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052178056X - Human Sacrifice, Militarism, and Rulership: Materialization of State Ideology at the Feathered Serpent Pyramid, Teotihuacan

Saburo Sugiyama

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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.

SABURO SUGIYAMA is a Professor in the Graduate School of International Cultural Studies, Aichi Prefectural University, Japan and a part-time member of the research faculty at the Arizona State University. He has contributed to a number of edited works on Mesoamerican archaeology including *Mesoamerican Archaeology: Theory and Practice* (2003).

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*To Kumiko, Yosei, Masano, and Nawva
in memory of Masako and Jusaku Sugiyama*

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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 FSP 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

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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>.)