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Investigating an Inland Maya Port: The 2003 Field Season at Trinidad de Nosotros, Petén, Guatemala



Research Year: 2003

Culture: Maya

Chronology: Middle Pre-Classic (ca. 600 B.C.) to Early Postclassic (ca. A.D. 1100)

Location: Department of Petén, Guatemala (see [Figure 1](#), [Figure 2](#))

Site: Trinidad de Nosotros

Table of Contents

[Abstract](#)

[Resumen](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Trinidad de Nosotros: Location, History, and Previous Research](#)

[Overview of Investigations at Trinidad: Research Goals](#)

[Investigations at Trinidad de Nosotros in 2003](#)

[Mapping in 2003](#)

[Test Excavations in 2003](#)

[Household Excavations in 2003](#)

[Excavations in the Port Area in 2003](#)

[Discussion](#)

[Trinidad's Occupational Chronology](#)

[The Late Classic Occupation of Trinidad de Nosotros](#)

[Understanding Trinidad's Port Function](#)

[Future Research at Trinidad de Nosotros](#)

[Acknowledgements](#)

[List of Figures](#)
[Sources Cited](#)

Abstract

Archaeological investigations at Trinidad de Nosotros, an ancient Maya site on the north shore of Guatemala's Lake Petén Itzá, were initiated in 2003 to study the development and function of an inland Maya port. Preliminary investigations in 2003 included mapping and a series of test excavations. These investigations were designed to delineate the site's chronology and to examine Trinidad's port function. Although research at Trinidad is ongoing, preliminary results suggest that the site has a long history, with major occupations from the Middle Preclassic to the Early Postclassic period. These investigations have also provided a number of early indicators regarding the nature of the site's function as a port.

Resumen

En 2003 se iniciaron investigaciones arqueológicas en Trinidad de Nosotros, un sitio arqueológico maya situado sobre la orilla norte del lago Petén Itzá, destinadas estudiar el desarrollo y la función de un puerto interior maya. Las investigaciones preliminares del 2003 incluyeron operaciones de relevamiento y una serie de excavaciones de sondeo. Esas investigaciones fueron diseñadas para delinear la cronología del sitio y para examinar la función del puerto de Trinidad. Aunque los estudios en Trinidad están en curso, los resultados preliminares sugieren que el sitio tiene una historia de larga data, con ocupaciones mayores desde el Preclásico Medio hasta el Posclásico Temprano. Además, estas investigaciones han proporcionado algunos indicadores tempranos con respecto al tipo de actividad que tuvo lugar en el puerto de la Trinidad.

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Introduction

Despite the growing recognition of the importance of ports for understanding trade in the Maya lowlands, port research in the Maya area has been largely limited to coastal zones. Although it is generally believed that inland waterways provided a rapid and efficient means of transportation, few inland ports have been identified or subjected to intensive inquiry. In 2003, a program of archaeological research was initiated at the ancient Maya site of Trinidad de Nosotros. This research is designed to study the development and function of an ancient Maya inland port. The research at Trinidad, in conjunction with ongoing research at the nearby Late Classic center of Motul de San José, provides the opportunity to explore the political economy of a Late Classic Maya polity.

Trinidad de Nosotros: Location, History, and Previous Research

The site of Trinidad de Nosotros (*Sik'u'* in Itzaj Maya) is located on the north shore of Guatemala's Lake Petén Itzá, approximately 3.5 km east of the modern town of San José and 2.6 km south-southeast of the Late Classic ceremonial center of Motul de San José ([Figure 1](#)). Located near the midpoint of the northern arm of Lake Petén Itzá ([Figure 2](#)), Trinidad was well positioned to participate in trade moving east-west across the lake. As Rice (1996) has identified port facilities and a series of possible inter-lacustrine canals at the east and west ends of the lake, this trade may have had considerable volume. Further, Trinidad is situated at the closest point of the lake to the Río Kantetul, a west-flowing stream that joins the larger Río San Pedro Mártir, an important artery of ancient Maya trade and transportation.



Selected Ancient Maya Ports, Sites with Port Facilities, and Other Sites Mentioned in Text

1. Trinidad de Nosotros
2. Motul de San Jose
3. Nixtun Ch'ich'
4. Ixlu
5. Tikal
6. Wild Cane Cay
7. Nohmul
8. Cerros
9. Santa Rita
10. Ambergris Cay (various sites)
11. Cancuen
12. Tulum
13. Xelha
14. Xcaret
15. Isla Cozumel (various sites)
16. Isla Cerritos
17. Punta Canbalam
18. Isla Jaina
19. Isla Uaymil
20. Moho Cay
21. Champoton
22. Xicalango
23. Muyil (Chunyaxche)

Figure 1. Map of Maya Lowlands with Selected Ports, Sites with Port Facilities, and Sites Mentioned in Text.

