

(Figure 8-12). Located near the human remains are two animal teeth---the only such artifacts found on Str. 765. The human and animal teeth seem to be platform offerings similar to those in Str. 764. On the slope off the edge of the plaza to the west of the northeast corner of Str. 765 was found a concentration of human long bones (Burial 765-1) (Figure 8-21). The remains included at least two individuals, an adult and a child. These remains included an adult's right tibia, fibula, right scapula, clavicle, two radii, and a child's left humerus, right femur, left femur, and tibia. The remains were stacked parallel to one another, generally oriented north/south indicative of secondary or perhaps tertiary burial.

Str. 766

Str. 766 is located immediately west of the base of the western stairway of Str. 764 (Figure 8-1). The excavations revealed that it, like Str. 607, its counterpart in Group A, is comprised of two buildings: Str. 766A and Str. 766B (Figure 8-22, 8-25, and 8-26). On the former structure were two or three small altars; therefore, it is an elongated shrine. It is clearly analogous to Mayapán statue shrines, but its extension along the medial axis is part of the Zacpetén variant of the assemblage. Both Structures 766A and 766B were oriented 2° north of east. Str. 766 was investigated with a 70-m² excavation block covering 100% of the building.

Architectural Composition of Str. 766A

Str. 766A is the portion of Str. 766 lying closest to the temple stairway. It is not centered upon Str. 764, but lies 1 m south of the medial axis extending from the latter structure. It is a long low platform and the western end of the structure was rounded

because later rectangular constructions had been built adjacent to an earlier round shrine. Vertical slabs, most of which are soft limestone, form the edges of Str. 766. Patches of plaster remain on the surface of the structure, 16 cm above the latest plaza surface. The main body of Str. 766A is a platform upon which were constructed two small masonry rectangles: Fea. 766A-1 and Fea. 766A-2. A third rectangle may lie between the first two

Fea. 766A-1, a 67 by 50 cm masonry rectangle, stood 11 cm above the plaster surface of Str. 766A, 2.95 m west of its west edge. The surface of Fea. 766A-1 does not appear to have been plastered. Several effigy censer sherds were found on top of this feature (see below). Below the feature surface (17 cm) lay Cache 1, a miniature Chilo jar that did not contain non-perishable offerings (Figure 8-25).

The base of the exterior of Fea. 766A-1 was excavated as well. Caches were found to the east and west of the feature. East of Fea. 766A-1 was Cache 2, a lidded jar resting 21 cm below the surface of the structure. Like most lidded cache vessels at Zacpetén, the vessel had two loop handles on its sides and one on the lid. Within the vessel were found several stone objects and a stingray spine (Figure 8-26). These objects were concentrated in a small 4 cm area along the edge of the vessel.

Cache 3 was found 37 cm below the building surface to the west of Fea. 766A-1. This cache included two Chak or Tlalok faces from effigy censers. One was a large sherd decorated with a life-size appliqué Chak/Tlalok face. It probably belonged to a censer, though of a type previously not encountered at Zacpetén. The censer was shaped like a jar rather than the usual hourglass form. The vessel may be related to Central Mexican Tlalok pots used in New Year rites (see Ringle et al. 1998: 216, Fig. 3, and Fig. 29). A censer with a similarly large face was encountered at Santa Rita Corazol (Chase

1985: Fig. 9). The large sherd seems to have been intentionally broken with care in order to preserve the complete face. Directly below this sherd lay the smaller head of another Chak, but this was part of a human figure effigy censer. It is evident that these sherds were intentionally cached. The low frequency of censer heads in the temples suggests that they were being removed for other purposes. Their presence in a cache indicates that they may have had some sort of residual supernatural value even when incense was not burning in them. The burying of deities masks, specifically those of God C, have been identified in Maya codices (Vail 2000: 128).

Fea. 766A-2 is located 1.3 m west of Fea. 766A-1 and was centered upon Str. 766. The feature is a rectangular stone box of soft dressed limestone vertical slabs set in a single course. It measures 55 by 65 cm though it was probably once square as the latter dimension was distorted by root disturbance. Fea. 766A-2 stood 10 cm above the surface of the Str. 766 and does not appear to have been covered with plaster. Excavations into the fill encountered a previous construction of the feature, described below.

