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PVN OP 046 Excavation Report

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Operation 46

Operation 46 encompasses 18 structures located in western La Sierra. A shallow, seasonal stream channel runs directly west/northwest of the Op. 46 buildings, the land dropping away slightly and gradually east/southeast of the quebrada. A second seasonal watercourse, trending southeast-northwest, joins the former channel immediately north of Op. 46. The topographic effect of these quebradas is to isolate Op.46 from the bulk of the center to the east as well as dense settlement to the north (Op. 23) and west (Ops. 47 and 48). Structures making up Ops. 44 and 45 lie immediately east and south of Op. 46, the 44 buildings and building remnants comprising the three operations most likely constituting a dispersed settlement that we arbitrarily segmented for recording purposes.

Operation 46 edifices cover a wide range of sizes. Four large platforms, Strs. 189, 190, 200, and 201, define the northern, western, and southern margins of an extensive patio the eastern flank of which is delimited by three small constructions (Strs. 202, 203, and 270). A second patio-focused group, composed of more modest platforms (Strs. 182-185, 187-188), lies on the operation's northern margin. Most of the remaining, generally small, buildings are scattered over the 43m separating these two foci.

Seven structures were excavated in Op. 46. Six of these buildings were extensively cleared in 1995 (Strs. 187, 188, and 46-Sub1, directed by E. Laine) and 1996 (Strs. 190, 203-A, and 203-B, directed by M. Turek and R. Johnson). The remaining edifice, Str. 183, was investigated by means of a single trench dug against its southwest flank during an initial testing program conducted in 1988 (carried out as part of Op.23, under M. Dall's direction, but reported here). A total of 277m² were cleared in the course of this work.

Structure 183

Structure 183 defines the northeast corner of the patio surrounded by Strs. 182-185, 187, and 188 on the northern edge of Op. 46. Structure 182 is 7m to the northwest, Str. 188 is 13m in the same direction, and Str. 184 lies 11m to the southwest. The land above which Str. 183 was erected is fairly level, though there is a steep drop approximately 30m to the northeast into the quebrada that borders Op. 46 on this flank. The building was investigated by a single 1x8.9m trench dug against its southwest (patio-facing) flank (Subop. 23F). Excavations were carried down to a maximum depth of 1.14m below modern ground surface outside construction, architectural fill not having been probed. A single construction phase was recognized in the course of these investigations though, of course, evidence of earlier versions of Str. 183 may well lie outside our excavation limits. All work was overseen by M. Dall.

Time Spans

<u>Time Span</u>	<u>Construction Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	-	-	S.1-3	-	LCLII
2	Str. 183-1st	U.1-5	-	-	LCLII, III

Time Span 1

Natural deposition of S.1, 2, and the lower 0.14m of S.3 predate the raising of Str. 183-1st. Stratum 1 is a hard-compacted, dark brown soil exposed to a maximum thickness of 0.25m in a probe dug immediately southwest of Str. 183-1st (S.1's base lies beyond excavation limits). Fully 0.2-0.22m of S.2, a brown, moderately hard-compacted soil, overlies S.1 and is, in turn, covered by S.3. The latter is a brown-to-light brown earth the lower 0.14m of which runs beneath final-phase Str. 183-1st architecture. Recovery of artifacts (including probable building debris such as bajareque fragments) from at least S.2 and the basal portions of S.3 indicate human occupation in Str. 183-1st's immediate vicinity prior to the raising of that edifice.

Time Span 2

Suboperation 23F revealed a set of three low steps/terraces (U.1-3) that give way to a 1.2m-wide earthen surface that is, in turn, surmounted by what may have been the step-up to the summit (U.4). Units 1-3 are each 0.15-0.21m high and measure approximately 0.25m across (essentially one, medium-size cobble tall and wide). Unit 4, in turn, ascends ca. 0.3m and most likely marks the summit's southwestern limit. Unit 5 is a 0.24m-high wall lying 2.74m southwest of Str. 183-1st's basal step/terrace, U.1. Unit 5 may be the facing for a terrace that projects from the main platform into the patio or the foundation for a surface-level building not identified during mapping. The narrow exposure provided by Subop. 23F does not permit evaluation of these alternatives.

Structure 183-1st, therefore, is a stone-faced platform standing ca. 0.9m high, ascended by three low terraces on the southwest, and aligned roughly 312 degrees. Surviving recorded construction was fashioned primarily of unmodified river cobbles though masonry blocks were scattered among the stones comprising U.1-4. Terrace and summit surfaces appear to have been earthen.

Time Span 3

Continued natural deposition of S.3 succeeded Str. 183-1st's abandonment, the earth level eventually collecting to depths of 0.62-0.68m above S.2. Fallen architectural debris was recorded in moderately dense concentrations extending from the summit to 1.58m southwest of U.1. A lighter accumulation of stone tumble is found for up to 2.1m southwest of U.5 as well (all included within F.1).

Structure 187

Structure 187 is on the western margin of the Op. 46 northern patio. Structure 185 is 22m to the southeast while Str. 188 lies 8.5m to the northeast. Though the land above which Str. 187 was raised is more-or-less level, this building is within 20m of the precipitous descent to the quebrada bordering Op. 46 on the west. Excavation of 23m² in Subop. 46B, 46F, 46G, 46I, and 46J completely uncovered Str. 187. Digging was carried down to a maximum depth of 0.61m below modern ground surface, revealing a surface-level building raised in a single construction episode. All of the work was supervised by E. Laine.

Time Spans

Time	Construction
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<u>Span</u>	<u>Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	-	-	S.1	-	LCLI?
2	Str. 187-1st	U.1-5	-	-	LCLII, III
3	-	-	S.2-3	F.1	-

Time Span 1

Stratum 1, a light brown, moderately fine-textured soil, underlies Str. 187-1st construction by at least 0.14m (S.1's base was not encountered). This earth level is not clearly defined anywhere; it is most obvious on the southwest where it was observed to ascend 0.06m over 1.06m southwest-to-northeast. Investigations were not adequate to determine whether S.1 contained cultural material. Recovery of a few ceramics diagnostic of an interval predating Str. 187-1st's period of use mixed with later items tentatively implies a human presence in the immediate area prior to the activities chronicled in TS.2.

Time Span 2

Structure 187-1st is a surface-level building delimited by stone foundations 0.1-0.3m tall and 0.4-0.8m across (U.1-3; U.4, the northwest foundation, was very poorly preserved and so we could not determine its original height, the width is estimated at 0.4m). The earthen-floored space enclosed by U.1-4 is partitioned into southwest and northeast rooms by a ca. 0.25m-high by 0.9m-across stone-faced wall (U.5) that abuts U.2 and projects roughly 2.05m to the northwest. Structure 187-1st's northwest side has been seriously disturbed, greatly complicating reconstruction of building form. Evidence pieced together from surviving architectural fragments suggests that there may have been a 0.95m-wide gap between U.4 and 5, creating a doorway between the northeast and southwest compartments. Unit 5's relatively great width hints at its use as something other than, or in addition to, a room divider. Possibly, this construction also functioned as a bench or shelf. The rooms separated by U.5 cover 1.7x3.1m (southwest) and 1.7x2.95m (northeast). No door providing access to Str. 187-1st's interior was noted, though such an entryway may have pierced the damaged northwest side.

