

Inside and Outside: Residential Burial at Formative Period Chalcatzingo, Mexico

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ABSTRACT

At Chalcatzingo, Mexico, an early regional center, the common location for burials was under house floors, but some high-status burials occurred in more open spaces. These latter were also residential burials, interred within the landed domain of social units. Although both “inside” and “outside” burials drew on claims of ancestral continuity, it is important to explore the differences they entailed. Investigating how repeated mortuary practices at Chalcatzingo evoked referential networks—endowing those practices with intelligibility and enabling identity formation over time—can broaden understandings of residential burial practices and bridge various classificatory separations imposed by archaeologists, including those between public and private mortuary spaces. [mortuary practices, citation, social houses, complex society, Mesoamerica]

A focus on residential burial conforms to a recent trend in mortuary analyses to examine the “landscape of the dead” (Parker Pearson 1999:124), part of the growing interest since the 1990s in the anthropology of place (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003:1). Treating residential burial, typically subfloor interments within a domicile, as a separate category of mortuary practice presumes that certain conditions and implications derive from burial location in direct spatial juxtaposition with the habitation activities of living individuals. The potential for making interpretations of social organization and political economy, as well as religion and ritual, is therefore substantial. This potential is augmented by cross-cultural studies of residential burial practices archaeologically and ethnographically. Nevertheless, isolating residential burial as a classificatory category introduces or reifies certain parameters in archaeological assumptions and inferences. Both the potential and the limitations of this categorizing warrant further elucidation.

The analysis of residential burials as a class of mortuary practices is both an update to an earlier perspective in mortuary archaeology—characterized as the “Saxe-Binford approach” of the 1970s (Brown 1995; Chapman

and Randsborg 1981)—and a shift to more contemporary interests—the “ancestral-descendant approach” (Rakita and Buikstra 2005:8; see also McAnany 1995, 1998; McAnany et al. 1999:129) concerned with issues of identity and social memory (e.g., Chesson 2001). Binford (1971) had proposed that systematic differences in disposal of the dead cross-culturally can be correlated with subsistence behaviors and by extension with sociopolitical complexity (Brown 1995:10). Similarly, Saxe’s (1970) well-known “Hypothesis 8” linked the presence of formal disposal areas of the dead to territoriality. However, many of these earlier studies dealt with cemeteries distant from the living areas of foraging populations, and the spatial patterning within cemeteries was somewhat neglected (Chapman and Randsborg 1981:14; Goldstein 1981:57).

Nevertheless, similar ideas should apply to the territoriality claimed by agricultural societies in putting their dead within or near their residences. As Parker Pearson observed, “the fixing of the dead in the land is a social and political act which ensures access and rights over natural resources” (Parker Pearson 1999:141). The inferential shift to the ancestral-descendant approach is reflected in a greater

concern for “mortuary space” and the location of the dead “relative to landscape and construction and location relative to other decedents” (Ashmore and Geller 2005:84; see also Silverman and Small 2002). The important difference with residential burial, of course, is the close proximity of the dead to the most intimate spaces of the living, in many cases with minimal physical barriers separating the two. The cohabitation of the living and dead in the same space implies the continued role playing of the dead, usually as ancestors (rather than as ghosts), in the social practices that forge the identities, statuses, and property rights of the living. Residential burials suggest property claims to the land where the residences are situated and to the structures themselves, with rights grounded in appeals to precedence strengthened by the physical presence of predecessors. Sequential burials in the same location manifest the strategic linking of identities of the living inhabitants to the deceased over time (Ashmore and Geller 2005:84; Gillespie 2002; McAnany 1995).

Another important characteristic of residential burial is that interment within the walls of a private residence is less visible than burial in the open spaces of cemeteries or public structures. The dead are thus assumed to become entwined in salient social memories of burial acts within the social field of a household. The knowledge of the placement of the dead shared by, even limited to, household members would contribute to the maintenance of their specific group identity in contrast with parallel identities of other households (Hendon 2000:47–49; Mizoguchi 1993:231). Thus Joyce observed that “burial practices within residential compounds provide the ground against which nonresidential burial practices were distinguished” (Joyce 1999:41). Her analysis of burial practices from Formative period Mesoamerican sites contrasted the marking and emergence of personal and group identities between corporate group-oriented residential burial and the wider social contexts informed by burials within public architecture, notably platform mounds (Joyce 1999:41). The development of the latter out of the former coincided with the rise of complex societies in the Middle Formative period (see Barrett 1990 for a similar British case study).

In sum, substantial inferences derived from residential burial practices have proven useful in archaeological interpretations, but these implications are also being challenged. I use the case study of Formative period Chalcatzingo, Mexico, to comment on some of these embedded assumptions and to explore other ways of treating residential burial, moving beyond categories of mortuary space to examine the shaping of social and material relationships iterated through mortuary practices. By investigating repeated practices that evoke referential networks endowing those practices with

intelligibility and allowing for the reproduction of memory, my aim is to broaden understandings of residential burial and to bridge the classificatory distinctions between public and private mortuary spaces. In so doing, I also challenge the classification of “mortuary space” as distinct from other types of spaces (see also Joyce, chapter 3, this volume).

Chalcatzingo

Chalcatzingo is located in the Amatzinac River valley in eastern Morelos state, 100 kilometers southeast of Mexico City (Grove 1987c) (Figure 7.1). The major occupation of the site was during the Middle Formative period, from 900–500 B.C.E. (Before the Christian Era, uncalibrated), when complex societies developed throughout Mesoamerica. During this period, Chalcatzingo was the political center of the Amatzinac valley and one of the most important communities in highland central Mexico, with ties to the Gulf coast Olmec peoples, southwest Mexico, and southeast Mexico into the Maya area (Grove 1987a). Chalcatzingo is also one of the most extensively excavated Middle Formative sites in central Mexico, providing substantial information on domestic life (Grove and Gillespie 2002:11).

The site lies at the base of a highly visible natural landmark, the conjoined volcanic hills (*cerros*) named Cerro Delgado and Cerro Chalcatzingo (Figure 7.2). Major research was conducted in the early 1970s by the Chalcatzingo Archaeological Project led by David Grove, Jorge Angulo, and Raul Arana (Grove 1984; Grove, ed. 1987). Three cultural phases of occupation discussed here are the Early Formative Amate phase (1500–1100 B.C.E.), the Early Middle Formative Barranca phase (1100–700 B.C.E.), and the Late Middle Formative Cantera phase (700–500 B.C.E.; all dates are uncalibrated) (Cyphers Guillén and Grove 1987). During the Cantera phase, the site reached an extent of 40 hectares and included one large stone-faced platform mound along with several smaller stone-faced platforms (Prindiville and Grove 1987:79).

However, the most important modification to the built environment was the terracing of the natural hillside slopes at the start of the Barranca phase (ca. 1100 B.C.E.), creating an initial ten hectares of level fields. Importantly, with the exception of Terrace 1, apparently only one residential structure was placed on each terrace, creating a dispersed settlement pattern that continued through the Cantera phase (Prindiville and Grove 1987:79). The house locations on each terrace had long life spans. Constructed of adobe brick and wattle-and-daub walls with thatched roofs, the structures were intentionally burned at intervals, an act with highly ritualized overtones, and then rebuilt in the same place over

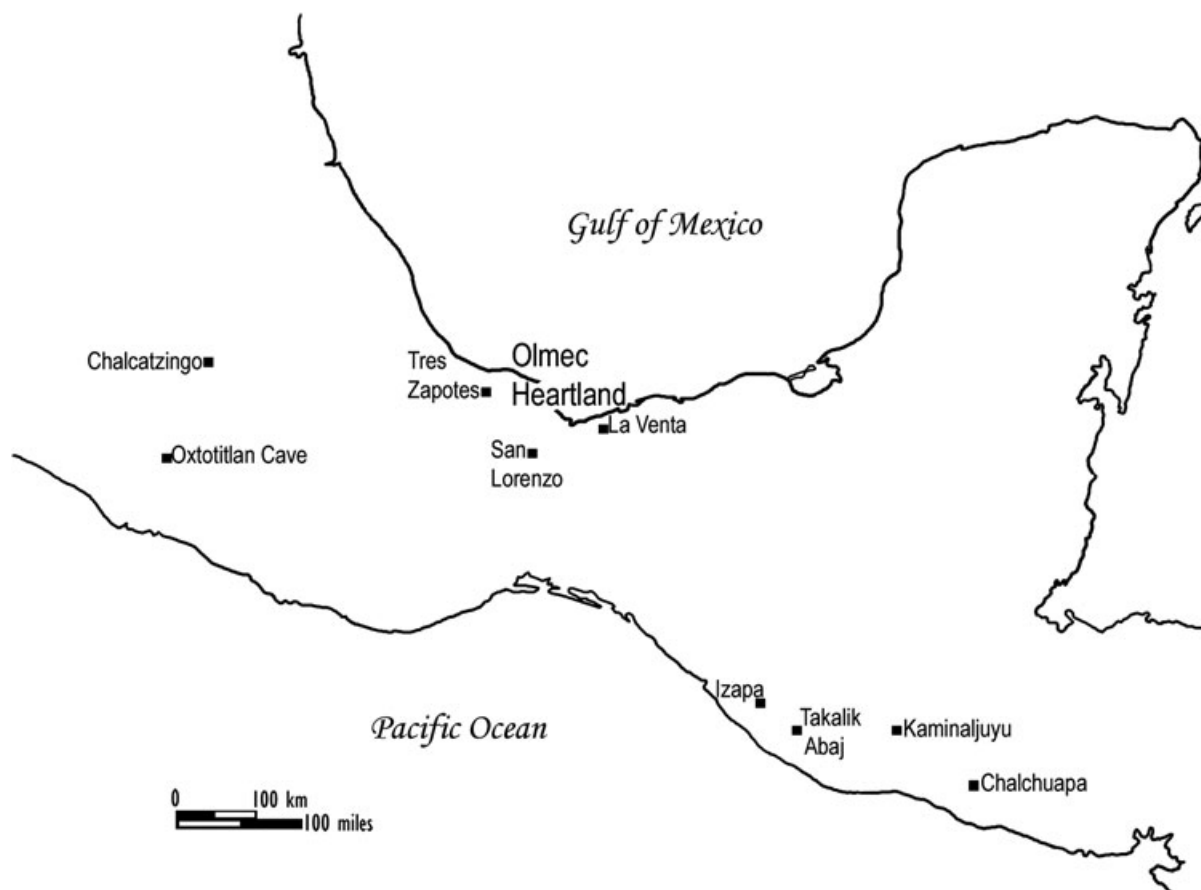


Figure 7.1. Chalcatzingo and selected Formative sites in Mesoamerica.

generations (Grove and Gillespie 2002:17; Prindiville and Grove 1987:74).

