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PVN OP 014 Excavation Report

Edward M. Schortman
Kenyon College

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Operation 14

Operation 14, located on the southern border of La Sierra's North Cluster, consists of two buildings (Strs. 66 and 67) that overlook the Quebrada Danta 8-10m to the south. Operation 14 is bordered on the east by Ops. 11 and 20, on the north by Op. 16, and on the west by Ops. 13, 19, and 54. The terrain rises very gradually south-to-north away from the quebrada and west-to-east. Structures 66 and 67 are separated by 3m, the former lying west of the latter. Both buildings were excavated, Str. 67 in 1988 and Str. 66 during the 1995 field season. Digging was sufficiently extensive in both cases to expose at least the edifices' basal dimensions along with some details of summit architecture. Work on Str. 66 revealed that what we had thought was one large edifice was actually two separate buildings (Strs. 66A and 66B). Each of these constructions is described separately below. Fully 158m² was cleared in the course of this work, directed by J. Miller, N. Condon, M. Dall, S. Kane, D. Schafer, and P. Whooley in 1988 and C. Wells during 1995.

Structure 66A

Structure 66A, the northern construction embedded within Str. 66, is 3.25m north of Str. 66B and 3m west of Str. 67. The terrain surrounding Strs. 66A and 66B is relatively flat, rising 0.18m over 23.94m south-to-north. Excavations pursued within Subops. 14E, G, H, J, K, and L exposed ca. 66m², permitting reconstructions of Str. 66A-1st's basal dimensions and general form (Subop. 14E was mistakenly assigned in both 1988 and 1995, dates on collection bags and analysis sheets were used to separate these materials). Digging was carried down to maximum depths of 0.6m and 1.04m below modern ground surface into architectural fill and outside construction, respectively. A single building phase was identified in the course of this work which was overseen by C. Wells from January 30-March 23, 1995.

| Time Span | Construction Phase | Units | Strata | Features | Date |
|-----------|--------------------|----------|--------|----------|-----------|
| 1 | - | - | S.1-4 | - | LCLI/II |
| 2 | Str. 14-Sub5-1st | U.1 | - | - | LCLI/II? |
| 3 | - | - | S.5,6 | - | LCLII |
| 4 | Str. 66A-1st | U.2-19 | - | - | LCLII/III |
| 5 | Str. 66A-1st | U. 20-21 | - | - | LCLIII |
| 6 | - | - | S.6-8 | F.1 | - |

Time Span 1

Stratum 1, a hard-compacted, medium-brown soil, was exposed to a maximum thickness

of 0.05m in a 0.5x0.5m probe dug immediately south of Str. 14-Sub5-1st (S.1's base was not encountered). The restricted portion of S.1 uncovered in our excavations precludes determining whether its deposition coincided with human occupation in the immediate area. A fine-textured, gray/white ash (S.2) cover S.1 by 0.06-0.07m. Stratum 2, in turn, is blanketed by 0.04m of hard-compacted, dark brown earth (S.3). The 0.1-0.12m of S.4, a soft-compacted, dark brown to black soil, that buries S.3 caps the stratigraphic sequence revealed in the 0.5x0.5m test. Recovery of artifacts from S.2-4, coupled with the likely cultural origin of the S.2 ash, point to a human presence nearby when S.2-4 were being deposited.

Time Span 2

Structure 14-Sub5-1st is represented by a 0.23m-high, 0.6m-wide stone wall (U.1) lying 2.69m north of Str. 66A-1st. Unit 1's stratigraphic position, covered by S.5 and 6, its preserved top lying ca. 0.1m below the base of TS.4 architecture (U.13), implies that Str. 14-Sub5-1st was raised prior to Str. 66A-1st's construction. The architectural significance of U.1 is unclear; it may be the remnant of a platform's southwestern flank or a foundation delimiting a surface-level edifice. Unit 1 is aligned roughly 313 degrees and is built of unmodified river cobbles set in a brown mud mortar.

Time Span 3

Stratum 5, a hard-compacted, medium-brown soil, accumulated to a depth of 0.08-0.10m above S.4 after Str. 14-Sub5-1st's abandonment (S.5, like its predecessors, was only revealed in the 0.5x0.5m probe referred to above). Subsequently, U.1 was blanketed by the introduction of the lowest 0.1m of S.6, a fine-textured, medium-brown earth containing numerous pebbles. Recovery of cultural materials from S.5 and lower S.6 indicates a human occupation coeval with the laying down of these soils.

