

WK-08: CONTINUING EXCAVATIONS IN THE RELIGIOUS PRECINCT STRUCTURES N14-12, O14-07 AND IN THE VICINITY OF STELA 3

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Introduction

The religious complex at El Perú-*Waka'* is situated in the southeastern corner of the known site core. Referred to as the El Mirador Complex, two large pyramids and a small triadic group atop a natural rise form the nexus of this ritual space. Stela 3 and Structures N14-12 and O14-07 are located on this summit plaza, and were the focus of Operation WK-08 throughout Proyecto Arqueológico El Perú-*Waka'*'s second field season.

Background

The area of investigation during 2004 was the same as the previous season. These excavations also followed the same general strategy outlined in the 2003 report. For more detailed information regarding these topics, please refer to Chapter 9 of *Proyecto Arqueológico El Perú-*Waka'*: Informe No. 1, Temporada 2003*, edited by Héctor L. Escobedo and David Freidel.

Griselda Pérez Robles conducted a preliminary analysis of WK-08A's ceramic material collected in 2003 (Pérez, n.d.). This information is included in an unpublished report compiled by all archaeologists who conducted laboratory analysis of ceramics recovered during the first season of work, and presently is accessible only to project members. The total

number of sherds from last year's excavation was 3250, and in 2004 was 2982. Compared to other operations, these numbers illustrate the paucity of material from WK-08A, highlighting the challenges of constructing a ceramic chronology, particularly when some levels contained no diagnostic material whatsoever. The preliminary chronology is presented in the table below:

Unit	Level	Period
0	0	Late Classic
1	1	Late Classic
	2	Late Classic
	4	Mixed - Early/Late Classic
	6	No Diagnostics
	7	Mixed - Early/Late Classic
	8	No Diagnostics
	9	No Diagnostics
2	1	Mixed - Early/Late Classic
3	1	Late Classic
4	1	Late Classic
5	1	Late Classic
6	1	Late Classic
7	1	Late Classic
8	1	Mixed - Early/Late Classic
9	1	Late Classic
	2	Late Classic
10	1	Late/Terminal Classic

References concerning ceramic material collected this year are based on a cursory analysis completed by the author in April 2004. Any assertions of time period are to be considered tentative, as the materials still require analysis of the style completed by Pérez.

Twenty-five units were excavated this season, and elevations were taken from seven datums. The elevations of the seven datum points are relative to the Central Datum in Plaza 2, which presently has an arbitrary height designation of 100m. The following table lists the relative elevation for each datum (Tsesmeli, pers. comm. 2004):

Datum #	Elevation
1	146.37cm
2	146.30cm
3	147.227m
4	146.799m
5	147.106m
6	145.708m
7	146.523m

Every unit has a designated datum selected from the most appropriate of the seven. For the purposes of this report, each unit's opening and closing elevations will be given *in relation to the specific datum from which the measurements were taken*. The elevations will be reported in the following order: the four corners: SE, SW, NE, NW, and finally the center. The abbreviation "cmbd" will accompany each set of elevations, meaning "centimeters below datum," and the appropriate datum number will follow. Datum 4 was used only briefly, and will not be referenced in the text. The following table lists the datum used for each unit:

Unit	Datum	Unit	Datum
3	1	23	6
11	1	24	6
12	3	25	6
13	3	26	5
14	1	27	1
15	3	28	3

16	1	29	3
17	5	30	5
18	5	31	7
19	5	32	7
20	6	33	1
21	6	34	7
22	6	35	7

Finally, as per Rich, Lee and Acuña's summary of Proyecto Arqueológico El Perú-Waka's use of the lot as a cataloging mechanism (2003: 9), features, walls, etc. were assigned lot numbers. In certain instances, this report denotes lots as "feature lot" with the goal of increasing clarity.

Objectives

Several objectives were outlined for this season's work in WK-08:

- Refine the chronology atop the summit plaza.
- Complete additional investigation near Stela 3, with an emphasis on 1) determining if the ceramic concentration located in WK-08A-1-1-9 and WK-08A-1-1-11 was present elsewhere in the vicinity of the stela; and 2) refining the estimate for the time period the stela was placed in its present location.
- Determine whether the multiple floors recorded in Unit 1 (2003) are cosmetic replastering events localized directly in front of the stela, or whether they extend out beyond this area.

- Further define the architectural characteristics and construction sequence of Structure N14-12.
- Test the hypothesis that N14-12 was once a vaulted structure.
- Collect data on one of the other structures atop the summit plaza.

The following report will describe the excavations undertaken in order to meet these objectives. Figure 1 is a spreadsheet containing information by lot, level and unit about the type and quantity of artifacts recovered. These data will not be repeated in the text, unless further discussion is warranted. Also, this report will treat excavation units 11-35 in a logical grouping, not in numeric order. As a result, surface collections are examined first; then excavations in the proximity of Stela 3; followed by work on Str. N14-12; and, finally, excavations on Str. O14-07. A map with the location of each excavation unit is included (Fig. 2).

Surface Collections

WK-08A-0

Lots 126 and 166 are surface collections not associated with a specific unit. Lot 126 was collected at the summit of N14-12, from a small area southwest of Unit 15. Ceiba spiked and burned sherds were recovered. Sherds decorated with the ceiba motif are common in this particular area of the site. Lot 166 was collected while cleaning the north wall of the looter's trench located on the west side of Str.

N14-12. The cleaning was undertaken to determine if this trench yielded evidence of the western structure wall (feature lot 204), excavated in Units 17, 19 and 26. The stones in the trench were highly disturbed, but there was one cut stone visible in the north profile. It is possible this was associated with the interior face of the western structure wall. No further work was done in this looter's trench.

Excavation in the Vicinity of Stela 3

WK-08A-11

This is a 1x1m unit situated approximately 1.75m north of Stela 3. The purpose of Unit 11 was trifold: first, to test for the ceramic concentration discovered in 2003 (WK-08A-1-1-9 and WK-08A-1-1-11); second, to assess the number of floors in this location; and third, gather more data to refine the chronology of the summit plaza. The placement of the unit was restricted to the north by a survey datum, and to the south by the north edge of the previously excavated Unit 1. A total of 16 lots were excavated, and opening elevations were 146, 152, 143, 149 and 144 cmbd1. At unit close, the elevations were 323, 326, 274, 307 and 340 cmbd1. Craggy and undulating bedrock is the reason for these disparate elevations.

Level 1 was comprised of lots 79, 81, and 83. Lot 79 (max. thickness: 19cm) was the removal of the humus layer and matrix to the first layer of rubble. There may have been a deteriorated floor in this lot, as a layer of small, loose ballast was visible in the SW corner of the unit, at 171 cmbd1. No plaster was detected.

Mixed in with the ceramics from this lot are small exterior bolstered rims and body sherds of what may be either jars or basins. Two dense layers of rubble, ranging from approximately 5 to 20cm in diameter, were removed in Lots 81 (max. thickness: 24cm) and 83 (max. thickness: 23.5cm). A possible censer fragment or appliqué was noted in lot 81 and in lot 83 the incurving rim of a tecomate was identified, as well as a sherd with a monochrome orange slip, thought to be late. A single bone was found in Unit 83. This was confirmed to be faunal (species unknown) by project osteologist Jennifer Piehl. Lot 83 was terminated at the level of a preserved plaster floor.

Levels 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 are comprised of plaster floors laid almost directly on top of each other, with very little fill in between.

Level	Lot	Max. Thickness
2	84	8cm
3	85	7cm
4/5	87	22cm
6	89	5cm
7	91	19.5cm

Few sherds are present in these lots, therefore dating each floor is difficult. Lot 87 contains two floors, as the lower one was poorly preserved and only visible in the profile. In lot 87, a sherd with a cream slip was noted as possibly dating to the Late Preclassic (Acuña and Eppich, pers. comm. 2004). Two sherds with an orange-red exterior slip, different than the orange-red slipped material from previous lots, were also observed. The slip was not, however, as thick and waxy as Sierra Red. It is possible that Lot 91 is also early, based on the small number of

sherds it contained. At this point, a total of six plaster floors have been recorded, not including the ballast noted in lot 79.

While the seventh plaster floor was being excavated as lot 93, level 8 (max. thickness: 5.5cm) a cache was encountered in the west-central portion of the unit. The cache is comprised of two lip-to-lip vessels (lot 99) and a third vessel (lot 97) inverted over the upper lip-to-lip vessel. These stacked vessels are located approximately 30cm north of a groundstone spheroid (see Garber 1989 for discussion of spheroids) and east of what appears to be a cut floor (Fig. 3). The vessels and groundstone are situated on the centerline axis of Stela 3 and Str. N14-12.

The covering vessel (AR #001) was fragmentary, and removed in the field. Several very small mother of pearl shell fragments were collected as the lip-to-lip vessels were excavated. These were extracted maintaining their original configuration, and brought to the field laboratory. The top vessel (AR #002) was lifted from the bottom vessel (AR #003) to reveal a mound of fine, compact matrix. The matrix appeared to contain nothing, but was bagged for further analysis for pollen or organics. Based on the wall thickness, slip and rim shape, the monochrome reddish orange bowls appear to be Terminal Preclassic (Acuña, pers. comm. 2004).

In lot 100, matrix was excavated below the seventh floor in the eastern half of the unit. A large plaster mass was located here into which the eastern side of the cache vessels had been

cemented. The western side of the vessels was open to a cavity beneath the cut floor.

Level 9 began with excavation of the poured plaster, removed in lot 102 (max. thickness: 11cm), to reveal a fine-textured gray matrix that was hardened in some places. In the area to the north, south and west of the vessels, the gray matrix was cleared (lot 104), and the cavity adjacent to the vessels explored. The brown, friable matrix inside the cavity contained unidentified insect casings and small, modern snail shells. In lot 105, gray matrix mixed with small rubble fill was removed. Bedrock was confirmed in lot 109, which was very jagged, rough and uneven.

Discussion

Excavation of this 1x1 addressed several objectives outlined previously. First, the ceramic concentration located in WK-08A-1-1-9 and WK-08A-1-1-11 (Rich 2003) was not present in Unit 11. This suggests the material was spatially restricted, only located in close proximity to the stela. A *concentration* of smashed vessels such as this tends to indicate a reverential deposit; termination deposits, on the other hand, are thought to be more dispersed (Freidel, pers. comm. 2004).

Secondly, the multiple replasterings directly associated with the north face of Stela 3 were identified in this unit. Along with multiple floors excavated in other units this year, this suggests replastering/reflooring was common atop the entire summit plaza, perhaps to mitigate

effects of erosion on this elevated and unprotected high point. Another alternative is that the multiple floors were simply related to architectural modifications made through time.

The cursory ceramic analysis indicates level 4/5 is qualitatively different than previous lots in Unit 11; the slip color and texture are different, suggesting an earlier date. This correlates with Pérez's results from the WK-08A-01 material, where level 4 is described as "Mixed – Early/Late Classic." Level 8 contains the cached vessels tentatively dated to the Late Preclassic, which are stratigraphically above the matrix presumably used to level off the bedrock for plastering. As of this writing, the cache provides the earliest proof of activity on the summit plaza.

WK-08A-14

Unit 14 is a small 1x.5m test excavation abutting the south face of Stela 3. The purpose of this unit was to confirm floors documented in units 2, 4 and 6 in 2003 and initiate a centerline excavation on this side of the stela. Opening elevations were 141, 138, 144, 139 and 141 cmbd1 and closing elevations measured 182, 185, 154, 142 and 160 cmbd1.

Instead of reaching the expected floor, we found large rocks in the first lot, designated 88 (max. thickness: 21cm). Some tree root disturbance was noted. Monochrome orange sherds, a bowl base, a sherd with gouged or stamped designs and a plate fragment with a partial foot were collected in this lot. In lot 90

(max. thickness: 10cm), the edge of an alignment was identified, approximately 56cm from the southern perimeter of the unit. Ceramic material collected in this lot consisted of a bowl or dish base with a complete foot, most of a totally blackened candelaria and another appliqué. Additionally, a small concentration of sherds was left in place in the SE corner of the unit. These were collected in lot 92; some of them were burned.

Lot 92 also contains censer fragments. Refitting sherds were also identified in lot 90. The censer is mostly complete, approximately 16cm in height, differentially blackened and is Late or Terminal Classic. Eppich (field notes, 2004) describes the design as consisting of a molded series of slats situated below rounded protuberances alternating with ceiba spikes. Moreover, another two, perhaps three, candelaria fragments were noted, but these did not appear burned as in the previous lot. Also in lot 92 (max. thickness: 15.5cm), the rocks in the northern two-thirds of the unit were cleaned and left in situ. A floor was discovered south of the previously noted alignment, and appears to lip up onto the edge of the alignment, which is a low platform extending across the southern face of Stela 3. Excavation was terminated in this unit after these three lots comprising level 1 were completed. Additional units (16 and 27) were opened adjacent to Unit 14's east and west perimeters.

