

C H A P T E R T W O

BOYS AND GIRLS INTERRUPTED

Mortuary Evidence of Children from Postclassic Cholula, Puebla

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INTRODUCTION

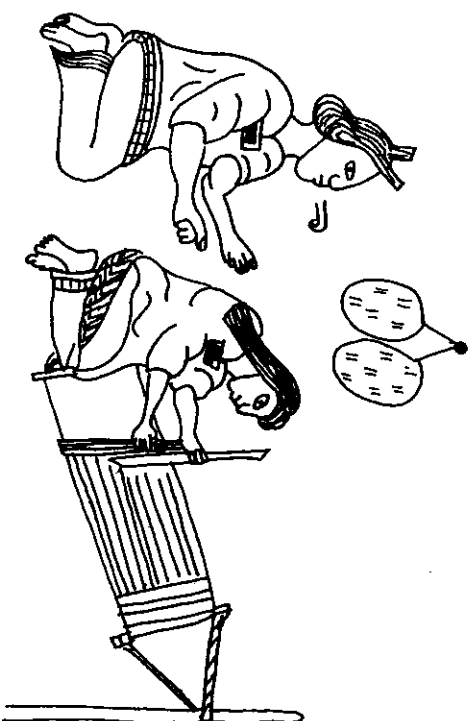
Just as women were left out of historical reconstructions of ancient Mesoamerican culture a mere ten years ago, children have also been consistently overlooked. Ethnohistorical accounts by chroniclers such as Bernardino de Sahagún (1950–1982) provide faint glimpses of Aztec child-rearing practices, and the *Códex Mendoza* (1992) outlines the process by which children were introduced to adult roles (Galnek 1992; Joyce 2000, 2001). These vague hints parallel the minimal representation that women had in Colonial sources (Hellbom 1967; Nash 1978; Brown 1983; McCafferty and McCafferty 1988, 1991, 2000a; Rodríguez 1988; Brumfiel 1991, 2001; Burkhardt 1997; Joyce 2000, 2001).

The goal of this chapter is to flesh out the skeletal outline of sub-adults in pre-Hispanic Cholula. Our study focuses on mortuary remains from Cholula (Puebla, Mexico), an urban center that reached its maximum size in the Postclassic period (900–1520 CE) (see Figure 1.1). Extensive

excavations in the ceremonial precinct around the Great Pyramid recovered over 400 interments (Noguera 1937; Romero 1937; López, Lagunas, and Serrano 1976), most of which date to the Postclassic. Additionally, eighteen skeletons from the Early Postclassic UA-1 house offer a domestic perspective on Cholula mortuary practices (McCafferty 1992).

Mortuary data is presented on age, sex, position, orientation, and grave goods. These statistics are used to reconstruct patterns for Infants (less than one year old), Children (1–13 years old), and Juveniles (14–21 years old). The combined study group of Infants, Children, and Juveniles might be better termed “sub-adults.” We prefer, however, to stick with a more vernacular “children,” making the distinction between lower-case “children” when referring to sub-adults, but capitalizing “Children” when referring to the 1–13-year age group. The mortuary patterns for children are then compared with those of adult males and females in order to infer the process by which the normative social identities of “man” and “woman” were attained. Based on Sahagún’s (1950–1982) extensive accounts, information is available for stereotypical male and female gender roles, including descriptions of ambiguous and alternative identities (McCafferty and McCafferty 2000a). Following Sahagún, Aztec males were characteristically engaged in farming, hunting, fishing, warfare, and commercial craft production. Adult females were more closely associated with domestic tasks, such as cooking, child-care, spinning, and weaving. These stereotypes are more closely linked to elite practice with greater fluidity of occupation probably found among commoners and servants.

Very little is said about children and their associated roles in the ethnohistoric records. In several accounts newborns are referred to as a “precious necklace, precious feather, precious greenstone, precious bracelet, [or] precious turquoise” (e.g., Sahagún 1950–1982, 6:176). The *Codex Mendoza* (1992) describes the process by which children grew to adulthood, taking on progressively more complex responsibilities: cooking, spinning, and weaving for girls; and hunting, fishing, and warfare for boys (Cahnek 1992; Figure 2.1). Following Rosemary Joyce (2000, 2001), childhood is a process of enculturation during which adult identities are learned and achieved. The death of a child, then, could be construed as a case of “girl (or boy) interrupted,” with the mortuary ritual reflective of a stage in the “girling” or “boying” process (after Joyce 2001). Mortuary ritual is obviously more complex than simple reflection, so the patterns apparent in the archaeological record must be interpreted carefully in relation to the normative patterns of adults or alternative identities perhaps indicative of age grades associated with



2.1: *Children in the process of learning adult skills* (drawn by S. McCafferty after *Codex Mendoza*, 1992, 3:60r).

childhood or adolescence or even other socially meaningful categories (Crawford 2000; Sofaer Derevenski 2000). The Cholula burial data provide an exceptional basis for studying these processes.

DEATH IN POSTCLASSIC MEXICO

Postclassic Cholula was a multicultural society that was likely dominated by the Nahua ethnic group and, therefore, probably shared many cultural attributes with the better documented Aztecs of the Basin of Mexico. At the same time, Cholula’s archaeological record allows for the empirical evaluation of ethnohistorical data and can serve as a caution against overly simplistic generalizations. The Aztecs believed that different fates awaited the deceased depending on the cause of death (McKeever Furst 1995). The most common burial practice was cremation. Sahagún (1950–1982, 3:44–45) describes the actual cremation:

And then it came to pass that [the old men] had ornamented [the dead one], then they took him to the fire. And the little dog they first slew; thereupon [the dead one and the dog] burned. Two sextons took great care of [the dead one]. And some of the sextons were gathered singing. And when the body of [the dead one] already was burning, they took great pains with it; they kept packing it down. And the body crackled and popped and smelled foul. And when it had come to pass that they burned it, thereupon

they placed it in a heap[.] they piled up the embers. And they said: "Let him be bathed"; thereupon they bathed him—they threw water on him, they kept wetting him, they made a slush. When it cooled, once again they placed the charcoal in a heap. Thereupon they dug a round hole in which to place it: a pit. This they called a cave. . . . And likewise [it was done with] the noblemen as well as the commoners. When they had burned [the body], they sorted out, they gathered up all [his] bones. Into an earthen vessel, into a pot, they put them. Upon the bones they placed a green stone. They buried [the pot] in the home.

The deceased was burned along with his/her worldly possessions in preparation for the journey to Mictlan, the land of the dead located in the distant north.

