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OVN OP 123 Excavation Report

Edward Schortman

Kenyon College, schortma@kenyon.edu

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Site 123

Site 123 is on the north margin of the Naco valley, on a high terrace overlooking the Rio Manchaguala which is ca. 100m to the west/southwest. The hills that define the basin are roughly 200m to the north. Site 120 lies 850m to the northwest and across the Rio Manchaguala from Site 123. Site 123's 39 mapped structures are arranged around 11 plazas and cover a total area of approximately 41,600m². The 23 monumental platforms at the settlement (buildings at least 1.5m high) delimit six major plazas arranged in a southwest-northeast line; the largest of these edifices, Str. 123-5, sits by itself 57m north of the northern-most monumental patio group. Smaller buildings form plaza groups scattered around the site's western and southern margins. A ca. 1m-tall rise on Site 123's southwest margin supports Strs. 123-29, 30, 33-37 and was originally interpreted as a natural eminence. Excavations here in 1988 and 1990, however, revealed that it is an artificial terrace raised early in the settlement's history.

Investigations of Site 123 began in 1977 when it was first recorded during survey. Excavations were initiated immediately, digging being carried out here in 1977, 1979, 1988, and 1990. The 1977 research was pursued out under the auspices of Cornell University and directed by John Henderson of that institution. Patricia Urban and Rosemary Joyce supervised the excavations in 1977, Urban continuing research at the site in 1979. Results of these first investigations have appeared in several publications (Henderson et al. 1979; Urban 1986a, 1986b). The present report concentrates on the excavations pursued at Site 123 by Julia Miller from May 23-July 1, 1988, and Victoria Clark from April 23-June 21, 1990. During the 1988 and 1990 field seasons, ca. 406m² were cleared in the course of investigating six structures, including a Middle Preclassic earthen terrace.

Structure 123-26

Structure 123-26 is a monumental platform situated in the southern portion of the site. The building looks northeast into a plaza defined by Strs. 123-21 through 23 and 27 as well as southwest into the patio delimited by Strs. 123-24, 25, 28, 29, and 31. Str. 123-29 is 32m southwest and across the southwest plaza from Str. 123-26 while Strs. 123-27 and 23 are 9m and 7m distant, respectively. Excavations conducted within Subop. Z, AA, BB, and II exposed slightly less than half of this platform, uncovering ca. 118m² in all. Digging was pursued to a maximum depth of 2.85m below modern ground surface outside construction; architectural fill was not probed in the course of this work. One major building episode was revealed through these investigations which were directed by J. Miller.

Time Spans

<u>Time Span</u>	<u>Construction Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	-	-	S.2-4	-	LPrecl?
2	Str. 123-26-1st	U.1-4	-	-	LPrecl
3	Str. 123-26-1st	U.5-43	-	-	LPrecl, II, III

Time Span 1

This interval is distinguished by the deposition of three distinct soil levels (S.2-4). The earliest of these entities to be laid down, S.4, is a moderately coarse-textured, loosely compacted, tan sand. Stratum 4 was revealed to a maximum thickness of 0.26m, though its base lies beyond excavation limits. Overlying S.4 by 0.26-0.32m is a coarse-textured, loosely compacted, reddish-brown sandy soil (S.3). Artifacts and bones retrieved from S.3 point to human occupation in the immediate area while this soil was accumulating. Blanketing S.3 is a moderately coarse-textured, soft-compacted, brown soil (S.2). As much as 0.4m of S.2 was laid down now though, at least on Str. 123-26-1st's northeast side, this material continued to accumulate after the platform was abandoned.

Time Span 2

The few portions of Str. 123-26-1st's earliest known version that were uncovered consist of the platform's northeast and southwest core platform walls (U.4 and 2) along with low, stone-faced terraces that fronted these massive vertical risers (U.3 and 1). On the northeast, the lowest recorded terrace facing (U.3) stands 0.22m high and projects 2.53m northeast of U.4. The latter is fully 1.9m high, rising 1.53m above U.3's tread and extending 0.27m into S.2. It is unclear whether U.3 is actually the basal riser on this side of the building or if at least one more terrace lies undiscovered to the northeast. On the southwest U.1 is a 0.25m-high terrace facing that extends back 0.69m to the northeast where it is succeeded by U.2. The last-named construction stands to a preserved height of 1m and, unlike its northeast analogue, seems to rest on its fronting terrace.

Structure 123-26-1st, during TS.2, was a platform standing at least 1.75m high, measuring roughly 12.5m across northeast-southwest, and oriented ca. 320 degrees. Both the northeast and southwest flanks were fronted by low (0.2-0.22m high) stone-faced and -surfaced terraces that measured 2.53m and 0.69m across. These low risers gave way to vertical stone walls that apparently ascended directly to the summit; the better preserved northeastern example extended down behind its fronting terrace while the more disturbed southwest example seems to have rested on the basal terrace tread. All walls dating to this interval were fashioned of unmodified rocks the naturally flatter faces of which were directed outwards. A mud mortar was used as the binding agent.

Time Span 3

Structure 123-26-1st underwent a significant program of renovation during this span. Whether the changes made were accomplished as part of a single building episode or were introduced periodically over a longer interval is unknown.

The platform's perimeter was defined by low (ca. 0.25m high) stone-faced terraces (U.1, 3, 39, 40, and 41; U.40 continues the line of U.1 to Str. 123-26-1st's west corner). Widths are recorded for only two of these entities; U.1 and 3 measure 0.69m and 2.53m across, respectively. The platform's west corner formed by the intersection of U.40 and 41 is inset 0.7m northwest-

southeast by 1.3m southwest-northeast. The remaining three basal corners were not uncovered. These low ascents lead back to the steep vertical walls that define the platform's core on the southwest and northeast (U.2 and 4, respectively; see TS. 2). The latter walls rise directly to the summit. Their analogues on the northwest and southeast were not exposed. Extending 4.68m northeast and 2.66m southwest of U.4 and 2, in turn, are two stone staircases. These constructions are symmetrically located in the approximate centers of Str. 123-26-1st's long, plaza-facing sides. The northeast stair covers 5.6m northwest-southeast and is defined by well-coursed, steep cobble walls on both flanks (U.21 and 22). The eight risers themselves, aside from the basal example, are not well preserved (U.5-12). They are estimated to have been 0.14-0.4m high by 0.3-1.06m across. On the southwest, the staircase covers 5.8m northwest-southeast, its flanks delimited by steep, vertical ascents (U.18 and 20). As was the case with its northeastern analogue, the southwest staircase had deteriorated significantly since abandonment. It originally consisted of an estimated 6 risers (U.19, 34-38) that are 0.17-0.34m high by 0.17-0.82m across.

Structure 123-26-1st's summit measures 6.1x14.75m and supports at least five rooms. The superstructure itself is delimited by low (generally 0.14-0.2m high) stone foundations (U.14, 15, 17, 23-26, 29-32). The superstructure's north corner is inset 0.7m on a side; the exposed west and east corners, though poorly preserved, do not seem to have been inset. Three small enclosures (Rooms 1-3) form a line running northwest-southeast overlooking the northeast staircase. The central compartment, Room 1, measures 1.4x2.5m and has a low, stone-faced shelf (U.43) set in its east corner. Unit 43 is triangular in shape and covers 1.35m on its longest side by 0.75m and 1m on its legs. Room 2 lies to the northwest and encompasses 0.8x1.35m. Adjoining Room 1 to the southeast is a cubicle that covers 1.4x1.45m (Room 3). The earthen floors of Rooms 1-3 are burned orange. Whether this burning was part of an effort to create a hard surface or resulted from an accidental conflagration is unclear. The cross-walls that distinguish one room from another in this triad (U.25 and 42) were added after the footings that define the compartments margins had been raised (U.15, 23, 24, and 26). How much time intervened between these events is uncertain, though it is possible that the area occupied by Rooms 1-3 originally was one enclosure covering 1.4x5.5m.

Lying immediately southwest of Room 1, and separated from it by a low stone foundation (U.24), is an enclosure measuring 2.5x3.35m (Room 4). Unlike Rooms 1-3 which are defined on all sides by stone footings, Room 4 is completely open on the southwest where it overlooks the southwestern staircase. Room 4 is bounded on the southeast by another foundation wall (U.27) while its northwest flank is delimited by a low but extensive stone construction (U.28); U.28 covers roughly 2x2.9m (measured across its center). This entity is much broader than any other uncovered summit wall, these generally falling within the range of 0.3-1m wide. It may be that U.28's unusual spatial extent reflects its use as a bench. A stone line (U.16) runs 2.15m southeast from U.28 across most of Room 4's northwest-southeast dimension. Unit 16 is 2.15m southwest of the enclosure's northeast foundation (U.24) and stops 0.5m shy of its southeastern footing (U.27). The architectural significance of this construction is unknown. Room 6 is immediately northwest of Room 4. Based on our limited excavations within this compartment, it is estimated that Room 6 covers 3.1x4.1m and was open to the southwest. A 1m-wide gap in the compartment's east corner likely provided access to the room's earthen-floored interior from this side. Only a very small fraction of Room 5 was uncovered. This enclosure borders Room 4 on the southeast and covers, very roughly, 3.5x5m. No built-in furniture was recorded in Rooms 5 and 6 though such constructions may well lie within

unexplored portions of both compartments.

