

Lamanai--The 1998 Season

LAMANAI FIELD REPORTS 1998

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Dr. Pendergast cleaning possible earlier LBT (Lamanai Building Type) in N10-27, "Harold" .



Harold (N10-27) SE side of N10-2: Estuardo working on stair.

REPORT OF 1998 ARCHAEOLOGICAL MAPPING AND INVESTIGATIONS OF STRUCTURE N10-27.

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Introduction

We did not initially plan to probe Str. N10-27, in front of which Stela 9 was discovered. However, in the course of developing planning exercises for the LFRC Maya architecture course, we realized that the structure was well suited to the exercise of mapping monumental architecture. First and foremost, it had already been recorded, so that the students would not be responsible for primary recording of critical features. In addition, Str. N10-27 is not overwhelmingly large, yet it displays a range of architectural features: a Lamanai Building Type athwart a central stair; stairside outsets; and exposed terraces. Finally and not least important, the structure attracts tourists because of the presence of the stela, and we had in mind that if, in the process of cleaning various features for plans and profiles, we could clarify aspects of the sequence, we could proceed further to stabilize and consolidate those features, such as the lower portion of the central stair, that would improve the building's appearance for visitors to the site.

Excavation team, in addition to the PI: Claude Belanger, David Pendergast, Scott Simmons, Terry Powis, Norbert Stanchly, Mark Shelby, Laura Howard, and the students from the 1998 architectural field school.

Tasks and Activities

The following areas of N10-27 were the focus of architectural examination and excavation activity:

- 1) clearing the lower portion of the central stair of overlying midden
- 2) clearing core material from the north and south doorways through the east (back) wall of the chambered building that was built athwart the central stair, and which Loten and



Harold (N10-27) LBT, N. doorway. E. wall excavated by N. Stanchly .



Pendergast have referred to as an example of the Lamanai Building Type. Loten has since proposed a change to Lamanai Temple Type, but for the present progress report we have chosen the less culturally specific term and will generally use the abbreviation LBT.

3) clearing the portion of the central stair that extends upward behind the Lamanai Building Type

4) probing behind the stairside outsets associated with the LBT to learn something about earlier building phases.

Results

Clearing the central stair of overlying midden: The lower portion of the central stair of N10-27 is in a poor state of preservation (see Drawings No. 1). The stairsides can be traced and the risers followed, but many of the stones of the stair were either removed and re-used in ancient times or have been destroyed by collapse of higher portions of the structure. Nonetheless there is enough structural evidence remaining to enable the entire stair to be stabilized and reconstructed, and such an undertaking would improve the appearance of the building immensely for tourism purposes.

The benefit of potential stabilization and reconstruction is the main reason why we will continue to clear the stair during the 1999 season. The experience afforded to architectural students in tracing the remains of the collapsed stair provides an educational rationale, and the reasonably well preserved midden overlying the stair continues to provide sherds and other artifacts from the Terminal Classic and Early Postclassic periods. Most of this cultural material repeats forms and types already excavated and recorded does not provide any new information. The Terminal Classic pottery is characterized by forms such as San José V-type outcurved bowls (Thompson 1939: 140-141) and types such as Daylight Orange (Gifford 1976: 300-302, Fig. 199) whereas the later Postclassic material includes a range of Buk-phase types recovered elsewhere on site (Graham 1987; Pendergast 1981, 1982). The recovery of familiar forms and types from a known and manageable stratigraphic context -- in this case a midden -- provides an excellent learning opportunity for students, because they benefit from our prior experience in this zone, and there is little danger of their destroying architectural or stratigraphic evidence in the learning process. 6: 300-302, Fig. 199) whereas the later Postclassic material includes a range of Buk-phase types recovered elsewhere on site (Graham 1987).

Harold (N10-27): Scott Simmons cleaning earliest stairside outset on face of Harold (N. end) .



Stair at base of Harold (N10-27) .

