

11. Miscellaneous Bedrock and Boulder Carvings

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A wide variety of carved and worked stones and areas of bedrock, not strictly classifiable as monuments, are found at Chalcatzingo. A separate sequential numbering system, beginning with the prefix MCR (Miscellaneous Carved Rock), is used to separate these from the site's monuments. In keeping with the precedent set in the monument chapters (Chapters 9 and 10), the MCR's are ordered and discussed by site areas and subareas, within two sections. The first section describes *maquetas* (models) and quarry stones; the second section, stones with deeply ground "cup-marks."

The Miscellaneous Carved Rocks are found primarily in site areas I, II, and III, the upper terraces and hillside slopes of the archaeological zone. Stones bearing ground cup-marks are even more restricted, most of them occurring on the talus slopes of the Cerro Chalcatzingo and the terrace fringes immediately adjacent to the talus slopes. Figure 9.2 provides the location of the majority of the stones discussed below. Most were plotted on the map by sight, and thus their position on the map is accurate in some cases only within 1 or 2 m.

CARVINGS AND QUARRY STONES

Area I-A

MCR-1 (Fig. 11.1)

Carved into the exposed bedrock about 3 m east of Monument 1 is a shallow rectangle, ca. $30 \times 25 \times 2.5$ cm. This carving has been previously published by Carlo Gay (Altar 20; 1972a:83).

MCR-2 (Fig. 11.2)

Excavations during the first field season removed soil deposits from bedrock exposures adjacent to Monuments 1, 6, 7, and 8 high on the hillside of the Cerro Chalcatzingo, uncovering Monuments 14 and 15. These same clearing operations also disclosed a narrow and shallow canal (MCR-2) carved into the

bedrock above Monument 1, above and behind Monuments 6 and 7. This canal, with a maximum width of 14 cm and a maximum depth of 4 cm, is approximately 2.6 m long. It is within the drainage carrying rainwater runoff past Monument 1. Its position and height are such that water flowing out of the canal will fall into a group of mortar-like holes (MCR-3) near the base of Monuments 6 and 7.

MCR-3

Just west of the base of Monument 7 is a group of seven mortar-like holes (Altar 19; Gay 1972a:82–83), obviously positioned to catch falling water from the canal (and drainage) 1.8 m above and to the south. It is also probable that these water catchment stones and the canal were designed to function primarily at times when there was a minor rather than a major water flow. The canal is shallow,

and the catchment holes were probably meant to hold "sacred" water. A torrent of water would obscure both carved features.

Area II

MCR-8 (Figs. 11.3, 11.4)

Gay (1972a:80) reported this stone, which lies near the east end of T-11, as Altar 9. When originally seen by our project, the stone looked exactly as photographed by Gay (1972a:Pl. 16)—a large flat area, ca. 1.4 m in diameter, with a raised area on the south side and a ground cup-mark on the flat surface. Irregular pecked grooves ran east and west from the cup. Grove was intrigued with the possibility that the stone was a crude model (*maqueta*) of the Cerro Chalcatzingo and site, with the flat area representing the fields at the base of the *cerro*.



Figure 11.1. MCR-1, carved rectangular depression near Monument 1.



Figure 11.2. MCR-2, shallow canal cut into bedrock above Monuments 1, 6, and 7.



Figure 11.3. MCR-8, *maqueta*.

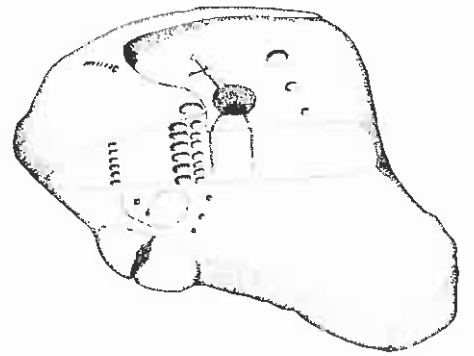


Figure 11.4. Drawing of MCR-8, showing details.

During the second field season, the sides of the stone were cleared, and it was discovered that the stone was larger and more complex than imagined, and indeed apparently was a *maqueta*. The area originally exposed on the ground surface is the top of the *maqueta*. Below this (to the east; up, in Gay's photo) is another large flat area with a pecked spiral. This flat area ends with another raised area (barely projecting from the surface in Gay's photo).

Today we believe that the main raised area symbolically represents the Cerro Chalcatzingo. The vertical drop to the lower flat area and spiral represents the cliffs of the *cerro*. Two pecked grooves running from the cup continue over the face of the "cliff," and when rain water overflows from the cup, it flows along these grooves and over the "cliff" as well.

