The Earliest Pipil: New Perspectives on "Toltec" Presence in Southern Mesoamerica

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Introduction

The Toltec presence at the great Maya center of Chichén Itzá has long been controversial. Earlier models describe the invasion of Chichén Itzá by the Mexican Toltecs, with an ensuing fluorescence in a hybrid Maya-Toltec style expressed in art and architecture (Tozzer 1957). In contrast, some of the more recent evaluations argue that the new styles manifested at Chichén Itzá were a purely Maya development, which was then transmitted to central Mexico (Kubler 1961, 1975; Lincoln 1986). This would completely reverse the direction of stylistic influence. There is currently no agreement on the origin and significance of these styles, apart from being indicative of some form of intense interaction between central Mexico and Yucatan in the Terminal Classic to Early Postclassic (ca. AD 850-1200)(see Davies 1977:202-226 for a balanced discussion of this problem).

In 1983 and 1985 two sites were discovered in El Salvador that offer a different perspective on the question of Toltec influence in southern Mesoamerica. Like Chichén Itzá, these sites contain Toltec style architecture, sculpture, and portable artifacts. Unlike the Maya city, however, they were situated in near the southeastern periphery of Mesoamerica.

Excavations at the Salvadoran sites allows the definition of the Toltec-affiliated Loma China Phase. Together with other evidence for Mexican intrusion to El Salvador, the Loma China Phase sites present a new opportunity to examine the "Toltec intrusion" of southern Mesoamerica in a context very different from the Yucatec case. The similarities and differences between the two situations may be productive in understanding the nature of this Mexican interaction.

This paper will examine the new evidence from El Salvador, and consider the applicability of different models to explain the local "Toltec intrusion".

Mexican Influence in El Salvador

Earlier Research

The first Spanish expeditions to penetrate southern Mesoamerica were surprised to find several native groups speaking a dialect of the language they knew as Mexicano, now generally called Nahuat. These groups, known as the Pipil, also showed strong ties with central Mexico in their material culture, religion, and social organization. Their major concentration was in central and western El Salvador. Throughout the Colonial period it was assumed that these Nahua speakers had migrated from central Mexico at some time in the past, an opinion since substantiated through many years of ethnohistoric and archaeological research.

Some of the earliest studies of the Pipil and their Mexican origin were ethnographic in nature. Even in the 1850's, Squier (1855) compared Mexican and Pipil language and culture (from his own observations made in western El Salvador), and found an astonishing similarity between the two. Hartmann (1901, 1907) recorded Mexican myths and customs among the Pipil of Nahuizalco, going so far as to call them "Aztecs". The more detailed studies of language and myth recorded in Izalco by Schultze-Jena (1977, 1982) allowed him to trace closer parallels with Protohistoric central Mexican culture. More recent lexicostatistic analyses of Nahua (e.g. Luckenback and Levy 1980) attempted to trace the phylogenetic relationships between its dialects (including Nahuat), and to date their separation.

Prehistoric similarities between the two areas were noted soon after archaeological studies began in El Salvador. Spinden (1915), Sol (1929), and Lothrop (1927) both found late period artifacts which they considered to be Mexican in style. Many carried representations of Tlaloc, Xipe Totec, and other clearly non-local dieties. More recently, Stanley Boggs also noted Postclassic remains in Mexican style. These include a life-size ceramic image of Xipe Totec (1944a), incense burners representing Xipe Totec (1976) and Tlaloc (1949), and wheeled figurines (1973). However, Boggs' greatest contribution was his excavation

of the Tazumal site in the Chalchuapa archaeological zone (1943a, 1943b, 1944b, 1945, 1950, 1962, 1963). The Tazumal site is discussed in length below.

Within the last decade, the Pipil sites of Cihuatán and its possible satellite, Santa María, were investigated by William Fowler (1981). Fowler treated these as type sites, leading to the definition of the first comprehensive archaeological description for Mexican-derived assemblages in Early Postclassic El Salvador. He termed this the Guazapa Phase. The Guazapa Phase was strongly related to contemporaneous phases in central Mexico. So strongly, in fact, that Fowler interpreted this as evidence of the Pipil arrival. Fowler and I now agree on a slight modification for dating the Guazapa Phase, where the newly defined Loma China Phase (which is in fact closely related to the Pipil arrival - see below) occurs first, in the Terminal Classic/Early Postclassic periods (ca. AD 950-1050[?]), with Guazapa following directly afterward (ca. AD 1050[?]-1200) (Amaroli: in preparation).

Loma China was excavated by Manuel Méndez and Manuel Murcia in 1982-83 as part of a salvage project for the San Lorenzo Dam in central El Salvador. It revealed a unique concentration of Mexican artifacts and types of Central American ceramics which were traded widely in the Early Postclassic, including Silho Fine Orange, Tohil Plumbate, and Nicoya Polychrome. In 1985 I conducted another salvage excavation, but in a locality of the Tazumal group named Cementerio Jardín, some 120 kilometers from the San Lorenzo Dam. My study led me to interview Boggs for additional data on Tazumal, and forced a reevaluation of this site as a whole. Loma China and Tazumal are used here to define the Loma China Phase, which replaced the "native" Late Classic cultural traditions, and almost certainly represents the arrival of the earliest Pipil. Presentation of the information from these sites constitutes the bulk of this paper.

The next two sections are meant to place the Pipil in a meaningful context. In the first section, I offer a new synthesis of the Late Classic in El Salvador, based on my own work and on some reinterpretation of previous researchers. This is important for understanding the situation encountered by the migrating Pipil. It is followed by a discussion on the problem of Pipil origins.

El Salvador on the Eve of the Pipil Arrival

Western and central El Salvador seem to have been largely homogeneous in ethnicity during the Late Classic, with very similar components found at Chalchuapa, Ahuachapán, San Andrés, Lake Güija, Cerrón Grande, and the San Salvador valley; this probably extended westward into part of eastern Guatemala. Firmer geographic bounds for this phase, which I will refer to as Payu (after its ceramic complex), can now be fixed in other directions. The Tamasha Phase (equivalent to the Late/Terminal Classic Cotzumalhuapa culture) is found to the southwest, on El Salvador's western coastal plain (Amaroli 1987a). Lepa Phase sites occupy a contiguous area of similar coastal plain and coast-like low interior valleys, ranging from Punián (on the central coast), and including Laguneta, Los Llanitos, Quelepa (where the phase was defined by Andrews 1976), and probably Tehuacán (Amaroli 1987b). Materials recently looted from Chalatenango suggest that the northern limits of the Payu Phase may be "softer", grading into the very similar Coner Phase of Copán (Fig.4 shows my tentative distribution of cultural phases extant in Late Classic El Salvador).

What more can be said about the ethnicity of El Salvador's Late Classic inhabitants? This question assumes importance here since the immigrant Pipil first interacted with these groups, which appear to have been represented by the Payu, Lepa, and Tamasha phases.

The Payu Phase has traditionally been called "Maya" (see for example Lothrop 1939; Longyear 1944, 1966). Sharer (1978) and Sheets (1983) further specified that it was Chortí. They seem to have adopted Thompson's (1970) Chortí expansion hypothesis, where ethnohistoric data of dubious origin are freely projected hundreds of years into the past, together with the idea that Copán was a Chortí community. Similarities between the Payu Phase assemblage and Copán suggested a model where El Salvador was depopulated by the 3rd century Ilopango eruption, then resettled by Late Classic Chortí speakers influenced by Copán.

Stanley Boggs long regarded the Payu Phase as autochtonous; if Maya, it was as closely linked to the definitely non-Maya inhabitants of eastern El Salvador as to Copán. As evidence, he

stresses the complete absence of Lowland Maya style artifacts (with the exception of some portable objects), the local architectural style, and the lack of Maya sculpture or glyphs. The few Maya artifacts present at Chalchuapa are even less common than eastern Salvadoran imports.

Arthur Demarest also rejects a Chortí identification (in press), and repeats many of Boggs' criticisms in view of a new model for the development of local chiefdoms. Demarest sees the rise of leaders who did emulate Copán in some ways to reinforce their power, but were essentially native and non-Maya. Demarest's points are well taken. He demolishes the idea of a Chortí resettlement of western and central El Salvador, and underscores the local character of its Late Classic developments. His ideas represent a departure from much of the current work on the "southern periphery", which tacitly assumes that Maya influence tended to be inherently stronger than non-Maya. I would add that more attention should be directed to the demonstrated and potential interaction between Payu centers and other nearby foci of vigorous, non-Maya development peaking during the Terminal Classic, found in the Cotzumalhuapa and Lepa areas.

A fundamentally different cultural pattern, termed the Lepa Phase, was found in eastern El Salvador. Andrews (1976) has identified the Late/Terminal Classic Lepa Phase both with the ancestors of ethnohistoric Lenca, who inhabitated most of eastern El Salvador and Honduras, and with an invading Mexican elite population. As was discussed above, new information makes the thesis of a Late Classic Mexican invasion to Quelepa untenable. Linguistic prehistory of Lenca has been interpreted in such a way as to suggest that its presence in eastern El Salvador may extend back to the Late Preclassic (Campbell 1976), lending new support to Andrews' proposal that the local Classic population was Lenca. Rosemary Joyce recently (1986) showed that the Lepa ceramic group Delirio Red-on-white was dispersed over a very wide area in the Terminal Classic, including Seibal and Copan. This distribution helps trace the wide spheres of interaction that accruing evidence suggests were characteristic of the Terminal Classic. To these occurences may now be added finds in Terminal Classic contexts at Cara Sucia (Amaroli 1987a) and the Rivas region of Nicaragua (Healy 1980 - described as an unnamed red-on-white ceramic). The Salvadoran Lenca seem to have "devolved" in the

Postclassic. The Spaniards reported no overarching political organization uniting these Lenca, and each independent community had to be conquered separately - an arduous and lengthly process (Amaroli 1986, 1988).

The region's third major Late Classic cultural phase was limited to the southwestern Pacific coastal plain. This phase, called Tamasha, is a local manifestation of the extensive Cotzumalhuapa culture, where production of cacao, cotton, and salt were prominent activities (Amaroli 1987a, 1987b). Tamasha was also Late/Terminal Classic in date. The controversial ethnic affiliation of the ancient Cotzumalhuapans is an important but unresolved question (see Parsons 1969). Excavations at the easternmost Cotzumalhuapa site, Cara Sucia, reveal a Terminal Classic facet to the Tamasha Phase, marked by some modifications and additions to the cultural assemblage. "Motagua"-style fine paste pigment flasks, moldmade cylindrical vessels, fine orange vessels very similar to the Altar group, and copper all make their appearence in this facet, dated between AD 800-950.

Pipil Origins

It is beyond the scope of this paper to review adequately previous ideas on the Pipil and their origins. But one recent statement (Fowler 1985:37) provides a point of departure for the following discussion:

> The Pipil and the Nicarao were Nahuat-speaking groups who moved from central and southern Mexico into Central America in several complex stages or "waves" of migrations which began possibly as early as A.D. 700 and continued until about A.D. 1350 (Thompson 1948; Borhegyi 1965; Luckenback and Levy 1980; Fowler 1981). Their movements, one of the clearest cases of large-scale migration in Mesoamerican prehistory, were probably indirectly connected with the collapse of Teotihuacan and both directly and indirectly related to the expansion and later demise of the Toltec empire (Davies 1977; Weaver 1981).

The notion of several "waves" of Pipil migrations was speculatively advanced by Borhegyi in his influential article (1965). His model was tentative, but nevertheless his three Mexican migrations to Central America have enjoyed an unnaturally long life and are still cited frequently. It is now clear that he was fundamentally incorrect, especially in his attribution of virtually any "Mexican" influence in the region, regardless of date or nature, to the Pipil invasions.

The first "Pipil" migration noted by Borhegyi occured around AD 400-500, and was marked by the appearance of Teotihuacán traits at Kaminaljuyú. He described these "Teotihuacán Pipil" as invading warriors and missionaries interested in cacao, who established themselves in the region by "force and guile" (Borhegyi 1965:30). While the mechanism by which these traits were introduced to Highland Guatemala (and elsewhere, as we now know) is still very controversial (see for example Weaver 1981:261), it was completely unrelated to the introduction of the historic Pipil, whose culture was drawn from a much later phase of central Mexican development.

