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Surface Archaeology in the Chilapa-Zitlala Area of Guerrero, México

Seasons 2 and 3 (2004–2005)



Research Year: 2004

Culture: Guerrero, Olmec, Mezcala

Chronology: Pre-Classic to Post Classic

Location: Guerrero, México

Site: Chilapa-Zitlala Area

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Abstract

This report covers the second (2004) and third (2005) field seasons of the project.

Resumen

Este informe cubre la segunda (2004) y tercera (2005) temporadas de campo del proyecto.

Fieldwork

From February 5 through April 24, 2004, sixty one new sites (CZ-058–CZ-118) were located, mainly in the area around Zitlala and along the Coapala ravine. A total of 125 sites have been located during the three field seasons ([Figure 1](#)). More detailed maps of three of the larger sites located in 2003 were made, and two test pits were excavated at Cerro Quiotepec (CZ-002). Between February 14 and April 5, 2005, survey was carried out to the north of Zitlala and in the environs of Xochitempa. Seven new sites (CZ-119–CZ-125) were located, but most of this season was dedicated to a terrace by terrace collection of lithic material at Cerro Quiotepec (CZ-002) and the excavation of a test pit at Baño Negro (CZ-116).

Proyecto Arqueología de Superficie Chilapa-Zitlala. Temporadas 2003, 2004 y 2005

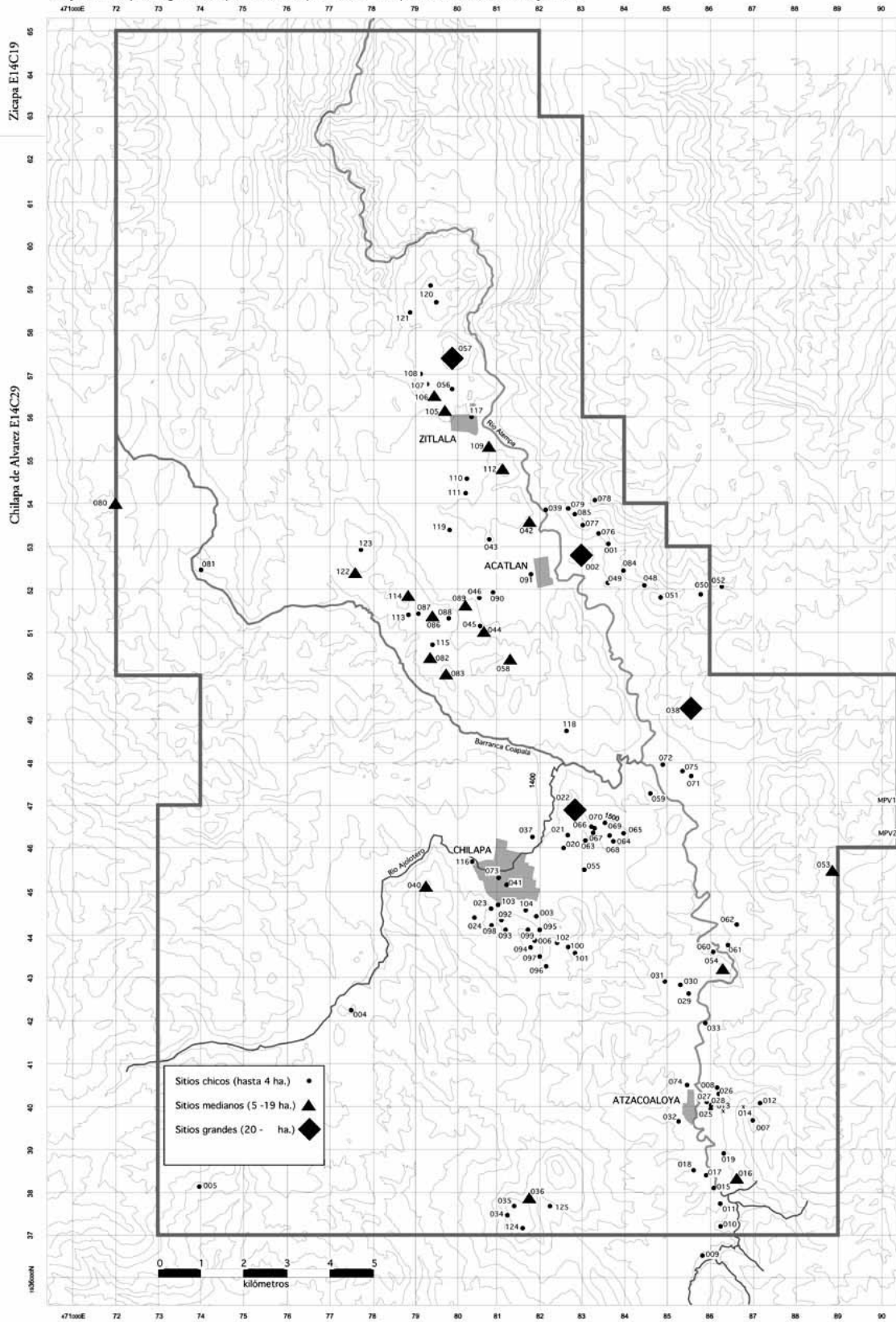


Figure 1. Sites located during the three field seasons.

Sites Located in 2004

CZ-058	Cumulián o Coloxtlán
CZ-059	Iglesia de Nejapa
CZ-060	Casa de Don José Sánchez (en Trigomila)
CZ-061	Tlakolol de la familia Aparicio
CZ-062	Comisaría de Trigomila
CZ-063	
CZ-064	
CZ-065	Pie del Caballero
CZ-066	
CZ-067	
