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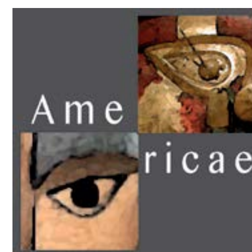

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Claudia García-Des Lauriers

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Claudia García-Des Lauriers : Department of Geography and Anthropology, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona (CA), USA [clauriers@cpp.edu].

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The Regalia of Sacred War: costume and militarism at Teotihuacan

Claudia García-Des Lauriers

Department of Geography and Anthropology, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona (CA), USA
clauriers@cpp.edu

Throughout Mesoamerica costume and clothing formed an important part of marking identity. At the Classic Period site of Teotihuacan, Mexico, this was further reinforced through artistic representations that submerge the body beneath elaborate costume elements marking an individual's identity whether that be in terms of profession, gender, or social rank. In this paper, I focus specifically on the costume of the warriors first defining what the important elements of Teotihuacan warrior garb were, followed by a discussion of the copious number of examples from the Maya area. I conclude this paper with a comparison of portraiture traditions in the Maya region and Teotihuacan and argue that a tradition of emblematic portraiture focused on identities portrayed through costume is reflective of the cosmopolitan society of this great Central Mexican city.

Keywords: Mesoamerica, Teotihuacan, militarism, costume, Classic Period, warriors, iconography, identity.

Las insignias de la guerra sagrada: indumentaria y militarismo en Teotihuacan

En Mesoamérica la indumentaria y la ropa fueron de suma importancia para denotar la identidad. En el sitio clásico de Teotihuacan, México, eso fue reforzado a través de las representaciones artísticas que figuran el cuerpo humano cubierto con los elementos complejos de la ropa, los cuales indican la profesión, el género o el rango de una persona. En este ensayo me enfocaré en el atavío de los guerreros, primero definiendo los elementos básicos de su ropa y después pasando a una discusión sobre una multitud de ejemplos encontrados en el área maya. Para concluir compararé las tradiciones del retrato maya con las de Teotihuacan, planteando que en el México central se desarrolló una tradición de retratos emblemáticos que creaban una identidad a base de la indumentaria y la ropa como un reflejo de la sociedad cosmopolita que habitó en esa gran ciudad.

Palabras claves*: Mesoamérica, Teotihuacan, militarismo, indumentaria, Clásico, guerreros, iconografía, identidad.*

Les insignes de la guerre sacrée : costume et militarisme à Teotihuacan

En Mésoamérique, le vêtement et la parure ont été des marqueurs importants de l'identité. Dans le site classique de Teotihuacan (Mexique), cet aspect était renforcé par les représentations artistiques où le corps humain est largement occulté par un ensemble complexe de vêtements qui indiquent la profession, le genre et le rang de la personne. Dans cet article, on portera une attention plus spécifique au costume des guerriers, en s'intéressant d'abord aux éléments essentiels de son vêtement et en discutant ensuite les occurrences de ces derniers en zone maya. Pour finir, on comparera la tradition du portrait chez les Mayas à celle de Teotihuacan et on proposera que celle du Mexique central se distinguait par des portraits « emblématiques » où l'identité est exprimée par le costume et la parure. Ces derniers seraient à mettre en relation avec le caractère cosmopolite de cette grande cité.

Mots-clés *: Mésoamérique, Teotihuacan, militarisme, costume, période classique, guerriers, iconographie, identité.*

Patricia Anawalt (1981: 3), in her book *Indian Clothing Before Cortes: Mesoamerican Costumes from the Codices*, noted that in Mesoamerica "dress was identity; even a god had to don his proper attire." This point is by no means lost at Teotihuacan where artistic representations abound of figures attired in an extensive array of clothing that encompasses from the simplest body revealing *maxtlatl* or loincloth worn by male figures to the elaborate body enveloping regalia of high-ranking warriors, priests, and deities. The importance of dress at Teotihuacan is visible in the manner in which the most elaborate clothing and costume almost completely obscures the human form. Anonymous bodies become abbreviated into barely discernible arms, hands, legs, and a face, with clothing marking the body and revealing an individual's rank, gender, and social role through embodied symbols that contextualize the wearer within the larger community of actors at Teotihuacan. Bodies are standardized, not unlike the anachronistically titled "portrait" figurines, but through meticulous costumes and small exhaustive decorations, individuality is expressed through rich multivalent body ornamentation (Pasztory 1997).

While many identities were performed at Teotihuacan and portrayed in artistic media, in this paper I would like to focus on the clothing and regalia of the warriors. First,

I will define through iconography and archaeology what made up the military costume of Teotihuacan, followed by a brief discussion of the many examples of this dress found outside of the city. The last section of this essay proposes that, at Teotihuacan, costume and clothing served as the basis for a tradition of emblematic portraiture for the cosmopolitan society of this great Central Mexican metropolis.

THE ICONOGRAPHY AND ARCHAEOLOGY OF MILITARY COSTUME

The study of warrior costume at Teotihuacan is largely focused on an analysis of artistic representations, since many of the materials used to create these adornments were organic and rarely survive in archaeological contexts. Elements made of more durable materials such as jade, obsidian, mica, and shell however, do appear in burials and other contexts allowing us a glimpse of the skilled craftsmanship and beauty of these objects. Examples of Teotihuacan warrior garb are also quite common outside of the city itself with a few examples shown in the art of Early Classic Monte Albán, but many more represented in Early and Late Classic Maya sculpture, polychrome vessels, and figurines. The representations from outside the city serve to reaffirm the importance of these costume and clothing elements and their association with Teotihuacan, but in the case of the Maya representations, they also provide relatively more naturalistic portrayals that help "translate" some of the more emblematic and stylized examples from Central Mexico (García-Des Lauriers 2000). In addition, Early Classic Maya portrayals of Teotihuacan warrior clothing provide a contemporaneous view of these warriors from a society that was in contact with them. However, it is important to note that these images of Teotihuacanos are an etic view of these Central Mexican warriors. While useful, they are from the Maya perspective and add another layer of meanings shaped by the relationships between these two groups of people, and further mediated by how individual Maya artists made these manifest in visual form at the request of Maya elite who commissioned their portrayals.

The warriors' clothing was composed of a number of different elements that, when brought together, were emblematic of this important identity within Teotihuacan society. Perhaps the most essential male garment is the loincloth or *maxtlatl*, however the stepped border loincloth (Figure 1a-b) became an important and commonly worn version associated closely with warriors (García-Des Lauriers 2000; Anawalt 1981). The importance of this stepped-border loincloth as an emblem of the Teotihuacan warrior is reaffirmed by examples from the Maya region of figures represented wearing this item of clothing while in full Teotihuacan-style warrior regalia (Figure 1c-d).

When looked at more closely, this border alludes to the *almenas* used to line the roofs of apartment compounds and temples at Teotihuacan—a subtle architectural reference worn on the bodies of Teotihuacan warriors of the city they defended (Figure 1e-f) (García-Des Lauriers 2000). A vessel from Tikal and the Estela Lisa from Monte Albán both represent a group of warrior/emissaries leaving a place with *talud-tablero* architecture and *almena* lined roofs (Millon 1988: fig. V.19; Marcus 1983: fig. 6.5). Architectural references on clothing are well known for Teotihuacan as documented by Conides and Barbour (2002). It is no surprise that these might also appear on warrior garb especially as these men traveled abroad and represented the great Central Mexican metropolis while on their forays to the Maya region and Monte Albán.

