
27. Comments on the Site and Its Organization

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GENERAL COMMENTS

Location

The Río Amatzinac Valley is agriculturally marginal when compared to the fertile river valleys of Morelos lying to the west and the Izúcar de Matamoros valley to the east. The river, which has cut a deep barranca, has few areas of broad alluvial soils or high natural humidity. While it is possible to hypothesize that the rise of certain early centers, such as San Lorenzo on the Gulf Coast, was related to agricultural productivity and surpluses, such cannot be the case for Chalcatzingo.

The initial population of the valley by early agriculturalists most probably involved splinter groups from the Río Cuautla settlements to the west, an area with great population and land pressures. The Early Formative inhabitants of the Río Amatzinac Valley, in moving into this more marginal region, were obviously motivated in their choice of settlement locations by three major factors: proximity to accessible water, to good agricultural land, and to a variety of vegetation zones with collectable plant resources. Taking all three factors into consideration, the Chalcatzingo hillside was probably the most favorable location in the valley. A spring occurs at the bottom of the hillside, and the water of the Río Amatzinac, while in a deep barranca, is nearby and accessible. The hillslopes and the spur known today as La Joya (which lacks archaeological remains) are elevated above the valley floor and the *Pithecellobium* Woodland cover, and today are considered to be good agricultural land. The woodlands lie to the north and west of the site, Huizache Grasslands to the south, and the hills and barranca provide a further range of plant communities for exploitation.

The Community and Its Support

While Chalcatzingo was the largest valley settlement during the Early Formative Amate phase, it does not seem to have attained the size of villages to the west in the Río Cuautla Valley (e.g., San Pablo; Grove 1974b). Further data are needed on the architecture of central Mexican Early Formative period settlements before it can be ascertained whether Chalcatzingo's Amate phase mounds are unusual for the region and would mark the site as already special by ca. 1000 BC. The lack of identified public architecture outside of the Río Amatzinac Valley during the subsequent Middle Formative period suggests that Chalcatzingo may indeed have been unique or special in the Early Formative as well.

Although a few small hillside terraces may have been constructed during the Cantera phase or possibly even during the Classic period, the major terracing at the site took place during the Early Barranca subphase. The archaeological data from the site do not illuminate any of the possible causal factors behind the community decision to create the terraces. For instance, we lack fossil pollen from the Early Barranca subphase and thus are unable to recreate environmental conditions at that time. It seems probable that the terracing was not directly stimulated by observation of other functioning terraces (and their advantages) in the region, for as far as we can determine such terracing is uncommon in eastern Morelos and the Amatzinac valley.

R. A. Donkin's (1979) analysis of aboriginal terracing in the Americas provides some possible causal explanations. For example, terracing normally occurs in areas of marginal rainfall, that is, where annual precipitation is less than 900 mm (*ibid.*: 7). Such terracing not only eases the problems of cultivating hillside land but also creates a surface

which better traps and retains sparse rainfall and moisture. As noted in Chapter 2, most of the Amatzinac Valley, including Chalcatzingo, has a yearly rainfall approximating 900 mm; thus terracing would have improved moisture retention while at the same time the built-in water diversion systems protected the agricultural land and habitation areas from excessive rainfall runoff.

Michael Coe and Richard Diehl (1980: 1:387) suggest that the San Lorenzo plateau was constructed in the form of a giant bird. Donald Lathrap (personal communication) believes that at the site of Las Haldas, Peru, the terraces topographically symbolize a stylized cayman's jaw. Whether the form of Chalcatzingo's terraces had symbolic as well as practical value remains a matter for speculation. An obvious and prominent artificial topographic feature at Chalcatzingo is T-27, which forms a rectangular thumb projecting northward from near the center of the lower terraces (Fig. 4.2). Its central position suggested to us the possibility of symmetrical arrangements on the site, and this hypothesis was tested during our excavations. For instance, the site's table-top altar, Monument 22, was found just to the east of T-27. Excavations in the same area on the west, however, found absolutely nothing. No center line caches or unusual features were found by the excavations atop T-27 either. With imagination the T-27 thumb could be conceived of as the bottom lobe of a cruciform earth-monster mouth such as characterizes Monument 1, 9, or 13. In the same vein it might be significant that a line projected toward the true north from Monument 1 on the hillside crosses T-27 along its approximate center line. However, it is far from certain that the builders of the terraces incorporated symbolic motifs in the terrace constructions, or that T-27's location is due to any other reason than that

it covers a protruding ridge of bedrock and *tepetate* which extended too far northward to be covered by the regular terracing.

Other layouts on the site are of more certain importance in terms of religious symbolism. The major public structure (PC Str. 4) and the major public terrace (T-1, the Plaza Central, location of the elite residence and high-ranking burials) are situated at the upper part of the hillslopes and are close to the cleft separating the mountain's twin peaks. This placement seems clearly related to the sacred character of the mountain and the cleft.

The main settlement occurred on the terraces below the Plaza Central. Because the residences sit alone on individual terraces or field plots, spaced as much as 100 m from their nearest neighbors, we have described the pattern as "dispersed" (Chapter 6). This "dispersed" settlement spreads out from the nucleus represented by the Plaza Central terrace and its 70 m long platform mound. It is difficult to determine whether this "dispersed" or noncompact residence pattern was common for Middle Formative central Mexico, since the other archaeological data available are not comparable. Those data derive from the regional surface surveys conducted by Jeffrey Parsons, Richard Blanton, and William Sanders in the Valley of Mexico, and their conclusions depend heavily upon sherd densities and site extent for the settlement classifications (e.g., Sanders, Parsons, and Santley 1979:37–39, 55–58). The Valley of Mexico surveys define both "nucleated" and "dispersed" villages during the Middle Formative period (e.g., *ibid.*: Maps 9, 10). Dispersed villages were determined on the basis of "light" sherd concentrations, or 9–25 sherds/m² (*ibid.*:39, 56). Nucleated occupations have "light-to-moderate" or "moderate" densities, or up to 200 sherds/m². Our Río Amatzinac Valley survey (Chapter 21) used more generalized criteria, but no Cantera phase settlement, including Chalcatzingo, had greater than a "B" density (10–39 sherds/m²; Tables 21.1, 21.2).

If the Valley of Mexico criteria are used, all larger sites in the Río Amatzinac Valley ("B" density) can be classified as dispersed. But does a dispersed settlement identified on the basis of surface sherd scatter really equate with the dispersed residence pattern recovered by both intensive reconnaissance and ex-

cavations at Chalcatzingo?

Each terrace or field at Chalcatzingo has one area of dense ceramic debris which serves to identify the house location. We do not know if "dispersed" villages in the Valley of Mexico exhibit the same pattern, nor are there excavation data there to ascertain whether the residences in villages classified as "nucleated" or "compact" are actually more closely spaced than those in "dispersed" villages, or whether the "dispersed" villages lack nuclei. Before speculating on the reason for both compact and dispersed settlements in central Mexico, it must first be determined that such a dichotomy is real.

A strict dependence on surface collection data for settlement classification can lead, in this instance, to misclassification. Based upon criteria other than sherd densities, Mary Prindiville and I (Chapter 6) have suggested a very low population for Cantera phase Chalcatzingo. Our estimates do not agree with the population estimates given for the site in Chapter 21 and Appendix H. If classificatory criteria are used, our population estimate would designate Chalcatzingo a Small Village, which we believe it was. At the same time we also realize that Chalcatzingo was a Regional Center, but without the population of two thousand or more people "required" for such a classification (Table 21.3; J. Parsons 1971:22).

Chapter 6 also suggests that individual terraces or field units, each with its residence, were passed on in a hereditary manner, either through family or lineage. At Chalcatzingo the Plaza Central terrace was apparently the residential area of the site's major elite ("ruling") lineage, and the individuals buried atop PC Structure 4 may have been members of that lineage. This situation appears similar to that in later Classic Maya centers, where each plaza with its surrounding structures was the residence, ritual, and burial area of a specific lineage.

The presumed nonresidential areas surrounding each of Chalcatzingo's Cantera phase houses could have served as garden plots for food production. Using the data on modern agricultural yields from Chapter 26, and halving the yields to account for more primitive forms of maize, it is probable that a hectare of land could have supported a family of five. However, few terrace units and fields at the site approach a hectare, and most are substantially smaller. This implies that

other land in the vicinity was also farmed.

