

## Proyecto Itza Field SOP (draft 1/22/07)

### Responsibilities of Field Supervisors

1. Supervise the workers assigned to you.
2. Make certain that you have the proper field equipment before leaving for the field. Field equipment includes lot cards, blank forms, bags, excavation tools for yourself and your workers (some of which you will leave in the field).
3. You must print your own lot cards.
4. Excavate and record data according to the project SOP.
5. Maintain the order of your field notes. This project requires that all field notes are completely updated daily (including lot cards).
6. Consult one of the field directors when you have questions about excavation procedures or if you have a problem in the field.

### Responsibilities of Field Directors

1. Supervise field supervisors.
2. Assign workers.
3. Conduct independent excavations.
4. Report big problems to the PIs.

### Field Notes

1. Excavation forms and Feature forms are filled out in Spanish, but you can fill out the *Notas* section in English.
2. Your field notebook can be written in English.
3. Fill out all information on the forms in detail.
4. Your field notebook and the standardized forms should be partially repetitive. Field notebooks should also include interpretations, sketches, etc. The field notebook is the property of Proyecto Itza. If you wish to keep a separate personal notebook that is fine, but keeping such notes should not diminish those in your project notebook.
5. All notes should be written so that another researcher can understand your excavations—imagine the information that you would need to interpret the materials, if you had not excavated them yourself. You need to thickly describe:
  - a. The context.
  - b. The human behaviors that you believe produced the constructions and artifact deposits.
  - c. The temporal sequence of behaviors.
  - d. The forces that you believe acted upon the deposit after its deposition.
  - e. Any other field interpretation that comes to mind.

### General Excavation

1. All excavated soil will be screened through ¼ inch screen.
2. Use the standardized excavation forms for all excavations.
3. All materials must include 2 lot cards in each bag. Large objects that do not fit in a bag will also be assigned lot cards. Care should be taken to insure that these objects are properly labeled with secure labels (example: You can tie the label to the object).
4. Place the two lot cards inside of a small plastic bag within the larger bag.
5. Lote cards must be placed in the bags within a week of the completion of the unit's excavation. You must not begin the excavation of the next level in a unit until you have completed the lote cards of the prior level.
6. Operations are generally named after the building. If you are not excavating on a building then consult one of the field directors.

7. All excavations will be tied into the universal site grid.
8. If you have good ideas about how to improve excavations, consult the field directors (both of them).
9. Consider your and your workers' safety at all times.

### **Lote Cards**

1. As described above, lote cards are a critical aspect of the project.
2. Lote cards are written in *Spanish*.
3. The Ubicacion should describe the horizontal and vertical relationships of the context. For example translated into English is:, "This material was formed by a collapsed wall that lay below the humus layer and rested upon the building floor. It lay immediately to the east of the medial altar of Str. 6545."

### **Horizontal Excavations (in sequential order)**

1. Clear the grass from your excavation area.
2. Carefully lay in your grid with a resolution of 1x1 meters.
3. Each 1x1 meter unit will always be named after the grid coordinates (north, east) of its northeast corner.
4. Large nails should be placed every 3 meters and small nails every meter. All small nails should be marked with a piece of brightly colored plastic. Larger nails should include of strip of colored plastic upon which the grid coordinates of that point are written.
5. Each 1x1 meter unit will have its own lot number EACH level. This means that Unit 765, 978 Level 1 will have a different lot number than both Unit 765, 978 Level 2 and Unit 766, 979 Level 1.
6. Label bags for the humus layer (Level 1).
7. Bags are labeled as follows:

Site	Nixtun Chich
Operation	Op. 123
Unit Number	678, 567
Level Number	Nivel 1
Lot Number	Lote 2343
Your initials	GB
Date	7/2/06

8. Excavate the humus layer (Level 1).
9. Fill out two lote cards for all units in Level 1 and place them in a small plastic bag which is placed in the artifact bag.
10. Label bags for the collapse layer (Level 2)
11. Excavate the collapse layer (Level 2)
12. Keep in mind that some portions of your excavation will not have a collapse level.
13. It is always better to begin the excavation of collapse near a preserved section of wall.
14. Fill out two lote cards for all units in Level 2 and place them in a small plastic bag which is placed in the artifact bag.
15. In situ artifacts on the floor of a structure should be excavated as Level 2a.
16. In situ artifacts should be drawn in situ and photographed as necessary.
17. Draw the building plan (scale 1:10).
18. Draw wall profiles (scale 1:10).
  - a. Keep in mind that we are studying the construction techniques of the Itza. These data are important.
19. Draw building cross-sections (two axes).
20. Photograph the building and exposed walls.