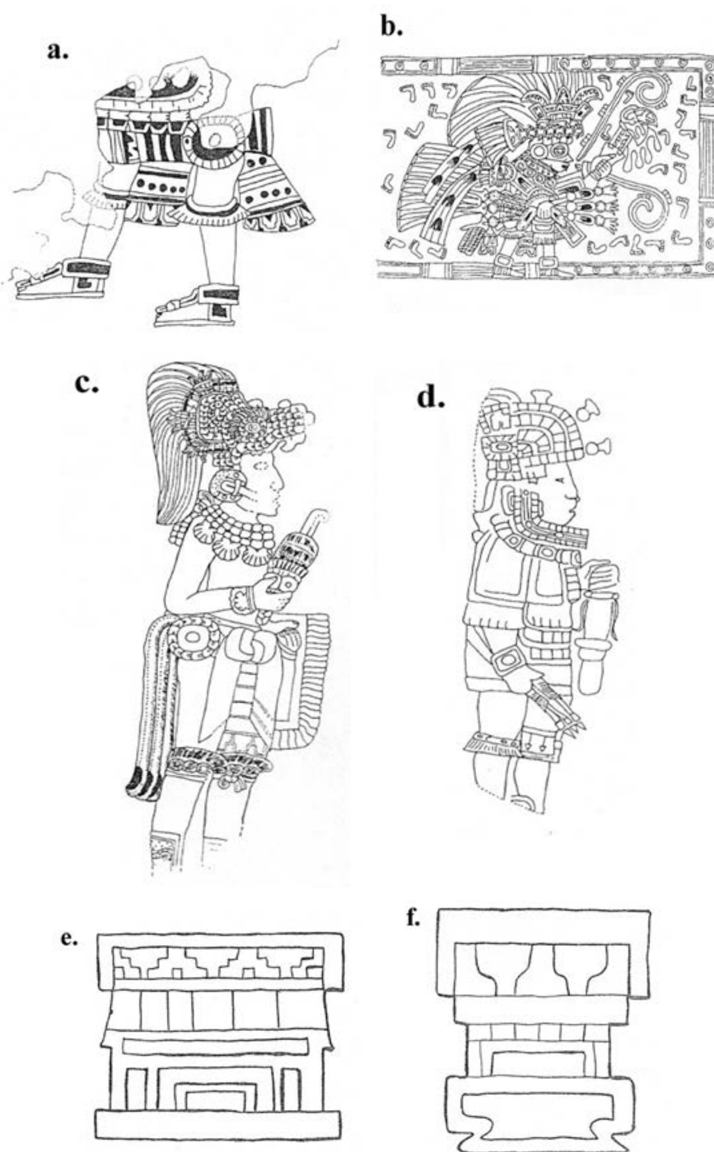

Figure 1. Stepped Border Loincloths: a. Warrior from Zone 3, Platform 14, Room 1, Mural 4 (drawing by author after Miller 1973: fig. 83); b. Warrior from Atetelco, White Patio, Talud mural (drawing by author after Pasztory 1997:

fig. 12.2); c. Nun Yax Ayin from Tikal, Stele 31 (drawing by author after Jones et al. 1982: fig. 51); d. Tres Islas, Stele 1 (drawing by author after Stone 1989: fig. 4); e. Temple Depiction from Tetitla (drawing by author after Séjourné 1966b: fig. 26); f. Temple depiction from a Ceramic Vessel found in Yayahuala (drawing by author after Séjourné 1966b: fig. 26).

While the Teotihuacan warrior costume always began with the compulsory loincloth, it also included a variety of upper body coverings and armor. Perhaps the most common form of upper body garment is a cape that is composed of three and sometimes four rectangular panels possibly made from thick cotton (Figures 1d, 8a). Schele and Miller (1986: 126) describe these garments as capes with broad strips often mistaken for sleeves. The panels protected the chest and arms and were frequently decorated with symbols such as the dripping fluid, Tlaloc imagery or other militaristic motifs. The manner in which they conform to the body of warriors is perhaps best illustrated in the 7th century Lintel 2 from the site of Piedras Negras that celebrates the first *katun* anniversary of the death of Yo'nal Ahk I, Ruler 2's father (Figure 2). Ruler 2 oversees the submission of several youths from Yaxchilan, Bonampak, and Lacanha, all of whom are dressed as Teotihuacan warriors and the text itself refers to Ruler 2 taking possession "of a *ko'haw* or Teotihuacanoid war helmet" (Martin and Grube 2000: 143).

Quilted cotton armor known as *ichcahuipilli* among the Postclassic Aztec was perhaps also present among the repertoire of garments worn by the Teotihuacan warrior (Figure 3a-b) (Anawalt 1981: 46). Most of the Classic period examples of this protective gear come from figurines in which the quilting is indicated by the textured surface of the clay around the torso and legs, suggesting that this represents one of the few limb-encasing clothing elements known for Teotihuacan (Anawalt 1981). An account by the Anonymous Conqueror (Conquistador Anónimo 1971 [1532?]: 368-398) describes this cotton armor as being one and a half to two fingers thick and comments on how effectively it protected warriors from projectile weapons—a detail not overlooked by the conquering Spaniards who quickly adopted it to defend themselves from Aztec weaponry (Anawalt 1981: 127; Bandelier 1877: 109-110). Since the indigenous weapons of warfare changed little from the Classic Period to the Postclassic, it is not surprising to see cotton armor in the repertoire of protective garments worn by Teotihuacan warriors.

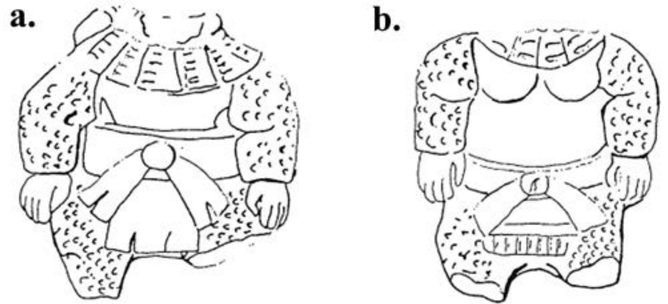

Figure 3. Quilted Cotton Armor at Teotihuacan: a. Figurine fragment from Teotihuacan (drawing by author after Séjourné 1966c: fig. 76); b. Figurine fragment from Teotihuacan (drawing by author after Séjourné 1966c: fig. 76).

