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EPV 018 Mu Field Notes 2005

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6/6/2005

2005-18-1

June 6th - Day 1

Today Marcello, Ellen, Pamela and US student visited the three sites we'll be working at during this field season: El Paraiso, El Cafetal and Las Orquidias.

The site of El Paraiso is located approximately one block away from the central park in town. Due to human encroachment, much of the site lies within private property, and only the plaza in which we are excavating is readily accessible. The site is adjacent to a river that floods during the rainy season, which is why a protective wall forces the flow of the river away from the site. The last construction phases at EP are not visible and unable to be reconstructed because local people have been taking stones from the structures for the past hundred years. Structure 1, the largest of the mounds, is about 8m in height. Structure 2, another large mound, is across the road. Although some ceramic shards and occasional elements were recovered from structure 1, this mound was bulldozed in the 1970's and is in a poor state of preservation. Two additional patios are found to the north of the plaza in which we're excavating. According to Marcello, EP was greatly expanded during the reign of K'ul K'ab (K'ab?) of Copán, beginning around 650 AD. Therefore, we hope that excavations in EP will help us determine the nature of the

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Interaction between EP and Cqum.

Approximately 1 km away from El Paraiso is EL Cafetal, a site coeval to EP, although with a much different layout. The main plaza at EC is a large, ~100 x 150 ft open space with no plaster floors. The site is currently overgrown with a mixture of vegetation and coffee trees that will be cleared in the future. As Marcello and Ellen said, it's important to note how close EP and EC are to each other, especially since they were occupied during the same time period. Though it would be hasty to attribute the architectural plan of EC to the Lenca without further investigation, we can definitely say that spatially the two sites are distinct. I noted that EC, being more remote than EP, is in a far greater state of preservation, making recovery of primary context artifacts a possibility here. Last season Lamy and Jim conducted phosphate soil tests at EC in order to detect possible human activity (feasting, possible burial). This year, units will laid upon areas of significant phosphate concentration.

Las Orquídeas, the last site and the furthest away from EP, has been mapped but not excavated yet. Unlike EP and EC, which date to the Mid/Late Classic, LO is a Late Preclassic period site, dating to 300 BC - 0. LO consists of a series of

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earthen mounds with stone architecture that do not seem to form a rectangular shape. Also present are two mounds that may be a ball court (an assertion disputed by Farmer). LO lies on ^{a rolling} terrain that is more open than EP and EC, with fewer trees and currently more cows (as the site currently functions as pasture land). Excavations here this season are meant to gather basic information about this site and area since very little is known as of now.

The main objective of today was to acustom ourselves to the orientation of these sites, to "see" how they appeared when they were occupied. We also began to orient ourselves according to a compass, i.e. which way is North, South, East, West, etc. EP and EC are closely aligned to the N-S axis, whereas LO is not.

June 7th - Day 2

Today we started work at EP, namely with surveying and mapping this year's excavation areas. Brian and I learned how to set up and operate the EDM and data collector. Although we had used an EDM during our time at the Henry Whitfield House, neither of us knew how to set it up until now. After assembling

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at D02

the tripod with the EPM on top, we used the software on the data collector to backsight D04, thereby allowing the machine to determine its position on the grid. Afterwards, Ellen and I created a sketch map of structures of the EP complex by walking the two main roads around the site. We mapped the excavation data using vectors (angle and distance), then plotted other structures upon a sketch of the streets. I discovered that there are many narrow roads and other structures just lying in backyards, making it extremely difficult to conceptualize these areas with an untrained eye. Although we weren't able to locate all of the extant structures, we did get some practice with creating sketch maps, something that is always done in the field and can be used to check against field data at a later date.

June 8th - Day 3

We began laying out trenches at EP today both using the EPM and by hand. Nat, May and I ^{partially} started with the EPM, which we used to lay out a 2m wide trench running the length of Structure 1. According to Ellen, any dressed stones, sculptural elements and other material of the last construction phase, if they were to

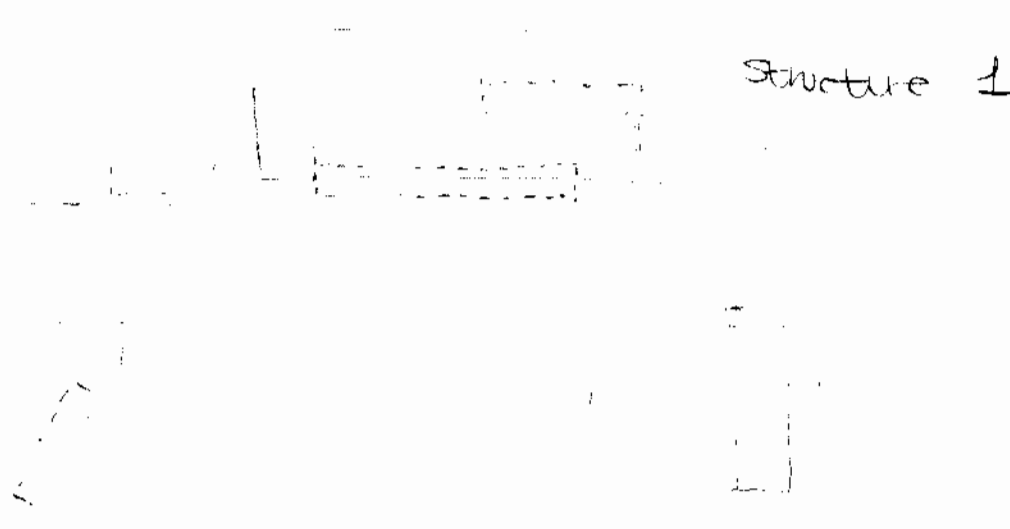
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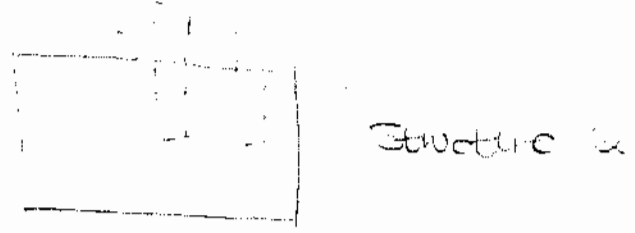
be found, will be located at the base of the mound. Two other trenches, laid out by Marcelo and Ellen, at Structure 2 terrace. This will help us determine the construction history of the site, i.e. the chronological phases of construction. Ellen said that we will have some a pre-fer floor and some basic masonry expansion over time.

In the afternoon we practiced creating 1x1m and 2x2m units using measuring tapes. By triangulating the distance between parallel and horizontal sides of a square, we began laying out a trench parallel to that on Structure 1 that extends further south. As for the

Sketch 1 Placement of trenches at El Palmar



Note: Figures not to scale!



other group, they started by laying out part of the trench on Structure 1 by hand, then checking all the points of that trench. By the end of the field day, that trench had been staked up. Today Nat and I also got our theodolites staked and placed/practiced with them.

June 20th - Lay 4

Brian and I began today's field work with assembling the EDM and staking two points for Nat and Larry, who used them as reference points for laying out a trench running parallel to the river. Excavations within this trench are assigned to uncover early structures that were not washed away by the river, whose course is rather unpredictable. Next, we shot a N-S transect of Structure 1. Reports from locals contain references to a chamber well inside the mound, likely to have existed on the northern end of the mound. Therefore, we hope to find a collapsed roof of some sort through this trench, and perhaps artifacts associated with the roof. Because the end of the trench is sharply angled downward, this is a case in which using an EDM is advantageous to plotting by hand.

After finishing the above trench, Brian and I had some rods so Tim and Mary

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could map the course of their trench using the EDM. However, the place to be very difficult due to obstruction by trees, so in the end, we were unable to shoot some of the points in that trench. Marcello said that we will establish a station atop Structure 1, from which we can map the remaining points. We finished the day by mapping points of Nat and Larry's trench. Marcello, Ellen and Pamela extended the trench atop Structure 1. This afternoon we will be instructed in interviewing and recording data for the PAREP project. Tomorrow we will begin excavation at El Paraiso.

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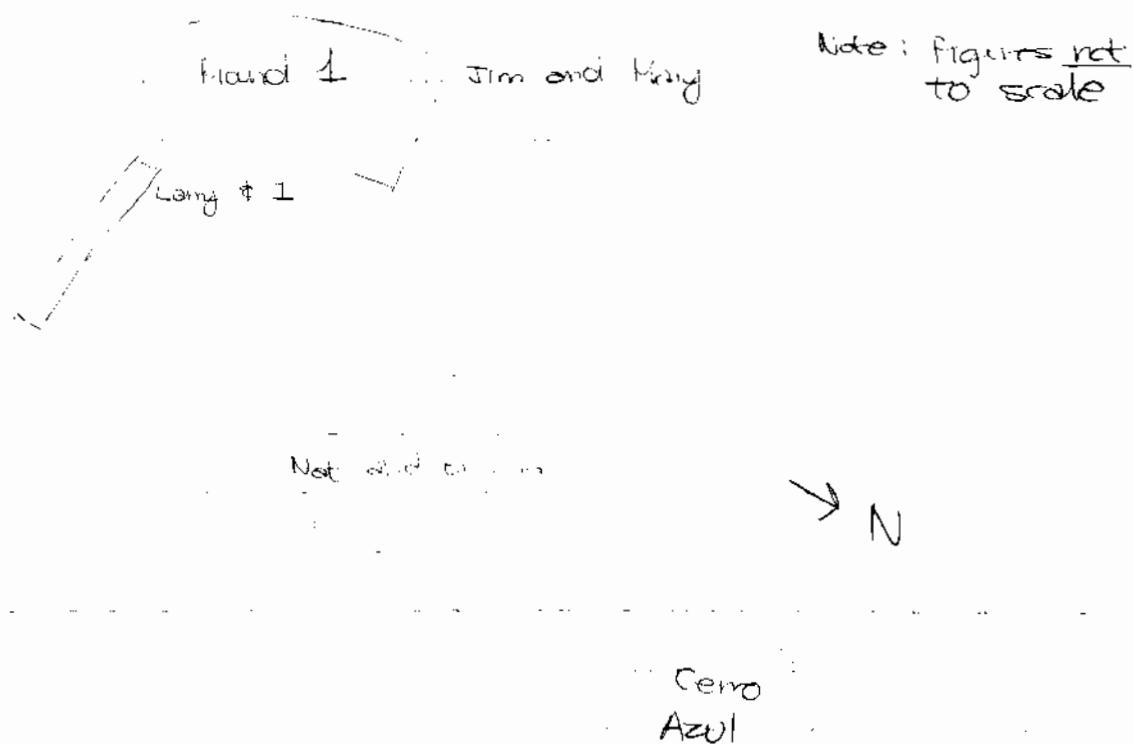
This morning, we drove out to Las Ciguidas, arriving around 8am. Although the weather was clear and cool in the early morning, it soon became very hot (around 95° F). The site was more or less unchanged from when we saw it first on Monday. Pamela and JS students began by estimating the corners of four mounds at the site, in order to clarify how these structures related to each other. Unfortunately, two of the mounds appear to have been bulldozed, which resulted in an uneven slope that made finding corners very difficult. After guesstimating the corners of the mounds, we split into teams of two. Nat and Brianna laid a long ^{N-S} trench running between and over two mounds, Jim and Mary laid a trench on the northeast side of the largest mound to test for a ramp.

