

**OUTLINE OF
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CHAPTER THREE

John Paddock on Monte Albán as an Urban Work of Art: A Story of the Emergence and Perseverance of Zapotec Cultural-Ethnic Identity

“The Zapotec tradition that so distinctively crystallized around 100 B.C. at Monte Albán... was still clearly recognizable over 1,500 years later on the interruption of the Spanish... Neither the abandonment of Monte Albán, nor Mixtec conquest and occupation (some three centuries of it), nor, finally, the relatively trifling Aztec invasion cause any sharp break in Valley Zapotecs ways. Except for the abandonment of Monte Albán and the later capture of a number of towns by the Mixtecs, change in the Valley of Oaxaca from the time of Christ until the Spanish conquest tended to be very gradual and the work of the Valley’s own Zapotec inhabitants.”

John Paddock, 1966¹

John Paddock (1918-1998), an Iowa-born scholar who spent much of his adult life living and working in Mexico, provides the first prominent American in the famously unbroken lineage of Oaxacanist archaeologists.² His first college experiences consisted

*Note that I have managed the footnotes in ways that respect “the first citation” (which is thus a full bibliographical citation) *in this chapter*, irrespective of whether that work was cited in a previous chapter. Also, to avoid confusion in this typescript, I have retained the quotation marks on all quotes, including those that are formatted as block quotations.

¹ John Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” part II in *Ancient Oaxaca: Discoveries in Mexican Archeology and History*, ed. John Paddock (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1970 [originally 1966]), 127.

² For some basic biographical background, see, for instance, “John Paddock (1918-1998),” (no attributed author), on the webpage of El Seminario de Cultura Mexicana, http://www.seminarioculturaoaxaca.org/?page_id=434; visited December 15, 2014. Also see Mike Porath, “The Mexico City College Story: The History: 1940-1963,” page 5, <http://www.mexicocitycollege.com/MCCrev/History5.html>; visited December 15, 2014. And see Jamie, Bali, “Entrevista a John Paddock: Testigo de su tiempo,” *Arqueología Mexicana*, vol. 1, núm. 3 (agosto-septiembre 1993): 47-49.

of three intermittent semesters studying geography at the University of Illinois between 1937 and 1943, the year he joined the United States Army. After the Second World War, he studied at the University of Southern California where he earned a AB in anthropology in 1951; and then later that year, at the suggestion of an army acquaintance, he enrolled at Mexico City College, where he studied with, among others, Alfonso Caso, Ignacio Bernal, Pablo Martínez del Río, Eduardo Noguera and Wigberto Jiménez Moreno to whom he owed a special interest in “documentary archaeology” or ethnohistory.³

In 1952, shortly after his arrival in Mexico, Paddock accompanied Bernal, who, just eight years older than him, would become his principal mentor, and some other Mexico City College students to Oaxaca. It was an initial visit that he describes as “brief but decisive;”⁴ and the next year he published an article entitled “Excavations in the Mixteca Alta,” the first of countless publications on Oaxaca archaeology that he would produce over next four decades.⁵ Arguably, from then on he was deeply enamored by all things Oaxacan. His thesis, directed by Bernal and approved in 1953, was entitled *The Mixe: An Ethno-Demographic Study*; and quickly he joined his teacher as a faculty member in the Anthropology Department at Mexico City College. In 1956, he took a leave of absence from those duties, and from oversight of the journal *Mesoamerican Notes*, in order to attend Stanford University and complete the course work for his Ph.D.;⁶ he took his comprehensive exams there in 1961, and was eventually awarded a

³ On Paddock's involvements as a student and later a faculty member at Mexico City College, which in 1963 became the Universidad de las Américas, see, for instance, the editor's Preface to *Homenaje a John Paddock*, editado por Patricia Plunket (Cholula, Puebla, México: Universidad de las Américas, Puebla, 2003), 11-12. Also in the same volume see Edward Simmen, “John Paddock and the Universidad de las Américas” (pp. 15-23); Gabriela Uruñuela y Ladrón de Guevara, “Yo no fui alumna de Paddock” (pp. 25-30); Paul Schmidt, “John Paddock: Recuerdos y also más” (pp. 31-36); and Ronald Spores, “John Paddock, etnohistoriador” (pp. 37-42).

⁴ John Paddock, Preface to *Ancient Oaxaca: Discoveries in Mexican Archeology and History*, ed. Paddock, viii.

⁵ John Paddock, “Excavations in the Mixteca Alta,” *Mesoamerican Notes* 3 (1953): 1-50.

⁶ See the Preface to *Mesoamerican Notes*, vol. 5 (1957): 7-8.

doctorate for a version of his piece on “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica” on which this chapter concentrates. Back in Mexico, he subsequently directed excavations not only at several sites in the Mixteca region, especially around Huajuapán de León, and in the Valley of Oaxaca, notably at Yagul, Lambityeco and Mitla, but also at the much-debated “Oaxaca barrio” at Teotihuacán in 1966.⁷ And, as we’ll note momentarily, his archaeological interests were complemented by the study of Oaxaca’s modern indigenous communities, the involvement with which not only enriched his appreciations of pre-Columbian Oaxacan history but also led, in the latter stages of his career, to a special interest in the broader topic of the values and mores in what he termed “antiviolent communities.”⁸ Lacking Bernal’s extreme fascination and facility with the ceramic evidence, Paddock’s early interests in social and psychological anthropology, questions of “culture and personality,” persisted to the end.

In addition to extensive field research, he held several posts, including at the Mexico City College (in 1965, renamed Universidad de las Américas) where he succeeded Bernal—and, in his own words, “continued that orientation”⁹—as chair of the Anthropology Department from 1962 to 1967. There he served as faculty adviser for *Mesoamerican Notes*, a periodic publication that frequently addressed Oaxaca-related topics, as well as directing the Instituto de Estudios Oaxaqueños and overseeing the series

⁷ Regarding Paddock’s work at Yagul between 1954 and 1956, see John Paddock, “The First Three Seasons at Yagul,” *Mesoamerican Notes*, vol. 4 (1955): 25-48; and John Paddock, “The 1956 Season at Yagul,” *Mesoamerican Notes*, vol. 5 (1957): 13-32. His work at Teotihuacán will be discussed later in this chapter.

⁸ On Paddock’s late-career interest in non-violence, see, for instance, the following four articles: John Paddock, “Studies on Antiviolent and ‘Normal’ Communities,” *Aggressive Behavior*, vol. 1, no. 2 (1975): 17-232; John Paddock, “Pueblos antiviolentos, notas sobre un estado de salud social,” in *Comportamiento y violencia: Más allá de Lorenz y de Skinner*, eds. S. Genovés and J. F. Passy (Mexico: Editorial Diana, 1976); John Paddock, “Values in an Antiviolent Community,” *Humanitas* 12 (1976): 183-94; and John Paddock, “A New Look at the Problem of Human Violence,” in *Social, Political, and Economic Life in Contemporary Oaxaca*, ed. Aubrey Williams (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Publications in Anthropology, 1979), 24: 1-22.

⁹ Paddock, Preface to *Ancient Oaxaca*, vii.

Boletín de Estudios Oaxaqueños. At the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico he assisted Bernal during 1963 in the planning and design of the Oaxaca Sala discussed in the previous chapter; and, in 1967, he returned to Oaxaca where he would remain for the rest of his life, during which time he was director of the Museo Frissell de Arte Zapoteca in Mitla and the Instituto de Estudios Oaxaqueños.¹⁰ Amidst that long career Paddock had many students, perhaps foremost among them Kent Flannery, who, as we'll see, became both an important collaborator and sometimes critic. Once fully retired from the Anthropology Department of the University of the Americas, during the 1980s, he devoted himself to the study of ethnohistorical sources, particularly maps and colonial documents of the Valley of Oaxaca, and to cataloguing his vast photographic archive as well as pursuing his interests in strategies of non-violent conflict resolution.¹¹

Abundant anecdotes continue to testify to the personal impression that Paddock left on other archaeologists, former students and also older Zapotec residents of Mitla who have no shortage of stories about him. Most are highly flattering, though often with some qualification or edge. One associate, for instance, describes a complex relationship with Paddock that led her to conclude: "All his publications reflect him: sarcastic, haughty, distrustful, critical, meticulous, creative, hard-working, strict discipline and broad vision, a complete anthropologist, interested in all aspects of human diversity."¹² And one encounters as well persistent complaints that Paddock, despite counseling students to publish their results promptly, left much of his best fieldwork and most provocative ideas unpublished. Consequently, any attempt to recapture his mature opinions on Oaxaca archaeology via the written work is certain to be imperfect and incomplete.

¹⁰ Regarding Paddock's involvements with Ervin R. Frissell and the Museo Frisell in Mitla, see, for instance, Simmen, "John Paddock and the Universidad de las Américas," 19-20.

¹¹ "John Paddock (1918-1998)" on the webpage of El Seminario de Cultura Mexicana.

¹² Uruñuela, "Yo no fui alumna de Paddock," 28; my translation. For additional anecdotal accounts of Paddock, see also the other various articles in *Homenaje a John Paddock*, editado por Patricia Plunket.

**I. ENTHUSIASMS, ASPIRATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS:
A THIRD AND MORE WIDELY ACCESSIBLE SYNTHESIS OF ANCIENT OAXACA**

Voluminous and varied as his contributions were, far and away the most widely-read and influential of Paddock's articles appears in a book that he edited entitled, *Ancient Oaxaca: Discoveries in Mexican Archeology and History* (1966, 1969). That three-part volume has a peculiar formation insofar as it was originally conceived as a small publication of conference papers by the leading Oaxaca specialists who participated in a symposium on ancient Oaxaca during the XXXV International Congress of Americanists in Mexico City in August 1962, all of which were devoted directly or indirectly to the "Mixtec problem." Those essays by Alfonso Caso, Ignacio Bernal and half dozen other very prominent scholars, Paddock among them, came to constitute Part III of the book. To those more specific essays Paddock felt compelled to contribute a brief and more general introduction that to his and apparently the publisher's surprise evolved into the amply illustrated 154-page "Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica," which appears as Part II; this is by far his single most famous publication. Finally, providing a still wider frame for these reflections on the Mixtecs, Wigberto Jiménez Moreno contributed a major pan-regional overview entitled "Mesoamerica Before the Toltecs," and that essay became Part I.

The end result is, then, a sort of collage of specific and general, technical and popular essays—Paddock's the most well-known among them—all of which report on recent research or discoveries, and virtually all of which make reference to ongoing and still unfolding projects. Paddock laments in his 1966 Preface that, "Ever since the end—well over twenty years ago—of the Monte Albán excavations, there has been no such thing as a full-time Oaxaca archaeologist,"¹³ but then in a 1969 Preface to the Second Printing, he is able to report on an impressive array of current archaeological work in the region, including the early results from Flannery's *Prehistory and Human Ecology* of the

¹³ Paddock, Preface to *Ancient Oaxaca*, ix.

Valley of Oaxaca Project, which began in 1964.¹⁴ If uneven in lots of respects—and if trained more on the Mixtecs than Monte Albán per se—the book displays Oaxacan studies in a very lively transitional moment. And it is, in any case, Paddock's milestone article, "Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica," which is sandwiched into the middle of this variegated book, together with a few of his other relevant articles, that form the basis for this chapter's review of his distinctive rendition of Monte Albán's history.¹⁵

A. ACCORDING OAXACA ITS (OVER)DUE: PAIRED APPRECIATIONS OF ANCIENT AND MODERN OAXACANS

Even in the front matter to *Ancient Oaxaca*, Paddock announces an affection for both Oaxaca and Oaxacans, ancient and modern, that will repeatedly resurface throughout his acclaimed synthesis. Regarding the region's pre-Columbian past, he, like Caso and Bernal, underscores the troubling discrepancy between Oaxaca's absolutely pivotal role in the broader history of Mesoamerica and the disproportionately small scholarly attention the area had received, especially by contrast to far more abundant Maya and Aztec studies; frequently he complained, for instance, about what he saw as the disproportionate emphasis on Aztecs in the National Museum.¹⁶ Beyond simply rectifying the imbalance, he argues that Oaxaca actually deserves greater consideration than those areas because the accomplishments of the Aztecs, though fabulous in their way, came too late to have had major impacts on the larger and longer history of Mesoamerica; and as to the Mayas, "despite their impressive achievements, their geographical remoteness was so extreme that they seem to have had very little effect on the course of cultural development in the remainder of Mesoamerica."¹⁷ Presaging one of

¹⁴ Paddock, Preface to the Second Printing of *Ancient Oaxaca*, ix.

¹⁵ For a review of that essay, see Howard Leigh, "Further Discussions of Oaxaca Archaeology: A Reply to Mr. Paddock," *Boletín de Estudios Oaxaqueños*, no. 8 (MCC) 1958.

¹⁶ See, for instance, Uruñuela, "Yo no fui alumna de Paddock," 28.

¹⁷ Paddock, "Introduction to Part I," in *Ancient Oaxaca*, ed. Paddock, 2.

his most persistent emphases, Paddock stresses that, “The Oaxaca peoples, by contrast, were again and again at the center of critical developments in Mesoamerican history...;”¹⁸ and yet, to date, “A tiny group of specialists has been the uncomfortable but helpless possessor of a near monopoly on detailed knowledge of Oaxaca.”¹⁹ He is, then, urgent and thrilled to gain a wider audience: “This book is intended to help end the unwelcome secrecy, and to make ancient Oaxaca more accessible to more interested people.”²⁰

Extending the same enthusiasm to the twentieth-century inheritors of that pre-Hispanic past, Paddock's Acknowledgements thank not only individual Zapotec residents of Mitla, but likewise expresses a more general sense of appreciation to all of the indigenous Oaxacans with whom he has, by then, lived and labored for years: “Modern Oaxacans, descendants of the Cloud People, make working and staying among them so agreeable that, like most of my colleagues, I would live here if I could.”²¹ Again and again it is apparent that his admiration for the underrepresented ancient history of Oaxaca is matched, maybe exceeded, by similar fondness for the present-day native people of his adopted homeland. And, therefore, as we'll see, his way of telling the story of Oaxacan social history takes special pains to stress the persistence and “remarkable continuity” of Zapotec culture from its emergence “prior to the birth of Jesus” through to present. In short, again like Caso and Bernal, Paddock thinks that both pre-Columbian and modern-day Oaxacans deserve far greater respect than they have been accorded.

Determined, then, to bring Oaxaca and Oaxacans their just due, Paddock's self-assigned agenda is to follow Caso's *Culturas mixteca y zapoteca* (1939) and Bernal's

¹⁸ Paddock, “Introduction to Part I,” in *Ancient Oaxaca*, ed. Paddock, 2.

¹⁹ Paddock, Preface to *Ancient Oaxaca*, ix.

²⁰ Paddock, Preface to *Ancient Oaxaca*, ix.

²¹ Paddock, Preface to *Ancient Oaxaca*, ix. The individual Zapotec residents of Mitla that he singles out are Darío Quero and Eligio Martínez, Sr., both on the staff of the Frissell Museum of Zapotec Art.

“Archaeological Synthesis of Oaxaca” (1965) with just the third broad overview of Oaxaca archeology, one that is more accessible to a wider readership.²² The parallels, especially with Bernal’s only slightly earlier synthesis, are exceptionally strong, which thus makes the differences especially noteworthy; indeed, a major thrust of this chapter will be the comparison of those two seminal treatments of essentially the same material. Predictably, it will not be divergent “facts” and dates, but rather the contrastive tones and emphases that distinguish these two very different historiographical constructions. Where Bernal’s *Handbook of Middle American Indians* article is a model of disciplined academic writing, Paddock’s is, in many respects, a microcosm of the heterogeneous volume in which it occupies a middle place. His aim of reaching “the serious reading public”²³ prompts a more colloquial and narrative style, and helps to explain the inclusion of over 300 photographs;²⁴ but he also takes the article as an occasion to present “some plain data,” which is of interest primarily to specialized audiences.²⁵ He describes his task as summational of the present state-of-the-field, “a new synthesis of views currently held by those who specialize in the study of ancient Oaxaca,” but also concedes that “much of what follows is opinion,” which opens the way to more personal and sometimes idiosyncratic digressions.²⁶

His celebrated article is, then, an intriguingly patchy presentation; and thus three important qualifications deserve note. For one, to treat Paddock’s synthesis as the sort of unified story that I do in this chapter does, at points, require a very generous reading; juxtaposing his summaries of the work of others and his own then-current opinions leaves considerable slippage, especially with respect the characterization of Zapotecs. Second, the synthesis, which served as his Ph.D. dissertation, was written midway in his long

²² Paddock, “Bibliographical Note” to “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 240.

²³ Paddock, Introduction to Part II of *Ancient Oaxaca*, 83.

²⁴ By far the most patently narrative portion of his article is the closing section entitled “The Cloud People,” Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 232-39.

²⁵ Paddock, Introduction to Part II of *Ancient Oaxaca*, 84.

²⁶ Paddock, Introduction to Part II of *Ancient Oaxaca*, 83.

career, while his ideas continued to evolve. His later work, together with observations of colleagues who spent time with him in the 1970s and 1980s, strongly suggests that had this synthesis been drafted later, it would have been very different—even less like Caso's and Bernal's, less insistent on the overwhelmingly aesthetic priorities of ancient Mesoamericans, and more resemblant to the growing skepticism about the motivations of pre-Columbian Oaxacans that we will encounter in more recent accounts. Third and perhaps most important is a reminder that, as with each of the stories of Monte Albán under consideration in this book, I encourage many viable readings; and thus when, by chapter's end, I make the case that John Paddock provides us, in addition to loads of valuable historical information, a very decidedly 1950s-1960s American narrative about Zapotec “national character” and “ethnic identity,” that is but one of many lessons readers might derive from his work. One cannot expect that he would be in accord with that sort of contextualizing interpretation; though as I note repeatedly, it is the Monte Albán narratives themselves and not the archaeologist-authors with which the present work is most concerned.

B. METHODOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES: THE AVOIDANCE AMERICAN PROVINCIALISM AND THE VIABILITY OF “PSYCHOLOGICAL PROJECTION”

In any case, no one can contest Paddock's intimate familiarity with the particulars of Oaxacan archaeology along with his complementary interests in the pertinent ethnohistorical sources; and his very active involvement in the still-manageably-small field kept him thoroughly apprised of the projects of other researchers in the area, all of whom he knew well. And yet, for all of his pre-Columbian interests, he frequently identified his main interest as social or psychological anthropology (a point to which I return momentarily).²⁷ Enthusiasm, empathy, genuine curiosity, a humanistic sensibility

²⁷ Simmen, “John Paddock and the Universidad de las Américas,” 17, records Paddock's reminiscence of his first meeting with Ignacio Bernal at Mexico City College in which the then-recent USC Anthropology graduate muses, “At the time [in 1951], I thought I was a social or psychological anthropologist, but Bernal is an extraordinarily persuasive individual and as a result I have worked for well over twenty years in archeology, without ever leaving psychological anthropology really.”

and an urge for collaborative engagement resound throughout his sometimes disorganized writing. That he was a jazz musician prior to his interests in archaeology—indeed music was a lifelong interest—does not come as a surprise.²⁸ Regarding Paddock's distinctive outlook, Ronald Spores observes that,

“John came from a world of music, art, and psychology and with his preparation in the sciences and in anthropology offered us his special perspective. In his personal relationships, John had the tendency to generalize from his experience with one or another person or activities observed in [indigenous communities such as] Mitla, Tlacolula, Macuilxochitl, or Zaachila and to make inferences concerning ethnic entities, professions or social groups. I think that we are all guilty of the same thing, but in our formal presentations we refrain from mentioning our stereotypes, our feelings, our personal sentiments; John, however, walked almost always in the space between science and art, between empiricism and impressionism.”²⁹

If deeply opinionated in some respects, unlike the ensuing scholars we'll address, all of whom preface their accounts of ancient Oaxacan history with self-disclosing declarations of their chosen theoretical authorities and/or adversaries, Paddock pledges allegiance to no explicit theories of social history, cultural evolution, economics, religion or the formation of ethnic identity—all topics that play large roles in his interpretive (re)construction. He was not a theoretician.³⁰ It is very telling, then, that in one of his

²⁸ Regarding Paddock's lifelong interests in music, Simmen, “John Paddock and the Universidad de las Américas,” 16-17, for instance, notes that both of his parents were musicians, that he studied music from his childhood forward, that “John had been a professional musician for years before he entered the Army [in 1943] and he played in an Army band during the time he was in service,” that the AB degree he earned from the University of Southern California in 1951 included a major in Anthropology and a minor in Music, that in the early 1950s he worked for a band based in Los Angeles and another in San Francisco that accompanied popular singer Frankie Laine, and that while a student at Mexico City College he wrote a column for the student newspaper entitled “Music in Mexico.” On his involvements as a jazz musician, see “John Paddock (1918-1998)” on the webpage of El Seminario de Cultura Mexicana; and on his late-life involvements with the Oaxaca Symphony, see Uruñuela y Ladrón de Guevara, “Yo no fui alumna de Paddock,” 29.

²⁹ Spores, “John Paddock, Etnohistoriador,” 41; my translation.

³⁰ Spores, “John Paddock, Etnohistoriador,” for instance, describes Paddock's approach as a “convergent methodology” insofar as it draws on a combination of archeology,

few explicitly methodological discursions, when commenting on the “nearly incredible enterprise” of building the fabulous city of Monte Albán atop a seemingly inopportune mountain, he offers this bit of American cultural criticism:

“In purely economic terms, in fact, the whole accomplishment seems fantastic. But if we attempt to comprehend [the mountain siting of Monte Albán] in those terms alone we are neglecting the crucial factors. For over a century we have been living in a world where technology has been the great hope, solving one problem after another. Perhaps we may be forgiven if we have to come to demand material-mechanical explanations for everything, overlooking the possibility that they may often be insufficient.”³¹

Though somewhat indirect methodological guidance, this moment of candor and discontent with his native USA nevertheless directs attention to two principles or procedural recommendations that Paddock regards as obligatory if one is to garner a suitable appreciation of the cultural accomplishments of ancient Oaxacans; both reflect his inclinations toward psychological anthropology. First, as I will note in later chapters, every scholar working in this area must decide whether the pre-Hispanic Oaxacans shared essentially his same assumptions about time, space, life, death, family, social obligations and entitlements, etc., or whether they were significantly different, operating with cosmological and social premises that would strike modern readers as peculiar in either revolting or refreshing ways. Each scholar must ask, if the goal is to respect and understand them, are Oaxacans more suitably conceived as familiar or as “strange”? And Paddock, for one, definitely opts for the latter. More specifically, where he laments that contemporary (1960s) Americans “demand material-mechanical explanations for everything,” he ventures that, “Ancient Mesoamerican culture was strikingly impractical on two counts: [1] its indifference to (or contempt for) technology, and [2] its extraordinary devotion to esthetic principles.”³²

linguistics, history and ethnology (p.40), but also as “idiosyncratic” insofar as he combined, without fully synthesizing or replicating, the influence of his enumerable teachers, including especially Bernal, Caso and Wigberto Jiménez Moreno as well as Robert Barlow and Fernando Horcasitas (p.39).

³¹ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 152.

³² Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 152.

Paddock, in other words, either inadvertently or deliberately, provides us a characterization of ancient Mesoamericans—at this point *not* singling out Oaxacans—that would seem to be a compelling converse of all that he finds objectionable about then-current trends in the United States; his is, I will suggest, a kind of countercultural, even broadly “Beat,” sensibility. Thus where he can complain that modern Americans are ostensibly motivated by individual personal gain—they are, above all, self-interested materialistic consumers—ancient Mesoamericans are, in his view, refreshingly indifferent to the acquisition of goods and property.³³ While modern Americans prize “practicality” and economic efficiency, and thus are dismissive of art and fixated on finding technological solutions that can expedite every task, he is convinced that ancient Mesoamericans derived their greatest satisfaction from the honest effort required of a grand collective undertaking, especially projects that cultivate their extreme devotion to aesthetics and the sublime. Paddock’s thoroughly non-Western Zapotec protagonists are even more preoccupied with art than with religion.

And thus, accordingly to Paddock’s warning, to presume that pre-Columbian Mesoamericans, most notably Zapotecs, shared the materialistic predilections and aesthetic indifference of contemporary Americans—perhaps the very features that led him to a life in Oaxaca—cancels our opportunity to make sense of the lofty Zapotec capital. Having stressed the extramundane inclinations of native Oaxacans, a line of discussion that anticipates future discussions about “the ancient Zapotec mind,”³⁴ Paddock insists that, “The nearly unbelievable phenomenon of Monte Albán IIIb cannot

³³ The characterization of ancient Mesoamericans as indifferent to the acquisition of goods and property is especially ironic for someone like Paddock who spent lots of time in Mitla, a town whose Zapotec residents are described by everyone from Elsie Clews Parsons forward as relentlessly concerned with assigning a monetary value to everything. See, for instance, Elsie Clews Parsons, *Mitla: Town of the Souls and Other Zapoteco-Speaking Pueblos of Oaxaca, Mexico* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1936), chap. 2, “Economic Life;” and Charles M. Leslie, *Now We Are Civilized: A Study of the World View of the Zapotec Indians of Mitla, Oaxaca* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1960), chap. 7, “The Acquisitive Society.”

³⁴ See, for instance, Marcus and Flannery, *Zapotec Civilization*, 19.

be understood except in terms of these noneconomic attitudes.”³⁵ That is to say, while astute readers of Paddock may find it difficult to avoid noticing that the traits that most endear Zapotecs to the author are precisely the antitheses of those that he finds most crass and unpalatable in the modern Western world, they will also encounter some seemingly sound advice against ethnocentrism. In short, he advocates strongly—in ways that are both appealing and worrisome—that in order to avoid American provincialism, it is crucial that ancient Oaxacans be conceptualized as very different from modern researchers.³⁶

Second, again consistent with his proclivities for psychological anthropology and in concert with his concerns about avoiding the fatal distortions of an Americentric attribution of modern “practicality” to ancient Oaxacans, Paddock makes the case for another methodological tactic that, in his view, marks the foremost way in which his Oaxaca synthesis “ventured out beyond what my colleagues have been doing.”³⁷ In a direct challenge to the archaeological trends of his day, he tenders the view that, “Objectivity and discipline alone—without intuitive insight, esthetic sensibility, and imagination—are capable of producing neither scientific discovery nor achievements like Tajín and Tikal.”³⁸ And thus, albeit in a very non-technical way, he describes his reliance on something akin to the “disciplined empathy” or “eidetic vision” advocated by phenomenologists of religion when he confides that, in his experience-abetted view, to

³⁵ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 152.

³⁶ Paddock’s empathetic and appreciative approach to indigenous cultures, and more specifically his views that the native peoples of Oaxaca and elsewhere constitute not only worthy objects of study but also models for the improvement of contemporary American lifeways and values, is evident, for instance, in the opening lines of Paddock, “A New Look at the Problem of Human Violence,” 1-2, where he opines: “... if we are willing to look humbly at how other people live, willing to admit that our accustomed way may not always be the only or the best way, we will find that modest Pacific islanders, jungle hunters, and poor peasants [e.g., those he encountered in Oaxacan villages] have something valuable to teach us.”

³⁷ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 84.

³⁸ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 85.

really understand ancient sites like Monte Albán requires—or at the very least is immeasurably enhanced by—the prolonged company of present-day indigenous Oaxacans.³⁹ Paddock, therefore, apparently feels both a sense of entitlement and responsibility to capitalize on the sensibilities that have been deepened by his years of involvement with native communities, and thus explains, “I have presented a psychological projection into the life of Monte Albán’s great period simply because I think somebody among those few persons thoroughly steeped in such a culture ought to attempt this kind of sketch from time to time.”⁴⁰

In other words, though it requires a somewhat charitable reading to translate Paddock’s passing comments into actual procedural prescriptions, he is, it seems, broaching the much-debated insider/outsider question and suggesting that where those scholars who lack his face-to-face experience with indigenous peoples are settling for “etic” approaches, which explain archeological data in ways that would make little sense to Oaxacans themselves, he aspires to an “emic” approach that more fully respects “how local people think.”⁴¹ He aspires, in more colloquial terms, to “get inside the heads” of pre-Columbian builders and residents of Monte Albán. Pursuant of that possibility, native Midwesterner Paddock explains that, “I have lived and worked for years among modern Zapotecs and Chocho,” while also confiding that “I do not know any Mixtecs” (a contrast to which I will return later).⁴² For him, that extended time “among the descendents of his archaeological subjects” is a valuable resource that emboldens the controversial assertion—to which he, wisely enough, anticipates resistance—that,

³⁹ Regarding disciplined empathy or “eidetic vision,” see, for instance, Douglas Allen, “The Phenomenology of Religion,” in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, second edition, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), vol. 10, 7089.

⁴⁰ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 84.

⁴¹ See, for example, the essays in *The Insider/ Outsider Problem in the Study of Religion: A Reader*, ed. Russell T. McCutcheon (London and New York: Cassell, 1999).

⁴² Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 85.

“Attitudes developed toward his contemporaries [i.e., present-day Zapotecs] may be extended to the ancestral people and their archeological culture.”⁴³

That contentious assertion reminds one, for instance, of the approach advocated by Andeanist and Mesoamericanist Burr Cartwright Brundage wherein he too claimed to “steep” himself in the language and primary source materials of another culture very different from his own, first the Incas and then the Aztecs, until such time that he began to regard his own intuitions about the beliefs and ideas of that culture as reliable.⁴⁴ There is, then, a kind of tradeoff or wager in a work like Brundage’s *Fifth Sun: Aztec Gods, Aztec World* (1983)—his daringly expansive chapter on “The Quality of the Numinous” is an especially good example—in which the author puts at risk the certainty that most academic work demands in the interest of more deeply nuanced and rewarding, if much less certain, interpretations. Paddock too, it seems, makes that sort of wager when he undertakes his “psychological projection” into the mindsets of Monte Albán residents;⁴⁵ and he, moreover, works to improve his odds, as it were, by repeatedly stressing the very impressive continuity of a distinctive Zapotec culture that stretches from Period I Monte Albán all the way to twentieth-century Oaxaca.⁴⁶ On those grounds, some may agree with Paddock that these venturous extrapolations into pre-Hispanic attitudes and “psychology” are his most signal contribution, while others may find that the least persuasive component of his synthesis.

⁴³ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 85.

⁴⁴ Personal communication with the author concerning Burr Cartwright Brundage, *The Fifth Sun: Aztec Gods, Aztec World* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983), chap. 3, “The Quality of the Numinous.”

⁴⁵ See Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 84 and 149-74.

⁴⁶ To translate Paddock’s project into the sort of theoretical debate among archaeologists that does not seem to interest him, if he can establish the continuity between pre-Columbian and contemporary Oaxacans, then his “psychological projections” would have more the character of the “direct historical approach” than “ethnographic analogy.”

II. A GUIDING NARRATIVE THEME: THE EMERGENCE AND PERSEVERANCE OF A DISTINCT ZAPOTEC CULTURAL AND ETHNIC IDENTITY

It is no surprise, given John Paddock's oft-acknowledged debts to Alfonso Caso and more directly still to Ignacio Bernal, that we find in his rendition of Monte Albán history important resonances with all three of the guiding narrative themes that I identified in Bernal's (re)construction—namely, a highly favorable depiction of indigenous Mesoamericans, an ambivalence about religion, and great optimism about the prospects intercultural admixing. Paddock will, however, introduce significant skews in each case.

A. ALTERNATE IMAGES OF INDIANS AND THEOCRACY: ZAPOTEC EXCEPTIONALISM AND A GENERIC AFFIRMATION OF RELIGION

First, Paddock too participates in the rehabilitation of the images of Indians of every era; and thus, his characterizations of all of the pre-Hispanic actors are, like Caso's and Bernal's, overwhelmingly positive. Though presumably not so interested in providing a resource for Mexican national identity, Paddock also will frequently praise the intellectual and even more the artistic sensibilities and accomplishments of pre-Columbian peoples who, in his view, as noted, compare favorably with modern Americans in all respects except technology. Again in this story, one encounters no savage, slow-witted or mean-spirited native peoples, though there are occasional references to the heart-sacrificing and "haunted Aztecs,"⁴⁷ about whom it may be easier to speak ill because they are so peripheral to his main storyline. Paddock is, then, far more vulnerable to accusations of sentimentalizing than slandering ancient Mesoamericans.

His enthusiasms for indigenous Mesoamericans are, however, more partisan than Caso's or Bernal's. Often reminding readers that "an immensely important characteristic

⁴⁷ Paddock, "Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica," 153.

of ancient Oaxaca was its always central location with respect to the other major divisions of Mesoamerica,”⁴⁸ Paddock will consistently position pre-Hispanic Oaxacans as leaders rather than followers who have little impetus to borrow anything from Olmecs or Mayas, neighboring peoples who are in no sense their superiors; and, as we'll see, in his efforts to rectify the persistent underestimations of his area of specialization, he will be even more tendentious in his iconoclastic view that Oaxacans were the dominant, not subordinate or equal, partners in their dealings with Teotihuacanos. Moreover, if Oaxacans are, in Paddock's accounting, Mesoamerica's finest, Zapotecs are the best of the best. In this respect more like Caso than Bernal, his plotline will really feature just two groups, the Mixtecs (or, more properly, Tetlamixteca, a term we'll address later) and the Zapotecs; and though both share a common Oaxacan ancestry and each has unique accomplishments, Paddock's earlier disclosures about close personal relationships with many Zapotecs but no Mixtecs, may (or may not) help to explain the favoritism that he habitually shows to the former. In short, where Bernal found ways to sing the respective praises of six different indigenous groups, all excellent in their own ways, the Zapotec builders of Monte Albán one among them, Paddock advocates for a kind of Zapotec exceptionalism.

Second, with respect to his characterization of religion, Paddock will repeat the standard view that Monte Albán was “a major religious capital,”⁴⁹ and in an anachronistic choice of metaphors, he will tell us that “[Period IIIb] Monte Albán was a place electric with the presence of the gods,”⁵⁰ the specific identity of which he takes directly from Caso and Bernal's extensive work on funerary urns.⁵¹ But we will *not* find in Paddock's

⁴⁸ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 232.

⁴⁹ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 153.

⁵⁰ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 153.

⁵¹ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 122-24, 129-39, 145, 156 and 168-73, reproduces many photos of funerary urns with captions taken directly from Caso and Bernal's work that identify, for instance, “the goddess 13 Serpent,” “the bat god,” “the tiger god,” etc.; but he does make any reference to those specific gods in his text.

rendition the sort of deep ambivalence about religion that we did in those of Caso or Bernal. He will concur, for instance, that, across ancient Mesoamerica, “the extreme development of religion was a central integrating factor in the society;”⁵² but, unlike his very high opinion of the Zapotecs’ special, arguably unique, artistic capabilities, Paddock does *not* single them out—in either affirming or accusatory ways—for having any special degree of religiosity. Unlike the laudatory (eventually rejected) images of the Classic Mayas as time-worshipping mystics that were in vogue at the time Paddock was writing, he does *not* accentuate a supposedly special penchant for spirituality as one of the attributes that makes the “impractical” Zapotecs more compelling than materialistic modern Americans. In fact, somewhat oddly, he explains that, while the ancient Mesoamericans’ extraordinary aesthetic predilections are “strikingly impractical,” because of religion’s crucial role in social integration, “we shall not treat [religion] as impractical.”⁵³

In his scheme, theocracy is an intrinsic feature of Early Urbanism (by contrast to the militarism of Late Urbanism), and thus he will give the impression that the Early Urban phenomenon of Monte Albán was “strongly theocratic” from its Period I origins clear through to its collapse at the end of Period IIIB. But he does *not* reinforce those prevalent images of the Main Plaza as a forum for the sort of religio-political ritual that manipulates and intimidates subjects into compliance, since those are not authoritarian aspirations that the Zapotecs of his imagination have. More inclined to associate theocracy with a religio-artistic appreciation of the sublime aspects of life than with coercive or manipulative authority, Paddock can, therefore largely affirm the “theocratic Zapotecs” who provide a favorable contrast to “militaristic Mixtecs.” But he will *not* award religion any special role in Monte Albán’s ascent; he will *not*, unlike Bernal, hypothesize that Classic-era Monte Albán’s “may have been far more theocratic than any of its neighbors;”⁵⁴ and thus nor will inordinate commitments to theocracy play the sort

⁵² Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 152.