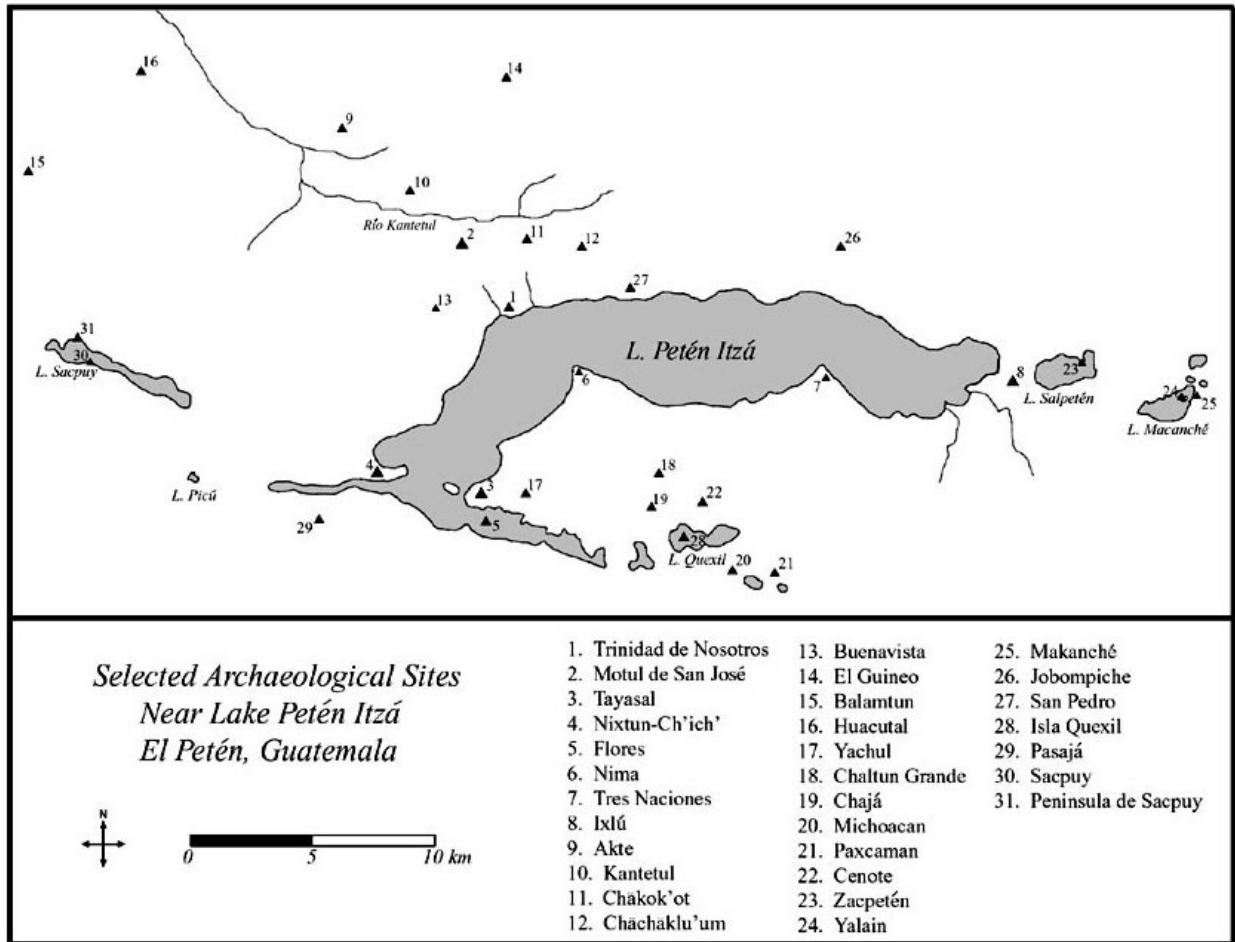


Figure 2. Map of Selected Sites in Lake Petén Itzá Area.

Trinidad's strategic placement is enhanced by the site's natural setting. Sediments from a nearby drainage have created a relatively wide, silty beach at Trinidad that contrasts sharply with other locations on the north shore of the lake. Along most of the north shore of Lake Petén Itzá, steep natural terraces step down to narrow, rocky beaches, providing comparatively little space for beaching or loading or unloading canoes. In addition, a narrow, partially artificial peninsula at Trinidad extends out in front of the beach and creates a small, protected harbor (Figure 3, shown below).

During the mid-20th century Petén chicle boom, Trinidad was one of the principal chicle ports on Lake Petén Itzá. Chicle was transported from camps as far north as Uaxactún and Dos Aguadas to Trinidad where it was loaded into dugout canoes and barges for shipment to the island capital of Flores. Local informants indicate that Trinidad's use as a chicle port resulted in part from its location at the base of a "natural path of least resistance" through the hilly terrain north of the lake. It is worth noting that the principal trail following this route passes within a few hundred meters of the principal plaza of Motul de San José.



Figure 3. Photograph of Harbor at Trinidad de Nosotros.

George Cowgill (1963:59) was likely the first archaeologist to visit Trinidad when he collected surface ceramics from a site he referred to as Playa Buena Vista. Based on his description, however, Playa Buena Vista was almost certainly the eastern portion of Trinidad de Nosotros. Trinidad was later visited by members of the University of Pennsylvania Tayasal Project including Stanley Loten and Arlen Chase. Chase (1983:1168) noted the presence of numerous mounds in the area including one mound eroding into the lake. In 1994, Rómulo Sánchez Polo and other members of the Proyecto Maya-Colonial performed a brief reconnaissance at the site, describing it as one of the major sites on the north shore of the lake (Sánchez 1996:152). Finally, in 2001, members of the Motul de San José Project carried out a brief reconnaissance at Trinidad (Moriarty and Wyatt 2002). A tape-and-compass map was prepared and ceramic materials were collected from the surface. Based on these investigations, Trinidad was identified as a major satellite center of Motul de San José and targeted for future research.

Overview of Investigations at Trinidad: Research Goals

Investigations in 2003 constituted the first step in a multi-year investigation at Trinidad de Nosotros. Research at Trinidad has a variety of specific objectives, but is guided by

two overall goals: (1) to study the long-term development and function of an inland Maya port; and (2) to identify Trinidad's relationship with the nearby ceremonial center of Motul de San José.

The first of these goals involves examining the long-term function and development of Trinidad. As a way to study the site's function, data from Trinidad are being compared to a number of existing port and coastal site models. These models range from that of a relatively simple coastal site, focused on the extraction of lake resources, to that of a highly specialized trading port, involved in the movement, administration, and distribution of local and long-distance trade goods. Trinidad's function as a port or coastal site will, of course, have changed considerably over time and in relation to patterns in trade routes, local settlement, and larger historical processes.

The second interrelated goal of research is to study Trinidad's relationship with the site of Motul de San José. During the Late Classic period, Motul was a capital in an important local polity. Its Late Classic development and apogee appears, however, to have been rapid with little antecedent or subsequent development. Trinidad, in contrast, had a very long occupation. Under these conditions, investigations at Trinidad provide the opportunity to study changes in political economy in relation to the development of Motul de San José as a political power during the Late Classic. It is likely, for example, that varying degrees of involvement in the management of local and long-distance exchange on the part of Motul's Late Classic rulers will have had a variety of different effects on the function and operation of Trinidad de Nosotros as an ancient Maya port.

Investigations at Trinidad de Nosotros in 2003

The 2003 season at Trinidad was designed to collect a variety of baseline data concerning the site's extent, organization, and chronology. From May to late July 2003, a series of archaeological investigations was carried out by a staff of seven American and Guatemalan archaeologists and students and a crew of eighteen workers from the town of San José. These investigations included survey and mapping operations, test excavations, a limited number of structural excavations, and preliminary explorations in Trinidad's port area. The preliminary results of these investigations are described below. A more detailed summary will be available in the upcoming Motul de San José Project annual report (Moriarty, Foias, and Castellanos 2004).



Figure 4. Map of Trinidad de Nosotros.

