Interlibrary Loan Users Panel: Archaeology & Astronomy in Maya Temple Precincts

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National Park Service

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49th Annual Colorado ILL Conference,
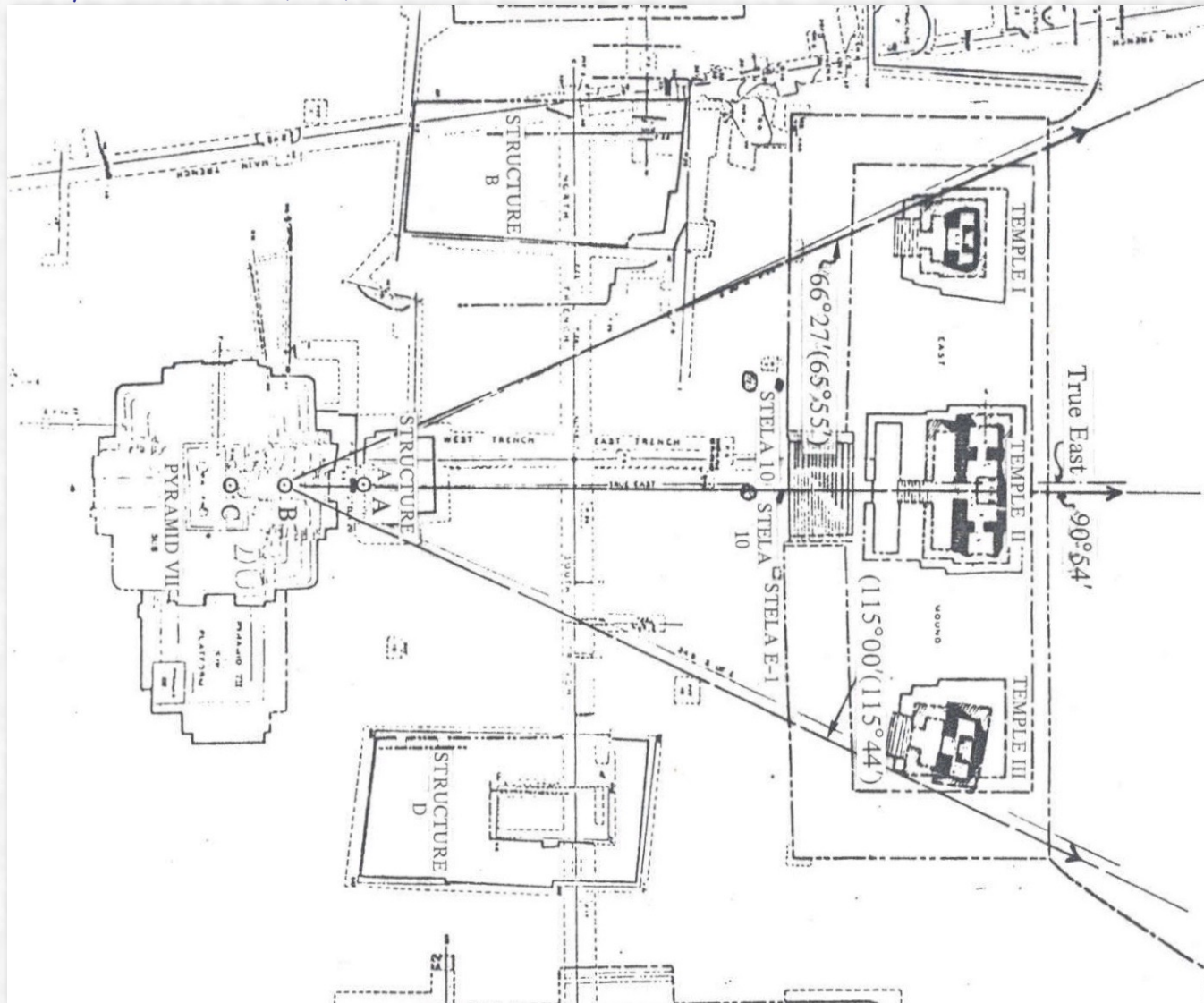Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado

