Dale –

It's a little shop-worn(!?) future thought
you'd like it!
Merry Christmas!

Love,
Mom and Dad

1974

The Origin and Legacy of Mexican Art

Also by Katharine Tyler Burchwood

Art Then and Now (with Kathryn D. Lee)

The Origin and Legacy of Mexican Art

Katharine Tyler Burchwood

SOUTH BRUNSWICK AND NEW YORK: A. S. BARNES AND COMPANY
LONDON: THOMAS YOSELOFF LTD

Library of Congress Catalogue Card Number: 71-146748

A. S. Barnes and Co., Inc.
Cranbury, New Jersey 08512

Thomas Yoseloff Ltd
108 New Bond Street
London W1Y OQX, England

ISBN 0-498-07840-X
Printed in the United States of America

To my Mother,
Ellen Richmond Tyler

Contents

Acknowledgments

My grateful appreciation and thanks are accorded the following for permission to use illustrative material and their help in obtaining it:

Miss Inéz Amor, Galería De Arte Mexicano, Mexico City.

Mr. Edward Barry, Art Editor, *The Chicago Tribune.*

Miss Dorothy Bishop, Department of Arts, International Business Machines Corporation Collection, New York.

Miss Anita Brenner, Mexico City.

Mr. Michael E. Carbine, Director of Public Relations, Mundelein College, Chicago.

Miss Renée D. Gallindo, Secretary, *Art of Mexico,* Mexico City.

Mr. Charles E. Guptill, Mexican Government Tourism Department, Mexico City.

Mr. Kermit Holt, Travel Editor, *The Chicago Tribune.*

Miss Ursula Kühl, Foreign Department, *Artes De Mexico,* Mexico City.

Mr. A. J. Misrachi, Central Art Gallery, Mexico City.

Miss Enriqueta Sanchez, Director, Mexican Government Tourism Department, Chicago.

Mr. David Weber, Correspondent, *The Chicago Tribune,* for Mexico City.

Mr. Conrad White, Granville, Ohio.

Also to:

Artes De Mexico. Publication by The National University of Mexico.

Galería De Arte Mexicano, Milán, Mexico 6 D.F.

Mexican Government Tourism Department.

National Banks of Mexico, Tourism Service.

National Railroads of Mexico.

The Origin and Legacy of Mexican Art

1
ART BEGINS

The legacy of Mexican art is rooted in mystery—in a peoples' unquenchable love of beauty. Across centuries of alternate torture and triumph, in a land both hospitable and cruel, the creative urge rose again and again over natural and human catastrophes which should have fractured its tradition permanently. But each time, a new synthesis was formed, until in the flowering of the twentieth century native art combined the earthiness of cactus with the mysticism of eternity.

The land itself is framed in contrasts, with Eden-like shore lines, impassible jungles, desolate deserts, rich verdured plateaux, mountains soaring thousands of feet above sea level, volcanos smoldering under icecaps, and gigantic mountains towering as guardians over all. Owing to the varying altitudes and to location in both temperate and tropical zones, the climate is diversified, ranging from tropical to cool temperature. Average temperature in the central plateau is 60 to 70 degrees F; in the coastal plains 80 to 90 degrees. (Plate 1. *Popocatepetl. Viewed from Ameca,* depicts such scenic contrasts).

Mexico's political history rivals the geographical. Origins have vanished in a prehistoric past or remote antiquity, while later times present fabulous panoramas. Obscure tribes grow to imperial power, then fall into obscurity or utterly vanish with equal mystery. Immense cities, rivaling in beauty those of the ancient world, rise as if by magic from jungle or plain or are abandoned abruptly to vines and the elements, to be discovered almost intact centuries later by scientists whose ancestors did not know of the builders' existence.

The Mexican people are largely descended from Oriental tribesmen who crossed Bering Strait from northeastern Asia, entering the western hemisphere at the end of the last Ice Age. Trekking southward, they reached this land where their descendants founded a new civilization known as Mesoamerican. Today's population of 30,000,000 includes many living in isolated mountain villages who still speak the Nahuatl language and wear the same type of clothing as did their ancestors who met the Conquistadores. Roughly estimated, a third of the people are pure Indian of remote Asian heredity. Another third, approximately 10,000,000 are *Mestizo,* a blend of Indian and Spanish, closely integrated with Western culture. They are strong, forceful people of dignified bearing, with exemplary qualities which have made them leaders in government, the army, the professions, and the arts. A few inhabitants are a blend of Indian and Negro, while the re-

PLATE 1. *Popocatepetl, viewed from Ameca.* Courtesy Mexican Government Tourism Department

maining population, of pure Spanish descent and known as "Castillian," boasts 500 families living today in urban centers.

The tenacity with which ancient tradition clings is illustrated by the people of Anáhuac—Valley of the Waters—an important early art center. Although this rich farm land, where background mountains rise like monoliths against its sky, was rent asunder by Cortés, natives still speak the Aztec-Mexica tongue. Their unique descent from an Oriental-Occidental amalgam is reflected in an art that combines awareness and appreciation of nature's beauty and the chastening effect of a long history of tribulation, which became Mexico's art legacy.

Areas near coastal stretches on the Gulf bordering humid jungles, known as "rubber-hot-lands," were the home of art-minded people about 1000 B.C. Their artists carved huge stone heads which have been submerged in jungle growth near southern Vera Cruz, Chiapas, and western Tabasco. For centuries these colossal heads remained embedded near tribal burying grounds and pyramids. The heads, many over nine feet high, were

PLATE 2. *Olmec stone face.* Relic of Mexico's oldest civilization. Plaster reproduction. La Venta, Tabasco. Courtesy American Museum of Natural History, New York

skillfully modeled, realistic renderings of round-faced young men. The Spanish called the primitive sculptors who had carved them *Olmec* (deriving the name from *olli* meaning "rubber"), and the strange idols are believed to symbolize strength and power attributed to a god or important person. The heads are characterized by Mongolian features, having flat noses, broad nostrils, thick lips, and narrow eye-slits, and they are carved in direct, forceful style (Plate 2. *Olmec Head. A massive relic of Mexico's oldest civilization*).

These ancient Mexican idols bear a strong resemblance to the arts of Asia, Polynesia, and Oceania, as was noted when relics from both sides of the Pacific were shown at the 1950 exposition of pre-Columbian Art, Museum of Natural History, New York, where interesting comparisons were made with stone relics excavated by Dr. Matthew Stirling in Mexico. An idol wearing a cap resembling a football helmet, discovered by the Smithsonian Institute, was named "El Ray" by the archaeologists, who believed it to be the image of an ancient king. Other Smithsonian relics of heads show spreading tiger-like fangs carved in dynamic style. This type of pattern became dominant throughout Mexican ancient history, and many such carvings were found at Tres Zapotes and dated by radio carbon at around 30 B.C. Also discovered there were stela (grave stones) and calendar calculations with dot-bar cuts which indicate a primitive Mexican numeral system. Although tribal sources yield few certainties determining origins, these relics and art findings of stone do offer reliable clues. Archaeologists have uncovered skillful carvings in three-dimensional form which may be viewed equally well from all sides. Among these small works in blue-green jadeite are masks and figurines discovered in the Olmec homeland (Plate 3. *Head of a Woman*).

Early migrations ended about 1000 B.C., and invaded peoples who had trekked from the far north began settling on farms in fertile areas. Their dependable food crop of corn (maize or *teosinte*) encouraged wandering hunters to remain and form agrarian

PLATE 3. *Head of a Woman.* Olmec style. Jadeite, of uncertain provenance. Courtesy *London Illustrated News,* June 21, 1947

communities, which resulted in forming an agricultural civilization wherein tribal settlements were bound by blood ties. The Indians born into a clan or *calpulli* claimed common heritage and gradually, as numerous tribal subgroups and villages formed, they enlarged into great nations: Toltec, Zapotec, Olmec, and Tarascan (Plate 4. Map: *Pre-Conquest Tribes*).

During the long period ending with the arrival of the Spanish, the tribal nations were shocked again and again by wars causing them to fall and rise. Fortunately, it was an established Mesoamerican practice for invading, conquering peoples to settle and live in

peace with vanquished tribesmen, which enabled them to absorb valuable learning and skills. For example, it is believed that after the artist people of the hot-lands had been conquered, probably by the Maya, they, in turn, fell before barbaric northern invaders who absorbed sections of Olmec territory, thus creating a new and strong tribal strain which produced the Toltec nation. In later time, when another tribe, the Chichimecs, captured the Toltec capital city of Tollan in a surprise attack, they gradually extended control over a large plateau area and the conquering invaders took a place among the other Mesoamerican nations. Interestingly enough, the early tribesmen, despite innumerable defeats and conquests, were able to fuse and retain traditions and customs, including popular handicrafts. Dependable knowledge of ancient tribes is to be found in art relics such as clay figurines and pottery; though loosely labeled, they supply helpful sources for tracing cultures.

Inspired by a deep love of beauty, native art persisted, despite devastating wars, finally to reach a climax three thousand years later—in our own time. Ancient tribal farmers

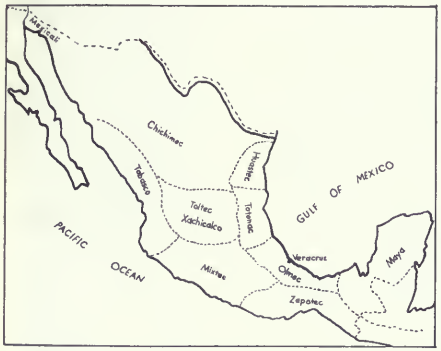

PLATE 4. *Map showing distribution of Mexican tribes.* The Aztecs were in the area first occupied by the Toltecs.

so adjusted their time as to allow leisure for worship, participation in religious ceremonials, dreaming, sorrowing, enjoying life, and creating arts and handicrafts. By nature the Indian is not competitive, as we understand that term, and because a primary love of beauty was ingrained in him, he willingly spent time in the development and perfection of art skills. He listened to hidden presences in sky, cloud, mountain, plant, and animal, expressing in art what he felt and saw. After meditation he had an urge to produce something beautiful. Many remains of the ancient hunter-farmers of the Valley have been found in the region around Anáhuac (Plate 5. *Seated Man*).

In Mexico, as elsewhere, tribal arts were always preceded by handicrafts, and ancient weaving that served many practical purposes made use of readily available cactus fibers of various types known as *agave, maguey,* of *metl.* Tribal women were the first weavers, and they soon learned to design their weavings with geometric, stylized, all-over patterns, the motifs being derived from plants, birds, men, animals, and fish. The first looms were of the primitive saddle-back or horizontal type, consisting of two wooden bars between which warp threads extended lengthwise. Sometimes one bar was fastened to a tree or pole, the other to a leather belt around the weaver's waist, and the weaving of the woof thread was done with a single shuttle. This type of loom, known as the "old," is still used by many weavers who produce beautiful textiles featuring creative nature designs. The *petate* (Aztec for "mat") is a practical and popular woven wrap which is as popular and useful now as in pre-Conquest days. Basically it provides a bed or mattress of woven reeds, covered with a cloth woven from maguey fibers; this often serves as a burial wrap for humble Indians. The ancient craft of weaving has become an important and profitable Mexican industry today, and many skilled artisans in Puebla, Guerrero,

PLATE 5. *Seated man.* Pre-Columbian Mexican sculpture of Jalisco, Mexico. Courtesy Chicago Natural History Museum

and Oaxaca are engaged in the large-scale production of woven articles.

Settled agrarian living created the need for domestic implements and containers, hence pottery-making was an early craft. Mexican soil provides quantities of clay well suited for pottery and the earliest bowls and jugs were made of coarse, red-yellow clay fired under burning wood, though later pottery for utilitarian needs (*corriente*) was baked in ovens or kilns. Craftsmen learned to mix limestone with cement, which they crushed to a fine sand and combined with an adhesive to provide a smooth surface on which designs could be etched or painted. The first designs consisted of flowing curvilinear motifs rendered in black or white strokes on reddish clay vessels. The patterns were applied in bands around the sides of bowls and on the necks of jugs.

Women made most of the household pottery, using simple molds such as basket containers, though pottery for domestic use was often the work of an entire family in the average home, where children learned to be little craftsmen, their efforts being regarded with special pride. Pottery became a popular medium of exchange at the weekly tiaquiz and tribes developed stylistic differences in their wares. Early potters at Cholula became noted for their red and black wares, and they also excelled in making weapons and carving figurines in clay, terra-cotta, and jade. Ancient pottery and carvings are prized by archaeologists, for these relics offer more exact cultural information than architecture and folk-lyric legends.

After their fame in ceramic skills spread throughout the central highlands, experts among Olmec and Zapotec craftsmen were sent as roving tutors to instruct other tribal groups. In time, capable artisans located near the great religious centers dominating the Valley of Anáhuac—at Cholula, Monte Albán, and Teotihuacán. During the most prosperous period of the Toltec nation, professional potters formed guilds for production of ceremonial vessels and elaborate mortuary vases for use in symbolic-religious services. Many rare ceramic treasures have been found in tombs at Monte Albán, where beautifully decorated funeral pieces were intended to contain food and drink for the dead. These were polished to a deep, high luster achieved by vigorous rubbing and burnishing with obsidian scrapers and agate stones. Though pre-Columbian pottery was unglazed, a shiny, glaze-like effect was achieved entirely by hand. Made without the aid of a potter's wheel, famous primitive funeral vases are perfectly shaped and the elegant polished black ware, produced between 272 B.C. and A.D. 1, is regarded as among the finest pottery made by Mesoamerican peoples.

PLATE 6. *Terra-cotta head.* Totonac sculpture. Classical Period. Courtesy The Cleveland Museum of Art, Purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund

When in the sixteenth century the Spanish introduced the potter's wheel, along with

PLATE 7. *Tenoned head. Man with Dolphin Helmet.* Totonac sculpture. Courtesy International Communications Foundation, Monterey Park, California

molds and glazes, missionary priests taught the Indians newer methods of pottery-making along with their Gospel lessons. The Indians of Puebla were the first to receive this priestly instruction and rarely beautiful ritual pieces were made there for the church. Fine secular pottery has etched designs of birds, flowers, reptiles, and human figures. Mexican pottery of today, following the tradition of early times, enjoys a world market and villagers take pride in displaying it and their weaving on travel routes.

Early Mexican ritual sculpture required symbolic interpretation, for it was intended solely for religious purposes and naturalistic designs were restricted to secular use. During the Classic Period of Mexican sculpture (A.D. 1–900) only archaic forms prevailed. Later artists produced carefully studied, naturalistic portrait heads, and remarkably skillful carvings of structural anatomy were made by Totonac sculptors. *Terra-cotta Head* (Plate 6) is a work of firm musculature and belongs to the Vera Cruz art tradition of careful and detailed workmanship. A profile assigned to the eighth-ninth century is the *Tenoned Head. Man with a Dolphin Helmet* (Plate 7). A realistic sculpture individually characterized, it expresses a more advanced phase of Totonac culture.

An early work of special interest (500 B.C.–A.D. 500) is a statue carved from sandstone, *Human Figure with Staff* (Plate 8), made in Tampico, Mexico. The figure here shows conscious distortion to secure significant art values. A limestone carving known as *Hacha* (Plate 9) in the Vera Cruz tradition (A.D. 400–800) is a significant example of the Trajin Style. The height of this exquisite carving is thirteen-and-one-fourth inches.

Clay figurines and heads found near Vera Cruz depict people who lived there during the seventh century. There is no information regarding what later happened to them; whether they were conquered or became tribute payers to a series of conquerors is unknown. Typical of this art is *Head of a Smiling Woman* (Plate 10). Totonac sculptors were expert in modeling small figurines; they invariably had smiling faces and so became known as "laughing heads." Their lively human interest and charm have special appeal.

Because the Mesoamerican peoples were constantly exposed to severe dangers, they sought protection through the magic aid of idols, which served to charm away or ward off danger and disaster. Carved idols often represented jaguars shown in ferocious, distorted poses emphasizing dynamic power and drive—a sculptural motif which remained popular in Mexican art for thousands of years.

PLATE 8. *Figure of a man leaning on a staff.* Vera Cruz, Haustec, 900–1200 A.D. Museum of Primitive Art, New York

PLATE 9. *"Hacha."* Carved limestone. Vera Cruz. Tajin style 400–800 A.D. (height 13¼") Courtesy *Art of Mexico*

Large carved heads, originally made to decorate temples, have been found in Totonac jungles. They confirm the existence of an early art civilization there a thousand years before Cortés came, and indicate that the Totonacs had lived there consecutively from 500 B.C.

PLATE 10. *Head of a Smiling Woman.* Vera Cruz. Pre-Columbian. Courtesy London Illustrated News, March 7, 1953

Thousands of small idols made for a fertility cult were found in the vicinity of Teotihuacán, where Valley farmers worshiped during the Archaic Period. Since the mother of the gods was their most important goddess, idols were made representing the creative force ascribed to women. These female forms of clay, jade, terra-cotta, or stone, have protruding eyes, large hips and thighs, and tiny wasp-like waists. Similar cult figurines have also been found in what are now the states of Guerrero and Oaxaca, where they probably were dropped in corn fields to conjure good crops from the gods (Plate 11. *Clay Figurines of the Archaic Period*). Obsidian and rock crystal found in volcanic soil were carefully chipped by Indian sculptors to make figurines for cult worship. Having no steel knives or fine chisels, the ancient artists depended solely on crude implements made from volcanic rock with which to accomplish their carving. Many skillfully cut jade idols have been found, although jade is the hardest of Mexican stones to carve.

Massive Toltec construction was characteristic of the architecture of this period. Sculptural forms were often used as columns for holding roofs and the figures so employed were symbolic designs merely suggestive of the human form. Low-relief carvings in structural stone were used to convey the effect of strength and beauty when incorporated with architecture, although all decorative features were in symbolic style.

When the Aztecs conquered the Toltecs, they adopted all of the architectural and art forms of these gifted artist-builders. Both the Toltecs and the Zapotecs, who were Mexico's greatest builders, achieved difficult construction feats without the help of mechanical methods for lifting and placing huge stones in position and without pack animals for transporting materials. How they accomplished their tasks remains a debated mystery. Quarries located in what is now the State of Guerrero, supplied *trachite* and *tezontl* for building. The latter is a porous red rock derived from lava, which was used for hundreds of years and provided remarkable permanency. A notable example is the Palace of Cortés at Cuernavaca, which is still in good structural condition and is used today as a museum and courthouse.

The people of Mexico had not lived long as settled farmers when they undertook the building of vast temple-cities. Stepped pyramids were erected between the eighth and ninth centuries B.C. which included a complex of courtyards wherein a ball game called *trachti* was played. A partly excavated Totonac city in northern Vera Cruz province

PLATE 11. *Clay figurines.* Totonac culture. Archaic period. Courtesy *Mexican Arts Publications*

contains a palace, a ball court, and a seven-tiered pyramid with nearby burial grounds covering ancient shrines. Crumbling ruins in the city of Tzintzuntzen, one-time capital of the Tarascan nation, contain idols, basalt axes, and weapons of obsidian and flint. These relics remind us that countless submerged remains await archaeological spadework.