Borhegyi proposed a Late Classic (AD 700-900) migration of his more enigmatic "Tajininzed-Teotihuacan-Pipil". For reasons that are not explicit, Borhegyi also called this group the "Pipil-Nicaro". With the "fall" of Teotihuacán, refugees dispersed through many areas previously under that city's sway or influence, including the Gulf Coast around Tajín. After a period of residence, those who had fled to the Gulf Coast became "Tajinized" and converted to "an aggresive, warlike group that may have caused widespread population displacement wherever they moved" (Borhegyi 1965:40). The Tajinized-Teotihuacán-Pipil are seen as agents in the abandoment of Classic centers in southern Mesoamerica, and the establishment of defensive hilltop sites. Borhegyi associated this group with the Cotzumalhuapa culture of Pacific coastal Guatemala and El Salvador, and in so doing he was following the earlier ideas of Thompson (1941). After excavating a Cotzumalhuapa site, Thompson soon after (1948) expressed far less confidence in his earlier judgement, since he was able to show that the Cotzumalhuapa culture existed before the historic Pipil's probable arrival. This has since been substantiated by excavations in Guatemala (Parsons 1967, 1969; Rubio 1986) and El Salvador (Amaroli 1987a, 1987b). Even though he cited Thompson's

later work, Borhegyi did not take into account Thompson's more cautious perspective on Cotzumalhuapa. The "Tajinized-Teotihuacán-Pipil" migration is the most imaginative in its origins and the least supported in terms of archaeological evidence. But as will be discussed later, his idea that a Pipil migration was responsible for a change in settlement patterns (although between AD 900-1000) may have been partially correct.

The "Nonoalca-Pipil-Toltec-Chichimec" migration is the final Pipil movement described by Borhegyi. He derived this group from a coalescence of those legendary Tolteca-Chichimecas who departed Tula for Tlapallán, and from the Nonoalca, who he sees as descendants of other "Tajinized-Teotihuacán-Pipils" who had remained in the Laguna de Términos area. In itself, this presents a confusing situation, since Tlapallán is a legendary place sometimes identified with the Laguna de Términos area of Mexico's Gulf Coast, and is often used as a synonym for the land of the Nonoalca as well (Davies 1977:143-144). Between AD 1000-1200, these "Pipils" entered the Guatemalan Highlands and acquired control over sources of salt, agricultural products (especially cotton and cacao), obsidian, jade, flint, volcanic stone, and copper. The Quiché, Cakchiquel, and others were their descendants, and the Mexican traits recorded for these groups were introduced by the Nonoalca-Pipil-Toltec-Chichimec. Without question, the postulated origins of this Pipil group are entirely speculative. Borhegyi's "Nonoalca-Pipil-Toltec-Chichimec" were an artifice which he invoked without direct support from ethnohistory. Their role seems to have been very similar to his earlier "Tajinized-Teotihuacán-Pipil", so much so that it is not apparent how Borhegyi distinguished them. The period involved does, however, approximately correspond to the earlier Pipil presence in the region, according to the evidence now at hand, and so the proposed "Nonoalca-Pipil-Toltec-Chichimec" migration may, in a limited way, be closer to historical truth.

Leaving Borhegyi's model aside, it is still unclear whether there is other evidence for more than one Pipil migration. The answer, as provided by linguistics and archaeology, seems to be no.

Nahuat has long been considered an earlier dialect of the Nahua language.* Lexicostatistic analysis of its two major recorded divisions, Salvadoran Nahuat (spoken by the Pipil) and Veracruzan Nahuat, shows their very close phylogenetic status. It has been calculated that Nahuat differentiated from other Nahua dialects by the 9th or 10th century AD, while its division into Veracruzan and Salvadoran varieties has been placed in the 13th century (Kaufmann 1974; Luckenbach and Levy 1980). If nothing else, this indicates their great lexical proximity

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*The Nahua language comprises a number of mutually intelligible dialects, including Nahuatl, Nahual, Veracruzan Nahuat, and Salvadoran Nahuat (Luckenbach and Levy 1980; Fowler 1983). Pipil has been promoted as a term for Salvadoran Nahuat by its principal scholar, Lyle Campbell (1985). Ethnohistoric sources also refer to by this name, although mexicano, mexicano vulgar, nahuat, and nahuate are also used (Amaroli 1986). Only the last two are employed by its present speakers in El Salvador. Non-linguists (archaeologists and ethnographers included) working in this region have for many years called this dialect Nahuat, reserving Pipil as an ethnic term referring to its speakers. I am very reluctant to take issue with Campbell, but there can be no doubt that he is mistaken in considering this a separate language within a broader Nahua linguistic grouping. There are many facts supporting its position as a dialect of the Nahua language, just a few of which will be mentioned here. To begin with, those who conquered El Salvador were mostly Spaniards who had participated in the Conquest of Mexico, and their Nahuatl-speaking "indios amigos" - Mexica, Texcocoan, and Tlaxcalan allies; they judged the Pipil to speak "lengua de México" (Lardé y Larín 1977:35). Early Catholic missionaries working with Salvadoran Nahuat used Molina's 1571 Nahuatl-Spanish dictionary in their work (Squier 1955:350-351), and distinguished this dialect from central Mexican Nahuatl (known simply as "mexicano") by use of such terms as "lengua mexicana corrupta" and "lengua mexicana plebeya" (Larde y Larin 1977:36-37). Perhaps the ultimate proof of dialectical status is mutual intelligibility, as can be attested by one speaker of modern central Mexican Nahuatl (who was also a linguist) who conversed with speakers of Salvadoran Nahuat in a small community of western El Salvador (Osmín Magaña 1986: personal communication).

and shows that it is legitimate to speak of Nahuat in an inclusive sense for both Salvadoran and Veracruzan dialects.

On linguistic, documentary, and archaeological grounds, there is general agreement that a Nahua dialect is the best candidate for the language spoken by the Toltecs (Kaufman 1974:49; Davies 1977:161-169). The Historica Tolteca-Chichimeca is in fact rather definite on this point (Kirchhoff 1947:xxxi). The dating and historic distribution of Nahuat led some scholars to specify this as the particular dialect used by the Toltecs (Weaver 1981, c.f. Kirchhoff 1947:xxxi), an idea which finds some support in an ambiguous remark by Ixtlilxóchitl (1950) who classifies the Pipil as "de nación tulteca". If this view is correct, the Nahuat enclaves documented for Veracruz, El Salvador, and elsewhere are relics of a distribution formerly much more extensive, especially in central Mexico.

It should be apparent that the linguistic evidence easily admits a single period of migration for Nahuat-speakers, but does not support multiple periods of movements for different Nahua dialects, as Borhegyi's model would have us believe. Furthermore, the suggested differentiation of Nahuat in the 9th or 10th century AD and the subsequent diversification of its varieties by the 13th century places this Nahua dialect in a critical position with respect to Mesoamerican culture history. The dialect arises with the prominence of Tula, which itself may have been Nahuat-speaking, and loses its cohesion around the time of Tula's demise as a major center.

Archaeology also best supports a single Pipil migration, or at least a single period of migration. We now have data from two sites in the Pipil heartland of El Salvador that appear to document the Pipil arrival between AD 900-1000. This is a time when links with central Mexico were maintained for a brief period. Numerous other Pipil sites are known in the region, but unlike the earlier ones, they do not evince active links with Mexico. The information from these two sites, Tazumal and Loma China, form the core of this paper and are discussed below.

A different stance if taken by Andrews on a "Mexican" (or more specifically, Veracruzan) intrusion at the eastern Salvadoran site of Quelepa, which he excavated in the late 1960's

(Andrews 1976). I have proposed that present information shows that Andrews' "invasion" was actually a local manifestation of Terminal Classic interaction between Quelepa (and other Lepa Phase sites of eastern El Salvador) and the Cotzumalhuapan sites which extend from Guatemala into western El Salvador. In fact, virtually all of the traits Andrews considered "Mexican" can now be demonstrated as Cotzumalhuapan in origin. The separation between the Cotzumalhuapa and Lepa areas is only about 50 kilometers, and it seems entirely unneccessary to search far afield to ascribe these traits to Veracruz, at several hundred kilometers distance from El Salvador (Amaroli 1987a, 1987b). Quelepa probably maintained its ethnic identity for the entirety of the Classic, and some local ceramic groups continue throughout the period, even with the introduction of "foreign" traits. Its occupation effectively ended around AD 900-1000, corresponding to the introduction of Mexicans in neighboring areas.

Discussions of Pipil origins have too often been characterized by tenous arguments and speculation in attempts to bridge over the considerable gaps left by archaeology and ethnohistory. The following information from Loma China and Tazumal opens new possibilities for the interpretation of the Pipil and the critical problem of their intrusion into Central America.

The Archaeology of Loma China and Tazumal

The Loma China Site

Tragically little is known about the Loma China site. It was one of many localities innundated by the construction of the San Lorenzo Dam on the lower Lempa River in central El Salvador, completed in 1983. A limited archaeological salvage project was conducted by the Administracion del Patrimonio Cultural. The initial survey work was aborted in 1980 due to social unrest, and work resumed in 1982 with a opportunistic survey that located several mound sites. Between 1982 and 1983 approximately six

sites were excavated that ranged in age from Late Classic to Late Postclassic. Among these was the extraordinary Loma China site.

The results of this work have yet to be adequately studied. My information for Loma China was collected from field maps drawn by its excavator, Manuel Méndez, and through several interviews with Manuel Murcia, a caporal who worked under Mendez. In 1986 Manuel López, who is the director of the Museo Nacional "David J. Guzmán" in San Salvador, graciously permitted me access to the Loma China artifact collection.

With Murcia's help and extant field records, I was able to reconstruct some of the finds at Loma China. The site consists of four mounds, situated on a terrace next to the east bank of the Lempa River (Figs. 1, 6). In general, their construction was of earth fill, faced by stones, only some of which had been roughly shaped into blocks. They are designated as Structures A through D.

Méndez excavated three structures. Str.A had originally appeared as a very low but extensive platform. Excavation revealed the cobble footings of a multiroomed structure associated with a square platform which rose in three vertical terraces (Fig.7). The footings of a similar multiroomed structure in Tazumal supported adobe and rubble walls, but it is not known if such was the case at Loma China. The investigation of Str. D revealed another complex of rooms, but in this case supported on a large, low platform.

The third mound, Str.B, was a solitary platform, very much like the one incorporated within Str.A. Str.B was packed with offerings. A central burial below its summit was in a flexed position, and spaced around the skeleton were four thin sandstone plaques, each covered with identical mosaics. These depict a standing individual with the helmet, pectoral, sandals, and feathered square shield characteristic of Toltec warriors (Fig.8; c.f. Tozzer 1957). The individual holds a feathered serpent (complete with rattles) arching up from behind (see Tozzer 1957 for Toltec warriors in equivalent poses). The materials used to make the plaques were jade for the individual and the feathered serpent, shell and turquoise for the warrior's face, and iron pyrites for the encircling frame.

The central burial in Str.B also had large numbers of tiny (mostly one centimeter in diameter and less) turquoise plaques in the area of its head. Their beveled edges and abundance are the only evidence we have that a turquoise-encrusted mask once covered its face.

At least three other burials were found in the lower terraces of Str.B. All were "multilated". One example consisted solely of the trunk of an adult body, whose rib cage was charred from intensive burning. No artifacts were associated with these three interments.

Str.B did, however, contain numerous artifacts. Méndez and Murcia both believed that these were offerings for the central burial. Ceramic vessels abounded, with 13 of Tohil Plumbate, 34 of Nicoya Polychrome, and a striking example Silho Fine Orange carved with a feather serpent motif. These ceramics groups were widely exhanged in the Early Postclassic, and will be discussed at length with regard to the Tazumal site. Several green obsidian prismatic blades appeared in a cache. They were unusual in several respects. They were complete specimens, they were exceptionally narrow (one centimeter or less), and the razor-like edges of these delicate objects showed no signs of use. It may be that there sharply pointed distal ends were used as lancets for blood-letting. Another cache unearthed in Str.B consisted of about 6 chert and obsidian bifaces, including corner-notched and side-notched varieties that are morphologically identical to specimens from Chichen Itza and central Mexico (Sheets 1978).

