

The Archaeology of Tezcatlipoca

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From the seminal nineteenth century works of Eduard Seler (1990-98) through the present day, scholars have emphasized the works of the chroniclers (primarily Sahagún and Durán) as primary sources on Aztec gods, myths, and ceremonies, coupled with ample use of the ritual or divinatory codices to illustrate religious themes and activities. This body of scholarship can be considered the standard or dominant approach to Aztec religion. Although intellectual perspectives and paradigms have changed through the decades, scholars return again and again to this same small set of primary sources. As a result, ethnohistorians and art historians now pose questions far more sophisticated and detailed than their predecessors of a few decades ago. Fortunately the primary material is quite rich, and we are far from exhausting its potential to add to our understanding of Aztec religion.

The continuing reliance on a small number of sources by scholars working in the dominant scholarly approach to Aztec religion comes at a cost, however. Although our understanding of the details of Aztec iconography and symbolism has advanced greatly, we still know very little about many important topics that—for whatever reason—are not featured in the works of the chroniclers or the codices. Unless scholars can begin to incorporate other kinds of information, research on Aztec religion will become so detailed, involuted, and esoteric that it could cease to contribute to the wider task of illuminating the Prehispanic past. Fortunately there is a nascent trend suggesting that scholars are beginning to move beyond the confines of the chroniclers and codices to produce important new insights in the Aztec religious beliefs and practices. The chapters in this book are part of that trend.

It is no accident that the new scholarly trend focuses on the deity Tezcatlipoca. Not only is the smoking mirror one of the most important of the Aztec deities, but he is the god whose scholarship has clearly surpassed that of his brethren in quantity and quality. Although a number of significant studies of Tezcatlipoca have appeared in recent years (e.g., Carrasco 1991; Heyden 1989; Matos Moctezuma 1997; Olivier 2002; Saunders 1990; Valencia Rivera 2006), the majority of the credit for advancing scholarship on this deity must go to Guilhem Olivier. His detailed examination of Tezcatlipoca is an important breakthrough in many ways (Olivier 1997); subsequent citations to this work will be to the English translation (Olivier 2003). Strange as it may seem, Olivier's book is the first comprehensive book-length treatment of an Aztec deity.¹

Among the significant accomplishments of Olivier's book are its systematic comparisons among sources (for example, tables of attributes of the deity images of Tezcatlipoca in the codices), the breadth of written sources consulted, the judicious analyses and evaluations of data and interpretations, and a serious regard for the material manifestations of the Tezcatlipoca cult. He treats cult objects not just as objects that may contain iconographic texts, but as importance sources of material and contextual data in their own right. Although his approach to such objects is not as systematic or comprehensive as an archaeologist might hope, Olivier does demonstrate the very real advances in scholarship that can come when new kinds of data—beyond the chroniclers and codices—are brought to bear systematically on a topic in Aztec religion.

THE CHAPTERS IN THIS BOOK

The chapters in this book build on the foundation of Olivier's book, and they illustrate diverse ways to expanding the traditional emphases on the standard sources. Guilhem Olivier's own chapter expands the perspective to incorporate another major deity, Quetzalcoatl. Careful comparative analysis is always a productive way to increase understanding of a phenomenon, understanding, and the juxtaposition of these two deities increases our understanding of both. Susan Milbrath also applies a comparative framework in her comparison between Tezcatlipoca and the Maya deity Kawil. Her analyses encompass a much broader range of symbols and associations, which is both a strength and a weakness. On the positive side her study provides wider contextualization of the deities and their symbolism than the other chapters, but on the negative side this broadening of the perspective makes specific comparisons more difficult to evaluate.

Juan José Batalla Rosado works within the framework of the standard sources—codices—but his work departs from past studies by its minute attention to detail in a highly systematic framework. He has shown the value of this approach in a variety of publications (Batalla Rosado 1997, 2002a, b, 2007), and that tradition continues in the present paper. The systematic comparisons and analyses carried out by Olivier (2003) and Batalla (this volume) represent a valuable method for continuing to derive insights from the standard sources.

Three chapters move far beyond the standard documentary sources on Tezcatlipoca. Emily Umberger focuses on large stone public monuments, many of which have some sort of Tezcatlipoca imagery. She shows that these depictions relate less to the Tezcatlipoca cult than to political rhetoric and propaganda that employed Tezcatlipoca as an icon of imperial power. The simple presence of images or attributes of this deity cannot therefore be assumed to relate to religion or ritual per se. This insight comes only by analyzing these monuments in their spatial and visual contexts. Cecelia Klein moves so far beyond the standard sources that her chapter is not really about the Aztec period at all, but rather concerns the relevance of Tezcatlipoca for Christian representations in the Colonial Period.

Colin McEwan, Rebecca Stacey and Caroline Cartwright focus on a single object—the remarkable mosaic skull in the British Museum that is commonly identified as Tezcatlipoca. Although they point out that this identification is not as secure as we might like, it does seem to be supported by the balance of the evidence. Their study makes excellent use of comparative evidence to interpret this object, and it is an important contribution to our understanding of Tezcatlipoca.

THE MATERIAL CULTURE OF AZTEC RELIGION

One of the limitations of the standard approach to Aztec religion as outlined above is the seeming avoidance of archaeological evidence—objects and their context—by most scholars. The big exception, of course, centers on research at the Templo Mayor of Tenochtitlan since 1978 (Boone 1987; López Luján 1993; Matos Moctezuma 1982, 1995). This project has contributed immensely to our understanding of many aspects of Mexica ritual and religion, and the resulting archaeological data have been embraced and used extensively by non-archaeologists (e.g., Aveni et al. 1988; Broda 1987; Carrasco 1987; Graulich 2001; Umberger 1987). Unfortunately for the purposes of this volume, Tezcatlipoca is poorly represented in the offerings and other finds of the Templo Mayor project. A few images of the deity are found on

objects (see discussion below), and some of the excavated cult items could well derive from rituals dedicated to Tezcatlipoca. But overall, research at the Templo Mayor has taught us little about this important deity.²

In this chapter I examine several archaeological aspects of the Tezcatlilpoca cult. I focus on obsidian mirrors, ceramic flutes, and momoztli altars, and on the archaeological evidence for the antiquity and extent of Tezcatlipoca and his cult. My treatment of the archaeology of Tezcatlipoca must be seen as preliminary because I run up against some basic problems that plague the analysis of Aztec material culture. In considering the lack of archaeological input to research in the dominant tradition of Aztec religious studies (beyond the Templo Mayor project), one is initially tempted to argue that ethnohistorians, art historians, and religious studies scholars simply need to take sites and artifacts into greater account in their analysis. But even a cursory glance at the archaeological literature reveals that few of the relevant objects and sites are analyzed or published in a format that can be used by other scholars. It is simply not reasonable to expect the contributors to this volume, or other scholars of Aztec religion, to root around in the dusty storage collections of museums or to find all of the relevant archaeological reports—typically published in obscure places, if published at all—to see whether obsidian mirrors or flutes have been excavated at Aztec sites. Archaeologists, art historians, and museum curators have not done our jobs to compile and analyze information on Aztec material culture, and this hinders our understanding of Aztec religion.

This chapter is an exploratory essay to see what kind of insights might be gained from a more systematic consideration of the materiality and context of the elements of Tezcatlipoca's cult. Although my coverage of obsidian mirrors, ceramic flutes, and altars is far from complete, it is still possible to advance our understanding of some aspects of Aztec ritual practice simply by looking at a wide range of items instead of focusing solely upon the best-known and finest examples. In some ways this chapter can be considered an extension of Olivier's monograph on Tezcatlipoca. I provide a few more examples than he considers, and I take a closer look at some of the material objects of the Tezcatlipoca cult.

The most problems that limit the contribution of material culture to research on Aztec religion are: (1) an art historical focus on a few of the finest objects in place of study of a wider range of less fine examples; (2) a lack of information on the holdings of museums; and (3) a lack of publication of key archaeological projects and collections.

Problem 1, the Art Historical Focus on Only a Few of the Finest Objects

Most art historians and museum curators focus their analysis on a small number of the finest objects, ignoring the range of variation within categories of material culture. For example, there are probably thousands of Aztec stone sculptures in museums in Mexico, the U.S., and Europe, yet only a small subset of these are included over and over in museum exhibits and catalogs (e.g., Eggebrecht 1987; Matos Moctezuma and Solís Olguín 2002; Solís Olguín 2004; Solís Olguín and Leyenaar 2002). From such works one cannot get any kind of idea of the variation that exists within Aztec sculptures; for this one needs complete catalogs and documentation of individual museum collections. Unfortunately there are only a few examples of this. Felipe Solís Olguín cataloged sculptures in the museum at Santa Cecilia Acatitlan (Solís Olguín 1976) and he also published a catalog of sculptures from Castillo de Teayo (Solís Olguín 1981). The recent catalog of sculptures in the new Musée du quai Branly in Paris (López Luján and Fauvet-Berthelot 2005) is another very useful work in this tradition. From this work we can begin to suggest that most sculptures of deities housed in temples throughout Postclassic central

Mexico were cruder and far more variable than the finely made examples that we see in all the books.

Another example of this phenomenon is the Tlaloc jar. The small number of fine Tlaloc jars excavated at the Templo Mayor are reproduced and analyzed endlessly in books and articles, and one might easily think that these were typical of Aztec ceramic vessels depicting this deity. Far more common in the storerooms of museums, however, is a very different type of vessel with crude Tlaloc features. Examples have been excavated at Nahualac and Tenenepango (Charnay 1888; Lorenzo 1957), Cerro Tlaloc (Wicke and Horcasitas 1957), Calixtlahuaca (Smith et al. 2003a), and other sites. Leonardo López Luján (2006:v.1, 140-143, v.2, 454-455) has published illustrations and discussions of the variety of Tlaloc vessels used throughout Mesoamerica, including both the fancy and the crude Aztec forms. Prior to the publication of that work, however, one would never know that the crude vases are the most typical form of Aztec Tlaloc effigy, however, because of the two other problems identified above: lack of information on museum collections, and lack of publication.

