
4. The Excavations

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The project's research approach combined excavations with large-scale regional survey and supplemented these data with analytical techniques such as palynology, bone chemistry, and raw material characterization of trace minerals. The excavations are the subject of this chapter, which provides a brief summary of the excavations for each of the major site areas. Some of these areas are discussed in further detail in other chapters.

MAPS, MAPPING, AND GRIDDING

Before initiation of field work, an aerial photograph of the site and its immediate area was acquired from the Mexican government agency CETENAL (Comisión de Estudios del Territorio Nacional). This photo was projected to a scale of 1:800, and tracings were made of each agricultural terrace and field. The resulting seven maps were then used as a basis for providing numbers for each field on the site and in the immediate surrounding area. The fields on the main site zone closely follow the Formative period terraces and subterraces. These received identification numbers preceded by the prefix T (e.g., T-2, T-27, etc.). Using a small drainage cutting through this site area as a dividing line, fields west of the drainage received even numbers, those to the east odd numbers (Fig. 4.1). N (north) and S (south) prefixes were used for fields in unterraced areas peripheral to the main zone. The Tetla zone behind the hills received its own numbering at a later date.

During the first field season a basic site map was made using an alidade. This map was based on a bench mark we established on a long elevated area running eastward from the Classic period pyramid. It was soon recognized that this elevated area was an earthen platform mound, now designated PC Structure 4. As field work began, it became apparent

that creating a total site map with an alidade would be quite time-consuming and impractical since we did not have a full-time cartographer. A National Geographic Society grant provided funds for the second field season which allowed the Compañía Mexicana Aerofoto, S.A., to make photogrammetric site maps with contour intervals of 1 m and a scale of 1:1,000 (shown in a reduced version in Figs. 1.2, 4.2, and 9.2).

The site size and terraced surface area of Chalcatzingo are such that a total site grid would be cumbersome and difficult to manage. It was therefore decided to consider each terrace as essentially a subsite, with its own datum and grid.

When a decision was made to begin excavations on a particular terrace, a cement datum point was established and tied in to the master bench mark atop PC Structure 4. A grid of 1 × 1 m squares oriented to magnetic north was laid out on the chosen terrace. Since the termination of the project, several datum points, including the master bench mark, have been vandalized and/or removed.

CLEARING

Although many of the terraces on the sites were plowed yearly, inter-terrace slopes, talus slopes, and some fallow terraces were heavily overgrown with vegetation, primarily tall sunflower-like *Compositae* or tall grass. It is probable that some non-agricultural areas had not been cleared for hundreds of years. Before survey or excavation began, the entire site was cleared of overgrowth, exposing a number of small terraces and some unsuspected archaeological features. Clearing was repeated prior to the start of each field season.

SURVEY, LOCAL AND REGIONAL

Following the clearing of the site at the beginning of the initial field season, a program of surface survey began, at first limited to obtaining a basic understanding of the site (boundaries, large-scale artifact distribution patterns, etc.). These first surveys did not collect artifacts, for their purpose was only to gain preliminary information. Artifacts were left on the surface for the more intensive surveys which followed.

Intensive surveys were carried out primarily during the first and second field seasons. In addition to intensive surveys of the entire site, during the second field season a group of fields between the village and the main site zone covering 7 ha were regularly studied and intensively surveyed and collected three times during an eight-month period. The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of plowing and other forms of surface disturbance on surface artifact patterns. The results of this study have been published by Kenneth Hirth (1978c).

A major focus on the second field season was the large-scale surface survey of the entire Amatzinac Valley, from the foothills of the volcano Popocatepetl in the north to the Guerrero border in the south. This survey, which took six months, did not sample selected areas but instead covered every field within the approximately 454 km² area. Over 450 sites ranging from the Formative through the Postclassic were recorded. The analysis of these data is presented in Chapter 21 as well as in several publications (Hirth 1974, 1978b, 1980). Descriptions of the Formative period sites are provided in Appendix H.

EXCAVATION TECHNIQUE

Excavation unit size varied and usually is mentioned in the description of the ex-

cavations of each site area (below). Most commonly, trenches were 1 × 3 m, and excavations to clear particular features were 2 × 2 m (one unit of a 2 × 2 m grid). When possible, all excavations followed the natural stratigraphy. Measurements were always taken in the metric system. All excavated material was screened on a ¼" mesh screen, and finer screens were available when considered necessary. Soil samples were collected from appropriate features for flotation, and pollen samples were collected both from stratigraphic levels and from features such as house floors.

ARTIFACT PROCESSING

The project laboratory was established in a large house in the town of Cuautla, about 24 km west of Chalcatzingo. A permanent lab crew worked on artifact analysis on a year-round basis. However, basic processing of all artifacts was carried out at the site. Sherds were washed, dried, and catalogued before being transported to the lab.

Artifacts requiring special analyses were taken, with INAH permission, to labs in Mexico City and elsewhere. Radiocarbon samples were processed by Rikagaku Kenkyusho, of the Institute of Physical and Chemical Research in Japan. Faunal remains were analyzed in Mexico by Ticul Alvarez (Appendix J) and ceramic thin sections by Ann Cyphers Guillén at UNAM (Chapter 13). Bone chemistry analysis was carried out by Margaret Schoeninger at the University of Michigan (Schoeninger 1979a, b), as was the analysis of iron ore samples by B. J. Evans (Chapter 23). Pollen and obsidian samples were analyzed at the University of Illinois (Chapters 3 and 23).

SUMMARY OF THE FIELD SEASONS

The Chalcatzingo Project's first field season in 1972 was in the nature of a pilot project and was conducted with relatively limited funding. The research design was constructed to gain basic information about the site, such as its extent, its major cultural periods, and the basic distribution of Middle Formative cultural features including surface concentrations of sherds, raw materials, stone features, and visible architecture. This study was carried out by surface survey and excavation.

The original plan had been to select excavation areas according to statistical

sampling and random numbers, but several factors, including site size and limited first-year funds, caused us to alter that approach. By 1972 the long-standing Formative period chronology for central Mexico had been seriously questioned (Tolstoy and Paradis 1970), and the proposed revisions were not in agreement with Chalcatzingo's published chronology (Piña Chan 1955). It was clear that a clarification of chronology was important to the more synchronically related goals of the project, and such clarification became a major priority of the initial field season. Thus, a long and deep stratigraphic trench was excavated across T-1 (the "Plaza Central"). This area was chosen because it was the uppermost central terrace, would be one of the least affected by mixing (through its location), was apparently a central focus of the site (a subjective observation made on the basis of visible features), and had been the primary area contributing to Piña Chan's 1955 chronology.

The initial surveys showed that the site's uppermost terraces generally had a random distribution of Formative, Classic, and Postclassic surface sherds. While Early Formative sherds occurred in highest quantities in the northeast area of T-1 and the northeast area of T-15, white sherds with rims decorated with the double-line-break motif, a general Middle Formative marker, were common in the overall surface scatter. But away from the few upper terraces, white sherds also appeared in nonrandom distributions, consisting, on most terraces surveyed, of a sherd concentration of approximately 8–10 m in diameter, normally located near the terrace's upper edge. The distribution pattern suggested that these sherd clusters might be surface indications of Middle Formative house areas, and as the Plaza Central trench neared completion, one of these areas (T-9A) was tested.

Because of our interest in surface artifact distribution as it related to subsurface remains, a relatively small terrace, T-4, was selected, gridded, and subjected to a 100 percent surface collection prior to beginning excavations. The T-4 excavations encountered a quantity and confusion of stone wall lines, and were continued into the second field season. Ultimately the analysis of T-4 materials showed no clear relationships between surface artifact distribution and the subsurface architecture, possibly because of the small size of the terrace in compari-

son to the almost ubiquitous features.

The only other area excavated during the first season was along the southwest side of the Plaza Central and consisted of Cantera phase structures (PC Str. 1 and PC Str. 2). Both of the excavations continued into the second field season. At the close of the field work, Hirth took core samples across several terraces and ran phosphate tests on the cores. All showed strong evidence of human occupation (Hirth 1972). His data were not utilized in determining areas to be sampled during the other field seasons.

The second and third field seasons were directed primarily toward the excavation of Middle Formative house structures, the locations of which were correctly presumed to be marked by distinct surface concentrations of artifacts. As commented upon elsewhere in this book, this approach obviously provides a sample which may be biased. Areas of this type excavated in 1973 included T-11, T-24, and T-29. The 1974 field season continued with house excavations on T-9B, T-23, T-27, S-39, and N-2.

During both of the latter field seasons, other structures and features were also excavated, including the water control "dam" on the northeast corner of T-15; a table-top altar, walled patio, and stone-faced platform on T-25; a heavy obsidian concentration on T-37; the PC Structure 4 earthen platform structure; stelae and stone-faced platforms on T-15 and T-6; and a number of caves on the Cerro Delgado. Some Classic period structures, including a ball court (T-15 Str. 2) and a round pyramid (T-3 Str. 1), were partially excavated in 1973. In 1974, Huazulco and Telixtac, two minor Middle Formative sites located during the reconnaissance, were tested. A Middle Postclassic house in the Tetla site area was excavated.

Three weeks of field work were carried out in 1976 for the purpose of clarifying the stratigraphy of certain site areas. Two of the deep trenches which had been excavated on PC Structure 4 in 1973 were reopened and one new trench excavated. Excavations were begun in front of T-6 Structure 1 to gain a larger sample from Amate phase stratigraphic levels. An Amate phase structure, T-6 Structure 3, was discovered but not excavated due to the short field period. With these excavations the field work at Chalcatzingo was terminated.

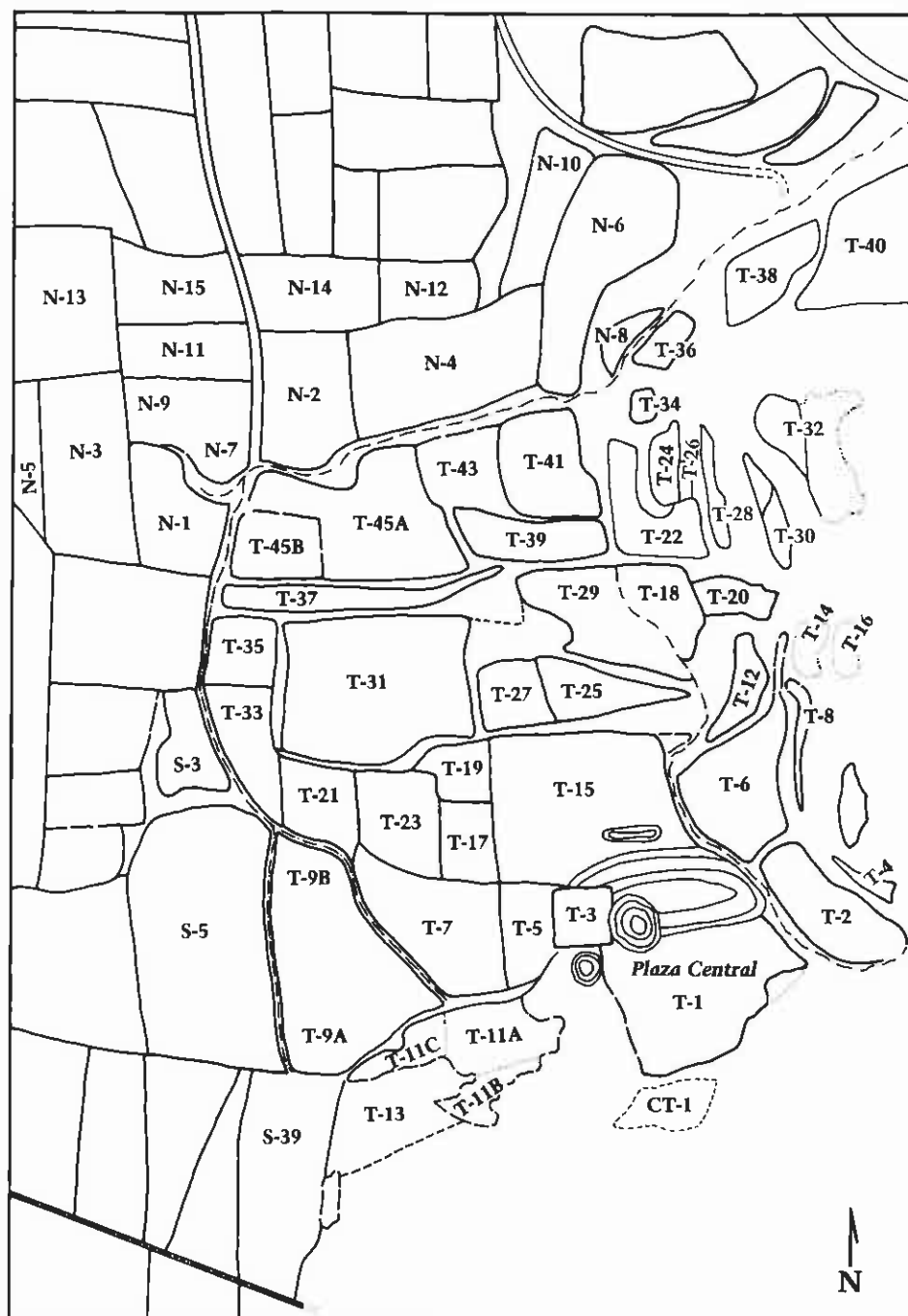


Figure 4.1. The project numbering system for Chalcatzingo's terraces and fields. Not all areas were excavated.

CHALCATZINGO EXCAVATION SUMMARY

This section provides a terrace-by-terrace summary of the excavations. The field seasons during which the excavations were conducted appear in parentheses following the terrace number (e.g., FS 1972–1973). The excavation units across the site are shown in Figure 4.2. Table 4.1 provides data on the magnitude of each major excavation as the volume of material excavated, in order to prevent misleading comparisons of artifact quantities between excavation units. Excavation volume by phase is found in Table 4.2. Details of the stratigraphy used for chronological reconstructions can be found in Chapter 5 and Appendix B.

Terrace 1/Plaza Central (FS 1972–1974, 1976)

The project's initial excavations began on Terrace 1, commonly referred to as the Plaza Central (PC), a large rectangular field slightly over 1 ha in area. This field was also the location of most of the stratigraphic pits excavated in 1953 by Román Piña Chan (1955). The uppermost of the central terraces, it is bounded on the south by the talus slopes of the Cerro Chalcatzingo. It is therefore the terrace closest to the site's large boulder and bedrock bas-reliefs. The northern boundary includes the Classic period mound-plaza complex (T-3) and the long Middle Formative platform mound (PC Str. 4), which extends eastward from behind the largest of the Classic pyramids (T-3 Str. 1). The eastern side of the Plaza Central field is marked by a small streambed which we refer to as El Paso Drainage, while the western side is defined by an unfarmed rocky area.

Following the establishment of the site's bench mark atop PC Structure 4, a 100 m long line was run south from the bench mark (which also served as the terrace datum point) and staked at 10 m intervals. Then 1 × 3 m pits were begun at the 40, 70, and 90 m stakes (e.g., 87–90S/0–1E), and when these units reached bedrock (at ca. 4 m depth), they were expanded north and/or south, and other units also begun at other of the 10 m interval stakes, until a nearly complete 60 m long transect section was exposed (Fig. 4.3).

With the exception of the upper 60 cm of deposits, which included Classic and Postclassic artifacts, the stratigraphy exposed by the transect was Middle For-

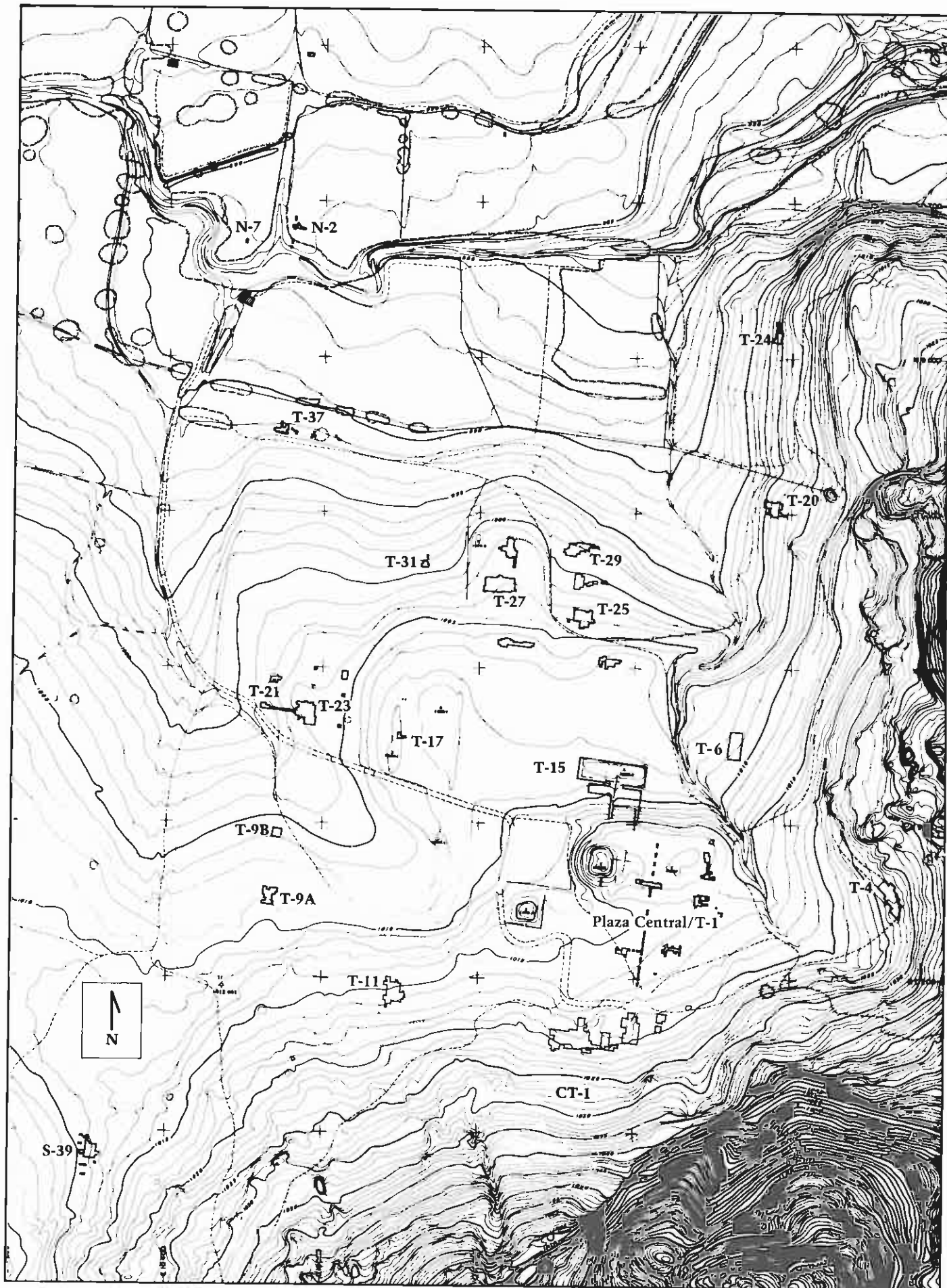


Table 4.1. Excavation Volumes (in m³)

<i>Terrace</i>	<i>Formative</i>	<i>Classic</i>
PC Str. 1	174	
Str. 2	200	
Str. 3	65	
Str. 4	110	
Str. 6	57	
Main trench	111	
Other	66	
Pyramid		38
El Rey Drainage	37	
T-4	ca. 194	ca. 15
T-6 Strs. 1 & 2	70	
Round altar area	15	
Str. 3	22	
T-9A	50	5
T-9B	12	
T-11 Strs. 1 & 2	65	
Trash pits		7
T-15 Str. 1	78	
Str. 2		184
Str. 3	8	
Str. 4		15
Str. 5	50	
T-17	3	8
T-20	5	50
T-21	29	
T-23 Str. 1	96	4
Other	22	8
T-24	44	
T-25 Altar & patio	105	
Behind altar	6	
Str. 2	13	
T-27 Str. 1	66	
Str. 2		31
T-29	62	
T-31	6	
T-37	18	
S-39	37	
N-2	13	
N-5	7	
N-7	7	
CT-1	23	
CT-2		12

Table 4.2. Approximate Excavation Volumes by Phase (in m³)

<i>Phase</i>	<i>Volume</i>
Amate	108
Barranca	200
Cantera	1,638
Classic	377
Total	2,323

mative. The upper levels relate to the Cantera phase and the lower levels to the Barranca phase (Appendix B, SSU 31). Only one small area of Amate phase (Early Formative) deposits was uncovered by the excavations, at the extreme downhill (north) section of the trench (40–43S; Appendix B, SSU 29) in a cut penetrating the large platform mound (PC Str. 4). A high water table prevented excavation of these deposits.

