

Archaeological Excavations of a Round Temple at Uxmal: Summary Discussion and Implications for Northern Maya Culture History

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Introduction

While the social disintegration of the Classic Maya “collapse” was occurring in the Southern Lowlands, Uxmal, Kabah, and Sayil, located in the hilly Puuc region of northwestern Yucatan, grew in population during the ninth and early tenth centuries. A local architectural florescence featured massive buildings blanketed with complex mosaic stone sculptures (Pollock 1980; Gendrop 1983; G. Andrews 1986; Kowalski 1987; Barrera Rubio y Huchim Herrera 1989, 1990). A preeminent late center in Yucatan was the city of Chichen Itza, located on the northern plain of the peninsula (Tozzer 1957). Chichen Itza displays some architecture and art closely related to that of the “Puuc” cities such as Uxmal, while other structures display a more eclectic style, many elements of which stem from non-Maya sources. Because some Chichen Itza buildings and artworks are particularly related to those of Tula, Hidalgo, identified by Wigberto Jimenez Moreno (1941) as the Toltec capital, Tollan Xicocotitlan, this eclectic style is often termed “Toltec-Maya.”

Earlier descriptions of the culture history of northern Yucatan have emphasized the distinctiveness of the “Puuc” and “Toltec-Maya” styles, and have argued that they basically succeeded one another in time, with the “Puuc” style corresponding to the so-called Terminal Classic period (c. A.D. 800-1000), and the “Toltec-Maya” style dominating the Early Postclassic period (c. A.D. 1000-1200) (Tozzer 1957; J. E. S. Thompson 1945; E. W. Andrews 1965; Diehl 1983). More recently, many scholars have suggested that there was a greater chronological and cultural overlap between the Puuc centers such as Uxmal and the Toltec-Maya culture at Chichen Itza (Ball 1979a, 1979b). While some view the overlap as of relatively short duration (c. 50-100 years) (Andrews 1979;

Andrews V and Sabloff 1986; Coggins and Shane 1984; Kowalski 1987; Dunning 1991), others suggest that the Puuc sites and Chichen Itza were wholly contemporaneous (Lincoln 1986, n.d.; Ringle, Bey, and Peraza n.d.).

The discovery of a small, round structure (hereafter designated the Uxmal Round Structure) at the site of Uxmal offered an opportunity to test some of these models archaeologically. Originally located by Ian Graham during a mapping project at Uxmal in 1988, the structure was subsequently cleared under the direction of Jeff Kowalski, who made a more detailed preliminary plan and published a brief description and cultural-historical interpretation (Kowalski 1990). During the spring semester of 1992 Kowalski and Alfredo Barrera Rubio, Director of the *Centro Regional de Yucatan del INAH*, co-directed archaeological excavation and consolidation of this round structure. A basic purpose of the excavation was to obtain data that would help clarify our knowledge of culture history and processes of social change in northern Yucatan during the Terminal Classic/Early Postclassic period.¹ Because larger temples of circular form generally have been interpreted as a non-Classic Maya architectural form introduced at Chichen Itza (e.g., the Caracol) during the Terminal Classic/Early Postclassic period (c. A.D. 770-1150), and since the Uxmal Round Structure represents the first major building of circular form discovered at a Puuc site, it was felt that the Uxmal structure would shed light on the nature of the chronological overlap and cultural connections between Chichen Itza and Uxmal during this time.

Summary of Excavations

The Round Structure at Uxmal is located about 20 meters west of the northwestern boundary platform of the Pigeons Group (fig.

