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TWO POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS

Where Latin America is concerned, there seems to be a tendency to publicize negative developments and, conversely, to ignore or to play down the importance of anything of a positive and encouraging nature that takes place in the countries of that region.

As examples of affirmative action, suffice it to mention two recent events in the field of inter-American relations, within which problems that had kept alive areas of friction and conflicts of interest between the United States and Latin America have been surmounted in a constructive and exemplary fashion. The cases in point are the nationalization of the petroleum industry in Venezuela and the agreement between the Government of Panama and a powerful transnational enterprise, the United Brands Company.

In the first instance, President Carlos Andrés Pérez of Venezuela applied a formula that, without harming the economic interests of the foreign enterprises engaged in exploiting a rich natural resource, assures that the paramount national interest will prevail.

In the second case, the Government of Panama gained joint participation in the means of production and the benefits derived from the country's banana industry, without recourse to an act of expropriation that would have been detrimental to orderly growth in exports of that product.

Referring to the happy outcome of those events, OAS Secretary General Alejandro Orfila has quite properly pointed out that they can establish a precedent in future Hemisphere relations.

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Front cover: Raising a liberty pole, symbol of early U.S. independence movement. Detail of engraving by John C. McRae, after a painting by F.A. Charman. (See supplement following page 16.) U.S. Library of Congress photo. **Inside front cover:** *The Changing West*, detail, by Thomas Hart Benton, 1930, shows U.S. landscape changed by man and machine. Collection of New School for Social Research, New York City. **Inside back cover:** Apollo 11 rises from launch tower carrying first men to land on the Moon, 1969. U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration. **Back cover:** Nineteenth century carved wooden eagle, by William Beal. Plain or gilded eagles, symbols of national identity, were popular decorations for homes and public buildings. Photo by U.S. National Gallery of Art (Index of American Design), Smithsonian Institution



Teotihuacán clay incense burner, *ca.* 9 inches tall, collection of E. Salazar. One of first Teotihuacán artifacts found at Escuintla, Guatemala, it indicated a possible focus of Central Mexican influence on the Maya

Diplomacy and Conquest IN PRE-COLUMBIAN MESOAMERICA

NICHOLAS M. HELLMUTH

IN 1936 ARCHAEOLOGISTS uncovered evidence of an outpost of pre-Columbian Mexicans at Kaminaljuyú, within the limits of Guatemala City. Carnegie Institution of Washington scientists meticulously excavated two mounds on the grounds of the Roosevelt Hospital that revealed a series of terraced adobe platforms in the *tablero-talud* architectural style of Teotihuacán, in central Mexico a few miles from Mexico City. The mounds are right next to what is now the cloverleaf intersection of the Pan American Highway to Mexico. Travelers from Mexico today arrive in Guatemala City along essentially the same approach as visiting Teotihuacanos in the fifth to seventh centuries A.D.

During that period Teotihuacán was one of the largest cities in the world, with a population variously estimated at between seventy thousand and two hundred thousand people. The immense Pyramid of the Sun and the sizable Pyramid of the Moon,

connected by the grand Street of the Dead, are still notable landmarks. The builders of that imperial city were the Teotihuacanos, predecessors of the Toltec of A.D. 1000 and of the later Aztec of the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries.

Teotihuacán merchants ranged as far south as Costa Rica in search of blue jade, a rare color of that precious mineral found only in the far south. Green jade was encountered in highland Guatemala and in their native Mexico, but blue had been a treasured variety since the much earlier Olmec times. The Teotihuacanos were an able mercantile people; they controlled the sources of obsidian, or volcanic glass—a vital item for cutting tools in a premetallic technology. They mined a particular kind, green in color, which is found only in the vicinity of Pachuca, in the State of Hidalgo, Mexico. The presence of Teotihuacanos in Kaminaljuyú, Guatemala, results from their interest in controlling the remaining sources of obsidian, the



Above: Teotihuacán style cylinder tripod from Escuintla region of Guatemala. Geometric motif at left is known as a Teotihuacán yearsign; reptile eye glyph, reverse side, is a Teotihuacán symbol

Right: Vase from Guatemala shows head of Teotihuacán warrior over a half shield preceded by a raptorial bird, all symbols of the military might of Teotihuacán



El Chayal deposits about twelve miles northeast of Guatemala City.