I have been told that Loma China was not completely innundated by the new reservoir, and it may be possibly to continue studies at this small but fascinating site.

The Tazumal Site

Tazumal is much better documented than Loma China This site and its general region of western El Salvador hosted several archaeological investigations since the 1940's. It has figured in broader debates regarding the origin and development of complex society in southeastern Mesoamerica (Sharer 1978;

Demarest in press). Also in contrast to Loma China, it is well documented ethnohistorically.

The Tazumal site lies in the western Salvadoran town of Chalchuapa (Fig.1). It is often stated that Chalchuapa occurs in the "highlands" of southeastern Mesoamerica (as in Sharer 1978). Although true in a relative sense, it is little like the Guatemalan Highlands. El Salvador's "highlands" are quite low, normally ranging between 400 to 800 meters above sea level, and Chalchuapa is found at 700 meters. Palynological studies show its climax vegetation to have been similar to the Peten (Tsukada and Deevey 1967).

On the eve of Conquest, Chalchuapa lay on the western limits of a major Pipil polity centered at Cuscatlán. Before Spanish-induced economic changes affected the region, Chalchuapa was was noted for its production of maize, cacao, and cotton (Amaroli 1986).

Unlike every other community in the Cuscatlán province, Chalchuapa's inhabitants were not Nahuat speakers. It is probable that their language was Pokomam (a Maya language), at least to judge from the early 17th through late 18th century (Gage 1702; Ximenez 1929; Cortéz y Larraz 1958). It is perhaps a unique situation to find a Maya community under Pipil sway. It appears that Chalchuapa was formerly Pipil, and the Pokomam were installed only a short time before the Spanish conquest. It had long been thought that all of central and western El Salvador had once been Pokomam speaking, but as a result of the Pipil arrival only Chalchuapa still maintained this Maya identity upon the arrival of the Castillans (Lothrop 1939). Archaeology and linguistics are once again in agreement on a different perspective. Several avenues of linguistic investigation show Pokomam to have been rapidly expanding on the eve of Conquest; their presence in Chalchuapa began very shortly before AD 1500 (Campbell 1977). The archaeological record can accomodate an interpretation where the resident Pipil are replaced by Pokomam, or at least enter into strong interaction with the Pokomam area (as marked by Chinautla Polychrome and other non-Pipil artifacts), at some point after AD 1200 (Sharer 1978; Stanley Boggs and Manuel López 1985: personal communication).

But if this is so, how was Chalchuapa transformed from a Pipil to Pokomam settlement, and how did it remain part of a Pipil state? Part of the answer may lie in the nature of Mexican polities, in that a chief concern with subject communities was tribute, not cultural uniformity. (But this is not to say that the Pipil migration several centuries prior did not displace or destroy the native population.) I have elsewhere offered an explanation where Chalchuapa and another Pokomam enclave were formed under Pipil patronage as buffers against the expansionistic Cakchiquel (Amaroli 1988).

Whether the Pokomam speakers took Chalchuapa by force, or whether there was a more peaceful transformation, Cuscatlán was evidently able to accomodate their presence and continue to extract tribute. The point here is that the Pokomam enter into the story at a late date, and were not players on the scene of the Pipil migration, despite apparent political affiliations.

Chalchuapa's rich archaeological heritage has long attracted scholarly interest. Some of its monumental sculpture was removed to the capital as early as 1892, lamentably without a very useful record of their provenience (Lardé y Larín 1977). During the 1920's the Salvadoran natural scientist Jorge Lardé recognized Chalchuapa as an "archaeological region" composed of several discrete sites, including Tazumal, Casa Blanca, El Trapiche, Pampe, and Lake Cuscachapa (Lardé 1926). Stanley Boggs' work here is so extensive, stretching from the 1940's to the present, that it deserves mention in a separate paragraph. As for the researchers, William Coe began to study the El Trapiche site during the 1950's, work that was abruptly terminated before its completion (Coe 1955); despite this, his initial findings demonstrated an important Late Preclassic occupation as did Boggs' earlier discovery of Olmec bas reliefs. Continued interest in this period of "highland" Maya development eventually led to a major archaeological project under the sponsorship of the University of Pennsylvania and the directorship of Robert Sharer. The Chalchuapa Project ran from 1966-1970 and was a landmark in Salvadoran archaeology (see Sharer 1978). Its principal focus was on the Preclassic, but sites dating from a different periods were also excavated, resulting in a cultural sequence ranging from approximately 1200 BC to the Protohistoric period. The Chalchuapa Project did not excavate at the Tazumal site, and barely used its information in reconstructing the

cultural sequence and history of Chalchuapa. Later in the 1970's, Manuel López of the Administración del Patrimonio Cultural excavated a basal tunnel started by the Chalchuapa Project under the Middle-Late Classic Str. C1-1 of the Casa Blanca site. This same structure was partially restored in the early 1980's. In 1978 William Fowler Jr. and Manuel López undertook a salvage excavation of a small Late Preclassic mound in the El Trapiche site, where they found evidence of a mass human sacrifice (Fowler 1984).

Three projects of the 1980's deserve mention in this review of archaeology in Chalchuapa. In 1985 it was noticed that the main structure in the Tazumal group was slumping, and some of the terraces restored by Boggs in the 1940's seemed in danger of imment collapse. This led to the "reconstruction of a reconstruction" which continues today on Structure 1 at Tazumal. Though not strictly archaeological in nature, the background research led to a series of interviews with Boggs and the recovery of some significant unpublished data. Two salvage projects were also conducted in 1985. Under less than ideal conditions, Manuel Murcia (Administración del Patrimonio Cultural) monitored the paving of streets near the Tazumal site and recovered several caches of artifacts dating from the Middle Classic to the Postclassic. I carried out the other salvage project at a locality known as Cementerio Jardín. This locality represents an extension of the Tazumal site's latest occupation, and its excavation, together with the information provided by Boggs, led to a reinterpretation of Tazumal. The new data and interpretations are presented below.

Few if any Mesoamerican archaeologists have had a longer involvement with a single zone than Stanley Boggs with Chalchuapa. His major work there focused on the Tazumal site, carried out in twelve seasons between 1942 and 1955. Tazumal originally had 13 visible mounds, including an enclosed ballcourt, a circular platform, and the monumental complex formed by Structures 1 and 2. Subsequent work also defined part of an associated residential area (Fig. 2). Around 1940, Boggs found that the major structures at this site were being mined for earth to manufacture adobe bricks. Other adjacent mounds were being demolished as modern Chalchuapa grew. Under these circumstances his first excavations at Tazumal aimed to salvage basic information about some of the largest prehistoric structures in

Chalchuapa. The discovery of extensive architectural facings and a Late Classic tomb filled with artifacts helped convince the government to take action and to preserve its principal structures.

Boggs' excavations at Tazumal revealed a complex series of 14 superimposed construction episodes spanning a period of some 700 years (the following information is based on interviews with Boggs between 1985-1987, and on Boggs 1944a, 1944b). The earliest structure was part of a low platform whose construction had been interrupted, but only temporarily, by a volcanic ash fall - possibly from the 3rd century AD Ilopango eruption. Soon afterward in the sequence, a platform strongly reminiscent of Teotihuacán "talud-tablero" architecture was erected, and within it was found a burial with several artifacts in Teotihuacán style: a slab-footed cylindrical vessel, a candelero, and a stone incensario sculpted to combine feline and avian elements in a way paralleling some depictions known from Teotihuacán. However, the most spectacular offering with this burial was an "assembly line" ceramic incensario built of moldmade and modeled components, perhaps representing Quetzalcoatl surrounded by sea shells.

Massive constructions later enveloped this Early Classic platform, culminating in a Late Classic stepped pyramid set upon a very large basal platform. Str. 1, as this construction is known, reached approximately 24 meters in height, probably rising in nine vertical terraces (Fig. 3). A balustraded stairway rose on its west side, but any trace of a superstructure had been obliterated by time and the depredations of adobe brick makers. Twenty human burials were excavated within this structure, of which Tomb 1 was the most important in terms of location and contents. It was found on the pyramid's western side, under the stairway. Like most of the other Tazumal graves, this "tomb" had been constructed as a shaft with its contents arranged on the bottom. It had then been filled with earth and rubble, then capped with rough slabs. The adult male interred in Tomb 1 had been wrapped in fig tree [amate] paper and placed on a mat [petate], where he was and surrounded by a treasure trove of Late Classic artifacts. About 90 ceramic vessels were present, in addition to plain yugos with a sculpted hacha, pyrite mirrors on plain slate backings, a jade pectoral in a style common at Copán, and three tumbaga figurines thought to be of Costa Rican origin (some of the earliest metalwork to have reached southeastern

Mesoamerica; c.f. Bray 1977). Over half of the vessels were "lost" during Boggs' absence from El Salvador in the early 1950's; those remaining in the National Museum collection were briefly reported by Sharer (1978). Copador, Salua (also called Babilonia or Ulua Polychrome), San Juan Plumbate, and other local Late Classic ceramic groups were represented, mostly belonging to the Payu ceramic complex established by Sharer, and there was an example of Peten Gloss Ware with a glyph band. Tomb 1 clearly held a prestiious occupant, the abundant and diverse offerings being an expression of his participation in far-ranging networks of interaction.

At some time after the completion of Tazumal's massive Str.1, probably in the Early Postclassic period, a very different monumental platform was erected on its western side, where it directly abutted and covered part of Str. 1's batter (Fig.3). Str.2 has late "Mexican" style talud-tablero terraces. A balustraded stairway is found on its western side. The extensive basal platform that supported Str.1 was enlarged even further to integrate both structures 1 and 2 as a single architectural unit.

Several features of Str. 2's construction were new to southeastern Mesoamerica, and seem to be of Mexican origin. Each of its three terraces were built of numerous rubble-filled cells. Small stones studded the flanks of Str.2, and were interpreted as anchors for the thick coating of fine white stucco which covered the building. Several shallowly buried caches of Tohil Plumbate were spaced around the base of Str.2. No other offerings were associated with this building, but several intrusive burials found in the old Late Classic Str.1 are believed to date to the Early Postclassic. They were buried with several vessels belonging to the ceramic group which Sharer named Cozatol. This association with the Cozatol group is an important key in interpretation, as will be discussed below.

Boggs also recognized two other constructions at Tazumal that were contemporaneous with Str.2. The nearly destroyed base of a small platform was uncovered just north of Str.1. It was also unusual in its use of carefully fitted polygonal slabs to face its rubble fill - a technique since noted at the Postclassic site of Cihuatán (Fowler 1981). Boggs excavated the other building, Str.6, which was being destroyed by the growth of modern Chalchuapa. Its method of construction was identical to

that of Str.2. Str.6, however, was a circular platform that rose in two terraces, again faced with late style talud-tableros, and was equipped with balustraded stairways on both its north and south sides. Remnants of a circular superstructure were found on its summit. Three burials were found within Str.6, but none had offerings preserved - these individuals probably were the offerings for this building. Structure 6 may have been a temple dedicated to that manifestation of Quetzalcoatl known as Ehecatl (Davies 1977). It must be mentioned here that the Chalchuapa Project reportedly excavated two Early to Middle Classic burials from "the site of Structure B1-6 [the project's designation for Tazumal Str.6]" (Sharer 1978:120). According to Stanley Boggs, who of course excavated Str.6, these burials were not at the location of the then-destroyed Str.6.

A fourth structure in the Tazumal group may now be tentatively attributed to this same period. The enclosed I-shaped ballcourt (oriented east to west) has yet to be excavated. Surface collections indicate an Early Postclassic date.

The Early Postclassic structures of Tazumal find close correlations with contemporaneous Tula. Both sites share rubble-filled celluar construction for platforms, studs for anchoring plaster coatings, square platforms or "pyramids" with talud-tablero facings and balustraded stairways, similar circular platforms, and I-shaped ballcourts (Acosta 1941, 1945, 1956; Diehl 1983).

