

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

The Social Implications of Ritual Behavior in the Maya Lowlands: A Perspective from
Minanha, Belize.

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

Anthropology

by

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2008

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Chair

University of California, San Diego

2008

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my mother, Janja Van Lehn (Janette Schwake). Her endless support, love, and encouragement have helped me on so many occasions and I could not have completed this without her. She has an astonishing strength of spirit, and she has always taught me to reach for my dreams. Thanks Mom, you are the most amazing woman in the world, and a great inspiration to me.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work has only one name on it, but it could never have been accomplished without the financial, logistic, academic, professional, and moral support of many people. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the people who have been critical to my success, and of course, I apologize if I have inadvertently left anyone out.

I would like to offer a most sincere and heartfelt thanks to Dr. Geoffrey Braswell for everything. I have learned a tremendous amount from Geoff, and he has been a great source of support throughout this process. The other members of my doctoral committee at UCSD, Drs. Guillermo Algaze, Paul Goldstein, Elizabeth Newsome, and Eric Van Young, are thanked for their constructive comments and general willingness to help.

A critical element that has enabled this work is the financial support I have been fortunate to enjoy in the form of research grants, travel bursaries, and research and teaching assistantships. Many thanks to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Trent University, UCSD, and SUNY-Buffalo.

This work was made possible through permissions granted by the Institute of Archaeology in Belize. I would like to thank Drs. Jaime Awe, Allan Moore, and John Morris, Mr. George Thompson and Mr. Brian Woodeye, as well as the entire staff at the Institute who do an incredible job. Very special thanks in particular to Jaime, who gave me my first opportunity to work in Belize. I have a deep respect and gratitude for Jaime. His vision for archaeology in Belize, his enthusiasm, and his kindness to all of us who work as guests in his country, are inspiring.

The dissertation work was done under the auspices of the Social Archaeology Research Program of Trent University. The Principal Investigator, Dr. Gyles Iannone, is a wonderful mentor and friend, and I'm thankful for his continued support. Cheers Gyles!

Many people in Belize have also been instrumental in the completion of this work. One very special colleague and friend is José Martinez. Joe knows more about this stuff than I do and has helped me through some of the roughest spots-- I cannot thank him enough, he really is an angel. I would also like to make special mention of David Valencio, who has always been a great friend and co-worker. All of my other Belizean colleagues and friends are also thanked for their great contributions during the years this work was done: Carlos Ayala and family, Joseph Cal, Erva and Landy Espat, Sam Harris, Bob and Nettie Jones, Miriam Khalil-Martinez, Selva Khalil-Martinez, Doris, Efrain, Glynnis, Lazaro, Marco, Millie, and Rosa Martinez, Uncle Joe Mayo, Arexia Morales, Diana from Pacz Hotel, Hugo Panti, Delso Sierra, Alwyn Smith, Everaldo Tut, Jeronico Tut, Victor and Theresa Tut and family, and Angel Velasquez. I apologize if I have inadvertently forgotten to list anyone here, but I truly am impressed with the wonderful folks from the Cayo District!

Getting through the doctoral program would have been impossible without the help, support, and hard work of my fellow graduate students, SARP staff, and field school students. Many, many thanks to the following amazing folks: Colin Agnew, Sarah Carr-Locke, Joelle Chartrand, Tina Christensen, Sara Clowery, Jim Conlon, Josalyn Ferguson, Nadine Gray, Sherry Gibbs, Brian Groves, Dr. Christophe Helmke, Jay Herbert, Nick Jamotte, Kimberley Kersey, Pat Killpack, Andrew Kinkella, Selma Losic, J. Paige MacDougall, Denise Mardiros-Rush, Jolene McMurdo, Adam Menzies, Matthew

Mosher, Dr. Holley Moyes, Alicia Orr-Lombardo, Meaghan Peuramaki-Brown, Jesse Phillips, Simone Philpot, Adam Pollock, Ryan Primrose, Peter Prince, Sandra Ricci, Mike Roets, Carol Sakamoto, Jason Seguin, Dr. Jeffrey Seibert, Sheri Smith, Norbert Stanchly, Dr. James Stemp, Lars Strøm Christenson, and Gerald Trainor, and to all of my SUNY-Buffalo and UCSD graduate student friends and colleagues. Extra special thanks to Jason Seguin for his assistance acquiring materials from Trent, Nick Jamotte and Brian Groves for help with the preparation of some of the figures at Trent, Jay Herbert and Colin Agnew for their help with the preparation of the human remains in Belize, Kimberley Kersey for her beautiful illustrations, Nadine Gray for ceramic analysis, Gerald Trainor for “clandestine” operations in the field, and Beniamino Volta for his computer wizardry and companionship in the Meso lab!

There are several professors who have assisted and inspired me with their collegiality, and willingness to read papers, answer questions, offer commentary, and share ideas. I would like to offer special thanks to Drs. Jim Aimers, Marshall Becker, Robert Knox Dentan, Jim Garber, Elizabeth Graham, Paul Healy, Ian Hodder, Lisa Lucero, Rhan-ju Song, Barbara Tedlock, and Estella Weiss-Krejci.

On a more personal side, I must thank my very supportive family for putting up with me throughout this long process. I could not have done this without their unflagging belief in my abilities. Thanks to Janette, Carolyn and Robert for everything. I would also like to thank Simon and Barbara Gray for treating me like family, even though I am a brat! Also, many thanks to Klaus Wulf. Many people have had a very positive impact on my life, but sadly, are no longer with us. I am deeply grateful to my father Peter

Schwake, my maternal grandparents Otto and Marie Van Lehn, my Uncle Andy and Auntie Annie Kampen, as well as Mary Gray and Michael Gray.

Finally, I would like to offer sincere thanks to a couple of my closest friends. For inspiration and support when needed, but also sweaty *Cult* t-shirts, positive overstanding, and “Red Sonja” jokes, I need to offer my thanks to Colin Agnew, Keelon Jenkins, and James Stemp. I have also been blessed with three people in my life who have shown me nothing but unconditional love, and thanks is certainly not enough to tell them what they mean to me. Tara Carter, Nadine Gray, and Dr. Don Smith have done all kinds of ridiculous things for me, and I truly would not be here if it was not for the three of them.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Social Implications of Ritual Behavior in the Maya Lowlands: A Perspective from
Minanha, Belize.

by

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Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology

University of California, San Diego, 2008

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The principal goal of this research is to elucidate the relationship between ancient Maya social organization and ritual behavior. More precisely, how the ancient Maya used the rituals surrounding death to promote their social goals. The research was undertaken at the site of Minanha, a medium-sized center located in the North Vaca Plateau of west central Belize. The site is located equidistant between the powerful lowland sites of Caracol to the south and Naranjo to the northwest, and the smaller sites of the Belize Valley to the north and southeastern Petén to the southwest. This location places Minanha at the center of an exciting frontier zone of interaction between all of these

different polities. Excavations at Minanha were done within ritual architecture at three loci in distinct occupation zones of the site: the site center, its immediate periphery, and the outlying habitation zone in the distant periphery of the site. This sampling strategy creates a geographic and spatial transect that cross-cuts all the social strata represented at the site, from apical elites in the site center, to lesser elites surrounding the site center, to the supporting populations of commoners in the site periphery. The results of this research confirm that different groups of people at the site used the rituals surrounding death for diverse purposes. This manifested in very dissimilar material traces in each of the investigation locations. The apical elites tapped into a mythical past to legitimate their right to rule, the lesser elites emphasize their occupational specialization as scribes as a means to bolster their social status, and the commoners at the site chose to maintain the status quo of longstanding regional traditions through their mortuary practice. All social strata at the site emphasize group interment over individual interment, a pattern seen in a similar frequency from the central Petén to the site of Caracol, but a different strategy of meriting individual interment was seen along a large crosscutting swath of land following the river systems of the Belize Valley and southeastern Petén. Mortuary practice and social position are intricately linked for the ancient Maya in complex and dynamic ways.

I

Introduction

I investigate how similarities in the mortuary sample from different social strata can be interpreted as aspects of emulation, tradition, ideology and the maintenance of the status quo, and how differences in the mortuary sample can be seen as deliberate group actions to achieve a particular aim in the present such as the legitimation of the right to rule, or the increase in social status along a continuum or status hierarchy. The main research question is how social status and mortuary behavior were related for the ancient Maya. In particular, which aspects or features of the material correlates of mortuary behavior are similar and different between and within social strata at the site of Minanha in west central Belize during the Late/Terminal Classic period (A.D. 675-810).

The dissertation starts with Chapter II, a consideration of ritual theory, mortuary archaeology, and the ancient Maya. The broad categories of ritual and religion are first examined via their historical definition by influential theorists such as Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx, and Max Weber. Then, work by cultural anthropologists on ritual and religious universals is discussed, particularly the work of Van Gennep on rites of passage and Victor Turner on symbolic capital. Death is the final rite of passage in an individual's life, but the group left alive must commemorate and reconstitute in the wake of the loss of that individual. A discussion of mortuary archaeology follows, or how archaeologists dealing with mortuary behavior have reconstructed elements of culture, the social system, political economy and ideology through the application of the techniques of mortuary

archaeology. Next, a discussion is presented on how Maya archaeologists have employed the constructs of mortuary archaeology at Maya sites in Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, and Honduras. Finally, a brief section on Maya caching and ritual practices is included because, in many cases, caches and burials were closely related ritual actions in the ancient Maya world. In fact, human remains can often be found in cache contexts, and artifacts seen in caches often constitute grave good assemblages. Conceptually, archaeologists separate caches from burials, but it is certain that there was a close relationship between these two types of ritual deposits.

Chapter III presents the research design for the work at Minanha. A cross-section of mortuary contexts that represent all social strata at the site were investigated. The sampling strategy employed for the excavations is presented, including the particular physical and logistical constraints under which the work was completed. The excavated data sample, like any archaeological sample, has inherent biases. Some of the most important biases are discussed in this chapter. The excavation methodology is also made explicit in this chapter. Finally, different hypothetical outcomes are discussed in relation to the various interpretations that could be made about social status and mortuary practice at the site.

Chapter IV presents broad background information on various aspects of the country of Belize. The environment, climate, flora, and fauna characteristic of Belize are discussed because these are typical of the environment and resources available during the florescence of the site of Minanha. The geology of Belize and specifically the Vaca Plateau are briefly described to better provide a picture of the available rock and mineral resources available in the environs of the site. A brief history of modern Belize is then

presented, because the archaeological research itself takes place within the present, and it helps to understand the full context and complexity of how site investigation in Belize first occurred in the modern era and continues today. Finally, a focused discussion of the history of archaeological investigations at the site of Minanha is presented, from the Carnegie projects of the 1920s through to the present day investigations with Trent University. Very few people have worked at Minanha in comparison to some archaeological sites that have been under constant scientific investigation, and this fact alone makes the data from Minanha a unique contribution to the field of Maya archaeology.

Chapter V presents the original data from the excavations at Minanha. Detailed excavation information is presented from three locations, Group A in the site epicenter, Group S in the site center, and the MRS4 Group in the periphery of the site. Preliminary description and interpretation about the significance of these excavated materials is presented in this chapter. The recovered data relates to a relatively constricted period of time at the site, the Late and Terminal Classic periods. Statistical shortcomings of the dataset are overcome through the incorporation of a vast amount of comparative regional data in the next chapter.

Chapter VI compiles mortuary data from the broader region surrounding Minanha. The available mortuary data from three regional zones, the Belize Valley region, the Vaca Plateau region, and the Southeast Petén region, is included to serve as comparative data that contextualize the Minanha material. Some stunning patterns of mortuary behavior emerge from this regional perspective. For instance, one of the most striking patterns of mortuary practice in the Late Classic period is the frequency of

multiple individual interments, with a significant number of multiple interments occurring in a non-random pattern across the landscape. This pattern is clearly significant and relates to patterns of microregional site affiliation and integration during the Late Classic. This example is one way that mortuary data can be used to answer larger questions of political integration for a region.

Chapter VII returns to a discussion of the Minanha mortuary data, specifically, how they answer the research question on the nature of the relationship between social status position and mortuary behavior. Due to the very different nature of the mortuary remains from each sector of the site, the motivations of each group are examined through the interpretations in this chapter. The apical elite, through their caching practices and public messages of legitimation of their right to rule, focused on community and tapped into past successful rulers' activities. This ensured their continued control of the site. The lesser elites used the interment of their deceased in a different way, one that was more focused on establishing a particular group identity linked to an occupational specialization as a means to forward their overall group status position. The commoners were engaged in mortuary activity that preserved a regional "folk" tradition, they were concerned with interring their dead with the correct degree of respect and appropriate ritual. Although the mortuary behaviors of the various social strata at the site were primarily different, there still were underlying similarities across all strata in the use and frequency of multiple individual interment. This characteristic is one that shows the broader regional affiliations of the Minanha Maya, and contextualizes their mortuary activity within a regional scale or perspective.

Finally, Chapter VIII presents some final conclusions about the relationship between social position and mortuary practice, and how this research project has successfully marshaled data to meaningfully engage with this question. The chapter summarizes the material presented in each of the previous chapters, and highlights how the data from Minanha show that different social groups within the site enacted the ritual process associated with death in a different way. Each group---commoners, lesser elites, and apical or ruling elites---used the ritual process to achieve a particular goal. Alternately, the groups emphasized specific aspects of group identity to maintain a traditional folk identity, to challenge the status quo, or to grant legitimacy to the current structural hierarchy.

Mortuary rituals constitute an opportunity for members of different social strata to engage with their own position in the socio-structural hierarchy. This interaction can be to maintain or reify a social position, or to challenge it. The Minanha mortuary assemblage from three different social strata at the site show both types of interaction, as groups strove to establish status within the shifting socio-political landscape of the Late and Terminal Classic periods.

II

Ritual Theory, Mortuary Archaeology and the Ancient Maya

This chapter presents a brief review of the ways that scholars have studied ritual and religion through archaeological assemblages. Four broad categories are examined because their combined articulation results in a holistic approach to the meaning behind the ritual process. These include: (1) issues related to the theory of religion and ritual; (2) the archaeological category of mortuary analysis; (3) mortuary analysis in the Maya area; and (4) archaeological analysis of cached and ritual offerings in the Maya area. Thus, this chapter includes broad theoretical notions that discuss how to evaluate the role of ritual and religion in living societies as well as how anthropologists have understood the structural role of religion within cultural systems. These theoretical considerations are then applied to the archaeological record through an examination of mortuary remains as this class of artifacts best reflects the ritual and religious ideas of a society. A brief overview of how ideas and methodologies from mortuary studies have been used and applied in the Maya area is then presented. Finally, a short discussion of caches and ritual offerings in the Maya area is included because this is one culturally specific context that is closely related and occasionally indistinguishable from the ritual processes associated with mortuary practice. These four categories encompass the essential foundation for the interpretation of the material remains excavated for this dissertation project at the ancient Maya site of Minanha.

Theoretical Approaches to Religion and Ritual

The articulation between religious beliefs and practices and social, economic, and political organization has been a focal point for historical, philosophical and anthropological research. Some of the earliest contributions to the development of theoretical models on this topic come from the influential works of Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx, and Max Weber. What follows is a brief review of each of these scholars, with an emphasis on the placement of the role of religion and ideology with respect to other structures of culture and society. Following this is a brief review of how these notions have been incorporated into archaeology, where the focus of study is the material record. Because archaeologists do not have direct access to the minds of ancient people, the way that they approach the study of ritual and religion is through the interpretation of material remains that reflect ancient ideology and belief, and more importantly, approach the meaning housed in ritual and religious material representations. An important aspect of this materialist approach is a semiotic interpretation of the meaning of culturally specific symbols within particular contexts, and how these symbols are represented and recombined to create new meanings.

Durkheim, Marx, and Weber

Emile Durkheim attempted to isolate the elemental characteristics of religious feeling. He was interested in the emergence of religious sentiment, particularly how the notions of the sacred and the profane were first manifested with an understanding of a supernatural realm beyond the everyday material world. One of Durkheim's most important contributions to the study of religion is the primacy he gave to social relations

and how these are intertwined with religious belief. He proposed that the first feelings of a religious nature were the product of collective social activity. This “social effervescence” is the prime mover in his theory of how religious sentiment arose from social interaction. In his words,

Religion is an eminently social thing. Religious representations are collective representations that express collective realities; rites are ways of acting that are born only in the midst of assembled groups and whose purpose is to evoke, maintain, or recreate certain mental states of those groups (Durkheim 1912:9).

Implicit in this explanation of the emergence of religious sentiment is the primacy placed on collective experience, phenomenology, public social life, and even the performance of religion. It is noteworthy that for Durkheim, material-based economic relations and issues of political economy did not play major roles in the emergence or use of religious notions, and items related to religious experience are mutually separate from the economic and the political realms. Moreover, he de-emphasized issues related to class-based power imbalances or social inequality.

Durkheim was one of the first writers to systematically describe the emergence of the fundamental cognitive division in the minds of humans that categorizes things as either sacred or profane. This basic categorization forms the structural foundation for the way that people view the world. He notes that anything can be sacred, but it is through representations or systems of representations that the sacred nature of a thing becomes known. These systems of representation consist of such things as beliefs, myths, dogmas and legends (Durkheim 1912:34).

Durkheim (1912:35) noted that sacred things are not fixed, either within one culture or between cultures. His emphasis on the polysemous nature of sacred things suggests that it is context, rather than the object itself, that denotes the sacredness of a thing. This idea of the arbitrary nature of what is classified as sacred parallels Saussure's (1966) work on the arbitrary nature of the linguistic sign and would seem to deny that an object itself could have inherent sacred qualities, but it is rather the social meaning infused in the object that transforms it from the profane to the sacred. This is important for archaeologists who interpret the meaning of symbols, because it emphasizes the importance of understanding a single object within an entire culturally specific complex of meaning, where material objects are routinely defined and redefined within the context of use. Even identical items can, depending on context, mean very different things. The context is likewise more than just the physical location in which the item is discovered, but also includes the audience who witness the ritual use of the item.

Durkheim's categorization of things as either sacred or profane fails to recognize that these categories are not mutually exclusive, but rather represent two relative ends on a continuum. Although Durkheim (1912:34) did give some merit to the idea of hierarchy within the categories, for example with some things being more sacred or profane than others, ultimately he viewed sacred things and profane things as entirely separate. Mircea Eliade suggested an updated take on Durkheim's categorization, acknowledging that the sacred is itself a complex notion, not one easily defined by the binary division of the world. Eliade (1959:14) notes that sacred things can become profane through desecration, while profane things can become sacred through particular sets of rites and rituals. In effect, sacred and profane are two ways of "being in the world," with a complex interplay

between the two that allows for the imposition of human agendas through symbolic manipulation. This reassignment is particularly useful for archaeological analyses of ritual and religious practices because the material record can be seen as the literal manifestation in the physical world of the use of a symbolically charged item within a distinct cultural context. Durkheim focused primarily on egalitarian societies. But for social contexts that are decidedly non-egalitarian, this functional manipulation can have significance for power relationships and political machinations. That is, groups with different levels of social power attempt to increase their status and standing through the manipulation of material possessions.

Durkheim's main contribution toward an understanding of the relationship between religion and society is the idea that religious feeling emerged from the social condition. The strength of Durkheim's approach is his operational methodology of identifying all aspects of culture as either sacred or profane, providing researchers with an analytical tool for the interpretation of the symbolic meaning of an object or a performance. Critiques of Durkheim are often based on the work of Karl Marx, who presents almost the inversion of Durkheim's model through an emphasis on the primacy of economic factors.

The work of Karl Marx has been very influential in anthropology, especially ideas on physical exploitation and oppression in contexts where ideological hegemony has been imposed on one group by another. Vulgar Marxism posits that society is founded on a structural base consisting of the mode of production, that is, the basic form of economic activity practiced by a particular culture to fulfill human needs. Nonetheless, economic activity, according to Marx, inevitably leads to the division of labor between those who

own and control the means of production and those who do not (Marx 1977:160). Thus for Marx, the economic sphere provides the base upon which the structural elements of social organization, particularly class, are founded. Ideology, therefore, fits into this scheme as a superstructural tool that is manipulated by those who control the economic sphere of production in order to maintain their position of dominance. In fact, Marx placed religion solidly within the political sphere and opposed any notion of religion as being based outside the humanist perspective. In other words, he writes,

...religion should be criticized more within a critique of the political situation than the political situation within a critique of religion...for religion has no content of its own and does not live from heaven but from earth (Marx 1977: 23).

Obviously, a key aspect of the Marxist perspective is the importance of unequal power relationships. This is quite a different view than Durkheim's, where there is almost no discussion of unequal social relationships, but rather an emphasis on the collective experience. Marx does emphasize the importance of the collective experience, but instead sees the cleavage of society into groups as grounded in economic terms. The often quoted quip "religion is the opiate of the people" (Marx 1977:64), expresses the way that Marx fit religion into his scheme for the organization of culture. Religious groups crosscut the unity of economic-based social divisions and are a source of social unrest that distract from economic concerns (Marx 1977:39). Religion, therefore, is an element of superstructure that serves to cloud awareness of economic exploitation. When Marx notes that "man makes religion, religion does not make man" (Marx 1977:38), he asserts that

religion is a tool utilized by some men to continue and legitimate their dominance in an economic sense.

For archaeology, the contribution of Marxian thought is that there are always relations of power underlying social actions. The analysis of the context of use of material culture related to ideology and religion should be understood within this theoretical conception. Specifically, religious practices in the past had implications to the economic life of the participants. Political control of religion and ideology should be seen from the perspective of what was to be gained in each particular context.

Max Weber (1930:90) set out with the explicit goal of determining the extent that religious ideas shape and form actual practices, and identifying other forces that play a role in shaping action. Rather than modeling the relationship between religion and society as either a top-down or bottom-up approach, Weber utilizes a notion of the very interconnectedness of these systems. He notes that there are constant accommodations between ideology and religion, and social structure and political economy. Ideology, therefore, can be described as something that permeates social and cultural existence and is woven into these other structures of society. Perhaps the single most important contribution of Weber's work is his notion that individual ideas can become forces in history (Weber 1930:90). He emphasizes this through the example of how Protestantism's foundational idea of the "calling of work" created an individual's morality and ethical responsibility to fulfill that calling. This idea had a great impact on the economic system of emerging market capitalism as it promoted the acquisition of capital through work as an obligation (Weber 1930:75). One thing Weber's example shows is the importance of historical particularism, or that the reception and legitimation

of an idea has a basis in the activities surrounding its existence. This is especially applicable to archaeological analyses in that it emphasizes the importance of determining the details of the particular context within which an idea was manifested in the past.

The theoretical heritage of Durkheim, Marx, and Weber is the primacy each places on a particular aspect of culture, itself a complex system of interwoven structures and actors. Each scholar provides a lens with which to view and interpret the material correlates of the actions of past cultures. Durkheim's contribution is his definition of the sacred and profane as cultural universals, and that these meanings are assigned within a social context. Also, that religious feeling itself and the ideological significance of things related to religion and religious action emerge from a social context. Marx's contribution relates to power and unequal social relationships. Far from being an agreed upon collective decision, Marx sees religious sentiment as something that is utilized to obscure hierarchy and exploitation. This is useful when looking at past cultures, because it serves as a reminder that even in egalitarian societies, there are status inequalities, and that we must reconstruct past ritual action with a view towards the relative power positions held by social actors. Finally, Weber contributes a dynamic perspective between ideology and society, and that both continually informed and transformed the other. Thus, for archaeological interpretation, the complexity of religious action must be understood via these transformative cycles.

Theoretical Understandings of Ritual

Collins (1998:1) points out that the very definition of 'ritual' is problematic, for it is a term used in such broad contexts as to almost become meaningless. The term can apply to an act that is formulaic, symbolic, culturally meaningful, or traditional, but there

are many exceptions to each aspect of this definition (Collins 1998:1). In the sense of an oft-repeated series of prescribed actions, ritual can be meaningless and have no attached cultural or religious significance. Victor Turner (1969:4), a major figure in the study of ritual and religion in cultural anthropology, initially defended the relevance of studying something that earlier scholars, Lewis Henry Morgan in particular, had deemed unknowable, unintelligible, and part of the realm of imagination and emotion. Like Turner, Claude Lévi-Strauss (1978:13) similarly notes that this conflict is inherent to academic inquiry because of the primacy of scientific knowledge, which does not adequately take alternate ways of knowing into account. He labeled things in opposition to the scientific way of knowing as “the logic of the concrete,” defining it as “respect for and the use of the data of the senses” (Lévi-Strauss 1978:13). By pointing out this dichotomy, Lévi-Strauss and other theorists suggest that there are ways of knowing the meaning and significance of things classed as part of the perceptory, sensory, and phenomenological realms. This is particularly true when the investigator can operationalize belief systems by focusing the scope of scientific inquiry on meaningful social moments, such as those related to what anthropologists have classified as rites of passage (van Gennep 1908).

Rituals that relate broadly to van Gennep’s notions of rites of passage can be seen as meaningful actions because they relate to the positions of individuals and groups within their social structure. The added importance of the social context in which a ritual occurs provides a framework for understanding the meaning or significance of the ritual as a rite of passage. Turner (1969:43) referred to this specifically as symbolic ritual, and by that he meant ritual that was deeply characterized by the utilization of symbolic items

defined through culturally specific cognitive classifications, social structures, and cosmic ideology or worldview. Nonetheless, we are still left with the task of understanding what is ritual and what is not. Bell (1992) emphasizes three aspects of action that can help us understand the meaning of ritual. First, ritual is situational or has a particular cultural and social context associated with it. Second, ritual is strategic. There are always relations of power to consider when analyzing ritual action. Third, ritual reproduces or reconfigures a vision of the stratigraphy of power in the world (Bell 1992:4). These aspects of ritual place it within a social context that is hierarchical, and emphasize both conscious and unconscious notions of the structure of society. Having all three of these aspects included in an analysis of ritual enables the researcher to describe ways that ritual maintains and challenges the status quo, or in other words, how ritual action can both affirm the hegemonic ideology or provide an outlet to social actors in challenging the dominant ideology.

In broad theoretical terms, mortuary or funerary rituals fall under van Gennep's (1908) category of rites of passage. He defined rites of passage as particular rituals related to crises in the lifecycle of an individual that have structured order and symbolic content. In particular, he identified three major phases of rituals related to rites of passage: separation, transition, and incorporation (van Gennep 1908:11). This contribution towards the creation of a systematic partitioning of ritual into universal elements was reliant on the underlying notion of the distinction of the categories of sacred and profane. Equally important for van Gennep was the idea that rites of passage are intimately related to the social conditions of the individual or group enacting the ritual. In other words, rites of passage have social meaning, and are carried out as a result

of shifts and changes in the social status of individuals (van Gennep 1908:20).

Concomitant with this notion is the idea that rites of passage can affect individuals through categorical transformation and groups through the enactment of rituals within the community. Finally, although he defined three stages in the enactment of rites of passage, he noted that particular rites of passage typically emphasize only one of these. For instance, although funerary rituals reflect all three stages of separation, transition, and incorporation, the focus is on the separation of the deceased member of the community from that of the living (van Gennep 1908:11). This is echoed by Bloch (1992) who defines ritual as connecting everyday life to the transcendental. Because of this, people view funerary ritual as something that negates the permanence of death, and allows the deceased to transcend to the sacred realm.

Van Gennep's original description for the structure of ritual has been almost universally accepted. In fact, it is often taken as a given that he was correct in how he defined the stages of a rite of passage. Although his stages of the ritual process have subsequently been applied to numerous ethnographic and sociological examples, Victor Turner has significantly elaborated on van Gennep's notions. Turner, unlike van Gennep, sees the process of transformation between stages, or what he calls the liminal phase, as the key significance of ritual rather than the cumulative change that follows a ritual performance (V. Turner 1977). By focusing on van Gennep's second stage, Turner has identified two facets of liminality: the liminal and the liminoid. He defines the liminoid as characteristics outside the central economic and political processes of a culture that develop marginally to the main structure. By contrast, liminal phenomena are collective and sanctioned cycles of ritual (V. Turner 1977:44). In other words, Turner characterized

the ritual sphere as containing a competing tension between structurally sanctioned group activities and more marginal actions performed by smaller segments of a society. To distinguish these two aspects of the liminal phase of ritual, Turner (1969:109) refers to the liminal as structure and the liminoid as anti-structure, permitting a dialogue between the status quo and the inversion or challenge to the societal norm. What these have in common, however, is that they both contain elements of liminality---the concept that there is an interruption in the usual flow of social relations. The presence of symbols that represent both structure and anti-structure are seen within the liminal phase of the broader rites of passage. There is often a competing tension for a ritual participant in the liminal phase, who is granted special status but who also lacks status, who is torn down and built up, who is simultaneously in the symbolic womb and the symbolic grave (Turner 1969:96). Death is a very powerful metaphor that is present in many other rites of passage or stages of transition throughout the lifecycle, thus it stands to reason that rituals associated with actual death have parallels to all other stages of life, and are relevant to the social relations, political hierarchy, and economic systems of a specific culture (Turner 1969).

Turner notes an additional aspect of the rites of passage: the dialectic opposition between the established structure of social relations. For state societies this includes a structured, differentiated, and hierarchical system of opposition against individuals in the moment of liminality when all structural positions are stripped away and the community of individuals is seen and represented as unstructured and undifferentiated (Turner 1969:96). This undifferentiated state of shared base experience is referred to as *communitas*. In a structuralist explanatory model, *communitas* cannot exist in the absence

of the structure (Turner 1969:96). There is also an aspect of danger associated with *communitas* because during the liminal stage it is in opposition to the usual structure. *Communitas* constitutes a challenge to the status quo, but beyond the ritual process the community as a whole affirms the status quo, despite the fact that inequality is present in the system (Turner 1969:109). For mortuary ritual, this form of description and explanation cements the significance between the material manifestation of the ritual (grave goods, grave type, grave location, etc.) and the social structure of society. Although mortuary ritual is certainly significant as it relates to social organization, a major part of mortuary rites relates to the inversion of the status quo caused by the sudden departure of an individual or individuals, and the re-affirmation of the validity of the structural hierarchy as it exists in the everyday.

Terence Turner also emphasizes van Gennep's transformative stage of the ritual process, but goes one step further by developing a working model that explains how, not just why, rites of passage work towards mending ruptures in social systems. He outlines a theory of the articulation between ritual and the social context in which it is enacted. He pays close attention to the differentiation between the normal everyday structures of life and the special circumstances surrounding the ritual situation (T. Turner 1977:60). He emphasizes the notion that ritual and ceremonial behaviors develop when the usual structure of social relationships is challenged. In contrast to the uncertainty created by this rift in the normal situation, ritual provides a structured and controlled pattern of action to combat the uncontrollable (T. Turner 1977:61). This description of ritual is especially applicable to rites of passage. For example, when an individual starts to exhibit qualities of another age-set (as in the transition from girl to woman or boy to man) the

status quo is upset, and a rite of passage marking transcendence to the next category heals the inconsistency or incoherence of the situation by re-categorizing the individual. One unique aspect of funerary ritual as a rite of passage is that there is often less predictability regarding when the rift will occur. This speaks to the degree to which rites of passage have either an individual or group emphasis, or a combination of importance to both individuals and the group. For age-set transcendence, it is predictable that all members of a group of a particular age will change their structural category together as a special group of initiates. With death, the structural rift is often created not only by the unexpected loss of an individual, but also by the fact that while the transcendence of categories applies to the individual, the ritual is enacted by the group of survivors to restore the social framework. Therefore, the importance of the ritual for the community is emphasized over the importance of the rite of passage for the individual (Buikstra 1995:230; Dillehay 1995). Peterson (1987:74) points out that this is seen in other types of rites of passage as well, for example the baptism of babies, where the enacted rite has more meaning and emphasis for the group than the individual. In the Christian baptismal rite, the baby is unaware of his or her change in status, but the rite itself is important to the community of believers to ensure that the baby is part of the group. The transmission of meaning and value re-affirms group beliefs, much the same as a funerary ritual does.

These theories of ritual, rites of passage, liminality, and structural manipulation contribute important insights to the meaning of mortuary materials recovered from archaeological contexts. Mortuary archaeology deals with materials that result from a moment in time that correlates to one of van Gennep's rites of passage. Grave goods constitute examples of Turner's symbolically charged ritual items. The whole ceremony

associated with the death of an individual is one that is characterized by a dynamic re-shuffling of the social status positions of all the remaining group members. Thus, the work of van Gennep, V. Turner, T. Turner, Bell, and others is particularly relevant to mortuary contexts.

Ritual and Social Memory

One of the recent notions employed to explain the meaning behind archaeological materials of a ritual nature relates to the idea of collective memory. A number of recent publications have examined the relationship between memory and archaeological remains (Chesson 2001; van Dyke and Alcock 2003; Williams 2003). Several terms have been used to refer to this phenomenon: collective memory, social memory, collective or social remembering, cultural memory, and group memory. In this section, I discuss definitions of these terms. I then examine the general characteristics and theory of social or collective memory in order to establish a general framework of archaeological correlates that confirm the presence of this phenomenon.

Definitions used to refer to collective memory share several common points. These include: (1) the discussion of the location of the phenomenon of collective memory in relation to the remembrance of the individual subject; (2) the relationship between memory, history, and identity; and (3) the sense of a present purpose responsible for the active process of memory production (Connerton 1989; Halbwachs 1992; Myszal 2003; Nora 1989; Wertsch 2002).

Assmann (1995:126) likens cultural memory to biological inheritance. Instead of being shared genetically, cultural memory is a solution for the preservation of tradition. Specifically, he defines cultural memory as “a collective concept for all knowledge that

directs behavior and experience in the interactive framework of a society and one that obtains through generations in repeated societal practice and initiation” (Assmann 1995:126). Essential to this definition is the idea that cultural memory is something that serves as a repository for cultural tradition. In contrast to other definitions, Assmann emphasizes the conservation of tradition as the main function of cultural memory. The notion of conservation raises an essential characteristic of any definition of cultural memory: time. Something cannot be classed as belonging to long-term cultural memory, as opposed to everyday or communicative memory, if it does not have a component of longevity on the order of decades, generations, or centuries (Assmann 1995:129).

Other irreducible components of any definition of collective memory are that it is shared by a group and that it is constructed or mediated within a social context (Assmann 1995:127; Halbwachs 1992). Collective memory is something that does not exist at the scale of the individual, but rather it is intersubjective. It is a form of knowledge created and agreed upon by more than one individual, much in the same way that language is (Samuel 1990:6). But the group context is not a singular entity, because there can be many simultaneous groups to which a single individual belongs, and thus many competing and parallel groups constructing different pasts as a means of solidifying their identity in the present (Halbwachs 1992). Misztal (2003:25) demonstrates the importance of the sanction of a group in her definition of collective memory as “the representation of the past, both the past shared by a group and the past that is collectively commemorated, that enacts and gives substance to the group’s identity, its present conditions and its vision of the future.” This definition emphasizes that the creation of collective memory is an active process, with group members selecting particular things to remember that are

fundamental to their shared group identity. As well, it underlines the importance of the present in the creation of collective memory, suggesting that contemporary motivations are at least partly responsible for the production of group memory. Halbwachs (1992) calls this the “presentist approach”, stressing that collective memory is something that emerges in the present as a result of the combination of present concerns and through the act of commemorating the past. The present participants may not themselves remember the past that is being commemorated, but the combination of the cumulative aspect of past events and the presentist emphasis on group cohesion allows for both continuity with distant events and for new readings of the past for the present (Halbwachs 1992).

The creation and manipulation of a usable past is a key element to the creation of collective memory and also to the remembrance of events long past. Hobsbawm (1983) labeled the manipulation of a usable past as the invention of tradition. He defined the invention of tradition as “a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past” (Hobsbawm 1983:1). Inherent in this definition is both an element of alteration (in which people consciously select particular aspects of a past to emphasize through ritual) and an element of conservation (in which the tradition being replicated in the present is represented as if unchanged). Even if traditions remain unchanged through long periods of time, the present milieu itself is different from all the contexts of the past in which the tradition or remembrance occurred.

The coalescence of a shared group memory also implies that the group has come to a consensus about past identity. Participants agree to some statement of underlying

truth and use that truth to forge a continued claim about the present and future of the group (Fentress and Wickham 1992:25). Additionally, it is the use of the remembered past in the present that serves a particular purpose in the present. This is often a claim of naturalization or legitimation of authority, a defense of preferential status, or a reassertion of access to resources (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Van Dyke and Alcock 2003).

The process of collective memory requires a mechanism to facilitate the successful operation of both the creation and maintenance of these memories. Wertsch (2002:6) suggests that an essential component of collective memory is mediation. The process of creating collective memory is an action that is mediated via cultural tools such as language and narrative texts (Wertsch 2002:6). Although Wertsch refers to text as the foundation for this mediation, other cultural tools, such as oral narrative or items of material culture, can stand as proxies for written text and serve in the same capacity as mnemonic devices that facilitate the act of remembrance. Some define the thing that mediates within very broad boundaries (e.g., words, images, songs, ceremonies, stories, people): essentially anything that triggers remembrance (Rodríguez and Fortier 2007:xii). Beyond just serving as mnemonic devices, texts and objects serve as repositories for memory. Memories are distributed between these memory banks and the individuals of the collective who do the remembering. Elsner (2003:210) labels a system where objects hold a functional role as signifiers of memory as object-based semiotics, that is, a system where material forms themselves are a culturally based system of communication. The objects serve as a functional tool to facilitate the retention and recall of socially relevant information. This mnemonic process cannot be separated from the material or the material act of representation (Küchler 1987: 243; Melion and Küchler 1991:7). The

materiality of the object in conjunction with its context of use allow the object itself to have an impact on the social relations of those who make and use it. This impact may support, challenge, undermine, or reify those social relations (Meskell 2004: 2). Because of the active process between an object that mediates remembrance and the subject, Wertsch (2002) defines the enterprise of collective memory as collective remembering. Although Mistal's (2003) definition of collective memory and Wertsch's (2002) definition of collective remembering are fundamentally similar, Wertsch places primacy on the active process and Mistal places primacy on the representation of collective memory. In either case, the role of objects as mediator is a powerfully different interpretation of material culture than other forms of analysis based on style or appreciation of the piece in isolation from its mnemonic context.

Social memory can operate in different contexts, but one feature common to all mnemonic processes is a spatial component. The technique known as "the method of loci" is a cognitive system of remembering that links word, image, or object with a spatial location (Küchler 1987:249). This technique uses a socially and culturally specific spatial mapping to remember more than rote memorization can alone. For the individual, the spatial referent could be chosen at will, but in the case of collective remembering the group agrees on the associative locale and objects to aid in remembrance. This agreement is constrained by particular social and cultural limitations. Locales and objects are standardized amongst a cultural group, a feature that is promising for the detection of long-term cultural remembrance through the examination of material remains. The relationship between memory and the spatial location where the remembered event took place is important because there is a great degree of specificity attached to a recollection

when it has a spatial referent (Archibald 2002:74). As a shared group activity, social memory is performed. It is a discursive body practice that establishes a connection between the act of remembering and the space in which it occurs (Meskell 2004: 65).

Some theorists place the notion of social or cultural memory in opposition to the notion of history, something that “simpler” societies had instead of formal writing systems. Nora (1989:8) discusses this fundamental opposition, and suggests that history eradicates memory through its incontrovertible recollection. He defines memory as something akin to a living entity, something that is in permanent evolution, something that responds to remembering and forgetting, and ultimately something that is fluid because it can be manipulated and appropriated (Nora 1989:8). This definition reflects some of the characteristics of Myszal’s (2003) definition of collective memory, but where Nora defines history and memory as being opposites, Myszal has a more open definition that allows for the coexistence of the processes of formal history and social memory. One point of articulation between history and memory is the essential role that power relations have in relation to official written or objectified recollections. Küchler (1987:248) identifies memory and the production of history as mutually related processes where both are connected to the attainment and maintenance of power and authority. Both mnemonic processes and the production of history are open to social and historical influence. Thus, the two processes coexist alongside one another, the difference lies only in the social milieu or context of their use. For instance, the ancient Maya certainly had a writing system with which to record historical events. The use of Maya hieroglyphic writing was controlled by apical elites, with only the largest and most important sites having control over the production of writing (Marcus 1992). As a technological tool of

communication of the elite, writing served two ends: either an integrative or agitative function between elites, or among elites and commoners (Marcus 1992:11). There is evidence to suggest that many sites without writing employed pseudo-writing to imitate readable glyphs, but more importantly, to show their recognition of the power of the written word. If formal writing, and hence control over the recording of history was not accessible, apical elites from lesser sites and marginalized elites could have employed object semiotics or mnemonic processes as an alternate means to acquire and maintain power and legitimacy and to bolster social status through the process of collective remembering. This parallels Wertsch's (2002) assertion that collective memory is a mediated process, but here, objects serve as the intermediary instead of written text.

Several definitions and characteristics of collective remembering are described in the preceding section, but we are still left with the task of how to operationalize these phenomena in the material assemblages recovered from archaeological contexts. The material correlates to the process of collective remembering have most of the following traits: temporal longevity, evidence of being shared by a group, presence of one or more object mediators, a present purpose for the creation of a usable past, a feat of remembrance that could not otherwise be explained, a strong spatial referent or location associated with the process, and evidence of the process taking place within a ritual context. One strategy to discern between conscious collective remembering and non-discursive repetitive ritual practices is to compare their characteristics (Table 2.1).

The first characteristic, longevity, relates to the temporal range of the material items. For long-term cultural remembering to occur, there must be material proof that something is remembered over time. Material remains related to rituals that do not reflect

cultural remembering might exist in a single time, in a particular moment, or outside of temporal comparisons. The second characteristic, that the remembering occurs at the scale of more than one individual, is a defining feature of collective memory. If the ritual can be enacted by a single individual, it cannot represent collective memory. This is different from a single individual enacting a ritual that, in actuality, is one that refers back to a collective ritual. The point is that if a single individual can enact the ritual in the absence of reference to a collective version or template of the ritual, then it is not a form of collective memory. This is not to say that all group ritual activity is by default an example of collective memory, most ritual contexts do involve more than one individual, but if the ritual context is one that could entail a single individual such as a private domestic ritual, it can be ruled out as an example of collective remembering. This feature is also linked to the spatial referent for collective remembering: the physical location of the ritual event must be one where the group involved could witness and partake of the ritual. Because of this, it is most likely that rituals associated with conscious collective remembering will not be in private, domestic contexts, but rather in public or semi-public open areas and shrines. In addition, the presence of a spatial referent connects to the mnemonic function or role the physical space has in the recall process. The link with a particular spatial context is not necessary to a ritual that does not involve memory construction. The spatial context could shift or vary if it did not serve as a locus for associative recall. In addition, there must be material items that serve as mediators in the act of collective remembering. The material culture that serves as a mnemonic device or as a reservoir for culturally significant information related to the act of recall needs to be present in the recovered archaeological remains for archaeologists to be able to discuss

collective memory. The context of the materials is integral to the role the specific spatial location serves as a locus for the creation of collective memory. In conjunction with the previously discussed material correlates, the material evidence must point to an interpretation that an unusual feat of remembrance occurred. The context of material remains, particularly if they are diachronic in scale, as well as the spatial location of remains can be used as evidence of the feat of remembrance.

The final aspect of the interpretation of the archaeological correlates of a cultural memory event include placing the remains within their local, regional, and cultural context to determine the motivation behind the ritual event. The reason for the creation of the connection to the past through a memory event could relate to multiple purposes in the event's present, and a description of the broader events can elucidate what that motivation may have been. The hearkening back to a usable past could have served a multitude of social ends; to bolster status, legitimate right to rule or access to resources, legitimate social or occupational position, and settle land claim or resource disputes, among other things.

Mortuary Archaeology

Archaeologists most often approach the study of culture via the rigorous analysis of material remains related to settlement and subsistence practices (Flannery and Marcus 1993:260). This methodology does not always have much relevant application to the interpretation of material related to the realm of ideology and religious belief. This changed with the pioneering work of Lewis Binford (1971) and Arthur Saxe (1971) on

mortuary remains. Of particular interest is the underlying similarity of their work to the fundamental ideas of Durkheim, Marx and Weber, alternately emphasizing the primacy of social organization, economic and political economy, and the interconnectedness of these by their relation to ideological systems. A number of newer approaches to mortuary archaeology have emerged in the years since the contributions of Binford and Saxe, with variable emphasis placed on the remnant physical materials we deal with as archaeologists. Nonetheless, these approaches tend to conserve the basic notion that relevant information about social organization and meaning can be deduced from material remains.

An example of a newer approach that places primacy on economic or material items is DeMarrais et al.'s (1996) notion that ideological principles, as they apply to political organization, hegemony, power relations, and actions of resistance, are embedded in material culture. Moreover, this materialization allows archaeologists a way to access the meaning of past social and ritual action. One must question, however, the appropriateness of an archaeological data set to answer questions related to what are often cognitive processes such as ideas and beliefs (Flannery and Marcus 1993:260). Not all material assemblages can be effectively brought to bear on questions of mental processes, but this is not to say that there are not appropriate data sets that are useful, including the remains associated with mortuary contexts. If any class of material items was to be used to elucidate the ideology and ritual practices of an archaeological culture, items related to mortuary contexts would seem to be the most appropriate because there is an authenticity and solemnity associated with people's actions in relation to the disposal of their own dead. This is especially apt in relation to van Gennep's (1908) emphasis on

the importance of rites of passage, because death is one of the most significant instances in the life of an individual and society where ritual associated with the rites of passage can clearly be identified materially.

The archaeological analysis of mortuary remains was explicitly developed by the innovative work of Binford (1971) and Saxe (1971). Following the idea that burial customs reflect social relationships, Binford (1971:7) posited that rites related to mortuary ritual vary in form and structure with different social variables. He included a level of analysis that examined the degree of continuity or change in burial practices related to the relative stability or instability of the social and political structure of the group (Binford 1971:13). Binford (1971:13) admits that this is a difficult assertion to confirm because so many of the case studies that he used to examine this premise were unique and defied categorization as politically stable or unstable, not to mention the difficulties in documenting relative stability and instability in mortuary practice. What this study did contribute, however, was a comparative perspective that incorporated diverse data from many parts of the world. One of the main points that emerged from Binford's work was that within a single society there often is a great diversity in burial practices. This formal differentiation of mortuary rites is related to differences in status and group affiliation of the deceased individual (Binford 1971:14). This realization was important because it countered the notion put forth by Kroeber (1927) that mortuary ritual was somehow independent of other aspects of culture such as social organization or political organization. Because of the strong association between an individual's status in the social system in life and the continuation and incorporation of this position in death, Binford (1971:15) focused on the range of roles available to the individual in any given

society. He termed this role theory. He posited that for each society, there were a number of different social personae or roles that an individual could obtain. In “simpler,” more egalitarian societies there were generally fewer social roles than in more “complex,” hierarchically stratified societies (Binford 1971:17). These social personae relate to aspects of demographics, the age and sex of the individual, as well as aspects of the individual’s place in the society with regards to relative status and “occupation,” and incorporation into other subsets of membership within the group (Binford 1971:17). Thus the interpretation of the meaning of burial practices through the lens of understanding the individual’s social persona transcended the descriptive focus of the analyses that archaeologists had already been doing.

This emphasis on role theory (clearly borrowed from British Structural functionalism) parallels Turner’s (1969:97) notions of the dialectic between structure and *communitas*, the idea that individuals and groups in society alternate between low status and high status positions in their ever increasing attainment of overall higher status. One point of departure between Binford’s role theory and Turner’s ideas about status is that Turner described even relatively “simple” societies as having very complex divisions of “multiple personae, groups, and categories, each of which has its own developmental cycle, at a given moment many incumbencies of fixed positions coexist with many passages between positions” (Turner 1969:97). Thus, for mortuary analysis, teasing out the complexity or significance of the various positions where the individual was situated is a difficult prospect.

Like Binford, Arthur Saxe (1971) has investigated similar notions related to the belief that an individual’s treatment in death is a reflection of his or her position or status

in life, and that in looking at the entire range of interment practices within a single culture, the nature of the social system can be deduced (Saxe 1971:39). Binford and Saxe's contribution towards understanding funerary ritual was, at the time, contentious and in direct opposition to Kroeber's (1927) belief that mortuary practices were independent of other core cultural traits (Binford 1971:14). Kroeber's influence, particularly his assertion that mortuary behavior is relatively detached from culture, has shaped the way that previous archaeologists looked at mortuary remains as the manifestation of a set of isolated, special-occasion behaviors that are not imbued with elements found in all other aspects of a culture.

Conversely, an unfortunate simplification of the significance of mortuary remains as direct proxies for social organization has occasionally emerged from the Binfordian approach to mortuary remains (Rakita and Buikstra 2005:5). Mortuary ritual, including all its rites and behaviors, is a complex process, and mortuary remains are only the partial physical residues from the terminal stage of the mortuary process. Thus, any simple one-to-one correlation between status and burial should be suspect. Multiple lines of evidence---including settlement, survey, architecture, resource availability---should be used to confirm interpretations based on grave type, orientation, grave goods, body treatments, and other elements distinctly related to the mortuary assemblage.

The work of Binford and Saxe has been elaborated to include not only the analysis of mortuary remains as indicators of social organization, but also to take account other factors such as the environmental, economic, ritual, and even archaeological transformation of mortuary remains (Tainter 1978:109). Tainter discusses two criteria of mortuary analysis: the range of social information that can be derived from mortuary

remains and the reliability of burial data to indicate social phenomena (Tainter 1978:110). The notion of role theory, or that an individual plays multiple social roles within his or her life, is the basis for the linkage between the person's death, mortuary rites, and the correlation with the social organization of the society. Tainter (1978:110) emphasizes the point made by Saxe that at death, unlike any other crisis point in the life of an individual, all people who interacted with the deceased are present to mark the final rite of passage. Social personae or roles are linked to the material correlates of mortuary ritual because individuals with relatively high status have a greater number of relationships and status obligations than do people with low status and few important status relationships (Tainter 1978:118).

One result of this emphasis on the individual and his or her social personae has been that instances of multiple person interments seem to contradict the validity of using the individual as the unit of analysis. Group burials present a complication because it is difficult to discern individual statuses. It is also difficult to associate particular grave goods with particular individuals (Kuijt 1996). However, as Tainter pointed out, Saxe had approached this question in his original work:

To the degree that corporate group rights to use and/or control crucial but restricted resources are attained and/or legitimated by means of lineal descent from the dead (i.e. lineal ties to ancestors), such groups will maintain formal disposal areas for the exclusive disposal of their dead (Saxe in Tainter 1978:123).

In a sense, Saxe identifies one of the most important levels of social division for the manifestation of mortuary ritual, the corporate or lineage group. It follows that in

instances of group interment, the importance of the individual is downplayed in favor of the importance of the group. This suppression of individual identity is thought to be strongly related to a social explanation, again confirming the strong relationship between treatment in death and the social organization of a society (Brown 1995:5). Brown notes that Saxe further links the development of a corporate or lineage group identity in death with an economic function by stating that this strategy of emphasis on group identity through the maintenance of formal areas for interment is often correlated with the group's control of a restricted resource (Saxe in Brown 1995:13). This aspect of the Saxe-Binford hypothesis has generally been accepted, as it dovetails well with notions of establishing group legitimacy within a competitive setting (Brown 1995:13).

Whether the focus is on the social roles of an individual or a group, Binford and Saxe both stressed that there is a variation in the status categories reflected in mortuary ritual (Brown 1995:13). Although they certainly do not posit a one-to-one correlation between numbers of discernable status distinctions related to age, sex, and hierarchical division, it is this aspect of their work that is the most criticized. This criticism is particularly relevant to cases where distinctions related to age, sex, and hierarchical categories are not reflected in burials. One modern example of this is the burial of King Fahd of Saudi Arabia who was buried in an unmarked grave in a simple burial shroud, despite being one of the wealthiest and most powerful men in the world. The reason for this treatment in death relates to Wahhabism, a strict sect of Islam, which requires no ostentatious displays in funerary ceremony, regardless of the social and political status of the deceased (Cook 1992). The absence of evidence in this case does not correlate to an absence of a complexity of social categories in the associated society (Hodder 1982:199).

Despite the possibility of rare exceptions, elements of social status and structure can be discerned from mortuary remains with some cautionary certainty, as long as the broader social, cultural, and ideological contexts of the mortuary practices are well understood.

Subsequent work on the interpretation of mortuary analysis has focused not only on those aspects of status that pertain to the deceased individual, but also on the re-formulation of the social group in the absence of that individual. In other words, the rites associated with death are enacted by the living members of the society to which the deceased was a part, and that this provides an additional level of social significance to mortuary custom (Brown 1995:5; Dillehay 1995:4). There are a significant number of more recent mortuary analyses that focus on the recurrent theme of the relationship between the living and the dead. The presence of ancestor worship strengthens community cohesion through social, economic, and political frames of reference (Dillehay 1995:17; McAnany 1995). The practice of ancestor veneration among sub-groups of a particular population is thought to relate to attempts to establish preferential access to lands and resources for the group's surviving members. The continued relationship with ancestors is seen as a strategy employed by the living to forward their own material gains (Salomon 1995). Particularly in instances where mass burial or sequential multiple burial is practiced, one interpretation is that the identity of the individual is subsumed by that of the group in the interest of emphasizing cohesiveness and promoting the material and social interests of that group (Duncan 2005:223). In some cases, the concentration of individuals in a mass or sequential grave can be seen as a form of veneration that preserves aspects of the individual identities as group members, especially if identity is shared and linked to a particular specialization or occupation.

Veneration, however, is not the only behavior or attitude directed towards the deceased during the process of mortuary ritual. Violation, where the remains of the deceased are destroyed or defiled, is also frequently present in the range of mortuary activities. This deliberate postmortem treatment of the dead is quite the opposite of practices that can be classed as veneration. Violation damns the deceased in the afterlife, and veneration serves to ensure the continued success and longevity of the deceased (Duncan 2005:207). Both actions can be part of the ritual structure, and certain degrees of violation and veneration can be represented within a single mortuary context. For example, the subsuming of individual identity in mass burial can be seen as a small-scale violation of personal identity in service of the veneration of the group identity.

Other aspects of culture, such as the environment or economics, have been used to understand the social meaning of mortuary remains. Like discussions of many of the big questions in archaeology, univariate explanations have often given way to causal explanations that take multiple variables into account. This is evident in mortuary analysis, and it is a combination of factors that defines the treatment of the dead of a particular society at a particular time (Brown 1995:7). Mortuary analyses that try to account for the complexity of the relationships between these variables come closer to a description of the operation of a past culture than single cause explanations. Because the activities associated with death are so important for most people and they mark a rare socially and emotionally charged moment, the analysis of materials related to that moment must be as complete as possible. Trinkhaus (1995:54) points out that the important factors related to an understanding of mortuary ritual go beyond the simple analysis of skeletal remains and their associated grave goods. She emphasizes how the

simple correlation of a particular aspect of an interment can lead to an incorrect conclusion if the entire cultural context is not accounted for. For example, a rare or unique form of treatment in death is often equated with special treatment that is reverential, or somehow reflects the high social status of the individual by nature of its rarity (Trinkhaus 1995:54). This could just as easily be interpreted as the disposal of a social deviant. The point here is that mortuary behavior must be understood holistically, with as many classes of culture specific data as possible.

Another important aspect of mortuary analysis is that the material record is always incomplete. Many of the disagreements over the interpretation of mortuary remains may in fact be a result of the incompleteness of the record, and archaeologists often forget that their material remains have an inherent bias and are not fully representative. This is eloquently described by Dillehay (1995:3), who points out the vast differences between what we know about archaeological and historical cultures. But the opposite is also true. Some cultures are known only archaeologically, and there is no ethnohistoric data that could provide an additional template with which to compare mortuary remains. The absence of archaeological evidence and the lack of contemporary groups to use as referents to explain past mortuary practice are problems that archaeologists recognize, but the true impact on data analysis is not often fully appreciated.

Despite the problems inherent in dealing with the inconsistencies of mortuary data, it still comprises the best repository for social beliefs and structures in the archaeological record. These inconsistencies can be overcome through careful methodological strategies, including increasing the scale of analysis, increasing the

sample size, and the inclusion of comparative data. One development in mortuary archaeology since the initial inception of the Binford-Saxe hypothesis is that the scale of analysis needs to be on a regional level rather than on the level of a single cemetery. Goldstein (1995:101) has argued eloquently for this regional perspective in mortuary analysis as a way to ensure that every possible range of social status and burial type is included in the study. A regional methodology also helps to elucidate all phases of mortuary ritual. The rituals associated with death constitute a process, not a single event, and the materials recovered in mortuary contexts do not all enter the record at the same time (Bradley 1995: vi). All stages of the ritual process associated with mortuary behavior can be elucidated with a regional-scale methodology because it increases the chances that all behaviors---central or peripheral, transitional or permanent---are represented in the mortuary data set.

Another focus of more recent work in mortuary archaeology has been the importance of space, and understanding space syntax in mortuary contexts (Ashmore and Geller 2005:81). Of course, space has been of vital importance to interpretations of mortuary contexts since the work of Binford and Saxe, but a revitalization of the importance of spatial analyses has been expanded beyond social status inferences based on single interments (Ashmore and Geller 2005: 81). In particular, spatial characteristics of mortuary contexts across large regional areas have contributed to a more complete understanding of the process of mortuary ritual, because all aspects of that process are included in the overall mortuary database. In addition, spatial relationships between the decedents and important features on the landscape, or the location of other deceased individuals, add to a more complete regional spatial syntax (Ashmore and Geller

2005:84). A large part of this spatial analysis has included an examination of architecture associated with mortuary remains, which also poses problems for interpretation. The chronology of construction and mortuary events needs to be distinguished (Maurer Trinkaus 1995:54). These events are rarely separate, but instead are spurred by the death event. The death of an individual and his or her interment requires a concomitant phase of building construction to renew the mortuary space and properly inter the deceased.

Many researchers have interpreted the location of mortuary remains as a deliberate strategy that corporate or kinship groups use to assert ownership claims to land and resources for non-state societies (Bloch and Parry 1982). This is because the veneration of important ancestors can be seen as a way to integrate the group with a specific area and legitimate the group's control and use of the land or resources. A similar motivation could be assigned to sub-groups within state-level societies as a way of establishing and maintaining claims to limited resources and to bolster group status. This is one strategy that may have been employed by lesser elites as they tried to gain access to higher status within a class of nobles. In either case (state or non-state societies) the particular manifestations of these group solidarity building enterprises result in extra significance being placed on the signaling role of domestic or in-group produced burial items, so that they serve as markers to identify group cohesiveness (Maurer Trinkaus 1995:59). The use of these important group signifiers identifies and delineates the mortuary community as distinct from other groups, emphasizing what they have in common as a shared community (Charles 1995:79).

The research of archaeologists working in the Maya area reflects these shifting perspectives in mortuary and ritual analysis. One of the most important ideas recently

applied by Mayanists has to do with corporate and lineage groups using the interment of the dead as a forum to create and actuate ancestor worship in order to claim the right to rule and to access land (McAnany 1995).

Mortuary Representation as a Power-Sharing Ritual Strategy

There is a very specific form of group identity creation that is related to the previous discussion of ancestor veneration as a strategy to forward the social goals of a group. Specifically, that group identity can be emphasized as it relates to a particular occupational specialization to increase the overall status position of group members. Social actors employ various status-building strategies within highly stratified, hierarchical societies. One such strategy utilized by lesser elites emphasizes horizontal ties of identity within cohorts. These mechanisms of heterarchical group representation do not simply emulate the tactics of the apical elites at a site, but rather, entail a different strategy on the part of these lower status elites.

Most scholars characterize Mesoamerican societies, including the lowland Maya, as two-class endogamous systems (Marcus 1992:6). Within a single class however, there were many strata characterized by complex status relationships between different individuals and groups. Individuals used a variety of strategies to increase their relative status as well as their overall status position. Marcus (1992:11, 437) labels these as actions of agitation and integration. Of great importance in looking at any issue of social organization is the identification of the source of power, or alternately, the diversity of power sources present in a particular structure. One common structural relationship is hierarchy, where certain characteristics are subordinately ranked in relation to others (Crumley 1995:2). Even within a strict hierarchy, the complexity of relations revolving

around differential sources of power allows that other forms of interactions can themselves create power. One of these alternate forms of interaction includes heterarchy. Crumley (1995:3) broadly defines heterarchy as “the relation of elements to one another when they are unranked or when they possess the potential for being ranked in a number of different ways.” In other words, heterarchical processes do not necessarily occur in opposition to hierarchical ones, but rather work simultaneously in complex social systems as a way to create counterpoised power. The nature of complexity means that there are certain inherent contradictions embedded in the structure. The dynamic nature of social relationships is also important to recognize. The utilization of heterarchical processes can be seen in shifting contexts that do not necessarily create a new category in the structure of social relations, but rather temporarily shift power to particular individuals or groups within the established structure creating the potential for the destabilization of the structure. A particularly apt time for power shifts of this sort is during times of sociopolitical unrest, when the centralized control of the apical or ruling elites of a site is waning. Castells (2000:8) defines three categories of identity building: legitimizing, resistance, and project identities. Briefly, these refer respectively to programs of identity construction instituted by the dominant state apparatus, the disenfranchised subaltern, and sub-groups of society that purposefully construct a new identity for a particular end (Castells 2000:8). For in-group power plays by those situated in medial positions in the status hierarchy, the project identity is the most likely strategy to achieve a desired increase in status. One situation that is particularly ideal to construct this project identity is the depiction of group identity through mortuary ritual. Constructing this group identity

around a functional role such as an occupational specialization is one way to create distinction for group members.

Every example of a lesser elite mortuary representation that emphasizes a particular functional role through the inclusion of a specialized assemblage of artifacts does not necessarily have to be an example of a heterarchical shared-power strategy. A re-examination and comparison of material culture items from apical elites at each site and the materials found in the mortuary contexts of these lesser elites would confirm the route of exchange and access for these goods. If the assemblages were very similar at a single site, the evidence would suggest the presence of a strongly vertical social and political structure where apical elites legitimated lesser elites by granting access to particular luxury items (Potter and King 1995:29). On the other hand, where there is a greater divergence between the nature of material culture items between apical elites and lesser elites at a single site, the presence of heterarchical trade and exchange relationships is likely. As McAnany (1991) cautions, the items of exchange themselves possess great value, but of greater significance is the route of exchange through which they were acquired.

The depiction of a functional role as a status affecting strategy is not limited to lesser elites constructing project identities. Commoners could use the same method to create a resistance identity, as could apical elites to emphasize a legitimizing identity. For example, a parallel strategy of functional role depiction can be seen in ruling elite representation in stone for the purpose of bolstering status and legitimating the right to rule. Borowicz's (2004) discussion of the three iconographic programs in Early Classic stela monuments at the Petén site of Tikal centers on kings representing themselves in

differing functional roles related to ritual obligations or warfare. Other examples include kings who impersonate deities in their representations on stelae, who show themselves engaged in shamanic practices or bloodletting rituals, conversing with ancestors, acting as priests, dressed as warriors, and standing on or beheading captives. The alternate themes of responsibility to the community and reinforcement of power are frequent in the permanent monuments that rulers commissioned as part of the creation of an identity that legitimated their right to rule. For non-apical or lesser elites, permanent representations in stone monuments are not typical. Nonetheless, different classes of material items, such as those associated with mortuary rituals, could function in a similar way to construct project identities.

What is not clear is how functional role representation enhanced the status of lesser elites. One way to conceptualize the effect this strategy had on social position is to think of a Cartesian field of status positions (see Kim 1999). In a strict hierarchy, with no particular strategy of mortuary representation, the y axis in such a field can be imagined as a gradation of status positions from lowest to highest. For the ancient Maya, the top-ranked position was taken by ruling or apical elites. Still within but at the lower end of the elite stratum was the location of lesser elites. Finally, within a separate stratum and in the lowest position, were the commoners (Figure 2.1). The addition of an x axis, representing an increasing degree of emphasis on specialization through mortuary assemblages turns this continuum of statuses into a field of status positions, and allows for certain lesser elites to shift their position closer to the ruling or apical elites, and farther from other lesser elites and commoners simultaneously (Figure 2.2). In other words, the implementation of a factor related to role specialization pushes particular

groups closer to the top of the hierarchy through the emulation of a strategy the apical elites from the site already employ to construct legitimizing identities. Though still working within the hierarchical structure, these lesser elites place an emphasis on heterarchical processes in order to increase their overall status in relation to those groups occupying the poles of the status hierarchy. One reason for this is that they would not typically be allowed to participate in the same forms of representation as the ruling elites of the site. Thus, during a time of sociopolitical breakdown of that same ruling elite, this lesser elite strategy of representation emerged between apical elites trying to maintain the status quo, and lesser elites trying to forward their position in the vacuum created by the weakening of the power of the ruling elite.

Mortuary Analysis in the Maya Area

Archaeology in the Maya area has, by necessity, included mortuary analysis since its inception, but an explicit focus on burial and mortuary remains was not part of initial archaeological investigations in Mesoamerica. This is not to say that people did not have an interest in the material remains found in association with mortuary contexts. Before archaeology was fully established as a scientific discipline, adventurers, explorers, and interested individuals were guided by a general interest in the burials and grave goods found in the temples and tombs of the ancient Maya. As Webster (1997:4) notes, it was the grand tombs located in large, specially-built funerary pyramids that first drew the attention of scholars to Maya mortuary contexts, but it was the prevalence of burying the dead in and around residential groups that forced attention towards the study of mortuary

remains as a focus of inquiry. Some of the earliest systematic investigations that included Maya mortuary contexts occurred under the auspices of the Carnegie Institution of Washington and the Chicago Field Museum of Natural History projects. Carnegie projects investigated many sites all over the Maya area between 1914 and 1962 including Chichen Itza, Calakmul, and Mayapán in Mexico, Petén area sites in Guatemala including Tikal and Uaxactún, Copán in Honduras, and many other sites in between (Morley 1943). None of these investigations focused specifically on mortuary archaeology, but due to the ancient Maya proclivity to bury their dead in household and small shrine contexts, many mortuary materials were encountered in the process of excavation. Unfortunately, these collections were often set aside, or mentioned only in passing in project publications with little attempt to discuss or compare the mortuary data on a local or regional scale. Moreover, almost none discussed osteological data (Webster 1997:3). J. Eric S. Thompson (1931) published some of the earliest systematic reports on Maya burials in the field reports of his investigations in the southern Cayo District of Belize for the Chicago Field Museum of Natural History. He is among the first to note not only the presence of skeletal material, but also to document the location and orientation of the body in the grave, to describe the architectural features and location of the grave, and to comment on the included grave goods (Thompson 1931). Although a great improvement upon those who simply discarded the skeletal material or set it aside in favor of collecting the grave goods, the mortuary data collected by Thompson were still secondary to the actual goals of the project excavations.

Later work in Maya mortuary archaeology focused on several things: categorizing and describing the physical attributes of graves, analyzing the skeletal remains found in

burial contexts, and studying the link between mortuary remains and broader social processes. Some researchers compiled rudimentary regional data about burials at sites such as Copán, Mountain Cow, Baking Pot, Barton Ramie, and Tikal (Bullard and Bullard 1965; Merwin and Vaillant 1932; Ricketson 1931; Smith 1950; Tourtellot 1965; Willey et al. 1965). These relatively large-scale attempts to gather ancient Maya burial data focused on attributes of the graves themselves, including the degree of architectural elaboration, the position and orientation of the interred, and enumerations of associated grave goods. One of the more exhaustive of these studies was undertaken by Alberto Ruz Lhuillier (1968), who included data for 1300 to 1500 burials from 115 sites in his examination of Maya funerary customs. Ruz Lhuillier divided the Maya area into three sections: a southern area including highland Guatemala, El Salvador, and the Pacific coastal sites; a central area including Chiapas, the Gulf Coast of Mexico, the Usumacinta drainage, the Petén region of Guatemala, western and southern Belize, and western Honduras; and a northern area including the Puuc and Yucatán (Ruz Lhuillier 1968:79-80). He described the data from these sites in terms of grave type, including simple graves, caves and *chultunob*, cists, formal graves, and tombs. This categorization still forms the basis of mortuary classification in the Maya area today. His work was unique in that he also took colonial records and modern Maya burial practices into account while focusing on the burial practices of the ancient Maya (Ruz Lhuillier 1968).

More recently, archaeologists concerned with Maya burials have used a more anthropological approach to investigate mortuary contexts. In addition to description and skeletal analysis, materials are interpreted as part of a broader socio-cultural context that includes resources and economics, political economy, social organization, conflict, and

ideology. Rathje (1970) was one of the first to link grave wealth to sociopolitical position *vis à vis* achieved status in the Maya area. He looked at house platform burials from Barton Ramie in terms of relative wealth of grave goods and the age of the interred individual. He noted that burials earlier than A.D. 700 had richly furnished young adults, and relatively few well-accompanied adult burials in house platforms (Rathje 1970:364). This pattern shifts after A.D. 700, towards a lack of well furnished young adult burials, and a higher incidence of well accompanied adult burials in house platforms (Rathje 1970:364). The specific details of this shift are unimportant here as well as some problems inherent in Rathje's research design, but what is significant is that by using a diachronic perspective, Rathje was able to identify broader patterns of mortuary behavior that directly related to the social and cultural contexts of which they were a part. This type of study contextualizes mortuary data in a more complete way than simple descriptive analysis, and tries to account for the causes of sociopolitical change that filter down and create change in mortuary contexts.

At the same time as Rathje worked on Maya burials, William Haviland undertook a large study of Maya mortuary remains at the lowland site of Tikal, located in the Petén region of Guatemala. Like Rathje, Haviland (1967) tried to go beyond mere description of mortuary remains by answering a broader question: How did stature relate to social stratification and differential resource availability through time? Although there are again problems with his interpretations, in light of what we now know about the Tikal Maya from a variety of material culture studies, Haviland's work was among the first to link features of skeletal biology to causative social factors. Webster (1997:9) points out that a problem common to both Rathje and Haviland's work is that neither of them undertook

the excavation of mortuary remains with their research question in mind, but rather used the skeletal remains and excavation data that was available after the fact. This is still a problem in Maya mortuary archaeology today. Even when an explicit research design is developed and undertaken for a specific site, the recovered remains are often few in number, necessitating the use of a comparative sample from someone else's excavations. Thus, problems of comparing different data sets, recovered under vastly different conditions, complicate mortuary studies. Webster (1997:10) also discusses a difficulty in developing projects specifically tailored to recovering human remains in the Maya area, and that is that the ancient Maya, particularly in the Late Classic, did not often have discrete areas within their sites for the interment of the dead. Instead of cemeteries, they housed their dead within residential and ceremonial architecture. It is therefore difficult to recover large, statistically significant mortuary populations. An exception to this typical situation is long-term, multi-year projects undertaken at a single site, such as the various projects at Copán and Tikal. The scale of the excavations carried out as part of the research design at these two sites has allowed for large numbers of mortuary contexts to be excavated, analyzed, and curated.

As a result of more and more projects including a mortuary component into their research, a major synthetic compilation of pan-Maya burial customs was undertaken by Bruce Welsh in 1988. Welsh (1988) put together the largest database of Maya mortuary customs to date, with special emphasis on the development of a categorical grave typology that most anglophone researchers now use as a starting point for their investigations. This was the first attempt to define and standardize the descriptive mortuary terminology used by researchers in the Maya area, and it made a major

contribution towards increasing the comparability of data from different sites. In addition to grave typology, Welsh (1988) also included the broader architectural context of burials, information on body position and orientation, grave contents, and a cursory discussion of some social features of Maya burial such as evidence for sacrifice and ancestor worship. The lasting contribution of his research has primarily been the standardization of terminology for his grave typology. In a way, Welsh's work can be seen as a descendant of the work started in the 1960s that focused on similar attributes of the Maya mortuary assemblage, but on a much smaller scale (e.g., Willey et al. 1965).

An alternative focal point of inquiry related to Maya mortuary excavations has been in biological anthropology and the related sciences that examine the physical components of the skeletons recovered from burial contexts to discern aspects of diet, lifestyle, environment, genetic affiliation, and cultural practices that result in the modification of bone. Buikstra (1997:222) notes that early on, John L. Stevens had an interest in features of archaeological bone that could inform anthropological questions, particularly those that pertain to origins of populations. At the time, stature, cranial form, gross morphological pathology, sex, and age were the characteristics of interest and the features that could be reliably identified (Buikstra 1997:222).

Early scholars were interested in ancient Maya cultural modifications of the skeleton, such as cranial shaping and tooth filing and inlaying (Fastlicht 1948; Romero 1958; Whittlesey 1935). These practices were first interpreted as indicators of high status, but this interpretation has since changed somewhat. Although many still interpret deliberate cranial modification and dental inlays of precious stone as high-status indicators, most researchers also suggest that dental filing was a non-elite practice

(Massey and Steele 1997; Saul and Saul 1997; Williams and White 2006). Interestingly, recent studies have shown that dental filing is unrelated to sex or social status, and that it may actually be a marker of corporate group membership (particularly in the Late and Terminal Classic periods) or relate to marriage practices and social roles (Williams and White 2006:141, 146).

Techniques for analyzing skeletal material have developed in exciting ways over the past several decades. They now allow us to answer questions of nutrition and foodways, subsistence strategies, general health, age at death, cause of death, disease, cultural modification of bones and teeth, social organization, differential access to resources, place of origin, genetic distance, population genetics, paleodemography, and identity. The focus of many recent biological anthropology studies in the Maya area have used a regional scale of analysis to discern broad trends in populations and communities rather than in isolated individuals (Buikstra 1997:222). The relevance of population-wide or paleodemographic studies is that broader anthropological questions can be addressed with skeletal data. Archaeological inquiry of this sort contributes a diachronic scale or perspective that goes well beyond the limitations of similar studies using living populations. In addition, with the incorporation of larger samples in paleopathological studies, the status baseline for the ancient Maya population writ large has been established, allowing for a more critical understanding of specific cases when compared to the overall population. Two of the founding contributors to the development of the database of ancient Maya pathological conditions on a population-wide basis are Frank and Julie Saul who worked at Altar de Sacrificios (i.e. Saul 1972, 1973; Saul and Saul 1989). One of the outcomes of their study is that many researchers have used data to

answer questions of larger cultural and ecological processes, specifically the Maya “collapse” (Buikstra 1997:225). As previously mentioned, current work in Maya bioarchaeology uses powerful analytical tools to answer questions that gross morphological studies could not address. One example is strontium/oxygen isotope analysis to differentiate between individuals who are local or foreign to a particular site, area, or region. Prior to the widespread use of these techniques, the interpretation of place of origin for individuals from mortuary contexts was discerned on the basis of associated mortuary goods, as well as epigraphic and iconographic interpretations. One emerging pattern from these studies is that many of the largest Classic Maya cities held foreign-born individuals within key mortuary contexts (Price et al. 2007). This example serves to show how the more sophisticated techniques used by bioanthropologists contribute to a more nuanced understanding of archaeological remains, one that would not be possible using other lines of material evidence.