Lang and I laid out a trench running E-W across a mound adjacent to the largest mound to the area between the two mounds. Although I feel that the results of this activity were relatively accurate, especially since we only used a tape measure, the uneven terrain did cause some difficulty and contributed to measurement errors. After finishing our trench, Mary shot in the trench corners and Lang and I assisted Pamela, Nat and Brianna with their trench, which was inaccurately laid at first.

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Sketch 1 Trenches at Las Orquidias



Today Marcello was working with Faicel and Ellen on tying Las Orquidias into the established grid by shooting with the EDM over a long distance. Later on Ellen and Marcello arrived at the site and set up a cement datum ^{approximately} in the middle of the site. Overall, it was a big field day. However, we didn't have too much trouble with the cars (some of which I covered away through snoring, stamping and waving my machete) or the vegetation (also due to using my machete).

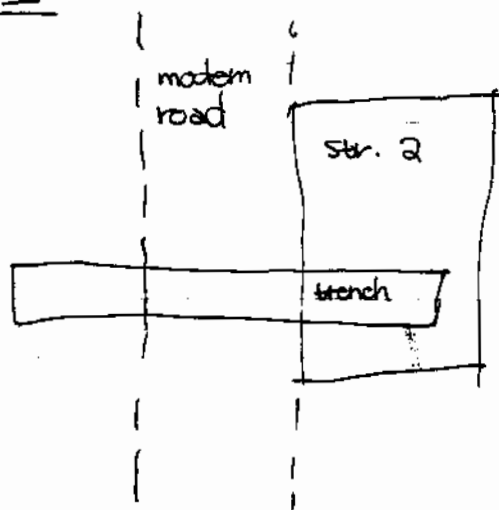
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Day 6

Today I arrived in the field at around 8am. The weather is heavily overcast and cool. The day got off to a slow start because Marcello had to assign workers to their respective sites. I will be working with Lionel and Maximiliano, who started work with cleaning the surface of the trench that bisects Structure 2, where I'll be working the next few days/weeks. The surface soil is densely compacted, moist and clayey in texture. There are many stones (some of them fill) and ^{many} roots at the surface. The trench, in its entirety, runs ~ 25 m from the base of Str. 2 to the apex of the structure. It is oriented E-W and rises sharply over the structure ~ 10 m from the trench's western-most point.

Sketch 1



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We are beginning the excavation of this trench (Op 4, Sub-op 15) from the NW corner and will be using 20 cm arbitrary levels in excavation unit A. At 9:27 am, excavation has begun! Go archaeology! There is the stump of a dead pineapple tree on the south wall of EU A. Soil near the surface of the unit appears extremely moist and will have to be sifted by hand. A large cobble (~20 cm in diameter) was removed from the surface of the SE quadrant. There are some small, light brown sandy lenses in the first 20 cm BGS.

Finished Lot 1, recorded info on lot form, took a photo of beginning of lot 2 and proceeded. Soil remains clayey and soft, with few artifacts. We have uncovered a few large cobbles within the EU and a possible animal burrow 33 cm east, 23 cm south of the NW corner. This is likely a major root disturbance and ~~is~~ compromises the matrix in that area. We are still working in a disturbed context since we have recovered a button, a shard of modern green glass and a piece of pill packaging from ~~the~~ Lot 2.

The large cobbles revealed in Lot 2 are almost certainly construction fill from Str. 2 but probably ~~are~~ laid down during road construction and not tumbled stones.

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By lunchtime, we have almost completed excavation of Lot 2. There is still some loose soil and a lens of dark soil (decayed roots?) in the center of EU A.

Lot 3: Approximately 45 cm BGS, ^{there were} large cobbles 30-40 cm in diameter that appear throughout EU A. There is a slight color change ~ 60 cm BGS on the east side; the soil is slightly darker, more compact and drier in this area. A large root running N-S through the middle of the EU was removed via machete. Several stones in the SE corner appear to be in a rectilinear formation. Further excavation has revealed more of the darker, drier, clay-like soil. Marcello said that this layer will form its own lot. At the end of the day, my workers (Lionel and Maximiliano) and I cleaned the ^{unit} floor surface and I took some photos of Lot 4. I will continue excavating Lot 4 tomorrow and am likely to open another 1x1 m unit in order to make our working space more comfortable.

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2005-18-13

Day 7

Lot 4 (cont.): I arrived in the field at 7:30 am today; the weather is overcast and humid with no wind. As with yesterday, my goal is to reach the yellow plaster floor in EU A, though Marcello says that it may be further below the ground surface than originally ~~thought~~ ^{thought}. On the western side of EU A about 50 cm BGS, I have come across a high concentration of coarse, red hued ceramic, soft volcanic rock ^(obs) and glass. This deposit is interspersed with large pebbles ~10 cm in diameter. The soil in the eastern side of the unit takes on a more yellowish hue ~55 cm BGS but without change in soil texture. Marcello says that fragments of a ceramic plate found today are, in fact, ancient although in a disturbed context.

Further down in this lot, my workers and I are finding more pieces of ceramic, modern glass and one interestingly shaped piece that Santiago says is made from local stone. It is ~5 cm in length and is solid except for a hole running through it. There are several cut marks on one side of

Sketch 1 Stone Fragment



the piece. So far, the function of the piece has not been identified.

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65 52 59
Artifacts recovered today are steadily increasing in size the further down we dig today, with several ceramic pieces > 5 cm in diameter. This could possibly indicate a lower degree of human activity at this level BGS. As for the soil, ~ 63 cm BGS it remains compact, crumbly and dark brown. The rocks in the SE^{corner} turned out ~~not~~ not to be a terrace or facade and were removed. We concluded Lot 4 at 65 cm BGS.

Lot 5:

As we continue excavating the clayey layer, the soil is becoming more compact and more difficult to travel. By ratio, fewer modern materials (ceramic) are being found, with each artifact averaging 3-4 cm in diameter. Overall, the concentration of artifacts is slightly lower than that of the previous lot. By ~ 70 cm, the soil is virtually a solid layer of clay and must be hacked apart for removal. This layer is almost free of artifacts. Around 80 cm BGS, the clayey soil becomes lighter in color with a yellowish hue but remains the same texture.

At 78 cm below the SW corner, there is a layer of medium-sized pebbles, each ~ 5 cm in diameter, that appear to cover the entire excavation floor of EU A.

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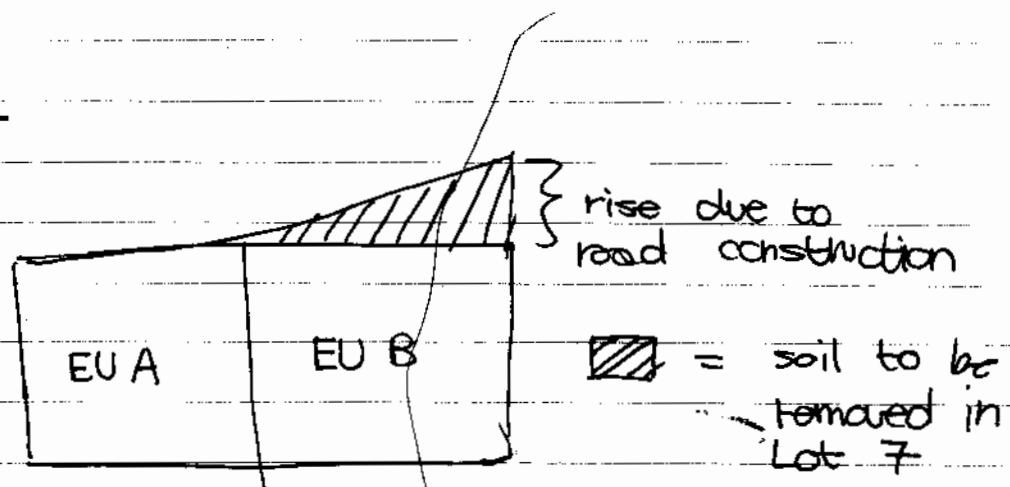
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Lot 5 (cont.)

The pebbles do not appear to be laid down in a regular pattern, but its ^{the} YDE floor, according to Marcello. Ending elevation measurements show that the ^{pebble} floor is remarkably level. After cleaning the unit wall and photographing Lot 6 (YDE floor), I began laying out EU B, another 1x1 m unit directly east of EU A.

Marcello said it would be advantageous to remove the slope of EU B in a wedge-like manner so that the ^{that of} surface of the unit will be level to ^{that of} EU A.

Sketch a



Lot 7:

The ^{ground} surface of EU B, which is higher in elevation than EU A, contains many cobbles and ^{abundant} root matter. Cobbles comprise the majority of the matrix. The soil here is similar to that of the surface of EU A: it is very moist, sandy and slightly clayey, and a

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Lot 7 (cont.)

medium brown color. Due to the soft, sticky nature of the soil and abundance of road construction fill, Lot 7 will only be approximately level. By the end of ^{the end elevations} this day, my workers and I have finished excavating Lot 7, and I have photographed the beginning of Lot 8.

Toward the end of the day, Marcello showed me an obsidian point ~ 2 cm long that dates to the Postclassic. Since the point was the end product of ^{the reworking of} a pre-existing blade and found in one of the upper layers of Santiago's unit, this suggests the site of El Paraiso was ^{not} only reoccupied during the Postclassic but Postclassic peoples reworked previously existing cultural materials at El Paraiso.

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Today I arrived at the site around 7:30am. The weather is overcast with no wind, just like yesterday. First, Marcello ordered the adjustment of the tarp of our champa and then work was underway. After taking start and ending elevations for Lot 7, the workers began excavating Lot 8, which will go down to the terminus of the construction fill. A 10cm balk will be placed at the western edge of EU B to prevent soil from spilling into EU A.

Lot 8:

The soil in this lot remains loose and sandy and contains few artifacts. On the eastern wall of EU B, there may be the remains of a wall or platform: the rocks forming this possible feature will be left in for now. There is a dead tree trunk in the NW corner. Many of the stones removed from the center of the EU are dressed, although they do not form any regular patterns. ~ 30 cm BGS, it appears that there is indeed a wall on the eastern side of EU B. One large cobble that was originally part of the wall but has fallen out of position, ^{was} removed. Below the large cobble ^{that} ^{is} still in place ~~are~~ ^{are stacked} rows of smaller stones, each approximately the size of a brick.

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Lot 8 (cont.)

The material remains in this lot remain mixed; finds include several pieces of ceramic handle, ~ 8-10 cm sherds of pottery and modern glass.

After photographing the beginning of Lot 9 and the wall (named "Wall 1" for the time being), my workers and I began excavating Lot 9, which will extend down to the floor substructure seen in EU A.

Lot 9

The soil texture of Lot 9 is the same as that of EU A at this level BGS. Artifacts recovered from this lot are also similar to those at this level BGS in EU A. Notable finds include pieces of glass appearing to be 30 or 40 years old. This suggests that the local people, at some time in the past, used the land in this area while Wall 1 was still above ground level.

Two bone fragments of an unidentified animal were also recovered. About ~ 70 cm BGS, the clayey soil assumes a yellowish hue (which also appeared at this level in EU A); this soil is almost free of artifacts, probably due to the extremely compact nature of this layer. Contents recovered from Lot 9 include modern and ancient ceramic, glass and tobacco stone.