Time Span 4

Structure 66A-1st is a platform defined by vertical stone basal walls 0.4-0.65m high (U.3/5 and 6) on all four sides. Discrepancies in the heights of northern and southern basal facings and summit step-ups suggest that Str. 66A-1st was erected over a significant north-to-south slope (ascending approximately 0.6m over 7.16m in this direction). What we had originally thought was an artificial construction linking two parts of Str. 66, therefore, seems to have been a low hill against which two adjoining edifices were built. Fill contained by U.3/5 and 6 consists of a moderately dense concentration of stones set in a brown soil matrix (U.19). The basal facings are backed by terraces, measuring 0.4-0.74m across, that terminate in substantial stone ascents (U.8-11) to the summit. These risers are 0.49-0.85m tall and 0.4-1.15m across (the western element (U.11) was not sufficiently cleared to determine its width). The earthen-floored space bounded by U.8-11 encompasses 4.09x4.25m and shows no signs of internal divisions. A 0.4m-long (minimally) eastward projection from the northern exposed end of U.11 may have been part of an effort to subdivide the superstructure's interior, though evidence in support of such an interpretation is not available.

After completion of the core platform, Str. 66A-1st covered 5.85x7.16m. There is some indication that the above construction achieved its final form by means of several stages. Unit 7

survives as an east-west running line of cobbles embedded within the terrace surface backing U.6 on the north. Unit 7 runs 5.1m west from its junction with U.3 at which point it corners and heads back to the south (traced for only 0.35m before disappearing beneath U.8; U.7, here, possibly comprises the back (eastern) side of U.5, the western basal facing). Though U.7's architectural significance is uncertain, it may well have been the platform's northern basal wall prior to U.6's construction. If so, then the raising of U.6 would have added a scant 0.5m to Str. 66A-1st's northern flank.

Steps and a connecting terrace were added to Str. 66A-1st's northern and eastern sides during subsequent renovations. The first stage in this sequence was construction of U.2, a 0.65m-high basal wall that completely buried U.6, the previous northern basal facing. With the addition of U.2, the northern terrace was now 1.07m wide. On the east, U.2 corners with U.12, a comparable facing that encases the northern third of U.3, the eastern basal wall. Unit 12 interdigitates with the eastern staircase (U.17/18). These steps project 1.25m and 0.6m east from U.3 and 12, respectively, and are 2.8m long north-south. The basal riser (U.17) is 0.1m high by 0.5m wide, its successor, U.18, standing 0.2m above the U.17 tread. Units 17 and 18 would have formalized passage from ground surface to the platform's first ascending terrace but it is unclear how the summit was reached from this point. On the north, the U.13/14 staircase protrudes 0.85-1.1m north from U.2 and covers 3.65m east-west. The basal step (U.13) rises 0.45m and measures 0.42m across whereas U.14 stands 0.2m above U.13's tread, reaching a height equivalent to the top of U.2. Built atop the newly enlarged northern terrace is U.15, a 0.29m-high by 0.45m-wide wall that extends 1.4m north from its abutment with U.8 (running over U.7, 6, and 2 in the process). Paralleling U.15 on the east is U.16, a 0.76m-high by 0.45m-wide wall that projects 0.74m north from U.8 (U.16 abuts the latter, runs over U.7, and ends at U.6). Only 0.50-0.55m separates U.15 and 16, creating an enclosure that covers ca. 0.4m² and is open completely on the north overlooking the U.13/14 steps. The location of this cubicle on Str. 66A-1st's center-line implies that it was meant to be a focal point for activities conducted on the building's northern flank. Recovery of large quantities of ceramics, especially incensarios, and human skulls within the compartment reinforces this impression.

Structure 66A-1st was, by the end of TS.4, a substantial, earth-and-stone-filled platform standing 0.89m (on the south) to 1.52m high (on the north), measuring 6.45x7.51m (excluding the steps), and aligned roughly 10 degrees. The edifice appears to have been built into a significant north-to-south ascent, original ground surface rising ca. 0.6m over 7.16m, and to have reached its final form by dint of at least two episodes of renovation to the original platform. Just prior to abandonment, Str. 66A-1st was bounded on all sides by vertical facings 0.4-0.65m high that give way to terraces that are 0.4-1.07m wide. These, in turn, terminate in vertical walls that ascend 0.49-0.85m to the earthen-floored summit. The latter seems to have supported a perishable superstructure containing a single room that covers 17.4m² in which no built-in furniture was identified. The unusual width of the northern summit wall (U.8, 1.15m across) hints at its use as more than a foundation; possibly it also served as a bench. Formal access to the platform was channeled up stairs on the east and north, each composed of two stone-faced risers that are 0.1-0.45m high with treads measuring 0.42-0.5m wide. These steps project 0.85-1.15m north and 0.6-1.25m east from the platform and are 3.65m and 2.8m long, respectively. Both staircases provide access to the terrace surfaces but we do not know how the summit was attained. The lower southern basal and summit walls (0.4m and 0.49m high, respectively) certainly provided the fewest obstacles to reaching the summit, implying that it was from this side that the superstructure was entered. The northern steps lead directly to a small cubicle

(0.4m²) set on Str. 66A-1st's center-line and open over the northern staircase. Material found on and immediately above the earthen floor of this compartment suggests that it served as a repository for esoteric objects possibly employed in activities conducted on, or near, the platform's northern, fairly wide terrace (1.07m across). All facings and foundations are made of unmodified river cobbles set in a brown earth mortar.