Monumental Sculpture at Tazumal

Four monumental sculptures were associated with the Early Postclassic structures. While not well-carved, Tazumal's sculptures are extraordinary for this region of Mesoamerica. Like some contemporary sculpture in central Mexico, they appear to have been roughed out in a blocky shape, then formed through excavation of areas, depending heavily on grooves to outline the details of the subject. At least three find their closest comparisons with Toltec sculpture. They include two Chacmools, a "jaguar throne", and a stela.

The two Chacmools are illustrated by Anderson (1978). Most of the sculpture in that study is poorly illustrated, and the Chacmools are no exception. Although several details are distorted, others are not even visible. Anderson's descriptions must have been based on these photographs, since they are equally sparse. These sculptures were designated as Chalchuapa Monuments 23 and 24. Both represent a reclining individual, with head held erect and twisted toward its left; the hands support a tray held on its belly. A Toltec "mariposa", probably meant as a bird (c.f. Tozzer 1957), is visible on the chest of both figures, half covered by an arm. The left arms both have a knife in a sheath worn between the elbow and shoulder. All these details resemble features on Chacmools found at Tula and Chichén Itzá, among other places. The nearest comparable sculptures would be the small Chacmool from Quirigua (Sharer 1985), an example from Aguateca (Nicaragua), and then Chichén Itzá itself.

Chacmools have a wide distribution in Postclassic Mesoamerica. They have been reported from Tula, Tenochtitlan, Michoacán, Tlaxcala, Cempoala, Chichén Itzá, Aguateca (Nicaragua), and Quiriguá (an alleged Costa Rican "Chacmool" may be in some way derived from the Mesoamerican concept, but its form and execution are fundamentally different). For some authors, the ample dispersion of Chacmools has muddled their relation to the Toltecs and other groups (Davies 1977:209). But this relation becomes clear if due attention is alloted to dating. The earliest dated specimens are the most uniform in their execution and appear between AD 900-1000 at Tula (12 examples), Chichén Itzá (14), and Tazumal (2) only. At each of these sites, Chacmools were placed before raised platforms or entrances to chambers, which may have functioned as altars, temples and, in perhaps in some cases, palaces (Weaver 1981:369; Miller 1985). I suggest that the early Chacmools be considered separately from the later sculptures.

The early group of Chacmools shows a consistent association with Quetzalcoatl and jaguar thrones. At Chichén a Chacmool was discovered within the Castillo sub (Temple of Kukulcan), before the entrance to a vestibule containing the famous red jaguar throne. At the same site, a Chacmool is set at the entrance to the Temple of Warriors, with the columns behind it displaying feathered serpents. The first excavated Chacmool was found at Chichén in the Platform of the Eagles, just underlying a red

jaguar sculpture (Tozzer 1957:91). Similary, the two Tazumal Chacmools had been placed at the entrances to a probable Ehecatl or Quetzalcoatl temple (see below). It is entirely possible that another sculpture, a "jaguar throne", was found there.

Mary Miller recently proposed that Chacmools originated in the Maya area, and were then transmitted to central Mexico and elsewhere in the Early Postclassic (Miller 1985). The core of this argument is that Chacmools depicted captives in a posture of defeat and submission, somewhat analogous to the Classic Maya victims, who frequently appear bound in awkward positions. The most obvious flaw with this idea is that Chacmools definitely are not defeated victims. Contrary to fairly universal Mesoamerican conventions for captives, Chacmools are not stripped of clothing and ornament. Instead, they tend to wear Toltec helmets, with knives in shoulder sheathes and a "mariposa" on their chests. Sandals, wrist and ankle ruffs, and the typical waist garmet worn by males complete their attire. All these are features of Toltec warriors, not captive Maya (c.f. Tozzer 1957). Miller goes on to argue that "the greater variation of the [Chacmool] at Chichén Itzá also suggest its development at that site" (1985:14). The only evidence of "greater variation" she shares, however, is a Chichén example with its legs in a more relaxed position, which does not seem substantially distinct from the rest. If not taken out of context, the Chacmool remains a solid component of Toltec art, with clear antecedents in Teotihuacan and other earlier central Mexican sites; these ties are reinforced by the association of Chacmools with the ancient central Mexican deity, Quetzalcoatl.

A third sculpture has suffered considerable multilation, but can still be recognized as a "jaguar throne". It is crude but similar in concept to those unearthed at Chichen Itza, where such thrones are shown in use by Toltec warriors (Tozzer 1957:103). Terminal Classic Uxmal is also well-known for its jaguar throne. The Tazumal example is in a crouched position, and a Toltec "mariposa" appears on one side of its body below its missing head. Its haunches support a circular plate with nearly obliterated remains of incised designs, recalling the mosaic plaque supported by the famous red jaguar throne in the sanctuary of Chichén's Catillo sub structure. The Tazumal sculpture, designated Monument 25 (Anderson 1978), was carved from deep red scoria; its color is a further parallel with Chichén. It is

similar to the Tazumal Chacmools in its workmanship and general dimensions.

The fourth sculpture is a stela commonly known in El Salvador as "la virgen de Tazumal". It is now numbered as Monument 21 (Anderson 1978; a more useful illustration may be found in Lothrop 1939). It was carved from a large, thin slab, with a height of 2.6 meters. Its face shows a standing male whose right arm crosses his chest and holds a long, decorated object. The elaborate headgear shows Tlaloc, and quetzal feathers stream from each side and flow downwards to frame the individual's oval face. He wears a wide beaded (?) pectoral band, and similar wristlets. His loincloth consists of a decorated girdle, with a strip of cloth pendant before his groin. The portrayal of his face is exceedingly simple, as though a single groove was continued to form two oval eyes (with central concavities) and a large trapezoidal nose. The mouth is a simple short and wide groove. The thin sides of this monument have remnants of carving that have been called glyphs (once again, poorly rendered in Anderson 1978). There were probably four evenly spaced elements on each side. Pending examination by an epigrapher, it appears that these designs are only vaguely glyph-like.

Monument 21 cannot easily be compared to other Toltec sculptures at Tazumal. A general similarity exists with the two Toltec stelae recovered at Tula, which are notable in the use of a large, thin slab, feathered Tlaloc headgear, and simple oval face and eyes. More remote similarities may be found in their pectorals and loinclothes (Nicholson 1971:Fig.27).

Many of these features are found in Lowland Maya stelae also, and it may well be that the carver of the Tazumal stela was dimly inspired by his impressions of Maya monuments - in such case Monument 21 would be Late Classic in date and could have been taken from an original association with Str.1 to be repositioned in front of Str.2.

All four sculptures had been taken to San Salvador in the 1890's. At the time, their original locations were only vaguely stated. Boggs was able to interview residents who, in 1942, still remembered their removal. His best reconstruction is that two Chacmools had originally been set at on the north and south

side of Str.6, at the bases of the stairways leading to its circular shrine. The stela had been taken from the western side of Str.2 (Anderson 1978:160 mistakenly gives its provenience as Str.1). We may never know more about the provenience of the "jaguar throne", beyond the fact that it was somewhere in the area of Tazumal's large structures. Perhaps like other jaguar thrones, it too was associated with Chacmools. If it did obey such cannons of sculptural placement, it may have occupied the summit of Str.6.

The Cementerio Jardín Locality

Recent salvage exavations have forced a reinterpretation of the Early Postclassic component at Tazumal. Bulldozer cuts in a lot near the principal structures of Tazumal turned up abundant prehistoric sherds, and as a result the Adminstración del Patrimonio Cultural began a salvage project under my direction. This locality is called Cementerio Jardín, and lies approximately 700 meters southeast of the main Tazumal group (Fig.2).

Surface materials were mixed, with Late Preclassic, Late Classic, and Early Postclassic materials. On first inspection, Early Postclassic sherds seemed the most abundant and least eroded. Then the discovery of several green obsidian prismatic blades invited comparison with the similar assemblage at Loma China.

Our project sank an initial series of 1m x 1m test units in a cross pattern to provide north-south and east-west transects in and beyond the area where sherds had appeared. We found no features, and reached sterile bedrock or clays between 40-100cm depth. The sherds included some eroded Late Preclassic and Classic ceramic groups. The Early Postclassic materials noted on disturbed surface were abundant and well-preserved in the excavation, and included Tohil Plumbate, Nicoya Polychrome, and spiked incensario fragments. Once again, several green obsidian prismatic blades were present.

Small, probably residential platforms are common on surrounding parcels, with a continuous distribution to Tazumal's monumental structures. Early Postclassic materials on the surface suggested that many of these could belong to the site's latest component (see also the results of an earlier surface survey in Sharer 1978). This led to an intensive search for structural remains over the whole of Cementerio Jardín, including large brushy areas of old untended coffee bushes. It was in one such area that a looter's pit had turned up an adobe brick (looting is extremely common in Chalchuapa). Test excavations to either side hit stone and adobe features at 40cm. These were interpreted as the footing of a wall and part of an associated floor.

Areal exposure was then begun with a crew of six working with 2m x 2m units. The test units demonstrated that the overburden was devoid of cultural materials, so this was rapidly removed. A mixed layer of burned adobe, soil, bahareque (wattle and daub), and charcoal flecks covered the stone features, and on reaching this we replaced shovels with trowels.

As the layer of burned debris was slowly removed, remains of smashed and scattered ceramic vessels were found in contact with tamped earth flooring. Among these were sherds from Tohil Plumbate, Nicoya Polychrome, large spiked censers, and ladle censers. A greenstone plaque, ceramic flute, green obsidian primatic blades, twenty complete and fragmentary obsidian bifaces, and a few other small artifacts were also strewn across the floor. It was interesting to see that their breaks were uneroded. No vessel could be completely reconstructed, but it was possible to show that some joinable sherds were separated by a distance of two meters or more, while others were adjacent. By the end of the three week limit on fieldwork, the areal exposure had uncovered 80 square meters, which still left parts of the structure unexcavated.

The ruins of a multiroom building were revealed (Fig.5). In my interpretation, the structural lines served as footings for adobe and rubble walls. A few small cut stone blocks were found on the footing. There was no direct indication of what the roofing materials had been. An azotea (flat, beamed roof) would probably have left more debris than was found, and so it may have been thatched. Some paved internal areas may represent one or

more patios. At some point in time, several ceramic vessels and censers were smashed; parts were dropped within the building, others were scattered about within and probably without, the latter falling beyond our excavation. Other objects once contained in the structure may have been removed intact. It is impossible to ascertain the time elapsed between the smashing of objects and the burning of the building. The large sherds on the floor indicate the sudden destruction of the building; these would not have long survived pulverization if people continued to enter the structure.

Comparable structures are unknown for earlier periods of Salvadoran prehistory. They do appear at contemporary Loma China, and continue at other Pipil sites, including the slightly later site of Cihuatán, and an ethnohistoric center called Apopa, or the Madre Tierra site. This architectural concept would then appear to have been introduced to El Salvador by the migrating Pipil, and it is reasonable to seek antecedents in their area of origin. Central Mexico does present numerous examples of contemporary and earlier multiroomed structures. In particular, the structures interpreted as elite residences at Tula bear great similarities in both layout and methods of construction (Diehl 1983).

There is little basis for identifying the function of this structure. Spiked and ladle censers are ritual objects, but their presence could be due as much to household ritual as a specialized ritual use for the building. The other objects found within - "commercial" ceramics, obsidian bifaces, and other objects - are diverse. This diversity does not permit a single function to be assigned, but could reflect a residential use, where multiple activities would result in a diversity of materials.

This was not the only multiroom structure in the Cementerio Jardin locality. A month after our work, bulldozers revealed another series of footings about 100m from our excavation. It was not possible to intervene for further salvage work.

Among the artifacts found on the floor of the excavated building were types believed to be Mexican-related. Sherds of molcajetes (grater bowls) are related to the Tamoa Buff group described by Fowler for the central Mexican-derived assemblage of

Cihuatán (1981). Very similar side-notched obsidian bifaces have been reported from Mayapán, Chichén Itzá, Zaculeu, and central Mexico (Sheets 1978:24).