Structure 187-1st covers 4.1x5.7m, is aligned roughly 29 degrees, and contains two rooms encompassing 5.27m² and 5.02m². These compartments are divided by a ca. 0.25m-high by 2.05m-long stone-faced construction that probably served in part as a bench. Facings and foundations are made primarily of unmodified river cobbles measuring 0.01-0.4m along their largest dimension (most are less than 0.3m long). Unit 2 contains five masonry blocks ranging up to 0.5m along their greatest dimension; one at the U.1/2 junction (the edifice's east corner) and four near U.2's center at the point where U.5 intersects U.2. A large faced block is also located where U.1 joins U.4 to form the building's north corner.

Time Span 3

After abandonment, natural deposition of S2 and 3 eventually covered S.1 by ca. 0.45m along with Str. 187-1st architecture. The first to be laid down, S.2 is a dark brown, moderately coarse-textured

soil. Stratum 3, a light brown, moderately fine-textured earth containing numerous small roots, covers S.2 and probably represents an upward continuation of the latter. Numerous stones fallen from final-phase architecture were found in moderate densities extending for up to 1.7m away from construction and within the building's confines (F.1).

Structure 188

Structure 188 occupies the northwest corner of the northern patio in Op. 46. Structure 187 is 8.5m to the southwest while Str. 182 is a scant 8.5m to the northeast. The terrain here is fairly level, dropping 0.5m over 12m southeast-northwest. Steep descents into the seasonal stream channels that border Op. 46 are roughly 28m and 15m distant to the north and northwest, respectively. Excavations conducted as parts of Subops. 46A, 46C, 46D, 46E, 46H, and 46K completely cleared Str. 188 along with a previously undetected building (Str. 46-Sub1) lying 2.9m southeast of this platform. Approximately 100m² were dug in the course of clearing Strs. 188 and 46-Sub1, the work conducted from March 28-May 12, 1995. Digging was carried down to a maximum depth of 1.1m below modern ground surface outside architecture and 0.82m beneath ground level into construction fill, excavations tentatively revealing two building phases. All work was directed by E. Laine.

Time Spans

<u>Time Span</u>	<u>Construction Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	-	-	S.1-2	-	Mprecl LCLI, II?
2	Str. 188-2nd	U.1-8, 14	-	F.1-2	LCLII, III
3	Str. 188-1st	U.9-13, 15-20	-	F.3-4	LCLIII, EPC
4	--	-	S.3-4	F.5	-

Time Span 1

Prior to the erection of any recovered construction, S. 1 and 2 were deposited by seemingly natural means. Stratum 1 is a fine-textured, moderately hard-compacted, dark brown clay that was exposed to a maximum thickness of 0.3m beneath Str. 188-1st's southeastern flank (S.1's base lies beyond excavation limits). Overlying S.1 is a fine- to moderately fine-textured, hard-compacted, tan clay mottled with white inclusions (S.2). Stratum 2 is 0.16-0.21m thick where it covers S.1 and ascends 0.3m over 6.68m southeast-to-northwest before being lost beneath Str. 188. The earth level reappears 5.1m to the northwest where it is 0.3m lower than in its previous manifestation, dropping an additional ca. 0.5m over 2.3m southeast-northwest. Cultural material was not clearly retrieved from S.1. Stratum 2 did yield artifacts and was found to be mottled orange from included bajareque where it underlies F.4 on Str. 188-1st's southeast margin. The varied time periods represented in excavated collections imply

that there was an enduring human presence in this portion of La Sierra. To date, however, we have found no architecture or features associated with these early intervals.

Time Span 2

Because probes into architectural fill were limited in scope, it is difficult to reconstruct Str. 188's architectural history. It is very likely that U.1-4 are basal facings for a platform (Str. 188-2nd) that was later encased by the addition of the U.9-12 terraces pertaining to Str. 188-1st. The bases of U.1-4 were not revealed, though all run down and behind U.9-12. Unit 3, the putative northwestern facing and the most thoroughly investigated of these elements, stands at least 0.5m tall, possibly rising as much as 0.9m high. The widths of U.1 and 3, the only elements for which this dimension was obtained, are 0.64m and 0.88m, respectively. Unit 3 may be the more substantial of the two because it was built to withstand the pull of downslope erosion on the building's northwest side. A concern with architectural stability may also account for U.3 being set at least 0.2m into underlying S.2 (the relation of U.1, on the southeast, to S.2 is not known). Units 1-4 contain a fill composed of small to medium-size cobbles set in a brown soil matrix (U.14). Structure 188-2nd's superstructure is set back 0.9m from the southeast basal facing and is delimited by a 0.4-0.6m-wide by ca. 0.3m-high cobble footing on the southeast (U7) and the tops of U.2-4 on the remaining sides. The area thus defined is subdivided into northeastern and southwestern compartments by U.5, a 0.2m-wide by ca. 0.3m-tall cobble footing. The southwest enclosure covers 2.1x2.5m, its northeast neighbor encompassing 2.45x3.45m. Movement between the two rooms was through 0.4m-wide gaps between U.5 and U.3 and 7 on the northwest and southeast, respectively. A 0.8m-wide breach in the superstructure's eastern corner is the building's apparent entryway. No other superstructure architecture was identified save for U.6 and 8. The former is a cobble pavement measuring 0.8x1.1m that extends northeastward from U.5 while the latter is a comparable surface covering ca. 1m long northeast-southwest that extends 0.55m southeast of U.7. The architectural and behavioral significance of these floors is unclear; outside of U.6 and 8, Str. 188-2nd's summit is covered with earth.

The erection of Str. 188-2nd may have spanned two building phases discernible now by subtle changes in U.14. Features 1 and 2 may be remnants of those disjunctions. The former is a line of cobbles resting 0.41m below Str. 188-2nd's reconstructed summit. This level may be a fragment of former summit pavement or simply represents a break in the build-up of U.14. Feature 2 is a comparable stone level separated from F.1 by the addition of roughly 0.2m of stone-and-earth fill (U.14 both covers and underlies F.1). Both features are eminently vague, their architectural significance far from certain. Nevertheless, they at least imply that Str. 188-2nd might have been the end-product of a prolonged construction effort.

