Chapter 2

A Temple over Time

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Figure 2.1. Summit of the F8-1 pyramid with remains of the final construction phase, Str. F8-1-1ª. Photo: Arturo Godoy.

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High-resolution version available at www.mesoweb.com/publications/TNS/index.html.

Figure 2.2. The F8-1 pyramid in 2013.

Str. F8-1 consisted of several different episodes of building, all visible in excavation profiles and plans (Figures 2.1 to 2.4). Some were major investments, resulting in entirely new structures. Others involved little more than the construction of outsets, refurbished stairways, or raised floor levels and added berms. The major phases are designated by the ordinal and "Sub" system used in Maya archaeology. Thus, Strs. F8-1-1st and F8-1-2nd represent the final two buildings. The topmost, 1st, is an elevated and expanded version of 2nd, with much the same floor plan and, perhaps, a shared set of basal terraces. Ruined from the Early Classic period on, 1st was never rebuilt; its tumbled masonry and stucco sculpture lay close to present-day humus. The building just underneath 1st and 2nd had a more complex plan. Not one, but two separate areas were roofed. Because of the discontinuity with 1st and 2nd, these earlier structures received a "Sub" label implying, by Mayanist convention, a very different layout from that which came after. The logic of latest-to-earliest labeling means that the later of the two buildings is Sub.1A and, despite their more imposing

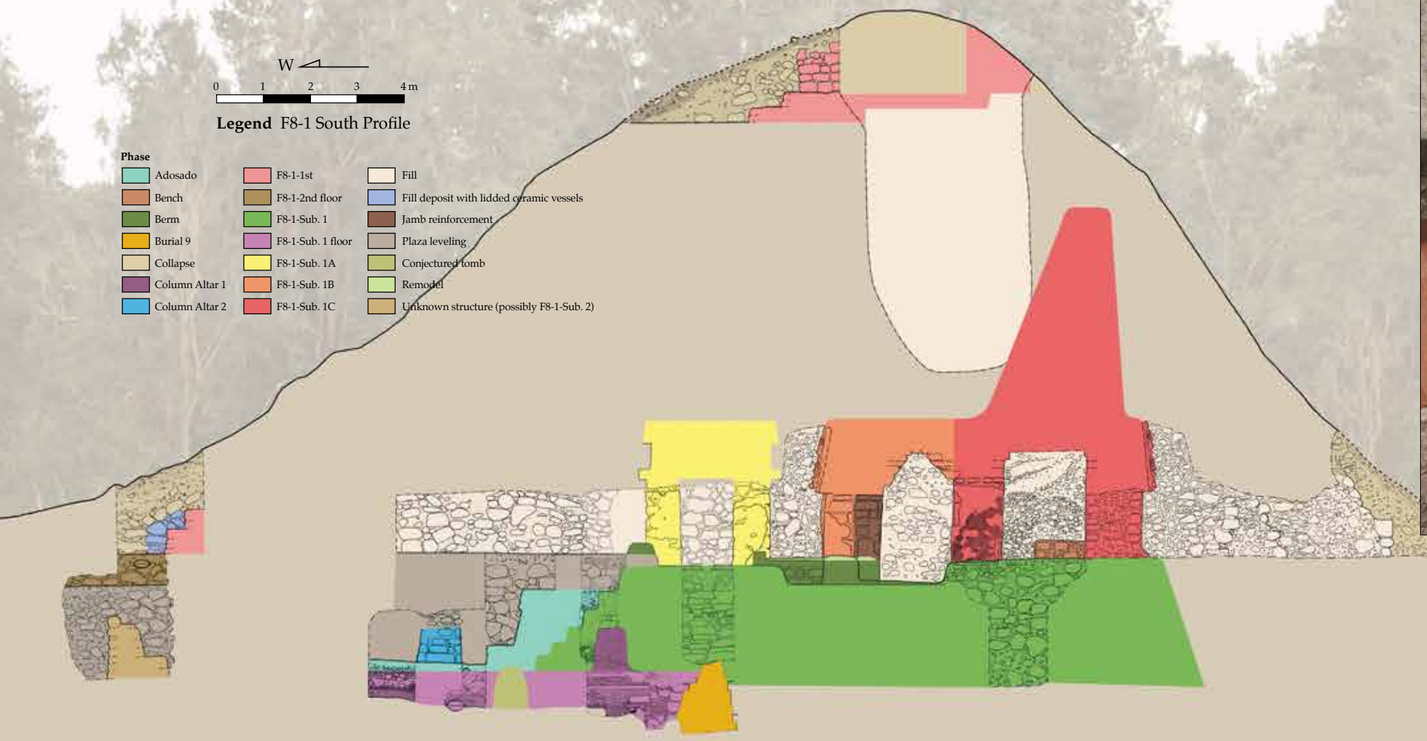


Figure 2.3. (facing page) The iterations of Str. F8-1 still visible in the southern excavation profile: Str. F8-1-1st, the "Upper Temple" (pink); F8-1-Sub.1A, the "Shrine" (yellow); F8-1-Sub.1B, the frontal chamber of the "Temple of the Night Sun" (orange); F8-1-Sub.1C, the rear chamber and roofcomb of the "Temple of the Night Sun" (red); and possible remains of F8-1-Sub.2, the "Red Temple" (far left, tan color); superimposed are combined profiles of excavations within Str. F8-1 from the 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012 field seasons (original excavation drawings by Nicholas Carter, Anabella Coronado, Thomas Garrison, Yeny Gutiérrez, Stephen Houston, Zachary Hruby, and Sarah Newman; combined figure: Thomas Garrison); (this page, top) stucco sculpture on the north face of the northeast corner of Structure F8-1-Sub.1C, as revealed by excavation; (this page, bottom left) cut on axis through the Temple of the Night Sun showing excavation pits leading down to the burial chamber; (this page, bottom right) volumetric model of the Temple of the Night Sun complex.

size and elaborate stucco modeling, the two distinct phases of the earlier are Sub.1B and Sub.1C. Lowest of all was Str. F8-1-Sub.2, the most enigmatic in the sequence. This building consisted of red-painted stone, often harder and more rectangular or carefully shaped than elsewhere in Str. F8-1; the stone was also covered on one or two sides by a simple, thin covering of stucco that contrasted strongly with the embellishments of later buildings. At some point, just prior to the construction of Sub.1B and Sub.1C, masons dismantled Str. F8-1-Sub.2. Signs of burning, especially a notable darkening of its paint, hint that its ending may have been violent or intense.

These labels offer a precise nomenclature for the individual buildings that make up Str. F8-1. They also suffer from alphanumeric clutter. For this reason, a more descriptive and evocative set of labels is used here. The "Upper Temple" corresponds to Str. F8-1-1st, the "Middle Temple" to Str. F8-1-2nd, and the "Shrine" to Str. F8-1-Sub.1A. The "Temple of the Night Sun" is comprised of two structures, Str. F8-1-Sub.1B (the frontal chamber) and Str. F8-1-Sub.1C (the rear chamber and roofcomb), while the "Red Temple" corresponds to Str. F8-1-Sub.2, the lowermost, dismantled building. The stratigraphy is partly explained in annual reports by the project (e.g., Román and Newman 2011), but some details have come to light in recent excavations or need further clarification or integration.

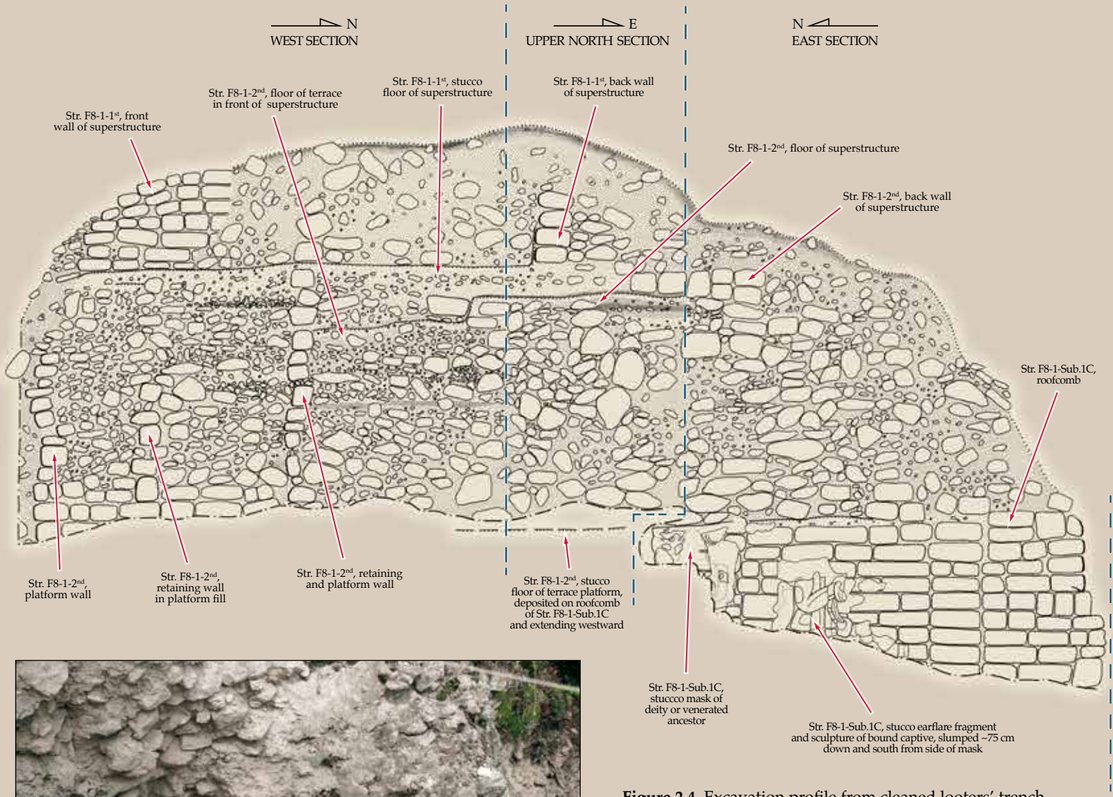
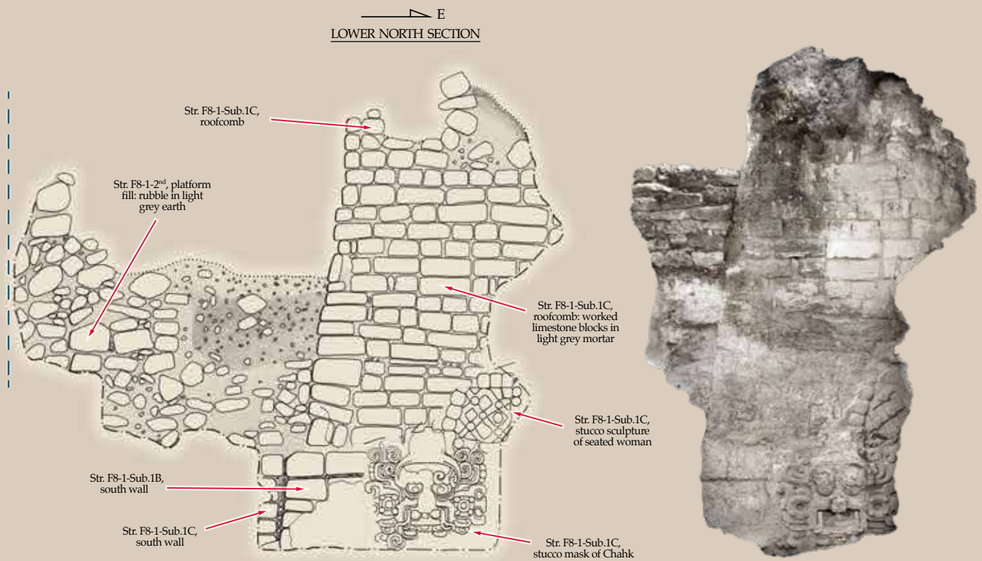


Figure 2.4. Excavation profile from cleaned looters' trench, southern side of Str. F8-1, with architectural elements of Str. F8-1-Sub.1C, F8-1-1st, and F8-1-2nd. Seen in the drawing and in the photograph at left are remains of modeled stucco from the roofcomb of Sub.1C, the "Temple of the Night Sun." The stucco mask of Chahk, at the far right of the drawing and in adjacent views, is from the southern façade of Sub.1C (see Chapter 5). Drawing: Nicholas Carter; photos Arturo Godoy and Edwin Román; photogrammetry Katie Simon, CAST.



