

1987

Maya Ceramics : Papers from the 1985 Maya Ceramic Conference, edited by Prudence M. Rice and Robert J. Sharer, pp. 73-98. BAR International Series 5345 (i): 73-98. Oxford, England.

Terminal Classic

to Early Historic Period

Vessel Forms from Belize

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1985 CERAMICS CONF.

The sequence of Terminal Classic to Historic period vessel forms in Belize remains to be documented more fully, but there is enough information extant to permit some degree of generalization about form changes and the co-occurrence of attributes that are diagnostic of specific time periods. My frame of reference for the Postclassic is derived largely from my work at the site of Lamanai, in northern Belize, from 1979 to the present. I have used this information, as well as data from sites (see Fig. 1) in the Belize, Caves Branch, Sibun, and Stann Creek valleys (Graham 1985, 1983; Graham et al. 1980, 1985), and Altun Ha (Pendergast 1979, 1982a) to tie some aspects of the Lamanai sequence to Postclassic ceramic events elsewhere.

In the accompanying illustrations I have attempted to assemble forms that represent periods within the Postclassic. Not all chronological periods at Lamanai have been named because only a portion of the ceramic collection has been analyzed. However, provisional names are in use for some phases and these can serve as preliminary devices by which to divide the Postclassic.

THE SEQUENCE IN PERSPECTIVE

The transition effected from the Late Classic to the Postclassic is most clearly manifested at Lamanai in continuous construction and modification of an assemblage of elite residential structures (Plaza N10/3) north of a ceremonial complex that includes N10-9, a large ceremonial structure that continued to be modified until at least the thirteenth century (see Pendergast 1985). In most areas of the site, however, as well as at other sites in Belize, what can viably be called the end of the Classic period is most sharply in evidence in the nature of changes in the

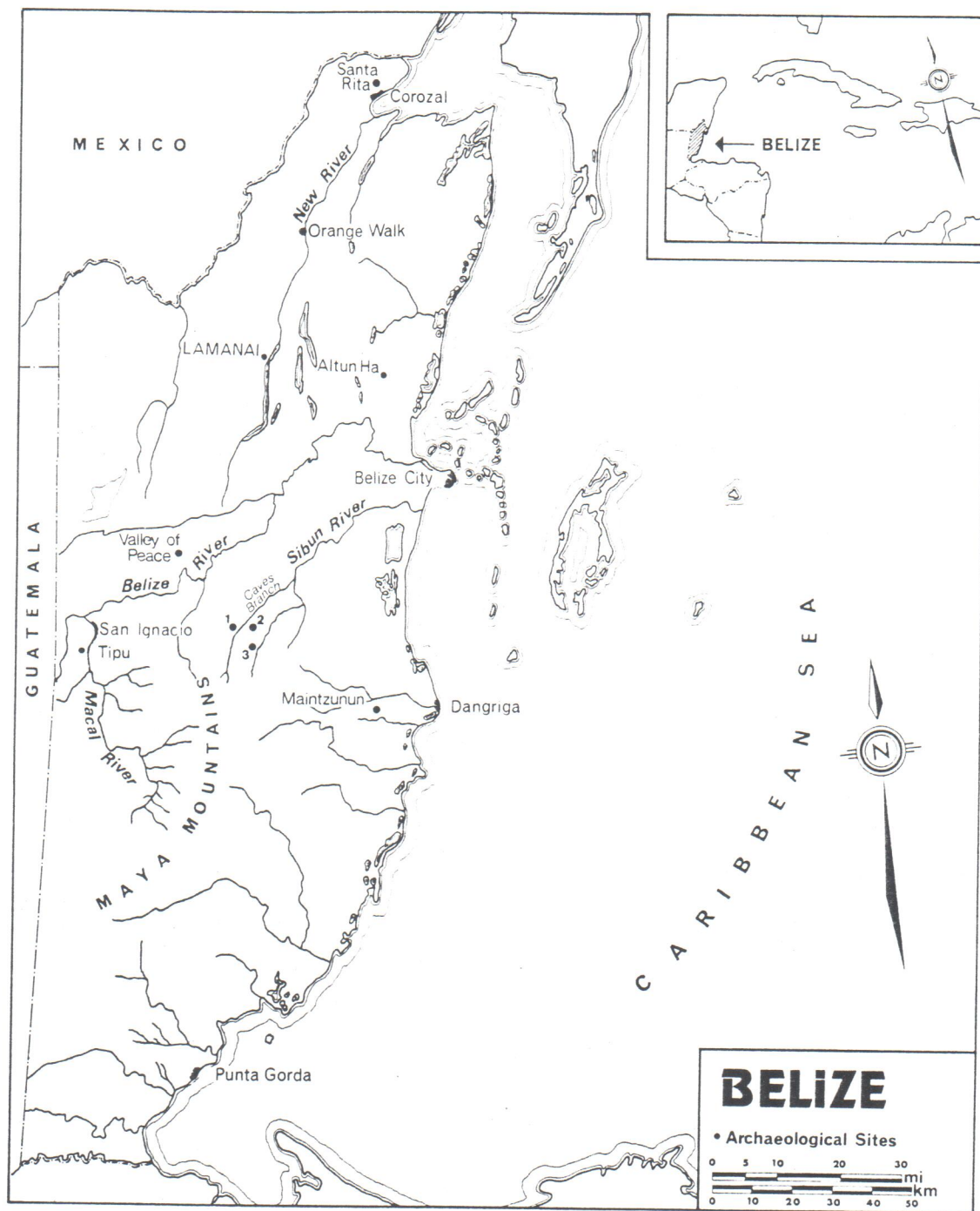


Fig. 1. Map of Belize with sites mentioned in text. 1: Footprint Cave. 2: Actun Tzimin. 3: Chanona Cave.

Vessel Forms from Belize

artifact inventory and architectural sequence from the eighth to ninth century, despite the fact that continuities in ceramic tradition are present.

Therefore at Lamanai, as elsewhere in the southern lowlands (Chase and Chase 1985; Sabloff and Andrews 1986), we are turning to the Terminal Classic period to isolate the trends that in retrospect can be seen as the roots of postclassic culture.

I will not deal with the Late to Terminal Classic changes in any detail here (see Graham 1985:228-229), but I will outline three important points about the Terminal Classic period that bear on the way the ceramics from Terminal Classic times onward can be assessed.

The first critical point is that if the focus of archaeological investigation is any aspect of Maya occupation dating from the ninth century or later, then the excavation strategy employed must be designed specifically to suit depositional patterns that differ markedly from patterns characteristic of the Classic period. Massive construction did not cease everywhere but it diminished considerably. As a result, far fewer artifacts are preserved because only a relatively small portion is sealed in deposits bound up in various ways in construction. Terminal Classic middens occur, but in my experience the ceramics are generally preserved only when the middens have been sealed in one way or another by later occupation or construction deposits, or are protected by being piled against or inside buildings. Evidence for Terminal Classic or later occupation associated with small structures is usually revealed only by extensive exposure of these structures, as several centuries of use can often be represented by only thin scatters of debris. From Terminal Classic times onward, the context within which the ceramic evidence is viewed is not comparable to the context of Classic ceramics, and the approach for structuring sequences of occupation or drawing inferences about settlement patterns must be tailored to suit what is known about Postclassic conditions.

The second point is that our understanding of the changes that took place from Classic to Postclassic times will be increased greatly if we look not at ceramics alone--which, though they indicate a trend toward regionalization, also show aspects of continuity--but rather at the correlation of Terminal Classic ceramic forms and types with the appearance of a new lithic technology characterized by side-notched points. To chart the adoption of side-notched lithic technology in the southern lowlands is, to a great extent, to chart the spread of Postclassic culture. Though the correlation of various aspects of material culture is a given in

archaeological interpretation, the Terminal Classic is perhaps the most critical period in Maya prehistory in which to consider ceramic forms and types against a backdrop of lithic technological change.

Finally, though it is true that from Terminal Classic to Historic times the ceramic assemblages are characterized by great regionalization, it is equally true that as Postclassic pottery becomes increasingly familiar, its forms and treatments are paralleled from site to site. From such recognition of parallels, a more coherent Postclassic sequence is beginning to emerge (see Chase and Rice 1985). Of necessity, however, the sequence begins with a new look at the Terminal Classic.

