

Understanding Early Classic Interaction between Kaminaljuyu and Central Mexico

Geoffrey E. Braswell

Numerous explications have been proposed for the appearance of central Mexican ceramics and obsidian, as well as for locally manufactured architecture in a foreign style, at Kaminaljuyu. Nearly all published scenarios, including that put forward by the Carnegie investigators of Mounds A and B, imply that foreigners from the great city of Teotihuacan resided at Kaminaljuyu.¹ Most suggest that these resident foreigners dominated the economy or political system of the site. It is incorrect to call many of the reconstructions “models” or even “falsifiable hypotheses.” Few have predictive value, and because of their highly inductive and interpretive nature, even fewer have been rigorously tested. Instead, many are speculative narratives that seem to be consistent with the meager information available to their proponents. Several, too, are legacies of a time when “theorization” was given priority over data, and these seem to push interpretation far beyond a point supported by evidence.

Priests, Pochteca, Pirates, and Politicians

Many narratives of central Mexican/highland Maya interaction posit that a small band of Teotihuacanos moved to Kaminaljuyu, married local women, and—either operating alone or on behalf of their home city—conquered the site (e.g., Borhegyi 1965:24; Cheek 1977a, 1977b; Kidder et al. 1946:245, 255; Sanders 1977; Sanders and Price 1968). The most extreme version proposed that the conquerors incorporated Kaminaljuyu into an expansionist Teotihuacan empire (Sanders and Price 1968:167). But this scenario was retracted by one of its proponents on the grounds that it was difficult to see how Teotihuacan could have controlled such a far-flung empire when there was little evidence for the political control of territory between the highlands of Mexico and Guatemala (Sanders 1977:404–405; cf. Bernal 1966; see also Chapter 12). Nonetheless, the imperial conquest scenario has been resurrected by Kuniaki Ohi (1994b:752), who argues that Teotihuacan was responsible for a massive fire at Kaminaljuyu at about A.D. 200. According

to his narrative, this destruction ushered in a 350-year period of political and economic domination by the great central Mexican empire, which ended in another conflagration at Kaminaljuyu. Ohi (1994b) is alone in positing such an early Teotihuacan conquest and in rejecting the Aurora phase as a valid temporal-ceramic unit (see Figure 1.2). His evidence for a great fire at the beginning of the Early Classic is consistent with Marion Popenoe de Hatch's (1997, 1998) proposal of a site-unit intrusion near the end of the Santa Clara phase, although she does not associate this disruption with Teotihuacan.

In a series of articles, Stephan de Borhegyi (1951, 1956, 1965, 1971) suggested that religion played a role in the expansion of Teotihuacan material culture throughout Mesoamerica. In particular, he suggested that "missionizing zeal" (Borhegyi 1971:84) may have been one factor leading to the appearance of Teotihuacan "influence" in Kaminaljuyu. Nevertheless, economic motivation is usually put forward as the principal reason Teotihuacanos moved so far from home. Charles D. Cheek (1977a, 1977b), for example, sees the Teotihuacan presence at Kaminaljuyu as developing from trade. At first, the elite of Kaminaljuyu controlled exchange in the Valley of Guatemala. Because of their interaction with Teotihuacanos, local rulers became aware of certain aspects of central Mexican culture and traded for the prestige goods that were interred with them when they died. The earliest tombs and versions of Mounds A and B date to this Contact phase (Figure 3.2a-c). Somewhat later in time, burial patterns changed, tomb furnishings became richer in exotic goods, and certain elements of the *talud-tablero* style were adopted. Structures A-4, A-5, A-6, B-2, and B-3 were built during this Integration phase (Figure 3.2d-f). Eventually, however, Teotihuacan influence became so strong at Kaminaljuyu that it cannot be explained "on the basis of a non-coercive contact model" (Cheek 1977b:450). This is Cheek's (1977a:Figure 62) Teotihuacan phase, during which the last two versions of Mounds A and B, as well as the *talud-tablero* architecture of the Acropolis-Palangana complex, were built (Figures 3.2g-h, 3.3, 3.4, and 4.1).

The data used to support an eventual conquest are the adoption of the full *talud-tablero* form, the local production of cylindrical tripods, and the use of the seated "tailor position" for the central occupants of the tombs (Cheek 1977a:Figure 62). The last feature, however, was introduced during the earlier Integration phase and cannot be attributed to Teotihuacan influence. Although kneeling or seated burials are common at Teotihuacan, the tailor position is not (Spence 1996b; see also Manzanilla and Serrano 1999; Rattray 1992, 1997). Moreover, Alfred V. Kidder et al. (1946) and Antonia Foias (1987) suggest that some of the tripod cylinders from the *earliest* Esper-

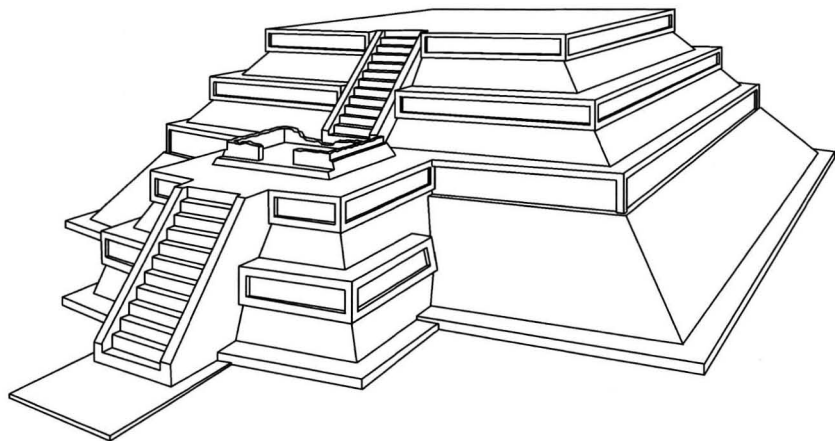


FIGURE 4.1. Kaminaljuyu Structure B-4 (redrawn from Kidder et al. 1946:Figure 113).

anza tombs at Kaminaljuyu were copies (e.g., Tomb A-I, Vessel 1). The copying of a style—be it in ceramics or architecture—seems to be rather weak evidence for the use of coercive force. William T. Sanders (1977:406) also equates the appearance of the full *talud-tablero* style at Kaminaljuyu with the physical presence of Teotihuacanos who “were able to obtain access to sufficient local labor to construct substantial temples.” One way to obtain access to such labor is coercion. But it also is reasonable to suggest that the local elite had gained enough wealth to sponsor foreign (or foreign-trained) architects who built structures in the full *talud-tablero* style (see Brainerd 1954:23). Finally, although the phases that Cheek (1977a, 1977b) identifies have chronological merit, the distinctions between them do not suggest—at least to me—anything particularly dramatic about the transition from the Integration to the Teotihuacan phase. Instead, the latter seems to be the culmination of the gradual adoption and transformation of foreign styles and goods into a local substrate. In particular, I do not understand why the addition of the *tablero* and *pedrín* to the *talud*-and-cornice architecture of the Integration phase indicates force. A bridging argument more persuasive than Sanders’ is needed to link the *tablero* and *pedrín* to a military takeover.

If one assumes that the rulers of Kaminaljuyu were buried in the tombs of Mounds A and B, an important implication of Cheek’s model is that the principal occupants of the earliest tombs dating to the Teotihuacan phase (i.e., Tombs A-V, A-VI, B-I, and B-II) might have been born in Teotihuacan. This is discussed below in further detail.

Sanders’ (1977) narrative differs from Cheek’s (1977b) in that Sanders does not argue for a period when the Teotihuacan state directly con-

trolled Kaminaljuyu. Instead, he suggests that professional traders similar to the Aztec *pochteca* visited the site and traded with the local elite during Cheek's Contact phase. When interaction increased in frequency and intensity, Teotihuacano merchants settled at Kaminaljuyu and married local women. Sanders (1977:407) argues that as the power of Teotihuacan declined, relations between the great city and the *pochteca* waned. At this point, the merchants living in Kaminaljuyu, like the whites of Ian Smith's Rhodesia, acted on their own and seized power. He writes that "ultimately the taking over of the Kaminaljuyu community by this foreign merchant colony was a private political venture" (Sanders 1977:407). The *pochteca*, then, became pirates and politicians.

Data supporting intense trade relations between Teotihuacan and Kaminaljuyu can be mustered, and the hypothesis that professional merchants from the great central Mexican city lived in Kaminaljuyu is arguable, although not demonstrated. But intermarriage is pure speculation and the final scene of Sanders' reconstruction is conjecture, supported by little more than the observation that the contents of the last tombs of Mounds A and B suggest declining contact with Teotihuacan.

The Port-of-Trade Model and the Kaminaljuyu Chiefdom

One of the more interesting contributions made by the Pennsylvania State University Project is Kenneth L. Brown's (1977b) analysis of sites located in the natural communication route linking the highlands to the Pacific piedmont. He argues that merchants from four regions of Mesoamerica (central Mexico, the southern Maya lowlands, the northwestern Maya highlands, and the northern Maya highlands) all used the Valley of Guatemala as a politically neutral port-of-trade (Brown 1977a:428-431; 1977b:304-352). In his reconstruction, control of the valley was split between two paramount sites, Kaminaljuyu and San Antonio Frutal, which maintained their political independence. According to Brown (1977b:364), the rulers of these sites regulated exchange conducted in the port-of-trade. Teotihuacan merchants lived in a barrio at Kaminaljuyu, but Maya traders from the southern lowlands and other parts of the highlands maintained a presence at San Antonio Frutal. Brown (1977b:291-295) stresses that there is no evidence for a conquest of the Valley of Guatemala by Teotihuacanos. There are no garrisons, site location was not determined by defensive concerns, there are no signs of widespread destruction, there is no reason to think that populations were

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relocated, and there is no evidence for a disruption of native artifact traditions. Instead, Brown (1977b:317-322) argues that a political takeover would have been counterproductive because the maintenance of neutral and weak polities was necessary for the port-of-trade to function.

Brown ventures that potential conflict between resident foreigners and the local elite was abated by integrating the former into the native political and economic system. Nonetheless, he speculates that "at the point that inequitable control was assumed by the Teotihuacan traders over the port operations, the port of trade as such came to a halt" (Brown 1977a:364). In other words, the eventual economic dominance of Teotihuacan led to the collapse of the system and the abandonment of the region by foreign traders.

There are notable aspects of Brown's scenario, particularly the sober evaluation of data relevant to conquest scenarios and the observation that material goods from other regions of the Maya area appear in the Valley of Guatemala. But evidence for Brown's political reconstruction and the existence of a port-of-trade seems somewhat scanty. Moreover, chronological data for San Antonio Frutal, Solano, and Esperanza-phase Kaminaljuyu are insufficient for demonstrating anything more than general contemporaneity. For example, it is not at all clear that the lowland Maya and Pacific piedmont ceramics found at San Antonio Frutal date to precisely the same period as Teotihuacan "influence" at Kaminaljuyu. Finally, as with most other scenarios, one must question whether the data are sufficient to support the existence of a Teotihuacan barrio at Kaminaljuyu.

