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Excavations of Nakum Structure 15: Discovery of Royal Burials and Accompanying Offerings

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Introduction

Two royal burials along with many attendant offerings were recently found in a pyramid located in the Acropolis complex at the Maya site of Nakum. These discoveries were made during research conducted under the aegis of the Nakum Archaeological Project, which has been excavating the site since 2006. Artefacts discovered in the burials and the pyramid significantly enrich our understanding of the history of Nakum and throw new light on its relationship with neighboring sites.

Nakum is one of the most important Maya sites located in the northeastern Peten, Guatemala, in the area of the Triangulo Park (a "cultural triangle" comprised of Yaxha, Naranjo, and Nakum) (Figure 1). It was discovered at the beginning of the twentieth century by the French count Maurice de Périgny (1908, 1911). Later the site was visited and cursorily investigated by Alfred Tozzer and Raymond Merwin from the Peabody Museum of Harvard University (Tozzer 1913), followed by Sylvanus Morley (1937-1938). The ruins were forgotten in the ensuing decades until they were twice visited by Nicholas Hellmuth in the 1970s (Hellmuth 1975, 1978:93-95, 1992). But it was only in 1994 that Nakum was subjected to intensive investigation by

the Triangulo Project of the Guatemalan Institute of Anthropology and History (IDAEH). As a result of this research, the epicenter and periphery of the site have been studied in detail and many structures excavated and subsequently restored (Calderón et al. 2008; Hermes et al. 2005; Hermes and Żrałka 2008). In 2006, thanks to permission granted from IDAEH, a new archaeological project was started at Nakum (The Nakum Archaeological Project) directed by Wiesław Koszkul and Jarosław Żrałka from the Jagiellonian University, Cracow, Poland. Recently our excavations have focused on investigating two untouched pyramids located in the Southern Sector of the site, in the area of the so-called Acropolis. The Acropolis is the largest and most impressive complex of the site, consisting of a platform surmounted by more than thirty structures, mainly palace residences, that surround twelve patios or courtyards (Tobar and González 2007) (Figure 2). The largest of them is Patio 1. During prior research by the Triangulo Project, the buildings enclosing Patio 1 from the north, south, and west were intensively excavated and subsequently restored. Only two low mounds (Structures 14 and 15) located on the eastern side of Patio 1 were left intact due to their poor state of preservation. Our research has shown that one of the

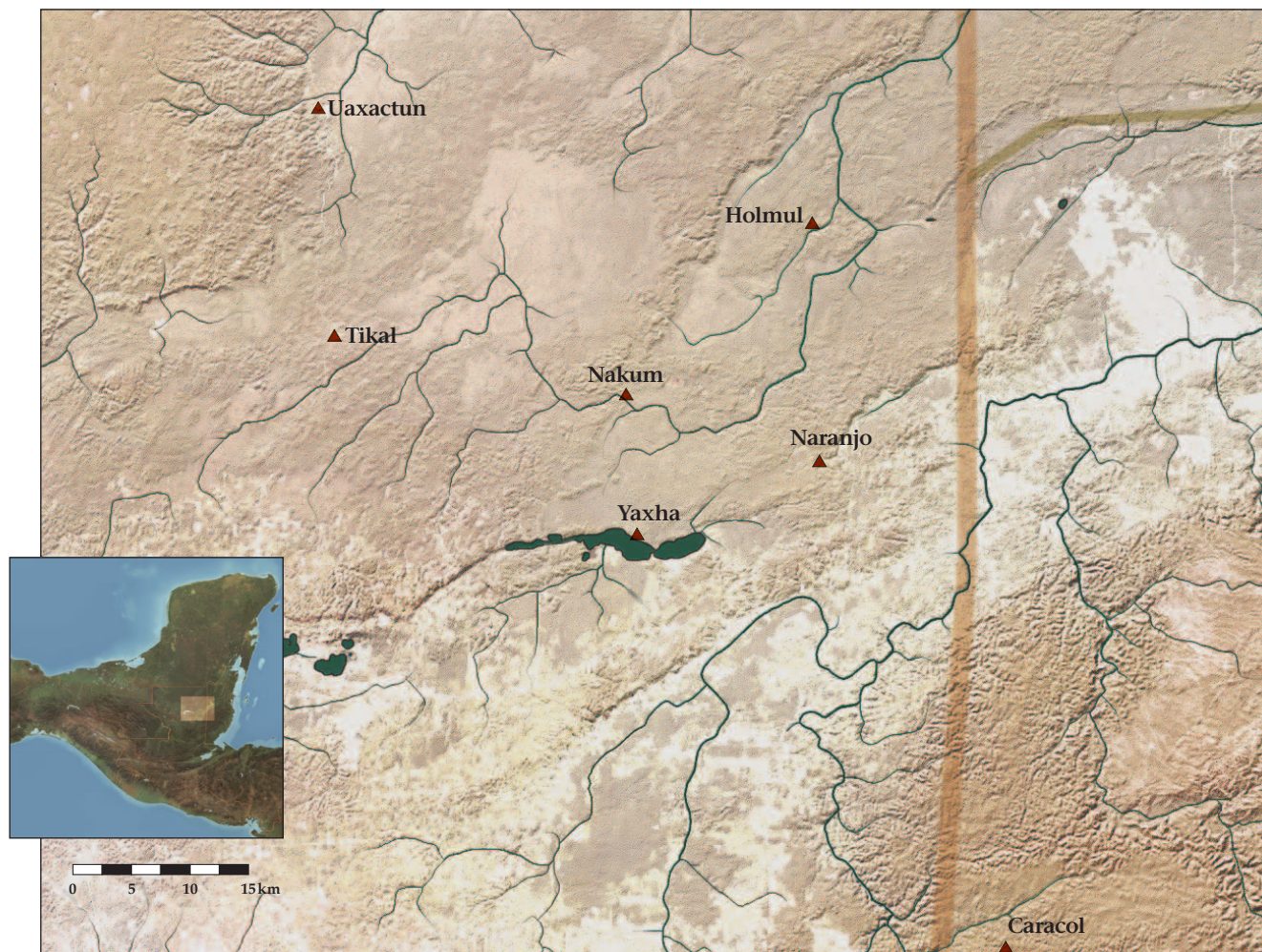


Figure 1. Nakum in its regional context (map courtesy of Precolumbia Mesoweb Press).

excavated pyramids (Structure 15) held two important burials, among them a very rich tomb (Burial 1) which in all probability belonged to one of the local kings. Below we present results of our investigation of Structure 15 and the discoveries we made.

Structure 15 and the Discovery of Burial 1

The main aim of excavating Structure 15 was to study its architectural development through time as well as test the hypothesis that it might be part of a so-called “eastern shrine complex,” an architectural pattern also known as “Plaza Plan 2” (Becker 1971). Excavations in sites such as Tikal, Caracol, and a number of others have shown a distinct and characteristic pattern of setting the burials of founders and other important family members, along with abundant associated offerings, in shrines or temples situated on the eastern side of plazas (Becker 1971, 1999, 2003; Chase and Chase 1994, 1998; Jones 1999). The east was extremely auspicious in Maya belief, as the direction from which the sun is born every day after a nightly journey through the Underworld.

Thus the easterly direction was symbolically linked to concepts of rebirth and resurrection. The discovery in eastern shrines of tombs and caches associated with the symbolism of the underworld at Caracol and elsewhere shows that these buildings were connected to the veneration of ancestors, as well as the Maya belief in the afterlife and rebirth (Chase and Chase 1994:54-56). It seems that the importance of the eastern direction in Mesoamerican belief systems and its association with ancestors and rulership may have very deep roots going back to Olmec times. One of the first eastern shrines constructed to venerate and honor a deceased king has been identified at San Lorenzo (see Cyphers et al. 2006:27).