A low wall (U.33) seems to have been added late in Str. 123-26-1st's history. Unit 33 is 2m northeast of U.3, 0.25m back (southwest) from the front of the northeastern staircase. This construction was followed for 0.9m northwest of the stairs before excavation ceased. It may be that U.33 was intended to replace U.3, thereby expanding the platform's northeast terrace to 4.53m wide northeast-southwest. No comparable additions were recorded off the southeast flank of the northeast stairs, however, suggesting that, if there was an effort to expand the northeast terrace it was either never intended to be symmetrical *vis a vis* the steps or was not finished.

By the conclusion of TS. 3, Str. 123-26-1st was a stone-faced platform that stood at least 1.75m high, measured 12.4x23.65m (excluding the steps), and was aligned ca. 317 degrees. The building's perimeter is delimited by stone-faced terraces that average about 0.25m high and are 0.69m and 2.53m wide (the two measurable examples). These low risers give way to steep ascents to the summit on at least the northeast and southwest where Str. 123-26-1st's core platform walls were revealed. Staircases project 4.68m and 2.66m from near the center of the edifice's northeast and southwest core facings. These formal stairways are 5.6m and 5.8m wide and consist of eight and six risers, in turn. Structure 123-26-1st's superstructure encompasses 6.1x14.7m and is divided among six earthen-floored enclosures delimited by low stone foundations that likely supported perishable upper walls. Three of these compartments form a line running northwest-southeast and overlook the northeast staircase (Rooms 1-3). These are the smallest cubicles uncovered on the platform's summit, measuring 1.1m², 3.5m², and 2m² progressing from northwest to southeast. The cross-walls separating these compartments were added after the perimeter footings were in place, possibly suggesting that Rooms 1-3 originally made up one relatively ample enclosure that covered 1.4x5.5m. The central compartment contains a triangular-shaped shelf built into its east corner and the floors of all three enclosures are burnt orange. Bordering this trio on the southwest, and facing out over the staircase on this side, is a much larger enclosure (Room 4). Covering 8.4m², Room 4 is bordered by a low but extensive wall on the northwest. Encompassing 5.8m², this construction may have doubled as a bench and wall support. Two relatively large enclosures border Room 4 on the northwest (Room 6, 12.7m²) and southeast (Room 5, 17.5m²). The former was entered through a 1m-wide door in its east corner though it may also have been open to the southwest.

The only modification made to the construction once its basic form was established seems to have been the expansion of the northeast basal terrace, northwest of the staircase, by 2m. No comparable addition was noted southeast of the stairs. All stone constructions associated with Str. 123-26-1st are made of river cobbles the flatter faces of which are directed outwards. Schist slabs were occasionally found included with these river-rounded stones. All of the rocks are set in a mud mortar.

Time Span 4

Following Str. 123-26-1st's abandonment, S.2 resumed accumulation, eventually covering much of the building's basal construction on the northeast and southwest sides. Blanketing S.2 by as much as 0.62m is a moderately coarse-textured, loosely compacted, dark gray to black, root-rich soil (S.1). Embedded in S.1 and 2 is a moderately dense concentration of rocks fallen from final-phase architecture (F.1).

Structure 123-30

Structure 123-30, in the southwest corner of the settlement, defines the west side of a plaza delimited on its other flanks by Strs. 123-31, 32, 38, and 39. A sizable saddle links Str. 123-30 with Str. 123-29 immediately to the north while Str. 123-31 is 18m to the northeast and across the plaza. Structure 123-30 also overlooks a patio defined by diminutive Strs. 123-33 through 36, lying immediately to the west/southwest. Excavations here, conducted within Subop. 123FF, uncovered roughly 50m², most of the exposed area being restricted to a trench that cut across the platform's approximate center from northeast to southwest. Time permitted limited clearing of the summit and portions of Str. 123-30's eastern basal wall. Digging was pursued to maximum depths of 2.28m and 0.58m below modern ground surface outside and within architecture, respectively. One principal building phase was identified in the course of this work which was directed by J. Miller.

Time Spans

<u>Time Span</u>	<u>Construction Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	-	-	S.9, 10	-	MPC?
2	-	-	S.8	-	MPC?
3	-	-	S.6, 7	-	
4	-	-	-	F.2	LPrecl
5	-	-	S.2-5	F.3	LPrecl
6	Str. 123-30-1st	U.1-21	-	-	LPrecl
7	-	-	S.1, 2	F.1	LCLIII

Time Span 1

The earliest known activities attested to in and around Str. 123-30-1st were revealed in a deep probe dug off the building's southwest flank. The occupation sequence described under TS. 1-4, therefore, depends primarily on observations made within that test.

The first of these episodes involved the deposition of S.9 and 10. The earliest of these entities, S.10, is a coarse-textured, loosely compacted, yellow-to-orange-colored sand. Stratum 10 was exposed to a maximum thickness of 0.09m, its base lying beyond excavation limits. Overlying S.10 is as much as 0.28m of fine-textured, hard-compacted, tan-to-yellow soil (S.9). Stratum 9 was apparently truncated on the northwest. Here, the layer drops 0.24m over 0.38m, pinching out against the top of S.10. It is very likely that S.9 and 10 are parts of the upper-most fill deposits used to fashion the monumental earthen terrace that underlies Strs. 123-33 through 36 and the western edges of Strs. 123-30 and 29 (most likely corresponding to Str. 123-Sub1-1st's U.4, see below).

Time Span 2

Stratum 8, a fine-textured, hard-compacted, reddish-brown soil with a few included small rocks that seems to be stained with *bajareque*, fills the area northwest of S.9 where the latter was apparently cut. Most likely S.8 fills a pit that had been dug through S.9 down to S.10. The putative declivity measures at least 0.37m across by 0.24m deep; its full dimensions were not recorded.

Time Span 3

Strata 8 and 9 are blanketed by S.7, a very coarse-textured, hard-compacted, sandy brown soil that accumulated to a maximum observed thickness of 0.18m. Stratum 7, in turn, is buried by S.6, a coarse-textured, hard-compacted, bright orange soil. The latter's color may be due to burning, possibly resulting from activities pursued in the adjacent F.2. Stratum 6 is 0.2-0.24m thick.

Time Span 4

All of the aforementioned earth layers (S.6-10) were cut into during the construction of a sizable pit (F.2). Feature 2 is, maximally, 0.84m deep and is at least 0.86m across (the declivity's northeast margin was not revealed). The depression thus created is filled with a dense concentration of small to large cobbles and, primarily, angular rocks along with *Pachychilus sp.* Shells, all set in a fine-textured, soft-compacted, tan ash. Feature 2 was seemingly a locus of burning which may have affected some of the surrounding soils (S.6 and 8 especially).

Time Span 5

Feature 2 might have been blanketed initially by S.5, a coarse-textured, loosely compacted, tan sand that was exposed to a maximum thickness of 0.38m (its base was not identified). Stratum 5 ends abruptly on the northeast, 0.8m southwest of F.2. So dramatic is S.5's termination, dropping 0.32m over 0.02m, that it looks as though S.5 was cut through. In its place to the northeast is a moderately coarse-textured, hard-compacted, dark brown to gray soil mottled with white inclusions (S.4). Stratum 4 contains numerous artifacts, along with a scattering of small rocks, and covers F.2 by as much as 0.46m. Stratum 4 does not cover S.5 but occupies an equivalent stratigraphic position northeast of the latter. At least 0.49m of a moderately coarse-textured, hard-compacted, brown soil mottled with white inclusions (S.2) covers S.4 southwest of Str. 123-30-1st. Embedded within S.2, 0.16m above its interface with S.4, is a rough line of flat-laid, unmodified stones (F.3). Feature 3 is one rock (0.15m) thick and may be the remnants of construction, possibly part of a foundation for a surface-level building. Only a segment 0.43m wide of this putative architecture was exposed in the deep southwestern probe so the behavioral significance of F.3 remains unknown.

On the northeast of Str. 123-30-1st the earliest activity identified in our excavations is the deposition of coarse-textured, soft-compacted, tan sand (S.3). Stratum 3 is at least 0.15m thick (its base was not uncovered) and is generally similar to S.10 on the southwest. The top of S.3 is 0.45m above the preserved top of S.10, the two exposures being separated by 18.24m. It is

possible that they are parts of the same earth level that is rising gradually from southwest to northeast. Testing this notion would require digging through the mass of Str. 123-30-1st that separates the two uncovered soils, an option we did not pursue. As on the southwest, S.2 also collected on the northeast prior to the construction of Str. 123-30-1st. On the northeast, 0.6m of this soil accumulated atop S.3 before TS. 6.