In the discussion that follows, most of the vessels illustrated are from Lamanai, but a small proportion are from Altun Ha, the Belize valley (Negroman-Tipu and Valley of Peace), the Sibun valley (Actun Polbilche and Chanona cave), and the Caves Branch valley (Actun Tzimin and Footprint caves).

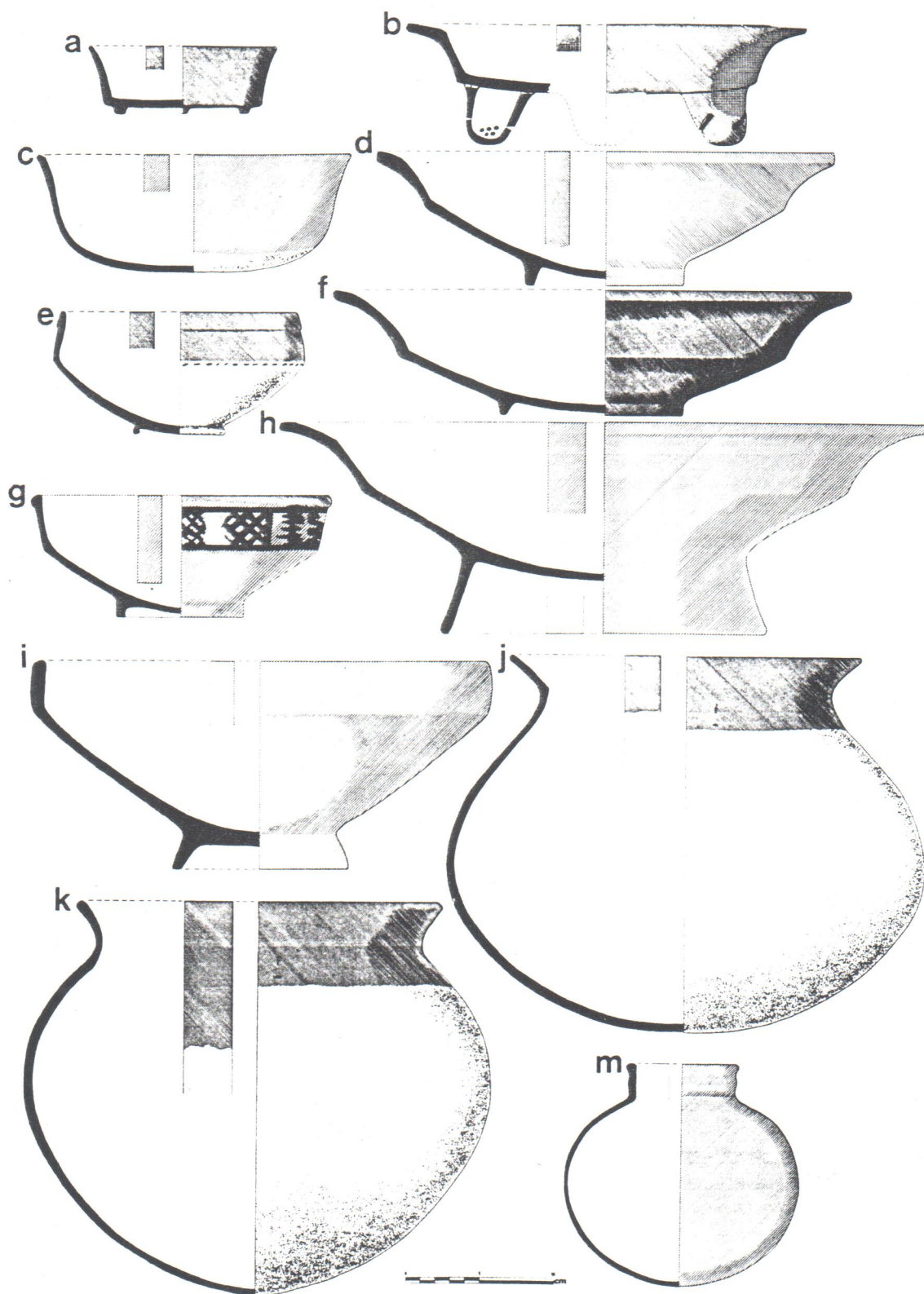
TERMINAL CLASSIC-EARLY POSTCLASSIC PERIOD

Figures 2 and 3 illustrate some of the vessels that are characteristic of the Terminal Classic to early Postclassic period in Belize. Evidence from Lamanai, Altun Ha, and sites in the Stann Creek District indicates that most of these vessels were in use from the ninth to the eleventh century. At Lamanai in particular, massive

Fig. 2. (note: "DOA" serves to designate the Department of Archaeology's catalogue numbers in Belize; where I do not have the specific vessel number, only the site catalogue number is given. All other catalogue or lot numbers are those of the site excavators.)

- a. Lamanai, LA 676/1. Plaza N10/3 group, midden under demolition material between N10-15 and N10-28.
- b. Lamanai, LA 661/2. N10-15, from core of unit of construction in one of the rooms.
- c. Lamanai, LA 678/1. N10-15, midden on north side of bench at west end.
- d. Lamanai, LA 164/6. N10-2, Burial N10-2/39.
- e. Lamanai, LA 656/6. Refuse pit at the northeast corner of N10-15.
- f. Actun Tzimin, DOA 31/189-1: 42.
- g. Altun Ha, RP 239/1. Str. E-7, 2nd A, Burial E-7/16.
- h. Altun Ha, RP 135/17. Str. E-7, final-occupation midden, west face of platform.
- i. Lamanai, LA 569/1. P8-103 refuse, west side.
- j. Actun Polbilche, AP 2/2. Alcove 1.
- k. Actun Polbilche, AP 2/9. Alcove 1.
- m. Lamanai, LA 640/4. N10-15, Cache N10-15/2.

Vessel Forms from Belize



and continuous construction in the Plaza N10/3 group, as noted above, is documented during this period. In other areas of the site large middens that contained most of the ceramic forms of the period have been found along the terrace faces at the sides of Late Classic buildings and in various rooms. In at least two architectural groups, the Plaza N10/3 complex and N10/8, these ceramics are overlain by forms and types representative of the Middle Postclassic period or "Buk" phase.

Figure 2b is not a representative Lamanai form, though the lip treatment may be a Lamanai variation on a foreign theme. I have included it because it is one of the few examples of a form more closely akin to those of central Belize and Peten--a flat bottomed bowl with "oven" feet. The practice of producing enlarged, hollow, and vented feet is not common at Lamanai until the Buk phase, whereas such treatment appears with greater frequency in Peten and central Belize in Terminal Classic times (see, e.g., Pendergast 1969; Sabloff 1975). The occurrence of the flat bottomed bowl with large, hollow, vented feet with Terminal Classic ceramics at Lamanai is consistent with dating farther south, but its infrequent appearance suggests that ceramic trends were in progress at Lamanai that were different from those in Peten and some parts of Belize.

Of the other vessels, Figures 2d, f, and h represent a form that is a marker for the Terminal Classic period. Though I am not aware of the occurrence of this form in Peten, it is widespread in Belize and occurs as a variety of types (e.g., Roaring Creek Red and Daylight Orange, types established in Gifford 1976). It is found at sites in the Stann Creek District (Graham 1983, 1985), in the Caves Branch valley (at Actun Tzimin), the Sibun valley (at Actun Polbilche [Pendergast 1974]), at Altun Ha (Pendergast 1982a), and in northern Belize at Lamanai and San Jose (Thompson 1939). It is a long-lived form that, as Pendergast has pointed out (personal communication, 1985), seems to have evolved by elongation of the pedestal base and exaggeration of the lip into the "chalice" form so characteristic of the Buk phase (see Fig. 5d, e,; and Pendergast 1981a: Fig. 15).

The basal-break bowls of Figure 2e, g, and i also appear to be antecedent forms of Buk-phase pedestal base bowls such as Figure 4a and b. Terminal Classic slipped bowls such as Figure 2c are common, and seem to be the antecedent form for Buk bowls with elaborate incised designs such as Figure 5j and k.