CZ-068	
CZ-069	
CZ-070	
CZ-071	Parcela de Jimón
CZ-072	Casa de Juventino
CZ-073	Frente a la casa del Dr. Augurio Hernández
CZ-074	Atzacaloya pueblo
CZ-075	Entronque Xuchichio
CZ-076	El Hornito
CZ-077	
CZ-078	Oxtopixco
CZ-079	
CZ-080	El Ranchito
CZ-081	Iglesia de Viramontes
CZ-082	Amate Amarillo
CZ-083	Los Izotes
CZ-084	Oxtocapan
CZ-085	
CZ-086	Terreno de Eucario
CZ-087	
CZ-088	
CZ-089	Anexo a La Corona
CZ-090	Loma Lagunilla
CZ-091	Acatlán Libramiento
CZ-092	
CZ-093	
CZ-094	Quiautepec
CZ-095	Trapiche
CZ-096	Iglesia de Acazacatla
CZ-097	Norte de Acazacatla
CZ-098	El Paraíso
CZ-099	
CZ-100	Las Lomas Acazacatla
CZ-101	

CZ-102	
CZ-103	San Antonio (Moyotepec)
CZ-104	Huerta del Dr. Augurio
CZ-105	Tetzatzacoalco
CZ-106	Tecorralco
CZ-107	Lagunita
CZ-108	
CZ-109	Coatetecpan
CZ-110	Tres Marías I
CZ-111	Tres Marías II
CZ-112	Ameltepec
CZ-113	Mohonera Buenavista
CZ-114	El Encanto
CZ-115	
CZ-116	Baño Negro
CZ-117	Zitlala
CZ-118	Villa Magdalena o Tecoyutla

Sites Located in 2005

CZ-119	Abajo de Bachilleres 17
CZ-120	Cuahuitecuyan
CZ-121	Cuahuitecuyan Oeste
CZ-122	Cerro Mazatepec Sur
CZ-123	Cerro Mazatepec
CZ-124	Cerro Bayenatzin
CZ-125	Cerca del Panteón

Maps

Detailed maps of the three largest sites, located in 2003, were made: Cerro Quiotepec, CZ-002; Comango, CZ-038; and Cuauhlopec, CZ-057, plus maps for the larger sites located during 2004 and 2005. These maps were made, mostly by Miguel Pérez Negrete, using a hand-held Garmin Legend GPS, registering points every 5-10 m, while walking the sites, and at key points, such as structure and terrace corners and turns. Although most maps are still in process, Cerro Quiotepec (CZ-002), which includes Oxtotitlán (CZ-001) is illustrated here ([Figure 2](#)).

