
24. Classic and Postclassic Chalcatzingo

RAUL MARTÍN ARANA

In addition to Chalcatzingo's major Formative period occupation, there are components from later time periods as well. Román Piña Chan's 1952 research showed that Montículo A (our T-3 Str. 2), one of two mound structures which face a small rectangular plaza, dated to Teotihuacan III-IV (1955:7-9). Excavations during the three major field seasons of our project uncovered several additional Classic period structures on the main site area. Late Classic and Early-Middle Postclassic structures were also mapped in the Tetla zone of Chalcatzingo, and minor excavations were conducted. Classic and Postclassic artifacts occur as well in caves on the Cerro Delgado. Only one definite Postclassic architectural feature was found in the main site area, the so-called *adoratorio* which is discussed below.

CLASSIC PERIOD

Chalcatzingo was neither large nor apparently important during the Classic period. Several other sites in the valley overshadowed Chalcatzingo in these respects. San Ignacio (RAS-78), in the southern valley, may have been the area's major center. This fact is significant, for until the Classic period the southern valley was relatively unimportant, and the shift in focus to this area points to a major shift in the economy during this time, a shift which terminated with the end of this period (Hirth 1980).

Central and eastern Morelos reflect strong Teotihuacan influences during the Classic period, especially during the Teotihuacan III-IV phase. That such influences are far weaker in western Morelos is undoubtedly at least partially a reflection of central Mexican geography. Central and eastern Morelos are situated adjacent to the Amecameca pass in the Sierra de Ajusco. This pass connects those regions of Morelos with the east-

ern Valley of Mexico and Teotihuacan. Western Morelos is far more isolated geographically from the Valley of Mexico, and was certainly within the sphere of Xochicalco rather than Teotihuacan.

The small Classic occupation at Chalcatzingo pertains primarily to Teotihuacan III-IV. The largest site near Chalcatzingo at this time was Las Pilas (RAS-14), only a few kilometers to the southwest. This site, situated near a large spring, has recently been excavated and partially reconstructed (Martínez Donjuan 1979). These excavations uncovered a number of large caches of Teotihuacan III-IV ceramics. Several of the mound structures at Las Pilas are characterized by *talud*-cornice architecture, and such architecture also occurs at San Ignacio to the south.

The fall of Teotihuacan affected Classic period settlement throughout central and eastern Morelos. In the Río Amatzinac Valley the settlement pattern shows a shift in population back to the northern valley. The main site area at Chalcatzingo seems to have been abandoned, but occupation may have continued at Tetla. A comprehensive discussion of the valley during the Classic has been written by Kenneth Hirth (1980).

Pyramid Group (T-3)

The major Classic period monumental architecture on the main site area consists of two small pyramid mounds facing a plaza, as well as a small ball court to the north of the plaza. The pyramid-plaza group is situated on Terrace 3, near the northwest end of the site's uppermost and principal terrace, the Plaza Central (T-1). The largest mound, T-3 Structure 1 (Piña Chan's Montículo B; 1955:8), slightly over 9 m high, faces west onto the plaza. Our 1973 excavations of this structure were intended to define its dimensions and form.

Those excavations indicated that the

structure is a circular pyramid (actually more ovoid than round), approximately 35 m in diameter at its base (Fig. 24.1). The pyramid's main staircase, including balustrades, is 8.01 m wide. R. David Drucker (1977) has suggested that Teotihuacan utilized a measurement unit equivalent today to 0.805 m. This mound's stairway width appears to be a basic multiple (10 ×) of that measuring unit.

The round pyramid was built onto the western end of the 70 m long Middle Formative period platform mound, PC Structure 4, which delimits the north side of T-1. The pyramid has an earthen core and an exterior facing of undressed stones, laid with their flattest sides outward. This stone exterior was once plastered, although only traces of the plaster remain today. The pyramid may have originally risen in three stages; however, our excavations and reconstruction were carried out only on the lowest stage. A small area of Classic period stone pavement had been laid onto the upper surface of the platform mound, adjacent to the rear of the pyramid (Figs. 24.2, 24.3).

The plaza area measures approximately 40 × 40 m. Piña Chan (1955:7) gives the dimensions as 60 × 50 m, but these may relate to the basal measurements of the plaza, which is raised above the terraces to the north (T-15) and west (T-5).

Piña Chan's excavations concentrated on the smaller of the two pyramid structures. The excavated and partially reconstructed structure, Montículo A (our T-3 Str. 2), lies on the plaza's south side. It is a two-stage quadrilateral structure. The lower stage, which measures 24 m per side, had a height of approximately 1.4 m. It may have had *talud-tablero* architecture. The upper stage, 18 m per side, had a height of 1.7 m (Piña Chan 1955:7). Although Piña Chan's project partially reconstructed this structure, it is today again a featureless mound.



Figure 24.1. T-3 Structure 1 pyramid.



Figure 24.2. Pavement behind T-3 Structure 1.

T-15 Ball Court (T-15 Str. 2) (Figs. 24.4, 24.5)

Our initial surveys of Chalcatzingo in 1972 determined that a long low mound occurred on T-15 (Str. 2) slightly north of PC Structure 4, the 70 m long platform mound. It was suspected that this smaller mound might have somehow functioned as part of a ball court structure in conjunction with PC Structure 4, although the T-15 mound is dwarfed by PC Structure 4, which rises nearly 8 m above it. Excavations in 1973 began with a north-south cross-trench across the T-15 mound and onto the northern slopes of PC Structure 4. Additional trenches were placed in the area between the mounds in order to identify "end zones," the playing alley floor, and other features. This work served to delimit the structural features on the north and south portions of the T-15 mound as well as Classic period construction on the north slope of PC Structure 4.

The Classic portions of PC Structure 4 represent additions onto that Middle Formative structure. These constructions changed parts of the north slope of PC Structure 4 into the south range structure of the ball court. This construction terminated in a long east-west wall about halfway up the slope of PC Structure 4 (Fig. 24.6). Unfortunately, heavy erosion on the slopes has destroyed almost all other vestiges of that construction.

