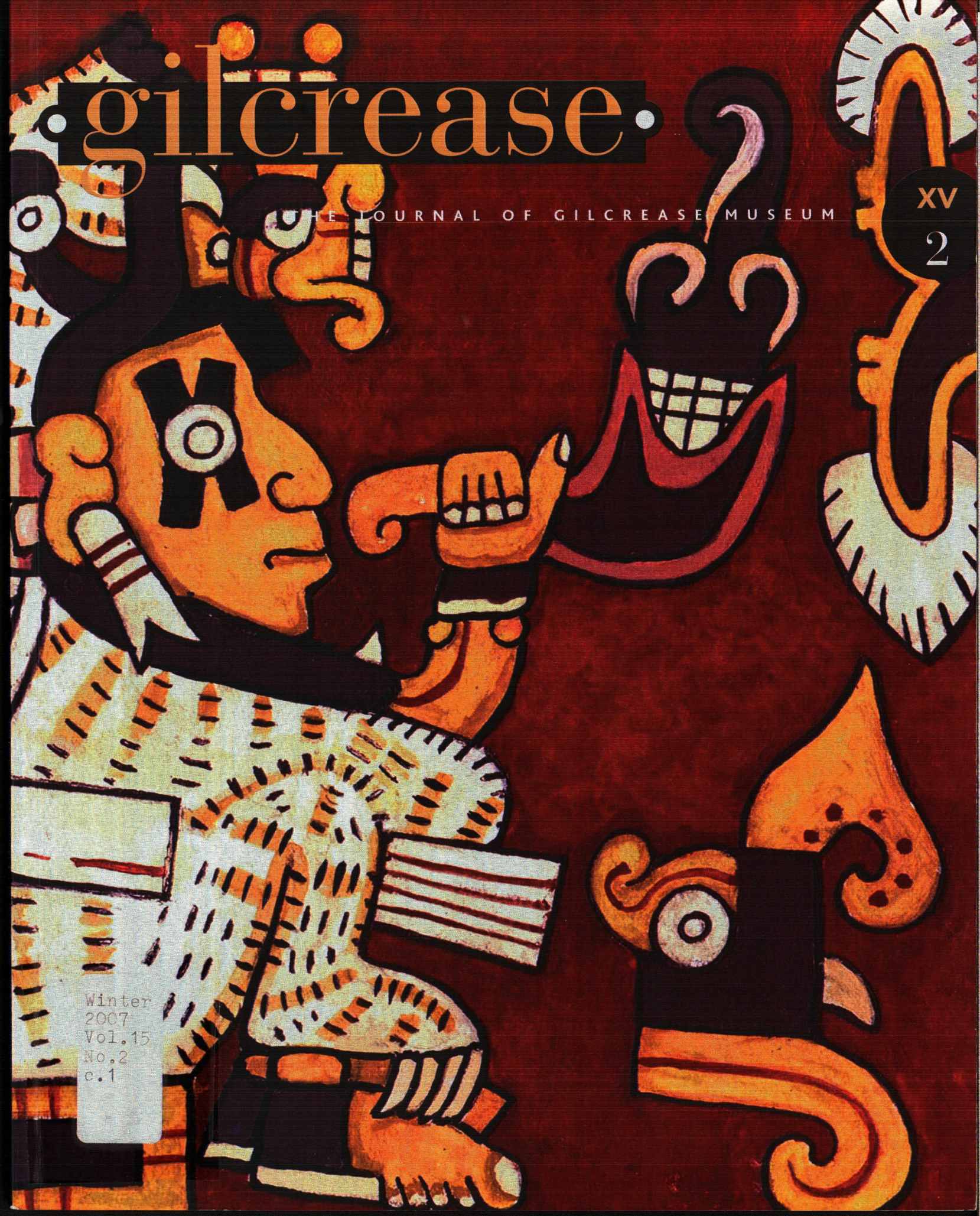
gilcrease

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MESOAMERICA ISSUE

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Frederick Catherwood, Artist Explorer

APRIL MILLER, GILCREASE MUSEUM

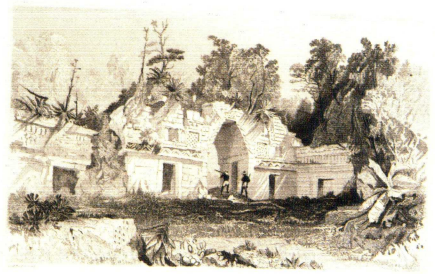
Frederick Catherwood stands out among the most respected expeditionary artists of the nineteenth century. His depictions of the Mayan ruins of Central America are considered his most profound accomplishment, having influenced Mayan archaeology into the present day. These magnificent drawings of pyramids and temples were by far the most accurate to date, so scientifically accurate, in fact, that modern archaeologists use them to read inscriptions since worn away by time or destroyed by human hands. By rightly attributing the structures to indigenous Americans, Catherwood was among the first to debunk the varying far-fetched theories of their genesis. His work ignited academic interest in the mysterious ruins and, perhaps even more valuably, exposed a wider public to the exotic beauty and elegance of a lost civilization.

FACING: *Archway,* Casa Del Gobernador, Uxmal. Color lithograph. Published in *Views of Ancient Monuments in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan,* by Frederick Catherwood, 1844. Plate 10. 2126.1016.12.

We now come to the ruins of Uxmal, in Yucatan, which, for their vast extent, their variety, and being for the most part in good preservation, may claim precedence in this Province of any other remains of antiquity. They impressed my mind at the first glance with the same feelings of wonder and admiration, with which I first caught sight of the ruins of Thebes.

—Frederick Catherwood





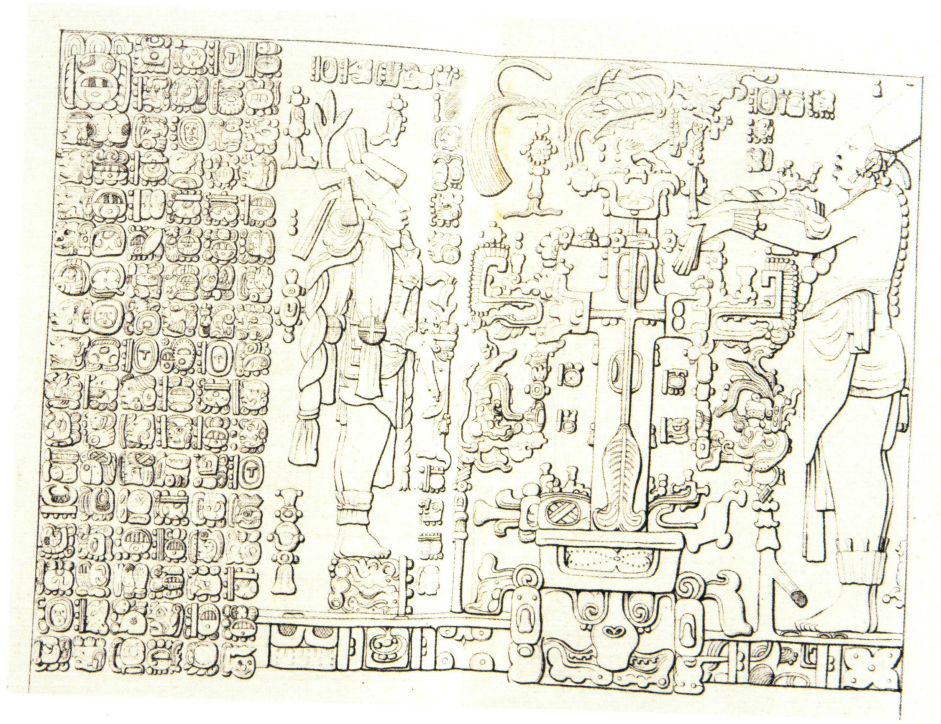
TOP: *Gateway at Labna.* Engraving after drawing by Frederick Catherwood. Published in *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan,* by John Lloyd Stephens, 1843. Volume 2. Page 54. 2526.1444.

BOTTOM: *Interior of Gateway at Labna.* Engraving after drawing by Frederick Catherwood. Published in *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan,* by John Lloyd Stephens, 1843. Volume 2. Page 55. 2526.1444.

The effect of the whole combination was curious and striking, and, familiar as we were with ruins, the first view, with the great wall towering in front, created an impression that is not easily described.
—John Lloyd Stephens

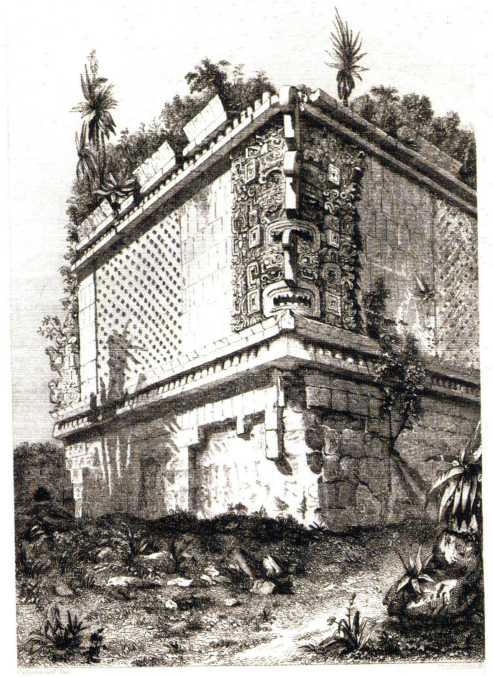
Frederick Catherwood was born on February 27, 1799 in London's Hoxton Parish. While much of his childhood remains a mystery, it is known that he left school and signed articles of apprenticeship to architect Michael Meredith at age sixteen. Over the next five years Catherwood learned the skills of an architect and the mechanics of drawing. Completing his apprenticeship in 1820, he followed the suggestion of longtime friend Joseph Severn and attended free art classes at the Royal Academy in London. His education there introduced him to the work of eighteenth-century Italian etcher, architect, and archaeologist Giovanni Piranesi. The manner in which Piranesi conveyed the great scale and magnificence of the buildings of ancient Rome deeply impressed Catherwood, and he endeavored to capture these aspects in his own archaeological drawings.

Catherwood's career as an explorer and surveyor of ancient monuments began soon after he completed his studies at the Royal Academy. Early in the autumn of 1821, he traveled to Rome to join his friend Joseph Severn, who had accompanied poet John Keats to Italy the year previous. Upon arrival, Catherwood was welcomed into the Society of Englishmen, described by Severn as "all good fellows—20 in number—painters, sculptors and architects." Here Catherwood began his study of classical architecture. He worked and sketched his way south into Sicily, Greece, and finally Syria, carefully drawing ruins he visited.

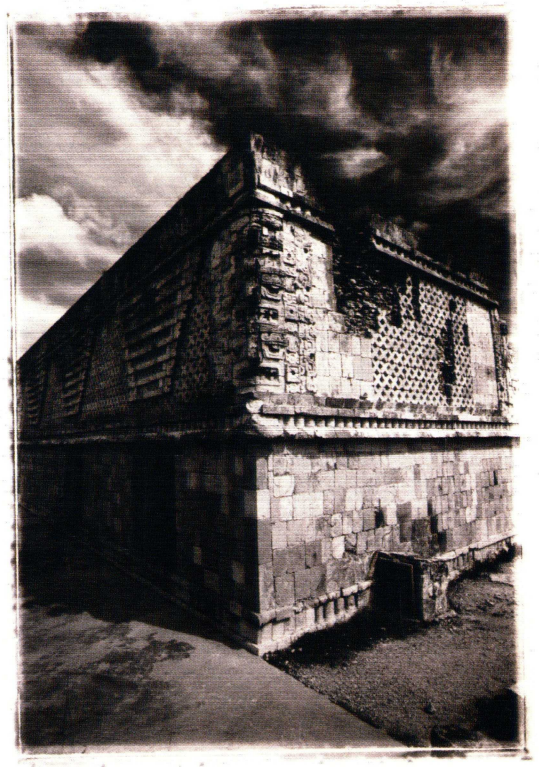


Tablet on back of altar, casa no. 2, Palenque. Engraving after drawing by Frederick Catherwood. Published in *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan,* by John Lloyd Stephens, 1841. Volume 2. Page 345. 2446.250.

The principal subject of this tablet is the cross. It is surmounted by a strange bird, and loaded with indescribable ornaments. The two figures are evidently those of important personages. They are well drawn, and in symmetry of proportion are perhaps equal to many that are carved on the walls of the ruined temples in Egypt. —John Lloyd Stephens



SOUTH EAST ANGLE OF MONJAS, UXMAL.



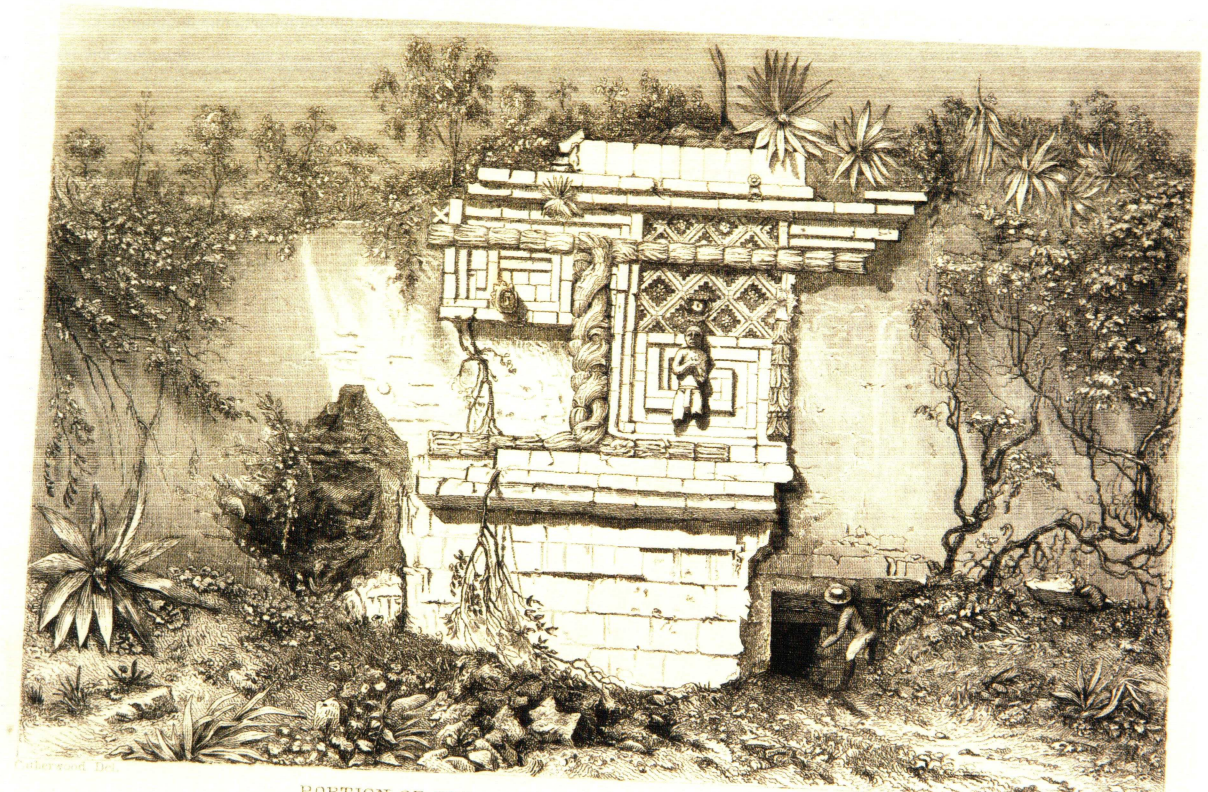
In 1824, Catherwood's travels took him to Egypt, where he was to meet fellow Englishman Robert Hay. This serendipitous meeting resulted in Hay hiring Catherwood as an architectural artist on future Egyptian expeditions, further cementing Catherwood as an expert expeditionary artist. Catherwood spent several years in Egypt conducting architectural research on ancient cities, drawing the interiors of great tombs, recording hieroglyphics and inscriptions, and rendering murals and sculptures.