The surface of Str. 766 on the exterior of Fea. 766A-2 was excavated and Cache 4, a Chompoxté Red-on-cream var. Akalché polychrome tripod plate, was encountered east of the feature and 30 cm below the platform surface (Figure 8-25). The vessel was inverted and centered upon Fea. 766A-2. No artifacts were found beneath the vessel.

Previous Constructions of Str. 766A

Lying 10 cm below the latest surface of Str. 766A was its first construction (Figure 8-27). The stones tended to be slightly smaller those of the second construction and only 30% were soft limestone. They were set as vertical slabs. A preserved portion of the plaza surface (Floor 2) associated with the primary construction of Str. 766A lies

adjacent to the south face, 12 cm below the latest plaza surface. This is the same surface as Floor 2 discerned in Test Pit 892, 296 (Figure 8-2). Portions of the earlier version of the shrine were covered by a relatively well-preserved plaster surface that lies 10 cm above the third plaza surface (Floor 2). Carbonized incense was encountered on top of the structure. The western edge of the earlier shrine was constructed adjacent to a still earlier circular platform (Fea. 766A-3).

Within the bounds of the first construction of Str. 766A and below Fea. 766A-2 is an earlier construction of the latter feature (Figure 8-29) that obviously preceded Str. 766A-1st. The primary construction of Fea. 766A-2 is a two tiered rectangular masonry box. It is comprised of small rubble coursed blocks, 50% of which are soft limestone. At the base of the feature, lies the second plaza floor (Floor 3), which was also associated the primary construction of Str. 766A-3. The primary construction of Fea. 766A-2 measures 45 by 62.5 cm and stands 37 cm high. No special deposits were encountered within the feature.

Lying in situ upon the second plaza surface, 24 cm west of the primary construction of Fea. 766A-2 was Cache 5, an adult human mandible (Figure 8-25). Similar deposits were found near Structure 607B, and in Op. 1001. This artifact could have associated with the primary construction of Fea. 766A-2 or a later cache.

Fea. 766A-3 is the circular platform against the east side of which the primary and secondary constructions of Str. 766A were built (Figure 8-22 and 8-27). Most of this structure is covered with a thick coat of stucco, therefore, the masonry style was difficult to discern, but it appears to have be composed of small coursed rubble, 20% of which is soft limestone. The feature was constructed in a wedding cake-shape with three extant

tiers. The second plaza surface (Floor 3) lies at the base of the first tier (Figure 8-24). This surface is the same as that encountered west of the primary construction of Fea. 766A-2. Excavations into the fill of Fea. 766A-3 did not reveal special any deposits. While this wedding cake-shaped altar seems odd, it is not an unique form. The Codex Dresden depicts at least two similar altars both in association with human sacrifice (Villacorta and Villacorta 1930: 78-95). A nearly identical though slightly larger altar was found at Uaxactun, but dates to the Early Classic period and may have been associated with ballcourt rituals (Valdés and Fahsen 1995: 203). A similar altar was found in front of Temple 45 at Tulum, but it had rectangular terraces with a circular “bowl” on top (Lothrop 1924: 112). A fourth feature may be located midway between Fea. 766A-1 and 766A-2 (Figure 8-22). It is a masonry rectangle standing 10 to 12 cm tall. If this were a feature, it was superficial and did not have associated artifacts.

Test Unit 904, 299 demonstrates that bedrock below Str. 766 was not very deep (Figure 8-28). The highest cultural stratum in the test pit is the floor of Str. 766A-I, the first construction of the building. Beneath this floor is a Late Postclassic Fill (Level 3), which rests upon a Terminal Classic fill (Level 4). Directly below the latter fill is a plaster surface (Level 5) corresponding with Floor 3 in Test Unit 892, 296 of Str. 767 (Figure 8-2). This surface was built upon a Late Postclassic fill event (Level 6).

Architectural Composition of Str. 766B

Str. 766B lies 65 cm west of Fea. 766A-3, in direct line with Str. 766A (Figure 8-23). The structure is composed of limestone rubble, all of which is hard, set as vertical slabs. The rectangle formed by the stones is bisected (north/south) by an additional line of large limestone rubble set as blocks. It is likely that the eastern portion of Str. 766B

was a 1.8 x 0.5 m addition onto an earlier 1.8 x 1.0 m construction. No special deposits or earlier constructions were buried within the structure or beneath it to a depth of 46 cm below the plaza surface.