Documenting the Modeled Stucco Sculpture

The tight fit of the Diablo tunnels made conventional imaging difficult. A team from the Center for Advanced Spatial Technologies (CAST), University of Arkansas, came to the rescue with novel photogrammetric techniques. Led by Katie Simon, with assistance from Kevin Fisher, Vance Green, Lauren Lipiello, and Alexa Rubinstein, they first experimented with a Breuckmann SmartSCAN HE, a white-light, fringe-protection photogrammetric scanner. For unknown reasons, the equipment failed. The team then collected images with a Canon 5 camera linked to strobe and flash. Photographs were taken with at least 60% overlap in vertical and horizontal dimensions. Two or more images shot from different angles allowed, after processing with Agisoft PhotoScan, the creation of a point cloud. Further massaging derived a surface (or mesh) from the point cloud, onto which textures could be mapped (Figure 2.5).

Figure 2.5. Documented remains of modeled stucco on the four sides of the "Temple of the Night Sun" (see Chapter 5). Photogrammetry: Katie Simon, CAST.

Figure 2.6. Blocks from Str. F8-1-Sub.2 (the Red Temple) plastered over and reused in the construction of Burial 9's chamber walls. Photo: Stephen Houston.

Phase 1:

The Red Temple (Str. F8-1-Sub.2)

The Red Temple is poorly understood. No signs of its plan or layout survive—in fact, it may not have even existed in the immediate vicinity of Str. F8-1. What does endure is a set of blocks with consistent size and finish. A few preserve an angle or batter, indicating that the Temple was not simply a vertical building with flat roof. The small number of attested stones hints, too, that the Temple could not have been very large. Several stones found their way into the walls of the tomb, where they were plastered over (Figure 2.6). One block was positioned in the western wall, some 25 cm above the floor; another appears another 25 cm or so above that stone, though farther to the south. After sealing, when the tomb experienced structural problems, several of the reused slabs from the Red Temple dislodged from the wall, one landing on Sector B4 where it struck and tilted Vessel 2.

Most stone used in later constructions of Str. F8-1 was relatively soft. Almost chalky and crumbly in texture, it took whatever strength it had from generous overlays of stucco. Not so the Red Temple. Its rock was harder, elongated and slab-like, with little stucco save for a preparatory layer for a highly burnished coating of paint. The variant masonry, so different from subsequent phases, suggests that the Red Temple was built some decades before the rest of the pyramid. This accords with finds of Late Preclassic and "Tzakol 1" sherds in parts of the El Diablo complex, as well as early buildings in the Plaza, such as Str. F8-18 (see "Ceramics from El Diablo Fill," below). Later red hues on Str. F8-1's stucco tend to be more orange, with similar levels of saturation but a lighter appearance than the Red Temple. In contrast, the Red Temple's blocks display an almost burgundy-red finish, at times darkened nearly to black. The only explanation for this range of color would be the general or topical application of flame. Whether this burning took place at the time of dismantling or some time before is difficult to say, although the former is more likely; a similar episode of burning affected both chambers of the Temple of the Night Sun prior to its encasement in later building phases. The Red Temple could not easily have survived such damage.

As will be seen below, stratigraphy confirms that the space for Burial 9 was constructed in two phases. One phase created the tomb chamber, another vaulted and sealed it. Blocks from the Red Temple appear in both. Two stacked courses, facing east, occur as neatly positioned fill to the west of a column-shaped mortuary altar,

a stuccoed sculpture in use while the tomb was open (see below). The Red Temple might have been built generations earlier, but in all likelihood only a short span elapsed between the initial construction of the tomb and its closing. The material reserved from the Red Temple might have been convenient, close at hand, pre-cut, and ready-to-use. It might also have held some special property that the builders sought to confer on the tomb. A counterpart may be found in the early platform (Str. M7-1-Sub.1-1st) in the East Group, which was also colored red and decorated with stucco. Painted blocks from this structure were similarly reused for some of the capstones along the vaulted passage leading to Burial 16 (see Chapter 1).

There is another enigma, not yet resolvable on present evidence. A building came to light in Op. EZ 5B-3-6, a pit just under the union between the final stairway of Str. F8-1 and the plaza in front (see Figure 2.3). Partly destroyed, it was surrounded by ceramics, albeit in relatively small quantity, from the initial years of the Early Classic period (see "Ceramics from El Diablo Fill," below). Stratigraphy indicates that this building, on rough alignment with the Temple of the Night Sun and the Shrine, was buried fairly late, when masons brought the platform of the Shrine (Str. F8-1-Sub.1A) up to the level of the El Diablo plaza. The problem, however, is that the evidence from ceramics points to an early interment, even before the construction of the tomb. A possible explanation is that the early ceramics came from reused fill or were misdated, meaning that another, fairly late building existed concurrently with the Shrine and the Temple of the Night Sun. Alternatively, the ceramics are correctly interpreted and the buried, now-destroyed building in EZ 5B-3-6 might be the remains of what was once the Red Temple. It had a stairway, purely conjectural at this point, dropping down to the west, towards the level fronting the tomb and its enclosing platform. The only way to test these possibilities is to connect the interior excavation tunnel in Str. F8-1 with the structure found in EZ 5B-3-6. Unfortunately, that dig would be dangerous; the surface is too close, and the fill likely to be loose.

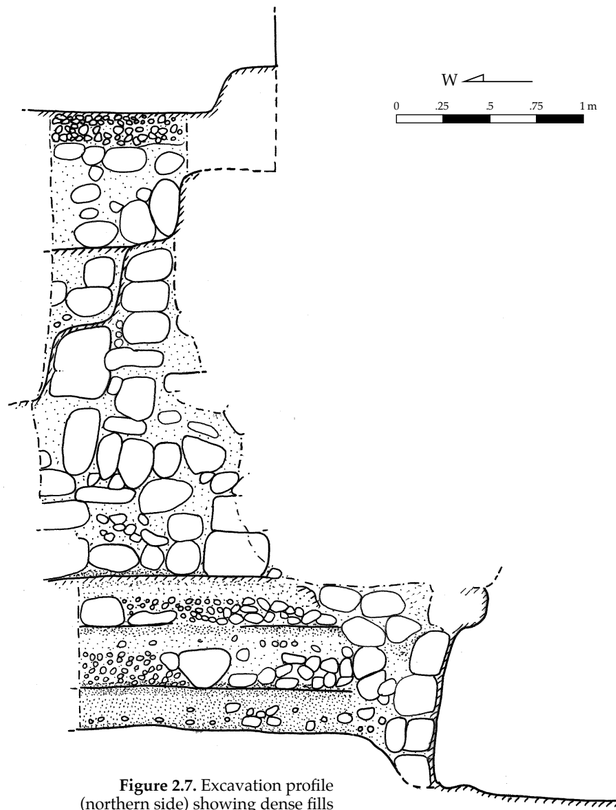


Figure 2.7. Excavation profile (northern side) showing dense fills atop bedrock to west of tomb chamber. Drawing: Stephen Houston.

Phase 2:

The Open Tomb and Column Altar

The phase of Str. F8-1 after the Red Temple was both subtractive and additive. The ancient masons' first task was to scrape away a dark, dense layer of earth to reveal the limestone bedrock below. Sulfurous and full of organics, this layer probably came from early levels of occupation at El Diablo or was taken from *bajo* deposits down the hill (such fills were evidently prized at El Zotz for their solidity, occurring in the site's largest pyramid, Str. L7-11, as well as various other monumental structures). The layer might have correlated with the Red Temple and, barely visible in one profile, a faint floor a few cm above bedrock (Figure 2.7). The masons then cut a rectangular depression into the exposed bedrock. This surface would become the floor of the tomb, later smoothed with tamped earth and plaster. Linear slots around this depression served to fix blocks for the tomb's walls. The chamber itself, measuring 3.12 m along its north-south axis and 1.25 m wide along its east-west axis, on a heading of 340° (magnetic 339°, true north if corrected for declination), was formed of shaped limestone blocks and mortar. Initially masons laid down five courses

Figure 2.8. Caches 5, 6, and 8 visible in their arrangement about a crude stone altar, immediately to west of Burial 9. Photo: Arturo Godoy.

of stone, establishing the rectangular footprint of the tomb while leaving the enclosed space accessible from above. The uppermost course cantilevered slightly over the opening, its "lip" or top surface covered entirely with 2 to 3 cm of stucco.

A complex offering surrounding a crudely worked stone altar was placed just outside the western wall of the tomb (Figure 2.8). This dated to the time of tomb construction, most likely following the erection of its walls. The offering and its constituents may correspond to poorly preserved floors, visible in the excavation profile, suggesting a process of successive interment and covering with provisional levels of fill above each deposit. The stone altar was accompanied by a series of five caches, four composed of two small bowls placed lip to lip—Caches 4 (EZ 5B-28-15; Figure 2.9), 5 (EZ 5B-28-18; Figure 2.10), 6 (EZ 5B-28-19; Figure 2.11), and 7 (EZ 5B-28-16; Figure 2.12), and one unpaired bowl, sitting upright—Cache 8 (EZ 5B-28-20; Figure 2.13). All of these were small examples of Aguila Orange, outflaring-side cache vessels, as described by T. Patrick Culbert (1993:Fig. 103) for deposits at Tikal. To judge from their uniform finish and shape, the vessels were made by the same potters, probably at close to the same time: notably, this batch of pots also included vessels reserved for interment *after* the closing of the tomb (see below). Most of the cache vessels held human phalanges, with some containing teeth or obsidian as well (see Chapter 4). Cache 4 enclosed two human hand phalanges (an intermediate and distal), which appear to come from a single finger of an adult individual and show evidence of exposure to heat.

Figure 2.9. (top left) Reconstructed superior vessel (4A) of Cache 4; (top right) reconstructed inferior vessel (4B) of Cache 4; (bottom) Cache 4 prior to excavation. Photos: Jorge Pérez de Lara and Arturo Godoy.

Figure 2.10. (left) Cache 5 prior to excavation; (right) reconstructed inferior vessel (5B) of Cache 5. Photos: Arturo Godoy and Jorge Pérez de Lara.

Figure 2.11. (top left) Reconstructed superior vessel (6A) of Cache 6; (bottom left) reconstructed inferior vessel (6B) of Cache 6; (above) Cache 6 prior to excavation. Photos: Jorge Pérez de Lara and Arturo Godoy.