WK-08A-16

The objective for this 1x1m unit located directly west of Unit 14 was to further define the previously identified platform. Opening elevations were 138, 133, 137, 131 and 135.5 cmbd1 and closing measurements were 184, 131.5, 179, 140 and 185 cmbd1. A total of 10 small lots were excavated, all designated the same cultural level.

Lot 95 was a surface collection in this unit. The humus was removed in lot 96 (max. thickness: 9.5cm in the SW corner), revealing a sherd concentration in the NW quadrant of the 1x1. Most of the sherds in lot 96 had an elevation between 135 to 139 cmbd1; in other words, they were very close to the ground surface. It should be noted the prehistoric origin of this concentration can be questioned because of the amount of looting activity documented on the summit plaza (for details on the looting activity in WK-08A, see Pérez Calderón 2003; Rich 2003). It is possible the concentration was a surface phenomenon created in modern times and covered over by a thin humus accumulation. In any event, the sherds were drawn in situ and collected in lot 107. Noted in both lot 96 and 107 were bolstered rims, striated sherds, two refits of a cylindrical vase, basal fragments with foot scars, foot fragments, ceiba spike sherds, interior incised fragments, rim sherds with exterior bolstering and burned sherds. The subsequent lot 108 exposed more of the concentration, collected as lot 111. It was smaller in total area than the first layer of the concentration, and was also drawn in situ. The

sherds were as described previously. Lot 112 represents the final, small layer of the sherd concentration, located very close to the surface of the platform rocks, which were fully exposed in lot 114.

Lot 115 encompassed only the southern portion of the unit, and uncovered the floor south of the platform's edge. A complete, unslipped candelaria exhibiting some blackening was recovered in this lot. Fragments suggesting broken censers and a small spout-like fragment were also collected, along with sherds identical to the censer described in WK08A-14-1-92. These censer sherds were also noted in lots 121 and 149. A concentration of rubble was removed from the NW corner of the unit in lot 121. Much of this rubble is pinned in place by a single large stone extending beyond the perimeter of the unit. This is probably a fragment of the broken Stela 3. As much rubble as possible was removed, with the goal of clearing the western face of the platform without disturbing the stela fragment so it may be properly excavated in the future. The western edge of the platform runs along the same axis as the western edge of the stela. In lot 149 the floor to the west of the platform was exposed. A fragment of a small, circular disk with hole drilled in its center (SF #012) was collected among the rubble, as well as a small eccentric (AR #004). The raw material is a grayish brown chert. The eccentric design is a trident motif – it is three-pronged on one end, and the opposite end has a single short prong. It's dimensions are approximately 3.5x4.5cm.

WK-08A-27

This 1x1m unit is on the east side of Unit 14, and was initiated to expose the remainder of the stela platform. Opening elevations were 144, 142, 149, 145 and 146.5 cmbd1, with closing elevations of 180,157, 192, 196 and 195 cmbd1. Unit 27 encompasses last year's Unit 6, which was small trench (1.5m on the N/S axis by 60cm wide) connecting Unit 1 in front of Stela 3 with the excavations on Structure N14-12. Consequently, the eastern portion of Unit 27 was backfill from the previous year's excavation.

Unit 27 contained only one lot, designated 152 (max. thickness: 51cm). The platform was fully revealed in this unit (Fig. 4). We did not encounter the platform in Unit 6 because it is approximately 12cm west of the east edge of the stela, and Unit 6 was flush with the east edge of the stela. Half of a small broken, circular bead was recovered above the platform (SF #013). The ceramics collected in this lot contain censer fragments and a small exterior incised bowl with remnants of orange slip that is blackened on the interior. The design is similar to material coming out of WK02 associated with Fine Gray ceramics, thus placing it in a late context, perhaps late Tepeu 2 (Acuña, pers. comm. 2004).

WK-08A-33

Last year's excavations suggested earlier floors had been cut to insert Stela 3. Unit 33 was initiated to investigate this hypothesis. The same area excavated in Units 14, 16 and 27

was collapsed into this single 1x1.5m unit, whose opening elevations were 192, 184, 196, 131.5 (stela fragment) and 167 cmbd1. Closing elevations were 205, 194, 206, 198 and 215 cmbd1.

Only four lots were excavated in this unit, but it is likely to be reopened for further investigation in the forthcoming field season. Lot 188 (max. thickness: 21cm) was the removal of the first layer of platform stone. The entire platform was designated feature lot 205. Four large basal stones were then extracted as lot 190 (max. thickness: 21cm). The nicely preserved floor surrounding the platform is not visible underneath the basal stones. Matrix and ballast were noted at a slightly lower elevation. This, along with the plaster lipping up on to the platform stones, suggests the stones were set before the floor was completed. Ceramic material collected in both of these lots, including monochrome orange sherds and censer fragments, can be ascribed to Tepeu 2/3 upon preliminary examination (Acuña, pers. comm. 2004).

Lot 191 (max. thickness: 9cm) constituted the excavation of the floor surrounding the platform area, and the matrix and ballast under the platform stones. Beneath this was a second floor, however, it was only visible in the southern, eastern and western extremities of the unit, in other words, around the outside of the platform. Under the platform was rubble and plaster-like matrix near the stela. The second floor, matrix and rubble were taken out as lot 193 (max. thickness: 18cm). Excavation was terminated at the base of this

lot. A higher concentration of rubble was noted in the area underneath the platform, and an alignment of stones abutted the face of the stela. A third floor was identified in the eastern and western portions of the unit. While the sherds from lot 191 were similar to the previous two lots, the sherds collected in lot 193 are different, including possible examples of Aguila Orange and Pucte Brown, inferring an earlier period.

Discussion

The small platform on the south face of Stela 3 functioned as an altar. It's construction dates to Late/Terminal Classic, based on the ceramic sample collected during the removal of the stones. It measured approximately 1.3m on the east-west axis, and 75cm on the north-south axis. The stela-altar pairing is not uncommon at sites such as Tikal and Uaxactun (Coe 1965: 466). The relative prominence of censer fragments, candelarias, sherd concentrations and burned sherds supports the altar interpretation, as does the chert eccentric. Coe describes trident shaped eccentrics as being components of early monument-associated caches (1965: 465). This eccentric was not recovered in a cache at the base of, or underneath, Stela 3, but associated with the western edge of the platform. It appears that this eccentric was placed as an offering on the altar; no intact stela-altar cache has been recovered in WK-08. The altar and associated artifacts, coupled with the very thick ceramic concentration located on the north side of the stela in WK-08A-1-1-9 and WK-08A-1-1-11,

reinforces the interpretation of the summit platform as sacred space.

There may have been concomitant altar on the other side of the stela. This idea is, of course, pure conjecture, but perhaps the ceramic concentration represented in lots 9 and 11 spilled over the edge of a similar altar on this side of the stela. That concentration was stratigraphically above the final floor in Unit 1, just as the altar on the south side is stratigraphically above the final floor. Unfortunately, this concentration was excavated directly north of a looter's pit running across the entire north face of the stela, so any evidence regarding an altar on the north stela face would have been destroyed.

Finally, ceramic evidence at the base of Unit 33 suggests an earlier time period than represented on top of the altar. Additional research needs to be carried out in this unit next year to further clarify the chronology. This will contribute to the objective of refining the time period the stela was placed in this location.

Excavation of Structure N14-12

WK-08A-03

Unit 3 was located on structure N14-12, along the central axis of the building, at the base of a shallow concave area running southward up the front center. It was the only previously excavated unit reopened this year. The 2x2m pit is situated between two piers identified in Units 5 and 9 (Rich 2003). Unit 3 exposes an entrance between the piers, but the area further south had

not been investigated. The purpose of reopening this unit was twofold: first, to tie back into the grid established in 2003, and Unit 3 contains a portion of both of the piers, which is convenient for spatial referencing. The second goal was to resume investigations into the nature of the shallow centerline trench.

Elevations were taken with Datum 1 in both seasons of excavation and, after the backdirt was removed to the level of rubble exposed last year, elevations were retaken for comparison. Only a .5cm difference was recorded between this and last year's elevations on a metate fragment in the center of the unit. The corners of the unit demonstrated slightly more variation, but that may be because not all of the backdirt was removed. The opening elevations in this 2x2m unit in 2003 were 33, 58, 82, 74 and 81.5 cmbd1. Starting elevations this year were 56, 97, 99.5, 99 and 94 cmbd1.

In lot 80 (max. thickness: 54.5cm), rubble was removed to a matrix level. This was brought down to an eroded floor level in lot 116 (max. thickness: 26cm). An E/W alignment of stone (feature lot 206) was documented in this lot. This alignment appears to run across the entire front façade of N14-12 (also visible in Units 5, 17 and 26) and serves as some sort of basal platform or foundation for the piers and cornering wall identified in Units 17 and 26. Also in lot 116, the area at the base of the eastern pier was more thoroughly cleaned, and a complete chert point (SF #010) was recovered near the NW corner of the pier. Several of the sherds from this lot have a heavy, cement-like matrix covering the surface that adhered despite

washing. Another sherd appeared to be calcified.

WK-08A-12

Unit 12 was a 2x2m unit adjacent to the southern perimeter of Unit 3. This unit, along with 3, 13 and 15, all form a strip excavation up the shallow centerline trench, totaling 7.5m long x 2m wide. Elevations in Unit 12 were taken from Datum 3. They were 84, 98, 123, 145 and 130.5 cmbd3. Closing elevations were 136, 137.5, 194, 196 and 200 cmbd3.

Lot 82 (max. thickness: 33cm) was the removal of humus and matrix down to the first layer of rubble. Tree root disturbance is extensive in this lot, but the first of six E/W oriented stair treads was identified. The tread was constructed of cut stone, rubble and large slates. An interior thickened rim sherd suggesting a Tepeu 2 date was observed.

Lot 129 (max. thickness: 45cm) also contained many roots, particularly in the northern portion of the unit, and a great deal of matrix was mixed in with the rubble. The majority of excavation was done in front of the stairway. The goal of this lot was to more clearly define the stair tread noted in lot 82, and determine if there were others in this unit. As with many of the lots in WK08A, these sherds show signs of burning. An incurving bowl or basin rim was noted, as was an eroded appliqué, and two sherds with evenly applied stucco layers. Lot 140 was confined to the area north of the first tread, which is contiguous with the terrace wall

(feature lot 207) documented in Units 18 and 19 (see Fig. 5 for profile). Here the wall drops to a single course high. A second stair tread was identified along the south perimeter of the unit, and extends into Unit 13. Large slates were common throughout the unit, either laid on top of the floor or integrated into the stair construction.

In Lot 195, a N/S oriented wall (lot 208) was distinct in the profile, demarcating the west edge of the stairway. It was at least two courses high and provided clear evidence this was an inset staircase. The sherds collected in this lot include samples of El Perú-*Waka*'s Terminal Classic undefined waxy monochrome red (Eppich 2003) and "chunky" censer fragments.

WK-08A-13

Also 2x2m, Unit 13 is adjacent to the southern border of Unit 12 and continues up N14-12's stairway. Opening elevations were 43, 37, 75, 97 and 79 cmbd3 and closing elevations were 64, 62, 136, 144 and 101 cmbd3. The first lot was 86 (max. thickness: 22cm), which was very similar to WK08A-12-1-82. It contained cut stone, rubble and large slates close to the surface. Again, as in Unit 12, large slabstones were present throughout. There is a fairly large tree to the west of the unit with roots extending into this excavation, as well as into the looter's trench on the western side of the building. Many of the sherds in this lot exhibit signs of burning. Censer fragments and two sherds belonging to a Fine Orange narrow-necked jar were collected. The jar has an orange-red base slip and black geometric designs painted on the neck. Incised

rings encircle the base of the neck, and more incised designs are below the shoulder area. Fine Orange suggests a late Late Classic or Terminal Classic date for this surface lot.

Two more stair treads were documented in lot 130 (max. thickness: 42cm). Two censer fragments, (one a ceramic appliqué – possibly a censer eye), bowl fragments and burned sherds were recovered. Lot 201 is located in the NW portion of the unit, attempting to further define the wall designated lot 208. There is serious root disturbance to this wall, and it is better preserved further north in WK08A-12. Excavation of lot 203 was targeted at the fill behind the second stair tread. Small ballast was identified, and beneath that matrix mixed with small to medium fill behind the faced stones composing the face of the tread. Three courses of stone were identified along the face of the third tread. An exterior bolstered rim sherd and the unidentified Terminal Classic monochrome red ware were again recorded in lot 203.