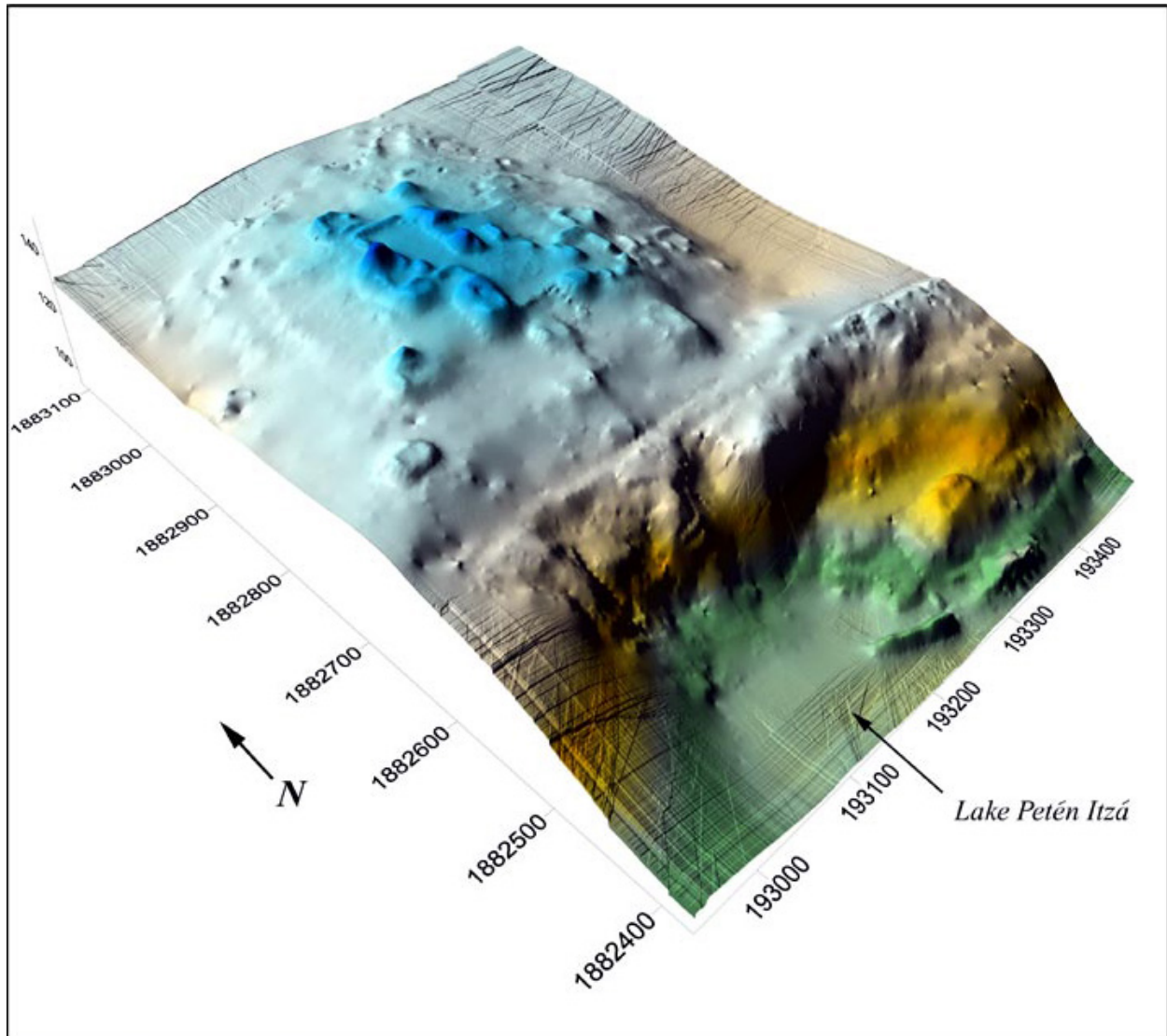


Figure 5. 3D Surface Map of Trinidad de Nosotros.

Mapping in 2003

During the 2003 season, an area of approximately 35 hectares was surveyed and mapped ([Figure 4](#)). Based on field reconnaissance in areas surrounding the surveyed zone, the mapped area represents approximately 60-75% of the site of Trinidad. Large zones of settlement to the east, west, and north remain to be mapped. Within the surveyed zone, over 100 structures, eight quarries, and five chultunes were identified and mapped by the total station crew. Mapped architectural groups were given preliminary alphabetic designations in order of discovery. Numerous additional architectural groups were identified in the surrounding area. We estimate that upon

completion of the final map in 2005, Trinidad will include 125-150 structures organized into approximately 50 groups.

The mapped portion of Trinidad can be divided into two semi-discrete zones: (1) a densely settled core architectural zone atop the ridge overlooking Lake Petén Itzá; and (2) a slightly detached settlement area focused on the lake and the site's harbor.

The Core Architectural Zone: The core architectural zone at Trinidad de Nosotros is situated on the relatively flat summit of the ridge overlooking Lake Petén Itzá (Figure 5). Approximately 80 structures are located within this zone, most situated at least 40 m above the present lake level. The dominant architectural complexes within this zone are Str. A-1, Str. E-1, Group F, and a series of five public plazas (Figure 6). Structure A-1, a 12 m semi-radial pyramid, is the principal structure at the site and is clearly visible from distant parts of the lake (Figure 7). Str. E-1 is a slightly smaller temple that may have originally had a round form. Group F, the Trinidad ballcourt, has a T-shaped form and lateral structures 25 m long. The western lateral structure is surmounted by a small temple platform, referred to as the "Ballcourt Temple," accessible by a staircase on its western side.

The core architectural zone at Trinidad is marked by the presence of numerous formal plazas. Four of these plazas, Plazas I-IV, are enclosed by the site's principal architectural groups and residences and are accessible only by a staircase at the south end of Plaza I. Combined, these plazas cover an area of more than 9,500 m². The fifth plaza, Plaza V, is located just west of the site's principal structure and covers an area of more than 8,000 m². Excavations in Plazas I-IV encountered multiple construction phases dating from the Preclassic to the Late Classic. Excavations in Plaza V, in contrast, revealed only sparse evidence for modification. Plaza V is identified as a plaza based on its location and the absence of visible surface architecture in what is, otherwise, the center of the site.