[W]hen men died, [their kin] burned with them all their baskets with insignia, their shields, their obsidian-bladed swords, and all the things [they had wrested] from their captives, and all their capes, and all which had been their various clothing. . . . Likewise, [if it was] a woman, all her baskets, her waist bands, her divided cords [for holding up the textile], her skeins, her shurles, her barens, her cane stalks, her combs also all burned with her. (Sahagún 1950–1982, 3:43)

Other goods, including wooden figures, smoking tubes, and clothing, were bundled up and burned at intervals after the funeral as offerings to Mictlantecuhli, the lord of the underworld (ibid., 43–44). If the deceased was a noble, then slaves were killed and cremated to accompany him to the afterlife (ibid., 45):

And some became the companions [of the dead one]—the beloved slaves, perchance a score of the men as well as so many of the women. Thus they said: as they had taken care of their lord, they yet made chocolate for him, they yet prepared food for him. And the men who had served them as messengers just so would care for them in the place of the dead.

Diego Durán (1971:121–122) also described the Aztec burial practices:

Some people were buried in the fields; others, in the courtyards of their own homes; others were taken to shrines in the wood; others were cremated and their ashes were buried in temples. No one was interred without being dressed in his mantles, loincloths, and fine stones. In sum, none of his possessions [was] left behind; and if he was cremated, the jar which received his ashes was filled with jewelry and stones, no matter how costly. Dirges similar to

our responses were chanted, and [the dead] were mourned, great ceremonies taking place in their honor. At these funerals [people] ate and drank; and if [the deceased] had been a person of quality, lengths of cloth were presented to those who had attended the funeral. [The dead man] was laid out in a room for four days until [mourners] arrived from the places where he had friends. Gifts were brought to the dead man; and if the deceased was a king or chieftain of a town, slaves were killed in his honor to serve him in his afterlife. His priest or chaplain was slain. . . . He was killed so that he might perform the ceremonies in the afterlife. They slew the chief steward who had served him, the cup bearer, the male and female humpbacks, and the dwarfs who had been in his service. . . . They killed the grinders of corn so that these women might grind and prepare tortillas in the other world. The deceased was not to suffer poverty; therefore, he was buried with immense riches: gold, silver, jewels, precious stones, fine mantles, earplugs, bracelets, and feathers. If he was cremated, together with his body were burned those who had been slain to serve him [in the afterlife]. The ashes [of the victims] were mixed together and thus stirred [and] were buried with great solemnity. The funeral rites lasted for ten days filled with sorrowful, tearful chants.

Mortuary ritual from the early Colonial period is described by Bartolomé de Alva in his *A Guide to Confession Large and Small in the Mexican Language*, 1634 (Alva 1999:83): "When someone died . . . did you accompany, bury, and wrap each one of them up with he nequien cloaks, tobacco, tunplines, sandals, money, water, food, [and all] unbeknownst to the priest?"

This practice is illustrated in the *Codex Magliabechiano* (Boone 1983; Codex Magliabechiano 1983:56), where the deceased is wrapped in a cloak and tied with rope. Offerings that accompany the burial include precious stones, a metal bell, and a ceramic vessel. These are shown attached to the wrapped bundle and might also be within the wrappings. A feather headdress rests on top of the bundle.

In contrast to these Aztec practices, Gabriel de Rojas (1927:164, translation by author) described the indigenous burial practice at Cholula: "When they died they were buried in front of an idol, in a round hole, not lying extended but rather drawn up or squatting." The distinction between cremation among the Aztec and direct, primary interment as at Cholula is one likely distinction between the two Postclassic cultures. For example, numerous pots each containing cremated remains and usually a single greenstone bead were found by Sisson at Late Postclassic Coxcatlan Viejo (1974:31–33), part of the Aztec empire to

the south of Cholula. Otherwise, however, relatively few Aztec cremation burials have been found. Non-cremation burials have occasionally been found in Postclassic residential areas, as at Cihuatecpan in the Valley of Mexico (Evans and Abrams 1988), Tetla-11 at Chalcatzingo (Norr 1987) and Cuexcomate and Capilco (Smith 2002) in the Valley of Morelos, Tula (Healan 1989), and Coxcatlan in the Tehuacan Valley (Sisson 1973, 1974). In part because of the scarcity of Postclassic burials, especially of adults, Michael Smith (2002:108-109) suggests that there may have been cemeteries perhaps associated with public buildings or with older parts of sites. In this sense, the hundreds of Postclassic burials found at Cholula's Great Pyramid (López, Lagunas, and Serrano 1976), largely abandoned during the Middle and Late Postclassic, may constitute such a cemetery.

In contrast to the mortuary ritual of adults, Aztec children were believed to have a different destiny. Sahagún's *Primeros Memoriales* (1993, 2:151n42) noted:

And he who died when he was a rather young child, and indeed still a babe in the cradle, it was said, did not go to Micltlan, but only went to Xochitlapan. It was said that there stood a tree of udders, there [at which] the babies suckled. Underneath it the babies were opening and closing their mouths; the milk dripped into their mouths.

This paradise was located in the heavens and was presided over by Tonacatecutli, the lord of all created things, who gave life to all animate creatures (Sahagún 1950-1982, 6:115). Jill Leslie McKeever Furst (1995:25-26) writes that these young souls took the form of birds or butterflies while they awaited the chance to return to earth to repopulate during the next world age.

Diego Durán (1971:441) describes the Feast for the Little Dead, *Micailhuitonli*, which took place in August and "commemorated innocent, dead children. . . . In the solemn ceremonies of this day offerings and sacrifices were made to honor and venerate these children." Offerings of chocolate, candles, and food were made during this festival. Live children were incorporated in the rites as "a thousand diabolical inventions" were used to protect them, including haircuts; anointing with tar, feathers, and soot; beads; and little bones. From the list of confession questions (Alva 1999:85), women were asked:

When your child died, did you put your breast milk on him with a reed? Did you bury it with him? Or where you buried him: do you go there to spill and pour your breast milk on him?

Based on this survey of ethnohistorical information on mortuary practices in Postclassic central Mexico, cremation was clearly identified with the Aztecs. Grave offerings, including both material objects and sacrificed attendants, were burned to accompany the deceased to the land of the dead. These offerings represented the same goods used in life and therefore reflect, at least to some degree, the status and occupation of the deceased. Young children, who "had not reached the age of reason" (McKeever Furst 1995:26), faced a different fate upon death, and this would be potentially reflected in distinct burial practices, although the sources do not comment on this. Since most of the previously mentioned information was recorded about the Aztecs, it should not be assumed that all cultures of central Mexico shared these practices. In the case study to be discussed, Cholula was a multiethnic community that shared some religious practices with the Aztecs, but also had its own unique patterns that reflected a distinctive cultural mix.