Grove (1987b:421; Prindiville and Grove 1987:80) interpreted these practices as evidence for hereditary proprietary rights to the land and the structures on them, rights in which deceased persons whose bodies were incorporated into the structures would have played a role. The buildings had a life cycle with ritually marked moments of birth and death (Grove and Gillespie 2002:17), which must have been implicated in the life cycles of their human inhabitants (see, e.g., Chapman 1994; Gillespie 2000b, 2002; McAnany et al. 1999; Mock 1998). The analytical scale of household mortuary space should therefore extend beyond the walls of the individual residences to consider the patterning of the long-lived house locations, each on its own terrace sloping down (south to north) from the base of the hills.

Eleven Cantera phase domestic structures were excavated partially to nearly completely in the 1970s. They are all large by Mesoamerican standards, with interior walls dividing them into different rooms (Prindiville and Grove 1987:67, 69). Unfortunately, the ground surface is the same

today as during the Formative period, so the floors have been plowed away, surface artifact patterns destroyed, and foundation walls partially scattered (Prindiville and Grove 1987:66). Despite these conditions, 143 Formative period burials were recovered, providing a large database for elucidating repeated mortuary practices. Of these, approximately 111 date to the Cantera phase (Merry de Morales 1987a:95, 1987b). The burials include all age categories and ostensibly both sexes. Regrettably, some of the burials were damaged by plowing, and in virtually all cases the skeletal material was too poorly preserved to definitively ascertain sexes of the deceased, and only general age categories could be determined (Merry de Morales 1987a:95).

The principal objective of the 1970s analysis was to assess how burials might reveal social ranks and to distinguish elite individuals based on criteria such as crypt graves, the inclusion of exotics (jade, iron-ore mirrors, and hematite), and the presence of other mortuary furniture such as pottery, figurines, and grinding stones (Merry 1975; Merry de Morales 1987a, 1987b). This objective was in keeping with the Saxe-Binford approach dominant at that time, but it

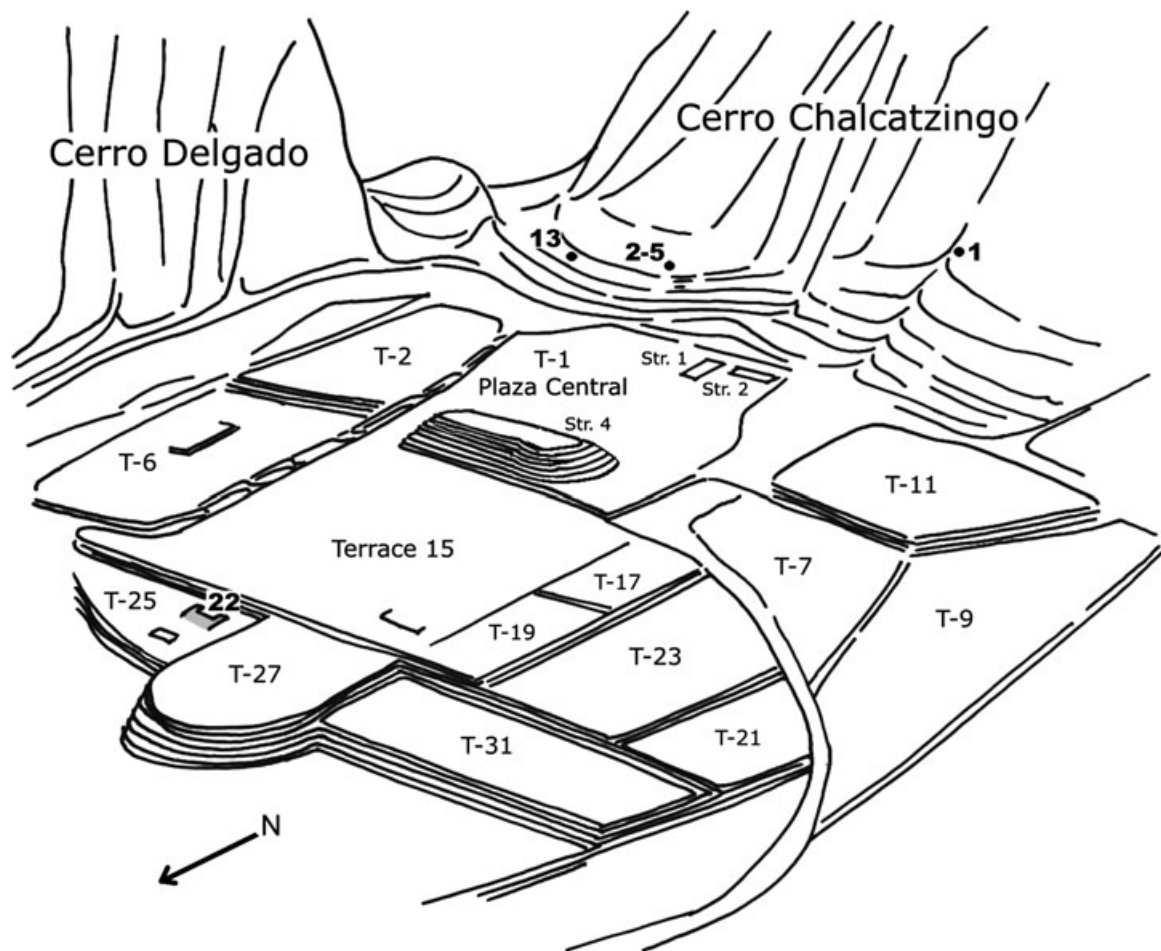


Figure 7.2. Perspective drawing of Chalcatzingo's terraces with some of its Formative period architecture. Monument (sculpture) numbers are in boldface. (Courtesy of David C. Grove)

was also indispensable to broader explanatory goals for the project as a whole concerning the emergence and manifestation of social complexity at this chiefly center. I begin with an overview of how the burial data were interpreted by the Chalcatzingo Project and later commentators to highlight the difficulties and advantages of treating subfloor burials as a category of mortuary practice.

The Normative Pattern of Subfloor Burial: Testing Its Implications

In 1972 when the initial test pits at Chalcatzingo revealed numerous shallow burials in a localized area of the topmost terrace (Terrace 1), the archaeologists believed they had found a cemetery (Merry 1975:26). However, subsequent horizontal excavations and the discovery of stone wall foundations led to the realization that most of the burials

were within a single structure. Excavations on other terraces revealed that residences there also had intramural burials. Residential subfloor burial was thus taken to be the general practice at Chalcatzingo, as it was elsewhere in Formative Mesoamerica (e.g., Joyce 1999). In this assessment, the archaeologists adopted the normative approach to mortuary data typical for that time—"the rules a society used" (Goldstein 1981:57; see Chapman and Randsborg 1981:3–4)—useful to characterize demographic profiles, ranking, and other forms of social classification at the level of the community.

More specifically, the project archaeologists concluded that "the majority of Chalcatzingo's Cantera phase burials occur beneath house subfloors and are presumed to be the remains of people who inhabited those houses at least sometime during their life," while burials not under house floors were considered "anomalous" (Prindiville and Grove 1987:73). Major areas of "anomalous" burials were

the large platform mound on Terrace 1, a walled sunken patio on Terrace 25, and two caves on the hillside. However, having asserted that subfloor burial was the “normal pattern” (Merry de Morales 1987a:98), the Chalcatzingo archaeologists—notably Merry de Morales, Prindiville, and Grove—questioned the implications that followed from it. They tested the assumption that subfloor burial was the norm for all residents of an individual domicile and revealed this was not the case (for similar conclusions elsewhere, see Chapman 2005:36). The number of burials found relative to estimated population for individual residential structures was too few to account for the entirety of the households that would have occupied those structures over several generations (Prindiville and Grove 1987:73–74, table 6.1).

The archaeologists concluded that an unknown number of Chalcatzingo’s inhabitants were not buried under the floors of their residences. This determination would explain the “anomalous” burials of individuals outside the walls of residential structures, including 22 Formative period burials under the floor of a sunken patio unassociated with a domicile. Of these graves the archaeologists asked, “Did these people come from various households?” (Prindiville and Grove 1987:73). There is also the anomaly of one house having a high number of burials, Structure 1 on Terrace 1, known as the *Plaza Central*. Plaza Central Structure 1 (PC Str. 1) was a large building even by Chalcatzingo standards, but its 38 subfloor burials represent nearly four times the number found in the next largest burial inventory, the ten interments in adjacent PC Str. 2. One suggestion (later rejected) was that this residential location was unusually long lived, and thus many generations are represented (Prindiville and Grove 1987:table 6.1; Grove and Gillespie 2002:14).

Furthermore, PC Str. 1 was the only excavated residential structure that contained subfloor burials in stone crypts, and some of them had jade objects (Merry de Morales 1987a:98). The Plaza Central, over one hectare in extent, lies immediately below the talus slopes of Cerro Chalcatzingo, beneath Olmec style Cantera phase boulder and bas-relief carvings on that hillside (Grove and Cyphers Guillén 1987:23). PC Str. 1 was built on the south side of the terrace (adjacent to the *cerro*), while at the north end was the largest structure at Chalcatzingo—the 70-meter-long stone-faced platform mound (PC Str. 4), whose earliest construction stage dates to the Early Formative Amate phase (Grove and Cyphers Guillén 1987:31; Prindiville and Grove 1987:63). Because of its premier location and many high-status burials, PC Str. 1 was deemed an elite residence, home to Chalcatzingo’s Cantera phase leaders or “chiefs” (Merry de Morales 1987a:98, 101; Prindiville and Grove 1987:79; see also Grove and Gillespie 1992:193).

