

## PREFACE

This thesis presents the burial data recovered from the archaeological site of Lambityeco, in the Valley of Oaxaca, Mexico. The data may serve, later, as a base for exploring a number of aspects of ancient Zapotec society.

The thesis is organized in two chapters. The first one contains five major parts. First, an overview of how prehistoric societies have been studied--particularly by using burial data--is discussed. Two major requirements, contextual and chronological controls, are emphasized if such kind of data is going to be used in the reconstruction of past social systems. The second part of chapter 1 deals with the first requirement, i.e. contextual control. Here, the concept of household cluster is proposed as an adequate unit of analysis for the Lambityeco burials. This section ends with a general comparison of the household clusters as defined at Lambityeco and those from Formative deposits, for which the concept 'household cluster' was originally developed. The third part of the first chapter treats the second requirement in the use of burial data to infer aspects of social structure, i.e. chronological control. The contemporaneity of the archaeological remains at Lambityeco are evaluated in very general terms and it is concluded that the reduced burial sample does not allow finer chronological control within a time span of approximately 650 years (550-1200 A.D.). Parts four and five discuss, respectively, some of the methods used in the analyses on the household, tomb, and burial levels, and those followed in the osteological analysis of the human remains. The latter section deals, specifically, with the methods employed in the ageing and sexing of the skeletons, and evaluates the burial sample in terms of its age and sex characteristics by comparing



it to other burial series from the Valley of Oaxaca.

Chapter 2 presents the data base by describing the burials within the conceptual framework of 'household cluster'. The chapter consists of a descriptive text, figures, and appendixes that are cross-referenced, so a variety of archaeological information--directly or indirectly related to the burials--is provided. This data base still needs further analysis geared toward answering specific questions about Zapotec society as reflected at Lambityeco between A.D. 550 and 1200.

Several people have contributed in one way or another to the present thesis. I would like to acknowledge Dr. Michael Lind, not only for the initial suggestion of studying the Lambityeco burials, but also for providing with countless stimulating ideas and sharing all his own data. Special thanks are due to Dr. John Paddock, who provided all the required facilities in order to stay in Mitla between October and January of 1980-81, during which a major portion of the burial collection was analyzed, and in the summer of 1982, when data relating to the archaeological context of the burials was gathered. I thank Dr. David A. Peterson for allowing me reductions in my teaching loads between 1981 and 1983, in order to finish the osteological analysis and to continue in the preliminary study of the archaeological contexts. I would also like to thank Dr. Marcus C. Winter for the generous facilitation of the burials excavated by the INAH Regional Center in Oaxaca, and some related field and laboratory notes.

I am especially grateful to my brother Gustavo, who did the lettering of all the figures in chapter 2, and to my brother Gonzalo, who provided computer assistance in the systematic arrangement of all the data and in the elaboration of appendixes C, D, and E.

Credits should also be given to Octavio Hernández who not only took the Plate photographs but many more, to Sandy Vázquez who printed the plates, and to Z. Green for editing an earlier version of chapter 2.



Finally, but no less importantly, I would like to express my deep gratitude to my parents, Ale, and Paulo, for helping me in their own special ways.

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