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## PVN Op 323 Excavation Report

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## Site 323

Site 323 consists of three distinct occupation loci (Groups I-III) that occupy elevated terrain which projects southward from the escarpments that define the Naco valley's northern margin. Site 322 is ca. 120m west of Site 323 from which it is separated by a north-south running seasonal stream channel that issues from the southern hills. Site 324 lies roughly 150m north and approximately 11m above Site 323 within the lower reaches of the northern hills. Sites 322, 323, and 123, ca. 500m to the west of Site 323, all occupy the same high terrace of the Rio Manchaguala, that watercourse running immediately south of the settlements. This terrace is dissected by broad, shallow run-offs that extend southward from the northern hills, deepening and becoming wider as they approach the Rio Manchaguala.

Site 323's Group I contains one extant platform and three rock concentrations, the latter measuring 2-5m in diameter. The platform is built into a west-to-east rise in the land and is 0.2m high on its western, downsloping flank. It has no discernible elevation on the east. Together, these remains surround a patio on all sides save the east which was left open. Group II is ca. 90m southeast of Group I and consists of an artifact-and-stone scatter encompassing 47x10m. No distinct concentrations of cultural materials or buildings were recognized in Group II. Group III is roughly 77m east-northeast of Group II and is composed of four platforms and one rock concentration (ca. 5m in diameter) that together delimit a patio on all sides. The rock concentration likely consists of the disturbed remains of a small building that originally delimited the patio's north flank. Group III's surviving structures are set on the edges of natural descents that drop approximately 0.75m to the east and 2m to the south towards the meandering course of the Rio Manchaguala. That watercourse is ca. 45m south of the settlement at its closest point. The Group III platforms stand 0.5-1.1m high on their downsloping sides and range from 0.15-0.8m tall on their upslope flanks.

Groups I and II showed signs of having been recently plowed when Site 323 was investigated in 1991 and 1996; both loci were planted in corn during the first visit (June, 1991) and tobacco during the second (late March through mid-May, 1996). Plowing extended up to the margins of Group III in both years and there were signs that its patio may also have been cultivated in this manner. The rock concentration on the patio's north side likely resulted from disturbances due to plowing. The surviving buildings did not, however, appear to have been seriously damaged by this or other activities prior to excavations conducted there by Briana Beacom and Adrienne Misheloff in 1996. Three of Group III's buildings (Strs. 323-1/3) were dug here from March 15-May 14, 1996. One additional edifice that did not appear on ground surface was also exposed during these investigations (Structure 323-Sub1). In all, 196m<sup>2</sup> were cleared in the course of this work.

## Structure 323-1

Structure 323-1 closes off the northwest corner of the Site 323 patio. It is located 3.5m northwest of Str. 323-2 and 12m, and across the patio, from Str. 323-3. The ground underlying this edifice slopes up slightly from northwest to southeast, rising 0.44m over 9.34m in that direction. Excavations conducted here within Subop. 323B, K, L, P, U, AC, AD, AF, AK, and AL resulted in the clearing of ca. 59m<sup>2</sup>, all but the north corner of the edifice being exposed in the course of these investigations. Digging was carried down to maximum depths of 0.55m and 0.72m below modern ground surface within and outside construction respectively, revealing one principal construction stage. All of the field research reported herein was directed by Adrienne Misheloff.

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	-	
2	Str. 323-1-1 <sup>st</sup>	U.1-7, 10, 11, 15, 17-18	-	F.1	LCLIII/II
3	Str. 323-1-1 <sup>st</sup>	U. 8, 9, 12-14, - 16, 19	-	-	LCLIII, EPC?
4	-	-	S.1-2	F.2	

Time Span 1

The earliest activity attested to in the vicinity of Str. 323-1-1<sup>st</sup> was the seemingly natural deposition of a light brown to tan, coarse-textured, moderately hard-compacted sand (S.3). Stratum 3 rises 0.26m over 2.16m from northwest to southeast towards Str. 323-1-1<sup>st</sup>'s northwest basal facing (U.1). It reappears underlying the southeast flank of the building (U.9) by which point S.3 has apparently ascended 0.18m from its last recorded point on the northwest. This soil level then descends gradually 0.06m over 2.8m southeast of Str. 323-1-1<sup>st</sup> by which point it exits our excavations. Stratum 3 was exposed to a maximum thickness of 0.27m though its base was not encountered in any of our probes.

Time Span 2

Structure 323-1-1<sup>st</sup> was a platform delimited on all sides by stone facings. On the northeast and southwest these walls (U.5 and 17) rise 0.72m directly to the summit. Unit 17, the southwest facing, steps out 0.3m to the southwest 4.8m northwest of its southern corner with

U.7. This outset continues northwest for the remaining 1.25m of U.17's length, terminating in its corner with the platform's northwest basal facing (U.1). This step-out may have been the remains of a step providing access to Str. 323-1-1<sup>st</sup>'s summit, though the poor state of U.17's preservation in general makes such a contention difficult to establish.

The platform's northwest and southeast basal facings appear, in contrast, as a set of long, narrow terraces ascending to the summit. On the northwest, U.1 rises 0.08m above the top of S.3, the presumed ground surface exposed during TS.2 and 3, and is sunk 0.1m into that earth level. Unit 1 is 0.45m wide, surfaced with stone, and terminates on the southeast at U.2. Unit 2 runs down behind U.1 and stands to a preserved 0.4m above that basal riser. Based on the disposition of tumbled architectural debris emanating from U.2 it is likely that this wall originally rose 0.55m above U.1 and led directly to Str. 323-1-1<sup>st</sup>'s earthen-floored summit. Unit 18 was traced for 1.95m southeast from its junction with U.2's southwest terminus. The former is poorly preserved and may be the remnants of a stone wall that borders Str. 323-1-1<sup>st</sup>'s summit room on the southwest. On the southeast, the basal riser is U.7. It stands 0.37m tall and has a stone-surfaced tread measuring 0.25m across. Unit 7 is succeeded on the northwest by U.6 which rests on and rises 0.24m above U.7 to the summit. Units 6 and 7 may well have acted, in part, as steps providing access to Str. 323-1-1<sup>st</sup>'s superstructure. Unit 2 on the northwest appears to have been too high to have served this purpose though the aforementioned outset on U.17 could have offered a means of reaching the summit from the platform's west corner.

A stone floor (U.4) runs 1.04m northwest from U.6 where it ends at U.3. Unit 4 was most easily identified over its northeastern-most 3.2m and was not as clearly marked in the 3.1m lying to the southwest. It is possible that U.4 did not extend for the full northeast-southwest length of the summit where it backs and is seemingly integrated with U.6.

Unit 3, the southeast summit wall, rests on and stands 0.11m above U.4, is 0.62m wide, and rises an estimated 0.21m above the inferred level of Str. 323-1-1<sup>st</sup>'s earthen-floored summit. The room, delimited by U.2, 3, 18, and the back of U.5, encompasses 3.3x4.2m. The only built-in features recorded here are two parallel stone lines (U.10 and 11) that extend an estimated 1.6m (U.10) and 1.75m (U.11) southwest from the inferred back of U.5 into the open summit enclosure (U.5's southwest side was not clearly identified where it would have intersected U.10 and 11). Unit 11 is 0.2m southeast of the summit compartment's north corner. Units 10 and 11 are 0.4m wide by 0.25m high and are separated by 0.2m. Unit 10's southwest terminus is indented 0.2x0.2m on its southwest flank. The behavioral significance of U.10 and 11 is unclear. They are not joined to each other nor do they run back to and intersect U.2, the northwest summit wall. They may have been supports either for perishable upper walls or, perhaps, round-bottomed ceramic vessels. It is unlikely that they are part of a bench or shelf.

A concentration of stones was noted sitting atop the inferred level of Str. 323-1-1<sup>st</sup>'s earthen summit floor (F.1). This pile of relatively flat-laid rocks measures 0.69m across and is

0.3m high. Feature 1 lies 1.64m southeast of U.2's northwest face and did not appear as a coherent, intelligible construction during excavation. It may be the remnants of some element of superstructure architecture though what it might have been escapes us.

