

of stars and of the underworld, where all of these find their origins and endings. Here is the source of all life and of its ~~own~~ cycles of birth death and rebirth a terrifying place of perpetual darkness, but also the birth place of light and heat and the abundance of the earth.

This temple was accessible to only two priests who had to enter it through a kind trap door, ^{or} which forced them to do so on ^{their} hands and knees. Beyond this door and on entering there was either a curtain or another door which when the first had been shut, guaranteed that the temple's interior would remain in complete darkness. Outside in a kind of ~~the~~ columned porch or vestibule, ~~there~~ there was a large brazier in the floor at least ten or twelve feet square in which a perpetual fire burned, tended constantly by these and other ~~priests~~ ^{important} priests.

In keeping with the theme of fire and of origins was the temple of Xuitēcuhlti located ~~on the~~ ^{in the center of the} ~~western~~ western side of this compound with its doorway facing east. The origins of time, of the earth's seasonal cycles, the sanctification of ^{high} office in the state, and of ~~human~~ even of that moment of human conception that set the fate of each individual tonalli. He was an important patron of the ruler and played a crucial role in the coronation ceremonies of each new king. For that reason and because of the significance of the east as the origin of each day's new sun and of that daily cycles association with the span of human life, I chose to place that palace ~~known as the penitential~~ where the king did penance before the great festivals and where he also prepared himself for his own coronation. This resonates with both his human and, ^{his} godlike, new identity as a ruler, and completes the supportive triad of religious and earthly authority expressed anciently in the three hearth stones that supported the cooking pots which gave nourishment and life to ^{it was} mankind.

In all of these things, Coatlan's ~~was associated~~ ^{association} with the ~~powerful~~ transformative power of fire —

to sanction new identities that seems so expressive

When a child was born from the realm of non-being it was fire that baptized him into his new existence. And when a king was initiated into rulership he underwent a symbolic death of all he had been in his former life, and ~~with~~ ^{as} he was ~~the~~ transmuted into this new being of Tlalocani under the careful patronage of Xictecuhtli a deity which would be with and within him ~~on~~ even to that day when again the fire would transform the materiality into the realm of ^{pure} spirit itself.

There are other important structures here, ^{or well} especially that one which links the three ~~we~~ ^{we} have already mentioned. This is the great fire brazier in the center of the compound itself. I call it the brazier of Xictecuhtli since I ~~do not~~ believe it was here that the fire priests gathered for their once a year penitential sacrifice in which they held sticks of ^{burning} pine ~~resin~~ while they dropped ~~their~~ flaming droplets over their naked bodies.

So spectacular was this rite that it was all that was required of these priests each year.

This brazier according to my plan formed part of a triad of these structures, located along the great north-south sacred way within the temenos itself. The other two were located in front of the temples of Tlaloc-Huizilopochtli and of Tezcatlipoca respectively and marked at their extremities the ~~winter~~ ^{perisolar} and summer solstices and of also the equinox at the center.

There is enough ^{persuasive} source evidence to ^{convince} ~~persuade~~ me of the existence of ^{these structures} ~~these~~ at Coatlan and at Coatepec.

But as for that located in front of the temple of Tezcatlipoca, there are indications in descriptions of rites connected with the god Omacatl which strongly suggest its existence as well as a paragraph from one of the Indian chroniclers of the conflict for the possession of this square in which the Spanish are described as mounting a cannon on what they called a stone of sacrifice from which they fired at the warriors who were on the roofs ^{tops} at Coatlan (up the road).

This is also confirmed by Bernal Diaz and Cortez himself who describe a counter attack by the natives who forced the Spaniards back to the Columned gate of the eagles, the Buachquiax and ~~to~~ out of the second square.

Returning to Coatlan, there are quarters ~~there~~ for some of the fine priests of Xiuhtecuhtli although the primary residence for these lies just behind the temple to this god - further west in a ~~section~~ compound of its own which is also part of the fine temple itself. This is Tzomolcoo and forms a kind of transition ^{point} between the fine temple and the large precinct I believe was the Acotlixcoapan ^{place} Calpulli the sacred compound of the merchants, ^{this place} which also under the strong patronage of Xiuhtecuhtli will be discussed later.