Joseph W. Michels (1977, 1979) provides a fourth perspective from the Pennsylvania State University Project. Agreeing with Brown, he considers Kaminaljuyu to have been part of a port-of-trade and argues that the site neither lost its political hegemony nor shared power with resident Teotihuacanos. In fact, he views the establishment of the "Teotihuacan enclave" as

a brilliant set of moves that the leadership of Kaminaljuyu made . . . to protect and preserve the chiefdom's political autonomy in the face of the awesome prestige and economic power of the imperial state of Teotihuacan, while at the same time maintaining correct protocol so as to avoid any slighting of Teotihuacan's political sensibilities. (Michels 1977:464)

The argument supporting this position is singularly opaque, relying on a complex set of assumptions regarding the "precinct," "subchiefdom," "inter-

mediate lineage,” “moiety,” and “conical clan” structure of the Valley of Guatemala. Most scholars have neither adopted nor challenged Michels’ (1977, 1979) “Kaminaljuyu chiefdom” narrative, and it never has been the subject of constructive discourse.

Economic Imperialism and Elite Gift Giving: Two Perspectives Derived from Obsidian Studies

Building on Brown’s port-of-trade scenario, Robert S. Santley (1983) proposed an influential hypothesis regarding strategies of economic imperialism. According to Santley (1983:107), the emergence of Teotihuacan as a power was related to its natural environment. The city was located in an agriculturally precarious zone that happened to be near important obsidian sources. In order to increase the resilience of the economy, agricultural surpluses were used to foster diversified strategies of energy acquisition. In particular, by developing a specialization in lithic production and distribution, Teotihuacan used the capital gained through exchange to purchase staples needed during times of agricultural stress (Santley 1983:108).

But nearby Otumba and Malpaís are not the only obsidian sources in Mesoamerica. In order to protect its growing monopoly, Teotihuacan expanded the zone of its direct control to include the Paredón, Pachuca, and Tulancingo (Pizzarín) source areas. Other source areas, such as Zaragoza (Puebla) and El Chayal (Guatemala), were too distant for Teotihuacan to incorporate into its territory. Instead, “a cartel of power centers, all under the control or influence of Teotihuacan, attempted to dominate the distribution of exotic resources to the most densely settled parts of Middle Classic Mesoamerica” (Santley 1989:133). Kaminaljuyu, which Santley (1983) calls a “Teotihuacan enclave,” was one of these sites.

Santley notes that the Teotihuacan “barrio” was located far from the center of Kaminaljuyu, away from the zone of “factory workshops” (see Hay 1978). He writes:

Consequently it does not appear that Teotihuacan dominated craft production. The implication is that Teotihuacan controlled some other aspect of the economy, and that aspect I believe involved long distance bulk trafficking of obsidian and probably other goods as well. (Santley 1983:101)

An analogous argument is that the distance between the Oaxaca Barrio and the principal lithic production areas of Teotihuacan suggests Zapotec con-

trol of the exchange of Pachuca obsidian. This notion, of course, has no advocates.

Santley (1983, 1989) proposes that in areas where Teotihuacan could not exert direct political control, highly organized Teotihuacan merchants—again thought to be similar to the Aztec *pochteca*—transported greater quantities of goods more efficiently than their Maya counterparts. Merchants living in enclaves such as Kaminaljuyu, therefore, maintained the Teotihuacan monopoly of the obsidian trade by filling an important niche in regional and local economies.

The *pochteca* argument—whether Santley's (1983, 1989), Sanders' (1977), or Brown's (1977a, 1977b) version—has lost favor in recent years because the temporal gap between Late Postclassic Tenochtitlan and Early Classic Teotihuacan is too great to support a direct historical analogy. Moreover, as Santley (1989:144) himself notes, the argument that caravans of Teotihuacan merchants moved obsidian from Kaminaljuyu to the Petén is contradicted by the relatively small quantities of volcanic glass found in the Maya lowlands. A highly organized obsidian transportation system was not needed because local chert was plentiful.

Another problem is that there is little evidence that Kaminaljuyu controlled the widely dispersed El Chayal obsidian deposits. Classic-period settlement in the area is not dense, and there are no features suggesting an attempt to restrict access (see Mejía and Suyuc 1999). If access to El Chayal obsidian was not controlled by Kaminaljuyu, it seems unlikely that foreign obsidian merchants would establish themselves at the site. In fact, there are few sources that appear to have been directly controlled by Classic polities, and most are located in interstitial areas or buffer zones *between* major polities (e.g., Braswell 1996, 2002b; Cruz 1994; Cruz and Pastrana 1994; Daneels 1997; Healan 1997). An important exception is the Zaragoza source, located only 6 km from the immense city of Cantona (Ferriz 1985; García and Merino 1998). Most Classic and Epiclassic obsidian artifacts from the Gulf Coast and Isthmian regions came from the Zaragoza source (see Braswell 2002b). Recent archaeological research at Cantona has not suggested the presence of a Teotihuacan enclave, so it does not seem likely that Teotihuacan merchants supplied most of the obsidian consumed in the Gulf Coast or Isthmus of Tehuantepec. Thus, the area thought to have been subject to Teotihuacan mercantile control has shrunk dramatically since Santley (1983, 1989) first proposed his hypothesis. If indeed there was a barrio of Teotihuacan merchants at Kaminaljuyu, there is little reason to suppose that its residents were deeply involved in the obsidian trade.

In a recent contextual analysis of green obsidian from the Pachuca source, Michael W. Spence (1996a) suggests that obsidian artifacts made in Teotihuacan as commodities were transformed by acts of gift giving into expressions of relationships between elite Maya and Teotihuacanos. When found in primary contexts in the Maya lowlands, most imported central Mexican ceramics are associated with tombs rather than with dedicatory caches in public buildings. Joseph W. Ball (1983:138-143) argues from the contexts of imported ceramics that they were private expressions of individual relations, rather than public affirmations of community affiliations. Spence (1996a) notes the same general context for green obsidian and suggests that artifacts made of Pachuca obsidian were given as gifts to Maya elite by their Teotihuacan counterparts (see Chapter 9). But the gift-giving hypothesis does not explain why copies of central Mexican ceramics often appear in the same contexts as Pachuca obsidian and imported ceramics. Presumably, Teotihuacanos were not giving lowland "knock off" vessels to their Maya peers. Moreover, once exotics entered the system, Maya leaders could have given them to each other. In that case, the presence of green obsidian or foreign-style ceramics in tombs would reflect ties between Maya elites.

Spence (1996a:33) also proposes that under certain circumstances, green obsidian served the same utilitarian purposes as tools made of Guatemalan obsidian (see Moholy-Nagy 1999a). Moreover, other items lost all symbolic reference to Teotihuacan and were used in purely Maya ritual contexts. Finally, in some cases the symbolic reference to Teotihuacan was transformed and objects were used in contexts that were "largely Maya" (Spence 1996a:33). Here, Spence refers specifically to the Late Classic use of Teotihuacan symbols within the context of ritual warfare (see Stone 1989). One may speculate that such a transformation need not have occurred at a time *after* the collapse of Teotihuacan, but could also have happened during the late Early Classic.

The logical implication of the gift-giving hypothesis is that the Teotihuacan obsidian and imported ceramics found in the tombs of Mounds A and B were gifts to local elites. Yet Spence concludes: "The individuals buried in the mounds A and B tombs of Kaminaljuyú were probably Teotihuacán emissaries" (1996a:33). Two other works reach the same conclusion (Spence 1993, 1996b), but a recent article presents an evolving and more complex interpretation of the identity of the human remains from Mounds A and B (White et al. 2000).

Status Reinforcement

Arthur A. Demarest and Antonia E. Foias (1993) are among a small group of scholars who have questioned all aspects of the "Middle Classic Horizon" concept (Parsons 1967-1969; Pasztory 1978b; Wolf 1976) as it has been applied in the Maya region. They argue that the appearance of central Mexican imports and homologies (local copies; see Ball 1983) suggests that the Maya elite manipulated exotic goods and symbol sets in ways that reinforced their status. Some of these materials were imports from Teotihuacan and other sites in central Mexico and indeed indicate contact with Teotihuacanos or other foreigners. But many copies of central Mexican-style ceramics, mirrors, and other artifacts were made within the Maya region. Since such homologies are more common than identities (imports), it follows that the *appearance* of foreign relations was at least as important as actual connections between individual rulers and their central Mexican counterparts. In other words, although gift giving of the sort discussed by Spence (1996a) took place, Maya leaders commonly created the impression of foreign personal ties in order to enhance their status.

In an undergraduate thesis, Foias (1987) examines the ceramics of Kaminaljuyu Mounds A and B. She argues that the quantity of ceramic identities found in the tombs has been exaggerated. Only 16 of the approximately 337 vessels are Thin Orange ware imported from central Mexico. Although Thin Orange ware is common at Teotihuacan and may have been circulated in Mesoamerica by Teotihuacan traders, it is now known to have been manufactured in the Río Carnero region of Puebla (Ratray 1990; Ratray and Harbottle 1992). Moreover, of the sixty-seven cylindrical tripods excavated from Mounds A and B, just eight are similar enough in shape and decoration to be central Mexican imports. The low number of ceramic identities and the comparatively high number of homologies suggest that the occupants of the tombs were not Teotihuacanos (Demarest and Foias 1993:158). Demarest and Foias also reemphasize that Teotihuacanoid ceramics were not the only foreign-style artifacts found in the tombs. Gulf Coast pottery, lowland Maya Tzakol-phase vessels, and even Oaxaca-style ceramics also were recovered (Kidder et al. 1946).

Thus, the elite of Kaminaljuyu imported and copied a wide variety of foreign goods and symbol sets in order to reinforce their status. Although the quantity of central Mexican-style goods in the tombs suggests relatively frequent interaction with foreigners, "[i]t does *not* necessarily follow from this that these contacts reflect any intense economic connection or control from

Teotihuacan” (Demarest and Foias 1993:158). Demarest and Foias (1993), therefore, are the only scholars discussed here who have challenged not only the assumption that some of the principal occupants of the Mounds A and B tombs were Teotihuacanos, but also the notion that Teotihuacan controlled the economy and political system of Kaminaljuyu.

Teotihuacan Identity and the Existence of a Foreign “Barrio”

Archaeologists who have argued for a late Early Classic foreign “enclave” or “barrio” at Kaminaljuyu have not explicitly described what they mean by “resident Teotihuacanos,” but they seem to imply males who were born and raised in the central Mexican city. Ethnicity, like other forms of social identity, is constructed. If foreign-born warrior-priests or merchants married women from Kaminaljuyu, as suggested by Kidder et al. (1946) and Sanders (1977), the children born of those unions could have had a shifting range of contextually defined identities. First-generation male settlers might have been from Teotihuacan, but their children might not have expressed their own identities in the same way. Just as the pharaohs of Ptolemaic Egypt were Greek, Egyptian, and neither, the offspring of Teotihuacan settlers at Kaminaljuyu would have had complex identities.