The lowest deposits overlying sterile hardpan (*tepetate*) over most of the transect trench are Late Barranca subphase, although they contain earlier Barranca and Amate phase materials as well. The mixed nature of these deposits appears to explain the discrepancy between their

radiocarbon and ceramic dates (Chapter 5). The presence of Late Barranca sub-phase deposits atop sterile *tepetate* over most of the transect but with an Amate phase deposit at the north end of the transect indicates a great deal of disturbance and earth moving which removed in situ Early and Middle Barranca sub-phase deposits.

Data from other terraces indicate that the site's terraces were constructed during the Early Barranca subphase, and that the Late Barranca subphase earth movement is unrelated to initial terrace-building. The data suggest that the Amate phase occupation occurred on the unteraced hillslopes. The Early Barranca sub-phase terrace building was a cut-and-fill operation which in some areas removed soil to *tepetate* and moved it downhill to be placed over the existing ground surface. Thus, Early Barranca deposits overlie the exposed bedrock of uphill sections of terraces, while the more northern (downhill) areas of terraces are composed of a mixed Early Barranca–Amate phase fill overlying the original Amate phase deposits (and of course covered by later Barranca and Cantera phase deposits).

While the original Plaza Central terrace was undoubtedly constructed in this manner as well, the Late Barranca sub-phase earth removal seems to have served another purpose, the resurfacing and enlargement of PC Structure 4, the long earthen platform mound which delimits the north side of the terrace.

Three stone features and a small section of stone pavement were exposed by the transect. One, a wall-like stone feature resting on *tepetate*, was uncovered in section 77–84S of the trench. This feature, which extended westward into the sidewall of the excavation, may have been the foundation of a Barranca phase house. In the same general trench area, 40 cm above the foundation stones, another stone wall ran perpendicular across the trench cut. This latter wall appears to have been some type of retaining wall for a low terrace extending southward. While the low terrace began in the Barranca phase, it was maintained into the following Cantera phase and was the location of at least two residential structures (see *Structure 1*, below).

An unusual stone construction was found in transect section 67–70S again running essentially perpendicular to the trench line (therefore parallel to the axis of the terrace). This structure (PC Str. 5)

Figure 4.2. Topographic map of the main site area, showing the location and extent of the excavation units.

was constructed of rounded river cobbles, and is 2.6 m high and over 4 m in width (Fig. 4.4). The south or rear of the construction is vertical, while the north or front face has a slope of ca. 30°. While this structure could represent a fairly elaborate facing of an earlier subterrace, the stratigraphy abutting its rear suggests that it was a free-standing construction and that the levels behind it built up over time. The structure sits atop the first soil level (Late Barranca subphase) above *tepetate* and is clearly a Barranca phase construction. The structure's top section occurs within a level with a mixed Cantera phase–Classic period sherd content, indicating that at least the top of this construction remained exposed for perhaps 1,500 years after its original creation.

No serious attempt was made to expose the entire extent of PC Structure 5, although some cross trenching was carried out. The sloping front face of the structure faces the south slope of the PC Structure 4 platform mound 17 m to the north. Therefore, in the transect profile (Fig. 4.4) the two structures are reminiscent of ball court profiles. However, neither of these structures has been adequately excavated, and any interpretation suggesting that the structures are functionally related in any way is premature.

Structure 1

The original transect trench extended only to 90 m south of the terrace datum. It was decided during the course of excavations to test another 30 m farther along the transect line, on a slightly elevated area immediately adjacent to the talus slopes of the *cerro*. As the plow zone level of these new test squares was being cleared, stone features, fragmen-



Figure 4.3. The 1972 Plaza Central (T-1) transect trench. Photo faces north. The large Middle Formative earthen platform mound (PC Structure 4) with a Classic pyramid (T-3 Structure 1) on its west end crosses the center of the photo.

tary bones, and nearly entire but smashed pots were uncovered. Additional test squares were cleared to below plow zone level, and similar bone and sherd concentrations were discovered. Although highly weathered, fragmentary, and difficult to identify, the bone was human. The ceramics were Middle Formative in date, belonging to the Cantera phase. While previous transect excavations had been in the nature of stratigraphic pits, the concentration of human bones at the base of (and within) the plow zone dic-

tated the necessity of abandoning that procedure in this area.

The human bones obviously signified possible Middle Formative burials. Although the excavation of a Middle Formative area of burials was not originally anticipated as one of the priorities for the first field season, it was decided to pursue the excavation of this section of T-1 because of the potential of gathering a variety of data here which would be relevant to our first season goals. Drawing from the case of the Early Formative

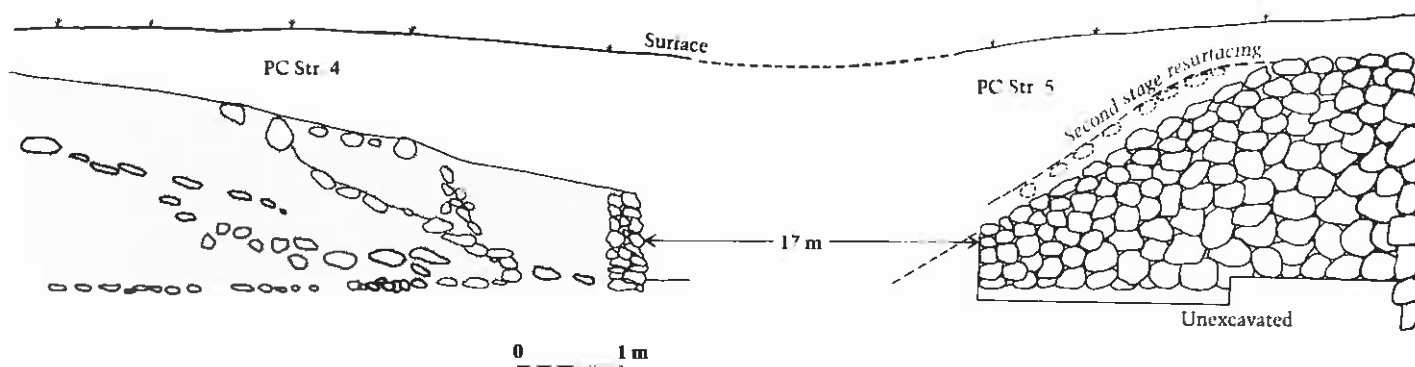


Figure 4.4. Profile of PC Structures 4 and 5.

burials at Tlatilco in the Valley of Mexico, where associated structures may have gone unnoticed, the decision was made to clear the plow zone level of this area, working square by square laterally out from our test squares.

As this clearing progressed, it became evident that the human bone fragments were indeed the remains of highly eroded burials and that they occurred within an area bounded at least on the east and south sides by stone walls. The eastern wall section was 7 m long and 1 m wide, and formed a distinct corner with the 6 m long and 0.7 m wide southern wall (Fig. 4.5). To the north, wall-like remains of stone, obviously disturbed by plowing, apparently delimited another boundary of the area of burials.

The first season of excavations opened about 170 m² of this area. When the lateral extent of the distribution of burials had been determined, excavations began downward. In the two field seasons of work in this area, a total of thirty-eight burials were recovered. These, together with other burials found on the site, are discussed in Chapter 8 and described in Appendix C.

As data became available from other excavations at Chalcatzingo, it became apparent that the walls bordering the PC Structure 1 burials were typical of Cantera phase house foundation walls and that Middle Formative burials on the site were commonly placed beneath floors of the houses. This fact and other data (discussed in Chapter 6) indicate that Structure 1 was a residence. The attributes of many of the burials suggests these individuals enjoyed a high status in the community; hence this was probably an elite residence (see Chapter 8).

The burials in Structure 1 (Fig. 8.5) all occur between the plow zone and 85 cm below surface. Scattered wall segments within that same area suggest that earlier Cantera phase structures (Str. 1b and 1c; Figs. 8.6, 8.7) once existed in this same location but were destroyed prior to the construction of Structure 1d (the stage of the structure associated with the burials). Other evidence of earlier constructions is an area of mud-plaster floor and postmolds (Str. 1a) at 130 cm in depth, nearly 50 cm below the deepest burials. This structure can be dated as Early Cantera subphase. An intrusive Late Cantera trash pit containing several metate fragments and a stone sculpture (Fig. 20.12) was found nearby.

Erosion in this area of the site is such that the Structure 1 house floor has been within the plow zone for at least several decades (if not centuries). The plowing is responsible for destroying sections of the house walls and the house floor (if not already removed by erosion), and for disturbing stone features associated with some burials. The proximity to the surface created extremely poor conditions for the preservation of human bone.

Structure 2

The wall lines of PC Structure 2 were found in the southeast corner of the Plaza Central while attempting to trace the course of El Rey Drainage (Fig. 4.6). Most of the foundation stones occur at the base of the plow zone, and it is probable that other walls have been destroyed by plowing. One protruding stone with a carved rectangular depression (MCR 4) occurs within one of the wall lines. This stone has been published previously (Gay 1972a:80).

As happened so frequently during the project's excavation of house structures, the floor area of the structure (or the uppermost structure) was found to have been within the plow zone and destroyed. The plow zone in this area was removed over an area of approximately 100 m². The foundation walls exposed revealed a long line of rectangular room areas extending for approximately 20 m (Fig. 4.7). Two structures (2-1 and 2-2) are probable.

A few stones and artifact clusters several meters farther north in an area of very shallow soil suggest the possibility that a third structure, now completely destroyed, once existed. Only Structure 2-1 contained data significant enough to be discussed here.

The excavations within Structure 2-1 uncovered two well-defined floor levels below the plow zone (and evidence of a presumably destroyed upper floor). Both of these floors were of hard-packed earth, with no base of sand or pebbles (as occurred in some other structures at the site). Six vessels, all Cantera phase, had been laid out upside down and in an orderly manner on the upper floor. The lower floor level was found only at the western end of the Structure, a small portion of it having been preserved by burning. Burned wall daub fragments found on the floor indicate that the entire structure was burned at this time (whether purposely or accidentally is discussed in conjunction with other burned dwellings in Chapter 6). The presence of at least one floor level above the burned floor shows that the structure was later rebuilt, a phenomenon also found with other burned structures at Chalcatzingo.

Archaeomagnetic samples from the burned floor area were taken by archaeologist Daniel Wolfman and analyzed by Robert DuBois at the University of Oklahoma. The results (Wolfman, personal



Figure 4.5. PC Structure 1 looking north.



Figure 4.6. Excavations of PC Structures 1 (lower left) and 2 (right center). Photo faces southwest from Cerro Delgado.

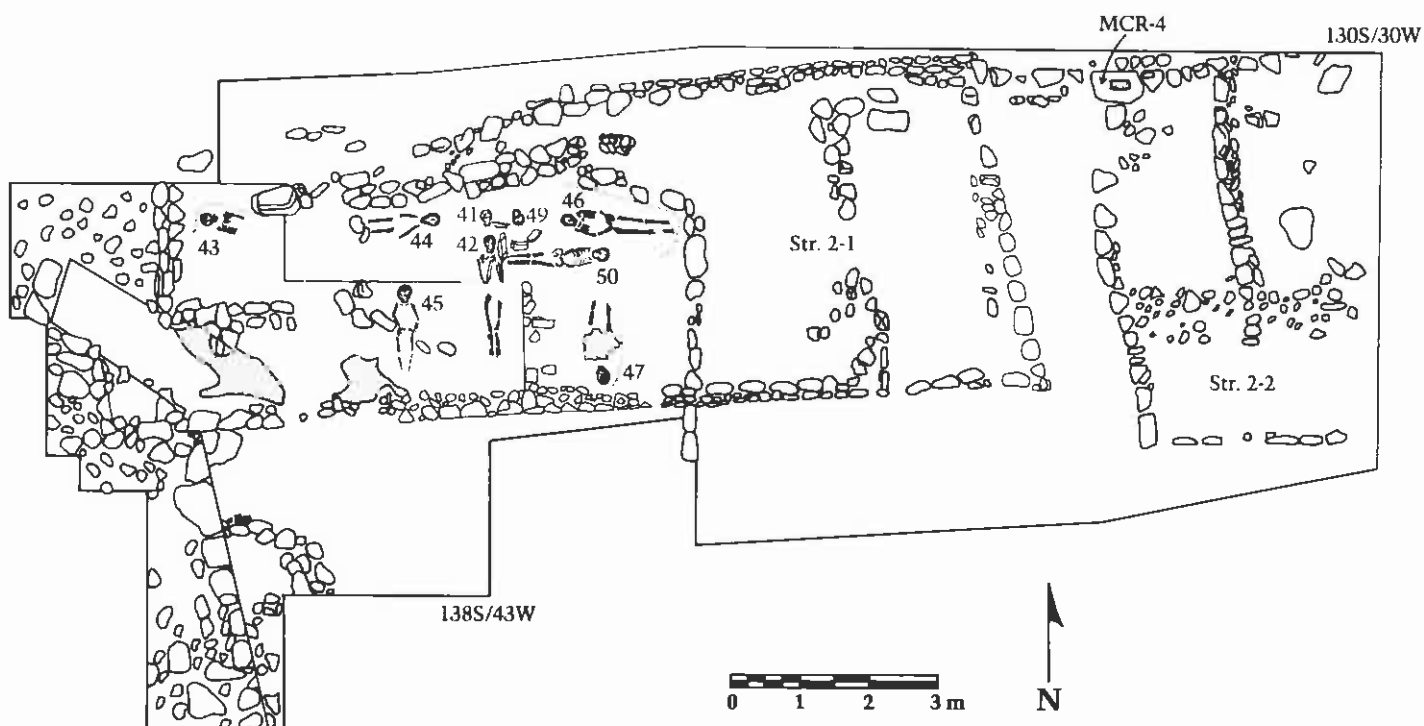


Figure 4.7. Plan map of PC Structure 2, showing Burials 41–50. Burial 48 (fragmentary) not marked.

communication) indicate a magnetic deviation of $5.6^\circ \pm 4^\circ$ from true north at this time period. Radiocarbon dates (N-1707, N-1708, Table 5.1) provide uncorrected readings of 620 and 630 ± 80 BC for Structures 2-1 and 2-2.

Ten burials were found beneath the lower floor level of Structure 2-1. All of them occurred on the same level (ca. 160 cm below surface) and within a limited area of the structure. This is a markedly different pattern from PC Structure 1, where burials occurred throughout the subfloor area and at varying depths. While the burial grouping may be important, the consistency in burial depth appears to be related to the shallowness of the *tepetate* in that area.

A general lack of grinding stones and household artifacts in association with PC Structure 2 (except as burial furniture), the narrow and elongated form of these structures in comparison to excavated house structures (Chapter 6), and the presence of the vessels laid out on one of the excavated floors combine to suggest that these structures may not have had a primary residential function, or at least not in the same manner as other excavated houses. Because the common burial pattern is beneath house floors, however, these structures may well have been houses, but the artifacts recovered from this structure group indicate that these buildings had a special function when compared to other structures. Quantities of hematite and magnetite ore fragments were recovered in the interior fill and in front of the buildings. A few of these have coarsely ground surfaces indicating they had been used to make red pigment. Hollow clay spheres (see Fig. 16.16) also occur in abundance here, and a carved handstone (Fig. 20.9) was found at the rear of Structure 2-1.

Structure 3

Following the discovery of the Structure 2 group to the west of PC Structure 1, tests were made 10 m east of Structure 1 to ascertain whether architectural features existed in that area as well. Stone alignments were found just below the plow zone and also at a slightly greater depth. All of these alignments were incomplete and may have belonged to a structure which was purposely dismantled. Their original form and nature could not be determined. The lack of manos and metates in this area suggests the possibility that the function of these now incomplete structures was other than residential.

Structure 4

The largest architectural construction at Chalcatzingo is PC Structure 4, a long, low earthen platform mound. The original length of this structure, which forms the northern edge of the Plaza Central terrace, is difficult to ascertain, since its western end is covered by the T-3 Structure 1 Classic period pyramid. The length, estimated by the slight changes in the mound's topographic contours in the area of the pyramid to delimit the western end, is between 70 and 80 m. The width is harder to define because it is difficult to determine where the mound's sloping south side originally ended and the terrace edge began. Using the 1,011 m contour on the mound's north side as its northern limit, and 46 m south of datum as the southern limit (see profile, Fig. 6.2), the width is approximately 71 m. While width essentially equals length, it must be remembered that the east-west length is at essentially



Figure 4.8. PC trench, section 40–50S, showing rock facing of PC Structure 4 mound. Arrow points south.

the same elevation, while the north-south profile is primarily characterized by sloping sides, with a relatively flat upper surface ca. 30 m wide.

During the second field season two 1×3 m strata pits, aligned along the Plaza Central transect line, were excavated into the top of the platform mound at 0–3N (Fig. 8.18) and 9–12S. Both excavations reached sterile *tepetate* at ca. 5 m. These pits were briefly reopened in 1976 to check certain stratigraphic details, and at that time two additional pits, 3–6S and 15–18S, were excavated to provide further data. These four units, together with the 40–50S transect trench which was partially cut into the mound's south side during the first field season (Fig. 4.8), provide a general picture of the platform mound's construction and chronology.

