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The Oaxaca Barrio in Teotihuacan: Mortuary Customs and Ethnicity in Mesoamerica's Greatest Metropolis

Maria Teresa Palomares Rodriguez
Southern Illinois University Carbondale, palomarestere@hotmail.com

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THE OAXACA BARRIO IN TEOTIHUACAN: MORTUARY CUSTOMS AND ETHNICITY
IN MESOAMERICA'S GREATEST METROPOLIS

by

María Teresa Palomares Rodríguez

B.A. Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 2007

A Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Arts

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in the field of Anthropology

Approved by:

Andrew K. Balkansky, Chair

David Sutton

Mark Wagner

Michelle Croisser

Graduate School
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. Andrew K. Balkansky

This research examines the mortuary customs of the Oaxaca Barrio, one of the foreign settlements in the ancient city of Teotihuacan. The Oaxaca Barrio is associated with the Zapotec homeland in the state of Oaxaca, southern Mexico (roughly 290 miles); but many questions remain unanswered about its origins and development. The mortuary customs of the Oaxaca Barrio show how Zapotec migrants adapted to living in Teotihuacan over a considerable period of time, maintaining aspects of their homeland identity, but also generating a new cultural repertoire by which members of the enclave redefined themselves. The presence of Zapotec people in Teotihuacan has at least three distinct moments or contexts: its origins in a time of Zapotec expansion (200 B.C), the formal settlement of the Oaxaca Barrio (A.D 100), and much later in time, when the barrio shows a hybridization process with singular characteristics (A.D 300).

I address in this research two important questions: Why did Zapotec migrants keep their mortuary traditions? How did migrant identity change over time? To answer these questions I present in five chapters general characteristics of the Oaxaca Barrio, theoretical concepts, and archaeological evidence that support the analysis and discussion developed about this foreign group, and finally its mortuary customs and the relationship with its ethnicity.

The Zapotec migration to Teotihuacan is important because social, political, economic and ideological aspects are involved, and this topic is not only useful to archaeological studies (in one of the most important cities in Mesoamerica), also it is helpful to anthropological research about modern migrations, and studies of identity and ethnicity in the contemporary world.

In Chapter I, I present a general view of the Oaxaca Barrio in Teotihuacan, the chronology and a brief review of the situation in the Zapotec area and Teotihuacan at the moment of the Oaxaca Barrio's foundation, and a general idea of the mortuary customs in each place; also in this chapter I mention the objectives of this investigation and its limits. Chapter II mentions the main theoretical concepts related with this investigation: ethnicity and hybridization, I also approach the main ideas and hypotheses about the political and social structure in the Oaxaca Barrio. Later in Chapter III, I describe the most important archaeological evidence found in each compound excavated until now in the Oaxaca Barrio, and Chapter IV shows the archaeological record of mortuary customs identified in this foreign settlement; in this section I describe four important and basic elements in the mortuary system: type of burial, offerings and practice of funerary rites, and urns. And finally in Chapter V, I present the discussion of each element, making a comparison with funerary practices and characteristics in the Zapotec area, mainly Monte Alban, and Teotihuacan culture; also in this last chapter I mention how could be the syncretism-hybridization process of this foreign settlement, mainly identified through its funerary customs.

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CHAPTER I

THE OAXACA BARRIO IN TEOTIHUACAN

Teotihuacan is considered one of the most influential and important cities in Mesoamerica during the Classic period; its importance is mainly as a control center in the distribution of important products such as obsidian, its immense size, its cosmopolitan makeup, and its evident influence on other regions of Mesoamerica. During the Xolalpan phase (A.D. 450-650) tens of thousands of inhabitants were concentrated over 20 square kilometers; the largest urban center of Classic Mesoamerica was shaped by 2,000 apartment compounds, and temples, platforms, palaces and enormous structures such as the Sun pyramid and the Moon pyramid (Millon 1973; Cowgill 1997). The city was metropolitan in the modern sense; people with different languages and ethnicities lived there, and examples are the foreign barrios (neighborhoods), where people from the Oaxaca area, Gulf Coast, West and South Mexico have been identified (Rattray 1987, 1990; Spence 1996; Gomez 2000).

The Oaxaca Barrio or *Tlailotlacan*¹ was located in the southern slope of Colorado Chico's Mountain, which is one of the natural elevations that limit to Teotihuacan Valley

¹ The area of the Oaxaca Barrio also had a Postclassic occupation (A.D. 1000 - 1400), and some places retain the original Nahuatl name; this is the case with *Tlailotlacan*, it means "people from out" or "people from a far away land". In some historical sources (Aubin: 1851), it mentions the presence of people from the Mixtec area known as *tlailotlaque*, who settled in one of the *barrios de Tetzcuco* (Central Valley of Mexico), under the reign of emperor *Quinatzin*, they were known by their skills painting and writing history.

in the West. This foreign settlement is roughly 3 km from the Avenue of the Dead (the main N/S street in the city), toward the western edge of Teotihuacan (Figure 1), in quadrants N1W6 and N2W6 of the Teotihuacan city map (Millon 1973). The Oaxaca Barrio was identified by the presence of Zapotec traits, such as Oaxaca-style gray wares and tombs, during the 1962-1971 excavations and survey by the Teotihuacan Mapping Project.

There are different hypotheses for the establishment of Zapotec people in the Oaxaca Barrio in Teotihuacan. Some authors view the Zapotecs as great artisans or specialized workers such as masons, textile dyers (Sprager 1979), weavers or potters (Rattray 1993); the possibility of Zapotec people sharing their knowledge of astronomy and calendrics to help with the planning and construction of Teotihuacan (Peeler and Winter 1993); or the barrio as part of a complex route of trade and production of specific products (Díaz 1981; Crespo and Mastache 1981). However there is not enough archaeological evidence to evaluate these hypotheses.

Although we do not know why the Oaxaca Barrio was established in Teotihuacan or how it might have changed during at least three centuries of occupation, there are several important facts that most scholars agree upon:

1. The Oaxaca Barrio is located far away from the ceremonial-civic center of Teotihuacan. This marginal location supports the idea that the Zapotec inhabitants were among the lower or intermediate social levels in Teotihuacan society (Millon 1976).

2. The compounds in the Oaxaca Barrio conformed to Teotihuacan building standards and styles (e.g. the Teotihuacan orientation, which follows the general grid of the city).
3. Most of what we know about the Oaxaca Barrio is from domestic areas (Millon 1967; Spence 1989; Rattray 1993; Gamboa 1995; Ortega and Palomares 2003), although a recent investigation has shown the presence of a Zapotec-style two-room or multi-room temple (Croissier 2007).
4. The identification of Zapotec style has been studied mainly in ceramics and burials. Paddock and Rattray identify a hybrid ceramic tradition of local clay and Zapotec traits (Fowler and Paddock 1975; Rattray 1993, 2001). Examples are some ceramic types of domestic use, funerary pottery such as urns, and also figurines. Other aspects that show clearly the Zapotec presence are the Zapotec-style tombs.

It is for these reasons that the barrio has been viewed as occupied by migrants, perhaps merchants or a trading enclave, but it raises questions about the ways that the barrio members integrated or not with Teotihuacan society, and to what extent they maintained ties with their homeland.

The Oaxaca Barrio - Chronology

Paddock (1966) was the first investigator to propose that Zapotec emigrants stayed in this settlement for 100 to 150 years (Monte Alban II-III A, A.D. 200 – 350); later Millon (1967, 1973), Spence (1989), and Rattray (1993) proposed a period of

occupation from Teotihuacan's Tlamimilolpan to Xolalpan phases (A.D. 200-550). However, this investigation proposes an earlier initial occupation (see chart of Chronology, Figure 2). New interpretations of burials, iconographical analysis of urns and recent data from archaeological explorations in the Zapotec neighborhood, show the presence of Zapotec style in association with early Teotihuacan pottery. We can talk of the origins of the foreign barrio and its occupation during early phases in Teotihuacan, since Tzacualli phase or Monte Alban II (as early as the first century A.D). This point will be approach in Chapter V.

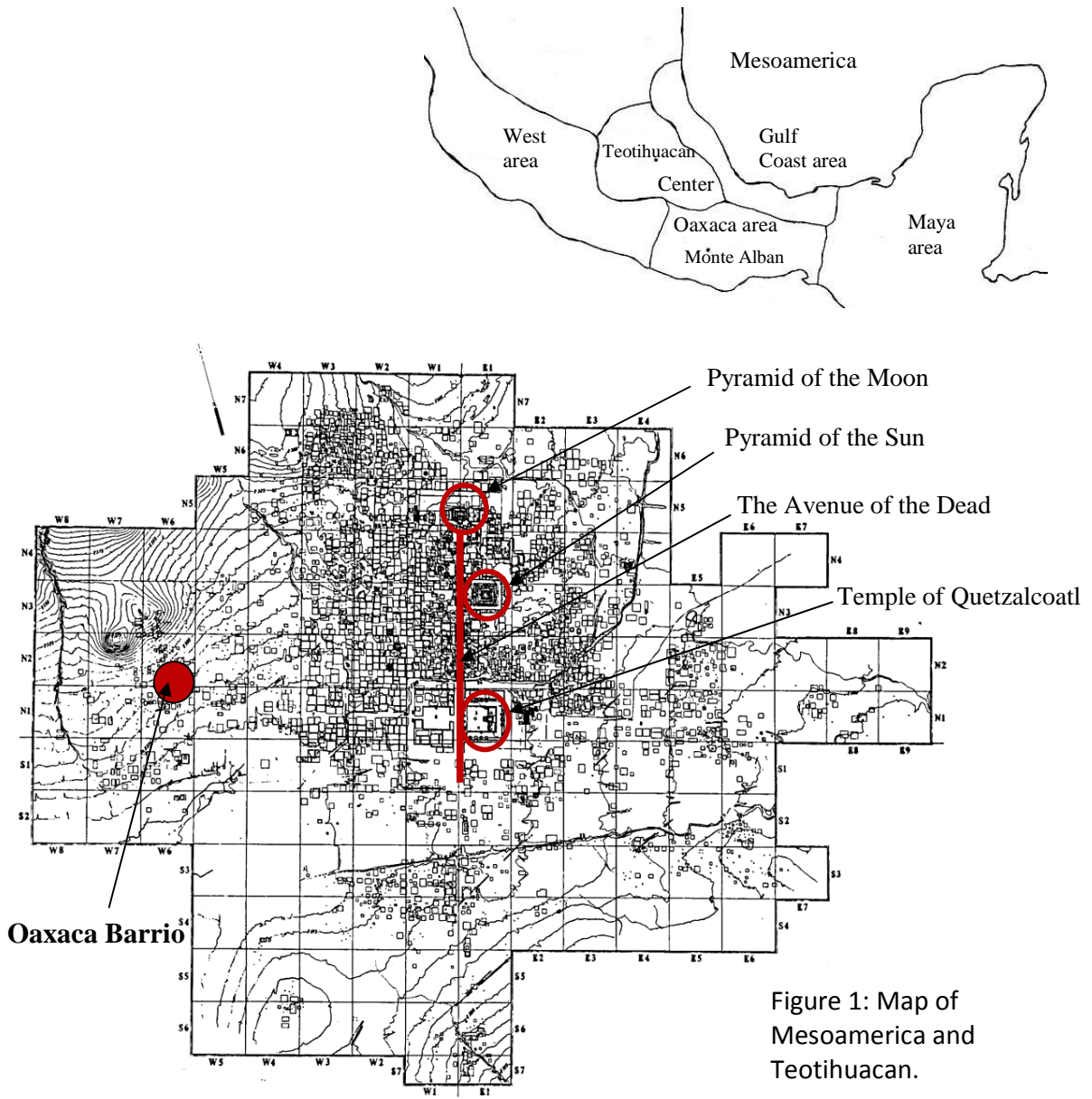
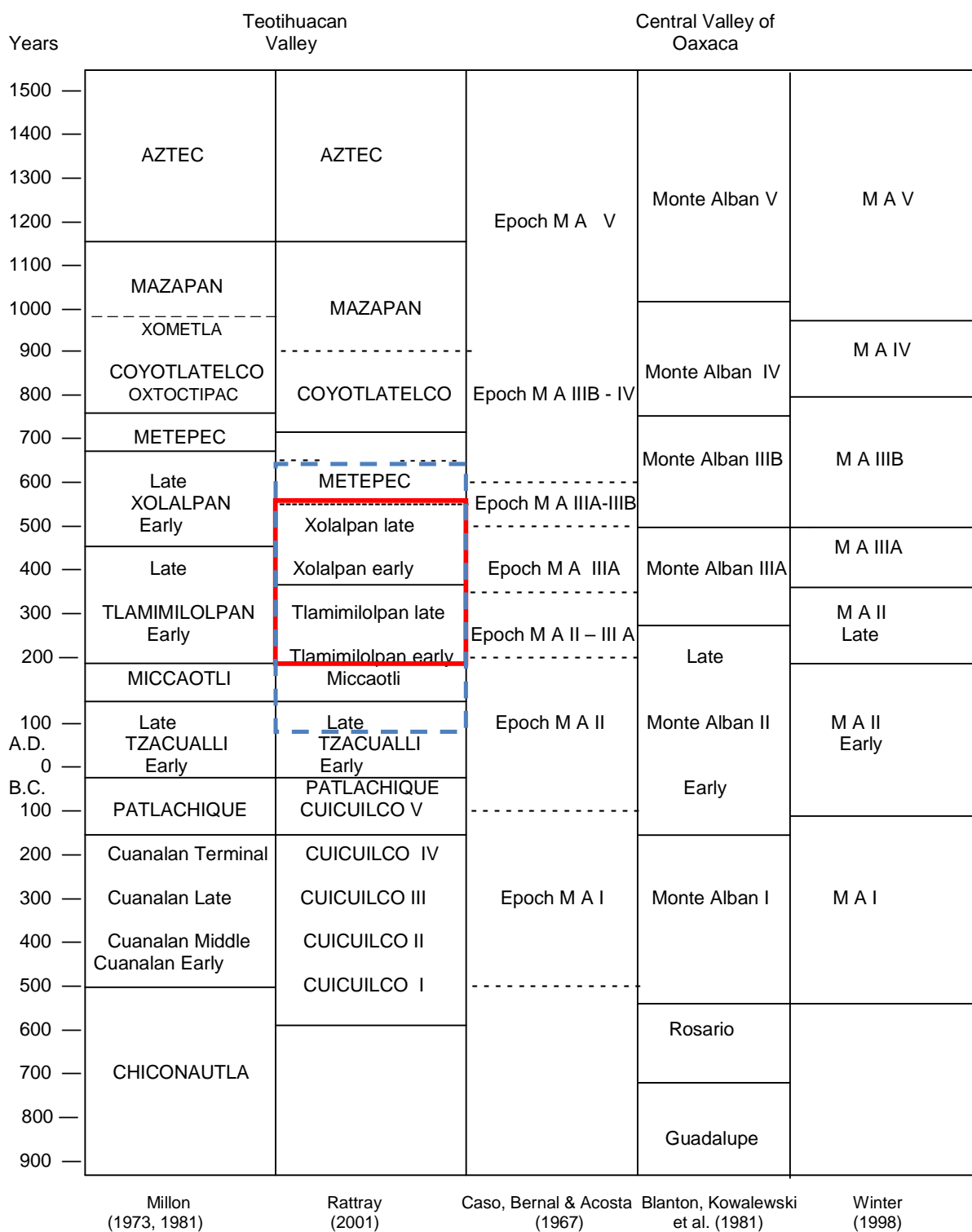


Figure 1: Map of Mesoamerica and Teotihuacan.