Beyond the practical protective gear, high-ranking warriors also further adorned their bodies with elaborate collars and necklaces, back-mirror assemblages, and ornate headdresses. Among the most common neck ornaments worn by warriors were collars made of shell platelet with radiating ornaments such as shells, shell and jade earflare ornaments, and the more dramatic maxillae collars. Radiating shell collars are best exemplified in the Jaguar mural from Techinantitla and in a fragment of a plano-relief vessel published by von Winning (1981) where one can make out a shell collar clearly associated with a platelet shell helmet (Figure 4a-b). Portraits of Nun Yax Ayin from Tikal also show this individual attired as a Teotihuacan warrior wearing one of these shell collars (Figures 1c, 4c). The discovery of Burial/offering 5 in

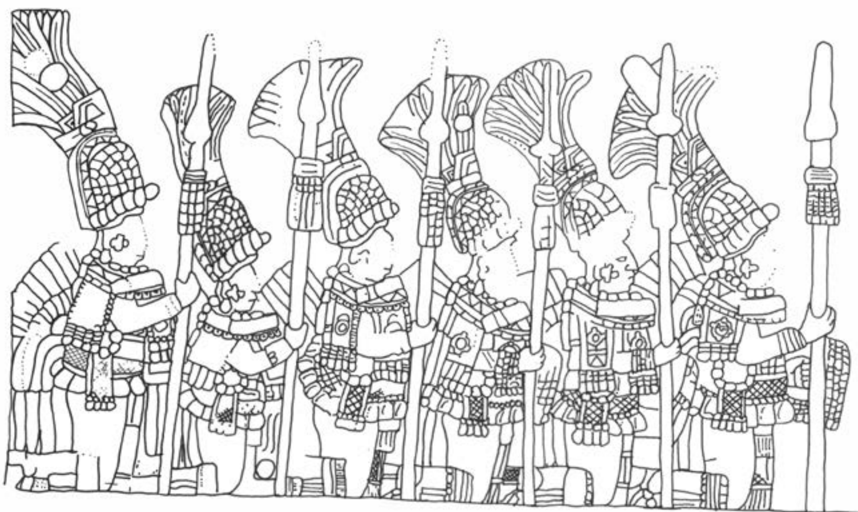

Figure 2. Warriors with Tri-Paneled Cape, Detail, Lintel 2, Piedras Negras (drawing by author after Schele and Miller 1986: Plate 40a).

the Moon Pyramid by Saburo Sugiyama and his team has shed light on the iconography of warrior costume. Individual 5C was interred wearing an ornate collar of shell platelet with radiating shell disks, each further decorated with a jade ear flare (Sugiyama et al. 2004: 29; Sugiyama and López Luján 2006: 33-38). Collars of this sort are worn by some of the most elaborately attired warriors shown on the murals from Techinantitla and the Las Colinas Bowl (Figures 5b-c and 8a).

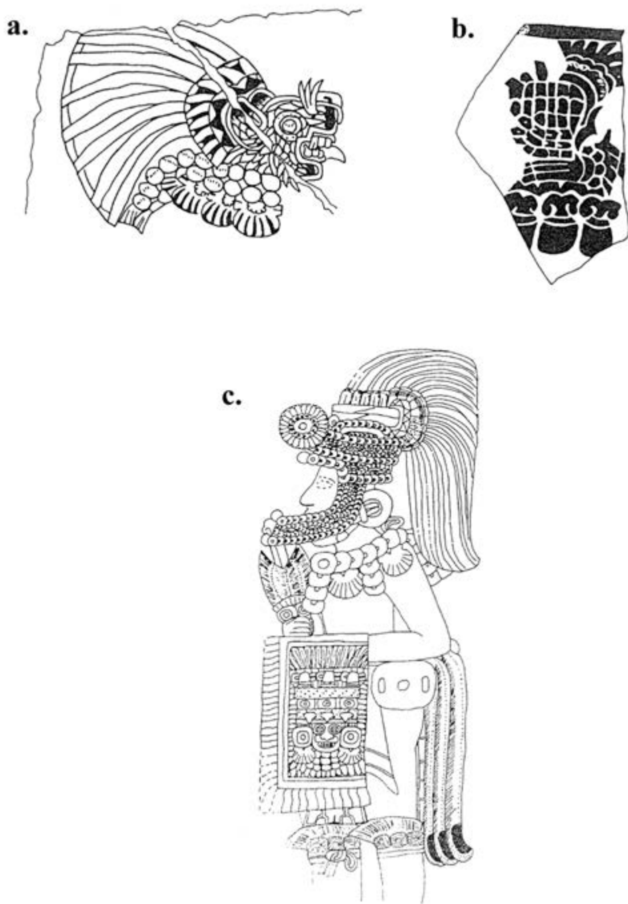

Figure 4. Radiating Shell Collars: a. Detail of Feathered Jaguar Mural, Techinantitla (drawing by author after Berrin 1988: fig. VI.15); b. Plano-relief vessel fragment, Teotihuacan (drawing by author after von Winning 1981: fig. 5); c. Detail, Tikal, Stele 31 (drawing by author after Jones et al. 1982: fig. 51).

The display of symbols of rank and emblems that reaffirm the success of a warrior in battle often form a key component of a warrior's attire. Platelet collars decorated with actual human maxillae and shell replicas discovered in burial/offerings at the Feathered Serpent Pyramid and more recently in Burial/offering 6 in the Moon Pyramid are some of the most striking manifestations of the prowess of individual warriors in the field of battle (Sugiyama 2005; Pereira and Chávez 2006). While actual examples of these collars are limited to figures in sacrificial contexts, the warriors shown on the Las Colinas Bowl don examples of these collars suggesting that they formed part of the costume of living warriors as well (Figure 5a, d). Maxillae collars served to display war trophies, a tradition shared between Teotihuacan warriors and warriors from Oaxaca as indicated by representations of these necklaces from this region (Sugiyama 2005: 171-179).

Mirrors of pyrite mosaic fastened onto a slate backing, similar in fashion to the Aztec *tezcacuitlapilli*, were a key component of Teotihuacan warrior garb. These were worn alone or as the focal point of a larger decorative assemblage that included feathers and coyote tails (Figures 1c, 4c, 8a). Karl Taube (1992a) has cogently pointed out the symbolic importance of mirrors, associating them with portals, faces, eyes, flowers, fire, water, and spider webs. Archaeological examples of these important costume elements from Teotihuacan have been found among the sacrificed warriors in the Feathered Serpent Pyramid and burials in Zacuala Palace among many other examples (Séjourné 1959; Sugiyama 2005). The Esperanza Period burials at Kaminaljuyú and the Margarita Tomb from Copán also contained examples of Teotihuacan-style mirrors (Kidder et al. 1946; Bell et al. 2004: 139). Whiles those from the Margarita tomb at Copán were found in a basket, they are drilled with two holes indicating they may have served as back mirrors or pectorals (Bell et al. 2004). Mirrors found in tomb B-I at Kaminaljuyú however indicate that these were worn

