

**THE CERAMIC COMPLEXES OF THE
TAYASAL-PAXCAMAN ZONE, LAKE PETEN, GUATEMALA**

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Central to the Peten region of Guatemala is the large bifurcated body of water known as Lake Peten-Itza. The Tayasal-Paxcaman Zone is located on the peninsula of land that divides the lake in half. Archaeological investigations were undertaken in this area in 1971, 1977, and 1979, and resulted in the production of a controlled body of excavated ceramics (A. Chase 1979, 1983). The sequence provided by these ceramics extends from the middle part of the Maya Preclassic Period to the Historic occupation of the region (Fig. 1).

***Chunzalam Ceramic Complex**

The earliest recognized pottery from the Tayasal-Paxcaman Zone is related to the Mamom Ceramic Sphere (see Willey, Culbert, and Adams 1967 for a review of sphere designations; see P. Rice 1979a for comparative data from Yaxha), and its date may be projected back to approximately 900 B.C. In general, the ceramics exhibit a harder paste and glossier slip than those of subsequent complexes. Incision and fluting occur relatively frequently as decoration.

*Indicates ceramic complexes, wares, types, or varieties established on the basis of materials in the Tayasal-Paxcaman Zone.

UAXACTUN UNSLIPPED WARE

Achiotes Ceramic Group

Achiotes Unslipped: Achiotes Variety

Jocote Ceramic Group

Palma Daub: Variety Unspecified

***Temchay Ceramic Group**

*Temchay Burnished: Temchay Variety

*Cantara Grooved: Cantara Variety

FLORES WAXY WARE

Chunhinta Ceramic Group

Chunhinta Black: Chunhinta Variety

Deprecio Incised: Deprecio Variety

Centenario Fluted: Centenario Variety

	DATE	TAYASAL	UAXACTUN	TIKAL	BARTON RAMIE	ALTAR	SEIBAL
	1700	late facet					
LATE	1600	---KAUIL---					
POSTCLASSIC	1500	early facet					
	1400						
MIDDLE	1300	COCAHMUT			late facet		
POSTCLASSIC	1200				NEW		
EARLY	1100	late facet					
POSTCLASSIC	1000	CHILCOB			TOWN		
TERMINAL	900	early facet			early facet	JIMBA	
CLASSIC	800	late facet	3	CABAN			
	800	---HOBO---		EZNAB		late facet	BAYAL
LATE	700	early facet	2	IMIX	SPANISH LOOKOUT	---BOCA---	transition
CLASSIC	600	PAKOC	1	IK	TIGER RUN	late facet	TEPEJILOTE
	600					---PACION---	
	500		3	late facet		early facet	
EARLY	500	HOXCHUNCHAN				CHIXOY	?
	400		2	MANIK	HERMITAGE	VEREMOS	
CLASSIC	400					AYN	
	300	YAXCHEEL		early facet			JUNCO
	200		1			SALINAS	
	200	late facet		CIMI	FLORAL		
	100				PARK		
LATE	A.D. 0	KAX		CAUAC		late facet	late facet
	B.C. 100	early facet	CHICANEL		MOUNT HOPE	PLANCHA	CANTUTSE
PRECLASSIC	200			CHUEN	BARTON CREEK	early facet	early facet
	300						
	400			TZEC		late facet	
MIDDLE	400		MAMOM		late facet	SAN	
PRECLASSIC	500					FELIX	ESCOBA
	600	CHUNZALAM			JENNY	early facet	
	700			EB	CREEK		
	800				early facet	XE	REAL
	900						
	1000						

Figure 1. Sequences of ceramic complexes at sites in the southern Maya Lowlands.