This might seem slim evidence to consider this small vertical drop the "cliffs" of the *cerro*, but an examination of the carving clearly shows small pecked "stairs" on the face of the "cliff." On the back side of the uppermost projection of the "cerro" is a small natural hole in the stone. Small pecked "stairs" also occur up to this hole, a "cave" in the *maqueta*. Actual well-carved stairways have been found on the far western hillside of the Cerro Chalcatzingo (see MCR-11).

It is probable that the second raised area on the *maqueta* (today broken from the stone) represents the Cerro Delgado. The *maqueta* is not a realistic depiction of the hills and site; rather it seems to be a symbolic representation. The facts that the *maqueta* emphasizes water and shows two drainages on the cliff face are significant when it is remembered that the Area I monuments on the hillside at Chalcatzingo occur near the two major water drainages.

MCR-9 (Figs. 11.5, 11.6)

During the excavations of T-9A Structure 1, which exposed the remnants of a Cantera phase house structure, a large stone slab, ca. 85 × 50 cm, was uncovered within one of the interior stone lines. A small (ca. 16 × 10 cm) rectangle was engraved on the surface of the slab. Within the rectangle a crude "sunburst" motif had also been pecked and engraved. The presence of a glyph-like engraved motif on this slab and the highly possible association of the slab with a Cantera phase subfloor burial (Chapter 4) suggests the intriguing possibility that the symbol was linked to the deceased individual.



Figure 11.5. MCR-9 in situ in wall line of T-9A house. Arrow points north.



Figure 11.6. Details of MCR-9 engraved design. (Orientation is different from that in Figure 11.5.)