⁵³ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 152.

⁵⁴ Bernal, *Ancient Mexico in Colour*, 38.

of prominent role in Paddock's explanation of the Zapotec capital's downfall that they did in Bernal's. Perhaps his only cautionary note that religion can "go wrong" is a passing line about human sacrifice eventually becoming "a rationalized form of punitive execution" among the Aztecs; but then he immediately assures readers that sort of perversion of religion never happened at Monte Albán.⁵⁵ In short, though religion is not a distinctive or high-profile topic in Paddock's story of Monte Albán, when it does surface, he expresses, instead of the troubled ambivalence, a largely affirming sense of the religio-artistic inclinations of ancient Oaxacans.

B. 4000 YEARS OF HEROIC RESISTANCE: THE AVOIDANCE OF ADMIXING AND PRESERVATION OF ZAPOTEC ETHNIC IDENTITY

By contrast, with respect to the third theme, which I argued was the very centerpiece of Ignacio Bernal's narrative—namely, the invariably positive ramifications of intercultural admixing—Paddock will make a far more consequential departure from his mentor. Paramount as this change in narrative emphasis is, it might be missed by casual readers because, at numerous points, Paddock will reiterate lines that come directly from Bernal's work, and thus seem to reaffirm his sequential scenario about an Olmec-influenced Period I, a Mayanoid-influenced Period II and a Teotihuacan-influenced Period III. But closer scrutiny reveals that each time Paddock discusses one of these respective occasions of external influence at the Oaxacan capital, he will gloss it in ways that actually undermine rather than support Bernal's attribution of exciting new developments at Monte Albán to the stimulus of outsiders. Rather than celebrating the prospect of two cultures coming together, mutually benefiting one another and evoking revitalized new innovations, Paddock provides a picture of Zapotecs who succeed for nearly the opposite reason—that is, because, as they come into their own, they are increasingly adept at fending off unwanted external interventions, and thereby retaining their own cultural distinctiveness. Where Bernal's Zapotecs thrive on intercultural

⁵⁵ Paddock, "Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica," 153.

interactions, Paddock's Zapotecs are masters of avoiding the pitfalls and compromises that such cross-cultural exchanges invariably present.

Though this script might, then, seem to accuse ancient Oaxacans of small-minded intolerance or cultural chauvinism, Paddock levels no such charges. Instead, consistent with his glowing assessments of Zapotecs, ancient and modern, he commends their extreme resistance to intermingling with outsiders as among the most laudable and effective attributes in what amounts to a 4000-year epic of heroic resistance, a struggle for Zapotec cultural autonomy that, in fact, continues into the present era. Pursuant of that central storyline, rather than reaffirm the supposed rewards of multicultural interactions, he will train his attention on "cultural identity" and, more poignantly, on the vexing notion of "ethnic identity." Anticipating resistance and reminding us of Caso's and Bernal's concerns about the untoward "ethnic baptism of Oaxacan archaeological remains,"⁵⁶ Paddock explains that,

"Since we cannot often be entirely certain about it, identification of the peoples who make archeological events has been deplored as poor science. Further, ethnicity is an elusive concept; ethnic identity may be based upon a number of criteria, or a combination of them. But ethnic identity remains a significant social reality. Here we shall reply primarily on language, to date the best understood criterion for Oaxaca."⁵⁷

For him, then, different languages are the most accessible and reliable indicators of more elusive cultural and "ethnic" differences. And though the presently prevailing wisdom is that the most heartfelt identity among Oaxaca's indigenous people is their affiliation with a specific village rather than a broader group, Paddock makes the boldly universalistic claim that, "The kind of identity that holds deepest interest for the actors of history themselves, and for the spectators as non-scientific fellow human beings, clearly is that of ethnic groups."⁵⁸ Moreover, speaking to the two tiers of identity that will be so

⁵⁶ See Caso, "Reading the Riddle of Ancient Jewels," *Obras* reprint page 97; and Bernal, "Archaeological Synthesis of Oaxaca," 789.

⁵⁷ Paddock, "Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica," 237.

⁵⁸ Paddock, "Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica," 236-37.

important in the way that he frames his stories of ancient Oaxaca and Monte Albán, he observes that, “For Oaxaca ethnic identity has been important both [1] in distinguishing Oaxacans from outsiders and [2] in dividing Oaxacans among themselves.”⁵⁹

The Zapotec protagonists in his Monte Albán (re)construction will, in other words, participate in two layers of “ethnic identity.” At one level, they are, together with Mixtecs (or Tetlamixteca), “Oaxacans” in the sense that they feel a special connectedness to and investment in the uniqueness of Oaxaca as a distinct region within Mesoamerica; and, in Paddock’s account, this generic Oaxacan identity is born in the very early pre-urban eras, around 2000 BCE, when the area was populated by “a single people having a single language and culture.”⁶⁰ At that point, all of ancient Oaxaca was a relatively simple and unified “ethnic-linguistic unit.”⁶¹

And, at another level, his lead actors also have a more specific ethnic identity as “Zapotecs,” which sets them apart from Mixtecs, a uniquely Zapotec identity that emerges from the unique history of Monte Albán. Though this narrower but also more prized Zapotec ethnic identity, according to Paddock, first began to show itself at the emergent capital about 100 BCE (that is, at the beginning of Period II), that distinct self-understanding was not fully formed until Period IIIB, the era in which the Mixtecs developed their own alternate style of urbanism in the western portion of the region.⁶² In this script, then, Zapotecs will, in a sense, need a Oaxacan “other” to find their own more specific cultural and ethnic identity. But, once formed, that unique Zapotec identity will, in Paddock’s telling, persevere—against a host of fateful obstacles, including the collapse of Monte Albán, a huge Period V Mixtec invasion, a modest Aztec invasion, the world-changing arrival of Spaniards and even the birth of the Mexican nation-state—clear through to the modern-day Zapotec communities in which he spend so much time.

⁵⁹ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 237.

⁶⁰ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 237.

⁶¹ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 237.

⁶² Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 238.

That is to say, Paddock's foremost guiding narrative theme is, in short, the emergence and still-ongoing perseverance of a distinct Zapotec linguistic-cultural-ethnic identity. His is, in other words, an epic tale of valiant and gutsy cultural survival that flatters the protagonists and, upon first reading, may seem to be compatible with and broadly parallel to Bernal's serpentine saga about cagey Oaxacans who reshape every encounter with outsiders in ways that serve their self-interest. Yet, upon closer examination, the differences between Bernal's and Paddock's renditions of ancient Oaxacan history are fascinating and profound. By stark contrast to his teacher, Paddock's preoccupations with the endurance of separate and distinct ethnicities require him to minimize rather than magnify the role of cultural collaborations and commixtures in the creation of the great mountaintop metropolis. Instead of Bernal's Zapotecs who are confidently open to the ideas and stimuli of outsiders—indeed Bernal's Zapotecs owe their very existence and distinctiveness to cultural admixing!—Paddock provides us Zapotecs whose seemingly greatest strength lies in holding at bay the foreign influences that might dilute the integrity of their ethnic identity. In that sense, John Paddock presents a tale of Monte Albán that is not slightly, but drastically, different from that of Ignacio Bernal.

III. THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS:

JOHN PADDOCK'S HISTORICAL (RE)CONSTRUCTION

Keeping in mind especially the large differences between John Paddock's and Ignacio Bernal's only-seemingly similar accounts of pre-Columbian Oaxacan history, consider next, then, how the very different premises of the North American archaeologist assert themselves in every episode of his version of events.

A. OAXACA IN ADVANCE OF MONTE ALBÁN: FROM OAXACAN CULTURAL UNITY TO THE DIVERGENCE OF ZAPOTEC AND MIXTEC (OR TETLAMIXTECA) BRANCHES

Though Paddock's synthesis is only slightly better informed about the early formative periods than Bernal's—not until later his essays does Paddock begin to benefit from the settlement studies of Kent Flannery and Richard Blanton—he prepares the way for his version of Monte Albán's five standard stages with an opening section on “Early Man in Oaxaca.” Making the most of very limited information, he apprises us, for instance, that, “Up to now, mammoth bones found in Oaxaca have not been found together with points and knives such as those that served to establish the existence of early hunters—about 12000 to 8000 B.C.—in the Valley of Mexico.”⁶³ But he also alludes to recent Oaxacan evidence of a very long period between 7000 BCE and 3000 BCE in which “rudimentary cultivation was probably being practiced, but pottery still not being made.”⁶⁴

Additionally, Paddock reiterates, though with greater skepticism than Bernal, the by-then largely discredited legend that there had once been a large lake in the Valley of Oaxaca, which would provide a convenient explanation for the otherwise surprising absence of early human habitation in this ecologically rich area.⁶⁵ And he adds to the region's prestige (as he is always wont to do) by citing Richard MacNeish's then-fresh suggestion that Oaxaca, more specifically the Tehuacan Valley, is among the leading candidates both for the first domestication of plants—maize foremost among them—and for Mesoamerica's first irrigation system.⁶⁶ No mean accomplishments. In brief, underscoring and even boasting about these early breakthroughs, which portend myriad more original accomplishments that will arise in connection with Monte Albán, Paddock

⁶³ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 88.

⁶⁴ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 89.

⁶⁵ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 95.

⁶⁶ See Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 88-89 and 232-33.

reinforces his persistent claim that, “At a number of critical points in Mesoamerican development... [Oaxaca] seems to have been the first to make some innovation that then diffused to and affected the rest.”⁶⁷

1. “A Simple and Complete Unity”: Formative-Era Oaxaca as Separate and Distinct from the Rest of Mesoamerica

Moreover, in what will prove to be a crucial point of departure for his plotline, Paddock substantiates his assertion that Oaxaca was, throughout every era, “in the center of Mesoamerican events” by extending and nuancing Bernal’s suggestion that, with only a couple small exceptions, “the whole valley of Oaxaca has had a common history and is an ecological unit in which the same cultures have succeeded one another throughout in the same order.”⁶⁸ Balancing the region’s paired diversification and unity—and looking beyond the central valley to *the whole of Oaxaca*—Paddock, on the one hand, stresses the extreme environmental diversity, which, in his view, ultimately accounts for a similarly enormous cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity within Oaxaca; adding yet one more item to the growing list of accolades, Paddock even makes the startling but not inconceivable claim that there are “various aspects of human diversity that ancient Oaxaca compresses perhaps as much as any region in the world.”⁶⁹ Yet, on the other hand, he also insists that, during early pre-pottery agricultural days, it was “a few tiny bands of physically and culturally homogeneous men,” migrating from the north, that first populated the Oaxaca region, and thus account for the shared ancestry of all indigenous Oaxacan groups.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 232.

⁶⁸ Bernal, “Archaeological Synthesis of Oaxaca,” 795-96.

⁶⁹ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 232.

⁷⁰ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 232.

At this early point, then, according to Paddock, all Oaxacans were participating in “a simple and complete unity, that of a single people having a single language and culture” that was, furthermore, identifiably separate and distinct from the entire rest of Mesoamerica.⁷¹ In that sense, and from this early period forward, he gives a resounding—indeed amplified—affirmation to the proposition that, not simply the central valley, but the whole of “ancient Oaxaca is an ethnic-linguistic unit.”⁷² In fact, the existence of a generalized “Oaxacan identity” will remain an important premise throughout the duration of his (re)construction.

Be that as it may, that initial cultural unity, if forever an important shared substructure, according to Paddock, sometime around 2000 BCE, began to “diverge” (a key term in this arc of his story) into a multiplicity of different cultures, languages and “perhaps ethnicities” as various constituencies fanned out into the highly diverse sub-regions of Oaxaca. As he explains,

“Each local environment and subculture favored some physiques and temperaments and combined with other factors to produce peoples who differ physically and whose cultural differences may extend to their basic views of man and life and the universe.”⁷³

While there were innumerable of these splinter groups, each of which developed physical, linguistic, cultural and perhaps epistemological differences from its neighbors in different local environments, Paddock postulates that they all belonged to one of three larger language groupings, which remain identifiable today—namely, the Otomían, Zapotecan and Mixtecan. The Otomían branch is “located north of the Oaxaca

⁷¹ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 237.

⁷² To be accurate, Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient America,” 237, makes the moderated claim that, “Except for the Chontales and the Zoque-Mixe-Huave group, which are all small populations located in the extreme southeast, ancient Oaxaca is an ethnic-linguistic unit.” But that qualification actually strengthens rather than weakens his broader argument and storyline.

⁷³ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 232.

archeological region, and therefore does not greatly concern us,"⁷⁴ which thus leaves the two main Oaxacan branches that figure so prominently throughout Paddock's account. The Zapotecan and Mixtecan branches or "trunks" are, however, decidedly unparallel insofar as the Zapotecs, who will migrate into the Valley of Oaxaca, remain much more linguistically and culturally unified than the Mixtecan branch, which diverges into numerous distinct languages and cultures, all of which will (until the final episodes of this story) reside primarily in the western portion of Oaxaca.⁷⁵

2. Foreshadowing a Postclassic Reunion: The Formative-Era Cultural Divergence of Zapotecs and Tetlamixteca

Having limited his cast of main characters to just two groups, Paddock, nonetheless, in one of his most opportune rhetorical moves, coins the new term "Tetlamixteca" to encompass the Mixtecs proper along with their numerous neighboring linguistic and cultural relatives.⁷⁶ (Recall that Bernal used "Mixtecoid" to similar purposes.)⁷⁷ That strategy admittedly glosses over most of the cultural differences among

⁷⁴ Paddock, "Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica," 226.

⁷⁵ Among numerous places that he notes this imbalance between the relatively unified Zapotecan branch and the widely diversified Mixtecan branch, Paddock, "Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica," 237, explains, "only two names (Chatino and Zapotec) have been assigned to all those [languages] of the Zapotec trunk, while each modern language of the Mixtec trunk has a different name."

⁷⁶ Paddock, "Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica," 200, explains, "We need a new name for the group of peoples that includes the Mixtecs proper and their neighboring linguistic and cultural relatives such as the Chocho-Popolocas, Mazatecs, Chinantecs, Cuicatecs, Ichcatecs, Amusgos, and Triques; but that excludes the also neighboring and fairly closely related Zapotecs and the remoter although still related Pame-Otomí and Mangue-Chiapanec peoples. I propose to call this group the Tetlamixteca." Though that term does not seem to have enjoyed much usage outside of Paddock's synthesis (not even in his own later work), it is important to note that throughout this present chapter, whenever referring to the "two great branches (or trunks)" of Oaxacan peoples as Zapotecs versus "Mixtecs," it would actually be more accurate to describe the two-part distinction as Zapotecs versus "Tetlamixteca." I will at points be reminding readers of this difference.

⁷⁷ See, for instance, Bernal, "Archaeological Synthesis of Oaxaca," 811.

western Oaxacan peoples; and throughout Paddock's account there is slippage, which he fully acknowledges, wherein "Mixtec" sometimes refers narrowly to that particular linguistic-cultural-ethnic group and sometimes refers more broadly to the collection of western Oaxacan groups that he labels the Tetlamixteca, a coinage that does not enjoy much currency outside of Paddock's 1966 synthesis. Be that as it may, that simplification has enormous historiological consequences—arguably advantages—insofar as it allows Paddock to shape the convoluted 4000-year history of Oaxaca into a coherent and stirring script that features, in uneven emphases, just two main protagonist groups: the Zapotec main actors, who will win full credit for the successes of Monte Albán, and the Mixtecs, who will, in a highly prominent supporting role, actually take center-stage in Period V when they launch a "massive invasion" from western Oaxaca into the central valley.⁷⁸

Paddock manages, in other words, cleverly enough, to configure four labyrinthine millennia and innumerable ethnic groups into a two-party, fairly smooth-running narrative of Oaxacan social history. Moreover, in order to appreciate *the end* of this impressively coherent, almost circular historical account requires readers to appreciate his opening premise that, *in the beginning* (prior to 2000 BCE), all indigenous Oaxacans—including most notably "the two great branches" of Zapotecs and Mixtecs (or Tetlamixteca)—were participating in a unified linguistic and cultural heritage. To the extent that Paddock provides us a kind of historical novel, this is the foreshadowing, if you will. Persuaded that language is the most accessible and reliable diagnostic of more elusive cultural and ethnic identities, Paddock regards as the most unassailable evidence of this shared ancestry the fact that present-day Mixtecs and Zapotecs both continue to have names for themselves that mean "the Cloud People," a self-descriptor that they "still say it in a very similar way."⁷⁹ In other words, in his account, the two sets of Oaxacans have quite independent histories, which eventually lead to considerable hostilities between them, and Paddock will devote considerable attention to trying to articulate the

⁷⁸ See Paddock, "Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica," 127 or 224.

⁷⁹ Paddock, "Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica," 238.

nature of the differences between them;⁸⁰ but his story is likewise predicated on the proposition that these two famously contrastive peoples were, in an earlier era, both part of a single pan-Oaxacan cultural identity, cultural siblings, if you will.