As stated above, the major terrace construction dates to the Early Barranca subphase. Included in this massive construction effort was the placement of thumb-like check dams across the two major rainwater drainages. The diversion of El Rey Drainage protects almost all upper terraces from erosion due to rainwater runoff from the Cerro Chalcatzingo. The T-15 diversion dam (T-15 Str. 1) is built onto one of the lower terraces. Because its function was ultimately to protect fields lower on the hillside from uncontrolled rainwater runoff, it can be inferred that an extensive area below T-15 was utilized for agricultural purposes. Today most of the land below the terraces is privately owned and is irrigated by a simple gravity flow system (Chapter 2). Such an irrigation system possibly operated during the Formative period as well.

It is also possible that, as a regional center, the community at Chalcatzingo received additional agricultural support as tribute or via exchange with the valley's other settlements. In addition to basic vegetable staples such as maize, beans, and squash, animal protein may also have been imported. This is suggested by the large quantity of dog bones in the refuse (Appendix J). Deer and rabbit seem to have been secondary meat supplements, although whether gained through hunting by local residents or as another import cannot be determined.

Intra-Valley Relationships

The Río Amatzinac Valley, an area differentiated archaeologically from the surrounding areas, was clearly the local interaction sphere for Chalcatzingo. Survey data (Chapter 21) have delimited northern, central, and southern valley settlement clusters, and these seem to be at least somewhat distinguishable by some artifact attributes. However, these artifact variations are minor in terms of the strong influence exerted throughout the valley by Chalcatzingo. The overall valley cultural cohesion is most apparent in ceramic types such as Peralta Orange and in the Ch1 and C8 figurines, all of which are abundant within the valley but rare or absent on the outside.

Such valley ties likewise extend into architecture. Middle Formative period public architecture is virtually undocumented in areas of central Mexico other than the Río Amatzinac Valley, where at least four Cantera phase settlements

other than Chalcatzingo have mound architecture. The presence of public architecture at these sites may mark them as secondary centers, perhaps formed through the fissioning of or marriage into Chalcatzingo's elite lineage(s). Unfortunately, the interpretation of surface reconnaissance data does not agree completely with the postulated link between mound architecture and secondary center status. Campana de Oro (RAS-20) is classified by survey criteria as a Large Village, and El Palacio (RAS-112) as a Small Village, yet both sites have mound architecture (Appendix H). Mound architecture is also found at an unnamed Small Village (RAS-164) and at Telixtac (RAS-144), a Hamlet. Teresita Majewski (Chapter 22) disagrees with the Hamlet classification of Telixtac, and the presence of the large mound there does suggest that it may have been larger and more important than reconnaissance data alone indicate.

Because of the relatively small sample of artifacts, burials, and residential structures at Telixtac and Huazulco, a question remaining to be answered is how different the sociopolitical complexity in these communities was in comparison to Chalcatzingo's. Of particular interest would be the differences in rank or status between the regional center and the various lower levels of the valley settlement hierarchy. Although not elucidated by the present data, it could be possible that everyone living in the regional center had a generally higher rank or status than persons living elsewhere in the valley.

Markers of Ranking

The analysis of ranking or status at Chalcatzingo itself has been drawn primarily from the burial data (Chapter 8). Stone crypt graves and jade artifacts were taken as the two major identifiers of high rank at the site. The presence of *cantaritos* placed inside shallow bowls with burials of apparently high-ranking individuals at both La Venta and Chalcatzingo indicates that these otherwise unimposing vessels probably became important markers when placed together as a unit in a grave. The quantity of vessels apparently meant less than a particular quality which was perceived for certain pottery items. This illustrates a problem in attempting to identify individuals' social rank through grave associations, for the cognitive value system of their culture was obviously very different from ours.

A person's rank or status and role in a society during life are obviously symbolized in a variety of ways. Most such symbolization is seldom preserved in the archaeological record. It is also possible that certain artifacts associated with burials are less indicators of individual rank and more indicators of ritual status. While the two may often correspond closely, in some instances they may not. Persons ritually sacrificed may have had a low rank in life, but the ritual associated with their death might require elaborate grave furniture.

Location and burial data suggest that Late Cantera subphase PC Structure 1d housed the site's highest-ranking elite. Thirty-eight burials were recovered from the subfloor area of this residence, almost four times the number from any other excavated house. The quantity of burials from the other residences seems low if it is assumed that the residents of each household were buried only under their house floor. As Marcia Merry de Morales has suggested in Chapter 8, special members of other households, possibly prominent lineage heads, may have been interred beneath PC Structure 1d rather than within their own residences. The data also show that many individuals were interred in nonresidential contexts, e.g., the T-25 patio area.

Workshop Areas

Whereas at San José Mogote, Oaxaca, workshop functions can be attributed to many of the residences, and occasionally a great deal of variation exists in manufactured products between houses (Flannery and Winter 1976:38–41; Kent Flannery and Joyce Marcus, personal communication), few workshop activities are apparent at most of Chalcatzingo's house structures. An exception is found with PC Structure 2, a structure associated with the Cantera phase elite residence. Here drill cores and quantities of iron ore (some with ground surfaces) indicate workshop activities.

Although no house structure was located on T-37, the large concentration of obsidian debitage there (Chapter 19) indicates a workshop somewhere in that area. A minor dichotomy exists in the chipped stone tool assemblages among certain houses (Chapter 18), but the implications of that dichotomy, particularly in terms of any possible "workshop" functions, are unclear. Other possible workshop areas, far more tenuous, are mentioned below. However, the general

lack of workshop activities at the site may well indicate that unlike the situation at San José Mogote, such activities were not important to Chalcatzingo's overall role and maintenance.

Based strictly upon the quantity and variety of figurines recovered on T-24, Mark Harlan (1979:488) hypothesized that a figurine workshop was there. However, excavations did not uncover supporting evidence in the way of kilns, wastage, etc. In the same manner, certain data have suggested to us that S-39 might have had ceramic workshop functions, yet kilns and wastage are also lacking there and elsewhere on the site. If anywhere on the site kilns were separate from structures, they would probably have been missed by our excavation sampling techniques but should have been recognizable, if near the plow zone, by surface indications (some Classic period lime kilns were discovered in this way). If kilns were constructed on the interterrace slope areas, they remain undetected. Due to the role of Chalcatzingo as a regional center and its interaction with other areas (Chapter 28), it is possible that the pottery used at the site was manufactured at another village in the valley. If this was the case, the village would probably have been north of Chalcatzingo, since minor decorative variations set the Peralta Orange ceramics of the southern valley subsphere apart from those of Chalcatzingo.

Rituals of Termination

The fill of every excavated house structure yielded fragments of greenstone artifacts, primarily thin jade earspools, even though jade was absent from all house burials except those of PC Structure 1. These jade fragments could be interpreted as "workshop debris," yet other evidence of jade working was generally lacking, and social strictures prohibiting jade workers from being jade wearers (at death) would have to be hypothesized. Recent data from the Late Formative period site of Cerros in Belize provide another and more probable explanation. At Cerros, David Freidel (personal communication) and James Garber (1983; personal communication) have identified ritual activities associated with the termination of the use of major structures. These rituals included the breakage and scattering of ceramics and jade.

It was pointed out in Chapter 6 that Chalcatzingo's house structures had been periodically destroyed. The reasons for

the destruction may have been pragmatic, such as the residence's age and deterioration, or ideological, such as the death of the dwelling's main personage. It is quite possible that rituals accompanied the destruction and that these included the breakage of ceramics and jade, just as rituals of termination resulted in similar artifact breakage at Cerros. Thin ear spoils would be the most easily broken items of Chalcatzingo's jade assemblage. The house structures were subsequently rebuilt, and debris from the termination ritual would have become incorporated into the fill. It is normally assumed that potsherds found in house excavations are the result of normal breakage related to household activities. In light of the possibility of termination rituals involving both jade and ceramics, this notion must be re-examined.

