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Primary Source Materials on Oaxacan Zapotec Urns from Monte Albán: A New Look at the Fondo Alfonso Caso and other archives in Mexico

Research Year: 2007
Culture: Zapotec, Mixtec
Chronology: Preclassic - Classic
Location: México D.F. and Pachuca, Hildago
Site: Various archives at UNAM, MNAH, INAH, etc.

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Abstract

I proposed a two-week trip to review the archival materials of the Fondo Alfonso Caso in Mexico City. Within the Fondo, essentially a repository of the Mexican archaeologist Caso's papers, I was particularly interested in works relating to his excavations of Zapotec tombs at Monte Albán, in the modern-day state of Oaxaca, in México. The Fondo's collection is distributed among three locations in Mexico City, at the Biblioteca Nacional de Antropología e Historia (BNAH), housed in the Museo Nacional de Antropología e Historia; at the Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas (IIA) of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM); and at the former Instituto Nacional Indigenista (now Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de Pueblos Indígenas, CNDPI). My main goal in reviewing the materials of the Fondo Alfonso Caso was to obtain additional notes and images relating to Caso's excavations in Monte Albán in the 1930s and '40s. While he and later his collaborators, Ignacio Bernal and Jorge R. Acosta produced several brief publications related to the explorations in Oaxaca, I hoped that the Fondo would have additional materials that would be helpful for students of Oaxaca. While in Mexico City, I realized that Caso's notes and images were also distributed in a few other locations, such as the Archivo Histórico of the MNAH, the Archivo Técnico of the National Insitute of Anthropology and History (INAH), and the Fototeca Nacional (SINAFO).

My objective in this project was not only to better understand Caso's work in Oaxaca, but also to make known the locations and availability of more images and notes from this and other of his projects, some of which were left unfinished when he died in 1970. Since the materials related to his works were separated, it is also useful for Mesoamerican scholars to know what materials are contained in which of the repositories scattered across Mexico City.

Resumen

Propuse un viaje de dos semanas para consultar los archivos del Fondo Alfonso Caso en la Ciudad de México. Dentro del Fondo, lo cuál es básicamente un archivo de los papeles del arqueólogo Alfonso Caso, me interesé en las obras relativas a las

excavaciones de las tumbas zapotecas de Monte Albán en el estado de Oaxaca. La colección del Fondo se encuentra repartida en tres partes en la Ciudad de México: en la Biblioteca Nacional de Antropología e Historia (BNAH), ubicada en el Museo Nacional de Antropología e Historia; en el Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas (IIA) de la Universidad Nacional Autónomo de México (UNAM); y en el ex-Instituto Nacional Indigenista (ahora Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de Pueblos Indígenas, CNDPI).

Mi meta al revisar los materiales que resguarda el Fondo Alfonso Caso era obtener apuntes e imágenes pertenecientes a las excavaciones de Caso en Monte Albán en los años 30. Aunque él y sus colaboradores, Ignacio Bernal y Jorge R. Acosta publicaron algunos folletos relativos a sus exploraciones en Oaxaca, esperaba yo que el Fondo tuviera materiales adicionales que sirvieran a los estudiantes de las culturas de Oaxaca. Mientras yo estaba en México DF, me di cuenta de que había otros materiales de Caso y sus excavaciones que se encuentran en otros acervos, como el Archivo Histórico del MNAH, el Archivo Técnico del Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH), y la Fototeca Nacional (SINAFO).

Mi objetivo en este proyecto era no sólo entender mejor el trabajo que había hecho Caso en Oaxaca, sino también dar a conocer la ubicación y disponibilidad de las imágenes y apuntes de éste y de otros proyectos suyos, algunos sin terminar cuando el murió en 1970. Debido a que los materiales fueron separados a su muerte, es muy útil para los estudiantes de Mesoamérica saber qué papeles se encuentran en cuál de los acervos en México.

Introduction

While I had proposed a two-week trip to Mexico City to review the archival materials of the Fondo Alfonso Caso there, in fact the research dovetailed with my dissertation research, and continued for several months, both within the Fondo itself and in other locations in Mexico City and the surrounding areas which proved to have materials relating to the Oaxacan excavations. These included the Archivo Histórico of the BNAH, its Microfilm collection, the INAH's Archivo Técnico and its Fototeca, as well as in the IIA's library and in the Fototeca Nacional, located in Pachuca, Hidalgo, but which can be consulted at the INAH office in Mexico City. (For full information on the locations and contact information for these offices, see Appendix B.) My general goal in reviewing the materials of the Fondo Alfonso Caso was to find out what was available, and my specific objective was to obtain additional notes and images relating to Caso's excavations in Monte Albán in the 1930s and '40s. While he produced three brief publications related to the explorations in Oaxaca, I felt that the Fondo could be carefully studied to find additional photographs and notes.

Background

This research trip is part of a much larger project to reconstruct the context and contents of pre-Columbian tombs of Oaxaca, México. The Zapotec peoples who were dominant in this part of southern Mexico during the Preclassic and Classic periods, beginning ca. 500 BCE constructed a mountaintop capital at the site of Monte Albán near the modern day city of Oaxaca. Residents of palaces and houses at this center built their tombs under the patios that were the centers of the house structures. These crypts in some cases had elaborate decorative programs sometimes including mural paintings, stone relief panels in the walls, ceilings, or the tomb's portal, and one or several wall niches. Within these niches and in piles on the floor surrounding the tomb' inhabitant, were abundant offerings to the dead. While these offerings undoubtedly included textiles, food, plants, feathers, and objects of paper and other perishable materials that have not survived, the excavators of Monte Albán were at least able to document the diverse ceramics that filled the tombs, as well as stone and obsidian objects that sometimes were also deposited.

It is thanks to Alfonso Caso and his collaborators on the excavations of Monte Albán that such a range of tombs from Monte Albán are known. As early as 1931, the first year that he worked at the site, Caso realized that there was a pattern to the placement of the tombs. As he mentions in microfilmed notes, probably part of a draft of his book on the tombs of Oaxaca that was left unfinished at his death, the sepulchers were usually found under the largest side of the square house complex.[1] The tombs were usually opposite the house's entrance, and were often, although not always, located under the west side of the building. After Caso documented this pattern, and observed that it was relatively easy to find the remnants of house foundations even under the site's overgrown vegetation, the archaeologist realized that looters would soon understand the pattern as well. He hired guards for the site, whose structures had now been revealed by the removal of the cornfields that previously had been planted on the remains of its Main Plaza. Due to the enormity of the excavations, it would have been impossible for these watchmen to control the whole of the large site, so Caso also excavated as many tombs as he could methodically complete in the short excavation seasons that he had available, opening about 175 burial chambers in the seventeen seasons that he worked at the site.

While Caso, often dubbed "the father of Mexican archaeology" was brilliant, and worked with a talented and dedicated group of collaborators, he also faced many problems in his excavations. He worked in the 1930s and '40s, at a time when the technology of interior illumination for the photographs that he took was not highly developed. (See Fig. 5 below, for an illustration of this point.) The early years of his excavations were plagued by severe underfunding. The lack of funds seems to have been due at least in part to Caso's having been heartily disliked by Licenciado Alfonso Toro, the former head

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[1] The information gathered on tombs was published in very short article form as a pamphlet printed as part of the Anales del Museo de Arqueología, Historia y Etnografía in 1934 (see Bibliography.) However, Caso was preparing a full book on the subject, which seems to have been mostly completed at his death, but of which I have not found a complete draft. However, parts of what probably was to form this book are in the rolls of microfilm in the Biblioteca Nacional de Antropología e Historia.

of the Museum. Toro was still in a position of power within the Secretariat of Public Education (SEP), which financed excavations.[2] According to documents found in the Fondo Alfonso Caso-IIA, in 1932, the year after Caso's amazing find of fabulous treasures in Monte Albán's Tomb 7, his excavation budget was cut nearly in half. Another anthropologist in the Museum, Ramón Mena, questioned the veracity of the finely worked gold objects that Caso discovered in Monte Albán's Tomb 7 in 1932, claiming in print that they were of recent manufacture.[3] However, when Caso challenged him to bring his evidence before the Mexican Academy of Sciences, Mena simply failed to show up, and so his arguments were utterly discredited. In addition to political infighting, the fervid pace of excavations, and the need to constantly fundraise from outside organizations such as the Carnegie Institution and the Instituto Panamericano de Geografía e Estadística, left him little time to publish the results of his excavations in detail. He produced three pamphlets that were distributed by the Instituto Panamericano, each about 35 pages of text, with a roughly equivalent number of pages of photographs, which covered excavations of 1931-32, 1934-35 and 1936-37. In later years, his collaborator Jorge R. Acosta published some of the 1940s excavation reports in the journal *Cultura y Sociedad*.