Structure 188-2nd is a stone-faced platform that stands an estimated 0.6m (on the southeast) to as much as 0.9m tall (on the northwest), covers 3.7x6m, and is oriented approximately 60 degrees. The superstructure is fronted on the summit on the southeast by a 0.9m-wide open area, a small portion of which near the center is paved with cobbles (U.8). A low cobble foundation (U.7) and the tops of U.2-4 bound the summit building which, itself, is partitioned into two rooms encompassing 5.25m² (southwest) and 8.28m² (northeast). Doorways situated at the termini of the interior dividing wall (U.5) facilitated movement between these enclosures while the superstructure itself was entered through a gap in its eastern corner. The northeast and southwest compartments were featureless save for a cobble pavement covering a small portion of the former (U.6). The edifice described above may have

been antedated by at least one earlier version of Str. 188-2nd, the latter ca. 0.4m lower than its successor. All foundations and facings are made of river cobbles that range between 0.1m to 0.3m across their longest dimension. The U.6 and 8 floors mostly consist of smaller rocks (0.01-0.1m longest dimension) among which are mixed a few of the larger cobbles. A brown mud mortar was used as a binding agent in every case.

Time Span 3

This interval witnessed the lateral expansion of the Str. 188-2nd platform coupled with the creation of what appears to be an extensive enclosed space off the edifice's southeast, patio-facing flank. Units 9-12 were introduced as part of the first effort, enlarging the building's basal area on all sides by 0.55-1.2m. These entities are 0.5-0.7m tall and at least partially bury the earlier U.1-4. Unit 11 on the northwest is set 0.39m into S.2, suggesting that special efforts were made to stabilize the side of Str. 188-1st most vulnerable to downhill erosion (comparable to similar exertions attested to on the same flank in TS.2). By way of contrast, U.9 on the southeast extends only 0.08m into S.2. Units 1-4 may have continued to project 0.2m (on the southeast) to 0.66m (on the northwest) above the new additions, delimiting the boundaries of a summit that seems to have remained largely unchanged. Unit 13, a 1.4x1.6m cobble pavement set atop the terrace corner formed by the junctions of U.9 and 12 was introduced at this time. The top of U.4 may have been converted now into a facing for a 0.75m-wide by 2.9m-long bench (still designated U.4) occupying the southwest wall of the superstructure's southwestern room. There are no other superstructure components that can be clearly assigned to TS.3. Units 15 and 16 comprise the cobble-and-brown-earth fill added between U.3 and 11 and U.1 and 9, respectively (similar material is thought to fill the gaps between U.4 and 12 on the southwest and U.2 and 10 on the northeast, but these areas were not probed). Units 9-12 are distinguished by the very large cobbles (0.3-0.5m+, longest dimension) that are their primary components. Commonly, care was taken to select large rocks with naturally flat faces for incorporation into U.9-12 and these vertical aspects were then oriented outwards. The U.13 floor closely resembles U.6 and 8 in its construction. Stones in pavement and facings are all set in a brown mud mortar.

Two late additions may have been appended to Str. 188-1st's southeast and northwest flanks, burying at least a portion of U. 9 and 11 in the process. This interpretation is suggested by the recognition in section of two stacks of more-or-less flat-laid cobbles set against the southeastern (F.4) and northwestern (F.3) basal walls. Clearing away from the axial trench where F.3 and 4 were first recognized did not reveal clear continuations of these entities, their lateral dimensions, their very reality, being open to question. *If* F.3 and 4 are the poorly preserved remnants of a late addition, however, they would have expanded the platform up to 0.7m on the southeast and 1.16m on the northwest and might have completely buried U.9 and 11 wherever the features were located along those facings.

Units 18-20 are 0.1-0.2m-high cobble walls that define the northeast, northwest, and southwest sides of an earthen-floored space encompassing 2.3m (minimally) by 6.4m built on ancient ground surface off Str. 188-1st's southeast side. The platform is ca. 0.5m northwest of this construction and connected to the latter's north corner by a 0.4m-wide, 0.2m-tall cobble wall (U.17). A 2.75m-wide gap between U.19 and 20 provides passage between Str. 188-1st and the southeast enclosure. Units 17-20 are built of medium-size river cobbles (0.1-0.3m, maximum dimension) set in a brown mud mortar.

Three large masonry blocks were noted in positions suggesting that they had fallen from U.18, indicating that this material was sporadically included in TS.3 construction.

Structure 188-1st is a 0.7m- (southeast) to 1.36m-high (northwest) stone-faced platform faced by a single 0.55-1.2m wide terrace that completely wraps around and buries the lower portions of its predecessor (Str. 188-2nd). The reason for the slight increase in the building's height on the southeast and northwest is that the aforementioned terrace is set slightly further downslope than were Str. 188-2nd's basal facings. Structure 188-1st, therefore, covers 5.25x8.25m and generally preserves Str. 188-2nd's orientation (the above figures do not include F.3 and 4). The summit was largely unchanged from TS.2, the principal modifications apparently being the addition of a bench to the southwest room and laying of a cobble floor on the southern terrace corner. That floor lines up with the broad passageway into an extensive surface-level construction lying immediately southeast of the platform. The latter is seemingly open to the southeast. Given its proximity to, and linkage with, the Str. 188-1st platform, it is likely that the enclosure's functions are tied to activities conducted on the adjacent edifice. The area enclosed by the surface-level buildings is approximately 14.72m² and it is aligned roughly 58 degrees.

Time Span 4

Following abandonment, Str. 188-1st was buried by natural deposition of S.3 and 4, two very similar moderately coarse-textured, moderately hard-compacted soils that differ slightly in color (S.4 is dark brown while underlying S.3 is brown) and in their inclusions (S.3 has more stones [F.5] and fewer roots than S.4). Together, these layers accumulated to thicknesses of 0.44-0.64m over S.2 and buried all but the uppermost portions of final-phase architecture. Stones fallen from Str. 188-1st are embedded in S.3 (primarily) and 4, extend over the platform's summit, flanks, and for at least 1.8m northwest and 1.8m southeast of U.11 and 9, respectively (F.5). Feature 5's rocks are particularly densely packed off the northwest flank where the terrain slopes down most precipitously.

Structure 46-Sub1

Structure 46-Sub1 lies 2.8m southeast of Str. 188-1st, on the southeastern margin of the surface-level construction built against that platform's patio-facing side. Imperceptible on ground surface, Str. 46-Sub1 was initially detected in the Subop. 46A axial trench dug to expose Str. 188. Suboperations 46A, 46C, 46E, and 46K were then enlarged to completely uncover Str. 46-Sub1. Excavations here were carried down to maximum depths of 0.67m below modern ground surface into and through construction and 0.49m beneath ground level outside architecture, identifying a single building phase in the process. All work was directed by E. Laine.

Time Spans

<u>Time Span</u>	<u>Construction Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	-	-	S.2	-	?
2	Str. 46-Sub1-1st	U.1-6	-	-	LCLIII, II; EPC, LPC
3	-	-	S.3-4	F.1	-

Time Span 1

Stratum 2, a moderately fine-textured, moderately hard-compacted, tan clay mottled with white inclusions, runs beneath Str. 46-Sub1-1st architecture for at least 0.06-0.24m (its base was not uncovered; this earth level is a continuation of S.2 defined in the Str. 188 excavations, the designations being kept the same to stress continuity). Artifacts recovered from S.2 indicate a human presence in the immediate vicinity of Str. 46-Sub1-1st's eventual construction site while this earth layer was accumulating.