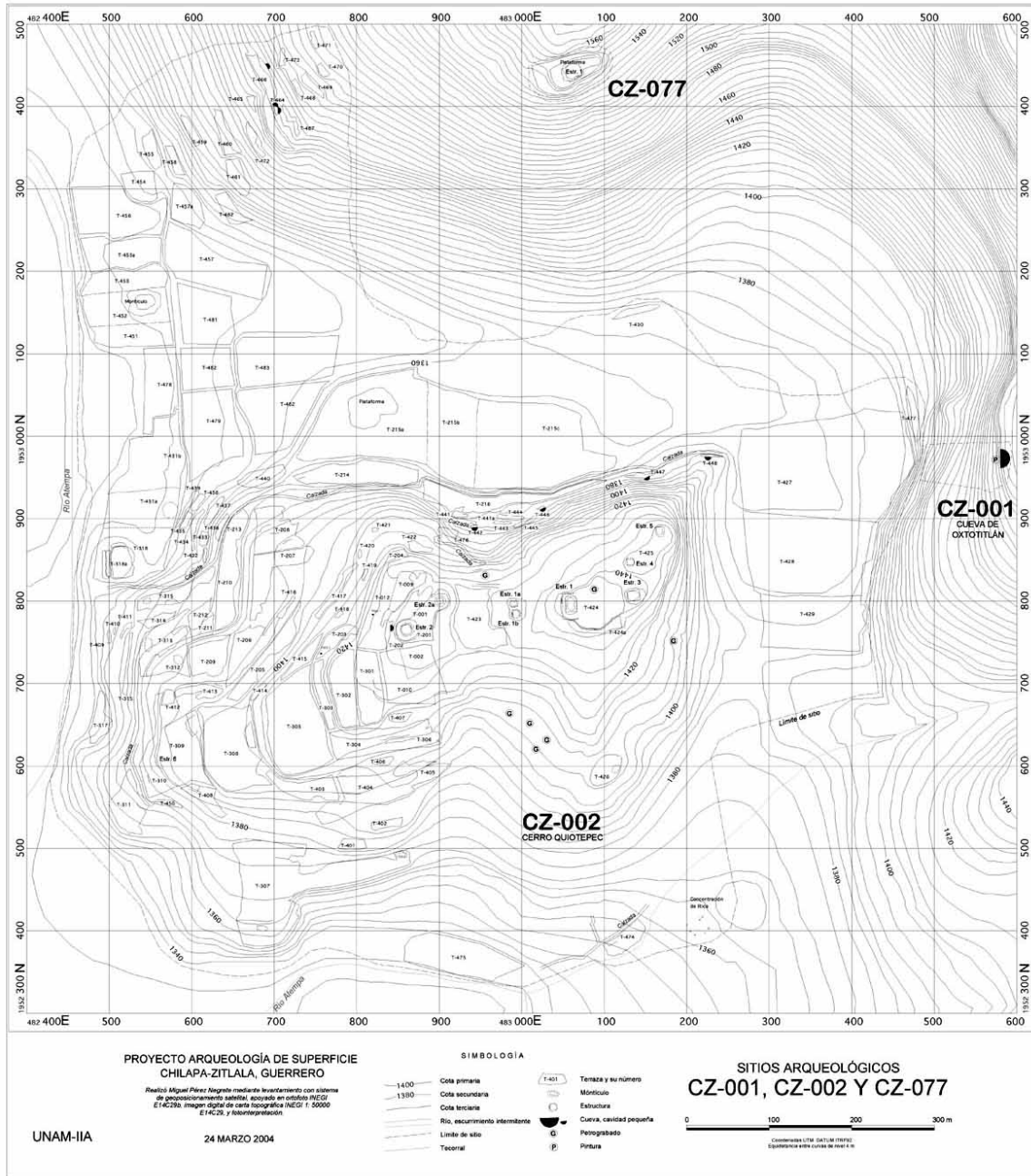