Figure 5. Photographic techniques in the 1930s. A movie studio came to film the excavations and some of the finds, they had to be shot outside as the tombs were too dark for the interior illumination techniques of the time. Courtesy IIA, Biblioteca "Juan Comas", Area de Fondos Documentales Alfonso Caso, FACA-UNAM. Box 5.

[2] See Rutsch (2008) for more information on politics in the museum and the SEP during this period.
[3] This was amply documented in newspapers of the time. Robles (2004) also makes reference to this problem.

Objectives

The general objective for my trip to Mexico City was to gain an understanding of the breadth and depth of the available archives of Alfonso Caso's notes and unpublished materials, particularly those relating to his excavations at Monte Albán in the 1930s and '40s. While it was also interesting to see what other sites and cultures were of interest to, and studied by, Caso, my main goal was to see what information was available to supplement the succinct publications on Oaxaca.

The specific objective for the trip was to be able to research the archaeological data necessary to re-contextualize many of the objects found in Caso's excavations. While the largest, most complex, and most aesthetically pleasing objects from the excavations have been published, in some cases extensively, many others have never been seen or photographed for publication. I am interested in understanding the patterns of presence and placement of not just large urns or greenstone objects, but also the multitude of ceramic objects, both utilitarian wares and miniature vessels and figures, that were amply represented in these tombs.

Methodology

For my general objective, to understand what materials are available of Alfonso Caso's unpublished notes, drawings, photographs and publication drafts, I compiled biographical and bibliographic information on Caso. Once I understood more clearly the chronology of his ascent through a variety of administrative positions in public service, such as rector of the UNAM, founder of the INAH and co-founder of the national school of anthropological training, the Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia (ENAH), all jobs held while he was still in charge of field operations in Oaxaca, it was much easier to understand why he had to be content with the short publications produced with the Instituto Panamericano de Geografía e Estadística on the fieldwork. His style of working was much more to work with and "digest" the materials over the years, as he prepared large, exhaustive, magnum opus-style volumes such as his *Urnas de Oaxaca* (1952), published with Ignacio Bernal, and *Cerámica de Monte Albán* (1967), produced with Bernal and Jorge R. Acosta.

For my more specific objective of being able to restore context to the objects and decorative elements from Monte Albán's tombs, I had a harder time finding many of the materials I expected to encounter in the various archives. His field diary, the *diario de campo*, proved elusive. However, the progress of his excavations, particularly for seasons I-X (1931 – 1941), and from some of the discoveries from the later seasons, can be laboriously pieced together from the "*ficheros*", or object registers, on the microfilms available in the microfilm section of the Biblioteca Nacional de Antropología e Historia. In addition, a large number of images from the excavations came to light, some of which were not part of his publications with the Instituto Panamericano de Geografía e Estádistica, and probably have never been published. Some were held at the Fondo Alfonso Caso in the Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas of the UNAM, and a large number were in the collection of the Fototeca Nacional.

Biographical Information

Apart from a chronology of Caso's life and work which follows (see Appendix A), certain themes can be discerned as having run through his endeavors. As the son of an intellectual family, complex cerebral pursuits were a touchstone for him. As the brother of the well-recognized philosopher Antonio Caso, who was a driving force for his initial inscription in UNAM, he maintained an enduring relationship with the University in many capacities. He had graduated from its law school, where he was to give classes, and even during the decade of his excavations at Monte Albán, he continued to give classes in the Facultad de Filosofia y Letras there. The influence of his law training on his thinking and application of logic to the study of pre-Columbian cultures was substantial: he applied the same critical reasoning to the works he discovered at Monte Albán.[4]

Apart from his work with the university, he also maintained a strong tradition of service to his university and his country throughout his life. He was the Director of the Escuela Nacional Preparatoria in 1928, then from 1933-34 the Director of Mexico City's Museo Nacional de Arqueología, Historia y Etnografía – the very institution that had been his classroom during his studies with Hermann Beyer and others in pre-Columbian cultures. Later, from 1939-44 he was Director of the Museum after its reorganization (spurred and shaped by him) into the Museo Nacional de Antropología e Historia, at the same time as he co-founded the Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia (ENAH). He returned to the UNAM from 1944-45, during a crucial moment when it was faced with disintegration. Caso's successful changes to the *ley orgánica* at the university placed him in the public eye, and from 1946-48 he employed his law training once again, trying to apply the same spirit of reform that he had instituted at the UNAM, this time in Mexico's Secretaria de Bienes Nacionales e Inspección Pública, which has over the decades become the Department of Energy, but whose activities at that time were also related to taxation.

Finally, all his administrative and intellectual talents were to be brought to the fore when he created the Instituto Nacional Indigenista in 1949. From that time until his death in 1970, he was to head the Instituto in a two-decade-long quest to improve the lives of Mexico's indigenous peoples, and to halt their exploitation at the hands of local political and social leaders. While many of the policies of indigenism that he pursued are now discredited, he does seem to have been motivated by a genuine passion to help Mexico's indigenous groups.

All the while, none of these important and challenging positions stopped the flow of his scholarship on pre-Columbian topics: he was constantly producing articles, talks and books. Over time, his interest shifted from actual fieldwork to study of the Mixtec codices using archival and documentary research. One of his greatest undertakings, the exhaustive Reyes y Reinos de la Mixteca (Kings and Kingdoms of the Mixtec

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[4] The information in this section has been taken from various sources, mostly Kubler (1991), as well as the various volumes in tribute to Alfonso Caso (the *Homenaje a Alfonso Caso,* produced in several versions in 1951, 1976 and 1996. See Bibliography for complete information.)

Region) was published posthumously in 1976, a tribute to the enormous contribution he had made to Mesoamerican studies during his lifetime.

Perhaps due to Caso's public fight with Ramón Mena over the jewels of Tomb 7, he has been viewed unfavorably by many in the field of Mexican anthropology. While the idea that the jewels were falsifications created by Caso has been disproved, another malicious legend is sometimes mentioned: that Caso did not find the tomb, but rather took advantage of the work of others in his expedition.[5]

Overview of the Materials

Upon Alfonso Caso's death, his family separated his papers into three parts, to be given to three institutions of which he had formed an integral part during his life: the Instituto Nacional Indigenista (INI), the UNAM; and also the Biblioteca Nacional de Antropología e Historia (BNAH), located within the Museo Nacional de Antropología e Historia, an institution he had helped to found as well.[6] Caso's family apparently distributed his papers roughly according to their date and to the function in the government that he was fulfilling at that point, but the papers are mixed to a great degree. In addition, there were materials that the family chose to keep rather than donate.[7]

As someone interested primarily in Caso's excavations at Monte Albán, I was hoping to discover a wealth of unpublished notes, as well as drawings, diagrams and photographs of the site and the approximately 175 tombs that he excavated. Since Caso published reports for only the first 8 seasons of a total of about 17 years that he excavated at Monte Albán, I was also interested to know if there were additional reports available for the later seasons of digging.

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[5] Based on conversations with a student from the Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia (ENAH).

[6] As per conversation with Alicia Reyes, FACA-UNAM and with Genaro Díaz, BNAH.

[7] As per Alicia Reyes of the Fondo Alfonso Caso in the Biblioteca "Juan Comas" of the Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas, the family wanted to keep for example certain of his studies of the Mixtec codices.

Figure 1. Urn in the interior of Monte Albán Tomb 6 before excavations. Courtesy Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas (IIA), Biblioteca "Juan Comas", Area de Fondos Documentales Alfonso Caso, Fondo Alfonso Caso Andrade (FACA) – Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), Box 5.

Figure 2. Offering cache from Montículo B. Courtesy IIA, Biblioteca "Juan Comas", Area de Fondos Documentales Alfonso Caso, FACA-UNAM. Box 6.

The main new source of materials on Caso and his excavations that this report attempts to publicize is the additional accessibility of the Fondo Alfonso Caso that is part of the Bliblioteca Juan Comas of the Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas of UNAM. Within the past few years, this has been extensively reorganized, with different staff members, and is now much more accessible than in previous years.