PC Str. 1 was rebuilt in the same location several times. At least four building stages were revealed (a–d), the earliest in the Early Cantera subphase. The deepest burial was 120 centimeters below surface (hereafter *cm bs*), but the rest are shallower than 80 cm bs. Significantly, all the burials lay well above the earliest excavated floor (130 cm bs). In fact, the 38 subfloor interments are believed to be associated only with the final building stage (PC Str. 1d) (Grove and Cyphers Guillén 1987:27). They were all dated to the Late Cantera subphase (Merry de Morales 1987a:101) from approximately 600–500 B.C.E. (Cyphers Guillén and Grove 1987) and therefore are not the remains of many generations of inhabitants. Furthermore, the PC Str. 1 burials uniquely express the range of all burial types on the site (Merry de Morales 1987a:98). Thus Grove (1987b:422) suggested that some persons buried under the PC Str. 1 floor were not household residents, and that this was a special burial location. Again, his surmise contradicts the assumption that people were buried under the floors of their own domiciles, incorporated into the structure in acts of domestic or household ritual.

Moreover, the absence of burials in the three earlier iterations of PC Str. 1 (stages a–c) calls into question whether this building was, in fact, a residence. The normative pattern of subfloor burial was actually used to help determine which structures at Chalcatzingo functioned as domiciles. The presence of intramural burials in PC Str. 1 was taken to indicate that it was indeed a house (Grove and Cyphers Guillén 1987:27). The same reason was given for classifying the adjacent PC Str. 2 as a residence. PC Str. 2, which shared a patio area with PC Str. 1, is different from the other buildings in its layout and included artifacts, and it was an area of craft working. However, it had been destroyed and rebuilt several times, and it included ten subfloor burials, which were used to argue that PC Str. 2 was probably a residence (Grove and Cyphers Guillén 1987:29). Nearby PC Str. 6, on the other hand, was called a “house-like structure,” but it lacked subfloor burials (Grove and Cyphers Guillén 1987:31). In other words, to say that “subfloor graves were present in every Cantera phase domestic structure excavated at Chalcatzingo,” as Grove and I did in a recent article (Grove and Gillespie 2002:13), engages a bit of verbal sleight of hand because the presence of burials was used to determine whether or not a structure had a residential function.

The Chalcatzingo data thereby help to expose the fragility of inferences regarding subfloor interments and some drawbacks in separating subfloor burials from other mortuary spaces. The assumption of a normative burial location for all household members was not sustained. The notion that subfloor burials necessarily imply private or household as opposed to public rituals—those with numerous and

more diverse witnesses—is not warranted in the case of the PC Str. 1 burials of individuals from likely multiple households. And if the PC Str. 1 burials were not members of a single household, then the twinned presumptions that that structure was the Cantera phase chiefly residence because of its many high-status burials and that there was a single chiefly residence at the site are jeopardized (Gillespie 2009).

Despite these unwarranted assumptions, there is nevertheless great potential for construing social relationships from the Chalcatzingo mortuary data by focusing on practices that resulted in the various discrete mortuary spaces for multiple interments of generally intact bodies in delimited places on the individual terraces. Interments were almost always primary and did not typically disturb other burials, despite confined intramural mortuary space (see King, chapter 4, this volume). There are definite indications that burial locations were remembered (if not actually marked) over long periods and that there were proscriptions on wantonly disturbing the dead. Two distinctive skull burials were encountered (Burials 37, 111) but there is little other indication of the separation or curation of body parts. All of these patterns indicate meaningful choices made in lieu of known alternatives elsewhere, for example, the distancing of the dead from the living, a single community cemetery, a communal tomb chamber with mixed osseous material, cremation, the circulation of relics, and separate structures for individual burials (e.g., barrows). Some of the implications of these choices are suggested here by examining the contexts for mortuary practices through time.

Mortuary Practices as Material Citation

The synchronic normative approach to mortuary analysis typical of much of 20th-century archaeology continued well into the 1990s (Chapman 2005:27–28), during which time it was increasingly challenged. Manifestations of status indicators in funerary contexts were shown to be dynamic, even cyclical, rendering normative studies problematic (Cannon 1989). Mizoguchi observed that “by concentrating on static patterns, we tend to forget the flow of time through which various human practices were conducted [and the] archaeological study of mortuary practices is no exception” (Mizoguchi 1993:223). More recent approaches in archaeological interpretation, as summarized by Joyce and Lopiparo, reveal “a transformation from an ethnographic emphasis on ‘shared’ practices to a historical examination of *repeated* practices” (Joyce and Lopiparo 2005:370). The influence of agency and practice theories has resulted in greater attention to “chains, networks, and other images of repetition, such as citationality,” that is, to “figures of se-

quences of action in time” (Joyce and Lopiparo 2005:368, 372).

Jones (2001) recommended citation as a useful tool for analyzing depositional events, including burials. He adapted Butler’s (1993) concept of citation—the notion that “in order for a word or thing to make sense it must reiterate components of previous sentences or objects”—to artifacts and their contexts as a form of material citation “in which traces on each artefact establish relations of similitude within a wider matrix of similarities and differences” (Jones 2001:339, 342, 351) and thereby facilitate the reproduction of memory. An advantage of Butler’s citation is that it “moves the focus from individual agency alone to individual action within culturally delimited frameworks that make certain kinds of action intelligible” (Joyce 2000:187). Actions become intelligible and meaningful because performances within material spaces and the deposited objects that result from them contribute to “different networks of referentiality” (Jones 2001:339). From this perspective, mortuary customs are no longer seen as reflecting social roles or statuses. Those roles and statuses emerge instead out of routine yet strategic actions and engagements with the material world, including funerary rituals that served as the media for constituting social relations (Barrett 1990:181–182; Chapman 2000:177; Joyce 2001:22).

Jones (2001:340) further borrowed Gell’s (1998:232ff.) notion of “distributed objects” as a “citational field” in which objects are considered components of chains of reference to other iterations. They invoke an orientation to the past via memory—recapitulating past actions to create a sense of similarity or identity with precursors. These retrospective and past-oriented actions are retentions, temporal references to that which has already transpired. Modifying, even innovating, actions to create a sense of future-oriented (prospective) difference with past actions nevertheless still make reference to those retentions or precursors, the precursors then becoming protentions, bases for subsequent actions (terms from Gell [1998:235] based on Husserl’s [1964] phenomenology of time-consciousness). Indeed, actions are always future oriented (Gell 1998:256) in that they establish the potentiality of and constraints on subsequent actions. To paraphrase Gell (1998:257), each burial becomes a “project” for future burials, whether or not that project is fulfilled.

Similar concepts have already been applied to mortuary analyses (e.g., Barrett 1990, 1994; Chapman 2000; Joyce 2001; Mizoguchi 1993) that treat burials as complex citations, each of whose individual criteria (grave type, orientation, position, furniture, etc.) can be seen as components of individual and multidimensional networks of referentiality. The networks become historical artifacts referenced by individuals and groups as they emerge from practices

over time, providing the context for endowing those practices with signification and value. Subjects or actors are “acted upon” (Munn 1986:14) by these practices and their inherent materiality, such that their social subjectivities are formed or transformed, rather than merely reflected, by their actions.

Examining burials as referential chains, as citations of prior actions, is best done where there is good control over the dating of the interments, for example, through radiocarbon dating of bone (Chapman 2005) or tight stratigraphic sequencing. Neither of these options is available for the Chalcatzingo burials, nor as a general rule is burial depth a reliable indicator of relative dating. Nevertheless, those burials occurred over several centuries, and there are subgroups of burials for which sequencing data are available. Indeed, investigating mortuary practices at Chalcatzingo in terms of citation has the advantage of accounting for the many small-scale patterns noted by the Chalcatzingo archaeologists that were unintelligible at a synoptic community-wide scale (Merry de Morales 1987a:99). This approach can also bridge the conceptual divide between subfloor and non-subfloor mortuary spaces, so that the latter are no longer seen as “anomalous.” It further obviates the classificatory distinctions usually made between human interments and related depositional practices such as subfloor caches of objects and animal burials (see Jones 2001:346; Joyce, chapter 3, this volume).

Networks of referentiality (citational fields) and the dynamic social fields they engage—the “spacetime of self-other relationships formed in and through acts and practices” (Munn 1986:9)—can be construed at multiple temporal and spatial scales. Rather than distinguish burial practices at Chalcatzingo as either subfloor or anomalous at the level of the site as a whole, chains of mortuary practices can be examined at the minimal spatial scale within a single interment and within a single structure, the medial scale of the artificially built terrace, and the maximal scale of the community as a whole vis-à-vis other communities. From this perspective, the interments on the Plaza Central, which include subfloor burials in PC Strs. 1 and 2 as well as special crypt burials in the great platform mound (PC Str. 4), can be shown to reference citational fields that distinguish them from other burial locations, including those in the sunken patio on Terrace 25. On the other hand, the Terrace 25 and Plaza Central burials, constituting the “elite” or “high-status” burials at the site, have more in common with one another than they do with the “non-elite” residential burials on the other terraces. These citational fields are briefly traced here, focusing on the Plaza Central and Terrace 25, the two areas of the site with the highest densities of burials.

The Vertical Perspective: Paired Burials

To distinguish the different kinds of intersubjective relationships that emerge from citations, I modify for heuristic purposes Strathern’s (1994:51) “vertical perspective” (referring to the linear relationship between an agent and individuals now deceased) and “horizontal perspective” (focusing on the substantive linkages between an agent and other living persons), recognizing that both come into play in mortuary practices. The vertical perspective is useful in interpreting the continued burial of individuals in the same residential space. Sequentiality, accomplished through such repetition, is essential to notions of duration or longevity, of making connections to past generations that are valorized as sources of legitimacy, identity, and rights to property (Gillespie 2000a:12). The first burials establish a precedent that is cited by subsequent burials in the same locale. The burials are more than just a commemoration of the dead; they are a material index of the agency of ancestors (Gell 1998:256).