The mound as visible today is primarily an earthen construction dating to the Cantera phase. A thin layer of Clas-

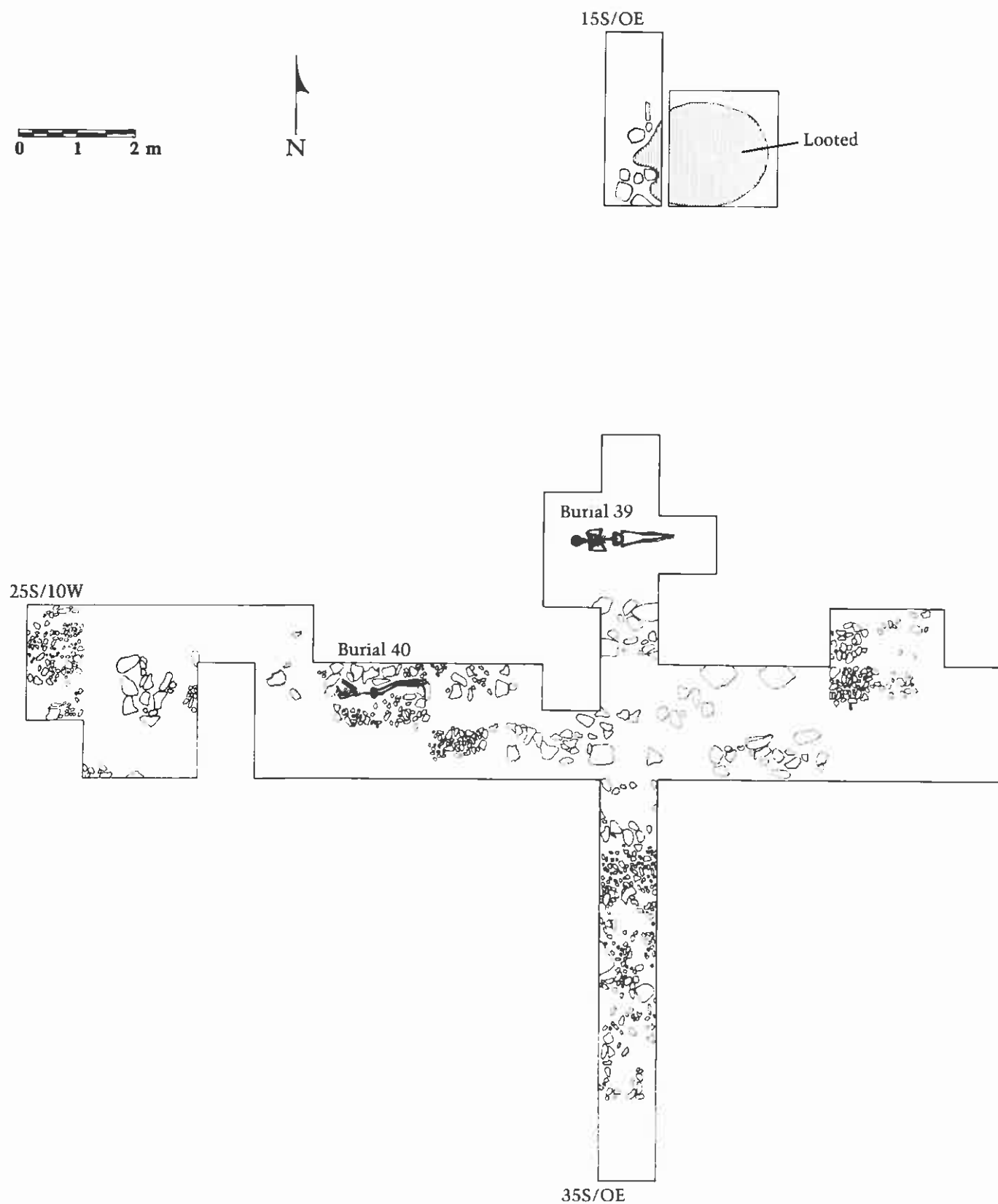


Figure 4.9. Plan map of PC Structure 4 excavations.



Figure 4.10. Tomb on east end of PC Structure 4.

sic period material covers the upper west surface at the rear of the Classic pyramid (T-3 Structure 1). Stratigraphic profiles indicate that this Cantera phase construction is itself built over several earlier construction stages, the earliest of which may be Amate phase (Figs. 6.2, 8.18 level VI; Chapter 6). Because we are dealing with limited data from only a few strata pits, the forms and dimensions of the various earlier mounds remain to be determined. The outer surface of the earliest mound appears to have been plastered with a surfacing of dark brown clay. Although the very few sherds recovered from within the inner mound are Amate phase, and the mound was apparently built over an undisturbed Amate phase ground surface, the exact dating of this inner structure is still unclear. It could possibly be an Early Barranca structure contemporaneous with the ter-

race building. The mound stages are discussed further in Chapter 6.

Two burials were uncovered on the top of PC Structure 4. Burial 39 was found when a strata pit was started along the north-south transect line at 22–25S. This pit was not completed due to the discovery of the burial. The interment (Fig. 8.3) was covered by an irregularly shaped mound of rocks. Of particular importance is the fact that the individual had been adorned with jade jewelry at the time of interment. Burial 40, found nearby, was similarly adorned with jade jewelry and also an iron ore mirror (Fig. 8.4). Burial 40 may have originally been interred within a stone-lined grave, and most of the stones were probably removed by plowing. Our 1976 excavations revealed one (and possibly two) looted stone-lined graves nearby (Fig. 4.9).

We consider both Burials 39 and 40 to

represent high-ranking individuals. That PC Structure 4 was an important location for the burial of such individuals was further confirmed by excavations carried out near the east end of the mound. In addition to the uncovering of two large faced stones (MCR-6, -7), a stone wall was encountered in units 12-15S/35E. The wall, ca. 1.1 m tall, faces east and contains a small stone-filled, door-like opening (Fig. 4.10). The “door” within this unusual wall feature was intriguing, and the excavation units were enlarged westward to expose the area behind the wall.

The expansion uncovered a low mound of stone, about 2 m long and 1.5 m wide. The combination of a wall, sealed “door,” and mound strongly implied a special tomb structure unlike any previously known for this time period or region. Unfortunately, as the excavation of this feature progressed, an area of disturbed earth was found adjacent to the north side of the low stone mound. Our worst fears were soon realized, for the disturbed soil turned out to be the result of relatively recent looting which had rifled the tomb and its contents. The only materials recovered by our excavations were fragments of human bone and a piece of jadeite, apparently from a mosaic (Fig. 17.14c). By context the tomb can be dated as Cantera phase. Villagers informed us that the looting had taken place about 1970 and had been carried out by a dealer from Izúcar de Matamoros. Our informants stated that they had seen the looters (apparently assisted by several hired villagers) remove a “stone statue” from their excavation.

The Classic pyramid, T-3 Structure 1, was built onto the west end of PC Structure 4. In addition, some Classic period rebuilding was also carried out on the mound’s northwest side. This area of the mound, which slopes down to T-15, formed the south range of the Classic period T-15 ball court. Some wall structures were built onto the northern slope of PC Structure 4 (Chapter 24), and the added construction appears as a minor bulge in the mound’s topography (Fig. 4.2).

Structure 5

PC Structure 5 is described in the discussion of the transect trench above; for a profile, see Figure 4.4.

Structure 6

Excavations near the southeast end of PC Structure 4 uncovered several stone wall lines and the partially destroyed subfloor pavement of a house-like structure (PC

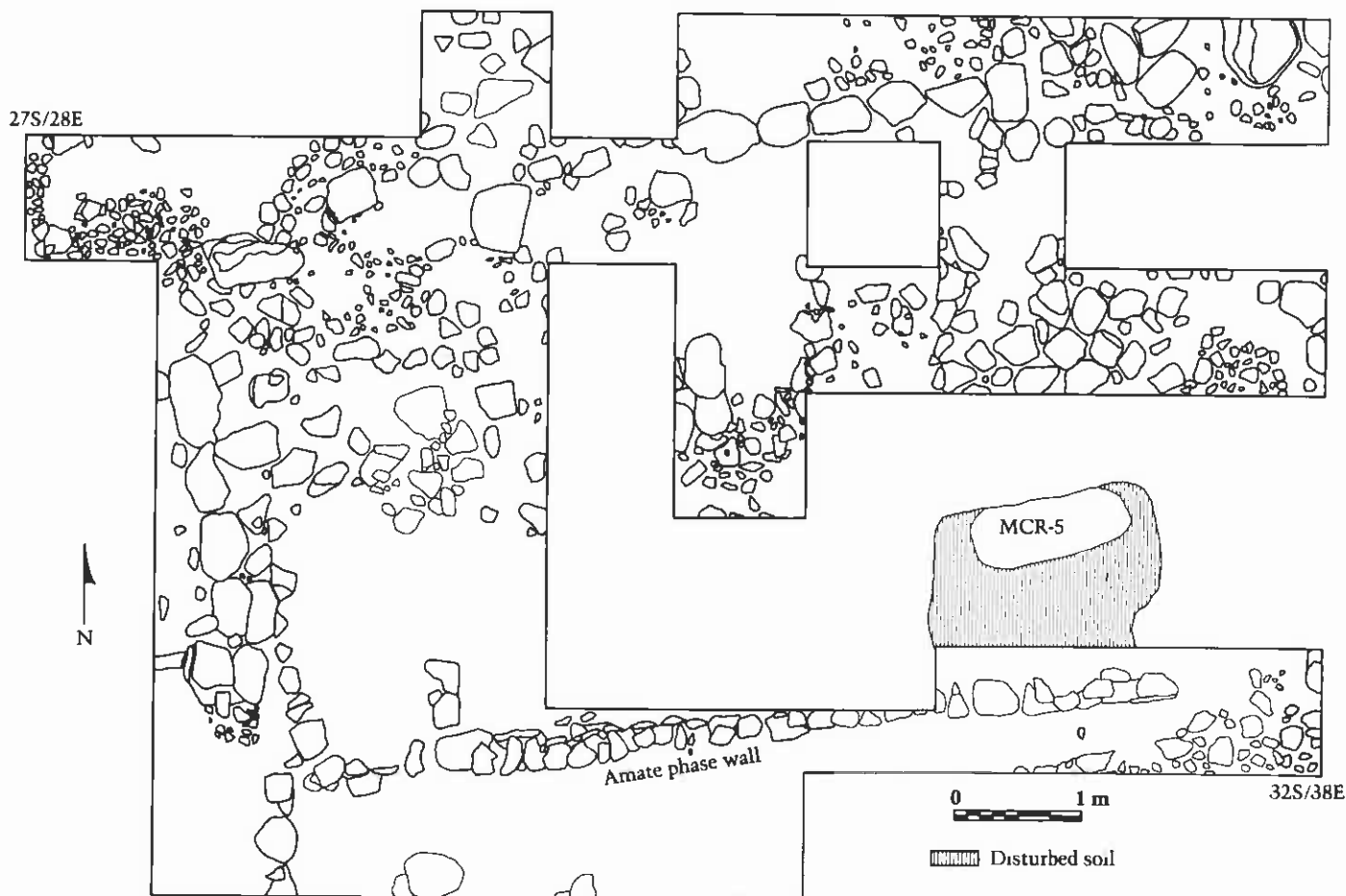


Figure 4.11. Plan map of PC Structure 6b.

Str. 6b; Fig. 4.11). Portions of the last two field seasons were devoted to excavating in this area. The relationship of this house-like structure to Structure 4 is unclear at this time. Its orientation (ca. N2½W) is within a few degrees of the probable alignment of Structure 4 (see Chapter 6), but more enigmatic is the fact that it sits partially on the side of the mound. Dating of the structure is therefore also problematical because Amate and Barranca phase sherds from the Structure 4 fill are abundant on the floor of the structure. Some pottery, as well as the structure's position, strongly suggests a Cantera phase date.

Structure 6b partially overlies a long Amate phase wall (Str. 6a; Fig. 4.12), nearly 50 cm high and 13.5 m long. The function of the wall is unclear, although it may be related to the inner Structure 4 mound. Its orientation, N5½W, is relatively close to that of Structure 4 and 6b. Two Amate phase bird burials, one an oriole (*Icteridae*) and the other a crow (*Corvidae*), were associated with

the wall. The oriole burial had an Amate phase bottle in association, the only complete Amate phase vessel recovered during the project (Fig. 4.13).

El Rey Drainage (FS 1972)

The clearing of the site at the beginning of the first field season exposed archaeological and topographical features previously hidden by the extensive cover of overgrowth. One such feature was a deep channel or gully cutting down the talus slopes of the Cerro Chalcatzingo. Although rock-filled and narrow on the upper portion of the *cerro*, the channel is deeply incised after passing the foot of Monument 1, the "El Rey" bas-relief. This channel, which is one of the major collectors and outlets of rainwater runoff from the *cerro*'s northern face, we have termed *El Rey Drainage* (see site maps).

This drainage is important because as the major collector of rainwater runoff it also sits above the site's artificial terraces. If unchecked, a heavy runoff of water would severely damage the ter-

aces. It is therefore highly significant that near the foot of the talus slopes the channel is diverted almost 90° eastward by a large dam-like construction of boulders and earth. This construction, like a similar diversion dam on the northeast corner of T-15 (Str. 1), served to control runoff and direct it away from the terraces.

Eight trenches were placed across the drainage and possible "outlet" points in order to view the channel, trace its course, and date the dam-like construction. Trench 1 exposed a U-shaped channel with a surface of hard-packed gray clay (Fig. 4.14). Alternating layers of sand and clay above this well-defined floor indicate periods of fast and slow runoff, apparently related to storms of varying intensity. However, the layering might also suggest occasional blocking of the channel downstream. Because the hard-packed channel of grey clay suggests evidence of long-term maintenance, blocking of the drainage may have occurred after the channel fell into disuse.



Figure 4.12. PC Structure 6c, Amate phase wall, looking east.



Figure 4.13. PC Structure 6, Amate phase Exotic Bottle.

The diversion construction, over 30 m long, parallels the west side of the natural drainage for nearly 10 m before turning it eastward. The construction is about 3 m in width and is made from boulders averaging ca. 2 m in diameter, with a few as large as automobiles. In some places it appears that, in addition to earth, smaller stones were placed as fill between the boulders. Dating of the construction remains tenuous, but by analogy to the T-15 construction it can be associated with the period of terrace building in the Early Barranca subphase. Sherd material was rare within the construction, and the few sherds present were highly eroded. Many were Amate phase sherds, and a few could be identified simply as generalized Middle Formative, again suggesting (by the quantity of Amate phase materials) a chronological placement contemporaneous with the terrace building.

Attempts to trace the course of the major canal past the dam structure were unsuccessful, probably because of heavy erosion on the talus slopes. One smaller canal which could be followed ran onto the Plaza Central at its southwest corner. This canal may be natural, formed following the abandonment of the large system. It flows over a Cantera phase house structure (PC Str. 2), further suggesting that it is unrelated to the larger Formative period diversion system.

Terrace 3 (FS 1973)

While it was not the original intention of the project to investigate Classic period structures to any extent, this time period was of interest to project codirectors Raul Arana and Jorge Angulo, and when additional funds for the reconstruction of some of the site's architecture became available, minor excavations were carried out.

Structure 1

Piña Chan (1955: 7–8, Map 2) conducted excavations on one of two Classic period structures which face a small plaza area at the northwest corner of T-1. Those data are briefly mentioned in Chapter 24. The largest of the two mounds is built onto the west end of PC Structure 4 (Piña Chan's Mound B, our T-3 Str. 1). This mound was not excavated by Piña Chan, and was selected for partial excavation and reconstruction by our project. Trenches were excavated into the front and rear of the mound until construction features were found, and these features were then cleared and followed. These trenches uncovered the front stairway, balustrade, and sloping stone sides of the pyramid, with some areas of plaster remaining, and the rear walls and a semicircular stone pavement extending eastward over the western upper surface of PC Structure 4 (Figs. 24.2, 24.3). This work revealed that the pyramid was a round structure ca. 35 m in diameter and slightly over 9 m in height. The areas of the pyramid uncovered by our excavations were consolidated and where necessary were reconstructed (Fig. 24.1).

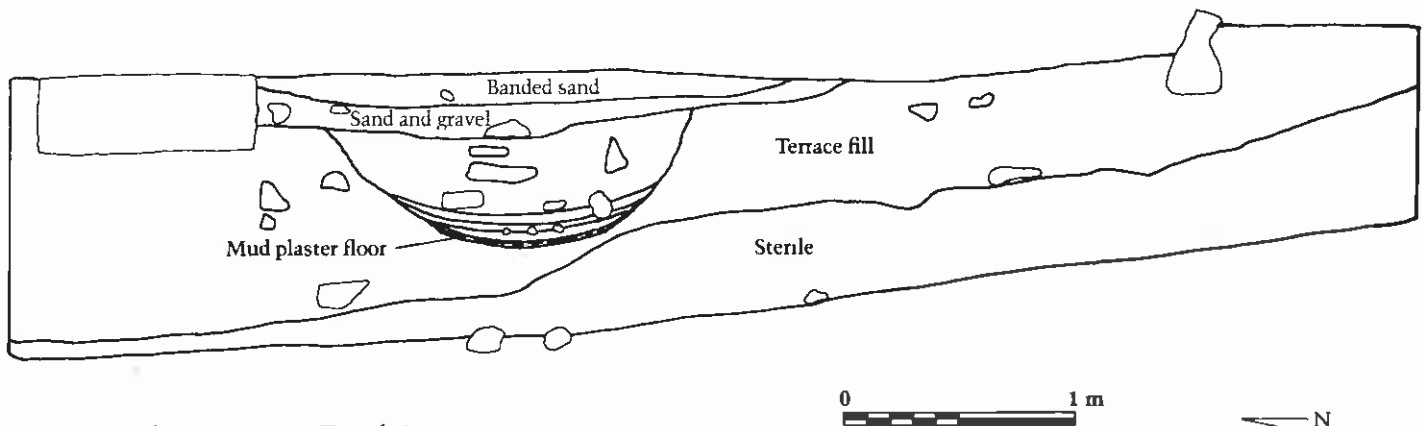


Figure 4.14. El Rey Drainage, Trench 1, profile.

Terrace 4 (FS 1972, 1973)

T-4 is a long, thin hillside terrace on the lower slopes of the Cerro Delgado, about 60 m east of the Plaza Central terrace. Due to the quantity of artifacts recorded on T-4 by the preliminary site survey, it was chosen as one of the few terraces to be excavated the first field season.

Although almost every other excavation on the main site area had the excavation grid oriented magnetic north-south, the T-4 grid was an exception and was oriented along the terrace's narrow axis (N53E). Prior to excavation the entire terrace was staked and a complete surface collection made from each square. This was done to test surface distributions against subsurface remains. As mentioned earlier, the results of this test showed no clear relationship between surface distributions of artifacts and subsurface architecture. Excavations over two field seasons revealed a complex series of Cantera phase wall features, many of which were intruded and/or destroyed by Classic period constructions (Fig. 4.15).

Structures 1 and 2

Two partial Cantera phase structures, T-4 Structures 1 and 2, were discerned. While structural remains were abundant on T-4, subfloor burials were not. This scarcity of burials may be a function of sampling or preservation, but it is also possible that these were not residential structures and that, therefore, burials should not be expected.

Structure 3

The Cantera phase wall features, one of which has the remains of burned mud plaster still adhering, present a confusing jumble. Adding to this confusion is the Classic period reuse of terrace, as exemplified by T-4 Structure 3. This structure, on the south end of the terrace, is a low stone-faced Classic period platform. Its upper surface lies within the plow zone, and its base is ca. 70 cm below the surface. The platform contains several floor levels, but these are Cantera phase floors. One floor surface has two partial Cantera phase vessels resting upon it. As explained in Chapter 24, the Classic platform was apparently constructed by cutting away the surrounding soil (Cantera phase deposits) to create the low platform. This exposed raised mound was then faced with flat stones.

Structure 4

Excavations further to the north uncovered a large stone circle which appeared in four of the 2×2 m squares. This feature (T-4 Str. 4) extends downward, slopes inward, and has its stone facing also toward the feature's interior. The excavation of this construction, which we have identified as a Classic period lime kiln, is discussed in Chapter 24 (Figs. 24.10, 24.11).

Terrace 6 (FS 1973, 1974, 1976)

T-6 (Fig. 4.16) had not been farmed for several years prior to our project, and for this reason surface artifacts were not as abundant as on regularly plowed terraces. Because no ceramic cluster indicative of a subsurface house was present, no excavations had been planned on T-6.