Excavation revealed that the central part of the east (rear) wall was thicker than the north and south portions of this same wall (see Drawing No. 1; also, compare profile of north doorjamb of north doorway in Drawing No. 4 with the south jamb of the same doorway in Drawing No. 9). It appears that this greater wall thickness created a better junction with the courses of the central stair. For sections and profiles of these doorways, see Drawing Nos. 1, 4, 9, 10.

Clearing the central stair behind the LBT:
Only the courses immediately behind the LBT, and those in the doorways, were preserved, protected in the former case by the east or back wall, and in the latter case by core that had been placed over the stairs as part of a planned stage of further construction.

Probing the stairside outsets associated with the platform that supported the LBT:

Collapse in some areas allowed us to probe the core of the stairside outsets associated with the LBT building phase to learn something about earlier phases of construction. Three earlier architectural phases were encountered.



Harold (N10-27): Earliest stairside outset with inset stair shown - Preclassic. Dr. Pendergast says "no mask".



Harold (N10-27): Cleaning latest central stair. Encountered charcoal and sea shells in collapse debris over stair.

Summary of construction phases

The last phase included the construction of the LBT athwart the central stair, and the stairside outsets and terrace faces of the platform that supported the LBT. This last phase we have nicknamed "Mean Green" (Drawing No. 1). Mean Green was preceded by "Old Yeller," an earlier stairside outset that probably flanked an associated stair, although nothing of the stair remained within the small zone that we were able to excavate. Old Yeller was preceded by "Big Red," the evidence of which we have in the form of stairside outsets painted red, with a central stair that becomes inset as it rises (see Drawing Nos. 2, 3, and 5). The style of construction of the outsets and the stair both suggest strongly that Big Red was Preclassic in date, and probably built around 100 B.C. Evidence in the form of a terrace face against which the Big Red stairside outset was constructed on the north side tells us that there was a construction phase that preceded Big Red, which we have called "Big Blue."

The clearing of portions of Str. N10-27 has revealed, not surprisingly, earlier construction phases, of which Big Blue and Big Red are Preclassic. Based on the early 7th century A.D. dates on Stela 9, we know that Mean Green was constructed sometime in the early to mid-7th century. Old Yeller remains elusive, both in date (probably Early Classic) and in form, the latter because no finished face was discovered, only a rough surface where the face had apparently been chopped back to make way for later construction. N10-27 was abandoned sometime during the Late Classic Period. By the 10th century, and very possibly as early as the 9th century, midden deposits began accumulating against the Mean Green terrace faces, probably discarded by families living nearby. N10-27 remained the site of garbage deposition throughout the 11th and 12th centuries as indicated by the presence of Buk-phase pottery (See Pendergast 1986 and Graham 1984). There is also evidence in the form of minimal stone foundations and pottery, west and south of N10-27, that there was some Late Postclassic occupation in this zone.

Stela 9 and Its Preservation

Although Stela 9 is protected from the elements by a thatch roof, there is evidence of some wear and tear: some of the shallow carved lines do not show up as clearly as they once did, and it appears that one of the teeth of the headdress monster has been damaged. We have discussed in the past the possibility of making a cast of the stela to replace the original. This year, as the result of the pledge of funds for the museum by Donald Ross, I commissioned Claude Belanger to purchase latex in England for the purpose of making a mould of the upper portion of the stela, and then making a cast from the mould, to see if the results would be favorable.

The stela was first cleaned with a mild soap and water solution. Liquid latex was applied, and once several layers were applied and allowed to dry, a fiberglass support mould was constructed over the latex. The mould was removed and allowed to set for two days. Plaster was poured into the mould to form a thin cast. A more substantial cast would have required much more plaster, for which we did not have the funds at present. In addition, a full plaster cast would be heavy and difficult to move. A possible alternative would be a lighter core capped by another material. In any case, the experimental plaster cast showed the details of the carving well; some small air bubbles remained, but the process is clearly a workable one.

It will be possible with further funding to make a cast using plaster and powdered stone, the latter in order to duplicate the appearance of the original. Also, in any cast meant to replace the original, a mould should also be made of the base of the stela. In this way the original stela could be reconstructed and actually set in its original place in the LBT of N10-27. The original stela could then be moved to the on-site museum, or to an addition to the present building.