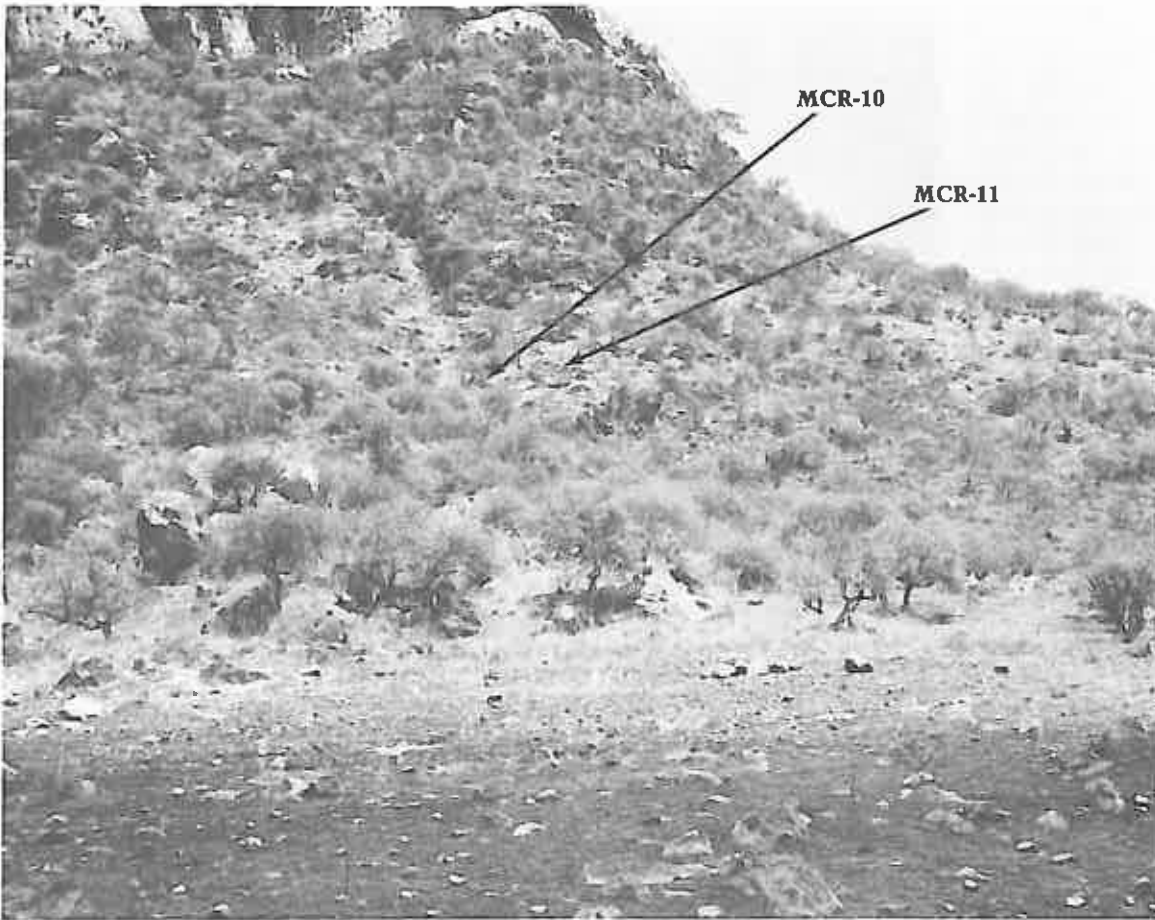


Figure 11.7. Hillside of Cerro Chalcatzingo showing locations of MCR-10 and MCR-11.



Figure 11.8. MCR-10.



Figure 11.9. MCR-11, lower stairway.

MCR-9 is located today in the municipal building in the village of Chalcatzingo.

MCR-10 (Figs. 11.7, 11.8)

An unusual relief carving occurs on a sloping section of exposed bedrock on the Cerro Chalcatzingo above the southwest limit of the site (S-39). It is located at about the 1,040 m contour level. This shallow relief carving takes the form of a long parabolic line, with the open end of the parabola pointing uphill (south). The parabola's east leg is ca. 3 m long; the west leg is 2 m. It is the uphill section that is raised in relief. The parabola crosscuts natural fissures and contours of the stone, and therefore is believed to be an artificial construction.

MCR-11 (Fig. 11.9)

This carving consists of two well-carved sets of stairways on the exposed rock slopes of the Cerro Chalcatzingo. They are located about 30 m west and 10 m above MCR-10.

The two stairways, of five steps each, are separated from one another by ca. 3 m vertically. The lowest (eastern) stairs (Fig. 11.9) extend up a ca. 40° rock face. These well cut and ground steps are ca. 44 cm wide. Their length varies from 20 to 30 cm and their depth from 9 to 12 cm.

The uphill (western) group is somewhat different, for rather than each step being integrally connected, they appear more as a sequence of well-cut steps separated by small areas of natural rock slope. This set of steps varies in width from 50 to 70 cm, but they are only 10–20 cm in length and 10–12 cm deep.

Today these steps do not appear to begin or terminate at any significant point on the hillside. Erosion on this highly exposed section of hillside may have long ago removed any artifact debris or simple constructions. The only other feature of interest in this hillside area is a group of stone slabs, another 30 m higher on the hillside. One of these slabs (MCR-12, see below) is partially cut through by a deep groove, suggesting that this hillside area was a source of large flat blocks of stone for the site.

MCR-12 (Fig. 11.10)

A large slab of stone lies on the hillside surface about 30 m above (south of) MCR-11 and near some low, cliff-like exposures of stone. However, this slab, ca. 164 cm long, 100 cm wide, and 36 cm thick, has a deep groove cut across its upper face and two sides. This groove, 55 cm from one end of the slab, is 12 cm



Figure 11.10. MCR-12, partially cut stone slab.

wide and 7 cm deep. The groove was apparently made to cut or trim this slab to size.

Three other smaller slabs nearby may be the unneeded remains of already cut slabs, although they are now eroded and weathered (a few are partially buried), and it is difficult to ascertain if they were once cut. However, the possibility exists that this area may have been a small quarry site, perhaps using slabs removed from the low outcrops nearby.

MCR-13

About 55 m east of Monument 12 is a buried stone slab with only its upper surface exposed. This slab, 150 cm in length and 70 cm wide, has a groove cut from side to side across its exact center. It may have been originally "quarried" on the hillside near MCR-12 and moved to this location, although this is speculation.

MCR-14 (Fig. 11.11)

About 80 m downslope (west) from Monument 12 is a roundish boulder, ca. 190 cm in diameter and 65 cm tall. A cut groove encircles 90 percent of the boulder at its mid-point. No other worked stones have been found in the adjacent area.

Area III

MCR-4

This small stone, labeled Altar 12 by Gay (1972a: 80, Pl. 18) stands within the front wall line of PC Structure 2 (Fig. 4.7). As noted by Gay, it is ca. 74 cm tall and contains a 1 cm deep carved rectangular cavity ca. 23 cm long and 13 cm wide.



Figure 11.11. MCR-14.