After Egypt, Catherwood traveled to the Middle East, sketching and drawing his way through Jordan, Jerusalem, and into Lebanon. It was in Jerusalem that he completed his greatest work to that date—the entire architectural plan of the Dome of the Rock. Using his *camera lucida* (an instrument that casts an image of a subject on a sheet of drawing paper by means of a series of prisms and lenses, so that its outline can be traced) he completed a sketch of the entire outline of the city and began work on a portfolio of drawings that would later be used in his Panorama in Leicester Square in London.

By age thirty-two, Frederick Catherwood had accumulated a vast body of work and experience. He had traveled through Italy, Sicily, Greece, Egypt, and the Middle East, and was fluent in Arabic, Italian, and Hebrew. These accomplishments did not, however, afford him much in the way of an income, and so, inspired by the need for money, he returned to London where he entered business—as a Panoramist. The Panorama was a popular attraction during the nineteenth century. Using drawings brought back from his travels, Catherwood created Panoramas depicting Jerusalem, Thebes, Karnak, and the Baalbec. He later opened a Panorama in New York City, adding Algiers, Carthage, and Athens to the collection. An advertisement in a New York paper described the Jerusalem Panorama as "a painting of the largest class, 10,000 square feet from drawings of Mr. Catherwood brilliantly illuminated every evening by upwards of 200 gas-lights—admission 25¢."

Uxmal, after Catherwood [House of the Nuns, southeast corner]. Photo by Leandro Katz, 1985.

Comparison of Catherwood's detailed drawing of the southeast corner of Las Monjas or The House of the Nuns in Uxmal to a photographic image of the same.



PORTION OF THE WESTERN RANGE OF BUILDING, MONJAS, UXMAL.

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KABAH.
3rd Casa.

It was also during his time in London that Catherwood made the acquaintance of American lawyer John Lloyd Stephens. Stephens had recently traveled to many of the same locations as Catherwood. In fact, Stephens had followed a map drawn by "F. Catherwood" while touring the Holy Lands. When Stephens visited Catherwood's Panorama, the two men began a relationship that would endure for decades and ultimately would launch Mayan archaeology as a serious field of study.

At Stephens' urging, Catherwood relocated to New York in 1836, bringing his Panorama with him and establishing employment as a lecturer and architect. In the meantime, Stephens had written an account of his travels titled *Incidents of Travel in Egypt, Arabia Petraea, and the Holy Land.* Published in 1837, the book was widely successful, selling out twelve printings in one year. Catherwood and Stephens began discussing a tentative expedition to Central America.

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, few archaeological studies had focused on the ruins of South and Central America. Early Spanish conquerors and missionaries gave accounts of sophisticated urban civilizations but, unfortunately, these reports were generally made to record the process of eradication and conversion. As the years passed and indigenous cultures were assimilated under Spanish rule, the old cities were forgotten even by the descendants of the Americans themselves. The remains of their ancient monuments and buildings were abandoned and in time swallowed by the jungle. Archaeological rediscovery began in the eighteenth century, but research and drawings resulting from those early studies were often influenced by the prevailing theories that those responsible for the ruins were descendants of the Egyptians, the Phoenicians, or even the "lost tribes of Israel."

Central American explorer Juan Galindo wrote descriptive accounts of various Mayan ruins, including Palenque and Copán. Published in Paris in 1834 with the title *Antiquites Mexicaines,* Galindo's writings were notable for suggesting that, contrary to popular belief, similarities existed between the contemporary Mayan peoples and the carved images found among the ruins. Accounts such as these kindled the enthusiasm of Catherwood and Stephens, further convincing them of the importance of an expedition to explore the ruins of Central America. Due to the success of his travel books, Stephens had the finances to propose just such a venture, and, with Catherwood hired on as architect-artist, the small expedition departed for British Honduras in the autumn of 1839. A month later the two arrived in the city of Belize, where after a short stay they boarded the river boat Vera Paz. The paddle steamer carried them up the Río Dulce River to the village of Izabal where they prepared for their trek over the Mico Mountains into Guatemala. Although Catherwood and Stephens had traveled extensively, neither had experienced the lush vegetation or the still and humid atmosphere they encountered in Central America. Stephens' account of their voyage up the Río Dulce into the interior well describes their impressions.

> The pelican, the stillest of birds, was the only living thing we saw, and the only sound was the unnatural bluster of our steam engine. The wild defile that leads to the excavated city of Petra is not more noiseless or more extraordinary, but its sterile desolation is in strange contrast to the luxuriant, romantic, and beautiful, which is everywhere here.

Landing at port Izabal, they secured pack-mules and guides for their passage over the mountains and through the jungle, into the unknown and largely unexplored wilderness of Central America.

FACING TOP: *Portion of Western Building, Monjas, Uxmal.* Engraving after drawing by Frederick Catherwood. Published in *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan*, by John Lloyd Stephens, 1843. Volume 1. Page 302. 2526.1443.

FACING BOTTOM: *Kabah, 3rd Casa.* Engraving after drawing by Frederick Catherwood. Published in *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan*, by John Lloyd Stephens, 1843. Volume 1. Page 398. 2526.1443.

A plate represents the front of the edifice, which, when we first came upon it, was so beautifully shrouded by trees that it was painful to be obliged to disturb them, and we spared every branch that did not obstruct the view. While Mr. Catherwood was making his drawing, rain came on, and, as he might not be able to get his camera lucida in position again, he continued his work, with the protection of an India-rubber cloak and an Indian holding an umbrella over the stand.
—John Lloyd Stephens

After a grueling journey over the mountains, the company reached the site of Copán. It was here that Catherwood first set up his *camera lucida* and began his drawings of the art and architectural remains left by the Mayan peoples. Of the altars and idols they encountered at this ancient city Stephens wrote,

> One, we found, had been displaced from its pedestal by enormous roots; another, locked in the close embrace of branches of trees, was almost lifted out of the earth; and still another had been hurled to the ground and bound down by huge vines and trees which grew around it, seemingly to shade and shroud it as a sacred thing; in the solemn stillness of the woods, it seemed a divinity mourning over a fallen people.

Catherwood surveyed the site, drawing a map of the buildings and monoliths. Unable to completely clear the site of vegetation in the time allowed, Catherwood concentrated his efforts on drawing the carved standing stones, or steles, which dominated the Great Plaza. The huge stone figures depicted ancient peoples dressed in exotic costume and were carved on the sides with glyphs. Here Catherwood had a first-hand look at the fundamental differences between the inscriptions on the American artifacts and the hieroglyphics of the Egyptians; these were unlike anything he had ever encountered. Upon viewing the ruins at Copán the travelers became convinced that the remains were not the result of some Old World migration, but were remnants of a civilization indigenous to the Americas.

The company traveled from Copán to the ruins of Quiriqua, then on to Palenque and Uxmal. With exquisite accuracy and skill, Catherwood completed sketches, surveys, and maps of each ruin site discovered. Maya scholar Dr. Sylvanus G. Morley later acclaimed Catherwood's depictions as "so accurate that it is possible to decipher the date inscribed from it."

Throughout their trek, biting and stinging insects plagued the company. On one occasion Stephens had to retreat to a nearby town to recover from an infection in his foot. Upon his return to the site, he was shocked by the condition of Catherwood, who also suffered from the incessant plague of mosquitoes, gnats, garrapatas (ticks), and niguas (chiggers). He later recalled that "Mr. Catherwood. . . . was wan and gaunt; he was lame, like me, from the bites of insects, his face was swollen, and his left arm hung with rheumatism as if paralyzed."

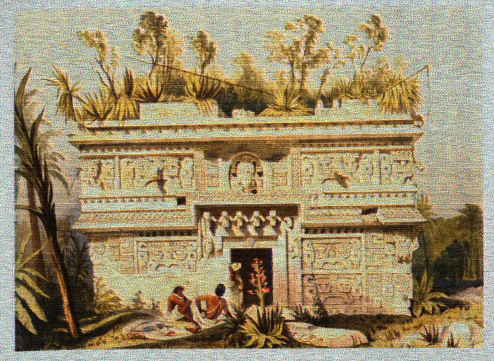
At Uxmal, Catherwood became so ill with malaria that Stephens made immediate arrangements for the pair to leave the country and return home. They embarked for New York with plans to return and carry out the remainder of their expedition. Upon their return home, Stephens immediately began working on a travel account of their journey. Catherwood was given complete charge of illustrations and design of the two volumes, to be titled *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatán.* The book was released in September 1841 to enthusiastic public response; 20,000 copies sold by December. The book was so popular, in fact, that it was reprinted eleven times in six months. Edgar Allen Poe, at the time a book reviewer for *Graham's Magazine,* called it "perhaps the most interesting book of travel ever published."

Although the jungle had come close to killing both Stephens and Catherwood, the duo returned for a second expedition in late 1841. This time they confined their exploration to the Yucatán area, now known to be the former realm of the Mayan New Empire. Continuing the previously aborted study of Uxmal, Catherwood worked for six straight weeks, completing more than fifty drawings of the site. Eventually collapsing from exhaustion and a recurrence of malaria, he was carried from the ruins to the nearby village of Nohcacab. After a brief recuperation, the tour continued on to the ruins of Kabah. After Kabah came Sabachshé, then Sayil, Labná, Bolonchen, Tulum, and Chichén Itzá. At each site, Catherwood took surveys, made drawings and sketches, and collected relics and artifacts. On June 17, 1842, the second expedition came to an end. Catherwood and Stephens returned to New York with grand plans to open an archaeological museum, the first of its kind in the United States.



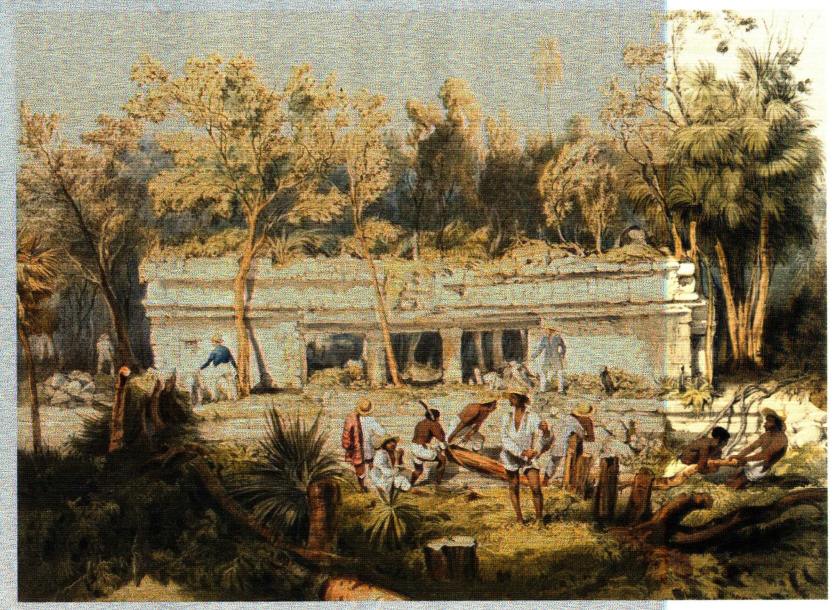
Broken idol at Copan. Color lithograph. Published in *Views of Ancient Monuments in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan,* by Frederick Catherwood, 1844. Plate 4. 2126.1016.6.

This idol, in its ruined state, is one of the most beautiful in Copan; and in workmanship, is equal to the best remains of Egyptian art.
—Frederick Catherwood



Las Monjas, Chichen-Itza. Color lithograph. Published in *Views of Ancient Monuments in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan,* by Frederick Catherwood, 1844. Plate 21. 2126.1016.23.

At four o'clock we left Piste, and very soon we saw rising high above the plain the Castillo of Chichen. In half an hour we were among the ruins of this ancient city, with all the great buildings in full view, casting prodigious shadows over the plain, and presenting a spectacle which, even after all that we had seen, once more excited in us emotions of wonder.
—John Lloyd Stephens



Temple, at Tuloom. Color lithograph. Published in *Views of Ancient Monuments in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan,* by Frederick Catherwood, 1844. Plate 24. 2126.1016.26.

This engraving contains the only known image of Frederick Catherwood. The artist is seen here measuring ruins of Tuloom.

Upon their return, Catherwood was again commissioned to provide all of the illustrations in Stephens' upcoming book, *Incidents of Travel in Yucatán.* In an effort to stimulate interest in his and Stephens' recent discoveries, Catherwood brought the collection they had garnered from their expedition, which included carved lintels of Kabah and Uxmal, stone sculptures, and oversized watercolors of the ruins, to the Rotunda building on Broadway that housed his Panorama, with the intention of exhibiting them.

Yet fate would not allow it. In July 1842, Catherwood's Panorama and every object stored in the Rotunda burned to ashes. Much of Frederick Catherwood's life work was destroyed in the blaze, along with his and Stephens' hopes of opening an archaeological museum. Philip Hone, former mayor of New York and famous American diarist, was an eyewitness:

> Catherwood's Panorama of Thebes and Jerusalem were burnt last evening about ten o'clock and those two valuable paintings were destroyed together with the other contents of the building, among which were a large collection of curiosities and relics and other precious things collected by Messrs. Stephens and Catherwood in their recent travels in Central America. This will be a severe loss not only to enterprising travelers, but to science and the arts in general. The edifice being perfectly circular and without windows and the contents of a peculiarly inflammable nature, the appearance of the conflagration was like that of a huge cauldron.

FACING: *Idol at Copan.* Color lithograph. Published in *Views of Ancient Monuments in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan,* by Frederick Catherwood, 1844. Plate 1. 2126.1016.3.

Copan may be called the city of the Idols, as it abounds with monolithic statues of Indian deities.
—Frederick Catherwood

FACING: *Idol and altar at Copan.* Color lithograph. Published in *Views of Ancient Monuments in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan,* by Frederick Catherwood, 1844. Plate 5. 2126.1016.7.

In this Plate, the altar, or sacrificial stone, forms the principal object in the fore-ground."... "It is sculptured into four hideous heads of colossal size, having enormous fangs, and distended eyes, adding, no doubt, the finishing horror to the bloody sacrifices which there can be little doubt were enacted on it.
—Frederick Catherwood

Fortunately, many of Catherwood's drawings from the second expedition had already been given to the engravers in preparation for publication, and some of his notes and sketches had been kept safely at home. *Incidents of Travel in the Yucatán* was in bookstores by March 1843. As before, this book was a wild success. The combination of Stephens' eloquent words and Catherwood's magnificent drawings fascinated readers and generated a widespread interest in what previously had been a subject relegated to academics and eccentrics.