Ethnic identity also is instrumental. Even if the principal occupants of the tombs of Mounds A and B were locally born elites without biological connections to central Mexican populations, as is suggested by Demarest and Foias (1993), they may have claimed a Teotihuacan identity. Elsewhere, I have argued that the Postclassic nobles of the Guatemalan highlands constructed a hybridized “Toltec”-K’iche’an identity (Braswell 2001a, 2002a). This allowed the creation of social distance between classes within the framework of a social system that, although stratified, was understood according to the metaphor of kinship. Ethnogenesis, therefore, served to “disconnect” the elite (Stone 1989). Similarly, the manipulation of central Mexican symbols, objects, styles, and ideology by the elite of Kaminaljuyu may have supported social stratification by creating a new Teotihuacan–highland Maya identity that could not have been imitated by commoners.

Despite the lack of anthropological discussion regarding what Teotihuacan identity meant in the context of the Maya highlands, it is reasonably clear that most scholars consider the “resident Teotihuacanos” of Kaminaljuyu to have been, at least in the first generation, members of a central Mexican population born at or near the great city of Teotihuacan. These scholars

also suggest that for however many generations an enclave was maintained at Kaminaljuyu, the descendants of Teotihuacan colonists maintained an ethnic identity that was, in whole or in part, defined by actual rather than invented connections to the central Mexican city. Using this narrow definition of Teotihuacan identity, the remainder of this chapter is devoted to examining the possibility that Kaminaljuyu contained a “barrio” or “enclave” of resident central Mexicans.

I do not consider the presence of *talud-tablero*-style architecture to be sufficient evidence on its own for positing the existence of a politically dominant resident foreign population. There are numerous alternative scenarios that account for the presence of this style at Kaminaljuyu. *Talud-tablero* architecture, even its most central Mexican form, could have been brought from Teotihuacan to the Guatemalan highlands without a migration. I have suggested already that architects and builders from Kaminaljuyu could have been sent to train in central Mexico, and that Teotihuacanos could have been brought to the Maya highlands in order to construct *talud-tablero* buildings. Alternatively, a more complex chain of intermediaries, perhaps from the Pacific piedmont or the Gulf Coast, might have been involved. There are, in fact, reasons to suppose that the proximal source of architectural inspiration was not Teotihuacan itself, but some site in the latter region.

What, then, would constitute significant evidence for a resident population of Teotihuacanos (*sensu stricto*) in Kaminaljuyu? The strongest line of argument would be the demonstration, through the study of genetic material, that a subpopulation living in late Early Classic Kaminaljuyu shared traits unique to central Mexicans. The identification of such traits through morphological studies of human bones would also be reasonably strong evidence. Another line of data derived directly from human remains is stable isotope evidence of residence in central Mexico. Both strontium- and oxygen-isotope assays may be used for this purpose. Such data, however, cannot distinguish local Maya from ethnic Teotihuacanos who were born, raised, and lived their lives in Kaminaljuyu. That is, stable isotope analysis may be used to identify first-generation immigrants, but not their offspring.

If direct evidence from human remains is lacking, data suggesting that central Mexican-style artifacts and symbol sets were manipulated in ways and in contextual settings similar to those of Teotihuacan would support the existence of resident foreigners. The strength of such an argument would be proportional to the breadth of the behavioral domain for which such similar artifacts and contexts were found. Moreover, for analogous behav-

iors, complete symbol and artifact sets would provide greater evidence for an actual Teotihuacan presence than partial sets. Thus, the presence of central Mexican-style ceramics in a burial is weak evidence, unless the vessels are similar in kind, number, and arrangement to those used in burials at Teotihuacan. Moreover, the full array of grave goods should be similar, as well as the position of the body and mode of its interment. The *talud-tablero* does not strongly suggest a Teotihuacan presence unless all components of the style appear and are built in the same relative proportions as those of the city, are constructed using the same techniques and analogous materials, are combined to form structures similar in both appearance and use to those of the homeland, and are arranged in groups that reflect a similar sense of site planning as that of Teotihuacan.

Sanders (1977:403-404) points out that if intermarriage was practiced, certain aspects of Teotihuacan culture would be lost, abandoned, or transformed in the diaspora. In particular, some items pertaining to Teotihuacan residential technology and household religion would be absent. Moreover, if resident Teotihuacanos did not belong to the upper stratum of Kaminaljuyu society, but instead lived as equals or even pariahs within the community, additional facets of central Mexican culture would be masked and other classes of artifacts would be missing. Still, there should be evidence for certain aspects of Teotihuacan culture replicated in whole for a particular realm of behavior (e.g., burial customs, architectural canons, or even dietary habits). In addition, if military leaders, merchants, or even slaves from Teotihuacan lived in an enclave at the site, their presence would be replicated at different physical scales. This would be particularly true if foreigners occupied a position of political or economic dominance. But there should also be some replication if Teotihuacanos lived as autonomous equals or even as inferiors in Kaminaljuyu. The absence of replication at different scales, in contrast, would suggest that central Mexican artifacts and symbol sets were manipulated in native cultural contexts by local people.

My evaluation of the evidence for the existence of a Teotihuacan barrio at Kaminaljuyu proceeds from the largest units of scale to the smallest, in which I include analyses of the isotopic composition of teeth. Along the way, I evaluate the two potential expressions of identity for which there is significant evidence: architecture and interment practices. I conclude that they do not replicate Teotihuacan behavior. Moreover, a foreign presence tends to be visible only at certain intermediate scales of analysis and is often manifested in a superficial manner.

Macroscale Analysis

The last two versions of Mounds A and B, as well as several structures in the Acropolis-Palangana complex, are built in the *talud-tablero* style (Figures 3.2–3.4, and 4.1). At a larger scale of analysis, however, the plans and orientations of the groups in which these structures are found do not resemble anything at Teotihuacan. Mounds A and B, like several other Classic-period groups at Kaminaljuyu, face each other, and are oriented northwest to southeast across an open plaza (Figure 4.2a). The Acropolis-Palangana complex is also oriented on a northwest-to-southeast axis (Figure 4.2b).² It illustrates a second type of architectural plan at Kaminaljuyu, which consists of mounds arranged on top of earthen barriers or large platforms that completely enclose patios. Similar arrangements of closed, mounded groups are quite common in the Maya highlands west of Kaminaljuyu. Investigation of these sites, however, has produced little or no evidence of contact with central Mexico. One such site is El Perén, located in the *municipio* of San Martín Jilotepeque, which replicates the basic architectural plan of the Acropolis-Palangana complex of Kaminaljuyu but is aligned with the natural landscape (Figure 4.2c). The north group of El Perén also contains two opposing mounds like Mounds A and B. Access to each group is restricted by large earthen constructions resembling walls, upon some of which higher mounds were raised. El Perén is a single-component Early Classic site, and radiocarbon dates suggest that it was constructed during the fifth century (Braswell 1996:281). A similar site is La Merced (Figure 4.2d), also in San Martín Jilotepeque, which was occupied throughout the Classic period (Braswell 1996:921–928). Most importantly, no indications of foreign connections—in the form of central Mexican-style ceramics, architecture, and imported obsidian—have been found at El Perén, La Merced, or other similar sites west of Kaminaljuyu. The northwest-to-southeast orientation of late Early Classic groups at Kaminaljuyu is quite different from the Cartesian grid of Teotihuacan. Moreover, the two basic plans of late Early Classic groups at Kaminaljuyu are seen at both contemporary and slightly earlier sites in the Maya highlands that lack central Mexican-influenced artifacts and architecture. Furthermore, neither of the two highland Maya layouts are found at Teotihuacan. Finally, the typical Teotihuacan apartment compound (Figure 11.4) is completely lacking at Kaminaljuyu. Thus, although certain late Early Classic structures at Kaminaljuyu were built in the *talud-tablero* style, they were not combined in ways that suggest central Mexican influence. At the scales of the site map (Figure 3.1) and the group plan (Figure 4.2a–b), late Early Classic Kaminaljuyu was built according to high-

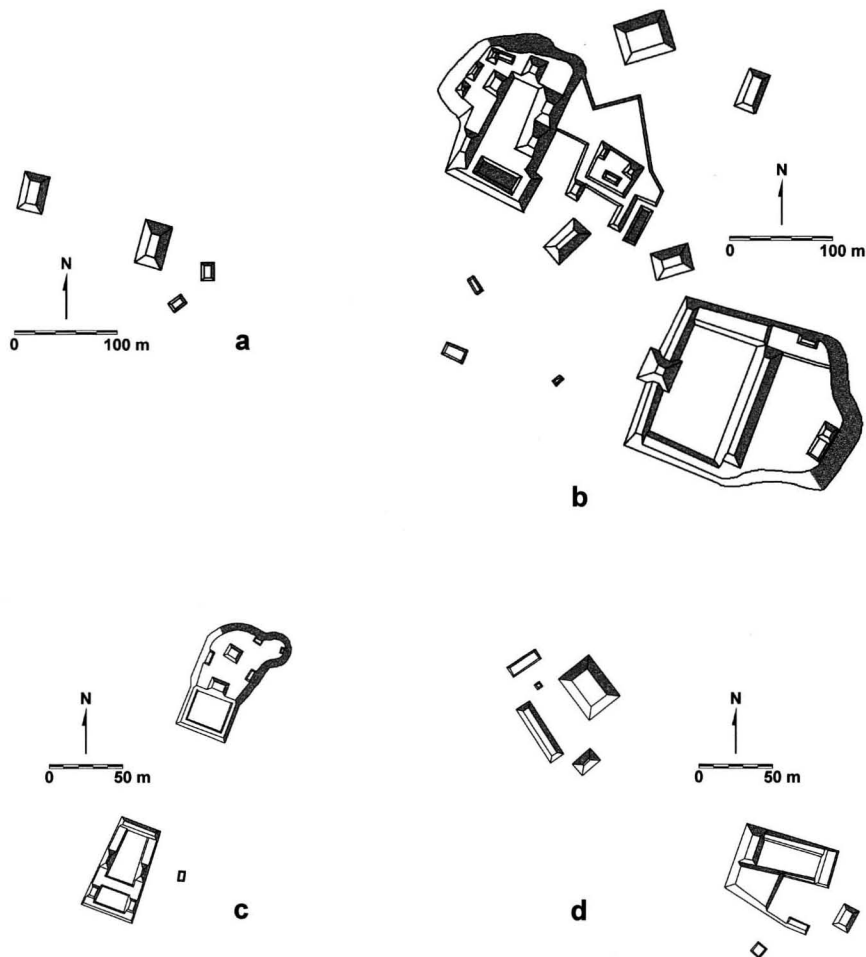


FIGURE 4.2. Examples of Classic-period highland Maya group plans: (a) Mounds A and B, Kaminaljuyu; (b) Kaminaljuyu Acropolis-Palangana complex; (c) El Perén; (d) La Merced (redrawn from Braswell 1996: Figures B.16, B.21-B.22, and survey data collected by T. R. Johnson and E. M. Shook).

land Maya canons of site planning, and no Teotihuacan influence may be seen. Since *talud-tablero* structures were not arranged in ways reminiscent of highland Mexico, one should wonder if they were designed by or for Teotihuacanos.

