The Lords of Lambityeco
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The sequence of elite structures in Mound 195 and a comparison of their remains with the ethnohistoric model of Zapotec political organization at the time of the Conquest provide insights into the nature and evolution of the political system at Lambityeco. A sequential integration approach to these elite structures can identify ongoing changes in the material remains that reflect changes in the political system at Lambityeco that led up to its collapse toward the middle of the ninth century CE. Likewise, the sequence of structures provides material evidence of changing relationships between Lambityeco and Monte Albán. These changes will be examined within the context of hegemonic and territorial states together with factors that may have led to the collapse of the regional political systems.

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION AT LAMBITYECO

Colonial documents state that Zapotec city-states (queche) were ruled by royal married couples (coqui and xonaxi) who were in a direct line of descent from an apical ancestor who founded their royal lineage. The portrait heads on the façade of Tomb 6 and the friezes of the altar complex of Mound 195 Sub depict married couples like the coqui and xonaxi shown in the Genealogy of Macuilxóchitl and other colonial Zapotec pictorial genealogies (Whitecotton 1990). In addition, the males are depicted with short pointed
beards like coqui portrayed in some of the colonial Zapotec pictorial genealogies, such as the *Lienzo de Guevea* (Paddock 1983b:18). Furthermore, the Lambityeco friezes, like the colonial Zapotec pictorial genealogies, extend the genealogy back to an apical or founding ancestor (Oudijk 2008:107). All these factors indicate that the married couples who occupied the houses of Mound 195 Sub from ca. 700 to 800 CE were coqui and xonaxi who ruled Lambityeco. Finally, the construction of Structure 195-1, a large civic residential complex (PPA), over the older elite structures demonstrates that Mound 195 was the seat of political power at Lambityeco and the locus of the residences of its coqui and xonaxi up until the end of the Xoo phase.

**POLITICAL EVOLUTION AT LAMBITYECO**

The elite houses of Mound 195 Sub were occupied over a period of 100 years by four successive generations of coqui-xonaxi couples who were direct descendants of a single royal lineage ancestor. The four separate couples plus the apical or founding ancestor depicted in the friezes of the altar complex represent the genealogy of the royal married couple who occupied Structure 195-3 from ca. 775 to 800 CE and whose portrait heads decorate the façade of Tomb 6, Lord 1 Lachi and Lady 10 Naa. Their genealogy extends back five generations to the founding ancestor of their royal lineage, Lord 2 Chilla, who may have lived from ca. 650 to 675 CE. If our reading of the genealogy is correct, the immediate descendants of Lord 2 Chilla may have included Lord 4 Lachi and Lady 10 Loo, who probably lived between ca. 675 and 700 CE. None of these individuals appears to have occupied any of the elite houses of Mound 195 Sub.

The remaining three couples in the friezes, however, must have occupied the three oldest houses within Mound 195 Sub, although because of the destruction of portions of the upper friezes, some of their names are unknown. Again, if our reading of the genealogy is correct, Lord 5 Peche and Lady 4 ? occupied Structure 195-6 between ca. 700 and 725 CE and were most likely buried in Tomb 5. Lord 8 Laala and Lady 3 Xoo occupied Structure 195-5 between ca. 725– and 750 CE and Lord ? and Lady 5 Naa occupied Structure 195-4 between ca. 750 and 775 CE. These latter two couples were buried in Tomb 6, where their skeletal remains are represented by four of the six minimum individuals buried there.

**STRUCTURE 195-6**

The oldest house within Mound 195, Structure 195–6, was probably built and occupied by Lord 5 Peche and Lady 4 ? between ca. 700 and 725 CE.
It was a substantial house that had a patio and room floors paved with white plaster. Its patio covered an area four times as large as most commoners’ houses, including a more or less coeval commoner’s house recently excavated at Lambityeco east of Mound 195 (Markens, personal communication, 2007). Also, unlike most tombs of commoners, consisting of holes excavated into sterile soil and dirt floors, Tomb 5, in which the Structure 195-6 coqui and xonaxi were most likely buried, was a masonry structure with a white plaster floor. Insofar as access to resources can be determined from the material remains of houses and tombs, the coqui and xonaxi who occupied Structure 195-6 had access to ample resources within the context of their community. A large area of ash and salt boilers directly south of Structure 195-6 in the basal deposits underlying Mound 190 indicates that they may have been involved in salt production and that this area formed part of their residential plot.

**STRUCTURE 195-5**

The next elite house, Structure 195-5, was probably built and occupied by Lord 8 Laala and Lady 3 Xoo between ca. 725 and 750 CE. He most likely was the eldest son of the Structure 195-6 coqui and xonaxi. Two important architectural features distinguish Structure 195-5 from Structure 195-6 and make it more elaborate. First, it was built atop a low platform whose front (west side) consisted of a talud covered by a layer of plaster. Second, a new household tomb (Tomb 6) was built beneath the eastern part of the patio in an area where it would not disturb Tomb 5. Tomb 6 was a very elaborate tomb that had a large façade with twin panels painted red and framed by double cornices. The construction of the elite house atop the platform and the erection of Tomb 6 suggest that the coqui and xonaxi who occupied Structure 195-5 had the ample resources necessary to acquire these symbols of power to reinforce their status as rulers of Lambityeco.

In addition, at this time a second elite house, Structure 190-5, was built in Mound 190 only 10 m south of Structure 195-5. This house was built over the former salt-boiling area within the residential plot of the Structure 195-6 coqui and xonaxi. The house was probably occupied by a second son of the Structure 195-6 coqui and xonaxi who was most likely a younger brother of the Structure 195-5 coqui. He evidently started a cadet or junior branch of the royal lineage (see Oudijk 2002:77), initiating the sequence of four superimposed houses within Mound 190 occupied by noble married couples who were buried in Tomb 2. Archaeological evidence from Mound 190 and Tomb 2 suggests that these nobles may have served as priests, which corresponds with statements in colonial documents
that second sons of coqui often became religious specialists (Lind and Urcid 1983, 1990).

Finally, between ca. 725 and 750 CE, the House of Tomb 3 was built within the large residential plot slightly north and about 45 m west of Structure 195-5. The house was occupied by a family of commoners who were probably contracted by Lord 8 Laala and Lady 3 Xoo to reside there and serve as fulltime retainers. The House of Tomb 3 was probably situated near the western entrance to the large residential compound and served as a point from which access to it could be controlled.

**STRUCTURE 195-4**

The probable eldest son and heir of the Structure 195-5 coqui and xonaxi, whose name we do not know, and his wife, Lady 5 Naa, occupied Structure 195-4 between ca. 750 and 775 CE. They built their house on top of the Structure 195-5 house but expanded it greatly. First, they raised the platform atop which the house was built and extended it eastward. Second, they doubled the size of the original house by adding, along its north side, a second patio with rooms around it. Third, they expanded Tomb 6 from a single-chamber to a double-chamber tomb and may have built an altar along the back wall of the east room. In addition, they probably had the first, and oldest, sweatbath built about 10 m north of Structure 195-4 within their large residential compound. Finally, they may have had the House of Tomb 3 refurbished for the second generation of commoner retainers, as evidenced by the resurfacing of its patio. Their construction activities made Structure 195-4 larger than many of the elite houses at Monte Albán. Insofar as access to resources can be determined from the material remains of houses, Structure 195-4, covering an area more than twice as large as Structures 195-5 and 195-6, represents material evidence that the coqui and xonaxi who occupied it had access to considerable resources.