The fill that makes up the hearting of Str. 323-1-1<sup>st</sup> consists primarily of a dark brown, moderately coarse textured soil (U.15). Embedded within this matrix are a few scattered medium-size stones.

Structure 323-1-1<sup>st</sup>, by the conclusion of TS. 2, was a stone-faced, earth (primarily)-and-stone-filled platform that stood 0.61-0.72m tall, measured 6.3m on a side, and was aligned roughly 24 degrees. The building is ascended on the northeast and southwest by facings that rise directly to the summit and on the northwest and southeast by narrow stone-surfaced terraces that are 0.08m tall by 0.45m wide (northwest) and 0.37m high by 0.25m wide (southeast). These terraces run the full width of Str. 323-1-1<sup>st</sup> and, on the southeast at least, may have provided steps leading to the superstructure. Another means of reaching the summit was possibly provided at the edifice's west corner where there is a 0.3m-wide by 1.25m-long step out on the southwest basal wall.

The superstructure consists of one sizable, earthen-floored room that covers 13.9m<sup>2</sup>. Two parallel walls, 0.25m high by 0.4m wide, lying 0.2m apart extend 1.6 and 1.75m southwest into this space from near the enclosure's north corner. These constructions may have supported perishable upper walls or ceramic vessels the round bases of which were wedged in the narrow spaces separating these constructions. The relatively great width of the southeastern summit wall, combined with the presence of a stone surface backing it for 3.2m of its length, tentatively hints that this segment of wall and floor comprised a stone-faced and -surfaced bench measuring 0.21m high, 1.66m wide, by 3.2m long. If this was the case, then Str. 323-1-1<sup>st</sup>'s superstructure was likely entered by moving up the terraces on the platform's southeast, plaza-facing side, passing southwest of the bench and into the summit room. Remains of a possible construction (F.1) found within the platform's summit room weakly hints that the superstructure may have been more complexly organized than it appears at present. The behavioral significance of F.1 is, however, far from certain.

All walls and foundations that were raised during TS. 2 were made of river cobbles the flatter faces of which were directed outwards. There is variable evidence of horizontal coursing in these facings and footings, though this may have more to do with how well particular units were preserved rather than how much care was invested in their original construction. In any case, all stones used in fashioning walls of all sorts were set in a mud mortar. Most probably the superstructure consisted of wattle-and-daub walls set atop stone foundations (U.2, 3, and 18) and the on top of the northeast basal facing (U.5).

### Time Span 3

During this interval Str. 323-1-1<sup>st</sup>'s core platform remained intact and largely unmodified. The major changes wrought now were on the edifice's southeast flank. Here, the earlier basal riser (U.7) was completely covered by a new facing (U.8) that was set directly against its predecessor. Unit 8 is 0.26m wide and stands 0.11m above U.9. The latter is a 0.24m-high terrace that extends 0.63m southeast and into the patio from U.8. The lower exposed 0.26m of Unit 8 is covered by U.9 and the base of the former construction was not revealed in our excavations. Units 8 and 9 do not run the full length of Str. 323-1-1<sup>st</sup>'s southeast flank. Though not well-preserved for the northeastern-most 1m it does appear that both terraces did terminate at, and turn back to join, the platform's east corner. On the southwest U.8 and 9 stopped 1m shy of Str. 323-1-1<sup>st</sup>'s south corner, turning back to intersect U.7 at this point. The latter continues to extend, unobstructed by TS.3 construction, to its juncture with the southwest basal facing (U.17). Consequently, during TS.3, Str. 323-1-1<sup>st</sup> had an inset southern corner, the step-back measuring 0.85x1m.

For the most part, construction of U.8 and 9 replicates the pattern seen earlier with U.6 and 7; i.e., a low stone terrace projects from the platform into the patio and is succeeded on the northwest by a facing that rises above it and leads to the summit. As U.6 continues to project 0.24m above the second riser (now fronted by U.8) the result of these renovations was to convert what had been two terraces leading up from the earth-floored patio to Str. 323-1-1<sup>st</sup>'s superstructure with three such risers. The latter are 0.11-0.24m high by 0.51-0.63m wide.

The inset southern corner noted above was largely filled by two low stone steps (U.12 and 13) set against the southwest side of the U.8 and 9 terraces. Units 12 and 13 are 0.2 and 0.25m wide, respectively, and each stands 0.2m tall. They extend 0.55m southeast from their junction with U.7 and are bounded on the southeast by U.14. Unit 14 is a 0.3m-wide by 0.6m-high wall that runs 1.1m southwest from its abutment with U.9. These additions seem to have been intended to formalize entrance to Str. 323-1-1<sup>st</sup> from the southwest, funneling traffic between U.7 and 14, up U.12 and 13 to the southwest flank of U.6, 8, and 9. If this was the case, the aforementioned modifications may have been part of an effort to facilitate passage between Str. 323-Sub1-1<sup>st</sup> and Str. 323-1-1<sup>st</sup>. The two buildings are only 2.5m distant at this point and the construction of U.12/14 could have been designed to integrate closely the activities occurring on and around the two constructions.

The only other modifications assigned to TS.3 are the construction of a stone pavement (U.16) off Str. 323-1-1<sup>st</sup>'s northeast side and a wall extending from the platform's northwest face (U.19). Unit 16 begins 2.65m northwest of the platform's east corner (as established by the addition of U.9) and runs for at least 1.95m northwest along the front of U.5 and for 0.3m northeast of that facing (its northeast and northwest limits were not identified). Unit 19, in turn is a 0.2m-high wall that intersects Str. 323-1-1<sup>st</sup>'s basal northwest facing (U.1) 4.1m southwest from the estimated location of the platform's north corner. This wall was traced for 0.4m as it ran perpendicular to, and northwest from, U.1; its northwest end is beyond our excavation limits.

Unit 19's southwest side was not clear; this wall may have been 1.15m wide though we cannot be sure of this point.

As TS.3 drew to a close, Str. 323-1-1<sup>st</sup> was still a stone-faced, earth-and-stone-filled platform that stood 0.61-0.72m high and was oriented ca. 24 degrees. It now measured 6.3x7.2m and was mounted on the southeast, patio-facing flank by three low stone-faced risers. An additional access feature composed of two stone steps was appended to the southwest flank of these terraces in the inset corner formed by their intersection with the original southeast basal wall, U.7. These steps are 0.2-0.25m wide by 0.2m tall and run northwest-southeast for 0.55m. Bounded on the northwest by U.7, they terminate on the southeast in a 0.3m-wide by 0.6m-tall stone wall that runs perpendicular to the risers. This set of steps may have been added to ease passage between Strs. 323-1-1<sup>st</sup> and 323-Sub1-1<sup>st</sup>, 2.5m to the south. The stone pavement found bordering Str. 323-1-1<sup>st</sup> along part of its northeast flank may point to the formalization of work spaces adjoining the core platform. The wall extending northwest from Str. 323-1-1<sup>st</sup> may point to the existence of earthen-floored surface-level rooms set against the core construction near the end of its use-life.

Time Span 3 construction consists of river cobbles the flatter aspects of which are directed outwards. Some effort was invested in placing the larger rocks in each facing and wall into clear horizontal courses though often only one such course survives. The stones in all of the walls were set in a mud mortar.

#### Time Span 4

Following Str.323-1-1<sup>st</sup>'s abandonment, most of the extant architecture was covered by the deposition of S.1 and 2. The latter is a dark brown, moderately coarse-textured, moderately hard-compacted soil that accumulated to a depth of as much as 0.39m above S.3 in areas bordering Str. 323-1-1<sup>st</sup>. Covering S.2 by 0.07-0.13m is a nearly identical soil (S.1) distinguished by its greater concentration of roots from its predecessor. Embedded in S.1 and 2 is a generally light scattering of stones that likely fell from walls associated with Str. 323-1-1<sup>st</sup> (F.2). Feature 2 rocks were found at distances of up to 3.8m distant from the platform, their densities thinning out considerably with greater distance from the building.