Fondo Alfonso Caso – at the Biblioteca "Juan Comas" of the Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas

This archive is still in the process of being catalogued, so probably only about 80% of its holdings are now in the searchable computer databases in its offices. It is, however,

much more accessible than it has been in the past: under the direction of Alicia Reyes, with the assistance of Jose Luis De la Rosa and a *Servicio Social* student who continues to work there, Raúl Alvarez, the collections are much better organized, and have been not only categorized, but cleaned, with all paper clips and staples removed, and placed into acid-free folders for their storage. While in the past, this archive apparently lacked transparency, and materials were given to researchers on an arbitrary basis, now one can search the computer database and request specific boxes for study. Since some correspondence simply was undated, I found that the best method for searching was to look through the database and consult based on the person Caso was corresponding with. For example, the letters he exchanged with Martín Bazán, his collaborator on the excavations, provided a clearer picture of daily life in the excavations. Much of the correspondence about Monte Albán in fact has to do with monetary concerns: the ancient truck that the archaeologists had was constantly breaking down and had to be repaired, tires were scarce at the tail end of the Depression and scarcer still during World War II. Much of what is contained in the approximately 50 boxes of documents catalogued so far is correspondence with various institutions and individuals, drafts of papers and articles, and large amounts of administrative paperwork concerning the Monte Albán excavations. The Fondo here also has about 30 boxes of images, searchable in a separate database from the written materials. Unfortunately, most of these seem to be proofs from Caso's various books, so have been published, but there are some photographs which appear not to have been previously published (see figs. 1 and 2) as well as an early map of the Monte Albán site, with Caso's notes on the first season's tombs (see fig. 3). From these photos (see especially fig. 4) we can get a sense of the conditions that Caso was excavating under, and the photographic technology available at the time (see fig. 5). In addition, there are pictures from excursions to various archaeological sites as well as images that friends and colleagues sent to him from objects, collections and sites that they felt he should know about, (see fig. 6). Also, there were some large-format, approximately life-size, colored drawings of the bench reliefs from Tizatlán, Tlaxcala. They were colored much more brightly than the reliefs appear today, and it would be interesting to correlate them with his notes to understand to what degree he was filling in color over entire areas where it was present only in traces, or extrapolating original color from what was there. Especially interesting for scholars of the Mixtec codices are about 10 of his notebooks, each dedicated to and dealing with a specific glyphic manuscript. These are impressive, as he goes page by page, noting potential connections. While I am unsure to what degree all this information was included in *Reyes y Reinos de la Mixteca*, the complexity of the notes contained in them suggest that these books are a potentially rich source of information for students of the codices. This Fondo contains a great deal of correspondence and other materials that have not been extensively studied, due to the previous problems of access. The new staff is friendly, eager to be of help, and very knowledgeable about Caso. See Appendix B "Research Resources" for details on how to contact the Fondo and the procedure for requesting access to consult it.

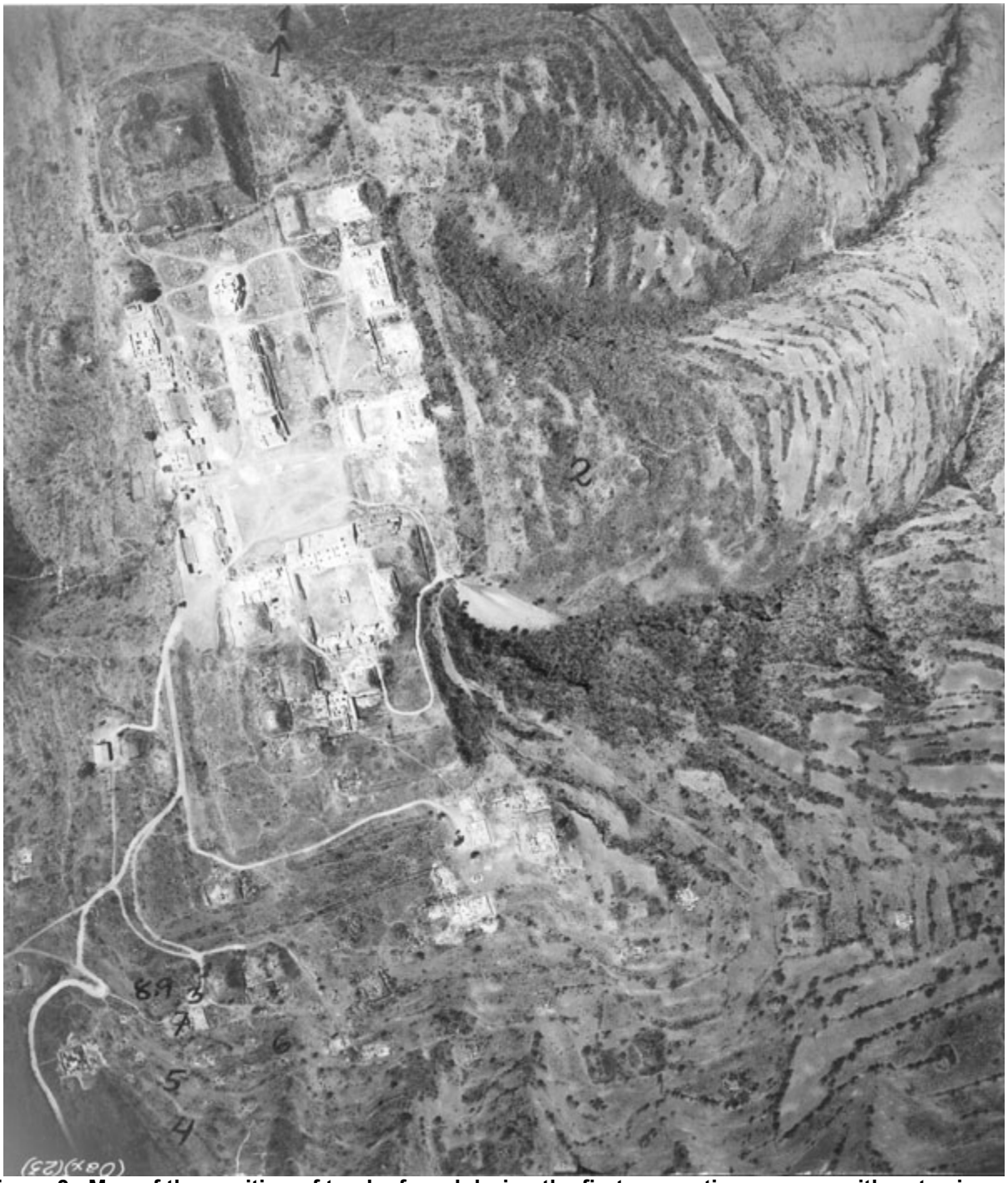


Figure 3. Map of the position of tombs found during the first excavation season, with notes in Alfonso Caso's writing. Courtesy Courtesy IIA, Biblioteca "Juan Comas", Area de Fondos Documentales Alfonso Caso, FACA-UNAM. Box 5.

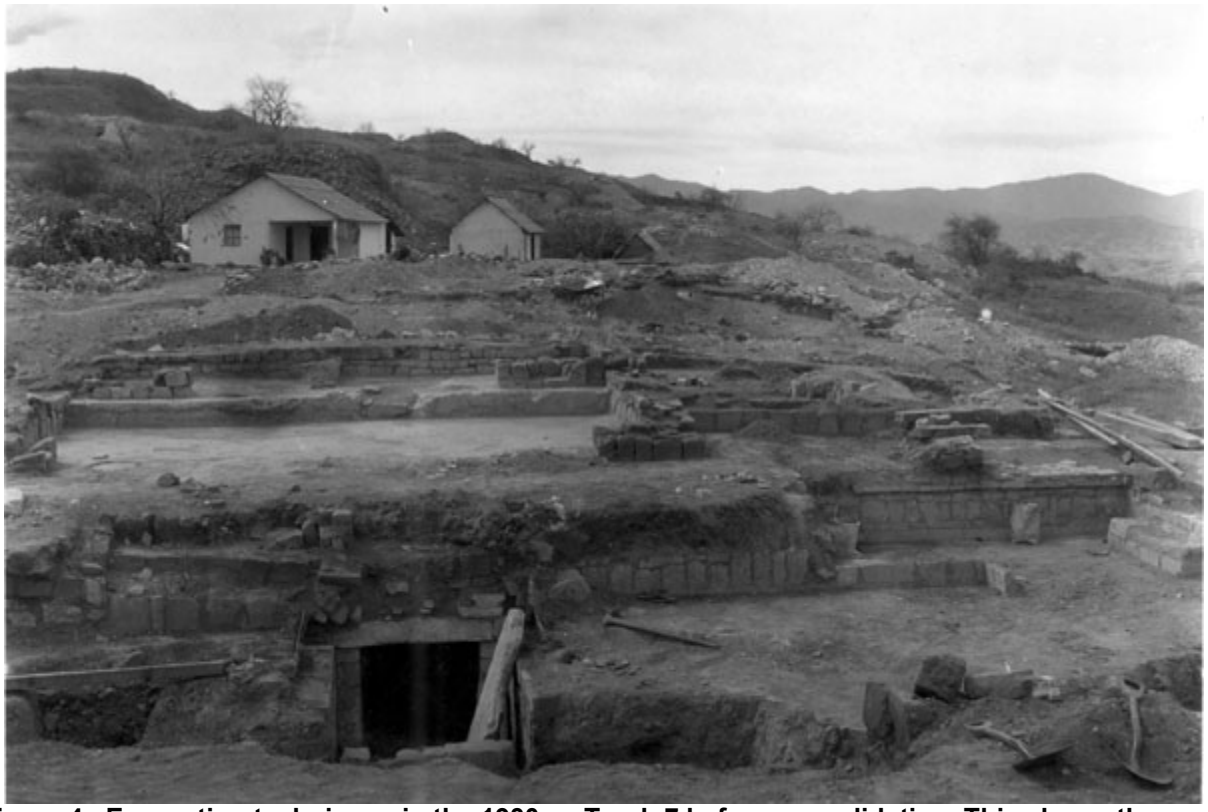


Figure 4. Excavation techniques in the 1930s – Tomb 7 before consolidation. This shows the positioning of tombs under Zapotec houses and palaces. Courtesy Courtesy IIA, Biblioteca "Juan Comas", Area de Fondos Documentales Alfonso Caso, FACA-UNAM. Box 9.