The excavation of Structure 15, which is situated on the eastern side of Patio 1, resulted in the discovery of a large royal tomb (designated as Burial 1) in a test pit opened on the summit of this structure (Figure 3). Large capstones were found 1.75 m below the summit of the pyramid. Beneath these lay a large tomb chamber. In the course of the investigation we found evidence of looting in Structure 15, and two illicit trenches dug on

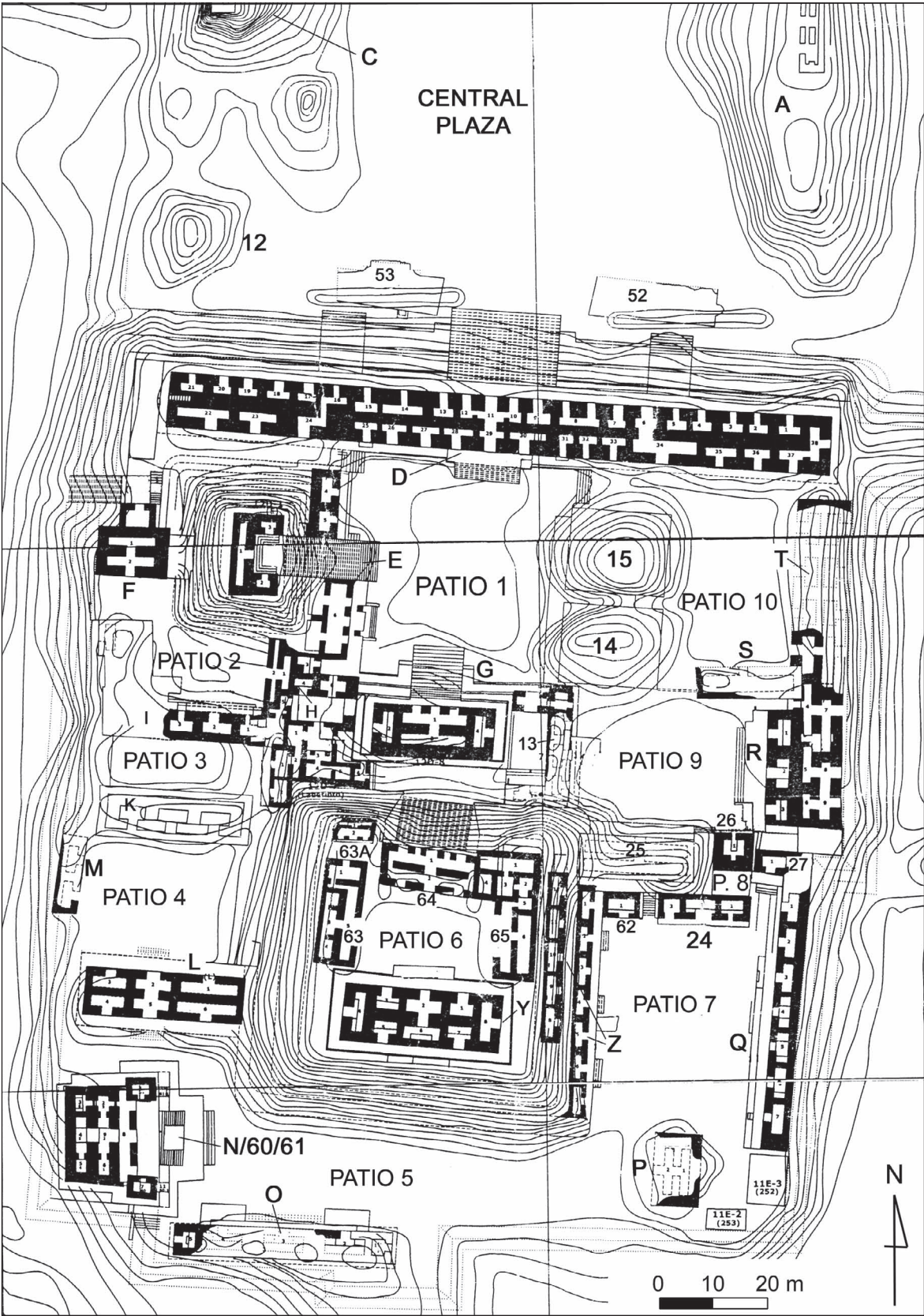


Figure 2. Southern Sector of Nakum with the Acropolis complex and Structure 15 where Burials 1 and 2 have been excavated (map by Proyecto Triángulo, IDAEH).

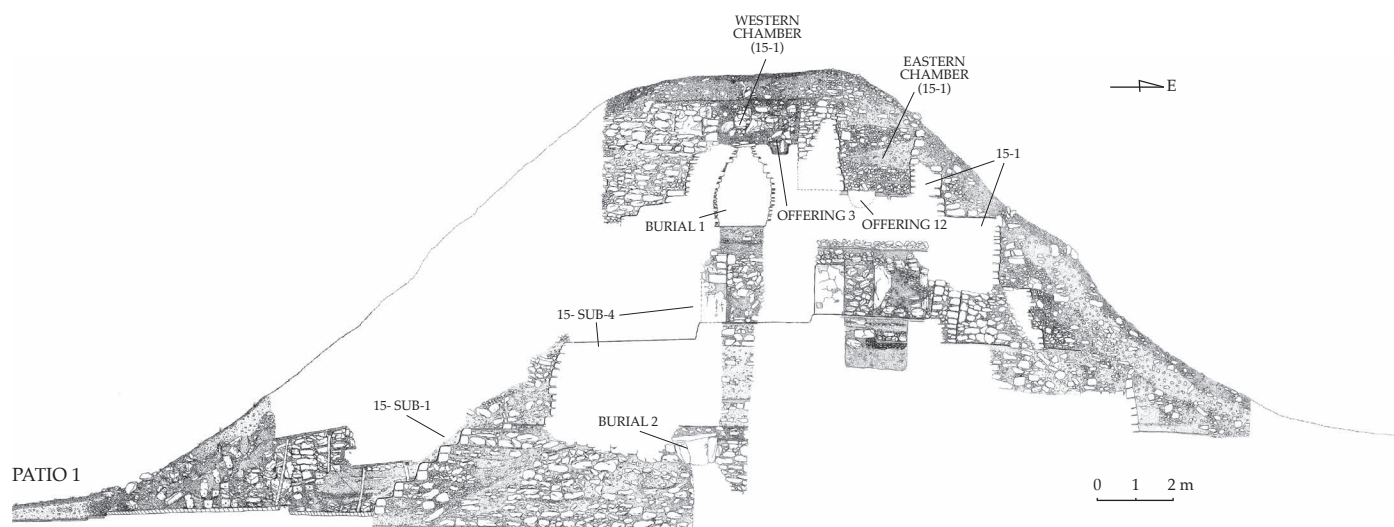


Figure 3. Cross-section of Structure 15 showing major architectural stages and location of Burials 1 and 2 and associated offerings (Offerings 3 and 12 are indicated). Drawing by Wiesław Koszkuł, Bogumił Pilarski, and Katarzyna Radnicka.

its eastern facade were documented. Fortunately the looters failed to find the tomb, though they managed to severely damage the building.

The tomb chamber of Burial 1 has a north–south orientation and is 4.5 m long, 1.5 m wide, and 2.2 m high. In the northern end of the tomb were discovered the remains of a skeleton laid in a supine position (Figure 4). It had been heavily damaged by small animals, probably rats that entered the tomb and ate various bones while scattering others around the chamber. An analysis of what remained by our physical anthropologist Varinia Matute showed that the individual from Burial 1 might have been between 35 and 45 years of age at the time of death, but it was not possible to establish the sex of the body (Matute 2006).

The individual buried in the tomb was furnished with many offerings, including three ceramic vessels, four jade earspools, a jade pectoral, and almost 500 jade and shell beads of different shapes from a main necklace (Concentration 1; see “C.1” in Figure 4) and perhaps a dozen other necklaces and chains (Concentrations 2 and 3; “C.2” and “C.3”). Moreover, four spindle whorls were found together with dozens of very small shells. During excavations the tomb was divided into 215 sectors for artefacts and 20 sectors for bones in order to achieve accurate documentation of the fine beads and pieces of bones. These lay in a thin layer formed by dirt and small fragments of plaster which fell out of the walls and the vault of the burial chamber.

Ceramic vessels were discovered in the southern part of the tomb (Figure 5). Among them there were two large bowls of Chaquiste Impressed type (Vessel no. 3; “V3” in Figure 4) and Azucar Impressed type (Vessel no. 1; “V1”). The third vessel (No. 2) can be ascribed to the Saxche Orange Polychrome type, and its importance lies

in the fact that it represents the so-called Tikal Dancer style (see Reents-Budet 1994:197–198) (Figure 6). It is a tripod plate with a basal flange; its diameter is 38.2 cm. The vessel’s flange was cut into a step-fret motif and covered with blue pigment. The background of the interior of the plate was painted in orange and red with several circular black bands. In the center of the vessel a dancing maize god was painted. The importance of this find lies in the fact that only a few completely preserved vessels of this type have been discovered in such good archaeological context; most of these plates (numbering ca. 30 completely preserved pieces) come from private or public collections and their provenance is unknown (Boot 2003;Looper 2008;Looper et al. 2009:122–131). All known examples with an archaeological context were found in tombs at Tikal and Uaxactun, as well as in the Dolores region of southeastern Peten (Culbert 1993:Figs. 43a, 48c, 51a, 78a1; Mayer 2010; Smith 1955:2:Fig. 73a1). Although the provenance of the majority of the Tikal Dancer Plates is not known, both archaeological data and chemical analysis indicate that this ceramic type was typical for the greater Tikal region (Looper 2008; Reents-Budet 1994:197–198; Reents-Budet and Bishop 2003; Reents-Budet et al. 2008).

The richest offerings were deposited in the northern part of the tomb, on the deceased person’s chest and head. Almost all of the 179 jade artefacts documented in the tomb were found here. Among them there were a jade pectoral, several earspools, and other jewels forming rich earrings (Figure 7). The pectoral merits special attention as it is a very rare artefact. It is a clamshell object 10.6 cm long and 4.9 cm wide with two suspension holes starting on the convex side and going up through the top rather than out through the front. Its position indicates that it was part of a necklace formed by circular

and tubular jade beads and was laid on the dead person's chest in a horizontal position (Figure 8).