Problem 2, the Hidden Treasure of Museum Collections

Fine Aztec objects were among the first Mesoamerican items brought from Mexico to Europe after the Spanish conquest, and Aztec objects remained popular with museums in Europe and the U.S. during the heyday of artifact collecting in the nineteenth century (Boone 1993). Needless to say, Mexican museums have many more examples in their storerooms. With a few exceptions, however (Baer 1996; Baer and Bankmann 1990; Carrandi et al. 1990; Solís Olguín 1976; Solís Olguín and Morales Gómez 1991), museum holdings remain largely undocumented. A few years ago I contacted curators at a number of museums, looking for possible collections from Calixtlahuaca. Some were able to supply information, but most replied that they simply didn't know what they might have, and that they had no convenient way to find out (given current staffing and budgets).

I have discussed the problem of undocumented museum collections in another work (Smith 2004). In that paper my focus was on the importance of whole objects (in museums) for interpreting the fragments excavated by archaeologists. Here I am emphasizing the related issue of understanding the range of variation within key categories of objects. One possible consequence of the lack of knowledge of museum collections is the absence of a systematic catalog (or corpus) of any category of Aztec object. In Classical and Mediterranean archaeology, many categories of material objects—from Greek vases to Persian stamps to Byzantine coins—have a published corpus. Such works make many dispersed objects known and they provide a standardized reference for scholars in many disciplines.

Problem 3, the Lack of Publication

The lack of publication—of both museum collections and excavations—is another obstacle to using material objects in the analysis of Aztec religion. Complete publication of key collections can open up new interpretive windows and advance our understanding of Aztec religion and society. One example is the so-called volador offering, a collection of many hundreds of ceramic vessels and other objects excavated in downtown Mexico city in the 1930s. Solís Olguín and Morales (1991) published all of the volador objects in the Museo Nacional (unfortunately they did not include numerous other objects from the volador that had been exchanged with other museums around the world). By examining the composition of the offering in terms of vessel forms, my colleagues and I were able to offer a new social interpretation of the

deposit (Smith et al. 2003b) that would have been impossible without a systemic accounting of the several hundred objects. The situation with respect to many key Aztec sites is even worse. For example, there is simply no documentation at all of the early excavations at Teopanzolco and Santa Cecilia Acatitlan, and many other sites remain poorly published (see discussion in Smith 2008). We need far more richly illustrated systematic works like López Luján (2006) if we are to begin to understand the forms and variation in Aztec material culture.

THE MATERIALITY OF THE TEZCATLIPOCA CULT

Olivier (2003) discusses the various items associated with the cult of Tezcatlipoca. These include sculptures of the deity, obsidian mirrors, precious stones, human femurs, staffs, shields, arrows, flutes, momoztli altars, and a variety of specific items and attributes of jewelry, costume, and body paint. Of these I single out obsidian mirrors, ceramic flutes, and momoztli altars for discussion, based upon two criteria: (1) they seem to have strong associations with the deity (based upon the codices and writings of the chroniclers); and (2) they are relatively well represented either in archaeological excavations or else in museum collections of Aztec material. These objects illustrate both the limitations discussed in the previous section and the potential to transcend those limitations with systematic and comprehensive analysis.

Obsidian Mirrors

The obsidian mirror might be considered the most important object in the Tezcatlipoca cult. This judgment is based upon several factors, including the most commonly accepted etymology of Tezcatlipoca, which means “smoking mirror” (Olivier 2003:14-15), the distinctive attribute of a black smoking mirror that replaces Tezcatlipoca’s foot in numerous codex images, and the abundance of additional black mirrors as costume elements of the deity in the codices (they appear as pendants, back devices, and headdress elements). The association between mirrors and Tezcatlipoca is not an exclusive one, however; the divinatory codices contain images of mirrors associated with Huitzilopochtli and other deities. Nevertheless, their depiction with Tezcatlipoca predominates, and it seems safe to say the most or all circular obsidian mirrors suggest the presence of the cult of Tezcatlipoca.

To my knowledge, no obsidian mirror has ever been excavated in a documented and approved professional archaeological excavation. There are numerous examples in museums, however, and these form the basis for the following discussion. Figure 1 shows the two typical forms of Aztec obsidian mirror, circular and rectangular. These objects, now curated in museums in the care of the Instituto Mexiquense de Cultura, do not have secure proveniences. They were both part of the collection of the Museo Regional de Toluca when it was cataloged and moved to new quarters in the 1970s (Castillo Tejero 1991). That collection originated with José García Payón’s (1936) material from Calixtlahuaca, to which various donations and purchases were added over the years. Poor record keeping by García Payón (who directed the museum initially) and subsequent museum directors often prevents a secure separation of the Calixtlahuaca material from the later additions (Smith et al. 2003a). García Payón, however, typically mentions important and distinctive finds in his un-illustrated narrative of the excavation and finds (García Payón 1979), yet he fails to include any discussion of obsidian mirrors. This suggests that these objects were not from his fieldwork, but were donations or purchases sometime between the 1930s and the 1970s.

A number of authors have suggested that rectangular obsidian mirrors were probably innovations of the Spanish colonial period in central Mexico (Meslay 2001; Saunders 1997), although they fail to provide much evidence in support of this idea. The lack of rectangular mirrors from known excavations cannot be used in favor of a colonial dating, since none of the (almost certainly Prehispanic) circular mirrors have secure provenience either. But I will not consider the rectangular variety further here, for two reasons: (1) there seems to be a good possibility that these are not Prehispanic in origin; and (2) Nicholas Saunders has undertaken a study of the rectangular mirrors (personal communication, June, 2007, see also Saunders 1997), which one hopes will be available shortly.

There is abundant evidence in the codices that mirrors in Aztec central Mexico—both those associated with Tezcatlipoca and other mirrors—were black and circular in form. Figure 2 shows a variety of examples of mirrors in the codices; all are circular and most are black. The most common image is Tezcatlipoca's foot (fig. 2A). A mirror is part of the toponym of Tezcatepec in both the *Codex Mendoza* (Berdan and Anawalt 1992:f.27r) and the *Codex Azcatitlan* (Barlow and Graulich 1995:7); it also occurs in the personal name of Atezcatl (fig. 2C). Sahagún's mirror-stone ("tezcatl;" fig. 2D) is round and black (Sahagún 1950-82:bk.11, 228-229); see also his discussion of the mirror-stone seller, "tezcanamacac" (Sahagún 1950-82:bk10, 87).

The *Codex Azcatitlan* (Barlow and Graulich 1995:7) shows one of the Aztlan migrants leaving Huehuetoca with a bundle that includes a smoking mirror (fig. 2E). Barlow's interpretation of this scene is as follows: "Desde aquí parte el camino con los portadores del dios, uno de los cuales lleva a cuestas el espejo humeante de Tezcatlipoca" (Barlow 1995:70). As often the case in the codices, it is difficult to determine whether this image was meant to depict an actual obsidian mirror, or whether the smoking mirror is a sign for Tezcatlipoca, for his sacred bundle (Olivier 1995), or perhaps for his worship and cult in general. Overall, the images in figure 2 make it clear that the standard depiction of mirrors in the Aztec codices was a circular black object, sometimes with plumes for smoke and sometimes with down balls. I am not aware of any images of rectangular mirrors in the Aztec codices.

I have been able to locate secure references to thirteen circular obsidian mirrors in museum collections; these are listed in Table 1. I exclude from consideration a number of small circular ornaments of obsidian that are probably more usefully characterized as jewelry pendants rather than mirrors. Two such ornaments in the Peabody Museum of Natural History at Yale University (catalog nos. YPM 137867 and YPM 260565) differ from the mirrors discussed here in two ways: they are much smaller (diameters of ca. 5 cm, compared to 17-29 cm for the mirrors) and their edges are crudely flaked and not smoothed like mirrors. Similar objects, excavated at Teotihuacan by Linné (1934), are called mirrors by Taube (1992:169). I have not conducted anything resembling a systematic study of these mirrors, and the following remarks are intended only to suggest a few patterns and to illustrate the potential of systematic research on museum collections.³ My sample comes from the published literature, with personal inquiries to a number of museums, and it is almost certain that additional unpublished examples are found in other museums.⁴ I have seen only one of these mirrors first-hand (no. 1). A systematic study would require careful examination and measurement of each object, coupled with some technical studies (e.g., chemical characterization to determine the geological sources of the obsidian).

All, or most, of these mirrors are of the form of object no. 3 (fig. 3), the famous "magical speculum of Dr. Dee" (Anonymous 1968; Tait 1967). The mirrors are close to circular in form, with a single projection pierced by a hole. The likely purpose of the hole is for wearing the mirror as an ornament on the chest or in another position, a common trait in representations of Tezcatlipoca in the codices (Olivier 2003:54-55). On object 1 (fig. 1A) the projection has clearly

broken off, and it is possible that this is the case for other examples—e.g., object 2)—whose published images do not show a clear projection. The mirrors all appear to be finely polished, with smooth but distinct edges (fig. 3). Some examples (mirrors no. 2 and 12) are encased in wood frames; I would guess that these are most likely post-conquest additions.

