



**CONTINUED INVESTIGATION INTO
EPICENTRAL PALACES:
REPORT OF THE 2001 FIELD SEASON AT
CARACOL, BELIZE**

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The seventeenth field season of the Caracol Archaeological Project took place from late January through the end of March 2001. The excavation crew consisted of a total of 25 individuals during the course of the work (see Table 1). A *New York Times* "Science Times" film crew was also on site for one week and produced a short documentary for the National Geographic cable channel (entitled "Hidden City of the Maya"), which first aired internationally in late July 2001. *TIME for Kids* also ran cover stories on the 2001 field season at Caracol in their "World Report Edition" of May 4, 2001 (Vol. 6, No. 6) and a week earlier for younger children.

The 2001 investigations primarily focused on the unexcavated portions of two epicentral palace compounds, Barrio and Caana ([Figure 1](#)). Both had been largely excavated and exposed during earlier field seasons, but they were selected for further research in 2001 as part of planned cooperation between the research interests of the Caracol Archaeological Project and the touristic and development goals of the GOB-sponsored Development Project under the direction of Jaime Awe. Besides plans for improving the access road to the site and building a new on-site research center, the Belizean Development Project has as its mandate the stabilization of both the Barrio palace group and the Caana architectural complex. Thus, one of our research goals was to complete the excavation of these two place compounds. The full investigation of these complexes was expected to yield information relevant to the final architectural plans and functional use of these groups.

Investigations undertaken during 2001 focused on:

- Three locales in Barrio ([Figure 2](#)): the unexcavated northern room in Structure B21 ([Figure 14](#)); an investigation of the formal western stair and areal excavations of the northern half of Structure B25 ([Figure 5](#)); and, axial investigation of Structure B26 ([Figure 12](#)).
- Four areas in Caana ([Figure 18](#)): the areal investigation of the summit of Structure B18 as well as associated summit and plaza probes ([Figures 21](#) and [22](#)); the areal investigation of the remaining unexcavated rooms in the northwest quadrangle ([Figure 27](#)); the clearing of the alley between the base of Structure B19 and the northeast quadrangle ([Figures 30](#) and [31](#)); and the clearing of the side rooms that were inset into the front basal platform of Structure B19 ([Figure 18](#)).
- Follow-up excavations and recording of an open tomb in Structure F21 that had previously been started during 1995, but never completed ([Figures 46](#) and [47](#)).

No formal settlement mapping was undertaken during the 2001 field season.

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Palaces, Final Abandonment, and the Further Definition of Caracol's Elite: The Problem

The palaces of Caracol have proved quite important to understanding both the social composition of the site and the nature of Caracol's Classic era collapse. Of all architectural constructions at Caracol, areal exposure of these buildings is most likely to reveal *de facto* refuse that relates to the site's final elite and has a bearing on the abandonment of this important city (D. Chase and A. Chase 2000; A. Chase and D. Chase 2001). These palace complexes include extensive vaulted range edifices that incorporate raised temples into their building arrangements. Not only has areal clearing produced *de facto* refuse, but excavation into the cores of these structures also have produced a series of deposits which permit an assessment of Caracol's Late Classic society with regards to ritual (A. Chase and D. Chase 1994, 1996a; D. Chase and A. Chase 1998), diet (A. Chase and D. Chase 2001; A. Chase et al. 2001), and status (A. Chase and D. Chase 1996b; A. Chase et al. 2002). However, while individual palaces and portions of palace compounds have been investigated, no palace compound had all of its rooms excavated prior to the 2001 field season.

Continued investigation of Caracol's palaces was of particular interest for at least three reasons. First, *de facto* refuse has been recovered on the floors of some rooms from almost all of the palaces that have been excavated to date at Caracol. Associated carbon dates indicate that some drastic event may have simultaneously ended epicentral occupation of these complexes ca A.D. 895 (A. Chase and D. Chase 2001). New excavations would therefore yield new *de facto* refuse and more clearly help to delineate the latest activities at Caracol. Second, excavations of room floors has also permitted interpretations concerning differential use of palace compounds; this is particularly seen in relation to rooms associated with only serving wares as opposed to rooms containing only storage vessels (such as on Caana). Evidence of shell and bone working is also differentially distributed in some palace complexes (such as Barrio). It was felt that new excavations of palace compounds might permit further delineation of other activity areas. Third, excavations of palace compounds have yielded deposits in associated temples that permit insight into elite ritual (D. Chase and A. Chase 1998), elite ancestral burial habits (D. Chase and A. Chase 1996a), and elite dietary consistency over time (A. Chase and D. Chase 2001). Further excavations in these palace compounds would surely permit additional insight into Caracol ritual and diet relative to social status. Finally, at least in the case of Caana, it was felt that excavations could possibly reveal how late in the Terminal Classic Period this complex was rebuilt, something that is particularly significant for considerations of the Classic Maya collapse.

Epicentral Palace Investigations: Barrio

The Barrio palace compound ([Figure 2](#)) consists of a series of once vaulted structures on a raised platform in the eastern part of Caracol's epicenter. The palace compound consists of three range buildings and a potential northern temple. Although the 2001 field season revealed the remains of a series of deeply buried palaces under the latest version of this northern building, it did not clarify the function of the latest version of this edifice. The eastern and southern buildings in Barrio are almost identical in size and layout. Formal entry to Barrio was through the larger western building, which commands the sizeable plaza directly east of Caana. An altar showing a person within a moon sign was found in this eastern plaza at the beginning of the 2001 field season ([Figure 17](#)). Excavation into the structural cores of Barrio's buildings suggests that this complex was constructed in the Late Classic Period and included some Terminal Classic structural modification. Recovered *de facto* refuse was limited to two rooms in the complex during the 2001 field season. However, significant amounts of redeposited trash were also recovered.

A variety of excavations, consisting primarily of areal clearing but with deeper penetration in two locales, was undertaken in Barrio during the 2001 field season. As a result of the 2001 field season, the northern rooms in the western building were areally cleared ([Figure 5](#)). The southern half of this building was areally cleared in 1991 and 1993. The western building was partially sectioned on its medial axis in past seasons; this axial probe was continued in 2001 ([Figure 6](#)). *De facto* refuse was recovered in association with the investigations into the western building (Structure B25), primarily associated with the building rooms on the side of the interior plaza. In the eastern building in Barrio, the transverse room on the north end of the structure was cleared areally except for the portion that was near the collapsed eastern slope of the supporting platform. The other rooms within Structure B21 had already been exposed and all three frontal axes were penetrated in 1991. Finally, the northern building in Barrio, Structure B26, had been excavated about its base and partially tunneled on its southern medial axis in 1993. Investigations during 2001 undertook an axial penetration of the summit of Structure B26. No formal structural remains were encountered that would have represented a final summit building, but deeply buried earlier construction was present. As a result of these investigations, all of the buildings in the Barrio palace compound have been cleared and axially probed.

Structure B25

Structure B25 dominates the eastern edge of the large plaza immediately east of Caana and the western side of the Barrio plaza ([Figures 3 and 4](#)). The building measures some 7 m in width (east-west) by 35 m in length (north-south). It consists of 2 sets of parallel rooms offset by tandem end rooms. Central doorways permit axis between the eastern plaza and the interior Barrio plaza. The arrangement of the central axis of Structure B25 is consistent with controlled palace access routes found elsewhere at Caracol (A. Chase and D. Chase 2001). The excavation of Structure B25 during the 2001 field season was undertaken in accord with the stabilization goals, which call for the consolidation of the entire Barrio palace complex. Thus, through arrangement with the Department of Archaeology, the rooms were left open for stabilization purposes. The northern exterior wall of Structure B25, which had bowed outward badly, was in fact left for final excavation by the stabilization team so that it could more accurately be consolidated.

Suboperation C160B ([Figures 5 and 6](#)) was defined for the axial excavation through the western stairway of Structure B25. As the central door for Structure B25 was 3 m in width, the excavation was also made 3 m in width; once the western plaza floor was reached and cleared, the excavation was halved and deeper penetration was only 1.5 m in width. The trench extended out 8.8 m from the outer (western) edge of the B25 central doorjamb. The axial upper stairs for Structure B25 had been stabilized by the Department of Archaeology in 1996; this stabilization effort was not disturbed by the 2001 research. Rather the eastern end of the 2001 trench was demarcated by the last consolidated step.

As a result of these investigations the western axial stair for Structure B25 was found to consist of 8 steps and to project out 5.6 m beyond the building into the western plaza. Whereas the upper steps associated with the building itself were composed of horizontally laid stone, the lower steps were comprised of vertical upright slabs, a construction technique generally considered to be of Terminal Classic or Postclassic date (D. Chase and A. Chase 1988).

At the plaza level of the steps, a deeper 1.5 m wide trench was dug to bedrock and penetrated 6 floor levels. Bedrock was located 1.52 m below the latest plaza floor. Penetration into the latest steps revealed the remains of at least one earlier ripped-out stairway. It appears that the latest western stairway into Barrio may be the result of a remodeled earlier version. The bottom step for a potential third stairway was located half a meter directly beneath the existing second basal step. While earlier stairways could be discerned, little evidence of previous construction efforts was found in the core of the building. An earlier trench in the eastern part of the building revealed that this section of Structure B25 was constructed directly over a flooring that is at the same level as the interior courtyard floor. Axial penetration in the western interior building revealed a second floor approximately 20 cm below the current one. It ended in a turn-up 1.4 m beyond the interior front wall, suggesting that the western room floor had at one time been at a slightly lower level than the eastern room floor. This would have been perfectly appropriate for a building that anchored the eastern side of the large western plaza. Apart from these minor modifications, no evidence for an earlier version of Structure B25 was encountered in the core of the building itself. Thus, it would appear that Structure B25 was constructed in a single effort that raised its substructure 1.25 m above the interior Barrio courtyard.

Excavations at the plaza base of the stairs produced the remnants of a single large olla ([Figure 16a](#)), a small jadeite bead, and half of a doughnut-shaped stone or macehead. No special deposits were recovered on axis to Structure B25.

Upon conclusion of excavation (and through discussion with the DOA and stabilization projects), the deeper trench was completely backfilled to the level of the latest stairway construction and the stones that comprised the steps were replaced in their original locations so that they could be properly stabilized.

Suboperation C160C ([Figures 5 and 6](#)) was assigned for the clearing of overburden and collapse from within the northern extent of the long central west room. The material that filled the room was of a light buff color and was composed for the most part of fallen building stone and decomposed limestone mortar as well as stucco decoration and armatures that once would have decorated the exterior of Structure B25. As in the southern part of this room a doorway was encountered in the west wall, confirming that this rather long room could be entered through 3 doorways on its western side. The eastern side of this room was pierced by a single 3 m wide medial door that led to the eastern rooms and ultimately to the inner Barrio courtyard. No *in situ* artifactual materials were associated with the floor of this room.

Suboperation C160D ([Figures 5 and 6](#)) was assigned for the eastern rooms off the medial passageway through Structure B25. A separate door to the room itself was inset 1.5 m to the north of the east-west medial passage. Along with two shell beads, the remains of a plate ([Figure 16b](#)) and a large fragment of a modeled-carved vessel ([Figure 16c](#)) were found in this antechamber. The room itself was dominated by a large bench attached to the eastern, western, and northern walls. The bench rose 0.72 m above the associated floor and was both 2 m deep and broad (the width of the room). It was fronted by 1.25 m of floor space to its front (south). Two small ceramic vessels ([Figures 16d and 16e](#)) and a pyrite inlay were recovered from the room floor immediately south of this bench; another pottery vessel ([Figure 16f](#)) was found in the northwestern corner area of the bench. The presence of three miniature vessels within this room may indicate that this space was used for a special function. The forms of these vessels are consistent with ceramics sometimes suggested as holding pigment or paint.

Suboperation C160G ([Figures 7 and 8](#)) was assigned for excavation of the northern transverse room of Structure B25. Excavation revealed that the western portion and northwestern corner of this room were badly collapsed. The room was unusual in that three different levels of benches were recorded. Originally, the room appears to have had a door between it and the northern east-facing room as well as a doorway out to the alley between Structures B25 and B26. Both doors were later sealed and partially buried by raised benches. As presently constituted, this room has its doorway bisected by a raised bench on its eastern side. It was appended to another bench that had already raised the entire room beyond the inner

doorjamb. Another u-shaped bench was placed atop this bench and was attached to the rear (south) wall of the room; most of the western extent of this bench had collapsed. A final, and even higher, bench ran along the length of the room's eastern wall, engulfing the eastern end of the central u-shaped bench. The complexity of bench construction in this room is similar to that found in the southern room of Structure A39 in the Central Acropolis (A. Chase and D. Chase 2001; D. Chase and A. Chase 1996a). No *in situ* material was recovered from this investigation.

Suboperation C160I (Figures 9 and 10) was assigned for the areal clearing of the northernmost west-facing room in Structure B25. A 2 m wide door exposed most of the room to light. Like its southern counterpart, the rear of this room was filled by a raised bench with armatures that abutted the room's northern and southern walls and filled all but half a meter of the room. The bench was painted red. It was 1.4 deep and rose 0.65 m above the front floor with its side armatures rising another 0.33 m. No *in situ* artifactual materials were associated with the room floors, but there was stucco decoration, probably from the collapsed exterior architecture of Structure B25, in the fill of the room.

Suboperation C160F (Figure 5) was assigned for an initial corner probe in the northwestern corner of the northernmost east facing room in Structure B25. This suboperation was later superseded by and encompassed within Suboperation C160H.

Suboperation C160H (Figures 5 and 11) was assigned to the clearing of the northernmost east-facing room in Structure B25. It appeared prior to excavation that the door to this room had been blocked and sealed in antiquity. Excavation half-sectioned the room along the face of the room's northern doorjamb. Once the overburden was cleared, two benches were found. One filled most of the northern extent of the room, while a second lower bench ran from the southeast corner towards the northern bench. Both benches were extensively burnt. The height differential between the two benches was 0.30 m. The rear axial bench was 1.1 m deep, but only 0.35m high. The remnants of a 0.35 cm wide armrest marked the southern extent of the lower axial bench; the higher northern bench compensated for the missing northern armrest. A complete seashell and an antler tine were found on the upper surface of the lower bench. Excavation through the axial bench revealed that it had once been a separate entity from the northern bench and that an addition had filled in the original narrow alleyway that had separated the two benches.