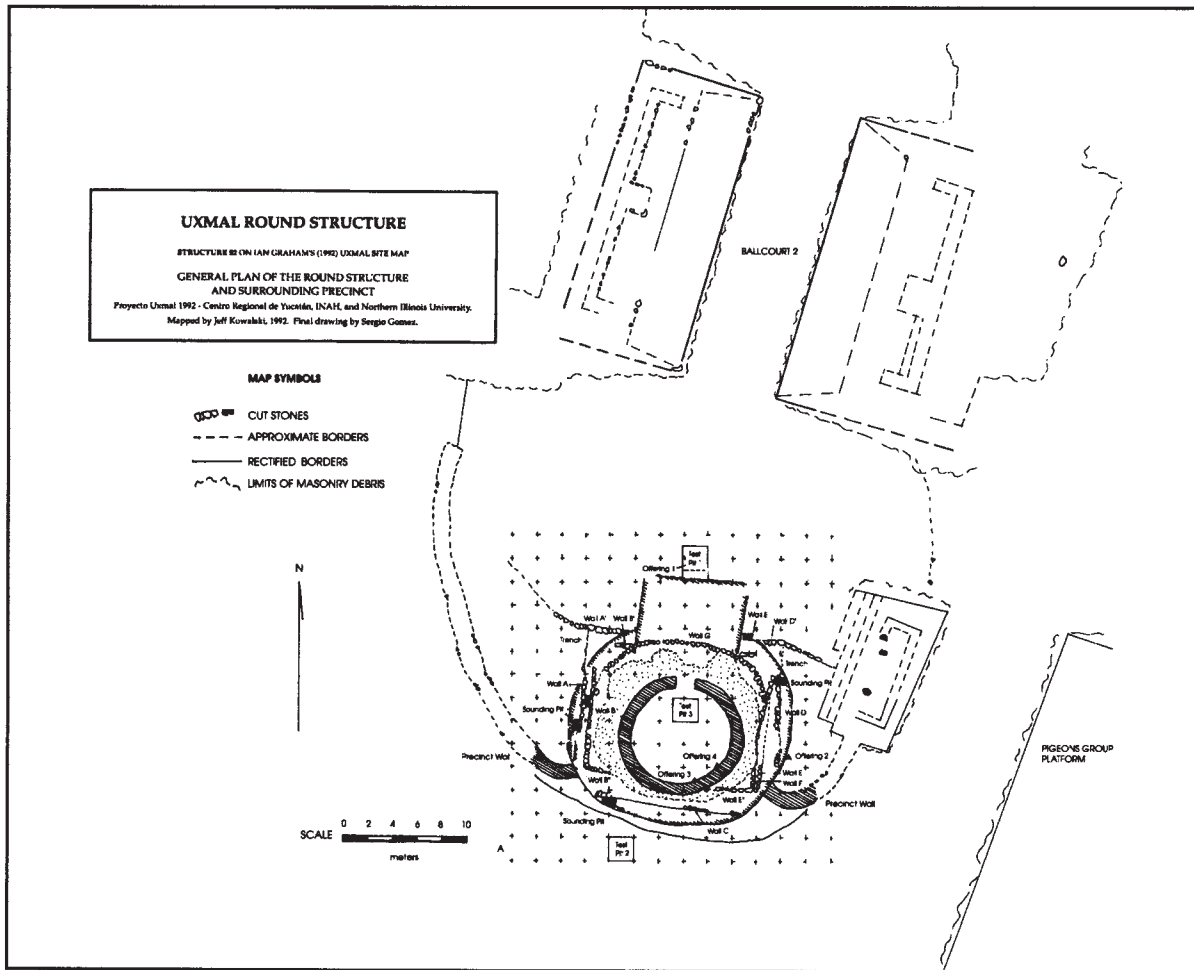


Fig. 1 Map of the Uxmal Round Structure and associated structures, showing their location relative to the Pigeons Group.

1). Excavations revealed that the Round Structure is connected by a low wall to a small building of rectangular ground plan, located slightly to the northeast. The small building rests on a low basal platform, and has a single long room opening toward the west. The room is apparently surrounded by walls on three sides, giving the structure a U- or C-shaped ground plan. Structures of similar plan have been documented elsewhere at Uxmal (Ruz Lhuillier 1955:50-51, fig. 1; Ruppert and Smith 1957:580-582; Barrera Rubio 1991:50-51; Barrera Rubio et al. 1991:32-34), and have been considered late buildings of Terminal Classic or Early Postclassic date (Tourtellot, Sabloff, and Carmean 1992; D. Rice 1986; J. Fox 1987:84). Another low wall curves toward the northwest of the Round Structure from its southwest side. Together, these two walls cre-

ated an enclosed precinct and effectively restricted access to the Round Structure. During clearing of the area in the vicinity of the Round Structure, it was discovered that two parallel mounds located to the north form the eastern and western boundary platforms of a north-south oriented ballcourt (designated Uxmal Ballcourt 2).²

The court alley is 8 meters wide and 23 meters long and is bounded by platforms with sloping inner "benches" and a higher, vertical-sided wall supporting structures of the Puuc "colonnade" style, probably corresponding to the ninth century (Gendrop 1983; Andrews 1986).

Three 2 X 2 meter test pits were excavated in front of the stairway, to the southwest rear side, and on the summit of the Round Structure (figs. 1, 3). These excavations and related soundings defined three principal plaza plaster floors. The

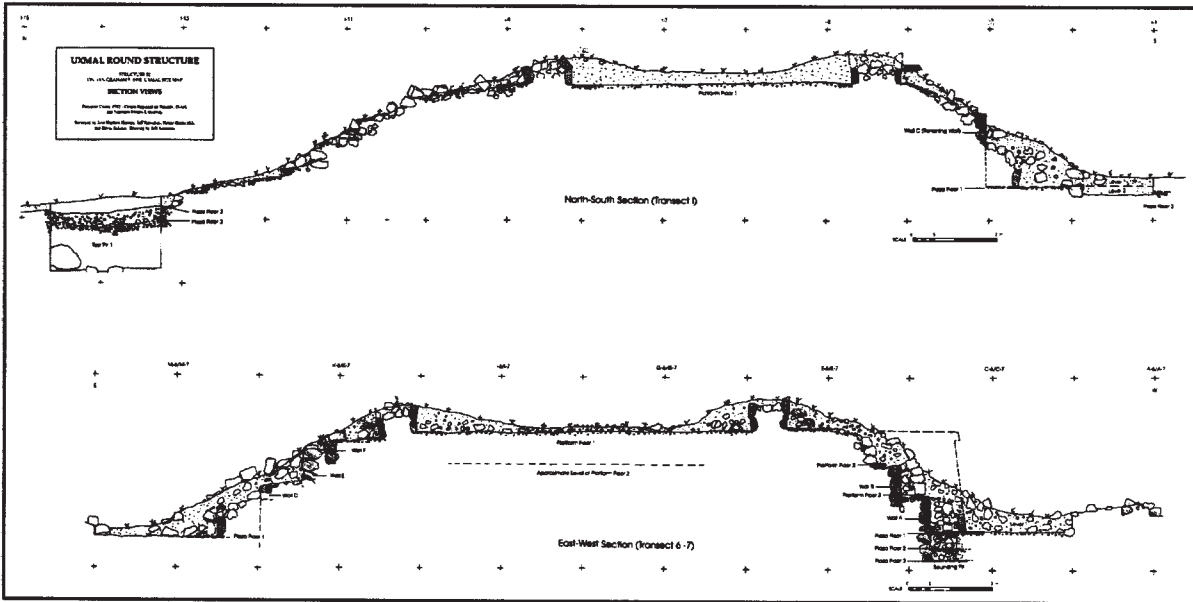


Fig. 2 East-West and North-South section drawings of the Uxmal Round Structure.

earliest of these (Plaza Floor 3) was located during test pit excavations in Test Pits 1 and 2, as well as in sounding pits excavated at points around the basal platform (e.g., in quadrants C-6 and J-10) (fig. 2). This floor apparently precedes the construction of the Round Structure, and apparently represents a plaza level on which a two-stage substructure of rectangular form with rough masonry walls was constructed. This substructure was detected during explorations in the interior of the Round Structure.