***Vecanxan Ceramic Group**

- *Vecanxan Mottled: Vecanxan Variety
- *Cortales Fluted: Cortales Variety

Joventud Ceramic Group

- Joventud Red: Joventud Variety
- Guitara Incised: Guitara Variety

Pital Ceramic Group

- Pital Cream: Pital Variety
- Pital Cream: *Mixuevos Variety
- Muxanal Red-on-cream: Muxanal Variety

MARS ORANGE WARE**Savana Ceramic Group**

- Savana Orange: Savana Variety

***Kax-Chicanel Ceramic Complex**

The two facets of the Kax Ceramic Complex are characterized by monochrome slipping—primarily red, black, or cream. The complex may be dated from 200 B.C. to approximately A.D. 300, and it is a full member of the Chicanel Ceramic Sphere. Either intentionally or unintentionally, many slipped vessels within the complex exhibit a variety of the three base colors. Three kinds of paste may be distinguished. One is very hard and is derivative from the Chunzalam Ceramic Complex; it is characteristic of the early facet pottery of Kax. The second is quite brittle and usually occurs only with red-slipped ceramics; it spans both facets of Kax. The third is an ash-tempered paste that appears primarily during the late facet of the Kax Ceramic Complex.

UAXACTUN UNSLIPPED WARE**Paila Ceramic Group**

- Paila Unslipped: Paila Variety

Sapote Ceramic Group

- Sapote Striated: Sapote Variety

PASO CABALLO WAXY WARE**Sierra Ceramic Group**

- Sierra Red: Sierra Variety
- Sierra Red: Ahuacan Variety
- Sierra Red: *Ax Variety (late facet)
- Laguna Verde Incised: Laguna Verde Variety (early facet)
- Ahcab Red-on-buff: Ahcab Variety (early facet)
- Repasto Black-on-red: Repasto Variety
- *Xex Red: Xex Variety (late facet)
- Anil Orange: Anil Variety(?)

Flor Ceramic Group

- Flor Cream: Flor Variety

Iguana Creek White: Variety Unspecified (late facet)
Accordian Incised: Accordian Variety
Pochitocus Punctated: Pochitocus Variety
Mateo Red-on-cream: Mateo Variety
*Coxu Black-on-cream: Coxu Variety
*Bucut Multicolor: Bucut Variety

Polvero Ceramic Group
Polvero Black: Polvero Variety
Lechugal Incised: Lechugal Variety

Escobal Ceramic Group
Escobal Red-on-buff: Escobal Variety

***UNNAMED GLABROUS WARE**

*Topol Ceramic Group
*Topol Orange: Variety Unspecified (late facet)

UNSPECIFIED WARE

Unspecified Ceramic Group
Sacluc Black-on-Orange: Variety Unspecified (late facet)

***Yaxcheel Ceramic Complex**

Dating from approximately A.D. 300 to 400, the Yaxcheel Ceramic Complex links the Late Preclassic and Early Classic Periods in the Zone. The complex is a peripheral member of the Floral Park Ceramic Sphere. Unlike Floral Park complexes, however, polychrome decoration is extremely rare within the Zone. This decorative absence, in fact, characterizes the Early Classic Period in the Tayasal-Paxcaman Zone; in contrast, this is a time that is architecturally well represented at Tayasal and especially at Cenote.

UAXACTUN UNSLIPPED WARE

Quintal Ceramic Group
Quintal Unslipped: Quintal Variety
Quintal Unslipped: Variety Unspecified

Triunfo Ceramic Group
Triunfo Striated: Variety Unspecified

PASO CABALLO WAXY WARE

Polvero Ceramic Group
Polvero Black: Variety Unspecified

PETEN GLOSS WARE

Aguila Ceramic Group
Aguila Orange: Aguila Variety

HOLMUL ORANGE WARE

Aguacate Ceramic Group

Aguacate Orange: Variety Unspecified

Guacamallo Red-on-orange: Variety Unspecified

*UNNAMED GLABROUS WARE

*Topol Ceramic Group

*Topol Orange: Topol Variety

*Topol Orange: Varieties Unspecified

Metapa Trichrome: Variety Unspecified

*Paxbono Ceramic Group

*Paxbono Black: Paxbono Variety

UNSPECIFIED WARE

Unspecified Ceramic Group

Sacluc Black-on-orange: Variety Unspecified

Caramba Red-on-red-orange: Variety Unspecified

*Hoxchunchan Ceramic Complex

Following a brief flirtation with the Floral Park Ceramic Sphere, the Tayasal-Paxcaman Zone peripherally participated in the Tzakol Ceramic Sphere, well known from Uaxactun (Smith 1955) and Tikal (Culbert 1965-1975) to the north. The basal-flanged polychrome bowls found at these latter two sites, however, are not at all common in the Zone. With the significant exception of this lack of polychrome, the Hoxchunchan Ceramic Complex falls squarely within the Tzakol Ceramic Sphere. The complex may be dated from A.D. 400 to 600.