Lot numbers assigned to N10-27:

LA - 1104 Clearing blocked jamb, southern doorway, LBT, collapse debris and core

LA - 1105 Clearing blocked jamb, northern doorway, LBT, collapse debris and core

LA - 1106 Clearing "Big Red" stairside outset face, core

LA - 1107 Clearing "Big Red" stair of overlying core
LA - 1108 Cleaning lower portion of central stair of overlying midden
LA - 1109 Defining "Old Yeller" and clearing what was left of its face

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REPORT OF THE 1998 EXCAVATIONS OF STR. N12-12, "THE RECTORY."

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Introduction and Prior Work

Str. N12-12 is one of the buildings that was used during the 16th- and 17th-century Spanish colonial occupation at Lamanai. Its location with respect to the second church (YDL II) suggests that it served as the residence for the visiting Catholic priest and/or as the residence for the individual responsible for scheduling and saying masses during the priest's absence. Excavations were begun at N12-12 during



The "Rectory" (N12-12): S. face, where N12-12 is abutted by Church II.

the second week of the architectural field school, on July 5th, and continued until July 25th.

Prior excavations carried out by David Pendergast in 1983 had cleared the "Gann holes" on the south and west sides of the structure. Pendergast suspected that Gann, through his digging, had destroyed what evidence there may have been for a stair on the structure's south side.

A trench was excavated by Pendergast in 1983 from the south to north sides along what appeared to be the mid-line of the structure (see 1983 Field Notes). At the time, Pendergast distinguished what he thought were three possible phases of platform construction based on differences in the core. No evidence for a stair was encountered either on the north or south sides. A portion of the south face was cleared, however, and an attempt was made to find the structure's facing stones on the east and west sides. A few stones in alignment were revealed, but excavations ended before either the east or west faces were very much in evidence. What did seem to be true was that a basal moulding was in evidence on the south side, at least on the platform's western half, and that the stones of this moulding were used as a footing for the north wall of the sanctuary of YDL II (the second church). With regard to a north platform face, a portion of it was encountered in the trench on the north side, but there was not enough time to follow it to determine the structure's dimensions. The existence of a rock assemblage called "Pox" outside or north of the face on this side suggested that the platform may have been added to at one time, and that another face stood north of the existing one. Eleven lots were assigned by Pendergast to the excavation of N12-12 in 1983; their contexts are discussed at the end of this report.



The "Rectory" (N12-12): W. face, near SW corner.



The "Rectory" (N12-12): W. face of "Gann" where "Eria" runs perpendicular to "Gann".



The "Rectory" (N12-12): Hector and Estuardo cleaning N. face of building.

Methods and Results, 1998

Basically, we attempted this season to follow the faces that had been exposed to determine the dimensions of N12-12 and ultimately its construction history and relationship to church architecture. The faces are those of a platform that supported a superstructure at one time; the absence of wall masonry indicates that the superstructure was probably of wood. The platform was thought at first to be a single building event, but our excavations demonstrate that at least two and perhaps more phases are in evidence.

Based on the research Graham (1998) has carried out on missions in the New World, the Belize missions seem to have followed the early medieval pattern in which churches have their altar ends facing east, and in which the rectory is placed just north of the church near the sanctuary end. At both Negroman-Tipu (Graham 1991) and Lamanai (at least in the case of YDL II), buildings were placed north of the church at the sanctuary end, and appear to have abutted the church wall. For this reason, we nicknamed Str. N12-12 "The Rectory."

We were successful in clearing the face and basal moulding on the south side, and about half of the face on the west side. The basal moulding continued around the south side to the west, but a tree that stands midway between the NW and SW corners on the west side has buckled much of the face, leaving collapse in its wake. There was clearly some sort of addition to the platform on the west side (see LA 1116 below) because three huge stones in alignment mark a construction event. The stones are most likely to be part of a face of some sort, perhaps the face of a platform addition or even, possibly, the outset of a stair (in Pendergast's 1983 Fieldnotes, Appendix I of this report, he interprets this feature as a stair). Unfortunately the main access road through the Lamanai Reserve crosses the west end of N12-12, and in order to discover more about the addition on this side we will have to shift the road. For the time being we have given the name of "Eria" to this addition, and, like Pendergast, we are using "Gann" to refer to the platform itself, but especially to the platform as it was faced with cut limestone and a basal moulding.