A well-finished plaster floor covered the area between the doorjambs and benches, but the southeastern corner of the room showed no evidence of any flooring. Excavation was undertaken in the broken corner of the room to a depth of approximately 0.85 meters. The material here was indistinguishable from the dry core rubble found elsewhere in Structure B25 with one exception. A large amount of Terminal Classic garbage including pieces of a slate mirror back, a spindle whorl, a large jasper tubular bead, and several vessels (Figure 16j,l,p,u) were recovered from this area; other pieces of pottery recovered here proved to fit to vessels located exteriorly to the room in a raised construction area (Figure 16x,jj; see Suboperation C160L). In an attempt to explain this anomalous corner material, an axial probe was made beneath the sealed floor of the room to see if similar materials were recovered. For whatever reasons, the sealed sample yielded less sherd material and garbage, although some of it was potentially Terminal Classic in date. Thus, the unsealed area in the room's southeastern corner is still not fully understood although it was clearly a locus for the deposition of Terminal Classic trash.

Other vessels were recovered from the floors of this room. Two ollas were found on the northern bench (Figure 16i and k). Another olla (Figure 16g) and a tripod plate (Figure 16h) were found just west of the northern doorjamb. And a very burnt and broken modeled-carved vase was found directly on the room floor in front of the northern bench (Figure 16m; also located here was a jadeite flake). The scene on the vase is a common Belize scene found on 2 similar vases from Caana (A. Chase 1994:180) and on a host of vessels from throughout Belize (Graham et al. 1980).

Suboperation C160L (Figures 5 and 11) was assigned for the excavation and removal of 5 meters of a crude construction feature that blocked and raised the plaza area between Structures B25 and B26. The wall that formed the southern side of this feature was not finished like other architecture found at Caracol. It probably represented a construction pause in a more formal building that was never finished (because the site epicenter was abandoned). A similar, though cruder, feature was recovered on the Caana summit linking the B18 stairway to the front (south) palace area. Excavation behind the crude facing in the northwestern corner of the Barrio plaza revealed 2 buried steps leading to the northeastern room of Structure B25. The southern limit of these steps had been removed prior to being engulfed in the construction feature; the northern end of the steps was intact. The fill of this feature was peppered with Terminal Classic garbage that included large pockets of carbon and ash. Artifactual materials that were recovered included a ceramic bird whistle, drilled and worked shell and bone, slate mirror backs, a groundstone celt, mano and metate fragments, spindle whorls, chert points, and obsidian and chert fragments. Most notable were a series of reconstructable vessels that contained the majority of the Terminal Classic forms known from other Caracol palace excavations (Figure 16n,o,q-t,v-jj). Also recovered in this Terminal Classic trash dump were human remains (cranial and long bone), possibly the remains of trophies and/or a meal (see also D. Chase and A. Chase 1982 for similar burnt human remains in a Terminal Classic trash dump at Nohmul, Belize).

Suboperation C160E (Figure 5) was assigned for materials recovered in the alley between Structures B25 and B26. This alleyway had already been largely cleared during the 1991 and 1993 excavations of Barrio. New excavation continued to the north, revealing the full extent of the structure walls for B25, but not *de facto* trash or deposits.

Structure B26

Structure B26 is the tallest building within the Barrio palace complex. It dominates the northern side of the interior courtyard. It had previously been investigated only at its base. Its southern corners were both rounded and its western extent formed the side of a narrow alley between Structures B25 and B26. It had been axially probed in 1993, leading to the discovery of a very crude frontal stair and a simple burial deep within its core (see Figure 12). Sizeable limestone boulders visible over the entire surface of the building had led to early speculation that Structure B26 was either stone-robbled or that the latest version of Structure B26 was never finished. Based on the excavations undertaken in 2001, evidence was amassed

that the building was never finished and that it was being enlarged at the time of its abandonment. This interpretation is supported not only by the lack of summit architecture, but also by the plaza level construction feature that connected Structures B25 and B26 (see Suboperation C160L), by the raised level of the alley between Structures B25 and B26, and by the blocked doorways associated with this alley (see Suboperation C160H).

Suboperation C160J (Figures 12 and 13) was assigned to an axial penetration on the summit of Structure B26 that measured 3.7 m in length by 2.0 m in width. The rubble concentration extended from the surface of the summit to a depth of almost 2.5 m where a buff colored fill was found. This lighter fill probably resulted from building demolition as a red-painted plaster floor was encountered at a depth of 2.85 m below the summit of the mound. Scattered human remains were also encountered at a depth of about 2.0 m; these were not articulated, however, but were found sparsely distributed throughout the rubble fill. The deeply buried red-plaster floor was at one point covered over by a bench. One course of this bench was still preserved. It faced south and was abutted by another floor. The eastern doorjamb (1.0 m wide) for the building containing this bench was also encountered in the excavation. South of the doorjamb, a plastered step led 0.35 m down to another floor level, which had been ripped out 1.25 m further south. Penetration below these various floors revealed an intensive locus of building activity in which earlier doorjambs and slight axis shifts were evident. Dry core fill existed beneath the deeply buried architectural constructions. No special deposits were encountered.

Based on these excavations, it would appear that the north side of the Barrio courtyard had at one point had a well-constructed "palace" building similar to those that existed on the other three sides of the plaza. This edifice had been raised more than the other buildings in Barrio; its floors were over a meter higher than the raised southern or western structures. At some point in the Terminal Classic it would appear that a major renovation was started on Structure B26 that would have raised the building substructure by approximately 3 meters. However, this construction effort never reached fruition.

The excavation into Structure B26 was completely backfilled at the end of the 2001 field season.

Structure B21

The eastern extent of the Barrio complex is defined by a well-constructed building labeled Structure B21. As originally mapped by Satterthwaite (Satterthwaite and Beetz 1981), there appeared to be two eastern structures in the Barrio group. Excavation in 1991, however, revealed that this surface anomaly was due to the collapse of the rear wall of the building and the broad axial doors of the building. In point of fact, Structure B21 is an eight room tandem plan building with transverse end rooms (A. Chase and D. Chase 2001). The two side rooms facing the courtyard both have benches with armatures. The three eastern building axes were trenched in 1991 and revealed no special deposits.

Suboperation C160K (Figures 14 and 15) was assigned for the northern room of Structure B21, which had never been excavated. Excavation proceeded east from the already exposed rounded corner of Structure B26 following the northern exterior wall of the room. Once the doorjamb was reached, the building was half-sectioned. Much of the eastern extent of this room had collapsed over the edge of the raised platform supporting Barrio and the eastern limit of the room was not exposed. It appeared that there may be another ancillary construction to the north of Structure B21 based on the presence of a southern oriented facing about 0.8 m north of the doorway to the room. This possible construction was not investigated. Excavation revealed the room's floors to be well plastered and found several sherd scatters on the floor of this room in the area of the doorway. However, no vessels could be reconstructed.

Epicentral Palace Investigations: Caana

Caana is at the heart of Caracol. This huge architectural complex rises some 43.5 meters above the floor of the B Plaza (Figures 19 and 20). The palace compound encompassed minimally 71 rooms with at least 45 associated benches (Figure 18). Excavations document a very complicated construction history. Although little is known about Caana's Early Classic form, penetrating excavation has shown that Structure B19 was at least 38 meters in height by the end of the Late Preclassic era. At the onset of the Late Classic Period, the summit plaza was 4 meters lower than the present plaza surface. Burials found in Structures B19 and B20 associated with this earlier summit level are dated from A.D. 537 through A.D. 634 (A. Chase and D. Chase 1996a). Based on hieroglyphic texts on a buried building, the Caana summit was raised after A.D. 680. Although Structure B18 was not axially penetrated before the 2001 field season, its present form could be dated to the Terminal Classic Period based on artifactual materials recovered from within a room that was engulfed by its expanded substructure. Terminal Classic ritual activity was recovered from the floors of Structure B19 and an altar set in front of this building probably marks 10th Cycle ceremonies (A. Chase and D. Chase 1999). Excavations of Caana encountered differentiated refuse with individual rooms containing distinct kinds of *de facto* refuse (suggesting variations in the usage of rooms); some rooms contained predominantly storage vessels while others contained serving vessels. Besides on-floor ceramics, excavations in the Northeast Quad of the summit also yielded the remains of an articulated child within the southern room suite; the position and unburied condition of this body indicates that this portion of Caana was abandoned both rapidly and completely.

Investigations on Caana during 2001 sought to detail remaining unexcavated rooms in order to record architectural plans and locate any use-related remains. While the inner rooms of the Northwest Quad had been excavated previously, the outer rooms of this building had not (Figure 27). The alleyway between Structure B19 and the Northeast Quad also remained unexcavated (Figure 30). These were exposed during the 2001 field season. Areal excavation of the summit of Structure B18 defined its latest building plan (Figure 22); axial penetration at the summit and base sought to understand the construction history on this structure (Figure 21), but recovered no formal earlier constructions (unlike similar work in Structures B19 and B20). Laporte (1994) has shown a Terminal Classic emphasis for placing ritual deposits in north and west buildings in the adjacent southeast Peten. Structure B19, a north building, did in fact produce recognizable Terminal Classic material during the 2001 and previous field seasons. However, this season's excavations of Structure B18, a west building, did not produce any special deposits. Special deposits dating to the

Late Classic era were encountered, however, in each suite of tandem rooms on the basal southern corners of Structure B19 (Figures [33](#), [36](#), [39](#), and [42](#)). Both tombs were sealed under each B19 basal room suite, but each had been re-entered and ritually uprooted in antiquity, presumably at the beginning of the Terminal Classic era.

Structure B18 (Figures [19](#), [21](#), and [22](#))

Structure B18 is one of the latest constructions to have been undertaken on the summit of Caana. In its final phase it engulfed both the rear half of Caana's long linear front (south) tandem-plan building within the core of its southern substructure and the majority of another building within the northern side of this same substructure. Ceramics recovered within the filled-in room under the southern extent of Structure B18 dated to the Terminal Classic Period. Also visible within the fill of Structure B18 at its southern extent was the south facing doorjamb of an earlier building that would have exited onto the roof of Caana's southern summit range building, indicating that an earlier version of Structure B18 had existed at one time. The floors of this earlier building were estimated to be approximately 4 m below the latest summit floor.

Suboperation C20F ([Figure 21](#)) was assigned for an excavation at the base of Structure B18 into the plaza core. This excavation was laid out tangent to the lowest step for Structure B18 and was 2.0 m wide by 3.0 meter long. As had been noted for excavations in front of Structures B19 and B20 (A. Chase and D. Chase 1987), the plaza had been raised in a single construction effort through the deposition of over 4 m of dry core fill without any pause lines. Digging in this dry core fill was rather precarious. However, limited penetration was made through the plaza floor in front of Structure B18 to a depth of almost 4.4 meters. Although deeper than either the B19 or B20 plaza penetrations, neither earlier construction activity was located nor was an earlier plaza floor encountered. Artifactual material recovered in the dry core fill was almost non-existent. The excavation was backfilled to the level of the plaza surface once it was recorded.

Suboperations C20D and C20E ([Figure 22](#)) were assigned for the areal clearing of what little was left of Structure B18's northern summit building (even less of the summit building was left to the south). The collapsed material that was excavated from above the summit floors was used to extend the summit surface to the west. Initial clearing of the central room north of the single stone left in the southern doorjamb was undertaken as Suboperation C20D. Following the intact red-painted floor, the northern jamb was easily recovered 2.65 m away from the southern jamb as was the eastern step-up onto the room floor. The room step-up was partially covered by an even more easterly lower step, indicating that this latter step or stoop had been subsequently added. The interior wall of the northern part of this room was easy to follow for 3.4 meters; it ended in a cross wall that ran west for almost 2 m (where there was a sharp vertical drop, probably at the junction with what would have been the interior medial building wall). The northeast interior corner of the front room had visibly slid off the summit. The central summit room floor was fairly intact, but was upended in several vertical sections as one moved west until it disappeared completely. What was intriguing was the stucco decoration that was recovered from within the collapse in this interior room. A large portion of a stucco frieze was encountered that must have graced the front exterior of B18 at one point in time ([Figure 23](#)). Also encountered were a few fragments of stucco hieroglyphs that also would have been located on the exterior façade.

The northern wall encountered in Suboperation C20D proved to be approximately 0.65 m in width, 0.15 m less than the eastern wall. This was probably due to its status as an interior building wall. Suboperation C20E was assigned for excavation of the limited summit area that could be assigned to the room north of this wall. The eastern wall of this room had completely collapsed (as was visible in the arc seen in the slumped east-west wall stones). However, an interior segment of the outer northern wall of Structure B18 was recovered 2 m from the northern facing of the medial wall. And, importantly, a doorjamb was also located here, which indicates that this room faced north. The continuous medial wall indicates that there was no interior passage to the front axial room of B18. The collapse over the floors of this room yielded the remains of 2 stucco heads that would have been attached to the upper building facade ([Figure 24](#)) as well as most of the rim of a large ceramic storage container ([Figure 25a](#)).

Once the axial room had been cleared down to floor level and recorded, a deeper axial probe was undertaken within Suboperation C20D. This smaller trench was 1.5 m in width, penetrated the sealed summit floor, and was tangent to the southern section as delineated by the southern doorjamb. Penetration below the red-painted room floor revealed no other formal floors associated with the summit of Structure B18. However, 0.74 m below the summit floor, a construction floor or pause was encountered. A second construction floor was found 1.20 m below the first. This second construction surface was penetrated to a depth of 0.90 m; at this point excavations were halted due to difficulty in excavating the dry core fill. Thus, excavation was undertaken to a total depth of 2.84 m below the summit floor of Structure B18 without finding evidence of any earlier constructions. No special deposits were encountered. However, pieces of mirror backs were recovered sealed within both construction blocks. This deeper excavation was completely backfilled once it was recorded.

Northwestern Quadrangle (Figures [26](#) and [27](#))

The rooms that immediately surrounded the Northwestern Quadrangle in Caana were excavated during the 1991 field season. Unlike the Northeastern Quadrangle, which has room suites on all four sides of its interior courtyard, the Northwestern Quadrangle has building suites only on its northern and western sides. The floors of both buildings were painted bright red. It has been argued elsewhere that this quadrangle was the logical formal residential area for the royal personage (A. Chase and D. Chase 2001).

Suboperations C78H, C 78I, C78J, C78K, and C78L (Figures [27](#), [28](#), and [29](#)) were assigned for the various rooms that did not front on the interior courtyard excavated in 1991. Most of these rooms were badly preserved with much collapse off of the northern and western sides of the summit.