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At the end of Lot 9, "Wall 1" remains something of a mystery. The wall appears, at present, to have two courses; the problem is the courses beneath them. I dug a small probe in the SE corner of EU B in hopes of locating the next course down. However, I found nothing but more soil, which was confirmed by Marcello as he extended the probe. At present, the ~~visible~~ visible portion of the wall is simply resting on soil. We hope that opening EU C will help clarify the dimensions and extent of the wall. Marcello also mentioned that Wall 1 contrasts sharply from the wall Pamela excavated in 2003. That wall, NW of Wall 1, was very regular and finely constructed; Wall 1, on the other hand, has been blown out and much coarser in terms of construction material. Wall 1 might possibly be a later construction and thus unrelated to the wall Pamela found. Right now, the most troubling aspect of Wall 1 is the fact that it does not extend down to the plaster floor substructure, ~~making~~ so we are unable to establish the relationship between the two.

Because I'm not feeling very well today, Marcello will take me back to the house for water. For this afternoon's work, Lionel and Maximiliano are going to fully expose

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the substructure and ~~the~~^{square} the unit walls for a photo of both completed excavation units. Exposing the floor is a very slow process and will probably take the rest of this excavation day.

By the end of the day, the workers have cleared the excavation floor. Work for the beginning of tomorrow will be squaring the unit walls and photographing the two excavation units and ~~the~~ Wall 1.

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2005-18-21

I started work around 8am today at the site. The weather is still the same as in previous days: overcast and extremely humid. Lionel and Maximiliano are still squaring the unit walls and other maintenance work, though we will be ready to photograph the units soon.

After photographing the excavation floors of EU A and EU B, my workers and I laid out EU C and took its initial elevations. The eastern side of EU C rises prominently over the western side due to a man made rise. Judging from the eastern wall of EU B, the humus layer of EU C mostly consists of construction fill and roots.

Lot ¹¹

This lot has the same purpose as Lot ⁷ did, which is to level the ground surface before proceeding with the excavation of this unit. The soil of this unit is sandy, loamy and very loose. Many cobbles are found within the unit along with roots. Due to the disturbed context and high traffic nature of this area, artifacts recovered are modern glass, ceramic and plastic. There is a small anthill (!) near the SW corner of the unit.

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Lot 12

~ 50 cm BGS from the NE corner of EU C, we encountered what appeared to be a layer of large, crudely laid ~~stone~~ cobbles, with one exceptionally large cobble on the north wall in the center of the unit. Per Marcello's instructions, we are removing the smaller stones on the western side of the unit down to the modern wall (Wall 1). There is little soil between the cobbles in this lot. This layer is almost free of artifacts, though the beginning of the lot yielded more glass and modern ceramic.

After removing more cobbles on the western side of the unit, it is clear that we have located the eastern edge of Wall 1. Wall 1 is currently exposed in two tiers; the lower tier is what was exposed during excavation of ~~the~~ EU B, the upper tier is what was just exposed. The upper tier is visible as two large cobbles with a vertical stack of smaller stones between them. Marcello believes that Wall 1 is a modern construction and a poorly ~~executed~~ executed one as well. Santiago concurs, adding that the construction style is similar to ~~the wall~~ ^{the wall} he's finding at the base of Structure 1.

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Lot 12 (cont.)

For the remainder of the day, the workers cleaned up the surface of Wall 1 and extended the champal tarp eastward since we will open EU D first thing tomorrow. The last thing I did in the field today was to photograph Wall 1 in its entirety (at least within the trench).

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After arriving in the field around 8am today, Marcello and I discussed our plans/goals for my trench today. As planned we will open EU D in hopes of locating the platform of Structure 2.

Lot 13

Because the area of this lot experiences high human activity, the soil on the ground surface is very compact with many pebbles and cobbles. ~5 cm below the surface of the ground is a solid layer of pebbles that Lionel says is a part of the road construction. The soil here is so compact that it must be hacked out with a pickax, resulting in large chunks of solid soil. Material remains are scarce in this layer, though this lot has yielded flooring material, glass and a naturally green rock. Further down in this lot, we have encountered clearly recent materials such as a battery and a fuse of some sort. This disturbed context / construction fill extends down at least 30 cm. We just pulled out what appears to be a pair of red underwear from the unit, further confirming the disturbed nature of the unit's surface layer. On a happy note, I just carefully removed a worm from my unit and set him/her free unharmed. Marcello also bought me a Pepsi and a new meter.

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Lot 13 (cont.)

to replace my perpetually faulty one. ~ 40 cm below the NW corner, we are finding lots of plastic bags, cloth, etc. This material is concentrated in the NE corner and may be a trash pit of some kind. At this level on the western wall of the unit, the soil profile clearly shows a 7-8 cm thick layer of lighter brown silt, deposited in 1998 by Hurricane Mitch. There is an additional soil change beneath the silt, so our current level will be the terminus of this lot. A local who stopped by the unit confirmed ~~at~~ that the area occupied by EU D was a trash pit, one that was sealed in by the alluvium from Hurricane Mitch.

After photographing Lot 13, we continued excavating the next lot. We may or may not have reached the eastern edge of Wall 1 in the previous unit (EU C), so we will know soon since we have almost reached the elevation of Wall 1 in EU D.

Lot 14

As with previous units, ~~the~~ the soil ~ 60 cm BGS is ~~■~~ darker, crumbly ^{and} clayey. ~ 55 cm below the NW corner, Lionel discovered a partial obsidian blade that is certainly

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Lot 14 (cont.)

pre-Hispanic. At the NW corner ~ 80 cm BGS, there is a marked spot where the soil changes to light brown, which measures ~ 25 cm in diameter. After exposing 20 cm of the eastern facade of Wall 1, we have determined that this is indeed the easternmost extent of the wall. ~ 80 cm BGS, a water pipe suddenly appeared in the soil near the western side of the unit. Uchel says it supplies potable water to the nearby houses and is still functioning. I consider this an unexpected but manageable problem, one of many challenges inherent to working inside a modern settlement area. Marcello says we can simply excavate around it and leave it at that. Below 80 cm, the soil becomes very dry but without a color change.

Before leaving the site this afternoon, my workers and I started leveling the excavation floor at the level of the water pipe. This will be the end of Lot 14. In other news, Mary found a glyph carving on the patio floor of the elite residence she's excavating at El Cafetal. Bri and Nat's excavations (on Structure 1 and on the structure next to it, respectively) are also going well.

When all of us PAREP members arrived at El Paraiso this morning at 8, Marcello and I reviewed our findings thus far for the group. Afterwards, the workers and I began levelling the end of Lot 14. Although I noticed a color change in the soil ~ 80 cm below the NW corner, Marcello said it's probably a product of the water pipe's presence. The color change (light brown) is localized around the pipe and is not accompanied by a change in soil texture. Few, if any, artifacts are found in the 20cm of soil directly above the pipe. At this elevation on the eastern side of the unit, there is a layer of small cobbles, though they do not form any discernible pattern and do not form a floor.

Lot 15

The beginning of this lot revealed more cobbles in the center of the unit. We are still finding modern materials ~ 1 m below the NW corner of the unit. Around 11am, Marcello and I and other PAREP members took a field trip to Las Orquideas to take a look at the excavations being conducted there.

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2005-18-28

I began work at 7:45 am today. The weather is very overcast and cool. We have almost reached the end of Lot 15 and are leveling the corners and cleaning the unit walls. Within this lot are several pieces of toba stone, modern ceramic and glass. Approximately 1 m BNWC, I found a piece of material ^{about 6 cm in length} that might either be wood or bone. Pamela said it might be a ~~radius~~ radius or ulna fragment but she cannot say for sure either way at the moment because of the amount of dirt on the fragment. I will set this piece aside and examine it in the lab, hopefully soon. After widening the walls at the eastern end of the unit, I took some pictures and finished the lot.

Lot 16

As we go further down, the concentration and size of ancient artifacts is increasing. The beginning of this lot has yielded a high concentration of ancient ceramic and several pieces of bone and a tooth, which are likely from a large dog. The soil in this lot is a dark brown clayey type that is dry and crumbly. The transition between a lighter brown ^{clayey} and darker brown ^{clayey} layer is prominent and does not appear in previous units.

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Lot 16 (cont.)

At ~ 1.1 m BNWC, we are still finding modern pottery sherds. However, Ellen said not to worry about this because these modern materials can work their way downwards via bioturbation. As of yet, I have not found a perfectly sealed deposit in this trench. Nevertheless, because the size of the ancient pottery sherds is increasing, I believe that the deposit we are currently excavating (in this lot) is relatively undisturbed.

There is an exceptionally high concentration of ancient pottery sherds in this lot. These sherds vary in size but ~~are~~ are generally 4-8 cm in length and have a reddish finish on their interior surface. The sherds are ~ 1 cm thick and seem to come from very large vessels, given the degree of concavity of the sherds. Because I am finding more ancient materials, ~~the~~ ^{the workers} will set up a screen soon to examine the backdirt further.

As we continue with this lot, we are finding more of the same materials described above. ~ 1.3 m BNWC there are fewer cobbles present within the soil.

Regarding the location of the platforms and/or steps of Structure 2, Ellen said there is no way of knowing exactly where

Lot 16 (cont.)

the western facade of the structure begins since road construction has complicated the situation.

Lot 17

Only 6-7cm into this lot, the workers found a lens of plaster. I dug a probe ~ 10 cm down on the SE corner of the unit and found no further traces of plaster. Expanding down to the level of the plaster in a northern direction also failed to turn up more traces of plaster. After consulting with Ellen, I decided to take the floor of the unit down to the level of the plaster, and will photograph/document it afterwards. In any case, the plaster in question is almost certainly what remains of the plaster floor of the patio ~~is~~ containing Str. 2. As in one of Marcello's ~~is~~ trenches (the one next to the river), the plaster appears as a ^{bright} lens of a yellowish hue and readily visible in contrast with the clayey soil surrounding it.

Strangely enough, the 6-8 cm ^{of soil} above the plaster floor yielded very few artifacts, namely one pottery sherd. I expected the surface of the floor to be rich in artifacts such as ~~is~~ pottery sherds and perhaps even obsidian.

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2005-18-31

After leveling the excavation floor to the level of the plaster lens, the lens appears as a spot in the soil centered 10 cm east and 46 cm south of the NW corner. It is about 25 cm long and 15 cm wide and has a series of pebbles (likely the floor substructure) scattered around the center of the remaining plaster. This plaster lens is the only remaining plaster in EU D.

After taking photos of Lot 17 and some detail shots of the plaster lens, my workers and I laid out EU E, which we will begin excavating first thing tomorrow. EU E is the first unit of 04/15 that is entirely situated upon the road. Judging from the east profile of EU D, I expect to find more of the trash pit about 30 cm BGS; perhaps I will catch the facade of the platform as well in EU E. Because I've finally located remains of the plaster floor (V/DE floor), my main objective at present is to locate the platform or steps of Structure 2.



+16
+9

6/21/2005

2005-18-32

Arriving in the field around 7:45 am today, I began work on EU E. Though the weather is currently overcast, I predict that sunny weather will be here soon.

Lot 18

The surface of Lot 18 appears much the same as that of EU D, consisting of packed earth and some roots/weeds. The first soil layer we encountered was a dense, pebbly layer of construction fill. The soil between the pebbles is medium brown, loose and sandy. Materials recovered thus far include a shell and a piece of flooring tile.

~10 cm BGS, the pebble layer transitions into a sandy and clayey soil with few rocks. This layer is very compact and tends to form chunks. ~20 cm BGS, the soil changes into a moist, silty layer, most likely alluvium deposited by Hurricane Mitch (also found in the previous EU). As expected, the modern trash pit begins to appear ~30 cm BGS, with "artifacts" such as glass, bottle caps and roofing tile. A few reddish stains are present ~35 cm BGS that are probably disintegrated pieces of metal. Soil within the trash pit layer is pebbly and sandy as well as moist.