**STRUCTURE 195-3**

The final structure atop Mound 195 Sub, Structure 195-3, was built and occupied between ca. 775 and 800 CE by Lord 1 Lachi and Lady 10 Naa. Although they reduced the residence in size from its Structure 195-4 form, they made it much more elaborate and much less accessible from the outside. Furthermore, they appear to have separated the residential quarters from the more public civic sector of the building.

The civic sector (Structure 195-3SE) of the building underwent considerable renovation. First, the platform was raised and the front (west side)
or façade of the building was decorated with a plaster-covered stone facing. Second, the rooms were elevated along the south side of the patio and the large south room in which the coqui and xonaxi conducted governmental business had the walls flanking the stairway ascending to it decorated with “lightning in the sky” step frets (a metaphor for Cociyo) contained in panels framed by double cornices. Third, a 2 m high altar complex was constructed that occupied the entire east side of the patio and depicted their royal ancestors going back five generations; this altar complex is similar to one in the elite House of Tombs 139, 140, and 141 on Terrace 21 at Monte Albán. Finally, plaster portrait heads of Lord 1 Lachi and Lady 10 Naa were attached to the façade of Tomb 6; nothing as elaborate or ostentatious as these portrait heads has ever been found on any tomb at Monte Albán or elsewhere in the Valley of Oaxaca.

With regard to accessibility, a series of modifications not seen in the earlier elite structures of Mound 195 Sub were done. In Structure 195-4, the blind L-shaped northwest corridor had provided relatively open access from outside the residence to either Structure 195-4SE or Structure 195-4NE. In Structure 195-3, this corridor was sealed and the blind L-shaped southwest corridor was opened, which diverted access to the extreme southern side of the civic sector (Structure 195-3SE) and away from the residential (Structure 195-3NE) quarters. The corridor was only wide enough for people to enter the building single file and ended in a small vestibule in front of a small corner room that may have been occupied by a servant or guard who controlled direct access to the building. Likewise, anyone arriving in front of the southwest corner room had the altar complex in full view in front of them, a statement by the coqui and xonaxi of their royal lineage’s long history as rulers of Lambityeco.

Significant changes also took place in the residential quarters (Structure 195-3NE), which were virtually sealed off from the outside, making them the most inaccessible part of the building. The rooms were raised 1 m above the patio floor so that all four had to be reached by stairways from the patio below. The walls on either side of the stairways were decorated with panels framed by single cornices. In addition, the sweatbath to the north of the residential quarters was expanded in size. Likewise, Lord 1 Lachi and Lady 10 Naa probably refurbished the House of Tomb 3 for the third generation of commoner retainers, as evidenced by the resurfacing of its patio floor. They also added a second house nearby, the House of Tomb 4, which represented an additional group of commoner retainers either newly contracted or resulting from an outgrowth of the Tomb 3 household.

Despite all the changes in the Structure 195-3 civic residential building, the patio floors of the earlier Structure 195-4 were not replaced.
Instead, the Structure 195-4SE patio floor was retained in Structure 195-3SE. Additionally, the northern half of the Structure 195-4NE patio floor was reutilized and a new southern section simply tacked on in Structure 195-3NE. Nevertheless, it is evident that Lord 1 Lachi and Lady 10 Naa had access to a considerable amount of resources and invested them to enhance their status by acquiring material symbols of power, most of which were displayed in the public part (Structure 195-3SE) of the civic residential structure.

Although the earlier coqui and xonaxi were evidently able to conduct their governmental business within their ample residences, Lord 1 Lachi and Lady 10 Naa constructed what may be properly termed a civic residential building. The southern half of the building (Structure 195-3SE) was the more elaborate public part where the coqui and xonaxi conducted their governmental business, dispensed justice, and probably feasted noble retainers; and, if Urcid’s interpretation of the unusual southeast corner room is accepted, the coqui probably performed rituals petitioning rain here. The northern half of the building (Structure 195-3NE) was seemingly the private residential quarters of the coqui and xonaxi and their family.

This innovation, at Lambityeco, of separating the more elaborate civic sector from the more mundane residential quarters also served to separate the role of the coqui and xonaxi as household heads from their role as rulers of Lambityeco. This appears to reflect a shift from the previous authoritarian but more paternalistic rulers to more autocratic rulers. By separating the civic from the residential part, their status was enhanced by providing them with a public space, a symbol of power, from which to rule Lambityeco.

**THE END OF A ROYAL LINEAGE**

Following the deaths of Lord 1 Lachi and Lady 10 Naa, a dramatic change in political organization took place at Lambityeco. Evidence of this change is manifested in the material remains of all the structures within the residential compound—Mound 195, Mound 190, and the Houses of Tombs 3 and 4. Numerous lines of evidence reflected in these archaeological remains point to the ruler and political elite of Monte Albán as the agents of this radical change that took place in ca. 800 CE. They brought about an end to the local royal lineage that had ruled Lambityeco from ca. 700 to 800 CE and appointed new governors in their stead.

A series of events reflected in the material remains of Structure 195-3 relate to changes leading up to the demise of the local royal lineage and the installation of new rulers at Lambityeco. Following the death of Lord 1 Lachi, his son and heir or his wife, Lady 10 Naa, retrieved his bones
from Tomb 6 in ca. 800 CE. She, or her son, may have continued to rule Lambityeco until her death in ca. 810 CE. Divested of her former power, Lady 10 Naa, accompanied by a small offering typical for commoners, was unceremoniously buried in Tomb 6 by way of a hole dug in the center of the flat-top altar and through the roof of the main chamber. The desecrated altar was never repaired, leaving the hole as a gaping chasm. Also, in an act of disrespect and desecration, the friezes at the top of the altar complex were broken and tossed, some pieces ending up in the hole dug through the altar. Following her death, the public part (Structure 195-3SE) of the civic residential building was abandoned, marking the end of the local royal lineage and signifying the end of the place from which they had ruled.

These acts of irreverence of the former rulers and destruction of their symbols of status and power were probably carried out by agents of the ruler and political elite of Monte Albán and/or the new governors they appointed to rule Lambityeco. They also appear to have expelled the heirs of Lord 1 Lachi and Lady 10 Naa from the residential compound. The new coqui and xonaxi took over the former residential quarters (Structure 195-3NE) of Lord 1 Lachi and Lady 10 Naa and had the door between it and the former civic sector (Structure 195-3SE) sealed, leaving the civic sector abandoned. A new door was opened through the west wall of the entrance hall to provide access to the Structure 195-3NE residence from the outside. In addition, just outside the residence, either an earlier doorway was reopened or a hole was knocked through the north wall of the abandoned civic sector (Structure 195-3SE) so that the new rulers could dump and burn their garbage on its floors.