There is no secure provenience information for any of these thirteen mirrors. Some authors have published speculations of the general region of origin for some examples; for example Keleman (1969:v.2, 361) says that mirror no. 2 “is said to come from Veracruz.” Olivier (2003:331) reviews this and other such attributions, few or none of which can be given much credence in my view. Two historical citations to obsidian mirrors from Michoacán (Olivier 2003:331) do suggest that these objects were probably used in the Tarascan empire. Of the three

Table 1

Location	Catalog no.	publications	Dimensions:		
			diam.	thickn.	source ^a
1 Museo Román Piña Chán, Teotenango			28.0	3.1	1
2 American Museum of Natural History, New York	30.0/6253	Keleman 1969, pl.298A; Saville 1925:pl.II			
3 British Museum, London	OBJ 112376	Tait 1967:fig. 4	18.4	1.3	1
4 British Museum, London	AM 1825, 1210.16		26.0	1.5	1
5 British Museum, London	AM 1907, 0608.2		24.0	1.6	1
6 Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City		Day 1992:46	18.8		2
7 Museo de América, Madrid	Inv. 9996, Room 4		21.5		1
8 Nasher Museum, Duke University, Durham, NC		web site	19.7	1.9	1
9 Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris		Meslay 2001:78	25.2		2
10 Private collection		Meslay 2001:79	28.9		2
11 Museo Nacional de Ciencias Naturales, Madrid	18611				
12 Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City					
13 Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City					

Notes:^b

- a Dimensions in cm; source for dimensions:
 - 1: personal communication from museum staff
 - 2: publication

mirrors in the Museo Nacional de Antropología in Mexico City, one (no. 6) is from central Mexico and two (nos. 12 and 13) are from west Mexico (Felipe Solís, personal communication, July, 2007).

There appears to be some degree of standardization in the size and form of the circular obsidian mirrors in my sample. All, or nearly all, have the projection discussed above. The diameters of the mirrors have a range of 17 to 29 cm (Table 1). A frequency plot of the diameters suggests a possible bimodal distribution. Three mirrors are between 18 and 19 cm in diameter, four are between 25 and 29 cm, and three are between those two clusters. Although the small number of examples is insufficient to show a definitive bimodal distribution, the data are suggestive.

In general, bimodal size distributions of manufactured objects suggest that producers were aiming at two distinct sizes of objects; otherwise one would expect something close to a normal distribution with a single mode. Aztec and other Mesoamerican obsidian producers were quite expert in working with the volcanic glass and could have produced mirrors of any size they wanted. Sahagún's (1950-82:bk.10, 87) discussion of the mirror-stone maker (“tezcachiuuhqui”) indicates that mirrors were made by specialists (see also Sahagún 1950-82:bk11, 228-229). John

Clark (1994) points out that although Sahagún lists some of the steps in the production process (e.g., abrading with sand, carving, polishing with a cane), we actually know very little of just how mirrors were made. But a bimodal size distribution would suggest deliberate choices and activities on the part of Aztec mirror makers.

This inference based on a possible bimodal size distribution in turn suggests that there were probably cultural reasons for the existence of two different size categories. One possibility is that there were different uses for the two types; perhaps one type was to adorn sculptures or ixtipla of Tezcatlipoca whereas the other was for priests to carry around to use in divination. Another possibility is that the two size types were made and used by different cultural groups; perhaps mirrors were of one size in central Mexico and another size in the Tarascan area or in the outer imperial provinces. Alternatively there could have been a change in the norms of size through time. These speculative interpretations are intended only to illustrate some possible implications of the data in Table 1. Although we cannot specify the uses or meanings of different types of circular obsidian mirrors (if the distribution is in fact bimodal), the size data do suggest a level of complexity in the uses of obsidian mirrors that would be invisible if one only examined a small number of the finest objects. The addition of more cases to those listed in Table 1 will permit my hypothesis of a bimodal distribution to be more firmly evaluated and might lead to additional useful inferences.

One promising line of analysis for obsidian mirrors in museum collections is chemical source analysis. Obsidian objects are relatively easy to assign to geological sources, and several of the available techniques are non-destructive. Two rectangular obsidian mirrors that were used by Murillo for paintings (Meslay 2001) have been subjected to source analysis using the PIXE technique, along with four other mirrors in Paris museums (Calligaro et al. 2005), and the results suggest that the obsidian was from the Ucareo and/or Zinapecuaro sources in Michoacán.⁵

Ceramic Flutes

Compared to obsidian mirrors, ceramic flutes in general have a weaker association with Tezcatlipoca, but they are far better represented in both museum collections and in documented archaeological excavations. As analyzed by a number of authors (e.g., Both 2002; Martí 1953; 1968:117-123; Olivier 2003:194-195, 215-218), flutes played crucial roles in the Tezcatlipoca cult, particularly during the veintena festival of Toxcatl. During the month of Toxcatl the ixitpla of Tezcatlipoca processed through the streets of Tenochtitlan playing the flute (fig. 5A), whose sound was viewed as the voice of Tezcatlipoca. When he mounted the steps of the pyramid for his sacrifice, he is said to have broken a flute on each stair (fig. 5B).

Adje Both (2002) has compared ethnohistoric evidence to the physical, acoustic, and iconographic attributes of Aztec ceramic flutes. He shows that a particular kind of flute—the flower-flute—was strongly associated with the Tezcatlipoca cult. Two such flutes, and a schematic cross-section, are shown in figure 6. While all Aztec flutes have a tube with fingerholes, these instruments also have a long duct leading to the aperture, and a bell shaped like a flower blossom. On some examples, the flower decoration on the bell is divided into four parts. Both (2002:281) links the symbolism of the flower bell and its four-part symmetry to several realms, including the Aztec concept of music as “flowery song” and a number of components of the cult and symbolism of Tezcatlipoca. For example, on one occasion Tezcatlipoca’s ixiptla emerged from the temple and played his flute to each of the four cardinal directions in turn (Durán 1967: v.1, 39-40). See also Both (2005b; 2006).

Both has suggested to me that “specific musical instruments were closely related to specific religious complexes and probably were used only in ritual contexts related to these

complexes” (Adje Both, personal communication, July, 2007). The implication of this hypothesis is that whereas the flower-flutes were associated with Tezcatlipoca, other types of Aztec flutes (Both 2005a; Kollmann 1895; Martí 1968) may have been associated with other deities. Figure 7 illustrates a series of broken flutes excavated in burials from the Middle or Late Postclassic (or Aztec) period at Teotenango in the Toluca Valley. These flutes, none of which are of the flower-flute variety, illustrate several other kinds of Aztec flute. There is no published information on the specific archaeological contexts of the Teotenango flutes (beyond the fact that they are from burials), and thus it is not clear whether they might indicate a Tezcatlipoca-related deposit or not.

I have excavated a number of small fragments of ceramic flutes from domestic trash deposits at Aztec-period sites in central Mexico. Figure 8 shows ten of the thirteen identified tubular flute pieces from Yautepec, an urban center in north-central Morelos (Smith n.d.-b); I also recovered two fragments at Cuexcomate and Capilco, rural sites in western Morelos (Smith n.d.-a). My 2007 excavations at the Late Postclassic city of Calixtlahuaca in the Toluca Valley also turned up a small number of flute fragments. From the small size of these fragments it is usually impossible to classify them into known Aztec flute types; of the ten pieces in figure 8, all I can venture to say is that item C is not a flower-flute; it has an anthropomorphic head at the distal end, like one of the flutes from Teotenango (fig. 7).⁶

It is difficult to reconstruct the significance of musical instruments in domestic contexts, in part because music was part of ritual, and the ethnohistoric sources contain very little information on domestic rituals (Burkhart 1997; Smith 2002). Both (n.d.) discusses two types of Aztec music culture: temple music performed by specialized priests, and court music performed by professional musicians. Most references to musical instruments in the chroniclers and codices pertain to these two contexts (Both 2005b, n.d.; Martí 1968). In addition to flutes, the Aztec-period residential contexts I have excavated also contained whistles and rattles, and a New Fire ritual dump at Cuexcomate (Elson and Smith 2001) contained a ceramic drum (Smith n.d.-a). I have suggested that such instruments might have been used, along with ceramic figurines and censers, for domestic rituals such as divination, curing, and fertility rites (Smith 2002). An alternative possibility that I now consider more likely is that they were used when people participated in specific public ritual activities that were part of the monthly veintena ceremonies (Smith 2008:chapter 4).

In summary, the simple presence of ceramic flutes is insufficient to link an archaeological context or objects to the cult of Tezcatlipoca. Nevertheless, one specific type—the flower-flute—does seem to have a strong association with this deity. Furthermore, the presence of one or more broken flutes in buried offerings may suggest the presence of the Tezcatlipoca cult. The significance of ceramic flutes in domestic contexts is far from clear, but these objects do not seem to suggest an association with Tezcatlipoca. In fact, there is little or no evidence to suggest that Tezcatlipoca was venerated at the domestic level. Ceramic figurines, a major component of domestic rites, sometimes depict deities (e.g., Tlaloc, Quetzalcoatl, or Xochiquetzal), but apparently not Tezcatlipoca (Kaplan 2006).

***Momoztli* Shrines**

Small stone shrines or platforms are further along the continuum identified above for obsidian mirrors and ceramic flutes: shrines are more abundant and better documented archaeologically, but their association with Tezcatlipoca is much weaker. Unfortunately, for these features there seems to be a serious disjunction between the ethnohistorical data—descriptions and depictions of *momoztli*—and archaeological data—stone structures at sites. In a section labeled, “The Problem of the Momoztli,” Olivier (2003:172-182) reviews ethnohistoric

data on momoztli. These structures bear a strong association with Tezcatlipoca, but they seem to be highly variable in form and context. Olivier states, “Thus the word *momoztli* can designate several kinds of buildings, from a temple to an altar or a small oratory” (Olivier 2003:174).