We began where Pendergast had revealed the first course of a probable platform face at the north end of the test trench and we followed this course westward to reveal a substantial north face. The style of construction on this side is, however, very different from that on the south side. The stones on the south are cut and shaped, and a basal moulding is in evidence. On the north the stones are crudely shaped (if shaped at all), stood on end, and larger than those of the south face. We tried to follow the face to the NW corner, but we found that a huge tree had dislodged most of the construction on this side. Random-sized stones packed tightly along the facing stones still standing provided evidence, however, that the platform had indeed been added to on this (the north) side (see LA 1117 below). Excavations terminated for the season before we reached the proposed NW corner.

On the east side, only a small portion of the face was revealed, and it exhibits a basal moulding. We do not yet know how this face conjoins the others, or whether it relates to them at all. The sanctuary walls of YDL II seem to have been placed over the original line of the south face of N12-12, so that the south face must have been destroyed on this end when YDL II was built. To complicate matters, further excavation of the footings of YDL II suggest that the church was not built, as we thought at first, over the basal moulding stones of N12-12, but instead over stones that were part of yet another structure or structural phase - one that postdated "Gann" but predated the church. Further possible evidence for such a structure, or one like it, was found north of YDL II in the form of an alignment of stones (see sketch).

Summary

Although we have not yet been able to connect all excavated structural portions of N12-12, our excavations have shown that N12-12 represents a far more complex series of events than originally anticipated. N12-12 may have originally been built in Late Postclassic times and then used and added to in Historic times. Its Historic-period use may

be represented by more than one construction event, however. We hope that continued excavations in 1999 will bring us closer to sorting out the construction history of N12-12.

Lot numbers assigned to N12-12; lots in parentheses refer to equivalent lots assigned by Pendergast in the 1983 excavations:

LA 1100

PAA (post-abandonment accumulation) and collapse debris from the south side of N12-12, along the platform face of "Gann," the nickname given to this construction phase.

LA 1101 (LA 786)

PAA, collapse debris, clearing the west side of N12-12, Gann.

LA 1102

Clearing the platform face on the east side of N12-12; not certain here that the platform is Gann; it's possible it is a different construction event, although as it was cleared, a basal moulding that matches that encountered on the south face was revealed. Contexts are PAA and collapse, but possibly midden-1 as well.

LA 1116 (LA 777)

Clearing along the west face of Gann but on the north side of an apparent addition to Gann. So far we only have the north face of the addition (see sketch), which we have nicknamed "Eria," and which was probably a low platform that supported a perishable superstructure of some sort -- perhaps a kitchen building. Or, it may have been part of a stair feature (an outset?). No south face of Eria was encountered, but there is still more earth to clear along the west face of Gann in 1999. Eria's north face so far comprises three large, uncut stones, and architecturally does not match the Gann platform face. Unfortunately we may find that "Eria" was destroyed by road construction, but the small cut we made westward into the roadbed suggested that much of Eria remained intact. LA 1116 is PAA, collapse, and core.

LA 1117 (LA 763,764)

Clearing along the north face of Gann. The north face was first identified by Pendergast in 1983 as a "single alignment of stones" encountered at the north side of the test trench dug through the assumed mid-line of Gann. We started at this alignment and continued to follow it westward. We hoped to follow it to the northwest corner, but the presence of roots from a trumpet tree slowed progress. We cut the tree down, but it took most of the rest of the excavation time to clear the roots and move past this disturbed root zone where, by the end of the season, no facing stones were yet encountered. However, it may be that the corner is inset, and we have hopes of clarifying the situation in 1999. Indications are that what we dug through to clear the north face was probably construction core of an addition to the platform on this side. We could not be certain at first because it also appeared to be collapse. However, Pendergast suspected that this was possible construction core in 1983. At that time he described the stones in this zone as a "rock assemblage" and used the nickname "Pox" to refer to the deposit on this side (see Appendix I, this report). We will retain this designation, especially since we discovered through excavation that stones were packed tightly along the Gann face here, indicating that they were not collapse but rather the result of a construction effort. In 1999 we will look closely for remains of a face for "Pox," but disturbance in this zone is considerable (collapse, Gann's excavations, and root action).