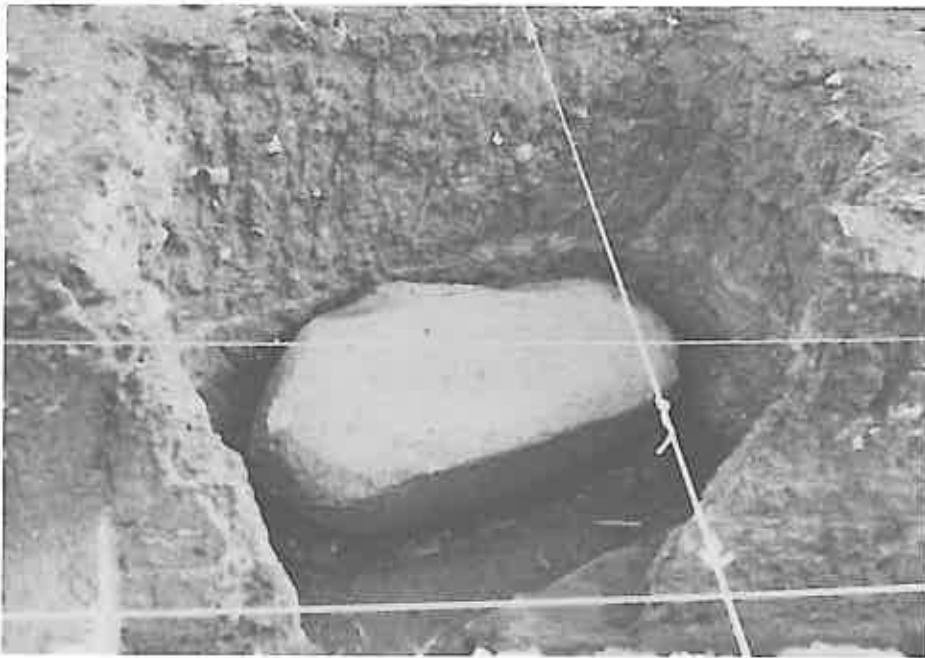


Figure 11.12. MCR-5 as found on PC Structure 6.

MCR-5, MCR-6, and MCR-7 (Figs. 11.12–11.14)

These are large stone slabs which have been ground to a smooth surface on all sides. While roughly rectangular in shape, the sides and end pieces are sometimes rounded or tapered, giving the stone an irregular shape overall. All three stones lack evidence of any carved or painted motifs, and their relatively short length and general shape suggest that they were not meant to be erected vertically. All were found buried on or near the southeast end of PC Structure 4, in intrusive pits, and the local villager who farms this piece of *ejido* land informed us that in the past he has buried large stones here to remove them from the area he plows yearly.

MCR-5 (Fig. 11.12) was found during excavations of PC Structure 6, adjacent to Structure 4's southeast edge. Unlike MCR-6 and MCR-7, it has one large flat side, ca. 125 cm long and 65 cm wide, and a curved (ovoid) cross-section ca. 50 cm thick.



Figure 11.13. MCR-6 in situ, PC Structure 4.



Figure 11.14. MCR-7, PC Structure 4.



Figure 11.15. MCR-15 (left) and MCR-16 (right) in field.



Figure 11.16. MCR-17, T-2.

MCR-6 (Fig. 11.13) was found buried on the east slope of Structure 4 in excavations carried out during the first field season. It is more rectangular than either of the other stones, but unlike them has one unfinished (or broken) end section. It measures ca. $100 \times 60 \times 40$ cm.

MCR-7 (Fig. 11.14) was also found on the east slope of Structure 4, about 5 m from MCR-6 and east of the looted tomb feature. It has generally flat sides and rounded ends, and measures $95 \times 60 \times 50$ cm.

There are also well-finished large broken stones buried on the east end of Structure 4, and others which lie along the edge of the El Paso Drainage gully adjacent to this structure (Fig. 6.3). The presence here of all these worked stones suggests that they may have been originally located atop the east end of the platform mound. At this time we cannot conjecture as to their function, although it is possible they served as part of an architectural feature (wall, floor, etc.). The dating of these carvings is unknown, and we can only presume that they date to the period of major use of the platform mound, the Cantera phase.

MCR-15 and MCR-16 (Fig. 11.15)

Until recently, two large stones projected from the surface of the lower, flat area of T-29, but they apparently have been destroyed or removed. These stones, spaced ca. 3.8 m apart and with an approximate orientation between them of N85-1/2W, occurred in an area away from the hill-sides, where no natural boulders are found. Therefore, these two monoliths must have been purposely erected in this location.