Monuments 25 and 26

In 1973, attention was drawn to a large flat stone, partially exposed within the plow zone on the north side of the terrace. The plow zone was cleared away, revealing the stone to be circular, with carvings around its circumference. The immediate area was gridded, and the round "altar," now labeled Monument 25 (Fig. 9.23) was cleared. Adjacent to and southwest of Monument 25 was a large

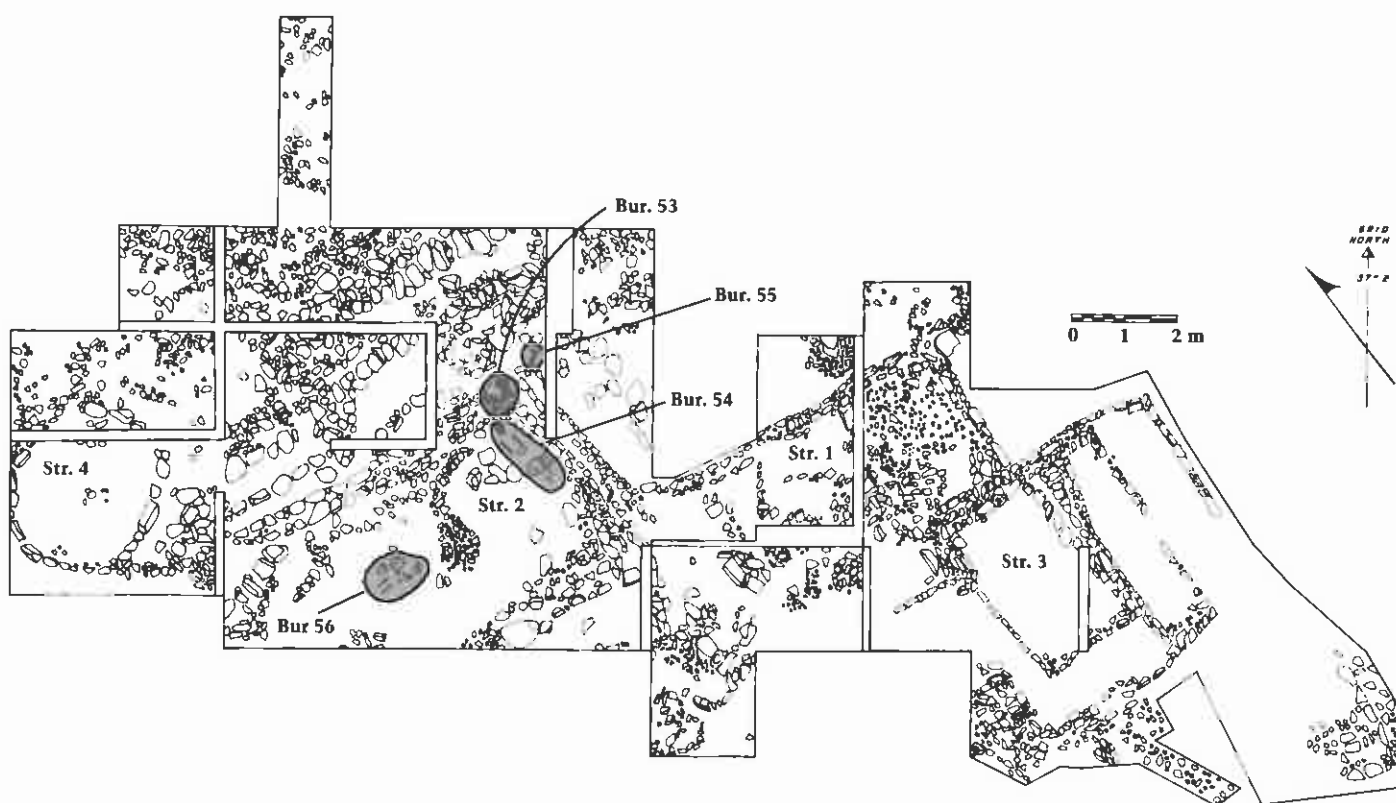


Figure 4.15. Plan map of T-4 excavations.

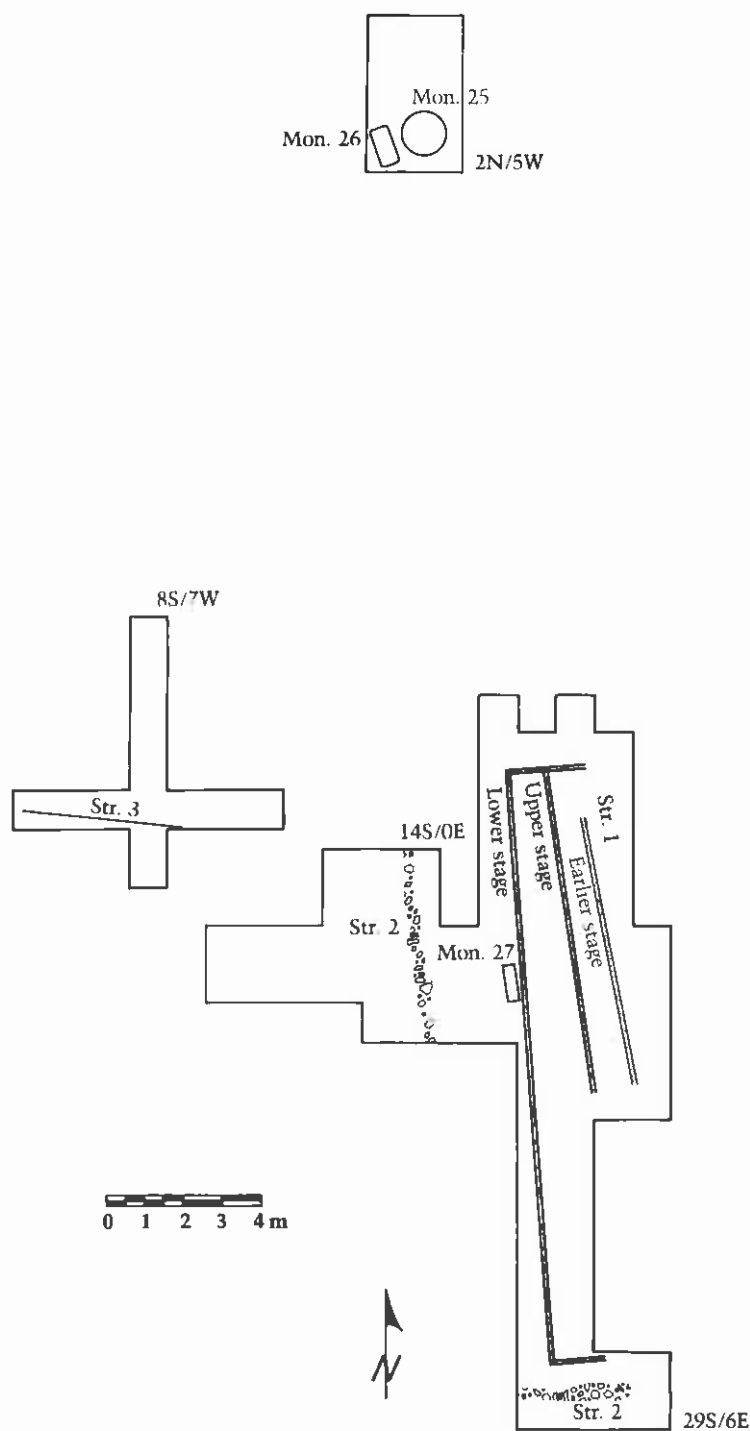


Figure 4.16. Plan map of T-6 excavations.

broken stela base, Monument 26 (Fig. 9.24). Excavations revealed several smaller rocks near the base of Monument 25, but no definite features such as wall lines were apparent. It is highly significant that this round altar was directly associated with a stela (now broken), for such stela-altar complexes are essentially a southern Mesoamerican phenomenon.

The round altar rested about 50 cm below the present terrace surface. The base of the stela was at nearly 100 cm below the present surface. There seems little doubt that their positions when found were essentially in situ. Both monuments are described and discussed in greater detail in Chapter 9.

Priorities at the time these monuments were found did not permit further explorations of this section of T-6 to search for possible associated structures or other features. Because the monuments could not be left in situ without the risk of future destruction by plowing, etc., it was decided (in consultation with the director of the INAH Regional Center in Morelos) to move the two monuments ca. 10 m north, to the edge of the terrace. There a special platform and roofed structure were built for them.

Monument 27 and Structure 1

In spite of the discovery of the two monuments in 1973, T-6 remained a low-priority terrace (residences, and not monuments, were the top priority). However, soon after the beginning of the 1974 field season, the farmer whose *ejido* land includes T-6 pointed out a stone which protruded slightly from the terrace surface. This stone was well hidden as one of literally thousands to be seen on the surface (ca. 12 per m²), but upon close examination it showed a small weathered area of relief carving. Using the 1973 datum established for the excavations of Monument 25 and 26, the area surrounding this new carving, Monument 27, was gridded and a crew put to the task of excavating the monument.

The excavations revealed the protruding stone to be the upper tip of a large stela. The stela had been broken in half laterally and the upper portion, leaning slightly to the rear, was also broken vertically and missing the left hand section (Figs. 4.17, 9.25, 10.22). As the clearing of the stela progressed, a stone wall was found directly behind it. The excavations were expanded to follow the ca. 85 cm tall wall, and these disclosed that the wall continued ca. 5 m to the north and 10 m to the south. At each end the wall

turned a corner eastward. This structure, T-6 Structure 1, is a Cantera phase platform mound constructed with a facing of river cobbles and field stones. The naturally flat or smoothed sides of the rocks have been placed to face outward.

Continued excavations discovered a second, upper, stage, 1.2 m behind the front wall, making this a stepped platform. This second stage rises 50 cm, but its top extends into the plow zone, so its original height may have been greater. The second stage wall also extends down another 70 cm (nearly to the base level of the front wall). This means that the lower or front stage of the platform structure is a superposition over an earlier platform whose 1.2 m tall, slightly sloping front wall now constitutes part of the second, upper stage. Other stone alignments, paralleling the first walls, occur behind them and may represent even earlier constructions.

The stratigraphy underlying Structure 1 is a series of sloping Barranca and Amate phase levels. The original Barranca phase terracing apparently had a northward-sloping surface. During the Cantera phase the area was remodified by excavation and leveling, and the platform was built atop the modified surface. This modified surface, when projected northward, corresponds to the surface level of Monument 25, the round altar. Based upon this evidence, the altar-stela complex can be hypothesized to have been contemporaneous to the final Structure 1 configuration and standing stela.

Structure 2

The excavations of Structure 1 uncovered a third wall 2.5 m in front of the platform (Fig. 4.17). This wall, T-6 Structure 2, apparently not part of the Cantera phase rebuildings of the structure, is slightly curved and arcs around the front and sides of Structure 1, effectively covering the platform and stela. Fill between this latter wall and Structure 1 includes a few Classic period sherds. Two radiocarbon assays from charcoal recovered in the fill provide divergent post-Cantera phase dates (N-1948:290 \pm 90 BC; N-1949:900 \pm 65 AD). The outer wall is constructed of cobbles and boulders larger than those used in facing the Cantera phase platform. The wall's purpose is uncertain. It may represent a raised Classic period platform. Because its upper surface is within the plow zone, any superstructures have long since been destroyed. A Classic period trash pit intruding into T-6 Structure 1 provides fur-

ther evidence that this area was utilized at that time.

Monument 28

A large boulder protruding from the southwest corner of T-6 into the El Paso Drainage was discovered to have an eroded bas-relief carving on its underside. The area around the boulder was gridded and excavated to uncover the monument (Mon. 28, see Figs. 10.23, 10.24). There were no associated features, and from its position it is clear that the monument was purposely buried. Whether it was moved prior to burial cannot be determined, but this seems probable.

Structure 3

The 1974 excavations of T-6 Structure 1 had yielded the best Amate phase stratigraphy on the site. However, a larger sample was desired to clarify the stratigraphic sequence, and several pits were opened on T-6 (Fig. 4.18) during a brief excavation program in 1976. The first pit encountered a buried stone-faced Amate phase platform structure (T-6 Str. 3), one of the earliest examples of Early Formative period architecture known in central Mexico. Due to lack of sufficient time for an adequate excavation of this important feature, the excavations were halted and backfilled. Additional excavations in the same general area yielded the stratigraphic data originally sought.

Terrace 9A (FS 1972)

Our initial surveys had indicated that two possible house areas existed on Terrace 9, one on the field's upper slope (T-9A) and the other in the lower section (T-9B).

Structure 1

The first remnant house structure to be excavated by the project (Str. 1) was characterized on the surface by a slight raised area with a heavy clustering of Middle Formative white potsherds. The T-9A datum was established in the field itself but tied to a second bench mark at the south end of the terrace. Both the datum and bench mark were then tied to the main site datum atop PC Structure 4. A north-south line was laid out bisecting the low rise, and a series of 2 \times 2 m squares were cleared to the base of the plow zone. Stone alignments were uncovered by this initial clearing. These alignments, the subsurface foundation walls for the original house structure (Str. 1), had served to retard erosion in this area of the field and were thus responsible for the low mound marking

this structure. This also unfortunately means that the house floor and many of the foundation walls had been destroyed by erosion and plowing.

Within the area delimited by the foundation wall lines (Fig. 4.19), an area we presume to be the structure's interior subfloor, were five human burials as well as a dog burial. Also in this area there was a minor wall line which included a large flat stone. This slab, approximately 85 \times 50 cm, was marked with an engraved rectangular design (Figs. 11.5, 11.6) and has been designated MCR-9. It is the only carving of this type found at the site. Two Cantera phase vessels, a Carrales Grey composite silhouette bowl and an Amatzinac White hemispherical bowl, were recovered immediately to the south of this slab. At the end of the field season, when MCR-9 was removed prior to backfilling, two additional Cantera phase vessels were found, an Amatzinac White spouted tray and small shallow bowl. Recent reanalysis of the data suggests that the vessels had probably been associated with a burial which had been disturbed by Classic period activities in this area or which was missed by the excavations. It is also possible that the MCR-9 slab was part of a cover stone for a stone-associated grave (see Chapter 8 for Chalcatzingo grave types). To the south and outside of the house a definite sixth human burial and the burial of two small collared peccaries were found.

The dating of the T-9A walls and burials is highly problematical. Confusing the dating is the presence of some Classic period intrusive pits in the area. Two of the four radiocarbon dates from T-9A fall within the Classic period, and none of the dates (N-1414–N-1417, Table 5.1) fall within the Cantera phase.

The excavated material is derived from subfloor fill, and although most is Early Cantera subphase, there is some Early Barranca material as well. This latter material may predate the construction and be contemporaneous with the T-9B structure farther down the hill. Most of the stone foundation walls are similar in construction to Cantera phase house foundations (Chapter 6). A few boulder-like stones, however, are similar to the Barranca phase T-9B house walls and may be the remnants of an earlier Barranca phase dwelling here. All but one subfloor burial lack ceramic offerings, and the *cantarito* associated with Burial 62 could be either Barranca or Cantera phase. It is most probable that T-9A

Structure 1 is an Early Cantera subphase structure.

Terrace 9B (FS 1974)

Structure 1

T-9B lies downhill, 45 m north of the T-9A excavations. While it is not marked by a high concentration of surface artifacts, our attention was drawn to this area by a group of large rocks protruding above the surface outlining a rectangular area of about 5.5×5 m. Although it is common practice at Chalcatzingo for farmers to excavate and remove large boulders from their fields, this group somehow remained relatively untouched.

The area was gridded separately from the T-9A grid, and the plow zone was carefully removed, exposing further sections of the stone wall lines designated T-9B Structure 1 (Fig. 4.20). Three separate room areas can be identified, but no floor was easily discernible. Several whole and fragmentary vessels were found at the 45–50 cm level, suggesting a possible floor zone.

The ceramics from Structure 1 securely date it to the Barranca phase. Features within the structure include a small trash pit and a stone circle with areas of burned earth in its interior but lacking ash or charcoal. Three “burials” were uncovered. Preservation in the T-9B area is quite poor, and in reality two of the burials (nos. 63 and 64) were simply fragmentary pieces of human bone. Burial 65 was intruded into the east wall of the structure. A Cantera phase *olla* found in association with this burial shows it to postdate the house structure.

Terrace 11 (FS 1973)

Structures 1 and 2

Survey recorded a large concentration of Middle Formative ceramics near the midpoint of T-11, and alignments of stone protruding from the surface could also be noted. A datum was established near the center of the ceramic concentration and a secondary datum set up on the terrace's south edge. Excavations began as a series of 1×4 m trenches, searching for visible features at the base of the plow zone. Wall features appeared at ca. 40 cm below the surface and were typical of Cantera phase foundation walls (see Chapter 6). These walls outlined a large rectangular structure approximately 6.5×8 m (T-11 Str. 1). Wall lines a few meters to the south indicate the presence of a second structure (Str. 2,



Figure 4.17. T-6 Structure 1 with stela in situ (center) and Structure 2 wall line (foreground).



Figure 4.18. T-6 Structure 3 wall exposed by excavation.



Figure 4.19. Plan map of T-9A excavations.

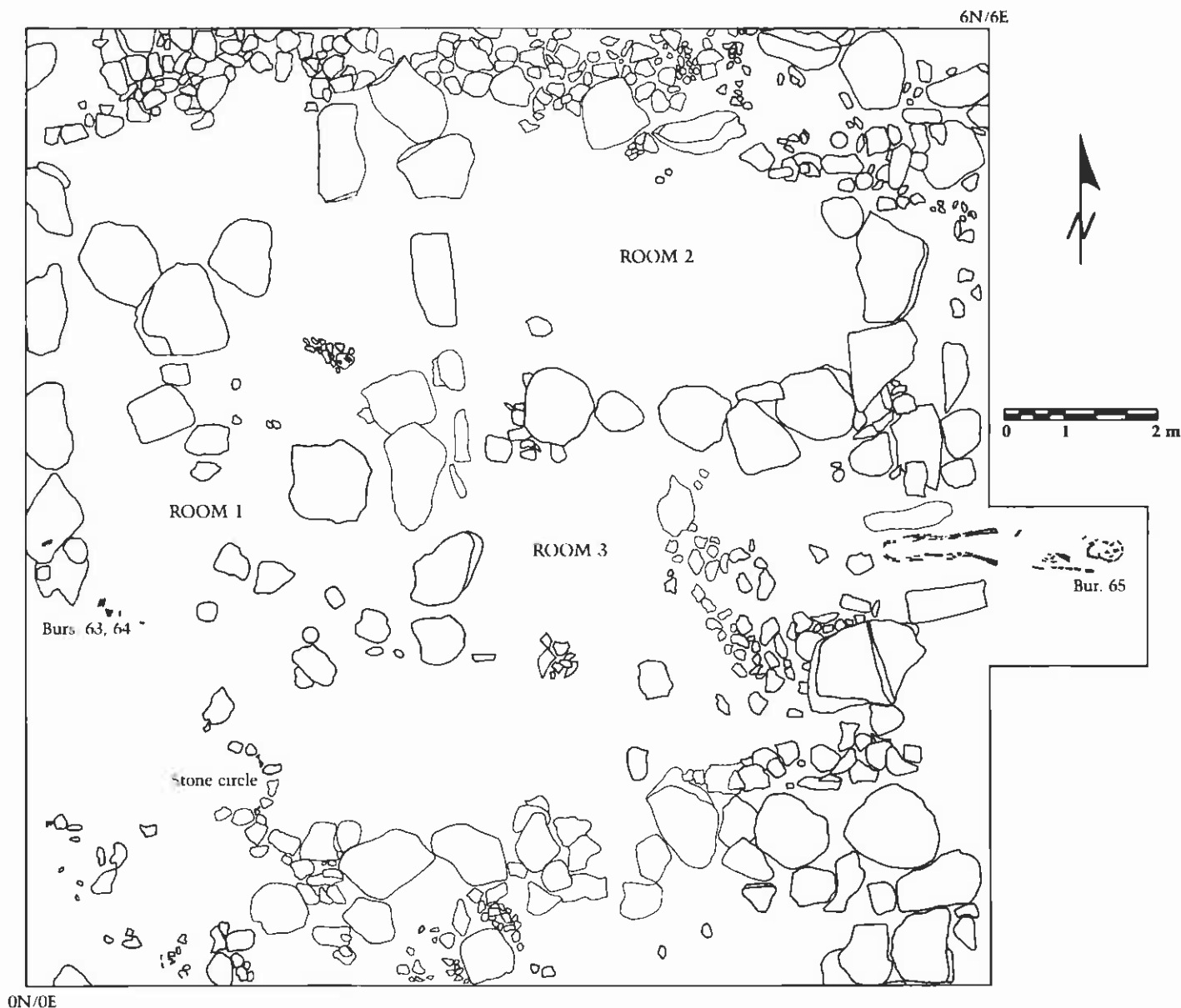


Figure 4.20. Plan map of T-9B excavations.

probably separate but possibly an extension of Str. 1; see Fig. 4.21).

