

FAMSI © 2001: Janet Montoya

Terracotta Figurines from the Pyramid of the Moon at Teotihuacán, México



Research Year: 1999

Culture: Teotihuacán

Chronology: Early Classic to Late Classic

Location: Teotihuacán, México

Site: Pyramid of the Moon

Table of Contents

[Introduction](#)

[The City of Teotihuacán](#)

[Clay Figurines at Teotihuacán](#)

[The Excavation Project](#)

[The Figurines](#)

[Method of Figurine Analysis](#)

[Overview of the Figurine Collection](#)

[Figurines related to Superimposed Buildings](#)

[Building 1](#)

[Building 2](#)

[Building 4](#)

[Building 5](#)

[Building 7](#)

[Summary](#)

[List of Figures](#)

[Sources Cited](#)

Introduction

In May 1998, Dr. Saburo Sugiyama of Arizona State University and the University Prefectural of Aichi, Japan and Professor Ruben Cabrera of the National Institute of Anthropology and History of México began a joint project to explore the interior of the Pyramid of the Moon at Teotihuacán, México. The structure, believed to be the earliest of the monumental constructions at the site, is located at the slightly elevated northern end of the central North-South axis of the city, framed by the mountain known today as Cerro Gordo as illustrated in [Figure 1](#). It is surrounded by fifteen smaller pyramidal structures, which form a large plaza opening onto the central avenue of the city.

Because of its strategic location within the overall city layout and the unique configuration of the Moon Plaza, it seems likely that the pyramid was of great significance to the inhabitants and probably functioned as the center of ritual and ceremonial activities from its earliest days. Sugiyama and Cabrera felt that exploration of the interior of the Pyramid of the Moon could provide information about early Teotihuacán and help answer long-standing questions regarding the origins of the city, the political organization and structure of the government, and the religion and ideology of the Teotihuacán state. The project continues to the present day and is currently in its fourth field season.

With funding from FAMSI, the documentation and analysis of the clay figurines recovered during the first three field seasons, specifically the 1998-2000 excavations in and adjacent to the Pyramid of the Moon, has been accomplished. In this report I will first present a brief overview of the excavation project and the figurine collection. The focus of the report will be the subset of the figurine collection that can, at this time, be related to the various building stages or substructures within the walls of the structure we know as the Pyramid of the Moon.

Submitted 12/01/2004 by:

Janet Montoya

janet-montoya@home.com



Figure 1. The Pyramid of the Moon framed by Cerro Gordo (from Millon 1993:23).

The City of Teotihuacán

The Valley of Teotihuacán is located in the northeastern corner of the central Basin of México, separated from the hustle and bustle of modern day México City by 40 kilometers and several low mountain ranges on its southern edge. The setting is idyllic and peaceful: rolling green hills interspersed with verdant cornfields and small quiet villages. But between approximately 1 A.D. and 650 A.D. the scene must have been quite different. During that time a vibrant and powerful city developed here. Magnificent pyramids and temples covered with brightly colored murals lined its civic and ceremonial center. High walled residential apartment compounds of stone and adobe for its nearly 125,000 inhabitants crowded around the city center and spilled out over the valley floor, covering 8 square miles (Millon, 1992:344). Archaeological evidence of Teotihuacán's influence stretches from Guerrero on the Pacific Coast to Veracruz and the Yucatán on the Gulf of México, and throughout the highland and lowland Maya areas of Guatemala (Millon 1993:28). But that was then. Today Teotihuacán's monumental constructions stand as mute testimony to the power and glory of what once was, and archaeologists are left to reconstruct this grand city from the pieces and fragments that were left behind when the city was violently sacked, burned and abandoned sometime in the 7th century (Millon 1993:32).

Clay Figurines at Teotihuacán

Among the artifacts that the inhabitants of Teotihuacán left behind were millions of fragments of tiny terracotta figurines; broken pieces of clay that had once been fashioned into images of humans and animals. Clay figurines must have been ubiquitous at Teotihuacán. Some of the earliest written accounts by visitors to the site in the 1800's – nearly 1200 years after the city was abandoned – report thousands of small clay heads littering the Teotihuacán landscape (see Kolb 1996:2-3). In the years since, archaeological excavations at the site have never failed to produce copious numbers of figurine fragments associated with structures from all phases of the city. Although they have occasionally been found in burials, they are usually found along with pieces of ceramics, obsidian, and other type of household debris in the material used as construction fill.

Figurines recovered in excavations of the earliest structures at the site are handmade, and many bear the distinct fingerprints of their creators. But there seems to have been a gradual move from handmade figurines to mold made figurines as the city grew and developed, with an interim period when both techniques were used, sometimes on the same figurine. In the later phases of the city all figurines were mold made. Concentrations of figurine fragments, molds and other figurine manufacturing debris in several areas of the city were located during the large scale mapping of the city in the 1960's. These areas have been interpreted as evidence of possible figurine workshops during the later phases of the city indicating a shift towards state-controlled manufacture (Barbour, 1975:Pg.117-126).

Even though we do not yet understand exactly how and why the clay figurines were used, it is apparent that they were an integral part of the everyday life of the ordinary Teotihuacáños. And because they were made throughout the hundreds of years of the city's existence, they form a sort of record in clay of the society and its inhabitants as the city developed.

The objective of the figurine analysis is to "read" the information encapsulated in the figurines in order to support the objectives of the overall Pyramid of the Moon project. Specifically to: (1) contribute to our knowledge and understanding of the early inhabitants of Teotihuacán; (2) identify changes in the society and ideology as the city developed; (3) identify evidence of relationships with areas outside the Teotihuacán valley; (4) refine the early Teotihuacán figurine chronology.

The Excavation Project

Excavations during the 1998-2000 field season consisted of eight major areas in or adjacent to the Pyramid of the Moon, designated Fronts A through H, as illustrated in [Figure 2](#), developed by Sugiyama and Cabrera.