Several sherds of the Cozatol ceramic group were found in the excavation. It will be remembered that Cozatol vessels accompanied the intrusive burials uncovered in Tazumal Str.1. This is a key association, and to understand its significance it is necessary to consider this group in greater depth. The Cozatol group has been documented for several localities in El Salvador. At the coastal site of Cara Sucia it was introduced in the Terminal Classic (the Tamasha Phase, Late Facet), which ended at approximately AD 950 (Amaroli 1987). Cozatol vessels, again in a Terminal Classic context (associated with periform jars), were excavated with a burial at the El Tanque site, situated in the north-central Salvadoran Department of Chalatenango (Crane 1978). Other Cozatol sherds and vessels have been reported for vicinities near Soyapango and Aguilares in central El Salvador. The occurence of Cozatol seems to span a short period of time between the end of the Tamasha and Payu phases through the ensuing Loma China Phase. From the associations of Cozatol, I speculate that the "Early Postclassic" Loma China Phase is closely equivalent in time to the Terminal Classic, and may briefly have overlapped or coexisted with the Tamasha and Payu phases, before these were completely replaced by Loma China or the slightly later Guazapa Phase.

Tohil Plumbate sherds were more abundant here than in any site documented in El Salvador, comprising 2.7% of the total. For comparative purposes, only 0.6% was found at the Early Postclassic site of Cihuatan (Fowler 1981). Nicoya Polychrome was closely similar in its relative abundance here, and scarcity elsewhere. Both these ceramic groups were widely distributed in the Early Postclassic and have been found together in caches from El Salvador, Nicaragua, (Healy 1980), and in Tula, where Tohil Plumbate was surprisingly the most abundant "non-local" ceramic, even surpassing groups from the relatively nearby Gulf Coast (Diehl et al 1974). Several associations of Silho Fine Orange and Tohil Plumbate vessels are known (Healy 1980), and all three ceramic groups were unearthed from a single context at Loma China.

The origins of Plumbate remain today as little understood as when Shepard approached the problem 40 years ago (1948). Her best guess for the source of Tohil Plumbate was the Pacific coastal zone of the Chiapas-Guatemala border, a region known as Soconusco during the early Colonial period. Shepard also recognized that a small area of central El Salvador was the origin for almost one half of all Tohil Plumbate vessels known. Shepard therefore suggested the possibility of multiple production centers. Several years previously, under the guidence of this criterion of abundance, Lothrop (1927) was led to identify central El Salvador as the sole origin for Tohil Plumbate. He even reported the manufacture of Plumbate-like ceramics in recent times for this area. Not only is Tohil Plumbate abundant here, but several duplicate pieces have been discovered. One of the most intriguing cases involved four unique Tlaloc whistling jars, all identical, and all attributed to a five kilometer radius in central El Salvador (three were reported in Shepard 1948, and a fourth was found at Mapilapa in 1985).

The literature published since Shepard's study has repeated only the first half of her hypothesis, and furthermore, many writers cite the proposed Soconusco origin as though it were an established fact.

The problem of Plumbate origins has been considered afresh in a stimulating paper by Neff and Bishop (in press). They propose that Plumbate had its roots in the "fine pasted" Tiquisate ware found on the Pacific coast of Guatemala in the Middle and Late Classic. San Juan Plumbate, an earlier variety dating to the Late and Terminal Classic, was produced in the Soconusco region. The potters switched to a different Plumbate clay source but continued to manufacture San Juan forms until the Early Postclassic, when Tohil Plumbate effigy vessels became popular. Neff and Bishop support their study with neutron activation studies.

I have several comments on Neff and Bishop regarding their methods and conclusions, but here I will limit myself to their conclusions regarding Plumbate origins. From the beginning, they loaded the study in favor of a Soconusco origin. I agree that Tiquisate ware was probably the antecessor of Plumbate, but the writers ignore the variation to be found both in Tiquisate forms

and composition (with gross differences visible macroscopically) across its area of distribution, extending along the Pacific coast from Chiapas to El Salvador. This could reflect multiple zones of Tiquisate production, which could have "carried over" for Plumbate. Neff and Bishop choose to ignore this possibility and, in favor of the Soconusco hypothesis, narrowly focused their study on the Guatemala-Chiapas border area. Most of their plumbate sample was taken from a site postholed by Neff on the southeast coast of Guatemala, supplemented by surface collections taken from two nearby sites. In order to demonstrate a Soconusco origin for Plumbate through neutron activition, valuable trace element characterizations of Plumbate (which incidently revealed three closely related compositional varieties) are compared against a "generalized eastern Soconusco group...formed using thirty-two specimens representing twelve sites, at least four different time periods, and both coarse and fine-paste wares". It challanges belief that the lumping of such a heterogenous and tiny sample could produce meaningful results. No effort was made to constitute other "generalized" comparison groups for adjacent areas beyond Soconusco, denying us the opportunity to gauge Plumbate's relatedness with other potential production zones.

It should be obvious that I wish to see the issue of Plumbate origins left open. The possibility of multiple production centers for the Tohil variety, first raised by Shepard, still deserves further testing. More specifically, it is necessary to further evaluate the region of central El Salvador noted for abundant finds of Tohil Plumbate as a possible production area.

Nicoya Polychrome presents another sticky problem. Nicoya Polychrome is a broad term, under which are lumped several polychrome varieties sharing a fine white slip with red, black, and yellow painting, manufactured on the southern limits of Mesoamerica between the Classic and Postclassic periods (Healy 1980). The specific variety found associated with Tohil Plumbate has been identified by Healy as the Papagayo group, which he defines on the basis of less than 40 small sherds found in the Rivas region of Nicaragua (but see also Fowler 1981). The abundant sample of whole vessels from El Salvador do not correspond to his description for Papagayo or any other Nicaraguan group. Particularly distinctive in El Salvador are tall cylindrical vases with annular bases, the fairly common

occurence of maker's marks, and a very fine paste. An interpretation in agreement with the evidence at hand is that the Salvadoran variety is a locally produced group of Nicoya Polychrome. The published photographs of the Nicoya Polychrome vessels found with Tohil Plumbate at Tula (Diehl et al 1974; Diehl 1983) are most similar to the Salvadoran group.

Another diagnostic of the Loma China phase related to Tula is green obsidian. This accounted for 1.6% of all obsidian recovered, with the remainder almost entirely from Ixtepeque (based on visual examination). The only known source of green obsidian is Pachuca, located in central Mexico. The excavators of Tula feel that the Pachuca source was under Toltec control during the Early Postclassic, having contributed 80% of the total obsidian found in their capital (Diehl 1983:111).

The Cementerio Jardín finds imposed a reevaluation of Tazumal's Early Postclassic component. To begin with, the occupation during this time was not limited to monumental structures as it may have been previously, but rather extended over a large area whose limits have yet to be drawn, but reaching at least 700 meters to the Cementerio Jardín locality. Within this area are remnants of small platforms and multiroomed structures, many of which are probably residences. According to non-systematic surface collections taken by Sharer (1978), there may be considerable continuity between the Late Classic and Early Postclassic use of over one square kilometer in Chalchuapa, but the area he sampled is largely to the north of Tazumal. No Early Postclassic structures were excavated by the Chalchuapa Project, so the nature of "use" in those localities remains undefined. The excavations and surface inspection at Cementerio Jardín do point toward the existence of possible residential use south of Tazumal, but additional survey is needed to determine the total area with Early Postclassic materials.

But there was another result of the reevaluation. It also led to rethinking the nature of the Pipil migration as represented by Tazumal and Loma China. The following section summarizes and interprets the information from these two sites.

Tazumal and Loma China: Summary and Interpretation

Tazumal and Loma China are used here to define a cultural phase, termed Loma China, dated as beginning around AD 900-1000. They represent components with a consistent asseblage, including Tohil Plumbate, Nicoya Polychrome (of a variety peculiar to El Salvador), Pachuca obsidian, certain "Mexican" biface forms, and multiroomed structures.

In addition to these shared traits, there also exist some differences between the two sites. At the end of the Classic period Tazumal was a very old and prominent monumental center. With the introduction of the Loma China Phase, new, Mexican style buildings were erected amid the pre-existing structures, one being built against Tazumal's large pyramid. The Loma China Phase buildings included a medium sized pyramid, a circular structure, an enclosed ballcourt, and an extensive area with multiroomed structures, interpreted as residences. Monumental sculpture was set before these buildings and are closely comparable only to examples from Tula and Chichén Itzá.

Loma China, in contrast, was a single component site. There are no major Late Classic sites recorded in its vicinity. Its structures are smaller, and the site as a whole less extensive than in its equivalent component at Tazumal. Though more rustic in every sense, Loma China had the largest hoard of Tohil Plumbate, Nicoya Polychrome, and Silho Fine Orange known to this writer. These were associated with four extraordinary Toltec mosaic plaques which certainly were not made locally, and several possible sacrificial victims - all apparent offerings to the central burial of an adult male.

While some of the differences between Tazumal and Loma China are admittedly based on negative evidence, additional archaeology will not change the essential picture. At Tazumal, a major center of southeastern Mesoamerica was directly overlain by a major Toltec-style center. Loma China was established in a kind of hinterland, away from any significant pre-existing site.

Loma China and Tazumal fortuitously lie near the eastern and western limits, respectively, of the ethnohistoric distribution

of the Salvadoran Pipil. Looted materials indicate that other Loma China Phase sites await discovery at various localities within this area. As if to connect the Loma China Phase with the ethnohistoric Pipil, sites of the intervening Guazapa Phase (identified as immediately antecedent to these Pipil) share a very similar distribution. In short, according to the direct historical approach, the roots of the ethnohistoric Pipil may legitimately be projected from the Protohistoric "Cuscatlán" Phase, through the Guazapa Phase, and back to the Loma China Phase.

How can we characterize the introduction of the Loma China Phase, and the subsequent changes leading to the Pipil encountered by the Spanish? The Loma China Phase represents the entrance to this region of a significant Mexican population derived, at least ultmately, from a region of central Mexico were Toltec traditions prevailed. The local assemblage at Tazumal is completely replaced by one of Mexican style on many levels. A new Mexican style monumental center is created, creating a visual disjunction with the adjacent "native" structures. Not only were the architectual forms derived from Mexican prototypes, but also the methods of construction. The suggested association of Chacmool and jaguar throne sculptures with a circular temple probably dedicated to Ehecatl (Quetzalcoatl) represents a pattern also found at Toltec Chichén Itzá and echoed at Tula. Taken as a whole, no comparable Toltec style overlay has been found at any other site in southern Mesoamerica. The case of Nohmul is reminiscent only to a limited degree (Chase and Chase 1982), while at Chichén Itzá Toltec and Maya styles intedigitated and "hybridized" to some degree (Tozzer 1957). The Loma China site, again in contrast with Tazumal, can be viewed as a outpost set up by the Mexican immigrants, poorer in architecture, but quite wealthy in commerical ceramics and exotic artifacts. It is tempting to speculate that the primary concern of its occupants was in fact the acquistion of ceramics and perhaps other local products. Loma China may have an entrepôt.

The Loma China Phase settlements appear to have formed part of an active two-way network of exchange that linked them to Tula. Both stylistic evidence and exotic materials support this conjecture. Significant quantities of Pachuca obsidian, the major source exploited by the Toltecs, have been found at the Salvadoran Loma China Phase sites. Needless to say, with several

other obsidian sources within much easier reach, the role of Pachuca obsidian most likely would have been symbolic rather than technological, its striking green color being a visual expression of distant relationships. Loma China's four mosaics portraying Toltec warriors with feathered serpents are, both in materials and style, foreign to El Salvador. They would be considered exceptional finds in any Mesoamerican site, and must have been manufactured in some major center of Toltec tradition. Their value in El Salvador too would have been symbolic, possibly emblemic of a Toltec heritage. In Tula, on the other hand, large quantities of sherds from Central American ceramic vessels have been found, especially Tohil Plumbate and Nicoya Polychrome. Complete vessels of both groups have even been found together in caches. Although the provenience of Tohil Plumbate remains, in my opinion, unresolved, the particular variety of Nicoya Polychrome found at Tula represents a group so far reported only from El Salvador, and probably indigenous to it.