As reviewed by Olivier (2003:175–182), scholars from Eduard Seler’s time to the present have identified a number of specific stone objects with the momoztli of the chroniclers (see also Umberger 1984). Many of these are stone boxes and other portable rectangular objects with some kind of explicit Tezcatlipoca iconography (Gutiérrez Solana Rickards 1983: lams. 03, 109, 147, 202). To my mind, these small portable objects do not match very closely the temples, altars, or oratories that the chroniclers seem to associate with the label momoztli (although their association with Tezcatlipoca is usually clear enough). Umberger (1984) interprets the “teocalli de la Guerra sagrada” monument as a momoztli.

Archaeologists have excavated numerous small stone altars or platforms at Aztec sites, but it has not been possible to associate these clearly with the category momoztli or with other aspects of the Tezcatlipoca cult. A strong emphasis on small platforms built in the centers of cities was a key innovation of Aztec urban planning (Smith 2008:chapters 4, 5). Such small platforms, of course, are found at nearly all Mesoamerican cities, from Olmec times through the Late Postclassic. But at Aztec city-state capitals (and then later at Tenochtitlan), city builders erected many more of these structures than in earlier times, and they placed them in key locations within the urban epicenter to define public spaces for ceremony. Interestingly, one of the additions that Late Postclassic builders made to the central plaza at Tula was a rectangular altar, built in front of Temple C.⁷

Figure 9 shows two small platforms or altars at the site of Ixtapalua Viejo (also known as Acozac). They are low rectangular platforms with stairs on one side; in their form these are typical of platforms at many sites. For some archaeologists in the early twentieth century, such platforms were not deemed worthy of excavation and reconstruction. They were left unexcavated next to large excavated and restored temples (fig. 10). A number of Aztec city-state capitals have rows of platforms along one side of the main urban public plaza. The two structures at Ixtapalua Viejo (fig. 9) may fit this pattern, which is much clearer in the plan of Teopanzolco.

Eight platforms in a rough line face the main pyramid at the Early Aztec city center of Teopanzolco (fig. 11). These illustrate the variety of such platforms in size and form; two are circular and one is long and narrow. The southernmost platform contained an offering of 92 human skulls, of which about one-third showed evidence for decapitation (González Sobrino et al. 2001; Lagunas Rodríguez and Sánchez 1972). The urban center of Coatetelco in southwest Morelos also contains a row of platforms along the main plaza; in this case they are attached to the side of a large ballcourt (Arana Álvarez 1984; Smith 2008:figs. 1.1, 3.5). There are several platforms adjacent to the main pyramids of Tenochtitlan (Olmeda Vera 2002) and Tenayuca (Noguera 1929), and the excavated epicenter at Tlatelolco is full of these features (González Rul 1998).

In a review of architectural forms at Aztec urban centers (Smith 2008: chapter 4), I use the term “shrine” for these small platforms to distinguish them from portable altars on the one hand, and temples on the other. I identify four types of shrine: (1) **tzompantli** or skull rack; (2) **tzitzimime shrine**, decorated with skulls and crossed bones in relief, and typically misidentified as skull racks (Klein 2000); (3) **other rectangular shrine**; and (4) **circular shrine**. When I began compiling data on these structures, I had hoped that it might prove possible—on the basis of form, size, and location—to subdivide the rectangular shrines beyond types 1 and 2 (I have data on over 40 rectangular shrines); in fact one goal (after reading Olivier’s book) was to propose an archaeological identification of the momoztli shrine. Unfortunately the data did not

cooperate, and I have not been able to further subdivide this category or suggest any potential momoztis at Aztec urban sites.

Given the wide latitude in meanings of the term momoztli in early sources, and the wide variety in the size and form of small altars at Aztec urban sites, it seems likely that at least some of the excavated structures probably corresponded to the category of momoztli. Unfortunately few offerings—which might tie them to Tezcatlipoca or other identifiable cults—have been excavated at these structures. Given the low level of reporting on many of the excavations, it is not possible to tell whether the lack of offerings is the simple result of a lack of rigorous testing or whether it really reflects a paucity of offerings at small platforms.

Discussion

The above review of material evidence for the Tezcatlipoca cult is far less conclusive than one would like. Part of the problem stems from the nature of archaeological evidence. If one starts with the chroniclers and the codices, it is easy to develop arguments for the strong association of obsidian mirrors, ceramic flutes, and momoztli shrines with the worship of Tezcatlipoca. Those sources, however, also include other uses for such objects; these are less important for mirrors, but increasingly more significant for flutes and shrines. But if one starts with an isolated object without context in a museum, or even a documented archaeological find with good context, it is difficult to make a rigorous argument for an object's use or significance without iconographic data or a suite of identifiable associated objects. If archaeologists were to excavate a burial or offering associated with one of the major components of the Tezcatlipoca cult as described in the chroniclers, it would probably be relatively easy to identify the deposit correctly. But such offerings have yet to be encountered by archaeologists at Aztec sites.

In the absence of rich contextual and associational data of the sort provided by the offerings of the Templo Mayor since 1978 (López Luján 1993), archaeologists and museum scholars must fall back on systematic analyses of descriptive data of the sort reviewed above. If we had larger samples of mirrors, flutes, or platforms to work with, it would almost certainly permit clearer and stronger interpretations of their roles in the cult of Tezcatlilpoca (or in other contexts). I hope that the above discussion helps stimulate further research in this area. We need better documentation of museum collections and archaeological findings, we need more systematic analyses of larger samples, and we need rigorous integration with parallel systematic analyses of the ethnohistoric data of the sort provided by Guilhem Olivier.

THE TEZCATLIPOCA CULT IN SPACE AND TIME

When and where did the Tezcatlipoca cult originate? This question can only be answered with archaeological data, if indeed it can be answered at all. In addition to the finds of archaeology, however, one needs rigorous methods and concepts to link the fragmentary material remains of early periods to the rich documentary and archaeological record of Tezcatlipoca at the time of the Spanish conquest. With one exception (Paddock 1985), however, I have not seen the application of such methods and concepts in the literature on early Tezcatlipoca. How many and which of the deity's attributes need to be present in order to conclude that Tezcatlipoca was known and worshipped prior to the Aztec period? Without an explicit consideration of such issues, interpretations will remain based more on the opinions of individual scholars (who may

differ widely in their assumptions and standards of proof) than on empirical data. In this sense I cannot evaluate Milbrath's (this volume) views on the historical relationship between Tezcatlipoca and Kawil (see also Valencia Rivera 2006); I have no idea what criteria to use to judge the adequacy of such arguments.

In line with the prior observations, I will not address the “origin” of the Tezcatlipoca cult here. Olivier (2003) reviews the literature on this topic, and not surprisingly finds it difficult to come to any firm conclusions. My approach focuses on the historical distribution of some of the key attributes of Tezcatlipoca. Most scholars would probably agree that the presence of Tezcatlipoca can be inferred from one or more of the following three traits: the image of the smoking mirror; a deity with one leg cut off; or a deity with a black horizontal band of face paint. Combinations of these traits obviously provide stronger evidence than a single trait in isolation. I also review briefly a distinct suite of evidence suggesting the presence of the Tezcatlipoca cult in the Chalchihuites culture of Zacatecas in Classic and Epiclassic times.

The map in figure 12 shows sites matching these criteria for Tezcatlipoca in each of two blocks of time: the Epiclassic to Early Postclassic period, and the Middle to late Postclassic (Aztec) period. I cannot claim to have made an exhaustive study of Mesoamerican archaeological sites looking for attributes of Tezcatlipoca. I started with Olivier's (2003) discussion and added other material I am aware of. There does not seem to be evidence fitting my criteria from the Classic period or earlier. It is entirely possible, of course, that there was a thriving Tezcatlipoca cult in such times that did not happen to leave the kind of evidence under consideration here, or perhaps one whose attributes changed through time.

Epiclassic and Early Postclassic

The clear representation of Tezcatlipoca in reliefs at the Temple of the Warriors at Chichén Itzá has been discussed by a number of authors (e.g., Olivier 2003:65-66; Thompson 1942). The example reproduced in figure 13A has both the severed leg and two smoking mirrors—one replacing the lower leg or foot, and the other in the headdress. The dating of the architecture and occupation at Chichén Itzá is currently undergoing revision (Kristan-Graham and Kowalski 2006), and at this point the most conservative interpretation is that these reliefs date to the Epiclassic (A.D. 700-900) and/or Early Postclassic (A.D. 900-1100) periods.

For Tula, Olivier (2003:65) notes that, “The absence of representation of Tezcatlipoca in the prestigious Toltec city has perplexed the specialists for a long time” (e.g., Stocker 1992-93). There are two problems with this statement. First, it looks at the situation backwards. Such puzzlement implies that the Aztec accounts of Quetzalcoatl and Tezcatlipoca at Tula are historically correct, and that archaeologists have simply failed to locate more evidence of Tezcatlipoca at the site (since his cult must have been present and prominent). To the contrary, I argue that the archaeological record of Tula should be the starting point. We have an empirical record generated by numerous documented archaeological projects over many decades (e.g., Acosta 1964; de la Fuente et al. 1988; Healan 1989; Mastache et al. 2002; Matos Moctezuma 1974; Sterpone 2000-2001). Aztec accounts of Tula and the Toltecs, on the other hand, were ideologically-motivated mythological statements to which it is difficult to attribute much historical validity (Smith 2003b, 2006). Our puzzlement should instead be over why the Aztecs made such a big deal out of Quetzalcoatl and Tezcatlipoca among the Toltecs when the archaeological record only accords them modest presence at Tula and other Epiclassic-Early Postclassic sites.