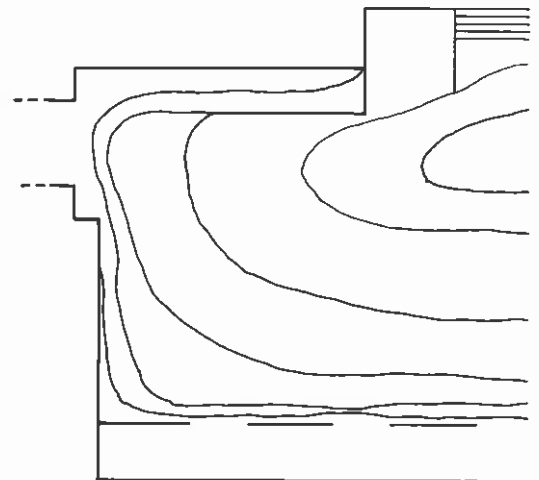


Figure 24.4. Topographic map and profile of T-15 Structure 2 ball court.



Figure 24.3. Close-up of pavement behind T-3 Structure 1.

T-15 Structure 2, the north range of the ball court, is 41.5 m long and is oriented N87½W (true north). Two building episodes were found for this structure. The earlier structure is 11 m wide, while the later addition increased the width to 12.3 m. The sloping playing bench of the second episode may have had an angle of 10° and a width of about 9 m. The slope of the earlier bench cannot be determined.

The first building episode of the north ball court structure used large stones turned flat side outward. There is no plastering apparent on the stones. The outer (second) structure exhibits faced, perfectly laid stones, re-covered with plaster. Plaster was also used on the playing alley floor of the second (later) ball court. The back or north side of T-15 Structure 2 is characterized by a 23.5 m long stairway of three steps bordered on each end by a 2.3 m wide balustrade. The stones that support the exterior ball court walls were carved in a special form. They are well shaped and well faced, and each has a wide raised upper front edge (Fig. 24.7). These stones serve as the front basal stones for the balustrade. Sloping stones rest against them, and the raised front edge provides support for the upper stones and prevents their slippage. This construction form is characteristic of sites of this period in Morelos, the Valley of Mexico, and Teotenango in the State of Mexico. Above the rear stairway,

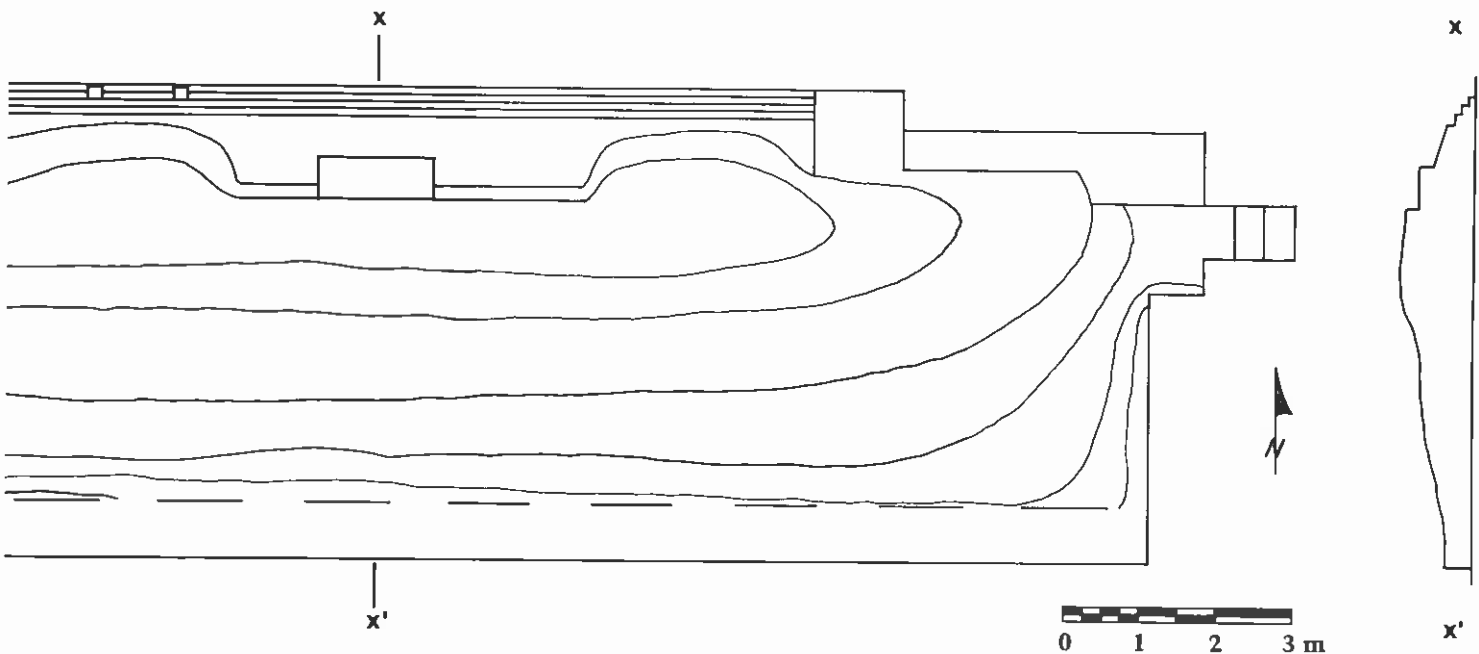




Figure 24.5. Reconstruction of ball court steps. Photo taken several years after reconstruction.



Figure 24.6. Ball court upper wall on slope of PC Structure 4.

and centered at the back of the ball court structure, is a small rectangular altar-like construction 3 m long by 1 m wide and about 30 cm high.

Excavations within the playing alley area disclosed no structural features at either end of the ball court, indicating that the playing alley was open-ended. Its length therefore cannot be determined, but its width for the second building episode was 8 m. A test trench in the center of the playing alley uncovered an offering of five seated clay figurines, 60 cm below the playing alley floor (Fig. 24.8). Four of these figurines were grouped in a circular fashion around the central figure (Fig. 24.8c). All of the figures were handmade, decorated with red and blue paint, and relatively elaborate. Each is between 10 and 15 cm high. Also within the center of this circular group was a disc of greenstone, perforated in the center, and a cylindrical object of clay with streaks of paint.

