

JOHN LILLY JR.
1888 CENTURY PARK EAST — SUITE 10
LOS ANGELES, CA 90067

March 27. 1981

Dear Scott and Stuart:

We found the painting right after we last talked, and I've been calling ever since to let you know how much we like it and that it was safe. (I left a message for you with someone at the Gallery). It was in the mail room, perfectly safe,

What a world of possibilities the interior of a temple opens up! The light is very similar to what we see in the small temples that are on the little pyramids in the Sierra Toapuri. Yes, they appear very dark inside when you first enter, and if you do not stay long you could be left with the impression that they are always very dark. I wonder if the spaniards may have been so horrified that they never stayed long enough to let their eyes adapt.

I will look for one of my slides that will show this light, but I think you have it captured, even to the angle and color (it is a very white, though subdued, low angle, almost cold light, which somehow you have been able to recreate). If we can assume that the very light colored (almost white) clay that forms the temple patio has nearly the same color temperature (degrees Kelvin) as the whitewashed surface immediately in front of an Aztec temple (they are at the same altitude) then it is completely accurate.

The amount of blood in the painting is about what we see normally. Granted, the Toapuri do not sacrifice more than four or five bulls and/or deer at a time, but they have a certain sensibility about how much is enough blood. Quantity is not so important as who gets it and how. The blood is usually concentrated more on the idols and religious paraphernalia and less on the walls and altars, which in our case are more junky, more crude, of course.

The black dog is a fascinating concept. The Toapuri tell of the black dog that accompanied the man who escaped the great flood that covered the world, which was of course the end of the fourth sun in the Aztec chronology. The dog is always shown in association with an extremely old goddess "Our Elder Sister the Monster" (possibly Earth Monster) who told the man the flood was coming. She is the oldest of the female deities and is impersonated at ceremonies by someone dancing around wearing a scarey

mask and tapping people on the head with her cane (which is a kind of three-pronged stick, much thicker at the handle end, which grows naturally in this form. Like Mictlancihuatl, she also wears a skirt. I cannot tell if the two are related. The dog survived the flood with the man and eventually turned into a woman who became his wife and helped found the new age.

The skull and crossed bones design is beautiful, as is the Ilhuicapapalotl. We see carved stone serpents in many temples, particularly in the small ones in the bottom of the canyons that are associated with the sacred caves. I love the painted stone box...weren't these called "Calli" also? Colette says the box you were making must be like the ones they used, according to what she has read.

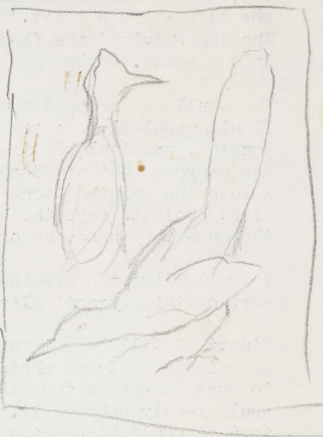
I really like the precious feather fabrics, this is the sort of thing practically no one knows about.

Stuart, I will be returning this painting very soon, just as quickly as I can photograph it. It is already so close to what we see in the Sierra that I wonder if more blood would really enhance it. Do you think there is any possibility that it could become the scene that is seen through a temple doorway? This may be a ridiculous idea, but I will risk trying it out to see what you think. Maybe a much larger drawing of part of a temple could be painted around what we see here, so that the viewer understands the relationship between these objects and the building? Or possibly is there any way to show some of the interior structure of the temple, with this altar at the far end, as if you were standing near the door and someone was holding the curtain aside to let in light? Anyway, this view is already so spectacular that maybe it should stand as is.

Yesterday I photographed the entire Borbonicus and it should be ready today, in which case I will enclose it with this letter. Unfortunately, the Special Collections division at UCLA is very strict with their rare collections and will allow me to photograph only under fluorescent light, so you may not get the color quality you need on my first try. This codex is controversial, of course, many people claim that the certain impurity of style indicates that it is a copy of the original, made under the direction of the spaniards immediately after the conquest. I have also photographed some explanations of it, which you should be able to read by projecting on your carousel with a sharp lens. The guardians at Special Collections will not allow these to be Xeroxed, so I am reproducing them on slides for you. The last two pages of explanation or on another roll which I will send later. The explanation includes diagrams of the codex pages to facilitate your researches. Let me know if this is what you wanted, and if not I will try again. Thank you again for another view of the ancient world. We feel privileged to be allowed to see it.

Regards to you both,

John



Amelanchier

Red century plant