The placement of founding burials in structures on the individual terraces marked a within-community difference that was sustained by succeeding burials. The longevity of corporate group property rights, as Grove (1987b:421; Prindiville and Grove 1987:80) earlier noted, was also manifested in such material citations as the rebuilding of structures that sheltered the sequentially placed interments in the same location. These data support the modeling of Chalcatzingo’s social organization as a Lévi-Straussian “house society” (Gillespie 2009). They indicate strategic actions to objectify the perpetuity of house identity and property, with the “houses”—which are long-lived property-owning social units—operating as corporate agents (Gillespie 2000a, 2000c, 2007; see in this volume Adams and Kusumawati, chapter 2; King, chapter 4; and White and Eyre, chapter 5). Social houses maintain their existence, status, and property by the continuity of such practices, including citations that reference the memories and objects associated with predecessors. These practices inscribe a link or identity to precursors in those cases where actions involve materiality.

Later interments in the same locale did not merely copy past actions, because the physical setting and familial relationships had been changed by earlier deaths. Instead, they became part of strategies to reorder the dead with regard to the living (Barrett 1990:182). PC Str. 1, with its 38 Late Cantera subphase burials, exemplifies the resort to such strategies as burial space became restricted over time, rendering this structure, in Barrett’s phrase, “an increasingly elaborate topography of the dead” (Barrett 1990:182). Merry de Morales (1987a) observed several interesting within-structure patterns in the graves that could not be explained

strictly by rank differences or changes in shared customs over time. One such pattern was a notable set of differences in burial furniture and grave orientation on either side of an imaginary east–west line that divided the structure into northern and southern halves (Merry de Morales 1987a:103–104). These two halves may have been thought of as separate burial locations within the same structure, revealing different citational histories.

PC Str. 1 Paired Burials

Another important within-structure pattern was formed by paired burials. Paired burials consist of two interments made at different points in time positioned on top of one another or side by side, separated by at least several centimeters of earth (as opposed to double burials in which two individuals were buried together at the same time, which also occurred at Chalcatzingo). They provide a measure of sequencing even though the exact time difference between the two cannot be ascertained, and as a minority practice, imply some kind of relationship among the individuals so treated (see Chapman 2000; Gilchrist and Sloane 2005:158). Six burial pairs were identified among the 38 interments of PC Str. 1 by Merry de Morales (1987a:104–106, table 8.2). Three are in the northern half (#21/31, #19/32, #15/30) and three in the southern half (#3/33, #5/34, #10/27) of the structure (Figure 7.3). While some pairs could be coincidental (e.g., #19/32)—a consequence of limited space or imperfect memories of earlier interments, given that subfloor burials were typically not disturbed—most appear to have been deliberately placed (Merry de Morales 1987a:104). Their orientations varied: in three cases the bodies were parallel in alignment (heads in the same direction), while in the other three they were perpendicular to one another (Table 7.1). Crypt burials were paired with other crypt types; direct (non-crypt) interments with others of the same type. The uppermost burials of the pairs occurred in the plow zone, 20–25 cm bs, while the earlier burials ranged in depth from 50 to 75 cm bs.

The most compelling burial pairs are #3/33 and #5/34. The earlier burials of each pair, #33 and #34, were interments of individuals in extended position, bodies oriented east–west, laid feet-to-feet in graves lined and capped with flat stones (called crypts in the 1987 site report and rock tombs in Merry 1975). These two were among a small cluster of five such crypts in the southern half of the structure at approximately 60 cm bs (#28, #33 [at 75 cm bs], #34, #36, and #37—the last a small stone box with only a skull). Of these five, #33 and #34 were the only interments oriented east–west and were the northernmost of the crypt burials in

the southern half of the structure (one crypt burial, #26, was found in the northern half). Also, #33 and #34 were paired in identical fashion by later interments, #3 and #5 respectively, also in crypts but oriented north–south, with heads to the north in both cases. The later bodies were laid perpendicularly over the lower portions of the human remains placed earlier. They therefore form double pairs.

Merry de Morales (1987a:105) and Grove (2006) suggested that #33 and #3 constituted a male–female pair, #33 being the male. Burial 33 had a jade Olmec style figurine and a jade awl fragment (“blood-letter”), the latter an object found with probable males in Cantera phase contexts (and elsewhere in Formative Mesoamerica; Joyce 2000:46). Burial 3 had a grinding stone that may have been a marker of female gender. More significantly, a carved stone head (broken off a statue) included in Burial 3 apparently was that of a female based on the head covering worn, and Grove (2006; Grove and Gillespie 1992:195) has indicated some likelihood that the statue represented the deceased individual. Merry de Morales (1987a:105) further noted that these two crypt burials, #3 and #33, contained the “most truly Olmec artifacts found” during the excavations—the figurine and the statue head—which was another manifestation of their pairing.

While some of the pairs may indeed represent male–female dyads, possibly spouses, the inability to accurately sex the vast majority of the Chalcatzingo burials leaves this issue unresolved (Merry de Morales 1987a:106). Furthermore, Burial 5 was a juvenile in a crypt burial, and there could be many reasons that two interments of different mortuary events were placed one atop the other or side by side (Merry de Morales 1987a:104). Significantly, Merry de Morales (1987a:106) observed that examples of the common funerary types of ceramic vessels (double-loop handle censer, *cantarito* [small bottle], shallow bowls, composite bowls, and, in PC Str. 1 only, shallow bowls in mouth-to-mouth orientation) did not co-occur across a burial pair (see Table 7.1). That is, if one grave had a particular vessel type or configuration, its pair did not. She therefore suggested that the first interment was remembered, and the second was devised to form its complement in some fashion.

Although Merry de Morales (1987a:106) considered those behaviors to mark some sort of “social dichotomy,” such as gender, expressed by the two deceased individuals, the complementary mortuary furniture and body positions may more simply have resulted from the intentional reference to the earlier burial when creating the second as a material citation (Table 7.1 reveals the absence of a consistent pattern of pairing any two vessel types). The spatial juxtaposition of the artifacts in the two graves indicates a recapitulation of the earlier act (a retention). Interestingly,

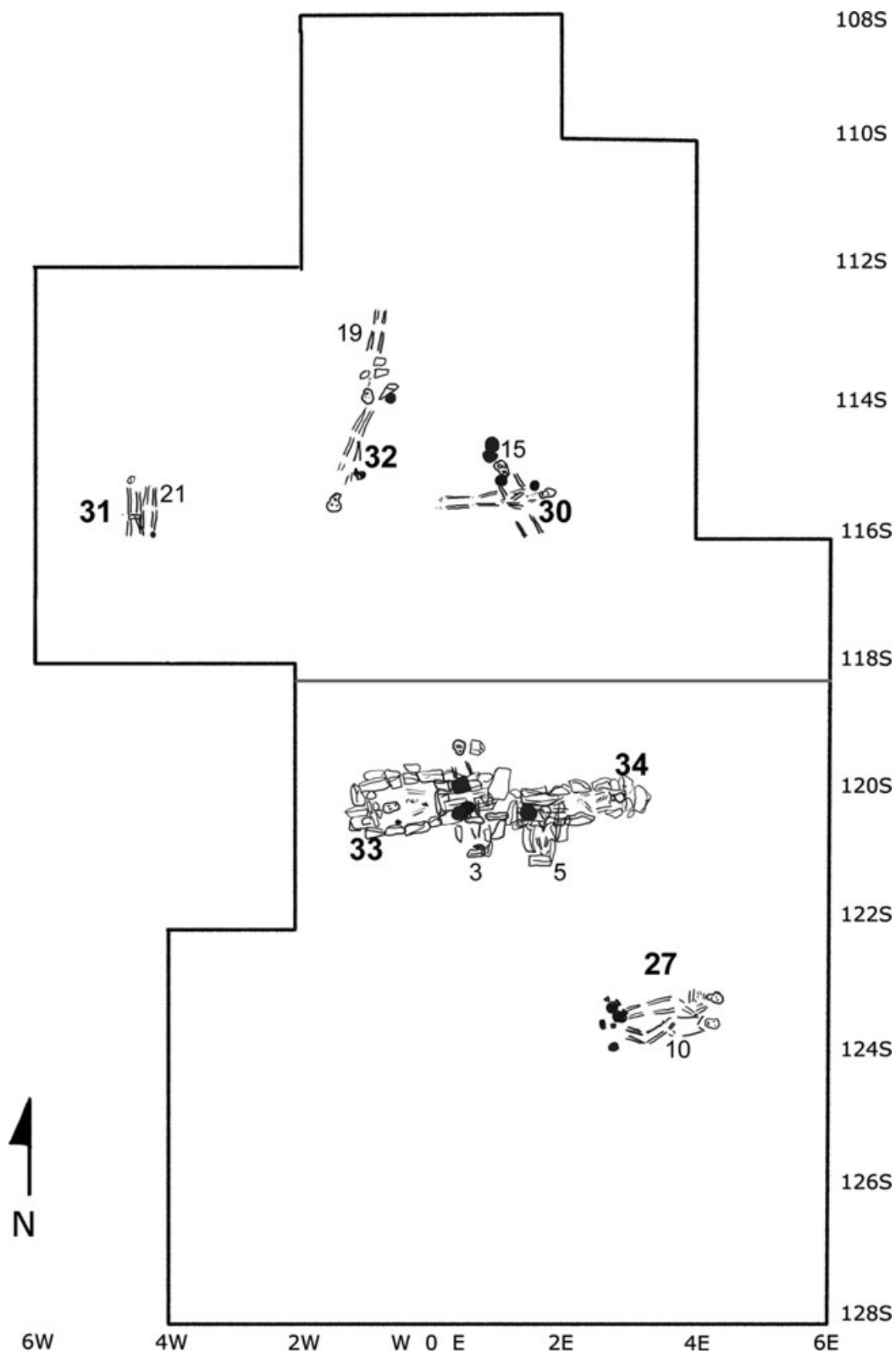


Figure 7.3. The paired burials within PC Str. 1 (based on Merry 1975:figs. 1–6). Decrease in font size indicates the later burial in each pair. The horizontal line across the middle of the excavation unit roughly divides the space into northern and southern halves.

