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PSB OP 102 Excavation Report

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Site 102

Site 102 consists of 13 buildings and construction remnants scattered in a rough north-south line along the eastern edge of the terrace supporting Sites 98-107. Site 100 lies 90m to the west at the closest point while Site 103 is found 67m in the same direction. There is no clear patio-focus evident in Site 102, component buildings are either isolated or found in small clusters of two to three edifices. Structure 102-1, 5 and 7 were excavated by a crew of six men for five days, constituting all told an investment of 30 person-days of labor in the study of Site 102. The work was overseen by R. Paine and E. Schortman.

Structure 102-1

Structure 102-1 is a low, isolated platform situated in the southern part of the settlement. The building was investigated by two trenches (both included in Subop. 102E) set on the approximate centers of the structure's east and west flanks. These excavations each measure 1m north-south by 3.05m east-west and were carried down to a maximum depth of 0.4m into construction fill, revealing a single building phase.

Excavation Lots

<u>Lot</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Context</u>	<u>Time Span</u>
102E/1	12 sherds	Mixed Fill and Occupation Debris	1,2
102E/2	15 sherds 1 chert piece	Mixed Fill and Occupation Debris	1,2

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	-	LC?
2	Str. 102-1-1st	U.1-5	-	-	LC
3	-	-	S.2	F.1-2	-

Time Span 1

The first event chronicled in Subop. 102E is the deposition of S.1, a light brown, fine-textured, hard-compacted soil. Stratum 1 was exposed to a maximum thickness of 0.14m, though nowhere was its base identified. This earth level runs more-or-less even from west to east, dropping precipitously east of Str. 102-1-1st, disappearing into the base of excavation 1.32m east of U.1. Current ground surface evidences no such descent, implying that whatever depression lay in this area during the prehistoric occupation of Site 102 had filled in during the

years since the settlement's abandonment (TS.3). Stratum 1 underlies construction associated with Str. 102-1-1st and must, therefore, have been laid down prior to events pertaining to TS.2. Most of the cultural material included in lots 102E/1 and 2 derives from S.2, and so pertains to TS.2. Nevertheless, we cannot preclude the possibility that some of these items also derive from S.1, generated by occupation predating the construction of Str. 101-1-1st.

Time Span 2

Structure 102-1-1st was originally defined on the west and east by low cobble facings, 0.21 and 0.26m high respectively (U.2 and 1), which apparently contained a fill of dark brown, fine-textured, hard-compacted soil and a few included stones (U.3). Units 1 and 2 are set 0.02-0.04m into S.1. Unit 2 is 0.29m wide while Unit 1 appears to be backed by a cobble pavement extending westward from U.1's preserved top. An earth surface, the top of U.3, runs back (east) from U.2. Structure 102-1-1st at this time measured 4.1m across, stood 0.21-0.26m high, and had a summit that was partially surfaced with stone.

At some point late in the use of Str. 102-1-1st, the building's east flank was extended approximately 0.57m (U.5). Construction of this addition involved laying down a cobble fill atop S.1 that was retained on the east by a poorly preserved cobble facing (all U.5) roughly 0.21m high. In the course of these activities, U.1 was buried. Structure 102-1-1st now measured 4.67m east-west.

Time Span 3

Following the abandonment of Str. 102-1-1st, the platform was buried by the natural deposition of S.2, a dark brown, fine-textured, hard-compacted soil. As noted above (TS.1), S.2 seems to have filled in a depression lying east of Str. 102-1-1st. Included within this earth level is scattered architectural debris (F.1 and 2). These moderately dense concentrations of displaced stones extend 0.85m west and 0.63m east of Str. 102-1-1st, most having come to rest atop S.1 (suggesting that the top of this layer was the ground surface exposed during the occupation of Str. 102-1-1st). The quantity of dislocated architectural fragments incorporated in F.1 and 2 implies that Str. 102-1-1st suffered a moderate amount of disruption following TS.2.

Structure 102-5

Structure 102-5 is paired with Str. 102-6, ca. 5m to the west. These two buildings are located in the approximate center of Site 102. A single trench, measuring 1m east-west by 5.3m north-south, was excavated against the platform's south flank (Subop. 102B). Suboperation 102B was carried down to a maximum depth of 0.53m into and below construction fill, revealing a single building phase.

