

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Figurines were produced at Teotihuacan during the life of the city and the later Coyotlatelco occupation. They seem to have been part of household paraphernalia for a large part of the population because they have been reported to occur in vast quantities at the ancient city, and are associated with domestic items in residences. Figurines in the Teotihuacan stylistic tradition were largely confined to the city, as relatively few have been recovered outside the Teotihuacan Valley.

Comparison of Teotihuacan figurine styles and motifs with similar ones in ceremonial art is a useful approach in identifying some figurine symbols within the rich iconography of ceremonial art forms. But many figurines, in fact most from site 9:N1E7, have no stylistic counterparts. Where similarities do occur, they are not exact copies, but as Wicke suggests (1954), are reflections of motifs seen in elite art as if the figurine designer was familiar, one step removed, with the original (assuming that the ceremonial art forms did indeed appear earlier than the corresponding ones on figurines). Figurine iconography should, then, be considered as a genre apart from ceremonial art.

Styles and motifs carried on the figurines probably had symbolic meaning which conveyed information recognized by the Teotihuacanos.

How they conceptualized the symbols is unknown, although some styles seem to have had religious connotations.

It is possible that social or corporate groups living in apartment compounds, sharing ritual and other activities, (R. Millon 1967: 121, 1976: 222) may have also shared symbols related to these activities. Symbols on some similar figurines may have varied from one Teotihuacan locale to another, and represented regional differences of various groups. The 248 figurine fragments from site 9:N1E7 presented in this study are possibly the kinds of figurines which were associated with the occupants of that particular site or the neighborhood. Site 9:N1E7 is on the edge of the city, approximately three kilometers from the Ciudadela along the Eastern Avenue.

Linné stressed the religious aspect of figurines: "That the clay figures, at all events the majority of them, possessed significance in connection with religious conceptions, is surely beyond doubt. I am afraid that the student that measures ritual objects with the foot-rule of typology and weighs them on the scale of logic is running risks of miscalculation" (1942: 87). His warning has been taken into account in this study, but it is suggested here that in many cases the distinction between the religious and the secular is difficult to ascertain, and may have had little meaning for the Teotihuacanos. What sort of ritual involved figurines, apart from their having been placed in caches and burials, is unknown.

Apparently Pasztory refers only to murals in explaining the distinction between the sacred and secular, and the hierarchic relation-

ships of figures and motifs with the supernatural dominating human figures (1978: 120). That approach would not apply to an assessment of figurines because it is unknown whether they were used singly or in groups. Decorative elements on the figurines might have been intended to indicate hierarchic arrangement, for example, the personage who wore a headdress with three rosettes was more important than the individual who was accorded only two.

Hand Modelled Figurines

The phases represented by the hand modelled figurines from site 9:N1E7 are the Tzacualli, Miccaotli, and Tlamimilolpa--A.D. 1-400 according to René Millon's most recently published chronology (1981: 206, Fig. 7-7, footnote 7). During this time the city had been laid out on a grid system, the Pyramids of the Sun and Moon as well as other monumental architecture had been constructed, and apartment compounds became the standard residential unit in Tlamimilolpa. The city had grown to the greatest area it would occupy, and had almost reached its maximum population. The relative conservatism and uniformity of style and design of hand modelled figurines contrasts sharply with the innovations and rapid growth which were taking place in other areas of Teotihuacan culture. Unfortunately, refinements in the figurine chronology by phases are lacking, especially for hand modelled pieces.

According to Pasztory, during the Late Preclassic and Early Classic phases there was almost no difference between representations

of the human figure and of the supernatural in Teotihuacan art (1978: 120). Some of the recognized gods in early Teotihuacan times are the rain deity, the flayed god, and the old fire god (Armillas 1945, Kubler 1967: 14). Some hand modelled figurines with mask-like faces and which are equated with representations of the flayed god were recovered (Séjourné 1959: Fig. 75), but I have not seen hand modelled figurines with Classic period rain deity traits (goggles, fangs) nor of the old fire god (wrinkled brow, sagging cheeks).