Table 7.1. Paired Burials within PC Str. 1d

Burial	Depth (cm bs)	Quadrant	Relationship to Other (Head/Feet)	Type*	Age**	Double-Loop Handle Censer	Shallow Bowl	Shallow Bowls Mouth-to-Mouth	Cantarito	Cantarito in a Shallow Bowl	Composite Bowl
27	60	122-124S/2-4E	Parallel E/W	D	A	X					
10	25	122-124S/2-4E	Parallel E/W	D	A					X	
30	70	114-116S/0-2E	Perpendicular E/W	D	A	X		X			
15	27	114-116S/0-2E	Perpendicular NW/SE	D	YA		X				
34	60	119-121S/1-4E	Perpendicular E/W	Crypt	YA	X					X
5	20	120-122S/0-2E	Perpendicular N/S	Crypt	J					X	
33	75	118-120S/1W-1E	Perpendicular W/E	Crypt	A						X
3	20	118-120S/0-2E	Perpendicular N/S	Crypt	A				X		
32	56	114-116S/0-2W	Parallel S/N	D	A					X	
19	22	112-114S/0-2W	Parallel S/N	D	A			X			
31	50	114-116S/4-6W	Parallel S/N	D	A						X
21	20	114-116S/4-6W	Parallel S/N?	D	A						X

Note: Based on Merry de Morales 1987a:104-106, table 8.2, 1987b. Earlier burial is listed first in each pair.

*Type categories: crypt or simple, direct interment (D).

**Age categories: adult (A), young adult (YA), juvenile (J).

only certain interments were chosen for this role as precursors (protentions) for future pairings. However, the complementarity of the included ceramic objects may indicate more than the marking of difference between the earlier and later interments. It could have signified an act of completion or wholeness, the two individuals so treated forming a totality whose parts were separated in time but brought together at the death of the survivor.

Terrace 25 Paired Burials

Burial pairs were not limited to PC Str. 1. Two Cantera phase burial pairs (#95/105 and #97/102) were identified by Merry de Morales (1987a:108) within the other area with many Formative burials—Terrace 25 (Figure 7.4). At the south end of this terrace was a sunken patio, walled with several courses of flat stone slabs on at least its eastern, southern, and western sides. Its size cannot be determined because the northern wall(s) have been destroyed and the patio's edges changed over time, but its minimal size was 40 square meters (Fash 1987:85, fig. 7.4). Near the center of the southern wall a rectangular construction jutted into the patio, composed of some 20 large, rectangular, shaped stones arranged on three sides around an earthen core. This structure was a 4.4-meter-long north-facing table-top bench/altar, labeled Monument 22, similar in form to monolithic altars at Gulf coast Olmec centers (Figure 7.5). Relief carving on the front face stones was identified as the large eyes and eyebrows of the deified earth (Fash 1987:82).

Burial 105 had been placed within the earthen fill of the bench/altar's center, and Burial 95 was placed above and slightly south of Burial 105 (Table 7.2). Although the bodies were laid within the preexisting larger stone construction, both interments had their own crypts made of flattish stones placed around and above them. The earlier burial was east-west, head to east, while its pair was west-east, head to west, to form a complement. However, there is no obvious pattern of complementarity among the ceramic offerings between them or for the other Cantera phase burial pair on Terrace 25, #97/102 (Burial 102, the earlier of the two, had no grave furniture).

Significantly, the Terrace 25 patio had a burial "triplet," because under the #95/105 pair was an earlier burial, #109, dating to the preceding Barranca phase (Figure 7.4). This earliest burial was a subfloor residential burial, one of at least two (the other is #112) placed under a Barranca phase residence (Fash 1987:86). Just outside of that structure a large pit was dug deep into the subsoil hardpan (*tepetate*), into and upon which other Barranca phase burials were placed. However, instead of being continuously rebuilt, as was the pattern

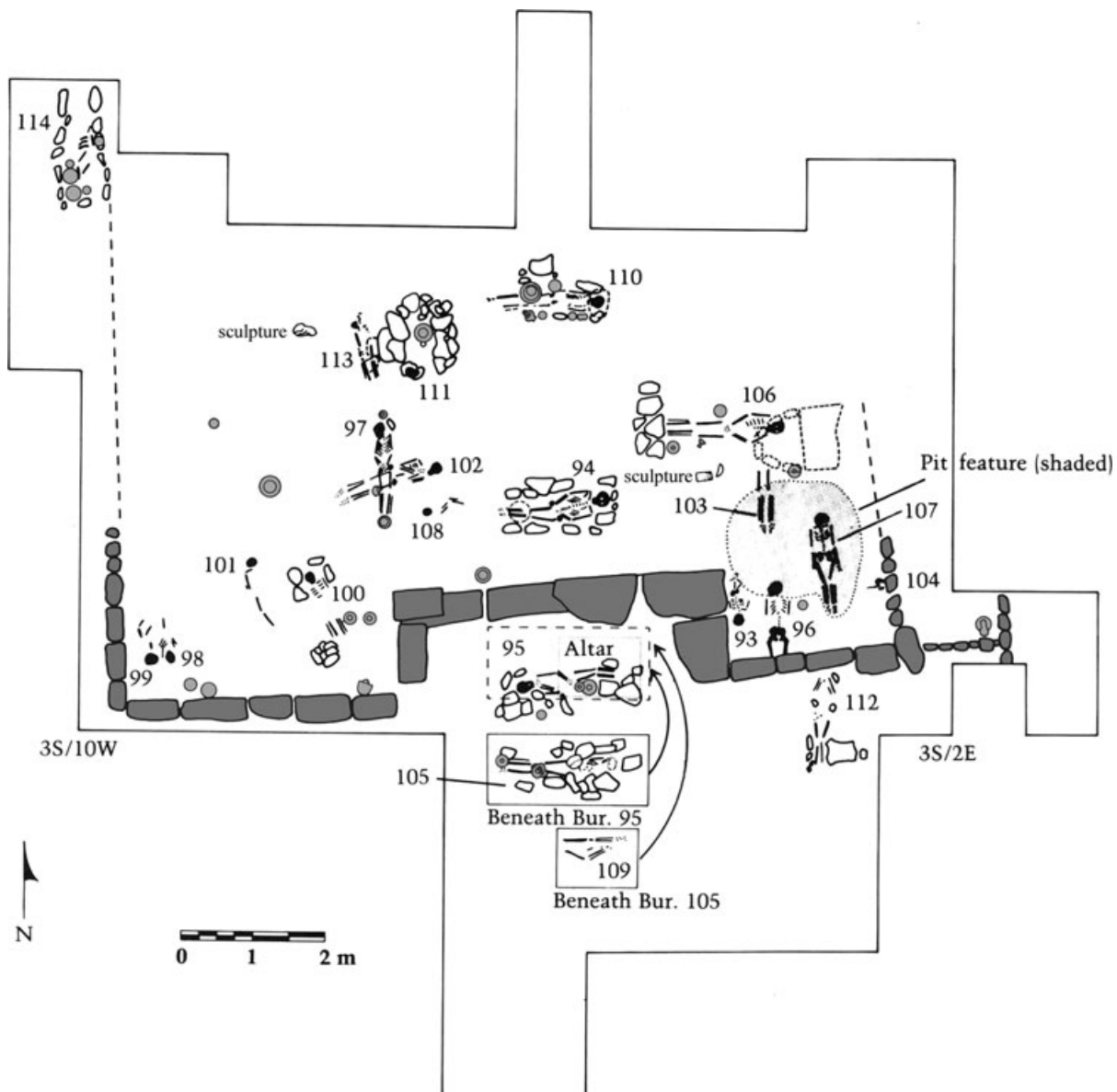


Figure 7.4. Plan map of Terrace 25 excavations showing the bench/altar (Monument 22), patio, Burials 93 to 114, and some of the whole vessels deposited in the patio (modified from Fash 1987:fig. 7.1).

elsewhere at Chalcatzingo, this residence became the locale for the southern extent of the sunken patio. The bench/altar and subsequently Cantera phase Burials 105 and 95 were placed precisely atop Burial 109, which was oriented west–east, the same orientation as the two burials above it and the bench/altar construction. The upper half of the Burial 109 adult, probably male, body (Merry de Morales 1987b:473) was impacted by the positioning of the crypt for Burial 105. The individual’s teeth with traces of “red paint,” mandible, and some long bones were found in

fragments just beneath the crypt (Arana 1973). Fash, who excavated Terrace 25 in 1974, doubted that this placement was a coincidence, suggesting that the altar’s direct association with the Barranca phase residence and Burial 109 indicates “a long-standing ‘sacred’ importance for this location” (Fash 1987:94). The Cantera phase burials postdated the original erection of the bench/altar atop the earlier house foundations, and the significance of this place may have changed once again to that of a “shrine” (Fash 1987: 94).

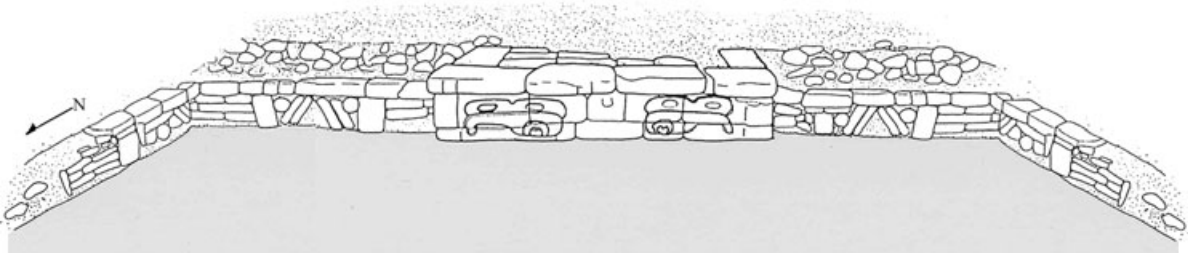


Figure 7.5. Drawing of the bench/altar face (Monument 22) and stone walls of the Terrace 25 patio. (Courtesy of David C. Grove)

Although the architectural function of this locale was greatly transformed in the Cantera phase, the citation of the Barranca phase burial was made in the same way as at PC Str. 1. We might consider that the bench/altar was erected on that spot as a part of the future-oriented “project” established by the social house that included Burial 109 as its property, the only one of the ten Barranca phase and five Late Barranca/Early Cantera phase burials found at Chalcatzingo that included a valuable jade object (tubular bead) (Merry de Morales 1987b). These sequential actions bridged what archaeologists see as a Barranca to Cantera phase boundary in the citation of the precursor subfloor burial by the two Cantera phase crypt graves, all of them represented as “elite” individuals. Those actions also blurred the classificatory distinction between private subfloor and public non-subfloor burials.