Time Span 5

This interval witnesses a late reoccupation of Str. 66A-1st. The only clear construction assigned to TS.5 is U.21, a 0.3m-high by 0.69m-wide wall located on the platform's summit. This entity was traced for a distance of 0.9m east-west, continuing beyond excavation limits on the west, and is oriented very approximately 276 degrees, 30 minutes. Unit 21's base is 0.19m above Str. 66A-1st's summit floor, separated from the latter by a hard-compacted brown to light brown soil in which a few rocks are scattered (U.20). Based on these stratigraphic relations, U.21 seems to have been built well after the building raised during TS.4 was abandoned.

The architectural significance of U.20 and 21 is unclear. The former may have been purposefully introduced to raise the summit level, though no retaining walls bounding this putative earthen fill were noted. Alternatively, U.20 may represent debris that accumulated after Str. 66A-1st was abandoned. Unit 21, in turn, could be part of a foundation delimiting an insubstantial construction built atop the ruined platform. No other fragments of this edifice were recovered, leaving unanswered questions concerning the building's form and dimensions. Unit 21 is built of unmodified river cobbles set in a brown mud mortar.

Time Span 6

Following abandonment of the squatter settlement atop Str. 66A-1st, the building was blanketed by the continued natural deposition of S.6 and the introduction of S.7 and 8. Stratum 7 is a hard-compacted, light brown earth that blankets S.6 by 0.18-0.39m and is, in turn, covered by 0.04-0.08m of soft-compacted, dark brown, root-rich soil (S.8). Embedded within the upper portions of S.6 as well as S.7 and 8 is a dense concentration of rocks fallen from TS.4 and 5 architecture (F.1). Feature 1 covers the platform and extends for 2.31m and 1.68m south and north of Str. 66A-1st, respectively. Stone density within F.1 decreases with increasing distance from Str. 66A-1st.

Structure 66B

Structure 66B is 3.25m south of Str. 66A, a low hill lying between them. Based on the relative depths of Str. 66B-1st's northern and southern architectural features, it appears that the ground on which the edifice was built rose approximately 0.5m over 5.69m south-to-north. As noted in the earlier discussion of Str. 66A-1st (TS.4), it was this knoll located between the two neighboring edifices that we misinterpreted as architecture linking Strs. 66A-1st and 66B-1st. Ancient ground surface (dating to TS.3) also seems to have ascended beneath Str. 66B-1st, rising 0.12m across 6.54m east-to-west. Excavations conducted within Subops. 14E, F, I, and L uncovered ca. 44m², revealing most of the building's western, northern, and southern flanks along with about a half of its eastern perimeter (Subops 14E and F were mistakenly assigned in both 1988 and 1995, dates on lot bags and data analysis sheets being used to separate material

assigned to the same suboperations but derived from different contexts). Roughly two-thirds of the summit was also exposed. Digging was pursued to maximum depths of 1.1m and 1.14m beneath modern ground surface outside construction and into architectural fill, respectively. A single building phase was identified in the course of this work directed by C. Wells from January 30-March 23, 1995.

Time Spans

| Time Span | Construction Phase | Units | Strata | Features | Date |
|-----------|--------------------|---------|--------|----------|-----------------|
| 1 | - | - | S.1-3 | - | Mprecl, LCLI/II |
| 2 | - | - | - | F.1,2 | LCLII? |
| 3 | Str. 66B-1st | U.1-17 | - | F.3 | LCLIII/II |
| 4 | Str. 66B-1st | U.18-21 | - | - | LCLIII, EPC? |
| 5 | - | - | S.3-5 | F.4 | - |

Time Span 1

Stratum 1, a soft-compacted, coarse-textured, brown sand, was uncovered to a maximum thickness of 0.15m at the base of a probe dug off Str. 66B-1st's western flank. The base of S.1 was not encountered and its top ascends 0.05m across the 0.52m it was exposed from west to east. Capping S.1 by 0.03-0.05m is a lens of soft-compacted, fine-textured, dark gray ash (S.2). Stratum 2 trends upward west-to-east like its predecessor and is sufficiently high to be associated with F.1 and 2, 2.98m to the east. As this intervening area was not excavated, the putative linkage cannot be established. Stratum 3, a moderately hard-compacted tan clay that is increasingly fine-textured with greater depth, covers S.2 and runs beneath TS.3 architecture. Though an undetermined portion of S.3 clearly predates Str. 66B-1st's erection, it is unclear how this soil relates to possible constructions associated with TS.2 (F.1 and 2). It may be that S.3's deposition began during a localized occupational hiatus after the latter were abandoned but before work began on Str. 66B-1st. Since we could not substantiate this interpretation, we opted to advance a simpler hypothesis in which the lowest segments of S.3 were introduced during TS.1. The S.2 ash strongly points to a human presence in the immediate area by at least the conclusion of TS.1 as does the recovery of artifacts from the relevant portions of S.3.