Chronology



Occupation of the Oaxaca Barrio (Rattray 1993, Spence 1996)

Proposed occupation in the Oaxaca Barrio

Teotihuacan and Monte Alban

I consider it important to present a general view about the social and political situation of Teotihuacan and the Central Valleys of Oaxaca, mainly in Monte Alban, at the moment of the Oaxaca Barrio's beginnings (around A.D. 100). The early occupation found in the Oaxaca Barrio belongs to Tzacualli-Miccaotli phases (A.D. 100-200), this is a very important period in Teotihuacan, the Feathered Serpent Temple or Quetzalcoatl pyramid, icon of ideological and politic power of Teotihuacan, was built during Miccaotli and Early Tlamimilopan phases (Sugiyama 1998). In Tzacualli phase (A.D. 0-150) began an important period of construction in Teotihuacan, mainly public buildings. During Tlamimilolpan phase, many of the great constructions that characterized Teotihuacan were finished (Rattray 1998) and its full extension was 22 km² with a population around 125,000 inhabitants, it was for its time the largest city in the Western Hemisphere. Teotihuacan developed at this point complex networks of trade and social-politic relationships with other Mesoamerican regions, such as Oaxaca and Maya areas (e.g. ties to Tikal and Kaminaljuyu in Guatemala).

In Oaxaca, during the epoch Monte Alban II, different settlements in the Oaxaca Valley were under the domain, control and administration of Monte Alban, capital of Zapotec culture and founded around 500 B.C (Blanton et al. 1999; Marcus and Flannery 2001). By Monte Alban II, the city's great plaza was surrounded with important public buildings. Marcus and Flannery consider Monte Alban an expansionistic state with territories outside its home Valley.

In addition it is important to mention characteristics during Monte Alban IIIA (A.D 300-500), when Teotihuacan had a strong presence in the Zapotec capital, in diverse stelae that commemorate trips of Teotihuacan people to Monte Alban (e.g. *Lapida de Bazan, Estela Lisa, and Estela I*), and the identification of different materials with Teotihuacan style in the site, mainly in elite areas, are evidence that shows diplomatic relationships between these important Mesoamerican cities (Marcus and Flannery 2001).

During Monte Alban IIIA phase, the Oaxaca Valley had 115,000 inhabitants, and the Zapotec capital around 16,500 persons that lived in 1196 residential terraces or small platforms located on the slope of the hill (Blanton 1978; Kowalewski et al. 1989). The distribution of the residential spaces was similar to Teotihuacan domestic compounds, rooms around a courtyard or patio (Winter 1986). It is interesting that the main change from epoch II to IIIA was the increase of population, and the use of defensive traits in some sites located in the Valley that belong to Zapotec state. Joyce Marcus and Kent Flannery mention that the Zapotecs of period IIIA tried to consolidate their dominated territory in the Oaxaca Valley, instead of the expansion and conquest that characterized epoch II.

In sum, at the moment of the Oaxaca Barrio's foundation, Monte Alban was a very important coordinator of administrative centers in the Oaxaca Valley, organizing military activities, trade and diplomatic relationships with other areas in Mesoamerica (Blanton et al. 1999).

Funerary Customs in Teotihuacan and Monte Alban

The main difference between the burials practiced in the Valley of Oaxaca and in Teotihuacan is the use of tombs, built expressly for that purpose (Winter 1995), and the position of the body (see Figure 3). The extended position is common in Zapotec burials, while in Teotihuacan bodies are usually buried in a flexed position. Archaeologists use these funerary differences to establish ethnicity and identity in conjunction with pottery traditions and architectural styles (Rattray 1997; Spence and Gamboa 1999).

In comparison to Teotihuacan, characteristics of funerary customs in the Oaxaca Valley, mainly from Monte Alban, show unique mortuary traditions from early times (e.g. Winter 1995). The burials during M.A. I (550-150/200 B.C), are associated with domestic units, and were simple features or pits and also in tombs located in patios or yards and rooms. Both funerary deposits present multiple burials, but they show differences in offerings and the location of the burial (public or private spaces), which is related to status of the buried individual or individuals. Also during this period there is not a distinction between men and women burials, both were buried into tombs or features, with or without offerings; thus gender is not a criteria to establish any kind of differentiation in the mortuary system of Monte Alban.

Regarding burials in M.A. II (150/200 B.C – A.D 250), they keep the location in domestic units, but certain new traits develop. One notable trait in this epoch is the position of the legs of buried individuals (with legs crossed at the ankles); another

interesting fact is that some individuals presented dental mutilation or incrustation on teeth.

Burials in M.A. IIIA (A.D 250 – 500) include 21 tombs in Monte Alban, which were explored by Caso, Bernal and Acosta in the 1930's and 40's. These tombs present diverse and numerous offerings, thus the differentiation is clear between these and other burials of the same period. In this period there is a new way to bury children, which was under patios or yards with stone floor of domestic residences, and there were a number of infants and young people buried. One interesting burial was 18 skulls of infants and young people in a pit, also the presence of cranial deformation practices. And finally in M.A. IIIB-IV (A.D 500-1000) burials in Monte Alban were located into residences, most of them deposited in graves and covered with stone slabs; the main characteristic in this epoch is the decrease in the number of offerings, in comparison with previous periods. There are three clear patterns in this epoch: a simple residence without presence of tombs and modest burials, a residence with simple tombs, and structures known as palaces with elegant tombs of high quality (Winter idem; Marcus and Flannery 2001: 258).

Regarding funerary practices in Teotihuacan, we can mention briefly that due to the nature of its multi-ethnic population, diverse and different mortuary practices have been identified. However archaeological data have shown more often seated or flexed burials in simple pits. Many of the features were reused in later times, and the funerary deposit or pit could be circular with concave bottom located in fillings or tepetate, mostly under floors (Cabrera 1999). The graves were usually designed for individual burials, but there are cases of two or three skeletons (including those found in *Tlailotlacan*).

Furthermore there is a large sample of skeletons of unborn or newborn placed in plates and covered with other similar vessels known as three-handless covers. There are also burials associated with altars (relatively common in Teotihuacan), and cremation has been identified in some areas of the city. There are numerous data about ritual decapitation and dismemberment, and also evidence of sacrifice or offerings of newborn and unborn babies. Samples of ritual sacrifices of adults in large scale have been found in the Temple of the Feathered Serpent (Sugiyama 2005). Finally it is important to mention the presence of traditions or funerary customs from other cultures, such as Western cultures (Michoacan), Maya area, Veracruz, and Oaxaca.

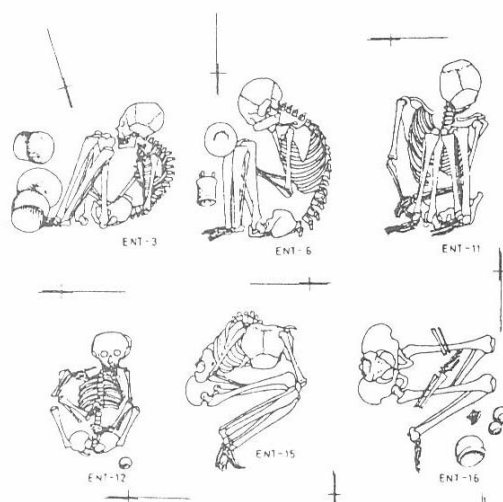
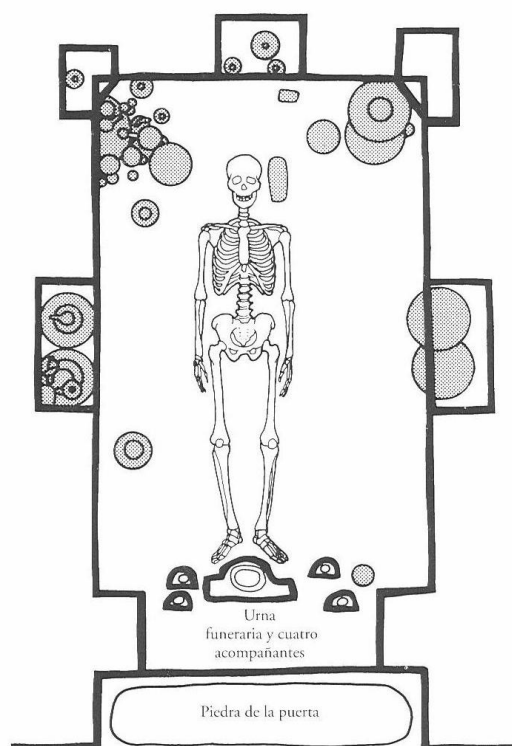


Figure 3: Samples of burials in Monte Alban and Teotihuacan. Top: Plan of Tomb 104 from Monte Alban (Marcus and Flannery 2001); Low: Burials from La Ventilla, Teotihuacan (Rattray 1997).

Objectives

The objective of this investigation is to identify and describe the main elements of the mortuary customs in the Oaxaca Barrio. This study considers four important aspects of the mortuary system in the Oaxaca Barrio: type of burial, offerings, ritual customs, and urns. The analysis of mortuary variables and their relationships will be central to answering the research questions and to test the hypotheses. Each element will be analyzed by a comparative study between Teotihuacan, Monte Alban, and the Oaxaca Barrio; looking for changes, syncretism or unique adaptations in the Zapotec Barrio. I will use the data from my excavation in 2002 and recent explorations in the Oaxaca Barrio, which will be integrated into one presentation.

This investigation does not pretend to address the function of the Oaxaca Barrio in Teotihuacan; however the study of mortuary customs is a clue to how Zapotecs were living in the biggest Mesoamerican capital in Classic times. I plan to analyze the elements of mortuary customs in the Zapotec Barrio and analyze the funerary rites over time in comparison to the Zapotec homeland. Previous studies mention that it seems funerary rites do not change (Spence 1996; Spence and Gamboa 1999; Rattray 1993, 1997); for example the disposition of human remains, the placement of ochre over human remains and offerings, animal remains as part of the offering, the deposit of two or more individuals, and the presence of urns show Zapotec traditional funerary customs and rites. In funerary customs, the ritual involves the buried individual in a process of unification with Zapotec ancestors, so the functions of funerary rites are to

keep the cohesion of the barrio inhabitants and to keep the relation with Zapotec ancestors. But a great deal more information has come to light through excavations in domestic contexts in the past two decades, including many little-noticed salvage projects whose results could enhance or even change this traditional view. Thus under these assumptions, I plan to test each element of funerary customs to identify rites in the barrio in comparison with the Zapotec homeland.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The analysis of mortuary customs is designed to identify social factors underlying differences in the material treatment of the dead. Mortuary practices involve collective actions, thus through studies of funerary elements it is possible to know social structures of the community (Brown 1995). The burials in the Oaxaca Barrio involve social, political and religious aspects of society; this investigation plans to test if these burial practices really do remain unchanged, or in fact show a trend toward syncretism-fusion with the surrounding culture of Teotihuacan. What might this tell us about the nature of the barrio? The answer to this question is important for understanding processes of syncretism and/or diasporic identity worldwide, as well as the true nature of the special relationship between Teotihuacan and Monte Alban.

This chapter will look at theoretical concepts and how they are used in my research. I begin discussing a general definition of ethnicity, pointing the importance of its transformation process. I also discuss the terms hybridization and syncretism, which are useful to understand the social characteristics of the Oaxaca Barrio. Also I briefly mention previous studies about ethnicity, approached mainly on foreign settlements in Teotihuacan, and what factors are considered by the investigators to establish ethnicity. Finally I approach the main ideas and hypotheses about the social and political

structure in the Oaxaca Barrio, which is related with the general system proposed to Teotihuacan organization known as barrio.