The terracotta figurines in the offering at the foot of the stairway of the Temple of Quetzalcoatl excavated by Rubín de la Borbolla (1947: Fig. 13) include bald heads and bald cleft heads, and do not resemble at all the carved heads on the facade of the temple. However, the offering is dated to Early Tlamimilolpa (R. Millon 1966: 5), and is later than the temple itself, which is thought to have been built in Miccaotli (R. Millon 1973: 55). Nonetheless, there was apparently little attempt to reproduce in figurine form the likeness of the decoration on the temple associated with the offering.

It is interesting to note that the resemblance of a few figurines from site 9:N1E7 (Figs. 4, 5, and 6) with figures in the offering scene mural of the Temple of Agriculture is with the people making the offerings, rather than the objects being worshipped.

Figurine styles which were to carry on (or perhaps be revived) in later phases had been established by the early phases at Teotihuacan. Evidence from site 9:N1E7 is the wide band headdress, the bald head,

the bald cleft head, and the human within an animal head. According to von Winning the bald cleft head style begins in the Tzacualli phase (1976: 153-154). It is impossible to know if the occupants of site 9:N1E7 were innovators of these styles, or if they maintained stylistic traditions set down elsewhere in the city. The human head within the animal head is seen in moulded form, and is perhaps the forerunner of the animal headdress. A few individuals in the offering scene mural wear animal headdresses. However, the wide band headdress, the bald head, and the bald cleft head forms are seen only on figurines. Heyden (1976: 4) suggests that the wide band headdress is a symbol of rank or lineage in Teotihuacan society.

It seems significant that, given the individuality of hand modelled figurines, the heads from 9:N1E7 break down into a few categories. One might conclude that social groups of some sort were allowed to wear certain kinds of headdresses, or that fashion or artistic canons dictated how people decorated their heads. Figs. 1-7 especially seem to lack traits associated with deities, at least as the deities are now understood.

Ceremonial art is richer in animal than human forms during the early phases. At site 9:N1E7, however, hand modelled human heads (21) occur more frequently than hand modelled animal heads (5). If identification of torsos is correct, and excluding dancer torsos, the number of hand modelled human torsos (8) almost equals hand modelled animal torsos (7).

The Stratigraphic Pits,
Late Tlamimilolpa Layers

The stratigraphic pits at site 9:N1E7 contained only four figurines in layers with ceramics dated no later than Late Tlamimilolpa. Fig. 12, a large hand modelled head with narrow slit eyes and three tufts on the head (Type III-E), and Fig. 44, a hand modelled animal torso (Type XI-A), were recovered in stratigraphic pit 1. The torso is perforated through the body as if it were used as a pendant.

The Late Tlamimilolpa layer of stratigraphic pit 2 contained two limb fragments--Figs. 127o (Type XXXV) and 129p (Type XXXVIII). Fig. 127o is a perforated limb of the kind associated with puppet figurines. There are several moulded puppet figurines in the 9:N1E7 collection, but neither hand modelled puppet torsos, nor hand modelled heads which may be identified as puppet heads are present. It is possible that Fig. 127o was attached to a hand modelled puppet, the other parts of which lay outside the excavated area. On the other hand, moulded puppets may have been produced by Late Tlamimilolpa.

Fig. 129p, a recognizable foot, is similar in size and shape to puppet feet (von Winning 1958), but the area where the leg would have been perforated is broken away, and there is no conclusive proof that this limb was indeed part of a puppet figurine. The individuality of hand modelled figurines is too great for assumptions to be made about which limbs were attached to which kinds of torsos. Many examples of hand modelled figurines may be seen in Artes de México (1965: 90-91).

Classic Moulded Figurines

Figurines began to be made in moulds at approximately the beginning of the Xolalpan phase. However, some examples cited above (pp. 37-38) suggest that the moulding process was known at Teotihuacan before the traditionally accepted date. Dancers and puppets dominate the Xolalpan phase, although there is evidence that some so-called Metepec figurine styles do appear in Late Xolalpan. Barbour (1975: 94) found tenuous evidence for other styles of mouldmade figurines in Early Xolalpan. The 250 years of Xolalpan, or even 150 years of Early Xolalpan (R. Millon 1981: Fig. 7-7), seem a very long time for only two figurine types to be in use in the highly developed and complex city. Both dancer and puppet figurines continue into the Metepec (Barbour 1975: 27).