Finally, a more recent direction of mortuary studies in the Maya area is found in programs of research that use an anthropologically grounded perspective for the interpretation of mortuary remains. Specifically, researchers seek to understand mortuary remains as a product of larger cultural processes. Patricia McAnany (1995), for example, has made a significant contribution to our understanding of the complexity of mortuary ritual related to ancestor creation and veneration. McAnany (1995) published the volume, *Living with the Ancestors: Kinship and Kingship in Ancient Maya Society*, a contribution that is almost universally cited in discussions of ancient Maya mortuary remains. McAnany’s (1995) discussion of mortuary practices posits that the ancient Maya used mortuary ritual as a strategic venue in which to claim land ownership, resource rights,

and inheritance. A clearly associated postulate to a situation where people use the mortuary context to claim resources and land is that these are not equally distributed across all strata of the population (McAnany 1995). In fact, there is a diversity of competing strategies in how mortuary interments are carried out in different temples at the same site by competing groups of community members engaged in wealth and status display (Lucero 2007:411). This parallels the situation at sites such as Minanha, especially during the Late and Terminal Classic periods, when resources were increasingly scarce and centralized control of the site weakened. The focus on the social nature of mortuary practices reflects the growing recognition of the importance of both the structural organization of society and the fact that it is the living social group that interments the deceased individual and is responsible for funerary rituals (Joyce 2002:30).

One aspect of Maya mortuary practice that requires particular mention is the interment of more than one individual in a single grave. The practice of multiple burial is common across the Maya area, yet it is not well understood. Researchers have posited different interpretations of why the practice was undertaken, from secondary interment to sacrifice. The frequency of multiple burials in the area of the present research is a critical characteristic of the mortuary assemblage.

Years ago, multiple interments were noted by Thompson (1931:293) at Cahal Cunil, near Caracol, in the Vaca Plateau. He noted that many of the individuals must have been secondary interments, because the small chamber was not large enough to house all the individuals in a non-decomposed state (Thompson 1931:293). Ruz Lhuillier (1968:156) discussed multiple interments as different from the norm of single individual interment across the Maya area. He identified two areas where multiple interments were

prevalent during the Late Classic: along the upper Grijalva and Usumacinta, and in the low hills of the Yucatán (Ruz Lhuillier 1968:156). Because he viewed this pattern of interment as relatively rare, he did not offer any interpretation of the significance of multiple interments.

Welsh (1988:168) interprets multiple burials as evidence of human sacrifice. Although he does not equate the mere presence of multiple individuals in a single grave with sacrifice, he suggests that when there is a primary individual accompanied by spatially peripheral individuals who were decapitated, mutilated, or disarticulated, then sacrifice was likely (Welsh 1988:168-169). Welsh classified single interment as the preferred pan-Maya style of deposition of the dead, and commented that true multiple interments were prevalent at only one site, Mountain Cow. At all other sites, the presence of multiple bodies in the same burial could be used to infer human sacrifice (Welsh 1988:216). He interprets multiple burials at Uaxactún (n=2), Tikal (n=8), Piedras Negras (n=1), and Altun Ha (n=5) as evidence of human sacrifice (Welsh 1988:178-180). Haviland (1997:2) briefly mentions the phenomenon of multiple interment at Tikal, but proposes just two potential interpretations: (1) children buried with their mother or father; or (2) sacrificial victims included in the grave of an adult. The underlying assumption that relates the presence of multiple individuals in a single grave to the act of sacrifice is one that emphasizes the importance of the deceased, where it is thought the sacrificed accompany the dead to the otherworld, perhaps as attendants or companions. This is a very plausible explanation for some multiple interments, but the presence of multiple individuals in a single grave does not alone provide evidence to prove that an act of sacrifice occurred.

More recently, the interpretation of multiple individuals within a single grave has shifted towards explanations that have more to do with the sociopolitical and economic aspirations of the living (Ashmore and Geller 2005; Fitzsimmons 2002; McAnany 1995; Weiss-Krejci 2002). Weiss-Krejci (2002:355) highlights some of the possible explanations for how multiple individuals end up sharing a final resting place. These reasons include secondary funerary rites, ongoing tomb use, skeletal curation and the reuse of bones, and human sacrifice. Another issue that has been used to infer relative status is whether or not the skeleton is articulated. Weiss-Krejci (2002:356) points out that articulation does not necessarily indicate high status, nor does disarticulation indicate low status or sacrifice. Disarticulation as the end result of the rituals performed for or with the deceased can be a result of multiple practices including multi-staged mortuary rituals of exhumation and reburial, sequential interments, tomb re-entry, or looting and desecration events in antiquity (Weiss-Krejci 2002:356).

One of the important details related to the way in which multiple interments have been interpreted has to do with the presence or absence of formal entrances to tombs, allowing for repeated access to the burial space. Where formal access ways into tombs have been present, such as in several instances of tombs at Caracol, Nebaj, and Zaculeu, the presence of fully articulated individuals with adjacent disarticulated bones is interpreted as an artifact of tomb re-entry and sequential burial rather than sacrifice (Weiss-Krejci 2002:364). Multiple burials in contexts without formal grave access points continue to be interpreted as evidence of human sacrifice. Weiss-Krejci (2002:369) points out however, that multiple interments in the absence of formal tomb entrances or re-entry points could reflect a different process where remains were accumulated as natural death

occurred, but were interred simultaneously at some later date. Moreover, some tombs could have been reentered without using a formal entranceway. In other words, multiple burials found in contexts with or without formal entrances and passageways for re-entry could be a result of similar ritual processes. Coe mentions evidence of grave re-entry in antiquity at Tikal: "Such points admittedly could be used to buttress a case for the original interment's profound disturbance, but only if there were dire need to invoke reentry in the first place." (Coe 1990:123) The notion of a complex series of rituals and treatments of the dead that extend over a lengthy period of time could provide such a need.

McAnany's (1995; 1998; McAnany et al 1999) work on mortuary assemblages links the process that creates multiple interments with the underlying ideological principle of ancestor worship. Ancestor worship cannot simply be described as a reverent act by the living towards their deceased family members. It is a complex process through which socio-economic and political power relationships are played out in the living space. By placing their deceased within the very buildings that they continued to live in and use, the ancient Maya were emphasizing the importance of their ancestors while creating the category or class of ancestors worthy of special reverence from the entire group of their deceased relations. As McAnany (1998:273) points out, keeping the ancestors within the home emphasizes the ties between the socio-political entity of the home and the inheritance and landholding claims of those still living within it.

Beyond just inheritance and landholding concerns, the prevalence of multiple interments at particular sites during particular times is related to cycles of waxing and waning political authority. The act of interring the familial dead together in a structure

through a process that transforms them into revered ancestors is an authenticity and authority building statement. McAnany points out that in some places such as K'axob, single interments within designated structures for the ancestors were at times replaced by multiple interments representing sequential ritual events (McAnany 1998:275). At Tikal, Early Classic burials in the area of the Great Plaza and the North Acropolis show a similar intensification of multiple interments. Of 26 burials in all time periods, seven, or 27 percent, are multiple burials. These multiple burials date from the Late Preclassic to the Middle Classic only. In other words, their presence is restricted to a relatively short period of time. As the Chases (1998a) have pointed out, at Caracol, a similar increase in the intensity and elaboration of ritual associated with the interment of ancestors took place during the Late Classic period. Of interest here is that these events---including elaborate tomb planning and construction, sequential tomb entry and re-entry, and a multitude of stages of body preparation of the dead---indicate that the rituals associated with the creation of a class of ancestors were complex and not a single result of dedicatory or termination rituals. The factors behind the increase in sequential burial in the mortuary record at particular times and in particular places merit further examination. These factors are relevant to the Vaca Plateau sites, including Minanha.

Archaeological Analysis of Cache and Ritual Offerings in the Maya Area

Materials recovered from cache contexts share many similarities with materials recovered from burials. In fact, lots of the recovered artifacts from these contexts are indistinguishable and form part of the corpus of ritual materials used by the ancient

Maya. Archaeologically, caches and burials are often spatially located in close proximity within ritual architecture, and they contain similar types of objects, high status goods, and (often) human skeletal elements. This is especially true for the Maya area, where Becker (1992) has noted that categorizing interments that contain human remains as either burials or caches is sometimes difficult. The importance of the relationship between caches and burials can best be approached through an understanding of the meaning of the cached materials. Stross (1998:35) notes: "Cache 'offerings' can be interpreted as a way of animating the building by inserting a 'heart' that in some cases may replicate the cosmos with representatives from each cosmic level." Because Maya ritual architecture is most often represented by a pyramidal structure, the significance or meaning of the temple pyramid must be integral to any interpretation of the cached objects found within them. In fact, two aspects of the temple are significant: both the outside and the inside. Miller (1999:22) notes that the focus of the temple in Mesoamerica, as well as architectural features in general, was on the external space of a platform for performance, ritual, and sculptural adornment. The internal spaces were mostly concerned with mass, with one important exception: the interment of ritual caches and deposits that served to animate the building through termination and dedicatory rituals. The excavation of cached deposits in temple structures serves to emphasize interpretations made about the larger significance or meaning of the structure. The inference of meaning at the cache level of analysis has often been the focus of investigation and serves to provide an archaeological confirmation of the suggestion that pyramidal temples represented a sacred mountain (see Boteler-Mock 1998).

William Coe (1965) was one of the first to notice a context specific pattern in cached offerings, specifically that they occurred in association with monuments and structures. Groups of artifacts recovered in clustered association are categorized broadly as offerings, and discretely hidden clusters are given the sub-heading of cache (Coe 1965:462). Discrete caches themselves are further classified as either dedicatory or termination offerings. Coe's (1965) broad classificatory scheme for caches has remained in use, relatively unchanged by Mayanists today.

Coe's (1959, 1965) schema for the classification of ritual deposits made an initial distinction between offerings and caches. To him, caches are a sub-category of offerings distinguished by the cultural intent or meaning behind their deposition and their discretely hidden nature. For Coe, offerings that are hidden are caches, but those that are not are simply categorized as offerings (Coe 1965:462). The intent behind both kinds of deposits is similar, thus making overly-fine distinctions in definition unnecessary. The designation of cache is then further divided as either utilitarian or votive. Utilitarian caches are simply repositories of hidden goods related to subsistence storage or other mundane materials. Votive caches relate broadly to a category of ritual deposits that can also represent different behavioral intents responsible for their deposition. Thus, votive caches were further divided into the categories of dedicatory, termination and non-dedicatory. Dedicatory caches relate to discrete deposits interred within structures at the time of construction to sanctify the building (Coe 1959:119). Termination caches signify rituals of renewal in relation to new structural phases, and they also signify the release of power of ritually charged items such that the power inherent in particular objects is released through their destruction. Coe (1965:462) categorized termination deposits as

offerings, not caches, because often they are not discretely hidden. This aspect of the Coe classification scheme has been challenged, because the presence of discretely hidden caches of objects are thought to express an intent of termination. Thus for most applications of the division of caches, archaeologists include open clusters of intentionally smashed objects as termination caches, as evidenced by the standardized definition of caches by Loten and Pendergast:

an artifact or group of artifacts intentionally placed in a specific location unrelated to a burial, often but not always on the primary or transverse axis. The artifacts that comprise a cache were presumably intended as an offering, but the term “cache” is preferred because it is a designator without functional implication. Caches may lie in the core of a structure or in a pit cut into antecedent construction; they were usually sealed immediately after placement. (Loten and Pendergast 1984:5).

Termination caches often contain broken, defaced, mutilated, or burned objects representing termination events, where the spirit, power, or *k'ulel* (the living force that imbues all things) of the objects was released (Becker 1992, Boteler-Mock 1998:5, Coe 1959:77, Schele and Mathews 1998:48). This living force, once put into non-living things through dedication ceremonies and rites, could become dangerous when no longer used. Thus it had to be contained or released in special termination rituals (Friedel, Schele, and Parker 1993:234). It is noteworthy that particular kinds of objects are usually associated with representations of *k'ulel*. These include jade, bone, shell, mica, mirror stones, eccentric flints, finely made ceramics, and precious stones (Freidel, Schele, and Parker 1993:234). The presence of these types of items in complete forms in discrete caches often indicates a dedicatory function, or the rites associated with imbuing the living force

or *k'ulel* into a structure. Some caches are thought to fulfill both dedicatory and termination functions, for example, they serve to terminate the previous phase of use of a construction, but also dedicate the new phase of construction of a structure (Freidel and Schele 1989:239).

Both dedicatory and termination offerings are often found in association with the primary axis of a pyramidal or temple structure. Pendergast (1998:61) discusses the importance of axial placement of caches related to the importance of the axis itself. The axis serves to identify the structure, and was maintained as an entity that was perceptible as physically separate from the axes of any facing structures. It also functioned as an avenue of communication with a deity or ancestral linkage, a kind of portal to the otherworld (Pendergast 1998). The installation of life force into inanimate structures through dedicatory rituals was subsequently removed through termination acts, such as the placement of a termination cache or offering.

A useful notion to keep in mind when looking at the classificatory schemes that archaeologists develop to analyze their material is that these tools may or may not agree with the cognitive scheme of the people who enacted the behavior and created the material deposit. Although Coe's classification of offerings is a very useful way to look at materials, the actual manifestations of the rich variety of ritual behaviors do not always discretely fit into one category. Archaeologists only find the terminal location of use for an item, and perhaps this has skewed the way we conceive of offertory practices. One way to examine the methodological utility of the Coe-based classification of ritual deposits as dedicatory, non-dedicatory, or termination caches is to apply it to a different geographic area where similar deposits are seen.

The Middle Horizon Wari State in the central Andes has similarly manifested ritual offerings like those of the Maya. These are found within D-shaped ceremonial structures. Isbell and Cook (2002) note a preponderance of smashed urns and jars within such structures at the site of Conchopata. They developed a classificatory scheme to describe these by dividing them into four types. Briefly, the four types are as follows: Type 1 includes numerous giant vessels, smashed and buried in a simple pit excavated into the ground; Type 2 consists of numerous oversize vessels, smashed and deposited on a surface within a sizeable architectural enclosure; Type 3 has only one or two urns, smashed and distributed on a surface, usually within a small room or patio; and Type 4, the most problematic offering type that consists of numerous oversize jars broken on the surface or floor of a room. Unlike the other types of deposits, this final type has a great variety of ceramic types in addition to the urns and jars usually utilized (Isbell and Cook 2002:260-2). This method of classifying ritual deposits can be compared to the Coe terminology by likening Type 1 to the termination cache classification, and Types 2, 3, and 4 to the termination offering classification. Thus, there is some degree of cross-cultural utility to these classification tools. Again, however, the question is whether or not the indigenous groups responsible for the material record would have recognized these distinctions (such as the difference between a termination cache versus an offering) as important. The meaning behind deposition is somewhat removed from our classification system of the offering, but nonetheless, as cached ritual offerings are so frequently recovered in association with mortuary remains in the Maya area, they must be included as an important part of that assemblage. In fact, caches may shed light on the ceremonies

undertaken in association with the broad mortuary program, allowing researchers to see specific components of that ritual process.

Conclusion

The ideas presented here reflect the complexity of the topic of ritual and religion in antiquity. Aspects of social organization, ideology, power relations and cultural belief all play a role in the ways that people behaved in the past during the crisis of losing a group member to death. The material culture that is best suited to examine issues of religious belief for the Maya is often found in association with the pyramidal structures and shrines that housed the remains of the dead. The material remains themselves are frequently represented by items in association with mortuary and offertory contexts. Thus, the best way to approach the religious ideology of the ancient Maya is to examine these deposits archaeologically, with the goal of understanding their culturally specific meaning. In particular, this class of material items must be examined with an eye to their social relevance to the living, as they dealt with the loss of an important group member, and had to re-constitute the group in their absence.

Table 2.1: A comparison between the material correlates of ritual that relate to cultural remembering and to ritual that does not have a component of cultural memory.

Cultural Remembering	Non-memory related Ritual
Longevity: material evidence spanning a lengthy time period, connecting to temporally distant events.	One time occurrence: material evidence that exists as a single occurrence, or does not connect to events distant in time.
Intersubjective: an activity that occurs at the scale of more than one individual.	Individual or Group: may occur at the scale of a single individual, or at the level of a group.
Mediated: object or material culture present that mediates the recollection.	Non-mediated: ritually significant artifacts can be present, but do not serve a function of recollection.
Usable Past: some need in the present is fulfilled via the recollection of a usable past. Could relate to social status, legitimation, or bolster a claim over social or material resources.	Ritual Present: fulfills a ritual need of the present such as a role status transition related to a rite of passage for instance.
Feat of Remembering: the material remains constitute a link through time that could not be explained otherwise.	Tradition, but not memory: material manifestation of the ritual behavior may be in line with tradition, but does not construct a specific context for recall.
Spatial Referent: an important spatial referent that both accommodates the group participating in the ritual of remembering, but also serves as an associative locus of recall for the group.	Lack of Specific Spatial Referent: no necessary spatial referent to accommodate the minimally lone participant in the ritual, nor a consistency in spatial context for the enactment of the ritual.

Traditional Hierarchic Model of Social Organization

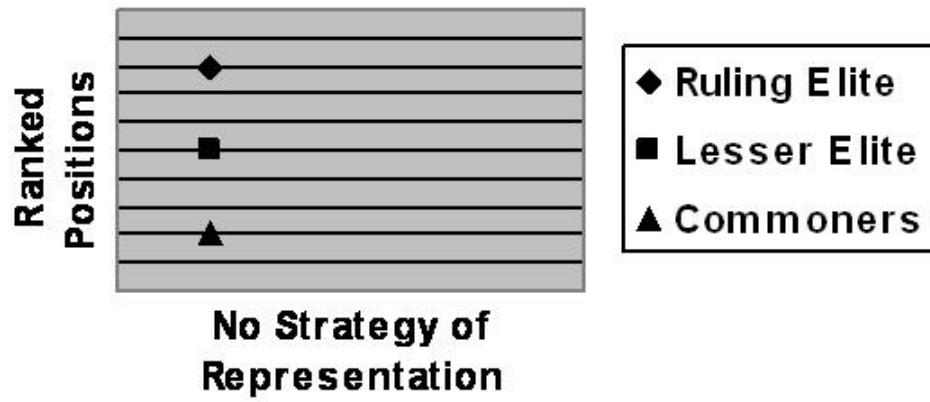


Figure 2.1: Graphic representation of traditional hierarchical model of social organization.

Triangulation Effect of Heterarchic Representation

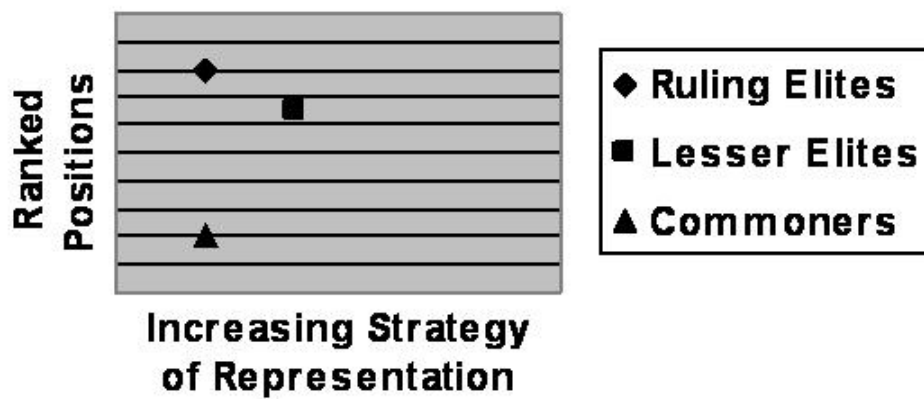


Figure 2.2: Graphic representation of triangulation effect for lesser elites using a strategy of heterarchical representation.

III

Social Theory and Research Design

This dissertation seeks to address the hypothesis that social status or class position affects mortuary behavior. In particular, I ask if there is a relationship between social position and the form of mortuary behavior practiced by members of a social stratum in ancient Maya society, and if members of each stratum enacted mortuary ritual with a specific group goal in mind. In order to test this hypothesis, a program of excavation was undertaken in mortuary shrine contexts at the Maya site of Minanha, in west central Belize. This chapter presents the research methodology in more detail, considers limitations and biases inherent in the data, and provides a series of hypothesized and expected outcomes.

The nature of ancient Maya social organization has long been debated. Some argue for a strict two-class system of nobles and commoners (Marcus 1983:469), while others propose the presence of multiple strata including a middle class. One point of contention relates to the importance of lineage ties versus the degree to which non-kinship based territorial units were important to social organization (Chase and Chase 1996: 803). Hageman (2004:65) lists the following characteristics of lineage-based organization for the ancient Maya: they owned inalienable corporate property, they had a group identity, they usually married outside of the group, they had unequal power relations within the group, and they venerated ancestors. These characteristics have also been ascribed to other models that have been applied to describe ancient Maya social

organization, but one point of departure is whether or not group members were linked by actual or real kinship ties to the group. Part of the problem in identifying the presence of lineage organization archaeologically is that biological relationships between people are not easily discerned from material culture unless genetic testing of human remains is undertaken.

Recently, a model for ancient Maya social organization based on house societies has been discussed (Gillespie 2000c). This house model modifies Lévi-Strauss' *maison* and *société à maison* concepts, particularly when looking at ritual as a practice from domestic households through to large-scale public ritual in site centers within a diachronic framework (Gillespie 2000b). Lévi-Strauss's original definition of the house was as a category of social relation or a type of social structure that was:

a corporate body holding an estate made up of both material and immaterial wealth, which perpetuates itself through the transmission of its name, its goods, and its titles down a real or imaginary line, considered legitimate as long as this continuity can express itself in the language of kinship or of affinity and, most often, of both (Lévi-Strauss 1982:174).

In this definition, group identity can be seen as the most important division, with individuals subsumed as members of a particular group. Membership within the house was *not* limited to people linked by blood kinship. Instead, membership can be seen to be related to either biological or fictive kinship, giving a more fluid adaptability to people's lived reality. This group identity also exists beyond the time frame of a single individual's lifespan, making it a more enduring social institution, and making the house the agent (Gillespie 2000a:2). The house concept also crosscuts economic considerations,

as there can be houses containing both relatively wealthy and relatively poor groups. This establishes a framework for comparison across economic boundaries, allowing social relationships rather than access to material wealth as a basis for comparison. The developments of ritual practice can be seen to relate to both the social structure and the political strategies employed by house members over time. The materials used in ritual deposits within the house reflect the social status of the house, including mortuary and non-mortuary ritual depositions. As well as representing social position, ritual assemblages show the aspirations of the house as an agent, because the members strive to change, modify, redefine, and reconstruct their position in hierarchical societies.

Those who advocate lineage models characterize ancient Maya social organization as relatively less complex, while those who focus on the complexity of ancient Maya social organization emphasize the breakdown of traditional kinship ties and the presence of multiple levels of social positions (Chase and Chase 2004: 139). Although problems of scale arise when using archaeological data to infer social organization, the Chases (2004:139) emphasize that from their data-based perspective at the large site of Caracol, the analytical unit with the most meaning is the household or residential group. This parallels Gillespie's (2000c) house society model for ancient Maya social organization. They suggest that households had up to 40 individuals who were related by both blood and marriage, as well as other associated individuals, who together functioned as a corporate economic group (Chase and Chase 2004:142). Their excavations across all social strata at the site reveal that the household level of organization is a primary organizing principle in Late Classic Maya society (Chase and Chase 2004:139). Archaeologically, they characterize the residential group as cardinally

oriented and containing raised platform and un-raised plaza areas with one or more buildings located along the plaza sides (Chase and Chase 2004:139). Although the number, size and complexity of these residential structures vary according to socioeconomic position, the basic residential unit functions the same across all strata of ancient Maya society. At Caracol, the eastern building of each residential group functioned as a ritual shrine to house honored dead and associated ritual items approximately 80 percent of the time (Chase and Chase 2004:139). Minanha, too, is organized on the base unit of the household, and this unit repeats across all social categories at the site, separated only by amplitudes of scale. Like Caracol, the royal household at Minanha is part of the largest acropolis found in the site epicenter, and slightly smaller high-status elite households are found in nearby site core locations. Commoner households are found in the more distant site periphery where they could engage in agricultural activities related to supporting the population in the site center.

Sampling Strategy and Methodology

A broad theoretical premise of mortuary archaeology is that there is a significant relationship between social organization and mortuary remains. An essential addition to this premise is that there is a desired present goal, or strategy of the living, which relates to the form of mortuary ritual chosen to commemorate the dead in particular places at particular times. This research discerns how members of different social strata at the ancient Maya site of Minanha enacted the rituals associated with death.

The data are from three non-random excavation locations at the site of Minanha: (1) the eastern pyramid of the E-group in the largest public plaza in the site epicenter; (2) the eastern shrine of an elite residential plaza group in the site center; (3) and the eastern shrine of a small plaza group in the periphery of the site, near the agricultural terraces and fields that supported the population in the site center. This excavation strategy ensured that representative materials from a cross-section of social statuses at the site would be represented, and also that mortuary ritual remains would be uncovered, because the eastern shrine is a well-established location in the Maya lowlands for the interment of the dead. In all three loci, the excavation method employed was to establish axial trenches on the west or plaza-facing side of the structure, which revealed the construction history of the structure as well as associated ritual remains in burials and caches. In all cases, the plaza in front of the structure was also excavated, because this is a typical location for caches and burials in the Maya lowlands. The excavation units varied in size, depending on the size of the respective architecture.

The excavation methodology was to divide the materials in the archaeological units by culturally meaningful level rather than using an arbitrary lot system of excavation. For all loci, Level 1 is the humus or accumulated soil and organic materials that had amassed since the time of abandonment, Level 2 is the fall material, or the material which was once part of the architecture but had since fallen or slumped out of place, Level 3 is the terminal phase of architecture, Level 4 is the penultimate phase of architecture, and increasing level numbers indicate earlier and earlier phases of construction. Excavations were by the hand-trowel method, no shovels were employed in the removal of matrix or overburden. All materials were screened through 1/4 inch mesh,

and all artifact, faunal and ecofact materials that did not fall through the screen were saved. All excavated portable artifact materials were then processed in the field laboratory. Ceramics were washed, catalogued and analyzed by the author and project ceramicist Nadine Gray, chipped stone lithic materials were processed and analyzed by the author and project lithicist Dr. James Stemp, obsidian was analyzed by Adam Menzies, and faunal and human remains were processed and analyzed by the author. Artifact drawings were completed by project illustrator Kimberley Kersey, as well as several undergraduate field assistants.

The total Minanha sample consists of at least 30 individuals interred in at least six grave and cache contexts at the three site loci. The majority of associated materials date to the Late and Terminal Classic Period, however, some Late Preclassic ritual materials were recovered in association with the Structure 3A excavations in the site core.

Excavation Biases

The mortuary sample from Minanha holds several inherent biases. The Maya buried their dead in dispersed locations, everywhere from large pyramidal structures and shrines, to within households, plaza floors, construction fill, middens, *chultunob* or underground chambers, caves, and rockshelters. This dispersal of burial remains increases sampling bias when compared to cultures that interred all of their dead in easily identifiable and spatially distinct cemeteries (Wright 1994:81). The excavation strategy for this dissertation focuses only on formal mortuary architecture in the form of eastern pyramids and shrines in plaza groups at the site. Consequently, the non-random sampling

strategy introduces a degree of bias in favor of the few individuals deemed appropriate to inter within these formal structures in each group. Since it is precisely the behavior associated with the interment of these particular individuals that is of interest for this study on the relation between social strata and mortuary treatment, the sample is the most appropriate one for the research question.

As with most sites in Central America, one condition that archaeologists have to work with in Belize is the extensive looting that has occurred at archaeological sites. Minanha is no different, and most large structures at the site---particularly in the site center---have some degree of looting. This varies from slight disturbance to almost total bisection of structures. Nonetheless, all materials were rarely removed through these actions, so there is always something to be salvaged by careful excavation. Of the three main structures excavated as part of this project---Structures 3A, 77S, and MRS4---all had some evidence of looting. A small excavation had been placed in the summit of Structure 3A as part of the 1927 expedition to the site, and subsequent looting on the face of the structure had left the T-shaped vaulted tomb open with its contents mostly removed. Of course this is a serious loss of data, but the area in front of the 3A structure was not touched, and the series of dedicatory and termination caches in front of the structure were still *in situ*. Structure 77S had slight evidence of looting, with only a few superficial holes dug into the rear and south sides of the structure. These incursions did not impact the area of interest for this study, the plaza floor in front of the structure and the vaulted tomb within the heart of the structure. Finally, Structure MRS4 in the periphery was extensively looted, but again, the looting took place from the rear or east

side of the structure, and did not impact the important ritual and mortuary deposits housed on the west plaza-facing side of the structure.

The Minanha mortuary sample is essentially synchronic. The majority of mortuary contexts excavated date to the Late and Terminal Classic periods, thus questions of change through time cannot adequately be addressed by the Minanha materials alone. An additional challenge with the Minanha mortuary sample relates to its size. Because of the size of the architecture excavated for this dissertation, the nature and complexity of the ritual deposits, and the constraint of excavating with field school students, the sample is neither large nor statistically significant. Although it does represent a clear cross-section of the mortuary behavior from all social classes at Minanha, it does not include the population of all mortuary contexts at the site. To offset these concerns about the date of the materials and the sample size of the collection, a large amount of mortuary data from nearby sites in the Belize Valley, the Vaca Plateau, and southeastern Péten was compiled in order to serve as a comparative database to contextualize the Minanha mortuary sample. This material, discussed in Chapter 6 of this dissertation, was compared to the Minanha sample.

Archaeological Expectations

This section seeks to delineate the various expected or hypothesized archaeological correlates for the interpretation of multiple mortuary scenarios. This is undertaken to answer the question: “How can the materials excavated from mortuary contexts be linked to theoretical scenarios of social and political integration?” Three

possible outcomes are discussed here as an imposed analytical framework to discuss meaningful differences in the excavated data (Table 3.1). These categories are arbitrarily introduced for the purpose of gross analysis, and they represent somewhat idealized extremes that are unlikely to be found on-the-ground. Nonetheless, they serve as the foundation in my attempt to operationalize the interpretation of mortuary behavior via material remains.

The first scenario supposes that mortuary contexts across all social strata at the site are materially similar. If apical elite, lesser elite, and commoner mortuary practices are similar in terms of architectural location, grave type, number of interred, body orientation and position, and associated grave goods, then the hypothesis that mortuary behavior has an important and specific relationship to the competing aims and aspirations of different social strata would be invalid. In such a context, there might be a difference in the quality of the grave goods of elites and commoners, but this difference would not negate the essential similarity in all customs related to the interment of the dead. Instead, an inter-strata mortuary assemblage with a high degree of uniformity would be evidence of an ideological primacy to interment that operated despite social class differences. For instance, Geertz (1957:40) discusses Javanese funerals as strictly regulated via specific proscribed actions by mourners and family as prerequisites to the interment of the dead. These necessary ritual actions are the same for everyone, regardless of social position, and everyone is interred within the confines of the village cemetery, a location distinct from residential or administrative areas of the village (Geertz 1957). In such a case, although different social strata exist, differential treatment in death is not a culturally

meaningful action, and consequently, no differentiation in mortuary remains or significance between strata would be observed.

The opposite situation would be where the material features of the mortuary assemblage (location, grave type, number of interred, body position and orientation, and associated grave goods) cluster along the lines that divide social strata in a population. If all of these features come together within social strata and are different across strata, then mortuary ritual can be interpreted as meaningfully linked to social organization. In this case, strict mortuary differences between strata can be interpreted as a means to reify rigid social distinctions; individuals do not cross out of the social status they held in life, even after death. If this extreme model was actually represented in the mortuary assemblage of a group, an interpretation about the rigidity of that culture's social divisions could be made. Of course, no cultures adhere to a perfectly strict division of mortuary practice. Nonetheless, there are examples where individuals from certain strata of the society simply do not have access to the mortuary ceremonies of the members of other strata. For example, the strict Hindu caste system in India prevents those of the lowest caste, the Dalit or Untouchables, from even entering the cemetery or burial grounds of those of the higher castes (Davies 2007:274). The associated archaeological situation would have the higher castes represented in the mortuary assemblage, but the diversity of practices of all social groups at the site would not be present in the formal area for the interment of the dead.

A third model for the expected archaeological correlates of mortuary practice posits a complex manifestation of mortuary practice by different social groups. Some of the features would be similar across lines of social stratification, and some of the features

would be different, creating a dynamic and complex mosaic of similarities and differences between and within social strata. Depending on which features are shared across strata, and which are not, the interpretation of these complexities relates directly back to the motivations of the groups enacting the mortuary ritual. For example, there is a body practice among some ancient Maya elites of including a jade bead in the mouth of the deceased as part of the assemblage of grave goods. Lesser elites who did not have access to jade sometimes used a shell bead as a proxy. The intent behind including something precious in the mouth of the deceased is the same for both social groups. The difference is one of scale. Nonetheless, there is also the situation where the elites alone engaged in this practice. This then constitutes a marker of elite-ness, of something that distinguishes the elites from others. The absence of an item in the mouth of lesser elites and commoners can be seen to relate to a different cultural process. Lesser elites might not use direct emulation as a means to get socially closer to their superiors, they might engage in a completely different body practice, reflecting different goals and strategies. A situation with a complex manifestation of mortuary practices is very likely in situations where people feel that they have something to gain by altering their traditional mortuary practices. This could be a gain in social standing within or across their strata, or access to resources, legitimacy, or power. The specific context itself constrains which aspects of the mortuary behavior that people can manipulate, creating a complex manifestation of mortuary remains across social strata. This complex situation is one that the researcher must interpret using particularistic data from the local and regional area.

Conclusion

This chapter has briefly examined the research design, research methodology, sampling strategy, excavation biases, and expected archaeological outcomes for this research project. As with any archaeological research, there are particular issues and constraints associated with fieldwork, and the research undertaken at the site of Minanha is no different. Previous archaeological work undertaken at the site, as well as subsequent illegal looting activity, has altered the nature of the data set. Time and labor constraints impacted the amount of material that was recoverable for this study. Nonetheless, a sufficient cross-section of representative data was collected. The most serious gaps in the data---lack of statistical significance and synchronic chronology---were overcome by the incorporation of significant amounts of comparative diachronic data from sites in the surrounding region (see Chapter 6). Finally, a series of different archaeological expectations are discussed. Prior to the excavations themselves, it was unclear whether all members of the Minanha community were engaging in similar or different mortuary practices. These hypothetical outcomes are discussed with respect to what similarities and differences could mean for the question of how mortuary behavior and social position are related.

Table 3.1: Hypothetical patterns of mortuary remains across social strata.

	Identical mortuary assemblages between social strata.	Different mortuary assemblages between social strata.	Complex manifestation of mortuary practices.
Location	Interments across all strata are housed in a single, similar location such as a cemetery, or shrine context.	Interments of different strata have different interment locations (each strata sharing a distinct location).	Regardless of social strata, a variety of interment locations are used (multiple locations within strata).
Grave Type	All graves are of the same form, for example, everyone interred in boot shaped tombs.	Grave type corresponds to social position, with one type prevalent per strata.	Multiple grave types associated with individuals from the same strata.
Number of interred	All burials from a community having either single or multiple individual interments across all strata.	Depending on social position, some strata with single person interments, other strata with multiple individual interments.	Single and multiple individual interments occurring in mixed frequencies across social strata.
Body Position and orientation	All members of the community interred with a particular body position and orientation.	Different body positions and orientations linked to particular social strata.	Multiple body positions and orientations, unlinked to social position.
Associated Grave Goods	Despite differences in quality, all interments share similar associated grave goods.	Clusters of particular goods associated with particular social strata.	Complexity of grave good associations, unlinked to only social strata.

IV

Environment, History, Site Description, and Previous Research

I discussed theoretical issues in mortuary archaeology and ritual studies in Chapter II, and several possible patterns of the relationship between mortuary ritual and social organization in Chapter III. My hypothesis that mortuary ritual differs in relation to social position must now be tested against an original archaeological data set. For this dissertation, the original case study comes from excavations at the ancient Maya site of Minanha in west central Belize. Prior to describing the archaeological specifics of the Minanha case, I will review certain historical and contextual information. This chapter introduces the geography, climate and environment of Belize, presents the general geological profile of the country and more specifically the Vaca Plateau in the western region of the country, outlines a brief history of the nation, pinpoints the location of Minanha including a discussion of previous work undertaken at the site, and details a preliminary site description.

Environment, Climate, Flora, and Fauna

The small Central American country of Belize, known as British Honduras until 1973, is located in a region of great biodiversity that is characterized by a number of different ecological zones. Belize is situated east of Guatemala, south of the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico, and north of Honduras and El Salvador. The country is

approximately 174 miles north to south, and at its widest point it is 68 miles west to east. The land area of the entire country is about 22,965 square kilometers or 8,750 square miles (Barry 1992:130; Wright, Romney, Arbuckle, and Vial 1959:13). Broadly, Belize is characterized as part of the tropical lowlands of Central America. The majority of the lowlands are below 800 feet in elevation, with tropical forest ground cover consisting of both evergreen and rain forests (Janson 2001; Sharer 1994; Wright et al. 1959). Parts of Belize are much higher. Victoria Peak in the Maya Mountains, one of the tallest mountain in Belize, reaches 3,675 feet (Janson 2001:122). The climate of Belize is tropical with a mean annual humidity of 83 percent.

The mean annual rainfall differs dramatically in a gradient from north to south, with an approximate rainfall of 52 inches per year in the north and 167 inches per year in the far south. The general pattern of rainfall has two seasons: a wet “rainy season” from approximately June to November, and a relatively hotter and more arid “dry season” between December and May. Great variation between the onset of rain and the duration of the wet and dry seasons occurs year to year, and the rainy season usually starts about a month earlier in the southern parts of the country before it starts in the rest of the country. Temperatures in Belize range from 50°F to 95°F, with an annual mean temperature of 79°F (Wright et al. 1959:15-16).

The primary subsistence crops were and are corn and beans. A variety of vegetables, tubers, and fruits were also grown. Some rice is now grown in parts of Belize. Citrus and sugar cane are the major cash crops of Belize. Many contemporary slash-and-burn agriculturalists or *milperos* start clearing bush in February. They burn their fields in March or April, and they plant corn and rice in May. Weeding is conducted until August

and September when the crops are harvested. September is the time when farmers plant beans. Some areas of the country can also sustain an additional corn harvest, so that there are two planting and harvest cycles during the year. In terms of cash crops, citrus is harvested beginning in August, and January is the main harvest time for sugar cane. In the past, the months from June through September were the prime time for *chicleros* to be in the jungle tapping the zapote or sapodilla trees because the sap flows most freely during the wet season. November through May were the prime mahogany logging season because the dry season allowed for easier movement through forest tracks and trails (Wright et al. 1959:22).

The ancient Maya farmed corn, but their complex subsistence system combined both intensive and extensive forms of agriculture. It was also augmented by the use of the abundant natural plant and animal resources available in Belize. Typical trees found in Belize's tropical rain and evergreen forests include mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla*), cedar (*Cedrela mexicana*), logwood (*Haematoxylon campechianum*), sapodilla (*Achras sapota*), Santa Maria (*Calophyllum antillanum*), bullet tree (*Bucida buceras*), allspice tree (*Pimenta officinalis*), breadnut or ramon (*Brosimum alicastrum*), cohune (*Attalea cohune*), ceiba or cottonwood (*Bombax ceiba*), cabbage palm (*Sabal mexicana*), American fig or *amate*, as well as some species of oak. Many of these trees support other plants, most notably numerous epiphytes, strangler vines, lianas, bromeliads, and orchids (Janson 2001; Sharer 1994:33; Thompson 1931:227; Thomson 2004:15). There are also numerous flowers present in Belize that may have had great importance in the past. These include many varieties of orchids, succulents, lilies, and wildflowers.

Numerous species of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, insects, corals, and fish live in the waters and forests of Belize. A rough estimate of statistical biodiversity for Belize includes 4000 species of flowering plants, 533 species of birds (33 threatened), 155 species of mammals (15 threatened), 107 species of reptiles (7 threatened), 700 varieties of native trees and 72 varieties of orchids (Barry 1992:130). The most important species for the ancient Maya (and people today) are those used for subsistence or for a variety of other utilitarian, commercial, or ceremonial purposes. Mammals found in Belize include cats such as the jaguar (*Pantera onca*), puma (*Puma concolor*), ocelot (*Felis pardalis*), jaguarundi (*Herpailurus yagouroundi*) and margay (*Felis weidii*). Larger mammal species present in Belize include tapir (*Tapirus bairdii*), white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), red brocket deer (*Mazama americana*), brown brocket deer (*Mazama gouazoupira*), collared peccary (*Tayassu tajacu*), white-lipped peccary or warrie (*Tayassu pecari*), manatee (*Trichechus manatus*), howler monkey (*Alouatta villosa*), and spider monkey (*Ateles geoffroyi*). Smaller mammal species include the kinkajou (*Potos flavos*), gray fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*), anteater (*Tamandua tetradactyla*), armadillo (*Dasypus novemcinctus*), and opossums (from at least six different Genus categories, including *Didelphis*, *Marmosa*, and *Philander*). Also present are members of the family *Mustelidae* including the grison (*Galictis vittata*), tayra (*Eira barbara*), and river otter (*Lutra annectens*). There are also members of the raccoon family including coatimundi (*Nasua narica*); and rodents including agouti (*Dasyprocta punctata*), and paca also known as tepezcuintle or gibnut (*Agouti paca*). There are also numerous rat, mouse (both of the Order Rodentia) and bat (Order Chiroptera) species throughout the lowlands (Janson 2001; Olsen 1982; Sharer 1994:34).

Important bird species in Belize include the ocellated turkey (*Cyrtonyx ocellatus*, or *Meleagris ocellata*), great curassow (*Craz rubra*), crested guan (*Penelope purpurascens*), thicket tinamou (*Crypturellus cinnameous*), roseate spoonbill (*Ajala ajala*), brown pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*), great egret (*Casmerodius albus*), jabiru stork (*Jabiru mycteria*), chachalaca (*Ortalis vetula*), and various quail, duck, teal and geese species. There are also plenty of smaller, more colorful birds in the tropical forests including the keel-billed toucan (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*), collared aricari (*Pteroglossus torquatus*), emerald toucanet (*Aulacorhynchus prasinus*), scarlet macaw (*Ara macao*), mealy parrot (*Amazona farinosa*), as well as numerous other trogons, kingfishers, swifts, hummingbirds, woodpeckers, and motmots. Some of the large carrion eaters and hunters include turkey vultures (*Cathartes aura*), king vultures (*Sarcoramphus papa*), red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), and in the most remote rain forests, harpy eagle (*Harpia harpyja*), among other hawks, owls, and kites (Janson 2001).

Some of the important amphibians and reptiles common in Belize include green iguanas (*Iguana iguana*), black iguanas (*Ctenosaura similis*), banded basilisk lizard (*Basiliscus vittatus*), loggerhead sea turtles (*Caretta caretta*), river turtles or *jicotea* (*Trachemys cripta*), crocodile (*Crocodylus moreletti*), tree frog (*Smilisca baudini*), and toad (*Bufo valliceps*). There are over 100 snake species in Belize, only about 20 of which are poisonous. Important species of snake include the king snake or false coral snake (*Lampropeltis triangulum*), coral snake (*Micrurus negrocinctus*), boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor imperator*), and the fer-de-lance, Tommy Goff, or *barba amarilla* (*Bothrops asper*) (Janson 2001).

Invertebrates in the lowland forests are also significant, both for their utility and their ceremonial or symbolic importance. These include the morpho butterfly (Family *Morphidae*), katydid (Family *Tettigoniidae*), grasshopper (Family *Tettigoniidae*), mantis (Family *Mantidae*), tarantula (Family *Theraphosidae*), giant millipede (Class *Diplopoda*), giant centipede (Family *Scolopendra*), leaf-cutter ant (Family *Formicidae*), and scorpion (Family *Centruridae*) (Janson 2001).

A residual bias from the Spaniards who initially came into contact with the Maya during the conquest of Mexico and Central America is that they built their civilization in a most inhospitable environment (Patch 1993). The preceding lists of plant and animal species present in the Belizean central lowlands attest to the great biodiversity of the region, and refutes this earlier ethnocentric bias that the jungles of the lowlands were somehow undesirable or marginal environmental zones. In fact, these plants and animals provided food, raw materials for innumerable items of material culture, and coveted luxury goods useful in the establishment of long distance trade and exchange networks. Rather than being a resource depleted environment, the central lowlands were, and are today, a rich environmental zone with great species diversity.

Geology of Belize and the Vaca Plateau

The country of Belize sits on the eastern side of Central America between the latitudes of 16 and 18½ degrees north. In broad terms, there are two landforms: mountains flanked by subsidiary limestone masses and low lying coastal plains (Thomson 2004:xiii; Wright et al. 1959:22). The second largest barrier reef in the world

lies offshore and runs the length of the entire country. The Maya Mountains, running approximately NE-SW in the south central part of the country, have an elevation just over 3000 feet. The mountains are formed of Paleozoic era (350 million year old) rock deposited in two sedimentation episodes, and now consist primarily of quartz-rich and granitic rock. The parent material of the Maya Mountains lacks volcanic ash deposits and forms soils that lack phosphate, potash, lime, and other minerals (Wright et al. 1958:23). Abundant masses of limestone abut the Maya Mountains. These form rich and fertile soils. After the initial uplift event in the Paleozoic that created the Maya Mountains, there were subsequent submersions during the Cretaceous Era (60,000,000 years ago). This is when the majority of the limestone was laid down (Wright et al. 1959:23). Since these early formation events, stream and surface water action have caused erosion, and some of the limestone has disappeared entirely, exposing older granite. Some of the highest peaks in the Maya Mountains are composed of exposed quartz ridges and peaks, including Baldy Beacon at 3,348 feet, Fowler or Richardson Peak at just below 3,650 feet, and Victoria Peak in the Cockscomb Range (Wright et al. 1959:23). Numerous upland streams originate in the Maya Mountains. Most head east to the lowland coastal plains. Some flow towards the west, but their flow is collected by the Macal and Mopan Rivers, two branches of the Belize River, and brought eastward to the lowland plains. Only a single river on the extreme south west portion of the plateau, the Machaquilá, succeeds in flowing westward towards Guatemala (Wright et al. 1959:24).

To the north of the Maya Mountains there is an extensive mass of limestone of partly Cretaceous and partly Eocene age that has steep-sided eastern scarps at elevations of 50, 250, and 400 feet (Reeder, Brinkman and Alt 1996:121; Wright et al. 1959:28).

One portion of this area, located along the Belize/Guatemalan border and south of the Belize Valley, is known as the Vaca Plateau. The site of Minanha is located here. The Vaca Plateau is characterized by a variety of karst landforms, including an integrated system of dry karst valleys separated by residual limestone hills, single and compound sinkholes, and numerous caves found within heavily brecciated Campur limestone (Reeder et al. 1996:121). The Campur Formation of Cretaceous limestones of the Vaca Plateau (synonymous with the Ixcoy Formation in Guatemala) were formed as depositional breccias (coarse grained rock held together by a mineral cement matrix) from carbonate dissolution, collapse, and recementation. The Campur Formation is described as being composed of:

principally gray, gray-brown, and tan limestones which were deposited in reef-associated environments. The formation contains minor amounts of dolomite, and locally is interbedded with thin beds of shale, siltstone, and limestone breccia or conglomerate (Reeder et al. 1996:122).

Areas of elevation in the Vaca Plateau region can be classed in two categories, the valley bottom and the residual hill slopes. The first, the dry valley bottoms, are covered by a thick mat of vegetation. The second, the residual hill slopes, range in angle from moderate (30 degrees) to vertical. The moderate to steep slopes, between 30 and 60 degrees, have a thin mat of decaying vegetation, and the steepest areas are composed of exposed bedrock forming prominent escarpments. The relative relief between the two categories, the valley bottom to the top of the residual hills, is approximately 100 meters (Reeder et al. 1996:125).

Today, the Vaca Plateau is devoid of surface water. Surface streams once flowed across the karst landscape along lines of structural weakness, but the majority of the surface flow moved into a system of subsurface drainage networks. This helped develop the secondary permeability and subsurface networks so that eventually, all surface water went below ground. The surface stream channels were abandoned, and transformed due to continued slope processes above ground, which buried the former stream channels (Reeder et al. 1996:128). The hills in the Vaca Plateau are all that remain of the interfluvies between valley systems, and the contemporary depth of the water table is estimated at 250 meters below the surface (Reeder et al. 1996:128). Many of the caves present in the Vaca Plateau today show evidence of having formed under the water table, even though they are often 200 meters above its present level. The numerous sinkholes that now exist on mid-hill slopes also were probably formed via the active fluvial system that once existed in the valley bottoms (Reeder et al. 1996:129). The ancient Maya had a variety of adaptive systems to deal with this paucity of surface water. In the Minanha region, a large artificial reservoir was constructed at the base of the Minanha hill. In addition to this main source of water, numerous smaller water features such as springs, water holes, and smaller reservoirs are evident across the site landscape (Primrose 2004).

A Brief History of Modern Belize

The area that is now Belize was first traversed by Paleoindian peoples inhabiting the New World, was next settled by early sedentary agriculturalists, and was eventually occupied by the ancient Maya. In more modern times, it was the Spanish who first staked

a claim to the land. Pope Alexander VI made a papal donation of the lands of the New World to Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain in 1493. Between 1506 and 1509, two Spanish navigators, Vicente Yáñez Pinzón, one of Christopher Columbus' captains, and Juan Díaz de Solís sailed from the Bay Islands to the Port of Honduras and created rough charts of the coast of southern Belize. Francisco de Montejo also contributed to these first Spanish maps of the coastline of Belize when he sailed there during the 1530s but none of these early explorers came ashore (Thomson 2004:10). Possibly, the first European to actually traverse part of British Honduras was Hernan Cortés in 1524 during his overland march to quell the uprising of Cristobal de Olid, when he is thought to have crossed through part of the Cockscomb Range in southern Belize, possibly even traversing the area in southwestern Belize where the site of Pusilha is located (Caiger 1951: 17-18; Thomson 2004:11). The Spanish claim in the Caribbean and Central America was not uncontested. English pirates are recorded in the region as early as 1527, with pirating, smuggling, and privateer activities continuing for several hundred years. Some of these English pirates included Hawkins, Drake, Oxenham, and Lovell, and they frequently stopped on land to hide, rest, and stake their own claims (Caiger 1951:20). The British Monarchy legitimated these British incursions on Spanish land to openly challenge the Spanish right to Central America and the West Indies. As a result, several ephemeral settlements sprang up as a consequence of British attempts to establish a foothold in Belize. These include an agricultural venture by Captain Daniel Elfrith sometime around 1641 in the upper and lower Stann Creek area, a large plantation run by Phillip Bell at Placentia Point in 1634, and a more substantial British settlement of shipwrecked logwood cutters in 1638 near the mouth of the Belize River (Caiger 1951:28-29). Although Spain had a

legitimate claim on the lands of Belize under the authority of the Pope, the practical control of the area belonged to the British, who did not recognize the Spanish claim and began to develop settlements to exploit the natural resources of Belize.

A Scotsman, Captain Wallace, who may have been Sir Walter Raleigh's first lieutenant on his 1617 voyage to the Orinoco, is considered the founder of Belize City. He landed in 1640 with a company of 80 buccaneers at the mouth of the Belize River (at the same site as the shipwrecked logwood cutters) and began to build a more permanent settlement that included houses and a defensive palisade (Caiger 1951:31-32). In fact, the name Belize, which became the official name of the Colony of British Honduras in 1973, is thought by some to be a variant on Wallace's name. The years following the founding of the settlement were marked by numerous events where pirates and buccaneers sheltered or hid from their Spanish enemies. In 1655 Harry Morgan hid in Belize after attacking Campeche and later moved on to sack Trujillo (Caiger 1951:43). Eventually though, with the end of profitable privateering in 1697, the buccaneers turned to more stable trade, and typically involved themselves in the logwood industry. Logwood is a tropical softwood that was prized because it contains a sap in the heart of the tree that could be fermented and used in the dye process for woolen goods (Caiger 1951:37; Thomson 2004:15). Logwood cutters loyal to the British, along with allied groups of Mosquito Indians, worked the area abutting the entire Gulf of Honduras and became known as the Baymen. Part of the reason for the success of the Baymen was that they were protected from Spanish incursion by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. By 1717, the Baymen of Belize were exporting up to 4,000 tons of logwood a year, and many had become quite wealthy. A resurgence of British piracy again touched Belize at this time.

The famed pirate Edward Teach, or Blackbeard, is said to have buried a great treasure in the Turneffe Islands, although it is possible he just re-fitted a ship there in 1717 (Caiger 1951:63; Thomson 2004:18).

The financial success of the Baymen in the logwood cutting enterprise increasingly attracted the interest of the Spanish. One of the first loosely organized Spanish raids came from the Péten in 1718 and reached Spanish Lookout, but the British were aided by the Mosquito Indians and repelled this incursion. In 1730, Figueroa, the Governor of Yucatan, sent a brigantine up the Belize River, destroyed seven logwood vessels, and at the same time sent a land force via Bacalar to attack the Belize settlements. Some of the British settlers retreated back to the Mosquito Shore (Caiger 1951:66; Thomson 2004:22). In Britain, suggestions were made to make Belize a colony, and this enraged the Spanish who began attacking Belize in earnest by 1745. Considering there were only about 50 Englishmen and 120 black slaves in Belize at this time, the legendary feats of the Baymen are celebrated because they repelled the Spanish attempts to either chase them off or take over their settlements (Caiger 1951:72). There were numerous Spanish incursions on the settlements of the Baymen, until the Treaty of Paris in 1763, which supposedly recognized the cutters' right to continue to cut logwood in the Spanish territory of Belize (Caiger 1951:78). Spanish aggression towards the Baymen continued, and in 1765, some support was given to the Baymen from the British Naval forces in Jamaica, under William Burnaby. Burnaby was the first to encourage occupation and use of St. George's Cay as the settlement capital, and also responsible for the first law code for the settlement, known as "Burnaby's Code" (Caiger 1951:81). Trouble continued for the Baymen on September 15, 1779, when the Governor of Bacalar

attacked the settlement at St. George's Cay, taking many English prisoners to Merida, then Havana, where many survivors fled to the Bay Islands in Honduras (Thomson 2004:26). But the retaliatory actions of Horatio Nelson and Edward Despard against the Spanish reinstated the settlements on the mainland and at St. George's Cay by 1783. The most decisive Spanish attack on St. George's Cay happened on September 10, 1798. In this instance however, the Baymen managed to repel the Spanish advancement in the Battle of St. George's Cay. Afterwards, the Spanish were never again able to forcibly evict the British colonists and settlers from Belize (Thomson 2004:33). From the British win at the Battle of St. George's Cay, Belize came to be seen as a proper colony of the British crown in all but official name (Caiger 1951:100). The connections that the settlement traditionally had with the Mosquito Indian King and held into the 1800s allowed for Britain to extend its control in the region. The lands of the Mosquito Coast were declared to be under official British protection by 1848 (Caiger 1951:114). Although Belize was essentially already a British Colony, it became official in 1862 under the title of British Honduras, although the name "Belize" had appeared in official correspondence since at least 1800 (Thomson 2004:37,85). In 1871, Queen Victoria confirmed British Honduras as a full Crown Colony, complete with a Crown representative (Governor) and a Constitution (Caiger 1951:131).

As a result of this status, and the concomitant connections from being part of the British Empire, the population of Belize began to include immigrants from other colonial holdings. For instance, in 1858, 1,000 Sepoy mutineers with their wives and families were transported to Belize from India. Indentured Chinese laborers were brought in 1865, numerous Americans from the southern states came to the Toledo District in 1868, and

Syrians and Italians also came to Belize (Caiger 1951:127). The descendants of all of these groups can be found in modern-day Belize.

As an official colony of the British empire, British Honduras prospered. A rough estimate of the exported materials during the nineteenth century include logwood to a maximum of 35,000 tons in 1896, mahogany up to 5 million feet in 1833, and *chicle*, the sap of the sapodilla tree, at 2,000,000 tons a year by the beginning of the twentieth century (Caiger 1951:135; Thomson 2004:108). Additional exports from the colony included “banana, sugar, rum, coconut, oranges, tobacco, cassava, cohune oil, cedar, rosewood, tortoise-shell, shark-leather, and sponges” (Caiger 1951:135). By the early 1900s, logwood was still exported, although not in the amount it once was, and mahogany continued to be an important export. The supplies of mahogany in the forests of Belize were beginning to dwindle by 1902. Belizean cedar exports to the United States increased in the wake of decreasing mahogany exports. By 1913 one of the main exports was bananas, and the infrastructural growth associated with the banana industry included the first railroad of the colony in the Stann Creek district to transport bananas (Caiger 1951:143). Other infrastructural achievements in the colony included the incorporation of the first bank, and the establishment of an inland electric telegraph in 1902 (Thomson 2004:114). The economic success of the colony took a downturn, however, during World War I. Imports and exports were directly reliant on transatlantic shipping, which ceased during that war. It is interesting to note however, that at least two companies, a total of 528 men from British Honduras, actively served with the British West Indies Regiment in the Middle East during the Mesopotamian campaign (Thomson 2004:129). Some of these men can be credited with starting the first black nationalist movement in Belize,

particularly Samuel A. Haynes who founded the Belize branch of the United Negro Improvement Association in 1920 (Barry 1992:72). Added to the economic downturn resulting from the war was an infestation of Panama disease that affected all the banana plantations of Stann Creek. This and the cessation of *chicle* and logwood harvesting crippled the economic prosperity of the colony in 1917 (Caiger 1951:148; Thomson 2004:120). The 1920s saw a mixed economic picture in British Honduras.

At this time, there was a focus on other resources of the colony, particularly the potentially rich archaeological resources. One of the first times in the modern era when the archaeological treasures of the colony came to public attention was at the Wembley Exhibition of 1924. Supposedly amongst the exhibition pieces was an ancient carved sapodilla lintel from a Maya temple in Cayo District (Caiger 1951:152). This was around the same time that the explorers Thomas Gann and Frederick A. Mitchell-Hedges first came to the site of Lubaantun, soon to be followed by Thomas A. Joyce of the British Museum. Other well-known adventurers of the 1920s also came to Belize. Charles Lindbergh flew the *Spirit of St. Louis* from Guatemala to Belize in 1927, the first time an airplane landed in Belize (Caiger 1951:153). An even odder tale is told of Baron Edward Bliss of Buckinghamshire who had heard of the great sport-fishing in the colony. En route to Belize, he fell ill and died within site of the shore. Before he died, he bequeathed his considerable fortune to the colony through the Baron Bliss Trust (Caiger 1951:154).

The late 1920s were marked by the stock market crash that preceded the Great Depression, the after effects of which were felt even in remote British Honduras. In addition, a terrible hurricane in 1931 all but leveled the capital of Belize City, killing an estimated 1,500 people (Caiger 1951:158). The city was re-built, and by 1935 it included

the Carnegie Library and Museum, which housed treasures of the ancient Maya (Caiger 1951:165). It was at this time, too, that Guatemala re-asserted a claim for Belize, a controversy that continues to the present-day.

The post-World War II economy in Belize was based on two elements: the development of the export crop of citrus, and the development of an improved road system linking the capital to the western side of the country. This enabled increased settlement and agricultural development. This western agricultural development was based at Central Farm, established in 1948 and still active today, as a governmental agricultural center for support of private sector ventures in agriculture (Thompson 2004:139). This agricultural development was outstripped by the need for agricultural products. As late as the 1950s, rice, meat, milk and vegetables still accounted for a third of overall imports to Belize (Thomson 2004:145).

Several noteworthy events characterized the development of Belize in the latter half of the twentieth century. First was the devastating Hurricane Hattie in 1961 that flattened Belize City, destroyed the Stann Creek citrus crops, and killed an estimated 261 people (Thomson 2004:147). The propensity for damaging hurricanes to Belize City spurred the relocation of the capital to Belmopan where construction began in 1966. The formal seat of government moved there in 1971 (Thomson 2004:148). Important developments in government included self-governance by 1965. The official name of the colony changed in 1973 from British Honduras to Belize, and finally, the country achieved independence in 1981 (Thomson 2004:179). In the years since, tourism, now its biggest industry, has had the greatest impact on the landscape of Belize. The earliest waves of tourists to the country were self-styled eco-tourists. Later, cruise ships took over

a large part of the tourism market in the country. Both types of tourist have generated great interest in the archaeological heritage of the country, and development and tourism-related monies have had a serious impact on site development and consolidation activities since independence.

History of Investigations at Minanha

The first twentieth century record of the site appeared in a small Belizean newspaper, *The Clarion*, on May 11, 1922. On April 27, Father Arthur Versaval (priest of the Catholic Church in Benque Viejo) and Dr. Winsor (the Medical Officer for the El Cayo district) re-discovered the site approximately 20 miles southeast of Benque Viejo. Versaval describes the results of a hasty survey of the site as locating an artificial mound approximately 140 feet high, 40 feet wide, and 55 feet long. He mentions that the summit of this mound supports an additional 4 structures, located in each cardinal direction. The largest of these is described as having:

caved in from the top, exposing a sepulchral vault four feet by seven of oval form. In this chamber were found some bones and five pieces of painted pottery- four complete and another fragmentary, but bearing remnants of Maya glyphs, among which one, the Month sign, and another, Initial Series sign, can still be made out (*Clarion* May 11, 1922).

Versaval describes the area to the south of the large main mound as having at least 15 smaller mounds. After having seen the chamber containing the vessels, Father Versaval named the site *Mucnal Yok Tunich*, meaning “grave upon a stone.”

In 1927, the site was visited by archaeologists associated with the British Museum Expedition to British Honduras. Although the bulk of that expedition was focused on the site of Lubaantun in southern Belize, a small party consisting of Thomas A. Joyce and Thomas Gann ventured to the Cayo District to examine a recently reported ruin south of Benque Viejo (Joyce, Cooper Clark, and Thompson 1927:295). Joyce, Gann, and six *chicleros* rode eight mules for 10 hours south of Benque Viejo town, and eventually had to abandon the mules when they climbed the final distance up to the top of the rise on which the site sits (Joyce et al. 1927: 295). Almost immediately, they realized that the area was very low on available surface water, and had two of their local guides permanently employed in cutting water vine (liana) for enough drinking water to sustain the small party (Joyce 1927:320). After locating the site, they named it Minanha, or 'place without water.' Joyce conducted a preliminary pace and compass survey using a prismatic compass and tape, and also carried out very limited excavations. These efforts were limited by a lack of water and shortage of labor resources (Joyce et al.1927: 295; Joyce 1927:320). Joyce's initial impression was that the standing surface architecture was of a relatively poor quality, and that the best masonry at the site was within some underground chambers uncovered by their limited excavations on top of the acropolis of the site (Joyce 1927:320).

Joyce (1927:322) noted that the limited archaeological investigations they were able to accomplish had disappointing results, but that they were enough to establish the importance of the site (Figure 4.1). Excavations undertaken during this brief 1927 foray include a pit into the summit of Mound H (Social Archaeology Research Program, or SARP, Structure 38J), where they found some obsidian artifacts and some rough pottery,

including the nose of an apparent figurine (Joyce 1927:322). They also dug two large excavations into Mounds B and C which compose the ballcourt of the site (SARP Structures 1A and 2A) with no findings discussed. As well, they excavated Mound A (SARP Structure 3A) and located several good quality stone implements. They also excavated into Mounds T and U (SARP Structures 7A, and 10A) with no results, and Mound E (SARP Structure 36J). This final excavation in Mound E was probably their most interesting excavation as it revealed a well-built chamber with an intact Maya arch and notably, the capstones of the vault were slate slabs (Joyce 1927:323). This is notable because it is rare to find architectural features composed of the raw material slate. The entire room was subsequently buried with a large amount of earthen fill: a total of 6 feet, 6 inches above the level of the slate capstones (Joyce 1927:323). Although they did not have the time to reach the floor of the chamber, the excavators did clear material to a depth of about 1 foot along the entire 8 foot length of the chamber (Joyce 1927:323).

Writing about this same expedition, Thomas Gann provided some additional details that fill out the picture of these early encounters at the site. Although Thomas Joyce was an archaeologist of some renown, Thomas Gann is mostly considered an avid amateur, who had a great interest in the Maya. He noted that he had seen the pottery vessels held by the Jesuit Priest Father Versaval in Benque Viejo (Gann 1927:136). For the first time, the fact that the vessels were actually found by a *chiclero* named Eglesias is mentioned. Gann (1927:136) noted that the Father had acquired the vessels from the *chiclero* several years earlier (earlier than 1927). In the *chiclero*'s telling, he was looking for sapodilla trees about 15 miles to the southwest of Benque Viejo and came across a large stone-faced mound, which had four pyramids on its flat top (Gann 1927:137). He

found the vessels in a cave-like hole near the summit of the northern most of these pyramidal structures, and subsequently, he gave them to the priest in Benque Viejo (Gann 1927:137). Gann provides a more detailed description of the vessels from his visit to the Father, noting that the collection contained “cylindrical vases, bowls, and saucer-like vessels; they had been beautifully decorated, in yellow, red, black, and white, with geometrical devices, and upon one of them human figures and hieroglyphics were still discernible” (Gann 1927:136). Gann describes the condition of the vessels as poor as a result of being exposed to weather and the dripping of lime-impregnated water so that their surfaces had a thick calcareous crust, and the hieroglyphs were unreadable (Gann 1927: 136-7). He was able to make an assessment of the quality of the ceramics, describing them as belonging to “the very highest and rarest type of Maya ceramics-hard, thin, porcelain-like ware” (Gann 1927:137).

Gann’s narrative provides more information on the particular members of the 1927 expedition to the site, including his descriptions of several of the accompanying guides and laborers. The initial group of expedition members gathered in Belize City in the beginning of April, 1927, and included Gann, T.A. Joyce, Muddy, Andres and a photographer named Avery (Gann 1927:138). Little is known of these last three individuals, other than they had previously accompanied Gann on other expeditions. Additional information comes in a later publication describing the 1928 Field Museum of Natural History of Chicago expeditions to British Honduras, J.E.S. Thompson (1931:231) identifies Muddy as Mr. Amado Esquivel, who was employed on that project as well.

After a lengthy journey by motorized boat to Cayo (modern-day San Ignacio), and then by road via Succotz, they arrived in Benque Viejo “the last outpost of British rule in

the colony” before the outfit headed for the site (Gann 1927:141). Muddy, apparently the go-to-guy for the expedition, acquired the men, mules and gear necessary for the trip once they arrived at Benque (Gann 1927:142). One of the six laborers secured for the trip was the *chiclero* Eglesias, the original discoverer of the site and the pottery held by Father Versaval. Although very biased in tone and attitude, Gann provides us with the only known description of Eglesias, who “was a typical chiclero, with long black hair hanging over his forehead, cynical mouth, scoffing, restless eyes, and one ear partly eaten away by leichmaniasis---commonly known as Bay Sore---which gave him a particularly rakish appearance” (Gann 1927:142). In contrast, one of the other laborers, Henrique, was described as “possessed of a magnificent physique, his face a fine oval, and his features pure Greek in outline; his eyes a deep brown, large, well open, and wide apart, his expression benevolent and thoughtful” (Gann 1927:142-3). One additional unnamed laborer was described only as “a mixture of east and west Indian”, and characterized as a hard worker (Gann 1927:143). And finally, the other three workers were described as “ordinary Indian mozos, their original good qualities considerably obscured by many years of “Chicleando”, and the recklessness and dislike of regular work which that occupation always induces” (Gann 1927:143).

Gann confirmed the details of the 1927 expedition to Minanha, outlined above by Joyce. He described the terrain between Benque and Minanha as consisting of rocky gorges, dense bush, and dramatic, steep rises (Gann 1927:143-4). He noted:

The trail cut by the men was simply awful, up and down steep little limestone hills, and in and out amongst vast boulders, ascending gradually all the way. Even the mules found it difficult to find a foothold on some of

the smoother rocky slopes, and amongst the heaps of loose boulders which covered the path in places (Gann 1927:144-5).

This is an accurate depiction of the terrain of the area, because it is definitely a difficult landscape to traverse. On the final ascent up to the site, Gann (1927:145) mentioned seeing numerous ancient semi-circular terraces along the hillsides and surmised that a fairly large population must have been sustained by these intensive agricultural activities. Gann (1927:145), like Joyce, made special mention of the lack of surface water at or near the site, and lamented that they were forced to make coffee out of soda-water. He mentioned that it was this point, the lack of water, which caused him to come up with the name of Minanha (Gann 1927:151). He even noted that the others eagerly accepted his name for the site, although Joyce himself failed to credit Gann with coming up with the name. Some prophetic words of Gann directly pertain to the contemporary group of archaeologists working at the site: “Future explorers will have to establish a regular mule water transport service between the ruins and the village of Benque Viejo if they are to enjoy any degree of comfort” (1927:150). Like Joyce, Gann also emphasized that they had to engage the laborers to locate water bejuco or liana, the vine that releases water once cut, and that they even had to send Muddy back to Benque to bring vats of water to them the next day (Gann 1927:145-146). The rest of the expedition went on to the site, climbing slopes that Gann (1927:146) described as being “steep as a house” until they reached the summit of the hill, and the site itself.

Gann mentioned that he expected to only find the single mound where the *chiclero* Eglesias had found the pottery vessels, but was surprised to see “a vast complex

of pyramids, plazas, terraces, and causeways - evidently the remains of a once extensive Maya city” (1927:146). His description of the site matches Joyce’s, although he notes that there were a total of six (not five) painted Maya vessels in the collapsed chamber of the northern pyramid atop the acropolis (Gann 1927:147). His description of the excavations undertaken during their brief stay at the site confirms Joyce’s discussion. Like Joyce, Gann found that the most interesting excavation undertaken was in the small oval structure on the south end of the acropolis (SARP, Structure 36J). He noted the slate capstones that sealed a large, well-built, subterranean room, and the rarity of such an architectural configuration (Gann 1927:148). Excavations conducted by SARP reveal that this entire area on the acropolis was subject to a massive in-filling event, where extensive materials were used in antiquity to bury the earlier constructions. Thus, although Gann noted that the presence of “subterranean” rooms is unique in the Maya area, he misunderstood the construction sequence.

Gann described the reluctance of the expedition members to return to Benque by noting that they had wanted to accomplish more at the site. In his words:

We bade a reluctant farewell to Minanha. We had come expecting to find a single, large, flat-topped pyramid, with several small burial-mounds on its summit, in which we had hoped to find a few specimens of that very beautiful and rare Maya pottery, with dates and figures of gods, men, and animals painted upon it. We were disappointed in this quest, but, on the other hand, had discovered a very large ruined site, the thorough exploration, clearing, and excavation of which would probably require a large force of labourers, over a number of years, to accomplish (Gann 1927:155).

The site was not re-visited by archaeologists until 1998, when the site was relocated. An initial reconnaissance survey and clearing of the site took place during December 1998 in preparation for the first formal excavations since 1927 (Iannone 1999:11). Our initial findings suggested that Minanha was much larger than described in the 1927 reports, with a much larger epicenter, more numerous and larger buildings, and a greater number of associated peripheral settlements. The potential for multi-year excavations seemed promising, and in fact, a total of ten field seasons have been conducted at the site. Most of this work has focused on the ritual, palace, and administrative architecture of the site epicenter---in Groups A and J---but significant excavations have also been undertaken in Groups R, T, and S, all just outside the site center. Work continues in the periphery of the site to investigate the support population in household groups such as MRS4, as well as the associated agricultural terracing and water management features.

Site Description

The site of Minanha is located equidistant between the large polity of Caracol to the south and smaller sites in the Belize Valley to the north (Figure 4.2). The site also sits at the approximate midpoint between the sites of Caracol and the great city of Naranjo (Iannone 1999:14). Iannone (1999:14) posits that the location of Minanha is significant in relation to the power struggle between the sites of Caracol and Tikal, two large polities with a history of mutual aggression. Minanha sits in a critical border position between these sites, and thus was an area of contention between the larger sites when local

alliances and affiliations oscillated between the larger polities (Iannone 1999:14). Secondary or lesser elites could also manipulate their position in regards to this advantageous spatial proximity to the two larger polities. They could pull support populations away from the ruling elite at the site, creating tension for those in higher positions of authority, while augmenting their own (Iannone 1999:14). The initial excavation goals of the project include investigating the nature of these affiliations and alliances from the material record recovered in administrative, ritual, and palace contexts. This dissertation is a focused study on the second of these, because this research investigates the function and significance of ritual behavior in relation to each social strata at Minanha.

The 1927 expedition map of the site of Minanha depicts several structures arranged around a series of plazas on the acropolis of the site, as well as numerous structures in an area to the south of the acropolis. Since the initiation of the SARP work at the site in 1998, an updated map including surrounding settlement has been completed (Figure 4.3). To date, 145 structures have been mapped within the 39 hectare area of the site (Iannone 2003:2). The site center can informally be divided into two sections: a series of plaza groups on top of the acropolis comprising the apical elite residence or court to the north, and more open-access plaza groups at the base of the acropolis. This second area contains range structures, an E-group, large pyramidal structures, and a ballcourt to the south (Iannone et al. 2001:1). Additional features of the site core include at least eight blank stelae, a small reservoir, and a short *sacbe* (causeway) alongside the acropolis. At a lower elevation in a ring surrounding the site core is a second level of administrative, residential, and ritual features. These groups are composed of smaller

architecture than that seen in the site epicenter (Iannone et al. 2001:1). A series of smaller groups have been located in the more distant periphery of the site. These are associated with agricultural terraces and water features and are up to several miles distant from the site epicenter. These small, relatively isolated groups represent the agrarian support population of the site. Excavations to date have indicated that the site epicenter was first occupied in the Terminal Preclassic period (A.D. 100-250), and that the main period of occupation occurred during the Late (A.D. 600-780) and Terminal (A.D. 780-810) Classic periods (Iannone et al. 2001:1).

