

Notes:

March 18,

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Milson and the
The Temple of Culhuacan at the Eastern Gate

In several early Colonial sources, most notably the famous map of the Templo Mayor accompanying Sahagun's Florentine Codex, the viewer can see a ~~small~~ temple located behind and to the east of the Great Tzocallis of Huizilopochtli and Tlaloc. The depicted structure is generally referred to as the Temple of Culhuacan, although curiously Sahagun does not mention a temple by that name in his famous list of the 78 buildings within the Great Temple precinct. Many scholars believe that the Culhuacan Temple was the original "Coatepec" temple of Huizilopochtli built on the site ^{mentioned in Sahagun's accounts} where the ^{the words of} founding Mexican priests at last saw the Eagle perched upon the nopal cactus ^{the omen of the}. This omen signaled the end of their long migrations and the very spot where the ^{sovereign} heart of their legendary ancestral leader, Coatlicue, had been buried.

In the excavations made by Eduardo Matos and his team behind the Coatepec remains uncovered in the 1978-81 digs, no significant structure possibly corresponding to this Temple of Culhuacan was found. The absence of such a structure might at first appear to reinforce the scholars' belief that the original Culhuacan Temple was simply built over and covered onion layer fashion by the Great Tzocalli itself. Today this earliest phase cannot be archaeologically investigated because it lies below the current water table level.

Jack
Tues at 9:00

Bruce +
Perry

$$22\frac{1}{4} \times 14$$

Scott and I believe that Sahagún's illustrators would not have included such a ^{building} ~~structure~~ ~~behind~~ the great temple of Huizilopochtli and Tlaloc in their highly abbreviated plan had it not been a very important separate structure with a very special religious function. It should be noted that the Archaeological Remains seen today ^{we think they temple lie} ~~lay~~ below the level seen by the Spanish Conquerors and that the period II Staird parapet which Mator uncovered behind the temple of Tlaloc and Huizilopochtli had been built over earlier structures and may itself have been covered by the ~~last~~ ^{part or} renovations made in the ^{ancient} VIIIth phase. Scott and I also believe that the great precinct did not end at this parapet as Mator contends, but may have extended much further to the east. We think too that the phase III structures seen by the Spanish were built upon ^{not just raised over but on that was} ~~the~~ significantly raised ^{part of} ~~the~~ ^{precinct} ~~area~~. Conspicuous to the great temple precinct entering from the public gates on the west ^{on} ~~and~~ the south would ~~also~~ ^{have} noticed that structures ^{around} on the northern gate were also elevated. ^{We think that} The stair rising to buildings on the north and the east effectively belched these gates from public view and showed that they were not public thoroughfares.

It is certain that when we read the early Spanish chronicles dealing with Aztec myths and religious practices we can see that the ~~the~~ ~~Nixcoatl~~ ~~was~~ a very important god who was in many ways pivotal in the creation of the Mexican world view. ^{But} ~~But~~ who was Nixcoatl and

to that there may be nothing in Archaeology and ^{we} ~~can~~ help us to what the Spanish saw.
Nixcoatl was often ~~thought~~ ^{thought} ~~referred to by various names~~ ^{as} ~~as the god of hunting~~
Soberano ^{was}

and what was his importance? I am going to attempt to make this explanation as simple as possible. Almost everyone who has studied the Aztec people ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ familiar with the central myths of their beginnings, ^{long migrations} ~~their beginnings~~ ^{which brought them to the south to the Valley of Mexico} and their eventual rise from ^{the position of} ~~disperged~~ outcasts to rule over the established people of the Anahuac and most of ^{North America} ~~Central Mexico~~. No matter how rich and powerful and cultured they become in their dominion, the Mexican Aztecs never turned their backs on their hunter-gatherer origins. In fact this legendary ~~hunter-gatherer~~ ^{hunter-gatherer} mystique ~~formed~~ ^{formed} the basis of their predatory attitude and inspired their conquests. As they developed their skills at empire building through marriage, diplomacy and trade, the ~~Mexican~~ ^{Mexican} man let the arts of civilization (which they greatly admired) displace this primitive mystique. Their Tribal God, Huitzilopochtli, ~~was~~ ^{was} a god of war ~~who~~ ^{was} originally ^{modeled on} a deity of hunting. Since human sacrifice fed the gods of the Cosmos and insured the fertility of the earth, the Aztec warrior was basically a hunter of sacrificial victims.

Keenness of senses, endurance, resourcefulness, ~~sharp~~ ^{keen} ~~vision~~ ^{vision} and ~~skill~~ ^{skill} with net and bow and arrow and mastery of the fire drill were ^{attributes} ~~qualities~~ admired in both hunters and warriors, and these were the qualities which enabled the Mexican to survive ~~against great odds~~ on their difficult journey south from Aztlan.

to rule the freed state, had the history of his people re-written so that the failed lord of his children's Ancestors, ~~the~~ Aztlon and Chicomotoc became known as Culhuacan or Teoculhuacan (see Bernal "Aztec Kings" p. 4).

The Aztecs believed that history repeated itself in ~~and then~~ cycles or variations of cycles. What goes ^{literally} around, comes around in the Aztec mind. When ~~the~~ ^{we read that} Aztec had the previous history books destroyed and ~~had~~ ^{ordered} Mexican history rewritten we regard ^{legitimate} ^{disparaging} this as a manipulation of fact for propaganda. But I think the Aztec historians might have regarded their previous histories as flawed, ^{pure} ^{needed} ^{needed} reinterpretation and factual adjustment to properly align the story of their past to the mandatory cycles of events that had ~~been~~ ^{been} dictated by the gods. The writing of histories, the telling of myths, the recording of genealogies and the dates of special events by Aztec ~~historians~~ ^{historians} and early Colonial historians ^{have} created ~~such~~ ^{so} many contradictions and variations of facts that ~~some~~ ^{modern} historians ^{often} throw up their hands in frustration and refuse to work with the records.

In their art and architecture, in their explorations and surveying of sacred spaces, in their rituals and ~~political~~ ^{political} conduct the Aztecs sought to create models that ~~reflected~~ ^{some sense} helped them to understand and literally grasp ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~understanding~~ ^{the} of the gods and their own destiny. ^{For} ^{the} relating their histories and the unfolding of events - myth and historical fact became intertwined because the ~~unfolding~~ ^{unfolding} of both is nothing more than the complex unfolding of the will of the gods whose ~~action~~ ^{action} motives are of her contradictory and obscure and ultimately little to do with more.

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In their art and architecture, in their searching out and surveying of sacred spaces, in their rituals and political conduct, the Aztecs sought to create models to help them to better understand and ~~manage~~ participate ⁱⁿ reality as they saw it. In relating their history and the unfolding of events Aztec historians literally created models of time where myth and historical fact became inseparable and complementary. Such models were ~~the~~ a means by which the Mexican mind could hope to comprehend the will of the gods whose motives were ~~often~~ contradictory, obscure and often had little to do with men.

Plt No 359 from 945

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