Ethnicity and Hybridization

Ethnicity is a term usually used to describe human groups based on their language, territorial identity, common descent, cultural affinity, and so on, but generally it is an imprecise concept. It is also important to take ethnicity as a social phenomenon and as a subject of change or transformation in relation to time and space. Ethnicity is the result of a process of historical development (Kearney 2000, Stephen 2005). In archaeology, we can identify ethnicity through material remains that pertain to shared values, beliefs, norms, sense of membership to a particular group, or shared traditions (Sigiura 1991).

Another important issue is the fact that ethnicity has the characteristic of "plasticity", in other words it has the capacity of transformation, "readjustment" and internal modulation. The transformation would be a gradual adaptive process that occurs continuously. Some of the customs or traditional practices carried out by the inhabitants of an enclave can show a high degree of resistance to change; these customs or practices are closely related to survival and perpetuation of the group's identity, while the practices that do not compromise the identity of the enclave may undergo transformations, or may even be replaced by others (Gimenez 1996).

As regards hybridization, it is considered in this investigation as synonymous with syncretism, and it refers to a social process where elements of one society are

assimilated into another society resulting in a new social form or in a change of cultural traits, or what Clack (2011:228) calls “the amalgamation of formerly discrete worldviews, cultural meanings, and in particular religion.” This change does not always result in a total fusion of cultures. Studies of hybridization and syncretism have been associated with social and cultural interaction, transformation, assimilation, acculturation and ethnogenesis, terms applied in archeology to the persistence or adoption of material culture traditions, mainly from colonial contacts (Deagan 1998; Gosden 2004).

In the case of the Oaxaca Barrio, in regard to mortuary customs, key questions address hybridization/syncretism and ethnicity:

- Which patterns or traits of the Oaxaca Barrio’s burials are like those of the Oaxaca Valley, and which are more typical of Teotihuacan?
- How have these patterns changed over time?
- What is the relationship between mortuary traditions and ethnicity in the Oaxaca Barrio?

Rattray (1990) considers the behaviors and practices of a group as factors that determine ethnicity, which is formed by different codes in terms of language, occupation, religion, dress, food and housing habits, separating its members from “the others” and using this difference to establish their ethnicity. However in the identification of ethnic groups in pre-Hispanic societies, Rattray mentions the importance to study “ceremonial paraphernalia”, funerary practices and religious architecture, all of them as part of the reconstruction of religious behavior. Likewise skeletal remains are a good indicator of ethnicity, especially when there are examples with specific cultural traits such as dental mutilation or cranial deformation, some of these practices were

developed in specific cultures (and also in specific social strata) and could express ethnic affiliation.

As regards Oaxaca Barrio ethnicity, Spence considers that the foreign cultural affiliation of the Oaxaca Barrio's inhabitants is most apparent in the mortuary remains (Spence and Gamboa 1999). The Barrio's burial practices include the use of slab-stone tombs, consisting of a burial chamber with an ante-chamber and entry stela, and stone-lined pits; placement of the dead in an extended position; covering skeletal remains with red pigment, a practice that may have been limited to secondary interments when the primary burial was disturbed; and secondary burials and multiple interments. If, as Spence suggests, the mortuary system in the Oaxaca Barrio was the cultural aspect that kept the majority of the traits from the homeland, a primary hypothesis is that mortuary customs were part of the main core of the Oaxaca Barrio's ethnicity and identity, and for this reason Zapotec migrants did not change, and tried to keep, their funerary practices very similar to the homeland. The elements involved in funerary customs were very important for the population of the Oaxaca Barrio to preserve their identity. We would expect to see in the offerings, tombs, urns and rituals customs not changing in comparison with the Zapotec customs. If there are changes, those did not involve fundamental aspects on the funerary customs, which are related with Zapotec ideology and religion. All these characteristics are the clue to understand and explain ethnicity in the Oaxaca Barrio, and how they define themselves. Also it is important to consider that the Zapotec initially faced relocation outside their place of origin, and therefore away from their ecological, technological, economic and cultural rights.

In addition, the Oaxaca Barrio's inhabitants were living, and sharing ideas with different groups of Teotihuacan residents. Gomez (2000) mentions the presence of West Mexican people close to the Oaxaca Barrio. This coexistence is clear in recent discoveries in the Oaxaca Barrio (Ortega 2008, 2009, 2010); burials' offerings have been found that contain pottery in West Mexican style (mainly Michoacan area). What were the strategies of coexistence that developed for the Oaxaca Barrio's inhabitants with different groups in Teotihuacan? How was the interaction of the Oaxaca Barrio inhabitant in their neighborhood, in the daily life, and into other different contexts (political or economic)? However ideological or religious issues were being sustained in the barrio, until now, there has been evidence of funerary rites practiced only inside of the Oaxaca Barrio. This could be a clue to the relationship that existed between the Oaxaca Barrio's inhabitants and the rest of Teotihuacan society. Also this particular situation is a perfect sample to understand ethnicity, which could face a process of loss, reconstitution, adaptation, or syncretism. What were the strategies or mechanisms to conserve or preserve ethnic traits and, at the same time, which was the degree of assimilation or adaptation of the migrant group?

Political and Social Structure in the Oaxaca Barrio

In regard to political structure and social organization in the Oaxaca Barrio, it is important to mention the general organization of Teotihuacan, and the concept of barrio or neighborhood. The term barrio has been commonly used to talk about a specific type of social and political organization in Mesoamerican societies (see Arnould et al 2012).

The architectural characteristics of Teotihuacan are the basis to understand the barrio concept in this ancient Mesoamerican society, and Teotihuacan presents an architectural pattern characterized by the presence of buildings called apartment compounds. Apartment compounds or residential compounds are considered as architectural units and they have been the object of various studies (Millon 1973, 1981; Cowgill et al. 1984, Cowgill 1997), suggesting that these structures harbored different sectors of Teotihuacan society and their occupants developed various activities related to political, economic and religious issues. In the apartment compounds are elements related with political and administrative institutions of the Teotihuacan government; these institutions were linked with Teotihuacan state religion, and all these elements were coexisting with spaces dedicated to domestic activities and housing; and some compounds harbored specialists of different craft activities, an example is the apartment compound known as Tlajinga 33, which has evidence of lapidary specialization and ceramic workshops (Storey 1991).

Millon (1973) estimated the existence of two thousand architectural compounds, defined as buildings of various rooms at various levels, around open courtyards that would function as rainwater collectors and provide ventilation and light. The apartments were united by aisles and they had domestic spaces for the preparation and storage of food, and all compounds were surrounded by an outer wall. Millon believes that Teotihuacan used a building module of 57 m as the unit of measure; he also considered that compounds could accommodate from 20 to 100 people. Some architectural complexes or barrios have been partially excavated: Yayahuala, Xolalpan,

Tlamimilolpan, Tetitla, The Ventilla, Oztoyohualco, Tlajinga, The Oaxaca Barrio and Merchant's Barrio, among others.

Millon (1973), Gomez (2000) and Ortega (2002) propose that neighborhoods or barrios are composed by the articulation of different departmental compounds. Barrios could be inhabited by groups related via kinship, ethnic affiliation and / or trade, working as a liaison between the various sectors of the population and groups from the administrative hierarchy of Teotihuacan society. In the neighborhood we can identify economic, political and ideological patterns dictated by the state; so a barrio reflects, in a minor scale, the social, political, economic and religious aspects from Teotihuacan state, and for that there is in the neighborhoods a degree of authority and control exerted from the state. All these elements interact to shape a social and economic unit, forming a subsystem within the Teotihuacan organization, and articulating with other subsystems (others barrios or neighborhoods).

The apartment compound had an important ritual dimension to its identity; its members functioned together in economic activities that were vital to the survival and well-being of the group (Sempowski and Spence 1994: 383). Some investigators (Sanders et al 1979, Sempowski and Spence 1994) believe that the evidence from some Teotihuacan barrios indicate or suggests these apartment compounds were occupied by a lineage, or some similar descent-based corporate group, with a patrilocal residence bias. However, Spence mentions that the apartment compound social unit was not simply a patrilineage:

Although there is skeletal evidence to suggest patrilocality, it does not necessary tell us anything about descent or recruitment. In fact, Millon (1976, 1981) believes that the inhabitants may have been organized cognatically, perhaps with an agnatic bias, and would have had relatively flexible recruitment procedures. This may well have been the case, with a variety of practices (the option of bilocal residence, fictive kinship, adoption, patron-client relationships, etc) supplementing the fundamental agnatic or cognatic descent to allow more diversity in residence and group membership (Sempowski and Spence 1994:410).

In the Oaxaca Barrio it is still difficult to establish if the community was from a matrilineal or patrilineal structure, however there is no doubt that kinship would be related with its ethnicity and identity. We do not know if the Oaxaca Barrio kinship was built on the principle of descent from men going on through men, and the line of descent through opposite gender was completely excluded or partiality excluded.

Spence and Gamboa (1999) noted the highly favorable treatment accorded to the burials of women, which was been confirmed with recent studies from Archer (2012) and Ortega (2009, 2010). Women appear to have been considered, at least with the archaeological evidence until now, equal in status to men. They were buried in all kinds of funerary contexts identified in the Oaxaca Barrio (graves, tombs and cists), and they have important and “wealthy” offerings, including different materials, local and foreign. Spence et al. (2005) argue, that women in Tlailotlacan or the Oaxaca Barrio seem to have enjoyed “unusually high status”, because Zapotec migrants were concerned with

the survival of their ethnic community, and women played an important role in this issue. They were crucial to both the physical and cultural reproduction of the barrio.

It is possible that the Oaxaca Barrio as a group would have had the flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances, yet also the stability and coherence to persist as an effective social unit over generations. Also it is interesting that currently in Zapotec societies in the Oaxaca state, there are both kinship systems, patrilineal and matrilineal, the latter having develop on the coast of Oaxaca and Isthmus of Tehuantepec (Dalton 2010).

CHAPTER III

EXCAVATIONS IN THE OAXACA BARRIO

Nine of the fifteen apartment compounds with Zapotec affinities have been partially excavated in the Oaxaca Barrio from 1966 to 2012 (see Figure 4), and diverse cultural aspects have been discovered as a result of these excavations (Figure 5). This chapter mentions briefly the explored compounds and their characteristics; this review hopes to show limits and scopes of data used in this research.

Site TL7 (7:N1W6)

This compound was the first one explored in the Oaxaca Barrio in 1966 by the University of Americas under Evelyn Rattray (1993) and John Paddock (1966, 1983); in 1967 the Teotihuacan Mapping Project excavated this site also (Millon 1967, 1973). The most relevant evidence of these explorations was the discovery of two incomplete urns and fragments of others with Zapotec style; also found were diverse burials in extended position and one tomb. During these excavations the investigators discovered architectural features such as walls (from rooms and limits of the compound), floors (some of them made by cobblestones, which is a particularity in the Oaxaca Barrio). Also important was the presence of significant amounts of Zapotec style pottery,

especially ceramic types identified in Monte Alban as G1, G2, G12 and G21 (Caso, Bernal, and Acosta 1967). The most recent exploration in the Oaxaca Barrio, in the summer of 2012 by Veronica Ortega, has covered the southern part of this compound; the goal of this exploration was to confirm and complete data from Millon and Rattray's excavations. As a preliminary result, this excavation confirmed the presence of the tomb excavated by Millon, but with different characteristics than the description made by the first explorers; also Ortega (personal communication) mentions evidence of other tombs located at the south end of the compound, where Rattray previously reported a burial with urn fragments.

Site TL6 (6:N1W6)

Michael Spence excavated this site during different seasons (1986, 1987 and 1989); he explored a platform attached to a courtyard or plaza with a central altar, along with four tombs and diverse burials and offerings in simple graves (see Figure 5). As result of this excavation, Spence identified a sequence of eight stages of construction, providing more information about the Oaxaca Barrio inhabitants. This compound represents the later occupation in the barrio, Metepec phase.

Site TL69 (69:N2W6)

This site was partially excavated by Quintanilla (1982), who was part of the Teotihuacan Archaeological Project 1980-1982 (Cabrera et al 1982). As part of the

results of this exploration Quintanilla identified diverse burials in extended position and architectural features of domestic context.

Site TL1 (1:N1W6)

This site is one of the most explored compounds in the Oaxaca Barrio (Gamboa 1995, Palomares 2002, and Ortega 2008, 2010). The data and evidence from these excavations show a complex compound with public and domestic architecture; architectural features such as platforms, plazas with central altars, rooms' walls and limits of the compound, cobblestone floors and *tepetate* or natural rock used as floor (another characteristic of the Oaxaca Barrio). This compound has a complex net of drainages and three levels of construction. During the last excavation it was possible to know the size of the compound (north – south) which was 32 meters (see Figure 5). Also numerous burials in different contexts with diverse offerings were explored, and a total of three tombs were identified. It is important to mention the identification of ceramics from Tzacualli phase as a result of pottery analysis from the recent excavations.

Site TL5 (5:N1W6)

Excavations in 2003 determined that Structure TL5 had three construction episodes, two dating to the Classic period and one to Postclassic period. The TL5 plan most closely resembles two-room temples from the Oaxaca Valley, specifically a few

examples defined by small rooms on opposite ends of the main two-room structure (Croissier 2007).

Site TL9 (9:N1W6)

The archeological exploration by Ortega in 2008 covered a small part of this structure, however she could identify domestic areas with similar characteristics to the rest of the barrio, the use of natural rock or *tepetate* as floor, walls made by cobblestone and a drainage system, in addition this exploration identified skulls as offerings, which could be in relation to new constructions in the compound.