Intermediate Scales of Analysis

Evidence for interaction with central Mexico is most evident at Kaminaljuyu at intermediate scales, particularly the levels of the entire structure and

the complete artifact. Nonetheless, even at these scales deviations from typical Teotihuacan architecture and craftsmanship are visible. Saburo Sugiyama (2000:128–129) and George L. Cowgill (1997; cf. Chapter 12) have noted similarities between the Feathered Serpent Pyramid and Mounds A and B. Moreover, as Juan Pedro Laporte (Chapter 7) and Vilma Fialko (1988b) have argued, the plan of the Ciudadela, in which the Feathered Serpent Pyramid is located, may be modeled after the Maya “E-group” (see also Cabrera 2000; Morante 1996). For these reasons, it is worth comparing in some detail the Feathered Serpent Pyramid with Mounds A and B. Nevertheless, as Cowgill (Chapter 12) warns, there are three reasons why the importance of such a comparison should not be overemphasized. First, the Feathered Serpent Pyramid and the Kaminaljuyu mounds are not contemporary: the former was built no later than the third century, and the construction history of the latter did not begin before the middle of the fourth century A.D. Second, the Feathered Serpent Pyramid is unique not only at Teotihuacan, but also in Mesoamerica. Kaminaljuyu Mounds A and B, although much more humble in size, also are unique. Third, no high-level elite burials have been discovered in the Feathered Serpent Pyramid, although pits looted in antiquity provide some clues that they may have once contained interred rulers (Chapter 12). Thus, comparison of the burials—if conducted at all—should be limited to the sacrificed retainers found in each structure.

At the structural level, similarities between the Feathered Serpent Pyramid and Mounds A and B are indeed impressive (Figure 4.3). The alignments of the Feathered Serpent Pyramid and Mound B are similar, and Mound A mirrors that orientation. Subrectangular burial pits are located not only under the center of the mounds, but also on their central axes. In particular, the buildings all may share a pattern of burials found under and in front of the stair. At Kaminaljuyu, these were major tombs. Unfortunately, a large pit just west of the stair of the Feathered Serpent Pyramid was looted in antiquity in an event that may have been related to the building of the Adosado, so it cannot be compared with the rich tombs found under the aprons and projecting platforms of Mounds A and B. Other potential elite tombs beneath the body of the pyramid were also looted. The suggestion that these were the tombs of rulers or other elite members of Teotihuacan society is based not only on what remains of their contents but also on an analogy with Mounds A and B (Sugiyama 2000). Moreover, the presence of burials directly under the stair of the Feathered Serpent Pyramid has been inferred rather than tested (Cabrera 2000:208–209; Sugiyama 2000:Note 4). On a more detailed level of analysis, however, the two Finca Esperanza mounds

derived, particularly the cornice and the apron (appearing in a rudimentary form on Structure B-3). That is, certain elements of the style could *not* have come from Teotihuacan. Thus, it would be surprising indeed if they were designed by or for Teotihuacanos. Moreover, these early structures were made of earth and were built using techniques developed at Kaminaljuyu during the Las Charcas phase. Unlike the earliest *talud-tablero* structures of Tikal, Integration-phase architecture is accompanied by central Mexican-style artifacts. For this reason, no one has suggested that the full, later expression of the style at Kaminaljuyu emerged as a result of local experimentation with a pan-Mesoamerican style.

The Teotihuacan-phase platforms of Kaminaljuyu are among the most foreign and exotic appearing structures in the Maya area (Figures 3.2g-h and 4.1). Even so, they do not conform to the architectural norms of any particular site in central Mexico, and they contain several unique and locally derived elements. One commonly discussed feature of *talud-tablero* architecture is the relative height of each element. Santley (1987) has noted that the ratio of *talud* to *tablero* height at Teotihuacan is approximately 1:1.6 to 1:2.5. At Tepeapulco, *tableros* are proportionally even larger, with a ratio of 1:3 (Rivera 1984). In contrast, the relative proportions of the *talud-tableros* of Kaminaljuyu are approximately 1:1 (Cheek 1977a:133), a value very similar to that of Mound 2 at Maticapan (Valenzuela 1945:94-96) and the most common proportion used at Tikal (Chapter 7; Laporte and Fialko 1990). In other words, at least one aspect of the *talud-tablero* style of Kaminaljuyu seems to conform more closely to the norms of Gulf Coast architecture than to the most common variants of the style at Teotihuacan. Still, as Cowgill (Chapter 12) suggests, it may be that archaeologists have overemphasized the significance of *talud-tablero* proportions, and that the range of variation seen at Teotihuacan and Kaminaljuyu has been incorrectly reported. To these concerns, I add that the size of a *tablero* may have been constrained by the instability of the fill and the lack of sufficient mass to cantilever it. Structures that are built primarily out of earth cannot support *tableros* as large as structures built of heavy fill, large stones, and concrete.

It may be that certain elements of the *talud-tablero* style diffused slowly from the Gulf Coast to Kaminaljuyu, perhaps through Tikal (see Laporte and Fialko 1990). The partial *tableros* of the Stage E3-b structure of the Palangana (Cheek 1977a:53, 57) also are reminiscent of Tikal architecture. It should be stressed that very few buildings of this style are known from Teotihuacan.

At least five of the *talud-tablero* structures at Kaminaljuyu had balustrades capped with finial blocks (Structure A-7 of Mound A, and Structures A,

E, F, and G of the Acropolis), but other contemporary structures at Kaminaljuyu lacked this feature (Cheek 1977a:133). As at Tikal (Chapter 7), the finial block was an optional feature of the local variant of the *talud-tablero* style. In contrast, it can be seen much more frequently in the architecture of Teotihuacan.

The incomplete molding of the Stage E1 superstructure *tablero* (Cheek 1977a:41, Figure 13) and of the *tablero*-like balustrade on Mound D-III-1 (Rivera and Schávelzon 1984) also differs from nearly all examples at Teotihuacan, but is somewhat similar to the *tablero* panels of Oaxaca. Many—but by no means most—*tableros* at Teotihuacan, including those of the Feathered Serpent Pyramid, were either painted or adorned with sculpture. In contrast, the *talud-tablero* architecture of Kaminaljuyu appears to have been bereft of such decoration.³

Two important features of local origin are found on structures dating to the Integration and later phases. These are the apron or frontal platform (a projection from the front of the stair that often contains two or more platforms; see Figures 3.2g-h) and the enclosure-atrium-platform configuration (Figure 3.4b). Neither is found at Teotihuacan, but the large projecting shrine platform of Structure B-4 does have parallels at the central Mexican city (Figure 4.1; Cheek 1977a:133-134). The enclosure-atrium-platform composition of the Palangana Stage E3 structure is unique in Mesoamerica, although Cheek (1977a:136-137) sees slight similarities with other sunken patios and courtyards at Kaminaljuyu, Teotihuacan, and Bilbao. It seems unlikely that Teotihuacanos governing Kaminaljuyu would mandate the construction of buildings containing local Maya features, including an example with a configuration unique to Kaminaljuyu.

Cheek (1977a:130-132) considers the construction techniques and materials of both Kaminaljuyu and Teotihuacan and points to many important similarities. Although the *pedrín* coating, certain aspects of the fill, and the use of cantilevered flat stones to support *tableros* have close parallels at Teotihuacan, the *talud-tablero* structures of Kaminaljuyu were often built with more earth and faced with less—and more coarsely shaped—masonry. For example, the fill of Structures B-4 and B-5 was almost completely clay, and even the facing immediately below their *pedrín* surfaces contained few pumice stones (Kidder et al. 1946:45). Thus, these two structures differed from their Preclassic predecessors principally in *superficial* attributes (i.e., *pedrín* and the *talud-tablero*). Moreover, as Cheek (1977a:132) points out, “the honeycomb pattern of the matrix of the Temple of Quetzalcoatl and the use of vertical tree trunks to redistribute the weight and transmit the force di-

rectly to the ground” do not appear at Kaminaljuyu, suggesting that different methods of stabilizing fill were used at the two sites.⁴ Cheek proposes, however, that the small Kaminaljuyu structures may not have required a more intricate stabilization technique. Nonetheless, he concludes that the architects who built the Kaminaljuyu structures may have been “familiar only with the form of the talud and tablero and not with the details of its construction” (Cheek 1977a:132). Elsewhere, when discussing the Stage E1 structure, he writes: “the builders knew what the Teotihuacan building [*adoratorio*] looked like, but did not know how it was built” (Cheek 1977a:134).

Turning more specifically to the comparison of the Feathered Serpent Pyramid and Mounds A and B, the construction histories of the buildings are quite different. Mounds A and B each contained superimposed structures, most of which appear to have been constructed when a new tomb was built. None was used for any length of time (Kidder et al. 1946:42). In contrast, the Feathered Serpent Pyramid appears to have been built in one enormous construction phase that occurred c. A.D. 150–250 (Cabrera 2000:208). With the exception of Graves 12 and 15, which were first used before the construction of the Feathered Serpent Pyramid, the burials so far excavated in and around the pyramid all are related to a single, large-scale sacrificial event (Sugiyama 1989, 1996).

Burials and mortuary furnishings. The placement of burials, the arrangement of the dead, and the accompanying artifacts of Kaminaljuyu Mounds A and B are quite dissimilar from those of the Feathered Serpent Pyramid on several analytical scales. Rubén Cabrera (2000:208–209) has noted a symmetrical pattern to the burials within the Feathered Serpent Pyramid that he sees as a reflection of cosmological and calendrical beliefs expressed by the Fejérváry-Mayer cruciform-quincunx. Burials in and around the structure fall on two principal orthogonal axes (north-south and east-west), two secondary intermediate axes, and in the center of the pyramid (Figure 4.3a; Cabrera 2000:Figure 7.11c). Twenty bodies were found in the epicenter of the structure where the axes intersect. This is seen as a representation of the earth or center of the Mesoamerican cosmos. The principal axes of the pyramid correspond to the four cardinal directions. Interments along them occur in arrangements of two, four, eight, nine, thirteen, eighteen, and twenty individuals: all numbers of calendrical importance (Cabrera 2000:208; Sugiyama 1996, 2000:127). Finally, the minor axes represent the intermediate directions. Cabrera (2000:208) writes: “The symmetrical distribution of these burials and the quantity of skeletons found so far suggest that 260 people must have been buried at this building, a number corresponding to the

amount of days in the ritual calendar.” On a larger scale, the Ciudadela and Great Compound, which together were the political and cultural nexus of Tlamimilolpa-phase Teotihuacan, also formed the geographical center of the city at the intersection of the Street of the Dead and the East and West Avenues. The burials within the Feathered Serpent Pyramid and even the great plan of the Tlamimilolpa city itself, therefore, were cosmograms (Cabrera 2000:209).

No such cosmological or calendrical pattern has been detected in the arrangement of the tombs and in the number of skeletons and disarticulated bones found in Mounds A and B. Instead, these structures appear to have functioned as mortuary temples that grew by accretion as new tombs were added (Kidder et al. 1946:13). Moreover, they did not occupy a central position in either Kaminaljuyu or the group in which they are located (Figure 3.1). Instead, Mounds A and B were quite peripheral. They do not seem to have symbolized the physical nexus of either the community or the world.