T-15 Platform (T-15 Str. 4)

The 1972 and 1973 field research included monthly false-color infrared "aerial" photography of the site to detect unusual moisture and vegetation growth patterns (Chapter 1). These photographs clearly illustrated an unusual moisture pattern on T-15, with some areas drier than others. Upon field inspection, these drier areas were found to be slightly raised and to have surface sherd quantities greater than the surrounding areas. One such raised area occurred 60 m north of the T-15 ball court, adjacent to the terrace's north edge. Excavations were initiated on this slightly elevated portion of the terrace in 1974 and immediately uncovered walls both within and slightly below the plow zone. The wall lines delimited a rectangular structure with an entrance threshold on the west side (Fig. 4.26).

The structure apparently had two building episodes. The earlier is represented by walls delimiting a principal floor area of ca. 5 × 6 m. The exact dimensions are impossible to define because the southern end of this structure has been destroyed by plowing. An enlargement to the floor area approximately 1 m wide later increased the principal floor to 6 × 6 m. The wall alignment of the earlier building stage is N16½E, while the alignment of the second stage is N13½E, only one degree different from the T-4 platform alignment.



Figure 24.7. Shaped stones forming part of exterior ball court walls.

Included in the wall line of the structure's threshold are nicely faced stones with a wide raised edge, identical to those found on the balustrades of the T-15 ball court. From their position it seems unlikely that these stones served the same "support" function here that they did on the ball court. Grove (personal communication) is of the opinion that the persons originally constructing this platform structure removed these stones from the ball court structure. This suggests that the ball court was no longer functional at the time of this construction. Since we have no dates for either of these structures, this remains conjecture.

Although they are within the plow zone, some of the floor area and exterior wall lines have sections of plaster remaining. The exterior wall stones of this structure are small in comparison to those of other Classic structures on the site. It is my impression, although the structure is quite destroyed (particularly on the east and south sides), that it originally had a height of about 50 cm from the base of the threshold to the floor. No postholes were discovered on the floor level. Because looters' pits and plowing have destroyed many sections of this "platform," all traces of any upper building on it may have likewise been destroyed. We can therefore only speak of this as a platform-like structure. Associated artifacts clearly indicate that it is Late Classic in date.

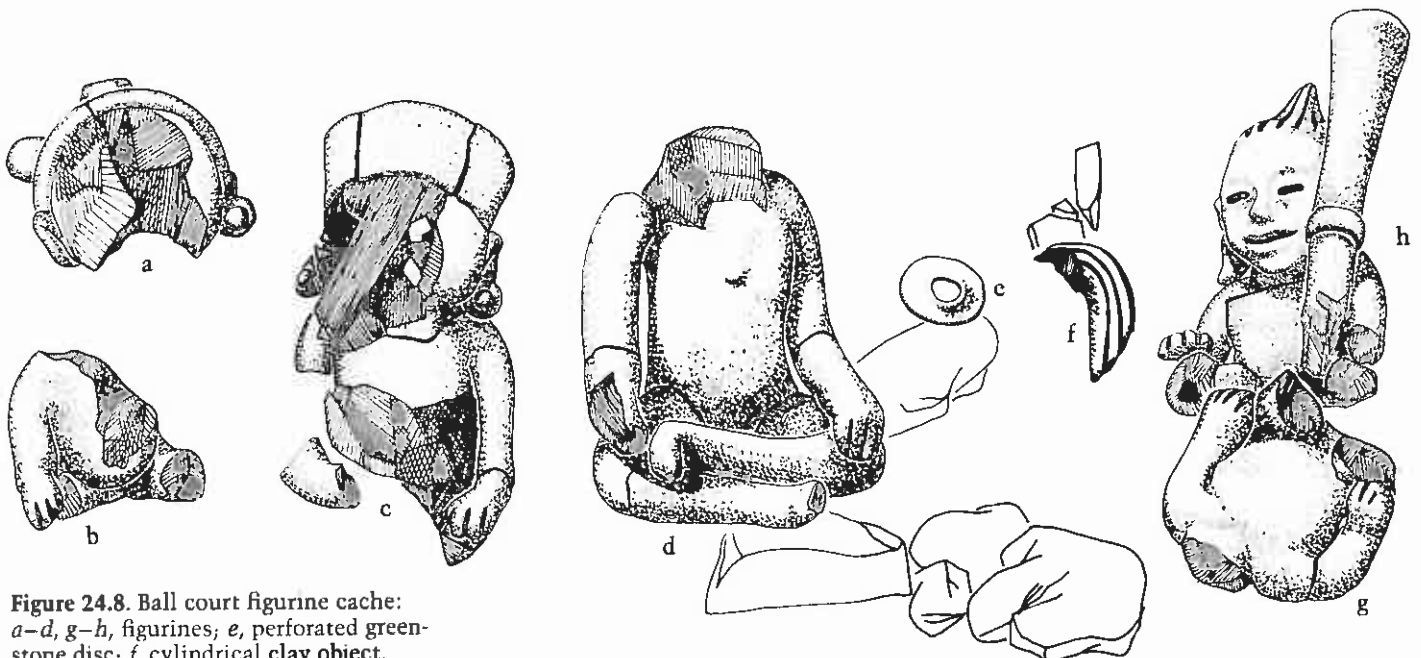


Figure 24.8. Ball court figurine cache: a-d, g-h, figurines; e, perforated greenstone disc; f, cylindrical clay object.

T-4 Platform (T-4 Str. 3)

Our 1982 excavations on T-4 uncovered, amid a confusion of Middle Formative wall lines, a low Classic period platform structure (T-4 Str. 3; Fig. 4.15). The structure, which is quadrilateral, measures 4.8 m in width and has "back wall" lines at 3, 3.8, and 4.8 m from the front of the structure. The walls of the structure are highly destroyed and in their present condition are not straight. Therefore, the exact dimensions and orientation of this platform structure are generally difficult to ascertain. The front of the structure and the balustrade have an apparent orientation of N12½E (true).