Site TL11 (11:N1W6)

This site has been excavated in 2008 and 2009 by Ortega, and covered an important extension of this compound, showing two levels of construction, a complex drainage system, platforms around a center courtyard or plaza with a central altar, the floor of one plaza was made by cobblestone and fragments of stone-plates or slabs (used to cover drainages); central altars had offerings such as Zapotec and Teotihuacan pottery and shells with remains of red pigment. In addition, it was interesting the identification of skulls as offerings close to access of rooms, or as offerings to commemorate renovations or a new level of construction. Also there was a deposit of water with infant's burials, and a burial in flexed position with an urn of Zapotec style as offering. Two tombs were found, one to the first occupation

(Tlamimilolpan) and the second one to Xolalpan occupation (A.D. 450-600), also numerous burials were explored with their offerings. One interesting architectural feature was a panel in form of an inverted U, which is an architectonic element in Zapotec cities, mainly in Monte Alban. Also relevant was the discovery of urns fragments and canine burials. In general this was an important compound in the Oaxaca barrio with large public areas and domestic contexts, also it had architectonic elements that show high quality in comparison with other compounds.

Site TL67 (67: N2W6)

This compound located toward north of the Oaxaca barrio, presents similar architectural characteristics with the rest of the compounds explored; the materials used in construction and architectonic distribution are the same: cobblestones and blocks of natural rock or *tepetate* to build room walls, which are around patios or plazas, with a central altar; some patios have cobblestone floors and drainages. The explored area belongs to domestic contexts and a public area. Some burials were explored and they were in extended position. One important result was the presence of Tzacualli pottery types, showing the earliest occupation in the Oaxaca barrio (Ortega 2008, 2009).

Site TL20-North (20: N1W6)

The northeast corner of this compound was excavated by Gamboa in 1995, who identified a series of rooms and patios with central altars and similar characteristics to

the rest of the Oaxaca barrio's compounds; however one interesting discovery in this excavation was 15 neonate burials deposited each one in a bowl, all of them around a central altar in a courtyard.

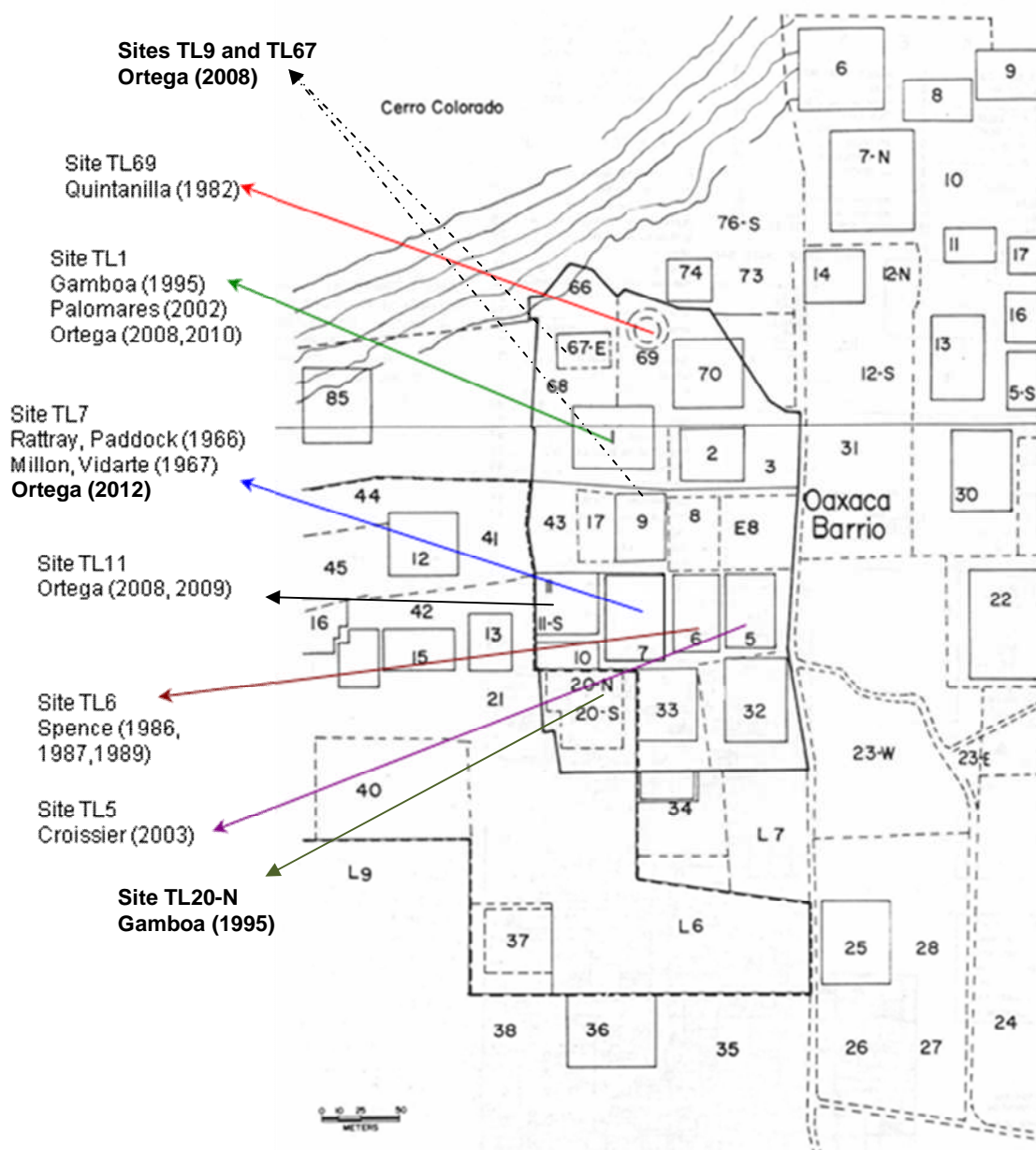


Figure 4: Modified map from Rattray (1993), showing the excavations in the Oaxaca barrio.

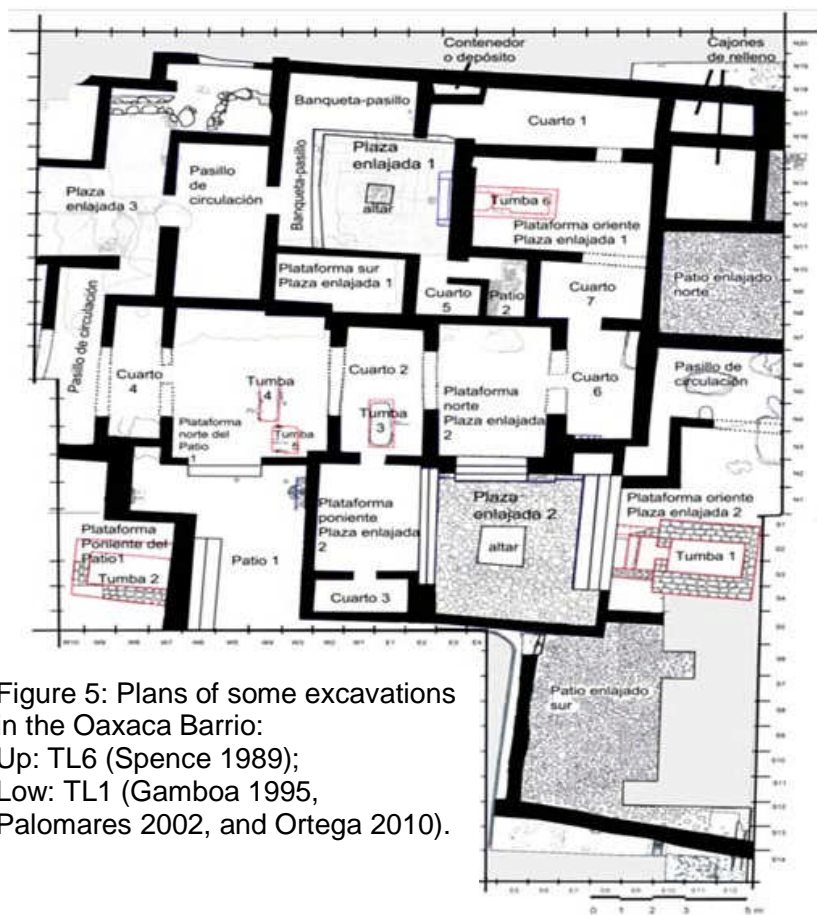
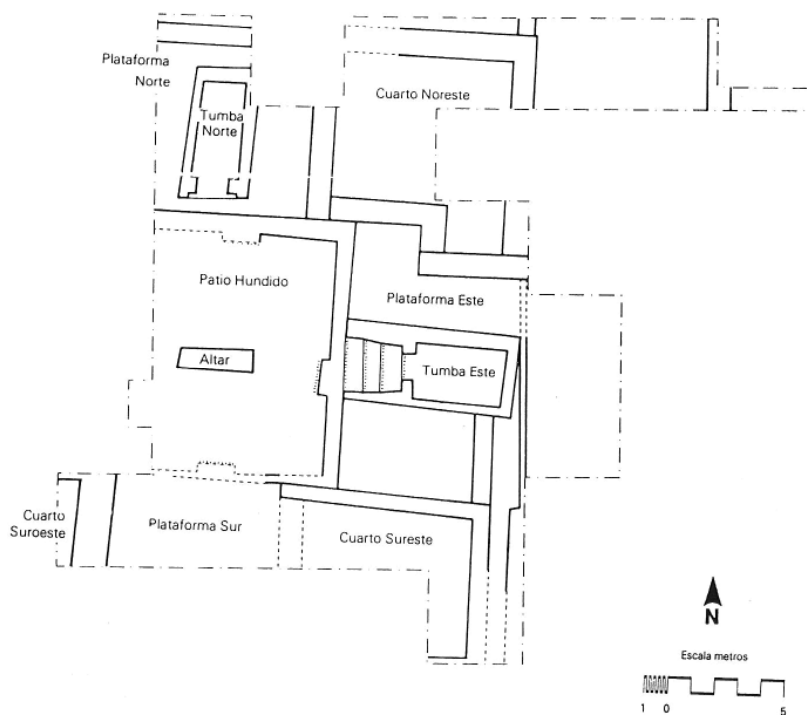


Figure 5: Plans of some excavations in the Oaxaca Barrio:
 Up: TL6 (Spence 1989);
 Low: TL1 (Gamboa 1995,
 Palomares 2002, and Ortega 2010).

CHAPTER IV

MORTUARY CUSTOMS IN THE OAXACA BARRIO

This study considers four important aspects of the mortuary system in the Oaxaca Barrio: type of burial, offerings, rituals and urns. This chapter mentions the characteristics of each element, and later in Chapter V it will be analyzed each one by a comparative study with Teotihuacan and Monte Alban funerary practices, looking for changes, syncretism or unique adaptations in the Zapotec Barrio. In this chapter I present data from my excavation in 2002, and recent explorations in the Oaxaca Barrio.

Burials

The burials are deposited in three contexts: long pits (graves), burials with stone-lined cists and tombs. Each has singular characteristics:

Burials into long pits (graves)

Compounds explored in the Oaxaca Barrio have shown burials deposited into long pits or graves, most of them have 1.80 m length by 0.70 – 0.80 m width, and they were excavated on natural rock (*tepetate*), the pit has about 20 to 30 cm of depth. Frequently we can find two persons in the deposit, one in extended position and the

other stacked in one corner of the pit (see Figure 6). These features are located usually in domestic areas (under rooms) and have been identified since Tlamimilolpan to Xolalpan phases. Adults are most common but children or infants have been deposited in small graves in extended position or flexed. The offerings in this deposit are diverse such as Teotihuacan pottery, Zapotec style pottery (local and foreign source-raw), canine remains, stone-green figurines and beads, shells, and obsidian artifacts; it is interesting that some of the pottery are miniature bowls and jars.

Two samples of this type of burial were found in compound TL1 (Palomares 2002, 2007); one was located under the corner of rooms and covered by *tepetate* slabs, the other one was under the floor of a room with poor conservation and high modern alteration. In both cases there were remains of two individuals (adults), women (stacked) and men (extended). Both cases show offerings; they were diverse with animal bone (dogs).

Burials with stone-lined cists

Unfortunately there are only few samples of this type, most of them with a high level of alteration by modern settlements in the area. The main characteristics are: burials of young individuals or infants in extended or flexed position, with or without offerings and remains of stones around the mortuary context. This type of burial has been found in domestic contexts, under floors of rooms and patios.