The concave side of the pectoral is incised with an anthropomorphic figure wearing an elaborate headdress, a theme typically employed in early Maya art to depict an ancestor (possibly an ancestor of the deceased) (Figure 9). The horizontal position on the chest may imply that the ancestor is gazing down upon the wearer, protecting him symbolically. Ancestors in Maya art were usually represented in this way, truncated either to only a head or a head with a bent arm, and floating in smoke and flame scrolls (Houston et al. 2006:50; Houston and Inomata 2009:212-213).

The other (convex) side of the Nakum pectoral has a short hieroglyphic text. The character of the incision differs here, suggesting that the text and figural image were made by different artists. The text names the jade pectoral itself and mentions the royal title *ajaw* and the name of a previously unknown king, Ixiim Chan, to whom it belonged. Moreover, the name of the city governed by the ruler appears in the text. According to David Stuart (personal communication 2006), the glyph in the second position might be read as **YAX-a** (Yaxha), the name of another Maya site located ca. 11 km south of Nakum at Lake Yaxha. The whole inscription can be interpreted as: "This is the pectoral of the Yaxha ruler Ixiim Chan." The appearance of what could be a very early version of the Yaxha emblem glyph in the inscription is especially interesting since it may cast a new light on the political relationship between the two sites.

Ceramically the tomb can be dated to the seventh century or the turn of the seventh and eighth. The basal flange of Vessel 2 cut into a step motif is especially characteristic for the Tepeu 1-2 transition. These dates are consistent with radiocarbon dating. A piece of carbon sampled from the plate with the representation of the Tikal Dancer (containing the burnt skeleton of a bird) was dated to 1300 ± 35 BP (2σ cal. AD 650-780). However, the jade pectoral is several centuries earlier than the tomb and can be stylistically ascribed to the period between the third and fifth centuries AD. In all probability it was kept by the royal family as an important heirloom and finally deposited with the king upon his burial. This practice has been documented in several other Maya sites where items from earlier times were placed with deceased kings. Nevertheless, the history of the Nakum piece seems to go further back in time. The shape of this artefact makes it analogous to several Olmec spoons or clamshell pendants some of which were excavated at La Venta (see Andrews 1986:Figs. 3, 7, 9c, 1987:Fig. 1b-23, 25, 26, 29, 32; Benson and de la Fuente 1996:Cat. no. 98; Drucker 1952:23, Pl. 53, left; Guthrie 1995:Cat. nos. 70, 75). Thus it seems that the Nakum pectoral is an Olmec piece that was subsequently reused by the Maya. In this case it would have experienced at least three episodes: manufactured by the Olmecs possibly in the Middle Preclassic, it was brought at an unknown time to the Maya Lowlands where incisions were made on both sides during the Early Classic period; finally it was placed in the tomb with the person interred in Structure 15 in the Late Classic (Żrałka, Koszkuł, Martin, and Hermes 2011). The Nakum pectoral is not exceptional in this regard since we know of several other examples of Olmec objects reused by the Maya. Sometimes such artefacts were additionally covered with inscriptions and/or

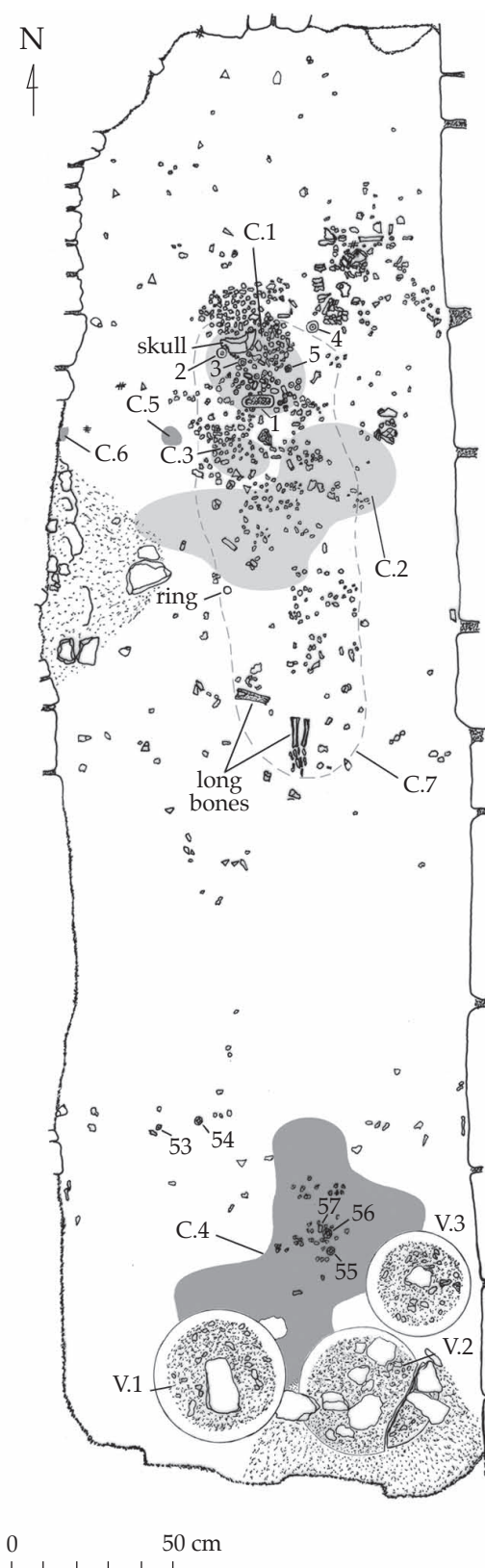


Figure 4. Plan of Burial 1: (1) pectoral; (2-5) earspools; (54-57) spindle whorls; (V.1-V.3) Vessels 1, 2, and 3. Drawing by Wiesław Koszkuł and Jarosław Żrałka.

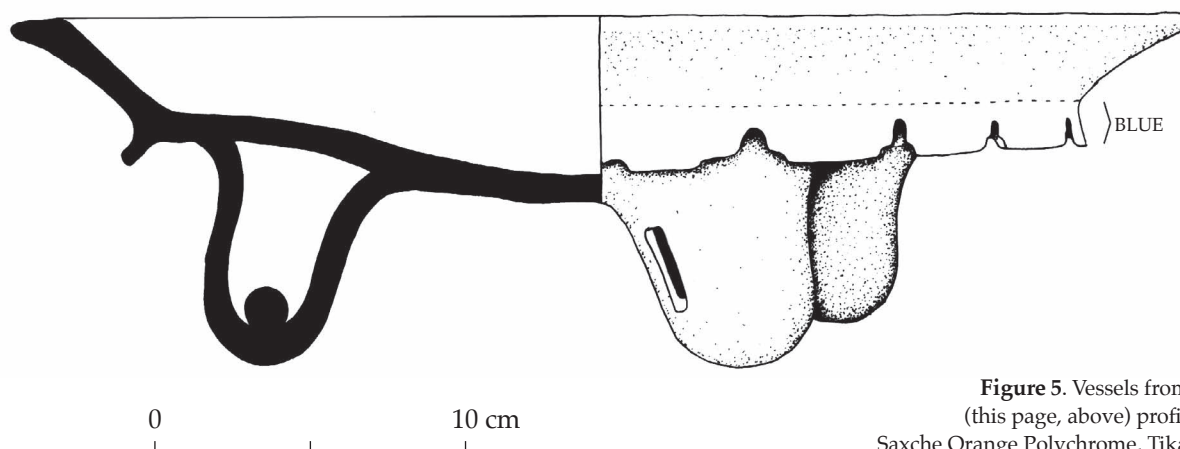
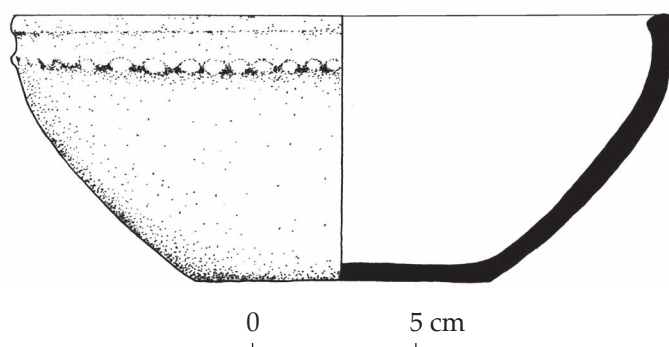


Figure 5. Vessels from Burial 1:
(this page, above) profile view of
Saxche Orange Polychrome, Tikal Dancer-
style plate; (this page, below) Azucar Impressed;
(facing page, above) Saxche Orange Polychrome, Tikal
Dancer-style plate; (facing page, below) Chaquiste Impressed
(photos by Robert Słaboński, the Nakum Archaeological
Project; drawings by Katarzyna Radnicka).