UAXACTUN UNSLIPPED WARE

Quintal Ceramic Group

Quintal Unslipped: Quintal Variety

Quintal Unslipped: Variety Unspecified

Candelario Appliquéd: Candelario Variety

*Yohchalek Modeled: Yohchalek Variety (Fig. 2b)

Triunfo Ceramic Group

Triunfo Striated: Triunfo Variety

PETEN GLOSS WARE

Aguila Ceramic Group

Aguila Orange: Aguila Variety

Aguila Orange: Variety Unspecified

Aguila Orange: *Oxpayac Variety

Dos Hermanos Ceramic Group

Dos Hermanos Red: Dos Hermanos Variety (late)

Pucte Ceramic Group

Pucte Brown: Pucte Variety

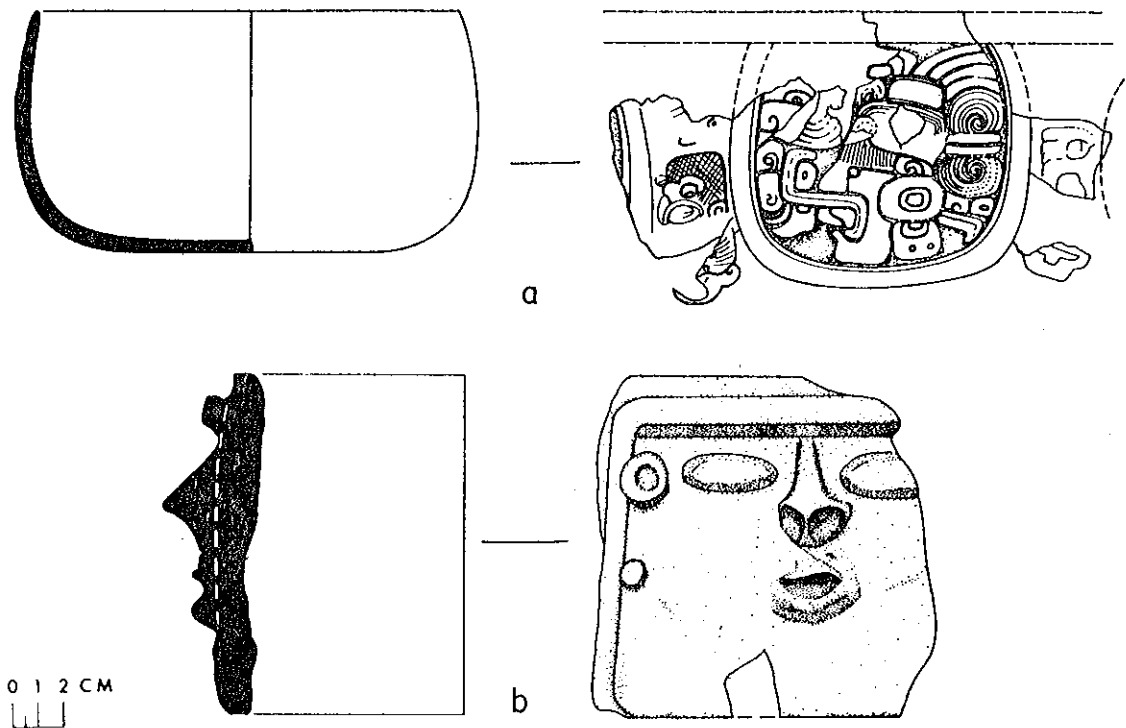


Figure 2. Classic Period pottery of Tayasal. Hoxchuncan Ceramic Complex: a, Urita Gougged-incised: Urita Variety; b, Yochalek Modeled: Yochalek Variety. (Drawings by Sarah J. Ruch, a; Diane Z. Chase, b; 1/3 scale.)

