

AND MAN CREATED HIMSELF . . .

Eduardo Matos Moctezuma

There was a moment in history when man discovered he could harden clay with fire, using his creative powers to give life to what was lifeless, to capture his gods and all that surrounded him in this ductile material. He made vessels and recipients to hold water and food for his daily sustenance, and on more than a few occasions, to act as offerings to the gods or to accompany the dead to unfathomable places. Further, clay allowed him to represent himself, fashioning images of his diverse visages, in everyday poses and activities. In this way, man managed to achieve eternal existence through clay, a material which had been created by man himself.

While in some Mesoamerican cultures, human beings were thought to have been modeled from corn, other cultures believed that God had used clay to create them in his image. God had modeled man from clay just as man was able to model himself. In this way, man and God had the same creative power: they could both transform clay into their own image, into their own essence.

Once man realized he could transform clay, nothing could hold him back. In the case of Mesoamerica, pottery was perhaps one of the most productive human activities, leaving behind a vast quantity of examples. Thanks to the action of fire, it takes on such a degree of hardness that it can survive the ravages of time and remain intact—or relatively so—over the course of centuries. Each piece communicates multiple messages, making it possible for scholars to know the characteristics of the society that created it. Ceramic objects speak to us equally of their uses and of the accoutrements and rituals of the ancients. They also serve to establish pre-Hispanic chronologies and to provide information about exchange patterns with distant groups. However, what is perhaps most important is that through these pieces, man was able to leave his mark as an artist.

With his hands and his intellect, he transforms, molds, and in the end, leaves traces of his brilliance in a simple pottery vessel.

Translated by Debra Nagao.

DEIFIED EARTH

TEOTIHUACAN: THE CITY AND THE WORLD

Leonardo López Luján

As the archetypal Mesoamerican city, Teotihuacan ("The Place Where Gods Are Created") was a hub from which radiated one of the most unique civilizations in world history. Although its beginnings were

rather modest, the original settlement was soon transformed with the arrival of agricultural groups drawn by the exceptionally rich and varied surroundings. Dense pine and oak forests stood on the nearby mountains; vast areas of grasslands and xerophilous vegetation which had adapted to the hot, dry conditions covered the slopes; and the valley floor was carpeted by a fertile alluvial plain constantly irrigated by rivers and springs. Equally important to the newcomers in pre-Hispanic times was the presence of basic mineral resources such as obsidian and clay. With these materials, they produced a wide range of utilitarian and luxury items over the course of centuries, laying the foundations for a true emporium. These activities were soon fortified by the privileged position occupied by this settlement which lay on the most direct route between the Gulf of Mexico and the lake zone of the Basin of Mexico.

Teotihuacan achieved the rank of city at the dawn of the Classic period (A.D. 150–650). At that time, more than a third of its 85,000 inhabitants had ceased working in food production to instead devote themselves full-time to craftsmanship, commerce, politics and religion. The city's dimensions, density and ethnic diversity continued to grow throughout the so-called Xolalpan phase (A.D. 350–550), a golden age in which some 100,000 individuals came to occupy a twenty-square-kilometer area. Although the population's substratum seems to have been Nahua or Otomí in ethnicity, there were also significant numbers of people from Oaxaca, the Gulf of Mexico, Western Mexico and perhaps the Mayan area, giving Teotihuacan a cosmopolitan air.

In Mesoamerican terms, Teotihuacan was a superlative example of urban planning. It was unique for its straight, regularly spaced streets equipped with an efficient hydraulic network. The constructions adhered to a rigid grid plan that reproduced the idealized four-part configuration of the earth's surface. More than 2000 rectangular apartment compounds were grouped into neighborhoods, and these in turn into districts. The five-kilometer-long Street of the Dead was the main avenue that organized space at the site. It was lined by the city's most significant religious and palatial structures, as well as what could have been the site of the market. Standing out from among these constructions were the massive Pyramids of the Sun and the Moon, which made it a ceremonial center that far surpassed human scale. An immovable, monotonous, almost stifling geometry reigned over the city, in which the buildings, public monuments, mural paintings and great offerings of consecration glorified the aquatic world, time, human sacrifice and political power.

