New Studies in Archaeology

Human Sacrifice, Militarism, and Rulership

Teotihuacan was one of the earliest and more populous pre-Columbian cities, and the Feathered Serpent was its vital monument, erected circa AD 200. This work explores the religious meanings and political implications of the pyramid with meticulous and thorough analyses of substantially new excavation data. Challenging the traditional view of the city as a legendary, sacred, or anonymously governed center, the book provides significant new insights into the Teotihuacan polity and society. It provides interpretations of the pyramid’s location, architecture, sculptures, iconography, mass sacrificial graves, and rich symbolic offerings, and concludes that the pyramid commemorated the accession of rulers who were inscribed to govern with military force on behalf of the gods. This archaeological examination of the monument shows it to be the physical manifestation of state ideologies such as the symbolism of human sacrifice, militarism, and individual-centered divine authority, ideologies that were later diffused among other Mesoamerican urban centers.

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NEW STUDIES IN ARCHAEOLOGY

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SABURO SUGIYAMA

Human Sacrifice, Militarism, and Rulership

Materialization of State Ideology at the Feathered Serpent Pyramid, Teotihuacan
To Kumiko, Yoei, Masano, and Nawa
in memory of Masako and Jusaku Sugiyama
CONTENTS

List of figures ix
List of tables xiii
Acknowledgments xv

1 Introduction: cognition of state symbols and polity 1
   Motivations and ends 1
   Structure and brief summaries 8
   Theories and strategies 10

2 Background: data and ideation 18
   Excavations at the Feathered Serpent Pyramid 18
   Mesoamerican cosmology 32

3 The Ciudadela and the city layout 38
   Search for the Teotihuacan Measurement Unit (TMU) 40
   Principles of space management in the city 41
   Monuments on the Avenue of the Dead 46
   The Ciudadela as an integral element of the city layout 47
   General discussion 48

4 Architecture and sculpture 53
   Architecture 53
   Sculpture of the facades 56
   Temple sculpture 76
   General discussion 84

5 Burials 87
   Contextual interpretations 89
   Burial patterns 96
   General discussion 114

6 Offerings 122
   Obsidian 124
   Greenstone 140
   Slate and other stones 159
   Shell 165
   Other items 180
   Offering associations 185
   General discussion 198
## Contents

7  **Overview: sacrificial and elite burials**  
Sacrificial burials in Teotihuacan  
Elite burials in Teotihuacan and Teotihuacan provinces  

8  **Conclusion: the Feathered Serpent Pyramid as symbol of sacrifice, militarism, and rulership**  
Symbolism  
Sociopolitical implications  
Materialization of power in ancient states  

**Notes**  

**References**  

**Index**
FIGURES

1. Plan of Teotihuacan  
2. Plan of the Ciudadela  
3. Principal facade of the FSP  
4. Plan of the FSP before the 1982 excavation  
5. Plan of the FSP, showing the location of the burials  
6. Plan of the FSP reconstructed by the author in 1982  
7. General plan of Front C operations  
8. General plan of Grave 13  
9. Plan of Grave 15  
10. Plan of Grave 14  
11. Central section of Grave 14  
12. Underworld and upper world depicted in *Codex Vaticanus A*  
13. Cosmogram indicating temporal and spatial divisions  
14. Map showing the extent of Teotihuacan, ca. AD 600  
15. Plan of the central ceremonial zone along the Avenue of the Dead  
16. Plan of the ancient Chinese capital of the Sui state  
17. Representations of the Feathered Serpent in Teotihuacan  
18. Representations of serpent-like creatures in Teotihuacan  
19. Representations of the Feathered Serpent as a border motif in Teotihuacan  
20. Representations of the Feathered Serpent as an independent symbol  
21. Representations of the Feathered Serpent in the form of a headdress  
22. Representations of the Feathered Serpent as a main motif  
23. Representations of headdresses as symbols of authority  
24. Representations of Venus and symbols related to Venus in Mesoamerica  
25. Representations of headdresses, Cipactli, and Feathered Serpent  
26. Representations of headdresses associated with the Feathered Serpent, implying possible calendrical meanings and/or significance of authority (rulership) in Teotihuacan  
27. Possible dots signs in Teotihuacan  
28. Zapotec glyphs and calendar signs  
29. Representations of headdress and nose pendant without a face
List of figures