Large jars with slipped or washed rims are common in Belize from Middle Preclassic to Postclassic times. In the Terminal Classic period the rims are slipped red down to the shoulder, and the bodies of the jars can be

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Vessel Forms from Belize

striated or plain. The forms and treatment represented by Figure 2j and k are common at Lamanai, though the illustrated vessels are from Actun Polbilche. Figure 2j is notable in that the treatment of the rim presages the sharp flare characteristic of jars from the Buk phase through early Historic times. The jar of Figure 2m shows a bulge in the neck that becomes a more common attribute in Postclassic times, whereas the flat bottomed tripod bowl of Figure 2a is reminiscent of Late Classic forms.

Aside from the forms illustrated here, there is a bottle shape that is also diagnostic of the Terminal Classic period; like the bowls of Figure 2d, f, and h, it occurs in both northern and central Belize (Gifford 1976:240, Fig. 148; Pendergast 1985: Fig. 2f). There is also a barrel- or cylindrical-shaped vase form that occurs at Lamanai with modeled-carved decoration (see examples of Fig. 3); the form is common in central Belize, and may, in fact, be more typical of that region than of the north.

Modeled-carved vessels are problematic, to say the least. I know of only one from a stratified context in Belize--a cache vessel excavated at Maintzunun along Silk Grass Creek in the Stann Creek District (Graham et al. 1980)--where it has been dated to the ninth or early tenth century. Three of the vessels illustrated here (Fig. 3a, b, and c) exhibit a scene that is a common theme on modeled-carved vessels in Belize (Graham et al. 1980). The variety in execution of the scene and in pastes of the vessels (compare Fig. 3a from Valley of Peace with 3b from Chanona cave) indicates that at least in this case no mold was used to control execution, as was the case with Pabellon Modeled-carved (Sabloff 1975:195). A template or drawings must have been in widespread use, however, because standardized elements occur at a number of sites (Lamanai, Altun Ha, Valley of Peace, Chanona cave, and Footprint cave).

Modeled-carved vessel sherds at Lamanai are found mostly as surface scatters over Late Classic buildings, and only occasionally in Terminal Classic middens. The vessels do not seem to have been a common type or form, and as evidence from caves suggests, they may have functioned solely in a ritual context.

Generally speaking, red is the dominant Terminal Classic slip color. The slips often have a Preclassic look and feel, though they do not adhere to the vessel body nor retain the sort of luster that is characteristic of Preclassic ceramics. Except for the modeled-carved vessels, creative efforts seem to have been channeled more into experimental form variations than into painting, incision or other surface treatments. As the Terminal Classic period progressed, orange slips appear with more frequency. By the twelfth century, when what we have

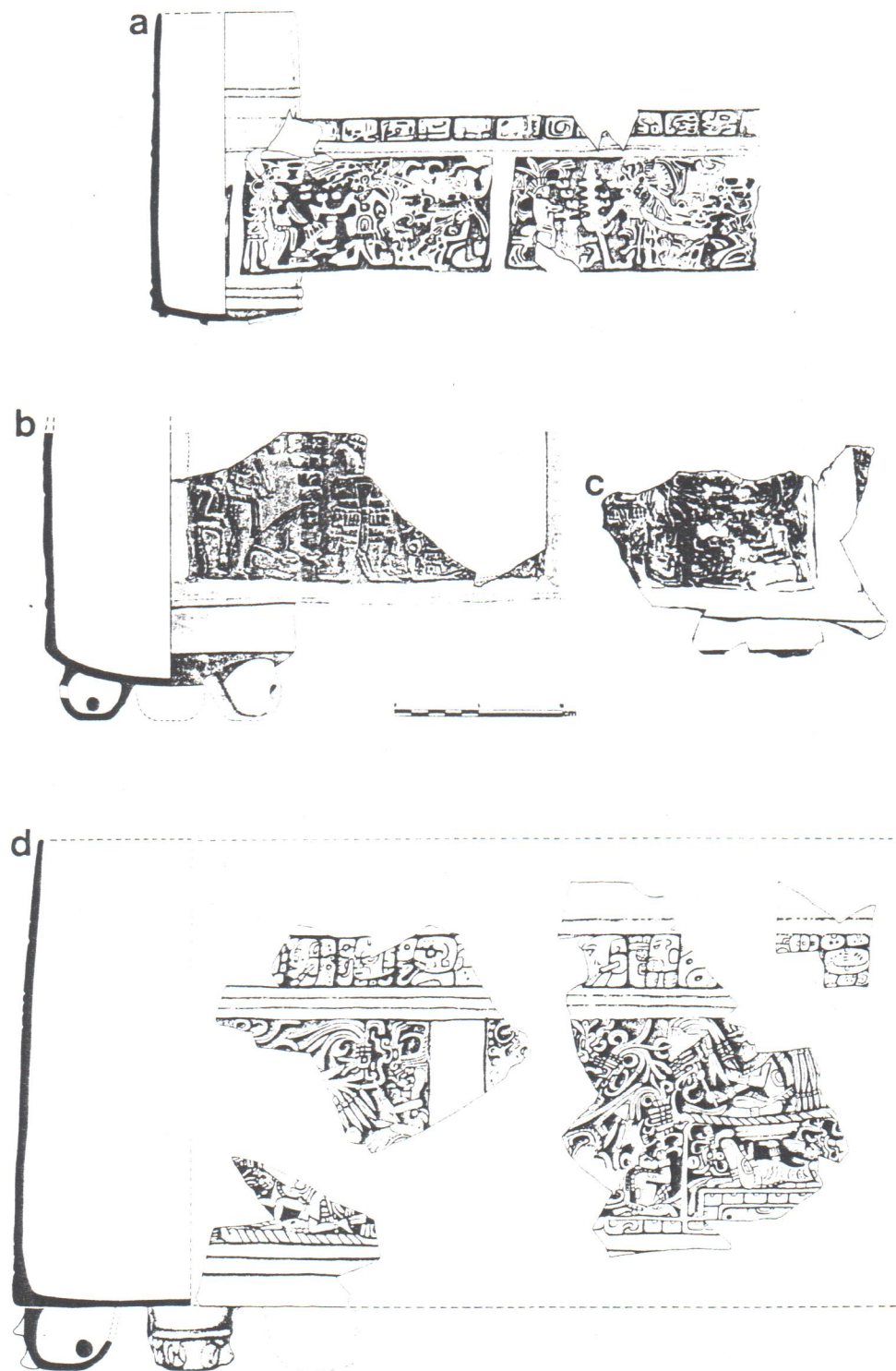


Fig. 3. a) Valley of Peace, DOA 30/191-2. b) Chanona Cave, DOA 32-189-5:8. c) Footprint Cave, DOA 31/189-15:2. d) Lamanai, OLA 661/1, surface of N10-15.

Vessel Forms from Belize

called Buk phase ceramics were in full flower, orange was the preferred slip color. At Lamanai, at least, forms had become standardized--that is, repeatedly produced over a period of time--while post-slip incision dominated vessel decorative treatment.

The picture from central Belize is far less clear, because less work with a Postclassic focus has been carried out there. However, the evidence so far from Tipu suggests that by the twelfth century whatever ties may have existed with northern Belize in earlier times had been loosened, and the ceramic tradition known to be characteristic of Peten had come to dominate (see Rice 1985).

BUK PHASE - THE MIDDLE POSTCLASSIC

Many Buk-phase forms have been published elsewhere (Pendergast 1981a, 1982b). Here I have chosen to illustrate forms that have antecedents in the Terminal Classic period, or that presage later Postclassic treatments. The ceramics on which the characterization of the Buk phase is based were produced in quantity by AD 1140. This calendar date is the mean of a series of radiocarbon dates from Structure N10-2, one of the major sources of burial-associated Buk ceramics. Given the minimal variation in forms apparent at this time, it is reasonable to assume that at least some of the vessels of this phase had begun to be made and used a half-century earlier, and possibly as early as AD 1050, in order for this standardization to develop. Because there is continuity as well as change from Terminal Classic times, it is difficult to think in terms of a "starting date" for this phase. What can be said at this juncture is that the most significant changes in emphasis in ceramic and lithic manufacture took place at Lamanai in the tenth and eleventh centuries: incised decoration came to dominate as decorative treatment; red slips gave way to overwhelming use of a bright, lustrous orange; the last easily traceable ties to Classic Maya culture, such as polychrome decoration or even the depiction of ritual scenes on pots in the modeled-carved technique, disappeared; and side notched projectile points were manufactured to the exclusion of the stemmed bifaces or stemmed macroblades of earlier times. By AD 1150, Buk-phase ceramics and lithics had become standardized (at least in comparison with the two centuries that had gone before); AD 1050 can be reasonably chosen as that great archaeological fiction, the "start" of the Buk phase. It is probably best, however, to hold the pinpointing of a starting date in abeyance until all of the materials from Lamanai are analyzed.