Consequently, then, as we'll see, among the most fascinating features of Paddock's version of events is his contention that the Postclassic encounters between Mixtecs and Zapotecs in the Valley of Oaxaca are not simply a confrontation between two very different and disconnected groups, but rather a "reunion" of peoples of a shared descent!⁸¹ The dramaturgical possibilities of a scenario in which sibling Oaxacan groups, separated in their infancy but now, all-grown-up with similarly impressive but very different resumes, reuniting—or perhaps declining to reunite—in the wake of Monte Albán's demise are, to be sure, provocative in the extreme. This theatrically rich historical script, admittedly erected on the basis of thin archeological evidence, will endure lots of criticism; and most subsequent archaeologists will lose interest in this preoccupation with ascertaining the supposed "ethnicity" of pre-Hispanic peoples. Nevertheless, the wide acceptance of Paddock's basic premises about a single Oaxaca cultural substratum that eventually "diverged" into two great branches is evident, for instance, in the important 1983 collection of 100 topical articles entitled *The Cloud People: Divergent Evolution of the Zapotec and Mixtec Civilizations*, edited by Kent Flannery and Joyce Marcus, and conceived as "a case study" of "the process by which contrasting cultures evolve from a common ancestor."⁸²

In short, Paddock provides a prelude to his story of Monte Albán—in which 4000 years ago, Zapotecs and Mixtecs had already begun to realize and refine distinctive

⁸⁰ Later I will revisit, for instance, John Paddock, "Mixtec and Zapotec National Character: Some Early Views (A.D. 1580-1880)," Topic 98 in *The Cloud People: Divergent Evolution of the Zapotec and Mixtec Civilizations*, eds. Kent V. Flannery and Joyce Marcus (New York: Academic Press, 1983), 351-53.

⁸¹ Paddock, "Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica," 238.

⁸² Preface to *The Cloud People*, eds. Flannery and Marcus, xix.

cultural and “ethnic” identities—that is both narratively compelling and, in the broad strokes, historically viable.

B. PERIOD I: THE EARLY ASCENT OF MONTE ALBÁN: THE FOUNDING AND MAINTENANCE OF “AN ENORMOUS WORK OF ART”

Paddock's larger story of Oaxaca begins, then, with the gradual divergence of Zapotec and Mixtec branches from a shared cultural heritage; and, in the final episodes, he will describe the eventual “reunion” of those two groups in the centuries following the collapse of Monte Albán. But between those bookends, Mixtecs (or Tetlamixteca) will play little or no role in his renditions of the early and middle phases of Monte Albán's development. Less complicated in this respect than Bernal's six-actor saga of Monte Albán, Paddock's treatments of Periods I, II, IIIA and IIIB will scarcely require his Zapotecan protagonists to share the spotlight with anyone.

Moreover, where all of the major syntheses of ancient Oaxaca that come after this one will acknowledge the near-certainty that many of the groundbreaking developments in urbanism that Caso and Bernal attribute to Monte Albán actually transpired first at the nearby site of San José Mogote, Paddock also writes in advance of that crucial realization and thus does not even mention the earlier city. Not much better informed about the centuries immediately before Monte Albán's emergence than he was about more ancient circumstances, he is able to identify just one Oaxacan site that shows significant signs of urban-like development in advance of the famed capital, Monte Negro, a mountaintop town in the Mixteca region that had “a clear system of streets and a number of public constructions.”⁸³ That configuration prompts Paddock to entertain the possibility that, “[except] for its rather small population and the lack of any surviving evidence of writing, it might be considered almost a small city;”⁸⁴ but he cannot really position Monte Negro as any sort of direct antecedent to Monte Albán. Paddock's is, in other words, the

⁸³ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 95.

⁸⁴ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 95.

last major synthesis to describe Monte Albán's founding as a nearly miraculous development without any significant precedent whatever.

Be that as it may, given the available information, Paddock, like Caso and Bernal, faces the major interpretive challenge of accounting for a high-sited city that seems to have emerged without antecedent, and then grows at a remarkable rate. Reaffirming the usual timing, Paddock proposes that, "sometime between 1000 and 500 B.C. a group appears to have taken possession of the Valley; and it began building in impressive scale on the top of Monte Albán."⁸⁵ Though titling his discussion of Monte Albán I "Pre-Urban Communities," Paddock immediately counters that, "There is grave doubt... that we should characterize this period of Monte Albán itself as pre-urban..."⁸⁶ And though the original founders were among that branch of Oaxacans who would become the Zapotecs, he, like Bernal, avoids describing them as Zapotecs per se; that designation will come somewhat later. That these initial residents buried their distinguished dead in tombs with offerings of high quality pottery, that they seem to have laid out the expansive dimensions of the great plaza very near the outset and, most importantly for Paddock, that they erected stone monuments with calendrical inscriptions, allows him to conclude that the earliest dwellers at Monte Albán clearly displayed "all the usual signs of class divisions."⁸⁷ Moreover, if, as he strongly anticipates, future investigations reveal the use of writing, relatively large and dense populations and a projected plan for the large-scaled city, then "we may have to consider them urban."⁸⁸ Once again accentuating Oaxaca's leading role, he observes that all-but-forgone conclusion would put Monte Albán well ahead of any urban settlement in either Central Mexico or the Maya zone; and thus "we should in all probability have to recognize that these Oaxacans were the first city dwellers

⁸⁵ Paddock, "Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica," 95.

⁸⁶ Paddock, "Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica," 91.

⁸⁷ Paddock, "Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica," 99.

⁸⁸ Paddock, "Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica," 99.

in America.”⁸⁹ Again this is a story of a momentous urban initiative with no humble beginnings.

Though that much is in accord with Bernal, Paddock does not endorse his mentor's opinions about the Olmecs as a crucial stimulus to these Monte Albán I developments. Remarking that the proximity of the Olmec and Oaxaca areas makes “certain strong resemblances” between the two entirely predictable, he is content to observe that, “We cannot yet say which one came first, or which one (if, indeed, either) played the dominant role in their borrowing and lending.”⁹⁰ In a more forthright moment, he confides a hope that further research will disclose “a common origin for the Monte Albán I culture and that of La Venta [which] would explain their similarities and differences without resort to the troublesome device of ‘influences’ from one to another;”⁹¹ and he finds persuasive the view that “the western part of the Mixteca is likely a place of origin for a single culture” from which both those cultures descend.⁹² Be that as it may, Paddock is *not* inclined to repeat Caso's or Bernal's assertions that Monte Albán's Period I success owes to the felicitous consequences of cultural admixing between Oaxacans and Olmecs, a storyline that is significantly different from his own.

On the question of the seemingly unlikely site-selection with which every commentator must contend, Paddock's cautionary comments about transferring to indigenous Oaxacans our own modernist preoccupations with expedience and “practicality” enable a much more assertive and interesting stance. He is, it seems, not at all impressed by the familiar argument that the mountaintop was chosen because of its inherent fortress-like attributes. In his (re)construction, the Zapotecan branch, though

⁸⁹ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 99, n. 2.

⁹⁰ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 91-95.

⁹¹ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 233.

⁹² Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 175.

implicated in occasional references to “empire builders,”⁹³ and though they do eventually acquire control over large stretches of Oaxaca, displays almost no inclination militarism, conquest or coercive authority. Aside from a late-Period IIIB era when the city’s increasing population make resources scarce, and thus Zapotecs are compelled to forcibly commandeer their neighbors’ land, Paddock attributes to them little inclination to take others’ property or territory;⁹⁴ and in those rare moments when he acknowledges their involvements in human sacrifice, he feels compelled to assure readers that it was an infrequent occurrence.⁹⁵ He reproduces numerous photos of the famous Danzante carvings, which he concurs belong to Period I; but he barely mentions the contorted figures in his text, and thus skirts the possibility that they may (or may not) signal militarism.⁹⁶ That is to say, in stark contrast to some later syntheses, including that offered by his student Kent Flannery, Paddock provides us with an even more gentle and genteel characterization of the Zapotecs than had Caso or Bernal. Accordingly, the selection of the formidable site on military grounds is quite fully incompatible with Paddock’s presentation.

In fact, Paddock gives us pause to consider that the very formulation of the question concerning the ostensible unlikelihood of locating a city on a mountaintop presupposes both Eurocentric fixations with efficiency and a lack of aesthetic sensibility that are seriously at odds with ancient Mesoamericans’ priorities. Regarding the obvious inconveniences of life on a waterless ridge, he accedes that, “In purely economic terms... the whole accomplishment seems fantastic,”⁹⁷ and he emphasizes that, “Men capable of manipulating a calendar based on astronomical events were obviously able to perceive

⁹³ See, for instance, Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 232 and 239.

⁹⁴ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 149.

⁹⁵ See, for instance, Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 153.

⁹⁶ See Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 107-10.

⁹⁷ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 153.

that building a metropolis on a mountain range was a costly business.”⁹⁸ For him, though, this deliberate selection of a logistically difficult rather than easy location is perhaps the quintessential exemplar of the indigenous Oaxacans’ striking—and appealingly non-Western—“impracticality;” for a people operating with “an extraordinary devotion to esthetic principles,” there is nothing baffling about this choice of places to live, work and worship.⁹⁹ As part of his “psychological projection” into the sensibilities of ancient Oaxacans, wherein Paddock allows himself a special degree of speculation, he goes so far as to suggest that the residents of Monte Albán conceived the very city itself as “an enormous work of art,” which was made even more rewarding by the huge expenditure of labor that was required to create it:

“The men and women who toiled up that long hill with some offering for the gods—food for their priests, wood or water for their temples—may have felt in their tired bodies that a valley location would be more ‘practical.’ But these people were participating in the life of a metropolis; they could see that they were making it possible... They were proud, and they were reassured at this enormous work of art as evidence that man too has power.”¹⁰⁰

Thus while Paddock, at these points waxing romantic, opens himself to subsequent derision by proposing that the supposedly technology-disdaining Oaxacans were more than willing to endure the practical obstacles of an alpine abode because “the view is magnificent.”¹⁰¹ And likewise vulnerable is his contention that the excruciating outlay of expense and labor required to capitalize on this vista was offered freely and collectively: “No whip-cracking slave driver was needed. The satisfaction of helping to create something simultaneously imposing, reassuring, and beautiful is enough to

⁹⁸ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 153.

⁹⁹ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 153.

¹⁰⁰ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 153. It is actually in his account of Monte Albán IIIB, from which this quote is taken (thus the reference a “metropolis”), that Paddock provides his fullest discussion of the mountain site-selection.

¹⁰¹ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 153.

mobilize endless amounts of human effort.”¹⁰² Assuredly, as the next three chapters will demonstrate, most of Paddock's scholarly successors will find these ruminations on the lofty religio-aesthetic priorities of the builders and residents of Monte Albán overstated and completely unrealistic. But in chapter 7, we will also discover that the most recent thoroughgoing synthesis of ancient Oaxacan social history, in which archaeologist Arthur Joyce argues that Monte Albán enjoyed the allure of a “cosmic mountain” and “axis mundi,” actually returns to an explanation of the only-seemingly imprudent site-selection that is more reminiscent of Paddock's. Susceptible to charges of exoticism, Paddock's solution to the enigma of Monte Albán's sudden appearance and spectacular ascent, always a favorite with tour guides, ironically, may eventually find renewed favor with scholars as well.

C. PERIOD II: THE CERTAIN ONSET OF THE EARLY URBANISM: “FIRST-GENERATION” CIVILIZATION AT MONTE ALBÁN

Where Paddock expressed some hesitations about designating Period I Monte Albán a city, with the onset of Monte Albán II, a short period that runs from roughly 300 BCE to 100 BCE, he can speak with certainty about “the beginnings of early urbanism.”¹⁰³ In his appraisal, “As measured by its effects on the further development of culture, on forms of human behavior, and on personal experience, the city is quite possibly man's most dynamic invention;”¹⁰⁴ and thus that Monte Albán is, in his view, the earliest Mesoamerican site to attain that status is enormously significant. Distressed by the multiple and thus ambiguous usages of the term “Classic,” he opts instead for the rubric of “Urban.”¹⁰⁵ And then he makes a distinction—a prickly polarity that will be crucial for the remainder of his (re)construction—between “Early Urban,” which refers to

¹⁰² Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 153.

¹⁰³ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 111.

¹⁰⁴ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 111.

¹⁰⁵ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 111.

“the ‘first-generation’ civilizations of Mesoamerican, those strongly theocratic systems that evolved not out of other urban civilizations but out of simpler forms,” versus “Late Urban,” which refers to “‘second-generation’ civilizations that descended from the Early Urban theocracies.”¹⁰⁶

These labels can be confusing because, though Paddock frequently uses the nomenclature “Early Urban times” and “Late Urban times,” the differentiation is not actually a temporal or chronological one. Rather it is a contrast between what urban geographer Paul Wheatley terms “primary urbanism,” which entails the actual invention of the city from non-urban forms—Monte Albán and Teotihuacan, for instance, belong to this very small group of Early Urban centers—versus “secondary urbanism,” which refers to more derivative cases of cities that emerge as descendants or off-shoots of earlier cities.¹⁰⁷ According to Paddock, Cholula, El Tajín, Xochicalco and Tula, for instance, all of which emerge in Teotihuacan’s wake, belong to this much larger category of Late Urbanism, as do all of the Mixtec cities that arise during and after Monte Albán. In other words, even in its latter stages, Monte Albán will remain a late “Early Urban” city,¹⁰⁸ and while Paddock does explore the uncertain prospect of a tradition of Early Urbanism in the Mixteca region,¹⁰⁹ he presents a scenario in which essentially all Mixtec cities, whether in the Mixteca region or the Valley of Oaxaca, even in their earliest permutations, are “Late Urban” without ever participating in the Early Urban forms from which they derive. Moreover, Paddock’s distressingly blunt assertion that Early Urban cities are by

¹⁰⁶ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 112.

¹⁰⁷ See Paul Wheatley, *Pivot of the Four Quarters: A Preliminary Enquiry into the Origins and Character of the Ancient Chinese City* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1971), chap. 3, where he makes the case that in human history there have been just eight instances of “primary urban generation,” Mesoamerican (specifically Teotihuacan) one among them.

¹⁰⁸ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 210, explains, “We should be cautious in speaking about Late Urbanism among the Zapotecs—at least those of the Valley of Oaxaca—because their Early Urban ways tended to persist, at the expense of Late Urban alternatives, right down to the Spanish conquest.”

¹⁰⁹ See, for example, Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 175 and 183ff.

definition “strongly theocratic systems” while Late Urban cities are “militaristic” raises lots of problems. But, as we’ll see, if historically problematic, that purported polarity—which attributes theocracy to Zapotecs and militarism to Mixtecs—is very useful in advancing his wider Oaxacan narrative about the Formative-era “divergence” of the two branches, and then their largely frustrated Period V “reunion.” Yes, to reduce Oaxaca’s extreme diversity to a two-party confrontation between Early Urban theocratic Zapotecs and Late Urban militarist Mixtecs has commendable story-crafting benefits.

In any case, Paddock agrees with Caso and Bernal that Period II lasted only a couple hundred years and “is identified by the appearance at Monte Albán of a number of traits limited largely to aristocratic and ceremonial circles, while on the level of the common people the ways of period I go on virtually undisturbed;”¹¹⁰ and he concurs also that the era “brought some wonderful works of art into being, and in a style frequently quite different from that of period I.”¹¹¹ Period II was, he reaffirms, the era in which Great Plaza was for the first time fully paved.¹¹² Paddock likewise repeats their view that “Just as there is some kind of affinity between Monte Albán I and the ‘Olmec’ culture of La Venta, there are several resemblances suggesting links between Monte Albán II and what is identified as ‘the South.’”¹¹³ But again he declines to reecho Bernal’s contention that there was some a productive “cultural fusion” between southern-based Mayanoid peoples and Oaxacans. Actually, in Paddock’s view, perhaps surprisingly given his persistent stress on Oaxaca’s central position in Mesoamerica and thus presumed involvements with all of the wider region’s peoples, Mayas at no time are strongly influenced by or influential in Oaxaca. Even for later eras, he says, “the dazzling

¹¹⁰ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 112.

¹¹¹ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 120.

¹¹² Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 111.

¹¹³ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 112.

achievements of the Early Urban Mayas seem in general to have been very remote and exotic for their contemporaries west of Tehuantepec.”¹¹⁴

Furthermore, Paddock mentions but declines to endorse Caso's view that this Period II style was imposed by conquest, a stance grounded largely in Caso's hypothesis that the juxtaposition of place name glyphs and upside-down human heads in the carvings on Building J is a record of Monte Albán II's military victories. The majority of later scholars, as we'll see, do endorse some permutation of Caso's interpretation of those inscriptions; but Paddock, predictably opting for a more cosmological than political reading of the Building J glyphs, instead favors Howard Leigh's suggestion that the inverted heads represent “celestial deities passing under the earth (the mountain glyph) in order to resume their heavenly procession the following day.”¹¹⁵ Seemingly, once Paddock has assessed Monte Albán as a premier instance of Early Urbanism, he is even less inclined to find in it signs of militarism, which is a defining feature of Late Urbanism.

In sum, then, minimizing any role for forcible conquest, either initiated or weathered by Monte Albán, Paddock can, alternatively, point to the fact that this style was “a ruling class phenomenon”—confined, in Bernal's phrase, to “an autocracy of rulers or priests who imposed their own ideas but did not constitute a majority”¹¹⁶—as support for the “strongly theocratic” orientation of the city even at this early point. And though, like Bernal, he still avoids identifying the residents of Period II Monte Albán as Zapotecs per se, that people from “the Zapotecan branch,” with minimal reliance on outsiders, are credited with “quite possibly man's most dynamic invention” makes this era another very important link in the unbroken 4000-year-long chain of Zapotecan cultural continuity that he is proposing.

¹¹⁴ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 234, n. 20.

¹¹⁵ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 119.

¹¹⁶ Bernal, “Archaeological Synthesis of Oaxaca,” 800.