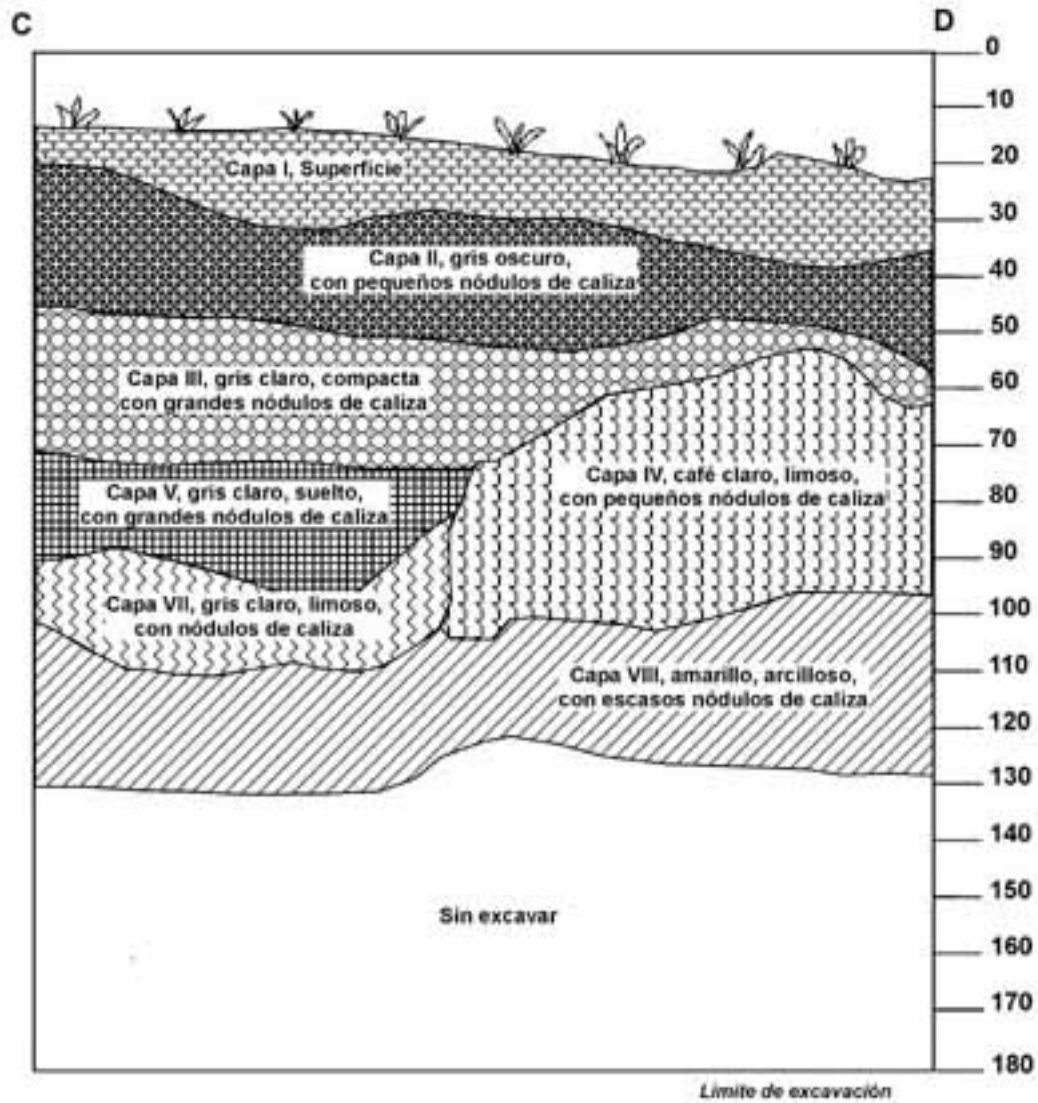