The platform rises only about 20 cm, and the walls are delimited by faced stone. The front of the structure has a 2.2 m wide balustrade, although on a structure this low, the balustrade appears to have been of a "formal," obligatory architectural nature, rather than functional feature. The stones along the front of this platform are slightly sloped (Fig. 24.9), a characteristic typical of many Classic period constructions at Chalcatzingo. It is apparent that this platform was constructed not by building upward, but by excavating the surrounding soil from around the areas desired for the platform, leaving the platform rising from this excavated area.

The Classic period excavations which created this raised platform went through the floor of a Middle Formative structure, and thus the upper surface of the platform is also the floor surface of that Middle Formative (house?) structure. It is probable that some of the damage to the T-4 Middle Formative architectural features uncovered by the project's excavations is due to Classic period construction and destruction and the Classic period use of Middle Formative wall stones.

It is perhaps significant that the large rock which we designate as MCR-19 (Figs. 11.18, 11.19) with a quadrangular design of pit marks and grooves, lies only a few meters west of the raised platform. Naked-eye sightings taken along the alignments of the pit marks cross both the large round Classic pyramid (T-3 Str. 1) and the T-4 Classic platform (Grove, personal communication). The alignment of the MCR-19 quadrangle is likewise within 1° of that of the platform. Because the platform had been reburied prior to the discovery of MCR-19, exact sightings between the quadrangle and the platform's features could not be made,



Figure 24.9. Slightly sloping front wall of T-4 platform (T-4 Structure 3).

although a meaningful association between the stone and the structure is presumed.

Lime Kilns (T-4 Str. 4, T-23 Feas. 4 and 7)

Three Classic period lime kilns were uncovered during the excavation of Middle Formative structures. The largest kiln is located on T-4 (Fea. 4). Two smaller kilns were found on T-23 (Feas. 4 and 7). All three kilns are subterranean and intrusive into Middle Formative structures. All are described and discussed in detail by Teresita Majewski (1976b), who also draws comparisons with ethnographic examples in Mesoamerica. Only a few basic details of the kilns are presented here.

The T-4 kiln (Figs. 24.10, 24.11) was almost round, with a diameter varying between 2.8 and 3.1 m and an approximate depth from lip to base of 2.3 m. The walls of the kilns slant inward at an angle of approximately 75°, thus creating an inner basal diameter of approximately 1.8 m. The kiln walls are constructed of large, relatively flat stones, flat side facing inward. They have been set in a mud mortar.

The upper 1 m of this feature contained fill which was largely loamy soil, sand lenses, and one concentration of calcitic rock. Near the bottom of the fea-

ture were layers of calcitic rock sandwiched between layers of charred earth, charcoal, and ash. When the feature was completely cleared, fire blackening of the lower sides was evident.

Over five hundred cobble-sized stones were removed from the lower levels of the feature. Of these three hundred were tested with hydrochloric acid, and 82 percent tested calcitic. Many could be seen to be in various stages of calcinization from limestone to lime. These data indicate that the function of this feature was indeed that of lime burning.

Ceramic material within the kiln was relatively sparse, but the fill did include both Middle Formative and Classic period debris. In one of the lowest levels, a Teotihuacan IV mold-made figurine head was found together with Teotihuacan IV sherds. A radiocarbon sample from the lowest charcoal layer in the kilns (N-1694) yielded a date of AD 690 ± 80 (Table 5.1).

The 1974 excavations of Middle Formative structures on T-23 uncovered two small intrusive Classic period lime kilns. One (Fea. 4) has a diameter of about 2 m, the other (Fea. 7) of 1.2 m. Both kilns have lip-to-base depth of about 1 m. Neither kiln was excavated due to time limitations.

It is probable that the western end of T-23 where the two kilns occur, as well

as the area immediately to the north (between T-31, and T-33 and T-35) was an area of Classic period lime production. Limestone rocks, some partially calcined, occur on the surface of this area. Limestone is not indigenous to this hill or this section of the valley, but outcrops do occur in the southwest portion of the valley (Fig. 23.1).

T-17 Platform and T-7 Wall Lines

Northwest of the T-3 Classic pyramid-plaza group, at the western end of T-15, there is an approximately 2 m rise onto T-17. Excavations on the western end of T-17 uncovered, at a depth of 35 cm below the surface, the top of a 70 cm tall, well-built sloping wall running north-south (declination $N6\frac{1}{2}E$). This wall, when taken with the raised configuration of this entire terrace, suggests that most of T-17 itself is a raised, stone-faced Classic period platform. This platform covers an area of roughly 35×70 m. It is possible that a small mound structure might be present on the northwest end of this platform (see topography, Fig. 4.2), although we did not test for such a structure. This large raised platform appears to form the western end of the Classic period ceremonial complex.

On T-7, directly south from T-17, a number of large boulders protrude from the ground surface. These boulders occur in two straight lines with alignments of roughly $N83\frac{1}{2}E$ and $N86\frac{1}{2}E$. One stone in this group, excavated by a villager one weekend in 1974, was discovered to have the faint, weathered remains of a bas-relief carving, and is apparently a Middle Formative stela (Mon. 24), which had been buried upside-down as part of the wall line. This suggests that the wall is post-Middle Formative. The fact that the boulder line has a general right-angle alignment to the T-17 platform wall, as well as its proximity to the T-17 platform, suggests that the boulder line dates to the Classic period.

T-20 Structures 2 and 3

Surface reconnaissance showed a concentration of Middle Formative white ware sherds in the area of a marked slope change on T-20, a hillside terrace. Excavations in this area uncovered within the plow zone the partially destroyed remnants of Classic period walls and floors which are part of structures overlying Middle Formative deposits (Fig. 4.28). Looting and erosion are responsible for bringing substructure Middle



Figure 24.10. Classic lime kiln (T-4 Structure 4) at beginning of excavation.