Figure 2.12. (left) Cache 7 prior to excavation; (above) close-up of tooth found within Cache 7 (after on-site laboratory excavation of Vessel 7B); (below) reconstructed superior vessel (7A) of Cache 7. Photos: Arturo Godoy, Stephen Houston, and Jorge Pérez de Lara.

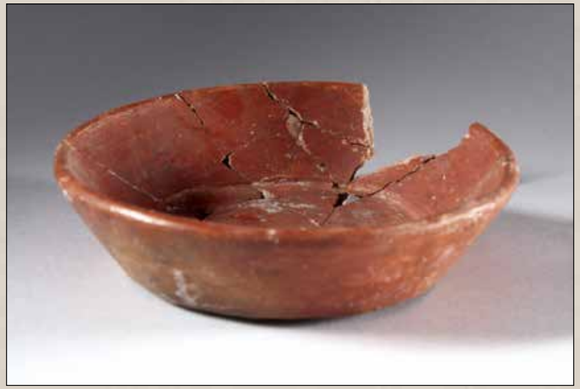


Figure 2.13. (top) Reconstructed vessel from Cache 8; (bottom) Cache 8 prior to excavation. Photos: Jorge Pérez de Lara and Arturo Godoy.

Cache 5, which featured two slightly larger and deeper vessels in comparison to the other caches, held six hand phalanges, also most likely from a single adult individual (one proximal phalanx, three intermediate phalanges, and two distal phalanges), one adult mandibular incisor, and a complete obsidian blade. Cache 6 had three human hand phalanges (one intermediate phalanx, one distal phalanx, and one phalanx too fragmented to be identified), all of which are adult (again, most likely from a single individual) and show evidence of discoloration from heat exposure and remains of a blackened substance that, in burning, adhered to the bone. Within its paired bowls, Cache 7 consisted of a single mandibular incisor, while Cache 8 housed two intermediate hand phalanges.

The altar and cache vessels were found either within or just above the dark, organic matrix that had been removed to level the bedrock and construct the tomb chamber. The exact placements and spatial relationships of the stone altar and accompanying cache vessels are difficult to reconstruct because of their natural settling within fill levels. It seems likely that Caches 4, 5, 6, and 8 may initially have been placed in a quadripartite arrangement below the stone altar, which then served as a cap for the caches. Cache 7 corresponds to a later fill episode as the construction of the tomb continued. It is quite possible that other lip-to-lip caches existed around the tomb, along the western axis and in other quadrants as well. Moreover, the stuccoed column altar erected in front of the tomb (discussed below) closely mirrors the orientation and location of this lower, much rougher altar.

The fill levels containing the caches and altar reached to the height of the tomb's walls, at the fifth course of stone, before they were covered with a well-preserved floor of thick stucco. The floor not only covered the dense, dark fill and arrangement of cached offerings, but further extended across the wall of the tomb, lipping over the interior edge and its cantilevered stones. The recovery of nests built by a species of potter wasp, which took its nest material from the moist mud covering the interior

Figure 2.14. Potter wasp nests. Photo: Arturo Godoy.

walls of the tomb chamber, suggests that the floor remained in use while the tomb was still open (Figure 2.14). This allowed the mud and mortar to solidify, permitting time, too, for rituals of burning and the assembly of mortuary furniture (see Matthews and González 2004:Figs. 2-5). The high volume of wasp nests found within the tomb at El Diablo indicates "a reasonable inference of the onset of the rainy season," when such insects swarm. Nonetheless, potter wasps nest asynchronously throughout the year in tropical environments and even mid-dry season cannot be ruled out (James M. Carpenter, personal communication, 2010). The nests and surface remains of such activity cluster toward the southern end of the tomb. This is the area that would have been most exposed during the months from May through July, according to solar angle calculators adjusted to the latitude of the Peten. Potter wasps tend to be more active in daytime, which might favor a summer date for the construction of the nests. The period it takes to build and provision a nest varies according to weather and distance to building material, but the average is two days (James M. Carpenter, personal communication, 2010). The evidence is inconclusive, yet there is a credible chance that the tomb was built and left open for some days in the early months of the local rainy season. A tempting, though unconfirmable date would be the summer solstice, thematically consistent with the solar iconography that envelops the Temple of the Night Sun. This is also when viewers, observing the sun rise from behind the Temple, would have seen a precise solar alignment with the "bat cave" (a collapsed sink-hole) on the Buenavista Escarpment.

Atop this floor and immediately to the west of the open tomb chamber was a column-shaped altar measuring about one meter in height (Figure 2.15). The entire altar was a modeled stucco mask facing west, away from the tomb and toward the plaza. Somewhat crude in execution and partly defaced before its eventual burial, the mask was not detected during initial excavations because of tight spacing within the narrow vertical shaft accessing the tomb and the complex stratigraphy of Str. F8-1's inner layers. Its presence became clear only during later cleaning and documentation. Extending to the south, the mask displayed a large eye orbit (now largely destroyed), along with a mouth and protruding snout. Further excavations around the column altar confirmed that it was a freestanding

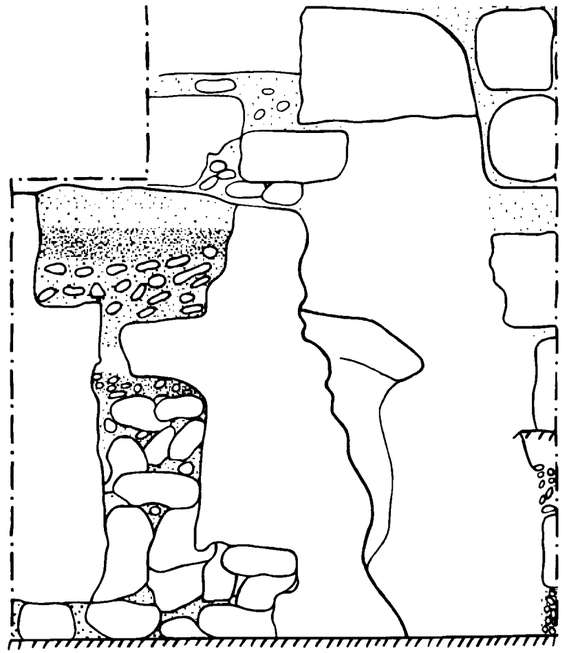


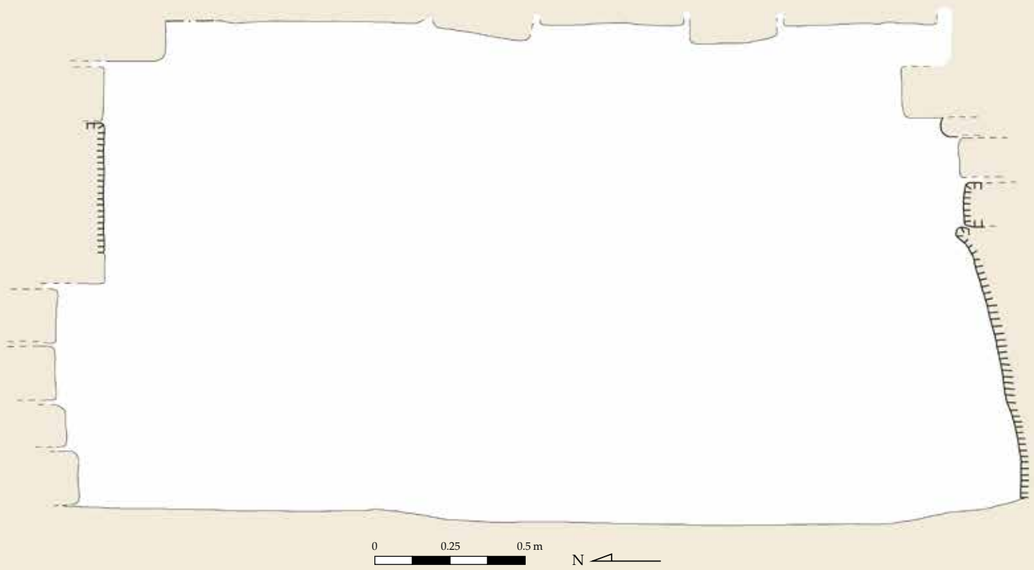
Figure 2.15. Column-shaped altar with modeled stucco mask, facing to the west and erected atop the floor leading away from the open tomb chamber. Burned residues atop the altar suggest it may have played a role in preparing offerings for the tomb behind it. Drawing: Boris Beltrán.

Figure 2.16. Flake scars left by masons on chamber stones. Photo: Arturo Godoy.

feature. Shaped by creating a cylinder of dressed stone, it was then packed with loose stone and earth fill before being plastered. At the center atop the altar a resinous and waxy deposit (approximately 1 cm thick) attests to residues of burning activities, most likely of copal incense. This evidence suggests that such rituals formed an integral part of the creation, exposure, filling, and later interment of the royal tomb directly behind the altar. Moreover, several of the vessels within the tomb and their contents show signs of heat exposure—some are severely cracked and blackened—including two basal-flange bowls with gutter spouts, each paired with a hollow, globular vessel (Vessels 3 and 14), two pitchers with gutter spouts and pedestal bases (Vessels 4 and 7), and a wide-mouth jar with a tall neck and small handles (Vessel 8), as well as six subadult skeletons found within large lip-to-lip cache vessels along the north-south axis of the chamber (Vessels 2, 11, 12, 13, 16, and 23). The burned objects and offerings contained within the tomb raise the intriguing possibility that these items were heated atop the column altar, making it a key location for ritual processing and preparations surrounding the interment. Both the column altar and the tomb opening were buried simultaneously, to be incorporated into the subsequent phase of Str. F8-1.

Phase 3:
Filling and Sealing of the Tomb; Construction of the Rear Chamber of the Temple of the Night Sun and Shrine Platform (Str. F8-1-Sub.1C)

To seal the tomb, masons laid the final two courses of the vault. These stones were not as even as the slabs below and must have needed additional shaping. A mason standing in the empty tomb—a filled chamber would not have provided sufficient space—struck horizontal or glancing blows with a chert axe, its "bite" about 5 cm in width (Figure 2.16). The flake scars of the axe left parallel marks in the soft stone, generally with a slight downward tilt to the right. A grey mud plaster packs and beds the stone, a technique also used in the construction of a fourth-century AD royal tomb at nearby Bejucal. The gaps between the two courses were filled and smeared with the same mud plaster, though in more vertical streaks, leaving impressions of grouped fingers. The mud disappears towards the southern end of the tomb. Almost certainly this was where those filling the tomb exited the chamber, leaving no one living to complete the daubing. The vault's capstones were some 10 cm thick, the widest ones situated near the center of the vault. Most skewed off the perpendicular, crossing at a more easterly angle (Figure 2.17). The reasons for this are unclear. Perhaps the arrangement was thought to lend greater strength to the vault or maybe the slanting, more easterly heading conferred some symbolic benefit. The act of leaving open and then



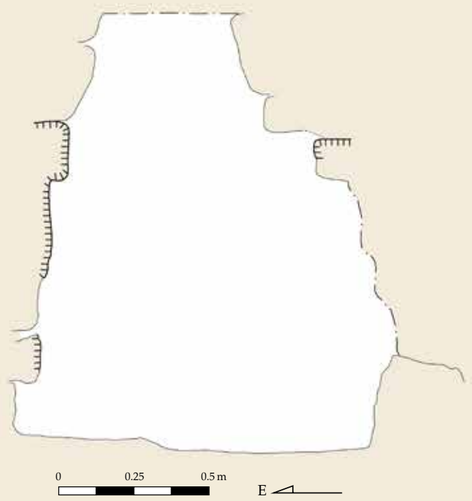


Figure 2.17. (above) East-west profile across tomb, from datum near tunnel entrance; (below left) north-south profile across mid-line of tomb; (below right) capstones to Burial 9's vault skewed slightly from a perpendicular angle to the tomb's walls before being filled and covered with mud plaster. Drawings: Sarah Newman; photo: Arturo Godoy.