Archaeologists Alfred Kidder, Jesse Jennings, and Edwin Shook found in Guatemala evidence not only of Teotihuacán *tablero-talud* architecture, with its characteristic vertical and sloping panels, but also pottery in the distinctive, three-footed cylindrical style of central Mexico. Just as the geometric *tablero-talud* façade is found only in association with Teotihuacán culture, so also the ceramic artifacts of these remarkable people are totally different from anything else used by other pre-Columbian peoples. This distinctiveness makes it easy to recognize Teotihuacán presence in southern Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Costa Rica.

The discoveries at Kaminaljuyú were repeated subsequently when a Guatemalan digger uncovered *tablero-talud* style architecture in the Palangana sector of Kaminaljuyú. Although these excavations were not scientifically recorded at the time, recently Charles Cheek studied the remains still visible. His forthcoming publications should reveal considerable information on Teotihuacán presence in highland Guatemala as expressed by the unique Teotihuacán architectural façade.

Recently, graduate students of Pennsylvania State University report finding *tablero-talud* Teotihuacán related architecture at small sites in the Valley of Guatemala, suggesting that much of highland Guatemala, not only Kaminaljuyú, was dominated by Central Mexican culture during the fifth to seventh centuries. Anthropological linguist Lawrence Feldman, of the University of Missouri, indicates that

much of highland Guatemala was occupied by foreign (Mexican) language speakers until the Maya expanded into this region several centuries later. Taking all the evidence together, archaeologists today have accepted the fact that either traders, soldiers, missionaries, or diplomats from Central Mexico conquered and then controlled highland Guatemala.

Knowledge about the scope of Teotihuacán influence on the rest of Guatemala did not come until the 1960's. Then, archaeologists of the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania were surprised to find at the Maya ruins of Tikal considerable artifactual evidence of Teotihuacán presence in the heart of the El Petén lowland rain forest. Two monumental carved stone stelae were found with portraits of the principal deity of the ancient Teotihuacanos, often called Tlaloc, god of rain and resultant fertility. Curiously, the water and fertility aspects of this deity were not stressed; instead this ring-eyed deity was clearly shown in the guise of a feared war god. This martial aspect of Teotihuacán infiltration of the Maya lowlands is underscored by Ian Graham's discovery of several Teotihuacán warriors sculpted on stelae from the little-known site of Tres Islas.

Working with the Peabody Museum, Harvard University, Graham also found Teotihuacán symbols on a monument from the Maya ruins of El Zapote. He subsequently recorded a Teotihuacán sculpture at the remote ruins of Yaxha, on the shores of picturesque Lake Yaxha. These extensive Maya ruins form the third largest pre-Columbian site yet found in the Republic of Guatemala. Graham photographed and prepared a drawing of enigmatic Yaxha Stela 11, a

fifth to seventh century stone monument that portrayed a fierce visage of the ring-eyed god of the Teotihuacanos. Iconographic analysis by Esther Pasztory, of the Department of Art and Archaeology of Columbia University, has suggested that the absence of water or fertility symbolism and the blatant portrayal of a shield and spear in warlike pose indicate that this is not the traditional Tlaloc but the Teotihuacán War God. Some archaeologists have jokingly christened this the Teotihuacán god of foreign relations.

Edwin Shook unearthed at Tikal a wide variety of ornately painted pottery vessels adorned with scenes of Teotihuacán gods, including Tlaloc, here correctly in the guise of Rain God. Lots of cylinder tripods, the traditional Teotihuacán shape of pottery, were found in tombs of the rulers of fifth to seventh century Tikal. In 1970 the Department of History of Art of Yale University initiated a long-range, multidisciplinary project to study the iconography of the art of Tikal. Among the topics was "Teotihuacán Influence on the Maya Art of Tikal."

To understand the nature and degree of Teotihuacán influence on Tikal, it was necessary to begin with the

broader question of Teotihuacán expansion southward. Tikal did not exist in isolation. Several scholars had hypothesized that Tikal was visited by Mexicans not directly from the Central Mexican capital but from the provincial outpost of highland Kaminaljuyú. Since Kaminaljuyú was only about three hundred miles from Tikal, this was the most logical source of foreign influence.