Both Cabrera’s numerical reconstruction and a simpler argument based on symmetry suggest that the empty burial pit west of the stair of the Feathered Serpent Pyramid contained eight individuals arranged in a manner similar to that of Graves 10 and 11.⁵ Nevertheless, the pit clearly is unique in form and preparation. Unlike the other graves, which are irregular and shallow trenches, it was well dug, spacious, and deep. It may very well be that it once contained the body of a ruler (Cowgill 1997; Sugiyama 2000:128–129) or even a ruler and a sufficient number of victims to preserve Cabrera’s symmetry. Moreover, sherds from relatively fine vessels, including White-on-red vases (compare with Berrin and Pasztory 1993:Figure 111; Séjourné 1966a:figura 197), were found in looters’ back dirt from Grave 13, beneath the pyramid (George L. Cowgill, personal communication 2001). This, too, is consistent with the argument that the Feathered Serpent Pyramid once contained elite burials. Although I find it less likely, it could be that these apparently elaborate “graves” held richer and more special offerings without containing the bodies of rulers. Since they were looted in antiquity, we will never know for sure who or what they contained.

Even though the Feathered Serpent Pyramid may once have contained elite burials, the calendrical-cosmological significance of the sacrificed individuals (Cabrera 2000), their placement as part of a massive dedicatory event related to the construction of the platform (Sugiyama 1989, 1996, 2000), and the different construction histories of the structures all demonstrate that the Feathered Serpent Pyramid not only is quite different from Kami-

naljuyu Mounds A and B, but also is unlike any other structure known in Mesoamerica.

On a more detailed level of analysis, the arrangement of the bodies within Mounds A and B and many aspects of the tomb furnishings do not resemble burial patterns known from Teotihuacan. Tomb A-I, the earliest in the Mound A sequence, was opened and reused on several occasions. Similarly, Tomb A-II contained two sequential burials. Tomb B-IV, which intrudes into the earlier and larger Tomb B-III, may also represent a variant of this practice. The only tombs at Teotihuacan that are known to have been periodically reopened, added to, and resealed are located in Tlailotlacan, the Oaxaca Barrio (Spence 1992).⁶ But the occupants of these tombs are thought to have been Zapotecs, so tomb reuse does not seem to have been an indigenous practice at Teotihuacan.

The later tombs of Mounds A and B, as well as those excavated in the Palangana, shared a very distinct pattern of arrangement and burial furnishings (Cheek 1977a:141-153). Principal figures were seated with crossed legs in the tailor position. They faced south, regardless of the orientation of the structure. Many of the Mounds A and B tombs were deliberately filled, but ornaments as well as bones were found spread over an appreciable area. Kidder et al. (1946:88-89) accounted for this by arguing that the principal figures had been wrapped in voluminous bundles that, as they decayed, left space for bones and furnishings to settle. Moreover, fragments of wood that did not come from the roof beams of the tomb were found scattered symmetrically about the principal occupant of Tomb A-III, and similar marks were found on the floor of Tomb B-I (Kidder et al. 1946:55, 74, 89, Figure 31). Kidder et al. interpreted this as evidence that the principal figures of these tombs were seated in some sort of wooden box or crib.

Seated burials are common at Teotihuacan and have been found at Tikal (Coe 1990, 1:118-123; Shook and Kidder II 1961), Copán (Chapter 5; Fash and Fash 2000), Mirador (Agrinier 1970, 1975), and in the Ixil region (Becquelin 1969; Smith and Kidder 1951). Nonetheless, the orientation of the bodies, the tailor position, and the use of a mummy bundle with a wooden box have no antecedents beyond Kaminaljuyu. Citing an ethnohistorical account provided by J. Eric S. Thompson (1939:283-284), Kidder et al. (1946:89) argued that the closest parallel is with sixteenth-century burial customs of Alta Verapaz.

If the principal figures in Kaminaljuyu Mounds A and B were Teotihuacanos, why were they interred in a manner that is completely unknown from Teotihuacan? As Cowgill (Chapter 12) points out, no high-level elite buri-

als dating to the Xolalpan phase have been discovered at Teotihuacan in all the years of extensive excavation in the city. He lists several possible reasons why this may be the case, but only three seem tenable to me: (1) elites did not receive special mortuary treatment; (2) they were cremated (Headrick 1999); or (3) they were disposed of in some other way that leaves no obvious archaeological correlates. All three possibilities distinguish Teotihuacan from Kaminaljuyu and all other Maya sites where Teotihuacan "influence" has been found. If any of the high-level elites interred in Maya tombs *were* Teotihuacanos, they were buried according to local customs, not those of their home city.

Many of the items that constituted the mortuary furnishings of the Esperanza-phase tombs either were imported from northwestern Mesoamerica or were inspired by central Mexican material culture. For this reason, at the analytical scale of the artifact, the offerings evince interaction with Teotihuacan, the Gulf Coast, and other regions northwest of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. But on the level of the entire funerary assemblage, the types of foreign-style goods, their placement, and their roles were transformed for use in a highland Maya context. That is, although certain items from the Mexican highlands were found within the tombs, they were combined and manipulated in ways that reflect neither central Mexican behavior nor the Teotihuacan belief system.

Numerous ceramic vessels were found within the Mounds A and B tombs. Kidder et al. (1946:92-93) noted that certain kinds of vessels, particularly cylindrical tripods, appeared in all of the tombs. In most cases, these were found in nearly identical pairs. Pairing was common with other sorts of vessels, including some of local style. Other ceramics that served a mortuary function are "cream pitchers," found in all but Tomb B-VI, and "ash bowls," used as containers for incense burned in other vessels. Some ash bowls were found on floors, but most were placed within the lower levels of the earth used to fill the tombs (Kidder et al. 1946:93). Cheek (1977a:144-145, 147-152) discusses typological and morphological patterns in more detail and identifies chronological changes within the funerary complex.

Other items found in all of the tombs include mosaic plaques, jade, and shell. With the exception of Tomb B-VI, the poorest and last in the sequence, all contained grinding stones and either secondary individuals or a disarticulated skull.⁷ At Teotihuacan, grinding stones are associated with female burials, but not with males like the principal figures of the Esperanza tombs. One to three mosaic plaques, which probably were mirrors worn on the chest, were found on the lap or just south of each principal individual (Cheek

1977a:144; Kidder et al. 1946:Table 1). Two individuals from Tomb B-I had composite mirrors placed in the small of their back (Kidder et al. 1946:74). Mirrors of both sorts are depicted commonly at Teotihuacan and often were combined with flares and other items made of jade (Taube 1992a:175-177). Kidder et al. (1946:127, Figures 53c, 143b) reconstructed one mirror with jade flares and also found a jade spool on a pyrite mirror. According to Karl A. Taube (1992a:198), mirrors were imbued with many meanings at Teotihuacan and were used as a means to see into the supernatural world. At Teotihuacan and later sites, individuals wearing mirrors are often depicted in military garb and carrying weapons. Two of the composite mirrors from Mounds A and B have backs that are richly decorated in a Teotihuacan style (Kidder et al. 1946:Figure 175a-b). It seems very likely, then, that the mirrors found within the Esperanza tombs were important cult items related to warfare and divination, and that some of them may have come from Teotihuacan. Nonetheless, the back of a mirror from Tomb B-I is carved in the Classic Veracruz style of El Tajín (Kidder et al. 1946:Figure 156). Since the use of composite pyrite mirrors was quite widespread during the Classic period, it may be that the principal figures of the Kaminaljuyu tombs participated in a pan-Mesoamerican cult focused on warfare and divination.

A cache of obsidian blades, presumably for letting blood, was placed near each of the principal figures of the Esperanza tombs, and the location of the cache seems to be chronologically meaningful (Cheek 1977a:92). Peripheral bodies that were accompanied by fewer or no adornments and offerings were found in most burials, but some of the less elaborate tombs contained isolated skulls. These secondary individuals were interpreted by Kidder et al. (1946:89-90) as sacrificed slaves, and the isolated skulls as either trophies of war or victims of sacrifice. The secondary individuals, including the skulls, most often were adolescents, young females, or children (Kidder et al. 1946:90). One reasonable conjecture is that the grinding stones found in all the tombs save the last, which also lacked an isolated skull or secondary skeleton, were included as items to be used by the companions to prepare food for the principal figures.

Returning to the comparison with the Feathered Serpent Pyramid perhaps is flogging a dead horse. The repeated pattern of mortuary goods found in the Esperanza-phase tombs is quite different from that of the burials unearthed in the Teotihuacan structure or any other burials known from the great city. Ceramic offerings were quite uncommon in the Feathered Serpent Pyramid (Sugiyama 1996), but this may be a result of the looting of the pits that might have contained elite individuals. The form most represented in the

few ceramic offerings associated with the Feathered Serpent Pyramid is the "Tlaloc" jar (Cowgill 1997:142; Sugiyama 1996), two of which were found in the mass grave and offering at the center of the pyramid (Cabrera et al. 1991:86). Esther Pasztory (1992:297) associates these with household religion and notes that they frequently are found in burials at Teotihuacan. In contrast, Tomb A-II is the only burial at Kaminaljuyu where the form has been found. A paired set, which probably was made locally, was recovered from that tomb (Kidder et al. 1946:Figure 200). Paired cylindrical tripods and cream pitchers of the sort so common at Kaminaljuyu are not known from the Feathered Serpent Pyramid burials.⁸

The closest parallel in mortuary furnishings is the use of mirrors, which were found associated with many of the individuals interred in the Feathered Serpent Pyramid (Sugiyama 1989:97, 1992:210, 1996; 2000:126). All are interpreted as either warriors, priest-warriors, or warrior impersonators who were sacrificed when the pyramid was constructed. Since they were sacrificial victims, they are more analogous to the companions than they are to the principal figures of the Kaminaljuyu tombs. But only a few of the companions wore pyrite mirrors as items of personal adornment. In fact, few ornaments were in clear association with the companion skeletons.⁹ Moreover, the gender and age profiles of the warriors of the Feathered Serpent differ considerably from those of the Kaminaljuyu companions. The former overwhelmingly are adult males. Thus, although both the warriors of the Feathered Serpent Pyramid and the secondary companions of the Esperanza tombs appear to have been sacrificial victims, the analogy ends there.

It is tempting to argue that the presence of Teotihuacan-related objects in the Esperanza tombs implies the maintenance of a central Mexican ethnic identity. But the artifacts, their pattern of disposition, and the arrangement and orientation of principal figures do not reflect what is known about burial patterns at Teotihuacan. Most dramatically, the fact that we have *identified* elite burials at Kaminaljuyu (as well as at other sites) suggests that they do not contain Teotihuacanos who practiced the funeral rites of the Xolalpan phase. If there was indeed an enclave at Kaminaljuyu, than we must expect that elite foreigners either were interred in simpler burials or were cremated. In either case, it seems that the principal occupants of the Esperanza tombs were Maya.

The general lack of "Tlaloc" jars—found not only in the Temple of the Feathered Serpent but also in other graves at Teotihuacan—suggests that the individuals buried in Mounds A and B and in the Palangana did not prac-

tice the same rituals as their counterparts at Teotihuacan. In light of recent discoveries at Montana (Chapter 2), it is also worth noting that warrior “portrait” figurines are not known from Kaminaljuyu, and only one *candelero* was recovered during the Carnegie excavations of Finca Esperanza.¹⁰ Moreover, as Kidder et al. noted:

We found nothing to indicate that the elaborate “built up” incense burners of Teotihuacan and Atzacapotzalco were made at Kaminaljuyu; had they been, it is incredible that some of the little moldmade *adornos* so lavishly applied to them should not have turned up in our excavations. (Kidder et al. 1946:214).