Balanza Ceramic Group

- Balanza Black: Balanza Variety
- Lucha Incised: Lucha Variety
- Urita Gougged-incised: Urita Variety (Fig. 2a)
- Paradero Fluted: Paradero Variety
- Maroma Impressed: Maroma Variety
- Maroma Impressed: *Chachachuron Variety
- Positas Modeled: Variety Unspecified

Dos Arroyos Ceramic Group

- Dos Arroyos Orange-polychrome: Dos Arroyos Variety
- Caldero Buff-polychrome: Variety Unspecified

Discordia Ceramic Group

- Discordia Black: Discordia Variety

***Pakoc-Tepeu Ceramic Complex**

The advent of abundant polychromy in the Tayasal-Paxcaman Zone co-occurs with the onset of the Late Classic Period. The Pakoc Ceramic Complex dates from A.D. 600 to 700 and is a full member of the Tepeu Ceramic Sphere. The types within this complex correspond to similar ones described for Uaxactun (Smith 1955) and Tikal (Culbert 1965-1975).

UAXACTUN UNSLIPPED WARE

Cambio Ceramic Group

Cambio Unslipped: Variety Unspecified

Ucum Unslipped: Variety Unspecified

*Chilonche Unslipped: Chilonche Variety

Encanto Ceramic Group

Encanto Striated: Encanto Variety

PETEN GLOSS WARE

Tasital Ceramic Group

Tasital Red: Tasital Variety

Molino Ceramic Group

Molino Black: Molino Variety

Tinaja Ceramic Group

Chaquiste Impressed: Variety Unspecified

Subin Red: Variety Unspecified

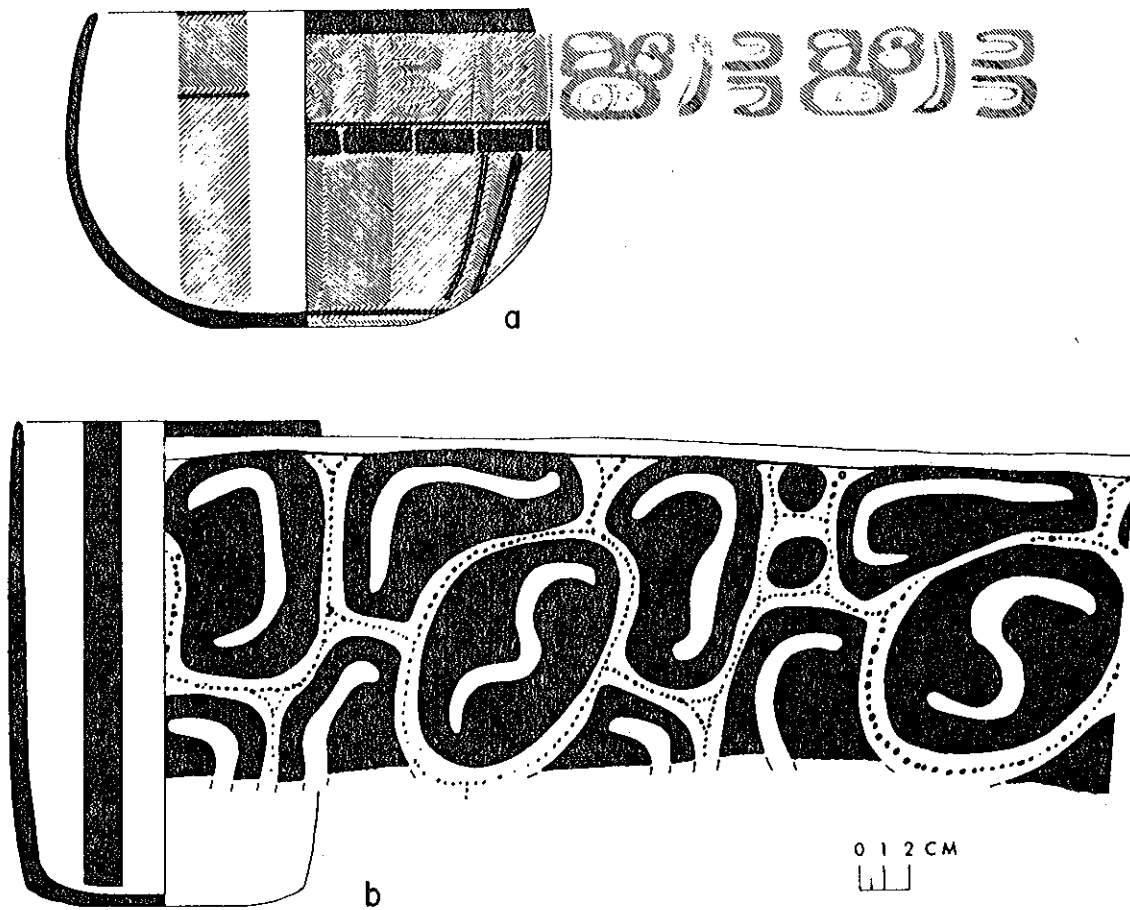


Figure 3. Classic Period pottery of Tayasal. Pakoc-Tepeu Ceramic Complex: a, Saxche Orange-polychrome: Saxche Variety; b, Bejucal Brown-on-buff: Bejucal Variety. (Drawings by Sarah J. Ruch, a; Arlen F. Chase, b; 1/3 scale.)

Saxche Ceramic Group

- Saxche Orange-polychrome: Saxche Variety (Fig. 3a)
- Saxche Orange-polychrome: Variety Unspecified
- Uacho Black-on-orange: Uacho Variety
- Desquite Red-on-orange: Desquite Variety
- Bejucal Brown-on-buff: Bejucal Variety (Fig. 3b)
- Jama Red-polychrome: Jama Variety
- Juleki Cream-polychrome: Variety Unspecified
- Sibal Buff-polychrome: Variety Unspecified