WK-08A-15

Unit 15 was placed at the summit of N14-12's central staircase. Sharing the southern perimeter of Unit 13, this excavation was 2m on the E/W axis, and 1.5m on the N/S axis. The shortened N/S axis is due to the looter's trench on the south side of the building, which abuts the southern boundary of Unit 15. The looter's trench is approximately 85cm wide. Opening elevations in Unit 15 were 8, 0, 36, 35 and 36 cmbd3 and closing elevations were 8, 0, 61, 57 and 55 cmbd3.

Only two shallow lots were excavated – many of the surface rocks and slates were left in place in the southern 65cm in this unit. In lots 94 and 132, rubble was carefully removed to expose two stair treads. Ceiba-spiked and burned sherds were collected from both of these lots. In the SW corner of the unit, two large slates were noted on the surface.

WK-08A-28

The purpose of Unit 28 was to clean the looter's trench on the south side of N14-12. The entire trench was swept in lot 157, and as a result a 10cm thick floor was discovered at an elevation of 106 cmbd3. This floor is visible in all three walls of the looter's trench. It was decided the west profile of the trench would be cleaned more intensively in lot 158, as it was the best preserved. The thick floor was clearly in good condition, particularly underneath the very wide load-bearing wall sitting on top of it. This wall measured 136cm from the exterior wall facing to the interior wall facing. The width of the fill (wall core) in between the stones measured approximately 75cm. Lot 157 contained two sherds refit to the Fine Orange jar discussed previously in WK08A-13-1-86. A similar sherd was collected in lot 158, although not a refit.

WK-08A-29

Within Unit 12, another unit was established. This 1x1m pit was centrally situated in Unit 12, adjacent to the first tread of the inset staircase. The new pit was designated Unit 29 in order to make a distinction between it and Unit

12. The purpose was to excavate to bedrock to collect chronological data. Opening elevations were 193, 195, 211, 201 and 200 cmbd3, and closing elevations at bedrock were 412, 399, 406, 400 and 405 cmbd3.

The unit was started at cultural level 2, since excavations in Unit 12's Level 1 terminated at the level of a poorly preserved floor. Lot 161 (max. thickness: 35cm) exposed another cut stone alignment (feature lot 209), below and slightly in front of the first stair tread. The alignment is angled to the north, perhaps pushed forward because of the weight above. The easternmost cut stone appears to have been pushed out of the alignment entirely. The remainder of the lot contained a loose, brown matrix, several mid-sized pieces of rubble, and a large slabstone (approximate measurements 74x40cm) was recorded the northern portion of the unit. This slabstone was adjacent to another slabstone at the base of Unit 12, just outside of Unit 29. A smooth, molded stone was noted in this lot, which looks like it may be some decorative architectural element. Freidel suggested it may be flowstone (pers. comm. 2004).

Lot 168 (max. thickness: 40cm) contains additional fill and two more large slabstones, as well as another irregularly shaped large rock. One of the large slabstones was located directly beneath the one identified in lot 161. Lot 171 (max. thickness: 38cm) contained more rubble and matrix fill. A change in matrix was noted in lot 174 (max. thickness: 55cm). Previously the unit contained brown matrix; the change here was to a darker, almost humus-like matrix above

a floor at 315 cmbd3. Small pieces of bajareque and burned rock were recorded, and in the NW corner of the unit 37 bone fragments were collected. They are unidentified human longbone (Piehl, pers. comm. 2004).

The floor was removed in level 3, lot 175 (max. thickness: 43cm), and measured 10-12cm thick. Beneath this floor was a 10cm layer of soft, brown (10YR 5/3) matrix with another floor underneath the matrix. Unfortunately, the lot was not changed at this juncture, and excavation continued underneath the floor. Here the matrix changed to a very dark gray (10YR 3/1) with patches of black. No charcoal was observed. Small pebbles and fist-sized rubble were included. Lot 175 was arbitrarily closed after roughly 16cm of this matrix was removed. Excavation of this matrix and fill continued in level 4, lot 176 (max. thickness: 35cm), until another matrix change was encountered. The few sherds in this lot were eroded and small. Lot 178 (max. thickness: 28 cm) was a very dark gray/dark grayish brown matrix (10YR 3/1 or 3/2) devoid of rubble or pebbles. It contained sherds throughout, including thick-walled, waxy interior/exterior slipped sherds suggesting an earlier date. The lot was terminated at bedrock.

Discussion

Units 3, 12, 13, and 15 reveal surface architecture along the centerline of the structure, which was dominated by a poor-quality inset staircase with a total of six treads. There were two treads per unit, in Units 12, 13 and 15. The entire staircase was designated lot 210 (Fig. 6).

Large slabstones were incorporated into the construction of the stairs. Many of these slabs, with their longer sides oriented E/W, are situated along the central axis, all of which are also in alignment with the stela. These may have originally been vault capstones from an earlier construction phase reused in this architectural remodeling of N14-12. It is possible there was a small platform at the summit in Unit 15.

The stairs were located close to the modern-day ground surface, and no plaster was documented on any part of the staircase. Ballast, however, was recorded in WK08A-13-2-203, suggesting a plaster surface at one time. In sum, this indicates powerful erosion on the staircase. The angle of the staircase creates a channel down which water can run, wearing away plaster and not allowing for substantive humus accumulation, thereby generating the “anomalous centerline trench” referred to in the 2003 report (Rich 2003).

The alignment in Unit 3 referred to as a basal platform/foundation (lot 206) extends across the north face of the structure, demonstrated in Units 17 and 26. This feature may have been identified under the SW corner of the structure as well, in WK08A-35. It is possibly a basal platform, defined by Loten and Pendergast (1984: 4) as the component forming the base of a substructure and completely supporting the component above it. As described, however, the basal platform should extend horizontally well beyond the limits of the upper elements. This is not the case here, and because of this the element may also be explained as a basal moulding. Loten and

Pendergast (ibid.) define this as “a moulding at the foot of a feature such as a wall, an outset, a bench or a terrace.”

Unit 28 – the southern looter’s trench – was also along the centerline of N14-12. The 10cm thick floor was the hallmark of this unit, discovered once the matrix and mossy growth was removed from the trench walls. This floor may represent a prepared surface for construction of the thick load-bearing wall. Interestingly, it is higher than any other floor excavated on the southern façade of N14-12, suggesting perhaps an elevated room in the rear of the building. This implies the inset staircase was a later component of N14-12, which covered over earlier architectural features (for example an elevated room or another staircase).

Fine orange refit sherds collected in this unit and the surface lot in Unit 13 may be explained several ways. Perhaps the vessel was placed at the summit of N14-12 on the small platform, and subsequently broke. Some of the fragments fell to the south (Unit 28) and others to the north (Unit 13). It is also possible the vessel was intentionally broken and scattered by the ancient Maya, or possibly by the modern looters who have pilfered the site. This final option is a sad but plausible explanation, because the context is so close to the ground surface. Humus accumulation is so paltry along the centerline, that modern intervention occurring, for example, 40 years ago may not be so obviously modern in this context.

The purpose of Unit 29 was to collect a column of data to bedrock along the centerline

axis. As with the rest of operation WK08A, the unit did not contain an abundance of material useful for dating the structure. Besides the eroded floor level at the surface of this unit, two more floors were identified. The first was the 10-12cm thick floor, above which the human longbone offering was found. Since this material was fairly well preserved, it is fair to say that it was placed on the floor and covered over very soon thereafter by the matrix and rubble fill above it. The bone, therefore, appears to be an offering along the centerline axis prior to an architectural modification or construction episode. This thick floor is similar to the floor recorded in Unit 28, but nearly 2m deeper. Perhaps it corresponds to the same construction phase as the elevated room hypothesized in Unit 28? Further excavation could address this.

Bedrock in this unit was smooth and level, very different from the bedrock in previously described Unit 11, north of Stela 3. The presence of sherds and chert flakes in the final lot suggests bedrock was intentionally leveled and fill laid on top of it for construction purposes. Based on the waxy slip and thick, the sherds in this fill appear to be earlier in date than the upper levels; further ceramic analysis is required before suggesting a specific period.

WK-08A-17

Adjacent to the western boundary of 2003's Unit 9, Unit 17 was another 2x2m pit initiated to learn more about the architecture of N14-12. Opening elevations were 89, 98, 156, 165.5 and 118 cmbd5, with closing elevations of

178, 178, 181.5, 210 and 184 cmbd5. All seven lots in Unit 17 were assigned to the same cultural level. Lot 98 (max. thickness: 25cm) was the removal of humus and matrix to expose the uppermost layer of rubble. A large, eroded slabstone of the same type encountered throughout WK08A's excavations was documented on the ground surface in the SE corner of the unit. In Lot 101 (max. thickness: 13cm) more rubble was removed, along with displaced cut stone and matrix. Several cut stones appeared to be in situ, and were left in place. After further excavation, these proved to be part of an E/W oriented wall (lot 211) in lot 103 (max. thickness: 26cm). The wall runs along the same axis as the pier excavated last season in Unit 9, and is approximately 90cm wide from the north exterior face to the south interior face. The wall core in between is comprised of small to mid-sized rubble and matrix.

Lot 106 (max. thickness: 54.5cm) served to more clearly define the wall, identify the same basal platform/moulding feature referred to in Unit 3 (lot 206) and expose a floor (203 cmbd5) to the north of that. It is possible the wall is actually another pier – but the unit does not extend out far enough to the west to capture the western perimeter of this feature. Amazingly, there is a preserved stucco layer on the face of the NE cornerstones and along the north face of this feature. East of this wall, the base of lot 106 is comprised of slanting stones that may have comprised a vault. Lot 122 (max. thickness: 71cm) focused on the eastern half of the unit and north of the wall, to accomplish more clearing. The basal feature (lot 206) was

exposed across the full N/S length of the unit. It is located about 50cm south of the unit's northern perimeter. Another layer of what appear to be collapsed vault stones was concentrated in the SE quadrant of the unit.

Excavation in lot 137 (max. thickness: 35cm) was restricted to the eastern and southern (behind the wall) portion of the unit. An eroded floor was noted to the east of the wall, on top of which sits a large slabstone. South of the wall there is an angled alignment of three fairly large slates. They seem intentionally placed and are flanking a feature of flat-laid stones to be discussed in the review of Unit 19.

The removal of these slates took place in lot 164, which was also focused on the southern and eastern segments of the unit. Beneath these three slates a small, flat rock was banked up against the corner where the interior faces of the walls called lot 204 (western wall of structure) and lot 211 meet. When the small, flat rock was removed, a complete bivalve half (species unknown) was found situated against the wall. This was cataloged as SF #015, and supports the intentionality of the stone arrangement at the base of unit 17 and in contiguous Unit 19.

WK-08A-26

Unit 26 was adjacent to the western perimeter of Unit 17. It was a 1x2m unit established to determine whether the wall in Unit 17 (lot 211) cornered to look like a reverse "L", or was another freestanding pier. An additional

objective was to locate the NW corner of the building. Opening elevations were 119, 151, 173, 199 and 152 cmbd5, and closing elevations were 114 (on a rock), 214, 207, 216 and 190 cmbd5.

Lot 144 (max. thickness: 34cm) was composed of humus, matrix and rubble. Some cut stones were identified among the rubble in the north and west portions of the unit, and others appeared to be in their original locations based on the expected trajectory of the wall in Unit 17. Due to a nearby tree, there is serious root intrusion in the western part of the unit. In lot 148 (max. thickness: 57cm) the corner of the structure was identified, showing that the wall was indeed contiguous and cornered in a reverse "L," joining up with the interior face of the western structure wall (lot 204). This wall is also about 90cm wide from the east-facing interior to the west-facing exterior. The basal feature was also identified beneath the corner, as well as a continuation of the floor to the north of that. Lot 200 was a quick exploration of the corner. It showed that the surface cornerstone sat on top of another large stone. It seems likely that this foundation is, at most, only another course high (Escobedo, pers. comm. 2004) and time constraints prevented further excavation.

WK-08A-18

Unit 18, a 2x2m pit situated south of 2003's Unit 9 and west of Unit 12, was initiated along with Unit 19 to expose more of the structure's architecture. The opening elevations are 81.5, 19, 128, 83 and 71 cmbd5. Closing

elevations on a floor were 175, 176, 179, 176 and 175 cmbd5. All of the six lots were considered one cultural level.