To a large extent, Teotihuacan achieved its splendor thanks to active craft production and aggressive commercial strategies. Feathered headdresses, fine cotton garments, shell ornaments, semiprecious stone carvings, obsidian tools, as well as household and luxury ceramics were mass-produced in its workshops. These manufactured goods were exported to the remotest corners of Mesoamerica, along well-protected corridors that linked the metropolis to its col-

onies, enclaves, allied capitals and ports of trade, including Copán, Kaminaljuyú and Tikal (in present-day Guatemala), and Matacapan, Cholula, Monte Albán and Tingambato (present-day Mexico). Obviously, a system of this nature would have required a sufficiently strong army to protect the free passage of merchandise, individuals and ideas that forged Teotihuacan's powerful sphere of influence.

Translated by Debra Nagao.

VERSATILE EARTH

A HERITAGE OF CLAY

George L. Cowgill

When the city of Teotihuacan began its rapid expansion around 100 B.C., excellent pottery and ceramic figurines in a wide variety of styles had already been produced in many parts of Mesoamerica for at least two millennia. This provided a technological and stylistic basis on which Teotihuacan artisans could draw. For the most part, Teotihuacan ceramics are not among the most aesthetically distinguished styles in Mesoamerica. Clays in the Basin of Mexico are not of exceptional quality, and ceramic techniques were not as highly developed as in some other regions and periods. There is no evidence, for example, that the Teotihuacanos ever used kilns. Some extremely fine cylinder vases—often with elaborate polychrome stucco designs applied after firing—were exported to other parts of Mesoamerica, reaching as far as the Mayan center of Copán, in present-day Honduras. These precious vessels were probably gifts, used to cement ties with local elites. Within the city of Teotihuacan itself—with its 100,000 inhabitants—there was lively exchange of utilitarian wares made by specialized potters, but there is no evidence of ceramic exports on a commercial scale beyond the city's immediate surroundings.

Ancient Clay: The First Ceramics

The Teotihuacanos were direct heirs to a ceramic complex from the Basin of Mexico called Ticoman—a style characteristic to the pre-Teotihuacan city of Cuiculco, in the southern part of the Basin. It is also found in many small towns and villages throughout the Basin, including the type site of Ticoman, in what is now the northern part of Mexico City. The local variant in the Teotihuacan Valley is called Cuanalan. Besides utilitarian pots, this ceramic complex features graceful serving bowls with pleasing curvilinear profiles, often decorated with red designs. The Ticoman style is part of a general red-slipped tradition that was widespread in Central and Western Mexico during this time, with many local variants, such as the Chupícuaro styles some 200 kilometers to the west, in the state of Guanajuato. However, except for a few trade pieces, there is little evidence of direct contact between these regions.

Between about 100 B.C. and A.D. 150, Teotihuacan grew rapidly, and by A.D. 150, it had nearly reached its maximum area of around 2000 hectares, and a population of perhaps sixty to eighty thousand. Most ceramics from the early part of this period are assigned to a complex called Patlachique, which seems to have developed out of the Cuanalan (Ticoman) complex with little outside influence. The ceramic complex of the latter part of this period is called Tzacualli (and corresponds to the phase of A.D. 1–150). Besides utilitarian pots and large bowls with little or no decoration, there are several distinctive styles of fine serving ware. Especially notable are vessels decorated with the "resist" (or "negative") technique, in which portions of the vessel were protected from applied slips or smudging by some material that disappeared with firing, leaving behind "negative" patterns. The browns, reds and yellows of polychrome-resist vessels are subdued but glowing. The effect was perhaps equaled, but to my mind never exceeded, by the brighter and more insistent greens, blues, reds, yellows and blacks of the much later stucco-painted tripod cylinder vases. Other Tzacualli vessels were painted with white lines over a red slip. A highly distinctive Tzacualli form is an early form of the "Tlaloc" jar, which clearly represents the Teotihuacan Storm God, almost surely the most important deity in the Teotihuacan pantheon.