The rear room of the western building was excavated as Suboperation C78I and yielded the remains of a central bench. While the portion of this rear room that attached to the base of Structure B18 was still extant, only the eastern and southern faces of the bench were still in existence. The northern face of the bench and most of the room's northern extent were gone. However, based on the plaster floors and rear wall stones that were recovered in the southern part of the room, the bench in this building was unusual in that it was inset at least 0.20 m into the rear (west) wall of the room. It does not appear to have had armatures. While the floor of this rear room and the sides of the bench appear to have been painted red, the upper plaster surface of the bench appears to have been white (perhaps to color contrast with a now missing rear red panel behind the bench [as recovered elsewhere on Caana]). A single *in situ* vessel was recovered from the doorway area in front of the bench. This vessel is a large pedestal base censer ([Figure 25c](#)), similar to one found in the suite of rooms immediately south of Structure B20 and resembling another one from the Structure F21 tomb ([Figure 48g](#)).

Suboperation C78H was assigned for the eastern room immediately north of Suboperation C78I. At one time this room could be entered through the front room of the western structure in the Northwest Quadrangle. However, the room had been sealed in antiquity; it was also raised above the floor level of the front room by a bench that filled the entire room. Excavation showed this bench to be in an exceedingly bad state of repair, lacking all of its western extent. To gain a better building plan, the room was therefore excavated down to the original floor level. This resulted in both the discovery of most of the basal stones for the western wall (although slid out of place) and the recovery of most of a large incurved bowl ([Figure 25d](#)).

Suboperation C78J was assigned for what little remained of the room immediately north of Suboperation C78H. This room had once been the rear room of a two-room suite that faced west. A floor was found attached to its eastern wall at a height that indicated that it had once served as a bench surface. No western walls for this rear room could be found as they had long ago slid off the summit of Caana. No *in situ* artifactual remains were recovered.

The northern room of the north building in the Northwestern Quadrangle was cleared as Suboperation C78L. The room floor was of red plaster and the room had a central rear bench that also had been painted red and had side armatures at one time. The rear wall was not in evidence in the bench area, but was present in the room that was nearest to Structure B19 and indicated that the bench had been attached to this wall (unlike its western counterpart). On the western wall of the rear room, the southern doorjamb of an entranceway to a third room was found. Suboperation C78K was assigned for this third room, but only the southeast corner of this room had not collapsed down the side of Caana. No *in situ* artifactual material was recovered in association with the northern suite of rooms in the Northwestern Quadrangle.

Northeastern Quadrangle ([Figures 30](#) and [31](#))

The Northeastern Quadrangle in Caana was excavated during the 1991 and 1993 field seasons. These excavations resulted in the clearing of the interior plaza and the definition of the plan of this suite of residential rooms. Several of the rooms in this complex were littered with the remains of ceramic vessels. In one case, these vessels within a single room formed clear clusters and could be put back together, resulting in the recovery of a large concentration of serving vessels (13 black tripod plates; 3 grey vases). In other cases, the sherds were from large storage vessels, which could not be easily reconstructed. These materials, however, provide clues as to how the northeastern quadrangle was utilized. Also important from the standpoint of understanding the rapidity of Caracol's epicentral abandonment was the recovery of an unburied child from the floor of the inner room in southern residential suite. Investigations during the 2001 field season focused on the alley adjacent to the eastern side of Structure B19.

Suboperation C81P ([Figure 30](#)) was assigned for the clearing and excavation of the L-shaped alley that existed between the base of Structure B19 and the northern building in the Northeast Quadrangle and between this northern building and the western suite of rooms appended to the base of Structure B19. The passage between the western and northern buildings of the Northeast Quadrangle was vaulted (see [Figure 30](#)) and had a raised step separating the alley from the courtyard. The alley between the northern building and the base of Structure B19 was not vaulted. Recovered in these clearing investigations was an eroded vase or cup ([Figure 25b](#)) of similar form to those recovered from within the western suite of rooms in the Northeast Quadrangle.

Structure B19 ([Figure 20](#))

Among the most important buildings at Caracol and the tallest on Caana, Structure B19 has been the focus of significant effort by the Caracol Archaeological Project. Work during the 1986 field season revealed the buried chamber of a woman, still the largest tomb out of the 100 excavated at the site, within an earlier version of Structure B19 (A. Chase and D. Chase 1987, 1996a). Subsequent work between 1993 and 1995 revealed the final plan of Structure B19 to be a tandem room building with three frontal doors and with a single axial doorway to the rear chamber. The summit floors were penetrated and yielded evidence of earlier constructions as well as a series of special deposits. The building was also tunneled from front to rear, connecting up with a now backfilled looter's tunnel that had existed in the northern side of the substructure when the current project started in 1985. These investigations revealed that the original substructure had been built on the earlier Caana plaza surface towards the end of the Late Preclassic and that Structure B19 had risen to a height only 4 meters shy of its Late Classic height at this time.

One of the earliest features noted for Structure B19 was a two-room basal suite set into the building's southwestern substructure at plaza level. The roof of the rear room of this suite had collapsed into a hollow in which the walls of this small chamber ([Figure 39](#)) were visible. This rear room had been excavated in 1985 and the front room had been half-sectioned into the summit plaza, but the eastern part of the front room had never been fully excavated. The postulated two-room basal suite on the southeastern corner of Structure B19's substructure had been confirmed during the 1993 field season, but had never been exposed. One of the goals of the 2001 field season was to finish the investigation of these rooms.

Suboperation C4I (Figures [32](#), [33](#), [35](#), [36](#), and [37](#)) was assigned for the investigation of the two-room suite that was inset into the southeastern corner of the B19 substructure at plaza level. Although the outer doorway of this room suite had been exposed earlier, it had been backfilled. The exterior portion of this room was re-exposed to the western doorjamb and an excavation was laid out through the front door. The northern extent of this excavation was meant to encompass the rear room (its extent was projected from the already exposed southwestern room suite). As initial clearing revealed a slightly collapsed (and broken), but otherwise intact lintel for the inner room, the rear room was not excavated; rather, its investigation was left for the stabilization crew so that this doorway could be restored. However, the entire eastern part of the front room was cleared and the front room was sectioned in line with the western doorjamb up to the inner doorway. The western extent of the front room was not excavated.

Within the collapse of the front room modeled stucco was recovered in abundance as well as a tenoned head with crude human features ([Figure 34](#)). This tenoned head was similar to one discovered much earlier set into the forehead of a composite architectural mask at the base of Structure B20-1st (A. Chase and D. Chase 1987:24). Given the presence of architectural masks composed of building stones and stucco on the final versions of Structures B18 and B20 midway up each substructure, it is considered likely that a pair of such masks also once graced Structure B19, having been set on the roof of each basal room suite. The tenoned head would have fallen into the southeastern room as a result of the collapse of the room's roof.

Excavation was initially halted on the plaster floor of front room, which showed evidence of axial burning, especially immediately in front of the step-up into the rear room of this suite. Further inspection of this step-up revealed a "linteled" niche that had been sealed and then plastered over. Removal of the stones filling the niche revealed faced sides and a plastered floor 0.06 m lower than the floor that abutted the inner step. This lower floor was cut on its south side. Accordingly, a 1 m by 1 m excavation was placed on axis and tangent to the rear step. Removal of the latest plastered floor in the front room revealed a circular cut in the floor that formed the niche surface; this cut went through two additional floors. The circular cut was most similar to the re-entry hole encountered for the Structure A38 tomb (D. Chase and A. Chase 1996a) and indeed upended capstones were readily visible within the cut as well as open air space to the north. Minimal clearing confirmed the existence of tomb under this suite of rooms. The stratigraphy indicated that this tomb had been re-entered in antiquity and that evidence for this re-entry then had been sealed beneath a formal plaster floor.

Digging into the reentry pit revealed that it had been situated directly over the steps and entrance for a tomb that extended under the unexcavated rear room. Re-entry of the chamber was confirmed through the discovery of a scree of dirt and debris that spilled into the well-plastered and commodious tomb. Large faced rocks, presumably from dismantled constructions, had rolled into the tomb and rested against its northern wall. While some sherd material ([Figure 38h](#) and cover) and modeled stucco (from former architectural decoration) was found within the scree itself, there were concentrations of broken vessels on the floor of the chamber and the complete bases of 2 vessels ([Figures 38b,d](#)) sat midway along the tomb's western wall. Some of vessels (such as [Figures 38a,b](#)) had been broken into many pieces and strewn randomly over the floor of the chamber. Pockets of carbon indicated that some of the broken vessels had been extensively burned ([Figures 38d,e,f,g](#)). With one exception ([Figure 38a](#)), sherds within the scree fit to the broken vessels on the floor of the chamber. Other artifactual materials encountered within the chamber included a jadeite inlay, worked bone and shell (spondylus and conch), obsidian blade fragments, faunal remains, and pieces of ceramic censersware.

Excluding the entrance, the chamber measured 1.95 m in height by 2.40 m in length by 1.60 m in width. Following the formula established for calculating Caracol tomb volume (D. Chase and A. Chase 1996a), the chamber itself encompassed 7.31 m³ of open space. Even though chambers of this size often house single individuals in the Caracol epicenter (A. Chase 1992), this tomb contained the scattered and disarticulated remains of 2 people, 1 adult and 1 subadult approximately 7-8 years of age. The subadult showed evidence of potential inlay holes in three of the deciduous canines (but no inlays were intact) as well as evidence of hypoplasia. The adult did not appear to have had inlays, but did exhibit calculus on the lower incisors. This individual additionally appeared to have had arthritis.

Suboperation C4H (Figures [37](#), [39](#), [40](#), [41](#) and [42](#)) was assigned for investigations undertaken in the southwestern basal suite of rooms for Structure B19. This locus had initially been investigated in 1985, but the eastern part of the front room had never been excavated; this collapse was removed during the 2001 field season, yielding mainly fragments of modeled stucco.

After the eastern basal tomb had been located, a small test excavation (1.7 m north-south by 1 m east-west) was placed on axis in the front room in the western suite south of the inner door. Excavations in 1985 had already revealed the existence of 3 floors in this room, the upper 2 of which had once turned up to a bench that had been ripped out in antiquity, but had once raised the level of the rear room. Excavation through the floors in the front room found that the upper two were intact and continuous, but that the third one that formed the remaining surface for the rear room had been pierced by a circular cut. Like its eastern counterpart, this cut formed a reentry point for a tomb beneath the sealed upper floors. Upended capstones poked through the cut and the chamber had been largely filled in antiquity with earth, stone, and redeposited modeled stucco. Only its northern end and extreme east and west sides were absent of fill. Similar to the eastern chamber, the sherd of a polychrome vessel graced the entranceway of the chamber ([Figure 40](#)); unlike the eastern chamber, this sherd could be fit to the rest of the vessel on the floor of the chamber ([Figures 41](#)[upper left] and [43b](#)). Pieces of only 2 vessels were recovered in the overburden ([Figure 43a,i](#)); these also fit other sherds from the chamber floor.

Although both basal B19 tombs were peppered with carbon, more burning was evident in the western chamber than in the eastern chamber. Several of the vessels (Figures [43a,c,d,e,g,j,k,l](#)) were extensively burnt. Much of the bone was either calcined or in extremely poor condition, with one exception. A concentration of bones in the southeast part of the chamber on the floor proved to be in extremely good condition and to have formed an articulated hand, leading to speculation that it had been sacrificially cut off (i.e., an expanded version of the site's many "finger" caches [D. Chase

and A. Chase 1998]) and tossed into the chamber just before the tomb was partially filled with dirt and sealed.

Unlike the eastern chamber, a lense of darker reddish-brown soil lay on the floor of the western tomb. Most of the vessel and sherd remains lay either in or on this layer. The material from the floor of the chamber included 4 bowls ([Figure 43a-d](#)), 2 dishes ([Figure 43e,h](#)), pieces of 2 decorated jars ([Figure 43i,k](#)), the complete rim of a plainware olla ([Figure 43j](#)), an interiorly burnt unslipped offering dish ([Figure 43l](#)), a complete unslipped pedestal base ([Figure 43g](#)), and several other unique sherds ([Figure 43f](#)). One of the polychrome bowls exhibits the Mexican year-sign ([Figure 43b](#)) and closely resembles a vessel found in Tikal Burial 116 (Culbert 1993:fig. 64c2; see also Smith 1955:fig. 73b6,8); another vessel with the Mexican year-sign was recovered from a burial in Caracol Structure B5 (A. Chase 1994:fig. 13.10). Artifactual material in the tomb included a spindle whorl, worked bone and shell (spondylus and conch), a stone bead, 2 hematite inlays, obsidian blade fragments, faunal material, and pieces of ceramic censerware. Modeled architectural stucco had also been dumped directly on the floor of the chamber and included an unusual snake head ([Figure 44](#)).

Exclusive of the entryway, the western basal tomb for B19 encompassed 7.36 m³ and measured 2.40 m long by 1.60 m wide by 1.98 m high. Like its counterpart to the east, the western chamber also housed multiple individuals. Parts of five individuals were present in this chamber. The 2 adults each exhibit inlays in their teeth; one had extensive hematite inlays extending between the first premolars in the maxilla and between the canines on the mandible; the second had jadeite inlays in the upper incisors with the central incisor also being filed. Three subadults appear to have been present. One was less than a year old; one was about 15 years of age; and one was 6 years old and had an inlay hole in a deciduous upper incisor.

A final question must be raised as to whether the reentry and desecration of the two basal B19 tombs was part of the same event. For several reasons it is suspected that the chambers were desecrated at approximately the same time. First, the modeled stucco decoration dumped into each chamber is of similar quality and may have derived from the same razed building; further work with the stucco in each chamber may gain cross-fits. Second, what appear to be parts of the same vessel may actually be distributed in each tomb, even though no cross-fits could be made during the 2001 field season. One of these vessels is likely a ring base olla. There is a base in the eastern chamber ([Figure 38d](#)) and a rim of what appears to be the same vessel in the western chamber ([Figure 43j](#)). Another shared vessel is likely a red cylinder vase ([Figure 38c](#)); its base was in the eastern tomb and sherds of what appear to be the same vessel were recovered in the western tomb. Both chambers also contain sherds of a thin blackware jar with an incised exterior design, but again no cross-fits could be made. Finally, both chambers also contained a few fragments of a Late Classic D Terminal classic modeled cylinder censer, similar to those found in association with the B19 lower central stair feature and Altar 16 (A. Chase and D. Chase 1987:25; 1999). This circumstantial evidence points to a unified desecration of the two chambers somewhere towards the start of the Terminal Classic era. Once results are received from radiocarbon samples collected from within these chambers, it may prove possible to better interpret the chambers' reentry and desecration.