The second difficulty with the above statement is that there are in fact a good number of stone reliefs of smoking mirrors at Tula, in addition to at least one representation of Tezcatlipoca

himself. The latter, a relief of the deity from Pilastra 5, lado A (fig. 13B) has been published by Stocker (1992-93:67), Jiménez García (1998:126, 465), and Olivier (2003:296). The smoking mirror reliefs at Tula seem to have gone unidentified in the literature. Gamboa Cabezas (2007:46) recently published a photo of a newly-excavated mirror relief, but he calls it a solar disk (fig. 13C). A nearly identical relief, excavated by Acosta (1956:97) and now in the Museo Nacional de Antropología, is identified only as a “lápida con representación de disco y volutes” by de la Fuente et al. (1988:200, and fig. 144). Three other reliefs from Acosta’s excavations have central circular elements very similar to these two objects, but without the smoke volutes (de la Fuente et al. 1988:198-200, and figs. 141-143).

While these reliefs clearly document the presence of Tezcatlipoca at Tula, archaeologists have yet to identify any temples or shrines dedicated to the deity at the site. Another possible image of Tezcatlipoca from the Toltec period is part of a complex rock painting at Ixtapantongo in the western part of the State of Mexico (fig. 13D). This figure, a warrior who wears some kind of bird garment, has a severed leg. Villagra Caleti (1954:3) interprets the image as Tezcatlipoca, an identification that Olivier (2003:62-63) seems to accept. Krickeberg (1969:193-195), on the other hand, labels this image as Xiuhtecuhtli and identifies another figure in the painting as Tezcatlipoca. The Ixtapantongo painting is dated to the Toltec (Early Postclassic) period on stylistic grounds.

A different kind of evidence suggesting the presence of the Tezcatlipoca cult during this period consists of mortuary practices of the Chachihuites cultures of Zacatecas. Holien and Pickering (1978) interpret a burial at the site of Alta Vista as that of a possible Tezcatlipoca ixiptla. Placed under the floor of a major temple at the site (the “Hall of Columns”), the burial consisted of a primary interment of a central individual, lacking the cranium, accompanied by eight secondary interments with evidence of ritual mutilation. Grave goods included a broken flute and several elaborate polychrome serving vessels. Holien and Pickering argue that this feature resembles what one might expect a burial of a Tezcatlipoca impersonator might look like (taking in account, of course, that no such burial has been encountered at Aztec sites).

Holien and Pickering make several interpretive errors, pointed out by Olivier (2003:90-91, 200-201). For example, they misidentify the central figure in the cosmogram on page 1 of the Codex Fejérvary-Mayer (1971) as Tezcatlipoca, not Xiuhtecuhtli. Olivier concludes that “the elements presented by Holien and Pickering are not enough to affirm that a ritual akin to that of Toxcatl was held in Alta Vista in the Classic period” (Olivier 2003:201). Nevertheless, the presence of several similar burials in the region—not discussed by Olivier—does suggest to me that an identification with Tezcatlipoca, or a Tezcatlipoca-like cult, is a reasonable interpretation of the Alta Vista burial (Lelegemann 2000:chapter 9; Nelson 1997). In the words of Holien and Pickering:

Our “Tezcatlipoca” is so labeled for convenience, not in order to claim the “discovery” of an Aztec deity among early northern Chichimecs. In the Mesoamerican Classic, generally, there is probably the cosmological context to accommodate a Tezcatlipoca-like creator god just as there are isolated archaeological indications of such a cult (Holien and Pickering 1978:156).

Regardless of whether one accepts the Chachihuites burials as evidence of the Tezcatlipoca cult, the admittedly limited evidence for Tezcatlipoca in the Epiclassic and Early Postclassic periods does seem to be concentrated in central Mexico and at Chichén Itzá. Previous generations of scholars might have interpreted Tezcatlipoca as a Toltec deity whose presence in

other areas could be attributed to Toltec conquest or diffusion. Yet we now know that Tozzer's (1957) simplistic model of Toltec diffusion to or influence on Chichén Itzá is inadequate (Kristan-Graham and Kowalski 2006), and that Aztec legends of a Toltec empire were widely exaggerated if not completely false (Smith and Montiel 2001, n.d.). Nevertheless, the deity Tezcatlipoca was clearly present at Tula as well as at least one site (Ixtapantongo) with Toltec style paintings.

Late Postclassic

Archaeological evidence for Tezcatlipoca is considerably more abundant during the Late Postclassic period. It is often difficult to distinguish Middle Postclassic (AD 1100-1300) and Late Postclassic (AD 1300-1521+) contexts, and some of the examples discussed in this section may in fact date to the Middle Postclassic period. Figures 14 and 15 illustrate some of the examples; these and others are discussed by Olivier (2003) and Paddock (1985). A more complete review of the literature would almost certainly turn up additional examples.⁸ I divide the evidence into two groups: central Mexico and more distant areas (see figure 12).

One of the few cases of Tezcatlipoca from a well-documented context in Tenochtitlan is a burial urn excavated at the Templo Mayor (fig. 14A). The presence of the deity in Tlaxcala has long been known from the Tizatlán murals (fig. 14B, Noguera 1927). Other examples are common on polychrome ceramic vessels of the Codex style (Hernández Sánchez 2005:159-173); an example from Oxotelulco (Contreras Martínez 1994) is shown in figures 14C. Hernández Sánchez (2005:160) includes 45 examples of polychrome vessels decorated with Tezcatlipoca-related imagery from sites ranging from Tenochtitlan to Cholula and the Puebla-Tlaxcala Valley to Veracruz. Her criteria for identifying Tezcatlipoca are different from those I use here, and it is not clear just how many of the 45 examples have the specific attributes under discussion.

An imperial Mexica-style stone relief that may have been excavated by José García Payón at Calixtlahuaca (fig. 14D) is a clear depiction of a smoking mirror.⁹ The four examples in figure 14, coupled with the abundance of Tezcatlipoca in the divinatory codices and the data of Hernández Sánchez (2005) demonstrate that the Tezcatlipoca cult was present in much of central Mexico during Aztec times. For other central Mexican representations, some with known provenience and others without, see Olivier (2003:57-73) and Gutiérrez Solana Rickards (1983).

Three Late Postclassic examples of Tezcatlipoca outside of central Mexico are illustrated in figure 15. A mural from the Huaxtec site of Tamohi (fig. 15A) is interpreted by Zaragoza Ocaña (2003:31-32) as Tezcatlipoca on the basis on the facial paint. Paddock (1985) discusses a number of examples from Oaxaca, including an image carved on a bone from Tomb 7 at Monte Albán (fig. 15B). The most distant examples, discussed by Olivier (2003:63-64), are some Late Postclassic painted cups from La Garrafa in Chiapas (fig. 15C, see Pareyon Moreno 1988:192).

The (Middle and) Late Postclassic distribution of the Tezcatlipoca cult is concentrated in central Mexico, with several examples considerably further afield in the outer imperial provinces (Tamohi, Oaxaca) or beyond (La Garrafa). A tentative explanation for this pattern is offered below.

Tezcatlipoca in the Postclassic Mesoamerican World System

The Middle and Late Postclassic periods saw the most extensive development of long-distance commercial exchange and stylistic interaction in the entire Prehispanic Mesoamerican past. Goods and ideas moved freely throughout Mesoamerica, linking hundreds of independent

city-states into broad interconnected networks (Smith and Berdan 2003). The commercial and tributary institutions of the Triple Alliance Empire were part of this broad world system, but exchange and interaction were by no means limited to the imperial domain.

I suggest that the broader distribution of Tezcatlipoca traits in the Late Postclassic period compared to Epiclassic/Early Postclassic times represents an expansion in the extent of this cult. In other words, it seems more likely to me that the cult was adopted in new areas in Late Postclassic times, rather than being a widely-distributed ancient cult for which we happen to have more material evidence from later times. This is similar to the conclusion reached by John Paddock (1985) in his discussion of the nature and geographical distribution of Tezcatlipoca images in Oaxaca. Paddock argues an indigenous cult of Tezcatlipoca did not exist in Oaxaca, and that the deity “was known there only briefly during Aztec times, and in places close to the Aztec route through Oaxaca” (Paddock 1985:309).

Paddock’s interpretation was part of an older paradigm in which widespread distributions of traits were explained as resulting from “influence” from a center. In this case, he implies that the Tezcatlipoca cult was deliberately spread by invading or traveling Aztecs. Today, archaeologists are more likely to emphasize the roles of distant or provincial rulers and elites in choosing to adopt foreign traits or goods. Thus individuals in provincial or distant areas (i.e., elites or priests in Tamohi, La Garrafa, and Oaxaca in the present case) had agency in deciding whether to adopt or not adopt foreign goods, traits, styles, cults, or deities (Stein 2002; Wilk 2004). These actors made their decisions based upon their local context and needs, not upon the wishes of distant imperial rulers. This kind of approach is particularly appropriate for Mesoamerica, where empires adopted hegemonic or indirect methods of control, as compared to the territorial or direct control exercised by empires in many other parts of the world (Sinopoli 1994; Smith and Montiel 2001).

CONCLUSIONS

Ethnohistoric sources on Tezcatlipoca reveal a number of objects and traits that can be considered material manifestations of his cult. I have singled out three such traits—obsidian mirrors, ceramic flutes, and momoztli platforms—as nonperishable goods with particularly strong associations with the deity. These items have been excavated or collected from Aztec sites and are known to scholarship today. They all have the potential for systematic research (e.g., catalogs of museum holdings and excavated examples) that, if undertaken, would surely advance our understanding of the Aztec cult of Tezcatlipoca. My very brief analysis of the sizes of a sample of obsidian mirrors suggests the possible use of two distinct types of mirror. This exercise is meant as an example of the potentially useful information that can be generated with systematic attention to a range of objects but not with intensive focus on one or two of the finest examples.