At the height of their success, Catherwood and Stephens proposed a new project: the publication of a large work in four volumes entirely on the antiquities of Mesoamerica illustrated with over 100 color lithographs. The nineteenth century was the era of the illustrated book. John Gould had recently published his first set of hand-colored lithographs of the hummingbirds of South America, James Audubon had just issued the last print of his *Birds of America,* and George Catlin was preparing for the imminent publication of his portfolio of American Indians. Unfortunately, plans for the ambitious project were unsuccessful. Lack of the required number of subscribers for the expensive enterprise caused the publishers to withdraw, leaving the idea to founder. Catherwood, however, was determined to publish his own set of plates and progressed alone with this endeavor. He employed six of England's most outstanding engravers to lithograph carefully selected drawings he felt most representative of the art and architecture of the Maya, and in May 1844 he released *Views of Ancient Monuments in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatán.* The magnificent volume consisted of twenty-five hand-colored plates, an introduction, and descriptions penned by Catherwood himself. The text reiterated his opinions that the ruins discovered in Central America were the work of peoples indigenous to the New World, a concept that inspired a new school of thought and stimulated fresh interest in the ancient civilizations of Central America.

It will never be known what further contributions Catherwood may have offered to the study of archaeology and ancient art. After the last of the Stephens-Catherwood expeditions to Central America and the destruction of his Panorama and the Rotunda, Catherwood was forced to turn his career in a more lucrative direction by pursuing architecture, then engineering and railroad building. Never returning to expeditionary art or archaeology, he spent his talents on several failed architectural ventures and uncompleted railroad projects.

Catherwood's life came to an early end on September 20, 1854 during a voyage from Liverpool to the United States. He was aboard a ship that was rammed by a French vessel due to dense fog. His death announcement appeared almost as an afterthought in the New York papers— several days after accounts of the accident were published, the single line "Mr. Catherwood Also is Missing" appeared under lists of those saved and lost. He was fifty-five years old.

It is difficult to comprehend how Frederick Catherwood, who should be such a prominent figure in history, has been largely forgotten. For many years he lived a life so adventurous that it rivals those of fictional heroes in literature and film. Traveling through deserts and jungles, exploring tombs and the ruins of ancient cities, running New York's first (and last) Panorama, and publishing his own book of hand-colored lithographs, he led an existence virtually impossible in the current day and age. But even more than his adventures, it is the man's work that should be remembered and celebrated. In a time of European cultural elitism, Catherwood's conviction that the ruins of Central America were the work of native Mesoamericans challenged the widespread judgment of these people as savages. His elegant drawings of the lost ruins of Central America, which brought the ancient civilizations into the imaginations of people all over the world, are as worthy of rediscovery today as the very ruins they depict.

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Robert Stacy-Judd and the Maya Revival Style

JESSE LERNER



Robert Stacy-Judd in Maya costume, left, and in a 1932 portrait photograph, facing. Robert B. Stacy-Judd Collection Architecture & Design Collection, University Art Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara

Robert Stacy-Judd (1884-1975) came to learn of Maya architecture through Frederick Catherwood's celebrated etchings for John Lloyd Stephens's *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan* (1841) and *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan* (1843), and thus began a lifelong fascination. He saw in the Maya a lost Eden enlivened by royalty and pomp, which he dramatized in colorful costumes, flamboyant architecture, romantic poetry, and speculative literature. His greatest triumph was the Aztec Hotel (Monrovia, California, 1924-25), which achieved overwhelming popular success and earned praise in publications ranging from the *New York Times* to *American Architect* and *The Hotel Monthly.* The hotel launched Stacy-Judd's career as a promoter, explorer, and chronicler of the ancient Maya.

As an archaeologist, Stacy-Judd's contributions are negligible. At a time when the wild armchair speculations of Victorian anthropology were fast becoming outmoded, he brought to the table an odd stew of ideas borrowed from Ignatius Donnelly, James Churchward, and Alice and Augustus Le Plongeon. But with his flair for showmanship, he found his place in southern California, hobnobbing and frolicking with the Hollywood crowd. Bette Davis turned to him to satiate her curiosity about the Maya. He even proposed a feature-length fiction film set at Chichén Itzá called *The Scarlet Empress* for which he labored in his later years on costumes and sets. None of his later projects, however, ever garnered the high praise won by the Aztec Hotel. How was it that this Monrovia hostel captured the imagination of so many?

Following the territorial enlargement resulting from the U.S.–Mexican and Spanish-American Wars, North Americans flocked to exhibitions where they could see something of these recent, distant acquisitions. These included displays of human specimens, antiquities, and plaster casts of archaeological curiosities. P.T. Barnum was apparently responsible for a hoax which toured the U.S. and Europe, a pair of microcephalics billed as "Ancient Aztec founders of the ruined temples of that country, described by John L. Stephens Esq., and other travelers," and at Chicago's Columbian Exhibition, Edward Thompson's archaeological casts included a life-sized copy of the arch at Labna. These displays embodied the climate of westward expansion and Manifest Destiny which framed early American anthropology.

Jesse Lerner is an independent filmmaker based in Los Angeles and Mexico City whose books include *F is for Phony* (with Alex Juhasz) and *The Shock of Modernity.* Other writings can be found linked to his website www.americanegypt.net or his page at www.pitzer.edu/academics/faculty/lerner/index.asp, or posted on his blog: theamericanegypt.blogspot.com/

FACING: War Memorial, Minot, North Dakota. Right: "Research, Hypothetical Study," utilizing ancient Maya art motifs. Robert B. Stacy-Judd Collection Architecture & Design Collection, University Art Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara



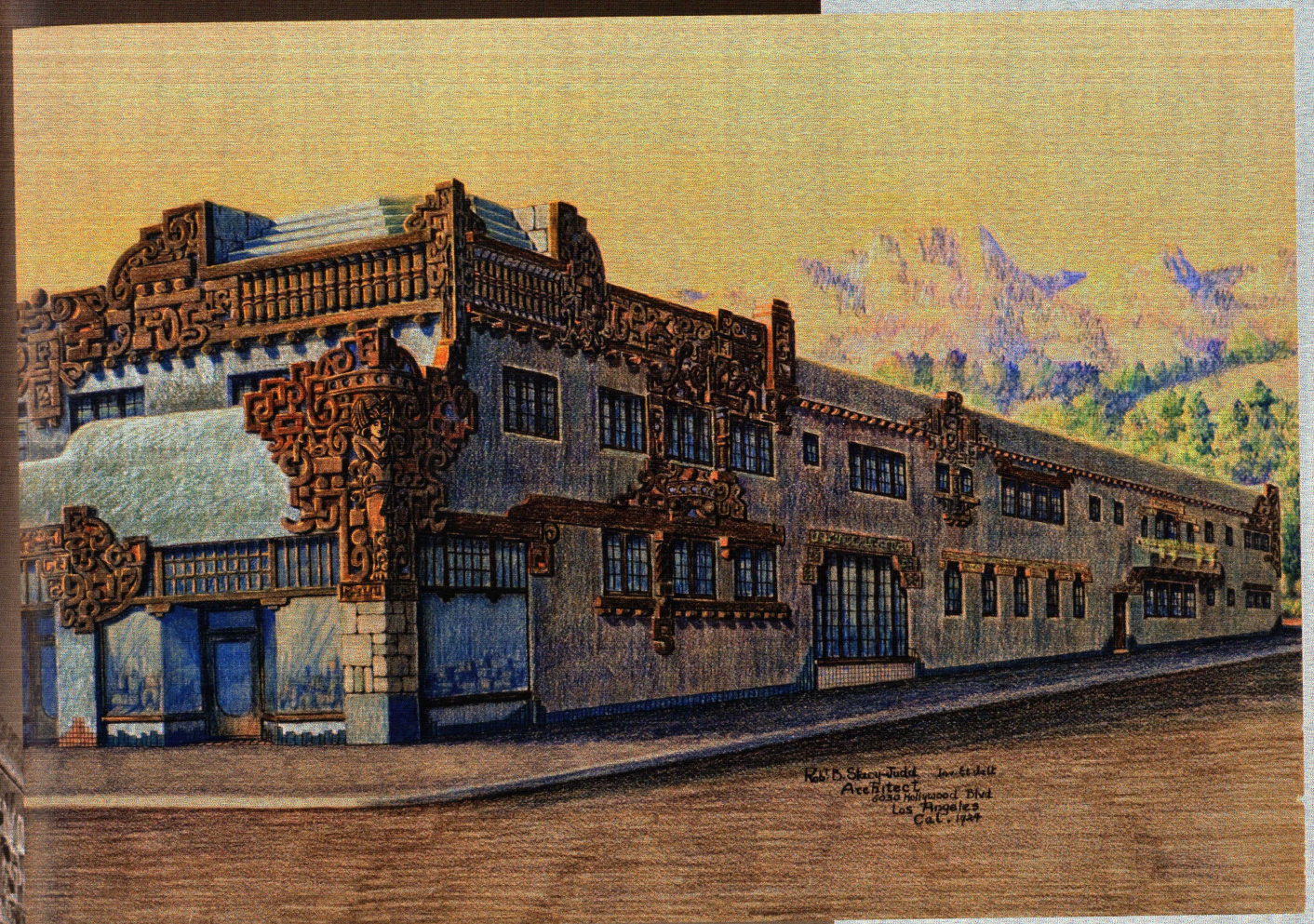
By the late 1930s, the building of Maya Revival structures in the U.S. had gained an altogether different political urgency. The repeated U.S. invasions of Central America, the Carribean and Mexico in the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries had made Latin America suspicious of and hostile to the colossus to the north. Wary of this ill will, the Hoover and Roosevelt administrations championed a Good Neighbor Policy of mutual respect, cooperation, and non-intervention. The growing threat of fascism in Europe heightened the need for hemispheric unity, and Maya Revival architecture was a tangible and public declaration of a common American heritage. San Diego's former Federal Building (Richard Requa, 1935), a bit of Uxmal in Balboa Park, and Mérida's Parque de las Americas (Manuel Amábilis, 1946) where stelae naming the states of the Americas proclaim the shared Maya ancestry of nations including Canada, Uruguay and Cuba, embodied this phenomenon.

Robert Stacy-Judd's Aztec Hotel represented a transitional moment—it was neither colonial proclamation of ownership nor diplomatic offering but was poised between the expansionism of the previous century and the diplomatic necessities of the Good Neighbor era.

The opening of the Aztec Hotel coincided with an exuberant new visibility north of the border for Latin American culture generally and for pre-Columbian objects and styles more specifically. In the 1920s, modernist dancer Ted Shawn toured middle America with Francisco Cornejo's costumes and Martha Graham's performance in *Xochil,* a pre-Cortésian dance. Battery company executive and amateur Mayanist Theodore A. Willard published his mannered archaeological fiction, *Bride of the Rain God: Princess of Chichen Itza* and *The City of the Sacred Well.* Stacy-Judd's tour-de-force coincides with the inauguration of the Carnegie Institution's Chichén-Itzá excavations (1923-33), popularized in periodicals like *National Geographic*. But of all these Jazz Age visions of the ancient Maya, none was more delirious than that of Stacy-Judd.

The hype that developed around the Aztec Hotel (intentionally misnamed as a concession to Americans' greater familiarity with the Aztecs of the Central Valley than with cultures further south) celebrated the Monrovia hostel as "the only building in the United States that is 100% American." Turning to autochthonous sources was a frequent strategy for North Americans in search of an authentic, non-European identity. Often this search called for face paint, secret rituals, and the taking of indigenous appellations. Posing in profile, as in a Maya bas-relief, Robert Stacy-Judd displays for the camera his Maya headdress and robes. By dressing himself as a Maya lord, the English expatriate sought to cut the umbilical cord to Europe.

In an era when globalization is often taken to mean Americanization, the search for an "authentic American style," or for an architecture which is "100% American" seems passé. Today's Maya Revival buildings are more likely to be amusement park attractions, located in places as distant as Catalonia or the Bahamas, than monuments to inter-American understanding and cooperation. Yet in spite of the perceived irrelevance or datedness of the ideas which spurred on this revival style, the work of Stacy-Judd anticipates the postmodern turn in architecture. His collision of distinct styles and geographically distant citations in unrealized projects like "The Streets of All Nations" (1938), with its Russian, Hindu, French and (inevitably) Pre-Columbian units, remind contemporary viewers of theme park architecture. His Philosophical Research Society building with its jumble of borrowings anticipates Frank Gehry's Aerospace Museum (Los Angeles, 1984). Stacy-Judd's was an alternate path that looked to both the past and the future.



Exterior of the Aztec Hotel, Monrovia, 1924-25. Robert B. Stacy-Judd Collection Architecture & Design Collection, University Art Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara

Governor's Palace Corbel Arch at Uxmal, Yucatàn, Mexico. This view shows the large corbelled arch at Uxmal's Governor's Palace. The large building within the ceremonial center at Uxmal is flanked by the esoteric Temple of the Magician to the right. Photo by Anthony Peres, 2007.







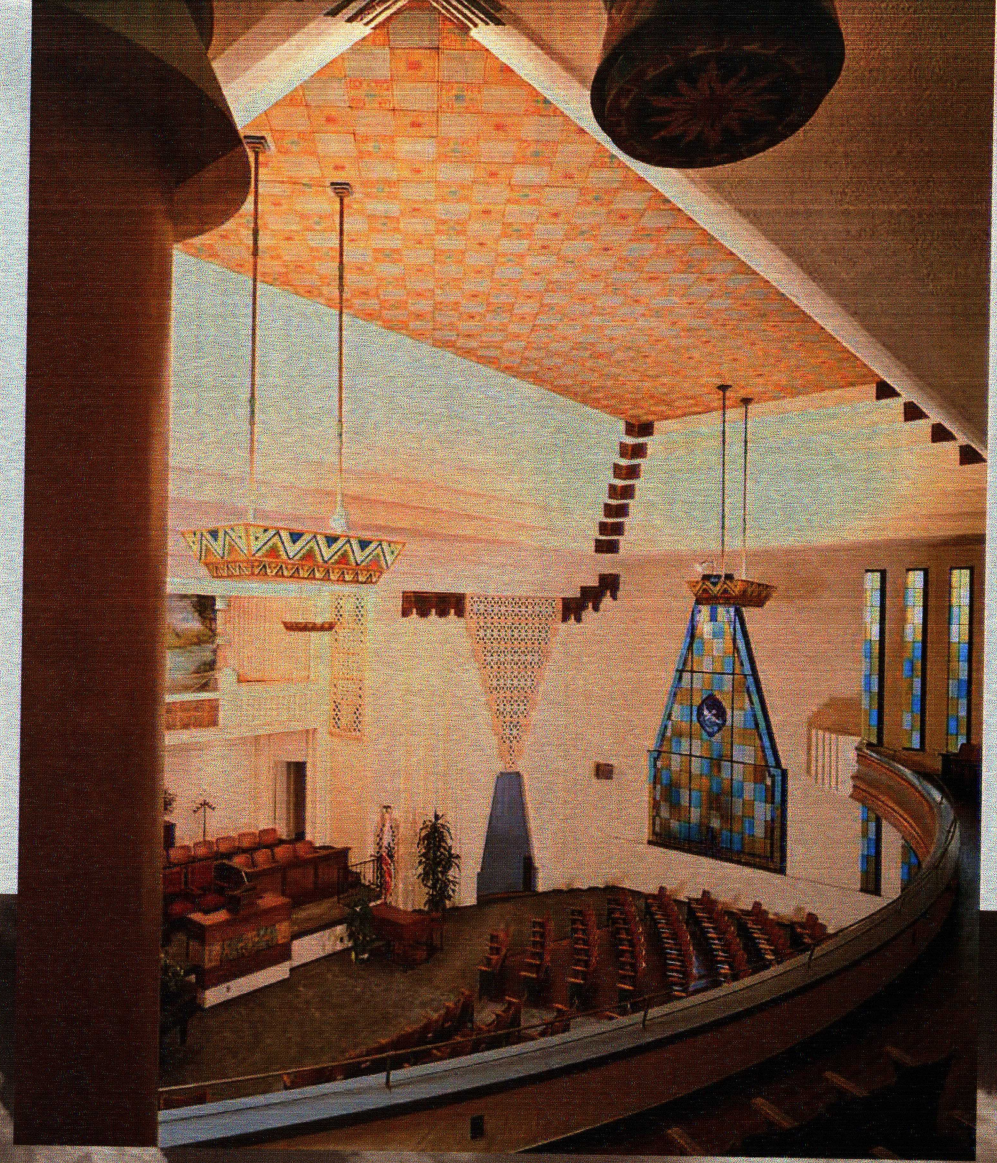


Aztec Hotel, Monrovia, California. FACING: The hotel lobby. Left: The entrance mural by Stacy-Judd.