At the same time that the local royal lineage was being deposed and expelled from the residential compound, archaeological evidence from Mound 190 and the Houses of Tombs 3 and 4 indicates that their residents were experiencing a similar fate. The relatives of Lord 1 Lachi and Lady 10 Naa, the noble household just south of Mound 195, were likewise expelled from the residential compound. Their residence (Structure 190-2) was buried beneath construction fill, eliminating all traces of their presence. A new house (Structure 190-1) was built over the fill, which in both Structures 195-2 and 190-1 included a section of unusual hemispherical adobes, suggesting that they were undergoing construction at nearly the same time. Structure 190-1 was occupied by a new noble household probably sent by the ruler of Monte Albán to assist the new coqui and xonaxi in governing Lambityeco. Finally, the commoners who were retainers of Lord 1 Lachi and Lady 10 Naa and who occupied the Houses of Tombs 3 and 4 were driven out from the residential compound. Their houses were demolished to build the north platform of System 195.
These varying lines of archaeological evidence from Lambityeco indicate that around 810 CE everyone who had occupied residences within the residential compound were expelled and had new structures built over the remains of their residences. By ca. 830 CE, Mound 195 Sub and the elite structures within it were buried under construction fill used to raise the eastern half of Mound 195, eliminating all material traces of the royal lineage that had ruled Lambityeco for the previous century.²

**STRUCTURE 195-1**

The radical change in political organization at Lambityeco is reflected in the construction of Structure 195-1. It was a huge civic residential complex (PPA) that was built to Monte Albán standards. It has the same layout and basal measurements as System IV (TPA) on the Main Plaza at Monte Albán and was most likely designed by Monte Albán architects. With the exception of the west hall, the Structure 195-1 residence built atop Mound 195 is very similar in its layout and dimensions to the East Palace on the Main Plaza at Monte Albán and the Houses of Tombs 104 and 105 with their inset L-shaped corner rooms and was also most likely designed by Monte Albán architects.

The material remains of Structure 195-1 clearly point to the ruler and political elite of Monte Albán as the agents of this dramatic change in political organization at Lambityeco. The ruler of Monte Albán had the power to remove the local ruling lineage at Lambityeco and everyone associated with them who resided within the large residential compound. Likewise, the ruler of Monte Albán had access to the substantial resources necessary to build a monumental structure the size of Structure 195-1 and the power to appoint new coqui and xonaxi to be governors of Lambityeco.

Despite its enormous size, Structure 195-1 had a very small tomb within its residential sector. The small size of Tomb 1 suggests that, although the Structure 195-1 civic residential complex (PPA) was constructed to impress and convey the power of the state, the new Structure 195-1 coqui and xonaxi, despite having considerable power over the residents of Lambityeco, did not wield much personal power within the context of the larger state headed by the ruler of Monte Albán. Likewise, the slab-lined grave for the noble buried under the east room of Structure 190-1 in Mound 190 suggests that the noble household who occupied it manifested even less personal power within the state.

The new rulers instituted a number of politically managed economic changes at Lambityeco. Lambityeco’s major industry, salt production, underwent a clear change around 810 CE. Salt workers were grouped in a
government workshop near the salt deposits. New salt-production techniques were introduced to increase production. Mixing tubs were implemented to enhance brine salinity. Ovens were used to maximize salt distillation at a lower cost for fuel than the previous bonfires. Standardized smaller-size salt boilers were also introduced to reduce distillation time. All of these factors increased productivity.

The use of standardized salt boilers implies that the potters who made them were also organized into government-controlled pottery workshops at this time. It is likely that Monte Albán–style kilns (Winter and Payne 1976) were introduced to maximize pottery production at a lower cost for fuel than the previously used bonfire kilns (Swezey 1975). The production of G-35 bowls, the standard food-serving vessel in the Xoo phase, was increased by virtually eliminating the pattern-burnished designs and thereby reducing the production step index. Likewise, textile producers may have been organized into government workshops. However, unlike salt production, archaeological evidence for these latter changes is lacking and they must remain hypothetical.

The imposed rulers appear to have established a new marketplace at Lambityeco, although this is uncertain because archaeological evidence of marketplaces is notoriously difficult to verify. This possible marketplace was situated between two monumental Monte Albán–style complexes. Along the northeast side of the marketplace was the large residential compound containing the civic residential complex, or PPA, of the new ruler. Along the south side of the marketplace was a temple complex, or TPA, Mound 155. These two monumental constructions dominated the marketplace and would have facilitated the ability of the new rulers to control and tax any market exchanges.

Interestingly, Structure 195-1 was a work in progress. It was never finished before it was abandoned around 850 CE. The north and south platforms along the plaza never had walls completed around them. Furthermore, the south and west platforms had piles of construction fill on them, indicating that they were to be raised to higher levels. A large limestone block from which stones were being removed to build walls was left at the southeast corner of Mound 195. A raised and paved walkway or road along the south side of Mound 195 was never finished before Structure 195-1 was abandoned. It appears that workmen simply stopped working, leaving construction in progress. The abandonment of Structure 195-1 coincides with the collapse of the political system and the virtual total abandonment of Lambityeco.
Questions brought up in Chapters 1 and 2 regarding the political relationship between Monte Albán and Lambityeco during the Xoo phase may now be answered. It is evident from the sequence of elite structures within Mound 195 that Lambityeco was a semiautonomous city-state with its own local royal lineage of coqui and xonaxi from ca. 700 to 800 CE. The rulers of Monte Albán almost certainly required these local rulers to pay tribute and, perhaps, provide labor services and soldiers for military campaigns but probably allowed them a good deal of autonomy in governing the Lambityeco city-state. A similar situation most likely obtained among other semiautonomous city-states throughout the Valley of Oaxaca at this time. Therefore, it is probable that the rulers of Monte Albán headed a hegemonic state in the Valley of Oaxaca from ca. 700 to 800 CE.

Around 810 CE, however, the political elite of Monte Albán devised a new strategy for governing Lambityeco. They deposed the local ruling lineage and installed new rulers in a large civic residential complex. They also instituted some politically managed economic changes primarily involving salt production, Lambityeco’s major industry, which became a government-controlled operation. These political changes transformed Lambityeco from a semiautonomous city-state to a province under the direct control of Monte Albán from this time until the regional collapse of the political system around 850 CE.

If these changes were happening at Lambityeco, then it seems very likely that they were being instituted at former semiautonomous city-states throughout the Valley of Oaxaca at this time. By converting former semiautonomous city-states into provinces overseen by governors and by politically managing the most important resources of these former city-states, the ruler and political elite of Monte Albán transformed their former hegemonic state into a territorial state.

MONTE ALBÁN’S WORLD SYSTEM DURING THE XOO PHASE

Both Lambityeco and Monte Albán reached their highest peak during the Xoo phase. The establishment and prosperity of Lambityeco at this time was directly related to political stability in the Valley of Oaxaca generated by the rulers of Monte Albán. Lambityeco was located on the valley floor with no nearby defensible positions and could not exist in this setting without support and protection from the capital. Therefore, it seems evident that Monte Albán’s rulers had established hegemony over the city-states in the Valley of Oaxaca by the beginning of the Xoo phase.
Such hegemonic control was not limited to the Valley of Oaxaca but also extended to adjacent areas (Fig. 10.1). Insofar as ceramic assemblages reflect political hegemony, the Sola, Ejutla, and Miahuatlán valleys to the south manifest a Xoo phase ceramic assemblage virtually identical to that of the Valley of Oaxaca, as demonstrated by excavations and surveys there (Brockington 1973; Markham 1981; Feinman and Nicholas 1990; Balkansky 2002). In addition, for the Sola Valley, Balkansky reports the presence of Xoo phase carved stones and, although he does not recognize them as such, TPAs and/or PPAs, which he describes as a “three to four structure group (with a larger east structure) arranged around an enclosed plaza” (Balkansky 2002:66). Balkansky (2002:60) cites an estimated population of more than 7,000 persons for the Sola Valley at this time, whereas Feinman and Nicholas (1996:93) cite a coeval population of about 3,000 persons for the Ejutla Valley.