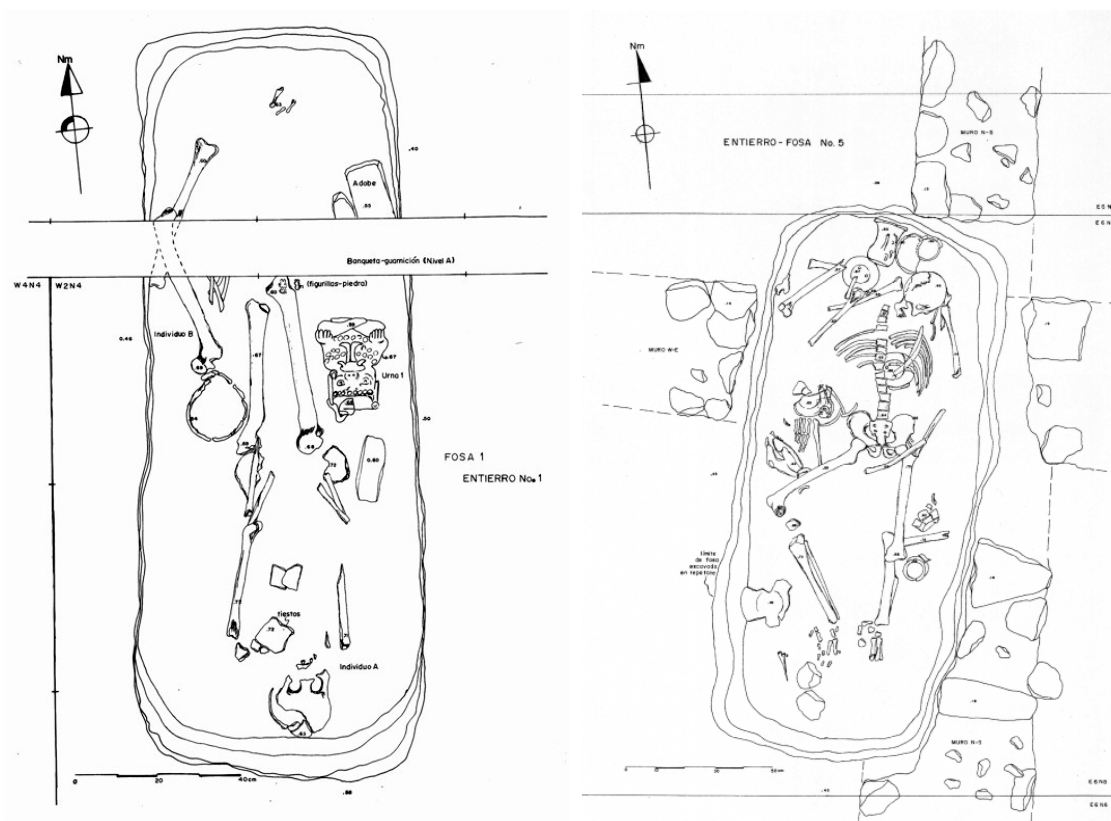


Figure 6: Burials into long pits, Structure TL1, The Oaxaca Barrio (Palomares 2002)

Tombs

Until now eleven tombs have been found in the Oaxaca Barrio: two in TL7 (Millon 1967 and Ortega 2012), four in TL6 (Spence 1989), three in TL1 (Gamboa 1995 and Ortega 2010) and two in TL11 (Ortega 2008, 2009). Tombs are dated to early Tlamimilolpan, Xolalpan and Metepec phases (A.D. 200 - 650). The tombs are located under platforms around patios or plazas, or under their own floor of courtyard or *patio*. The general form is rectangular, some of them with antechamber and steps to the access. All the tombs present reuse space, in other words, into the tombs have been found remains of more than one person and their deposition occurred at different times; this is a common practice in the Oaxaca Valley (Middleton, Feinman and Molina 1998). A characteristic of tombs is burial of adults, either male or female, but also there are a few cases with infants (Spence and Gamboa 1999).

Below I mention general information of each tomb found in the Oaxaca Barrio and their characteristics:

TL7 tombs: the first tomb found in TL7 is characterized by two steps that link with a hall, which gives access to a main chamber; also it was identified, as part of a wall, a stela with a Zapotec glyph and numeral (Millon 1973), this stela shows the glyph of "movement" and the numeral nine (a horizontal bar and four dots, see Figure 7), it is very interesting that the stone is local and it was part of the front face of the Quetzalcoatl temple, in the ceremonial center of Teotihuacan, 3 km east from the Oaxaca Barrio (Spence 1992). This tomb is dated by early Tlamimilolpan and is one of the earliest tombs in the Oaxaca Barrio, however it was looted in Metepec phase and during Postclassic period (personal communication Rattray 2006); the tomb had the

remains of at least six individuals (four adults and two infants), also there were bones of dog. The individuals were not buried at the same time, and some of the remains show red pigment. Unfortunately there are not available pictures or maps that show the form and architectural features of this tomb. The second tomb of TL7 was found during the most recent exploration in the Oaxaca Barrio, summer 2012 by Veronica Ortega. Ortega (personal communication) mentions that toward the south of this compound, where Rattray recorded a burial with fragments of urns (Rattray 1993), were identified large slabs that belong to the roof of a tomb.

TL6 tombs: four tombs were identified in this compound (Spence and Gamboa 1999), with the remains of 14 individuals. The earliest tomb was dated to late Tlamimilolpan phase, it has an entrance toward a patio, and contained one individual and offering, mainly ceramic vessels. The south tomb in this compound is dated to early Xolalpan phase and was under a platform around a courtyard, this tomb contained six adults, females and males. The east tomb (Figure 8), dated also to early Xolalpan presents a main chamber and steps that give access to the entrance; at least four individuals were deposited in this tomb, with diverse offerings, mainly miniature ceramic vessels. And finally the north tomb was built in Metepec phase, and was under a platform around a plaza with central altar (the same one where was located the east tomb); it is a rectangular structure with a south access and included four adults, two males and two females.

TL1 tombs: three tombs have been found in this compound (Figure 9). Two tombs dated to Xolalpan phase were identified during Gamboa's excavation in 1995, both in association with platforms around a plaza with central altar, also both included remains

of more than one individual and diverse offerings; in one of them was identified dog bones and feces that suggest that animal was offered live (Spence and Gamboa 1999). The third tomb identified in this compound was located under a platform around a plaza with cobblestone floor and central altar, is dated to early Tlamimilolpan and natural rock was used as floor; it has coarse walls and two steps that link with the access and the main chamber; the rectangular structure contained two individuals, one male (25-30 years old) and the other gender was not identified, and this burial contained ceramics, shells, remains of a canine and lithic artifacts.

TL11 tombs: two tombs have been found in this compound; one was located in the fill of a platform during the exploration of 2008, with coarse walls, a roof made of large irregular plaques of basalt, and its access toward the east (Figure 10). This tomb was 85 cm deep, 153 cm long and 43 cm wide; also this tomb is one of the few that hold an infant, who was in extended position, a female around 6 to 7 years old. The offering was ceramic, mainly miniature vessels and one Zapotec pot (known as zoomorphic bowl), and canine bones. The tomb is dated to Xolalpan phase (A.D 450-600). The other tomb was found during 2009 exploration by Ortega and her team; it was located under the floor of a courtyard or plaza with central altar. The tomb's form is rectangular without access, and natural rock or *tepetate* was used as floor; this tomb has 190 cm length by 45 cm width and 40 cm height, this tomb is earlier than the first founded in this compound (Tlamimilolpan phase), and it was disturbed by different constructive remodeling in the compound.



Figure 7: Stelae found in tomb from TL7 Structure, showing glyph and numeral sign (Millon 1973), (Photo by Miguel Morales).

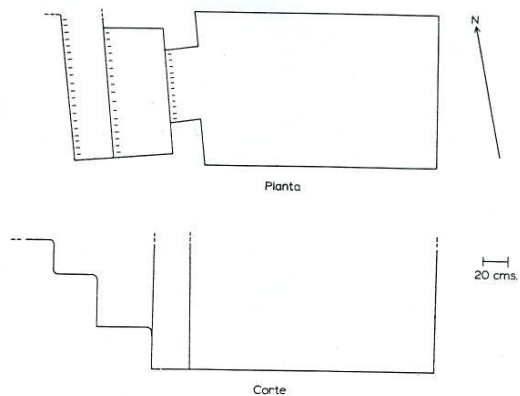


Figure 8: Plan of East Tomb from TL6 Structure (Spence 1989).

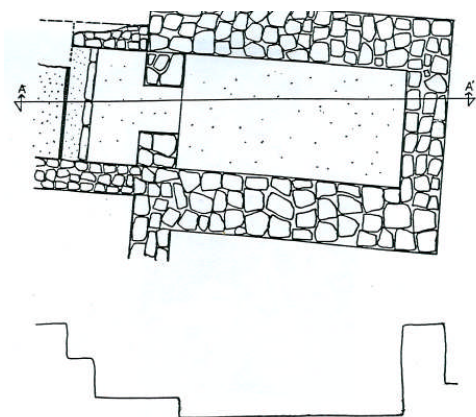


Figure 9: Tombs from site TL1. Left, plan of East Tomb (Gamboa 1995); Right, Tomb found by Ortega (2010).



Figure 10: Tomb found in TL11 (Ortega 2008)

Others types of burials

Also it is important to mention the presence of neonate burials in bowls, a common practice in Teotihuacan and the Zapotec area. However there are at least two funerary contexts in the Oaxaca Barrio that involve children and have been interpreted as human sacrifices. In a patio, around the altar, excavated in TL20 (North) were 15 neonate burials, each one in a bowl (thin orange ware and mate ware), and in TL11 were identified nine children into a room with elements associated with water (Figure 11); these burials are dated to late Tlamimilolpan and early Xolalpan, and also bones of dogs were found in the burial deposit. These contexts could have three possible explanations: natural death, strategy of “birth control”, or sacrifice. In Chapter V I will present a discussion about the possibilities to explain these burials, but it is important to point to limitations of each possible explanation, and the problems with the data. If these burials are showing the same event or they are from different moments, and if there are analysis of bones, and what kind of analysis, to know the characteristics of health of each individual.

In addition, there are the presence of skulls as offerings close to access of specific areas in the compounds; an example is in TL11 (Figure 12), where were found two skulls to the side of a staircase. Skulls (with three first vertebrae) were with obsidian blades. Other types of burials found during different excavations in the Oaxaca Barrio are only fragments of the body (legs or arms for example), or complete skeletons in drainages; this practice also has been found in other places in Teotihuacan, using drainages as funerary contexts when they are not in function or will be close for a

remodeling-construction. However we cannot disqualify a possible symbolic interpretation between death and water (related with drainage nets).

Also, simple burials without grave, or clear funerary deposit, have been identified in the Oaxaca Barrio; the main characteristics are individuals with poor offerings (one or two vessels) or without any offering, commonly females and infants deposited or found in fills of diverse constructions (domestics). Finally one interesting funerary context is burials in ventral-extended position, two cases have been found, both infants (see Figure 13), in TL1 (Ortega 2010, Archer 2012) and TL6 (Spence and Gamboa 1999).

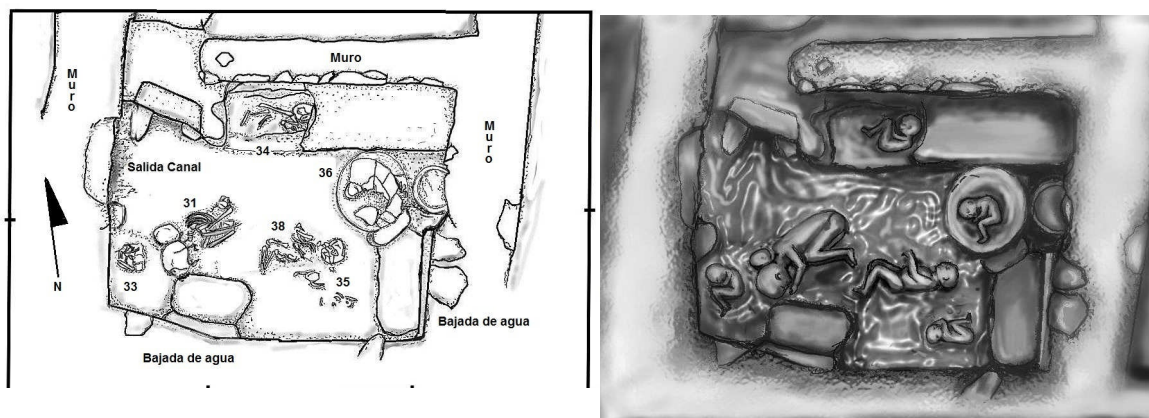


Figure 11: Infant burials in “deposit of water” (Ortega 2009), and recreation by Archer (2012)

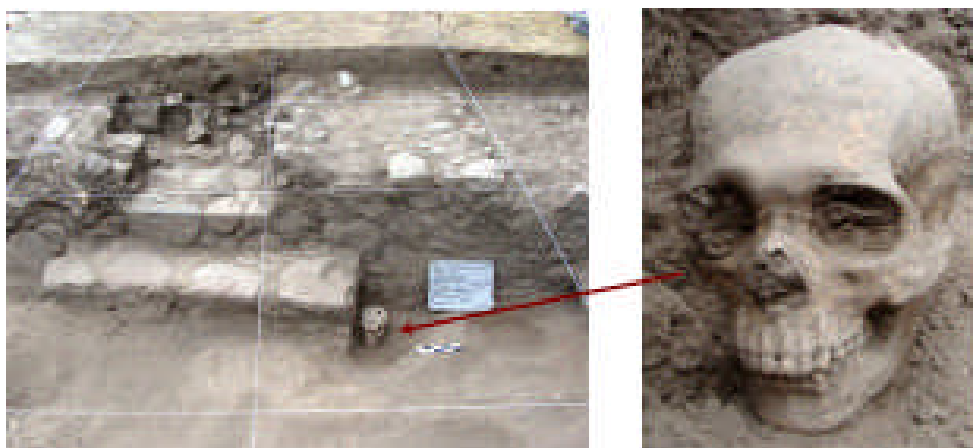


Figure 12: Skull found next to staircase in TL11 (Ortega 2009)

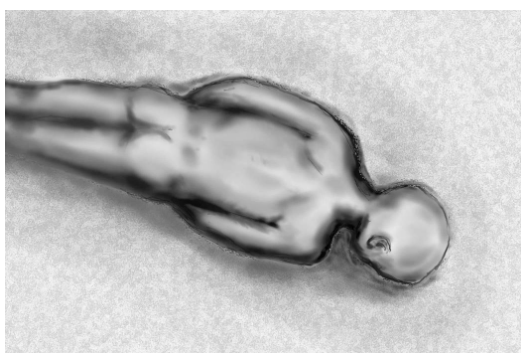


Figure 13: Recreation of an infant burial, ventral extended position, in TL1 (Archer 2012)

Offerings and Ritual Customs

Offerings and funerary customs are the result of a complex of social relationships that are expressed in a ritual act into an ideological frame or religion. The Oaxaca Barrio's burials show a big diversity of objects as offerings (Figure 14): figurines and beads of green stone, worked bone, shells, animal remains (dog skull or only the jaw), vessels of different style (Teotihuacan, Zapotec and Michoacan styles), and Zapotec urns (fragments and complete urns). Some burials present tools or artifacts in association with daily activities and working activities, such as *metates*, obsidian knives and blades, and stucco polishers. In one burial, in the TL11 compound, was a musical instrument, named *Omechicahuaztli*, deposited as part of an offering (Ortega 2008).

