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## 22. Excavations at Telixtac and Huazulco

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One of the project's research goals was to excavate smaller Middle Formative sites in the Río Amatzinac Valley to provide comparative data as well as information on intravalley interaction during this period. Time and funds were limited, so the decision was made to test excavate one site in the valley north of Chalcatzingo and another south of Chalcatzingo. We wanted sites at the lower range of the settlement hierarchy to gain a more complete perspective on Chalcatzingo's sociocultural role in the Amatzinac Valley settlement system.

After visiting many prospective locations, Huazulco (RAS-62) in the northern sector and Telixtac (RAS-144) in the southern section were chosen (see Fig. 21.4). These two sites were accessible and had good Middle Formative debris. Part of the Telixtac site is bisected by railroad tracks; thus, in addition to regular permits, permission to work near the right-of-way had to be obtained from railroad officials. Telixtac was test excavated in March 1974 and Huazulco in April 1974.

### TELIXTAC

The site RAS-144 (Figs. 21.4, 22.1) is located on part of the *ejido* land belonging to the small village of Telixtac, about 15 km due south of Chalcatzingo in the drier Huizache Grassland zone. In this area Middle Formative settlements are located either along permanent rivers or near springs. Several sites were found along the Río Amatzinac where barranca sidewalls widen and open onto alluvial terraces which could have been utilized for floodwater irrigation.

This portion of the valley is also characterized by shallow-sided impermanent drainages. Telixtac lies at the confluence of four of these small drainages. It is also near a small spring. Surface debris covers over 2 ha between two east-west running

drainages (dry at the time of excavations). Ground cover is minimal since the site is used for annual maize cultivation.

Telixtac is a shallow site, with sterile soil and *tepetate* occurring at a depth of about 1–1.5 m. Much of the site has been destroyed by repeated plowing, and cultural debris begins within what is now the plow zone (0–20 cm below surface). To the east, a separate limited Postclassic occupation was noted, consisting of a small circular mound and some scattered ceramic debris. None of this material overlies the Middle Formative occupation.

The only indication of Middle Formative architecture is a low, linear platform mound, approximately 100 × 23 m, which is bisected along its long axis and about half destroyed by a railroad cut. Mound architecture dating to this period is rare in the highlands and occurs only at Chalcatzingo and major sites in the surrounding valley. Thus its presence here indicates that Telixtac was relatively important in the regional hierarchy.

Most excavation units were dug in four areas (I–IV) of maximum sherd concentration, which had been determined by a surface survey of the site. Test Pit I was excavated to sample an area of relatively low sherd density.

### Area I

Only Area I had surface indications of architecture—the low linear mound. This type of platform mound is unusual due to its length; it is similar at first glance to later period range structures. Two profiles (totaling 6.5 m) were cleaned along the west face of the north-south railroad cut bisecting the mound (Fig. 22.1). Although at least one of the structures found in Area I had associated midden buildup extending onto the mound, the stratigraphy indicates that the mound is not midden but was a purposeful construction. The terrain at the site slopes

downward from west to east to a northwest-southeast trending bench (20 m wide) of constant elevation. The linear mound was constructed along this natural bench, extending to the southeast.

Excavations immediately adjacent to the mound revealed evidence of a structure having two building phases. A 24 m<sup>2</sup> area along the west side of the mound was horizontally stripped to 40–50 cm below surface level, uncovering part of the wall lines of a rectangular structure oriented north-south and east-west (Fig. 22.3). The structure originally extended northward; the double foundation wall partially shown in the northern part of Figure 22.3 had been destroyed by subsequent excavation for construction. The indented double wall, measuring approximately 1 m in length (at the center of Fig. 22.3), may have been part of a recessed entrance, opening to the west, on the downslope side of the mound. The structure apparently extended eastward onto the mound.

In some parts of the structure, we uncovered remnants of what may have been a stone underlayer to a floor. This is a common subfloor construction technique at Chalcatzingo, possibly designed to facilitate drainage. The overlying floor had probably been of packed earth. The only artifacts found in situ were concentrations of crushed whole and partial vessels and a mano found on part of the wall foundation.

Clay daub fragments, some of them burned, were recovered in the areas adjacent to the wall lines, indicating that some structure walls had been constructed of wattle and daub. Some of the daub fragments had wattle (*Tithonia tubaeformis*) impressions, while others were flat-sided. While many of the flat-sided pieces from wall surfaces at Chalcatzingo had traces of white pigment (Chapter 6), there is no evidence for this at Telixtac.