The postures of dancer figurines vary only slightly (Artes de México 1965: 67), and there is no decoration which might provide a clue to their symbolic meaning. The only similar forms are the figures in the Tlalocan mural at Tepantitla. Pasztory dates this mural to Late Xolalpan, or A.D. 525 or 550-600 (1976: 92, chart II). These dates roughly coincide with Millon's chronology of A.D. 550-650 (for Late Xolalpan (1981: 206, Fig. 7-7).

Puppet figurines have no counterparts in ceremonial art; the four-symbol-pattern (von Winning 1958: 6) which occurs on puppet figurine headdresses and on vases is the only link. The decoration on headdresses associated with puppets might have served as indicators of regional differences. Von Winning's examples of puppets from

Azacapotzalco (1958) show designs not seen in the 9:N1E7 collection. Unfortunately only one puppet figurine (Fig. 57) has torso intact with a bald cleft head. No information on puppet headdresses is provided from the 9:N1E7 group. Von Winning (1976: 153-154) considers the bald cleft head to be symbolic, so perhaps puppet headdresses also had symbolic meaning for the Teotihuacanos.

The dating of Classic moulded figurines other than dancers and puppets is a problem. It is known that other kinds of figurines were produced at least as early as the Late Xolalpan, but they have not been reported in sufficient numbers so the chronology remains unclear. It is not impossible that most of the moulded heads in this collection were produced during the Metepec phase. N1E7 is the Metepec type site (Cowgill 1974: 394), and during the Teotihuacan Mapping Project survey it was discovered to have a high Metepec to Xolalpan ratio of ceramics (Cowgill 1974: Fig. 7).

It would be interesting to know if there was a time lag between ceremonial art forms and the figurines which reflect some of the motifs. Only a few of the 9:N1E7 Classic moulded figurines have stylistic links with ceremonial art, some of which have been dated. Goggles on the eyes and the fangs of Fig. 73 are recurring motifs in murals and on vases. The pyramid-shaped heads with arches on the foreheads (Figs. 75, 76) are similar to heads in the water panels of the Tetitla Jade Tlaloc murals (Miller 1973: Fig. 302). Pasztory dates the murals to A.D. 450-500 (1976: 92, chart II). Goggles on the forehead (Figs. 77, 88) are also found on the "dios con el moño en el tocado" heads on the

Temple of Quetzalcoatl, and on small heads attached to the basal rim of a Thin Orange cylindrical tripod vase. The vase is associated with a burial dated to the Late Xolalpan (Rattray 1981: Fig. 9a). Wrinkled face (Fig. 74) and sunken cheeks (Fig. 78) are characteristics of the old god (Séjourné 1966a: Lams. 65-66). The clothing of the torsos of Figs. 123 and 124 is similar to that of the figures in the Teopancaxco mural. The mural is dated by Pasztory at A.D. 525 or 550-600, her Late Xolalpan II (1976: 92, chart II). The female figure on a vase in Artes de México (1965: 90) is dressed in similar garb to the quechquemitl figurine torsos (Figs. 125, 126), and the head wearing a headdress with double horizontal band and central ornament (Fig. 94).

If the figurines mentioned above were made during the Xolalpan phase, they would be contemporaneous with the corresponding elite art forms. In fact, Fig. 126, quechquemitl gingerbread torso, was recovered in stratigraphic pit 2, associated with ceramics no later than the Late Xolalpan phase. If, on the other hand, they were produced during the Metepec phase, there is a time lag of approximately 150-200 years. The problem is further complicated because Teotihuacan phases are long time periods. Precise dates available in the Maya area on carved stelae are lacking.