Lot 110 (max. thickness: 26cm) was the removal of humus and matrix to expose the first layer of rubble. Very few cut stones and no slabstones were exposed. An E/W oriented alignment (lot 207) of very eroded stones was noted close to the southern unit boundary. This is the previously mentioned terrace wall. Lot 117 (max. thickness: 23cm) proved this surface alignment to have another course of better preserved cut stone below it. This wall is approximately 70-80cm north of the southern unit perimeter. In subsequent lot 119 (max. thickness: 9cm), excavation was undertaken only to the north of this wall, which was the case for the remaining lots.

In lot 119, rock that looked like collapsed vault stones increased significantly in density. This phenomenon was even more pronounced in lot 133 (max. thickness: 39cm). Large slabstones (approximately 60cm lengthwise) were also included among the small vault stones in this lot. Lot 139 (max. thickness: 34cm) was more of the same vault collapse. Excavation in the eastern portion of the unit, however, was nearing the floor level previously identified in Unit 12. This floor was actually contiguous with that of Units 12, 17 and 19. In lot 163 the floor was completely cleared of vault collapse. A small oliva shell (SF #014) with a 1mm diameter hole drilled through one end was collected near the wall in this lot.

WK-08A-19

This 2x2 is situated west of Unit 18 and south of 17. Opening elevations were 21, 80, 85, 89 and 53 cmbd5, and closing elevations of 175, 174, 180, 178 and 178 cmbd5 were recorded. Seven lots were excavated and assigned to a single cultural level, and are very similar in composition to Unit 18. A tree was located in the SW quadrant of the unit.

The first lot was 113 (max. thickness: 20cm) in which humus and matrix were removed to expose the first layer of rubble. The wall called lot 207 was not as obvious in this unit, but was clear in lot 118 (max. thickness: 19cm). Beginning with lot 120, all excavation took place in only the northern two-thirds of the unit (north of the wall). While this lot also contains collapsed vault stones, they are not as dense here as in concomitant lot 119 (Unit 18). A fragmented metate was noted in this lot. Lot 134 also contained collapsed vault stones, which range from 25-45cm on either the length or width axis, and tend to be approximately 6-9cm thick. These measurements are also representative of the collapsed vault stones in the other units

Figure 7 depicts the very flat and level slates (feature lot 212) in Lot 138 (max. thickness: 47cm). These were contained in the western portion of the unit, concentrated against the N/S and E/W oriented walls (lots 207 and 204, respectively), and are bordered on the east and north (Unit 17, lot 137) by angled slates. A second layer of flat-laid slates was exposed beneath the first, in lot 162 (max. thickness:

19.5cm). A thin layer of matrix was noted in between. In the final lot 165 (max. thickness: 12cm), a fairly well preserved floor was exposed, contiguous with the floors identified at the base of Units 3, 12, 17, and 18.

WK-08A-30

The purpose of Unit 30 was identical to that of 29: to excavate to bedrock to gather data regarding the chronology of the structure. It was positioned in the western portion of Units 17 and 19. The unit was 90cm on the E/W axis, running along the terrace wall (lot 207). The western perimeter ran 158cm along the interior face of the structure's western wall (lot 204), while the eastern edge of the unit was 170cm in length. Opening elevations were on the floor surface: 173, 174, 182 and 176 cmbd5 (no center elevation). Closing elevations on bedrock measured 377, 384, 372, 381 and 396 cmbd5. The ten lots excavated here began at cultural level 2 since the beginning surface was the plaster floor at the base of 17 and 19.

Lot 167 (max. thickness: 7cm) was the removal of the plaster floor. Beneath a thin layer of ballast, another floor was revealed. This penultimate floor had a grayish tinge, and was speckled with burned patches. This floor and its fill were removed in lot 169 (max. thickness: 12cm). Directly underneath a third floor was discovered. This was removed in lot 170 (max. thickness: 35cm). Carbon fragments were mixed in with the ballast under the floor, and the matrix became very hard within this lot. In the profile it looks like an undifferentiated plaster

mass. The ceramic material collected in this lot looks earlier than the others – thick-walled outcurved jar fragments, a brown waxy slipped sherd and one that may be Aguila Orange. The lot was closed at the level of an anomalous single-course E/W alignment (feature lot 213) at a depth between 215-221 cmbd5. This alignment was located approximately 25cm north of the southern unit wall.

Lot 173 (max. thickness: 83cm) was the excavation of rubble fill, which became progressively larger as the depth of the lot increased. At an elevation of 285-290 cmbd5 another floor was exposed. It was, however, cut on a N/S axis and although it is visible throughout the west profile, it extends only about 7cm east into the unit. It is not visible in the east profile at all. The preserved area of floor was approximately 10cm thick. Directly above this floor was a 10-20cm thick layer of matrix. Sitting on top of this matrix layer was a one course high N/S oriented alignment (feature lot 214) visible only in the west profile of the unit. Under the matrix layer was a nicely preserved floor extending across the entire unit. This was uncovered in lot 177 (max. thickness: 14cm), and was the fifth floor recorded in this unit. This floor was removed in lot 179 (max. thickness: 7cm), and in lots 180 (max. thickness: 13cm) and 181 (max. thickness: 29cm) the sixth and seventh floors were removed. Lot 180 contained a base-body junction sherd that may be Sierra Red. In lot 181 matrix combined with small fill was excavated. When a layer of rubble was encountered the lot was changed to 182 (max. thickness: 47cm). This lot contains rubble fill of various sizes; two flat but irregularly shaped

slabstones were pulled from the southern portion of the unit. Sherds resembling Late Preclassic material were noted (Acuña, pers. comm. 2004). The next lot was initiated at the level where the matrix changed from a dark brown (10YR 4/2) to an even darker shade. In this final lot designated 185 (max. thickness: 20cm), smooth bedrock was encountered. As in WK08A-29-4-178 the matrix was a very dark gray/dark grayish brown (10YR 3/1 or 3/2) devoid of rubble or pebbles. It contained sherds throughout.

Discussion

Units 17, 18, 19, and 26 define the surface architecture on the northwest façade of N14-12. Another entrance to the building was recorded between the pier excavated last year in Unit 9 and the cornering wall in WK08A-17. Excavations in Unit 18 and 19 indicate this peripheral entrance led into a vaulted room. Based on an assumption of symmetry, a vaulted room is also expected on the eastern half of the front façade. When the vault collapse was removed, flat-laid slates were encountered at the base of WK08A-19. Because of the organized way in which the two layers of slates are set into the corner and edging both walls, this feature appears intentionally arranged. The slates do not overlap or appear random in their placement, as if they were part of the vault collapse. They look more like tiles carefully set above the floor level, upon which the vault collapsed. The well-preserved oyster bivalve under the angled slates in WK08A-17-1-164 supports intentional placement. In Unit 26 the NW corner of the structure was identified.

In contrast to these surface units, WK08A-30 provides information about the entire construction sequence of the building, like WK08A-29. The three floors present in the surface lots of Unit 30 are not visible in the profile of Unit 29. These surfaces suggest the 1.15m tall terrace wall (lot 207) was a later modification to the architectural plan, as it is not necessary to prepare a surface with three floors prior to wall construction.

The fifth, sixth and seventh floors correspond to two floors in WK08A-29-3-175. Above these floors in unit 30, the single course alignment designated lot 214 is on the same vertical axis as the interior of the structure's west wall, although 1.10m deeper. This implies some kind of similar construction footprint during earlier incarnations of N14-12; however, as of this writing the earlier configuration is unclear.

WK-08A-31

Unit 31 was a 1x1m pit established to locate the SW corner of N14-12. This corner of the structure is on a pronounced slope at the edge of the plaza and riddled with large trees, which made the task quite difficult. This resulted in the subsequent excavation of units 32, 34 and 35. A new datum was set up for Unit 31 (Datum 7) and also used for the other three units. Opening elevations were 74, 106, 22, 67 and 68.5 cmbd7. Closing elevations were 158.5, 187.5, 82.5 181 and 105 cmbd7. All lots were ascribed to a single cultural level.

The first of four lots was lot 172 (max. thickness: 45cm), which constituted the removal of humus, rubble and cut stone fall. Lot 184 (max. thickness: 45 cm) also contained mostly rubble. In the east half of the unit the matrix is a brownish-tan, as opposed to the west where it is a medium brown. No reason for this difference was obvious in lot 184, but as lot 194 (max. thickness: 71cm, min. thickness: 3cm) was excavated, a N/S oriented wall (feature lot 215) was identified, with the matrix toward the interior being the lighter colored matrix to the east. The wall was two to three courses high in this location. The profound slope and root disturbance here made excavation difficult. The final lot in the unit was 197, which further exposed the wall and a floor adjacent to the exterior face of the wall. The floor is approximately 188 cmbd7. As no corner was discovered, Unit 34 was opened to the south to continue the search.

WK-08A-32

Unit 32 was another 1x1 opened simultaneously with Unit 31, and is located west of that unit. Opening elevations were 109, 120, 73, 100 and 108 cmbd7, with closing elevations of 182.5, 145, 186.5, 139 and 152 cmbd7. Excavation in lots 187 (max. thickness: 38cm), 192 (max. thickness: 49cm) and 196 (max. thickness: 26.5cm) provided no useful information and were tremendously disturbed by very large tree roots. These lots did contain some nicely cut stone, presumably having tumbled off the structure.

WK-08A-34

This 1x1m pit followed the wall (feature lot 215) southward. It was only one cultural level and one lot. The opening elevations for lot 198 were 150.5, 166, 76, 111 and 112 cmbd7, and closing elevations were 155.5, 204, 110, 187 and 170 cmbd7. Again, this unit was permeated with large tree roots. No corner was encountered in this unit, but the floor was exposed at an elevation ranging from 187-204 cmbd7, slanting to the south. It was not as well preserved here as further north in Unit 31.

WK-08A-35

This unit was another 1x1m with only a single lot (lot 202), adjacent to the south edge of Unit 34. Opening elevations were 226, 231, 167, 168 and 193 cmbd7 and closing elevations were 225, 231, 185, 219 and 235 cmbd7. Jumbled cut stone was noted, as well as several large (approximately 57x26cm), nicely cut stones, two with notches taken out of one corner. One also had a circular depression worn or drilled through about half the thickness of the block.

As with the previous three units, Unit 35 is severely disturbed by roots, but by following the wall (feature lot 215) the askew SW corner was finally located. What appears to be a foundation stone of some sort was also protruding from beneath the poorly preserved floor, which had an elevation of 219 cmbd7 in this unit.

Discussion

Excavation in Units 31, 32, 34 and 35 served to further define the architectural characteristics of this structure by pinpointing the SW corner. It seems possible the foundation stone revealed in lot 202 is part of the same basal feature exposed on the northern façade of the structure. The length from the NW corner in Unit 26 to this corner is 10.80m.

The tree root intrusion coupled with the pronounced slope has negatively affected the preservation of the entire SW portion of the building, not just the cornerstone. Cut stones are scattered all along the southwestern slope of the natural rise.

Excavation of Structure O14-07

Based on Ian Graham's rectified map of El Perú produced some three decades ago, there appear to be two piers on the western face of Structure O14-07, framing a central entrance. It is likely that on the other side of the piers there are two more doorways. The structure is quite long, running nearly the entire length of the summit plaza's N/S axis. Freidel (pers. comm. 2004) suggested the low gallery style building with three entrances seems characteristic of the Terminal Classic, but prior to these excavations, knowledge about the structure's architectural features had only been conjecture. The objective of these units was to test the assumptions about the architectural configuration, while collecting data from another structure atop the summit plaza.

WK-08A-20

Unit 20 is a 1x1m pit, established simultaneously with Units 21 and 22 – also both 1x1m. These three units run on an E/W axis, perpendicular to the structure itself, and cut a path directly into the structure's central room, through the central doorway. The purpose of these units is to begin assessing the architectural features and chronology of O14-07.

Opening elevations in Unit 20 were 84, 115, 84.5, 114 and 97.5 cmbd6. Lot 123 (max. thickness: 23.5cm) was the first of 11 lots excavated in this unit, with a total of nine cultural levels assigned. In this first lot, humus was removed to reveal rubble, along with one large cut stone in the eastern side of the unit. Level 1 also contained lot 127 (max. thickness: 32cm) in which both a very poorly preserved floor and a low quality N/S oriented alignment (lot 216) were uncovered. The alignment extends the length of the unit perimeter dividing 20 and 21, and the floor is to the west of the alignment. The alignment is interpreted as a doorway threshold. The floor was excavated in lot 131 (max. thickness: 12cm) to the level of the next floor, which was much more nicely preserved, but buckling due to root perturbation below. The low quality doorway threshold stones were faced on the exterior by nicely cut veneer stones. A second, earlier threshold (feature lot 217) is situated slightly to the west of the first threshold, which appears to be sitting on top of the penultimate floor.