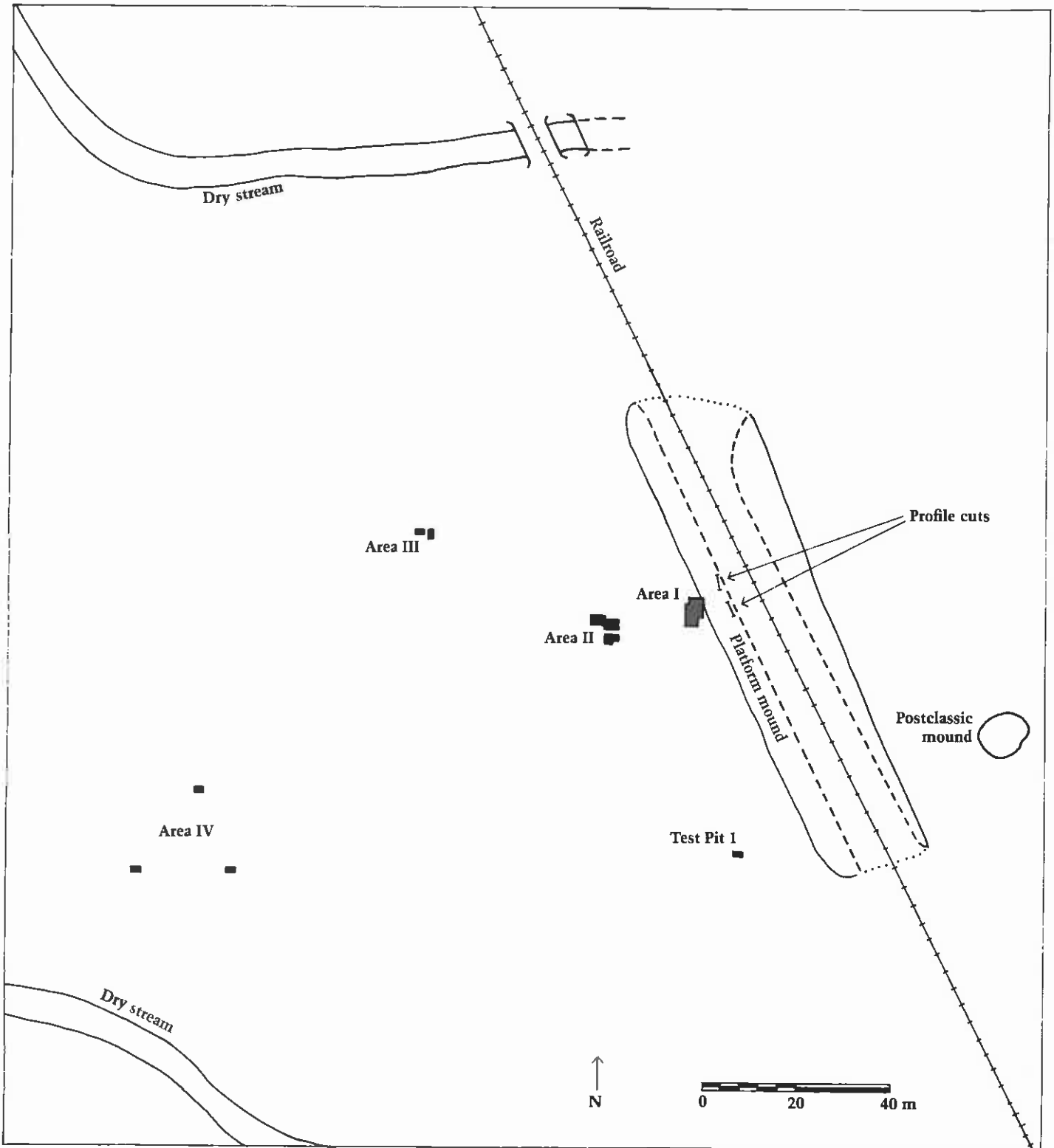


Figure 22.1. Telixtac, showing location of excavation units.



**Figure 22.2.** Telixtac Area III excavations (foreground). The Cerro Gordo and Cerro Chalcatzingo are in the background.

Two trash pits (not illustrated) were associated with this structure. One, on the mound itself, had been dug through part of a wall foundation associated with an earlier construction. It could not be excavated as it was within the railroad right-of-way. For that reason it is not clear whether this pit was inside or outside of the structure. A flexed burial (Burial 3) was found to the north of this trash pit.

The second pit was outside the structure, to the west. Refuse in this pit, which had been excavated into *tepetate*, included ceramics, lithics, ground stone tools, and animal bone. Fragments of human bone occurred in the refuse, and a skull (Burial 2) associated with a partial jade bead and a Carrales Coarse Grey ovate bowl was found at the base of the pit. The pit's basal level has an associated radiocarbon date of  $2600 \pm 70$  BP (720–580 BC; N-1956), well within the Cantera phase limit.