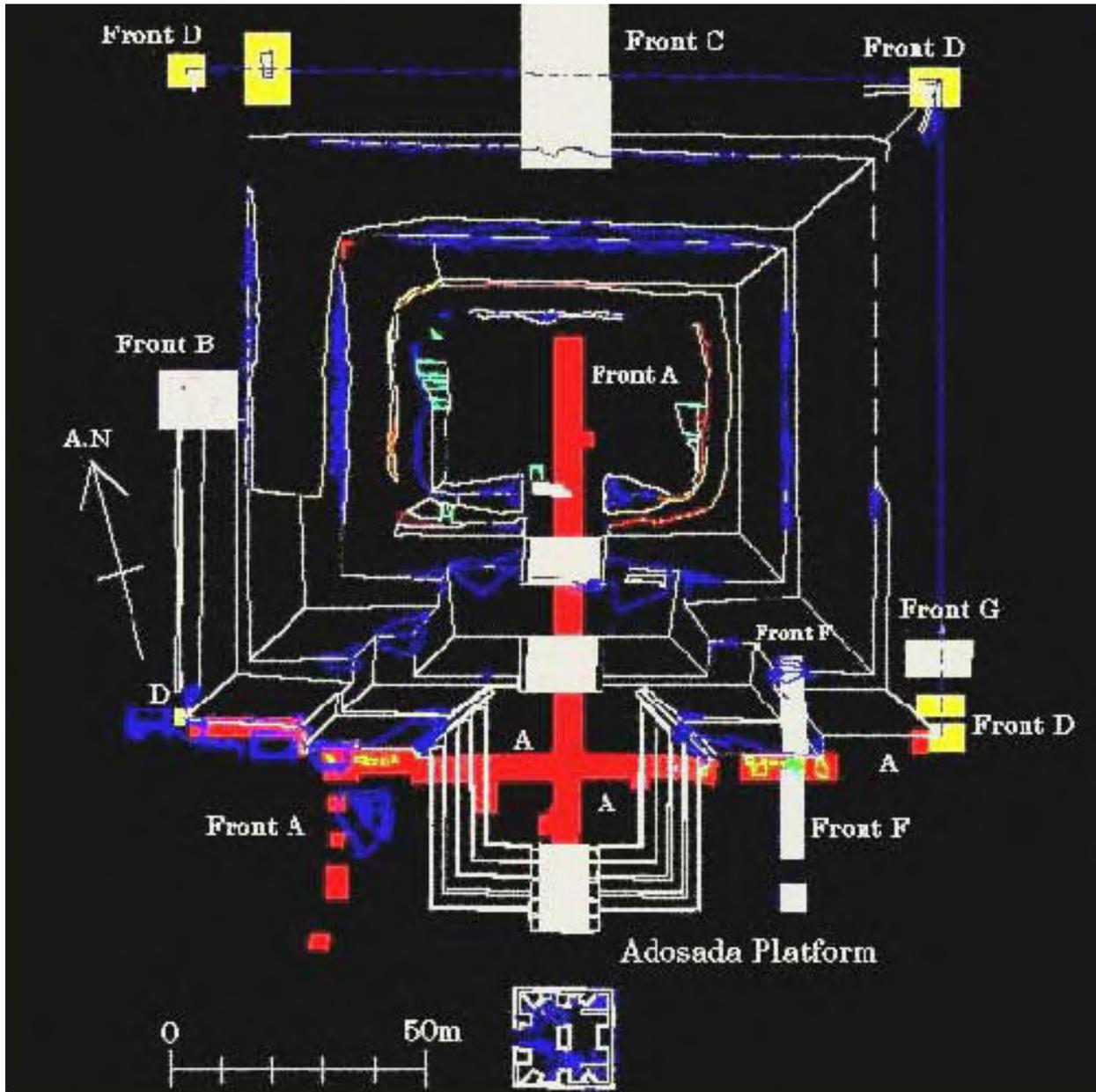


Figure 2. Excavation Plan (developed by Sugiyama and Cabrera 2001).

Front A consisted of a series of six tunnels, labeled Tunnels 1 through 6, excavated in the interior of the pyramid at bedrock level. In addition to the tunnels, forty stratigraphic pits were opened around the perimeter of the pyramid in order to resolve questions about the various substructures of the pyramid that arose during the excavation of the interior.

Fronts B, C, and D were carried out on the exterior of the pyramid and in some cases penetrated the interior. Excavations in these areas provided data about the characteristics of the construction of the building in its last building stages, as well as previous constructions.

The initial surface survey was designated as Front E.

Front F, or Tunnel 7, was excavated during the 1999 field season on the east side of the Pyramid in a northerly direction to clarify architectural features of substructures identified during the previous field season.

Front G, began in the 2000 field season and continuing in the 2001 field season, consists of excavations of various structures surrounding the Pyramid.

Front H, or Tunnel 8, also begun in the 2000 field season and continuing in the 2001 field season, consists of a series of tunnels in the interior of the Pyramid at the upper level of the Pyramid.

Based on an analysis of the data gathered during the extensive tunnel excavations and stratigraphic pits during the first three field seasons, Sugiyama and Cabrera have concluded that the construction of the Pyramid consisted of seven separate building episodes, labeled Building 1 through 7, each one encompassing all or part of the previous structure, as illustrated in [Figure 3](#). The last or final construction, Building 7, is the structure that we know today as the Pyramid of the Moon. Three sacrificial burials containing the remains of humans, animals, and numerous artifacts of shell, obsidian, and other items have been discovered associated with Buildings 4 and 5.

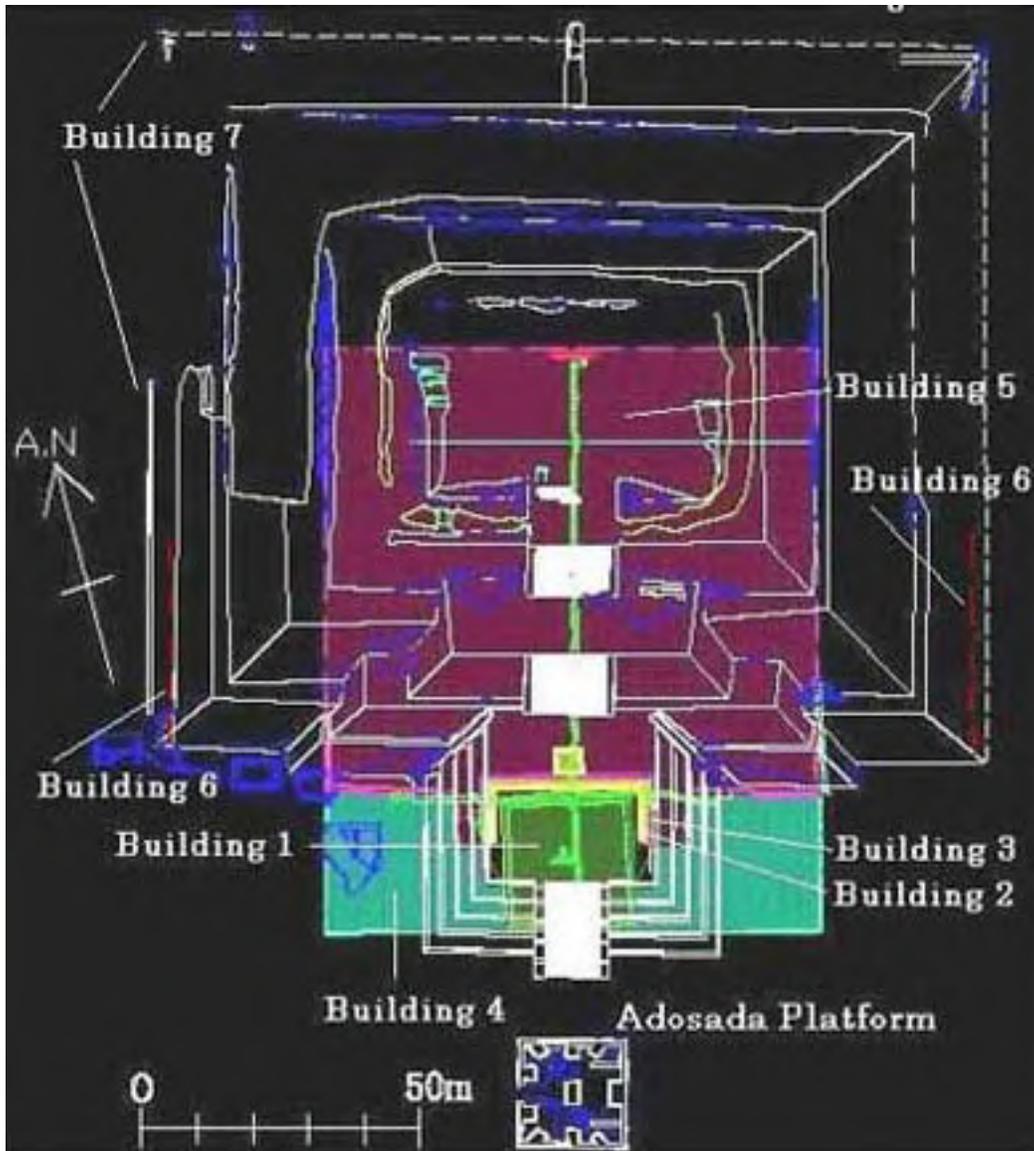


Figure 3. Superimposed Buildings (developed by Sugiyama and Cabrera, 2001).

The Figurines

The figurines that make up the Pyramid of the Moon collection to date were recovered mixed with other types of debris in the fill material of the various substructures of the Pyramid. This necessarily means that they were removed from a location somewhere outside the structure itself. It is possible that the fill material was taken from nearby rubbish heaps that had been accumulated fairly contemporaneous with the construction. But it is also possible that they were taken from accumulations of debris that had existed for a much longer time, perhaps even hundreds of years. Another possibility is that both of the above scenarios occurred simultaneously, resulting in a mixture of

contemporaneous and earlier period figurines in the same fill material. Therefore, the figurines in and of themselves cannot be considered a reliable dating tool. However, they can be used as supporting evidence in conjunction with the results of analysis of other artifact types – such as ceramics, obsidian, organic material, etc. – also found in the fill material associated with the figurines. Likewise, data from the analyses of these artifact types can be used to help pinpoint the cultural phase or time period during which the figurines were made and used. Therefore, as the results of the analysis of other artifacts and materials recovered in the excavations become available the information is being integrated with the figurine data to assist in phasing of the figurines and aid in refining the Teotihuacán figurine chronology.

Method of Figurine Analysis

The figurine analysis project was initiated in June 1998 and continues to the present day. Each of the figurine fragments is assigned a unique number composed of the area in which it was recovered and a sequential number; for example A1, A2, etc.