Plaza Floor 2 was detected in Test Pits 1 and 2, and in sounding pits, and was contemporaneous with the construction of the Round Structure. It extends beneath the basal platform of the Round Structure and terminates at the walls of the inner rectangular substructure.

Plaza Floor 1 refers to the floor level of a raised area of the plaza, defining a kind of low platform surrounding east, west, and south sides of the Round Structure.

Excavations in Test Pit 3, on the summit of the Round Structure, revealed two plaster platform floor levels. The latest of these is Platform Floor 1, which surfaces the interior room of the Round Building and its surrounding terrace. The earlier of these, Platform Floor 2, is located about 75 centimeters below Floor 1 and is associated with the two-staged rectangular substructure mentioned above.

The Round Structure consisted of a round

basal platform approximately 18.2 meters in diameter (E-W) and 17.5 meters in diameter (N-S) (fig. 3). This platform is faced with large, rectangular stone blocks tied into a nucleus of large and small unshaped stones and lime and *sascab* (breccia) mortar (fig. 4). The majority appear to have been quarried and cut for this project, but at least one appears to be a reused facing block from another Late Puuc building at Uxmal. Several reused Puuc style sculptured stones also were encountered in the fill of the platform. Almost the entire basal platform had sections of the lower courses of masonry well-preserved, with the exception of a section 1.8 meters long in quadrants C-8, C-9, and D-9. The platform originally stood about 2.3 meters high and had slightly sloping, nearly vertical walls capped by an overhanging beveled cornice. Large, wedge-shaped blocks of this cornice were encountered in debris around the base of the platform.

A stairway some 8.4 meters wide and oriented approximately 10-12 degrees east of north, projects from the north side of the basal platform. This stairway was constructed over the rough masonry walls of the rectangular substructure referred to previously.

On the summit of the round basal platform, surrounded by a terrace, is a structure of circular ground plan with a single doorway opening toward the northeast (fig. 5). The doorway was defined by

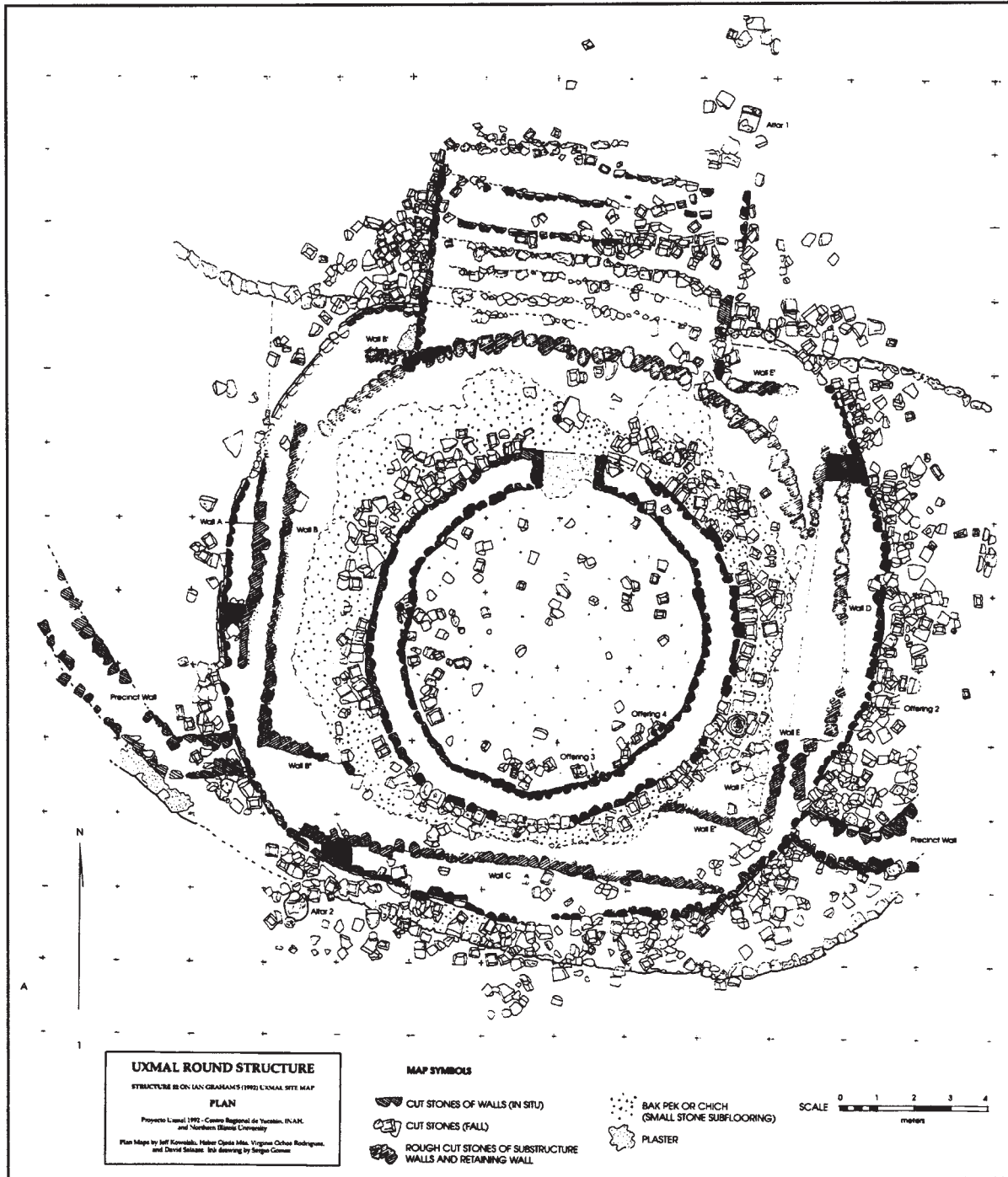


Fig. 3 Plan of the Uxmal Round Structure.