Within Structure 2 a possible floor at ca. 50 cm depth is defined by the presence of some whole vessels atop an area of soil marked by a different color (soft yellow-brown soil). In contrast, the interior of Structure 1 is heavily intruded by pit features, and a "floor" level is difficult to ascertain.

A carved stone, Monument 20, was found within a wall line fragment near Structure 2. From its context and style the carving is presumed to be Cantera phase (Chapter 9). Whether at one time the carving, a decapitated "statue," was associated with an inhabitant of this

structure cannot be determined from the data available.

Only one burial (no. 66), outside of the structures defined by the walls, was found during excavations. The skeleton, partially destroyed by intrusive Feature 1, rests upon *tepetate* and is associated with two Cantera phase vessels. No burials were recovered from within either structure, possibly due to sampling (the subfloor areas were not completely excavated), to disturbance by intrusive pits (unlikely), or to an actual absence.

Fourteen pit features were found during the T-11 excavations. Most of these features had surface areas covering 4–6 m². All are intrusive from slightly above

the Cantera phase surface level. Thus the high quantity of Middle Formative ceramics found by our survey in this area of T-11 can be accounted for by plowing, which distributed the ceramic refuse from the intrusive pits.

Six of the pit features were cross-sectioned. All share a general pattern of stratification. The upper layer in each is a soft, granular, whitish soil, very mottled and with distinct lensing. Underlying this is a soft, fine-grained yellow-brown soil level. This second level overlies a layer of rocks, apparently tossed into the pits. The rock layer is underlain in turn by another layer of yellow-brown soil, but in several pits this lower yellow-

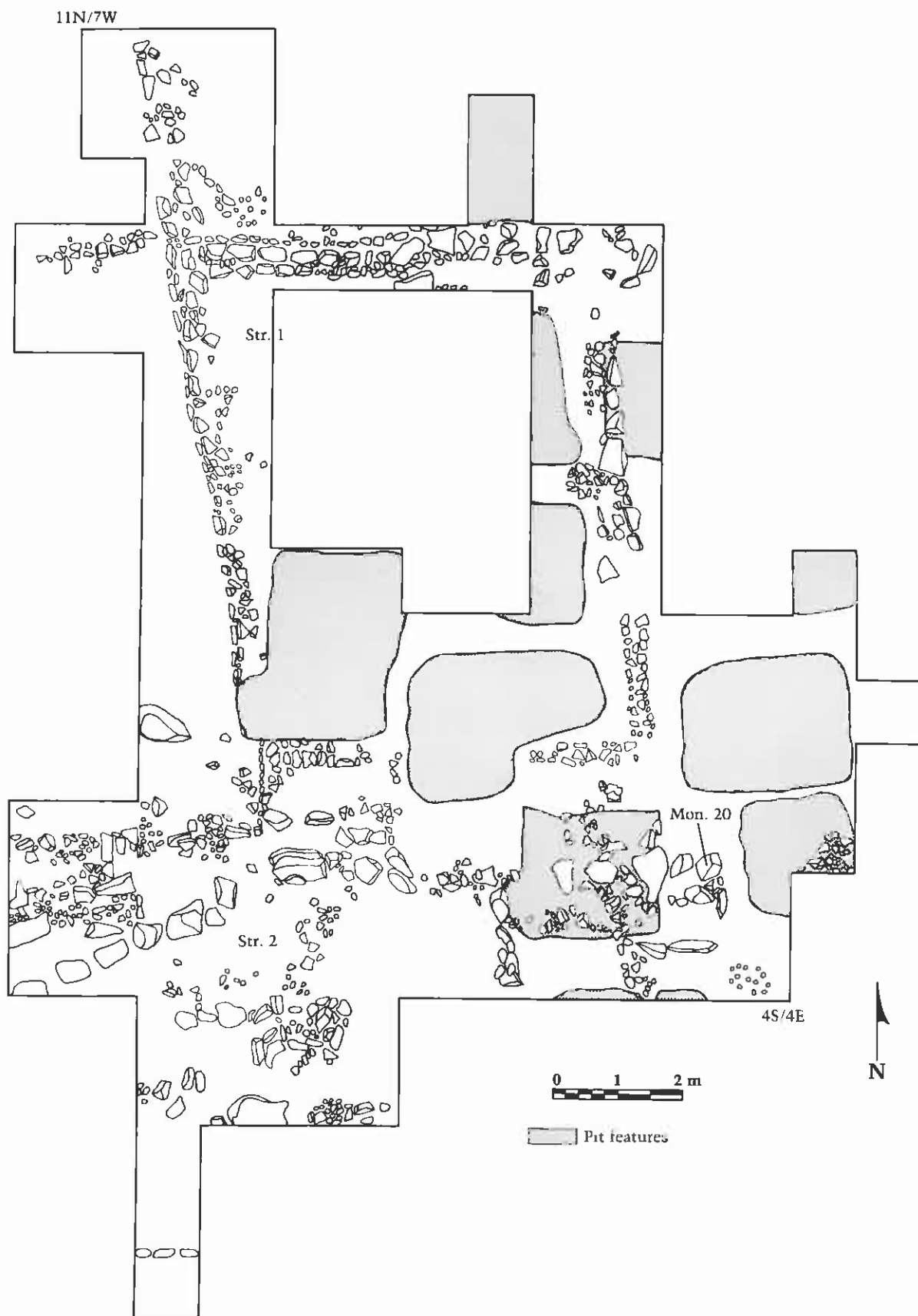


Figure 4.21. Plan map of T-11 excavations; shaded areas represent intrusive pit features.



Figure 4.22. El Paso Drainage between T-6 (left) and T-15 (right).



Figure 4.23. T-15 Structure 1, water control structure, facing west.

brown layer included charcoal fragments and fragments of burned clay. The only evidence of fire within the pits was found in Feature 3, in which the lower walls of the pit were baked. It is possible that these features represent food preparation pits. They were not firepits, and if they were used for food preparation, then heating was done by means of heated stones. No seed remains were recovered in flotation samples taken from these pits, but deer and dog bone fragments were found.

Dating of the features is problematical. They are obviously post-Structure 1 since they intrude through that structure's walls. The sherds within the features are Cantera phase, and Xochitengo Polychrome sherds, a Late Cantera subphase diagnostic, occur in the upper levels. While this should date the intrusive pits as Late Cantera subphase, one probable Late Classic sherd was recovered from level IV of Feature 1. Since only one sherd of this time period was recovered, its presence could be due to rodent action or other undetected disturbance, yet it casts doubt on a Cantera phase dating for the features.

Terrace 15 (FS 1973, 1974)

Structure 1

The watercourse we have named El Paso Drainage cuts northward across the site from the saddle connecting the site's two *cerros* and runs along the east edges of the Plaza Central and T-15 to the base of the hill and eventually to the *barranca* of the Río Amatzinac. This relatively narrow gully is in places etched ca. 2 m into the *tepetate* underlying the adjoining terraces (Fig. 4.22). While it is normally dry, a heavy rain can create a deep torrent of water in the drainage.

The drainage runs north and downhill between the Plaza Central and T-2, and between T-15 and T-6. It then makes a sharp 90° eastward turn at the north end of these latter two terraces. Some 30 m further it makes another sharp right-angle turn downhill again. These sudden diversions are caused by a large earthen "thumb" which projects eastward from the northeast corner of T-15. This thumb is a purposeful water control structure, T-15 Structure 1 (Fig. 4.23).

The structure is about 35 m long and 7 m high. It is constructed primarily of earthen fill, although lines of stones were found along its south side, apparently to resist the erosive force of the water being diverted eastward. Several

looters' pits have disturbed its surface. Four trenches were excavated on the structure in 1973 for the purpose of gaining data on its construction and temporal placement. These excavations revealed that the structure had been built of basketloads of fill over a small stone core. The construction had been done in one operation and was an integral part of T-15 contemporaneous to the T-15 terrace construction (Early Barranca subphase). One of the trenches was run along the structure's south side to discover whether the construction overlay an earlier channel running straight down the hillside. As suspected, the original natural drainage channel was covered by the structure.

The surface of the structure is crisscrossed with stone lines, apparently placed to retard erosion. Although Structure 1 contains quantities of Amate phase and some Barranca phase sherds throughout its interior, a minor amount of Cantera phase sherds occur within the surface level, suggesting a possible Cantera phase resurfacing.

The function of this structure is obvious. If left uncontrolled, the infrequent but torrential rain runoff in the drainage would have damaged the lower terraces and lands at the base of the hill. Diverting the water flow sharply, twice, serves to slow it down and alleviates the dangers of washouts farther down the hill. The inclusion of this structure as part of the terrace building demonstrates a considerable foresight on the part of the site's Early Barranca subphase inhabitants.

Structure 2

With the initial clearing and survey of the site in 1972, a number of architectural features became apparent. Among these was T-15 Structure 2, a long low mound 10 m north of PC Structure 4 and paralleling that structure. T-15 Structure 2 was considered to be a possible ball court structure.

In 1973 a datum point was established atop this mound and a north-south trench laid out which cut across the structure at its estimated midpoint. The trench was excavated only to the surface of the actual architecture and served to locate wall lines, floors, etc. (Fig. 4.24). No attempt was made to cut into the structure itself. As the architectural features were uncovered, the excavations were expanded until much of the structure was cleared.

Structure 2 represents the northern range of an east-west-oriented ball court



Figure 4.24. Excavations at T-15 Structure 2, ball court, facing southwest from the Cerro Delgado.

(Figs. 24.4, 24.5). The playing alley lay between Structure 2 and the northern slopes of PC Structure 4. Sherds securely date the ball court to the Late Classic, making it contemporaneous with the pyramid-plaza group of T-3 a few meters to the southwest. The structure is 41.5 m long and 12.3 m wide. Its maximum height is ca. 2 m. The south side of the structure is dominated by the low sloping playing wall; the north side by a wide stairway.

The southern range of the ball court presents a problem because it was constructed onto the northern slope of PC Structure 4. Cross trenches were excavated into this slope. They located the low stone wall forming the base of the southern playing wall and, midway up the slope of PC Structure 4, a 90 cm tall wall apparently representing the rear of the south range (Fig. 24.6). However, be-



Figure 4.25. T-15 Structure 3 wall line.

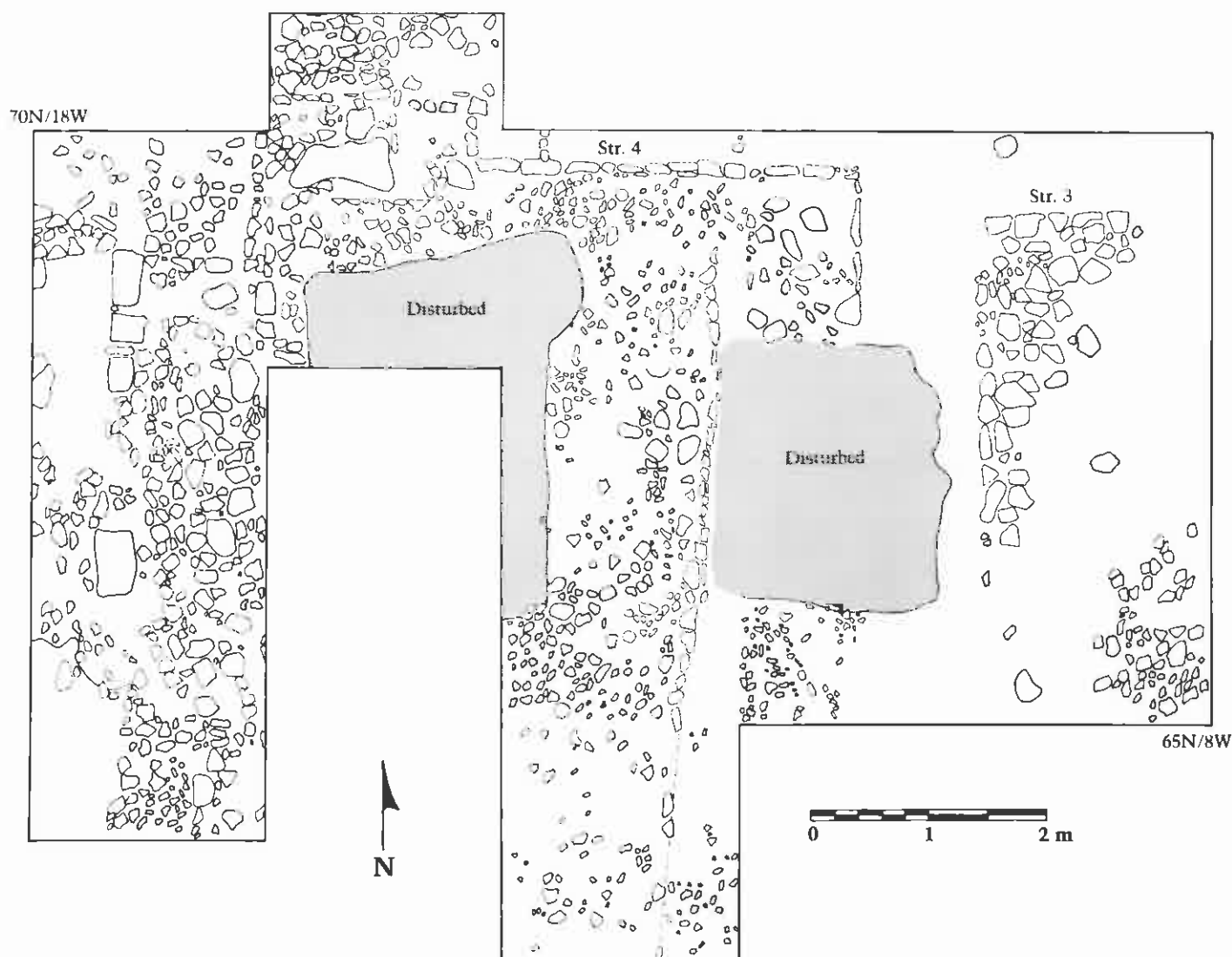


Figure 4.26. Plan map of T-15 Structure 3 and 4 excavations.

tween the two walls which delimit this range, most intervening architecture appears to have long since been destroyed by erosion and farming. The ball court is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 24.

Structure 3

Heavy Middle Formative sherd concentrations led to our decision to excavate in the northeast section of T-15. Structure 3 was uncovered by these excavations. This Cantera phase structure, just below the plow zone and probably partially destroyed by plowing, is represented by a small section of stone wall foundations. Only a small area of the structure and floor remained (Fig. 4.25). Excavations below Structure 3 uncovered a few fragmentary Barranca phase stone alignments of unknown function. These rest

atop a mixed Amate-Barranca phase fill which may be the original terrace fill surface in this area.

Structure 4

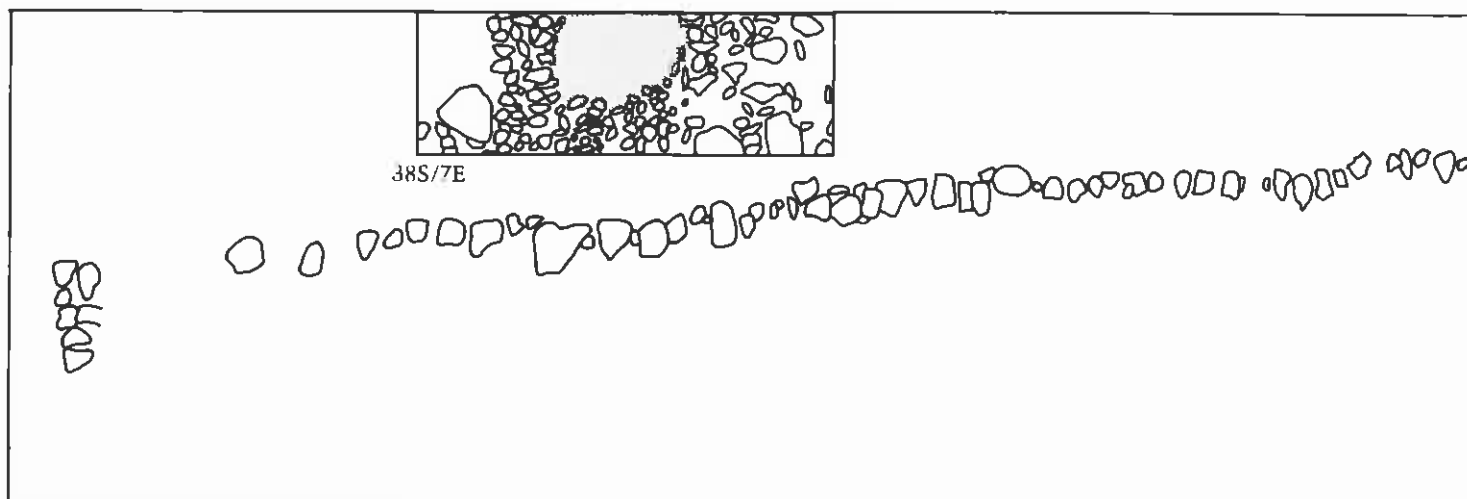
Only 3 m west of Structure 3 is a Late Classic rectangular structure ca. 7 × 7 m in dimension (Str. 4; Fig. 4.26). It is discussed in detail in Chapter 24.

Structure 5

The decision to excavate on the northwest portion of T-15 (designated T-15 West) was based on the discovery there of a stela (Mon. 21; Fig. 9.21) lying face down and almost entirely buried within the plow zone. The excavations at this location were primarily to test for the presence of architecture associated with the stela. Because the planned excavation area was close to the ongoing T-27

excavations, the T-27 datum was used for this excavation also. Prior to beginning the excavations, the monument was moved to the north edge of the terrace. A special shelter was constructed for it, and visitors to the site can see it there today.

Excavation units were opened where the head and foot of the stela had lain. These units uncovered wall features at the base of the plow zone. As the excavations were expanded, it became clear that the features were part of a stone-faced platform mound. Like the T-6 platform, T-15 Structure 5 was constructed of river cobbles and field stones set with their smoothest face outward. In form Structure 5 (Fig. 4.27) is like the inner structure of T-6 Structure 1, rectangular with



a slightly sloping front wall which varied in height from 70–100 cm. The platform is 19.5 m long. A small ring of stones, apparently the support stones for Monument 21, seems to mark the monument's original position.

The platform is a Cantera phase construction, although our current data cannot determine its temporal relationship to the T-6 platform (T-6 Str. 1). T-15 Structure 5 is overlain by Classic period debris and is underlain by wall lines that are apparently Amate phase. The context of a Cantera phase structure built atop Amate phase deposits is similar for both the T-6 and T-15 platforms and indicates that excavation and leveling were carried out prior to the building of each platform.

Terrace 17 (FS 1974)

T-17 is a large rectangular terrace raised 1–2 m above the neighboring fields. Areas of sherd concentrations occur near the terrace's western edge, and test excavations were begun here to investigate these concentrations. These excavations revealed the reason for the terrace's raised appearance. A Classic period platform wall running north-south 35 cm below the present surface was found in the first test trench. The wall, constructed of flat stone slabs set in a mud mortar, is 70 cm in height and has a slope of about 50° from horizontal and an orientation of N6½E. Although our trench exposed only 2 m of the wall, its position at the western edge of the field suggests that the entire terrace is a Classic period platform.

The possibility that this terrace is a later Classic period construction is reinforced by the stratigraphy underlying the platform wall. The test trench, excavated down to *tepetate*, included Cantera and Barranca phase levels beneath the platform feature (Appendix B, SSU 11). T-15 and T-17 were probably a single large flat terrace until the Classic period, when the platform construction (now T-17), was added to that terrace's western end.

