
This is a facsimile publication of a Ph.D. dissertation at Columbia University. In spite of the poor drawings and photographs which accompany the volume, it is worth the careful attention of Mesoamerican specialists.

Following a suggestion made by Lee Parsons, the author attempts to prove that much of Toltec-Maya art and architecture at Chichen Itzá, Yucatan’s most important site, is not Early Post-Classic as in the traditional chronology, but Late Classic. In his scheme, the Great Ball Court would be dated to the seventh and early eighth centuries A.D. His arguments are not based upon standard archaeological evidence, for this is virtually nonexistent, notwithstanding years of excavation by both the Carnegie Institution of Washington and the Mexican government. As far as I know, there is not a single radiocarbon date available for Chichen Itzá!

Cohodas’ thesis is therefore that of an art historian, and at present can be neither proved nor disproved. It requires the simultaneous existence of two different traditions of art and architecture at the site, one a “Chichen Toltec” and the other a “Chichen Maya,” rather than a succession in time of a more Maya culture by a more Toltec one.

The author’s description of the Great Ball Court and its associated buildings is useful, and his analysis of the complex iconography of the accompanying reliefs, while based upon a hypothetical and somewhat idiosyncratic model, is always interesting. Cohodas raises a voice of dissent in Maya studies, but it is always good to have old assumptions questioned lest they become dogma.

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