The construction techniques and the presence of subfloor burials, trash pits, and utilitarian artifacts define this structure as a residence, similar to houses at Cantera phase Chalcatzingo. The positioning of this structure adjacent to the long platform mound is quite similar to the relationship between PC Structure 6 and PC Structure 4 (the platform

mound) at Chalcatzingo. In neither instance are there data suggesting that these are elite residences, although their association with important public architecture strongly implies that they were special in some regard.

I believe that the linear mound also served a very utilitarian function at Telixtac, probably diverting rainwater and/or barranca overflow away from the living areas.

#### **Area II**

What were probably remnants of wall foundations were uncovered in several sections of Area II, but they lay so close to the surface that they had been badly damaged by plowing. The occupation debris in this area is shallow, with sterile soil occurring at approximately 50 cm below surface. Floor debris appears to have accumulated directly on top of the sterile horizon. Part of a straight-sided pit was uncovered in profile, having been cut into the sterile layer.

Ground stone tools were common in Area II, and only Area I had more burned daub fragments. Area II is unusual because all excavated levels contained more than 60 percent eroded sherds. This was not the case in any other area of the site. The only bone material recovered was a human premolar.

#### **Area III**

Excavations in Area III were limited to two  $1 \times 2$  m units. Cultural debris was relatively light; only 5 gm of adobe were recovered. Worked animal bone was found as well as several ground stone artifacts, including two mano fragments and a tubular arrow shaft straightener.

One burial (Burial I) was found in Area III. Unfortunately, this burial was removed by looters before it could be properly excavated. The associated artifacts were eventually recovered, however, and most basic data concerning burial form can be reconstructed. The interment was flexed and appeared to have been a young adult about 15–20 years old, placed in a shallow grave pit. Associated offerings included two whole C5 figurines, a small incised Amatzinac White shallow bowl, an animal effigy pot, and a Pavón Fine Grey pinch-sided ovate bowl. A fourth bowl (Fig. 22.4, upper center) was recovered from looters' backdirt after they vandalized the burial one night, before it was completely excavated. The vessel, probably associated with the burial, is Amatzinac White and has rim form RB-78.

A comparison can be made between this Telixtac burial and the subfloor burials of Chalcatzingo PC Structure 1 (Chapter 8; Appendix C), one of which (Burial