Although tribal chiefs retained power as rulers during development of the Mesoamerican civilization, tribal priests supervised and managed temple building, which at first consisted only of mounds of rock and lava. As religion became of greater importance, the power of the priests increased in the tribes and they secured builders, architects, and sculptors for all the huge temples that were later built, calling up labor forces and controlling expenditures for the tremendous tasks of temple construction. Priests also determined the calendar form to be followed and the dates for festivals, and they directed all ceremonials and rituals.

2
THE ART OF BUILDING

During the prehistoric period, mounds of rock, adobe, and lava served as shrines for worship, the sites later becoming locations for pyramid-temples, and thus began Mexico's large-scale building culture. The Pyramid of Cuilcuilco, erected by the Olmecs about 600 B.C., is the earliest extant monumental construction in the central highlands. It was completely submerged around A.D. 300 by volcanic eruption, which the Indians believed was an act of angry gods. In 1922 the pyramid was excavated by the Department of Archaeology of the University of Arizona and was found to be in a relatively good state of preservation because it was covered by a protective layer of lava. The pyramid consists of four truncated cones, each increasing in size, with an overall height of sixty-five feet. Located near the national university campus at the capital's edge, it is only fifty miles from the ancient religious center of San Juan Teotihuacán. Remains of the ancient Pyramid of Cuilcuilco constitute a highly prized Mexican relic.

Other similar, though much smaller, pyramids were built on rectangular or square bases, diminishing toward the top either step by step or by graduated sides to the summit where a sanctuary was enthroned. Carved symbols of skulls and feathered serpents extended out on pegs from the walls of these early pyramids. In El Tajin, near Vera Cruz, is the Pyramid of the Niches, a Totonac monument of the Classical Period believed to have been part of an ancient city. Made of volcanic rock and adobe, its sides were covered with brightly painted stucco.

When wild northern tribesmen, led by their conquering chief Mexicoatl, subdued the Valley of Anáhuac about A.D. 700, they settled and intermarried with the civilized people there, whose forebears had cradled Mesoamerican highland culture. Learning the art of building from them, they were destined to be Mexico's master builders, and ancestors of the great Toltec tribe. Their last legacy included enlargement of the religious center at Teotihuacán and building of the city of Tollan (also called Tula), which became the Toltec capital. This ancient city contained the imposing Plaza with its Temple of Tlaloc honoring the God of Rain. Four huge statues of warriors have been excavated on the site, near a former Temple of Warriors. These Toltec warrior statues, known as the *Giant Atlantes* (Plate 12), were excavated between 1940 and 1945, and are now on exhibit in the archaeological zone of Tula, state of Hidalgo, along with other relics of that area which had been successfully occu-

pied by Toltecs,Chichimecs, and Aztecs. Also found there were large carved friezes of coyotes and eagles which have the bold elaborate artistry typical of early Indian decoration.

PLATE 12. *Toltec Warrior; known as the Giant Atlantes. Tula, Hidalgo.* Colossal stone sculpture. Courtesy Juárez Museum, Chihuahua

These huge, fearsome warriors of a bygone epoch stare out over the ruins of the once mighty Tula, capital of the Toltecs. Originally there were four giant warriors and the fifteen-foot-high statues, together with pillars, supported the roof of a temple on top of the Pyramid of Quetzalcóatl, chief deity of the Toltecs.

The Toltecs, who became highly successful agriculturists, produced large grain surpluses, but more important, they built a vastly enlarged religious center at Teotihuacán, dedicated to nature gods from whom they sought plentiful crops and continued prosperity. The Toltec religion ascribed a soul to the elements of nature, believing that spirits of the gods governed fertility and the heavenly constellations whose forces furnished them with all the elements of life. These spirits lurked in clouds, rainbows, sunsets, and winds. Later Indians worshiped a vast pantheon of gods, principal among which were the Sun God; his consort, the Moon Goddess; the Rain God, Tlaloc; his consort, the Water Goddess; the War God; and Quetzalcóatl, god of air, life, sky, and earth, who controlled the wonder of creation. Propitiation of the gods was by prayer, rituals, sacrifices, participation in fiestas, ballad-singing, art, and folkloric dancing, for the Indian believes that aesthetic expression helps his identification with the spirit world. He willingly trudges miles to special religious rituals and festivals; the roads to shrines are filled with Indians, some walking and some riding burros or leading them with heavy burdens. Others drive goats and turkeys on the road while bearing large bundles on their heads. Women carry babes on their backs while holding the hand of a toddler. Priests arranged dates of rituals and fiestas on the same days as the market dates (tiaquiz) in order to combine pilgrimages and permit the attendance of the entire family.

The name *Toltec* is derived from the tribe's great capital city, Tollan, and the nation enjoyed three hundred years of supremacy and continued prosperity in its vast domain. But before the Toltec nation crumbled under the onslaught of barbaric foes, it left a vast legacy of massive construction, the temple city of Teotihuacán. Altars and idols have not yet been fully restored at the pyramid temple there, but visitors can climb the Pyramid of the Sun—which has been completely excavated—and view a far-reaching countryside and mountain terrain comprising Toltec domains, to which the tribe became heirs after conquering the Teotihuacáns. The Toltecs wisely built upon what they found there

and enhanced the "Place of the Gods" by erecting a huge square pyramid, its excavation being near the town of San Juan Teotihuacán. The historic religious center, or "Habitatation of the Gods," was later abandoned and suffered neglect and ruin before the Aztec conquest of the Valley. Teotihuacán's slow decline began after the great drought of A.D. 890, when the center was little used. By around A.D. 1100 it was a deserted ghost city called "Place of the Dead."

Although the old Toltec "builder-people" were subordinated when Aztec control brought a strong warrior class into prominence, some codex records tell that a few Aztec emperors continued to make pilgrimages to Teotihuacán for rituals up until the Conquest. Moctezuma II was a follower of the Toltec faith and the Aztecs are credited with efforts to preserve the ancient religious heritage. Teotihuacán's three largest units comprised the Pyramid of the Sun, the Pyramid of the Moon, the Temple of Quetzalcóatl, and a lesser group included the Temple of Agriculture with its plaza and array of tall columns. The Pyramid of the Sun has five terraces; a monumental stairway leads to the summit sanctuary. This vast construction was erected to express the Indian's yearning to honor the Sun God with a majestic shrine. Though the Pyramid of the Moon and the Temple of Agriculture were much smaller, they also were settings for symbolic pageantry and elaborate ceremonials.

Teotihuacán's ruins are today a huge mass of bleak gray stones, rising somber and tall, but the visitor can visualize processions of priests in ornate cult paraphernalia, and colorful assemblages, mounting the pyramid steps to the temple top all sparkling in the sun. The temple complex also contained several three-storied palaces used by priests representing various fertility cults. Though now in ruins, some recovered parts of walls contain painted relics of what were once ancient murals. Priests of the Classic Period were students of astronomy and their preserved records enumerate the calendrical rituals honoring gods who governed the seasons, sun, and soil. All religious-agrarian observances were strictly kept by priests, who, as representatives of the gods, received absolute obedience. The priests were also closely linked with artists and architects and it was their duty to promote preservation of art traditions.

Now a treasured archaeological zone, Teotihuacán was originally intended for a sacred city to which pilgrimages could be made from distant parts of Mesoamerica. It was first constructed by an unknown race during the Archaic Period, the date being mere conjecture since Teotihuacán's origin is buried in mystery. Though it is known to have been used constantly as a shrine between 200 B.C. and A.D. 900, the entire center was laid out on three square miles containing five pyramid temples. The temples were a half-mile apart and each had its own platform. The largest construction, the Temple of the Sun, rose to a height of 216 feet. All construction was of volcanic stone blocks placed in pyramidal form. Restoration of other parts of the complex, erected in honor of various gods and heavenly planets, is progressing and has in some instances been completed. The present accomplishment, however, represents the greatest single Mexican archaeological achievement of our time.

During the Toltec regime, the Teotihuacán center included the majestic spectacle of the entire Valley, having a population of approximately 100,000. Located on a site thirty miles northeast of the present capital, its vast size dwarfs, by comparison, all else in Mexico, and is today both majestic and impressive, gracing an area where mountain vistas show two great volcanoes to the south, Ixtaccihuatl and Popocatepetl, whose snowy peaks reach the clouds (Plate 13. *Pyramid of the Sun*).

This massive structure is greater in size

than any other pyramid, differing in shape from the Cheops Pyramid of Egypt which rises tall and smooth to a sharp point and was built for a tomb, whereas Mexican pyramids were intended for temples of worship. The architectural zone of Teotihuacán contains many valued relics, including sculpture, stone sarcophagi, stone implements, and clay death-masks, all proving that Toltec craftsmen excelled in varied art fields. Among excavated relics of Toltec ceramic art are rare cylindrical vases with three feet and fitted lids, the handles being designed in the form of birds. Practical resourcefulness of the Toltecs is noted in their invention of Tamscal steam baths, created by running water over heated stones; these baths served as models for the Aztecs, who improved them as they did the Toltec Codex records. Public markets for buying and selling were introduced by the Toltecs, who began the custom of Mexican tiaquiz which persists throughout Mesoamerica (Plate 14. *A Typical Market Scene*). The Toltecs' greatest legacy is their remarkable architecture, notable through the ages for its massive strength. Toltec construction continued as a major influence for thousands of years after the nation had completely fallen apart.

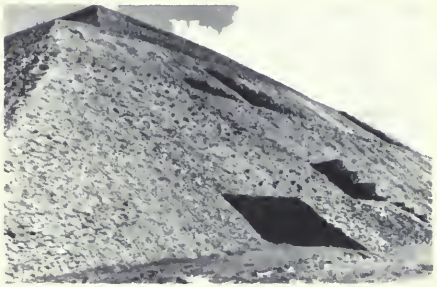

PLATE 13. *Teotihuacán: Pyramid of the Sun* (2 views). Courtesy Conrad White, Granville, Ohio

PLATE 14. *Typical market day scene.* Tiaquiz. Arts of Mexico. Courtesy Mexican Arts Publications

About a mile from the Pyramid of the Sun stood a vast rectangular enclosure containing the Temple of Quetzalcóatl, dedicated to the God of Air and Life and in Toltec days used chiefly for agrarian rituals. This section of

PLATE 15. *Plumed Serpent.* Carved on Pyramid. Teotihuacán. Stone carving. Courtesy Anita Brenner and Bank of Mexico Tourist Service, Mexico City

the large complex also contained smaller pyramids, which tradition tells were dedicated to the stars—the Indians' symbol of eternity. The Temple of Quetzalcóatl was profusely decorated with gargoyle-like, barbaric, stone heads symbolic of the Rain God, Tlaloc, with numerous sculptures honoring the plumed or feathered serpent—Quetzalcóatl's symbol (Plate 15. *Plumed Serpent*). These cryptic carvings on each tier of the temple are now in a fair state of preservation. Grotesque stylized heads, repeated in high relief on tier after tier of masonry, show serpent heads wreathed in quetzal plumes to represent the god's symbol; these are believed to have been carved by the Toltecs. (Plate 16. *Serpent Heads*). Other carvings, in linear style, are of clouds, raindrops, seashells, skulls, tigers, astral signs, and dot-bar numerals, believed to be among the oldest architectural low-relief carvings in central Mexico.

Toltec decline was brought about by internal turmoil when religious-civic strife raged among numerous tribes. After the Toltecs assumed the peaceful religion of Quetzalcóatl, which had been practiced by some of their conquered people, many of the nation's tribes would not subscribe to it and they continued to worship the God of War, the chief deity of their barbaric past, who demanded continual warfare of his followers. Quetzalcóatl always appeared to his worshipers as a bearded old man with white skin, wearing a flowing white robe, and he is so rendered by Orozco in his famous mural (Plate 17. *Quetzalcóatl, God of Peace.* Mural detail representing the Toltec legend). The Toltecs further believed that their ruler, who was both king and priest (A.D. 925–947), was a reincarnation of this god, who required his people to live in peace and forbade human sacrifices, asking his worshipers to present him with fruits and flowers only. Quetzalcóatl's symbol, the feathered or plumed serpent, was derived from *quetzalli,* a bird of beautiful plumage, and *cóatl,* a serpent.

When drastic civil war developed, the king fled his palace at Tollan (A.D. 927), which he burned after secretly burying the national treasure. He took refuge among the Olmecs, but promptly sailed away in a small craft upon open seas and was probably lost, though he had promised to return with the invincible aid of Quetzalcóatl to avenge the destruction of his kingdom by the disloyal Toltec tribes. In spite of severe civil-religious conflict within the Toltec nation, it survived, though in a weakened condition, for another two hundred years, when, in A.D. 1168 it was destroyed by a northern tribe of barbaric Chichimecs. After total dissolution of the

PLATE 16. *Temple of Quetzalcóatl.* Stone carvings of the Plumed (or Feathered) Serpent at Teotihuacán. Courtesy Mexican Government Tourism Department

Toltec nation, the entire Valley was in utter chaos and the tribes fought each other under sponsorship of different gods. After Tollan was razed, many Toltecs fled, although some remained in the Valley, some settled at Oaxaca and Puebla, and others migrated to Yucatan. Though the Chichimec people never fully established their own empire, they controlled much of the Valley for hundreds of years, their kings being loyal to tribal authority. The small, present-day village of Tenayuca, eight miles northwest of Mexico City, was once an important Chichimec center; it contains some excavated remains of great archaeological interest.

During a later period of severe unrest (c. A.D. 1300) a strong, art-gifted people known as Mixtec-Puebla, descendants of an old ceremonial civilization in the Valley, occupied Teotihuacán, establishing themselves there as artists and teachers of art skills while living peacefully. These Mixtec-Puebla people continued there until the Aztecs conquered the whole area, although during the interval

prior to the Conquest they succeeded in fostering a Golden Age of Peace, enjoyed by many tribes including Olmecs, Zapotecs, Totonacs, Mixtecs, and Puebla peoples. It was through their united efforts that the ancient center at Monte Albán realized renewed importance and was again occupied. At this time religion and peace were symbolically interpreted in art, and though Aztec ascendancy brought military emphasis, art skills and knowledge were strongly stressed. These redevelopments of ancient Mesoamerican centers filled a need of the people.

The fine art of fresco painting in the Valley of Anáhuac had been strongly linked with religion during the Toltec phase at Teotihuacán, as is shown in murals discovered there and on walls of temples crowning pyramids at Cholula, and in tombs at Monte Albán. Much pre-Hispanic mural art found in Zapotec and Toltec cities consisted of geometric interlaced designs featuring religious symbolism, though paintings found at Teotihuacán emphasized agrarian calendar rituals. Polychrome renderings of butterflies and greatly enlarged insect heads were painted on wall panels of Cholula's pyramid. These are similar to recently discovered paintings in the Palace of Butterflies now on exhibit at the museum maintained on the site of the Pyramid at Teotihuacán. It is believed that these naturalistic works were painted in the third or fourth centuries of the Christian era. Renderings of gods, goddesses, and priests elab-

PLATE 17. *Quetzalcóatl, God of Peace.* From Toltec legend. (Fresco detail) by José Clemente Orozco at Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire. Reproduced by permission of the Trustees of Dartmouth College

orately arrayed in cult costumes have been discovered in large tombs at Monte Albán. Other interesting pre-Hispanic murals show jaguars and coyotes found on palace walls in apartments occupied by Toltec nobles. Paintings of the period after A.D. 1000 and found on altars at Tizatlán, near Tlaxcala, show figures of gods and goddesses similar to Mixtec polychrome works found near Oaxaca and Puebla.

The famous pre-Hispanic city of Cholula is located in a lovely Valley dominated by beautiful Mount Orizaba, and lies eight miles west of Puebla. Because Cholula possessed many ancient burial mounds marking shrines, it early became a religious center and pilgrimage site. In A.D. 688 Cholula was the Mixtec capital and it remained so until the Conquest. Only a few ancient remains now exist in Cholula because a new city was built there and Christian churches were built on shrine sites, causing Cholula to be called "the Rome of Mexico." In pre-Hispanic times Cholula had been the important religious and urban center of the entire Valley of Puebla, and its large teocalli, built to honor Quetzalcóatl, soared to majestic height over the plateau. Though much smaller, this teocalli resembled in grandeur Teotihuacán's great pyramid, and was one of the finest early-period structures in Mexico. The main pyramid at Cholula was excavated in 1931, when five different types of construction were discovered there. Each period is differentiated by a pyramidal adobe structure of different size, incorporated in a pyramid of the preceding epoch. Today's visitors who view the interior are accompanied by a government guide, who carries a lantern to permit seeing the ancient stages of construction while on a tour of inspection winding through a mile of tunnels cut into the pyramid's adobe bricks.

Today the site is crowned by a handsome Christian church built by Spanish Colonials as replacement for the Indian teocalli they destroyed. The church has an impressive green tile dome and interior walls of native marble and onyx combined with ornamentation of gold leaf in Spanish-Colonial style. The ancient and unique city of Cholula is remembered as the historic site where Cortés's army encamped beside the old teocalli, and where he received warning of a native plot against the Spanish. When the message was brought him by an Indian interpretor, Cortés ordered the killing of hundreds of natives assembled for prayer in the teocalli. After the massacre, Cholula was burned. Bernal Diaz del Castillo, the Spanish soldier-historian who marched with Cortés's army, wrote an eyewitness report of these events, including the burning of Cholula.

Later, when the Spanish Conquistadores had forced their way into Aztec territory and were approaching the capital, the Indians recalled with anguish their neglect in Toltec days of the god Quetzalcóatl. They were convinced that the god had sent the white-skinned men to destroy them, and, because they were terror-stricken in the belief that the Spanish were reincarnations of Quetzalcóatl, their resistance was paralyzed. During the struggle between the Aztecs and Cortés's army in 1519, the Emperor Moctezuma sent a Mask of Quetzalcóatl to Cortés. This Aztec mask, a work done in Guerrero, was made of stone combined with a mosaic of turquoise and coral, with eyes of shell and obsidian.

3
MONTE ALBÁN

Monte Albán, an archaeological site built in the Classical Period, consisted of an amazing ceremonial center located high on a bleak mountain six miles west of the modern city of Oaxaca, in southern Mexico. The center covered an area of twenty-five square miles, and rose 1500 feet over the plain. Ancient Indians selected this spectacular site for the home of their gods because they considered it a worthy location for communion with the nature forces they worshiped. Monte Albán was a temple city before Teotihuacán was built, and is believed to have had a population of over one hundred thousand. The origin of Monte Albán is vague but some archaeologists of the University of Mexico believe that it was at one time controlled by the Olmecs though largely built by the Zapotecs. Active from about 1000 B.C.–A.D. 1522, it was the only ceremonial center continuously used until the Conquest. Originally built by an unknown people, it was completely destroyed before the Toltecs controlled the Valley. Relics of Monte Albán's hieroglyphics, calendar, and astronomical studies indicate that its original inhabitants and builders were of an advanced culture and superior to other Mexican people. After Zapotec leadership at the Mount ended, a tribe known as the Mixteca, which lived in the Oaxaca area, took over control of the ancient center. They were a religious and art-conscious people and their period was one of peace. Pilgrimages were made on foot to shrines and often meant traveling for miles (Plate 18. *Mexican Woman Enroute to a Shrine*). When the Aztecs took over the entire area, the Mount had been used consecutively as a religious center for over a thousand years. The Mixtecs were not hindered by the Aztecs, who allowed them to continue in their art-loving way of life because of appreciation of their art accomplishments.