Knowledge of the Tezcatlipoca cult and its material manifestations is hampered by the fact that to date no clear offering or altar or temple dedicated to the deity has been excavated at a Late Postclassic site (apart from the segment of stairs at the Tezcatlipoca temple south of the Templo Mayor; see note 2). More precisely, no such excavated feature has been identified yet by archaeologists; it is entirely possible that early excavators dug a Tezcatlipoca temple or momoztli platform but failed to identify it due to the fragmentary nature of the finds or to incomplete excavation.¹⁰ This lacunae makes it difficult to evaluate enigmatic features such as

the Alta Vista burial, because there is no well-documented central Mexican example for comparison.

The distribution of key representations and traits of Tezcatlipoca in space and time suggests some patterns for the development and spread of the cult, although the number of cases remains somewhat small to reach confident conclusions. Although it is certainly possible that the cult of Tezcatlipoca had deep origins in Mesoamerica, the clear markers of the Aztec-period deity and cult do not appear until the Epiclassic-Early Postclassic period. Most of the documented cases from this time period are from central Mexico, specifically Tula and the Toltec-related paintings of Ixtapantongo. The columns at Chichén Itzá remain enigmatic.

In the Middle and Late Postclassic periods, the number of representations of Tezcatlipoca and smoking mirrors in central Mexico increased dramatically, and their spatial extent outside of central Mexico also expanded notably. Like so many aspects of Aztec political, religious, and elite culture, the Tezcatlipoca cult was adopted from Toltec models. The Aztecs probably expanded and elaborated the cult and its mythology to a much greater extent than their Toltec ancestors, although this is difficult to prove with current data. Representations in the codices, murals, and elaborate polychrome ceramics—in both the Valley of Mexico and the Puebla-Tlaxcala area—suggest a widespread cult of high prestige. It is likely that elements of this cult were adopted by distant elites and priests because of that prestige; there is no evidence that imperial armies or administrators actively promoted the cult in conquered or distant areas.

Acknowledgements

I thank Elizabeth Baquedano for inviting me to write this essay. Some of the data in Table 1 were initially assembled in a term paper by Kate Sullivan at the University at Albany. Adje Both provided helpful information on ceramic flutes and the context of Aztec music more generally. He sent me several of his papers and kindly allowed me to reproduce three of his drawings of flutes. I want to thank a number of museum personnel for responding to my inquiries about obsidian mirrors; these are listed in note 4. In many ways this paper is merely an update, extension, and reorganization of parts of Guilhem Olivier's book, *Mockeries and Metamorphoses of an Aztec God: Tezcatlipoca, "Lord of the Smoking Mirror,"* and I acknowledge the inspiration of that work and its author. I thinka Elizabeth Baquedano, Frances Berdan, Adje Both, Guilmen Olivier, and Emily Umberger for their helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

FIGURE LIST

Figure 1. Obsidian mirrors from museums in the Toluca area. A: circular mirror in the Museo Román Piña Chán at the site of Teotenango. B: fragmentary rectangular mirror in the Museo de Antropología e Historia, Centro Cultural Mexiquense, in Toluca. Photographs by Michael E. Smith. Reproduced courtesy of the Instituto Mexiquense de Cultura.

Figure 2. Black (obsidian) circular mirrors in the Aztec codices. A: Tezcatlipoca's foot from the Codex Borgia (modified after Seler 1963:f.21); B: Toponym for Tezcatepec from the Codex Mendoza (redrawn from Berdan and Anawalt 1992:f.27r); C: Personal name of Atezcatl from the Mapa de Sigüenza (redrawn from Castañeda de la Paz 2006:154); D: Mirror-stone ("tezcatl") in Sahagún (modified after Sahagún 1950-82:bk.11, fig. 783); E: Carrier of the sacred bundle of Tezcatlipoca in the Codex Azcatitlan (modified after Barlow and Graulich 1995:7).

Figure 3. Circular obsidian mirror (no. 3) in the British Museum. This is the famous mirror used for divination by Dr. Dee. Photo from Tait (1967:fig. 4); reproduced courtesy of Yale University Press.

Figure 4. Frequency distribution of diameters of the obsidian mirrors listed in Table 1.

Figure 5. The use of flutes during the festival of Toxcatl in the Florentine Codex (Sahagún 1950-82: __, __). A: ?? Priests playing flutes during a procession; B: Broken flutes at the temple during the sacrifice. Reproduced courtesy of _____.

Figure 6. Aztec ceramic flower-flutes. A, B: flutes in the Ethnological Museum, Berlin. A: SMB PK, Inv. IV Ca 2548; B: SMB PK, Inv. IV Ca 2553. C: Schematic cross-section of an Aztec tubular duct flute (drawing by A. A. Both). From Both (2002:figs. 2, 3). Reproduced courtesy of Arnd Adje Both.

Figure 7. Fragments of ceramic flutes, not of the flower-flute variety, excavated in Postclassic burials at Teotenango (modified after Velázquez V. 1975:321).

Figure 8. Flute fragments excavated from domestic contexts in Yautepec, Morelos. Photograph by Michael E. Smith. From Smith (n.d.-b).

Figure 9. Reconstructed small platforms or altars at Ixtapaluca Viejo (Acozac). Photograph by Michael E. Smith.

Figure 10. Unreconstructed small platform or altar at Calixtlahuaca. Photograph by Michael E. Smith.

Figure 11. Plan of the Epicenter of Teopanzolco, showing the row of small platforms or altars on the west side of the main plaza. From Smith (2003a:40).

Figure 12. Map: A: Chichen, Tula, Alta Vista, Ixtapatongo. B: Tenochtitlan, Tizatlan, Ocotelulco, Cálix / Tamohi, Coix, M Alban, La Garrafa *** TO DO ***

Figure 13. Representations of Tezcatlipoca and his cult during the Epiclassic and Early Postclassic period. A: Stone relief at Chichén Itzá (modified after Olivier 2003:289); B: Stone relief at Tula (modified after Stocker 1992-93:67); C: Stone relief at Tula (redrawn from Gamboa Cabezas 2007:46); D: Rock painting at Ixtapantongo (modified after Villagra Caleti 1954).

Figure 14. Representations of Tezcatlipoca and his cult in central Mexico during the Late Postclassic period. A: Ceramic urn from the Templo Mayor of Tenochtitlan (modified after López Luján 2005:178); B: Mural at Tizatlán, Tlaxcala (modified after Olivier 2003:296); C: Ceramic polychrome plate from Ocotelulco, Tlaxcala (modified after Olivier 2003:295); Stone relief from Calixtlahuaca (no. SS-91); drawing by Emily Umberger.

Figure 15. Representations of Tezcatlipoca outside of central Mexico during the Late Postclassic period. A: Mural at Tamohi, San Luis Potosí (modified after Zaragoza Ocaña 2003:32); B: Carved bone (bone no. 65) from Tomb 7, Monte Albán (modified after Paddock 1985:316); Gourd cup from La Garrafa, Chiapas (modified after Olivier 2003:295).

TABLE LIST

Table 1. Catalog of obsidian mirrors discussed in this chapter.

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¹ There are other monographic treatments of Aztec deities, of course, but they tend to focus either on a limited range of source material (e.g., Boone 1989; Vié-Wohrer 1999), or else on a particular aspect of the deity (e.g., Carrasco 1982; Nicholson 2001). No other work takes such a comprehensive approach to an individual deity.

² Excavations of the Programa de Arqueología Urbana, an outgrowth of the Templo Mayor project, have located a portion of the stairway of the Tezcatlipoca temple under the Antiguo Palacio del Arzobispado south of the Templo Mayor (Matos Moctezuma 1992, 1997; Olmo Frese 2003); unfortunately these excavations revealed no offerings or other clear Tezcatlipoca-related elements. The so-called “Cuauhxicalli de Motecuhzoma Ilhuicamina,” uncovered not far from the Tezcatlipoca temple (Graulich 1992; Pérez-Castro et al. 1989) does have Tezcatlipoca imagery, but this relates more to the political message of the stone than to the Tezcatlipoca cult per se (Umberger, this volume).

³ For historiographic discussion of how the examples in Paris and Madrid may have made their way from Mexico to Europe, see Meslay (2001) or Feest (1985; 1990).

⁴ I thank the following museum personnel for information and help with my brief survey: Felipe Solís of the Museo Nacional de Antropología for nos. 6, 12, and 13; Martín Antonio M. and Patricia Aguirre M. of the Instituto Mexiquense de Cultura for no 1; Colin McEwan and Steward Watson of the British Museum for nos. 3-5; Ana Verde of the Museo de América for no. 7; Shelby Spaulding of the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University for no. 8; and Begonia Sánchez of the Museo Nacional de Ciencias Naturales for no. 11.

⁵ The analysis carried out by Calligaro et al. (2005), while perhaps technically sophisticated, is quite crude when compared to standard archaeometric source analyses of obsidian that employ many source samples and large databases (e.g., Glascock 2002). Now that portable X-ray fluorescence machines are becoming more common, it would not be a difficult task to analyze obsidian mirrors with greater rigor (i.e., use of a larger number of reference samples from known sources).

⁶ Communication with Adje Both and Susan Rawcliffe about Aztec wind instruments indicates that it is more difficult than I had thought to distinguish flutes from whistles when dealing with fragmentary remains. Thus my classification of these types (Smith n.d.-a, b) will require revision.