The Proliferation of Clay

By about A.D. 150, a single concerted effort had brought the immense Pyramid of the Sun nearly to its present size. Recent excavations directed by archaeologists Saburo Sugiyama and Rubén Cabrera Castro show that the Pyramid of the Moon, in contrast, grew by stages, but that by this time it was also quite large. In the same period, new ceramic styles appeared, in complexes called Miccaotli (A.D. 150–225) and Early Tlamimilolpa (A.D. 225–300). These derived largely from earlier styles, and do not suggest any significant influx of new immigrants, although it is likely that (as in other pre-modern cities) death rates somewhat exceeded birth rates, so there was probably always a trickle of migrants being absorbed into the city. External influences on ceramics at this time seem to have come from the Gulf lowlands and Oaxaca, rather than from the West.

Some ceramic pieces dating to this period have lively red-on-brown decorations, but many are more somber—polished dark brown or black. Especially prevalent are flat-bottomed bowls with outcurving sides, often with small, solid, conical nubbin supports. These must have been basic serving ware in every household. Their quality varies greatly, and many are plain and not especially well finished. Others are decorated with incised motifs—often simple incised arcs—while a few of the most attractive pieces have modeled arcs rather than merely incised ones. Less common are small jars and tall vases with outcurving rims, also usually with nubbin supports.

CERÁMICA DE

TEOTIHUACAN



ARTES DE MÉXICO renació en 1988 como un proyecto cultural inusitado, que toma como eje una revista monográfica en la que confluyen aproximaciones novedosas y reflexiones apasionadas sobre nuestra cultura. Desde entonces, nuestra meta ha sido descubrir, a través de los más sorprendentes objetos del arte, los nuevos enigmas de un México creativo y vital. Hemos querido indagar sobre lo que no es evidente a través de lo que sí se ve. Invariabilmente nos hemos visto maravillados, pues los muchos rostros de nuestra cultura han superado nuestras expectativas. Llevamos veinte años sumando al placer de contemplar el placer de comprender.

Y, gracias a la preferencia de nuestros lectores, seguiremos sumando senderos a este itinerario cultural.

PÁGINA ANTERIOR:

Vaso blanco sobre rojo especular con soportes de botón (detalle). Clásico, fase Tlalimilolpa (225-350 d.C.).

Proviene de la Ciudadela, Teotihuacan.

Cerámica del grupo pulido.

Museo Nacional de Antropología.

DIRECCIÓN GENERAL: Alberto Ruy Sánchez Lacy, Margarita de Orellana
GERENTE DE ADMINISTRACIÓN: Teresa Vergara • **Jefa de Redacción:** Gabriela Olmos
REDACCIÓN: Juan Carlos Atilano, María Luisa Cárdenas, Sergio Hernández Roura
Jefe de Diseño: Manelik Guzmán • **Diseño:** Víctor Espinosa, Yarely Torres
CORRECCIÓN: Stella Cuéllar, Edith Vera • **EDICIÓN EN INGLÉS:** Michelle Suderman
TRADUCCIÓN AL INGLÉS: Debra Nagao • **TRADUCCIÓN AL ESPAÑOL:** Patricia Aguirre, María Palomar
PUBLICIDAD: Luz Hernández • **DIRECTOR COMERCIAL:** Antonio Flores
INSTITUTO DE INVESTIGACIONES ARTES DE MÉXICO: Director: Alfonso Alfaro
PROYECTOS ESPECIALES: Directora: Mónica del Villar
ASESOR LEGAL EN DERECHO DE AUTOR: J. Ramón Obón León