At the time of our project the western stone (MCR-15) projected ca. 50 cm above the ground surface, and the eastern stone (MCR-16) ca. 120 cm. Each was roughly quadrangular, with sides of ca. 70 cm. Neither exhibited faced side surfaces or traces of carving, but since their upper surfaces are angular, both may be the basal stumps of broken monoliths.

Area IV

MCR-17 (Fig. 11.16)

Several small boulders occur at the northwest corner of T-2, just across the El Paso Drainage from the large Middle Formative platform mound on the Plaza Central (PC Str. 4). A concentric circle and a backward-S element are depicted on one of the boulders. Because of weathering and an overhanging tree, the carvings are usually visible only in the mornings

when they are highlighted by the sun.

While I cannot offer an interpretation for the backward-S symbol, the concentric circle probably represents the *chalchihuitl* glyph, the symbol of "precious water." This motif also occurs on the "El Rey" relief (Mon. 1), and both that carving and the T-2 boulder are located beside gullies which carry rainwater runoff. It is impossible to date the T-2 carving, since the *chalchihuitl* glyph was important from the Formative period onward, and while this carving is probably Middle Formative, it could instead be related to the site's Classic or Postclassic period occupations.

MCR-18 (Fig. 11.17)

This carved rock was reported by Gay (1972a:85, Pl. 22; Mon. 2) and is a relatively small angular boulder projecting above the surface at the upper (southern) end of T-2. The stone, whose exposed dimensions are ca. 2 m long, 1 m wide, and 50 cm high, has small, step-like parallel lines carved on its surface, giving the impression that it is a miniature representation (*maqueta*) of a mountain with stepped paths to the top. Another *maqueta* stone was found on T-11 (MCR-8).

MCR-19 (Figs. 11.18, 11.19)

A boulder with a large horizontal surface sits on the west edge of T-4 near its southern extremity. Shaded by a tree, this rock served as a convenient resting spot during the two seasons of excavations on T-4. During that time the archaeologists noted small, purposefully ground pits in the boulder's surface and recorded this information in the T-4 field notes. However, it was not until several years later that astronomer John Carlson, during a visit to the site, noticed faintly carved lines connecting the pit marks. Carlson notified me of his discovery, and I then studied the carving during a visit to the site in 1978.

Several faintly carved lines on the upper surface of the boulder create a quadrangular form. Small pit marks are found at each of the quadrangle's corners, at its center, and at the midpoints of the NW and SE sides. The quadrangle measures 85 × 63 cm, and its lines orient to ca. N11-1/2E and ca. N80-1/2W. When this latter line is projected westward, it crosses the north side of the Classic pyramid, T-3 Structure 1. When projected to the east, it crosses the Classic period platform, T-4 Structure 3, only a few meters away. The orientation of T-4 Structure 3 is essentially the same as that of the quadrangle pecked onto the stone.



Figure 11.17. MCR-18, T-2.

The various orientations strongly suggest that the quadrangle dates to the Classic period.

Area VI

MCR-20

At the first major bend in the broad path which runs along the north side of the Cerro Delgado to Tetla is a large boulder on the north side of the path. The path (south) side of this boulder has a shallow carved rectangular depression (30 × 20 cm) and a faint series of weathered lines which could be remnants of miniature carved steps (see MCR-8, MCR-18) near the rectangle. A smaller rectangle (20 × 15 cm) is found on the boulder's north side.

MCR-21 (Fig. 24.20)

This is a group of at least fifteen mortar holes ground in the bedrock at the edge of the river in the barranca north of Tetla. They are located at the foot of the only access trail from Tetla to the barranca in this area. Although Tetla has evidence of Formative, Classic, and Postclassic occupations, I would suggest that these bedrock mortars are probably Postclassic simply because they have not been completely eroded and destroyed by the river's annual flooding, indicating perhaps that they do not have great antiquity.

CUP-MARK STONES

Cup-mark stones are boulders or exposures of bedrock containing deep circular ground depressions. They were first reported at Chalcatzingo by Gay (1972a: 73–84). The holes are mortar-like and can occur as solitary examples or in groupings. The holes differ from normal bedrock mortars in their relatively small diameters, carefully ground vertical walls, and by the fact that they are seldom located near water sources.

Several points related to cup-marks are worth mentioning. Only one example can be even tentatively dated. Monument 18, found on the east end of PC Structure 4, has a cup-mark which seems to be an integral part of that monument's carved design (Fig. 9.20). This suggests that some, if not most, of the cup-marks are Middle Formative if we can assume that Monument 18 itself is Middle Formative in date. In addition, a few of the cup-marks are found on boulders on the surface of the site's Middle Formative terraces, demonstrating that they date to or after the terrace building.