Monte Albán's vast ceremonial center contained a crowning rectangular plaza 3,300 feet long and 850 feet wide, with an altar of sacrifice which was reached by four stairways (Plate 19. *Monte Albán's Excavations*). Stone was used to construct solid rock masses through which passageways were cut, honeycombing the entire Mount with tunnels of elaborate masonry. The ancient Zapotec builders were expert stone masons and restoration gives proof of their skillful and original engineering projects (Plate 20. *Monte Albán. Passageway*).

The great center contained a ball-court intended for the game called tlachtli, and there was a large grandstand for spectators. This was the first athletic-field construction

PLATE 18. *Mexican woman enroute to shrine worship.* (Tepepulco, Caja Del Agua) Courtesy *Art of Mexico*

PLATE 19. *Excavations.* Monte Albán. (2 views).
Courtesy Conrad White

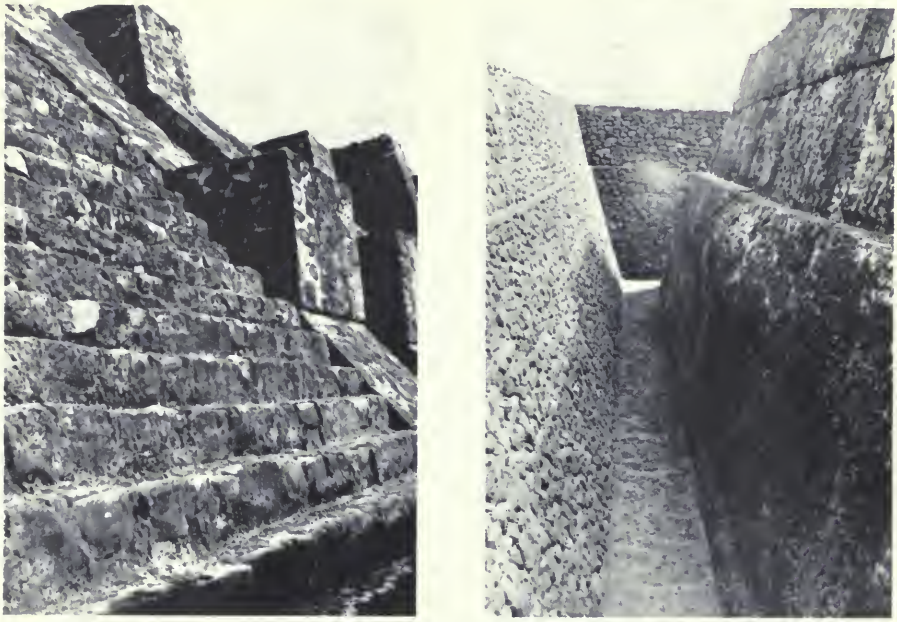

PLATE 20. *Passageway, room interior.* Monte Albán. (2 views). Courtesy Conrad White

in the Americas. Also included were palatial apartments for the king, nobles, and priests, whose tomb locations extended on high abutments, while lesser tombs were built on the Mount's lower spurs (Plate 21. *Tomb. Monte Albán*). Though only a few structures of the vast Monte Albán complex have been excavated and restoration on the larger units of pyramids and temples has progressed slowly according to plan, there is ample proof of the magnificence of its ancient construction and the great skill with which it was done.

During the center's period of gradual decline (A.D. 900–1420), a series of severe droughts caused many of the Mount's people to move to Mitla, an ancient city twenty-six miles from Oaxaca, and the great site was then used mainly as a burial place although some Mixtec inhabitants remained at the Mount after the Conquest.

The rare art skills of Mixtec people are attested by excavated relics, which include stone carvings and bas-reliefs discovered in tombs. Some of these show astronomical designs of fine workmanship. Among the most famous relics are some life-size stone relief carvings, probably part of a temple frieze, showing nude men in rhythmic motion resembling dancing; all 140 figures, however, suggest caricatures and they are believed to portray tribal chiefs and warriors taken prisoner in war. These "dancer stones," as they are called, are considered a mystery of Monte Albán. Some tombs of Zapotec noblemen and

priests contained murals, carvings of the Corn God, urns, gold masks, rare ceramics, and incense burners (Plate 22. *Funeral Vase*) (Plate 23. *Two painted vessels of about* A.D. 1300).

A landscape mural covering one wall portrays the Paradise of Tlaloc, the Rain God; it shows dancing figures among flowering trees. Notable finds in tombs were "black ware" ceramics polished to a high glaze and regarded as the finest vases in all Mesoamerica. Mixtec artist-craftsmen produced elaborately designed jewelry. The pictured necklace (Plate 24. *Necklace. Mitla*) is an

PLATE 21. *Tomb.* Monte Albán. Courtesy *Art of Mexico*

PLATE 22. *Funerary urn.* Zapotec Culture from Oaxaca, Monte Albán Tomb 103. Pictorial ornament. Courtesy Mexican Government Tourism Department

exquisite piece of gold filigree beads which are flat and carry three tiny bells. The two disks are ear ornaments, each in the form of a hummingbird's head holding a pendant made with three bells. Many examples of Mixtec jewelry, fine jade carving, and metallurgy show that these artisans were flawless technicians. The Mixtecs were also expert in making ceremonial gold masks, for which they invented a new technique of pressing gold sheets into molds. Many of these beautiful gold pieces were melted by the Spanish, who stole them for the precious metal. The high quality of Mixtec artistry is evident in a fantastic horde of treasures which were discovered when Tomb 7 was opened in 1931. It contained a rich collection of jewels, large pearls, and gold breast-plates; altogether the cache weighed over nine pounds and consisted of quantities of rare treasures made with great skill. Although 169 other tombs were opened, none held articles comparable in value to those in Tomb 7.

In 1937–38, some brightly colored frescoes were found in Monte Albán tombs, and included there were the skeletons of nine priests. Although examples of rare Mixtec articles found at Monte Albán are widely scattered throughout museums of the world, the most comprehensive exhibits are in the Museum of Natural History in Mexico City, State Museum of Oaxaca, and the Museum of Mitla.

Codices intended for use as books were made of deerskin, stag hides, or maguey leaves, and folded like a screen. Pictographic annals were made at Monte Albán, primarily to preserve information about historic events. These annals have special art interest because of their fine drawing, coloring, and engaging charm, being decorated with colored miniatures and combined with hieroglyphics which recorded events year by year. They often included genealogies of noble patrons, though many dealt with calendar rituals, taxes, trade, and property deeds. Some Mixtec codices found at Monte Albán contain map drawings, astronomical charts, and research projects in mathematics. These records reach farther into antiquity than any made by other Mesoamerican people. Though the Spaniards burned many codices, eight rare Mixtec books were fortunately spared and they are now among the world's great historic treasures. A section of the Codex Borgia, in the Vatican Library, is the finest Mexican manuscript; painted at Cholula on deekskin, it measures thirty-four feet long by ten and five-eighths inches wide and folds like a screen. It deals with agrarian calendar rituals and astronomy. Oxford University Library has the famous Aztec Codex Barbonicus; it enumerates calendar rituals and

PLATE 23. *Painted vessels.* CHOLULA AREA. Courtesy *Art of Mexico*

PLATE 24. *Necklace. Gold filigree.* Mitla area. A.D. 1200–1500 from Oaxaca. Courtesy *London Illustrated News,* September 4, 1948

PLATE 25. *Palace of Repose. Wall carvings.* Mitla about 14th century. Courtesy Mexican Government Tourism Department

historical events and is enhanced by miniatures in color. The paintings in codex records form part of ancient Mexican art; their lovely miniatures rendered by priest-artists at Monte Albán display excellent drawing and color.

The Mixtec Art Legacy

It is believed that ancestors of the Mixtec tribes lived in the Olmec rubber country and later migrated to the central plateau region where they established a ceremonial culture at Cholula in the Oaxaca area, finally becoming known as the Mixteca. By around 1350 they moved to Monte Albán because the Zapotecs had vacated the center. Although the Mixtecs were later subdued to some extent by the Aztecs, they continued to exert a dominant cultural influence on all Mesoamerican life, largely because of their art skills, which were highly diversified to include painting, sculpture, ceramics, goldsmithing, and mosaic work.

A famous architectural relic is the remains of a temple complex at Mitla, twenty-five miles south of the Mount. Originally it was part of a group of five buildings erected beside the usually dry Mitla River. Mitla is believed to have once been a Zapotec center, previously used by the Toltecs and before them by the Olmecs. Today the ancient ruins are known as "Mitla Ruins," "Place of Eternal Rest," and "City of the Dead." Tribal ancestors of the Zapotecs had lived peaceably as

Sun Worshipers, and it is believed that they may have built the temple group. The center's plaza and flat-roofed palace have recently been restored, and are now regarded as treasures of Mexican archaeology. Wall carvings of intricate stone designs cut in geometric shapes called *rilieves* are fitted without mortar (Plate 25. *Palace of Repose. Wall Carvings*). This architectual mosaic work is the finest in Mexico and resembles a textile pattern although the unit forms are somewhat similar to a Greek fret. The remains of this ancient palace-temple's walls of about the fourteenth century are covered inside and out with stone mosaic work (Plate 26. *Stone columns, Hall of Monoliths. Palace of Repose*).

Monolithic stone columns, twenty feet high, served as dividers for halls of the ancient Palace of Repose, and were intended to sustain the palace roof, which is believed to have been the largest roofed room at that time in all Mesoamerica. These tall columns are characteristic of Mexican architectural solidity of structure. The excavation and restoration of the six pillars are impressive achievements, especially important because the mosaic decorations on them have been carefully restored to their original appearance in ancient times.

Although ancient mosaics have usually been removed from their original location for display in museums, Mitla's remain in their original architectural setting. The historic palace, with its superb proportion and beauty, today stands roofless, but presided over by six strong pillars, which, as remnants of the Temple of Repose, are silhouetted against the Mexican sky like ghosts of a past civilization.

PLATE 26. *Palace of Repose. Columns.* Mitla. Courtesy Mexican Government Tourism Department

4
THE AZTECS

When the Aztecs conquered the Toltec stronghold in the Valley of Anáhuac they left a powerful impress on history and the art of Mesoamerica. Believing it their duty to support Toltec traditions, they used Toltec architecture as models for construction and readily rebuilt the old empire by conquest of tribes until all central Mexico became their vast domain. Aztec force and vigor overcame difficulties, and their rise as supreme rulers of the vast Sun Kingdom came about in a comparatively short time.

Barely four hundred years after the Aztec's humble tribal beginnings in near barbarism, the Tenocha-Aztecs, a migrant tribe from the Chichimec area, built their impressive capital city of Tenochtitlán in the lovely Valley of Anáhuac. In honor of their tribal god of war, Mexicali, they named their country Mexico, adding the suffix "co" which signifies "place." Today, over a million and a half "Nahuátal"-speaking people are direct descendants of the founders of Tenochtitlán's vast temple-pyramids and palaces.

The Tenocha-Aztec tribe made its first settlement where an eagle was perched on a "tenoch" while devouring a serpent held in its beak. This symbol was adopted by the tribe and has persisted through the years; when in 1821 national independence was won by Mexico, it was made the national insignia and now is incorporated in the seal of state (Plate 27. *Eagle and Serpent.* Fresco detail from *History of Mexico* by Diego Rivera).

PLATE 27. *The eagle and serpent.* Fresco detail. By Diego Rivera. From *History of Mexico,* National Palace, Mexico City. Courtesy Mexican Government Tourism Department and Bank of Mexico Tourism Service

"Tenoch" was then added to the tribal name, which became "Tenocha-Aztec"; the capital

city, also so named, was destined to become the home of the powerful Aztec tribe, but following the Conquest the capital's name was changed to Mexico City.

Bernal Diaz del Castillo, a writer, soldier, and comrade of Cortés, describes how the Spanish Conquistadores looked down from a high mountain pass, and, seeing Tenochtitlán far below, marveled at its bright, stucco-coated palaces, temples, and swimming pools surrounded by fruit trees. The impressive vista, revealing the Aztec wealth, included inventions such as removable bridges, aqueducts, and floating gardens. Many houses of adobe, sundried brick, were brightly painted and roofs were tiled. The usual Mexican home (Plate 28. *Mexican Home with Interior Court and Patio*) was coated on the exterior with a soft blend of rose-pink stucco. When Cortés became fully aware of all this Aztec splendor, he vowed to capture Tenochtitlán in the name of Charles V, Emperor of Spain, and then to demolish it and the entire Sun Kingdom, for he believed it his mission to Christianize the New World; hence his entourage always included several missionary priests.

PLATE 28. *Mexican home. Interior court, patio.* Courtesy Mexican Government Tourism Department

The rapid rise of the humble Tenocha-Aztec tribe resulted in its conquering all people of the Valley. Their first settlement (A.D. 1400) was beside a lake on a high site in the beautiful forest of Chapultepec, which in Aztec means grasshopper hill. This lovely section is now a park and houses the famed Museum of Archaeology, History and Art. Following the Conquest, a Spanish city called Mexico City was built on the razed Aztec capital, centering around a plaza—once the heart of the old city—known as the Zocalo, a point at which ten streets converged. In Aztec days it was the sacred area of Tenochtitlán, for it contained the great teocalli honoring the gods. Mexico City's magnificent cathedral, built on the site where the pagan pyramid-temple had stood, now dominates the Zocalo. Ironically, it was built with the stones of the demolished Aztec temple. A fine present-day market stands on the Zocalo's southeast corner, in an area where Aztec games used to be played and where Spanish bull-fights were later held.

Cortés marveled at the tiaquiz where fine animal pelts, fabulous jewels, and gold and silver were sold and traded. Today the Zocalo is an impressive area covering 500 by 620 feet, surrounded by handsome buildings including the great Municipal Palace, the walls of which are decorated with Orozco's frescoes depicting Mexican history. Like ancient Tenochtitlán, Mexico City is famed as a city filled with beautiful flowers; the Zocalo's flower booths have colorful displays at all times of the year and hours of the day (Plate 29. *The flower market.* Fresco detail by Diego Rivera). Xochimilico, a section reminiscent of Aztec days, is known as the

PLATE 29. *The Flower Market.* Fresco Detail. By Diego Rivera. Court of Labor, Ministry of Education, Mexico City. Courtesy Mexican Government Tourism Department

PLATE 30. *Codex.* Porfirio Diaz. Detail National Museum of History, Mexico City. Mexican Government Tourism Department

"place of flowers." Flat-bottomed boats like those of the Aztecs today ply canal waters through a network of islands and floating gardens while native arts and handicrafts are offered for sale by Indians just as in Aztec days.

The Aztec council conferred absolute power over the Sun Kingdom on its emporer, who assumed semi-divinity. During the reigns of eight emperors, covering 120 years, the nation prospered and vast tribute money poured into the treasury. Matters of military policy were decided by the emperor and his chiefs, but the priests, who interpreted the will of the gods, called up sacrificial victims from tribal villages. Although warfare had brought the Sun Kingdom its vast tribal dominions, the state was dominated by the mystic power of gods represented by priests who served as Aztec overlords.

Priest-artists made pictographic records and painted miniatures on manuscripts and codices, which became an important Aztec art. The first writing by the primitives was picture writing or hieroglyphics, which reproduced objects, animals, or persons in a pictographic stylized or symbolic form. The bright colors on some codices were obtained from flower petals, vegetables, and pulverized minerals (Plate 30. *Codex Porfirio Díaz.* On maguey paper, fifteenth century). The famous *Codex Florentine. The Ofrenda* (Plate 31.) shows in this illustration an offering given the dead, usually on special saints'

days. The Florentine codex was a translation by priests from the Nahuatl tongue into Spanish. Cortés sent several codices to Spain,

PLATE 31. *Codex Florentina.* "The Ofrenda." National Museum of History, Mexico City. Courtesy Mexican Government Tourism Department

where they were first regarded as curiosities of New World art, later to become treasured relics of museums and libraries. Antonio de Mendoza, the first viceroy to Mexico, ordered the making of a rare codex (known as The Mendoza) which was purchased in 1831 by the Bodleian Library of Oxford University. Many pictographic records have listings in ink of tribal taxes; sketches show bales of cotton, embroidered garments, feather mosaics, gold dust, jade beads, and bird feathers, which were all items used in Aztec trading. Also translated by priests are "Songs of the Gods," which declared them to be "possessors of the earth and all it contains." Cortés was guided by maps and codices given him by Emperor Moctezuma for his trip to Honduros, and after the Conquest, accurate drawings of waterways and canals throughout Tenochtitlán were discovered in the emperor's palace. The Spanish found Indian glyphs incomprehensible and burned many in the Texoco public market, believing them a hindrance to the spreading of Christianity among the Indians. Later, attempts were made to locate some codices which had escaped burning and the first bishop of Mexico made efforts to retrieve the sixty-three which had been hidden.

Among fifteenth-century relics of Aztec sculpture is a well-preserved block-like, stiffly robed figure (Plate 32. *The Corn God*). The feet serve merely as stands to support the sturdy figure; the face has large, almond-shaped eyes; a heavy ceremonial headdress surmounts all. Worship of the god was vital,

PLATE 32. *The Corn God.* Stone Sculpture. Aztec. National Museum of History, Mexico City. Courtesy Mexican Government Tourism Department

PLATE 33. *Coatlicue, Mother of Aztec Gods, Goddess of Earth, Life, Death.* 8′ statue from Tenochtitlán, 1519. National Museum Anthropology, Mexico City. Courtesy Mexican Government Tourism Department

for this deity provided food for *tortillas*. Aztec sculptors and artists were not especially interested in imitating nature; rather, they transformed what they saw and knew to create an individual expression (Plate 33. *Coatlicue*). Coatlicue was revered by the Aztecs as "Mother of the Gods," also as Goddess of Earth, Life, and Death. The free-standing statue of her, from Tenọchtitlán, is eight feet high. Her skirt is made of carved snakes.

Aztec worship of their God of War required that human sacrifices constantly be made. During Moctezuma II's reign (1503–20) tension mounted when astrologer-priests reported the skies filled with ominous signs demanding double the calls for human sacrifices to propitiate the god. Later, when white-skinned, bearded men landed at Vera Cruz with eleven ships, sixteen horses, dogs, and cannon—all of which were unknown to the Aztecs—the nation was engulfed in fear. It was then that priests confirmed the apprehension, saying that the god Quetzalcóatl had sent these emissaries to destroy the Sun Kingdom. History records how the Spanish invasion quickly proceeded. On Cortés's arrival at Tenochtitlán he was graciously received by the emperor, but conquest came within two years; it brought death to Moctezuma and his successor, Cuautemoc, and the complete subjugation of all Mexico (1521). This last Aztec emperor had proved his ability as a great military leader of his people and, when finally captured, he was tortured in the hope that he would tell where Aztec treasure was hidden. This he refused to divulge and he was murdered. Cuautemoc is greatly revered for bravery and service to his people, and an important statue of him has the place of honor on the Pasco de la Reforma. Designed by two Indian sculptors, Miguel Norena and Gabriel Guerra, it is rated among the finest statues in the capital.