Excavation Lots

<u>Lot</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Context</u>	<u>Time Span</u>
102B/1	128 sherds	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	2

	3 lithic pieces 4 <u>bajareque</u> fragments 12 bone fragments 17 <u>jute</u> shells 1 <u>metate</u> fragment		
102B/2	168 sherds 2 obsidian pieces 1 <u>candelero</u> fragment 1 figurine fragment 57 <u>jute</u> shells	Mixed Fill and Occupation Debris	1,2
102B/3	43 sherds 6 <u>bajareque</u> fragments 1 <u>jute</u> shell	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	2
102B/4	53 sherds 1 chert piece 1 lithic piece 1 <u>metate</u> fragment	Fill	2
102B/5	? sherds 1 <u>mano</u> fragment	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	2

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	-	LC
2	Str. 102-5-1st	U.1-4	-	-	LC, EPC
3	-	-	S.2	-	-

Time Span 1

Stratum 1 and at least the lower 0.1m of S.2 underlie and bury the bases of construction associated with Str. 102-5-1st, strongly indicating that these earth levels were deposited prior to the events chronicled in TS.2. Stratum 1 is a light brown, fine-textured, hard compacted soil which was exposed to a maximum thickness of 0.2m before disappearing into the base of excavation. Stratum 1 was discontinuously exposed in two portions of Subop. 102E but seems to descend gradually (0.06m) over 0.8m from north to south. Stratum 2, which buries the aforementioned level, is identical to it in all respects save color, being a dark brown. No architecture was associated with TS.1 though the recovery of some artifacts from S.1 and lower

S.2 imply the existence of habitation in this locale predating the erection of Str. 102-5-1st.

Time Span 2

Excavations on the south flank of Str. 102-5-1st revealed that this portion of the building had been subject to several episodes of renovation during its use-life. The earliest element assignable to this sequence is U.1, a cobble wall aligned 265 degrees and standing 0.37m high which most likely served as Str. 102-5-1st's south basal facing. Unit 1 may have originally stood 0.47m high, bringing its top level with the reconstructed earthen platform summit. The base of U.1 rests atop S.1. At some later point, Str. 102-5-1st was extended 1m southward through the construction of a new cobble facing standing a preserved 0.33m high and 0.59m wide (U.2). Packed between U.1 and 2 is an earth fill, virtually indistinguishable from S.2, in which a few medium-size cobbles are included (U.3). Unit 3 may have completely buried U.1. How much, if at all, U.1 continued to protrude above the terrace created by U.2 and 3 remains unknown. Sometime after the raising of U.2 and 3 another cobble terrace was appended to the platform's south face (U.4). Unit 4 stands a reconstructed 0.14m tall, and is backed over most of its north-south width by an earth-and-stone fill (included within U.3; the earth is identical to that found in S.2). It is possible that the rocks served as a paved surface for this ultimate southern terrace. Unit 4 measures 0.93m across and buried the lower 0.14m of U.2 (leaving 0.19m of that wall still visible). This final construction element was very poorly preserved.

By the conclusion of TS.2, Structure 102-5-1st's south basal flank rose 0.47m and was ascended by two low terraces (U.4 and 2), 0.14 and 0.19m high, which together extended the building 1.93m from its original southern basal facing (U.1). This last component may have now marked the southern edge of the platform's summit. Orientations had changed little from the beginning of TS.2, the final version being aligned 268 degrees (based on measurements taken along U.2).

Time Span 3

Following the abandonment of Str. 102-5-1st, the remaining 0.17-0.4m of S.2 was deposited burying all exposed units. The paucity of architectural debris incorporated in S.2 indicates that the platform suffered little disturbance since TS.2.

Structure 102-7

Structure 102-7, ca. 63m north of Str. 102-5, is the easternmost of a cluster of three buildings near the northeastern margin of Site 102. The building was investigated by two trenches (Subops. 102C and D) set up on the approximate axes of the platform's west and east flanks respectively. Suboperation 102C covers 1m (north-south) by 2.5m (east-west) and was carried down to a maximum depth of 0.33m into construction fill while its eastern counterpart measures 1m by 3.14m and was dug to a maximum depth of 0.66m beyond construction. A single building phase was revealed in each case. Structure 102-7's summit was not investigated during the 1985 excavations.

Excavation Lots

<u>Lot</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Context</u>	<u>Time Span</u>
102C/1	? artifacts	Occupation Debris (Secondary)	1,2
102C/2	? artifacts	Fill	2
102C/3	? artifacts	Mixed Fill and Terminal Debris	2
102D/1	28 sherds 1 censer fragment	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	2
102D/2	47 sherds 1 <u>mano</u> fragment	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	2
102D/3	18 sherds 1 <u>bajareque</u> fragment	Occupation Debris (Secondary)	1

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	-	EC, LC
2	Str. 102-7-1st	U.1-4	-	F.1	LC, EPC
3	-	-	S.3	F.2	-

Time Span 1

Strata 1 and 2 underlie elements of Str. 102-7-1st and so their deposition is attributed to T.S.1. The lowest exposed layer, S.1, is a red-brown, fine-textured soil exposed to a maximum thickness of 0.16m (the base was not located). Overlying this level is S.2, a light brown, fine-textured, hard-compacted earth maximally 0.3m thick (measured in the eastern portion of Subop. 102D where the S.1/2 interface was revealed). Stratum 1 was only uncovered in a relatively deep probe on the east side of the platform while S.2 was revealed underlying Str. 102-7-1st construction in both Subops. 102C and D. A scattering of artifacts recovered from deposits predating T.S.2 indicates a light occupation in this area prior to raising Str. 102-7-1st. Identification of Early and Late Classic diagnostics among the analyzed ceramics in lot 102D/3 encourages tentative placement of this early habitation at the transition between these intervals.