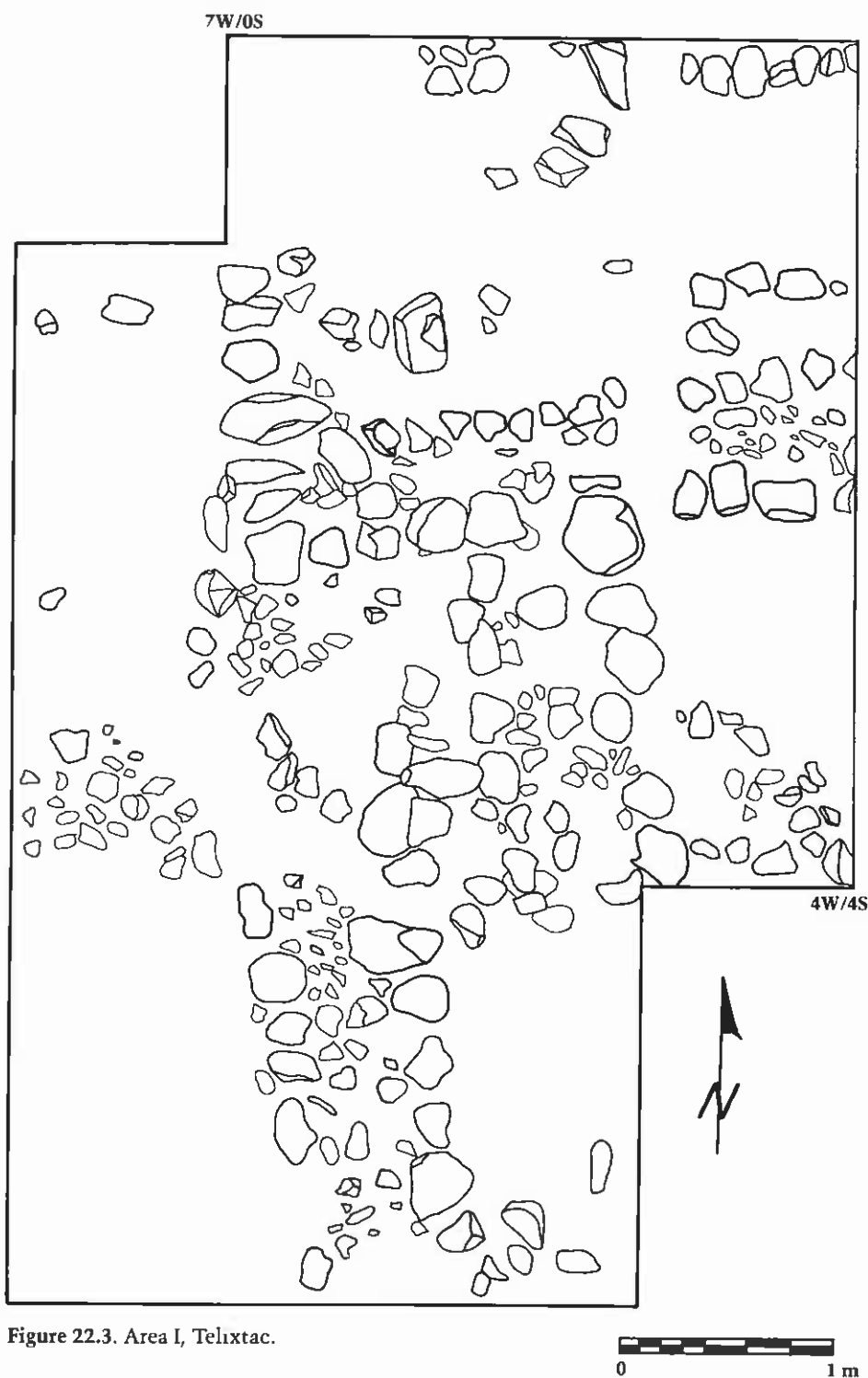


Figure 22.3. Area I, Telixtac.

28, a crypt burial) also had an animal effigy pot. The inclusion of Amatzinac White shallow bowls in burials was also a common practice at Chalcatzingo. Although there is no direct evidence for a structure here, this burial may have been associated with a household cluster.

#### **Area IV and Test Pit 1**

These areas are considered together here since they are stratigraphically similar. In Area IV, the area farthest from the platform mound, three  $2 \times 1$  m pits were excavated. Debris here was light, and the remnants of possible wall foundation lines were found in only one unit.

Test Pit 1, which also measured  $2 \times 1$  m, was placed near the mound, about 110 m east of Area IV and 45 m south of Area I. A line of rocks, which may have been part of a structure wall, appeared in this unit, as well as a partial straight-sided pit in profile. Debris in the area of this excavation was moderately heavy, but was concentrated in a small area. Ground stone tools (a whole mano and a partial metate) were recovered from the test pit, but none were found in Area IV. Animal bone was absent in both areas.

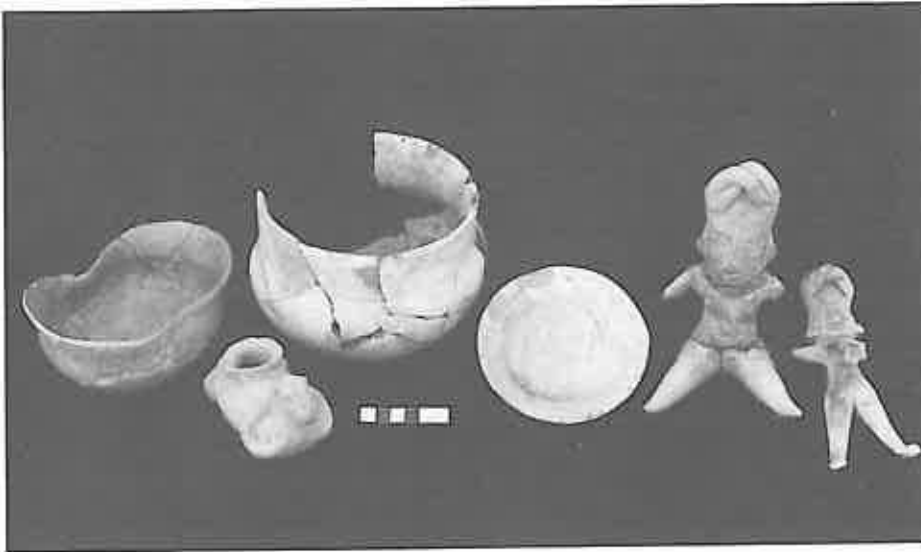


Figure 22.4. Telixtac Burial 1 ceramics.

### HUAZULCO

The site of Huazulco (RAS-62) is about 10 km northwest of Chalcatzingo in a flat, moderately wooded area at an elevation of about 1,500 m. It lies about 600 m east of the Río Frío. This entire area of the valley is within the *Pithecellobium* Woodland environmental zone.

Middle Formative cultural debris was scattered in an area of less than 0.25 ha in the center of a 2 ha cornfield southwest of modern Huazulco. Sherds were concentrated in the southern part of the site, and a 13 m long north-south trench was placed in this area (see Fig. 22.5). Several small additional units were excavated north, east, and west of the trench outside of the ceramic scatter which defined the site, but they revealed no significant cultural remains.