**D. PERIOD IIIA: EARLY URBANISM CONTINUES: ASSIMILATING FOREIGN
INFLUENCES AND THE “CRYSTALLIZATION” OF A DISTINCT ZAPOTEC IDENTITY**

In two crucial respects, John Paddock's discussion of Period IIIA Monte Albán (100 BCE-300 CE), routinely termed the Early Classic era, is very similar to that of Ignacio Bernal. First, this is, by both accounts, the point at which the people of Monte Albán, in Paddock's phrase, “begin to show a taste for the style of Teotihuacan.”¹¹⁷ Though there will be some differences in their assessments of the relevant dates and much larger differences in the way that they characterize Oaxaca-Central Mexican relations, both follow Caso in acknowledging an interim phase, so-termed Transitional Period II-IIIa (roughly 100 BCE-200 CE), during which the earliest signs of Teotihuacan influence appear.¹¹⁸

Second and more narratively significant, recall that, Bernal describes Transitional Period II-IIIa as an era in which Oaxacan, Olmecoid, Mayanoid and Teotihuacan elements were all present at Monte Albán; but then he contends that it is not until the start of Monte Albán IIIa proper (200 CE-500 CE in his scheme) that those four components were “fused” into the cultural unity that, for him, marks the a birth of a distinct Zapotec culture¹¹⁹—a development that, I argued, is the pivotal turning point in Bernal's entire presentation of ancient Oaxacan history. And for Paddock too, though he pushes the key date back some three centuries (that is, to 100 BCE, the beginning rather than the end of Transitional II-IIIa), this is the watershed moment at which the long-germinating Zapotecan branch actually blossoms—in his term, “crystallizes”—into a distinct Zapotec

¹¹⁷ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 127.

¹¹⁸ For the purposes of his broad synthesis, Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 127, simply merges so-termed *Transición II-IIIa* (roughly 100 BCE-200 CE) into his dates for Monte Albán IIIa (i.e., 100 BCE-300 CE), which are somewhat different than those in Bernal's synthesis (i.e., 200 CE-500 CE). Nonetheless, even in that overview, Paddock does comment on that transitional phase as a discernable period; and, in other contexts, he treats it as more identifiable era.

¹¹⁹ See chapter 2 of this book and Bernal, “Archaeological Synthesis of Oaxaca,” 801.

cultural tradition and perhaps even a distinct Zapotec “ethnic identity.”¹²⁰ Dating discrepancies notwithstanding, Paddock and Bernal are, then, in agreement that, at long last, Monte Albán IIIA can now be identified as a Zapotec city!

Paddock also follows Bernal's lead in emphasizing the largely unbroken continuity of Zapotec culture from this point forward. But he expiates at greater length, and with somewhat different emphases, on the pattern of cultural perseverance and resilience that begins with Monte Albán IIIA—and then never ends:

“Neither the abandonment of Monte Albán, nor the Mixtec conquest and occupation (some three centuries of it), nor, finally, the relatively trifling Aztec invasion caused any sharp break in Valley Zapotec ways. Except for the abandonment of Monte Albán and the later capture of a number of towns by the Mixtecs, change in the Valley of Oaxaca from the time of Christ until the Spanish conquest tended to be both very gradual and the work of the Valley's own Zapotec inhabitants.”¹²¹

In short, though the final line in that quote, which accentuates the independent initiative of the Zapotecs, augurs a significant shift in emphasis, Period IIIA is, for Paddock, as it was for Bernal, the critical juncture—indeed, the decisive point of transition—in his entire historical (re)construction. For him, even the birth of the modern Mexican nation-state will not thwart the persistence of the distinctive Zapotec cultural and ethnic identity that emerges at this point.

1. Minimizing Teotihuacan's Role: Monte Albán IIIA Success as a Thoroughly Zapotec Accomplishment

If in agreement on the key point that Monte Albán IIIA marks a peripeteia or seminal new beginning in Oaxacan history, albeit one that was very long in the making, Paddock and Bernal have, however, very different ideas about the role that Teotihuacan played in hastening the birth of this unique Zapotec culture. While substantial Period

¹²⁰ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 126.

¹²¹ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 127.

IIIA Teotihuacan influences are irrefutable, Paddock echoes Bernal by observing that, “in every instance the Oaxacans adopted these northern ideas only after coloring them strongly with their own traditions;”¹²² and he also agrees that, irrespective of the prominence of Teotihuacan stylistic features, “There is no hint that Monte Albán was in some way dependent upon or subordinate to Teotihuacan (as so many centers of the same time were).”¹²³ To the contrary, Paddock presses considerably further by insisting that Monte Albán was not merely Teotihuacan's peer but, in fact, the controlling partner in this Oaxaca-Central Mexican interaction. Where most accounts of the initial Teotihuacan-Monte Albán involvements in the Transitional Period II-IIIa are framed in ways that imply that this was the era in which the great Mexican capital began to make its presence felt in Oaxaca, Paddock reverses the agency by proposing that, “one suspects that the Transición period at Monte Albán marks the moment when... Teotihuacan was for the first time a center of sufficient importance to attract the interest of the Valley of Oaxaca people.”¹²⁴ In his script, the Oaxacans, not Teotihuacanos, are the instigators of the exchange, who will take or leave as much or little from the Mexican capital as they like.

Much less inclined than Bernal to undertake research in other regions of Mesoamerica, Paddock, always an avowed Oaxacanist, in 1966 ventured to Teotihuacan in order to supervise some excavations of the famed “Oaxaca barrio,” which lies on the western outskirts of that Central Mexican capital.¹²⁵ Though that project thus came too late to be fully integrated into his acclaimed synthesis, reflecting years later on the work provided him, among other things, an occasion to revisit his high-profile disagreements with René Millon, head of the ambitious Teotihuacan Mapping Project, concerning both

¹²² Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 127.

¹²³ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 127.

¹²⁴ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 127.

¹²⁵ See John Paddock, “The Oaxaca Barrio at Teotihuacan,” Topic 52 in *The Cloud People: Divergent Evolution of the Zapotec and Mixtec Civilizations*, eds. Kent V. Flannery and Joyce Marcus (New York: Academic Press, 1983), 170-75.

dating at the two respective sites and the nature of the Teotihuacan-Monte Albán relationship. In Millon's oft-quoted surmise,

“Altogether, the evidence suggests that relationship... may have been closer and of a different kind than the relationship of Teotihuacan to other foreign centers. There may have been a kind of ‘special relationship’ between Teotihuacan and Monte Albán. This may explain why so far the only unmistakable foreign enclave at Teotihuacan is the *barrio* of Oaxaqueños.”¹²⁶

Paddock seizes on Millon's phrase “special relationship,” but then redefines and, actually, nearly reverses it. Noting Teotihuacan's enormous influence at the Maya sites of Kaminaljuyú, Tikal and Copán—all of which are some three times farther away from Teotihuacan than is Monte Albán—Paddock makes a vigorous argument that the “specialness” of the Oaxaca-Teotihuacan relationship is actually “a defiance of relative propinquity,” by which he means, irrespective of the relative proximity of the Central Mexican and Oaxacan capitals, they have a startling *lack* of involvement! Most notable to him on the Teotihuacan side is the narrow restrictedness of Oaxacan elements to that one western *barrio*; and, on the Monte Albán side, he stresses that, despite the abundant artistic and architectural allusions to Central Mexican styles, only a “handful of Teotihuacan objects” have been discovered.¹²⁷

In Paddock's view, then, contrary to a misimpression that is exacerbated by Monte Albán's highly prominent (and voluntarily instituted) artistic references to Teotihuacan, the involvements between the two capitals were neither extensive nor sustained. Regarding the brevity of their interactions, his Teotihuacan excavations lead him to conclude, for instance, that “Every sherd of Oaxaca style that I know from the

¹²⁶ René Millon, *Urbanization at Teotihuacan, Mexico*, vol. 1, *The Teotihuacan Map*, part 1: Text (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1973), 42; quoted by Paddock, “The Oaxaca Barrio at Teotihuacan,” 175.

¹²⁷ Paddock, “The Oaxaca Barrio at Teotihuacan,” 175.

Oaxaca barrio fits without forcing into the Transición II-III date at Monte Albán...¹²⁸
 He, moreover, takes strong issue with Millon's contention that the Oaxacans who had occupied that barrio were "servants" and that the large vessels found there were "washtubs." Impatient with any intimation that Oaxacans had been vassals to Teotihuacanos and borrowing Millon's own late dating of the Teotihuacan sequence, Paddock observes that "the first large constructions [in the Oaxaca barrio] took place there when Monte Albán was already a centuries-old city;" and that confidence in the Zapotec capital's much greater maturity enables his only partly jocular assertion that, "obviously the Oaxacans had been called in to show the Teotihuacanos how to do masonry construction."¹²⁹

Again in short, at points seeming almost like a protective parent, guarding the reputation of a daughter who is involved with a notoriously profligate suitor, Paddock frames his story so that it is, at every moment, the Zapotecs of Monte Albán who enjoy the upper hand over Teotihuacan, always "calling the shots," as it were, in their much over-exaggerated relationship.¹³⁰

2. Continued Peace and Unprecedented Prosperity: Admixing Averted and Independent Zapotec Initiative Reaffirmed

Paddock, thereby, explicitly denies the widely held view that Teotihuacan played a decisive role in inspiring "the new urban social system of [Monte Albán] IIIa," a span in the capital's history that he characterizes as "extremely productive" and

¹²⁸ Paddock, "The Oaxaca Barrio at Teotihuacan," 170. He notes also (*ibid.*) that, besides being limited to a very narrow time frame, nearly all of the Monte Albán style ceramics found at the central Mexican capital "were produced at Teotihuacan from local clay."

¹²⁹ Paddock, "The Oaxaca Barrio at Teotihuacan," 170.

¹³⁰ For the view of a student of Paddock's who worked with him at Teotihuacan in 1966 and then later came to disagree with her teacher about the nature of the relationship between Monte Albán and the Central Mexican capital, see Evelyn C. Rattray, "The Teotihuacan-Oaxaca Relationship," in *Homenaje a John Paddock*, editado por Patricia Plunket (Cholula, Puebla, México: Universidad de las Américas, Puebla, 2003), 139-45.

unprecedentedly prosperous.¹³¹ As with earlier eras, he acknowledges and provides photos of some Period IIIA images that seem to signal militarism, most notably, the stelae on the South Platform that “include figures of bound captives and a conqueror thrusting his lance into the hill glyph representing some still unidentified town.”¹³² Yet also as with earlier periods—and perhaps to heighten the contrast between the theocratic Zapotecs and the militaristic Mixtecs—Paddock emphasizes more strongly that, during Period IIIA, “there is no hint of fortification... [and] there are no signs that [the city] was ever fought over or prepared for fighting.”¹³³ For him, Monte Albán’s success never depends upon military prowess. By the same token, he writes that, “City life and the high level of organization in associated rural areas had made possible a new kind of exploitation of the environment;”¹³⁴ but he also anticipates his later comments about the causes of Monte Albán’s eventual decline by adding the cautionary note that “the abundant food supply allowed a steady population increase, and before the end of IIIa all of the best land in the Valley had been occupied.”¹³⁵ Be that as it may, the Period IIIA Monte Albán of his description is steadily improving in all respects and still largely conflict free.

Accordingly, though reticent about the frequent designation of this era as the “[Early] Classic,” Paddock has to concede that “in one sense of the word it is indeed the beginning of classic (true, pure, typical) Zapotec style;”¹³⁶ and then he takes special pains to note that, “Although Teotihuacan style is plainly present in some objects of IIIa, much of the culture was by this time fully central Oaxacan.”¹³⁷ His principal narrative thrust is,

¹³¹ Paddock, “The Oaxaca Barrio at Teotihuacan,” 149.

¹³² Paddock, “The Oaxaca Barrio at Teotihuacan,” 142.

¹³³ Paddock, “The Oaxaca Barrio at Teotihuacan,” 142.

¹³⁴ Paddock, “The Oaxaca Barrio at Teotihuacan,” 149.

¹³⁵ Paddock, “The Oaxaca Barrio at Teotihuacan,” 149.

¹³⁶ Paddock, “The Oaxaca Barrio at Teotihuacan,” 141.

¹³⁷ Paddock, “The Oaxaca Barrio at Teotihuacan,” 141.

in other words, not mutually beneficial inter-cultural admixing but, instead, an eminently different emphasis on the extent to which the native Oaxacans were, by this point—now that the long-insipient Zapotec tradition had “so distinctively crystallized”¹³⁸—sufficiently confident and strong to loose themselves from foreign interference and exercise their own unique gifts and talents. With the emergence of “a true Zapotec style,” the occupants of Monte Albán were finally prepared to be innovators rather than imitators.

Therefore, when he inventories the respective historical “sequences” that led to the great sophistication of Monte Albán IIIA pottery urns, monumental architecture, funerary architecture, the writing system and calendar, and even “the common serving dish,”¹³⁹ details aside, the general pattern is in each case the same: All of these arenas demonstrate in their own ways that Period IIIA is “the final phase of a centuries-long process of assimilation during which outside ideas were reworked and ultimately (at a point that defines the end of IIIa) absorbed.”¹⁴⁰ Paddock is, it seems, very pleased to announce that, at long last, the Zapotecs had domesticated every foreign influence.

Monte Albán IIIA is, then for both Paddock and Bernal the era of the greatest Teotihuacan influence and, more importantly, the era during which a truly distinctive Zapotec culture finally emerges; but their narrative emphases are profoundly divergent. For both of them, this is the paramount turning point in all of pre-Columbian Oaxacan social history; and both will stress the smooth arc of prosperity and artistic excellence that characterizes this period and the next. Concurring that Period IIIA is “relatively simple” in contrast to Period IIIB, both accounts underline the era’s steady improvement. So much agreement on the course of events and on the blossoming of Zapotec culture ought not, however, obscure the fact that they are telling acutely different, at times, antipodean stories. Bernal’s storyline celebrates the mutual benefits for all parties of

¹³⁸ Paddock, “The Oaxaca Barrio at Teotihuacan,” 126.

¹³⁹ See Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 128, 140-41

¹⁴⁰ Paddock, “The Oaxaca Barrio at Teotihuacan,” 141.

cross-cultural interactions, and he thus congratulates the Zapotecs for the open receptivity that allows them to be transformed and improved by their dealings with outsiders. Paddock, by contrast, congratulates the finally full-fledged Zapotecs for the sort of self-discovery that enables independence from the seemingly meddlesome involvements of outsiders, especially Teotihuacanos. Instead of celebrating the “cultural fusion” to which both sides make significant contributions, his choice of terms—the “assimilation,” “absorption” and even eventual “disappearance” of foreign influences—all accentuate autonomous and self-determining Zapotecan initiative. In Paddock’s (re)construction, Monte Albán’s mounting success depends not on cooperation with foreign peoples and ideas, but rather on their containment.

E. PERIOD IIIB: “BAROQUE EARLY URBANISM” AND MIXTEC OTHERS:

ELABORATIONS IN ZAPOTEC ART, ARCHITECTURE AND IDENTITY FORMATION

Monte Albán IIIB (300 CE-900 CE), commonly termed the Late Classic, is, in Paddock’s scheme, “Baroque Early Urbanism,” the era of the city’s greatest florescence in nearly all respects. Stressing that Periods IIIA and IIIB “in most senses constitute a single tradition”—and reinforcing his leitmotif about a unique Zapotec tradition and ethnicity “coming into their own”—the latter period is notable for “the disappearance (through assimilation) of the last traces [of foreign influence] from periods I and II; the dividing ‘line’ therefore is of necessity a twilight zone of considerable width—sometimes referred to as *Transición IIIa-IIIb*.”¹⁴¹ At this point, the Zapotecs have the maturity, independence, knowhow and resources to reach their full and unique potential; and the results are predictably spectacular! During this period, if not the previous one, Monte Albán graduates from the status of a city to that of a “regional capital” and also a “metropolis,” that is, “an urban center that holds a dominant place in a complex of other urban centers.”¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 127-128.

¹⁴² John Paddock, “Some Thoughts on the Decline of Monte Albán,” Topic 56 in *The Cloud People: Divergent Evolution of the Zapotec and Mixtec Civilizations*, eds. Flannery and Joyce, 187.

1. Contemporaneous Developments in the Mixteca Region: The Emergence of Late Urbanism and Mixtec Ethnic Identity

Though Paddock depicts Mixtecs—and, for that matter, all non-Zapotecs—as largely incidental to Monte Albán's continuing ascent, his allusions to wider developments in Oaxaca are narratively important insofar as they continue to foreshadow the western Oaxacans' eventual reemergence into the story. During Monte Albán IIIB, according to his account, Zapotecs and Mixtecs continued the “slow divergence countered by only occasional, difficult contacts,” which had begun centuries earlier.¹⁴³ Developing with largely independent trajectories, the Zapotecs in the central Valley, as we've seen, maintained their mainly smooth ascent to more complex and “baroque” forms of Early Urbanism while the Mixtecs in the western portion of Oaxaca and the Tehuacan Valley remained “peripheral to Monte Albán,” still without the prowess in astronomy, writing and the construction of large stone buildings that were by now exceptionally well elaborated by the Zapotecs at Monte Albán.¹⁴⁴ Doubtful about evidence that the Mixteca region may have had its own tradition of *Early* Urbanism,¹⁴⁵ Paddock is, however, quite sure that the Mixtecs (or, more properly, the Tetlamixteca) were making great strides in developing a tradition of *Late* Urban “city-states” of a militaristic character that contrasted sharply with theocratic orientation of the Early Urbanism of Monte Albán.¹⁴⁶ And he, moreover, considers that those developments in urban organization were matched by the emergence of a distinctive Mixtec “ethnic identity” that was also markedly different from that of the Zapotecs. Consequently, he makes the important assertion that, “A sharp though not total differentiation [between Zapotecs and Mixtecs] was finally achieved with the development of Late Urbanism in

¹⁴³ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 239.

¹⁴⁴ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 175.