Figurines are classified as "human," "animal," "other," or "unknown." Within the human category four major subcategories are used: head, torso, appendage and headdress. Within the animal category three major subcategories are used: head, torso or whole. Pieces that do not fit into either of the two major categories – items such as ear spools, pieces of decorative adornment, whistles, beads, etc. are categorized as "other." Fragments that cannot be identified are classified as "unknown." In some cases the fragments are reclassified as "ceramic" and returned to the ceramic collection.

Each figurine is measured for length, width, and thickness. Munsell Soil Color Charts are used to determine paste color as well as paint remnants where present. Physical characteristics and distinguishing features are noted for each fragment.

Where possible the figurines are tentatively assigned to a chronological phase. In this study, phase designations are based on comparison studies of stylistic attributes defined in published reports from excavations at Teotihuacán, other sites within the Valley, and related sites outside the Valley. Some of the works referred to for comparison studies are Noguera's 1974 report on excavations in the lower part of the Pyramid of the Sun; Millon, Drewitt and Bennyhoff's 1965 report on the excavations at the Pyramid of the Sun; Smith's 1987 report on the figurines recovered during the 1959 to 1962 excavations within the Pyramid of the Sun; Sanders' and West's report on figurines from 1962 excavations at four Valley of Teotihuacán sites; and doctoral dissertations on Teotihuacán figurine collections by Darlena Blucher (1971), Warren Barbour (1975), Sue Scott (1994), Charles Kolb (1995), and Kim Goldsmith (2000).

Chronological phasing of Teotihuacán figurines presents a number of challenges. The Teotihuacán figurine chronology in use today was developed by Barbour in his 1975 doctoral dissertation and is based on the relationship between figurine styles and the

current established Teotihuacán ceramic chronology illustrated in [Figure 4](#) (Cowgill 1997:131).

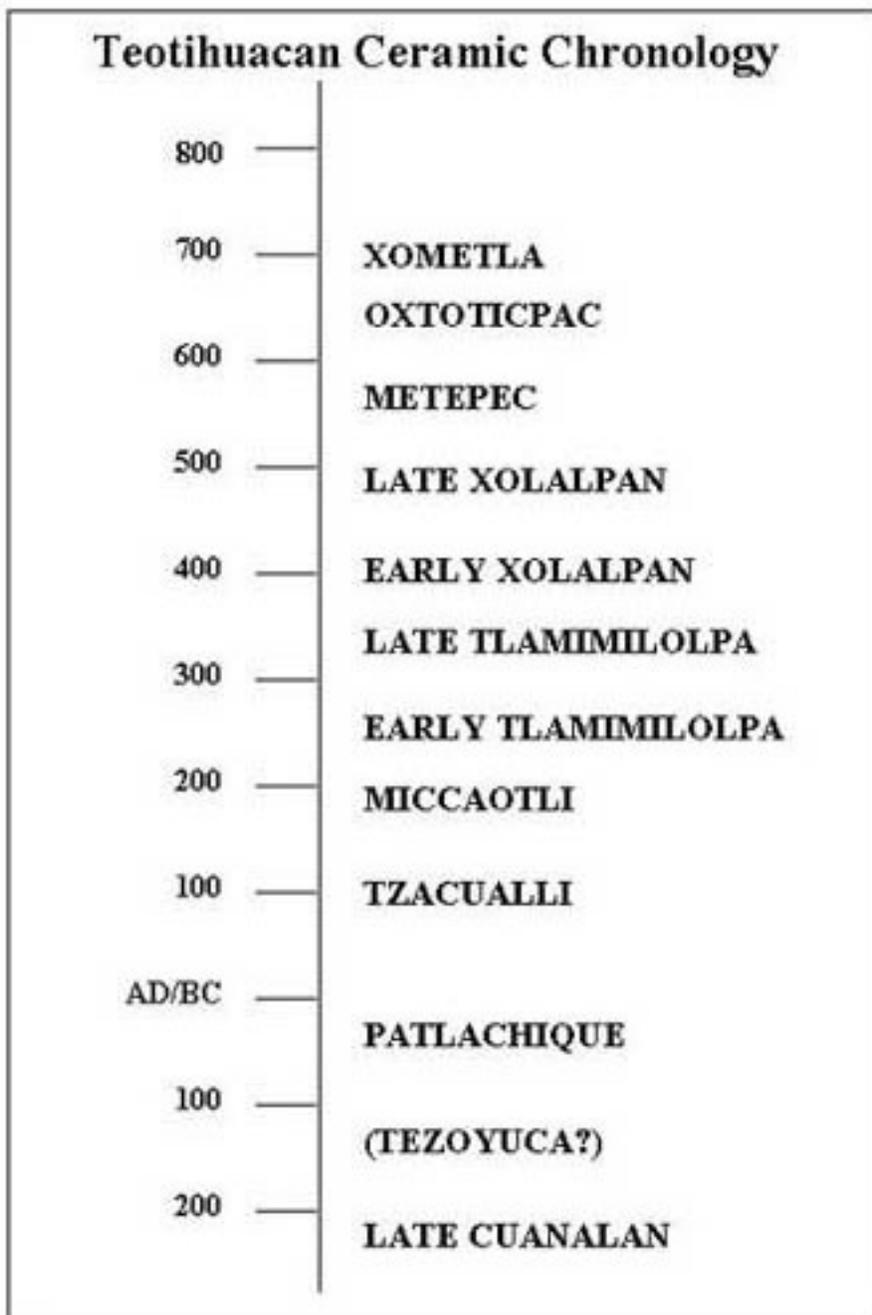


Figure 4. Teotihuacán Ceramic Chronology from Cowgill 1997:131.

However, as has been noted by numerous Teotihuacán figurinists, the Teotihuacán figurine chronology may not necessarily follow the Teotihuacán ceramic chronology. Phasing is further complicated by the scarcity of information on early Teotihuacán Valley figurines from stratigraphic excavations. As the results of the analysis of other material found in the fill with the figurines, particularly the ceramic material, become available, chronological phasing for the figurines from the Pyramid of the Moon may be modified.

Where possible, the figurines are assigned a type designation. Teotihuacán figurine typology also presents challenges to the researcher. While numerous approaches to typology have been proposed and used by Teotihuacán figurinists, no standard has yet been adopted. The most easily understood typological scheme, and the one which will be followed in this study, consists of descriptive names based on the most prominent physical features of frequently occurring types sometimes combined with more specific descriptions: for instance, "coffee bean eye," "slit eye," "round head," "portrait," "puppet," etc. In this study the figurines have been assigned to previously defined and established "types" whenever possible. New types may be identified and added to the list if necessary as the study progresses.

Overview of the Figurine Collection

To date 1,389 figurine fragments from the Pyramid of the Moon excavations have been cataloged. Despite the undoubtedly rough treatment the figurines received before and during deposition in the pyramid, some survived in fairly good condition and in some cases multiple pieces of the same figurine have been located in proximity to one another and can be reassembled. Almost all have some amount of white paint remnants in their crevices and grooves. In many cases the vivid colors of red, black, and yellow that were painted over the white undercoat are still visible.

The overwhelming majority of the figurines – 97% – are from the earliest phases: Tezoyuca through Miccaotli (200 B.C.- A.D 200). 100% of the figurines found within the walls of the existing pyramid are handmade. Mold made figurines account for only 3% of the total, and all were found in the areas outside the walls of the Moon Pyramid.

Approximately 75% of the figurines have been classified as "human"; 3% have been classified as "animal"; 9% have been classified as "other"; 9% could not be identified and have been classified as "unknown"; 4% were determined to be ceramic sherds rather than figurines and have been reclassified as such.

Figurines related to Superimposed Buildings

Based on their on-going analysis Sugiyama and Cabrera have identified many of the stratigraphic levels associated with each of the superimposed buildings within the Moon

Pyramid. Correlating this information with the figurine provenience data, four hundred and seventy figurines can be associated with the seven building stages at this time.

The total number of figurines associated with each of the structures varies from as few as 15 for Structure 1 to as many as 289 for Structure 4. This variance is a factor of the relative size of the structures as well as the extent of the excavation within the structures themselves. [Figure 5](#) illustrates the percentage of figurines styles per structure.