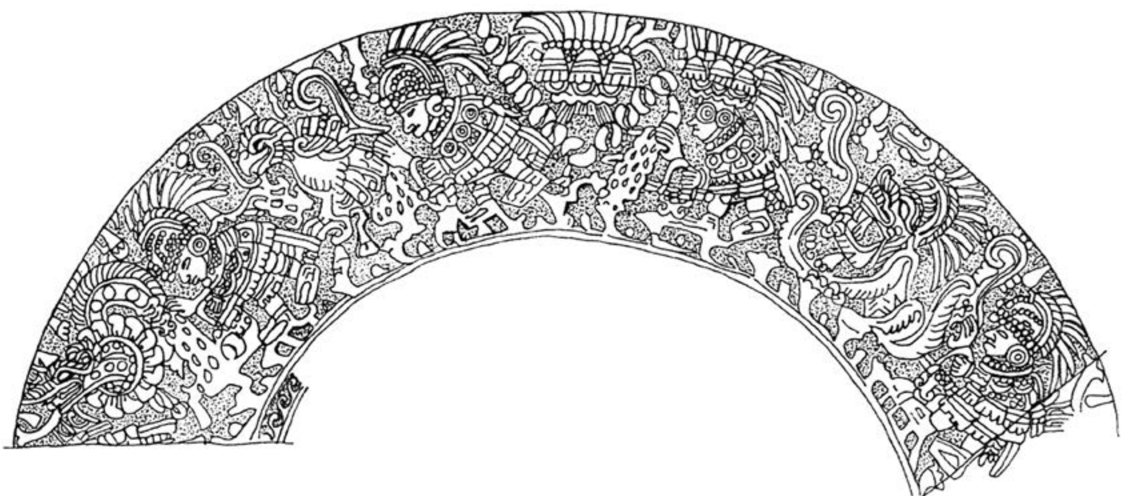

Figure 5. Las Colinas Bowl, The first and last warriors wear maxillae collars (drawing by author after Linné 1942: 68).

on the small of the back corroborating artistic representations of these important objects (Kidder et al. 1946). Ross Hassig (1992) has noted that these lavish mirror and feather arrays along with ornate headdresses may have served as battle standards for Teotihuacan warriors, not unlike the feather ornaments illustrated in the Codex Mendoza worn by later Aztec that helped to identify regiments of warriors (Anawalt 1981).

Weapons are the most obvious identifying feature of a warrior, and the weapons of the Teotihuacan warrior included the *atlatl*, darts, and flexible shield (Figures 1c, 4c, 6). While the *atlatl* in and of itself has a deep history in the Americas as a weapon and hunting implement, the Teotihuacanos created a form that became synonymous with warriors from this city. Examples of spears and round shields are also known from Classic period Central Mexico, but when the Maya, for example, created images of Teotihuacan warriors such as those from Tres Islas, Stele 1 and Tikal, Stele 31, the *atlatl* was a critical marker of identity (Figures 1d, 1c, 4c). The Teotihuacan *atlatl* has a distinct shape, typically adorned with feathers near the spur end, making it look paddle-like in some instances with the end rising from the feather decoration and curving slightly to form the spur where the dart nock rests before being launched. Below the feather decoration, the *atlatl* will have circular grips that look similar to the goggles worn by warriors (Figure 6a-b).

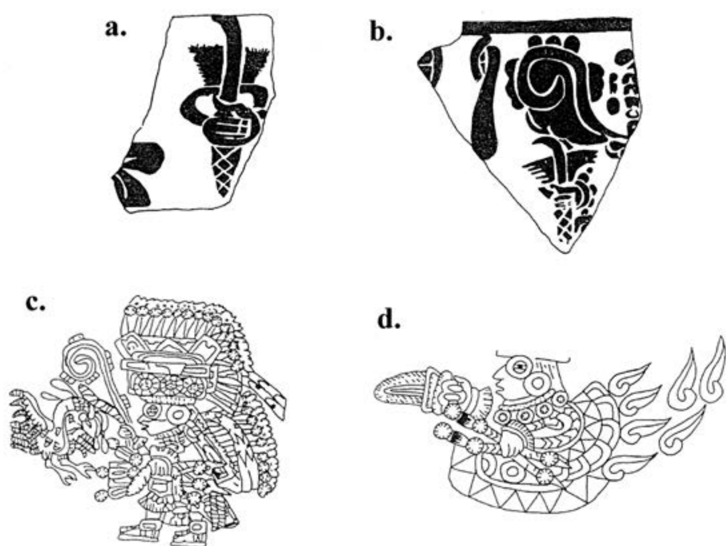

Figure 6. Teotihuacan Weapons of War: a. Atlatl, Fragment of Plano-relief Vessel, Teotihuacan (drawing by author after von Winning 1958: fig. 7); b. Atlatl, Fragment of Plano-relief Vessel, Teotihuacan (drawing by author after von Winning 1958: fig. 7); c. Darts held by Warrior from Atetelco, White Patio (drawing by author after Berrin 1988: VI.32b); d. Warrior bust, Tepantitla, Patio 9, Mural 3 (drawing by author after Miller 1973: fig. 195).

The iconography of the Teotihuacan *atlatl* has been the subject of greater study in recent years by several scholars noting the importance of this weapon's shape and its conceptual link to birds, butterflies, and fire serpents (Taube 2000a; Headrick 2007; Nielsen and Helmke 2008). Annabeth Headrick (2007) suggests strong iconographic and conceptual links between the Teotihuacan *atlatl*, butterflies, and Tlaloc. Teotihuacanos engaged in "visual punning" in their representations of this weapon whose appearance often mimicked or made very strong reference to these beings (Headrick 2007: 129). Jesper Nielsen and Christophe Helmke (2008: 463) have put forward that the Teotihuacan *atlatl* may be a representation of an owl based on a single example from Murals 2 and 3 from Portico 1, Patio 3 of Atetelco. They go on to propose that perhaps these "[…]'owl spearthrowers' were believed to imbue the flight of darts with the same killing speed and precision as a raptorial bird pursuing its prey" (Nielsen and Helmke 2008: 463). Taube (2000a: 298) has also identified "starry spear-throwers" at Teotihuacan and links them conceptually to the Xiuhcoatl, a creature whom he interprets to be a celestial caterpillar and relates it to warrior and butterfly imagery. *Atlatls* in the hands of Teotihuacan warriors were more that mere weapons; they conveyed important messages through their appearance and representations about the cult of sacred war as Taube (1992b) refers to the religious dimension of Classic period Central Mexican militarism.

The main projectile depicted in the art of Teotihuacan is the *atlatl* dart. Darts were carried in conjunction with the *atlatl*, both at Teotihuacan and in depictions from the Maya area (Figure 6c-d). They also appear with soft squared shields as the Teotihuacan emblems of war. The darts usually have a barbed point at the end, presumably of obsidian—a projectile point style closely associated with Teotihuacan. Squared shields made of flexible materials recall similar examples described by Bernal Díaz del Castillo (1963: 228) for the Aztec, which he mentions were rolled up when not in use (Figure 4c). Among the Aztec, these shields were made of cane interwoven with cotton and covered with feathers and other decorations (Conquistador Anónimo 1971 [1532?]: 372-373). Perhaps the shields used by Teotihuacanos were also constructed in this manner, however no examples have been recovered from the archaeological record to firmly confirm this. Yet, depictions of flexible shields suggest a similar construction, especially the example illustrated on Tikal, Stele 31 (Figures 1c, 4c). Both sides of the shield are illustrated revealing that it was held by a strap located behind the shield while the fronts of the protective weapons were decorated with emblems associated with Teotihuacan warfare such as the Tlaloc with tasseled headdress shown on this example.