The three physically distinct tiers of settlement at the site---the acropolis in the site epicenter, the lower ring of settlement surrounding the epicenter, and the groups at the bottom of the hill in the periphery of the site---correspond to at least three levels of social status positions within the community. The raised, restricted acropolis is the apical elite residence. The large compounds surrounding the site center were the residences and activity areas of lesser elites. Peripheral groups were residences of the support population, or commoners, of the site.

The topographical elevation, position, and architectural size gradient at each respective location supports this assessment. The largest pyramidal and range structures are found in the site epicenter, somewhat smaller pyramids are found within the quadrilateral residential plazas surrounding the site center, and low-lying mounds with small associated pyramidal shrines are found in the peripheral groups. Aside from the size gradient of structures, additional support for this assessment is taken from the material items located in each respective location.

General Interpretations of Minanha Archaeology

Iannone (2005) interprets the events of the Late and Terminal Classic periods at Minanha as largely responsive to the large-scale political and demographic realignment of the Maya collapse. He posits that the major centers of the Petén and Vaca Plateau lost power, creating a vacuum that secondary centers located in the frontier zones between large centers used to attain power (Iannone 2005:26). Iannone (2005:26) describes the emergence of a royal court at Minanha in the Late Classic period that had a 100 year period of florescence, before being destroyed in the Terminal Classic. During the Late Classic (A.D. 675-810), Iannone (2005:29) identifies an intensive building program at Minanha. This building phase resulted in the construction of a 9.5 ha court complex, including an elite residential acropolis with a restricted northern access, and a more open group of plazas to the south (Iannone 2005:29). Evidence to confirm the interpretation of the acropolis as a royal court includes that the proposed royal residence is the most spatially restricted court at Minanha. As well, the royal courtyard contained an 8.5 m high pyramidal shrine with rounded terrace corners and a stucco façade, and a vaulted throne room with a throne-like bench inside it (Iannone 2005:30). Iannone (2005:30) also notes that the Minanha civic center has a strong north-south axis, with the royal residence in the north, a symbol of the heavens. He suggests that this was a deliberate strategy to emulate a much more powerful and distant center, Calakmul (Iannone 2005:31).

Iannone (2005:32) posits that the rulers responsible for the Late Classic construction of the royal court at Minanha were either locals from the Minanha polity, or migrants from the nearby center of Caracol. The evidence for a non-local origin of these

rulers includes attributes that are common at both Minanha and Caracol. These consist of an ancestor shrine with a slate stela in front, multiple entry tombs, slate capstones in graves, the practice of caching obsidian eccentrics, speleothems, and flanged effigy censurs, and the smashing of flanged effigy censurs (Iannone 2005:32). This list of traits could also be interpreted to mean that a local group, familiar with Caracol, was emulating the ritual practices of that polity. Additional evidence to support a local origin for the Late Classic rulers at Minanha include a series of caches in front of the E-group in Group A of the site core that physically connect material from the Late Classic to material from the Preclassic. This implies a continuity of local ritual knowledge, and supports the position that the Late Classic rulers at the site were local (Iannone 2005:32; Schwake and Iannone no date). There are no written texts confirming the role that individuals from Caracol had in the creation of the Minanha royal court. It is unknown at present if the Late Classic Minanha rulers came directly from Caracol or elsewhere, or if they were of local origin. Citing Kopytoff's model of social hybridity in frontier zones, Iannone (2005:32) suggests that the royal court at Minanha was constructed and controlled by disaffected migrants from Caracol who blended with the local population at the site.

Iannone (2005:34) posits that the royal court at Minanha was short lived, and events at the beginning of the Terminal Classic period (A.D. 810-900) caused the collapse and subsequent abandonment of the royal court. The rooms of the royal residential compound were filled in, and the courtyard itself was buried (Iannone 2005:34). This was not a violent destruction of the royal courtyard, but rather a carefully planned in-filling event, which has been interpreted as showing reverence to the political body associated with the court structures (Iannone 2005:34). The reverence shown by

burying but not destroying the structures of the royal court is interesting. It suggests that there was a Terminal Classic population at the site who enjoyed some control of labor and resources after the fall of the Late Classic royal court (Iannone 2005:37). Models for the lowland Maya collapse often portray the Terminal Classic Maya populations as desperate, violent, starving individuals trying to escape the breakdown of their sociopolitical system. Iannone suggests that this was not the case at Minanha. Although there was a significant change in the power structure of the community, a dispersed Terminal Classic population at Minanha did persist after the abandonment of the royal court (Iannone 2005:37).

The timing of the rise and fall of the royal court at Minanha is also significant. Iannone (2005:38) links the rapid rise of the polity to larger patterns of shifting political control between the centers of Caracol and Naranjo. During the eighth century, both Caracol and Naranjo were less active regionally because they were experiencing periods of political hiatus themselves (Iannone 2005:38; Martin and Grube 2000). Iannone (2005:40) posits that the careful filling and burial of the structures of the royal court, instead of their haphazard destruction, indicates that local agents played a role in the downfall of the royal court. Iannone (2005:40) goes on to suggest that these actions were spurred by outside agents from Caracol or Naranjo in a final effort to quell the upstart rulers at the secondary center of Minanha, and to re-assert regional control.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the essential background information regarding the geophysical environs of the site of Minanha and has also presented a brief overview of the sociopolitical history of the modern country of Belize. Environmental information, including the floral and faunal species, is critical to understand the breadth of resources the ancient Maya utilized for subsistence, technology, and symbolic applications. Far from being a unified zone, the North Vaca Plateau is an environment characterized by variability. This variability exists in elevation, climate, forest cover, plant and animal species, mineral resources, lithic raw materials, and water availability. Despite being near other centers, the variability in environment is striking. For example, the nearby centers in the Belize Valley region are found in a riverine ecosystem where people employed subsistence strategies adapted to the seasonally flooded alluvial plains. The Belize Valley inhabitants also had access to different resources than those available in the Vaca Plateau. Thus, despite being only 30 km away from Minanha, the microenvironment differences between the two areas is significant. The historical background presented here is essential to understand the context in which the site was rediscovered in the modern age, as well as to discuss the earliest archaeological work undertaken at the site during the 1920s. The modern country of Belize is a new nation, one that emerged from an interesting combination of historical influences. The research undertaken as part of the Minanha investigations occurs within the context of modern day Belize, thus the trajectory of development of Belize is relevant to understand the contemporary framework of the excavations. The brief description of the site serves as an introduction to the precise

location where the excavations for the dissertation were completed. Finally, some preliminary interpretations of Minanha archaeology over the past decade have been discussed. Modern archaeological research at the site was only initiated in 1999, and this intensive program of investigations has raised questions about the history of the site as well as the placement of the site within local and regional landscapes of power.

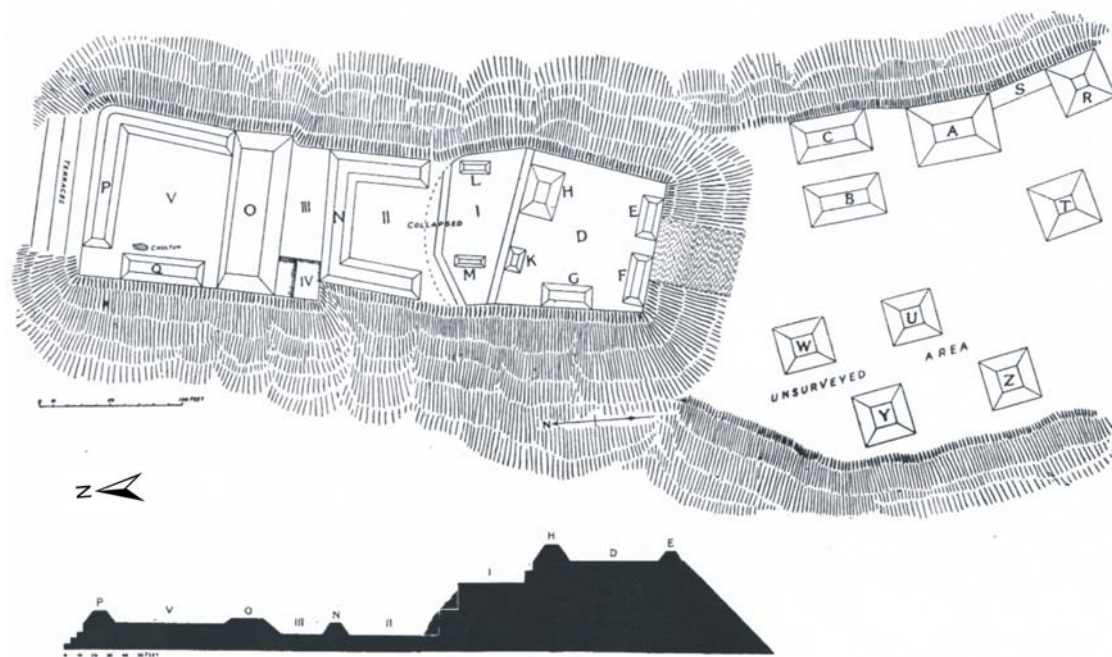


Figure 4.1: Top Plan and Section of the site from the 1927 Expedition. (Modified from Joyce et al. 1927: 321).

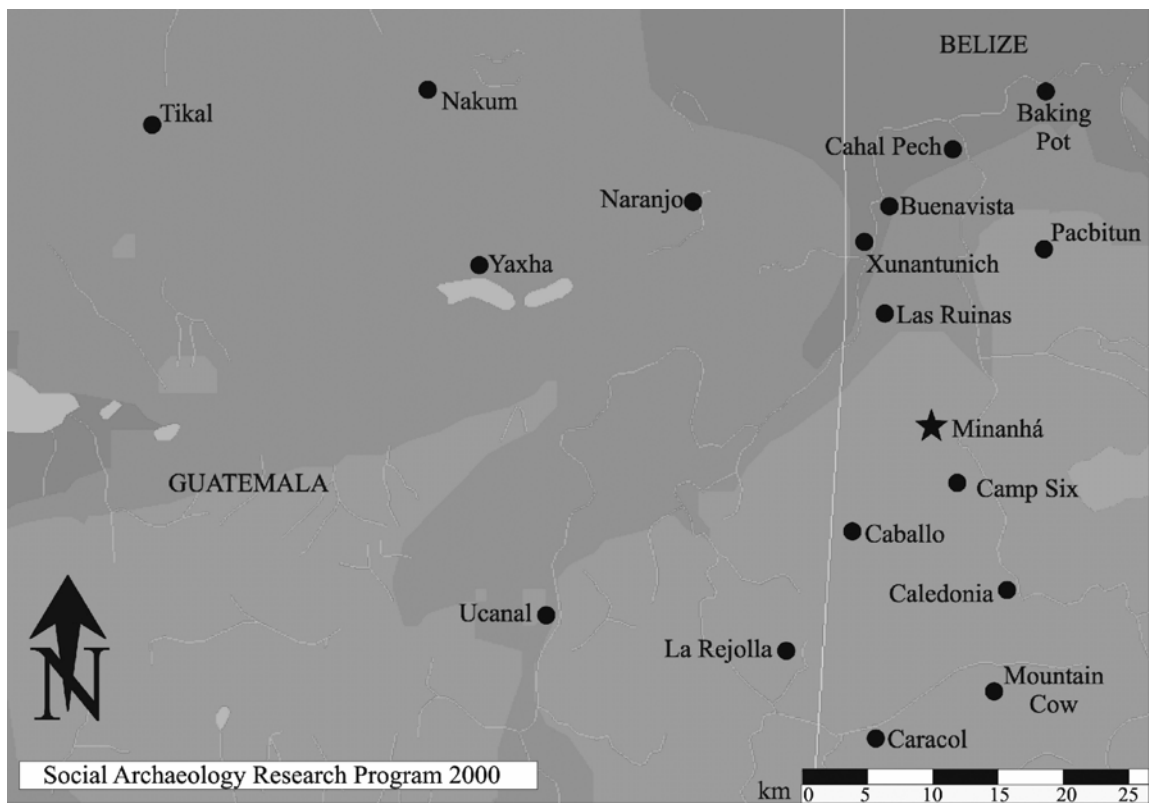


Figure 4.2: Regional location of Minanha. (Map provided by G. Iannone).

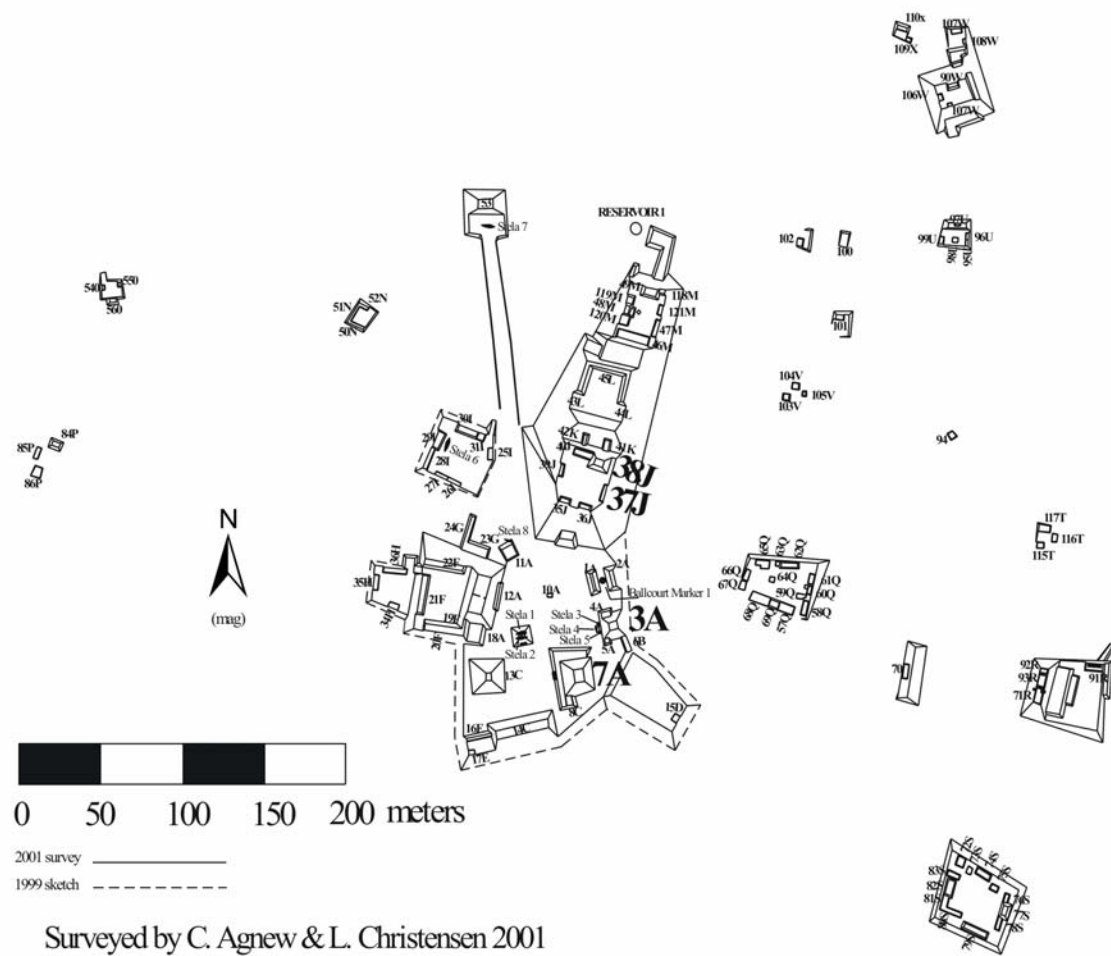


Figure 4.3: Site core of Minanha. (Map provided by G. Iannone).

Case Study: Minanha

The excavation component of this dissertation project was carried out under the auspices of the Social Archaeology Research Program (SARP) field school of Trent University, run by Dr. Gyles Iannone. The work was undertaken during the 1999 through 2004 field seasons at the site of Minanha. Three loci served as the focus of these excavations, broadly aimed at elucidating the continuum of forms of ritual architecture and associated ceremonial ritual items across all socio-political strata at the site. These areas include a large pyramidal temple structure in the site core, and smaller pyramidal structures in groups both near the site core and in the distant periphery of the site. This chapter describes the excavations in some detail, because they comprise the primary data set for this dissertation and represent the bulk of the original research contribution of this work.

Excavations in Group A

The excavations in Group A, the main public plaza in the site epicenter, focus on the eastern configuration of buildings that comprise part of an E-group or astronomical group. The Group A plaza is bounded by Structure 10A and the ballcourt, Structures 1A and 2A, Structure 9A, Structure 7A, and Structures 2A, 3A, and 4A. Excavations were undertaken in most of these structures by the SARP team (see Iannone et al. 1999). Because many of these structures had suffered the most extensive recent looting, part of

the justification for conducting these excavations was to gather any remnant *in situ* archaeological materials.

Structure 3A, the central pyramidal structure of the eastern configuration of the E-group, was one of the first structures excavated for this research project. The structure is flanked by two lower platform constructions: Structure 4A to the north and Structure 5A to the south. The rough configuration of a large, pyramidal structure flanked by two lower platforms or pyramids on the eastern side of a plaza corresponds to the expected pattern for an E-group. In this case, the right angled, front wall of Structure 5A is visible on the surface but does not seem perfectly symmetrical to the more platform-like Structure 4A. Thus, although Structures 3A, 4A, and 5A appear to form a Cenote-style E-group, the variation present between Structures 4A and 5A makes it preferable to categorize them as a Cenote variant form (Aimers 1993).

The first E-group in the Maya lowlands was recognized at Uaxactun, Guatemala, by Frans Blom. Structures E-1 through E-III and E-VII were noted to have a unique configuration: a single structure oriented east, facing a line of three structures on the eastern edge of the plaza (Aimers 1993:1). The lone western structure has since been described as being either a radial pyramid, or a pyramid with only one or two stairways. This structure does not usually have a temple built atop it, rather a stela or pylon is typically erected at the summit (Cohodas 1985:53). Note that Structure 9A at Minanha, the western structure, had two miniature limestone monuments in pieces on its summit (Stelae 1 and 2). The eastern structure is characterized by a long north-south running platform divided into three parts with one or more temples constructed atop it. The central pyramidal structure of the eastern platform may have equal-sized collateral

pyramids or smaller flanking structures constructed at a later time. This configuration usually occupies a central location of a site, and may be associated with other public ritual architecture such as ballcourts and *sacbeob*. The Minanha E-group is located adjacent to the ballcourt. Immediate architectural associations with E-groups include stelae with axially aligned altar monuments, as well as stelae at the center of the flanking structures (Aimers 1993:94, 116; Schele 1987:12).

Three variations on the construction styles of the eastern configuration of E-groups have been noted. These are the Uaxactun style, Cenote style, and Cenote variant forms. These distinctions are made on the basis of formal characteristics related to differing morphology. The Uaxactun style is characterized by three structures of equal size, elevated on a single platform. The Cenote style E-groups tend to have a large or easterly extending central section, with relatively smaller northern and southern flanking structures. The Cenote variant type is characterized by significant morphological differences from the other described types, in fact, they do not seem to conform to a specific configuration (Aimers 1993:74). The eastern structure of the E-group at Minanha is a Cenote variant type.

The spatial distribution of E-group configurations, though relatively restricted, continues to grow as more sites are investigated and identified as having one of the forms of E-group. They are found throughout the central Petén, in parts of southern Yucatán, and parts of northern and west central Belize, including the Belize Valley, and the Vaca Plateau. This distribution somewhat challenges the concept that there is only a central core zone where E-groups are found (Rathje et al. 1978:163). Within the general proximity of Minanha, E-groups have been noted at the Vaca Plateau sites of Caracol,

Cahal Pichik, Hatzcap Ceel, and Pacbitun. Others are found at the Guatemalan sites of Ucanal, Yaxha, Naranjo, and Nakum. More are known from the Belize Valley sites of Xunantunich, Las Ruinas de Arenal, El Pilar, Cahal Pech, and Baking Pot (Aimers 1993, 1997; Awe and Campbell 1989:12; Carpenter 1998; Chase and Chase 1995; Healy 1990:251; Rathje et al. 1978; Taschek and Ball 1999). It is significant to note that of the sites listed, only Xunantunich, Yaxha, and Caracol have the Uaxactun style E-group, while the rest have either the Cenote style or the Cenote variant type.

Chase and Chase (1995) posit that E-groups are an important architectural marker for a significant change in socio-political organization between the Preclassic and Early Classic Periods. They note that what has been called the Lowland Maya “stela cult” occurs in concert with the E-group phenomenon. They identify this social organizational change as the conjunction of rulership and centralized authority, and suggest that the E-group functioned as a place for display and ritual by an emerging ruling elite. Further evidence for this is the inclusion of the burials of important personages within the buildings of the E-group structures (Chase and Chase 1995:100-101). This is especially interesting for the Minanha case, because the excavations in association with the E-group in Group A reveal a long use-history by the apical elites at the site, dating back to the Preclassic period. A description of these excavations follows.

Previous work at 3A includes a cursory excavation in 1927 under the auspices of the British Museum Expedition. Gann (1927:152) describes the work as a small 6 foot excavation into the summit of the mound, where numerous potsherds and two small, flaked bifaces were recovered. Joyce et al. (1927:323) also briefly mention the 3A (then called Mound A) excavation by noting that “one or two stone implements of good

quality were found.” Since then, a looter’s trench, opened axially along the center of 3A, has revealed a T-shaped, stone-lined elaborate crypt. The crypt “consists of a formal, west-to-east running vaulted entrance which leads to a north-south oriented chamber” (Iannone 1999a:3). Iannone also notes that looters appear to have discovered a burial on the summit of Structure 3A, based on the recovery of portions of ceramics that suggest a grave assemblage of the Late Classic Period. These ceramics include parts of at least two Sotero Red-Brown cylinder vases, an Orange Walk Incised cylinder vase, a Cubeta Incised cylinder vase, a Belize Red plate and the basal section of an *incensario* (Iannone 1999a:4).

The western, plaza-facing side of the eastern E-group configuration measures 21.7 m in length. Structure 3A extends between 9.0 and 9.4 m in width to the east and is 6.0 m in height. Excavations were undertaken with the goals of establishing the temporal phases for the different construction events of Structure 3A, to reveal the presence of any on-floor or sub-plaza floor caches or burials aligned with the center of the structure, to reveal the formal entrance to the T-shaped crypt/tomb as well as other potential interments below, and finally, to collect and identify the assemblage of materials from within the looter’s backdirt (as this project includes salvaging material damaged as a result of looter destruction).

Unit 3A-1

Unit 3A-1, a 4 x 4 m unit, was set into the western side of Structure 3A (Figure 5.1). The unit was axially aligned as determined by running a central line along the vaulted ceiling of the west-east running entrance of the T-shaped crypt/tomb. The unit

was centered on this line. The unit was dug in cultural and natural levels with the inclusion of the looter's backdirt as an excavation level.

Level 1a. This level was designated as looter's backdirt, a secondarily deposited layer. The level did not extend over all areas of the unit, as it primarily flanked the looter's trench that led into the T-shaped crypt/tomb. The level thickness ranged between 2 and 14 cm. The center fell within the looter's trench, while the corners did not reflect the actual thickness of the level matrix. Specifically, in some areas adjacent to the looter's trench, boulders larger than 14 cm were removed, where they were stacked by the looters to a thickness of approximately 50 cm. The level consisted of large boulders that the looters had removed during their excavation of the T-shaped crypt/tomb. Some of the boulders were of a compact limestone, very few were faced, and there was one large vault capstone in the level that had been placed there as a result of looter activity.

A variety of artifacts were recovered from within this level, including many ceramic fragments, a perforated potsherd disc, a broken chert biface, several chipped stone biface fragments (both thick and thin), unmodified pieces of slate, obsidian blade fragments, two metate fragments, a mano fragment, and a speleothem (Table 5.1). Of note are the *incensario* fragments, which include examples with a nose and "cruller" design, thought to be representative of the Jaguar God of the Underworld (Figure 5.2). There also is a round appliqué fragment of an *incensario* that is covered in Maya blue paint, similar to those seen on the flange sections of modeled cylinder censurs from the site of Caledonia (Awe 1985:264). Similar *incensarios* have been recovered from

epicentral Caracol, and they also bear a superficial resemblance to *incensarios* recovered from Las Ruinas de Arenal (Taschek and Ball 1999:230).

Level 1b. This level was designated as mixed humus and A horizon soil, a secondarily deposited natural layer in a ceremonial context. The level thickness ranged between 0.5 and 14.5 cm. There was slight mixing with the previous level, as it was difficult to determine the level of the humus soil horizon that had formed prior to the modern looting in the structure. The level consisted of soil, pebbles and roots, in approximate percentages of 70 percent, 20 percent and 10 percent respectively. The soil ranged from ashy, dark brown to black in the west end of the unit to light brown, loamy soil in the east end of the unit. Of the ceramics recovered, about 10 percent constituted the 'nicer' varieties characteristic of the mixed deposit of the previous level, while the bulk consisted of a more characteristic Late Classic Period (A.D. 700-800) utilitarian assemblage of unslipped, course, thick-walled vessel sherds. Other artifacts from this level include an olive shell tinkler, a basalt mano fragment, 6 obsidian blade fragments, a thin, chipped stone chert biface fragment and many raw slate fragments (Table 5.2).

Level 2. This level represents slump, a secondarily deposited layer of material in a ceremonial context. By this, I mean that the building functioned as a ceremonial structure, not that the slump is ceremonial. The level is comprised of former architectural materials that have slumped forward and are no longer *in situ*. The level ranges in thickness from between 3 and 69.5 cm. The matrix consists of loose brown/black dirt (30 percent), rootlets and roots (10 percent), cobbles (30 percent) and boulders (30 percent). Many of the boulders are faced on one side and have slumped off of the formal architecture. A very large tree stump in the southwest corner of the unit

contributed to the disturbance of this layer. Artifacts recovered from this level include many raw slate fragments, two granite metate fragments, three granite mano fragments, a chert thin biface fragment, and two quartz massive fragments, in addition to bulk lithics and ceramics (Table 5.3).

Level 3. The removal of the previous level revealed the terminal architecture (Level 3a, Structure 3A-1st) of Structure 3A. The basal course of cutstones consisted of a single course of roughly shaped boulders, in approximate alignment due to cultural and natural post-depositional disturbances. Sections of the basal course were recovered in the northern and southern ends of the unit, lateral to the looter's trench. A very large stone on the north side of the northern section of the basal course had the appearance of a broken-off stela monument. The limestone was of the compact type (in contrast to the surrounding porous limestone cutstones), and the base appeared to be buried within the terminal floor. This was later designated as Stela 3, because at the time of the wall construction, this monument, which had previously stood in a line with Stela 2 in front of Structure 3A-1st, was deliberately broken off and absorbed as part of the new construction of the front wall. A four course east-west running wall section was uncovered in the northeast corner of the unit, which formed part of the stair side of the terminal stair. Stela 3 was aligned with the basal course of the terminal architecture, just to the north of the stair side. Both north and south segments of the basal wall appeared to form corners, facing into the looter's trench. These are now thought to be where the looters cut through the terminal architecture. Towards the crypt/tomb entrance, along the eastern end of the unit, the southern terminal east-west running wall went from the large boulders of the basal course, to smaller, cut stones aligned in multiple courses

(approximately five to eight). Because of the difference in construction style, these smaller cutstone wall courses are thought to represent the penultimate architectural phase (Level 4, Structure 3A-2nd). Along this section of the wall, some large, faced boulders abut the bottom courses. Initially, these were thought to represent the terminal architecture forming an entrance to the crypt/tomb, alternately, they may have been placed there by the looters as they accessed the tomb. The first possibility is intriguing as this would indicate that the tomb had been purposefully left open. In light of later excavations however, the second possibility is more likely. In fact, the architecture of the terminal stair overlaid the crypt/tomb entrance, sealing access to it. The northern east-west running wall of the penultimate phase of architecture in the tomb entrance had been partially removed by looters, because this side was characterized by small, core fill. The activity of the looters made interpretation of the architecture considerably difficult, because layers representing different construction events were exposed simultaneously by them, and large segments of the terminal phase of construction had been indiscriminately disturbed and moved.

Level 3a. This is a secondarily deposited layer of construction fill without rubble in a ceremonial context, and represents the poorly preserved terminal architecture (3A-1st). The level was removed from both the northeast and southeast quadrants of the unit. Level thickness in the northeast section ranged from 8 to 43 cm and from 22 to 59 cm in the southeast. The level consisted of cobbles (80 percent), pebbles (10 percent), and boulders (10 percent). The cobbles were loosely packed, and some roots were interspersed. Artifacts recovered from within this level include bulk lithics and ceramics, as well as many raw slate fragments (Table 5.4).

Stela 3 was excavated as part of this level. The base appears purposefully rounded, and was surrounded by a ring of about six stones that fortify the placement of the monument. After excavation, the dimensions of the monument were measured. It is 76 cm in height, 26 to 42 cm wide, and 29 cm thick. *In situ*, the top of the stela was situated 35 cm above the terminal floor, while the body of the monument extended 24 cm within the terminal floor. An additional 29 cm continued into the penultimate floor. It is probable that the stela was placed during the construction of the terminal architecture. There were no sub-stela cached remains found in association with the monument. A similar, broken-off stela monument was noted within the south wall of the unit, also aligned with the basal course of the terminal architecture. It is designated as Stela 5. It was noted to also have small stones arranged around its base. This monument was not excavated. Stelae 3 and 5 had been placed just lateral to the stair side of the terminal stair. Both monuments were purposefully broken in antiquity. It is probable that these defacement events occurred after the termination of the structure, coinciding with the abandonment of use of the site, or most likely, with the destruction and infilling events occurring in the royal court at the site (Iannone 2005). Of course, it is impossible to know an absolute date for the timing of this abandonment event, but it happened at sometime after the construction of the terminal architecture.

Level 3b. This level is secondarily deposited floor fill in a ceremonial location, and represents the terminal plaza floor (AP-1st). The plaster cap was completely deteriorated due to the proximity of the floor to the surface. The dry stone ballast layer (no mortar) was an average thickness of 24 cm. No core layer of large boulders was present. In different parts of the unit, the level ranged in thickness from 10 cm to 53.5

cm. The level consisted of pebbles (40 percent), and dry, brown, loose soil (20 percent). Some burnt limestone appeared at the bottom of the level (near the penultimate floor surface). Artifacts associated with this level include many raw slate pieces, a quartz crystal fragment, a quartz massive fragment, an obsidian blade fragment, a ground river stone (rubbing stone), two granite grooved sphere fragments, and a granite mano fragment (Table 5.5).

Feature 3A-F/1. During the removal of Level 3b, several cutstones, axially aligned with the crypt/tomb opening were uncovered. These turned out to be part of Feature 3A-F/1, sitting atop the penultimate floor (Figure 5.3). This circular alignment of cutstones encloses a termination cache offering. The cutstones in the circular alignment were all between 15 and 25 cm. Within the stone alignment, a large portion of a Belize Red dish with rattle feet (one of these rattles was found *in situ*, within a broken vessel foot), was recovered. There were also two halves of two broken granite manos recovered from within the cache. Also, some raw slate fragments, pottery fragments and bulk chert lithics were found within the enclosed cache context (Table 5.6). This feature was placed at the time of the construction of the terminal phase of architecture (Late Classic Period, which dates from about A.D. 700- 800). The offering terminated the use of the penultimate phase of construction. This is emphasized by the fact that the re-flooring surface of the penultimate floor was cut through to specifically place the offering on the original penultimate floor, and the materials within the cache had been deliberately broken, indicating a termination of use of those items.

Feature 3A-F/2. A second ring of cutstones (faced on the eastern side) was found just to the west of Feature 3A-F/1. This U-shaped ring of cutstones enclosed a

large, upright slate monument that had been broken off at the top, designated Stela 4. This enclosure was designated Feature 3A-F/2, and the context described as secondarily deposited ceremonial pitfill. The butt of the stela was *in situ*, and the monument was fortified by a large stone placed behind it. The slate stela measures 60 cm in height, 55 cm wide, and 8 cm thick. The slate of the monument was dark grey in color. The front and back sides of the monument were very smooth, and bits of slate had begun to peel off of the edges (and may explain the high number of raw slate fragments recovered from the immediately preceding levels). The stela cut through the penultimate re-flooring (if it had been present here), the penultimate floor, and the anti-penultimate floor, and sits on a fourth floor surface. Very few artifacts other than the stela were recovered. These include some generic ceramics and lithics, and some unmodified raw slate fragments that undoubtedly came off of the stela (Table 5.7). The cutstone ring chamber, prepared for Stela 4, sat immediately beneath the terminal floor. Thus the placement of this stela is thought to be contemporaneous with the setting of Stelae 3 and 5, at the time of the construction of the terminal phase of architecture. Like the other two Late Classic Period monuments, Stela 4 was purposefully broken off at a later time, again, probably coinciding with a site abandonment termination event.

Large slate pieces, similar to Stela 4, can be found in burial contexts elsewhere at the site, as well as at the site of Pacbitun, thought to be a slate lithic production workshop location (Healy et al. 1995). Slate stelae, similar to Stela 4 can be found at the cave sites of Actun Tunichil Muknal and Laberinto De Las Tarantulas Cave, and at the site of Caracol (Awe et al. 1997; Chase and Chase 1987). Stelae monuments have been identified to mark *katun* ending periods, but they also commemorate the successful

completion of various rituals or cycles by rulers (Bassie Sweet 1991:120). The purposeful destruction of all the stelae associated with the eastern configuration of the E-group at Minanha indicates the termination of such commemorative associations, reflecting a shift in the socio-political leadership organization of the Minanha Maya at the time of the Terminal Classic or Early Postclassic Periods.

Level 4. After the removal of Levels 3a and 3b, the penultimate architecture beneath was revealed. This consisted of a wall of smaller, better prepared cutstones, running north-south across the entire unit. The wall was up to 5 courses in places, and at an average depth of about 150 cm below unit datum. An additional wall of cutstones was uncovered directly to the east of this, at a depth of 130 cm below unit datum, forming two terraces or stairs on the west face of the structure that lead into the shrine room at the crypt/tomb entrance.

Level 4a. This level represents a re-flooring of the penultimate floor (AP-2nd-A), and its context is secondarily deposited floor fill in a ceremonial building. The poorly preserved plaster cap was approximately 2 cm thick. The underlying dry stone ballast layer was an average of 20 cm thick. This level constitutes a re-flooring event because the penultimate architecture went beneath it, and a relatively well preserved penultimate floor lay under it (AP-2nd-B), in direct association with this architecture. The level was only identified in a small section of the unit, extending from the penultimate architecture to the eastern side of Feature 3A-F/2. The matrix consisted of semi-compact ballast of mostly cobbles (40 percent), pebbles (30 percent), and dry, light brown dirt (30 percent). Artifacts associated with this level include raw slate fragments, and a ceramic piece in the shape of a leg or *incensario* “plug” (Table 5.8). Excavations

to this point represent the completion of the 1999 field season. The 3A-1 unit was re-opened in the subsequent 2000 field season.

Unit 3A-1a

At the beginning of the 2000 field season, Unit 3A-1 was downsized to a 4 x 2.85 m sub-unit (3A-1a). The sub-unit was 4 m across in the north-south direction, and 2.85 m in the east-west direction (on the western side of Unit 3A-1). The sub-unit was placed at an approximate distance of 50 cm from the exposed penultimate architecture (3A-2nd). This ensured maximal access to the plaza floor and prevented architectural collapse.

Level 4b. This level was secondarily deposited ceremonial floorfill and it represents the penultimate plaza floor (AP-2nd-B). The level consisted of a plaster cap and ballast layer for the floor. The well preserved plaster had an average thickness of 5 cm, and the dry-stone ballast layer was approximately 20 cm thick. More specifically, the two together were about 30 cm thick in the north and central area of the sub-unit, and about 20 cm thick in the south end of the sub-unit. The matrix of the ballast layer consisted of about 10 percent gray soil and 90 percent cobbles, with very few boulders. Although the ballast layer was dry-stone, there were small pockets of mortar at the bottom of the level near the plaster cap of the next floor.

Artifacts recovered from within this floor level include lithics and ceramics that date to the Late Classic Period (A.D. 700-800). Diagnostic types from this level include early Mount Maloney Black: Mount Maloney Variety, late Mount Maloney Black: Mount Maloney Variety, Belize Red: Belize Variety, Zibal Unslipped: Variety Unspecified (Buff), and several sherds of the Local II jar variety. There were several

ground stone lithic materials recovered from within the level, including a mano fragment, three metate fragments and 11 raw slate fragments. There were two fragments of plaster floor surface that were painted red, a massive quartz fragment and an exhausted flaked chert core (Table 5.9).

The construction of this floor was associated with the deposition of Feature 3A-F/3, an axially aligned dedicatory cache offering. The cache was placed into the Level 5 floor, or the AP-3rd floor level, when the AP-2nd-B floor was constructed.

Feature 3A-F/3. This feature is a small (28 cm east-west by 37 cm north-south) cache pit cut into the Level 5 floor (Figure 5.4). The cache was initially noticed because of a circular concentration of stones that protruded from the level plaster of the Level 5 floor. The cache itself was about 23 cm deep. It contained many pieces of slate, with one large piece lining the eastern side of the cache. The cache consisted of about 30 percent loose soil, 30 percent cobbles and 40 percent pebbles. Within the cache were several chert artifacts including one crescent and one triangular shaped eccentric, a blade, and a thin biface fragment (Table 5.10; Figure 5.5). Both eccentrics show evidence of being broken. There also was a large obsidian blade fragment in the cache. Within the cache, an undiagnostic Late Classic ash tempered sherd was the only ceramic material recovered.

The placement of the cache in conjunction with the construction of the Level 4 (AP-2nd-B) floor, the relative value of the artifacts of the cache, and the axial alignment of the cache in relation to Structure 3A combine to indicate that the cache was dedicatory to the new phase of construction. Nonetheless, the placement of the cache within the Level 5 (AP-3rd) floor, and the breakage of the included chert and obsidian

artifacts indicate that the cache was also placed to terminate the use of the previous construction.

Level 5. This level consists of secondarily deposited floor fill in a ceremonial context, and it represents the AP-3rd or third from last floor construction. The floor, ballast, and supporting fill was between 120 cm and 148 cm thick. There was a well-preserved plaster cap that was an average of 15 cm thick. Underneath was an approximate 62 cm thick mortared ballast layer. The ballast layer was quite compact, and had a matrix of approximately 40 percent plaster, 40 percent cobbles, and 10 percent pebbles. A dry stone core layer of about 80 cm was beneath this. The core layer consisted of very loose boulders (about 80 percent of the matrix), dirt (10 percent) and cobbles (10 percent). On the basis of the ceramics from within the floor, this level dates to the Terminal Preclassic Period (A.D. 100-400). Pottery includes sherds from the following groups: Sierra Red, Flor Cream, Polvero Black, Sapote striated, Savannah Orange. Also found were an *incensario* fragment and some sherds from red calcite wares. Ground stone artifacts from within the Level 5 floor include slate fragments, and a granite mano fragment. Additionally, there were three massive quartz fragments, a segment of a red painted plaster floor, several lithics, and some faunal remains consisting mostly of *jute* shells (Table 5.11). Feature 3A-F/4 was found within the core layer of the Level 5 floor.

Feature 3A-F/4. This feature consists of a complete but broken vessel and the partial remains of an adult individual (Table 5.12). The single individual represented by these remains is an adult between the ages of 18 and 30 years (Appendix 1). This designation is made on the basis of the presence of premolars (adult), the development

and probable eruption of the maxillary third molars (at least 18 years of age), and the absence of tooth wear with the exception of slight wear on the lower central incisors (probable age of less than 30 years; Schwake and Agnew 2000). The vessel is a complete, though broken, Sierra Red: Society Hall vessel that dates to the Terminal Preclassic Period, probably about A.D. 300 (Figure 5.6). The cache was axially aligned and was probably dedicatory to the construction of the Level 5 floor. Because the human remains were only represented by cranial, upper thoracic and long bone fragments, they are thought to be re-deposited and are themselves part of the dedicatory offering.

Level 6. This level was designated secondarily deposited floor fill in a ceremonial context, represents the AP-4th construction, or the fourth from last Plaza A level, and was about 160 cm deep. It consisted of an approximate 17 cm compact brown dirt surface (a tamped earth floor), and beneath this was a 140 cm dry-stone core layer. The tamped earth layer was about 70 percent soil, 20 percent pebbles, and 10 percent cobbles. The core layer consisted of very large boulders. A fairly dense concentration of *jute* shells was recovered from within this layer. Other faunal elements include a pair of crab claws. A ground granite mano fragment was also recovered from this level. A quartz crystal and a worked potsherd were also found (Table 5.13).

Unit 3A-2

Additional excavations were completed within Structure 3A proper and were designed to investigate the entranceway to the T-shaped crypt/tomb. This entranceway formed part of a shrine room antechamber giving access to the crypt/tomb itself (Figure 5.7). The unit was excavated to elucidate potential offerings within the shrine room

platform itself, as well as to refine temporal information for Structure 3A. This area is one of considerable disturbance, because looting activity had left open access to the crypt/tomb.

The looter's trench into the T-shaped vaulted crypt/tomb was investigated and profiled. The ceiling of the crypt/tomb sits approximately 2 m above the current floor level (characterized by loose, dispersed boulders intermixed with soil). Along the back (or eastern) wall of the tomb, the looters dug a rather precarious tunnel into the heart of the structure. Visible within this tunnel is a floor at a level that roughly corresponds to the terminal floor in front of the structure. An additional floor was noted about 70 cm above this, which had a plaster layer about 10 cm thick. As we completed the profile for the entire structure, an additional shallow looter's trench was noted along the top, western face of the mound. As well, a large trench extends from the summit, down the eastern side of the mound. This may have been an enlargement of the 1927 excavations. Two north-south running retaining walls were identified in the profile of the looter's trench, near the top of the eastern façade of the structure. Directly beneath the summit of the mound, within the open looter's trench, three additional floors were identified; each represented by thin plaster caps (all less than 5 cm), and ballast layers approximately 10 cm thick. These floors were situated at depths of approximately 98 cm, 113 cm and 130 cm respectively.

Unit 3A-2, a 2 x 0.5 m unit, was set into the shrine room floor along the anterior or western edge of the passage, where the main axial looter's trench had disturbed the structure (Figure 5.8).

Level 1a. This level consists of secondarily deposited looter's backdirt, which had been deposited during the time that Burial 3A-B/1 was looted. The Level 1a material was mostly on the north side of the unit and varied in thickness from 4 cm on the south east edge, to 17 cm in the northwest corner of the unit. The level consisted of approximately 40 percent soil, 40 percent pebbles, and 20 percent cobbles. The soil was quite compact, as a result of foot traffic through the passageway since the time of the looting of Burial 3A-B/1. The soil was dry and was black-gray in color. Artifacts recovered from within the level matrix include lithics and ceramics. Additionally there was a single human humeral fragment recovered that had likely been initially interred within Burial 3A-B/1. There was also a raw slate fragment within the matrix of this level (Table 5.14).

Level 4c. This level is secondarily deposited floor fill from a ceremonial context, and constitutes the platform floor of the shrine room, associated with the 3A-2nd building construction. The plaster cap of the platform was poorly preserved and was 7 cm thick. The plaster was compact, and had loose light gray to dark black soil underlying it. The underlying ballast was dry-stone and between 18 and 29 cm thick. The ballast consisted of approximately 40 percent pebbles, 30 percent cobbles, and 30 percent soil. A lens of compact mortar that had sunk to the bottom of the ballast layer had an uneven surface. The total thickness of the floor varied between 25 and 36 cm. Artifacts recovered from this level include ceramics and lithics, faunal remains represented by *jute* shells, a chert blade, and a fragmentary jadeite bead that had been part of the Burial 3A-B/1 offerings and had been compacted into the top of the Level 4c material (Table 5.15).

During the excavation of the western edge of the unit, some large capstones were uncovered. Three large, red colored river rocks were located within the 4c matrix, just above these capstones. One was almost basin-like in shape (approximately 33 cm long), with another large round rock atop it (approximately 26 cm long), and a smaller rounded rock next to them. Although these rocks appeared to be significant because they were unique within the surrounding matrix, it was not until their alignment with the capstones beneath was revealed that this suspicion was confirmed. To better expose the capstones, the unit was extended to the north. This extension was designated as Unit 3A-3.

Diagnostic ceramic sherds were recovered from within the Level 4c matrix, but because of disturbance from looters and subsequent pedoturbation, an exact temporal designation could not be ascribed to the context. The identified sherds include two Mount Maloney Black: Mount Maloney variety sherds associated with the Middle Classic Period, two Mount Maloney Black: Mount Maloney variety sherds associated with the Terminal Classic Period, as well as two Platon Punctated-Incised: Platon variety sherds, two Belize Red: Belize variety sherds, one Cayo Unslipped: Cayo variety sherd, one three-pronged censor fragment, one *incensario* plug, one *incensario* lip fragment, two *incensario* eye fragments, one right-sided *incensario* flange, and one unidentified *incensario* fragment. This mixed assemblage contains elements that had been removed from the Burial 3A-B/1 chamber as well as the original ceramic materials contained within the construction matrix of the 3A-2nd building.

Unit 3A-3

Unit 3A-3, a 0.5 x 0.6 m unit, was set along the northwest corner of Unit 3A-2. The unit was set up to expose more of the capstones revealed during the excavation of Level 4c in Unit 3A-2.

Level 1a. Within this unit, Level 1a represented an extension of the looter's backdirt, a secondarily deposited layer, as seen in Unit 3A-2. The Level 1a material did not cover the extent of the unit, because it was only recovered in the northern end. The level was between 3 and 12 cm thick in the center and northeast corner of the unit respectively, and consisted of approximately 50 percent soil, 40 percent pebbles and 10 percent cobbles. Artifacts associated with this level include a few ceramic sherds, and three raw slate fragments (Table 5.16).

Level 4c. Similar to Unit 3A-2, this level represents the floor fill of the platform for the shrine room. The floor had a total thickness of between 13 and 19 cm in the south end of the unit and the center and north end of the unit respectively. The ballast level was dry-stone and composed of roughly 30 percent pebbles, 30 percent cobbles and 40 percent soil. The only artifacts recovered from this level were some ceramic sherds (Table 5.17). Ceramic analysis of these identified one Belize Red: Belize variety sherd, and one un-typed medial flange. This suggests a Late Classic Period date for the construction of the shrine room platform.

Level 4b. This is the sustaining surface for the platform floor, associated with the 3A-3rd/AP-3rd construction floor fill, beneath the Level 4c platform floor. This floor surface was about 20-25 cm thick. The preservation of the floor surface was good, with an approximately 9 cm thick plaster cap. This surface could also be seen in the Unit 3A-

2 excavations. The ballast layer beneath was 5 cm thick and consisted of dry stone fill. The level consisted of about 60 percent cobbles, 20 percent pebbles, and 20 percent soil. This soil was dark gray in color. The only artifacts recovered from this level were lithics and ceramic sherds (Table 5.18).

The ceramic types found in the sherds indicate a Late Classic temporal designation for the time of construction of the 3A-3rd building phase, and include one Mount Maloney Black: Mount Maloney Variety (Late Classic), and one Benque Viejo Polychrome: Variety unspecified sherd.

Burial 3A-B/3

When both Units 3A-2 and 3A-3 had been excavated to the level of the capstones, the chamber was excavated as Burial 3A-B/3. There were at least four large capstones revealed within both units at an approximate depth of 216 cm below the unit datum (Figure 5.9).

The Burial 3A-B/3 chamber had been cut into the Level 5 and Level 4b floors (associated with the 3A-4th and 3A-3rd/AP-3rd constructions respectively). The 3A-B/3 capstones were actually above the level of the Level 4b/3A-3rd/AP-3rd floor surface. Burial 3A-B/3 is thus associated with the Late Classic time of the Level 4c/3A-2nd shrine room construction. Level 4c was also cut through. This represents a re-entry event into the Burial 3A-B/3 chamber. The re-entry into tombs and burial chambers is increasingly recognized as a common practice in the Maya lowlands, although it is sometimes difficult to identify archaeologically. Apparently, as part of the termination of use of the 3A-2nd shrine room, Burial 3A-B/3 was re-opened, and the remains were removed (see below), possibly to be re-interred in Burial 3A-B/1, located within the

shrine room itself. Structure 3A/2nd and Burial 3A-B/1 were subsequently buried by the construction of Structure 3A-1st.

The chamber for Burial 3A-B/3 was a simple crypt type of interment, with the grave oriented in a north-south direction. It probably once contained a single adult individual, but the grave was re-opened in antiquity and most of the skeletal remains were removed. It is likely that the individual was oriented with head to the south in an extended position because of the location of the arm bones in relation to the bones of the lower extremities. After the removal of the capstones, there was a layer of loose dirt at a depth of 243 cm (Figure 5.10). Near the top, but still within this matrix was a large cutstone block that appeared to be most consistent with the Level 5 type of architectural material. This was initially puzzling, because it was stratigraphically located above most of the material within the burial chamber. It became clear that this piece of the Level 5 or 3A-4th construction phase fell into the chamber at the time of the re-entry into the burial chamber, at the end of use of the 4c construction phase. As the more compact layer of soil was excavated within the chamber at a depth of about 272 cm, some loose bone was recovered from the south end of the chamber that appeared to be lower arm bones. There also were additional human remains recovered from underneath the northernmost capstone (Figure 5.11). These consisted primarily of foot and ankle bones. The western foot was mostly articulated, whereas the bones of the easternmost foot were disarticulated. The *in situ* preservation of the bones was good, but decreased upon removal from the stable matrix of the ground. Because the preservation of the bone was quite good, it was difficult to explain why none of the more robust skeletal elements were evident in the grave, unless their lack is attributed to their subsequent

removal at the time of the chamber re-entry. There also was a paucity of grave goods associated with the interment. Because the interment was placed axially within the central structure of the eastern configuration of mounds of the E-group of the site, it would seem that the individual interred within the chamber would have been of some significance, and thus merit elaborate grave offerings. Their absence gives further credence to the hypothesis that the majority of the material within Burial 3A-B/3 was removed at the time of the chamber re-entry. I found lithics and ceramics, faunal remains consisting of unidentified bone fragments, and one chert thick biface in the chamber.

The ceramic analysis of the sherds recovered from within the Burial 3A-B/3 chamber confirms that it dates to the Late Classic period. Diagnostic sherds include one Mount Maloney Black: Mount Maloney variety Middle Classic period sherd, two Dolphin Head Red: Dolphin Head variety sherds, and three Belize Red: Belize variety sherds (Late Classic) (Table 5.19).

These excavations completed the investigation of Structure 3A. The excavations reveal that the area is one with a long use-history, with a series of exactly aligned vertical caches deposited in association with the front of the structure, dating back to the Preclassic period. During the intense re-building events of the Late Classic period, several monuments were erected in front of the structure and subsequently intentionally destroyed. Several burial and grave re-entry events in the passageway leading to the T-shaped tomb occurred in association with the interments placed within the tomb itself, leaving the impression that this spot, more than any other, was the focus of intense ritual activity by the ruling elites at Minanha (Figure 5.12).

Because of the importance of the structures flanking the main eastern pyramid of the E-group, investigations were undertaken within nearby Structure 4A. This structure is the northern flanking structure of the eastern configuration of mounds that make up the E-group in the site core of Minanha. The excavation was initiated in order to investigate the construction history of the flanking structure, its purpose, and to elucidate the nature of any offerings or interments associated with that section of the E-group.

Unit 4A-1

Level 1. Unit 4A-1, a 4 x 4 m unit, was set into Structure 4A. Level 1 consisted of secondarily deposited humus, and represents the most recent layer of soil formation atop the 4A flanking structure. This soil layer had a high percentage of organic material within the matrix, including about 30 percent roots and rootlets, and 25 percent dark brown to gray soil. Additionally, the matrix contained about 35 percent cobbles, and 10 percent limestone pebbles. The Level 1 matrix varied in thickness from 2 cm in the northwest and center of the unit to 28 cm in the southeast corner of the unit. Artifacts recovered from Level 1 include ceramics, lithics and faunal fragments. In addition, five raw slate fragments were recovered as well as a quartz crystal fragment and one granite mano fragment (Table 5.20).

Level 2. This level is secondarily deposited slump. This material was 7 cm thick on average, and consisted of 30 percent cobbles, 30 percent pebbles, 10 percent boulders, and 30 percent soil. The soil was dark brown in color, and slightly compact in some areas. Artifacts recovered from this level include lithics and ceramics, as well as three granite mano fragments, four raw granite fragments, one medial obsidian blade

fragment, 28 raw slate fragments and one unifacially drilled slate bead (Table 5.21).

The high incidence of ground stone artifacts is noteworthy, because the excavations in front of and within Structure 3A did not have as high a frequency of this type of material. Although ground stone was present, specifically within the Feature 3A-F/1 cache, it did not follow the same depositional pattern of being scattered across the surface of the building.

Level 3. This level is construction fill with rubble and represents the terminal architecture of Structure 4A. The terminal architecture can be described as including a platform in the north, a north-south running wall (with one course of faced stones), and an east-west running terrace (Figure 5.13). Also, in the southeast corner are several large, un-faced boulders that may be part of the wall of the original 3A pyramidal structure. The level was 111 to 214 cm thick. The level consisted of about 20 percent boulders, 30 percent cobbles, 20 percent pebbles, 20 percent soil and 10 percent roots and rootlets. The material up to the large core fill is relatively loose with lots of large boulders (un-faced). Some faced stones have been found in the southeast corner (n=3).

Artifacts recovered from this level include lithics, ceramics and faunal fragments. Additionally, one chert thick biface, 75 raw slate fragments, one quartz crystal fragment, 12 granite mano fragments, eight obsidian blade fragments, two granite grooved sphere fragments, one massive quartz fragment, three raw granite fragments, five granite metate fragments, one quartzite pounding stone, and one worked ceramic potsherd (Mount Maloney Black: Mount Maloney variety) were found (Table 5.22). Again, the high incidence of ground stone artifacts is noteworthy, perhaps indicating a special function for Structure 4A as a place for the offering of ground stone

domestic items or as a processing area for consumables associated with the rituals at Structure 3A. Many diagnostic ceramics were identified from this level, and they indicate a Terminal Classic Period date for the construction of the last phase of the Structure 4A platform. These diagnostics include nine Mount Maloney Black: Mount Maloney variety rims that can be solidly identified to date to the Terminal Classic phase (Lecount et al. 2002:46). Other diagnostics include Alexander's Unslipped: Alexander's variety and Cayo unslipped water vessels, as well as representatives from the local type II, McRae Impressed, Platon Punctated-incised, Benque Viejo polychrome, and Belize Red varieties.

It is interesting to note that the Structure 4A platform did not reach its current size or elaboration until the Terminal Classic Period. This has important implications for understanding the span of time when the structures of the eastern group of the E-group at Minanha may have functioned. In fact, it appears that the E-group configuration might not have been complete until the Terminal Classic, although lower flanking platforms may have been present prior to that time.

Level 4. The removal of the previous levels revealed the Level 4 material, although we did not excavate it. Level 4 consisted of an east-west running wall of faced stone (approximately 9 courses) at a depth of approximately 390 cm below the unit datum, and a north-south running wall of faced stone (Figure 5.14). The east-west wall appears to represent a Late Classic Period construction phase that extended the north side of the Structure 3A pyramid. The north-south running wall may or may not represent a small flanking structure dating to the Late Classic Period.

Level 5. This level consisted of construction fill with rubble and is a terrace that was only in the south end of the unit. It is supported by a retaining wall (Figure 5.15). The terrace dimensions varied in thickness from 35 cm in the northwest, to 65 cm in the northeast, to 58 cm in the center, to 57 cm in the southwest and 83 cm in the southeast. This feature was excavated in the hopes of recovering ceramic materials from a well-sealed context.

The level consisted of 20 percent pebbles, 30 percent cobbles, 20 percent boulders and 30 percent soil. The soil was dry and loose, and light gray in color. A few of the boulders and cobbles were faced. Artifacts recovered from this level include lithics, ceramics and faunal fragments (*jute* snail shells), as well as one raw granite fragment, and two raw slate fragments (Table 5.23). The ceramic analysis yielded a temporal assignment to the Late Classic period, and the construction is interpreted to represent an earlier side of the Structure 3A pyramidal building.

Excavations in Group S

The 2002 field season saw the initiation of excavations within Group S, specifically, within Structure 77S, a pyramidal structure on the eastern edge of the plaza. The focus of these investigations was multifold: to establish the chronological framework for the construction of edifices within the Group S plaza, to determine the use history of the structures, and to reveal patterns of ritual deposition within Structure 77S.

Group S is located approximately 200 m southeast of the site epicenter. The group is arranged in a quadrilateral pattern around a central plaza, with four structures on the north, three structures in the form of an E-group on the east, a long, low range structure in the south, and a cluster of four structures on the west side of the plaza. On the surface, the group is one of the larger plazuela groups within the tier of settlement just proximal to the site core itself (within a range of about 500 meters). Before excavation started, it was noted that there were several granite ground stone artifacts on the surface. These include three granite ground stone mano fragments, eight granite ground stone metate fragments and one ground stone grooved sphere. All of these ground stone artifacts were found in front of the structures on the east and south sides of the plaza.

Unit 77S-1

Unit 77S-1, a 2 x 4 m unit, was set along the center line of Structure 77S. It was hoped that this placement would reveal ritual deposits (caches or burials) that were associated with the structure. Although the structure itself had been looted, the looting was limited to the top and south of the structure, leaving the front façade of the structure relatively intact (Figures 5.16, 5.17).

Level 1. This level consists of secondarily formed humus, the soil and organic material atop the surface of the mound. The level varied in thickness from 3 cm in the southeast corner to 29 cm in the center of the unit. The matrix consisted of loose, brown dirt mixed with decaying organic material. Many roots and rootlets were found throughout the matrix as well. The matrix was approximately 80 percent soil, with

about 10 percent roots, and 10 percent other organic matter. Artifacts recovered from this level include ceramics and lithics (Table 5.24).

Cursory examination of the ceramics in the field suggests that this mixed context contained typical Late Classic forms such as Belize Red and Mount Maloney types. A single Caracol-style *incensario* sherd was found on the surface in the front of the structure. A few more specialized artifacts were recovered from the Level 1 matrix including two pieces of raw slate, one chert drill, one utilized flake, two thin chert bifaces, and one piece of granite.

Level 2. This level consists of secondarily deposited slump. This layer represents the material that had slumped from its original location as part of the terminal architecture of Structure 77S. The level varied in thickness from 1 cm in the center to 47 cm in the southeast corner of the unit. The level consists of approximately 20 percent fallen limestone cutblocks, 20 percent un-faced limestone cobbles, 50 percent loose, brown/black dirt, and some roots and rootlets (about 10 percent). Artifacts recovered from this level include lithics and ceramics. There was a noticeable increase in the density of ceramics from the southwest corner of the unit. Included in this lot were a few broken but interesting pieces that had circular, incised surface decoration that may represent a jaguar pelt. One vessel leg segment appears to be roughly in the form of a feline leg. The location of these sherds is important, because although they were found within a disturbed and mixed level relatively close to the surface, further excavations revealed that the location was just above a crypt burial. Other artifacts from the Level 2 matrix include faunal remains, five obsidian blade fragments, seven chert flakes, six

slate fragments, three quartz crystals, four granite metate fragments, one limestone speleothem, and one perforated potsherd disc (Table 5.25).

The speleothem is noteworthy because it appears to have some deliberate etching on its surface. The significance of speleothems found within surface site architecture is thought to be related to their link to caves, understood to be sacred places to the ancient Maya and portals to the underworld. Speleothems are often found in ritual contexts. Here, one was found on top of the eastern pyramidal structure of Group S.

As the Level 2 material was removed, several faced stones that comprise the basal stair were revealed in the western end of the unit. There was only a single course of these stones. Directly in front of this basal row, within the Level 2 matrix itself, were several large sherds of Belize Red: Belize variety ceramics, and in relatively close proximity, there was a fragment of a granite metate. These were found close to the central east-west axis of the building, but neither can be referred to as a discrete offering or cache. Both granite mano artifacts and Belize Red: Belize variety ceramics were found in a similar primary context deposition at Structure 3A, the E-group in the main public ritual plaza at the site (Schwabe 1999:50). It is possible that the 77S deposit was simply disturbed as a result of ground and soil formation processes in the interim between the deposition and discovery of the materials, and had moved up into Level 2.

Level 3. Once the Level 2 matrix had been completely removed, Level 3, or terminal architecture, was revealed (Figure 5.18). This architecture was poorly preserved but it was possible to discern and map the three lowest risers of a terminal stair. No plaster from the terminal stair was preserved. Each riser consisted of only a

single course of cut limestone. To the east of what remained of the terminal stair, there remained only backing masonry for the structure in the form of small, packed limestone ballast stones. At the top or east end of Unit 77S-1 there were several, very large, shaped limestone blocks protruding from the ballast layer. These were rectangular in shape but thin in cross section and appeared to be vault capstones. They were sitting rather haphazardly atop the surface, and perhaps were pushed out of their original location by the action of large tree roots. Further excavation revealed that they were the capstones for the elaborate crypt chamber of 77S-B/2.

Level 3a. This level was construction fill and rubble above the terminal floor. The level varied in thickness from 11 cm in the southwest corner of the unit, to a maximum thickness of 208 cm in the northeast corner of the unit. The level consists of about 40 percent dark brown soil, 20 percent faced limestone boulders, and about 40 percent limestone pebbles and cobbles. Artifacts recovered from this unit include lithics, ceramics, and faunal remains. There also were several specialized finds including three granite mano fragments, one granite metate fragment, one raw slate fragment, two limestone speleothems, one chert burin, four chert flakes, one chert thin biface, and two obsidian blade fragments (Table 5.26).

The ceramic analysis of the sherds from this level indicates a solid Late Classic date for the terminal phase of architecture of 77S. Nadine Gray's (2002:1) analysis reveals the presence of the following diagnostic ceramic sherds: 13 Belize Red: Belize variety (one plate, 11 bowls, one jar), eight Local Jar Type II (four bowls, four jars), five Mount Maloney Black: Mount Maloney variety bowls (early), three Mount Maloney Black: Mount Maloney variety bowls (late), one Garbutt Creek Red: Garbutt

Creek variety (bowl), 11 Vaca Falls Red: Vaca Falls variety (eight bowls, three bases), two Zibal Unslipped: Zibal variety (jars), two Xunantunich Black on Orange: Variety Unspecified (bowls), two Alexander's Unslipped: Beaverdam variety (jars), two Cayo Unslipped: Cayo variety (jars; Gray 2002:1).

As the Level 3a material was cleared, it became apparent that there was an elaborate crypt chamber located at the east end of Unit 77S-1. This chamber, 77S-B/2, was visible due to the protruding capstones that were situated at the east end of the unit, and it seemed that the vault of the chamber had not collapsed, suggesting that the chamber was still intact beneath the material of the Level 3a matrix.

Level 3b. This level represents the terminal floor in front of the basal stair of Structure 77S. The context type was secondarily deposited floor fill, and it covers the western portion of Unit 77S-1. The level matrix varied in thickness from 83 cm in the northwest corner of the unit, to 103 cm in the southeast corner of the unit. Although Level 3b was a floor, the original plaster cap or surface of the floor has completely deteriorated. Because of this, it was difficult to determine if re-flooring episodes had occurred. The ballast layer for the terminal floor was mortared and between 48 and 54 cm thick. The core layer of the floor was dry stone, and 33 to 65 cm thick. Thus the total thickness of the floor was between 87 and 113 cm. The level itself consisted of approximately 60 percent mortared ballast stones and 30 percent loose soil ranging from light to dark brown in hue. About 10 percent of the matrix consisted of invasive roots and rootlets. Few artifacts were recovered from this level. These include lithics and ceramics. There were a few pieces of human skeletal remains in the matrix, which had moved from their primary deposition location within the 77S-B/1 simple crypt due to

bioturbation. Artifacts also included one chert flake, one drilled shell, and one ceramic perforated potsherd (Table 5.27).

The analysis of the ceramic materials from this level indicate a Late Classic date, which corroborates similar dates for the associated architecture already described for Level 3a. Details of the 17 diagnostic sherds found include that there were four Zibal Unslipped: Zibal variety (jars), four Belize Red: Belize variety (three plates, one jar), one Benque Viejo Polychrome: Variety Unspecified (bowl), two Garbutt Creek Red: Garbutt Creek variety (bowls), and one Yalbac Smudged-brown: Yalbac variety (jar; Gray 2002:2).

Almost as soon as the excavation of Level 3b commenced, it became apparent that there were some very large capstones just beneath the surface of the terminal floor. These were exposed and designated Burial 77S-B/1 (Figure 5.19). The orientation of the chamber appeared to be parallel to the terminal architecture, just in front (or to the west) of the basal stair in a north-south alignment. The chamber itself continued to the south, past the south wall of Unit 77s-1. Thus an additional unit, Unit 77S-2, was placed adjacent to this southwest corner of the unit in order to fully expose the burial chamber. Notably, one of the large capstones in the southern end of the simple crypt grave is made of slate.

Unit 77S-2

Unit 77S-2, a 1.5 x 2 m unit, was set along the southwest corner of Unit 77S-1 to follow the capstones that comprise the chamber of Burial 77S-B/1. The first three levels excavated in 77S-2 are basically identical to those in 77S-1, and their descriptions follow.

Level 1. The Level 1 matrix in 77S-2 was humus. The level varied in thickness between 3 cm in the southwest corner to 12 cm in the center. The level consisted of about 65 percent dark brown soil, 5 percent pebbles and cobbles, and 30 percent roots and decaying organic matter. Very few artifacts were recovered from this level as there were only lithics and ceramics present in small numbers (Table 5.28).

Level 2. This level consisted of the slump, or the material that had slid from its original place in the terminal architecture. The level was 3 cm thick in the southeast corner of the unit and 19 cm in the northeast corner. The level consisted of about 40 percent loose brown soil intermixed with about 30 percent pebbles, 20 percent cobbles and 10 percent roots and rootlets. The artifacts recovered from the level include lithics and ceramics, one granite metate fragment and one raw slate fragment (Table 5.29). Of the ceramics that were discovered, there were several large olla fragments from the northwest corner of the unit (directly above the level of the terminal floor and capstones of 77S-B/1).

Level 3a. This level consisted of the material within Unit 77S-2 that formed the terminal architecture of the structure. The level context is construction fill with rubble. The level had a depth that varied from 4 cm in the northwest corner, to 53 cm in the northeast corner. The level consisted of approximately 40 percent dark brown soil, 40 percent cobbles, and 20 percent roots and rootlets. The relative amount of material excavated from this level was low, because the structure only protrudes into about one fourth of Unit 77S-2 on the eastern side. The unit was placed to explore a feature in the floor, thus the Level 3a material for this unit is small. Very few artifacts were recovered from this level, but those that were include ceramics and lithics, two raw slate

fragments, and one chert flake (Table 5.30). Fifty five diagnostic sherds indicate a Late Classic date for this context. Sherd types include three Belize Red: Belize variety (one plate, one jar, one unknown form), three Vaca Falls Red: Vaca Falls variety (two bases, one mini jar), four Zibal Unslipped: Zibal variety (jars), five Cayo Unslipped: Cayo variety (jars), and five censor sherds (Gray 2002:2).

Level 3b. This level consists of the material that comprised the terminal floor in front (i.e., to the west) of the terminal stair. The context is floor fill, and the level matrix varied in thickness from 55 cm in the southwest corner of the unit to 73 cm in the northwest, northeast and southeast corners of the unit. The plaster surface of the floor was completely deteriorated, the ballast layer was mortared and about 50 cm thick, and the core layer was dry stone and about 105 cm thick. The level is comprised of about 10 percent dark brown soil, 10 percent limestone boulders, 70 percent pebbles, and 10 percent cobbles. Very few artifacts were recovered from the level. These include ceramics and two obsidian blade fragments (Table 5.31). The ceramic analysis for this level indicate a Late Classic Period date. Diagnostic sherds included one Mount Maloney Black: Mount Maloney variety (bowl-late) and one Cayo Unslipped: Cayo variety (jar; Gray 2002:6).

Burial 77S-B/1

Once the material of Level 3b was removed from both Units 77S-1 and 77S-2, a clear view of Burial 77S-B/1 was achieved. The capstones for the simple crypt burial were visible in both units, running along a north-south axis. The chamber itself was roughly 2.25 m long and the width was just over a meter (1.05 cm). Although several of the capstones in the middle of the interment chamber had seemingly collapsed into the

chamber itself, the capstones at the southern end of the chamber were relatively intact. These were larger, and one of them was made of slate. Because the chamber is solidly surrounded by the Level 3b matrix, it is stratigraphically associated with Level 3, placed during the time of the Level 3 construction. Additionally, there is no evidence that the Level 3b floor was cut for the placement of the burial chamber. Instead, the upper capstones of the chamber sit just beneath the floor surface.

Burial 77S-B/1 contained a mass of human remains within the chamber. The bones were disarticulated, and there appeared to be multiple individuals interred within the chamber (Figure 5.20). Every type of corporal element was present within the chamber (cranial and post-cranial). Thus it is thought that the remains represent complete individuals, not segments of bodies. Although many long bones seemed oriented parallel with the axis of the chamber, it is difficult to say what positions the bodies lay in. Cranial elements were found in both the north and south ends of the chamber, and a sacrum was found in contact with the cranial elements in the north end. This suggests that the placement of the bodies was less than careful. Material near the capstones was better preserved than bone matter from lower down in the chamber.

Cranial elements, though disarticulated, were located in four general distribution areas within the chamber. At the south end of the chamber, underneath the slate capstone, there were poorly preserved cranial elements represented by small mandibular fragments and several loose teeth (Figure 5.20). Nearby, a drilled conch shell pendant was found. This may have been in the mouth of an individual whose head was to the south, or around the neck of an individual as part of his personal adornment. Three of the other cranial concentrations were in the north end of the chamber: one to the east,

one to the northwest, and one to the southwest. Finally, the last concentration of cranial elements was located centrally within Unit 77S-1 on the eastern edge of the crypt. This concentration lacked a mandibular fragment, but consisted of several teeth, with an associated unifacially drilled jadeite bead. The bead may have been placed within the mouth of the interred individual, but more likely was worn around the neck as an item of personal adornment. It is interesting to note that the location of the jadeite bead was exactly in front of the center of the terminal stair, thus it was axially aligned with the building. Field and lab analyses suggest that there were a total of 9 individuals interred within this chamber. One individual died at an age greater than 40 years. Another individual (the one whose cranial elements were located in the south end of the chamber, beneath the slate capstone) was male, based on the relative robusticity of the mandibular and cranial elements present in comparison to the others within the simple crypt chamber (Appendix 1).

The chamber housed relatively few grave goods. This paucity of grave goods could relate to the status of the individuals within the chamber, and perhaps corroborates the idea that they serve as offerings themselves to the more important ancestors interred within Structure 77S. The artifacts that were recovered from within the burial, in addition to the shell pendant and the jadeite bead already mentioned, include lithics, ceramics, and faunal remains. The faunal remains consist of *jute* shells, and intrusive rat remains. There also were nine pieces of raw slate. These were found proximal to the slate capstone, and were catalogued collectively as they were thought to have flaked from the capstone. Additionally, there was one obsidian blade fragment and two chert flakes (Table 5.32). Twenty six diagnostic sherds were recovered in the

ceramic lot. These date to the Late Classic period, and they include the following, three Tialpa Brown: Variety Unspecified (bowls), four Mount Maloney Black: Mount Maloney variety (bowls- two late, two early), two Garbutt Creek Red: Garbutt Creek variety (bowls), two Belize Red: Belize variety (one plate, one unknown form), nine Vaca Falls Red: Vaca Falls variety (bowls), and one Sotero Red-brown: Sotero variety (Gray 2002:2-3).

It is worthy of note that the depth of the chamber of 77S-B/1 was between 42 cm in the north end and 68 cm in the south end (Figure 5.21). These measurements were taken from the top of the capstones, thus the chamber itself is very shallow, especially considering it housed 9 individuals. Once the material remains were removed from the crypt chamber, the floor of the crypt could be seen. The floor was made up of boulder sized rocks packed together. There were many air spaces between these boulders. Further excavation revealed that the prepared boulder floor was sitting atop larger dry stone core boulders, which themselves were sitting atop bedrock. The bedrock depth was a total of 341 cm below unit datum, or between 20 and 41 cm beneath the level of the bottom floor of the crypt.

Burial 77S-B/2

The capstones protruding from the eastern end of Unit 77S-1 were indeed the upper vault stones of an elaborate crypt, Burial 77S-B/2. The chamber, oriented north-south, was opened on the upper west side, and some of the western wall was removed in order access the crypt itself. The chamber was entirely surrounded by the Level 3b terminal architecture, thus it must have been constructed during the building of the Structure 77S terminal phase of architecture. The construction quality of this chamber

was much greater than the simple crypt of prepared limestone uprights and boulders capped by flat limestone capstones in front of the structure in Burial 77S-B/1. The chamber was large and rectangular in shape, measuring approximately 2.3 m long and 1.2 m wide (Figure 5.22). The walls were constructed of finely hewn mortared limestone blocks, and the chamber itself was about 0.7 m deep. In the northeast corner of the chamber, an entryway slanted upwards to the north (Figure 5.23). This access way was approximately 0.65 m wide and 2.1 m in length. At the northern extent of the access way was a large capstone that may have served as the portal into the crypt. Just to the south of this, two single-course cutstone steps were located within the entryway itself. This feature must have served as a reentry point into the 77S-B/2 chamber, allowing for multiple entries of the chamber.