INTRODUCTION TO CHOLULA

Cholula is located in the Puebla/Tlaxcala valley of the central highlands, east of the Basin of Mexico. The site was founded in the Middle Formative period (ca. 1000 BCE), and at least by the Late Formative it was developing as a regionally important ceremonial center (McCafferty 1996). The Great Pyramid of Cholula, known as the *Tlachihualtepetl* ("artificial mountain"), evolved over at least fifteen centuries to become the largest pyramid in the world, with a palimpsest of accruing symbolic meanings (Figure 2.2; McCafferty 2001). The Great Pyramid was abandoned at the end of the Early Postclassic period (ca. 1200 CE) when Nahuatl Tolteca-Chichimeca took control of the city and created a new ceremonial center in what is still the civic-administrative center of San Pedro Cholula. Although the city developed around the "new" Pyramid of Quetzalcoatl, the old *Tlachihualtepetl* pyramid retained ritual importance as the center for mountain worship dedicated to *Tonacatecutli* and a rain deity called *Chiconauquahuitl* (Rojas 1927; Durán 1971; see also McCafferty 2001). The old ceremonial precinct also continued as a prominent place for ritual interments (López, Lagunas, and Serrano 1976) as hundreds of Postclassic burials were placed in and around the abandoned buildings.

Although there has been extensive exploration of the ceremonial precinct around the Great Pyramid, minimal archaeological exploration has been done in the surrounding urban zone. Consequently, little is known of domestic patterns from any period of the city's history. One



2.2: Great Pyramid of Cholula, view from the south.

exception is a house dating to the Middle and Late Tlachihualtepl phase of the Early Postclassic period (900–1200 CE), roughly contemporary with the final stage of the Great Pyramid (McCafferty 1992, 1996). The Structure 1 house was discovered during the UA-1 excavations on the campus of the University of the Americas (Wolfman 1968; McCafferty 1992). It comprises four rooms, a sweatbath, and porch areas immediately outside of the structure. Evidence of burning and in situ deposits on the house floor suggest a cataclysmic destruction and rapid abandonment of the structure (McCafferty 2003). Included with occupation and immediate post-abandonment contexts were skeletal remains of eighteen individuals, mostly children.

CHOLULA MORTUARY DATA

Between the 1930s and the 1970s, extensive excavations were conducted at the Great Pyramid under the direction of Ignacio Marquina (Marquina 1951, 1970, 1975; Messmacher 1967). Known as the Proyecto Cholula, the project sought to discover the architectural history of the pyramid by digging tunnels into the interior of the mound and clearing exterior

surfaces, especially on the south and west sides. In the course of these excavations, hundreds of human skeletons were recovered (Romero 1937; López, Lagunas, and Serrano 1970, 1976). By far the most comprehensive publication on these remains was that of Sergio López, Zaid Lagunas, and Carlos Serrano in their monograph *Enterramientos Humanos de la Zona Arqueológica de Cholula, Puebla* (1976). This volume presents the methods used for skeletal analysis, results of the analyses grouped by chronological period, and a discussion of ceremonial interments. Tables identify the age, sex, burial position, and orientation of each burial and list grave goods by individual.

The original report distinguished between a group including unborn, neonatals, and perinatals, and a group including infants (1–13 years), juveniles (14–21 years), and adults. For the purpose of our present analysis, the unborn, neonatal, and perinatal categories have been collapsed into a single “Infant” group, and the Proyecto Cholula’s “infant” category will be termed “Children.” Juveniles were occasionally identified by sex, as were adults, although no rationale was given for how these determinations were made.

In adapting the Proyecto Cholula data for the current reanalysis, we have combined those burials from periods Cholulteca II and III. According to the chronology used by the original investigators (Müller 1970, 1978), these would date to after the abandonment of the Great Pyramid, or roughly 900–1520 CE. Problems with the Postclassic chronology used by the Proyecto (discussed in McCafferty 1996), however, blur the distinctions used to separate these two phases. Consequently, burials from the two phases are considered together.

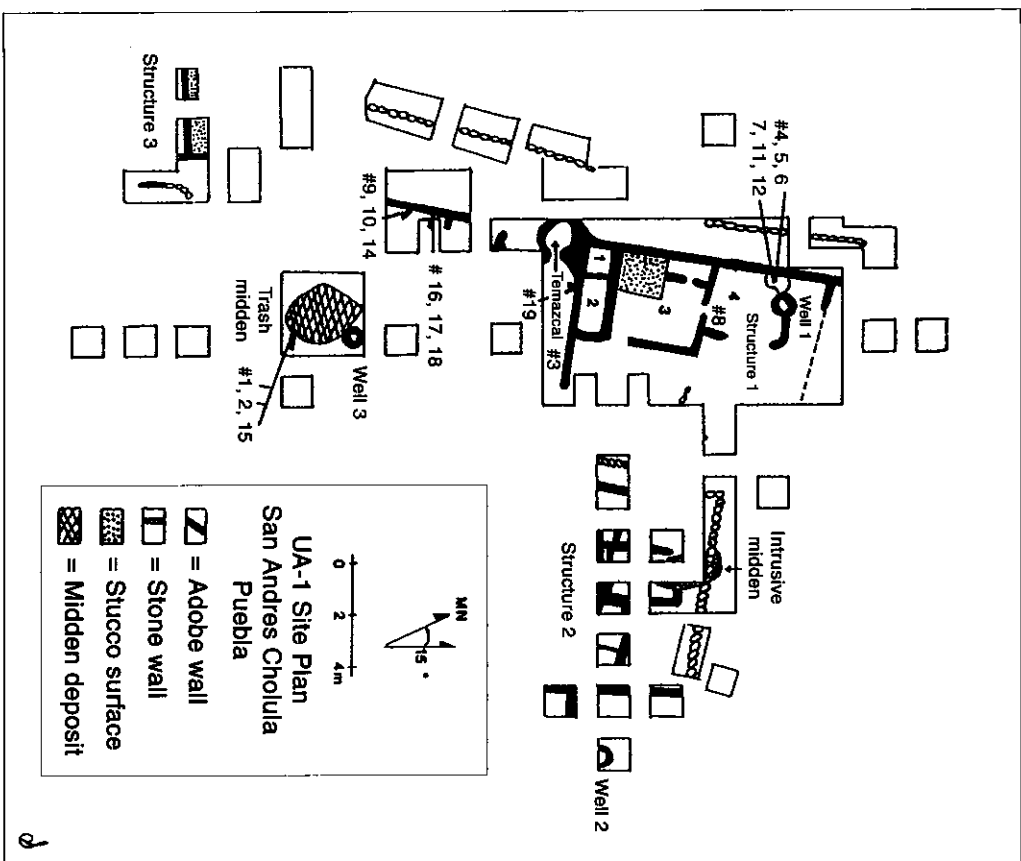
The Proyecto Cholula recovered 440 burials (López, Lagunas, and Serrano 1976:24, table 4), of which 1 dated to the Preclassic, 17 were from the Classic period (Cholula II and III), 55 were Epiclassic (Cholula IV and Cholulteca I), 346 were Postclassic (Cholulteca II and III), 19 dated to the Contact period (Cholulteca IV), and 2 were of undetermined date. Classic period burials were generally buried in a flexed position on the side, with males more often oriented east to west and females buried north to south (based on the head-to-foot axis). The burial pattern during the Epiclassic period was radically different, suggesting larger cultural changes. Individuals were nearly all cremated with their remains placed in large ceramic vessels. Most of the burials were of adults. Mortuary patterns for the Postclassic are distinctive with most individuals buried in a flexed seated position and oriented to the north. This varied pattern suggests a dynamic cultural landscape, as is indicated by ethnohistorical accounts (McCafferty 2003).