Although the sequence of three bench/altar burials was noted by the Chalcatzingo archaeologists, two other paired burials in the Terrace 25 patio (Table 7.2) are less obvious and were not so recognized (Figure 7.6). These interments also spanned the Barranca to Cantera phase change, and the burials were discussed separately by time period by Merry de Morales (1987a). By focusing on chains of practices rather than separating the data according to changes in archaeological cultural phases over time, these sequences of actions become more apparent. The other pairs are #111/113 (Cantera/Barranca) and #106/103 (Cantera/Late Barranca-Early Cantera) in the patio area north of the altar’s west and east corners, respectively. In both cases the earlier burials (#113, #103) were disturbed, the upper halves of the bodies missing (like #109 under the bench/altar), and they lacked grave furniture. The #106/103 pair is perpendicular in orientation, whereas the #111/113 pairing is more unusual in that the Cantera phase Burial 111 consists of a skull perched atop a stone, part of a larger ring of stones (recall the Cantera skull in its own crypt in PC Str. 1, Burial 37).

The citation of the three earlier interments as precursors in Terrace 25 therefore extended over some centuries, unlike

what is known for the PC Str. 1d burials, all of which dated to the Late Cantera subphase. These material citations created or reiterated linkages among the more ancient dead, the recently deceased, and the living that could have been construed as genealogy or precedence with or without demonstrated biological ties, as a way of asserting the long-lived property rights and identities of social houses (Gillespie 2009). Fash (1987:94) suggested that the individuals buried in the patio area may have lived in, or been associated with, a Cantera phase residence and platform mound on the north end of Terrace 25. This architectural placement mimics that of the Plaza Central, which likewise had a structure with many burials on the south end and a platform mound on the north end.

Burials Within a Horizontal Referential Network

Terrace 25

The walled sunken patio on Terrace 25 was an open space where, one presumes, funerary rituals were part of a display of status and property rights among a larger audience of witnesses than that available for residential subfloor interments. From these public actions more extensive social fields would have been created or strengthened out of the shared experience and social memories of the participants (Barrett 1990:186). The function of the patio with its bench/altar is uncertain; it is unique at the site. Furthermore, this locale was subjected to a series of architectural transformations in the Cantera phase after the Barranca phase house was razed. The altar was erected more than once, its carved front side was later blocked from view by large stones, and the size of the patio was modified several times (Fash 1987; David C. Grove, personal communication, 2008). Importantly, the patio was used for ritual deposition activities of various sorts. Some bodies and objects were laid down on the original ground surface and covered with earthen fill when the patio

Table 7.2. Terrace 25 Formative Burials

Burial	Depth (cm bs)	Quadrant	Orientation (Head/Feet)	Phase*	Type**	Age***	Ceramics	Other	Remarks
93	100	0-2S/0-1W	S/N	C	D	I			sacrifice; next to NE corner of altar
94	150	0-1N/2-4W	E/W	C	Crypt	YA		obsidian flake	in front of altar
95	120	2-3S/2-4W	W/E	C	Crypt	YA	2 ollas	tubular jade bead	within altar (topmost)
96	150-165	0-2S/0-1W	N/S	LB/EC	D	YA		obsidian blade	under patio wall
97	120	1-1S, 0-2N/5-7W	N/S	C	D	A	3 bowls		paired with 102
98	100	1-2S/8-9W	S/N	C	D	YJ	1 bowl?		double with 99; uncertain which has the bowl
99	100	1-2S/8-9W	S/N	C	D	YJ			double with 98
100	95	0-2S/6-7W	N/S	C	Stone	J	3 bowls		double with 101
101	100	0-2S/7-8W	N/S	C	D	J			double with 100; has pile of stones near feet
102	100	0-1N/5-7W	E/W	C	D	A			paired with 97; associated with 108
103	200	0-1N/0-1W	N/S	LB/EC	Stone	A			upper half gone; rattlesnake carving nearby
104	100	0-1S/0-1E	?	C	Dist	A			fragments; legs under wall
105	130-160	1-2S/2-4W	E/W	C	Crypt	A	5 bowls, 1 olla, 1 eccentric bowl		inside altar (middle of the 3)
106	152	1-2N/0-2W	E/W	C	D	A	7 bowls, 1 censer		large stone slab later placed over head area
107	220	0-1S/0-1E	N/S	LB	D	J	1 jar	stingray spine	buried within a deep Barranca phase pit
108	110	0-1N/4-6W	?	C	Dist	J	4 bowls	tubular jade bead	near 102, probably associated
109	170	1-2S/2-3W	W/E	B	Dist	A		tubular jade bead	on tepetate, under altar; upper half disturbed
110	120	2-4N/2-5W	E/W	C	Stone	A	7 bowls, 1 censer	metate	
111	80	2-3N/5-6W	?	C	Stone	A	3 bowls	jade bead	skull only on ring of stones
112	170	2-4S/0-1E	N/S	B	Dist	A			no skull
113	120	2-3N/6-7W	N/S	B	D	A			upper half gone; animal carving nearby
114	70	4-6N/9.5-11W	N/S	C	Crypt	A	4 bowls, 1 olla		just outside patio wall, which precedes it

Note: Based on Arana 1973; Fash 1974; Merry de Morales 1987b. N = 22.

*Phase: Cantera (C), Barranca (B), Late Barranca/Early Cantera (LB/EC).

**Type categories: crypt; simple, direct interment (D); stone associated (stone); disturbed (dist).

*** Age categories: adult (A), young adult (YA), juvenile (J), young juvenile (YJ), infant (I).

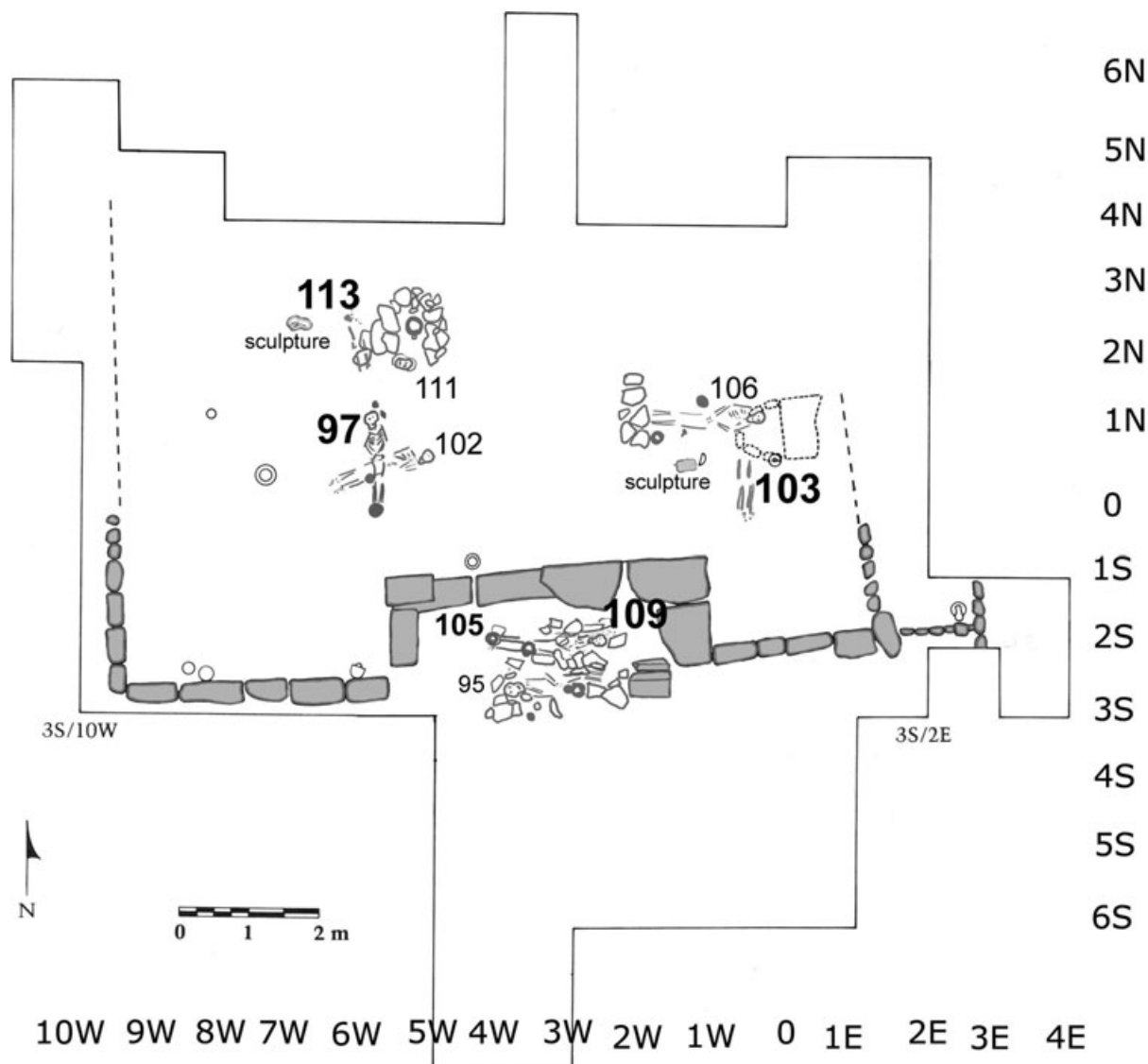


Figure 7.6. The paired burials on Terrace 25. Decrease in font size indicates later burials in each group.

was first laid out and leveled; others were buried in pits dug down into the layers of that fill. Various objects, including whole pottery vessels, stone sculptures, dog bones, piles of rocks, rock walls, and stone pavements were recovered here in addition to human bodies (Arana 1973; Fash 1974).