Calakmul Main Plaza, Mexico, E Group Architectural Complex

Image courtesy of William Folan

Uaxactún, Guatemala, Group E Architectural Complex
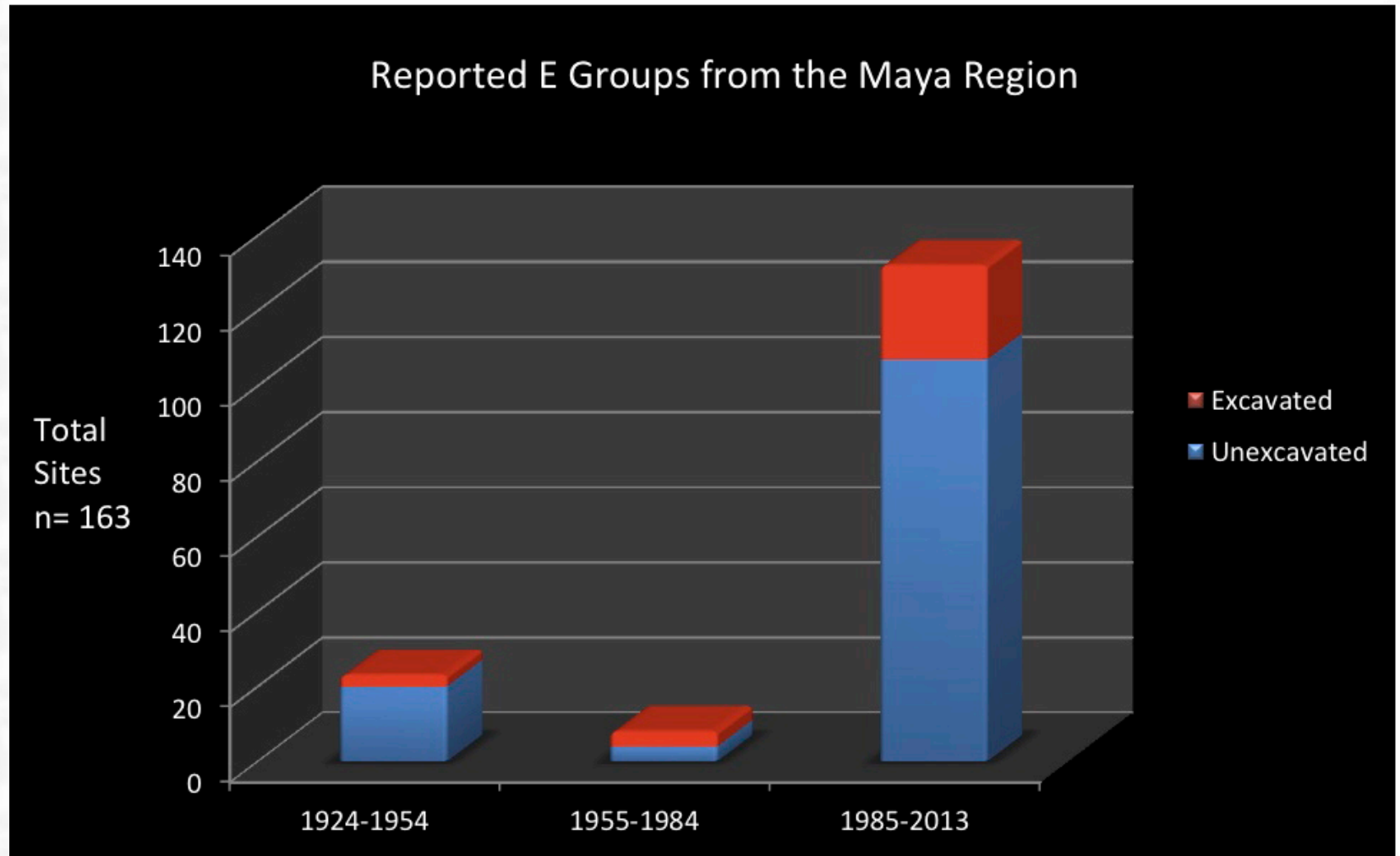Image courtesy of Aveni & Dowd (2017)

E Groups make an ideal database for addressing questions about complex socio-cultural organization for three key reasons:

1) Broad distribution across the southern Maya lowlands (map, M. Wolf)

2) **Central places,** e.g., Calakmul's Structure IVb, East side of
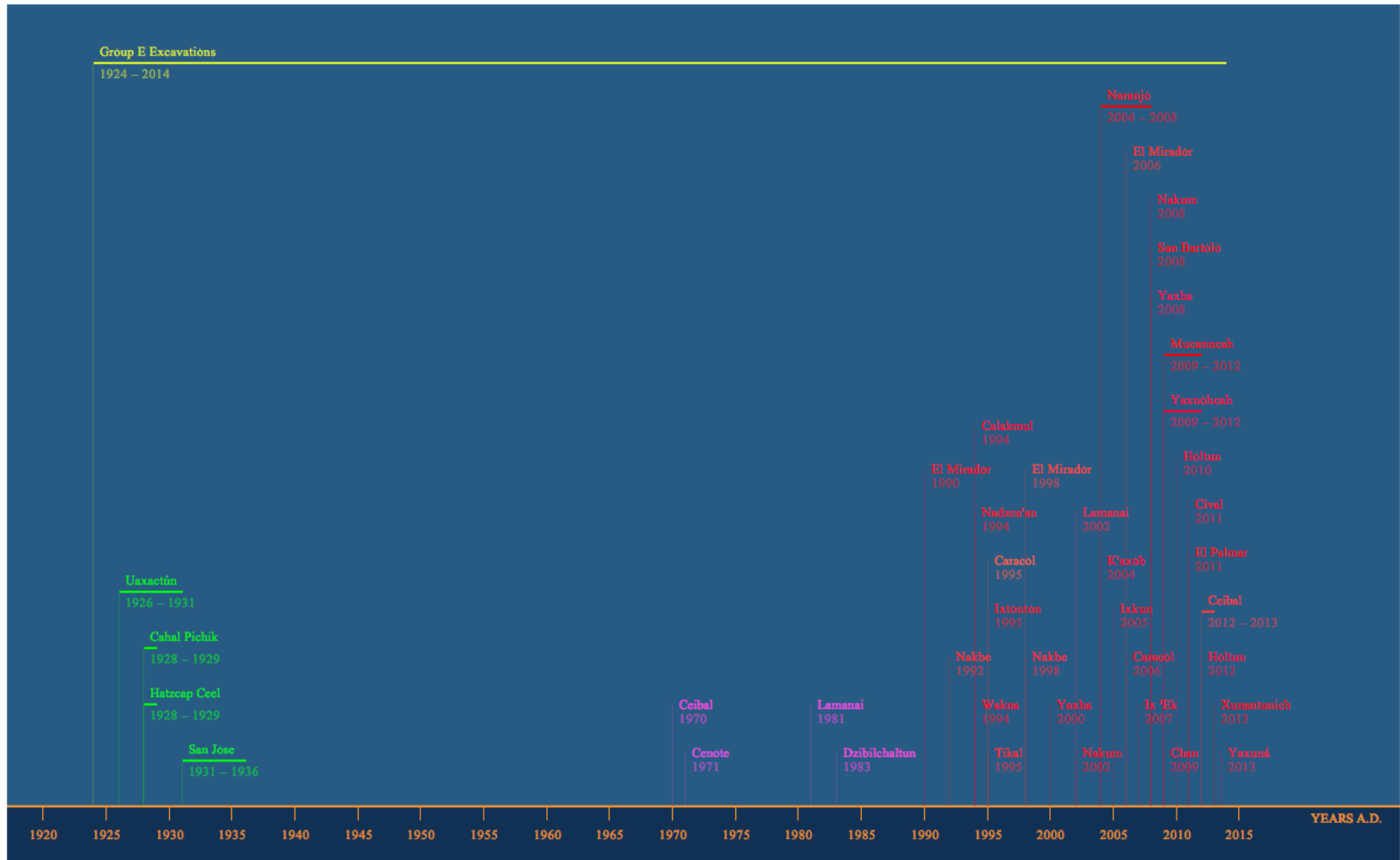   Main Plaza (Castillo et al. 2007:59).