#### Structure 323-2

Structure 323-2 delimits the southwest side of the central patio. It is 3.5m southeast of Str. 323-1, 2.7m southwest of Str. 323-3, and 0.65m southeast of Str. 323-Sub1. Structure 323-2 was erected over the edge of the terrace leading down to the Rio Manchaguala, the terrain dropping 1.79m across 10.67m from northeast to southwest. Excavations conducted in Subop. 323 D, G, H, I, J, M, R, S, W, AA, and AB cleared ca. 70m<sup>2</sup>, exposing all of the building. Digging here under the direction of Briana Beacom was pursued to maximum depths of 1.12m

and 0.66m within and outside architecture, revealing one major construction phase and four subsequent periods of remodeling.

### 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	-	MPC/LPrecl? LCLI?
2	Str. 323-2-1 <sup>st</sup>	U.1-8, 31	-	-	LCLII/III?
3	Str. 323-2-1 <sup>st</sup>	U.9, 10	-	-	LCLIII/II
4	Str. 323-2-1 <sup>st</sup>	U.11-19, 27-29	-	-	LCLIII/II
5	Str. 323-2-1 <sup>st</sup>	U.20-24, 30	-	-	LCLIII/II
6	Str. 323-2-1 <sup>st</sup>	U.25, 26	-	-	LCLIII, EPC?
7	-	-	S.1-3	F.1	

### Time Span 1

The first activity recognized in the course of investigating Str. 323-2-1<sup>st</sup> was the apparently natural deposition of at least 0.24m of tan, coarse-textured, moderately hard-compacted sand (S.4; this stratum's base was not revealed in our excavations). Stratum 4 was revealed only in the southwestern-most excavations, 1.56m southwest of, and downslope from, Str. 323-2-1<sup>st</sup>. Here, S.4 was recorded ascending 0.36m over 1.55m southwest-to-northeast.

An estimated 0.2m of S.2, a brown, moderately coarse-textured, moderately hard-compacted soil, blankets S.4. Because deposition of S.2 continued after Str. 323-2-1<sup>st</sup> was abandoned it is difficult to specify with confidence how much of this soil was laid down during TS.1. The figure given here is based on the disposition of architectural debris originating on Str. 323-2-1<sup>st</sup> and the observation that S.2 does run under TS.4 architecture by at least 0.18m. Excavations were not carried deeply enough on other sides of the building to determine their relations with S.2

### Time Span 2



The earliest version of Str. 323-2-1<sup>st</sup> that we could reconstruct from the observed remains was a modest stone-faced platform that supported a single earthen-floored summit room. The perimeter basal walls are U.1-4 and they contain a fill composed of very few rocks set in a brown soil (U.31). The facings, where they were fully exposed, stand 0.75-0.9m tall and are 0.35-0.55m wide. The summit contained by these constructions covers 2.35x2.45m and includes a 0.3m-high stone-faced and –surfaced bench (U.6, 7). This bench measures 1.9m northeast-southwest by 1.14m wide and completely fills the superstructure’s east corner. Unit 8, a low, 0.2m-wide wall, runs the 0.45m from the bench’s west corner to the interior of U.1, the platform’s northwest basal facing. The addition of U.8 created an earthen-floored cubicle covering 0.45x0.85m in the superstructure’s north corner.

A 0.4m-high terrace (U.5) was noted 1.7m southeast of Str. 323-2-1<sup>st</sup>. Unit 5 extends 4.2m northeast-southwest, parallel to the platform’s orientation, and runs under architecture dated to TS.4 (U.11). This unit is 0.3m wide along its southwestern-most 2.5m but widens to at least 1.7m along its remaining extent. The relationship between U.5 and TS.2 architecture is unclear. The terrace ends on the southwest without joining up with any construction while on the northeast its relationship, if any, to this early version of Str. 323-2-1<sup>st</sup> is buried beneath later architecture. Because the depth of U.5’s base approximates measurements made on Str. 323-2-1<sup>st</sup>’s platform facings we tentatively infer that the former belongs in TS.2. It may have been built to slow erosion down the platform’s southeast side where the ground drops away towards the Rio Manchaguala. If so, then U.5 could reasonably be expected to join up with Str. 323-2-1<sup>st</sup> near the latter’s east corner with which U.5 is roughly in line.

By the end of TS.2, Str. 323-2-1<sup>st</sup> was a stone-faced platform that stood 0.75-0.9m tall, measured 3.2m by (minimally) 3.4m (The southwest facing’s (U.2’s) southwest face is covered by later construction (U.29), and was aligned approximately 216 degrees. The earthen-floored superstructure covers 5.8m<sup>2</sup> and contains a 0.3m-high stone-faced and –surfaced bench in its one room. That bench is 1.14m wide and runs 1.9m from the summit’s southeast wall along the superstructure’s northeast flank. A very small compartment, covering 0.4m<sup>2</sup>, is set in the summit’s north corner adjoining the bench. A stone terrace may have been raised along Str. 323-2-1<sup>st</sup>’s southeast flank to retard erosion down this side of the edifice. If this was the case, the terrace was 2.5m wide and seems to have run for 4.2m northeast-southwest along the full length of the platform’s southwest flank. All facings during this span were made from cobbles the flatter aspects of which were directed outwards. These rocks were set in a mud mortar.

### Time Span 3

During this span Str. 323-2-1<sup>st</sup> was expanded to the southeast by the construction of U.9 and 10. Unit 9 replaced U.4 at the platform’s southeast basal wall whereas the 0.65m of U.10 added now extended the northeast facing (U.3) to intersect with U.9. It is not clear if the U.5 terrace was still visible and in use during this interval.

By the end of TS.3 Str. 323-2-1<sup>st</sup> retained its basic form, height, and orientation from TS.2. Now it measured 3.4x3.85m, the summit's one room covering ca. 5.8m<sup>2</sup>. The bench and small adjoining room noted earlier remained unchanged. If the southeastern terrace stayed in use, it was narrowed to 1.85m across. Construction material and styles were not modified during TS.3.

#### Time Span 4

Significant changes wrought during TS.4 saw Str. 323-2-1<sup>st</sup> expanded on all sides, the most notable modifications being seen on the building's northeast, patio-facing flank. Beginning on the southeast, U.11 covered U.9 and extended the platform 1.1m beyond that addition made in TS.3. Unit 11 runs for 5.8m northeast-southwest and is inset 0.2m along its exterior (southeast) face over its southwestern-most 1.4m. Unit 29 corners with U.11 and forms the platform's southwest facing (over-riding U.2 which previously played this role). This southwest facing has an irregular shape, expanding from 0.6-0.9m wide for 3.2m from its west corner with U.1 before stepping back 0.75m to the northeast. Subsequently, U.29 continues for 1.5m at this reduced width of 0.25m to its junction with U.11. The south corner of Str. 323-2-1<sup>st</sup> formed by the intersection of U.11 and 29 is, therefore, inset, that step-back covering 0.75x1.5m. Built on a steep slope dropping down to the southwest towards the Rio Manchaguala, U.29 was not very well preserved over much of its extent. The changes in U.29's width and the inset corner described above may, therefore, result more from erosion of parts of the wall than from intentional planning.

Structure 323-2-1<sup>st</sup> was expanded significantly by the addition of a 0.42m-high facing (U.12) that now delimits the platform's northeast side. This riser gives way to a 2.27m-wide terrace that supports three enclosures set in a northwest-southeast line. The central compartment has a floor made from a mix of stones and earth. It covers 1.5m northeast-southwest (measured from the interior [southwest] facing of U.12) by 1.4m and terminates on the southwest in a ca. 0.3m-high stone step-up to the summit (U.16). Unit 16 is 0.35m wide and leads back to U.3, the platform's northeast basal facing during TS.2. It appears that the 1.4m-wide segment of U.3 that overlooks the central room was reduced in height by ca. 0.3m, thus providing access to the original summit enclosure from the northeast. This change would have meant that the U. 6/7 bench no longer served that purpose. Instead, the long arm of that bench (U.6) might now have functioned as the southwest side of a vestibule covering 0.46x1.55m. It was from this small compartment that the original summit room was reached.