Thus, there is little reason to suspect that the inhabitants of Kaminaljuyu practiced the religion sponsored by the Teotihuacan state. Instead, they seem to have borrowed certain elements of central Mexican ritual and to have used them in novel social and cultural contexts.

The combination and manipulation of Teotihuacan objects and other foreign-style items in a manner that is very different from central Mexican behavioral patterns does not imply a Teotihuacan origin. Sanders’ (1977) suggestion that the household rituals and burial practices of Teotihuacanos and their ethnically mixed offspring at Kaminaljuyu differed from those of Teotihuacanos living in central Mexico is reasonable, but the lack of Teotihuacan burial practices at Kaminaljuyu should not be construed as supporting the presence of Teotihuacanos. After all, most—if not all—sites in the Maya area lack clear evidence for Teotihuacan burial practices. Since virtually all foreign-style portable artifacts found at Kaminaljuyu come from funerary contexts that do not resemble central Mexican burials, the most notable behavioral realm in which Teotihuacan interaction is manifested seems to be locally derived.

Microscale Analysis

I do not doubt that the Thin Orange vessels from the Esperanza tombs of Kaminaljuyu come from central Mexico, although they probably were not manufactured at Teotihuacan itself and may have been brought to Kaminaljuyu by traders from other less distant sites. Moreover, Foias’ (1987) identification of eight cylindrical tripods as ceramic identities seems accurate. Nonetheless, at the microscale level of modal analysis, most of the central Mexican-style vessels from Mounds A and B do not conform to the artistic

canons of Teotihuacan. They are homologies that were made outside of central Mexico by potters who either did not know or who chose to violate the norms of Teotihuacan proportions (Foias 1987).

Other artifacts from the Kaminaljuyu tombs, when viewed at a micro-scale level of analysis, appear to be homologies rather than identities. Not counting three lots of obsidian pebbles, a total of 204 obsidian artifacts were recovered from the tombs of Mounds A and B. Eighty-five pieces are of green obsidian from the Pachuca, Hidalgo, source, which provided most of the material used to make prismatic blades and blade-derived artifacts at Teotihuacan. Sixty-one of the Pachuca artifacts are small sequins found in close association in Tombs A-II and A-IV. These probably were appliqués sewn onto a cloth backing. Those from Tomb A-IV were found with what may have been a stuccoed and painted mask or headdress. The remaining 24 pieces of green obsidian occur in a variety of forms: a finely made handheld knife (from Tomb A-I), 15 finely made projectile points (from Tombs A-V and B-I), and 8 prismatic blade fragments (from Tombs A-I and A-II). The remaining 119 obsidian artifacts, as well as approximately 575 pebbles that probably were used in turtle-shell rattles, all are of gray obsidian. It is highly likely that the gray prismatic blades ($N=104$) are made of material from the nearby El Chayal source. Although gray obsidian artifacts, generally assumed to be from the Otumba source area, are common at Teotihuacan, most are bifaces rather than prismatic blades. Fourteen gray projectile points were recovered from the Kaminaljuyu tombs (in sets of 5 from Tombs A-VI and B-II, as well as a set of 3 from B-IV and a fragment from B-I). All but the fragment are illustrated (Kidder et al. 1946:Figure 157b, d, and g). The illustrated projectile points made of gray obsidian are crudely worked and do not exhibit the patterned flaking that is typical of Teotihuacan manufacture. Although Spence (1996a:26) notes that these gray projectile points differ in form from Teotihuacan examples, the 10 pieces from Tombs A-VI and B-II share a general—albeit crude—resemblance to the set of 7 green projectile points from Tomb A-V. Moreover, they differ in certain aspects from highland Maya forms typical of the Classic period. I suspect, therefore, that these gray obsidian projectile points are crude homologies made of local obsidian.

Human remains can be examined on at least three microscale levels of analysis. First, traits that are manifested in bone morphology and are thought to be genetic may be studied. Such “biological distance” studies have become less common in recent years, in part because many of the traits subject to analysis have unknown expression and inheritance patterns (Buikstra et al. 1990). In any event, the remains from the Esperanza tombs, except for the

teeth, are in exceptionally poor condition and prohibit such studies (Lori E. Wright, personal communication 2000). Second, direct comparative genetic studies may be undertaken. This approach is quite new to Mesoamerica (see Chapter 6), and the data so far collected are not sufficient to distinguish between central Mexican and highland Maya populations. Third, chemical assay may be employed to study paleodiet and to determine geographical origin (e.g., Buikstra et al. 2000; White et al. 1998; Wright and Schwarcz 1998). Because both dietary practices and geographical residence may indirectly reflect ethnic identity, these analyses are of particular relevance to Teotihuacan-Maya relations.

The most promising new research to be conducted on materials from the Mounds A and B tombs is the determination of the isotopic composition of teeth. Unlike bone, which continues to be remodeled throughout the life of an individual, the composition of tooth enamel does not change after it is mineralized. The mineralization of the first molar occurs between birth and three years, and the enamel of the third molar is formed between ages nine and twelve (White et al. 2000). Changes in diet during these periods may be studied by comparing the isotopic composition of the enamel of these teeth. Lori E. Wright and Henry P. Schwarcz (1998, 1999; see also Wright 1999, 2000), for example, have used stable isotope analyses of bone, tooth enamel, and dentine to study weaning practices and the diets of both children and adults at Kaminaljuyu. In particular, they have compared the diets of the principal and attending figures in the tombs of Mounds A and B, as well as those of individuals from other contexts. Although differences in weaning patterns were noted (Wright 2000; Wright and Schwarcz 1999), diets were fairly uniform at Kaminaljuyu and differed from those of lowland sites in that proportionally less protein was obtained from terrestrial animals (Wright and Schwarcz 1998). Important differences between individuals were noted in the values of $\delta^{18}\text{O}_c$, the oxygen-isotope ratio of enamel carbonate (Wright 2000; Wright and Schwarcz 1999). These results are supported by independent assays of oxygen-isotope ratios of enamel phosphate ($\delta^{18}\text{O}_p$) from the same teeth (White et al. 2000).

The oxygen-isotope composition of bone and enamel is largely dependent on the oxygen-isotope composition of ingested water, which in turn is determined by local temperature, distance from the sea, latitude, elevation, and humidity (Yurtsever and Gat 1981, cited in White et al. 2000). After evaporation from the ocean, the first rain to fall from a cloud contains higher levels of ^{18}O than later precipitation. As that cloud moves farther inland and rain falls at higher altitudes, the oxygen-isotope ratio of rainwater

decreases (Wright 2000). The $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ values from either enamel phosphate or carbonate provide paleoclimatological data regarding the region in which a child lived. If the $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ values from the first and third molars of an individual differ significantly, a change in climate or location during childhood is indicated. Moreover, if the $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ value of a tooth from an individual differs from that of a local baseline value, it suggests that he or she moved to the area after that enamel mineralized. Such studies, then, can be of great importance to understanding residence patterns and, indirectly, identity. It must be stressed that locally born people who maintain a foreign identity share the same $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ ratios as their neighbors. Thus, both Teotihuacanos and the Teotihuacan-born-and-raised inhabitants of the Oaxaca Barrio had similar $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ ratios (White et al. 1998).¹¹

Christine D. White et al. (2000) determined the $\delta^{18}\text{O}_p$ values for forty-one teeth from thirty-one individuals excavated at Kaminaljuyu and Beleh, another site in the Valley of Guatemala. The teeth came from burials dating to the Middle Preclassic to Postclassic periods, including sixteen individuals from the tombs of Mounds A and B. A total of twenty-one first and third molars from principal figures ($N=4$), companion skeletons and isolated skulls ($N=10$), and remains of ambiguous classification ($N=2$) were analyzed.¹² The $\delta^{18}\text{O}_p$ values from these teeth were compared to a local baseline value of 16.9 ± 0.8 ‰ (one-sigma) determined for Preclassic burials at Kaminaljuyu (White et al. 2000), as well as with baseline values of 14.7 ± 0.3 ‰ determined for Teotihuacan, 13.0 ± 0.6 ‰ for Monte Albán (White et al. 1998), and 19.9 ± 0.7 ‰ for Río Azul (White and Longstaffe 2000).

Results indicate that of the sixteen individuals from the tombs who were studied, four exhibit $\delta^{18}\text{O}_p$ ratios significantly outside the range of trophic variation characteristic of Kaminaljuyu. These include a probable companion skeleton from Tomb A-I (Skeleton 8), a principal figure and companion from Tomb A-V (Skeleton 1 and Skull 3), and an ambiguous figure from Tomb B-IV (Skeleton 2). Three of these four individuals exhibit $\delta^{18}\text{O}_p$ values of 18.7 to 20.3 ‰, which are considerably higher than those typical of Kaminaljuyu (White et al. 2000: Table 1). These values may suggest a lowland Maya origin, as White et al. (2000) propose, or may be consistent with the Pacific Coast and piedmont, an area for which no information currently is available. Due to the proximity of the latter to the ocean, $\delta^{18}\text{O}_p$ values from the Pacific Coast and piedmont should be considerably higher than those of Kaminaljuyu. Most notably, only one individual, Skeleton 1 of Tomb A-V, has a $\delta^{18}\text{O}_p$ value (14.8 ‰) that falls within the range noted for Teotihuacan (White et al. 2000: Table 1). This was determined from the upper left third molar of the

individual. Assay of the lower left first molar, however, yielded a corrected $\delta^{18}\text{O}_p$ value of 17.3 ‰,¹³ consistent with the Kaminaljuyu baseline. Based on these data, White et al. (2000) suggest that the principal figure of Tomb A-V was born and died in Kaminaljuyu, but spent a portion of his childhood at Teotihuacan.

Wright (2000), who first noted a low oxygen-isotope value for this tooth in her study of enamel carbonate, cautiously suggests that this conclusion may be premature. Tomb A-V was the most disturbed of all the Esperanza tombs, and few remains of Skeleton 1 were found (Kidder et al. 1946:62–63). It is conceivable, therefore, that the sample was somehow contaminated. Moreover, oxygen-isotope assay provides data on a single variable. The baseline level determined for Teotihuacan may reflect conditions at a wide variety of sites across the highlands of Mesoamerica. Until more data are available, such as the results of an independent strontium assay, it seems best to consider the conclusion that this individual spent part of his childhood at Teotihuacan as preliminary.