Time Span 2

Features 1 and 2 are very tentatively identified as the remnants of two successive earthen constructions entombed beneath Str. 66A-1st (so tentative, in fact, that they received "feature," and not "unit," designations). Feature 1 is composed of moderately soft-compacted, dark brown to gray clay exposed to a maximum thickness of 0.2m in the base of a test dug beneath Str. 66A-1st's summit (F.1's base was not reached). This entity ends abruptly on the north in a more-or-

less vertical face and extends southward for 0.51m, continuing beyond excavation limits in this direction. Feature 2, made of moderately hard-compacted, tan clay, blankets F.1 by 0.14-0.3m. Unlike its immediate antecedent, F.2 steps up in two indistinct segments from north to south; the first, clearest riser ascends 0.2m, is succeeded for 0.15m by a relatively flat surface above which F.2 slopes up an additional 0.2m over the exposed 0.34m, north-south. Feature 2's base was not encountered though there is some evidence that the entity consists of at least one more riser; fronting the lowest exposed ascent is a sloping zone that ascends 0.06m over 0.18m north-south. The composition and forms of both features are sufficiently distinct to warrant caution in consigning them to Str. 66B-1st's fill. Instead, they may represent portions of two diminutive clay platform, the first (F.1) standing at least 0.2m high and the second (F.2) rising minimally 0.46m while encapsulating its predecessor. Additional clearing, for which there were no resources or time in 1995, would be needed to test this proposition.

Time Span 3

Structure 66B-1st is bounded on the south, west, and east by vertical facings that rise 0.37-0.73m high. The eastern and western basal walls (U.3 and 2) ascend directly to the earthen-floored summit. The fill retained by U.1-3 consists of two distinct earth layers: a coarse-textured, soft-compacted, dark brown to gray sand (U.14) succeeded by a coarse-textured, soft-compacted brown sand (U.15). Unit 14 is minimally 0.28m thick whereas U.15 blankets its predecessor by ca. 0.4m.

On the south, the basal facing (U.1) gives way to a 0.52-0.9m-wide earthen-floored terrace that ends in a ca. 0.45m-high step-up (U.17) to the summit. Unit 10, a 0.1m-high by 0.19m-wide wall, protrudes 0.65m west from U.4 (see below), joining the latter construction where it narrows from 0.45m to 0.25m as it proceeds south-to-north. Unit 10 is 0.22m north of U.17 and has successfully frustrated our best efforts to ascertain its architectural significance. A 0.12m-high by 0.3m-wide step (U.11) composed of a single cut-stone block projects 0.69m south from its abutment with U.1. Unit 11 is more-or-less centered on U.17 and probably facilitated access to the summit from Str. 66B-1st's southern flank.

A more formal entryway consists of a staircase composed of three stone risers that vary in height from 0.14-0.28m (U.6-8). Units 6-8's treads are 0.25m and 0.41m wide. The U.6/8 stairs extend 0.66m east from U.3 and were followed for 1.4m to the north before excavations ceased. The earthen-floored landing that succeeds the U.6/8 steps is bounded on the west by a 0.3m-high, 0.96m-wide (east-west), minimally 0.7m-long (north-south) wall (U.9). Flanking the landing on the south is an earthen-floored compartment (Room 1) bounded on all sides save the north by foundations that stand 0.2-0.4m high and measure 0.25-0.45m across (U.4 and foundations set on U.1 and 3 on the south and east; as noted above, U.4's western flank steps in [eastward] 0.2m at a point ca. 1.15m north of its southern margin). The enclosure's northern flank is delimited by a stone-faced, vertical ascent of 0.2m (U.5). Unit 5 extends down at least 0.28m below the Room 1's putative floor level and does not seem to have served as a footing. More likely, the compartment was entered by stepping down 0.2m from the summit landing on the north. Room 1 borders U.17 on the east and its featureless interior encompasses 1.45m on a side. A 0.35m-wide gap intervenes between U.9's southern margin and the enclosure's northwest corner.

Another stairway may have originally graced an earlier version of Str. 66B-1st's western flank. This entity, which is covered by Room 2, is composed of a reconstructed three risers, the

basal one of which is the lower 0.3m of U.2. A 0.54m-wide tread backing U.2 ends in a vertical ascent of 0.16m, succeeded by a 0.2m-wide tread that gives way to a 0.15m-high riser (the upper two steps are glossed as U.16). If this reconstruction is correct, and U.16 stood no taller originally, then Str. 66B-1st would have been 0.61m high on the west when these stairs were in use. Unit 16's north-south extent is unknown as is its relationship with other possible early architectural features.