Of the elements that make up the clothing and costume of warriors at Teotihuacan, it was the headdress that garnered perhaps the most importance. Headdresses ranged from simple headbands to majestic, multi-layered assemblages of feathers, jewels, shells and other precious materials. Headdresses are often laden with symbolism

including an individual's personal name and rank. The importance of the headdresses may be partially linked to the meanings associated with the human head. The head was conceptually linked to notions of self, personhood, and identity throughout Mesoamerica (Houston and Stuart 1998; Houston et al. 2006; Joyce 1998). Among the Aztec, the head is thought of as "the center of social relations," a repository of status, identity, and the *tonalli*, one of the animate essences critical to notions of personhood (López Austin 1996: 182-185). It is not surprising then that headdresses were often the loci for marking status, social identity, and even displayed the name glyphs of individuals as these framed the face as a marker of the individual within the larger parameters of being in a given society (Houston and Stuart 1998; Joyce 1998; Millon C. 1973, 1988; Kelley 1982; García-Des Lauriers 2000).

Among the most important headdresses worn by warriors from Teotihuacan are the year-sign headdress, shell platelet headdresses, and the tasseled headdress. The year-sign headdress worn by figures illustrated in the murals of Atetelco are combined with ornate feather assemblages (Figures 1b, 6c) (García-Des Lauriers 2000; Headrick 2007). This head ornament was associated with Tlaloc, as illustrated by examples of figurines from Teotihuacan and in examples depicted on Late Classic Maya monuments. In the Maya versions, however the basic elements of the Teotihuacan warrior headdresses are embellished with a turban-like structure. The year-sign has often been linked to "the Sun, fire, water, earth, fertility, certain deities… [parentage], ancestors, calendrics and astronomy" (Heyden 1977: 218). At Teotihuacan, there are examples of this symbol linked to calendrics, but in its context as part of warrior costume it is most closely tied to images of Tlaloc in his guise as god of war (Pasztory 1974; Taube 2000a). The link between Tlaloc and martial imagery at Teotihuacan is also strengthened by the shell goggles worn by warriors. These goggles not only connected warriors with this important deity, but also, according to Taube (2000a), gave their faces a skeletal quality: hence, for their adversaries, the goggled countenance of the Central Mexican warrior would have been comparable to looking into the anonymous face of death quite literally.

Perhaps the most commonly portrayed warrior headdress is one identified independently by Saburo Sugiyama (1992, 2005) and Karl Taube (1992b) from a sculpted image carried on the back of the feathered serpent on the façade of the Feathered Serpent Pyramid (Figures 1c, 4c, 5a-b, d). While both scholars identify this figure as a headdress, López Luján, López Austin and Sugiyama (1991) suggest this represents the primordial crocodile, a figure closely tied to calendric cycles. Taube (1992b, 2000a) on the other hand suggests that this represents a helmet made of shell platelet in the form of the Teotihuacan war serpent, a Classic period forbearer of the later Aztec *xiuhcoatl* or fire serpent. The consistent associations of this figure and both zoomorphic and pillbox forms of this helmet with warrior costume suggest that Taube's assessment is perhaps more consistent with iconographic representations. Examples of this helmet are common at both Teotihuacan and in Early and Late Classic Maya images of warriors donning Central Mexican-style attire.

Platelet headdresses, though common in artistic representations, are no mere fancy of the artists' imagination. Actual headdresses have been identified archaeologically at Yayahuala (Séjourné 1966a) and at Zacuala Palace where Séjourné (1959: 64) identified an interred individual wearing "a cap made of plates of red shell." Other examples are known from the Maya region at sites such as Kaminaljuyú and Copán. Tomb B-1 from Kaminaljuyú contains the skeletons of several people, one of which was interred wearing a platelet headdress (Kidder et al. 1946: fig. 31, 161a and d). Platelet helmets have been found in Burial 48 from Tikal, Tomb 1 in Mound 2 from Nebaj, Tomb 5 from Piedras Negras, and in the "sub-Jaguar" tomb at Copán (Coe 1990: 974; Smith and Kidder 1951: fig. 42, 69d; Berlo 1976; Fash and Fash 2000: 445). While a significant number of these helmets come from the Maya area, texts from Panel 2 at Piedras Negras, and iconographic depictions from Early and Late Classic Maya monuments, consistently associate this helmet with Teotihuacan.

Perhaps one of the most important symbols of rank among Teotihuacan warriors was the tasseled headdress, first identified by Clara Millon (1973, 1988), but also the topic of studies by Zoltán Paulinyi (2001), and García-Des Lauriers (2008). While all of these scholars agree that this headdress represents a marker of high rank, I suggest that it served to mark the wearer with the title "keeper of the house of darts" or a Classic Period version of the Postclassic *tlacochcalcatl* title (García-Des Lauriers 2008). My argument is based first on two key examples of this headdress, one from a stuccoed vase now at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) and another from a Plano-relief vessel in the Diego Rivera Collection published by Séjourné (Figure 7a-b). In the LACMA vessel, the tasseled headdress is shown in emblematic form next to a temple whose door is adorned with a shield and darts. The Diego Rivera vessel on the other hand presents a warrior figure shown almost as a funerary bundle centered amidst representations of temples. These temples, I suggest, are Classic period versions of the "house of darts" or Postclassic *tlacochcalco*—an Aztec temple that served as an arsenal for weapons and as locations for the funerary rites of warriors and kings. Ethnohistoric accounts describing Aztec *tlacochcalco* record that the temples were identifiable by images of weapons emblazoned on the doors, a detail clearly visible in the LACMA Vessel (Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas 1947: 187; Francisco López de Gómara 1954, vol. 2: 138).

The headdress itself, however, also yields clues linking it to this important temple and associated title.

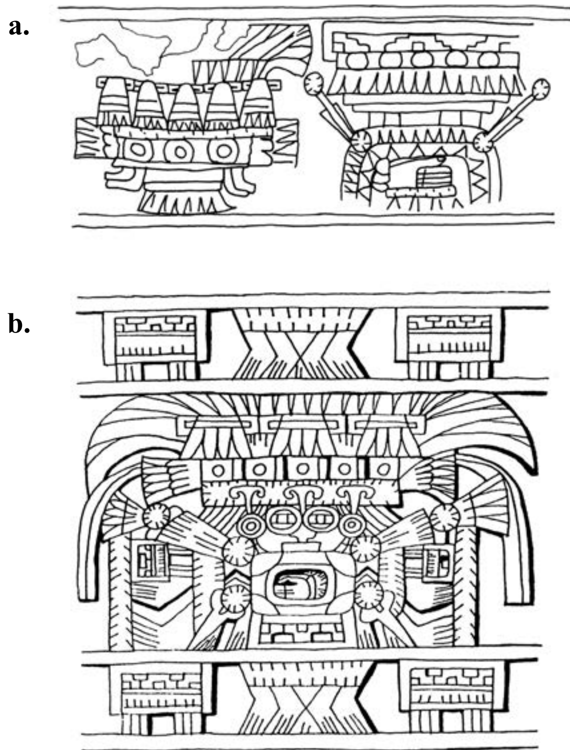

Figure 7. Tasseled Headdress with *tlacochcalco*: a. Stuccoed and painted vase from Los Angeles County Museum of Art (drawing by author after Conides and Barbour 2002: fig. 7); b. Plano-relief vessel from Diego Rivera Collection (drawing by author after Séjourné 1966a: 87).