Time Span 6

Structure 123-30-1st is ascended on its northeast flank by nine generally low (0.1-0.42m high) stone-faced terraces that are 0.2-2.14m wide (U.1-9). The broadest of these risers, U.9, is also the uppermost member of the set, giving way on the southwest to a 0.37m-high stone-faced step-up to the summit (U.11). Unit 11 is 0.91m wide and probably doubled as the superstructure's northeast foundation. Remnants of what may have been an earlier terrace facing (U.10), superseded and buried by U.8, were recorded northeast of U.11. Unit 10 is 0.06m high and runs back 0.95m to the southwest where it is succeeded by U.11. The construction of U.9, 0.3m to the northeast, resulted in the blanketing of U.10 by 0.07m of a fill that consists of a moderately coarse-textured, hard-compacted, brown soil (U.20). On Str. 123-30-1st's southwest side six poorly preserved terraces, 0.14-0.56m high by 0.26-1.04m wide (U.14-19), ascend to the summit. The widest terrace treads are the lowest (U.14, 1.04m across) and the two highest examples (U.18 and 19, 1m and 1.04m wide, respectively). The final ascent to the summit on this side is 0.54m high (U.13). Unit 13 is 1.35m across and likely served as the superstructure's southwest foundation. The considerable width of U.13 suggests that it may have been used as a bench or shelf in addition to supporting perishable upper walls. Only 1.6m of Str. 123-30-1st's southeast basal facing (U.21) was uncovered; U.21 stands about 0.25m high.

The superstructure measures 4.8x8.4m and is dominated by a 0.38m-high (on the northeast) stone-faced bench (U.12). Unit 12 measures 2.32m across northeast-southwest; only 1m of its northwest-southeast dimension was exposed. Unit 12 is only 0.24m high on the southwest, this discrepancy apparently owing to differences in the heights of the summit floors. Though time did not allow for extensive clearing of the superstructure, it appears that this building consisted of one large room (40.3m²) through the center of which a large bench ran roughly northwest-southeast. The building's southwest foundation may have doubled as another bench or shelf.

The restricted portions of fill revealed in excavations within 123FF indicate that it consisted of small to medium-size rocks set in a moderately coarse to coarse-textured, brown-to-reddish-brown soil (U.20).

Overall, Str. 123-30-1st was a stone-faced, earth-and-stone-filled platform that stood ca. 2.5m high, on the southwest and 3m high on the northeast, measured 16.8m across northeast-southwest, and was oriented approximately 334 degrees. The summit was most likely reached by ascending the nine, low, stone-faced terraces on the building's northeast, plaza-facing side. Six comparable terraces face Str. 123-30-1st's southwest flank. Topping the platform is an earthen-floored superstructure composed of one room that may have encompassed 40.3m². A sizable stone-faced bench that is 0.24-0.38m high by 2.32m across northeast-southwest runs northwest-southeast through the enclosure's approximate center. A second bench or shelf may have been created using the superstructure's relatively wide southwest foundation. All construction associated with this version of the platform consists primarily of unmodified stones, most of which are quite large, set in a mud mortar. Schist slabs were recorded in U.3 and 21

whereas a cut stone was part of U.6. No patterning was noted in the use of these rocks. In general, little care seems to have been taken in choosing stones with flat faces or in orienting those rocks so as to create sheer vertical ascents.

Time Span 7

After Str. 123-30-1st was abandoned, S.2 continued to accumulate, eventually blanketing most of the edifice’s northeast and southwest sides. Capping S.2 by 0.12-0.2m is a moderately coarse-textured, hard-compacted, root-rich, dark brown soil (S.1). Stratum 1 and upper S.2 contain a dense to moderately dense concentration of rocks that most likely tumbled from final-phase architecture (F.1). Feature 1 is densest where it overlies the northeastern and southwestern terraces, declining in density as distance from architecture increases. This debris was traced for 2m on the southwest before excavation ceased; on the northeast the fallen rocks taper off after 1.1m. The concentration of rocks is so dense over the basal northeastern (U.1-4) and southwestern terraces (U.14-18) that it almost looks as though the rocks were purposefully laid to cover portions of Str. 123-30-1st’s architecture. If this was the case, no sign of the architecture that might have retained this supposed fill was recorded.

Structure 123-36

Structure 123-36 defines the south side of a plaza defined by low platforms (Strs. 123-33/36) in the settlement’s southwest corner. Structure 123-34 is 7m to the north across the plaza while Str. 123-35 is 9m to the northwest. All four of these buildings rest atop the massive earthen terrace designated Str. 123-Sub1-1st and described below. Digging here within Subop. 123X and CC revealed most of the edifice’s north side and a smaller portion of its south flank and summit, uncovering ca. 40m2 in the process. Excavations were pursued to a maximum depth of 1.17m below modern ground surface outside construction; architectural fill was not investigated. One building episode was identified in the course of these investigations which were directed by J. Miller.

Time Spans

<u>Time Span</u>	<u>Construction Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	-	-	S.3, 4	-	MPC?
2	-	-	-	F.3, 4	MPC?
3	-	-	S.2, 5-7	-	MPC?, LPrecl
4	Str. 123-36-1st Str. 123-36-Sub1	U.1-3, 5-20 U.4	-	F.2	LCL I-III
5	-	-	S.1, 2	F.1	

Time Span 1

Most of the events pertaining to TS.1-3 were revealed in a deep extension of Subop. 123CC on Str. 123-36-1st's south side. The earliest activity recorded in this area involved the deposition of a fine-textured, soft-compacted, tan sand (S.4). Stratum 4 is at least 0.34m thick (its base was not found) and ascends 0.24m over 3.2m from southeast to northwest before dropping 0.16m across 0.78m in the same direction. Capping S.4 is 0.25-0.32m of coarse-textured, hard-compacted, brown sandy soil (S.3). Stratum 3 also rises from southeast to northwest, ascending 0.26m over 3.2m in that direction. These two earth layers are likely parts of Str. 123-Sub1-1st's U.4 described in the account of that building.

Time Span 2

Both S.3 and the upper portion of S.4 were truncated by the excavation of two pits (F.3 and 4) located 3.2m apart. Feature 3, the southeastern-most declivity, is at least 0.62m deep and measures 1.65m wide southeast-northwest (the base and all but the pit's northwest flank are beyond our excavation limits). The northwest side of the depression is very steep, the wall dropping 0.62m over 0.18m from northwest to southeast. Feature 3's northwest neighbor (F.4) is, minimally, 0.44m deep by 1.23m across (once again, only one side, the southeast margin, was exposed while the base eluded detection). Feature 4's southeast flank slopes down far more gradually than was the case with F.3, declining 0.44m over 0.62m. Similar pits were dug into the top of Str. 123-Sub1-1st soon after the latter's construction (see below). It may well be that F.3 and 4 are further examples of this widespread pattern

Time Span 3

This episode witnessed the filling in of F. 3 and 4. The former contains a fine-textured, soft-compacted, dark brown soil mottled with small white inclusions (S.5). Numerous artifacts, along with a few small rocks, were recovered from S.5 which completely fills the uncovered portions of F.3. A very similar soil (S.7) covers the bottom-most exposed segment of F.4, achieving observed thicknesses of 0.38-0.54m (S.7 rises 0.16m over 1.04m from southeast to northwest). Blanketing S.7 is 0.04-0.32m of moderately fine-textured, loosely compacted, tan to light gray soil (S.6). Stratum 6 rises 0.2m above the top of F.4 near the middle of its uncovered extent, pinching out against S.3 on the southeast and narrowing to 0.06m thick on the northwest excavation margin. Blanketing this sequence is S.2, a moderately coarse-textured, hard-compacted, brown soil with many small white inclusions. About 0.35m of S.2 underlies TS.4 construction and was likely introduced now.

Time Span 4

Structure 123-36-1st is ascended on the north by a 0.62m-high terrace (U.5) the tread of which extends 1.2m back to U.6. The latter construction defines the summit's north margin. Unit 4 is a 0.49m-high wall that is 1.2m north of U.5. Clearing along the entire length of U.5 did not reveal any connections between it and U.4. The absence of an identified relationship between U.4 and 5 may be due to poor preservation. More likely, U.4 is part of another building

(Str. 123-36-Sub1), possibly the southern foundation of a surface-level edifice.

Unit 5 runs 6.45m east-west, stepping out (north) 0.3m over its eastern-most 1.2m. It then extends back (south) in the form of U.11 and 12 on the east and west to join U.6. Though U.6 was only exposed to a height of 0.09m where it backs U.5, it is likely that this construction originally defined the platform's north face. Unit 6 seems to be abutted by U.11 on the east, continuing for 0.8m beyond (east of) U.11 before joining with Str. 123-36-1st's east basal wall (U.14; U.6 is very poorly preserved over its eastern-most 0.8m). On the west it looks as though U.12 intersects U.6 at the latter's northwest corner; what seem to be the remnants of an earlier western basal facing (U.17) were traced for 1.3m south of that junction. Apparently, at some point in the occupation sequence, U.6 was extended 0.45m westward where it cornered with the final version of the western basal wall, U.13. This last addition would have contributed to the impression that the terrace defined by U.5, 11, and 12 projected 1.2m north of Str. 123-36-1st's north face (U.6) and was placed symmetrically with respect to that side of the platform (it is actually skewed slightly to the west).