The mountainous Peñoles region to the west of the valley also has a Xoo phase occupation in two-thirds of the area closest to the Valley of Oaxaca (Kowalewski, personal communication, 2008) with a larger population in
contrast to earlier phases (Kowalewski 2003). In his survey in the mountains north of the Etna arm of the valley, Drennan (1989:378) reports a considerable increase in population in this area, including sites with a Xoo phase ceramic assemblage and sizeable mound groups in contrast to very low population levels in earlier phases.

The Sierra Juárez in the mountains north of the valley also manifests the presence of a Xoo phase ceramic assemblage and a TPA at San Pedro Nexicho (Winter, personal communication, 2008). The Guirún area east of the Tlacolula arm of the valley had a substantial Xoo phase occupation including, like the Ejutla Valley, more than 3,000 persons (Feinman and Nicholas 1996:93). To the south of the Tlacolula arm and east of the Zimatlán arm of the valley, the Chichicapan Valley has a substantial Xoo phase occupation (Winter, personal communication 2008). It seems likely that the small valleys in the mountainous region surrounding the Valley of Oaxaca were occupied by Zapotecs under the political hegemony of the rulers of Monte Albán during the Xoo phase.

On the other hand, there is little evidence that Monte Albán’s ruling elite exerted control beyond these areas. The Cañada region to the northeast lacks evidence of a Xoo phase ceramic assemblage. To the southeast and southwest, the Mixe area and Isthmus of Tehuantepec, which together formed a separate cultural region during the Late Classic, show no evidence of Xoo phase occupation (Winter, personal communication, 2008).

Xoo phase ceramics, but not the entire ceramic assemblage, have been found to the northwest of the Valley of Oaxaca in the nearby Nochixtlán Valley, the largest and richest agricultural valley in the Mixteca Alta. Xoo phase ceramics are reported from surveys around Jaltepec, a large Classic site in the extreme southern part of the Nochixtlán Valley (Byland and Pohl 1994), and also occur in excavations along the slopes of Yucuñudahui, a major Classic site in the extreme northern part of the valley (Lind 1979). However, no dates are associated with these ceramics and their context is insufficient to assess the significance of their presence, although it may reflect intensive trade between the Valley of Oaxaca and the Nochixtlán Valley.

Along the Pacific Coast in the region known as the Mixteca de la Costa, the Classic period is much better known. However, there is no evidence for a Xoo phase ceramic assemblage or any indication that the rulers of Monte Albán ever exerted politically hegemony over this region (Joyce 2003). On the other hand, the rulers of Río Viejo and other Late Classic centers along the Pacific Coast erected carved stone monuments inscribed with their calendar names using Zapotec hieroglyphics (Urcid 1993; Urcid and Joyce 2001). This suggests that they were emulating symbols of power.
used by the rulers and political elite of Monte Albán. Therefore, although the region was not under their control, there was probably intensive trade between this region and Monte Albán via Sola, Miahuatlán and Ejutla (Feinman and Nicholas 1990, 1993).

Farther north in the Mixteca Baja, extensive excavations at Cerro de las Minas, a major Late Classic Ñuiñe phase site, have not revealed any evidence of Xoo phase ceramics (Winter 1996, 2007a). At this time, however, members of the political elite at Cerro de las Minas and other sites in the Mixteca Baja were buried in tombs with local-style urns or ceramic effigies. Furthermore, the Mixteca Baja rulers also employed carved stones naming themselves and depicting their conquests using Ñuiñe hieroglyphics that were originally derived from Zapotec writing during the Nisa phase (Gaxiola 1984:77; Urcid 1998:10–11; Rivera 2000, 2002). The employment of distinctive urns and carved stones by Late Classic Ñuiñe rulers reflects their own local emulation of symbols of power used by the rulers and political elite of Monte Albán and probably indicates economic interaction between the Mixteca Baja and Valley of Oaxaca.

Yet, farther north in the valleys of Toluca and Puebla, evidence of Xoo phase ceramics have been discovered (Smith and Lind 2005). However, no dates are associated with these ceramics and they do not constitute a complete Xoo phase ceramic assemblage. Nevertheless, they appear to reflect mortuary contexts, indicating the possibility of Late Classic enclaves of Zapotec long-distance traders who lived and died in these valleys. Finally, the presence of Balancán Fine Orange in the Valley of Oaxaca indicates a relationship with Tabasco and Campeche on the Gulf Coast, although the examples from the valley are mostly imitations and may or may not include some imports.

Between 650 and 850 CE, apart from the Valley of Oaxaca and adjacent areas, Monte Albán’s world system probably included the Mixteca de la Costa, Mixteca Alta, Mixteca Baja, and the valleys of Puebla and Toluca. However, to date there is no archaeological evidence that the rulers of Monte Albán exerted direct political control over any of these regions. Instead, it appears more likely that long-distance traders from Monte Albán were actively engaged in economic exchanges with these regions. These interactions were made possible by the earlier collapse of Teotihuacan in the Valley of Mexico whose rulers had probably exerted hegemony over these areas and Monte Albán until ca. 550 CE (Winter 1998, 2001).

In sum, the hegemony established by Monte Albán’s rulers during the Xoo phase seems to have been limited to the Valley of Oaxaca and areas immediately adjacent to it. Although Monte Albán manifests some of the characteristics that Smith and Montiel (2001) cite for empires, such
as a major urban center with hieroglyphic inscriptions that record conquests and evidence for regions beyond the empire emulating its symbols of power, most of the other characteristics are lacking. It does not appear, therefore, that Monte Albán can be categorized as an empire during the Xoo phase.

THE COLLAPSE OF MONTE ALBÁN

The abandonment of Lambityeco was caused by political instability. This instability was a result of the inability of the rulers of Monte Albán to maintain control over the communities within the state. Therefore, the question of why Lambityeco was abandoned is directly related to the question of how the rulers of Monte Albán lost political control of the communities within the Valley of Oaxaca at the end of the Xoo phase. This latter question, in turn, relates to the question of why certain elite practices of Classic period Zapotec civilization fell into disuse and why Monte Albán ceased to exist as the capital of a state after having served as the most important city in the Valley of Oaxaca for more than a millennium.

Explaining the political collapse of Monte Albán requires a concerted problem-oriented research plan that is still far away from being realized, not only because of the scale of the phenomenon but also because the sequential integration approach has not been employed in the few relevant cases where there has been a fair amount of archaeological explorations at particular sites. Thus, the model to be outlined below should be construed as hypothetical and aimed at formulating questions for future research. We begin by emphasizing that the political collapse of Monte Albán should be understood in terms of a sociocultural process within particular historical and ecological contexts (Cowgill 1988) and that due attention needs to be paid to local antecedents, environmental factors, and anthropogenic impacts on certain ecosystems.