***Hobo-Tepeu Ceramic Complex**

The Hobo Ceramic Complex, dating from A.D. 700 to after A.D. 900, may be subdivided into two temporal facets; both facets are members of the Tepeu Ceramic Sphere. The early facet of Hobo is fully integrated with the ceramics from elsewhere in the Peten; the late facet is clearly derivative from the early facet. Unlike other known Peten ceramic complexes, however, the Tayasal-Paxcaman Zone continues in the Tepeu Ceramic Sphere and rarely exhibits the relatively common model-carving found in the Eznab Ceramic Complex to the north (Culbert 1973) or the abundant fine paste wares found in the Boca-Jimba and Bayal Ceramic Complexes to the south (Sabloff 1973, 1975; Adams 1971, 1973). Unlike the pottery in these other complexes, the Hobo Ceramic Complex evinces ties to the central part of Belize during both facets, specifically to Kik Red (D. Chase 1982: 75-76) in the early facet (as witnessed in Bu. T108-1), and between the locally made Simaron Group (A. Chase 1979: 95-96, 1983: 1213) and Montego Polychrome from Barton Ramie (Gifford 1976: 267) in the late facet.

UAXACTUN UNSLIPPED WARE**Cambio Ceramic Group**

- Cambio Unslipped: Cambio Variety
- Cambio Unslipped: Xax Variety
- Maroma Impressed: Variety Unspecified
- Miseria Appliquéd: Miseria Variety
- Pedregal Modeled: Pedregal Variety

Encanto Ceramic Group

- Encanto Striated: Encanto Variety

PETEN GLOSS WARE**Nanzal Ceramic Group**

- Nanzal Red: Nanzal Variety

Achote Ceramic Group (late facet)

- Achote Black: Variety Unspecified

Meditation Ceramic Group (early and late facets)

- Meditation Black: Variety Unspecified

Palmar Ceramic Group (early)

- Palmar Orange-polychrome: Palmar Variety
- Yuhactal Black-on-red: Yuhactal Variety

Zacatel Cream-polychrome: Zacatel Variety
Paixban Buff-polychrome: Paixban Variety
Mex Composite: Mex Variety

Tinaja Ceramic Group

Tinaja Red: Tinaja Variety
Tinaja Red: *Tanaha Variety
Tinaja Red: Variety Unspecified
Pantano Impressed: Pantano Variety
Chaquiste Impressed: Variety Unspecified
Cameron Incised: Cameron Variety
Cameron Incised: Variety Unspecified

Asote Ceramic Group

Asote Orange: Variety Unspecified

Maquina Ceramic Group

Maquina Brown: Maquina Variety
Pepet Incised: Variety Unspecified

Danta Ceramic Group

Danta Orange-polychrome: Variety Unspecified (Fig. 4)
Saptan Buff-polychrome: Saptan Variety
Lombriz Orange-polychrome: Variety Unspecified
Joyac Cream-polychrome: Variety Unspecified
Jato Black-on-gray: Variety Unspecified
*Chumeru Polychrome: Chumeru Variety
Leona Red-on-orange: Variety Unspecified