Some evidence, admittedly weak, has been offered that the Loma China Phase may have briefly overlapped in time with several local, "native" phases. To that internal (i.e., within El Salvador) evidence may be added the presence of locally produced, non-Toltec trade items, especially Tohil Plumbate and Nicoya Polychrome, at both Loma China Phase sites and Tula. At a minimum, their existence suggests an overlap with active "native" societies.

In the ensuing Guazapa Phase it appears that a greater diversity of Mexican style artifacts are introduced, but at the same time other elements diagnostic of the Loma China Phase disappear (c.f. Fowler 1981). Most significantly, in the Guazapa Phase there is no green obsidian, no mosaics, very little (if indeed any) Tohil Plumbate and Nicoya Polychrome, and no chacmools, jaguar thrones, or other Toltec style sculpture. In short, the evidence suggests a break in the linkage with central Mexico during the Guazapa Phase. Guazapa Phase sites are numerous and definitely signal the full replacement of "native" cultures, and probably societies, by the Pipil (c.f. Fowler 1981). Perhaps Loma China Phase sites were abandoned at this time, but the sample of these is exceedingly small and future archaeological could easily change this.

The same distribution can also be noted for the Protohistoric "Cuscatlán" Phase sites, and at least a few of these were probably occupied continously from the Guazapa Phase to the Conquest. Against the backdrop of continuity, here we may note that some Mexican elements present in the Guazapa Phase are dropped, and there is less emphasis on monumental architecture.

In brief, the Mexican intrusion may be summarized as:

1. Establishment of Toltec-related centers, probably with overlap, then replacement of "native" phases.

2. Severing of Toltec ties. Mexican style (Pipil) centers multiply and totally replace local phases.

3. Entering into the Protohistoric period, the Pipil drop some previous traits, but remain essentially Mexican.

Modeling the Mexican Intrusion to El Salvador

Modeling social and economic interaction between prehistoric groups is currently a major concern in archaeology, and is now very common in Mesoamerican studies. This section examines the application of interaction models to the problem of Mexican intrusion in El Salvador.

From the very onset most interaction models may be rejected as inappropriate for the problem at hand. The Salvadoran case involves the replacement of diverse local cultural phases by a single non-local phase. Models that describe gradual change through diffusion and most forms of trade (reciprocity, down the line, central place redistribution or market exchange) have no descriptive power for the rapid and complete replacement, rather than transformation, of native culture evidenced at Tazumal and Loma China.

What is needed is a model that addresses the points outlined above. The two postulated stages must be explained, where at

first "Toltec" centers are established, overlapping with local phases and with active links to Mexico, and second where a general Mexican phase completely replaces the native phase, but now without several "Toltec" elements or direct interaction with Mexico.

Once this is realized the applicable models become very few in number. One of these involves the concept of colonial enclaves (Renfrew 1975:42-43). This describes a situation where one group "sends [its] emissaries...to establish a colonial enclave...to exchange goods with [another group]". This mode of trade, Renfrew feels, may "transport goods over very great distances", and suggest these may be directed by imperial capitals. A colonial enclave also creates a situation where a great flow of information is to be expected between the native population and the colonists, with some preference in directionality, presumably because the colonial culture is as being more prestigious.

Renfrew argues that no assumptions should be made regardings what was being transported, or how much. The values placed on objects and their quantities are, of course, culturally determined.

In applying this to the Salvadoran problem, Tazumal would be seen as a principal colonial enclave. Its location in the heart of a major native center suggests cohersion, but if true, its nature could range from military-backed usurpation to colusion with local chiefs. It seems to me, however, that usurpation is the only action that could account for the complete replacement of Tazumal's previous assemblage, the presence of weapons, and suggestations of what I hesitatingly refer to as "Toltec warrior cults"; Chacmools, representating Mexican warriors arrayed before temples as servants to dieties. The usurpation of Tazumal seems validated on all levels - from mundanely domestic to the ideological. The other site under consideration, Loma China, would then be seen as a very inferior satellite of the colonial enclave of Tazumal, or perhaps some other unknown enclave situated more towards central El Salvador. Its location away from any principal native center could be seen as an effort to maintain a degree of neutrality by avoiding conflicts or alignments with native groups. It could be an example of what may be a fairly common type of small center dedicated largely to

trade. Just what was being extracted from El Salvador for this short-lived foreign trade definately included the Tohil Plumbate and Nicoya Polychrome vessels. Probably cacao was also of great interest. Cacao may have been flourishing as early as AD 650 in western El Salvador, and by the Conquest, under Pipil management, this had become the densest and most productive region of cacao production in all Mesoamerica (Amaroli 1978), perhaps because Salvadoran cacao was highly esteemed for its flavor during the early colonial period (MacLeod 1973). Whether it was through free exchange or coercion, the new occupants of Tazumal had this resource at their disposal. Another economic attraction would have been the people themselves. Some of the replacement of natives by Mexicans could be facilitated by a lucrative trade in local slaves.

As Renfrew suggests, a colonial enclave does not function in a vacuum. What is the possible wider context of the Mexican settlements in El Salvador? Its central Mexican source is rather unambigous, and all indications point to Tula. The hoary question of the limits of Tula's hegemony and influence have been addressed extensively by Davies (1977), Diehl (1983), Lincoln (1986), and many others. The recent tendency has been to place Toltec influence on a short leash. The Terminal Classic/Early Postclassic events at Chichén Itzá, once widely accepted at face value as involving Toltec conquest and rule of a Maya center (see Weaver 1981), are now seen by many as more local in nature, and related to central Mexico in vague and indirect ways. I am not certain of why this reversal has been so widely accepted. Those who have attempted to challange a more active Toltec role in Chichén history must dispute Tozzer's exhaustive study of Toltec and Maya in that city (1957). Lincoln (1986) has tried this and the prevailing opinion is that he failed (Stephen Houston 1988:personal communication).

The Loma China Phase is interpreted as representing a direct migration from Toltec central Mexico southward to the very edges of Mesoamerica. For a period of time, the immigrant Mexicans were able to maintain active links with their former homeland. This raises a number of questions. Future studies will have to explain the mechanism which enabled the establishment of a Toltec enclave in Central America. But also we are confronted with a more fundamental issue: the nature of the Toltec state itself. The investigation of Tula's relationship with Toltec

enclaves in El Salvador and elsewhere will help generate new, less constrained, perspectives on the politics and economy of Early Postclassic Mesoamerica.

With the demise of the Toltecs, links between the Salvadoran enclaves and central Mexico were severed. Public statements of Toltec heritage (as in Tazumal's monumental center) were discontinued, while other aspects of Mexican material culture were expanded. Whether it was through a brief episode of additional immigration, or through a slower process of replication, with displacement or absorption of native peoples, by AD 1200 a completely Mexican pattern had replaced the native cultures in central and western El Salvador. This situation continued with few modifications to the Spanish Conquest.

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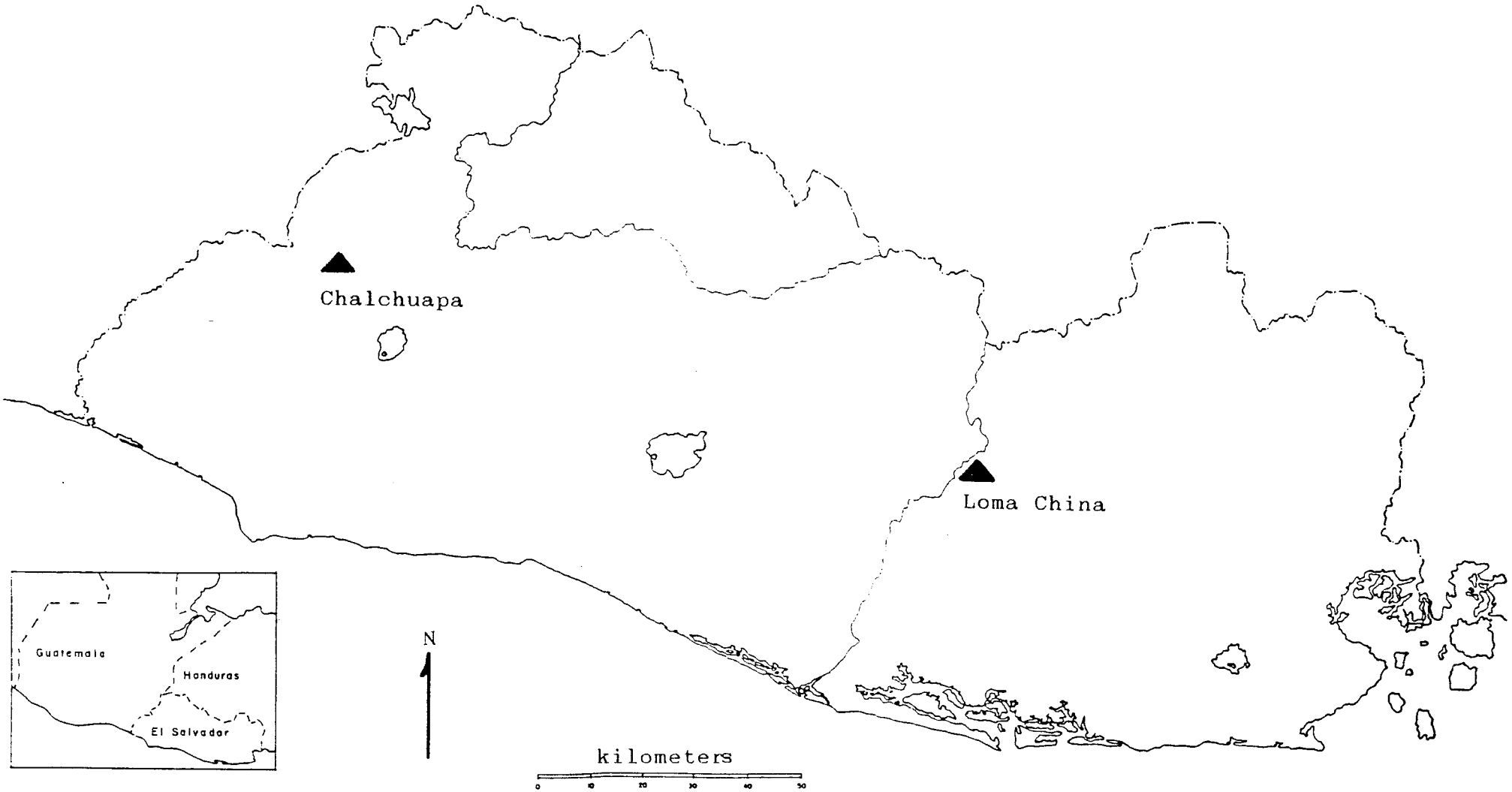
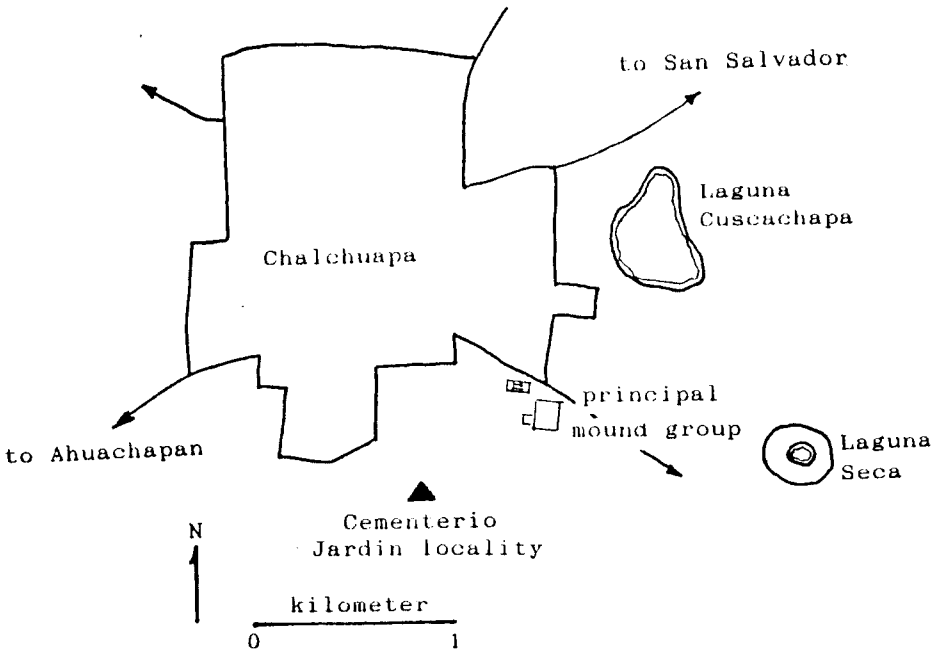
Figure 1. General location of Chalchuapa and Loma China