On the south, only the basal riser (U.7) was exposed. Unit 7 is 0.45m high and is fronted by a projection that extends 2m southward. This projection intersects the body of the platform at a point 1.85m west of Str. 123-36-1st's southeast corner and is bounded by U.1 and 3 on the south and east, respectively; U.1 was traced for 1.7m westward before excavation ceased. Units 1 and 3, each 0.4m high, front terrace treads that are 0.43m and 0.3m wide. These flat spaces give way to a second tier of facings (U.2 and 16) leading to the projection's summit. Units 2 and 16 are each 0.3m high. Very little of the projection's summit was revealed.

Structure 123-36-1st's eastern and western flanks are ascended by one basal facing leading to the summit (U.14 and 13). Relatively little of the summit was exposed. From what we exposed, it appears as though the superstructure contained an L-shaped bench that looked out north towards the plaza over U.5 and 6. The body of the bench is defined by U.8 and 20 on the west and north, respectively. These stone walls are 0.53m high and were followed for 1.3m north-south (U.8) and 1.65m east-west (U.20). Projecting 0.6m north from the bench's east end is a 0.13m-high construction that measures 0.7m across (U.10). Another projection (U.9) was located 0.76m south of the bench's northwest corner. Unit 9 extends 0.4m west of U.8 and was traced for 0.8m to the south before excavation ended. Unit 9's stones are flush with the base of excavation and may have supported a perishable upper construction or been part of an earlier building episode that was incorporated into Str.12-36-1st's earthen summit floor.

Late additions to Str. 123-36-1st are limited to three modest walls erected off the platform's north and south flanks. Unit 19 is a ca. 0.2m-high wall that abuts the northern U.5 terrace 0.15m east of its northwest corner. This construction extends at least 0.9m to the west (its full east-west length was not uncovered). Unit 15, a ca. 0.1m-high wall, intersects the east wall of the southern projection (U.3) at a point 0.55m south of the southern basal facing (U.7). This construction is oriented ca. 45 degrees, very much at odds with Str. 123-36-1st's alignment of 264 degrees, and is projected to have intersected U.7 roughly 1m west of the platform's southeast corner. The architectural significance of U.15 and 19 is unclear. The latter may be part of a surface-level building erected next to Str. 123-36-1st's west side. Unit 15's addition, on the other hand, would have created a low, triangular-shaped raised area in the corner formed by the intersection of the platform and its south projection. Unit 15 may be the facing for a shelf measuring an estimated 1.05m along its southeastern hypotenuse, set outside, but under the eaves of, Str. 123-36-1st's summit building.

Unit 18, in turn, is a very poorly preserved wall standing a reconstructed 0.72m high.

Located 2.75m south of U.7, U.18 may be the remnants of a casually built terrace that fronted Str. 123-36-1st's south flank.

By the conclusion of TS. 4, Str. 123-36-1st was a stone-faced platform that stood 0.71m high, measured 4.9x7.5m (including the U.5/11/12 terrace), and was aligned 264 degrees. A 1.2m-wide terrace, standing 0.62m high, and at least partially paved with schist slabs, fronted the platform on the north, extending for nearly the building's full width on this side. A stone-faced projection extends 2m south from the platform's southern basal facing, intersecting the latter at a point 1.85m west of Str. 123-36-1's southeast corner. This projection is at least 1.7m wide east-west and rises to its full height of 0.7m in two stages, the basal riser being 0.3-0.43m wide.

The earthen-floored summit encompasses approximately 7.45m east west and supports a stone-faced bench that stands 0.53m high and measures 1.65m east-west by, minimally, 1.3m north-south (this dimension was not completely revealed). A 0.13m-high construction projects 0.6m north of the bench's east end and is 0.7m wide, giving the bench an overall "L-shape." Another construction extends 0.4m west of the bench's west side, intersecting that facing 0.76m south of the bench's northwest corner. This diminutive entity may be part of an earlier construction unrelated to TS.4 architecture.

Relatively late in its occupation history, Str. 123-36-1st may have been fronted by the addition of a casually fashioned terrace raised 2.75m south of the edifice. At roughly the same time a surface-level building might have been appended to the platform's northwest corner and a triangular-shaped shelf was possibly built against Str. 123-36-1st's south flank in the corner created by the south basal wall and the eastern facing of the projection. Another surface-level edifice, Str. 123-36-Sub1, seems to have been built 1.2m north of the platform.

A particularly dense aggregation of rocks (F.2) was found 0.4m south of U.18. Feature 2 measures 0.95m across and is 0.53m thick at its approximate center. The stones comprising F.2 seem purposefully placed, as though they were part of a late but ephemeral construction, possibly related to the U.18 terrace; perhaps a step.

All TS.4 constructions were made using unmodified stones, primarily river cobbles, set in a mud mortar. Several schist slabs were noted incorporated in these walls and in the floor of the northern terrace.

Time Span 5

Following Str. 123-36-1st's abandonment, S.2 resumed accumulating, eventually covering most of the TS.4 architecture. Capping S.2 by 0.08-0.38m is a moderately coarse-textured, hard-compacted, root-rich, dark brown soil (S.1). A moderately dense concentration of rocks fallen from final-phase architecture was found inter-mixed with S.1 and the upper portions of S.2 (F.1).

Structure 123-38

Structure 123-38 is a modest-size platform situated on the settlement's south margin. The building is not part of any obvious plaza group, being situated roughly 11m west/southwest of Str. 123-30 and 3m west of Str. 123-39. Digging here, directed by J. Miller, uncovered ca. 55m² within Subop. 123DD, EE, GG, and JJ, revealing approximately half of the edifice. Excavations were pursued to maximum depths of 1.25m and 0.42m below modern ground surface outside and within construction, respectively. Time did not permit more than superficial

penetration of final-phase architecture, resulting in the identification of a single building episode.

Time Spans

<u>Time Span</u>	<u>Construction Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	-	-	S.2-4	-	LPrecl?
2	Str. 123-38-1st	U.1-19	-	-	LCL II, III
3	-	-	S.2	-	LCLIII?
4	Str. 123-38-Sub1	U.20	-	-	LCL III
5	-	-	S.1, 2	F.1	

Time Span 1

Deposition of S.4, a dark orange-brown sand, is the earliest activity attested to in Str. 123-38-1st's vicinity. This layer was exposed to a maximum thickness of 0.12m (its base was not found) north of the platform where it was revealed to run more-or-less flat over 1.24m north-south. Directly overlying S.4 by 0.1-0.13m is a brown sandy soil (S.3) that also maintains a relatively even surface across the 1.53m it was exposed north of Str. 123-38-1st. These layers, in turn, were blanketed by a moderately hard-compacted brown soil in which a few small pebbles are included (S.2). At least 0.12m of this soil underlies TS.2 architecture, suggesting that the lower segment of S.2 was laid down now. Artifacts recovered from at least lower S.2 and S.3 point to a human occupation in the area during this interval.

Time Span 2

Structure 123-38-1st is a platform that is fronted by one stone-faced terrace on the west (U.15). Unit 15 ascends 0.54m and is succeeded 0.28m to the east by U.16 which rises 0.6m to the summit. Unit 15's tread is fashioned on stones (included in U.15). On the east the basal riser, U.11, is 0.5m tall and runs an estimated 11.3m long north-south, terminating on both ends in rounded corners. Unit 11's earth-and-stone-surfaced tread runs 0.45m to the west where it is succeeded by U.12. The latter rises 0.49m above U.11 and is 2.6m wide, ending on the west at U.14. That last construction ascends an estimated 0.63m to the summit. Unit 13 is located on this broad tread and seems to be a block of stone 0.54m wide east-west that projects 0.8m south from the northern trench wall but does not continue across the full 1m-width of the excavation in which it was encountered (Subop. 123EE). The architectural significance of this construction is unknown. The southern summit wall (U.10) is at least 0.38m high; its base was not definitively encountered and it may, thus, have once risen to a more imposing height. It is also likely that we never encountered Str. 123-38-1st's southern basal facing. Estimates of its location based on the position of the platform's southeast corner, we can tentatively suggest that the southern terrace was 2.8m wide though there may have been several ascents within that largely unexcavated

space.