21. Excavate a test unit investigating the construction sequence.

### Test Pits

1. Test pits are excavated for a variety of reasons. All buildings with horizontal excavations include a test unit to investigate construction history.
2. The size of the text unit varies by objective. However, keep in mind that small units limit the sample size.
3. Deep test units can be dangerous. Be sure to “step” such units.
4. Excavate in cultural and natural levels.
5. Feel free to divide into arbitrary levels as needed; however, be sure that you describe them in detail.
6. Use the horizontal excavation forms as level forms. Place an X in the boxes in the 3 x 3 m grid that will not be excavated.
7. Test pits will initially be divided into 1x1 m lots, but once it is certain that there are no in situ materials, you may excavate levels in 1x2 or 2x2 meter contexts.
8. If a test pit exceeds 3 meters in depth, you must take steps to ensure safety (remember that there are children living nearby).
9. Test units will ideally reach bedrock, but safety should always be considered.
10. When the test unit is completed, draw at least two profiles (generally perpendicular). Choose the profiles that provide you with the greatest amount of information.
11. Photograph the drawn profiles.
12. Backfill units after asking approval from the field directors or the PIs (supervisors are responsible for backfilling units).

### Features

1. Features are named by operation. For example, the second feature in Operation 764 is Fea. 764-2.
2. Divisions within the feature are designated by letters. For example, a concentration of copal within a feature might be designated Fea. 764-2a. Each of these divisions will have its own lot number (if artifacts are recovered).
3. If you excavate levels within features, these can also be designated with letters.
4. Bags for feature excavations are labeled as follows:

Site	Nixtun Chich
Operation	Op. 123
Feature Number	Rasgo 123-1a
Lot Number	Lote 2654
Your initials	GB
Date	7/2/06

5. All features must be drawn as formal plans.
6. All features should be frequently photographed.
7. If you need extra pages, uses additional feature forms.
8. Soil samples (0.5 liter) should be taken from features when appropriate. Soil samples are always placed in doubled plastic bags.
9. It is critical that you explain the relationship of the feature to all nearby deposits. Describe how you think the feature was built/excavated and its historical relationship with nearby deposits.

### Burials

1. Burials will be excavated as features, with the following exceptions:
  - a. Soil is excavated leaving bones and grave goods in situ.

- b. A detailed plan (1:10) will be made of the human remains, grave goods, and the burial pit/tomb.
- c. A photograph will be made of the human remains, grave goods, and the burial pit/tomb.
- d. Two soil samples should be taken from burials (ca. 0.5 liter of soil each). One sample is taken from the abdomen and the other should be taken from the matrix of the burial near the skull.
- e. In the *Notas* section, be sure to record:
  - i. The direction that the burial is oriented. Imagine the head is an arrow and note its directionality (For example 25° east of north, upwards, etc).
  - ii. The direction of the skull's face.
  - iii. The burial position (on its side, face down, seated, etc).
  - iv. The "flexation" (flexed, tightly flexed, extended, etc).
  - v. A detailed list of burial contents and their position.
  - vi. The condition of the remains.
  - vii. A rough estimate of age (adult/child)
  - viii. Any other data that you can provide (sex, skeletal anomalies, etc).
  - ix. A detailed description of the burial feature. You must describe the burial shape, construction techniques, stratigraphic relationships, etc.
2. Do not remove soil from any complete vessels recovered in burials or any other context. These materials will be analyzed by a paleobotanist.
3. Use wooden tools to excavate burials.
4. Human bones should be placed in paper or cloth bags.
5. Bag each bone (not bone fragment, bone as in left femur, etc) separately, but do not give each bone a separate lot number (unless there are remains from multiple individuals in which case you will consult the field director). However, you should label each bag.
  - a. Attached bones, such as those of the skull should not be separated.
  - b. Soil inside of bones should not be removed.
  - c. The skull should be removed as a single unit.
6. Do not wash human bones (the osteologist will clean remains as needed).
7. All human remains should be treated with respect.