Figure 24.11. Classic lime kiln (T-4 Structure 4) after excavation.

Formative sherds onto the surface of this area, as well as for the general destruction of the Classic period structures.

Only the south side of Structure 2 was well preserved (Fig. 24.12). The exterior walls are of large unfaced, naturally smooth stones, placed flattest side outward. Rounded river cobbles are also included in the exterior wall line. No evidence of plastering occurs on the walls or floor area.

One wall section of Structure 3 (Fig. 24.12) was built of flat stones set at a slope of about 60°. Similar sloping *talud* sections are found on the T-4 Classic platform's front face, and also occur on a far larger scale on the T-17 platform walls. Such a sloping *talud* suggests that the southern wall of this structure was the front wall.

Nine Classic period burials were uncovered during the T-20 excavations, seven of which were within the probable subfloor area of the structures. The subfloor burials usually occurred in groups of two to four individuals (adults, children, or both; see Appendix C, Burials 67–72, 74–76). The presence of these burials suggests that these structures were residential rather than ceremonial constructions. Two Middle Formative burials and destroyed wall lines were also recovered in the excavation of this area,

indicating that a Middle Formative structure once existed here as well.

T-27 Structure 2 (Fig. 4.34)

Excavations at the north end of the thumb-like terrace of T-27 uncovered walls within the plow zone. These appear to be part of a Late Classic (Teotihuacan IV) structure. Time did not permit the clearing of the entire structure, but several features are worth noting. The walls are all composed of large unfaced stones. There are no sloping walls such as were found with the T-4 platform or the T-20 structure, and the construction is far more massive than that of other Late Classic structures found on the site.

Three burials were recovered during the excavations (nos. 121, 125, 135). Burial 135, highly fragmentary, was found within a small rectangular stone crypt located in a wall line on the southeast side of the excavation. Associated with this interment was a cache of thirteen Teotihuacan IV vessels (Fea. 1), seven of which were Thin Orange ring-base bowls (Fig. 24.13).

T-9A

T-9A excavations disclosed the remains of a very destroyed Middle Formative structure. However, the area apparently

was also utilized during the Late Classic, since excavations also revealed one Late Classic vessel, and two of the four radiocarbon dates run for T-9A pertain to the Classic period (N-1414:AD 510 ± 80, N-1415:AD 560 ± 80; Table 5.1). It is possible that Classic period inhabitants of this terrace reutilized existing wall foundations from the Middle Formative structure. Heavy erosion and modern plowing, both responsible for destroying most of the Cantera phase structure, undoubtedly removed almost all traces of the overlying Classic remains.

CT-2

On the slope below and east of Relief Group I-A (Mon. 1, "El Rey") and immediately to the west of the El Rey Drainage is a small stone platform excavated in 1973. When excavations began, the feature looked like a random pile of small rounded river cobbles. However, clearing excavations showed it to be a platform structure approximately 3 × 3 m², with a small extension to the east giving the entire structure an L-shape. Although the majority of the stones comprising the structure are rounded river cobbles, several lines of larger, flatter stones delimited its outer walls. The small platform, on its highest (north, downhill) side, is only about 45 cm tall. An inverted metate near the front center may have served as a "stair" onto the platform. Classic sherd fragments serve to date this platform.

Classic Period Burials

Classic period burials occasionally occur intruded into Middle Formative structures (see Chapter 8 for discussion). They are usually individual occurrences (e.g., T-4, T-24, T-25), and are catalogued in Appendix C.

Classic Pictographs

A large number of rock paintings occur at Chalcatzingo, and they are discussed in detail in Chapter 12. Because most consist of very simple motifs, they are difficult to date through stylistic similarities to other Mesoamerican art. However, the paintings found in Cerro Delgado Cave 19 (Fig. 12.45) are more complex and exhibit strong similarities to the art of Teotihuacan, while sharing attributes with Chalcatzingo's cruder paintings as well. This suggests that the majority of the paintings may date to the Classic period.



Figure 24.12. Classic period walls on T-20: Structures 1 (background), 2 (center), and 3 (right foreground).



Figure 24.13. T-27 Structure 2, Feature 1 vessel cache.



Figure 24.14. Postclassic shrine (*adoratorio*) on hillside below Monument 2 (reconstructed).

Tetla

One other Late Classic occupation zone occurs at Chalcatzingo: the Tetla zone, located on the northeastern side of the Cerro Delgado. Our knowledge of the Classic period here comes through surface collections and a few stratigraphic pits. Because many of Tetla's mounds appear to be Middle Postclassic (although some may overlie earlier Classic constructions), the description of Tetla is given in the next section of this chapter.

POSTCLASSIC PERIOD

Postclassic structures and artifacts were found on two areas of Chalcatzingo: the main site zone and the Tetla zone behind the Cerro Delgado.

Wall lines and plaster fragments were discovered while clearing brush on the hillslope below Monument 2 during the first year of the project (Grove and Angulo 1973:25–26). Subsequent excavations uncovered a series of wide stairways and platforms, all with traces of plastered surfaces. These extend for about 30 m up the hillside, attain a maximum width of over 10 m, and end at the base of the boulder cluster containing Monument 2 (Fig. 24.14). This Postclassic structure, which the project reconstructed, we term the *adoratorio* (shrine). This structure is unique in the region, and its location strongly implies that it was directed toward the veneration of Middle Formative Monument 2. Grove (1972b:36) has noted that this (or the Cerro Jantetelco) might be the Teocucani shrine mentioned by the sixteenth-century chronicler Fray Diego Durán.

Ceramics recovered during the excavations of the *adoratorio* include large brazier fragments with pendant clay ears of corn, figurine fragments, and Tlalhuica Polychrome sherds (Fig. 24.15). The sequence of Postclassic ceramics is still in question in this area; the structure may be Middle or Late Postclassic in date. Similarities between the *adoratorio* sherds and those from the house excavated on terrace Tetla-11 (Chapter 25) argue for a Middle Postclassic date.