Several reasons are advanced for Cortés's amazingly easy conquest of Mexico. These include Aztec injustice to conquered tribes; failure peaceably to absorb villages taken in sudden attack; inequality in calling sacrificial victims; lack of loyalty throughout the Sun Kingdom, even among nominally Aztec tribes. Another cause of disunity came from the Aztec rigid caste system which divided the population. The lowest group (peons), comprising the bulk of the population, worked without pay on noblemen's estates, which resulted in bitter resentment. This group's disunity infected Mexican life for 300 years, until a bloody revolution brought a proclamation of equality. From this social ferment, a new art developed to champion freedom for all. The Mexican Renaissance had begun.

In the holocaust following the Conquest, all Aztec architecture was destroyed. In conquering the Sun Kingdom, the Spanish aimed to obliterate Indian culture completely; Aztec monuments perished with finality. However, in Tenayuca, a small present-day village eight miles northwest of Mexico City, an ancient pyramid-temple, similar to the large one at Tenochtitlán, has been excavated and restored. It features the same sloping sides, upper platform, and stepped terraces topped by twin temples and reached by stairways. Great stone carvings of open-fanged serpents, resembling those of Tenochtitlán's great pyramid-temple, serve as the principal decoration.

Aztec sculpture was the nation's supreme contribution to art. Some statues were carved "in the round," permitting their being viewed equally well from all directions. Aztec sculpture appeals to the modern eye because of its simplified volume, plastic beauty, and expressive power. Aztec sculptors were supremely capable of accomplishing realistic renditions of high quality, as is proved by two outstanding examples in the British Museum. A carving in translucent quartz of a rabbit and another of a skull in rock-crystal are fine examples of realistic carving. Aztec sculptors worked with complete freedom from formal art rules or conventions, their art being expressive of individual creative-

ness. They enjoyed carving as an engaging activity, and there are quantities of both large and small stone renderings which are the work of humble artisans whose sheer delight in the doing of their art dictated its expression (Plate 34. *Carved Boulder*).

Pretentious religious sculpture intended for Aztec temple decoration featured formal

PLATE 34. *Carved Boulder.* Aztec. Showing a face in jaws of a feathered serpent. Courtesy Chicago Natural History Museum

symbolic interpretations, such as serpent heads and writhing water snakes. Statues of the Goddess of Water, patroness of aqueducts, show her with her head entwined in serpents, her skirt consisting of snakes massed together. Such Aztec sculpture was intended to inspire awe and fear by its grim, austere style. However, some sculptures for public structures were works of restraint, such as the caryatides using human forms incorporated with architectural columns, which were intended for functional needs. Terraces on teocalli were enhanced with relief carvings of water-snakes and some of the friezes had simplified designs. These were made during Tenochtitlán's last and greatest building phase, probably by talented Mixtec-Puebla sculptors then working at the capital.

The famous Aztec Calendar Stone (Plate 35. *Calendar Stone*) used in the temple for sacrificial offerings was carved about 1480 from a piece of porphry. This round stone is twelve feet high and weighs 24 tons. A greatly revered relic, it is engraved with cryptic cylindrical designs and bordered with carved bands of jade and turquoise containing elaborate symbols. Centered on the disk is the face of Tenariuh, the Sun God, surrounded by astrological symbols of the cycles of creation. Though the Calendar Stone was lost for a long time, it was found in 1790 when paving was being done in the Zocalo. It is now on exhibit in the Museum of Anthropology, History and Art in Chapultepec Park.

Another historic Aztec relic, the Stone of Tizoc (Plate 36. *The Stone of Tizoc*), is carved in cylindrical form from volcanic trachyte. It is eight feet in diameter and its central disk, carved in low relief, has rows of Aztec warriors with their captured enemies. The stone's elaborate carvings express the Aztec belief in sacrificial payment of blood to the gods and it was used in the temple as the sacrificial place. King Tizoc had dedicated his conquests in wars (1481–86) to the Sun God, and the stone was carved in commemoration of his achievements. This great relic was also temporarily lost but in 1792 it was discovered buried beneath the present location of the National Pawn Shop. It now is on exhibit in the foyer of the museum at Chapultepec Park.

An example of Aztec ceramic sculpture is a statue twelve-and-a-half inches high (Plate 37. *Standing Warrior.* Ceramic sculpture). This work becomes alive because of its skillful handling of anatomical form and detail;

THE AZTEC CALENDAR

PLATE 35. *Calendar stone.* The Aztec Calendar stone of the Sun, 15th century. From Tenochtitlán. In National Museum of Anthropology, Mexico City. Courtesy Mexican Government Tourism Department

it represents a typical warrior serving in the militia, probably a clan member and tax-paying native. As every tribesman was necessarily a warrior, the statue is a representative Mexican type. The average Indian's height is 5′2″; he has a thick-set body, broad head, and coarse black hair, though he has no hair on his body or face; his skin is of a warm brown color.

The Aztecs regarded trading and selling of importance second only to warfare. Essentially art-minded, the Indians carefully planned their tiaquiz displays with careful consideration for color harmonies, for they never separated utility from beauty. A distinctive and colorful handicraft of Aztec feather mosaic was popular, though few, if any, Mexicans are today continuing this art and it is considered a lost craft. The Aztec artist arranged feathers according to size and color and, after stripping them, left only the fragile feather tip, for the stems were woven into the cotton backing and fastened with glue to the cloth. Because of overlapping, many feathers were needed to cover a square inch, necessitating the plucking of hundreds of rare birds to make elaborate mosaics. The cloak that Moctezuma gave Cortés, and that he in turn sent to Emperor Charles V, is now in the Vienna Museum. Feather mosaics were worn on Aztec warriors' headgear, were worn by priests for ceremonial cloaks, and

PLATE 36. *Stone of Tizoc.* From Tenochtitlán. Now in National Museum of Anthropology, Mexico City. Courtesy Mexican Government Tourism Department

were used as wall-hangings. The mosaicists were supplied with feathers from birds in royal aviaries located near their workshops. Beautiful Aztec feather mosaics are exhibited

PLATE 37. *Standing warrior.* Ceramic Statue, A.D. 400–800. Mexico, Jaina Style. Courtesy The Art Institute of Chicago, Primitive Art purchase fund and Edward E. Ayer Fund.

at the Museum of History, Mexico City, and at the Louvre and British Museum. After the Conquest pure gold threaded embroideries were sewn by Aztec craftsworkers for ceremonial vestments and bull-fighters' costumes.

No other Aztec art equaled their fine goldsmithing, designing, and intricate setting of rare jewels, which were rendered with great skill. Exquisite articles were often made in the form of animals, birds, or flowers. Working with precious stones, the craftsmen also fashioned small ornaments in the shape of ducks, tigers, lions, and monkeys. Perfection was achieved in a jewel formed like a fish with alternating gold and silver scales and a necklace containing emeralds and rubies in the shape of tiny gold bells. Because emeralds were the Aztec's most highly prized precious stone, Moctezuma presented Cortés with one of great size cut in pyramidal form. A rare collection of jewels was sent by Cortés to Emperor Charles V in 1519. They were praised by craftsmen of Seville and Madrid

PLATE 38. *Gold breastplate.* Mixtec Culture from Tomb 7, Monte Albán, Oaxaca. Now in Museum of Anthropology, Oaxaca. Courtesy Gisèle Freund, Paris

who "despaired of equaling their perfection," and by Albrecht Dürer who wrote in his Nuremberg Diary: "I have never seen, in all my life, things that so delight my heart." Aztec goldsmiths surpassed the artistry of Benvenuto Cellini, their rare craftsmanship being a hundred years in advance of work done by European artisans.

Aztec lapidarists carved extensively in jade and amethyst, using gold and silver for ceremonial temple needs and for funeral masks. Jade was of special value and an item for tribute payments, and though an extremely hard stone to carve, Aztec lapidarists accomplished the art with skill. Craftsmen improved the techniques for gold embossing, plating, sheathing, and hammering, details of which they learned from skilled Mixtec-Puebla artisans who were working at Tenochtitlán (Plate 38. *Gold Breastplate.* Mixtec. 15th century).

The Conquest far exceeded a dramatic seizure of Aztec wealth and land; it was actually a rape of Mexico, for all was desolated. It was the Spanish aim to win Mexico for God and king, their determination being rooted in a zealous religious cause—that of bringing an end to human sacrifice. The Aztec people were ridden with grave doubts, even to questioning whether the sun would rise the next day. A complete change, a new concept, an entirely new idea of social values was in process of evolving and was destined to mature after 300 years. The humble Mexican, laden with sorrow, through these years became the subject of great art when native artists sought to help bring beneficial changes into Indian life. Artists used their talents to build a new national consciousness, though it was their aim to preserve the primitive art of the land and people they loved. Modern Mexican artists present messages from ancient history and legend that form a legacy to benefit the conquered and the conquerors through the power of native art.

5
THE COLONIAL PERIOD, 1521-1821

The 300-year Colonial Period is divided for convenience into periods of distinct art styles:

Primitive (1521–1571) Church building
Renaissance (1521–1600) Reflecting art introduced by imported artists; the influence of masterpieces sent by the Crown to churches; foreign art used as models for copyists
Baroque (1600–1760) Offering native artists creative growth and opportunity to express originality. Three developments within the style are: Baroque (proper); Plateresque; Churrigueresque
Neo-Classic (1760–1850) Reaction to simplification, bringing restraint and return to Greek and Roman influence

i

Conversion of Indian to European Culture; Church Construction

Although the Sun Kingdom was no more, its survivors became the ancestors of today's Indians, representing a unique people who possess much art ability. The Conquest had broken the Indian's heart; the Conquistadores had taken his land and gold and reduced him to slavery. Most Indians were landless serfs called peons, who labored without pay on Spanish farms. Though the Crown's grants of land in Mexico were intended for the Spanish-born, a few Indian chieftains and warriors among Aztec, Tlaxcalan, and Texaco tribes were honored with land grants, titles, and coats-of-arms. This encouraged intermarriage between certain Indian families and those of Spanish grandees, which began a creole or *crillos* class. Another group, of Spanish and Indian blood-blend called *mestizo,* received less favor, though in later time it became powerful because its leaders were highly capable and succeeded in all phases of work, including the arts. The mestizos remained somewhat repressed, however, until after the Revolution of 1910, when they assumed leadership throughout Mexico.

Class division brought to Mexico a European-Medieval concept of government, for when a strong power developed in the Church during the 300-year Colonial period the social situation in New Spain became increasingly difficult. A European feudal class concept brought Mexico a system of land ownership called *hacienda,* which, although originally intended to offer the Indians paternal guardianship, degenerated into a complete subjugation of them. Severe abuses took place in Mexico and these were destined to continue

until bloody uprisings and revolution freed the peons. A hacienda was similar to a large farm and somewhat like a village, having its church, store, and places for laborers all owned by a single Spanish family.

Although the Crown's interest in humble Indians was kindly, attempts to help them were blocked by powerful landowners. The Crown, along with missionary priests, advocated payment to peons for labor and wanted a law enacted to prohibit slavery, but these attempts were opposed. Strong animosity and dissension increased between Spanish-born gentry and the creole class, who were dissatisfied with the restricted rights they received for they claimed more favor in consideration of their descent from the Conquistadores. When a creole wanted a public office he was ignored or refused, and this caused severe antagonism between the two classes even though their efforts were united to keep the peons in complete servitude. Continued exploitation of peons on haciendas and in mines included severe whippings and other terrors which touched off uprisings (Plate 39. *Enslavement of the Indians.* Fresco detail, *History of Mexico* by Rivera). Episodes showing hardships of peons have been painted by Orozco, Siqueiros, Goitia, and other Mexican artists of our time.

Although Spain had been well governed under strong monarchs and conditions in Mexico were favorable then, a change came after the destruction of the Armada in 1588 and the colony was adversely affected. The value of Mexico's gold and silver decreased and political turmoil worsened. Creole envy of wealthy Spanish-born hacienda owners caused them to be called *gachupines,* a derisive nickname meaning centaurs. During increasingly severe times, the Indians turned for consultation to priests, who brought them their joy in a new-found religion.

After the Conquest, the Spanish began vigorously to proselitize all natives, who were being taught the language and Gospel lessons, although many continued secretly to worship their idols, even hiding them behind Christian altars. Their new religion offered hope of salvation, and even though Spanish control was far from desirable, one great advantage was that human sacrifice had ceased. A religious conquest began directly after the destruction of Tenochtitlán, for spreading Christianity was considered justification for the capture of Mexico to require conversion of the Indians. The natives accepted the new religion, willingly becoming devout believers. After their rude awakening to a strange Spanish control of their lives, with nothing of their former Aztec ways of life remaining, they turned wholeheartedly to the Church for solace and devotion. Christianity caused them to forsake old pagan ideas and they welcomed belief in one God, Father of all men; their faith helping them to endure hardships. Ministrations of the Fathers gave helpful release, and delight in folkloric art known as "art of the fields" helped mend the broken spirit of the Indians.

The Crown gave generous support to religious work in Mexico and missionary Fathers aided the peons. Typical of this devotion was the service of a Flemish monk, Peter of Ghent, who labored fifty years founding schools and teaching art. His school for Aztec children in the Franciscan center at Mexico City also housed the first native seminary. A Franciscan historian, Bernardine de Sahagun (1499–1590), converted thousands; his Nahuatal-Spanish dictionary, a labor of twelve years, is still used. He translated Holy Writ and the catechism, and recorded many Indian sagas; his writing about the "Brown Madonna—Our Lady of Guadalupe" helped bring devotion to this beloved native saint. Leading Mexican artists have painted works showing friars helping the Indians, such as Orozco's famous work *Franciscan Father and the Indian* (see chapter 10).

Under the guidance of different Church

PLATE 39. *Enslavement of the Indians.* Fresco-detail by Diego Rivera. Palace of Cortés, Cuernavaca, Mexico. Courtesy Mexican Government Department of Tourism

Orders, the Indians were taught to use Spanish tools, plant fruit trees, develop art skills, make pottery and do leather tooling. It is estimated that over a thousand Indian converts were baptized daily during the late sixteenth century. The Spanish imported plants, trees, and animals; introduced iron, steel, wool, the upright loom, pottery-wheel, glass-blowing, glazing, and fine ceramic techniques. The Dominicans built a vast "fortress-monastery" in Mexico City which contains monk's cells decorated with murals and wood-carved statues that show the creative power of priest-artists who taught the natives art skills. They delighted in gardening, and planted vines, trees, and flowers to surround the plazas near monastery arcades where they hung cages for singing birds.

The Jesuits remained in Mexico City to assist in the Colonial government; Carmelites and Augustinians directed construction of religious buildings, many being made with hand-fitted stones, and some church centers were in process of building for two hundred and fifty years. The nation was fast being Christianized. When church bells tolled at certain hours the Indians would leave their tasks to kneel and pray; the women, when inside church, wore the traditional Spanish mantilla, a head-covering which was hand-woven.

The Church of San Francisco, built in 1524 on the site of Moctezuma's palace, was constructed with stones salvaged from it. This ancient church contained the first school where natives were taught Spanish and Holy Writ; today the church, convent, and chapel stand as a revered historic landmark in the midst of Mexico City's business section, and visitors to the site realize that it breathes an aura of devoted service. The Church of San Francisco of Cholula (Plate 40. *King's Chapel.* Church of San Francisco, Cholula) is likewise one of the oldest churches in the Americas. The ornate bell tower with twisted columns and the colorful tiled dome on this church present a blend of Spanish-Moorish styles, also combining rare lace-like carvings on high towers and capitals. This beautiful chapel served for centuries as an

PLATE 40. *King's Chapel.* Church of San Francisco. Cholula. Courtesy Anita Brenner and National Railways of Mexico

oasis of peace and protection through the troubled times when governments rose and fell. In this old religious center four Tlaxcalan chiefs were baptized into the Faith. Founded by Franciscan friars in 1552 and located on a high plateau 116 miles east of Mexico City, its brightly colored domes give the effect of a Persian garden. Sevillian architects imported by Cortés worked at Puebla and Cholula, instructing Indians in the art of building, introducing such architectural features as cupolas

and minarets, which reflect the Sevillian-Moorish styles then popular in Spain. At this period Puebla and Cholula became famous for their many beautiful churches. Use of handsome colored tiles was lavish, these being made by Puebla natives whom the Spanish had taught the intricacies of ceramic art and tilemaking.

During the Colonial period architecture was the major art expression. Indian craftsmen under direction of the Spaniards superimposed Indian motifs and details on European styles, creating richly complicated designs. The Church of San Cristóbal in Puebla (Plate 41) is a fine work of Colonial seventeenth century, having a notable façade, tall towers, and a beautiful dome. One of the most famous Colonial churches in Mexico City is the Church of Santo Domingo (Plate 42) built about 1526. Its massive thick walls of red tezontl were erected three blocks north of the Zocalo, facing the Plaza de Santo Domingo. This ancient church is on the site, in the center of the Aztec city of Tenochtitlán, where warriors marched in rhythm while trumpeting Moctezuma. The Church of Del Carmen (Plate 43) in Mexico City has a dome of blue, white, and yellow tiles and a rarely beautiful façade. It stands today in one of the poorest quarters of the city to serve a large parish there. A rare Colonial construction is the Cathedral of Durango (Plate 44) which is enhanced by the architectural beauty of its fountain and ironwork next to the stone masonry of the beautiful curved portal.

PLATE 41. *Church of San Cristóbal.* Puebla, 17th century. Courtesy Mexican Government Department of Tourism

Throughout the long Colonial period many monasteries were built in Spanish-Romanesque style, combining low, broad solidity with heavy doors and small, slit-like windows fitted with glass made in Puebla; interiors were decorated with colorful glazed tiles; roofs were of red clay tiles curved like half-cylinders. Many of these thick-walled, fortress-style monasteries also combined some elements of Gothic and Moorish styles. Churches had a single nave; ribbed vaulting supported an arched roof; façades were enhanced with carved statues around the portal and a rose window above, made of colored glass from Puebla. The Colonial monasteries were surrounded by a walled courtyard having a spacious patio and arcades adjoining the plaza, which was furnished with huge stone water-basins, shade trees, and flower beds.

These vast religious constructions and their fine decoration offered the art-conscious Indians many interesting approaches to creative art expression and much use of their

PLATE 42. *Plaza and Church of Santo Domingo.* Mexico City. About 1690. Courtesy Mexican Government Department of Tourism

talent was evidenced in carved statues, polychromed reliefs, paintings in oil, and many frescoes. Native artists of the Colonial period believed destiny led them to work on the beautifying of New Spain's churches and they delighted in expressing their feelings for the supernatural. Friars encouraged Indian artists to carve statues and paint monastery walls, thereby expressing their deep sensibility of the sufferings of Jesus and the saints.