Figure 6. Lintel from a tomb of San Marcos Tlapazola, from the collection of Adolfo Martínez Bustamante. These kinds of images show Caso's interest in, and awareness of, many local collectors' activities and the objects that they preserved. Courtesy Courtesy IIA, Biblioteca "Juan Comas", Area de Fondos Documentales Alfonso Caso, FACA-UNAM. Box 5.

Fondo Alfonso Caso – Biblioteca Nacional de Antropología e Historia (BNAH)

This is an incredibly rich resource for study, since it comprises several different reserves and offices within the building of the Museo Nacional de Antropología e Historia. Access to the Biblioteca Nacional de Antropología e Historia should be requested through Genaro Díaz, Director of Services for the Public. (See Research Resources, Appendix B, for full contact information.) Mr. Diaz is very knowledgeable about the collections of the BNAH and extremely helpful, often suggesting additional resources which may be of help. His staff is extremely patient and professional; they also go the extra mile, helping to find something within the collection, correcting request slips and explaining cataloguing changes rather than simply telling researchers that the material they want is not available under that catalogue number.

Figure 7. Alfonso Caso's office in the Biblioteca Nacional de Antropología e Historia, today the office of the Biblioteca's Director, its bookshelves and decorations have been basically untouched. Courtesy Biblioteca Nacional de Antropología e Historia (BNAH).

Figure 8. Photograph of Alfonso Caso with a pile of Zapotec urns, probably ca. 1950s. Framed photograph from his office. Courtesy BNAH.

The Fondo itself of the BNAH is comprised of 6 boxes of Caso's materials, plus an additional two boxes that hold the original folders and envelopes in which the documents were contained. There is a catalog for the Fondo, which details the contents of the boxes, and many of the bound volumes of journals that Caso kept in his office, still kept intact as it was when Caso was alive (see figs. 7 and 8), although it is now the office of the Director of the BNAH. This part of the Fondo is focused mostly on Mixtec codices, and perhaps 50% of it is correspondence with Howard Cline, Donald Robertson and other of different organizers of the Handbook of Middle American Indians, making suggestions on early drafts of many of the entries regarding the codices. Perhaps another 20% represents correspondence with various Mexican journalists, such as Cesar Lizardi Ramos, Samuel Martí and others, who sent Caso clippings of all their articles related to archaeological finds (see fig. 9). While at the museum, friends and colleagues continued to send him images from collections and sites worldwide that they thought would be of interest for Caso, or wanted his opinion about (see fig. 10).

DOMINGO 16 DE MAYO DE 1965

MEXICO EN LA CULTURA

DIQUIYÚ

ciudadelas, en la cumbre más alta se halla el montículo u observatorio circular con la tumba redonda, que servía para vigilar todo el Señorio. Es muy improbable que gente extraña pudiera acercarse a los linderos de Diquiyú sin que fuera advertida por sus celosos guardianes.

COMO en Teotihuacán, el conjunto de monumentos en Diquiyú impresiona por su planeación y por los conocimientos, pujanza, disciplina y aliento de conceptos filosóficos y religiosos, que animaron a sus constructores. Diquiyú es un ejemplo elocuente de los imperios prehispánicos tan brillantemente analizados por Alfonso Caso en sus recientes conferencias en El Colegio Nacional. Pero lo más extraordinario de Diquiyú es que debido a su aislamiento secular, todo parece estar esperando la acción del investigador para entregar sus secretos arcanos y bellezas arquitectónicas. Asombra este aislamiento ya que sabemos por las exiguas fuentes históricas disponibles que en la Mixteca existieron ciudades importantes. Cortés en una de sus cartas cuenta cómo sus subalternos:

VISTA de la Sierra Madre de la Mixteca Alta, en el Estado de Oaxaca. (Fotografía de S. Linné).

Alta: "...ñudzevuizuhu, que

TAMBIEN hay que tomar en

mo estado en que lo dejaron

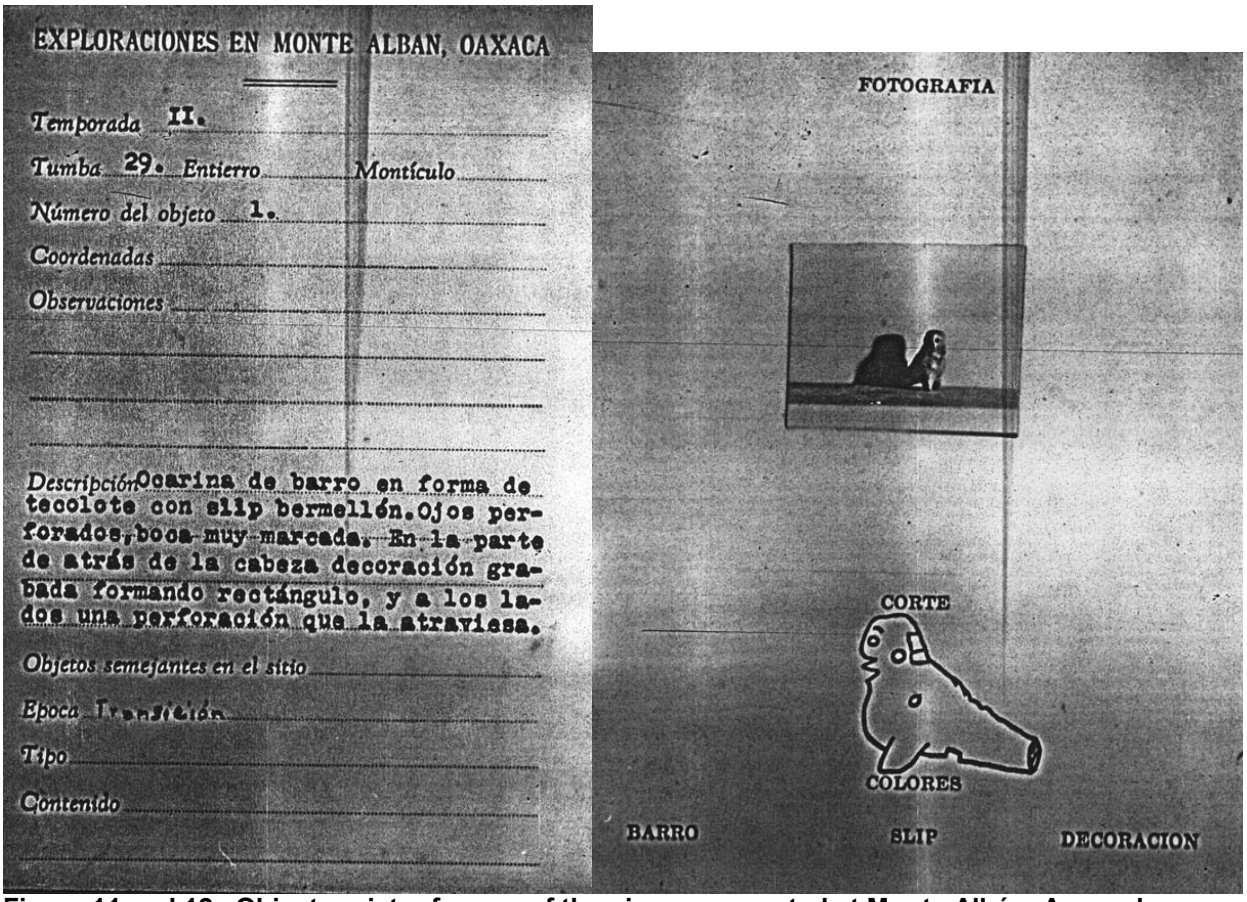
Figure 9. Clipping of article by Samuel Martí, sent to Alfonso Caso. Article entitled "Un ignoto señorio en la Mixteca Alta, Oaxaca: Diquiyu", appeared in México en la Cultura section of the paper Novedades, May 16, 1965. Courtesy BNAH, Archivo Histórico, Fondo Alfonso Caso. Box 4, Legajo 36, Document 4.