Figure 2. Cerro Quiotepec (CZ-002) and Oxtotitlán (CZ-001).




 UNAM-IA	PROYECTO ARQUEOLOGÍA DE SUPERFICIE CHILAPA-ZITLALA, GUERRERO	SITIO CZ-002 QUIOTEPEC
	Realizó Claudia Alejandra Porras Ibarra	UNIDAD: Pozo 1
	15 abril 2004	TERRAZA: 012 PERFIL SUR

Figure 3. Pit 1, south profile, CZ-002 (drawing).



Figure 4. Pit 1, south profile, CZ-002 (photo).

Test Pits

During 2004, two 1.5x1.5 m test pits ([Figure 3](#); [Figure 4](#), shown above; [Figure 5](#); [Figure 6](#), shown below) were excavated by Claudia Porrás Ibarra on two terraces (Numbers 12 and 203) of Cerro Quiotepec. The location of the pits was selected because the preliminary analysis of surface materials suggested a long sequence might be recovered there; however, materials seem to be restricted to the Middle and Late Formative periods.

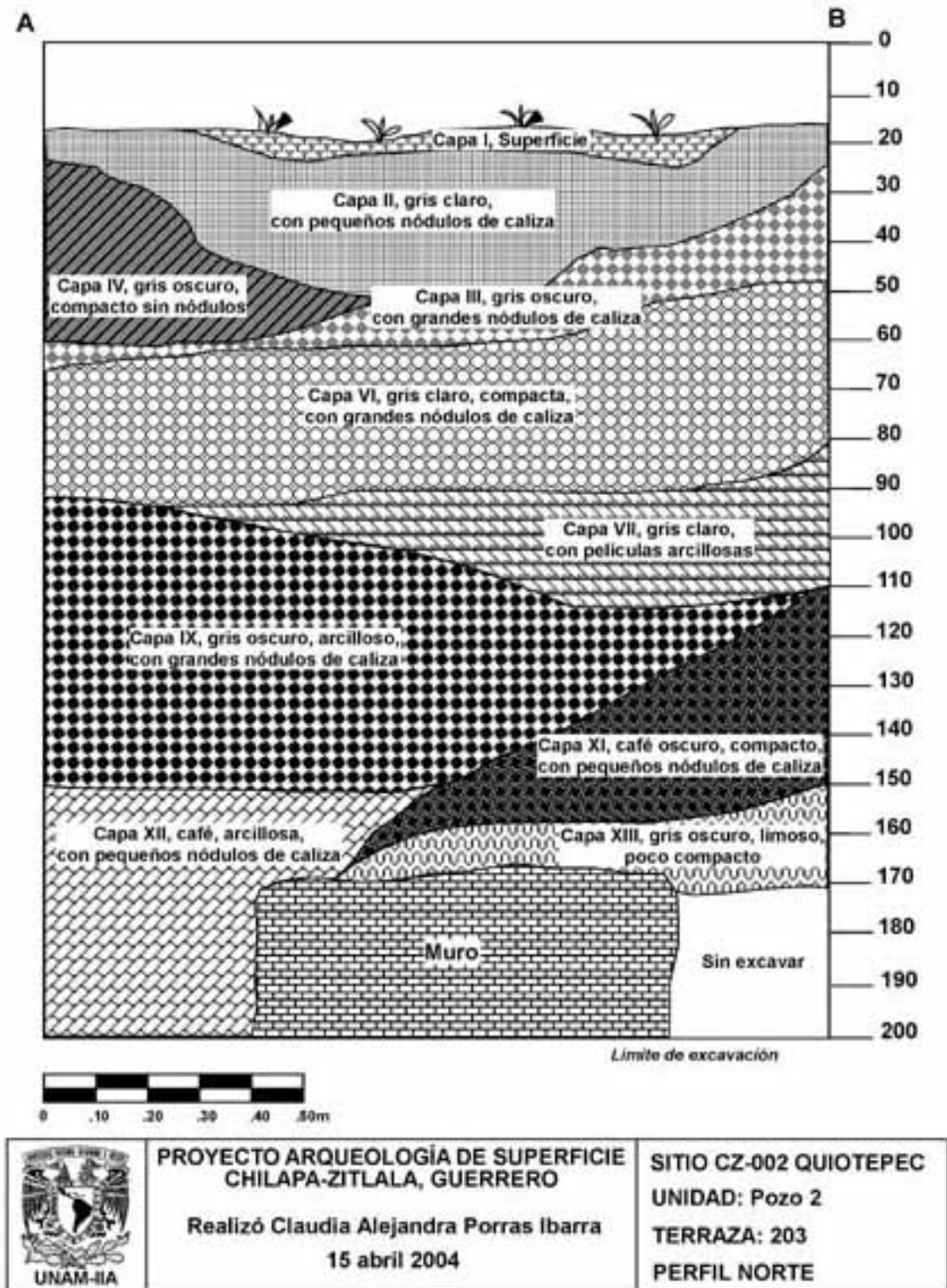


Figure 5. Pit 2, north profile, CZ-002 (drawing).