Within the chamber itself, the remains of at least 15 individuals and numerous grave goods were recovered (Figure 5.24). The minimum number of individuals was assessed based on the dentition present in the chamber. At least 4 females and 4 males were present. The bone preservation varied from poor to good, and although mostly disarticulated, the interment position of at least three of the individuals could be determined. One of these individuals, a female between 35 and 39 years of age was located in a flexed seated position in the southeast corner of the interment. Another female was in a similar position in the same location, just to the north of the first woman. The flexed seated position is probably how they were placed within the chamber because their crania are literally sitting atop their femora. In close association with these cranial remains were a complete variety of post-cranial elements, including fingers, ribs, long bones and vertebrae, which confirm that these remains represent

complete individuals, not partial or secondary interment of just cranial remains. The third individual was represented by a rough north-south alignment of remains, head to the north, with the majority of the cranium present, including facial bones that were crushed into the occiput. Teeth were located just to the north of the cranium, and because of the presence of pre-molars, the individual is known to be adult. Further examination of the degree of resorption present in the mandible of this individual suggests it was an older adult, over the age of 40. Lab analysis suggests it is a male. Flanking both sides of the head of this individual was a set of shell ear decorations. These were in the form of incised shell discs with associated bone fasteners or pins. The shell earring and bone pin to the east of the cranium was actually found with the bone pin pushed through the central drill hole of the shell (Figure 5.25). Other cranial elements were found in both the southern and northern extents of the chamber, thus as seen in the 77S-B/1 interment, body orientation was not uniform for all the individuals present. At least one other older male was found in the center of the chamber, and one male was also recovered from the southwest corner of the crypt. The two male individuals in the center of the crypt were generally in excellent health, with only minor instances of degenerative bone disorders. The degree of mixing, disarticulation and post-depositional movement attests to the fact that the chamber was re-entered numerous times in antiquity to inter additional ancestors within the chamber. One interesting aspect of the paleopathological analysis between the individuals in the Structure 77S-B/1 grave and those in 77S-B/2 is that the latter had a much higher frequency of severe tooth wear, including secondary dentin formation in comparison to the individuals in 77S-B/1. This is a function of the age difference between the two

groups. The individuals interred within 77S-B/1 were much younger, with few instances of severe tooth wear, while the individuals interred within the 77S-B/2 chamber were much older individuals. This confirms the interpretation that the 77S-B/1 individuals, who were interred within a single burial event, with few grave goods, were sacrificed or interred to honor the group ancestors interred in 77S-B/2, who were sequentially interred at the ends of their natural lives.

The matrix surrounding the remains was abundant, as openings in the chamber vault were present fairly close to the surface, and much material had washed into the aerobic chamber enclosure. The matrix consisted of wet, black-gray clay and dirt. This surrounding material contributed to the relatively poor preservation of the human remains.

There were a total of nine complete, or mostly complete, vessels found within the 77S-B/2 chamber. There were three olla-type vessels or jars. One (SARP catalogue number 27/187-002:2704; Table 5.33) was located in the northwest corner of the chamber atop two nested plate offerings. This was identified as a Cayo Ceramic Group jar, dating to the Late Classic Period (Gray 2002:9). One was an almost complete vessel in the north end of the chamber (27/187-002:2470; Figure 5.26; Table 5.33). This was identified as a Tu-Tu Camp Ceramic Group vessel that also dates to the Late Classic Period (Gray 2002:9). The third vessel of this type was a partial vessel with strap handle located centrally, and slightly to the eastern side of the chamber (27/187-002:2509; Table 5.33). This has been identified as an example of a Chan Pond Unslipped: Chan Pond variety jar (Gray 2002:5). The interesting thing is that this vessel dates to the Late Preclassic Period. Perhaps this is an instance where a vessel was saved

as a treasured family heirloom, until it found its final interment place within the 77S-2 chamber.

There were also three plate forms found within the offerings of 77S-B/2. There were two flanged plates nested atop one another in the northwest corner of the grave (27/187-002:2685-6; Table 5.33). They were both Late Classic period plates of the Chunhuitz Orange Ceramic Group (Gray 2002:9). A third, partial, orangeware plate form was found in the north end of the chamber (27/187-002:2471; Figure 5.27).

Two special vessels were located just south of the center of the chamber. These were tiny flask-shaped vessels that have been referred to in the literature as “poison bottles” or “ink/pigment containers.” They are thought to function as pigment containers rather than poison containers, because several Early Classic examples of these vessels contained pigment, or contained copal incense. These miniature vessels have been found at the sites of Copan, El Ceren, Uaxactun, and Aguateca (Reents-Budet 1994:68, 214-215). A similar example of a miniature vessel has been found at Minanha in Group R (Prince 2000). It is interesting to note that the only examples of these unique vessels at the site are being recovered from just outside the site core proper, on the second terrace groups that are within about 500 m of the site core.

The first ink vessel from Burial 77S-B/2 is a small, undecorated vessel (27/187-002:2548; Table 5.33). The second, found just atop the previous vessel, is a little larger and has an elaborately decorated human face on its front side (27/187-002:2510; Table 5.33; Figure 5.28). The sides of the vessel have pseudo-glyph like inscriptions. The vessel also has discrete shoulder “incisions” which would allow for the vessel to hang on a string, without any liquid that was stored within the vessel leaking out. Both of

these vessels have been dated to the Late Classic Period (Gray 2002:5-6). This unique vessel is most similar in style to one found at the site of Copan, on the southeast periphery of the Maya area. Although the front of the vessel does not have similar decoration, it too has pseudo-glyphs along the sides of the vessel (Reents-Budet 1994:215).

By far, the most impressive complete vessel recovered from the 77S-B/2 chamber is a painted polychrome cylinder vase, centrally located along the west wall of the chamber (27/187-002:2500; Table 5.33; Figure 5.29). The surface of the vase is decorated with red, orange and black on cream slip. The vessel is a member of the Zacatel Cream-polychrome variety, with characteristic bands of pseudo-glyphs just under the rim and the main body divided into repetitive quarters. The design element is eroded, but there appears to be a black and white mat symbol in two quarters of the main body. Unfortunately, little can be readily identified in the design of the other two quarters. Zacatel Cream polychromes date to between A.D. 672 and 830 (Reents-Budet 1994:328). What is especially interesting about this vessel, is that it is a close replica of the “characteristic” of the Zacatel Cream type, which implies it was not produced at Minanha but rather imported to the site. The locus of production for these vessels is the Northern Petén Lowlands of Guatemala in the general region of Nakbe. This is interesting in light of the fact that there must have been a mechanism in place for the people from Group S to acquire this prized and valuable vessel. Indications from other excavations at Minanha suggest ties to the southern city of Caracol. The Zacatel Cream polychrome would seem to be an exception.

There were several other interesting grave goods found in association with the individuals in the 77S-B/2 chamber. Specifically, there was a worked conch shell pigment holder found in the south end of the chamber (27/187-002:2629; Table 5.33; Figure 5.30). As well, there was a worked central element of a conch shell, which may have served in the application of pigment (27/187-003:2638; Table 5.33; Figure 5.30). Taken together, these shell artifacts and the presence of the pigment vessels, could indicate a scribal function for some of the individuals interred within the 77S-B/2 chamber. Scribes and artisans held relatively high social status. This could explain the presence of an elaborate polychrome cylinder vase within the chamber; perhaps it was a gift between elite members of the artisan class.

Additionally, there were other artifacts that were found within the chamber that must have served as the personal adornments or accoutrements of the relatively high status individuals interred within. These include a hematite bead, a jadeite pendant, various shell artifacts including 3 shell adornos, shell beads, and a shell pin.

Finally, these artifacts were also included: lithics, ceramics, and faunal remains, as well as two pieces of worked bone, one chalcedony thin biface, one piece of raw granite, five pieces of worked shell, one bone pin, three obsidian blade fragments (Table 5.33).

Excavations in the MRS4 Group

The previous excavations in the site epicenter at Structure 3A, and on the first terrace of occupation at Structure 77S revealed a picture of the ritual beliefs and

behaviors of the upper strata of Minanha's society. A more complete cross-section of ritual activities has to include the lower strata of society also, thus the 2003 field work concentrated on a lower status household in the periphery of the site. The work conducted in the MRS4 group in the Minanha periphery concentrated on the excavation of the looted eastern pyramidal structure of the group, Structure MRS4-M3 (Figure 5.31).

The MRS4 group is a large plazuela group located in a valley just over one km to the southeast of the Minanha site center (see Connell 2001 for initial survey and testing of the group). Though not the largest group in the periphery, the MRS4 group was chosen as representative of the household level of settlement from the immediate hinterlands of the Minanha site center. Burning of the group as a result of a fire set with the intention of clearing a *milpa* field resulted in the clearing of surface vegetation across the entire MRS4 group. A systematic surface collection of all of the principal mounds in the group was undertaken in addition to the excavation and mapping activities focused on Structure MRS4-M3. This surface collection concentrated on the western structure of the group, MRS4-M1, the configuration of three structures on the north side of the group, MRS4-M2, MRS4-M6 and MRS4-M7, the two structures on the south edge of the group, MRS4-M4 and MRS4-M5, and the plaza area defined by the configuration of these mounds. During the 2003 field season, excavations were carried out in association with the eastern pyramidal structure of the group, Structure MRS4-M3.

Preliminary analysis suggests that the structure was built in a single construction phase during the Late Classic Period (ca. A.D. 700-800). Although the structure was

heavily looted on its eastern side, the front of the structure was intact. Axially placed offerings could be revealed through excavation.

Unit MRS4-M3-3

Unit MRS4-M3-3, a 2 x 4 m unit, was set along the primary axis of the mound. The unit was excavated in both cultural and natural levels (a total of five). Two associated burials and two features were also found. The preservation of both the structure and associated artifacts is poor, in part due to the proximity of the architecture to the surface and lack of overburden. However, there were some interesting materials found in association with the surface of the mound.

Level 1. This level consists of an approximately 5 cm thick humus soil layer. The layer contained ash from the recent fires, dark brown soil, and organic materials. Finds from this layer include a small ceramic figurine head, although it was probably an appliqué from a larger vessel, a speleothem, three perforated potsherd disks and numerous *incensario* fragments, some of which were decorated to represent a jaguar pelt motif (Table 5.34). The nature of these surface deposits suggest that they represent offerings, or themselves are evidence of reverential ritual practice towards the eastern structure and its function as an eastern ancestor shrine. The presence of the modeled head may indicate a more rustic pattern of domestic based ritual practice enacted in the periphery. This form of local domestic-based ritual may represent a tradition of ritual practice far outside the sphere of courtly ritual enacted in the site center (Plunket 2002:4). The presence of the jaguar pelt motif *incensario* fragments shows continuity with similar deposits from Group S at Minanha. Not only are the materials similar, but they are contextually located in the same position, atop the simple crypt burial in front

of the eastern structure of the group. Although the *incensario* fragments are aesthetically pleasing, they are rather crude when compared to some of the finer *incensario* fragments from other sites and even from the Minanha site center, thus it may be that they represent a local manufacturing tradition.

Level 2. This level is a slump deposit, was approximately 15 cm thick, and consisted of approximately 40 percent cobbles, 15 percent pebbles, 10 percent boulders, and 35 percent soil and organic material. Many ceramics recovered from this level were also *incensario* fragments sitting atop the capstones of the underlying burial chamber (MRS4-M3-B/1) with large rectangular capstones intact on its surface (Table 5.35). Although the capstones themselves are limestone, there was a large piece of slate, approximately 15 cm square, above the capstones in the southern end of the crypt. The placement of this piece of slate is reminiscent of the location of the slate capstone in the Group S simple crypt burial in the same location, just in front of the terminal stair (Figures 5.32, 5.33). The fact that there was not an entire slate capstone in the simple crypt burial may reflect the more limited access to the material of the MRS4 group members. However, the placement of this piece of slate, atop the simple crypt chamber, shows continuity with the site-wide practice of associating slate with burial contexts.

Burial MRS4-M3-B/1

The remains of at least two individuals were found within the burial chamber itself. The remains were very poorly preserved and there was a distinct paucity of associated grave goods. The only artifacts recovered were two conch shell *adornos* found in proximity to the cranial remains of one of the individuals; thus they likely represent items of personal adornment. The only other grave goods within the chamber

were an obsidian blade fragment, and a quartz crystal (Table 5.36). The chamber of the simple crypt interment was contained within the floor fill of the terminal floor, and showed no evidence of re-entry, thus the individuals placed within the chamber were placed there at the same time (Figure 5.34).

Level 3a. This level designated as floor fill, consists of approximately 60 cm of boulders (35 percent), cobbles (15 percent), pebbles (10 percent), and loose, white plastery soil (40 percent). The surface or plaster cap of the floor was completely deteriorated, but there were ballast and core layers present. Very few artifacts were recovered from within the floor material itself (Table 5.37).

Level 3b. This level, designated construction fill with rubble, was approximately 200 cm thick. The construction material consisted of dirt (20 percent), pebbles (30 percent), boulders (20 percent), and cobbles (30 percent). Near the bottom of this layer, the relative clast percentages changed to an approximate 80 percent proportion of boulders and only 20 percent of loose, dry soil. Structure MRS4-M3 itself, was comprised of only a single construction phase, contemporaneous with the placement of the simple crypt burial in front of the structure. Artifacts recovered from Level 3b include ceramics, lithics, faunal remains, several obsidian blade fragments and some small pieces of raw slate (Table 5.38).

MRS4-M3-B/2

Immediately to the east of the burial chamber of MRS4-M3-B/1, and underneath the basal stair of the structure, the remains of at least one additional individual were recovered (MRS4-M3-B/2). The remains of this individual or possibly several individuals, were very poorly preserved, did not have any associated grave goods, and

in fact, were not found in a formal interment chamber. The interment was typologically designated to be a simple grave due to the presence of human remains. Of note however, was the axial location of these remains, beneath the structure. A preliminary comparison of these remains to those found within the formal burial chamber in front of the basal stair would seem to suggest that this individual fulfills Becker's (1992) classification of human remains as offerings themselves. This interment served to sanctify the sacred nature of the structure rather than glorify the identity of the interred individual. Additional human bone, representing numerous individuals, was located in a haphazard scatter beneath the building along the same plane as the MRS4-B/2 burial. Since there was no formal chamber for this burial, the extent or boundary of the interment was difficult to identify, particularly since bone continued to be found to the margins of the excavation unit.

Features MRS4-M3-F/1 and MRS4-M3-F/2. Atop the boulder-sized core of the structure itself, just beneath the basal course of stair stones and again in an axial location, there were two dedicatory cache offerings (Figure 5.35). The first, MRS4-M3-F/2, consisted of an upside-down Mount Maloney Black: Mount Maloney variety bowl. The other, MRS4-M3-F/1, consisted of two small lip-to-lip Cayo Unslipped: Variety Unspecified vessels with a single human finger found within them (Table 5.39). Both of these offerings are dedicatory and date to the construction of the building itself. It is interesting to note that here in the periphery, the vessel used for a dedicatory ritual offering is a Mount Maloney Black vessel. Taschek and Ball (2003:378) suggest that the Mount Maloney vessels come from two production loci within the Belize Valley. This is interesting because it suggests that the inhabitants of the MRS4 group had

economic access to materials from the Belize Valley region to the north. By contrast, the presence of a lip-to-lip cache containing a finger is an identical pattern to similar deposits within the eastern structures of residential groups at Caracol (Chase and Chase 1998a). This suggests that the residents of MRS4 were aware of regional ritual practices, as seen at Caracol, and that they too participated in this network of ritual behavior. Unfortunately, no formal interments were recovered from the central core of the structure, probably because of the extensive looting of the building. The only indication that there may have been something present was a stack of six large obsidian blade fragments tossed to the edge of the looter's trench. Since the formal excavations into the fill of the structure recovered relatively few artifacts, it is likely that these obsidian blades were found within a formal grave chamber, but there is no other evidence to corroborate this supposition. In looking at similar eastern shrines, for example at the site of Zubin in the periphery of Cahal Pech in the Belize Valley, it is usual to find relatively more elaborate interments within the structure when there are simple crypt, multiple-individual interments within the plaza floor immediately in front of the basal stair (Iannone 1994). The individuals within graves in the structure are thought to embody the role of important venerated ancestors for the resident members of the group (McAnany 1995).

Sub-unit MRS4-M3-3a

Finally, beneath the construction itself, a level of tamped earth or clay served as the building platform for the construction. A one by one m sub-unit, MRS4-M3-3a, was set up to investigate this layer (Figure 5.36). The layer itself was designated Level 4 and consisted of approximately 13 cm of tamped clay. This rather dense, light brown clay

had not been present in the other construction phases already described. There were not many associated artifacts within the clay except for a number of small *jute* snail shells interspersed across the entire sub-unit (Table 5.40). This clay surface undoubtedly represents the first cultural layer as it sits atop soft, sterile bedrock. A small incursion was dug into this bedrock to confirm that it was sterile.

Conclusion

The excavations at the three loci at Minanha show continuities and differences. The rituals enacted at each location show significant differences of intent. The apical elites focused on long-term caching practices in association with their mortuary rituals. They also tapped into previous structures of local power. In contrast, lesser elites focused on bolstering their own group status via their occupational specialization and connections to similar individuals in the Petén, and even enacting that power via the sacrifice of others. The commoners focused on the maintenance of broad folk tradition through their use of lip-to-lip vessel caching, and incorporation of cache goods from the Belize Valley. The significance of these differences are more fully discussed in Chapter 7. What is apparent after the initial description of the behaviors is that there is a rich and complex mortuary life at Minanha, one that needs to be further explored and contextualized within a regional perspective. One striking similarity across all social strata is the prevalence of multiple individual interments. The comparative data marshaled in the next chapter provides a more complete picture of this mortuary practice.

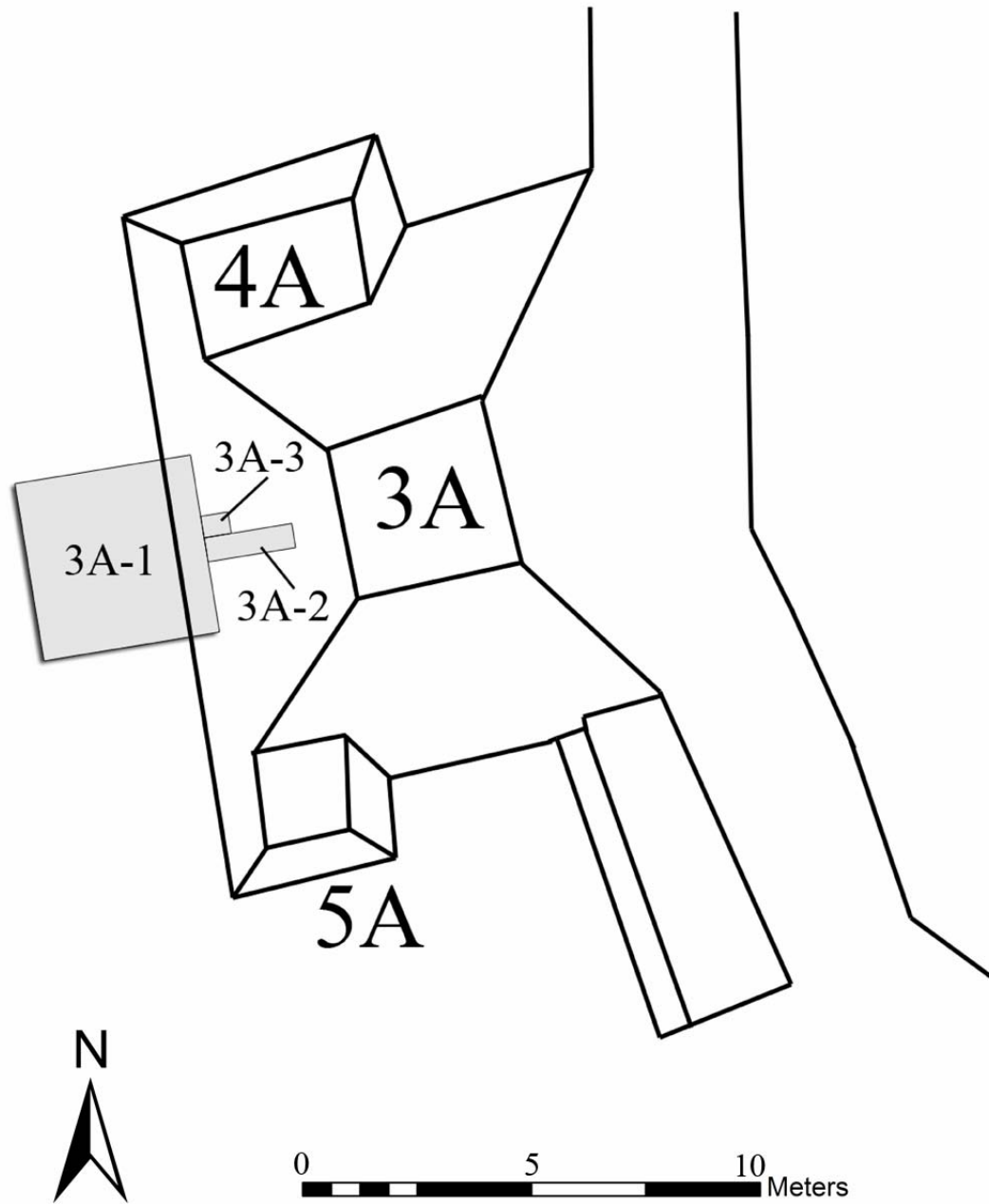


Figure 5.1: Structure 3A with location of excavation units 3A-1, 3A-2, and 3A-3.

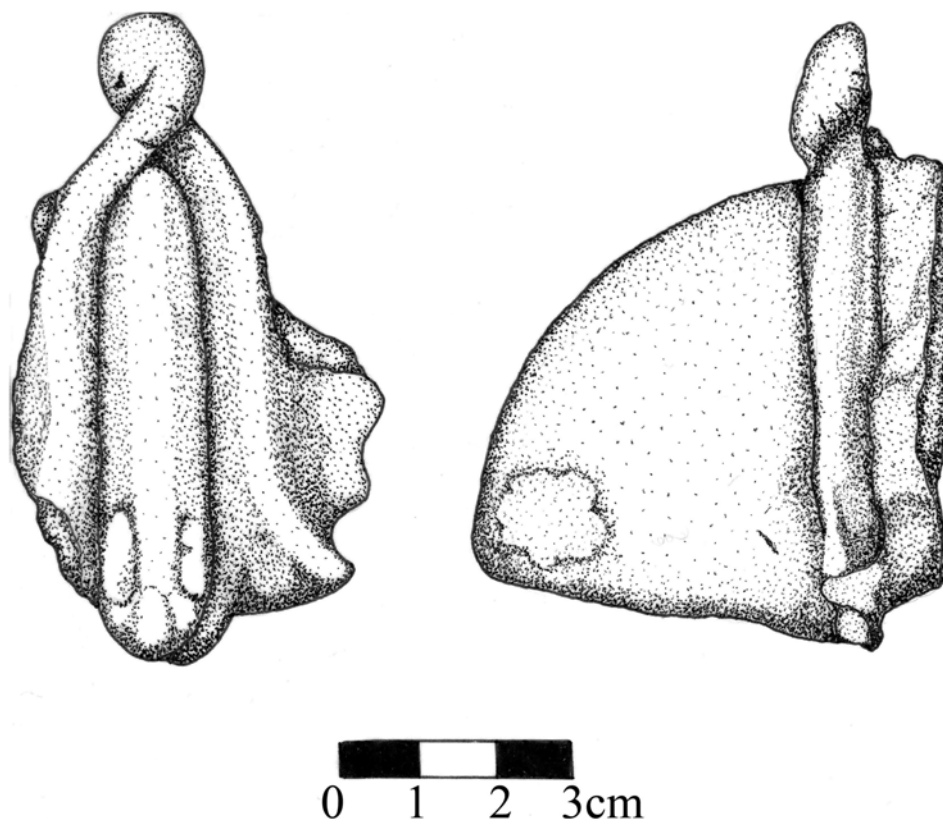


Figure 5.2: Incensario fragment showing Jaguar Sun God of the Night nose with cruller element (drawn by K. Kersey).

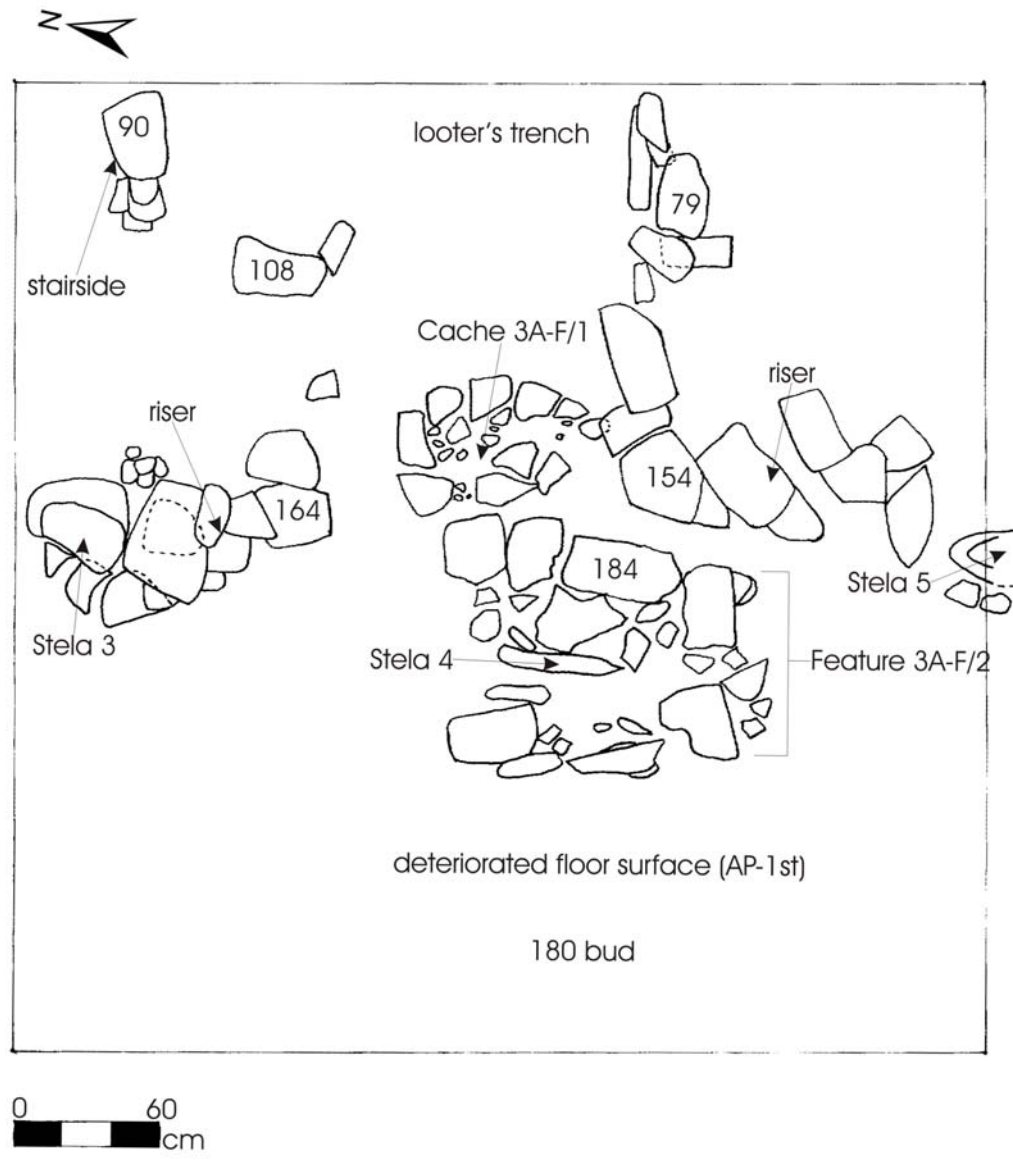


Figure 5.3: Top Plan of Unit 3A-1 (3A-1st Construction).

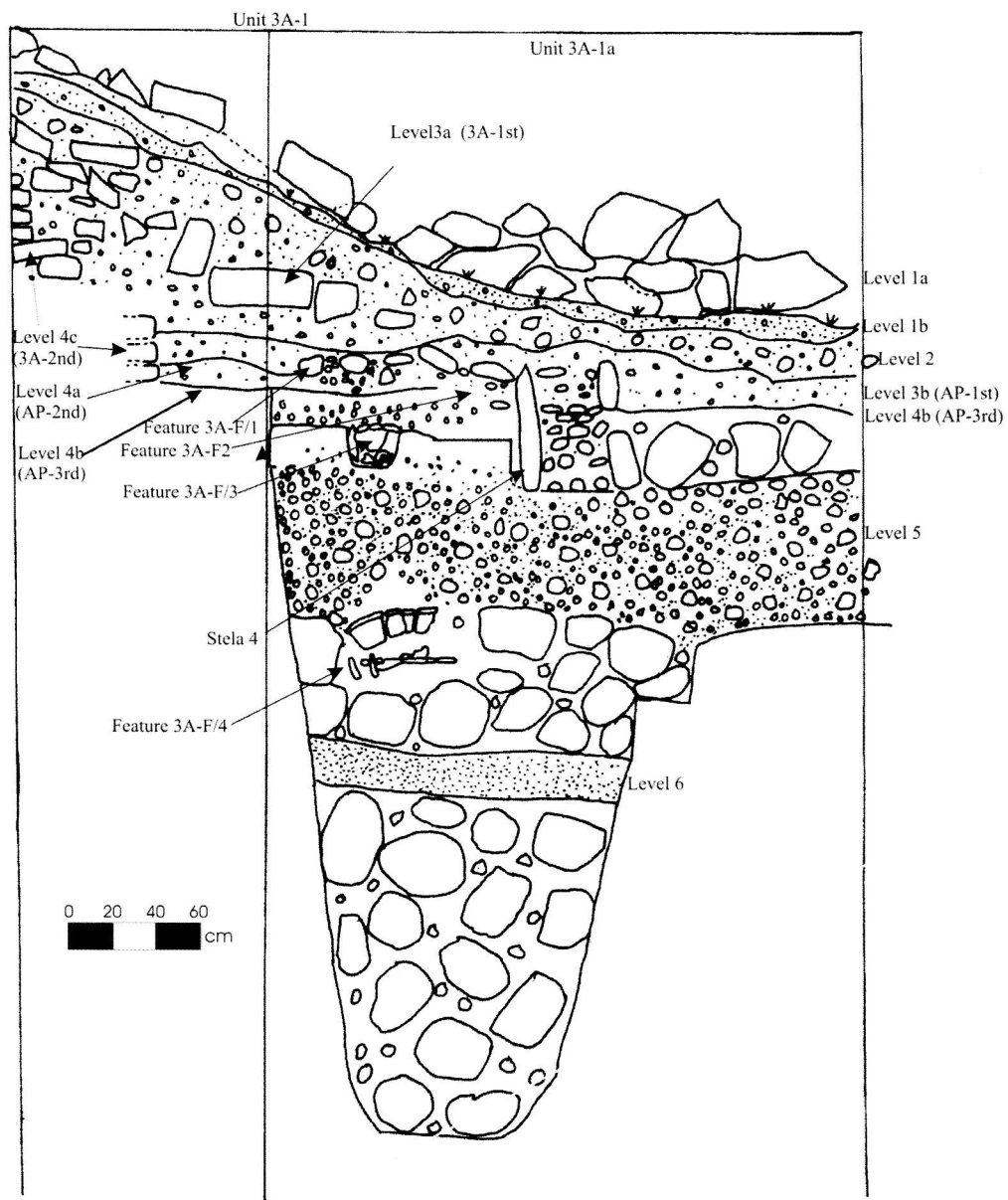


Figure 5.4: Profile Unit 3A-1.

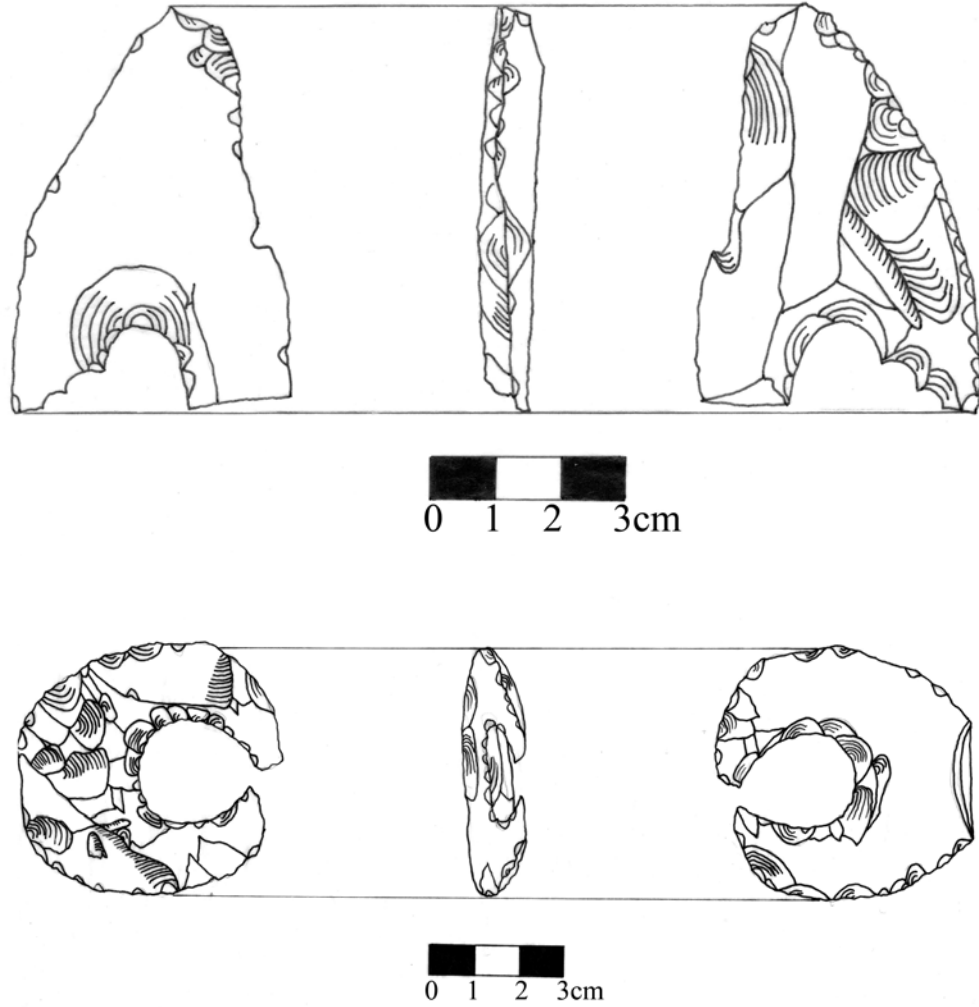


Figure 5.5: Chert eccentric lithics from Feature 3A-F/3, (drawn by K. Kersey).

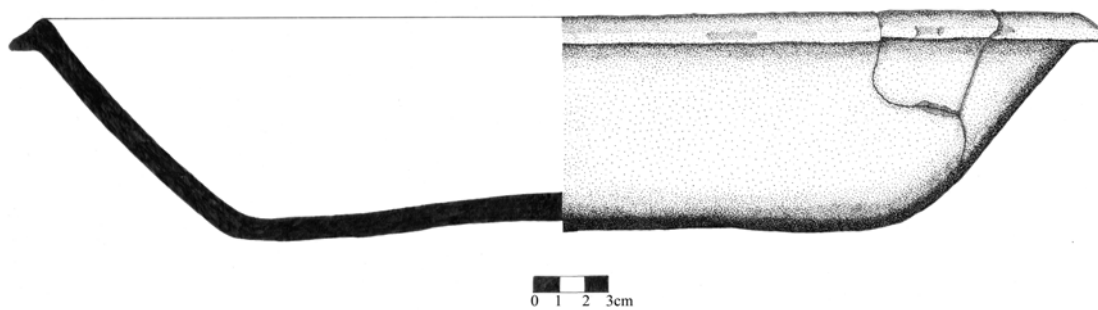


Figure 5.6: Sierra Red: Society Hall vessel that dates to the Terminal Preclassic period (A.D. 300) from Feature 3A-F/4, (drawn by K. Kersey).

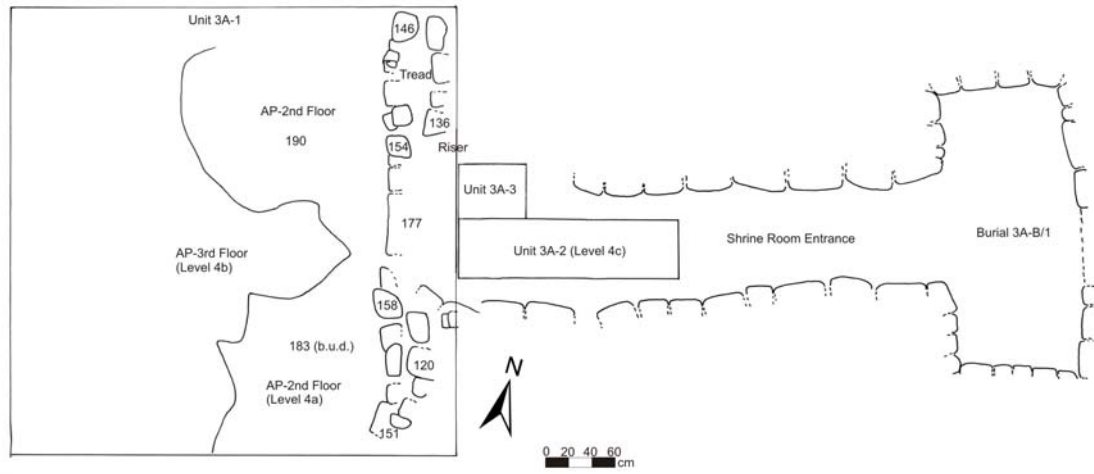


Figure 5.7: Top Plan of Structure 3A, Units 3A-1, 3A-2, and 3A-3 (Penultimate architecture).

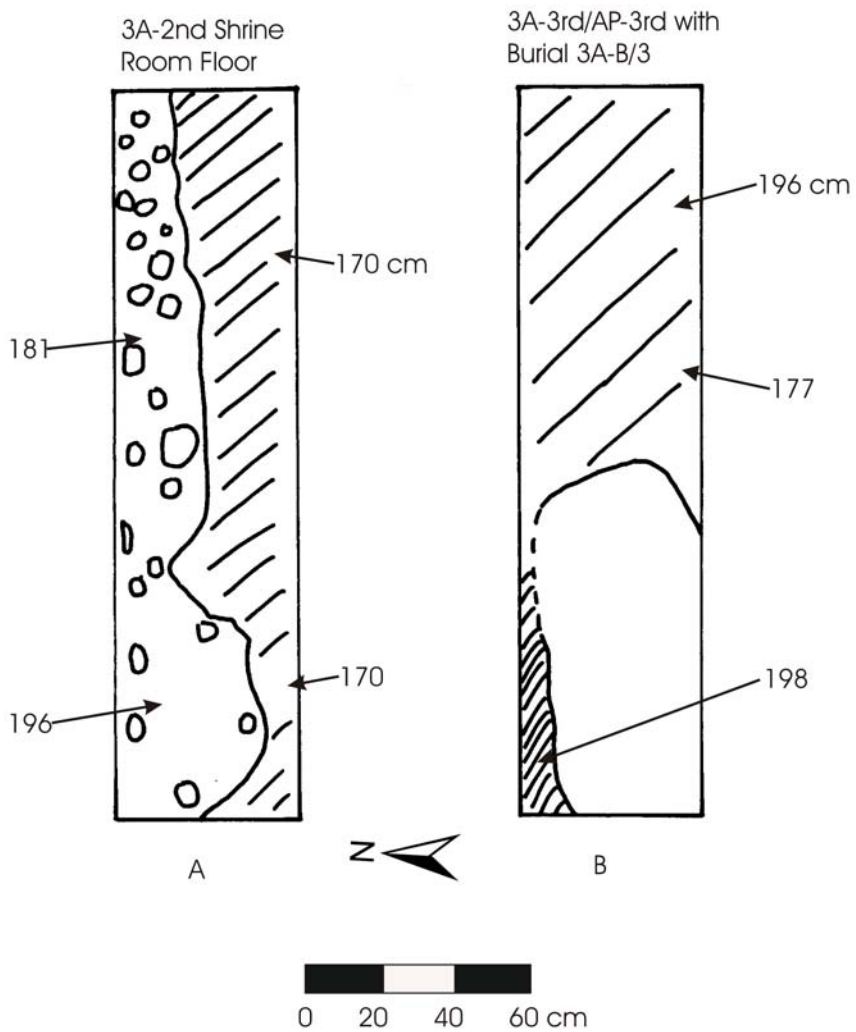


Figure 5.8: Top Plan of Unit 3A-2.

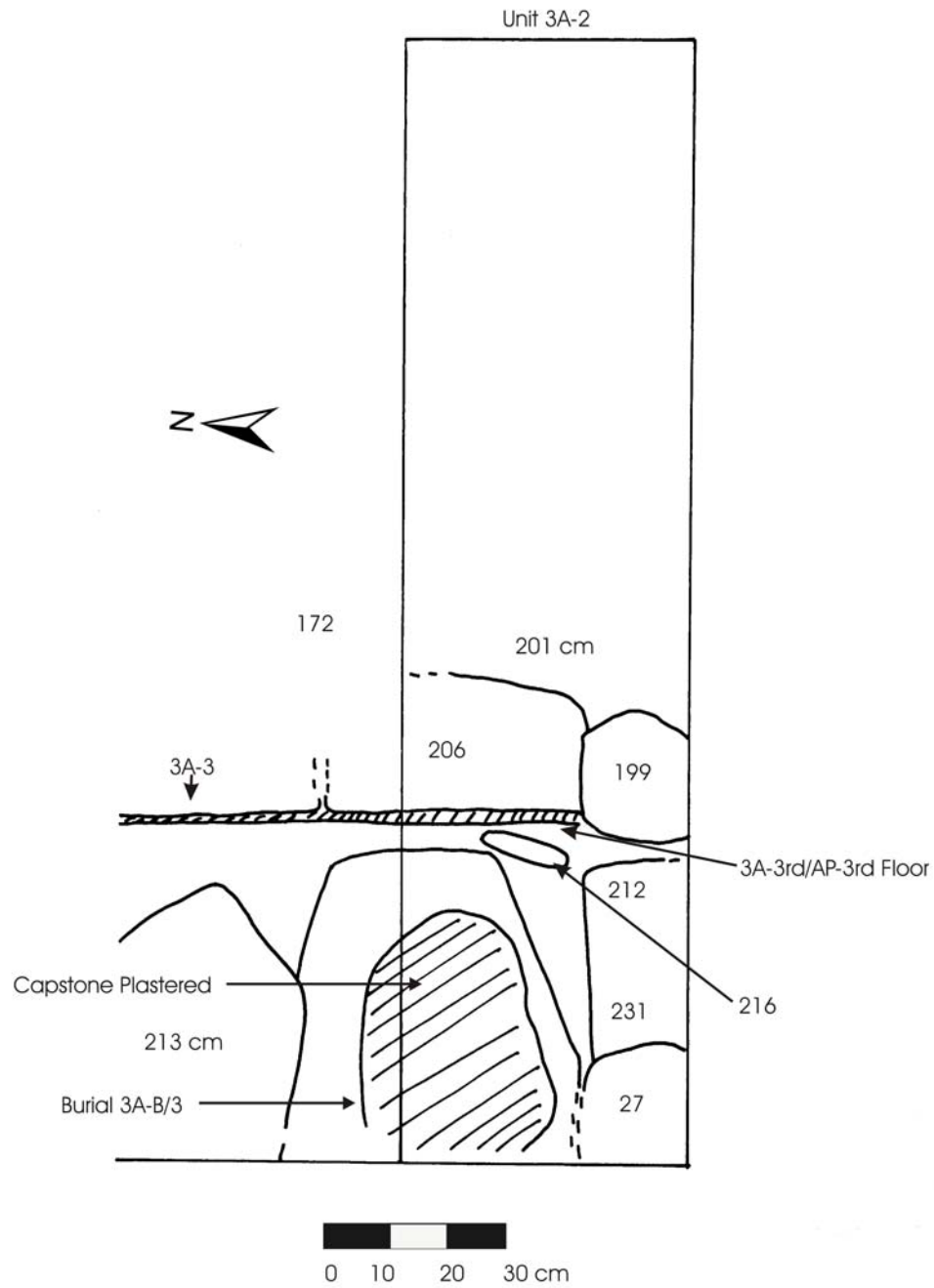


Figure 5.9: Top Plan of Units 3A-2 and 3A-3, Top of 3A-B/3 Capstones.

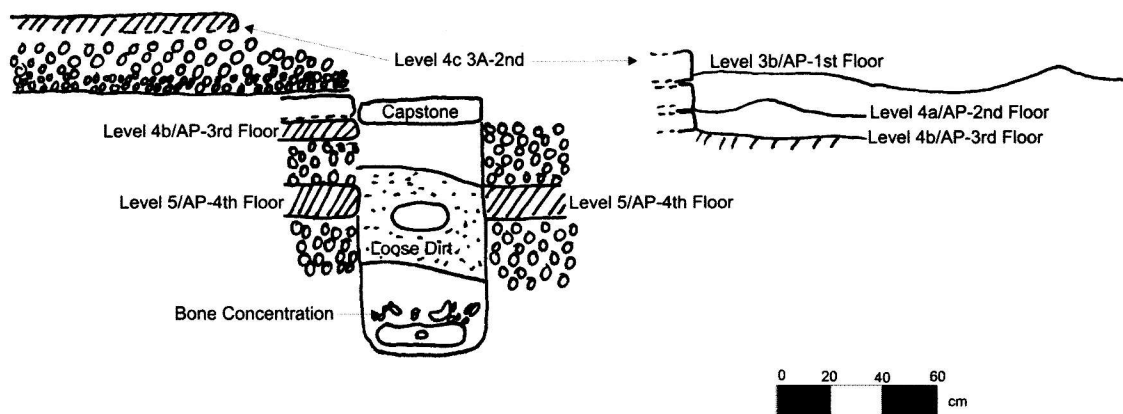


Figure 5.10: Structure 3A, Running Profile of Burial 3A-B/3, Looking South.

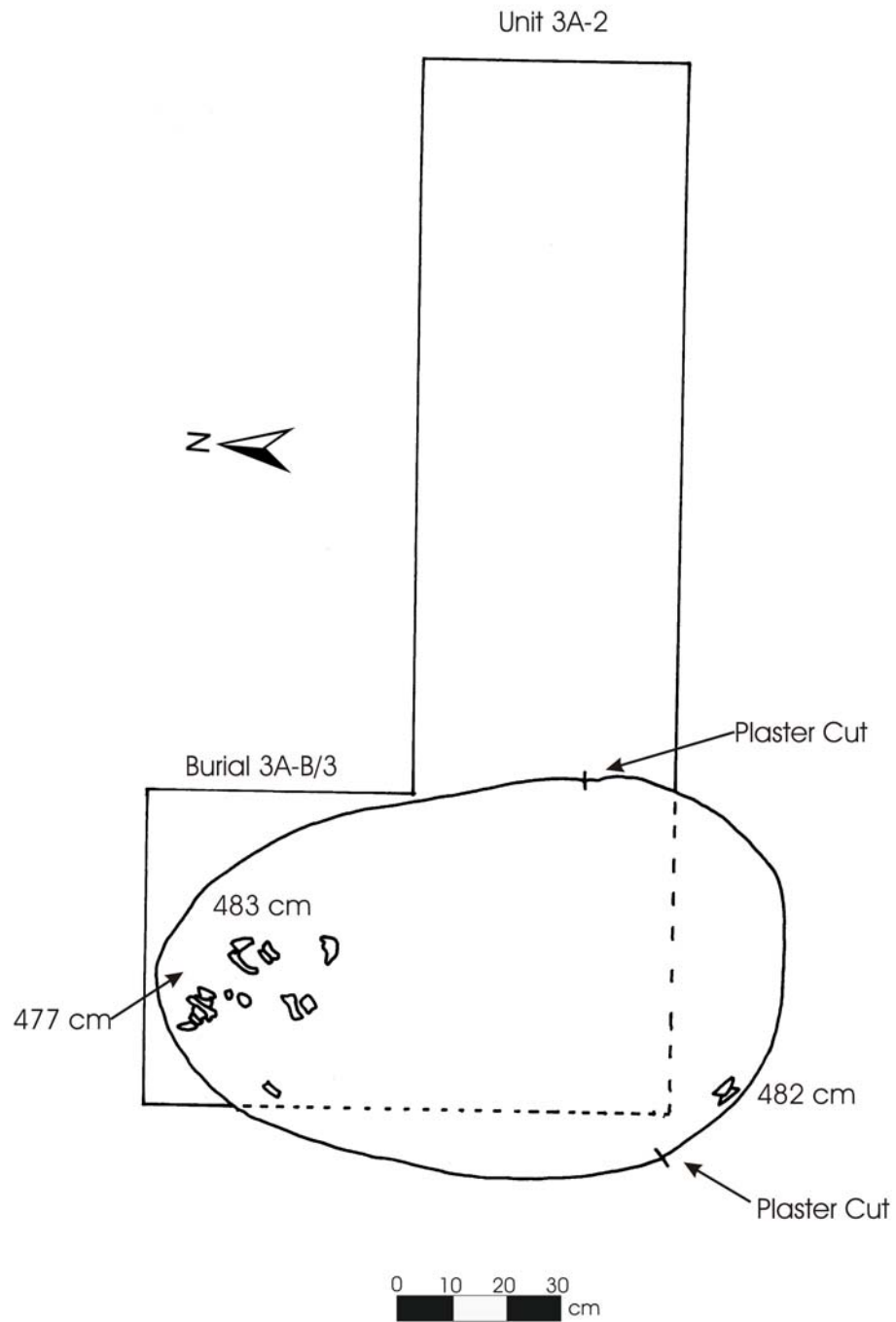


Figure 5.11: Top Plan Unit 3A-2 and Burial 3A-B/3.

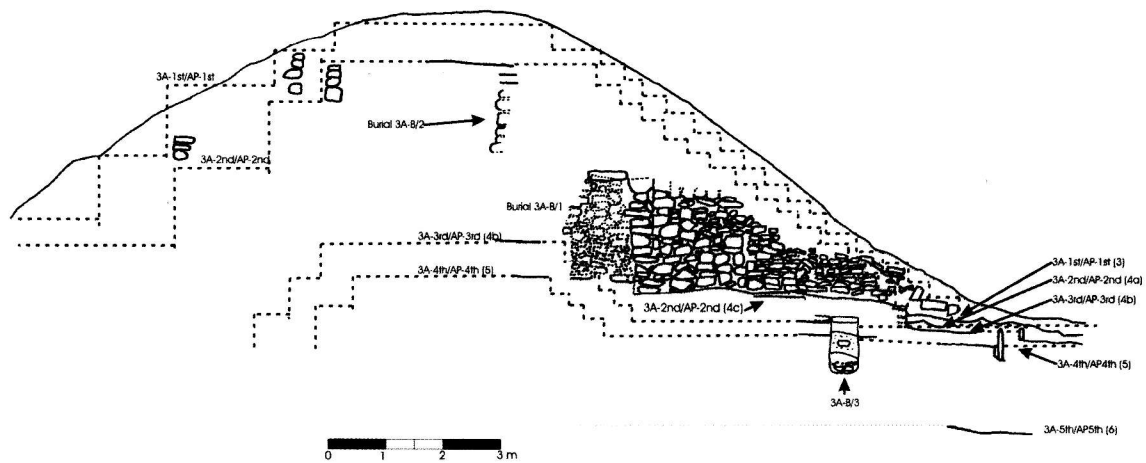


Figure 5.12: East-West Running Profile of Structure 3A.

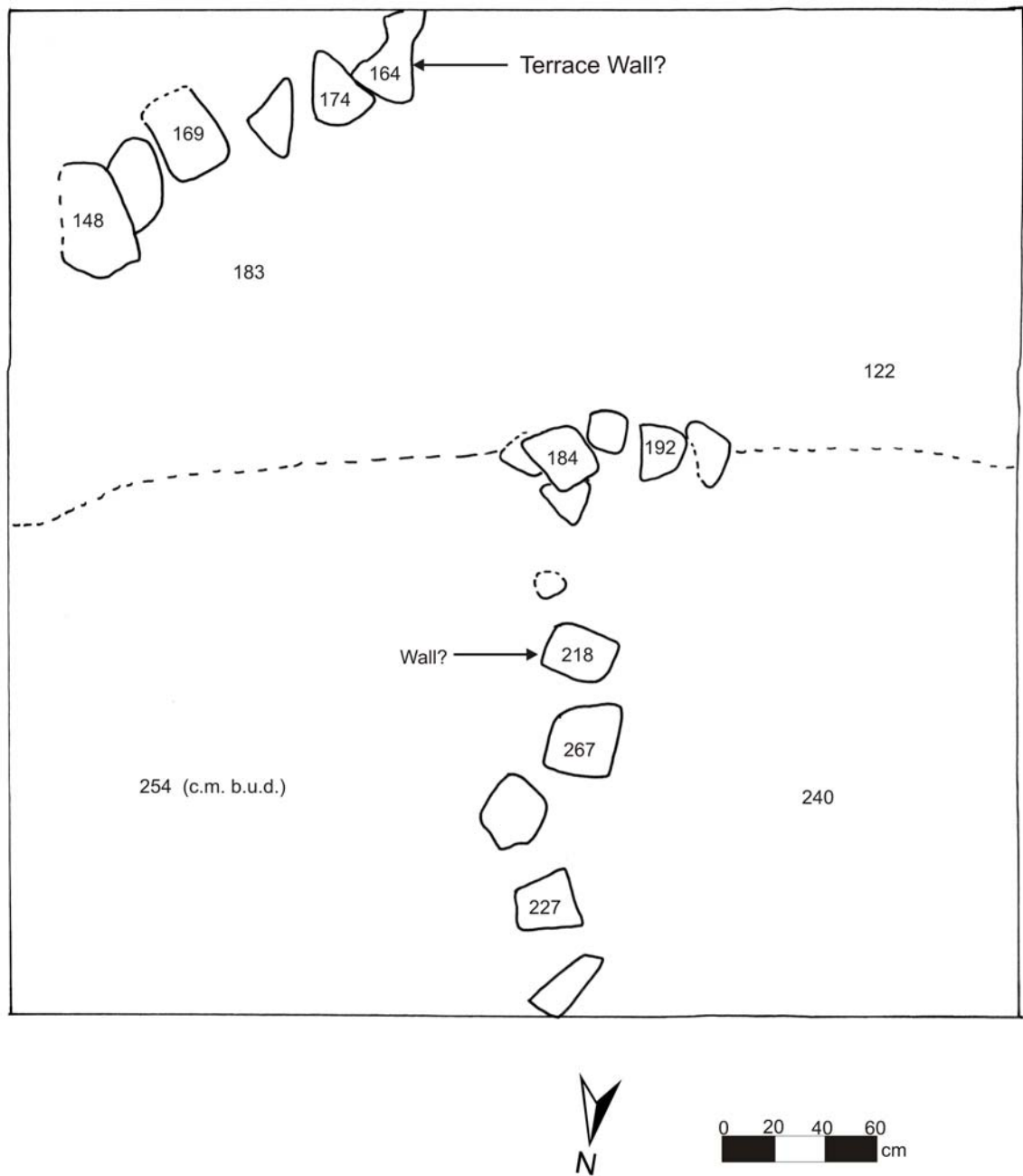


Figure 5.13: Top plan Structure 4A, Unit 4A-1, Level 3.

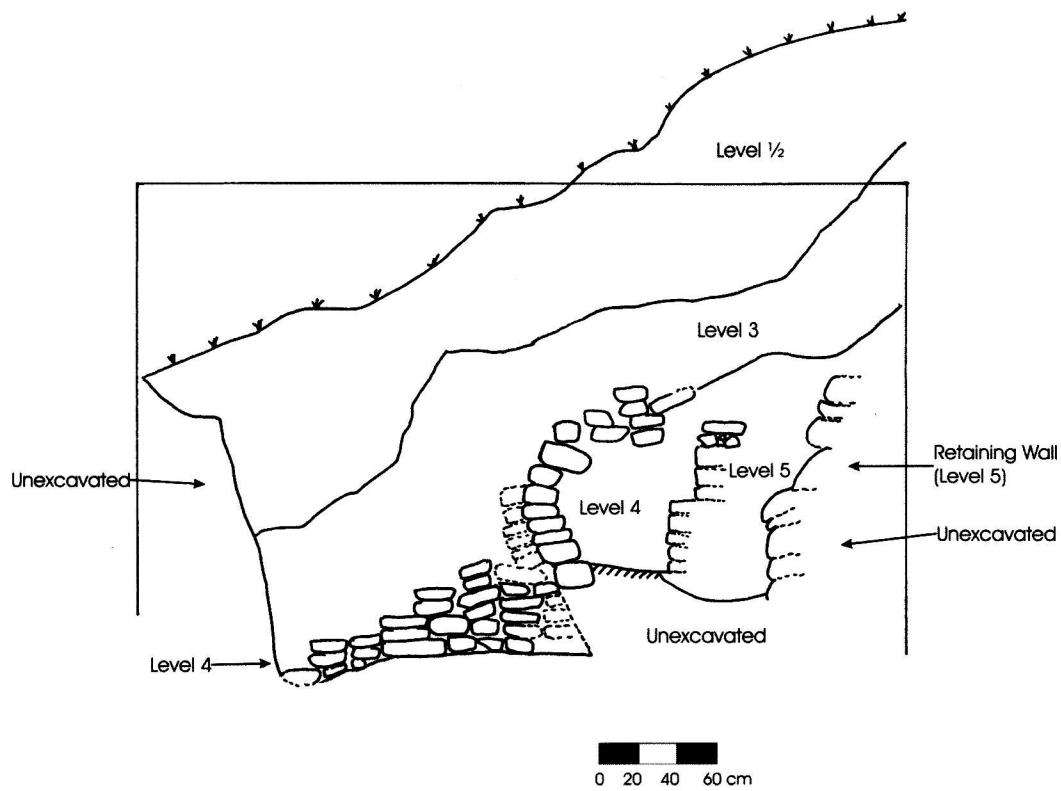


Figure 5.14: Unit 4A-1, Profile Looking East.

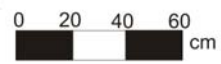
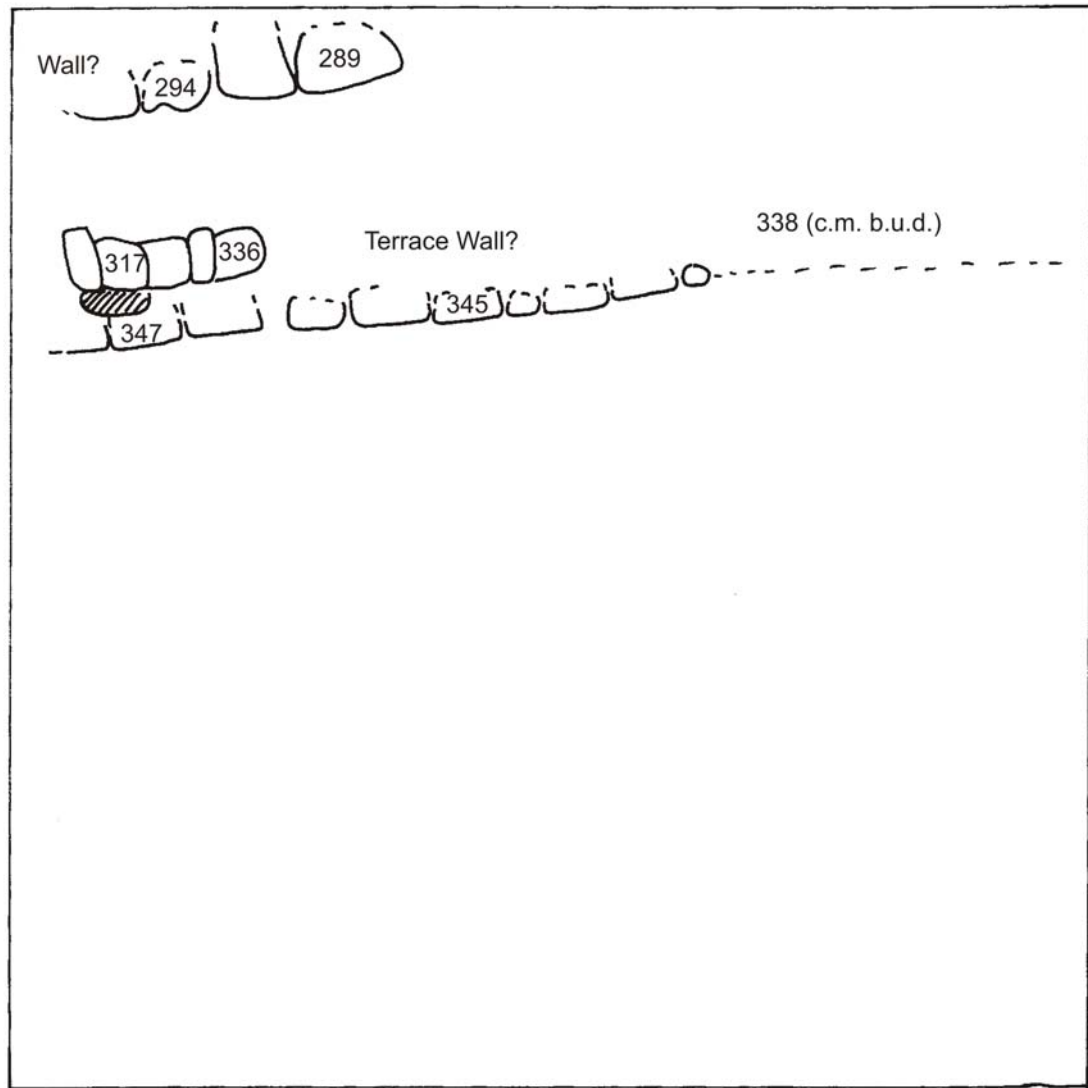


Figure 5.15: Top plan Structure 4A, Unit 4A-1, Level 5.

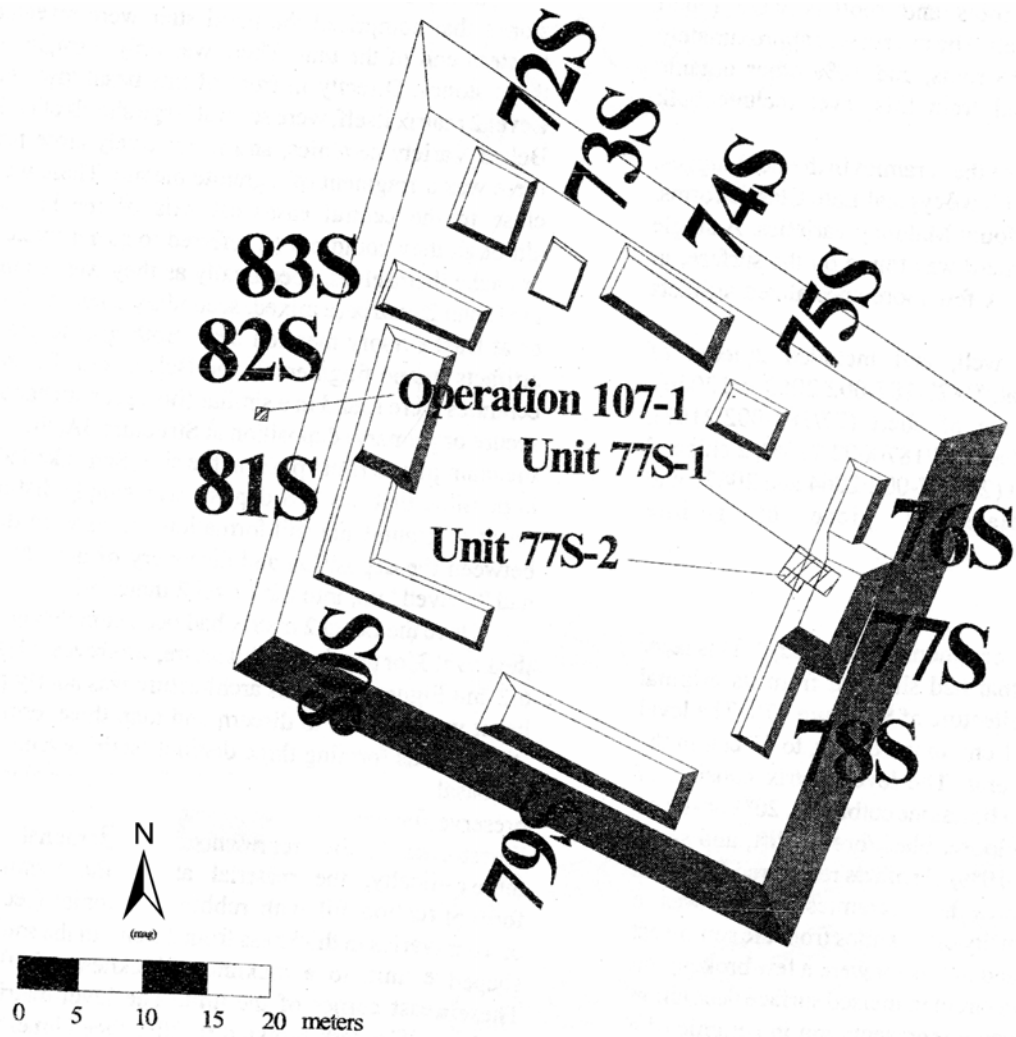


Figure 5.16: Top Plan of Group S, showing location of Structure 77S.

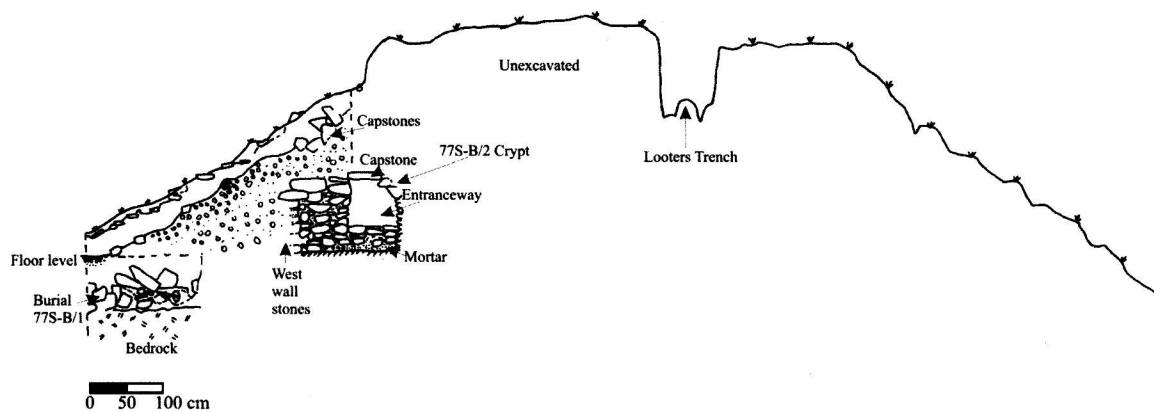


Figure 5.17: Profile map of Structure 77S, Unit 77S-1, Looking North.

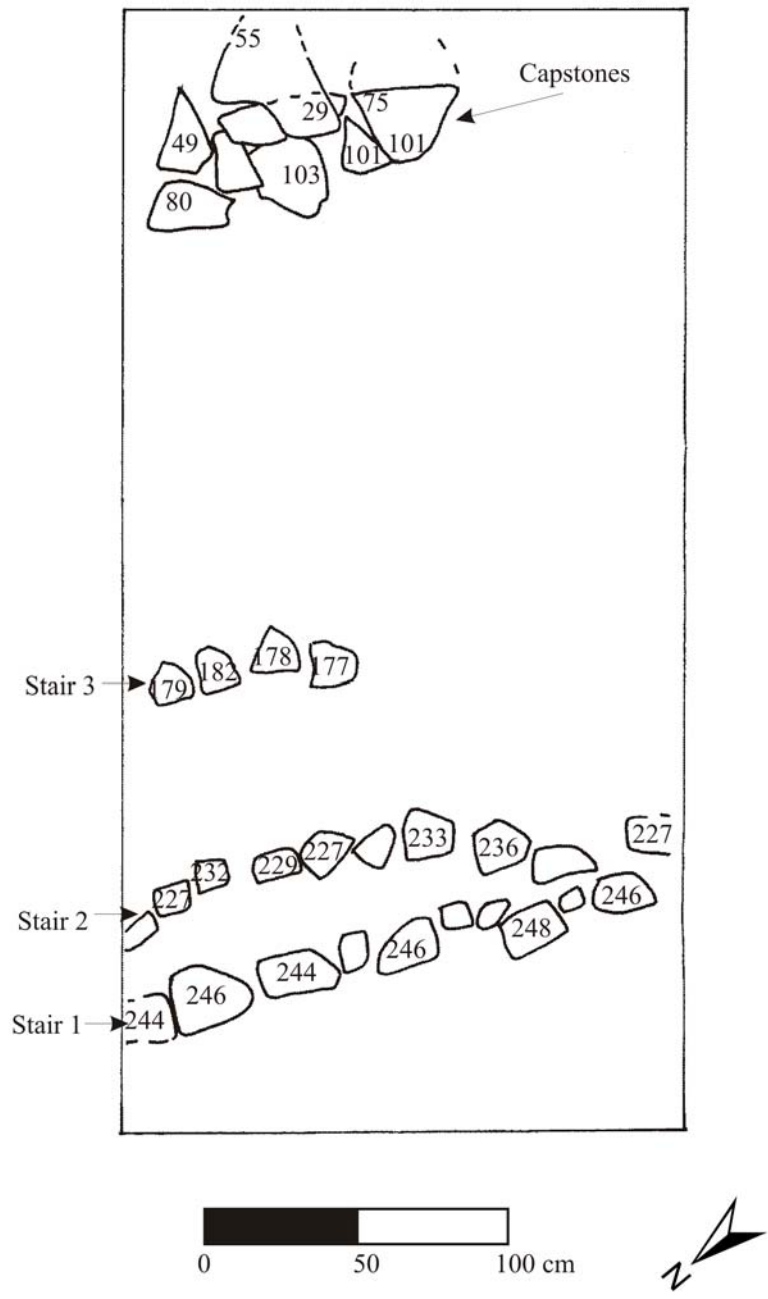


Figure 5.18: Top Plan of Unit 77S-1, Level 3, Terminal Architecture.

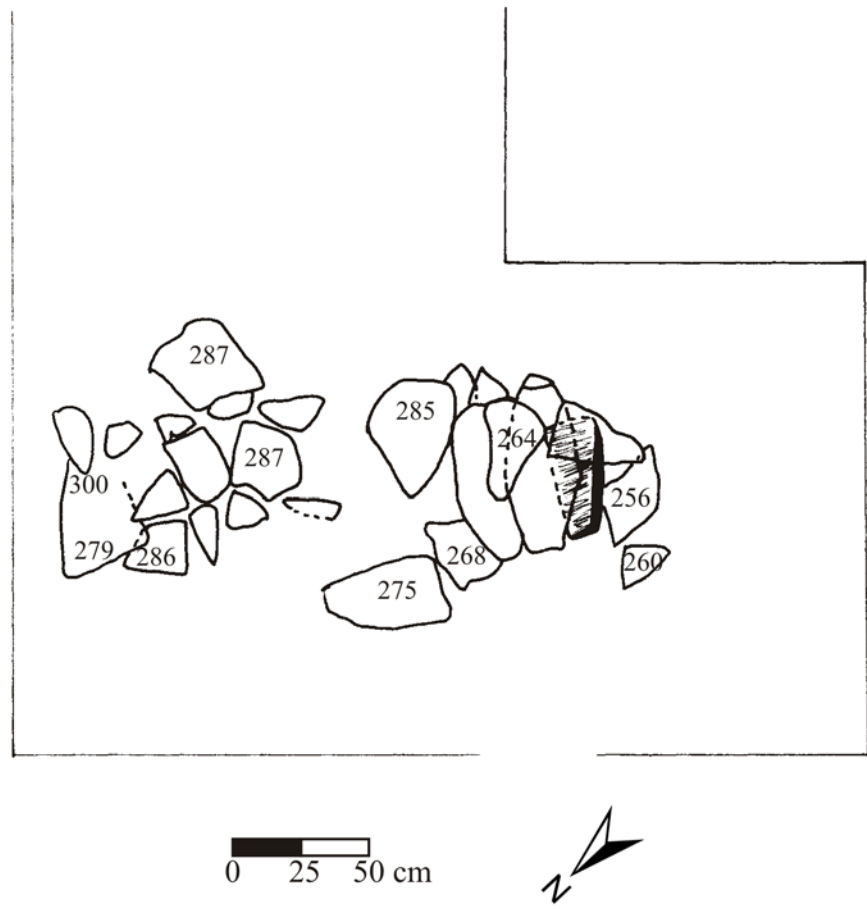


Figure 5.19: Top Plan of Burial 77S-B/1, Top of Capstones.

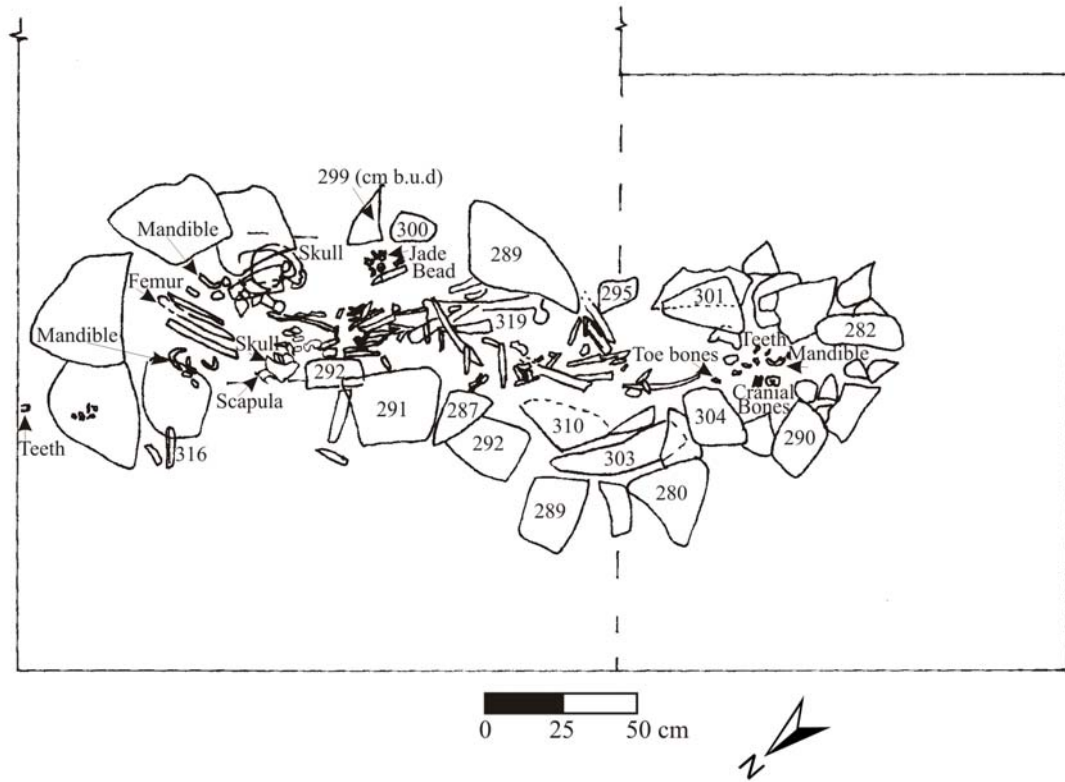


Figure 5.20: Top Plan of Burial 77S-B/1, Units 77S-1 and 77S-2, Structure 77S.