Access to the summit appears to have been from the north as here the ascents are lower and more formally prepared than in any other exposed portion of the platform. Unit 1, the basal northern facing, is 0.48m high and capped with schist slabs. A pavement of these stones fills the 0.85m intervening between U.1 and the next ascending riser (U.3). Unit 17, a low, north-south-running stone wall, apparently defines the western limits of this flooring; its eastern margin was either not so marked or all signs of it are lost. Unit 3 is 0.31m tall, its tread surfaced with schist slabs leading back (south) to U.4, a 0.32m-high, stone-faced riser. Backing U.4 for 2.51m is a disrupted surface which seems to have been paved, once again, with schist (U.5). Unit 5 ends on the south in a sizable construction (U.6) that may have been a bench. Unit 6 is 0.5m high and measures 1-1.3m north-south by at least 4.95m east-west (the construction narrows from west to east and its eastern end was not revealed). A niche encompassing 0.65m east-west by 0.53m north-south (U.7) is set into U.6's north face near its putative east end. Unit 7 may have served as a 0.25m-high step that facilitated access to U.6's summit. A block of stone (U.8) covering 0.65m east-west projects 1.1m south from U.6 directly opposite U.7. Unit 8's top is flush with that of U.6 and with the stone pavement (U.9) that extends from U.6 south to U.10, the southern basal facing. Unit 9's surface mostly consists of schist slabs, many of which are pink, white, and yellow. Earth that was burnt orange was noted among these rocks over the southernmost 0.8m of U.9's exposed extent. It looks as though U.6 and 8 may have originally been part of an L-shaped bench the back (south) side of which was elevated through the introduction of fill and surfaced with a formal pavement (U.9). At this point U.6 may have become either a very wide bench (4.86m north-south, from U.6 to U.10) or its north face simply marked an ascent to an elevated, paved southern floor of the superstructure.

Later in the construction sequence Str. 123-38-1st was slightly modified by the construction of two small projections set against its northern face (U.1). One of these entities, U.2, is a 0.47m-high block of stones measuring 1m across east-west and extending 0.54m north from its abutment with U.1 near that wall's center. The second addition, U.18, is 0.5m further to the east. Unit 18 is a fairly low construction that is, minimally, 1.1m across east-west and extends, maximally, 0.7m north of U.1. The north face of U.18 slants back south towards U.1 over its exposed length, inclining 0.2m towards U.1 over the 1.1m it was uncovered. Though their architectural purposes are unclear, U.2 and 18 might have been parts of an entry feature designed to channel traffic between them and up and onto Str. 123-38-1st's summit.

Those small portion of platform fill (U.19) that we exposed consist of small to large rocks set in a brown soil matrix.

By TS. 2's conclusion, Str. 123-38-1st was a stone-faced, earth-and-stone-filled platform that stood 0.79-1.52m high, measured 9.7x11.6m, and was aligned between 0-7 degrees. Discrepancies in the edifice's height may result from variations in the ground surface over which the platform was raised. The west flank was ascended by two stone facings the upper-most likely leading directly to the summit. On the east two terraces give way to a broad tread that terminates in a stone-faced step-up to the summit. A stone block raised atop this wide surface may well be related to activities pursued on the second ascending eastern terrace, though that relationship is unclear. At least two vertical ascents lead to the summit on the south whereas on the north two broad and low, stone-paved terraces likely provided formal access to the superstructure. Structure 123-38-1st's northeast and southeast basal corners are both rounded; the western corners were either not uncovered (southwest) or were too poorly preserved (northwest) to determine if this pattern was repeated elsewhere.

The summit measures approximately 6.3x7m and was apparently reached by ascending the north flank. The paved summit floor on the north encompasses 2.51m north-south and leads to a 0.5m-high stone-faced and -surfaced bench that is 1-1.3m wide by at least 4.95m long east-west. A 0.65m-wide stone projection extends 1.1m south of the bench near the latter's east end. A step measuring 0.53x0.65m and 0.25m high was set into the bench's north wall, also near its eastern terminus. At some point in the construction sequence the area between the bench and the summit's southern margin was elevated to a point equivalent to the bench's top and surfaced with stone. This modification may have converted the bench into a facing marking the division between a lower northern, and a 0.5m-higher southern summit surface, both of which were paved with stones. Two late additions to Str. 123-38-1st's north face, low stone blocks set 0.5m apart near the platform's center, may have been intended as entry features designed to channel traffic up the building's north face.

All walls associated with Str. 123-38-1st are made of unmodified river cobbles set in a mud mortar. One possibly faced sandstone block, however, was recorded. The pavements gracing the superstructure primarily consist of schist slabs mixed with some cobbles.

Time Span 3

During this interval ca. 0.2m of S.2 accumulated on the platform's east side. It is unclear whether the aforementioned deposit was the result of natural processes or represents fill purposefully introduced to raise ground surface off Str. 123-38-1st's east flank.

Time Span 4

Set atop the newly introduced segment of S.2, and 1.6m east of Str. 123-38-1st's east basal facing (U.11), is a block of stones composed of unmodified rocks set on end (U.20). Unit 20 measures 0.6m across east-west by 0.2m high and encompasses at least 0.6m north-south (its northern margin was not exposed). The stratigraphic position of U.20, 0.2m above the base of U.11, implies that the former entity was introduced after Str. 123-38-1st was built. How much time intervened between these two events is unclear, though it does appear that stones dislodged from the platform (F.1) rest on the same level as U.20's base. This relationship suggests that Str. 123-38-1st did not start to decay until after U.20 had been raised.

Time Span 5

Following the abandonment of Str. 123-38-1st, deposition of S.2 resumed, eventually covering most basal construction. Stratum 1, a moderately fine-textured, moderately hard-compacted, root-rich, dark brown to gray soil, covers S.2 by 0.26-0.7m. Embedded in S.1 and 2 is a moderately dense concentration of stones fallen from TS.2 architecture (F.1). Feature 1 was followed for 1.46 and 1.6m west and east of Str. 123-38-1st, respectively; relatively little tumbled debris was noted north of the edifice.

Structure 123-39

Structure 123-39 is a sizable platform located on the site's southern margin. It occupies the crest of the high terrace overlooking the Rio Manchagua immediately to the south.

Structure 123-39 is ca. 3m east of Str. 123-38 and 9m south of Str. 123-32. Excavations directed by J. Miller in Subop. 123Y and HH cleared roughly 85m² and reached maximum depths of 1.2m and 0.68m below modern ground surface outside and within construction, respectively. Though hints of earlier construction were noted, only one major building episode could be clearly identified.

Time Spans

<u>Time Span</u>	<u>Construction Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	-	-	S.2-5	-	MPC, LPrecl, LCLI
2	Str. 123-39-1st	U.1-22	-	-	LCL II?
3	Str. 123-39-1st	-	-	F.2, 3	LCL II/III
4	-	-	S.1, 2	F.1	

Time Span 1

The earliest activity revealed in the environs of Str. 123-39-1st is the deposition of at least 0.12m of S.5, a moderately coarse-textured, soft-compacted, brown sandy soil (its base was not exposed). Stratum 5 was uncovered in a deep extension of Subop. 123Y south of the platform where the layer rose 0.28m over 1.52m south-to-north. Covering S.5 by as much as 0.28m is a fine-textured, loosely compacted, tan sand (S.4). A very similar soil, S.3, was recorded north of Str. 123-39-1st; the primary difference between S.3 and 4 is that the former is somewhat coarser than the latter. If, as seems likely, these represent different, discontinuously exposed portions of the same earth layer, then the ground surface it defines ascended 1.49m over 20.24m from south to north. This putative rise conforms with differences in the bases of Str. 123-39-1st's basal facings; the lowest southern terrace (U.9) is 0.48m lower than its northern counterpart (U.1) 12.13m distant. Blanketing S.3 and 4 is roughly 0.7m of S.2, a moderately coarse-textured, moderately hard-compacted, brown soil with numerous small white inclusions. This amount of S.2 corresponds to the estimated distance intervening between TS.2 architecture and S.3 and 4.

Time Span 2

Structure 123-39-1st's south face is ascended by four stone-faced terraces (U.6-9) that culminate in a 0.36m-high step-up to the summit (U.5). The terraces are 0.23-0.81m high by 0.3-0.77m wide. The second ascending riser, U.8, is both the tallest member of the sequence and is marked by somewhat unusual construction; its bottom-most 0.41m steps out 0.09m south from the main body of the facing. The building's northern flank is ascended by three terraces (U.1-3) that are 0.39-0.97m tall and measure 0.16-1.55m across. The basal riser (U.1) is the narrowest while U.2 and 3 are 1.55m and 1.13m wide. The summit ascent (U.4) is 0.65m high by 1.22m

wide. Structure 123-39-1st's eastern and western flanks were not encountered.