In controlling their hegemonic state, the Monte Albán ruling elite must have deployed at various times different strategies toward their subject city-states, including marriage alliances, competitive generosity, patron-client relationships, and direct control backed up by military force. Figure 10.2 plots some of the participants and the type of relationships that may have characterized the Monte Albán state ca. 800 CE. Among these must have been successful or weak relationships that were contingent on the specific strategies of incorporation and the geographical distance between the capital and subject city-states. Other relationships would have involved political and economic competition not only between Monte Albán and subject city-states but also between neighboring incorporated city-states.
10.2. Hypothetical model of the political collapse of the Xoo phase Monte Albán state (ca. 850 CE)
In addition, both the capital and subject city-states would have had competitive relationships with autonomous polities on the fringes of the state’s boundaries and with more distant polities.

That the political elite of Monte Albán were seemingly able to maintain successful relationships with some incorporated city-states may be illustrated by Cerro de la Campana, Suchilquitongo (Méndez 1988). Although little is known of the context of Tomb 5—the most ostentatious tomb yet known in all of southwestern Mesoamerica—the palace associated with it was not covered by a PPA or a TPA (Urcid 2005), nor is there any evidence for an abrupt secession of the local ruling lineage. There is a TPA adjacent to the palace, suggesting that the relation between Monte Albán and Cerro de la Campana was different from the relation between the capital and the Lambityeco rulers.

The case of Lambityeco serves to illustrate the competitive relationship between the capital and subject city-states. The changes implemented by the rulers of Monte Albán on Lambityeco appear to have been, to a large extent, a response to the growing economic power and independence of the local elite in governing their city-state. Between ca. 700 and 800 CE, the royal couples of Lambityeco evidently increased their access to resources that they invested in symbols of status and power even rivaling or surpassing some of those from Monte Albán. One of those sources of wealth appears to have been based on their role as mediators between salt producers and consumers, perhaps by controlling its distribution to neighboring city-states and to Monte Albán. During the same time, Monte Albán was growing too (almost doubling its Pitao phase population) and certainly required increased resources to support its population and its political elite. By co-opting salt production at Lambityeco and its distribution to other city-states within their sphere of control, the political elite of Monte Albán would have augmented much needed revenue to support themselves and the population of their capital city, curtailing at the same time the increased ability of the local ruling elite from amassing further economic and political power.

Similar examples of a competitive relationship between the political elite of Monte Albán and other subject city-states within the Tlacolula arm of the valley may have involved Macuilxóchitl. The community had what appears to be a TPA at the top of Cerro Danush, with a palace in the next lower terrace (Faulseit 2008). Such a strategic location dominates the local landscape. There is also a probable PPA that was cut through by the Pan-American Highway (Markens, Winter, and Martínez 2008:202). Although we do not know what these examples of state architecture mean in terms of the local political dynamics or when within the Xoo phase they were built,
the presence of these two monumental structures may reflect the vested interest of the Monte Albán ruling elite to keep that city-state within its tight control.

Still another example of a takeover by the political elite of Monte Albán may have involved the community of Xoxocotlán, despite the close proximity of the latter to the capital. Tomb B in Mound 5 at Xoxocotlán, a tomb built and used continuously throughout the Xoo phase, appears to have been associated with a double-patio elite residence that was eventually covered by a TPA or a PPA (Urcid and Sellen 2008).

It is possible that the growth in power of several regional ruling elites and the need to increase access to resources by the capital led the ruling elite from Monte Albán to a widespread enforcement to ensure overall tighter control. Such a strategy involved not only nearby communities (like Xoxocotlán) but even entire distant regions (like the Sola Valley). By converting former autonomous city-states into provinces ruled by governors and by politically managing the most important resources of these former city-states, the ruling elite of Monte Albán transformed their former hegemonic state into a territorial state in the latter part of the Xoo phase.

Although there is no evidence that Monte Albán was ever conquered (Winter 2003:116) or that a major polity in any region surrounding the valleys ever posed a significant military threat to the capital, our model does consider the possibility of warfare at the fringes of the state, particularly between loosely incorporated subject states and between these and autonomous neighboring polities. Figure 10.2 plots a competitive relationship involving organized violence between Miahuatlán and Coatlán, in the southern mountains, based on what we know of the relationship between these communities during the early Colonial period (Paso y Troncoso 1905; Jansen 1984; Thiemer-Sachse 1990). The warring between these communities at that time appears to have been triggered, among other things, by local territorial disputes that probably had long historical antecedents. From the perspective of the capital, these low-scale armed encounters would have tapped resources that the political elite of Monte Albán were forced to divert in order to protect their distant provinces.

Such protection would have been crucial in order to guarantee direct and indirect access to more distant resources that was made possible by trading relations with autonomous polities. We assume that the progressive increase in access to resources evidenced among the Lambityeco elite between ca. 700 and 800 CE reflects a similar success on the part of the rulers, political elite, and long-distance merchants from Monte Albán in generating more resources during this time. Figure 10.2 plots three probable trading routes linking (1) Río Viejo, in the Pacific littoral, with Sola de
Vega; (2) the Mixteca Baja with the Valley of Oaxaca via the Mixteca Alta; and possibly (3) Tehuantepec, in the Isthmus, with Monte Albán, although there is little evidence for the latter. Each trading relation would have been different, depending on the presence or absence of intermediaries.

It should be stressed that the model illustrated in Figure 10.2 includes but a small fraction of the constituents that made up the Monte Albán state, but by outlining the multiplicity of interests and relationships among participants it becomes clear the potential variety of sociocultural factors that could have unfolded simultaneously, leading to the collapse of the regional political system. In addition, there is no reason to eliminate from the model the possibility of strife within the political elite of Monte Albán. All of the stone monuments from the capital that were carved during the first half of the ninth century CE occur in the North Platform and have been found fallen and, in most cases, broken and incomplete. Although it is impossible to determine if the condition of these monuments reflects iconoclastic acts by competing elite factions or is simply the result of decay and more recent vandalism, it is unlikely that the ruling elite of Monte Albán had monolithic interests. Intrigues in royal courts, plots of assassination of leaders, and sudden takeovers by factions with different agendas figure prominently in the histories of ancient and modern states.

Could widespread or localized social unrest have played a role in the political collapse of Monte Albán? Given the need of the growing state to increase revenues in order to provide local and regional services, it seems possible that governors in some provinces and the ruler and political elite at Monte Albán increased the labor demands on commoners to produce more goods, limiting at the same time their access to certain manufactured goods. If such a measure became increasingly repressive, commoners could have rebelled or shifted their allegiance to other dissenting elites, who may have been pressed as well to supply more tribute.

However, if commoners had rebelled, we would expect to find archaeological evidence of the destruction and desecration of civic residential buildings and other elite markers of status and power, such as that found at Río Viejo on the Pacific Coast of Oaxaca (Joyce, Bustamante, and Levine 2001). There is no such evidence in any of the elite residences or public buildings at Lambityeco or Monte Albán (Winter 2003:106). If rebellions ensued in other parts within the state, the political elite of Monte Albán would have had to divert resources to maintain the elite interests of those provinces.