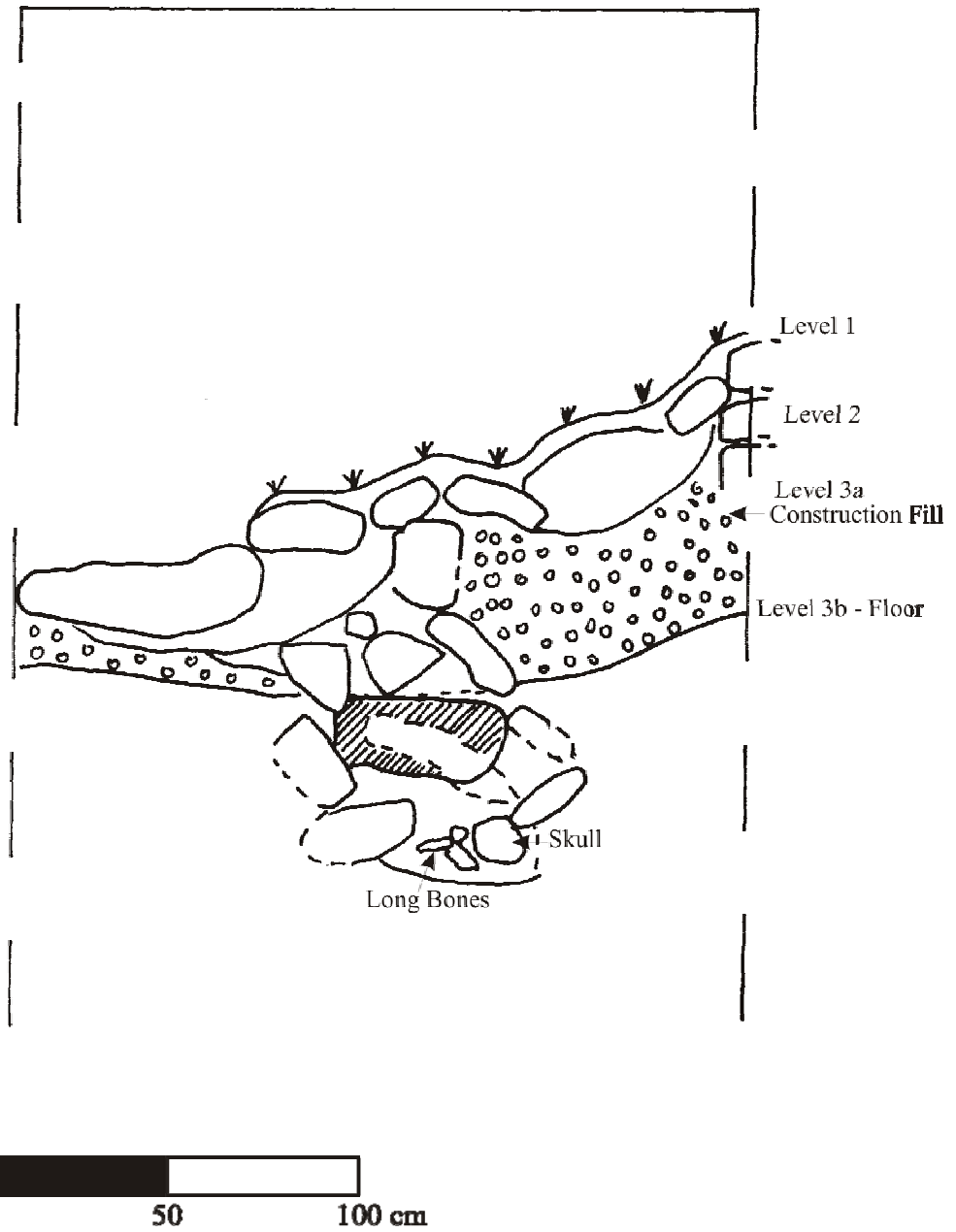


Figure 5.21: Profile of Structure 77S, Unit 77S-2, Looking North.

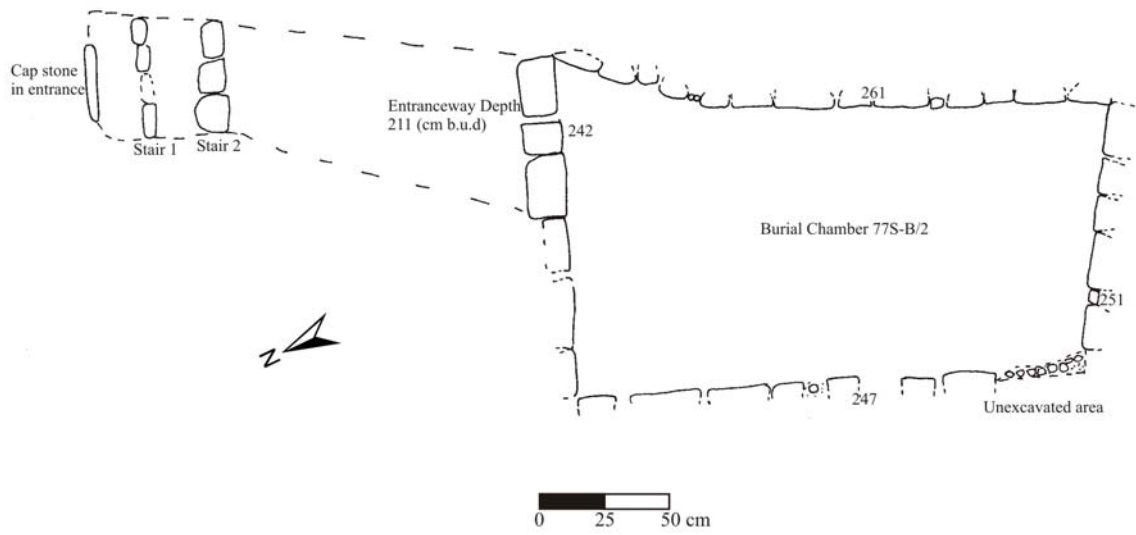


Figure 5.22: Top Plan of Burial Chamber 77S-B/2, Structure 77S, Group S.

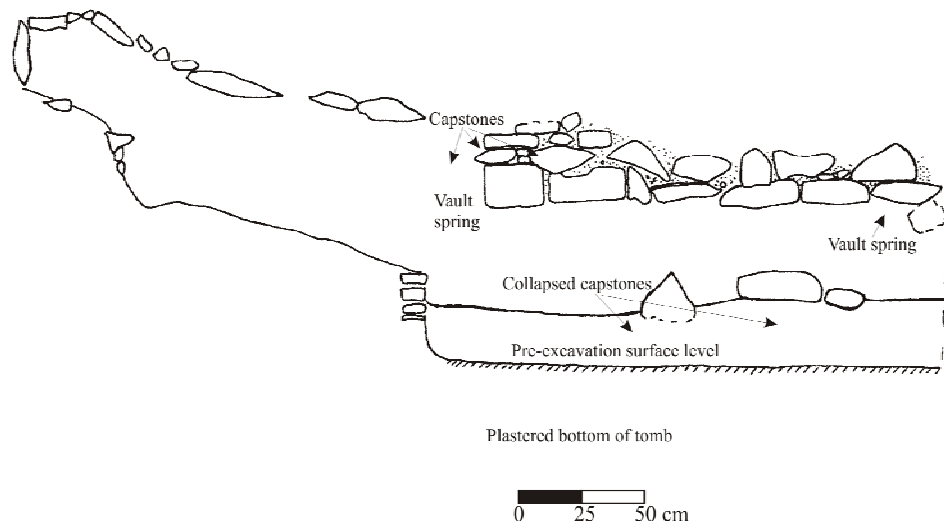


Figure 5.23: Profile map of Burial 77S-B/2, Looking East.

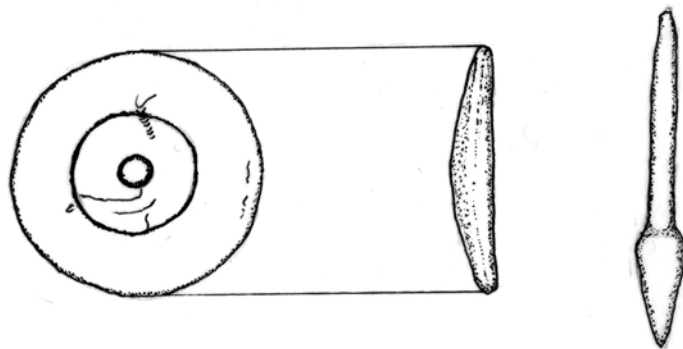


Figure 5.25: Shell adorno and pin from Burial 77S-B/2 (actual size, drawn by K. Kersey).

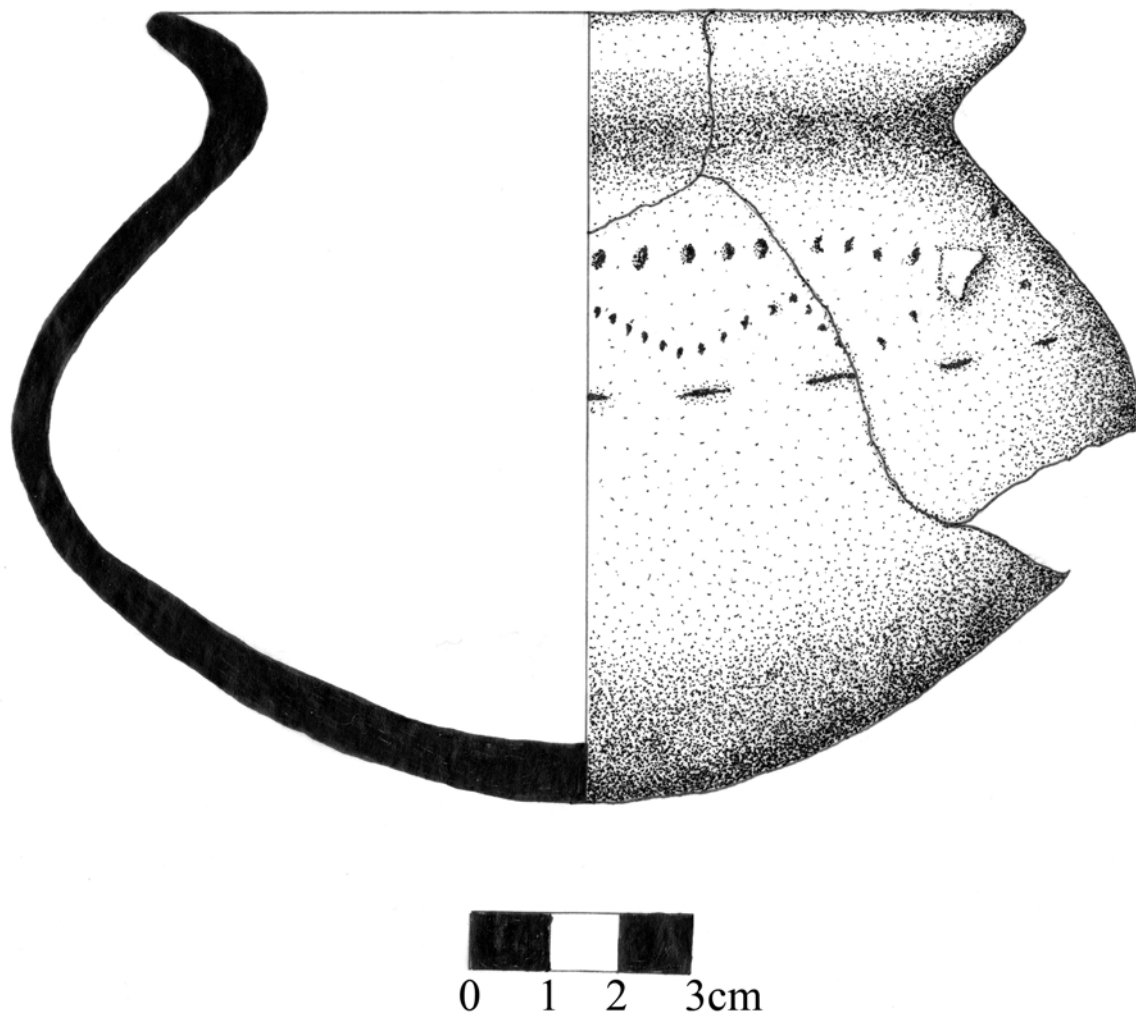


Figure 5.26: Late Classic Period Tu-Tu Camp Ceramic Group vessel from Burial 77S-B/2, (drawn by K. Kersey).

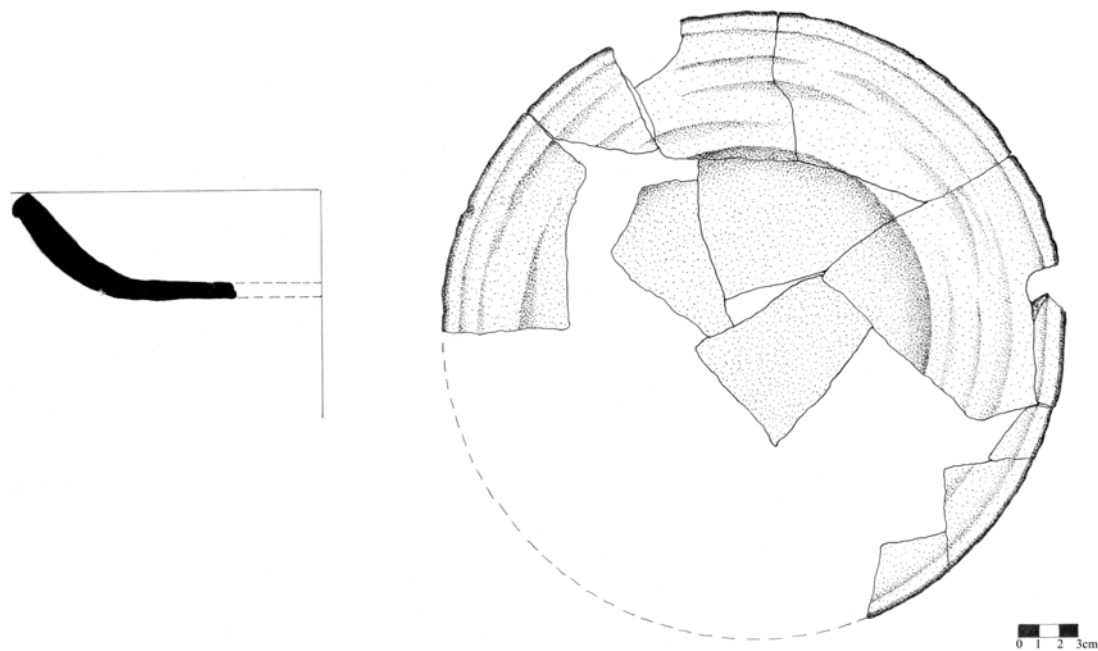


Figure 5.27: Late Classic orangeware plate from Burial 77S-B/2, (drawn by K. Kersey).

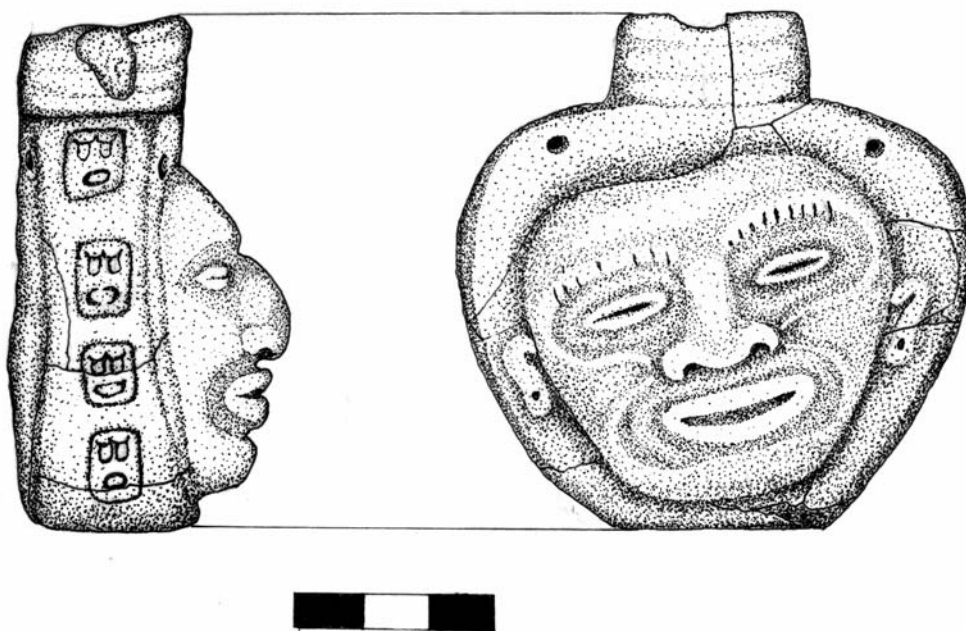


Figure 5.28: Pigment vessel from 77S-B/2, (scale is 1:1, drawn by K. Kersey).

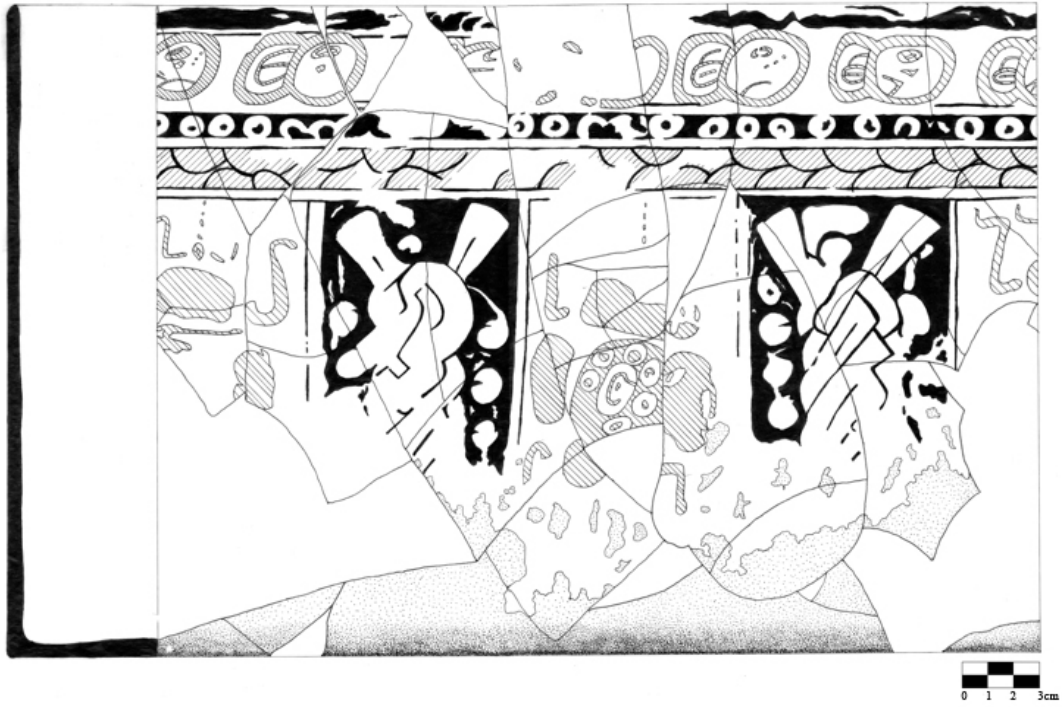


Figure 5.29: Zacatel Cream Polychrome from 77S-B/2, (drawn by K. Kersey).

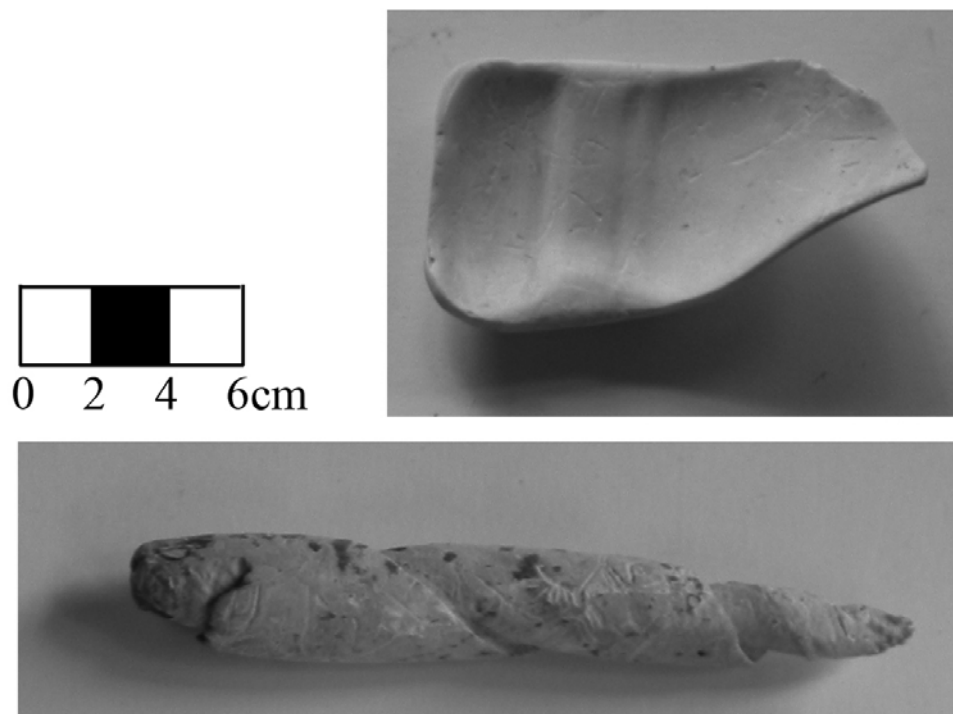


Figure 5.30: Shell artifacts from 77S-B/2.

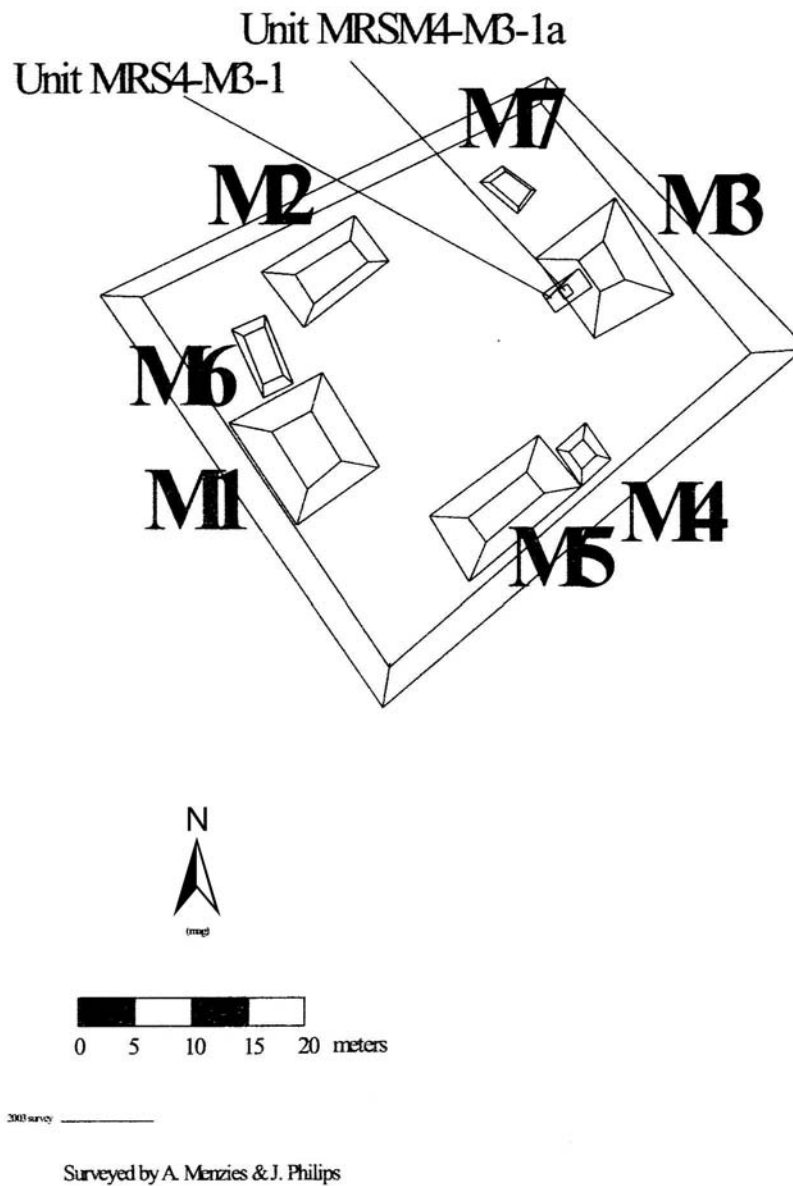


Figure 5.31: Plan of MRS4, showing location of excavation Unit MRS4-M3-1 and MRS4-M3-1a.

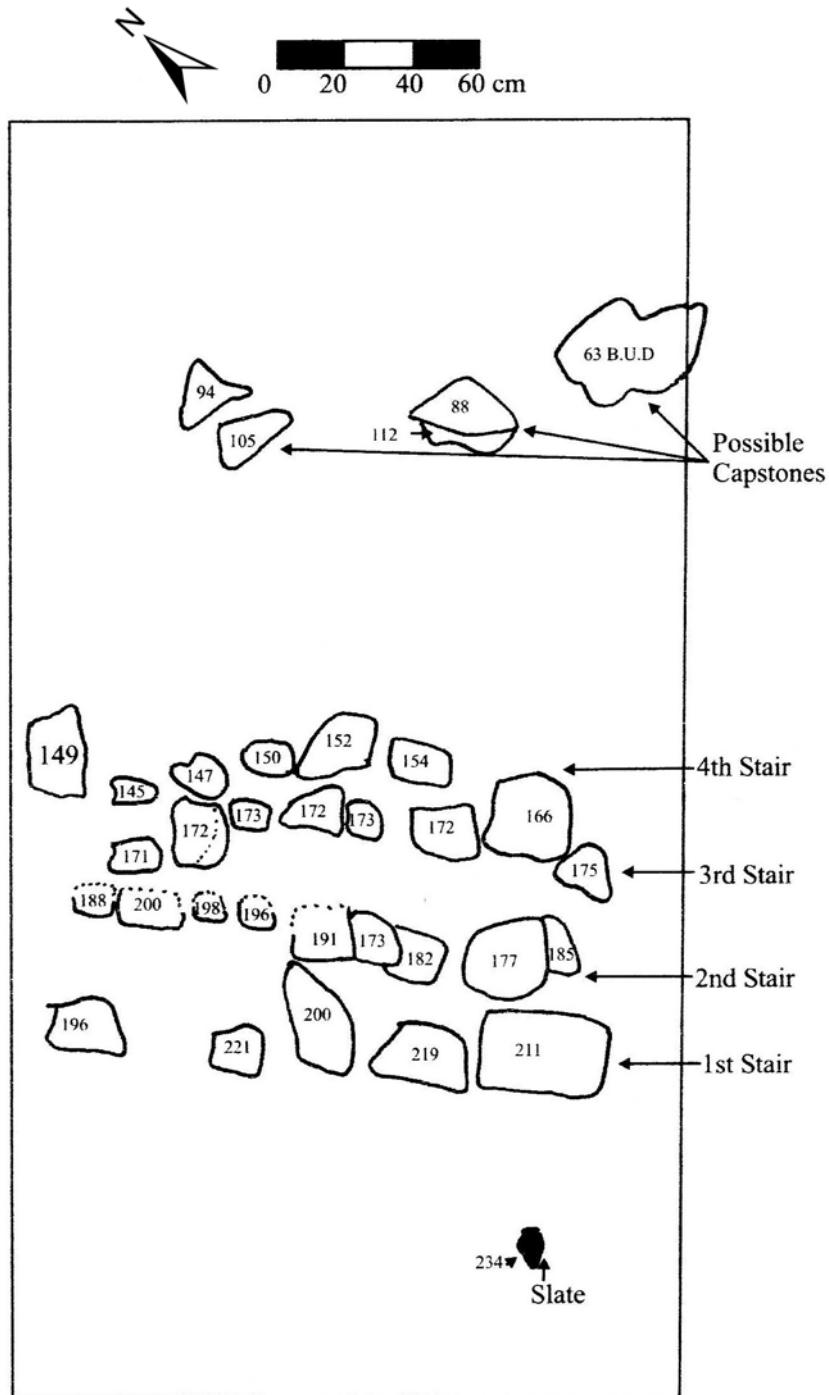


Figure 5.32: Top plan of MRS4-M3-3, Unit MRS4-M3-3, Level 3, terminal architecture.

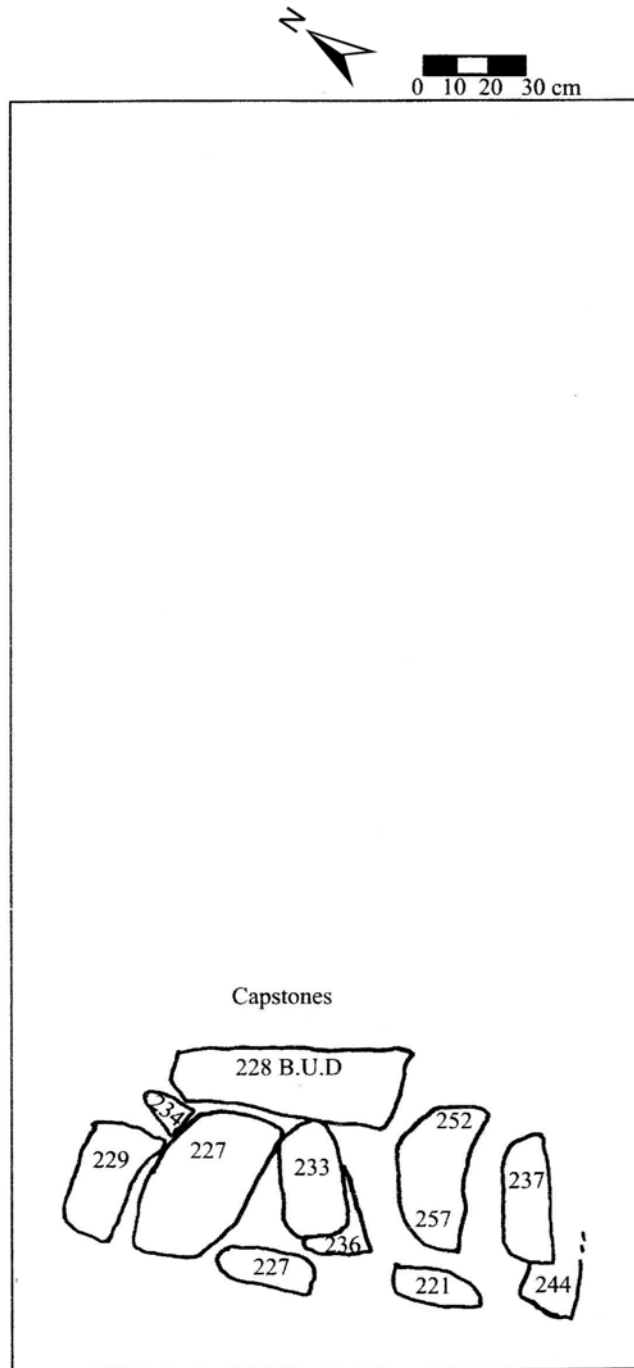


Figure 5.33: Top plan of MRS4-M3, Unit MRS4-M3-3, Level 3a, Burial MRS4-M3-B/1 (capstones).

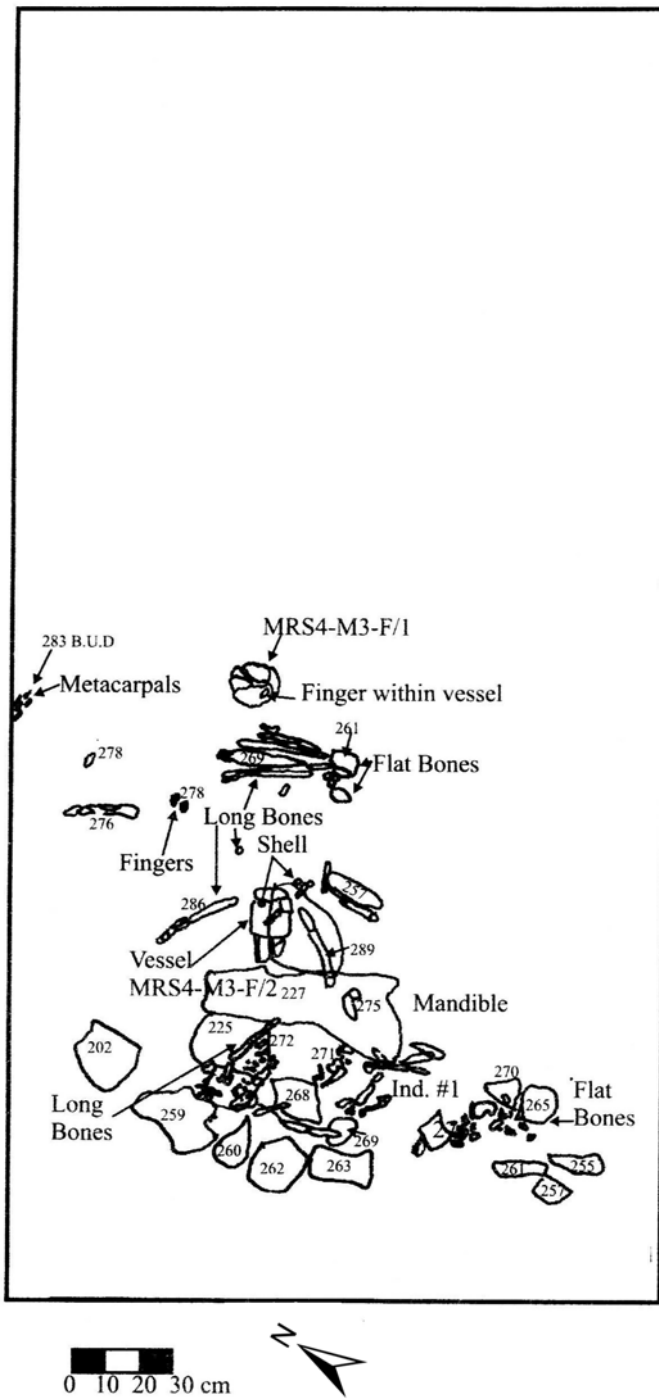


Figure 5.34: Top plan of MRS4-M3, Unit MRS4-M3-3, Burial MRS-M3-B/1.

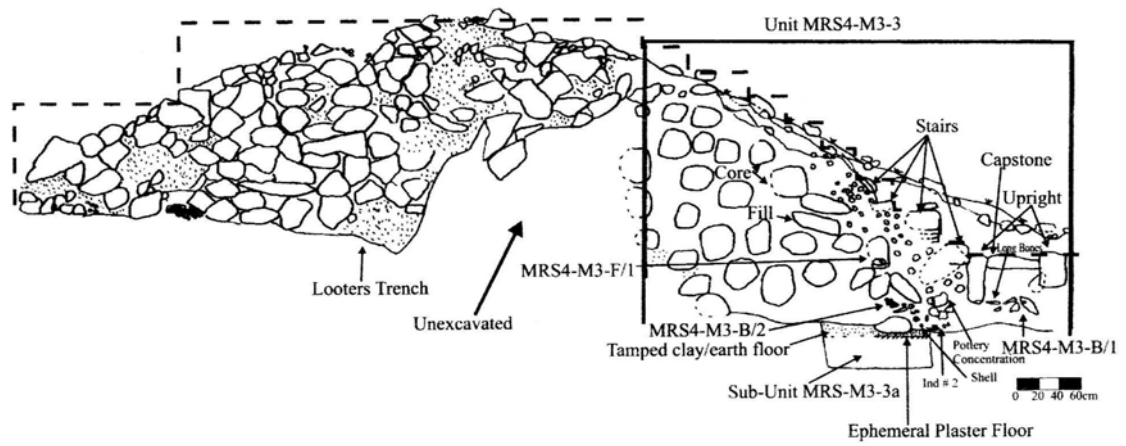


Figure 5.35: East-West running profile of MRS4-M3, facing south.

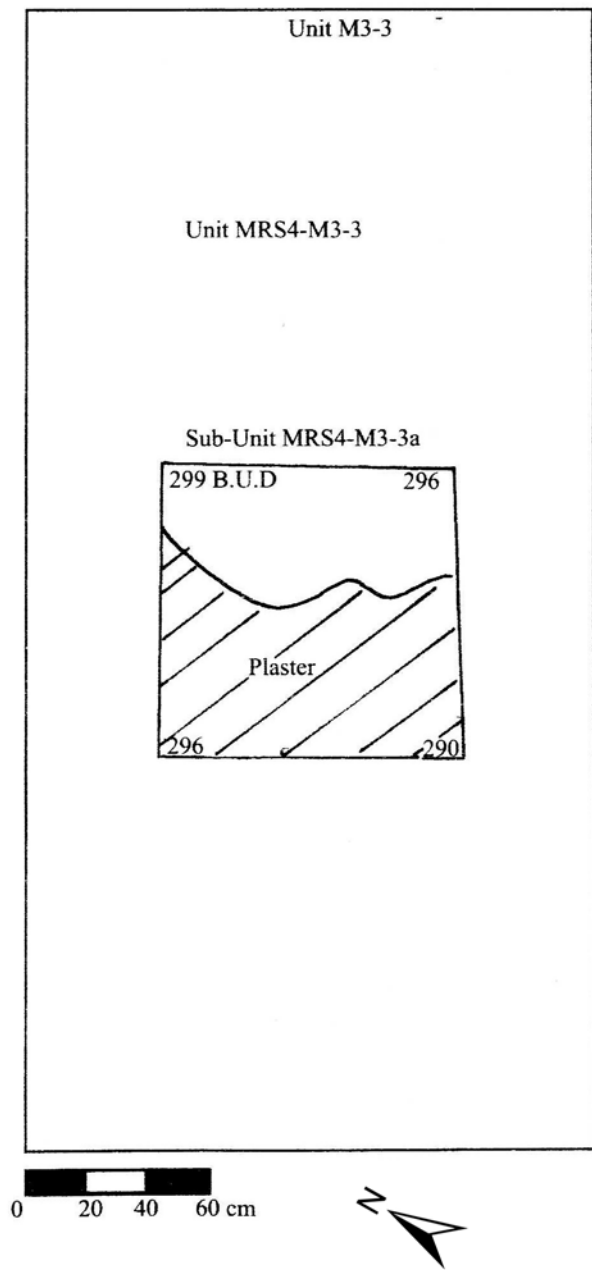


Figure 5.36: Top plan of MRS4-M3, MRS4-M3-3, Sub-Unit MRS4-M3-3a, Level 4.

Table 5.1: Artifacts recovered from Structure 3A, Unit 3A-1, Level 1a. The context for Level 1a is looter's backdirt, ceremonial (secondary).

Catalogue #	Artifact Category	Artifact Type	Raw Material	Ceramic Period
27/187-002:13	faunal	bulk lot	faunal	mixed
27/187-002:14	ceramic	bulk lot	ceramic	mixed
27/187-002:15	lithic	chipped stone thin biface	lithic	mixed
27/187-002:18	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:39	lithic	chipped stone blade	obsidian	mixed
27/187-002:40	lithic	chipped stone blade	obsidian	mixed
27/187-002:41	lithic	chipped stone blade	obsidian	mixed
27/187-002:42	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:43	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:44	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:45	lithic	groundstone metate (fragment)	granite	mixed
27/187-002:46	lithic	groundstone mano (fragment)	granite	mixed

Table 5.2: Artifacts recovered from Structure 3A, Unit 3A-1, Level 1b. The context for Level 1b is humus, ceremonial (secondary).

Catalogue #	Artifact Category	Artifact Type	Raw Material	Ceramic Period
27/187-002:47	ceramic	bulk lot	ceramic	mixed
27/187-002:48	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:52	faunal	shell tinkler	shell	mixed
27/187-002:53	lithic	bulk lot	lithic	mixed
27/187-002:54	lithic	chipped stone blade	obsidian	mixed
27/187-002:55	lithic	chipped stone blade	obsidian	mixed
27/187-002:56	lithic	chipped stone blade	obsidian	mixed
27/187-002:57	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:58	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:59	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:60	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:61	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:62	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:63	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:64	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:81	lithic	groundstone mano (fragment)	basalt	mixed
27/187-002:82	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:84	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:85	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:86	lithic	groundstone raw granite	granite	mixed
27/187-002:87	lithic	chipped stone thin biface	chert	mixed
27/187-002:88	faunal	bulk lot	faunal	mixed
27/187-002:129	lithic	groundstone pounding stone	granite	mixed
27/187-002:130	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:131	lithic	chipped stone blade	obsidian	mixed
27/187-002:132	lithic	chipped stone blade	obsidian	mixed
27/187-002:133	lithic	chipped stone blade	obsidian	mixed
27/187-002:134	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:135	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:412	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:815	lithic	chipped stone utilized flake	chalcedony	mixed
27/187-002:892	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed

Table 5.3: Artifacts recovered from Structure 3A, Unit 3A-1, Level 2. The context for Level 2 is slump, ceremonial (secondary).

Catalogue #	Artifact Category	Artifact Type	Raw Material	Ceramic Period
27/187-002:136	faunal	bulk lot	faunal	mixed
27/187-002:137-159	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:160	lithic	groundstone metate fragment	granite	mixed
27/187-002:199	lithic	bulk lot	lithic	mixed
27/187-002:200	lithic	groundstone mano fragment	granite	mixed
27/187-002:201	ceramic	bulk lot	ceramic	mixed
27/187-002:202-204	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:206-208	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:213	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:218	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:220	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:222-246	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:247	lithic	groundstone mano fragment	granite	mixed
27/187-002:248-274	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:275	lithic	chipped stone thin biface fragment	chert	mixed
27/187-002:276	lithic	groundstone mano fragment	granite	mixed
27/187-002:277	lithic	quartz massive	quartz	mixed
27/187-002:279	lithic	groundstone mano fragment	granite	mixed
27/187-002:280	lithic	groundstone metate fragment	granite	mixed
27/187-002:298-308	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:309	lithic	chipped stone blade	obsidian	mixed
27/187-002:310	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:311	lithic	chipped stone thin biface fragment	chert	mixed
27/187-002:312	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:341-347	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:349-360	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:365-371	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:394-397	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:403	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:592	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:803	lithic	chipped stone notched flake	chert	mixed
27/187-002:804	lithic	chipped stone thin biface	chert	mixed
27/187-002:819	lithic	chipped stone thin biface	chert	mixed

Table 5.4: Artifacts recovered from Structure 3A, Unit 3A-1, Level 3a. The context for Level 3a is construction fill without rubble, ceremonial (secondary).

Catalogue #	Artifact Category	Artifact Type	Raw Material	Ceramic Period
27/187-002:413	ceramic	bulk lot	ceramic	Late Classic
27/187-002:414	lithic	bulk lot	lithic	Late Classic
27/187-002:416-427	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	Late Classic
27/187-002:464-536	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	Late Classic
27/187-002:538-550	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	Late Classic
27/187-002:598	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	Late Classic
27/187-002:616	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	Late Classic
27/187-002:664	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	Late Classic

Table 5.5: Artifacts recovered from Structure 3a, Unit 3A-1, Level 3b. The context for Level 3b is floor fill, ceremonial (secondary).

Catalogue #	Artifact Category	Artifact Type	Raw Material	Ceramic Period
27/187-002:37	lithic	groundstone rubbing stone	basalt	Late Classic
27/187-002:432	ceramic	bulk lot	ceramic	Late Classic
27/187-002:460	lithic	bulk lot	lithic	Late Classic
27/187-002:463	lithic	groundstone grooved sphere	granite	Late Classic
27/187-002:537	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	Late Classic
27/187-002:551-575	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	Late Classic
27/187-002:576	lithic	chipped stone blade	obsidian	Late Classic
27/187-002:584	lithic	groundstone mano fragment	granite	Late Classic
27/187-002:585	lithic	quartz massive	quartz	Late Classic
27/187-002:586	lithic	groundstone grooved sphere	granite	Late Classic
27/187-002:587	lithic	bulk lot	slate	Late Classic
27/187-002:599	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	Late Classic
27/187-002:600	lithic	quartz crystal	quartz	Late Classic
27/187-002:617-629	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	Late Classic
27/187-002:631-636	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	Late Classic
27/187-002:383-385	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	Late Classic
27/187-002:971	lithic	chipped stone utilized flake	chert	Late Classic
27/187-002:972	lithic	chipped stone core	chert	Late Classic

Table 5.6: Artifacts recovered from Feature 3A-F/1. The context for Feature 3A-F/1 is offering, termination cache (occupation surface).

Catalogue #	Artifact Category	Artifact Type	Raw Material	Ceramic Period
27/187-002:278	ceramic	bulk lot	ceramic	Late Classic
27/187-002:613	lithic	bulk lot	lithic	Late Classic
27/187-002:614	lithic	groundstone mano fragment	granite	Late Classic
27/187-002:615	lithic	groundstone mano fragment	granite	Late Classic
27/187-002:638	lithic	bulk lot	slate	Late Classic
27/187-002:639	ceramic	vessel	ceramic	Late Classic

Table 5.7: Artifacts recovered from Feature 3A-F/2. The context for Feature 3A-F/2 is pitfall, ceremonial (secondary).

Catalogue #	Artifact Category	Artifact Type	Raw Material	Ceramic Period
27/187-002:719	ceramic	bulk lot	ceramic	Late Classic
27/187-002:734	lithic	bulk lot	slate	Late Classic
27/187-002:738	lithic	bulk lot	lithic	Late Classic

Table 5.8: Artifacts recovered from Structure 3A, Unit 3A-1, Level 4a. The context for Level 4a is floor fill, ceremonial (secondary).

Catalogue #	Artifact Category	Artifact Type	Raw Material	Ceramic Period
27/187-002:718	ceramic	bulk lot	ceramic	Late Classic
27/187-002:727	lithic	bulk lot	lithic	Late Classic
27/187-002:730	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	Late Classic
27/187-002:743	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	Late Classic
27/187-002:745	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	Late Classic
27/187-002:783	lithic	groundstone raw granite	granite	Late Classic

Table 5.9: Artifacts recovered from Structure 3A, Unit 3A-1a, Level 4b. The context for Level 4b is floor fill, ceremonial (secondary).

Catalogue #	Artifact Category	Artifact Type	Raw Material	Ceramic Period
27/187-002:790	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	Late Classic
27/187-002:800	lithic	chipped stone core	obsidian	Late Classic
27/187-002:801	lithic	bulk lot	lithic	Late Classic
27/187-002:802	ceramic	bulk lot	ceramic	Late Classic
27/187-002:816	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	Late Classic
27/187-002:818	lithic	groundstone mano fragment	granite	Late Classic
27/187-002:820	lithic	groundstone metate fragment	granite	Late Classic
27/187-002:821	lithic	groundstone metate fragment	granite	Late Classic
27/187-002:823-825	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	Late Classic
27/187-002:826	lithic	groundstone metate fragment	granite	Late Classic
27/187-002:827	other	plaster painted	plaster	Late Classic
27/187-002:841	lithic	quartz massive	quartz	Late Classic
27/187-002:855	other	plaster artifact	plaster	Late Classic
27/187-002:869-874	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	Late Classic

Table 5.10: Artifacts recovered from Feature 3A-F/3. The context for Feature 3A-F/3 is offering, dedicatory cache (axially aligned).

Catalogue #	Artifact Category	Artifact Type	Raw Material	Ceramic Period
27/187-002:791	lithic	chipped stone thin biface	chert	Late Classic
27/187-002:809	ceramic	bulk lot	ceramic	Late Classic
27/187-002:810	lithic	bulk lot	slate	Late Classic
27/187-002:811	lithic	chipped stone eccentric	chert	Late Classic
27/187-002:812	lithic	chipped stone eccentric	chert	Late Classic
27/187-002:813	lithic	chipped stone blade	obsidian	Late Classic
27/187-002:817	lithic	chipped stone blade	chert	Late Classic

Table 5.11: Artifacts recovered from Structure 3A, Unit 3A-1a, Level 5. The context for Level 5 is floor fill, ceremonial (secondary).

Catalogue #	Artifact Category	Artifact Type	Raw Material	Ceramic Period
27/187-002:843	faunal	bulk lot	faunal	Terminal Preclassic
27/187-002:844	lithic	bulk lot	lithic	Terminal Preclassic
27/187-002:845	ceramic	bulk lot	ceramic	Terminal Preclassic
27/187-002:846	lithic	quartz massive	quartz	Terminal Preclassic
27/187-002:854	lithic	quartz massive	quartz	Terminal Preclassic
27/187-002:859	other	plaster painted	plaster	Terminal Preclassic
27/187-002:878	lithic	quartz massive	quartz	Terminal Preclassic
27/187-002:883	lithic	groundstone mano fragment	granite	Terminal Preclassic
27/187-002:897	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	Terminal Preclassic

Table 5.12: Artifacts recovered from Feature 3A-F/4. The context for Feature 3A-F/4 is offering, dedicatory cache (axially aligned).

Catalogue #	Artifact Category	Artifact Type	Raw Material	Ceramic Period
27/187-002:881	lithic	bulk lot	lithic	Terminal Preclassic
27/187-002:882	ceramic	bulk lot	ceramic	Terminal Preclassic
27/187-002:884	ceramic	vessel	ceramic	Terminal Preclassic
27/187-002:885	human	bulk lot	human	Terminal Preclassic

Table 5.13: Artifacts recovered from Structure 3A, Unit 3A-1a, Level 6. The context for Level 6 is floor fill, ceremonial (secondary).

Catalogue #	Artifact Category	Artifact Type	Raw Material	Ceramic Period
27/187-002:913	ceramic	bulk lot	ceramic	Terminal Preclassic
27/187-002:956	faunal	bulk lot	faunal	Terminal Preclassic
27/187-002:977	lithic	bulk lot	lithic	Terminal Preclassic
27/187-002:978	lithic	groundstone mano fragment	granite	Terminal Preclassic
27/187-002:988	faunal	crab claws	crustacean	Terminal Preclassic
27/187-002:990	lithic	quartz crystal	quartz	Terminal Preclassic
27/187-002:1024	ceramic	perforated potsherd disk	ceramic	Terminal Preclassic

Table 5.14: Artifacts recovered from Structure 3A, Unit 3A-2, Level 1a. The context for Level 1a is looter's backdirt, ceremonial (secondary).

Catalogue #	Artifact Category	Artifact Type	Raw Material	Ceramic Period
27/187-002:1167	ceramic	bulk lot	ceramic	mixed
27/187-002:1172	human	bulk lot	human	mixed
27/187-002:1173	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:1191	lithic	bulk lot	lithic	mixed

Table 5.15: Artifacts recovered from Structure 3A, Unit 3A-2, Level 4c. The context for Level 4c is floor fill, ceremonial (secondary).

Catalogue #	Artifact Category	Artifact Type	Raw Material	Ceramic Period
27/187-002:1124	ceramic	bulk lot	ceramic	Late Classic
27/187-002:1171	lithic	chipped stone blade	chert	Late Classic
27/187-002:1179-1185	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	Late Classic
27/187-002:1186	lithic	bulk lot	lithic	Late Classic
27/187-002:1190	faunal	bulk lot	faunal	Late Classic
27/187-002:1192-1193	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	Late Classic
27/187-002:1716	lithic	groundstone bead	jadeite	Late Classic

Table 5.16: Artifacts recovered from Structure 3A, Unit 3A-3, Level 1a. The context for Level 1a is looter's backdirt, ceremonial (secondary).

Catalogue #	Artifact Category	Artifact Type	Raw Material	Ceramic Period
27/187-002:1176-1178	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:1187	ceramic	bulk lot	ceramic	mixed

Table 5.17: Artifacts recovered from Structure 3A, Unit 3A-3, Level 4c. The context for Level 4c is floor fill, ceremonial (secondary).

Catalogue #	Artifact Category	Artifact Type	Raw Material	Ceramic Period
27/187-002:1168	ceramic	bulk lot	ceramic	Late Classic

Table 5.18: Artifacts recovered from Structure 3A, Unit 3A-3, Level 4b. The context for Level 4b is floor fill, ceremonial (secondary).

Catalogue #	Artifact Category	Artifact Type	Raw Material	Ceramic Period
27/187-002:1166	ceramic	bulk lot	ceramic	Late Classic
27/187-002:1188	lithic	bulk lot	lithic	Late Classic

Table 5.19: Artifacts recovered from Burial 3A-B/1. The context for Burial 3A-B/1 is looter's backdirt, ceremonial (secondary).

Catalogue #	Artifact Category	Artifact Type	Raw Material	Ceramic Period
27/187-002:415	ceramic	bulk lot	ceramic	mixed
27/187-002:879	lithic	chipped stone thin biface	chert	mixed

Table 5.20: Artifacts recovered from Burial 3A-B/2. The context for Burial 3A-B/2 is a grave, unclassified (unknown).

Catalogue #	Artifact Category	Artifact Type	Raw Material	Ceramic Period
27/187-002:2	ceramic	bulk lot	ceramic	Late Classic

Table 5.21: Artifacts recovered from Structure 4A, Unit 4A-1, Level 1. The context for Level 1 is humus, ceremonial (secondary).

Catalogue #	Artifact Category	Artifact Type	Raw Material	Ceramic Period
27/187-002:1293	lithic	bulk lot	lithic	mixed
27/187-002:1294	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:1326	ceramic	bulk lot	ceramic	mixed
27/187-002:1328	lithic	groundstone mano frag	granite	mixed
27/187-002:1329-1330	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:1334-1335	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:1336	faunal	bulk lot	faunal	mixed
27/187-002:1337	lithic	quartz crystal	quartz	mixed

Table 5.22: Artifacts recovered from Structure 4A, Unit 4A-1, Level 2. The context for Level 2 is slump, ceremonial (secondary).

Catalogue #	Artifact Category	Artifact Type	Raw Material	Ceramic Period
27/187-002:1420	lithic	groundstone mano fragment	granite	mixed
27/187-002:1574	lithic	chipped stone blade	obsidian	mixed
27/187-002:1575	lithic	groundstone mano fragment	granite	mixed
27/187-002:1576	lithic	groundstone mano fragment	granite	mixed
27/187-002:1577-1579	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:1580	lithic	groundstone raw granite	granite	mixed
27/187-002:1581-1599	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:1600	lithic	groundstone bead	slate	mixed
27/187-002:1601-1602	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:1607	lithic	groundstone raw granite	granite	mixed
27/187-002:1608	lithic	groundstone mano fragment	granite	mixed
27/187-002:1609	ceramic	bulk lot	ceramic	mixed
27/187-002:1614	lithic	groundstone raw granite	granite	mixed
27/187-002:1615-1617	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:1697	lithic	bulk lot	lithic	mixed
27/187-002:1699	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed

Table 5.23: Artifacts recovered from Structure 4A, Unit 4A-1, Level 3. The context for Level 3 is construction fill with rubble, ceremonial (secondary).

Catalogue #	Artifact Category	Artifact Type	Raw Material	Ceramic Period
27/187-002:1392	lithic	chipped stone thick biface	chert	Late Classic
27/187-002:1603, 1707-1715, 1743-1781, 1785-1797, 1840-1847, 1889-1893, 1904, 1907, 1910	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	Late Classic
27/187-002:1698	lithic	quartz crystal	quartz	Late Classic
27/187-002:1717	ceramic	bulk lot	ceramic	Late Classic
27/187-002:1718, 1722, 1723, 1725, 1727-1729, 1782, 1783, 1852, 1897, 1911	lithic	groundstone mano fragment	granite	Late Classic
27/187-002:1719	lithic	chipped stone blade	obsidian	Late Classic
27/187-002:1720	lithic	chipped stone blade	obsidian	Late Classic
27/187-002:1721	lithic	groundstone grooved sphere	granite	Late Classic
27/187-002:1724	lithic	quartz massive	quartz	Late Classic
27/187-002:1726	lithic	groundstone raw granite	granite	Late Classic
27/187-002:1730	lithic	bulk lot	lithic	Late Classic
27/187-002:1734, 1896, 1898, 1908, 1909	lithic	groundstone metate fragment	granite	Late Classic
27/187-002:1784	lithic	groundstone raw granite	granite	Late Classic
27/187-002:1811	lithic	chipped stone blade	obsidian	Late Classic
27/187-002:1837	faunal	bulk lot	faunal	Late Classic
27/187-002:1838	lithic	chipped stone blade	obsidian	Late Classic
27/187-002:1849	ceramic	worked potsherd	ceramic	Late Classic
27/187-002:1886	lithic	chipped stone blade	obsidian	Late Classic
27/187-002:1894	lithic	groundstone pounding stone	quartz	Late Classic
27/187-002:1895	lithic	groundstone grooved sphere	granite	Late Classic
27/187-002:1903	lithic	chipped stone blade	obsidian	Late Classic
27/187-002:1905	lithic	chipped stone blade	obsidian	Late Classic
27/187-002:1906	lithic	chipped stone blade	obsidian	Late Classic

Table 5.24 : Artifacts recovered from Structure 4A, Unit 4A-1, Level 5. The context for Level 5 is construction fill with rubble, ceremonial (secondary).

Catalogue #	Artifact Category	Artifact Type	Raw Material	Ceramic Period
27/187-002:1864	ceramic	bulk lot	ceramic	Late Classic
27/187-002:1923	faunal	bulk lot	faunal	Late Classic
27/187-002:1924-1925	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	Late Classic
27/187-002:1926	lithic	bulk lot	lithic	Late Classic
27/187-002:1927	lithic	groundstone raw granite	granite	Late Classic

Table 5.25: Artifacts recovered from Structure 77S, Unit 77S-1, Level 1. The context for Level 1 is humus, ceremonial (secondary).

Catalogue #	Artifact Category	Artifact Type	Raw Material	Ceramic Period
27/187-002:2064	lithic	chipped stone thin biface fragment	chert	mixed
27/187-002:2065, 2066	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:2067	lithic	chipped stone thin biface fragment	chert	mixed
27/187-002:2068	lithic	groundstone metate fragment	granite	mixed
27/187-002:2071	ceramic	bulk lot	ceramic	mixed
27/187-002:2165	lithic	groundstone unclassified	sedimentary rock	mixed
27/187-002:2166	lithic	chipped stone utilized flake	chert	mixed
27/187-002:2167	lithic	chipped stone drill	chert	mixed

Table 5.26: Artifacts recovered from Structure 77S, Unit 77S-1, Level 2. The context for Level 2 is slump, ceremonial (secondary).

Catalogue #	Artifact Category	Artifact Type	Raw Material	Ceramic Period
27/187-002:2073	lithic	bulk lot	lithic	mixed
27/187-002:2074	faunal	bulk lot	faunal	mixed
27/187-002:2075	ceramic	bulk lot	ceramic	mixed
27/187-002:2076-2081	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:2082, 2083, 2171	lithic	quartz crystal	quartz	mixed
27/187-002:2084-2088	lithic	chipped stone blade	obsidian	mixed
27/187-002:2089	ceramic	perforated potsherd	ceramic	mixed
27/187-002:2090, 2092, 2093, 2097	lithic	groundstone metate fragment	granite	mixed
27/187-002:2091	lithic	speleothem	limestone	mixed
27/187-002:2140, 2160-2162, 2173-2175	lithic	chipped stone utilized flake	chert	mixed

Table 5.27: Artifacts recovered from Structure 77S, Unit 77S-1, Level 3a. The context for Level 3a is construction fill with rubble, ceremonial (secondary).

Catalogue #	Artifact Category	Artifact Type	Raw Material	Ceramic Period
27/187-002:2163	faunal	bulk lot	faunal	Late Classic
27/187-002:2164	ceramic	bulk lot	ceramic	Late Classic
27/187-002:2168	lithic	bulk lot	lithic	Late Classic
27/187-002:2170, 2205, 2331	lithic	chipped stone utilized flake	chert	Late Classic
27/187-002:2208, 2209, 2455	lithic	groundstone mano fragment	granite	Late Classic
27/187-002:2210	lithic	chipped stone thin biface fragment	chert	Late Classic
27/187-002:2253	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	Late Classic
27/187-002:2452, 2457	lithic	speleothem	limestone	Late Classic
27/187-002:2453, 2454	lithic	chipped stone blade	obsidian	Late Classic

Table 5.28: Artifacts recovered from Structure 77S, Unit 77S-1, Level 3b. The context for Level 3b is floor fill, ceremonial (secondary).

Catalogue #	Artifact Category	Artifact Type	Raw Material	Ceramic Period
27/187-002:2169	human	bulk lot	human	Late Classic
27/187-002:2206	faunal	drilled shell	shell	Late Classic
27/187-002:2243	lithic	bulk lot	lithic	Late Classic
27/187-002:2245	ceramic	bulk lot	ceramic	Late Classic
27/187-002:2346	ceramic	perforated potsherd	ceramic	Late Classic

Table 5.29: Artifacts recovered from Structure 77S, Unit 77S-2, Level 1. The context for Level 1 is humus, ceremonial (secondary).

Catalogue #	Artifact Category	Artifact Type	Raw Material	Ceramic Period
27/187-002:2214	ceramic	bulk lot	ceramic	mixed
27/187-002:2215	lithic	bulk lot	lithic	mixed

Table 5.30: Artifacts recovered from Structure 77S, Unit 77S-2, Level 2. The context for Level 2 is slump, ceremonial (secondary).

Catalogue #	Artifact Category	Artifact Type	Raw Material	Ceramic Period
27/187-002:2216	lithic	bulk lot	lithic	mixed
27/187-002:2217	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:2218	lithic	groundstone metate fragment	granite	mixed
27/187-002:2219	ceramic	bulk lot	ceramic	mixed

Table 5.31: Artifacts recovered from Structure 77S, Unit 77S-2, Level 3a. The context for Level 3a is construction fill with rubble, ceremonial (secondary).

Catalogue #	Artifact Category	Artifact Type	Raw Material	Ceramic Period
27/187-002:2244	ceramic	bulk lot	ceramic	Late Classic
27/187-002:2251	lithic	bulk lot	lithic	Late Classic
27/187-002:2252, 2271	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	Late Classic
27/187-002:2259	lithic	chipped stone utilized flake	chert	Late Classic

Table 5.32: Artifacts recovered from Structure 77S, Unit 77S-2, Level 3b. The context for Level 3b is floor fill, ceremonial (secondary).

Catalogue #	Artifact Category	Artifact Type	Raw Material	Ceramic Period
27/187-002:2272, 2273	lithic	chipped stone blade	obsidian	Late Classic
27/187-002:2532	ceramic	bulk lot	ceramic	Late Classic

Table 5.33: Artifacts recovered from Structure 77S, Burial 77S-B/1. The context for Burial 77S-B/1 is grave, crypt (simple).

Catalogue #	Artifact Category	Artifact Type	Raw Material	Ceramic Period
27/187-002:2213	human	bulk lot	human	Late Classic
27/187-002:2246? 2247?	lithic	bulk lot	lithic	Late Classic
27/187-002:2248	faunal	bulk lot	faunal	Late Classic
27/187-002:2249	ceramic	bulk lot	ceramic	Late Classic
27/187-002:2329	lithic	groundstone bead	jadeite	Late Classic
27/187-002:2330	lithic	chipped stone blade	obsidian	Late Classic
27/187-002:2339, 2340, 2342	lithic	chipped stone utilized flake	chert	Late Classic
27/187-002:2341	faunal	shell pendant	shell	Late Classic

Table 5.34: Artifacts recovered from Structure 77S, Burial 77S-B/2. The context for Burial 77S-B.2 is grave, crypt (elaborate).

Catalogue #	Artifact Category	Artifact Type	Raw Material	Ceramic Period
27/187-002:2456	ceramic	bulk lot	ceramic	Late Classic
27/187-002:2470	ceramic	partial vessel	ceramic	Late Classic
27/187-002:2471	ceramic	partial vessel	ceramic	
27/187-002:2472	lithic	bulk lot	lithic	Late Classic
27/187-002:2473	faunal	bulk lot	faunal	Late Classic
27/187-002:2474	human	bulk lot	human	Late Classic
27/187-002:2497, 2631	faunal	worked bone	bone	Late Classic
27/187-002:2498, 2634, 2641	faunal	shell adorno	shell	Late Classic
27/187-002:2499	lithic	chipped stone thin biface	chalcedony	Late Classic
27/187-002:2500	ceramic	vessel	ceramic	Late Classic
27/187-002:2509	ceramic	partial vessel	ceramic	Late Preclassic
27/187-002:2510	ceramic	partial vessel	ceramic	Late Classic
27/187-002:2511	faunal	shell adorno and shell pin	shell	Late Classic
27/187-002:2548	ceramic	partial vessel	ceramic	Late Classic
27/187-002:2628	lithic	groundstone raw granite	granite	Late Classic
27/187-002:2629, 2638, 2639, 2700, 2703	faunal	worked shell	shell	Late Classic
27/187-002:2630	faunal	bone pin	bone	Late Classic
27/187-002:2632	lithic	groundstone pendant	jadeite	Late Classic
27/187-002:2635, 2636, 2642	lithic	chipped stone blade	obsidian	Late Classic
27/187-002:2637	faunal	shell pin	shell	Late Classic
27/187-002:2640	lithic	groundstone bead	hematite	Late Classic
27/187-002:2643, 2644	faunal	shell bead	shell	Late Classic
27/187-002:2685	ceramic	partial vessel	ceramic	Late Classic
27/187-002:2686	ceramic	partial vessel	ceramic	Late Classic
27/187-002:2704	ceramic	partial vessel	ceramic	Late Classic
27/187-002:3067	faunal	cut shell	shell	Late Classic

Table 5.35: Artifacts recovered from Structure MRSR-M3, Unit MRS4-M3-3, Level 1. The context for Level 1 is humus, ceremonial (secondary).

Catalogue #	Artifact Category	Artifact Type	Raw Material	Ceramic Period
27/187-002:2851	ceramic	bulk lot	ceramic	mixed
27/187-002:2852	lithic	bulk lot	lithic	mixed
27/187-002:2853, 2856, 2866	ceramic	perforated potsherd disk	ceramic	mixed
27/187-002:2854	faunal	bulk lot	faunal	mixed
27/187-003:2855	lithic	speleothem	limestone	mixed
27/187-002:2867	ceramic	figurine	ceramic	mixed
27/187-002:2875	lithic	groundstone rubbing stone	river cobble	mixed

Table 5.36: Artifacts recovered from Structure MRS4-M3, Unit MRS4-M3-3, Level 2. The context for Level 2 is slump, ceremonial (secondary).

Catalogue #	Artifact Category	Artifact Type	Raw Material	Ceramic Period
27/187-002:2876	ceramic	bulk lot	ceramic	mixed
27/187-002:2877	lithic	bulk lot	lithic	mixed
27/187-002:2918, 2981, 2982, 3008	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	mixed
27/187-002:2921	lithic	groundstone mano fragment	granite	mixed
27/187-002:2922, 2924, 2925, 2926, 2927, 2928, 2929	lithic	chipped stone blade	obsidian	mixed
27/187-002:2923	faunal	bulk lot	faunal	mixed

Table 5.37: Artifacts recovered from Structure MRS4-M3, Burial MRS4-M3-B/1. The context for Burial MRS4-M3-B/1 is grave, crypt (simple).

Catalogue #	Artifact Category	Artifact Type	Raw Material	Ceramic Period
27/187-002:3022	human	bulk lot	human	
27/187-002:3023	ceramic	bulk lot	ceramic	
27/187-002:3024	lithic	bulk lot	lithic	
27/187-002:3025	faunal	bulk lot	faunal	
27/187-002:3069	lithic	chipped stone blade	obsidian	
27/187-002:3093	lithic	quartz crystal	quartz	
27/187-002:3094, 3095	faunal	shell adorno	shell	
27/187-002:3098	human	bulk lot	human	

Table 5.38: Artifacts recovered from Structure MRS4-M3, Unit MRS4-M3-3, Level 3a. The context for Level 3a is floor fill, ceremonial (secondary).

Catalogue #	Artifact Category	Artifact Type	Raw Material	Ceramic Period
27/187-002:3003	ceramic	bulk lot	ceramic	
27/187-002:3004	lithic	bulk lot	lithic	
27/187-002:3005	human	bulk lot	human	
27/187-002:3007	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	
27/187-002:3009	lithic	chipped stone blade	obsidian	
27/187-002:3010	faunal	bulk lot	faunal	
27/187-002:3068	lithic	quartz crystal	quartz	
27/187-002:3090	lithic	chipped stone utilized flake	obsidian	

Table 5.39: Artifacts recovered from Structure MRS4-M3, Unit MRS4-M3-3, Level 3b. The context for Level 3b is construction fill with rubble, ceremonial (secondary).

Catalogue #	Artifact Category	Artifact Type	Raw Material	Ceramic Period
27/187-002:3091	lithic	bulk lot	lithic	
27/187-002:3092	faunal	bulk lot	faunal	
27/187-002:3096, 3139, 3238	lithic	groundstone raw slate	slate	
27/187-002:3097, 3128, 3140, 3141, 3142, 3143, 3144, 3163	lithic	chipped stone blade	obsidian	
27/187-002:3137	human	bulk lot	human	
27/187-002:3138	faunal	cut shell	shell	
27/187-002:3145	lithic	groundstone mano fragment	granite	

Table 5.40: Artifacts recovered from Structure MRS4-M3, Feature MRS4-M3-F/1. The context for Feature MRS4-M3-F/1 is offering, dedicatory cache (axially aligned).

Catalogue #	Artifact Category	Artifact Type	Raw Material	Ceramic Period
27/187-002:3129	ceramic	vessel	ceramic	
27/187-002:3130	ceramic	vessel	ceramic	
27/187-002:3131	human	bulk lot	human	
27/187-002:3240	ceramic	partial vessel	ceramic	Middle Classic

VI

Comparative Regional Perspectives

The research site for this dissertation is Minanha, located in the north Vaca Plateau region of west-central Belize. Although the research conducted at Minanha provides original data that bear on the question of the relationship between ritual practice and society, they are limited in temporal range and statistically do not compose a large sample. The majority of the excavated materials from Minanha date to the Late and Terminal Classic periods, although there are sparse data that pertain to the Late Preclassic and Early Classic periods. Because of this, as well as the need to look at the research question within a broader regional perspective, ritual and mortuary data from other sites in the Lowlands, in areas proximal to Minanha geographically, are presented in a comparative fashion over as broad a temporal range as possible. There is a particularly rich history of research in areas nearby Minanha, especially the Belize Valley to the northeast, the region surrounding the major center of Caracol to the south, and the sites of the southeast Petén to the southwest (Figure 6.1). The compilation of this data facilitates the synthesis of regional patterns pertaining to ritual and mortuary practices, and a more complete picture for interpretative generalization than a single-site analysis alone could accomplish. Because of the prevalence of multiple burials (more than one individual in a single grave context) at Minanha, the presence and frequency of multiple burials is noted for all of the interments compiled in the mortuary database. This reveals specific regional patterning in the frequency of this variation of mortuary practice.

Mortuary data from published sources is tabulated to form the comparative data sample for the Minanha materials. Minimally, a mortuary event had to have been given a temporal assignation by its excavators to be included in this sample. In addition, it was minimally necessary for information on grave type and the number of individuals interred in order for the data to be included in this sample. Where possible, information on associated grave goods and caches, as well as information on body position and orientation, demographics (age and sex), cultural modification, and paleopathology were also noted. The sample, therefore, does not represent the total number of burials and caches containing human remains that have been excavated in the areas adjacent to Minanha, but it does contain as many of these mortuary data as possible, providing the three criteria of inclusion in the sample were met (date, grave type, number of individuals), and that these data were available in published form. The published sources from which the data were gathered are primarily represented by *informes* or non peer-reviewed, yearly field reports submitted to the governments of Belize and Guatemala. More traditional published sources from edited volumes and journals were also used, sometimes serving as a verification of the data reported in the gray literature.

The comparative sample discussed in this chapter comes from reported excavations at 39 surface sites and 5 caves in the eastern lowlands, and represents the interment of between 1,040 and 1,115 individuals in 677 distinct burials (Table 6.1). These burials were found in three distinct locations, the southeast Petén, the Belize Valley, and the Vaca Plateau (Figures 6.2, 6.3, and 6.4). Of these, 48 date to the Preclassic Period, 51 to the Early Classic, 12 from the Early to Late Classic, 504 to the

Late Classic, 60 to the Terminal Classic, one to the Postclassic, and one to the historic period. A more detailed description of these mortuary remains follows.

The Southeast Petén Region

The southeastern Petén region is characterized by both mountainous and savannah terrain. The entire area is crosscut by numerous rivers including the Chiquibul, Mopán, Salsipuedes, Sacúl, Xaan, Poxté, Machaquilá, and the Río San Juan. These rivers all originate in the western portion of the Maya Mountains. Of particular importance to this research is the Río Mopán, beginning near Dolores, Petén. The Salsipuedes and the Chiquibul rivers feed into the Mopán in Guatemala upstream from where it joins with the Macal and becomes the Belize River in Belize. Numerous sites exist all along the waterways of the region, as well as in the interfluvial valleys. Laporte and Mejía (2000) interpret the dense sites in the eastern Petén as indicating the existence of approximately 43 segmentary states, or autonomous entities, based on a hexagonal distance model, with medium sized sites as the regional center of each. For the research reported here, mortuary data were collected and tabulated from 22 sites in 15 of these political regions located along the Mopán, Salsipuedes, Poxté, and Río San Juan, as well as the interfluvial region between the Poxté, San Juan, and Mopán. A total of 213 burials containing the remains of 253 individuals dating from the Late Preclassic through Terminal Classic periods are discussed. The data are organized according to geographic region rather than by specific site for the southeastern Petén, as these correspond to the analytical units of analysis employed by Juan Pedro Laporte and the other excavators who work in this area.