Structure 66B-1st's northern flank is not easily comprehended. The western basal facing (U.2) ends without clear resolution in this direction; the eastern basal wall (U.3) was not traced far enough northward to reveal how it might have articulated with architecture on this side. What we did find on the north is a semi-circular stone construction (U.12) that extends a linear distance of 3.45m east from its junction with U.2 and varies in thickness from 0.25-1.05m. Unit 12's original height is estimated to have been 0.43m, though whether it maintained this altitude over its entire extent is unknown. On the east, U.12 ends where it intersects U.13, a 0.53m-high L-shaped wall whose stocky shorter leg measures 0.45m north-south and projects 0.35m west from the north end of its thinner, north-south running segment. The latter is 0.3m wide and was traced for 0.4m southward before excavation ceased. Whatever the architectural significance of U.12 and 13 might be, there is no sign that they functioned as fill-retaining walls or joined with U.3 to close off the platform's northeast corner. Lacking such evidence, we propose that Str. 66B-1st's builders raised their edifice against the southern escarpment of the low northern hill, using that knoll to close off the platform's flank on this side. The existence of a formal entryway on Str. 66B-1st's eastern side (the U.6/8 steps), together with the more informal accessway on the south (U.11), imply that construction in unexcavated areas east of U.13 closed off access to the summit from this side. Without additional work, however, such interpretations are no more than plausible speculations.

Located approximately 1.7m north of U.12 is a dense deposit of cultural material (F.3), primarily ceramic fragments. Feature 3's top is about 0.07m above the level of U.12's base, and the debris reaches a maximum recorded thickness of 0.48m. Though no pit outlines were noted, F.3 may have been trash that accumulated in a natural or artificial declivity between Strs. 66A-1st and 66B-1st. Its proximity to the U.12/13 complex hints at a possible association among these elements, though such a linkage is not established.

Structure 66B-1st is an earth-filled platform that rises 0.7-0.82m on all sides save the north where it was seemingly raised against a low hill. The building covers 5.8m on a side (not including the eastern outset stairs) and is oriented 354-359 degrees. The earthen-floored summit was reached from the south by ascending a 0.1m-high step appended to the basal facing, traversing the 0.52-0.9m-wide southern terrace, and then stepping up and over the 0.45m-high riser that defines the summit's southern margin. Two staircases may have provided access to Str. 66B-1st's summit from the east and west. The latter is set flush with the building's western basal riser (U.2), consists of three steps, and was completely buried by TS.4 construction. The better understood eastern staircase is also made up of three vertical risers, each 0.14-0.28m high, juts 0.66m east from the platform's basal facing, and is at least 1.4m long north-south. The treads on the eastern staircase are 0.25 and 0.41m across. The latter access feature leads up to an earthen-floored landing bordered by a room on the south. Said enclosure has an earthen floor encompassing 2.1m² set ca. 0.2m below the rest of the summit surface. Foundations measuring 0.25-0.45m wide and standing 0.2-0.4m high delimit the compartment on all sides except the north. That flank is marked by a sheer vertical descent from the summit that probably marks the primary point of entrance to the enclosure. A 0.3m-high by 0.96m-wide stone construction lies

1.8m west of the eastern steps and defines the landing's boundary on this side. Only followed for 0.7m north of its southern margin, it is possible that this unusually broad wall functioned as a bench facing out over the stairs. Structure 66B-1st's northern edge is defined by two intersecting architectural elements that together cover 3.7m east-west. Most of this distance is taken up by a curved wall segment that bulges out to the north, is 0.25-1.05m wide, and may have stood 0.43m high. Lying 1.7m north of the aforementioned semi-circle is a dense artifact deposit that is 0.48m thick. It may be that this debris was generated by activities conducted in and around the curved wall, though this connection is far from certain.

The most common material used in TS.3 architecture is unmodified river cobbles. Cut stone blocks were employed in U.13 but are particularly prevalent in steps: U.11 is a single, faced block and similarly modified stones are incorporated in U.16, 6, and 7. Masonry is an especially common component in the last two entities. There is a general tendency to orient the naturally flatter aspects of unmodified cobbles so that they face outwards. Unit 12, the northern curving wall, diverges from this pattern; its rocks face inwards (towards the south). A brown mud mortar is used as a binding agent in all foundations and facings.