Time Span 2

Structure 46-Sub1-1st is a surface-level edifice bounded on all sides by variably wide, but consistently low, cobble foundations (U.1-4). These footings stand a preserved 0.1-0.25m tall and measure 0.35m (U.1 and 2) and 0.8-0.85m across (U. 3 and 4). The earthen-floored space demarcated by U.1-4 is divided into southwest and northeast enclosures by U.5, a 0.2m-wide by 0.1-0.2m-high footing that abuts U.3 on the southeast and stops 0.55m short of U.1 on the northwest. The latter gap probably acted as a doorway allowing passage between the two compartments. A 0.15m-high, 1m-wide stone-faced bench or shelf (U.6) occupies nearly the entirety of the southwest compartment. Unit 6 is 1.4m long northwest-southeast and is set within the area delimited by U.2, 3, and 5. The southwest and northeast rooms, including the area taken up by U.6, each cover 1x2.5m.

Structure 46-Sub1-1st measures 3.3x3.7m, is oriented roughly 53 degrees 30 minutes, and contains two rooms that each cover 2.5m². Approximately 65% of the southwest enclosure is filled with a low, stone-faced bench while its northeastern counterpart lacks any built-in features. Movement between the rooms was channeled through a 0.55m-wide door set between the medial wall and northwestern foundation. No breaches in the boundary foundations signaling an entryway were noted, though it is unlikely that such low walls posed significant obstacles to traffic. Footings and facings are made primarily of unmodified river cobbles measuring 0.01-0.4m across their largest dimension (most fall between 0.01-0.3m). Three large (0.3-0.4m, longest dimension) cut blocks were incorporated into the building's west and north corners; one on the former's exterior, one each on the interior and exterior of the latter. Structure 46-Sub1-1st is raised atop S.2, unit elevations dropping as that soil level descends from northwest to southeast; no effort was apparently expended in leveling this terrain prior to construction

Time Span 3

Following abandonment, Str. 46-Sub1-1st was covered by the natural deposition of S.3 and 4. These layers are continuations of the strata bearing the same numbers immediately to the northwest. Stratum 3, a moderately coarse-textured, moderately hard-compacted brown soil, was laid down first over S.2 and exposed architecture. Stratum 4 was deposited next, being distinguished from its predecessor by its slightly darker color and greater prevalence of roots. Most likely, S.3 and 4 represent slight variations within a single soil that eventually accumulated to depths of 0.42-0.46m above S.2. Very few stones tumbled from final-phase architecture were noted around Str. 46-Sub1-1st, those encountered being included in F.1.

Structure 190

Structure 190 closes off the northeast corner of the patio defined by Strs. 189-190, 200-203, and 270. Structure 203 is 83m to the east/southeast of Str. 190 while Str. 189 lies 44m to the east. The ground drops off ca. 0.4m over 22m north-to-south and 0.7m over 16m west-to-east. Roughly 10m west of Str. 190 the terrain descends rapidly into the channel of the quebrada that borders Op. 46 on this side.

Investigation of Str. 190 was largely restricted to two, 1m-wide trenches that cut across the platform east-west (Subop. 46M) and north-south (Subop. 46N) meeting at the building's center. Units exposed in these narrow probes were followed to limited extents as time allowed (conducted as part of Subop. 46O). Overall, ca. 52 m2 were cleared in Subop. 46M-O, excavations being carried down to maximum depths of 1m below modern ground surface outside construction and 1.48m beneath ground level into architectural fill. At least two building phases were identified in the course of this work. All excavations were overseen by M. Turek from April 16-May 17, 1996.

Time Spans

<u>Time Spans</u>	<u>Construction Phases</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	-	-	S.1	-	LCLIII,II
2	Str. 190-2nd	U.1-5	-	F.1-2	LCLIII,II
3	Str. 190-1st	U.6-22	-	-	LCL III,II
4	-	-	S.1	F.3	-

Time Span 1

At least 0.11m of S.1, a fine-textured brown clay, was found underlying construction dating to TS.2, minimally 0.26m of this earth level being located beneath architecture pertaining to TS.3. It, therefore, seems quite likely that deposition of lower S.1 preceded TS.2 and 3 construction events. Exactly how much of S.1 was introduced during this span cannot be ascertained as the earth level's base was not encountered in our excavations. Artifacts were recovered from S.1 where it was found under TS.3 construction; no cultural material was clearly derived from S.1 where it underlay Str. 190-2nd. The limited nature of the latter exposures, however, militated against recovering relevant items. Consequently, we cannot be certain that there was human occupation associated with S.1's deposition prior to TS.2, but it seems likely.

Time Span 2

Remnants of Str. 190-2nd were revealed by deep probes sunk into its successor's architectural fill. Exposures were, therefore, limited and the earlier building is only known from two tests separated by 4.6m. These investigations uncovered two earthen floored rooms delimited by substantial cobble foundations. The southernmost enclosure measures 1.4m north-south by at least 2.45m east-west, was entered through a door on the north (minimally 1m wide), and is bounded by U.1, 2, and 3 on the west, north, and south (the eastern footing was not identified). These foundations stand 0.31-0.48m high, U.1 and 2 having widths of 1.2m and 0.8m, respectively (U.3's north-south dimension was not exposed).

The northern compartment encompasses 1.5m north-south and is delimited by U.4 and 5 on the south and north. These constructions stand ca. 0.4m high, their widths being unknown. A large jar (ca. 0.24m diameter) was set into the earthen floor in the approximate center of the southern room, opposite the northern door (F.1). An apparent hearth, identified by a concentration of charcoal roughly delimited by eight stones, rests on the northern enclosure's floor (F.2). Feature 2 defines an oval covering 0.6m east-west by 0.88m north-south. Evidence of burning, in the form of a hard-compacted, dark orange-red soil grading into a yellowish-brown soil with increasing depth, extends 0.13m below the putative floor level. A third room may have lain immediately west of U.1, bounded on the west by U.11. This interpretation is suggested by the nearly identical depths of U.1's and U.11's bases. If this was the case, the resulting earthen-floored room would encompass 3.12m east-west.

The restricted nature of our excavations precludes definitive statements concerning the form and dimensions of Str. 190-2nd. Instead, we hypothesize that this building consists of a series of rooms built directly on ground surface, the exposed upper portions of S.1 serving as floors. Foundations evidence considerable care in their construction, being fashioned primarily of small, tightly packed cobbles set in a light tan, fine-textured soil matrix. A few medium-size cobbles are interspersed among the more diminutive rocks, occasionally forming up to four horizontal courses. The preponderance of small stones in TS.2 construction, coupled with the use of a light tan earth mortar, distinguishes components of Str. 190-2nd from those pertaining to its successor. This early building covers at least 8.8m east-west by 9.9m north-south (including U.11 on the west) and is aligned roughly 106 degrees.