At the conclusion of the 2001 field season (and in accord with the Department of Archaeology and the GOB Development Project) the excavated areas over both the southeastern and southwestern room suites were covered with zinc by the project and the two tombs were left open for future stabilization by the GOB Development Project.

Suboperation C4J ([Figure 45](#)) was assigned for a 1 m wide axial penetration of the oval bench with rounded back that is set to the front of the western basal room suite of Structure B19. Given the uniqueness of this feature, it had been hoped that a dateable deposit would be recovered from within its core. However, only a few eroded sherds were found within the dry core fill of the bench. The plaza floor that supported the feature had not been broken and was not penetrated. The bench did obscure differing plinth heights and projections (the plinth became a mini side stair for the B19 basal steps, mimicking the side steps at the very base of Caana) at the base of the exterior room wall that its construction had engulfed.

This bench was originally areally exposed and recorded in 1985 ([Figure 45](#)). A projecting stucco cornice around the upper part of the bench seat had largely fallen off, but pieces of it were recovered and revealed an interwoven mat symbol that had once banded the bench. The rear backing had its own red projecting band surrounding a surface that was decorated with several layers of polychrome painting. Although little of this paint remained, careful recording revealed patterns of jaguar spots and vertical mat symbols ([Figure 45](#)). These iconographic symbols marked this unusual bench or throne as a locus of great power.

Other Investigations

Although the focus of the 2001 field season was the site's epicentral palaces, it proved necessary to finish a salvage excavation of a looted tomb that had been started in 1995, but for various reasons had never been completed.

Structure F21 ([Figure 46](#))

Structure F21 was situated west of the site epicenter in a group that lies at the southern extent of a ridge that defines the western side of the valley over which the A Group towers to the east (the northern extent of the valley is demarcated by the causeway that joins the A Group and the Northwest Group). Structure F21 defines the northern edge of its residential plaza and is the tallest building within its group. During the 1995 field season, looting was discovered in the both Structures F21 and F22, the eastern building in the same group. The front of Structure F22 had been penetrated axially at its base, but no burials appeared to have been encountered. Structure F21 had been penetrated on both its western and northern side. The western trench had tunneled into the core of the building, but encountered nothing. However, on the northern side of Structure F21, the looters had penetrated the roof of a tomb at plaza level and had spewed out pieces of vessels and bones into the associated plaza. An excavation crew was sent to begin clean-up of this tomb under the direction of Clarrisa Hunter. The looters' backdirt was screened and loose vessel pieces were

collected. However, the salvage excavation was not finished in 1995 and a tarp was placed over the looters' entrance to the chamber. Ms. Hunter died in the off-season (D. Chase and A. Chase 1996b) and no one returned to complete the salvage excavation the following year.

During the 2001 field season, members of the stabilization crew relocated Structure F21 and recovered pieces of two other vessels from its immediate vicinity. Looters had once again visited the area and left these materials behind. Because of this, an excavation crew supervised by Amy Morris completed the excavation and recording of the tomb during off-hours over the course of multiple weekends. Within the chamber, small pieces from most of the vessels recovered from the looters' backdirt in 1995 were found as were pieces to the vessels found in the plaza in 2001 by the stabilization crew.

Suboperations C121A and C121B (Figures 46 and 47) were assigned for salvage excavations related to Structure F21 and its immediate vicinity. Suboperation C121A was assigned for surface finds in the plaza associated with Structure F21; only 1 "cache" vessel (Figure 48m) could not be securely associated with the F21 tomb. Suboperation C121B was assigned for excavation associated with the F21 tomb. During the 2001 field season, the interior of the chamber was cleared to floor level and recorded. The looters had excavated through the floor in most of the tomb, but had left many small artifacts behind. Thirteen ceramic vessels (Figure 48a-l,n) can be securely associated with this chamber and it is suspected that the remaining cache vessel (Figure 48m) also came from this chamber. Another cache vessel (Figure 48n) was associated with the formal western entryway to the chamber, recalling similar entranceway cache associations seen in the upper tomb of Structure A34 (D. Chase and A. Chase 1996a). Other artifactual materials from within this chamber included worked bone and shell (including a possible lip-plug), worked dog teeth, a fish vertebrae, and pieces of obsidian and chert.

The total volume encompassed by the Structure F21 tomb was 2.94 m³ (not including the entry step). The chamber measured 2.15 m in length by 1.10 m in width by 1.40 m in height. The remains of 5 individuals were recovered in association with this chamber; 3 were adults and 2 were older adults. Minimally 3 individuals had their upper central incisors filed and one also had inlays (now missing). Tartar and hypoplasia are also evident in the teeth recovered. Overall, the positioning of this tomb in the north building is reminiscent of similar ones known from Structures A34 and B19.

Summary

The investigations undertaken during the 17th field season of the Caracol Archaeological Project sought to complete the investigation of two previously researched palace complexes in the site epicenter. Part of this focus was driven by the desire to compliment the GOB tourism project, which had proposed to stabilize both compounds. It was also hoped that, in the process of clearing the Barrio palace complex and the rest of the Caana summit prior to full stabilization, it would be possible not only to flesh out already existing plans and sections, but also to gain new information on how these palace complexes had been used. The 2001 investigations succeeded in accomplishing these goals and added to the settlement data with the Structure F21 investigations.

New information relative to the functional use of the Caana summit was gained. The final building plan for Structure B18, with its transverse end rooms, was not what was expected and revealed that Structure B18 more resembled a "palace" than a "temple." This functional difference may explain the lack of axial deposits encountered in association with the building. The Caana Northwest Quadrangle was fully exposed for plan and the incensario encountered on the floor of the rear western room, in combination with evidence for the bench being inset into the rear wall, suggests that this area had special ritual function. The contrast between the Northwest Quadrangle and the Northeast Quadrangle is especially apparent in the different kinds of ceramics recovered in the two areas (as re-emphasized in the 2001 alley excavations; see also A. Chase and D. Chase 2001).

Especially significant was the recovery of two reentered and desecrated tombs under the front basal side rooms of Structure B19. After their reentry, the tombs were sealed under later floors and benches. There was burning on the floors above them, indicating that these side rooms had continued to be used. The recovery of the impressive artifactual materials from within these chambers indicates that Caana had continued to be occupied and used by the site's elite into the late part of the Late Classic Period past A.D. 700. But, the reentry and desecration of the chambers raises unanswered questions about the transition between the Late and Terminal Classic Periods around A.D. 800.

The Barrio excavations met all of the outlined research goals. The axes of Structures B25 and B26 were investigated and backfilled, and the unexcavated rooms in Structures B25 and B21 were cleared and recorded in preparation for future stabilizing crews. These investigations additionally revealed that Barrio was in the middle of undergoing a major remodeling effort at the time of the "collapse." Unexpected and exceedingly important was the recovery of large amounts of Terminal Classic garbage in the form of reconstructable vessels from the area at the juncture of Structures B25 and B26 in the interior courtyard. These vessels unite disparate sections of the Terminal Classic palace ceramic subcomplex found elsewhere in the Caracol epicenter and should eventually permit cross-site comparisons to help elucidate this enigmatic era.

The results of the 2001 field season will ultimately add to the mystique of Caracol, complementing the ongoing stabilization not only in a practical way but also in terms of its broader long-term intention of encouraging tourists to visit and be awed by the archaeological remains of the site.

TABLE 1:

Caracol Project Members: 2001 Field Season

Staff:

Arlen Chase C1

Diane Chase C2

Amy Morris C111

Amy Murphy C118

Sandra Wheeler C123

Lana Williams C126

Lucas Johnson C134

Lyndsey Wood C140

Elise Adams C142

Shayna Brown C143

Mark "Earl" Jacobs C145

Justin Kiner C146

Chris Savage C147

Eva Schmidt C148

Belize Support Staff:

Rita Wiltshire

Aurora Gongora

Elida Neal

Carlos Mendez

Eric Manzanero

Carlos Castillo Garcia

Jaime Iglesias Mis (Moguel)

Saul Ysiel Galeano

Edilberto "Nelson" Mendez

Reginaldo de Jesus Mendez

(Edilberto) Margarito Tun

FIGURES

The following figures were prepared in this format by A. Chase. Figures 1, 2, and 18 are by A. Chase. The ceramic illustrations and the new Caracol altar were drafted by Lucas Martindale Johnson. The architectural illustrations were drafted either by Amy Morris or D. Chase. All photographs are either by D. Chase or by A. Chase. Line drawings are based on field drawings and are presented without major reconstruction that may be added in final publication.

[Figure 1](#). Map of Epicentral Caracol showing locations of Barrio, Caana, and Structure F21.

[Figure 2](#). Plan of Barrio palace compound.

[Figure 3](#). Photograph of excavation of Barrio main entryway steps approaching Structure B25, Suboperation C160B.

[Figure 4](#). Photograph of inner court of Barrio looking toward Structures B25 (west building) and B26 (north building), Suboperations C160D, C160H, and C160J.

[Figure 5](#). Plan of north portion of Structure B25 showing plans of newly excavated rooms, Suboperations C160C, C160D, C160F, C160G, C160H and C160I.

[Figure 6](#). Axial section through main doors of Structure B25, Suboperation C160B, C160C, and C160D.

[Figure 7](#). Axial section of overburden in north room of Structure B25, Suboperation C160G.

[Figure 8](#). Photograph of multiple bench levels in Suboperation C160G.

[Figure 9](#). Axial section of overburden in northwestern room of Structure B25, Suboperation C160I.

[Figure 10](#). Photograph of bench in Suboperation C160I.

[Figure 11](#). Axial section of overburden in northeastern room of Structure B25, Suboperation C160H.

[Figure 12](#). Section of Suboperations C160J and C76X, comprising an axial trench through Structure B26.

[Figure 13](#). Photograph of deeply buried architecture under the latest dry core fill of Structure B26-1st, Suboperation C160J.

[Figure 14](#). Axial trench through northern room of Structure B21, Suboperation C160K.

[Figure 15](#). Photograph of excavation of northern room of Structure B21, Suboperation C160K.

[Figure 16a-l](#). [Figure 16m-v](#). [Figure 16w-gg](#). [Figure 16hh-jj](#). Ceramic vessels associated with Structures B25 and B26: a.,gg. Sombrero Appliqued; b.,m. Sahcaba Modeled-carved; c.,s. burnt Tinaja Group; d.,e. possibly Valentin Unslipped; f.,j.,t.,u. Tinaja Red; g.,i.,k.,cc.,ee. Valentin Unslipped; h. probably Tinaja Group; l. ceramic figurine (untyped); n. Cameron Incised; o. probably Cameron Incised; p.,x.,z.-bb. Pantano Impressed; q. possibly Martin's Incised; r. Belize Red; v. unknown modeled type; w.,y. eroded Tinaja Red; dd. Possibly Platon Punctated; ff. possibly Encanto Striated; hh. possibly San Julio Modeled; ii. Possibly Azucar Impressed; jj. Pabellon Modeled-carved.

[Figure 17](#). New Caracol carved altar (Altar 23) found in courtyard west of the Barrio palace.

[Figure 18](#). Plan of Caana palace complex as of the end of the 2001 field season.

[Figure 19](#). Aerial photograph of Caana looking west towards Structure B18.

[Figure 20](#). Aerial photograph of summit of Caana looking north towards Structure B19.

[Figure 21](#). Axial excavations undertaken on Structure B18, Suboperations C20D and C20F.

[Figure 22](#). Plan of remnants of building on summit of Structure B18, Suboperations C20D and C20E.

[Figure 23](#). Collapsed stucco frieze recovered from summit excavations of Structure B18.

[Figure 24](#). Stucco heads recovered from summit excavations of Structure B18.

[Figure 25](#). Ceramic vessels recovered from Structure B18, Northwest Quadrangle, and Northeast alley. a. undesignated unslipped type; b. possibly eroded Tinaja Red; c. Valentin Unslipped; d. possibly Tinaja Red.

[Figure 26](#). Photograph of Northwest Quadrangle on summit of Caana.

[Figure 27](#). Plan of Northwest Quadrangle on summit of Caana, Suboperations C78H, C78I, C78J, C78K, and C78L.

[Figure 28](#). East-west section through Northwest Quadrangle on summit of Caana, Suboperation C78I.

[Figure 29](#). North-south section of rear room of the north building in the Northwest Quadrangle, Suboperation 78L.

[Figure 30](#). Plan of alleyway between Structure B19 and Northeast Quadrangle with section through vaulted east-west passage, Suboperation C81P.

[Figure 31](#). Photograph of alleyway between Structure B19 and Northeast Quadrangle, Suboperation C81P.

[Figure 32](#). Photograph of excavation of east basal front room of Structure B19, Suboperation C4I.

[Figure 33](#). Axial section of excavation of east basal front room of Structure B19, Suboperation C4I.

[Figure 34](#). Tenoned head from collapse with east basal front room of Structure B19, Suboperation C4I.

[Figure 35](#). Photograph of tomb beneath east basal front room of Structure B19, Suboperation C4I.

[Figure 36](#). Plan of tomb beneath east basal front room of Structure B19, Suboperation C4I.

[Figure 37](#). Short cross-sections of tombs from below basal front rooms of Structure B19: a. eastern tomb; b. western tomb.

[Figure 38](#). Ceramic vessels recovered in association with basal east Structure B19 tomb, Suboperation C4I: a. possibly Batcab Red-polychrome; b. possibly Paixban Buff-polychrome; c. Belize Red; d. Valentin Unslipped; e. possibly Nanzal Red; f. Valentin Unslipped; g. possibly Tialipa Brown; h. possibly Joyac Cream-polychrome.

[Figure 39](#). Axial section of excavation of west basal front room of Structure B19, Suboperation C4H.

[Figure 40](#). Photograph of tomb entry below sealed floor in west basal front room, Suboperation C4H.

[Figure 41](#). Photograph of tomb beneath west basal front room of Structure B19, Suboperation C4H.

[Figure 42](#). Plan of tomb beneath west basal front room of Structure B19, Suboperation C4H.

[Figure 43a-h](#). [Figure 43i-l](#). Ceramic vessels recovered in association with basal west Structure B19 tomb, Suboperation C4H: a.,d. burnt Zacatel Cream-polychrome; b. possibly Zacatel Cream-polychrome; c. possibly burnt Chantori Black-on-orange; e.,h. Machete Orange-polychrome; f. undesignated type; g. undesignated plainware type; i. possibly Carmelita Incised; j. Valentin Unslipped; k. possibly Rosa Punctated; l. Ceiba Unslipped.