The summit enclosure pertaining to TS.2 was significantly modified during TS.4. As noted, a vestibule was created where the U.6/7 bench had been. A possible replacement for that bench lies immediately southwest of U.6. This earthen-surfaced, stone-faced construction is 2.3m long northeast-southwest, 1.3m wide, and is bordered by U.6 on the northeast and the newly constructed U.17 on the southeast. The latter is 0.2m tall and abuts U.6 and the northeast

side of U.29 on the northeast and southwest, respectively. The small cubicle in the north corner of this room was apparently still in use during TS.4. Two additional diminutive compartments were added immediately to the south divided by the newly built U.18, a 0.3m-high by 0.4m-wide wall that abuts U.17 and 1 on the southeast and northwest. The southernmost of these enclosures covers 0.9x0.95m while the central cubicle spans 0.4x0.95m (measured across the centers of each room). In sum, the superstructure's bench no longer ran northwest-southeast as it had in TS.2 and 3 but was now aligned northeast-southwest. Three very small rooms border the bench on the northwest, set in a line running parallel to that construction. All three of these cubicles were likely accessed from the bench.

Returning to the northeast terrace, the central enclosure described above was bounded on the northwest and southeast by two formidable walls (U.14 and 15). These constructions stand 0.88m (U.14) and 0.72m (U.15) tall and are 0.69m and 0.42m wide, respectively. The compartment on the northwest encompasses 0.9x1.6m and was surfaced with stone for 1.25m southwest from its northeast margin (U.19). The southeast room encompasses 1.1x1.6m and was floored with earth.

Unit 13 defines the northwest flank of the northeast terrace, bounding the northwest room on its northwest side. This construction does not run the full length of Str. 323-2-1<sup>st</sup>'s northwest side but stops 3.45m northeast of the building's south corner. Fully 2.9m of that expanse was still faced by U.1, the original northwest platform facing, which was not covered by construction at this time.

Two terraces (U.27 and 28) were apparently also added to Str. 323-2-1<sup>st</sup>'s southwest flank during TS.4. The uppermost of these risers (U.27) is 0.55-0.75m wide (expanding from northwest to southeast) and rises 0.22m above U.28 which is downslope and to the southwest. Unit 27 begins on the southeast at a spot equal to the northwest side of U.29's inset corner, running back to and joining U.29 at that point. It was traced for 3.6m to the northwest before excavation ceased. Unit 28, the basal riser, measures 0.6-0.75m across (widening from northwest to southeast) and is 0.3m high. The southeast and northwest termini of U.28 were not identified; the latter likely lies beyond excavation limits while the southeast end seems to have eroded downslope.

As TS.4 drew to a conclusion, Str. 323-2-1<sup>st</sup> was a stone-faced platform that stood 0.75-0.9m tall, was aligned 216 degrees, and measured 5.8x7.9m (maximally). The building had a deeply inset south corner (1.3x1.5m) and on its northwest face the basal facing runs for 2.55m southwest before stepping back 0.6m to the southeast. The remaining 3.45m of the building's northwest face is formed by the core platform's northwest basal wall (U.1).

The core platform erected in TS.2 now supported an earthen-floored room covering 5.8m<sup>2</sup> with a formal entryway on the northeast. The latter was created by reducing the height of

what had been Str. 323-2-1<sup>st</sup>'s northeast basal facing (U.3) by 0.3m across an area 1.4m wide that issued into the room where the U.6/7 bench had been located. The latter construction was converted into a vestibule that encompasses 0.7m<sup>2</sup> and is backed on the southwest by the new version of the summit bench. The latter runs 2.3m to the southwest, taking up the remainder of the summit room's southeast side, is 1.3m wide and 0.2m tall. Three small bins, separated by low stone walls, run parallel to and abut the bench on the northwest. These are set in a northeast-southwest-running line and encompass 0.4m<sup>2</sup>, 0.9m<sup>2</sup>, and 0.4m<sup>2</sup> beginning with the northeastern-most cubicle. Southeast of the bench the summit is (maximally) 1.2m wide and is fronted on the southeast by the platform's southeast basal facing (U.11).

Fronting the core platform on the northeast, patio-facing side is a set of three rooms set in a northwest-southeast trending line on a 0.42m-high by 2.27m-wide terrace. The central enclosure, measuring 2.1m<sup>2</sup>, is surfaced with a mix of stones and earth. A 0.3m-high by 0.35m-wide stone step that spans this enclosure provided access to the building's summit. The room northwest of this compartment is partially paved with rocks and covers 1.4m<sup>2</sup>. Its counterpart southeast of the middle room is floored with earth and encompasses 1.8m<sup>2</sup>. No way of moving among these rooms was discerned and only the central enclosure provided a formal means of reaching the summit. Most likely each of the compartments on the northeast terrace was entered from the patio and the summit was attained by passing through the central room.

The three stone-faced terraces on Str. 323-2-1<sup>st</sup>'s southwest side may also have provided access to the summit. More likely, however, they were built to slow erosion down the edge of this river terrace, all three of them having succumbed to varying extents from the force of erosion down this incline.

All walls, facings, stone surfaces, risers, and the bench are made of cobbles set in a mud mortar. The flatter aspects of these rocks are directed outwards.

### Time Span 5

During this interval the platform's northeast basal riser (U.12) was covered by the construction of U.21. The latter was 0.4m high and extended Str. 323-2-1<sup>st</sup> 0.64m further into the patio. Unit 21 runs the full northwest-southeast width of the platform and joins with U.22 to form the building's north corner. Unit 22 is 0.67m wide, runs for 3.65m southwest of its abutment with U.21, and completely covers and extends beyond U.13. We infer that U.22 at its southwest terminus runs back southeast to U.1, the core platform's northeast facing. Our excavations did not yield clear evidence for this junction, however. If this inference is, nonetheless, correct, U.1 continued to define Str. 323-2-1<sup>st</sup>'s northwest flank for a distance of 1.75m to its junction with U.29.

Unit 23, a stone semi-circle, abuts U.22 on its northwest face 2.75m southwest of Str. 323-2-1<sup>st</sup>'s north corner. This construction has a northeast-southwest diameter of 0.95m and

projects 0.45m northwest of U.22 (its interior measurements are 0.5m northeast-southwest by 0.25m). There was no sign of burning in or near U.23 and its function remains unclear. This semi-circle may have been used as a post support though no other comparable units were found on or around Str. 323-2-1<sup>st</sup>.

Within the central room on the northeast terrace the U.16 step-up to the summit was replaced by a comparable riser (U.30) located 0.7m to the northeast. Unit 30 covers U.16 and is backed for 1.03m to the southwest by a stone floor (U.20).

A stone pavement (U.24) may well have been added on ground surface off Str. 323-2-1<sup>st</sup>'s west corner at this time. Unit 24 underlies TS.6 construction (U.25, 26) and was 1.2m wide northeast-southwest by at least 2m northwest-southeast (its edge lies beyond excavation limits on the northwest). The behavioral significance of U.24 is unclear; it may have been introduced in part to formalize an activity space located along the platform's northwest side.

By the end of TS.5, Str. 323-2-1<sup>st</sup> retained the basic form, orientation, dimensions, and room arrangements it exhibited during the preceding stage. Additions made to the edifice's northeast and northwest sides enlarged its basal measurements, Str. 323-2-1<sup>st</sup> now covering 6.5x8.5m. Fully 1.75m of the core platform's northwest facing (U.1) remained exposed during this span, creating an inset along this facing that is 0.67m deep. A stone-lined semi-circle was set against the platform's northwest flank, 2.75m southwest of Str. 323-2-1<sup>st</sup>'s north corner. This unit measures 0.45x0.95m on its exterior (0.25x0.5m on the interior) and is of unknown function. The step-up to the summit room in the central room on the northeast terrace was expanded 0.7m and backed for 1.03m to the southwest by a stone floor. A stone pavement encompassing 1.2m by (at least) 2m set on ground surface off Str. 323-2-1<sup>st</sup>'s west corner may mark a formalized activity area.