ASAMBLEA DE ACCIONISTAS

Víctor Acuña, Cristina Brittingham, Mita Castiglioni de Aparicio, Armando Colina Gómez, Margarita de Orellana, Olga María de Orellana, Ma. Eugenia de Orellana de Hutchins, Octavio Gómez Gómez, Rocío González de Canales, Michèle Sueur de Leites, Bruno J. Newman, Marie Hélène Pontvianne, Abel L. M. Quezada, Alberto Ruy Sánchez Lacy, José C. Terán Moreno, Teresa Vergara, Jorge Vértiz.

CONSEJO DE ADMINISTRACIÓN

Presidente: Alberto Ruy Sánchez Lacy • **Vicepresidente:** Bruno J. Newman • **Consejeros:** Ernesto Canales, Octavio Gómez Gómez, Margarita de Orellana, Florence Pontvianne, Marie Hélène Pontvianne, Abel L. M. Quezada, Enrique Rivas Zivy, Teresa Vergara • **Comisario:** Julio Ortiz • **Secretario:** Luis Gerardo García Santos Coy.

CONSEJO DE ASESORES

Alfonso Alfaro, Luis Almeida, Homero Aridjis, Huberto Batis, Alberto Blanco, Antonio Bolívar, Rubén Bonifaz Nuño, Efraín Castro, Leonor Cortina, José Luis Cuevas, Cristina Esteras, Manuel Felguerez, Carlos Fuentes, Concepción García Sáiz, Teodoro González de León, Andrés Henestrosa †, José E. Iturriaga, Miguel León-Portilla, Jorge Alberto Lozoya, Alfonso de María y Campos, Eduardo Matos Moctezuma, Vicente Medel, Álvaro Mutis, Bruno J. Newman, Luis Ortiz Macedo, Brian Nissen, Ricardo Pérez Escamilla, Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, Vicente Rojo, Guillermo Tovar, José Miguel Ullán, Juan Urquiza, Héctor Vasconcelos, Eliot Weinberger, Ramón Xirau.

FOTOGRAFÍA: Portada: Jorge Vértiz • Interiores: Pablo Aguinaco: pp. 12-13 • Michael Calderwood: pp. 4-5 • Bo Gabrielsson: p. 34 • Javier Hinojosa: pp. 9, 46, 54 izquierda, 58 derecha, 59 • Shigeru Kabata: pp. 47, 49 arriba izquierda y abajo izquierda • Justin Kerr: pp. 16, 17 abajo • Leonardo López Luján: p. 15 • Miguel A. Morales: pp. 21 arriba, 24, 25, 26 abajo, 40, 44, 49 arriba derecha, 58 izquierda, 62, 64 • Marco Antonio Pacheco: pp. 6, 10, 21 abajo, 22, 26 arriba, 33, 37, 38, 39, 41, 42-43, 48, 50, 51 derecha, 53, 54 derecha, 57 derecha, 65, 69, 70 • Jorge Vértiz: pp. 1, 3, 11, 17 arriba, 18, 19, 20, 23, 27, 28, 30-31, 32, 36, 45, 49 abajo derecha, 51 izquierda, 52, 55, 56, 57 izquierda, 60, 61, 63, 66, 80 • Del cuadro de la página 29: Javier Hinojosa, Miguel A. Morales, Marco Antonio Pacheco, Jorge Vértiz.

ILUSTRACIONES:

Fernando Botas: pp. 75, 76 • James C. Langley: p. 72 • Abel Mendoza / Manuel Romero: p. 73.

De la obra de José María Velasco:

"Reproducción autorizada por el Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura 2008"

INAH. La reproducción, el uso y el aprovechamiento por cualquier medio de las imágenes pertenecientes al patrimonio cultural de la nación mexicana contenidas en esta obra, están limitados conforme a la Ley Federal sobre Monumentos y Zonas Arqueológicos, Artísticos e Históricos, y la Ley Federal del Derecho de Autor. Su reproducción debe ser aprobada previamente por el INAH y el titular del derecho patrimonial.