This program—to take five years—began in May 1970. Within twelve months we were surprised to discover a totally unsuspected center of Teotihuacán culture in Guatemala, not in the highlands as expected and not in the El Petén lowlands either. The capital of Teotihuacán occupation of Guatemala turned out to be

Stela 11, ca. AD 450-600, from Maya site of Yaxha, Guatemala, depicts goggle-eyed war god of provincial Teotihuacán outposts



Maya style lidded cylinder tripod from El Petén lowlands of Guatemala shows similarities to Escuintla cylinder tripods, which in turn reflect Central Mexican influence



Clay incense burner found at Escuintla shows Teotihuacán personage wearing round chest plaque with reptile eye glyph



on the fertile coastal plain of Escuintla, bordering the Pacific Ocean. Especially in the vicinity of the towns of Tiquisate, La Gomera, Nueva Concepción, and Finca San Antonio Río Seco were mounds that have produced a total of more than a thousand complete ceramic artifacts in a provincial Teotihuacán style. This quantity is the largest batch of Teotihuacán-related pottery ever found in pre-Columbian sites outside of the Central Mexican heartland of the valley of Teotihuacán. The quantity is impressive evidence for the sustained contact between coastal Escuintla and the Teotihuacán homeland. J. Eric S. Thompson had noted Teotihuacán artifacts in this region in the 1940's, but the true indications of the pre-Columbian

density of foreign occupation were not revealed until about a year ago.

The trail of discovery of this Escuintla outpost began in 1970 when photographer Joya Hairs mentioned that the private collection of Enrique Salazar L. contained three excellent representations of provincial Teotihuacán art. Through the assistance of Guillermo Mata A., I obtained permission from Salazar to photograph his collection. The objects, incense burners, turned out to be a regional Teotihuacán style quite obviously derived from Central Mexico. Nothing like them had ever been reported from Guatemala. Salazar indicated that the incense burners, and two slab-foot Teotihuacanoid cylinder tripods

also in his possession, all came from the Escuintla plain.

Soon the trail of discovery led to the artifact research laboratory of Edwin Shook. Shook, one of the original discoverers of Teotihuacán architecture and pottery at Kaminaljuyú, was also the Director of the Tikal Project when initial evidence of Teotihuacán presence was located there. While reconnoitering the Pacific coastal plain, Shook had received information about the small ruins of Finca San Antonio Río Seco. Visiting the site, he found on top of a mound an impressive ceremonial cache of Teotihuacán-related objects, including hourglass-shaped incense burner bases—a shape diagnostic of Teotihuacán influence. Scattered around the surface of the mound he found several hundred fragments of Teotihuacán incense burner lids, smashed when a tractor-drawn plough ran over them.

One discovery quickly led to another, and within a year the results were fairly clear—and startling. A veritable treasure of information had been found, the kind of situation that enriches man's knowledge of the prehistory of the ancient Americas. Now the events of

fifth to seventh century imperial Teotihuacán expansion can be documented for the first time.

We suspect that Teotihuacán interest in the Escuintla coast involved control of the harvest of cacao beans. These beans served as currency and were even counterfeited in later Aztec times. The cacao tree, literally a money tree, grows only in fertile, moist, tropical locations, especially along rivers. Often volcanic ash enriched the soils where the Guatemalan highlands drop down to the Escuintla plain, an area that was, in aboriginal times, renowned for its productivity. From a strong base in Escuintla the foreigners moved north, first to form an outpost at Kaminaljuyú, then further northward to Verapaz. From here the traders of green obsidian, missionaries of Tlaloc, diplomats of the great capital of Teotihuacán and its foreign settlements, and accompanying military personnel passed to the El Petén region lowland Maya sites of Tres Islas, Tikal, Yaxha, and Uaxactun. Although Teotihuacán never directly conquered the Petén Maya, it left significant impact on Maya culture until Teotihuacán itself was destroyed by unknown peoples early in the eighth century.



Two views of rare Escuintla incense burner with fully modeled bird and clay seashell adornments, an example of sophisticated Teotihuacán-influenced art from sixth century Guatemala

During its influence throughout Guatemala, three distinct forms of Teotihuacán domination may be documented:

■ Conquest, complete political and social domination, and partial colonization, with the actual presence of Teotihuacán administrative personnel and some families—indicated by the presence of the full range of ritual and domestic Teotihuacán artifacts seen on the Escuintla coastal plain of Guatemala.

■ Political, economic, and social control, probably by military means, but very little colonization, with limited presence of Teotihuacán administrative personnel, and but few families—suggested by ceremonial architecture and ritual (but significantly, not domestic) Teotihuacán-related artifacts. Seen at Kaminaljuyú and the adjacent highlands of Guatemala, particularly around Lake Amatitlán.