The destruction of specific monuments at Chalcatzingo and in the Olmec heartland can likewise be attributed to termination rituals, in these instances coincident with the death of the personage portrayed (Grove 1981b). In Chapter 10 Jorge Angulo offers the possibility that figurine decapitation may be the equivalent of monument mutilation but on a non-elite level. The Chalcatzingo figurine sample, like that from many Mesoamerican assemblages, consists primarily of detached heads and bodies. Very few whole figurines were recovered. The common and purposeful mutilation of figurines by breaking off their heads seems to indicate that some important ritual function was served by this breakage.

Figurines

The typology of figurines presented in Chapter 14 follows that of George C. Vaillant very closely. This approach presented problems in the analysis (Chapter 14) because variability exists within Vaillant's types, and some attributes crosscut types (see Vaillant 1930; 1935). These shortcomings, together with regional variation, have made typological consistency between the Chalcatzingo figurines and those of the Valley of Mexico difficult to attain. Nevertheless, Chalcatzingo's figurines, more than any other artifact category, compare closely with those of the Valley of Mexico, and a large number are identical. On the other hand, Harlan's classification (Chapter 14) is important in that it recognizes that an equally large number of figurines, while

similar in all other attributes, exhibit a distinctive eye treatment. This eye treatment distinguishes them not only from Middle Formative period Valley of Mexico figurines but from those of central and western Morelos as well. While the eye treatment seems to be restricted to the Rio Amatzinac Valley, our sample does not indicate any major intra-valley differentiation.

"Baby-face" figurines are Early Formative. Only a few were recovered by our excavations (Fig. 14.4), since our work in Amate phase levels was minimal. Almost all Early and Middle Formative period figurines recovered were solid, but a few hollow examples occur (Fig. 14.8a). Among these latter was the top of the head of a white-slipped hollow (and presumably "baby-face") figurine found adjacent to a foundation wall of PC Structure 1a. Some Middle Formative figurine bodies depict enlarged stomachs, suggesting pregnancy (Appendix E). Many of these show slits in the sternum—upper belly area.

Because the figurine sample is so large, the quantity of unusual figurines recovered is also larger than "normal." A few of these show facial and hair treatments similar to those of Xochipala figurines from Guerrero (Gay 1972b). This suggests interaction with that region and implies that many of the elaborate Xochipala figurines may be Middle Formative in date. However, it should not be assumed that all unusual figurines result from interaction with as yet undetermined areas. Many could be local innovations. Thin-section analysis of the figurine clays, as was done for the site's major ceramic types (Chapter 13), will assist in the recognition of non-local figurines.

A figurine type which can be considered local to the Rio Amatzinac Valley is the type defined by Vaillant (1930:112) as C8. While C8 figurines have been found in the Valley of Mexico and in western Puebla in minor quantities, at Chalcatzingo they constitute 41 percent of the Middle Formative figurine heads, and they seem to be similarly important throughout the valley. While most central Mexican Middle Formative figurine heads show generalized, stylized facial features, the facial features of C8 figurines are far more specific and realistic. Variation in facial features is so specific that subtypes can be classified, which correlate in turn with specific headdress forms.

The C8 facial-headdress subtypes are so individualistic that these figurines must be interpreted as portrait figurines. By analogy to portrait monumental art (Grove 1981b), they depict in all probability individual chiefs, rulers, or important lineage heads. In Olmec portrait monuments the headdress seems to have served as the identifier. The correlation of C8 figurine facial types with headdress forms indicates that a similar identification device may have been in use with these figurines.

At least twenty different individuals, represented in multiple occurrences, have been distinguished in single pieces. Several individuals are illustrated in Figure 27.1, and these can be compared with the more generalized figurine types illustrated in Chapter 14. Although in almost all cases the headdress form correlates perfectly with the facial type, one facial type does seem associated with three headdress forms (Fig. 27.1g–n).

Since both portrait monuments and portrait figurines are found at Chalcatzingo, correspondences in individuals between the two should be expected. One definite match does occur, and another match is possible. One problem in attempting to match monuments with figurines obviously lies in the fact that many portrait monuments are decapitated and the head sections are missing or effaced. Monument 10, a bas-relief showing a frontal human face with a peaked headdress (Fig. 9.27), is duplicated in C8 (Person D) figurines found at both Chalcatzingo and Telixtác (compare Figs. 22.7a–b and 27.1j–l). A more tenuous association, based primarily upon headdress form, is between Monument 17, a carved statue head found with Burial 3, and the C8 subtype designated Person A (Fig. 27.1a–c). Only one burial, no. 29, was in a possible association with a complete C8 figurine (Person O; Fig. 27.2). While the association of Monument 17 with Burial 3 suggests that the monument represented the buried individual, such a conclusion for Burial 29 and C8 Person O is premature.

Since Chalcatzingo's portrait monuments and their mutilation are strong reflections of Gulf Coast culture, the C8 portrait figurines and their certain correspondences with individuals shown on monuments suggest by analogy that portrait figurines may have Gulf Coast counterparts and antecedents. While the Gulf Coast Middle Formative figurine sample is poorly published, some figu-



Figure 27.1. C8 portrait heads: *a-c*, Person A; *d-f*, Person B; *g-i*, Person C; *j-l*, Person D; *m-n*, Person E; *o-q*, Person F (two variants); *r-s*, Person G; *t-u*, Person H; *v-w*, Person I; *x-y*, Person J; *z-aa*, Person K; *bb*, Person M; *cc*, Person Q.

Figurines shown seem to have portrait characteristics (P. Drucker 1943a:Pl. 44; 1952:Pl. 28; Weiant 1943:Pls. 22, 27), though a larger sample is obviously needed. At the same time, while C8 figurines could have Gulf Coast antecedents, it should be mentioned that in eyebrow treatment they are not exactly like central Mexican and Gulf Coast figurines and are most similar to San Jeronimo figurines from near the Pacific Coast of Guerrero (Brush 1968:Pls. 21–26; Vaillant and Vaillant 1934:Pl. 17).

While Chalcatzingo's figurines seem to be portraiture, as presumably are certain Gulf Coast figurines, C8-like figurines from central and western Morelos are not as well made and appear more stylized and generalized. These are perhaps local attempts at replicating the C8 style without portraying a specific individual. Many punched-eye Type A figurines (e.g., Vaillant 1930:Pl. 21) may be closely related to C8's. The figurine typology of Rosa María Reyna Robles (1971) in fact incorporates C8's within Type A. It is my impression that Type A figurines are more common in the Valley of Mexico and that they are possibly the generalized equivalents of C8's in that region.

At the same time, a few well-made C8 figurines, completely identical to those from Chalcatzingo and its local interaction area, have been found at sites in the Valley of Mexico and western Puebla, usually in surface collections. Vaillant (1930:Pl. 17, second row) illustrates several C8's from Tetelpan in the Distrito Federal, including a Chalcatzingo Person Q. Reyna Robles (1971:Pl. 100) shows a C8 (Person A) from Tetelpan as well as several C8's from Epatlan, a village near Las Bocas and Izúcar de Matamoros, Puebla. Most Epatlan C8's duplicate unnamed examples in the Chalcatzingo sample. As noted elsewhere, many of Chalcatzingo's ceramic ties through time are with the Izúcar de Matamoros valley. Further archaeological work will obviously be necessary to understand the distribution of C8 figurines and the implications of C8 figurines (representing "Chalcatzingo personages") found at other central Mexican sites.

The Cult of the Ruler

The functions of the generalized, stylized figurines, which certainly comprise the overwhelming majority in Mesoamerica, have yet to be satisfactorily explained. However, Thomas A. Lee's (1969:62–65) summary is one of the

best available. C8 figurines, because they are portraiture, require a different explanation. As Susan Gillespie suggests in Chapter 15, these figurines cannot be viewed independently from the portrait monuments, for together they serve to identify what can be termed a Cult of the Ruler (see also Grove and Gillespie 1984). This cult apparently was present in Early Formative Gulf Coast sites and continued during the Middle Formative, when it expanded outward to Chalcatzingo and several other sites. Originally apparently expressed only in stone monuments, by the Middle Formative rulers' portraiture was also exhibited on jade artifacts and in ceramic figurines. The cult placed a special importance upon the person of the ruler, presumably both in life and in death. The cult at Chalcatzingo seems to demonstrate a special sociopolitical status which seems, at least overtly, very different from current reconstructions of the social complexity at other Middle Formative period sites in central Mexico.