3) Time depth, construction and use roughly between
1,000 BC-AD 1,000, table showing southern Mesoamerican chronology
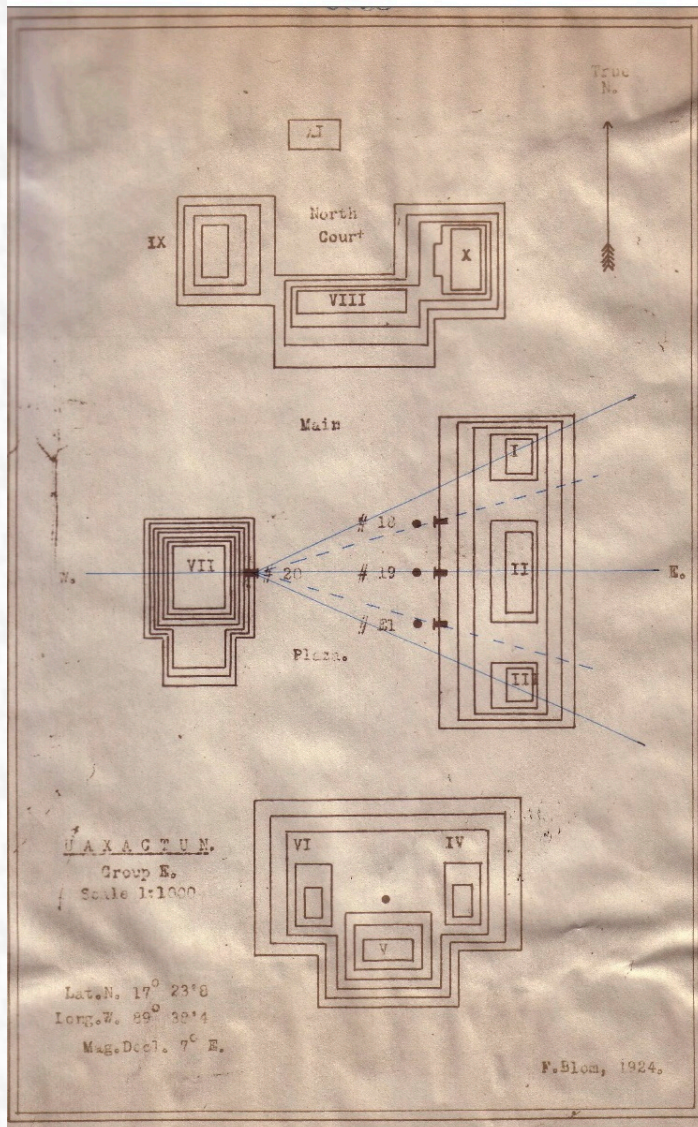(Inomata et al. 2013: Fig. 2).

Period		Cal. BC	San Lorenzo/ La Venta	Chiapa de Corzo	Southern Pacific Coast	Ceibal		Political processes and construction events
Preclassic	Late	300	Zapote	Guanacaste	Guillén	Cantutse	2	
		400					1	
	Middle	500	Late Franco	Francesa	Frontera	Escoba	3	La Venta as a major center
		600		Escalera	Escalón		2	Spread of E-Group assemblages in the Maya lowlands
		700	Early Franco				1	
		800		Vista Hermosa	Late Conchas		3	Tikal and Cival E-Group assemblages / Spread of MFC patterns in central Chiapas
		900	Late Puente	Dili	Early Conchas	Real	2	Ceibal pyramid and monumental construction / La Blanca pyramid?
		1000					1	Ceibal E-Group assemblage
		1100	Early Puente	Cotorra	Jocotal			Ojo de Agua plaza-pyramid complex
	Early	1200						
		1300	San Lorenzo		Cuadros			San Lorenzo as a major center

Transitional period

Historiography of E Group Research:

Reported E Groups from the Maya Region

E Group Excavation Timeline:

Group E Excavations
1924 – 2014

Naranjo
2004 – 2008

El Mirador
2006

Nakum
2008

San Bartolo
2008

Yaxha
2008

Muenoseoah
2009 – 2012

Yaxnóhcah
2009 – 2012

Holtun
2010

Calakmul
1994

El Mirador
1990

El Mirador
1998

Cival
2011

Nadzca'an
1994

Lamanai
2002

El Palmar
2011

Caracol
1995

K'axob
2004

Uaxactún
1926 – 1931

Ixtontón
1995

Ixkun
2005

Ceibal
2012 – 2013

Cahal Pichik
1928 – 1929

Nakbe
1992

Nakbe
1998

Caracol
2006

Holtun
2012

Hatzcap Ceel
1928 – 1929

Ceibal
1970

Lamanai
1981

Waka
1994

Yaxha
2000

Ix 'Ek
2007

Xunantunich
2013

San Jose
1931 – 1936

Cenote
1971

Dzibilchaltun
1983

Tikal
1995

Nakum
2002

Chan
2009

Yaxuná
2013

YEARS A.D.

1920 1925 1930 1935 1940 1945 1950 1955 1960 1965 1970 1975 1980 1985 1990 1995 2000 2005 2010 2015

Uaxactún Group E Plan (Blom 1924:58).

Ruppert (1977[1940]:222) wrote: "Since the small buildings on the east side of the plaza are definitely not domiciliary and the pyramid on the west does not support a building the arrangement must be ceremonial or esoteric in function."

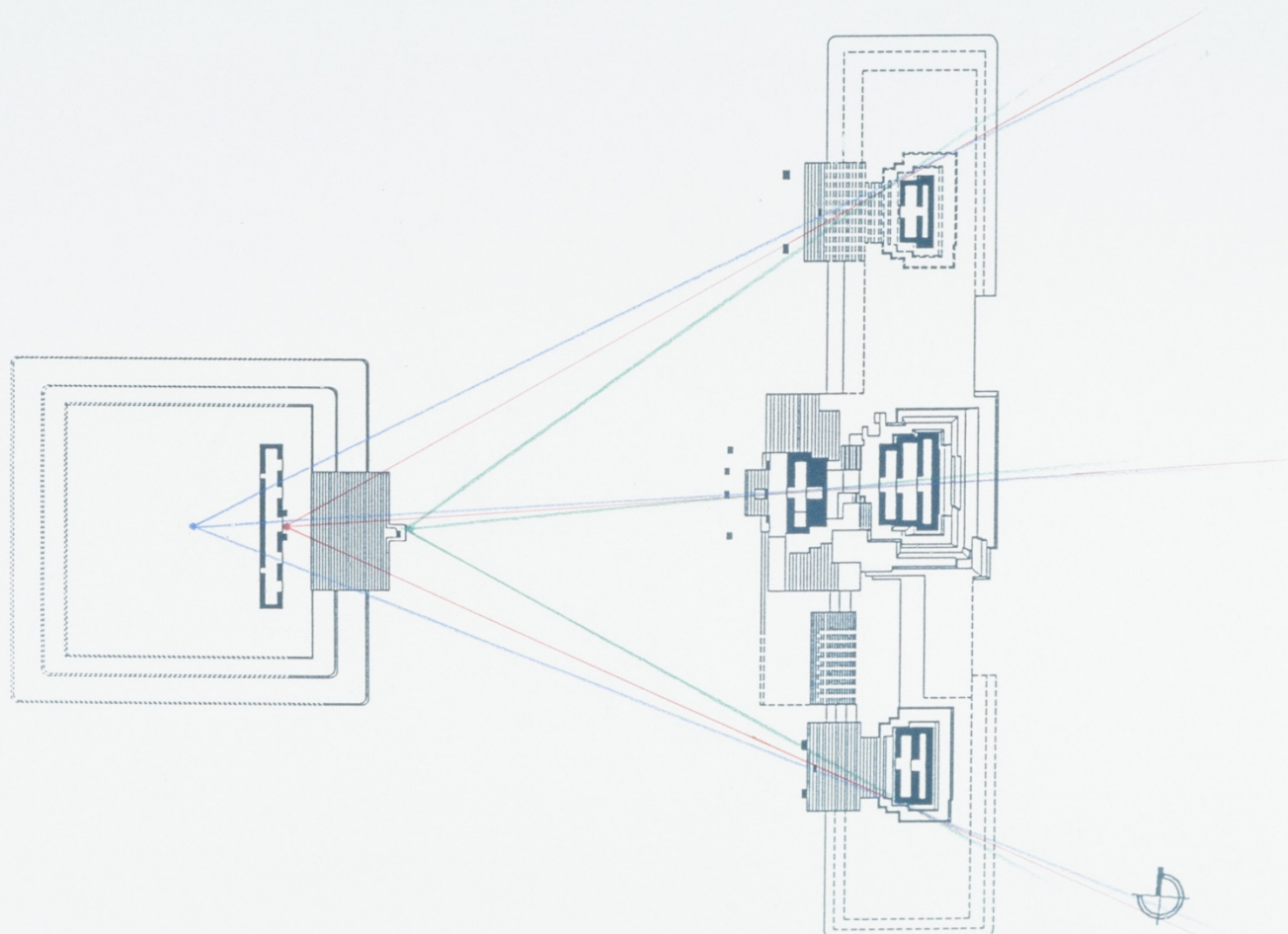# C.I.W. excavations at Uaxactún Group E Plaza from Str. X, view south

ca., 1926-1930

Emergence of religious institutions:

Multi-room temples: Calakmul

Map, E. González

Emergence of religious institutions:

Multi-room temples: Calakmul

Emergence of religious institutions:
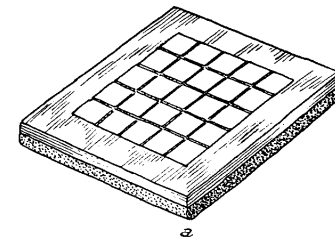
Multi-room temples: Calakmul

Photo, Dowd © 1995

Emergence of religious institutions: Multi-room temples: Uaxactún

TEMPLE I

TEMPLE II

TEMPLE III

EAST   MOUND

0   10   20 FEET   N ←   0   3   6 METERS
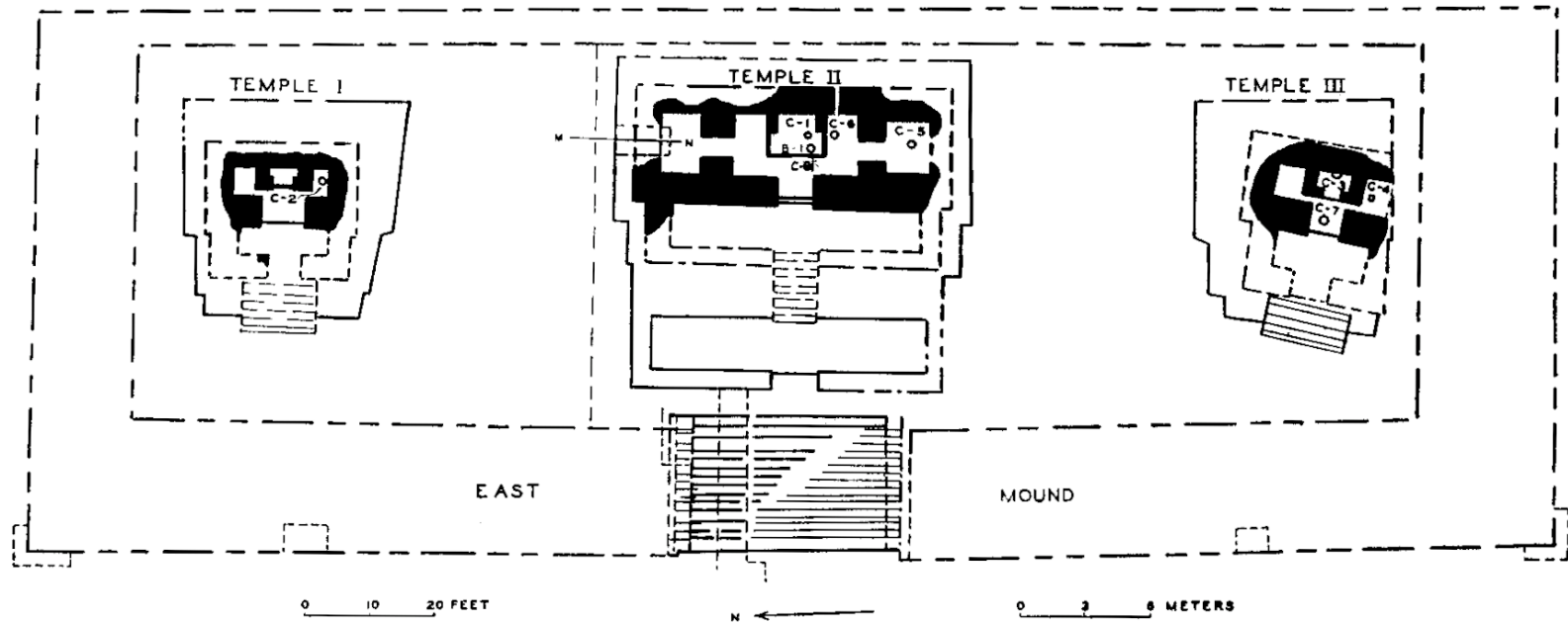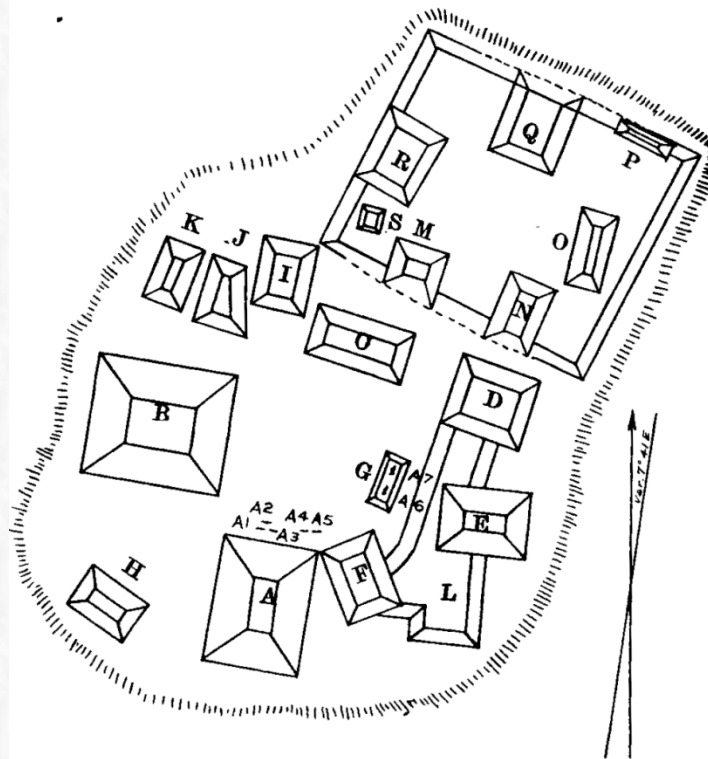
(Ricketson & Ricketson 1937)