BRITISH HONDURAS VOLCANIC ASH WARE

*Simaron Ceramic Group

*Simaron Red-on-orange: Simaron Variety
*Tziche Polychrome: Tziche Variety

FINE ORANGE WARE

Altar Ceramic Group

Tumba Black-on-orange: Tumba Variety

Group Unspecified

Types and Varieties Unspecified

PUUC or CHICHEN RED WARE

Kik Ceramic Group

Kik Red: Variety Unspecified
Tzibana Gouged-incised: Variety Unspecified

THIN SLATE WARE

Ticul Ceramic Group

Xul Incised: Variety Unspecified

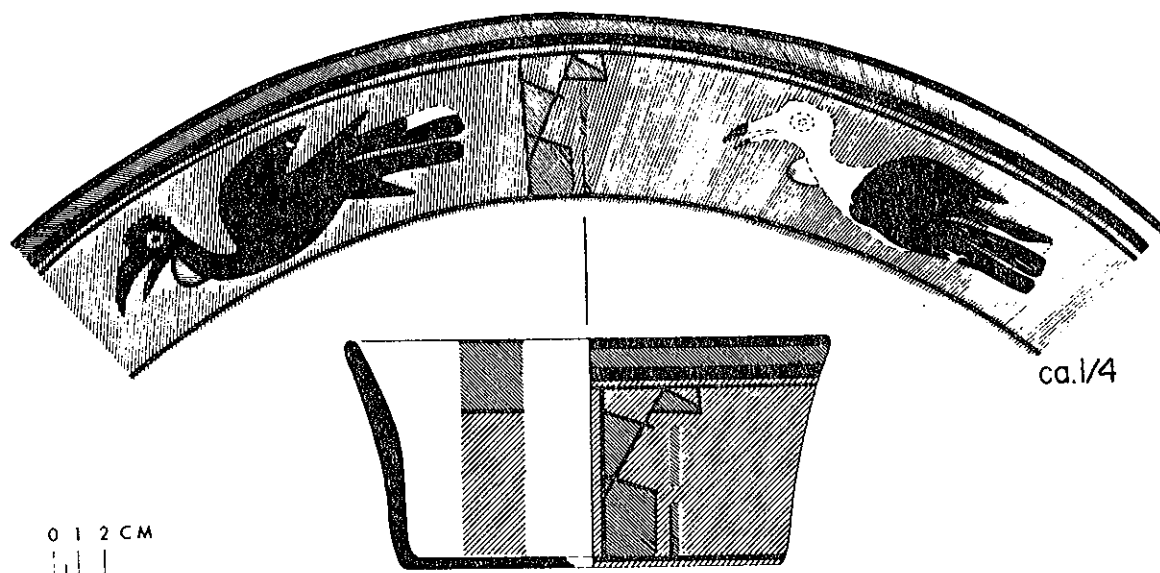


Figure 4. Terminal Classic Period pottery of Tayasal. Hobo-Tepeu Ceramic Complex, Danta Polychrome: Variety Unspecified. (Drawing by Sarah J. Ruch; roll-out about 1/4 scale, vessel 1/3 scale.)

*Chilcob-New Town Ceramic Complex

The Chilcob Ceramic Complex represents a break from the Central Peten ceramic tradition; it may be dated from approximately A.D. 900 to 1200. Two facets may be defined for the complex. While there is a temporal division between these two Chilcob facets, the early facet of Chilcob may be temporally equivalent to the late facet of Hobo. Thus, early Chilcob and late Hobo may represent spatially (and culturally) separated ceramic complexes. As previously noted for the Hobo Ceramic Complex, some linkages may be seen in the Chilcob Ceramic Complex to central Belize. The complex is a full member of the New Town Ceramic Sphere (Sharer and Chase 1976: 289-291). While the early facet exhibits greater standardization of types, the late facet of Chilcob shows a proliferation of ceramic groups and variability, perhaps representing an era of experimentation and integration.