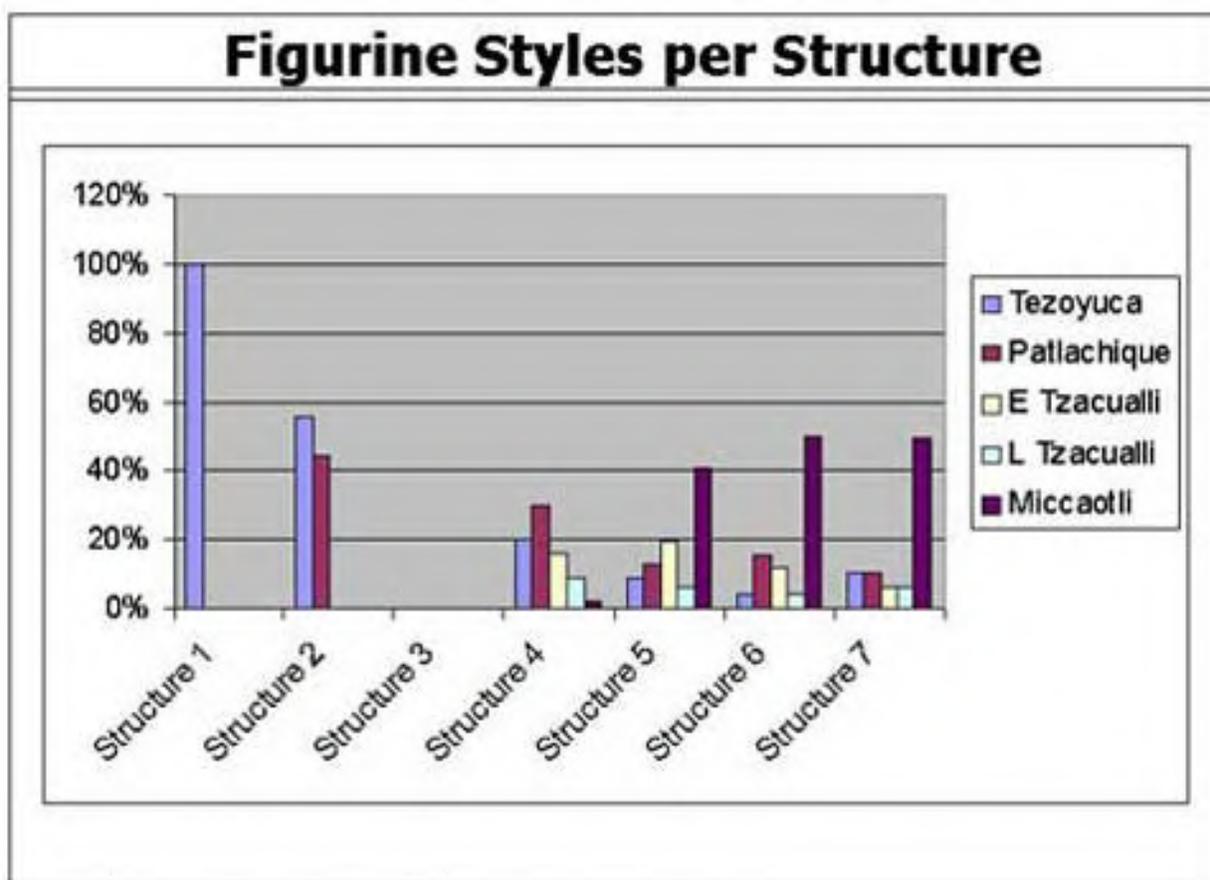


Figure 5. Percentage of figure styles per structure.

As we move through the various structures changes in the distribution of styles is evident. All the figurines associated with Building 1 are of the Tezoyuca style. Building 2 figurines are almost equally divided between Tezoyuca and Patlachique styles. There were no figurines identified with Building 3. Unfortunately the outer walls of Building 3 were nearly destroyed by the modifications made during the construction of Building 4, and therefore very little architectural information is available relating to Building 3.

Associated with Building 4 we see for the first time figurine styles commonly associated with the Tzacualli phase. Miccaotli style figurines also make their first appearance but in very small number. However, the pre Tzacualli styles still account for over half the collection.

The majority of the figurines associated with Building 5 fall within the Tzacualli phase style with an increasing presence of Miccaotli style figurines. This trend continues with Building 6. By Building 7, the final building stage and the structure that we know today as the Pyramid of the Moon, Miccaotli style figurines are in the majority.

Turning to the figurines themselves, I have selected the most interesting examples from each of the structures.

Building 1

Three figurines from Building 1 fill material are illustrated on [Figure 6](#).



Figure 6. Figurines from Building 1.

Figurine A139 is the head and upper torso of a zoomorphic figure with large disks representing eyes and the remnant of a protruding snout or beak. The remainder of some type of extension – possibly ears – is evident on either side of the head. The figure is in an upright position with arms extended outward. A thick roll is present at what would probably have been the juncture of the legs. There is evidence of either a stand or a tail at the back. Remnants of white and red paint remain in the crevices. While the figurine is unusual, it is not unique; similar types have been reported in Teotihuacán excavations as early as the Tezoyuca/Patlachique phase. Smith reported a similar figure, which he described as possibly the head of an owl, in the fill material from the Pyramid of the Sun mixed with ceramic material of the Late Tzacualli phase (Smith 1987:Fig. 54e). West reported a strikingly similar example from El Tepalcate (West 1975:Vol. 2, Plate 80b) in material of the Tezoyuca/Patlachique cultural period. West identified the figure as that of a "deer or a highly stylized early human representation" (West 1975:Vol. 10, pg 123). Millon discovered a similar figurine with "spectacle" eyes in a test pit in a plaza floor at Oztoyahualco, to the northwest of the Moon Pyramid in his 1957 excavations at that site. The figurine was found mixed with ceramics of the Tzacualli phase. Millon postulated that the "spectacle" eyes might be an early representation of a "Tlaloc" figure (1960:5-6, Fig. 5). While Figurine A139 leaves many questions unanswered, it does provide us with another example of the use of ring-type or "Tlaloc" style eyes quite early in the history of Teotihuacán.

A132 is the lower portion of a human head with double "gash" eyes and "gouge" mouth typical of the Tezoyuca period style. Remnants of white paint with an overlay of red can be seen in the deep gouges. The most remarkable feature is the extremely large protruding nose. A141 from the same level is probably the right side of the headdress that this figure was wearing based on a comparison with Figurine A175 from Building 2, shown in [Figure 7](#).

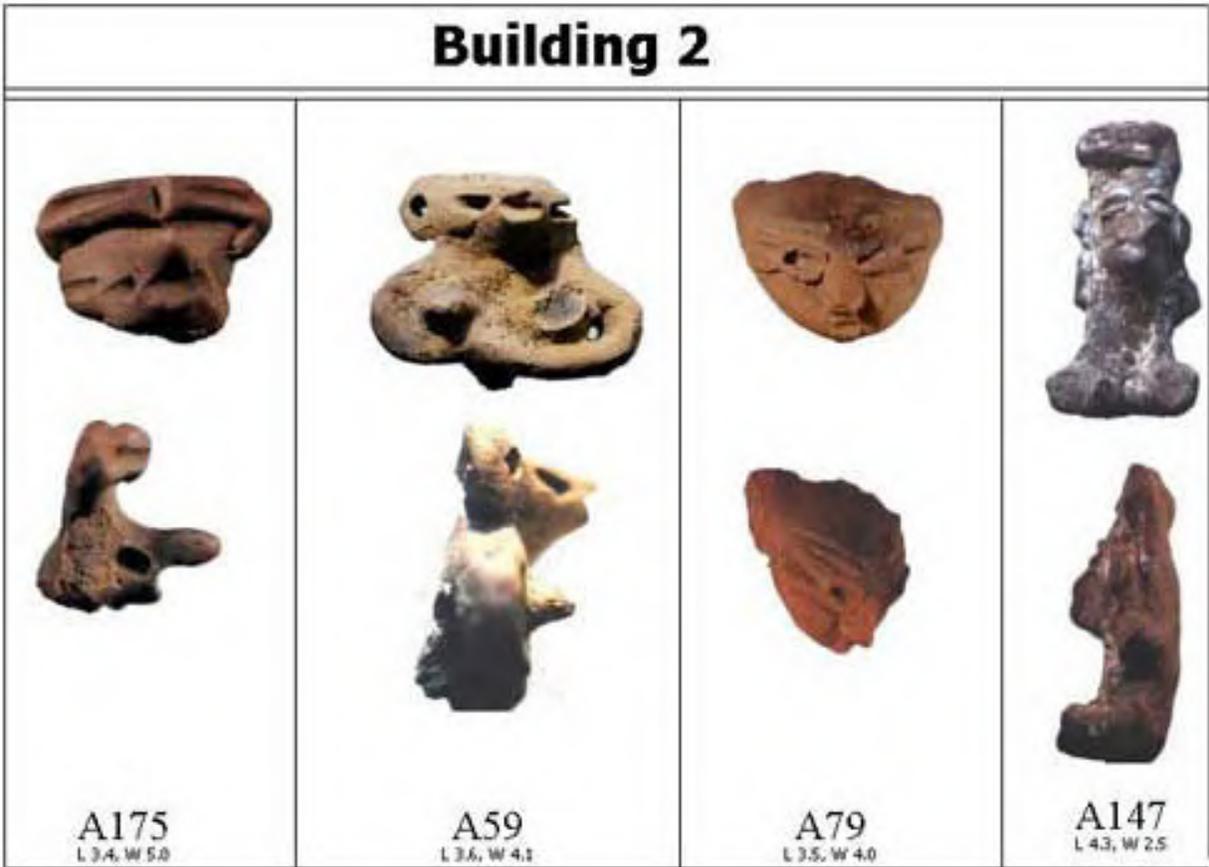


Figure 7. Figurines from Building 2.