For the most part, the results of Wright's (2000) analyses strongly concur with those of White et al. (2000). Wright (2000), however, notes that Skeleton 2 of Tomb B-IV, which exhibited the highest $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ values seen in the Kaminaljuyu sample, also had very high $\delta^{15}\text{N}_c$ values. This suggests that the individual—or more likely his nursing mother—consumed a lot of marine fish. Wright proposes, therefore, that he was born not in the Petén, but in Pacific Guatemala or some other coastal region. Wright also notes that $\delta^{18}\text{O}_c$ values from the three sampled skulls of Tomb A-III (all independently assayed by White et al.) indicate a lowland pattern. Thus, the $\delta^{18}\text{O}_c$ results are in good accord with the $\delta^{18}\text{O}_p$ assays for thirteen of sixteen individuals, but do not concur on Skulls 1–3 of Tomb A-III.¹⁴

White et al. (2000) and Wright (2000) both determined $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ values for other burials at Kaminaljuyu. White et al. (2000) consider the individuals in Burial 2 of Mound B-V-5 and in Burial 4 of Mound B-VI-2, both Amatlé-phase interments, as displaying $\delta^{18}\text{O}_p$ values consistent with the Teotihuacan signature. The lower right first molar from the first of these two Late Classic burials yielded an adjusted $\delta^{18}\text{O}_p$ of 15.6 ‰, and a value of 15.7 ‰ was determined for the lower left third molar of the second individual (White et al. 2000:Table 1). Although these values fall below the baseline range for Kaminaljuyu, they are considerably higher (at least three standard deviations) above the mean for Teotihuacan. Thus, these data are best interpreted as indicating that the two individuals spent at least a portion of their childhood at some still unidentified place, but not at Teotihuacan.

Three aspects of the oxygen-isotope data are highly suggestive and relevant to the issue of a foreign presence at Kaminaljuyu. First, there is no evidence that any of the sixteen analyzed individuals from the tombs of Mounds A and B were born and spent their early childhood at Teotihuacan. Only one individual, the principal figure from Tomb A-V, may have spent time in central Mexico during his childhood. This tomb, associated with the construction of Structure A-7 (Figure 3.2g), is the earliest one dating to Cheek's (1977a:Figure 62) Teotihuacan phase. According to Cheek's model, if any individual in the Esperanza tombs was born in Teotihuacan, it should be the principal figure of this tomb. Apparently, however, he was born in or near Kaminaljuyu.

Second, a strong foreign presence, from one or more sites typified by higher $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ values, is represented in the tombs of Mounds A and B. These individuals (three according to the enamel phosphate analyses; six according to the enamel carbonate assays) may have come from the Petén, but a Pacific piedmont or coastal origin also is possible. White et al. (2000) suggest that the presence of individuals from these regions is more in accord with Brown's (1977a, 1977b) port-of-trade hypothesis than with any of the Teotihuacan-dominance models.

Third, none of the foreigners represented in the Esperanza tombs are clear principal figures. Kidder et al. (1946), in fact, interpreted all six of these individuals as sacrificed attendants, as offerings of some sort, or as trophy heads. The only foreign-born individual that possibly is a principal figure is the ambiguously classified Skeleton 2 of Tomb B-IV (the marine fish eater). No third molar from this individual was analyzed, but he may have spent most of his life at Kaminaljuyu. Given that nearly all foreign oxygen-isotope signatures were determined from companion figures or isolated skulls, the port-of-trade hypothesis is not strongly supported. Instead, it is more plausible to speculate that these children and juveniles were sacrificed captives or slaves from either the Pacific Coast or the Maya lowlands.

The Nature of Relations with Central Escuintla and the Proximal Source of Teotihuacan "Influence" at Kaminaljuyu

If the foreigners interred as attendants or sacrificial victims in the Mounds A and B tombs did indeed come from central Escuintla, we may wonder if relations between Kaminaljuyu and that region were friendly. Compared to earlier times, few coastal ceramics are found at Kaminaljuyu and few highland wares are present in central Escuintla during the Early Classic period. Moreover, there are strong data suggesting that obsidian cores from the

El Chayal source (near Kaminaljuyu) were not traded to certain sites in Escuintla. Instead, finished prismatic blades made of El Chayal obsidian apparently trickled into the region from some unknown site or sites. A decrease in ceramic exchange, an apparent restriction of the trade of polyhedral cores, and the possibility that Kaminaljuyu captured and sacrificed young women and children from Pacific Guatemala all suggest that relations between the two centers of Montana and Kaminaljuyu were not cordial. Moreover, it is important to remember that *talud-tablero* architecture, Thin Orange ware, and obsidian from the Pachuca source have been found at both Kaminaljuyu and Solano, but are either unknown or extremely rare at Montana. Conversely, the warrior “portrait” figurines, *candeleros*, theater censers, and certain ceramic types that suggest a foreign presence at Montana are either unknown or exceedingly rare at Kaminaljuyu. It is peculiar, as well, that sites in the Guatemalan highlands with significant quantities of Pacific Coast and piedmont ceramics, such as Frutal (Brown 1977b:270–271), lack *talud-tablero* architecture and green obsidian. Apparently, highland communities that traded with the Escuintla region did not receive central Mexican-style artifacts or ideas from their partners in Pacific Guatemala. It is significant that the only evidence for a Teotihuacan “connection” at Frutal is a small quantity of Thin Orange sherds. As Brown (1977b:266) rightly concludes, this suggests contact with Kaminaljuyu, and not with contemporary sites in central Escuintla, where Thin Orange ware is unknown (see Chapter 2).

Together, all these data argue that the sources of “Teotihuacan influence” at Montana and Kaminaljuyu were not the same, and that the two sites did not engage in intense economic interaction. Although it is tempting to envision Pacific Guatemala as the staging ground for “Teotihuacan incursions” into the Maya highlands (e.g., Berlo 1984), to do so requires that we ignore the nature and context of nearly all the evidence from both regions concerning contact with central Mexico.

From where, then, did Kaminaljuyu receive central Mexican goods and ideas? Both the kinds of materials found at Kaminaljuyu and their contexts suggest a relationship with Tikal and Copán. At all three sites, imported tripod cylinders are limited to elite burials and a few other peculiar contexts, most notably the problematical deposits of Tikal. Teotihuacan “influence” is not seen in any meaningful way in household contexts at these three Maya sites. In particular, items suggesting participation in the state-sponsored religion of Teotihuacan are missing from Kaminaljuyu, Tikal, and Copán. At all three cities, Thin Orange ware and green obsidian (including sequins)—materials that are unknown or exceedingly rare in late-fourth- to

fifth-century contexts in southern Guatemala—have been found. At these three sites, *talud-tablero* platforms were built, but to date no evidence for that architectural style has been found in central Escuintla. Although chronological data are insufficient to determine the direction in which ideas and materials spread (Chapter 3), interaction among Kaminaljuyu, Copán, and Tikal seems to have been an important mechanism in their dispersal throughout the Maya highlands and lowlands. Conversely, Montana does not seem to have played an important role, despite the likely presence of a foreign colony at that site.

Conclusions and an Alternative Narrative

Data supporting the existence of a Teotihuacan enclave or barrio at Kaminaljuyu are extremely weak. To date, no bioanthropological evidence supporting a central Mexican origin for any individual at Kaminaljuyu has been mustered. Oxygen-isotope analyses of both enamel phosphate and carbonate from a single tooth may suggest that the principal figure of Tomb A-V spent part of his childhood at the central Mexican city. Alternatively, the sample may have been contaminated somehow, or may indicate a sojourn at some yet unknown place that happens to have an oxygen-isotope signature similar to that of Teotihuacan. Given the infancy of this type of research and the fact that oxygen-isotope assay yields only one dimension of data, it seems quite possible that such a region someday will be identified. In addition, it is worth repeating that oxygen-isotope analyses conducted on tooth enamel indicate place of birth and development rather than ethnicity. Some of the individuals exhibiting the Kaminaljuyu signature could have been considered Teotihuacanos. Likewise, a hypothetical individual with a value typical of Teotihuacan could have been a Maya raised in highland Mexico.

Central Mexican-related material culture is present in only very limited and spatially isolated contexts at Kaminaljuyu. Moreover, evidence of interaction with Teotihuacan is manifested in only two aspects of material culture: architecture and mortuary furnishings. The *talud-tablero* architecture of Kaminaljuyu, like that of other Maya sites, differs in important ways from most examples at Teotihuacan. Construction techniques were different, certain elements of the style that were common at Teotihuacan were optional at Kaminaljuyu, the basic proportions of the elements appear to have been different, and local features that are not seen at Teotihuacan were incorporated into structures at Kaminaljuyu. In addition, at least one kind of *talud-tablero* structure, the enclosure-atrium-platforms of the Palangana (Figure 3.4), has no known analogue in central Mexico. Finally, the *talud-tablero* structures

of Kaminaljuyu were not arranged in larger patterns that suggest Teotihuacan influence. At the macroscale level of the group and site plan, late Early Classic-period Kaminaljuyu was wholly highland Maya in appearance.

Interaction with Teotihuacan can also be seen in burial practices. In particular, both central Mexican homologies and identities are found in the ceramics and obsidian artifacts that accompanied the principal figures of the Esperanza tombs. Mirrors and certain shell ornaments also indicate interaction with central Mexico and the Gulf Coast. Nonetheless, if typical highland Maya goods were substituted for these items, all central Mexican aspects of the tombs would disappear. That is to say, there are no broader patterns of burial placement, body position, and complexes of material goods that replicate the mortuary practices of Teotihuacan. Moreover, the kinds of central Mexican goods found in the Esperanza-phase tombs are not the same as those most frequently found in Teotihuacan burials. An important exception is the use of back and chest mirrors, which were used not only at Teotihuacan but also in much of Classic-period Mesoamerica. Most striking is the arrangement of principal figures. Their seated cross-legged position, voluminous mummy bundles, and placement in wooden boxes appear to be unique to the Guatemalan highlands. The reuse of the earliest tombs of Mound A also are not consistent with Teotihuacan practices. Most important, the use of tombs for high-level elite burials is *completely unknown* from Xolalpan-phase Teotihuacan. Above the analytical level of the individual artifact, there are few affinities with central Mexican burial patterns.

Evidence for interaction with central Mexico, then, is limited to intermediate levels of analytical scale, particularly the artifact and elements of the structure. Moreover, such affinities tend to be superficial, that is, limited to the visible surface rather than the hidden interior. I attribute this to the manipulation of central Mexican symbols and artifacts in cultural contexts that are decidedly highland Maya in both their inner details and larger patterns. Together, superficiality and only limited replication at different scales indicate that evidence for a barrio or enclave of Teotihuacanos at Kaminaljuyu is insubstantial.

Nearly all of the narratives discussed here argue for the existence of a resident group of politically or economically dominant Teotihuacanos. Kidder et al. (1946) wisely chose to emphasize other aspects of the data, particularly their chronological implications. But others have piled additional speculation—regarding marriage patterns, *coups d'état*, economic structure, and even political intrigue—upon this rather shaky supposition. The imaginative narratives proposed by many researchers seem too complicated to be

warranted by a few dozen pots, composite mirrors, a couple of handfuls of obsidian, and several structures built in an eclectic, partially foreign style. If one accepts that evidence for a permanent and dominant Teotihuacan presence is rather weak, other explanations that do not require the existence of such a population should be sought.

One possibility is the gift-giving hypothesis proposed by Spence (1996a). It may be, therefore, that the foreign goods buried with the principal figures of the Esperanza tombs represent direct and personal relations with Teotihuacanos. Oxygen-isotope data from Skeleton 1 of Tomb A-V, in fact, support the notion that such direct contacts existed. But the gift-giving hypothesis on its own does not explain why locally produced "knock offs" are found in greater number in the tombs than actual central Mexican goods. Such homologies, and perhaps some of the central Mexican identities from the tombs, may reflect ties with the elite of other Maya and non-Maya sites closer to home. Two possibilities are Tikal and Copán, but it may also be that Kaminaljuyu was a source of "Teotihuacan influence" at those cities.