In lot 150 (max. thickness: 10cm) the penultimate floor and threshold designated lot 216 (the higher one) were removed to further expose the threshold designated lot 217. A third well-preserved floor is at the same elevation as the floor identified in WK08A-21-5-156. Lot 153 is the removal of the threshold designated lot 217 (lower one). The floor documented in both lots 150 and 156 may have been cut to insert the threshold stones. Plaster flooring, small ballast and fist-sized rubble fill was excavated to the level of the fourth floor in lot 159 (max. thickness: 29cm). After conferring with Eppich and Acuña, it is thought the sherds from this lot may be Late Classic with some earlier modal remnants, or simply early Late Classic. Another N/S oriented alignment, suggesting yet another construction phase of the structure, was assigned lot 218. Clearly, this alignment sits on top of the fourth floor. Leaving this alignment intact, lot 160 (max. thickness: 5cm) is the extraction of the fourth floor, revealing the fifth floor recorded in this unit. Floor five was excavated in lot 183 (max. thickness: 9.5cm), and floor six in lot 186 (max. thickness: 10cm). While excavating lot 183, three more rocks were discovered at a deeper elevation and slightly further to the west of the alignment called lot 218. These were also left in situ.

The presence or absence of floors became difficult to differentiate at this point. Lot 186 was a peach colored plaster (as opposed to the cream colors more common in these excavations), which terminated at the level of what was documented as the seventh floor. A sherd with a basal flange was noted. Lot 189 (max. thickness: 25cm) was closed at the next

bona fide floor – floor eight. A stone was laid into this floor at an elevation of 215 cmbd6. When extracted in lot 199 (max. thickness: 52cm) nothing was discovered beneath it. This lot was comprised of a mixture of matrix and rubble and was closed at a fairly compact layer of rubble. Two poorly cut stones are present in the west profile. The ceramic material contains monochrome orange slipped sherds, as well as brown slipped sherds, and outcurving jar necks suggestive of the Early Classic.

After reviewing the entire profile, two facts became clear:

1. There definitely was not a “floor seven” as defined above. After the fact, the profile showed no difference at this depth.
2. An undocumented floor shows in the profile between the third and fourth floors.

This results in a total of eight floors clearly illustrated in the north and west profiles (Fig. 8).

WK-08A-21

Unit 21's opening elevations were 70, 84, 66, 84 and 75 cmbd6, with closing elevations at 147, 150, 144, 149 and 148 cmbd6. A total of seven lots were excavated, with lot 124 (max. thickness: 36cm) comprised of humus, matrix and rubble. What looked like floor ballast was encountered in the eastern portion of the unit. The lot was brought down to a concentration of rubble containing some roughly cut stones. Lot 128 (max. thickness: 29cm) was devoid of rocks, except for the threshold alignment (feature lot

216) shared with Unit 20. An elongated tubular bead (SF #011) made of a black, polished material was collected in this lot.

Lot 135 (max. thickness: 35cm) was terminated at the surface of the first plaster floor, as were the four subsequent lots: 151, 154, 155 and 156, for a total of five floor surfaces in this unit. These lots contain paltry numbers of sherds, and it is unlikely a chronology differentiating them will be able to be developed.

Lot	Max. Thickness
151	5cm
154	6cm
155	5cm
156	20cm

One of the floors was omitted in the profile drawing – either the third or fourth floor from the surface – due to the compact nature of the plaster in the profiles and heavy root disturbance noted in lot 154. Finally, the surface of the fifth floor in this unit corresponds to the surface of the third floor in Unit 20.

WK-08A-22

The furthest east of Units 20, 21 and 22, Unit 22 was estimated to be in the center of the structure. Opening elevations were 63, 70.5, 59.5, 66.5 and 65 cmbd6, with closing elevations of 11, 113.5, 110, 117 and 113 cmbd6. This unit was plagued by serious root damage, and in an effort to not fatally impact the large tree to the east of the unit, only two lots were excavated here. Lot 125 (max. thickness: 32.5cm) was comprised of rubble mixed with matrix. The

ballast-like layer first noted in WK08A-21-1-124 was identified here, at a slightly higher elevation than that of Unit 21, and at that point the lot was terminated. A preserved plaster floor was revealed at the base of lot 136 (max. thickness: cm), which is the same floor exposed in WK08A-21-1-135.

WK-08A-23

Units 23, 24 and 25 extend southward from the southern perimeter of Unit 20. They are all 1x1m units, each containing two lots. The purpose of these excavations was to test the presence of the hypothesized pier and search for the southern entrance. Opening elevations for Unit 23 were 71, 117, 85, 117 and 90 cmbd6, with closing elevations of 92, 139, 90, 138 and 137 cmbd6. A small tree was located in the NW corner of the pit. Lot 141 (max. thickness: 10cm) was the removal of humus and matrix to expose the first layer of rubble.

In lot 145 (max. thickness: 42cm) intact veneer stones were identified, forming the final construction phase of O14-07's western façade. The veneer wall is two courses high, with the basal course set slightly further west, achieving a stepped appearance. The upper course is approximately 25cm east of the basal course, and is badly disturbed. The two courses of veneer stone were designated lot 219. In the western portion of the unit, a floor was documented at 137 cmbd6. This floor corresponds with the first floor documented in WK08A-20-1-127.

WK-08A-24

Opening at 80, 115, 77, 115 and 102 cmbd6 and closing at 120, 142, 100, 140 and 144 cmbd6, Unit 24 revealed the same features as Unit 23 – the two-course veneer wall and floor. A tree in the east-central portion of the unit displaced many of the stones in the upper course of the veneer wall. Lot 142 (max. thickness: 24cm) was closed after exposing the first layer of rubble, which was very eroded and seemed slightly less dense in the unit than in Unit 23. The veneer stone wall and floor were encountered in lot 146 (max. thickness: 30cm).

WK-08A-25

Placed where another doorway was predicted, Unit 25's opening elevations were 75, 108, 88, 110 and 102.5 cmbd6. The closing measurements were 91, 116, 119, 142 and 139 cmbd6. Lots 143 (max. thickness: 25cm) and 147 (max. thickness: 22cm) contained slightly less rubble than Units 23 and 24. The same poorly preserved floor was encountered, and it slants slightly downward toward the south from Unit 23 to this unit. A medium-sized slabstone is positioned along the axis of the veneer wall, precisely where the door should be located.

Discussion

The excavations in Units 21-25 are very shallow, and only the final architectural façade was revealed. The doorway was never confirmed in Unit 25 and it was not possible to identify piers. They may exist further to the east

than Units 23, 24 and 25; however, present data confirm only the veneer walls. This finishing technique has been observed in other operations at El Perú-*Waka'*, including Operations WK-05 (palace complex) and WK-06 (elite residential structures). Freidel (pers. comm. 2004) stated true veneer stone is a hallmark of fluorescent architecture in the northern Maya lowlands, and is rare in the southern lowlands.

Unit 21 is situated on the interior of the structure, while Unit 20 is located outside of the building. Several layers of threshold stones divide these two units. There are more floors in the surface levels of Unit 21 than in Unit 20, providing evidence for more reflooring episodes inside the structure during the final phases of use. Unfortunately, significant vertical excavation was not carried out inside the building, only outside the central doorway in Unit 20. This lack of interior excavation coupled with a general paucity of artifacts did not assist in determining what function the building might have served.

On the exterior of O14-07, several construction phases were revealed in WK08A-20. A total of nine floors were recorded outside of the structure, again confirming that repeated reflooring is present across the summit plaza. Ceramic material possibly dating to the early Late Classic is located beneath the lowest layer of threshold stones, and the final lots of Unit 20 may date to the Early Classic. The two poorly cut stones in the west profile may form part of a construction pen related to the earliest phases of O14-07. This unit was a prime candidate to be

excavated to bedrock, but was not, due to time constraints.

Conclusions

Research completed during the second season at Operation WK08A successfully addressed the objectives detailed at the beginning of this report. These have already been covered in the previous discussion sections, but several important points will be reiterated. First and foremost, present evidence indicates use of the summit plaza spans from at least the Late Preclassic to the Late/Terminal Classic, as evidenced by the Late Preclassic cache and the Late Classic or possibly Terminal Classic ceramics collected in many of the units.

The sherds and other artifacts collected in WK-08A certainly do not suggest a residential function for this location. The ceramic material is comprised primarily of censer fragments, striated sherds, and ceiba spiked vessels, bowls, and a few jars, vases, and plate fragments. Much of the ceramic material exhibits evidence of some kind of burning. Overall the sherds tend to be small in size, and many of the units have very few sherds. The total number collected after two years of investigation is 6232.

The lithic material is also found in very low quantities (Fig. 1), and is mostly debitage. cursory examination indicates every single obsidian artifact but one is a prismatic blade fragment (n=158). Again, it must be restated that relatively few lithic and obsidian artifacts have been collected in this operation.

Shell was more intensively collected this second season. While more analysis needs to be completed, several interesting and unexplained patterns have emerged based on a preliminary examination of the data. The most numerous are jute shells, collected in units on N14-12 and O14-07. Of the “non-architectural” units excavated this year, considered to be 11, 14, 16, 27 and 33, Unit 33 is the only one containing jute. None of the jute recovered appear to have been used as a food source, despite their generally large size. Several potential explanations for this are 1) they were given as offerings, or 2) perhaps the jute were mixed in with matrix that was hauled up to the summit plaza for construction purposes. This may even imply that the nearby bajo was being mined for dirt. Another pattern was noted in regard to pomacea (apple snail) shells. These are only located in the lower levels of the vertical excavations – Units 11, 29 and 33. This is also the case for fragmentary mother of pearl, which is only found in 11, 20, 29 and 30. These patterns need to be addressed through further analysis.

Temple structure N14-12 appears to date to the Late Classic, perhaps even into the Terminal Classic, during its final incarnation. The final architectural plan consists of an inset staircase with a small platform at the summit and vaulted rooms on either side at the base. Large slabstones have been purposefully arranged everywhere during this phase, and suggest another dismantled vault was perhaps incorporated into an earlier version of the temple. Earlier architectural configurations are

hinted at in the excavations, but remain unidentified at the time of this writing.

The natural rise itself mimics a large pyramid with a temple (N14-12) constructed at the summit. The positioning of the entire religious precinct atop natural promontories and elevated terrain ties into ideological patterns of ancient Maya civic design utilizing natural topography to reinforce cosmological belief systems. There are several attributes of the Mirador group suggestive of this, the first being the elevation of the location, which contributes to its visual prominence on the landscape. Survey data demonstrate the natural rise supporting the three smaller structures is nearly 45m higher than the primary civic plaza located to the northwest. Secondly, the access routes to the tripartite religious complex are severely restricted, possibly indicating limited public access to these spaces. Finally, the religious precinct's proximity to water, in the form of the adjacent bajo is suggestive of Late Classic Maya representations of the mythic water mountain (Scarborough 1998).

Work in the forthcoming season will focus for a short period on Stela 3, attempting to fine-tune when the stela was erected during the Late Preclassic to the Late/Terminal Classic use

period. Also, the northern slope of the rise requires further investigation as it is hypothesized that a staircase runs along this face, in accordance with the proposition that the natural rise is functioning as a pyramid. Excavation will, however, focus heavily on O14-04, the second largest pyramid in the El Mirador Complex.

