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## PSB OP 328 Excavation Report

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## Site 328

Site 328 consists of 7 constructions two of which are low platforms (Strs. 328-1 and 328-5) while the remainder are marked by stone lines set flush with modern ground surface. Five of these buildings are found atop a low rise though otherwise there is no evidence of patterning in their arrangement. Site 328 is 300m northwest of Site 327, 175m southwest of Site 323, and 100m east of the Rio Ulua. A total of 21.3m<sup>2</sup> was dug here in the course of investigating Strs. 328-2 through -6 and within what appeared on the surface to be a particularly dense concentration of stone tool debris. These excavations were overseen by Julie Benyo and Thomas Melchionne.

## Structure 328-2

Structure 328-2 appeared on the surface as a rectangular construction delimited by stone lines that were flush with modern ground surface. The edifice lies in the eastern part of the settlement atop the low rise on which Strs. 328-3-5 and Str. 328-7 are also found. Structure 328-3 is 10m to the west, Str. 328-7 is 27, to the south. Structure 328-2 was investigated by digging a 1x5.1m trench (Subop. 328B) running northwest-southeast across the building's approximate center. Digging was pursued to maximum depths of 0.4m and 0.38m below modern ground surface within and beyond architecture, respectively. One building phase was recognized in the course of this work.

## Excavation Lots

<u>Lot</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Context</u>	<u>Time Span/Date</u>
328B/1	18 bajareque fragments	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	2/EPC?
328B/2	unprocessed (sherds)	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	2/EPC?
328B/3	20 sherds, 9 jute shells, 1 mano fragment	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	2/EPC?
328B/4	empty	-	-
328B/5	unprocessed (sherds)	Occupation Debris	2/EPC?
328B/6	1 sherd	Occupation Debris	2/EPC?
328B/7	empty	-	-
328B/8	empty	-	-
328B/9	4 sherds, 9 obsidian pieces, 4 other lithics	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	2/EPC?
328B/10	empty	-	-

## Time Spans

Time Construction

Span                      Phase                      Units                      Strata                      Features                      Date

-	-	-	S.1	-	-
2	Str. 328-2-1 <sup>st</sup>	U.1, 2	-	-	EPC?

### Time Span 1

The earliest activity identified in the vicinity of Str. 328-2-1<sup>st</sup> was the deposition of a brown soil rich in numerous very small to large rocks (S.1). There were no changes in soil composition from the base of excavation to modern ground surface, making it very difficult to ascertain how much of S.1 was deposited in TS.1 and how much was laid down after Str. 328-2-1<sup>st</sup>'s abandonment. Given that architecture pertaining to TS.2 was not covered by any soil, it seems likely that erosion of the low hill on which Str. 328-2-1<sup>st</sup> sits worked against the accumulation of earth after this edifice was no longer in use. Hence, we tentatively infer that S.1 collected to a minimum thickness of 0.4m in TS.1 (its base lying beyond excavation limits), its current top being close to the ground level above which Str. 328-2-1<sup>st</sup> was raised. The density of rocks comprising various sizes, from gravel to one example measuring 0.39m across and projecting 0.4m upwards from Subop. 328B's base, may point to S.1 as the uppermost part of the deposit that comprises the hill supporting Str. 328-2-1<sup>st</sup> and its neighbors. The absence of cultural material within the lowest exposed 0.12-0.15m of S.1 implies that there was no significant human presence in the area when most of this soil was being laid down.

### Time Span 2

Structure 328-2-1<sup>st</sup> is a surface-level building bordered on the southeast and northwest by low stone walls (U.1 and 2, in turn). Unit 1 stands 0.13m high and measures 0.38m across whereas U.2 is about the same height and width (each is one stone high and wide). The former wall is aligned roughly 351 degrees while the latter is oriented at ca. 9 degrees. This variation in alignments is most probably due to the disruption of both lines; they project about 0.09m above ground surface and would be easy prey to such disruptive processes as erosion. The earthen-floored room delimited by U.1 and 2 covers 1.21m across its uncovered center, the building measuring 1.97m wide at this point. Units 1 and 2 are made of unmodified cobbles set in a mud mortar.