Cup-mark stones are not restricted to Chalcatzingo or to Morelos. Similar stones have been found in other areas of Mesoamerica (e.g., Guanajuato; Emilio Bejerano, personal communication).

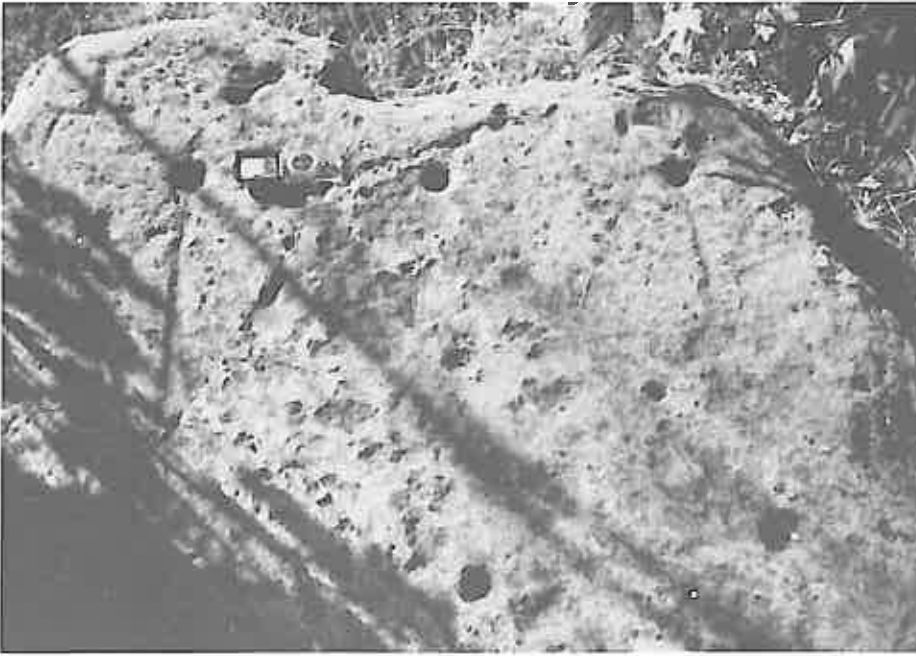


Figure 11.18. MCR-19, T-4.

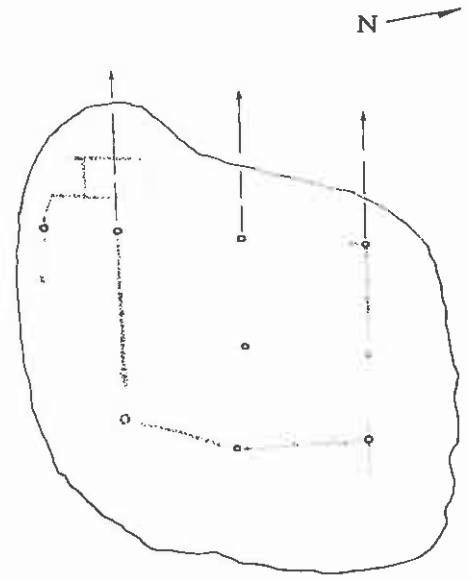


Figure 11.19. MCR-19 showing alignments of shallow pits in stone. Arrows at top point to Classic pyramid.

However, they are not usually mentioned in site reports.

The survey of cup-mark stones by Gay and Gillett Griffin (Gay 1972a:73–84) was comprehensive and located the majority of the stones which we observed during our field work. Gay's use of the term "altar" for these stones seems inappropriate, however. His map (1972a:74) provides a good generalized idea of their distribution (compare to Fig. 9.2). It should be noted, though, that while illustrations in his book depict clusters of cup-mark stones (1972a:Figs. 40–42), the illustrations are stylized and are apparently meant only to portray individual stones. No such clusters occur, orientations vary, and the illustrations are obviously not meant to depict exact spatial distributions.

I share Gay's (1972a:84) opinion that the cup-mark stones served ritual rather than utilitarian functions, and that they were probably receptacles for "sacred" water (rainwater and/or ritual water). MCR-8 demonstrates very well the relationship of water to these deeply ground holes, as does the location of MCR-22. While I hypothesize that these stones functioned to hold "sacred" water, the possibility of significant alignments between some or all of them cannot be ruled out and remains to be tested.



Figure 11.20. MCR-22.



Figure 11.21. MCR-26, T-11.