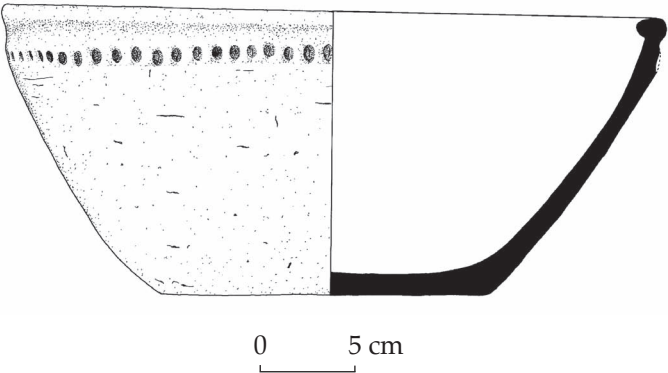




Figure 6. Vessel of Tikal Dancer style from Nakum Burial 1 (photo by Jarosław Żrałka).

images (see Fields and Reents-Budet 2005:182, 191-194; Rich et al. 2010; Schele and Miller 1986:119-120). These ancient heirlooms were supposed to legitimize the power of the lords who owned them.

As mentioned earlier, Burial 1 also contained four beautifully carved spindle whorls. This group of artefacts is particularly typical for female burials, especially at sites such as Tikal, Uaxactun, and Caracol (Chase et al. 1998; Koszkuł et al. 2009; Welsh 1988). On the

other hand, spindle whorls were also documented in Precolumbian male burials excavated in southeastern Peten, the Guatemalan Pacific Coast, and Highland sites (Chase et al. 2008; Cossich 2009). Moreover, weaving was connected to the male sex in Colonial and modern times in both the Maya highlands and in Central Mexico (Cossich 2009). Thus we must be very cautious when establishing the sex of the buried person based solely on spindle whorls, since all accessible archaeological data

indicate that although they predominate in female burials, they do appear quite frequently in male interments as well.

Offerings Deposited in Proximity to Burial 1

Recent investigations of the surroundings of the tomb show that it was built inside the chamber of a temple at the summit of a pyramid platform (designated as phase 15-1). The temple originally had two interconnected chambers, east and west, standing on a three- or four-terraced platform (see Figure 3). Most probably, after the death of a local ruler the Maya decided to use the existing temple as his resting place. Its western chamber was converted into the sepulcher of Burial 1, while in the eastern room two offerings were deposited below the floor (Offerings 11 and 12). Subsequently both rooms of the temple were filled with rubble and sealed. Later, directly above the tomb chamber another offering was



Figure 7. Reconstruction of jade earrings from Nakum Burial 1 (photo by Magdalena Rusek; reconstruction by Magdalena Rusek and Katarzyna Radnicka).

placed (no. 3). After all these depositions took place at the top of Structure 15 a shrine of perishable materials



Figure 8. Area of the upper part of the body of the individual interred in Burial 1. Jade pectoral, jade earspools, and other ornaments are shown in their original position.

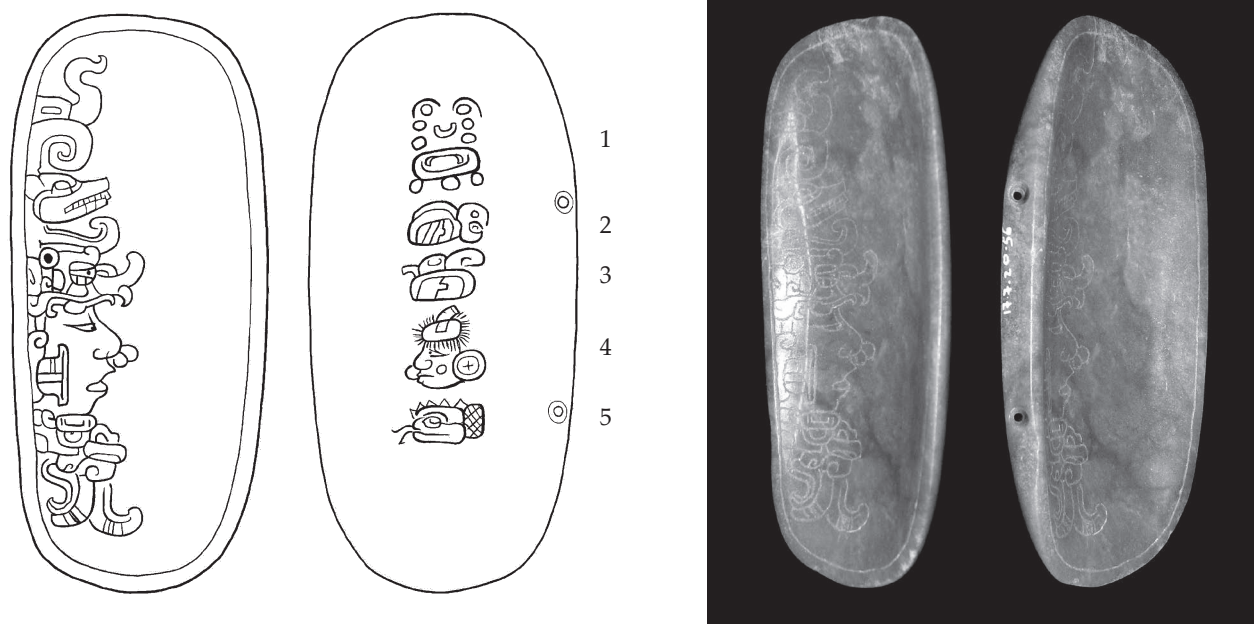


Figure 9. The pectoral found in Burial 1: (left) drawing of the concave and convex sides (drawing by Simon Martin); (right) photographs of the convex side.

was built.

The first offering (no. 11) from the eastern chamber is very interesting; it consists of 27 limestone bars placed in a small cavity cut into the floor (Figure 10a-b). Analogous artefacts have been found at other sites including Caracol, where according to Chase et al. (2008:133) they might have been used for weaving or as spacers for the production of nets. However, such an interpretation is still very problematic and further studies of these rare objects are needed. The second offering deposited in the eastern chamber (Offering 12) included two large plates that had a greenstone bead in their interior (one of the plates was in an upturned position and covered the other) (Figure 10c). Moreover, close to both the above-mentioned vessels nine flint knives and projectile points were found (Figure 11), some of them in a vertical position while others were placed below the vessels. At least four of these artefacts were stuccoed and painted blue (Figure 12). Two radiocarbon dates obtained from samples found in Offering 11 (1320 ± 30 BP, 2σ cal. AD 652-771, and 1265 ± 30 BP, 2σ cal. AD 666-860) confirm our stratigraphic observations which indicate that Offerings 11 and 12 were placed at the same time when Burial 1 was deposited.

Two more offerings were discovered above Burial 1. Almost directly above the tomb a cache was placed (Offering 3). It consisted of a cyst ca. 0.9 m long (N-S), 0.44 m wide (E-W), and 0.40/0.50 m high that contained two vessels (Figure 13). The first was a tripod plate of Saxche Orange Polychrome with a basal flange. It was ritually broken by a large stone that was found inside it in a vertical position during excavations. The other ves-

sel was a bowl of Tinaja Red type. In addition, the cache included a jade tube broken into two pieces. Its size (12 cm long) suggests that it might have been used as a pectoral worn on the chest. The ceramic types indicate that the offering can be dated to the Late Classic period. Finally, during the Terminal Classic period ca. 1.60 m above the tomb another offering was deposited (Cache/Offering 4). It was found 0.17 m below the surface of the pyramid's summit platform. It included a vessel of Cambio Unslipped type that contained 3 shell rings (on which representations of human faces were incised), as well as 6 shell beads and fragmented bones (Figure 14). The vessel was covered by a small sherd of the Tinaja Red type. Most probably Offering 4 was deposited during rituals venerating the deceased king that took place more than one hundred years after the funeral.

An Additional Offering from Structure E?

Opposite Structure 15 lies Structure E which was excavated by Bernard Hermes and Zoila Calderón during previous Triangulo Project research led by IDAEH. They showed that during the Late Classic period Structure E was a residential construction, most probably inhabited by the royal family. In the first part of the Late Classic (Tepeu 1 phase) it consisted of a main building situated on an elevated platform and two additional rooms located on a lower level (phase E Sub-5) (see Figure 15). It is plausible that the person in Burial 1 might have lived in this building and was subsequently interred in Structure 15 (phase 15-1), which lies on the other side of Patio 1 and on an axis with Structure E. Burial 1 and its ac-