Time Span 4

Units 18/20 delimit an enclosure (Room 2) built among the ruins of Str. 66B-1st's summit. As much as 0.1m of moderately coarse-textured, moderately hard-compacted, brown soil (U.21) accumulated over Str. 66B-1st's summit prior to Room 2's construction. It is hard to say whether U.21 was purposefully introduced to raise the summit's height or resulted from gradual deterioration of the TS.3 superstructure and natural soil deposition processes. The absence of clear walls designed to retain U.21 tentatively supports the latter interpretation. The real possibility that such units have collapsed, however, means that we cannot rule out the former reconstruction. Units 18/20 are foundations that stand 0.34-0.42m high and are 0.2-0.5m wide. There is a 0.8m-wide indentation in the approximate center of U.20's western (interior) face. Unit 20 narrows from 0.5m to 0.2m across in this space and drops to 0.11m high. It would be reasonable to see this as evidence for a 0.8m-wide doorway in Room 2's eastern footing. Such an entryway seems redundant, however, given that the compartment's entire north side is completely open. Consequently, the indentation may have served as a niche set at floor level. It is important to bear in mind, however, that construction in this area is poorly preserved and it is possible that Room 2's eastern and western foundations (U.19 and 20) originally joined with U.12, the latter still protruding 0.33m above floor level. The enclosure's featureless earthen-floored interior covers 2.7m² (2x1.35m; not including U.12) and the construction is aligned approximately 357 degrees. Two burials found beneath Room 2's floor, intruded into U.15 (Str. 66B-1st's fill) are probably associated with this late compartment.

Units 18/20 are made of unmodified river cobbles the naturally flatter aspects of which are directed outwards. All stones are set in a brown mud mortar.

Time Span 5

Following abandonment of the presumed squatter settlement atop Str. 66B-1st, natural deposition of S.3 resumed. This layer was, in turn, covered by S.4 and 5, moderately coarse-textured, moderately hard-compacted soils distinguished solely by overlying S.5's darker brown hue and greater concentration of small roots. Together, S. 4/5 blanket S.3 by 0.22-0.42m.

Embedded within upper S.3 as well as S.4 and 5 is a dense to moderately dense concentration of rocks fallen from TS.3 and 4 architecture (F.4). Feature 4 extends over Str. 66B-1st and for 1.6m south and 1.4m north of construction and for at least 0.36m and 0.73m west and east of architecture, respectively.

Structure 67

Structure 67 is 3m east of Str. 66 and 8m north of the Quebrada Danta. The terrain surrounding Str. 67 rises 0.08m over 10m south-to-north and 0.06m across 10.65m from west to east. Excavations conducted with Subops. 14A/F uncovered approximately 48m², revealing all but 3.5m of the edifice’s basal perimeter. Exposure of the summit was limited to two, 1m-wide axial trenches that intersected at Str. 67-1st’s approximate center. Digging was carried down to maximum depths of 1.05m and 0.67m below modern ground surface outside architecture and into construction fill, respectively. A single building phase was identified in the course of these investigations directed by J. Miller, N. Condon, M. Dall, S. Kane, D. Schafer, and P. Whooley.

| Time Span | Construction Phase | Units | Strata | Features | Date |
|-----------|--|---------------------------------|--------|----------|-----------|
| 1 | - | - | S.1 | - | LCLI/II? |
| 2 | Str. 14-Sub1-1st Str. 14-Sub2-1st Str. 14-Sub3-1st Str. 14-Sub4-1st | U.16,17 U.18 U.20 U.19 | - | F.1 | LCLI/II? |
| 3 | - | - | S.2, 3 | - | LCLI/II? |
| 4 | Str. 67-1st | U.1-15, 21-23 | - | - | LCLII/III |
| 5 | - | - | S.3, 4 | F.2 | - |

Time Span 1

Natural deposition of S.1, a hard-compacted, light tan sand, is the first event recorded in Subop. 14A/F. Stratum 1 was exposed to a thickness of 0.01-0.04m at the base of excavation north and south of Str. 67-1st (its base was not encountered). This layer maintains more-or-less the same level over its uncovered extent, rising an estimated 0.02m over 9.3m south-to-north (based on two discontinuous exposures north and south of TS.4 construction). Not enough of S.1 was revealed to determine whether it contained cultural material.

Time Span 2

Feature 1 is a lens composed of moderately coarse-textured, soft-compacted soil stained dark black with organic material and which overlies S.1 north of Str 67-1st. This entity achieves a maximum thickness of 0.17m where it intersects Str. 67-1st's northern basal wall (U.5), pinching out entirely 0.69m to the north. Given that F.1 is buried by earth laid down in succeeding TS.3 (S.2), it is more likely that U.5 was intruded into F.1 than that it predates the organic-rich lens. The heavy organic staining of F.1, coupled with the recovery of artifacts from it (including bajareque), imply its cultural origin, possibly as debris associated with a construction buried beneath Str. 67-1st.

Units 16/20 may well have been low foundations associated with surface-level buildings raised and occupied during TS.2 (Str. 14-Sub1/4-1st). Units 16 and 17 form an L-shaped wall located 0.3m off Str. 67-1st's southwest corner. Unit 16 was traced for 1.05m north-south, U.17 extending at least 2m east from its junction with U.16's southern terminus. Together, U.16 and 17 appear to form the southwest corner of a building (Str. 14-Sub1-1st) that continues north and east under Str. 67-1st. Unit 18 lies 0.45-0.6m west of U.16. Like its near neighbor, U.18 is also L-shaped; its eastern leg was followed for 1.15m north-south whereas the southern element projects at least 0.7m southwest from its junction with the eastern segment's southern end. Unit 18 may be the southeast corner of another surface-level edifice (Str. 14-Sub2-1st). Unit 19 is 0.5m west, and 0.3m north, of U.18's eastern and southern legs and was exposed for 2.35m north-south. The architectural significance of U.19 is unclear; it may be part of the perimeter of a surface-level construction (Str. 14-Sub4-1st). Though the bases of U.16/19 rest at about the same depths as do Str. 67-1st's basal walls, they are largely buried by S.2, which was laid down during TS.3. This stratigraphic relation points to U.16/19's temporal priority *vis a vis* Str. 67-1st.