large jamb stones (97 X 60 X 23 cm.) and there are conserved remains of a low plastered step up into the interior. This round building is approximately 10.1 meters in diameter N-S by 10 meters E-W. The outer walls were faced with well squared “vener” type facing blocks, which rose to a height of about a meter, with a minimum of three courses,

and more likely four courses, around the entire building (fig. 6). Judging from the debris, the upper exterior course was capped by a projecting, beveled cornice. In most places in the interior, only two courses of badly fire-crazed and spalled masonry blocks remained standing, although one block of a third course remained in place. During



Fig. 4 View of the facing masonry of the basal platform of the Uxmal Round Structure.

the excavation, no evidence of significant masonry debris in the interior, nor of specially shaped vault stones was encountered, indicating that the upper section of the building may have been of plastered wattle and daub, supporting a roof of perishable materials (probably conical pole and thatch).³

Several offerings were encountered during excavations. The first of these, Offering 1, was located in Level III of Test Pit 1, directly in front of and to the center of the stairway of the Round Structure. It consisted of an olla of Yokat Striated Ware, accompanied by fragments of Muna Slateware and other ceramic types of the Cehpech complex (fig. 7). Although the offering was located at the level of Plaza Floor 3, corresponding to the earliest leveling of the plaza, it was clearly intrusive, and appears to correspond to the construction period of Plaza Floor 2, approximately contemporaneous with construction of the Round Structure. Offering 1 thus is interpreted as a dedicatory offering for the Round Structure.

The most significant finds were three offerings of Tohil Plumbate ceramic vessels. Offering 2 consisted of two Tohil Plumbate vessels, an effigy armadillo and a pyriform vase,



Fig. 5 View of the doorway of the Round Building of the Uxmal Round Structure.



Fig. 6 View of the masonry walls of the Round Building of the Uxmal Round Structure.

placed on a shallow level of debris adjacent to the southeast base of the basal platform (quadrant L-5) (fig. 8). Offering 3 was composed of two Tohil Plumbate vessels, a deer effigy and a vase with globular body and tapering neck, located on a shallow layer of debris (13-16 cm.) above the floor of and adjacent to the rear interior wall of the round building (quadrant H-4) (fig. 9). Offering 4 con-

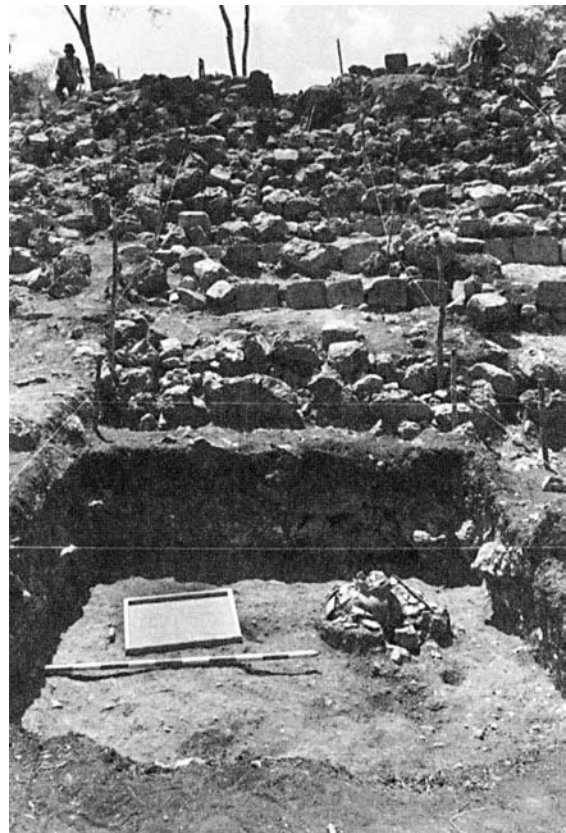


Fig. 7 View of Offering 1, showing Yokat Striated Ware olla located in front of and at base of stairway of the Uxmal Round Structure.

sisted of two Tohil Plumbate vessels, a pyriform vase with composite silhouette and an anthropomorphic effigy depicting a man wearing a feathered headdress, located on a thick layer of debris (approximately surface level) near the inner wall of the round building (quadrant I-5) (figs. 10). Since a layer of construction debris was found beneath each of these offerings, it indicates that a considerable span of time elapsed between the abandonment of the Round Structure and the deposition of the Plumbate offerings.

Two columnar altars with hieroglyphic inscriptions also were found during excavations, located near the northeast corner of the stairway (quadrant J-13; Altar 15) and at the southwest base of the Round Structure (quadrant D-2; Altar 16)



Fig. 8 View of Offering 2 in situ, showing two Tohil Plumbate vessels located near the base of the basal platform of the Uxmal Round Structure (Quadrant L-5).



Fig. 9 View of Offering 3 in situ, showing two Tohil Plumbate vessels located near the base of the inner wall of the Round Building of the Uxmal Round Structure (Quadrant H-4).

(cf. Morley 1970; Pollock 1980:274-275). Both altars apparently originally were located on the upper terrace encircling the Round Building proper. Unfortunately, neither bears well preserved Calendar Round dates, nor are there any personal name glyphs that correspond to those identified previously at Uxmal or Chichen Itza. A well-preserved series of glyphs from an upper band on Altar 16 possibly refers to a noble woman with a personal name containing an earplug sign (cf. Proskouriakoff 1961), and contains a passage possibly reading *u kit bolon pauahtun* (cf. Stuart 1988?; Taube 1992) (figs. 11 and 12). It is possible that this name is related to that of the Postclassic deity known as *cit bolon tun*, who is described as a god of medicine (and by extension wind-borne disease) by Landa (Tozzer 1941:154). A possible earplug *Ahau* title (formerly identified as an emblem glyph) is found on the hieroglyphic altar in front of the Codz Poop at Kabah (Kelley 1982:8; Grube 1986:Abb. 5), but its form does not closely resemble that on Altar 16.