As commented before, the sociocultural processes outlined thus far need to be considered in terms of their ecological setting. From the Pitao to the end of the Xoo phase, the population at Monte Albán doubled,
reaching the highest peak in its entire history. Population in the Valley of Oaxaca and adjacent regions of the Monte Albán state also appears to have experienced considerable growth between 650 and 850 CE. Lambityeco, for example, was not even occupied or had a very tiny population during the Pitao phase, yet grew to have a population of nearly 3,000 persons and served as the capital of a city-state with more than 8,000 persons during the Xoo phase. The large increase in population of the valley would have required a corresponding increase in food production.

During this time, Monte Albán would have needed twice the amount of food resources ever in its history for its population to survive. Kowalewski (1982:203) has suggested that, at this time, the rulers and political elite at Monte Albán adopted a piedmont strategy to help feed the growing population. The rulers of Lambityeco also appear to have adopted a similar strategy as evidenced by the large nearby farming community of Santa Ana del Valle, spread across the piedmont zone to provide Lambityeco with corn. It also seems probable that many of the other city-states in the valley adopted a piedmont strategy to provide food resources for their increasing populations.

At present, we have no means of evaluating the extent to which a piedmont strategy could have impacted specific ecological systems, nor do we have data on the chain of anthropogenic changes that such a strategy may have caused in the valley. In addition, although a piedmont strategy is risky because it is dependent on rainfall and adequate rains may not fall in the same area each year (Kowalewski 1982:155–156), this strategy evidently worked well during years of normal rainfall because resources could be shifted to affected areas and because these probably varied randomly from year to year within the valley. Nevertheless, a prolonged and widespread drought would have had a devastating effect on the large Xoo phase population in the Valley of Oaxaca (Winter 2008).

Although studies aimed at understanding ancient climatic regimes to detect evidence of drought episodes have not been carried out in southwestern Mesoamerica, environmental evidence from the Basin of Mexico (Caballero and Ortega Guerrero 1998; Metcalfe et al. 1989; O’Hara and Metcalfe 1997, cited in Markens, Winter, and Martínez 2008:209) and from southeastern Mesoamerica (Hodell, Curtis, and Brenner 1995; Robichaux 2002:341; Haug et al. 2003) indicates the onset of dry intervals coincident with the Late Classic. The data from the southern and northern Maya lowlands are allowing a better understanding of the timing, geographical extent, and possible causal relation between drought episodes and sociocultural developments. “Evidence for severe, extended drought conditions . . . now comes from at least three sources, each of which is based on a different line
of evidence,” which date a series of severe droughts in southern Campeche and the Maya lowlands from ca. 750 to 950 CE (Robichaux 2002:341). It is possible that this series of severe droughts may have also affected the Valley of Oaxaca near the end of the Xoo phase. What is needed in order to evaluate this scenario is to obtain paleoclimatic data for the valley to elicit timing and periodicity of droughts caused by solar forcing (Hodell, Brenner, and Curtis 2001), the way they differentially affected diverse localities and ecosystems, and the extent to which such episodes bear a possible casual relationship with the political collapse of Lambityeco and Monte Albán.

What has become clear in the case of both the southern and northern Maya lowlands is that episodes of drought manifested different impacts in different places, coinciding with the collapse of polities in some areas and not in others and, in some cases, even may have permitted political transformations toward increased wealth and power (Yaeger and Hodell 2008). The case of Chichen Itzá is worth considering because the timing of its growth appears to coincide with a major drought episode affecting the eastern part of the peninsula of Yucatán during the ninth century CE. It has been hypothesized that such a drought would not have affected Chichen Itzá as it did other settlements in that sector of the peninsula because its political economy was not much dependent on agricultural production but on the mercantile control by its political elite of the trading and distribution of manufactured goods, including salt, along the circumpeninsular canoe networks (Yaeger and Hodell 2008:220–221).

The effects of a drought in the valley would have had implications that, together with the political turmoil, would have exacerbated the conditions, leading to the political collapse of Lambityeco and Monte Albán. We have argued that during the early part of the Xoo phase, ca. 650–800 CE, the Zapotec economy in the valley appears to have operated on market principles as evidenced in salt production at Lambityeco, which was a household enterprise. A prolonged drought around 800 CE would have increased the cost of corn and other foodstuffs. To compensate for these increased costs in basic foodstuffs, producers of other basic household necessities—salt, ceramics, textiles, obsidian, manos and metates, molcajetes, lime—would have had to increase the costs of their products. This inflationary spiral, in turn, would have left many households of commoners, especially borderline producers and farmers whose crops failed to yield adequate harvests, without access to sufficient resources to obtain their basic necessities.

In response to such an economic crisis, unfolding in tandem with the increased threat of the growing power of local elites, the ruler and political elite at Monte Albán may have brought about the same radical change in political organization at Lambityeco to other parts of the valley. By
deposing the local ruling elites, installing their own governors, and imposing government control of the economy, they would have controlled the production and distribution of basic resources, ensuring that most households in the valley’s provinces under their control had access to basic resources, perhaps even providing them through rationing. Likewise, the government workshops would have provided employment at the least cost to the state. In this manner, scant resources could be stretched to cover most households.

Structure 195–1 at Lambityeco provides some additional evidence concerning the changes implemented by the ruling elite at Monte Albán early in the ninth century CE. Because it was built with the same basal dimensions as System IV on the Main Plaza of Monte Albán, its monumental size seems too grand for Lambityeco, which only had a population of 3,000 persons and was one-tenth the size of Monte Albán. It seems likely that this structure was erected as a public works project that employed architects, masons, masons’ helpers, and unskilled laborers who could not be placed in government workshops. It is also likely that the temple precinct system (TPA) with similar dimensions and its 12 m high temple in Mound 155 was an additional public works project. These public works projects probably reflect the political apprehension of having a large jobless and underfed population of idle commoners.

An interruption in the construction of Structure 195–1 sometime around 825 CE is evident in the archaeological remains. The west room in Structure 195–3SE, which was partially covered with construction fill, had its walls above the level of the fill exposed to the elements for some time. Likewise, the construction fill directly west of Structure 195–3NE, which had been deposited at the same time, manifested a weathered surface, indicating that it too had been exposed for some time. This suggests that resources were not available to continue construction, probably because they were being channeled to respond to crises in other provinces. Archaeological evidence from Structure 195–1 and Structure 190–1 at Lambityeco indicates that the sweeping economic changes instituted by the ruler and political elite at Monte Albán lasted for, perhaps, less than two generations before the regional political system collapsed.

Imposing a governor at Lambityeco would have factionalized the community, since non-ruling elites most likely had a stake in what the deposed lineage had previously provided them. The remaining disenfranchised elites from Lambityeco could have regrouped and allied themselves with the ruling elites of other subject city-states that were already balkanizing from Monte Albán. Perhaps the imposed governor at Lambityeco further lost the ability to maintain the local population if the elites from Yagul
(hypothetically also balkanizing from Monte Albán) offered better opportunities to the Lambityeco commoners, including jobs tending their fields and lesser tribute quotas. Perhaps many Lambityeco commoners did revolt after all, not violently but simply by mass migrating within a short span to Yagul and other adjacent communities. It is even possible that the imposed ruler at Lambityeco eventually maneuvered against the paramount lord of Monte Albán in an attempt to gain autonomy.