Figure 2.18. Offerings within Burial 9 showing sequential placement, with the rims of certain vessels overlapping others, as shown by Vessels 12 (covered by *Spondylus* shell facing down) and 13 (the pair of stacked vessels). Photo: Arturo Godoy.

closing a hole does accord with a trope attested in Classic Maya inscriptions. At an important Period Ending, Copan Stela A (glyphs H10-G12) celebrates the world directions along with holy lords linked to them. Its text mentions **HA-'o-ba pa-sa no-ma WAY-ya ma-ka no-ma WAY-ya**, *ha'o'b pasnoom way maknoom way*, "those, the hole-openers, the hole-closers." The concept of covering (*mak*) chambers and caches with capstones appears also at Caracol, Ek' Balam, and Machaquila, over the full gamut of the Late Classic period (e.g., Chase and Chase 1987:Fig. 37; Graham 1967:Figs. 47, 53, 55, 57, 59; Lacadena 2004:Figs. 6, 7, 8, 11, 13, 14, 16). In all discernible cases, such rituals involved royalty. This surely applied to the El Diablo tomb as well.

The offerings and occupants of the tomb were placed sequentially, moving from north-to-south and west-to-east in sequential lines and layers of objects. This pattern was especially evident in the positions of certain ceramics. Vessel 10, a small *olla* with a vertical neck and strongly everted rim, was placed before the far larger Vessel 11, just to the east. The same holds true for Vessel 12, its top adorned with a face-down *Spondylus* shell; its positioning preceded that of Vessel 13, which rested immediately to the east (Figure 2.18). By the time all the offerings were placed, the floor of the tomb was almost entirely covered by artifacts (Figure 2.19). These occurred in three north-to-south lines (see Figure 3.1, page 86). The western line had, in sequence, a serving bowl (Vessel 1), a lip-to-lip pair of cache vessels containing the remains of an infant (Vessel 12), then three more serving vessels with lids (Vessels 15, 17, and 19). The middle line consisted of lip-to-lip or doubled ceramics with human offerings (Vessels 2, 11, 13, 16, 23) and a large *olla* for liquids (Vessel 21). The eastern

Figure 2.19. Floor of the tomb chamber of Burial 9. Photo: Arturo Godoy.

line included smaller serving vessels (Vessels 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 14), including two spouted bowls covered by layers of textiles that appear to have been employed to preserve the moist heat of their contents. This line consisted of several stuccoed and painted wooden vessels, at least one with feet in the shape of peccary snouts and a water-bird lid; an open ring-shaped pot-stand supported one of the vessels, a polychrome ceramic lid covered another. Such delicate, perishable vessels arc around the main body, from the top center of the tomb, down the eastern side, with a dense layer of probable stacked vessels, all perishable, atop Vessel 22. The eastern line ended with two now-decayed wooden cylindrical drinking vessels, one with slab feet, and a second bowl resting on peccary-snout supports. The final ceramics in this arrangement were three more serving vessels with lids (Vessels 18, 20, 22).

A peculiarity of some zoomorphic vessels in the tomb is their deliberate inversion. At interment, some of the lids appear to have been deliberately shifted from their correct orientation (Figures 2.20 and 2.21). The monkey head on Vessel 1 lay skewed 189° from the body of the creature underneath. The same pattern held for the mythic turtle on the lid of Vessel 17, also reversed with respect to the designs on the bowl below. One such find could be coincidence. Two advertise an intention to arrange the zoomorphs in a way that violated and subverted the overall depiction, a head now hovering over a tail, a belly or chest underneath a back. The heads on zoomorphic or anthropomorphic ceramic lids in the tomb generally face towards the east, albeit with more northerly and southerly dispositions in some examples.

Another striking feature of the ceramic assemblage in the tomb is that several vessels and their lids are mismatches. The base of Vessel 15 is larger than its lid, making for an awkward, sunken fit. Vessel 23's incongruity is more extreme. Its two lip-to-lip vessels include a base that has a slight medial flange

Figure 2.20. Lids of Vessels 1 (top) and 17 (bottom), found in positions that reversed their zoomorphic heads with respect to their bases, inverting the intended designs of the vessels. Photos: Arturo Godoy.

paired with an upper bowl of entirely different shape, more in keeping with the smooth, slightly outflaring bowls used in the tomb's other caches. Curiously, the medial-flanged bowl is far older than most other objects in the tomb, based not only on its form and surface treatment, but also its paste composition and chemical signature, matching those of Late Preclassic vessels at El Palmar (Ronald Bishop, personal communication, 2012). In the case of Vessel 23, the discrepancies between lid and bowl led to weaknesses when the one was placed atop the other. Stones tumbling from the unstable chamber wall contributed to severe breakage of several other vessels (Vessels 1, 12, 18, 22), but this was particularly

Figure 2.21. Vessels 1 (top) and 17 (bottom), restored in the laboratory with their designs as intended. Photos: Jorge Pérez de Lara.

catastrophic with Vessel 23, the upper portion of which splintered into several dozen fragments. A few bowls exhibit obvious wear on their rims, such as the incised blackwares (Vessels 15 and 17). Although only the lip-to-lip cache vessels appear to have been commissioned for the tomb, other vessels followed consistent themes: the solar howler monkeys depicted on both Vessels 1 and 18 play on comparable, cosmic motifs.

The human remains within lip-to-lip bowls (Vessels 2, 11, 12, 13, 16, and 23) composed most of the middle line in the tomb, six in a row, and one, Vessel 12, at a right angle to the east of Vessel 13, the central ceramic in the line. A full description of the remains appears elsewhere (see Chapter 4), but there is unmistakable patterning (see Figure 4.3, page 183): skulls of children occupy Vessels 11 (Skeleton C) and 16 (Skeleton F) and the full bodies of infants appear in alternation—Vessels 2 (Skeleton B), 12 (Skeleton D), 13 (Skeleton E), and 23 (Skeleton G). One seemed to be too large for its receptacle. This body, Skeleton E in Vessel 13, probably hung over its edge; the two vessels intended for lip-to-lip positioning were simply stacked, the body draped over the uppermost. Close study by Andrew Scherer indicates that the single skulls faced east, except Skeleton B, as was true for the whole bodies. The heads to the east recall, by far analogy, an ethnographic account from the coastal Mixteca of Mexico: "La cabeza del niño difunto se orienta hacia el lado donde nace el sol" ("the head of the deceased child is oriented towards the side where the sun is born"; López Castro and Ruiz Medrano 2010:51). That the line of vessels with bodies as offerings corresponds approximately to the area occupied by the presumed king cannot be a coincidence.

The skeletal remains of the tomb's main occupant were found either above or interspersed among artifacts, suggesting that the body had originally been placed in an elevated position above the array of grave furniture. Powdered wooden remains intermingled with the skeletal remains and above the artifacts on the floor of the tomb confirm that the body was likely placed on an elevated wooden funerary bier, a widespread practice observed across the Maya area,

Figure 2.22. Fragment of wooden bier, or *teem*, coated with a layer of thin stucco, painted green. Photo: Arturo Godoy.

especially in the Early Classic period (Fitzsimmons 2009:188-193; Peirera and Michelet 2004:338-346). Long fragments of thin stucco, painted green, show evidence of wood grain on their undersides where they covered the bier (Figure 2.22). The bier itself is probably a long, low throne that the Classic Maya labeled a *teem* (Robertson et al. 2007:7, 29, 36). Described as a "funerary bed," in "formal equivalence" to benches for the living (Peirera and Michelet 2004:Fig. 9), these were in all likelihood acquired in life. The spouse of Ruler 3, Yo'nal Ahk, at Piedras Negras, Guatemala, received one when her husband celebrated 25 years on the throne; their daughter, highlighted at the same time, had also managed to survive the rigors of early childhood (Piedras Negras Stela 3, glyph E3; the gift may imply the woman's appointment as possible regent). Another *teem*, its everted legs reproducing those of an animal, came to light in Burial 195 at Tikal (Moholy-Nagy 2008:65-66, Fig. 231). Dating to the early years of the Late Classic, it was 35 cm tall and 1.02 m long, approximately the length of a *teem* represented under the mortuary bundle of a queen on Piedras Negras Stela 40.

The *teem* in the El Diablo tomb was about twice the length of the Piedras Negras example and some 50 cm in height, to judge from the minimum dimensions necessary to accommodate the vessels below. Royal tombs at Río Azul, Guatemala, all of Early Classic date, show evidence of footings for *teem* (Hall 1989:73; Orrego Corzo 1987:Figs. 14, 15), as perhaps does a crypt at Comalcalco (Blom and La Farge 1926:Fig. 97). Alternatively, as in Río Azul Tomb 19, the wooden bench of Burial 9 may have resembled an open lattice of lashed boards (Hall 1989:Fig. 70). Whatever its precise shape—the finish on the El Diablo *teem* was far finer than the examples from Río Azul—the wooden support was introduced into the tomb on its side, without the body. There was insufficient room in the small opening for a more graceful, level entrance. The ruler's body probably experienced the same indignity when introduced to the chamber.

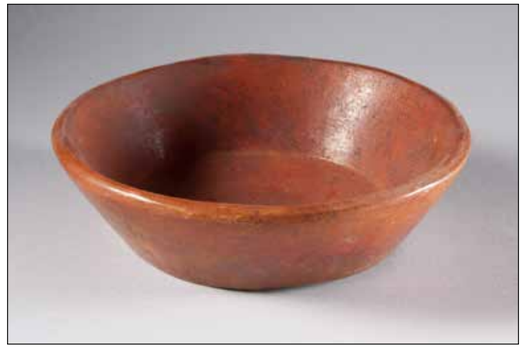
Several artifacts found among the grave goods on the floor of the tomb were originally on the bier with the deceased. These included a large obsidian blade, a dancer's belt composed of *Conus* and *Spondylus* shells and a necklace of smaller shell beads worn by the occupant, a jade bead (originally placed within the mouth of the deceased; Ruz Lhuillier 1968:459), jade discs, celts, plaques, and masks,

Figure 2.23. Distribution of objects within the tomb, especially the *Conus* and *Spondylus* shells scattered above rock fall. Photo: Arturo Godoy.

and possibly a feline pelt, as suggested by the recovery of a distal phalanx of ocelot (*Leopardus pardalis*) size. The presence of the phalanx hints that the ruler went to the grave with a feline kilt or cape, much like those depicted in Rooms 1 and 2 in the Bonampak murals, Chiapas, Mexico (Miller and Brittenham 2013:Fig. 111). A second possibility, attested on several Late Classic vessels (e.g., K555, K2796 at Mayavase.com), is that the pelt covered the *teem*.