Although plans of the ceremonial zone indicate the general location of burials from each time period, they are at a large scale and therefore not useful for understanding much about burial contexts. Photos do show particular burials, so additional information is available in these cases.

Skeletal remains of nineteen individuals were found at UA-1, eighteen of which were associated with the Early Postclassic Structure 1 house. Preliminary identification of the skeletons was prepared by Dr. Arturo Romano of the Museo Nacional de Antropología and reported in Wolfman's preliminary report (1968; also McCafferty 1992:143-157, 207-220). An isolated mandible of an adult (individual 13) was found on the surface, but the remaining burials were found in and around Structure 1 (Figure 2.3). Burials 1, 2, and 15 were fetuses all interred together in a Torre Polychrome bowl associated with a large trash midden. Burials 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, and 12 were buried together in a pit dug through the floor of Room 4; since some of the cranial remains projected above the floor level it is speculated that they were interred a short time after the house was abandoned but before the adobe walls began to collapse (Figure 2.4). An adobe retaining wall enclosed four of the individuals, but Burials 11 and 12 were placed outside that wall. Burials 9, 10, 14, 16, 17, and 18 were buried together against an exterior adobe wall that connected with the north/south wall of Structure 1 and, based on seriation analysis of associated ceramics, these burials were probably interred before the abandonment of Structure 1 (McCafferty 1992:463). Single burials included Burial 3, found against the exterior wall and covered by wall collapse; Burial 8, which was placed in a pit through the stucco floor before the construction of a wall connecting Rooms 3 and 4; and Burial 19, found above the floor level near the intersection of two interior walls. Since all of these individuals were buried during the occupation or shortly after the abandonment of the house, it is likely that they were members of the household group.

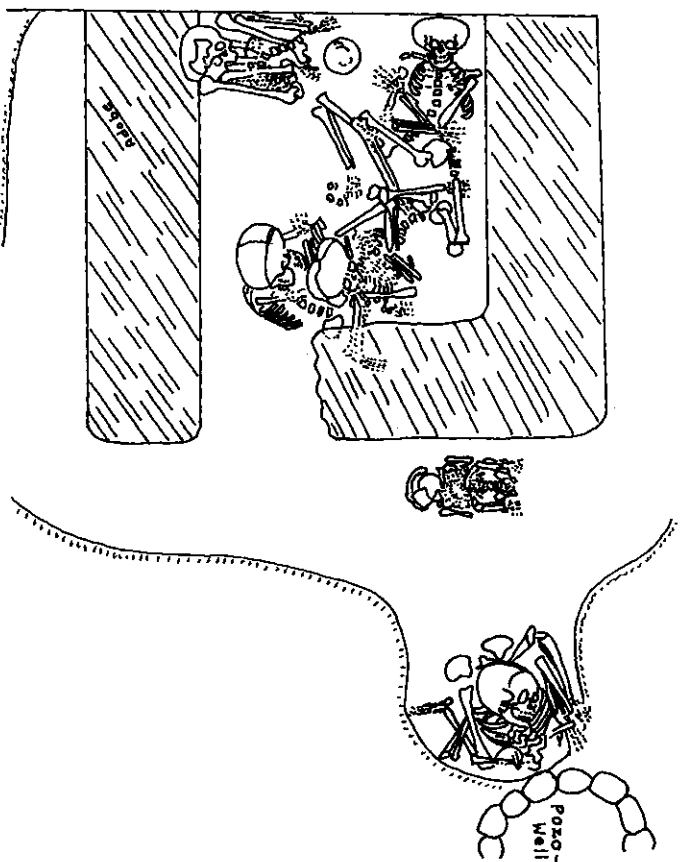
Results of the Proyecto Cholula analysis were used by Michelle Hayward in her dissertation (1986) that constructed life tables for Postclassic and early Colonial Cholula. Baptismal records from sixteenth-century San Andrés Cholula provided the database for the Colonial period. One conclusion of this study was that there was a surprisingly low incidence of infant and child burials in the Great Pyramid burial assemblage, which resulted in a suspiciously low infant mortality rate, at least as compared with other preindustrial cities (compare with demographic profiles presented by Storey and McAnany, Chapter 3, this volume).

Michael Smith (2002) has also commented on the general infrequency of burials at Postclassic sites in central Mexico and proposes



2.3: Plan of UA-1, indicating location of burials (drawn by S. McCafferty).

that cemeteries must have existed, perhaps in abandoned portions of sites. The ceremonial precinct of the Great Pyramid may constitute such a cemetery, but it still presents the problem of potential underrepresentation of infants and children. The UA-1 household context suggests that infants and children may have been buried more often in residential areas. Thus the UA-1 context offers a means of correcting for the biased sample recovered by the Proyecto Cholula.



2.4: Group burial in Structure 1, room 4 (drawn by Sharisse McCafferty after Elena Eritta).