BELOW: An angle showing the hotel's original store windows and Maya-inspired exterior relief. Photos by Anthony Peres, 2007.

The forty-four-room hotel on Route 66 was built with the ample finances of the Roaring Twenties but closed during the Great Depression of the 1930s. It was sold at auction for $50,000 and subsequently suffered various ups and downs. A major restoration was begun in 2000. Architect Robert Stacy-Judd attributed the inspiration for his design to John L. Stephens's INCIDENTS OF TRAVEL IN CENTRAL AMERICA, CHIAPAS AND YUCATAN *(1841) with engravings by Frederick Catherwood.*



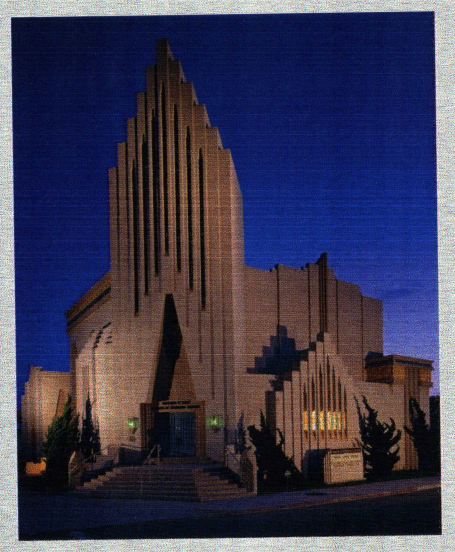


First Baptist Church interior, a view from the balcony, Ventura, California. This view encapsulates virtually every Maya iconographic detail favored by Stacy-Judd. The corbelled doorway designs, and stylized speaker screens, along with columns and glyphs, imparted a historic sophistication to the Maya enthusiast of the period. The copper light fixtures were designed and painted by the architect.

BELOW: The Triumphal Arch at Labnà, near Uxmal, Yucatàn, Mexico, is a Classic Maya architectural masterpiece. This view is not unlike one that Frederick Catherwood is likely to have created using a camera obscura for reference in the execution of his engravings seen in John L. Stephens's *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan.* Photos by Anthony Peres, 2007.



Robert Stacy-Judd's restored Maya Revival-style First Baptist Church in Ventura, California, shows Maya-inspired corbel arches and stylized bell tower with vertical vents above pyramidal shaped entrance steps. In Ventura and nearby Ojai, California, Stacy-Judd found clients amenable to his unconventional style. Ojai was and remains a spiritual center for groups such as Stacy-Judd's client the Theosophical Society.



RIGHT: Glyph detail, exterior of the First Baptist Church, Ventura, California. Although fancifully created from Robert Stacy-Judd's imagination, the glyph relief on this exterior panel evoked a sense of authenticity to those new to the Maya style in the early part of the 20th century, and provided an interesting departure from the Spanish Mediterranean style common to California at the time. Photo by Anthony Peres, 2007.



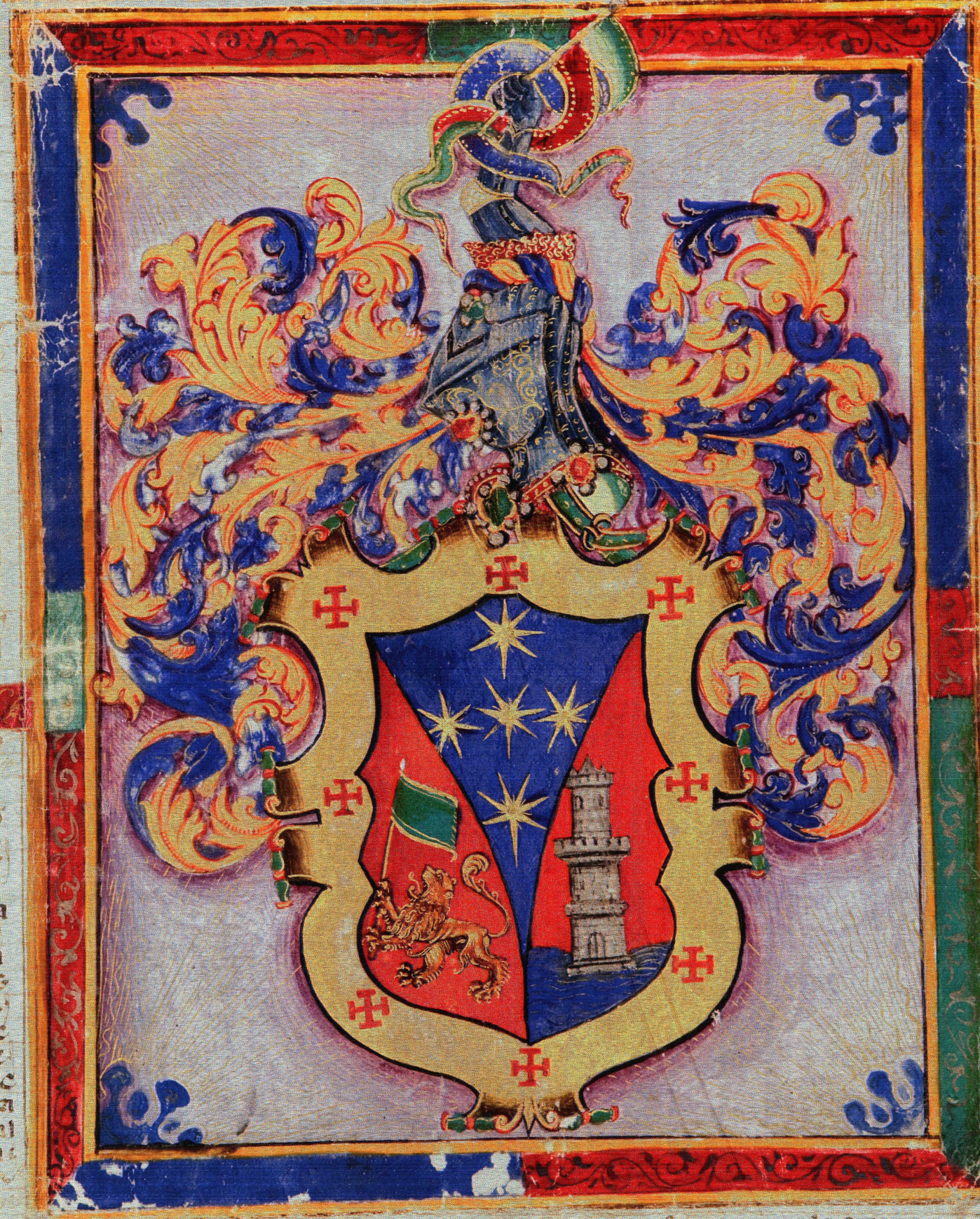
Long before the mighty pen, the mighty word—unwritten and unrivaled—dominated social and cultural communications. Absolute in power and unequaled in importance, words allowed people to transmit histories and collective memories to future generations through oral tradition. One of its most frequent forms was a simple recitation of parentage, a humble predecessor to one of the fastest growing hobbies in the United States, genealogy. Medieval European genealogy developed under feudalism, which allowed the inheritance of possessions only upon demonstration of legitimate descent. Genealogies became an integral part of the process of legitimization, marking the first organized and widespread practice of recording European lineages. Today, from amateurs to professionals, people across the country invest

A Call to Arms

time and money in the search for elusive ancestors and pending pedigrees. A common element of this quest is heraldry, the study of armorial bearings and their accessories. However, unlike its modern expression in the multi-million-dollar industry of emblazoned keychains and coffee mugs, heraldry was once a revered and nearly sacred tradition. Three Spanish documents from the Gilcrease collection illustrate this significant and artistic institution, particularly the role of the coat of arms.

THE HERITAGE AND HISTORY OF EUROPEAN HERALDRY

KIMBERLY ROBLIN, ASSISTANT CURATOR, GILCREASE MUSEUM







Full view of Juan Ochoa arms, immediately above. At top and on the previous page are details of the elaborate heraldry. The oval portrait vignette shows Charles V. Gilcrease 4057.604.

For a heraldic symbol so widely researched, the coat of arms remains somewhat enigmatic. Most scholars maintain that the custom of decorating shields with personal designs and embellishments has existed for millennia, an early step in the evolution of modern heraldry. They disagree, however, upon the precise introduction of the European coats of arms, so called because they were embroidered on the surcoats of knights. Many believe they were marks of distinction, originally borne on shields and other battle accoutrements. They cannot agree, however, on the timing and circumstances surrounding their first appearance. Some suggest the battlefield as the first site, when military leaders carried painted shields to distinguish themselves from other leaders. Some propose jousting tournaments as the first arena, with knights bearing arms on their shields and surcoats, while some believe knights began the custom during the Crusades. Another theory, increasing in popularity, suggests they were simply a product of vanity, of men wanting to separate themselves from others through decoration and design. Despite these differences of opinion, however, all agree upon the importance of heraldry during the fifteenth through early nineteenth centuries.

This was a time of haves and have-nots, when the position a person occupied within the social hierarchy influenced every aspect of his life. Directly associated with class differences were surnames. Across Europe, prominent families synonymous with wealth, power, and prestige used their names as a form of social currency, to forge alliances and increase opportunities. Over time, they created simple, armorial bearings to represent their names. Sometimes the images represented traits or accomplishments of the family, but just as often they held no direct correlation. As the years progressed, these coats of arms became more complex and regulated. Governments established specific departments responsible for the granting of the insignia, and although some aspects of the practice differed from country to country, other aspects were similar. The Gilcrease documents reveal these commonalities and differences through the Spanish heraldry they display.

JUAN OCHOA DE LEXALDE

A primary difference separating Spanish coats of arms from those of other European countries was the roster of qualifications for receiving and bearing them. Most heraldry dictated that only men born to nobility could carry arms. Rarely did they make exceptions to this rule. However, Spanish heraldry allowed men to gain arms by proving loyalty and bravery through military service. This provided a unique opportunity for someone of a lower class to ascend the social hierarchy into nobility. Juan Ochoa de Lexalde is an example of this distinctive Spanish custom.

On February 10, 1519, Hernán Cortés, one of the most infamous conquistadors of history, set sail from Cuba with 11 ships, 653 men, 16 horses, and one objective—the conquest of any lands and any people he encountered. To finance the expedition he had mortgaged his home for 8,000 gold pieces, convincing his men to do the same by issuing a proclamation that promised a share of the gold and other riches they might discover. It was a difficult choice for some, but the lure of fortune and fame swayed them to join. Like so many young men, they dreamt of adventure and exploits, of making their lives extraordinary. One of these young men was Juan Ochoa de Lexalde, who with the rest of the soldiers helped Hernán Cortés realize his conquest of modern-day Mexico and capture the great Aztec city of Tenochtitlán in 1521.



Charles V coat of arms. Gilcrease 4057.604.

Born in the Basque region of Spain to Martin de Lexalde and Maria de Belitequi in 1490, Juan Ochoa de Lexalde sailed to the New World at only eighteen years of age, taking part in the conquest of Puerto Rico the following year. Ten years later, he joined Cortés on his expedition to Mexico, and in 1533 he joined him again on an expedition into southern California. Eventually, he settled in Puebla de los Ángeles and served as an alderman, while also owning substantial property in Mexico City. Like so many conquistadors, he never



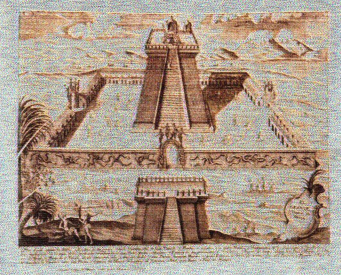
returned to Spain, or even Cuba or Hispaniola. Instead, he remained in the land he helped to conquer, and for his military service Charles V granted him a coat of arms on November 9, 1546. Meant for display, it was an impressive and ornate manuscript, equal to the honor it illustrated. Privileges, the documents that accompanied the coat of arms, normally described the coat and elements depicted, conveying the significance of each item. This privilege, however, only listed the elements. They consisted of five gold stars, a gold lion, a green flag, and a silver tower, a common symbol of military service. There were also eight red crosses, another common element in European heraldry. The document closed by declaring that each of Ochoa's descendants would receive great honors because of their ancestry. This emphasized the belief that honor was something passed down through generations, a tangible possession that could be lost or tarnished.

The Ochoa manuscript, however, included another set of arms, those of Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor and King of Spain. Royal arms were more complex than those of standard nobility because they contained arms for each royal house of the bearer. Charles V, as grandson of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, displayed the quartered arms of Spain. As the grandson of Emperor Maximilian and Mary of Burgundy, he also displayed the arms of Austria and Flanders. A double-headed eagle rested beneath the shield, with a crown overhead, while the motto Plus Ultra was inscribed on the pillars of Hercules. Translated it meant more beyond, describing his empire on which the sun never set.

JUAN TIRADO

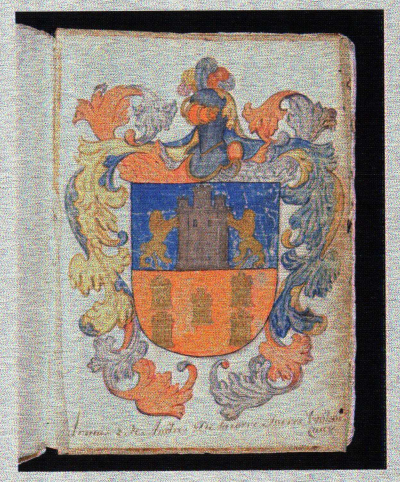
It is a small book—fifty-five pages long and over 300 years old. The leather binding is faded and the inked design barely visible, but three centuries have hardly diminished its appeal. Because despite the cliché to the contrary, one cannot help but judge this book by its cover and assume that something extraordinary lies within. As the pages reveal, the something extraordinary is no less than one man's life.

His name was Juan Tirado, and like Juan Ochoa, he marched with Cortés against the Aztecs. But where the Ochoa document failed to recount specific military deeds, the Tirado volume provided a detailed description of his efforts, from losing his right hand in a battle near Almeria, to defending a causeway during La Noche Triste, the Night of Sorrow. In June 1520, Cortés learned that a large party of Spaniards sent to arrest him for insubordination would soon be landing on the coast. He marched to the coast and defeated the expedition led by Pánfilo de Narváez. However, while he was away his second in command, Pedro de Alvarado, launched an unprovoked attack against the unarmed Aztecs in Tenochtitlán. The news reached Cortés; he returned to find the city in upheaval, his efforts to calm the Aztecs unsuccessful. Cortés and his men soon became trapped in the hostile island city, with their only escape the Tacuba causeway joining the island to the lake shore. Under cover of night on July 1 they tried to escape, but sentinels sounded the alarm and a battle began. The causeway and the canals beneath it quickly became flooded with Aztecs and Spaniards. Historians disagree over the number of Spanish casualties, but many place it in the hundreds. The remaining men retreated, and it was widely whispered that Cortés sat beneath a tree and wept for the devastating defeat. Tirado's valor helped his comrades escape, and it also gained him a coat of arms granted by Charles V. The arms consisted of a stone causeway, representative of the one he defended, and the severed heads of five Aztecs killed by him during the battle. It was a simple arms, but clearly symbolic of the deeds meriting his privilege.