Following the placement of the final capstone to seal the tomb, a series of large, rectangular stones were arranged above. These were first laid in courses of elongated, near-trapezoidal slabs oriented north-south. Packed with hard plaster, the stones were buttressed at about one meter above the vault with rectangular slabs (ca. 50 cm x 20 cm) that ran east-west. The shifting orientations distributed the mass of the platform constructed above the tomb, preventing collapse into the chamber below. Although the builders clearly intended to seal and protect the tomb from water and the great weight about to be placed on it, that goal was not entirely successful. With the inevitable decay of the wooden bier inside the tomb, the royal body collapsed and its mortuary attire scattered, in a roughly north to south alignment along the western side of the tomb. Moisture concentrated in lateral flows approximately 50 cm above the tomb floor. This weakened the walls and contributed to a shearing of stone, particularly along the eastern edge of the funerary chamber. Some objects, particularly the *Conus* and *Spondylus* shells, were found distributed in a tumultuous mix above stones collapsed from the tomb walls (Figure 2.23). Presumably then, the walls had fallen before the decay of the bier. Since the wood is unlikely to have lasted long, the internal upheaval of the tomb might have

Figure 2.24. Small, triangular cavity above the tomb's vault may have served as a "psychoduct," enabling contact with the deceased below. Photo: Stephen Houston.



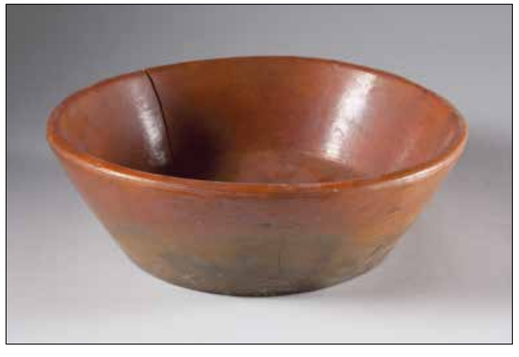


Figure 2.25. (left) Superior vessel (Cache Vessel 1A) of the first pair of vessels within Cache 1; (right) inferior vessel of the same pair. Photos: Jorge Pérez de Lara.

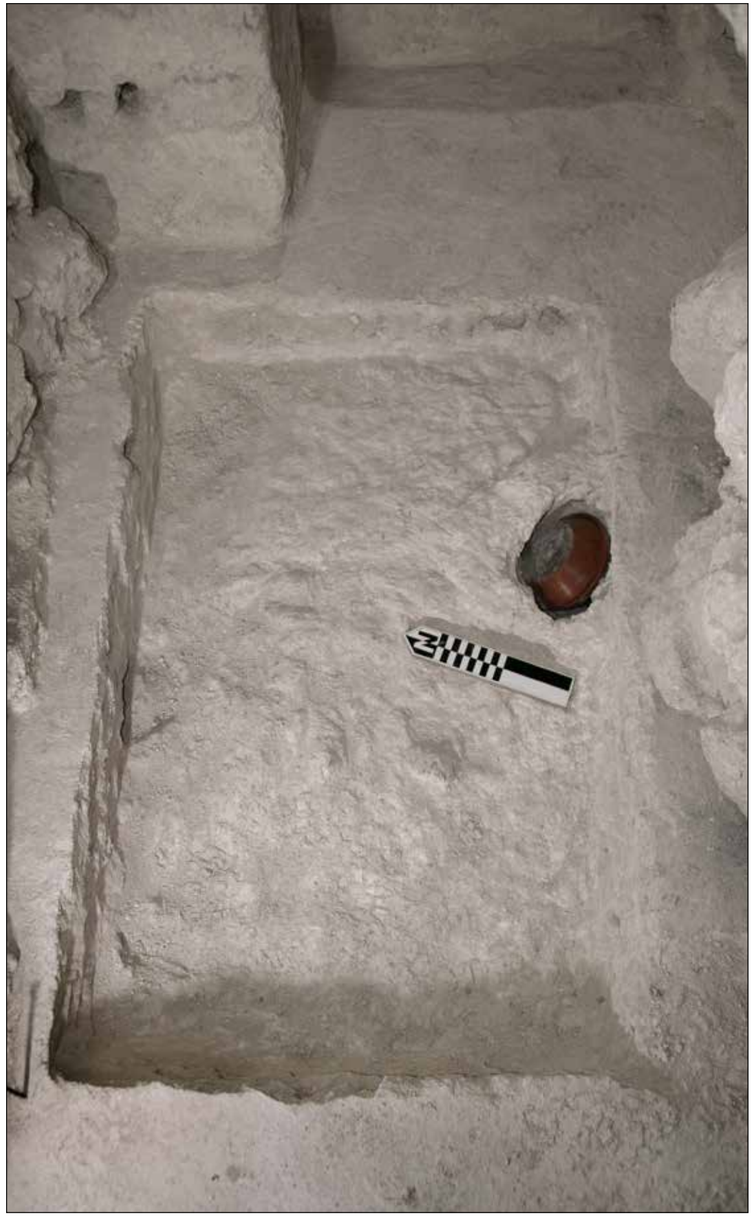


Figure 2.26. Set of Vessels 1A and 1B of Cache 1 prior to excavation. Photo: Arturo Godoy.

taken place only a century or two after the burial of the ruler.

Some ten courses of stone above the tomb's vault, a flat slab well-fixed in compact plaster (*sascab)* supported what can only be described, by analogy with the Temple of the Inscriptions at Palenque, as a psychoduct. This tube or cavity seemed to exist for ritual reasons, perhaps to facilitate sustained contact with the occupant of the tomb (Figure 2.24). In this case, the cavity was triangular in section, 10 cm wide at its base, and extended at least some 80 cm to the south. Its terminus or point of exit could not be established, as it was buried in architectural fill beyond the limits of excavated tunnels. The orientation of this cavity accorded perfectly with the vault line below. A dense pack of *sascab* plaster filled the area above the triangular opening and below two separate caches placed to mark the mid-line and mid-point of the platform over the tomb. The first to be found (although the second to be inserted by the Maya) was Cache 1, consisting of four bowls of the Aguila Orange type of the Aguila ceramic group in two lip-to-lip pairs, with the upper pair of vessels (1A and 1B) containing a single human phalanx (Figures 2.25 to 2.27; see Chapter 4). A lone sherd, also of the Aguila Orange type of the Aguila variety was found curated with the four bowls, a pattern mimicked in the later arrangement of Cache 9 (see below). Cache 2, the second cache found near the first, included another lip-to-lip of the same type-variety, but now with three adult phalanges (Figure 2.28). When found, the caches were nested within cavities which still bore the impressions of long leaves enveloping the vessel pairs, somewhat similar to the palm (*Coccothrinax* sp.) or *bob* (*Coccoloba* sp.) leaves that wrap sacred breads, *waaj*, in

Figure 2.27. (top right) Superior vessel (1C) of the second pair of vessels within Cache 1; (bottom right) inferior vessel (1D) paired with Vessel 1C; (above) Vessels 1C and 1D prior to excavation. Photos: Sarah Newman and Arturo Godoy.

Figure 2.28. (top left) Superior vessel (2A) of Cache 2; (top right) inferior vessel (2B) of Cache 2; (bottom) Cache 2 prior to excavation. Photos: Jorge Pérez de Lara and Arturo Godoy.

Yucatan (Figure 2.29; Love 1989:336; Redfield and Villa Rojas 1934:129). After positioning the caches, masons leveled and completed the final, burnished floor some 5 cm above Cache 1. This floor showed faint signs of burning, little more than grey soot, hinting that offerings may have been made there as well.

Such layers of construction resulted in a long, elevated platform that would serve as the base for both the Temple of the Night Sun and the Shrine. It is possible that the platform had another underlying basal tier, but this remains unconfirmed by excavation. What is known, however, is that the initial construction of the platform featured two smaller areas atop its eastern and western sides, each with beveled edges roughly 4 m apart. The eastern rise served as the base for the rear chamber of the Temple of the Night Sun, while its western counterpart would later hold the Shrine. The northern and southern sides of the long platform have not been exposed because of the quantity of fill over them and their proximity to the surface of the ruined pyramid of Str. F8-1. The front of this platform, facing toward the plaza to the west, was defined by a set of five steps, the lowermost revealed in 2012 (see below). These led down to the floor level at the base of the column altar, the same floor that lipped over the western wall of the tomb while the burial chamber lay open (see above). This level served as the frontal approach to the Temple of the Night Sun even after the altar's burial and may also have served as El Diablo's main plaza surface.

The Temple of the Night Sun (hereafter "the Temple") was built in two distinct phases. The first, Str. F8-1-Sub.1C formed the rear (eastern) vaulted chamber. This was situated directly above the raised area on the eastern side of the platform covering the tomb. With dimensions of approximately 4.2 m east-west and 9 m north-south, the initial form of the Temple contained only a single vaulted chamber, creating roughly 1.86 m by 6.6 m of interior space, stuccoed and painted red. A bench ran along the eastern wall of the chamber, constructed after the lower courses of the Temple's walls. The walls themselves contained dressed stones of 20 to 30 cm in depth, and the doorways were bridged by flat wooden lintels, four over the entrance to the rear chamber, probably of chicozapote (*Manilkara zapota*) or some other hard yet shapeable wood. The beams have left impressions of their grain in the plaster above and to the sides. This moderately sized chamber, however, supported a roofcomb towering more than 7.8 m above the surface of the underlying elongated platform. The initial phase of the building and its massive roofcomb appear to have been covered in the primary iteration of the elaborate stucco masks whose iconographic elements give the structure its name (see Chapter 5). Later excavations along the south side of the Temple, which revealed the front chamber to be a secondary addition, also showed a later Chahk mask stuccoed atop the building's earlier iconography. This displayed a male and female pair, most likely the father and mother of the founder in the tomb below.

Figure 2.29. Stucco around Caches 1 and 2, revealing impressions of long leaves that once enveloped the lip-to-lip vessels. Photo: Arturo Godoy.

Figure 2.30. Front chamber of Temple of the Night Sun, reinforced by thickening the door jamb of its middle wall to combat structural failures. Photo: Arturo Godoy.

Phase 4:
Construction of the Front Chamber of the Temple of the Night Sun (Str. F8-1-Sub.1B); Failure and Attempted Repair of the Temple of the Night Sun

Perhaps because of the immense weight of the high roofcomb, a second vaulted chamber, Str. F8-1-Sub.1B, was added to the front (western side) of the Temple. Cross beams within the rear chamber hint at an awareness of structural issues from the very beginning. The new and larger vaulted chamber, measuring roughly 10.7 m north-south and extending 2.7 m from the wall of the rear chamber, joined a low, flat roof in front of the towering roofcomb. This gave the Temple a "T-shape" in plan where it reached beyond the north and south walls of the rear chamber. Yet it seems to have done little to reinforce the unstable Temple. The dramatic contrast between a high-vaulted back room and much lower front room eventually led to a structural catastrophe. The front chamber seems to have collapsed not long after construction, although the amount of time involved is unclear. Masons had to reinforce the front chamber with a thickened door jamb in the middle wall and narrow it as well, thinning the interior space available within the room (Figure 2.30). The vault appears to have been lowered in the process—indeed, so low as to become precarious. A new set of cross beams gave some comfort to the builders, anxious about collapse, but it is doubtful this did much good.

Figure 2.31. Thin layers of paint used to sketch out later stucco sculptures. Photo: Stephen Houston.