Many monuments symbolically demonstrated a ruler's links to the supernatural and confirmed his "right to rule" (Grove 1973; 1981b). The ruler was cognized as imbued with supernatural power. The concept of "deities" probably did not exist during the Middle Formative, and it would thus be incorrect to ascribe "divine" status to these rulers, but they were certainly supra-mortal. The Cult of the Ruler expresses and communicates through various media this special position.

The Cult of the Ruler appears to have also embodied aspects of an ancestor cult. Genealogical links were communicated in the iconography and placement of some Gulf Coast monuments (Grove 1981b:67). The communication of lineage ties ("I am ruler because my ancestor was so-and-so") may be an important theme in Olmec iconography as part of the Cult of the Ruler. It is probably present but as yet unidentified at Chalcatzingo (see below). These ancestral aspects of the cult are perhaps exhibited in two monuments, Monuments 1 and 10. Monument 10, depicting a puff-eyed face topped by a pointed cap, sits atop the Cerro Chalcatzingo and not on the residential terraces where portrait monuments normally occur. Its iconography does not communicate the right to rulership or imply the embodiment of supernatural power. Carlo Gay (1972a:66) has interpreted the carving as a "rain deity,"

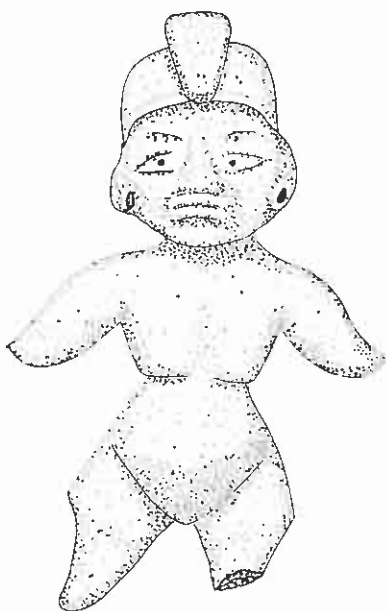


Figure 27.2. Whole C8 figurine, Person O, found in possible association with Burial 29.

but, as previously noted, the old man represented is duplicated in C8 figurines found both at Chalcatzingo and Telixtac. It is probable that this individual had been an important person in life. In ancestor cults the revered ancestors are often associated in one way or another with aspects of rain and fertility (Klein 1980:174; Marcus 1978a); thus a portrait depiction in a context suggestive of rain (see Chapter 10 concerning rain aspects of the sacred mountain) need not be surprising. In this same vein, the personage of "El Rey" (Mon. 1, discussed below) may also represent an ancestor strongly associated with rain and fertility.

Perhaps the strongest similarities to the Formative period Cult of the Ruler occur in the monuments of the Classic period Maya. Here again the depiction of the rulers, with glyphic texts related to significant aspects of their lives, was all-important (see also Pasztory 1978:130). It is probable that the roots of the Maya cult lie ultimately in Gulf Coast antecedents.

MONUMENTAL ART

In studying Chalcatzingo it is very easy to overemphasize the site's numerous monuments to the detriment of the many mundane activities which were the more important aspects of life at the site. Yet the monuments are there, and to understand them aids in understanding something of the cognitive system of the population that inhabited the site. Angulo's analysis of the monumental art in Chapter 10 followed what can be termed a "direct historical approach" utilizing ethnohistorical documents and codices and assuming continuity through time. This differs from my approach to the analysis of Olmec art (e.g., Grove 1981b), which is to recognize Gulf Coast Olmec as clearly a tropical forest culture with a basic belief system which was shared with tropical forest societies in South and Central America. This approach also accepts continuity through time in belief and symbols. While the prehispanic Maya belief system can likewise be considered as tropical forest and serves as a valuable source of information, the belief system of highland central Mexico is quite distinct and less useful as a source of data (even though in some aspects continuities with Olmec art probably exist).

It is difficult to compare Postclassic iconography, related to very complicated religious and sociopolitical systems, with

the data from much less complex Formative period societies. The religion of Postclassic societies in highland central Mexico involved an elaborate pantheon of deities, while Formative period religions apparently involved not deities but supernaturals. Among the Gulf Coast Olmec and at Chalcatzingo these supernaturals were usually represented in zoomorphic or anthrozoomorphic forms. Joyce Marcus (1978a) has suggested that Maya religion too was based upon supernaturals rather than deities. With this different perspective in mind, much of the remaining portion of this chapter involves a variety of observations, comments, and some alternative interpretations of the monuments.

Archaeological dating of Chalcatzingo's monuments through associated artifacts or radiocarbon samples is nearly impossible. The hillside reliefs, Groups I-A and I-B, are situated in areas of extensive and repeated erosion and redeposition. Similar problems occur with almost every other monument; thus, most can be placed chronologically only on stylistic grounds. The monuments share their greatest similarities with La Venta's Middle Formative period carvings, particularly those of phase IV, equivalent in time to Chalcatzingo's Cantera phase. Included in the similarities are bearded figures, circular ornaments in front of the upper lips of personages ("nose dots"), and figures seated with arms parallel and extended forward toward their knees. Further similarities are mentioned in individual discussions below.

Area I-A Monuments

The long-known and often-studied Area I-A reliefs high above the site on the Cerro Chalcatzingo are presented in Chapter 10 as forming a sequence which begins with the easternmost carvings (Mon. 11) and culminates in the large "El Rey" relief (Mon. 1). In that interpretation the clouds move toward the Lord of the Mountain in Monument 1. However, the motion in the sequence could also be seen as in the opposite direction. Monument 1 depicts large scrolls, possibly wind or mist, issuing from the mouth of the cave in which "El Rey" is seated. Perhaps the rain-laden clouds are formed at the sacred mountain of Chalcatzingo and dispersed by the wind (from the cave). The small zoomorphic figures appear to be blowing the clouds away toward the east. There the clouds are thinner and the raindrops fewer as their load becomes

dissipated. This alternative is more in line with the Postclassic concept of rain being "brewed" in caves from which it was dispensed over the countryside. The alternative, however, does not explain the presence of squash plants on the three carvings nearest to "El Rey" unless they simply symbolize the fertility of the area closest to the sacred mountain.

While probably meant to be viewed as a sequence or unified whole, the Group I-A reliefs exhibit individual variability (shown in Table 27.1). Of the six carvings, only five have clouds (interestingly, Monument 7, which lacks a cloud and raindrops, sits between Monument 1 and the others). Two stylistically different cloud forms are shown. Monuments 11 and 15 have thinner, more elongated and sinuous clouds; the others have the thicker cloud form typical of those hanging above "El Rey." Since this variation occurs *within* the sequence, it seems probable that the change in style reflects two different periods of carving, although not necessarily implying any significant time span between the periods.

There is also variation among the zoomorphic creatures, but they all seem to be small lizard-like saurians, probably highland adaptations of the symbolic concepts embodied in the cayman-saurian of Gulf Coast Olmec art. Such transformations between cayman and lizard are documented by Mary Helms (1977) for Central America and are apparently present here as well. Small lizard-like zoomorphs with flame eyebrows also occur in highland Formative period ceramic vessels (Fig. 27.3) and jade artifacts (Joralemon 1976: Fig. 9d).

Angulo (Chapter 10) likens the bifurcated scrolls emanating from the mouths of most of the zoomorphs to the "breath of life." Such an identification also has close parallels to the Zapotec concept of *pe*, which Marcus (1978a:174) notes is translated variously as "wind," "breath," or "spirit," "the vital force that made all living things move."

These small animals relate to earth, fertility, and rain in their symbolism. Yet, from a practical point of view, they can be associated with rain because they "forecast" the beginning of Chalcatzingo's rainy season. Our field experience at the site has shown that lizards "appear" in late May, a few weeks prior to the rains. They are thus the harbingers of rain. In fact, in some parts of Mesoamerica early rains are called "iguana rains."