Time Span 2

Structure 102-7-1st is a low platform defined by a single, sheer basal facing on the east

and ascended by two low cobble risers on the west. The eastern cobble basal facing (U.3) rises ca. 0.35m and is set 0.07m into S.2. The western basal terrace (U.1) is 0.17m high and 0.5m wide. The 0.19m gap separating U.1 and 2 is filled with dirt indistinguishable from S.3. Unit 2, the next ascending western riser, ascends 0.08m above the top of U.1 and is 0.6m across. A scant 0.04m intervenes between U.2 and F.1, the latter possibly marking the western margin of Str. 102-7-1st's summit. Feature 1 consists of two cobbles stacked 0.21m high, resting 0.03m above the preserved top of the red-brown, fine-textured earth fill (U.4) which backs U.2 on the east. Identification of F.1 as a component of Str. 102-7-1st is based in large part on the regular placement of the rocks and differences in elevation between the tops of U.2 and 3 (U.3 is 0.28m higher than U.2). This discrepancy suggests that there must have been some step-up to Str. 102-7-1st's summit on the west and F.1 is the best available candidate. The above interpretation remains tentative given F.1's poor state of preservation and the possibility that a clearer summit step-up lies in unexcavated areas further to the east. Backing U.2 and F.1 is a fill composed of red-brown, fine-textured soil grading upward into dark brown, fine-textured earth as modern ground surface is approached (U.4).

Structure 102-7-1st, therefore, was (most likely) an earth-filled platform that stood 0.35-0.46m high, measured 5.01m east-west, and was oriented 358 to 0 degrees. The building's summit covered a reconstructed 3.6m east-west and was accessed from the west over two low, narrow stone-faced terraces. A single, steep cobble wall defines Str. 102-7-1st's east margin.

Time Span 3

Following abandonment of Str. 102-7-1st, the platform was buried by the natural deposition of S.3, a dark brown, fine-textured, hard-compacted soil. Some tumbled architectural debris is included in S.3, being especially prevalent off the structure's east flank (F.2). Feature 2 consists of a light scatter of former building stones extending 2.4m east of U.3. Fewer displaced cobbles were noted west of U.1 (no feature designation). The quantity of tumbled debris identified in Subops. 102C and D implies that Str. 102-7-1st had suffered from minor disturbances following T.S.2.

Chronological Summary

The earliest period of occupation identified at Site 102 is the Early Classic. Diagnostics pertaining to this period were unearthed east of Str. 102-7 in earth levels underlying later construction (Str. 102-7-1st). As noted earlier, the mixing of Early and Late Classic materials in these strata may place this earliest known habitation at or near the Early Classic/Late Classic transition. No architecture associated with this interval was recorded.

The primary period of occupation at Site 102 is the Late Classic. It was during this span that all three of the excavated buildings were erected. Occupation at Site 102 persisted into the succeeding Early Postclassic when at least Strs. 102-5-1st and 102-7-1st were still in use. The paucity of Early Postclassic diagnostics recovered from excavated collections suggests that relatively few people may have continued to reside atop Late Classic buildings for a few years. No construction could be definitively assigned to the Early Postclassic.

Architectural Summary

Exposed Late Classic Site 102 platforms are generally low constructions rising 0.21-0.47m and measuring 4.1 to 5.01m across. The hearting of these edifices consists primarily of earth retained by low walls fashioned mostly of basalt cobbles the naturally flatter faces of which tend to be oriented outward. Stone sizes range from 0.1-0.44m in diameter though some pebbles as small as 0.04m across were used to fill in the gaps between the larger rocks. All mud mortar was used as a binding agent in all of the uncovered walls. Building alignments cluster within a few degrees of cardinal (355 to 0 degrees). Two of the three excavated platforms (Strs. 102-1-1st and 102-5-1st) exhibited evidence of renovation during their use-lives. In both cases these changes involved the lateral expansion of the edifice through the addition of a low (0.14-0.33m high), narrow (0.57-1m across) terrace off one of the flanks. Terrace widths, overall, measure from 0.04-1m. No clear summit architecture was recorded. This is not surprising as our excavations focused almost exclusively on the investigation of building flanks. At least a portion of Str. 102-1-1st's summit was paved with stone, the remainder being covered with earth.