The iconography of the façade will be discussed in Chapter 5, but its manner of construction deserves immediate comment. The lower part of the external walls, measuring approximately 1.8 m in height, sits below a sloping roof that cantilevers 25 cm out beyond the vertical thrust of the wall. The slope of the roof was prepared carefully with plaster, along with outset blocks of masonry to support the series of elaborate stucco masks placed upon it, while recessed areas in between the masks feature skybands with jeweled beads. After what must have been a process of curing the plaster to a hardened consistency, a master artist daubed an initial sketch, more suggestion than firm design, of the stucco sculpture to be affixed to the plaster. This paint survives in ephemeral, scarcely detectable form in a few areas where the overlaid stucco has sloughed away (Figure 2.31). The stucco program of the Temple attests to two major stages of application, with the deity heads coming last. The façade of the front chamber was somewhat more complex in layout, perhaps as a result of its being a later addition. Recessed panels, later echoed in the Shrine built atop the rise to the west (see below), showed other deities. All stuccoes were painted with red pigment. Some small highlighting with other colors appears, including yellow and orange in the eyes of the back central mask (Figure 2.32) and black-painted whorls in the eyes of a Jaguar God of the Underworld on the northern façade (Figure 2.33). Like the building below it, the roofcomb was similarly covered in sculptural elements. Of these, a seated figure remains visible on the north side, overlapped by the later stucco sculpture of Chahk below, along with a central mask (now partially destroyed) to the southern front of the roofcomb and a deity clambering up a pole.

The skill and execution of these stucco sculptures is impressive. What puzzles is the way that they were so weakly attached to their backing, especially on the sloped roof, but also the front lower façade. A continual danger during excavation was that of undermining thick, heavy stucco that lacked armature and proved ready to slide off. All that held

Figure 2.32. Color in the eyes of Mask 1, the central mask on the east cornice of the Temple of the Night Sun. Photo: Arturo Godoy.

Figure 2.33. Remains of black paint on Mask 5, a Jaguar God of the Underworld on the Temple of the Night Sun's northern façade. Photo: Arturo Godoy.

the stucco in place, particularly at the bottom, was the internal integrity of the plaster material itself. Gravity conspired against that integrity, and without careful digging pieces would crumble off the façade. Excavations in the corridor between the front of the Temple of the Night Sun and the eastern edge of the Shrine platform showed that, even prior to the elevation and repair of floors between the two buildings, the stucco program experienced significant damage. Parts of the Jaguar God of the Underworld on the front lower façade, west, were missing even *below* elevated berms. These failures signal, perhaps, that the local dynasty either did not wish to mend such damage or that it no longer enjoyed access to sculptors capable of such work. The Temple must have had a ragged appearance even during its time of full use. Still, it may be that the main damage was concealed by the Shrine (discussed below) and thus did not call out for urgent repair.

Phase 5:
The Shrine (Str. F8-1-Sub.1A)

At some juncture after the construction of the Temple's two chambers, a small structure was erected immediately to the west of this richly stuccoed building, a few meters directly above Burial 9 (see Figure 2.3). The motivation for this "Shrine" was evidently to cover the area above the tomb and its caches, perhaps for all-weather rituals. The Shrine may have been preceded by a perishable structure referencing Caches 1 and 2 below the surface of the platform, but, for structural reasons, excavations could not be undertaken to confirm this supposition. The small building measures only 4.5 m (north-south) by 2 m wide (east-west) and, for decoration, is limited to simple, square architectural features and recessed areas on either side of its front doorway. The recessed elements mimic those of the Temple behind it, pointing to the intriguing possibility that architects intended to cover the Shrine with a similar program of sculpted stucco. Perhaps they were unable to do so, for reasons unknown. The Shrine had at least two entrances, east and west, both with inset holders for doors or curtains. Unlike the Temple, the interior doorjambs of the Shrine show traces of ancient graffiti, including, on the northwest jamb, a full-length deity with characteristic "eagle" eyes (Figure 2.34). A thought arises, not testable unfortunately, that the rendering recalls a figure carved on the now-missing wooden lintel

Figure 2.34. Ancient graffiti etched into the interior doorjambs of the Shrine, including full-length deity with "eagle" eyes. Photo: Arturo Godoy.

Figure 2.35. The Adosado, with its top molding, basal terrace, and projecting outset on the front axis, was placed over the front stairway and altered access to the Shrine and the Temple of the Night Sun. Photo: Edwin Román.

above. A similar carving from Str. M7-1 in the main part of El Zotz indicates that the city invested in such work, albeit a century or so later. The absence of ornamentation on the Shrine, in conjunction with the unrepaired damage to the iconographic program of the Temple, hints that the talented sculptor or atelier responsible for the stuccoed masks of the Temple was no longer present.

Phase 6:
The Adosado and its Altar

After the construction of the Temple of the Night Sun, perhaps timed to coincide with the new Shrine, a sizeable outset was placed over the front stairway, altering access to both the Shrine and the Temple beyond it. The "Adosado" took the form of an outthrust baulk with a top molding and basal terrace, each 30 cm in height, with another small outset projecting directly on the front axis (Figures 2.35 and 2.36). Only one side of the Adosado was exposed, but enough remains to show that the overall length was 4.6 m. The original stairway is preserved to the side. In creating the Adosado, two events took place. The first was the placement of a lip-to-lip cache vessel (Cache 3/Burial 6, EZ 5B-28-9; Figure 2.37) containing the burned remains of a two- to four-year-old child (see Chapter 4), perhaps referencing the lip-to-lip caches in Burial 9 below (see above and Chapter 3). Presumably, those interring the child inserted the body into the container with a combustant, covered it with a lid, and forced it down into the lower part of the vessel, causing the ceramics to crack. Signs of burning extended into the cracks of the vessel, suggesting that combustion took place post-breakage. Closing the bowl most likely interrupted the burning, cutting off the oxygen needed to sustain the fire. The results would have been thwarted, flickering

Figure 2.36. The Adosado, with its basal terrace and projecting outset. Photo: Edwin Román.

Figure 2.37. (left) Cache 3/Burial 6, a pair of lip-to-lip vessels situated atop the original stairway to the Shrine and the Temple of the Night Sun; (right) inside were the burned remains of a two- to four-year-old child. Photos: Arturo Godoy and Stephen Houston.

Figure 2.38. Cache 9, positioned in front of the Adosado, with two pairs of lip-to-lip vessels and a lone sherd. Photo: Edwin Román.

Figure 2.39. A single painted polychrome sherd found curated with Cache 9, positioned between the Adosado and the column altar to the west. Photo: Edwin Román.

Figure 2.40. Cache 10/Burial 15, placed atop bedrock, with pair of lip-to-lip vessels containing the remains of a complete and well-preserved, though decapitated, infant. Photo: Edwin Román.

flame and acrid, dark smoke. A carved-out hollow was made on the first step leading down from the platform supporting the Shrine and leading to the Temple of the Night Sun; the two large bowls and their grisly contents were placed atop the step and the Adosado constructed above.

A second event, perhaps simultaneous with the first, was the positioning of two other caches in front of the Adosado, both excavated in 2012 (Figure 2.38; Gutiérrez et al. 2012:21-23). Like those under the floor of the Shrine, Cache 9 (EZ 19A-10-2) contained two pairs of lip-to-lip Aguila Orange type vessels of the Aguila variety. The first pair of vessels (Vessels 9A and 9B) was found only 8 cm below the level surface extending from the Adosado to the west; it contained an incisor, a phalanx, and an unidentified, possibly organic material. A polychrome sherd was seemingly curated and placed with the cache, a pattern similarly attested in the placement of the two lip-to-lip pairs forming Cache 1 above (Figure 2.39). Just to the northeast, at a depth of 20 cm, was the second set of lip-to-lip vessels from Cache 9 (Vessels 9C and 9D), also with tooth and phalanx, though covered with a fine grey paste not present in any of the other caches recovered from Str. F8-1. Just atop the bedrock was a final cache, designated Cache 10/Burial 15 (EZ 19A-10-4), which was also a lip-to-lip pair of bowls. Cache 10/Burial 15 enclosed the remains of a complete, though decapitated, infant (Figure 2.40; see Chapter 4). A separate excavation unit to the west (EZ 19A-9) showed what appeared to be remains of a floor, detected in a separate excavation unit to the northwest of the Adosado. This ran just beneath the final floor, accompanied by a complex sequence of tamped surfaces and rocks. Crucially, the floor was not visible in the pit

Figure 2.41. Large circular altar to the west of the Adosado, marking the edge of a cut excavated down to bedrock. Photo: Edwin Román.

Figure 2.42. One of the series of berms. Photo: Arturo Godoy.

Figure 2.43. Berms were raised within the doorways on either side of the Shrine. Photo: Stephen Houston.

where Cache 10/Burial 15 was found, indicating a cut to bedrock to prepare for the Adosado. Thus, the outset (a) measures 4.6 m x 1.3 m, (b) involved a slicing operation to sterile rock, (c) was accompanied by an elaborate set of new caches, and (d) lay just to the west of Burial 9. All of these pointed to the strong chance that another burial or substantial deposit lay within, some 50 cm or so from the lower front of the Adosado, but excavations in 2015 disproved this possibility. A circular masonry altar in front of the Adosado, probably marking the western edge of the cut to bedrock, parallels the mortuary altar in front of Burial 9 but must have had some purpose other than mortuary veneration (Figure 2.41). This altar, slightly tapered at its top and one meter in diameter at its base, lacked any stucco decoration.

Phase 7:
Raising the Plaza Level; Ensuing Problems of Drainage

Access to the Temple of the Night Sun, the Shrine, and the Adosado changed when the floor of the central plaza of the El Diablo group was raised roughly 10 cm above the elongated platform running beneath the Temple and the Shrine. What had been elevated buildings, approached first by direct ascent up a stairway, later by split ascent to either side of the Adosado, changed markedly to a set of buildings level with the plaza (this change in elevation most likely resulted from the construction of Str. F8-5 to the west of the Temple and the Shrine). The new plaza level allowed for unrestricted flow of human traffic, but it also created new problems. Rainwater that had previously washed down and around the Temple and Shrine now drained directly into them. In response, masons raised two berms within the doorways on either side the Shrine. The eastern berm features a small perforation to allow water to drain out of the structure's central room (Figures 2.42 and 2.43). The berms preserved proximity to

Figure 2.44. Cache of empty lip-to-lip vessels placed at the level of the plaza floor in front of the central stairway of Strs. F8-1-2nd and F8-1-1st, echoing the style of caches associated with the tomb. Photo: Arturo Godoy.

Figure 2.45. Weathering of red paint on the Temple of the Night Sun. Photo: James Doyle.

the subfloor caches within the Shrine while preventing water from running across its highly burnished floors. Soon thereafter, a second raised floor level and berm were configured to block the entrance to the front chamber of the Temple of the Night Sun. As mentioned above, some of the stucco sculptures on this front façade had already begun to fail, perhaps as a result of water coursing through the structure—possibly this had weakened the bond between stucco and backing wall. As in the case of the Shrine, the interior floors of the chambers went untouched, reducing the doorway to the Temple of the Night Sun to an uncomfortable height of one meter. Entrants were now forced to stoop, step down into the front chamber, then step up into the rear room. A cache that might have accompanied this raising of plaza level included another pair of lip-to-lip vessels at the level of the plaza floor, just in front of the later staircase shared by both Str. F8-1-2nd and F8-1-1st (Figure 2.44). Although this pair of vessels lacked human remains, they were close in size and nearly identical in form to those found with sacrificed infants or children (Román and Carter 2009:108).