El Grande Templo de Mexico, an engraving from *Historia de Nueva-Espana,* 1770, by Hernan Cortés. Gilcrease 2546.2199a.
FACING: *Portrait of Cortés,* unknown artist, oil on canvas. Gilcrease Collection 01--1969.





Tirado arms, top, and Agustin de la Torre Torres Y Borhorquez arms. Gilcrease 4076.8515
OVERLEAF: St. Augustin and Our Lady of Guadelupe from the Tirado manuscript.



The volume, however, conveyed more than a coat of arms. It was the result of Agustín Tirado de la Torre Torres y Bohórquez and his desire to obtain the rights to bear his great-grandfather's coat of arms. This was significant for two reasons. The first was that Juan Tirado was Agustín's maternal great-grandfather. In almost any other European country, this would have automatically prohibited him from inheriting the arms. However, Spanish heraldry allowed for the inheritance of arms through either paternal or maternal descent. The volume also represented the importance placed on these arms by families. Agustín filed the petition in Mexico City in 1648, and only after the case was reviewed by a council and authenticated by witnesses able to testify to Agustín's lineage was he allowed to bear the arms. Such was the weight placed by courts on the privilege of arms; petitions were considered with absolute formality and diligence. After the decision, Agustín bound the individual documents for preservation and proof of his noble ancestry. Included in the volume were two hand-painted images of St. Agustín and Our Lady of Guadalupe. Their inclusion conveyed the value and significance placed on these items.

DON MIGUEL DE CENDOYA

By the eighteenth century, heraldry was more precise and systematic than ever before. The standard for nobility had changed, and the new mark of true nobility was a coat of arms bearing a quartered shield, with each quarter displaying the arms of the maternal and paternal grandparents. Only by proving noble descent from both sets of grandparents could a person distinguish himself from the lesser nobility, known as hidalgos in Spain. The book in the Gilcrease collection was an example of efforts taken by Don Miguel de Cendoya and his family to distance themselves from lower nobility by proving their lineage. Not only did the book describe the importance of *sangre noble* (noble blood), it also included the family histories and arms for each of Don Miguel's grandparents.

However, it is first important to discuss another feature of this book that illustrated an important aspect of heraldry—the role of the King or Master of Arms. The second illustration in this book was a full page, hand-painted emblem of Don Pasqual Antonio de la Rua Ruiz de Naveda, the King of Arms in Spain. Each European country had a master or king of arms, who was solely responsible for creating and granting coats of arms. Granted



Cover of the Cendoya manuscript. Gilcrease 4076.8514.
FACING: Don Miguel de Cendoya coat of arms.



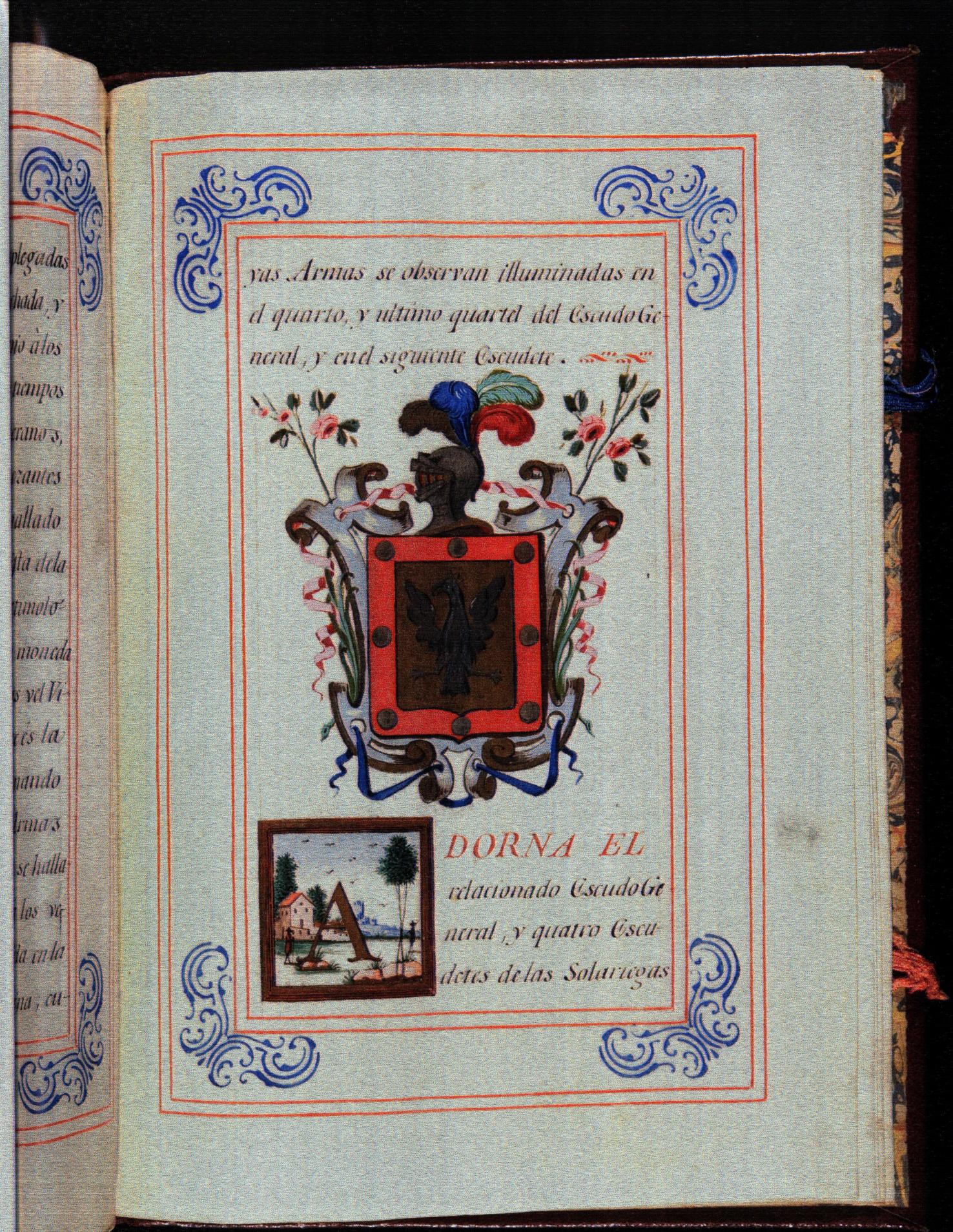
by the king or queen, the position was for life and sometimes passed from father to son. In this book, Don Pasqual Antonio de la Rua Ruiz de Naveda certified that the information contained was correct and verified.

THE CENDOYA FAMILY

The surname Cendoya originated in the province of Guipuzcoa, located along the northern coast of Spain. The earliest men associated with this name were Enrique and Aguirre de Cendoya. Enrique fought in the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa on July 16, 1212. Considered a pivotal point in Iberian history, the Spanish forces defeated sultan Caliph al-Nasir and his army of Tunisians, Algerians, Moroccans, and Senegalese. The arms of the family consisted of a silver shield for purity and zeal, a green tree that represented the fruit, or noble deeds, of the family, and a red lion. The lion symbolized steadfastness and intrepidness, and his red color the Cendoya blood spilt for Spain.

Don Pasqual Antonio Master of Arms. Gilcrease 4076.8514.
FACING: Goya arms.









TOP: Family tree from the Cendoya manuscript. Gilcrease 4076.8514.
ABOVE, left to right: Arizavaleta arms, Cendoya arms, Jauregui arms.

THE ARIZAVALETA FAMILY

The Arizavaleta family, like the Cendoyas, came from the Guipuzcoa province and fought in the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa. One ancestor, Juan de Arizaveleta, had arms designed to commemorate the red banner that Alonso VIII of Castille flew during the battle. The modern arms, however, consisted of three sections. The first was a red cross, similar to that of the Order of Calatrava, the first military order founded in Spain. The second was a green encina tree with golden acorns and a wild boar reaching for the acorns, and the third, a green field with a tower, symbolized military efforts and generosity in the service of the king.

THE JAUREGUI FAMILY

The Jauregui family was from both the Guipuzcoa and Alava provinces in northern Spain. Although not as noted in battle as the Cendoyas and Arizaveletas, the Jaureguis were still considered nobility. They had a quartered arms, with the first and fourth quarters being red fields with eagles. The eagle represented high position in committees. The second and third quarters were gold fields with red griffins. The griffins represented valor in combat and speed in obedience.

THE GOYA FAMILY

The Goya family was also from Guipuzcoa and very involved in military efforts throughout Spanish history, including Chomin de Goya's participation in the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa. The Goya coat of arms consisted of a gold field with a black eagle, wings spread, symbolizing service to the sovereign. The red border had eight silver bezantes, coins originating from Constantinople, and so called for the Latin name of the city, Byzantium. Many soldiers carried these coins east when they left for the Crusades, and they are included in the coat of arms to remind the family of their ancestors' participation in the Holy Wars.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Whether rewarding service in the Crusades or the Conquest, Spanish coats of arms underscored the significance placed upon family names. As symbols of loyalty and honor, they became valuable possessions, subject to the same laws of inheritance as other properties and heirlooms. But there is something intrinsic in the value of a name and the honor or dishonor it retains—something that lies beyond the reach of words. Perhaps the closest we can come to understanding is to consider one of literature's most famous questions, what's in a name? As the Gilcrease documents help to illustrate—everything.

Collis, Maurice. *Cortés and Montezuma*. New Directions: New York, 1999.

Cortés, Hernando. *Five Letters, 1485-1547*. Translated by J. Bayard Morris. W.W. Norton: New York, 1991.

Fox-Davies, Arthur Charles. *A Complete Guide to Heraldry*. Kessinger: Whitefish, MT, 2005.

A special thank you to Rita Willis who translated the Juan Ochoa de Lexalde document.



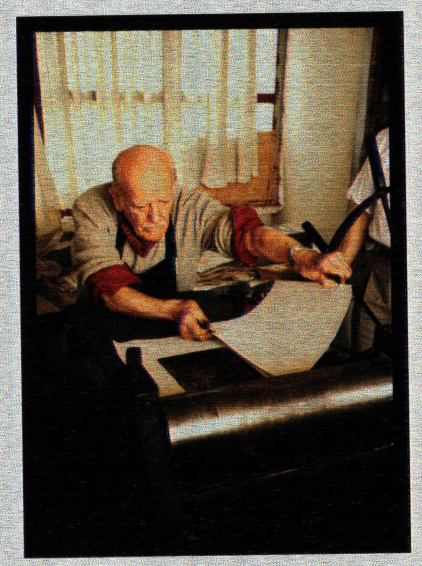
THE ART OF ALFREDO ZALCÉ

KELLY FINEGAN, ASSISTANT CURATOR, GILCREASE MUSEUM

Alfredo Zalcé was a painter, printmaker, sculptor, jeweler, a practitioner of almost every aesthetic medium at one point or another throughout his seventy-five-year career. In essence, he was an artist. Zalcé was born in Patzcuaro, Michoacan, Mexico in 1908 and was introduced to art through his parents, both of whom were photographers and encouraged their son's artistic abilities. Their influence would prove helpful while Zalcé attended the art school Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes: he supported himself by working as a photographer at this time. He received some notice early in his career and exhibited works in Seville, Spain; Chicago, Illinois; and throughout Mexico. Zalcé dedicated himself to representing the historic art of Mexico. His heritage and cultural identity gave him a unique opportunity to accurately depict the changes and struggles taking place in Mexico during his lifetime. With his murals and prints, Zalcé hoped to inspire people to get involved in shaping the course of Mexican politics. Many of his prints have a political message, illustrating the corruption and injustice of the government and the conditions in his country.

Although Zalcé was traditionally trained at the Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes, he developed his own artistic language while working in a regional style. In 1930, he founded a painting school in Taxco, Mexico. He attended a lithograph workshop instructed by Emilio Amero in 1931 and printed several lithographs that year. While teaching for the Mexican Secretariat of Public Education in 1932 he began painting al fresco murals for area public schools, a project he would work on for the next eighteen years. His first one-man show, featuring prints and paintings, occurred in 1932 at the Sala de Arte de la Secretaria de Educacion Publica. The following year he exhibited in Chicago.

Through his political involvement, Zalcé began working with a group of emerging Mexican artists who were searching not only for new political ideas but also for new expressions in painting and printmaking. In 1933, he joined other artists, including Leopoldo Mendez, Pablo O'Higgins, and Fernando Gamboa, in founding an artist's collective called LEAR—Liga de Escritores y Artistas Revolucionarios (League of Revolutionary Writers and Artists). One of the league's major projects, completed in 1936, was the mural Los Trabajadores Contra la Guerra y el Fascismo (The Workers Against the War and Fascism), painted on the walls of the stairway of the Talleres Graficos de la Nacion. It expresses, in a dissonant style, the strength of the Mexican movement during the 1930s. In his contribution to this collective work and in his other murals, Zalcé's approach to politics and art was direct. He believed that by making art about the people he was making art for the people, and that, through art, he could awaken them to the political realities that surrounded them.



In 1945, he produced his most famous print portfolio, Estampas de Yucatan, which included Rio Palizada. Three years later a major exhibition of his work appeared at the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes and then traveled to the Museo Michoacano de Morelia. In 1950, he became director of Escuela Popular de Bellas Artes de Morelia, where he was based for the rest of his life.

ALFREDO ZALCÉ WITH HIS HOMEMADE PRINTING PRESS, DATE UNKNOWN.

FACING: *Naturaleza Muerta,* relief print on paper, 1967. Gilcrease TL 2007.5.2

Zalcé worked with many different groups of artists throughout his career and was influenced by their various techniques. He embraced the ideals of the Mexican School of Painting, but also allowed himself to break away from prescribed schools of thought. He sought out artists and groups with political agendas, like the Taller de la Grafica Popular (Workshop of the People's Graphics), which worked out of a small print shop in Mexico City producing multiple-run linoleum and woodcut prints. The group's intensity was somewhat exhausting for Zalcé, who has been described as "such a gentle person, but really stubborn," though he enjoyed their study of works by European artists. Zalcé was particularly interested the forms and methods developed by Picasso.

The media through which Zalcé moved so fluidly to express his own self-described "Realist Lyricism" were affected by circumstance, opportunity, and personal connection. Many of his linoleum prints, for example, were created from 1966 to 1967, when he was working with an assistant who was familiar with the technical process and supervised an accurate registration system. When asked why he stopped making multiple-run relief prints, Zalcé simply replied, "my assistant left." He was constantly working with local craftspeople on various projects including sculpture, tapestries, and jewelry. Unconventional methods were a trademark of Zalcé's jewelry designs. He began with a small welded shape with grooves. Then grain by grain, he would add the glass particles and then literally paint with the small particles. Even in printmaking, Zalcé defied convention. Working with a local welder, he created his own printmaking press designed to fit his own needs. Zalcé's experimentation with a wide variety of materials allowed him to showcase the true artistic talent he really was.

Alfredo Zalcé is loved by Mexicans for his ability to portray a message that resounded with people. He continued to create until the end of his life in 2003. Many of the works in this portfolio were painted, printed, or constructed in the last thirty years of his prolific life. Zalcé's career spanned many years and many different types of materials, but he will be remembered as one of the foremost Mexican artists of the twentieth century.



