Supplemental Text 3

There is a virtual absence of Peto Cream Ware in our collections which is of considerable interest given the latter’s association with the later period of Chichén’s commercial power and influence. We identified only one Xcanchakan Black-on-cream sherd. This is of note because the type is heavily represented at Isla Cerritos where it comprised 13 percent of the Jotuto Sotuta complex materials, almost twice the quantity of Dzitas group sherds (7 percent) (Gallareta Negrón et al. 1989), a trend that continues when more recent excavations from Isla Cerritos are analyzed (see Clark 2015; Cobos 2010). It is important, however, that Sanders (1960:191) identified a relatively robust sample of “Mayapan Black-on-cream” (Xcanchakan Black-on-cream) from his trenches at Vista Alegre. We suspect that he may have misidentified at least some Balantun Black-on-slate as Xcanchakan Black-on-cream given the abundance of the former in our own test units and their shared opaque black trickle decoration. Supporting this belief, Sanders (1960:192) himself noted that the Mayapan Black-on-cream from the second level of Trench 1 (his most productive excavation) might, in fact, be Yucatán Slate Ware. The low quantities of Xcanchakan Black-on-cream may help us refine the dating of VA IIIb, but further work needs to be done on this. Stanton and Bey (2006) argue that Peto Cream Wares, of which Xcanchakan Black-on-cream is a member, became abundant during their 3rd stage of the period between the Terminal Classic and the Postclassic (based on data from Kulubá and Xelhá). This is reinforced by ceramic data from El Meco (Andrews and Robles Castellanos 1986), where the presence of Peto Cream is associated with a Sotuta-Hocabá complex. Although Peto Cream may first appear even earlier in conjunction with tenth century Sotuta complex modes (see Volta and Braswell 2014; also Ochoa Rodriguez 1999:77-78), there is a dramatic increase in its popularity as the Sotuta-Cehpech tradition continues, and Peto Cream continues after the slatewares disappear. As Peraza Lope (2005:84) notes, Kukulá (Peto Cream Ware) ceramics “are the most significant pottery for dating the last activities in Chichén Itzá before the city’s political collapse.” While we will need a far larger sample to substantiate our own tentative observations regarding Peto Cream Ware and its potential confusion with Balantun Black-on-slate, these thoughts still are worth sharing as they may hold an important chronological clue as to when the Itzá were most heavily engaged with the Vista Alegre settlement.

On balance, Ball is unconvinced that the black-trickled creamware found at Vista Alegre can or should be pigeonholed neatly as either “Balantun Black-on-slate” or “Xcanchakan Black-on cream.” While he does incline more to the former than the latter, especially following a 2012 review together with Glover of relevant collections from Chichen Itza, Mayapan, Isla Cerritos, several other northeast coast sites, and Vista Alegre itself (William T. Sanders’ own 1954 material) curated at the INAH Centro Regional de Yucatán Ceramoteca in Merida, he believes that the overlapping and intergradations recognizable only in a hands-on, direct, physical examination of the ceramics from these sites speaks clearly to an evolving, diverging black-trickled creamware tradition across Terminal Classic Yucatán and Quintana Roo. Habitually, rigidly, and unthinkingly forcing all such archaeological pottery into one or the other of the two established typological taxa supports a spurious schema that belies this underlying cultural reality. Scott Johnson (2015) documents a not very dissimilar phenomenal trajectory at Popola, Yucatán involving the earlier developmental history and emergence of Chichén Slateware, including the Dzitas base-group and Balantun Black-on-slate. Acceptably and convincingly defining, documenting, and establishing a new ceramic unit or type of the importance and significance of that involved- whether as a new and distinct member-unit of one of the established wares and groups or not- requires sherd/vessel quantities, conditions of preservation, overall typological representativeness, and solid stratigraphic and contextual associations and circumstances simply not represented by the existing Vista Alegre materials, depositional situations, and other circumstances. It is very much hoped that this can and will be addressed in the continuing, much larger scale and more intensive work at the site.

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