### Structures 328-3/4

Structures 328-3 and 328-4 were originally mapped as two parallel stone lines, barely visible on modern ground surface, that ran parallel to, and 4.5m apart from, each other. Suboperation 328C, a 1x9.2m trench dug to intersect the centers of both lines, revealed that they are likely parts of the same surface-level edifice (herein designated Str. 328-3-1<sup>st</sup>). Together, they are 10m west of Str. 328-2 and 10m northeast of Str. 328-5. Digging here was pursued to maximum depths of 0.59m and 0.45m below modern ground surface within and outside architecture, respectively. One building phase was identified during these excavations.

### Excavation Lots

<u>Lot</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Context</u>	<u>Time Span/Date</u>
328C/1	7 sherds, 1 bone	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	2/EPC?
328C/2	unprocessed (sherds)	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	2/EPC?
328C/3	1 sherd, 6 lithics	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	2/EPC?

328C/4	3 sherds, obsidian	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	2/EPC?
328C/5	empty	-	-
328C/6	empty	-	-
328C/7	empty	-	-
328C/8	empty	-	-
328C/9	unprocessed (sherds)	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	2/EPC?
328C/10	2 sherds, 3 obsidian pieces, 1 mano fragment	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	2/EPC?
328C/11	1 green stone, 7 sherds, 21 lithics	Occupation Debris	1/?
328C/12	empty	-	-
328C/13	5 sherds	Terminal/Occupation Debris	1,2/EPC?

#### Time Spans

<u>Time Span</u>	<u>Construction Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Date(s)</u>
1	-	-	S.1, 2	-	?
2	Str. 328-3-1 <sup>st</sup>	U.1, 2	-	F.1	EPC?
3	--	-	S.2?	-	

#### Time Span 1

Deposition of S.1, a light brown, sandy soil with numerous gravel to medium-size stone inclusions, was the first activity attested to in the environs of Str. 328-3-1<sup>st</sup>. Stratum 1 was exposed to a maximum thickness of 0.27m before disappearing beyond our excavation limits. This layer closely resembles S.1 revealed in Subop. 328B 10m to the east; the tops of both are within 0.02m of each other and the Subop. 328C exposure is lacking in cultural material as is the lower revealed portion of S.1 in Subop. 320B. It was noted that S.1 in Subop. 328C rises 0.15m over 2m eastward from the western trench margin before leveling out for the remaining 7.1m of the excavation. It may be, therefore, that S.1's upper surface undulates slightly though very little of this relief was evident in our excavations. Taken together, S.1 most likely represents the culturally sterile, underlying core of the hill on which some of Site 328's structures are clustered.

Between 0.17m thick (on the west) and 0.3m thick (on the east) of a gray-brown, sandy soil with moderate amounts of included gravel blankets S.1 and underlies TS. 2 construction. As the above figures suggest, this layer slopes up 0.13m over 5.05m west-to-east. This ascent is inferred from the relative stratigraphic positions of U.1 and 2, the former's base sitting about 0.13m above that of the latter. The putative ascent does not follow any comparable change in underlying S.1 and why it should

have occurred at all is unclear. Recovery of some artifacts from this lower portion of S.2 does hint at a human presence in the area prior to the erection of Str. 328-3-1<sup>st</sup>.

### Time Span 2

Structure 328-3-1<sup>st</sup> is a surface-level building oriented roughly 350 degrees and bounded on the east and west by stone foundations that are one stone tall and wide. Unlike the examples of comparable footings revealed in Str. 328-2-1<sup>st</sup>, however, these rocks are quite large; Unit 1 stands 0.4m high by 0.38m across while U.1 rises 0.25m and measures 0.37m wide. Most likely these foundations supported perishable upper walls. The earthen-floored room they border encompasses 5.05m east-west and may, as noted above, have slanted upwards 0.15m from west to east across this distance. Units 1 and 2 were made of unmodified cobbles set in a mud mortar, their flatter aspects directed both beyond the edifice and into its interior.

A dense cluster of small to very large cobbles extends 0.85m immediately east of U.1 (F.1). These rocks are generally flat lying and are bounded on the east by two massive cobbles set one on top of the other; they measure 0.44x0.41m and 0.33x0.21m and rise to a point equivalent to U.1's top. Feature 1 did not appear as a coherent construction during excavation but the horizontal positioning of its rocks coupled with the placement of two very large stones on its east border tentatively hints that it was part of a construction that has not survived well the ravages of time. It may be that F.1 was part of a late addition to U.1 in an attempt to widen that foundation to 1.22m across. Such a renovation, if it occurred, may have been part of an effort to convert U.1 from a foundation and into a construction that could still have supported a perishable upper wall and served some other purpose, perhaps as a bench.