The House of Tiles (Plate 45) in Mexico City was built by a nobleman for his own residence about 1700, when mansions erected throughout Mexico showed strong Spanish-Moorish influence. The façade has blue and white tiles arranged geometrically around balconies enhanced with lavish wrought-iron work; the interior now houses murals by Orozco. The House of Tiles is primarily noted for its abundance of rare ceramic tiles made in Puebla by expert Indian craftsmen, and, well located in an exquisite and interesting setting in the center of the city, it is now used as a fine restaurant and shop.

The building of the magnificent cathedral in the Zocalo (Plate 46. *Cathedral of Mexico City* was begun in 1553 and it has been rebuilt several times during the past 252 years, the most extensive remodeling having been undertaken in the seventeenth century. Originally constructed from stones taken from the demolished Aztec teocalli, it incorporates several styles in a formal conglomeration, both on the façade and in the interior. Today the cathedral represents an elegant and impressive example of neo-Classic architecture at its best. Beauty and restraint are seen in the design of two balanced towers surmounted on pillars. Don

PLATE 43. *Church of Del Carmen.* Mexico City. Courtesy Mexican Government Department of Tourism

PLATE 44. *Cathedral of Durango.* Fountain, portal, iron grille. Courtesy Mexican Government Department of Tourism

Manuel Tolsá, the architect, came to Mexico from Spain for the commission; his accomplishment has received world acclaim. Largest in the Americas, the cathedral's vast interior stirs the beholder's imagination with

PLATE 45. *House of Tiles.* Mexico City. D.F. 18th century. Courtesy Mexican Government Department of Tourism

compelling awe and wonder. The adjoining chapel, by contrast, is an architectural gem of eighteenth-century Baroque, exemplifying a light and airy architectural design which has received the highest praise.

ii

Art; Architecture; Painting; Sculpture; Native Folk Art "of The Fields"; Fine Art "of City Artists"

For the first fifty years following the Conquest, the Church made a religious conquest of the Indians by substituting "altars for idols." Church schools taught the natives an imitative art, which resulted in the suppression, to an extent, of their true creative impulses along with their idols. The Indian's art was belittled by professional artists, who disregarded it into oblivion. But Indian folk art "of the fields" continued to exist in scattered locations far removed from art centers where arbiters of established taste prevailed. Native artists living in rural parts continued to interpret original concepts, receiving their inspiration from fantasy and nature and expressing it in creative ways. Their religion offered art opportunities which were kept alive by local popular demand for wood-carved crucifixes and figures of saints made from maize paste, and for papier-mâché Judases, some ten feet high, intended for burning in monastery patios on the Saturday night of Holy Week. Ceremonials and fiestas created needs for handiwork by local artists. Indigenous art persisted in these ways and it existed in readiness for a revival of Mexican art in the modern movement of our time.

Folk artists were busy painting popular works showing miraculous events, such as cures which were credited to intercession by devout persons. These works, representing a miracle of healing and recovery and known as retables, were made on tin, copper, wood, or canvas and were presented as a thank offering by a donor to the church. Many Mexican churches have miracle paintings that are centuries old. The rural retable artist generally plied his craft in his spare time for he was otherwise engaged in making pottery, or was a weaver or a farmer. The retables are really little stories of religious character as told in pictures and they always represent a happening in which severe misfortune was threatened but averted through the gracious and opportune intervention of some saint invoked by the person in distress. Some retable

PLATE 46. *Cathedral.* Mexico City. D.F. Courtesy Mexican Government Department of Tourism

canvases represent ill persons in bed while loved ones fervently pray to invoke all-powerful help for the stricken one, who is probably in danger of death.

"City artists" expressed their ideas of religious themes by making paintings of "fine art" in pretentious altarpieces with elaborately carved, gilded, or painted sections combined with sculpture placed in adjoining niches. Oftentimes the altarpiece was flanked with numerous smaller panels around a large centerpiece.

Many artists were invited to Mexico from Spain, and on arrival they trained talented Indian art students at San Carlos Art Academy to assist them. Miguel Cabrera (1695–1768), frequently called the leading Mexican artist of the century, was a Zapotec Indian from Oaxaca. He was the favorite painter of the Jesuits and Court artist for the archbishop; almost every important church in Mexico possesses a Cabrera canvas. He was a careful and worthy portrait painter whose work was characterized by fine draftsmanship, and he invariably attained his goal of realistic likeness to the model. He painted the cupola of the Cathedral at Mexico City.

The Museum of Colonial Painting in Mexico City is the seventeenth-century Church of San Diego monastery, which has been restored in keeping with its original architecture, and it contains works of almost three centuries of Colonial rule. There are works by Francisco Antonio Vallejo, Baltazar de

Echave Ibia, and José and Nicholas Rodríguez Juárez painted in the manner of the Spanish artist Murillo in a somewhat derivative manner, though there are some excellent portraits by Manuel Tolsá, who was also a famous sculptor.

In addition to the strong influence of artists and architects who came to Mexico to work and teach, many churches were receiving rare gifts of art from the Crown. These included priceless tapestries designed by Rubens and many marble altarpieces. Titian's painting *The Entombment* was sent to the Church of San Francisco in a small village near Patzcuaro. An Assumption and an Altarpiece of Our Lady by Murillo was received by Guanajuato Cathedral. Mexican artists began to copy these masterpieces slavishly, particularly Murillo's works, for many were in Mexico and this resulted in a weakly derivative type of productiveness by Mexico's "city artists." Native art was devalued at this time, although when the Spanish arrived in Mexico they found art that astounded them. The pre-Columbian peoples had erected buildings of great beauty and fine craftsmanship and their ritual masks, murals, jewels, pottery, and sculpture were equally excellent.

Colonial viceroys were liberal art patrons, commissioning paintings which they gave to churches and also donating generously for decoration of their vacation refuge at Tepotzotlán, Morelos, twenty-five miles from the capital. This luxurious villa was used extensively during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and was restored in 1964 to its original beauty. It is now part of a museum containing the finest collection of early Mexican paintings in the Americas. The collection includes many madonnas painted by native artists who worked in the Flemish-Renaissance style. These artists were talented Mestizo painters who successfully imitated foreign art and their work became known as that of "city painters," who mainly supplied religious subjects commissioned by the higher clergy and other patrons. Because these artists were recognized leaders of "correct style," they displaced the artists of the fields.

The National Museum of the Colonial period at Tepotzotlán is mainly on the site of a former Jesuit monastery and seminary, and it and related structures are among the most beautiful religious complexes of Mexico after restoration in 1964 when they were incorporated as the present museum. One of the principal buildings is the temple of Saint Francis Xavier, former seminary of San Martín, with its adjacent chapels and church, founded toward the end of the sixteenth century and executed in the late Baroque style. The façade of the Monastery at Tepotzotlán (Plate 47) contains extremely ornate but beautiful reliefs and sculptures of saints, and the interior of the monastery is equally heavy with adornment and lavish use of gold leaf, the whole being well preserved and sparkling. The body of the church is cruciform in design and in it are conserved seven magnificent reredos in Baroque style. One of the most beautiful is dedicated to the Virgin of Guadalupe, as painted by Miguel Cabrera in 1767. The beauty and tranquility of the orchard and garden surrounding it cause the Tepotzotlán complex truly to reflect the Colonial period of Mexico. Its lovely grounds and courtyards are shaded with protecting trees and many fine works of sculpture in the cloisters and paintings inside the church make Tepotzotlán beautiful in every respect.

An exer-increasing number of Spanish, French, and Italian architects and artists soon flocked to the colony, and Mexican art soon was dominated by them. The Church took on the role of "Mother of Mexican Architecture" when, in 1526, Cortés offered liberal pay to Spanish architects if they would come to Mexico. He also gave funds for construction of the Cathedral of Cuernavaca and for his palace, which was begun in 1540. The

Dolls of woven palmetto fiber, dyed. Typical indigenous craft. Courtesy *School Arts Magazine*

Cathedral. Guadalajara. State of Jalisco. Courtesy Mexican Government Department of Tourism

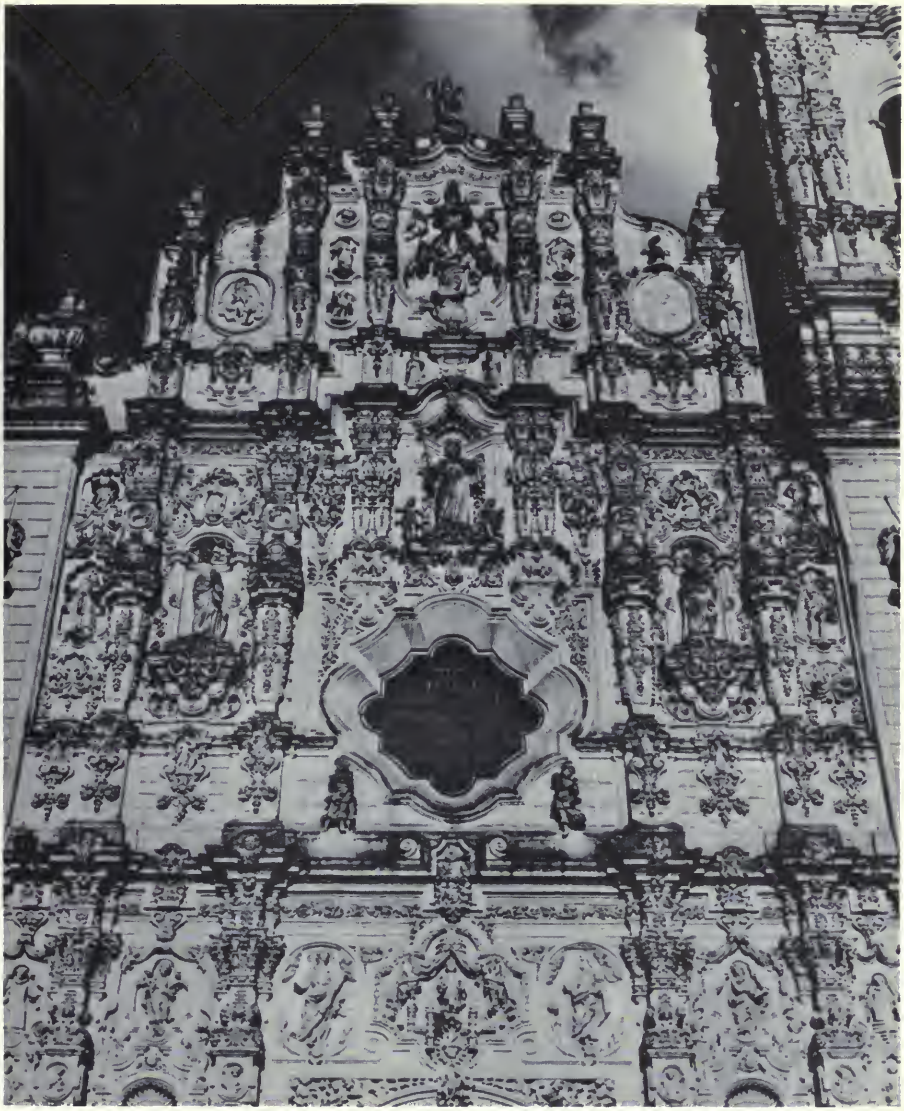

PLATE 47. *Façade: Church of Tepotzotlán.* Morelos, 18th century. Courtesy Mexican Government Department of Tourism

palace has been remodeled many times, yet the original red lava stone structure is in good condition today. A notable site of historic interest, the ancient structure has been enhanced by Rivera's magnificent murals in the loggia depicting the history of Mexico. A Spanish artist, Rodríguez de Cefuentes, made a series of portraits of early viceroys, which were formerly hung in the palace, though these paintings have now been removed to the National Palace in Mexico City. It is to be regretted that the Cefuentes portrait of Cortés was lost.

PLATE 48. *Cathedral.* Cuernavaca. Bell Tower and Balcony. Courtesy Mexican Government Department of Tourism

The bell tower of the Cathedral of Cuernavaca (Plate 48) combines typical Spanish arches on its balcony and an ornate dome-crowned tower which is notable for its slender grace. The Church of San Francisco in Cuernavaca (Plate 49) has a fine old dome and a unique architectural shell representative of Spanish architecture as interpreted in Mexico at its best.

The beautiful Colonial Church of Santa Rosa in the State of Querétaro (Plate 50) is a famed architectural treasure of Mexico. Of special interest are the ornate balconies and bell tower in Querétaro (Plate 51), a

PLATE 49. *Church of San Francisco.* Cuernavaca. Dome and Shell. Courtesy Mexican Government Department of Tourism

PLATE 50. *Church of Santa Rosa.* Querétaro. Courtesy Mexican Government Department of Tourism

PLATE 51. *Balconies and bell tower.* Querétaro. Courtesy Mexican Government Department of Tourism

distinctive example of graceful Colonial carving presenting Spanish Baroque architecture as seen in edifices of that aristocratic period.

Among structures of Colonial architecture in Mexico City are The National Pawn Shop and The Hospital of Jesus of Nazareth, the oldest hospital in the Americas. Founded by Cortés, it is on the site where he received gifts from Moctezuma. Another great Colonial landmark is the National Palace, at the east end of the Zocalo; its construction, directed by Cortés, originally covered a square block. Rebuilding in 1692 completed the old structure, though some portions still remain at the rear of the present Palace. Today's gray stone structure of three stories covers three city blocks and houses government offices and the National Museum where Rivera's frescoes cover the walls of the great staircase and central patio with scenes of national history.

The Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City (Plate 52) was erected on the site of an apparition of the popular saint in 1531. The world's largest basilica, it is on

PLATE 52. *Basilica, Our Lady of Guadalupe.* Mexico City, D.F. Courtesy Mexican Government Department of Tourism

PLATE 53. *Temple de los Remedios. Interior.* Cholula. Courtesy Mexican Government Department of Tourism

the Aztec site of the Temple of Tenayzin, honoring the mother of the gods, Coatlicue. Destruction of the temple by the Spanish saddened the natives but their grief was later assuaged by their love for the Virgin Mary, whom many Indians associated with Señora de Guadalupe. A favorite portrait of their most beloved saint was painted by Marcos Cipac in the early sixteenth century. It shows her standing on a crescent moon and is a treasure gracing the high altar tabernacle. Cipac was a student in Mexico's first school of art, the San Carlos Academy.

The Basilica of Guadalupe is considered the most important sanctuary of the Americas. It was built in honor of the Virgin of Guadalupe who, by popular choice, is the patroness of Mexico and Latin America. According to legend, Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared before Juan Diego, a humble native in 1521. A miracle occurred in an arid spot that was suddenly transformed with a spring and rose garden, on the site of the present basilica. The Virgin is venerated by millions, who each December 12 congregate at the shrine to offer thanks to and to beseech her aid for personal needs. The Basilica now houses a famed and unique Museum of Religious Art.

Baroque architecture enjoyed a long popularity in Spain and likewise, after the first quarter of the seventeenth century, in Mexico, where it was appreciated by both the Spanish and Indians and was the style for 160 years. During this long period the Baroque evolved through three phases—Baroque

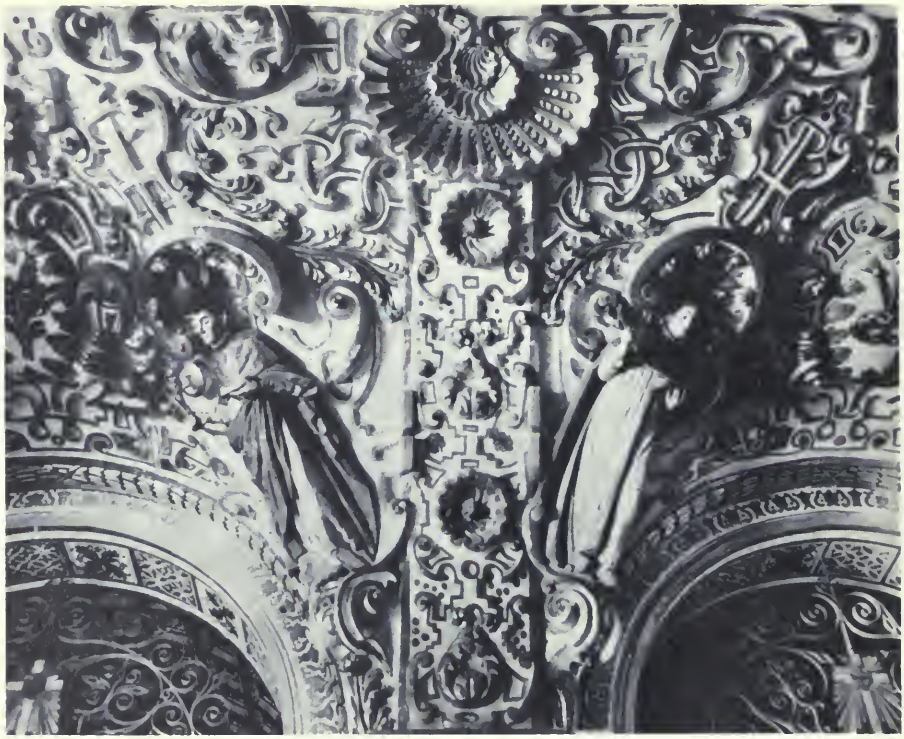

PLATE 54. *Ceiling. Church of Santo Domingo.* Oaxaca, 17th-century polychrome relief. Courtesy Mexican Government Department of Tourism

Proper, the Plateresque, and the Churrigueresque. Typical examples of Baroque Proper are two seventeenth-century churches in Mexico City, the Church of Jesus Maria and the Church of San Lorenzo; another, in Cholula, is the famous Temple de los Remedios (Plate 53. *Temple de los Remedios.* Cholula). This notable church has a rarely beautiful interior of skilled workmanship which combines rare artistry with creative variety. Baroque architecture as here expressed transcends the usual version of this style, for it has an enlarged concept, one that inspires awe, though Baroque Proper usually was intended to impress by elegance alone.

Later Baroque adaptations called Plateresque (meaning "silver-like") became increasingly ornate and this second phase of the style used elaborate curves, flowing lines, and scrolls made freely on plaster ceilings (Plate 54. *Interior, Church of Santo Domingo.* Ceiling Detail. Oaxaca). The third Baroque phase, known as Churrigueresque, is far more elaborate. Named for a Spanish architect, José Churriguera, it is characterized by carvings of garlands in wood, plaster, and stone.

Gold leaf was applied to plaster and wood carvings to create an effect of glittering light and shade. Notable examples include the Church of San Francisco at Tepotzotlán, twelve miles from Cuernavaca; two churches in Querétaro, those of Santa Rosa and Santa Clara; also the famous parochial church at Taxco.

The impressively ornate church of Santa Prisca and San Sebastian (Plate 55) was begun in 1757, its large cost covered by a thank-offering of José la Bordá, a French miner whose fortune was made in a silver mine on the site where the church was built. Its two tall, ornate towers, blue-tiled Moorish cupola, numerous belfries, and heavily carved wooden portals represent a hybrid of styles, though predominantly Churrigueresque-Baroque. The interior with its twelve altars, and the ceiling with its polychromed and gilded angels make Santa Prisca representative of the final ornate Baroque style.