A closing date for the Buk phase is even more

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difficult to fix, not because we lack evidence, but because of the abundant evidence for a gradual transition to the Cib phase, at least ceramically speaking, in both ritual and utilitarian vessels. In a very real sense, any precise closing date would be misleading, as indeed it would be for other phases, at Lamanai and elsewhere. Suffice it to say that from about AD 1300 to 1400 ceramic slips and styles gradually changed in the direction of a range of treatments that can be said to characterize ceramic expression of the Cib or "Tulum-related" phase from about 1350 to some time late in the fifteenth century. I summarize these changes in the discussion of Cib ceramics.

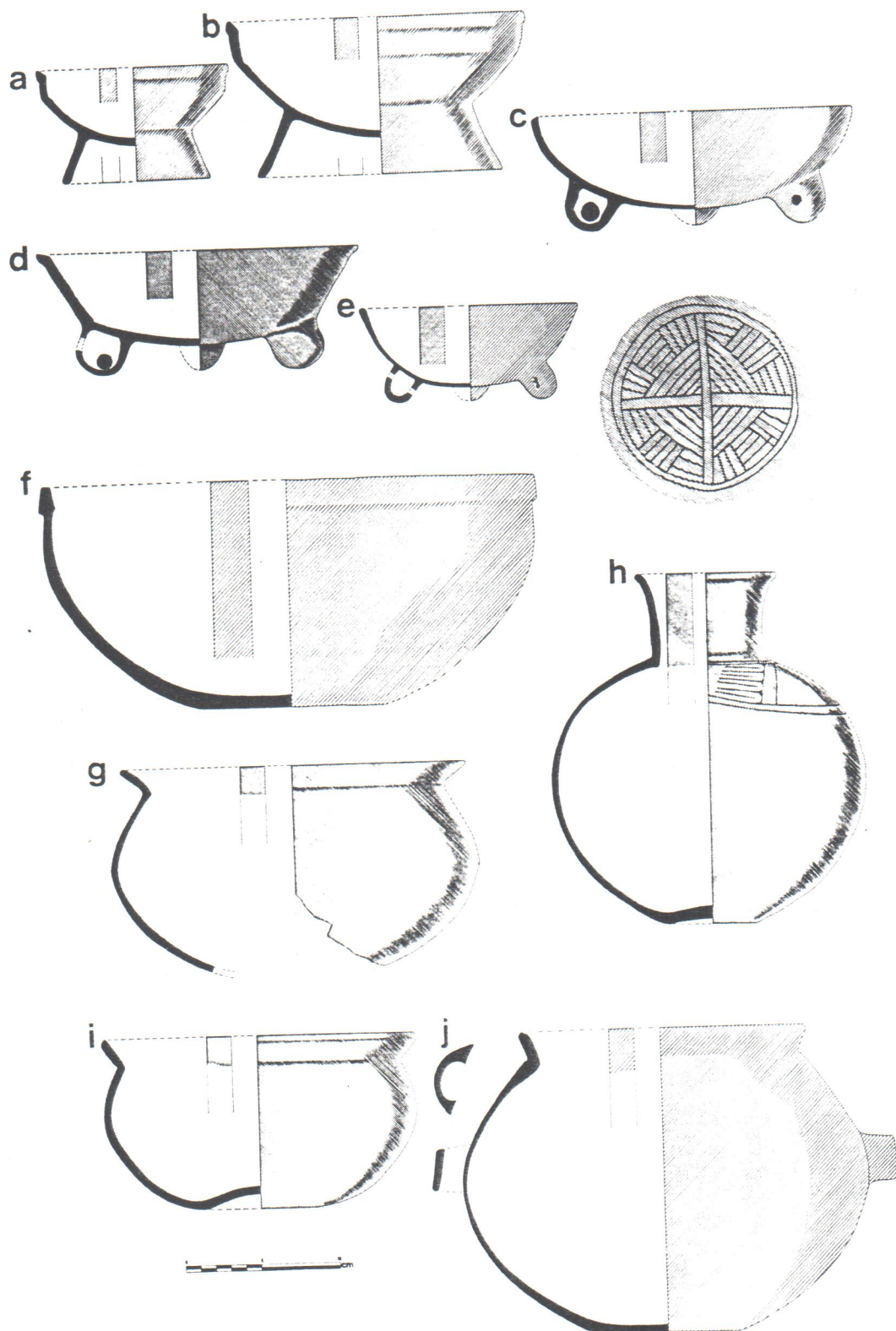
In general terms, Buk-phase ceramics are notable for: 1) the preference for orange, lustrous slips; 2) elaborate post-slip incised decoration, usually limited to bands around vessel rims, shoulders, or walls; 3) bowls with tripod, hollow vented feet that often occur as effigies of animals, or what are assumed to be gods; 4) frequent ornamentation of bowls and some censer forms with segmented flanges, often with incised decoration; 5) the collared rim treatment on jars and wide mouthed bowls; and 6) applied effigy figures of animals and gods that make their appearance on the sides of censers and bowls, or that occur as hollow vessels apparently used to contain offerings.

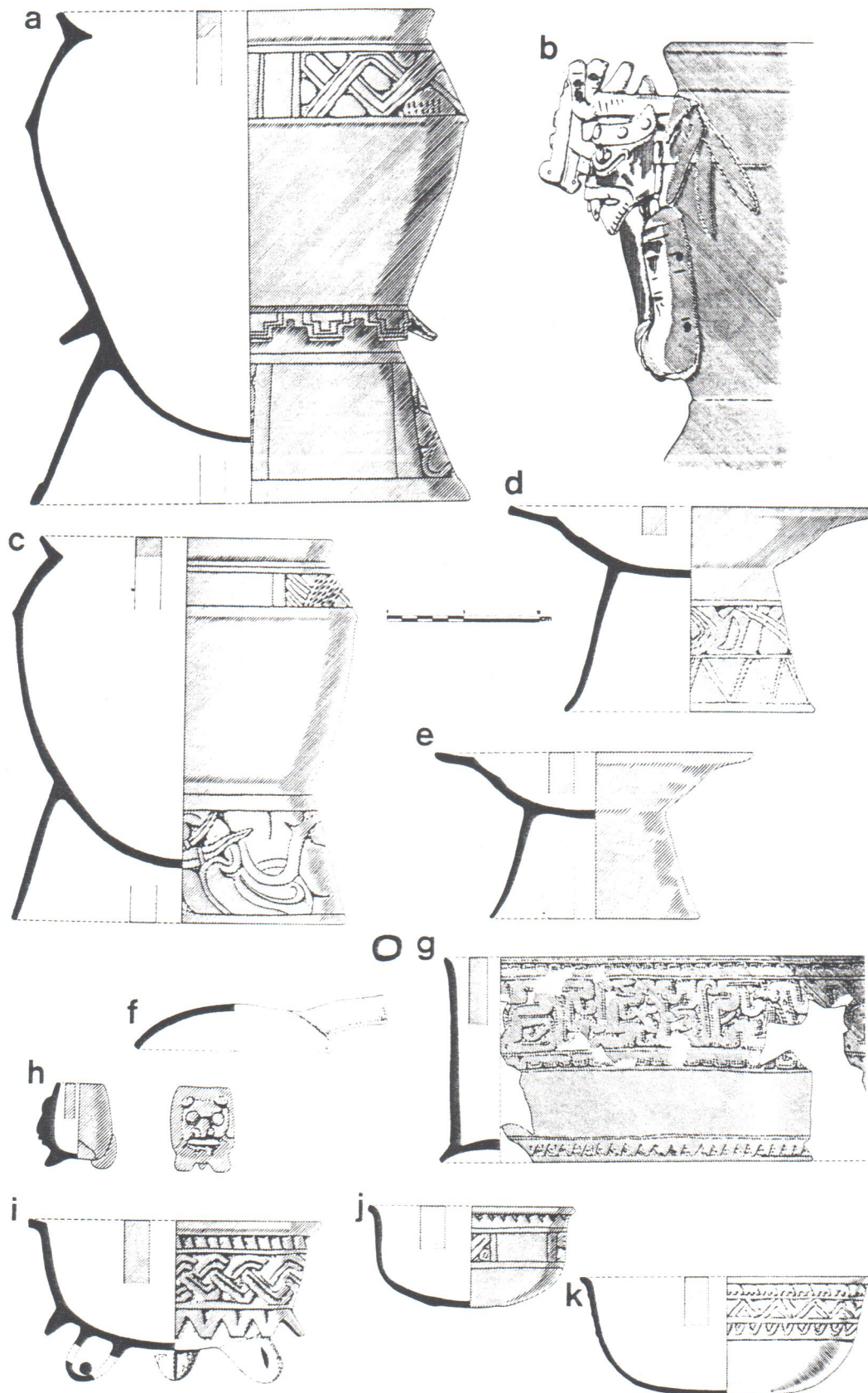
The basal-break pedestal base bowls of the Buk phase (Fig. 4a and b) and the "chalices" (Fig. 5d and e) have been discussed above as having antecedents in Terminal Classic forms. The slipped censers (Fig. 5a, b, and c) are markers for this phase in the Postclassic, and those with applique effigy figures (Fig. 5b; see also Loten 1985: Fig. 3) can be viewed as precursors of the Mayapan-style censers (Chen Mul Modeled) so common in Late Postclassic times (Pendergast 1981c; Smith 1971: Fig. 67).