Time Span 3

Structure 190-1st is a substantial, stone-faced platform that is ascended by two terraces (U.12 and 13) and a summit step-up (U.14) on its eastern, patio-facing flank. Though preservation here is poor, U.14's considerable width, measuring ca. 1.25m across, suggests that the third ascending riser was built first, U.12 and 13 being set against this stable foundation at a slightly later date. The basal and second ascending terraces, U.12 and 13, have cobble facings that ascend 0.34m and 0.31m and delimit terraces that are 1.65m and 1.4m wide, respectively. The step up from U.13 to U.14 is 0.47m, the latter marking the eastern limit of Str. 190-1st's summit.

Unit 1 was raised approximately 1.2m during this span, converted into a 1.2m-wide, north-south oriented medial wall possibly running the full length of the summit and partitioning that space into eastern and western segments. Unit 1's great width implies that it was more than just a foundation and space-divider; possibly it also served as a bench or shelf. Unit 2 was raised a comparable amount now, this foundation now serving as a room-divider east of U.1. Another east-west running wall, ca. 0.4m high, abuts U.1 north of U.2 (U.10). Units 10 and 2 may have bordered a summit enclosure covering 2.5m north-south. Movement between eastern and western portions of the superstructure was through a formal doorway set into U.1's northern end. This space is at least 1.3m wide north-south (its northern limit was not clearly identified), floored with a stone pavement (U.8), and fronted on the east by a ca. 0.25m-high cobble step that measures 0.6m across east-west (U.7). Units 7 and 8 lie immediately north of the putative room bordered by U.10. No other obvious summit architecture was noted south of U.2 (U.3 was apparently not elevated during TS.3 and was probably buried by fill used in converting the surface-level edifice into a platform). Investigations west of U.1 were minimal and did not contribute to an understanding of how space was organized on this side of the superstructure.

The remaining flanks seem to have been ascended by single, thick, steep stone facings (U.9, 11, and 6 on the south, west, and north). Unit 6 seems to have been built on and over the earlier U.5, enhancing that wall's height by ca. 0.6m. Unit 11 may have been raised a similar amount (0.66m), building on a foundation erected during TS.2 (*if* this entity was initially part of Str. 190-2nd). Unit 9 was probably built de novo, no evidence of earlier construction being found beneath this facing. Units 6, 9, and 11 are 1.9m, 1.95m, and 2.2m wide and have reconstructed heights of 1m, 1.3m, and 1.15m, respectively. The relationship between U.4 and 6 remains uncertain. Roughly 0.6m was added to the former's original height in TS.3, making it equivalent to the top of U.6. The U.19 fill of rocks and earth that buried Str. 190-2nd's northern room, however, also obscured all of the standing portions of U.4, suggesting that this entity was not visible on the final version of Str. 190-1st. It is unlikely that U.4 would have been elevated just to be buried and it may be that the construction was augmented in TS.3 to serve some as yet unknown purpose. The high density of stone tumble found overlying U.4 (part of F.3) hints at a substantial construction in this area, possibly the superstructure's northern footing. Unit 4 might have undergirded this heavily disturbed architecture. If that was the case, U.6 would define the northern limits of a terrace that extends 3.6m southward to the limits of whatever construction was raised above U.4.

Structure 190-1st's fill has been given different designations depending on where it was found (U.18 between U.5 and 6; U.19 between U.4 and 5; U.16 between U.1 and 11; U.20 within U.9; and U.15 between U.1 and 14). In all cases it generally consists of numerous small to large cobbles set in a brown soil matrix. The principal exception to this pattern is found in the lower 0.4-0.5m of U.15, 16, and 19. Here stones are less densely packed, are smaller, and the earth is lighter in color than in the overlying levels. These distinct layers correspond precisely to those portions of U.15, 16, and 19 that fill Str. 190-2nd's rooms. Such a break in fill units may signal many things. An intriguing possibility is that the above-noted division indicates a temporal disjunction between the termination of Str. 190-2nd and the raising of Str. 190-1st. This discontinuity might well correspond to a third building phase intermediate between the two outlined here, marking the first steps in transforming the earlier surface-level edifice into a platform. There is, however, no other evidence to support the forgoing suggestion.

A 0.25-0.5m-high stone wall (U.22) was identified 0.5m west of Str. 190-1st's western flank (U.11). Unit 22's behavioral significance is far from clear. It may be a fragment of relatively insubstantial construction raised between the investigated building and the quebrada on the west. It is impossible to evaluate this interpretation given the limited portion of U.22 uncovered in 1996.

Structure 190-1st measures 16.6m north-south by 14.3m east-west, stands a reconstructed 1-1.3m high, and is oriented roughly 10 degrees. The summit was reached by ascending three relatively low risers on the eastern flank, no other access features having been identified in our admittedly limited excavations. The summit encompasses 8.5x11.2m (taking U.4 as the northern limit) and is bisected into more-or-less equal eastern and western portions by a 1.2m-wide medial wall (U.1). Movement between these two sides was through a door set into the medial wall's northern end, that entry being formalized through the addition of a low step-up fronting the passage on the east. At least two rooms were tentatively reconstructed on the eastern summit, measuring 2.5m and 5.6m across (the latter is between U.2 and 9). Too little is known about the western summit to support even a hypothesis about space organization on this side of the medial wall. Unit 1 is sufficiently wide that it may have doubled as a bench or shelf during TS.2. Summit and terrace floors seem to have been primarily made of earth, the clearest exception being the stone pavement that floors the entryway at the northern terminus of the

medial wall. The poor preservation of most TS.3 construction prevents making inferences concerning the nature of final-phase architecture. River cobbles of varying dimensions, mostly large and medium-size, are the primary constituents in facings and foundations. A few cut masonry blocks were included in U.6 and 9, but nowhere are they common. The binding agent used throughout Str. 190-1st construction is a brown mud mortar.

Time Span 4

Deposition of S.1 resumed following Str. 190-1st's abandonment, eventually covering all but the platform's highest summit architecture. Varying amounts of stone fallen from final-phase constructions were found overlying and extending out from the margins of Str. 190-1st (F.3). Feature 3 is densest atop the building and off its southern and northern margins where it extends for approximately 2m beyond the edifice's limits. Tumbled stone was less prevalent on the east, being found in light to moderate amounts for only ca.0.8m beyond U.12 (comparable data was not recorded on the west). Apparently, the relatively steep northern and southern facings proved less stable over time than the lower eastern terraces.

Structure 203-A

Structure 203 appeared on the surface to be an extensive, albeit low (0.2-0.44m-high), platform occupying the northeast corner of the patio defined by Strs. 189-190, 200-203, and 270. The edifice is 38m south of Str. 189 and 83m east/southeast of Str. 190. Excavations, conducted within Subops. 46J, 46K, and 46L, revealed that the surface-visible mound contained two distinct platforms running in a north-south line. The southern member of the pair is designated Str. 203-A, its northern neighbor being glossed as Str. 203-B. Most of our efforts were devoted to completely clearing Str. 203-A. Excavations were pursued to maximum depths of 0.5m below modern ground surface outside architecture and 0.8m beneath ground level into construction fill, revealing three building phases. Approximately 80.4m² was cleared in the course of this work from April 16 to May 17, 1996. All digging was supervised by Robert Johnson.