A stone staircase fronts the platform on the north. The west flank of this access feature (U.10) was exposed running 1.9m north from U.1 where it turned a corner heading east to form the basal riser (U.11). Unit 11 stood ca. 0.2m high and was followed for 0.6m to the east before excavation ceased, in part due to the poor state of the construction's preservation. Two additional steps were tentatively identified, ascending 0.2m and 0.12m towards the summit (not given unit numbers due to the dramatic ambiguousness of the evidence for them). Unit 2 was apparently incorporated as the fourth riser in the sequence and is succeeded by two more steps (U.13 and 14) resting on the broad terrace tread running between U.2 and 3. Unit 13 is 0.4m high, projects 0.95m north onto this surface, and measures an estimated 5.75m across east-west. Its successor, U.14, is: 0.15m tall; located 0.5m south of U.13's north face; and, very roughly, 4.75m wide (assuming that it was placed symmetrically *vis a vis* U.13; U.14's east end was not uncovered). Unit 14 leads to U.3. Given the relatively high (0.65m), steep ascent from U.3 to U.4 it is likely that at least one more riser lies in the unexcavated area south of U.14. If so, then the northern staircase would have consisted of eight steps, including the U.4 summit ascent as the upper-most riser.

The eastern edge of the northern stairs was never found. Investigations in search of this elusive construction uncovered, instead, a curved stone construction (U.12) that arches north of U.1 for 1m over the 0.8m it was traced to the west before digging ended. Unit 12 seems to be a stone surface set flush with ancient ground surface; it may well have been built in the corner between U.1 and the northern stairs.

The platform's summit appears to be one large room measuring 4.3x16.7m. The walls bordering this enclosure (U.4, 5, 15, and 16) are 0.85-1.5m wide. Probes dug within the summit revealed remnants of a burnt earth floor (U.22), 0.05m thick, located ca. 0.5m below the inferred level of the superstructure's final surface. Unit 22, composed of coarse-textured, hard-compacted, orange soil, was traced for 3.16m south of its abutment with U.4, the northern summit wall, over which U.22 drops 0.14m. Most likely, U.22 represents an earlier version of Str. 123-39-1st's superstructure buried by a moderately coarse-textured, moderately hard-compacted, brown soil throughout which a few small rocks are scattered (U.20). An identical fill underlies U.22's eastern-most 0.7m though most of the floor is supported by a coarse-textured, soft-compacted, tan sand (U.21). No rocks were noted in the 0.17m of U.21 revealed in our excavations.

The northern, eastern, and southern foundations delimiting the summit (U.4, 5, and 15) are sufficiently broad (1.22-1.5m across) that they may well have doubled as benches as well as supports for perishable upper walls. Unit 17, a ca. 0.3m-high bench or shelf, seems to have been built into the eastern footing (U.15). This construction is 1.4m wide east-west and was followed for 0.8m south of its intersection with U.4 before digging terminated. Several fragments of stone floors were recorded atop the building's final summit, resting on U.20 fill. Unit 18 extends 1.1m south of U.4 and measures 2.35m across east-west; this floor is situated east of Str. 123-39-1st's center, being located 3.8m west of the superstructure's northeast interior corner. Unit 19 was revealed ca. 2m south of U.18. Only 0.4m of U.19's north-south extent was uncovered (its northern limit remains undiscovered) while its full east-west width of 1.5m was revealed.

By the time TS. 2 drew to a close Str. 123-39-1st was a stone-faced, earth-filled platform that stood 2.32m and 2.8m high on the north and south, respectively, measured 11.7m north-south (excluding the stairs), and was aligned ca.72 degrees. Four and three terraces ascend the southern and northern faces of the platform, respectively, while a staircase consisting of an

estimated eight stone-faced risers projects 1.9m north of the edifice's approximate center. A curved stone surface may have filled the corner defined by the stair's eastern wall and the platform's northern basal facing. The superstructure consists of what seems to have been one large enclosure covering 71.8m². Its northern, southern, and eastern foundations are broad enough (1.22-1.5m across) to have functioned as both wall supports and benches. Built into the eastern summit wall is a bench or shelf that is roughly 0.3m high, 1.4m wide, and at least 0.8m long (its southern edge was not identified). There are signs of at least two construction episodes the last of which constituted the superstructure's final version. The earlier of the two was at least partially covered by a burnt earth floor, though whether the burning was intentional or not is unknown. This version was covered by ca. 0.5m of earth fill which was capped in a few areas by small, discontinuous segments of stone paving.

Time Span 3

During this interval two casually built stone-faced terraces may have been added to Str. 123-39-1st's southern face (F.2 and 3). Neither of these constructions were sufficiently well preserved to be recognized during excavation; they were identified after digging on this side of the building was completed. Feature 2, the basal element in the putative dyad, is an estimated 0.48m high by 1.23m wide and is succeeded on the north by F.3. The latter rises to an approximate height of 0.5m and runs back 1.99m to intersect U.8, the second ascending southern terrace during TS.2. Unit 9 is completely covered by F3 whereas about 0.21m of U.8 would still have projected above F.3's tread. Feature 2's base is 0.62m below the exposed bottom of U.9, further indicating that Str. 123-39-1st was erected over a gradual south-to-north ascent. If F.2 and 3 are remnants of actual constructions, they may have been added to shore up the platform on its most vulnerable side where it overlooked the southern descent to the Rio Manchaguala. The addition of F.2 and 3 would have made for six terraces ascending the edifice's south flank, expanding Str. 123-39-1st's north-south dimension to 14.92m.

Time Span 4

After occupation of Str. 123-39-1st ceased, accumulation of S.2 resumed. This soil blankets all but the uppermost remnants of TS.2 and 3 architecture. A lens of moderately coarse-textured, hard-compacted, dark brown soil that is 0.12-0.19m thick extends 2.24m north of the axial trench's (Subop. 123Y's) south margin before pinching out 0.44m north of F.2. Burying S.2 by 0.11-0.31m is a moderately coarse-textured, loosely-compacted, root-rich, dark brown soil (S.1). Found within S.1 and upper S.2 is a moderately dense concentration of rocks likely derived from final-phase architecture (F.1). Feature 1 was identified for 1.48m south of F.2 and 1.55m north of U.1. In the latter case the stone density drops significantly before picking up again 2.4m north of U.1. From this point to the northern limits of excavation (2.92m) the rocks making up F.1 become more frequent; most likely they represent debris tumbled from nearby Str. 123-32 to the north.

Structure 123-Sub1

Fully 23 tests pits (123W, AB/AW) were dug into the summit and flanks of the low eminence in the southwest corner of the settlement that supports Strs. 123-30, 33/36. Initial tests

excavated here in 1979 strongly suggested that this rise, which covers approximately 37x45m, was a construction whose erection dated to the Middle Preclassic (1200-400 BC). Investigations were resumed in this locale in 1988 when J. Miller supervised the digging of a 2x2m pit (123W) in the approximate center of the rise. Subsequent, more extensive investigations were undertaken by Victoria Clark, from April 23-June 21, 1990, designed to get a clear sense of the construction's dimensions and building sequence. Clark supervised the digging of 22 probes ranging in size from 2x2m to 1x2m. Four of the five 2x2m tests surrounded Subop.123W on all sides, being separated from that earlier excavation by 0.5m; the fifth 2x2m probe was 5m northeast of Subop. 123W. All but four of the remaining trenches extended in lines running 14m east, 8m west, 9.5m north, and 8m south of Subop. 123W. The four non-architectural probes (Subop. 123AO, AP, AR, and AU; each measuring 1x2m) were placed off Str. 123-Sub1 to the south and southwest between it and the Rio Manchagua to evaluate stratigraphic relations away from the construction. Approximately 58m² were cleared in the course of this work, digging being pursued to a maximum depth of 3.62m below modern ground surface. Three major construction phases were identified during this research.

Time Spans

<u>Time Span</u>	<u>Construction Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	-	-	S.3 -5, 12-20, 23, 30	-	
2	Str. 123-Sub1-3rd	U.2	S.6-8, 24	F.2-5, 7, 10, 18, 20, 26	MPC
3	Str. 123-Sub1-2nd	U.1, 5, 6, 9, 10, 13-15,	S.21, 22, 40	F.6, 8, 9, 11-13, 19, 23, 24	MPC
4	Str. 123-Sub1-1st	U.3, 4, 7, 16-18	-	F.17, 25	MPC
5	-	U.8, 11	-	F. 27	LCLI-III
6	-	-	S.1, 2	F.1	

Strata 9, 10, 11, 25-29, 31-39, and F. 21 were recorded off of Str. 123-Sub1 to the south and southwest and are not discussed in detail within this temporal scheme.

Time Span 1

The earliest recorded activity in Str. 123-Sub1's vicinity was the deposition of fine- to coarse-grained, moderately hard-compacted, yellow to tan colored sands interbedded with fine-grained, yellow to tan colored silts (S.3-5, 12-20, 23, 30). A few scattered small river-rounded

cobbles were found embedded in these early soil levels and lenses of gravel were also noted. In general, these culturally sterile layers run fairly level over the 13m they were traced from Str. 123-Sub1's surface-visible south edge to its approximate center (probed by Subop. 123W). Running east-west, however, these levels were observed rising approximately 0.6m across 19m west to east before ascending another 0.74m over 2m in that same direction. The sterile layers then slow their eastern ascent, rising ca. 0.2m over the remaining 4m they were traced to the east.