Las imágenes de la jarra del dios de la Tormenta y del vaso que se encuentran dentro de la fase Tzacualli en el cuadro de la página 29 fueron tomadas del libro de Kathleen Barrin y Esther Pasztory (eds.), *Teotihuacan: Art from the City of the Gods*, Nueva York, Thames and Hudson, 1993.

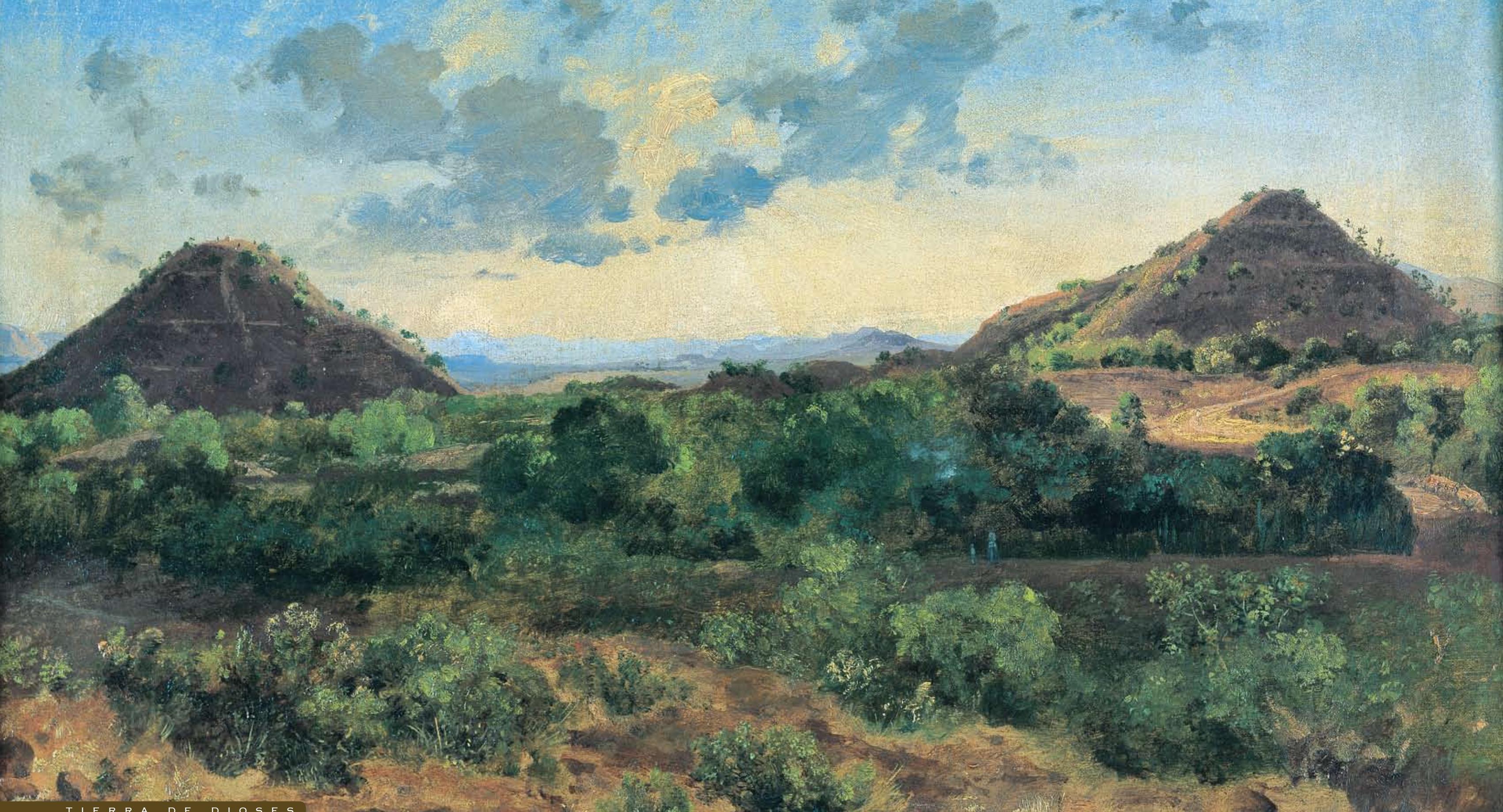
La imagen de la página 73 fue tomada del libro de Laurette Séjourné, *Teotihuacan, capital de los toltecas*, México, Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1994. p. 201.