"El Rey," the major relief of the Area

Table 27.1. Group I-A Reliefs

	Mon. 1 (I-A-1)	Mons. 6-7 (I-A-2,-3)	Mon. 15 (I-A-4)	Mon. 14 (I-A-5)	Mon. 8 (I-A-6)	Mon. 11 (I-A-7)
Bifurcated scroll from animal's mouth			X	X	X	
Scroll as base for animal or person	X	X	?	X		X
Squash plant		X	X	X		
Thin cloud with out-curving ends			X			X
Thick cloud with downcurving ends	X			X	X	
Number of raindrops	Many	0	2?	5-6	2	3

**Figure 27.3.** Vessel of the lizard-like supernatural, National Museum of Anthropology.

I-A monuments, depicts a personage sitting within the stylized mouth of the earth-monster. The mouth here is shown in profile, while Monuments 9 and 13 offer full-faced views. The form of the mouth in all three depictions is significant, for while symbolizing a cave, the upper half of the cruciform is identical to the hill glyph of Monte Albán, Oaxaca. Since bromeliads are shown growing from the inner corners of each of Chalcatzingo's cruciform earth-monster mouths, just as they grow today on the rock faces of the Cerro Chalcatzingo (Fig. 10.11), the cruciform mouth can be seen symbolically as both cave and mountain.

There seems little doubt that "El Rey" personifies a concept such as Lord of the Mountain. The position of the carving high on the mountainside, the symbolism of the cave-mountain, and the numerous raindrops in the garment and headdress worn by "El Rey" all suggest that this is a supernatural personage. Yet

anthropomorphic supernaturals are not common in Olmec art, and "El Rey" lacks the symbols which usually identify such supernaturals: cleft heads, flame eyebrows, feline-like mouths, etc. Just as headdress motifs serve to identify specific real personages in Olmec art (Grove 1981b), the two quetzal birds at the rear of "El Rey's" headdress could also serve as an identifier, implying that the personage is not a generalized supernatural. Moreover, the real and the supernatural may not be mutually exclusive. "El Rey" may represent a divinized ancestor who, in the Cult of the Ruler (discussed above) has assumed supernatural proportions or who mediates with the supernaturals for the good of the society.

The pair of quetzal birds may not be the only identifying motif of importance in the headdress of "El Rey." Also present are two distinct sets of three !-shaped raindrops. This triple raindrop motif is not unique to "El Rey." It also appears on

the headdress of the personage seated within the altar niche of La Venta Altar 5 (P. Drucker 1952: Fig. 52). In the altar the person holds a supernatural baby, while "El Rey" holds a large rectangular object with an S-shaped scroll, perhaps different manifestations of the same supernatural element. Like the triple raindrop symbol, the paired quetzal motif is also found on a La Venta monument (see the discussion of Monument 12 later in this chapter). Both motifs can be used to infer significant symbolic links between Chalcatzingo and La Venta, and even the possibility that the same personages are being depicted on monuments at both sites.

Area I-B Monuments

The carvings from Area I-B have been discussed at length in Chapter 10 and in various publications, and only a few comments will be added here. While Coe (1965a: 18; 1965b: Fig. 49) has identified the objects held by the two central figures of Monument 2 (Fig. 10.13) as clubs, and Angulo (Chapter 10) interprets the same figures as warriors, Jeremiah Epstein (personal communication) has pointed out to me the similarity between the "clubs" and South American agricultural digging sticks. My subjective impression is that the monument depicts a ritual related to agriculture, although if considered in the context of the iconography of the other four monuments in the area (see below) it is difficult to hypothesize an agricultural theme for the entire group.

All four figures in the scene have "bird-serpent" masks identical in style to the small masked figures which form the "background" of La Venta's Stelae 2 and 3 (in most drawings the La Venta masked figures are misinterpreted and are shown with long noses rather than masks, but photographs and actual examination of the stelae show the figures to be masked; P. Drucker 1952: Figs. 49-50; Heizer 1967: Pls. 1-2). The significant person in the Chalcatzingo carving seems to be the seated individual, not only because he alone is in that position, but also because he wears a horned headdress and his mask has been turned to the back of his head, exposing his face. During our excavations at Chalcatzingo some figurines of a nearly identical personage were recovered (Fig. 27.4). From these it can be inferred that the seated person of Monument 2 was of an importance that transcended the relief alone, since the figu-

rines come from scattered site areas and all are perforated for suspension.

Monument 3 (Figs. 9.10, 10.15), showing a large feline whose tongue touches a tall branching object, has details which were covered by fiberglass resin when molds were made of this relief in the 1950's. The major obscured motif, which Angulo and I have studied both together and independently, may be crucial to understanding the symbolism of the branching motif and the relief as a whole. The resin-encrusted area is located between and below the feline and the branching object. Although I previously described the branching motif as similar to the carbon cactus (Grove 1972a: 155), it is now clear that the base of the "cactus" begins simply as a large U-element which lacks a trunk or stem connecting it to the "ground." The obscured motif may make that link.

The anthropologist Iker Larrauri, visiting the site in 1973, offered an interesting interpretation for the large branching motif. He suggested that the circular elements at the tips of the branches might represent water sources (springs) and the long branches, rivers. Angulo (Chapter 10) also interprets the circles as water sources. If this motif is taken as a very schematic representation of the river barrancas in the valley above Chalcatzingo, the branches approach the actual

pattern. The feline, which in such an interpretation could be the representation or "glyph" of the site, drinks water from the source nearest the site, the spring and stream at the foot of the hill. However, this interpretation rests to a great extent upon the ultimate identification of the motif today obscured by fiberglass resin. Angulo (Chapter 10) sees the motif as a human with right arm raised. If that identification is correct, then the feline is licking the upraised arm and not drinking from a water source.

Monument 4 (Figs. 9.11, 10.16, 10.17) depicts felines and humans, while Monument 5 (Figs. 9.12, 10.18) depicts a cayman-like creature with a human. Although their role here is unclear, the feline and the cayman are major Olmec supernaturals of earth, sky, and water. In these scenes they attack humans who are so identical stylistically that the two carvings can be assumed to be contemporaneous. Because the lower feline in Monument 4 has an unusual headdress motif identical to that worn by person c in nearby Monument 2, all three carvings may be contemporaneous and inter-related. With such a unity among the I-B reliefs, Monument 3 is probably also an integral part of this group. Since Monuments 4 and 5 depict humans with upraised arms in association with zoomorphic supernatural creatures, Angulo's

suggestion in Chapter 10 that Monument 3 includes a human with upraised arm in front of the large feline seems plausible. If Monument 3 is part of this group thematically, then perhaps the symbolic content of these four carvings was also meant to be viewed sequentially, as Angulo suggested for the Area I-A monuments.

Monument 12

The paired quetzal symbol at the rear of "El Rey's" headdress is also found on two other monuments. The first, Chalcatzingo's Monument 12, the so-called "Flying Olmec" carving (Figs. 9.14, 10.19), depicts a pair of quetzal birds flying above a human figure. Unfortunately, the personage's headdress, which may have contained other iconographic information, is largely destroyed. Although the monument depicts a supernatural act, it is not inconceivable that the actor was a specific personage, perhaps identified by a headdress motif (now missing) or by the paired quetzal motif.

The second monument with paired quetzal birds is La Venta's Monument 19, a carving with remarkable stylistic similarities to Chalcatzingo's Monument 12, although the personage of Monument 19 is not "flying" but is seated within the curved body of a supernatural serpent. Above this person's head is a motif which Philip Drucker, Robert Heizer, and Robert Squier (1959: 199) describe as "a horizontal rod with a long tassled end." Actually, each end is tassled, and close inspection shows that the tassles are long-tailed birds, presumably quetzales (Fig. 27.5).

The similarities between Chalcatzingo Monument 12 and La Venta Monument 19 are so strong that I believe the person responsible for carving the Chalcatzingo monument must have been intimately familiar with the La Venta monument as well as with the background figures in La Venta Stelae 2 and 3, for the "Flying Olmec's" pose and dress closely duplicate figures on those latter monuments. There are no antecedents to monument carving in central Mexico prior to Chalcatzingo and thus the similarities of Monument 12 to certain La Venta carvings suggests that the carving was executed by an artisan trained on the Gulf Coast.