Examples of the headdress from the Diego Rivera Vessel, Techinantitla murals, and Tikal, Stele 31 clearly show a row of dart points found on the register closest to the head of the wearer along with feathers and a row of tassels (Figures 4c, 7b, 8b). While not all depictions of the headdress have a row of dart points, the motif is not an uncommon aspect of this headdress (Millon 1973, 1988). Tasseled headdresses were made almost entirely of perishable materials, however Séjourné (1959: 64-65) reported that in Burial 27 from Zacuala Palace, five points of gray obsidian, several mica discs, and "drops" were located near the head of the interred individual. The warrior buried under the staircase at Zacuala Palace was buried with what seems to be a tasseled headdress.

The importance of these dart points is that they appear in the headdress in a similar fashion as glyphic versions of the *tlacochcalcatl* title from the Postclassic Period manuscripts. In examples from the Matricula de Tributos, Florentine Codex, and the Codex Mendoza the *xiuhuitzolli* headdress is further marked by a feathered dart (Figure 9). Another important detail that has parallels in the Postclassic is that, among the Aztec, the "keeper of the house of darts" was a high ranking warrior, closely tied to the emperor, and bearers of this title would be sent to serve as governors of conquered communities. In the case of the Classic Period tasseled headdress, it not only appears at Teotihuacan, but also at Tikal (Plano-relief vessel, Stelae 31 and 32), Kaminaljuyú, Yaxhá (Stele 11), and Monte Albán (Stelae 7 and 8) (Martin and Grube 2000: 31, 35; Kidder et al. 1946; Millon 1988: fig. V.17, V.19; Marcus 1983; fig. 6.5). Unlike other examples of Teotihuacan warrior costume like platelet helmets, flexible shields, *atlatls*, tri-paneled capes, and stepped-border loincloths that continue to appear in Maya art well after the fall of Teotihuacan, the tasseled headdress appears largely on objects dating to that Early Classic period or that depict or record direct contacts with Teotihuacan warrior emissaries that took place largely during this period. I do not here argue that the Classic Period bearers of this headdress should be seen as governors of conquered communities necessarily, but I do believe that they represent, whether in their roles as warriors or emissaries, the interests of the Teotihuacan state not unlike the Postclassic *tlacochcalcatl*.

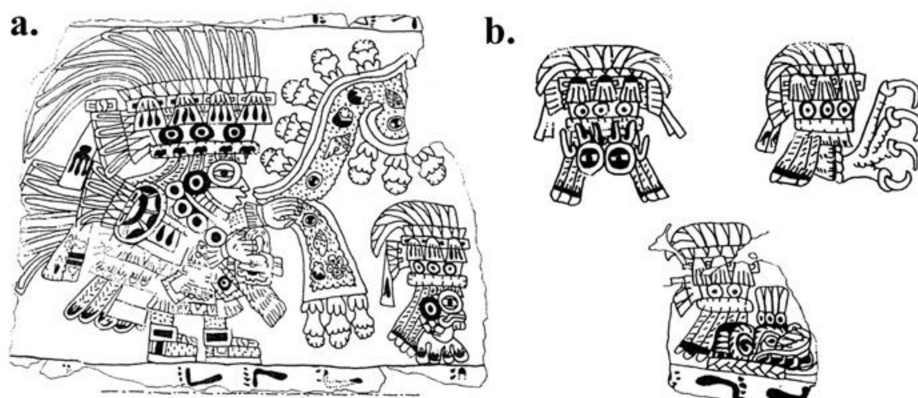

Figure 8. Tasseled Headdress: a. Techinantitla, Mural of Processional Warrior (drawing by author after Millon 1988: fig. V.1); b. Tasseled Headdress glyphs from Techinantitla (drawing by author after Millon 1988: fig. V.3-5).

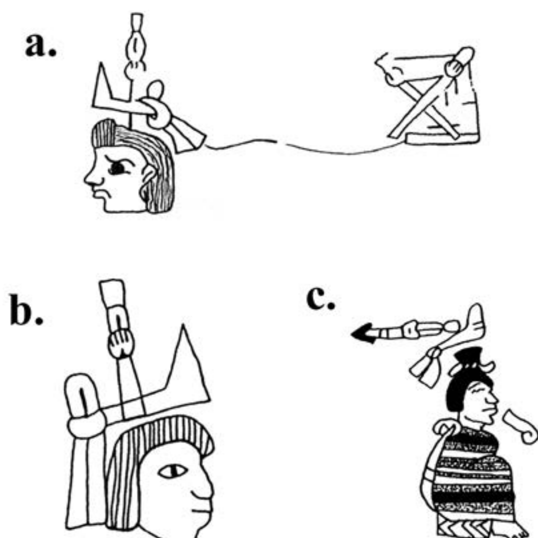

Figure 9. Tlacochcalcatl Tecuhtli Title: a. Detail, Folio 1v of the Matricula de Tributos (1980); b. Folio 17r of the Codex Mendoza (drawing by author after Berdan and Anawalt 1997); c. Folio 76 in Book 8 of the Florentine Codex (drawing by author after Sahagún 1950-1982).

TEOTIHUACAN WARRIOR COSTUMES ABROAD

Before moving on to a discussion of costume and emblematic portraiture at Teotihuacan, I would like to briefly address the issue of the many examples of Teotihuacan warrior costume outside of the city—namely in the Maya area. The question of Teotihuacan's influence on different regions of Mesoamerica entered into the discourse of Mesoamericanist archaeology with publication of the excavations at Kaminaljuyú (Kidder et al. 1946). Evidence of Teotihuacan interactions at this important Early Classic highland Maya site was initially interpreted to reflect the important role that this Central Mexican city played in the development of social complexity in the Maya region (see Sanders and Price 1968; Sanders and Michels 1977; Cheek 1977). Since this first major discovery of Teotihuacan's presence in the Maya area, much has been written about the nature of those contacts particularly as evidence of intense interaction was discovered at Tikal, Copán, Kaminaljuyú and sites in the Tiquisate and Escuintla regions of the Pacific coast of Guatemala (Kidder et al. 1946; Hellmuth 1975, 1978; Berlo 1983, 1984, 1989; Bove 1990, 2002; Bove et al. 1993; Bove and Medrano Busto 2003; Stuart 2000; Fash and Fash 2000; Braswell 2003a; Sharer 2003; Bell et al. 2004). The evidence ranges from potential single contact events between Teotihuacan and the Maya to evidence of more enduring interactions (Pendergast 1971, 2003; Ball 1974, 1983; Millon 1988: fig. V.17; Berlo 1992: fig. 9; Marcus 2003).

Prevailing perspectives on the matter of Teotihuacan and the Maya include "externalist" views, which see Teotihuacan as having a strong and intrusive impact on Maya culture and politics during the Early Classic Period (Sanders and Price 1968; Stuart 2000; Fash and Fash 2000; Fash 2002; Braswell 2003b; Nielsen 2003). "Internalist" perspectives make a more Mayacentric assessment, often interpreting Teotihuacan influence as nothing more than the Maya practicing "elite emulation" of Teotihuacan cultural traditions (Stuart 2000; Fash and Fash 2000; Braswell 2003b). Within these larger frameworks there is a continuum of thought exemplified by those who believe Teotihuacan had an extensive commercial empire that included control over some prominent Maya centers such as Tikal, Copán, and Kaminaljuyú (Sanders and Michels 1977; Santley 1989; Nielsen 2003), while other scholars actively seek to interpret Teotihuacan influence as the result of Maya elites appropriating aspects of Teotihuacan culture to legitimize their authority, but not having strong direct connections with the metropolis itself (Stone 1989; Iglesias Ponce de León 2003). The application of these various models is contingent on the site and period under discussion. For the Early Classic, both models are germane and their application depends only on the individual site or region under study. For the Late Classic Maya, Teotihuacan was no longer a strong political center with direct interregional influence, and the elite emulation hypothesis seems more reasonable for the centuries after the collapse of the Teotihuacan state (Stuart 2000; Stone 1989).

