Surface Archaeology in the Chilapa-Zitlala Area of Guerrero, México

Research Year: 2004
Culture: Guerrero, Olmec, Mezcala
Chronology: Pre-Classic to Post Classic
Location: Guerrero, México
Site: Chilapa-Zitlala Area

Table of Contents

Abstract
Resumen
Fieldwork
Sites Located in 2004
Sites Located in 2005
Maps
Test Pits
Lithic Survey
Analysis of Materials
Preliminary Conclusions
Protection of the Acatlán Area
Research Team
Acknowledgements
List of Figures
Sources Cited
Abstract

This report covers the second (2004) and third (2005) field seasons of the project.

Resumen


Fieldwork

From February 5 through April 24, 2004, sixty one new sites (CZ-058–CZ-118) were located, mainly in the area around Zitlala and along the Coapala ravine. A total of 125 sites have been located during the three field seasons (Figure 1). More detailed maps of three of the larger sites located in 2003 were made, and two test pits were excavated at Cerro Quiotepec (CZ-002). Between February 14 and April 5, 2005, survey was carried out to the north of Zitlala and in the environs of Xochitempa. Seven new sites (CZ-119–CZ-125) were located, but most of this season was dedicated to a terrace by terrace collection of lithic material at Cerro Quiotepec (CZ-002) and the excavation of a test pit at Baño Negro (CZ-116).
Figure 1. Sites located during the three field seasons.
Sites Located in 2004

CZ-058  Cumulián o Coloxtlán
CZ-059  Iglesia de Nejapa
CZ-060  Casa de Don José Sánchez (en Trigomila)
CZ-061  Tlakolol de la familia Aparicio
CZ-062  Comisaría de Trigomila
CZ-063
CZ-064
CZ-065  Pie del Caballero
CZ-066
CZ-067
CZ-068
CZ-069
CZ-070
CZ-071  Parcela de Jimón
CZ-072  Casa de Juventino
CZ-073  Frente a la casa del Dr. Augurio Hernández
CZ-074  Atzacoaloya pueblo
CZ-075  Entronque Xuchichio
CZ-076  El Hornito
CZ-077
CZ-078  Oxtopixco
CZ-079
CZ-080  El Ranchito
CZ-081  Iglesia de Viramontes
CZ-082  Ámate Amarillo
CZ-083  Los Izotes
CZ-084  Oxtocapan
CZ-085
CZ-086  Terreno de Eucario
CZ-087
CZ-088
CZ-089  Anexo a La Corona
CZ-090  Loma Lagunilla
CZ-091  Acatlán Libramiento
CZ-092
CZ-093
CZ-094  Quiuatepec
CZ-095  Trapiche
CZ-096  Iglesia de Acazacatla
CZ-097  Norte de Acazacatla
CZ-098  El Paráíso
CZ-099
CZ-100  Las Lomas Acazacatla
CZ-101
CZ-102
CZ-103 San Antonio (Moyotepec)
CZ-104 Huerta del Dr. Augurio
CZ-105 Tetzatzacoalco
CZ-106 Tecorralco
CZ-107 Lagunita
CZ-108
CZ-109 Coatetecpan
CZ-110 Tres Marías I
CZ-111 Tres Marías II
CZ-112 Ameltepec
CZ-113 Mohonera Buenavista
CZ-114 El Encanto
CZ-115
CZ-116 Baño Negro
CZ-117 Zitlala
CZ-118 Villa Magdalena o Tecoyutla

Sites Located in 2005

CZ-119 Abajo de Bachilleres 17
CZ-120 Cuahuitecuyan
CZ-121 Cuahuitecuyan Oeste
CZ-122 Cerro Mazatepec Sur
CZ-123 Cerro Mazatepec
CZ-124 Cerro Bayenatzin
CZ-125 Cerca del Panteón

Maps

Detailed maps of the three largest sites, located in 2003, were made: Cerro Quiotepec, CZ-002; Comango, CZ-038; and Cuauhlootepec, CZ-057, plus maps for the larger sites located during 2004 and 2005. These maps were made, mostly by Miguel Pérez Negrete, using a hand-held Garmin Legend GPS, registering points every 5-10 m, while walking the sites, and at key points, such as structure and terrace corners and turns. Although most maps are still in process, Cerro Quiotepec (CZ-002), which includes Oxtotitlán (CZ-001) is illustrated here (Figure 2).
Figure 2. Cerro Quiotepec (CZ-002) and Oxtotitlán (CZ-001).
Figure 3. Pit 1, south profile, CZ-002 (drawing).
**Test Pits**