Ceramics and other artifacts recovered to date

The bulk of the material from the 1983 excavations is Late Postclassic, and sherds from Mayapan-style local censers are in evidence, especially on the north and west sides. Unfortunately, the soil on the south and west sides is extremely

disturbed; adjacent to YDL II (west of the church sanctuary, south of N12-12) there appears to have been a large pit dug and filled in modern times. Partly filled with church plaster, it may represent mid-19th century sugarmill-related activity. The west side of N12-12 has been disturbed by road construction. Only the north and east sides so far seem to be undisturbed by modern construction events. Excavating outside (north of) the face on the north side reveals that "Pox" may well be the core of a platform addition on that side (see above). If so, then the censer fragments on that side derive from the core of the addition. The olive jar sherds recovered by Pendergast on the north side may also be part of the core, which would date the addition to Historic times; or, they were scattered about the surface of the platform addition in Historic times and filtered through to core following abandonment and collapse.

Sherds from periods earlier than Late Postclassic times are represented; most of these are Terminal Classic in date, although Preclassic sherds also occur, mainly on the south (most highly disturbed) side, as do 19th century glass bottles and other modern artifacts. Chert flakes and debitage are fairly abundant, but no contexts are primary, so they, too, come from different time periods. If primary contexts exist (i.e., midden or occupational debris) they are most likely to be encountered on the north or east sides. Pendergast describes the east side as an area where midden debris was found to occur in 1983, and olive jar fragments were recovered from the north side. The crocodile effigy (Cache N12-12/1; LA 757) found cached in the core of the platform in the area of the mid-line trench suggests a rather late date of construction (Terminal Postclassic or Historic) for the bulk of N12-12, but nothing will be certain until the entire construction history has been elucidated.

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APPENDIX I: Fieldnotes, Lamanai Structure N12-12, 1983.

Comments:

These are the fieldnotes recorded by Pendergast in 1983 when Str. N12-12 was first investigated.

The only editing has been to standardize terminology used in 1998 and 1983. See the lot assignments in the 1998 report for notes on the coordination of the 1983 and 1998 contexts.

Fieldnotes 1983

Trench at N. reveals collapse debris, apparently capping (or mixed with) sherds that include olive jar fragments. No clear N. face to parallel the S. platform face. Trench across structure (N-S) sections the area disturbed by Gann's excavations plus uppermost core unit. At the N. side, S of a single alignment of stones (possible basal moulding?), depth ca 30-35 cm, scattered in core, is Cache N12-12/1 (LA-757), a single crocodile vessel. [Illustration to be provided]

Checking of the SE portion of the structure shows that the basal moulding on this face, similar to the one mentioned above, runs under the YDL II wall; hence demolition of the "Gann" portion of the structure (the outermost unit of construction identifiable) is likely to have preceded construction of YDL II. That destruction of a stair at the S occurred as a result of church construction is possible but unlikely, given the location of the church relative to N12-12.

The N-S trench is approximately on the primary axis, but partly in the area of Gann's excavations. Cache N12-12/1 seems contemporary with the core in which it lay because it was spread among the stones, but the possibility exists that it was intrusive. The upper core of the structure (above the level of the basal moulding and interior [core?] face at the N) is LA-758; sherds from the core of the platform are LA-759.