The evidence of Postclassic "occupation" on the main site area consists mainly of a few Mazapan figurine fragments recovered from a trash pit in T-27 Structure 2 (Fea. 1; Fig. 4.34). There is, however, good evidence for a significant Postclassic occupation at Tetla. The Tetla zone lies between the barranca of the Río Amatzinac (which runs east and then

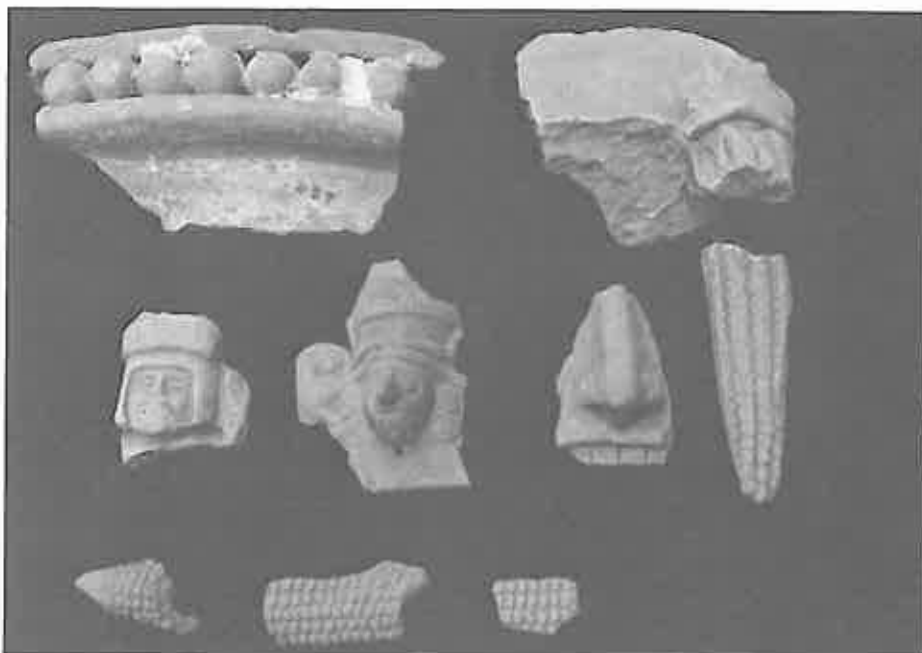


Figure 24.15. Postclassic vessel sherds and figurine heads from excavation of shrine.

south to delimit two sides of the zone) and the eastern (rear) face of the Cerro Delgado (Fig. 24.16). Surrounded by the deep barranca and the cliffs of the *cerro*, Tetla has relatively restricted access and is in a naturally defensible position. This may or may not have been a significant locational factor for the Late Classic–Middle Postclassic occupation here.

Tetla has approximately 14 ha of flat terrain between the barranca and the steep hillslopes which define the zone's western and southern limits. A large portion of this L-shaped flat expanse, which extends along the northeast and east of the Cerro Delgado, may represent Formative, Late Classic, and Early–Middle Postclassic modifications of the original ground surface. A deep stratigraphic test pit on the terrace Tetla-11 revealed nearly 3 m of mixed fill which included Late Classic sherds and thus can be tentatively dated to that period.

This flatland area contains the largest mound structures at Tetla and includes the three "occupation zones" defined by the project's regional settlement survey (Appendix J: RAS-1A, -1B, -1C). At the northeast end of the area is a low, artificially leveled hill surmounted by two large mounds (Str. A-1, A-2) and at least one plaza area (Figs. 24.17, 24.18). Debris from a looter's pit on the east side of one mound included a tubular clay drainpipe

(Fig. 24.19) similar to those from Tula, Hidalgo, described by Dan M. Healan (1974). South of the hill are a variety of small mound groups as well as a large raised platform (Str. B) made up of a rock and earth core and supporting a mound (Figs. 24.17, 24.18).

To the west of the main hilltop structures is a second grouping of mounds, including a definite ball court (Fig. 24.7). This ball court (Str. C), on Tetla Terrace 1, consists of two parallel mounds about 30 m in length and 1.5 m in height, separated by a playing alley ca. 6 m wide. The approximate orientation of the ball court is N64½W. An old colonial period road running from Chalcatzingo to Tenango cuts through Tetla and may have destroyed the eastern end of the ball court.

To the east of the ball court is a large, unusual horseshoe-shaped mound (Str. D) about 2 m tall, with the mouth opening to the west. The path from the mouth to the interior of the structure drops another 2 m, making the interior area ca. 4 m lower than the top of the surrounding stone walls. This inner area measures approximately 10 m east-west × 6 m north-south. One characteristic of this odd-shaped mound, seen in the quantity and type of vegetation growing there today, is the greater moisture within the inner area. This suggests that the structure may surround an old spring or well.

Small springs do occur along the base of the *cerros*, and a spring or well would have been a possibility here.

It should be noted that water for Tetla was probably taken from the barranca, and one of the few access trails to the barranca begins just north of this structure. In the barranca, at the end of this trail, is a bedrock mortar group adjacent to the river (MCR-21; Fig. 24.20). During times of heavy rain when river water is extremely muddy, or in periods of dryness when the river is a mere trickle, or possibly during periods when the site was being defended, an on-site water source would have proven to be of value. Obviously the true function of the U-shaped mound remains to be tested by future research.

Excavations in 1974 revealed a Middle Postclassic house structure on Tetla Terrace 11, to the north of the horseshoe-shaped mound. This house is described in Chapter 25.