Comparative Architecture, Dating, and Implications for Culture History

Buildings of circular plan have been documented at various Mesoamerican sites (Pollock 1936b). Many examples occur at sites in central Mexico, where they have generally been connected with the cult of Ehecatl, the wind-god manifestation of Quetzalcoatl. Although it is difficult to be certain about the function of the Uxmal Round Structure, its non-residential character and restricted access, coupled with the fact that depictions of Quetzalcoatl as the feathered serpent (Foncerrada



Fig. 10 View of Offering 4 in situ, showing two Tohil Plumbate vessels located near the base of the inner wall of the Round Building of the Uxmal Round Structure (Quadrant I-5).

de Molina 1965) and Ehecatl-like sculptures have been documented at the site (Cabello Carro 1980), supports the idea that the Uxmal building was a temple with cultic associations with Quetzalcoatl-Ehecatl.

In the Maya area major examples of round buildings generally date to the Terminal Classic/Postclassic periods, although there are reports of earlier examples of Classic date, particularly at



Fig. 11 Photograph of Uxmal Altar 16.

sites in Belize (Haberland 1958; Sidrys and Andersen 1978; Hammond et al. 1979). Elsewhere, a Classic period circular structure (Str. DZ-12) identified as a vapor bath or oven later converted to ritual use has been documented at Oxkintok, Yucatan (Gonzalez Arana 1990). In the Central Yucatan region a Late Classic cylindrical tower exists at Puerto Rico, Campeche (Andrews IV 1968) and Structure 16 at Becan is a small circular structure south of Structure IV (Pina Chan 1985:62-63).

Better known and larger examples of such circular structures, however, are clearly of Terminal Classic or Postclassic date. This is the case for the Caracol (Str. 3C15) at Chichen Itza (Ruppert 1935; Kelley 1982:13) (fig. 13), the Casa Redonda at the same site (Pollock 1936a; Ruppert 1952), and the principal circular temple at Mayapan and other related structures at that site (Stephens 1843; Pollock 1936b; Adams 1953; Shook 1953, 1954, 1955; Chowning 1956; Pollock, Roys, Thompson and Proskouriakoff 1962).

Other examples of round structures have been documented on the east coast of Quintana Roo at sites such as Isla Mujeres, Xcaret, Yalku, Xelha, Paalmul, Tulum and San Gervasio (Cozumel) (Pollock 1936b; Lothrop 1924; Andrews V and Andrews 1975; Sierra Sosa 1991; Vargas de la Pena 1992). The majority of these are thought to be of Late Postclassic date, but round structures corresponding to an earlier period, perhaps the Terminal Classic, have been reported at other Quintana Roo sites, including Uolmuul (Harrison 1979, 1984), Coba (circular structure in the San Pedro Group at the termination of Sacbe 3) (Benavides 1976; Navarrete, Uribe, and Martinez 1979) and Oxtankah (Ramirez Acevedo 1991).

For many years the most common

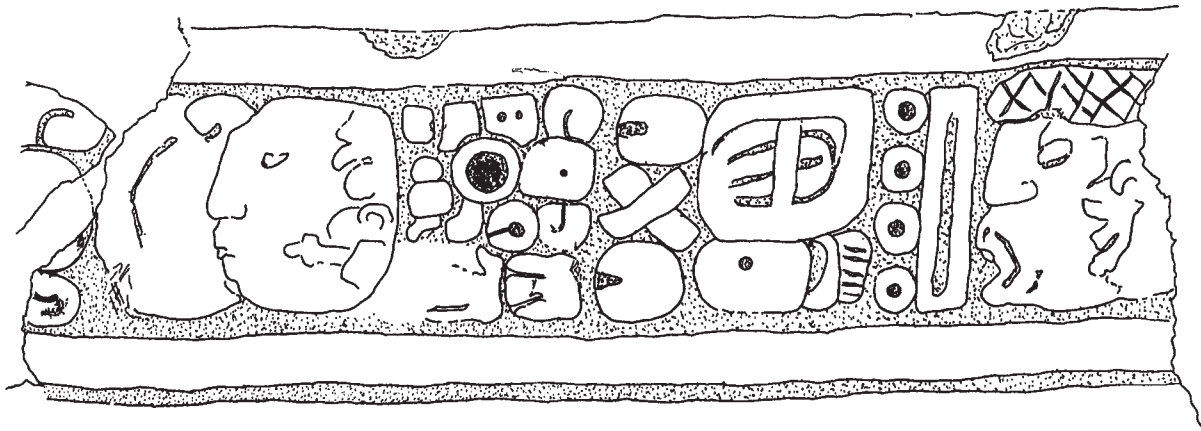


Fig. 12 Drawing of a section of preserved text from the upper band of Uxmal Altar 16.