At Coatlan's southern side is a long columnaded ~~part which is an~~ area through which a corridor passed giving access from Coatlan to the principal part of the square. This is the Mexico Calmeca the residence for the priests ^{of} Tlaloc. This location here is meant to emphasize ~~that~~ ^{an} aspects of Tlaloc as a war god, ~~and~~ earth god, and as a patron of rulers - all qualities valued by what the Aztecs would consider their ancestors. In other words the origins of this god's meaning before later transformations brought with them a greater emphasis on his qualities as a god of the rains.

In my model if ~~we~~ ^{we} could stand out in the main square looking north to this columnade we would see that there was only this one entrance to Coatlan in the center of its long expanse. This allowed for this southern columnade to function as a viewing gallery for the great festival, ^{among people} in the principal plaza. The doors to the Tlaloc Priests quarters are on the other, northern side allowing for greater privacy of these very important persons, while positioning them properly within this area of primal origins.

Still standing in the same place we could see, however that there are entrances to rooms on each side of this columnaded expanse. To the right we have what has come to be called the Compound of the eagles. Since ^{active} these knights of the sun were depicted in clay effigies found here there can be no doubt that this was a place appropriate to them.

although common sense ~~the~~ would incline us to place this location in the south west nearer to the temple of the sun. So why is it here in the north? I postulate that ~~there are several good reasons for this.~~

First of all, these rooms seem dedicated to acts of penance by the prominence of the Zacatapayolli bench protruding from the rank of benches running around the inside walls. These benches are certainly copies of earlier Toltec prototypes if not actual Toltec antiquities themselves, removed from Tula and reinstalled here in Mexico. Because of its purposeful archaism, the association of this place with ~~ancestral~~ ^{ancestral} ~~ancestors~~ ^{ancestors}, the communion with ancestors seems very likely. Even the eagles ~~there~~ ^{in the} ~~seems~~ ^{knights} somehow spectral with ~~their~~ ^{the} cloud like motifs on the upper edges of their wings and the remains of what appears to be an unpainted coating of white stucco used to model ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~of the~~ ^{the} uniforms. This ~~is~~ ^{is} even more strongly reinforced by the discovery of two life-size Ceramic skeletal figures here. The fleshed out and saddled feet of these seem to indicate living impersonators in skeletal costume.

~~Then~~ ^{must} we bear in mind that ~~an~~ ^{the} eagle knight, ~~by his own~~ ^{himself} was a transformation of a warrior into a new identity and persona, one who by his own oath of dedication to death on the battle field or upon the sacrificial stone had in a very real sense become a dead man. Sacrificial victims upon their deaths also become known as "eagle men", becoming in a final transmutation a companion of the sun, and who by this final act had imitated that original self sacrifice of the postulated god ~~who~~ ^{was} Manahuatzin who had become the sun of the present era.

These rooms located so close to the compound of Coatlán ~~and~~ ^{one} with its associations with the creation of the fifth sun and with the ancestors, ~~and~~ ^{as} a place of new identities sanctified by Xiuhtecuilli and again ^{as} the place of ultimate returning - death

Its location and ~~apparent~~ ^{its} penitential purpose seem appropriate ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ relationship with the kings own penitential quarters ~~next to~~ ^{adjacent to} it.

On the other side of the Colonnade I have placed

Another structure in symmetry with the house of the Eagles. Although there is no archeological evidence for such a place both Stuart and I feel that it would be a very appropriate location for the penitential rooms of that other important caste of warrior knights - the Jaguars.

Symbolically then, both of these places would guard the entrance to Coatlán with the eagles on the eastern side (The spirits of dead warriors were believed to accompany the sun from its morning rising to its Zenith at midday) from there it was accompanied by the Cihuatlites the spirits of Women who had died in their first Child birth to its setting in the west.) That Western ~~side~~^{direction} ~~was~~ in resonance with that point where the sun enters the underworld was ^{very} the realm of the Jaguar ~~and~~ the nahual of Tezcatlipoca and a god of the night, of the earth, and of the underworld.