La Venta's Monument 19 was found in a good La Venta IV context, suggesting that we are correct in dating Monument 12 to the Cantera phase. The personages in both monuments are depicted with

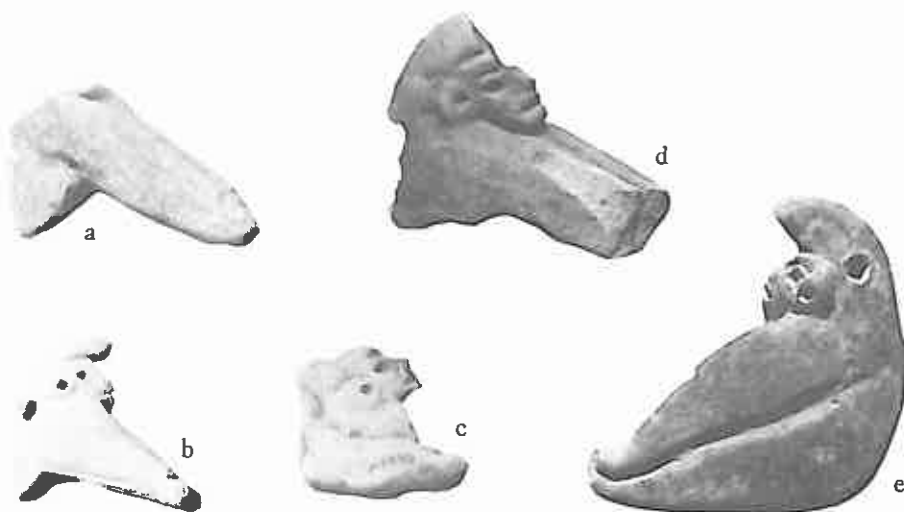


Figure 27.4. Figurines similar to seated figure in Monument 2: a-d, Chalcatzingo excavations; e, private collection, reported to be from Chalcatzingo.

nose dots in front of their upper lips, an attribute also found on Middle Formative period figurines. The La Venta Monument 19 personage holds an object somewhat similar to the handstone (Fig. 20.9) found in the excavations of PC Structure 2. The "Flying Olmec" of Chalcatzingo Monument 12 holds two objects, one a torch, the other indistinguishable. By analogy to jades with a similar flying person theme (Cervantes 1969: Figs. 7, 9, 10), the second object was probably a so-called knuckle duster. Angulo (Chapter 10) identifies the personage as a ball player based upon the objects held and the flying or leaping pose. I believe the theme is not related to the ball game. The parrot beneath the personage indicates that the artist clearly intended to indicate an act of flying rather than leaping after a ball, and the torch held aloft suggests possibly a flight through the underworld, perhaps with the personage as mediator between the upper and lower realms. There is also increasing evidence that the knuckle duster and torch symbols may be somehow related to blood-letting rituals, a topic beyond the scope of this chapter.

Assuming that the long-tailed birds depicted are indeed quetzales, they are clearly birds foreign to the Chalcatzingo area. In later Mesoamerican cultures the quetzal symbolized the east, but whether such symbolism is intended here is a matter for further analysis. The presence of the paired long-tailed bird (paired quetzal) motif on Chalcatzingo's Monuments 1 and 12 and on La Venta Monument 19 indicates at the minimum an important symbolic link between the two centers. If the motif is an identifier for a particular personage, then the presence of that personage in the art at both sites, including on Monument 1 in the possible role of revered ancestor as discussed earlier in this chapter, carries even greater significance. As noted earlier, the personage in Monument 1, "El Rey," also shares the triple raindrop motif with the personage of La Venta Altar 5.

Monuments 21, 26, 27, and 28

Chalcatzingo's Monument 21 (Fig. 9.21, 10.21) is the only certain female depicted in Mesoamerican monumental art of the Early or Middle Formative. The monument can be placed in time because it had been erected in front of a Late Cantera subphase stone-faced platform, T-15 Structure 5. The woman on Monument 21 stands upon an earth monster mask



Figure 27.5. Close-up of La Venta Monument 19 showing paired quetzal birds.

(Fig. 10.21), the earliest datable use of this symbol in Mesoamerica. Only one other possible Middle Formative example is known, Monument 1 at Los Mangos, Catemaco, Veracruz (de la Fuente 1973: 161). The earth monster mask is far more typical of Late Formative Izapan art (e.g., Norman 1976: Fig. 2.7), and is but one of several traits at Chalcatzingo which are more common to Late Formative period southern Mesoamerica (see Chapter 28).

Since monuments functioned to communicate a set of ideas, the fact that the personage shown on Monument 21 is female is highly significant. Ann Cyphers Guillén (1984) has suggested that the stela commemorates a marriage alliance between a Gulf Coast center and Chalcatzingo. In ethnographically recorded alliances related to trade and exchange, the woman is usually sent from the major partner to the lesser partner. In Chapter 10, it was suggested alternatively that the area from which the woman came was glyphically expressed within the scene's basal earth mask and was not the Gulf Coast. Instead, the *tierra caliente* of Guerrero is postulated. That interpretation was based upon a diamond motif. The possibility of a Guerrero alliance being commemorated by this monument has been strengthened since

the writing of Chapter 10 by the discovery of a new site in Guerrero, Teopan-tecuantlan (Martínez Donjuan 1982), which contains four Olmec-style monuments set in the walls of a rectangular patio similar to Chalcatzingo's patio on Terrace 25. Each monument depicts a massive baby-face supernatural wearing a headband containing four cleft rectangle motifs (e.g., Mon. 1, the only one of the four yet published; *ibid.*: Fig. 4). From photos taken by archaeologists who have visited the site, it appears that the cleft rectangle motifs on one (and possibly two) of the unpublished monuments are identical in form and interior symbols to the unusual cleft rectangles found on the pillar-like object on Chalcatzingo's Monument 21. The presence of an unusual motif on monumental art at both sites indicates to me that they were in significant contact and suggests that the motif could have functioned as a "place glyph" for one of the sites which was incorporated onto a monument at the other site to attest to their ties.

The undulating motif with elongated oblongs, which covers most of the vertical pillar and appears beneath the pillar as the background of the earth-monster mask, is also found on Monument 27 (Figs. 9.25, 10.22), where it decorates the body of the animal being carried (or ani-

mal cape being worn) by the personage shown on that stela. It also appears on the ledge of Monument 22, Chalcatzingo's table-top altar (Fig. 27.6). This latter context offers possible clues to the symbolism of the motif, for on Gulf Coast altars the iconography of the upper ledge appears to symbolize the earth. The elongated, rectangularly shaped, inverted-U elements which represent the upper tooth row of the cayman or saurian supernatural decorate the ledges of La Venta Altar 4 and Potrero Nuevo Monument 2. This motif is identical to the upper tooth row on ceramic depictions of the saurian supernatural (e.g., Joralemon 1976: Fig. 7) and in symbolism seems to carry over to the basic Middle Formative double-line-break motif decorating vessel rims (Donald W. Lathrap, personal communication). Rarely, the altar ledge may depict a sky cayman supernatural or have jaguar associations (Grove 1970a: frontispiece; 1973), but earth symbolism appears most common. Thus the undulating line motif at Chalcatzingo may symbolize some aspect of the earth. The elongated oblongs within the undulating lines are reminiscent of later symbolism of flowing water, and thus could relate not only to earth but to earthly water as well.

The personages shown on Monuments 21 and 27 are probably specific individuals (e.g., Grove 1981b). Both of these monuments were associated with stone-faced platforms related to the individuals portrayed. The presence of the undulating design on both stelae suggests that they are closely contemporaneous and perhaps even implies a relationship between the persons portrayed (e.g., the Monument 21 woman as wife or mother of the Monument 27 person; their carving techniques are different, suggesting that they were not executed at the same time). If the motif indicates a relationship between the stelae, their relationship to the table-top altar which also has this motif is confused by the altar's possible anachronism (see above).

Chalcatzingo's largest known stela, Monument 28 (Figs. 10.23, 10.24), was found buried at the western edge of T-6, a terrace also containing Monument 27 in situ in front of a stone-faced platform. In Chapter 6 it was suggested that terraces were "owned" and passed on through family or lineage. Rulership may also have been passed on through a certain lineage. The presence of two portrait or rulership monuments on T-6, one buried

and one standing in situ, suggests that the Monument 28 personage not only preceded the Monument 27 personage in time but was his ancestor as well. Monument 28 could in fact have once stood in front of one of the earlier building stages of T-6's stone-faced platform mound (T-6 Str. 1).