The pottery offerings in the Oaxaca Barrio's burials are among those aspects that show hybridization. Paddock and Rattray consider hybrid ceramics those with local clay and Zapotec traits (Fowler and Paddock 1975; Rattray 1993, 2001). Rattray (2001) mentions the presence of three varieties: Teotihuacan pottery, Zapotec pottery (imported or foreign), and hybrid ceramic (with Zapotec style and local clay). Examples are some ceramic types of domestic use, funerary pottery such as urns, and also figurines. In general, the difference between Teotihuacan and Zapotec ceramics is the clay; one common type of Zapotec pottery is characterized by its gray color, due to a reductive firing atmosphere (Shepard 1965; Caso et al. 1967). The barrio's foreign ceramic assemblage includes locally manufactured Zapotec-style vessels that are comparable to types G2, G3, a G12 non-combed bottom variant, G21, and G35 in the

Caso et al. (1967) classification system for Oaxaca Valley pottery. The Barrio's assemblage does not include the full repertoire of wares from corresponding chronological phases but rather a small range of domestic gray wares, primarily bowls and large basins (Rattray 1993). Other Oaxaca Valley wares, namely *cremas*, *amarillos*, and *cafes* are absent but I consider those could be missed with Teotihuacan local pottery tradition.

The pottery in burial offerings in the Oaxaca Barrio (tombs, graves, and pits) is diverse; vessels with clear Teotihuacan or local style (domestic and ceremonial), and Zapotec urns and foreign pots. The Teotihuacan vessels present in the Oaxaca Barrio's burials are: out-curving bowls, "Tlaloc" jars, miniature vessels (bowls and jars), three-handless covers, and foreign pottery such as hemispherical bowls made with thin-orange ware (produced in southern Puebla), "duck pot" or *patojo* (possible Oaxaca origin), and zoomorphic bowls from the Zapotec area (small bowls with short walls and four handles).

Also presence was an atypical triple bodied vessel with the representation of Tlaloc in a burial found in the TL11 compound; and a complete jar with western style, possible from the Michoacan or Queretaro areas, identified as offering in a burial at TL1 compound. Finally, regarding offerings, it is important to mention the identification of fragments or urns as part of offerings, such as legs, arms, and fragments of headdress and faces.

As regards rituals, Spence and Gamboa (1999) have mentioned the reutilization of space in burials (tombs, pits or features) into public and domestic structures at the Oaxaca Barrio, which is a characteristic of the funerary customs in the Zapotec culture

(Middleton et al 1998). In Zapotec burials it is common to relocate into a corner the previous human remains and the new one is interred in an extended position; also the presence of ochre over the remains and animals as part of the offering (dogs and birds).



Figure 14: Offerings from burials in the Oaxaca Barrio, showing the different types of pottery, and diversity on materials, such as green stone and bone (awl and musical instrument).

There are different assumptions about the presence of several individuals deposited in tombs. Some studies have approached tombs as a result of unique and simultaneous events, the disarticulated remains found inside the tomb have been classified as "secondaries" and interpreted as individuals exhumed and placed in the tomb in order to be offering to the principal individual (Caso 1933; Bernal 1958). However there are other studies that have interpreted this evidence as continues reusing of tombs; the reuse of the tombs is described as the repeated use of a funerary deposit (tomb, grave, or pit), so it is the result of a continuous process, each recent burial is placed in the tomb and previous burials were removed to one side or stacked close to the new one deposited. If the tomb is nearly full, or ritual with the prior interment complete, the disarticulated remains of the previous occupants can be totally removed from it (Middleton et al 1998). To Urcid (1996) the presence of different individuals, different sex and age, is related to a funerary context in a way that shows the succession of different leaders in the life of the community, maybe the ancestor couple, and their sons or daughters.

In sum, the tombs in the Oaxaca Barrio as those found in Oaxaca were reopened sometimes, over human remains has been identified red pigment, which could have been applied at different times, each time that the tomb was reused or reopened. In some tombs, graves or funerary pits, the red pigment also has been identified over pottery. Apparently the red color symbolizes or is related with reverence and respect to the ancestors buried.

Also the tomb may have been reopened in order to obtain some specific bones that exhibit some symbolic significance, for example the femur, jaws, humerus, radius or

skull, among others. To Urcid (*idem*), the elite family was looking for and selecting anatomical components from their ancestors' tombs to use them as symbols of power and status validation or justification. But also it has been found empty tombs and sealed, which implies a change of residence to the burial or burials. Some bones in the tombs were apparently "painted" with a red pigment after they lost their muscles and skin, and this has happened in most of the tombs that were reopened to bury new individuals.

Evidence of animal sacrifice is part of the Zapotec funerary practices, involving offerings of dogs, some puppies and small birds. Through some comparative studies, it has been concluded that the offerings of dogs was widespread while the presence of birds is restricted to the tombs of the high-ranking (Urcid 2005).

Zapotec Urns

One aspect of the Oaxaca Barrio that has received special attention is the Zapotec urns, a type of ceramic vessel with anthropomorphic or zoomorphic effigies attached. These artifacts are rich in iconographic information; their study has offered unparalleled sources of information on beliefs, ideology and religion from Zapotec society (Caso and Bernal 1952), and which was still practiced by inhabitants in the Oaxaca Barrio at Teotihuacan.

In the Zapotec area, the majority of urns are associated with mortuary contexts, and in particular tombs, where they were placed in different positions relative to the structure: on the roof, in front of the entrance, in wall niches, in the antechamber, and

on the floor (Sellen 2005; Urcid 2005). However, some urns have been found as offerings related to buildings, placed under stucco floors. The Zapotec urns vary in height from 10 centimeters up to one meter, and many are made in series, frequently consisting of sets of three, four or five. Most ceramic objects found in the Valley of Oaxaca are fabricated from a fine gray paste and many have applications of red pigment. Furthermore, there is evidence about the reuse of the urns, given that many are broken and they have been discovered *in situ*.

The question about what they symbolize and how they are related to religion and ritual activities, have been approached by different scholars. Some investigators argue that the effigies represent gods from a complex pantheon (Caso and Bernal 1952). Joyce Marcus mentions that the effigies represent royal ancestors wearing supernatural guises (Marcus 1983; Marcus and Flannery 1996). Current research demonstrates a correlation between the entities in the Zapotec calendar day-name list and the complexes of masks and costumes worn by the figures displayed on the urns (Sellen 2002; Urcid 2001, 2005).

In this investigation we consider urns as deities. Deities displayed on the urns are the same patron deities that correspond to the Mesoamerican ideology. Zapotec effigy vessels could represent ancestors who are impersonating deities represented in the ancient calendar.

Urn is undoubtedly involved into religious beliefs and events; their presence in tombs, burial offerings and offerings related to buildings, suggests that urns were used in a ritual context.

The early Zapotec urns, Monte Alban I and II (500 B.C – A.D 200), generally show a figure that combines human and zoomorphic attributes. The arms and legs look human, but human and zoomorphic features are fused in the head and face. In most cases the animal is represented by a mask placed over a human face. Some interpretations point to them as representations of gods, or as priests or vestments related to certain gods. The late urns, Monte Alban III (A.D 300-700), clearly show human traits and they exhibit ornamental elements related with the elite in Zapotec society. Religious and ritual aspects are manifested in headdresses, masks worn over the face, chest symbols and objects carried in the hands. Some urns represent only persons without symbolic elements, which have been named as “companions”, placed next to the more elaborated urns.

Caso and Bernal (1952) have grouped Zapotec urns according to their symbolic elements; the authors refer to them as gods, the most frequent representations are related to Cocijo, the Tiger god, Bat god, Buccal Snake mask god or Buccal Wind mask god (which is related to Quetzalcoatl – the Feathered serpent), bird mask god (mainly owls), Turquoise god, Xipetotec god, Tlacuache or Opossum god, and a category known as “companions.”

Zapotec Urns in the Oaxaca Barrio

Seven urns of Zapotec style have been found in the Oaxaca Barrio, 6 of them into mortuary context and one as offering related to a building. Some of them made with clay from Oaxaca and others showing local manufacture. The Zapotec urns in the Oaxaca

Barrio are tubular ceramic vessels with anthropomorphic or zoomorphic effigies attached. Their height varies from 19 to 34 centimeters, and the diameter of tubular vessels presents 5cm wide. All figures are seated and show diverse symbolic elements in headdress and cloth, and also some of them have remains of red pigment, it is also important to mention that most of them are incomplete and some pretty fragmented.

Until now the symbolic elements in the Oaxaca Barrio urns represent or are related with Cocijo god, Old god or *Huehueteotl*, and Buccal snake mask god (possible representation of Feathered Serpent or Quetzalcoatl), all of them are deities, either in Zapotec and Teotihuacan ideology. This could be a clue to the relationship that existed between the Oaxaca Barrio's inhabitants and Teotihuacan society.

Cocijo urn

Only one urn with symbolic elements related with Cocijo or Rain god has been found in the Oaxaca Barrio until now (Figure 15). This urn was discovered in TL1 compound (Palomares 2002, 2007) as part of an offering in a burial, the funerary deposit was a long pit with at least two individual buried (a couple), the urn was next to the extended individual (male adult). As part of the offering there were also two green stone figurines (*Mezcala* style), and two bowls. The urn is 22 cm height (with headdress) and 15 cm wide. The attached figure is a seated individual with legs crossed and hands over knees. The headdress is shaped by a hat with wavy lines by incision, in the frontal part there is the glyph "C". The face presents a mask over eyes and round nose; also it has a buccal mask from which emerges a forked tongue showing two canines teeth. Other important characteristics are its cape over shoulders and a

necklace. The tubular vessel is 16 cm high and 4 cm wide. This urn presented remains of red pigment, mainly over face.

An iconographic analysis (Caso and Bernal 1952) shows that this urn represents a Cocijo god, also known as Tlaloc or Chac in others Mesoamerican societies. In Zapotec culture, Cocijo is named also with his calendar name "3 L". The main symbolic elements of Cocijo urns are the mask and the presence of the glyph "C". Particularly, Cocijo urn in the Oaxaca Barrio presents early characteristics, such as the form of the nose (typical Olmec style), the way to do the glyph C (by incision), and the form of necklace, which represents green beads and shells.

Cocijo urns in Monte Alban are common in Epoch transition II – IIIA (Figure 16), however in others sites of the Oaxaca Valley, this god has been represented since early time (see Figure 17), Monte Alban I (B.C 500 - 200). Cocijo urn in the Oaxaca Barrio is dated to Tlamimilolpan phase, according with burial context, however iconographic analysis shows early traits dated to Monte Alban I and II. Also it is important to mention that according with results from clay analysis; the urn was made with material from Atzompa, in the Oaxaca Valley.

On the other hand, Cocijo or Tlaloc representations in Teotihuacan have been identified into different and diverse contexts; since early representations in pottery known as Tlaloc vessel from Tzacualli phase (0 - A.D 150), until representations on murals and sculptures in late periods. In addition, it is relevant to mention that the presence of Tlaloc in *Tlalotlacan* it was not only on urns, also it has been found in others types of vessels into funerary contexts, such as a three- bodies vessel and Tlaloc jars (Figure 18).



Figure 15: Cocijo urn, Site TL1
(Photo by Miguel Morales)



Figure 16: Cocijo urn, Monte Alban,
epoch M.A. transition II-III A
(Caso and Bernal 1952)



Figure 17: left, early representation of Cocijo, epoch M.A. I, from Santo Domingo del Valle, Oaxaca (Caso and Bernal 1952); right, urns with Cocijo traits from San Jose Mogote site.



Figure 18: Three-bodies vessel (Ortega 2009), and
Tlaloc jar.

Urns with snake buccal mask

According with Caso and Bernal (1952), the main characteristic of these urns is the buccal mask, which represents a jaw of snake with the top part longer than the low one, from the mouth emerges a forked tongue, showing some times teeth or canines. The difference between Cocijo god and this one is the mask over eyes that wear Cocijo representations. Until now there are three urns with representation of Snake mask god in the Oaxaca Barrio, two of them as part of an offering in burial and the other one as an offering of a building.

The urn as offering of a building was found in TL7 compound; the urn, which was broken, was discovered into a room over the floor with evidence of fire (Millon 1967). This urn is dated, according context, to late Xolalpan phase, but iconographic elements shows traits belong to Monte Alban IIIA (Caso and Bernal 1967). The character of this urn presents a snake mask with forked tongue which cover his mouth (Figure 19), also figure has a headdress with glyph 8J (Eight Corn). Urn is 34 cm high by 20 cm wide, and had red pigment remains, also it interesting to mention that results of clay analysis show that material is from Atzompa, Oaxaca.

The second urn with mask with forked tongue was discovery in the same compound TL7 but in funerary context (Rattray 1993), the urn was very fragmented as part of offering of buried male in extended position, the burial had others two individuals and was dated to late Xolalpan, but Caso and Bernal identified this urn to Monte Alban transition II - IIIA. The urn is 27 cm high and 17cm wide, the human figure has a mask with forked tongue and in the headdress presents the glyph C with two dots (see Figure 20), possible its calendrical name is Two Water (Urcid 2003). Also, on face and

headdress shows remains of red pigment. The mask has been interpreted by Urcid (*idem*) as an alligator buccal mask and urn was manufactured with local clay, from Teotihuacan valley. Furthermore, in the same funerary context there were fragments of others two urns, however it was not possible to determine which god was represented.