30 Burned clay fragments with representations of “feathers” in low relief 77
31 Burned clay fragments with representations of “shell” and possible “plants” in low relief 78
32 Burned clay fragment with representation of a “scroll” in low relief 79
33 Representations of watery scrolls associated with the Storm God at Teotihuacan 80
34 Triple “mountain” compound and Storm God on a Teotihuacan tripod vessel 80
35 Representations of watery scrolls associated with Storm God symbolism 81
36 Burned clay fragments with representation of “feathered disk” in low relief 82
37 Burned clay fragments with representation of “punctuation panel” in low relief 82
38 Mesoamerican convention for manifestation of rulership by representations of headdresses and nose pendants 85
39 Correlation between depth of grave and location in the FSP 99
40 Spatial distribution of the burials by general body position 102
41 Spatial distribution of the burials by orientation of body axis 104
42 Spatial distribution of the burials by orientation of body facing 106
43 Spatial distribution of the burials by body flexion posture 107
44 Spatial distribution of the burials by arm position 108
45 Spatial distribution of the burials by sex 110
46 Spatial distribution of the burials by age 111
47 Spatial distribution of the individuals with dental modification 113
48 General plan of Grave 14, showing only human bones 115
49 Plan of the body positions in Grave 14 116
50 General plan of reconstructed body positions of the FSP burials 117
51 Representations of war captives tied with rope 120
52 Chart of obsidian projectile points sorted by length and weight 125
53 Obsidian projectile points: types A, B, C, and D 126
54 Spatial distribution of projectile points by types in Grave 14 127
55 Spatial distribution of obsidian blades by width 130
56 Five types of obsidian biface 132
57 Spatial distribution of obsidian knives in Grave 14 133
58 Representations of obsidian curved knives in Teotihuacan 134
59 Anthropomorphic obsidian figurines (eccentrics), classified as type A1, A2, and A3 136
60 Zoomorphic obsidian figurines (eccentrics), classified as type B, C1, C2, and C3 137
61 Spatial distribution of obsidian figurines by type 138
62 Stylized head of an animal, possibly a Feathered Serpent 140
63 Spatial distribution of greenstone beads by diameter 142
List of figures

64 Spatial distribution of earspools by diameter 144
65 Two types of greenstone nose pendant 145
66 Spatial distribution of all nose pendants from Grave 14 plotted by weight 146
67 Representations of greenstone nose pendants 149
68 Greenstone figurines 150
69 Spatial distribution of all greenstone figurines in Grave 14 by type 152
70 Greenstone “resplandores” of various sizes found at the FSP 153
71 Spatial distribution of greenstone “resplandores” from Grave 14 by size 154
72 Greenstone cones found in Grave 14 155
73 Spatial distribution of greenstone cones in Grave 14 156
74 Various greenstone objects 158
75 Slate disks of various sizes from the FSP graves 159
76 Spatial distribution of individuals wearing slate disks 161
77 Spatial distribution of disks in Grave 14 162
78 Large cones with stems: materials for construction fill in the FSP’s central zone 163
79 Seven large, stemmed cones with portions of surface partially cut off 164
80 Spatial distribution of unworked shell by type in Grave 14 167
81 Shell pendants from Grave 14 168
82 Spatial distribution of shell pendants in Grave 14: types 1 and 2 169
83 Spatial distribution of shell pendants in Grave 14: types 3, 4, 5, and 6 170
84 Selected examples of shell objects used for necklaces and maxilla pendants 172
85 An example of a shell necklace complex with maxilla imitation pendants 174
86 Collar of real human maxillae 175
87 Canid tooth imitations made of shell, forming a maxilla pendant 175
88 Coyote representations in Teotihuacan murals 176
89 Ceramic statue with maxilla pendants from the Oaxaca region 178
90 Shell earplugs found at the FSP 180
91 Spatial distribution of individuals wearing shell earplugs in the FSP burial complex 181
92 Storm God vessel found in Grave 14 182
93 Varieties of baton in the form of a Feathered Serpent 183
94 Tlaloc (Storm God) holding lightning 184
95 Spatial distribution of offerings in Grave 14 187
96 Spatial distribution of objects thought to be personal ornaments in Grave 14 188
97 Spatial distribution of objects thought to be general offerings in Grave 14 189
## List of figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>Locations of greenstone clusters in central section of Grave 14</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>Locations of greenstone clusters in southwestern section of Grave 14</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Well-defined offering sets from Grave 14</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>Distribution of greenstone clusters and possible greenstone clusters in Grave 14</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>Spatial correlation of “bags”, greenstone figurines, and “resplandores” with the greenstone clusters in Grave 14</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103</td>
<td>Spatial correlation of slate disks with the greenstone clusters in Grave 14</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104</td>
<td>Representations of scattering ritual in Teotihuacan murals</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105</td>
<td>Offering scene on the mural of the “Temple of Agriculture”</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>106</td>
<td>Plan showing the process of modification at Structure A in Kaminaljuyú</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>107</td>
<td>Plan showing the process of modification at Structure B in Kaminaljuyú</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>108</td>
<td>Possible affiliation of individuals buried at the FSP</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>109</td>
<td>Mural of Structure B, Cacaxtla, showing sacrificed and sacrificers</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chronology of Teotihuacan and other relevant sites</th>
<th>page 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Quantitative data from the graves at the Feathered Serpent Pyramid</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This study is a result of my long-term research into the Feathered Serpent Pyramid (FSP) and the Ciudadela (Citadel). A major portion of the study was first published as my dissertation at Arizona State University (ASU) in Tempe, Arizona in 1995. *Human Sacrifice, Militarism, and Rulership: Materialization of State Ideology at the Feathered Serpent Pyramid, Teotihuacan* is a revised version of the dissertation, into which I have integrated new data and whose analyses and interpretations I have further refined.