Area I-A

MCR-22 (Fig. 11.20)

This stone lies at the southeast corner of CT-1. It was found at the beginning of the second field season as we were removing earth from a small natural spring. The stone has four cup-mark holes, three in a line and one to the side. Its location by this minor trickle of water again points out the relationship of cup-mark stones and water. This carving was not reported by Gay.

MCR-23

A stone with one cup-mark lies 20 m east of the El Rey Drainage, and 5 m west and 3 m south of the small CT-2 Classic platform on the hillslope below Monument 1. This or MCR-24 could be Gay's Altar 16 (1972a:82, Fig. 42).

MCR-24

A cup-mark stone sits about 25 m east of MCR-36 and about 5 m higher. A single cup-mark is found on its upper surface.

Area II

MCR-25

A large flat rock, almost 6 m in diameter, lies at the northern edge of T-11. This large rock, with at least ten cup-marks of varying sizes, is Gay's Altar 1 (1972a:73–74, Fig. 38). Two of the highly eroded cup-marks are connected by a small groove. It is unfortunate that this large stone has apparently been dynamited in

the recent past as part of the *cantera* mining on the hillside, since we cannot determine today how much of the rock is now missing.

MCR-26 (Fig. 11.21)

A shallow design rings the cup-mark on this stone (Gay's Altar 2; 1972a:76–77, Fig. 39), which protrudes slightly from the surface at the west end of T-11. It is the only design of this type recorded at Chalcatzingo, although several similar but far more complex motifs occur on rock exposures on the Cerro de la Cueva, across the valley from Chalcatzingo, visited by Grove and Angulo in 1972. The carving makes this cup-mark stone unique at Chalcatzingo.

MCR-27

Two cup-marks are found on the upper surface of the stone that Gay calls Altar 3 (1972a:77, Fig. 40). It is located in the T-13 area, ca. 35 m southwest of MCR-25. As Gay noted, this stone has also been partially destroyed by *cantera* mining activities.

MCR-28

Located 40 m south of MCR-26, at the west edge of T-13 and beside the path to Monument 13, is stone with one cup-mark. It may be the stone Gay labels Altar 4 (1972a:77, Fig. 40).

MCR-29

Located on the unfarmed hillside south of T-11, this stone with one cup-mark

may be Gay's Altar 5 (1972a:77, Fig. 40).

MCR-30

This stone may be Gay's Altar 6 (1972a:80, Fig. 40). It is located in an area of unfarmed rocky land surrounded by T-11. The stone has one cup-mark.

MCR-31

As with some other cup-mark stones, it is difficult to correlate this stone to those reported by Gay. Nevertheless, this is probably his Altar 7 (1972a:80, Fig. 41). It is located above the eastern end of T-11, 30 m southwest of MCR-32.

MCR-32

About 35 m south of the T-11 *maqueta* stone (MCR-8), a group of three cup-marks is found on what is probably a large buried boulder whose top is exposed in two areas. Two cup-marks occur on one large exposed section of rock, while the third is on a smaller exposure. This is probably Gay's Altar 8 (1972a:80, Fig. 41), although the positioning of the cup-marks is slightly different than that illustrated in his publication.

MCR-33 (Fig. 11.22)

A large angular stone, with a single cup-mark, lies 5 m north of MCR-8, the T-11 *maqueta*. This is Gay's Altar 10, although somewhat different than illustrated (1972a:80, Fig. 42).

MCR-34

A stone with one cup-mark is almost midway between MCR-28 and Monu-



Figure 11.22. MCR-33 (*foreground*) and MCR-8 (*background*).

ment 12, west of the infrequently farmed area we have labeled T-13. At this time we cannot correlate it with any specific stone reported by Gay.

MCR-35 (Fig. 11.23)

At the extreme southeast of the site, in a small drainage about 60 m south of Monument 12 [and located off the south edge of our map, Fig. 9.2], is a small boulder with two cup-marks and two other rocks with slightly shallower depressions. These were not recorded by Gay.

MCR-36 (Fig. 11.24)

A one-cup-mark stone was recently found just a few meters west of Monument 19.



Figure 11.23. MCR-35.