Phase 8:
The Middle Temple (Str. F8-1-2nd)

The span of time during which the Temple, the Shrine, and the raised floor between the two buildings were in active use is difficult to determine but was likely at least a decade or two. The key piece of evidence is the degree of weathering in the red paint of the Temple. It retains a sharp, luminous orange-red only under the cantilevered roof, in areas sheltered to the front, and under points of deep relief in the stucco sculptures (Figure 2.45). The rest has washed away. It seems logical to assume that the intense scouring by seasonal rains and year-round sunlight would quickly deteriorate the Temple's painted stucco surfaces, a crude indication of a relatively limited span of time during which the building was exposed. The dilapidated stucco must have also been a concern. Distressing quantities of the northern façade and probably parts of the roofcomb as well were in poor shape

Figure 2.46. Intentional mutilation of stuccos, Temple of the Night Sun. Photo: Edwin Román.

Figure 2.47. Fill above the Temple of the Night Sun, with retaining walls to prevent lateral displacement of the newly added bulk for Str. F8-1-2nd. Photo: Arturo Godoy.

even before the Temple was enclosed within later construction phases of Str. F8-1. Wishing to maintain the structure as a point of ritual focus, yet mindful of its increasing deterioration, masons interred the Temple and the Shrine (the Adosado now invisible beneath the raised plaza floor) beneath the most massive structure in the pyramid's sequence: Str. F8-1-2nd.

Once the decision had been made to cover the Temple and Shrine, the buildings were ceremonially filled and buried. This process involved intense burning, as evidenced by the heavily mottled and blackened interior walls of the Temple's rear chamber. The stucco program seems to have also been intentionally mutilated, with a focus on the noses, mouths, and headdresses of the deity faces (Figure 2.46). A curious feature of the fill levels surrounding the Temple was that the fill shifted from large blocks to finer material at a mid-section on the sloping roof, as though the builders wished to consolidate the structure before heaping more debris atop it. This finer level of fill also included several perpendicular retention walls, probably to prevent lateral displacement of the new bulk added to the pyramid and provide rough guidelines as construction progressed (Figure 2.47).

In bulk, the amount of fill brought to this location was at least five times as much as

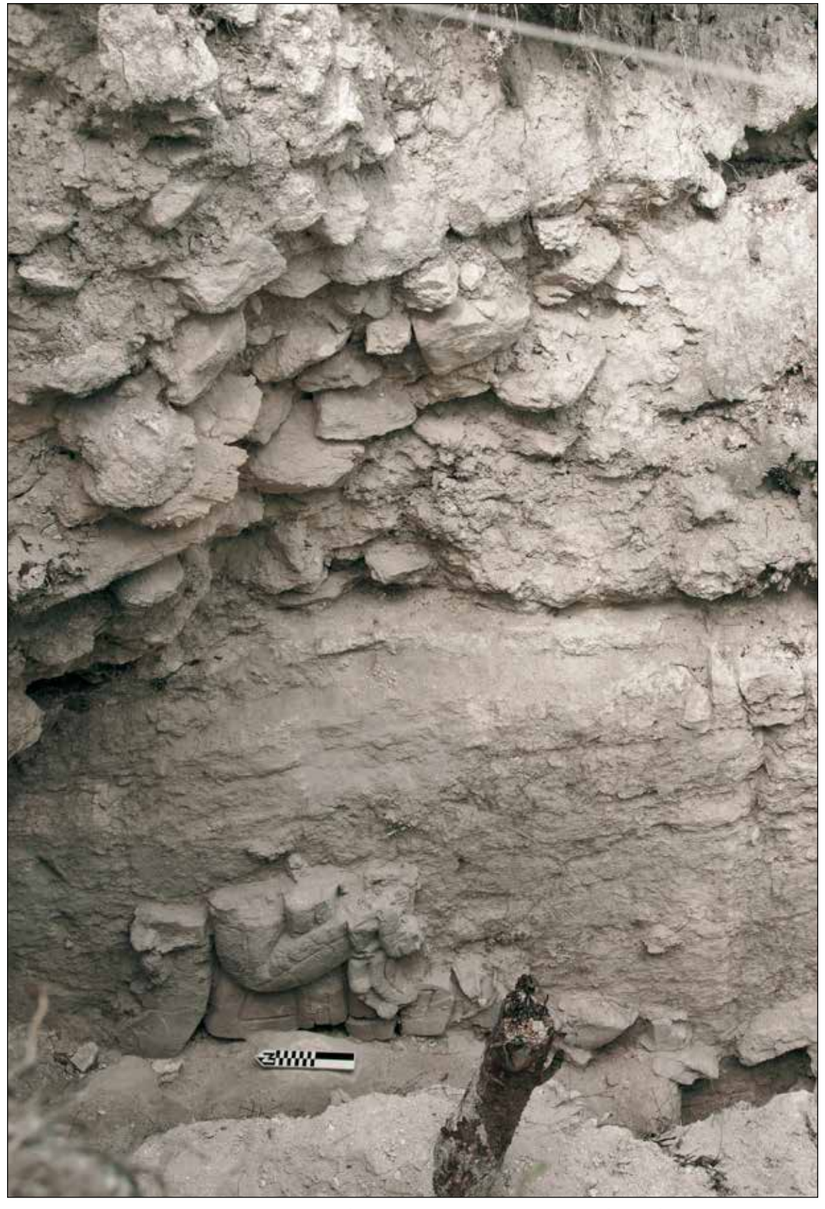


Figure 2.48. Stucco sculptures remaining on the roofcomb were covered over with fill. Photo: Arturo Godoy.

the separate constructions underneath. Not incremental but rather massive in investment, Str. F8-1-2nd represented a profound reworking of this center of ritual activity. From distinct structures, accessed by walking across a plaza, the structure now vaulted 8 m at the base, with its roof higher still. Relevant rites took place not in a variety of buildings with several rooms and multiple means of access, but in a single chamber. In short, Str. F8-1-2nd represented a ritual condensation, even simplification, of past activities.

The architecture of Str. F8-1-2nd is poorly understood. Preparations for this construction focused first on filling areas over and around the Shrine and front chamber of the Temple of the Night Sun. Concurrently, hacking and burning disfigured the central mask on the western front of the roofcomb. A plaster floor was then prepared across the fill, sloping slightly upwards toward the east so as to cover the roofcomb and its remaining stucco sculptures (Figures 2.48 and 2.49). In all likelihood, this was simply a leveling rather than a functional floor for pedestrian use or to prepare a temple. Instead, this level established a secure foundation for the visible summit of Str. F8-1-2nd. It may also correspond to an external, second terrace of the newly formed pyramid—the first terrace is hypothetical, but would

Figure 2.49. Plaster floor, sloping slightly upwards to cover the roofcomb of the Temple of the Night Sun, leveling the fill of F8-1-2nd and creating a secure foundation for the temple's summit. Photo: Arturo Godoy.

be consistent with the height and proportions of the altered structure. Like the better-preserved chamber of the final summit building, this room had a step-up of some 30 cm flanked by door jambs; the latter have now disappeared into a colossal looters' trench that gouged the southern summit of Str. F8-1 (see below). The single room measured 2.3 m deep and rested 1 m down on a clear, if rough, leveling of fill.

Notably, the chamber at the summit of Str. F8-1-2nd no longer had a permanent vault. Instead, it must have employed flat beams or, less likely, a peaked roof of thatch. This redesign enabled a larger interior expanse, prefiguring the flat roof and central access space of El Zotz's much later and most massive pyramid, Str. L7-11. The result: a significant departure from the look and display function of the massive roofcomb of the Temple of the Night Sun. The footprint of the chamber is noteworthy in another respect. It closely matches the wall of the front room of the Temple below. The positioning and dimensions must have been deliberate, carried out with an awareness of the building that had just been buried. Flat-roofed structures such as Str. F8-1-2nd most likely had limited sculptural programs. Small frontal masks above the entrance to the temple room and wooden lintels defining central doorways supplanted the elaborate deities completely encircling previous architecture. Iconographic ambitions at El Diablo seem to have shifted from the bold statements of the Temple of the Night Sun to more reduced versions in Str. F8-1-2nd.

The stairway of Str. F8-1-2nd

Figure 2.50. Modeled stucco recovered from the remnants of Str. F8-1-1st, recalling stucco program of masks on the Temple of the Night Sun, buried below. Photo: Arturo Godoy.

Figure 2.51. Modeled stucco recovered from the remnants of Str. F8-1-1st. Photo: Arturo Godoy.

is not securely discernible. Nonetheless, the fill in the excavation tunnel above the Adosado reveals no possible steps for this building, nor does the tunnel that pierces the back of the structure show any vestige of a separate terrace for Str. F8-1-2nd. This evidence suggests that the latest, visible terrace and stairway were probably shared between Str. F8-1-2nd, the penultimate building in the sequence, and the last, Str. F8-1-1st. The building seen today, with its ruined sides and barely detectable inset for a frontal stairway, was therefore reused by the final iteration of the structure, but created for its immediate precursor. Excavation has yet to probe the outset areas to either side of the front stairway of this building, but it is likely that these hold decayed stucco masks. Indeed, one set seems apparent in the surface debris of the final phase architecture.

Phase 9:
The Upper Temple (Str. F8-1-1st)

The final phase, Str. F8-1-1st, can be best understood as a slight refurbishment of Str. F8-1-2nd. The heavy work of creating the pyramid's height and volume had been done. Atop the structure, a simple one-room structure facing west was erected, with its room measuring roughly 8 m (north-south) by 3 m (east-west). This phase also featured a stucco mask above the doorway, some fragments of which were recovered, though they have not survived well (Figures 2.50 and 2.51). Nevertheless, the stucco program still hints at continuity: earspools with

Figure 2.52. Three lidded, cylindrical vessels on the bottom two steps of the central stairway and east-west axis of Str. F8-1-1st, packed in among sherds and plaster. Photo: Arturo Godoy.

side-views of a shark recovered from the summit of Str. F8-1-1st resemble those on masks from the Temple of the Night Sun, far below. For frontal access, this final building continued to use the floor and stairway platform made for Str. F8-1-2nd. While the motivations for the refurbishment are unclear, it is possible that royal patrons or builders wished to move the summit temple closer to the front edge of the pyramid, perhaps to better display its iconography. Another explanation might be a need to create a slightly larger chamber or, possibly, to replace a structure that had become unstable with its highly exposed, flat roof. The consistency of the iconography and ceramics recovered from the structure's architectural fill underscore that the time from the Temple of the Night Sun to these drastic changes was only a span of several generations at most (see "Ceramics from El Diablo Fill," below).

Phase 10:
Abandonment

At some point in the early to mid-fifth century AD, all major buildings of El Diablo fell into disuse. Some were apparently at the point of being rebuilt at greater height (Román and Carter 2009:85), but the process was inexplicably aborted. Strs. F8-7 and F8-5 had their rooms filled with deep debris, but no construction or occupational floors cover these fill deposits. At the nearby El Tejón hilltop, in a complex clearly oriented towards El Diablo, similar filling may also be attested (Piedrasanta 2011:192). Yet this too could represent fallen buildings or interrupted construction. At a much later time, comparable patterns appear in Str. L7-1 of the El Zotz Acropolis. Dating to ca. AD 600, the rooms of the structure were packed some two centuries later with concentrations of pottery and other artifacts; the chambers were then covered by 2 to 3 m of fill. A similar process appears to have occurred in the case of Str. F8-1-1st. On the bottom two steps of the pyramid's stairway, three lidded, cylindrical vessels were placed along the structure's east-west axis in a deposit of ashes, *cal* (densely packed lime plaster), and ceramic sherds (Figure 2.52). After this, El Diablo receded into oblivion. Only a handful of Late Classic ceramics were found in surface deposits in Strs. F8-1, F8-7, and F8-17; these were of the Pedregal Modeled type (see "Ceramics from El Diablo Fill," below).