Terrace 20 (FS 1974)

Survey on T-20, a sloping agricultural field on the western flanks of the Cerro Delgado, indicated a heavy concentration of Middle Formative sherds midway down the slope. A slight leveling in the topography at that point and the data obtained from our subsequent excavations indicate that this mid-point of the field had been level (terraced) until at least the Late Classic and that it has since been heavily eroded into its present sloping configuration.

Structure 1

Excavations in the area of the Middle Formative sherd concentration revealed three sets of stone wall features (Fig. 4.28). The deepest wall encountered was constructed of irregular field stones in a manner common to Cantera phase constructions. Only a 4 m segment of this east-west oriented wall, designated Structure 1, still remained. One meter north of the wall a Middle Formative burial (no. 73) was found. The burial and wall association, together with the ceramics from this level, indicate that the wall is

in all probability the southern foundation wall of a Cantera phase house. Burial 73 appears to have been a subfloor burial within that structure.

Structure 2

Two sets of Late Classic walls, the remains of two structures, occur 80 cm stratigraphically higher (and slightly uphill). T-20 Structure 2 is constructed of large field stones and river rocks and forms a low stone platform and floor pavement covering an area of 3 × 2.5 m. Three corners of this rectangular floor are clearly defined. A large pit feature, apparently the result of relatively recent looting, intruded and destroyed the northwest quarter of the floor.

Structure 3

Touching the northeast corner of Structure 2 is Structure 3, composed of east-west and north-south walls. The south face of the east-west segment is built of flat field stones set at a slight tilt (Fig. 23.12). This construction technique is also found on other Late Classic Structures (T-4 Str. 3 and T-15 Str. 4). The sloping wall of T-20 Structure 3 is ca. 2 m long but ends abruptly at its east end without apparent reason. The western end of the wall forms a corner with the stone line forming the north-south wall segment. A floor of cobble-sized rocks occurs within Structure 3. Classic period burials were recovered inside and outside Structure 2 and 3 (see Chapter 8 and Appendix C).

Terrace 21 (FS 1974)

In realization of the built-in biases of our sampling strategy during the excavation

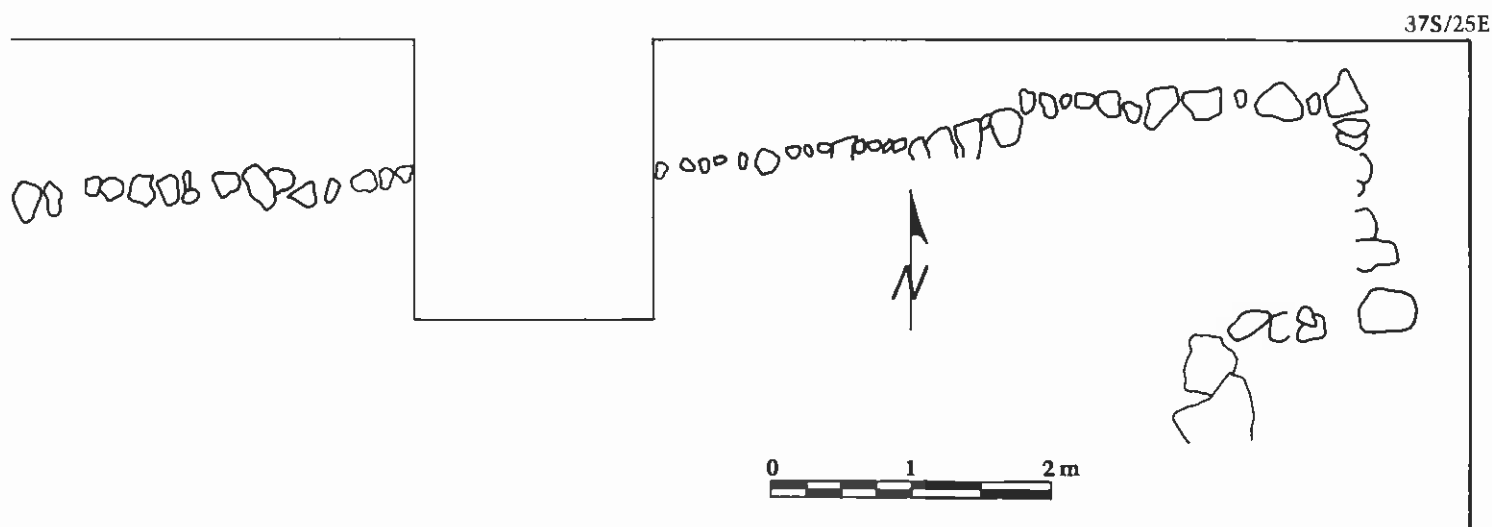


Figure 4.27. T-15 Structure 5; shaded area shows original location of Monument 21.

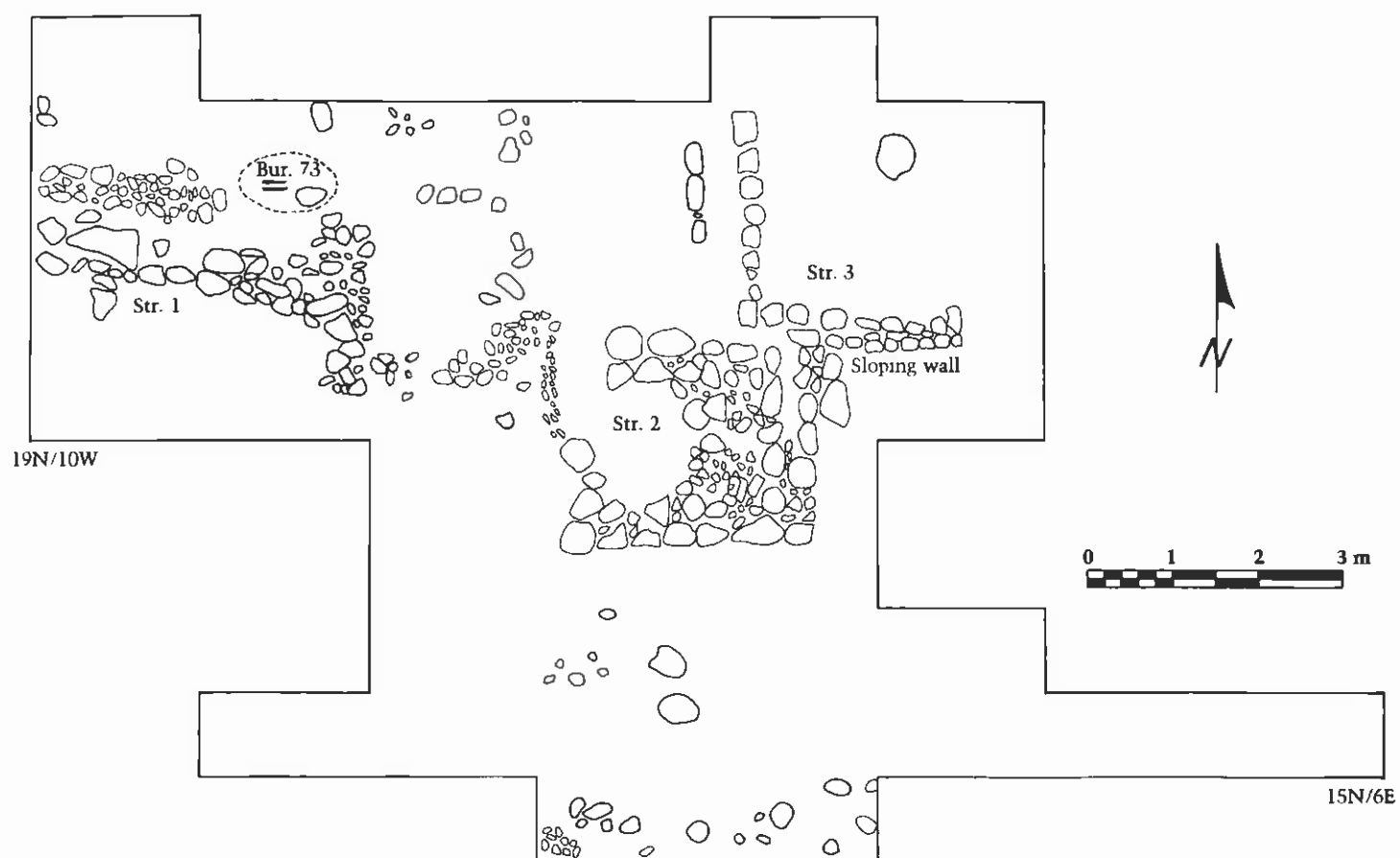


Figure 4.28. Plan map of Classic period structures on T-20.

of T-23 Structure 1 (see below), tests were run in several adjacent areas for the possibility of features related to the structure. One of these tests involved the excavation of an area ca. 20 m northwest of T-23 Structure 1 on the adjacent terrace, T-21.

Feature 1

This T-21 excavation encountered the edge of an apparent Cantera phase trash deposit. The test pit, taken down to *tepetate*, sliced into the trash deposit's western end and provided a profile of the accumulated trash, which appears to have been dumped into a shallow surface depression (Fig. 4.29). The trash was composed of Cantera phase sherds, rocks, animal bones, obsidian chips and blades, and a small stone animal figure (Fig. 20.8d). The deposit was composed of a series of concave layers (Appendix B, SSU 8) and was excavated by these natural layers. Analysis of each individual layer detected no apparent chronological change within the ceramics, and the entire deposit must span a relatively short period of time.

The trash deposit most probably is related to T-23 Structure 1 (see Chapter 6). This house structure has at least three definable construction periods, but at present we cannot assign the T-21 trash pit to any particular one of these. Underlying the northern edge of the trash at *tepetate* level (90 cm below surface) were the disturbed remains of a human burial (no. 78). The fragmentary skeleton was flanked on each side by a large stone. Six Cantera phase vessels found below the trash pit and also resting upon *tepetate* are believed to have been associated with the burial.

Feature 2

A second test excavation on T-21 took the form of a 23.4 m trench run from the T-23 excavations westward across a portion of T-21. Two coarse stone lines were uncovered. Both are clearly Cantera phase in date, and probably functioned for erosion control.

Terrace 23 (FS 1974)

Structure 1

The only Cantera phase house remains in our sample not severely damaged by plowing or erosion were found on T-23. At least three construction periods (Str. 1a, 1b, 1c) can be ascertained within the abundant wall features which crisscross the southwest area of T-23 (Figs. 4.30, 4.31, 6.9–6.11). The excavated structures provide some of the basic data on

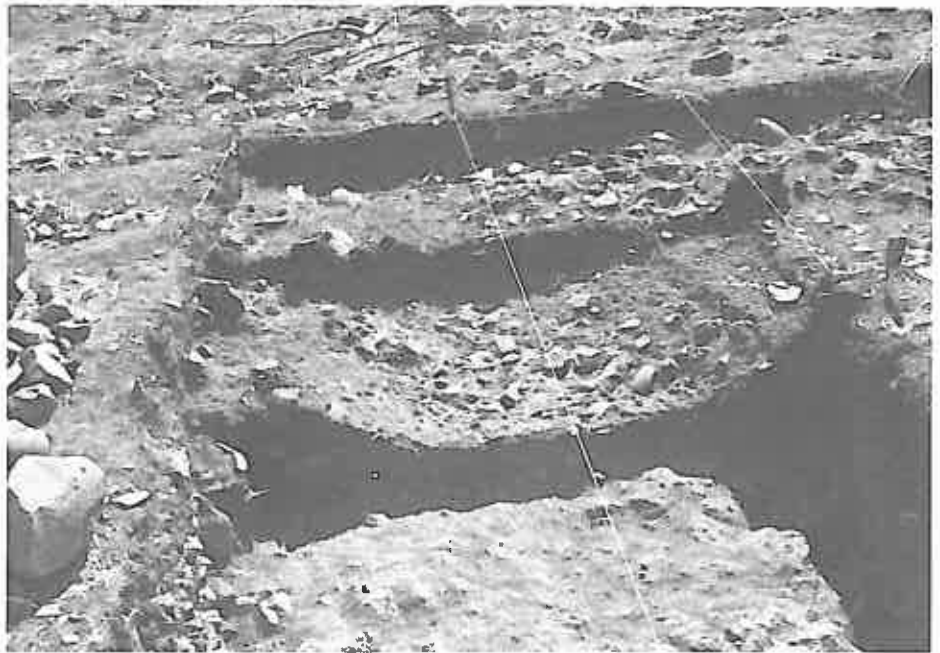


Figure 4.29. T-21 Middle Formative trash pit excavations.

houses at Chalcatzingo and are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6.

Testing other areas of the terrace for possible features associated with Structure 1 not identifiable through surface artifact concentrations uncovered some stone wall lines of uncertain date (T-23 Str. 2) to the northeast of Structure 1. Classic period features were also found on T-23, and as in the case of the T-4 excavations, they tend to confuse and destroy Formative period constructions. Two Classic period lime kilns intrude into T-23 Structure 1. The largest of these (Feature 4) occurs in the northwest section of Structure 1. A smaller kiln (Feature 7) occurs on the west side of Structure 1.

Feature 1

Excavations on the south end of the terrace uncovered a small circular stone feature, ca. 135 cm in diameter, with a burned interior. The dating of this feature, T-23 Feature 1, is uncertain because its upper surface sits within the plow zone and thus is associated with a mix of Middle Formative and Classic period sherds. We believe that this feature probably dates to the Classic period. Its function is uncertain, but our workmen thought that it was probably the firepit for an impermanent sweatbath structure (*temescal*).

Terrace 24 (FS 1973)

T-24 was the northernmost of the fields of the main site area excavated during the project. A heavy ceramic distribution suggested an occupation area at the top of this long sloping hillside. Close inspection showed that the Middle Formative ceramic debris was in situ and not the result of erosion from fields above T-24.

Structure 1

Excavations disclosed one major east-west wall feature and several north-south wall lines (Fig. 4.32). These apparently represent the remaining east and south sections of a Cantera phase house structure (T-24 Str. 1) which had been built (like nearby T-20 Str. 1) on a relatively small terraced area of the steep hillside. Subsequent erosion and recent plowing of the hillside have removed the western portion of the house and associated features.

While most of the walls are probably associated with a rectangular house structure dating to the Cantera phase, one northern group of stone alignments forms a set of three steps, each ca. 20 m high. To the west of the steps is a burned area, possibly an intrusive Classic period fire pit. The dating of the steps is problematic, but their alignment is similar to the Cantera phase foundation walls.

Seven burials were recovered during



Figure 4.30. Plan map of T-23 excavations, showing totality of wall lines and features.



Figure 4.31. T-23 foundation walls.

the excavations. Six of these date to the Cantera phase, but the seventh is a Classic period intrusion. Other intrusive pits, possibly Classic period, cut into Structure 1. Some of these may be the result of looting, however.

Terrace 25 (FS 1973, 1974)

Monument 22 and Structure 1

Excavations were begun on T-25 when an alignment of faced and carved stones was discovered exposed in a plow furrow. These were found to pertain to the upper ledge of a table-top altar (Mon. 22), built against the south end of a sunken walled patio area (Fig. 7.1). A large number of burials were found beneath the patio surface. The altar, patio, and most burials date to the Cantera phase. A minute section of a house floor (Str. 1) and a large trash pit excavated into *tepetate* are Baranca phase. Near the north edge of the terrace a low stone-faced platform (Str. 2) with the broken remnant of an associated stela (Mon. 23) postdates the altar and patio, but is likewise Cantera phase (Fig. 7.23). A minor amount of intrusive Classic period material occurs in the platform area. The excavations of T-25 are detailed in Chapter 7.

Terrace 27 (FS 1974)

The rectangular terrace known as T-27 is a modification of a small ridge which projects northward from between T-25 and T-31. The field today rises a meter or so above these terraces. T-27 was chosen for excavation because of its proximity to the T-25 altar and its highly visible geographic position. The excavations are summarized below and by David Crampton (1976).

Structure 1

A north-south trench was laid out across the center of T-27 and the plow zone cleared. This preliminary work revealed east-west-oriented stone alignments and clusters of ceramics and human bones. The cross-trench excavations were halted, and work was concentrated on clearing and delimiting the area of wall lines and burial features. This disclosed that although the burials were Late Formative, they were intruded into a Cantera phase platform construction (Str. 1) which exhibited several building stages (Fig. 4.33).

The earliest architectural feature uncovered is Structure 1a (unillustrated), defined by three foundation walls forming a rectangular structure 2 m wide, with a compacted floor. These walls appeared between grid coordinates 0–3S/5–

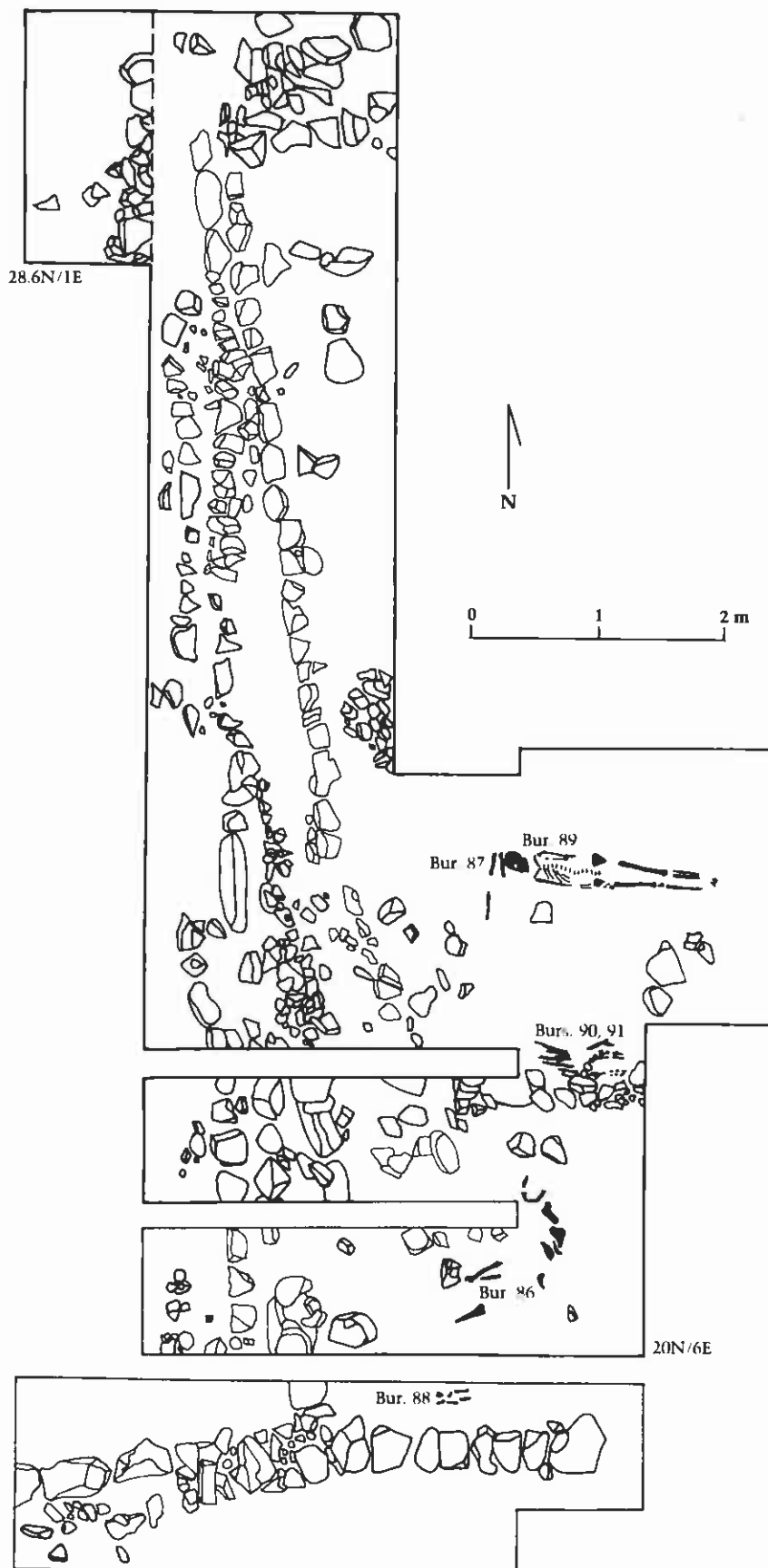


Figure 4.32. Plan map of T-24 excavations. Burial 92 not shown.