~30 cm BGS, the trash pit terminates and the clayey soil layer begins. Almost

Lot 18 (cont.)

Free of artifacts, this layer contains a few large pebbles but is mostly homogenous. Nearing the end of this lot, the contents recovered are one large bone, glass, a few ceramic sherds and brick/tile.

Lot 19

Since we were able to complete Lot 18 by the end of the morning, we started upon the next lot first thing in the afternoon. ~ 40 cm BGS, the soil is still compact and clayey as at the end of the previous lot. A few centimeters below 40 cm BGS, the soil rapidly becomes sterile although without a color change. ~ 50 cm BGS, I found a layer of large pebbles/small cobbles that do not appear to form any rectilinear patterns.

After conferring with Marcello, I believe the platform of Str. 2, if indeed present within EU E, must begin to appear around the level ^{BGS} of Cornelius. Thus far, I haven't seen any signs of stone rectilinear formations.

~ 70 cm BGS, the soil remains completely sterile and contains randomly scattered pebbles and cobbles. No change in soil consistency is present, as it remains

Lot 19 (cont.)

slightly dry, clayey and medium brown, though ~ 70 cm BGS it takes on a slightly yellowish hue. At this level, there is still no sign of the platform or steps leading up to the platform. Marcello said that either feature would appear as a course of large, rectilinear, dark stones, something that would be readily apparent on viewing. As such, I would say that we will probably not find the facade of Structure 2 in this EU.

We conducted work ~ 70 cm BGS today. Tomorrow we will finish this EU and

6/22/2005

2005-18-35

I began work today at Sam; the weather is extremely overcast and according to Lamy, it will certainly rain today. I verified that the soil in Lot 19 had not changed between the beginning of the lot and the excavation floor. Due to the scarcity of artifacts and absence of features in this lot, I will extend it all the way down to the level of the plaster lens in EU D.

Maximiliano just pulled a snake out of the rock pile where Pamela's pit used to be. It is striped black and white; according to Chepe, this snake is dangerous. The workers then began playing with/tormenting it... must be a Honduran impulse, this goading a venomous snake.

Lot 19
(cont.)

~80 cm BGS, the soil becomes ~~more compact~~ ^{drier} with slightly fewer cobbles. There is another layer of tumble ~90 cm BGS, which has no particular orientation. By this point, it is clear that we will not find the platform facade in this EU. Thus far today, we have recovered several pieces of toba stone, ancient and modern ceramic sherds, 2 ancient ceramic handles, and some glass. This lot also yielded what I believe to be a pigment stone. It measures ~4 cm in diameter and is a deep orange

6/22/2005

2005-18-36

at 19
(cont.)

color with a slight brownish hue. Its color rubs off very easily and the color produced is quite concentrated. Nevertheless, the stone shows no sign of human alteration and almost certainly was not used.

At 10:15 this morning, a torrential downpour began to fall at the site. There were a few short bursts of rain before but now it's really kicking it up a notch. Lionel built a makeshift wall on the southern end of the tarp but the ground around the unit is rapidly collecting water. Maximiliano and Lionel had to construct a channel for rainwater near the north wall of the trench because water was leaking down into it. Parts of EU D were flooded, though I was able to cover it with newly excavated soil.

In EU E, tumble from Str. 2 appears first ~ 40 cm BGS and extends down to the floor. Soil directly above the floor forms larger pecks than that above this level.

Starting ~ 70 cm BGS on the north wall and ~ 85 cm BGS on the south wall (75 cm BGS NE corner, 85 cm BGS SE corner), there is a dark brown, grayish-yellow

Lot 19
(cont.)

hued soil that is less clayey than the previous layer. Marcello says this layer might be from the first stages of Str. 2's collapse. This layer forms large pedis when struck with a pickax and contains almost no artifacts.

~ 1.1 m BGS, the soil transitions into a medium brown clayey soil with a reddish hue.

We are ending this lot about 2 cm above the floor substructure and beginning the next EU. EU F is entirely upon the road.

Lot 20

Because of EU F's location, the surface of the unit is covered with a dense, poorly sorted mixture of pebbles and cobbles. The soil between the stones is sandy, loose and medium brown. This surface matrix is being heaped behind the southern trench wall in order to keep at rainwater.

The layer of ~~sandy~~ silty alluvium begins ~ 25 cm BGS. So far, only a few shells, glass and modern refuse have been recovered from the unit. ~ 35 cm BGS the trash pit begins, with an abundance of plastic bags, straws and bottle caps. The soil here is sandy, somewhat coarse and extremely wet, most likely due to the heavy rainfall of the past few days.

I started work around 8am today, the weather was overcast and cool. Due to concerns about how the heavy rainfall of the past few days will affect the trench, some of the workers are constructing a wall to the ~~west~~^{north} of trench.

Lot 20
(cont.)

My workers and I started work today by excavating the remainder of this lot down to the level below the trash pit. We are still finding a high concentration of garbage at the same level of the trash pit in previous units.

Lot 21

The soil at the beginning of this lot is a moist, clayey, easily molded soil that is medium brown with a reddish hue. Few artifacts (a few pieces of brick) and found at this level. There is also an abundance of randomly scattered cobbles at the beginning of this lot, most likely more overburden from Structure 2.

~ 50 cm BGS on the SW corner of this unit, there is a ~~slight~~ notable soil color change to light brown. However, this ~~is~~ color is not homogenous and is more similar to mottling than a lens. Many angular and sub-angular stones are present from 30cm BGS down,

at 21
(cont.) all likely to be tumble. The soil associated with this tumble is moist, slightly clayey and medium brown. This soil is also sterile.

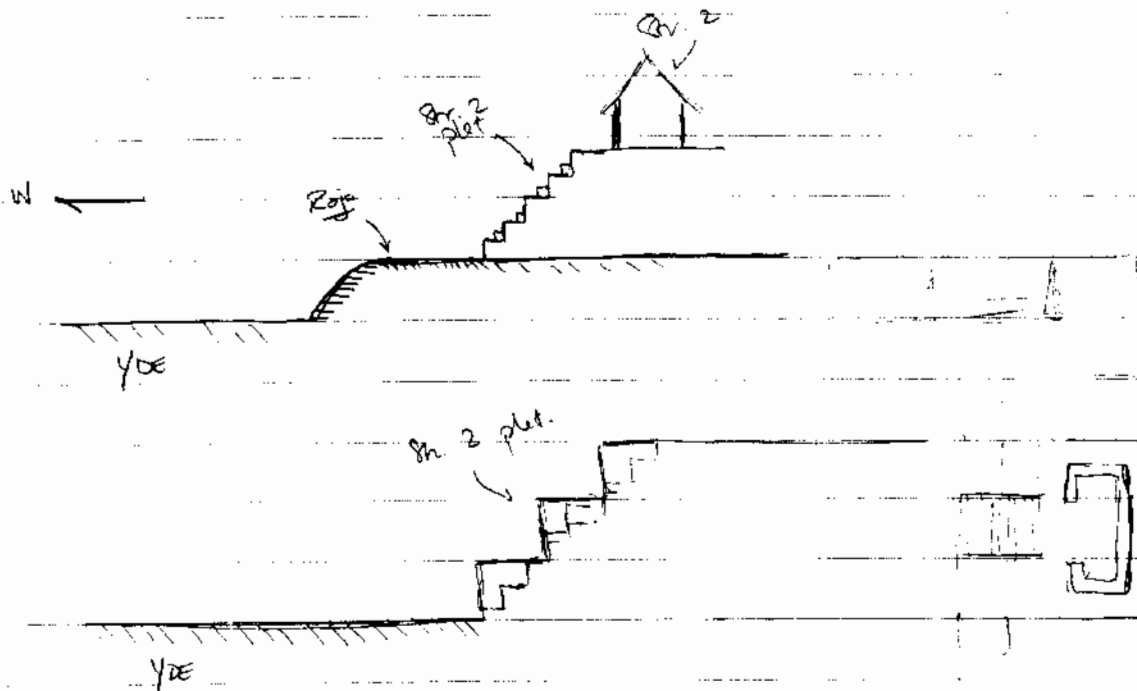
~ 60 cm BGS, a high concentration of worked stone appears. According to Marcello, while I have not reached the platform facade, it is definitely very close due to the concentration and nature of this overburden layer. To locate the facade with as little excavation error as possible, we are taking the western half of the unit down to the floor, examining the exposed profile for formations and then progressing eastward to the east wall of the unit.

~ 85 cm BGS in the center of the unit is a flat, rectangular stone Marcello says was likely part of the facade of Str. 2. There is a soil change to the blackish soil with a yellowish hue in this unit as with the previous unit. However, this transition is uneven between the north and south walls of the unit. This soil appears directly below the layer of large cobbles ~ 60 cm BGS and extends all the way down to the floor. Between the cobble layer and the floor, the matrix is mainly this blackish-yellowish soil with a few pebbles and cobbles that

at ~~21~~
(cont.)

are significantly smaller than the stones of the cobble layer. As architectural fill, the yellowish black soil contains virtually no artifacts, save for a few pieces of brick / construction material and some pottery sherds.

Now that we have exposed the unit floor ~~to~~ to ~ 30 cm ^{east} ~~west~~ of the ~~western~~ wall, it appears that we will, yet again, not find the platform facade.



Sketch Marcello's re-creation of the possible forms of Structure 2

6/24/2005

2005-18-41

I arrived in the field around 8am today. It rained a great deal last night and the newly constructed walls around my trench held up very well, so I am happy about that. Because we PAREP members are leaving for Copán this afternoon, everyone is only spending a half day in the field; for tomorrow, the workers will be beautifying the Parque Central as part of a community service project (and ^{it's} desperately needed).

As for the trench, the workers are finishing up EU F at present. If all goes well, we will be starting on EU G later this morning. Today is also the day of animals: first, a man from the house to the south of my trench brought over the cutest puppy I've seen in Honduras, then Misa found a baby rat in Santiago's trench, which I hope will go back to its mom after I sent him back to where he came from (I think).

Lot 21
(cont.)

The remainder of this lot was unexceptional; we removed the remaining ~~stones~~ stones above the floor except for 10 or so that were tightly wedged into the east wall. Lichel uncovered more of the plaster floor directly west of the remaining stones. In order to

x

6/24/2005

2005-18-42

st 21
(cont.)

best preserve this plaster, we have only uncovered patches of it and therefore don't know the full extent of the plaster in EU F.

st 22

EU G is located on the edge of the road and the beginning of the tumble from Str. 2. The surface of the unit contains pebbles of the road ballast and some silty soil on the eastern edge. Two dressed stones are present on the eastern edge and could possibly be some type of formation.

6/27/2005

2005-18-43

Arriving in the field around 8 am today, I noticed that the surface of EU G was covered with a thin layer of light brown colored mud. This mud seems to originate from runoff from Str. 2 and not the sides of the trench because ^{the floor of} the rest of the trench appears moist but without mud. Upon cursory examination, there will likely be three lots for EU G: from surface to below the trash layer, from the trash layer to the start of the cobble layer, from the cobble layer to the floor. Marcello thinks I ~~will~~ almost certainly will uncover some type of feature today.

at 22
(cont.)

About 30 cm BGS in the center of the unit, we have found the western edge of another modern wall. We are going to expose the eastern side of the wall down to the floor (or whatever level down it reaches). To the west of the wall, we are still seeing tumble from Str 2, though many large cobbles are present now, even at the unit surface.