The great church, built to withstand earthquakes, proved strong enough to hold Revolutionary cannon on its tile roof, and the church's tall twin towers rose proudly over a war-torn countryside. Throughout the ornamentation of Santa Prisca, native artists rendered carvings inspired by nature and its animals, and these motifs are carved around doors and windows and on chancels and choir stalls. Among notable examples of secular use of the third phase of Baroque is Casa del Alftenique, now a provincial museum at Puebla.

Mexico offers incredible variety in its lovely villages and towns. Taxco has kaleidoscopic interest and is filled with art. It is built upon a hillside in a section of Mexico which has long been a great source of silver ore, and is dominated by the large blue-green domed, impressive Church of Santa Prisca, built in sumptuous Baroque architecture. The beautiful Parochial Church of Taxco (Plate 56) is representative of Colonial design in its lovely

PLATE 55. *Parochial Church of Santa Prisca and San Sebastián.* Taxco, Guerrero. 18th century. Courtesy Mexican Government Department of Tourism

portal. Another outstandingly lovely building in Taxco is the Teatro (movie house) (Plate 57), which also contains the large School of Fine Arts.

Neo-Classic architecture came to Mexico in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, in a strong reaction toward simplification following the superabundance of late-Baroque ornamentation. Its leading architect, Manuel Tolsá (1757–1816), who was equally distinguished as a sculptor, redesigned the Cathedral of Mexico City in Neo-Classic style, the success of which gave it instant popularity, and this new style became the accepted architectural form for municipal and national structures throughout the world.

Tolsá also designed the handsome equestrian statue of Emperor Charles V, on the

Paseo de la Reforma, one of Mexico City's finest bronze monuments. Another notable Spanish sculptor, Alonzo Cano, carved numerous church façades and statues of saints for Mexican churches.

The 300 years following the Conquest were a socially unproductive era, but the Colonial Period may lay claim to great accomplishment in the construction of inspiring churches and in the founding, in Mexico City in 1539, of the first university in the western hemisphere. The establishment of the university came about through the pioneering efforts of Fray Bartelome de Casas, who took his plan for the project to Spain, where he received a foundation grant from Charles V. In the twentieth century advanced art concepts have been successfully promoted by architects and artists to make the university buildings examples of world renown.

PLATE 56. *Parochial Church.* Taxco, Guerrero. Side view. 18th century. Courtesy Mexican Government Department of Tourism

PLATE 57. *Teatro.* Taxco, Guerrero. (movie house.) Courtesy Mexican Government Department of Tourism

6
INDEPENDENCE IN ART AND STATE

Mexican art was destined for a long time to be involved with national and political struggles and with providing tribute to reformer-heroes who fought for betterment of the people amid severe class enmity. The colony in Mexico was surprised to learn in 1808 that a Napoleonic invasion of Spain had forced abdication of their Emperor and imprisonment of his son, Ferdinand. Although Joseph Bonaparte had possession of the Spanish throne, the colony refused to recognize him, and this caused class dissension to flare. The *gauchupines,* the Spanish-born hacienda owners, opposed Colonial efforts toward independence because they feared it would bring more power to the creoles and the mestizos, who represented liberal political ideals. Enmity increased between the higher clergy and the liberal groups.

The start of the independence movement came on September 16, 1810, when a humble village priest, Miguel Hidalgo, initiated a people's revolt by proclaiming the "Grito de Dolores" (cry of Dolores). After ringing the church bell to bring his parishioners, he proclaimed from the pulpit, "Long live Ferdinand, and death to the *gauchupines,*" which class the creoles and mestizos wanted removed from power. The Church of Dolores (Plate 58) is now a famous memorial of Mexican freedom. On hearing the priest's message, angry mobs proclaimed Hidalgo leader of the uprising, which soon became

PLATE 58. *Church of Dolores. Hidalgo.* Courtesy Mexican Government Department of Tourism

a stormy revolt aiming to abolish the haciendas. Hidalgo's forces, 80,000 strong, overran Mexico with furious rage, burning and killing. His army fought under the banner

of Our Lady of Guadalupe; the gauchupines and the Viceroy's forces, joined by the higher clergy, fought under sponsorship of the Virgin de los Remedios. At first the rebels succeeded, but they were later defeated and Hidalgo was executed a year after the uprising began. But his revolt began the long struggle of downtrodden natives to secure social justice which resulted in the Mexican Revolution. Hidalgo is revered as "The Father of Independence"; his tomb in the Cathedral at Mexico City is at the base of the great Independence Monument. *Hidalgo and the Liberation of Mexico* (Plate 59) by José Clemente Orozco is a dramatic portrayal of the emotional impact of this revolt and it gives a moving portrait of the priest-leader who raised his hand against tyranny. Strong, sweeping diagonals give emphasis to the stirring scene, the interpretation being unsurpassed for its mastery of emotive power.

Another large and excellently rendered portrait of Hidalgo is by Antonio Fabrés, showing the priest holding the banner of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Both portraits hang in the National Gallery.

Mexico's famous Independence Bell, now suspended over the central entrance to the National Palace, was rung by the patriot-priest Hidalgo in the little town of Dolores on the night of September 15, 1810, when he called to arms the rebel patriots who, after eleven years of difficult fighting, finally achieved independence from Spain. Each year, on the same date and hour, Mexico's President rings this bell from a balcony of the Palace. The Mexicans are ever aware of the agreeable call of bells which everywhere so fill the air with their gently persuasive notes that visitors from other lands conclude that all the church bells in Christendom have been gathered there in Mexico to be rung simultaneously. But Mexicans are conscious of the special significance of their Independence Bell.

When the great movement for Independence was born in 1810, old roads and highways formed what has been called "The Liberty Route." It is charged with historic reminders of brave heroes who heralded free-

PLATE 59. *Hidalgo and the Liberation of Mexico.* Oil by José Clemente Orozco. Senate Chamber, Government Palace, Guadalajara, Jalisco. Courtesy Mexican Government Department of Tourism

dom, and it serves as a relic of yesterday in the heart of Old Mexico. Among such historic reminders is the House of Don Miguel Hidalgo, which has been preserved as a museum in the town where he rang the bell in the Church of Dolores.

Another uprising in the same year (1810) was led by José Morelos. It brought nearer the colony's break with Spain and helped social goals, while Morelos's leadership prepared for the Revolution of 1910. Though his ideals were not achieved for 100 years

PLATE 60. *Morelia Cathedral and the Charro Parade.* Courtesy Mexican Government Department of Tourism

and he was defeated and executed, Morelos's efforts lighted the spark of continued hope for betterment. Among other plans, Morelos proposed benefits for Mexican artists, which later were realized and helped to create the twentieth-century Renaissance of Mexican art. His home was in the town of Valladolid, which honored his memory by changing its name to Morelia in 1928 (Plate 60. *Morelia Cathedral and Charro Parade*). The cathedral there is one of the most dignified and architecturally harmonious of all Mexican

churches. Built of trachyte, a tawny-pink native stone, its handsome twin towers loom high against the Mexican sky.

The dire needs of the Mexican people became the theme of artists who had asserted their freedom from dictation of foreign standards of taste, and now they proclaimed an expressive national art. *The Rear Guard* (Plate 61), a print by Orozco, is a forceful work that shows Mexican women participating in the war effort, marching with the army, their babies strapped on backs. Orozco subordinated pictorial details to achieve the dramatic expression of these humble, struggling women. Dark, sinister tones here convey a strong feeling against injustice, as the formless mob pushes forward, following soldiers armed with bayonets who lead the way. In the background, a row of weapons provides strong contrast to the single figure of a woman emerging into light.

Following Morelos's uprising of 1810, Colonel Augustine de Iturbide took short-lived control. During his stormy dictatorship he proclaimed himself Emperor Augustine I; his deposition brought the formation of new

PLATE 61. *The Rear Guard.* Print by José Clemente Orozco. Courtesy Mundelein College, Chicago; owned by: I.B.M. Corporation Collection New York

PLATE 62. *Juárez and the Reform.* Fresco detail by José Clemente Orozco. Courtesy National Museum of History, Mexico City

leadership which was even more disastrous for Mexico. General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna became dictator, instituting a poorly managed rule under which Texas was lost (1836) and over half of Mexican territory taken by the United States in the Mexican War (1845–48). When Santa Anna was overthrown (1855), the nation was in financial and social chaos, with oppression and poverty afflicting the people, who were incensed by the display of wealth by landowners and higher clergy. The time had come for the demands of the masses to be met.

Benito Juárez (1806–72), a great leader, carried the nation out of despair by instituting "The Reform" (1858–61), which brought many needed changes to Mexico. Juárez, a mestizo from Oaxaca, boldly attacked problems of land apportionment, church domination, and the privileges of higher clergy and military factions in his Reform or "constitution" (1857), largely modeled on that of the United States. Church property was confiscated, Monastic Orders and church schools were disbanded, and freedom of worship was introduced. New laws regulated apportionment of land, property rights, marriage, and divorce. The heroic work *Juárez and the Reform.* Fresco detail (Plate 62) by José Clemente Orozco shows the great reformer's face, much enlarged in the center of the fresco, placed against a background of fire, from which his head emerges victoriously in a cloud; his face expresses firm-

PLATE 63. *Zapatistas.* Oil by José Clemente Orozco. 1931. Museum of Modern Art, N. Y. Courtesy The Museum of Modern Art, N. Y.

ness and serenity, and above floats the tri-colored Mexican flag with the national insignia of the Aztec eagle, wings outspread.

Although Juárez overcame powerful reactionary enemies, international intrigue stopped his work for a time. Napoleon III made a pretext of a loan owed France to intervene in Mexican affairs, and he proclaimed an Austrian nobleman, Maximilian, Emperor of Mexico. Although the idea of an empire in Mexico was opposed by Juárez, the leading mestizos, creoles, and the masses of people—all of whom desired a Republic, it was supported by landowners and the higher clergy. Maximilian's unfortunate three-year reign ended when France withdrew its protective troops from Mexico because of need for them in Europe. Juárez soon defeated Maximilian's army; the emperor was executed and Juárez elected President. He brought Mexico a new nationalism; his laws secured order and stability, but unfortunately, death came to him after only five years as President. He is revered as the great liber-

ator and lawmaker of Mexico, and a hero of world renown.

During Mexico's critical times Mexican art expressed ideals of nationalism and portrayed the true condition of the people. José Guadalupe Posada (1851–1913), an artist of originality and great creative talent, made caricatures pointing up evil social conditions, which caused him to develop as a political prophet and pioneer realist of Mexican art. Posada's lithographs and wood and metal cuts expressed a picture of life with character, truth, and strength. He used his skill to point out the severe lacks in the regime of General Porfirio Díaz, who became President after Juárez's death and held office for thirty-four years. Posada's bitterly acid portrayals of Díaz's shortcomings and the nation's needs, presented in newspaper cartoons, had immense effect on social and political life. His talent is reminiscent of that of Daumier, the French realist, and of Goya, the Spanish satirist; Posada's bold draftsmanship and great originality had a profound influence on Mexico's artists and art.

The Díaz era, called "Porfirian," had no concern for humble Mexicans but favored wealthy foreign investors whom the President urged to acquire large holdings in Mexico and promote mining and railroad expansion, offering liberal inducements to capitalists. This policy allowed Mexico's vast mining and agricultural wealth to be controlled by rich foreigners, who became strong supporters of Díaz's political retention as President of Mexico. During this period, Posada's art made vicious attacks on the Díaz regime, which helped precipitate his leaving to live in Paris. Francisco Madero then exposed the corrupt Díaz elections and led a Revolution to give the Mexican people their agrarian rights. The war brought an end to the Díaz rule and Madero was murdered by political enemies. His successor, Emiliano Zapata, a peasant, led a people's army—many soldiers being barefoot—with the slogan "Land and Liberty." Zapata's rapid revolutionary gains were a menace to powerful Mexican financial interests and his enemies contrived to have him murdered. Zapata, the "people's leader," was the subject of many murals and portraits depicting him in his work as a revolutionary activist (Plate 63. *Zapatistas.* Oil by Orozco) (Plate 64. *Zapata Leading the Agrarian Revolt.* Fresco detail by Rivera).

PLATE 64. *Zapata Leading the Agrarian Revolt.* Fresco detail by Diego Rivera. Palace of Cortés, Cuernavaca, Mor. Courtesy *Art of Mexico*

Notwithstanding the loss of great leaders, the revolutionary conflict continued until the government responded to the people's grievances by favorable changes. Freedom of the individual became for the first time a reality in Mexico. Under President Obregon's special enactment (1921), the administration established a department of public education, which included fine arts instruction with scholarships for talented art students. Projects for decoration of public buildings by native artists proved of value to both the public and artists. Improved transportation facilities aided villagers living in remote areas to secure urban markets for their art and handicrafts. Renderings of Mexican scenes, presented by native artists with realism, showed the people at work and play; native artists' interpretations of the nation's pre-Conquest heritage and art legacy were encouraged.

7
ART AWAKENS

In the opening years of the nineteenth century, art continued on the basis of its Colonial background, although attempts were later made to improve the San Carlos Academy. Its director, Pelegrin Clavé, a Spanish artist, introduced the use of living models in classrooms and required that portraits be true likenesses of the sitters. During Maximilian's regime the Academy introduced French styles, foolishly transferring them into a Mexican setting. In Díaz's presidency, native artists were prevented from independent expression; Antonio Fabrés, then director of the Academy, advocated imitative art in the manner of the two popular Spanish painters —Sorolla and Zualoga.

But a clue to the grandeur of the art impulse in Mexico's people comes to light around every corner in Mexico City and down each cobbled street, wherein lies another chapter in the nation's turbulent struggle for peace, beauty, freedom, and honor among nations of the world. The Palace of Fine Arts (Plate 65) is a magnificent white marble structure of rarely beautiful architecture containing the national theater and a museum displaying some of Mexico's best art. It was begun in Díaz's time, and the costly structure was designed with limited seating capacity and was intended for use only by the privileged classes, though when it was remodeled in 1934 the handsome edifice of imported Italian marble was rebuilt with large seating areas and added balconies to meet the needs of all the people. Its Teatro de Belle Artes presents popular programs like the Ballet Folklorico for large audiences, as does also the National Opera which is housed there.

During the early nineteenth century folk artists were painting with sincere ingenuousness in a delightfully fresh, direct style. These unknown native artists, though lacking training in sophisticated art techniques, recorded what they saw, making attempts to handle tonal harmonies in their paintings. *Portrait of a Child* (Plate 66) by an anonymous colonial portrait painter exemplifies the art of these sincere painters who provided a definite link between the sixteenth-century friars' art of the monasteries and the modern Mexican art movement.

When Alfredo Ramos Martínez (1881–1946) returned after several years of study abroad, he taught the use of scintillating, clear color in his popular outdoor painting classes. The government later sponsored twenty-seven similar classes, offering free lessons to many who later became famous Mexican artists, among them Rufino Tamayo. Impressionist technique began in Mexico

PLATE 65. *Palace of Fine Arts.* Mexico City, 1904–1934. Adamo Boari, architect. Courtesy Mexican Government Department of Tourism

through the efforts of Martínez and Dr. Alt (1877–1964), both having studied it in Paris. "Dr. Alt," was an assumed name, a pseudonym of Gerardo Murillo, with which name he was christened when born in Guadalajara. He changed it to Alt, which means Water, in the Nahuatl tongue, because he disliked the art of the many Mexican copyists who imitated the Spanish Murillo's work, for at that time derivative Mexican artists made many copies of Murillo's pink and blue paintings. Dr. Alt is known for the aid he gave to Mexican folk art and for his strikingly original landscapes, of which he painted a series showing volcanos at different hours of the day, each indicating the effects of light on lava or clouds as the color changed. Dr. Alt lived near the volcano Popocatepetl in order to study the varied lighting at different hours, and his studies of atmospheric effects are accurately transcribed.

A devoted group of artists who gathered around Dr. Alt were inspired by his original methods and the leadership he attained when he urged the government to allow native artists to exhibit their paintings and sculpture at the show planned to celebrate the centennial of Hidalgo's "Grito de Dolores." The Díaz government had originally planned to show only the art of leading Spanish painters—Sorolla and Zualoga—but after Dr. Alt protested, a large show of native

art was allowed, for which the government granted 3,000 pesos to cover the cost of assembling it. The native show included various entries, enough to fill several galleries, and it had an enthusiastic reception and received the highest praise.

Although impressionistic painting was never popular in Mexico, it brought a desire for new art ideas and initiated attitudes which relieved the declining academic art then being taught at the Academy. Some talented students of Martínez who opposed the teaching of the Academy rented a small house in Santa Anita near Mexico City, where they painted outdoors—in this respect resembling the Barbizon artists of Paris—and called themselves "Mexican Barbizons." Native artists were urged to feature Mexican subjects and present-day Indian life with realism, aiming to make native art a national asset and to present all phases of art—murals, posters, caricatures, engravings, woodcuts, portraits, and landscapes.

Mexican art began to develop as an expression by individual artists of their personal feelings, based on experiences of what they saw and knew. Representative of this ideal is the work of Francisco Goitia (1884–1960), oldest of the Revolutionary artist group, who painted with deep sympathy for the tragic struggle of Mexico's people; his art is a proclamation of toil-weary Indians struggling in humble life situations. His *Tata Jesucristo* (Plate 67. *Father Jesus Christ*), painted in oil in 1926, is a masterpiece which won world acclaim for the grandeur of its Expressionism. A representative exhibit of works by Goitia and Posada hangs in the Palace of Fine Arts, Mexico City.

Goitia, along with José Posada, became a vital precursor of modern Mexican art. After studying on a government scholarship in Spain and Italy, Goitia returned to Mexico in 1912 and saw service in the Revolution, later working for the government at Teotihuacán (1918–25). While there he painted typical scenes of Mexican life, many recording the griefs and sorrows of humble people. Goitia's art was a mystic interpretation suffused with sympathy, portraying the lowly Indian's spirit. A deep student of the native art heritage and of folk art, he was a lifelong art teacher, his message the promotion of social consciousness favoring the Mexican masses. His profound expression of his awareness of his mission has given Goitia a high place in world art.

Mexicans from all sections of the nation left their work on farms, in mines, and in stores to join the army and help in the war for freedom. All classes were together, and though the mestizos became leaders in the armed forces, the humble peons displayed great courage while making their fine contribution for victory. In gratitude for their fine service, the post-Revolutionary government gave them special aid in its reconstruction program. Government help was given to art under direction of the cultural bureau chairman, José Vasconcellos, Minister of Education, who instituted a plan for the decoration of public buildings, maintenance of art exhibits, study and research in archaeology, excavation of historic ruins, and restoration and display of pre-Columbian relics. Reconstruction policy urged individuals to help the nation by patriotic use of art talent, skills, and abilities. President Obregon, a mestizo Indian, carried forward the principles of social justice inaugurated by Juárez, as did his successor, President Cardenas. In 1934 a six-year government plan provided equitable land adjustment by assigning parcels to peons for theiir ownership and cultivation, the subsidy being made possible by the reversion of one hundred million acres of land to the nation when haciendas and church holdings were absorbed. These long-delayed grants gave the Mexican masses new heart.