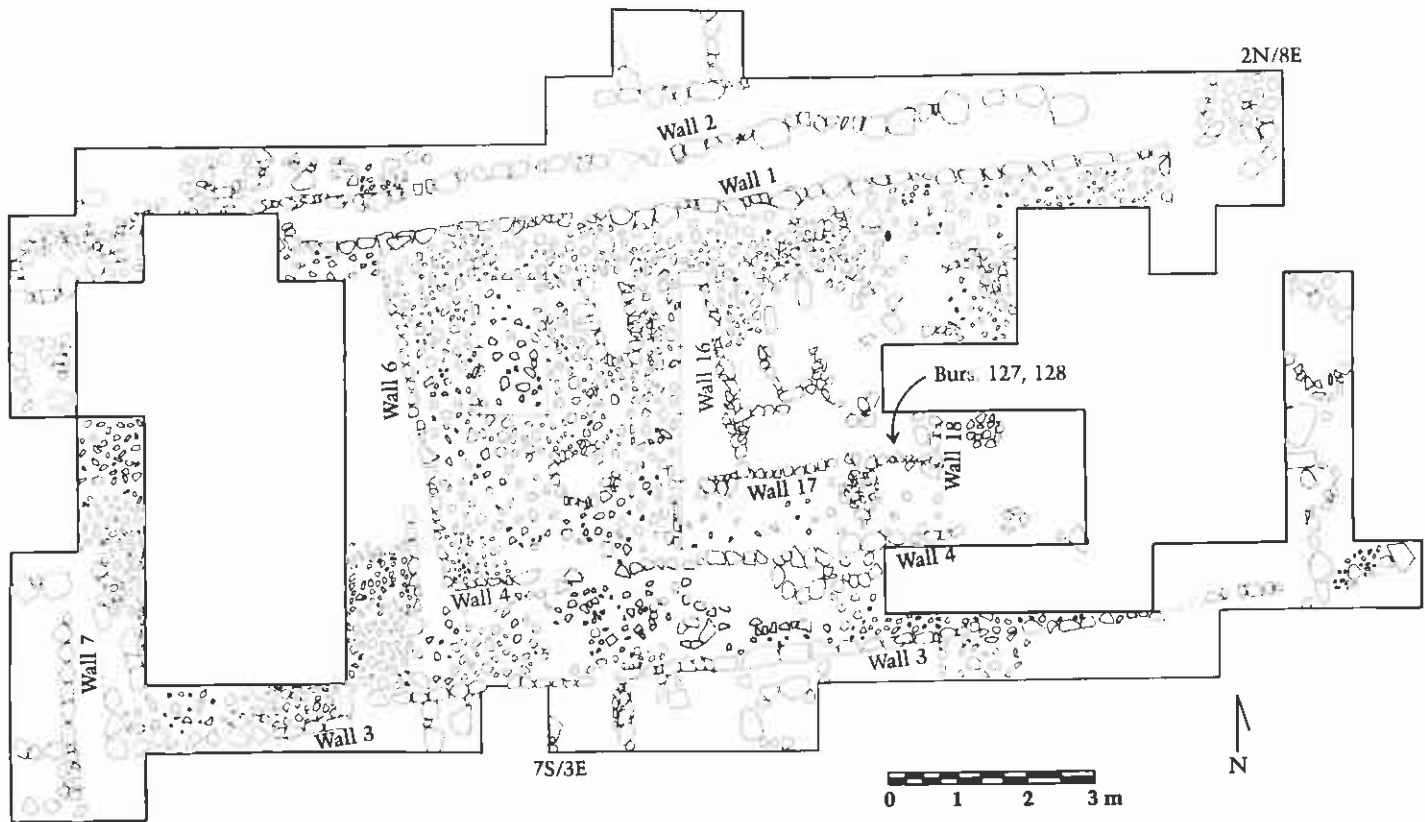


Figure 4.33. Plan map of T-27 Structure 1 excavations.

6W, and only a portion of this early structure was exposed by our excavations. Although Structure 1a walls rest just above *tepetate*, associated ceramics indicate it is a Cantera phase construction. A second small Cantera phase structure, 1b (also unillustrated), lies 5 m to the east.

The earliest platform structure, 1c, is delimited by Walls 1, 4, and 6, and covers most of Structure 1a and all of 1b. Wall 1, 65 cm high, forms the platform's sloping front face. The platform was originally 11.7 m long and 5.3 m wide. In time it was enlarged to the west and south by the additions of Walls 3 and 7. This larger platform is Structure 1d. A pavement of small stones covers the upper surface of Structures 1c and 1d. Structure 1e is defined only by Wall 2, a new front wall to the platform (of indefinite length). Structures 1c, 1d, and 1e are all Late Cantera subphase. The Late Formative burials intruded the stone pavement of this 1c–1e platform. However, two burials which did not intrude the pavement, nos. 127 and 128, are Cantera phase interments, probably contemporaneous with the platform.

Structure 2

Excavations to the north of Structure 1 uncovered a rectangular area of stone "floor" delimited by walls (Str. 2; Fig. 4.34). Other wall lines extend to the west, north, and east from the floor area. Burial 121 was found beneath the floor, and Burial 125 occurred within one of the westward extending wall lines. Most walls face in toward the floor area, suggesting a patio-like arrangement with the structure at the patio's northeast end. A wall to the south and east contained a rectangular crypt which contained the fragmentary remains of Burial 135 and thirteen Teotihuacan IV vessels, seven of which were Thin Orange ring-based bowls (Fig. 24.13). An intrusive trash pit (Fea. 1) which contained a Mazapan figurine fragment was also uncovered.

Terrace 29 (FS 1973)

Structure 1

A concentration of Middle Formative ceramics was located by survey at the upper end of T-29 immediately adjacent to T-25. We placed an excavation grid

parallel to the T-25–T-29 terrace edge (N15E) rather than use the north orientation. The clearing of the plow zone uncovered walls, designated Structure 1, within this disturbed surface area (Fig. 4.35). The overall construction is a series of east-west walls crosscut by north-south walls to form a series of rectangular areas each of which covers ca. 2 m². This appears to be the foundation of a terrace or platform ca. 20 m long and 4–5 m wide, built outward from T-25 over the sloping surface of T-29.

One burial (no. 159) lacking associated ceramics was found at the south end of the structure. The stratigraphy and fill related to Structure 1 are completely Baranca phase in date. If Structure 1 served as the foundation for some superstructure, erosion and plowing have removed all such traces.

Terrace 31 (FS 1974)

Brief test excavations were conducted on T-31 in the area immediately adjacent to T-27 for the purpose of ascertaining whether any structure complementary

to the T-25 altar stood in a symmetrical association on this side of T-27. Nothing of archaeological interest was recovered.

Terrace 37 (FS 1974)

A relatively flat field, T-37 lies at the foot of Chalcatzingo's terraced hillside. A modern stone wall along its northern side marks the boundary between the terraced *ejido* land and the privately owned lands which border the spring-fed stream. A few years prior to our project, looters attempted some excavations on this field but found little more than quantities of obsidian and abandoned their efforts. Our survey located two areas of obsidian surface concentrations, and these areas were gridded for excavation.

Obsidian Deposit

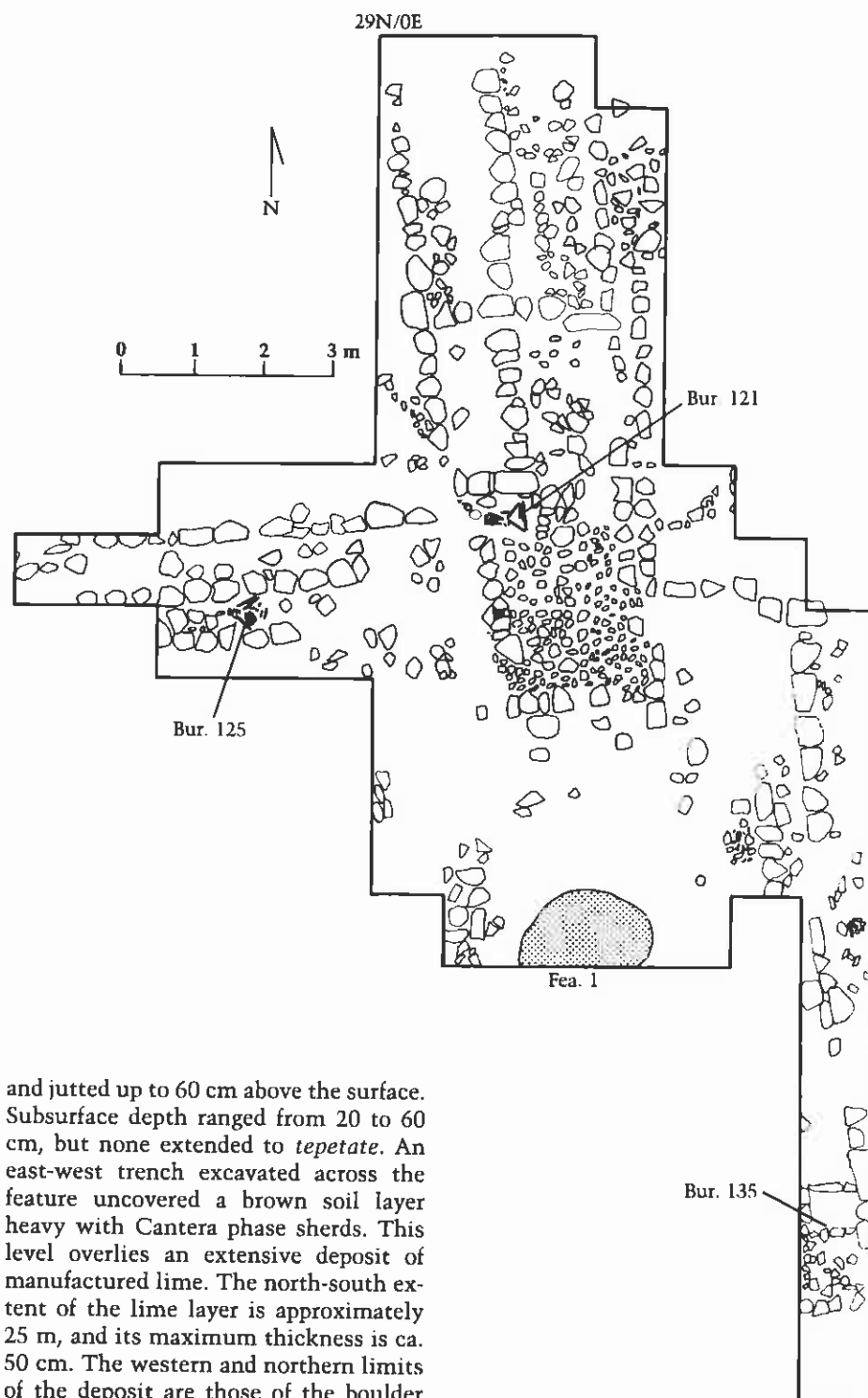
Excavations demonstrated that T-37 is quite shallow, with *tepetate* lying 24–56 cm below the surface. The major discovery was a Cantera phase obsidian refuse dump which covered an area of ca. 3×2 m and extended from the surface to *tepetate* for a total depth of 40 cm. This obsidian deposit yielded 42.5 kg of obsidian blades and flakes, with ca. 27,000 pieces larger than 1×2 cm (Chapter 19; S. Burton 1974:6). Human burials, most extremely deteriorated, were found both within and near the obsidian concentration.

Features 1 and 2

Two superimposed features are located east of the obsidian refuse. The uppermost, Feature 1, is a curved single line of large stones. A concentration of adobe fragments occurs along one area of this stone line, suggesting it is a wall feature. Another adobe fragment concentration surrounds a rock cluster to the south. Underlying the curved wall is a depression in the *tepetate* which includes three postholes running in a north-south direction (Fea. 2). These cross beneath the stone wall and therefore can be presumed to be unrelated to it. The postholes appear to relate to a structure long since destroyed.

Field South 39 (FS 1974)

The S-39 field marks the southern limit of surface artifacts on the site. It lies ca. 90 m southwest of Monument 12. This field was of interest because of its extreme southwest location and its main surface feature, three boulder lines which form a rectangle ca. 15×6.5 m with the open side facing south (Fig. 4.36). The boulders vary from 50 cm to 1.5 m in horizontal length, 40 to 50 cm in width,



and jutting up to 60 cm above the surface. Subsurface depth ranged from 20 to 60 cm, but none extended to *tepetate*. An east-west trench excavated across the feature uncovered a brown soil layer heavy with Cantera phase sherds. This level overlies an extensive deposit of manufactured lime. The north-south extent of the lime layer is approximately 25 m, and its maximum thickness is ca. 50 cm. The western and northern limits of the deposit are those of the boulder rectangle. The distribution of the lime makes it clear that it was a purposeful rather than a natural deposit.

The function of the S-39 area is uncertain. The lime deposit, which is clearly human-made, is unusual for several reasons. The nearest source of limestone is 7 km to the west. The use of lime is unrecorded during the Middle Formative in central Mexico, although it was used in Oaxaca. The lime was not apparently

Figure 4.34. Plan map of T-27 Structure 2 excavations.

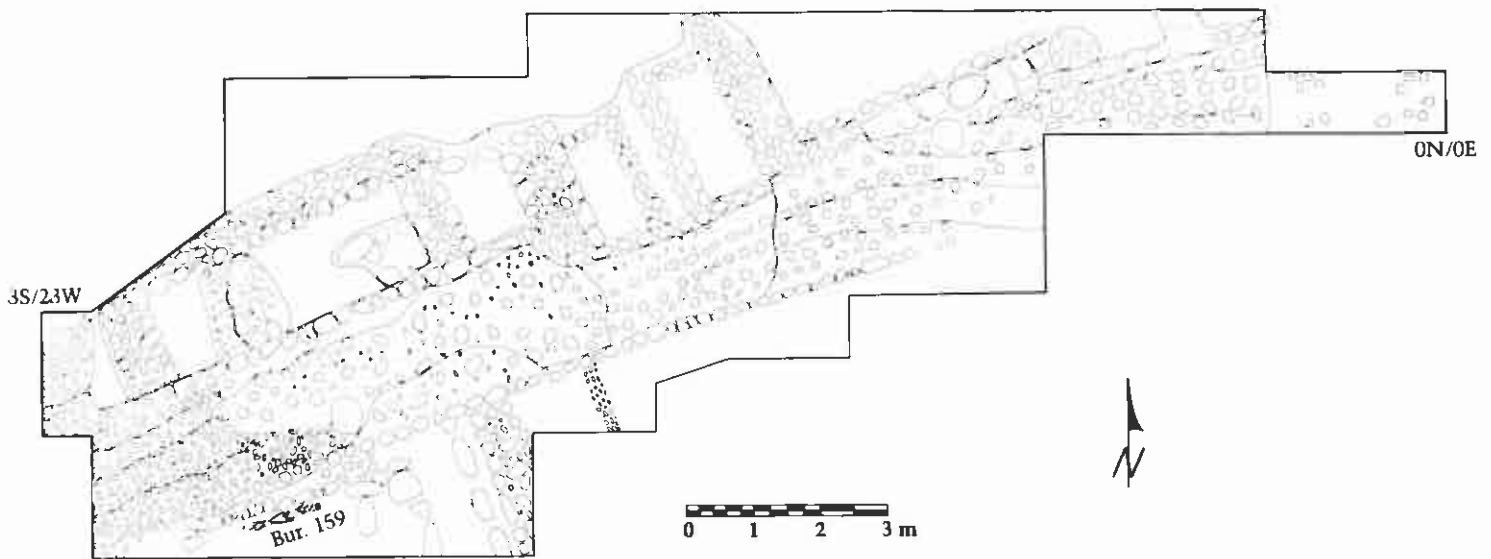


Figure 4.35. Plan map of T-29 excavations.

used as whitewash for the adobe-walled house structures since the few traces of white we have found on adobe fragments seem to be kaolin. Likewise, the white slip of the nearly ubiquitous white ware Middle Formative ceramics at the site again seems to be kaolin (Chapter 23). The lime could have been used in the preparation of corn *masa*, but there is no archaeological evidence to confirm such a hypothesis.

Seven burials were found during the excavations, all dating to the Cantera phase. The presence of burials suggests that some residential functions were associated with the area. Adobe daub fragments indicate that a structure had been built here, although no other evidence for the structure was found.

The artifacts from S-39 differ somewhat from those recovered at other areas of the site. Clay "bananas" and ceramic bars (see Chapter 16) occur in greatest frequency here. There is also a comparatively larger quantity of shallow Amatzinac White dishes. The bars and "bananas" may be pottery working tools, and S-39 could have been a pottery manufacturing area. No traces of kilns were found, but these may have been located away from the workshops. The massive boulder walls and the lime deposit remain to be explained.

Field North 2 (FS 1974)

The N-2 field lies on the north side of the spring-fed stream which runs near the base of Chalcatzingo's terraces and

to the east of the road running from the site to the village. A small erosion gully between the road and the field has exposed about 50 cm of Middle Formative deposits, including a large brazier fragment found eroded from the exposed cut following a heavy rainstorm. According to villagers who worked for or witnessed Piña Chan's 1953 excavations at the site, the roadway beside N-2 was the location of his Pozo 9 (1955:9, Map 2).

Structures 1 and 2

Two units were opened on the field (Fig. 4.37). The first encountered stone features which seem to be the remnants of a Late Barranca subphase structure, N-2 Structure 1. The second encountered a wall of large irregular field stones, N-2 Structure 2. Two of the wall's stones lie over the feet of a human burial (no. 149). Although no vessels were in direct association with this burial, two Early Barranca subphase vessels were found immediately above the burial in the subsequent level. Thus, both Structure 2 and Burial 149 are apparently Early Barranca subphase in date. Levels underlying the burial include Late Amate subphase deposits.

Field North 5 (FS 1974)

Two test trenches were placed in the N-5 field, which lies on the northwest periphery of the site. The purpose was to test for occupation west of the main site area in an area of limited surface artifacts. Our first trench uncovered a floor-like layer of small rocks at ca. 40 cm in

its southeast quarter. No other features were found until the upper torso and skull of a human burial (no. 150) were uncovered at ca. 95 cm. The skeleton, in poor condition, continued into the west sidewall. It lay in a shallow depression excavated into *tepetate* and lacked associated artifacts.

To recover the entire burial, the excavation unit was extended to the west by another meter. This unit, although excavated to *tepetate*, did not find the remainder of the skeleton, which was incomplete and ended at the sidewall of the original trench. The stratigraphy within the extension unit had been badly disturbed by an animal burrow, which apparently disturbed the burial as well.

The second trench did not yield significant data. Lack of time and the low priority given to this area halted further excavations.

Field North 7 (FS 1974)

Because more data were desired concerning the periods of occupation of the fields directly north of the stream, a 1 × 3 m test trench was excavated on N-7, a field across the roadway from N-2. No features were found during this limited excavation. The natural levels here are quite thick (Appendix B, SSU 3). The upper two levels are Cantera phase, and these overlie Amate phase deposits. No Barranca phase levels were found in this stratigraphic sequence, although there are heavy Barranca phase deposits on N-2.