Demarest and Foias (1993) present a compelling argument for the presence of both identities and homologies. Their perspective does not contradict Spence's (1996a) hypothesis; indeed, it complements his. Nonetheless, the elite-emulation hypothesis has two points of weakness. First, it is unclear how Teotihuacan-style goods were manipulated in ways that reinforced status. Second, nearly all foreign-style portable artifacts at Kaminaljuyu were found in private contexts with restricted access. The manipulation of status-endowing objects presumably would have been conducted frequently and in very public arenas; large stelae are much better suited for this purpose than prismatic blade fragments and other small items. But Teotihuacan identities and homologies (with the exception of *talud-tablero* architecture) come overwhelmingly from only one sort of behavioral context: elite tombs. There is no reason to think that foreign-style vessels were brandished about in public as status symbols. Moreover, they do not appear in association with elite residential architecture. They were not luxury goods consumed in the homes of the elite. Instead, they seem to be objects whose transformative power lies in their hidden, mysterious, and perhaps religious attributes.

Linda Schele, Mary E. Miller, and David A. Freidel all have argued that expressions of late Early Classic interaction between Teotihuacan and the lowland Maya were related to ritual warfare, particularly the type that has been called the "Star war," "Venus war," or "Tlaloc-Venus war" (Schele 1986; Schele and Freidel 1990; Schele and Miller 1986). Janet C. Berlo (1983), Karl A. Taube (1992c), and Saburo Sugiyama (1992, 1996) have discussed the

importance of warfare and sacrifice in the imagery of the Feathered Serpent Pyramid and other contexts at Teotihuacan. What ties the burials of Mounds A and B most securely to Teotihuacan is not the presence of central Mexican identities and homologies within the tombs. Instead, it is the fact that the principal figures, and perhaps several attendants, were accompanied with the accouterments of both war and sacrifice. In particular, the composite pyrite mirrors worn on the chests and, in some cases, backs of the dead of Mounds A and B have parallels throughout Mesoamerica (see Taube 1992a).

Borhegyi (1971) once suggested that religion was an important motivator for interaction between Teotihuacan and the Maya region. Although I do not believe that the individuals in the Esperanza tombs were evangelizing priests from Teotihuacan, the foreign-style portable objects of Kaminaljuyu were found in—quite literally—occult contexts. Their hidden nature, therefore, seems to suggest something beyond public-status reinforcement and the expression of interpersonal relationships. One more conjecture that may be added to the long list of narratives concerning Teotihuacan-Kaminaljuyu interaction is that the principal figures in the Esperanza-phase tombs—regardless of their ethnic identity—participated in a pan-Mesoamerican cult. A similar mechanism has been proposed by William M. Ringle et al. (1998) to explain cultural similarities across Mesoamerica during the Epiclassic/Terminal Classic period. Local manifestations of such a cult could have differed from site to site. At Kaminaljuyu, it was expressed most dramatically and elaborately in syncretistic mortuary rites that employed objects and symbols from central Mexico within the context of highland Maya funerary practices.

At many sites, this proposed cult focused on warfare, Venus, the Bearded Dragon/War Serpent, and the goggle-eyed storm god. Perhaps the Late and Terminal Classic Maya Vision Serpent, which sometimes was conjured from a mirror, is related to the War Serpent imagery of both Early Classic Teotihuacan and many lowland Maya sites (see Schele and Mathews 1998:222; Taube 2000b). Both the storm god K'awiil and his Postclassic highland avatar Tojil were tied to rulership. One may hazard, therefore, that the conjectural Early Classic cult imbued its warrior priests with the *mana* of rulership. The Epiclassic/Terminal Classic cult of Quetzalcoatl posited by Ringle et al. (1998) may have been a revival of this earlier cult.

Stepping further into the realm of speculation, participation in a world cult may have entailed occasional pilgrimages to or training in Teotihuacan, which perhaps was its most powerful and important center. The oxygen-isotope analysis of the principal figure of Tomb A-V may indicate such a trip.

Alternatively, in special circumstances, local rulers might have traveled to the great central Mexican metropolis for rites of legitimization. European kings and emperors sometimes were coronated by the pope in Rome and Mixtec lords underwent such journeys to have their noses pierced. Sugiyama (2000:128) discusses similarities between greenstone nose pendants found in the Feathered Serpent Pyramid and those depicted in the art of lowland sites (e.g., Laporte and Fialko 1990:53; Schele and Grube 1994a:91). Somewhat similar jade nose pendants were found in Tomb B-I and the fill of Structure B-3 at Kaminaljuyu (Kidder et al. 1946:115, Figure 146k-l). It also may be that the “arrivals” mentioned in hieroglyphic texts associated with both K’inich Yaax K’uk’ Mo’ of Copán and Siyaj K’ahk’ of Tikal describe *returns* from such pilgrimages of legitimization (see Chapter 5; Stuart 2000a).¹⁵ The authority of Teotihuacan, just as that of some unknown place (Cholula?) in the Mixtec example and of Rome in the European case, would have been symbolic and religious rather than actual and political.

Why is this scenario any better than the speculative narratives of researchers who suffer from “Teotihuacanomania” (Chapter 9)? For one thing, it is a minimalist hypothesis. That is, it narrowly accounts for the data we have for Teotihuacan “influence” without presupposing a much broader and intense sort of interaction for which we have little evidence. It is consistent with the cultural contexts in which central Mexican-inspired goods are found (at Kaminaljuyu, these contexts are elite tombs and the façades of a small number of buildings), and does not force us to account for the numerous realms of material culture in which there are *no* manifestations of Teotihuacan “influence.” It also is compatible with the eclectic mixture of both local and imported stylistic elements in architecture and ceramics. In contrast, narratives that posit the existence of a Teotihuacan enclave containing elites who dominated Kaminaljuyu require us to explain why *no* household contexts contain green obsidian, pottery, figurines, or *candeleros* from or inspired by Teotihuacan. Such narratives also must account for the fact that mortuary patterns seen in the tombs of “Teotihuacanos” abroad never have been observed in contemporary Teotihuacan. Although migrations frequently lead to changes in burial practices (Chapter 1), the adoption of so many aspects of Maya funerary rituals would indeed be surprising. Finally, a world-cult hypothesis affords insight into *why* foreign traits were not only tolerated but also embraced by local elite. It considers the Maya as actors, rather than as passive victims.

I have argued that evidence is insufficient to conclude that a resident popu-

lation from central Mexico lived at and dominated the site of Kaminaljuyu. But the elite members of highland Maya society who sponsored the construction of *talud-tablero*-style architecture and who were buried in the tombs of Mounds A and B may have been, in some sense, Teotihuacanos. Participation in a pan-Mesoamerican cult limited to the elite would have created social distance between local rulers and their subjects, particularly if cult members were seen as divine warriors of a foreign god. At late Early Classic Kaminaljuyu, which apparently lacked writing and all but lacked a tradition of carved-stone monuments, social distance was created by erecting foreign-style public architecture (Mounds A and B) and more private buildings (in the Acropolis and Palangana). A hybridized Teotihuacan-highland Maya ethnicity could have been fabricated to create even greater social distance. It is possible, too, that the need for social distinctions led to the early evolution of the myth of foreign origin so common to Postclassic Mesoamerica. Through ethnogenesis, the Maya rulers of Kaminaljuyu may indeed have become Teotihuacanos.

Acknowledgments

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Notes

1. Marion Popenoe de Hatch (personal communication 2001) correctly notes that Guatemalan scholars actively engaged in research at Kaminaljuyu no longer consider such scenarios. Nevertheless, they still dominate the published literature on Kaminaljuyu-Teotihuacan interaction.

2. Both Early and Late Classic structures at Kaminaljuyu tend to be oriented in this fashion. This represents an important shift from the Preclassic pattern of large, open plaza groups oriented northeast to southwest (see Figure 3.1).

3. Structures A-4 and A-5, built in the *talud*-and-cornice style of the Integration phase, contained painted cornices and summit platforms (Kidder et al. 1946:18, 43, Figure 7).

4. George L. Cowgill (personal communication 2001; see Chapter 12:Note 1), however, notes that the method used to stabilize the core of the Feathered Serpent Pyramid was not used in the Moon Pyramid. It may be another feature that makes the Feathered Serpent Pyramid unique at Teotihuacan.

5. This suggestion is based on the distance of the pit to the base of the pyramid, and not to the bottom of the stair. Alternatively, the pit might have been analogous to Graves 5 and 6, which each contained nine individuals.

6. Grave 12 of the Feathered Serpent Pyramid may have been reused when the structure was built, but only after being emptied and modified. That is, Grave 12 does not reflect a pattern of reuse and accretion.

7. Tomb A-I contained a *metate* but no *mano*.

8. In fact, at the time the Feathered Serpent Pyramid was built, cylindrical tripods apparently were not made at Teotihuacan (Chapter 12).

9. This observation is somewhat tautological. Companions often were identified not only by their peripheral positions within the tombs, but also by the lack of accompanying items. Nonetheless, Kidder et al. (1946:74) argue that Skeletons 2 and 3 of Tomb B-I were secondary individuals, and each was accompanied with a pyrite plaque, including the spectacular Veracruz-style example (Kidder et al. 1946:Figure 156). The identification of certain figures, including these two, as sacrificed servitors or companion figures is problematic.

10. The *candeler* was recovered from the fill of Structure B-4 and may have been associated with a destroyed tomb or structure (Kidder et al. 1946:71, 216). A peculiar figurine was found in Tomb A-III (Kidder et al. 1946:214, Figure 168a). It does not resemble examples known from Teotihuacan.

11. White et al. (1998) conducted their study on bone, rather than on enamel phosphate or carbonate.

12. These are Tomb A-I, Skeleton 4 and Tomb B-IV, Skeleton 2. The first is an isolated skull, but because Tomb A-I was opened and reused, we cannot rule out the possibility that this individual once occupied a more central position in the tomb. The fact that he was an adult of middle years at the time of his death suggests that he may have been a principal figure (Wright 2000). Kidder et al. (1946:80) propose that Skeleton 2 from Tomb B-IV is a sacrificed victim, but acknowledge that the accompanying items are more generous than for any other companion figure. The young age of the individual supports their tentative identification. As for Skeletons 2 and 3 of Tomb B-I, the role played by Skeleton 2 in Tomb B-IV is unclear (see Note 9).

13. $\delta^{18}\text{O}_\text{p}$ values from first molars must be adjusted by -0.7% in order to correct for the weaning effect (Wright and Schwarcz 1998, 1999).

14. Lori Wright (personal communication 2000) suggests that this apparent difference is overstated. The phosphate values of these individuals are at the very top of the Kaminaljuyu range as defined by other analyzed samples. Given the small overall sample size, these three values may distort the definition of that range.

15. On the Tikal marker, Siyaj K'ahk' is described as a *kalo'mte'* (perhaps of Tikal), a high title used by the rulers of only a few sites. I speculate that he might have received this title because of a pilgrimage.