⁷ My offhand explanation of this act has generally been that the Aztec-period builder of the platform was stamping Tula with the mark of a proper Aztec city (since Tula had many fewer such altars than specified by the norms of Aztec urban planning). In terms of Tezcatlipoca, one could also speculate that this was meant to be a momoztli dedicated to Tezcatlipoca, placed in the Tula plaza as part of a deliberate effort by the Aztecs to materialize the Tezcatlipoca cult that was posited in politically-charged legends of the Toltecs. Or perhaps the Aztec-period builder thought that Tula, as the mythical home of Tezcatlipoca, needed a physical symbol of the deity. In any case, the altar in front of Temple C provides one more example of the great ideological importance of Tula for the Aztecs.

⁸ Another underutilized source of information on the distribution of the Tezcatlipoca cult in the Late Postclassic period is the wealth of local documentation from throughout Mesoamerica. The *Relaciones Geográficas* (Acuña 1984-88) often mention the major deities in the towns covered, and these data have been analyzed in a number of regional studies. Druzo Maldonado Jiménez (2000:108-119; 2004), for example, discusses the possible presence of Tezcatlipoca worship in Morelos using data from the *Relaciones Geográficas*. A systematic look at this body of data would be very useful.

⁹ This relief is from the collection originally stored in the Museo Regional de Toluca. That collection consisted primarily of materials excavated at Calixtlahuaca by García Payón, but with other pieces added over the years without clear documentation. It is likely that this relief is from Calixtlahuaca, but that cannot be proven with current information (Smith et al. 2003a; Umberger 2007).

¹⁰ Native historical sources mention a temple dedicated by Tezcatlipoca at or close to Tlalpitzahuac, a town located near Chalco (see discussion in Umberger 1996), but this has not been excavated or studied.

Smith, p. 1

Fig. 1

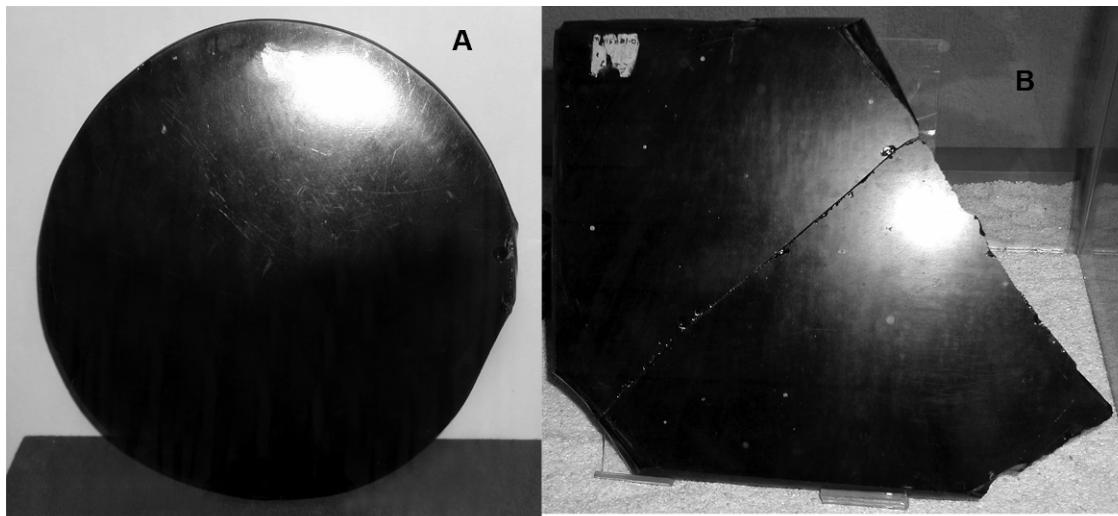


Fig. 2

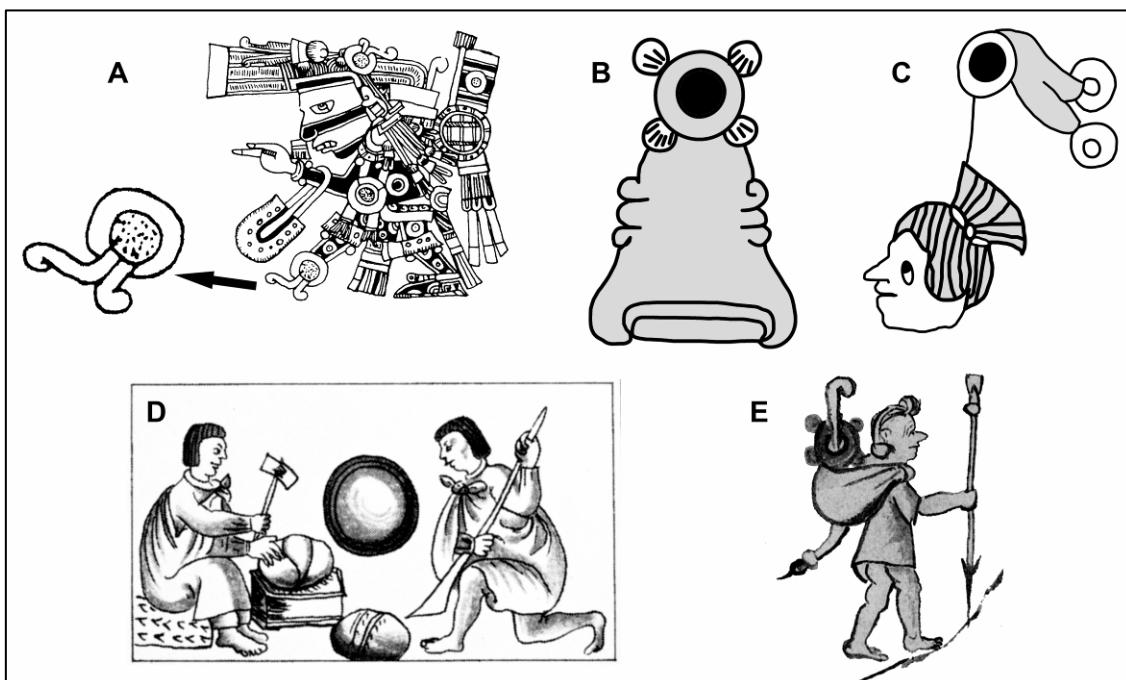
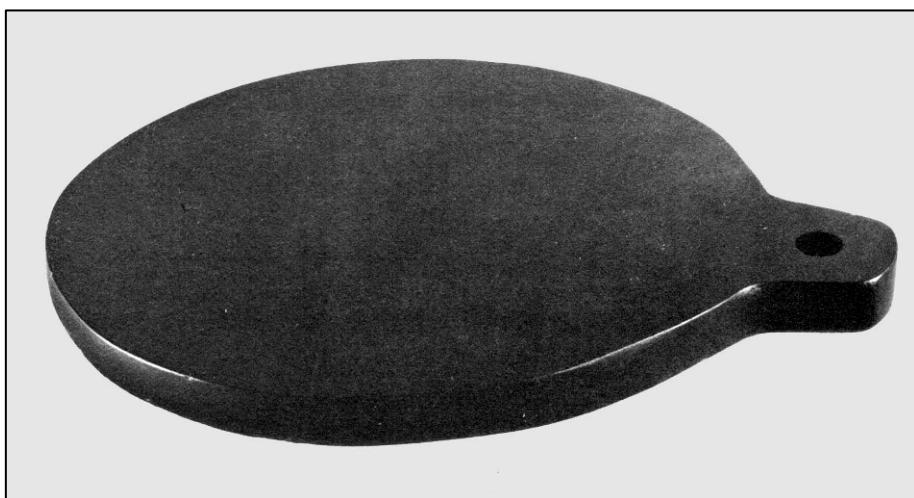