Figure 10. Photograph of pre-Columbian objects, sent to Caso by the Director of the Istituto di Antropologia dell'Universitá – Firenze. The note and photos sent in 1950 show that Caso was receiving a large amount of correspondence and unsolicited images of works at large, in and outside of Mexico. BNAH, Archivo Histórico, Fondo Alfonso Caso. Box 2, Legajo 16, Document 5.

Part of the BNAH, but down the hall on the Museum's second floor, is the Microfilm section and Fototeca of the BNAH. The Fototeca had no pictures related to Caso's excavations at Monte Albán, although they do have an album which included images from Leopoldo Batres' previous excavations at the site. The Microfilm section has an extensive collection, the most important of which for research on Caso's excavations are the 12 rolls on "Monumentos Prehispanicos" which detailed many aspects of the excavations and the objects found. These microfilms contain part of a book Caso hoped to publish on Monte Albán's tombs (see fig. 11). It also includes a microfilmed version of the object registers for the finds at the site (see fig. 12) organized by object type rather than by tomb.

Downstairs, on the museum's first floor, is the Archivo Histórico of the BNAH, which contains many interesting documents on Caso and other archaeologists, especially their interim reports. It also includes the originals of about 600 of the object registers that were completed for the first few seasons of work at Monte Albán. The Director of this archive, Trinidad Lahirigoyen, is very knowledgeable about its contents, and can be

very helpful. The only drawback to this Archive is that at present its hours are from 11:30 to 3, on Tuesdays and Wednesdays only.



EXPLORACIONES EN MONTE ALBAN, OAXACA

Temporada II.

Tumba 29. Entierro Montículo

Número del objeto 1.

Coordenadas

Observaciones

Descripción Ocarina de barro en forma de tecolote con slip bermellón. Ojos perforados, boca muy marcada. En la parte de atrás de la cabeza decoración grabada formando rectángulo, y a los lados una perforación que la atraviesa.

Objetos semejantes en el sitio

Epoca Transición

Tipo

Contenido

FOTOGRAFIA

CORTE

COLORES

BARRO SLIP DECORACION

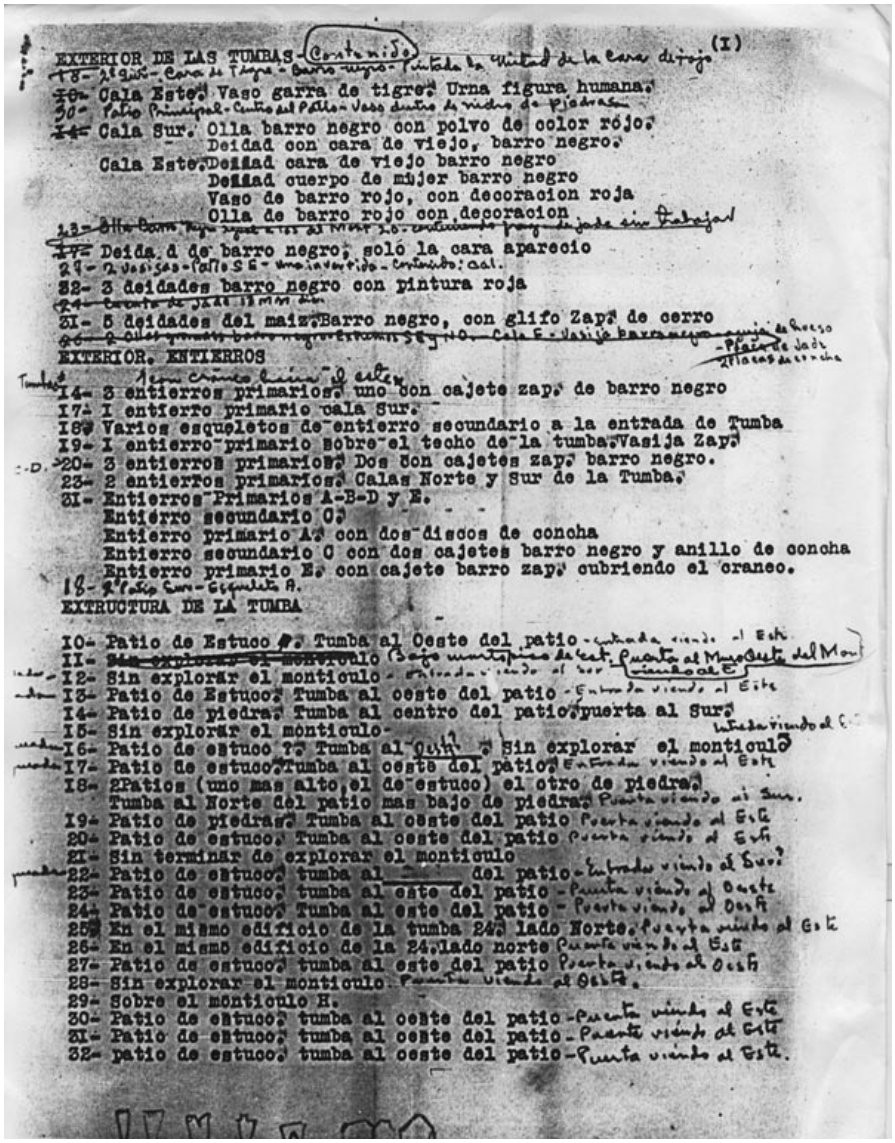
Figure 11 and 12. Object register for one of the pieces excavated at Monte Albán. As can be observed, Caso insisted on documenting even the smallest, humblest objects in the excavations. Courtesy BNAH, Microfilms Division. From series "2a. Prehispánicos (Monte Albán.)" Roll 2 of 12.

Fondo Alfonso Caso – Instituto Nacional Indigenista

This part of the Fondo Alfonso Caso should be comprised of mainly documents related to Caso's work in founding and running the Instituto Nacional Indigenista from 1949-70. Now housed in the INI's descendant, the Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de Puebloa Indígenas (CNDPI), the library of that government agency has been in the process of being remodeled since some time in 2007, and I have been unable to gain access to it. Given that in the other parts of the Fondo, chronologically anachronistic documents are mixed in; this could prove to have some documents of interest. I will update this report when I am able to check this library, as the renovations, while they have been postponed several times, are supposed to be finished in May, 2008.

INAH – Archivo Técnico

While not technically part of the Fondo Alfonso Caso, this is another important research resource in studying not just Oaxaca, but any part of Mexico which has been excavated: archaeologists deposit interim and final reports here. In the case of Caso and Monte Albán, the Archivo Técnico of the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH) contains several albums of photos, including some that are unpublished (see figs. 13 and 14). In addition, for all topics, it is probably worth requesting further information personally from Don Pepe Ramírez, the person in charge of this archive, as he occasionally may have additional documents that may be helpful. In the case of Monte Albán, Don Pepe was able to let me consult a folder of plans of different tombs of Monte Albán (see fig. 15), as well as additional information concerning Tomb 7.



EXTERIOR DE LAS TUMBAS - (Contenido) (I)

Cala Este. Vaso garra de tigre. Urna figura humana.
Cala Sur. Olla barro negro con polvo de color rojo.
Deidad con cara de viejo, barro negro.
Cala Este. Deidad cara de viejo barro negro
Deidad cuerpo de mujer barro negro
Vaso de barro rojo, con decoracion roja
Olla de barro rojo con decoracion
Deida d de barro negro, solo la cara aparecio
3 deidades barro negro con pintura roja
5 deidades del maiz. Barro negro, con glifo Zap. de cerro

EXTERIOR. ENTIERROS

14- 3 entierros primarios. uno con cajete zap. de barro negro
17- I entierro primario cala Sur.
18- Varios esqueletos de entierro secundario a la entrada de Tumba
19- I entierro primario sobre el techo de la tumba. Vasija Zap.
20- 3 entierros primarios. Dos con cajetes zap. barro negro.
23- 2 entierros primarios. Calas Norte y Sur de la Tumba.
21- Entierros Primarios A-B-D y E.
Entierro secundario C.
Entierro primario A. con dos discos de concha
Entierro secundario C con dos cajetes barro negro y anillo de concha
Entierro primario E. con cajete barro zap. cubriendo el craneo.