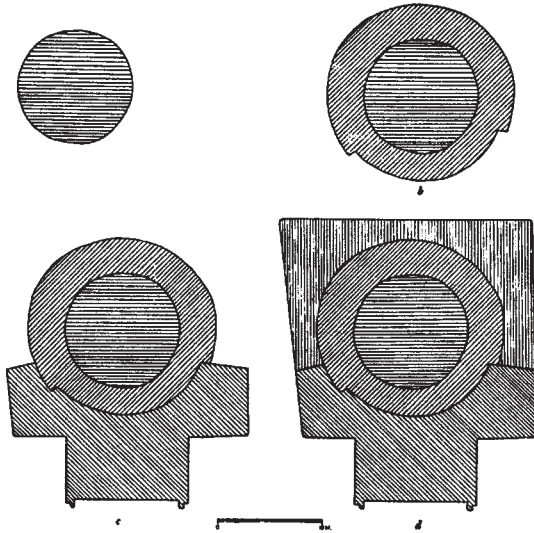


Fig. 13 Plans of construction stages of the Caracol at Chichen Itza (after Pollock 1936b:fig. 31).

interpretation of Postclassic round structures such as the Caracol or Casa Redonda at Chichen Itza was that they represented a non-Classic architectural form introduced as the result of the Toltec invasion of Chichen Itza (Tozzer 1957; Andrews IV 1965). Excavations and mapping carried out at Seibal, Guatemala (A. L. Smith 1982) and at Nohmul, Belize (Chase and Chase 1982), however, have documented new examples of round structures which have forced a reassessment of their cultural associations. At Seibal a prominent round platform (Structure C-79) was constructed during the Terminal Classic Bayal phase (c. A.D. 879-930) (fig. 14). Its round form is related to that of the approximately contemporary Caracol at Chichen, and corresponds to other significant architectural, sculptural, epigraphic, and ceramic links between these two centers (Sabloff 1973; A. L. Smith 1982:239-240; Kowalski 1989).

However, these similarities do not appear to have been the result of central Mexican Toltec incursions at Seibal, but rather apparently represent the outcome of the political, economic, and military expansion of related Chontal-speaking "Putun" Maya groups during the eighth and ninth centuries (Thompson 1970; Graham 1973; Ball 1974; Kowalski 1989).

At Nohmul the excavations of Chase and Chase (1982) have revealed a round structure (Structure 5) of Terminal Classic date, which seems to be a simplified analog of the Caracol at Chichen Itza, (fig. 15) as well as a patio-quad (Structure 20), a variant of the gallery-patio type structure otherwise known only at Chichen Itza. The presence of such Chichen Itza-related buildings at Nohmul, which otherwise lacks "Toltec-Maya" architectural or sculptural elements, supports the idea that the round structure form was disseminated by the Itza, a branch of the Chontal-speaking "Putun" Maya, rather than by the Toltecs of central Mexico.

The Uxmal Round Structure, like the Seibal or Nohmul structures, apparently was built during the Terminal Classic period in the late ninth or tenth century. The large, well-squared facing blocks of its round basal platform are comparable to the facing blocks of the platforms of other Terminal Classic "Late Uxmal" edifices such as the House of the Governor or Ballcourt 1 (the main ballcourt), both of which are believed to have been built around A.D. 900-910 (Kowalski 1987; Kelley 1982). In addition, the reuse of various "Classic" Puuc-style vault stones, facing blocks, or sculptural elements in the construction fill indicates that the Round Structure falls late in the Puuc sequence. Exactly how late is not entirely clear, since such reuse could indicate that the Round Structure post-dates other better dated "Late Uxmal" structures.

Analysis of ceramics is not yet concluded,

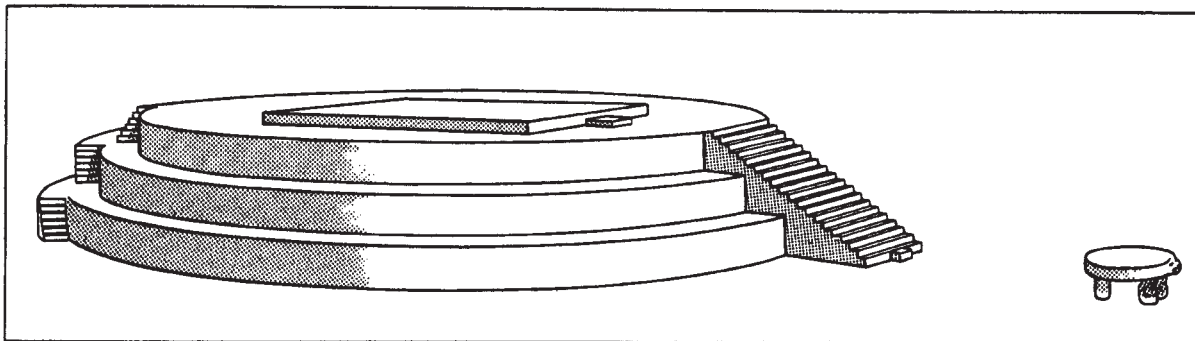


Fig. 14 Reconstruction drawing of Structure C-79 at Seibal, Guatemala (after A. L. Smith 1982:fig. 135)

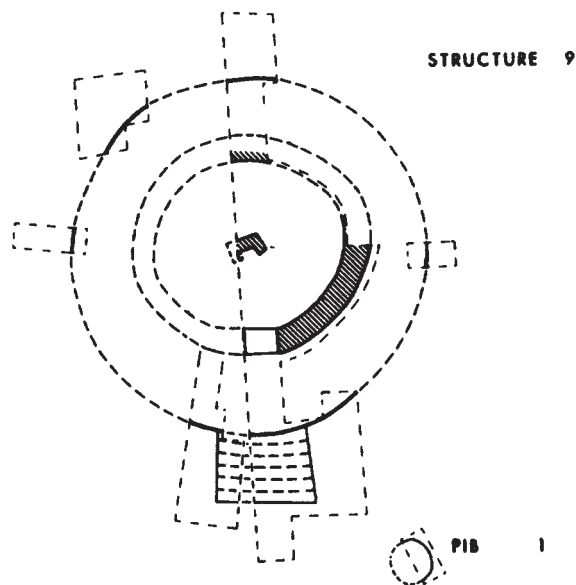


Fig. 15 Plan of Structure 9 at Nohmul, Belize (after Chase and Chase 1982:fig. 2).

but preliminary observation indicates that the vast majority of pottery recovered pertains to the Cehpech ceramic complex, traditionally dated to A.D. 800 to 1000 (R. E. Smith 1971). The finding of six Tohil Plumbate vessels in post-occupational contexts has important implications for the dating of the Round Structure. Tohil Plumbate pottery has also been reported in excavations at Uxmal carried out at the Great Pyramid (Saenz 1975), and at the great platform of the House of the Governor (associated with Fine Orange ware and with sherds of Cehpech complex ceramic (Muna Slateware, leabo Redware, etc.) (Barrera Rubio 1991).