Two habitation floors were found in the southern portion of the main trench. The most recent was at the base of the plow zone, and an earlier construction lay directly above a *tepetate*-like soil, about 1 m down. An incomplete stone foundation wall oriented east-west, forming the southern wall of a structure, was associated with the earlier floor. A disturbed subfloor burial (Burial 1) associated with the uppermost floor only 20 cm below the surface was directly north of this wall. The burial lacked mortuary furniture.

Large amounts of burned earth and pole-impressed daub fragments were recovered throughout the trench, further evidence for a structure, yet no compan-

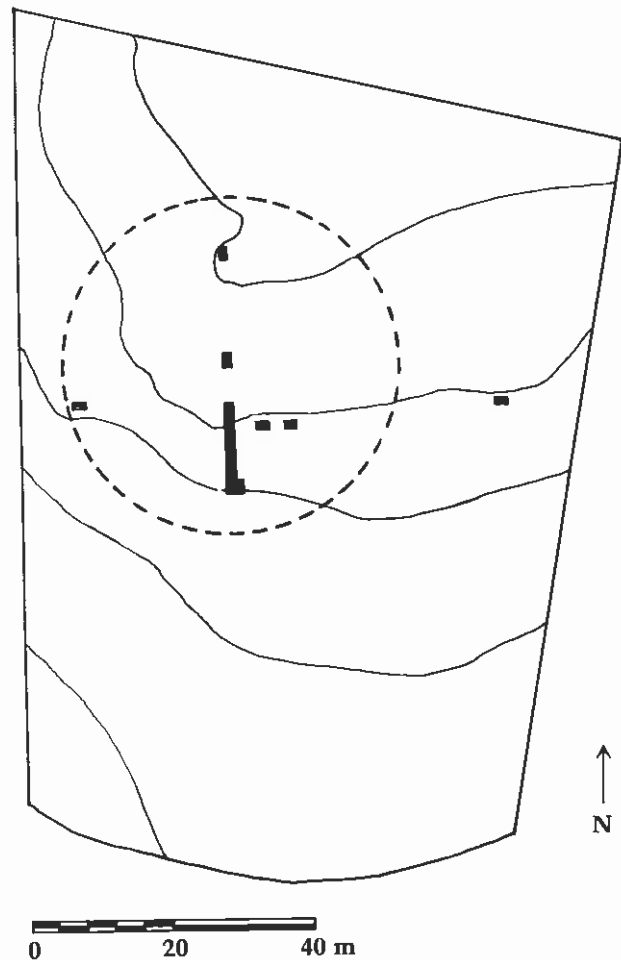


Figure 22.5. Huazulco site area. Solid line is field boundary; dashed line marks the extent of the destroyed mound. Contour interval 50 cm.

ion wall for either floor was found to the north. This could have been due to plowing disturbances. However, such a wall may have been constructed of adobe brick, which probably would not have been preserved (see Chapter 6). One complete brick was found in the northern part of the trench.

Almost 11 kg of adobe debris (some burned and some with flat surfaces) was recovered from one 4 × 1 m area of the trench. This suggests that at the time of destruction of this structure, one wall caved inward (south) toward the probable center of the house. The positioning suggests that the wall may have been located in an unexcavated area at approximately 3S/OE. The combination of daub and adobe brick fragments implies that one or both of the constructions uncovered in the trench may have had both adobe brick and wattle and daub walls such as occur with Cantera phase houses at Chalcatzingo. (Wall types, wall combinations, and house destruction are discussed in Chapter 6.)

Two additional floors occur in the northern part of the main trench. One extended along the base of the plow zone, but its exact dimensions are unknown. A wall of small rocks and burned earth was associated with it. About 50 cm below this floor there appears to have been another floor, with some of the adobe base present in the upward-sloping northern portion. An east-west wall of large boulders was at the southern limit of this floor, continuing east for at least 6 m. Although we cannot date this structure, the boulder wall line is similar to Barranca phase T-9B Structure 1 at Chalcatzingo. Fill over the lower floor was put in before the upper floor was constructed, suggesting an intentional raising and rebuilding of the structure, a practice also known from Chalcatzingo.

The small Middle Formative occupation at Huazulco was almost entirely covered by a Postclassic mound. This low, circular mound, said to have been faced with stone, has been destroyed by recent plowing and leveling activities. Burials are reported to have been removed from the mound, but none of the associated artifacts were available for study. Only about 10 cm of the mound soil still remained, all of it within the plow zone, enabling us to map the structure, which was about 30–40 m in diameter. The mound boundaries have been reconstructed on the contour map of the site (Fig. 22.5).

Most likely the mound represented a raised platform upon which several houses or a house compound would have been constructed. The burials could have been subfloor interments within the structures.

## ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

### *Ceramics and Figurines*

The main purpose of the Telixtac and Huazulco research was to facilitate cultural comparisons with Chalcatzingo. The ceramic typology and chronology developed for Chalcatzingo were employed in the analysis of ceramics recovered during the excavations (Chapter 13).

Based on the ceramic analysis, the Middle Formative component at Huazulco dates to the Late Barranca and Early Cantera subphases. Unfortunately, there are no radiocarbon dates for Huazulco to verify this placement. Amatzinac White, Peralta Orange, and Tenango Brown types dominate the assemblage. The only evidence that Huazulco is primarily a Cantera phase site is the presence of Xochitengo Polychrome, Amayuca Ruddy, and Atoyac Unslipped Polished I ceramics. Pavón Fine Grey, an "import ware," is notable for its rarity at Huazulco.

Telixtac can be tentatively dated between about 650 and 500 BC. Atoyac Unslipped Polished I, Amayuca Ruddy, and Xochitengo Polychrome sherds, all Cantera phase markers, are present in the ceramic assemblage. Xochitengo Polychromes occur in greater abundance at Telixtac than at Huazulco.

Vessel forms were much more useful as temporal indicators at Telixtac than at Huazulco. Especially common in Area I at Telixtac were outcurving wall bowls (RB-25) with complex interior and exterior rim design and *raspada* incising, diagnostic of the Early and Late Cantera subphases. Also diagnostic are the double-loop handle censer (RB-101), the Amatzinac White shallow bowl, and the animal effigy pot.

It is important to note that Peralta Orange and Pavón Fine Grey ceramics occur at both Telixtac and Huazulco, though Pavón Fine Grey is rare at Huazulco. As mentioned in the ceramic descriptions of these types (Chapter 13), Peralta Orange is a type common at Chalcatzingo and is apparently restricted principally to Amatzinac Valley sites, while Pavón Fine Grey is a non-local, imported type. While Peralta Orange could

have been made in ceramic-making villages throughout the valley, Pavón Fine Grey would probably have been diffused through the valley site hierarchy by redistribution. This may help explain why Huazulco, a much smaller site than Telixtac, has so few Pavón Fine Grey sherds. It should also be noted that while the punctate decorations on Peralta Orange at Chalcatzingo are normally triangular, those on Telixtac sherds were made with a circular instrument, indicating that different pottery workshops supplied these two settlements.

Figurines from Telixtac and Huazulco are comparable to those of Chalcatzingo, although the Huazulco sample is quite small. Of the definable figurine types, C8, Ch1-3, and Ch1-5 forms are the most prevalent. As at Chalcatzingo, C8 figurines are usually more carefully made and are sometimes orange-slipped and/or polished.

The two C5 figurines found with Telixtac Burial 1 (Fig. 22.4) are indistinguishable from Chalcatzingo's C5 figurines. However, three other figurines recovered from Area I (Fig. 22.6) are similar to Chalcatzingo's Ch1-5 type, yet differ in eye treatment from those. The eyes of the three Telixtac figurines are created by circular impressions with central punctations. This eye treatment may be a Telixtac variant of the Ch1-5 eye form and, like the Peralta Orange ceramics, suggests that Telixtac had its own workshops producing ceramics similar but not identical to those of Chalcatzingo.

A differential distribution of figurines is apparent at Telixtac. All of the excavated C8 specimens there are from Area I, in the residential structure associated with the platform mound. Also, two unusual C8 figurines closely resembling the head of Monument 10 at Chalcatzingo (Figs. 9.27, 22.7a–b, 27.1j–l) were recovered from the Area I structure. In the three seasons of excavation at Chalcatzingo, only three others of these figurines were found, and they share identical features with the Telixtac examples.

### *Internal Site Organization*

Based on the surface distribution of artifacts recorded during the reconnaissance of Huazulco and other northern valley sites, Kenneth Hirth (Appendix H) interprets Huazulco as having been an Isolated Residence during the Barranca phase and a Small Hamlet in the Cantera phase. Our excavation data suggest to me that there were from one to several rela-