RESULTS OF THE MORTUARY ANALYSIS, PROYECTO CHOLULA

Combining the individuals from Cholulteca II and Cholulteca III (López, Lagunas, and Serrano 1976), there were 12 Infants, 103 Children (ages 1-13), 11 Juveniles (ages 14-21), and 176 Adults, of which 99 were males and 77 were females. Individuals who could not be identified as to age and adults whose sex could not be identified were not included in this analysis.

Of the Infants with good contextual information, two were secondary interments and eight were primary (Table 2.1). Five of the primary burials were in the flexed dorsal position (63 percent), and two were flexed seated and one was flexed on its right side. Five of the burials (63 percent) were oriented in a northerly direction. Infants were never accompanied by grave goods (Table 2.2).

Children were present as primary interments in 83 percent of the cases ($n = 81$). The flexed seated position was most common (53 per-

cent, $n = 43$), although the dorsal flexed position was also found in 24 cases (30 percent). Children were buried in a northerly orientation in 55 percent of the cases ($n = 45$), but this group had the greatest variability in burial orientation.

Children were accompanied by grave goods 34 percent of the time. Ceramic vessels were the most common offering found with children (n

Table 2.1. Proyecto Cholula Burial Position and Orientation

	Infants	Children	Juveniles	Males	Females
PRIMARY	8 (80%)	81 (83%)	8 (73%)	76 (81%)	54 (73%)
SECONDARY	2 (20%)	17 (17%)	3 (27%)	18 (19%)	20 (27%)
SEATED FLEXED	2 (25%)	43 (53%)	5 (63%)	58 (76%)	36 (67%)
North	—	17 (21%)	2 (25%)	33 (43%)	18 (33%)
Northeast	1 (12%)	5 (6%)	1 (12%)	15 (20%)	11 (20%)
Northwest	—	3 (4%)	—	2 (3%)	1 (2%)
South	—	1 (1%)	—	1 (1%)	—
Southeast	—	2 (2%)	—	2 (2%)	—
Southwest	—	3 (4%)	—	—	—
East	—	6 (7%)	—	3 (4%)	—
West	1 (12%)	6 (7%)	2 (25%)	—	3 (6%)
DORSAL FLEXED	5 (63%)	24 (30%)	2 (25%)	14 (17%)	11 (20%)
North/South	—	—	—	1 (1%)	—
Northeast/Southwest	1 (12%)	2 (2%)	—	—	—
Northwest/Southeast	—	1 (1%)	1 (12%)	—	—
South/North	3 (38%)	11 (14%)	—	10 (13%)	6 (11%)
Southeast/Northwest	—	—	—	—	—
Southwest/Northeast	1 (12%)	5 (6%)	—	3 (4%)	2 (4%)
East/West	—	5 (6%)	1 (12%)	—	—
West/East	—	—	—	—	3 (6%)
VENTRAL FLEXED	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
North/South	—	—	—	—	—
Northeast/Southwest	—	—	—	—	—
Northwest/Southeast	—	—	—	—	—
South/North	—	—	—	—	—
Southeast/Northwest	—	1 (1%)	—	—	—
Southwest/Northeast	—	—	—	—	—
East/West	—	—	—	—	—
West/East	—	—	—	—	—
RIGHT SIDE FLEXED	1 (12%)	3 (4%)	0 (0%)	2 (3%)	4 (7%)
North/South	—	2 (2%)	—	1 (1%)	—
Northeast/Southwest	—	—	—	—	1 (2%)
Northwest/Southeast	—	—	—	—	—

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Table 2.1—continued

	Infants	Children	Juveniles	Males	Females
South/North	—	—	—	—	3 (6%)
Southeast/Northeast	—	—	—	—	—
Southwest/Northeast	1 (12%)	—	—	1 (1%)	—
East/West	—	—	—	—	—
West/East	—	1 (1%)	—	—	—
LEFT SIDE FLEXED	0 (0%)	7 (9%)	1 (12%)	1 (1%)	3 (6%)
North/South	—	—	—	—	1 (2%)
Northeast/Southwest	—	—	1 (12%)	—	—
Northwest/Southeast	—	2 (2%)	—	—	—
South/North	—	1 (1%)	—	—	1 (2%)
Southeast/Northeast	—	—	—	—	—
Southwest/Northeast	—	2 (2%)	—	1 (1%)	1 (2%)
East/West	—	—	—	—	—
West/East	—	2 (2%)	—	—	—

Table 2.2. Proyecto Cholula Mortuary Data

Artifact Class	Infants	Children	Juveniles	Female	Male
No Offering	12 (100%)	6 (66%)	7 (64%)	37 (48%)	49 (49%)
Offering	0 (0%)	35 (34%)	4 (36%)	40 (52%)	50 (51%)
Vessels	—	20 (19%)	2 (18%)	33 (43%)	36 (36%)
Figurines	—	2 (2%)	—	2 (3%)	—
Clay balls	—	6 (6%)	—	1 (1%)	2 (2%)
Beads	—	7 (7%)	—	—	1 (1%)
Lithics	—	2 (2%)	1 (9%)	1 (1%)	3 (3%)
Whistles/Flutes	—	3 (3%)	—	—	—
Carved bone "J"	—	1 (1%)	—	—	—
Obsidian lip plug	—	1 (1%)	—	—	1 (1%)
Tortoise shell	—	1 (1%)	—	—	1 (1%)
Dog mandible	—	1 (1%)	—	1 (1%)	—
Jadeite fragments	—	1 (1%)	—	1 (1%)	—
Sabumadores	—	4 (4%)	—	—	8 (8%)
Shell	—	—	1 (9%)	—	6 (6%)
Spindle whorls	—	—	—	4 (5%)	3 (3%)
Bone needles	—	—	—	2 (3%)	—
Bone awl	—	—	—	1 (1%)	1 (1%)
Human bone fragments	—	—	—	3 (4%)	2 (2%)
Paint remains	—	—	—	1 (1%)	3 (3%)
Mano	—	—	—	1 (1%)	—
Ceramic disk	—	—	—	1 (1%)	1 (1%)
Human face, stone	—	—	—	1 (1%)	—
Clay mold	—	—	—	1 (1%)	—
Deer antler	—	—	—	—	1 (1%)
Armadillo shell	—	—	—	—	1 (1%)