Time Spans

<u>Time Span</u>	<u>Construction Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	-	-	S.1, 2?	-	LCL II,I
2	Str. 203-A-3rd	U.1-7	-	-	LCLIII,II?
3	Str. 203-A-2nd	U.8-10, 23	-	F.1	LCLIII,II?
4	Str. 203-A-1st	U.11-22, 24	-	-	LCLIII, II, EPC
5	-	-	S.1-3	F.2	-

Time Span 1

Stratum 1, a fine-textured, moderately hard-compacted, brown clay, underlies exposed architecture by at least 0.06-0.5m (its base lies beyond excavation limits). The situation on the east is unclear as S.1 was not definitively identified in this area. It may be that S.2, a moderately fine-textured, moderately soft-compacted, brown clay, was laid down here to a depth of at least 0.14m before construction was initiated. This finding runs counter to observations made elsewhere in the excavations where S.2 consistently overlies S.1 and covers final-phase architecture. Strata 1 and 2 are distinguished by only slight textural and compaction differences and the anomalous stratigraphic sequence noted east of Str. 203-A may simply result from a failure to identify this subtle distinction.

Stratum 1 drops 0.14m over 9.95m north-to-south beneath Str. 203-A. Recovery of artifacts from the limited portions of S.1 uncovered in Subops. 46J, 46K, and 46L points to human occupation in the immediate area prior to Str. 203-A's construction.

Time Span 2

Structure 203-A-3rd is a surface-level building delimited by stone foundations on the south, west, and north (U.3, 2, and 4 respectively). These walls are 0.4-0.5m high, U. 2 and 3 measuring 0.6-0.9m across (U.4, the northern footing, is only 0.3m wide but its original northern face may have been truncated by the addition of U.10 and 12). Erected at the same time as U.2, U.1 is a ca. 0.55m-high by 0.5m-wide cobble wall that extends 3.65m eastward from Str. 46-A-3rd's western foundation. Unit 1 bisects the building's interior, dividing the space into northern and southern rooms, and protrudes 0.85-1.25m beyond Str. 203-A-3rd's eastern margin. Unit 1 drops to 0.11m high where it projects outside the apparent eastern limits of Str. 203-A-3rd. It is possible that the latter extension was added during TS.4 as part of an effort to subdivide a room built against the Str. 203-A-1st platform's eastern flank. Unfortunately, time did not permit dissection of the junction of the five construction units that occurs at this point to determine if U.1's eastern extension was an integral part of the original wall or if it was a later addition.

The northern enclosure measures 1.8x2.5m, while its southern counterpart encompasses 2.2x2.75m. The floors of both rooms consist of a pavement of small stones set in an orange to red-orange clay matrix (U.6 on the south and U.7 on the north). The distinctive color of the earth matrices in each case probably is a result of intense burning. Rising approximately 0.45m above U.6 in the southern enclosure is an L-shaped bench (U.5). Unit 5's western arm is 0.2m north of U.3 and runs 1.95m north to abut U.1, the northern arm continuing 0.8m east along U.1's south face, ending near the northeast room corner. The elements comprising U.5 are 0.7-0.8m wide. Erection of U.5, which clearly postdates construction of U.1 and 6, may have partitioned the southern room into two diminutive cubicles covering 0.85x1.45m east of U.5 and 0.8x2.2m to the west. Both of Str. 203-A-3rd's enclosures were open to the east.

Overall, Str. 203-A-3rd is a surface-level building that covers 3.25-3.65m east-west by 5.45m north-south, contains two stone-floored rooms open to the east, and is aligned roughly 359 degrees. The enclosures are set in a north-south line and measure 4.5m² (northern) and 6.1m² (southern). The latter contains a 0.45m-high, L-shaped bench whose arms are 0.7-0.8m wide and run 1.95m north-south before turning to extend 0.8m east along the compartment's northern wall. Construction of this element apparently divided the southern enclosure into two cubicles encompassing 1.2m² east of the

bench and 1.9m² to the west. Foundations and bench facings were built using river cobbles primarily, their naturally flatter aspects oriented outwards, and set in one to five surviving horizontal courses. Chinking stones are packed around the larger rocks in each case. Cut blocks are sparingly incorporated into U.1 but are a common component in the west face of U.5's western arm. In the latter case, the basal course is made up of faced tuff blocks set on end, the succeeding two courses being fashioned using a combination of flat-laid tuff blocks and cobbles. Average stone sizes range from 0.14x0.26m to 0.3x0.31m and all rocks are set in a brown mud mortar.

Time Span 3

Structure 203-A was converted into a platform during this interval. The formerly open eastern margins of Str. 203-A-3rd's northern and southern rooms were sealed by cobble foundations measuring ca. 0.55m high and 0.4-0.5m across (U.8 on the north and U.9 on the south), the rooms now filled with cobbles set in a brown earth matrix (U.23). Unit 9 abuts U. 1 and 3 while its northern companion, U.8, extends from its abutment with U.1 northward where it forms an integrated corner with U.10. The latter is set against, and seals, U.4 to the south, apparently serving as Str. 203-A-2nd's northern facing. Unit 10 is roughly 0.4m wide, U.4 and 10 together comprising a wall measuring 0.7m across. Unit 10's height was not ascertained as we did not wish to disturb the earlier (U.4) and later (U.12) constructions bracketing this wall on the south and north, respectively. Very likely, U.10 ascends 0.4m, as do U.4 and 12. The division of interior space into northern and southern rooms is maintained in Str. 203-A-2nd, U.1 now partitioning the summit into two enclosures. The U.5 bench probably continued to protrude above the earthen summit floor on the south. Unit 11, a stone facing that spans the 1.8m north-south width of the northern room, apparently defines the western limit of a bench that runs back 1.15m east to U.8's west face. A 0.04-0.1m-thick layer of hard-packed, fine-textured, orange-brown clay covers the top of the U.11 bench (F.1). Feature 1 may be the burnt remnant of the earthen coating that formerly surfaced this construction. Unfortunately, lacking clear summit floors, it is difficult to determine exactly how high U.5 and 11 rose above the summit.

Structure 203-A-2nd is a platform that stands ca. 0.5m tall, measures 3.7m east-west by 5.85m north-south, and retains the orientation of its immediate predecessor. The northern and southern rooms maintained their earlier dimensions, now elevated atop a stone-and-earth fill. Both enclosures possess benches, the newly added construction in the northern room being surfaced with a fine-textured clay that was burnt orange. No clear entryways are apparent and it is uncertain how the interiors of Str. 203-A-2nd's rooms were attained. Foundations and the bench facing added during this interval were fashioned primarily of river cobbles, their naturally flatter faces oriented outwards, and set in up to three horizontal courses. Chinking stones were packed around the larger rocks, the average dimensions of the latter ranging from 0.18x0.3m to 0.23x0.28m. All rocks are set in a brown mud mortar.