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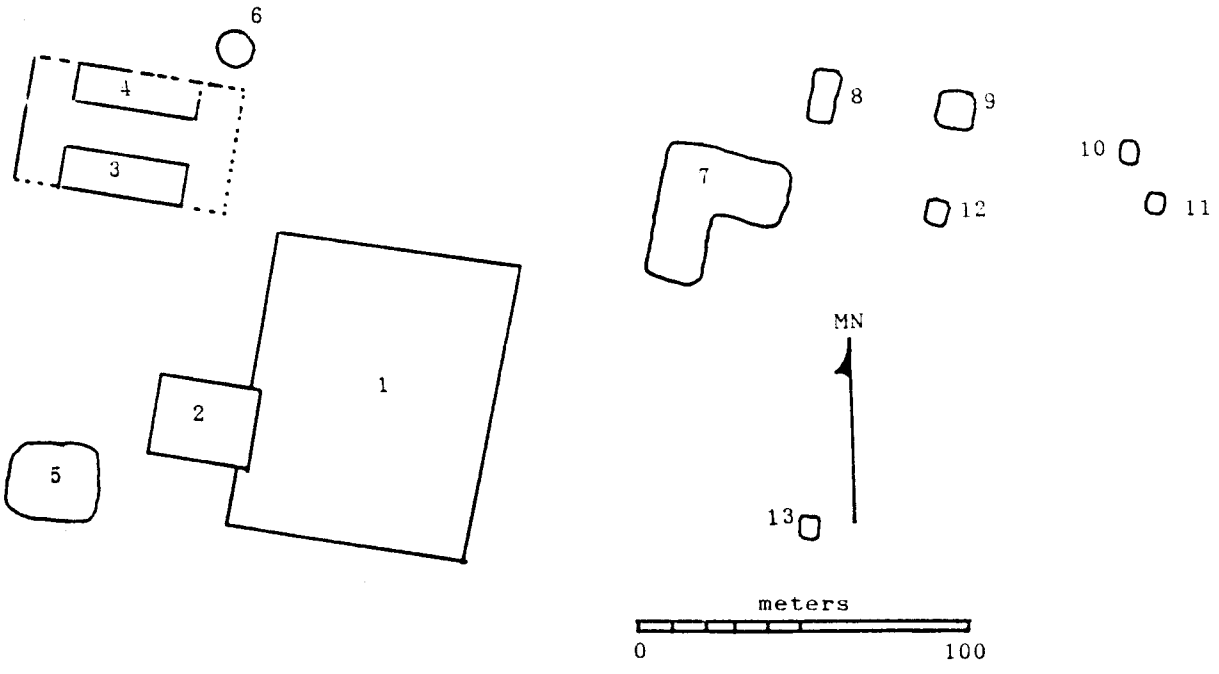


B

Figure 2. The Tazumal site in Chalchuapa.
A: General location
B: Sketch of principal mounds [after Boggs 1944a, Fig.7]

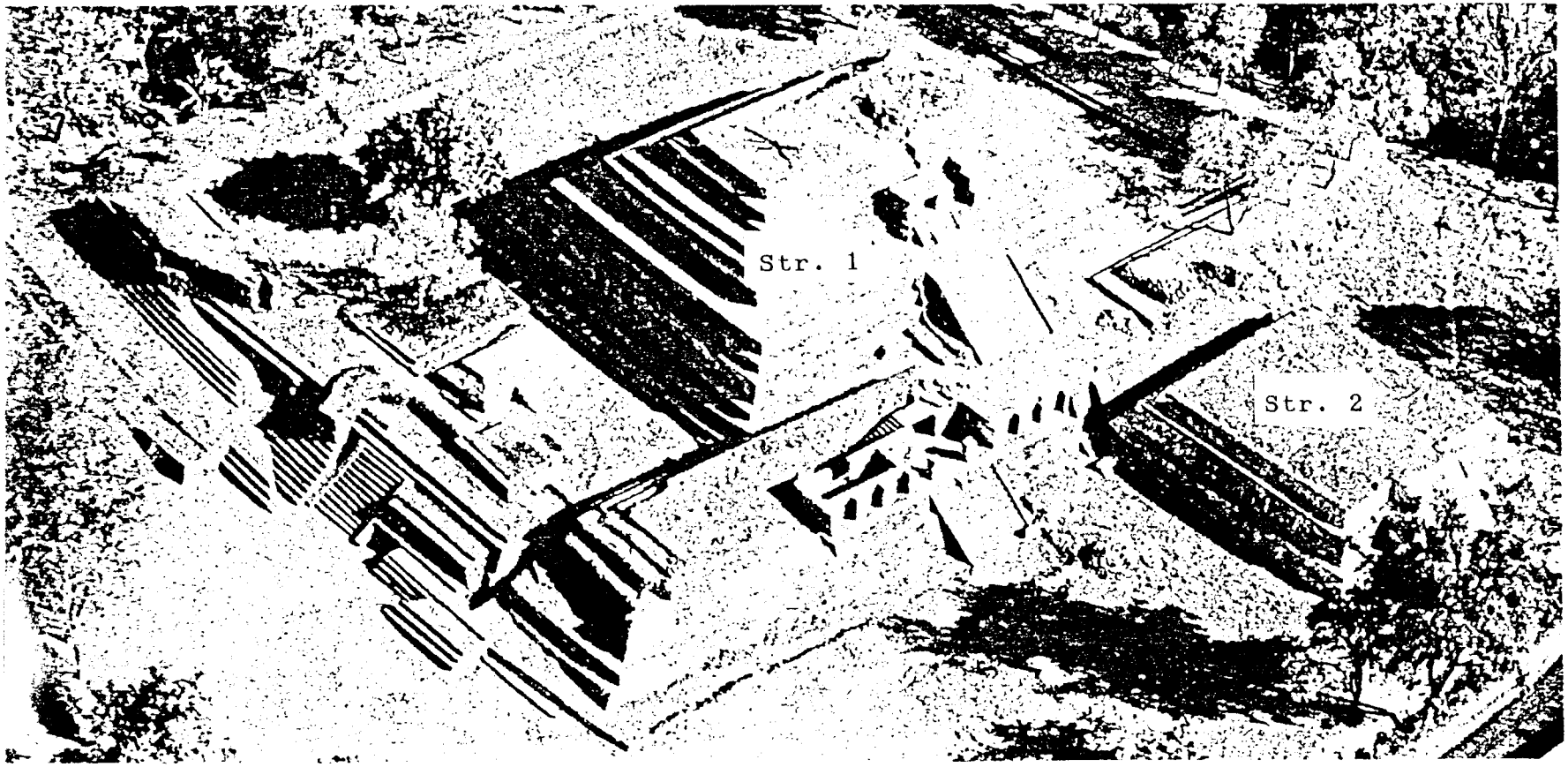
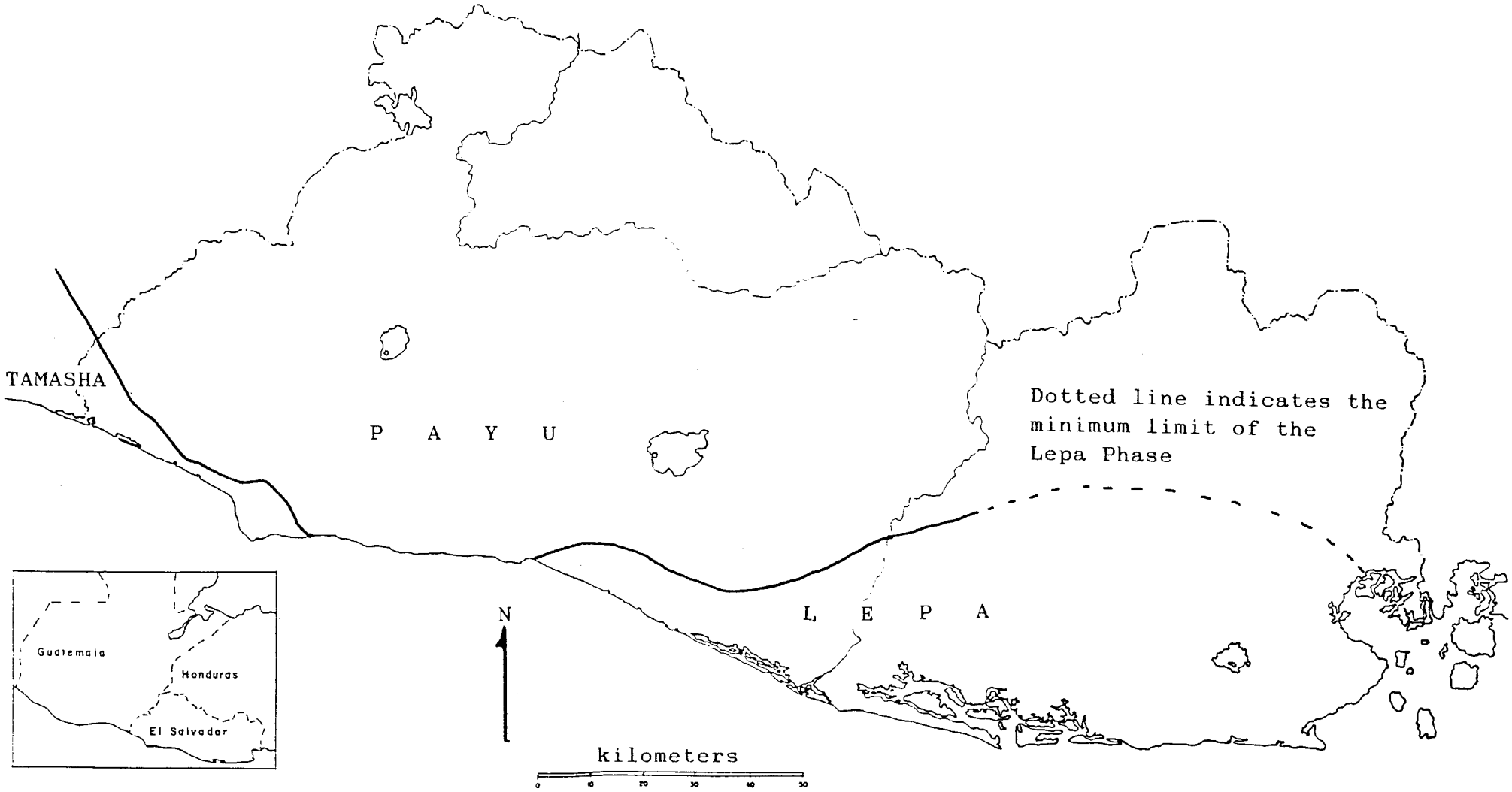
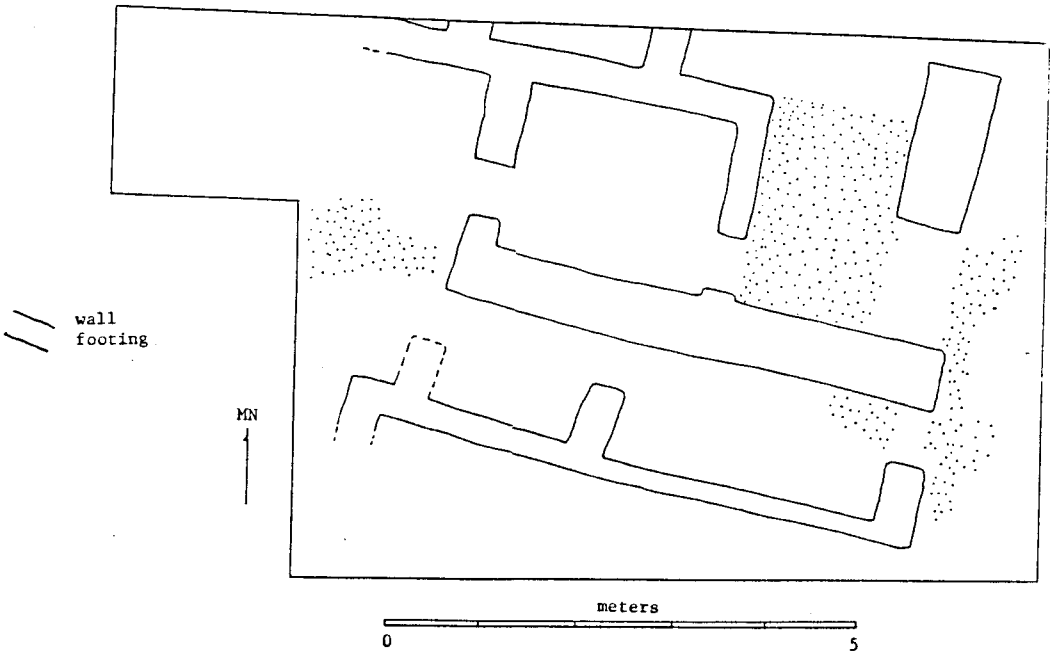