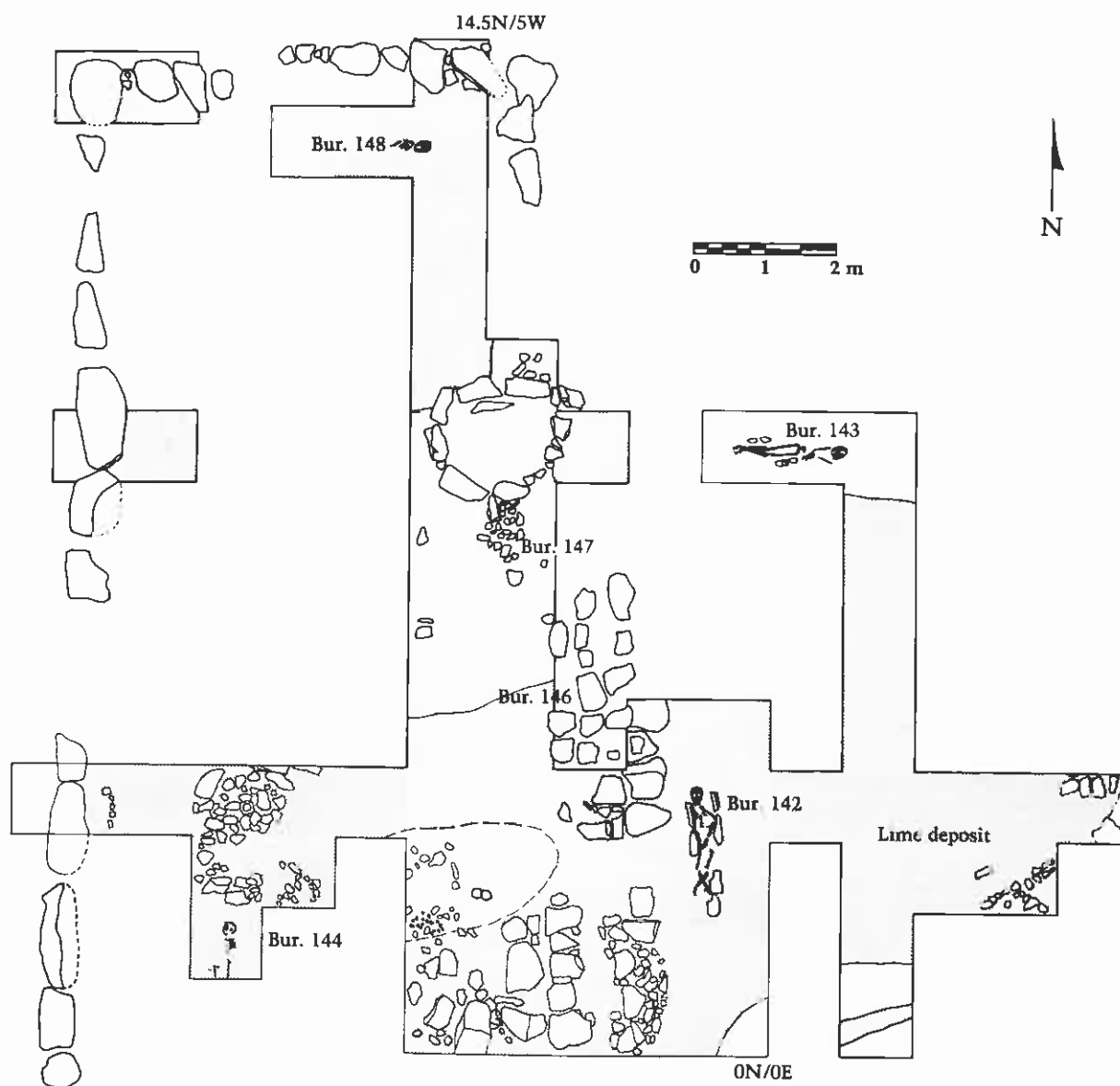


Figure 4.36. Plan map of S-39 excavations; shaded area indicates lime deposits. Burial 145 not shown.

Cerro Terrace 1 (FS 1973)

The clearing of the site of its overgrowth revealed archaeological and topographical features previously unknown. One of these was a small terraced area on the hillside talus slope south of the Plaza Central. Because this terrace lies between the Plaza Central (location of monumental architecture and an elite residence) and the bas-relief carvings on the *cerro*, the terrace was test excavated. It was immediately obvious that the terrace had been heavily eroded, as most of the ceramic debris was very weathered.

Several fragmentary stone alignments were found within the test pits, but

no structures could be defined. Peralta Orange sherds, a good Cantera phase marker, appeared to be present in greater than normal quantities. This ceramic type is restricted essentially to Chalcatzingo and sites in the immediate vicinity (Chapter 13). Its abundance on CT-1 may indicate a special meaning to the terrace, although exactly what cannot be ascertained at this time.

Cerro Terrace 2 (FS 1973)

Structure 1

A villager cutting down a dead tree to the west and uphill from CT-1 found a metate in the tree's root system. Other sur-

face features suggested that a structure might be present there, and a test excavation was made and eventually expanded. This disclosed a small rectangular stone platform ca. 3 × 3 m in size with a maximum height of 45 cm. The tree had grown in the platform's front (north) wall. The structure's upper surface had a floor of small and medium stones. At its uphill end the base of the platform rests upon *tepetate*, while its front side, downslope, sits upon a layer of black soil.

The dating of the platform remains tenuous, but it is probably Classic period. It is underlain by Middle Formative

sherds but surrounded by Classic period sherds. A complete Late Classic vessel was recovered 1 m north of the platform, and a metate found within the structure is unlike those from Cantera phase contexts. The structure lacks stucco and the sloping basal stones characteristic of other Classic period platforms on the site (T-4 Str. 3, T-15 Str. 4), but is likewise dissimilar to Cantera phase constructions.

Cerro Delgado Caves (FS 1973, 1974)

Only two routes, both accessible with great difficulty, are known to lead to the upper slopes of the Cerro Delgado, where a number of small caves are located. Along these routes are numerous hand and footholds, presumably prehistoric, carved into the steep rock faces to aid in climbing. Despite the limited access, our investigations show that the Cerro Delgado was used extensively in the past, beginning as early as the Middle Formative but with maximum use in the Middle Postclassic. An area of the eastern summit slopes has been occasionally planted in recent years, and one accessible cave (no. 1) had been utilized for storing grass cut for fodder just prior to our excavations.

During the 1973 and 1974 field seasons, excavations were conducted within two caves on the *cerro*, and samples from eight other caves were obtained from test pits. Surface samples were collected from an additional fifteen caves as well as seventeen terraces on top of the hill. Summary data on these caves is taken from Robert Burton (1974). Because the cave data are still under analysis, they are not reported in any greater detail here but will be the subject of a separate report.

At least twenty-five of the Cerro Delgado caves had been utilized, either as habitation sites or as possible water storage caves. Two of these latter caves have carved channels in the rock that we interpret as devices constructed to direct water to the interior, where natural depressions would have retained it. No other artificial water control devices were found, even though in several instances watermarks on the cave walls indicated that water had once been retained at a higher level than is possible now. Because our excavations were carried out in the dry season, we do not know whether these possible water storage caves collected water naturally; only one is known to hold water throughout

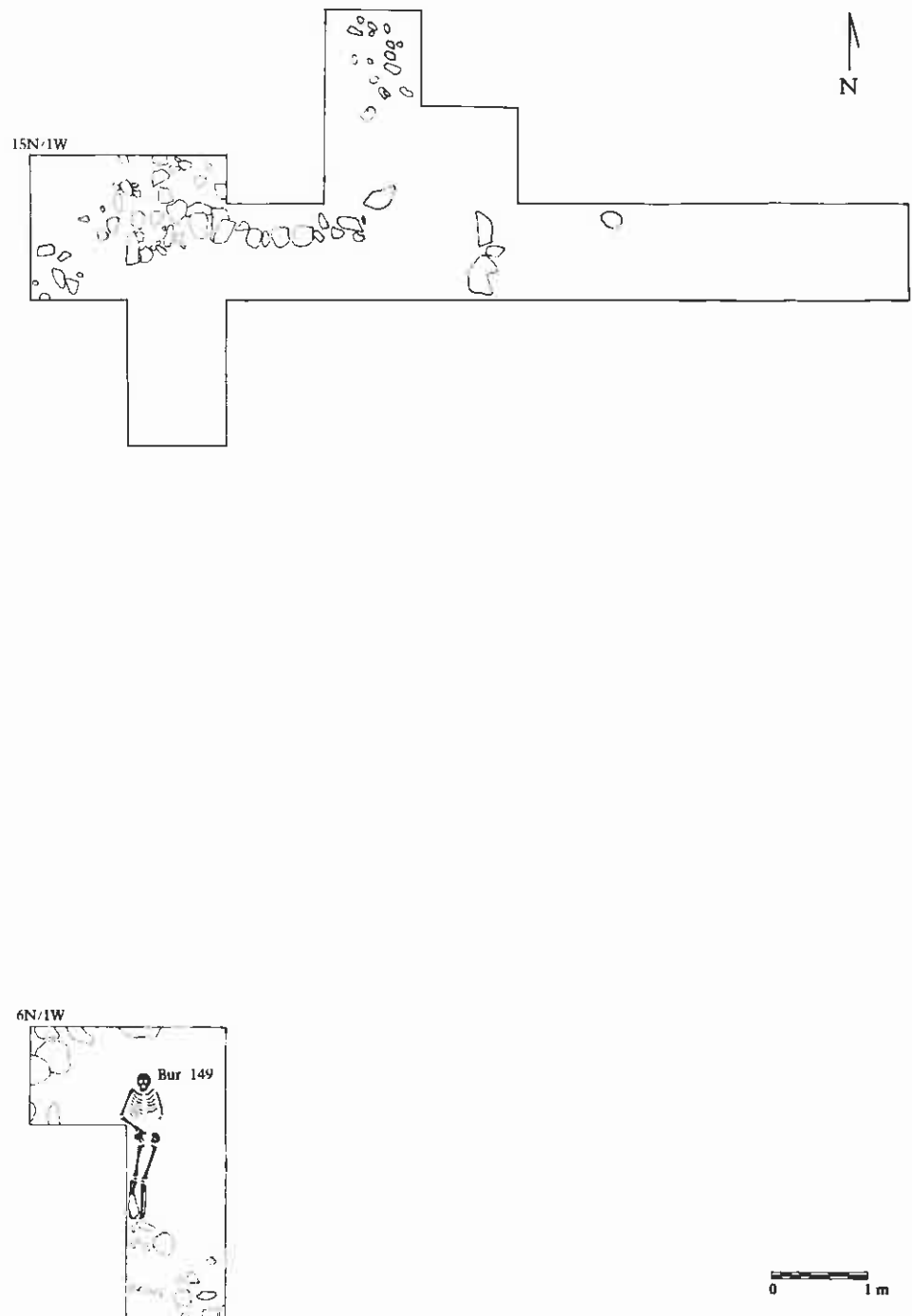


Figure 4.37. Plan map of N-2 excavations.

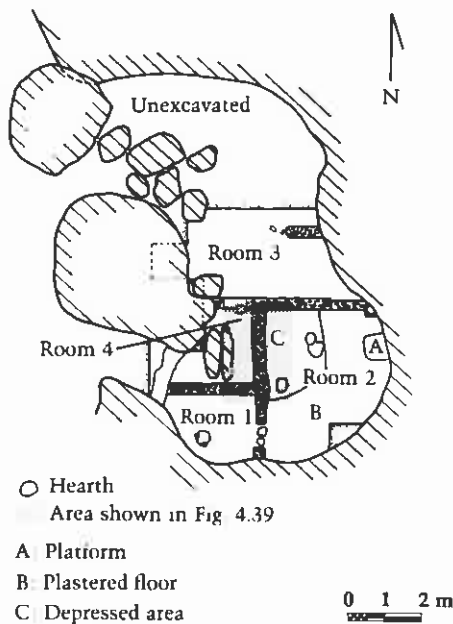


Figure 4.38. Plan view of Cave 4, Postclassic.

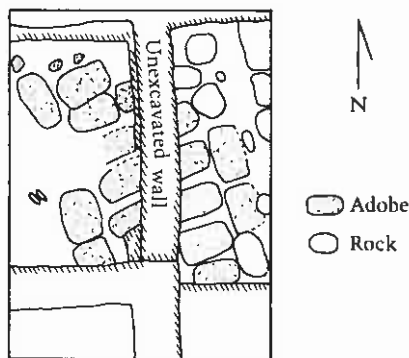


Figure 4.39. Plan view of Cantera phase adobe brick floor, Cave 4.

the year. The possible water storage caves tend to have a higher incidence of pictographs than do habitation caves.

Habitation debris was found in fourteen of the caves. It is certain that these caves were used for habitation, since they contained hearths, manos, metates, and tools of both chert and obsidian. Ceramics found were primarily utilitarian wares, but some decorated vessel sherds were also found. Prepared floors and partitioning walls are present in several of the caves. Caves 1 and 4 were excavated extensively enough to provide a good sample of their contents. In Cave 2, looters' backdirt was screened to recover dried plant remains (cotton, maize cobs, etc.; Appendix A) and wooden implements (Chapter 16).

The Cave 1 excavations uncovered Middle Postclassic, Classic, and Middle Formative deposits. These deposits, still under analysis, included clay and plaster floors, the remains of two walls, as well as a probable Late Formative burial (no. 151) and Middle Formative Cantera phase burials (nos. 152–155).

Cave 4, high on the western face of the *cerro*, contained a small Postclassic mud brick structure with four rooms (Fig. 4.38). A painted plaster floor in Room 2 was associated with a small raised platform and a depressed central area containing two hearths. The two doorways found had both been closed off with additional mud bricks. Collapsed walls indicated that the structure had fallen to ruin prior to rockfall from the cave's ceiling which partially blocks the cave entrance. Beneath the Postclassic structure in Cave 4 are 50 cm of Formative period deposits, within which were three Cantera phase burials (nos. 156–158). At the base of the deposit, just above bedrock, was a floor of adobe bricks (Fig. 4.39). This floor is apparently Cantera phase.

Tetla (FS 1974)

The villagers of present-day Chalcatzingo refer to the agricultural fields and terraces on the northeast side of the Cerro Delgado as "Tetla" (from the Nahuatl *tetlan*, "rocky place"). The Tetla zone, described in more detail in Chapter 24, is characterized by mound architecture apparently dating to the Late Classic and Middle Postclassic periods. The surface sherds are also predominantly from those periods, although Middle Formative sherds have been found on fields in the flatland area and in our excavations.

Our investigations included yearly sur-

veys of Tetla. In order to obtain a stratigraphic sample from that zone and to test for the possibility of Middle Formative occupation there, two fields, Tetla-1 and Tetla-11 (Fig. 24.16), were chosen for testing during the 1974 field season.

Tetla-1

This field lies to the south of the old colonial road (still used today) which winds through the zone. The field is ca. 150 m long and has a maximum width of ca. 75 m. Two areas were tested, both with negative results. These tests dramatized to us the fruitlessness of attempting to quickly test a large area with a few test pits.

Tetla-11

At the base of an enormous boulder, this field was heavily overgrown with *hui-zache*, indicating it had not been farmed in years. Initial investigations quickly uncovered wall lines and plaster floors just below the surface. These are the remains of a Middle Postclassic house which is described in detail in Chapter 25.

A stratigraphic pit was also excavated to the northwest of the house. The upper levels of this 3.4 m deep pit were Middle Postclassic. Included in these levels were two vessels which had been placed mouth-to-mouth. Inside the vessels were fragments of human bone and an unusual shell necklace. Underlying the Middle Postclassic levels was nearly 2 m of mixed fill containing Middle Postclassic, Late Classic, and Late Formative sherds. Middle Formative levels began at ca. 3 m. The fill indicates that Tetla 11 is a Middle Postclassic terrace. Our project did not attempt to date the hillside terraces of Tetla, but since Middle Formative sherds were not found on these hillside areas during our surveys, the terracing may not be contemporaneous to the Barranca phase terracing within what we term the main site zone on the west side of the hills.

RESUMEN DEL CAPÍTULO 4

Las excavaciones en Chalcatzingo se llevaron al cabo fundamentalmente durante tres temporadas de seis meses cada una, en 1972-1974. Se acompañó esta investigación con reconocimientos a niveles local y regional. Dadas las medidas del gran sitio y sus múltiples campos y terrazas, cada campo actual se consideró como una unidad de subsitio y le fue dada su respectiva numeración para identificación, inventario, y proceso de excavación. Las excavaciones de prueba consistieron generalmente de trincheras de 1×3 m, en tanto que las excavaciones con miras a obtener objetos en particular se hicieron de 2×2 m (correspondientes a nuestra unidad básica de cuadriculación). En tanto fué posible, las excavaciones siguieron la estratigrafía natural. Todo el material recibió el proceso de colado por malla. Muestras de flotación y de polen fueron tomadas frecuentemente también. Todos los artefactos fueron objeto de limpieza y catálogo en el sitio, y se procedió después a moverlos a nuestro laboratorio en Cuautla para su análisis.

La investigación fué diseñada para obtener información básica del sitio, tal como cuál fué la extensión total, cuáles sus períodos culturales mayores, así como qué distribución básica tuvieron los rasgos culturales correspondientes al Formativo Medio. Se pensó que fueran secundarias, y en última cuenta derivativas de los datos pertenecientes al sitio mismo, las consideraciones acerca del papel que tuvo Chalcatzingo en el juego de intercambio regional, y la naturaleza de sus contactos con la cultura Olmeca de la Costa del Golfo.

Se buscó aclarar la cronología del Período Formativo Mexicano Central, mediante el uso de los datos provenientes del Chalcatzingo, dado que la primera temporada de excavaciones coincidió con el año en el que dicha cronología fué puesta en duda seriamente. Por lo tanto, una de las primeras unidades excavadas fué una trinchera estratigráfica larga y profunda al través de la terraza (T) 1 (conocida después como la Plaza Central, PC).

Dado que las excavaciones de la estructura de las casas formaban parte importante de los objetivos del proyecto, las cuatro estructuras, PC Str. 1, Str. 2, T-9A, y T-4 resultan ligadas a las otras áreas excavadas durante la pri-

mera temporada de trabajo de campo. T-9A fué excavada para probar la hipótesis de que los grupos de tepalcates del Formativo Medio, los cuales se encontraron presentes en cada uno de los reconocimientos de superficie en cada terraza (generalmente uno por terraza) resultaran ser indicativos de las estructuras de las casas. Esto resultó ser cierto, y las posteriores excavaciones no fueron escogidas al azar sino que fueron hechas en función de la atención dada a estas concentraciones de tepalcates.

Las temporadas segunda y tercera consistieron primariamente de las excavaciones dirigidas a conseguir las estructuras de las casas (T-11, T-24, y T-29 en 1973; T-9B, T-23, T-27, S-39, y N-2 en 1974). Además, se investigaron otras estructuras y rasgos durante estas dos temporadas, las cuales incluyeron la "presa" de control de agua en T-15, un altar estilo Olmeca en T-25, una abundante concentración de obsidiana en T-37, el montículo plataforma (Str. 4) en la Plaza Central, las plataformas de cara de piedra y las estelas en T-15 y T-6, así como algunas de las cuevas del Cerro Delgado. En 1973 se excavaron algunas estructuras del Clásico, las cuales incluyeron un juego de pelota en T-15 y una pirámide redonda en T-3. En 1974 se probaron dos sitios pequeños del Formativo Medio del valle, Huazulco y Telixtac, para hacer una comparación con Chalcatzingo, y se excavó una casa del Postclásico en el área de Tetla en Chalcatzingo.

Se llevaron al cabo tres semanas de trabajo de campo, en 1976, con objeto de aclarar problemas de estratigrafía de algunas áreas del sitio, PC Str. 4 y T-6, en las cuales había materiales de la fase Amate. Una plataforma con cara de piedra de la fase Amate, T-6 Str. 3, fué descubierta pero no se procedió a su excavación dado el corto tiempo de la temporada de trabajo.