EXTRUCTURA DE LA TUMBA

10- Patio de Estuco. Tumba al Oeste del patio
11-
12- Sin explorar el monticulo
13- Patio de Estuco. Tumba al oeste del patio
14- Patio de piedra. Tumba al centro del patio. puerta al Sur.
15- Sin explorar el monticulo
16- Patio de estuco ?. Tumba al oeste. Sin explorar el monticulo
17- Patio de estuco. Tumba al oeste del patio.
18- 2Patios (uno mas alto, el de estuco) el otro de piedra.
Tumba al Norte del patio mas bajo de piedra.
19- Patio de piedra. Tumba al oeste del patio
20- Patio de estuco. Tumba al oeste del patio
21- Sin terminar de explorar el monticulo
22- Patio de estuco. tumba al del patio
23- Patio de estuco. tumba al este del patio
24- Patio de estuco. Tumba al este del patio
25- En el mismo edificio de la tumba 24. lado Norte.
26- En el mismo edificio de la 24. lado norte
27- Patio de estuco. tumba al este del patio
28- Sin explorar el monticulo.
29- Sobre el monticulo H.
30- Patio de estuco. tumba al oeste del patio
31- Patio de estuco. tumba al oeste del patio
32- patio de estuco. tumba al oeste del patio

Figure 13. Draft from an article on tombs of Monte Albán, presumably part of Caso's manuscript on the subject. Courtesy BNAH, Microfilms Division. From series "2a. Prehispánicos (Monte Albán.)" Roll 1 of 12.

Figure 14. Lintel from Xoxocotlán, Oaxaca, from the first season of excavations at Monte Albán. Courtesy Sistema Nacional de Fototecas.

Figure 15. Image from one of Caso's photo albums held at the Archivo Técnico, Insituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia. Courtesy INAH, Coordinación de Arqueología, Archivo Técnico.

Photo collections

For my project, I was especially interested in finding out what images were available of Caso's excavations and specifically, of the tombs that he found, before and during the excavations. The Fondo Alfonso Caso at the UNAM does have a significant number of photographs, in approximately 30 boxes there so far. (They are still finding and cataloguing additional photographs, so it is unclear what the final number of boxes will be.) This did include some images that I believe are unpublished, including ones from expeditions to various archaeological sites. There were a few scenes from Monte Albán's excavations, but not many. Many of the images that were present came from Caso's publications on the treasures of Tomb 7 and other finds. Some of the items in the archive were photos that other people had sent to Caso of their visits to various Mesoamerican sites. And Caso had also kept an extensive portfolio of images of codices that he was working with over the course of his lifetime. There are also some few photos included in the different letters files of the Fondo Alfonso Caso located in the BNAH. But the best resources that I found for images were the Fototeca Nacional, which has a database searchable by keyword; and for individual objects from the excavations, the images that are on the object registry cards that Caso and his collaborators filled out for each item found in the tombs, offerings, burials, and generally throughout the site. Trinidad Lahirigoyen in the Archivo Histórico of the Biblioteca Nacional de Antropología e Historia has about 600 of the originals of these cards in notebooks in the Archives office, although unfortunately the cards cannot be photographed. In a report from 1950, Jorge R. Acosta mentions that from 1931 to 1939, about 5000 of these cards were generated.[8] So the most complete set of the cards, although unfortunately with terrible image quality, is on the 12 rolls of microfilms marked "Monumentos Prehispánicos" in the Microfilm section of the BNAH. These can be copied, although the image quality is poor, or the microfilm rolls themselves can be copied.

The Fototeca Nacional is actually located in Pachuca (see Appendix B: *Research Resources*), but there is also an office in Mexico City with a computer containing a searchable database of most of the available images. It is well worth searching for several different keywords – for example, additional images of Monte Albán appeared when one searched for the term "Oaxaca" which were not associated with the search term "Monte Albán." This database contains over a hundred images of the tombs of Monte Albán, and many others from surrounding sites. (See figs. 16-19).

[8] See Acosta (1950), p. 13. Manuscript held at the Biblioteca Juan Comas of the IIA, UNAM.

Figure 16. Image from one of Caso's photo albums held at the Archivo Técnico, Insituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia. Courtesy INAH, Coordinación de Arqueología, Archivo Técnico.

Figure 17. Image from one of Caso's photo albums held at the Archivo Técnico, Insituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia. Courtesy INAH, Coordinación de Arqueología, Archivo Técnico.

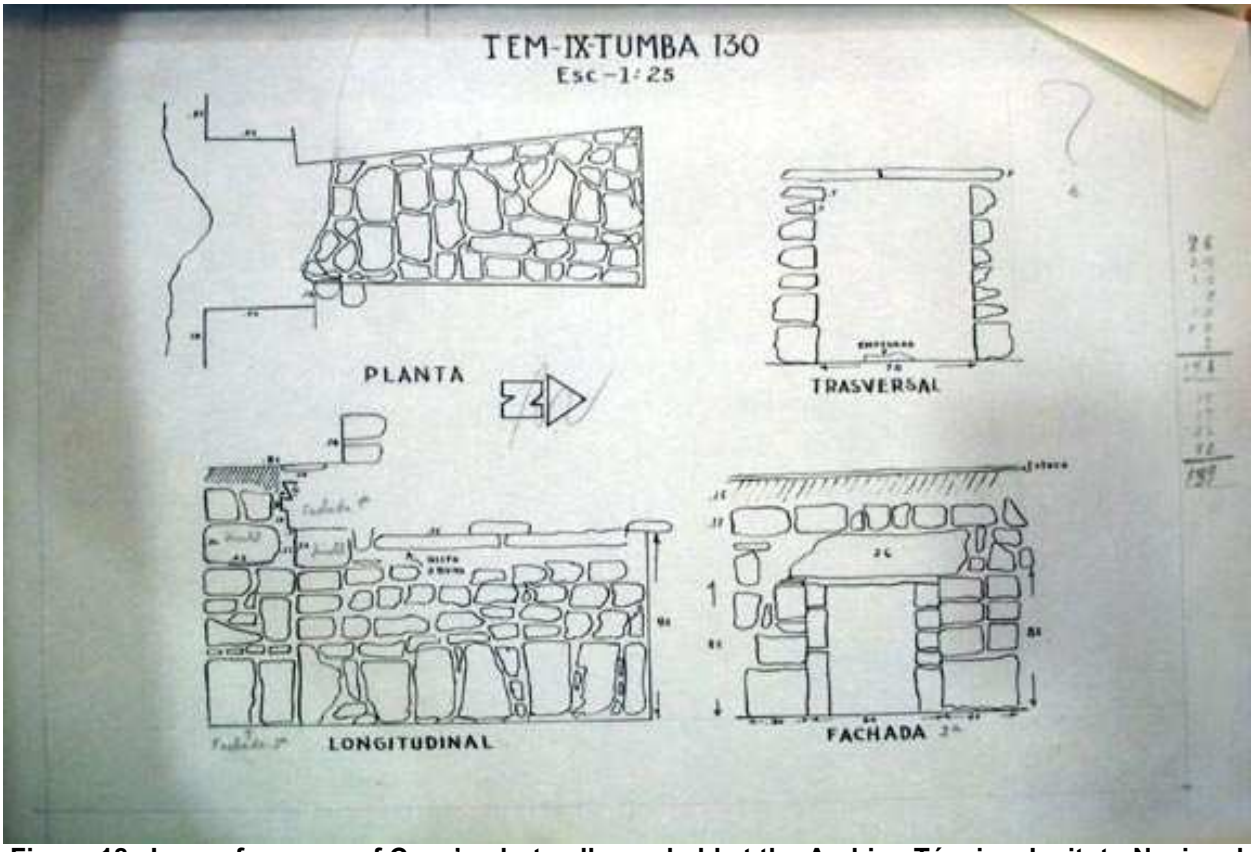


Figure 18. Image from one of Caso's photo albums held at the Archivo Técnico, Insituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia. Courtesy INAH, Coordinación de Arqueología, Archivo Técnico.