*PASAJA UNSLIPPED WARE

*Nohpek Ceramic Group

*Nohpek Unslipped: Nohpek Variety

*Suctuk Incised: Suctuk Variety

CHAPEL UNSLIPPED WARE

Maskall Ceramic Group (early facet)

Maskall Unslipped: Variety Unspecified

TOHIL PLUMBATE WARE

Tohil Ceramic Group

Malacatan Modeled: Malacatan Variety (early facet)

Probably SAN PABLO GLOSS WARE

Daylight Ceramic Group (early facet)
Daylight Orange: Daylight Variety

*VITZIL ORANGE-RED WARE

Augustine Ceramic Group
Augustine Red: Augustine Variety
Augustine Red: *Buete Variety
Pek Polychrome: Pek Variety (Fig. 5a)
*Chacocote Resist: Chacocote Variety
*Hobitzina Composite: Hobitzina Variety
*Hobonmo Incised: Hobonmo Variety

VOLADOR WARE

(Volador was initially established as a Red ware. At present there is no agreement on a single class term for this ware.)

Tanche Ceramic Group (late facet)
Tanche Red: Tanche Variety
*Jobompiche Red-on-paste: Jobompiche Variety
*Chachacate Polychrome: Chachacate Variety
*Purucila Incised: Purucila Variety

Trapeche Ceramic Group (late facet)
Trapeche Pink: Trapeche Variety
Xuluc Incised: Xuluc Variety
Xuluc Incised: Tan Variety
Mul Polychrome: Mul Variety
Dolorido Polychrome: Dolorido Variety
*Chuntuci Composite: Chuntuci Variety

Paxcaman Ceramic Group (late facet)
Ixpop Polychrome: Variety Unspecified

*Cocahmut Ceramic Complex

The Cocahmut Ceramic Complex may be dated from A.D. 1200 to 1450; it, too, is a full member of the New Town Ceramic Sphere. The diversity seen within the late facet of Chilcob pottery is replaced by an emphasis on standardization of types in the Cocahmut Ceramic Complex. Incision forms the primary decorative mode during the earlier part of the complex, but is rarely used toward the end of the complex. This ceramic complex is well represented in the Tayasal-Paxcaman Zone and population appears to peak during this time (A. Chase 1982, Table 43; see also P. Rice 1979d for comparative data from Topoxte).

*PASAJA UNSLIPPED WARE

*Nohpek Ceramic Group
*Nohpek Unslipped: Nohpek Variety
*Nohpek Unslipped: Variety Unspecified