The published map of the patio excavations (Fash 1987:fig. 7.1) gives a first impression of randomness in the positioning of artifacts, vessels, stones, and bodies shown there (and not all buried objects were depicted in the published drawing). Nevertheless, there are recognizable patterns at the sub-patio spatial scale. For examples, Burials 105 (in the altar), 94, and 110 form three east–west–oriented (head to east) crypt interments, creating a north–south axis with the center front face of the bench/altar, spaced

almost equidistant from one another. Two perpendicular burial pairs appear about one meter north of the east and west corners of the bench/altar (#103/106 and #102/97, respectively). It may not be a coincidence that the two Formative period portable sculpture fragments discovered in the patio—a headless jaguar (Grove 1987d:fig. 20.6) and a cylinder fragment resembling rattlesnake rattles (Grove 1987d:fig. 20.7)—occurred in near association with the Barranca/Cantera burial pairs outside the bench/altar (#113/111 with the jaguar sculpture; #103/106 with the rattlesnake rattle). However, these sculptures were not recognized as burial furniture or as associated in some way with the interments, despite the fact that Burial 113 and the jaguar carving were both lying directly on the natural *tepetate* layer at 115–120

cm bs, were drawn in the same one-by-two-meter unit, and were described as having been covered with earthen fill as no intrusive pits were observed in the profile to account for their positioning at different moments in time (Fash 1974).

The archaeologists considered the degree of spatial association prerequisite for inclusion in the category of “grave furniture” to be either among or very close to the skeletal remains, with evidence that the objects were deposited at the same time as the body. However, if one considers the burial to be part of a chain of actions, then contemporaneous spatially juxtaposed actions, spatially separated actions at the same time, and subsequent actions of a different kind in the same place may be implicated as part of the same citational network. The archaeological separation of human burials as distinct features forming a bounded classificatory type may therefore limit our understanding of the practices of which they were a part (for example, caches can be indistinguishable from burials; Becker 1992; Coe 1965; see Joyce, chapter 3, this volume). The immediate vicinity of the Burial 103/106 pair also includes a cluster of dog bones and a ring of stones, one of them a very large shaped slab, in the upper strata (Arana 1973). This same spot was repeatedly marked by depositions of different materials, and not all of them are necessarily archaeologically visible (see Joyce 2006 for a similar phenomenon at a Formative Honduras site). Apparently only certain locales in the patio area were subjected to such repeated, though variable, depositional actions. Thus, it was likely intended that the southeast patio wall should cover parts of three earlier burials (#96, #104, #112), just as it was no accident that the bench/altar and Burials 95 and 105 were placed over the earlier Burial 109.

In sum, acts of citation can be recognized as far more frequent and significant than what can be ascertained from mapping the burials alone if one allows for the citations to make references to other related (not identical) practices, and also to include similar practices that may have been repeated elsewhere in the area, the site, and spatial locations farther afield. This latter allowance adds a “horizontal perspective” to the network, a complement to the vertical one, dealing with how individuals and groups form connections across space as well as over time to other individuals and groups and the places associated with them. Networks of referentiality were thereby created and recapitulated, linking the burials (and the social personae they indexed) to one another and to the other objects in these spaces.

PC Str. 1

The Terrace 25 burials were considered “anomalous” because they fell outside the normal pattern of interring the

dead under the floors of houses. No doubt the walled sunken patio was the locale for many ritual actions that differentiated it from other structures at the site. However, the residences, too, were sites of ritual activity, including the deposition of objects beneath the floor (Grove and Gillespie 2002), so it is unwise to draw too strong a distinction between ritual and domestic architectural settings. PC Str. 1 was an unusual residence that may have become as much a shrine as was the Terrace 25 patio (Grove and Gillespie 2002:17–18). As noted above, Terrace 25’s burials are comparable to those on the Plaza Central in the use of stone slabs for lining and capping the graves (crypts) and in the pairing of burials. Crypts were not found elsewhere at the site (although there were other “stone-associated” burials; Merry de Morales 1987b:479), so the crypt burials in the one area cited the crypt burials in the other.

The PC Str. 1 excavations also revealed clusters of whole vessels, areas of stone paving, and piles of “debris” deposited upon and under the floors of the various construction stages (Merry 1975), not unlike those occurrences in the patio of Terrace 25. These intramural deposits included a portable stone sculpture, although the similarity of that act to the placement of the two stone sculptures in the Terrace 25 patio was not recognized by the Chalcatzingo Project archaeologists. Near the center of the northern half of the structure (111–113S/1E-1W) a large pit was dug down to 150 cm bs, some 20 centimeters below the earliest (Early Cantera subphase) floor (Merry 1975:fig. 4, 7). The top of this Late Cantera subphase intrusion was traced at about 70 cm bs (Grove and Cyphers Guillén 1987:27; Merry 1975:52). This feature was labeled a “trash pit,” although as such it is virtually unique among the interiors of the excavated residences. It did contain cultural materials that appeared to be debris; however, at its base was an upright stone sculpture (the “winged phallus”; Grove 1987d:fig. 20.12) along with *metate* (grinding stone) fragments—such fragments commonly occurred in graves. The top edge of the pit was partially marked by stone walls, and it may have had adobe lining (Merry 1975:43). Rather than consider this pit a place for managing household trash, given that it co-occurred in space and time with Late Cantera subphase practices of interring human remains (Burial 19 at 22 cm bs partially overlies it), this feature should be seen as an intentional deposit, an act of citation that therefore referenced those burials.

In sum, the anomalous burials in open spaces outside of the residences, as at Terrace 25, were components of dynamic citational fields that included the more common private burials inside residences, most notably within PC Str. 1. Nevertheless, the differences between them must be considered within the network of references—citations are

parts of a matrix of similarities and differences—within distinct social fields. The issue of visibility, noted above, remains important because “the degree of this overt visibility [of burials] relates to power” dependent on the witnessing of those acts (Hendon 2000:49). Varying scales of intimacy and visibility form a better means for assessing contrasting social settings than a simple domestic–public dichotomy of space (Joyce and Hendon 2000:155). Increasing the number of witnesses and the degree of emotionally charged memories created in funeral events requires more effective and elaborate forms of display, including “the mound as an elevated platform” (Barrett 1990:186). In this respect the open space of the Terrace 25 patio was trumped by the innovation of burials within the great linear stone-faced platform mound, PC Str. 4.

PC Str. 4

Even in its eroded state this long platform still has a commanding presence, and it looks substantially taller from the downhill view, on the lower terraces where the vast majority of the residents lived. Looking south towards the platform mound from these other terraces, one sees Cerro Chalcatzingo immediately behind with the carved reliefs on its rock surface. At least three, possibly four, Cantera phase subsurface burials were found at different locations on the top of the platform mound: relatively intact crypt Burials 39 and 40, a unique elaborate tomb structure that was looted in about 1970, and a possible additional stone-lined grave (Grove and Cyphers Guillén 1987:31). Although the traces of any surface structures have probably disappeared, one may nevertheless consider these burials to be residential in the sense that the mourners who prepared them were members of the elite social house that claimed the Plaza Central, treating the entire terrace as a spatial determinant of a house’s landed property. The Chalcatzingo archaeologists assumed that the individuals interred under the surface of the platform mound lived in, or were directly associated with, the PC Str. 1 residence (Merry de Morales 1987a:100–101).

While it has been argued (above) that PC Str. 1’s many burials probably do not all represent members of the immediate household, they must have been persons claimed as having membership in or alliance with the Plaza Central social house. Place of burial is always a strategic decision, and it can be used to strengthen or challenge claims to the deceased by the survivors of the multiple houses with which the deceased may have had affiliation (house of birth, house of parent, house of spouse, etc.). Disputes over bodies in such situations are not uncommon (Bloch 1995; Waterson 1995). For the members of the PC Str. 1 house to have interred

so many bodies within the walls of their principal domicile was a material sign of their status and of the strength of their alliances with other houses.

The objects found in graves, especially exotics, such as jade beads or other greenstone ornaments, were likely indexes or tokens of the wealth, prestige, and identity of the house(s) that buried them. Even the PC Str. 1 graves with little other indication of “wealth” had such tokens, suggesting that greenstone objects are not indisputable markers of high social status asserted by individuals in life and death (Merry de Morales 1987a:99). Merry de Morales (1987a:99) observed that jade beads were usually singular inclusions, unbroken and placed in or near the mouth. She thereby saw them as different from other jade objects, which were usually individual fragments variously positioned in a grave. Nevertheless, the beads were equally fragments of a larger costume element—a necklace or belt. Both the beads and the other greenstone bodily adornments are incomplete, their remaining parts likely retained by the survivors (an example of “disjunction”; see Joyce, chapter 3, this volume).

Joyce (1999:41) has suggested that for Formative Mesoamerica in general, personal identities that emerge and are played out within the social field of the corporate group (house) are manifested in residential burial practices. There is a great deal of intra-interment variability at Chalcatzingo, as Merry de Morales (1987a:99) observed in her analysis, which may reflect those individual identities. However, the inclusion of the fragmented items also indicates a sense of collectivity, of being parts of a whole. The deceased joined the collective house ancestors, whose physical aspects were incorporated in the structure itself, buried under the floors. When a residential structure went through life-cycle rites of razing and burning, small greenstone earspool fragments were deposited in the floor fill before rebuilding (Grove and Gillespie 2002:17), a possible material citation linking the life cycle of residences and the human beings who inhabited them both in life and after death.

The two intact PC Str. 4 crypt burials show similarities and differences with the PC Str. 1 graves, indicating the intelligibility of certain of their aspects to the members of the house responsible for the burials even as they manifest innovations (Table 7.3).¹ Both mortuary spaces have in common crypt graves, the inclusion of jade objects, and the fact that hematite was present in the two PC Str. 4 burials and in two of the 38 subfloor interments of PC Str. 1 (#28, #33), which were also in crypts and had jade grave furniture (Merry de Morales 1987a:98) (Table 7.4). However, in those latter cases, the hematite was present only as a smear on a single vessel in Burial 28 and a clump of hematite in the crypt of Burial 33. In contrast, the complete bodies and all the grave furniture in the PC Str. 4 crypts were stained with

Table 7.3. PC Str. 4 (Platform Mound) Cantera Phase Burials

Burial (no #)	Depth (cm bs)	Quadrant	Orientation (Head/Feet)	Type	Age	Furniture	Miscellaneous
39	60	22-24S/1W-2E	W/E	Crypt	Adult	2 jadeite earspools (worn) 49 jade beads as a necklace 8 jade beads (belt) greenstone adze? on chest Laca shallow bowl Amatzinac White cantarito inside bowl	entire body stained with hematite
40	39	23-25S/3-5W	W/E	Crypt	Adult	2 jade earspools near upper left arm 1 jade bead, probably in mouth 1 tubular jadeite bead between upper legs 16 jade beads in pelvis (belt?) 11 jade beads as necklace; with knotted sinew thread concave hematite mirror atop mandible fragment of second mirror 94 tiny pieces of turquoise (mosaic) near skull piece of worked shell in one earspool Amatzinac White shallow bowl Peralta Orange cantarito inside bowl jadeite from a mosaic disk	likely crypt; covering stones destroyed in plow zone; entire body and all grave furniture stained with hematite
(no #)		east end of PC Str. 4	bone fragments found in backdirt				2-m-long, 1.5-m-wide mound of stone with a stone wall facing east, having a stone-filled doorway; the tomb was looted in about 1970

Note: Based on Grove and Cyphers Guillén 1987; Merry de Morales 1987b.