as lying across ^{of near} ~~them~~ ^{complete} In the digs of 1901 in the Zocalo of Mexico City. Two staircases ~~were found~~ and part of a third were found together at a spot which would have placed them ^{near} the middle of the ancient north south road clearly ^{of} making a terminus ^{there}. In the 1970-80's digs, ~~the~~ ^{we were also} stairs, found adjacent to the ^{region of the} house of the eagles' stairs and of a very similar size and style of the 1901 digs were found in what seems to be a close alignment with them, but until Stuart mentioned this to Eduardo Matos no one had bothered to make the connection. Near the eagle stairs there were found indications of a colonnade running east to west giving us another clue as to a possible structure such as I have built in my model. And then there is the use of these very elements on the northern side of the soiled square at Tula a place greatly venerated by the Aztecs even to the ^{possible appropriation} ~~case~~ of some of its sculptures for their own northern precinct at Tenochtitlan. There are also indications in the Sahaguna descriptions of the great Aztec festivals that Coatlán was an enclosed and exclusive place and as he stated in the festival of Xepelli the impersonator of Ilamatecuhtli wearing a James ^{like} ~~two~~ faced mask backed her way up the stairs and into Coatlán at the termination of the ritual.

There are other important ~~archaeological~~ ~~possibilities~~ clues indicating the identity of this part of the square for in those same 1901 excavations the large sculptures of the ^{two} Xiucoatl and the massive ocelotl Cuauipicalli were found ~~of the~~ to gether with many other artifacts. In the nineteen twenties the larger stone eagle Cuauipicalli was also found here and in the most recent digs a ~~small~~ large sculpture of a death god was ~~found~~ uncovered. All of these are potent affirmations of this place as Coatlán.

It should ^{also} be remembered, that Coatlán was as Durán describes its temple of Cihuatl, the most sacred spot in the whole sacred square, the epicenter and generating animus of the entire state cult.

that it was an exclusive and closed enclave for the high^{est} nobility of ^{the} state upon whose shoulders lay the burden and responsibility for its maintenance. The king was crowned here. The gods of the earth, the mountains and valleys, and of the generative principle of ~~the~~ itself was here and by extension presided over not only by the quintessential goddess of the hearth, Chantico, but by the fire god him self in his ^{high} role as progenitor and custodian of fates, Sanctifier of office and keeper of time. Squatting in eternal vigil near the fire

of this model was its insistence upon a kind of Beauty that is asymmetry not to be found in any other Meso-American site. My primary objection to it though was intimately connected with ~~my~~ my own personal aims as an artist.

~~It was visually misleading.~~

~~I hope it is understood that I have deep respect~~

I hope it is understood that I have deep respect for what Marquina did and of how he did it. Both Stuart and I would have been quite lost without the benefit of his effort but we had come to the point that armed with so many years of study

~~I hope that it is understood that I have the deepest respect for what Marquina did and for the efforts of pioneers like Bates, Alcocer, Gamio~~

~~I hope that it is understood that, I have the deepest respect for what Ignacio Marquina did and for the efforts of pioneers like Bates, Alcocer, Gamio and others. Their work which sparked my interest, to begin with and fired my desire to want to recapture in paint what it felt like to see this astonishing place.~~ ^{both Stuart and I}

~~Stuart and I would be quite lost without that rich legacy, but we are now armed with decades of study and we~~

We would have been quite lost without the rich legacy they left us, but in the mid eighties ~~but~~ we had come to the conclusion that because of certain ~~inconsistencies~~ that it was time for another look, another attempt and we were feeling confident enough in our years of experience with the subject to contemplate the project awesome as it seemed.

Personally I have always been keenly aware that at its best and most informed my view ~~would~~ could be only another speculation ~~and~~ but even at its worst, I felt that I could produce a vision that ~~although~~ in accurate in every detail and still convey an accurate feeling of what it looked like.

possibly
might be

I have always been aware that whatever I might
~~that~~ produce would in reality be ^{but} ~~just~~ another product
of speculation but I did believe that the field was
wide open and ^{that} if I could use my empathetic abilities
as an artist in the service of ~~an~~ ^{a deeply} informed viewpoint that
it would be quite possible to create a vision that would
have a feeling ~~of~~ quite like that of the lost original.

Empathy was vital of course, but useless unless accompanied
by a real knowledge and understanding of the subject.

This is an ongoing and endless process, but there are
those special times when I feel that things are ripe enough
for ~~me~~ an effort in giving substance to what my
mind's eye sees for it, sees ^{often} ~~without effort~~ with wondrous
clarity