Figure 2.53. Photo by George Andrews in 1978, showing the Temple of the Night Sun and the original looters' tunnel penetrating into the structure from the south. Photo: George Andrews, courtesy of Edwin Román.

The Great Looting

Sometime in the 1970s, perhaps even the late 1960s, looting began in earnest at El Zotz and at El Diablo in particular. A visit by George Andrews in 1978 confirmed that the southwest bottom corner of the Temple of the Night Sun was accessible through a deep looters' trench and tunnel on the southern flank of Str. F8-1 (Andrews 1986:Fig. 5). Photos taken by Andrews show clearly the corner of a building, along with what appears to be a tunnel penetrating into the structure (Figure 2.53; one of the images, Andrews 1986:Fig. 4, is mis-oriented, being turned 90º clockwise from its correct position). Just beneath, the cornice had a hook-like stucco ornament also seen during excavations of the northern side of the Temple of the Night Sun. This evidence proved that Andrews had seen something that was quickly covered since his visit in 1978: the southern side of the Temple. Within two years, a large-scale trench filled the area documented by Andrews, exposing the front of the top of the Temple of the Night Sun. The date of this destruction can be assigned with confidence to the time between 1978 and 1980, when other photographs were taken by Martin Diedrich (personal communication, 2012) and Jacques VanKirk (VanKirk and Bassett-VanKirk 1996:61-62, 124, this last photograph published incorrectly, 90 degrees counter-clockwise). Diedrich's photographs (Figure 2.54) confirmed that much of the stucco sculpture on the top roofcomb had slumped since 1980. Excavations within the massive looters' trench showed the same pieces seen by Diedrich, though now roughly a meter to the south of their original location. Diedrich's photographs also indicated the presence of additional stucco. The angle of light on Diedrich's images allowed Houston to hypothesize that another large Chahk mask embellished the southern cornice of the Temple, in exact opposition to a nearly identical mask found during excavation on the northern cornice. In 2013, this was confirmed by extensive cleaning of the looters' backfill.

Diedrich's photographs provide a precise understanding of the sequence of the looting that took place at El Diablo. The tunnel viewed by Andrews was hacked out first. Within two years, looters had filled that tunnel with debris from a massive lateral cut in the summit of the pyramid. Further clearing of the area around the Chahk mask originally seen by Diedrich was also useful in determining the orientation of the tunnel documented by Andrews. He had seen the southeastern outset of the frontal

Figure 2.54. Photographs taken by Martin Diedrich, 1980, helping to date the looting at El Diablo and to clarify the views seen by earlier visitors to the site: (top) western front of the roofcomb, showing stuccos before slumping; (bottom left) Chahk mask still preserved on the south wall of the Temple of the Night Sun (see Figure 2.55); (bottom right) deity with "cruller" passing through earspool on the south side of the Temple's frontal chamber. Photos: Martin Diedrich.

Figure 2.55. Queen in beaded jade skirt, most likely the mother of the tomb's occupant, with superimposed mask of Chahk. Photo: Edwin Román.

chamber of the Temple, along with part of the outer wall of the back chamber. One of Diedrich's other photographs most likely shows a deity on that outset with the end of a twisting facial "cruller" passing through its earspool. Looters had penetrated into the divide between the first phase of the Temple (its rear chamber) and its later outset phase in front. Diedrich's documentation prompted further excavations in 2013, exposing what may be one of the earliest known depictions of a queen in Maya imagery (Figure 2.55). Excavations a meter to the west of the southern Chahk underscored the fact that the frontal chamber of the Temple of the Night Sun had been added as a second phase of the structure: the joins between the two buildings were clearly visible, leading to the looters' tunnel that entered the buildings in this junction.

An important point deserves reiteration here. The complex stratigraphic sequence of Str. F8-1's many phases took place within a relatively short span of time. Each subsequent construction episode was shaped, at least in part, by that which came before. All such phases lead back to Burial 9, the interment being the motivating factor underlying such investments. The Temple of the Night Sun, the Shrine, the Adosado, and the complete reworking of the pyramid in Strs. F8-1-2nd and F8-1-1st heralded the El Diablo hilltop as the focal point of dynastic creation and celebration. As will be seen in subsequent chapters and appendices, the tomb and the iconographic program of the Temple of the Night Sun set the stage for continued commemoration, highlighting the roles required of the dynastic ruler in life and after.

Ceramics from El Diablo Fill

Alyce de Carteret

Since 2008, the El Zotz Archaeological Project has excavated more than 5,000 ceramic sherds from the palatial complex of El Diablo. The majority of these excavations focused on the final phases of construction for a number of buildings, including Strs. F8-2, F8-4, and F8-5, as well as Strs. F8-12, F8-13, F8-15, F8-16, and F8-17. Other buildings, including Strs. F8-7 and F8-8, Str. F8-18, and, most extensively, Str. F8-1, received more intensive investigation of earlier phases of construction and sequences of occupation. The ceramics recovered from these operations, then, represent layers of architectural fill and collapse. Only one possible midden was excavated in the course of this project (Op. EZ-5L), the material from which is not included in the present analysis. Complete vessels recovered from Burial 9 and cache deposits are assessed elsewhere (see Chapter 3).

In order to provide a more nuanced chronology of the complex, the author and Joel López Muñoz analyzed the ceramic assemblage recovered from the excavations described above. This study employed two analytical approaches: type-variety, based on surface treatment (see, e.g., Gifford 1960); and modal, derived from a more holistic set of features, from paste to form to color (Smith et al. 1960:331). The types and varieties of ceramics encountered at El Zotz appear across the Maya lowlands, most notably at the nearby sites of Uaxactun (Table 2.1; see Smith 1955; Smith and Gifford 1966) and Tikal (see Culbert 1993). The Saquij ceramic phase of El Zotz, corresponding with the Early Classic period at the site, exhibits strong associations with the Tzakol and Manik phases of Uaxactun and Tikal, respectively (Walker 2009:296). Many of the characteristics that define Tzakol I, Tzakol II, and Tzakol III at Uaxactun are also present at El Diablo, allowing for the preliminary division of the Saquij complex into three subphases: Early, Middle, and Late (Czapiewska et al. 2014).

As with Tzakol ceramics at Uaxactun (Smith 1955:23), Saquij-phase pottery at El Diablo is broadly characterized by the prevalence of glossy wares, basal flanges, annular and pedestal bases, outflaring-side cache vessels, and distinctive Z-angle bowls. The Early, Middle, and Late facets can be distinguished from one another by the presence of these and transitional forms, which evolve gradually over the course of the Early Classic period. Diagnostic changes to vessel form include the incremental disappearance of Z-angles in the Middle Saquij subphase, the appearance and increasing popularity of pedestal and annular bases in the middle and late facets, and the disappearance of basal flanges in the Late Saquij subphase. Additionally, the paste of monochromatic pottery appears to undergo a distinct transformation between the Early and Middle Saquij facets. Early Saquij ceramics exhibit pale, chalky pastes that are often tempered with river sand, potentially taken from local drainage sources. Later pastes take on a rosier, orange hue and lose this distinctive sandy texture. (For more information on the Saquij complex at El Zotz, see Czapiewska et al. 2014.)

Empirical evidence suggests that the use of ceramics exhibiting particular modes did not extend far beyond their associated subphases. For instance, while Middle Saquij sherds may occasionally be found in fill with Late Saquij material, very rarely would Early and Late Saquij pottery be found in the same context. The appearance of diagnostic modes, then, indicated relatively reliably the subphase to which the excavation lot belonged. Furthermore, due to the eroded state of the assemblage, and of monochromatic pottery in particular (nearly 40% of El Diablo's monochromes are eroded or otherwise non-diagnostic), paste played a crucial role in confirming and challenging the chronological designations suggested by vessel form. Using this methodology, eighteen lots excavated from Str. F8-1 could be assigned to one of the three Saquij subphases (see Table 2.2). In addition, one lot (EZ 5B-3-3) corresponding with a level of architectural collapse, contained Mo'-phase (i.e., Late Classic) ceramics. Late Classic ceramic presence is limited to five sherds of Pedregal Modeled type, likely comprising the remains of a single vessel. The strength of Early Classic material in this lot suggests that Late Classic forms were only beginning to be used when El Diablo was abandoned, indicating that occupation of the pyramid ended near the end of the Late Saquij subphase, in the fifth to early sixth centuries AD.

Table 2.2.

Lot	Structure	Ceramic Date
EZ-5B-3-6	F8-1	Early Saquij
EZ-5B-30-1	F8-1	Early Saquij
EZ-5B-1-1	F8-1	Middle Saquij
EZ-5B-37-1	F8-1	Middle Saquij
EZ-19A-12-7	F8-1	Middle Saquij
EZ-5B-3-1	F8-1	Late Saquij
EZ-5B-11-1	F8-1	Late Saquij
EZ-5B-11-2	F8-1	Late Saquij
EZ-5B-12-1	F8-1	Late Saquij
EZ-5B-12-2	F8-1	Late Saquij
EZ-5B-13-2	F8-1	Late Saquij
EZ-5B-14-1	F8-1	Late Saquij
EZ-5B-15-1	F8-1	Late Saquij
EZ-5B-16-1	F8-1	Late Saquij
EZ-5B-17-1	F8-1	Late Saquij
EZ-5B-20-1	F8-1	Late Saquij
EZ-5B-3-3	F8-1	Mo'

Table 2.1.

Date	Group	Type: Variety	Number of Sherds	Weight (g)
Late Preclassic	Polvero	Polvero Black	1	5
Early Classic	Quintal	Quintal Unslipped	100	1763
		Cubierta Impressed	2	13
	Triunfo	Triunfo Striated	216	3639
	Aguila	Aguila Orange	279	5139
	Remate	Aduana Red	1	4
	Pucte	Pucte Brown	28	439
	Balanza	Balanza Black	25	327
		Urita Gouged-Incised	1	7
	Dos Hermanos	Dos Hermanos Red	33	414
	Caribal	Caribal Red	60	1426
	Dos Arroyos	Dos Arroyos Orange Polychrome	7	148
		San Blas Red on Orange	6	98
	Yaloche	Yaloche Cream Polychrome	2	49
		Caldero Buff Polychrome	1	17
Late Classic	Cambio	Pedregal Modeled	5	472
		Total	767	13960

Early Saquij – Basal Flange: A basal flange of a bowl of the type Dos Arroyos Orange Polychrome. The flange exhibits a geometric design characteristic of the Early Saquij subphase (see also Smith 1955:Fig. 76a).

Middle Saquij – Annular Bases: Examples of the thin, shallow annular bases characteristic of the Middle Saquij subphase.

Late Saquij – Thin Folded Rim: A bowl of the type Quintal Unslipped (unusually common at El Diablo in the Early Classic period) with a thickened rim characteristic of the Late Saquij subphase. Thickened rims become smaller in width over the course of the Early Classic period.

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