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PSB-OP 307-Excavation Report

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Site 307

Site 307 is ca. 100m east of Site 308 and 1km south of the Quebrada Aguacate/Zapote. The settlement consists of three extant constructions more-or-less evenly spaced in a line running northeast-southwest. The piles of likely building stones (cobbles) found scattered in the vicinity of these edifices hints at the former presence of other constructions which have since been lost to such modern activities as palm and plantain cultivation. Structures 307-2 and 307-3, respectively the central and northern buildings in the aforementioned line, were excavated in 1985 under the direction of Daniel Brennan and Julie Benyo. Fully 27.3m² were cleared in the course of this work.

Structure 307-2

Structure 307-2 is the central building in the northeast-southwest trending line of three constructions that comprise Site 307. It is 19m southwest of Str. 307-3 and 26m northeast of Str. 307-1. Digging here was largely restricted to a 1m-wide by 9m-long trench that cut across the platform running west-east. An extension measuring 2m² was appended to the trench's east end to clarify architectural details (11m² total, all conducted within Subop. 307B). Excavation was pursued to maximum depths of 0.6m and 0.7m below modern ground surface beyond and into final phase architecture. A single building episode was revealed in the course of this work.

Excavation Lots

<u>Lot</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Context</u>	<u>Time Span/Date</u>
307B/1	125 sherds, 2 bones, 3 pieces of chert, 1 metate	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	3/LCL, ECL?
307B/3	21 sherds	Mixed, Fill/Terminal Debris	3/
307B/4	12 sherds, 1 metate	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	3/
307B/5	22 sherds	Mixed Fill/Terminal Debris	3/
307B/6	60 sherds, 6 jute shells	Fill	3/ECL, LPrecl
307B/7	38 sherds	Fill	3/LCL
307B/8	unprocessed	Fill	3/

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	-	-	S.1, 2	-	LPrecl, ECL?
3	Str. 307-2-1st	U.1-5	-	-	LCL
4	-	-	S.1	F.1	

Time Span 1

The deposition of an estimated 0.06m of a brown soil (S.1) is the earliest activity attested to in the vicinity of Str. 307-2. The base of this soil layer lies beyond our excavation limits. The absence of any cultural material from this portion of S.1 very tentatively implies that there was no to very little human activity in the area during TS.1.

Time Span 2

On the east side of Subop. 307B, three discontinuous concentrations of fine, gray ash (all included in S.2) were found embedded within the 0.14m of S.1 that immediately underlies Str. 307-2-1st architecture. These deposits measure, from east to west, 0.2m thick by 0.33m long, 0.08m thick by 0.15m long, and 0.1m thick by 0.17m long. They are 0.4m and 1.12m apart and rest at roughly the same level immediately below architecture dated to TS.3. It seems likely that S.2 resulted from human actions, though very few artifacts could be associated with these ash concentrations; they certainly do not seem to be parts of midden deposits.

Time Span 3

Structure 307-2-1st reached its final form during this interval. That form is inferred primarily from the two best-preserved constructions that were uncovered (U.1 and 2); U.3 and 4 were reconstructed from more diffuse remains the natures of which was far from clear during excavation.

Structure 307-2-1st is bounded on the west (U.1) and east (U.4) by 0.2m-high stone facings that are backed by earthen-surfaced terraces measuring 1.35m and 1.9m across on the west and east, respectively. Units 2 and 3 rise 0.3m above these surfaces and define the limits of the 2.1m-wide earthen floored summit on the west and east, respectively. No summit architecture was revealed in the 1m-wide swath cut across Str. 307-2-1st. The platform's fill (U.5) consists of a brown earth indistinguishable from S.1 and in which a moderately dense concentration of small to medium-sized cobbles is embedded.

By the end of TS. 3, Str. 307-2-1st was a stone-faced, earth-and-stone-filled platform that rose 0.5m high, measured 5.15m across east-west, and was aligned 350-359 degrees (based on the orientations of U.1 and 2). The summit covers 2.1m across and is bordered by terraces that are 1.35m and 1.9m wide on the west and east. All facings were made of river-worn stones set in a mud matrix. Flooring on the summit and terraces consisted of earth.

Time Span 4

Following Str. 307-2-1st's abandonment, all but the uppermost stones in U.2 were covered by the continued deposition of S.1. A light concentration of cobbles fallen from TS.3 architecture (F.1) was found primarily atop the northwest and southeast terraces.

Structure 307-3

Structure 307-3 is on the northern end of the line of buildings comprising Site 307, 19m northeast of Str. 307-2. Excavation here (Subop. 307C) consisted of a 1m-wide by 6.6m-long trench dug across Str. 307-3 running east-west. Extensions dug along the building's east face and across its summit resulted in the clearing of 16.3m² overall. Digging was pursued to a maximum depth of 0.63m below modern ground surface within and outside construction revealing one construction phase.