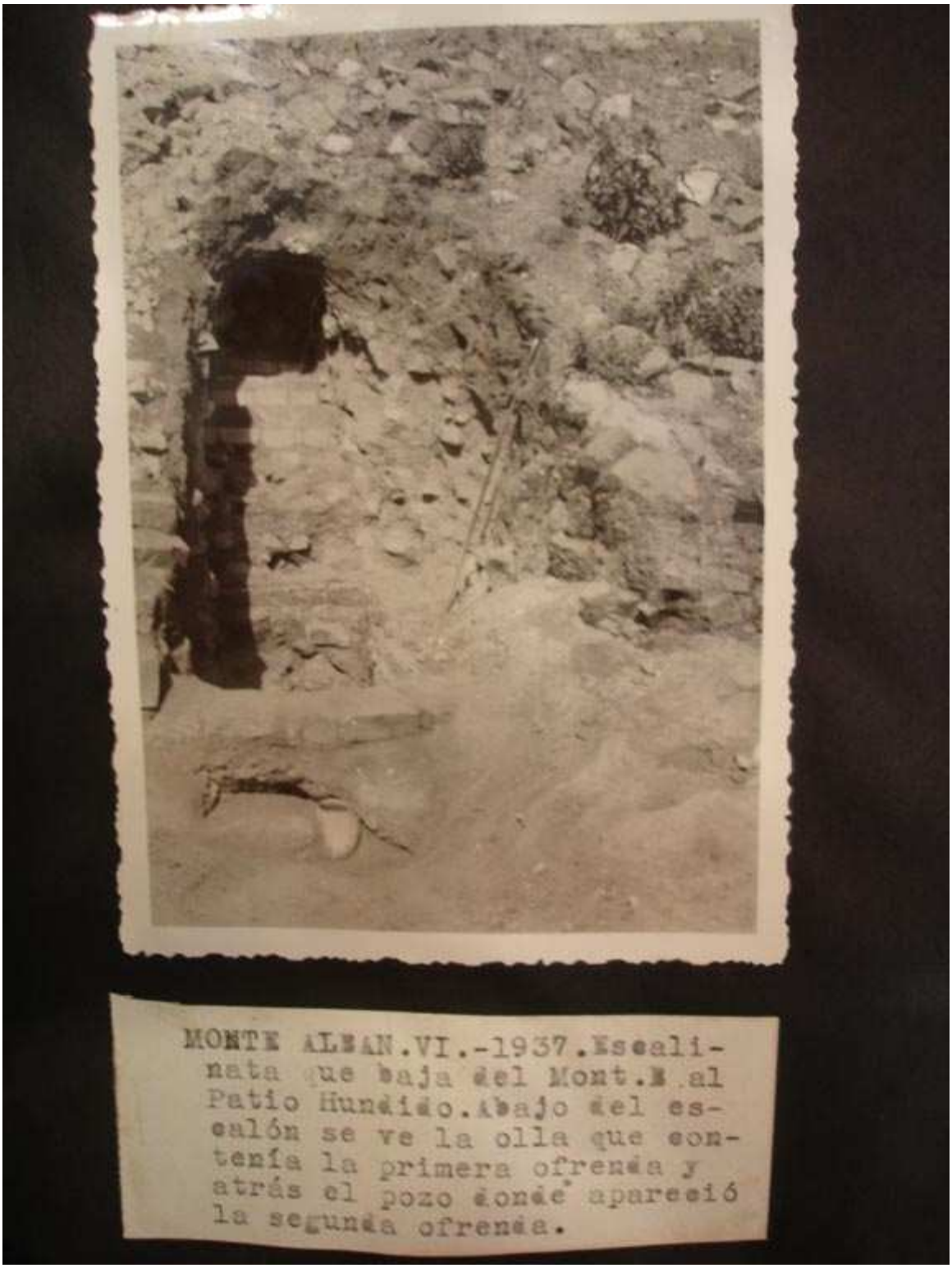


Figure 19. Image from one of Caso's photo albums held at the Archivo Técnico, Insituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia. From 1940, "Informe. Fotografías de las exploraciones arqueológicas de la zona arquológica de Monte Albán, Oaxaca." 3 vols. Courtesy INAH, Coordinación de Arqueología, Archivo Técnico.

Other Possible Sources of Information on the Excavations at Monte Albán

While I have been unable to visit all the possible different sources of information on this subject, some other possible avenues to continue and expand this study include: the archives of the Secretaria de Educación Pública (SEP) in Mexico City, as the first excavations at Monte Albán, until 1939, were under their purview; the Caso family and its papers; the UNAM's Biblioteca Nacional, which contains certain copies of Mixtec codices that Caso made himself; as well as other parts of the UNAM library system, such as the Biblioteca "Juan Comas" of the Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas, as well as potentially the libraries of the Institutos of Investigaciones Estéticas, Investigaciones Históricas and Investigaciones Filológicas. In Oaxaca, the INAH Regional office there, and the office, under the direction of Nelly Robles, and located in the Santo Domingo Cultural Center, has rich bibliographic resources on the site.

Conclusion

Alfonso Caso was one of the driving forces of Mexican archaeology in the early twentieth century. He stands out for the breadth of his knowledge, and for the number and range of sites and cultures at which he excavated and researched during his career. The incredible wealth of information that Caso published is very impressive, however the range of his interests and the articles and papers that he kept is so broad that it causes a problem for cataloguing all the available resources. The splitting of his archive into different parts was certainly designed to facilitate its access for those who were interested in Caso's career as an archaeologist, as opposed to those who were interested in the contribution that he made to Mexican *indigenismo*. Thus, the project of making clear what topics and materials are located in which archives is of assistance to scholars of many different areas within Mesoamerican studies. While I focused on trying to find documents relating to Caso's excavations at Monte Albán, many of his papers would be interesting for the wealth of materials available on the Mixtec codices. Other scholars of Tizatlán, Tlaxcala, should certainly consult Caso's papers, as he was the first to closely document the site.

In general, today Caso is little referenced in archaeology in Mexico. I think it is important to highlight the enormous impact that he had on our understanding of ancient Oaxaca.

Acknowledgements

Many, many thanks to all the personnel at the different archives, especially Raúl Alvárez, Jose Luis De la Rosa, Genaro Diaz, Trinidad Lahirigoyen, José Nava, Gabriela Nuñez, Jose Ramírez, Alicia Reyes and Marcelo Silva. All your help really facilitated not only successful searches, but also an enjoyable working environment while in Mexico. Un millón de gracias por haber esforzado tanto conmigo. I would like to thank the Arellanes family of Oaxaca, especially Nimcy Arellanes, from the bottom of my heart for all their suggestions, support and care while I was in Mexico. Many thanks to Mauricio

Fernández for all his travel tips, cultural consultation and help with writing letters. In addition, I received helpful suggestions before and during research from Diana Fane, Carola García, Esther Pasztory, Adam Sellen, Javier Urcid and Marcus Winter as to resources in Mexico City. Julie Hoover and Serge Lafontant provided me with support and needed downtime away from Mexico City. My parents, Dorothy and Thomas Hoobler, provided needed encouragement and support during the entire process.

List of Figures

Figure1. Urn in the interior of Monte Albán Tomb 6 before excavations. Courtesy Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas (IIA), Biblioteca "Juan Comas", Area de Fondos Documentales Alfonso Caso, Fondo Alfonso Caso Andrade (FACA) – Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), Box 5.

Figure 2. Offering cache from Montículo B. Courtesy IIA, Biblioteca "Juan Comas", Area de Fondos Documentales Alfonso Caso, FACA-UNAM. Box 6.

Figure 3. Map of the position of tombs found during the first excavation season, with notes in Alfonso Caso's writing. Courtesy Courtesy IIA, Biblioteca "Juan Comas", Area de Fondos Documentales Alfonso Caso, FACA-UNAM. Box 5.

Figure 4. Excavation techniques in the 1930s – Tomb 7 before consolidation. This shows the positioning of tombs under Zapotec houses and palaces. Courtesy Courtesy IIA, Biblioteca "Juan Comas", Area de Fondos Documentales Alfonso Caso, FACA-UNAM. Box 9.

Figure 5. Photographic techniques in the 1930s. A movie studio came to film the excavations and some of the finds, they had to be shot outside as the tombs were too dark for the interior illumination techniques of the time. Courtesy IIA, Biblioteca "Juan Comas", Area de Fondos Documentales Alfonso Caso, FACA-UNAM. Box 5.

Figure 6. Lintel from a tomb of San Marcos Tlapazola, from the collection of Adolfo Martínez Bustamante. These kinds of images show Caso's interest in, and awareness of, many local collectors' activities and the objects that they preserved. Courtesy Courtesy IIA, Biblioteca "Juan Comas", Area de Fondos Documentales Alfonso Caso, FACA-UNAM. Box 5.

Figure 7 . Alfonso Caso's office in the Biblioteca Nacional de Antropología e Historia, today the office of the Biblioteca's Director, its bookshelves and decorations have been basically untouched. Courtesy Biblioteca Nacional de Antropología e Historia (BNAH).

Figure 8. Photograph of Alfonso Caso with a pile of Zapotec urns, probably ca. 1950s. Framed photograph from his office. Courtesy BNAH.

Figure 9. Clipping of article by Samuel Martí, sent to Alfonso Caso. Article entitled "Un ignoto señorio en la Mixteca Alta, Oaxaca: Diquiyu", appeared in México en la Cultura section of the paper Novedades, May 16, 1965. Courtesy BNAH, Archivo Histórico, Fondo Alfonso Caso. Box 4, Legajo 36, Document 4.