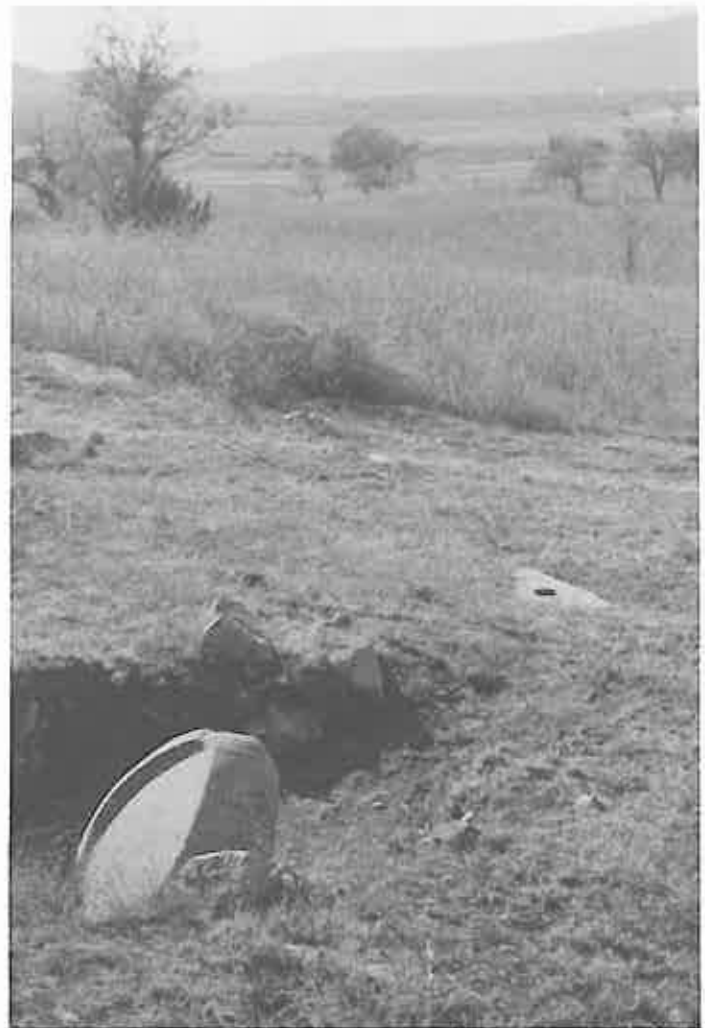


Figure 11.24. MCR-36 (*center*) and Monument 19 (*foreground*).



Figure 11.25. MCR-37 (*foreground*) and Classic period pyramid (*background*).

Area III

MCR-37 (Fig. 11.25)

Ten meters south and behind T-3 Structure 2, a Classic period mound, is a stone with one cup-mark reported by Gay (1972a: 80, Fig. 41) as his Altar 11.

MCR-38 (Figs. 4.6, 11.26)

Sitting on the southwest edge of the Plaza Central, between PC Structures 1 and 2, this large, tall boulder has two cup-marks on its upper surface. This cup-mark stone is unusual in that it is located very close to structures. It lies on the surface of a terrace and is the tallest of the cup-mark stones. This is Gay's Altar 13 (1972a: 83, Fig. 42).

Area VIII

MCR-39

There are two cup-mark depressions at the base of Monument 10, on the peak of the Cerro Chalcatzingo. They were first reported by Gay (Altar 21; 1972a: 83).



Figure 11.26. MCR-38 (*right foreground*), Classic pyramid, T-3 Structure 1 (*left background*), and PC Structure 4 (*right background*).

RESUMEN DEL CAPÍTULO 11

Además de los monumentos, Chalcatzingo presenta un número de piedras esculpidas, trabajadas, y en pedacería que hemos designado Rocas Labradas Miscelaneas (MCR). Estas incluyen: maquetas, tabletas de cantera, y piedras con incisiones profundas "con marca de taza." Su ocurrencia principal está localizada en las terrazas superiores y en las pendientes de las laderas de la montaña en el área del sitio principal.

Algunos de estos labrados se encuentran asociados claramente con el agua, por ejemplo, piedras para canales pequeños y recipientes de agua, tales como las que presentan el motivo "marca de taza." El simbolismo del agua también se exhibe en la maqueta grande (MCR-8), la que presenta no sólo los dos cerros sino también espirales, tazas, y ranuras para contener agua de lluvia. Además, hay un glifo de un chalchihuitl labrado en un canto rodado (MCR-17) al través del drenaje de El Paso.

Las otras piedras labradas designadas MCR incluyen escalones labrados en la ladera del cerro, piedras con marcas de cantera, y piedras con cortes irregulares o incompletos y ranuras. Casi ninguna de las MCR puede fecharse, ni sus ubicaciones por ahora permiten descubrir patrón alguno respecto de ellas entre sí o con relación a estructura alguna.