Time Span 4

This interval is distinguished by additions that extend Str. 203-A-2nd on all sides. The northern foundation was enlarged by the construction of U.12, a 0.4m-high by 0.4-0.7m-wide foundation that is set against and seals U.10 to the south. Unit 12 widens from its eastern to western termini and extends from Str. 203-A-1st's northwest corner to 0.5m shy of the northeast corner, creating an inset covering 0.4x0.5m during an early portion of TS.4. Overall, the northern foundation, composed of the adjoining segments of U.4, 10, and 12, is now 1.1-1.4m wide.

Modifications on the east were more extensive, culminating in the creation of a surface-level construction delimited by stone foundations (U.13-16) and the eastern platform facing (U.8 and 9). The northern footing (U.13) overlaps U.12 by approximately 1.45m, burying the latter's inset corner, and extends a reconstructed 2.25m east of U.8, the northern segment of the platform's eastern basal wall. Unit 14 projects 0.95m south of U.13, its southern terminus marking the northern edge of a 1.15m-wide doorway. Unit 15 extends 2.45m south of this entrance where it corners with U.16. The latter foundation runs westward for 1.25m where it is integrated with U.17. Unit 17, built against, and nearly obscuring, U.9, projects 1.7m north from U.16 to abut U.1's eastern extension. The U.1 eastern extension, as noted earlier, may have been erected during this interval. Bordering foundations (U.13-16) measure 0.18-0.29m high and 0.75-1m across, U.13 on the north having the greatest width. The room they delimit has an area of approximately 6.15m². Unit 1's extension protrudes 0.3m and 0.9m east of U.8 and 17 into the enclosure, essentially dividing the interior space into northern and southern components. The former covers 3.52m², the latter 2.19m², and passage between them is via the 0.9m-wide gap separating U.1 and 15. The southern compartment is floored with earth while its northern counterpart is surfaced with a mixture of earth and pebbles (U.18). Unit 18's soil matrix is red-orange, probably the outcome of intense burning in this area.

The architectural significance of U.17 is eminently unclear. Adding a footing in front of U.9 appears superfluous, no comparable renovation being noted north of U.1 sealing U.8. Unit 17 is equivalent in height to U.9, 13-16, thereby rendering its use as a bench or step within the eastern room improbable. More likely, U.17 was added to U.9 either to bolster that construction or to create a relatively wide (0.9m across) stone surface on the eastern margin of the southern summit room. As no comparable buttress was needed to support U.9's northern analogue (U.8), the latter interpretation is the more probable.

The platform's western and southern flanks were now faced by low (0.16-0.26m high) cobble walls (U.19 and 21) that retain a fill composed of stones set in a brown earth matrix (U.24). Unit 19 borders 6.05m of the edifice's western flank, ending on the south at its junction with U.20, a comparable architectural element that slants back southeastward to abut U.2, 0.5m north of the latter's corner with U.3. Unit 21 extends 2.2m southeast from its abutment with the U.19/20 junction before running east at a shallower angle for an additional 4.6m. About half way along its east extent, U.21's south face steps back ca. 0.3m to the north. Whether this indentation was part of the builders' original plan or a product of erosion is not certain. Units 19/21 define spaces that are 1.3m wide in front of Str. 203-A-1st. Units 19 and 20 appear to have been added prior to U.21's construction, though it may well be that the elapsed time was very short. Outside of the U.20 junction, evidence for how these elements were articulated with the platform has not survived. Units 19 and 21 simply end on the north and east, respectively, without linking to the principal edifice. These constructions were, in the recovered state, unlikely to have fronted terraces. How they figured in Str. 203-A-1st's architecture is unknown. Unit 22 is a 0.3m-wide cobble wall that projects at least 0.45m west of its abutment with U.19 on the north. Limited excavation in this area makes any inferences advanced concerning U.22's architectural significance highly conjectural. This wall might hint at the presence of surface-level constructions raised off Str. 203-A-1st's western flank, a pattern akin to that recounted on the east.

Three construction intervals culminated in the complex edifice glossed as Str. 203-A-1st. The central platform, ca.0.5m high and supporting two summit rooms, remained largely unchanged from TS.3, save for a modest expansion of its north-south dimension (the building now covers roughly

3.7x6.8m, exclusive of U.19/21). Stone walls were appended to this structure's western and southern facings, though what purposes these additions served remain unknown. Two interconnected rooms, arranged in a north-south line, were erected on ground surface immediately east of the platform. This complex was entered through a 1.15m-wide door on the east and is delimited by low cobble footings along with the substructure's eastern facing. The latter element was augmented on the south by the addition of the enigmatic U.17. The earth-and-stone floor of the northern enclosure (covering 3.52m²) was apparently burnt at some point during, or immediately following, use while its earthen-floored southern counterpart (encompassing 2.19m²) yielded no evidence of a conflagration. A 0.9m-wide door connects these two compartments. Additional surface-level edifices may have been raised against Str. 203-a-1st's western side though this is no more than a tentative hypothesis. All facings and foundations built during TS.4 are fashioned primarily of river cobbles set in a brown mud mortar. Average stone sizes range from 0.16x0.22m to 0.27x0.32m. Cut tuff blocks were incorporated into U.13's and U.21's facings while schist slabs appear as a minority component of U.15.

Structure 203-A-1st is, therefore, a complex of adjoining constructions, incorporating surface-level and elevated elements, that covers an area of roughly 59.25m² (7.5x7.9m). The orientation of this agglomeration generally maintains the nearly north-south alignment initiated in TS.2.

Time Span 5

Deposition of S.1 resumed following Str. 203-A-1st's abandonment, succeeded, in turn, by the introduction of S.2 and 3. Both of the last two earth levels are moderately fine-textured, moderately soft-compacted clays that differ slightly in color and the nature of their inclusions. Stratum 2 is brown and contains numerous rocks from F.2; S.3 is dark brown, incorporates fewer rocks but has a larger number of small roots. Altogether, S.2 and 3 accumulated to depths of 0.11-0.58m (minimally) above S.1, being particularly thick off the building's east and north flanks. Rocks fallen from final-phase construction (F.2) are found embedded in S.2 and 3 for up to 1.92m east, 3.34m west, and 0.45m south of Str. 203-A-1st. Comparable tumble fills the narrow gap separating Strs. 203-A-1st and 203-B-1st on the north. Feature 2 appears to have been particularly dense west of Str. 203-A-1st, less pronounced on the east and south.

Structure 203-B

Structure 203-B lies a scant 0.75-1.2m north of Str. 203-A. It was investigated by continuations of Subops. 46J, 46K, and 46L. Probes were carried to a maximum depth of 0.86m below modern ground surface outside construction; Str. 203-B's fill was not investigated. A single construction phase, showing some signs of modification, was identified in the course of this work. Roughly 12.7m² were cleared along the building's northwestern and southwestern flanks, from April 16-May 17, 1996, under the direction of Robert Johnson.