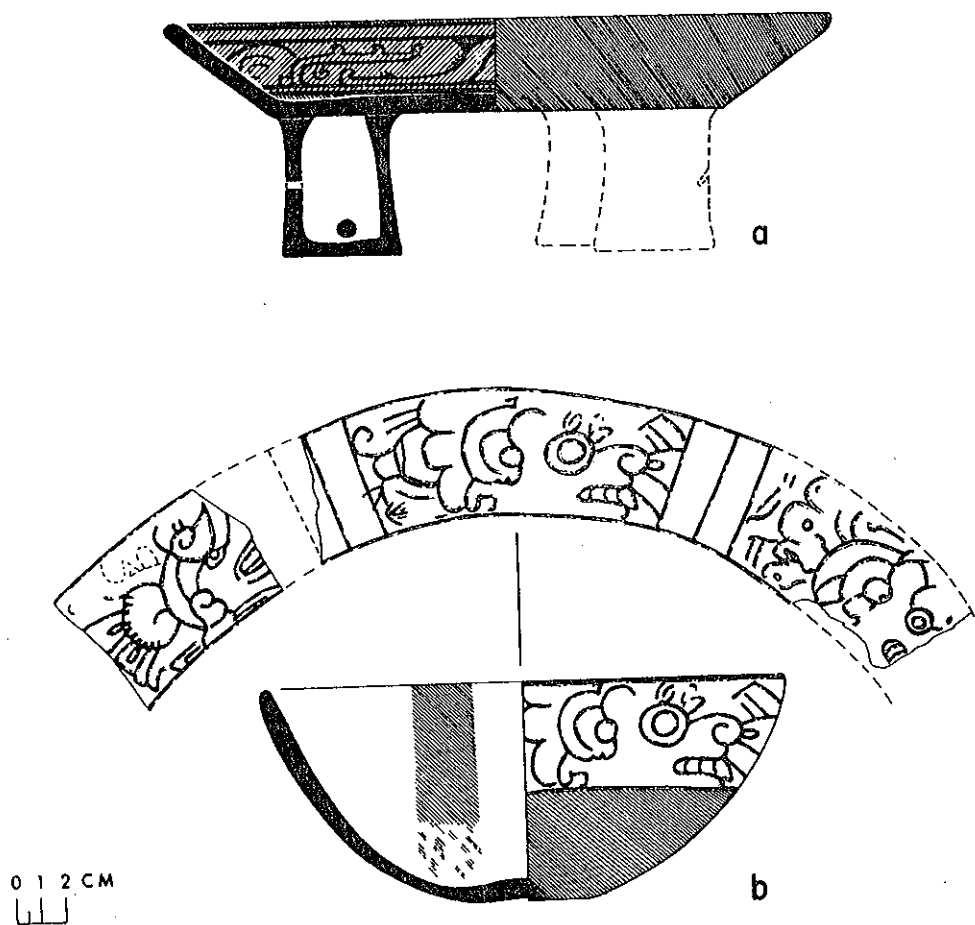


Figure 5. Postclassic Period pottery of Tayasal. Chilcob-New Town Ceramic Complex, a, Pek Polychrome: Pek Variety; Cocahmut-New Town Ceramic Complex, b, Picu Incised: Variety Unspecified. (Drawing by Sarah J. Ruch; 1/3 scale.)

- *Puxteal Modeled: Puxteal Variety
- Special Unnamed

VOLADOR WARE

- Paxcaman Ceramic Group
 - Paxcaman Red: Paxcaman Variety
 - Picu Incised: Picu Variety
 - Picu Incised: Variety Unspecified (Fig. 5b)
 - Picu Incised: *Thub Variety
 - Ixpop Polychrome: Ixpop Variety
 - Saca Polychrome: Saca Variety
 - *Chaman Modeled: Chaman Variety
 - *Juntecholol Composite: Juntecholol Variety

TOHIL PLUMBATE WARE

- Tohil Ceramic Group
 - Tohil Plumbate: Tohil Variety (or Tejutla)

*Kaul Ceramic Complex

The Kaul Ceramic Complex appears to represent a population decline in the Lake Peten vicinity. This complex spans the time from the Late Postclassic through the Historic Period and is tentatively dated from A.D. 1450 to 1750. It has not been formally assigned to a ceramic sphere. Some of its unslipped ceramics are almost identical with those ethnographically recorded from the village of San Jose on the northwest side of Lake Peten (Reina and Hill 1978: 41).

*PASAJA UNSLIPPED WARE

- *Nohpek Ceramic Group (early)
 - *Nohpek Unslipped: Variety Unspecified

MONTICULO UNSLIPPED WARE(?)

- *Chilo Ceramic Group (late)
 - *Chilo Unslipped: Chilo Variety
- *Xuchichini Ceramic Group
 - Xuchichini Unslipped: Xuchichini Variety

VOLADOR WARE

- Paxcaman Ceramic Group
 - Paxcaman Red: *Oppol Variety
 - Macanche Red-on-cream: Variety Unspecified

CLEMENCIA CREAM PASTE WARE

(This paste ware designation applies to the distinctive fabric composition of the vessels in this category. It is not directly comparable to the traditional wares,

such as Peten Gloss Ware, that are established on the basis of surface finish and technological method.)

Topoxte Ceramic Group

Topoxte Red: Topoxte Variety

Chompoxtte Red-on-cream: Chompoxtte Variety

WARE UNSPECIFIED

Tachis Ceramic Group

Tachis Red-on-paste: Tachis Variety

Concluding Remarks

When compared to Tikal and Uaxactun to the north, or to Seibal and Altar de Sacrificios to the south, the pottery recovered from the Tayasal-Paxcaman Zone indicates that this area cannot easily be placed into a superregional ceramic framework. The zone's individuality in ceramics is also replicated in the settlement data and other archaeological remains (A. Chase 1983). In spite of the regionalization evident in the Tayasal-Paxcaman Zone, its overall developmental sequence does conform to the general trajectory of the Southern Lowlands. The punctuated evolution of Maya civilization is especially pronounced in the ceramic sequence, however, in the innovation and experimentation present at both the upper and lower ends of the Classic Period.

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