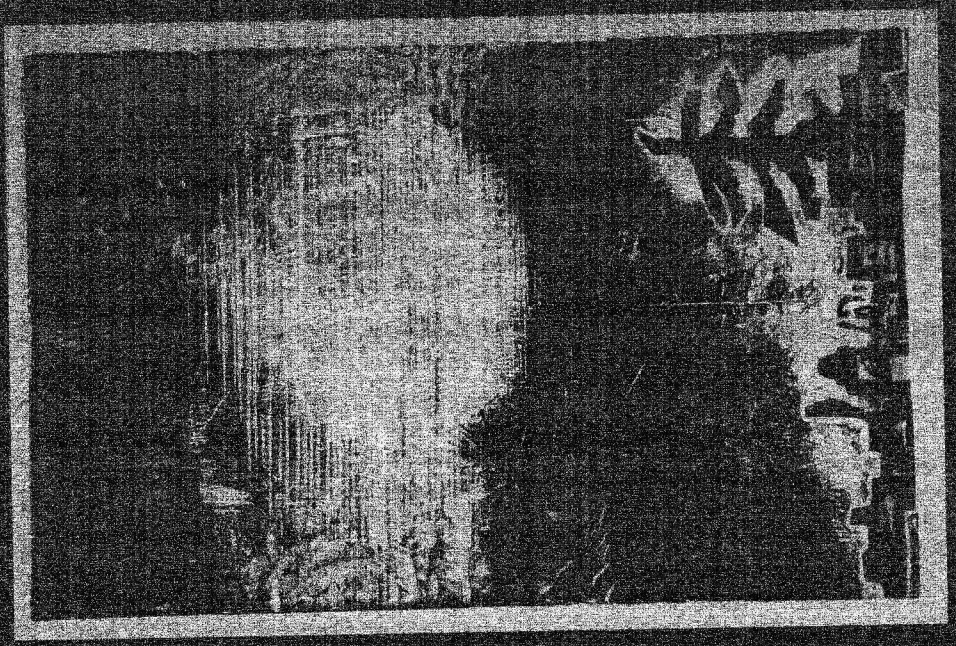
Blue Mountain, watercolor on paper, date unknown. Gilcrease TL 2006.24.3

FACING: *Sandias*, relief print on paper, 1968. Gilcrease TL 2007.8.19











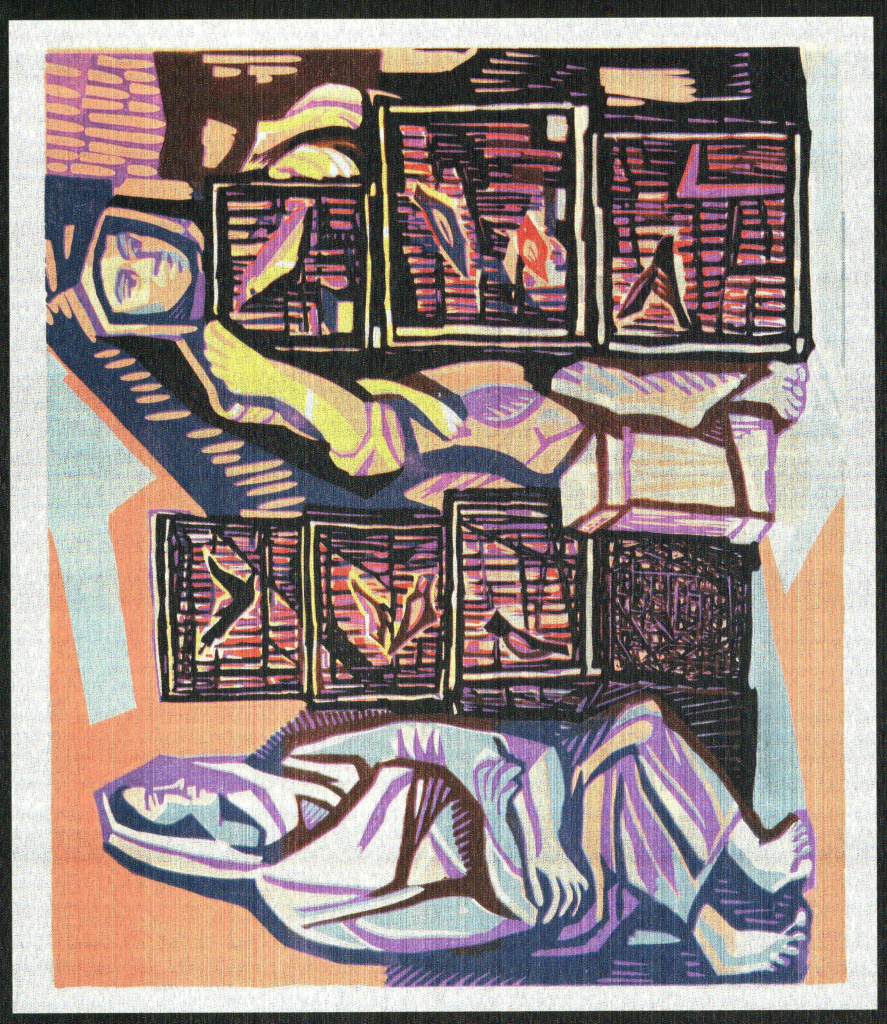
Pedro Nel Montañez, *Tule Grecian Urn*, relief print on paper, date unknown. Gift of the artist, 2007.8.13



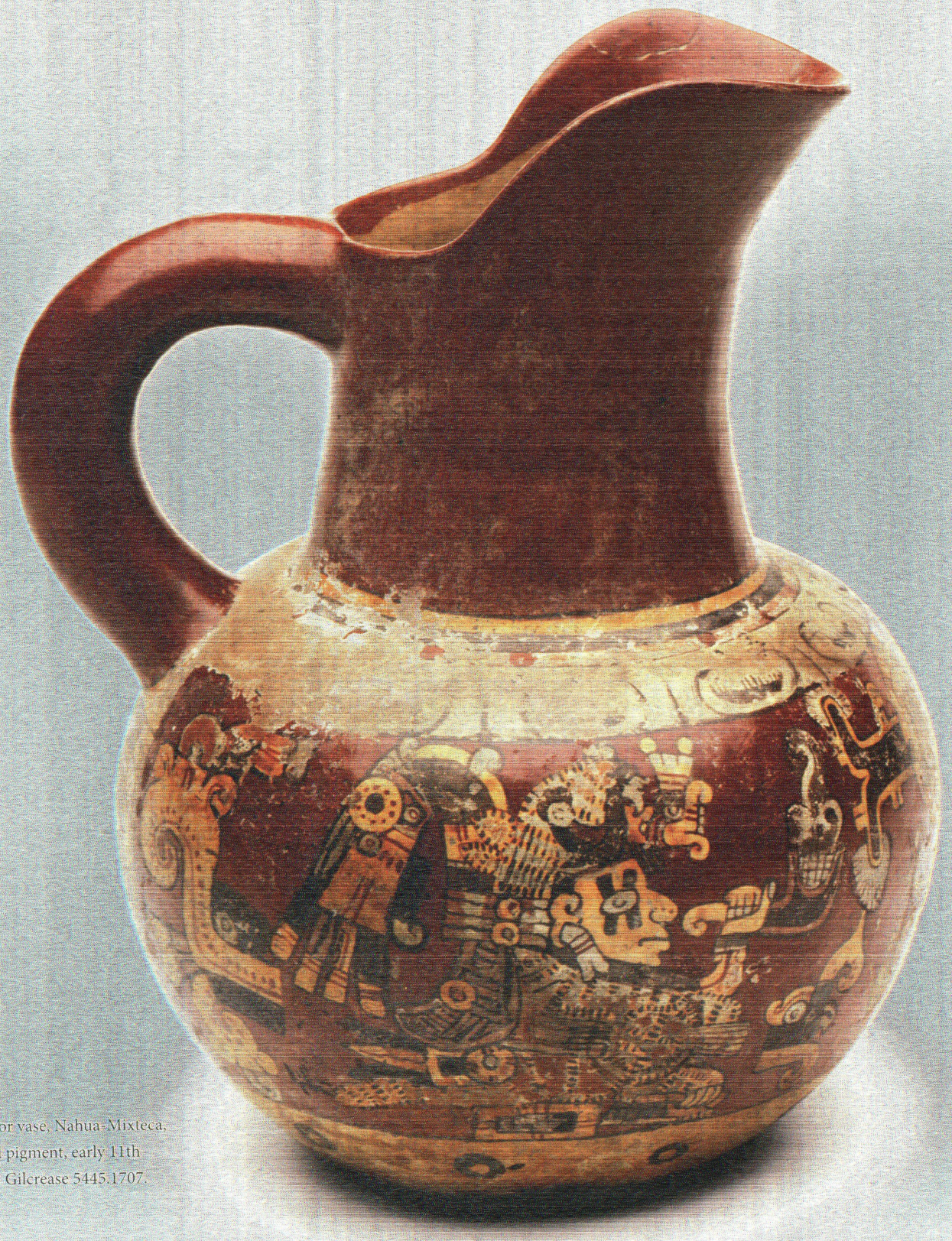
Niño, relief print on paper, 1967. Gilcrease TL 2007.5.2

FACING, TOP: *Payaseas*, relief print on paper, 1971. Gilcrease TL 2007.5.12

FACING, BOTTOM: *Luz en el estudio*, relief print on paper, 1967. Gilcrease TL 2007.5.5







Pitcher or vase, Nahua-Mixteca, clay and pigment, early 11th century. Gilcrease 5445.1707.

History on a Mixtec Vase

JOHN M.D. POHL

Gilcrease Museum possesses a significant collection of stunning polychrome ceramic vessels dating to ancient Mexico's Postclassic period between A.D. 1300 and 1521. Many people think of these masterpieces as "Aztec" because of the period to which they are attributed and their overall style of ornamentation. However, it is important to remember that the term Aztec was only invented by the German explorer Alexander von Humboldt at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Today scholars apply it more specifically to the civilization centered around present-day Mexico City that founded a mighty tribute empire later conquered by the Spaniards. Instead, this remarkable ceramic tradition should be more correctly attributed to confederacies of city-states dominated by the Nahuas, Mixtecs, and Zapotecs who competed with the Aztec empire for supremacy over southwestern Mexico for over a century previously. More than a million of their descendants still live in the Mexican states of Puebla and Oaxaca, speak indigenous languages, and practice a traditional Indian lifestyle. Nahua-Mixteca, as the art style is now known, is characterized by conventionalized symbols and an almost geometric precision in line. Colors were vivid and the imagery shared many of the attributes of early twentieth-century animated motion-picture characters, particularly the exaggerated emphasis on the head and hands that are attached to bent wire-like appendages. In addition to the polychrome ceramic tradition, the art style is also exemplified by a series of surviving screenfold books called codices.



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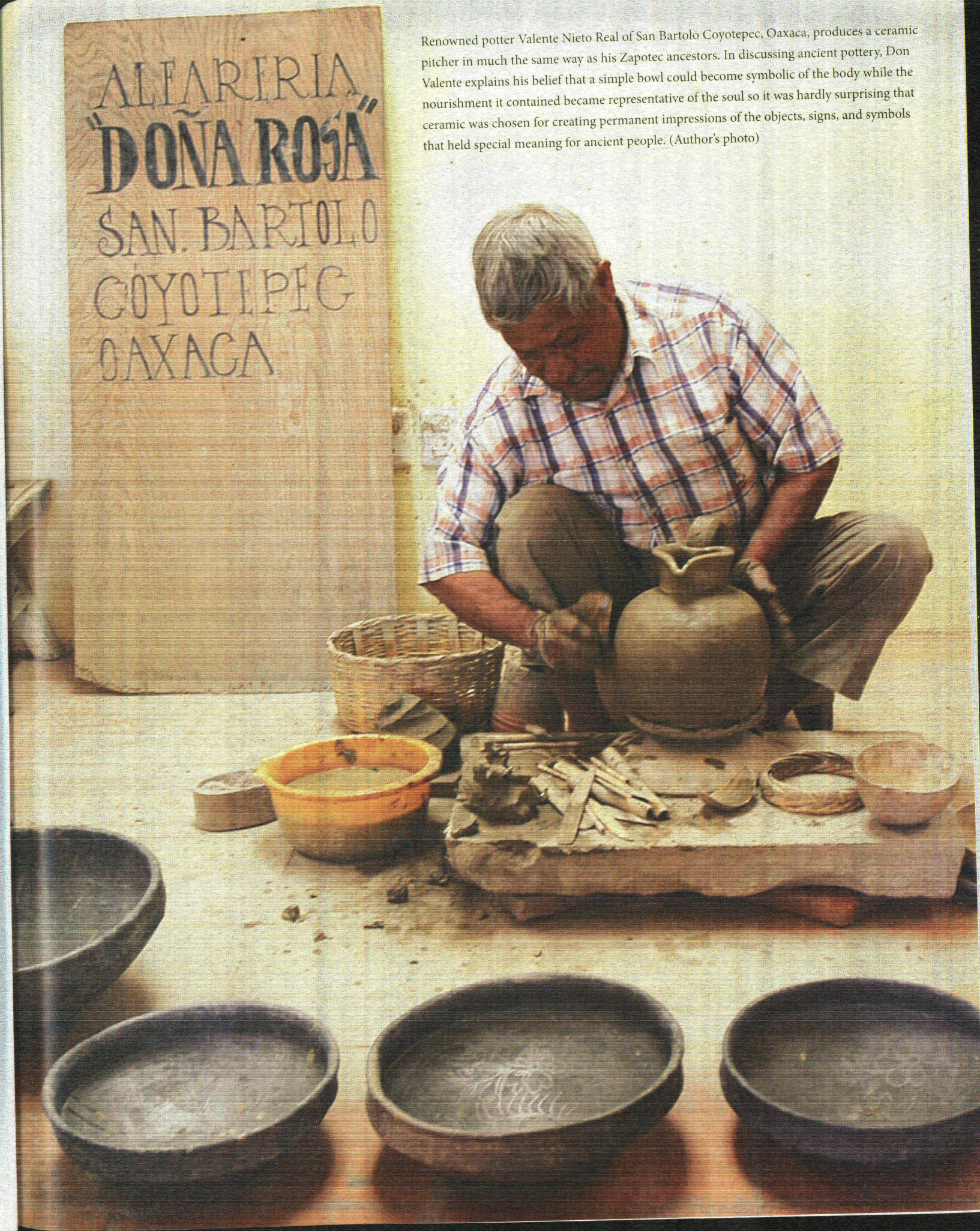


A photographic facsimile of Codex Nuttall (preserved in the British Museum) illustrates how the book could be folded accordion-style or opened to reveal all the pages of one side. (Author's photo)

Codices were made of animal hide and covered with a gesso-like foundation upon which figures were painted. They were folded so that they could either be consulted privately like the facing pages of an open book or extended to reveal all of the pages of one side, allowing priests and poets to present them to a court of assembled nobles at their feasts.

In full figurative form the Nahua-Mixteca style could be employed to convey historical or ritual narrative, but certain symbols could also be reduced to simple icons that represented either an idea or a spoken word. For example, the depiction of repetitive designs of birds, butterflies, and jewels invoked the spirits of ancestors while the representation of eye balls could more specifically indicate a tonal pun in the Mixtec language for the word "star." Far from representing any decline in literacy following the much earlier development of Zapotec, Mixe-Zoque and Maya scripts, therefore, the employment of the Nahua-Mixteca pictographic system became an ingenious response to the redistribution of power among Postclassic confederations of city-states and great houses whose leaders communicated in as many as twelve different languages (Pohl 2003a).