The question of Teotihuacan and Maya relations is one that still garners much controversy—especially in terms of how they should be interpreted. Much of the literature currently present on Teotihuacan's external relations focuses on the Maya region that, Cowgill (2003: 324) points out, is only the easternmost expression of Teotihuacan's presence outside of the Basin of Mexico. Moreover, Cowgill (2003: 324) suggests that perhaps research on the larger theme of "Teotihuacan abroad" is necessary, and that it should be framed within a broader Mesoamericanist perspective with more attention given to regions located between Teotihuacan and the Maya area. In other words, that the discussion of Teotihuacan interactions be understood as a much larger phenomenon with evidence of contacts being found in many sites throughout Mesoamerica including those in the Maya area, and that this evidence represents a greater diversity of interactions than currently presented by either internalist or externalist perspectives. Part of adopting this broader perspective includes more research in areas located in between Central Mexico and the Maya.

In terms of Teotihuacan warrior garb, the larger dialogue of Teotihuacan and Maya relations shapes how the many examples of this form of dress are interpreted. First of all, the question of chronology cannot be overlooked, and it is clear from recent evidence that Teotihuacan maintained external relations of diverse kinds with many regions in Mesoamerica almost from the beginning of its history. Sarah Clayton (2005) recently noted that

imported ceramics from the Maya region have been found at Teotihuacan in contexts dating as early as the Late Preclassic. In the coastal region of Guatemala at the site of Balberta, contexts dating to around AD 200 represent some of the earliest evidence of contacts outside of Central Mexico (Bove and Medrano Busto 2003: 53). The history of interactions between Teotihuacan and the Maya region is complex in its unfolding through time and space with most of the representations of Teotihuacan warrior garb dating to the Early and Late Classic. Early Classic examples known from Tikal, Copán, Tres Islas, Yaxhá, Kaminaljuyú and other centers reflect important relations either direct or indirect with Teotihuacan, while the Late Classic examples represent a combination of elite emulation and of a recognition of earlier historical relations between the Maya region and Central Mexico (Stuart 2000; Stone 1989; Braswell 2003a, 2003c).

Another important issue relating to the presence of Teotihuacan costume elements in the Maya region is whether they are symbols relating to the Central Mexican state or whether their appropriation by the Maya also meant manipulating their symbolism for self-serving political purposes (Stone 1989). Addressing this issue in its entirety is beyond the scope of this paper, however I will briefly mention two prominent examples that show the complexity of the issues at hand. Platelet headdresses, in their pillbox and war serpent forms, appear from the Early Classic clear through the Late Classic in the Maya area (Taube 1992a, 2000a; Stone 1989). Some glyphic versions may represent titles or bestow the wearer with some kind of authority (Martin and Grube 2000: 143; von Winning 1981). While platelet headdresses were worn by high ranking warriors also at Teotihuacan, their persistence in the Maya region after the fall of Teotihuacan suggests that they may not have been associated with the state apparatus exclusively, but with more general concepts of sacred war as described by Taube (1992a, 2000a).

The tasseled headdress, on the other hand, is another important marker of high-ranking warriors and appears in the Maya area and Monte Albán as mentioned earlier. I argue that this headdress marked the wearer as the "keeper of the house of darts" or *tlacochcalcatl* in charge of the weapons of war and other associated rituals conducted at the *tlacochcalco* (García-Des Lauriers 2008). As also mentioned, the examples known from the Maya region date to the Early Classic or make reference to events that took place during this period. This, along with the specific iconographic contexts, suggests that this may be one of the few symbols that we can securely link to the Teotihuacan state. In sites where depictions of the tasseled headdress appear, it is worth exploring the possibility of direct contacts with emissaries or warriors representing the interests of the Teotihuacan state, rather than assuming that these represent only emulation.

What does all of this mean in terms of military costume? For the Maya, Teotihuacan military costume formed an important part of the symbols associated with this polity, and Maya kings appropriated these military symbols as a means of elevating their own status as warriors. Maya kings draped themselves in tri-paneled capes, stepped border loincloths, war serpent headdresses while carrying *atlatl* and darts. These military symbols were potent partly because of the skill and success of Teotihuacan warriors and perhaps because of their organization in the field of battle (Hassig 1992). Military trophies such as the maxillae collars worn by the sacrificed warriors in the Feathered Serpent Pyramid and the captives sacrificed as offerings to the Moon Pyramid are testaments to the skill of the Teotihuacan warriors in the field of battle and in taking captives. Especially individuals in Burial/offering 5 who show strong ties to the Maya region (Spence and Pereira 2007; Pereira and Spence 2004; Pereira et al. 2004; Sugiyama and López Lújan 2006; Sugiyama et al. 2004; White et al. 2007) suggesting that at some point some Maya may have witnessed the skill of Teotihuacan warriors directly.

Moreover, Maya kings may have been drawn to the ethos of self-sacrifice present in the Teotihuacan military. Again we can cite some 200 individuals, many of them warriors that are sacrificed beneath the Feathered Serpent Pyramid (Sugiyama 2005; Cabrera 1993; Cabrera et al. 1991). Furthermore, the abundant butterfly imagery on *incensarios*, murals, and ceramic vessels found at both Teotihuacan and the Maya region has been shown to be associated with the souls of dead warriors and self-sacrificial themes (Berlo 1983, 1984, 1989; Taube 1992a, 2000a). For Maya kings who were expected to let their own blood for the maintenance of cosmic cycles, Teotihuacan warrior costume signified a parallel vision that could be mobilized to convey their power and legitimate their rule—a message that continued to have resonance in the Maya area even after the decline of the great Central Mexican metropolis.

ANONYMOUS BODIES AND EMBLEMATIC PORTRAITS

In her recent work on gender, women's roles, and embodiment, Rosemary Joyce (1998, 1999, 2000, 2005) has emphasized the complex discourse of identity encoded in body ornamentation throughout Mesoamerica. Costume and clothing were an intrinsic part of marking identity on the body, however among the Preclassic Olmec and the Classic Period Maya the social identities made manifest through elaborate regalia were also accompanied by the carefully recorded identity of individuals through a well recognized tradition of portraiture. Recent work by Houston et al. (2006; Houston and Stuart 1998) has shown the important confluence of text, image and personhood among the Maya. Especially in the case of word *baah* that refers to an individual's head and body more generally, portraits, and was also

used when speaking of an individual's participation in god impersonation (Houston et al. 2006: 53-101). Among the Classic Period Maya, there was not a strict division between image, portrait, and personhood. Portraits of rulers were seen as more enduring embodiments of that individual's self—ones that transcended the mortality of the body (Houston et al. 2006).