Figure 6. Pit 2, north profile, CZ-002 (photo).

At Baño Negro (CZ-116), one of the sites located during the 2004 field season, a 3.0x3.0 m test pit ([Figure 7](#); [Figure 8](#), shown below) was excavated by Eliseo Padilla during the 2005 season. Located within a curve of the Ajolotero river, on the outskirts of Chilapa, Baño Negro appears to have been a small residential site.

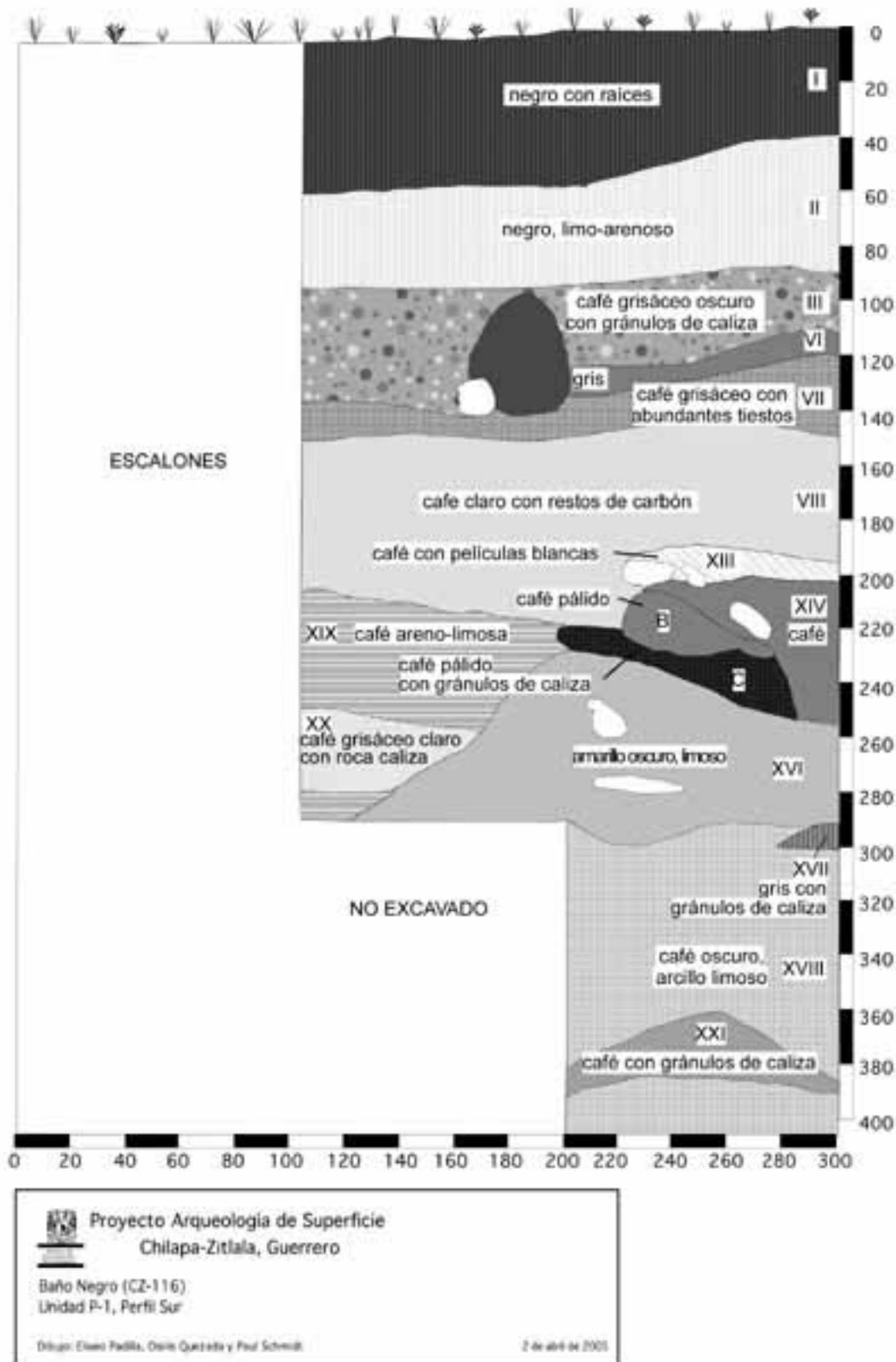


Figure 7. Pit 1, south profile, CZ-116 (drawing).