Building 2

While only 18 figurines were found in fill material associated with Building 2, four very different styles are represented, as shown in [Figure 7](#).

It is possible that this diversity in the figurines reflects a number of groups with different figurine traditions living in the general vicinity of the Moon Pyramid.

As mentioned previously, A175 appears to be an intact example of the A132 figurine type found associated with Building 1. The fact that there are two separate examples of the same figurine type in close proximity and associated with both early structures would seem to indicate that this was a figurine type fairly common in the general Teotihuacán area during the early period of the city.

A59 is a female figure with exaggerated conical shape breasts and a large snout-type nose and mouth. The figurine has the deep slash eyes and large ear perforations, typical of Tezoyuca style figurines. The arms rest on the abdomen right below the

breasts. The figure may have been wearing a headdress that has been broken off, leaving a "scar" across the forehead.

A79 is a thin concave anthropomorphic head with characteristics typical of the Patlachique style. The eye area is made of two large chambers with a raised area in between. The chambers were once painted white, evidenced by the white paint in the crevices; the raised area was probably been painted black to indicate the pupils. The nose is large and tilted downward and the mouth is small and "fish" like. Eyebrows are represented by slashes across the forehead.

A147 is a small, seated cylindrical figure wearing a twisted cord patterned headdress and ear spools. The color of the paste is dark gray, and the figure is still covered with splotches of white paint. The inner eye area is large and rimmed, and also contains white paint. This figurine resembles a seated type identified in West's report from Tezoyuca (West 1975:Plate 63d, Pg. 382 and Plate 65a, Pg. 383) and is tentatively placed in the Patlachique phase.

Building 4

[Figure 8](#) and [Figure 9](#) illustrate several of the figurines associated with Building 4. It is in the Building 4 collection that we see for the first time styles commonly associated with the Tzacualli phase.



Figure 8. Figurine heads from Building 4.

[Figure 8](#), upper row are styles usually associated with the Early Tzacualli phase – that is, "coffee bean" eyes, extreme jutting or prognathous lower jaw and a single roll collar. A22 is probably the earliest of this group and may represent a transitional type from the earlier period styles based on the extreme slant of the eyes, the snout-like nose and deep gouge mouth. Both A246 and A254 have a cleft or bifurcated head resulting in what is to us a heart-shape. This feature was apparently significant to the Teotihuacáns because it is not uncommon to find a "split head" completely covered by a headdress. And, in fact A254 once wore a headdress, as indicated by the scar across the forehead. Since the feature is usually found on female figurines it may be a sort of shorthand for "female." Figurine F3 is an example of a "round head," also a common Teotihuacán figurine type. F4 on the lower row directly below F3 may be the same figurine type but with the addition of the turban type headdress.

In the lower row of [Figure 8](#) are styles usually associated with the Late Tzacualli phase, exhibiting a lesser degree of prognathism, less pronounced "coffee bean" eyes, and a vertical "slit" mouth. The use of the small "disks" or "buttons" for headdress decoration is common during this phase. F1 is wearing an unusual headdress of bright red bat ears. Teotihuacán headdresses are thought to identify individuals, social groups or

social status. As evident in this very small sample, there is a great deal of variety in headdress styles.

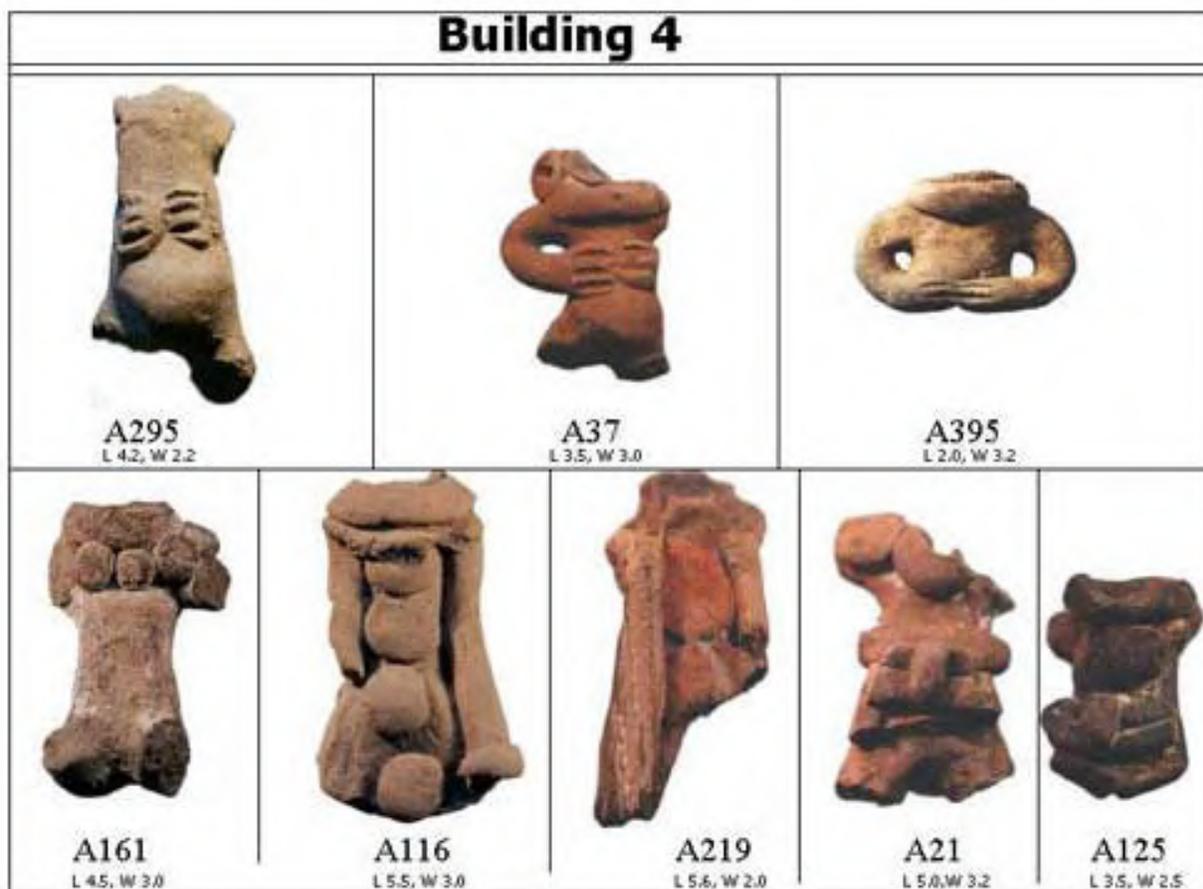


Figure 9. Figurine torsos from Building 4.

[Figure 9](#) is the torso equivalent of [Figure 8](#). On the upper row are styles commonly associated with the Early Tzacualli phase: standing nude figures with a single roll collar and hands resting on the upper abdomen. In some cases, as in A295 and A37, the lower abdomen protrudes markedly, possibly indicating pregnancy. A37 has remnants of red paint, especially visible on the ear spool.