Upon the political collapse of Monte Albán there was a dramatic decrease in the population of the city, with a 98 percent drop in population, and most of the households seemingly migrated elsewhere. There is no evidence of a sudden exodus at Monte Albán because the inhabitants took the time to pack up their household belongings before leaving (Winter 2003:114–116). Although a few households of salt producers may have remained at Lambityeco, it appears that most of the community was abandoned. It is even possible that any salt production was carried out by a few households who lived elsewhere and visited the site. Like Monte Albán, the Lambityeco inhabitants seem to have migrated slowly. The coqui and xonaxi who occupied Structure 195–1 were able to retrieve the bones of their ancestor from Tomb 1 before departing the site. The same applies to the nobles who occupied Structure 190–1, who were also able to retrieve the bones of their ancestor from the slab-lined grave (Burial 68–3) built under the household ancestral shrine.

The data from Lambityeco indicate that the political collapse of Monte Albán occurred while trying to regiment the government and the economy of at least some subject city-states. From the perspective of Lambityeco, the collapse ensued within a short span as the Monte Albán state was in the process of consolidation and, perhaps, expansion, rather than as a result of a slow process of contraction. However, we do not know the timing of the collapse of Monte Albán in terms of radiocarbon dates from the city. It is quite possible that the process was not the same in terms of its dynamics and pace with other city-states. In Figure 10.2, we also model a sudden and drastic contraction of the state prior to the eventual abandonment of the capital, assuming that its political elite briefly continued to maintain strongholds in a few provinces. Eventually, however, the political elite of Monte Albán seemingly moved their capital to Zaachila, which in time became one of several competing city-states in the valley. However, Zaachila’s Postclassic dynasty can only be traced back to ca. 1260 CE, when the city-state apparently succeeded in incorporating the Chila phase city-states of the valley into a large confederation; Zaachila also legitimated Late Postclassic valley rulers in a manner similar to Tilantongo in the Mixteca Alta (Oudijk 2008:106–107).
The political collapse of the Monte Albán state led to disjunctions in a number of cultural traits of Classic period Zapotec civilization. Certain elite practices and symbols of power lost prestige and fell into disuse soon after the abandonment of Monte Albán. Yet, other traits persisted (Winter 1989a:129) or were eventually reconfigured and deployed by succeeding elites, including new forms of writing, continued knowledge of the calendar and related mantic practices, a long-rooted religious ideology based on human sacrifice as gift-giving to the divine, deities such as the ubiquitous Rain God, and stories of origins that resorted to the tropes of a mountain of sustenance and the creation of humans from corn.

There is no doubt that the political collapse of Monte Albán brought a major reconfiguration of populations throughout the territories of the former state. Yet, the inability to define the ceramic assemblage of the Liobaa phase by survey projects of the Valley of Oaxaca and adjacent areas prevents us from a better understanding of the settlement patterns during the Liobaa phase (Winter 1989a). For instance, Kowalewski and colleagues (1989:map 8) record only the Chila phase settlements (ca. 1250–1521 CE) in the Valley of Oaxaca. Most likely there was reduction in demographic profiles because of warfare, mass migrations, and famine generated by the political instability and its environmental backdrop, including a possible drought and consequences of human impact on the landscape. It is also possible that some people moved outside the confines of the valley, but until we have a better idea of settlement histories in regions adjacent to it we have no means of assessing this possibility either.

**POST-ABANDONMENT ACTIVITIES**

Following the collapse of Monte Albán, only a residual population of 600 persons out of a Xoo phase population of 30,000 persons remained during the Liobaa phase and the settlement ceased to function as an urban center (Winter 2003:114–115). There is no evidence for the construction of temples, the production of urns or other elite ceramics, writing, or elaborate tombs (Winter 2003:117). There is some evidence of reuse of Xoo phase tombs, possibly by Liobaa phase visitors who wished to retrieve the bones of their ancestors (Winter 2003:115). However, the Liobaa population did not construct tombs at Monte Albán and evidently buried their dead in flexed positions (Winter 2003:114), instead of extended positions, as the latter would have required more labor to excavate. Likewise, Liobaa populations visited Monte Albán to place offerings in the ruins of Xoo phase temples. These offerings consisted of miniature ceramic vessels, which would have required less material and labor to produce and transport (Winter 2003:115).
At Lambityeco, there is scanty surface evidence for Early Liobaa phase occupation, and the community seems to have been almost completely abandoned at the end of the Xoo phase. However, evidence for Late Liobaa activity and possible occupation do occur. On top of Mound 195, Paddock (personal communication, 1967) found a thick layer of ash from salt-production activities deposited over the collapsed and already disintegrated adobe walls of the Structure 195-1 residence. Likewise, a hearth was dug through the floor of the north walkway of the plaza of System 195 (Structure 195-1) and a layer of yellow ash from the cleansing of bitterns from the salt was found nearby. In addition, a Silho or X Fine Orange hemispherical bowl was found in a hole dug through the plaza floor and a Silho Fine Orange necked jar was found elsewhere in the plaza.

On top of Mound 190, a thick layer of ash from salt production was also found on top of a layer of dirt from the collapsed and disintegrated adobe walls of Structure 190-1. A Silho or X Fine Orange tripod bowl was also located in this zone of salt production. In addition, the burial (68–2) of a child, six to eight years old, in a flexed position with a Late Liobaa phase subhemispherical bowl on his head was recovered (Urcid 1983; Lind 2008:175–176). Three archaeomagnetic dates of 1035, 1050, and 1065 CE were obtained in association with this zone on top of Mound 190. These dates conform to the known dates for Silho Fine Orange and indicate that the salt-production activities on top of the ruins of the Xoo phase buildings in Mound 195 and Mound 190 took place 200 years after their abandonment.

Finally, in a small Xoo phase mound (Mound 92) with an associated tomb (Tomb 8), a Liobaa phase burial (72–2) of an adult male, thirty to forty years old, was discovered. The burial had been placed in a circular hole dug through the ruins of the house and, evidently, accidentally penetrated the tomb roof. The offering consisted of a single Late Liobaa phase tripod pyriform jar. Like the burial (68–2) of the child in Mound 190, the adult male was a flexed burial, which is very distinctive from the extended burials of the Xoo phase. Both burials suggest that Late Liobaa phase households, probably salt producers, were located nearby; however, no Liobaa phase houses have been discovered and excavated at Lambityeco.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Through a sequential integration approach to a series of elite structures occupied by the lords of Lambityeco, this study has presented an analysis of political evolution in the Valley of Oaxaca during the Xoo phase. Unlike a sequential segregation approach, which describes cultural evolution in
terms of changes from one sequentially segregated phase of 150 to 400 years’ duration to the next, a sequential integration approach examines the continuous change within a single phase. By examining the changes at Lambityeco within the Xoo phase, it has been possible to reveal the nature of political evolution in the Valley of Oaxaca during this time period.

Lambityeco was established as a small, semiautonomous city-state in Tlacolula arm of the Valley of Oaxaca near the beginning of the Xoo phase. The location of Lambityeco on the valley floor indicates that the rulers of Monte Albán had established a hegemonic Zapotec state in the Valley of Oaxaca by the beginning of the Xoo phase that ensured the political stability necessary for Lambityeco’s vulnerable setting.

