

Excavation of East Tower

Work on the excavation of the "East Tower" of Chetro Ketl, probably the largest ruin in Chaco canyon, has been full of surprises. The first one came when it was discovered, on digging down six or eight feet, that the top room of the tower was a kiva, divided into eight sections by eight pilasters two feet wide, each cut from a single piece of timber. A packing of reeds and bark was discovered lining the spaces between the pilasters and the wall.

The second surprise came when, in clearing out the floor, a tunnel leading out of the kiva and up into an adjoining room was discovered. A student was lowered into the tunnel, the opening of which is about two feet square, and he reported that there was room enough for a man to crawl through on hands and knees for about twelve feet back, before the passage was blocked by fill. The walls were lined with small, even stones for two feet back, and rougher, larger ones from there on. The roof is of stripped poles covered with bark and reeds. The shaft descending to the tunnel was covered with a limestone slab. The tunnel has been completely cleared. It comes up through the wall of the adjoining room at ten feet higher level than the floor. The shaft is directly opposite a niche in the kiva bench, between it and the fire pit. Broken plaster in front of it indicates that an altar was once there.

After the clearing of the inside of the tower the fill on the outside was cleared away and it was found that it was inclosed (sic) within square walls and the corners buttressed with logs in a very good state of preservation. Dirt and rubbish filled the space between the timbers. The following articles were taken out: yucca string tied in square knots; little sticks, from some tree that grew by water, probably willow; fragments of deer antlers; pot rests of twisted grass tied with yucca fiber cord; two pieces of matting, one a border and the other a center, woven from water reeds; edge of a twig-rimmed basket; braided yucca which was probably a basket handle; medium fine, narrow yucca, sandal with quarter circle toe; similar sandal stuck to clay and leaving an impression thereon; prayer stick made of a corn cob on a twig tied with yucca string; bone awls; corn cobs, charred and uncharred yucca and cotton fiber; yucca and cotton cord; bones of small animals; squash seeds. Only one of the buttresses has been cleared.

Room three has been excavated this week. The walls are excellently plastered, and a number of very good pictographs are on them. It is interesting to note that the masonry that was standing above ground is not the same as that which was covered. The top story of the tower is apparently a later addition.

Stamm, Winifred, ed., "Excavation of East Tower." *El Palacio* 27 (July 6-August 17, 1929): 15-16.