To the north of Tetla's flatlands are the steep eastern and northeastern slopes of the Cerro Delgado. Here are long, thin terraces which create a total of about 4.5 ha of additional land for cultivation. These terraces are still maintained and farmed today. Small mounds occur on several of the terraces, and surface debris includes great quantities of Late Classic and Early–Middle Postclassic undeco-

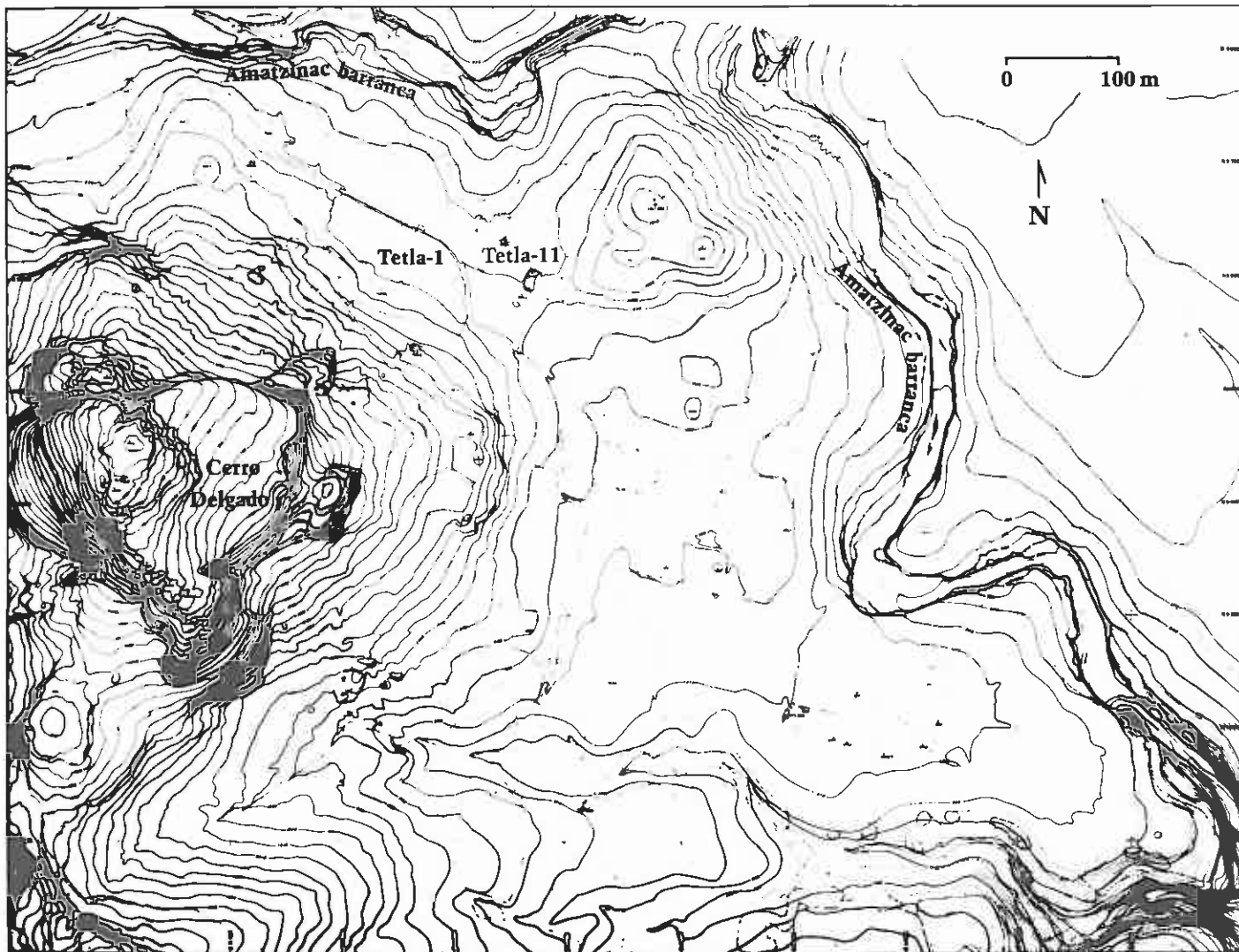


Figure 24.16. Tetla site area.



Figure 24.17. Northeast section of Tetla, showing ball court (center foreground) and pyramid-plaza complex atop hill (right background).