Fig. 3



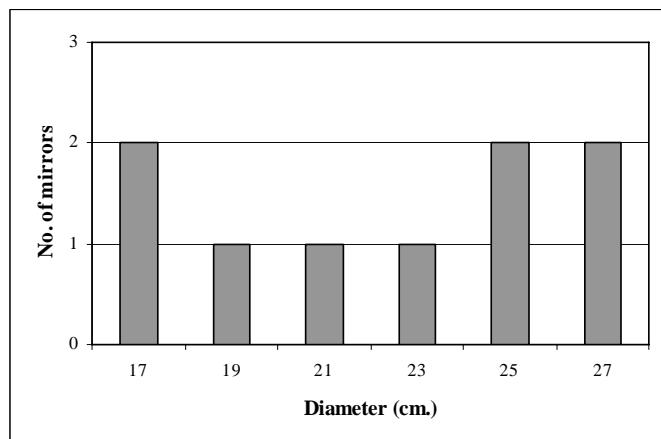


Fig. 4



Fig. 5

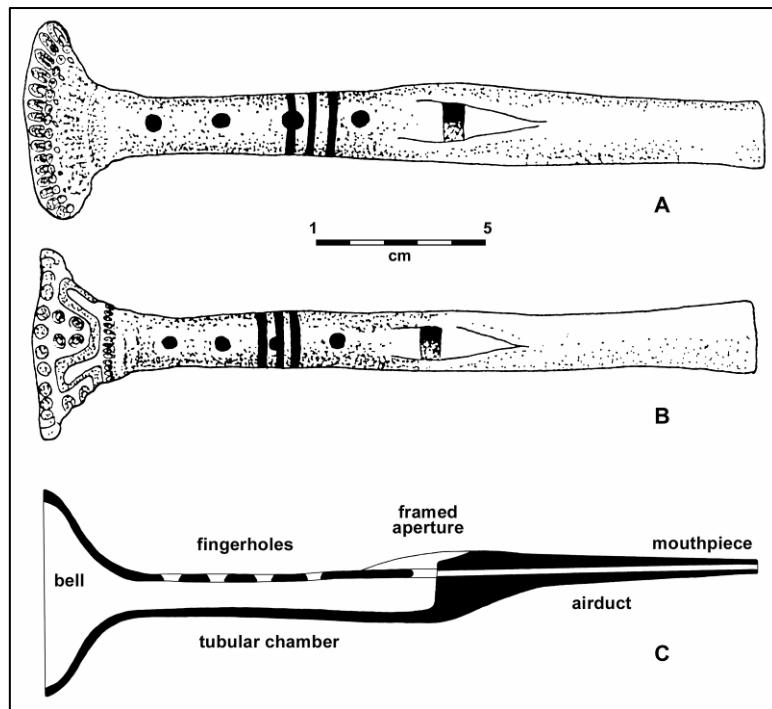


Fig. 6

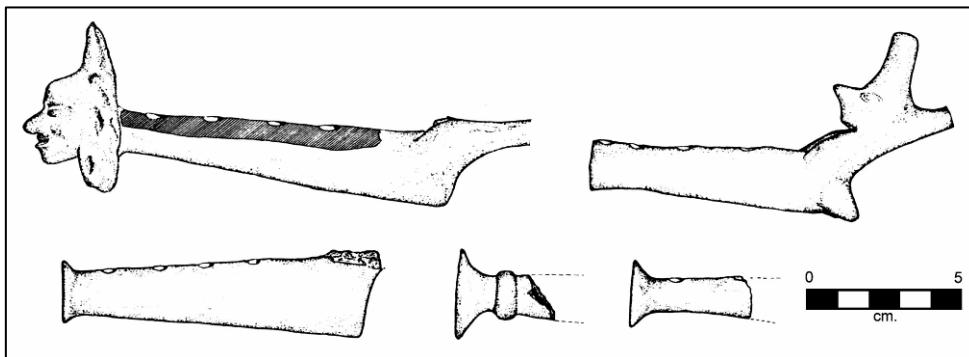


Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9



Fig. 10

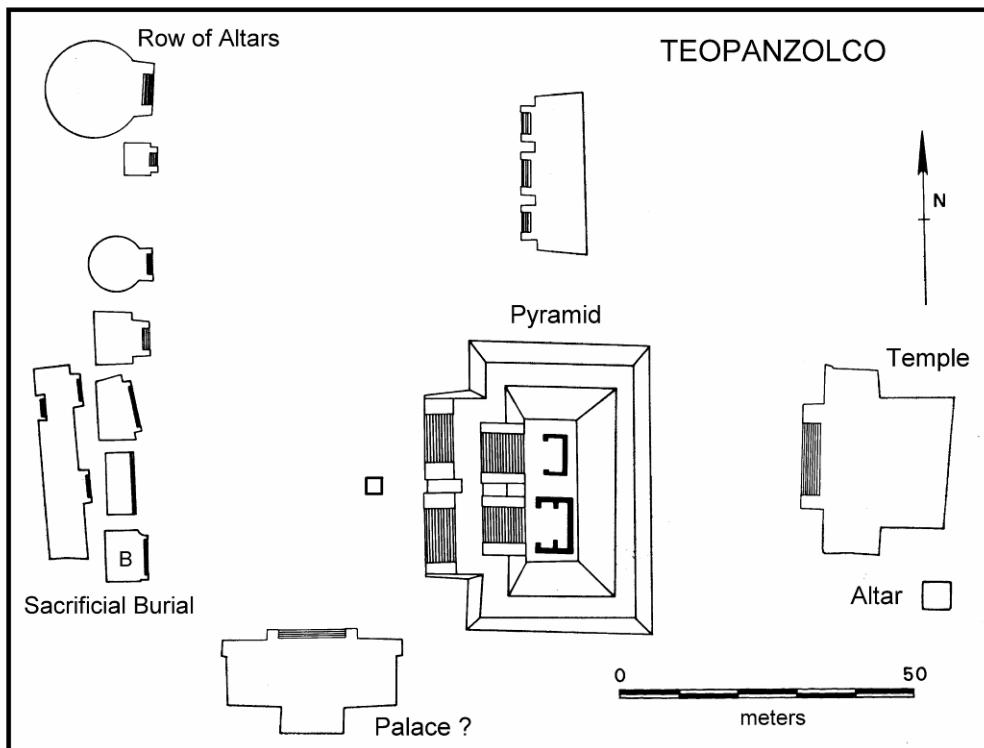


Fig. 11

(Fig 12 Map not done yet)

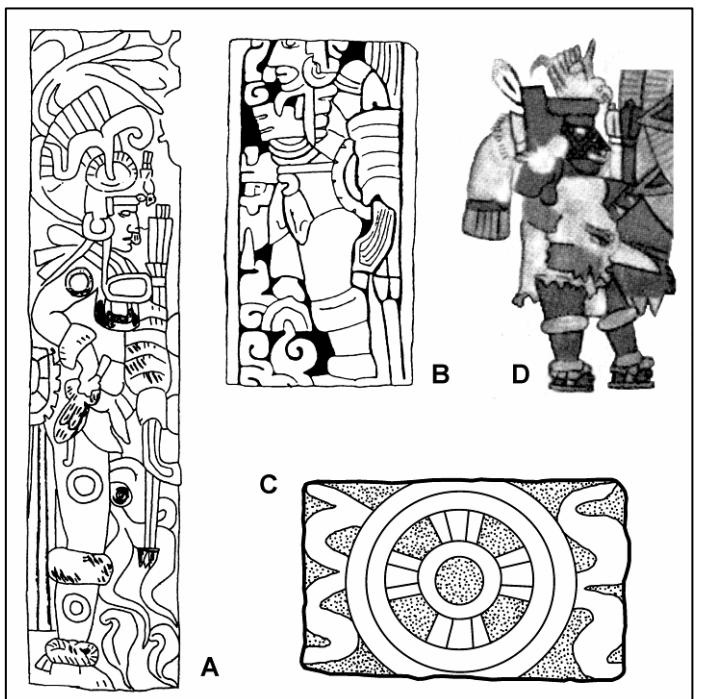


Fig. 13

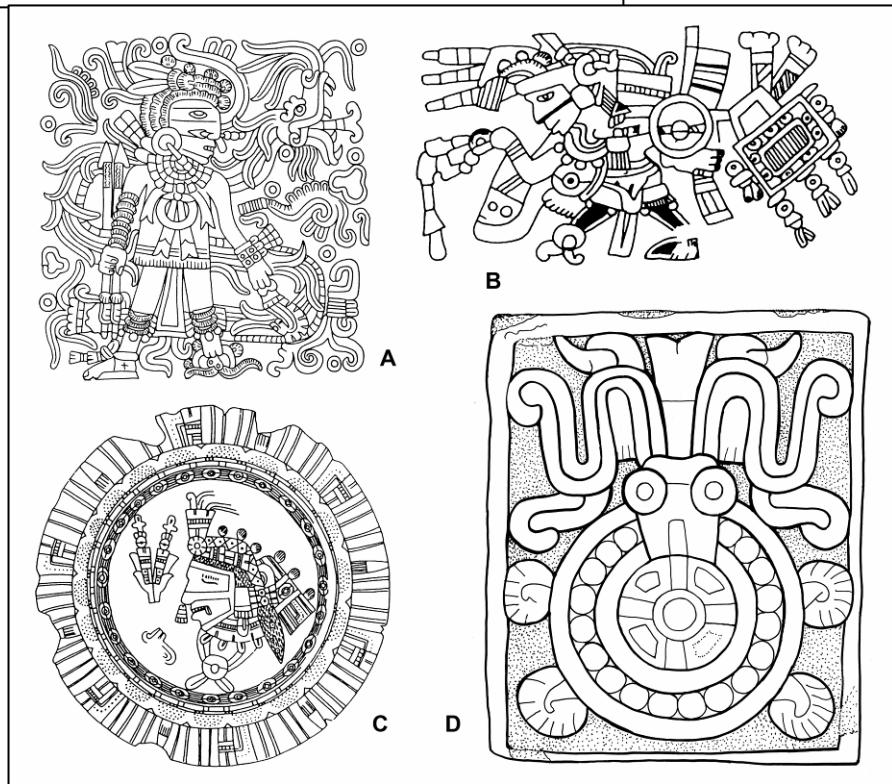


Fig. 14

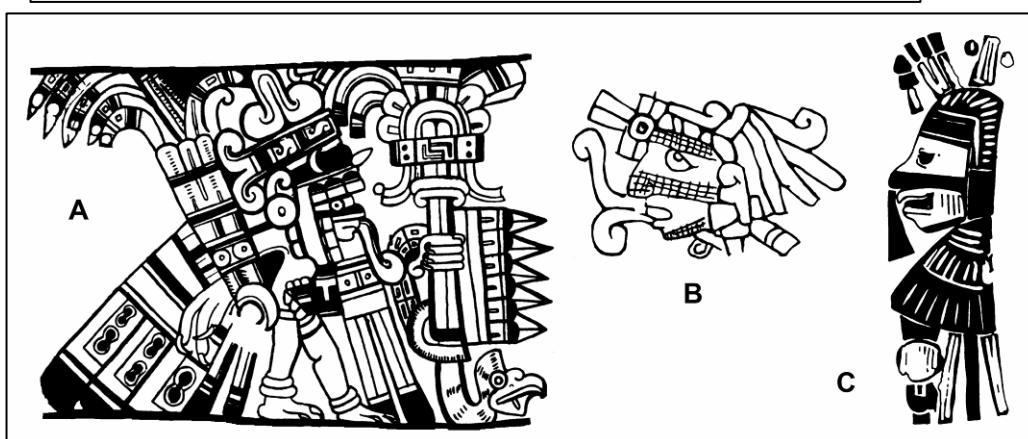


Fig. 15