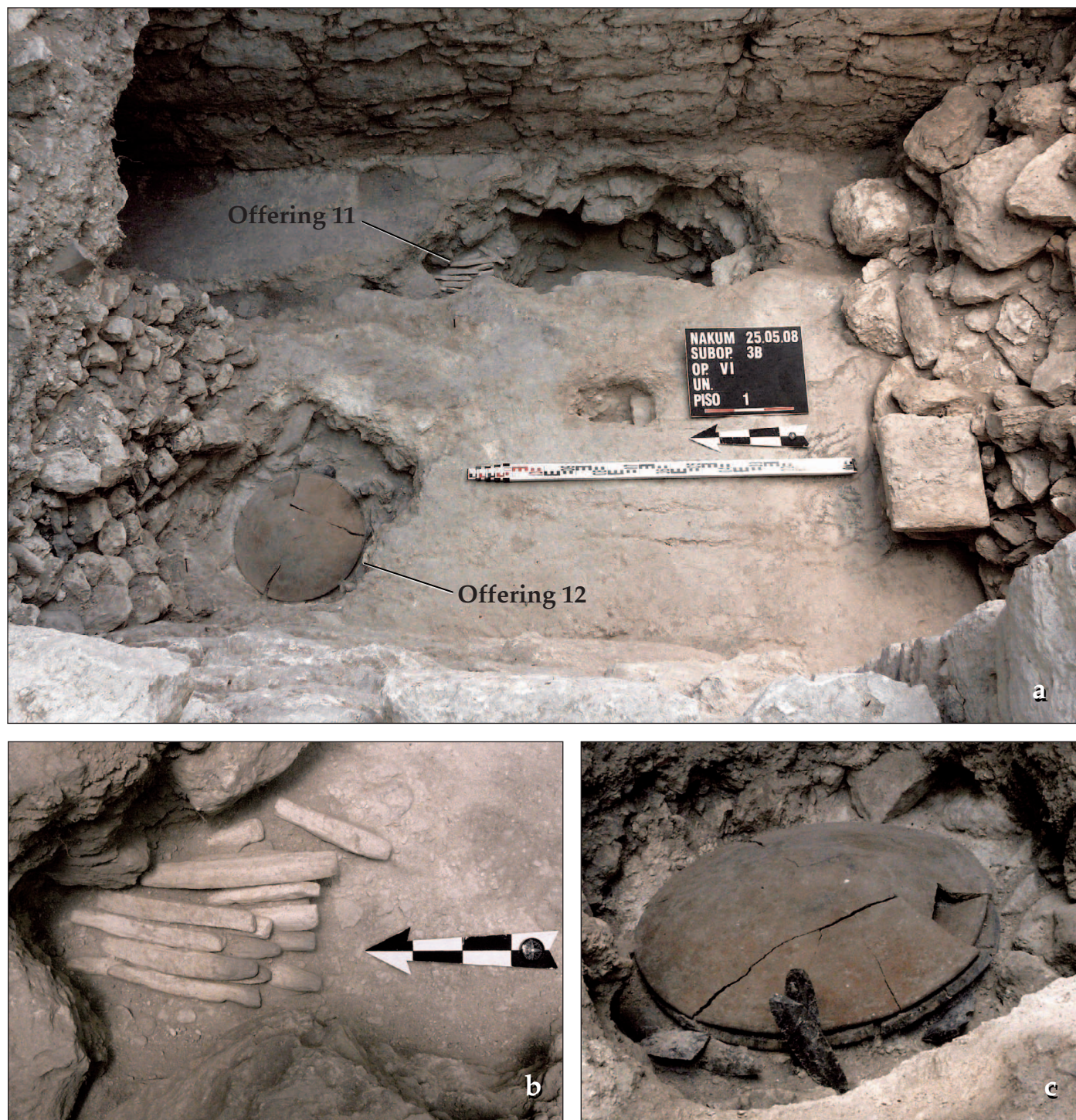


Figure 10. Eastern chamber of Structure 15-1 with location of Offerings 11 and 12 (a); view of stone bars from Offering 11 (b) and general view of Offering 12 (c).

companying offerings were placed in Structure 15, after which the two chambers of the structure were sealed, at the same time that an important remodeling of Structure E was taking place (related to the architectural stage of phase E Sub-5). In Structure E a cache was placed inside the bench of the main chamber and subsequently the

phase E Sub-5 building was covered by new construction (phase E-1) (Figure 15). The above-mentioned cache from inside the bench was extremely rich. It contained an anthropomorphic jade head and four tubular jade beads in the form of a human skull, spondylus shells, one pearl, coral remains, and two knives, each ca. 0.50

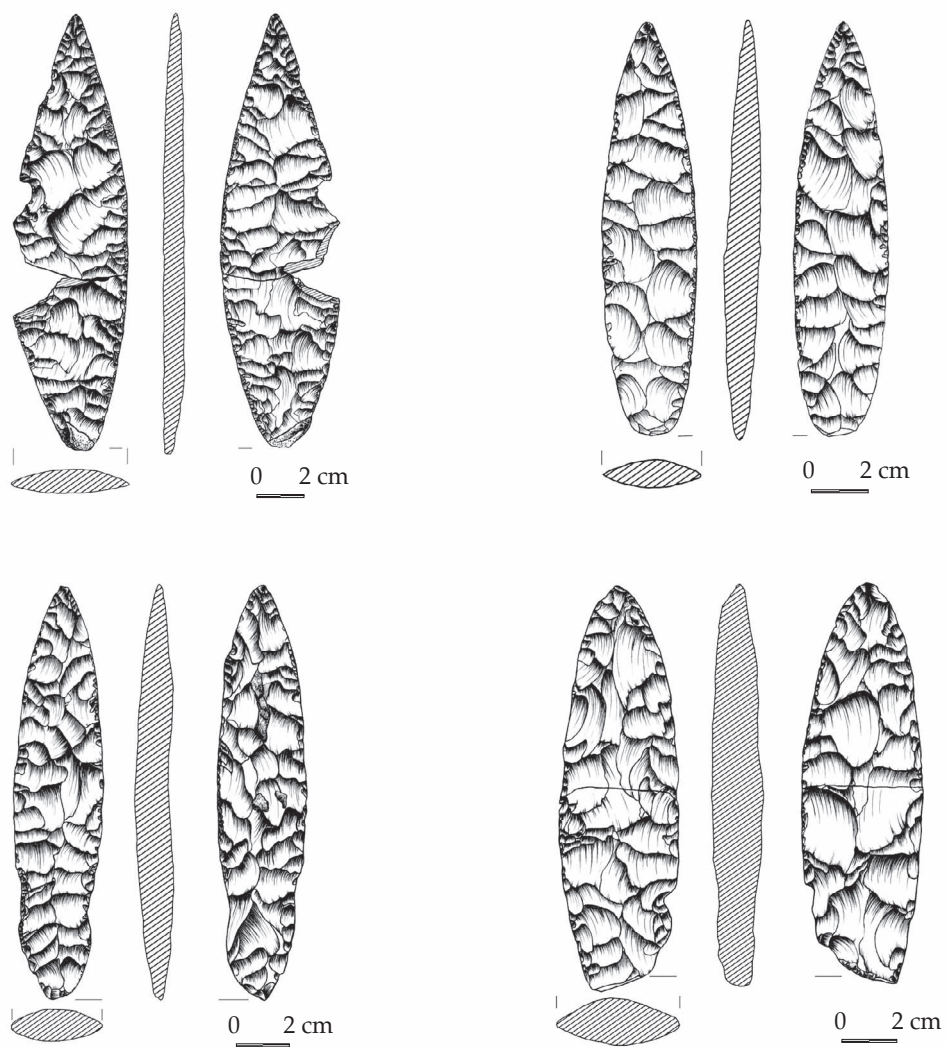


Figure 11. Projectile points and knives from Offering 12 (drawing by Bogumił Pilarski).

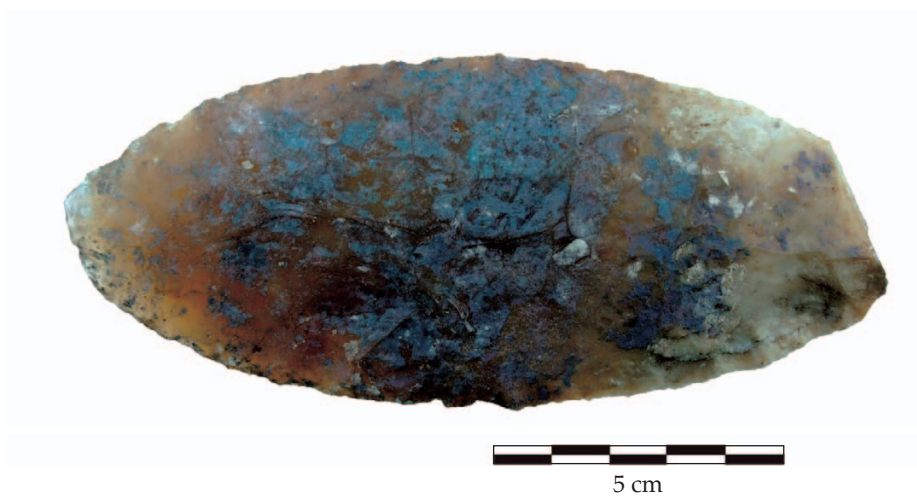


Figure 12. Painted knife from Nakum Offering 12 (photo by Bogumił Pilarski).