After speaking with Ellen, I believe that the previously mentioned "wall" is actually a line of sorts upon modern, possibly culturally induced, tumble from the eastern wall of EU G, it is clear

Lot 22
(cont)

that two distinct phases of tumble are present within EU F and EU G. The first phase, which terminates ~55 BGS, is likely modern and consists of poorly sorted tumble at a variety of angles ~~is~~ relative to the floor. Below this layer is ~30cm of homogenous, sterile soil with almost no stones or artifacts. Then we see another layer of tumbles composed of large, angular / sub-angular cobbles ^{extending down to the floor surface} only a few degrees off from the floor surface. Ellen believes this phase to be ancient and that it will lead to the facade of Str. 2.

Lot 23

This lot will contain all materials east of the "line" formed by the stones in the middle of the unit ^{down} to the earlier tumble phase. As with EU F, this layer contains almost no artifacts and a dense concentration of tumble. Also, the sterile soil layer is very pronounced as in the previous unit. There are a few deep red colored lenses in the center of the unit ~30 cm BGS.

Reaching the end of this lot, I asked Marcello about the next steps in excavating this unit. He says that the stones ^{in the} earlier tumble layer are most likely from the exterior of Structure 2 and part of a

Lot 23
(cont.)

construction that is still in situ. Marcello also says the best way to excavate given this fact is to take the rest of the unit down to the earlier tumble phase and go from there. The lot will contain all from the ~~earlier~~^{later} tumble phase to the surface of the earlier tumble phase. As in the previous unit, there is an inclusion in the form of a small fine clay deposit in EU G.

6/28/2005

2005-18-46

I started work today around 7:45 am; weather-wise, today might be the first sunny day we've seen in a long time, although it is still cloudy right now. Steady, heavy rain fell for several hours last night, and some of the water entered my pit. As such, units ~~east~~ of Wall 1 all have a layer of mud on their floors, as well as the cobble layer representing an earlier tumble phase. Construction to prevent further flooding of my trench will take place in and around my site today.

As for further plans for excavation, Marcello decided that it would be best to end the current lot at the surface of the earlier tumble phase and then move up one unit. I think this is because we have yet to determine the ~~fine~~ original position of this tumble (i.e. whether they were steps or part of Structure 2's facade). In addition, there appears to be some type of rectilinear foundation running N-S on the western wall of EU G; this might be a terrace and is definitely worth investigating.

Lot 24

As with previous lots situated upon inclines, this lot will be a wedge-shaped matrix meant to level the excavation floor of the unit. Due to the rains, the upper layers of EU H are extremely muddy.

Lot 24 (cont.) to the point where stratigraphy, if present, will be indistinguishable. The surface soil, a loose, silty medium brown type, ~~is~~ contains a few roots and much shell. Tumble begins to appear immediately below the unit surface; it is poorly sorted and resembles exposed fill on the surface of Structure 2. Fortunately, we are not encountering the trash pit level any longer, though many glass sherds and some metal were recovered in this lot. Because ancient ceramic sherds have also been found in this lot, this lot is in disturbed context, albeit to a lesser degree than the unit surfaces situated upon the road.

Lot 25

The context in this lot remains disturbed since we have found a child's shoe ~ 52 cm ~~below~~ BNEC. Below 50 cm, the soil becomes ~~loamy, flat~~ ^{loamy, flat}, extending down at least 20 cm. The earlier tumble phase terminates ~ 80 cm BNEC, which will be the end of this lot.

Now that EU H's profile has dried a bit, I can detect two distinct soil layers, the dark brown surface humus and below ^{it} a medium brown loamy layer. This, ^{of course,} ^{stratigraphy} is very different than that of the previous lot, especially since we've moved off the road and onto Structure 2.

at  ³⁹

~ 80cm BNEC on the east wall of EU H, there is an evenly laid layer of medium sized cobbles of the color of facade stones. After exposing more of the western edge of the unit, the cobbles there do indeed appear to form a step. Another step appears on the west wall of EU H further down. After clearing off tumble stones in the unit, there appear to be two steps oriented E-W; the higher step appears to be blawn out since some of the courses are out of alignment.

Tomorrow, I will begin removing tumble stones from EU G in order to uncover more steps. We have certainly reached the edge of Structure 2, after 7 units of excavation.

7/11/2005

2005-18-49

It's July! After two days of being ill (with the same throat virus Marcello had), I'm now back in the field. Upon arriving at 8 am this morning, I found my unit relatively undisturbed, with no signs of rain leakage. I'm working with Maximiliano and Lichel again and we will be cleaning the surface of the steps and removing tumble to find the first step.

After removing 20-25 stones, I ~~could~~ didn't see any discernible pattern of level stones that would suggest a step. However, I was able to ask Santiago for help and he said that there were indeed only two steps. The rest of the stones, which I was afraid of removing, were tumble and are being removed down to the level of the plaster floor. We are working in an easterly direction heading towards the edge of the steps ~~by~~ while following the plaster floor. ~ 40 cm from what I currently think is the edge of the steps, the plaster floor acquires shades of red as well as yellow, similar to the floor of Marcello's unit near the river.

Just now, I cut my left hand with my travel; although it doesn't hurt much, I'm finding it difficult to move my left thumb because of it.

7/1/2005

2005-18-50

After clearing off all the remaining tumble, I observe three separate portions of the steps. Going ~~west~~ to ~~east~~, the first construction is a wall measuring ~ 25 cm wide; composed of smaller, thick, almost squarish stones and thinner, more angular stones, this wall may extend below the level of the plaster floor, which would abut the facade of Structure 2, if true. To the east is the first step ^{measuring ~ 70 cm wide,} that has a smooth, clearly defined edge. By probing beneath the first course of this step with a chaining pin, Marcello discovered there is a finely constructed, regular facade at the western edge of the step. Further east is another step, ^{measuring ~ 40 cm wide,} one that differs in construction from the first step. Unlike the first step, the second step does not have a clearly defined outer edge, and some stones near the "edge" seem to be blown out. However, the absence of a defined edge is not due to excavation error, since the soil profiles there do not show additional stones. This step is only partially exposed at present.

In terms of procedure, we are going to expose the plaster floor directly west of the facade, determine if the "wall" extends below the plaster, and

7/1/2005

2005-R-51

widen the units walls in EU H. When this is completed, I am going to take some pictures for the record and measure out the next unit. For the end of the day, the workers and I cleaned out the ~~site~~ trench floor for the weekend.

Additional Note: Looking into the ~~site~~ trench from the unexcavated EU I, the steps and "wall" appear to be oriented

7/4/2005

2005-18-52

I arrived in the field at 7:45 am today; the weather is extremely humid and cloudy with a high chance of rain. Marcello is still in San Pedro Sula because he's picking up Roxanne, but he'll be back this afternoon. Santiago hasn't arrived yet, so for now, I'm in charge of the sight.

Lionel and Maximiliano cleaned off the steps first thing today and are now ~~beginning~~ starting excavation of EU I, the first lot of which is lot 26.

lot 26

Given that this lot is located upon the structure, the surface of EU I appears as a mixture of exposed tumble, light vegetation and loose soil. Our plan for today is to ~~remove~~ remove the natural incline of the unit, excavate down to the level of the steps and then evaluate the nature of the next step up. 10-30 cm BGS, there are still occasional pieces of trash present, suggesting the structure surface has experienced human traffic in recent times.

~ 40 cm BSEC there is a cluster of tumble stones, which are otherwise randomly distributed in the lot. The soil in this lot is a ^{loose} medium brown loam containing fine roots and some lighter soil lenses

Lot 27

~ 50 cm BNEC the concentration of tumble stones increases, although they do not form any flat surfaces. At this level, we are still encountering modern refuse (plastic, flooring tile and glass). ~ 55 cm BNEC, there is a patch of a friable, gritty light beige conglomerate, which is situated at the SE corner and stretches west about 45 cm. A large, flat cobble is directly north of this conglomerate. Though I have found pieces of this material in previous units, I haven't encountered any of this size before.

The large, flat cobble mentioned above could be part of a ~~platform~~ terrace/step surface, but it appears that, if it is a surface, the other stones are missing. One stone embedded in the south wall is at the level of the large cobble but there is no corresponding stone on the north wall.

At 68-73 cm BNEC, a possible terrace/step surface appears. This possible surface is on a downward slant ^(heading west), similar to the step ~~below it~~ to its west, with many stones at slight angles off horizontal (but ^{not} to the extent to which they can be ruled out as part of a structural surface). Some

7/4/2005

2005-18-54

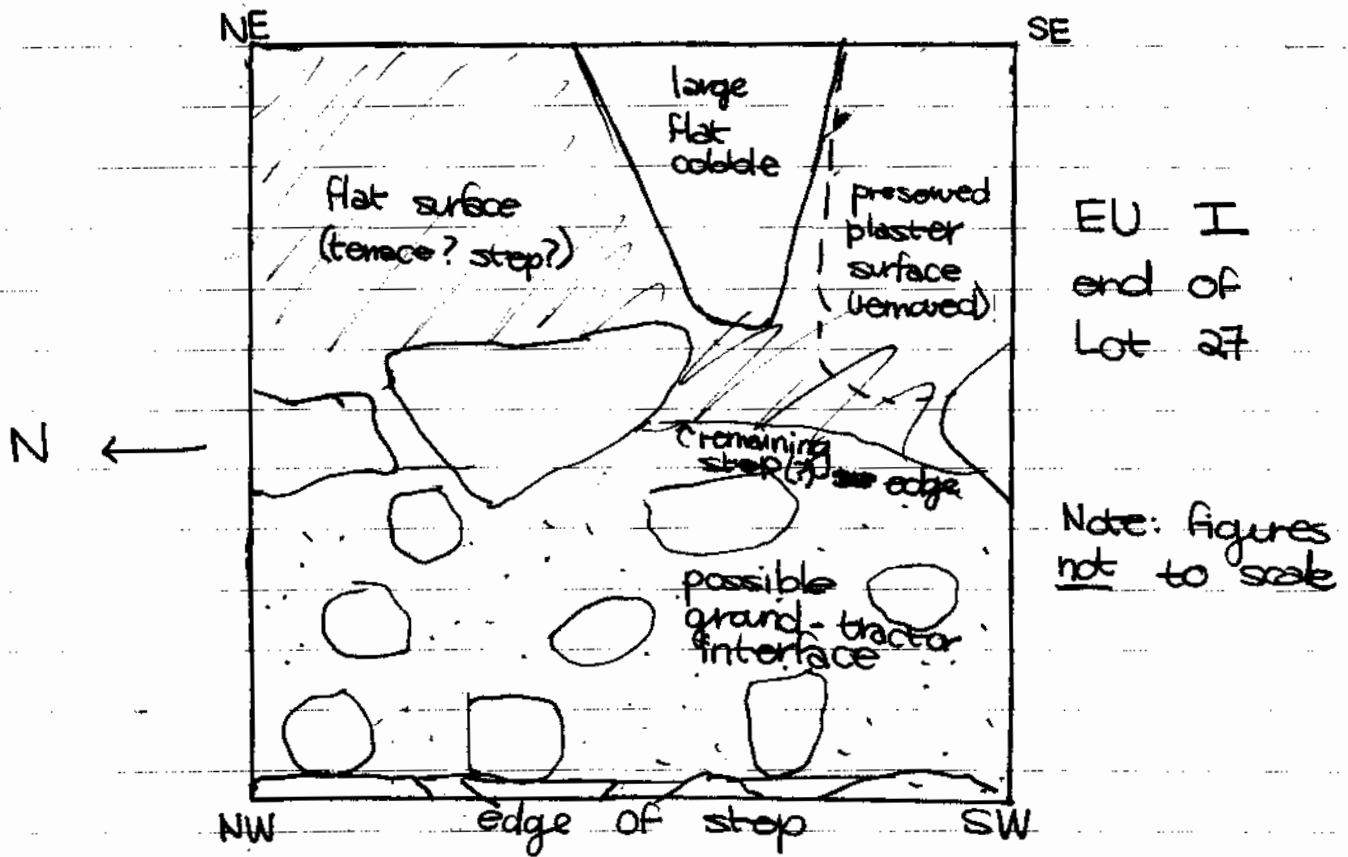
lot 27
(cont.) stones are also missing entirely from the possible surface (determined via applying a chaining pin).

