



Figure 5.11. Simple pit burial (Feature 3) of an adult female under midden north of the structure.

5.2. Feature 3 Burial

The individual interred in the pit grave was an adult female laid on her left side with her knees flexed (Figure 5.11). The skeletal remains were largely complete, and the skull was well enough preserved to see that the individual had undergone oblique tabular cranial deformation. Several maladies include an infection (likely osteomyelitis) on the left tibia, an infection in the nasal cavity, and heavy wear and caries on several molars. Scars on the mandible show healing from prior trauma. As there were no grave offerings with the body, this individual may have been afforded lesser personal standing or status than the individuals interred in the tomb.

5.3. The Domestic Assemblage at Ejutla

5.3.1. Ceramics

The large midden north of the structure contained more than cut shell debris. It also was filled with residential trash including huge amounts of broken utilitarian pottery, stone tools and chipping debris, and animal bones. Domestic trash also was abundant in fill contexts under the structure, in exterior areas around the house, and in all

the pit kilns. After the kilns served as firing features, refuse was deposited in them.

By quantity and volume, ceramic remains are the most abundant material that we collected during the excavations. These remains are heavily dominated by gris (gray) and café (brown) plainware vessels that are typical of the Classic period (ca. 250–900 CE) in the Valley of Oaxaca (e.g., Caso et al. 1967; Feinman 2018; Kowalewski et al. 1978). Overall, the Ejutla assemblage is generically similar to the Classic period contexts at the three sites—El Palmillo, Lambityeco, and the Mitla Fortress—we later excavated in the eastern arm of the valley (Feinman and Nicholas 2009, 2011b, 2016b). These two paste categories comprise approximately 95% of the utilitarian pottery at Ejutla, with roughly twice as much grayware as café. The proportions vary slightly between the later occupation (associated with the structure) and the earlier one below the house: ~37% café in the lower levels and ~32% in the later levels (Table 5.1). This decline is similar to changes over time in the ceramic assemblages at El Palmillo and the Mitla Fortress (Feinman and Nicholas 2009, table 4b, 2011b, table 5a); across the entire Valley of Oaxaca, gris paste vessels increased slightly as a proportion of all ceramic wares during the Classic period (Feinman 2018).