Table 2.3. Distribution of Vessel Forms

Vessel Form	Infants	Children	Juveniles	Females	Males
Conal/comal	—	1	—	—	—
Small conal	—	—	—	—	3
Plate/plato	—	4	—	8	8
Small plate	—	3	—	4	4
Tripod Plate	—	—	—	2	3
Bowl/cajete	—	8	3	8	15
Small bowl	—	1	—	4	3
Tripod bowl	—	—	—	1	3
Basin/scudilla	—	1	—	—	1
Shoepoc/patojo	—	—	—	1	—
Jar/olla	—	—	—	1	1
Small olla	—	—	—	1	1
Pitcher/cantaro	—	—	—	1	1
Small pitcher	—	—	—	1	—
Cup/copa	—	1	—	—	—
Constricted mouth basin/lecomate	—	—	—	1	—
Unspecified vessel/vasija	—	1	—	3	2
Small vessel	—	2	—	—	1
Tripod vessel	—	—	—	—	1
Small zoomorphic vessel (turtle)	—	1	—	—	—
Vessel fragments	—	4	—	5	3

= 20, 19 percent); other repeated offerings included beads (n = 7, 7 percent), clay balls (n = 6, 6 percent), *sabumador* incense burners (n = 4, 4 percent), whistles/flutes (n = 3, 3 percent), figurines (n = 2, 2 percent), and lithics (n = 2, 2 percent). Bowls and plates were the most common of the ceramic vessels recovered (Table 2.3).

Juveniles were buried as primary interments in 73 percent of cases (n = 8). The seated flexed position was most common, found in 63 percent of cases (n = 5). No consistent burial orientation was observed in the small sample. Juveniles were buried with grave goods in 36 percent of the cases. Two interments included ceramic vessels (18 percent), and lithics, *sabumadores*, and a shell were each present in one burial (9 percent each). Bowls were the only vessel form found with juvenile burials.

RESULTS OF THE MORTUARY ANALYSIS, UA-1

Of the eighteen burials associated with Structure 1, nine were either fetuses or infants (Table 2.4), defined as less than one year of age by Romano, the physical anthropologist who conducted the initial analysis (Wolfman 1968:34). This age group is roughly equivalent to the Infant group from the Proyecto Cholula, and accounts for 50 percent

Table 2.4: UA-1 Burial Data (after Wolfman 1968:table 4)

Burial #	Orientation	Position	Age	Grave Goods
#1	—	—	fetus	none
#2	—	—	fetus	none
#3	north	seated flexed	infant	bowl rim, obsidian frag, copper ring
#4	north	seated flexed	adult	bowl, red seeds ^a
#5	northwest	dorsal flexed	child	^a
#6	east	dorsal flexed	child	^a
#7	north	seated flexed	child	beads, a ceramic ball, greenstone celt, shell, shell whistle, obsidian eccentric "m," obsidian eccentric butterfly ^a
#8	north	seated flexed	child	obsidian blade
#9	north	seated flexed	child	bowl ^b
#10	north	dorsal flexed	infant	bowl ^b
#11	north	dorsal flexed	infant	^a
#12	northeast	ventral flexed	child	^a
#13	—	—	adult	none
#14	north	seated flexed	infant	2 large sherds ^b
#15	—	—	fetus	none
#16	north	seated flexed	infant	bowl ^b
#17	?	seated flexed	child	obsidian blade, large sherds ^b
#18	?	?	infant	obsidian blade, large sherds ^b
#19	north	seated flexed	child	carved bone, polishing stone, chert projectile point

^a Several objects were found in proximity to Burials #4, #5, #6, #7, #11, and #12 but could not be clearly associated with individual skeletons; nor are they clearly grave goods. These included a chert point, obsidian scraper, a spindle whorl, and a figurine head.

^b Objects were also found with Burials #9, #10, #14, #16, #17, and #18 that could not be associated with any individual skeleton. This included a high frequency of obsidian blades and scrapers, two projectile points, two figurines, a spindle whorl, and numerous ceramic balls.

of the UA-1 Structure 1 mortuary assemblage. Children ranged in age from 1 to 12 years of age, with Burials 5, 7, 8, 9, 12, 17, and 19 falling into the 4-6 years category, while Burial 6 was in the 7-12 age range (Wolfman 1968:34, table 4). Only Burial 4 was identified as an adult, a female aged 21-35 years.

With the exception of three fetuses found in a single polychrome bowl, all of the individuals were buried in the flexed position. Nine were seated (50 percent), four (22 percent) were dorsal, and one was ventral (6 percent); burial position could not be determined for Burial 18.

For the purposes of comparison with the Proyecto Chohola data, McCafferty (1992:146-147) modified the orientations originally reported in Wolfman's preliminary report. All but one were buried in a northerly direction (92 percent).

Romano reported that Burials 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, and 17 all exhibited evidence of cranial modification of the tabular erect variety (Wolfman 1968:34, table 4).

In contrast to the Proyecto Chohola data, Infants were accompanied by grave goods and Children had grave goods in higher frequencies. Notably, some objects of exotic material or manufacture, suggesting value, were included, such as a copper ring, greenstone celt, and obsidian eccentrics. Vessels and vessel fragments continued as the most common offering.

COMPARISON WITH ADULT PATTERNS

The child burials can be compared with the norms established from the adult burials of the Proyecto Chohola, where adult males were interred as primary burials in 81 percent of the cases, and females were primary burials 73 percent of the time.¹ Sub-adults therefore conform to this general pattern of primary interment.

Adult males appear in the seated flexed position in 76 percent of cases, the highest frequency of any group in the Proyecto Chohola population, and adult females are in the seated flexed position 67 percent of the time, the second highest frequency. This evidence suggests that the seated flexed position was the Postclassic norm and, although most sub-adults conformed to that norm, it was less standardized. In fact, the frequency of sub-adults in the flexed position increased from the Infant (25 percent) through Juvenile (63 percent) groups, suggesting that with age the likelihood of a child burial conforming to the adult pattern increased. Conversely, the younger the sub-adult, the more likely it was to be buried in a non-adult manner, with the dorsal flexed position most common among Infants and found with 30 percent of Children.

Similarly, burial orientation among adult males and females was consistently to the north (83 percent and 78 percent, respectively). These frequencies are again much more regular than the orientation of sub-adults, suggesting that the cultural norms were less restrictive for children or that alternative beliefs may have influenced sub-adult burials.

Adult males and females were about equally likely to be buried with offerings (51 percent and 52 percent, respectively). Ceramic vessels were again the most typical grave good, and were slightly more common among females (43 percent) than males (36 percent). After vessels, *schumador* incense burners were the next most common object buried with men (n = 8, 8 percent), followed by a shell (n = 6, 6 percent), lithics (n = 3, 3 percent), spindle whorls (n = 3, 3 percent), paint re-

mains (n = 3, 3 percent), clay balls (n = 2, 2 percent), and human bone fragments (n = 2, 2 percent).