Artifact Distributions of Str. 766 (A and B)

The frequency of non-effigy censer sherds was very low, but they were concentrated south of Str. 766. A moderate concentration of Patojo Modeled censer sherds was on the southeast corner of Str. 766A (Figure 8-14). A light scatter of Patojo Modeled censer sherds was on top of and to the south of Fea. 766A-1 and could have been associated with the small cache vessel or the cached sherds with Chak effigies. Another light scatter of Patojo Modeled censer sherds was encountered east and south of Fea. 766A-2. Part of this concentration lay above Cache 4, containing a Chompoxté Red-on-cream polychrome tripod plate.

Most non-ceramic artifacts are distributed to the south of Str. 766, but without clear patterns. However, the distribution of miscellaneous ceramics, bone, shell, and lithic flakes (Figure 8-29) were patterned. All were distributed similarly, with concentrations on the west end of Fea. 766A-3, south of Fea. 766A-2, southeast of 766A-1, and on the west side of Str. 766B. Bone, shell, lithic flakes, and miscellaneous ceramics are often found in architectural fill, concentrated adjacent to collapsed walls. These concentrations may have resulted from the deterioration of the masonry of Fea. 766A-1 to -3 and 766B. One problem with this interpretation is that most of this debris lies south of Str. 766, suggesting intentional deposition rather than random deterioration. A combination of sweeping refuse to the south and gradual masonry deterioration may account for this pattern.

Most artifact types with relatively high frequencies were concentrated to the south of Str. 766; however, such was not the case with obsidian blades (Figure 8-30). These artifacts were concentrated northeast of Str. 766B (or northwest of Str. 766A-3), northwest of Fea. 766A-2, and northwest of Str. 766A-1. Obsidian blades are found in fill, but not with the regularity of bone, shell, lithic flakes, and miscellaneous ceramics. Given that artifacts generally found in fill and secondary refuse such as swept censer sherds were concentrated to the south of Str. 766, the obsidian blades could be primary refuse. They may have been involved in bloodletting ceremonies related to the various altars of Str. 766.

One interesting unique artifact was a small lead ball found south of Str. 766 (Figure 8-16). This object is 1.02 cm in diameter and is partially deformed by either striking or being struck by another object. Its size suggests it was likely a bullet from either a pistol or a trade rifle. Found near the lead ball were a fragment of hematite, a crystal, a spindle whorl, and a crustacean pincer (Figure 8-12). As mentioned, the former two objects were used for divination, and spindle whorls are suspiciously frequent in central ritual features. It is possible that the lead ball had become attributed with supernatural power, like hematite and crystals.

Several pieces of human bone and teeth (Figure 8-12) were found on the plaza around Str. 766B. This concentration included cranial, maxilla, and unidentified bone fragments, and several teeth. These remains may have been offerings or evidence of dismemberment. Human remains were also found beneath the plaza surface near Str. 766B. At the northeast corner of the structure was Cache 6, which included 32 human teeth and numerous fragments of bone including two articulated vertebrae (Figure 8-25).

While the teeth were spread across three units, they may have belonged to the same individual, though an extensive osteological analysis has not yet been conducted.

Located around Str. 766B were a chert knife and two chert biface fragments (Figure 8-13). With such a low frequency, one cannot call this a concentration, but it is noteworthy that objects used for cutting overlapped with human teeth, maxilla, and cranial fragments scattered upon the plaza surface. Three beads were also found upon Str. 766B. As mentioned, beads were also used as offerings.

In sum, the majority of the artifacts of Str. 766 appear to have been swept to the south of the structure. North of the structure was the medial axis of Group C, which was probably an important ritual area cleaned before events, but obsidian blades were found in this area. Patojo Modeled censer sherds, bone, shell, and lithic flakes were concentrated south of Fea. 766A-1 and 766A-2, suggesting that these were focal activity areas. Another concentration of exotic artifacts south of Fea. 766A-1 includes artifacts that may have been objects with supernatural power. Finally, several human teeth and bones were found around Str. 766B suggesting mortuary or sacrificial behavior.

Str. 767 and Str. 1003

Str. 767 is located on the southern side of Group C in the position and form of an open hall in a Mayapán-style temple assemblage (Figure 8-1). It is a C-shaped building facing 8° east of north (Figure 8-31 and 8-32). This is the most poorly constructed hall at Zacpetén as its masonry was the least substantial and its walls the most asymmetrical. The interior appears to have been painted red, and four masonry rectangles/ altars lay in its western half. North of the east side of Str. 767 is Str. 1003, a low platform connecting