The ideas expressed here developed through projects supported by several institutions and grants. My first fieldwork at the FSP was carried out as part of the Proyecto Arqueológico Teotihuacán 1980–82, directed by Rubén Cabrera Castro of the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH) in Mexico. Further excavations for the same project during the 1983–84 seasons gave me an opportunity to focus on the sacrificial burial complex. I sincerely express my deep gratitude to Rubén Cabrera for his continuous support.

As a result of the early work, a new, joint project of INAH and ASU (formerly Brandeis University before the author's move to ASU) was formed: Proyecto Templo de Quetzalcoatl (PTQ88–89), or Project Feathered Serpent Pyramid in English. Cabrera and George Cowgill served as codirectors; I was their principal assistant. Funding was granted by the National Geographic Society, National Endowment for the Humanities, Arizona State University Foundation, and other sources; the Consejo de Arqueología of INAH in Mexico authorized the project. I received independent aid from the National Science Foundation's (NSF) Dissertation Research Program for the analysis of the data described in this publication. Much of the interpretation and writing of the text were carried out at Dumbarton Oaks, where I was a Resident Junior Fellow in 1993–94. Further funding for analyses and publications from the National Endowment for the Humanities and NSF, for which I was coprincipal investigator with Cowgill, also contributed to the present study.

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I finally should mention that, as a consequence of the research described here, a new excavation project was carried out at the Moon Pyramid from 1998 to 2004 by Rubén Cabrera, my codirector of the INAH in Mexico, and me. The continuing research was motivated by what the PSP project did and did not resolve. However, as the fieldwork is still underway, I have only added general data here very briefly with a few references to preliminary reports. Ongoing analytical studies with substantially new and unique data would strikingly shift our view of major monuments in Teotihuacan, affecting the interpretations presented here. In fact, new insights provided by the recent excavations formed a part of my “excuse” for the extended delay in publishing this, for which I owe profound thanks to the editors of Cambridge University Press, Jessica Kuper and Simon Whitmore. I am very grateful for their unusual patience, warmth, and continuing support. At any rate, I believe that the results of the studies discussed in this book formulate a body of substantial information.
Acknowledgments

...that we should return to, in order to integrate it into more comprehensive comparative studies of Teotihuacan monuments for the coming years. I have simply tried to present here what René Millon (1992: 401) says will be of lasting importance to students of Teotihuacan archaeology, a richly illustrated analytic study. (See also complementary information at http://archaeology.asu.edu/teo.)