AGRADECIMIENTOS:

Centro de Estudios Teotihuacanos • Centro Nacional de Investigación de Artes Plásticas - María Elena Durán • Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia - Jaime Jaramillo, Jorge Juárez • Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes - Víctor Manuel Amezcu Rosales • Memorial Art Gallery, Universidad de Rochester - Susan Nurse • Museo Etnográfico de Estocolmo, Suecia - Anne Murray • American Museum of Natural History - Lindsay Calkins, Barbara Mathé • Museo Nacional de Antropología - Felipe Solís • Museo de Sitio, Teotihuacan - Alejandro Sarabia, Miguel A. Morales • María Elena Altamirano • José Cabezas • Fernando Botas • Ángeles González Gamio • Leonardo López Luján • Giuliana y Alfredo Marín • Eduardo Matos Moctezuma • Enrique Vela.

ARTES DE MÉXICO

Córdoba 69, Col. Roma, 06700, México, D.F. • Teléfonos: 5525 5905, 5208 4503
Fax: 5525 5925 • www.artesdemexico.com • ventas@artesdemexico.com
suscripciones@artesdemexico.com • publicidad@artesdemexico.com
artesdemexico@artesdemexico.com



TIERRA DE DIOSSES

TEOTIHUACAN:

Leonardo López Luján

A PRIMERA VISTA, TEOTIHUACAN TRANSMITE LA SENSACIÓN DE GRANDEZA. Y ESTA PERCEPCIÓN SE INTENSIFICA CUANDO UNO INTENTA DESCIFRAR SUS ENIGMAS. EN ESTAS PÁGINAS EL ARQUEÓLOGO NOS PRESENTA UN ROSTRO INTRODUCTORIO DE ESTA CULTURA EXCEPCIONAL, UN ROSTRO QUE NOS INVITA A SEGUIRLA DESCUBRIENDO.

URBE Y ORBE

Urbe mesoamericana por antonomasia, Teotihuacan (el “lugar del endiosamiento”) fue el centro de irradiación de una de las civilizaciones más originales de la historia universal. Si bien tuvo inicios modestos, el asentamiento original pronto transformó su rostro con la llegada de grupos de agricultores atraídos por un

entorno excepcionalmente rico y variado. En las montañas circundantes proliferaban tupidos bosques de pinos y encinos; en el somonte habían amplias zonas de pastizal y vegetación xerófila, y, en el fondo del valle, una fértil planicie aluvial irrigada de manera permanente por ríos y manantiales. Tanto o más importante para los inmigrantes fue