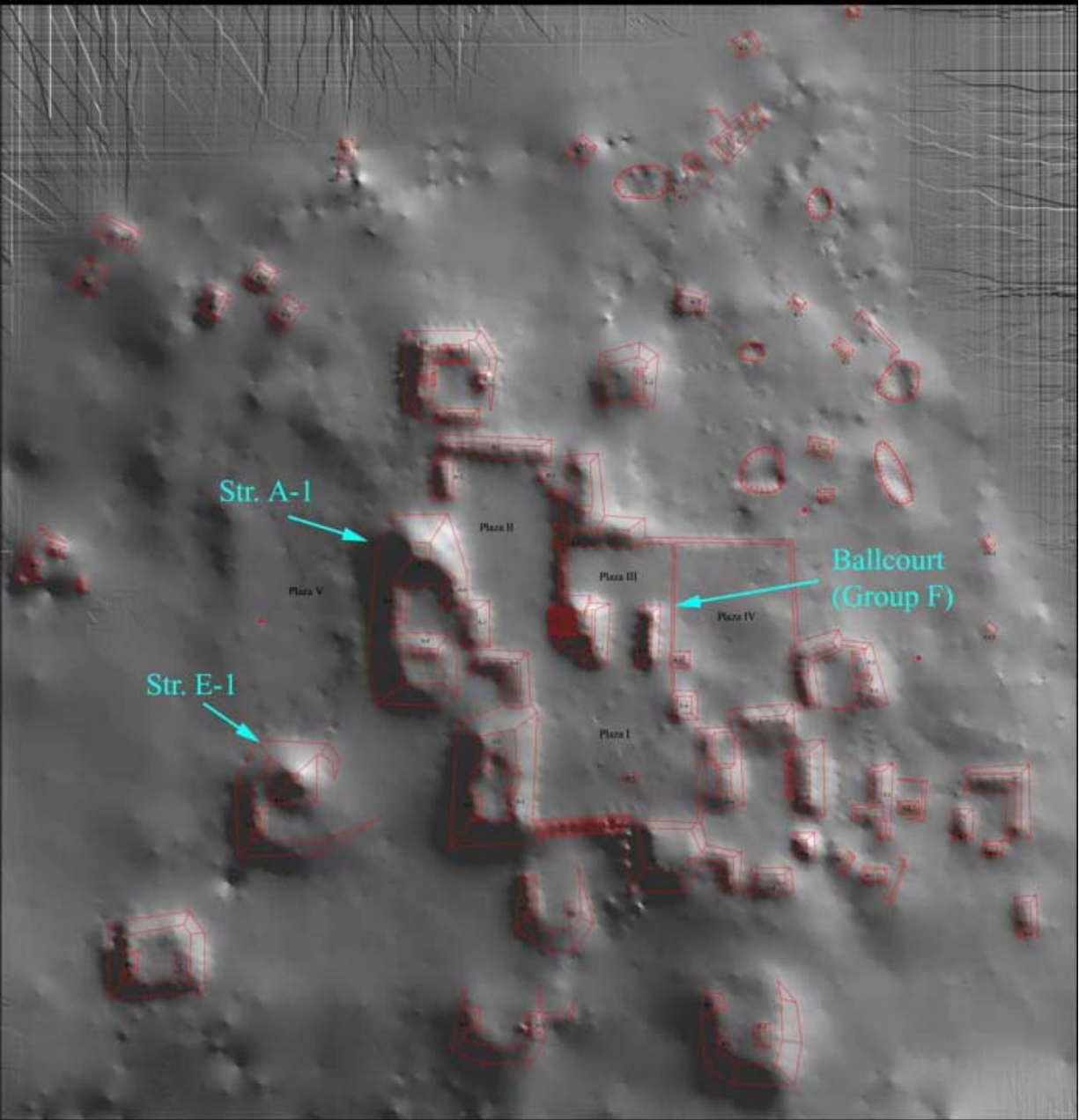


Figure 6. Surface Map of Central Trinidad de Nosotros.

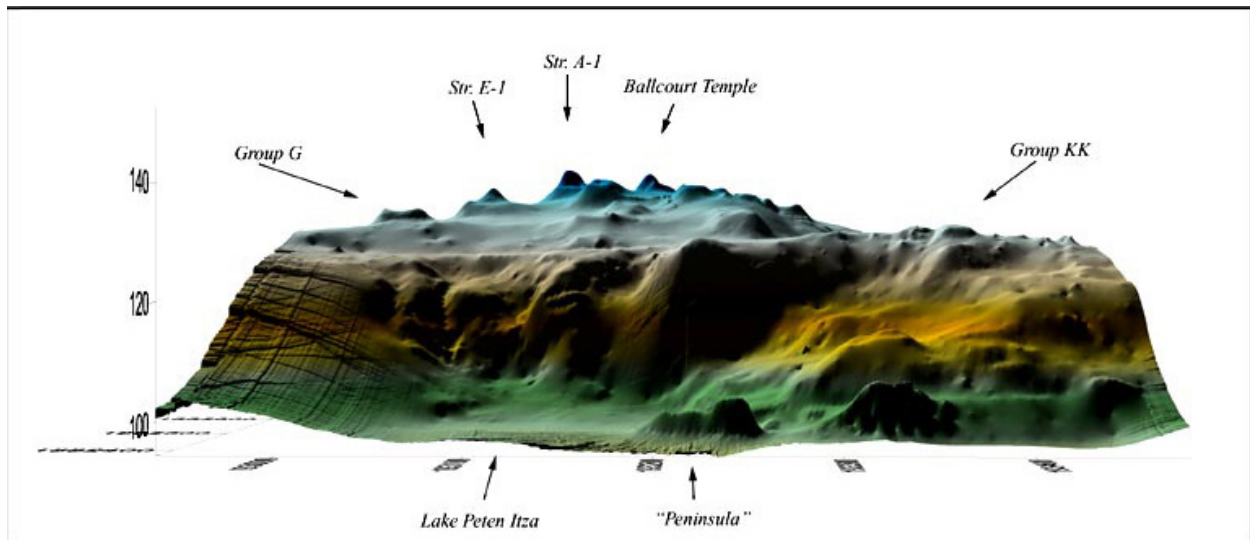


Figure 7. 3D Surface Map of Trinidad de Nosotros: View from the Lake.

Trinidad's core architectural zone also includes a number of elite and commoner residences. Most of the residential groups located in close proximity to the site's four paved plazas follow formal architectural arrangements and represent significant investments in labor. The principal structures in most of these groups—Groups C, L, S, T, U, and Y—probably originally had vaulted masonry superstructures and were likely residences for high status occupants of Trinidad. Based on test-pits, these groups were occupied primarily during the Late Classic. Slightly further from the site's principal plazas, at least ten informal residential groups were mapped in 2003, although many additional groups remain to be mapped. These groups have extremely varied forms and, based on test-pitting, date to a variety of periods from the Preclassic to the Postclassic.

The zone of settlement associated with the lake and the site's harbor begins at the break between the flat ridge top and the slope down to the lake ([Figure 8](#)). At this interface, the ancient Maya constructed a series of terraces and platforms, most of which appear to have had perishable superstructures. Below this line of platforms and terraces, a series of natural terraces step down to the lake. Many possible terraces and low structures are located along this slope, but most have been left off the map of Trinidad until their identification can be confirmed by excavation.