Lambityeco was an important salt-producing center and its salt producers may have provided up to 90 percent of the salt consumed by Valley of Oaxaca populations. It was also probably an important textile- and pottery-producing center, in which potters made excellent copies of Balancán Fine Orange that were probably exported to Monte Albán and other communities in the Tlacolula and Zimatlán arms of the valley. Lambityeco was an important local market center for the communities within its city-state and its vendors provided all the basic necessities for the households within its jurisdiction. What was not produced at Lambityeco was obtained through exchanges with vendors in markets in neighboring city-states and through Monte Albán’s merchants, who had access to long-distance trade networks.

The population of Monte Albán and the Zapotec state, including Lambityeco, evidently grew and prospered during the early part of the Xoo phase. This growth and prosperity was probably in large part because of the rulers, political elite, and long-distance merchants of Monte Albán who were actively engaged in trade toward the north, south, and west of the valley following the collapse of Teotihuacan. Also, in large measure, it was a result of the rulers of Monte Albán exerting hegemony over the city-states in the valley but allowing their local rulers considerable independence in governing them.

Shortly after 800 CE there was a dramatic change in political organization in the Valley of Oaxaca. The rulers of Monte Albán appear to have deposed the local rulers of major semiautonomous city-states in the valley and installed new governors in their place. They also instituted a politically managed economy, controlling the production and distribution of most resources. In this way they transformed their hegemonic state into a territorial state in the valley and adjacent areas.

It was hypothesized that this dramatic change in political organization was brought about by a complex interplay of internal and external socio-
cultural processes that could have been exacerbated by particular environmental factors and anthropogenic impacts on certain ecosystems. The rulers of Monte Albán and Lambityeco, and probably many other city-states in the valley, had relied on a risky piedmont strategy, dependent on rainfall agriculture, to support themselves and their large populations during the Xoo phase. A prolonged drought in a market economy would have caused corn prices and, consequently, other commodities to rise beyond the resources of most households of commoners. In response to this economic crisis, and given the eroded links among elites, the ruler and political elite of Monte Albán probably took control over the production of commodities that every household needed, such as salt from Lambityeco, and made it more efficient and productive. They also probably rationed these basic commodities to commoners who were employed in government workshops or on public works projects. This ensured that most households had access to basic resources.

Evidently, however, the interplay of multiple factors made it impossible for the Monte Albán state to maintain political control. The capital and many cities, including Lambityeco and Macuilxóchitl, the largest Xoo phase center in the Tlacolula arm of the valley (Markens, Winter, and Martínez 2008:208), were largely abandoned. Although we do not know how populations redistributed themselves, it is very likely that the Liobaa phase population of the valley was probably a fraction of the former Xoo phase population.

The collapse of Monte Albán, which had been the focal point of Classic period Zapotec civilization for 1,300 years, brought about major disjunction in elite practices. The Zapotec hieroglyphic system of writing, which supported the political system, lost prestige and fell into disuse. Images of deities such as Cociyo and Pitao Cozobi, which figured predominantly on the urns and bipod effigy vases in tombs of the elite, were not crafted any more. Large temples, the abodes of deities, and large governmental palaces, the abodes of rulers, ceased to be built. Former places of power were abandoned or nearly abandoned. The Xoo phase palaces and temples at Lambityeco fell into ruins, only to be used as platforms for salt boilers.

NOTES

1. In previous articles (Lind and Urcid 1983, 1990; Lind 2002), attempts were made to link these royal married couples to the sequence of elite houses in Mound 195 Sub, which they must have occupied. However, progress in the study of Zapotec hieroglyphics (Urcid 2001) and a thorough reanalysis of frieze fragments and inscriptions on the stone tablet from Tomb 6 have brought to light new
information leading to a corrected and more complete version of our interpretations, which will be presented here.

2. If Structure 195-3SE was abandoned in 810 CE and the new coqui and xonaxi occupied Structure 195-3NE until Structure 2 was built in 825 CE and if they occupied Structure 195-2 until Structure 195-1 was completed in 830 CE, as suggested by the calibrated radiocarbon dates, then some twenty years elapsed between the time they first occupied Structure 195-3NE until they occupied Structure 195-1. It appears that just before the completion of Structure 195-1 either the new coqui or xonaxi died and was buried in Tomb 1. Although it may seem unlikely that twenty years passed between the temporary occupations of Structure 195-3NE and Structure 195-2 until the final occupation of Structure 195-1, the calibrated radiocarbon dates are tightly clustered and follow the stratigraphy precisely. Furthermore, there is evidence that the construction of Mound 195 did not proceed without interruption. The approximate dating of the transition from Structure 195-3NE to Structure 195-2 to Structure 195-1 opens the possibility that our estimate of ca. 810 CE for the death of Lady 10 Naa may be too early.

3. The Valley of Oaxaca Survey Project incorrectly separated Monte Albán IIIB from IV and stated that during IIIB Monte Albán only controlled the Etla arm of the valley, with the Tlacolula and Zimatlán arms being virtually abandoned, and during IV, Monte Albán was abandoned (Blanton et al. 1981:97–98) and the Tlacolula and Zimatlán arms of the valley occupied. Markham (1981), Feinman and Nicholas (1990), and Balkansky (2002) were unable to distinguish IIIB from IV in the Miahuatlán, Ejutla, and Sola valleys. Therefore, they interpreted the IIIB-IV (our Xoo phase) occupation there in accordance with the interpretations of the Valley of Oaxaca Survey Project and concluded by default that the Sola, Ejutla, and Miahuatlán regions were not under the hegemony of Monte Albán, which either only controlled the Etla arm of the Valley (IIIB) or was abandoned (IV). Contrary to their Valley of Oaxaca Survey Project–influenced interpretations, we consider the Sola, Ejutla, and Miahuatlán regions to have been under the hegemony of the rulers of Monte Albán during the Xoo phase, as evidenced by the presence of Xoo phase ceramic assemblages there.

4. The Classic period in the Mixteca Alta is so poorly known archaeologically that no clear division even exists between Early and Late Classic phases. This makes it virtually impossible to assess the archaeological relationship between the Valley of Oaxaca and the Mixteca Alta during the Xoo phase. However, Spores (personal communication, 2008) is making progress in identifying the Early Classic in his recent excavations at Teposcolula.

5. Like the large farming community of Santa Ana del Valle, with a Xoo phase population of 3,600 little public architecture, and spread across the piedmont zone to provide Lambityeco with corn, the enormous farming community of Jalieza, with a Xoo phase population of 16,000 and little public architecture, was spread out across the piedmont zone probably to provide corn for Monte Albán. Several other piedmont communities to the west of Monte Albán were probably established for similar reasons.
6. Currently, Ray Mueller and Arthur Joyce are collecting and analyzing soil samples that may aid in identifying and dating any series of drought episodes in the Valley of Oaxaca (Joyce, personal communication, 2008).

7. The hypothesized move of the ruling elite of Monte Albán to Zaachila upon the collapse is based on evidence for a strong identification of the Zaachila elites with Monte Albán recorded in several Xoo phase carved monuments from Zaachila and its environs (Urcid 1999:230, 260, fig. 26).