Figure 10. Photograph of pre-Columbian objects, sent to Caso by the Director of the Istituto di Antropologia dell'Universitá – Firenze. The note and photos sent in 1950 show that Caso was receiving a large amount of correspondence and unsolicited

images of works at large, in and outside of Mexico. BNAH, Archivo Histórico, Fondo Alfonso Caso. Box 2, Legajo 16, Document 5.

Figures. 11 & 12. Object register for one of the pieces excavated at Monte Albán. As can be observed, Caso insisted on documenting even the smallest, humblest objects in the excavations. Courtesy BNAH, Microfilms Division. From series "2a. Prehispánicos (Monte Albán.)" Roll 2 of 12.

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Appendix A. - Chronology of Alfonso Caso's life and career

February 1, 1896	Alfonso Caso y Andrade is born in Mexico DF to Ing. Antonio Caso and María Andrade de Caso
1917	First published work, an article entitled "Ensayo de una clasificación de las artes," appears in the newspaper "El Universal," 20 October.
1918	Becomes Professor at the Facultad de Filosofía e Letras at the National Autonomous University (UNAM). Caso would hold this post until 1940.
1919	Graduates with bachelor's degree (licenciatura) in Law from UNAM. In the same year, he begins is appointed professor of law at the UNAM law school, where he would teach until 1929.
1920	Earns his MA degree in Philosophy. Does his servicio social (a mandatory portion of degree) assisting with a project on organization of the banking system.
1924- 1927	Studies with Professor Hermann Beyer in non-degree studies on pre-Columbian civilization held at the Museo Nacional in Mexico City.
1927	Publishes his first book, a monograph on the Aztec stone work known as the monument of sacred war. The monograph was entitled "El Teocalli de la Guerra Sagrada". In the same year, publishes, among other works, two articles on expeditions he made to the ruins of Tizatlán, Tlaxcala. Makes a thorough study of painted bench reliefs there with notable extant polychrome surfaces.
1928	Appointed Director of the Escuela Nacional Preparatoria. In the same year, publishes his first work on Oaxaca, *Las Estelas Zapotecas*.
1929	Appointed professor of Mexican and Mayan Archaeology at the National School of Philosophy and the National School of Anthropology, a post he would hold until 1943. He begins to work with the Museo Nacional as an archaeologist.
1930	Appointed head of the Department of Archaeology in the Museo Nacional, a title he would hold until 1933. Commissioned to complete a project of classification of the Museum's ceramics, he asserted that to complete the work scientifically, he needed to conduct excavations in the state of Michoacán, which he completed with the help of Eduardo Noguera. In the same year, Caso holds professorship of General Ethnology in the Facultad of Filosofía y Letras, UNAM.
1931	Appointed Director of the explorations of the site of Monte Albán. Begins excavations there, which he will continue to direct until 1943.
1932	January 9th, discovers Monte Albán's Tomb 7, with its incredibly rich treasures.
1933	Appointed Director of the Museo Nacional, from 1933-34.
1939	Assists in the formal creation of the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia. Serves as its Director until 1944.
1943	Visiting professorship at the University of Chicago.

1944	From March to August of 1944, serves as General Director of Higher Education and Scientific Research, UNAM. Then from August 1944 until March '45 serves as Rector of the university, where he implements changes to the university's "ley orgánica" at a moment of great turmoil in the university.
1946	Appointed Secretary of "Bienes Nacionales e Inspección Administrativa," whose modern-day descendant is the Department of Energy. Serves as Secretary until 1948.
1949	Participates in the founding of the National Indigenous Institute (INI), where he will serve as Director until his death in 1970.
1952	Publishes Urnas de Oaxaca with Dr. Ignacio Bernal. It is Vol. II of the Memorias of the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia.
1967	Publishes La Cerámica de Monte Albán with Dr. Bernal and the archaeologist Jorge R. Acosta.
March 30, 1970	Dies in Mexico City.
1974	Reburied in the Rotunda of Illustrious Men, Mexico City
1976	Posthumous publication of his magnus opus on the Mixtec genealogies, Reyes y Reinos de la Mixteca (Kings and Kingdoms of the Mixtec area).

Appendix B - Research Resources

Fondo Alfonso Caso – UNAM, Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas
Alicia Reyes (Coordinadora del Fondo)
Jose Luis De la Rosa
Raúl Alvárez (Servicio social student)
Phone: 52 (55) 5622-9653
Email: fondocaso@yahoo.com.mx
Location: In the Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas, UNAM
Hours: Monday – Friday, 10 AM – 4 PM.
Procedure for consultation: Must write a letter directed to Alicia Cervantes, the Director of the Biblioteca Juan Comas of the IIA.
One may make scans of pages and photographs of interest, they have a very high quality scanner, and the price for scanning is 3 peso per megabyte.

*There are many additional documents in the UNAM library system, not only in the Biblioteca Juan Comas, but also the Biblioteca Nacional, and the libraries for the Insitutos de Investigaciones Estéticas, Históricas and Filológicas.

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Fondo Alfonso Caso – Biblioteca Nacional de Antropología e Historia
Genaro Díaz Fuentes (Director de Servicios al Público)
Phone: 52 (55) 5653-6865
Email: servicios.bnah@inah.gob.mx
Location: In Museo Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Paseo de la Reforma y Calz. Gandhi, Col. Polanco.
Hours: Monday to Friday, 9 AM – 9 PM
Procedure for consultation: Call or email Genaro Díaz to let him know that you will be coming, and what your interests are.

Note: Also in the Museo Nacional de Antropología e Historia is the **Fototeca** of the Museum, which did not have photos related to Caso's excavations in Oaxaca, but does have photos of Leopoldo Batres' excavations in Teotihuacan and Oaxaca, among other sites (Contact information: Sonia, 5286-1085) Next to the Fototeca is also the **Microfilm division**, which has the 12 rolls of microfilms entitled "2a serie de Monumentos Prehispánicos (Monte Albán)" – this has much of what is available from Caso. Printouts can be made from the microfilms for 5 pesos per sheet. (Contacts are Solangia Tovar and Cristina Peñalosa, 5553-6369.) The Archivo Histórico is run by Trinidad Lahirigoyen on the Museum's first floor. Its hours are Tue. and Wed., 11:30-3 pm. (Contact phone 5553-6381 / -6386).

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Fondo Alfonso Caso/Papers of Alfonso Caso – Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de Pueblos Indígenas (formerly Instituto Nacional Indigenista)
Saul Ramírez
Phone: 52 (55) 9183-2100
Email: Unknown
Location: Av, Mexico-Coyoacaán, 343 / Col.. Xoco, Del. Benito Juárez. Ask for the Sala de Consulta.
Hours: Unknown
Procedure for consultation: Call them in advance to see whether the library is in service

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Archivo Técnico de la INAH
Main contact in the Sala de Consulta – José Luis Ramírez
Phone: 52 (55) 5702-6996 / 5702-6911
Email: ---
Hours: 10-4 Mon – Fri.
Location: Argentina 12, entrance on Donceles, Centro Histórico. There is no number on the building, but it has a sign for CONACULTA on the door. The Archivo Técnico is on the first floor. It is worth asking Don Pepe whether he has additional materials on any given topic, as he sometimes has things that are now in the catalogue.
Procedure for consultation: Anyone may consult the archive to look at documents, but to take pictures or potentially Xerox materials, you must drop off a letter of petition addressed to Arqlga. Laura Pescador, requesting permission to consult the archive and explaining who you are, and your interest in the facility and its contents.

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Fototeca Nacional
Pachuca – Main Office
Director is Juan Carlos Valdez Marín, Subdirectora Mayra Mendoza
Contact: Diana Sánchez
Phone: (771) 714-3653 x 104 Fax: (771) 713-1977
Email: fototecanacional@inah.gob.mx
Location: Casasola S/N, Exconvento de San Franciso, Pachuca, Hidalgo
Hours: 8-3 Mon – Fri.
Procedure for consultation: Contact Diana Sánchez first to find out what the letter to Mayra Mendoza should contain. You will then be given an appointment to consult the archive, and can then arrange for copies of the images as digital files. Prices vary.

Mexico City office (has searchable online database, but does not have originals of any of the images)
Gabriela Nuñez and Marcelo Silva
Phone: (55) 5061-9000 x8318
Email: ---
Location: Liverpool #123, ground floor (in the back of the patio)

Procedure for consultation: Call the office to make an appointment, as they can only accommodate one researcher at a time. They have access to an online database of the Fototeca's images, but some are missing, so in some cases, they will have the Inventory number and a brief description of what the image shows, but unfortunately no actual thumbnail of the image. Researchers may make printouts of the images that interest them for 5 pesos each page.