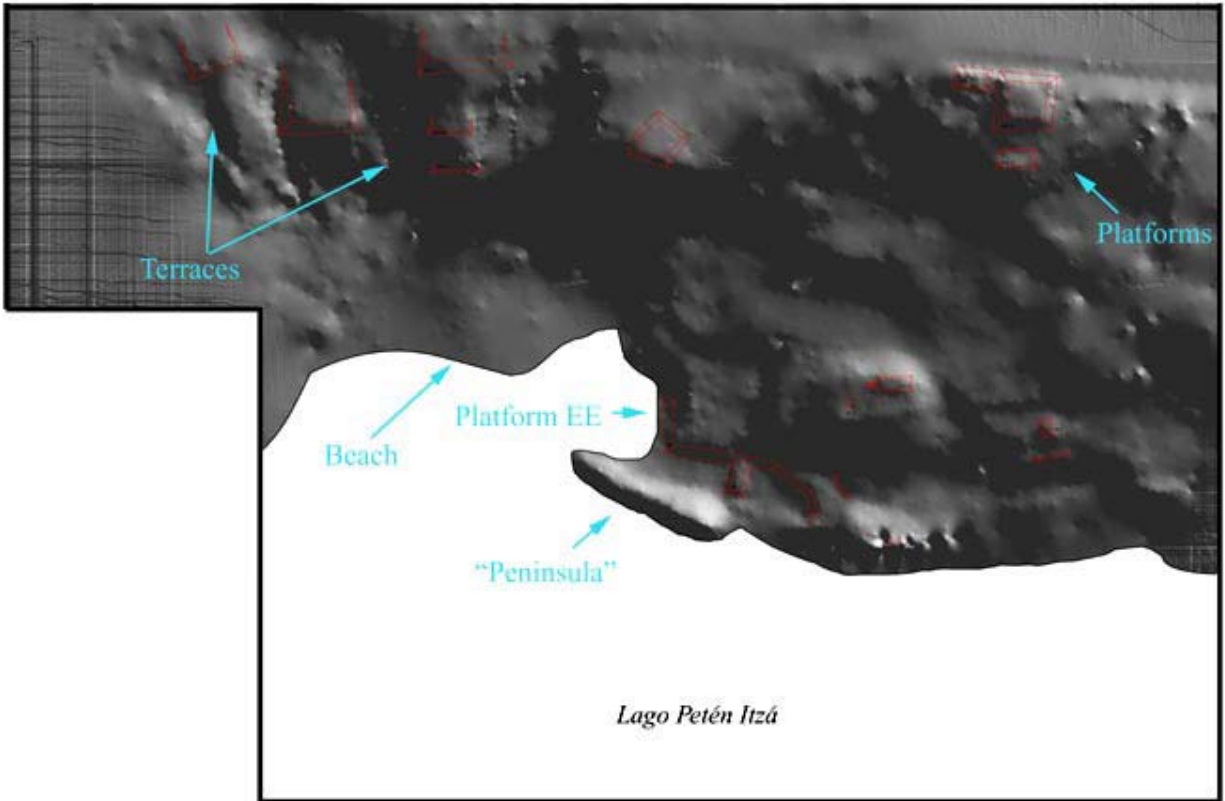


Figure 8. Surface Map of Port Area at Trinidad de Nosotros.

As with the slope leading down to the lake, Trinidad's harbor presents a complex network of natural, artificial, and modified features (Figure 9). The principal features defining the port area are Platform EE, Platform GG, and an intervening low area. Platform EE is a 1 m high platform that runs along the lower edge of the slope leading down to the harbor. Platform GG, referred to as the "peninsula," is a 60 m long feature that extends out from the shore and defines the harbor. Combined, these two features are believed to have formed the inner wall and outer breakwater for the harbor that was originally situated in between. The low area between these two features is, at present, only a few centimeters above lake level and is frequently inundated.

In addition to these features, Trinidad's harbor may also have included a small pier and exit ramp. Str. EE-1, a low extension off of Platform EE, is well situated to have served as a pier. The possible harbor ramp is located at the east end of Platform EE where the platform slope is significantly more gradual than in other areas. An additional sloping terrace is located above this feature. Combined, these features may have facilitated the movement of canoes out of the harbor and into a low, flat area just to the east.

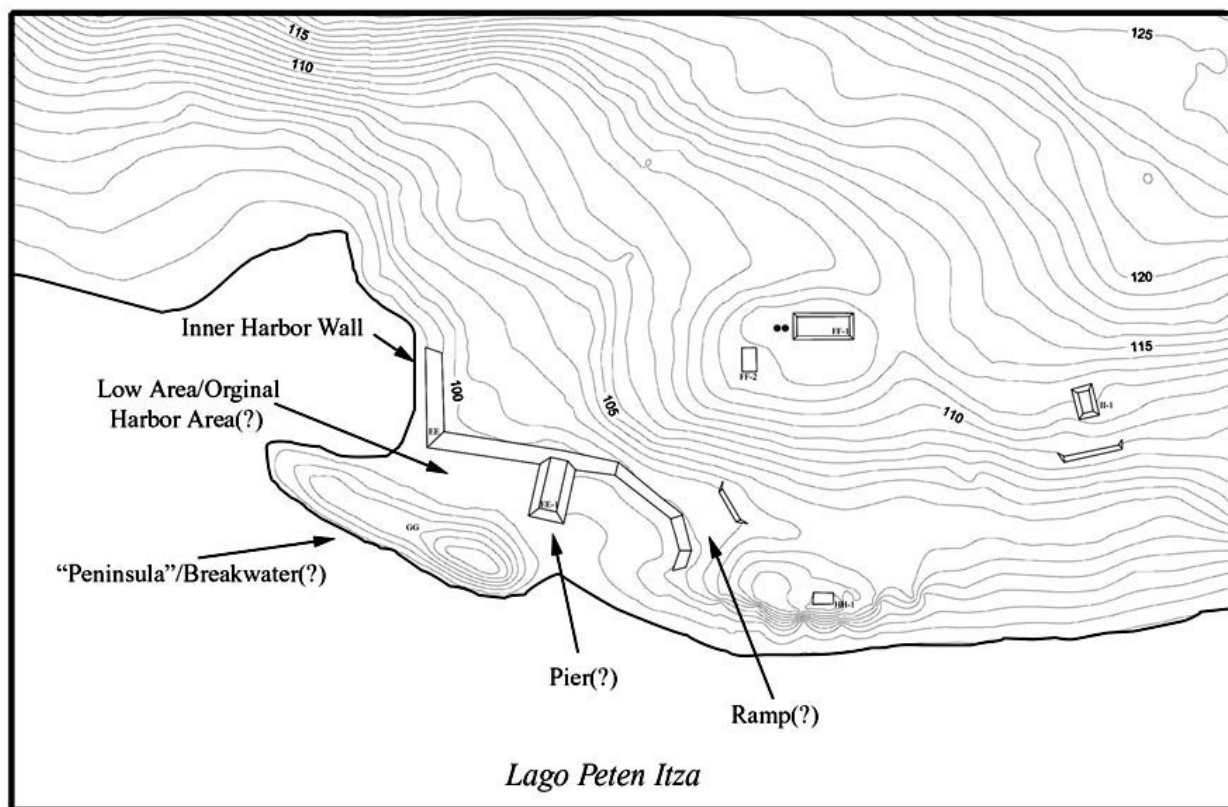


Figure 9. Map of Harbor at Trinidad de Nosotros, with Possible Port Facilities.

Test Excavations in 2003

During the 2003 season at Trinidad, a variety of different test excavations were carried out. First, a series of 29 1-x-1 m test-pits were excavated throughout the site in order to understand the site's chronology. Second, a series of 273 postholes and 100 shovel tests were excavated to locate middens associated with residential groups. An additional series of 1-x-1 and 1-x-2 m pits were excavated in those areas with middens.

The results of test-pitting operations indicate that Trinidad had an exceptionally long occupation, with major peaks occurring from the Middle Preclassic to the Early Postclassic. In Group G, for example, test-pitting recovered a long sequence of archaeological contexts dating to the Middle Preclassic, Late Preclassic, Late Classic, Terminal Classic, and Early Postclassic. A Preclassic burial (Trinidad Burial #5) was also recovered with marine shell pendants and a large, flaring-sided bowl, probably pertaining to a transitional Mamom-Chicanel ceramic complex ([Figure 10](#), shown below).



Figure 10. Trinidad Burial #5: Whole Vessel.