Very similar soils, also lacking evidence of a human presence during their deposition, were recorded in tests dug west (Subop. 123AU) and south (Subop. 123AO, AP, and AR) of Str. 123-Sub1. In the former direction a sequence of eight layers, distinguished by slight variations in texture and color, achieved a maximum observed thickness of 1.6m (S.29, 32-37, and 39). Based on this exposure in Subop. 123AU, it seems that the underlying deposit of culturally sterile sands and silts ascended very roughly 1.6m across 12.5m eastward to Str. 123-Sub1's western edge. To the south, artifact-free sands and silts very similar to those underlying Str. 123-Sub1 were revealed to a maximum thickness of 0.6m and trace an ascent of 3.8m across 61m from off the platform northward to Str. 123-Sub1's south edge.

It appears, therefore, that the various iterations of Str. 123-Sub1 cataloged here were raised atop a significant natural rise that ascended 3.8m south-to-north and 1.6m west-to-east up from the Rio Manchagua. The terrain apparently leveled off on its south-to-north transect where it underlay the later building while the land beneath this edifice continued to rise 1.54m west-to-east over the 25m it was followed beneath Str. 123-Sub1. The nature of these early soils suggests that they were laid down during floods of the nearby river, variations in the coarseness of grain sizes and the presence or absence of gravels and cobbles pointing to fluctuations in the intensity of these inundations.

Time Span 2

The earliest signs of human activity at the locus take the form primarily of scattered artifacts recorded within soil layers (S.6-8 and 24) and what seem to be the remains of more concentrated trash deposits (F.2-5, 7, 10, 18, and 20). The strata are fine- to coarse-grained yellow to tan sands and silts, though a few lenses of dark brown fine-textured silts were also recorded as well as ash layers. Most of the features are characterized by relatively dense concentrations of artifacts and some faunal remains set in a gray ash matrix. These middens are 0.06-0.52m thick. Most likely associated with these cultural deposits are the first hints of construction. Unit 2 is the most substantial of these efforts. It is a ca. 0.15m-high stone wall. A short segment of this architecture was exposed in Subop. 123W near the center of Str. 123-Sub1 (Str. 123-Sub1-3rd). Not enough of this building was revealed to determine its dimensions, orientation, or even U.2's architectural significance (e.g., as a platform facing or footing for a perishable upper wall). Unit 2 rests directly on S.3 and is clearly associated with both an artifact-bearing soil (S.6) and a 0.07m-thick lens of fine-textured, dark red-brown earth (F.2) that may represent the deteriorated remains of *bajareque* construction.

In addition to U.2 there are hints of other architecture raised during this span. Feature 20, for example, is a 0.02m-thick lens of fine-textured, densely compacted, light salmon-colored clay that drops 0.12m west-to-east over the 0.9m it was exposed on Str. 123-Sub1's western edge. The distinctive color and compaction of F.20 suggest that it is either the remnants of a colored clay that has washed off a nearby, but not excavated, building or it is the surviving portion of a terrace facing for an earthen platform. Feature 20 is roughly 8m west of U.2 and is covered by

0.18-0.31m of an artifact-rich deposit of ash and sand (F.18).

After Str. 123-Sub1-3rd was abandoned the building was blanketed by as much as 0.36m of soil composed almost exclusively of decayed fragments of burnt earth (F.5). Feature 5 underlies construction associated with Str. 123-Sub1-2nd, rests atop U.2 and was traced for 2m south of the latter. It is unclear what F.5 signifies architecturally. It may be the remnants of a perishable superstructure that was burnt and then used to raise the surface on which its successor, Str. 123-Sub1-2nd was built.

As best as we can estimate at this juncture, it appears that initial human settlement atop the terrace crest overlooking the Rio Manchaguala was fairly modest. Some small constructions were likely raised at this time and trash was jettisoned across most of the area that would eventually be covered by Str. 123-Sub1-1st. Near the end of TS.2 it looks as though perishable components of Str. 123-Sub1-3rd were razed, its rubble being used as the foundation for a more sizable construction, Str. 123-Sub1-2nd.

Time Span 3

The next period of activity witnessed the construction of at least one extensive, if low, stone-faced and -surfaced platform (Str. 123-Sub1-2nd). This building is maximally 0.52m high and was exposed in nine discontinuous segments beneath the central and northern portions of Str. 123-Sub1-1st. It may well be, therefore, that more than one construction is represented by these remains, though this is somewhat unlikely as only 0.5-1m separate each exposure. The surface of Str. 123-Sub1-2nd is uneven and its southeast, southwest, and northeast edges are not generally clear (the northwest flank was not identified). Further, excavations failed to reveal the edifice's south corner; either Str. 123-Sub1-2nd diverged significantly from a rectilinear form or said corner was washed away during the putative flood noted below. Holding these uncertainties in abeyance for the moment, if we are dealing with one building here, it measures approximately 8m east-west by 14m north-south and is aligned, very roughly, 22 degrees. No summit construction was recorded though, as noted further along, the building probably supported at least one perishable construction.

Associated with Str. 123-Sub1-2nd is a complex sequence of debris lenses that extend off the edifice's exposed flanks (F.6, 9, 11-13, 19, 23, 24). These generally consist of ash lenses alternating with yellow to tan fine-grained silts and sands; the layers are 0.02-0.26m thick and contain numerous artifacts, including fragments of bajareque. Found embedded within one of these lenses, F.11, are the only adobe blocks recorded within the Naco valley in any time period. These measure 0.12-0.16m long by 0.04-0.06m thick and were found extending 2m south of Str. 123-Sub1-2nd. The aforementioned blocks, along with the pieces of bajareque recovered from F.11 and other debris lenses in the immediate area, likely derived from Str. 123-Sub1-2nd's superstructure. Another fragment of the platform's architecture may be represented by a 0.02-0.04m thick deposit of lime plaster that was identified 1.3m south of Str. 123-Sub1-2nd. This is the only indication that a portion of the building might have been surfaced formally.

Structure 123-Sub1-2nd appears, based on the available data, to have been a 0.52m-high stone-faced and -surfaced platform that encompassed 8x14m and was aligned roughly 22 degrees. Its summit is featureless though, based on debris found off the building's flanks, it is highly probable that the edifice once supported a perishable construction fashioned of adobe blocks and bajareque. The large quantity of artifacts, often associated with ash, recovered from around Str. 123-Sub1-2nd implies that it was a locus for the performance of a wide array of

activities, including burning. The stones used in the construction of the platform are rounded river cobbles. Some portion(s) of the edifice may have been coated in a white plaster, though how extensive this treatment was remains unknown.

Identification of at least one lens of coarse sand (S.40; 0.06m thick) deposited near the end of TS.3 hints at the recurrence of river floods. Stratum 40 is 4m south of Str. 123-Sub1-2nd towards the Rio Manchaguala and seals at least a portion of F.13, a deposit of gray ash and artifacts apparently tied to the platform's use. In addition, the disrupted stones comprising that building are intermixed with a loosely compacted, light brown sandy silt (F.8). It may well be that TS.3 ended with an inundation from the nearby Rio Manchaguala that washed out the matrix in which Str. 123-Sub1-2nd's stones were originally set, replacing it with loosely consolidated sands and silts. This flood could have also destroyed Str. 123-Sub1-2nd's southern corner.

Time Span 4

Relatively soon after Str. 123-Sub1-2nd was abandoned, large quantities of artifact-rich earth fill were laid atop all known architecture dating to TS.3 (U.3, 4, 7, 16-18). Units 3 and 4, fine-textured, moderately hard-compacted, gray-to-light brown soils containing some sand and gravel along with charcoal flecks, ash, shells, and artifacts, comprise the majority of this fill. The distinction between U.3 and 4 lies in the slightly higher sand and gravel content of the latter and the greater amount of ash in the former; artifact densities also increase with greater depth from U.4 to U.3. Together, U.3 and 4 blanket Str. 123-Sub1-2nd by as much as 2.2m. Units 7, 16-18 underlie U.3 and 4 east of the earlier stone platform, resting atop the west-to-east natural rise that bounds Str. 123-Sub1-2nd on this side. These fill deposits vary in color from light to dark brown, and are generally fine-grained silts with some sandy inclusions; U.7 diverges somewhat from this pattern in that it is made up of coarse-textured sand and gravel. Units 7, 16, and 17, the lowest entities in the triad, are relatively poor in artifacts while U.18 is characterized by carbon flecking, medium-to-high artifact densities, and the inclusion of a few angular, seemingly fire-cracked rocks within it. Units 3 and 4 overlie U.16-18, by 0.54m atop the crest of the eastern rise ca. 9m east of Str. 123-Sub1-2nd, making for a fill deposit of 0.9m here. Further west, the fill comprised of U.3, 4, 16-18 is 1.34m thick. The ancient builders, therefore, seemingly adjusted the thickness of their fill to accommodate the natural rise in the terrain from west to east. On the north there was no appreciable change in fill thickness even at the northernmost limits of excavation (Subop. 123AS). We remain uncertain, therefore, where the northern margin of Str. 123-Sub1-1st was located. There was no evidence of a hiatus in the deposition of U.3, 4, 7, 16-18, implying that relatively little time was allowed to elapse during the construction of this edifice.