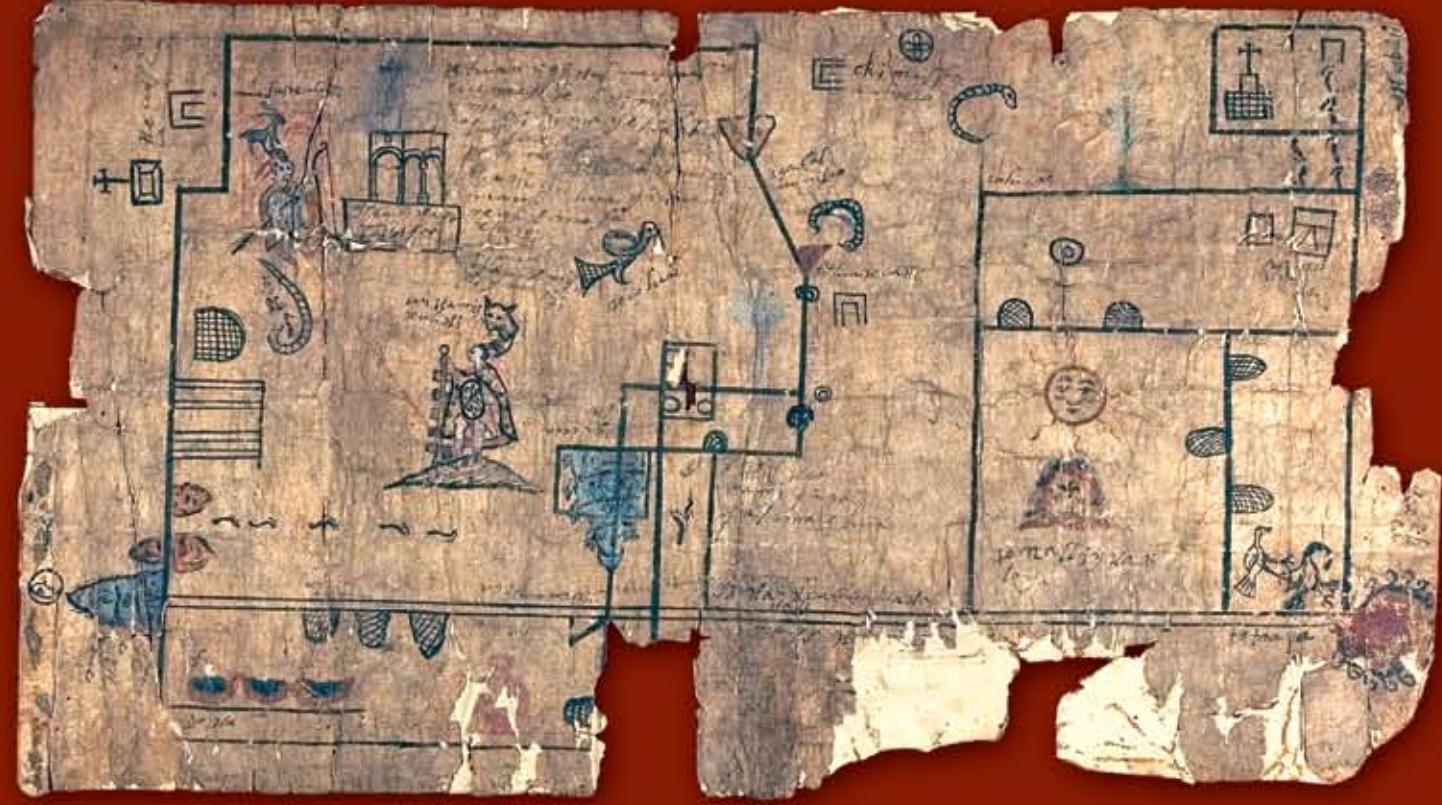
la presencia de dos recursos minerales básicos en tiempos prehispánicos: la obsidiana y la arcilla. Con ellos fabricarían, durante siglos, una amplia gama de artículos utilitarios y de prestigio, sentando las bases de un verdadero emporio. Tales actividades pronto se verían potenciadas por la posición de privilegio que ocupaba el asentamiento en la ruta más directa entre el Golfo de México y la zona lacustre de la cuenca de México.