A major portion of an olive jar, LA 742/1, lay on bedrock at approximately the N limit of the axial trench. LA 763/1 is a concentration of olive jar sherds atop a rock assemblage exterior to the N face of the structure and W of the axial trench (see plan), dia. ca 15-20 cm; probably atop the surface of a platform on which Gann rests. The rock assemblage is apparently outside this structure, but the structure limit at the N is not yet clearly definable. The rock mass ("Pox") has the appearance of core, but cannot be related to a unit secondary to Gann because neither form nor facings for such a unit are evident. The trench was extended northward to check for refuse at the limit of the possible platform underlying Gann; additional LA 763 olive jar fragments were scattered ca 6 metres N of the area of the first lot (LA 763/1), which was ca 2 metres N of the possible basal moulding of the N face of Gann. Further olive jar lay atop a rock spread that extends N from the W portion of Gann, and also at the E limit of the rocks. The significance of the rocks remains unclear; the possibility at first appeared to exist that the material represented Gann's backdirt, but the fact that the assemblage lay directly atop bedrock ruled out this identification. LA 763/2 is a celt on the surface near the S limit of the rock assemblage. N of Gann (see plan) was a hole cut from near ground surface into sascab, with 1 tapir (?) bone at a depth of 21 cm within it. The hole was filled above the bone with sascab fragments and soil, with a slight amount of ash (?) beneath the bone.

Upper core of Gann consisted of small stones at the N and larger stones plus soil at the S, probably task units rather than evidence of a construction sequence. The southern core overlay a mortar layer; sherds from the platform N of the possible basal moulding of the Gann N face were separated as LA-761. Below the line of facing stones at the N is another alignment; excavation was continued atop the latter line, under the mortar layer. Sherds from this unit are LA-762.

Excavation sectioned the W stair, marked by two high riser stones; the stair proved to be secondary to the platform face, which leaves no clear evidence of a primary Gann stair. As sherds from lower Gann core (LA-759) include middle Postclassic material, the date of the W stair must be Late Postclassic. Sherds from core of the W stair (LA-785) are few, and include Postclassic and earlier material. No cache was encountered in the stair. Excavation of Gann was closed 24/5/83.

Lots from N12-12:

LA-757

Cache N12-12/1 (crocodile vessel)

LA-758&759

Sherds &c from Gann core above the mortar layer (section trench)

LA-761

Sherds &c from platform core at N side of Gann

LA-762

Sherds from below the mortar layer, section trench from N limit of Gann.

LA-763&764

Sherds &c from surface of rock assemblage ("Pox") W of centre trench, at N face of Gann

LA-765

Radiocarbon sample in base clay under core of Gann; not clearly in situ burning, but may precede construction; extended N-S from approximate centre of structure to ca 40 cm N of the centre; sealed by the mortar layer, 54-60 cm above.

LA-777

Sherds &c from sides of W stair

LA-785

Core, of W stair

LA-786

Surface, W side of Gann, outside of vertical stone alignment

Comments:

The lone evidence of a possible sequence of construction in Gann appears to be the lower alignment of stones encountered below the putative "basal moulding" at the N face of the structure. Ripdown of portions of Gann prior to construction of YDL II is a virtual certainty, and demolition to clear the way for the second church is highly likely. There is nothing specific, however, to support a circa 1600 date (the presumed time of construction of YDL II) for the demolition. If Cache N12-12/1 is indeed contemporaneous with Gann there is a possibility that Gann was built in the Historic period, and there is nothing in core-content or other data to refute the suggestion. The olive jar fragments concentrated at the N side of the structure appeared to lie entirely outside the platform face, and the rock mass atop and around which they lay was certainly some sort of purposive assemblage, laid directly on bedrock. There is a fair likelihood that the rocks were laid up in Historic times, but the function of the assemblage is anything but clear. Not mentioned in the fieldnotes, but cleared in the last stage of excavation, is a unit secondary to the N12-12 platform, and runs perpendicular to it westward for an undetermined distance. Further excavation along and within the unit would be warranted, as would checking of all of the area N of the platform face that was not examined in 1983. The east face of the platform should be cleared at least to the SE corner of Gann, and the relationship between the structure and YDL II should be re-examined.

REPORT OF 1998 ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS OF STR. N11-7.