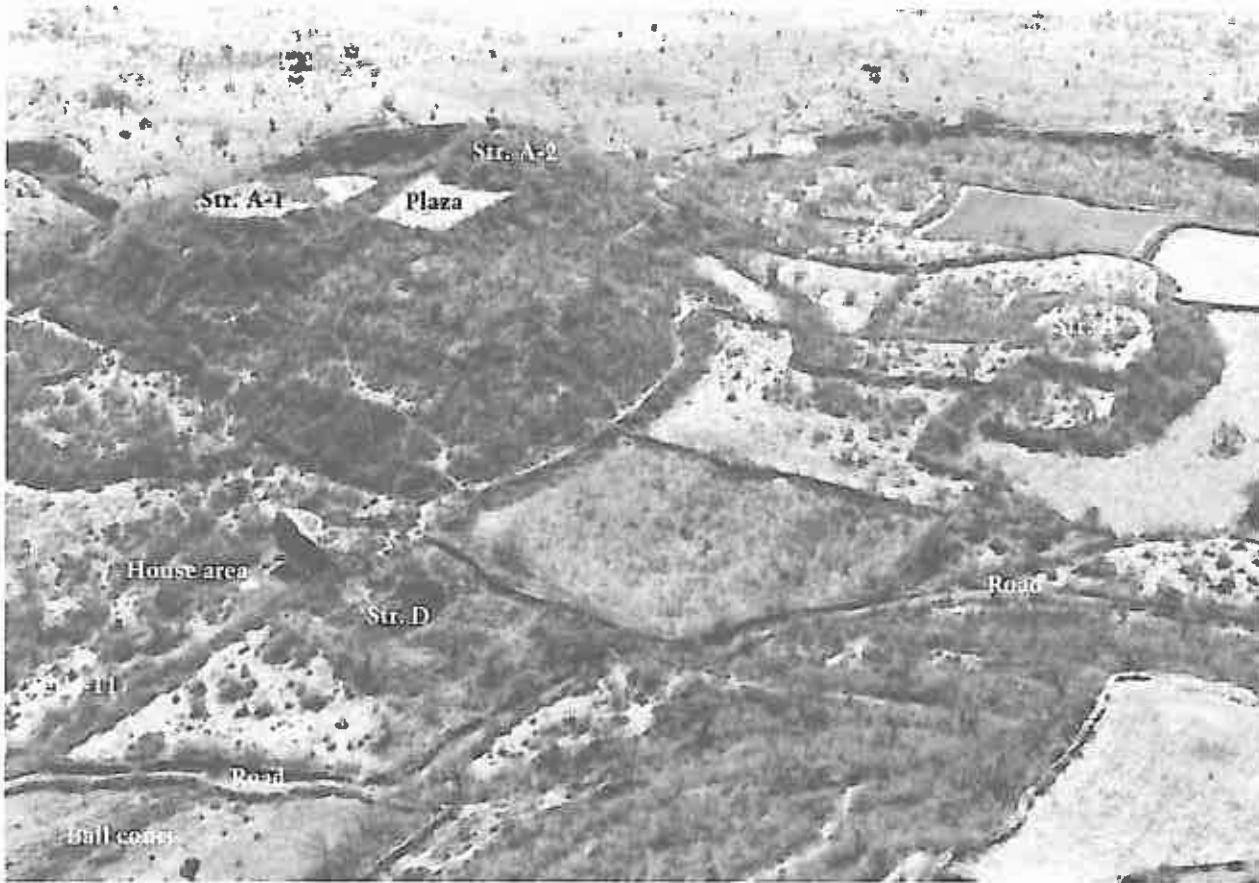


Figure 24.18. Eastern section of Tetla.



Figure 24.19. Postclassic tubular pipe (stripes are clear tape holding object together). Length: 34 cm.

rated utilitarian ceramics as well as obsidian and other stone artifacts. The surface assemblage implies that at least one function of these terraces was habitation. Many small and naturally flat sections of the hillslopes have concentrations of ceramics and stone artifacts as well, indicating that these too served as habitation areas.

The southern border of the Tetla zone is formed by a long ridge which extends eastward from the back of the Cerro Chalcatzingo to the river barranca. Grove's reconnaissance of this ridge in 1967 (Grove 1968b: 277) and subsequent surface surveys during this project located a number of small terraced areas with occupation refuse on the ridge's north (Tetla) side.

Above Tetla, at the junction between the cliffs of the Cerro Delgado and the steep talus slopes, are several caves (nos. 1, 2, 16; Fig. 12.37). Today these are sometimes used for storing bundles of grass to be used as cattle fodder. Informants have told us that the caves were also used

as a refuge by Zapatista revolutionaries, and excavations in Cave 1 yielded a one-centavo coin with an 1890 date, while Cave 16 contains the remains of a stone wall and a small trench, possibly for defensive purposes. The caves also contain Formative, Classic, and Postclassic period artifacts. Floral remains recovered from Cave 2 are listed in Appendix A.

The top of the Cerro Delgado is partly comprised of an eastward-sloping plateau (Fig. 12.37). Access to the plateau is possible only from Tetla, and vestiges of highly eroded pecked footholes still exist on one cliff slope. One village family still climbs the cliffs sometimes to plant tomatoes on the ca. 1.5 ha of usable land on the plateau. Several small caves are found in the cliffs at the uphill portion of the plateau (see also Chapter 12). The plateau's surface is littered with ceramic debris identical to that on Tetla's flatlands. A small mound built atop an artificial platform occurs at the highest point on the Cerro Delgado.

COMMENTS

It is worth noting that there are a wide variety of ceremonial and habitation zones at Tetla. While Tetla's earliest settlements appear to be Middle and Late Formative, its heaviest occupation seems to have taken place during the Early–Middle Postclassic. The variety of habitation areas at Tetla suggests that the site could yield interesting data on social stratification patterns. The one house excavated (Chapter 25) was located within the Middle Postclassic ceremonial zone. It was a large, well-made house with plaster floors. However, the hillside slopes also contain habitation debris, but either on small terraces or natural flat areas on the hillsides, neither of which is large enough to sustain a dwelling the size of the excavated structure. Plaster fragments are also missing from these latter locales.

Taken as a whole, these data suggest three types of residential structures, possibly related to levels of the society: (1) large houses; (2) houses on small artificial hillside terraces; and (3) houses on natural flat areas of the hillside slopes. A possible fourth type could be related to cave habitations, although it is not clear at this time whether cave utilization was for habitation, specialized activities, or ritual use.



Figure 24.20. Mortar holes [MCR-21] in barranca below Tetla.

RESUMEN DEL CAPÍTULO 24

El pequeño poblamiento del Clásico en Chalcatzingo pertenece fundamentalmente al período Teotihuacan III–IV. La arquitectura monumental importante del sitio para este período consiste de dos pequeños montículos piramidales que miran hacia la plaza (T-3) y una cancha de pelota al norte de esta plaza en T-15. El montículo más grande, T-3 Str. 1, es una pirámide redonda. Las otras construcciones del período Clásico en la zona principal del sitio incluyen varias plataformas, tres hornos de cal, y posibles estructuras de casas con entierros asociados. Algunas de las pictografías más elaboradas del sitio pueden fecharse al período Clásico, sobre la base de que presentan semejanza de estilo comparadas con los murales teotihuacanos. Tetla también tuvo un poblamiento pequeño del Clásico, pero su componente más importante está fechado en el Postclásico Medio. La única estructura del Postclásico, encontrada en la zona principal del sitio, es el complejo escalera-plataforma que conduce hacia arriba al santuario dedicado al bajorrelieve del Formativo Medio, Monumento 2. El fechamiento de esta estructura usando la cerámica asociada permanece incierto, aun cuando es probable que sea Postclásico Medio. La ar-

quitectura del Postclásico en Tetla incluye un número de estructuras, entre las que se encuentran un complejo montículo-plaza en la cima de una pequeña loma artificialmente elevada, y una cancha de pelota. A semejanza de la zona principal del sitio, existen aquí terrazas artificiales, las que probablemente ubicaban algunas de las estructuras de las casas, así como las tierras de cultivo. Además, algunas de las cuevas del Cerro Delgado tuvieron ocupación durante el Postclásico Medio.