En los albores del periodo Clásico (150-650 d.C.), Teotihuacan alcanzó el rango de ciudad. En ese entonces, más de una tercera parte de sus 85 000 habitantes había dejado de ser productora de alimentos para dedicarse de tiempo completo a labores artesanales, comerciales, políticas y religiosas. Las dimensiones, densidad y diversidad étnica de la ciudad siguieron incrementándose hasta la llamada fase Xolalpan (350-550 d.C.), época de máximo esplendor en la que cerca de 100 000 individuos llegaron a ocupar una superficie de veinte kilómetros cuadrados. Aunque el sustrato poblacional parece haber sido nahua u otomí, existían importantes núcleos de gente originaria de Oaxaca, el Golfo de México, Occidente y quizás del área maya, los cuales daban a Teotihuacan un toque cosmopolita.

En la escala mesoamericana, Teotihuacan se erigió como ejemplo superlativo de planificación urbana. Fue única por

sus calles regularmente espaciadas, rectas y dotadas de una eficaz red hidráulica. Las construcciones seguían un riguroso patrón ortogonal que reproducía la configuración cuatrispartita de la superficie terrestre. Más de 2 000 conjuntos de departamentos de planta rectangular se agrupaban en barrios y éstos, a su vez, en distritos. La Calle de los Muertos, con sus cinco kilómetros de longitud, era el principal eje organizador del espacio. A lo largo de ella se concentraban los más insignes edificios religiosos y palaciegos, así como el que posiblemente fue sede del mercado. Entre ellos sobresalían las masas descomunales de las pirámides del Sol y de la Luna, las cuales despojaban al centro ceremonial de toda escala humana. Imperaba en la ciudad una geometría inamovible, monótona, casi asfixiante, en la que los edificios, los monumentos públicos, las pinturas murales y las grandes ofrendas de consagración glorificaban el mundo acuático, el tiempo, el sacrificio humano y el poder político.

En buena medida, Teotihuacan logró su esplendor gracias a una febril producción artesanal y a agresivas estrategias comerciales. En sus talleres se elaboraron en serie tocados de plumas, prendas finas de algodón, adornos de concha, tallas de piedras semipreciosas, implementos de obsidiana, además de cerámicas domésticas y de lujo. Estas manufacturas eran exportadas a los más remotos confines



EL ARQUEÓLOGO ESTADOUNIDENSE MARSHALL H. SAVILLE (1867-1935) obsequió este mapa al American Museum of Natural History de Nueva York, donde actualmente se conserva. Conocido como el "Mapa Saville" e integrante de los "Mapas de San Francisco Mazapan", este documento representa en su mitad inferior las pirámides del Sol y de la Luna –figuradas como cerros azules–, la Calle de los Muertos y la Ciudadela. Según un estudio reciente de Michel Oudijk y Leonardo López Luján, este mapa fue elaborado entre 1700 y 1767, debido a disputas de tierras entre los habitantes de San Juan Teotihuacán y San Martín de las Pirámides. Cortesía de la División de Antropología, American Museum of Natural History. Cat. 1/443.



◀ EN 1922, EL ARQUITECTO IGNACIO MARQUINA (1888-1981) publicó esta acuarela que reconstruye los principales monumentos de Teotihuacan en su época de máximo esplendor. Se basó en el plano topográfico que levantó, junto con Luis Artigas y Rodrigo Pérez Ayala, bajo la dirección de Manuel Gamio. En el extremo derecho se observa la Ciudadela. Adosado a este conjunto fue excavado el taller alfarero donde se produjeron en serie los famosos incensarios tipo teatro. Tomado del libro de Manuel Gamio, La población del valle de Teotihuacan, México, Dirección de Talleres Gráficos-SEP, 1922.

PÁGINAS 12 Y 13:
José María Velasco. Pirámides del Sol y de la Luna, 1878.
Óleo sobre tela, 32 x 46 cm. Colección particular.
Cuando este óleo fue pintado, los habitantes de San Sebastián Xolalpan, ubicado al sureste de la Ciudadela, falsificaban piezas de cerámica.