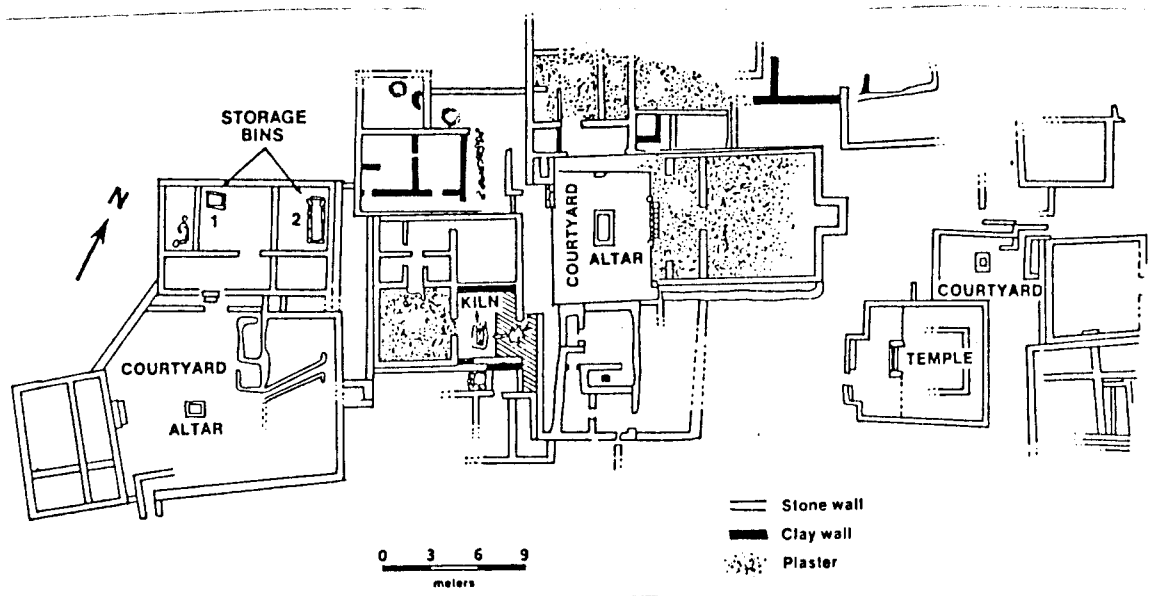
Figure 3. Tazumal site: Structures 1 and 2 (view to the southeast)
[after Sharer 1978, vol.1, Fig.61a)

Figure 4. Distribution of Late Classic phases in El Salvador





A



B

Figure 5. A: Tazumal site. Simplified sketch of the structure excavated at the Cementerio Jardin locality. The stipled areas indicate floors prepared with scoria gravel. The doorways are slightly conjectural.

B: Residential structure at Tula, shown for comparative purposes (after Weaver 1981:Fig.31).

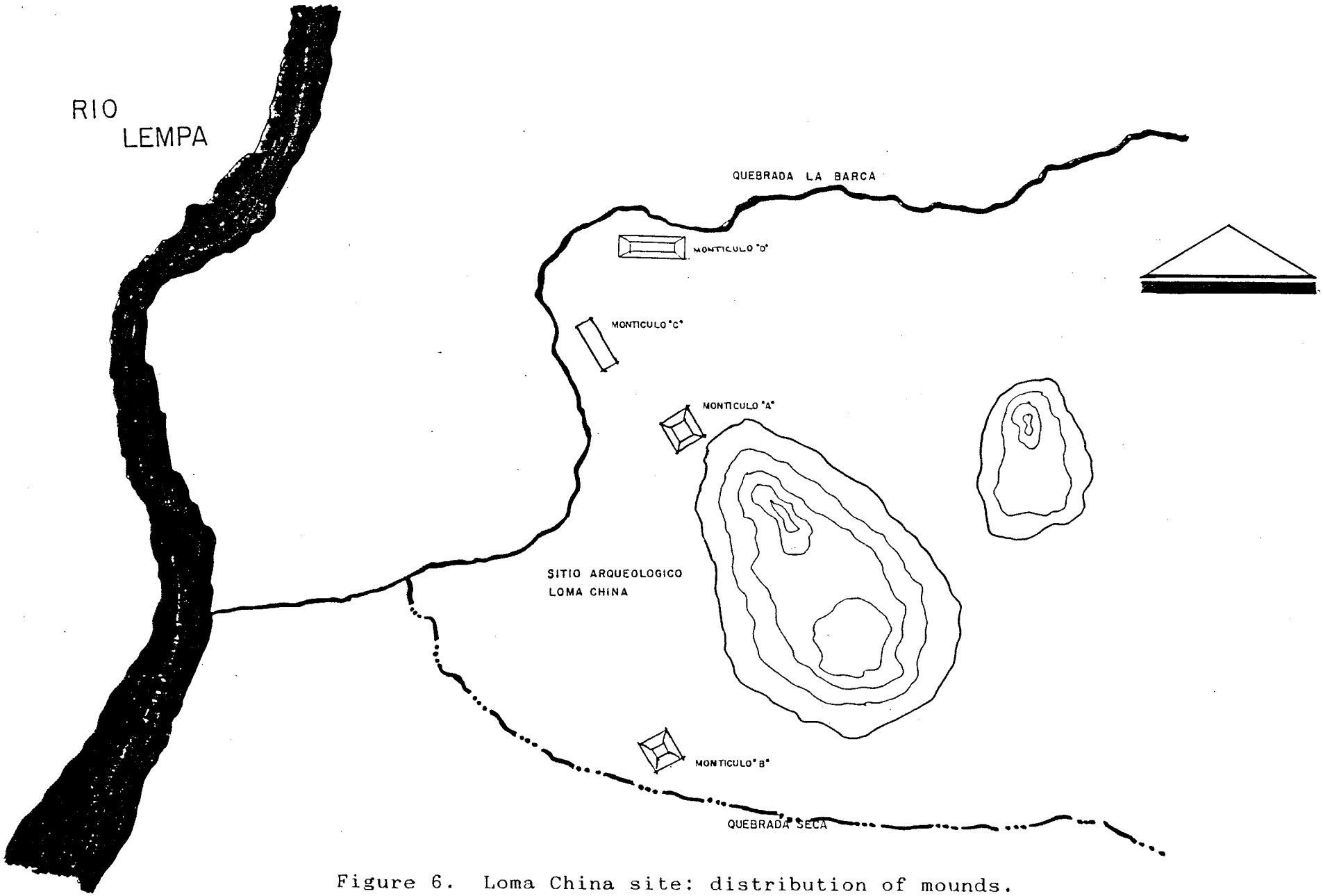


Figure 6. Loma China site: distribution of mounds.
[after sketch map by Manuel Méndez, 1983]

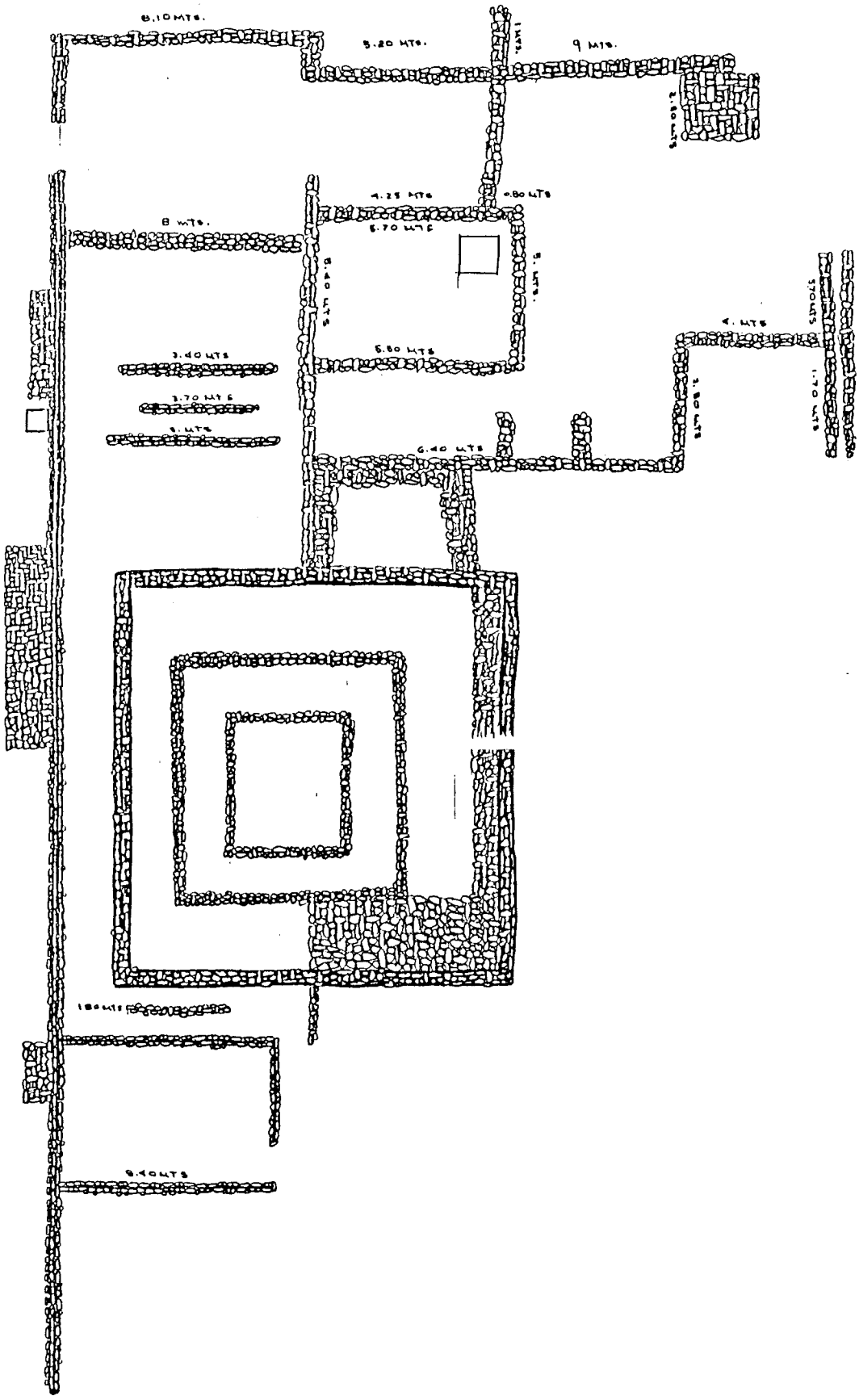


Figure 7. Loma China site: Structure A
[after sketch map by Manuel Méndez, 1983]

Figure 8. Mosaic plaque from Loma China Str. B.
The best-preserved of four identical plaques, each with a diameter of eight centimeters.