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Introduction

Limited archaeological testing at Structure N11-7 was conducted between July 6 - July 11, 1998. The goal was to test

for the presence of midden deposits that might help to date the period(s) of construction and occupation of the structure at this location. We also wished to know whether the lucrative Terminal Postclassic midden that had yielded metal artifacts on the south side of the platform would also be found on this, the north side. Previous archaeological testing at Structure N11-7 conducted in the early 1980s by David Pendergast of the Royal Ontario Museum confirmed the presence of extensive midden deposits of Terminal Postclassic date on the southern side of what appeared to be a large platform that had clearly seen a great deal of alteration and addition throughout several centuries. Unfortunately, the excavations on the north side revealed mixed contexts and no metals.

Methods and Results

A 1 x 2 m. excavation unit was situated in an area that appeared to represent the northeast corner of the Structure N11-7 platform. The long axis of the excavation unit was oriented at an azimuth of 28° east of magnetic north, i.e., roughly perpendicular to the perceived platform face, with the southern portion of the unit on the 'downslope' of the perceived platform face. All excavated soil was passed through 1/4 inch hardware cloth, and soil characteristics such as colour, texture, and composition, were noted using standard soils nomenclature. Excavations were conducted following natural strata and/or perceived construction phases, and cultural material was separated into lots according to these discrete deposits.

Two distinct soil deposits were encountered during 1998 excavations on the north side of the Structure N11-7 platform. The overlying very dark brown silty loam, designated Lot 1110, was mixed with occasional small (approximately 2-8 cm in diameter) to large (approximately up to 40 cm in length) unmodified limestone rocks, along with some small, crushed pieces of limestone. This unconsolidated matrix appears to represent post abandonment accumulation and structural collapse. At its maximum depth (in the southwest corner of the unit), Lot 1110 (Stratum I) extended approximately 47 cm below the surface. The minimum depth of the deposit was approximately 12 cm, in the northwest corner of the unit. Modern, historic (19th Century) and Late prehistoric/Spanish Colonial Maya artifacts, most of which were fairly small in size, were recovered from this upper soil deposit, and these will be discussed in more detail below. In sum, however, it appears that Lot 1110 represents post abandonment accumulation and collapse debris. No extant architectural features were noted in Lot 1110.

Due to time constraints, only a 1 x 1 m area (southern half) of Lot 1110 was removed completely in the excavation unit. The second soil stratum, designated Lot 1111, was excavated to a maximum depth of approximately 24 cm before excavations were terminated on July 11. The total depth of this deposit, a brown silty clay with numerous pieces of crushed limestone, could not be ascertained. Excavation of this lower deposit suggested at first that Lot 1111 was an intact, and undisturbed cultural deposit, in which solely prehistoric (and possibly Spanish Colonial Period?) cultural material was present. Artifacts tended to be somewhat larger in size than those recovered from the overlying deposit, Lot 1110. Review of the cultural material later, however, showed it to be from a number of different time periods from Preclassic to Terminal Classic. The soil of Lot 1111 was not particularly compact, and has been displaced somewhat by root action -some large roots approximately 10-12 cm in diameter are present. No evidence of walls or other distinct structural features was noted. It is possible that this lot represents unconsolidated structural core, composed of small to large, unmodified limestone rocks in a largely soil matrix with crushed limestone fragments throughout. The mixed lot of sherds would then have been part of the core of a building that dated to the Late Classic Period or later.

Contexts and Cultural Material:

LA 1110

Lot assessment(s):

PAA (post-abandonment accumulation)

collapse debris
midden-3

Counts:

sherds = 945
obsidian = 9
shell = 6
daub = 5
chert = 227
quartzite = 1
iron = 61
bone = 70
glass = 39
brick = 1
plaster/stucco = 22

Weights:

sherds = 4117g
bone = 102g
shell = 2g
chert = 1015g
obsidian = 16g
daub = 25g
iron = 142g
quartzite = 5g
stucco/plaster = 185g
glass = 87 g

LA 1111

Lot assessment(s):

midden-3
platform core(?)