Unit 20 is 0.3-0.45m north of Str. 67-1st, its top lying 0.02-0.03m below the base of the platform's northern facing (U.5). Unit 20 was uncovered for a distance of 3.5m east-west and is most likely a foundation from yet another surface-level building (Str. 14-Sub3-1st). All foundations dating to TS.2 are made of unmodified river cobbles set in a brown mud mortar. Structures 14-Sub1-1st, Sub2-1st, Sub3-1st, and Sub4-1st are aligned approximately 271 degrees, 5 degrees, 271 degrees, and 359 degrees, respectively.

Time Span 3

Stratum 2, a moderately coarse-textured, moderately hard-compacted, tan soil covers S.1 by 0.08-0.2m north and south of Str. 67-1st and F.1 by as little as 0.07m. East and west of the building S.2 was exposed to a maximum thickness of 0.36m, its base not having been reached in these locations. Stratum 2 runs beneath, and buries the lower 0.05-0.14m of TS.4 architecture, strongly suggesting that its deposition predates Str. 67-1st's construction. Recovery of artifacts from S.2 points to a human presence in the area while the layer was being introduced.

Approximately 0.04m of S.3, a moderately coarse-textured, hard-compacted, dark brown soil, intervenes between S.2 and a late addition (U.21) to Str. 67-1st. This stratigraphic position implies that the lowest portions of S.3 were introduced sometime between late TS.3 and TS.4.

Time Span 4

Structure 67-1st is a platform fronted by basal walls (U.1, 5, 8, and 9) that rise 0.2-0.37m above S.2. The northwest platform corner is deeply indented, measuring 0.75m east-west by

1.1m north-south. Unit 5, the northern facing, defines this embayment on the east whereas an eastward extension of U.10, the second ascending western terrace, delimits the southern flank. That U.10 is exposed here may suggest that it was the western basal facing for an earlier version of Str. 67-1st that was superseded by U.9. The latter does not extend the full length of Str. 67-1st's western flank, stopping 0.6m shy of U.10's northern terminus. Structure 67-1st's fill (U.23) is a mix of stones and a moderately coarse-textured, hard-compacted, dark brown soil.

The eastern facing (U.8) gives way to a 1.31m-wide earthen terrace that terminates on the west in a 0.52m-high vertical ascent (U.22) to the summit. The remaining sides are mounted by two-to-three low, earthen-floored terraces with widely varying widths: 0.41m and 2m across on the south; 0.22m and 0.51m wide on the north; and 0.41m, 0.65m, and 1.95m across on the west. The terraces are faced by stone risers (U.2, 6, 10, and 11) that are 0.11m-0.4m tall. Access to the earthen-floored summit was most likely from the west where the basal facing is particularly low (0.2m high) and the greatest number of terraces (three) are found. The summit measures 4.1x4.35m and is bounded by 0.11-0.4m-high stone step-ups (U.3, 7, 12, and 22) on all sides. A stone-faced and -surfaced bench (U.4), measuring 1.56x2m, dominates this space. Unit 4 stands 0.13m high on the west, but rises 0.3-0.4m above the summit on its remaining sides. The lack of foundations demarcating summit rooms leaves the impression that Str. 67-1st's summit was open on all sides.

Three low constructions (U.13/15) are appended to Str. 67-1st's western and eastern flanks. Unit 13 is a ca. 0.4m-high stone construction that runs 2m north from the platform's southeast corner and projects at least 0.66m east from U.8, the eastern basal wall. It is possible that this entity continues further east beyond excavation limits, widening slightly eastward. Unit 14 juts 0.95m east/northeast from Str. 67-1st's northeast corner. The westernmost 0.7m is 0.5m wide (north-south); the unit narrows to 0.25m across over its remaining eastern extent. These shifts suggest that U.14 was built in two stages, the 0.25x0.25m eastern block having been added relatively late in TS.4. Unit 15 closely resembles U.14. The former protrudes 1.3m west from the platform's northwest corner, closing off the northern side of the inset corner. Unit 15 measures 0.45m across over its eastern 0.9m, narrowing to 0.15m on its western margin. As was the case with U.14, these construction changes imply that U.15 was fashioned in two stages, expanding east-to-west over an unknown period of time. The western extension lines up tolerably well with U.9, its eastern segment paralleling U.10. The modifications noted in U.15 might be contemporary with the tentatively postulated addition of U.9 to an earlier western basal facing (U.10; see above). The area enclosed by U.5, 10, and 15 encompasses 0.6x0.9m.