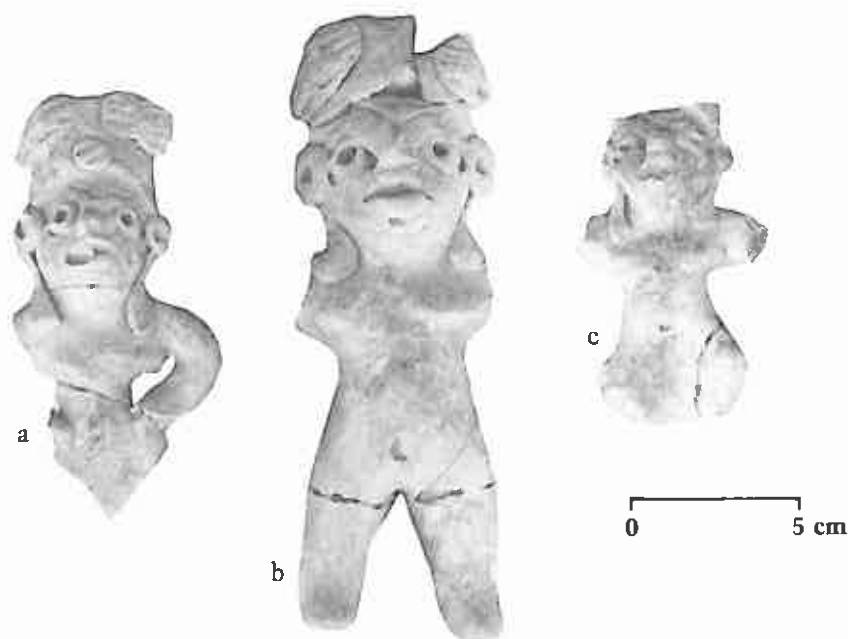


Figure 22.6. Telixtac C5 aberrant figurines.

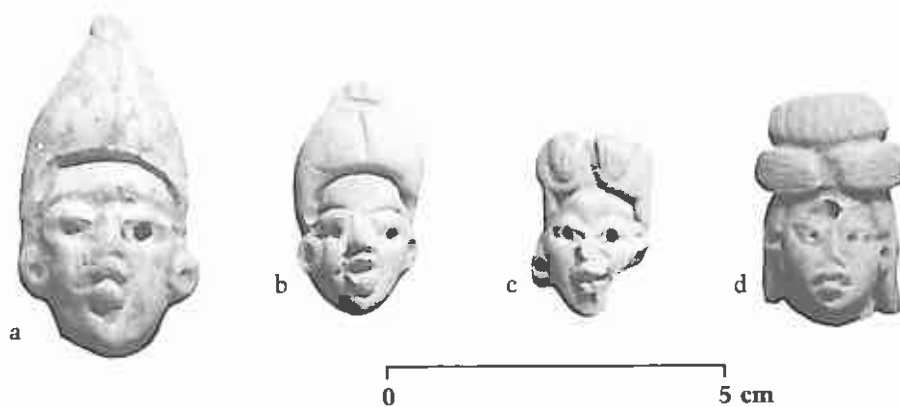


Figure 22.7. Telixtac C8 figurines.

tively contemporaneous household clusters, although superimposed floors were noted. It is unfortunate that house dimensions could not be ascertained to compare to the unusually large residences at Chalcatzingo.

Hirth classifies Telixtac as a Barranca phase Isolated Residence and a Cantera phase Hamlet (Appendix H). However, my surface reconnaissance and excavations revealed no firm evidence for the Barranca phase occupation.

Telixtac had at least five roughly contemporaneous household clusters, with evidence for two sequential constructions in Area I. Wall foundation lines were noted everywhere but Area III, and some had associated refuse pits, ranging in depth from 50 cm to 1 m. The double foundation wall of the Area I structure, although made of smaller stones than similar walls at Chalcatzingo (where stone is far more accessible), suggests that structures may have had adobe plus wattle and daub walls as at Chalcatzingo.

One important similarity between Chalcatzingo and Telixtac is the presence of a Cantera phase structure built beside a linear platform mound (Telixtac Area I and Chalcatzingo PC Structure 6), mentioned above. The Area I excavations at Telixtac also produced a cylindrical jade bead associated with a possible skull burial. These factors, as well as the quality of the artifacts found in Area I (e.g., Xochitengo Polychromes, C8 figurines), indicate that the Area I structure may have been an elite residence. Burial 1, Area III, is also similar to an elite burial at Chalcatzingo (see discussion above).

Perforated sherd discs with modified edges were abundant in Area I at Telixtac. These artifacts may have served as spinning counterweights, which would indicate that the occupants of the Area I structure were involved in the spinning of fiber.

On the other hand, in terms of the analysis of Chalcatzingo's lithics (Chapter 18), the stone tools from Telixtac and Huazulco most closely conform to the Group A pattern (common residences). The lithic artifacts at these sites are high in modified pieces, include few shaped tools, and exhibit a proportionally greater dependence on chert than at Chalcatzingo.

At both Telixtac and Huazulco, lithics needed for household use were probably produced within, or procured by, each living unit. Debitage is almost nonexistent at both sites. It is probable that un-

worked obsidian arrived first at Chalcatzingo, where it was worked (heavy workshop debris was found on T-37 at Chalcatzingo; see Chapter 19) and then redistributed to outlying areas. The obsidian cores exhibit reuse and exhaustion, strongly suggesting that obsidian was not available in abundance. Chert artifacts made of local materials were always more abundant than those of obsidian, the reverse of the situation at Chalcatzingo (see Chapter 18). Thus, compared to Chalcatzingo, there was a heavier reliance on local as opposed to imported raw materials at these smaller sites.