Four spindle whorls (5 percent) were found with female burials and were the most common grave good after ceramic vessels. Other objects found with females included shells (n = 3, 4 percent), human bone fragments (n = 3, 4 percent), figurines (n = 2, 3 percent), and bone needles (n = 2, 3 percent).

There was no great difference in the vessel forms associated with males and females, although males were about twice as likely to be accompanied by bowls (males = 15, females = 8). Males were uniquely buried with small comales. The strongest gendered association found in the grave goods is *sahumador* incense burners, which were found with males but never with females. Spindle whorls, often associated with female identity (McCafferty and McCafferty 1991, 2000b) were found with both females and males (females = 4, males = 3), in contrast to the gender stereotype of women as textile producers (see discussion in McCafferty and McCafferty 2000b). Bone needles, however, were only found with adult females and so may indicate specialized production that was more rigorously associated with female gender identity.

In comparing sub-adults' grave goods with those of adults, Children and Juveniles were less often accompanied by offerings; about half of adults had grave goods as opposed to only about one-third of Children and Juveniles. The major difference in the class of grave good is in the lower incidence associated with sub-adults of ceramic vessels, which, although still the most common offering, occurs roughly half as often as with adults. Other duplicated adult offerings that did not appear with sub-adults were spindle whorls, bone needles, and human bone fragments. The lack of sub-adults buried with spindle whorls is contrary to the expectation based on the depictions from the *Codex Mendoza* (1992), since according to that source girls began learning to spin during childhood and spinning was considered an important aspect of female identity even at a young age.

Offerings that showed up in association with Children more often than with adults include whistles/flutes, beads, and ceramic balls. The presence of beads could be related to the Feast for the Little Dead ceremonies described by Durán (1971:441), although it seems unlikely that this ceremony would be the only explanation for the presence of beads as mortuary goods. Elsewhere, we have suggested that the clay balls were used as blowgun projectiles, perhaps used to hunt waterfowl or lizards (McCafferty 1992; McCafferty and McCafferty 2000b), and so may have been among a sub-adult's activities. Also it should be noted

that four Children and one Juvenile were buried with *sahumadores*, which may indicate a male identity or a specialized ritual for children.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results of this analysis indicate only minimal variation in the cultural norm of Postclassic mortuary ritual, at least as represented in the Proyeecto Cholula population. Flexed seated burials oriented to the north are most common among adults, but are also the predominant type for all other age groups except Infants. This position and orientation conform with the ethnohistorical account of the deceased being placed in a hole in a seated position oriented toward Mictlan (Rojas 1927). The increasing frequencies among older Children and Juveniles suggest that as the "girling" and "boying" process increased, so did the likelihood that burials would conform to the normative burial position and orientation of adults.

The Infant class showed the least amount of conformity with overall patterns. The dorsal flexed position occurs most frequently, in contrast to all other age classes. There was a lack of grave offerings with Infants in the Proyeecto Cholula assemblage, although most Infants from UA-1 were accompanied with offerings. This discrepancy may suggest a cultural distinction between those Infants interred in the more public cemetery at the Great Pyramid, as opposed to those buried in the UA-1 domestic precinct. The lack of offerings with Infants from the Proyeecto Cholula population may indicate an age grade in which the very young were not yet considered gendered or even "human." (See Scott [2001] for a crosscultural perspective on the archaeology of infanticide.) A similar situation occurs in contemporary Cholula, where infants are not considered complete individuals worthy of their full baptismal name until after their third year. This belief goes against Sahagún's (1950-1982, 6:201-204) description of the bathing and naming ceremonies that took place soon after birth. It may explain, however, the accompanying depiction, which shows a toddler-sized child in the ritual (Figure 2.5). Once again, Sahagún's descriptions may represent an idealized situation, more applicable to the elite, but the illustrations could depict social practices more typical of commoners (see also Brown 1983; McCafferty and McCafferty 1988).

Additional age-related variation occurs with Children's grave offerings, where some differences may be associated with sub-adult/adult distinctions as opposed to adult male or female identities. The incidence of Children with whistles and flutes may suggest that these were toys.



2.5: *Bathing ceremony in which gendered goods are presented to newborns; note that distinct male and female items are identified (drawn by S. McCafferty after Sahagún 1950–1982, Book 6).*

The relatively high presence of clay balls might also be the result of these objects being toys if they were used as marbles or gaming pieces, as has been suggested, or as blowgun projectiles as we believe (see also contributions by Lopiparo and King in this volume, Chapters 6 and 7, respectively, discussing children's toys, and especially Storey and McAnany, Chapter 3, on Maya blowguns). It is interesting that children were more likely to be buried with beads than any other group. Figurines, an artifact class that may have functioned at least in part as toys, were found exclusively with Children and adult females. In a contextual analysis of Postclassic household ritual, again based on UA-1 data, Geoffrey McCafferty (n.d.) has demonstrated that figurines were often found in non-ceremonial contexts such as porch areas, where it is likely that children played. Other figurines and particularly those with female attributes, however, were found in wells where they were possibly deposited as offerings to the earth/fertility goddess complex in relation to prayers. These dual functions of figurines (and there were undoubtedly even more) could correspond to their presence with Child and adult female burials in the Proyecto Cholula data. Another possible gender marker would be the *sahumador* incense burner, which was only found with adult males and Children; it is plausible that the unsexed children with *sahumadores* may have been boys, although this inference remains speculative.

In reference to the ceramic vessels found as grave offerings, Children were relatively less likely to be buried with vessels than were adults. A category of small *pequeña* vessels was indicated in the Proyecto Cholula inventory, but these did not appear with sub-adults to any notable degree. Unlike other areas of central Mexico, particularly Oaxaca, miniature vessels are rare in Cholula and have not been found in ritual context. Thus it is unlikely that miniature, or "toy," vessels were part of children's mortuary ritual.

Although children from the ceremonial center were somewhat less likely to be buried with offerings than were adults, some were buried with numerous offerings and in fact some of the richest burials were those of children (López, Lagunas, and Serrano 1976). For example, Individual 134 was accompanied by two tortoise shells (probably drums), a whistle, and a *sahumador*. This burial may relate to what Sahagún (1950–1982, 2:79) described as a "little offering priest," a child who took part in processions at the calmecac in honor of Tlaloc. Individual 175 had nine vessels. Individual 209 had a bowl covering the head, a miniature vessel, and fourteen beads of obsidian and chert. Individual 238 was buried with a polychrome bowl, two anthropomorphic figurine fragments, and fragments of flutes.