During 2004, two 1.5x1.5 m test pits ([Figure 3](#); [Figure 4](#), shown above; [Figure 5](#); [Figure 6](#), shown below) were excavated by Claudia Porras Ibarra on two terraces (Numbers 12 and 203) of Cerro Quiopeque. The location of the pits was selected because the preliminary analysis of surface materials suggested a long sequence might be recovered there; however, materials seem to be restricted to the Middle and Late Formative periods.
Proyecto Arqueología de Superficie Chilapa-Zitlala, Guerrero
Realizó Claudia Alejandra Porras Ibarra
15 abril 2004

Sitio CZ-002 Quiotepec
Unidad: Pozo 2
Terraza: 203
Perfil Norte

Figura 5. Fosa 2, perfil norte, CZ-002 (dibujo).
At Baño Negro (CZ-116), one of the sites located during the 2004 field season, a 3.0x3.0 m test pit (Figure 7; Figure 8, shown below) was excavated by Eliseo Padilla during the 2005 season. Located within a curve of the Ajolotero river, on the outskirts of Chilapa, Baño Negro appears to have been a small residential site.
Figure 7. Pit 1, south profile, CZ-116 (drawing).
On leveling more than half the site to build a soccer field, a very large amount of sherds appeared, and in a profile left by the leveling, house foundations could be seen (Figure 9, shown below). The pit was excavated as a salvage project because the rest of the site is on the verge of being destroyed by the municipio, by building either basketball courts or a residential area. Analysis of the material from the test pit is still forthcoming, but there are indications that there may be a long sequence here, from at least the Middle Formative to the Postclassic. Unfortunately, a site which held great promise is going to be lost. I went through all the bureaucracy in an attempt to protect the site, without any effect.
Lithic Survey
During the 2005 field season, Paul Schmidt and Osiris Quezada surveyed the site of Cerro Quiotepec, collecting only lithic material terrace by terrace. There is a large amount of lithic fragments, mostly rhyolite.

Analysis of Materials
Approximately (a few bags still remain to be washed, counted, and marked) 36,300 sherds have been collected over the three field seasons; 24,700 from surface collection and 11,600 from excavation. A total of 5,883 lithic fragments were collected; 5,345 from the surface, and 538 from excavation. Paul Schmidt and Eliseo Padilla are working on the ceramics, while Osiris Quezada is building a descriptive data bank of all the lithics previous to their classification. There were 188 special objects defined as special objects, mostly stone celts and a few figurines.
Figure 10. Gabriel Lima, Claudia Porras, and Miguel Pérez Negrete in the ballcourt at Los Izotes (CZ-083).

Preliminary Conclusions

During the 2004 season, detailed mapping of the three largest sites located, made it evident that my original calculation as to their sizes was quite below reality. Comango (CZ-038), the largest site, covers 135 ha, making it the most extensive site known from the Guerrero Mountain area so far; Cerro Quiotepec (CZ-002) (Figure 2) extends 79 ha; and Cuauhlotep (CZ-057), at least 37 ha. The remaining sites range from 24 ha to less than 1 ha, most of them aligning along a continuum, between 5 and 0.5 ha. The site size variation would appear to suggest at least three hierarchies, perhaps more, depending on how one groups sites; this is quite a subjective exercise. However, since the ceramics are yet to be classified, and the settlement pattern defined by phases, it is impossible, at this time, to say much about site hierarchies at different times. Three sites with ballcourts have been located; besides Cuauhlotep, mentioned in the previous report, two, much smaller (10 ha each), sites with one ballcourt each, have been located (Figure 10, shown above). All three ballcourts are oriented east-west. Preliminary impressions from one site, Cerro Quiotepec (CZ-002), suggest that its most extensive occupation was during the Middle Formative, perhaps with 300-500 inhabitants; it was occupied through the Postclassic.
Miguel Covarrubias (1957) included the area of Chilapa in the sphere of what he defined as the Mezcala style. Recently, Rosa Reyna (1997) excluded it. However, both surface survey and excavation have turned up a large amount of a ceramic ware diagnostic of the Mezcala area: Granular White (Figure 11, shown above), consisting mostly of flat-bottom anforas, decorated with wide red bands (Schmidt 1990: 123-133). A fragment of a greenstone Mezcala figurine was found on the surface at Cerro Quiotepec (CZ-002). Another Mezcala-style characteristic, which occurs in the area, is an architectural feature consisting of stone pegs which decorate the tableros of buildings, such as at Xochipala (Reyna 1997). It is yet difficult to determine the chronological extent of the Mezcala tradition here; in Central Guerrero it appears to range from the Late Formative through the Late Postclassic.