¹⁴⁵ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 175, again relies on the work of Richard MacNeish in the Tehuacan Valley.

¹⁴⁶ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 200-1.

the Mixteca, contemporary with [the baroque Early Urbanism of] late Monte Albán IIIb in the Valley of Oaxaca.”¹⁴⁷

In other words, though the precise timing of the emergence of unique Zapotec and Mixtec identities (and ethnicities) remains elusive—and though most subsequent scholars will regard this as a phantasm not worthy of such persistent pursuit—Paddock proposes what amounts to a three-stage process: First, as we’ve noted, he believes that, beginning around 2000 BCE, the two groups had been slowly diverging from a single Oaxacan linguistic, cultural and ethnic unity; second, he then located the original “crystallization” of a distinctive Zapotec cultural tradition and perhaps distinct ethnic identity at roughly 100 BCE, that is, at the beginning of Monte Albán II; and third, he now suggests that, along with all of the other artistic and architectural elaborations that find their fullest flowering during Period IIIB, Zapotec cultural and ethnic identity also emerges in its strongest and most thoroughly unique form. At last, the “true, pure, typical Zapotec style” that had shown itself in Monte Albán IIIA,¹⁴⁸ now shines even brighter and clearer in Monte Albán IIIB.

Furthermore, though Mixtecs (or Tetlamixteca) are not offering any significant sort of challenge to Monte Albán during this era of its greatest size and strength, the emergence of a distinct Late Urban Mixtec ethnic identity, so this story suggests, provided the final impetus to the clarification of a Zapotec ethnic identity. In this largely two-party rendition of ancient Oaxacan history, the final formation of Zapotec self-identity, it seems, required a Mixtec “other.” And, in fact, intriguingly enough, in the end—that is to say, long after the collapse of all the highly impressive physical forms and social institutions that I am about to describe—it is this distinctive Zapotec cultural-ethnic identity that, in Paddock’s telling, proves to be both the most important and most enduring creation of Monte Albán IIIB.

¹⁴⁷ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 238.

¹⁴⁸ Paddock, “The Oaxaca Barrio at Teotihuacan,” 141.

2. Fully Florescent Monte Albán: Peak Population, Artistic Supereminence and Maximum Regional Influence

In any case, if that Mixtec-Zapotec dynamic is a special feature of Paddock's (re)construction, his basic description of Period IIIB Monte Albán—though perhaps singularly exuberant—is largely consistent with those of Caso and Bernal. He concurs, for instance, that it was at this point that Monte Albán reached its peak population (a number on which he abstains) and that nearly all the currently visible buildings were constructed.¹⁴⁹ Deeply enamored of these artistic and cultural achievements, Paddock provides his most gushing praise for the city at this stage:

“Monte Albán in period IIIB was a nearly incredible enterprise. It occupied not the top of a large mountain, but the tops and sides of a whole range of hills adjoining, a total of some fifteen square miles of urban construction.”¹⁵⁰

He marvels at the art and architecture, which, in his Oaxacanist view, rivaled and “perhaps anticipated” the best that Teotihuacan had to offer:

“The works of Zapotec culture remain always sober and formal, but always robust and often marvelously well made; the greatest of them all is the capital city. For all the magical beauty of Teotihuacan's city plan and integration into its landscape, the Zapotec architects of the same period matched—or perhaps anticipated—the accomplishment in their own way. They left for us at Monte Albán a city of unrivaled majesty in a setting that would have overwhelmed lesser men before they began.”¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ Paddock, “The Oaxaca Barrio at Teotihuacan,” 149.

¹⁵⁰ Paddock, “The Oaxaca Barrio at Teotihuacan,” 151.

¹⁵¹ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 153. Somewhat surprisingly, given his deep investments in Oaxaca, his concerted efforts to demonstrate Zapotecs' vigorous independence from Teotihuacan (discussed earlier) and his effusive description of Monte Albán IIIB, that Paddock, *ibid.*, 84-85, writes, “Fortunately for me, it is the art of Teotihuacan that affects me most deeply and directly; thus I can admire the robust grandeur of Zapotec work or the refined preciousness of the last Mixtec products with nearly as much detachment as I have toward Maya or Aztec art.”

And he accentuates again the enormous investment of labor, and thus impressive social coordination, required both to construct and maintain a city of this enormous scale, situated in such a remote location:

“In addition, the maintenance of a major religious capital such as Monte Albán [IIIa] would necessarily require the services of thousands of specialists: priests, artists, architects, the apprentices of these, and many kinds of workmen, including servants for the dignitaries and their families.”¹⁵²

Moreover, it is in his extravagant description of Period IIIB that Paddock undertakes his most profuse “psychological projection” as to what the Zapotec citizenry must have felt and experienced in their grand surroundings:

“They could stand dazzled before those mighty temples, stroll half an hour to circle the immense open plaza, watch the stunning pageantry of the ceremonies, stare as fascinated as we at the valley spread mile after mile below. They knew that no other such center existed for hundreds of miles—and even then their city had only rivals, not superiors. They were proud, and they were reassured at this enormous work of art as evidence that man too has power.”¹⁵³

In other words, Monte Albán, by now a metropolis and regional capital enjoying its widest sphere of influence, somehow remained, in his description, a largely peaceful and accommodating place in which people were voluntarily thrilled to participate not only because the marvelous city engendered a very satisfying sense of civic pride, but also, it seems, the rewards of special access to deities. It was Period IIIB that prompted both the phrase, “Monte Albán was a place electric with the presence of the gods,” and reassurances that, “The ultimate drama of human sacrifice... did not become a common affair and a rationalized form of punitive execution as it later did among the haunted Aztecs.”¹⁵⁴ Monte Albán IIIB displayed, Paddock's readers are encouraged to believe, theocracy of a thoroughly benign sort.

¹⁵² Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 152.

¹⁵³ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 153.

¹⁵⁴ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 153.

At this point, then, perhaps Paddock's greatest rhetorical challenge is finding adjectives and metaphors adequate to express his extreme infatuation with the accomplishments of Monte Albán's peak period. Among all major academic descriptions of Monte Albán IIIB, this is perhaps the most effusive; for him, "baroque" is a fully flattering, not overwrought designation. Yet, as in Caso's and Bernal's accounts, this is also "the most dramatic period of the city's history" insofar as the florescence of Monte Albán IIIB, which is roughly parallel with Teotihuacan III and climactic developments in the Maya zone, also sets the stages for the collapse of Early Urbanism across Mesoamerica.¹⁵⁵ And thus I turn next to John Paddock's interpretative description of the apparently foregone decline of Monte Albán.

F. PERIOD IV: ABANDONMENT AND COLLAPSE: INTROVERSION, ENVIRONMENTAL STRESS, EMIGRATION AND THE PERSISTENCE OF ZAPOTEC IDENTITY

Irrespective of his ebullient praise for Period IIIB Monte Albán, Paddock joins those who present the eventual collapse of the great Zapotec capital, which will mark the inception of Monte Albán IV (900 CE-1521), more as inevitable than surprising. Regarding the basic sequence of events and timing of the capital's demise, he is in quite full agreement with Alfonso Caso and thus Ignacio Bernal. He concurs, for instance, that "Monte Albán had not been abandoned by a population suddenly fleeing some catastrophe, but rather that it had declined little by little over a considerable length of time."¹⁵⁶ Taking to task the bluntness with which some have interpreted Caso's references to "abandonment," Paddock opts instead to describe the depopulation as a gradual and largely voluntary "emigration" insofar as people, instead of escaping some imminent disaster, simply made thoughtful—and largely economic—decisions that they could fare better elsewhere, and thus simply left.¹⁵⁷ Leaving open the slight possibility that "military activities had something to do with the abandonment of Monte Albán in

¹⁵⁵ Paddock, "Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica," 149.

¹⁵⁶ Paddock, "Some Thoughts on the Decline of Monte Albán," 187.

¹⁵⁷ Paddock, "Some Thoughts on the Decline of Monte Albán," 187.

some indirect way,” Paddock is emphatic that, “there is no evidence of fighting” at the city *per se*.¹⁵⁸ In this story of Monte Albán, the city’s beginning, middle and now its end are all relatively peaceful; and, fascinatingly enough, Paddock’s version of events, as we’ll see, even gives us reason to reconsider whether or not the city’s collapse really is a catastrophe for the Zapotecs after all.

In any case, with declining population, Monte Albán, according to Paddock, eventually lost its status as a regional capital and a metropolis “because its dominion over the other urban centers in the valley became too inconsequential;” predictably, it was the cities farthest from the fading old Zapotec capital that first declared their independence.¹⁵⁹ At that point, the “former metropolis” reverted to the stature of a mere city among other Oaxacan cities, though perhaps persisting, even in decline, as a kind of symbolic or nominal capital for a while longer; and then, eventually, it lost the population and influence that Paddock’s requires even to qualify as urban, without, however, reverting to a condition that was rural in the normal sense.¹⁶⁰ Again in agreement with Caso, Paddock is emphatic that, “abandonment had never been total, at least for any considerable period; activity of some kind took place in the center of the city even when it was in ruins;” and he notes that Richard Blanton’s then-recent urban survey reconfirms that.¹⁶¹ While he does not dispute that Mixtecs occasionally buried their dead in the old Zapotec tombs—Tomb 7 is, of course, his premier exemplar of that pattern of reuse¹⁶²—the possibility that the decaying plaza and buildings retained great prestige as a “sacred site” or pilgrimage destination, a prospect that other scholars we’ll discuss later accentuate strongly, is, somewhat surprisingly, not a featured component of his storyline. Moreover, since the depopulation was an ongoing, largely peaceful and always

¹⁵⁸ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 211.

¹⁵⁹ Paddock, “Some Thoughts on the Decline of Monte Albán,” 187.

¹⁶⁰ Paddock, “Some Thoughts on the Decline of Monte Albán,” 187.

¹⁶¹ Paddock, “Some Thoughts on the Decline of Monte Albán,” 187.

¹⁶² For reasons I will explain in the next subsection, in Paddock’s account, the (supposed) Mixtec reuse of Tomb 7 belongs to Monte Albán V rather than to Monte Albán IV.

incomplete phenomenon, it is difficult to date, though Paddock imagines that “Monte Albán was, by A.D. 700, and probably quite a few decades before, in process of abandonment.”¹⁶³ In all these respects, his version follows the party-line.

1. Complementary Causes of Demise: Elitist Isolationism and Environmental Degradation

As to root causes for this decline, Paddock provides two quite different sorts of proposals, which are presumably compatible, but only partly synthesized. First, while, as noted repeatedly, Paddock is largely unpersuaded that cultural vitality depends upon the interaction and “fusion” of different peoples, he nonetheless does reaffirm Bernal’s notion of an ironically self-inflicted demise wherein, during the final phases of Period IIIB, the city’s elite increasingly “turned in on themselves,” refusing involvement with outsiders and thus stagnating. In Paddock’s version of that thesis, Monte Albán rulers sabotage their own self-interests not only by less interaction with the rest of Mesoamerica,¹⁶⁴ but also less receptivity to the non-elite elements of Zapotec society. As he sees it, “In spite of all its power and prosperity, period III shows a very slow but inexorable falling off in the quality of its art... We may conclude that the ruling class was becoming more and more exclusive, less and less open to the talent of all kinds from below...”¹⁶⁵ In that respect, his account of Monte Albán’s decline prefigures that which we will encounter in Arthur Joyce’s “poststructural” description of the elite’s short-sighted exclusion and thus alienation of the city’s “commoners,” who simply withdrew their support for the capital, “voted with their feet” and moved elsewhere.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³ Paddock, “Some Thoughts on the Decline of Monte Albán,” 187.

¹⁶⁴ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 210.

¹⁶⁵ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 174.

¹⁶⁶ See Joyce, *Mixtecs, Zapotecs, and Chatinos*, 249-52, or chapter 7 of this book.

Also less inclined than Bernal to blame the excesses of inordinate religiosity *per se*, Paddock nevertheless postulates that along with this inordinate top-heaviness came a kind of arrogant and stubborn attachment to entrenched “tradition” and “sacred ways,” and thus a counterproductive resistance to change:

“The same increasing rigidity of the ruling classes was one of the causes of the final collapse. Less and less inventive, it was more and more fanatically devoted to tradition. The old ways were effective in the old days, and [they reasoned that] any trouble being suffered today must be caused by a departure from those sacred ways.”¹⁶⁷

In other words, though Paddock does *not* share Bernal's suspicion that “the fall of Monte Albán was in some way directly connected with these changes in the Mixteca,”¹⁶⁸ and he does *not* afford the collapse of Teotihuacan any direct role in Monte Albán's decline, he does join Bernal (and many others) in suggesting that Monte Albán's demise owes largely to the same sort of overreach and “inflexibility of the priesthood” that undermined similarly theocratic Early Urban centers in the Valley of Mexico and the Maya Lowlands.¹⁶⁹ To that extent, his presentation does resemble Caso's and Bernal's ambivalent observation that the same set of religious beliefs and practices that had been, in Paddock's words, “a central integrating feature in the society” was now working as one of the prime agents of disintegration.¹⁷⁰

Additionally, Paddock likewise explains Monte Albán's demise in terms of a kind of environmental degradation, which he tends to see as another flaw inherent in all Early Urban centers. According to this complementary line of reasoning, all of the great “first-

¹⁶⁷ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 174.

¹⁶⁸ Bernal, “Archaeological Synthesis of Oaxaca,” 808-9. While, as we'll see, there will be considerable ensuing debate about the Mixtecs role (or lack thereof) in the demise of Monte Albán, few scholars have been inclined to pursue the possibility that the fall of Monte Albán was in any way connected with “the formation of the Toltec Empire.”

¹⁶⁹ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 174.

¹⁷⁰ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 152.

generation” capitals of Mesoamerica, including Teotihuacan, Monte Albán and those in the Maya zone,

“began with a system capable of highly effective exploitation of the environment, but with a relatively small population. So long as the growing population could find new land on which to increase production, all was well. Surplus went into the building of more and more overpoweringly majestic monuments. Offerings in gratitude to the gods were splendid, and the priests who enjoyed a monopoly of specialized knowledge, including technical as well as religious procedures, lived sumptuously.”¹⁷¹

Inevitably, however, as Monte Albán's population grew and the usually peaceable Zapotecs reached the “effective functional limits” of the Valley of Oaxaca, they were forced to resort, for the first time in Paddock's story, to more militaristic means of exploiting their neighbors. Again as he explains:

“the Valley people may have tried to extend the economic boundaries of their region and to draw upon surrounding lands to help in the ever more costly maintenance and constant enlargement of Monte Albán. Perhaps the warriors on Monte Albán stelae of period III are men who set out to bring new areas under the city's domination, and the captives are the leaders of towns they conquered...”¹⁷²

Such combative tactics, which are decidedly at odds with Paddock's characterizations of the art-loving Zapotecs, somewhat extended Monte Albán's viability; but they could not, in the end, stave off the inevitable. In his surmise, Monte Albán, like other Early Urban centers, was ultimately a victim of its own (over)growth and success. As conditions worsened, emigration and thus depopulation accelerated, precipitating the downward spiral from metropolis to city to a largely, though not completely, vacant shell of the once-sumptuous capital.

¹⁷¹ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 149.

¹⁷² Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 149-51.

2. Collapse without Catastrophe: The End of Monte Albán, but the Persistence of Zapotec Ethnic-Cultural Identity

At one level, then, Paddock's ideas about the nature and causes of Monte Albán's decline are largely consistent with Caso's and Bernal's, and also anticipate both Joyce's poststructural hypotheses and more ecological explanations like those that we will encounter in Marcus Winter's rendition of ancient Oaxacan history. In those respects, his comments on the topic are plausible and largely non-controversial. Narratively speaking, however, unlike the perfect continuity between Bernal's paired accounts of the rise and demise of Monte Albán—both of which beautifully demonstrate the virtues of cultural admixing—it may be more difficult to see how Paddock's remarks about Monte Albán's collapse, even if historically tenable, are well-matched to his distinctive way of depicting the Zapotecs and telling their story.

In fact, this segment of Paddock's generally coherent composition seems to require his ostensibly exceptional Zapotec protagonists to act out of character, as it were, in at least four major respects. First, after consistently praising them for their resolute adherence to a cultural-ethnic identity that set them apart from every other Mesoamerican group and issued in the most grandiose of all capital cities, Paddock now attributes the decline of Monte Albán, in large part, to a xenophobic commitment to religio-cultural continuity and "tradition" that has become unworkable in a changing world; the extreme independence that had been the Zapotecs' greatest asset now becomes their foremost liability. Second, the supposedly technology-disdaining Zapotecs, now just like everyone else, explore, without apparent success, all conceivable means of enhancing the agricultural yield of their lands. Third, the previously peace-loving Oaxacans now adopt the usual militaristic tactics, which only delay the inevitable. And fourth, doing even more to undermine Paddock's characterization of Monte Albán's aesthetically astute citizenry, who had happily made such large and "impractical" sacrifices to build a majestic mountaintop city, now "under the pressure of 'economic forces,'" ¹⁷³ simply

¹⁷³ Paddock, "Some Thoughts on the Decline of Monte Albán," 187.

abandon their magnificent view and artful city in favor of more easily supportable settlements in the valley below. That is to say, the ostensibly unique city of Monte Albán, in the end, finds itself mired in precisely the same sorts of political and ecological crises of all other Early Urban centers; and, more damaging still to Paddock's larger narrative history, the supposedly exceptional Zapotecs, when faced with a city that no longer works, conduct themselves in altogether normal and "practical" ways.

These significant slippages in Paddock's characterization of the Zapotecs' approach to their declining capital—inconsistencies that may reflect the fact that his synthesis is largely designed to rehearse other scholars' ideas and thus only partly to air his own distinctive opinions—open the way for two very different ways of thinking about the ramifications of Monte Albán's demise as the controlling power in the region. Indeed, two strongly contrastive interpretations of this part of Paddock's script are possible.