All stones used in TS. 5 constructions consisted of cobbles, the flatter aspects of which were directed outwards. These rocks were set in a mud mortar.

### Time Span 6

During this interval the northwest basal facing (U.22) was extended 1.75m southwest where it intersected with a northwest extension of U.29. These constructions (labeled U.25 and 26, respectively) now formed Str. 323-2-1<sup>st</sup>'s west corner and covered the formerly exposed portion of U.1 (the core platform's northwest facing) and the U.24 pavement. It may be that the terraces fronting U.29 on the southwest were expanded to the northwest now as well. Unfortunately, our investigations did not continue far enough in that direction to test this hypothesis.

Structure 323-2-1<sup>st</sup> was much the same at the end of TS.6 as it had been at the conclusion of TS.5. The primary difference now is that the building was graced with an uninterrupted

facing along its northwest side that encompassed 1.32m across (northwest-southeast). All stones used in U.25 and 26 were river-worn cobbles the flatter faces of which were directed outwards. These rocks were set in a mud mortar.

Time Span 7

After Str. 323-2-1<sup>st</sup>'s abandonment, the building was blanketed by the resumed deposition of S.2 as well as S. 1 and 3. Stratum 3, a light brown, moderately hard-compacted, clayey soil, was recorded as achieving a maximum thickness of 0.2m northeast of the platform (its base was not encountered in our excavations). It was not noted elsewhere around Str. 323-2-1<sup>st</sup>. Stratum 3 buries the lowest exposed portions of U.21, the northeast facing of the northeast terrace, and may have functioned as a part of the patio's surface. Stratum 2 covers S.3 by as much as 0.18m whereas an estimated 0.1m of this soil was laid down on the southwest (excavations did not proceed deeply enough on the southeast and northwest to determine if portions of S.2 were also deposited prior to the erection of Str. 323-2-1<sup>st</sup> and its additions). Fully 0.06-0.14m of a dark brown, moderately hard-compacted, moderately coarse-textured, root-rich soil (S.1) overlies S.2 and caps the stratigraphic sequence here. Most likely, S.1 is the humus horizon formed on S.2.

Extending for as much as 3.6m southwest and downslope from Str. 323-2-1<sup>st</sup> is a moderately dense concentration of stones fallen from final-phase architecture (F.1). Fewer stones made up F.1 on the building's other exposed sides.

Structure 323-Sub1

Structure 323-Sub1 was not recorded during initial mapping of the settlement and was only revealed during excavation. It is 0.6m northwest of Str. 323-2 and 2.5m south of Str. 323-1. The ground underlying the building descends an estimated 0.3m over 3.7m southeast to northwest. Excavations conducted in Subop. 323C, F, O, R, AE, AG, and AH under the direction of Briana Beacom uncovered 22m<sup>2</sup> here, revealing about three-quarters of the central platform and roughly a quarter or less of the poorly preserved remains of Str. 323-Sub1-1<sup>st</sup>'s final version. Digging was pursued to maximum depths of 0.6 and 0.7m within and beyond architecture, respectively. One major building phase was identified in the course of this work along with hints of an earlier construction (Str. 323-Sub2) that was superseded by Str. 323-Sub1-1<sup>st</sup>.

Time Spans

<u>Time</u> <u>Span</u>	<u>Construction</u> <u>Phase</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Strata</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>Date</u>
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1	-	-	S.3	-	
2	-	-	-	F.1	?
3	Str. 323-Sub2-1 <sup>st</sup>	U.1	-	-	LCLII/III?
4	Str. 323-Sub1-1 <sup>st</sup>	U.2-4, 6-8	-	F.2	LCLIII/II
5	Str. 323-Sub1-1 <sup>st</sup>	U.5, 9-10	-	-	LCLIII, EPC?
6	-	-	S.1, 2	F.3	

### Time Span 1

The first activity identified in our investigation of Str. 323-Sub1 was the apparently natural deposition of a red-brown, hard-compacted, moderately coarse-textured soil mottled with white flecks (S.3). Stratum 3 was only revealed in a relatively deep probe dug off Str. 323-Sub1's northwest side where it was uncovered to a maximum thickness of 0.22m, S.3's base lying beyond our excavation limits. Stratum 3's top runs more-or-less evenly for 1.8m southeast from the northwest end of excavations before rising precipitously. This ascent is so steep that it may be of cultural origin (see TS.3).

### Time Span 2

Unit 1, a 0.13m-high by 0.65m-wide stone wall runs at an orientation of ca. 135 degrees across the 0.6m between Strs. 323-2-1<sup>st</sup> and 323-Sub1-1<sup>st</sup>. This construction extends 0.05m and 0.02m beneath architecture associated with the former's TS.5 (U.22) and the latter's TS.4 (U.2). What role (as facing or footing, for example) U.1 might have played in any building is unknown. It is not clearly related to any known structure and was probably partially razed during a period equivalent to Str. 323-2-1<sup>st</sup>'s TS.5.

### Time Span 3

As noted in the discussion of TS.1, S.3 rises rapidly from northwest to southeast under what would later become Str. 323-Sub1-1<sup>st</sup>. Specifically, this soil ascends 0.45m across 0.86m in this direction before disappearing beneath Str. 323-Sub1-1<sup>st</sup> architecture (U.6). Stratum 3 does not reappear southeast of this point despite efforts to locate it. This rise in S.3 is designated F.1 because it may be part of an attempt to raise ground surface on the northwest side of Str. 323-Sub1-1<sup>st</sup>. This interpretation is tentatively suggested by the rapid rise in S.3 at this point, an ascent that seems too swift to be the result of natural forces alone.

### Time Span 4

Structure 323-Sub1-1<sup>st</sup> was, during this interval, a stone-faced platform that supported an earthen-floored summit room. The perimeter of this construction is delimited by stone facings (U.2-4, 6) that stand 0.14-0.58m high and measure 0.4-0.82m across. The northwest facing, U.6, is the lowest of this set, that discrepancy being accounted for by its having been set atop the aforementioned rise in S.3 (TS.3). At 0.82m wide, the relatively great width of the northwest facing (U.6), suggests that it doubled as a support for a perishable upper wall and as a 1.25m-long stone-faced and –surfaced shelf.

The superstructure's one enclosure covers 0.9x1.25m and is bounded on the southwest by a 0.12m-high by 0.3m-wide stone-faced shelf (U.7) that extends the entire length (0.9m) of the compartment's southwest side. Unit 7's upper surface is 0.14m lower than that of U.6; if they both served, in part, as shelves then they were set at different levels. The summit room's floor was underlain by at least 0.16m of a red-brown, moderately coarse-textured, moderately hard-compacted soil containing numerous *bajareque* fragments (F.2). Feature 2 may be a continuation of S.3, the tops of the two levels lining up tolerably well (F.2's top is 0.09m lower than that of S.3, though the two are separated by the 0.82m width of U.6). Still, the concentration of wattle-and-daub fragments in F.2 opens the possibility that it is part of Str. 323-Sub1-1<sup>st</sup>'s fill.

Structure 323-Sub1-1<sup>st</sup> was ascended on the northeast by a 0.4m-high stone step (U.8) that projects 0.6m northeast of the platform. Unit 8 intersects Str. 323-Sub1-1<sup>st</sup> core at its east corner and runs for 1.55m to the northeast before coming to an end. Though we infer that the step turned back (southwest) to join the platform's northeast facing (U.2) at this point, we found scant evidence of such a juncture.

Overall, by the end of TS.4, Str. 323-Sub1-1<sup>st</sup> was a stone-faced, earth-filled platform that stood 0.14-0.58m high, covered 2x2.4m, and aligned approximately 304 degrees. It supported one diminutive earthen-floored summit room that encompasses 1.1m<sup>2</sup> and is bounded by a 0.12m-high by 0.3m-wide stone-faced shelf that runs the entire 0.9m length of the compartment's southwest side. The platform's northwestern basal facing is sufficiently wide (0.82m across) that it may have served as a support for the superstructure's perishable walls, to retain platform fill, and as a shelf. Formal access to the summit was provided by a 0.4m-high step on Str. 323-Sub1-1<sup>st</sup>'s northeast side. This riser projects 0.6m northeast of the platform and runs for 1.55m northwest of its junction with the edifice's east corner.