On the lower row of [Figure 9](#) are styles characteristics of the Late Tzacualli phase: figures wearing clothing and adornment with the use of "buttons" or "disks" for decoration. A161, perhaps a transitional style from the earlier period, is a seated figure wearing a necklace of disks beneath a single roll collar. A116 and A219 are seated or kneeling figures with long sashes or arms, double collars, and disks decorations. A21 and A125 are standing figures wearing a maxtlatl or loincloth used by males. Notice the

attention to detail in the clothing; A21's attire was constructed using four separate layers.

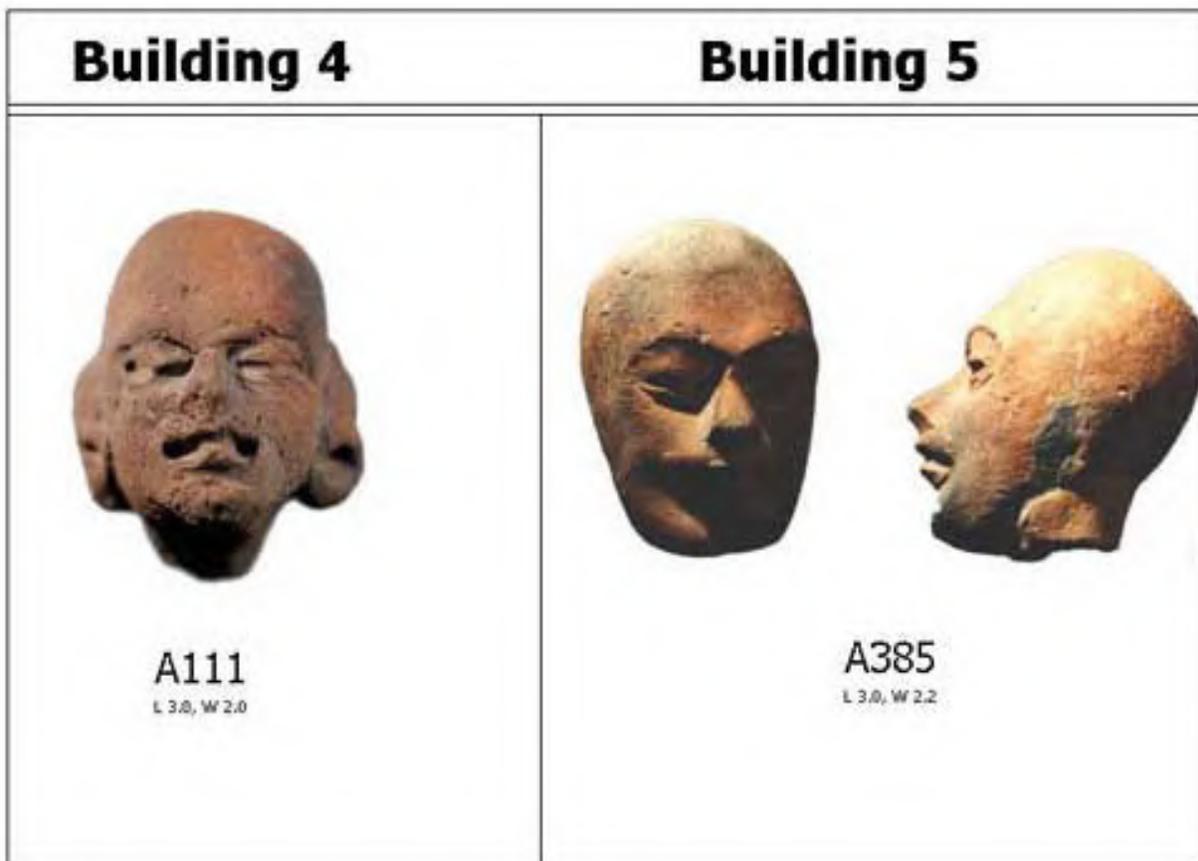


Figure 10. Figurine heads from Buildings 4 & 5.

The two figurine heads illustrated on [Figure 10](#) – A111, from Building 4 and A385 from Building 5 – are both unusual, yet they are similar to one another.

The texture and color of the paste of A111 seems foreign to Teotihuacán and the overall style seems more Olmec than Teotihuacán. The head is elongated and angled slightly backward, perhaps representing a type of cranial deformation. The features are very naturalistic with careful attention to detail. The eyebrow ridges are pronounced and the eye orbits are depressed. The eyes lids seem partially closed but eyeballs are visible, formed by indentations on either side. The corners of the mouth are slightly downturned. The lower lip curves upward in the middle, separating the mouth into two chambers, possibly depicting a deformity of the mouth.

Building 5

The overall style of Figurine A385 is very similar to A111, but the texture of the clay, workmanship and finish are much finer. At first glance it appears to be mold made, but on closer examination, it is evident that it is a handmade creation by a very skilled artist. The marks and strokes of the tools that were used to create the various features are still visible, including the artist's fingerprint on the forehead. The shape of the head, eyebrow ridges, details of the eye area, and double indentations indicating pupils on A385 are nearly identical to A111.

Figurine heads with this detailed eye treatment and naturalistic style have been reported before in several early Teotihuacán collections, (Millon 1960:fig 5f; Millon, Drewitt and Bennyhoff 1965:fig 106h; Barbour 1975:plate 13a, pg 13-15). These figurines bear a striking resemblance to the later period "portrait" heads, and may actually be the forerunner of this type.

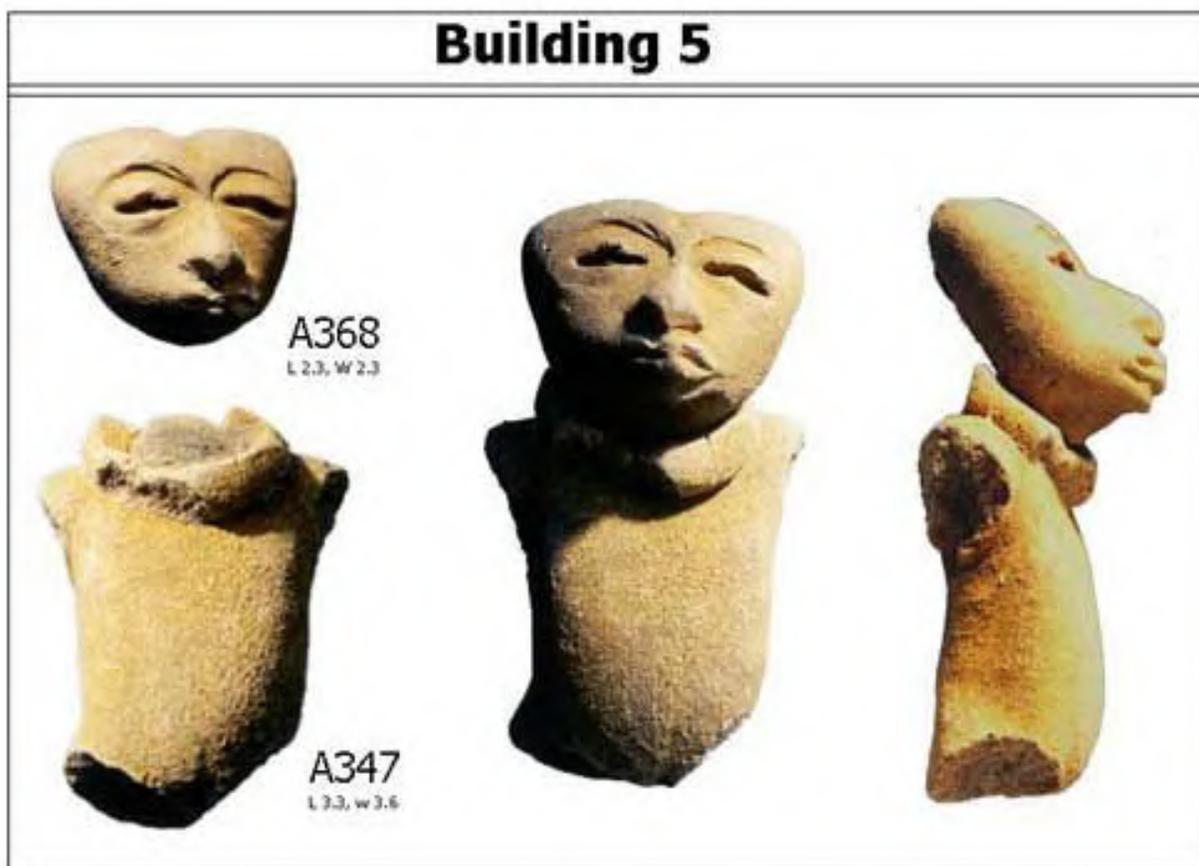


Figure 11. Reconstructed figurine torso from Building 5.