[Figure 44](#). Stucco snake head recovered with basal west Structure B19 tomb, Suboperation C4H.

[Figure 45](#). Stucco bench in front of basal west room of Structure B19, Suboperation C4J: a. plan; b. elevation of bench back; c. stucco painting on rear projection; d section.

[Figure 46](#). Profile and tomb north-south cross-section of Structure F21, Suboperation 121B.

[Figure 47](#). East-west section and plan of tomb in Structure F21, Suboperation 121B.

[Figure 48a-g](#). [Figure 48h-n](#). Ceramic vessels associated with tomb in Structure F21, Suboperation C121B: a. Pajarito Orange-polychrome; b. Zacatel Cream-polychrome; c. possibly San Pedro Impressed; d. possibly Tenaja Fluted; e. probably Salada Fluted; f. Gallinero Fluted; g. Caana Striated; h. possibly Kau Incised; i. possibly Tinaja Red; j. possibly Pasos Impressed; k.-n. Ceiba Unslipped.

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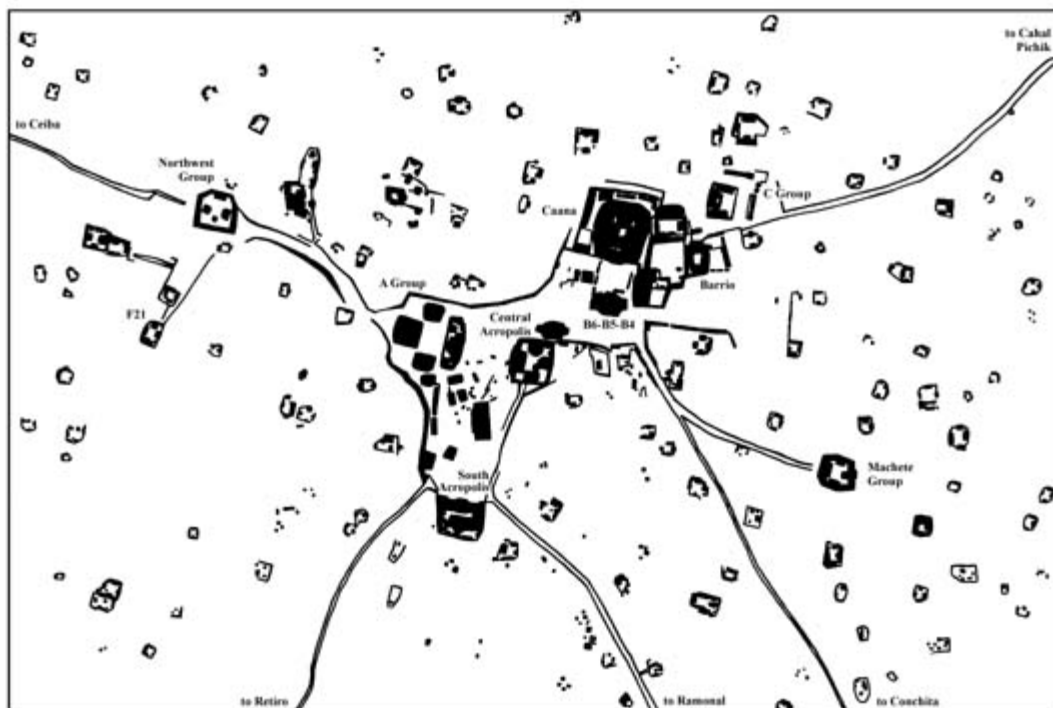
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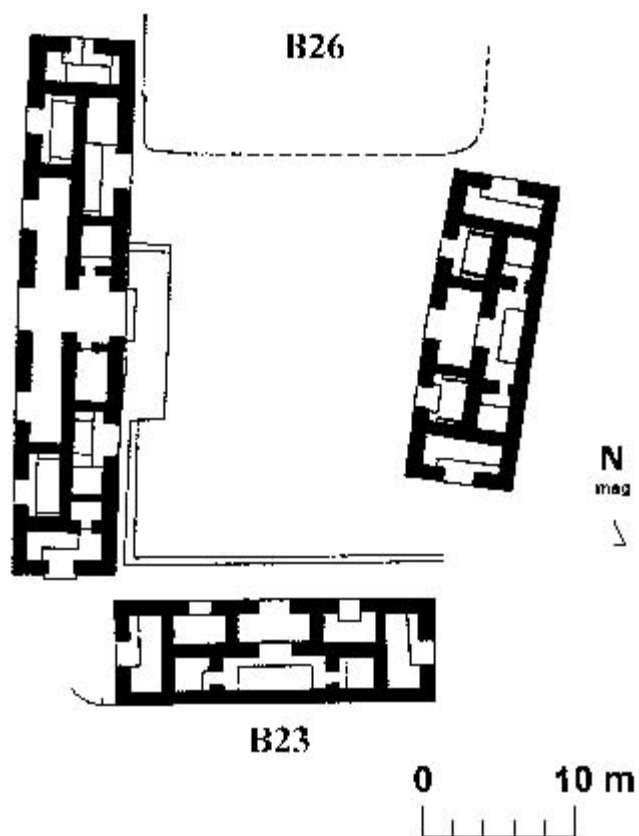


0 500 meters

CARACOL, BELIZE

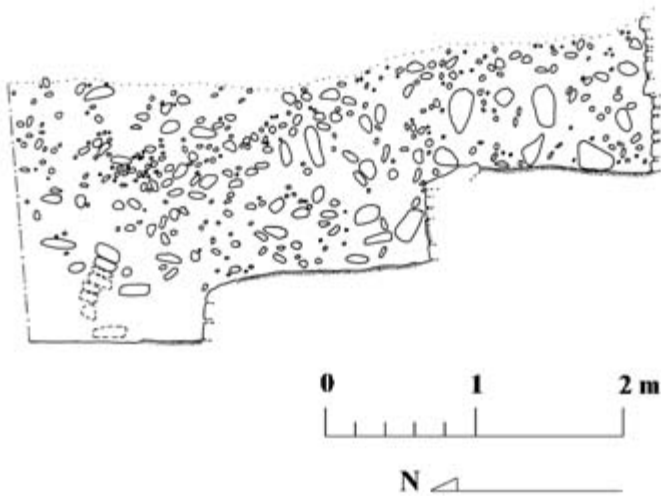
Epicenter & Surrounding Settlement

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Caracol Archaeological Project