Oxtotitlán, the cave with Olmec paintings (Grove, 1970a, 1970b), is located right next to Cerro Quiotepec. Since the presence of surface ceramics is continuous
between the hill and the cave, I propose that the cave and the hill are actually part of the same site. Preliminary analysis of Cerro Quiotepec's surface material suggests it was inhabited for a long time, from the Middle Formative through Late Postclassic; visible from the easternmost ceremonial area of the hill, the cave was most likely in use as a sacred area during the extent of the site's occupation. Hence, it is likely that the paintings cover the whole sequence. Now that AMS dating can produce results from a milligram or two of organic materials embedded in rock paintings, we should be able to determine whether the cave has the earliest depiction of Tlaloc in Mesoamerica, or it spans a long period of use.

**Protection of the Acatlán Area**

If a visit is planned to Oxtotitlán, you must first visit the Municipal Commissary's office, where a guide will be assigned. The cave is now fenced with locked doors. For the last two years, Sandra Cruz (INAH) has been cleaning the rock paintings in the cave; in the process, she has done a great job with the community which has led to the people of Acatlán, zealous of their cultural patrimony, setting up a joint community committee with INAH, to protect the cultural patrimony of the community's territory.

Figure 12. Osiris Quezada, surveying for lithics.
Research Team

Our research team in 2004 consisted of Miguel Pérez Negrete and Claudia Porras Ibarra (Figure 10). Miguel did most of the mapping, while Claudia did some survey and the excavation of the test pits at Cerro Quiotepec. Gabriel Lima, now President of the Neighborhood Board for the Protection of Acatlán's Cultural Patrimony, Municipality of Chilapa, assisted us as a guide, interpreter, and amateur archaeologist. In 2005, my assistants were Osiris Quezada (Figure 12, shown above) and Eliseo Padilla (Figure 13, shown below). Osiris spent most of her time with me resurveying Cerro Quiotepec (CZ-002), this time for lithic material, while Eliseo was in charge of the test pit at Baño Negro (CZ-116). Iliana Miguel (Figure 14, shown below) participated briefly in the survey around Xochitempa, and at the Baño Negro excavation.

Figure 13. Eliseo Padilla and Osiris Quezada, marking sherds and lithics.
Figure 14. Iliana Miguel, at the Baño Negro excavation.

Acknowledgements

First of all, to my Institution, the Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México and the Foundation for the Advancement of Mesoamerican Studies, Inc., (FAMSI), for their financial support; from the first I am especially grateful to Carlos Serrano, the Institute's Director, and, from FAMSI, Sandra Noble, for her patience in answering questions, and Jessica Costa. The Dirección General para el Apoyo al Personal Académico, of the UNAM, supported student help in the lab from May through December, 2004. To the Consejo de Arqueología, of the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH), that considered the project worthy. Three people were important in helping obtain financial support: David Grove, Linda Manzanilla, and Jaime Litvak. I appreciate the support given by a number of colleagues, who one way or another supported the project, either with infrastructure or their visits to the project: Raúl Arana, Rubén Cabrera, Ponciano Ortiz, Louise Paradis, Rosa Reyna, and Carmen Rodríguez. Will Levey, a colleague from Grad School days, visited us for a short while and helped mark sherds. To Profr. Magdalena Salazar, who kept us healthy, with good food, during the three seasons. I appreciate the support received from Amin Zarur Ménez, Coordinator of the State office of Fortalecimiento Municipal, and Dina Villanueva Ríos, of the
Governor's office, in February, 2005. Special thanks must also be expressed to Irene Castañeda, who gave me permission to dig at Baño Negro during the 2005 field season.


List of Figures

- **Figure 1.** Sites located during the three field seasons.
- **Figure 2.** Cerro Quiotepec (CZ-002) and Oxtotitlán (CZ-001).
- **Figure 3.** Pit 1, south profile, CZ-002 (drawing).
- **Figure 4.** Pit 1, south profile, CZ-002 (photo).
- **Figure 5.** Pit 2, north profile, CZ-002 (drawing).
- **Figure 6.** Pit 2, north profile, CZ-002 (photo).
- **Figure 7.** Pit 1, south profile, CZ-116 (drawing).
- **Figure 8.** Pit 1, south profile, CZ-116 (photo).
Figure 9. CZ-116. Profile showing a house foundation.

Figure 10. Gabriel Lima, Claudia Porras, and Miguel Pérez Negrete in the ballcourt at Los Izotes (CZ-083).

Figure 11. Granular White ware.

Figure 12. Osiris Quezada, surveying for lithics.

Figure 13. Eliseo Padilla and Osiris Quezada, marking sherds and lithics.

Figure 14. Iliana Miguel, at the Baño Negro excavation.

Sources Cited

Covarrubias, Miguel

Grove, David


Reyna Robles, Rosa Ma.

Schmidt, Paul
1990 Arqueología de Xochipala, Guerrero. Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. México, D.F.