Acknowledgements

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Figure 3: cache vessels

Figure 4: Stela platform

Figure 5: S Profile of 12, 18, 19, 29, 30, west profile of 17, 19 and 30 (Two pages total)

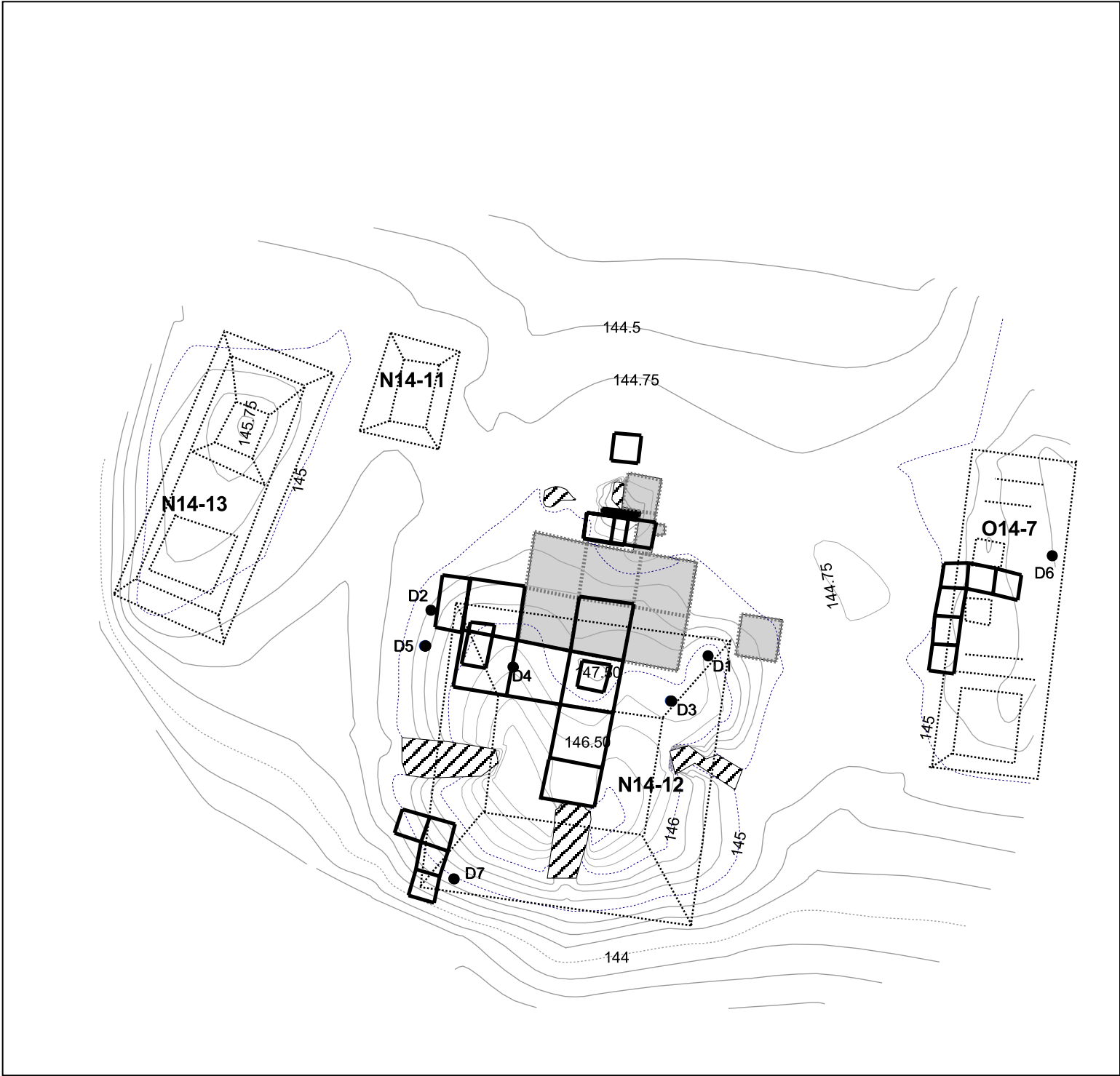
Figure 6: Plan of stairs

Figure 7: Flat slates in 18/19, two images level 1 and level 2

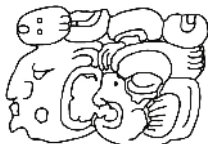
Figure 8: North and west profiles units 20, 21, 22

Figure 1. List of Lots and Artifacts

Unit	Level	Lot	Lot Description	Ceramics	Chert	Faunal Bone	Shell	Daub	Human Bone	Obsidian	Worked Stone	Special Finds	Registered Artifacts	Others	*Notes
00	0	126	Surface Collection	7											
00	0	166	Looter's Trench	13						2					
Subtotal				20	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	
03	1	80	Matrix/Fill	17											
03	1	116	Matrix/Fill	118	1		1			1		1 *			*Complete chert point
Subtotal				135	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	
11	1	79	Humus	57											
11	1	81	Matrix/Fill	65											
11	1	83	Matrix/Fill	55	1	1									
11	2	84	Floor	22											
11	3	85	Floor	17						1					
11	4/5	87	Floor	30	3										
11	6	89	Floor	3											
11	7	91	Floor	6											
11	8	93	Floor	6							1				
11	8	97	Cache										1 *		*Cache vessel (AR#001)
11	8	99	Cache				3						2 *		*Cache vessels(AR#002 y #003)
11	8	100	Matrix												
11	9	102	Plaster (not a floor)	4											
11	9	104	Matrix	3			1								
11	9	105	Matrix	9	4		4								
11	9	109	Matrix				1								
Subtotal				277	8	1	9	0	0	1	1	0	3	0	
12	1	82	Humus	8	2		1			1					
12	1	129	Matrix/Fill	64	5		24			1				1 *	*Stucco fragment
12	1	140	Fill	16			6			1					
12	1	195	Stairs	27	5		3			2					
Subtotal				115	12	0	34	0	0	5	0	0	0	1	
13	1	86	Humus	58			6								
13	1	130	Matrix/Fill	30	3		12			1					
13	1	201	Stairs	17			2								
13	2	203	Stairs	15	1										
Subtotal				120	4	0	20	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	
14	1	88	Humus	59	1						1				
14	1	90	Matrix/Fill	41						1					
14	1	92	Matrix	26						1					
Subtotal				126	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	
15	1	94	Humus	46											
15	1	132	Matrix/Fill	19											
Subtotal				65	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
16	1	95	Surface Collection	41											
16	1	96	Humus	327											
16	1	107	Ceramic Concentration	134											
16	1	108	Matrix	19											
16	1	111	Ceramic Concentration	55											
16	1	112	Ceramic Concentration and Matrix	12											
16	1	114	Matrix	15	1					1					
16	1	115	Matrix	60						1					
16	1	121	Matrix/Fill	10	1										
16	1	149	Matrix/Fill	33						1		1 *	1 **		*Fragment of a thin stone disk eccentric (AR#004) **Chert
Subtotal				706	2	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	1	0	
17	1	98	Humus	5			1								
17	1	101	Matrix/Fill	11			1								
17	1	103	Matrix/Fill	15			1								
17	1	106	Matrix/Fill	15											
17	1	122	Collapsed Roof Vault Stones	13			2							1 *	*Stucco fragment
17	1	137	Collapsed Roof Vault Stones	21			3			2					
17	1	164	Vault Stones and Matrix								1 *				*Half of a bivalve shell
Subtotal				80	0	0	8	0	0	2	0	1	0	1	
18	1	110	Humus	9	1										
18	1	117	Matrix/Fill	24	1		2								
18	1	119	Collapsed Roof Vault Stones	6			3			1					
18	1	133	Collapsed Roof Vault Stones	21	2		3			2					
18	1	139	Collapsed Roof Vault Stones	8			2	1							
18	1	163	Matrix/Fill	11			1					1 *			*Oliva shell
Subtotal				79	4	0	11	1	0	3	0	1	0	0	
19	1	113	Humus	10	1		1			1					
19	1	118	Matrix/Fill	38			4			1					
19	1	120	Collapsed Roof Vault Stones	46											
19	1	134	Collapsed Roof Vault Stones	16			3							1 *	*Quartz
19	1	138	Collapsed Roof Vault Stones	17	1		11			2				2 *	*Quartz
19	1	162	Vault Stones and Matrix	7			4								
19	1	165	Vault Stones and Matrix	2											
Subtotal				136	2	0	23	0	0	4	0	0	0	3	



WK08 Operation - Elevation of Structures and Excavation Units



Proyecto Arqueológico El Peru (Waka')
Parque Nacional Laguna del Tigre

- Operation Datums
- 2004 Excavated Units
- Excavation Units 2003
- ⋯ Elevation Interval 1m
- Elevation Contours 0.25m

- ▤ Structures
- ▨ Looters Trenches
- ▬ Stela

Scale:
1:200



Data and Mapping (2004):
E. Tsismeli, D. Marken,
G. Sincuir

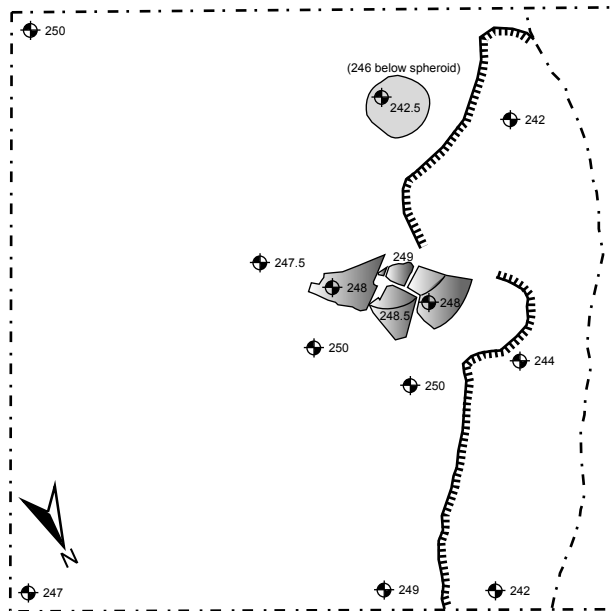


Figure 3a
WK08A-11-8-93 and 97

Plan of cache vessel, groundstone spheroid and cut floor. Lot 97 represents the fragmentary upper vessel (Registered Artifact #001) inverted over two lip to lip vessels. Elevations are centimeters below WK08A Datum 1. Drawing by Michelle Rich

El Perú-*Waka'* Archaeological Project
23 February 2004

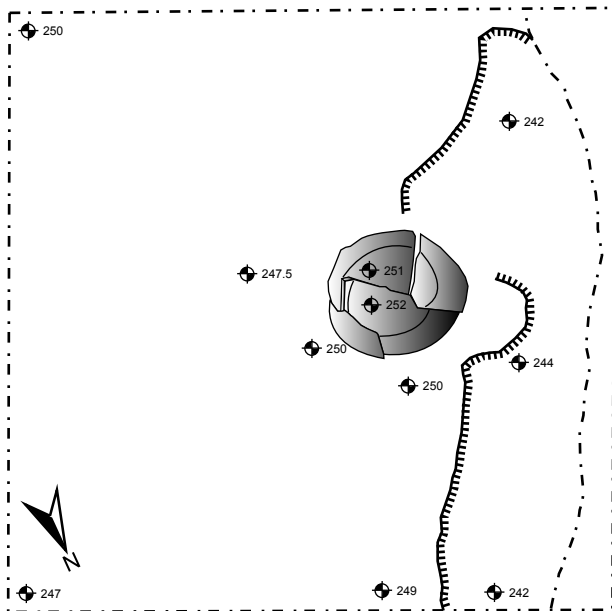


Figure 3b
WK08A-11-8-97 and 99

Plan of cache vessels and cut floor. Additional fragments of RA #001 are represented with the upper bowl (Registered Artifact #002) of the lip to lip vessels visible beneath. Elevations are centimeters below WK08A Datum 1. Drawing by Michelle Rich

El Perú-*Waka'* Archaeological Project
23 February 2004

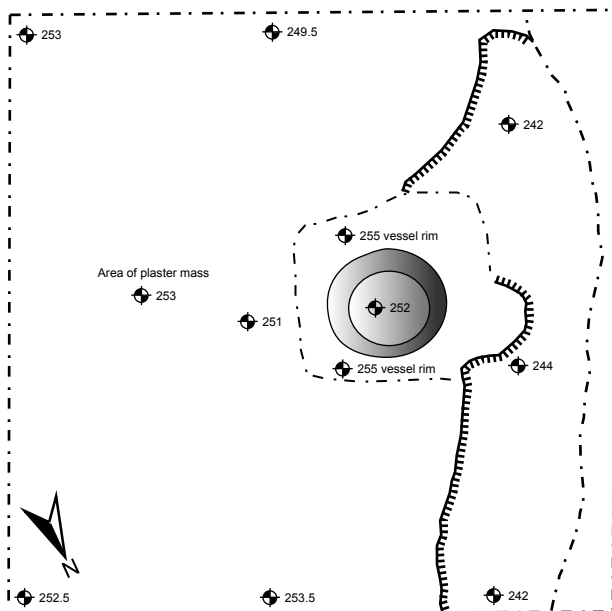


Figure 3c
WK08A-11-8-99 and 102

Plan of cache vessels and cut floor. Inverted vessel RA #002 is fully visible. Vessel RA #003 is hidden directly beneath, arranged lip-to-lip. The eastern portion of the unit was excavated to the level of a poured plaster mass. Elevations are centimeters below WK08A Datum 1. Drawing by Michelle Rich