Structure B21

Suboperation C160K



Structure B25

Structure B26

Suboperation
C160L

Suboperation C160H

Suboperation C160D

Suboperation
C160G

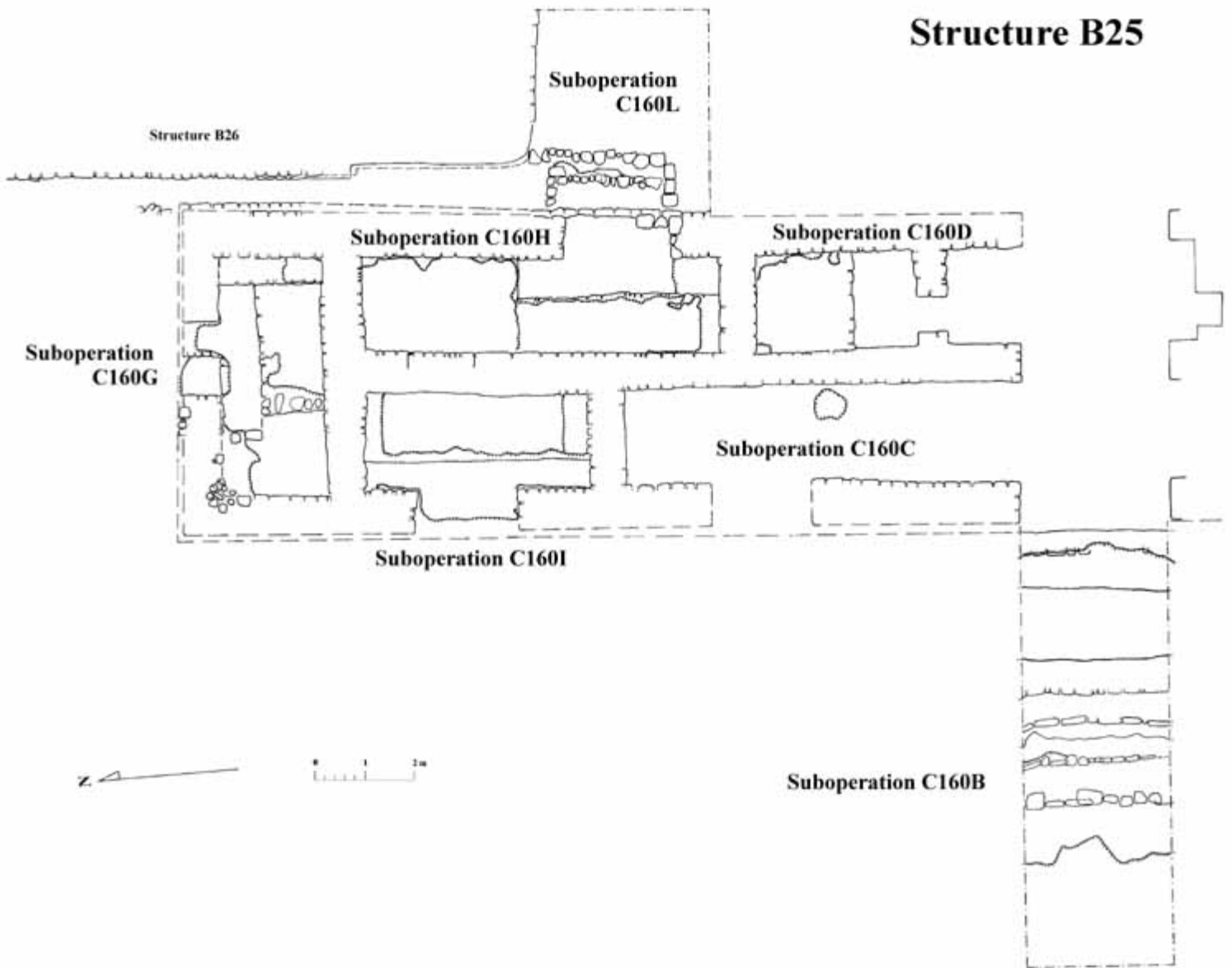
Suboperation C160C

Suboperation C160I

N

0 1 2m

Suboperation C160B



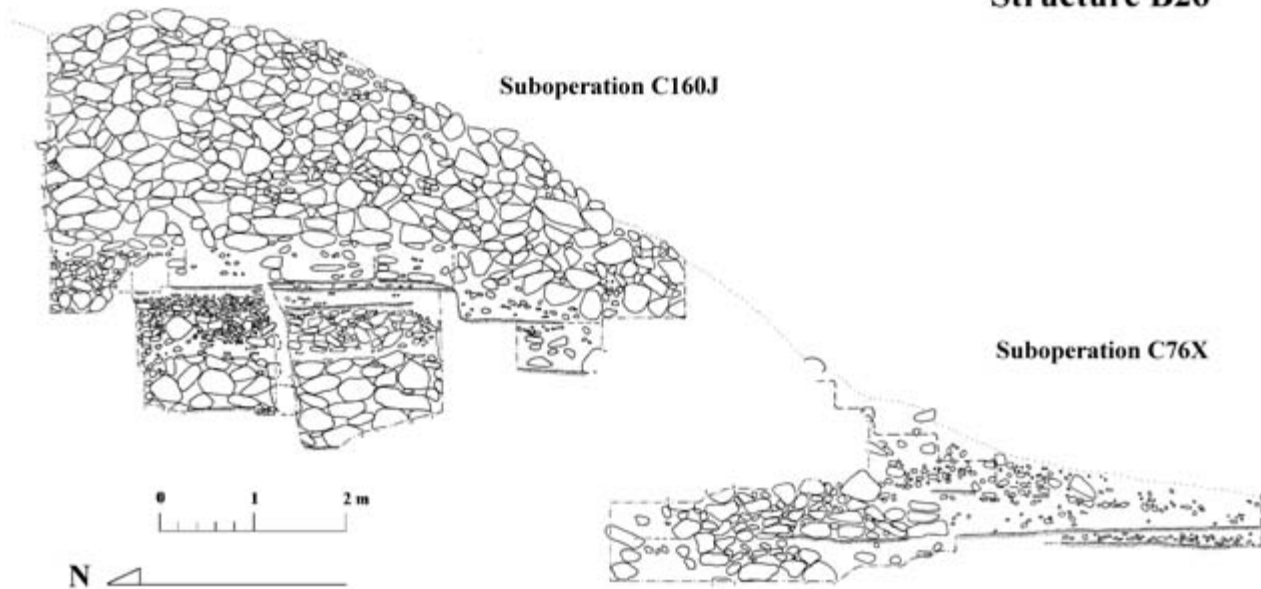
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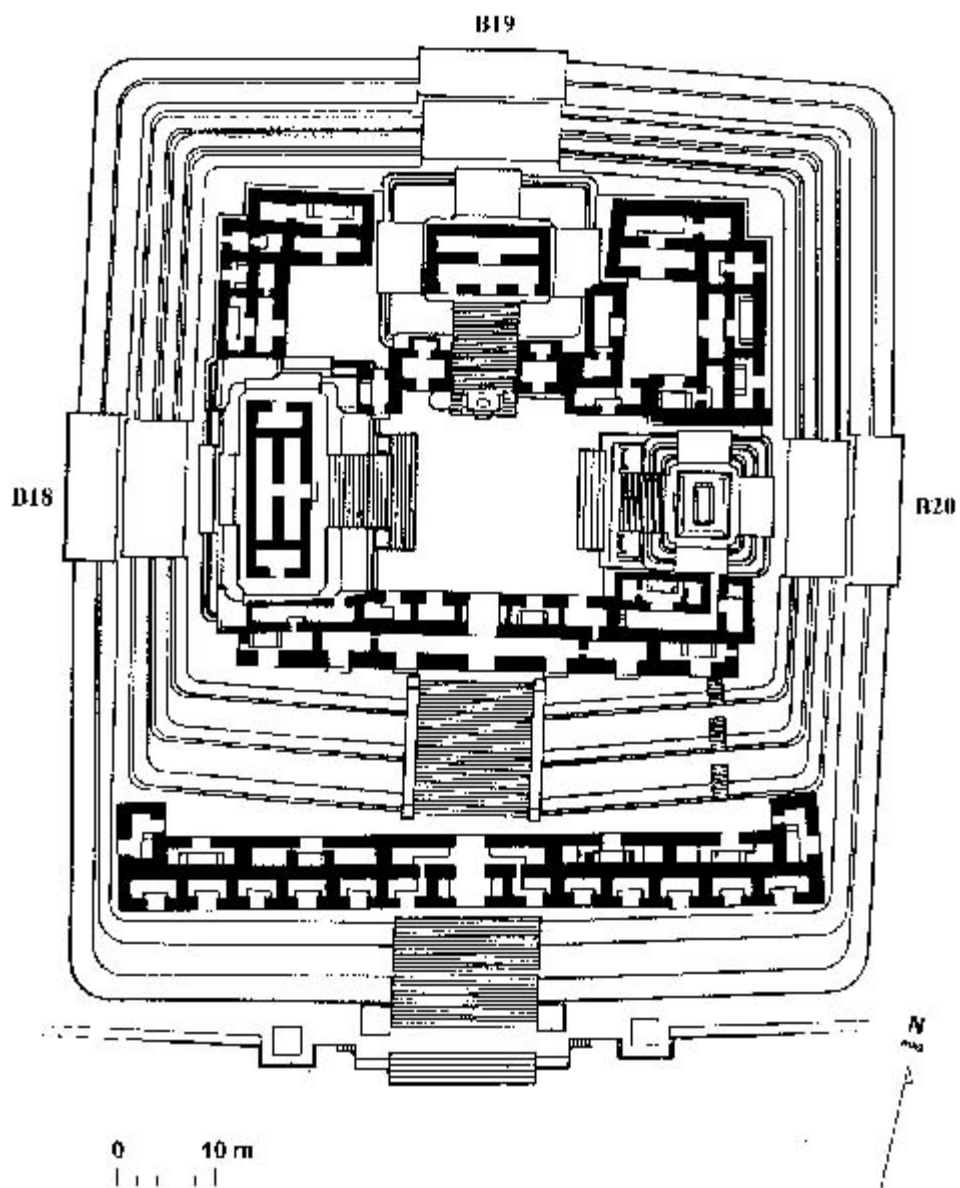
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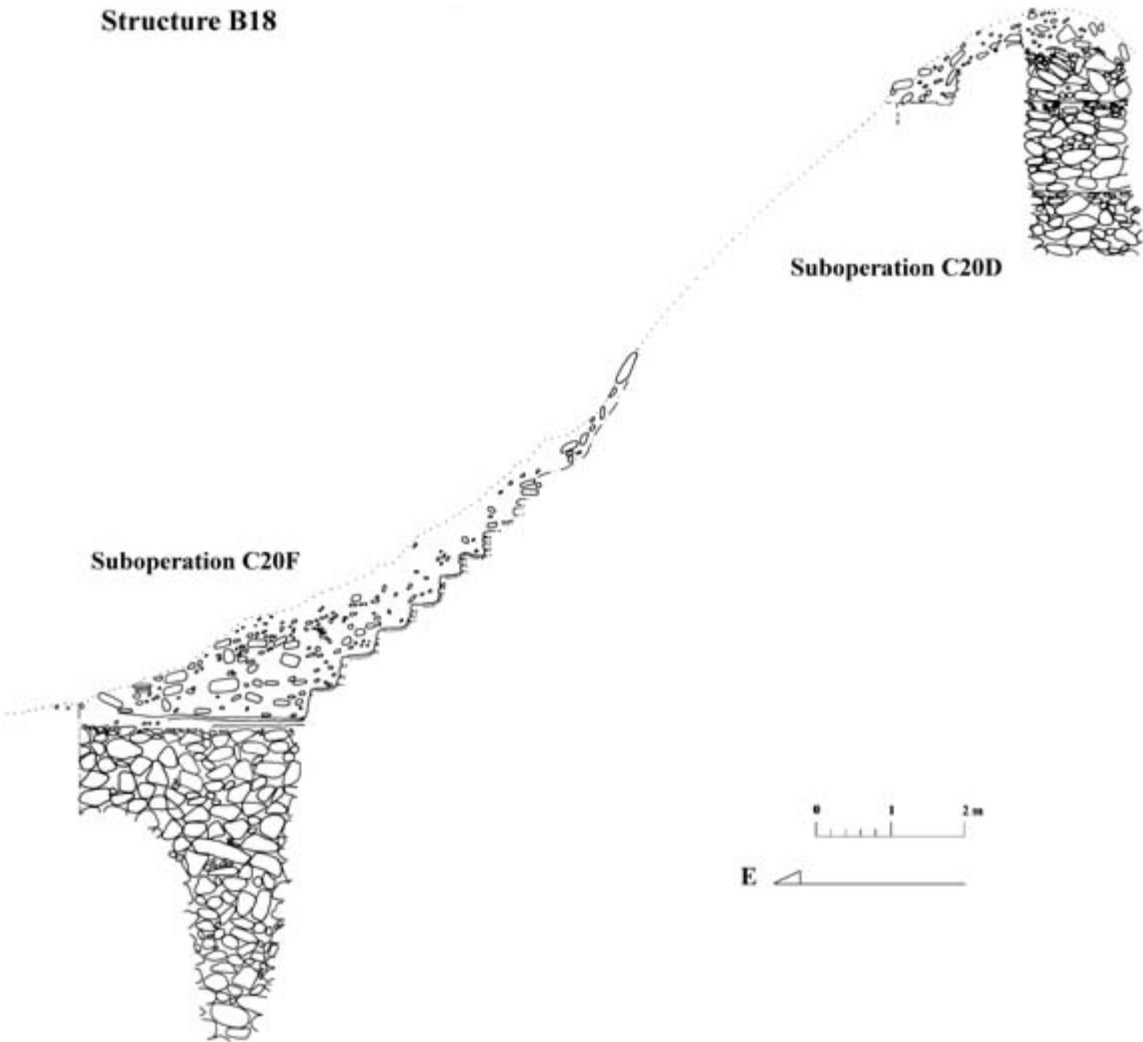
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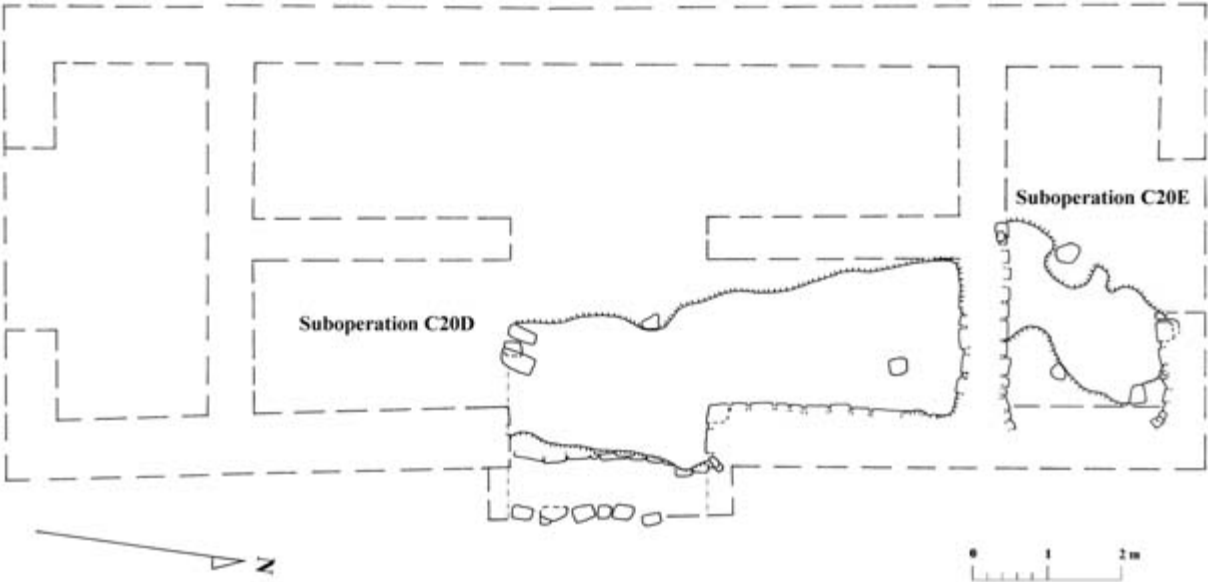




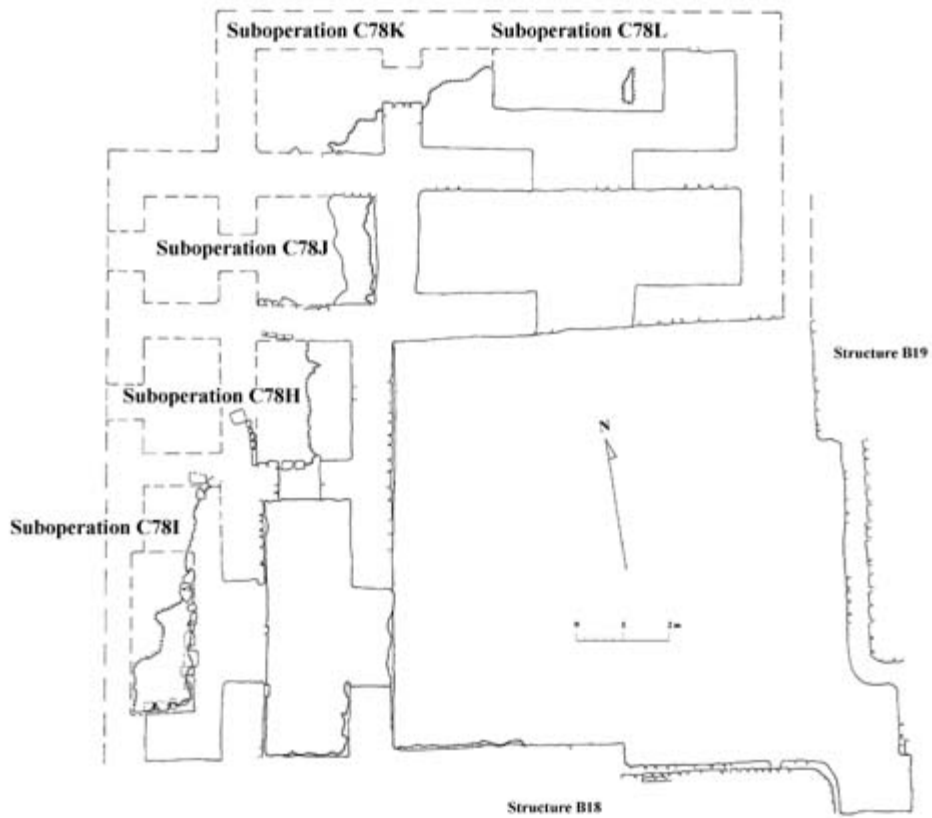
Structure B18



Structure B18

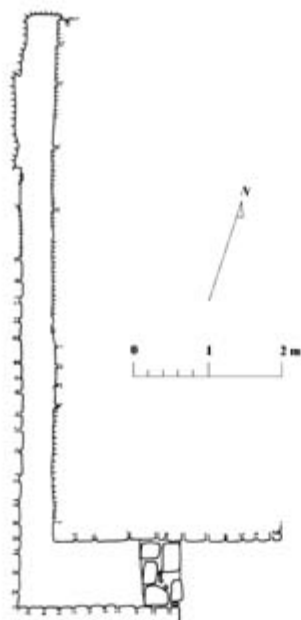


CAANA Northwest Quadrangle

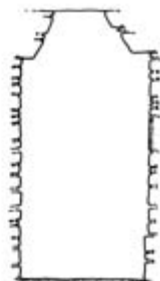


CAANA Northeast Quadrangle

Suboperation 81P



a



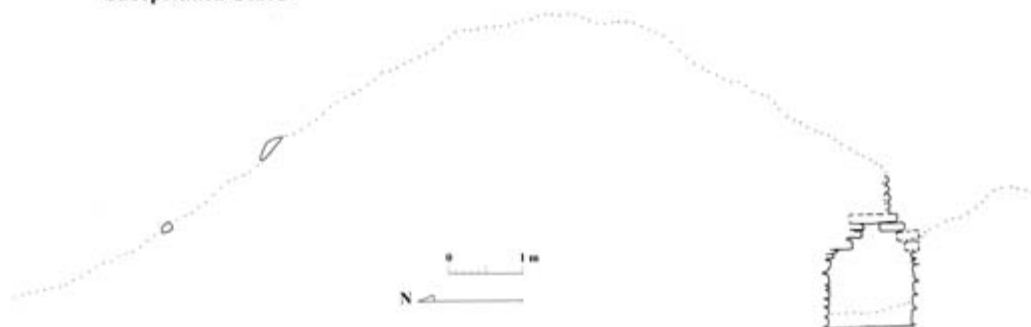
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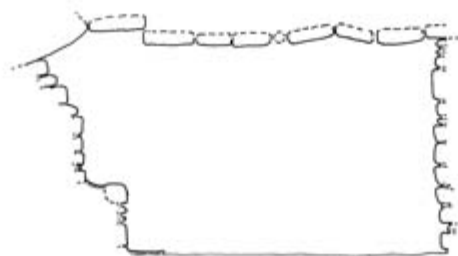
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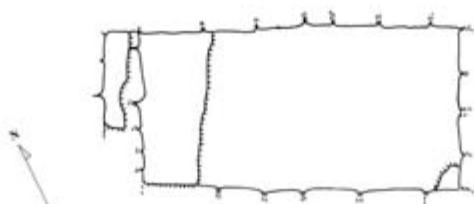
Structure F21