The upper Río Mopán valley sites include Ixtontón, Moquena, and Ixac from the Ixtontón polity, Ixkún and El Tzic from the Ixkún polity, Ixcól and Sukché from the Ixcól polity, and the site of Sacúl, the center of the Sacúl polity. The middle Río Mopán valley sites include Calzada Mopán, and Yaltutu from the Ucanal polity. The Río Salsipuedes region includes data from the site of El Chilonché, the center of the El Chilonché polity. The interfluvial area between the Poxté, San Juan and Mopán rivers is represented by the sites of Ixek and Tesík of the Ixek polity. The Poxté River Valley sites include Ixtutz and El Chapayal of the Ixtutz polity, Curucuítz and Ixcoxol of the Curucuítz polity, and Pueblito of the Pueblito polity. Finally, the Río San Juan valley sites include the sites that are the namesakes of the following four polities; La Puente, Copojá, El Ocote, and El Chal.

The Upper Río Mopán valley

The upper Río Mopán valley, located at the source of the Mopán river, is a mountainous area in the northern part of the Dolores-Poptún plateau. The sociopolitical organization of the area is characterized by several hierarchically organized political entities: Ixtontón in the east, Ixcól in the center, Curucuítz in the west, and Ixkún in the north (Laporte and Mejía 2000:198). The area is physically distinguished by steep slopes rising 650 m above sea level, as well as lower hills occupied by numerous smaller sites (Laporte and Mejía 2000:198). The mortuary data recovered from sites in this area include 122 burials, representing the interment of 138 individuals (Diaz et al. 1996; Laporte 1996; Laporte and Alvarado 1997; Laporte et al. 1997; Laporte et al. 2003; Laporte et al. 2004; Laporte and Ramos 1998; Laporte, Rivera et al. 2003; Reyes and Laporte 2004; Tiesler Blos 1996). There are four Late Preclassic burials, five Early Classic burials, 72 Late Classic burials, and 41 Terminal Classic burials.

The Preclassic burials are from a variety of grave types in residential and peripheral areas of the upper Mopán valley sites, a cist (n=1), a simple grave (n=1), and chultun contexts (n=2). Both chultun burials and the cist grave contain multiple interments, whereas the simple grave represents a single individual interment. Of the nine individuals in these Late Preclassic burials, two were adults, two were infants, and five were indeterminate with respect to age. One of the adults was male but sex could not be determined for the rest. The body positions of the Late Preclassic individuals included extended supine (n=2), flexed seated (n=2), lateral flexed (n=1), flexed (n=1), and indeterminate (n=3) positions (Laporte 1996; Reyes and Laporte 2004; Tiesler Blos 1996).

The Early Classic burials of eight individuals from the upper Mopán valley sites were located in site core funerary architecture and peripheral residential structures in cist (n=2), grave (n=2), and chultun (n=1) contexts. A grave and a cist burial were both multiple interments. The individuals were found in both flexed (n=1), extended (n=3), and indeterminate (n=4) positions. There were four adults, one subadult, and three individuals of indeterminate age (Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996).

There are many more Late Classic burials (n=72) from the upper Mopán valley sites than from the earlier time periods. There are burials from the centers of sites, as well as from peripheral residential zones. Burials were found within architectural structures as well as within and beneath plaza floors. The burials were from formal chambers (n=3), cists (n=47), simple graves (n=8), in fill (n=6), chultun (n=1), looted (n=5), and unknown (n=2) contexts. The most common grave type in the Late Classic is the cist grave, which comprises 65 percent of the sample. Of the 72 graves, five contained the remains of more

than one individual. These multiple interments were in cist (n=3), simple grave (n=1), and chultun (n=1) contexts. The 78 individuals were found in extended (n=46), flexed (n=5), and unknown or disturbed (n=27) positions. The remains represented adults (n=44), subadults or infants (n=10), and age indeterminate (n=24) individuals. There are 19 adult males, 16 adult females, and 43 individuals of unknown sex (Laporte 1996; Laporte et al. 1997; Laporte et al. 2003; Laporte and Ramos 1998; Laporte, Rivera et al. 2003; Reyes and Laporte 2004; Tiesler Blos 1996).

The 41 Terminal Classic burials from the upper Mopán valley sites are mostly from residential contexts (80 percent), but several (20 percent) are from site center contexts. The burials were from formal chambers (n=1), cists (n=20), simple graves (n=13), fill (n=3), within a pottery vessel (n=1), and looted or unknown (n=3) contexts. It is noteworthy that nearly half (49 percent) of the sample comes from cist type graves. Of the 41 burials, two (one cists, one grave) contained more than a single individual, making the total number of individuals from the Terminal Classic burials equal to 43. The 43 individuals were found in extended (n=28), flexed (n=3), in an urn (n=1), and in indeterminate (n=10) positions. There were adults (n=34), subadults (n=3), infants (n=3), and individuals of unknown age (n=3) in the sample. Adult males (n=12), adult females (n=11), subadult males (n=2), subadult females (n=1), and individuals indeterminate with respect to sex (n=17) were identified (Diaz et al. 1996; Laporte 1996; Laporte et al. 1997; Laporte et al. 2004; Laporte and Ramos 1998; Tiesler Blos 1996).

The Middle Río Mopán Valley

The next region of the southeastern Petén included in this sample is the middle Río Mopán valley, downstream from the sites discussed in the previous section. The

middle Río Mopán valley begins approximately 12 km downstream and to the north of the Upper Mopán River Valley where the river becomes navigable (Laporte and Mejía 2000:94). The territory of the middle Río Mopán valley is 400 km² in area and located between the Río Salsipuedes valley to the west and the Río Chiquibul valley to the east, with numerous sites located at the higher elevations (Laporte and Mejía 2000:94). The altitude of the area is between 260 and 300 m above sea level. It is a prime area for agriculture because it is rich with fertile alluvial soil, and has a climate characterized by humid savannah and a tropical forest environment (Laporte and Mejía 2000:94). The mortuary data includes 10 burials with 24 individuals interred within them (Aguirre 2001; Mejía 2001; Laporte 1996; Laporte et al. 2001; Tiesler Blos 1996). The burials are from the Late Preclassic (n=1), Late Classic (n=5), and Terminal Classic (n=4) periods.

The Preclassic burial is a cist burial from the site center of Yaltutu in the Ucanal polity. The cist contains the remains of seven adult individuals, of which three are male, two are female, and two are of unknown sex. The positions of the individuals are unknown because the cist had been disturbed prior to excavation (Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996).

The five Late Classic burials were found in plaza floor fill (n=2), in the center of a plaza floor (n=1), and in cist contexts (n=2). They contained the remains of 13 individuals. Two of the interments are multiple burials. One contains the remains of seven individuals in the plaza floor beneath structural stairs. The other is a cist containing three individuals. The skeletons were recovered in a variety of body positions including extended (n=1), seated (n=1), lateral flexed (n=1), and indeterminate (n=10). The 13 individuals include three adults, two infants, and eight age indeterminate

skeletons. Of the adults, one is male and two are of undetermined sex (Aguirre 2001; Mejía 2001; Laporte 1996; Laporte et al. 2001; Tiesler Blos 1996).

There are four Terminal Classic burials from the middle Río Mopán valley region. These contain the remains of four individuals and are all single-person interments. All of these interments are from either structural fill (n=3) or floor fill (n=1) contexts. All of the individuals were in the extended, supine position (n=4). One is adult and three died at an unknown age (Aguirre 2001; Laporte et al. 2001).

The Río Salsipuedes Region

The Río Salsipuedes is a tributary of the western half of the system that downstream becomes the Río Mopán region. It is west of the middle Río Mopán valley. The region is characterized as a wet savannah, although the upper area of the river valley reaches up to 400 m above sea level (Laporte and Mejía 2000:79). Archaeological sites in the region are mostly located in high areas, above the wet marshy areas in the lower elevations (Laporte and Mejía 2000:79). For this analysis, mortuary data was collected from the site of Chilonché, and includes two Late Classic single individual interments, one Terminal Classic single individual interment, and one Terminal Classic finger cache, containing the digits of multiple individuals (Quezada et al. 1997; Chocón 1997).

The Late Classic burials include a simple grave containing the head of an individual of unknown age and sex, and an on-floor deposit of a single individual of undetermined age and sex. Both were from residential contexts (Quezada et al. 1997). The Terminal Classic burial is from the site center and is an on-floor interment of a single age and sex indeterminate individual (Quezada et al. 1997). There is also a special deposit in the center of one of the residential plazas that contained numerous human

phalanges dating to the Terminal Classic (Chocón 1997). This is interesting simply because of the prevalence of human phalanges in ritual contexts in this portion of the Maya Lowlands.

Interfluvial Area

The interfluvial area is located in an area of steep terrain between the Ríos Poxté, San Juan and Mopán. The area is characterized by broken terrain, with small, dispersed sites across the landscape, which themselves have smaller affiliated sites in their peripheries (Laporte and Mejía 2000:161). Mortuary data was collected from the sites of Ixek and Tesík from the interfluvial area, and represent 20 single person interments dating to the Late Preclassic (n=1), the Early Classic (n=2), the Late Classic (n=16), and the Terminal Classic (n=1) periods (Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996). It is noteworthy that there were no multiple burials represented in the sample from the interfluvial area.

The Preclassic burial is a cist burial containing the extended, supine remains of a single adult individual from a residential zone of Ixek (Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996).

One of the Early Classic burials is also a cist burial containing the extended, supine remains of a single subadult individual from a residential area of Ixek. The other burial dating to this time period is a simple grave from the center of Ixek. It contains the extended, supine remains of a single, male, and adult individual (Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996).

The Late Classic burials were found in cists (n=11), a chultun (n=1), a simple grave (n=1), on a structure (n=1), and in unknown (n=2) contexts. The majority of these were from residential areas of Ixek and Tesík (n=15), whereas only a single interment came from the center of Ixek. Most of the individuals were in the extended, supine

position (n=10). Several had been disturbed so that their body position could not be determined (n=6). There are adults (n=14), a subadult (n=1), and individuals of indeterminate age (n=1) in the sample. Five of the adults are female, four of the adults and the single subadult are male, and six of the individuals are of unknown sex (Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996).

The Terminal Classic burial comes from the center of Tesík. It is a cist burial containing the extended, supine remains of a single adult, female individual (Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996).

The Río Poxté valley

The east-west running Río Poxté converges with the Río San Juan, eventually flowing into the Machaquilá system in the western part of the southeast Petén, after going through some underground karst passages. Three major sites are found in the Poxté region: Ixtutz and Curucuítz in the upper Poxté area, and Pueblito in the lower Poxté area. The sites in the upper Poxté region seem to have a closer affiliation with those sites in the nearby upper Río Mopán region (Laporte and Mejía 2000:176). There were 46 burials recorded from five sites in the Río Poxté valley representing the interment of 51 individuals dating to the Preclassic (n=1), Early Classic (n=2), Late Classic (n=40), and Terminal Classic (n=3) times. Of these, four burials held multiple individuals (Chocón and Laporte 2004; Laporte 1996; Laporte and Alvarado 1997; Tiesler Blos 1996).

The Preclassic burial is a cist burial from a residential area at the site of Curucuítz. The cist contained the remains of a female subadult, and an infant (Laporte 1996; Laporte and Alvarado 1997; Tiesler Blos 1996).

The Early Classic burials from the Río Poxté valley region are in the form of simple grave (n=1) and chultun (n=1) interments. The simple grave is a multiple individual interment containing two adults (one of whom is male) and one male subadult. Both of the adults were found in an extended body position. The chultun contained the remains of a single individual of unknown age and sex (Laporte 1996; Laporte and Alvarado 1997; Tiesler Blos 1996).

The 40 Late Classic burials from the Río Poxté valley region contained 42 individuals. They can be classified as cists (n=31), simple graves (n=7), and disturbed or looted contexts (n=2). Two of the cist graves housed multiple individuals. The individuals were found in an extended body position (n=30, or 71 percent). The majority of the extended individuals were placed supine (n=19, or 63 percent of those in an extended position). There were also three flexed individuals, one seated, and eight individuals placed in unknown positions. There were 25 adults, seven subadults and infants, and 10 individuals of unknown age. There were 10 males, 10 females, and 22 individuals of unknown sex (Chocón and Laporte 2004; Laporte 1996; Laporte and Alvarado 1997; Tiesler Blos 1996). Perhaps most noteworthy about the Late Classic burials is their startling amount of patterned regularity. Fully 78 percent of the grave types consisted of cists, 71 percent of the individuals were in an extended body position, with 63 percent of those additionally in the face-up or supine position.

The three Terminal Classic burials from the Río Poxté region were all single individual interments in cist graves. The individuals are all adults (one male, one female, one sex indeterminate) and all are positioned in the extended, supine body position (Laporte 1996; Laporte and Alvarado 1997; Tiesler Blos 1996).

Upper Río San Juan Valley

The Río San Juan valley is a geographically diverse area upslope from the Pasión and Usumacinta rivers, to the southwest of the middle Río Mopán valley. The area contains mixed flora, including rainforest, and low areas of the valley are completely inundated with water during the rainy season. Settlement, therefore, is concentrated on higher hilltops. The area is thought to be integral to ancient Maya east-west trade and communication routes linking the Caribbean Sea to the Río Usumacinta basin (Laporte and Mejía 2000:128). Twelve burials with 17 interred individuals are recorded for the sites of La Puente, Copojá, El Ocote, and El Chal, including two Late Preclassic, four Late Classic, and six Terminal Classic interments (Laporte 1996; Morales 1996; Roldán 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996). Of these 12 burials, three held multiple individuals.

Both Late Preclassic interments were simple graves. One of these was found beneath a floor. One burial contained the remains of multiple individuals (n=3), all infants, whereas the other contained the remains of a single, sub-adult individual. In both graves, an extended, supine body position was noted (Laporte 1996; Roldán 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996).

The Late Classic interments include two cist burials, a grave in plaza fill, and a looted burial. These burials were found at La Puente, El Ocote and El Chal. The looted burial contained the remains of two adults: one male and one female (Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996). The grave located in plaza floor fill at El Ocote also contained the remains of multiple individuals: one adult male, one adult female, and an infant. The adult male was found in a flexed position, whereas the female adult and infant consisted of cranial elements (Laporte 1996; Morales 1996, Tiesler Blos 1996). The two cist burials

from El Chal each contained the remains of a single adult woman. Both were found in an extended, supine, head-to-the-north orientation (Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996).

Six single-individual interments date to the Terminal Classic in the upper Río San Juan valley region. Two interments were found in plaza fill, and four interments from disturbed midden contexts. In all of these cases, body position was indeterminate. The remains in these six graves consist of at least five adults, three of whom are identified as males (Laporte 1996; Morales 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996).

Mortuary Trends in the Southeast Petén Region

Although the southeastern Petén is a large region encompassing numerous different waterways and several distinct ecological zones, it is characterized by a surprising uniformity of mortuary patterns. The compilation of mortuary data from the six sub-regions including the upper and middle Río Mopán, the Río Salsipuedes, the Río Poxté, the upper Río San Juan, and the interfluvial region show particular commonalities. The 213 known burials from these regions contained 253 individuals. Of these, nine date to the Preclassic, nine to the Early Classic, 139 to the Late Classic, and 56 to the Terminal Classic period. The reasons for this distribution of burials include: greater population density in later time periods, differential preservation, and the nature of ancient Maya building practices.

For all time periods, the most common burial context in southeast Petén was the cist. Fully 58 percent of the burials are classified as this grave type. Cist graves are relatively simple and require less labor and fewer resources to construct than other more elaborate grave types. Cist burials are defined as an “outlined grave consisting of stone lining on at least one of its sidewalls, cap or floor, but rarely, if ever, being completely

lined with stone” (Welsh 1988:17). The use of the term cist amongst the southeast Petén researchers is in line with the Welsh definition because they define a cist as a grave with a formal roof.

The second most common interment form in the southeast Petén data is the simple grave, with 18 percent of the burials classified as this grave type. Simple graves are less elaborate than cists. They are delineated burial spaces that contain neither formal roofs of stone nor stone-lined sidewalls (Welsh 1988:16). In comparison to cists, simple graves require a relatively lower level of energy and resource expenditure.

The third most common grave type in the southeast Petén sample is burials in fill, comprising 8 percent of the total burials. Fill burials are characterized by interments placed directly in the fill of structures or floors, without any special chamber constructed to protect the interred individuals. This grave type requires no special preparation and is even less costly in labor and resources than either cist or simple grave burials. Fill burials are often considered to be low status because of the fact that the individual is interred with construction material on and around him, with no air space between the person and the surroundings (Welsh 1988).

The most elaborate grave form seen in the southeast Petén sample is the formal chamber (4 percent). These are typically formal crypts of either simple or elaborate construction, with stone-lined walls and formal stone roofs (Welsh 1988:18). The construction of this type of grave necessitates a greater investment in labor and resources, and typically contains the remains of relatively high status individuals. Some also may contain low status retainers. The examples of chamber graves from the southeast Petén include four Late and Terminal Classic period interments from the upper Río Mopán

valley sites of Ixac and Ixtontón. These are in residential (n=3) and ritual (n=1) funerary contexts. It is interesting to note that a single individual was interred in each of these chambers. In similarly elaborate grave types in the Vaca Plateau region, it is common for these graves to house the remains of multiple individuals.

Several grave types represented in the sample comprised only a small percentage of the total represented types. These include chultun burials (3 percent), burials in middens or deposits within refuse deposits (2 percent), on-floor (1 percent) and on-structure burials (1 percent), within pottery burials (less than 1 percent), and unknown grave forms due to looting activity (7 percent).

The body position of the interred is a mortuary characteristic that is held as an indicator of microregional ritual and religious custom and practice, as well as a declaration of the status of the interred (Binford 1971; Saxe 1971). The body position of interments in the southeast Petén region also reflects interesting patterns. The body position could be determined for 152 of the 253 individuals. Fully 86 percent (n=130) of the individuals whose position could be determined were buried in an extended position. Seventeen individuals (11 percent) were buried in a flexed position, and five (3 percent) in a seated position. Clearly, the extended body position occurs at a significantly high rate in the southeast Petén. Of the 130 individuals found in an extended position, at least 100 (77 percent of extended individuals) were additionally noted to be in a supine position. Furthermore, many of these extended, supine individuals were found with their heads oriented north (n=23) or east (n=21). So, although not an exclusive pattern, the data shows a strong preference for individual body position to be in the extended, supine, head to the north or east orientation.

It is important to compare the frequency of multiple interments in the southeast Petén to those found in the Vaca Plateau. Because of the high frequency of multiple interments in the Vaca Plateau sample, one would expect to see a similar high occurrence of multiple burials in the southeast Petén region because of their close geographic proximity. What is most interesting therefore, is the very low occurrence of multiple interments in the sample from the southeast Petén. In fact for all time periods, only 22 of the 213 recorded burials were multiples, representing only 10 percent of the total sample (Figure 6.5). The sample breaks down to six multiple burials in the Preclassic, three in the Early Classic, 11 in the Late Classic, and two in the Terminal Classic. Of these, 50 percent were recovered in cist graves, 26 percent in simple graves, 14 percent in chultunob, and 5 percent each in floor fill and unknown/looted contexts.

The Belize Valley Region

The Belize Valley region has an abundance of sites situated along the course of the Belize River in western Belize. The Belize Valley can be divided into two general zones, an area of steep hills and slopes west of the convergence of the Macal and Mopán rivers known as the Upper Belize River Valley, and the agriculturally rich valley bottom sites to the east of the river convergence, known as the central Belize Valley (Chase and Garber 2004:1). The predominant settlement pattern in this rich alluvial valley along the Belize river is one of small and medium sized centers. Political organization is thought to be characterized by relatively autonomous centers throughout most of the Classic period, without a clear higher order center as the focal point of political integration for the valley

(Chase 2004:345). These sites, examples of a rather de-centralized political zone, have been the focus of numerous archaeological investigations over the last half century. Included in these investigations have been excavations of numerous ritual and mortuary contexts from the Preclassic through Postclassic that will serve as the comparative data for this study. The sites along the central Belize River area that are included in this analysis of mortuary remains include Baking Pot, Barton Ramie, Esperanza, Blackman Eddy, and Ontario. Although the sites of Pook's Hill and Cahal Uitz Na are not along the Belize River, but rather, are in the adjacent Roaring Creek Valley at the eastern edge of the Belize Valley sites proper, they are also included in this section of the analysis. The Upper Belize Valley sites included in this analysis of mortuary remains include the following sites along the Macal River: Cahal Pech, X-ual-Canil, and Chaa Creek. Numerous caves in both the Roaring Creek Valley and the Upper Belize Valley region have also yielded data regarding mortuary practices, these include the following caves: Actun Tunichil Muknal, Actun Uayazba Kab, Actun Nak Beh, Barton Creek Cave, Actun Halal, and Actun Yaxteel Ahau. The data presented here comes from 228 grave contexts, and include the remains of at least 290 individuals. If the phalanges and teeth of one special deposit at Cahal Pech are included, the number of individuals represented in these mortuary contexts increases to between 299 and 374. The interpretive difficulties associated with this special deposit are discussed later in the section on Cahal Pech.

Baking Pot

Located immediately proximal to the Belize River, the site of Baking Pot is a medium sized center in the central Belize Valley situated to take advantage of the rich alluvial soils along the river. The site itself is comparable in size and site layout to Cahal

Pech, and has its own associated minor centers within its immediate periphery. The most obvious difference between Baking Pot and Cahal Pech is that Baking Pot is located in the valley bottom, whereas Cahal Pech is on a high hill above the Macal River.

Publications on the earliest scientific excavations at the site reveal ritual deposits that span from the Preclassic to the Postclassic period (Bullard and Bullard 1965; Ricketson 1931; Willey et al. 1965). More recent excavations at Baking Pot have found Early Classic caches and burials within the Baking Pot site center in Structure E and in the Bedran group, as well as evidence of Late Classic burials and ritual activity in the peripheral groups of Atalaya, Bedran, and North Caracol Farms. The mortuary data collected here include 30 burials housing 39 individuals. There are three Early Classic burials, and 27 Late Classic burials (Aimers 1997, 2003; Audet 2003; Conlon 1993; Conlon and Powis 2004; Conlon et al. 1994; Golden and Conlon 1996; Moore 1997; Piehl 1997, 1999; Powis 1993b).

The Early Classic burials at Baking Pot include one elaborate crypt and two cists. The elaborate crypt from Structure G at the site contains the remains of a single adult individual in the extended, prone, head to the south body position (Ricketson 1931). The two cist graves are from in front of Structure E in the site core. Each contains the remains of a single, adult individual, one male, and one female. Both were found in the extended, supine, head-to-the-south body position (Piehl 1997; Aimers 1997).

The 27 Late Classic contexts that contain human remains at the site include 26 burials and one cache found near a *stela* monument. Together, there are 36 individuals within these contexts, with the majority of the contexts housing the remains of a single individual. The cache, one of the simple graves, and two burials in fill held multiple

individuals. The burial types represent a large range of grave types including in floor/fill (n=8), simple (n=4), in mound on floor (n=3), cist (n=2), tomb (n=1), bench (n=1), head in pot (n=1), surface (n=1), and unexcavated or unknown (n=5). The body position was determined for 24 of the individuals from the Late Classic burial contexts at Baking Pot. The face-down or prone position (88 percent) was more frequent than the supine position (12 percent), with 15 prone individuals and two supine individuals identified. The extended position (90 percent) was represented by 19 individuals, while the flexed position (10 percent) was only seen in two individuals. Finally, a position with the head pointing to the south (86 percent) was represented far more frequently (n=19) than the head to the east position (14 percent) seen in three individuals. In sum, the extended, prone, head-to-the-south interment position is prevalent in the Late Classic interments at Baking Pot, with 54 percent of the recovered individuals being found in that position. Demographic information was available for 29 individuals, with 24 adults, (eight males and eight females included in the 24), and five children; including one juvenile sexed as male (Aimers 2003; Audet 2003; Conlon 1993; Conlon and Powis 2004; Moore 1997; Piehl 1997; Powis 1993b; Ricketson 1931; Welsh 1988; Willey et al.1965).

Barton Ramie

Barton Ramie is located across the Belize River and is roughly 5 km east of Baking Pot. The site consists of numerous raised earthen mounds in a large settlement zone along the floodplain of the river (Chase and Garber 2004:5). The site was extensively investigated by Gordon Willey and his colleagues during the 1950s and 1960s. These investigations discovered 114 burials dating to the Middle Preclassic through the Terminal Classic period (Willey et al. 1965). Because of the burial

cataloguing system employed by the excavators, each skeleton was given a separate burial number designation. Upon re-examination of the context of many of these remains, it is apparent that some of the interred would be classified today as multiple burials. One complicating factor for interpretation is that the remains were not always placed in discrete grave contexts, but rather in simple graves in fill. Where the bones of one or more individual were actually in contact with each other, they were re-classified as multiple burials. Thus, the original Barton Ramie project burials numbered BR123-3, BR123-4, BR123-7, BR123-8, BR123-9, and BR123-18 have here been considered a multiple interment as they are all located together within an area of on floor fill. Similarly, beneath the same floor context, burials numbered BR123-10, BR123-11, and BR123-12 are here considered to constitute a multiple interment. I have reclassified additional contexts as multiple interments including BR123-25 and BR123-26; BR123-28 and BR123-29; BR144-2, BR144-3, and BR144-4; BR167-2, BR167-3, and BR167-4; BR194-2 and BR194-3; and BR260-2 and BR260-3. Thus, instead of the Barton Ramie assemblage consisting of 114 distinct single interments, it has been re-interpreted as consisting of 90 single interments and nine multiple interments. In other words, there are 99 burials known at Barton Ramie. Of these, 13 date to the Preclassic, six to the Early Classic, 79 to the Late and Terminal Classic, and one to the Postclassic period. A total of 116 individuals were excavated (Willey et al. 1965).

The 13 Preclassic burials from the site of Barton Ramie are in the form of on-floor graves (n=4), cists (n=2), in mound fill (n=2), in pottery vessels (n=1), with pottery vessel over the head (n=1), in floor fill (n=1), and unknown contexts (n=2). Each of these Preclassic interments contains the remains of a single individual. Body positions for these

individuals include extended, prone, head south (n=5), extended, prone, head north (n=2), extended, supine, head north (n=2), extended, head north (n=2), flexed, supine, head east (n=1), and flexed in a pottery vessel (n=1). Thus, the greatest number of these individuals was interred in the extended body position (83 percent), and where the head direction was noted, just under half had their head to the north (42 percent), and the same proportion had their head to the south (42 percent). Of the 13 individuals who could be assigned an age or sex designation, 11 of the 13 are adults, with six males and four females among them. Two are infants (Willey et al. 1965).

There are six Early Classic burials from the site of Barton Ramie, each containing the remains of a single individual. The Early Classic burials are in the form of simple graves in fill (n=4) and unknown grave types (n=2). The body position of the individuals includes five extended, and one seated. Of the extended individuals, all had their heads oriented to the south. Three were prone, one was supine, and one was unknown with regards to being face up or face down. Demographically, the six Early Classic individuals were represented by five adults and one child. Four of the adults are male (Willey et al. 1965).

There are 79 Late Classic graves that contain the remains of at least 96 individuals. Of the 79, nine (11 percent) are multiple burials found primarily in grave contexts in fill (n=7), as well as in a simple grave on sterile clay (n=1), and in a simple pit grave (n=1). The grave types at Barton Ramie are most commonly in-fill (both mound and floor) types, with 63 percent of the sample being represented by this grave type. The distribution of types includes in-fill (n=50), simple (n=12), cist (n=6), on-floor (n=2), under pottery vessel (n=1), and unknown (n=8). Body position was determined for 83 of

the individuals in Late Classic graves at Barton Ramie. An overwhelming percentage of these were interred in the extended, prone, head to the south body position, with 66 or 80 percent of the sample being in this position. An additional 6 individuals, or 7 percent were in the extended, supine, head to the south body position, and five additional individuals, or 6 percent, were extended, with their head to the south, and 6, or 7 percent, were in a seated position. This means, that where body position was at least partially determined, 93 percent of the individuals interred in the Late Classic at Barton Ramie (n=77) were interred in an extended body position with their head towards the south. This kind of uniformity of practice related to mortuary events is somewhat rare in any time period in the Maya Lowlands. Though trends in body position and head orientation have been noted for particular regions or sites, rarely do 93 percent of the interments conform to the pattern. Of the 96 individuals, 79 were adults and 15 were infants and children. Of the adults, at least 26 were identified as female and 16 were male (Willey et al. 1965).

There was also a single burial at Barton Ramie dating to the Postclassic period. This interment consisted of a simple, in-fill burial of a young adult female (Willey et al. 1965).

Blackman Eddy and Ontario

The site of Blackman Eddy is situated atop a hill close to the modern-day Western highway, which runs parallel to the Belize River. The site is a small sized center that has a long history of occupation, beginning in the Preclassic period. Because the site was quite heavily damaged by bulldozing activity, it provides a unique opportunity to access many of the earliest ritual deposits known from the Belize Valley region. These early deposits consist of numerous dedicatory and termination caches associated with

Structures B1 and B2. Of special interest here are deposits dug into and associated with the bedrock layer that have a high concentration of marine shell artifacts in them (Brown et al. 2001; Garber et al. 2001). Burials from the site are few and date to the much later Late Classic Period. Ontario is a small site located further to the east of Blackman Eddy along the Belize River. Because there is only a single burial to report, it has been lumped together with the Blackman Eddy mortuary assemblage.

There are three Late Classic crypt burials from Blackman Eddy that contain the remains of seven, possibly eight, individuals. The first crypt, Burial 4, located in Structure B1, contained four individuals. A second crypt, located in Structure A4, had been looted and hence no actual human remains were found within it although some fragmentary grave goods were found, so it is safe to assume at least one individual had been interred within the crypt. A third crypt grave, also in Structure A4, contained the remains of three individuals. The main individual is an adult in an extended, head to the south position, with two associated secondary individuals, one adult and one sub-adult flanking the main individual. The secondary burials are represented by skulls and long bones only (Garber et al. 2004).

The site of Ontario is identified by Driver and Garber (2004:292) as a Type 3 minor center. The site is located equidistant between the relatively larger sites of Blackman Eddy to the west and Camalote to the east, in the valley floodplain along the Belize River (Driver and Garber 2004:297). The site was entirely constructed during the Late Classic and abandoned by the Terminal Classic period. There is a single burial from the site in the mortuary database compiled here. The burial is a Terminal Classic in-fill

interment containing the remains of a single adult male individual in an extended, supine, head to the south body position (Driver and Garber 2004).

Pook's Hill, Cahal Uitz Na, and Slate Altar Group

The Roaring Creek Valley is becoming a more intensively investigated area due to the research of Jaime Awe and his team researching caves and surface sites in the river valley branching to the south of the Belize River, near the modern day city of Belmopan. Several sites in the Roaring Creek Valley have mortuary remains that have been included in this compilation of mortuary data. These sites include Pook's Hill, Cahal Uitz Na, and the Slate Altar Group. Both of the latter sites are located in close proximity to the cave Actun Uayazba Kab.

The mortuary data from the three sites will be discussed here, because there are only a few burials and because of the close proximity of the sites to each other. Together, the three sites have nine burials that span the Early Classic through Terminal Classic periods. There are three late Early Classic (A.D. 400-600) burials from Pook's Hill, each containing the remains of a single individual. The grave types represented include a grave cut into the bedrock, sealed by a floor, and two in-floor fill graves. Of the three individuals in these graves, two were identified as young adults. Where body position was determined, one individual was extended, prone, head to the south, another was flexed, prone, head to the south, while a third was only identified as having their head to the south (Helmke et al. 2001).

There are three burials that date to the Late Classic: one from Pook's Hill, one from Cahal Uitz Na, and one from the Slate Altar Group. The grave types include a crypt under a stair, a cist, and an unknown context due to destruction by looters. The crypt and

cist each contain the remains of a single adult individual, and the looted context contains the remains of three adult individuals, with at least one male, and one female. Body position was indeterminate for all but the single individual in the crypt grave, who was thought to be in an extended, head-to-the-south orientation (Bassendale 2000; Ehret and Conlon 1999; Helmke 2000; Helmke, Cruz, Mirro, Jacobs 1999).

Finally, three burials date to the Terminal Classic at Pook's Hill, containing the remains of five individuals. The grave types represented include a capped pit cut into bedrock, an in-fill burial, and a simple grave in a midden. The in-fill and midden burials were both multiple interments, each containing the remains of two individuals, whereas the capped pit was a single individual interment. At least three individuals were in flexed, prone position with their heads to the south. There were five adults, with at least two males, and one female (Helmke, Piehl, et al. 2001; Helmke, Stanchly, et al. 2001).

Caves in the Roaring Creek Valley

Caves are frequently the sites of mortuary ritual in the Maya area. In the Roaring Creek Valley in particular, numerous caves have been found that contain human remains. Caves as mortuary spaces present some challenges that are not inherent in discrete burials at surface sites. For instance, if the remains are not themselves buried in graves in the cave, they can be continually placed next to one another. It is difficult if not impossible to figure out if they were placed there during a single interment event or multiple interment events. Moreover, remains may end up together as a result of natural taphonomic processes. Also, it can be difficult to precisely date cave burials, if they do not have associated grave goods. These interpretive difficulties limit the usefulness of cave burials for making direct comparisons to multiple entry tombs at surface sites that contain more

than one individual. Nonetheless, documenting their presence is important because they do compose a significant proportion of the mortuary record in some areas.

At Actun Tunichil Muknal, a large cave in the Roaring Creek Valley, the remains of 10 individuals were found, mostly on the surface, with calcite accumulating over the bones. In many cases, the bones were jumbled together as a result of water action in the cave. These depositions date to the Late Classic period, and they include the remains of three adult males, one adult female, one juvenile, and three infants (Awe et al. 1997; Gibbs 1997). Nearby Actun Uayazba Kab had six Late Classic burials, three crypts, two cists, and one simple pit. In this case, the discrete grave types in the cave allow for more certain comparisons to be made between the cave and surface site burials, and it is also interesting to note that each of these graves held the remains of only a single individual. The body positions of these individuals include one extended, prone and five that were flexed in some way. The individuals included four adults (including one female) and one infant (Ferguson and Gibbs 1999). At Actun Nak Beh, also in the Roaring Creek Valley, three Late Classic burials (with one multiple interment) contained the remains of four adults and one juvenile (Halperin et al. 2001). In Actun Halal, the remains of a single individual were located near the entrance (Griffith and Morehart 2001). Finally, at Actun Yaxteel Ahau, there were five areas of the cave that had human remains. Of these, three had the remains of a single individual, while two areas held the remains of multiple individuals. Together, there were 14 individuals in the cave, including four adults (two of whom were female) and two juveniles (Owen and Gibbs 1999).

Esperanza

The site of Esperanza is located approximately midway between the larger sites of Cahal Pech and Baking Pot (Driver and Garber 2004:294). The site consists of a plazuela group constructed on a very large rectangular platform (Driver and Garber 2004:295). There are three Late Classic burials from the site, each containing the remains of two individuals (Schubert et al. 2001).

Cahal Pech

The site of Cahal Pech, located on a high hill just outside the modern town of San Ignacio Cayo, is a medium sized center with occupation dating as early as the beginning of the Middle Preclassic period (1200-900 B.C.) and lasting until the Late Classic period (A.D. 700-900; Aimers et al. 2000:74; Healy, Cheetham et al. 2004:105). The mortuary data compiled for Cahal Pech is derived from excavations in the site core proper, as well as in small, associated rectilinear groups connected by formal roadways or *sacbeob*. In addition information comes from more distant sites up to about 2 kilometers away, including Cas Pek, Tzinic, Rockville, Zotz, Tolok, Zopilote, and Zubin. The mortuary data collected here includes a total of 56 burials spanning the Preclassic through Late Classic periods. The remains of at least 67 individuals are found in these burials (Aimers 1992; Aimers et al. 2000; Awe et al. 1992; Awe et al. 1990; Awe and Campbell 1991; Aylesworth 1993; Cheetham 2004; Cheetham et al. 1994; Cheetham et al. 1993; Conlon and Awe 1991; Ferguson et al. 1996; Iannone 1993; Iannone 1994; Maar and Varney 1993; Powis 1993a; Powis 1994; Schwake 1996; Song 1993; Song no date; Song et al. 1994). In addition, there are human phalanges and teeth in mortuary contexts that indicate an additional nine to 84 individuals were involved in rituals associated with these

interments. Because phalanges and teeth can be extracted from an individual without necessarily causing death, these remains are interpreted here as offeratory remains rather than burials.

In the rather elaborate Tomb 2 at Zopilote, a smaller center connected to Cahal Pech proper by a *sacbe* or causeway, there were 225 medial and distal adult phalanges found in association with small lip-to-lip plainware vessels (Cheetham et al. 1994). These were thought to have been interred as part of the ritual entombment of a carved stela found within the tomb. In addition to these numerous phalanges, which were interpreted by the excavators to represent the fingers of between nine and 74 separate individuals, there were also numerous mandibular incisors located at the base of the stela monument, representing a minimum number of nine individuals (Cheetham 2004; Cheetham et al. 1994). Of course it is unknown whether the teeth and fingers came from the same individuals, so numerically, there could be anywhere from 11 to 234 individuals involved. Most probably neither of these extremes is accurate. What is important is that a great number of individuals were involved in a significant body sacrifice ritual where they removed or had removed their fingertips or teeth as part of the interment of an important stela monument.

There are 17 Preclassic burials at Cahal Pech that contained the remains of 21 individuals. The grave types include 10 cists, four simple graves, two simple crypts, and one cache containing human remains. Of these, two are multiple burials: a cist containing the remains of four juveniles, and a simple grave containing the remains of two adults. Body positions were recorded for 19 individuals, with a high percentage (53 percent) interred in the extended, prone, head-to-the-south position (n=10), and an additional four

in the extended, head-to-the-south position (21 percent). It is at least plausible to assume that these latter were also in the prone position so they can be combined for a total of 74 percent of those whose body position was determined to be in the extended, prone, head-to-the-south position. There were also three individuals who were found in a disarticulated position, one represented by only a head in a bowl, and one extended, supine, with head to the north. The demographic information for the Preclassic mortuary population at Cahal Pech is as follows: five adults, five adult males, four adult females, six juveniles, and one infant (Awe et al. 1992; Iannone 1993; Powis 1994; Schwake 1996; Song no date; Song et al. 1994).

There are nine Early Classic interments in the Cahal Pech mortuary sample containing the remains of 10 individuals. Only one of these graves is a multiple burial. The graves are in the form of cists (n=4), simple crypts (n=3), a simple grave (n=1), and an elaborate crypt (n=1). The multiple burial is the elaborate crypt (or tomb) at the Zopilote group, which contained many rich burial goods in addition to the two young adult males found in the chamber (Cheetham et al. 1994; Cheetham et al. 1993). Body position was at least minimally determined for each of the Early Classic individuals and included the extended (n=4), extended, head-to-the-south (n=2), extended, prone, head-to-the-south (n=2), extended, supine, head-to-the-south (n=1), and cranium in pottery vessel (n=1) positions. Demographic information for these burials include that there are seven adults. Three are male and one is a child (Awe et al. 1990; Cheetham et al. 1994; Cheetham et al. 1993; Conlon and Awe 1991; Iannone 1994; Schwake 1996).

The Cahal Pech mortuary sample includes 29 Late Classic interments housing the remains of at least 36 individuals. There are four multiple burials among these 29

interments. The grave types include cists (n=13), simple crypts (n=6), elaborate crypts/tombs (n=2), capped pits (n=2), simple in fill (n=2), cache (n=1), skull in vessel (n=1), and unknown (n=2) contexts. The multiple burials include two infants found in a dedicatory cache in the center of the east ballcourt at Cahal Pech, a simple cist burial of two adults at Tolok, two children in the stela tomb at Zopilote, and five adults in a haphazard cist at the base of the eastern shrine at Zubin. Body position was determined for 29 individuals and included 17 extended, prone, head-to-the-south, four extended, supine, head-to-the-south, two extended, two flexed, prone, head-to-the-south, two disarticulated, one extended, head south, and one head south. For head orientation, an overwhelming 86 percent of individuals had their head to the south. This is notably a very common characteristic for burials in the Belize Valley region. These Late Classic burials from the site include 28 adults and four children, with at least nine male adults and three female adults (Aimers 1992; Aimers et al. 2000; Awe et al. 1991; Awe et al. 1990; Awe and Campbell 1991; Aylesworth 1993; Cheetham 2004; Cheetham et al. 1994; Conlon and Awe 1991; Ferguson et al. 1996; Iannone 1993; Maar and Varney 1993; Powis 1993a; Powis 1994; Schwake 1996; Song 1993; Song et al. 1994).

Chaa Creek and X-ual-Canil

The smaller sites of X-ual-Canil and Chaa Creek are along the Macal River, part of the Upper Belize Valley region. X-ual-Canil, also referred to as Cayo Y, is located across the Macal River about 3 km from the larger site of Cahal Pech. Chaa Creek is located south along the west bank of the Macal River, about 5 km from Cahal Pech.

Although the excavations in the site core of X-ual-Canil did not reveal any mortuary data, a *chultun* in the periphery of the site did contain human remains. The

chultun, called the Choj Group *chultun*, dates to the Early Classic and contained the remains of four adults (Gray 2001; Schwake 1997).

Similarly, a *chultun* whose use spans the Early to Late Classic at the small site of Chaa Creek also contained human remains. Chamber 3 of the Chaa Creek *chultun* contained the remains of a single, adult male individual in a seated position (Lee et al. 2000).

Mortuary Trends in the Belize Valley Region

The mortuary data for the Belize Valley region include information from the sites of Baking Pot, Barton Ramie, Blackman Eddy, Ontario, Pook's Hill, Cahal Uitz Na, Slate Altar Group, Actun Tunichil Muknal, Actun Uayazba Kab, Actun Nak Beh, Actun Halal, Actun Yaxteel Ahau, Esperanza, Cahal Pech, Chaa Creek, and X-ual-Canil. In total, the information from 228 graves and the remains of 290 individuals is included (the number would increase to between 299 and 374 if the phalanges and teeth from the Zopilote tomb are included in this count of total individuals). Of the 228 graves, 30 are Preclassic, 23 are Early Classic, 169 are Late Classic, four are Terminal Classic, and one is Postclassic. Of the 228 graves, a total of 32 were multiple interments. In other words, only 14 percent of the burial assemblage from the Belize Valley sites are multiple interments (Figure 6.6). Considering that I re-classified several interments at Barton Ramie as multiples, although the excavators had classified them as individual interments, the overall percentage of multiple burials in the Belize Valley is low. This is in sharp contrast to the 40 percent occurrence of multiple burials in the Vaca Plateau region, but is similar to the 10 percent occurrence of multiple burials in the Southeast Petén. This will be discussed in a later section of the chapter devoted to the interpretation of multiple interments.

The predominant grave type in the Belize Valley sample across all time periods is the in-fill interment type. Seventy five or 33 percent of the sample are this grave type. The next largest interment type represented in the sample is the cist form with 18 percent of the sample or 42 graves. Following that is the simple grave form with 10 percent of the sample or 23 graves. Other well-represented forms include simple crypts (n=19), graves on the surface (n=16), and on-floor graves (n=6).

Body position was recorded for 218 of the 290 interred individuals, and for the Belize Valley region, there is a striking uniformity in position and head orientation. Almost half, or 48 percent, of the sample was found in the extended, prone, head-to-the-south body position. There were also 15 individuals or 7 percent of the sample in the extended, supine, head-to-the-south body position, and an additional 34 individuals or 16 percent of the sample in the extended, head-to-the-south position (undetermined supine or prone). If all of the individuals minimally in an extended position with their head to the south are counted together, they consist of 154 individuals or 68 percent of the total Belize Valley region mortuary assemblage. Other body positions were also noted, including prone (n=16), seated (n=8), flexed (n=7), flexed, prone, head south (n=6), extended (n=6), and disarticulated (n=5). If only the head orientation of the interred is considered, 75 percent of the sample has the head-to-the-south body orientation.

The Vaca Plateau Region

The Vaca Plateau is a vast limestone region north of the Maya Mountains. The area is characterized by karst landforms including an integrated system of dry karst

valleys separated by residual limestone hills, single and compound sinkholes, and numerous caves found within the heavily brecciated Campur Limestone (Reeder et al. 1996:121). Numerous sites have been investigated in the Vaca Plateau in addition to the site of Minanha and are included here in this discussion of mortuary practices. These sites include Caracol, Caledonia, and Mountain Cow. In addition, the sites of Las Ruinas de Arenal and Pacbitun are included in this section. Although they are not in the Vaca Plateau proper, they lie in the interstitial area between the Vaca Plateau and the Upper Belize Valley. For the entire north Vaca Plateau region, there was a total of 237 burials containing the remains of at least 488 individuals (Arendt et al. 1996; Chase and Chase 1987, 1998b, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005; D.Z. Chase 1994; Healy 1990; Healy, Awe et al. 2004; Healy, Hohmann et al. 2004; Hunter-Tate 1994; Jaeger 1987; Prince 2000; Schwake 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003; Slim and Orr-Lombardo 2002; Song no date; Taschek and Ball 1999; Thompson 1931; Turuk et al. 2005; Welsh 1988; White et al. 1993; Zehrt and Iannone 2005).

Las Ruinas de Arenal

The site of Las Ruinas de Arenal is a small center located in the rolling foothills of the northwest edge of the Vaca Plateau. The site is relevant to this analysis because it is situated equidistant between the site of Minanha and the Belize Valley centers. There are only two Early Classic contexts with human remains from Las Ruinas. The first is a simple crypt from Structure 1-2nd. It contained the remains of a single, adult individual in a prone, head-to-the-south position (Taschek and Ball 1999). This interment was accompanied by a considerable number of grave goods, including vessels with cached materials housed in them. The only other instance where human remains were located at

Las Ruinas was in a Terminal Preclassic/Early Classic lip-to-lip vessel cache that contained several human phalanges within the vessels (Taschek and Ball 1999). This is particularly interesting, considering there are similar instances at Minanha, Caracol, and in the Belize Valley.

Pacbitun

Pacbitun is a medium-sized center in the Cayo District of Western Belize. It is located in the north Vaca Plateau region between the true Vaca Plateau sites to the south and the Belize Valley sites to the north. Some architectural and sculptural traits at the site link it more closely to the south. These include the use of slate for capstones and other portable artifacts, a possible slate workshop, and the use of volcanic rock for monuments (Healy et al. 1995). There are a total of 24 burials in this sample from Pacbitun, representing the interment of 24 individuals dating from the middle Preclassic to the post-abandonment period (Arendt et al. 1996; Healy 1990; Healy, Awe et al. 2004; Healy, Hohmann et al. 2004; Song no date; White et al. 1993).

There are two Preclassic burials for the site of Pacbitun, one Middle Preclassic and one Late Preclassic. The Middle Preclassic burial is a cist/partial crypt grave that housed the remains of a single, adult individual in a prone, semi-flexed position. The head was found to the west (Arendt et al. 1996). The Late Preclassic burial is a simple crypt grave containing the remains of a single adult, male individual in an extended, prone, head to the south body position (Song no date).

There is also only a single burial from Pacbitun dated to the Early Classic period. The Early Classic burial is a crypt grave containing the remains of a single adult individual (White et al. 1993).

There are four burials at Pacbitun that date to the Late Classic period. These include a simple crypt grave type, two cist graves, and one vaulted, elaborate tomb. The elaborate tomb represents one of the richest and highest status interments recorded in the north Vaca Plateau region. The tomb itself was constructed with slate capstones, and contained numerous rich grave goods in addition to the remains of a single adult male individual in the extended, supine, head-to-the-south body orientation (Healy 1990; Healy, Awe et al. 2004; Healy, Hohmann et al. 2004). The simple crypt and one of the cist graves each contained the remains of a single adult male individual, while the other cist grave contained the remains of a single adult female individual. The body position was undetermined for these interments.

The Terminal Classic burials from Pacbitun, 16 in all, have a variety of grave types including, simple crypts (n=4), cists (n=4), pits (n=3), urns (n=2), and unknown contexts (n=3). Also a single post-abandonment, in-fill burial of an adult female individual. It is of unknown date. The 16 Terminal Classic burials each contained the remains of a single individual. Of the adults, seven have been identified as female and five as male. Also interesting is that both of the urn burials are child burials, with the other child interred in a simple crypt grave (Healy 1990; Healy, Hohmann et al. 2004; White et al. 1993).

Minanha

The site of Minanha, located in the north Vaca Plateau is the site where the excavations for this dissertation took place. The site is a medium-sized major center, located equidistant between the larger Vaca Plateau site of Caracol to the south, and the large eastern Petén site of Naranjo to the northwest. The mortuary assemblage from

Minanha consists of 13 burials containing the remains of at least 36 individuals dating from the Preclassic (n=1), the Early Classic (n=1), and the Late/Terminal Classic periods (n=11) (Prince 2000; Schwake 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003; Slim and Orr-Lombardo 2002; Turuk et al. 2005; Zehrt and Iannone 2005).

The late Preclassic burial is a cache within floor fill from in front of the E-group's eastern structure in the site center, and contained the disarticulated remains of a single, adult individual. The human remains in this cache are some of the earliest remains recovered from the site of Minanha, and consist of only cranial and long bones in association with a complete plate (Schwake 2000).

The Early Classic burial is a partial cist grave with the remains of a single individual in an extended, prone position. This grave was located just in front of the structure at the end of an epicentral *sacbe* at the site (Zehrt and Iannone 2005).

Eleven Late and Terminal Classic burials have been excavated at Minanha to date. These were in the form of simple crypts (n=4), in *chultunob* (n=2), in fill (n=2), of a tomb (n=1), a cist (n=1), and an elaborate crypt (n=1). In addition several phalanges were recovered within a lip-to-lip cache of two Late Classic vessels. These 11 burial contexts housed the remains of at least 44 individuals. This fact is noteworthy: A high percentage of the few burials that have been excavated at Minanha are multiple interments (five of the 13, or 38 percent). At least 13 of the individuals recovered were found in an extended body position, with at least two of those being supine. Body position was difficult to determine for many of the Minanha interments because of the poor preservation of the remains. Of the remains whose body position was known, four had their head to the west, one had his head to the north, and one had his head to the south. There were at least four

adults recovered in the sample. At least one was male (Prince 2000; Schwake 2001, 2002, 2003; Slim and Orr-Lombardo 2002; Turuk et al. 2005; Zehrt and Iannone 2005).

Caledonia

The site of Caledonia is approximately 2 ha in area and is located near the juncture of the Mountain Pine Ridge and the Chiquibul rainforest in the Vaca Plateau. In other words, it lies approximately equidistant between Minanha to the north, and Caracol to the south (Healy et al. 1998). The site is important because it is the locus of an important elite multiple burial. The burial dates from the Early Classic through the Late Classic (A.D. 450-650), and is a classic instance of a tomb being reused through a lengthy period of time (Healy et al. 1998). The burial is a vaulted tomb containing the remains of nine individuals: eight adults and one child. There was a female and a male adult in the chamber. The rest of the individuals are of unknown sex. The remains were very deteriorated, so body position could not be determined with any certainty (Healy et al. 1998). The lengthy use and re-use of the tomb is noteworthy, particularly in light of the frequency of multiple burials in re-enterable tombs at the sites of Caracol and Minanha.

Mountain Cow

Mountain Cow is located approximately 13 kilometers to the northeast of Caracol in the Vaca Plateau, and consists of a collection of four groups that are close together and collectively referred to as the Mountain Cow sites (Morris 2004:137). There are 13 burials from the Mountain Cow sites, specifically from Tzimin Kax, Cahal Cunil, and Hatzcap Ceel (Thompson 1931; Welsh 1988). Of these, five date to the Late Preclassic

period, and eight are from the Late Classic period. Together, these interments contain the remains of at least 26 individuals (Welsh 1988).

The Late Preclassic burials are in the form of simple crypts (n=2) and *chultunob* (n=3). The *chultunob* were all at the Tzimin Kax group. One contained a single, adult individual in a flexed position, one contained the remains of at least one individual in a disturbed/indeterminate position, and one contained the remains of a single, adult individual in a flexed position (Welsh 1988). Both of the simple crypts were from the site of Cahal Cunil. One contained the remains of at least one individual, and the other containing the remains of seven individuals. Of these seven, two were in a seated position, while the others were disarticulated, and at least one of the individuals was a male adult (Thompson 1931). This multiple burial is particularly interesting because it is a very early example (if the Thompson dating is reliable) of a multiple individual interment in the Vaca Plateau region, suggesting that the practice of multiple interments has a long tradition in the area. This form of burial clearly was developed in-situ within the local region, and was part of the regional mortuary repertoire that was picked up, elaborated, and intensified in the Late and Terminal Classic periods in the immediate area.

There are eight Late Classic burials from the Mountain Cow sites including two simple graves, two simple crypts, two vaulted crypts, and two tombs, which contain the remains of at least 15 individuals (Thompson 1931; Welsh 1988). All of these interments contained the remains of a single individual with the exceptions of a vaulted crypt that contained six individuals, and a stone-lined tomb that contained the remains of three individuals. Both of these latter interments were rich in accompanying grave goods as

well. The crypt housed 18 whole vessels and the tomb contained 25 whole vessels (Thompson 1931; Welsh 1988). Body position, and demographic information were not available for the majority of these interments. Nonetheless, within the Late Classic burials at the Mountain Cow Sites, there was at least one youth buried in a seated position (Welsh's Burial 13), one semi-flexed individual (Welsh's Burial 7), and one extended individual (Welsh's Burial 10). Of interest, is that the youth in Burial 13 was accompanied by numerous sets of lip-to-lip vessels in an adjoining area, at least three pairs of which contained human fingers (Thompson 1931). This form of caching fingers in lip-to-lip vessels is a common practice at the Vaca Plateau sites, particularly Caracol, but also at Minanha.

Caracol

The large Vaca Plateau site of Caracol has been classified as a major center. It differs in many ways from the smaller centers of the Belize Valley. Caracol is thought to be the capital of a strongly centralized polity in the Late Classic period. Also, the range of material culture found in ritual deposits is different from other centers in the Belize Valley. Many burials and caches have been excavated at the site, with most dating to the Late Classic period. The published data on the Caracol offerings and mortuary assemblage provides a large comparative sample for the Minanha assemblage. Similarities and differences between manifested ritual behavior in a contemporary era between the two sites can signify important relationships between the people of the two sites. The Late Classic offeratory repertoire at Caracol includes at least 133 caches and 183 burials. This rich accumulation of data is a direct result of the long-term project that has been undertaken at Caracol by Chase and Chase (1989, 1996, 1998).

Information on the mortuary assemblage from Caracol was accumulated from both published sources and site reports given to the Government of Belize. I tabulated 184 burials dating from the Preclassic through to the Terminal Classic periods for this study of mortuary patterns. These 184 discrete burials represent the interment of at least 393 individuals. It is important to note that this is a conservative estimate of how many individuals were interred within these burials. The poor preservation of bone often allowed for only a single individual to be identified, although the likelihood of the remains representing more than that single individual is high. Another interesting fact to note about the Caracol burial assemblage is the almost complete lack of Preclassic burials. Remains that date to the Preclassic, although scarce, are found at many of the other Vaca Plateau sites. Of the burials recorded here, one dates to the Preclassic, 15 date to the Early Classic, 134 date to the Late Classic, 14 date to the Late Classic/Terminal Classic transition, and nine date to the Terminal Classic. Additionally, there are 11 interments in the Caracol assemblage that had a use-history that stretched across a great span of time, from the Early Classic through to the Late Classic period. As expected, each of these 11 burials housed the remains of multiple individuals. The most startling trend that is readily apparent in the Caracol mortuary assemblage is the frequency of multiple interments. Of the 184 burials recorded here, at least 85 (or 46 percent) were multiple individual burials (Chase and Chase 1987, 1997, 1998b, 1999-2005; D.Z. Chase 1994; Hunter-Tate 1994; Jaeger 1987).

The single Preclassic burial from Caracol is in the form of a multiple-individual interment in a *chultun* from the Blanca group. The *chultun* housed the remains of three

individuals, one adult, one sub-adult, and one individual of indeterminate age (D.Z. Chase 1994; Hunter-Tate 1994).

There is a single interment at Caracol that dates to the Late Preclassic/Early Classic transition. This burial is in the form of a simple grave, in a terrace at Structure B36 at Canaa, the large epicentral pyramid complex at the site. The burial contained the remains of a single, older adult individual (Chase and Chase 2004).

There are 14 Early Classic burials at Caracol, which include the remains of 27 individuals. The interments are in the form of tombs (n=8), *chultunob* (n=4), in-terrace burials (n=1), and non-tomb graves (n=1). Of these interments, seven house more than a single individual, with five of these multiple individual burials being in tomb contexts. Of these 27 individuals, very little information was collected on body position, but there were at least two individuals in an extended, supine position with their heads to the south, one individual with his head to the north, and one individual with his head oriented to the east. The demographic information on these 27 individuals resulted in the identification of 10 adults and two sub-adults, with three of the adults identified as female and four as male (Chase and Chase 1987, 2004, 2005; D.Z. Chase 1994; Hunter-Tate 1994).

There are 11 known interments at Caracol that have a long-term use history, stretching from the Early Classic through to the Late Classic. These are proven to have had long-term use and multiple entries because of the ceramics and other materials found housed within the chambers. Each of these 11 interments contains the remains of more than one individual. In all, 27 individuals were recovered from these burials. The grave types of these burials are tombs (n=7), *chultunob* (n=2), an elaborate crypt (n=1), and a non-tomb (n=1). There are 12 adults and nine sub-adults among the 27 individuals

identified in these graves (Chase and Chase 1987, 1999, 2000, 2005; D.Z. Chase 1994; Hunter-Tate 1994).

The Late Classic burial assemblage from Caracol is by far the largest sample from the site compared to other time periods. There are 134 known burials that date exclusively to the Late Classic. These burials house the remains of at least 274 individuals. Fifty six of the 134 burials---or 42 percent of the Late Classic assemblage---are multiple burials. The burials are in the form of non-tomb graves (n=54), tombs (n=47), crypts (n=7), chambers (n=6), in fill (n=6), simple graves (n=6), cists (n=4), under slab graves (n=3), and an on-bench interment (n=1). The body position of the remains was not often included in this collection of mortuary data, because this information is not readily available in the published sources. Of those that were recorded here, six were supine, four were supine with their head to the south, three had their head to the north, two were prone, one was flexed, and one was seated upright. As in the case of body position, the demographic information for the human remains from Caracol is not complete. Of the materials that were analyzed, there were a total of 148 adults, 32 sub-adults, and 22 infants/children in the burials that housed at least 274 individuals. Of the adults 23 were identified as female, and 26 as male (Chase and Chase 1997, 1998b, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2005; D.Z. Chase 1994; Jaeger 1997).

Although they could probably be included with the Late Classic burial assemblage from the site, there are an additional 14 burials from Caracol that date to the Late Classic/Terminal Classic transition. These 14 burials include the remains of at least 32 individuals. Half of the burials are multiple interments. The burials in are the form of non-tomb graves (n=6), tombs (n=3), crypts (n=3), a cist (n=1), and a cave burial (n=1).

For most of the interred individuals body position was not noted, but there were at least two individuals in these interments who were found in the extended, supine position with their head oriented to the north. Another extended, supine burial had the head to the south. Where it was possible to determine age and sex of the remains, these interments contained 12 adults (two male and two female), and 11 sub-adults (two male; Chase and Chase 2001, 2003, 2005; D.Z. Chase 1994).

There are nine burials from Caracol that date exclusively to the Terminal Classic period. These include six non-tomb contexts, one tomb, one *chultun*, and one simple grave in structural fill. These nine locations contain the remains of at least 29 individuals, with three of the burials housing the remains of more than a single individual. Of note is that one of these multiple interments (a collection of disarticulated remains found on a stair) contains the post-cranial remains of at least two individuals but also an additional 17 human mandibles (Chase and Chase 2002). The other two multiple interments are in the form of a *chultun* and another non-tomb context. For these Terminal Classic interments, there are two adults, two sub-adults, and four infants/children (Chase and Chase 1997, 2002, 2004; D.Z. Chase 1994).

Mortuary Trends in the Vaca Plateau Region

The compilation of the mortuary data from the sites of Las Ruinas de Arenal, Pacbitun, Minanha, Caledonia, Mountain Cow, and Caracol comprises the Vaca Plateau mortuary sample. There are 237 excavated burials in the Vaca Plateau, from which the remains of 488 individuals were recovered. Of the 237 burials, nine are Preclassic, 19 are Early Classic, 12 span the Early to Late Classic, 196 are Late or Terminal Classic, and one is probably from the more recent historic period. As in other areas of the Maya

Lowlands, there is a sample bias towards greater representation in the later time periods. One of the most surprising traits of the Vaca Plateau assemblage is the almost complete lack of Preclassic burial remains recovered from the large site of Caracol. This is surprising because of the extensive amount of excavation that has been undertaken at the site, the size of the site, and the very high number of interments known to date to other periods.

The predominant grave type for all periods at sites in the Vaca Plateau is the tomb grave form (n=70) representing 30 percent of the sample, followed by non-tomb contexts (n=68) at 29 percent of the sample. The non-tomb designation is somewhat of a catch-all term. It is used by the excavators at Caracol to refer to all manner of grave types that are not tombs. The next largest proportion of graves in the Vaca Plateau sample are found in simple crypts (n=33), and simple graves, including graves in fill (n=20). There are also burials in *chultunob* (n=13), cists (n=13), elaborate or vaulted crypts (n=5), under slab graves (n=3), in pits (n=3), urns (n=2), a cave (n=1), an on-bench burial (n=1) and unknown/other contexts (n=5).

The information on the body position of the interred was not recorded with regularity or was indeterminate due to the poor preservation of the remains in a high proportion of the Vaca Plateau burials. The low number of individuals whose body position was recorded cannot be used as a reliable indicator of interment trends for this area. Nonetheless, of the 488 individuals, body position was at least partially determined for 49 individuals (only 10 percent of the sample). Of these 49, 18 were supine, 18 were extended, five were prone, four were seated and four were flexed. The direction of the head was only identified for 24 individuals, with 11 having their head to the south, seven

head to the north, one head to the east and five head to the west. Again, these low percentages of the total for body position and head orientation cannot be used to make any significant conclusions.

One of the most interesting details about the mortuary assemblage from the sites in the Vaca Plateau is the great incidence of multiple interments in this area. Of the 237 interments recorded here, 94 contained the remains of more than a single individual (Figure 6.7). These 94 interments represent 40 percent of the total Vaca Plateau sample. Two date to the Preclassic, seven date to the Early Classic, 73 date to the Late and Terminal Classic, and 12 have a long history of use spanning the Early through Late Classic Periods. Considering the nearby Southeast Petén region has only a 10 percent incidence of multiple interments, and the Belize Valley sites have a similar 14 percent incidence of multiple interments, the 40 percent occurrence rate in the Vaca Plateau region is all the more surprising. At the very least, this comparatively high occurrence of multiple burials signals a significant difference in ideology, intent, and mortuary behavior between the two nearby areas. Interpretations of what those differences may signify will be discussed in the next section of this chapter.

Similarity and Disjunction: Trends in the Mortuary Sample

This research compares the mortuary practices of three regions: the southeast Petén, the Belize Valley, and the Vaca Plateau. As the preceding sections of this chapter describe, there are interregional differences in mortuary practices. These differences include the presence or absence of particular practices, and also differences in the

frequency and intensity of traits among regions. An explanation that considers the reasons for these unexpected and striking differences is necessary. Of particular interest for each area is the distinct manifestation of mortuary patterns.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, one of the first researchers to divide Maya mortuary traits on the basis of geographic location and temporal occurrence was Alberto Ruz Lhuillier (1968). He divided the Maya area into three broad regions (northern, central, and southern), and described patterns of mortuary traits across these areas and through time. The scale of his comparison was large. As a result, Ruz demonstrated trends that occurred generally, those that occurred only in specific regions or at specific times, and those that occurred on a very localized level (Ruz Lhuillier 1968: 165-166). Many of the mortuary patterns he recognized are still accepted today, but due to the limits of the data then available, there were particular gaps in his original assessment. According to his typology, all of the data discussed here for the southeast Petén, the Belize Valley, and the Vaca Plateau are part of the central area, with a corresponding degree of uniformity expected across the three regions. He interpreted multiple interments between highland Guatemala and the Motagua river basin as successive interments in the Late Classic, and multiple interments in Chiapas and Yucatán as ossuaries in the Postclassic (Ruz Lhuillier 1968:165). My compilation of available data does not support a uniform frequency of multiple interments for the three regions, nor are the multiple interments exclusively representative of successive burial. The frequency of multiple burial is one characteristic of the mortuary sample that differs dramatically between the three areas.

The burial typology developed by Bruce Welsh was also presented in Chapter 2. Fitzsimmons (2002:20) notes that Welsh diverges from Ruz Lhuillier's broad divisions of

scale, and does not see local patterns of interment. Welsh (1988) interprets site-specific customs as the result of sampling error, and asserts a more broad-based view of ancient Maya mortuary practice. He argues that most traits are pan-Maya in scope. For the frequency of multiple interments, this analysis of the southeast Petén, Belize Valley, and Vaca Plateau does not support Welsh's view of general uniformity in ancient Maya mortuary practice.

More recent work in mortuary archaeology emphasizes the relevance of examining mortuary practice across larger regions, and stresses that single site analyses compromise interpretation (Ashmore and Geller 2005; Beck 1995). In fact, both the site-specific details and the broader regional patterns comprise a portion of the mortuary landscape. Our understanding of mortuary behavior is incomplete without a consideration of both. Fitzsimmons (2002:21) starts at the site level, and then draws conclusions about local and regional strategies of interment. My research emulates this work, and starts with site specific data. I then move to larger regions of closely affiliated sites, and finally I discuss what this means for socio-political affiliations and mortuary strategies along the eastern side of the south-central lowlands. I limit my comparison to data from sites in the region of the southeast Petén, the Belize Valley, and the Vaca Plateau. This allows me to discuss mortuary practice in a medium sized region. Despite this modest scale of analysis, my results show dramatic localized differences in mortuary practices.

The most striking aspects of the southeast Petén mortuary assemblage relate to grave type and multiple interments. Cist graves have a relatively high frequency in the sample with 58 percent of all burials recovered in this form. In the continuum of grave types, cists are midway between in-fill and simple graves in terms of material and labor

output to construct. They are not as expedient as simple graves because their construction involves the preparation of capstones, but at the same time, they do not require the degree of planning, material, and labor that tombs or elaborate crypts do. The other interesting aspect of the southeast Petén mortuary assemblage is the low frequency of multiple interments. Only 10 percent of the southeast Petén burials contain multiple individuals. This reflects a deliberate preference for individual interment, where the identity of the deceased individual is the focus of the mortuary ritual, rather than the construction and investment in a group identity.

The Belize Valley mortuary assemblage is characterized by a remarkably high frequency of single interment. Eighty six percent of the burials in the Belize Valley are single individual interments, whereas only 14 percent of the burials are multiple interments. There is also great consistency in body position in the Belize Valley, with the deceased in a prone, head-to-the-south body position. Almost half, or 48 percent, of the individuals were positioned in this fashion. Due to the constraint of compiling this mortuary database from a variety of published sources, and from a variety of different projects and excavators, a similar record of body position was not obtained for either the southeast Petén or the Vaca Plateau assemblages. Similar to the southeast Petén assemblage, the Belize Valley assemblage includes a high occurrence of relatively simple grave types, with in-fill burials (33 percent), cists (18 percent), and simple graves (10 percent) making up 61 percent of the total sample. These grave types do not require a great deal of material, advanced preparation, or labor output to construct.

In contrast, the mortuary assemblage of the Vaca Plateau demonstrates some key differences to both the Belize Valley sites, and the southeast Petén sites. The Vaca

Plateau sample is characterized by a high frequency of multiple burials, with 40 percent of the graves containing the remains of more than a single individual. As well, there is a higher frequency of more elaborate grave types in the Vaca Plateau sample, with a full 30 percent of the graves represented by tombs. Tombs require a high output of material and labor to construct their walled stone enclosures and accompanying roof vaults. This suggests a differing degree of control of labor in the Vaca Plateau when compared to the other regions. As well, these differences suggest a different focus for mortuary ritual in the Vaca Plateau, as the identity of individual deceased persons was purposefully downplayed in favor of constructing a group identity through mortuary ritual.

As previously mentioned, the most striking distinction between the mortuary patterns of the Vaca Plateau and both of the adjacent regions (the Belize Valley and the southeast Petén) is the frequency of multiple interments dating to the Late and Terminal Classic periods. Related to this, the percentage of total burials recovered which are found in this form. The total number of burials for each of the three regions is roughly comparable: 228 for the Belize Valley sites, 237 for the Vaca Plateau sites, and 213 for the southeast Petén sites. The frequency of multiple interments is remarkably different in the three areas. Only 14 percent of the Belize Valley burials and just 10 percent of the southeast Petén burials are multiple interments, but a full 40 percent of the Vaca Plateau burials are multiple burials (Figures 6.8, 6.9). The total count of individuals is as follows: in the Belize Valley, 99 of 290 individuals (34 percent of the population) are interred in multiple burial contexts. In the southeast Petén, 57 of 253 (23 percent of the individuals) are found in multiple interments. In contrast, in the Vaca Plateau, 343 of 488 individuals (70 percent of the mortuary sample) are interred in multiple interments. Although there is

a bias in the Vaca Plateau sample because a large proportion of the sample is from the site of Caracol, the data for other Vaca Plateau sites show a comparable frequency of multiple interments. For instance, the site of Minanha, which admittedly has a small total sample size at 13 burials, still has a 38 percent frequency of multiple individual burials. Twenty six individuals, or 72 percent of those recovered from the site, were interred in multiple burial contexts.

The differences in mortuary practice between the three areas are curious and unexpected considering the close proximity of the regions to each other. The most compelling difference relates to the frequency of multiple interments, and I argue that this is just one detail of many that reflects two fundamentally different systems of political organization, environment, settlement pattern, site affiliation, and demographic history. The political organization of the Belize Valley and the southeast Petén sites has been described by their excavators as segmentary states. This assessment arises from the settlement surveys undertaken at the sites. The settlement landscapes of both the Belize Valley and the southeast Petén are characterized by medium-sized centers located at regular distance intervals, with a distinct lack of a large regional capitol at the top of the settlement and administrative hierarchy (Awe 1992; Awe and Campbell 1989; Laporte and Mejía 2000). Instead, the sites of both regions are characterized as relatively autonomous, independent city-states, with a less-centralized form of sociopolitical control. In contrast, the sites of the Vaca Plateau reflect a different form of settlement pattern. Instead of a series of relatively autonomous, decentralized polities, the Vaca Plateau region has a clear primary center, Caracol, serving as the centralized power or regional capitol. The sites of Caracol and Minanha differ significantly from the Belize

Valley sites and the southeast Petén sites. Minanha has one of the largest acropolis structures of any site in the region, and Caracol has extremely large temple structures as well as an elaborate corpus of hieroglyphic texts on monuments. This emphasis on the construction of monumental architecture, and hieroglyphic text production shows a relatively high degree of centralized control in the political system of the Vaca Plateau region which is not seen in either the Belize Valley or the southeast Petén region.

Another similarity between the Belize Valley region and the southeast Petén region is the nature of their respective environments. The sites of both regions are located along rivers and waterways. The subsistence and strategic significance of having sites along navigable waterways cannot be understated, but at the same time, these riverways served to connect the sites as transportation and information pathways. The fact that the rivers of the southeast Petén flow downstream into the rivers of the Belize Valley is tangible proof that the two areas had a route of communication. The Vaca Plateau is a region that lacks surface water in the form of rivers. Instead, water is located in sinkholes, reservoirs, and sub-surface water systems. Communication and transportation in the Vaca Plateau were limited to overland routes, and agriculture was reliant on a complex series of hill-slope terraces, rather than the rich alluvial plains of an annually inundated riverine system, such as the Belize Valley. This basic difference in environment between the Belize Valley and southeast Petén regions, and the central Petén and Vaca Plateau necessitates different adaptive strategies for subsistence, transportation, communication, and sociopolitical organization.

Additional evidence that the Belize Valley and southeast Petén regions were operating within a separate system of interaction from the Vaca Plateau sites is the

occupation history and demographic profiles of the respective areas. The Belize Valley sites have great antiquity, with the first occupation levels dating to the Middle Preclassic period (1200 to 900 B.C.). There is very little to suggest that there was a similar occupation in the Vaca Plateau at that time. Rather, the earliest ephemeral occupations of the Vaca Plateau sites occur at the very end of the Preclassic period.

In comparing the data from the three areas, two characteristics are apparent. One is the dramatic difference in the frequency of multiple burials, with the Vaca Plateau sites exhibiting a much greater frequency than either of the other two areas (see Figure 6.8). The second is that when the data are stratified by period, there is a notable intensification of the practice of multiple burial at the Vaca Plateau sites in the Late and Terminal Classic periods (see Figure 6.9). This relatively restricted intensification of this form of mortuary practice is relevant because it mirrors that seen in other time periods at similar sites, for example, in the North Acropolis at Tikal in the Early Classic period (see Chapter 2).

The differences in mortuary practice between the Belize Valley and southeast Petén sites on one hand, and the Vaca Plateau and central Petén sites on the other, necessitates some discussion of what caused the distinct behavioral patterns. I argue three preliminary conclusions: 1) that certain multiple burials are the result of the sequential interment of ancestors as a means of solidifying power in the present; 2) that similar examples of burials with this underlying intent occur particularly at times of social and political unrest (K'axob in the Late Formative to Early Classic transition; Tikal in the Early Classic; and Caracol in the Late Classic); and 3) that sites in the Vaca Plateau are operating within a Central Péten style system based on settlement, environment, political

organization, and particularly mortuary behavior, and that this system crosscuts an entirely different Belize Valley/southeast Petén system which has different characteristics of settlement, environment, political integration and mortuary behavior. Geographically, these two areas cross-cut one another in the shape of a giant X (Figure 6.10). Instead of thinking about the entire region as one relatively homogeneous sphere of interaction, this data suggests that there are two separate systems of interacting sociopolitical structures.

Conclusion

Mortuary data can be loosely connected to particular forms of social and political organization. Traditionally, researchers in the Belize Valley have tended to see the system of political integration of the valley sites as reaching only as far as the site of Xunantunich, often referring to that site as a gateway to the central Petén. My research on mortuary behavior suggests the possibility that there is a much broader similarity among the sites along the riverways of the southeast Petén. This pattern extends downstream all the way to the Belize Valley. These areas share a similar environment, settlement pattern, political organization, and pattern of mortuary behavior, suggesting a similar shared ideology. Likewise, there is a strong connection linking the Vaca Plateau sites to a system originating in the central Petén. Instead of looking at sites such as Naranjo, Xunantunich, El Pilar, and Minanha as operating on the peripheries of other systems, they should be seen as forming the crossroads between two very large but distinct networks of interaction. One of the main results of my comparative research is that multiple interment has a very particular distribution across the landscape. Researchers often look at

interaction as emanating out from centers in concentric rings of decreasing intensity, but the on-the-ground pattern of affiliation for this micro-region in Guatemala and Belize suggests an x-shaped network, rather than a spheres of influence model. The comparative data presented in this chapter situates the Minanha community squarely at the crossroads of these two systems, and helps explain the variety in the Minanha mortuary assemblage between different social strata.