The various stylistic contexts of the segmented headdress (Figs. 82, 84, 85) are discussed above (pp. 65-67). The similarity of the headdress with those of the profile figures on Tikal Stela 31 has been widely noted (for example, C. Millon 1973: 304, Ball 1974: 8-9, Coggins 1979: 38, von Winning 1981: 30). The text on Stela 31 is

"the best test case we now have of the relationship or possible relationship of Teotihuacan to a major foreign center, in this case the greatest city in the southern Maya Lowlands" (R. Millon 1981: 231). According to Coggins (1979: 38), the frontal figure on Stela 31 is Stormy Sky whose ancestor, Curl Snout, came from, or had direct ties with, Central Mexico. Stela 31 was erected at 9.0.10.0.0, 7 Ahau, 3 Yax; A.D. 445, G-M-T correlation (Marcus 1976: 38). Iconographic elements in Stormy Sky's costume and the surrounding designs, including Curl Snout above his head as an ancestor figure, stress the nature of foreign rulers at Tikal, who were outside the Maya dynasty (Coggins 1979: 43). Although it is unknown if the profile figures represent Teotihuacanos, or Maya dressed in Teotihuacan costume, it may be assumed that they had some connection with the effort of Stormy Sky to solidify his position of power as a foreigner in the Tikal hierarchy.

Tikal Stela 31 is dated at A.D. 445, and the beginning of the Metepec phase at A.D. 650 (R. Millon 1981: Fig. 7-7). If these dates are even approximately correct, there was an almost 200 year time lag between the erection of Stela 31 and the manufacture at Teotihuacan of figurines wearing headdresses similar to those of the stela profile figures.

However, there are later examples from the Maya area of figures wearing segmented headdresses. The cache described by Ball is dated to approximately A.D. 600 (1974: 2-3), and Piedras Negras Lintel I, with figures in Teotihuacan segmented headdresses, to A.D. 761 (Kelemen

1969: xxxi). The Teotihuacan "helmet glyph," the segmented headdress shown alone in Maya inscriptions, may be the Maya version of the Teotihuacan name glyph (von Winning 1981: 31).

The headdress motif is found in various parts of the Maya Lowlands. At Teotihuacan it is seen on figurines, and on figures on the Calpulalpan bowl, which was produced during the Metepec phase (Rattray 1979: 398). When and where does this headdress first appear? It is a Maya creation used to refer to Teotihuacan, or does it originate at Teotihuacan? How long is it used in these areas? Tikal Stela 31 was ritually destroyed and buried in the seventh century (Jones, Coe, and Haviland 1981: 301, Fig. 10-4). These questions cannot be answered by the study of figurines from site 9:N1E7, but are raised to emphasize the obstacles in cross dating between Teotihuacan and other areas in Mesoamerica.

The only other example from the 9:N1E7 figurine group which may have some relation to "tierra caliente" is Fig. 114. If, indeed, the animal is a monkey covered with morning glory flowers, then a link is indicated with areas outside the Teotihuacan Valley, but not necessarily as far as the Maya Lowlands.

Many figurine motifs seen in publications are not found at site 9:N1E7. Only a few examples are the jaguar headdress, cotton armour, feathered suit, owl design on costume, tri-tassel headdress, pot-bellied torso, year sign, eye of the reptile, and the flayed god.

The Stratigraphic Pits, Late Xolalpan Layers

Figurines from the Late Xolalpan layers of stratigraphic pit 1

are a perforated puppet limb (Fig. 127a, Type XXXV), a mask fragment (Fig. 99, Type XXIV-B), an unidentified limb fragment (Fig. 130k, Type XL-A), and a gingerbread torso (Fig. 126, Type XXXIV-A). The two limbs and mask are associated with Late Xolalpan or earlier figurines. Only the gingerbread torso is usually thought to be of the later Metepec phase.

The Late Xolalpan layers of stratigraphic pit 2 contained a large hand modelled head (Fig. 13, Type III-F), a perforated puppet limb (Fig. 127p, Type XXXV), and a hand modelled arm with an appliqué band (Fig. 129q). All three pieces could have been produced earlier than the Late Xolalpan phase. The hand modelled head is usually associated with Early Classic phases; however, its finely modelled nose may be a more sophisticated approach to hand modelled figurine design which was developed even after figurines were made in moulds. Clear evidence for this suggestion is lacking.