El Perú-*Waka'* Archaeological Project
23 February 2004



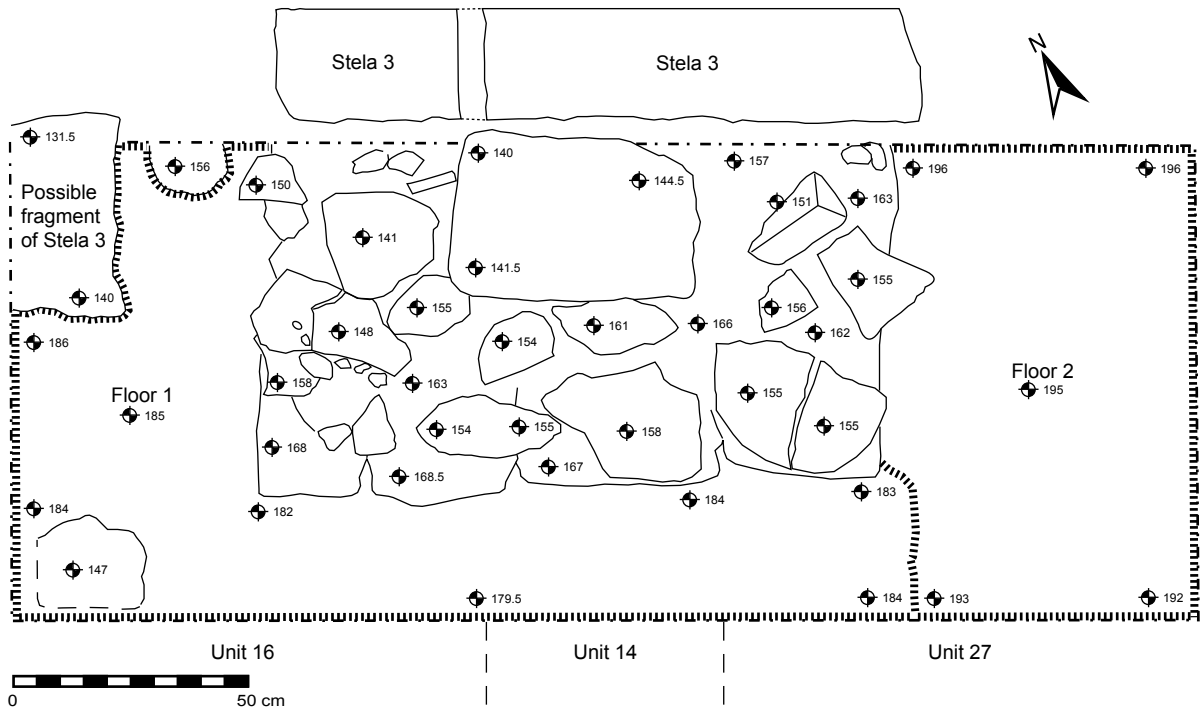


Figure 4a. WK08A 14-1-92, 16-1-49 and 27-1-152. Plan of altar on south face of Stela 3, depicting the uppermost layer of construction stone. All elevations are centimeters below WK08A Datum 1. Drawing by Michelle Rich. El Perú-*Waka'* Archaeological Project, 25 March 2004.

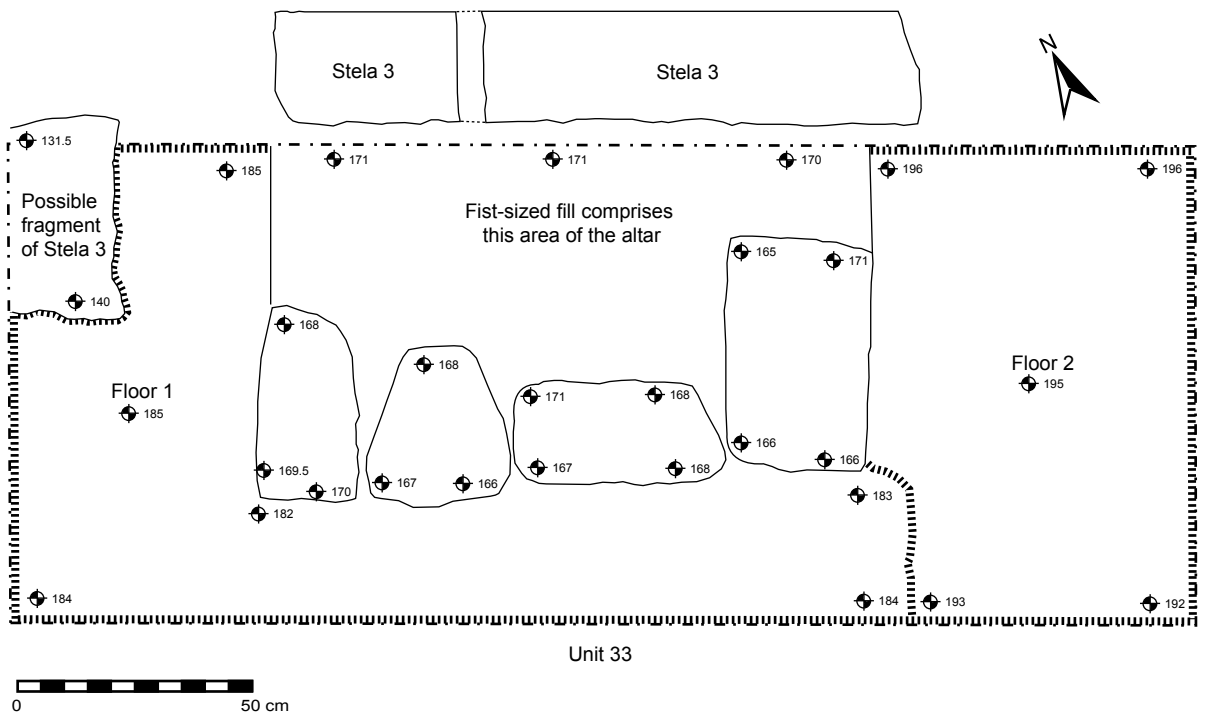
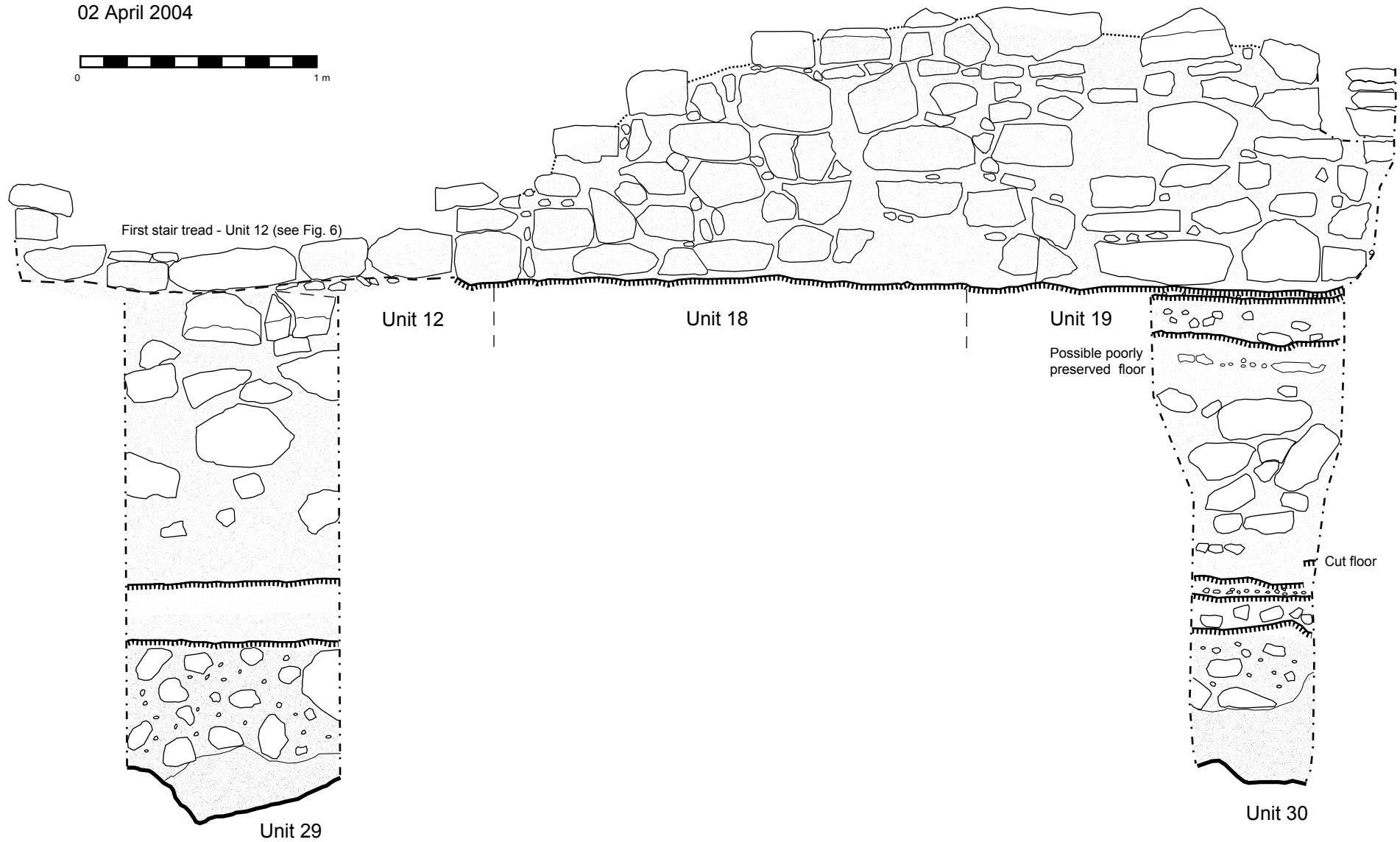
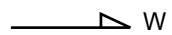


Figure 4b. WK08A-33-1-88. Plan of altar on south face of Stela 3, depicting the penultimate layer of construction stone. Units 14, 16 and 27 were merged to create Unit 33. All elevations are centimeters below WK08A Datum 1. Drawing by Michelle Rich. El Perú-*Waka'* Archaeological Project, 27 March 2004.

Figure 5
WK08A, Structure N12-14
Units 12, 18, 19, 29 and 30
South profile
Drawing by Michelle Rich

El Perú-*Waka'* Archaeological Project
02 April 2004



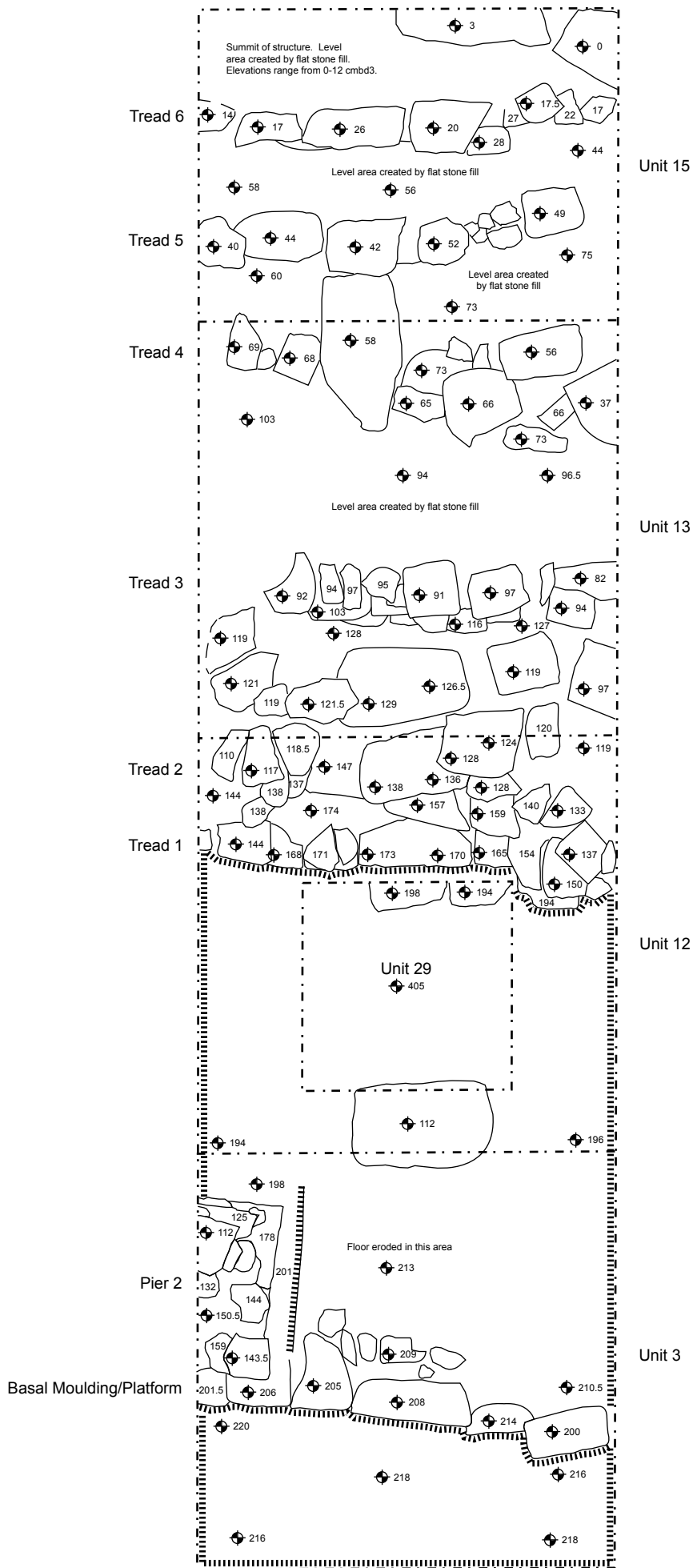


Figure 6
WK08A Units 3, 12, 13, 15 and 29

Plan drawing of Structure N14-12's crude, north-facing staircase. Elevations are centimeters below WK08A Datum 3 (elevations in Unit 3 converted from WK-08A Datum 1). Drawing by Michelle Rich