The front and side view of a partially reconstructed figurine is shown on [Figure 11](#). Two figurine fragments associated with Building 5, A368 and A347, were determined to be part of the same torso. This figurine combines several features discussed previously: the heart shaped or "split head"; the depressed eye orbits; the clearly delineated brow ridges; and eyeballs indicated by double indentations similar to Figurines A111 and A385 shown on [Figure 10](#). And, once again, there is a noticeable deformity of the mouth. Both the head and torso are covered with yellow paint fragments, prevalent in the Miccaotli phase.

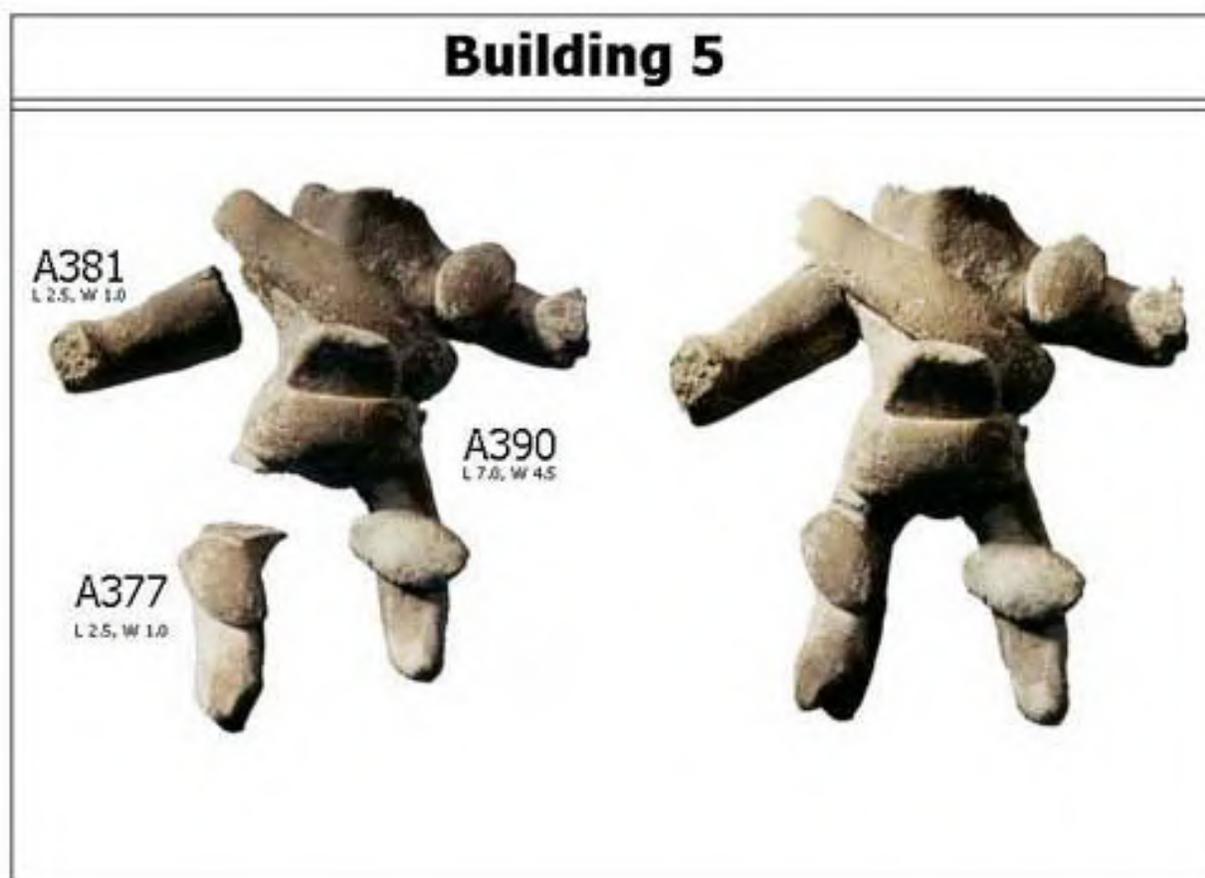


Figure 12. Reconstructed ballplayer figurine from Building 5.

[Figure 12](#) illustrates a nearly complete torso reconstructed from three separate figurine pieces from Building 5 – A381, A390, and A377. The figure is covered with a heavy white paint, with no overlying color visible. A thick band runs diagonally over the right shoulder, across the chest and under the left arm. The figure wears a very wide waistband with a large fold or flap looped under the band and curving outward. Oval appliques are present on the upper left arm and both knees. This figurine torso type has been reported in other Teotihuacán collections. (e.g., Barbour 1975:pg 80-81, fig 15; Goldsmith 2000:pg. 56-57; Kolb 1995:Plate 92F) and has usually been associated with

Xipe Totec, the flayed god. However, Scott (1993:132) has argued that this figurine type actually represents a ball player. I believe that the weight of the evidence in this particular case does indicate that the figure is indeed a ballplayer. The wide thick waist band with the curved frontal extension resembles the yoke and hacha configuration common to ballplayer attire, as are the arm and knee pads (Ekholm 1991:241-249). The heavy diagonal band across the chest may be a type of upper body protection. Unfortunately our reconstructed figurine cannot resolve the question of the type of headgear worn by the Teotihuacán ballplayer.

Building 7

Two separate figurine pieces from Structure 7 were also reassembled to produce the figurine shown on [Figure 13](#). Combining the H63 torso with the H64 leg the figurine that emerges is that of an individual with an extremely arched back. On the mid back on the inner side there is a noticeable indentation or impression. The upper portions of both arms remain and indicate that the arms were also stretched backward. This figurine is a variation of the "extended over table" type first identified by Goldsmith (1996; 2000:114-115). In this case, based on the indentation in the upper back, this individual was probably stretched over a pointed object – possibly a sacrificial stone – rather than a table. This severe backward arching of the body would facilitate heart extraction as depicted in various codices, an example of which is seen in [Figure 14](#).

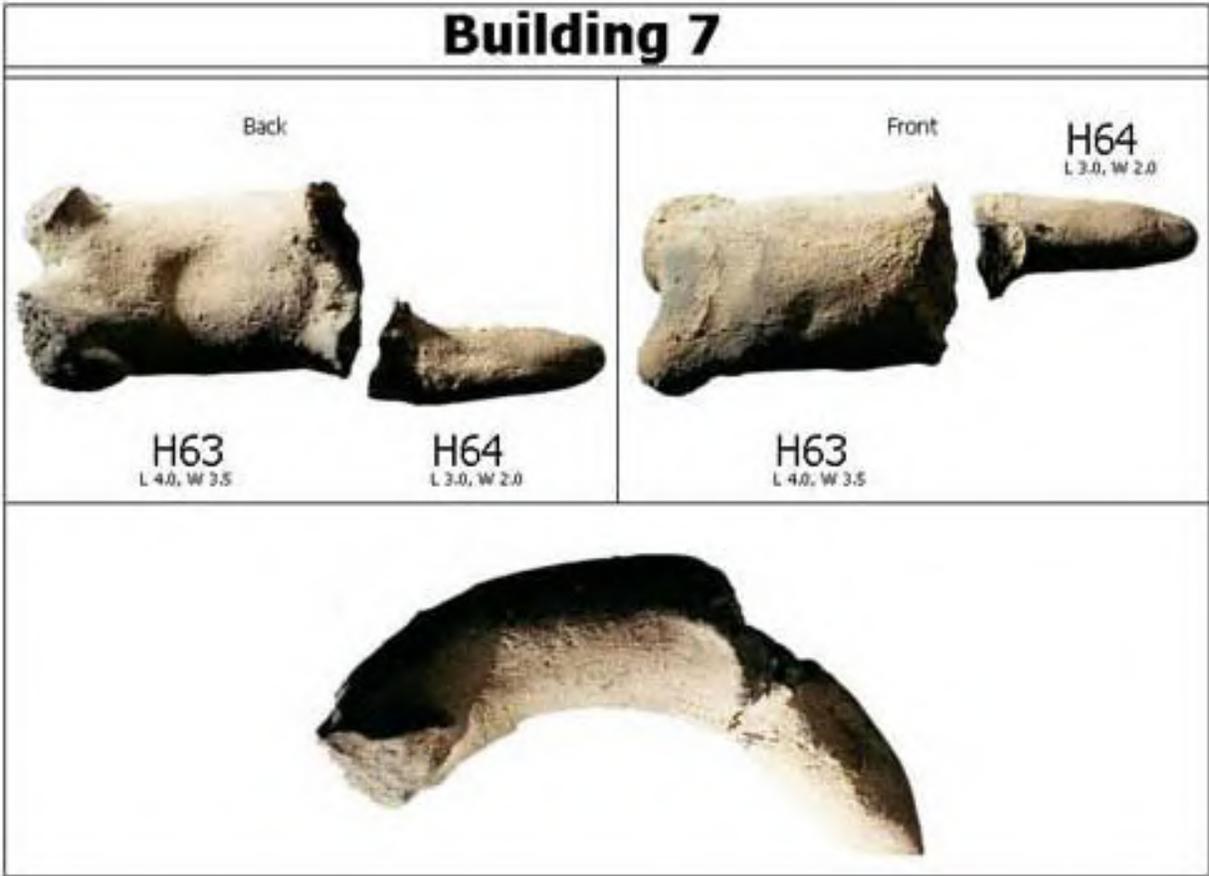


Figure 13. Reconstructed torso depicting victim of heart extraction.