Large numbers of native artists arrived in 1921 to paint Mexico City's public buildings for the government. Diego Rivera, Xavier

LATE 66. *Portrait of a child.* By an anonymous Colonial artist. Courtesy *Art of Mexico*

PLATE 67. *Father Jesus Christ* (Tata Jesucristo). Oil by Francisco Goita. 1927. Palace of Fine Arts, Mexico City, D.F. Courtesy *Art of Mexico*

Guerrero, and Roberto Montenegro were among the first to begin work. Orozco and Siqueiros soon joined them and became leaders of the large art project. Later workers were Rufino Tamayo, Carlos Merida, Julio Castellanos, Miguel Covarrubias, Jesus Guerrero Galván, Alfredo Zolce, and Leopoldo Mendes, who constituted a younger group who promoted Mexico's modern art movement on the completion of the great mural art project. Immediately following the Ministry of Education assignment of commissions to decorate walls of public buildings, all Mexican artists eagerly grasped the opportunity to serve their country. Rivera began his murals by portraying Mexican themes which helped start the nationalist art themes; thus the Reconstruction period offered artists much opportunity for portrayal of timely local scenes of human interest, which brought Mexican art on a forward creative path to the inauguration of a new aesthetic.

A syndicate organized by Mexican artists in 1922 presented its aims to help meet post-Revolutionary and Reconstruction needs. The syndicate's aim was to unite art workers for the creation of works expressive of the Indian spirit by presenting native life and its traditional heritage, and then to extend art influences by placing large-scale art in places where the public could view it. A mural of special interest, painted by Rivera, presents Zapata, the popular peasant leader (Plate 68. *Zapata Leading the Agrarian Revolt.* Fresco detail). Rivera's skillful spatial design and decorative arrangement of the large-scale figures are here combined with harmonious line directions of rope, weapons, poles, and banners. This work exemplifies post-Revolutionary art in a richly decorative, narrative style. It depicts the eventful flow of Mexican history and combines it with the new aesthetic achievement by the Republic.

PLATE 68. *Zapata leading the Agrarian Revolt.* Fresco detail by Diego Rivera. Palace of Cortés, Cuernavaca, Mor. Courtesy *Art of Mexico*

Through such influences, national Mexican art crystallized into a thoroughly popular style characterized by strong lines, and values and colors reminiscent of the art of pre-Conquest artists. Modern artists were seeking and finding sources of inspiration in ancient Indian art, returning also to use of primitive materials. Art had turned abruptly away from formalism to express with freedom the true scenes of local Indian daily life. Styles varied, with some artists working with Expressionism while others developed dynamic realism; still others aimed merely for decorative effect. But the whole program was in-

PLATE 69. *Parochial Church. San Miguel de Allende.* Courtesy Mexican Government Department of Tourism

PLATE 70. *Chapultepec Castle.* National Museum of History and Anthropology. Mexico City, D.F. Courtesy Mexican Government Department of Tourism

PLATE 71. *Street Art Fair.* Mexico City, D.F. Courtesy Mexican Government Department of Tourism

tended to make a truer statement of Mexican life for the world to see and understand.

The Parochial Church of San Miguel de Allende (Plate 69) is one of the most unusual architectural monuments in all Mexico. Its graceful towers pierce the air with a beautiful blend of neo-Gothic style in a supreme elegance of construction. This lovely Mexican town was designated a national monument by government decree in order to preserve its Colonial atmosphere, which combines in a beautiful manner Baroque emphasis with the older Gothic.

The Chapultepec Castle, now the National Museum of History (Plate 70) was built atop a hill in Mexico City in a park of the same name. "Chapultepec" in the Aztec tongue means "Hill of the Grasshoppers," and this was the main site of governing rule in pre-Hispanic years. The Castle was erected during the Colonial period but was abandoned in 1841 when it became a military college, although the lovely structure is linked with the short-lived empire of Maximilian and Carlotta, who used it as their official home. After the French intervention

collapsed, the Castle served as a summer residence for President Porfirio Díaz. In 1940 the Republic of Mexico declared it the National Museum of History and the handsome building now contains murals by Siqueiros, Orozco, Rivera, and other famous painters.

That art has awakened is evidenced in the Sunday morning art fairs in Mexico City (Plate 71), which are held to benefit struggling artists who hope for recognition by, and sales to, the public. Mexican artists have long displayed their work at street fairs and have indeed thereby created much interest among the city dwellers. Just about everyone in Mexico tries his hand at painting and many artists' colonies are scattered throughout the Republic.

8
MEXICAN MURALS

The government's extensive program of pre-Columbian research and archaeology increased interest in Mexican indigenous art, leading both artists and public to find inspiration in the nation's ancient art legacy. In 1922, under the influence of Teotihuacán's murals, Mexican artists learned from them how primitive painters made their frescoes. Xavier Guerrero, Jean Charlot, and José Clemente Orozco all conducted successful experiments which resulted in the improvement of modern fresco painting. Artists were inspired to use colors typical of pre-Hispanic art found in the newly excavated murals at Teotihuacán. Their study proved that various minerals were basic materials used in murals found in Monte Albán tombs and on walls at Teotihuacán. Most ancient paintings representing nature's forces were in landscape settings showing the "paradise of the gods" and Tlaloc, God of Rain, being implored to aid the Indian's crops. Other ancient murals with religious motifs were of priests, with many geometric designs of interlocked lines. Pre-Conquest Indians painted directly on the walls of palaces and temples. During the Colonial period friars and natives decorated churches and fortress-like monasteries with pictures that were a delight to the Indians. Religious subjects were rendered in large-scale paintings on walls, like the mural by an unknown artist at Tepepulco (Plate 72). These works helped the Christianizing work of priests among the natives.

The now famous Bonampak frescoes, discovered in 1946, were painted during the Classic period, around A.D. 600–700 and they represent the finest pre-Columbian murals in the Americas. Found in a tropical jungle at Chiapas, between Guatemala and Mexico, they were submerged in the "hot lands" for centuries. Among ancient ruins of buildings discovered there is one containing three rooms, the walls of which were painted with different scenes. One shows richly dressed chiefs; another is of servants dressing priests in ceremonial robes; and a third room displays musicians and dancers. *Head of a Chief* (Plate 73) is a fresco detail, part of a large painting in the Temple of Bonampak. Another is a battle scene (Plate 74), which indicates that the warriors of Bonampak used the spear as their weapon. Here the men, arrayed in magnificent costumes and jewelry, are apparently carrying out a raid. *Battle Scene* occupies three walls, which has led experts to believe that warfare was a principal activity of these ancient people. Sections present an exchange of prisoners, and a dance where finely attired people are

PLATE 72. Religious mural. By an unknown artist. Tepepulco. Colonial period. Courtesy *Art of Mexico*

being entertained by musicians playing tribal instruments. The three groups of paintings, in separate rooms, are executed with different types of brushwork, composition, and color. The *Battle Scene* is composed of strong linear rhythms created with broken lines to show violent action. All the Bonampak murals are painted with material which is partly tempera. Various bright colors were freely used.

Giles Grenville Healy, an American explorer-photographer, has recently taken infrared photographs of the Bonampak murals, which have brought renewed interest in this ancient but newly discovered art. His pictures include murals found in three excavated rooms where noticeable differences in the art style indicate that several artists worked collectively on the frescoes. Of special interest are the space rendering and action. The mystery about these murals is increased by their having been made in a remote and isolated place bounded by sea, jungle, and desert, indicating a culture entirely dissociated from any other people.

The Mexican government's modern mural project was planned to meet a national need. It began in 1921 and 1922 by commissioning artists to decorate walls of the National Preparatory School (Preparatoria), including its patio and auditorium (Amphiteatre Bolivar). The Mexican Mural Renaissance is usually dated between 1920 and 1925. Rivera painted there through 1923 and also worked in the Ministry of Education Building (Secretaria), though many other Mexican muralists also painted there. Rivera's *Worker's United* (Plate 75) is on the wall of the third-floor corridor. A notable later mural by Rivera which enforces this artist's belief in the unified effort of labor is his *Pan-American Unity* at San Francisco Junior College (Plate 76).

A bold and highly decorative Colonial work is the interior decoration of the Church of Santa Maria at Tonantzentla (Plate 77). This striking work in strong color and forceful relief is by an unknown artist of the eighteenth century. It shows details of heads,

PLATE 73. *Head of a Chief.* Pre-Columbian wall painting. Temple of Bonampak, Chiapas. Courtesy UNESCO World Art Series, begun 1954

masks, and floral motifs, and the ornamentation is so elaborate that it covers all parts of the interior and combines painting with gilding of stucco and scrolls.

José Clemente Orozco and David Alfaro Siqueiros painted extensively in the National Preparatory School (Secretaria). Orozco's theme of the Revolution stresses social improvement, a subject near his heart. Siqueiros's panels include his famous *Burial of a Worker*. The great mural project in Mexico slowly proceeded to completion, when it became a valuable form of mass communication, interpreting with force scenes of native

PLATE 74. *Battle Scene.* Pre-Columbian mural. Fresco detail from Temple of Bonampak, Chiapas. Courtesy UNESCO Publishing Center

life which were rendered dramatically yet showed realistically the truth concerning oppression of the peons and the later winning of their independence. While fostering improved social goals the mural program encouraged nationalism and appreciation of Mexico's indigenous art heritage. The huge program transcended anything ever attempted by a national art project and artists' brushes became the means whereby all Mexican hearts were captured. Native painters were dedicated to their gigantic task of depicting the long and tortuous saga of Mexico's land and soul, and each artist accepted the challenge individually. Some featured the laborer and his work; others portrayed thrilling historic events whereby courage and sacrifice brought national freedom.

Orozco's later mural at Pomona College, Claremont, California portrays his powerful imaginative concept and emotional intensity. This large work covers the space above a fireplace in the student refectory. His *Prometheus* (Plate 78) reinterprets a symbolic subject taken from mythology. It shows the Titan who stole fire from heaven giving it to mortal man. Orozco's treatment of the Titan figure has depth in its painting and composition, conveyed by sweeping diagonal movement. The Titan's hand is extended as he gives the symbolic fire to mankind and the artist shows masses of figures rushing forward to grasp the gift, which symbolizes the vast debt Mexico owes its heroes who

gave their lives on the altar of freedom for mankind. Orozco is believed to have been influenced in the development of his concept by the world's great painters, Michelangelo, Tintoretto, and El Greco. This magnificent mural by Orozco, a work of 1930, resembles in its symbolism his later great works in Mexico City and Guadalajara.

Many of Diego Rivera's Ministry of Education frescoes, with their fine genre themes, extend into its two three-storied patios. The smaller patio has murals of his *Court of Labor;* the larger, his *Court of Festivals* series. The Secretariat walls bear the work of Rivera and his assistants, two panels being the work of Amado de la Cueva and Jean Charlot, with other frescoes by Roberto Montenegro and Carlos Merida. Rivera's panels have skillful color gradations and spatial design and reveal a simplicity of treatment reminiscent of the great Giotto frescoes.

Gay scenes are featured in Rivera's *Court of Festivals,* presenting with verve a *fandango* dance with Indian orchestra; a maypole dance; the *ttortite* or "little bull," a popular entertainment at fiestas; a gay promenade along the Viga Canal on a festival day with flower-laden canoes; a Labor Day celebration, with marchers carrying banners. Other murals show a Saturday night before Easter; an All-Souls Day midnight feast; a cemetery with grave flowers and lighted candles on tombstones with braziers burning charcoal and incense; peasants resting after their labor of the harvest; early mining days, showing peons carrying heavy loads as they descend mine shafts; a Colonial sugar mill on a hacienda; drying and dyeing of fibers which will be woven into cloth. In the *Court of Labor* a typical market is seen, and women washing clothes.

Social emphasis prevails in murals celebrating the distribution of land, Zapata's peasant revolt, and portrait studies of popular native leaders. *Thanksgiving Day* shows peasants giving thanks for crops; a fire-dance

PLATE 75. *Workers United.* Fresco detail by Diego Rivera. Secretaria, Mexico City, D.F. Courtesy *Art of Mexico*

held annually in mining camps shows miners wearing masks and belts with rattles to accompany dancing around a bonfire; free education offered by the post-Revolutionary government is depicted. Plate 79. *The New School,* detail of a fresco by Rivera in the Ministry of Education in Mexico City, presents a young woman teaching children and adults while in the landscape background

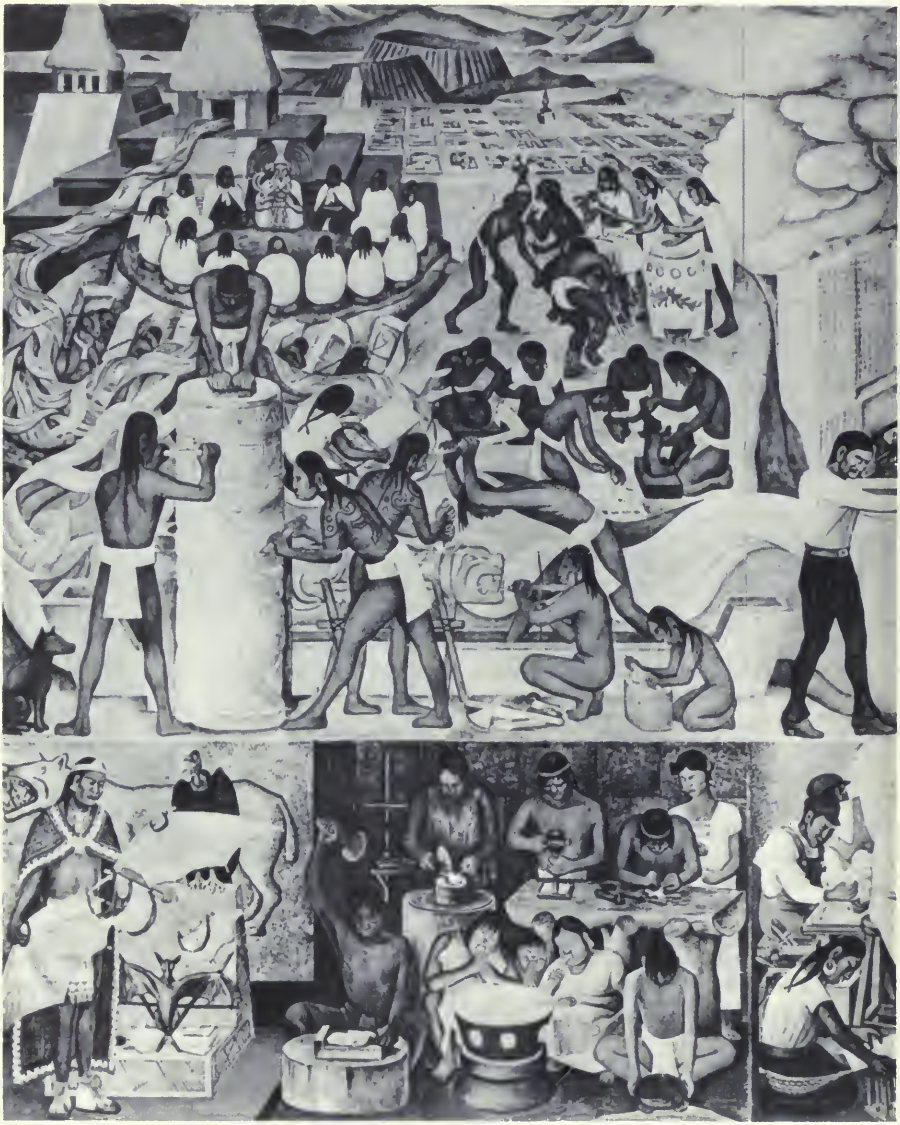

PLATE 76. *Pan-American Unity.* Fresco detail by Diego Rivera. San Francisco Junior College, California. Courtesy *Art of Mexico*

Pan-American Unity. Fresco detail by Diego Rivera. San Francisco Junior College, California. Courtesy *Art of Mexico*

PLATE 77. Interior decoration in Church of Santa Maria, Tonantzentla, Puebla, 18th century. Courtesy *Art of Mexico*

fathers and husbands are tilling and planting the fields. The symbolic mural of a humble peon welcoming social changes in an interpretation of freedom shows him cutting the rope which had tied him; a post-Reconstruction factory symbolizes opportunities to work and earn; pottery-making is shown as done in an ancient kiln. The last mural, the 32nd, depicts the hard treatment of peons on haciendas when they were forced

PLATE 78. *Prometheus.* Fresco by José Clemente Orozco. Wall of Pomona College Refectory, Claremont, California, 1930. Courtesy Pomona College

to lift heavy bags of wheat and corn, taking them for weighing under surveillance of a guard with gun ready to use if he discovers any theft among workers.

Murals in the Ministry of Education portray the Mexican scene with deep understanding of human rights, emphasizing the beauty of folk lore and also presenting changes wrought by post-Reconstruction reforms. The Golden Age of Mexican mural art portrays improved social conditions while interpreting native life with truth and tenderness. A unique mural achievement relating art and architecture is the work of a great contemporary Mexican, Juan O'Gorman, who designed the native stone mosaic façade and sides of the University City Library in Mexico City (Plate 80). The gigantic work contains symbols used by Mexico's earliest men, which are designed in colorful stone patterns. This achievement ranks as one of the world's most exciting mural developments. O'Gorman, who is both an architect and painter, also painted and directed the work on many murals inside the structure. (Plate 81. Mural in the University Library).