Fig. 4.

- a. Lamanai, LA 102/1. N10-7, Burial N10-7/2.
- b. Lamanai, LA 122/2. N10-2, Burial N10-2/18.
- c. Lamanai, LA 92/2. N10-4, Burial N10-4/30.
- d. Lamanai, LA 118/1. N10-2, Burial N10-2/16.
- e. Lamanai, LA 62/71. Midden, west side of N10-2.
- f. Lamanai, LA 13/2. N10-1, Burial N10-2, placed in an addition to the main structure, assoc. with censer similar to Fig. 5b.
- g. Lamanai, LA 58/2. N10-2, Burial N10-2/9, post abandonment.
- h. Lamanai, LA 127/9. N10-2, Burial N10-2/20.
- i. Lamanai, LA 12/1. N10-2, Cache N10-2/1.
- j. Lamanai, LA 133/1. N10-4, Burial N10-4/41.

Vessel Forms from Belize





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Vessel Forms from Belize

A wide variety of "frying pan" censers (Fig. 5f) appeared at this time; many have an animal-head effigy embellishing the tubular handle, and the orientation of the head indicates that the censer was in fact a kind of lid that either covered another vessel, or capped the incense or other material being burned. The interiors of the censers and the hollow handles are always heavily blackened; such blackening of the handles obviously could not have occurred if the vessels were held in the "frying pan" position.

Tripod bowls with hollow, vented feet (Fig. 5i) were produced in great numbers during this phase. Characteristically, the feet are often in the form of effigies (Pendergast 1981a, 1982b). Bowls such as those shown in Figure 5j and k have shape precedents in Terminal Classic times, such as Figure 2c, but the orange slip and elaborate bands of incision are markers for the Buk phase. The vase in Figure 5g is not a common form, but it is notable because it bears some resemblance to the straight-sided vases of the Terminal Classic period, and because it dates from the earliest part of the Buk phase.

Figure 5h is an example of the unslipped but often painted effigy censers that were common from the Buk phase through to Historic times. Though change is clearly manifested in the style of the large censers with applied anthropomorphic figures from Buk to Cib times (compare Fig. 5b to the "Mayapan-style" censer of Pendergast 1981c; Fig. 5), the smaller censers show less change through time. Unless paste and/or firing variations hold some clues, there are many cases in which these sorts of

Fig. 5.

- a. Lamanai, LA 95/1. N10-7, Burial N10-7/1.
- b. Lamanai, LA 61/1. N10-2, Burial N10-2/10; fold foil and copper bell also associated with this burial.
- c. Lamanai, LA 95/6. N10-7, Burial N10-7/1.
- d. Lamanai, LA 243/20. Found scatter over stair of N10-9.
- e. Lamanai, LA 243/4. Found scattered over stair of N10-9.
- f. Lamanai, LA 390/3. From core of N9-59, a small platform built in the area of the former plaza of a ceremonial group abandoned at the end of the Classic period.
- g. Lamanai, LA 21/9. N10-1, Burial N10-1/1.
- h. Lamanai, LA 34/7. N10-2, Cache N10-2/2; also contained corn and beans.
- i. Lamanai, LA 127/5. N10-2, Burial N10-2/20.
- j. Lamanai, LA 123/5. N10-2, Burial N10-2/19.
- k. Lamanai, LA 176/3. N10-2, Burial N10-2/45.

censers--cup and bowl shapes with applied effigy figures, or simply hollow effigy figures--could date anywhere from the twelfth century to Historic times.

Buk-phase ceramics have been identified at a few other sites in Belize. At Altun Ha (Pendergast 1982a:140) and Mayflower, near Maintzunun in the Stann Creek District (Graham 1985:222), censers and chalices were found fragmented over the collapse debris of abandoned Classic-period ceremonial buildings. Reconnaissance in 1984 and excavation in 1986 show that Buk-phase vessels occur in quantity at the site of Marco Gonzalez, on Ambergris Cay, in building core and midden contexts. The substantial amount of cultural material from this phase suggests that Marco Gonzalez was the site of intensive activity in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. At Negroman-Tipu, on the Macal River in the Cayo District, small numbers of sherds from Buk-phase vessels have been recovered consistently in core and midden lots of various structures. In some cases deposition is clearly non-primary, as in the core lots. In the case of the middens there are too few sherds to enable us to assess securely whether the Buk-phase sherds are contemporaneous with the early Postclassic Peten and central Belize types with which they occur, but indications are that this is so.

Analysis of the Tipu ceramics is in progress (Rice 1985) and conclusions have yet to be reached. At this stage, my overview of the Tipu ceramics has led me to note parallels between the lustrous orange-red slip of the Augustine Red at Tipu and the orange slip of Buk-phase ceramics. There are certainly general form parallels in the presence of collared jars and bowls, and in the form of grater bowls (see the Tipu vessels illustrated in Fig. 6a and b). The vessels illustrated in Figure 6a, b and c are from an Early Postclassic midden (based on the presence of Augustine Red) at Tipu which has yielded three obsidian hydration dates falling within the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries (AD 1155 +/- 39 years; AD 1163 +/- 28 years; AD 1201 +/- 50 years). These dates fall in the late part of the Early Postclassic in Peten and central Belize, but they are not out of line with it. The presence in the Tipu midden of a black fire-clouded variant of Augustine Red (Fig. 6c), a variant believed to be characteristic of Middle Postclassic times (Rice 1985), suggests that deposition of the midden probably took place in the latter part of the Early Postclassic continuum, according to Peten chronology.

Therefore, indications are that the "Middle" Postclassic or Buk phase at Lamanai (so called because of the clear transition from Terminal Classic times where Early Postclassic forms and types take root) parallels at least the latter part of the Early Postclassic of Peten and central Belize.

