**Supplemental Text 1**

*Methods*

*Archaeological excavations.* At Chochkitam, we have carried out excavations within looters’ trenches in the main structures and test pits into the plaza floors to document architecture and site chronology. An excavation in looter’s trenches typically begins by removing the backfill material left by looters until we reach the levels left undisturbed. We then record the architectural features exposed by the looters in scaled drawings on digital tablets. In some cases, we excavate further into the core of the mound to follow exposed architecture and record any architecture to generate as complete a stratigraphic sequence as possible. We excavate test pits in the plazas recording all stratigraphy to document periods of construction. All materials recovered are transported to a laboratory in the city and analyzed. We analyze ceramics using the type-variety system to assess a chronological sequence and evaluate shared styles with other lowland sites. We analyze lithics and other archaeological materials using established typologies to document function, mode of manufacture and source.

Using the above-described methods we have conducted limited excavations in the following buildings, Structures I, V and VII in the Main Plaza, Structure X in the Merwin Plaza, Structure XV and XII in the acropolis area, the eastern shrine in the Southwest Group, the north structure in the North Group and the east structure in the Northeast Group (Figure 2). So far, we have been able to recover four sets of epigraphic texts from different contexts. The first set is from Stelae 1 and 2 (Figure 6). The second is an inscription on a vessel from a burial in the Southwest Group (Figures 8 and 9). The third is an inscription on Stela 3 (Figure 3). The fourth set is an inscription on a structure buried int the North Group (Figure 2).

*Route analysis.*We developed routes from Dzibanche to Tikal, Naranjo, El Peru, Caracol, Palenque and La Corona using GIS methods1 (Figures 1 and 10). As a topographic basis for modeling movement between sites, we used the most recent terrain data from NASA’s STRM mission (version 2.02). The terrain data comes with a ground resolution of 32.5 meters per pixel, which is the highest resolution currently available for the region covering all the sites. Based on these terrain data we generated slope and aspect maps. We then reclassified the slope and aspect maps raw data into 7 categories representing factors of difficulty in traversing terrain based on slope steepness and direction of movement. For example, difficulty class 7 was reserved for the steepest terrain facing the opposite direction of travel. We also generated a map of landforms3, generating 10 classes of land features, including flat terrain, summit, ridge, shoulder, spur, slope, hollow, footslope, valley, and depression. Classes for depressions, valley, and footslope, representing *bajo* terrain were assigned a factor of 10 while the other classes, representing upland terrain were assigned a difficulty factor of 1. This had the purpose of forcing the least-cost algorithm to avoid traversing the *bajos*, if possible, which are intermittently flooded and permanently covered in some of the harshest, thickest vegetation, and are believed to be more difficult for foot travel compared to upland terrain.

Based on these friction factors, a cost surface was developed for each of the destinations of our routes, Tikal, Naranjo, El Peru, Caracol, Palenque and La Corona4. Finally, we found the routes using the r.drain5 algorithm, which threads a path through the pixels with the lowest values in the input cost map providing coordinates for Dzibanche as a starting location and each of the destinations. The resulting map traced the least-cost routes based on the selected criteria, which included avoiding bajo terrain (Figures 1 and 10).

*Epigraphy.* The inscriptions at Chochkitam were recorded using a combination of high-resolution photography (diffused and raking light) and structure-from-motion photogrammetry (De Reu, et al. 2013). For the latter, overlapping digital images were converted into 3D point clouds and polygon meshes using Agisoft Metashape Pro software (Agisoft LLC 2019). Further visualization of 3D data was undertaken in Meshlab (Cignoni, et al. 2008). In particular, radiance scaling filters were used to enhance the visibility of fine carved and incised details (Vergne, et al. 2010). The orthoimages of 3D models enhanced with the radiance scaling filters were combined with raking-light and diffused-light images as multiple overlapping layers which then served as basis for digital line drawings of the monuments following the updated procedures of the Corpus of Maya Hieroglyphic Inscriptions (Fash, et al. 2022). Following established conventions, the logograms and syllabograms are reported in bold uppercase and lowercase, whereas transliteration is in italics.

*Notes*

1 GRASS-GIS open-source software <https://grass.osgeo.org/>

[2 https://www2.jpl.nasa.gov/srtm/](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cfrancisco%5CDocuments%5Cholmul_2021%5CChochkitam_article%5C2%20https%3A%5Cwww2.jpl.nasa.gov%5Csrtm%5C)

3 <https://grass.osgeo.org/grass78/manuals/r.geomorphon.html>

4 Using <https://grass.osgeo.org/grass78/manuals/r.cost.html> with “knight’s move”

5 <https://grass.osgeo.org/grass78/manuals/r.drain.html>

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