All of the architectural elements associated with TS.4 construction were fashioned of river cobbles, the flatter faces of which were directed outwards. These stones are set in a mud mortar.

## Time Span 5



Additions made to Str. 323-Sub1-1<sup>st</sup> during this interval tend to be poorly preserved; it may be that they were never completed. What we can infer from the fragments that remain is that these renovations were intended to enlarge the building to the southwest and northwest.

The line of U.2, the core platform's southeast face, was extended 2.1m to the southwest (included in U.2) where it terminates in the building's new south corner. The line of the core platform's northeast facing, Unit 3, was also expanded, in this case at least 1.7m to the northwest. We terminated investigations of this wall before arriving at the north corner. The basal wall that delimits the expanded platform on the northwest (U.5) had largely deteriorated by the time it was excavated. From its preserved remnants we infer that it was 0.5m high, 0.96m wide, and retained a fill composed of brown, moderately hard-compacted, moderately coarse-textured soil in which a few small rocks are embedded (U.10). Unit 10 is set against the northwest-to-southeast rise in S.3 described under TS.3. A stone floor (U.9) apparently covered the 1.43m separating the core platform's northwest basal wall (U.6) and the back (southeast side) of U.5. Unit 6 still projected an estimated 0.1m above U.9 by the end of T.S.5.

As TS.5 drew to a close, Str. 323-Sub1-1<sup>st</sup> was a stone-faced, earth-filled platform that retained its earlier height and orientation. The construction now encompassed 4x4.7m. The room atop the core platform was unchanged in form and size from TS.4 though it now occupied the east corner of the superstructure. Only a 1m-wide trench was dug southeast-northwest across the area beyond this room so there is little we can say about how the remainder of the summit was organized. Based on the restricted data in hand it appears that the core platform still stood 0.1m above the summit of the addition and at least part of the latter was paved with stones.

The rocks used in TS.5 constructions were largely river cobbles oriented so that their flatter aspects faced outwards. These stones were set in a mud mortar.

### Time Span 6

Following Str. 323-Sub1-1<sup>st</sup>'s abandonment it was largely blanketed by the deposition of S.1 and 2. The latter is a brown, moderately hard-compacted, moderately coarse-textured soil that overlays S.3 by as much as 0.23m. Stratum 1, the 0.1-0.3m-thick humus horizon formed atop S.2, is distinguished from S.2 by its darker brown color and greater concentration of roots. Embedded in S.1 and 2 is a dense concentration of stones that fell from final-phase architecture (F.3). Feature 3 was traced for 0.57m away from Str. 323-Sub1-1<sup>st</sup> though it certainly continued for an undetermined distance beyond our excavation limits.

### Structure 323-3

Structure 323-3 closes off the southeast flank of the central patio. It is 12m southeast, and across the plaza, from Str. 323-1 and 2.7m northeast of Str. 323-2. The ground on which Str.

323-3 was raised ascends 0.35m over 6.34m southeast to northwest. Excavations conducted here under the direction of Adrienne Misheloff within Subop. 323E, N, Q, T, V, X, Y, Z, AI, and AJ cleared ca. 45m<sup>2</sup> in the course of exposing approximately three-quarters of the edifice. Digging was pursued to maximum depths of 0.72m and 0.8m below modern ground surface within and outside architecture, respectively. One major construction stage and two major additions to the initial platform were recognized in the course of this work.

### 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	-	
2	-	-	S.2	-	
3	Str. 323-3-1 <sup>st</sup>	U.1-3, 10-12, 14-16, 21	-	-	LCLIII/II
4	Str. 323-3-1 <sup>st</sup>	U.4-9, 13, 17-19, 20, 22	-	-	LCLIII/II
5	-	-	S.1, 2	F.1	

### Time Span 1

The first activity identified in the course of these investigations was the seemingly natural deposition of a moderately coarse-textured, soft-compacted sand (S.3). Stratum 3 was identified in a deep probe dug off Str. 323-3-1<sup>st</sup>'s southeast side where it rises 0.21m southeast-to-northwest across the 2m it was exposed. Stratum 3 was revealed to a maximum thickness of 0.3m, its base lying outside excavation limits. Several small to medium-size rocks were found embedded in S.3 though they are not densely concentrated in any excavated portion of it.

### Time Span 2

An estimated 0.14 m of a dark brown, moderately coarse-textured, moderately hard-compacted soil (S.2) overlies S.3 and runs under exposed portions of construction associated with Str. 323-3-1<sup>st</sup>. Stratum 2 contains numerous small pebbles (most less than 0.02m in diameter) and flecks of white material, the latter being especially prevalent off the building's downsloping, southeast side. As S.2 continued to be deposited in the environs of Str. 323-3-1<sup>st</sup> during TS.6 it is difficult to be sure how much of this soil was laid down prior to the raising of

Str. 323-3-1<sup>st</sup>. The disposition of architectural debris fallen from that building on Str. 323-3-1<sup>st</sup>'s southeast flank served as a guide in estimating the depth S.2 achieved during TS.2 (assuming that these stones came to rest on what had been the ground surface exposed during Str. 323-3-1<sup>st</sup>'s use). Based on this information, S.2 rose ca. 0.2m over 1.85m from southeast to northwest where it continued under Str. 323-3-1<sup>st</sup>. Digging did not proceed deep enough on the building's other sides to infer more than that the lower portion of S.2 extended beneath TS.3-5 construction.

### Time Span 3

The earliest known portion of Str. 323-3-1<sup>st</sup> that we encountered was a platform delimited by U.1, 2, 10-12. Units 10-12, bounding Str. 323-3-1<sup>st</sup>'s platform on the northeast, southwest, and southeast, ascend 0.34-0.54m directly to the summit. Units 1 and 2, on the northwest flank, rise to the platform's top in two increments. Unit 1, the basal riser, is 0.24m high, 0.19m wide, and supports U.2. The latter facing continues upward for an additional 0.27m before giving way to the summit. Units 1 and 2 continued 1.15m beyond (southwest of) the platform's west corner. This extension seems to have been integral to the original construction and may have defined the northwest flank of a surface-level room built against the platform's southwest side. No other walls that might have delimited this putative enclosure on its remaining sides were encountered. It may be that the southwest continuation of U.1 and 2 was intended to shield activities conduct against Str. 323-3-1<sup>st</sup>'s southwest side from the view of those in the patio.

The Str. 323-3-1<sup>st</sup> platform consists of two levels. The lower, northeast portion has a stone pavement (U.21) that runs 1.9m northwest from the building's southeast facing (U.11) and 1m southwest from U.10, the northeast basal wall. Unit 21 is bordered on the northwest by a 0.79m-wide stone surface that backs U.2 and on the southwest by 0.6m-wide earthen floor that gives way in this direction to a stone step-up (U.3) to the platform's upper-most level. Unit 3 runs the full northwest-southeast length of Str. 323-3-1<sup>st</sup>'s platform and rises 0.35m above the aforementioned earthen floor. The upper summit level measures 1.95x2.4m and is largely taken up by a 0.2m-high, stone- faced bench (bordered by the U.14/16 rock facings). This bench is 1.1m wide by 1.55m long northwest-southeast and is set in the approximate center of the room's southwest wall.

As TS.3 drew to a close Str. 323-3-1<sup>st</sup> was a stone-faced platform that stood 0.34-0.54m tall, encompassed 2.8x3.5m, and was aligned roughly 39 degrees. It was bounded by sheer walls on all sides save the northwest, patio-facing flank where two stone terraces ascend in increments of 0.24m and 0.27m to the summit. The superstructure consisted of two rooms set at different levels and in a northeast-southwest line. The northeast compartment covers 4.3m<sup>2</sup>. It has an L-shaped stone surface, including the back (southeast) side of U.2. The northwest-southeast trending leg of which covers 1x1.9m while its northeast-southwest running extension covers 0.79x1.6m. The remaining 1.1m<sup>2</sup> of the room is surfaced with earth. The southwest enclosure is

0.35m above its northeast analogue, encompasses 4.7m<sup>2</sup>, and is largely taken up by a 0.2m-high stone-faced bench. This construction is 1.55m long by 1.1m wide and projects into the compartment from near the center of its southwest wall. A room or sheltered work area may have been located against the platform's southwest wall, bordered on the northwest, patio-facing side by a 0.51m-high, 1.15m-long southwest extension of the building's northwest basal facings.