Fig.
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Vessel Forms from Belize

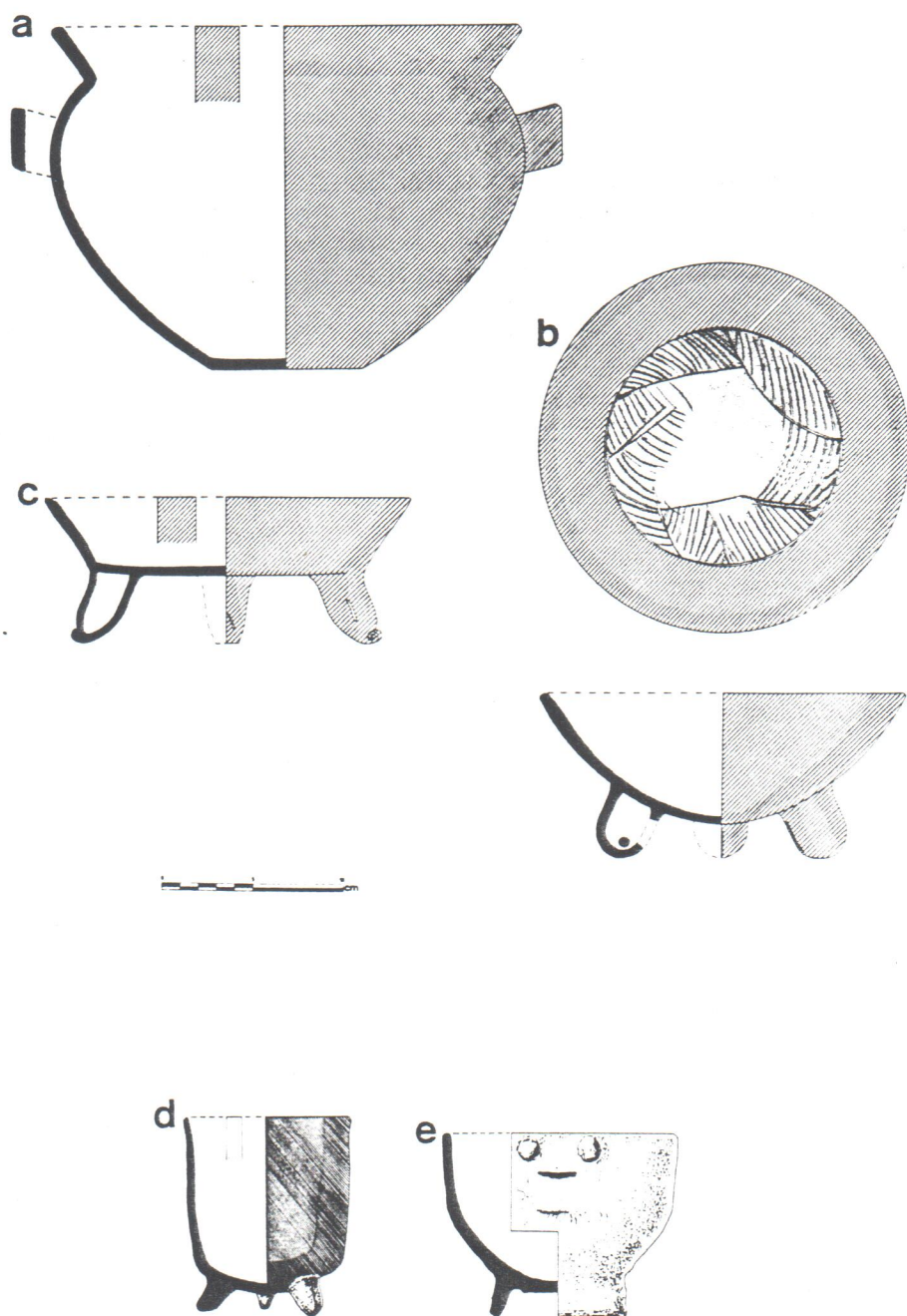


Fig. 6. a) Negroman-Tipu, T-245/1. b) Negroman-Tipu, T-366/1. c) Negroman-Tipu, T-245/2. d) Negroman-Tipu, MT-308/1. e) Negroman-Tipu, MT-308/2.

CIB PHASE - THE LATE POSTCLASSIC

The ceramics of this phase remain less fully documented than those of the preceding phase because a great deal of the material occurs in midden contexts, and the unslipped utilitarian ceramics from these contexts have not yet been analyzed. However, a range of vessels from stratigraphically controlled primary contexts, such as burials and offerings, has been studied and illustrated (see, e.g., Pendergast 1981b) and this has permitted at least some generalization regarding changes in ceramic treatments from the preceding Buk phase.

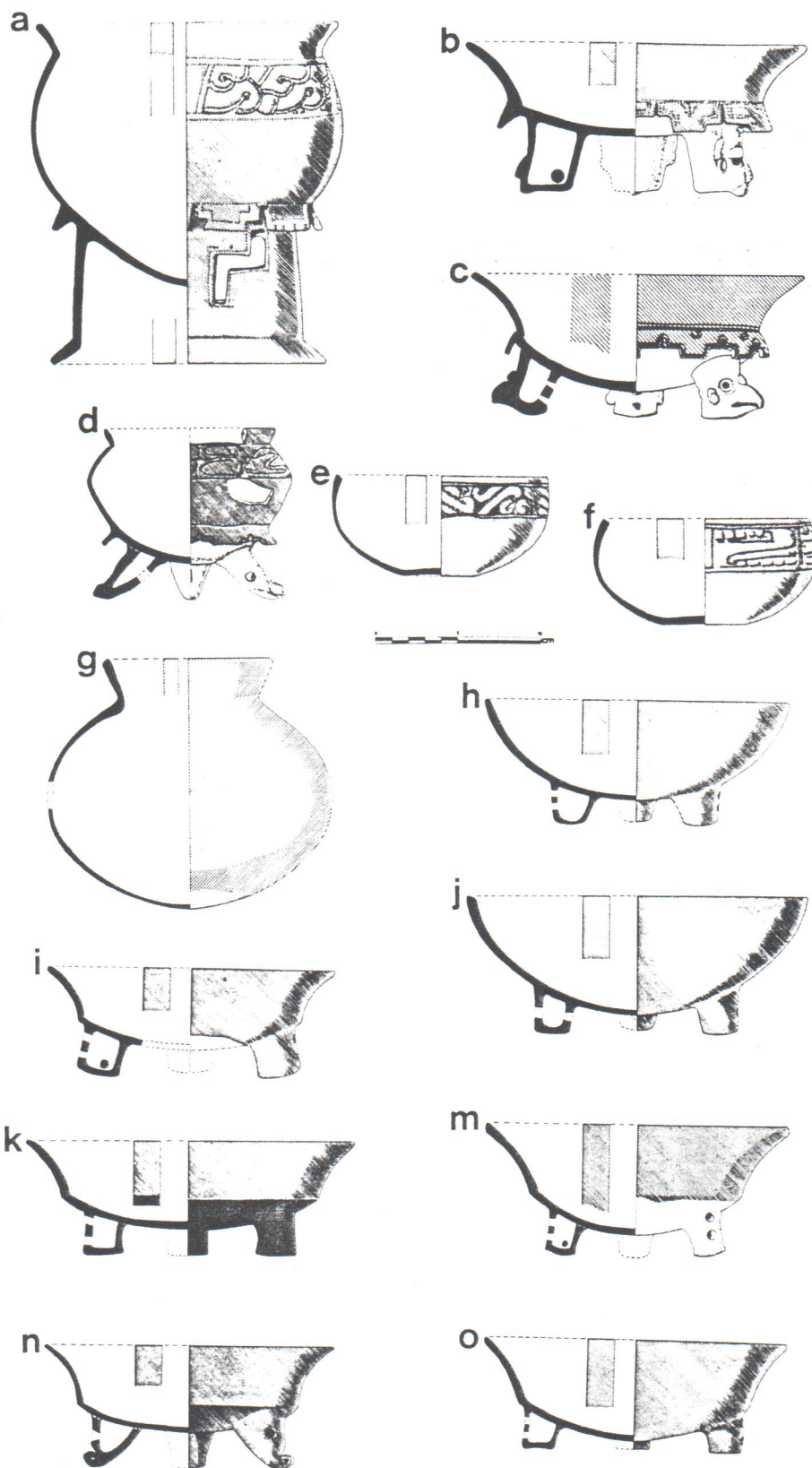
Continuity is in evidence in the persistence of the emphasis on post-slip incised decoration. The slipped flanged censer with pedestal base (Fig. 5a) continued to be made (Fig. 7a), though it was diminished in size. The penchant for hollow effigy feet continued, though the forms of the flanged bowls to which they were attached changed significantly, as did the angle and resting surface of the feet, which tended to be flat (Fig. 7b, c). It is at this time that the characteristic "sag-bottom" bowl, best known from the site of Tulum (Sanders 1960; Fig. 4a) made its appearance at Lamanai; it is certainly a marker for this phase (Fig. 7b, c, i, k-o). Hollow vented feet diminish in size, and a common form is cylindrical with a vertical pair of circular vents (Fig. 7h-m, o). The Peten-central Belize "slipper" or "scroll" foot is not a Postclassic form at Lamanai, but a variation makes a late appearance at the site in the vessel illustrated in Figure 7n, found in a burial along with the "Tulum-like" sag-bottom bowl with vented cylindrical feet in Figure 7k.