Figure 6.1: Map showing sites in the Belize Valley, Vaca Plateau, and southeast Petén, discussed in this chapter.

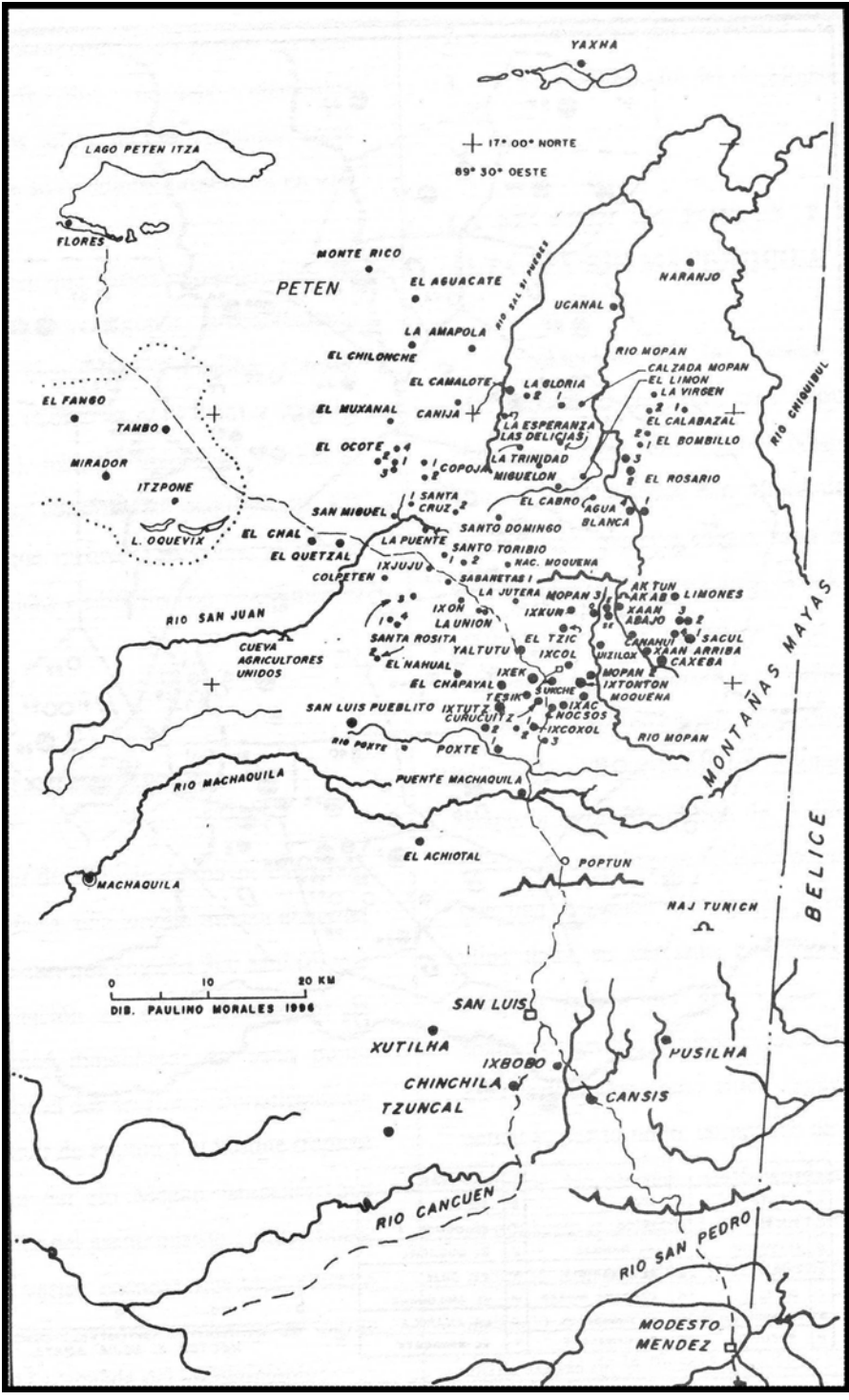


Figure 6.2: Map showing sites in the southeast Petén (Laporte 1996:Figura 2).

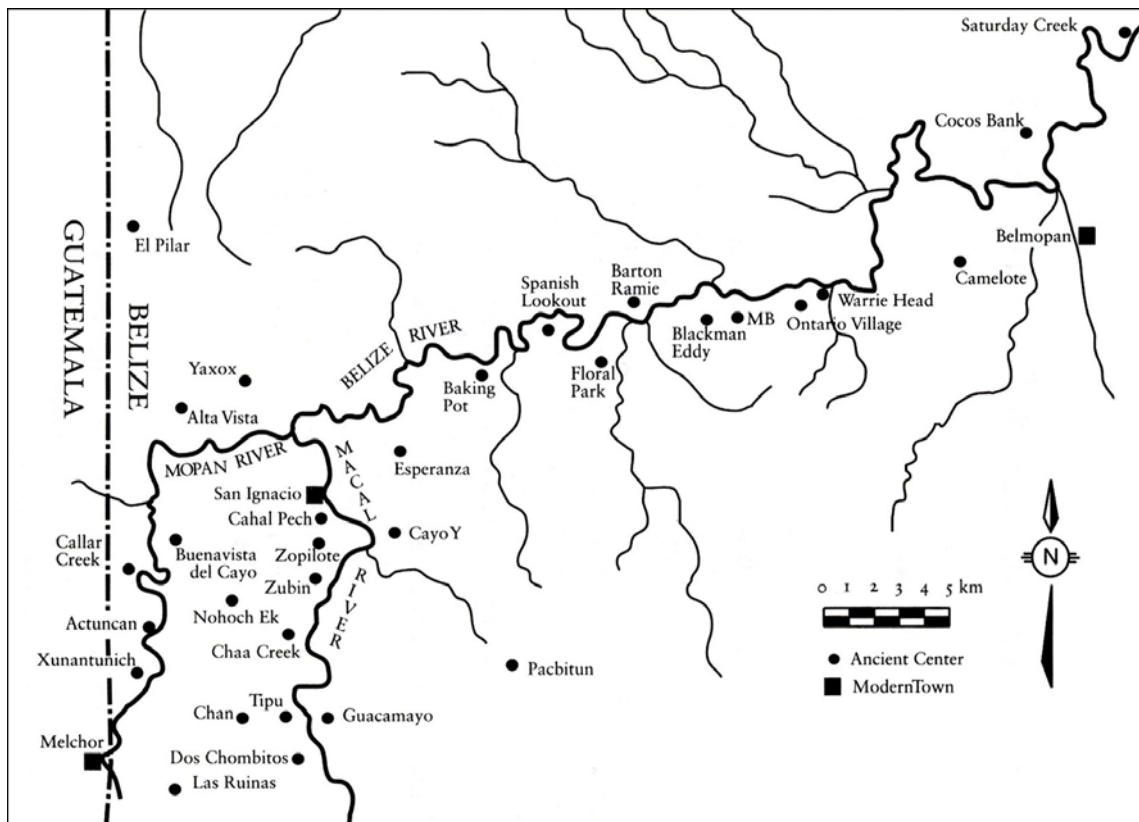


Figure 6.3: Belize Valley sites (Chase and Garber 2004:2).

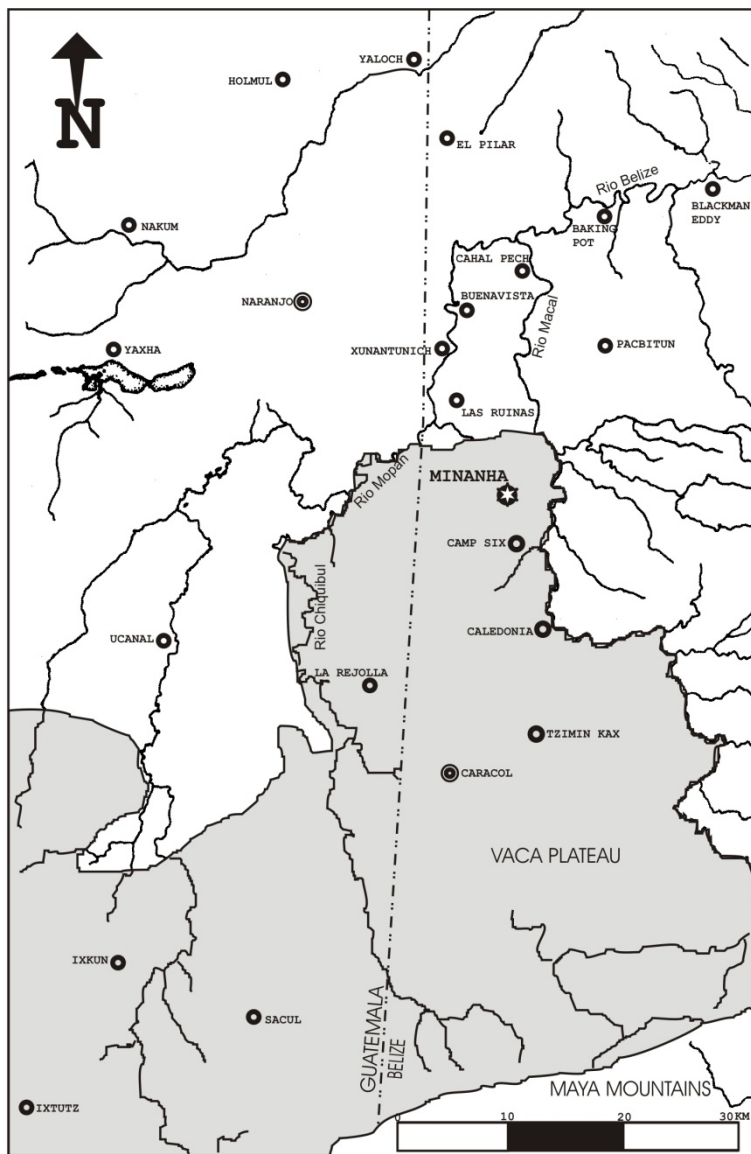
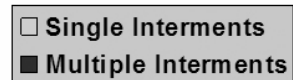
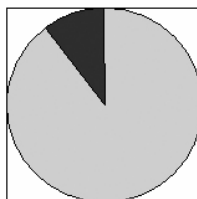


Figure 6.4: Vaca Plateau sites (provided by G. Iannone).

Southeast Petén Region

- Total frequency of multiple burials



- Number of individuals in multiple burial contexts

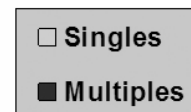


Figure 6.5: Total frequency of multiple burials in the southeast Petén, and number of individuals interred in multiple burial contexts.

Belize Valley Region

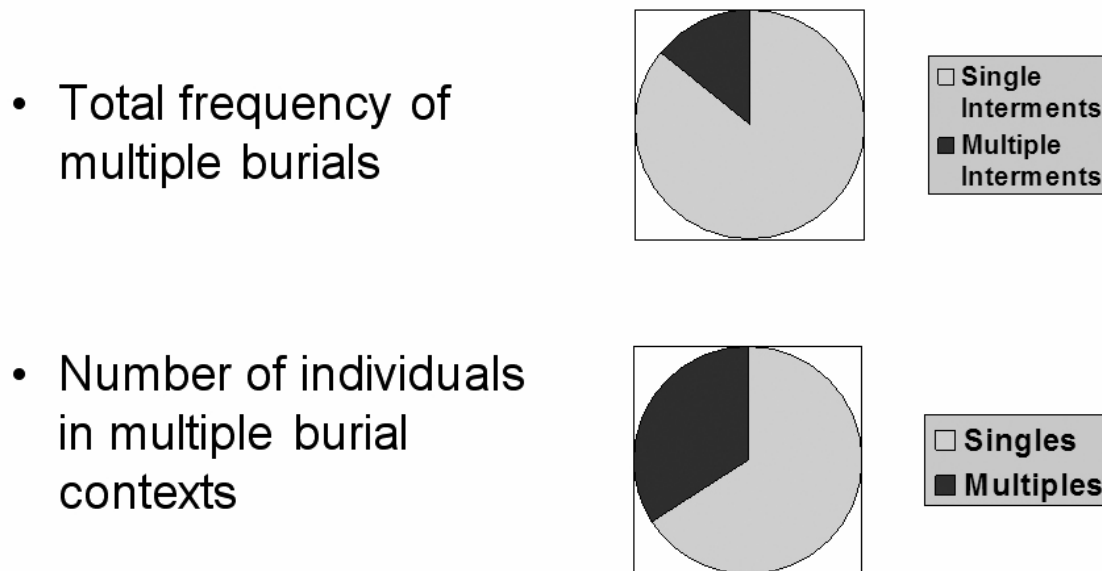
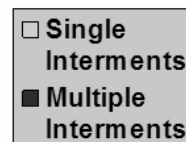


Figure 6.6: Total frequency of multiple burials in the Belize Valley region, and number of individuals interred in multiple burial contexts.

Vaca Plateau Region

- Total frequency of multiple burials



- Number of individuals in multiple burial contexts

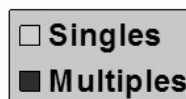
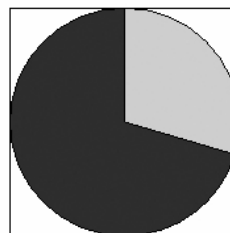


Figure 6.7: Total frequency of multiple burials in the Vaca Plateau region, and number of individuals interred in multiple burial contexts.

Frequency of Multiple Burials (across all time periods)

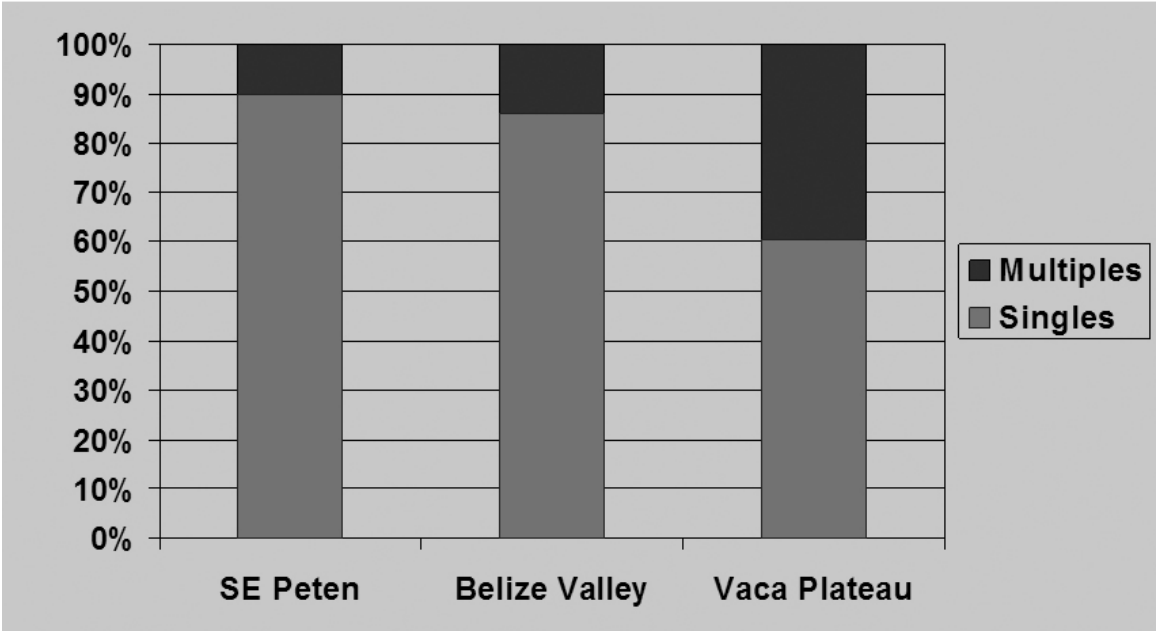


Figure 6.8: Frequency of multiple burials in all areas across all time periods.

Multiple Burials by Time Period

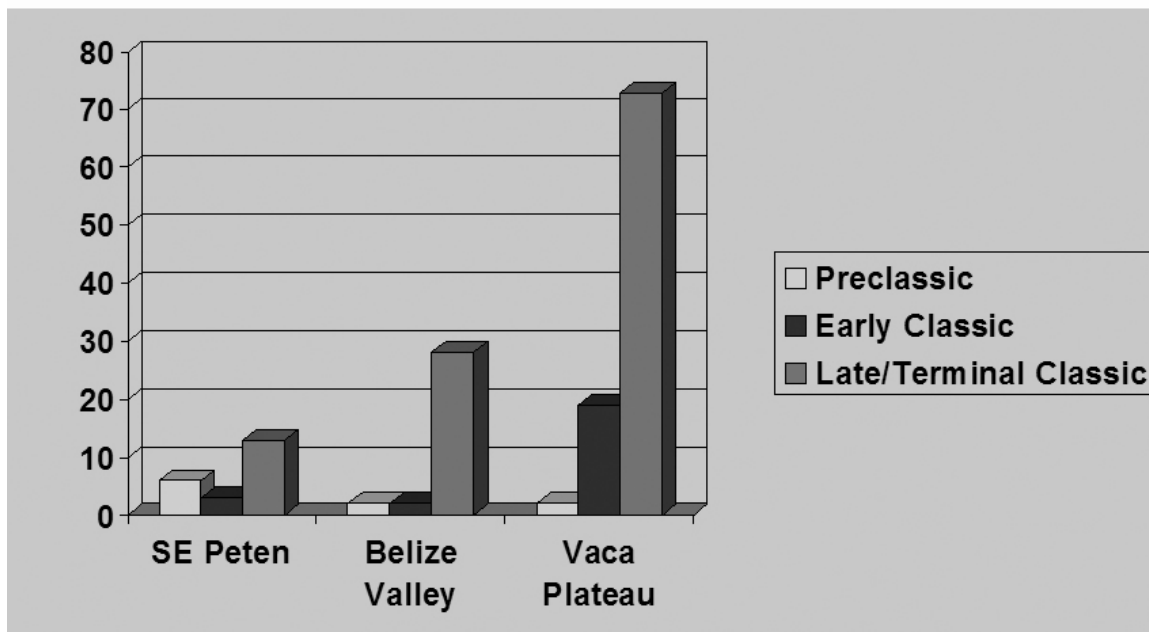


Figure 6.9: Multiple burials by time period in the SE Petén, Belize Valley, and Vaca Plateau regions.

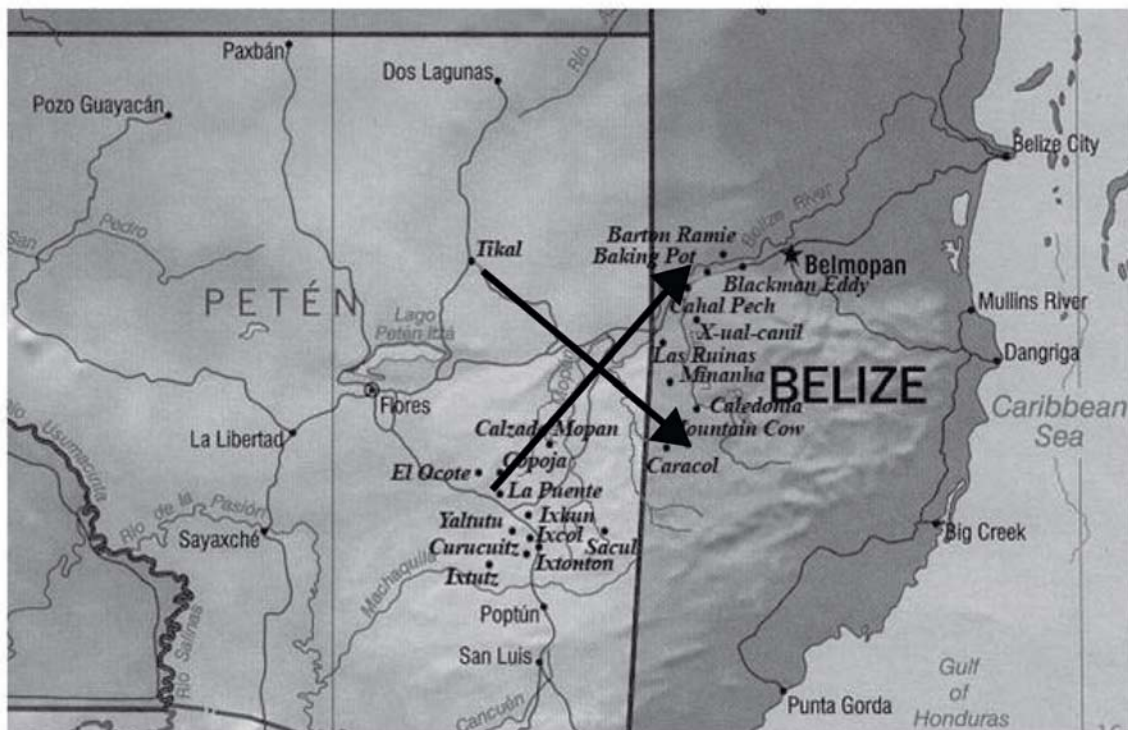


Figure 6.10: X-shaped pattern representing frequencies of multiple burial between regions.

Table 6.1. Comparative Burial Chart.

Site	Burial	Time Period	Grave Type	No. of Inds.	Source	
Cahal Pech	Burial B-4:1	Middle Classic	Dedicatory Cache	1 of 2	Awe and Campbell 1991	
	EBC-F/1	Late Classic		2 of 2	Ferguson, Christensen and Schwake 1996 Ferguson, Christensen and Schwake 1996	
Cahal Pech	BU 91-1	Terminal Preclassic	cist	1	Song no date	
	BU 91-2	Terminal Preclassic	cist	1	Song no date	
	BU 91-4	Terminal Preclassic	cist	1	Song no date	
	BU 91-6	Terminal Preclassic	cist	1	Song no date	
	BU 93-1	Terminal Preclassic	cist	1	Song no date	
	BU 93-2	Terminal Preclassic	cist	1	Song no date	
	BU 94-1	Mid to Late Preclassic	simple grave	1	Song no date	
	BU 94-2	Late Preclassic	cist	1	Song no date	
	Burial 1	Early Late Classic	Elaborate crypt	1	Conlon and Awe 1991	
	Burial 2	Late Early Classic	Cist	1	Conlon and Awe 1991	
	Rv.-1-1	Early Classic	Simple grave	1	Awe, Bill, Campbell 1990	
	Rv.-2-5	Early Classic	Cist	1	Awe, Bill, Campbell 1990	
	Rv.-2-4	Early Classic (?)	Simple cist	1	Awe, Bill, Campbell 1990	
	Rv.-2-3	Early Classic (?)	Simple cist	1	Awe, Bill, Campbell 1990	
Rv.-2-2	Late Classic (?)	Simple (in fill)	1	Awe, Bill, Campbell 1990		
Rv.-2-1	Late Classic	Simple (in fill)	1	Awe, Bill, Campbell 1990		
Cahal Pech	Burial 91-1	Middle to Late Formative	cist	1	Awe, Aimers, Blanchard 1992; Song in press	
	Burial 91-2	Middle to Late Formative	simple	1	Awe, Aimers, Blanchard 1992; Song in press	
	Burial 2-B/1	Late Classic	Cist (north/south)	1	Aimers et al 2000; Aimers 1992; Maar and Varney 1993	
	Burial 2-B/2	Late Classic	Cist	1	Aimers 1992; Maar and Varney 1993	
	Burial 2-B/3	Late Classic	Cist	1	Awe, Aimers, Blanchard 1992; Maar and Varney 1993	
	Burial 2-B/4	Late Classic	Cist	1	Awe, Aimers, Blanchard 1992; Maar and Varney 1993	
	Burial 2-B/5	Late Classic	Cist	1	Awe, Aimers, Blanchard 1992; Maar and Varney 1993	
	Burial 2-B/6	Late Classic	Cist	1	Awe, Aimers, Blanchard 1992; Maar and Varney 1993	
	Burial 2-B/7	Late Classic	Skull under dish	1	Awe, Aimers, Blanchard 1992; Maar and Varney 1993	
	Burial 7	Late Formative	simple crypt	1	Powis 1994; Song et al. 1994; Song in press	
Cahal Pech	Burial 8	Late Formative	simple crypt	1	Powis 1994; Song et al. 1994	
	Burial 9	Late Preclassic	cist	4	Song in press	
	Burial 10	Middle to Late Formative	cist	1	Song in press	
	Burial 2	Late Classic	Simple cist	1	Powis 1993a; Powis 1994; Song 1993; Song et al. 1994	
	Burial 3	Late Classic	Simple cist	1	Powis 1994; Song et al. 1994	
	Burial 4	Late Classic	Simple cist	1 of 2	Powis 1994; Song 1993; Song et al. 1994	
	Burial 5	Late Classic	Simple cist	2 of 2	Powis 1994; Song 1993; Song et al. 1994	
	Burial 6	Late Classic	Simple cist	1	Powis 1994; Song et al. 1994	
					1	Powis 1994; Song et al. 1994
						1

Table 6.1. Comparative Burial Chart (continued).

Site	Burial	Time Period	Grave Type	No. of Inds.	Source
Cahal Pech	Cache 2	Late Formative	Dedicatory Tooth Deposit		Powis 1994; Song in press
	Cache 3	Terminal Preclassic	Cache		1 Song in press
	Chultun B	Late Classic			Aylesworth 1993
	Tomb 1	Late Early Classic	Elaborate crypt	1 of 2	Cheetham et al. 1993; Cheetham et al. 1994
Cahal Pech	Tomb 2	Late Classic	Stela chamber	2 of 2	Cheetham et al. 1993; Cheetham et al. 1994
				n=9 to 75	Cheetham et al. 1994; Cheetham 2004
Cahal Pech	Burial A1-B/1	Late Classic	Simple crypt	MNI=9	2 Cheetham, Awe and Glassman 1994
	Burial A1-B/2	Late Classic	Capped pit		Cheetham, Awe and Glassman 1994; Cheetham 2004
	Burial A1-B/3 (? Middle Formative		In soil on bedrock		1 Iannone 1993; Maar and Varney 1993; Schwake 1996
	Burial A1-B/3 (? Late Classic		Haphazard cist	1 of 5	1 Iannone 1993; Maar and Varney 1993
			Haphazard cist	2 of 5	1 Iannone 1994; Schwake 1996
			Haphazard cist	3 of 5	1 Iannone 1994; Schwake 1996
			Haphazard cist	4 of 5	1 Iannone 1994; Schwake 1996
			Haphazard cist	5 of 5	1 Iannone 1994; Schwake 1996
X-uul-Camil	Burial A1-B/9	Late Formative/Early Classic	Simple crypt		1 Iannone 1994; Schwake 1996
	Burial A1-B/10	Late Formative/Early Classic	Simple crypt		1 Iannone 1994; Schwake 1996
	Burial A1-B/13	Early Classic	Simple crypt		1 Iannone 1994; Schwake 1996
	Burial A1-B/11	Late Classic	Simple crypt		1 Iannone 1994; Schwake 1996
	Burial A1-B/12	Late Classic	Simple crypt		1 Iannone 1994; Schwake 1996
	Burial A1-B/7	Late Classic	Simple crypt		1 Iannone 1994; Schwake 1996
	Burial A1-B/8	Late Classic	Capped pit		1 Iannone 1994; Schwake 1996
	Burial A1-B/6	Late Classic	Simple crypt		1 Iannone 1994; Schwake 1996
	Burial A1-B/5	Late Classic	Simple crypt		1 Iannone 1994; Schwake 1996
	Burial A1-B/4	Late Classic	Head cist		1 Iannone 1994; Schwake 1996
	Burial C9-B/1	Middle Preclassic	Simple grave	1 of 2	Schwake 1996
	Chaa Creek Baking Pot	CH1-1	Early Classic	Chultun	2 of 2
Chaa Creek Ch		Early Classic to Late Classic	Chultun		4 Gray 2001; Schwake 1997
Burial 1		Late Classic ?	On floor/multiple	1 of 3	1 Lee, Helmke, Piehl, and Awe 2000
Burial 2		Late Classic ?	On floor/multiple	2 of 3	Ricketson 1931; Welsh 1988
Burial 3		Late Classic ?	On floor/multiple	3 of 3	Ricketson 1931; Welsh 1988
Burial 4		Late Classic ?	In mound/multiple	1 of 2	Ricketson 1931; Welsh 1988
Burial 5		Late Classic ?	In mound/multiple	2 of 2	Ricketson 1931; Welsh 1988
Burial 6		Late Classic ?	In surface loam	1 of 1	Ricketson 1931; Welsh 1988
Burial 7		Late Classic ?	In mound, on floor	1 of 1	Ricketson 1931; Welsh 1988
Burial 8		Late Classic ?	In mound, on floor	1 of 1	Ricketson 1931; Welsh 1988

Table 6.1. Comparative Burial Chart (continued).

Site	Burial	Time Period	Grave Type	No. of Inds.	Source
	Burial 9	Late Classic ?	In rubble	1 of 5	Ricketson 1931; Welsh 1988
	Burial 11	Late Classic ?	In rubble	2 of 5	Ricketson 1931; Welsh 1988
	Burial 12	Late Classic ?	In rubble	3 of 5	Ricketson 1931; Welsh 1988
	Burial 13	Late Classic ?	In rubble	4 of 5	Ricketson 1931; Welsh 1988
	Burial 14	Late Classic ?	In rubble	5 of 5	Ricketson 1931; Welsh 1988
	Burial 15	Late Early Classic	Elaborate crypt/tomb	1	Ricketson 1931
	Burial 10	Late Classic ?	Unexcavated		Ricketson 1931; Welsh 1988
Baking Pot	BP-Plaza-1	Late Classic (SL/NT)	in plaza floor	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BP-Plaza-2	Late Classic (SL/NT)	in plaza floor	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BP-3-1	Late Classic (SL/NT)		1	Willey et al. 1965
	BP-3-2	Late Classic (SL/NT)		1	Willey et al. 1965
	BP-3-3	Late Classic (SL/NT)		1	Willey et al. 1965
Baking Pot	Burial E-B/1	Early Classic ???	Cist	1	Piehl 1997; Aimers 1997
	Burial E-B/2	Early Classic	Cist	1	Piehl 1997; Aimers 1997
	?	Late Classic	Bench Burial	1	Aimers 2003
	Tomb 2	Late Classic	tomb	1	Audet 2003
	Cache near stel	Late Classic		1 of 2	Piehl 1997
Baking Pot	Burial 1	Late Classic	In construction fill	2 of 2	Piehl 1997
Baking Pot	Burial 164-B/1	Late Classic	Simple grave	1 of 2	Piehl 1997; Moore 1997
			Simple grave	2 of 2	Piehl 1997; Moore 1997
Baking Pot	Mound 3	Late Classic	Intrusive interment-s	1	Conlon 1993
	Burial 1	Late Classic	Simple grave	1	Powis 1993b
	Burial 2	Late Classic	Cist	1	Powis 1993b; Conlon and Powis 2004
	Burial 3	Late Classic	Simple grave	1	Powis 1993b
	Burial 4	Late Classic	Cist	1	Powis 1993b; Conlon and Powis 2004
	Burial 5	Late Classic		1	Powis 1993b
	Burial 7	Late Classic	head in pot	1	Conlon and Powis 2004
	Burial 9	Late Classic	beneath floor	1	Conlon and Powis 2004
	Burial 11	Late Classic	beneath floor	1	Conlon and Powis 2004
	Burial 12	Late Classic	beneath floor	1	Conlon and Powis 2004
CP/BP Midpoir	Burial 1	Late Classic		At least 2	Conlon and Powis 2004
	Burial 2	Late Classic		At least 2	Schubert, Kaphandy, and Garber 2001
	Burial 3	Late Classic		At least 2	Schubert, Kaphandy, and Garber 2001
Blackman Edd	Burial 4	Late Classic	stone slab crypt	4	Schubert, Kaphandy, and Garber 2001
		Late Classic??	crypt	?	Garber et al. 2004
		Late Classic??	crypt	3	Garber et al. 2004
Ontario	Burial 1 ?	Terminal Classic	in fill	1	Driver and Garber 2004

Table 6.1. Comparative Burial Chart (continued).

Site	Burial	Time Period	Grave Type	No. of Inds.	Source
Barton Ramie	BR1-1	Late Classic	Spanish Lool in mound fill	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR1-3	Late Classic	Spanish Lool single line of stone	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR1-4	Late Classic	Spanish Lool in mound fill/on floor	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR1-5	Late Classic	Spanish Lool in mound fill	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR1-6	Late Classic (SL)	in mound fill	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR1-7	Late Classic (SL/NT)	few stones, not form	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR1-9	Late to Terminal Classic	four lg. limestone slabs on terrace floor	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR1-10	Late Classic (SL)	on terrace floor	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR1-11	Late Classic (SL)	unclear	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR1-12	Late Classic (Tiger run/SL)	slabs over skeleton	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR1-13	Late Classic (Tiger run/SL)	in terrace fill	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR1-14	Late Classic (Tiger run/SL)	in terrace fill	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR1-15	Late Classic (Tiger run/SL)	in terrace fill	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR1-18	Late Classic (Tiger run/SL)	in terrace fill	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR1-19	Late Classic (Tiger run/SL)	in terrace fill	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR1-16	Late Classic (Tiger run)	slabs over skeleton	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR1-17	Late Classic (Tiger run)	in floor	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR1-20	Late Classic (Tiger run)	in terrace fill	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR1-21	Late Classic (Tiger run/SL)	under terrace wall	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR1-22	Late Classic (Tiger run/SL)	in floor	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR1-23	Late Classic (SL)	in floor	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR1-24	Late Classic (SL)	in floor/terrace	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR1-25	Late Classic (Tiger run/SL)	next to retaining wall	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR1-26	Early Classic or later	in floor	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR4-1	Late Classic (SL/NT)		1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR4-2	Late Classic (SL)	rough stones over sl	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR20-1	Late Preclassic (Mount Hope)		1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR75-1	Late Classic (TR/SL)		1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR75-2	Late Classic (SL)	on stone slab crypt c	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR75-3	Late Classic (SL)	cist/crypt (slab uprigl)	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR82-1	Late Classic (SL)		1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR123-2	Late Classic (SL)	floor fill	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR123-3	Late Classic (SL)	in fill/on floor	1*	Willey et al. 1965
	BR123-4	Late Classic (SL)	in fill/on floor	1*	Willey et al. 1965
	BR123-5	Late Classic (SL)		1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR123-6	Late Classic (SL)		1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR123-7	Late Classic (SL)	in fill/on floor	1*	Willey et al. 1965
	BR123-8	Late Classic (SL)	in fill/on floor	1*	Willey et al. 1965

Table 6.1. Comparative Burial Chart (continued).

Site	Burial	Time Period	Grave Type	No. of Inds.	Source
	BR123-9	Late Classic (SL)	in fill/on floor	1*	Willey et al. 1965
	BR123-10	Late Classic (SL)	in fill/below floor	1*	Willey et al. 1965
	BR123-11	Late Classic (SL)	lying on back of 12	M. with below	Willey et al. 1965
	BR123-12	Late Classic (SL)	in fill/below floor	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR123-13	Early Classic (early hermit: intrusive into floor fill)		1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR123-14	Early Classic (early hermit: in fill/on floor)		1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR123-15	Late Classic (SL)	in mound?	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR123-16	Late Classic (SL)	in floor fill	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR123-17	Late Classic (SL)	in fill/below floors	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR123-18	Late Classic (SL)	between floors	1*	Willey et al. 1965
	BR123-19	Early Classic (early hermitage)		1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR123-20	Late Preclassic (Floral Park-early herm)		1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR123-21	Early Classic (early hermit: in fill/below floor)		1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR123-22	Late Classic (SL)	in fill/below floor	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR123-23	Late Classic (SL)	in fill	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR123-24	Late Classic (SL)	in fill	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR123-25	Late Classic (SL)	in fill	1*	Willey et al. 1965
	BR123-26	Late Classic (SL)	in fill	1*	Willey et al. 1965
	BR123-27	Postclassic (newtown?)	in mound fill	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR123-28	Late Classic (SL)	in fill/below floor	1*	Willey et al. 1965
	BR123-29	Late Classic (SL)	in fill/below floor	1*	Willey et al. 1965
	BR123-30	Preclassic/Early Classic (e limestone slab cist)		1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR123-31	Preclassic/Early Classic (le limestone slab cist)		1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR123-32	Early Classic (hermitage)		1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR123-33	Late Classic (SL/NT)	surface	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR123-34	Late Preclassic	in fill of mound	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR123-35	Late Preclassic	in fill of mound	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR123-36	Late Classic (SL)	surface	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR124-1	Middle Preclassic	in a pottery vessel, c	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR124-2	Middle Preclassic	pottery over head an	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR124-3	Middle Preclassic	in fill/below floor	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR130-1	Late Classic (SL)	in structure fill	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR130-2	Late Classic (SL)	in structure fill	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR130-3	Late Classic (SL)	in structure fill	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR130-4	Late Classic (SL)	in fill	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR130-5	Late Classic (SL)	in fill	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR135-1	Late Classic (SL)	in fill	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR135-2	Late Classic (SL)	in fill	1	Willey et al. 1965

Table 6.1. Comparative Burial Chart (continued).

Site	Burial	Time Period	Grave Type	No. of Inds.	Source
	BR144-1	Late Classic (SL/NT)	in terrace floor	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR144-2	Late Classic (SL/NT)	in terrace floor	1*	Willey et al. 1965
	BR144-3	Late Classic (SL/NT)	in terrace floor	1*	Willey et al. 1965
	BR144-4	Late Classic (SL/NT)	in terrace floor	1*	Willey et al. 1965
	BR144-5	Late Classic (SL/NT)	in terrace floor	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR144-6	Late Classic (SL/NT)	in terrace floor	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR144-7	Late Classic (SL/NT)	in terrace floor	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR147-1	Late Classic (TR)	below court floor	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR147-2 thru 4	Late Classic (SL)	structure fill	3	Willey et al. 1965
	BR151-1	Late Classic (TR/SL)		1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR151-2	Late Classic (TR/SL)		1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR154-1	Middle Preclassic	jumble of rock over,	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR154-2	Middle Preclassic	on floor	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR154-3	Middle Preclassic	on floor	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR154-4	Middle Preclassic	on floor	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR155-1	Late Classic (SL)	on floor	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR155-2	Late Classic (SL)	below floor	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR155-3	Late Classic (SL)	under surface of moi	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR155-4	Late Classic (SL)	under surface of moi	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR155-5	Late Classic (SL)	under surface of moi	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR155-6	Late Classic (SL)	under surface of moi	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR162-1	Late Classic (SL)	under surface of moi	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR167-1	Late Classic (SL)	shallow grave in fill	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR167-2	Late Classic (SL)	shallow grave in fill	1*	Willey et al. 1965
	BR167-3	Late Classic (SL)	shallow grave in fill	1*	Willey et al. 1965
	BR167-4	Late Classic (SL)	shallow grave in fill	1*	Willey et al. 1965
	BR167-5	Late Classic (SL)	shallow grave in fill	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR167-6	Late Classic (SL)	shallow grave in fill	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR194-1	Late Classic (SL)	vessels over legs an	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR194-2	Late Classic (SL)	on sterile clay	1*	Willey et al. 1965
	BR194-3	Late Classic (SL)	on sterile clay	1*	Willey et al. 1965
	BR194-4	Late Classic (SL)	on sterile clay	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR194-5	Late Classic (SL)	on sterile clay	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR260-1	Late Classic (TR/SL)	below floor	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR260-2	Late Classic (TR/SL)	vessel and lg. bouldr	1*	Willey et al. 1965
	BR260-3	Late Classic (TR/SL)	grave pit, same pit a	1*	Willey et al. 1965
	BR260-4	Late Classic (TR/SL)	grave pit	1	Willey et al. 1965
	BR260-5	Late Classic (TR/SL)	grave pit	1	Willey et al. 1965

Table 6.1. Comparative Burial Chart (continued).

Site	Burial	Time Period	Grave Type	No. of Inds.	Source
Pook's Hill	Burial 4A-1	Near time of site abandonr	Cut into bedrock/cap	1	Helmke, Piehl, and Bassendale 2001
	Burial 4A-2	AD 400-600 (Late Early Cl:	Cut into bedrock, se:	1	Helmke, Piehl, and Bassendale 2001
	Burial 4A-3	Terminal Classic (830-950)	In core of outset stai	2	Helmke, Piehl, and Bassendale 2001
	Burial 4A-4	AD 400-600 (Late Early Cl:	In Floor 3 ballast, wi	1	Helmke, Piehl, and Bassendale 2001
	Burial 4A-5	AD 400-600 (Late Early Cl:	In core of Floor 3	1	Helmke, Piehl, and Bassendale 2001
Pook's Hill	Crypt	Late Classic	crypt under stair	1	Helmke 2000; Bassendale 2000
		Terminal Classic (830-950)	On surface of termin 1 of 2	1 of 2	Helmke, Stanchly, Piehl, and Morehart 2001
Cahal Uitz Na	Burial in Plaza	Terminal Classic (830-950)		2 of 2	Helmke, Stanchly, Piehl, and Morehart 2001
	Slate Altar Gro looted	Late Classic	cist	1	Ehret and Conlon 1999
Pacbitun	BU-C1	Late Classic	unclear-looted	3	Helmke, Cruz, Mirro, Jacobs 1999
	BU 2-1	Middle Preclassic	cist/partial crypt	1	Arendt, Song and Healy 1996
	BU 1-9	Terminal Classic	crypt	1	Healy 1990; Healy et al. 2004
	BU 2-5	Late Classic	vaulted tomb	1	Healy 1990; Healy et al. 2004
	BU 2-6	Terminal Classic	urn grave	1	Healy, Hohmann, and Powis 2004; White et al. 1993
	BU 1-5	Terminal Classic	urn grave	1	Healy, Hohmann, and Powis 2004; White et al. 1993
	BU 1-6	Late Preclassic	simple crypt	1	Song in press
	BU 1-1	Early Classic	crypt	1	White et al. 1993
	BU 2-4	Late Classic	cist	1	White et al. 1993
	BU 4-2	Late Classic	cist	1	White et al. 1993
	BU 1-7	Late Classic	simple crypt	1	White et al. 1993
	BU 2-2	Terminal Classic	cist	1	White et al. 1993
	BU 301	Terminal Classic	?	1	White et al. 1993
	BU 302	Terminal Classic	simple crypt	1	White et al. 1993
	BU 304	Terminal Classic	cist	1	White et al. 1993
	BU 305	Terminal Classic	cist	1	White et al. 1993
	BU 340	Terminal Classic	cist	1	White et al. 1993
BU 415	Terminal Classic	cist	1	White et al. 1993	
BU 472	Terminal Classic	pit	1	White et al. 1993	
BU 484	Terminal Classic	pit	1	White et al. 1993	
BU 485	Terminal Classic	?	1	White et al. 1993	
BU 486	Terminal Classic	pit	1	White et al. 1993	
BU 487	Terminal Classic	?	1	White et al. 1993	
BU 64	Terminal Classic	simple crypt	1	White et al. 1993	
Las Ruinas	BU 91-B1	Post abandonment	in fill	1	White et al. 1993
	Cache	Late Preclassic/Early Class:	simple crypt	1	Taschek and Ball 1999
Minanha	Cache	AD 260-420 Terminal Preci	lip to lip cache	1	Taschek and Ball 1999
	Cache	Late Preclassic	partial remains with i	1	Schwake 2000
	Burial 3A-B/3	Late Classic	simple crypt	1	Schwake 2001

Table 6.1. Comparative Burial Chart (continued).

Site	Burial	Time Period	Grave Type	No. of Inds.	Source
	Burial 3A-B/1	Late/Terminal Classic	tomb	at least 1	Schwake 2001
	Burial 42K-B/1	Late/Terminal Classic	grave-cist	1	Slim and Orr-Lombardo 2002
	Burial 77S-B/1	Late Classic	simple crypt	5	Schwake 2002
	Burial 77S-B/2	Late Classic	elaborate crypt	14	Schwake 2002
	91R-B/1	Late Classic ?	simple crypt	1	Schwake 2000; Prince 2000
	MRS4-M4-B/1	Late Classic	simple crypt	at least 2	Schwake 2003
	MRS4-M4-B/2	Late Classic	under stair in fill	1, probably m	Schwake 2003
	MRS4-M4-F/1	Late Classic	lip to lip cache	1	Schwake 2003
	112-B/1	Late Classic	chultun M1	1	Turuk, Seguin, Iannone 2005
	113-B/1	Late Classic	chultun M2	1	Turuk, Seguin, Iannone 2005
	Burial 53-B/1	Late Classic	in fill simple	at least 5	Zehrt and Iannone 2005
	Burial 53-B/2	Early Classic	cist/partial	1	Zehrt and Iannone 2005
Mountain Cow	Burial 1	Late Preclassic (Holmul I)	chultun	1	Weish 1988; Thompson 1931
	Burial 2	Late Preclassic (Holmul I)	chultun	1	Weish 1988; Thompson 1931
	Burial 3	Late Preclassic (Holmul I)	chultun	1	Weish 1988; Thompson 1931
	Burial 4	Late Preclassic	simple crypt	1	Weish 1988; Thompson 1931
	Burial 5	Late Preclassic	simple crypt	7	Weish 1988; Thompson 1931
	Burial 6	Late Classic	stone lined tomb	3	Weish 1988; Thompson 1931
	Burial 7	Late Classic	vaulted crypt	1	Weish 1988; Thompson 1931
	Burial 8	Late Classic	elaborate crypt	6	Weish 1988; Thompson 1931
	Burial 13	Late Classic	simple crypt	1	Thompson 1931
	Burial 10	Late Classic	simple	1	Weish 1988
	Burial 11	Late Classic	simple crypt	1	Weish 1988
	Burial 17	Late Classic	unspecified tomb	?	Weish 1988
	Burial 18	Late Classic	simple	?	Weish 1988
Caledonia	Burial A1-1	Early Classic to Early Late	tomb	9	Healy, Awe, Helmuth 1998
Caracol	D Tomb	Late Classic	tomb/vaulted chamb	1	Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
D	Upper Burial	Early Classic	tomb	1	Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
D	Lower Burial	Early Classic	tomb	maybe more	1 Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
D	On bench	Late Classic	on bench in structure	2	Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
D	western summit	Early through Late Classic	tomb, entrance on s	2	Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
D	looter deep in s	Early Classic	plastered tomb	1	Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
D	A3 tomb	Late Classic; A.D. 696	tomb	1	Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
D	Tomb 1	Late Classic	tomb	1	Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
D	Tomb 2	Late Classic	tomb	1	Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
D	Tomb 3	Late Classic (Ad 572 or AD)	tomb	1	Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
D	Tomb	Late Classic	tomb	1	Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
D	Tomb	Late Classic	tomb	3	Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994

Table 6.1. Comparative Burial Chart (continued).

Site	Burial	Time Period	Grave Type	No. of Inds.	Source
Castle D	Vaulted tomb	Late Classic	tomb		1 Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
D	Tomb	Late Classic	tomb crudely vaulted	5	Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
D	Core	Late Classic	simple, in core		1 Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
D	near steps	Late Classic	under slabs		1 Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
D	Vaulted tomb	Late Classic	tomb	2 or 3	Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
D	tomb	Late Classic	tomb	24-25	Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
D	stairs	Late Classic	simple interment		1 Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
D	in front of latest abutment	Late Classic			1 Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
D	cist beneath abutment	Late Classic	cist		1 Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
D	tomb	Late Classic	tomb		1 Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
Conchita D	below bench	Late Classic	simple burial	5	Chase and Chase 1987; Jaeger 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
Conchita D	non tomb	Late Classic	simple burial	1	Chase and Chase 1987; Jaeger 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
Conchita D	below stair	Late Classic	non-tomb	4	Chase and Chase 1987; Jaeger 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
D	western chamber	Late Classic	chamber	1	Chase and Chase 1987; Jaeger 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
D	eastern chamber	Late Classic	chamber	2	Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
D	tomb	Late Classic			Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
D	tomb	Late Classic	large tomb	9	Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
D	tomb	Early and Late Classic	tomb	3	Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
Machete	cache	Late Classic	cache		Chase and Chase 1987
D	interment	Late Classic	cut in plaza floor	1	Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
D	core burial	Late Classic	core of L3 stairs	1	Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
D	crypt (lowest)	Late Classic	crypt under stair	1	Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
D	crypt (intermedi)	Late Classic	crypt under stair	1	Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
D	crypt (upper)	Late Classic	crypt under stair	3	Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
D	tomb	Late Classic (AD 613)	tomb	1	Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
Conchita D	tomb (north)	Late Classic	tomb	6	Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
D	tomb (south)	Late Classic	tomb	1	Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
D	tomb northern side	Late Classic	tomb	1	Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
Talking trees	[chultun	Early Classic	chultun burial	1	Hunter-Tate 1994; D.Z. Chase 1994
Blanca D	chultun	Preclassic	chultun burial	3	Hunter-Tate 1994; D.Z. Chase 1994
Pato D	Burial 1	Early Classic	chultun burial	5	Hunter-Tate 1994; D.Z. Chase 1994
D	Burial 2	Early through Late Classic	chultun burial		Hunter-Tate 1994; D.Z. Chase 1994
D		Early Classic ?	chultun burial	1 or 2	Hunter-Tate 1994; D.Z. Chase 1994
Chunta D	Burial 1	Early Classic	chultun burial	1	Hunter-Tate 1994; D.Z. Chase 1994
D	Burial 2	Early through Late Classic	chultun burial	4	Hunter-Tate 1994; D.Z. Chase 1994
Pajaro-Ramonal D	chamber (upper)	Late Classic	tomb		Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
D	chamber (lower)	Late Classic	chamber	4 to 5	Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
D		Late Classic	chamber		1 Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994

Table 6.1. Comparative Burial Chart (continued).

Site	Burial	Time Period	Grave Type	No. of Inds.	Source
Tulakatuhebe	tomb	Late Classic	tomb	7 to 10	D.Z. Chase 1994; Chase and Chase 1987
D	tomb	Late Classic	tomb	1 ?	D.Z. Chase 1994; Chase and Chase 1987
D	tomb	Late Classic	tomb	1 ?	D.Z. Chase 1994; Chase and Chase 1987
D	tomb	Late Classic	tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994; Chase and Chase 1987
Northwest group	crypt	Late Classic	small crypt	1	Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
D	lower chamber	Late Classic	chamber	2	Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
D	tomb	Late Classic	tomb	3	Chase and Chase 1987; D.Z. Chase 1994
Canaa	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	more than 1	D.Z. Chase 1994
	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
	non tomb	Late Classic	tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
	non tomb	Terminal Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
	non tomb	Terminal Classic	non tomb	2	D.Z. Chase 1994
	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
	non tomb	Late to Terminal Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
	eastern basal	Late to Terminal Classic	non tomb	2	Chase and Chase 2001
	western basal	Late to Terminal Classic	tomb	5	Chase and Chase 2001
	non tomb	Terminal Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
	S.D. C168B-1	Terminal Classic	in structural fill	1	Chase and Chase 2004
	S.D. C168E-1	Early Classic	tomb	2	Chase and Chase 2004
	S.D. C168-1?	Late Preclassic/Early Classic	in terrace/non tomb	1	Chase and Chase 2004
	S.D. C168-2?	Early Classic	in terrace/non tomb	1	Chase and Chase 2004
Caracol	non tomb	Terminal Classic	non tomb	2 and 17	Chase and Chase 2002
C. Acropolis	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	3	D.Z. Chase 1994
	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	2	D.Z. Chase 1994
	tomb	Late Classic	tomb	3 or more	D.Z. Chase 1994
	tomb	Late Classic	tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
	tomb	Late Classic (700AD)	tomb	4 or more	D.Z. Chase 1994
Barrio	S.D. C169B-1	Late Classic??	on bedrock, under site	2	Chase and Chase 2004
Wooden Lintel	non tomb	Terminal Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
Caracol	non tomb	Late to Terminal Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
	non tomb	Late to Terminal Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
Hilltop	tomb	Late Classic	tomb	2	D.Z. Chase 1994
	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	3	D.Z. Chase 1994
Mosquito	tomb	Late Classic	tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
	tomb	Late Classic	tomb	2 or more	D.Z. Chase 1994
	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
Muertos	tomb	Late Classic	tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994

Table 6.1. Comparative Burial Chart (continued).

Site	Burial	Time Period	Grave Type	No. of Inds.	Source
	tomb	Late Classic	tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
J's	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
Arana	tomb	Late Classic	tomb	2	D.Z. Chase 1994
	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
Rooster	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	3	D.Z. Chase 1994
	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	2	D.Z. Chase 1994
	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
	tomb	Early Classic	tomb	5	D.Z. Chase 1994
	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
	non tomb	Early to Late Classic	non tomb	2	D.Z. Chase 1994
Chick	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	3	D.Z. Chase 1994
	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
Hen	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	2	D.Z. Chase 1994
Chachalaca	tomb	Late Classic	tomb	4	D.Z. Chase 1994
	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
Dove	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	2	D.Z. Chase 1994
Ultimo	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	2	D.Z. Chase 1994
	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
Tiger	non tomb	Early Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
Pech	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
Blanca	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	3	D.Z. Chase 1994
Rita	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
	tomb	Late Classic	tomb	2	D.Z. Chase 1994
Toucan	tomb	Early to Late Classic	tomb	2	D.Z. Chase 1994
	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	2	D.Z. Chase 1994
Cerrita	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	3	D.Z. Chase 1994
	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	2	D.Z. Chase 1994
Escoba	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
Nowhere	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
Zero	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
Dwarf	tomb	Late Classic	tomb	2	D.Z. Chase 1994
	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	5	D.Z. Chase 1994

Table 6.1. Comparative Burial Chart (continued).

Site	Burial	Time Period	Grave Type	No. of Inds.	Source
Caracol	non tomb	Terminal Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
South Acropolis	non tomb	Late to Terminal Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
	tomb	Early Classic	tomb	2	D.Z. Chase 1994
	S.D. C164B-1	Late to Terminal Classic	crypt	2	Chase and Chase 2003
	S.D. C164B-2	Late Classic	crypt	1	Chase and Chase 2003
	S.D. C164B-3	Late Classic	unlined cist	1	Chase and Chase 2003
	S.D. C164B-4	Late Classic	crude cist	1	Chase and Chase 2003
Caracol	tomb	Early to Late Classic	tomb	2	D.Z. Chase 1994
Chib	tomb	Late to Terminal Classic	tomb	4	D.Z. Chase 1994
C Group	non tomb	Late to Terminal Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	2	D.Z. Chase 1994
	S.D. C171B-2	Late/Terminal Classic	stone crypt	7	Chase and Chase 2005
	S.D. C171B-3	Late/Terminal Classic	crypt	3	Chase and Chase 2005
	S.D. C171B-6	Late/Terminal Classic	cist	1	Chase and Chase 2005
	S.D. C171B-7	Late Classic	crypt	2	Chase and Chase 2005
	S.D. C171B-8	Late Classic	in fill	1	Chase and Chase 2005
	S.D. C171B-9	Early Classic/Late Classic	tomb	2	Chase and Chase 2005
	S.D. C171C-2	Early Classic on...	tomb	2	Chase and Chase 2005
	S.D. C172C-3	Late Classic	grave	1	Chase and Chase 2005
Retiro	tomb	Late Classic	tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
Bayal	tomb	Late Classic	tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	3	D.Z. Chase 1994
	tomb	Late Classic	tomb	7	D.Z. Chase 1994
	tomb	Early Classic	tomb	2	D.Z. Chase 1994
Walled	non tomb	Late to Terminal Classic	non tomb	1 or more	D.Z. Chase 1994
	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	3	D.Z. Chase 1994
	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	2	D.Z. Chase 1994
	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
Alta	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	5 or more	D.Z. Chase 1994
Wind	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
Earth	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	2	D.Z. Chase 1994
Fire	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	3	D.Z. Chase 1994
	tomb	Late Classic	tomb	4 or more	D.Z. Chase 1994
Cuchara	tomb	Late Classic	tomb	3	D.Z. Chase 1994
Midget	tomb	Late Classic	tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994

Table 6.1. Comparative Burial Chart (continued).

Site	Burial	Time Period	Grave Type	No. of Inds.	Source
Blood	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	2	D.Z. Chase 1994
Sweat	non tomb	Late Classic	non tomb	1	D.Z. Chase 1994
Saraguate	non tomb	Late Classic	crypt?	1	Chase and Chase 1997
	tomb	Late Classic	two-room tomb	4	Chase and Chase 1997
Flattop	chamber on a c	Late Classic	chamber on chultun ?		Chase and Chase 1997
Tres Gradass	tomb on chultun	Terminal Classic	tomb on chultun	1	Chase and Chase 1997
	chultun under t	Terminal Classic	chultun under tomb	2	Chase and Chase 1997
Insectos de An	non tomb	Late Classic	burial in front of str.	2	Chase and Chase 1997
	non tomb	Late Classic	burial in front of str.	2	Chase and Chase 1997
Caracol	tomb	Late Early Classic/Early La	burial in front of str.	3	Chase and Chase 1997
	tomb	Late Classic	tomb	5	Chase and Chase 1998b
El Vez	non tomb	Late Classic	in fill above tomb	1	Chase and Chase 1998b
	non tomb	Late Classic ?	secondary	1	Chase and Chase 1998b
Valentine	non tomb	Late Classic ?	?	1	Chase and Chase 1998b
	non tomb	Late Classic	stone cist over bedrc	1	Chase and Chase 1998b
Mono	non tomb	Early Classic/Late Classic	elaborate crypt	2	Chase and Chase 1999
	non tomb	Late Classic	in boulder fill	3	Chase and Chase 2000
S. of Res. C	tomb	Early Classic/Late Classic	tomb in str.	3	Chase and Chase 2000
	tomb (caretaker)	Late Classic	tomb	at least 1	Chase and Chase 2002
Periphery	tomb	Late Classic	tomb	3	Chase and Chase 2002
	NW Cave	Late to Terminal Classic	cave burial	2	D.Z. Chase 1994
Sacul	Cave	Terminal Classic	cist	1	Laporte and Ramos 1998; Laporte et al 1997
	Ent. 182	Terminal Classic	cist	1	Laporte and Ramos 1998; Laporte et al 1997
	Ent. 175	Terminal Classic	cist	1	Laporte and Ramos 1998; Laporte et al 1997
	Ent. 183	Terminal Classic	cist	1	Laporte and Ramos 1998; Laporte et al 1997
	Ent. 184	Late Classic	grave	1	Laporte and Ramos 1998; Laporte et al 1997
	Ent. 191	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte and Ramos 1998; Laporte et al 1997
	Ent. 190	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte and Ramos 1998; Laporte et al 1997
	Ent. 177	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte and Ramos 1998; Laporte et al 1997
	Ent. 178	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte and Ramos 1998; Laporte et al 1997
	Ent. 176	Terminal Classic	cist	1	Laporte and Ramos 1998; Laporte et al 1997
	Ent. 193	Late Classic	cist	2	Laporte and Ramos 1998; Laporte et al 1997
	Ent. 194	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte and Ramos 1998
	Ent. 223	Late Classic	grave	1	Laporte and Ramos 1998
	Ent. 212	Late Classic	plaza fill	1	Laporte and Ramos 1998
	Ent. 214	Late Classic	plaza fill	7	Mejia 2001
Calzada Mopa	Ent. 213	Terminal Classic	fill of structure	1	Aguirre 2001
	Ent. 213	Terminal Classic	fill of structure	1	Aguirre 2001
	Ent. 220	Terminal Classic	grave in fill	1	Laporte et al 2001
	Ent. 221	Terminal Classic	in floor fill	1	Laporte et al 2001

Table 6.1. Comparative Burial Chart (continued).

Site	Burial	Time Period	Grave Type	No. of Inds.	Source
Chilonche	Ent. 222	Late Classic	in center of plaza flo.	1	Laporte et al 2001
	Ent. 188	Late Classic	grave	1	Quezada, Chocon, y Amaya 1997
	Ent. 189	Terminal Classic	on floor	1	Quezada, Chocon, y Amaya 1997
	Ent. 181	Late Classic	on floor	1	Quezada, Chocon, y Amaya 1997
	Ent. 179	Terminal Classic	in BUKTE	?	Chocon 1997
	Ent. 137	Late Preclassic	grave (sub floor)	3	Laporte 1996; Roldan 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 148	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte and Alvarado 1997
	Ent. 120	Terminal Classic	cist	1	Laporte and Alvarado 1997
	Ent. 001	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte, Alvarado 1997; Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 002	Preclassic	cist	2	Laporte, Alvarado 1997; Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
Copoja	Ent. 150	Terminal Classic	cist	1	Laporte and Alvarado 1997
	Ent. 185	Early Classic	chultun	1	Laporte and Alvarado 1997
	Ent. 158	Late Classic	cist	2	Laporte and Alvarado 1997
	Ent. 123	Late Classic	grave	1	Laporte and Alvarado 1997
	Ent. 124	Late Classic	cist	At least 1	Laporte and Alvarado 1997
	Ent. 126	Late Classic	cist	At least 1	Laporte and Alvarado 1997
	Ent. 056	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 064	Late Classic	grave	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 065	Early Classic (possibly)	grave	3	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 066	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
Curucuitz	Ent. 122	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 125	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 128	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 129	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 146	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 147	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 149	Late Classic	grave	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 151	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 152	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 153	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
El Chal	Ent. 154	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 159	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 160	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 161	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 067	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 068	Late Preclassic	grave	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 069	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 070	Terminal Classic	midden	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996

Table 6.1. Comparative Burial Chart (continued).

Site	Burial	Time Period	Grave Type	No. of Inds.	Source
El Chapayal El Ocote	Ent. 072	Terminal Classic	midden	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 073	Terminal Classic	midden	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 078	Terminal Classic	midden	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 127	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 136	Late Classic	plaza fill	3	Laporte 1996; Morales 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 155	Terminal Classic	fill (relleno?) plaza	1	Laporte 1996; Morales 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 156	Terminal Classic	fill (relleno?)	1	Laporte 1996; Morales 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 047	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 048	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 003	Late Classic	grave	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
Ixac	Ent. 011	Late Classic	chamber	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 015	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 034	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 035	Late Preclassic	cist?	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 037	Terminal Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 038	Late Preclassic	grave	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 039	Terminal Classic	grave	2	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 040	Terminal Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 044	Terminal Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 045	Terminal Classic	cisst	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
Ixcoxol	Ent. 130	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 131	Late Classic	grave	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 132	Late Classic	grave	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 133	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 134	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 135	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 020	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 021	Late Classic	chultun	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 046	Late Classic	?	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 079	Early Classic	grave	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
Ixek	Ent. 080	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 081	Late Classic	grave	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 083	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 084	Late Classic	on structure?	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 090	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 101	Late Preclassic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 109	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 110	Early Classic?	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996

Table 6.1. Comparative Burial Chart (continued).

Site	Burial	Time Period	Grave Type	No. of Inds.	Source
Ixxkun	Ent. 111	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 112	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 113	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 114	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 050	Late Classic	fill (relleno?)	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 057	Early Classic	grave	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 060	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 166	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 167	Late Classic	cist	2	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 168	Terminal Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 169	Late Classic	grave	2	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996
	Ent. 242	Late Classic	grave at foot of wall	1	Reyes and Laporte 2004
	Ent. 243	Late Preclassic/Early Classic	grave at foot of wall	2	Reyes and Laporte 2004
	Ent. 244	Late Classic	in fill?	1	Reyes and Laporte 2004
	Ent. 245	Late Classic	in fill?	1	Reyes and Laporte 2004
	Ent. 246	Late Classic	in front of wall of eas	1	Reyes and Laporte 2004
	Ent. 253	Late Classic	chultun	3	Reyes and Laporte 2004
	Ent. 260	Late Classic	in str. 2 fill	1	Reyes and Laporte 2004
	Ent. 247	Late Classic	cist	1	Reyes and Laporte 2004
	Ent. 251	Late Classic	?	1	Reyes and Laporte 2004
	Ent. 250	Late Preclassic	chultun	4	Reyes and Laporte 2004
	Ent. 258	Late Classic	cist	1	Reyes and Laporte 2004
	Ent. 259	Late Classic	in fill	1	Reyes and Laporte 2004
	Ent. 252	Late Classic	cist in front of str	1	Reyes and Laporte 2004
	Ent. 232	Terminal Classic	in fill (south str)	1	Reyes and Laporte 2004
Ent. 004	Early Classic	cist	1	Laporte et al 2004	
Ent. 005	Terminal Classic	cist	2	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996	
Ent. 006	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996	
Ent. 009	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996	
Ent. 010	Late Classic	chamber	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996	
Ent. 012	Early Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996	
Ent. 013	Late Classic	cist	2	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996	
Ent. 014	Late Classic	chamber	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996	
Ent. 016	Late Classic	cist (looted)	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996	
Ent. 022	Terminal Classic	grave	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996	
Ent. 023	Terminal Classic	cist	2	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996	
Ent. 024	Terminal Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996	
Ent. 025	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler-Blos 1996	

Ixtonton

Table 6.1. Comparative Burial Chart (continued).

Site	Burial	Time Period	Grave Type	No. of Inds.	Source
	Ent. 026	Terminal Classic	grave	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 028	Terminal Classic	grave	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 029	Late Classic	chamber	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 030	Terminal Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 031	Terminal Classic	simple grave	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 032	Terminal Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 033	Terminal Classic	grave	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 041	Terminal Classic	fill (relleno?)	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 042	Terminal Classic	grave	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 043	Terminal Classic	grave	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 049	Terminal Classic	grave	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 051	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 052	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 053	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 054	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 055	Terminal Classic	chamber	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 062	Terminal Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 063	Terminal Classic	grave	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996; Diaz et al 1996
	Ent. 076	Terminal Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 082	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 085	Terminal Classic	grave	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 086	Late Classic	grave	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 087	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 088	Terminal Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 089	Terminal Classic	grave	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 091	Late Classic	grave	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 092	Terminal Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 093	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 094	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 095	Terminal Classic	container	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 096	Terminal Classic	?	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 102	Terminal Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 103	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 104	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 105	Terminal Classic	fill (relleno?)	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 106	Terminal Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 107	Terminal Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996
	Ent. 108	Terminal Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Blos 1996

Table 6.1. Comparative Burial Chart (continued).

Site	Burial	Time Period	Grave Type	No. of Inds.	Source
	Ent. 115	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Bloss 1996
	Ent. 116	Late Classic		1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Bloss 1996
	Ent. 117	Late Classic	fill (relleno?)	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Bloss 1996
	Ent. 118	Terminal Classic	grave	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Bloss 1996
	Ent. 119	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Bloss 1996
	Ent. 138	Late Classic	Looted ?	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Bloss 1996
	Ent. 139	Late Classic	Looted ?	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Bloss 1996
	Ent. 140	Terminal Classic	Looted ?	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Bloss 1996
	Ent. 141	Terminal Classic	Looted ?	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Bloss 1996
	Ent. 142	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Bloss 1996
	Ent. 143	Late Classic	Looted ?	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Bloss 1996
	Ent. 144	Late Classic	Looted ?	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Bloss 1996
	Ent. 145	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Bloss 1996
	Ent. 233	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte et al 2003
	Ent. 237	Late Classic	looted	1	Laporte et al 2003
	Ent. 235	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte et al 2003
Ixtutz	Ent. 157	Late Classic	indet. Looted	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Bloss 1996
	Ent. 162	Terminal Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Bloss 1996
	Ent. 163	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Bloss 1996
	Ent. 164	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Bloss 1996
	Ent. 172	Late Classic	Looted ?	2	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Bloss 1996
	Ent. 173	Late Classic		at least 1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Bloss 1996
	Ent. 174	Late Classic	cist	at least 1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Bloss 1996
	Ent. 165	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Bloss 1996
La Puente	Ent. 171	Late Classic	Looted ?	2	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Bloss 1996
Moquena	Ent. 234	Late Classic	grave in fill of str.	1	Laporte, Rivera, y Burgos 2003
	Ent. 236	Late Classic	cist with stones (sim	1	Laporte, Rivera, y Burgos 2003
Pueblito (Dolor)	Ent. 239	Late Classic	in floor grave	1	Laporte, Rivera, y Burgos 2003
	Ent. 241	Late Classic	in floor grave	1	Chocon and Laporte 2004
Sukche	Ent. 007	Late Classic	chamber	1	Chocon and Laporte 2004
	Ent. 008	Late Classic	chamber	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Bloss 1996
	Ent. 074	Late Classic	in fill	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Bloss 1996
	Ent. 075	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Bloss 1996
	Ent. 097	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Bloss 1996
	Ent. 098	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Bloss 1996
	Ent. 099	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Bloss 1996
	Ent. 100	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Bloss 1996
	Ent. 121	Late Classic	?	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Bloss 1996

Table 6.1. Comparative Burial Chart (continued).

Site	Burial	Time Period	Grave Type	No. of Inds.	Source
Tesik	Ent. 019	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Bloss 1996
	Ent. 036	Late Classic	cist ?	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Bloss 1996
	Ent. 058	Terminal Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Bloss 1996
	Ent. 059	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Bloss 1996
	Ent. 017	Late Preclassic	cist	7	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Bloss 1996
	Ent. 018	Late Early Classic/Early La	cist	3	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Bloss 1996
Yaltutu	Ent. 061	Late Classic	cist	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Bloss 1996
Ikkun	Ent. 027	Early Classic	cave	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Bloss 1996
	Ent. 077	Terminal Classic	cave	2	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Bloss 1996
	Ent. 170	Terminal Classic	cave	1	Laporte 1996; Tiesler Bloss 1996
	Ent. 255	Late Preclassic	cave	1	Brady et al. 2003
	Ent. 256	Late Preclassic	cave	4 to 7 inds	Brady et al. 2003
	Ent. 257	Late Preclassic	cave	multiple inds	Brady et al. 2003
Actun Petz	Room D	Early Classic (from 2 vess	Cave Burial	6 Inds.	Healy, Song, and Conlon 1996
Actun Chapat	Near entrance II		Cave Burial		Ferguson 2000
Actun Tunichil	Burial 1	Late Classic	Cave Burial	1	Awe, Griffith, Gibbs 1997; Gibbs 1997
	Burial 2		Cave Burial		Gibbs 1997
	Burial 3		Cave Burial		Gibbs 1997
Actun Uayazb:	Burial 3		Cave Burial	1 of 2	Gibbs 1997
	Burial 4		Cave Burial	2 of 2	Gibbs 1997
	Burial 5		Cave Burial	1 of 2	Gibbs 1997
	Burial 6		Cave Burial	2 of 2	Gibbs 1997
	Burial 7		Cave Burial		Gibbs 1997
	Burial 8		Cave Burial		Gibbs 1997
	Burial 98-1		Cave Burial-simple c		Gibbs 1997
	Burial 98-2		Cave Burial-partial c		Gibbs 1997
Actun Uayazb:	Burial 98-3		Cave Burial-cist		Ferguson and Gibbs 1999
	Burial 98-4		Cave Burial-cist		Ferguson and Gibbs 1999
	Burial 98-5		Cave Burial-crypt		Ferguson and Gibbs 1999
	Burial 98-6		Cave Burial-simple		Ferguson and Gibbs 1999
	In Cave		Random cave remai		Ferguson and Gibbs 1999
	Burial 1		Cave Burial		Halperin, Gibbs, Hodgman 2001
Actun Nak Bet	Burial 2	Late Classic	Cave Burial		Halperin, Gibbs, Hodgman 2001
	Burial 3	Late Classic	Cave Burial		Halperin, Gibbs, Hodgman 2001
	Burial 1	Proto through Late Classic	Cave Burial	3 Inds.	Halperin, Gibbs, Hodgman 2001
Barton Creek (Burial 1	Proto through Late Classic	Cave Burial		Mirro and Mirro 2001
	Burial BC24	Proto through Late Classic	Cave Burial		Mirro and Mirro 2001

Table 6.1. Comparative Burial Chart (continued).

Site	Burial	Time Period	Grave Type	No. of Inds.	Source
	Burial BC25	Proto through	Cave Burial	1	Mirro and Mirro 2001
	Burial BC22	Late Classic	Cave Burial	1	Mirro and Mirro 2001
Barton Creek	Burial BC27	Late Classic	Cave Burial	1	Mirro and Mirro 2001
	Burial BC26	Late Classic	Cave Burial	1	Mirro and Mirro 2001
Barton Creek	Burial BC13	Late Classic	Cave Burial	1	Mirro and Mirro 2001
Barton Creek	Burial BC14		Cave Burial	1	Mirro and Mirro 2001
Barton Creek	Burial BC12		Cave Burial	1	Mirro and Mirro 2001
	Burial BC1-4		Cave Burial		
	Burial BC5-9	Late Classic	Cave Burial	MNI=6	Mirro and Mirro 2001
Barton Creek			Cave Burial	MNI=5	Mirro and Mirro 2001
Actun Halal			Cave Burial	MNI=9	Mirro and Mirro 2001
Actun Yaxteel, Cluster 8			Cave Burial	1	Griffith and Morehart 2001
			Cave Burial		Mirro and Halperin 2000
			Cave Burial	1	Owen and Gibbs 1999
			Cave Burial	3	Owen and Gibbs 1999
			Cave Burial	1	Owen and Gibbs 1999
			Cave Burial	8	Owen and Gibbs 1999

VII

Mortuary Archaeology at Minanha

The previous chapter situates the Minanha mortuary data within the wider regional area. The frequency of multiple interment at Minanha places it within a system of similar mortuary behavior stretching from the central Petén site of Tikal, all the way to the Vaca Plateau capital of Caracol. Within the site itself, however, there are critical differences in mortuary practice according to social status. Three levels of status position were identified at Minanha using settlement location, degree of elaboration of architecture, and associated portable material items. The three strata were identified as apical or ruling elites, lesser elites, and commoners. Through a series of ritual caches in association with a mortuary shrine, the apical elite at Minanha establish continuity to the ritual practices of the past ruling elite at the site. The ruling elite mortuary behavior is public and politically motivated to emphasize their right to rule. The lesser elite at Minanha engage in a very different sort of mortuary behavior. They focus on the creation of a group identity through a strategy of multiple interment that creates and emphasizes a special occupational status for the group. They inter their important dead in a re-enterable elaborate crypt, and have potential sacrifice victims interred in a position of deference near this group crypt. The mortuary activities of these lesser elites serve as a strategy for the group to increase their access to power at the site, at the same time as they distance themselves from the commoners. Finally, the commoners at Minanha enact yet another pattern of mortuary behavior. They bury their dead collectively but without the creation of a group identity associated with an occupational specialization. They also engage in

caching practices that are very widespread in scope. These practices, such as the offering of human fingers in lip-to-lip cache vessels, are seen in a broad geographic distribution among commoners and lesser elites at sites in the Vaca Plateau and Belize Valley. These ritual actions represent a folk type tradition of ritual practice. The commoners show evidence through their mortuary behavior of a deliberate attempt to emphasize their connection to local ritual practices. Although their access to materials is restricted compared to members of other social strata at the site, the commoners do engage in practices on a small scale that are site-wide, such as in the use of slate in association with burial.