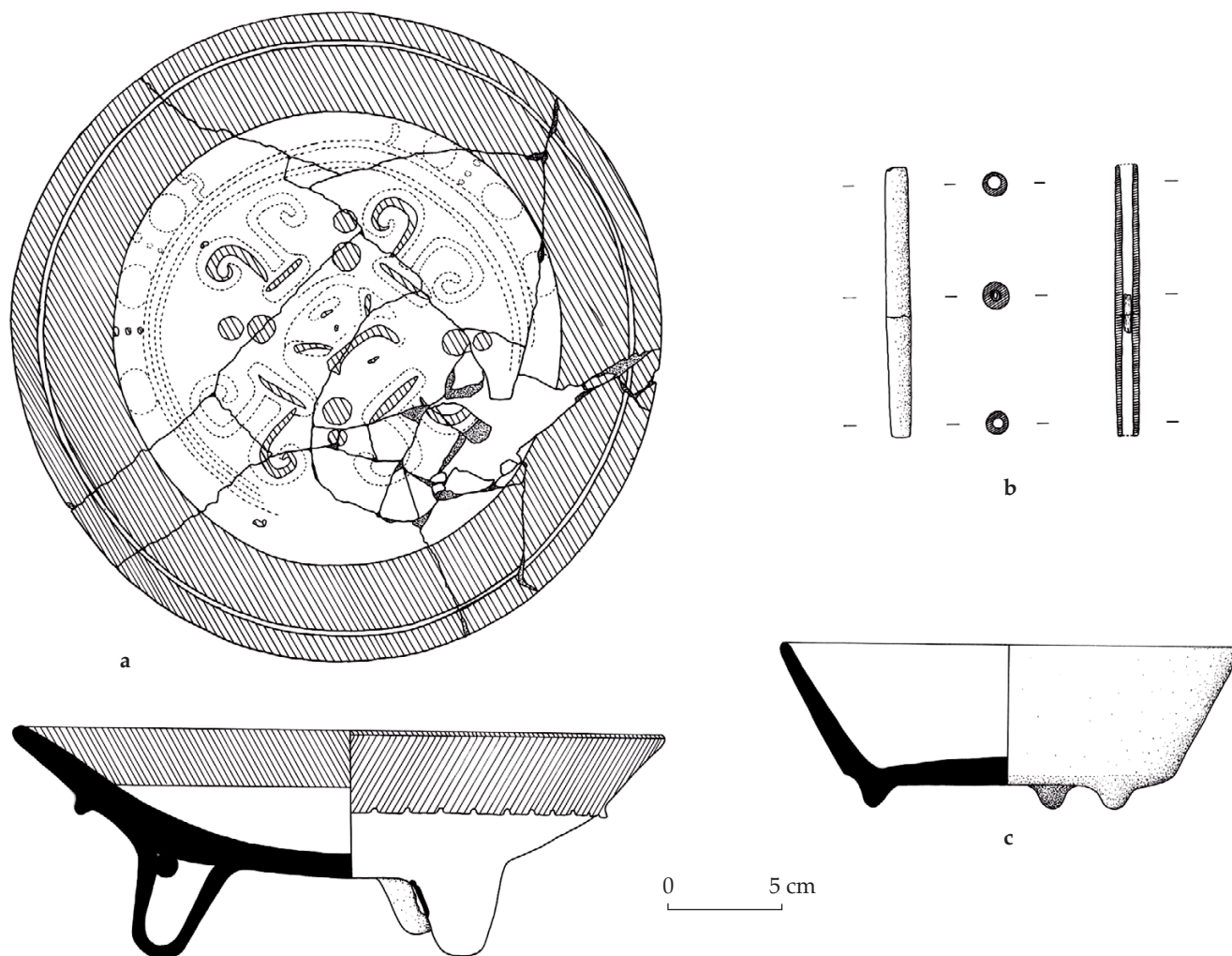


Figure 13. Offering 3 from Structure 15: (a) tripod plate of Saxche Orange Polychrome; (b) jade tube (pectoral?); (c) bowl of Tinaja Red type (drawings by Katarzyna Radnicka).

m long and made from obsidian and flint (Figure 16). If the deposition of this cache is connected with the death of the person buried in Burial 1 and therefore another gift for him, it may further demonstrate the importance of this individual in Nakum's history. After the death of this individual his residence (Structure E Sub-5) might have been ritually sealed or "killed" (a custom known from many other Maya sites) and a new building (phase E-1) constructed above it (Figure 15).

It is very possible that the ruler from Burial 1 was responsible for the architectural growth we see at Nakum during the first part of the Late Classic (Tepeu 1) when many new structures were erected or rebuilt, especially in the Acropolis complex. This architectural and cultural growth of Nakum during the Tepeu 1 phase may be the result of political changes in the region. We should bear in mind that the Tzakol 3/Tepeu 1 transition is characterized by cultural stagnation at Yaxha and a

political crisis in Tikal after its defeat by Calakmul in AD 562 (Martin and Grube 2000). These events resulted in the Ik-phase hiatus in the erection of carved monuments. Naranjo, another important neighbor of Nakum, suffered several defeats at the hands of Calakmul and Caracol in the seventh century. At least some of these factors might have contributed to Nakum's growth and political importance in the region during the Tepeu 1 phase.

Earlier Temple and Protoclassic Burial

When the tomb chamber of Structure 15 was documented and cleared a test pit was excavated from the level of the tomb to the bottom of the pyramid. Below the floor, vestiges of an older substructure were revealed (designated phase 15 Sub-4) (see Figure 3). Excavations showed that it had the same layout as the temple of

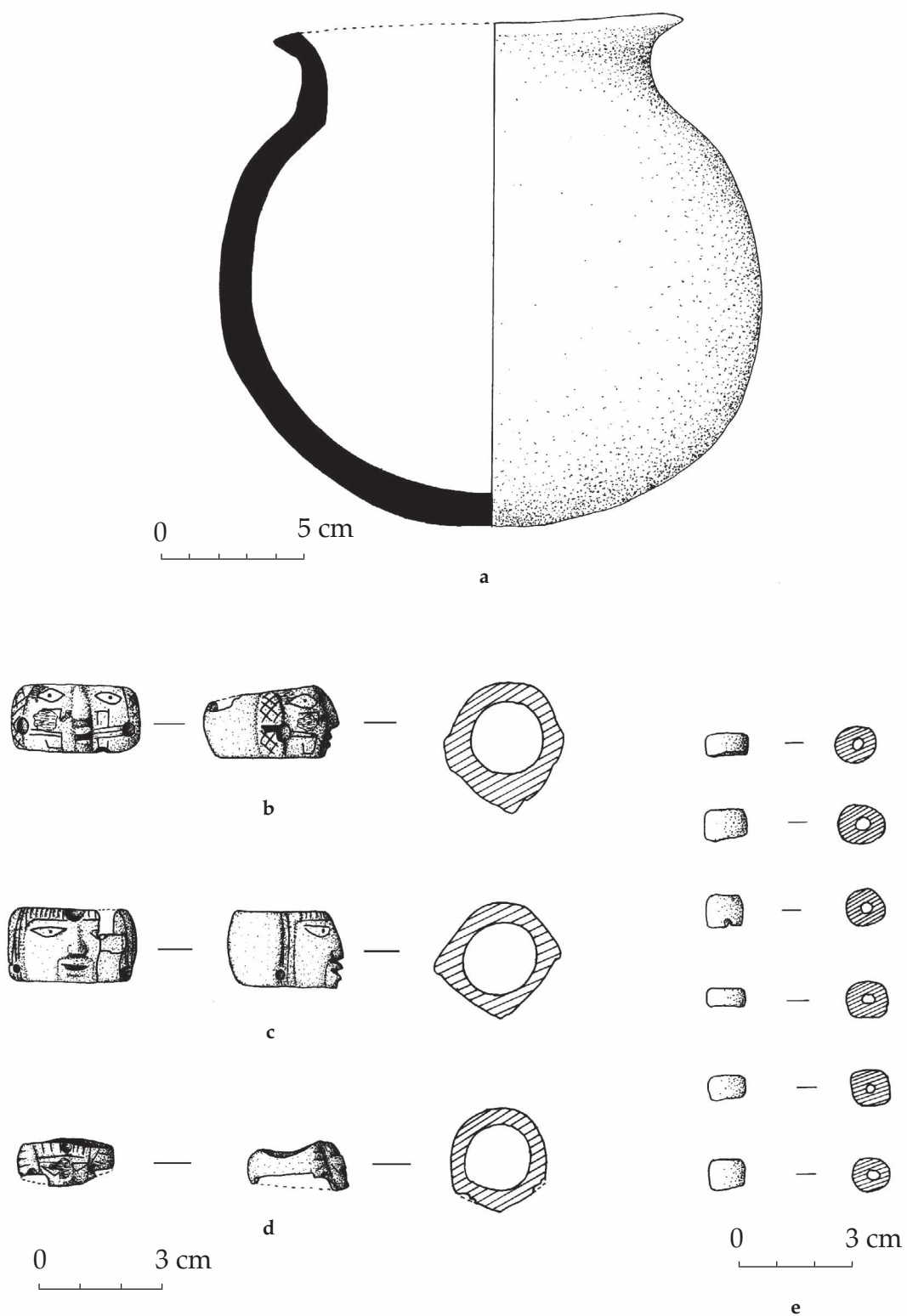


Figure 14. Artefacts from Offering 4 of Structure 15: (a) *olla* of Cambio Unslipped type; (b-d) shell rings; (e) shell beads (drawing by Katarzyna Radnicka).