El Perú-Waka' Archaeological Project
28 March 2004



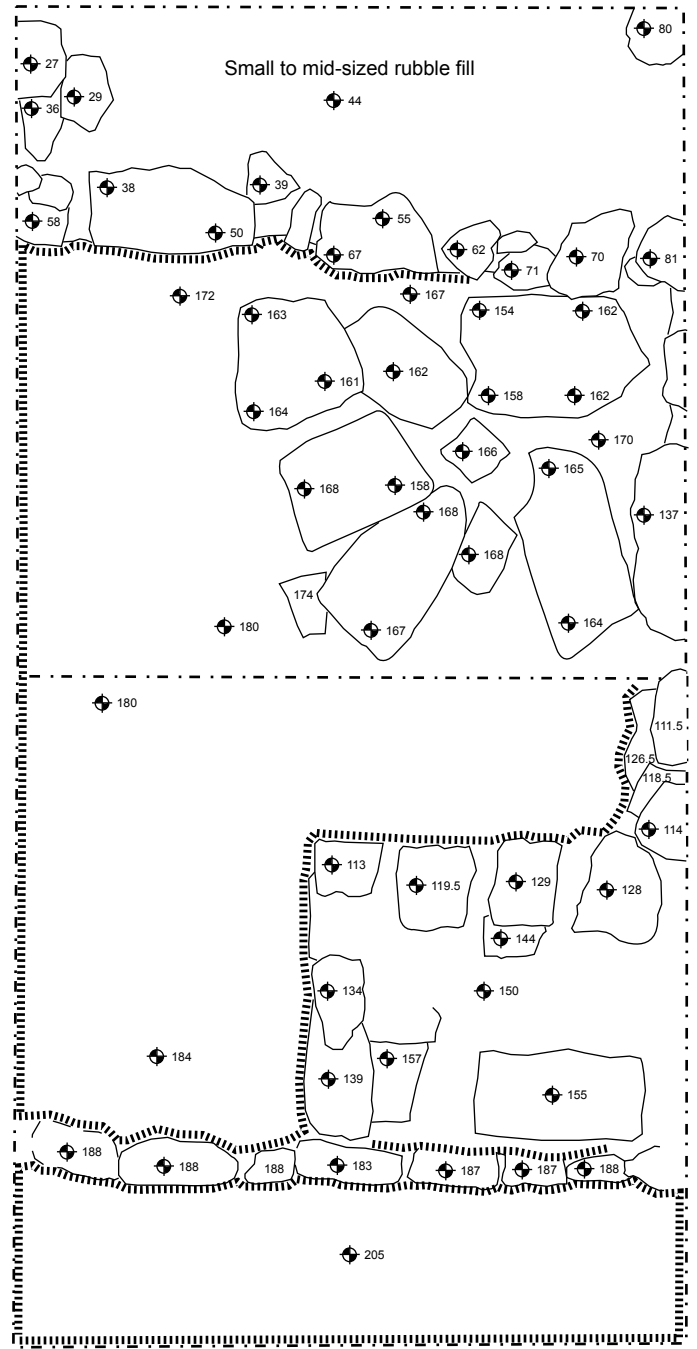
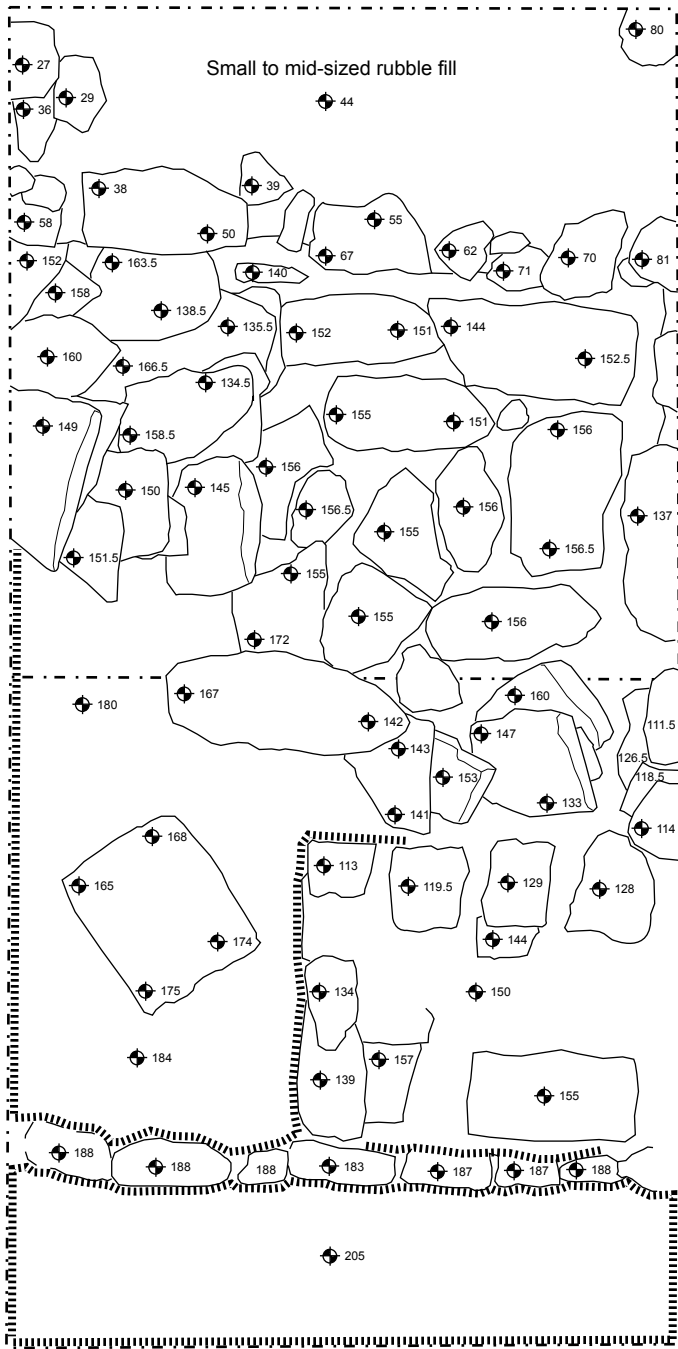


Figure 7a
WK08A 17-1-137 and 19-1-138

Plan drawing of the upper layer of flat-laid slates in Units 17 and 19 on Structure N14-12. Elevations are centimeters below WK08A Datum 5. Drawing by Michelle Rich

El Perú-*Waka'* Archaeological Project
20 March 2004

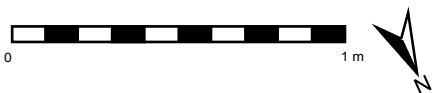


Figure 7b
WK08A 17-1-164 and 19-1-162

Plan drawing of the lower layer of flat-laid slates in Units 17 and 19. These slates were directly on the floor. Elevations are centimeters below WK08A Datum 5. Drawing by Michelle Rich

El Perú-*Waka'* Archaeological Project
21 March 2004



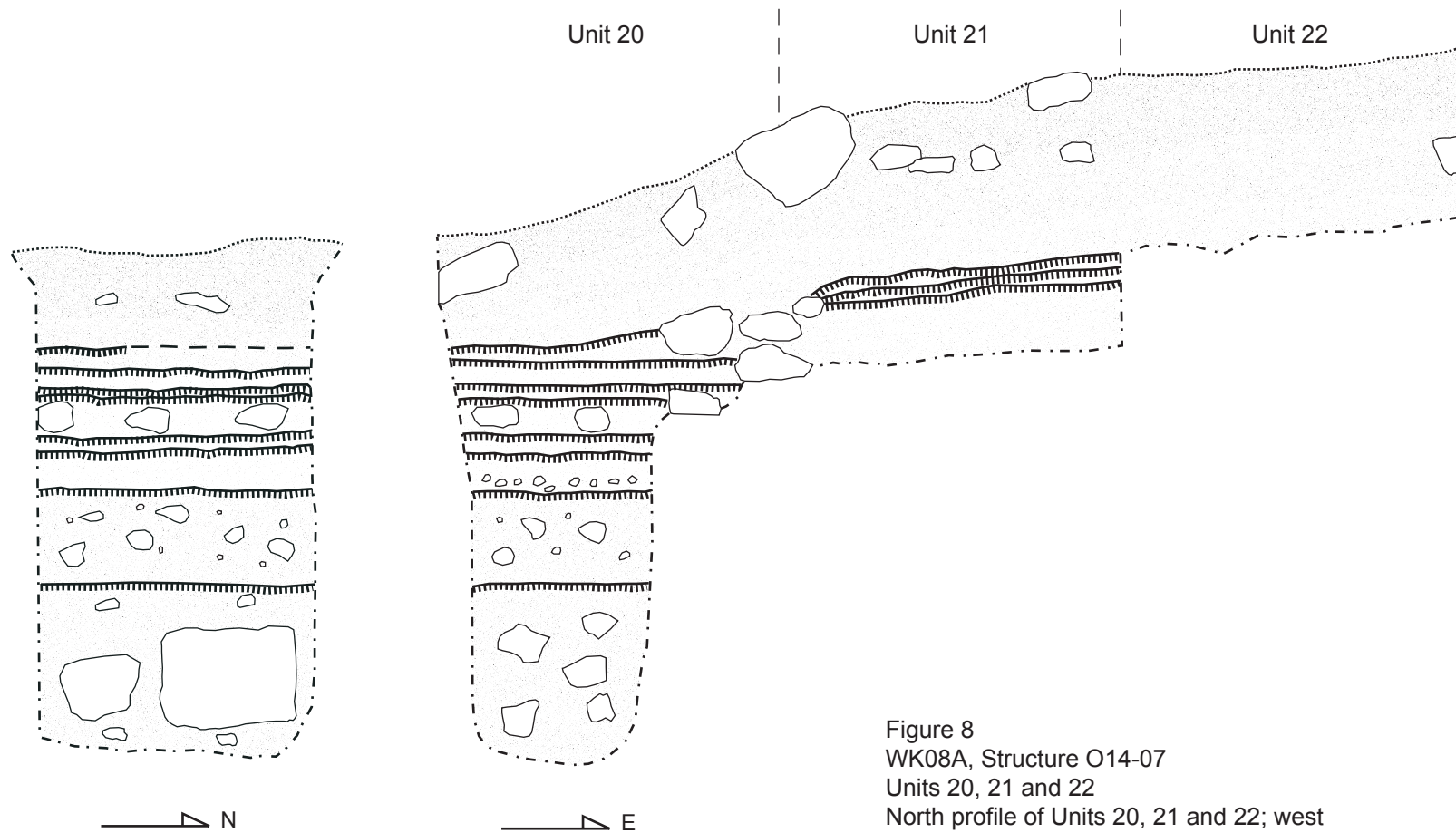


Figure 8
 WK08A, Structure O14-07
 Units 20, 21 and 22
 North profile of Units 20, 21 and 22; west
 profile of Unit 20. Excavation not to bedrock.
 Drawing by Michelle Rich

El Perú-*Waka'* Archaeological Project
 04 April 2004