Suboperation C121B





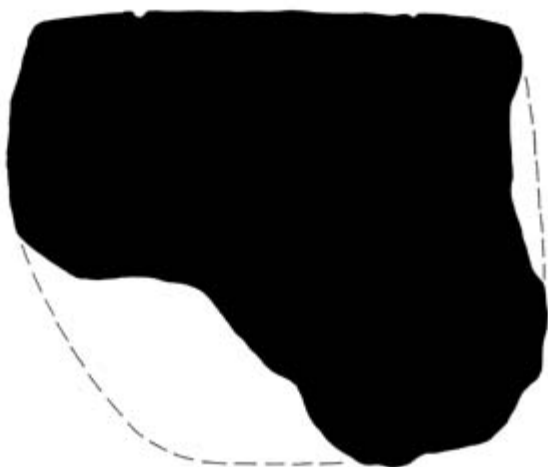
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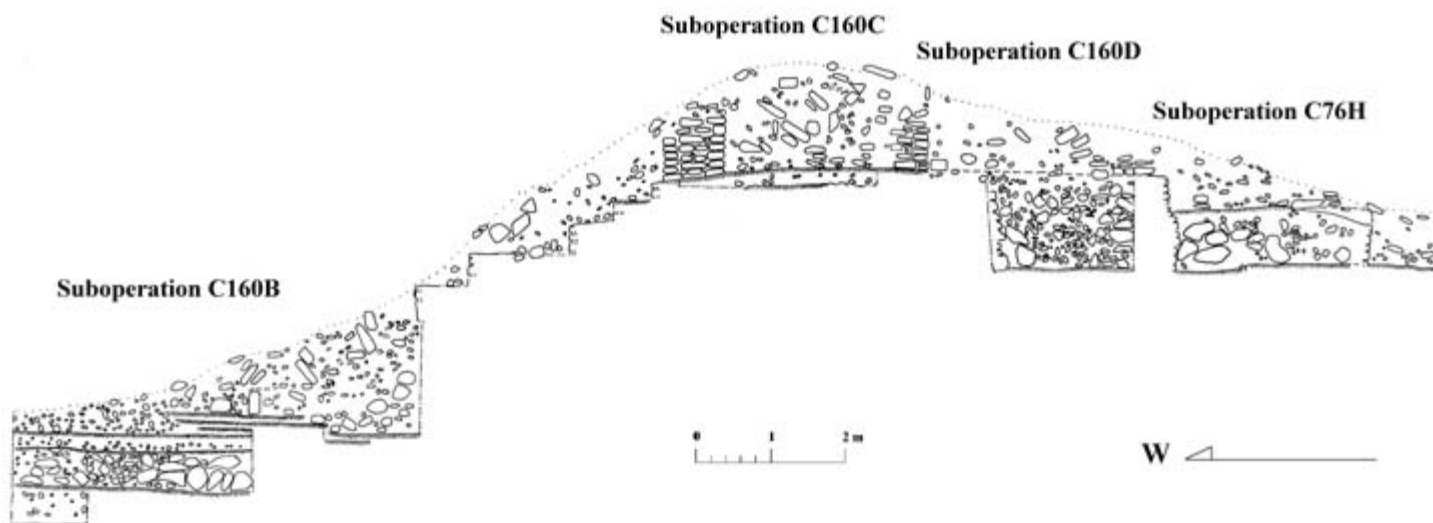
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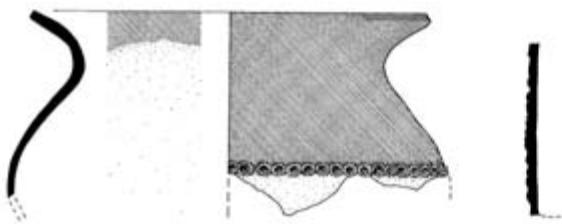


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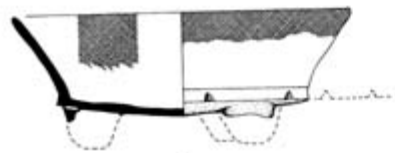




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c



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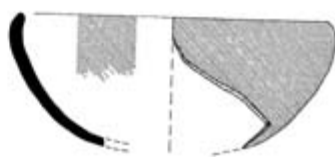
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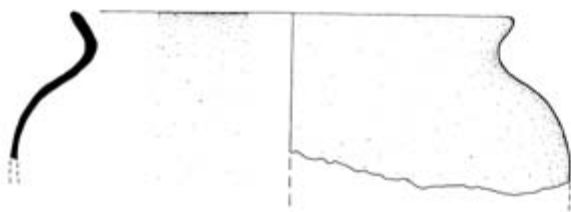
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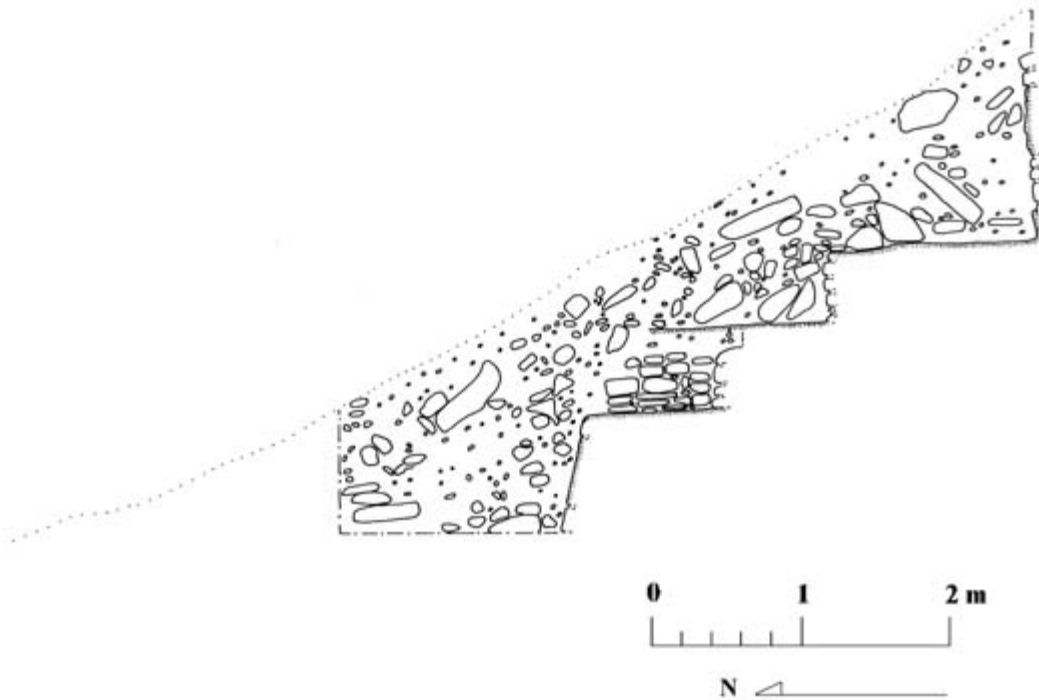


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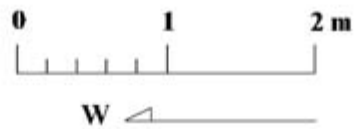
Suboperation C160G





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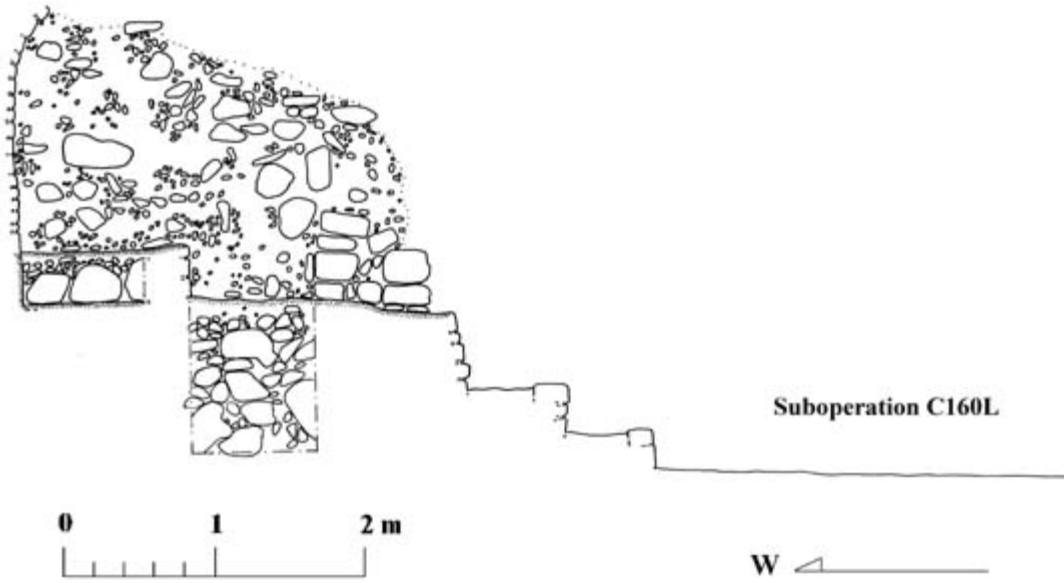
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Structure B25

Suboperation C160H





m



n

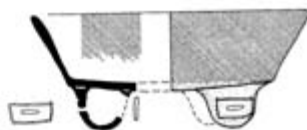


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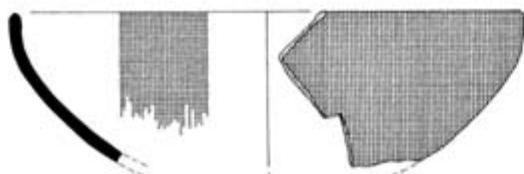
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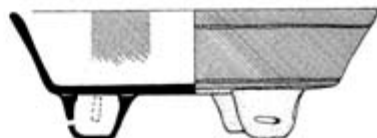
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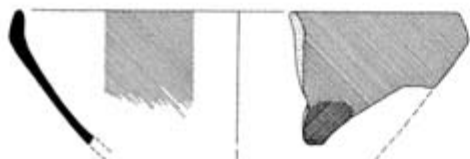
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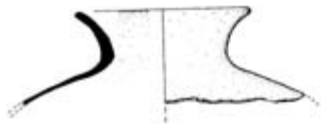
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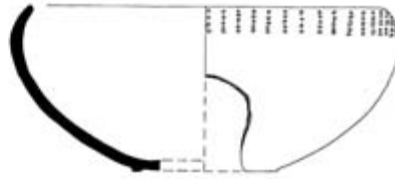
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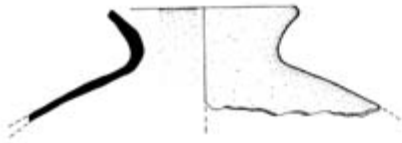
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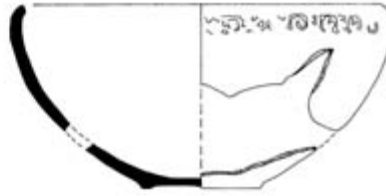
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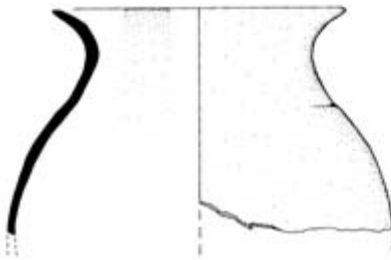


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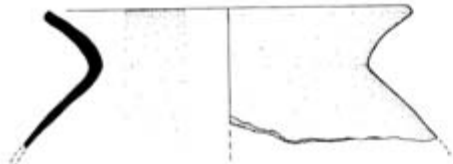
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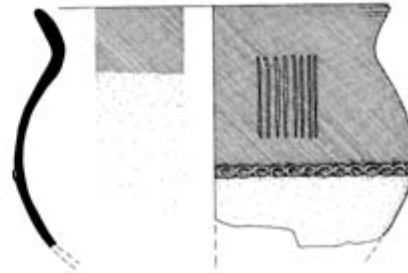
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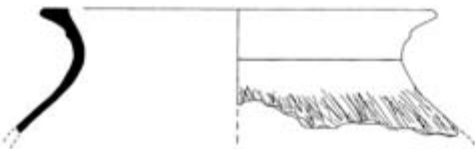
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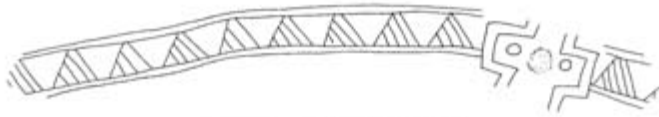
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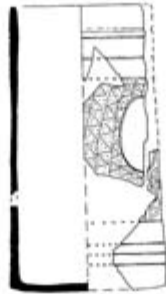
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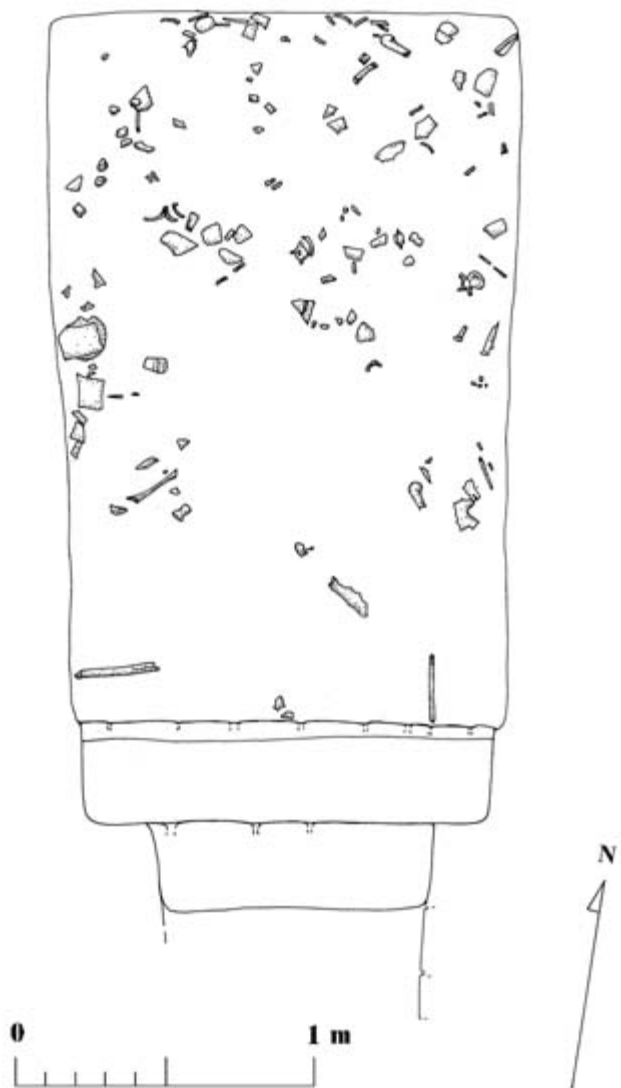