The third urn found in the Oaxaca Barrio with snake mask was part of offering in a burial at TL1 compound (Palomares 2002, 2007), the burial presented an extended individual (a male between 25-30 years old) with a rich and diverse offering, three urns and different Teotihuacan vessels. The urn was pretty fragmented and incomplete; however it kept the tubular vessel, which gives support to attached parts. The urn has with headdress 24cm height. Its characteristics are: large eyes made by incision (common in early urns from the Central Valley of Oaxaca), buccal mask in form of peak, remains of red pigment over the face, and complex headdress (see Figure 21). The headdress in this urn should be a representation of glyph C. According symbolic elements, urn belongs to Monte Alban Transition II - IIIA, and the burial context was dated to Tlamimilolpan phase. The analysis of the clay shows local manufacture, clay from Teotihuacan Valley.

One characteristic of these urns is their dress is not complex, they wear only a breechcloth, and this is an indicator of early urns in the Central Valley of Oaxaca. Urns with representations of Snake mask god have been found in different sites in Oaxaca (see Figure 22), mainly during epoch II and transition II – IIIA. Also urns with this type of mask can present different glyph or calendar name. Furthermore ten urns found in San Martin Huamelulpan site (Gaxiola 1978), from High Mixtec, show similar characteristics to Snake mask urns in the Oaxaca Barrio, although they do not present a snake buccal

mask, the style of eyes and vessel form are approaching, the urns from High Mixtec belong to Huamelulpan II period (100 B.C – A.D. 200).

I consider these urns as a type of representation about Feathered serpent god, the urns show the jaw mask of a snake with forked tongue and canines teeth, which have been considered traits that belong to this important god in Mesoamerican cosmology. In Teotihuacan Feathered serpent is represented in diverse contexts: buildings façades, ceramic, murals, and sculptures (Sugiyama 2005), this god was one of the most important in Mesoamerica during classic and posclassic times, known also as Quetzalcoatl and Kukulcan. Furthermore early representations have been interpreted from pottery and sculptures from Olmec culture and formative societies (Garcia 2011).

An interesting fact is the discovery of a vessel as offering in a burial in TL11 compound (Ortega 2009); the vessel has zoomorphic designs made by incision, showing a feathered serpent and a numeral (Figure 23).



Figure 19: Urn from site TL7 (Millon 1967)

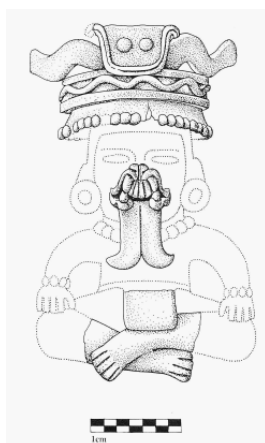


Figure 20: Urn from site TL7 (Rattray 1993)



Figure 21: Urn from site TL1, The Oaxaca Barrio (Photo by Aldo Díaz)



Figure 22: Urns with snake mask. Left: urn from North Cemetery of Monte Alban, Xoxo, epoch II. Right: urn from Tomb 6 in Monte Alban, epoch III.



Figure 23: Vessel with zoomorphic designs, showing a Fathered serpent and a numeral (Ortega 2009)

Urns with Old god representation

Three urns have been found in the Oaxaca Barrio with characteristics of Old god, also known as *Huehuetectl* or fire god. Two of them were in the same offering in a burial from TL1 compound (Palomares 2002, 2007), and the other one recently found in a burial into TL11 compound (Ortega 2009). Urns have incisions, which resemble wrinkles, over chin and cheeks. Also they have a mask over eyes and part of the nose; other characteristic is that they show teeth.

The urns found in the same burial were incomplete and fragmented, the archaeological context was dated to Tlamimilolpan phase, and an iconographic analysis shows traits from Monte Alban II and Monte Alban transition II-III A (Figure 24). These urns were part of a diverse offering with other urn (urn with snake mask) and eight different vessels, deposited into a burial of an extended individual (possible male). One of the urns shows local clay, from Teotihuacan Valley, but the other one (the most fragmented) shows clay from an unknown place in Oaxaca region, but out side of the Oaxaca Valley; this urn was identified under the vertebral column of the buried individual. As particular traits this urn has thin wavy lines over his cheeks in black color, and presents two knots (maybe a type of necklace or pectoral), which has been related with representations of jaguar in Zapotec culture. Furthermore both urns present remains of red pigment, mainly on face.

The most recent urn identified in the Oaxaca Barrio was found in a burial from TL11 compound (Figure 25), it was part of an offering to a buried individual (a male between 30-35 years old) in flexed position. Also the offering had a musical instrument

(*Omechicahuaztl*), and a jaw of canine. Burial is dated to early Xolalpan phase, and the urn belongs to Monte Alban III A-B. It seems to be made with local clay.

Representations of Old god, known in Zapotec culture also as God "5F" (Caso and Bernal 1952), have been identified since Monte Alban II, transition epoch, and Monte Alban III a- III b (Figure 26), but this is god is also represented in early phases in Chiapas and Guatemala. Also Old god representations have been found in Low Mixtec (Cerro de las Minas, Huajuapán de León), in sites with Teotihuacan influence during classic period. This god is important in Mesoamerican religion or cosmology, because he is considered as one of the creator gods. Furthermore this god has been represented in Teotihuacan, mainly in stone sculptures (Figure 27) and ceramic, his characteristics are: the figure of an old person seated and carrying a big brazier.



Figure 24: urns with representations of Old God or "5F", from site TL1, The Oaxaca Barrio (Palomares 2003)



Figure 25: Urn of Old God 5F found in TL11 site (Ortega 2009)



Figure 26: Urn of Old God "5F", found in Tomb 1, Loma Larga site, Oaxaca, (Caso and Bernal 1952)



Figure 27: Representation of Old God or Hueheteotl, god of fire in Teotihuacan

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The Oaxaca Barrio's burial practices maintained Zapotec characteristics such as the disposition of human remains, the placement of ochre over human remains and offerings, animal remains as part of the offering, the deposit of two or more individuals, and the presence of Zapotec urns.

Spence (1996) and Urcid (1996) have considered mortuary practices as one of the main driving forces to maintain social cohesion in the Oaxaca Barrio. The continuous practices of funerary customs would have helped residents to maintain a unique identity. However the mortuary customs practiced in the Zapotec settlement at Teotihuacan had some changes or adaptations, yet nevertheless maintained its original features (core) from Zapotec funerary system developed mainly in central valleys of Oaxaca.

Generally speaking, data from archaeological investigations in nine compounds of the Oaxaca Barrio show the following characteristics about mortuary customs:

- Burials into three main types of funerary deposits: tombs, long pits or graves, and stone-lined (cist).
- Burials located in residences or domestic areas; under floors and walls of rooms; and under patio floors or staircases.

- Mostly burials in extended position.
- Reuse of funerary deposits (tombs and long pits); tombs and long pits show more than one individual remains.
- Remains of red pigment over bones and offerings.
- Diverse offerings; with Zapotec ceramics, local (Teotihuacan) and foreign pottery (from other Mesoamerican areas).
- Fragments of dog bones as part of the offering.
- Zapotec urns with local and foreign clay; representations of three gods: Cocijo, Snake buccal mask god, and Old god.

There are some assumptions that I would like to make explicit; two main hypotheses have been used to explain the presence of more than one individual in funerary deposits (tombs and long pits) found in the Oaxaca Barrio. On the one hand the remains of the “secondary” individual, usually located in a corner of the funerary deposit, are considered as the result of an exhumed individual offered to the main buried person, and both are from the same event; on the other hand the presence of more than one individual is interpreted as result of different events, and shows the practice of reuse of funerary deposits. This is a characteristic Zapotec ritual practice, and each new burial is deposited in extended position and the old one is pushed in a corner or next to the new burial; also there are samples where remains are removed totally from the tomb (Middleton et al. 1998; Urcid 2005).

The presence of different individuals has also been explained as a funerary deposit of an elite family, or important ancestor and leaders of the community, showing

a couple, man and woman (Urcid 1996). In the Oaxaca Barrio's burials, most of the extended individuals in tombs and long pits were males, so hypothetically there would be a preference of buried males in extended position and his partner, located in the same funerary deposit. These burials are from different events, so remains and offerings from the first one were covered with red pigment as a sign of respect when a new individual was buried; however more exhaustive investigations are required to know if there was a pattern of males and females buried in the Oaxaca Barrio and also in the Zapotec area, and to explain the presence of some samples where were identified more than two individuals in the same funerary deposit.

Another hypothesis concerns the opening of tombs with the goal to obtain specific bones which have symbolic significance, for example femur, jaws, skull, humerus, and radius. According to Urcid (1996, 2005), elite families selected some bones from ancestors burials to use them as power symbols and validate status. Winter (1995) mentions that reuse of funerary deposits is a characteristic in tombs from Monte Alban, however in the Oaxaca Barrio, there are samples of reuse into both tombs and long pits or graves excavated into natural rock, some of them covered with slabs of the same natural rock (*tepetate*).

Also it is important to mention evidence of tabular-erect mutilation in skulls from burials in the Oaxaca Barrio, which it is a practice in the Zapotec area, mainly in Monte Alban (Winter 1995), and also there are some samples from Teotihuacan burials (Sempowski and Spence 1994); however samples in both sites are low to establish this type of cranial mutilation as a mark of ethnicity or identity to a specific group, in addition this practice also has been identified in the Maya area. Tabular-erect mutilation is an

intentional modification of head shape, the “tabular” shaping is produced by fronto-occipital compression (using bands), and the “erect” is a variety which refers to the direction of pressure resulting in an essentially vertical or anteriorly-tilted orientation of the occipital bone (see Whittington and Reed 2006).

In general, burials in the Oaxaca Barrio kept funerary costumes from the Zapotec homeland. Urcid (2005) mentions in Zapotec sites human burials were placed within residential areas, either in masonry tombs, in stone-lined cists, in unlined graves, inside or covered by ceramic containers (mainly infants) or in reused domestic features such as underground storage pits and abandoned ceramic kilns; in the Oaxaca Barrio, Ortega (2008, 2009) found reuse of drainages as funerary deposits. I have mentioned before the most common position of the burials in the Zapotec area, independently of their specific context, was supine and extended, although in a few cases the skeletons appear flexed (Winter et al. 1995, Urcid 2005). Fetuses and neonates were usually placed inside ceramic vessels as in Teotihuacan.

The location of burials in the Central Valley of Oaxaca was in residential units (Figure 28), a basic quadripartite model in the distribution of domestic space (Winter 1974), and includes a central open courtyard surrounded by rooms. Masonry tombs were usually built under the room of the house oriented towards the East. Other burials appear under the floor of the courtyard or the floors of the rooms, and sometimes outside the confines of the house proper but within the surrounding household plot (Urcid 2005). It is interesting to mention the presence of an infant buried with similar characteristics to those found in the Oaxaca Barrio; Winter (1995) mentions an infant, around 3 years old, buried in extended position but with the face seeing below (Figure

29). The infant does not present offerings in association and the funerary deposit is a simple feature, this burial belongs to Monte Alban IIIA.

Other important comparative points are the presence of infants and neonate burials, mainly identified in the TL20 and TL11 compounds at the Oaxaca Barrio; these burials have been interpreted as the practice of sacrifice (Ortega 2009), however this assumption is debatable; according to Spence and Gamboa (1999), the population of *Tlailotlacan* or the Oaxaca Barrio was about 600 individuals, and this would suggest the birth of about 30 infants each year in the enclave. It seems impossible that half of these would be slaughtered in sacrifice, especially since more than half of the surviving infants would die of natural causes during their first year, other studies in Teotihuacan suggest a crude birth rate of 49 per 1000 individuals and about 30% of infants born would not have survived their first year (Storey 1992). Thus if residents in the Oaxaca Barrio were practicing infant sacrifice, its population would become extinct within a few generations. I consider, along with Spence and Gamboa (1999), these burials are the result of accumulation over several years of natural infant deaths from these apartment compounds, and they present a specific funerary context, which shows a special treatment and rituals. However it is important to point out the evidence of sacrifice as offering, a practice known in Teotihuacan, examples of this practice are the burials found in the Feathered Serpent temple, and in the Oaxaca Barrio, also in Monte Alban, where have been identified burials, mainly skulls with the three first vertebrae as offerings to buildings.

Regarding social differentiation through funerary context, in the Oaxaca Barrio there are at least three traits to consider: the burial location, in domestic areas under

floor or walls of rooms, or in public space under platforms; the quality of the funerary deposit, tombs, stone-lined or graves excavated in natural rock, or without clear funerary deposit; and the quality of offerings.

However social differentiation in funerary customs in the Oaxaca Barrio is not too clear, whether tombs, long pits or burials with stone-lined cists have shown diverse offerings with objects of high quality, and few cases did not present any offering in association. Also there is not marked difference between gender, both males and females were deposited with or without offerings and into long pits or tombs. In contrast, Monte Alban shows clear social differentiation since MA I phase. During Monte Alban II, tombs were located under temples, public places or under altars of a main plaza. In Monte Alban IIIB-V (Winter 1995) there is a clear difference on locations of tombs and simple burials, and offerings in tombs are usually more diverse and rich. Also Winter mentions differences in the treatment of the body; adult versus infant, and tomb versus simple burial with one individual. This social differentiation in Monte Alban shows a pretty clear existence of different social status in the city.

Special attention has been given to the tombs, and Spence and Gamboa (1999) mention that, until now, most individuals buried in *Tlailotlacan* tombs are adults, while only 5 to 7% are subadults. Adults buried include both female and male. Urcid (1996) has suggested that burials in tombs were restricted to the main married couple of the social unit that occupied the residence; however Spence suggests that the tombs may also include brothers and sisters from the main couple and their offspring.