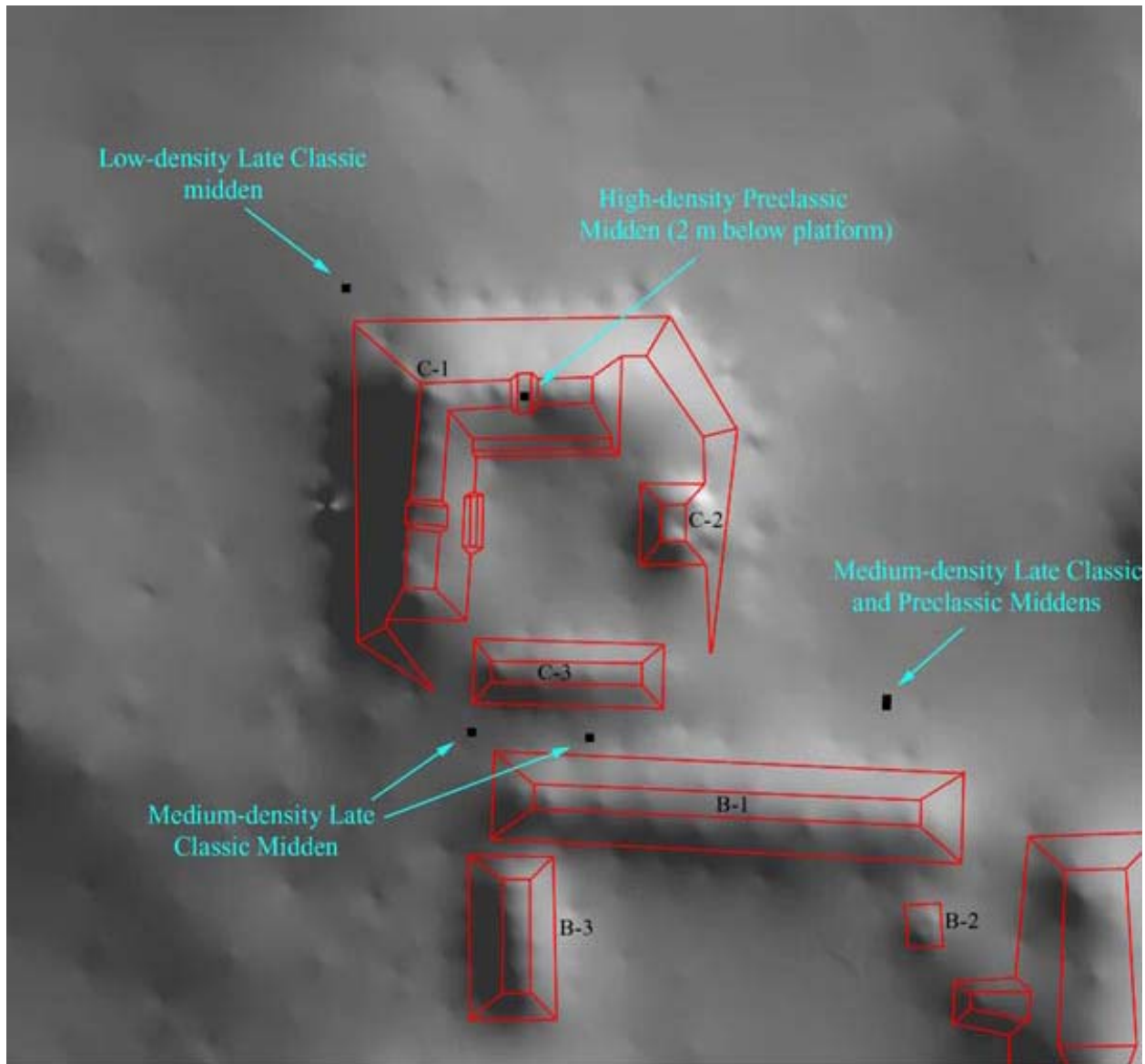


Figure 11. Middens Associated with Groups C and B.

Investigations in 2003 were also successful in identifying a number of artifact-rich middens associated with residential groups. A variety of prospecting techniques utilized around Group C, for example, led to the identification of at least four separate middens with materials from the Preclassic to the Late Classic ([Figure 11](#)). Further analysis of these, and other middens located during future research will provide a reliable indication of access to trade goods critical to understanding Trinidad's long-term port function.

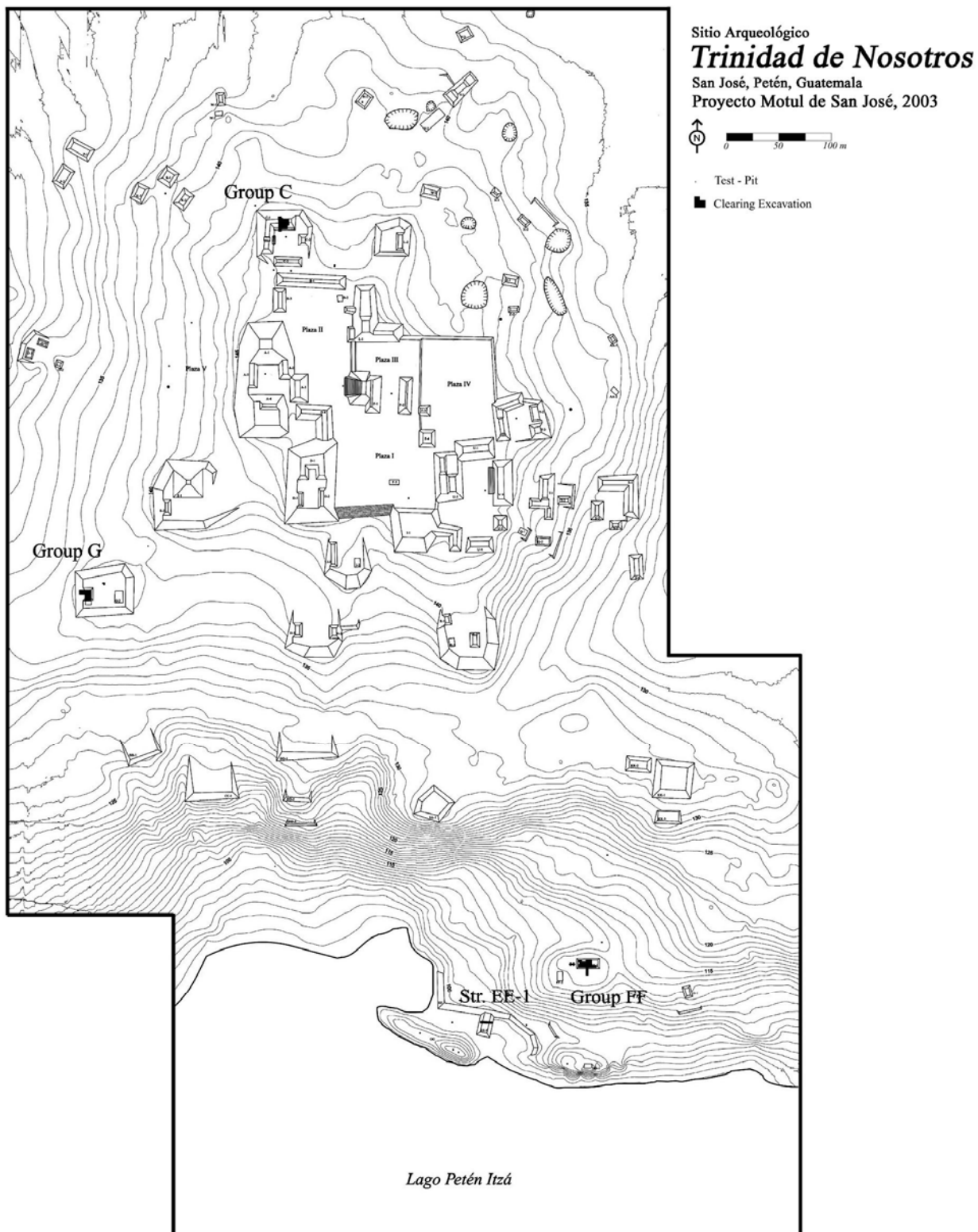


Figure 12. Map of Trinidad with Excavations Noted.