Ellen came by the site around 12:30 and looked at what I have uncovered thus far. It turns out that the light beige conglomerate was the plaster surface of the step/terrace in EU I. Its preservation was curiously variable since none of the plaster was found north of the large cobble. Judging from the color changes in the ^{soil} profiles, Ellen estimated the ^{location of} western edge of the step and recommended excavating the unit to this edge, W-E, to hit the edge of the step. The soil at ~80 cm BN~~EC~~ is a lighter brown, slightly reddish clayey type, the same as that upon the previously discovered steps. As with the previous lot, we are finding few cultural materials, save for ~~some~~ the chunks of plaster I kept and some shell. Upon the entire step/terrace surface, there has been a ~~total~~ lack of pottery sherds and other artifacts, though Marcelle says this is unsurprising.

7/5/2005

2005-18-55

We got out to the field at the unprecedented hour of 7:30 am today. The weather is humid and it's starting to heat up, so we're pretty much in for another hot, hot day. Lionel (not Lionel) began by removing more of the tumble west of the step in EU I, we soon discovered that the evenly laid, flat stones making up the previous step terminates before what remains of the edge of the ~~next~~ next step up.



Of course, there are several possible scenarios for explaining this. The edge of the step could have been destroyed post-

abandonment and what we found west of the remaining edge could be tumble. Another hypothesis is during the construction of the road, the tractor plowed through the edge of Structure 2 while trying to level the ground. The lower steps are plaster floor, all at lower elevations, were unharmed by this process, but the tractor could have caught the edge and demolished it. I feel that the latter scenario is very plausible because the proposed ground-tractor interface is almost at the level of the road ballast in previous units.

Next, the workers and I are cleaning out the walls and floor of EU I, then I will take some photos of the steps, such as they are at this point of excavation. After finishing these tasks, we then measured out EU J, which is on an even steeper slope than EU I. Maneuvering around the new unit is a bit difficult due to the low clearance of the tarp and the incline.

Lot 28

The surface of Lot 28 consists of loose, loamy dark brown soil and exposed tumble stones, along with some light vegetation. The goal of this lot is to level the working surface of the unit, as this

7/5/2005

2005-18-57

Lot 28
(cont.)

is ^{increasingly} important given the upward slope.
~10 cm BGS, the soil transitions from a dark brown loam to medium brown clay with a reddish hue. This clayey soil is slightly moist, and ~~stays~~ forms large peels. We ~~may~~ have found ~~the~~ a wall on the east wall of the unit. It begins ~20 cm BGS and extends downward in a regular pattern for three courses (thus far exposed). Upon closer inspection, the "wall" is more complicated than I originally thought. Although three rectangular stones with flat faces are clearly stacked near the center of the east unit wall, I have not encountered more ^{of} ~~similar~~ these stones south of the three. A cluster of tumble is found north of the three stones, so it's hard to say whether they are blown out pieces from the wall or just tumble.

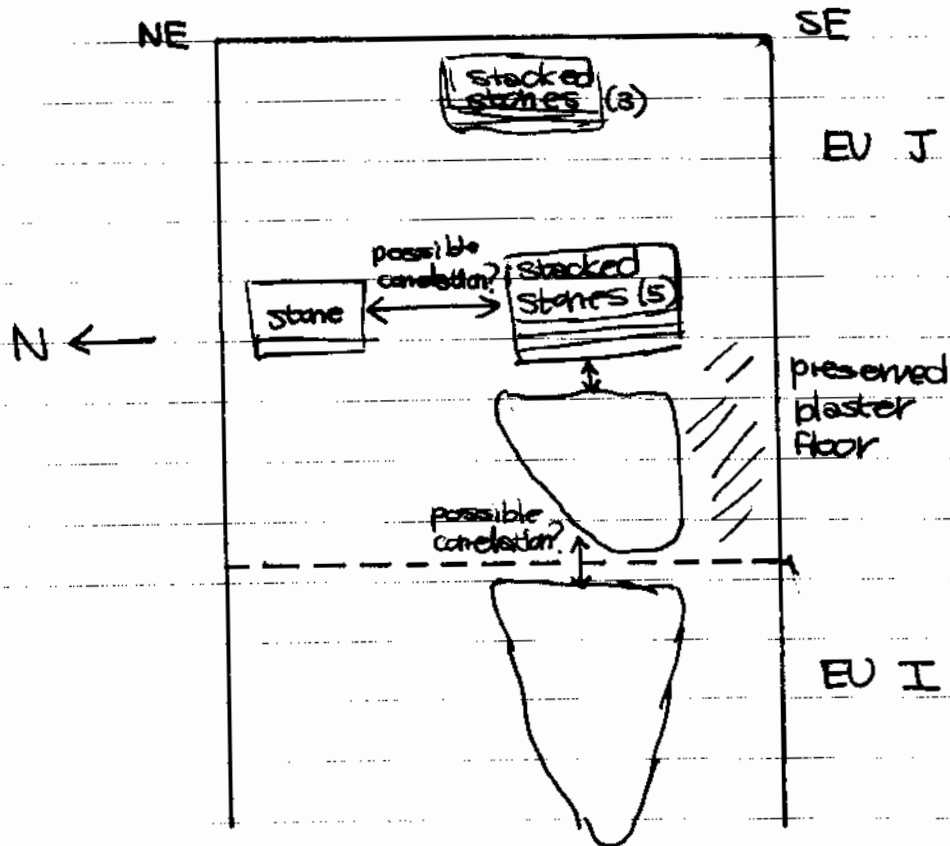
Excavating the western half of the lot, I noticed that almost all of the tumble ~~is~~ are at high angles off of the horizontal, slumping down away from the structure (i.e. west ends down, east ends up); some were almost vertically embedded in the soil. The soil surrounding these tumble stones is very moist, sticky and clayey, but also extremely loose. Many open pockets are found on the western half of EU J,

7/5/2005

2005-18-58

Lot 28
(cont.) one of which has just revealed another possible facade.

Upon examination of this "facade", Marcello said that the picture has now become extremely complicated, to the point where I need to open an additional two units south of EU's I and J. Marcello and I both think that there seems to be some type of transverse wall ^{that is} composed of the large cobble found in the previous unit, another large cobble and the facade (running W to E). South of the potential "wall" are remains of a well-preserved plaster floor, a portion of which was the "light beige conglomerate material" removed in Lot 27.



7/5/2005

2005-18-59

Lot 28
(cont.)

At this point in the excavation, we cannot determine whether the structures seen in EU J represent: (a) a transverse wall with steps to the north, (b) a N-S wall or (c) a ~~room~~ room north of the plaster floor. Therefore, we are opening up units in the direction of the preserved plaster. But we didn't have enough time left to lay out the additional units, (plus we didn't have the necessary measuring tapes) so we ended the day by cleaning out the unit.

7/6/2005

2005-15-00

I started field work today at 7:30 am; the weather is partly cloudy with ^{the} sun coming in and out. Our first task for today was laying out two new units south of EU's I and J, which proved to be quite difficult given the incline of Structure 2. Because we had no extra string, we had to rope off the corners using blue polka-dotted flagging tape. After taking elevations, we began excavating.

Lot 29

The surface of EU K was a mixture of roots, loosely packed loamy soil and tumble stones, mainly medium to large cobbles. These did not have any discernible formation. Part of the east wall of the unit collapsed ^{due} to the weight of the tumble and looseness of the soil. Only modern materials (glass shards, ceramic) were found in this lot, indicating modern activity.

Lot 30

Continuing in this EU, we are finding more tumble, oriented at many different angles to horizontal. Oddly enough, there was also a yuca plant growing in the unit and a large root as well. ~40 cm BGS, remains of the plaster floor begin to appear, around the center of the unit.

7/6/2005

2005-18-61

lot 30 The stones to the east of the exposed plaster do not appear to be part of a feature or formation; a sizable cavity in the soil exists near the SE corner.

Clearing tumble to the ~~west~~ eastern edge of the unit, we have revealed more of the remaining plaster floor. Unfortunately, due to the unstable nature of the loose soil-tumble stones matrix, the east side of EU K collapsed in an impressive mini avalanche. No damage was done the plaster, however.

The plaster remains are uneven in texture and appears in patches upon the unit floor. No artifacts were recovered from this surface.

(two pages only! a one day record for the least note taking... shame! -Y)

Today I arrived at the site around 7:45am. The weather is cloudy and extremely humid, and the workers think it will rain sometime today. The first thing we did today was measure out a new unit, EU L, another lateral extension that is directly south of EU J. EU L has the largest incline of all the units thus far, a logistical problem exacerbated by the mini-avalanche of yesterday.

Lot 31 The first 50-60 cm ~~of~~^{BSEC} of this unit is clearly tumble and was removed as such in a ~~W~~ W → E manner. A possible cluster of N-S aligned stones is present ~ ~~1~~^m BSEC. Currently, there are four visible, aligned stones at the same level, each 20-30cm long and rectangular. Nevertheless, the orientation of the stones beneath this potential course is unclear since some ^{stones} are clearly out of position. In any case, this feature, if it is one, is slumped away from the structure ⁱⁿ the same way as the steps. Also, this potential feature is oriented a few degrees east of magnetic north, as ~~is~~ the preserved step edge.

Marcello came by and removed some more tumble around the facade, confirming that it is a feature. Clearing along the wall to

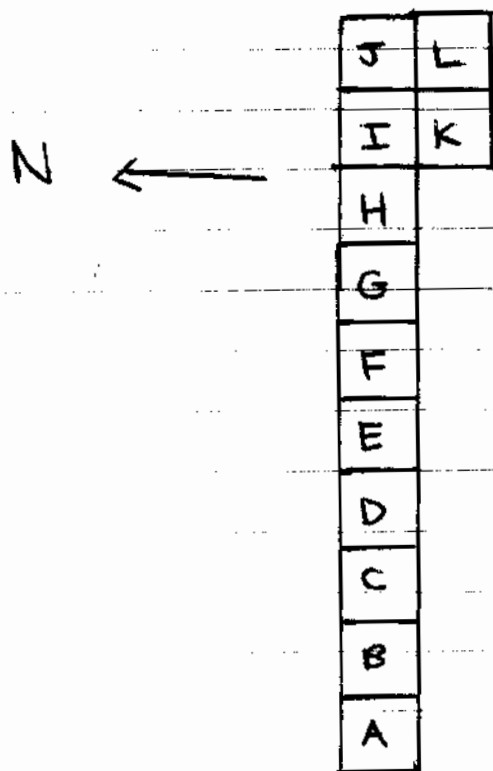
7/7/2005

2005-R-63

at 31
(cont.)

the north and into EU ~~J~~^J, we found that the ~~the~~ column of stacked stones abuts the facade. The plaster floor abuts both the facade and stacked stones, which is clearly seen in a corner where all three features meet. Now that we have located a facade, the next steps will be clearing EU L down to the plaster floor and then making up a unit in the new, ~~the~~ adjacent expansion.