Figure 8. Pit 1, south profile, CZ-116 (photo).

On leveling more than half the site to build a soccer field, a very large amount of sherds appeared, and in a profile left by the leveling, house foundations could be seen ([Figure 9](#), shown below). The pit was excavated as a salvage project because the rest of the site is on the verge of being destroyed by the municipio, by building either basketball courts or a residential area. Analysis of the material from the test pit is still forthcoming, but there are indications that there may be a long sequence here, from at least the Middle Formative to the Postclassic. Unfortunately, a site which held great promise is going to be lost. I went through all the bureaucracy in an attempt to protect the site, without any effect.



Figure 9. CZ-116. Profile showing a house foundation.

Lithic Survey

During the 2005 field season, Paul Schmidt and Osiris Quezada surveyed the site of Cerro Quiotepec, collecting only lithic material terrace by terrace. There is a large amount of lithic fragments, mostly rhyolite.

Analysis of Materials

Approximately (a few bags still remain to be washed, counted, and marked) 36,300 sherds have been collected over the three field seasons; 24,700 from surface collection and 11,600 from excavation. A total of 5,883 lithic fragments were collected; 5,345 from the surface, and 538 from excavation. Paul Schmidt and Eliseo Padilla are working on the ceramics, while Osiris Quezada is building a descriptive data bank of all the lithics previous to their classification. There were 188 special objects defined as special objects, mostly stone celts and a few figurines.



Figure 10. Gabriel Lima, Claudia Porras, and Miguel Pérez Negrete in the ballcourt at Los Izotes (CZ-083).

Preliminary Conclusions

During the 2004 season, detailed mapping of the three largest sites located, made it evident that my original calculation as to their sizes was quite below reality. Comango (CZ-038), the largest site, covers 135 ha, making it the most extensive site known from the Guerrero Mountain area so far; Cerro Quiotepec (CZ-002) ([Figure 2](#)) extends 79 ha; and Cuauhlo-tepec (CZ-057), at least 37 ha. The remaining sites range from 24 ha to less than 1 ha, most of them aligning along a continuum, between 5 and 0.5 ha. The site size variation would appear to suggest at least three hierarchies, perhaps more, depending on how one groups sites; this is quite a subjective exercise. However, since the ceramics are yet to be classified, and the settlement pattern defined by phases, it is impossible, at this time, to say much about site hierarchies at different times. Three sites with ballcourts have been located; besides Cuauhlo-tepec, mentioned in the previous report, two, much smaller (10 ha each), sites with one ballcourt each, have been located ([Figure 10](#), shown above). All three ballcourts are oriented east-west. Preliminary impressions from one site, Cerro Quiotepec (CZ-002), suggest that its most extensive occupation was during the Middle Formative, perhaps with 300-500 inhabitants; it was occupied through the Postclassic.



Figure 11. Granular White ware.

Miguel Covarrubias (1957) included the area of Chilapa in the sphere of what he defined as the Mezcala style. Recently, Rosa Reyna (1997) excluded it. However, both surface survey and excavation have turned up a large amount of a ceramic ware diagnostic of the Mezcala area: Granular White (Figure 11, shown above), consisting mostly of flat-bottom anforas, decorated with wide red bands (Schmidt 1990: 123-133). A fragment of a greenstone Mezcala figurine was found on the surface at Cerro Quiotepec (CZ-002). Another Mezcala-style characteristic, which occurs in the area, is an architectural feature consisting of stone pegs which decorate the tableros of buildings, such as at Xochipala (Reyna 1997). It is yet difficult to determine the chronological extent of the Mezcala tradition here; in Central Guerrero it appears to range from the Late Formative through the Late Postclassic.