Until now the remains of seven tombs have been discovered in the Oaxaca Barrio, all the tombs reuse space, and they are usually under floors of one of the rooms located

around a courtyard. The tombs are in association with domestic contexts, into both public and private areas. The tombs were used mainly from Tlamimilolpan to Xolalpan phases, and most of them are simple tombs of rectangular form known as “box or drawer” (Gonzalez 1990). In comparison with tombs from Central Valley of Oaxaca, mainly Monte Alban, the Oaxaca Barrio’s tombs were of low quality and simple form, without niches or complex facades. Some tombs in the Zapotec region are complex mausoleums with painted murals in the walls of the main chamber (Urcid 2005, Gonzalez 1990).

It is important to mention, as a general overview, the characteristics of tombs from the Oaxaca Valley, especially in Monte Alban. In epoch I, most of the tombs have flat ceilings, and they do not have niches or facades; early tombs are only a long box or drawer. This type of tomb is used until Monte Alban IIIB. During Monte Alban II and IIIA, the constructions are characterized by vaulted ceilings, and a cruciform plan that included different chambers and niches for offerings, and a staircase as access, usually tombs in these periods were for noble people (Marcus and Flannery 2001), a sample is the tomb 118 of Monte Alban (Figure 30). In addition, others tombs, mainly from Monte Alban IIIA, can present polychrome murals on walls, representing the noble lineage buried there, these types of tombs were located under palaces, as the tomb 105 found in Monte Alban.

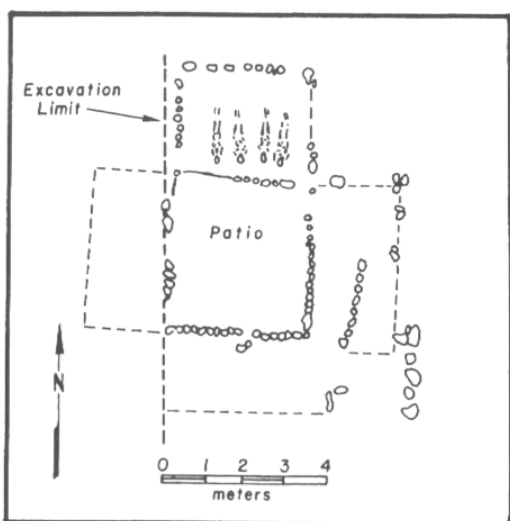


Figure 28: Location of burials in domestic areas in Monte Alban (Winter 1974)



Figure 29: a singular burial of infant in Monte Alban (Winter 1995)

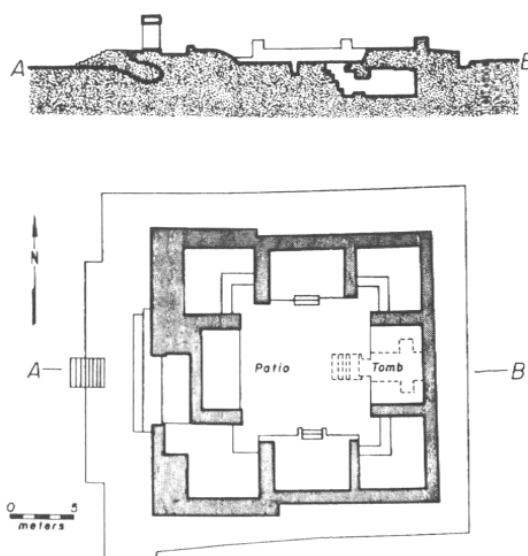
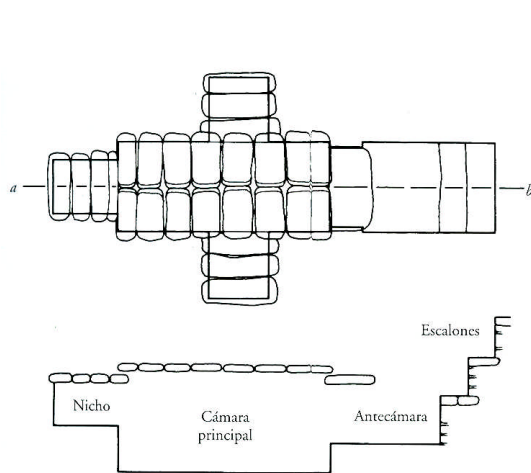


Figure 30: Plans of Tomb 118 of Monte Alban (Marcus and Flannery 2001)

Regarding urns, according to data shown in this study, we can see that urns were very important within the Oaxaca Barrio or Tlailotlacan, their presence was a link between barrio's inhabitants and their ancient ancestors or deities, thus urns have the function of connect this group with its origins. Also it is important to highlight the presence of urns in "modest" funerary contexts, such as graves excavated in *tepetate* or natural rock; this is in comparison with the common context of the Zapotec urns in Monte Alban, usually in tombs. This fact shows an adaptation of rituals and funerary deposits in the Oaxaca Barrio.

An important point about urns found in funerary contexts in the Oaxaca Barrio, is the fact that all of them represent deities known from the earliest stages of Monte Alban: Cocijo god, one of the most representative deities in the Zapotec pantheon, has mostly been represented in epoch I, as the same way representations of god with Snake buccal mask appears since Monte Alban I and II , also Old god, one of the creator gods, is identified since Monte Alban I and with reminiscences from others early Mesoamerican cultures, such as Cuicuilco in Central Valley of Mexico, or Chiapas area. It is important to mention the syncretism process on rituals and beliefs in the Oaxaca Barrio, both Zapotec and Teotihuacan cultures kept similar beliefs regarding the general Mesoamerican cosmology, so the Oaxaca Barrio's inhabitants respected Teotihuacan religion, their rituals and beliefs involved veneration to representations of Teotihuacan gods, which were also part of Zapotec rituals from their homeland.

As regards chronology, burials found in the Oaxaca Barrio have been dated mainly from Tlamimilolpan to Xolalpan phases. However, this could be debatable due to the reuse practice of funerary contexts. This practice would be as early as the Oaxaca

Barrio's settlement; recent archaeological excavations (Ortega 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2012) have identified occupation in at least two compounds (TL1 and TL67) from Tzacualli phase (0 - A.D 150). Ortega and her team identified diagnostic Teotihuacan ceramic types from Tzacualli phase in association with Zapotec ceramic types from Monte Alban II. In addition, others evidences of early occupation are the characteristics of gods' representations in urns and form and construction of tombs, which shows traits from early times in the Zapotec region, dated to Monte Alban I and II. Thus I consider, the Oaxaca Barrio could be set in one point into Tzacualli phase, and showing occupation during at least five centuries until Teotihuacan collapse. Evidence from Ortega's excavations shows occupation in the Oaxaca Barrio until Metepec phase (A.D 650), when Teotihuacan was abandoned and its population decreased significantly.

As well, it is important to point to the close relationship between Teotihuacan and Zapotec culture, mainly with Monte Alban, both important cities in Classic times. There is an extensive bibliography that mentions cultural, economic, political and social influences between these cultures; some scholars consider these cities shared architectural and calendar traits, inclusive it has been mentioned the possibility that Zapotec people helped to built Teotihuacan city during its beginnings (Peeler and Winter 1993). It is notable the similarities in calendar and writing system in both cultures, an example is Zapotec calendaric days and the glyphs found over the floor of one of the main courtyards in La Ventilla compound in Teotihuacan (Cabrera 1996). However future studies will help to understand the beginnings of the Oaxaca Barrio and its function into this complex relationship between Teotihuacan and Monte Alban. According to Trigger (1992), the intensity of economic, political and ritual interactions

among different prehispanic cities throughout Mesoamerica, it is an important factor when we are approaching any research problem about Mesoamerican societies. Thus, the development of each culture in diverse regional areas, such as the Valley of Mexico and Oaxaca Valley, cannot be understood independently from their neighboring areas. Trigger argues Mesoamerican societies should be treated as a regional unit, linked by the interaction of local elites and its population.

Mortuary customs were part of the main core of the Oaxaca Barrio's ethnicity and identity, and we saw in offerings, tombs, urns and rituals customs with little change in comparison with Zapotec customs; I consider these changes as a result or consequence mainly of access to materials, since the Oaxaca Barrio's inhabitants continued practicing the same rituals they used to do in homeland, but they adapted Teotihuacan or local materials into their funerary customs.

The Zapotec migration to Teotihuacan is important because social, political, economic and ideological aspects are involved, and was an ancient example of a process of urbanization that is still with us, arguably more important than ever before. The studies of the Oaxaca Barrio have provided new data on the nature of the relationships between the foreign settlement and Teotihuacan society, and also between Teotihuacan and Monte Alban, two of the greatest urban centers of Mesoamerica, however future investigations need to clear up the function of the Oaxaca Barrio and its relationship to Classic Mesoamerican urbanism.

Final Discussion

The analysis presented in last chapters shows types of adjustment from Zapotec migrants in their funerary customs, which would be attributed to basic reactions in a level of syncretism or hybridization. The syncretic process has been recognizable as a collective response, and we could see clearly that it was not a replacement of the Zapotec traditional system with those of Teotihuacan culture. Also I mentioned that in the Oaxaca barrio some “recognizable remains” in the funerary customs show traits from the Zapotec homeland. In addition, the complete rejection of all Teotihuacan elements was not evident; the Oaxaca barrio burials show, especially the offerings, a clear hybridization, sharing Zapotec and Teotihuacan ceramic traditions. Syncretism is defined by Dozier (1960: 164) as a kind of mosaic that introduces elements in various and complex combinations; this is a view that points to the interactive dynamics and complex responses to culture contact among societies, which was clear in the funerary customs of the Oaxaca Barrio.

The urns are an interesting example, as symbols of Zapotec and Teotihuacan identities played an important role in how these symbols could be used by persons involved in funerary customs in the Oaxaca Barrio. Did Zapotec urns have a transformation or different reinterpretation compared to the homeland? Did Zapotec migrants give or attribute new meanings to these important elements? The presence of only three representations of gods in the funerary customs in the Oaxaca Barrio, in comparison with the diversity of representations in the Zapotec area, would be related to three hypotheses: 1) the restriction of the only use of these gods from Teotihuacan

state-religion; 2) the syncretic process in the Oaxaca Barrio's religion and Teotihuacan; and 3) an autonomous decision from the Oaxaca Barrio's inhabitants to build an identity with these gods as a different social unit from the homeland. The answers and confirmation of these ideas or hypotheses would help to understand the nature of the Oaxaca Barrio, and for this reason it is important to continue investigations in the future that approach these complex and important topics.

The Oaxaca Barrio funerary customs show some overlaps between Zapotec religious practices, but allowing little room for a new syncretic process. The fact that the Oaxaca Barrio's inhabitants shared identifies of Teotihuacan and Zapotec religion, indicates an autonomous reinterpretation to fit their social, political, economic and religious reality which they expressed through ritual activities while unifying the wider community and reinforcing their values and identity as group in a clear difference to "the others" (Teotihuacan society). Religion and ritual were central to Mesoamerican cultures, touching upon all aspects of their lifestyle and ritual practices were considered important obligations for all community members.

Most significant to this discussion has been the notion of the use of elements of Teotihuacan culture in burial offerings of the Oaxaca Barrio, for example the presence of typical Teotihuacan vessels such as Tlaloc jars, handleless covers, polished outcurving bowls, miniature vessels, and orange thin hemispherical bowls. Adoption of these forms from Teotihuacan society and culture, gives the appearance of acceptance while integrating them within the unified Teotihuacan society. This response, which is often termed "syncretism" or even "assimilation," has been a viable way of avoiding the

negative consequences of direct resistance or rejection of the dominant group's with repressive measures or strict restrictions.

The Oaxaca Barrio was a small settlement characterized by small-scale Zapotec rituals incorporating local materials. It is important to mention that the Oaxaca Barrio, as a social unit which followed Teotihuacan general standards, would have a kind of autonomy inside the barrio; until now, there are few samples of extended burials, and none with characteristics of Zapotec rituals (especially the presence of urns with reuse of funerary deposits and remains of red pigment) outside of the Oaxaca Barrio. So this could be a clear policy from Teotihuacan state to Zapotec migrants, to keep their foreign rituals and traditions in the Oaxaca Barrio. Ritual activities were centered in the apartment compounds of the Oaxaca Barrio; they practiced their ceremonies in public and household contexts in the barrio.

Finally we can consider whether the Oaxaca Barrio holds a particular identity and ethnicity. They were not Teotihuacanos or Zapotecs, but a new social unit with their own religious, social, political and economic patterns, and for this reason Spence named them Tlailotlacanos (personal communication Spence 2005).

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VITA

Graduate School
Southern Illinois University

María Teresa Palomares Rodríguez

palomarestere@hotmail.com

Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia
Bachelor of Archaeology, June 2007

Special Honors and Awards:

2005 Scholarship, Center of Teotihuacan Studies, INAH, México.

2011 Scholarship to Abroad Studies, FONCA, México.

2012 Scholarship to Abroad Studies, FONCA, México.

Thesis Title:

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Major Professor: Andrew K. Balkansky

Publications:

2013 Cerámica foránea: Presencia multiétnica. In *Teotihuacan, Nueva Mirada al Pasado. Arqueología de Salvamento*. Edited by Veronica Ortega, Editorial Académica.

2009 Los Orígenes de la Civilización Mixteca. *Arqueología Iberoamericana* No. 2, April - June 2009, ISSN 1989-4104, p 25-33. Edited by Pascual Izquierdo. Coauthored with Andrew K. Balkansky and Felipe Nava. Electronic magazine in PDF format, <http://www.laiesken.net/arqueologia/>, Spain.

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