Figure 14. Depiction of Heart Extraction from Vega Sosa 1991:Folio 17.

Summary

In summary, the figurines have already begun to tell us about the great city of Teotihuacán, its inhabitants, and their society as it grew and changed over the hundreds of years captured within the walls of what we know as the Pyramid of the Moon.

The diversity of styles exhibited in the figurines associated with the first ceremonial structures, Buildings 1 and 2, may indicate the presence of diverse social groups living in and around the Teotihuacán area, perhaps contemporaneous with the construction of the Pyramid.

In the Building 4 construction fill we see for the first time Tzacualli style figurines. The Tzacualli style is widely recognized as the "typical" style of early Teotihuacán. Sugiyama has interpreted the massive enlargement of Building 4 as indicative of the establishment of the Teotihuacán state. (Sugiyama 2001). The figurines certainly support this interpretation. In the Building 4 figurine collection increasing complexity in the attire – clothing and headdresses – of the figurines is demonstrated, perhaps reflecting an increasing complexity in the society. The attention to detail exhibited in the careful crafting of the figurines, some of which have multiple layers of clothing, items of adornment, and headdress decoration indicates that such detail was important to the Teotihuacanos, possibly signifying social status or social group.

With the construction of Buildings 5, 6 and 7 we see a decrease in the Tzacualli style and the emergence of the simpler, more streamlined Miccaotli style, accompanied by a heavy use of yellow color.

Associated with these later constructions we have two examples of a different, naturalistic style seldom found in clay figurines – or any human imagery for that matter – at Teotihuacán. These two examples may be imported items from outside the valley and thus may be evidence of foreign influence in the city. On the other hand, they could be depictions of members of an elite class. In any event, the style appears to be the forerunner of the "portrait" style typical of the later Xolopan period. Chemical and mineralogical analyses of the clay used in these two samples will likely be carried out in the future to determine place of origin.

We have a nearly complete Teotihuacán style figurine wearing the common accoutrements of Mesoamerican ballplayers, indicating that a ball game of some sort was most certainly played at Teotihuacán.

And, finally, associated with the last building stage of the pyramid, we have evidence that the sacrificial ritual of heart extraction was practiced at Teotihuacán, using the same method depicted in codices from the Post Classic period, nearly a thousand years later.

The analysis of the figurine collection is a work in progress and much more remains to be done. Additional figurine fragments are being identified as excavation continues, and

the results of the analyses of other artifacts and materials recovered in the excavations of the first field seasons are just beginning to be available. I am confident that the figurines have much more to tell us about Teotihuacán, and I look forward to sharing that with you in the future.

List of Figures

[Figure 1](#). The Pyramid of the Moon framed by Cerro Gordo (from Millon 1993:23).

[Figure 2](#). Excavation Plan (developed by Sugiyama and Cabrera 2001).

[Figure 3](#). Superimposed Buildings (developed by Sugiyama and Cabrera, 2001).

[Figure 4](#). Teotihuacán Ceramic Chronology from Cowgill 1997:131.

[Figure 5](#). Percentage of figure styles per structure.

[Figure 6](#). Figurines from Building 1.

[Figure 7](#). Figurines from Building 2.

[Figure 8](#). Figurine heads from Building 4.

[Figure 9](#). Figurine torsos from Building 4.

[Figure 10](#). Figurine heads from Buildings 4 & 5.

[Figure 11](#). Reconstructed figurine torso from Building 5.

[Figure 12](#). Reconstructed ballplayer figurine from Building 5.

[Figure 13](#). Reconstructed torso depicting victim of heart extraction.

[Figure 14](#). Depiction of Heart Extraction from Vega Sosa 1991:Folio 17.

Sources Cited

Barbour, Warren

1975 The Figurines and Figurine Chronology of Ancient Teotihuacán, México. Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of Rochester, New York.

Bennyhoff, James

1967 Chronology and Periodization: Continuity and Change in the Teotihuacán Ceramic Tradition. In *Teotihuacán, IX Mesa Redonda, Sociedad Mexicana de Antropología*, pp. 19-29. México, D.F.

Blucher, Darlena K

1971 Late Preclassic Cultures in the Valley of México: Pre-Urban Teotihuacán. Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of Anthropology, Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts.

Cowgill, George L.

1997 State and Society at Teotihuacán, México. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol. 26, pp. 129-161.

Ekholm, Susanna M.

1991 Ceramic Figurines and the Mesoamerican Ballgame. In: *The Mesoamerican Ballgame*, eds. Scarborough, V.L. and D. R. Wilcox. Tuscon: The University of Arizona Press.

Goldsmith, Kim

1996 Health Ritual or Heart Sacrifice? Male and Female "Extended Over Table" Figurines from Teotihuacán. Paper read at the annual meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, New Orleans.

2000 Forgotten Images: A Study of the Ceramic Figurines from Teotihuacán, México. Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Riverside.

Kolb, Charles C.

1995 Teotihuacán Period Figurines: A Typological Classification, Their Spatial and Temporal Distribution in the Valley of Teotihuacán. In: *The Teotihuacán Valley Project Final Report - Volume 3: The Teotihuacán Occupation of the Valley: Part 2, Artifact Analysis*. William T. Sanders, ed., pp. 275-466. University Park: Matson Museum of Anthropology, The Pennsylvania State University.

1996 Ceramic Figurines from the Central Mexican Highlands: An Overview of Past and Current Research. Paper read at the annual meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, New Orleans.

Millon, René

1960 The Beginnings of Teotihuacán. *American Antiquity*, Vol. 26, Number 1, pp. 1-9.

1992 Teotihuacán studies: from 1950 to 1990 and beyond. In: *Art, Ideology, and the City of Teotihuacán*, ed. Berlo, J.C. Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks.

1993 The Place where Time Began: An Archaeologist's Interpretation of What Happened in Teotihuacán History. In: *Teotihuacán: Art from the City of the Gods*, eds. Berrin, K, Pasztory, E., New York: Thames & Hudson.

Millon, René, Bruce Drewitt and James Bennyhoff

1965 The Pyramid of the Sun at Teotihuacán: 1959 Investigations. Philadelphia: Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, Volume 55, Part 6.

Noguera, Eduardo

1974 La Cerámica Arqueológica de Mesoamérica. México, D.F.: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas.

Scott, Sue

1994 Terracotta Figurines from Ancient Teotihuacán: Typology and Iconographic Themes. Ph.D. Dissertation. Institute of Archaeology, University of London.

1993 Teotihuacán Mazapan Figurines and the Xipe Totec Statue: A Link Between the Basin of México and the Valley of Oaxaca. Vanderbilt University Publications in Anthropology 44. Nashville.

Smith, Robert Eliot

1987 A Ceramic Sequence from the Pyramid of the Sun, Teotihuacán, México. Papers of The Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Vol. 75. Harvard University. Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Sugiyama, Saburo, Shigeru Kabata, Anthony Aveni, Tatsuya Murakami

2001 Architectural Sequence of the Early Monuments at the Moon Pyramid, Teotihuacán. Paper read at the annual meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, New Orleans.

Vega Sosa, Constanza

1991 Códice Azoyú, El reino de Tlachinollan. Fondo de Cultura Económica, México, DF.