### Time Span 3

It may be that 0.08-0.11m of S.2 continued to be deposited in the environs of Str. 328-3-1<sup>st</sup> after it was abandoned. This is based on the amount of overburden that we infer collected atop Str. 328-3-1<sup>st</sup>'s putative floor. As was the case at Str. 328-2-1<sup>st</sup>, however, it appears that the area surrounding this building was subject more to erosion than deposition after its abandonment, very little soil collecting on and around the construction.

### Structure 328-6

Structure 328-6 appeared during mapping as an isolated, north-south running, stone wall line flush with modern ground surface lying ca. 25m west of the hill supporting Strs. 328-2 through 328-5 and St/ 328-7. Structure 328-5 is 39m to the east while Str. 328-3 is 53m in the same direction. The investigation of Str. 328-6 took the form of digging a 1x2m trench (Subop. 328E) set against the wall line's west side (2m<sup>2</sup> exposed in all). Excavations were pursued to a maximum depth of 0.5m below modern ground surface outside construction; the area east of and, presumably, within Str. 328-6-1<sup>st</sup>, was not probed. One building phase was identified in the course of this work.

### Excavation Lots

<u>Lot</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Context</u>	<u>Time Span/Date</u>
328E/1	40 sherds, obsidian	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	2/EPC?
328E/3	15 sherds, 4 obsidian pieces,	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	2/EPC?

	1 metate fragment		
328E/4	1 obsidian piece	Occupation Debris (Secondary)	1?/?
328E/5	empty	-	-

Note: Lots 328E/1 and 328E/2 were combined.

### Time Spans

Time	Construction				
<u>Span</u>	<u>Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Date(s)</u>
1	-	-	S.1	-	?
2	Str. 328-6-1 <sup>st</sup>	U.1	-	-	EPC?
3	-	-	S.1	-	

### Time Span 1

The first period of activity attested to here is the deposition of a light brown, very sandy soil largely devoid of inclusions (S.1). As S.1 continued to accumulate after Str. 328-6-1<sup>st</sup>'s abandonment and we did not encounter this layer's base, it is impossible at present to state definitively how much of S.1 was laid down now. We estimate, based on the stratigraphic position of Str. 328-6-1<sup>st</sup>'s western foundation (U.1), that at least 0.46m of this soil was deposited during TS.1. Artifacts were encountered primarily in the uppermost 0.2m of S.1 though one fragment of obsidian was retrieved at approximately 0.3m below modern ground surface. It may be that this lone item points to a scant human presence in the vicinity during TS.1; just as easily, the artifact might have worked its way down from the upper, more artifact-rich levels of the same stratum.

### Time Span 2

The only portion of Str. 328-6-1<sup>st</sup> that was uncovered is what we take to be its western foundation (U.1). Unit 1 is one stone high (0.17m) and wide (0.27m) and is oriented roughly 327 degrees. The wall is made of cobbles set in a mud mortar. Several of the rocks may have been intentionally modified to create flat faces that are directed westward. Based on this patterning and U.1's dimensions, we infer that this wall was the western foundation for a surface-level building. Based on the 0.24m dug east of U.1 it appears that the building's interior room had an earthen floor. We did not excavate far enough in this direction, however, to identify the building's eastern perimeter wall.

### Time Span 3

Very little material accumulated after Str. 328-6-1<sup>st</sup> was abandoned. An estimated 0.16m of S.1 may have settled over Str. 328-6-1<sup>st</sup>'s interior while perhaps as little as 0.03m of the same soil accumulated west of U.1. The paucity of rocks fallen from TS.2 architecture implies that U.1 was never much taller than it appeared during excavation.

### Structure 328-5

Structure 328-5 was mapped as a 0.3m-high platform located on the western margins of the hill atop which Strs. 328-2, -3, -4 and -7 were perched. Structure 328-3-1<sup>st</sup> is ca. 15m to the northeast. This building lacked any sign of stones and there was some doubt at the time that it was the product of human hands. Excavations were, therefore, undertaken to evaluate this point. A 1x3m trench (Subop. 328D) was dug northwest-southeast against the putative platform's northwest side and continuing up to the summit. Excavations were pursued to a maximum depth of 0.3m below modern ground surface and yielded no artifacts or any signs of architecture. The soil revealed in the course of this work was light brown and contained almost no inclusions aside from a few white, chalky stones. There is every reason to suspect that Str. 328-5 was not a purposeful construction of Prehispanic vintage; more likely it represents dirt piled up in relatively recent times.