Time Spans

<u>Time Span</u>	<u>Construction Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Date</u>
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1	-	-	S.1,2	-	LCLII, III?
2	Str. 203-B-1st	U.1-4	-	F.1	LCL III,II
3	-	-	S.2,3	F.2	-

Time Span 1

Deposition of S.1, a fine-textured, moderately hard-compacted, brown clay, is the first activity recorded in the immediate vicinity of Str. 203-B. This soil level was uncovered to thicknesses of 0.1m and 0.38m south and north of construction, respectively (S.1's base was not encountered in any of our tests). Though exposed in two discontinuous segments, S.1 appears to ascend 0.14m over 7.13m north-to-south. Stratum 1 subsequently descends another 0.14m over 9.95m north-to-south beneath neighboring Str. 203-A. Structures 203-A and 203-B, therefore, seem to have been raised on the southern and northern slopes of a very gradual rise that "peaks" between the two buildings. Approximately 0.07m of S.2, a moderately fine-textured, moderately soft-compacted brown clay, was deposited over S.1 prior to Str.203-B-1st's construction. Recovery of artifacts from throughout the investigated portions of S.1 and 2 indicate human occupation of Str.203-B-1st's eventual construction site prior to the raising of that edifice.

Time Span 2

Units 1 and 2 are the northwestern and southwestern basal facings of Str. 203-B-1st. These constructions stand 0.24-0.36m high and may have been backed on the summit by a pavement composed, in part, of schist slabs. The considerable disruption suffered by the shallowly covered summit since abandonment leaves open the question of whether such a floor ever existed. At some point in the building's use-life, a 0.24m-high addition (U.3) was tacked on to U.1's northwest face, beginning even with the latter's north corner and ending 0.8m shy of its west corner. Unit 3 extends Str. 203-B-1st 0.6-0.7m to the west and creates an inset corner on the west measuring 0.6x0.8m. A roughly square construction defined by upright schist slabs and tuff masonry blocks (U.4) was identified on the southwestern margin of Str. 203-B-1st's summit, ca. 0.6m east of the building's southwest corner. Unit 4 covers ca. 0.9m on a side, probably stood at least 0.25m high, and contains a stone sphere with a diameter of roughly 0.25m. Several of the tuff blocks were still standing on end when U.4 was uncovered though one block and all of the schist slabs were found tilting out and away from the unit. There is no evidence of a prepared surface flooring U.4. The architectural significance of this construction remains unknown. A line of five cut tuff blocks was found lying ca. 0.4m southwest of, and running more-or-less parallel to, U.2 (F.1). All but one of these stones were found to be lying flat and they are spaced 0.15-0.3m apart. Feature 1's architectural import is unclear. Regularity in stone positions and spacing hints at intentional placement, possibly as a step ascending Str. 203-B-1st's southwest side or as part of a relatively casual effort to bridge the short distance separating Strs. 203-A-1st and 203-B-1st. Alternatively, the rocks may be fortuitously placed tumble that cascaded off U.2 at some point following the edifice's abandonment. Though it is difficult to decide between these interpretations, we tend to favor the first view based largely on the concentration of such locally unusual stones and their regular placement.

Structure 203-B-1st is a 0.24-0.36m-high stone-faced platform that covers 4.45m northeast-southwest by at least 4.1m southeast-northwest and is aligned roughly 11 degrees. Limited exposure of

the summit rules out inferences concerning the type of superstructure that Str. 203-B-1st supported. All we can say at present is that the substructure might have been topped with a stone pavement and did support a square unit defined by upright masonry blocks and schist slabs on its southwestern margin. The summit could have been easily attained by stepping up and over the low northwestern and southwestern basal facings. Some energy may have been expended in linking Strs. 203-A-1st and 203-B-1st by means of the F.1 blocks. The latter might have also served as a formal step-up to Str. 203-B-1st. Units 1 and 3 are fashioned primarily from cobbles not set into clear horizontal courses. Unit 3 is built mostly of river-rounded stones, though here cut tuff blocks and schist slabs are intermixed with the cobbles. Horizontal coursing is not in evidence. Average rock sizes in U.1-3 range from 0.25x0.25m to 0.34x0.41m. As noted above, F.1 consists exclusively of faced masonry tuff blocks and U.4 was built using a combination of such blocks and schist slabs.

Time Span 3

Following Str. 203-B-1st's abandonment, deposition of S.2 resumed. Stratum 3, identical to S.2 save for its slightly darker brown color and greater concentration of roots, caps the stratigraphic sequence. Together, S.2 and 3 cover all construction and contain stones fallen from final-phase architecture (F.2). A light scatter of tumbled building debris extends for ca. 1.2m north of Str. 203-B-1st and fills the narrow gap separating this edifice from Str. 203-A-1st on the south.

Chronological Summary

Occupation in Op.46 appears to have been initiated in the Middle Preclassic. A few ceramics diagnostic of that span were unearthed from mixed contexts in the vicinity of Str. 188 and it is likely that a relatively small Middle Preclassic settlement existed somewhere in the area covered by Op. 46. The next time period identified in the collections is Late Classic I, scattered materials pertaining to the interval having been found near Strs. 188, 187, and 203A. The greater spatial dispersion of Late Classic I items may point to an increase in population over Middle Preclassic levels, though the infrequency with which diagnostics of both periods are found urges caution in advancing any inferences about ancient population size and distribution. Similarly, the absence of materials dating to the centuries separating the Middle Preclassic and Late Classic I may be more a product of limited sampling of deep deposits than due to any hiatus in occupation. Nevertheless, the dearth of Late Classic I and earlier objects hints at an enduring episode of relatively sparse settlement in this portion of La Sierra.

Late Classic II is well-represented in Op. 46 excavated collections, relevant items coming especially from strata underlying exposed architecture pertaining to Strs. 183, 188, 203A, and 203B. Construction of Strs. 183, 187, and 188-2nd may have taken place near the end of this span. Erection of Strs. 188-1st, 46-Sub1, 190-2nd, 190-1st, 203A-3rd, 203A-2nd, 203A-1st, and 203B-1st might well have followed soon afterwards. Given that most recovered and analyzed materials derive from secondary contexts, it is difficult to be more specific in tracing Op. 46's occupation history. The general impression obtained from these data is that the Op. 46 zone experienced a significant upsurge in settlement during Late Classic II/III, all investigated buildings being raised and in use probably for slightly more than a century on either side of that divide.

Occupation in Op. 46 dwindled rapidly in succeeding periods. Early Postclassic diagnostics were found in small amounts on and around Strs. 188-1st, 46-Sub1, and 203-A-1st. No construction is clearly linked to this interval, though some of the late, fairly casual additions appended to Strs. 188-1st (e.g., F.3

and 4) and 203-A-1st (e.g., U.19-21) are good candidates for inclusion here. Late Postclassic materials are present in diminutive quantities around Str. 46-Sub1, one of the few find-spots for such late prehistoric items anywhere in La Sierra. No signs of settlement dating to the Historic period were recognized.