The building's edges were not clearly marked. Subtle changes in the nature of the fill and the attitudes of those few rocks found within it tentatively point to what may have been Str. 123-Sub1-1st's southern and western margins. In both cases, small to medium-size, unfaced stones were noted embedded within the U.3 and 4 fill, tilting down and away from the edifice. These stones may be parts of the platform's hearting eroding downslope as the structure gradually deteriorated, though rocks in general are fairly uncommon elsewhere in U.3, 4, 16-18. Alternatively, we may have encountered the scattered remnants of an earlier stone facing most of which has long since eroded downhill; certainly these putative sloping zones were not clear enough to be designated as construction units. *If* these slight hints of Str. 123-Sub1-1st's western and southern facings indicate the building's approximate margins, then the edifice covered at

least 20m north-south by 25m east-west; the northern and eastern edges were not even tentatively identified and, being built into natural rises, may never have been clearly demarcated by architecture.

Dug into Str. 123-Sub1-1st's summit is a series of pits. Evidence for these intrusions was first identified in 1979 (Urban 1986a) but they continued to be found during the 1988 and 1990 investigations. Feature 25 is one such declivity. It projects 0.76m into U.3 and 18 on the eastern edge of the building and measures 0.76m across. The eastern edge is nearly vertical while its western margin slopes down 0.76m over 0.14m west-to-east and the base is slightly concave. Feature 25 contained the partial remains of one human skeleton and was likely a burial pit. Feature 17 is near the platform's center and consists of small to large cobbles densely concentrated within U.4 and bounded on the east by fine-textured, soft-packed, medium-to-dark brown soil. This pit is 0.76m deep by, minimally, 0.52m wide (its western edge was not found) and has a nearly vertical east wall and flat base. Feature 17's behavioral significance is abundantly unclear. Its top is 0.54m below Str. 123-Sub1-1st's reconstructed summit; it could be a discrete fill unit or a pit dug during a break in the construction of that platform. As no other signs of a building hiatus were recorded, we tend to favor the former interpretation. Feature 2 in the Str. 123-30 sequence along with Features 3 and 4 in the Str. 123-36 sequence are other representatives of excavations dug relatively deeply into Str. 123-Sub1-1st. While the artifacts found within the aforementioned declivities are identical to those recovered from the surrounding fill, it is hard to say whether the pits were integral to Str. 123-Sub1-1st's functioning or resulted from later use of the edifice.

Structure 123-Sub1-1st is a sizable earthen structure that completely covers its antecedent, Str. 123-Sub1-2nd, with as much as 2.2m of earthen fill. The construction encompasses very approximately 20x25m. This building was set into a west-to-east ascent, its southern and western flanks possibly delimited by sloping stone facings; we do not know if and how the northern and eastern sides were formalized. Structure 123-Sub1-1st was apparently raised in one fairly short episode using artifact-rich fill, most likely derived from trash deposits and occupation areas in the immediate vicinity. No summit construction was identified, though a series of pits was sunk into the edifice's summit. At what point in Str. 123-Sub1-1st's use-life these declivities were dug is unknown, though they were probably excavated not too long after the building was raised. This estimation is based on the similarity of temporal diagnostics found within the fill and the pits in question.

Overall, Str. 123-Sub1-1st took the form of an extensive, high terrace set into a natural rise overlooking the Rio Manchaguala. At the very least, construction of this edifice seems to have at last removed its occupants above flood levels as there are no signs of the inundations that possibly disrupted Str. 123-Sub1-2nd.

Time Span 5

During the interval Strs. 123-30, 33/36 were raised atop the summit of Str. 123-Sub1-1st. Structures 123-30 and 123-36 were investigated in 1988 and are described above. The remaining edifices had been almost completely obliterated by the 1990 field season and fragments of these buildings were encountered in the course of our studies of the Str. 123-Sub1 construction sequence.

Structure 123-34-1st is represented by a 0.36m-high stone wall (U.11) that was traced for 1.56m in Subop. 123AM's east wall. Unit 11 was oriented roughly 183 degrees and seems to

have been the platform's western basal wall. Unit 8, standing a preserved 0.44m high, looks to have been the northern basal facing of Str. 123-35-1st. This construction is oriented approximately 251 degrees. Structure 123-35-1st was investigated via Subop. 123T in 1979 (Urban 1986a). Feature 27, in turn, is a dense concentration of small to large rocks found within a shallow declivity (ca. 0.29m deep by 1.8m across north-south) set into the top of Str. 123-Sub1-1st. This aggregate is as much as 0.72m thick and its constituent stones are more-or-less flat laid save at the edges where they tilt in accordance with the contours of the depression they fill. Feature 27 is not associated with any surface-visible buildings, being located ca. 2m west/northwest of Str. 123-36. It may be that we are looking here at the remains of a construction that was not discerned during the initial mapping of the site. On the other hand, F.27 may be the product of more recent disturbances, possibly comprising debris from Str. 123-36 or other nearby edifices.

All rocks used in TS.5 architecture are unmodified stones set in a mud mortar. Based on temporal diagnostics associated with these modest constructions, it is clear that they were raised long after the terrace that supported them (Str. 123-Sub1-1st) had been abandoned and, possibly, forgotten.

Time Span 6

The final interval identified in the Str. 123-Sub1 sequence is marked by the deposition of S.1 and 2. The latter is a fine-grain, dark brown soil that is, in turn, overlain by a very similar earth layer distinguished by the prevalence of roots within it. Embedded in S.1 and 2 is a variably dense concentration of rocks that had been displaced from TS.5 architecture (F.1). Feature 1 is especially dense on Str. 123-Sub1-1st's eastern margin towards Str. 123-30 where it looks as though debris from several constructions had been pushed during bulldozing.

Strata 1 and 2 also cap the deposition sequences recorded off Str. 123-Sub1-1st's west and south margins (revealed in Subop. 123 AO, AP, AR, and AU). In these tests variably thick deposits of culturally sterile sands, silts, and gravels are succeeded by fine-grained, medium to dark brown soils (S.26, 27, and 38) that contain some artifacts. A 0.12-0.31m-thick deposit of cobbles set in a fine-grain sand (F.21) was found at the base of S.38 west of Str. 123-Sub1. These rocks most likely were deposited by river action, indicating another episode of relatively intense flooding in the area. Unfortunately, no temporally diagnostic items were found associated with F.21 so dating this flood remains problematic.

Chronological Summary

The earliest occupation attested to at Site 123 dates to the Middle Preclassic. Settlement pertaining to this span is concentrated primarily along the center's southwest margin where it appears that people first began raising relatively modest constructions atop the natural terrace overlooking the nearby Rio Manchaguala. These buildings appear to have been fashioned primarily of perishable materials, their walls resting atop stone foundations. The initial occupation apparently ended with the burning of at least some of its component structures.

Still within the Middle Preclassic, a 0.52m-high stone-faced and -surfaced platform that covers roughly 8x14m was erected over the remains of the earlier settlement. This building likely supported a superstructure whose walls were fashioned of adobe blocks and bajareque. Flooding from the Rio Manchaguala immediately to the south apparently coincided with this

edifice's abandonment. As much as 2.2m of earth mixed with artifacts and other cultural debris blanketed this platform still later during the Middle Preclassic. This fill was introduced in the course of raising an earthen terrace that encompassed approximately 20x25m and looked south towards the river. Near the end of the Middle Preclassic occupation several pits were dug into the summit of this massive terrace.

Some indication of Middle Preclassic occupation was also found immediately to the east in the vicinity of Str. 123-39. In all known cases, however, the earliest denizens of Site 123 stayed close to the Rio Manchaguala, favoring settlement atop the terrace overlooking that watercourse.

The primary period of occupation at Site 123 dates to the Late Preclassic. Material pertaining to his span is at first concentrated on the southwest site margins where it rests on the Middle Preclassic artificial terrace described above. Later in the span, the settlement seems to have expanded northward away from the river. It is during this interval that 25 of the center's monumental platforms were likely built, defining two major plazas running in a rough north-south line (Strs. 123-5, 9-32). The seven smaller edifices lying immediately northwest of the central group (Strs. 123-1-4, 6-8) were likely also built at about this time.

There are a few signs of occupation at Site 123 dating to Late Classic I, mostly concentrated, yet again, in the southwest part of the settlement. Use of Site 123 seems to have intensified during Late Classic II when Strs. 123-33/39 were raised. Of these, Str. 123-39 is the sole monumental example. Late Classic III diagnostics were found scattered over the southern part of the site as far north as Str. 123-26, indicating continued use of the older buildings during this interval. Some additions to Strs. 123-38 and 39 may have been made now while at least part of Str. 123-30-1st's western face might have been covered by a dense fill of cobbles during LCLIII. No clear evidence for the Postclassic use of Site 123 was noted.

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