Metepec Layers

Figurines were recovered from Metepec layers only in stratigraphic pit 1. The three figurines are a hollow effigy face (Fig. 98, Type XXIV-A), a dancer torso (Fig. 40, Type X), and an unbroken puppet limb (Fig. 127b, Type XXXV). The presence of the dancer torso and puppet limb are further evidence that these kinds of figurines were made in the Metepec phase, as the layers from which they were recovered contained only Metepec ceramics (p. 22, Rattray 1980: 11-12).

Coyotlatelco Figurines

The Coyotlatelco phase (A.D. 750-950) which followed the collapse of Teotihuacan lacks representational art forms other than figurines; pottery was decorated with geometric designs. The distinctive configuration of Coyotlatelco figurines suggests a break with Teotihuacan stylistic tradition; however, a few traits from earlier phases at Teotihuacan continued in use.

Figurine traits from site 9:N1E7 of both Classic and Coyotlatelco phases are the use of the mould, the stand, the quechquemitl, bulging eyes, and the four-petal flower motif. Classic period traits known from areas of Teotihuacan other than 9:N1E7 and found on 9:N1E7 Coyotlatelco figurines are the enthroned figure, the three-sided headdress, and T-shaped dental mutilation.

Coyotlatelco figurines from Azcapotzalco (Tozzer 1921, Vaillant 1938), Tenayuca (Noguera 1935b), Cerro Tenayo (Rattray 1966), and site 9:N1E7 at Teotihuacan share diagnostic characteristics (Rattray 1966: 136-137), and many of the same motifs. Stylistic comparisons are difficult because only a few figurines from Azcapotzalco and Tenayuca have been illustrated; however, some examples may be noted. One (of two) heads illustrated by Vaillant (1938: 2q, left) looks as if it came from the same mould as Fig. 154. The lateral projection from the head of a figurine wearing a triangular quechquemitl (Tozzer 1921: Plate 2-B) is similar to the projection on the jowled head of Fig. 144.

Coyotlatelco torsos and clothing are simple and standardized, whereas headdresses are characterized by diversity of decoration. Attention to detail on headdresses contrasts with the simplicity of clothing, and suggests that regional variations were symbolized by motifs on headdresses. The interlaced band motif on the Tenayuca headdress (Noguera 1935b: Figs. 1-2) is not seen on Coyotlatelco figurines from Azcapotzalco, Cerro Tenayo, or 9:N1E7. The Cerro Tenayo Type F headdress (Rattray 1966: Plate XIe-h) may have its counterpart at 9:N1E7 in the headdress of Fig. 151 (p. 75).

Coyotlatelco ceramic complexes differ from site to site (Rattray 1972: 202), and it is not impossible that diversity of figurine headdress motifs was governed by the location of the Coyotlatelco people in and around Teotihuacan.

Lack of stylistic context for Coyotlatelco figurines makes interpretation difficult. The absence of most Teotihuacan Classic traits may be explained by the cultural disruption caused by the collapse of Teotihuacan. The continuing use of a few traits may be evidence of some cultural contacts with pre-collapse Teotihuacan peoples, or at least a familiarity with the artistic devices employed on figurines. The Coyotlatelco occupants of site 9:N1E7 may have taken up residence at the site because the area had been productive in obsidian working. Some of the Coyotlatelco people may have continued, or revitalized, obsidian production around 9:N1E7 during their occupation of the site.

The discrete obsidian deposits (p. 27) suggest that 9:N1E7 was an obsidian working area. But the mixture of obsidian flakes, figurines,

and other ceramics in the fill of the excavated area seems stronger evidence still that obsidian working was associated with the occupants of the site.

The major obstacle to interpretation of 9:N1E7 figurines is the lack of clear archaeological context with architecture or any evidence of activity areas. Stylistic analysis is hampered by lack of comparative material of figurines from other areas in or around Teotihuacan. The attempt is made in this study to provide as much information as possible about the figurines from site 9:N1E7 which may be useful as comparative data for future studies of Teotihuacan figurines.