Household Excavations in 2003

Three residential structures, Structures C-1, G-1, and FF-1, were wholly or partially cleared during the 2003 season in order to gain a better understanding of architecture and residential space at Trinidad ([Figure 12](#)).

Investigations in Trinidad Str. C-1: Group C, the principal residential group at Trinidad, is located just north of Plaza II and Str. B-1. Trinidad Group C was constructed with a form corresponding to Tikal Plaza Plan 2, as defined by Becker (1971, 2003), with a small oratorio on its eastern side. Investigations in Group C focused on the eastern wing of Str. C-1, an L-shaped structure forming the north and west sides of the Group C plaza. A total of 48 m² of the structure and adjacent terraces was cleared.



Figure 13. Structure C-1, Following Excavation.

These excavations revealed that the eastern wing of Str. C-1 was originally a vaulted structure built in a tandem room arrangement ([Figure 13](#), shown above). The front, or southern, rooms were open hallways while the rear, or northern, rooms were largely occupied by a pair of small benches ([Figure 14](#), shown below). Access to the structure was achieved through a pair of wide doorways above a series of three terraces. Subsequent pits through the building's final construction phase revealed it to be a Late

Classic construction, although several possibly Terminal Classic modifications were also identified.



Figure 14. East Bench, Structure C-1.

During the Late Classic period, the occupants of Group C were among the highest elites at Trinidad. This is indicated by both the quality of vaulted masonry architecture and the characteristics of artifacts recovered during excavations in and around the group. Although analysis of artifacts from excavations in Str. C-1 is ongoing, materials encountered there were among the highest quality found at Trinidad in 2003. The ceramic inventory included large numbers of polychromes and exceptionally well-made monochromes. Other artifact classes included numerous figurines and finished tools.

Investigations in Trinidad Str. G-1: Trinidad Group G is located south of Plaza V and approximately 100 m north of the ridge-slope break. Group G is one of several residential groups located atop relatively massive basal platforms at Trinidad. Investigations in Group G focused on Str. G-1, a low rectangular structure on the west side of the Group G platform and an area of approximately 38 m² was cleared.



Figure 15. Structure G-1, Following Excavation.

Investigations in Structure G-1 revealed the structure to be a well-made foundation-brace structure, with a cut-stone foundation and interior stucco benches dating to the Late Classic ([Figure 15](#), shown above). The structure was also occupied during the Terminal Classic when a number of major renovations were made. Subsequent excavations through the Group G platform revealed a long history of occupation dating from the Middle Preclassic to the Early Postclassic.

Investigations in Group G also recovered outstanding evidence for chert tool production during the Late Classic, including enormous quantities of chert debitage, whole chert cobbles, and large numbers of chert cores, aborted tools, and broken and finished tools (Halperin and Hernández 2004). Chert tool production appears to have been a long-term specialization in the group as a transitional Middle-Late Preclassic midden, located atop bedrock under the platform, also included large quantities of chert debitage and microdebitage. Excavations in and around Group G also led to the recovery of more than 133 obsidian artifacts, suggesting that some obsidian tool production or other craft specialization involving obsidian blades occurred in the group.



Figure 16. Structure FF-1, Following Excavation.

Investigations in Trinidad Str. FF-1: Trinidad Group FF is located atop a large natural rise directly overlooking the site's harbor. Investigations in Group FF focused on Str. FF-1, the principal structure in the group, and an area of 28 m² was cleared ([Figure 16](#), shown above).

Excavations revealed that Str. FF-1 originally had a packed-earth floor and perishable walls (Spensley 2004). Although Late Classic and earlier materials were recovered in association with this building, its final construction dated to the Early Postclassic. At least 28 notched sherds, normally interpreted as nets sinkers used for fishing ([Figure 17](#), shown below), were recovered from within the structure, suggesting that the occupants of Group FF were focused on the extraction of lake resources during the Early Postclassic.



Figure 17. "Net Sinkers" from Trinidad de Nosotros.

Excavations in the Port Area in 2003

As noted above, differentiating between natural, artificial, and modified features in the port area was relatively difficult during mapping due to the area's long-term occupation and the effects of erosional processes. Thus, one of the principal goals of 2003 excavations in the port area was to determine which of the port features were man-made. These excavations demonstrated that the harbor at Trinidad is primarily an ancient Maya construction.

Test-pitting confirmed that the inner harbor wall (Platform EE) is an artificial feature that was modified several times during the site's occupation. The first construction of this feature dates to the Late Classic, and possibly earlier. Excavations on the "peninsula" also revealed a substantial degree of human modification. Test-pits on the eastern third of the "peninsula" located a preserved stucco floor, probably associated with a now completely eroded superstructure. In addition, a test excavation on the western two-thirds of the "peninsula" encountered massive fill stones mixed with a thick clayey matrix. This excavation also encountered a cache of six prismatic obsidian blades (Figure 18, shown below) and an associated burial (Trinidad Burial #2). Excavations in low area intervening between the "peninsula" and Platform EE, identified a relict lakebed below 75 cm of colluvium. Finally, excavation of the possible pier determined that it had been constructed in several phases with rough limestone boulders and well-prepared stucco floors.



Figure 18. Trinidad Burial #2: Obsidian Cache.

Discussion

Although the 2003 season at Trinidad was only the first of several anticipated seasons, and the analysis of artifacts is currently ongoing, a number of early observations and preliminary conclusions can be offered from the available data. These are described, by topic, below.

Trinidad's Occupational Chronology

One of the pleasant surprises of the 2003 season was the density and complexity of archaeological deposits at Trinidad. Most test excavations encountered long and complex sequences of construction and modification. The frequency of multiple superimposed sealed contexts and high densities of artifacts will, with continuing analysis, permit the creation of a very detailed chronology for Trinidad.

Although the analysis of ceramics from Trinidad is far from complete, analysis to date suggests that Trinidad had an exceptionally long occupation with several major peaks. The Late Classic occupation of Trinidad is the most visible at the site and most of the major architectural groups have a Late Classic component. Many of the major residential groups at the site date to the Late Classic and are highly comparable to those found at Motul de San José. Construction of the site's port facilities was also, minimally, initiated during this period.

The extent of the site's Late Classic occupation obscures, however, a long and extensive Preclassic occupation. Most deep pits in 2003 encountered structures, floors, middens, and other features dating to the Preclassic. Further, it is likely that construction of most of the major platforms at the site was initiated during the Preclassic. Although the ceramic sequence for Preclassic materials from Trinidad has not yet been finalized, it is likely that the major Preclassic peak in occupation at Trinidad occurred during the transition from the Middle Preclassic to the Late Preclassic.