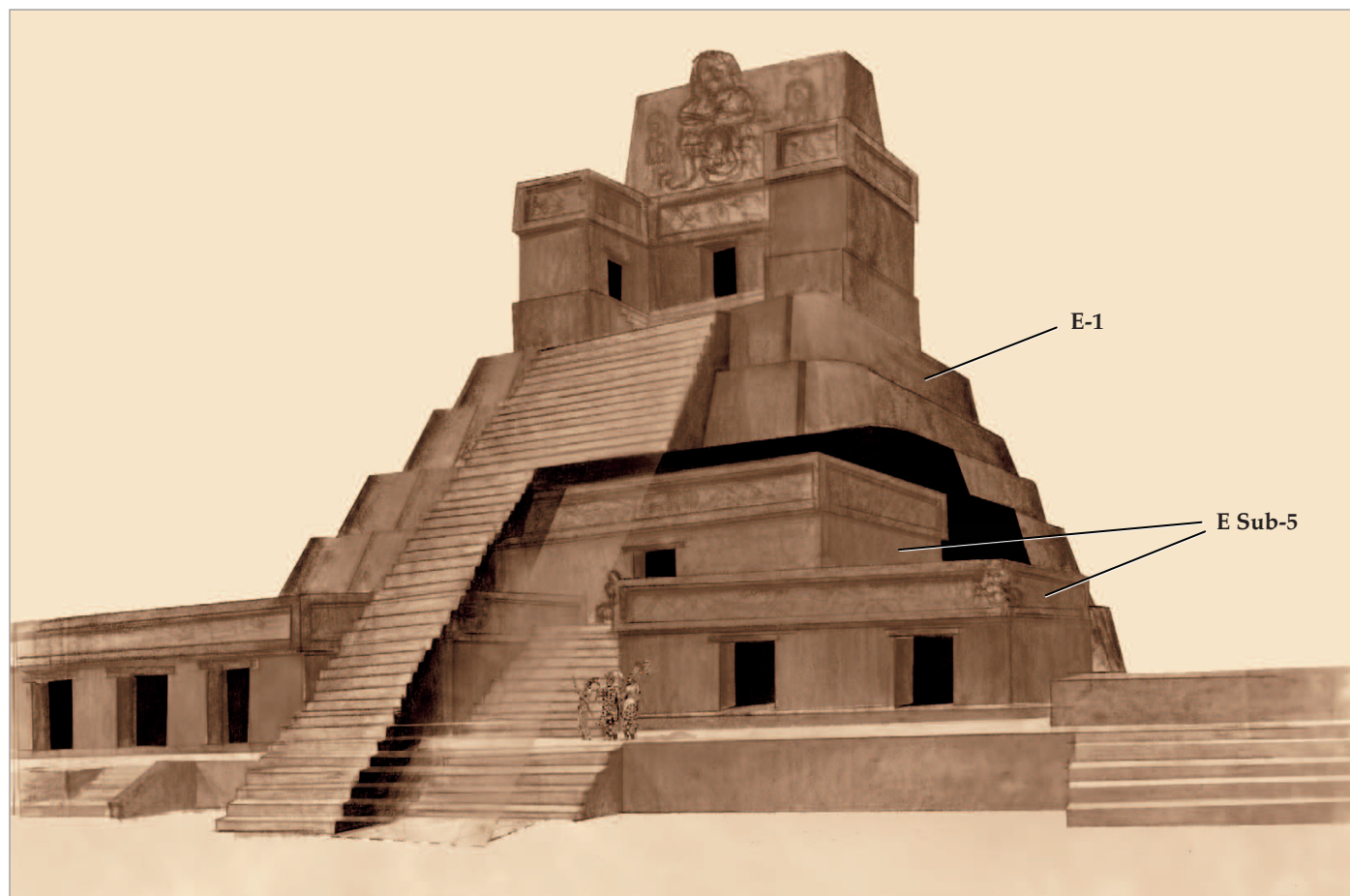


Figure 15. Reconstruction of Nakum Structure E with two main architectural phases visible, E-1 and E Sub-5 (reconstruction by Breitner González).

phase 15-1 and consisted of two long interconnected chambers that were located on a two-tiered platform. Phase 15 Sub-4 is dated to the end of the Early Classic or the beginning of the Late Classic period. Further down, below the temple of phase 15 Sub-4 and ca. 5 m below the floor of a tomb, another interment was found (Burial 2). It was deposited inside a crypt lined with and covered by large cut stones. Inside was deposited the skeleton of a woman, ca. 45–50 years old at the time of death (Figure 17). This individual was accompanied by two polychrome vessels and a shell bead (Figure 18). Stratigraphically the crypt was associated with a very early version of Structure 15 (phase 15 Sub-1). This was a platform which might have been surmounted by a perishable superstructure or alternatively left plain on top; the platform was located on the eastern side of Patio 1 (Figure 19). It seems that the interment was dug into the platform after the death of an important member of the local elite. Both vessels deposited in the burial represent the so-called Ixcanrio Orange Polychrome type, and they are dated to the Protoclassic ceramic phase. Here we follow the definition of the Protoclassic proposed by Brady et al. (1998) who characterize it as a ceramic

stage covering two epochs in Maya history: the final part of the Preclassic and the beginning of the Classic period (75 ± 25 BC–AD 400 ± 20). Two charcoal samples taken from Burial 2 clearly fall into this era, at 1790 ± 35 BP and 1715 ± 30 BP (2σ cal AD 130–340 and AD 250–410, respectively). Thus far only a few sites with significant Protoclassic occupation and accompanying material remains have been identified in the Maya Lowlands (Brady et al. 1998; Hammond 1984; Pring 1977, 2000).

All accessible archaeological data indicate that Nakum saw an important architectural and cultural resurgence during the Protoclassic phase. The huge Acropolis complex underwent an enormous rebuilding program at this time. Its platform was raised by 3 m, and not long afterwards several new buildings including Structure 15 were built on this new level. The Northern Sector of Nakum also experienced important architectural changes at this time. One of them was the construction of a large platform known as Structure 99, which has recently been excavated by the Nakum Archaeological Project. By contrast, excavations at the neighboring city of Yaxha have revealed almost no Protoclassic structures. The same may be said of many

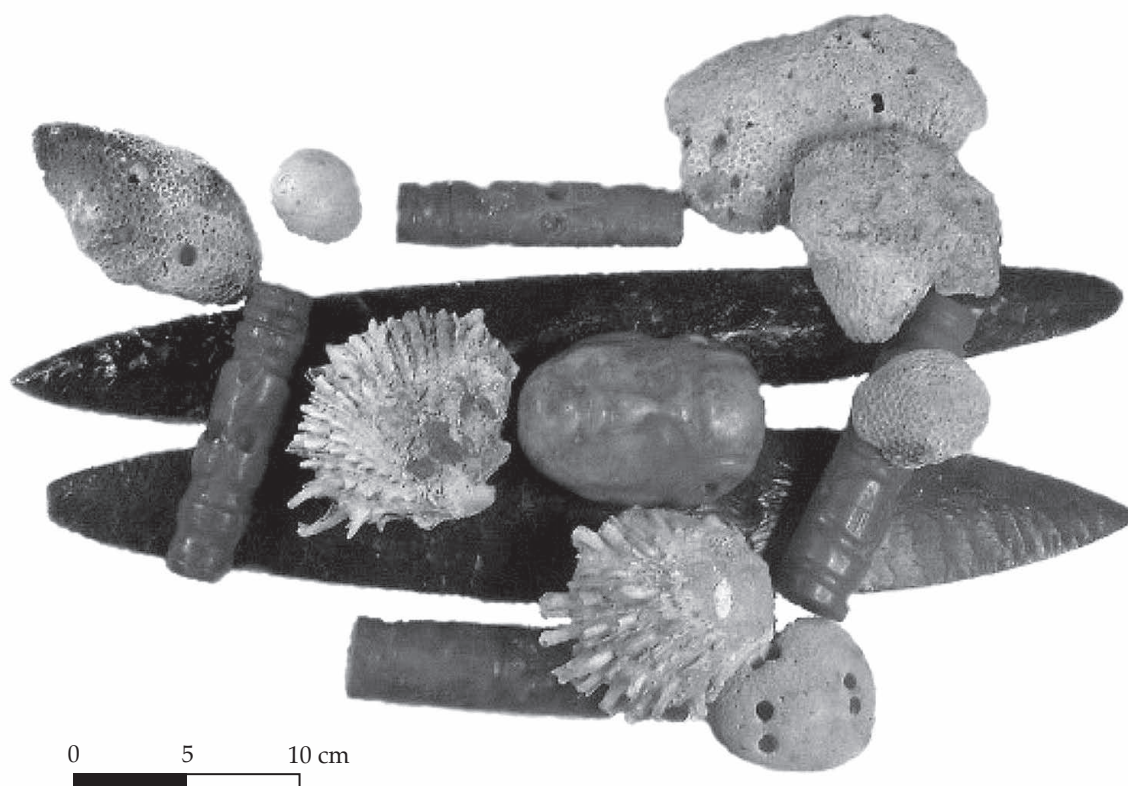


Figure 16. Offering discovered inside the bench of the main chamber of Structure E Sub-5, Late Classic period (photo by Bernard Hermes).

other sites in the Triangulo Park area. Thus Nakum seems to be one of the most important settlements in this region during the discussed phase (Hermes 1999; Žračka, Koszkuł, Hermes, Radnicka, and Velásquez 2011).