The relative wealth associated with child burials is also indicated at the UA-1 site, where nearly all of the Infant and Child burials had some grave goods. Burial 7 was exceptional, with beads, a ceramic ball, a greenstone celt, a shell, a shell whistle, and two obsidian eccentrics—one in the shape of an M, usually interpreted as a blood glyph, and the other of red obsidian in the form of a butterfly, also a symbol associated with death and rebirth (Berlo 1983).

In conclusion, the sub-adult burials of Postclassic Cholula show minor quantitative and little qualitative distinction with those of adults. The same cosmological principles seem to have dictated burial position and orientation, although burial of Infants and Children may not have conformed to these as rigorously as those of adults did, perhaps because of the belief that young children went to a separate paradise after death. Children were buried with grave goods of value, possibly related to childhood activities such as making noise, hunting small animals, and playing with figurines. We see this evidence as supporting the idea that children were progressively indoctrinated into the gendered roles of adulthood. This trajectory was interrupted in death, with the mortuary context reflecting the deceased's stage in the boying or girling process. A more detailed determination of the age at death would be useful in refining possible age grades.

Distinctions exist between the burial practices of the Great Pyramid cemetery and those of the UA-1 domestic context. Whereas sub-adults constituted a lower than expected proportion of the Great Pyramid burial population, leading Hayward (1986) to postulate a low level of infant mortality, they were the predominant age group at UA-1. This discrepancy suggests that the Great Pyramid should not be used as a representative sample for demographic interpretation, but also suggests that cultural distinctions may have determined the specific burial practices associated

with different classes of individuals. Were high status individuals buried at the pyramid? Does the relative number of adults indicate achievement? Were Infants and Children more likely to have been buried within the house compound because they had not yet attained a more public status? Or, since the UA-1 Infants and Children were more often buried with grave goods, did their death evoke greater emotional response within the private sphere? The ethnohistorical sources recount some glimpse of the grieving that accompanied death, including the idea of a mother pouring breast milk on the grave of her newborn (Alva 1999:85).

The Cholula mortuary data offer a rich basis for inferring pre-Columbian burial practices, including the treatment of sub-adults. This information presents a valuable tool for evaluating the ethnohistorical sources, which, because they are more specifically related to Aztec practices from the Basin of Mexico, highlight differences with the Cholula patterns. For example, the high incidence of primary burial is a striking contrast to the importance of cremation among the Aztecs. On the other hand, the Postclassic burials from the Great Pyramid cemetery represent a period of at least 600 years, encompassing profound ethnic changes in the resident population. Differences between the Great Pyramid and UA-1 practices may simply relate to these temporal distinctions.

We believe that the comparison between the cemetery and household contexts provides a meaningful insight into different scales of social practice and performance. Playing off of the insights of Aubrey Cannon (2002), cemeteries associated with monumental architecture may instill a sense of community identity where burials are melded into group memory. In contrast, household-scale burials preserve individual memories and corporate identity. Susan Gillespie (2002) suggests that the burial of family members within the household compound serves to reify ties to the landscape, where the house signifies both material and social manifestations of the corporate unit. In Maya society, both adults and children were buried beneath and around the house in order to recycle the souls, or *ch'ímel*, of the ancestors into the spirits of the living. This concept is reminiscent of the Aztec concept of Xochitlalpan, the paradise of deceased children awaiting reincarnation, and therefore may relate to the predominance of child burials within the UA-1 Structure 1 compound.

Children are an important component of any society, since they represent the transmission of cultural patterns into the future. The children of Cholula were buried in accordance with adult patterns but only to a degree. Following the ethnohistorical example of adults buried with grave goods associated with their life, children were often buried

with objects such as clay balls, flutes/whistles, and figurines as possible toys. If clay balls were used as blowgun pellets, then their presence with child burials would conform to the *Codex Mendoza's* depictions of young boys learning to hunt and fish, but the lack of spinning and weaving tools with children goes against similar representations of girls learning these female tasks.

Thus, as is so often the case, the Cholula burial data both support and contrast with ethnohistorical information, further demonstrating the utility of archaeology in exploring past cultural practices. To quote Cannon (2002:197):

[T]he spatial narratives of death are among the most complete and most commonly available records of archaeological history. They are conscious creations that were meant to tell a story of relevance and value from the perspective of past peoples' perceptions and interests. When read with the same critical care applied to any historical documentation, the long-term histories written in treatments of the dead can provide archaeology with a record of social and political change and an unusual source of insight into the nature of past perceptions of life and death, and of history itself.

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NOTE

1. The distinction between primary and secondary interments was made by López, Lagunas, and Serrano (1976) based on whether the skeleton was articulated at the time of burial, or rather disarticulated and therefore probably de-fleshed. Since the majority of the Cholula burials are direct interments (i.e., buried directly in the ground without benefit of a crypt or tomb), subsequent disturbance could only be caused by inadvertent natural or cultural transformation processes. These disturbances may include tree roots, rodent activity, or later excavations, but do not include such processes as tomb reentry (see McCafferty 1996 for an example of this type of disturbance). Consequently, the distinction between primary and secondary interment implies a very different treatment of the deceased, probably relating to the individual's status in life or the conditions of his/her death. Although there is no ethnohistorical information useful for understanding this distinction, it might relate to the difference between a free person and a slave, or perhaps a sacrificial victim.

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CHILDREN OF K'AXOB

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Premature Death in a Formative Maya Village

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In an archaeological search for children and childhood in ancient Mesoamerica, mortuary evidence is considered one of the prime sources of potential information (see Joyce, Chapter 11). So what can we learn about children and childhood at the Formative Maya village of K'axob from the juvenile burials? Obviously, the skeleton can tell us the age (but not sex without DNA analysis for prepubertal individuals) of the individual at death and something about his/her life from health indicators. The mortuary treatment is likely to reflect mostly adult valuation of individual children, as well as communal ideas regarding the proper way to commemorate a child's death and to prepare him/her for the afterlife. Other children may have participated in the mortuary rituals but are not likely to have directed them. As for childhood quality of life, mortuary data cannot really tell us about daily activities and pleasures of childhood, nor can it do more than suggest how the Maya of K'axob conceived of childhood and related to children. Information about what childhood involved and its salience