Unit 21 is a ca. 0.15m-high late addition made to Str. 67-1st's southern flank. Resting 0.03-0.04m above S.2 and overriding U.17 (Str. 14-Sub1-1st, TS.2), U.21 was followed for 0.8m south from its abutment with U.1 (the southern basal facing) before excavation ceased. Unit 21's architectural significance is abundantly obscure; it may be part of a surface-level edifice built against Str. 67-1st near the end of TS.4.

Structure 67-1st is a platform standing 0.86-1.06m tall, measuring 7.52x8.53m, and oriented roughly 357 degrees, 30 minutes. A variably wide earthen-floored terrace (0.22-1.31m across) surrounds the building on all sides save the northwest corner which is indented 0.75x1.1m. On the east, this terrace gives way directly to a step-up to the summit whereas the northern, southern, and western flanks are ascended by one (in the first two cases) and two (in the last) risers that are backed by earthen surfaces 0.51-2m wide. The greater number of terraces on the west tentatively implies that traffic to the summit was funneled up this side. The earthen floored summit covers 17.8m² and is bounded by 0.11-0.4m high stone step-ups on all

sides. A stone-faced and -surfaced bench, measuring 1.56x2m and standing 0.13-0.4m tall, dominates this space from its position near the center of the summit's western margin. There are no signs of foundations atop Str. 67-1st, suggesting that the terraces and summit were not subdivided into chambers.

There are hints of at least one renovation visited on Str. 67-1st during TS.4. The western basal wall (U.9) appears to have been appended to an earlier facing (U.10) near TS.4's conclusion. This putative addition may coincide with the westward extension of a low wall (U.15) bounding the northern side of the indented northwest corner. These constructions created a small, earthen-floored cubicle (encompassing 0.5m²), completely open on the west. In addition to U.15, at least three other low walls were built against Str. 67-1st's basal facings near this interval's conclusion; U.14 projects 0.95m east/northeast from the platform's northeastern corner while U.13 runs 2m north from the southeast corner and continues at least 0.66m to the east (possibly extending beyond excavation limits in this direction). A 0.15m-high wall traced for 0.8m south from its abutment with Str. 67-1st may be the remains of a footing that marked the perimeter of a surface-level building raised against the platform's southern flank.

All TS.4 facings, risers, additions, and the bench are made of unmodified river cobbles set in a brown mud mortar. In all but one instance, the cobbles are flat-laid; the southern face of U.14's eastern addition is fashioned of cobbles set on end.

Time Span 5

Resumption of S.3's deposition occurred following Str. 67-1st's abandonment. Stratum 3, in turn, was covered by S.4, a moderately coarse-textured, hard-compacted, dark brown-to-black soil distinguished by the numerous small roots found penetrating it. Most likely, S.3 and 4 are parts of the same horizon the uppermost 0.08-0.13m of which has a slightly higher organic content because of its proximity to modern ground surface. Overall, S.3 and 4 cover S.2 by 0.53-0.8m. Embedded within S.3 and 4 is a moderately dense concentration of stones fallen from final phase construction (F.2). Feature 2 is found overlying Str. 67-1st and for at least 1.16m away from extant architecture.

Chronological Summary

A few scattered sherds diagnostic of the Middle Preclassic, found mixed with later material in the environs of Str. 66B-1st, weakly suggest a light human occupation within Op 14 during this early span. The Late Classic I/II transition witnesses a considerable upsurge in activity. Excavations conducted around all three of the investigated edifices uncovered evidence for occupation dating to this interval and five modest buildings (Strs. 14-Sub1-1st, Sub2-1st, Sub3-1st, Sub4-1st, and Sub5-1st) were apparently raised now. The putative earthen platforms buried beneath Str. 66B-1st (F.1 and 2) could have been built at this time as well. Structures 66A-1st and 67-1st were most probably constructed during Late Classic II, their use extending well into the succeeding Late Classic III. Structure 66B-1st might have been built slightly later, possibly towards the end of Late Classic II or early Late Classic III, and sustained significant occupation into the latter period. The remnants of squatter settlements found atop Strs. 66A-1st and 66B-1st seem to date to Late Classic III as there are few signs attesting to later, significant occupation anywhere in Op.14. If true, this finding suggests that Late Classic III use of Op.14 was interrupted by a settlement hiatus of sufficient duration to permit the deposition of

0.1-0.19m of soil over Strs. 66A-1st and 66B-1st's platform summits. The very few Early Postclassic ceramic fragments found intermingled with earlier material on Str. 66B-1st imply a persistent, albeit small, occupation of this building after the Late Classic's end. No evidence of Late Postclassic or Historic period use of Op. 14 was recorded.