On the one hand, his rendering of the city's final stages might be interpreted in a quite familiar and normal way insofar as the once-powerful capital is, for all effective purposes, defunct; and thus, even if it was a largely peaceful and gradual process, this marks the last chapter in the Monte Albán story, as it were. Paddock's own account might, then, seem to support that very conventional understanding of the capital's catastrophic and complete end—wherein the death of the city also entails the irrevocable loss of much of Zapotec culture; the best of Zapotec civilization is now a feature of the past rather than the present or the future. But that is an interpretation that puts at risk his long-developing case for what I've termed Zapotec exceptionalism. That plausible reading, in other words, undermines Paddock's larger, longer and seemingly more heartfelt plotline about a unique Zapotec ethic-cultural identity that, once born at Monte Albán, never dies.

On the other hand, however, a very different reading of the same story—one that puts Paddock's comments on the depopulation of the capital in the context of his broader story of 4000 years of Oaxacan social history—presents the fascinatingly iconoclastic

possibility that the collapse of Monte Albán was not nearly the disaster that it might appear to have been, even for the Zapotecs themselves. This alternate interpretive route—the more venturesome alternative that I will unpack in the closing portion of this chapter—actually does allow readers to rescue both the specialness of the Zapotecs, and thus what I have identified as Paddock's foremost guiding narrative theme. Understood in this way, as our brief review of his ideas about Period V will help to show, the Zapotecs lose the once-fabulous capital but nonetheless retain that which matters far more. According to this much more interesting take on Paddock's story, instead of a death-blow to Zapotec cultural-ethnic identity, the collapse of Monte Albán is simply the first of several major Postclassic crises in the Valley of Oaxaca, none of which is adequate to defeat, or even seriously deflate, the unique way of being and knowing that Paddock would encounter centuries later in the Zapotec villages that he so much enjoyed. Within the broader frame of his story of cultural survival, the collapse of Monte Albán is a major but by no means fatal setback for the Zapotecs.

**G. PERIOD V: MASSIVE MIXTEC INVASION, ZAPOTEC PERSEVERANCE AND THE
“REUNION” OF OAXACA’S TWO GREAT BRANCHES**

In most early renditions of Monte Albán history it suffices to end with the Zapotec abandonment of the city and its sporadic Mixtec visitation as a necropolis, thus largely merging Periods IV and V into a single closing episode. But the logic and narrative structure of Paddock's account—especially if we are to appreciate the iconoclastic prospect of seeing the collapse of the capital as less-than-catastrophic—require fuller remarks on the complicated and much-debated interaction between these last two “periods.” Instead of mere denouement, this Late Postclassic stretch, in his telling, presents another sort of climax wherein the once-united but long-separated Zapotecs and Mixtecs finally reconvene, albeit in a highly tempestuous reunion.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁴ For some of his early, still-tentative but highly telling ideas about “the Mixtec invasion of the Valleys of Oaxaca,” see John Paddock, “Some Observations,” *Mesoamerican Notes*, vol. 5 (1957): 80-92.

The precise nature of the Mixtec presence in the Valley of Oaxaca during these final periods is, however, as Paddock observes, “One of the most controversial topics in the history of Oaxaca archaeology.”¹⁷⁵ He notes, for instance, that ever since Caso’s initial attribution of the fabulous Tomb 7 offerings to Mixtecs rather than Zapotecs—an identification he too affirms—discussion of the broader topic of major Mixtec involvements in this era, resistance to which he sees as more political than scientific, “has often been shrill, to say the least.”¹⁷⁶ He laments especially the way in some vocal non-scholars interpret the accentuation of a large role for Mixtec in the Oaxaca Valley—and the attribution of the most spectacular of all Monte Albán finds to Mixtecs instead of Zapotecs—as a deliberate ploy to “denigrate the Zapotec people.”¹⁷⁷ And though Paddock’s own stance on “the Mixtec question” will also come under considerable fire on that and other grounds, it definitely is one of the most prominent alternatives.

1. An Unhappy Family Reunion: Contemporaneous and Contested Zapotec and Mixtec Occupations of the Oaxaca Valley

In any case, the persistent misimpression (to which this summary admittedly contributes) that the famous five primarily ceramic-based categories, around which all early stories of Monte Albán are framed, define consecutive chronological periods is especially inadequate at this point insofar as, in Paddock’s synthesis, so-termed Periods IV and V refer to ceramic styles that are heavily overlapping rather than successive. The ceramics of Monte Albán IV are, as he reminds us, nearly indistinguishable from the earlier Period IIIB Zapotec style, and thus Monte Albán IV is defined less by stylistic

¹⁷⁵ John Paddock, “Mixtec Impact on the Postclassic Valley of Oaxaca,” Topic 79 in *The Cloud People*, eds. Flannery and Marcus, 272. In this article, Paddock, *ibid.*, attempts “to outline what he sees as some reasonable positions on the controversy,” which does by ways of special attention to sites at which he excavated, Yagul and Mitla. Here, fully aware that others strongly disagree, Paddock, *ibid.* 274, reasserts his ideas about a “Mixtec conquest in the valley.”

¹⁷⁶ Paddock, “Mixtec Impact on the Postclassic Valley of Oaxaca,” 274-75.

¹⁷⁷ Paddock, “Mixtec Impact on the Postclassic Valley of Oaxaca,” 275.

differences than by its association with Zapotec groups in the wake of the abandonment of the city.¹⁷⁸ Paddock, therefore, defines Monte Albán IV as the strictly Zapotec style that obtains—at any site—from 900 CE to 1521, that is, from the depopulating of Monte Albán until the arrival of the Spaniards. And thus, though he has some trouble confirming this in the field, Monte Albán IV should have its strongest representation at central valley Zapotec sites *other than* Monte Albán such as Zaachila, ETLA and Mitla.¹⁷⁹

By contrast, he defines Monte Albán V as “the period that begins with the arrival at any community in the Valley of Oaxaca of the culture brought by the Mixtecs to Monte Albán in the final centuries of preconquest times.”¹⁸⁰ That definition has to be qualified, however, by Paddock’s caveat that, in this case, he is using the term “Mixtec” to signify “not only the Mixtecs themselves but several neighboring and closely related peoples as well,” that is to say, the so-termed Tetlamixteca.¹⁸¹ Yes, there are grounds for confusion among non-specialists; and, yes, subsequent Oaxacan specialists, including his student Kent Flannery, will strongly disagree with Paddock’s “general branding of Monte Albán V pottery as [strictly] Mixtec.”¹⁸² But, in the context of his largely two-actor synthesis of ancient Oaxacan history, Monte Albán IV refers to the *Zapotec* style that runs from 900 CE to 1521 and Monte Albán V refers to the *Mixtec* (or actually *Tetlamixteca*) style in the

¹⁷⁸ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 210.

¹⁷⁹ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 210-13.

¹⁸⁰ John Paddock, “Mixtec Ethnohistory and Monte Albán V,” in *Ancient Oaxaca*, ed. Paddock, 368.

¹⁸¹ Paddock, “Mixtec Ethnohistory and Monte Albán V,” 376.

¹⁸² For instance, Kent V. Flannery and Joyce Marcus, “An Editorial Opinion on the Mixtec Impact,” Topic 80 in *The Cloud People*, eds. Flannery and Marcus, 278, write, “It is also our opinion that Postclassic studies have been confused by the general branding of Monte Albán V pottery as Mixtec...” They find that editorial comment necessary, it seems, because in Paddock’s essay in the same volume, “Mixtec Impact on the Postclassic Valley of Oaxaca,” 273, he reasserts his earlier opinion concerning the “identity of Monte Albán V and the Mixteca.”

Valley of Oaxaca that runs from about 1000 also to 1521.¹⁸³ In other words, according to Paddock's script for the centuries after the collapse of Monte Albán but before the arrival of Spaniards, there are two different, contemporaneous and interacting cultural—and, in his view, “ethnic”—constituencies in the Valley of Oaxaca: the local Zapotecs, represented by Monte Albán IV (900-1521), and the “foreign” Mixtecs, represented by Monte Albán V (1000[?]-1521).

With that clarification in mind, and if we simplify the historical scenario to which Paddock adds many qualifications, he suggests that while the two great Oaxacan branches—Monte Albán-based Zapotecs and the west-based Mixtecs (or Tetlamixteca)—had relatively little direct interaction during Periods I, II, IIIA and IIIB, the Mixtecs had during that span developed a very impressive tradition of Late Urban “city-states” in the Mixteca region.¹⁸⁴ By contrast to the “strongly theocratic” orientation of “first generation” or Early Urban centers like Monte Albán, these derivative or “second-generation” Late Urban Mixtec city-states were “militaristic.”¹⁸⁵ Moreover, as I noted in connection with Monte Albán IIIB, the Mixtecs had, by now, developed not only impressive military prowess, but also an “ethnic identity” quite distinct from that which the Zapotecs had been honing in their mountaintop capital for centuries. And, furthermore, the timing was such that, as Paddock explains, “Even when the late Zapotec world effectively closed itself from outside influence, as seems to have happened in Monte Albán IIIb-IV, the adjoining Tetlamixteca area was a center of major innovations.”¹⁸⁶ In Paddock's account, therefore, the Zapotecs are Early Urban

¹⁸³ Paddock is seemingly reticent about assigning a specific date to “the Mixtec invasion” of the Valley of Oaxaca, which would then give us a more specific date to assign to the beginning of Monte Albán V, as he understand it. Nonetheless, since, in his account, that supposed invasion came after the abandonment of Monte Albán, which he dates around 900 CE, it seems plausible (if not at all precise) to use 1000 CE as a tentative date for the onset of Monte Albán V, again as Paddock understands it.

¹⁸⁴ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 200.

¹⁸⁵ See Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 112 and 201.

¹⁸⁶ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 232.

conservatives who cling to the old ways even as they abandon Monte Albán in favor of smaller cities on the valley floor, while the Mixtecs—who, recall, Bernal described as agents of “secularization” and “modernization”¹⁸⁷—are the liberals or progressives who, having embraced the alternate orientation of Late Urbanism, were vigorously ascending to their prime.

2. Two Contrastive “Cloud Peoples”: Declining Zapotec Theocracy and Ascending Mixtec Militarism

Given the simultaneity of the declining fortunes of theocratic Zapotecs and the mounting vigor of the militaristic Mixtecs, the stage was now set for what Paddock describes as “a massive Tetlamixteca invasion of the Valley, [during which] most of the [Zapotec] towns in the Etna and Tlacolula Valleys were subjugated if not populated by the invaders.”¹⁸⁸ The head-to-head encounter between two such different peoples, at such different stages of their respective cultural developments, would be fascinating in any circumstance; but the fact they these were, in Paddock’s account, “siblings”—that is, groups born of the same Formative-era Oaxaca culture, who had then experienced some three millennia of “cultural divergence”—redoubles the dramatic, even Freudian appeal. This is the climatic rendezvous that Paddock foreshadowed via his extended comments about an originally unified Oaxaca from which the two branches had “diverged.” It was a sibling showdown—a “reunion of the Cloud People”—of Shakespearean proportions wherein a more seasoned and well-decorated older brother (the Zapotecs), by any socio-economic and political measure now well past their prime, were pitted against a younger brother (the Mixtecs), who had never previously posed either a threat or a cultural presence worthy of serious attention, but now emerged as the far stronger and more vigorous of the pair. It was, in that melodramatic sense, an ironic reversal or kind of “reckoning” wherein the Zapotecs, who had for so long enjoyed a largely unchallenged supremacy as the most power people in Oaxaca, now having watched their once-

¹⁸⁷ Bernal, “Archaeological Synthesis of Oaxaca,” 811.

¹⁸⁸ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 224.

magnificent capital dissolve into ruins, are, it seems, outnumbered and over-matched by a younger brother in the form of more virile Tetlamixteca. Great theater!

This dramatic Postclassic Zapotec-Mixtec faceoff, thereby, provides each Bernal and Paddock an ideal opportunity to advance their respective narrative themes. Recall that Bernal, who likewise characterized Mixtec culture as “very different in character, almost the opposite, from the Zapotec culture,” predictably enough, seized upon this fateful collision of siblings as a final exemplification of his favorite focus on the productivity of admixing cultures; and thus he underscores that, “when the Mixtecs occupied parts of the great valley and came into contact with the Zapotecs directly, the interaction between the two cultures produced great buildings like the palaces of Mitla and Yagul...”¹⁸⁹ Also predictably, but in stark contrast, Paddock capitalizes on the very same historical confrontation—for him a clash of two ethnicities as well as two cultures—to advance his alternate narrative agenda; and thus he suggests that the Zapotecs, irrespective of their much depleted strength and stature, were neither inclined to borrow from nor share with their younger siblings, and nor were they the easy targets for cultural conquest that they might seem to be. To the contrary, just as earlier Zapotecs had repulsed or “absorbed” the potentially contaminating cultural influences of Olmecs, Mayas and Teotihuacanos, the Postclassic Zapotecs of Paddock’s rendition, irrespective of their weakened political condition, manage to preserve fully intact their unique aesthetic sensibilities and cultural-ethnic identity. Once again, Paddock’s Zapotecs avert rather than embrace the prospect of cultural admixing.

Finally, in the very last segments of his story, though Paddock does not address either of these circumstances in detail, he depicts the “relatively trifling Aztec invasion” during Period V, which “seems to have left no archaeological trace whatsoever,”¹⁹⁰ and

¹⁸⁹ Bernal, “Archaeological Synthesis of Oaxaca,” 809. Recall that Bernal described the Postclassic arrival of large numbers of Mixtecs during with softer phrases like “exported their culture [into the valley of Oaxaca]” (p. 810) or “the arrival of Mixtec [or ‘Mixtecoid’] influence [in the valley of Oaxaca]” (p. 811).

¹⁹⁰ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 127-128.

the vastly more impactful arrival of Spaniards as yet two more occasions for the same well-practiced pattern of Zapotec cultural resistance. He, furthermore, commends the Zapotecs for holding off the cultural influences of the post-Mexican Revolution national government of 1810 to 1910, which in his view, “likewise made little impression on Indian Oaxaca.”¹⁹¹ In the final paragraph of his synthesis, he portends, to his serious chagrin, that the Zapotecs’ 4000-year run of cultural continuity may finally be coming to a close, lamenting that, “modern medicine, communications, and education are erasing in a few decades the ethnic identities that survived centuries of empire builders.”¹⁹² But then Paddock closes on a more positive note by acknowledging his good fortune to have experienced Oaxaca prior to that erasure: “A new sense of national identity as Mexicans is emerging, *but age-old loyalties persist.*”¹⁹³ In sum, irrespective of these 1966 premonitions that Oaxaca’s indigenous identities may finally be imperiled, Paddock’s treatment of Periods IV and V reinforces again his heroic tale of cultural survival and perseverance wherein the Zapotecs, even when militarily defeated, politically disenfranchised and economically superseded, are able to hold fast to their distinctive ethnic-cultural identity—which, in the end, depends on none of those prosaic realms.

IV. CLOSING THOUGHTS: AN EXPENDABLE ZAPOTEC CAPITAL, BUT AN ENDURANT ZAPOTEC CULTURAL-ETHNIC IDENTITY

In brief reiteration, then, John Paddock, irrespective of some internal inconsistencies, delivers a fairly sustained story of the emergence and remarkable persistence of a unique Zapotec cultural and ethnic identity. The saga begins around 2000 BCE, with the two great branches of ancient Oaxacans slowly diverging from a single Oaxacan linguistic, cultural and ethnic unity. It continues with an account of the Zapotecan branch moving from western Oaxaca into the central valley where, “sometime

¹⁹¹ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 239.

¹⁹² Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 239.

¹⁹³ Paddock, “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica,” 239; *italic added.*

between 1000 and 500 B.C.,"¹⁹⁴ members of that group found atop a previously vacant mountain a fabulous city, grand in conception and without precedent anywhere in Mesoamerica, thereby facilitating what Paddock terms "quite possibly man's most dynamic invention."¹⁹⁵ Conceived as "an enormous work of art," the capital's remote site was, in their view, a virtue rather than liability.¹⁹⁶ During the city's ascent, the Zapotecs have substantial interactions with Olmecs, lesser ones with Mayas and, during Period IIIA, more extensive involvements with Teotihuacanos; but in every case, Paddock, by stark contrast to Bernal, minimizes the contributions of non-Oaxacans.

In this version of events, the full arc of the Monte Albán's ascent to greatness is a thoroughly Zapotec accomplishment wherein their distinctive cultural and ethnic disposition "crystallizes" at roughly 100 BCE, and then finds its full "baroque" flowering in Period IIIB, at which point a "true, pure, typical Zapotec style" issues in Mesoamerica's most artistically, architecturally and culturally impressive capital. Following his account of the Period IV depopulation of the city, Paddock describes a massive Period V invasion into the Zapotec region of Mixtecs, whose extreme differences from their sibling Oaxacans undermine any hope that the Cloud People will recover their original unity. By this point, the two branches had embraced such disparate orientations that no rapprochement was possible; yet again, the Zapotecs, even while largely politically disenfranchised, find ways to avoid, deflect or domesticate the foreign interventions, and thereby retain their unique collective identity. And all these remarkable Zapotec accomplishments, according to this script, transpire with a minimum of violence and an unwillingness ever to compromise their "extraordinary devotion to esthetic principles."¹⁹⁷ The stirring storyline notwithstanding, there are, therefore, grounds to argue that Paddock's presentation is both the most laudatory of indigenous

¹⁹⁴ Paddock, "Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica," 95.

¹⁹⁵ Paddock, "Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica," 111.

¹⁹⁶ Paddock, "Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica," 152.

¹⁹⁷ Paddock, "Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica," 152.

Oaxacans, particularly the Zapotecs, but also least historically viable of any that we encounter in this book.