Nahua-Mixteca ceramics were highly refined and manufacturing techniques were labor intensive (Pohl 2003a, Ramsey 1975). Plates or vessels were either coil or slab-built. The wheel was not used, but basic construction could be facilitated with the use of convex molds or by cupping and rotating vessels on inverted bowls. The final shaping was achieved with wood or shell instruments. Many indigenous peoples of North America also believe that clay is a living spirit, an extension of the earth on which they depend for sustenance, and potters purposefully resist the use of the wheel arguing that it impedes their ability to sense the manner in which the clay wishes to be shaped. Once the clay had dried to a leather-like consisteney, its surface was burnished to prepare it for treatment with a fine slip called *terra sigillata* (literally "sealed earth") by contemporary potters. *Terra sigillata* is a very smooth lustrous coating of clay that resembles a glaze. Although it was independently invented in other parts of the ancient world, most notably Greece, the technique for making it was



Renowned potter Valente Nieto Real of San Bartolo Coyotepec, Oaxaca, produces a ceramic pitcher in much the same way as his Zapotec ancestors. In discussing ancient pottery, Don Valente explains his belief that a simple bowl could become symbolic of the body while the nourishment it contained became representative of the soul so it was hardly surprising that ceramic was chosen for creating permanent impressions of the objects, signs, and symbols that held special meaning for ancient people. (Author's photo)

virtually lost until the middle of the last century. Today, *terra sigilatta* is created by treating almost any kind of clay with a deflocculent or thinning agent to reduce viscosity. The finest particles are thereby separated from the densest in a tank and siphoned off. Potters then apply an even coat of fine "terra" over the entire vessel and create the characteristic glossy shine by buffing it lightly with cotton and oil. Vessels are fired at approximately 1,000˚C with little margin of variability in order to insure the highest gloss.

Ancient Nahua-Mixteca designs were painted in narrow dark line. The spectrum of colors was created by adding mineral-based pigments to *terra sigilatta* carefully applying it in and around the black line work with various brush sizes. Each application had to be smoothed and burnished and ultimately underwent at least two or possibly more firings. The effort shows in the radiant colors, the intricacy of the geometric designs, and the delicate figurative imagery achieved in the most refined pieces. However, unlike glaze which is more like a coating of hard glass, *terra sigillata* can be easily damaged from rough handling or it may simply lift from the surface of vessels which have been subjected to the elements especially after burial in the ground for a century of more.

The fact that so many fourteenth-century court artisans working across such a broad geographical area could paint the same set of icons with stylistic precision is a testament to the tremendous degree of elite integration that Eastern Nahua, Mixtec, and Zapotec royal houses, achieved through their alliance system (Pohl 2002a, 2003b, 2003c, 2003d). Nevertheless, cultural differences in symbolic usage are also apparent. The Eastern Nahuas, for example, expressed a preference for large serving basins, goblets, and bowls frequently ornamented with shields, skulls, bones, hands, and human hearts, iconography related to war and sacrifice as well as sorcery and divination. Their feasts could be confrontational, resulting in drunkenness and acts of factional violence (Pohl 1998, Pohl 2003a, Pohl 2007a).

The Mixtecs, on the other hand, expressed a preference for pitchers, tripod ollas, and tripod bowls. Many were ornamented with scenes directly taken from the historical codices, indicating a close connection between drinking parties and the recounting of creation stories and heroic sagas (Pohl 2006, 2007b). The forms of Mixtec serving wares suggest somewhat more refined courtly behavior but the appearance of symbols for mushrooms, morning glory, and other hallucinogens indicates that intoxication was just as much a part of efforts

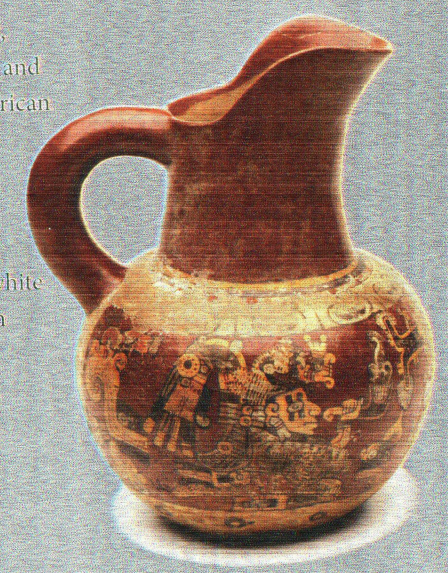
Rollout painting of the Gilcrease Pitcher. Elimination of damaged or repainted areas through careful examination under blacklight enabled the artist to reconstruct missing parts of the original scene. Lord Five Rain appears in the coyote suit on the left offering a burning censer of copal to the solar deity seated in the tree. Lord Eight Deer appears on the right dressed in a jaguar suit. A day sign for 6 Serpent can be identified directly behind him. Although, the year sign 6 Reed is largely obliterated, two numerals survive in front of Lord Eight Deer. The date correlates with September 2, A.D. 1083 making Eight Deer a contemporary of William the Conqueror. (Author's illustration)

efforts to communicate with the ancestors of the principal families. Genealogies detailed in Codices Nuttall, Selden, and Bodley indicate close intermarriage with Zapotec royal houses so we shouldn't be surprised to see the use of the same basic forms in their serving wares, especially tripod ollas and pitchers. However, the Zapotecs frequently ornamented their vessels with three-dimensional representations of animals such as deer and hummingbirds together with images of a Zapotec god known as Bezelao or Lord Thirteen Flower (2003a).

In similar fashion, other ethnic groups such as the Popolocas, Chochos, Mazatecs, Cuicatecs, and Chinantecs produced local variants of Nahua and Mixtec forms depending upon which of the alliance systems they had become most intensively engaged with, but featured iconography appropriate to their own cults.

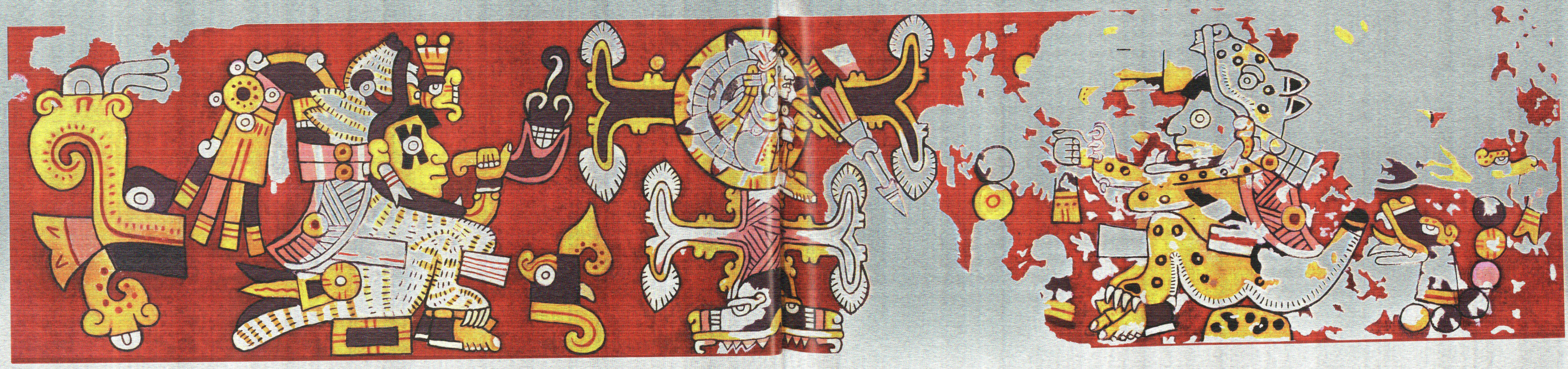
The Gilcrease pitcher

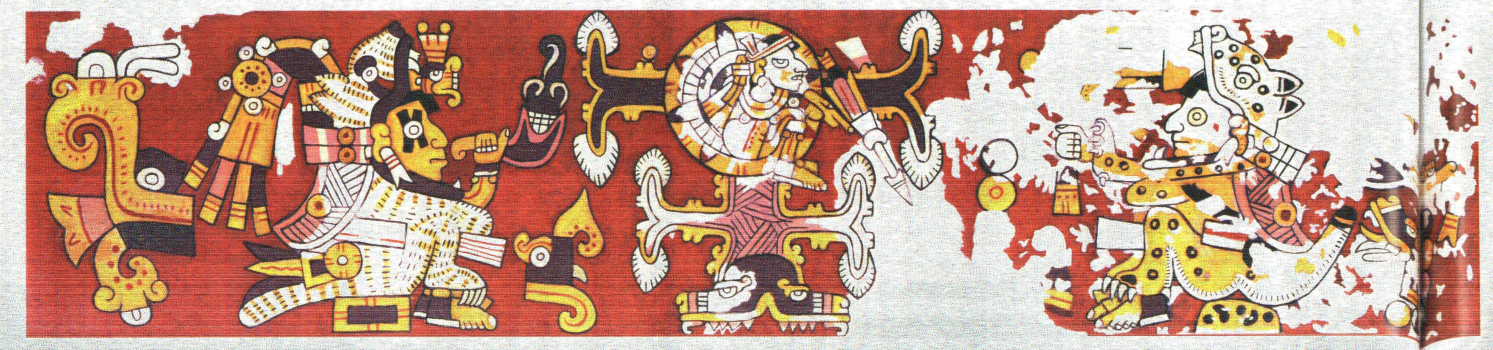
Compared to objects preserved in collections in Mexico, the Gilcrease pitcher is relatively unknown. The pitcher is 25.5 centimeters or about 10 inches high. It is elegant, even contemporary, in form, with a globular body, wide out-turned mouth for pouring, and an opposing handle of solid clay shaped as a broad loop. Pitchers are rare as a Mesoamerican form and for the most part only make their appearance during the Postclassic. Close examination reveals that there had been much restoration to the piece, including some repainting. Nevertheless, the standardization of the Nahua-Mixteca style allows me to propose a reconstruction of what the original figures, place sign, and dates entailed.



The better preserved section of the vase features a seated personage dressed in a white limb-encasing garment marked with parallel dark lines to indicate fur and topped by an animal head from whose mouth protrudes the face of a Mixtec lord. Comparison with imagery in Mixtec codices Nuttall and Colombino indicates that the animal is a coyote. The lord holds a censer with which he burns an offering of copal incense or tobacco. Two abstract head-like forms are painted in front and behind the lord. Such composite spirit forms appear in Codex Laud, for example, and seem to signify the supernatural materialization of spirit forces from the air during ritual performances.

To the right of the coyote-suited lord, it is possible to identify the object of his





veneration as a tree. At the top of the tree appears a disk marked with rays and points to indicate that it is the sun. Although damaged, enough detail can be seen to indicate that a small personage sits within the solar disk and points with his right hand. The tree's trunk emerges from the bifurcated head of a crocodile while its branches and leaves extend to the left and right in two separate clusters. An arrow appears over the upper right hand branch.

To the right of the tree appear at least two circles stacked vertically. Circles like these ordinarily signify numerals used in dates. If a date is indicated it is not clear what the year or day sign that accompanied it should be. A year sign may have appeared below the arrow that extends from the tree but the small bit of it that survives has also been repainted. If it is a year sign then the date that was originally painted there might have been Year 2+ Reed, with the reed year bearer signified by the arrow.

A second seated lord was painted in the last section of the narrative on the pitcher but most of the upper part of his body has been destroyed. Nevertheless, it's possible to see that he was intended to be a companion figure to the coyote lord on the opposite side of the tree. Enough of the figure survives to indicate that he wears a limb-encasing jaguar suit painted yellow with characteristic black spots. Enough fragments of the jaguar's jaw bone as well as the ear and the face of the lord survive to enable me to reconstruct the figure almost entirely. The jaguar lord crosses his right arm over his knees and raises his left hand suggesting that he is acknowledging the demand from the solar deity seated in the tree who points towards him. Behind the jaguar lord appears another series of circles together with a serpent head. This is clearly a day date signifying 6 Serpent.

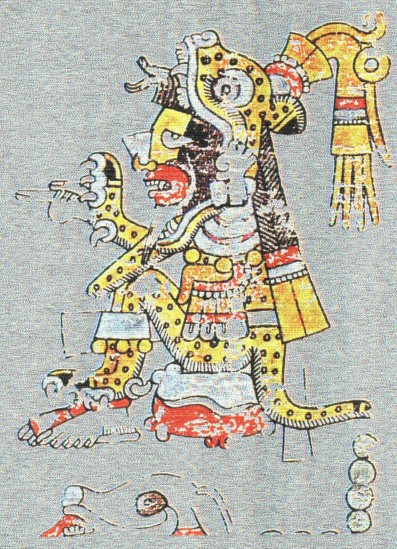
Numerous lords appear in the Mixtec codices dressed in tight-fitting, limb-encasing garments. Jaguar suits were especially popular, but mountain lion and coyote suits appear as well. While these outfits were most closely associated with warrior ranks in Aztec society, the Mixtec wore them exclusively for courtly appearances, where they signified special titles or personal names (Anawalt 1984). Consequently, it should be possible to use the appearance of this special ritual dress to identify the nobles portrayed on the Gilcrease pitcher. When attempting to identify people, places, and dates, codex specialists generally begin with Codex Nuttall because it is the most readily accessible. Preserved in the British Museum, Codex Nuttall was copied by an artist working with Zelia Nuttall, the scholar who wrote a commentary of the manuscript and for whom it was subsequently named. Codex Nuttall was first published in 1904 by the Peabody Museum at Harvard University but it was reissued in a standard book format in 1975 by Dover publications and has been in continuous print for over thirty years.

The famous eleventh-century warlord Eight Deer "Jaguar Claw" appears on Nuttall 54 wearing a complete jaguar suit. It is dramatic in appearance and magnifies his position as the leader of an alliance of over 100 princes who appear on pages 54-68. It could be significant that three of the princes who appear among his allies wear elements of coyote dress. However, the alliance scene does not feature the tree surmounted by the solar deity. On the other hand, a significant event featuring a solar tree does appear in Codex Nuttall 42. The scene shows Lord Eight Deer burning incense in front of a tree surmounted by a sun disk that grows from the head of a crocodile (facing page). The offering immediately follows Eight Deer's meeting with Lady Nine Grass the powerful oracular priestess of Chalcatongo (Pohl 1994: 69-82). The painter of Codex Nuttall was careful to date both the meeting and the offering as occurring in Year 6 Reed and Day 6 Serpent or September 2, A.D. 1083. (3) Neither a person dressed as a jaguar or a coyote appear in this scene however. Therefore, remembering that many Nuttall events also appear in Codex Colombino, I examined cognate imagery in the latter manuscript. Codex Colombino is preserved in Mexico's National Museum of Anthropology (Caso 1966, 1996). It details much of the same biography of Lord Eight Deer (Caso 1966, 1996). Although it was badly damaged at some time in the past, and in fact some scenes were intentionally erased, the manuscript features many details lacking in Nuttall. A readily available edition of the Colombino was published together with Codex Becker I with the new name "Codice Alfonso Caso" by Patronato Indigena in 1996. It includes a new introduction by Miguel León Portilla as well as the original 1966 commentary by Alfonso Caso.