The preferred slip color changed to red in the Cib phase, and the slip surfaces are not as lustrous as are

Fig. 7.

- a. Lamanai, LA 24714. N10-4, Burial N10-4/46; carved bone tube also from this burial (Pendergast 1981).
- b. Lamanai, LA 63/1. Midden at east face of N10-4.
- c. Lamanai, LA 247/15. Burial N10-4/46.
- d. Lamanai, LA 264/1. Misc. Burial N10/10.
- e. Lamanai, LA 247/12. Burial N10-4/46.
- f. Lamanai, LA 247/22. Burial N10-4/46.
- g. Lamanai, LA 102/8. N10-7, Burial N10-7/2.
- h. Lamanai, LA 91/3. Burial N10-4/29.
- i. Lamanai, LA 89/4. Burial N10-4/26.
- j. Lamanai, LA 90/1. Burial N10-4/28.
- k. Lamanai, LA 773/1. Camp Midden Burial 5.
- m. Lamanai, LA 81/1. Burial N10-4/19.
- n. Lamanai, LA 73/1. Burial N10-4/10.

Vessel Forms from Belize



those of the Buk-phase orange. Collared jars with horizontal strap handles have antecedents in Buk-phase forms, but are slipped red rather than orange. Unslipped utilitarian jars, bowls, and plates seem to show fewer changes from the Buk-phase repertoire than do the slipped ceramics but further analysis is necessary before continuity and change can be charted. As noted above, the dominant large-sized effigy censer of this phase is the well known "Mayapan-style" or Chen Mul Modeled type (Pendergast 1981c: Fig. 5; Smith 1971: Fig. 67). Smaller censers often take the form of cups with a pedestal base and effigy figure applied on the side (Pendergast 1985: Fig. 4b); alternatively, the effigy itself is hollow and was used to contain an offering of some kind (as in Pendergast 1985: Fig. 5c, though this particular example is probably Terminal Postclassic). Censers and jars with applied fillets and bosses (Cehac-Hunacti Composite) are also documented for this period, and continued to be made as late as the seventeenth century (see below).

The starting date for this phase is, as noted above, difficult to pinpoint, though the ceramics as described were standardized by about AD 1400. Though unslipped censer (and some jar) types such as Chen Mul Modeled and Cehac-Hunacti Composite continued to be made with little change through to Historic times, it is not yet entirely clear whether some other Cib phase vessels also remained in use at the time of the Conquest. However the presence of Yglesias phase Terminal Postclassic pottery together with European-made ceramics and European artifacts (see below) in several middens associated with Historic period structures has made it clear that the Yglesias ceramic assemblage, and not Cib phase pottery, dominated at the time the Spanish began their incursions into Yucatan and Belize in the mid-sixteenth century. Cib phase ceramics do not occur in these middens, except as occasional sherds, a situation that may be paralleled at Santa Rita where Tulum-related ceramics only show up in the core of Late Postclassic structures dated by Rita Red ceramics (D. Chase 1984; A. and D. Chase 1985:15).

Cib phase "Tulum-related" ceramics are relatively widespread in Belize and occur at least as far south as the Stann Creek District (Graham 1985:226-227). Unfortunately, however, they are often found on the surface, as at sites near Lamanai or at Colson Point (Graham 1985:226-227), or in mixed deposits, as at Tipu, or in post-abandonment accumulation, as at Altun Ha (Pendergast 1967, 1982a:169, 204, 220, 251, 257). At Colha, in northern Belize, vessels similar to those of the Lamanai Cib phase have been dated to the later part of the Postclassic sequence (Valdez, personal communication 1985), but as at Lamanai, chronological bracketing for this phase can only be estimated.

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YGLESIAS PHASE
TERMINAL POSTCLASSIC-EARLY HISTORIC PERIOD

The vessels illustrated in Figures 8 through 10 are from middens associated with structures known to have been used at Lamanai in the early Historic period. European-made artifacts from these middens include Spanish olive-jar sherds of the Early and Middle periods (Goggin 1960), majolica ware, and Spanish iron artifacts, as well as glass trade beads. A substantial midden from another area of the site contained the same range of ceramics, but no artifacts of European manufacture; we do not know whether the absence of European goods implies a difference in time, or in the status of those responsible for the accumulation of the refuse. The Yglesias phase is tentatively dated to a period from 1450 - 1700.

Lamanai's Yglesias phase ceramics are quite distinctive and clearly separable from the Cib phase vessels that predate them. The vessels are generally thin walled and relatively crude in surface appearance compared to ceramics from earlier phases, but vessel walls are notably strong. Slips are red, orange-red, buff, and black, but they are opaque and lusterless, and often thin, and in fact they very often have the appearance of a stain (mineral pigment and water) rather than a true slip. Tripod bowls with sag-bottoms persist, but the flange diminishes to a ridge that is often notched or scalloped. Feet are bulbous, ovoid, tapered, cylindrical, or frequently phalliform, and vents are usually rather large, either ovoid or slit (Figs. 8, 10). Strap-handles were still used, and high-necked jars represent continuity from earlier times. Bowls and some jar forms have a distinctive bolstered or thickened lip (Fig. 9b, c, e, n).

A common wide-mouthed jar form is that of Figure 9i, in which the jar neck is vertical with two or more grooved circumferential lines around the rim exterior. Sherds from similar jars were recovered at Tipu, but do not have the grooves.

Small effigy censers are similar to those of the preceding Cib phase (Chen Mul Modeled), though we are beginning to isolate changes in style that may be distinctive of the Terminal Postclassic-Early Historic period (representative effigy censers from this phase are illustrated in Pendergast 1984: Fig. 1, 2; 1986: Fig. 5b, c). Only a small number of fragments of the large, Mayapan-style Chen Mul Modeled effigy censers (as in Pendergast 1981c: Fig. 5) have been recovered from Yglesias middens. Censers and jars with applied fillets and bosses continued to be manufactured into the seventeenth century; one example (Pendergast 1985: Fig. 5d) was found intruded into the chancel floor of Lamanai's second church, a post-AD 1641 deposit.