As noted in Chapter 9, the personage on Monument 28 is adorned with plume-like ornamentation. Curiously, the plume-like motif is the inverse, on a smaller scale, of the large branching motif found in front of the feline on Monument 3 (Fig. 9.10). Just as Monument 28 is earlier than Monument 27, Monument 3 may be the earliest of the Area I-B reliefs (Monument 4 was erected onto the boulder of Monument 3 and is stylistically more similar to Monuments 2 and 5 than it is to 3).

It is probable that the upper, missing, portion of Monument 26 (Fig. 9.24) was also a portrait carving of an important individual, and thus T-6 can claim three such monuments. It is noteworthy that in its form and execution Monument 26 is crude and ovoid in cross-section and therefore very similar to Monument 28 but very different from the well-executed and nearly rectangular (in cross-section) Monument 27. If these features have chronological significance, then some degree of contemporaneity can be hypothesized for Monuments 26 and 28.

Monuments 9 and 24

The broken remains of Monument 9 (Fig. 9.17) were found by looters on the upper area of the Plaza Central's long platform mound (PC Str. 4). Two motifs on this large earth-monster face deserve further mention: the long, undulating eyebrows, which terminate in bifurcated elements, and a cartouche which occurs between the eyebrows. The undulating "cleft-eyebrow" motif is not unique to this monument nor to Chalcatzingo. It occurs on other examples of Olmec-related art, including Chalchuapa Monument 5 (D. Anderson 1978: 171), and more commonly on engraved jades (see for example Joralemon 1976: Figs. 12e, 14a, 17f). The presence of the motif at both Chalcatzingo and Chalchuapa, sites with Olmec-style carvings, is of particular interest.

The cartouche contains a "face" composed of two oval "eyes," below which are two short vertical "fangs." Two similar cartouches occur on Monument 24, but if the positioning of this latter monu-

ment proposed in Chapter 10 is correct (see Fig. 10.25), the cartouches are upside down. The similarity of the inverted cartouches to the raindrop motif has led to the ambiguity in the correct positioning of the stela as erected on the site today, based upon the orientation of the cartouche in Monument 9 and the large uncarved tapering section of the stela, which can only be its basal section.

Monument 24 is incomplete, since its upper section has been broken off (see Fig. 9.22). Natural exfoliation of the rock has likewise damaged much of the remaining carved area, and only a few fragments of the original design exist below the paired cartouches (Fig. 27.7). The most visible motif below the right cartouche appears to be the flaked remnant of a flame eyebrow, beneath which is a section of an elongated eye. The eye section can be seen on the left side of the carving as well. A few diagonal elements occur lower on the carving which with imagination resemble the "tears" beneath the eyes of the face of the supernatural depicted on Tres Zapotes Stela C. The extant carving may have been an earth-monster mask such as forms the base motif on Monument 21 (one vertical bar on the carving may be part of an upcurved fang). The stela's main design was obviously on the missing section. Of interest is the association, on two monuments, of the cartouche ("face") with the earth-monster face.

Monument 18

Although most Chalcatzingo monuments were erected vertically, Monument 18 (Fig. 9.20) may have been meant to lie horizontally, for its small carving is adjacent to a "water ritual hole" (Chapter 11). In Chapter 10 Angulo states that a vaguely carved face visible only at certain times of the year occurs within the concentric oblongs of this relief. My recent reinspections of this monument and of Monument 4, in which he feels that a face is carved in the cleft "ear" element on the head of the lower jaguar, indicate that no such faces exist. Natural irregularities and grains in the rock may have caused misleading features to appear in the rubbings of these monuments.

THE SACRED MOUNTAIN

With its bas-relief carvings, Chalcatzingo is unique among Middle Formative sites in highland central Mexico. Its

monumental public architecture adds to its uniqueness. Its location in the Rio Amatzinac Valley rather than elsewhere raises several questions. Other highland valleys were far more fertile but were not chosen. Other cliffs were suitable for bas-relief carvings but remained uncarved. Numerous locations have far easier access to much more abundant water. Therefore, there was obviously something about this location that transcended its selection beyond simply materialistic criteria. That special something was apparently the cognition of the twin hills of Chalcatzingo as a sacred mountain (Chapter 10). While other mountains could and did have sacred connotations, the cleft or "split-hill" form of these mountains made the sacred character of the location symbolically apparent (Cook de Leonard 1967: 63–66). The cleft in the mountain was the entrance to the underworld, the source area of supernatural power, making this a most sacred of sacred mountains. This presents a chicken-and-egg type paradox, for it is uncertain whether the original Early Formative period settlers of Chalcatzingo located here at least partially because they perceived this symbolism, or if the symbolism played a role only in the site's later development.

The placement of the monuments at the site is directly related to the symbolism of the locale. The Area I-A reliefs occur high on this hillside, along the natural watercourse which carries rain-water runoff from the western hillslopes. That these particular carvings symbolize rain, water, and fertility is not surprising. But in the largest relief of this group, Monument 1, the personage is depicted as seated within a cave. This, of course, may have a generalized "heart of the mountain" meaning rather than symbolizing an actual cave, yet a cave may have existed here. In the letter to the Mexican government reporting the discovery of "El Rey" (Chapter 1), the villagers who cleaned the carving state that they heard the noise of an "interior rock-fall" which suggested to them that a "temple or tomb" lay buried beneath the jumble of boulders to the left of the carving. This possibility was not investigated by our project due to the risk such work would impose for Monument 1.

While the Area I-B reliefs occur just below the cleft in the sacred mountain, a more important criterion seems to be their location at the base of a massive



Figure 27.6. Eastern ledge of altar, Monument 22, showing undulating motif with elongated oblong.

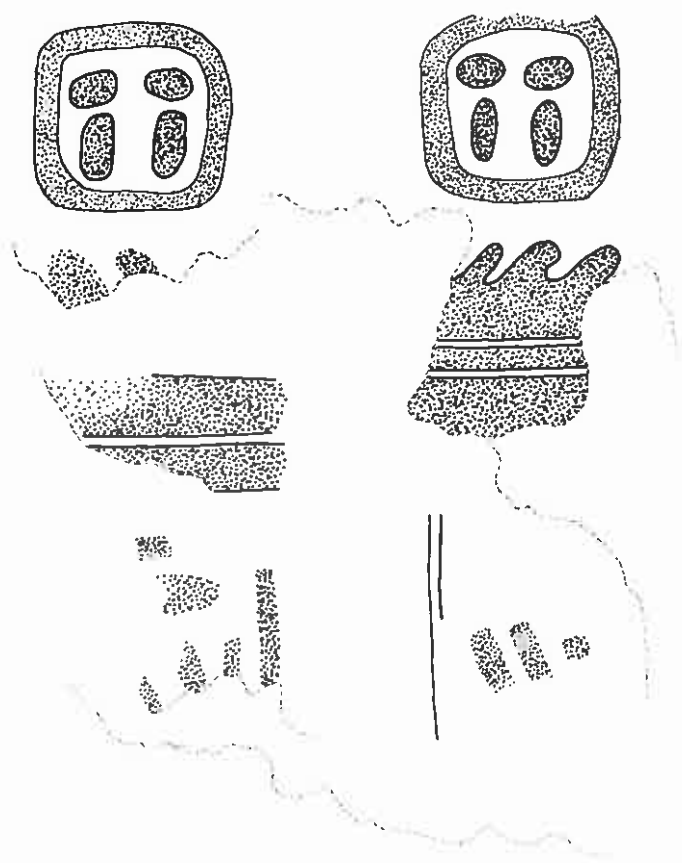


Figure 27.7. Details of Monument 24, as interpreted by Grove. Dashed lines indicate exfoliation.

fracture in the Cerro Chalcatzingo itself (Fig. 27.8), a wide secondary cleft into the sacred mountain. Groups I-B and I-A both deal with mythico-religious rather than rulership themes. Their positioning on the sacred mountain itself is clearly related to their thematic content.

The terraces at the base of the sacred mountain served as "public" and residential areas, the former expanding through time. Monuments associated with these terraces related largely to the commemoration of specific individuals and the Cult of the Ruler. It is these monuments which are mutilated. Those on the hillside, dealing with ritual or supernatural themes, sit unmolested. Although we do not have good chronological data on most of the site's monuments, the differences between the hillside carvings and those of the terraces seem to be functional/thematic and not strictly chronological.