All walls raised during TS.3 were fashioned of river cobbles the naturally flatter aspects of which were directed outwards. These stones, as well as the river-worn rocks used in stone surfaces, were all set in a mud mortar.

#### Time Span 4

The major changes that distinguish TS.4 involved adding a set of earthen-floored rooms set in a T-shape off the southeast flank of Str. 323-3-1<sup>st</sup>'s platform. The first step in this effort apparently involved the laying down of a dark brown, moderately fine-textured, hard-compacted clay (U.22). Unit 22 was exposed to a maximum thickness of 0.3m (its base was not encountered in our excavations) and apparently served as the floor for the southeastern rooms. This earth layer may have been deposited to level out the natural ground surface southeast of the platform where the terrain is dropping from northwest to southeast. The behavioral significance of the large fragments of bajareque found in U.22 is unclear. It may be that the U.22 was made up of debris derived from somewhat earlier construction at the settlement.

The footings that delimit the southeastern rooms were set into U.22. These stone foundations (U.4/7, 9, 17/19) vary considerably in their widths. Unit 4, the southeastern-most of these walls, is 1.03m wide and stands an estimated 0.55m tall on its southeast, downsloping side. Four of the remaining perimeter walls are 0.4-0.8m wide (U.6/9) and 0.3-0.58m tall while the footing that links the southeast rooms to the Str. 323-3-1<sup>st</sup> platform measures a scant 0.15m across and rises 0.2m high (U.17). Unit 17 abuts U.11, the southeast platform facing. It may have been added after the southeast room complex had been established and have sealed a 0.45m-wide door that provided access to these compartments from the southwest.

After U.17's construction the southeastern enclosures were accessed through a 1.25m-wide passage in its north corner. This corridor bounded by U.19 and 9 on the northwest and southeast is 1-1.2m long and gives way to the central compartment. The latter covers 0.6x1.6m and is bounded on the northwest by the Str. 323-3-1<sup>st</sup> platform and on the southwest by the narrow space closed off by U.17 on the southwest. This southwest enclosure measures 0.45x1.4m and is delimited on the southeast by a footing that is unusually broad (0.8m wide) for this structure (U.5). Unit 5, at 0.4m tall and 1.5m in length, is wide and long enough to have served as both a support for perishable upper walls and a bench or shelf. The southeast compartment encompasses 1.2x1.9m and is bounded by the widest wall in the southeast room complex (U.4). At 1.03m across, 0.55m tall, and 1.8m long (on its inner, northwest, face), U.4

could well have doubled as a support for a wattle-and-daub upper wall and as a bench. At some point after U.4 was constructed the southwest room was divided into two spaces by the erection of U.18. That wall is 0.35m wide and projects 0.85m northwest from its abutment with U.4. The southeast enclosure was, with the addition of U.18, converted into two cubicles set in a northeast-southwest line and measuring 0.65x1.2m and 0.9x1.2m (the northeast and southwest compartments, respectively). Access among all interior spaces in the southeast room complex was achieved by passing through the central room.

Two other constructions date to this span. One is a continuation of U.12, the platform's southwest facing, for 2.2m southeast from the former structure's south corner. This extension, labeled as U.13, is 0.35m high, roughly parallels the southwest side of the southeast room complex, and does not turn northeast to join with any constructions tied to that set of enclosures. It may be that U.13 was designed to slow erosion down Str. 323-3-1<sup>st</sup>'s southwest side and was either sufficient to the task as it stood or was never completed. It is also possible that the segment of wall connecting U.13 to U.6 had eroded downslope prior to our excavations.

A concentration of bajareque was found between U.13 on the southwest and the southwest side of the room complex (U.5, 6, and 17). Most of these sizable pieces consisted of wall fragments, their flatter faces directed upwards. Impressions of the sticks onto which this clay had been originally plastered were oriented downwards, pressed into the underlying dirt. Such consistent placing tentatively implies that the bajareque found here was being repurposed to create a level terrace surface running between U.13 and the southeast room complex. This disposition could also have resulted from the collapse of a perishable wall originally raised atop U.13.

On Str. 323-3-1<sup>st</sup>'s northeast flank a wall (U.20) was added. Unit 20 is 0.3m wide, 0.2m tall, is built of unmodified cobbles set vertically, and was traced for 1m along its northwest-southeast trending length (its terminus at either end was not encountered). This wall runs across and abuts the northeast terminus of U.19, the two footings making a T-shape. The erection of U.20 might have sealed the northeast entry into the southeast room complex and, as it continues northwest of U.19 for an unknown distance, defined the northeast side of a surface-level room set against the platform's northeast flank. We did not clear enough of U.20 to test either of these hypotheses.

By the conclusion of TS.4, Str. 323-3-1<sup>st</sup> consisted of two principal components. One of these is the platform that was raised during TS.3 and it was largely unchanged from how it appeared in its original incarnation. The second is a suite of earthen-floored rooms that were built up against that platform during TS.4, covered 3.5x4.4m, and were aligned roughly 324 degrees. This complex originally appears to have taken the form of a "T," its northwest side bounded by the platform's southeast basal facing (U.11). The compartments were accessed via two entryways. By far the larger of the two is on the northeast and measures 1.25m across and

leads directly into a room covering 1.4m<sup>2</sup>. On the southwest a much narrower door (0.45m across) issues into a space encompassing 0.6m<sup>2</sup>. These two entranceways converge on a central space that measure 1m<sup>2</sup>. The largest compartment in the complex covers 2.3m<sup>2</sup> and lies immediately southeast of the central enclosure. The broad, long southeastern foundation bordering the southeast room might have doubled as a wall support and bench whereas the footing that runs along the room's southwest side could have served as a shelf or bench as well. By this stage, therefore, it appears that the southeast room complex contained four distinct spaces of small to modest dimensions that were accessed through two entrances of varying sizes and, we presume, degrees of prominence. Passage among the compartments was relatively easy but required moving through the central room. As this space was overlooked by the platform's lower, northeast room it may be that people occupying that elevated space could have monitored the activities that transpired in the adjoining rooms.

Later additions to the rooms: closed off the southwest entrance; subdivided the southeast room into two diminutive compartments set in a northeast-southwest line and measuring 0.8m<sup>2</sup> and 1.1m<sup>2</sup>; and may have sealed, or reduced in width, the northeast door. An earthen-floored room measuring 1.35m across (northeast-southwest) may have now been raised adjoining the platform's northeast flank (U.10) while a terrace was at least started southwest and downslope from the southeast rooms to slow erosion along this side. This putative terrace may have been surfaced with recycled fragments of bajareque derived from earlier construction at Site 323.

All walls raised during TS.4 were fashioned of river cobbles the flatter aspects of which were directed outwards. The principal exception to this pattern is U.20, a late addition made to the southeast complex's northeast side. This footing was made by placing river-worn stones vertically rather than laying them down flat as is the case in all of the other known terraces, facings, and foundations associated with Str. 323-3-1<sup>st</sup>. In every case, however, the rocks were held in place using a mud mortar.

### Time Span 5

After its abandonment, Str. 323-3-1<sup>st</sup> was partially covered by the continued deposition of S.2, as much as 0.5m of this dark brown soil accumulated now. Stratum 2 was, in its turn, blanketed by 0.09-0.12m of S.1. Stratum 1 is distinguished from S.2 by the greater concentration of roots and other organic matter found in the former. Stratum 1, in sum, is the humus layer formed on S.2. Embedded in both soil levels is a light scattering of rocks that fell from TS.3 and 4 constructions (F.1). This debris was traced for up to 2.2m from preserved architecture.