For Teotihuacan, artistic representations of bodies were largely anonymous and this anonymity was reinforced in the standardization and use of molds for example in the production of figurines (Pasztory 1997). The human form becomes a canvas for layering identities and the most elaborate of these costumes, those presumably worn for the most important of occasions and by the most elite of warriors, almost completely envelope the human form. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the depictions of warriors from Techinantitla, where only the hands, face, and legs are visible—the rest of the body becomes merely a frame for the elaborate costume signifying these figures' rank and identifying attributes as warriors. In other cases, even the face is obscured in part by nose ornaments in the shape of snake rattles and *talud-tablero* platforms (Figure 7a). The image of Kuba Nyim Kot a Mbweeky III in state dress from Mushenge, Zaire, now Democratic Republic of Congo (Kleiner and Mamiya 2006: 196), serves as an ethnographic analogy from Africa that may clarify what I mean about the Teotihuacanos showing bodies laden with costume elements. Kuba Nyim Kot a Mbweeky III is adorned with elaborate ornamentation such that the only part of his body visible to onlookers is his face (Figure 10). The formal state dress plays an important role in transforming this person into an "embodiment of the office of sacred kingship," underscoring the importance of creating social distance through costume and clothing (Kleiner and Mamiya 2006: 205). This example from Africa helps bring to life in a comparative way the art of Teotihuacan allowing for a more nuanced view of costume traditions in this Central Mexican state. Like Kuba Nyim Kot a Mbweeky III, the high ranking Teotihuacan warriors become embodiments of their office and role as defenders of the central Mexican metropolis.

The importance of dress and the lack of a portrait tradition at Teotihuacan like that of the Olmec or Maya may have something to do with the make-up of Teotihuacan society and its military. We know from excavations by Sergio Gómez (2002) that an enclave of people from West Mexico was present at Teotihuacan. More extensive studies by Michael Spence (1976, 1989, 1990, 1992, 1996; White et al. 2004a) and Evelyn Rattray (1977, 1987, 1989) have reported on the presence of the Oaxacan and the Merchants' Barrios populated by people from Oaxaca and Veracruz respectively. Karl Taube (2003) has also proposed that, while there was no Maya Barrio *per se*, literate Maya individuals may have resided at Tetitla. Studies by Price, Manzanilla and Middleton (2000) also point to the importance of

Figure 10. Kuba Nyim (ruler) Kot a Mbweeky III in state dress with royal drum in Mushenge, Zaire (now Democratic Republic of the Congo). Photograph by Eliot Elisofon, 1971. Image no. EEPA EECL 2137. Reproduced with permission of the Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives, National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution.

foreign immigrants to the fabric of Teotihuacan society. While White et al. (2004b) point to evidence from the Tlajinga 33 apartment compound that indicates that foreigners were readily accepted, assimilated into Teotihuacan society, and attained high status alongside their Teotihuacano neighbors.

The seamlessly cosmopolitan nature of Teotihuacan society is also reflected in its military. Strontium isotope studies of a sample of warriors sacrificed in the Feathered Serpent Pyramid conducted by White et al. (2002), reveal that the Teotihuacan military included members who were born outside of the city, but spent significant years in residence at Teotihuacan. These soldiers were buried alongside people who had spent their whole lives at Teotihuacan, and individuals who had been born in Teotihuacan, and spent time away from the city (White et al. 2002). While the strontium signatures merely tell us about the geographic areas of origin and not the specific ethnic identity of these individuals, they do provide an indication that the Teotihuacan military was as cosmopolitan as its society.

The anonymity of bodily representation at Teotihuacan may have been a strategy of creating greater focus on the social identities marked by costume and clothing and less on the individual person performing these duties. In the case of warrior costume, these elements

of clothing and costume were the means through which individuals, regardless of where they came from, would embody the offices available to them. This idea is further suggested by the relatively large number of representations of disembodied costume elements—including headdresses, loincloths and other elements of clothing. The symbolism and importance of these bodily adornments perhaps superseded the need of the human body to give them meaning.

Yet, is it entirely accurate to argue that no individual identities were ever recorded at Teotihuacan? My answer to this is no. The Techinantitla murals and perhaps the Las Colinas Bowl may be examples of emblematic portraits of individuals—in this case high ranking warriors within Teotihuacan society. In the Techinantitla murals, there is a group of lavishly attired high-ranking warriors all shown wearing tasseled headdresses. Glyphs located in front of each of these figures include a tasseled headdress reaffirming the notion that this is an important title, but each is then modified by a varying element—a Tlaloc face, flaming eyes, an eagle claw and other modifiers (Figure 8a-b). Karl Taube (2000b) has suggested that these may have represented the name glyphs of these individual generals. The Las Colinas Bowl follows a similar pattern of processing warriors who are marked by individual glyphs (Figure 5). It is important again to note that their individuality is not shown through the features of their faces or bodies, but rather these are emblematic portraits—identities made manifest by costume and glyphs. Another possible example comes from texts from Tikal, where Stuart (2000) suggests that Spearthrower owl is named as a regent from Teotihuacan, yet we know of no portraits of this individual who is instead largely known from his name glyph—the owl and weapon symbol.

The emblematic portraiture of Teotihuacan is not altogether dissimilar from Marsden Hartley's, *Portrait of a German Officer*, painted in 1914 to memorialize his deceased partner Karl von Freyburg (Figure 11) (Hughes 1997: fig. 220, 367-370). Hughes (1997: 368) eloquently notes that "Hartley assembles [in this portrait] the 'things that were,' the symbols and emblems worn by von Freyburg or marking his chivalric role." He goes on to call this work a "'submerged' representation, which can be made out as a veritable totemic figure composed of the emblems of von Freyburg's military profession…" (Hughes 1997: 370). In the same fashion, the Teotihuacanos assembled on the anonymous bodies of these warriors captured in paint and clay, the emblems of their rank, their profession. In his emblematic portrait, Hartley, rather than following traditional conventions of European portraiture, focused on the individual's identity as an officer signified by his uniform and his identity revealed only by his initials placed on the lower left of the painting—an alphabetic equivalent of the modifiers accompanying the tasseled headdress glyphs in the Techinantitla murals (Figures 8 and 11).

Figure 11. *Portrait of a German Officer*, Marsden Hartley, 1914. Oil on Canvas. 68 1/4 x 41 3/8 in (173.4 x 105.1 cm), Alfred Stieglitz Collection, 1949, Accession number 49.70.42. Reproduced with permission of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

CONCLUSIONS

Teotihuacan military regalia served both practical and symbolic purposes. It both protected the body of the warrior, but also marked these individuals with the symbols of their social role as warriors, and their rank within warrior society. Moreover, despite their seemingly anonymous countenance, some of these warriors were marked as individuals through their costume elements in a form of emblematic portraiture. Teotihuacan military costume encoded both the ritual and social meanings performed by Teotihuacan warriors at home and abroad. For Maya kings, these potent symbols of military power were borrowed and reinterpreted in an effort to embody their power. As the example of the tasseled headdresses suggests, some aspects of warrior garb and its symbolism continued into Postclassic times as a form of Classic period Central Mexican heritage adopted and reinterpreted by later groups such as the Aztec. Through symbolism, ritual, and embodiment, the regalia of sacred war at Teotihuacan forged a common corporate identity that unified the diverse members of the military orders of this great Classic Period metropolis.

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