Counts:

sherds = 401
obsidian = 4
ground stone = 1
shell = 12
daub = 11
chert = 112

Weights:

sherds = 2990g
chert = 871g
obsidian = 2g
daub = 151g
ground stone = 668g

Ceramics:

LA-1110: The sherds are worn and from a variety of vessels and times. There are a few worn Preclassic sherds, as well as some sherds from striated jars that are probably Preclassic or Protoclassic. Most material is Late Postclassic, represented by Late Postclassic red wares. Recognizable but fewer in number are sherds from Yglesias ceramics of the Terminal Postclassic and Historic periods. Glazed ceramics imported from Britain are also represented. The context is mixed -- post-abandonment accumulation, collapse debris, and redeposited midden -- therefore none of this material tells us much about the date of occupation of the structure. What seems to be true is that the structure was the site of garbage deposition, and may in one of its manifestations have supported occupation. The fact that the Late Postclassic is so well represented suggests that some occupation may date to this period.

LA-1111: The sherds from this level are less worn and in better shape as far as preservation goes, but they are even more mixed. Preclassic (jars with slipped rims and striated bodies), Early Classic (polychrome), Late Classic (jars with red-slipped rims and a sherd of stamped ware) and some Postclassic are represented, although the earlier phases loom larger. That we are far from any primary context is clear; but the indications are also that we might be into core of some earlier building (Late Classic?), and that evidence of Postclassic occupation is confined to upper deposits associated with the very latest and superficial uses of the platform in this location. Therefore any focus on habitation associated with Late Postclassic metallurgy ought to concentrate on the peripheries of the platform, where midden might be found, and not on dissecting the structure at this location.

Chert:

LA-1110: Notable is the presence of considerable debitage -- discarded flakes and shatterpieces. Also clearly a range of expedient tools (used flakes), as well as a few small side-notched points. This debris clearly indicates midden material.

LA-1111: Some debitage; a few expedient tools; notable are larger chunks of chert that seem to represent removal of cortex and outer chunks from chert nodules. Unfortunately, however, we know from sherds that the deposit is extremely mixed, so that chert pieces cannot be assumed to be contemporaneous.

Faunal material:

Turtle is well represented; some bird bones; one jute.

Other:

Brick and bottle are probably late 19th century British. Iron is modern.

Small finds:

---4 chert small side-notched point fragments (arrowpoints); only one, LA 1110/1, retains the notching and a portion of the stem, but the shape of others -- LA-1110/12,13,14 -- suggests they, too, were likely notched and the stem end has broken off.

---2 obsidian arrowpoint fragments that also appear to have been side-notched when complete: LA 1110/2 and 3.

---1 expedient tool, LA 1110/8, selected because it has a cutting edge and also appears backed.

---2 biface tool fragments, LA 1110/9 and 10, one of which has an orange peel flake scar; both are from LA 1110

---1 core fragment, LA 1110/11.

---2 date seed net sinkers, LA 1110/4 and 1111/2.

---1 marble, modern, cat's eye, LA 1110/5.

---1 fragment, an apparent shatterpiece, from rock crystal, LA 1110/6.

----1 perforated shell, Spondylus, LA 1110/7.
----1 limestone mano, LA 1111/1.

Conclusions:

LA 1110 is most strongly represented by Late Postclassic or Terminal Postclassic activity, although the cultural material is not primary. LA 1111 may be core of an earlier phase of the platform with a component of cultural material, but the sherd content represents so many different time periods that re-depositional events must have been numerous. These results indicate that further excavation in this zone on the north side may not be productive in terms of clarifying Late/Terminal Postclassic occupation activity. Given the recovery of metals on the south side by Pendergast in 1985, it might be best, if excavations were to continue, to start with the known and begin to expand his initial work there. Whether N11-7 itself supported Postclassic occupation is not determinable from excavating the midden laid against it. For the time being, the question of the dates of N11-7's use will be superceded by an effort to locate Late Postclassic cultural deposits and particularly evidence of metallurgy.