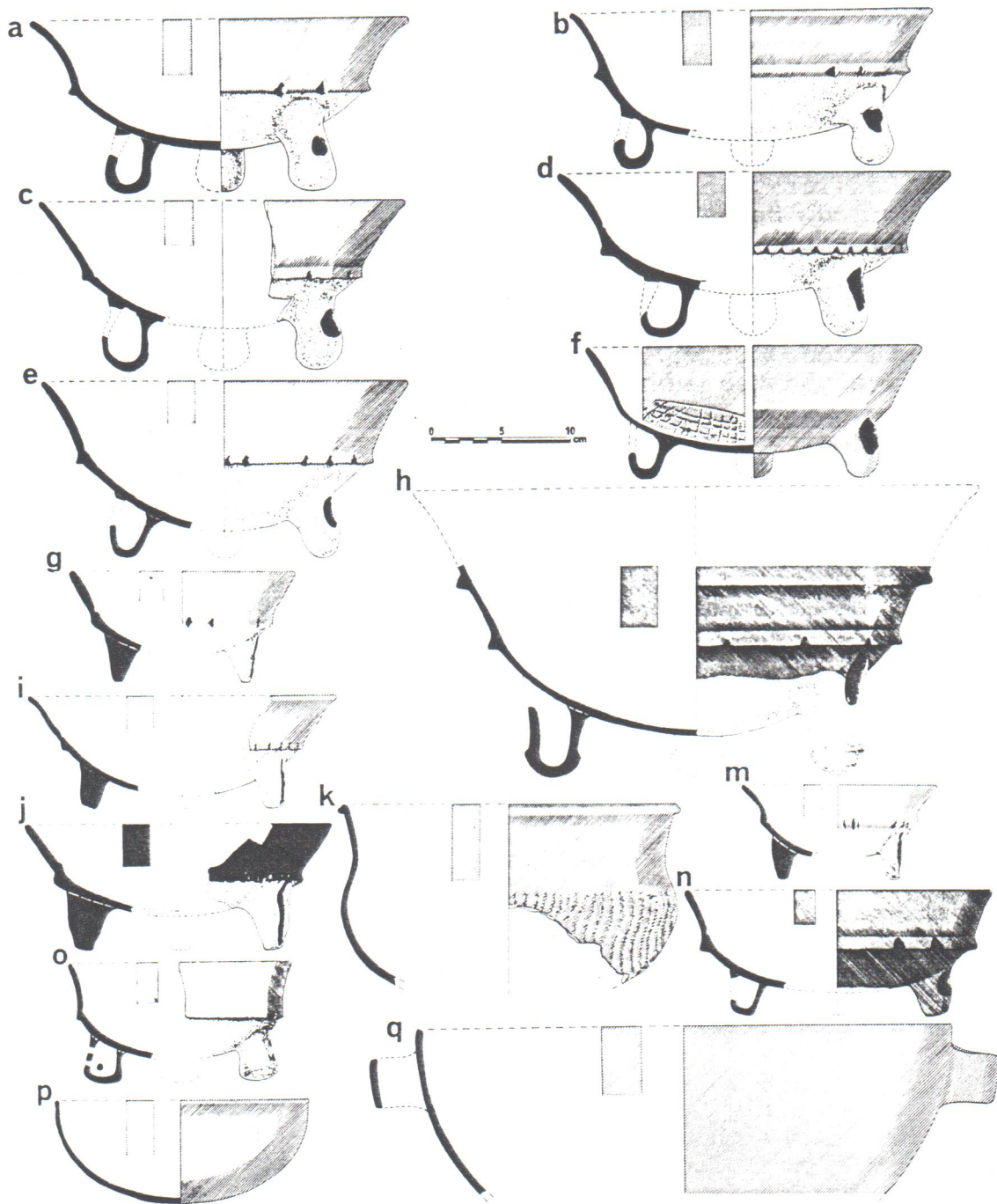


Fig. 8. a-d, f-i, k, p-q) Lamanai, LA 916, refuse pit sealed by the west floor of N11-18. e) Lamanai, LA 859, midden abutting north face of N11-18. j,m) Lamanai, LA 912, refuse pit at the northeast corner of N11-18. n) Lamanai, LA 858, midden at the northeast corner of N11-18. o) Lamanai, LA 909, refuse pit at the northeast corner of N11-18.

Fig.
west

Vessel Forms from Belize

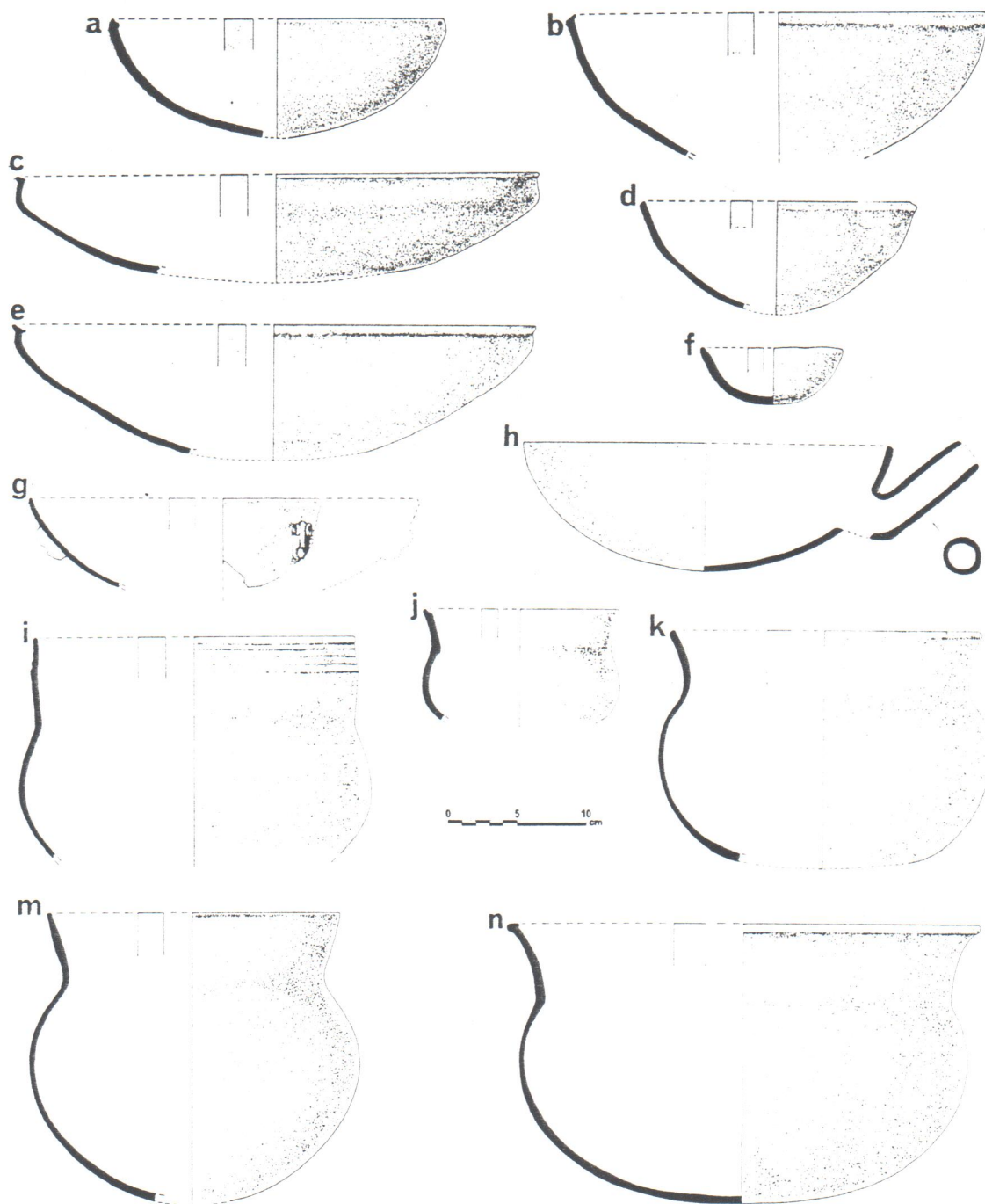


Fig. 9. a-n) Lamanai, LA 916, refuse pit sealed by the west floor of N11-18.



Fig. 10. a, d-f, i) Lamanai, LA 834, midden at the north face of N11-3. b, g, h) Lamanai, LA 823, midden at the north stair side, east face of N11-3. c) Lamanai, LA 859, midden at the northwest face of N11-3.

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Vessel Forms from Belize

Vessels that are formally and typologically similar to those of this phase have been found in small numbers at Tipu; sherds were recovered from Historic period midden contexts (Rice 1985), and two cache vessels were found intruded into post-abandonment deposits of a Late Postclassic period platform (Fig. 6d, e). Rita Red vessels and some of the Chen Mul Modeled censer forms from the site of Santa Rita (D. Chase 1984) are similar in aspects of form and treatment to vessels in the Lamanai sample. Parallels also exist with Chen Mul Modeled and Cehac-Hunacti Composite censer types at Mayapan and possibly with some Navula Unslipped examples (see, e.g., Smith 1971: Figs. 62, 63), but most of the Lamanai repertoire is not comparable with Mayapan. The only similarity that may be significant is the treatment of the neck on some wide-mouthed jars (Smith 1971: Figs. 61a5 and c4) in which the rim rises vertically, or nearly so, from the slightly restricted neck (Fig. 9i-n).

To date, Yglesias ceramics have been securely identified elsewhere only at Tipu, and there only in small numbers. Indications are that at Tipu at the time of European occupation the local ceramic repertoire was dominated by Peten ceramics, such as Paxcaman Red, with little demonstrated influence from northern Belize ceramic styles. Though further intensive archaeological investigation at other sites in Belize and Yucatan is warranted before any real assessment of Yglesias phase ceramics can be carried out, it would seem that, like the Cib and Buk phase ceramics of earlier times, Yglesias phase pottery is a northern Belize-Yucatecan development rather than a central Belize-Peten phenomenon. It is clear that only very general parallels exist with the site of Mayapan itself, but once post-1450 archaeology is better known in Yucatan, it is not unlikely that Yglesias phase ceramics will be found to fit into the overall picture of the material culture of Yucatecan polities on the eve of, and following, the Spanish Conquest.

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