Conclusions

The discovery of two tombs (Burials 1 and 2) with their attendant offerings in the Structure 15 pyramid indicates that it had a special function for the local people and formed a funerary eastern shrine complex. For at least part of its existence, Nakum Structure 15 might have been an important mausoleum for the local elites. Its formal construction, the location of Burial 1 (inside a pyramid situated on the eastern side of the plaza of the largest architectural complex of Nakum), its size (the tomb chamber is among the largest chambers in the Maya lowlands), its rich contents (including a large amount of jade and shell artefacts), as well as the use of red ochre, all indicate that the person buried inside it was of royal status (compare Culbert and Krejci 1995; Koszkuł et al. 2009). The fact that a large amount of greenstone jewelry and a Tikal Dancer plate with the representation of the dancing Maize God was deposited in the royal tomb indicates that these objects must have had a very

important meaning for the ancient Maya. The presence of jade indicates the occupant's high status as well as a link to the Maize God, whose jewels were symbols of the green foliage of sprouting cornstalks (Miller and Martin 2004:70). According to interpretations of Maya myth, the Maize God was sacrificed by the lords of death in the Underworld. Subsequently his miraculously-born twin sons exacted their revenge by killing these lords, as a result of which the Maize God was resurrected and went on to create a new world. Maya kings appear to have believed that after death they would follow the path of the Maize God, defeating the lords of the Underworld to be reborn. In preparation for this resurrection they were dressed for their last journey in the most elaborate jewelry that they had worn during their lifetime (Miller and Martin 2004:57-58, 70). Thus the presence of the vessel with the representation of the dancing Maize God in Nakum Burial 1 is consistent with an attempt to link the dead person with the Maize God and his resurrection.

Burial 2 is far more modest than Burial 1. Nevertheless, its location on an axis of a pyramid platform situated on the eastern side of Patio 1 and its preparation as a crypt lined with large stone blocks, as well as its grave goods, may indicate an elite burial, perhaps a member of the royal family of the still poorly known



Figure 17. General view of Burial 2 of Structure 15.

Protoclassic phase.

Lastly, it should be stressed that the inscription from the pectoral contributes to our understanding of the still-poorly-known history of the Maya cities of north-eastern Guatemala. The inscription from the pectoral is one of the earliest glyphic records from this area. If the second glyph incised on the convex side of the pectoral is indeed the toponym of Yaxha it may indicate a close relationship between these polities. The presence of the Yaxha emblem may even suggest that Nakum was ruled at some point by the dynasty from Yaxha or was part of the Yaxha kingdom in this period (for examples of shared emblem glyphs, see Martin and Grube 2000). Other more prosaic interpretations must be also considered: that the pectoral could have been received as a gift or could have been taken from Yaxha as a trophy by a Nakum ruler in the Early or Late Classic periods.

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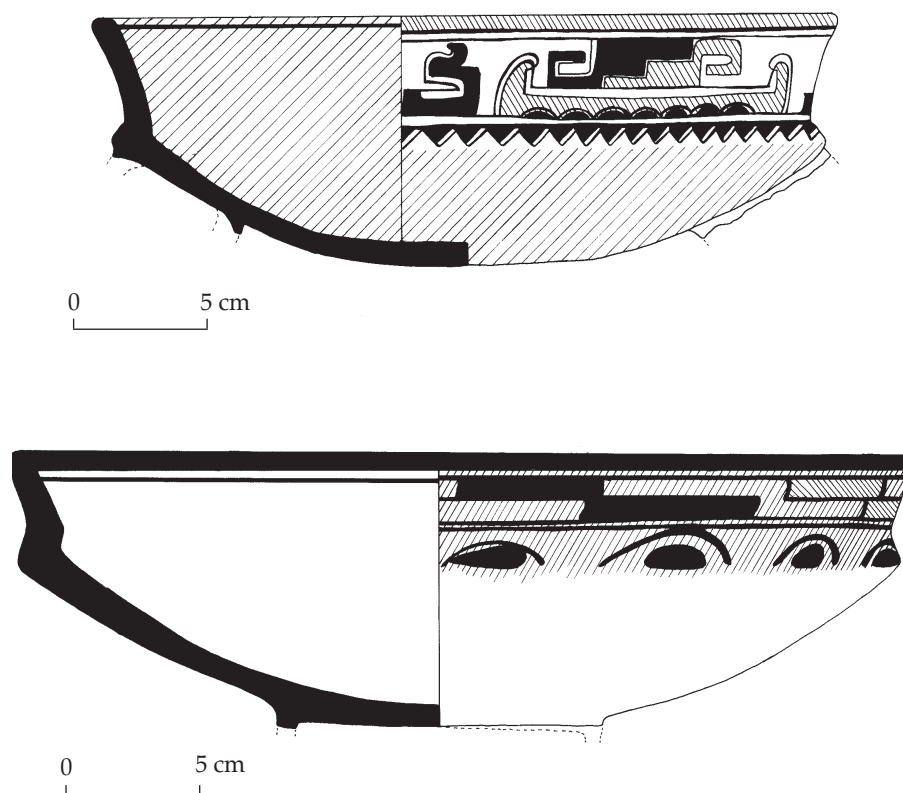


Figure 18. Two vessels of Ixcantio Orange Polychrome found in the interior of Burial 2 of Structure 15 (drawing by Katarzyna Radnicka).

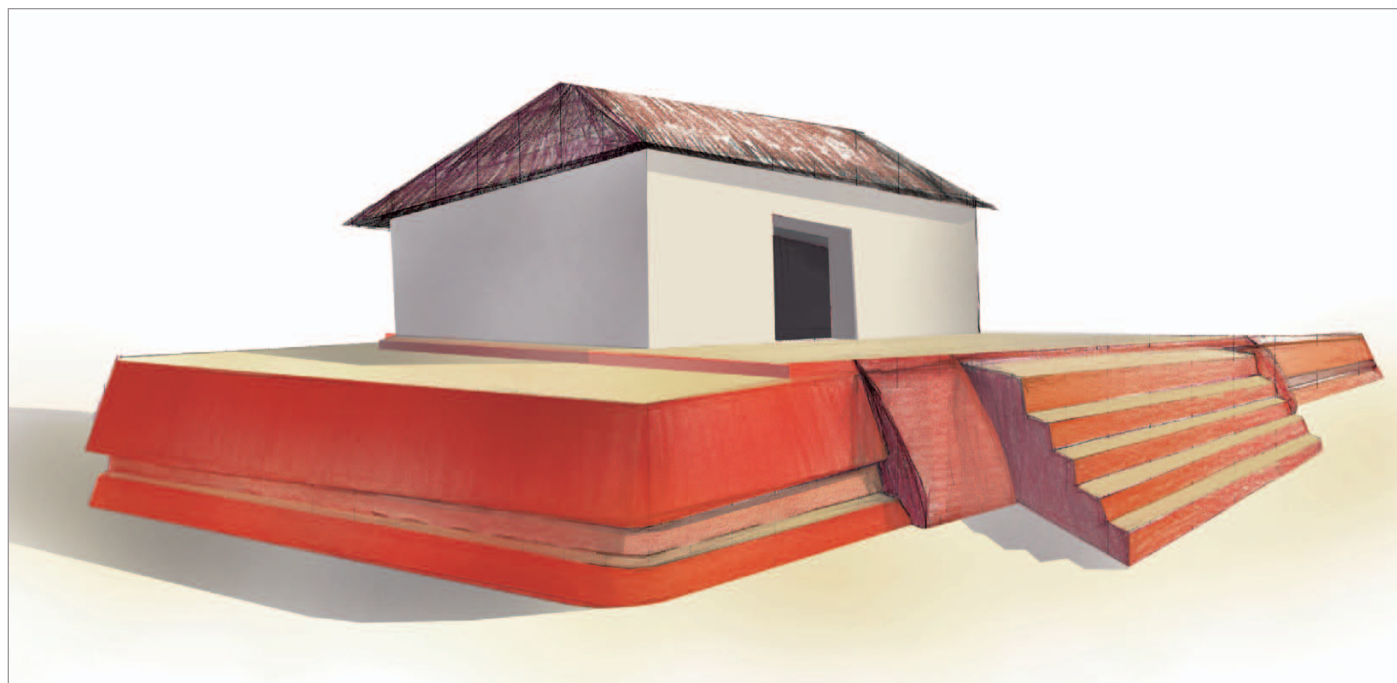


Figure 19. Reconstruction view of the first version of Structure 15 (15 Sub-1) (drawing by Breitner González).

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