Secondary occupations at Trinidad date to the Terminal Classic and Early Postclassic periods. Terminal Classic materials were found frequently throughout the site and it is likely that at least some of Trinidad's major buildings were constructed or substantially modified during this period. Early Postclassic materials were likewise found throughout the site in surface contexts, but were particularly concentrated along the shore and in the site's port area where several Postclassic residences were identified. Although "Protoclassic" and Early Classic materials were also recovered at Trinidad, low artifact frequencies suggest that these were comparatively light occupations.

Finally, Trinidad may also have a rare pre-Mamom early Middle Preclassic occupation. Several possible pre-Mamom sherds were recovered in contexts directly atop bedrock in 2003. The identification of such an early occupation at Trinidad would be consistent with the results of recent research at the sites of Nixtun Ch'ich' and Ixlú by the Proyecto Maya-Colonial (P. Rice 1996:247-286) and at the nearby site of Buenavista by the Motul de San José Project (Castellanos and Guffey 2002; Foias 2004). Confirmation of a pre-

Mamom occupation at Trinidad will, however, have to await further excavation and comparative analyses.

The Late Classic Occupation of Trinidad de Nosotros

Although much work remains to be done in order to understand the Late Classic relationship between Trinidad de Nosotros and Motul de San José, recent research permits some preliminary observations. First, Late Classic residential groups at the two sites are highly comparable. Residential groups in central Trinidad are similar in terms of plan, labor investment, and architectural style to those found in central Motul. Further, it is notable that the principal residential groups at both Motul de San José and Trinidad de Nosotros were constructed in the "temple on the east" architectural arrangement identified at Tikal as Plaza Plan 2 (Becker 1971, 2003).

In terms of monumental and public architecture, however, the two sites differ significantly. At Motul de San José and most of its other nearby satellite centers, the principal ceremonial structures are eastern temples. In contrast, the principal structure at Trinidad is a pyramid facing towards the south. Further, the identification of a ballcourt at Trinidad is particularly interesting in that no ballcourts have been found at Motul de San José. Although some variation between the two sites' public architecture can be accounted for by Trinidad's longer occupation, most of the major architecture at Trinidad appears to have had a Late Classic component.

One possibility that will be explored in future research is that Trinidad de Nosotros may have been a special function extension of Motul de San José during the Late Classic. If the ballgame functioned as a "boundary maintenance mechanism between polities," as has been suggested by a number of authors (Gillespie 1991:340; Santley *et al.* 1991), then the presence of a ballcourt at Trinidad may signal a special political or politico-religious function for the site within the Late Classic Motul polity. Further, if, as appears likely, Trinidad functioned as Motul's principal trading post and gateway on Lake Petén Itzá, then its public architecture may have religious or ideological functions differing significantly from that found in central Motul and most of its other nearby satellite centers.

Understanding Trinidad's Port Function

Prior to the 2003 season, Trinidad de Nosotros's role as a port could be inferred only from its strategic location, potentially artificial port facilities, and historical usage. Excavations in Trinidad in 2003, however, determined that much of the port area, including those features actually delineating the harbor, were wholly or partially artificial. The construction of the inner harbor wall and the modification of the "peninsula" breakwater, for example, appear to have been underway by as early as the Late Classic period. Additional excavations in the port area will be necessary to better understand the development of Trinidad's port facilities.

The relatively large quantities of exotic goods and materials recovered in 2003 provide some additional confirmation of Trinidad's function as a port. The raw frequencies of exotics should not be overemphasized, as these data have not yet been standardized and, further, represent almost 2000 years of occupation. Early indications are promising, however, as over 600 obsidian artifacts were recovered at Trinidad during the 2003 season. Obsidian provides one of the most useful indicators of trade activity, but additional exotic goods and materials, including marine shell, non-local chert, and ceramic trade wares, were also recovered in notable quantities.

Future research will test the hypothesis that Trinidad functioned as a specialized trading port during several phases of its occupation. Trading ports were involved in both the transportation and local distribution of trade goods and are frequently identified by high densities of exotic goods and materials (Andrews 1990; McKillop 1996). Based on preliminary indicators, such a port function may be indicated for Trinidad de Nosotros during its Middle-Late Preclassic and Late Classic occupations.



Figure 19. Harbor and Beach at Trinidad.

Future Research at Trinidad de Nosotros

Future investigations at Trinidad, scheduled for the spring of 2005, will build upon the results of the 2003 season. The second phase of research will include additional mapping, test-pitting, and household excavations. Intensive excavations will also focus on Trinidad's port facilities and monumental architecture. Excavations in the harbor area will seek to clarify the chronology of harbor construction and to test additional features that may be artificial. Dating and describing Trinidad's principal structure and ballcourt will provide information critical to our understanding of the site's long-term growth and function within the Late Classic polity centered on Motul de San José.

In order to identify variations in the function of the port both through time and in relation to events at Motul de San José, future research will explore the level of access that Trinidad's residents had to trade goods. The 2005 field season will emphasize the identification and excavation of middens associated with residential groups throughout Trinidad's long occupation.

Finally, future research will also include a number of specialized studies designed to provide a chronology for long-term variation in lake level ([Figure 19](#), shown above). Lake Petén Itzá's water level changes considerably during the course of the year and is believed to have fluctuated significantly during the occupation of Trinidad de Nosotros. Understanding the correlation between these changes and the site's occupation will be critical to studying Trinidad's long-term port function.

Acknowledgements

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List of Figures

[Figure 1](#). Map of Maya Lowlands with Selected Ports, Sites with Port Facilities, and Sites Mentioned in Text.

[Figure 2](#). Map of Selected Sites in Lake Petén Itzá Area.

[Figure 3](#). Photograph of Harbor at Trinidad de Nosotros.

[Figure 4](#). Map of Trinidad de Nosotros.

[Figure 5](#). 3D Surface Map of Trinidad de Nosotros.

[Figure 6](#). Surface Map of Central Trinidad de Nosotros.

[Figure 7](#). 3D Surface Map of Trinidad de Nosotros: View from the Lake.

[Figure 8](#). Surface Map of Port Area at Trinidad de Nosotros.

[Figure 9](#). Map of Harbor at Trinidad de Nosotros, with Possible Port Facilities.

[Figure 10](#). Trinidad Burial #5: Whole Vessel.

[Figure 11](#). Middens Associated with Groups C and B.

[Figure 12](#). Map of Trinidad with Excavations Noted.

[Figure 13](#). Structure C-1, Following Excavation.

[Figure 14](#). East Bench, Structure C-1.

[Figure 15](#). Structure G-1, Following Excavation.

[Figure 16](#). Structure FF-1, Following Excavation.

[Figure 17](#). "Net Sinkers" from Trinidad de Nosotros.

[Figure 18](#). Trinidad Burial #2: Obsidian Cache.

[Figure 19](#). Harbor and Beach at Trinidad.

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