Although the painted art at Chalcatzingo may date to the Classic period (using the Cave 19 art as a reference; Chapter 12), it is interesting that a distinct dichotomy exists between the location of the painted and the carved art. The mythico-religious carvings occur only on the Cerro Chalcatzingo, and with only one exception the red paintings on the *cerros* occur on the Cerro Delgado and in the "saddle area" (the cleft between the *cerros*). Implicit underworld symbolism is present even in the painted art, for almost all occur in caves or niches, and within these locales many paintings are associated with concavities in the rock.

As Angulo noted in Chapter 10, the sacred character of the *cerros* continues today, although in a Christian guise. Crosses have been erected atop both hills, and both public and private rain-related ceremonies are carried out. Whether the regional cultures of the Postclassic, Classic, and Late Formative attached as great an importance to this sacred mountain is a matter of conjecture, but earlier inhabitants clearly recognized the sacred nature of their locale. They dwelt at the entrance to the underworld and by implication had greater access than others to the supernatural powers therein; this would have made them more "powerful" in the eyes of others as well.

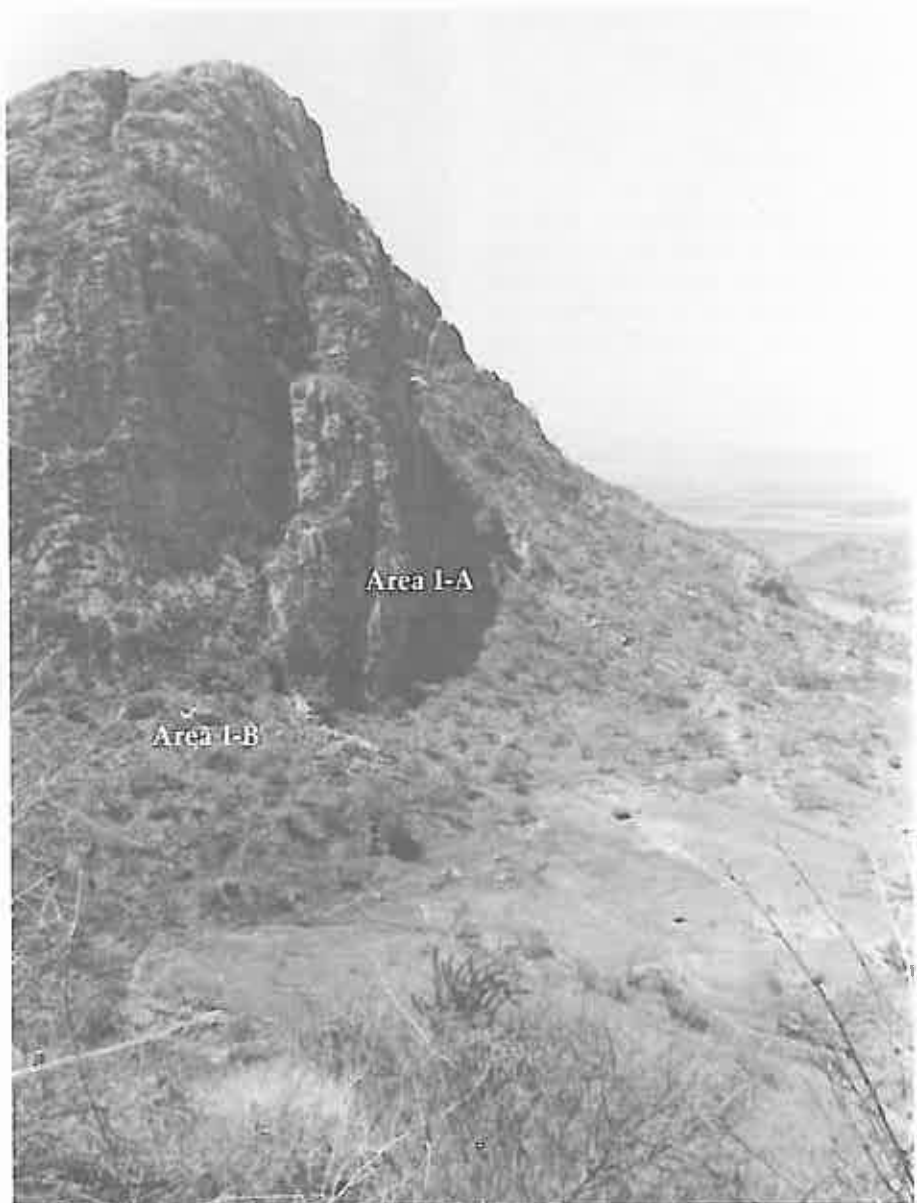


Figure 27.8. Northeast side of Cerro Chalcatzingo showing massive fissure above the Group I-B monument area.

RESUMEN DEL CAPÍTULO 27

Algunos de los principales datos referentes al sitio y a su organización están resumidos y comentados en este capítulo.

Chalcatzingo está ubicado en la zona más favorable del Valle del Río Amatzinac. Cuenta con el agua de un manantial, con buenas tierras agrícolas, así como con varias zonas ecológicas accesibles para la recolección. En la fase Amate, Chalcatzingo era el mayor asentamiento del Valle, pero no había alcanzado aún el tamaño de las aldeas situadas en el valle del Río Cuautla, que era agricolamente más rico. Durante la fase Barranca Temprana, fueron construidas las terrazas. El patrón residencial, durante el período Formativo, parece haber sido "disperso," contándose sólo una habitación principal por terraza. Es difícil comparar este patrón "disperso" con aquellos asentamientos del Valle de México que han sido considerados "dispersos," ya que estos últimos están basados únicamente en datos obtenidos a partir de reconocimientos de superficie. Si las terrazas también eran utilizadas para la agricultura, una hectárea de tierra pudo haber mantenido a una familia de cinco personas. La cantidad limitada de terrazas en Chalcatzingo hace suponer que otras porciones de tierra cercanas también eran cultivadas. Es probable que aprovisionamientos adicionales de alimentos hayan podido ser adquiridos por medio de intercambios o de tributo, inclusive perros, cuyos restos abundan en los basureros de Chalcatzingo.

Todo el Valle del Río Amatzinac estaba estrechamente aliado con Chalcatzingo y fuertemente influenciado por él. Algunos tipos cerámicos, como son el *Peralta Naranja*, las figurillas Ch1 y C8, así como la arquitectura pública, son escasos fuera del Valle. Existen cuatro sitios más de la fase Cantera en el Valle, que tienen arquitectura pública. Probablemente hayan sido centros secundarios.

Sólo algunas casas dan muestras de actividades artesanales claras. Esto parece indicar que probablemente los talleres no eran importantes para el papel que el sitio jugaba.

Mientras que una sola casa (P.C. estructura 1) tenía entierros asociados con jade, el material encontrado debajo de los pisos de casi todas las casas incluía pequeños fragmentos de jade. No se trata de material de manufactura, sino de

pedras de jade intencionalmente rotas y depositadas durante los rituales realizados al ser destruida la casa (antes de su reconstrucción).

Las figurillas del sitio son similares a los tipos del Valle de México, originalmente descritos por Vaillant. Existe, sin embargo, una importante excepción: las figurillas C8, que representan el 41 por ciento de la muestra de Chalcatzingo, son escasas o inexistentes en cualquier otra parte del Centro de México. Estas figurillas son retratos, probablemente de dirigentes locales y de jefes de linaje. Pueden ser distinguidos más de veinte individuos diferentes. Uno de los personajes es igual al que se encuentra representado en el Monumento 10.

Los retratos, en figurillas y en monumentos, permiten pensar en un Culto al Dirigente. Este culto, que también está presente en la Costa del Golfo, era, en cierta medida, un culto a los ancestros. También está asociado a la religión, ya que el ancestro empezó a ser venerado y asociado a la lluvia y a la fertilidad.

La cultura Olmeca de la Costa del Golfo tiene fuertes semejanzas con las culturas de los bosques tropicales de Centro y Sud América. El arte Olmeca puede, entonces, ser mejor analizado a través de analogías etnográficas con esa región. Varios relieves han sido estudiados en esta forma, y su localización permite suponer que los cerros en Chalcatzingo tenían un carácter sagrado.