Emergence of religious institutions:

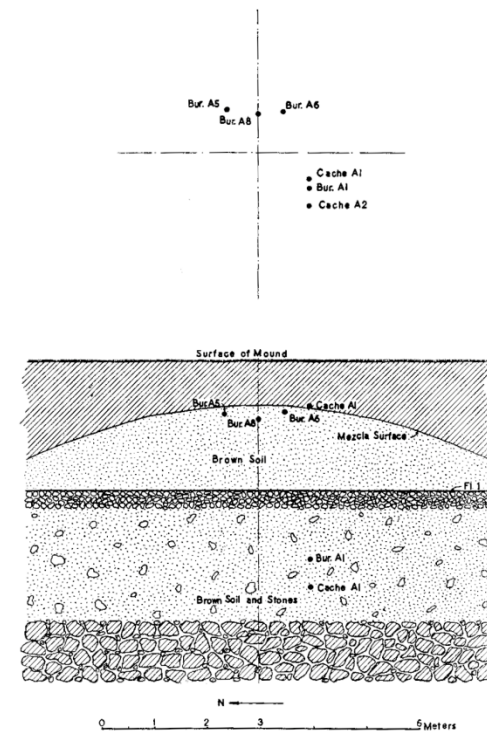Multi-room temples: Hatzcap Ceel ('Cold Dawn')
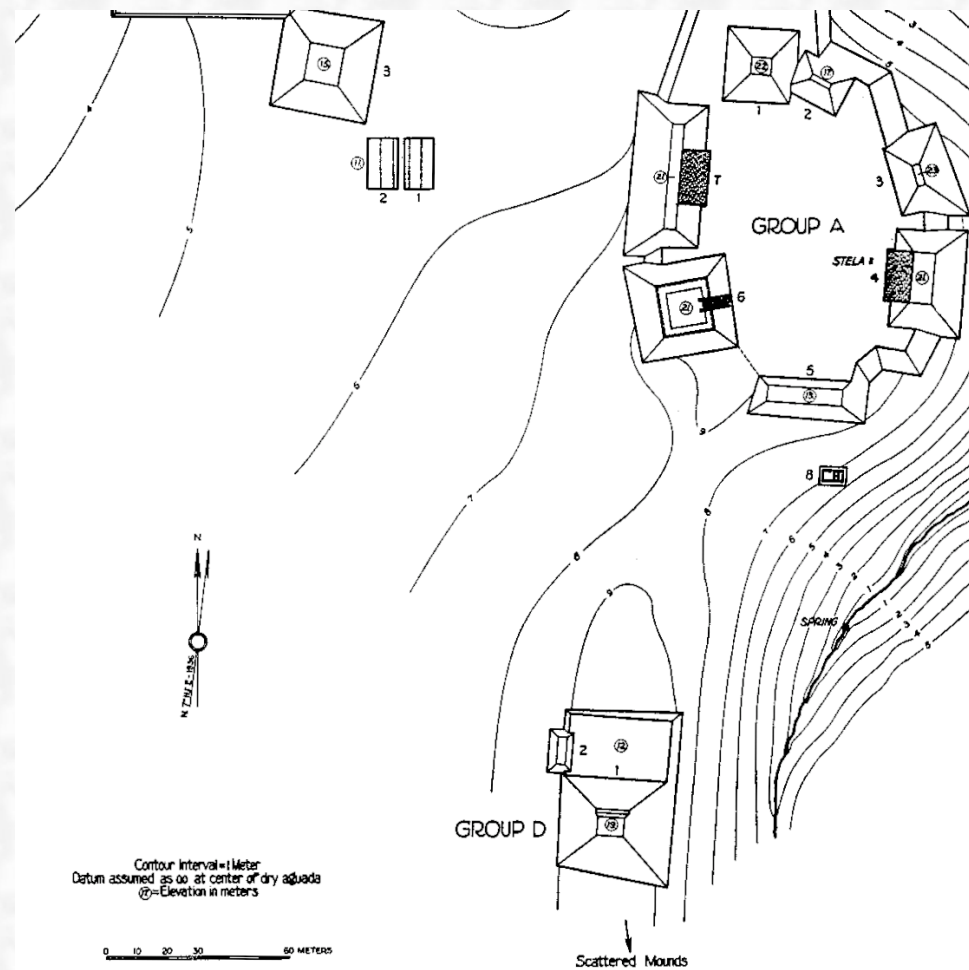(Thompson 1931)
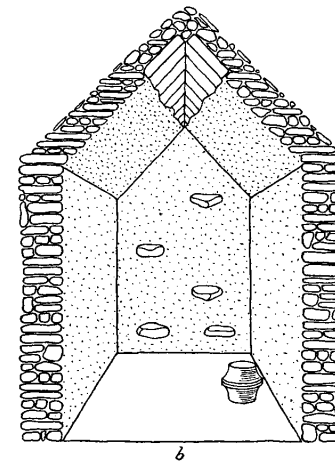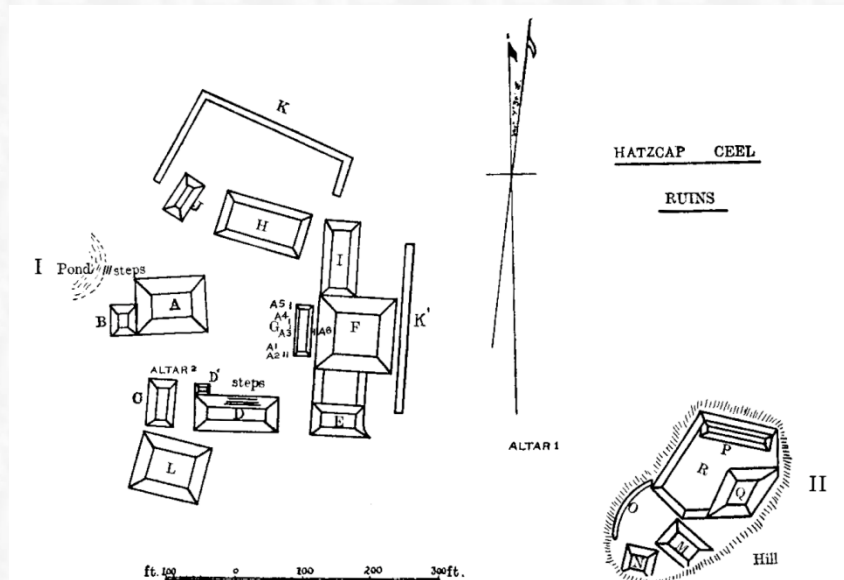
Religious specialization:

Single-room temples: Cahal Pichik ('The Town of the Emerald Toucanets')
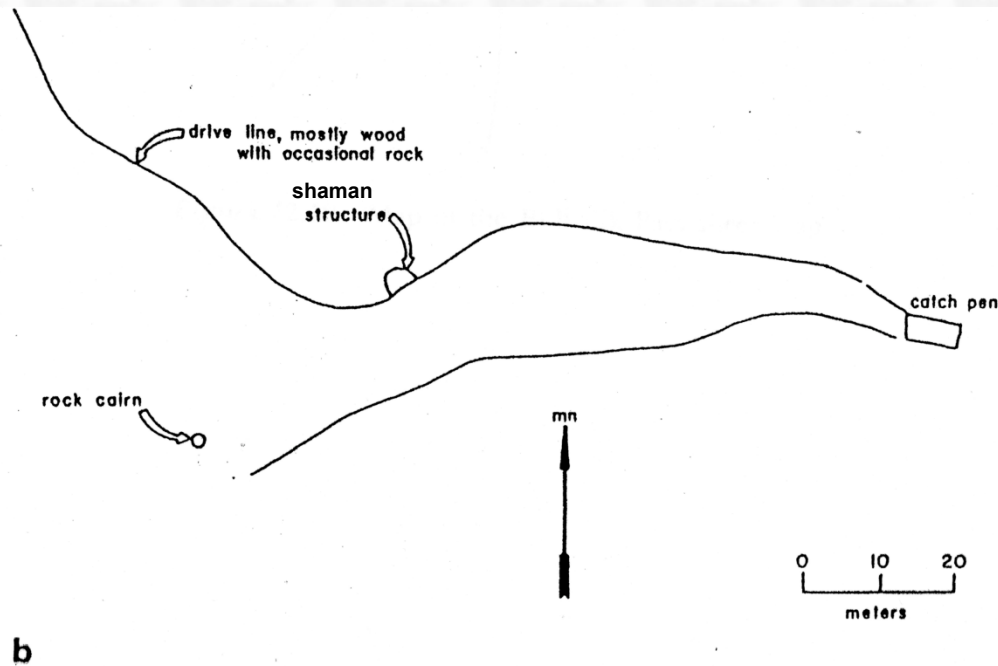(Thompson 1931)
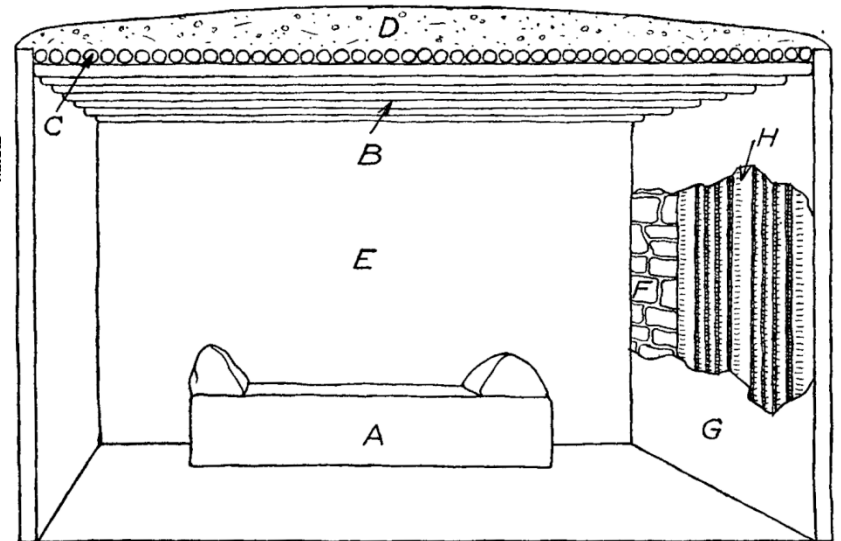
Religious specialization:

Single-room temples: San Jose (Thompson 1939)

Site 48FR2254, Because we may not have many chances to see emerging inequalities in the region due to preservation issues, we might look to other examples where a religious practitioner like a shaman is responsible for subsistence and the specialized architecture accompanying this role.
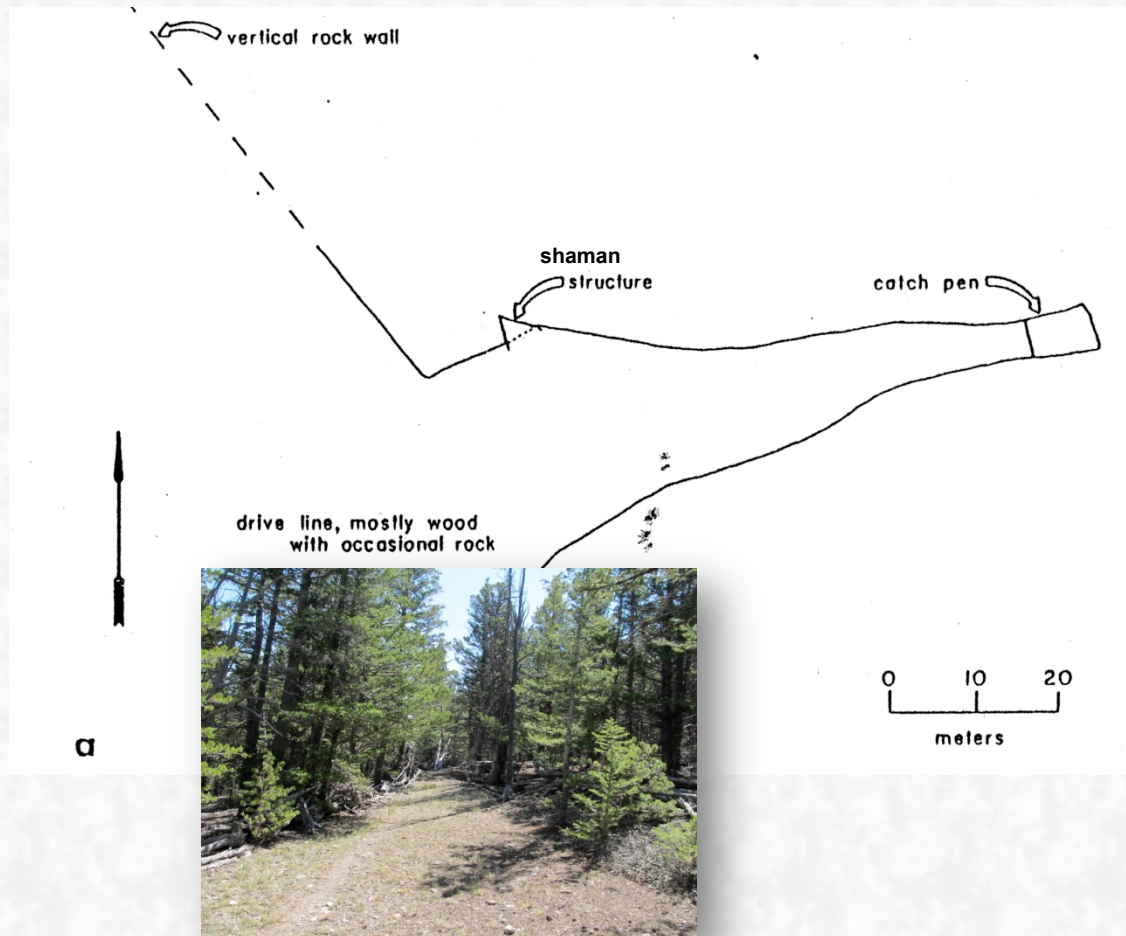
drive line, mostly wood with occasional rock

shaman structure

catch pen

rock cairn

mn

0   10   20
meters

b

e.g., shaman huts built into big horn sheep traps

Site 48FR2253, ca. A.D. 1800, Shoshone, consider George Frison's recent statement,"I think people underestimate the amount of ritual activity that goes on with this kind of thing," speaking about the function of "shaman huts" built into Wind River Range bighorn sheep traps (personal communication, 2013).

vertical rock wall

shaman
structure

catch pen

drive line, mostly wood
with occasional rock

0   10   20

meters

a

Photos, Dowd © 2013

Six areas of primary state formation (value in studying secondary state formation in nearby areas):
1) Oaxaca (Monte Alban), Mexico,
2) Viru-Gallinazo/Moche, Peru,
3) Uruk, Mesopotamia (Iran),
4) Hierakonopolis, Upper Nile, Egypt,
5) Harrapa, Indus Valley, Pakistan; and,
6) Erlitou, Yilou Basin, China.

Future Work

- Where to dig next?

- What do we hope to find?

- How is our work richer and more meaningful with the assistance we get from librarians?

- Interlibrary Loans (ILL) bring resources directly to patrons and create competitive academic environments at local libraries.