### Architectural Summary

Each of the investigated buildings at Site 323 consisted initially, at least, of a stone-faced platform that was 0.14-0.9m tall. The smallest of these edifices (Str. 323-Sub1-1<sup>st</sup>, TS.4) encompassed 4.8m<sup>2</sup> while the largest (Str. 323-2-1<sup>st</sup>, TS.6) had basal dimensions of 55m<sup>2</sup>. In all

cases save Str. 323-3-1<sup>st</sup>, these platforms were expanded laterally, but not vertically, over the course of multiple renovations. In some cases, such as Str. 323-1-1<sup>st</sup>, the effects were relatively minor, expanding in this case from a construction with basal dimensions of 40m<sup>2</sup> to one covering 45m<sup>2</sup>. In others the changes were more dramatic; Str. 323-Sub1-1<sup>st</sup> went from a building that encompassed 4.8m<sup>2</sup> to one that covered 19m<sup>2</sup> whereas Str. 323-2-1<sup>st</sup> expanded from a platform with basal dimensions of 11m<sup>2</sup> to one measuring 55m<sup>2</sup>. Three of the excavated structures reached their final forms in the course of two major periods of renovation while the largest construction at the settlement, Str. 323-2-1<sup>st</sup>, underwent four reconstructed renovations.

Building orientations range from 24-39 degrees, with all but Str. 323-1-1<sup>st</sup> falling within the range 34-39 degrees. Access features, in the form of steps or low terraces, were recorded on all four of the studied buildings and in each case these risers faced the patio. There is some evidence that a staircase was added to Str. 323-1-1<sup>st</sup>'s southeastern terraces late in its occupation to facilitate direct passage between it and Str. 323-Sub1-1<sup>st</sup>. This change did not significantly alter the ease with which the former building could be reached from the patio.

Superstructures ranged considerably in size and organization among the excavated examples, though most have earthen floors. Structure 323-1-1<sup>st</sup> has the largest summit room (13.9m<sup>2</sup>), there being no obvious divisions of this space into distinct compartments. Structure 323-Sub1-1<sup>st</sup>'s sole summit room during TS.4 covered a scant 1.1m<sup>2</sup>. Structure 323-3-1<sup>st</sup>'s two summit compartments are set in a northeast-southwest line and cover 4.3m<sup>2</sup> (northeast) and 4.7m<sup>2</sup> (southwest). The northeast enclosure was 0.35m lower than its southwest analogue while the northeast compartment is partially paved with stone, a relatively unusual floor treatment at this site. Structure 323-2-1<sup>st</sup>, during TS.2 and 3, supported one summit enclosure that covered 5.8m<sup>2</sup>.

Evidence for stone-faced benches was recorded in the summit rooms of Strs. 323-1-1<sup>st</sup>, 323-2-1<sup>st</sup>, and 323-3-1<sup>st</sup>. In the last two cases these constructions were free-standing. The Str. 323-3-1<sup>st</sup> example measured 0.2m high, 1.1m wide, and 1.55m long and looked northeast from the southwest room towards the northeast compartment. Structure 323-2-1<sup>st</sup>'s summit bench was modified over the course of TS.2 and 3. During the former interval it ran northwest-southeast, stood 0.3m high, and was 1.14m wide by 1.9m long. A cubicle covering 0.4m<sup>2</sup> borders this bench on the northwest. By the end of TS.3 the bench was reoriented to run northeast-southwest, stood 0.2m high and was 1.3m wide by 2.3m long. By this point the bench was bordered by three small compartments on the northwest. These run in a northeast-southwest line and measure 0.4m<sup>2</sup>, 0.9m<sup>2</sup>, and 0.4m<sup>2</sup>. No free-standing bench was recorded on Str. 323-1-1<sup>st</sup>. Here, the unusually great width of the platform's southeast basal facing hints at its use as a fill retaining wall, support for the superstructure's perishable upper walls, and a bench 0.21m high, 1.66m wide, by 3.2m long. If this was the case, Str. 323-1-1<sup>st</sup>'s bench looked out over the patio.

The three rooms built atop a 0.42m-high terrace set against Str. 323-2-1<sup>st</sup> during TS.4 are unique at Site 323. Set in a northwest-southeast line, these rooms are at least 0.3m lower than the core platform's summit and may well have served different purposes. The central enclosure covers 2.1m<sup>2</sup> and contains a 0.3m-high by 0.35m-wide, stone-faced and –surfaced step leading up to the superstructure's summit. The northwest room encompasses 1.4m<sup>2</sup> and was partly paved with stones while its southeast counterpart measures 1.8m<sup>2</sup> and was surfaced with earth. There was no sign of how passage among these compartments might have been effected but all three seems to have been accessible from the patio.

Stone-faced shelves were recorded primarily in the room sitting atop Str. 323-Sub1-1<sup>st</sup>'s core platform. The clearest example here stood 0.12m high and was 0.3m wide by 0.9m long. The wide (0.82m across) northwest basal facing of the platform may also have served, in part, as a shelf.

There are hints of surface-level rooms having been built against the sides of Strs. 323-1-1<sup>st</sup>, 323-2-1<sup>st</sup>, and 323-3-1<sup>st</sup> relatively late in their occupation histories. In the first two instances only tantalizing fragments of these enclosures were uncovered. At Str. 323-3-1<sup>st</sup>, however, we have a much clearer picture of what such a complex might have looked like. In this instance four (initially) earth-floored enclosures were raised against the platform's southeast (non-patio-facing) flank. They form a T-shape (the platform being the cross-bar) and measure 0.6m<sup>2</sup>, 1m<sup>2</sup>, 1.4m<sup>2</sup>, and 2.3m<sup>2</sup>. The largest of these rooms was bounded by especially broad stone foundations that may have doubled as footings for perishable upper walls and benches or shelves. The complex was originally entered from the northeast and southwest through doorways 1.25m- and 0.45m-wide, respectively. The southwestern passageway was apparently sealed at some point in Str. 323-3-1<sup>st</sup>'s TS.4 and there are some signs that by the end of occupation here the northeast door was also closed or at least significantly reduced in width. Such changes in access patterns may have been part of an effort on the part of the platform's residents to control who could draw on whatever goods were kept in the adjoining surface-level rooms. The relatively large southeast room was also divided into two smaller compartments late in its occupation. These newly created cubicles encompassed 0.8m<sup>2</sup> and 1.1m<sup>2</sup>.

All facings, foundations, benches, shelves, and floors were made using river cobbles. The flatter aspects of these rocks were directed outwards and all of the stones were set in a mud mortar. Some horizontal coursing was noted in the taller walls but this feature was not universally present even in these cases.

### Chronological Summary

There are slight hints of occupation at Site 323 extending back to the Middle Preclassic, Late Preclassic, and Late Classic I. This tentative inference is based solely on a very few ceramics that are diagnostic of these phases that were retrieved during the course of excavating



Str. 323-2. Site 487, a major Middle Preclassic center, is west of Site 323 on the same terrace overlooking the Rio Manchaguala. It may be that the handful of pottery fragments that date to this period derived from a diffuse settlement that surrounded the 3m-high Middle Preclassic earthen platform that dominates Site 487. In any event, the paucity of materials that date to these early time periods and their localization in one portion of the settlement strongly suggest that occupation pre-dating Late Classic II at Site 323 was very slight. Remains of Late Classic II activities are also weakly represented here. It can be difficult to separate Late Classic II and III occupations as there is significant continuity in artifact styles across them. We cannot, therefore preclude, the possibility that Site 323 was inhabited during Late Classic II though we certainly cannot assign any construction to that interval. There is, however, abundant evidenced that Site 323 took its final form during Late Classic III/II and continued in vigorous use during Late Classic III. All of the constructions investigated at the settlement were raised and occupied throughout these spans and there is some sign that this use persisted into the Early Postclassic. Diagnostics of that period are sparse, however, implying that Site 323 was largely abandoned soon after the end of Late Classic III. There are no clear indications that the site was in use after the Early Postclassic.