■ Diplomatic and cultural influence, with no conquest, no total political domination, and no colonization, with limited presence of Teotihuacán administrative personnel from Central Mexico; Teotihuacán matters handled largely through the intermediary of partially Mexicanized people from Kaminaljuyú. This is suggested by the presence of only provincial Teotihuacán art motifs (as opposed to pure Central Mexican motifs found in Escuintla and Kaminaljuyú), and the noticeably limited range of Teotihuacán ceramic artifacts, limited mostly to a few things used on ceremonial occasions. Seen at Tikal, Uaxactún, Yaxha, Tres Islas, and Copán.

This schema forms a rough continuum. It makes sense to visualize Kaminaljuyú in subjugation from a nearby Escuintla outpost, rather than from Central Mexico, a thousand miles away by foot trail. Furthermore, the emissaries, traders, missionaries, and warriors of Mexican cultural affiliation who brought aspects of Teotihuacán culture to Tikal were not coming directly from Teotihuacán itself. This historical situation is repeatedly documented by the fact that all “Teotihuacán” paintings and sculpture at Tikal are distinctive in character and include many local, Guatemalan Maya traits, demonstrating that their execution was by local Guatemalan artists somewhat unfamiliar with the full set of correct Teotihuacán art conventions.

Such diffusion of influence between distant regions was certainly not a one-way movement. The Maya must have had an embassy at Teotihuacán in faraway Central Mexico. Numerous Guatemalan traits can be detected in the ceramic and mural art at Teotihuacán. Jacinto Quirarte, Dean of the University of Texas at San Antonio, has recently published an analysis of an Izapán-derived Maya deity frequently present in the art of Central Mexico. We can visualize a developing increase in interregional state relations.

Each great culture enriched the other. Trade between Mexico and Guatemala flourished. The Teotihuacanos introduced into Guatemala the formidable atlatl, or spear thrower, and the rectangular tasseled war shield favored by Teotihuacán warriors. The Maya in return bartered quetzal feathers, black

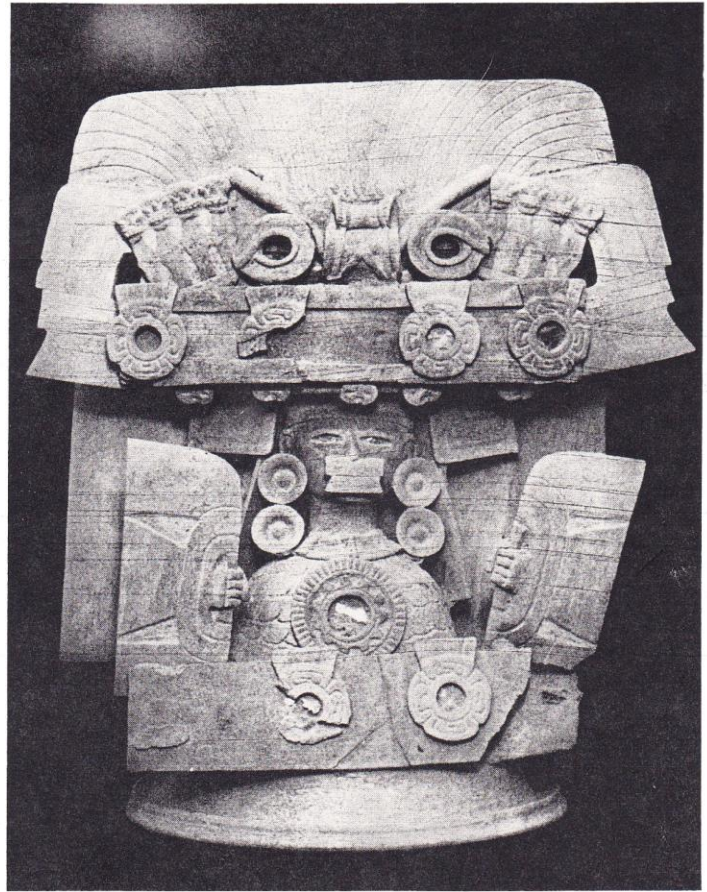
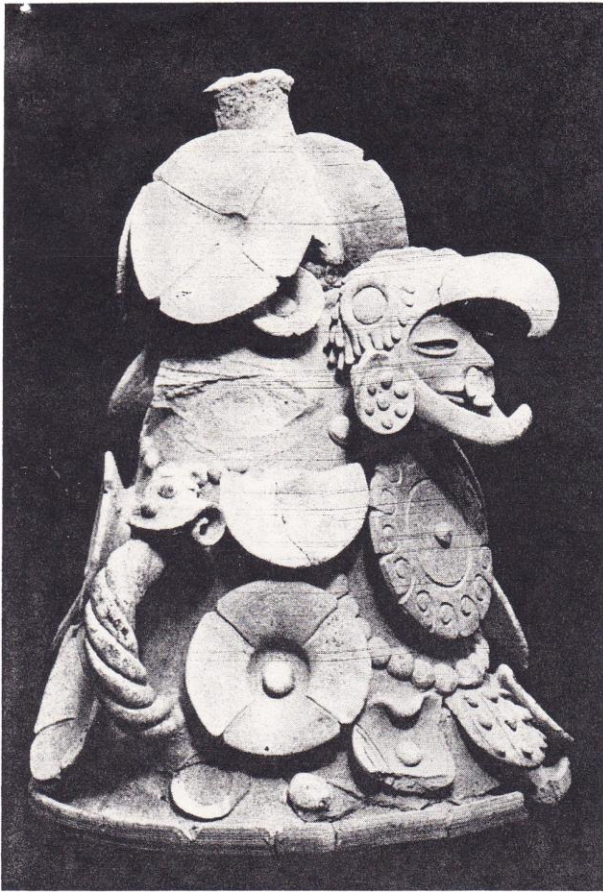