Table 7.4. PC Str. 1 Burials 28, 33 Related to Str. 4 Burials

Burial	Depth (cm bs)	Quadrant	Orientation (Head/Feet)	Type	Age	Furniture	Miscellaneous
28	60	121-123S/1-2E	N/S	Crypt	Adult	partial jade earspool, in 2 separated pieces small jade bead between lower legs 2 obsidian blades, 1 to west of each hand Amatzinac White bowl with 4 rim lugs Amatzinac White composite bowl Amatzinac White double-loop handle censer, east side of crypt Amatzinac White double-loop handle censer, west side of crypt unslipped cantarito (not in bowl) Peralta Orange animal effigy vessel (jaguar?) Olmec style serpentine figurine by right hand jade awl fragment beneath skull Amatzinac White shallow bowl unslipped cantarito inside the bowl 3 groups (4, 9, 12) of smooth pebbles in crypt 2 groups (10, 11) pebbles below crypt stones	hematite smeared on interior of Amatzinac White bowl with 4 rim lugs, "killed," placed beneath skull
33	75	118-120S/1W-1E	W/E	Crypt	Adult		small clump of hematite north of pelvis included as grave furniture

Note: Based on Merry de Morales 1987b.

hematite, even into the holes of the jade beads (Merry de Morales 1987b:463).

There were other important differences with the platform burials. In addition to the fact that they "obviously fall outside the normal pattern of house subfloor interments . . . the most striking aspect was the tremendous amount of jade in the two unlooted burials here (nos. 39, 40), more than was found in all other burials combined, and the fact that only these two individuals had been wearing the jade as jewelry at the time of burial" (Merry de Morales 1987a:98). This evidence is more than a material indication of the highest status individuals at Cantera phase Chalcatzingo, the conclusion reached by Merry de Morales (1987a:98). Unlike the PC Str. 1 burials, these two individuals were historically distinct persons. Their identities were implicated in their inalienable association with specific, likely named, intact items of house property that remained on their bodies in death rather than being broken up and retained by survivors. The social personae of these individuals were known and memorialized within a much wider social field than simply that of their own house (and allied houses). The increased display capabilities of interment atop the highly visible platform mound suggest the development of funerary spectacles with the capability of drawing more witness-participants into the ceremonies, while at the same time providing a spatial distance between the witnesses (below) and the officiants (above) (see Barrett 1990:186 for a similar Bronze Age British case). At the same time, the citation of practices elsewhere on the Plaza Central (crypt interment, jade inclusion) reveals a continuity, a reference to precursors, that would have muted the presumed innovation of a new political strategy in the eyes of the participants (following Mizoguchi 1993:232).

For Formative Mesoamerica, Joyce suggested that, in contrast with residential burials, "mound burials embody personal identity completely abstracted from the residential group context and its social claims . . . individuals buried in prominent nonresidential locations wear costumes that are standardized within communities and even in some cases between communities" (Joyce 1999:41). Her analysis of the Chalcatzingo PC Str. 4 burials alongside elite interments at the Middle Formative Olmec center of La Venta and at Los Naranjos, Honduras, revealed the repeated use of the same costume items, especially jade earspools and bead belts. These practices spanned cultural and linguistic differences and great spatial distances. They indicate a network of persons of an elite category whose identities therefore transcended their local spheres of influence (Joyce 1999:38-39).

Chalcatzingo's Middle Formative connections with the Gulf coast Olmecs are evident in specific similarities between bedrock carvings on the Cerro Chalcatzingo hillside

and some sculptures from La Venta, the preeminent Middle Formative Olmec center (Grove 1989:134), although Chalcatzingo also developed its own repertory of motifs that has not been found on the Gulf coast (Grove 2000). In addition, the elite “burials” placed in the ritual precinct of La Venta manifest the practices of wearing complete sets of jade jewelry (earspools, bead belts) and the inclusion of red pigment in association with the grave (Drucker 1952; Drucker et al. 1959), like the PC Str. 4 platform mound burials. Nevertheless, there are also strong similarities between La Venta and some subfloor burials of Chalcatzingo PC Str. 1, as noted by Merry de Morales (1987a:103), which suggests once again that the “inside” and “outside” burials are part of the same referential network.

As previously stated, PC Str. 1 Burial 3 had at the pelvis a stone anthropomorphic head broken off a statue (Merry de Morales 1987a:103). The decapitation of statues conforms to a pattern of sculpture mutilation more commonly known among the Gulf coast Olmecs (Grove 1981). Burial 3’s earlier counterpart, Burial 33, included an anthropomorphic figurine in the La Venta Olmec style, a jade awl, five groups of rounded pebbles around the crypt’s interior edges, and a clump of hematite. Grove (2006) has recently compared this latter crypt and grave furniture to the cist Tomb C at La Venta (Drucker 1952:67–68, fig. 22).² Like Burial 33, Tomb C is a Late Middle Formative east–west–oriented, stone slab-lined tomb.

An important difference is that Tomb C (like all but one of the tombs at La Venta Complex A) was a pseudo-burial (Drucker 1952:71; Drucker et al. 1959:162). The persona of the “deceased” was indexed by costume ornaments positioned as if worn on a body, but there were no human remains (Gillespie 2008:131). Two jade earspools were positioned as if on either side of a head, and a jade bead belt and jade awl (blood-letter) were placed over what would have been the pelvis area. Tomb C also included a serpentine anthropomorphic figurine positioned “mid-body,” like Chalcatzingo Burial 33, and clusters of serpentine and jade celts along the edges of the crypt suggestive of the similarly placed clusters of pebbles in Burial 33. The contents of the Tomb C cist were covered in a thick layer of red pigment. La Venta Tomb C therefore references PC Str. 1 Burial 33 rather directly, even as the “wearing” of greenstone ornaments among the La Venta pseudo-burials shows greater similarities to the Chalcatzingo PC Str. 4 burials. Because this sandstone-lined cist is unique to La Venta (the sandstone having to be imported), whereas crypt burials using abundant natural stone are not uncommon at Chalcatzingo or elsewhere in the highlands (Grove 1987a:435), one may suggest that the Olmecs of La Venta cited their Chalcatzingo counterparts, rather than the usual interpretation that Chalcatzingo’s elites were influenced by ideas and practices originating on the Gulf

coast. As for Terrace 25, its stone-walled sunken patio and bench/altar share greater similarities with sites in Guerrero state to the west than with Olmec centers to the southeast (Fash 1987:82; Grove 1989:142–143, 2000:287).

Conclusion

At Chalcatzingo, the notion of residential burial should not be confined to the space of a residential structure. Although subfloor burial was the common pattern, the spatial domains of the long-lived social houses were the individual human-made terraces, and other mortuary spaces were created on some of those terraces, notably on the Plaza Central and Terrace 25. Rather than pursue the normative, synoptic, and classificatory approach to the Formative Chalcatzingo burial corpus, I adopted a citational approach to investigate small-scale patterns evident in mortuary practices as repeated actions over time. Joyce and Lopiparo argued that attention to “figures of sequences of action in time . . . shift[s] our emphasis productively . . . to attending to what people were doing as they recapitulated valued practices of the past and innovated within the constraints exercised by past practices and articulated traditions” (Joyce and Lopiparo 2005:372).

By examining some of the Chalcatzingo mortuary data as repeated practices, insights are made into vertical connections—especially with the paired burials—and horizontal connections linking burial practices that transcend the various types of mortuary spaces across the site. Despite the substantial differences implicated in practices of hidden residential subfloor burial and funerary displays in more open areas, the “anomalous” public burials in the platform mound and the patio area were shown to be components of citational referential networks that included the private burials inside the structures. Moreover, the mortuary rituals themselves were entwined with other depositional practices in these same spaces, including the burial of pottery vessels, portable stone sculptures, and animals (or their body parts), which become more intelligible to us in this context. This practice-based approach therefore transcends classificatory limitations in the analytical distinctions separating “inside” and “outside” burials, residential and nonresidential spaces, and “mortuary” and “non-mortuary” deposits.

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Notes

1. The operating assumption is that the PC Str. 4 burials postdate at least some of the PC Str. 1 crypt burials. While this assumption is reasonable, the relative chronology of burials in the two structures cannot be determined. PC Str. 4 was not built as a burial mound, and its earliest construction predates the Cantera phase by centuries.

2. Another similarity between burials at La Venta and Chalcatzingo involves a certain grave inclusion: the placing of a *cantarito* (small bottle) within a shallow bowl as the sole ceramic offerings in Burial 10 and in crypt Burial 33 in PC Str. 1 and in the two intact crypt burials on PC Str. 4, Burials 39 and 40. Significantly, the same vessel pair constituted the lone pottery artifacts in La Venta Offering 5 (Drucker et al. 1959:162–167), another pseudo-burial in Complex A that predates the Tomb C feature (Merry de Morales 1987a:99; see Grove and Gillespie 1992:197). Although the *cantarito* in a shallow dish was considered to be a little-understood marker of high status at Chalcatzingo (Merry de Morales 1987a:99), it may reference more directly the Plaza Central social house, given that no *cantaritos* at all were found in the Cantera phase graves on Terrace 25 (Grove and Gillespie 1992:197–198).

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