## SUMMARY

The map illustrating the Cantera phase settlement pattern (Fig. 21.4) clearly shows that Huazulco is clustered with ten other small sites in the northern valley. The northern valley appears to represent an early area of colonization during the Formative period. This area came under the control of Chalcatzingo or one of the secondary centers in the central valley region during the Middle Formative.

In contrast, the southern valley exhibits a more dispersed settlement pattern of generally larger sites. Colonization of the southern valley began somewhat later than in the north but developed into at least a two-stage hierarchy of sites, which included secondary centers with platform mounds. The southern valley was integrated through the control of elite living at these secondary centers, which varied in size, e.g., San Ignacio (RAS-78) and Telixtac.

Huazulco and Telixtac, as representatives of smaller sites in the valley, shared a general cultural pattern with Chalcatzingo, one which was different from that of surrounding regions. Two important diagnostics restricted primarily to the valley—Peralta Orange ceramics and C8 figurines—both occur in the rural sites as well as at the main center, Chalcatzingo. At the same time, other objects, such as greenstone pendants and beads, are rare outside of Chalcatzingo.

In terms of more exotic artifact content, Telixtac appears more similar to Chalcatzingo than does Huazulco, although both sites were part of a local network supplementing Chalcatzingo's supply of subsistence goods. The similarities between Chalcatzingo and Telixtac are important, however, since Telix-

tac was larger than Huazulco and had at least some lower-level elite, while Huazulco was strictly a small rural settlement.

## RESUMEN DEL CAPÍTULO 22

*Dos sitios de la fase Cantera dentro del valle del Río Amatzinac fueron excavados con objeto de ganar una perspectiva más completa de las interacciones de Chalcatzingo con otras comunidades. Estas son Telixtac, al sur de Chalcatzingo, y Huazulco, un sitio más pequeño hacia el norte.*

*Telixtac tiene un montículo plataforma largo y en línea, lo cual indica su importancia relativa en la jerarquía regional. Las excavaciones revelaron muestra de una estructura a lo largo del lado poniente del montículo, una residencia semejante en técnica de construcción a los domicilios contemporáneos en Chalcatzingo, y otros cuatro agrupamientos de unidades habitacionales. La ubicación de la casa adyacente al montículo probablemente indica que se trata de una clase de residencia elitica, en base a la analogía que presenta la asociación de PC Str. 6 junto al montículo plataforma (PC Str. 4) en Chalcatzingo. También se descubrieron entierros en el subsuelo y artefactos semejantes a los recostrados en Chalcatzingo.*

*Huazulco es un sitio mucho más pequeño cuyo componente del Formativo Medio fué cubierto en algún tiempo por un nuevo montículo del Postclásico ahora destruido. Las limitadas excavaciones revelaron muestra de, por lo menos, una estructura con un entierro asociado en el subsuelo, lo cual también pone de manifiesto semejanzas con Chalcatzingo.*

*Los tipos de cerámica y las formas ubicadas en las fases de Chalcatzingo sirvieron para fechar los dos sitios, con lo que Huazulco fundamentalmente se fechó Barranca Tardío-Cantera Temprano, y Telixtac en el Cantera Tardío. Los dos sitios no tienen la misma distribución de cerámica, p.e., Pavón Gris Fino, una importación quizás controlada por Chalcatzingo, es mucho más raro en Huazulco, probablemente porque tenía menor jerarquía que Telixtac. Las decoraciones a base de puntos de*

*los tepalcates Peralta Naranja de Telixtac se hicieron con un instrumento diferente al que se utilizó en la decoración de sus contrapartes de Chalcatzingo, lo cual indica que se hicieron en otra parte, tal vez en Telixtac mismo. Algunas figurillas de Telixtac también varían de aquellas de Chalcatzingo, aun cuando pueden ser clasificadas dentro del mismo tipo y nuevamente indican la existencia de un taller aparte, dedicado a manufacturar artefactos del estilo Chalcatzingo en Telixtac. Aun cuando los dos sitios obtenían la obsidiana de Chalcatzingo, predominaban los artefactos de cuarzo, lo cual demuestra una mayor dependencia en las materias primas localmente existentes.*

*En conjunto, los dos sitios participaban del mismo patrón cultural general mostrado por Chalcatzingo. Dos artefactos diagnósticos restringidos al valle, la cerámica Peralta Naranja y las figurillas C8, ocurren en ambos sitios mientras que los artefactos más exóticos, tales como los objetos de piedra verde, se encuentran limitados a Chalcatzingo y quizás a otros sitios grandes poco numerosos.*