Tohil Plumbate was a widespread Mesoamerican tradeware, produced in southwest Guatemala, and traditionally it has been considered one of the principal ceramic diagnostics of the Early Postclassic period (Shepard 1948; Neff 1989a, 1984b). Although there is some evidence that Tohil Plumbate was used at sites such as Becan as early as the mid- to late ninth century (Ball 1977:135-177), it does not seem to have been disseminated widely until the early tenth century. Evidence regarding the appearance of Tohil Plumbate ware at Isla Cerritos, believed to be the port for Chichen Itza and whose major period of occupation brackets the Terminal Classic/Early Postclassic periods, seems particularly relevant to the Uxmal data (A. Andrews, et al. 1988). At Isla Cerritos there is evidence that during the Chapel phase (c. A.D. 750-900) Puuc-related Cehpech

ceramics intermingled directly with those of the Chichen Itza-related Sotuta complex (i.e., Silho Fine Orange, usually considered an Early Postclassic type). During the Jotuto phase (c. A.D. 500-1200), however, the Puuc-related Cehpech ceramics virtually disappear, and are replaced by large amounts of Peto Cream ware ceramics, as well as by smaller quantities of Tohil Plumbate sherds.

The Isla Cerritos evidence indicates that a period of Terminal Classic/Early Postclassic or "Puuc" and "Toltec-Maya" overlap, during which Cehpech and certain Sotuta groups are found in mixed lots, is succeeded by a more purely Early Postclassic phase. This closely parallels the situation at the Uxmal Round Structure, where the major period of construction and use is associated with predominantly Cehpech ceramics and seems to be contemporaneous with other "Late Uxmal" structures such as the House of the Governor, Nunnery Quadrangle, or Ballcourt 1, but where Tohil Plumbate vessels appeared in post-occupational contexts.

Dating the Round Structure more precisely within the Terminal Classic period is difficult. Kowalski (1987,1990) has argued that these "Late Uxmal" structures were constructed during a relatively short period of time during the late ninth and early tenth century, and that substantial large-scale construction at Uxmal ceased not long after the latest recorded date of A.D. 907 (cf. Andrews and Sabloff 1986; Dunning 1990). He thus argues that the Uxmal Round Structure corresponds to a late ninth-early tenth century period when certain Sotuta ceramics, such as the Silho Fine Orange group (Kilikan Composite) tripod bowl found in association with Uxmal Ballcourt 1 (associated with a date of A.D. 905) were available contemporaneously with Cehpech ceramics (Malaonado 1979, 1981; Kelley 1982). According to this interpretation, the Plumbate vessels were likely brought to Uxmal and deposited as offerings sometime during the last half of the tenth century.

Barrera Rubio differs by accepting the stylistic analyses and architectural seriation of George Andrews (1986) and Paul Gendrop (1983), both of whom suggest that the "Late Uxmal" structures were built and occupied from approximately A.D. 900 to 1050. He therefore suggests that the Uxmal Round Structure was not constructed until the middle of or at the end of the tenth century, and that the Plumbate offerings may have been deposited as late as the early eleventh century.

Despite these discrepant interpretations,

evidence discovered during the excavation of the Uxmal Round Structure helps clarify the extent of the chronological overlap between Uxmal and Chichen Itza during the Terminal Classic transition period (c. AD. 800-1000), and aids in defining the nature of the cultural and political interactions between these two sites. As noted, two different “non-linear” models for correlating the Puuc and “Toltec-Maya” cultural expressions have been proposed (Ball 1979a, 1979b). The “Total Overlap” model argues that the occupations of the Puuc cities and that of Chichen Itza are wholly coeval, and that Chichen Itza’s “Toltec-Maya” culture and art style represents a regional variant rather than a sequential development (Lincoln 1986, n.d.; Ringle, Bey, Peraza n.d.). We feel that the deposition of Tohil Plumbate vessels in post-occupational levels of the Uxmal Round Structure does not support this interpretation. The evidence from the Uxmal Round Structure best accords with the alternative explanation of northern Maya culture history, the “Partial Overlap” model, which views the Puuc centers and “Toltec-Maya” Chichen Itza as contemporaneous for a period of between 50 to 100 years (or perhaps 150 years if Barrera Rubio is correct about a late tenth century date for the Round Structure). The presence of a round building that can be considered a Chichen Itza-like *Caracol analog* at Uxmal, provides further evidence that a significant chronological overlap existed between the two sites, and that there were close contacts between them at an elite level. Such elite contacts have been documented formerly in the areas of epigraphy (probable references to the Chichen Itza personages *Kakupacal* and *Lady Kayam K’uk* in Uxmal inscriptions), sculptural style and iconography (the presence of prominent feathered serpent sculptures at the Nunnery Quadrangle and Ballcourt 1), and ceramics (the Silho Fine Orangeware offering cache at Ballcourt 1) (Kelley 1982; Krochock n.d.; Grube n.d.; Foncerrada 1965; Kowalski 1986, 1987; Maldonado C. 1979, 1981).⁴ In addition to these evidences of contact, an important iconographic indication of the close relationship between Uxmal and Chichen Itza appears on Uxmal Stela 14, where the warrior standing behind the ruler Lord Chac holds an atlatl spearthrower and holds a circular shield marked by crescent-shaped motifs identical to those appearing on the shields adorning the frieze of the Upper Temple of the Jaguars at Chichen Itza (Proskouriakoff 1950:164; 1970) (fig. 16). Alternate explanations of such resemblances are possible. For example, Ringle, Bey, and Peraza (n.d.)