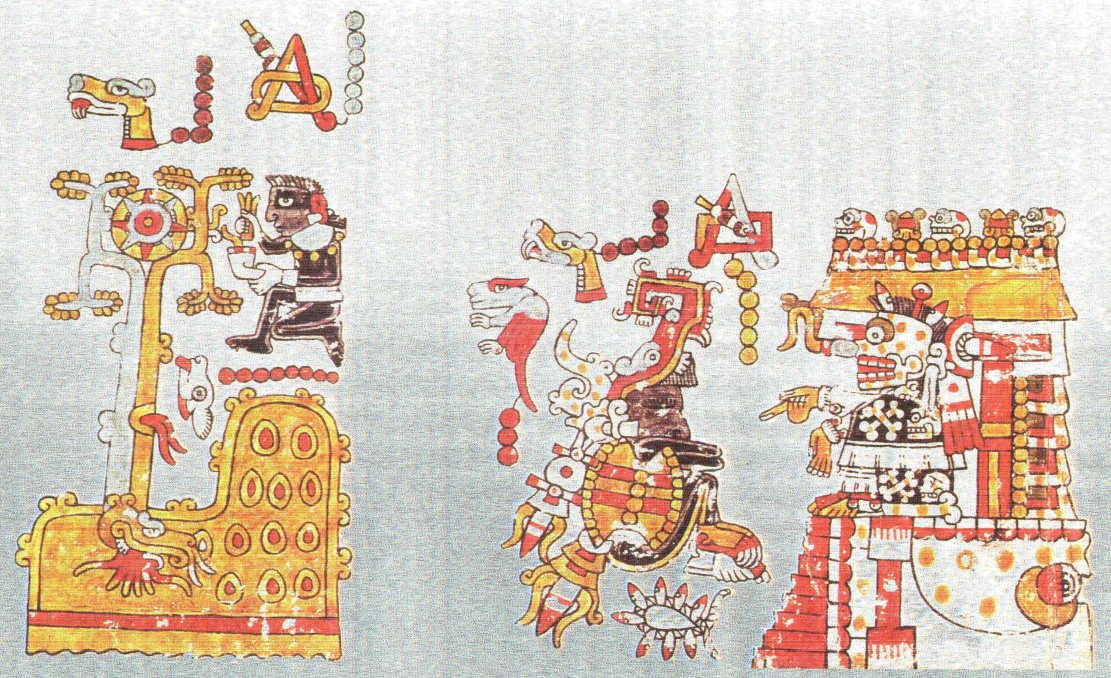
Colombino pages 3-4 are particularly significant. They show Lord Eight Deer dressed in a jaguar suit seated before a series of gifts including a conch shell trumpet, a divining mirror, an arrow ornamented with the head of an owl, and a golden fish, among other objects that he received from the oracular priestess Lady Nine Grass. Although the image of the priestess herself has been erased, it is clear from the depiction of her skull-ornamented temple that she had appeared prominently in the scene. Closer examination reveals that Eight Deer had a companion who attended this event. He appears seated directly behind Eight Deer wearing a limb encasing suit marked with coyote fur. His calendrical name is badly damaged but appears to have consisted of five numeral dots. His personal name is clearer and identifies him as "Smoking Mountain." Alfonso Caso consequently identified him as Lord Five Rain "Smoking Mountain" who appears as an ally of Lord Eight Deer in Nuttall 56 (Caso 1996: 67). Following their meeting with Lady Nine Grass, Lord Eight Deer and Lord Five Rain appear on Colombino page 3III seated before a hill surmounted by a tree. A solar disk is shown above the tree within which appears the image of a deity. Although the date is partially destroyed, enough of it remains to identify it as being Year 6 Reed, Day 6 Serpent which correlates with Codex Nuttall. The portrayal of the scene not only matches that of the Gilcrease pitcher but the surviving numerals, possible year sign, and the day sign serpent seem to indicate the same date (above).

The fact that the event portrayed on the pitcher coincided with Eight Deer's meeting with Lady Nine Grass suggests that the miraculous appearance of the sun god in the tree took place adjacent to the famous burial cave over which Nine Grass presided. Place of the Skull can be identified as the kingdom of Chalcatongo (Pohl 1994b: 75). Colonial historian Antonio de los Reyes listed the original name of Chalcatongo as Nuundaya. Nuu means "town" or "place," while ndaya means "hell" or the "underworld" and is signified by the skull. Dominican Friar Francisco de Burgoa later described a great burial cave at Chalcatongo that was located on a nearby mountain adjacent to a place known as Cerro de los Cervatillos or "Hill of the Musk Deer" (Burgoa 1934 I 337-340). The cave was venerated by all of the nobles of the Mixteca as it was well known that the ancestors of the lords of Tilantongo, the highest ranking kingdom, were buried there. Confirmation of Burgoa's account is found in the codices. Eight Deer himself is shown buried there as a mummy bundle following his assassination in Codex Bodley 14 IV. The cave was discovered by Friar Benito Hernández who identified it as a significant pagan shrine and destroyed its contents.

dressed in tight-fitting, limb-encasing garments. Jaguar suits were especially popular, but mountain lion and coyote suits appear as well.



Eight Deer wearing a tight-fitting jaguar suit on Codex Nuttall 54. (Author's illustration)



Eight Deer appears burning incense before a sun disk in a tree on Codex Nuttall 44 (left) following his meeting with Lady Nine Grass at the funeral of Lord 3 Lizard at Skull Temple, Chalcatongo (right). The date for both events is Year 6 Reed, Day 6 Serpent, indicating that the locations for these events were directly associated geographically. (Author's illustration)

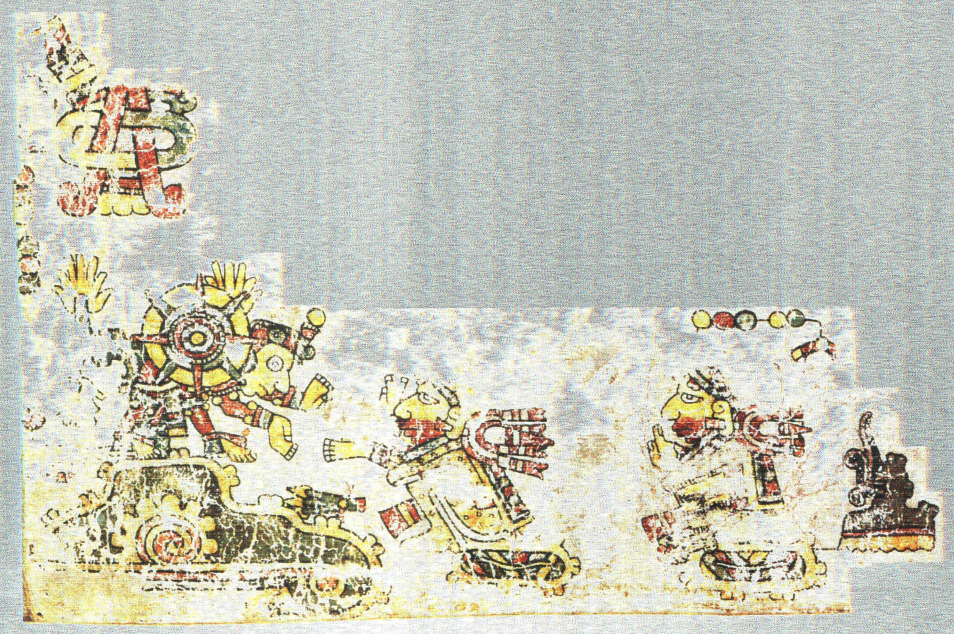
The location of the cave has been debated by scholars for many years and I once proposed that it might be located on a mountain to the south of the Chalcatongo Valley called Yucu Casa. However during the course of an archaeological excavation at Tilantongo, I befriended a local priest named Father Pacheco who told me he knew Chalcatongo well and that the Mixtec people there believed that the cave described by Burgoa so many centuries ago was located on a hill just outside of the community. I subsequently consulted with the Chalcatongo municipal authorities who confirmed for me that the legend of the burial site was well known throughout the region.

The cave or *yau*, a dialectical variant of *yavui*, is located on a heavily forested promontory called Yucu Cu two kilometers west of the town center on the community boundary with San Miguel El Grande. Unfortunately, the cave has been filled in with what appears to be more than a ton of earth, rock, and other debris so there is no way to determine how large it might have originally been. Yucu Cu is usually translated as "Hill of the Seat" by Chalcatongo Mixtecs today but it is also closely related to a term for an underworld or even "hell." A legend is still told of a "gachupin" or ominous spirit in the cave with which traditional Mixtec practitioners continue to consult on matters of healing or seeking prosperity. Local foresters believe that the royal dead were probably buried in more than one location on the site and they report other caves in the same vicinity located about twenty meters apart. The largest, known as La Reina (meaning "the Queen"), is covered with dense foliage but the entrance is described as an opening in the bedrock surface about three feet in diameter. In order to access the cave, one must use a rope to descend through a four to seven-meter deep shaft at the bottom of which is a large open chamber. Other caves are located lower down the slope on the south side of mountain.



A view of Chalcatongo from the summit of Yucu Cu. (Author's photo)

The summit of Yucu Cu, lies about one hundred meters north of the cave of the gachupin. It features an extensive series of habitation terraces surrounding a major Templo-Patio-Adoratorio complex that is typical of Late Pre-Classic to Classic period architecture (Winter 1986). Ceramics dating to the same period are found more or less continuously across at least five square hectares indicating that the site must have been home to a sizeable population, a clear indication that the citadel served as a capital for the southern Chalcatongo Valley by A.D. 800 if not earlier. The main plaza is still refered to as a *yahui*, a local Mixtec dialectical term for *yahui* meaning "market." This might seem surprising considering the antiquity of the site, but elsewhere I have written about the reuse of ancient plazas of this kind as the locations for regional boundary markets maintained by factionalized royal houses throughout the Postclassic and Early Colonial periods, particularly in conjunction with the use of adjacent cave sites and burial places as oracular



Lord Eight Deer and Lord Five Rain seated before the solar deity appearing in the tree on Codex Colombino 3. (Author's illustration)

Notes

1) I am indepted to Randy Ramer, Curator of Anthropology, and Fred Suffridge for their generous time and assistance at the Gilcrease Museum. Pedro Hernández Torres, Caracal Transportadora de Turismo S.A. de C.V., Oaxaca, Mexico, was my principal collaborator in the Mixteca.

2) Purchased in 1948 by Thomas Gilcrease, it was only published for the first time by Hasso von Winning in his comprehensive survey *Pre-Columbian Art of Mexico and Central America* in 1968 (von Winning 1968: 238). James Ramsey later discussed the piece in his dissertation inventory of Mixtec polychrome ceramics (Ramsey 1975: 522).

3) Wigberto Jimenez-Moreno first proposed a Mixtec to Julian Calendar chronology based on various Colonial period sources. The date 6 Reed, 6 Serpent was then calculated using a computer program designed by William O. Autry and based on the calendrical correlation currently employed by myself, Emily Rabin, and other colleagues (See Byland and Pohl 1994: 231-264, Rabin 2004).

4) Caso was the first to recognize that Codex Colombino and Codex Becker I preserved in the Museum fur Volkerkunde in Vienna were two parts of the same manuscript. Later Nancy Troike proposed a page order that differs from that of Caso, especially with regard to the latter half of the Eight Deer saga (Troike 1974). Unfortunately, Troike never published her study and restricted distribution of her dissertation manuscript on Colombino-Becker to a few colleagues making access to her work extremely limited for decades. Both Troike and Caso are in basic agreement with the interpretation of the scenes under discussion here.

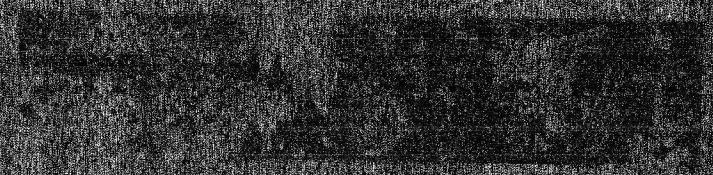
shrines (Pohl, Monaghan, and Stiver 1997). It is certainly no coincidence that the summit of Yucu Cu marks the boundary between Chalcatongo and San Miguel El Grande today, but an even larger plaza on a lower slope of the mountain called El Cervatillo or Place of the Musk Deer, doubtless a reference to the locative mentioned by Burgoa, continued to have been the site of annual religious festivals during which church sponsored peregrinations were made to the base of the ancient sacred mountain as recently as seventy years ago.

Despite the fact that they depict different legends, narrative scenes from Mixtec vases share a common theme in that the gods and heroes are always shown seated while engaged in various forms of ritualism. Considering the spectrum of activities appearing in the codices such as births, marriages, councils, alliances, dances, battles, sacrifices, and deaths, one wonders why the vase painters chose to focus on the scenes that they did. We don't know very much about portrayals on other Mixtec vases because they relate to sagas that are not well documented in the existing codices. The Gilcrease vase is therefore unique because we know that the miraculous appearance of the sun god in the tree signaled the major turning point in political fortunes of the famous Lord Eight Deer, a hero whose biography is prominently featured in the codices.

According to various accounts of the saga appearing in Codices Nuttall, Colombino, Becker I, Selden, and Bodley, Lord Eight Deer met with Lady Nine Grass to settle a dispute over the inheritance of Tilantongo and Jaltepec, neighboring kingdoms located in the southern Nochixtlan Valley (Pohl 2002b). Rebuffed by Lady Nine Grass who sided with Jaltepec's Lady Six Monkey, Eight Deer's principal rival, the warlord left the meeting and subsequently made an offering to the solar tree, the event depicted on the vase. The sun god miraculously appeared to Eight Deer and, according to Codex Colombino, directed him to travel to Tututepec located on the Pacific Coast of Oaxaca where he ruled for many years. In A.D. 1100, the heir to the throne of Tilantongo committed suicide. Eight Deer returned from the coast to usurp, but being the son of the kingdom's high priest, his bloodline was too distant to claim any legitimate right to the throne. He resolved the issue by seeking outside forms of legitimacy from the Eastern Nahua dominated confederacies of Puebla and northern Oaxaca. He later allied himself with over a hundred nobles from kingdoms as distant as Tlaxcala in the north to Zaachila in the Valley of Oaxaca to the south. Finally, in A.D. 1120, he gained the support of Lord One Death, the sun god's oracle at Achiutla. In 1123, he attacked and executed Lady Six Monkey along with her husband who also claimed the Tilantongo throne. He fused their bloodlines with his own through a series of strategic intermarriages and thereby founded the highest ranking royal Mixtec family at Tilantongo, an enduring legacy that continued throughout the early Colonial period. Its possible that like other major narrative traditions, Attic, Maya, and Moche among others, that the scenes represent snap-shots, summary scenes that evoke an entire saga by capturing a single snapshot. But we also know that the vases were intended to be used in feasts during which the stories pictorialized in the codices were presented by court poets before royal dignitaries who customarily seated themselves for these events in the patios of their palaces. The fact that the painters of Mixtec vessels chose to portray scenes that depicted the creator gods and ancestors of those same nobles engaged in comparable forms of activity may have been intended to suggest that, through comparable forms of ritual, their eternal spirits could transcend time and space to mingle with their descendants.



A large pyramid ruin, now overgrown with trees, and an extensive plaza, now planted with maize, once dominated the summit of Yucu Cu above the cave. Thousands of ancient pottery fragments strewn over the ground indicate that the site was a significant political center during the Classic period between A.D. 200-1000, but continued to be used for rituals and boundary markets during the Postclassic between A.D. 1000-1521 as well. (Author's photo)



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ALFREDO ZALCE, *Morelia*, relief print on paper, 1967, Gilcrease TL 2007.5.4