### **Cache Excavations**

1. Caches will be excavated as features, but:
  - a. Cached materials will be drawn and photographed in situ.
  - b. The orientation of caches should be carefully before removing the objects from their positions. In other words, put some flagging tape on the object that marks its orientation.
2. Do not remove the lids of cache vessels in the field. These materials will be analyzed by a paleobotanist. Be patient—impatience will destroy valuable data.
3. Since caches are extremely variable, please consult a field director for additional instructions.

### **Monument Excavations**

1. Keep in mind that many Classic period monuments were venerated in the Postclassic period (and this veneration is a major research interest of one of the field directors).
2. Monuments DO NOT have priority over Postclassic & Colonial deposits.
3. Excavations of monuments must follow the established excavation procedures.
4. Consult a field director immediately if you find a monument.

## Drawings

1. The following instructions include field drawings of all kinds whether plans, profiles, etc. You must compose all drawings so that someone other than yourself can easily comprehend them.
2. All formal drawings are composed at a scale of 1:10 on heavy weight graph paper with 10 millimeters to the centimeter.
3. All individual sheets of graph paper containing a drawing must be properly labeled as described below (no exceptions).
4. Plan drawings (whether building plans, feature plans, the plans of in situ artifacts, burials, etc) will be labeled with grid coordinates and will include a scale and a north arrow. The label will include the site name, the structure number, a description of what you have drawn, your initials, and the date.
5. Profile drawings (whether test unit profiles, building cross-sections, the masonry of walls, etc) will a reference to the datum, grid coordinates, and a scale. The label will include the site name, the structure number, a description of what you have drawn, your initials, and the date.
6. Other
  - a. Distinguish stones in walls from rubble and collapse. It is easy to mark wall stones with a small "W."
  - b. Mark the plan with frequent depths below datum (bd).
  - c. Include a legend if you use symbolism other than line drawings of stones. For example, "W= stone in the wall".

## Photographs

1. You are responsible for properly photographing all of your excavations. These photos are part of the site record.
2. The project camera should be used for all photographs.
3. Photos are recorded in the photo record.
4. It is **critical** that you use a sign board and place a north arrow and scale. Sign boards should include the site name, structure number, the context that you are photographing, the date, and your initials.
  - a. You can take a second photo that does not include the sign board and north arrow if you take it from the same position as the first.
5. Informal field "action" shots do not require a sign board.
6. Do not erase the Compact Flash cards (the PI will take care of this)

## Equipment

1. It is your responsibility to ensure that you and your field workers have proper field equipment each day in the field. This includes excavation and drawing equipment.
2. You must maintain your own field equipment and that of your field workers.
3. You must organize the purchase of your own field equipment and that of your field workers.
4. You may not give away project field equipment.

## Archiving

1. It is your responsibility to ensure that:
  - a. All of your notes are photocopied at the end of the season.
  - b. Your photocopied notes are stored in the designated place in an organized manner.
  - c. The PIs have the original copies of all of your notes.
    - a. You should present the notes to the PIs in an organized manner.
  - d. Your field notes and forms are scanned into the project computer in PDF format. Use black and white (or gray) mode with a resolution of 150 dpi
  - e. Photographs are transferred into the project computer regularly.

- f. All digital archives are well organized.
  - a. Since we are sharing a computer, never erase a colleague's files.
  - b. Each project member should have their own folder for digital data.
  - c. Since we have one camera, we can have a single folder for photographic data.
    - i. Take care not to copy over existing photos.
  - d. Photos from a personal camera should go in a separate folder.

### **Major Finds**

1. The PI and field directors must be notified immediately of all major finds.
2. IDAEH must be notified of all major finds before the information is release to any other institution (including funding agencies).
3. Field supervisors do not independently release information to the press. This is the job of the PIs.