Suboperation 328F

Suboperation 328F is a 1x2m trench, oriented roughly north-south, that was dug in an area that lacked architecture but was marked by a concentration of obsidian debris and tools. This excavation is located on the northwest edge of the hill supporting Strs. 328-2, -3, 4, -5 and -7, 34m northeast of Str. 328-6 and 43m northwest of Str. 328-3. Digging proceeded to a maximum depth of 0.4m below modern ground surface.

Excavation Lots

<u>Lot</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Context</u>	<u>Time Span/Date</u>
328F/1	58 sherds, 7 obsidian pieces	Terminal Debris (Secondary)	2/EPC?
328F/2	empty	-	-

Time Spans

<u>Time Span</u>	<u>Construction Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Date(s)</u>
1	-	-	S.1	-	-
2	-	-	S.1	-	EPC?

Time Span 1

The first activity attested to here was the deposition of a light brown, very sandy soil containing a dense concentration of gravel and some large cobbles (S.1). The lowest 0.2m of S.1 yielded no artifacts suggesting the absence of human activities in the immediate area while this soil was accumulating.

Time Span 2

Stratum 1 continued to collect in this area during TS.2 though its exposed upper 0.2m had less gravel than was noted towards its revealed base. Upper S.1 did yield artifacts, including obsidian of which several pieces were complete blades. This evidence suggests that the surface concentration of obsidian marked a place where tools of this material were made and/or used though the subsurface deposit was not particularly dense or deep. There was little evidence for the post-abandonment deposition of soil here, a pattern noted throughout Site 328.

## Architectural Summary

The three buildings investigated at Site 328 (Strs. 328-2-1<sup>st</sup>, 328-3-1<sup>st</sup>, and 328-6-1<sup>st</sup>) were all surface-level buildings the earthen floors of which were bounded by cobble foundations that likely supported perishable upper walls and stood one stone high and wide. The footings associated with Strs. 328-2-1<sup>st</sup> and 328-6-1<sup>st</sup> were modest, measuring 0.13-0.17m high by 0.27-0.38m wide. The space bordered by Str. 328-2-1<sup>st</sup>'s footings is also fairly small, measuring 1.21m across. Structure 328-3-1<sup>st</sup> stands out slightly from its near neighbors for its relatively greater size. Its bordering walls are 0.25-0.4m high by 0.37-0.38m across and the width of the room they contain encompasses 5.05m. There is also some ambiguous evidence that this building's east foundation was expanded to a (by local standards) robust 1.22m width, possibly with the intent of converting that footing into a unit that could serve as a wall support and a bench. All of the walls revealed at Site 328 are made of river cobbles set in a mud mortar. In the case of Str. 328-6-1<sup>st</sup>'s western foundation, at least several of these rocks may have been modified to create flat faces that were directed outwards to the west. The stones from other walls were not so clearly shaped.

Structures 328-2-1<sup>st</sup> and 328-3-1<sup>st</sup> are oriented generally north-south whereas Str. 328-6-1<sup>st</sup> is aligned northwest-southeast. There, thus, seems to have been some effort to align neighboring edifices along similar azimuths, a dictate that did not extend to the more distant Str. 328-6-1<sup>st</sup>.

The excavation of an apparent lithic concentration in the northwest portion of the settlement (Subop. 328F) reveals a pattern similar to that seen at Sites 323 and 330. That is, surface materials do not extend far below modern ground surface (0.2m in this instance) nor do these subsurface deposits yield particularly dense concentrations of material. It was noted throughout Site 328 that post-abandonment deposition of soil was minimal and that this may suggest that erosion played a significant role in shaping the site's form after its prehistoric denizens departed. If this is the case, then the stone tool debris found across Site 328 may represent the contents of deflated soil levels, materials that were formerly distributed across an unknown deposit of earth and are now concentrated on ground level.

## Chronological Summary

As at Site 327, very few artifacts diagnostic of any time period were analyzed from our excavations at Site 328. We surmise, based primarily on the nature and dimensions of the recorded architecture, that Site 328 was occupied primarily during the Early Postclassic.