Oxtotitlán, the cave with Olmec paintings (Grove, 1970a, 1970b), is located right next to Cerro Quiotepec. Since the presence of surface ceramics is continuous

between the hill and the cave, I propose that the cave and the hill are actually part of the same site. Preliminary analysis of Cerro Quiotepec's surface material suggests it was inhabited for a long time, from the Middle Formative through Late Postclassic; visible from the easternmost ceremonial area of the hill, the cave was most likely in use as a sacred area during the extent of the site's occupation. Hence, it is likely that the paintings cover the whole sequence. Now that AMS dating can produce results from a milligram or two of organic materials embedded in rock paintings, we should be able to determine whether the cave has the earliest depiction of Tlaloc in Mesoamerica, or it spans a long period of use.

Protection of the Acatlán Area

If a visit is planned to Oxtotitlán, you must first visit the Municipal Commissary's office, where a guide will be assigned. The cave is now fenced with locked doors. For the last two years, Sandra Cruz (INAH) has been cleaning the rock paintings in the cave; in the process, she has done a great job with the community which has led to the people of Acatlán, zealous of their cultural patrimony, setting up a joint community committee with INAH, to protect the cultural patrimony of the community's territory.



Figure 12. Osiris Quezada, surveying for lithics.

Research Team

Our research team in 2004 consisted of Miguel Pérez Negrete and Claudia Porras Ibarra ([Figure 10](#)). Miguel did most of the mapping, while Claudia did some survey and the excavation of the test pits at Cerro Quiotepec. Gabriel Lima, now President of the Neighborhood Board for the Protection of Acatlán's Cultural Patrimony, Municipality of Chilapa, assisted us as a guide, interpreter, and amateur archaeologist. In 2005, my assistants were Osiris Quezada ([Figure 12](#), shown above) and Eliseo Padilla ([Figure 13](#), shown below). Osiris spent most of her time with me resurveying Cerro Quiotepec (CZ-002), this time for lithic material, while Eliseo was in charge of the test pit at Baño Negro (CZ-116). Iliana Miguel ([Figure 14](#), shown below) participated briefly in the survey around Xochitempa, and at the Baño Negro excavation.



Figure 13. Eliseo Padilla and Osiris Quezada, marking sherds and lithics.



Figure 14. Iliana Miguel, at the Baño Negro excavation.

Acknowledgements

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We received invaluable help from various people in the different communities we surveyed in 2004 and 2005. In Acatlán: Gabriel Lima Astudillo, who is practically a full member of the project; Damián Sombra Rita, Municipal Commissary in 2004, Luís Vázquez Herculano, Municipal Commissary in 2005, Uriel Damasillo Cadena, who worked on the excavation at Cerro Quiotepec, and Inocencio Pintor Sánchez, Commissary of Communal Lands, accompanied Osiris and myself in the survey of Cerro Quiotepec in 2005. In Chilapa: Maclovio Ariza Acevedo, the Mayor, and Alfonso Ocampo, Secretary of the Municipality; Prisco García Téllez, Alicia Gutiérrez Sánchez, María de Jesús Gutiérrez Sánchez, Augurio Hernández, Eloy Jaimes Morales, Balam Jaimes Nava, Ricardo Nieto, Esther Romano de Hernández, Víctor Manuel Walle Mejía; Pastor Cuevas Alcocer and Agustín Borjas Calleja, worked at the excavation of Baño Negro in 2005. In Mazatepec: Félix Acatitlán Chino, Municipal Commissary in 2005 and Lorenzo Copeño Zazocoteco, Substitute Commissary. In Nejapa: Modesto Rosales and Juventino Carrera, Municipal Commissary and his substitute, who accompanied us on the intensive survey of Comango; Salvador Arciniega and Alberto Cuevas, teachers at the Telesecundaria. In Trigomila: the Municipal Commissary, Donato Leonardo Jimón, and the Aparicio family, Román and Darío, who showed great interest in our work; to Professor Fermín Cuajicalco Morales, for his support during a difficult community meeting. In Viramontes: Celso Gatica Gutiérrez, Municipal Commissary; Juan Cuevas García y Alfonso Gutiérrez Fiscal, who took us to El Ranchito. In Xochitempa: Cresencio Nava Vázquez, Floriberto Nava, and Fidencio Nava. In Zitlala: special appreciation to the Hilario family, Amancio, Alejandra, and Felipe Tecolapa; to Delfino Marianito, Secretario of the Mayor of Zitlala, for his efficiency.

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