recently have suggested that major northern Maya centers such as Ek Balam and Uxmal were almost wholly coeval with Chichen Itza and that they retained political autonomy, but that they adopted some Chichen Itza-related iconographic traits in a process of elite emulation. In Uxmal’s case, however, the similarities are more extensive and specific than in the case of Ek Balam. This could reflect the creation of some sort of more formal military-political alliance between the Uxmal and Chichen Itza elite, perhaps with Lord Chac collaborating with and utilizing Itza warriors to consolidate Uxmal’s power in the Puuc region during the late ninth or tenth century. Given the fact that the Uxmal Round Structure is known to be one of a number of distinctive round platforms and/or temples (e.g., the Caracol at Chichen Itza; Structure C-79 at Seibal, Guatemala; Structure 9 at Nohmul, Belize) built during the Terminal Classic period, it seems likely that the Uxmal circular counterpart was constructed during the period of elite interaction and collaboration between Lord Chac of Uxmal and the Itza rulers of Chichen Itza. Coupled with the evidence for Uxmal-Chichen Itza ties mentioned above, the presence of a round temple suggests that, although remaining politically autonomous, Uxmal’s elite may have concluded a pact with Chichen Itza, and sought to demonstrate their close links with Chichen Itza’s rulers by adopting the same innovative, non-Classic religious cults, and by emulating some of Chichen architectural forms. If we are correct in interpreting the Round Structure and related architectural, sculptural, epigraphic, and iconographic evidence as reflecting an Uxmal-Chichen Itza affiance, such ties apparently did not long survive the tenth century (Kowalski 1987; Dunning 1952; Pollock 1980; but cf. G. Andrews 1986; Gendrop 1983). The finds of Tohil Plumbate vessels in post-occupational debris levels of the Uxmal Round Structure seem to indicate that the dynastic organization responsible for maintenance of such buildings had probably disintegrated either by the middle of the tenth century according to Kowalski, or by the late tenth to early eleventh century according to Barrera Rubio. The post-occupational placement of Plumbate vessels as offerings suggests that a later elite group continued living at Uxmal, perhaps during the late tenth through early eleventh centuries. This elite group apparently was unable to maintain the major buildings, but seems to have been associated with various of the smaller U- or C-shaped buildings or the small room complex northwest of the Pyramid of the Magician

(Konieczna and Mayer Guala 1976). Their ability to obtain Plumbate ware argues that Chichen Itza was still thriving and that they maintained contact with that center. Perhaps they served as Chichen Itza's agents in the Puuc region.

The excavation of the Uxmal Round Structure helps clarify the chronological and cultural relationship between Uxmal and Chichen Itza, but also indicates that the "overlap" question is complex and probably involved varying types of regional interactions (cf. Ringle, Bey, and Peraza

n.d. on the Ek Balam-Chichen Itza relationship; A. Andrews and Robles Castellanos 1985 and Robles Castellanos and A. Andrews 1986 on the Coba-Chichen Itza relationship). In the sense that some small-scale construction probably continued at Uxmal during the later tenth and possibly early eleventh centuries, one can speak of a prolonged chronological "overlap" between the two cities. However, in the sense that major Puuc-style edifices do not seem to have been constructed or maintained at this time, the evidence best accords with what traditionally has been called the "Partial Overlap Model."

Finally, and with less certainty, we would speculate that the eventual decline of monumental architectural construction sometime after 10.4.0.0.0 in the Maya Long Count (A.D. 909) might best be explained as the result of the dissolution of the fairly short-lived Uxmal-Chichen Itza alliance postulated above, perhaps resulting in the ultimate conquest of Uxmal by a multi-ethnic, multiple ruler polity at Chichen Itza as has been suggested by Schele and Freidel (1990; cf. Freidel 1992). Uxmal's elite seem to have used architecture and art to indicate that they considered themselves the cultural brethren of the Itza rulers of Chichen Itza, but this apparently did not prevent the latter site from eventually deposing the Uxmal lords, after which a small Chichen-related group established an enclave living in the smaller, shodder late buildings scattered among gradually crumbling monumental edifices such as the Nunnery Quadrangle, or the recently excavated Round Structure.

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Fig. 16 Drawing of Uxmal Stela 14 (courtesy of Ian Graham).

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NOTES

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2 This is the second major ballcourt located in the central civic-ceremonial nucleus of Uxmal. In the northern sector of the habitational zone of Uxmal, Barrera Rubio (field notes, 1978) located two parallel structures which also appear to be the boundary platforms of a ballcourt (plans not yet published).

3 A few examples of broken Puuc tapered or "boot-shaped" vault stones were discovered on the slopes of the platform, but these were judged to have been used as platform fill rather than part of the roof of the Round Building. The lack of a vaulted roof relates the Uxmal Round Structure to the Casa Colorada at Chichen Itza (cf. Pollock 1936:10&, fig. 37), as well as to many circular plan temples in Central Mexico (Pollock 1936; Nuttall 1930).

4 A glyphic monument of distinctive form (i.e., a broad cylindrical body with a sort of spigot or tenon at the end) closely related to Altar 16 found at the southwest side of the Round Structure was discovered in the courtyard of the Cemetery Group, where the reference to Lady Kayam K'uk occurs. This monument apparently was discovered near the southwest corner of hieroglyphic Platform 3 (northeastern) (viz., Pollock 1980:220-224, fig. 402; Baudez and Picasso 1992:98).