Excavation Lots

<u>Lot</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Context</u>	<u>Time Span/Date</u>
307C/1	8 sherds	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	2/LCL
307C/2	3 sherds	Mixed Fill/Terminal Debris	2/
307C/3	unprocessed	Mixed Terminal/Occupation Debris	1,2/
307C/4	130 sherds, 3 jute shells, 3 pieces of <u>bajareque</u>	Mixed, Terminal/Occupation Debris	1,2/
307C/5	unprocessed	Fill	2/
307C/6	unprocessed	Fill	2/
307C/7	9 sherds	Fill	2/LCL

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	Str. 307-3-1st	U.1-5	-	-	LCL
3	-	-	S.1	F.1	

Time Span 1

Approximately 0.38m of a brown soil (S.1) underlies TS.2 construction and was probably deposited prior to the erection of Str. 307-3-1st. Stratum 1 is largely free of stones and other inclusions. No artifacts recovered from Subop. 307C could be definitively assigned to TS.1 though we cannot rule out the possibility that there was a human presence in the area prior to Str. 307-3-1st's construction.

Time Span 2

Structure 307-3-1st is a platform bounded on the east and west by 0.13m-high stone facings (U.1 and 2, respectively). Unit 1, on the east, is backed by an earthen-floored terrace that extends for 0.76m before it terminates in U.4. The latter is a 0.12m-high step up to the summit. On the west, U.2 extends back for 0.34m (about the width of the stones comprising the western basal facing) before being succeeded by U.3. Unit 3 is a 0.12m-high stone facing providing access to the summit which is paved with cobbles for a distance of 1.02m back (east) from the west face of the eastern summit step-up (all included in U.3). A 2.1m-long segment of Str. 307-3-1st's north basal facing (U.6) was uncovered extending east from the platform's northwest corner. Unit 6 leads directly to the summit, standing an estimated 0.25m high. Structure 307-3-1st's fill (U.5) consists of a few small to medium-sized cobbles set in a brown soil identical to S.1.

By the conclusion of TS.2, Str. 307-3-1st was a platform standing 0.25m high, measuring 4.31m across east-west, and aligned roughly 359 degrees. The building's 3.21m-wide summit was probably reached from the west where the narrow eastern basal facing (U.2, 0.34m across) probably served as a step leading to a formal paving that seems restricted to the summit's westernmost 1.02m. No architecture graced the 1m-wide segment of the superstructure revealed in Subop. 307C. On the east, the platform's summit is bordered by a 0.76m-wide earthen-floored terrace. All facings and the U.3 summit pavement were made of cobbles the naturally flatter faces of which were oriented outwards on the walls. The stones were set in a mud mortar.

Time Span 3

After Str. 307-3-1st's abandonment, continued deposition of S.1 covered all but the highest stones pertaining to TS.2 architecture. A very light scattering of small stones (F.1) was noted extending 1.3m east of U.1. Feature 1 likely consists of material fallen from Str. 307-3-1st during the protracted post-abandonment period.

Chronological Summary

The limited artifact samples from Site 307 that were analyzed pertain to the Late Preclassic through the Late Classic. Based on the contexts from which these few materials were recovered, it appears that Strs. 307-2-1st and 307-3-1st were built and used primarily during the Late Classic, earlier material having been inadvertently included in the fill of Str. 307-2-1st. This inference is supported by the nature and quality of the architecture exposed at Site 307 which is commensurate with that found on buildings that were erected elsewhere in the middle Ulu drainage during the Late Classic. No constructions can be assigned to the Late Preclassic and Early Classic at this settlement.

Architectural Summary

Structures 307-2-1st and 307-3-1st are low platforms (0.5 and 0.25m high) that measure 6.9m and 4.31m across. Both are bordered by low, stone-faced terraces though on Str. 307-2-1st these surfaces symmetrically flank the summit on the west and east (2m wide in each case) whereas on Str. 307-3-1st a narrower (0.76m across) terrace is found on the east side alone. In the last case a 0.34m-wide stone step ascends the platform's west side. Structure 307-2-1st's earthen-floored summit is 2.4m wide while the summit of Str. 307-3-1st spans 3.21m and is paved along its eastern margin to a width of 1.02m; the remainder of this elevated space was left as exposed earth. No other summit architecture was noted in our limited excavations.

All walls and facings recorded at Site 307 were made of unmodified river cobbles the naturally flatter faces of which were oriented outwards. These rocks were set in a mud matrix.

Summit and terrace surfaces were apparently made of earth with no effort made to formalize them through paving with stones.