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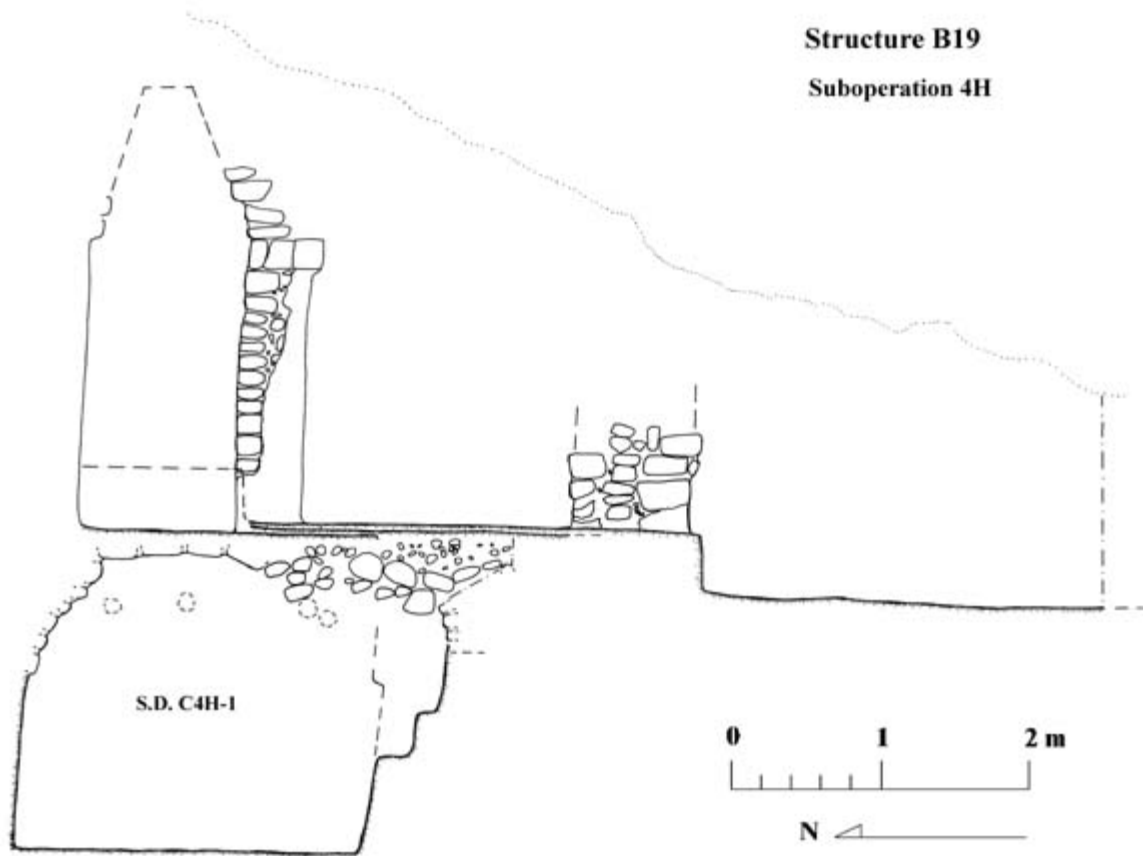
Suboperation 4I





Structure B19

Suboperation 4H





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0 1 2cm



a

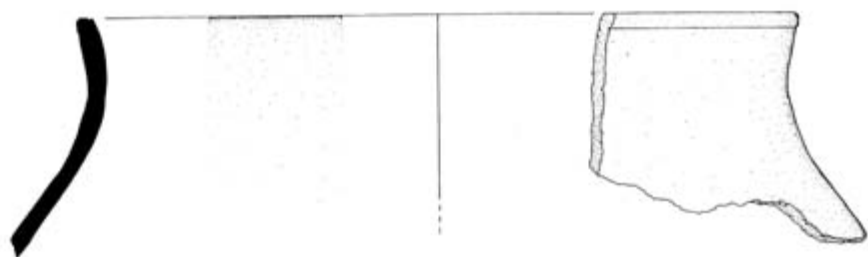


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b





a

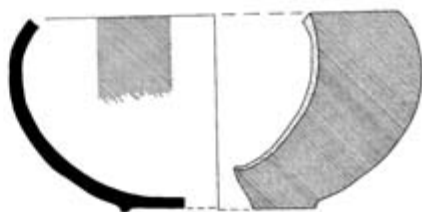
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b



c



d



CAANA Northwest Quadrangle

Suboperation C78I

Suboperation C78B

not recorded

Structure B19

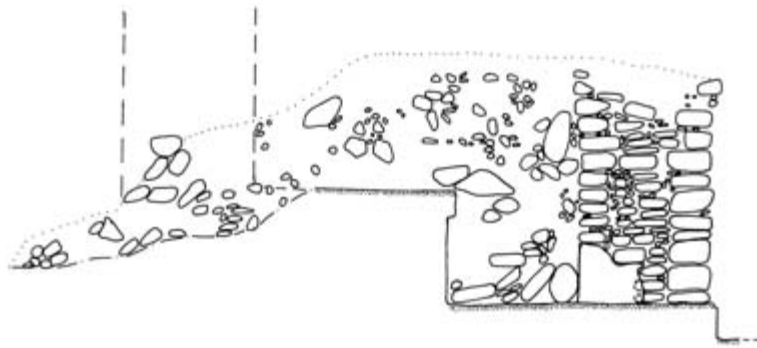


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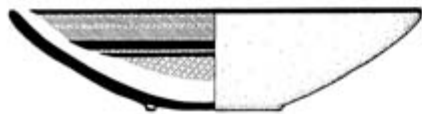
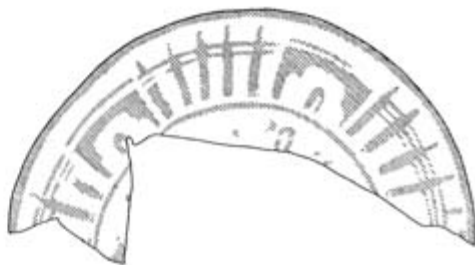
CAANA Northwest Quadrangle

Suboperation C78L

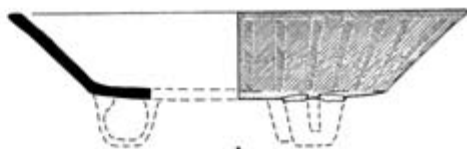


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N



a

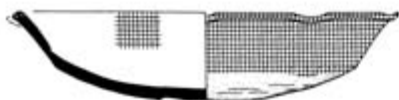


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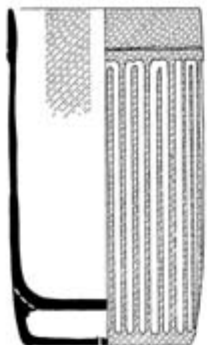


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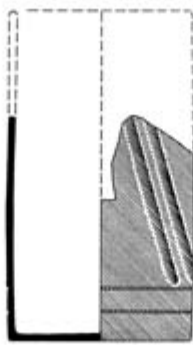
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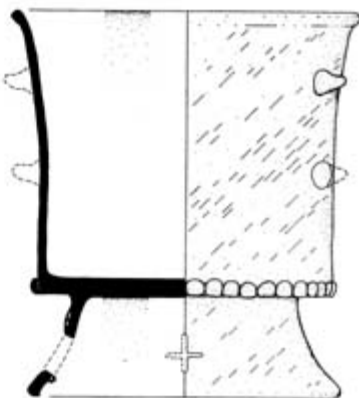
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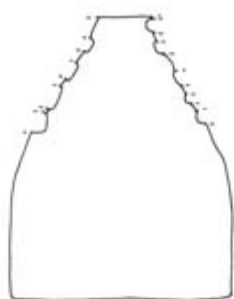
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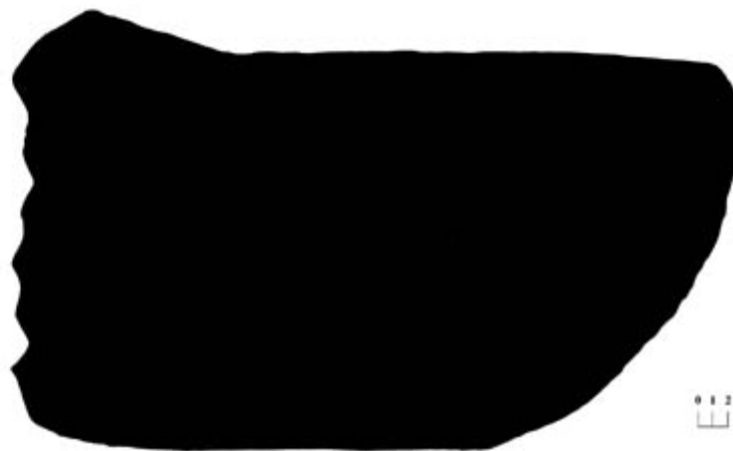


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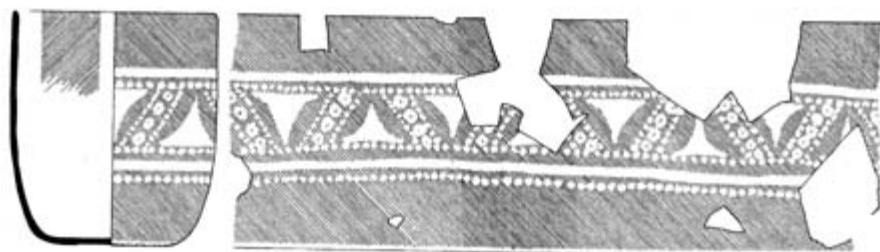


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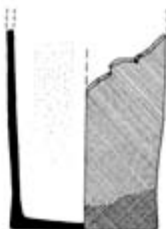
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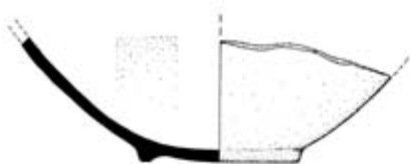


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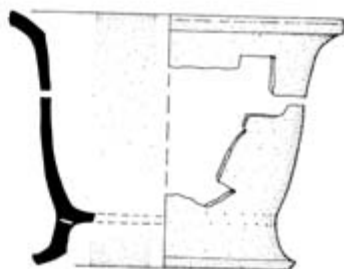
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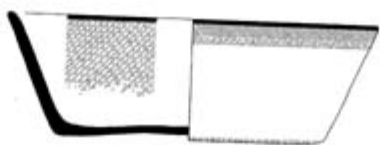
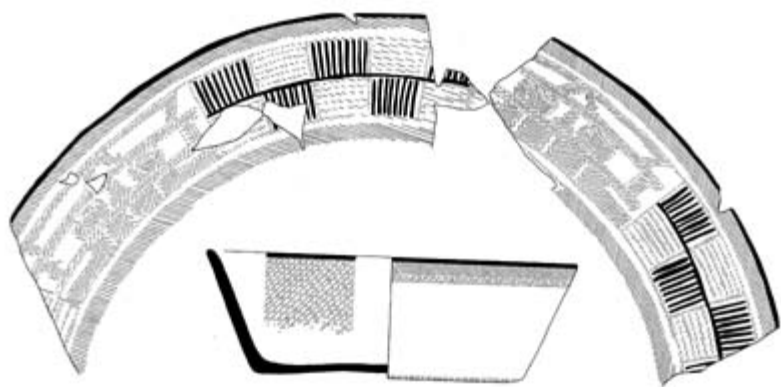


h









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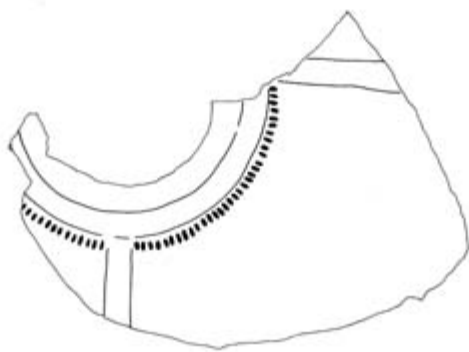
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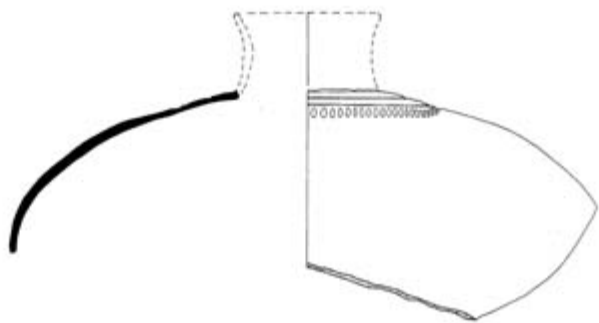
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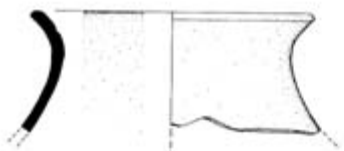
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i



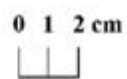
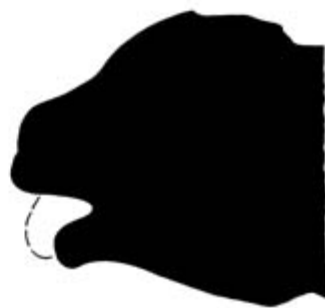
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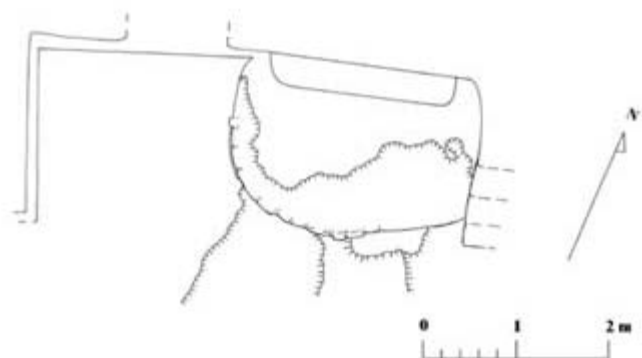
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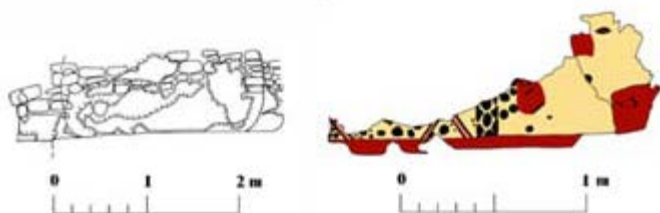
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CAANA Structure B19 exterior bench



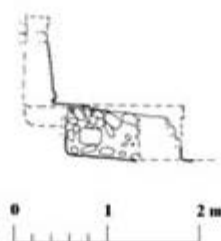
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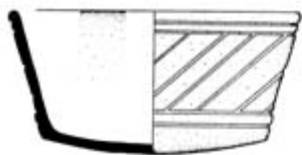
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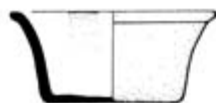


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