**A. BEAT SENSIBILITIES AND ECHOES OF NATIONAL CHARACTER STUDIES:
EXPATRIATE AMERICAN INTERESTS IN ETHNICITY AND IDENTITY**

In closing assessments of this narratively spellbinding if historically improbable account, were we to allow ourselves the sort of “psychological projection” that Paddock himself undertakes into the mindsets of Period IIIB residents of Monte Albán, we could float a host of suppositions concerning the author of “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica.” A bright, young, socially conscious, curious and impressionable Midwesterner studies anthropology and plays in a jazz ensemble in late 1940s California; then in the early 1950s, venturing even further from his roots, he pursues archaeology in Mexico with no less than Alfonso Caso and Ignacio Bernal; and then, at a time when Maya studies were *National Geographic Magazine's* poster-child and a leading destination for American archaeologists and anthropologists, he finds in the seriously slighted Oaxaca region an even better place than Yucatan or Chiapas to exercise his empathies for underdogs and outsiders. For a traveler and student of cultural diversity, a 1950s American version of prosperity that celebrated the military victories of World War II and the secure conformity of suburbia was provincial and stultifying; and thus the apparent “anti-violence,” together with a juxtaposition of material modesty and cultural richness, made Zapotec villages an exhilarating and highly appealing alternative. By his own account, Paddock, it seems, felt, in some respects, more “at home” away from home in Oaxaca.

There is, then, a tumble of biographical associations, all highly uncertain, that nevertheless seem consistent rather than at odds both with Paddock's choice of specializations and his vigorous, sometimes iconoclastic means of formulating a third and more popular synthesis of Oaxaca archaeology. He is, as we've noted, quite direct in acknowledging that his respect and fond regard for contemporary Zapotecs derived in large part from their highly appealing contrast to the individualist, materialistic, technology-fixated, efficiency-driven and violent trends in modern American society that

he found so troubling.¹⁹⁸ And though the present work is, as I explained in the Introduction, much less concerned with the personal motivations and biographies of archaeologist-authors than with the ongoing legacy and possible utility of their respective stories of Monte Albán, a couple of distinctly American connections are irresistibly worthy of note.

First is the plausible relevance, if oblique rather than explicit, of a kind of convention-challenging, broadly “Beat” sensibility in Paddock’s work. If, in one sense, that term was slang for “beaten down” or down-trodden, that concern provides, it seems, a quite clear analogue for his career-long endeavor to improve both the images of ancient Mesoamericans and the lot of their present-day descendents, specially neglected Oaxacans foremost among them. Moreover and more saliently, if for the likes of Jack Kerouac and Alan Ginsberg that term also carried the more ethereal connotations of “beatitude” in the sense of blessedness, exalted happiness and a blissful appreciation of the non-material aspects of life, that too matches in even clearer ways Paddock’s persistent assertion that ancient Mesoamericans, and quintessentially the Zapotecs, rejected technology and expeditiousness in favor of a special attunedness to the artistic and aesthetic dimensions of life. As Spores notes, Paddock “came from a world of music, art and psychology,”¹⁹⁹ which allowed him to identify the Zapotecs as kindred spirits. And the notion of beatific, furthermore, coheres with Paddock’s determined unwillingness to attribute militaristic or even political motivations to ancient Zapotecs,

¹⁹⁸ Here one is reminded of the three-decade earlier comments in Aldous Huxley, *Beyond the Mexique Bay* (New York and London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1934), in which Huxley, in the context of recounting a 1933 visit to Oaxaca (side trips to Monte Alban and Mitla included), complains that many books on Mexico written since the Great Depression “are marred by an injudicious extravagance of admiration for everything Mexican, or rather, for everything Indian in Mexico.” (ibid., 233) In his view, “This is only to be expected. The Mexico of the Indian is more, for these writers, than a mere geographical and sociological reality; it is place where wishes were fulfilled, and the intolerable evils of the civilized world corrected... For critics of modern American society the Mexican Indians fulfil [sic] the functions reserved in the writings of Voltaire and his contemporaries to the Chinese and the Persians; they are alien cudgels for the beating of domestic malefactors.” (ibid., 233)

¹⁹⁹ Spores, “John Paddock, Ethnohistoriador,” 41; my translation.

which thereby provided him a pre-Columbian precedent for the compelling commitment to non-violence that he observed in contemporary indigenous villages.²⁰⁰

Positioning Monte Albán's Zapotecs as precursors to what he perceived as the present-day "anti-violence" of Oaxacan indigenous communities, Paddock associates their "strongly theocratic" outlook, not with manipulative authority, but rather with an appreciation of the sublime aspects of life, which he could then accentuate via contrasts to the more militaristic and politically inclined Mixtecs. Instead of the ambivalence about religion of his Mexican colleagues, Paddock, not unlike the American Beats, has a largely affirming sense of the religio-artistic inclinations of ancient Oaxacans, though it is the "spiritual" rather than institutional or ritualistic dimension of religion that, in his view, deserves commendation. In that sense, his view also reflects a kind of generically Protestant affirmation of inward rather than outward expressions of religion, which deepens more still his characteristically American contrast to Mexican Catholic sensibilities.²⁰¹ His Zapotec protagonists are sensitive and deep thinkers; but the demonstrative and manipulative public ritual featured in many (re)imaginings of Monte Albán's Great Plaza plays no role in his account. In fact, in all these anti-materialist respects, Paddock could find a champion in the Zapotecs or, perhaps, enlist the Zapotecs in championing a set of countercultural values already close to his heart.

Second, Paddock's special preoccupations with identity and ethnicity, more emphases not really shared by his Mexican mentors, are also markedly American insofar as they reflect the influence, again albeit in a fairly generic way, of the highly controversial "national character" and "culture and personality" studies that

²⁰⁰ Of several late-career articles reflecting his interest in non-violence (or "anti-violence") that I cited earlier in this chapter, see, for instance, Paddock, "Studies on Antiviolent and 'Normal' Communities," and Paddock, "Pueblos antiviolentos, notas sobre un estado de salud social."

²⁰¹ Regarding the sort of underlying, broadly Protestant bias that is apparent Paddock's conception of religion, see, for instance, the editors' "Introduction: Material Religion—How Things Matter," in *Things: Religion and the Question of Materiality*, eds. by Dick Houtman and Birgit Meyer (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), 9-13.

anthropologists conducted during and directly after World War II.²⁰² Though he would have resented the “patriotic” purposes into which some of those much-criticized studies were recruited, and though he described it as “a virtually impossible task,” Paddock did agree to write a short article entitled “Mixtec and Zapotec National Character: Some Early Views (A.D. 1580-1880).” And in that piece, he counseled extreme caution about the still widely circulating characterizations of those two indigenous groups, which are actually grounded in a very small handful of highly prejudicial colonial documents:

“It would be easy to cite page after page of similar materials; the Mixtecs are described as sincere, perhaps a little simple, though cautious and always warlike. The Zapotecs are described as astute, perfidious, capable in fighting when they have to but strongly preferring the ways of diplomacy. Well, perhaps. But these are only characterizations, and no analysis will be found to underline them...”²⁰³

One might, therefore, be impressed by Paddock's due hesitations about simply signing onto those stereotypical images of the two contrastive groups; or, more skeptical readers might be concerned by the notable consistency between these two sets of images, which he considered unsubstantiated even for the colonial era, and the depictions of Mixtecs and Zapotecs that (re)appear in his synthesis.²⁰⁴ In either case, the vogue for “national character studies” provides another likely inspiration for a story of ancient

²⁰² See, for instance, Margaret Mead, “The Study of National Character,” in *The Policy Sciences: Recent Developments in Scope and Method*, eds. Daniel Lerner and Harold D. Lasswell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1951), 70-85; Margaret Mead, “National Character,” in *Anthropology Today: An Encyclopedic Inventory*, ed. Alfred L. Kroeber (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 642-667; and A. Irving Hallowell, “Culture, Personality, and Society,” in *Anthropology Today: An Encyclopedic Inventory*, ed. Alfred L. Kroeber (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 597-620. For a review of the abundant and then-current literature striving to define the “essence” of Mexican national character, see Gordon W. Hewes, “Mexicans in Search of the ‘Mexican’: Notes on Mexican National Character Studies,” *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, vol. 13 (1954): 219-23.

²⁰³ John Paddock, “Mixtec and Zapotec National Character: Some Early Views (A.D. 1580-1880),” Topic 98 in *The Cloud People*, eds. Flannery and Marcus, 351-52.

²⁰⁴ Despite notable consistency between these widely circulated stereotypes and the images that appear in Paddock's synthesis, he does not really suggest that pre-Columbian Mixtecs are more “sincere” than Zapotecs, and Zapotecs more “perfidious” or treacherous than Mixtecs.

Oaxaca that adopts as arguably its foremost leitmotif the formation and extraordinary persistence of a unique Zapotec cultural and “ethnic identity.”

B. MONTE ALBÁN AS AN INCUBATOR OF ZAPOTEC ETHNICITY: IMMATERIAL GAUGES OF CULTURAL EXCELLENCE AND A NON-CATASTROPHIC COLLAPSE

If reflecting a decidedly American skew, Paddock's famous article, which he described as, “a new synthesis of views currently held by those who specialize in the study of ancient Oaxaca,”²⁰⁵ definitely succeeded in its express goal of “help[ing] end the unwelcome secrecy, and to make ancient Oaxaca more accessible to more interested people.”²⁰⁶ He is, in lots of respects, deliberately unoriginal. Additionally however, again putting aside for the moment the important questions of historical accuracy and without claiming any exclusivity for this interpretation—because certainly there are many equally viable “life lessons” to draw from Paddock's somewhat ragged but nonetheless rich rendition of events—a case can be made that “Oaxaca in Ancient Mesoamerica” presents far more than a popularizing summary of then-current views on the region. Though it requires some interpretative labor to extract the genuinely original strain of Paddock's story, he does open the way to an appreciation of Monte Albán's unique role in Oaxacan history that is provocatively different from any that emerges from the other half-dozen storiological accounts that I consider in this book. In other words, his resolute emphasis on the Zapotecs' investments in aesthetic over utilitarian priorities comports in a general way with an appreciation of the “beatific” or non-material aspects of life; that much is obvious. But there are also more specific and less obvious ways that Paddock directs us to a fascinatingly atypical way of understanding the significance of Zapotec capital. Consider two.

First, regarding the means of gauging cultural excellence at Monte Albán, as we've noted, nearly all popular and academic accounts of the archaeological-tourist site,

²⁰⁵ Paddock, Introduction to Part II of *Ancient Oaxaca*, 83.

²⁰⁶ Paddock, Preface to *Ancient Oaxaca*, ix.

including those we will encounter in subsequent chapters, make the seemingly irrefutable assumption that the “florescence” of Zapotec culture—that is to say, its era of greatest prosperity and sophistication—came during Period IIIB; and apparently unassailable confirmation of that climatic success comes in the city’s most imposing architecture, greatest population and most elaborate social institutions, as well as its widest regional economic and political influence. That these are the clearest and most reliable indicators of cultural “success” seems nearly too obvious to note. According to standard assessments, these architectural and institutional structures are the greatest accomplishments of Zapotec culture, or so it certainly seems.

Though Paddock’s own extravagant praises of Period IIIB built forms contribute to that familiar view, his story actually—and in much more iconoclastic and intriguing ways—encourages very different criteria of cultural eminence. While he does not provide the sort of nuanced conceptions of ethnic identity that would content contemporary anthropologists or post-colonial theorists, he does invite us to consider that the excellence or success of an ethnic-cultural identity does *not* reside in material culture. Not unlike his warning that incessant questions about the oddly “impractical” site-selection of the city presuppose Eurocentric concerns with expedience that are not shared by ancient Mesoamericans, his account likewise gives us pause to reconsider whether the truest measure of the Zapotecs’ greatness really does lie in their big buildings, elaborate social institutions and political influence. He depicts the founders and residents of Monte Albán as idealists rather than materialists. Paddock’s Zapotec protagonists are a patient and persistent people who are predisposed to disdain rather than celebrate technology and who find their greatest satisfactions not in wielding political power or accumulating economic wealth, but rather in their exceptional appreciation of the aesthetic, trans-utilitarian aspects of life. Not surprisingly, the priorities of his ancient Zapotecs are far more like the art-appreciating Beats than like consumerist middle-class Americans. Paddock, in other words, challenges students of ancient Oaxaca, if they are to avoid the arrogances of Eurocentrism, to themselves adopt more idealist or “beatific” standards of cultural excellence. To be sure, when the extant evidence is overwhelmingly archaeological, the less tangible aspects of Zapotec culture will be far more elusive; but it

is, according to Paddock, only in those ethereal sensibilities that we can discover that which is truly special and unique about these native Oaxacans.

Second, Paddock, to the extent that he operates with these alternate aesthetic criteria of evaluation, does even more to challenge conventional assessments of Monte Albán's so-termed collapse. Mainstream accounts that attribute the cultural excellence to its outward expressions likewise take for granted that the Period IV cessation of building, loss of population, disappearance of social institutions and diminished regional influence signal a precipitous and very unfortunate "decline" and perhaps even "tragic end" of "true" Zapotec culture and civilization. From a materialistic outlook, it again seems irrefutable that the great capital, in the tellingly labeled Postclassic era, had "stagnated" and "failed." But again Paddock's treatment of the depopulation of Monte Albán and its Period IV and V aftermath points us to an alternative reading of the historical situation. If one resists the tendency to locate the excellence or "essence" of Zapotec culture in its material and institutional features, then the late Period IIIB suspension of building, dismantlement of hierarchical social systems, and losses of economic and political clout are, after all, minor rather than major losses.²⁰⁷

This is the sense in which the unraveling of Monte Albán's Early Urban institutions was *not* a catastrophe. Counterintuitive as it may seem, Paddock's narrative (re)construction dares us to consider the possibility that the late Period IIIB Zapotecs voluntarily walked away from the mountain capital and resettled elsewhere in the valley not because they were disillusioned with their aesthetics-based ethnic-cultural perspective, but in search venues where they could exercise that perspective with fewer obstructions and greater freedom. From this iconoclastic view (which will find strong resonances in Arthur Joyce's poststructuralist re-reading of the evidence), the Zapotec "abandonment" of Monte Albán was an act of confident maturity rather than desperation.

²⁰⁷ While explicit arguments that the collapse of Monte Albán was less-than-catastrophic for Zapotec culture are rare, one does encounter fairly frequently the thoughtfully corrective notion that stock references to the "collapse of Maya civilization" fails to appreciate the impressive persistence of distinctly Maya sensibilities and traditions among contemporary indigenous communities in Mexico and Guatemala.

Loosing themselves from all of those socio-political structures and conventions might even have signaled a righting of priorities, the same sort of corrective that counter-cultural critics undertake by mocking and satirizing the conventions of suburban America. Beat Zapotecs! By insisting that the depopulation of the capital was “voluntary emigration” rather than a forced flight from disaster,²⁰⁸ Paddock encourages readers at least to consider the possibility that the monumental, fixed features of the city were allowed to go into decline because that which is really important about Zapotec cultural and ethnic identity—its ideas, values, religio-artistic sensibilities, conceptions of the world and of human existence—were portable, and thus easily transplanted into smaller cities in the central valley.

From this view, the great city of Monte Albán, instead of the end goal and pinnacle of Zapotec civilization, had been a kind of incubator, the fertile urban environment that gave birth to the crystallization and then final flowering of a unique Zapotec cultural-ethnic identity, which then could persevere on its own. The demise of Monte Albán was, by that irregular reading, a means of rescuing rather than quelling Zapotec culture.

Of course, all of this may seem preposterously unrealistic; and in the next three chapters I will engage scholars who encourage us to re-imagine the ancient Zapotecs in far more prosaic ways, possessed of substantially the same materialist, pragmatic and politic priorities that Paddock and others observe in our current Western world. Also I repeat once more that this “beatific” reading is only one of many that readers could extract from Paddock synthesis, and it is quite likely not an interpretation that even the archaeologist-author, especially in his later years, would favor. Certainly the vast majority of commentators on his work come to no such conclusions. Instead, as a rule, one usually encounters the either implicit or explicit suggestion that John Paddock and Ignacio Bernal present essentially similar accounts of the social history of ancient Oaxaca. Yet, while I too have noted the abundant common ground, I end as I began this

²⁰⁸ Paddock, “Some Thoughts on the Decline of Monte Albán,” 187.

chapter by reasserting that the exceptionally strong parallels with Bernal's only slightly earlier synthesis serve most of all to make the differences especially noteworthy. In short, where Bernal's synthesis was ideally suited to bolster a Mexican mestizo identity, Paddock provides a story of Monte Albán that was—and is—serviceable as, among other things, a kind of critique of modern American society.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁹ Note also with respect to the sixth and final working proposition that I noted in the Introduction—the one that deals with the “reception” and “indeterminacy” of narrative wherein various (re)constructions of Monte Albán *could be* interpreted in ways and put to the service of socio-political agendas very different from those that are intended by their archaeologist-authors—there are, to be sure, numerous contrastive and less savory lessons that some audiences might extract from Paddock's account of ancient Oaxacan history. For example, ironically, while it is certain that Paddock is dedicated to depicting Oaxacans in a highly flattering light, his recurrent emphases on the Zapotecs' unwillingness to accept and integrate any cultural features from outsiders actually opens the way to a very unflattering characterization of them as insecure, close-minded, intolerant, even xenophobic. Moreover, by diametric contrast to Bernal's emphasis on the Zapotecs' aptitude in turning every cross-cultural encounter into a fortuitous opportunity for cultural enrichment, the Zapotecs of Paddock's version excel in forestalling rather than capitalizing on encounters with other groups, who are depicted largely as threats to the Zapotecs' distinctive ethnic and cultural identity. And thus, while this prospect presents an attitude that is nearly the opposite of Paddock's own deep appreciation for cultures other than his own, he provides a narrative resource that *could* prove serviceable to those who want to argue against cultural hybridity and in favor of the supposed virtues of “ethnic purity.” That would, though, be a vintage demonstration of “the indeterminacy of narrative.”