Remarkable hollow clay figurine from Escuintla, ca. 8 inches tall, *above*, and interior view of figurine, *right*, showing smaller figurines in pure Teotihuacán style

obsidian, cacao, and probably jaguar pelts to the Mexicans. The Maya probably taught the Teotihuacanos their system of bar-and-dot numerals and basic arithmetic, since this Maya form of mathematical calculation has been found recorded at Teotihuacán. Simple accounting would have been essential for a mercantile power such as Teotihuacán. Curiously though, the Teotihuacanos never became fully literate. They never borrowed or developed on their own more than a rudimentary hieroglyphic system. Nonetheless, Teotihuacán presence was felt as far south as Costa Rica and even into Campeche (at Becán) and in Yucatán (at Yaxhuna). Copán, in Honduras, was another Maya site with cultural contact with Teotihuacán.

This era of prosperity and cultural exchange came to a sudden end when Teotihuacán was burned and sacked by unknown forces sometime around A.D. 700-750. The city-state of Xochicalco, near modern Cuerna-





Elaborately sculpted clay incense burners from Guatemala, covered with Teotihuacán symbolism

vaca, Mexico, took over Central Mexican hegemony for a century or so prior to the rise of Toltec power. More than a hundred years after Teotihuacán fell, a catastrophe struck the Maya heartland. Unsettled times began approximately A.D. 850, and within a generation most of the once proud Maya cities of the Petén rain forest were abandoned by a stricken populace. The rampant green vegetation overran the ruins, hiding them until nineteenth century explorers broke into the remote sanctuaries to reveal their ancient splendors to the modern world.

Professional archaeological research coupled with art historical analysis of ceramic painting and stone sculpture continues to enrich the knowledge of ancient Mesoamerica. Information about the pre-Columbian development of interstate relations serves to illuminate the varied ways of man in Latin America. Diplomatic contact between the two great pre-Columbian civilizations is to be expected. Present-day boundaries did not exist for these fifth to seventh century peoples. Teotihuacán expansion southward to secure access to products and markets was a natural evolution for the then largest city in Mesoamerica.

Teotihuacán domination of the fertile Escuintla plain, then movement into Kaminaljuyú, are well documented historical events. The mighty Maya of El Petén had necessarily to come to terms with the expanding sphere of influence of Teotihuacán. In some fashion diplomacy created a peaceful interchange among Tikal, Yaxha, Uaxactún, and distant outposts of Teotihuacán power.

Although Teotihuacán certainly utilized its superior military power to advantage, no evidence of large-scale war is noted in the archaeological record. The Classic Maya absorbed Teotihuacán cultural influences, and then, upon the demise of the distant Central Mexican capital, went on to achieve further greatness in pre-Columbian Guatemalan art, architecture, astronomy, and mathematics. ■

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