It is perhaps unexpected that the mortuary behavior from the three different strata-associated contexts at Minanha show significant differences. These are distinct enough to interpret the mortuary behavior of the various groups of people in the Minanha community as the result of diverse agentive strategies during a time of social and political uncertainty at the site. Ritual behavior is often defined as conservative, it remains internally consistent throughout long periods of time. There is coherence to mortuary practices at Minanha and in the rest of the central Maya Lowlands through time. Nonetheless, at particular times and in particular places, variation in ritual practice emerges. For Minanha, the Late and Terminal Classic periods were a time of uncertainty (Iannone 2005). As this research shows, one strategy to deal with this uncertainty was for particular community groups to use the ritual processes associated with death as a way to maintain, bolster and negotiate their social and political position in a rapidly shifting sociopolitical landscape. This chapter discusses the interpretation of the different

mortuary contexts at Minanha, and what the excavations ultimately reveal about mortuary behavior at the site.

The Maintenance of Regional Tradition: Commoner Mortuary Practice

The mortuary practices of the commoners at Minanha, evidenced by the material remains associated with the MRS4 group in the distant periphery, are distinct from the practices of both elite groups at the site. The most important clue to commoner mortuary practice is the lip-to-lip cache vessels containing a single human finger that were found on top of the formal interment space associated with the eastern structure of the group. These finger pots are not common in any of the areas discussed in Chapter 6, but they are widely distributed. Finger pots such as the one at MRS4 at Minanha actually occur widely and are known from the Belize Valley sites of Zopilote (associated with Cahal Pech) and Las Ruinas de Arenal (just on the fringes of the Vaca Plateau), from the Vaca Plateau sites of Machete (at Caracol) and Mountain Cow, and also are known from the southeastern Petén site of Chilonché (Chase and Chase 1987, Cheetham 2004, Cheetham et al. 1994, Chocón 1997, Taschek and Ball 1999, Thompson 1931). Because this ritual practice is relatively rare, has a geographic occurrence that transcends other noted patterns of ritual mortuary behavior, and also because it occurs at the lower levels of the social status hierarchy at each site, it is interpreted to be part of a generalized folk tradition of sacrifice associated with mortuary ritual.

One other interesting aspect of the commoner mortuary assemblage at Minanha is the presence of a Mount Maloney cache vessel in the same location as the lip-to-lip

vessels. Just as the Zacatel polychrome vase is seen as a connecting link between elites at the site of Minanha and their peers in the central Petén, the Mount Maloney vessel may have been acquired via peer networks connecting commoners in the Belize Valley to those at Minanha. Because Taschek and Ball (2003:378) suggest that the production loci for Mount Maloney vessels was situated within the Belize Valley, and because Mount Maloney vessels do not occur in elite ritual contexts at Minanha, this network of contact must have been a direct one between commoners. What is most interesting about this is that the focus of commoner interaction and ritual practice is completely distinct from the focus of elite interaction and ritual practice. The separation of the different categories of social strata at the site is confirmed through these very different formats of mortuary behavior.

One important aspect of commoner mortuary ritual at Minanha is that they too were engaged in the practice of multiple interment. The simple crypt MRS4-M3 (Burial MRS4-M3-B/1), similar to Burial 77S-B/1 in Group S, was situated at the base of the eastern mortuary shrine. The remains of two individuals were found within this crypt. In addition, the remains of numerous individuals stretched from the physical boundaries of the MRS4-M3-B/1 crypt underneath the building. Unlike the burials in Group S however, the multiple burials associated with Structure MRS4-M3 lacked associated grave goods. This absence of materials is a significant difference between the commoners and elites at the site.

There is some ephemeral evidence at MRS4-M3 to support the idea that the commoners were at least aware of the ritual actions going on in the site center. The presence of two items of material culture located above the capstones of Burial MRS4-

M3-1 indicates this awareness. In Group A in the site center, there is a stela monument made out of slate, and in the royal residential acropolis at Group J, some slate capstones were found during the British Museum excavations of the 1920s (Joyce 1927:323). The Group S crypt at the base of Structure 77S had a single slate capstone in the south end of the crypt. The MRS4-M3-B/1 crypt does not have a slate capstone, but there is a small piece of slate (approximately 15 cm long) placed on top of the limestone capstone at the south end of the burial. Without making too much of a single piece of unmodified slate, the presence of the slate and its placement above the south end of the MRS4-M3-B/1 crypt is significant. The commoners in the MRS4 periphery had very little access to ritual material wealth, as evidenced by the paucity of grave goods associated with the MRS4-M3 burials. Nonetheless, they were aware of the ritual activities at the rest of the site, and strove to emulate some practices of the elites. It is unclear what the significance of slate at the south end of burial chambers was, but this practice is seen across all strata at the site.

A similar strategy of emulation in ritual practice can be seen through the presence of another class of material item, smashed ceramic *incensario* fragments. Smashed fragments of flanged *incensarios* are found in association with Structure 3A in the site core. These tend to have decorations that depict the Jaguar Sun God of the Night deity. In Group S, there were also smashed *incensario* fragments found above the crypt in front of the structure. These were not the same flanged *incensario* fragments as those seen in Group A, but rather, they were a crude form of *incensario* with design elements that depict jaguar pelts. At MRS4-M3, in the periphery, there are a few smashed *incensario* fragments of an even cruder type that depict a jaguar pelt motif. Of course, the function

of *incensarios* is to burn incense. Caution should be exercised in attributing the presence of incensario fragments at all ritual contexts across the site to some deeper meaning. The presence of *incensarios* could simply confirm that incense was being burned as part of the ceremonies associated with mortuary ritual.

In sum, one of the most distinct features of commoner mortuary practice at Minanha is that they lacked many of the material items found in association with the deceased of higher status groups. Some of the material items they did have were acquired through relationships with individuals in the Belize Valley, and utilized within a framework of traditional ritual practice. These traditions can be found at sites in the Belize Valley, Vaca Plateau, and southeastern Petén in lower status contexts. Importantly, the commoners at the site were not engaged in strategic group-identity building activities, nor were they concerned with the maintenance of their status position as commoners via their mortuary practices.

Representation of Group Identity: Lesser Elite Mortuary Practice

I argue that the mortuary assemblage from Group S at Minanha, a lesser elite context, is an example of a corporate or lineage group promoting a specific group identity as a status-generating strategy. These lesser elites deliberately chose to submerge individual identity, and instead utilized multiple interment as a means to create a group identity. This representation of group solidarity and identity served to bolster the overall status of the group members because it distanced them from commoners and other lesser elites, and raised their prestige so they were situated closer to the apical elites at the site.

This strategy emerged at Minanha in the Late Classic because the ruling elite held tenuous control over the site, and it was a time when lesser elites had an opportunity to gain a larger proportion of status in the social status hierarchy. Iannone (2005) has discussed how during the late 7th through 8th Century, an intrusive political body briefly set up a royal court at Minanha. This court could not maintain longevity. The decline of the political body coincided with the renewed identity and status building activities of the lesser elite at the site, as evidenced by the materials recovered from Group S.

In Chapter 2, I discussed Castells (2000:8) three categories of identity building: legitimizing, resistance, and project identities. In particular, I discussed that the most appropriate way to look at identity building among lesser elites is through his notion of project identities. In the case of Group S at Minanha, lesser elites marshaled a project identity through the inclusion of a particular assemblage of mortuary furnishings acquired via a heterarchical exchange network. Specifically, they emphasized their group function, or the occupational specialization of the group, as scribes to increase the distance between themselves and other lesser elites, and decrease the distance between themselves and the ruling elites. This can be stated definitively because of the deliberate choices they made in the interment of their dead. They offered the most sacred of things---human life--to the group of ancestors (in the form of the multiple interment in front of the structure, which was deposited at a single time). This erased individual identity in favor of a calculated group identity. It also emphasized items of material culture related to networks in the central Petén.

By choosing these ritual acts over others in the repertoire of mortuary behavior present at the site, the Group S lesser elites claimed a specific group identity. They could

have focused on individual identity in the interment of the dead, they could have used local items of material culture to inter as offerings to the dead, they could have utilized caching practices similar to elsewhere at the site. But the excavations in Group S show that they did not. A closer examination of the data from Group S, which was presented in Chapter 5, will clarify these interpretations.

Group S is situated approximately 200 meters to the southeast of the site epicenter. The location of the group, the size and elaboration of the architecture, and the recovered items of material culture confirm the group's designation as an elite complex. The fact that the group is spatially removed from the epicenter and does not reach the level of elaboration of the epicentral elite architecture, indicates that the status of the occupants is that of lesser elites rather than apical, ruling elites. In a strict emulation model, with corresponding top-down centralized control of access to utilitarian and prestige goods, the expected pattern of mortuary representation for the important individuals from Group S would be a copy of epicentral elite mortuary patterns. In this model, similar material items, albeit less in number and quality, would be expected to be found in burial assemblages. Iannone (2005:31-32) has outlined a complex of architectural and interment traits in the site epicenter that stylistically parallel those seen at the site of Caracol. Broadly, the Group S mortuary pattern fits within this structure, however, significant materials were recovered that did not emulate the patterns seen in the site epicenter.

Structure 77S, the central pyramid of the E-group complex of Group S, has two interment loci associated with it. The first of these (Burial 77S-B/1) is a simple crypt burial underneath the terminal floor, located at the base of the structure. The remains of at

least nine individuals were interred in this grave during the construction of the building in the Late Classic Period. The chamber housed relatively few grave goods. This paucity of grave goods relates to the status of the individuals within the chamber, and corroborates the idea that they served as offerings themselves to the more important ancestors interred within the structure proper.

The second interment location (Burial 77S-B/2) consists of an elaborate crypt within the 77S pyramid. In the northeast corner of the chamber, an entryway slants upwards to the north, ending in a large capstone that served as a permanent point of access to the crypt. The remains of at least 15 individuals were found within the chamber, along with numerous grave goods. The presence of the open access point, as well as the dispersed nature of the human remains (with some articulated in an extended position, and others, disarticulated and displaced to the sides of the chamber) together indicate that the individuals may have been interred in the chamber at different times.

Of the numerous shell, bone, ceramic, and lithic items included as grave goods in the chamber, a particular sub-set of items is of particular interest. Because of the dispersed nature of the human remains in the chamber, individual grave goods could not be associated with particular sets of remains, with the exception of specific items of personal adornment. This set of related materials can be seen as an offering to all of the individuals inside the chamber, creating and emphasizing their collective identity. This is a unique strategy of representation particular to lesser elites. The items of interest recovered from the chamber include a painted polychrome cylinder vase, two miniature flask-shaped vessels, and two specially modified pieces of conch shell (Figures 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3) .

The polychrome vessel, centrally located along the west wall of the chamber, is a member of the Zacatel Cream polychrome variety, with characteristic bands of pseudoglyphs just under the rim, and the main body divided into repetitive design quarters. The Zacatel Cream polychromes date to between A.D. 672 and 830 (Reents-Budet 1994:328), and were produced in the Northern Petén Lowlands of Guatemala, in the general region of Nakbé. Two attributes of this vessel are particularly interesting: the pseudoglyph text just beneath the rim, and the loci of production of the vessel. The presence of pseudoglyphs, rather than readable glyphs, indicates that the painter of the vessel was illiterate. The individual did recognize the power inherent in script, because true script is what the pseudoglyphs serve to emulate. Thus, although the artisan may have been a member of the elite, he did not have access to the knowledge that apical or ruling elites would. The fact that the vessel is from the northern Petén is also interesting considering the pattern at the Minanha site core of stylistic emulation of the southern city of Caracol (Iannone 2005). In concert, these attributes indicate that the lesser elites of Group S at Minanha had access to prestige goods from status equals, not at Caracol, but in the Petén. This system of exchange may have been characterized as a trade or a gift relationship, but nonetheless, it operated outside of the centralized control of the apical elites at the site.

The other interesting artifacts found in contextual association with the polychrome included the two miniature ceramic flasks and two worked conch shell pieces. One of the flasks is plain, but the other has an elaborate face molded on one side, a repetitive pattern of pseudo-glyphs, and molded shoulder holes that allow for the suspension of the vessel without spilling the contents. Several Early Classic examples of similar vessels from Copán, El Cerén, Uaxactún, and Aguateca contained pigment, thus

these vessels likely had the same function (Reents-Budet 1994:68, 214-215). The conch shell artifacts consist of a flattened scoop-like piece of shell and a worked central element of a conch shell (Figure 5.3). Although crude, the first could have served as a pigment holder, while the second may have served in the application of pigment. Numerous depictions of scribes on painted pottery show them with a brush for applying pigment in one hand and a flattened conch shell pigment holder in the other (Figure 7.1; Reents-Budet 1994:36). There are even very specific depictions of the tool used to apply pigment. This tool or stylus is characterized by a rigid form that is clutched differently than a brush (Reents-Budet 1994:41). Very few examples of either the pigment holder, brush, or stylus have been recovered archaeologically. The conch shell implements from this interment in Structure 77S at Minanha seem to comprise an additional rare archaeological example of the tool kit of an artisan.

The ceramic flasks served as more permanent pigment storage vessels, the shell pigment holder and stylus served in the application of pigment to ceramic, wood, or stucco media, and the painted polychrome may represent a valued gift from distant artisans in the Petén. That these items were interred as part of the mortuary furnishings of the main individuals in Group S indicates a deliberate attempt to represent and identify the deceased in their role as artisans. This process of representation emphasizes the horizontal ties between lesser elites rather than vertical links to apical elites. At least some of the materials, as well as the notion of being part of a special artisan classification, came via a heterarchical relationship outside the established structural hierarchy of the site.

The example discussed above is not a unique occurrence, thus the model has predictive value for describing lesser elite struggles for status recognition. In at least two other nearby cases, lesser elites have emphasized a functional specialization through mortuary assemblages to increase their own level of status. The practice may have great antiquity, because non-apical elites at the site of Zubin, a satellite site connected to the Belize Valley center of Cahal Pech, utilized this form of mortuary representation during the Late Preclassic/ Early Classic transition (Iannone 1993:53). At that small site, a single individual was interred with an assemblage of ritual paraphernalia indicative of his importance as a shaman or ritual specialist (Iannone 1993:53). At the site of Pusilhá in southern Belize, an individual was interred in a Late or Terminal Classic crypt with a unique assemblage of artifacts. The spatial location of the crypt is in a small pyramidal structure in a plaza group proximal to the large elite acropolis of the site. The unique assemblage of associated grave goods includes a pyrite mirror, a slate paddle, and a limestone baton, suggesting the elite status of the interred individual (Braswell et al. 2004:50). Although the functional specialization suggested by these objects is unknown, they could represent warrior status or refer to warfare. Other details, such as the location of the group, the size of the structure, and the lesser elite status of the interred is similar to both the Zubin and Minanha examples.

As discussed in Chapter 2, apical elites at the Petén site of Tikal utilized a similar representation strategy for a legitimizing identity. The kings depicted themselves on stone monuments engaged in particular occupational roles for the community. For non-apical or lesser elites, permanent representations in stone monuments are not typical. Nonetheless, the mortuary assemblage from Structure 77S at Minanha could function in

the same way, despite the fact that completely different classes of material items are represented. There is a similarity in the goal of emphasizing a specialized social role. Specifically, both stela monuments and mortuary assemblages constitute the physical remains of identity creation by different groups in the status hierarchy.

Social Memory and Community: Apical Elite Mortuary Practice

In Chapter 2, I outlined a series of characteristics that indicate a ritual material assemblage was used in the process of social memory construction (Figure 2.1). I contend that the ritual remains associated with the apical elite at Minanha, recovered during the excavations in association with the E-group, Structure 3A in the site core, fulfill each of these requirements, and constitute a cogent example of the ritual use of cultural memory as a strategy to maintain rulership over the polity at a time of particular unrest. As discussed in Chapter 4, the Late and Terminal Classic periods at Minanha saw the creation of a royal elite acropolis at the site, and a subsequent burial of this royal compound (Iannone 2005). The series of caches in front of Structure 3A fulfill the requirements of a cultural remembering event: 1) they have temporal longevity, 2) they were intersubjective, or created by more than a single individual, 3) the cached items themselves served to mediate the recollection, 4) the legitimation of those in power was the goal to create a usable past, 5) the caches show that a great feat of remembering occurred, and 6) the vertical alignment of caches serve as a spatial referent to accommodate group recall.

The focus of these investigations is Structure 3A, the eastern shrine structure of the E-Group, located in Plaza A. A T-shaped, vaulted elaborate crypt or tomb sat in the center of Structure 3A, but unfortunately, it had been looted prior to these investigations. The T-shaped tomb in Structure 3A is the most elaborate mortuary context known from the site so far. Because of this, the individuals who lived in and ruled from the elite acropolis must have been buried at this location, in the large public access area of the site core. In front of Structure 3A, three stela monuments were found. The central of these was a deliberately broken slate stela aligned axially with the building. It was flanked by two limestone monuments that were also deliberately broken. Between the monuments and the building itself, a series of aligned caches was located.

The first of these (Feature 3A-F/1), sits just atop the penultimate floor within the terminal plaza floor. The feature consisted of a circular alignment of cutstones that enclosed a termination cache. Within the stones was a Belize Red: Belize Variety dish with rattle feet. This vessel had been deliberately smashed at the time of deposition. There were also two halves of two broken granite *manos*. Finally, there were some raw slate fragments, pottery fragments and bulk chert lithics found within the enclosed cache context (Schwabe 1999:50). This feature was placed at the time of the construction of the terminal phase of architecture (the Late Classic period, which for Minanha dates from A.D. 700 to 800). The offering terminated the use of the penultimate phase of construction, as seen by its placement slightly cutting into the penultimate floor (Schwabe 1999:50). It is interesting to note that this cache is in what would normally be the expected location for a cache: on the penultimate floor, just in front of the terminal architecture.

Immediately beneath Feature 3A-F/1, within the ante-penultimate floor, but protruding into the penultimate floor, another cache was located. Designated Feature 3A-F/3, it consists of several pieces of slate lining the hole of the cache enclosure. Within this was a large prismatic blade fragment, two utilized flakes of pink chert, and two chert eccentric lithics. This cache dates to the Late Classic Period (A.D. 700-800), and is both a termination and a dedicatory offering. It can be seen as a termination of the ante-penultimate living surface, at the same time it is dedicatory towards the penultimate construction. The fact that there are relatively rare and mostly complete items within the cache further suggest a dedicatory function.

Approximately 80 centimeters below this, another cache was found (Feature 3A-F/4). This deposit was situated within the dry core fill of the rather thick ante-penultimate floor. This fill sat atop a tamped earth layer of clay-like soil. The deposit consisted of an inverted, complete, but shattered Sierra Red: Society Hall Variety vessel. This is part of a Terminal Preclassic complex of ceramic ware, thus the deposit dates to approximately A.D. 1-250. Beneath the inverted vessel were the partial remains of an adult individual. The only remains represented were the long bones, the skull and the teeth. This reflects an intentional deposition of partial remains rather than differential preservation. When human remains form part of a cached deposition, it is almost always because the deposit is dedicatory to something else (Becker 1992). Thus, this was also labeled a dedicatory cache. The material within the caches, in fact the caches themselves, serve as object mediators for the remembrance of events. These objects create the material link between the first cache event, and the subsequent cache events, fulfilling Wertsch's (2002)

requirement for material intermediaries as integral to occasions of collective remembering.

What is astonishing about these offerings is that they were separated by about 150 cm of depth, and a temporal span of between 425 and 750 years, yet they are situated in *perfect* vertical and horizontal alignment. This is seemingly contradictory given the expectation that different offerings will be situated in standard locations associated with the architecture of their *respective* building phases. The first question that comes to mind is, how did the Minanha Maya remember the exact spatial location of hidden offerings over such a long span of time? This constitutes a remarkable feat of remembering, one of the traits that serves as a hallmark of long-term cultural recollection. Not only was there a feat of remembrance, but also the span of time that stretches between the events constitutes a scale of diachronic longevity: a span of years that goes far beyond communicative or everyday memory but crosses multiple generations of ritual participants.

The question of how the Maya of Minanha accomplished such a feat of remembrance is answerable if the depositions are seen not as independent events, but as linked offerings that form part of a ritual process tied to a very specific spatial location. My discussion of memory posits spatial location as one of the most important factors in the preservation of long-term cultural memory. The Structure 3A deposits meet this requirement by providing a ritually charged public space for experience and remembrance. The nature of the location---a large, open public area---also supports the interpretation that many people witnessed the ritual events associated with the deposition of the caches.

A final intriguing aspect of the 3A caches is the fact that their dates correlate with a period of dramatic political change for the center. In brief, at the onset of the 8th century a royal court established itself at Minanha. The material culture and architectural inventory suggest that the rulers of this royal court were elite immigrants, perhaps from Caracol, local individuals emulating Caracol ritual strategies, or an emergent group consisting of both immigrants and locals (Iannone 2005). The upper two caches (3A-F/1 and 3A-F/3) were placed during the reign of this intrusive or newly created political body. These caches are important because they suggest that part of the success of the new elite may stem from the incorporation of local power structures into their governing apparatus. Specifically, an obvious effort was made to link the Late Classic caches with the Terminal Preclassic one (3A-F/4). By doing so, the new elite were able to tap into the traditions and long term social memory of the Minanha community, and thus tie into one of their most powerful portals of communication with the past. Such actions would have undoubtedly provided an important level of legitimacy for the fledgling royal court, and provided a reason for them to want to create a usable past via long-term cultural memory.

The creation of cultural memory is an intriguing notion in relation to mortuary assemblages. What is clear is that communities were quite adept at transferring these ritual maps between multiple generations. It is also apparent that it was important to periodically tie into features associated with memory in order to tap into a source of legitimation or confirmation of social position in a hierarchy. In some instances, such as at Minanha, this may have been initiated in order to provide legitimacy during a time of significant political change when two groups of people were attempting to merge as one, or when an intrusive group was trying to legitimate their power. The motivation for

activating social memory and recollection are diverse, but the end result often has material correlates, particularly if we use a long-term perspective to contextualize our findings.

Our knowledge of ancient Maya ritual practice is significantly increased through the application of this perspective based on theories of collective remembering. Far from being relevant to only the Minanha example, the criteria outlined here can be more broadly applied to the ritual assemblages of other Maya sites, allowing us to understand past ritual behavior in a new way. One example of a well-known ritual context that can be re-interpreted using the theory of collective memory is from the site of Tikal, in the central Maya lowlands of Guatemala. The burial of the Early Classic ruler Siyaj Chan K'awiil is in the North Acropolis (Martin and Grube 2000:35). After his death in A.D. 456, he was interred in Burial 48 within Temple 33. The structure was then remodeled with an overlying structure of masks and panels (Martin and Grube 2000:36). This structure stood for about 200 years, and then a subsequent remodeling event related to Burial 23, the grave of Nuun Ujol Chaak, occurred in A.D. 679 (Martin and Grube 2000:42). Part of this Late Classic remodeling event included re-setting and ceremonially entombing Stela 31, Siyaj Chan K'awiil's monument, in a room on top of the second phase of Temple 33 (Coe 1990:522). This location sits directly atop the burial chamber of Siyaj Chan K'awiil, sealed within the earliest version of Temple 33.

Just like the series of caches in front of Structure 3A at Minanha, these ritual events can be re-interpreted in light of the list of characteristics for the identification of collective memory. The material remains at the Temple 33 location exemplify longevity; the earliest activity occurs in the Early Classic period and ritual activity at the location

continues through to the Late Classic. Temple 33 is located in one of the largest, most accessible areas in the site core of Tikal, thus many individuals would have been present to witness the mortuary ceremonies that occurred there. This fulfils the requirement that the event be intersubjective. The importance of Stela 31 as the object mediator for the remembrance event is apparent, as it constitutes the critical item of material culture linking the Late Classic ritual events to the Early Classic king. The Temple 33 example proves that a great feat of remembering occurred. The placement of Stela 31 directly atop the burial of Siyaj Chan K'awiil occurred roughly 223 years after his interment, a significant length of time. The entire location of Temple 33 and its multiple construction phases is important because the structure sits along the central axis of the north acropolis in the site core, a sacred location at the site where generations of kings were buried. The motivation behind linking the interment of one of the Late Classic kings, Nuun Ujol Chaak, to a renowned Early Classic king, Siyaj Chan K'awiil, is connected to the legitimation of claims related to rulership. Siyaj Chan K'awiil ruled the site during a time of power and ascendancy for Tikal, he was a ruler who re-established the link to a pure Maya style and tradition through his art program after years of foreign influenced iconography (Borowicz 2003:228; Martin and Grube 2000:34). By deliberately tying into these achievements, the people of Late Classic Tikal were tapping into a powerful useable past. Nuun Ujol Chaak's reign was characterized by an ambitious program of territorial expansion, and his son, Jasaw Chan K'awiil continued the work of returning Tikal to its former glory during his reign (Harrison 1999:126; Martin and Grube 2000:44). The mortuary events surrounding Nuun Ujol Chaak's burial were overseen by his son, Jasaw Chan K'awiil, and constitute one of the first things he had to oversee as

the new ruler of Tikal. By creating a collective remembering event linking his father's interment to one of the greatest Early Classic rulers of the site, Jasaw Chan K'awiil was staking his claim to rule the site and emphasizing his legitimacy to take that leadership role. This is just one example of how the approach advocated here can add to our understanding of ancient Maya ritual behavior.

The use of collective memory in ritual contexts is a powerful tool that groups used to promote their own visions of a usable past for a particular goal in the present. Archaeologists can access the meaning of these events when an item of material culture was used to mediate the creation of this usable group past. As exemplified here, a concrete list of traits can be applied to the material remains of past ritual events to evaluate whether they constitute an instance of collective memory. This approach is not limited to Minanha. As exemplified by the Tikal example, it can be applied to many excavated ritual contexts in the Maya area. The continued application of this model will contribute a new way to understand the complexity associated with ritual events in the ancient Maya world.

Discussion and Conclusion

Three different segments of the Minanha community employed the rituals associated with death to unify the community, to aspire to higher group status, and to preserve tradition. The apical elites of the site engaged in caching and mortuary practices that maintained community, and legitimated their power. Elite mortuary ritual within the site-core emphasized the link between the rituals performed during the Late and Terminal

Classic and sacred activities in the distant past. The importance of social memory as the means to connect the present and the past by the apical elites is seen through their physical linking of burial to sacred cached remains dating back to the Preclassic period, when Minanha was first founded. This conscious appeal to the past served to legitimate and solidify elite claims to be at the peak of the political hierarchy at the site. The emphasis they placed on maintaining their position suggests that this position was tenuous, particularly during the Late and Terminal Classic.

The mortuary assemblage associated with the lesser elites at the site is surprisingly different. For them, individual identity was suppressed and a unified group identity related to a functional specialization was expressed through group burial. In this instance, the occupational specialization was linked to the control of a powerful tool of sociopolitical control: writing. The presentation of the identity of the group as being intimately linked to their status as scribes is underscored by a multiple interment of probable sacrificial victims associated with the group shrine. The material remains that attest to the ritual practices of these lesser elites stand out for their dissimilarity to what is seen in the site-core where the apical elites of the site lived and were buried.

Finally, the mortuary assemblage of the commoners at the site is one that adheres to regional mortuary traditions to a greater degree than any of the elite interments at the site. The commoners were limited in their ability to acquire many of the mortuary goods that the members of other social strata had access to. Nevertheless, they chose to emulate some ritual practices that were local (i.e., the use of slate in the south end of a burial chamber, the smashing of jaguar motif incensarios), in combination with practices that were more specific to those of the lesser social strata in a broad region (i.e., lip-to-lip

finger caches). The mortuary assemblage of the commoners at Minanha is also significant because of their failure to emulate the representational strategy of the lesser elites. The commoners did not have the ability to put forward a group identity that was solidified around a particular social occupation or role.

One significant feature of the Minanha mortuary assemblage is that it dates to the Late and Terminal Classic, a time of social, political, and community upheaval for most sites in the central lowlands of the Maya area. The cause and effect relationship between these changes and the manifestation of new mortuary patterns is difficult to discern, but there was an increased flexibility in ritual for many groups within the Minanha community. More variation in mortuary practice, particularly divided along social strata lines, is evident at this time period when compared to earlier times in the region.

There also was a very significant pattern of interment at Minanha that transcended class lines: (1) the high frequency of multiple interment; and (2) multiple interments were accessible over long periods of time. As asserted in the previous chapter, some aspects of the ritual process associated with death are conservative. One of the most interesting characteristics of the Minanha mortuary assemblage is the continued participation in the distinct regional practice of multiple interment, and in particular, that the prevalence of multiple interment is shared with the Petén sites to the northwest and Caracol to the south, but not with the Belize Valley to the north, or with those sites in the southeastern Petén that are in the same river drainage. This suggests an axis of affiliation between the Petén heartland and sites near Caracol. This distinct regional pattern of a high frequency of multiple interment leads me to propose some hypotheses concerning the origins of the individuals at the sites along the corridor between the central Petén and Caracol.

Speculatively, it is possible that the individuals responsible for the creation and maintenance of the particular ritual practices at Caracol were themselves familiar with the ritual practices of the central Petén site of Tikal. Although it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to comprehensively study the origin point of the population of Caracol, future research could examine this question in a more systematic fashion.

The specific interpretations and meanings of the different mortuary contexts at the site of Minanha have been discussed for each distinct social stratum at the site. The mortuary data from Minanha have also been discussed in terms of their placement within broad patterns of regional affiliation and practice. These data also need to be contextualized within the framework of the theory of ritual and religious practice discussed in Chapter 2.

An essential element of Durkheim's (1912) notion of the expression of religious feeling is that it emerges from a collective or group situation. The mortuary data from all three contexts at Minanha fit with this notion. Each of the physical locations for mortuary ritual at the site (Group A, Group S, and the MRS4 group) is characterized by its public nature. The plazas are all large, open spaces where large groups of people could have commingled to witness the acts undertaken in the eastern structure of each group. This trait implies a public, performative aspect to mortuary ritual at the site, in contrast to a private, obligatory one. The fact that groups were involved in mortuary practice as actors and participants indicates that the primacy Durkheim places on the social relations within groups is a key factor in the ultimate form or expression of mortuary ritual at the site.

Durkheim (1912) and Eliade (1959) defined the nature of the sacred and the profane. One interesting aspect of these definitions is that most material objects can slide

along the continuum between the poles of profane and sacred depending on the context of use of the item. For many of the interesting portable artifacts recovered from mortuary contexts at Minanha, this continues to be true. The accoutrements of the 77S-B/2 group interment could be seen as purely functional had they been found in a different context. The fact that the polychrome, ink vessels, and conch shell pigment container and application stylus were found in association with each other, and in a sacred ritual context indicates that the sacredness of an object is not fixed, but rather construed through the context of use of the items.

A more functional view of the position of ideology is posited by Marx (1977), with a concomitant view of the strategic importance of the ritual process echoed by Bell (1992). Marx (1977) saw the manipulation of ideology as an elite strategy to control the labor and resources of the lower classes. The comparison of the apical elite mortuary strategy at Minanha with the lesser elite mortuary strategy shows that in a particular moment of structural uncertainty, both the apical elites and their closest neighbors on the status hierarchy manipulated ideological programs of mortuary ritual for particular ends. The apical elites tried to maintain their position of ruling authority at the site, while the lesser elites strove to increase their own status and force power-sharing by ruling elites. Both groups achieved these goals through the process of identity creation via mortuary ritual. Weber proposed an understanding of ritual that included both the social factors of Durkheim, and Marx's unequal power relations. The Minanha mortuary data show both aspects because of the group level of involvement in mortuary practice at the site, but also the cooperative attempts to increase social standing through ritual expression, as evidenced by the Group S lesser elites. These social interpretations of mortuary ritual are

echoed by Binford's (1971) assertion that the form of mortuary ritual is intimately linked to the status and group affiliation of the deceased. The differences in Late Classic period mortuary ritual at Minanha between different social strata also confirm that Binford (1971) had identified a critical aspect of mortuary ritual when he asserted that patterns of mortuary behavior for a society would be more diverse during times of sociopolitical instability. The diversity of ritual practice among the three social strata at Minanha is expected in light of the shifting sociopolitical aspirations of local leaders versus those of the rulers of larger regional centers nearby.

A tension emerges between the belief that the significance of ritual practice relates to the Durkheimian notion of social effervescence, and the Marxian understanding that ideological structures serve political ends. Mortuary ritual literally sits at the crossroads of this structural tension. Van Gennep (1908) underscores this point through his discussion of the rites of passage. The liminal stage that death creates for an individual, and the social group to which they formally belonged, results in the creation of tangible ritual remains. For the apical elite at Minanha, the death of lineage members was used as an opportunity to link the remaining lineage members to the legitimate authority of the past rulers. This was enacted through a series of ritual caches in association with the mortuary shrine of the ruling elite. This top-down attempt to reify the structure or status quo is also a nice example of Turner's (1969) discussion of the liminal. For the lesser elites of Group S, death was used as an opportunity to construct and revise the group's structural role as scribes. Group identity was emphasized through a multiple-entry group burial place, where the individual identities of group members were subsumed under the functional identity of the group as a whole. This challenge to the

social order reflects Turner's (1969) discussion of the liminoid, where an attempt is made to invert or subvert the status quo. The commoners at the site used the death of a group member as a way to reify local traditions and burial customs. Their use of finger caching in association with mortuary remains recalls a widespread though uncommon folk tradition. This too is an example of how a segment of the society can be structurally marginalized to the point where their ritual actions do not have great success in attaining a change in the social structure, or improving their situation within it.

The work of Tainter (1978) and Brown (1995) on the importance of the lineage or corporate group for mortuary ritual is also exemplified in the Minanha data. Saxe (in Brown 1995) added an economic function to this by suggesting that corporate groups use mortuary representation as a means to control economic resources. The lesser elites of Group S at Minanha do this quite literally by creating a group identity that is intimately associated with an economic skill---writing---and linking their exclusive access and control of this resource to their representation of the group's deceased. On a broader scale, the prevalence of multiple interments across all strata at sites in the Vaca Plateau region can be interpreted as a general strategy by many groups to lay claim to particular resources. The general strategy of creating a class of venerated ancestors within a group serves to legitimate the living group's right to access some resource or capital. The fact that this strategy was not employed in the nearby Belize Valley and southeast Petén systems suggests that the nature of sociopolitical structure at these sites was fundamentally different from the cross-cutting central Petén and Vaca Plateau regions.

This chapter has presented interpretations of the mortuary practices of each social stratum at Minanha. As well, broad regional patterns of similarity and difference in

mortuary practice have been addressed. The mortuary data discussed from the excavations at the site fit well within the theoretical framework of ritual and religious ideas set out in Chapter 2. Ultimately, this research has clarified the ways in which mortuary ritual was incorporated to include the particular status goals of the living at the site of Minanha.



Figure 7.1: Depiction of scribes from cylinder vase. (From Reents-Budet 1994:36).

VIII

The Minanha Mortuary Assemblage

This dissertation research was undertaken at Minanha in west central Belize over five field seasons, starting in 1999. Little research has been done in the rugged North Vaca Plateau region where Minanha is located. The site is situated between some of the largest and most important sites of the Late Classic period. The research at Minanha examines the nature of large polity interaction in frontier zones at secondary centers. In 1999, the broad research goals of the project included initial survey and reconnaissance of the site, which had not been worked at since the 1920s. As well, the first phase of research focused on excavations in the site core, particularly in association with the elite acropolis, the ballcourt, and the E-group in the largest public-access plaza at the site. Testing was also done in groups in the immediate surroundings of the site core, with more distant peripheral investigations of the agricultural support population soon after. My research goal was only a small subset of these broader project goals---to investigate the ritual and religious architecture and associated cache deposits at the site across all temporal ranges and social strata at the site. I wanted to determine whether or not members of different social strata at the site could be distinguished on the basis of their mortuary practice. I hypothesized that if each stratum showed a similar pattern of ritual and interment of the dead, that the rituals surrounding the death of a group member were not important to the sociopolitical aspirations of living group members. On the other hand, I hypothesized that if there were substantial differences between status groups in

the way they enacted their mortuary rituals, then there were different ideological strategies at work as people used the ritual process surrounding death for a particular goal.

I excavated at three locations at the site---the elite E-group in the main public plaza, an E-group in an elite group just next to the site core itself, and a family shrine in the periphery of the site. According to spatial location, architectural elaboration, and degree of access to material wealth, each of these locations represented different social strata at the site---apical or ruling elites, lesser elites, and commoners. There were of course some similarities across all strata in ritual practices. The most interesting for Minanha was the prevalence of multiple interments for all groups at the site. In general however, it was apparent that the different locations and associated status groups at the site had substantially different ritual practices. The material manifestations of the rituals in the site core consisted primarily of caches in front of the burial structure, where lesser elites did not use discrete caching activities at all in association with the front of their structure. Rather, they had possible sacrifice victims interred in front of their group burial location inside the eastern structure of the group. The commoners in the periphery had some similarities to the lesser elites, but more than anything, seemed unable to access the associated material items from the same source networks as the lesser elites.

The theoretical framework underlying this research is founded on the contributions of Durkheim, Marx, and Weber in relation to the structural position of ideology and religious practice. In particular for mortuary ritual, Van Gennep's ideas of rites of passage are particularly useful. Beyond general ritual practice, some specific theoretical tenets are explored through this research. Specifically, I examine the

phenomenon of social memory, group identity construction, and heterarchy as deliberate ritual strategies to achieve a particular goal.

The background research for the project was presented in early chapters of the dissertation. This information includes the methodological approach for the excavations, and the details of the materials analysis. As well, brief information on the geology and environment of Belize was discussed. A brief history of modern Belize was presented, with a description of some of the earliest explorations of Minanha by the British Museum expeditions. My excavations were then described in Chapter V. The details of the three strata-associated contexts were discussed, particularly with respect to similarities and differences between locations.

At first examination, the material recovered from the site was interesting, but was not fully representative of regional mortuary behavior. In order to achieve a truly regional scale of understanding of mortuary practice, additional mortuary information from a variety of excavation projects in areas adjacent to Minanha and the Vaca Plateau was compiled. Hundreds of burials from the Belize Valley sites, the southeast Petén, and the Vaca Plateau were acquired and compared. This database of mortuary information also served to widen the temporal range of this dissertation, as the majority of the Minanha materials date to the Late and Terminal Classic periods. An unexpected regional pattern related to the frequency of multiple interment came out of this regional comparative approach. The Vaca Plateau sites had a very high frequency of multiple interment, whereas the Belize Valley and southeast Petén sites had a very low frequency of multiple interment. This interesting behavior difference between nearby areas can be understood when other traits of the regions are compared. The sociopolitical structures, settlement

patterns, environment and subsistence strategies, and demographic origins of the regions are quite different, suggesting that the regions had a different developmental trajectory. The riverine sites of the Belize Valley have a much greater antiquity than the Vaca Plateau sites. Perhaps local developments over a long period of time had a greater influence on the manifestation of their chosen form of mortuary ritual. I hypothesize that there may be a link between tenuous site leadership, or weak kingship, and the practice of multiple burial where the goal is the creation and veneration of important group ancestors. In a decentralized system such as the Belize Valley, power is already more distributed and shared across the landscape, and so a strategy where individual identity is submerged in favor of putting forward a group identity (through multiple burial) does not make sense. Where leaders are forced to assert their legitimacy for a more centralized role, it becomes reasonable for people to coordinate the focus of their rituals to forward a group identity.

For the specific social groups at Minanha, each used the mortuary situation to a different end. The apical elites interred a series of caches in association with their mortuary structure as a way of tapping into the past ritual actions of past site rulers. The details of the cache deposits in association with Structure 3A were discussed as an example of collective memory construction with the goal of legitimating ruling authority. In contrast, the mortuary focus of the lesser elites at the site in association with Group S was to create a project identity related to a unique occupation, specifically that group members were scribes. This group identity creation served to bolster the status of the lesser elites. In status terms, their emphasis on their special occupation moved them up the vertical site hierarchy, and away from other lesser elites and commoners at the same

time in a form of status triangulation. One way the lesser elites facilitated the construction of their special status was to acquire materials from outside the site hierarchy. They acquired material goods from the central Petén, whereas the apical elites were focused towards exchange and ideological networks with Caracol to the south. The commoners at Minanha did not have the means to acquire as much material wealth as other groups at the site, but they include materials from the Belize Valley in their mortuary rituals, as well as engage in practices that are more widespread in nature. Specifically, the practice of caching human fingers in crude lip-to-lip vessels is one seen at Caracol, as well as the Belize Valley and the southeast Petén among lesser elites and commoners, but not apical elites.

This research makes several contributions to Maya archaeology. First, it establishes a model that can be fruitfully applied to other mortuary contexts. This research shows that people did manipulate the rituals accompanying death for particular goals. These goals can be interpreted on the basis of the material culture recovered from the specific rituals. As well, this research has confirmed the importance of the inclusion of a regional scale of analysis for mortuary studies. If this work had been limited to only the Minanha material, the large pattern of interaction between the Vaca Plateau region, and the Belize Valley and southeast Petén would not be apparent. The implications for this type of research are important, not just for Mayanists, but for any archaeologist looking to understand ritual practices.

In sum, the different groups of Minanha Maya engaged in different strategies of mortuary ritual. This confirms that ritual is a dynamic social process that can be used to different ends, whether they are political, economic or social. The Late and Terminal

Classic periods in the Vaca Plateau region were in a constant state of change, and the opportunity provided by the manipulation of the mortuary situation was an important way for members of the Minanha community to assert what was most important to them, their unique identity.

Appendix

Human Remains Analysis

Minanha Accession #10066, Group A, Structure 3A, Feature 3A-F/4

Summary. These remains represent a single individual adult, between the ages of 18 and 30. It is important to note that the parts represented are consistent with the long bones, skull and part of the upper torso. No innominates, sacra, lumbar or thoracic vertebrae were recovered. These were not interred as part of the 3A-F/4 deposit, as these are often the hardest, most likely to preserve elements of the skeleton.

Dentition.

1 maxillary right central incisor.
1 maxillary right lateral incisor.
1 maxillary left central incisor.
1 maxillary left lateral incisor.

1 mandibular right central incisor.
1 mandibular right lateral incisor.
1 mandibular left central incisor.
1 mandibular left lateral incisor.

1 upper right canine.
1 lower right canine.
1 upper left canine.
1 lower left canine.

1 maxillary right first premolar.
1 maxillary right second premolar.
1 maxillary left first premolar.

1 mandibular right first premolar.
1 mandibular right second premolar.
1 mandibular left first premolar.
1 mandibular left second premolar.

1 maxillary right first molar. Large carious lesion on distal side of crown.
1 maxillary right second molar. Numerous pit fissures.

1 maxillary right third molar.
1 maxillary left first molar. Carious lesion on distal side of crown.
1 maxillary left second molar. Pit fissures in crown.

- 1 maxillary left third molar. Pit fissures in crown.
 1 mandibular right first molar. Pit fissures in crown.

Cranial Elements.

- 1 large frag. of occiput.
 1 frontal bone fragment.
 1 fragment of right temporal bone.
 1 fragment of left temporal bone.
 2 auditory ossicles (right incus and malleus).
 14 unidentified cranial fragments.

Post-cranial Elements.

- 1 radial shaft fragment.
 1 right radial shaft fragment.
 2 ulna shaft fragments.
 1 right humeral shaft fragment.
 1 left humeral shaft fragment.
 6 fibular shaft fragments.
 1 right tibial shaft fragment.
 146 unidentified long bone shafts.
 3 phalanges, fragments.
 7 vertebral fragments. All are small parts of atlas and spine very close to skull.
 103 small rib fragments.
 1000 unidentified bone fragments.

Minanha, Group A, Structure 3A, Burial 3A-B/1.

Summary. This poorly preserved shaft fragment is the only bone recovered from within Burial 3A-B/1. It was displaced from the chamber.

Post-Cranial Element.

- 1 long bone fragment.

Minanha, Group A, Structure 3A, Burial 3A-B/3.

Summary. The remains represent a single adult individual. The elements present are primarily lower limb and foot elements as most of the interment had been removed in antiquity.

Post-Cranial Elements.

- 1 radial shaft fragment.
 2 vertebral body fragments.
 2 rib fragments.
 1 distal articular facet of a tibia fragment.

2 partial first metatarsal shafts.
 6 partial metatarsal shaft fragments.
 3 metatarsal shaft fragments.
 1 calcaneous fragment.
 1 right third cuneiform.
 2 navicular fragments.
 2 distal toe phalanges.
 1 medial toe phalanx.
 9 proximal toe phalanges.
 1 articular facet of a proximal toe phalanx.
 3 flat bone fragments.
 1 long bone shaft fragment.
 125 unidentified elements.

Minanha Accession #10102, Group S, Structure 77-S, Burial 77S-B/1

Summary. The number of incisors and canines indicates that at least **9 individuals** were interred in Burial 77S-B/1. Using secondary dentin formation as an indicator of severe tooth wear, the Burial 77S-B/1 population has a frequency of 5% incidence of secondary dentin formation. Only 1 tooth in this sample shows evidence of cultural modification (filing).

Dentition.

Maxillary Incisors.

1 right central incisor.	Slight occlusal wear.
1 right central incisor.	Slight occlusal wear on mesial side.
1 right central incisor.	Slight occlusal wear, small caries pit on distal side, very large carious lesion on bottom of crown and through root, 2 bands of LEH, one at the root, one 1/3 of the way up the crown.
	Slight occlusal wear, mesial filing.
1 right central incisor.	
1 right central incisor.	
1 right central incisor.	
1 right central incisor.	
1 right lateral incisor.	
1 right lateral incisor.	
1 right lateral incisor.	
1 right lateral incisor.	Slight occlusal wear.
1 right lateral incisor.	Cingulum pit.
1 left central incisor.	Slight wear.
1 left central incisor.	Moderate occlusal wear.
1 left central incisor.	Moderate wear across occlusal surface.
1 left central incisor.	Moderate wear across occlusal surface.

1 left central incisor.	Distal occlusal corner filed out, LEH at filing.
1 left central incisor.	Slight mesial occlusal wear, carious lesion at distal crown and root.
1 left central incisor.	Very large carious lesion on medial root and crown.
1 left central incisor.	Carious lesion at distal occlusal surface, LEH 1/3 rd of the way up crown.
1 left central incisor.	
1 left central incisor.	
1 left lateral incisor.	
1 left lateral incisor.	
1 left lateral incisor.	
1 left lateral incisor.	Large cingulum pit, and large LEH 1/3 to 1/2 way up crown.
1 left lateral incisor.	Slight occlusal wear, small caries at CEJ.
1 left lateral incisor.	Slight mesial occlusal wear, and small carious lesion in mesial CEJ.
<i>Mandibular Incisors.</i>	
1 right central incisor.	Slight occlusal wear, moderate tartar.
1 right central incisor.	Moderate wear, LEH 1/3 of the way up crown.
1 right central incisor.	Moderate occlusal wear.
1 right lateral incisor.	Pitted carious lesion at CEJ.
1 right lateral incisor.	Moderate wear on occlusal surface.
1 right lateral incisor.	Occlusal chip, and tartar at CEJ.
1 right lateral incisor.	Slight occlusal wear.
1 right lateral incisor.	Moderate occlusal wear, and tartar at CEJ.
1 right lateral incisor.	Slight occlusal wear.
1 right lateral incisor.	
1 left central incisor.	Slight to moderate occlusal wear.
1 left central incisor.	Moderate occlusal wear.
1 left central incisor.	Steep wear on lingual side at CEJ.
1 left central incisor.	
1 left lateral incisor.	Steep wear on lingual side at CEJ.
1 left lateral incisor.	Slight wear.
<i>Canines.</i>	
1 right upper.	Slight mesial wear.
1 right upper.	LEH just above CEJ.
1 right upper.	Heavy occlusal wear, some secondary dentin formation, and LEH at 1/3 and 1/2 way up the crown.

1 right upper.	Slight wear at cusp, LEH at 1/3 and 1/2 way up the crown.
1 right upper.	LEH just above CEJ.
1 right upper.	LEH at 1/3 way up crown, small pitting carious lesion at mesial CEJ.
1 right upper.	Slight distal occlusal wear, LEH 1/3 up crown.
1 right upper.	Slight occlusal wear, LEH 1/3 up crown.
1 right upper.	LEH at 1/2 and 2/3 positions up crown.
1 right upper.	Mesial occlusal wear.
1 left upper.	Slight distal occlusal wear.
1 left upper.	LEH 1/2 way up the crown.
1 left upper.	Numerous LEH up entire crown, slight distal occlusal wear.
1 left upper.	2 bands of LEH at 1/2 and 1/3 points on crown.
1 left upper.	LEH 1/3 of the way up the crown.
1 left upper.	Slight occlusal wear on cusp.
1 left upper.	Severe wear with secondary dentin formation across entire crown, 2 bands of LEH at 1/2 and 1/3 points of crown.
1 left upper.	LEH 1/2 way up crown.
1 left upper.	
1 right lower.	Slight occlusal wear, LEH 1/3 of the way up crown.
1 right lower.	Slight distal occlusal wear, LEH 1/3 up the crown.
1 right lower.	Very slight occlusal wear on distal edge.
1 right lower.	Slight distal occlusal wear, LEH 1/3 up crown.
1 right lower.	Moderate distal wear. LEH 1/3 up the crown.
1 right lower.	Slight distal occlusal wear, LEH 1/3 up from CEJ.
1 right lower.	LEH 1/4 of the way up the crown.
1 right lower.	Numerous LEH up entire crown, carious lesion on mesial side of CEJ, moderate distal occlusal wear.
1 right lower.	Slight distal occlusal wear, LEH 1/3 up crown, severe tartar.
1 right lower.	Slight distal occlusal wear.
1 left lower.	Slight distal occlusal wear, LEH 1/3 up the crown.
1 left lower.	Moderate distal occlusal wear, LEH 1/3 up crown.
1 left lower.	Moderate distal occlusal wear, 2 bands of LEH above the CEJ.
1 left lower.	Slight wear facet on cusp, LEH 1/3 up crown.
1 left lower.	Intentionally filed mesial occlusal corner.
1 left lower.	Heavy crown wear, especially on distal edge.
1 left lower.	Numerous LEH up entire crown, slight distal occlusal wear.

1 left lower.

Numerous LEH over entire crown.

Premolars: (Not sided/numbered due to absence of roots).

Maxillary premolars.

15 total.

Slight wear on most, 2 have heavy carious lesions at the CEJ, 1 has pitted caries on both mesial and distal CEJ. The 3 with caries have slightly heavier wear.

Mandibular premolars.

22 total.

7 have no pathologies.

6 have wear only: 3 slight, 2 moderate, 1 heavy with secondary dentin formation.

9 have carious lesions: 3 are large at CEJ with slight wear, 6 have pitted lesions at CEJ, only 1 has slight wear.

Molars: (Not sided/numbered due to absence of roots).

Maxillary molars.

9 total.

3 with no pathologies (probably 3rd molars).

2 with large carious lesions at CEJ and into crown, both have heavy wear, 1 has secondary dentin formation.

2 have moderate wear.

2 have heavy wear with secondary dentin formation across entire occlusal surface.

Mandibular molars.

14 total.

6 have no pathologies.

2 have small pit caries on the crown.

3 have severe carious lesions throughout crown and roots.

2 have slight wear.

1 have severe wear and secondary dentin formation.

*Minanha Accession #10102, Group S, Structure 77-S, Unit 77S-1, Burial 77S-B/2
Catalogue Number 27/187-002:2474*

Summary. The number of canines indicate that there are at least **15 individuals** interred within Burial 77S-B/2. Using secondary dentin formation as an indicator of severe tooth wear, the Burial 77S-B/2 population has a frequency of 18% incidence of secondary dentin formation (compare to 5% for 77S-B/1). Only 2 teeth in this sample show evidence of deliberate cultural modification (filing). At least **4 females and 4 males** are

included, while 7 individuals are unknown with regards to sex. Of the females, 2 were located in the southern end of the crypt. Adjacent to the south wall is a female between 35 and 39 years of age in a flexed seated position, next to her is another female in a semi flexed position, the other 2 females were in the center of the crypt. In the southwest corner of the crypt, 1 male was located. Of the individuals from within the center of the crypt, 2 were old men (greater than 40 years of age). The general health of these individuals is robust, with minor healed fractures (traumatic injuries), relatively mild arthritic regrowth, and only slight cribra orbitalia.

Dentition.

Maxillary Incisors.

1 right central incisor.	Severe wear and secondary dentin formation.
1 right central incisor.	Mesial occlusal corner filed out.
1 right central incisor.	LEH at 1/3 and 1/2.
1 right central incisor.	Severe wear, secondary dentin formation, LEH at 1/2.
1 right central incisor.	No pathologies.
1 right central incisor.	Moderate wear, LEH at 1/3 and 1/2.
1 right central incisor.	Slight wear.
1 right central incisor.	Severe wear, LEH at 1/3.
1 right lateral incisor.	Slight wear, caries at CEJ.
1 right lateral incisor.	Slight wear.
1 right lateral incisor.	Severe wear, secondary dentin formation.
1 right lateral incisor.	Moderate wear, distal CEJ lesion.
1 right lateral incisor.	Severe wear, LEH at 1/3.
1 right lateral incisor.	Severe wear, secondary dentin formation.
1 right lateral incisor.	Slight wear, wear facet on labial side.
1 left central incisor.	Slight occlusal wear.
1 left central incisor.	Moderate occlusal wear.
1 left central incisor.	Slight occlusal wear, lingual tartar.
1 left central incisor.	Slight wear.
1 left central incisor.	Moderate wear, LEH at 1/3 and 1/2.
1 left central incisor.	Moderate wear.
1 left central incisor.	No pathologies.
1 left central incisor.	Severe wear, secondary dentin formation.
1 left central incisor.	Severe wear, secondary dentin formation, LEH at 1/2 up crown.
1 left lateral incisor.	Severe wear, secondary dentin formation.
1 left lateral incisor.	Severe wear, secondary dentin formation, LEH at 1/2 up crown, caries at CEJ.
1 left lateral incisor.	Severe wear, secondary dentin formation.

1 left lateral incisor.	Slight wear.
1 left lateral incisor.	Severe wear, secondary dentin formation.
1 left lateral incisor.	Severe wear, secondary dentin formation, carious lesion at CEJ.
<i>Mandibular Incisors.</i>	
1 lower central.	Moderate occlusal wear.
1 right central incisor.	Moderate occlusal wear.
1 right central incisor.	Severe wear and secondary dentin formation.
1 right central incisor.	Severe wear, secondary dentin formation.
1 right central incisor.	Moderate occlusal wear.
1 right central incisor.	Severe wear, secondary dentin formation.
1 right central incisor.	Moderate wear.
1 right central incisor.	Moderate wear.
1 right central incisor.	Slight wear.
1 right central incisor.	Moderate wear.
1 right lateral incisor.	Slight wear on distal occlusal edge.
1 right lateral incisor.	Filed on distal occlusal surface.
1 right lateral incisor.	Slight wear on occlusal surface.
1 right lateral incisor.	Slight wear on occlusal surface, pit caries at CEJ.
1 right lateral incisor.	No pathologies.
1 right lateral incisor.	Slight wear.
1 right lateral incisor.	Severe wear, secondary dentin formation, LEH at 1/3 up crown, large CEJ carious lesion.
1 right lateral incisor.	Severe occlusal wear, secondary dentin formation.
1 right lateral incisor.	Slight occlusal wear.
1 right lateral incisor.	Moderate wear.
1 right lateral incisor.	Severe wear, secondary dentin formation.
1 right lateral incisor.	Moderate wear.
1 left central incisor.	Moderate occlusal wear.
1 left central incisor.	Moderate wear.
1 left central incisor.	Severe wear.
1 left central incisor.	Moderate wear.
1 left central incisor.	Slight wear.
1 left central incisor.	Slight wear.
1 left central incisor.	Severe wear, secondary dentin formation.
1 left central incisor.	Severe wear, secondary dentin formation.
1 left central incisor.	Severe wear, secondary dentin formation, CEJ lesion on distal side.
1 left lateral incisor.	Slight wear.

1 left lateral incisor.	Severe wear, secondary dentin formation, large distal CEJ cavity.
1 left lateral incisor.	Moderate wear.
1 left lateral incisor.	Slight wear.
1 left lateral incisor.	Moderate wear.
1 left lateral incisor.	Moderate wear.
1 left lateral incisor.	Slight occlusal wear.
<i>Canines.</i>	
1 side unknown.	Slight wear.
1 right upper.	Slight occlusal wear.
1 right upper.	Slight wear, small caries at CEJ.
1 right upper.	Severe wear, rare CEJ wear facet.
1 right upper.	LEH at 1/3, no wear.
1 right upper.	Severe wear, secondary dentin formation, LEH at 1/3 up crown.
1 right upper.	Slight wear, LEH at 1/3.
1 right upper.	LEH at 1/3.
1 right upper.	Cusp broken in life, 2 large caries at CEJ.
1 right upper.	Moderate wear.
1 right upper.	Slight wear.
1 right upper.	Moderate wear.
1 right upper.	Severe wear, secondary dentin formation, CEJ pit cavity on distal side.
1 right lower.	Moderate distal occlusal wear.
1 right lower.	Slight wear on distal occlusal edge.
1 right lower.	Moderate wear, LEH at CEJ.
1 right lower.	Severe wear with secondary dentin formation, LEH at 1/3 up crown.
1 right lower.	Slight cusp wear.
1 right lower.	Slight mesial wear.
1 right lower.	Severe wear with secondary dentin formation, LEH at 1/3 up crown.
1 right lower.	Slight wear, LEH at 1/3 up crown.
1 right lower.	Moderate wear, LEH at 1/3, large CEJ cavity.
1 left upper.	Severe occlusal wear, secondary dentin formation, LEH at 1/3 up crown.
1 left upper.	Severe occlusal wear, secondary dentin formation.
1 left upper.	Severe occlusal wear, secondary dentin formation.
1 left upper.	Severe occlusal wear, secondary dentin formation.

1 left upper.	Moderate wear, LEH at 1/3 up crown, mesial CEJ caries.
1 left upper.	Slight wear, large carious lesion through crown.
1 left upper.	Moderate cusp wear.
1 left upper.	Severe wear, secondary dentin formation.
1 left upper.	Severe wear, secondary dentin formation, LEH at 1/3 and 1/2 up crown.
1 left upper.	Severe wear, large CEJ cavity.
1 left upper.	No pathologies.
1 left lower.	LEH 1/3 way up crown.
1 left lower.	Severe distal occlusal wear, secondary dentin formation.
1 left lower.	Severe wear, LEH 1/3 up crown.
1 left lower.	Slight wear, LEH 1/2 up crown.
1 left lower.	Severe wear, secondary dentin formation.
1 left lower.	Moderate wear, LEH 1/3 up crown.
1 left lower.	Slight wear, LEH 1/3 up crown.
1 left lower.	Severe wear, secondary dentin formation, LEH at 1/3 up crown.
1 left lower.	Slight wear, LEH at 1/2 up crown.
1 left lower.	Slight wear, LEH at 1/3.
1 left lower.	Slight mesial occlusal wear.
1 left lower.	Slight wear, LEH at the CEJ.
1 left lower.	Severe wear and secondary dentin formation, LEH at 1/3 up crown, distal pit caries.
1 left lower.	Moderate wear, LEH at 1/3, large carious lesion.
1 left lower.	Large CEJ carious lesion, no wear.

Maxillary premolars.

6 premolars.	All have slight wear.
30 premolars.	8 have no pathologies.
	5 have slight wear.
	5 have moderate wear.
	5 have severe wear and secondary dentin formation.
	1 has severe wear and carious lesions at CEJ.
	2 have moderate wear and CEJ caries.
	2 have large CEJ lesions.
	1 has severe occlusal carious lesion with secondary dentin formation.
	1 has small CEJ lesion, no wear.

Mandibular premolars.

3 premolars.	1 has slight carious lesion at CEJ.
6 premolars.	3 have slight wear.

29 premolars.	4 are just crowns-1 has large carious lesion. 4 have no pathologies. 2 have razor-like cusps. 5 have CEJ caries. 8 have moderate wear. 6 have slight wear.
<i>Maxillary molars.</i>	
1 third molar.	Slight wear.
3 molars.	Moderate wear.
27 molars.	6 have no pathologies. 6 have large CEJ lesions and moderate to severe occlusal wear. 3 have slight occlusal wear. 4 have moderate occlusal wear. 8 have severe occlusal wear and secondary dentin formation.
2 upper crowns.	1 has moderate wear.
<i>Mandibular molars.</i>	
1 left first molar.	In mandible, female, no pathologies.
1 left third molar.	In mandible, female, no pathologies.
1 molar.	Moderate occlusal wear.
1 right third molar.	Slight pitting lesions on occlusal surface.
1 third molar.	Slight wear, pitted carious lesion.
2 molars.	
27 molars.	6 have no pathologies. 10 have slight wear. 6 have slight occlusal pitting. 2 have CEJ caries. 3 have large CEJ caries and pit lesions.
5 lower crowns.	1 has medium wear.
<i>Unknown dentition.</i>	
1 supernumerary tooth peg.	
4 so eroded, no identification possible.	
<i>Cranial Elements.</i>	
1 parietal frag.	
2 frontal bone, partials (orbit).	
2 frontal bone frag (orbits/forehead).	Slight cribra orbitalia in orbits of both.
3 zygomatic bone, partial.	
2 zygomatic arch fragments.	
1 maxillary fragment.	5 tooth sockets, no resorbtion.
1 complete mandible.	Male, most sockets resorbed (old male).

3 pieces of mandible.	Female, has 2 teeth (listed above) in bone.
2 large mandible pieces.	Male, all sockets resorbed (old male).
6 mandibular or maxillary frags.	Very eroded.
1 right mandible half.	No resorbtion.
1 mandibular fragment.	2 resorbed sockets on fragment.
2 mandible fragments.	
2 diff. chin sections of mandibles.	
1 large occipital bone.	
1 occiput fragment (bun).	Inner table has numerous porous osteitities, outer table has long healed infectious impression.
1 occiput fragment (adj. to above).	Outer table marks.
1 right temporal bone.	
2 right temporal bones.	Bony regrowth on margins of TMJ joint (on both).
3 temporal frags (with ear holes).	
1 temporal frag. (mastoid process and ear canal).	
1 temporal frag. (outer table).	
1 ethmoid bone, frag.	Evidence of osteitis on surface.
4 sphenoid fragments.	
6 inner skull sinus fragments.	
2 hyoid bone fragments.	
3 cranial fragments.	Periostitis on both the inner and outer tables.
4 cranial fragments.	Periostitis on the outer table.
1 cranial fragment.	Circular erosion on outer table.
3 cranial fragments.	Periostitis on the inner table.
6 cranial fragments.	Pitted lesions on inner table.
767 cranial fragments.	
4 flat bone fragments.	Periostitis on the inner table.
54 flat bone fragments.	Periostitis on the outer table.
838 misc. flat bone.	Mixed cranial and innominate, scapula.
<i>Post-Cranial Elements.</i>	
Torso:	
Vertebrae:	
1 atlas fragment.	Different from below.
1 atlas fragment.	Spiky regrowth at tip of the arch on spinous process.
2 atlas frags.	Arthritic lipping on articular facet with axis.
2 atlas vertebral arch fragments.	
6 cervical vertebral arch fragments.	
2 cervical vertebra, partial.	Slight arthritic lipping.
1 cervical vertebral body.	Crushed.
4 thoracic vertebral arch frags.	

1 thoracic vertebral body frag.	
1 thoracic vertebral body.	Slight arthritic lipping.
1 thoracic vertebral body.	Moderate lipping, crushed vertebral body with lg. porosities.
2 lumbar vertebral body frags.	
1 lumbar vertebral body.	Slight arthritic lipping.
1 lumbar vertebral body frag.	Very crushed, severe bony regrowth.
8 lumbar vertebrae arch fragments.	
1 crushed vertebral body.	Severe arthritic lipping.
1 crushed vertebral body frag.	Slight arthritic lipping.
6 vertebral body fragments.	
85 vertebral arch fragments.	
3 vertebral articular facets.	
31 vertebral articular facets.	Slight bony arthritic growth.
42 misc. vertebral fragments.	
Ribs:	
1 first rib shaft frag.	
1 first rib shaft fragment.	Bony re-growth on underside.
1 right rib head, partial.	Slight arthritic lipping on articular facet.
2 left rib heads.	
1 left rib head.	Slight arthritic lipping on tubercle and facets.
2 rib heads.	Arthritic lipping on articular facet.
3 rib head.	
6 rib heads, partial	
4 rib shaft frags.	Porous re-growth inside costal groove.
197 rib shaft, partial.	
99 rib fragments.	No periostitis at intercostal margins.
Upper Limb:	
1 right clavicle shaft.	
1 left clavicle shaft.	
1 un-sided clavicle shaft.	
1 left scapula fragment, acromion.	
1 left scapula fragment.	
3 scapula fragments.	
1 scapular acromion process.	
1 right proximal humerus.	
1 left proximal humerus.	
3 right humeral shaft frags.	
1 left humeral shaft frag.	Healed fracture callous across transverse section.
1 left humeral shaft frag.	
5 humeral shafts.	
6 short misc. humeral shaft frags.	

4 left distal humerus frags.
 4 radial head fragments.
 3 left radial shaft.
 1 right radial shaft.
 2 radial shaft frags.
 8 radial shaft frags.
 1 left proximal ulna.
 1 ulnar shaft frag.
 25 ulnar frags.

Healed fracture callous on both.

Bony regrowth at coronoid process.

Healed fracture callous.

Right Hand:

2 right triquetrals.
 6 right naviculars.
 2 right naviculars, partial.
 8 right lunates.
 6 right capitates.
 3 right hamate.
 2 right hamates, partial.
 6 right greater multangular.
 6 right lesser multangulars.
 2 right pisiform.

5 right, third metacarpal, partial (base).
 2 right, fourth metacarpal, frag (base).
 1 right, fifth metacarpal, partial.
 2 right, fifth metacarpal.

Left Hand:

1 left triquetral.
 6 left naviculars.
 5 left navicular, partial.
 5 left lunates.
 1 left lunate, partial.
 3 left capitates.
 1 left capitate fragment.
 3 left hamates.
 3 left greater multangular.
 1 left greater multangular (partial).
 5 left lesser multangulars.
 1 left lesser multangular, fragment.
 3 left pisiform.

1 left, first metacarpal.
 1 left, third metacarpal.
 6 left, third metacarpal, partial.

1 left, fourth metacarpal, partial. Slight arthritic lipping on articular facet.

Unsided Hand:

2 triquetral.

1 navicular frag.

2 second metacarpals, partial.

2 fourth metacarpal bases, partial.

13 metacarpal head, fragment.

5 metacarpal fragments.

35 proximal hand phalanges.

2 proximal hand phalanges. Prominent lateral ridges on volar side.

2 proximal hand phalanges. Slight arthritic lipping.

1 proximal hand phalanx, partial. Bony ridging and regrowth on lateral edges of dorsal side.

16 proximal hand phalanges, head.

1 proximal hand phalanx, base. Prominent lateral ridging.

4 proximal hand phalanges, base frags.

14 proximal hand phalanges, partial.

14 proximal hand phalanges, shafts.

5 proximal hand phalanges, shafts. Prominent lateral ridges.

67 medial hand phalanges.

5 medial hand phalanges. Slight arthritic lipping.

7 medial hand phalanges, partial.

1 medial hand phalanx, head. Healed fracture callous.

21 medial hand phalanges, head.

1 medial hand phalanx shaft.

7 medial hand phalanges, base frags.

51 distal hand phalanges.

11 distal hand phalanges. Slight arthritic lipping on articular facets.

4 distal hand phalanges. Moderate arthritic lipping on articular facets.

5 distal hand phalanx, partial.

1 fused medial and proximal hand phalange.

7 hand phalanges, frags.

Pelvis:

1 innominate frag. with sciatic notch. Narrow notch- Male individual.

1 un-sided innominate fragment. Female due to wide sciatic notch.

1 large unsided piece of innominate.

2 innominate frags. with articulation for femoral head.

1 innominate frag. the iliac crest portion.

39 innominate fragments.

1 sacral fragment.

Lower Limb:

2 left femoral shafts, proximal ends.

1 right femoral shaft, proximal end.

2 partial femoral head frag.

14 femoral shaft fragments.

3 complete left patellae.

1 complete right patella.

3 partial right patellae.

2 right tibia shafts.

2 left tibia shaft.

1 left distal tibia.

Large irregular facet with lipping on anterior side.

1 right distal shaft fibula fragment.

1 left distal shaft fibula fragment.

13 fibular shaft frags.

Right Foot:

1 right calcaneous frag.

2 right taluses.

1 right talus fragment.

1 right cuboid.

1 right first cuneiform, partial.

5 right second cuneiforms.

1 right cuneiform.

3 right, first metatarsal, partial.

1 right, first metatarsal, base.

5 right, third metatarsals, partial.

1 right, fourth metatarsal.

4 right, fourth metatarsals, partial.

3 right, fifth metatarsal, partials (base).

Left Foot:

2 left first cuneiform.

5 left second cuneiforms.

2 left taluses.

1 left navicular.

1 left, first metatarsal.

Slight arthritic lipping on proximal articular facet.

3 left, second metatarsals, partial.

1 left, third metatarsal.

4 left, third metatarsal, base frag.

4 left, fourth metatarsal, base frag.

5 left, fifth metatarsals (frags.).

Unsidéd Foot:

2 cuboid fragments.

1 talus.

1 talus fragment.

3 navicular.

1 calcaneous frag.

5 misc. tarsals.

4 first metatarsal shaft frags.

1 first metatarsal frag.

1 metatarsal, partial.

1 metatarsal, partial.

14 metatarsal head, partial.

4 metatarsal shafts.

Slight arthritic lipping.

2 first proximal toe phalanges.

3 first proximal toe phalanges.

7 proximal toe phalanges.

1 proximal toe phalanx.

28 proximal toe phalanges.

15 proximal toe phalanges, head frags.

11 proximal toe phalanges bases.

2 proximal toe phalanges (base).

7 proximal toe phalanges, partial.

20 proximal toe phalanges shafts.

Slight arthritic lipping on articular facets.

Slight arthritic lipping on articular facets.

Severe arthritic regrowth and deformation.

Moderate arthritic lipping.

Distal ends of bone only.

1 medial toe phalanx.

15 medial toe phalanges.

Slight lipping on articular facet.

2 first distal toe phalanges.

3 first distal toe phalanges.

2 first distal toe phalanges.

Slight arthritic lipping.

7 distal toe phalanges.

1 distal toe phalanx.

3 distal toe phalanx, partial.

1 distal toe phalanx, partial.

Bony regrowth on plantar side.

Slight arthritic lipping.

2 toe phalanges, shafts.

Metacarpal/Metatarsal:

9 metacarpal/tarsal heads.

5 metacarpal/tarsal articular facets.

140 metacarpal/tarsal shafts.

2 metacarpal/tarsal shafts. Slight lipping and bony regrowth.
 45 metacarpal/tarsal fragments.

990 tiny long bone fragments.
 2362 medium sized long bone frags.
 1 distal end of a long bone frag. Pitting lesions in articular facet.
 2 long bone fragments. Each has flat transverse cutmark at ends and on cortex.
 11 long bone fragments. External pre-mortem ostitis.
 33 long bone shaft frags.
 2 long bone shaft frags. Pitting erosions on outer table.
 8 large long bone head frags.
 19 long bone head frags.
 347 unidentified bone fragments.
 7 and a ½ sandwich bags full of bone chips.

Collection of bone from south west corner of crypt.

Cranial Elements.

(Dentition recorded above-6 molars, 12 premolars, 9 incisors, 5 canines).

2 cranial fragments.
 1 mandibular fragment. Male.

Post-Cranial Elements.

2 distal hand phalanges, fragments.
 3 toe phalanges, shaft portions.

Collection of bone from south end of crypt-1st person in from south, flexed position.

Cranial Elements.

23 flat bone fragments.

Post-Cranial Elements.

1 large scapular fragment (incl. coracoid process, glenoid cavity, axillary border).
 1 vertebral fragment. Slight arthritic lipping.
 2 vertebral fragments.
 1 rib head fragment.
 1 left innominate fragment. Very wide greater sciatic notch- female.
 1 left pubic symphysis fragment. Age based on surface is between 35-39.
 1 partial femoral head.
 29 long bone fragments.
 12 unidentified fragments of bone.

Collection of bone from south end of crypt- 2nd person in from south, semi-extended position.

Cranial Elements.

Post-Cranial Elements.

2 vertebral arch fragments.
 2 articular facets of vertebral arches.
 3 rib shaft fragments.
 2 radial shaft fragments.

Un-sided Hand:

1 metacarpal head.
 1 proximal phalanx base.
 4 medial finger phalanges, partial.

Pelvic Elements:

1 large right innominate fragment. Wide greater sciatic notch- Female individual.
 1 large left innominate fragment. Female (second half of pelvis above). Also has large parturition marks, so had at least one child during her lifetime.

Right Foot:

1 right talus, partial.
 1 right fourth metatarsal fragment.

Left Foot:

1 left fifth metatarsal.

Un-sided Foot:

1 navicular fragment.
 1 first metatarsal head, partial.
 1 proximal toe phalanx.

75 unidentified bone fragments.
 4 unidentified long bone fragments.

Collection of bone from within Vessel #9 (large, nested orangeware plate in the northwest corner of the crypt).

Cranial Elements.

2 eroded cranial fragments.
 6 misc. flat bone fragments.

Post-Cranial Elements.

1 scapula fragment.
 1 rib fragment. Transverse cut-mark between interosseous borders.
 5 rib fragments.
 18 misc. long bone fragments.

- 1 proximal hand phalanx.
- 1 proximal metatarsal.
- 1 proximal toe phalanx, partial.

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