Clearing more of the unit floor, I confirmed that the plaster floor extends to the facade and is well preserved in that location. (~~the~~ from the wall to ~1 ft away from the wall).



Plan of excavation units
excavated

7/7/2005

2005-18-64

Lot 31
(cont.)

Following the plaster floor, the workers and I worked to the western side of EU K. We found that while the plaster surface slopes downward and becomes thinner and more poorly preserved E \rightarrow W, small pieces, \sim 2 cm long, were still found in the soil next to the western wall of EU K. This means that the plaster extended at least to the incomplete edge at the west wall of EU I and lends credence to the theory that a tractor \ddagger sheared off part of a step or terrace during road construction, thereby destroying the edge that extended above the road level.

We were able to clean out the entire unit floor and the facade before the end of the day. Tomorrow, we will measure out and begin excavating a new unit, EU M, that will be east of EU L.

7/8/2005

2005-18-65

We arrived at the site a little late today (8 am?), probably due to the cookout we're having today for lunch. Laying out the next unit, EU M, was pretty challenging given the slope we're working with. From the plaster floor up to the ^{top of} east wall of EU M is easily 2+ meters in height, so we have put down a plastic tarp over EU's I and K for catching soil. Leand is standing in EU M and moving soil downwards, which is then caught by the tarp and removed. Despite these ^{difficulties} ~~problems~~ ^{more advantageous} I feel that excavating eastward is ~~more~~ than excavating westward because I am interested in ^{locating} ~~finding~~ the upper surface of the terrace in EU L and the wall of the structure.

at 3a

~40 cm BGS, the matrix appears much as the upper levels of previous units. Beneath a thin, ~10-20 cm layer of loamy soil, the medium brown ^{oriented} ~~clayey~~ clayey layer begins. Tumble is randomly ~~distributed~~ and densely concentrated from the unit surface downward. The soil ^{and form} surrounding these stones are loose ~~and~~ some cavities within the matrix. Thus far, no artifacts have been recovered, nor were any found yesterday upon the plaster floor. Although a little strange, Marcello says

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2005-18-00

Lot 3a
(cont.) that this lack of artifacts does sometimes occur.

Due to adjustment of a champa stake and the unstable nature of the matrix, there was another soil collapse on the southern wall of EU L. Since today is a half day, we will spend the remaining time cleaning the soil upon the tarp, both from the excavation and collapse, and then close the trench for the weekend.

7/11/2005

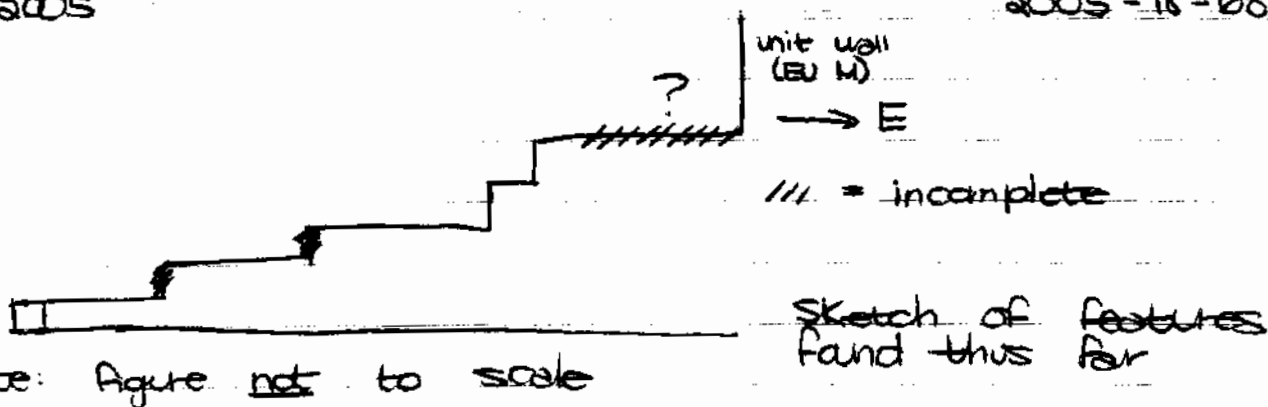
2005-18-67

I arrived at the site this morning at 7:45am; the weather is sunny but relatively cool, so I hope it stays that way. Due to a very violent storm last night, the green tarp over excavation units K, L and M did not hold up well and resulted in water leaking into the trench. Other than a few fallen cobbles, disturbance caused by the water was minor. The workers cleared most of the fallen pebbles/soil, laid down the tarp over the plaster floor, and continued excavation.

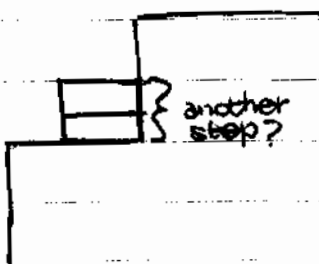
of 32
(cont.)

As noted previously, the matrix of this lot is entirely ~~is~~ tumble/fill and loosely packed soil. ~60 cm BGS, the soil is clayey, moist and medium brown. I have just found what appears to be another facade, perhaps the next step up, ~30cm above the previous facade. The new facade is also constructed of regularly laid, rectangular stones and runs N-S through the entire unit. If this is indeed another step, then we have a situation where there are, ^{going west to east,} three wider, low-lying terraces followed by at least two narrower, steeper steps. What's strange is that I don't see any additional steps to the east of these two steps.

Lot 32
(cont.)



After cleaning off the surfaces of the two steps, many questions about these constructions remain unanswered. We haven't located the next step up to the east of the two exposed ones and don't know ^{whether} the two stacked stones on the NW corner of EU M represent an intermediate step between two taller ones.



Note: figures not to scale

* Similarly stacked stones do not run south across the unit

Furthermore, many cavities appear between and behind the steps; Marcello believes that they resulted from the slumping forward of the structure itself. To get a clearer picture of the nature of the tumble and slumping of the structure, the workers will be cleaning off the south wall in units K and L.

However, an attempt to clean this area resulted in more tumble/fill collapse, so we may be unable to finish this ~~task~~ task.

Lot 32
(cont.)

Today we've also been experiencing major difficulties with the south wall of the extension (EUs K, L, M). When trying to remove stones that were out of position in the SW corner of EU M, I started a mini avalanche in the adjacent wall, which in turn collapsed over the second step. The center of the second step is being sustained by some previously removed tumble stones that will have to be removed for a photograph later on.

Marcello came by to assess the work done today; he says that the current level of EU M will be the terminus of the unit. The workers and I will clean the unit a bit more and take some photos. The tarp has also received a great deal of adjusting today since there was a little leakage into the trench from last night's storm. At present, storm clouds are indeed gathering, so it is very likely there will be a storm soon (sometime this afternoon).

Lot 33

After finishing up with EU M, the workers and I laid out EU N in the lateral extension. Accumulated error in measuring at the units resulted in the north side of EU N being 1.3 m long instead of 1 m (the SW corner of the unit was planted during survey).

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2005-18-70

at 33
(cont.)

As such, I decided to ~~make~~ the south side of the unit 1.3 m long as well, since that would result in a rectilinear unit, thus evening out the error.

The surface of this unit, as in previous units, is covered with a mixture of exposed tumble, vegetation and organically rich, dark brown loamy soil. Directly below the ground surface is a concentration of yucca roots and surprisingly, a relatively low concentration of pebbles and cobbles. A few sherds of tile, which are definitely modern, were recovered.

7/12/2005

2005-18-71

I began work today around 7:45 am; currently, the weather is partly cloudy and a bit humid. Because the unit we're working in is located well above the beginning of the trench, I've moved my sitting area up onto the mound, in front of EU N.

at 33
(cont.)

I've noticed that unlike the 3 or 4 previously excavated units, EU N has a well-defined humus layer ~30-40 cm deep. For this reason, I am breaking up this unit into ~~at~~ at least two lots. The soil change is quite distinct, from a dark brown, organically rich loamy type to a clayey, medium brown with orange hue type. What I find most surprising about this lot is the significantly lower concentration of tumble stones within it, compared to the surfaces of previous units. Could the area represented by EU N be the point of origin of tumble found in the lower units and seen in their unit profiles? Does this thicker layer of almost sterile soil ~~at~~ mean that the features below it (if any) are better preserved?

at 34

~80cm BGS, we have located what appears to be the upper edge of a wall

at 34
(cont.)

Currently exposed are six stones that make up the highest course of the wall; their orientation appears similar to the exposed section of wall that is due northeast of our unit. No discernible formations appear to the west of this feature, although another feature may be present along the north unit wall (so far, we can only see a few flatly laid stones in the north unit wall).

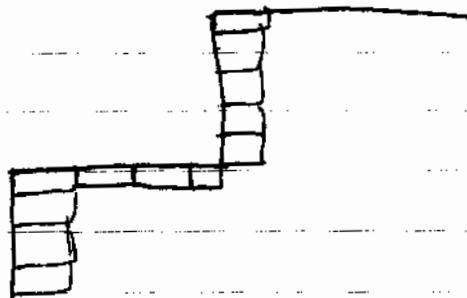
However, ~~this possible feature is not possible~~ this possible feature is not ~~possible~~ able to be studied any longer because a collapse of base soil along the north unit wall has taken out these stones along with a considerable chunk of the north wall.

~1m BGS, the soil becomes moister and more compact, although there is no change in soil texture or color. All in all, I am a bit disappointed in how poorly the structures in the lateral extension are holding up. Because the soil here is so loose and soft, exposed features collapse at least partially after exposure. The collapses along the walls have also impacted the exposed features, as we cannot direct the course of the tumbling soil and stones.

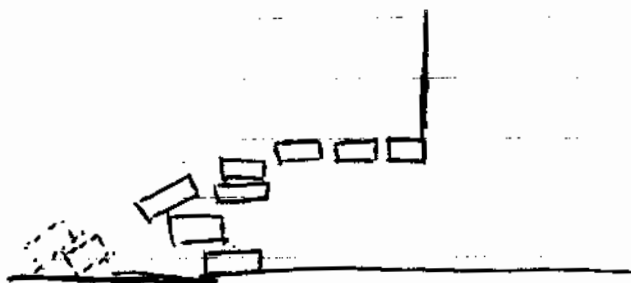
7/12/2005

2005-R-78

Our plans for the remainder of the field day are removing a stack of stones (not a feature) and cleaning thoroughly the last two units. Marcello came by after we finished this work to help with interpreting what we are encountering. According to Marcello, the so-called "second step" could, in reality, be a continuation of the first step. There are several reasons for this hypothesis. First, the "second step"'s facade appears to be very different in construction style from the facade of the first step. The stones of the second step are far smaller and less angular, and ^{have} less organized courses. A possible scenario is as follows:



Before



After

7/12/2005

2005-18-74

The facade of ~~the~~ ^{the} First Step could have blown out, scattering the topmost courses at onto the plaster floor. As the entire front column tilted forward, the rest of the step slumped in the opposite direction. In this scenario, there would have been only one step (and we're therefore missing much of the upper part of the step facade). Marcello says that we do not know enough about the constructions above this first (?) step to interpret it at the moment.

7/13/2005

2005-18-75

Lot 34
(cont.)

We arrived at the site around 8am today; the weather is overcast and cool. Sadly, Pamela, Brian and Roxanne are leaving today, so Marcello will be gone for the day. It rained for a long time last night and since the edge of the tarp was very close to the unit, a small amount of rain did seep in.

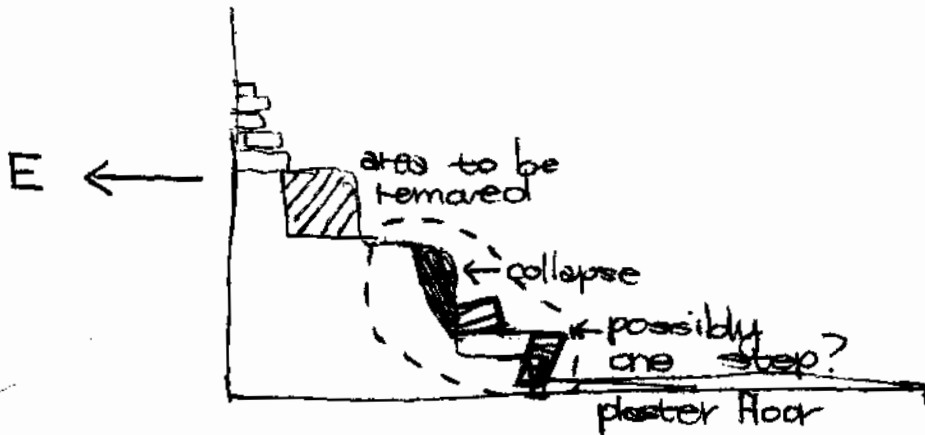
Examining the lateral extension as a whole, Marcello and I were unable to recognize any features besides the ^{scarcely} first facade ~~that~~ that abuts the plaster floor. The structure as a whole is surprisingly poorly preserved, though we cannot determine at this point why this is. One scenario is that what we're finding in the extension is an earlier construction phase, so the stones from the latest phase were re-used by occupants around the site for hundreds of years. As such, the last phase may simply be missing from both the structure surface and unit profiles. Another possible explanation is the structure was impacted significantly by natural forces such as flooding by the quebrada. A combination of both factors is also likely.

7/13/2005

2005-18-78

Lot 34
(cont.)

The work today will be concentrated in EU M and N; we will begin by taking the western half of EU N down to the level of previously named "second step".



The purpose of this action is to determine whether there is a better preserved surface/facade below what we have already exposed. This surface/facade might possibly ~~be~~^{belong} to an earlier construction phase. If no other surfaces appear, we will take all of the extension down to the level of the facade abutting the plaster floor.

We have just located a cavity in the soil matrix near the SE corner of EU N. Directly above this cavity is a large, flat cobble. However, no clear surface appears at the level of this cobble; the "courses" below what we

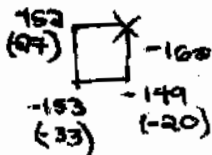
7/13/2005

2005-18-77

Lot 34
(cont.)

believed to be another step in EU N are actually more fill because large hollows appear between the stones. At ~1.5 m BGS ~~along~~ the east unit wall, there is a series of randomly placed stones with many hollows between them. This fill is completely free of artifacts, save for one sherd of pottery with a red finish. At this level, soil throughout the unit is medium brown, moist, clayey and extremely soft and loose. We continue to find cavities in both the east unit wall and the floor itself. From the east unit wall to about 50cm to the west, the stones upon the unit floor are so loosely packed with so little soil, that they can simply be lifted out of the unit by hand. Immediately west of this area is a row of three large, flat cobbles, similar to the one previously mentioned (the one next to the cavity).

At this point, I called Ellen on the radio and she came from El Cafetal to take a look at my unit. She immediately recognized the loosely laid ~~out~~ layer of stones as a fill episode; due to its distinctive appearance, she says that we



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2005-18-78

Lot 34
(cont.)

can associate this fill layer with a similar layer in Marcello's trench on the north side of Structure 1. Ellen also identified the four large, flat cobbles west of this fill layer as a "retaining wall" meant to stabilize the fill; this feature is also present on Structure 1. Lastly, Ellen said that this fill method was commonly used in the corner/side of a room. As such, we may find a wall in the next unit up. Ellen and Santiago both recommended moving up a unit, so after taking pictures and eating lunch, the workers and I will start on that.

After lunch, the workers and I began setting up EU 0 in the lateral extension. Soon after, a substantial storm started up, so we had to put up an additional tarp, adjust other tarps and put in another bracket. By the time we finished this, we ~~had~~ only had a few minutes for excavating before Ellen picked me up. Overall, it was a strange but interesting day, especially with the discovery of the loose fill layer.

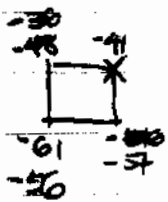
7/14/2005

2005-18-79

Marcello and I started work around 8am today; the weather is sunny and likely to become very hot. To begin the day, the workers and I are continuing excavation of EU 0.

Lot 35

As in EU N, the surface soil of EU 0 consists of a ~40 cm thick layer of dark brown, organically rich loam. According to Ellen, there used to be an animal pen atop. Structure 2, which is a likely explanation for the appearance of this substantial humus layer, compared to unit surfaces at lower elevations. Other than this, this lot has no other distinguishing features and went by very quickly.



Lot 30

Directly below Lot 35 is one of the fill layers from the latest version of construction. This is a medium brown clay that is packed between a dense concentration of cobbles of varying sizes. The clay has a slightly gritty texture and is very moldable.

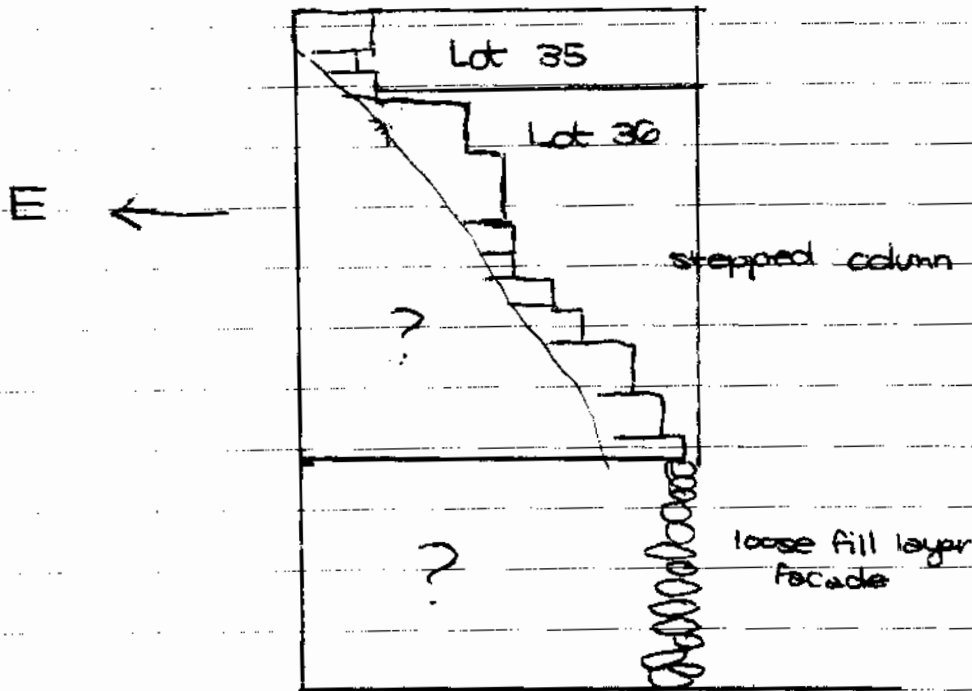
However, we soon came across two well-defined, stepped columns of rectangular, flat stones (the area to the south of these two columns is not clearly stepped).

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2005-18-80

Lot 36
(cont.)

Right now, the spatial orientation of this feature is somewhat of a mystery since it appears to terminate above the loose fill layer and is found directly below ~~the~~ the other fill layer.



Note: Figures not to scale

Marcello says that this feature was probably designed to hold open an hollow space within the structure. Of course, the question is, what exactly is this open space and what does it contain. Though a hollow space opens up to the south of the two stepped columns, the extent of our current excavation cannot tell us more about the interior of this ~~feature~~ feature.

Lot 36 (cont.) This being the case, we cannot excavate more of EU O at present. Instead, we photographed the exposed surface, measured out the next unit to the east, and began excavating there. Doing so, we hope to go up and over what was exposed in EU N and then work downwards.

Lot 37 The surface of this lot is covered with a relatively deep humus layer. Interestingly, the surface of this unit has yielded many (~10) pieces of pottery, including one jar handle, and some teeth and bone; we have not encountered ~~this type of~~ such a variety or concentration of artifacts for at least the past 7-8 units.

The soil here in this lot is of the same color and composition as that of the past two ^{unit} surfaces. Cobbles of various sizes are randomly placed within the soil; at the level where the soil transitions into clayey fill soil, the concentration of cobbles increases significantly. At this point, ~40 cm BGS, we terminated the lot and started a new one. I initially thought the layer of cobbles ~40 cm BGS may be a crude floor, but Marcello ruled out this possibility soon after looking at it.

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2005-18-82

Lot 38

Below what I believed was a crudely ^{constructed} floor, the cobble layer, the matrix reverts to medium brown clayey soil with randomly scattered cobbles ~ 40 cm BGS. a N-S running row of rectangular stones appears ~ 20 cm east of the west unit wall. This might be the beginning of some type of wall but further excavation will have to wait until tomorrow.



7/15/2005

2005-18-83

I began work today at 8am; the weather is sunny and warm, much like that of yesterday. The first thing we are doing is cleaning around the row of stones that were uncovered at the end of the day before.

at 38
(cont.)

Exposing more on the west side of the stones, I determined that there is indeed a facade there. At first I thought that this was the edge of a wall, given my first impressions, and proceeded to search for the other side of the wall. ■ However, I found only fill to the east of the aligned stones, which was when I called Marcello over to look at it. He said that the feature was a facade, not a wall, and that I should follow it down and to the edges of the unit. As such, we will begin by removing the topmost stones of the previously described "~~step~~ stepped columns" and then expose more of the facade, removing more stones of the columns as we proceed downwards. The matrix to the east of the facade and before the edge of the columns ~~is~~ is clearly fill, a mixture of slightly moist, medium brown with orange hue clay and cobbles.


After exposing ~80cm of the facade, the fill to its

7/15/2005

2005-18-84

Lot 38
(cont)

east becomes looser with less soil. Marcello came over at this point and immediately recognized what was going on. Due to the forward slump of the facade, the stepped columns were laid down to abut and stabilize it before the next version of the facade was laid down. Therefore, we are now dealing with an earlier version of Structure 2, as most of the latest construction phase is missing within the lateral extension.

 Looking at the facade (with ~1 m of it exposed) from the west, I can clearly see the edge of the construction. The facade, given its depth and corner, may be a terrace. On the south unit wall, there are three stacked stones and several stepped ones below it; although not part of the terrace, it may be a separate construction.

Note Page Layout: (heading)

Date

Year - Project # - pg

- start off with initial description every day weather, conditions, etc.
put you back in that day when reviewing notes in the future.
- write down everything, even if it's not important → detail = may important!
- don't rap or smoke in your pit!
- document all artifacts carefully.
- take lots of measurements and notes
- opening elevation (below datum)
- sketch drawings with measurements

sacar - to take out