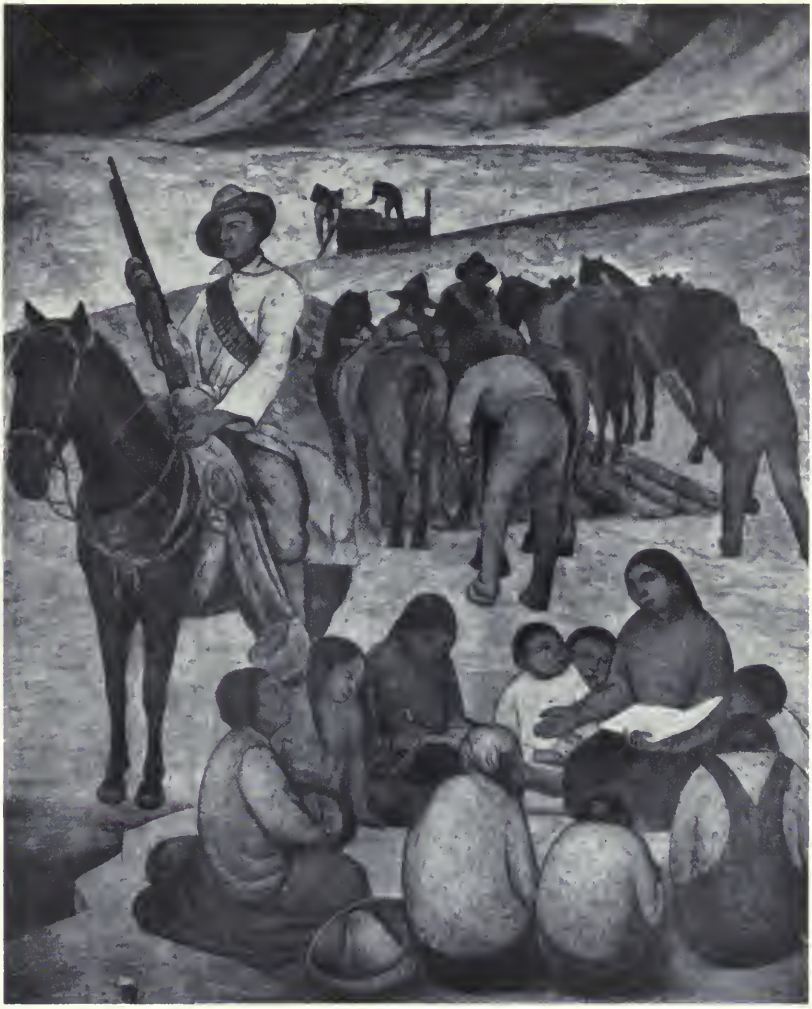

PLATE 79. *The New School.* Fresco by Diego Rivera in the Ministry of Education, Mexico City, D.F. Courtesy *Art of Mexico*

Rivera cooperated with O'Gorman on these mosaic designs.

The University of Mexico was founded in 1551 and it is now located in Pedregal, a suburb of Mexico City, where it occupies a huge area said to be the largest university

PLATE 80. Native stone mural, mosaic façade and sides designed by Juan O'Gorman. University City Library, Mexico City. Courtesy Mexican Government Department of Tourism

PLATE 81. Mural exterior Science building, University of Mexico. Mural art under direction of Juan O'Gorman. Courtesy Mexican Government Department of Tourism

campus in the world. Many of its buildings are made of lava rock, and they make a fitting monument to the beauty and practicality of contemporary architecture. All these structures are enhanced inside by murals by notable Mexican painters of today. Juan O'Gorman has said that his colored mosaics display historically the Mexican "Growth of Ideas."

Mexican artists of the Syndicate of Painters conceived the noble program for native art by which a revival of wall painting on a grand scale would be used to help restore the social relationship between art and all the Mexican people. This aim was to be accomplished through the influence of the content expressed, by social criticism of existing conditions, and by the quality and perfection of the wall paintings. That this great aim was well accomplished by the leaders of the movement is proved by the momentous effect of the Mexican mural art movement throughout the Western Hemisphere.

9
DIEGO RIVERA, 1886-1957

Diego Rivera's art was consecrated to helping Mexico's peasants and workers, also offering them enjoyment. His portrayal of social problems underlying native life fills vast murals and presents a panorama of Mexican history—heartwarming interpretations of the native's joy of life and of the tragic injustices he suffered. Rivera's later work envisages a new opportunity through the modern machinery that, he believed, would provide Mexican labor with the chance to become free from over-burdening and frustrating conditions. By thorough study in Detroit of automobile manufacture, Rivera obtained the necessary knowledge for rendering the mural commissioned by the Ford Company (1923–33) (Plate 82. *Part Production and Assembly of a Motor.* Fresco detail by Rivera). This work presents highly informed realism combined with knowledge of the technology of automobile manufacture, which Rivera uses here as symbolic of the machine age. He here oversteps the usual mural subject-matter in introducing his new art concept. Rivera's interest and involvment in the study of art in life situations took him to many different places and his vast production includes frescoes, easel painting, portraiture, landscape, stage-sets, ballet settings, and genre art.

Diego Rivera was born December 8, 1886, at Guanajuato, a silver-mining village, but due to his father's unemployment the family moved while he was a child to Mexico City, where at the age of ten he entered San Carlos Art Academy to receive an early, though thorough, art training. His teachers inspired him with love of pre-Columbian sculpture, and taught him landscape painting and draftsmanship, including the use of expressive line in his compositions, characteristic of Rivera's later art. He left the academy at sixteen to begin independent art work and at that time came under the strong influence of José Guadalupe Posada, whose original engravings deeply impressed him. Because he was fascinated by the imaginative and sarcastic cartoons, he often lingered in Posada's workshop. Rivera honored Posada's memory in 1926 by painting his portrait for the National Palace Series of Great Mexicans.

Dr. Alt helped Rivera secure a government scholarship in 1907, which offered extended study and travel abroad, and when twenty-one he left for Spain with a letter of introduction to Dr. Alt's former teacher. While studying he frequented art galleries to view great works by El Greco, Goya, and Velasquez; later travels took him to England, Belgium, Germany, Holland, and France,

PLATE 82. *Production and Assembly of a Motor.* Fresco detail. Diego Rivera. Courtesy The Ford Company, Detroit

where he studied the great art in galleries. Returning to Paris, Rivera came under the influence of Cézanne's art, which gave direction to his work. Parisian artists were at that time impressed by the Cubist vogue and had great enthusiasm for native African sculpture. The latter caused Rivera to use elements of primitive Mexican art in his work. At age twenty-four, he left Paris for a brief visit to Mexico, where he exhibited at the Centennial Celebration Art Show which Dr. Alt assembled for native artists. On his return to Paris he became impressed by post-Impressionism and neo-Impressionism, especially admiring Paul Gauguin's art and that of Henri Rousseau. Rivera had by then given more complete attention to Cézanne's art, realizing that it showed the way for his future work. Among his friends in Paris were Alie Fauré, the art historian, whose portrait he painted, and two talented Russian artists, Bakst, the stage-designer, and Archipenko, the sculptor.

Because of the political upheaval in Mexico, Rivera's government allowance was stopped and he earned his living while studying. He met his Mexican friend Siqueiros, who had arrived for study in Paris, and they agreed that native art should renounce foreign domination and express the values of

its own heritage. He left Paris for a visit to Italy to study galleries and art in churches, where he was most impressed by Giotto's frescoes and Byzantine mosaics. By this time Rivera was fully aware of his direction toward the values expressed in the art of Cézanne and he determined to find his own way and create a personal style. The opportunity came when he joyfully accepted the offer by the Mexican Government to decorate public buildings, painting frescoes expressive of native history and people. His life work began in 1922, when he adopted for his theme "interpretation of the Mexican scene" (Plate 83. *Self Portrait.* Lithograph by Rivera).

Post-Revolutionary times brought a popular-theater movement with its lively portrayal of native life, and these theatricals influenced murals of Rivera's *Fiesta Series,* which used folkloric features. While on a visit in Yucatan, he made water-color sketches which later served as material for easel works. *Fiesta Tehuana* (Plate 84) combines dancing and music in scenes similar to those in his later murals of the *Court of Festivals.* The patio and ground-floor walls in the Ministry of Education building are adorned with Rivera's *Festival of the Corn* (1923–28) in the *Harvest Festival* series. Because corn was a vital contribution to pre-Conquest life, Rivera delighted in painting renditions of it and his frescoes were at that time interpreting folk settings without concern for social problems. *May Day* in the *Court of Fiestas* shows his delight in native dances, where the scenes swing with linear rhythms and flowing color. *Yucatan Mother and Child* shows a tropical landscape, with glimpses of forest and plantation. On the south wall of the *Court of Labor* are portrayed the industries of southern Mexico: weaving, dyeing, sugar-refining, and cane-growing. These panels are in luminous color of rich tones reminiscent of Gauguin's post-Impressionist art. The north wall shows the mining and ranching industries of northern Mexico along with some Revolutionary scenes, while the east wall depicts activities of central Mexico: silver-mining, agriculture, and pottery-making.

Among Rivera's famous murals treating of social problems is *Weighing of the Grain,*

PLATE 83. *Self-Portrait.* Lithograph. Diego Rivera. Courtesy Mundelein College, Chicago. I.B.M. Collection, N.Y.

a powerful decorative work in his post-Impressionist manner, which uses symbolism where the peon's round hat suggests a halo above his head. Symbolism is again stressed in another work in the *Court of Labor* where a peon worker emerges from a mine and stands with outstretched arms in a posture reminiscent of the crucifixion. Among impressive works of outstanding decorative design are *The Dyers* and *Sugar Refiners.* While Rivera was painting these great decorations, his workday averaged fifteen hours and he kept up this heavy schedule in the years

PLATE 84. *Fiesta Tehuana.* Oil. Courtesy Mundelein College, Chicago. I.B.M. Collection, N.Y.

between 1923 and 1927. A work of the *Court of Labor's* first patio wall, *The New School* (see Plate 80), shows a change in Rivera's rendering of his figures. Here the forms have sloping shoulders and rounded heads and

PLATE 85. *Virgin Soil.* Fresco detail 1929 Chapel, Chapingo, Mexico. Courtesy *Art of Mexico*

torsos in a style of figure-drawing very different from his tall figures in earlier murals. This simplification of forms is believed to have been the result of research in the art of Duccio, a fourteenth-century master of Italy's fresco art, whose work Rivera admired. His later murals show still another stylistic change, with greater emphasis given to illustrative intention, as is seen in his Agricultural School frescoes at Chapingo.

Although the Ministry of Education walls were incomplete in 1926 when Rivera began work on his Chapingo murals, he accomplished both projects with the help of able assistants, Pablo O'Higgins and Maxime Pacheco, the latter being an artist-naturalist who painted flowers, birds, and animals in a style resembling that of French painter Henri Rousseau. Rivera's world-famed Chapingo murals were painted on the walls of an eighteenth-century chapel of a hacienda northeast of Mexico City, which had been taken by the post-Revolutionary government for development of a national agricultural school. The site had special appeal for Rivera because an Aztec temple once stood there and sculptural remains of ancient pagan idols had been found there.

The low-vaulted Colonial chapel, three miles from Chapingo, became the setting for Rivera's glorious decorative frescoes. His subject *The Land,* or *The Good Earth,* was timely and appropriate in the agrarian reform period. Included are panels of the *Corn Field,* indicating "fertilization," with companion works "germination" and "fruition" of *The Fecund Earth* (Plate 85. *The Virgin Soil.* Fresco detail by Rivera). The series combines symbolic and philosophical ideals which attain high power and beauty while expressing a better day for land apportionment. The replenishment of mankind on the earth is shown in a cycle of fertilization, the con-

cept being from pre-Conquest Mexico. A series of beautiful nudes is shown with perfection of decorative line planning, and the theme of a nature cycle, replenishing the earth, is shown with lofty idealism (Plate 86. *The Fecund Earth.* Fresco detail by Rivera).

PLATE 86. *The Fecund Earth.* Fresco detail, Chapel, Chapingo, Mexico. Courtesy *Art of Mexico*

On completion of his Chapingo murals in 1927, Rivera was invited to Russia as a guest of the government while he served as delegate of the Peasant's League. While there he was commissioned to paint a group portrait of officers, but was unable to complete the work because of a health concern that required him to return to Mexico. Nevertheless, in the last year of his life, he went back to Russia and completed the portrait. Although the second-floor murals in the Mexico City Ministry of Education building were unfinished, he completed them on his return to Mexico. A panel featuring a May Day celebration contains portraits of both his wife, Frida, and Siqueiros.

Owing to Rivera's friendship with Trotsky, who was living in Mexico as an exile and was murdered there by enemies, Rivera's art was belittled by Stalin and the Russian critics, who disparaged his work thereafter. In 1929 Rivera accepted a commission from the American Ambassador to Mexico, the late Honorable Dwight W. Morrow, to paint murals in the ancient Palace of Cortés, Cuernavaca, his theme to be the History of Mexico. This great art achievement was presented by Mr. Morrow to the city of Cuernavaca. It presents historic scenes, beginning with Aztec days, then covering the Conquest and agrarian uprisings under popular leaders. The large murals fill walls on an open balcony of the Palace and contain impressive full-length portraits of Mexican heroes, including Cuauhtemoc, the last Aztec emperor; Morelos; and Zapata. One panel shows how the Palace was built for Cortés by slave labor; another shows Cortés receiving tribute payments from Indians; while contrasting with these is a panel of a priest helping the natives. These highly praised murals, rendered with great decorative power and depth of feeling, portray stoic submission by Indians while suffering.

Rivera's large frescoes in the National Palace have as their center of interest the eagle-and-serpent Emblem of State. This, the largest mural, is on the staircase-landing wall and includes many figures representing persons in all walks of life who are making personal contributions to help attain and retain the glory of Mexican freedom for all people of the nation. The vast work was begun in 1929 and completed in 1935. The work is a great decorative achievement with much narrative emphasis. It depicts the whole panorama of Mexican history, showing the pre-Colonial life of Indians and the changes

after the Revolution had given them freedom.

A notable work performed for the Ministry of Health is *Life and Physical Fitness*, in which the panel depicting *Strength* is symbolized by a reclining female nude; *Knowledge* is interpreted in stained-glass windows, the design for which were by Rivera, the glass being made at Puebla. Rivera also painted numerous murals in California for various civic groups, besides fulfilling commissions for individuals and teaching a summer-term university course.

In 1933 Rivera began work on a large mural commission for the R.C.A. Building lobby, Rockefeller Center, New York. Rivera's designs brought adverse criticism because a portrait of Lenin was placed in a group of American workers; the mural was condemned after a court trial, but Mr. Rockefeller paid Rivera fully for the work. The next year Rivera reconstructed a duplicate of it in the Palace of Fine Arts, Mexico City. In the Mexican version of the work, Rivera substituted Mexican features for the controversial ones in the R.C.A. version. A large mural for the Hotel del Prado dining-room was Rivera's next commission; it offers criticism of grafting office-holders who exploited national resources. At this time he turned to painting easel works featuring Mexican life—landscapes and portraits for museums and private collectors.

An early modern-style residence in Mexico City was designed for Rivera by Juan O'Gorman (1929–30) intended primarily for a studio home for the artist and his wife, Frida, who was a successful teacher of art, painter, and lecturer. After her death in 1954 it was converted into a museum for her art and a larger studio-home was planned, with Juan O'Gorman again the architect; it contained a large museum for display of Rivera's collection of pre-Colonial sculptures and historical items, which he presented to Mexico. This modernistic, functional structure was named by the artist "Anahuacalli," in honor and memory of the Aztecs who had lived in the Valley of Anáhuac.

Rivera's last large project was a huge mosaic-relief decoration of exterior walls for the Olympic Stadium, Mexico City; his design, *Peace Between Nations*, was an interpretation of the ideals of Quetzalcoatl, the Toltec God of Peace. Though unfinished when Rivera died, it was completed according to his design by Juan O'Gorman; made entirely of native Mexican materials, including semi-precious stones, the work constitutes a grand achievement of modern art. Rivera's mosaic murals on the exterior walls of the University Library and the Transportation Center in Mexico City, are likewise made exclusively of native stones.

PLATE 87. *Flower Vendor.* San Francisco Museum of Art, San Francisco, Calif. Albert M. Bender Collections. Courtesy San Francisco Museum of Art

The *Flower Vendor* (Plate 87), an oil by Diego Rivera in the San Francisco Museum of Art, expresses Indian primitivism in its simple, monumental forms combined with the rich earthy color typical of this master painter.

Rivera's art reflects his primary interest

PLATE 88. Cathedral. Guadalajara. State of Jalisco. Courtesy Mexican Government Department of Tourism

in the contemporary world of progress in machinery for labor-saving aids to relieve the burdens of overworked humanity. But he was supremely conscious of the world's social meanings. His early murals in the amphitheatre of the Preparatory School and in the Ministry of Education were devoted to the social, economic, and political problems besetting Mexico. The Revolution became the source of his great frescoes of Chapingo, which he charged with symbolism. His loyalty to mankind is manifested especially in the murals showing Mexican peons. Rivera has given the art world an unhesitating and confident leadership to bring betterment to the land he loved.

Diego Rivera died at the age of 70, November 15, 1957, having achieved a high place in world art history and won acclaim as one of the greatest muralists of all time and a benefactor of Mexico and its people. He is buried in the Rotunda of Illustrious Sons of Mexico. Honoring his lifelong devoted service to his homeland, a permanent exhibit of his art is displayed in the National Memorial, Palace of Fine Arts, Mexico City.

10
JOSÉ CLEMENTE OROZCO, 1883-1949

José Clemente Orozco, a great Mexican artist of world renown, was a master of profound emotional and imaginative force. Born on November 23, 1883, at Zapotlán, a village in Jalisco, he was descended from pioneer settlers of Spanish-Indian heredity. Members of his family had held public positions of importance at Guadalajara and his mother was a talented musician. The family moved from Zapotlán to Guadalajara while José was a young boy. This fine capital city of Jalisco is located in a valley surrounded by mountains, its principal structure being the impressive Cathedral of Guadalajara in the State of Jalisco (Plate 88), which has handsome Baroque towers and beautiful interior decorations of that style. Another old building is the Government Palace, made of red lava stone which proved strong enough to withstand cannon fire in the Revolution. During the post-Reconstruction period its walls were decorated with Orozco's frescoes presenting panoramic scenes of Mexican history, which murals are rated among the artist's finest work. In 1888 the family moved to Mexico City, although Orozco returned long years later to establish his studio-home in Guadalajara. Following his death it was dedicated as a museum in his memory.

The artist's early training began with attendance at night classes of San Carlos Academy; later he received a scholarship for study at the National Agricultural School where he earned a degree in engineering though continuing his education at the University of Mexico, studying Classics, mathematics, and architecture. Orozco's training in careful methods of work and research were of special benefit to his later career in art. As mentioned above, the first influence of art upon him came from his haunting the studio-workshop of José Guadalupe Posada, whose satiric caricatures, macabre drawings of fantastic skeletons, interpretations of folklore, and denunciation of the Díaz regime with derisive yet humorous sketches all greatly impressed Orozco. He became filled with a desire to help the miserable condition of Mexico's poor with his art. In 1905 he entered the Academy to prepare for an art career, adding self-planned study in anatomy to his art curriculum. After his father's death Orozco attended night classes at the Academy, and earned his living by drawing cartoons for newspapers and magazines, an experience which gave valuable practical training for his future art career. It helped free him from academic formalism in art and encouraged his immediate branching out in development of a vital individual style.

Due to a severe accident caused by an explosion, three fingers were torn from his left hand; ensuing infection made drastic surgery necessary, leaving only a blunt stump without fingers where his left hand had been. Also one eye was damaged, requiring Orozco always to wear strong lenses thereafter. A singular result was that his art often emphasized hands in later paintings, and he studied the way great masters used hands in their work. A notable example is Orozco's famous Prometheus fresco (see Plate 79) with details of Quetzalcoatl and Father Hidalgo portraits in which the treatment of hands resembles that of El Greco.

Dr. Alt's emphasis on folk art influenced Orozco to paint the Mexican scene with sympathetic and expressive emphasis. While making caricatures and illustrations for newspapers he was led to produce works showing concern for severe social problems besetting the Mexican poor and he felt it his duty to inform the masses of severe injustices, urging their correction through his art. The plight of innocent victims of postwar problems caused Orozco to champion them and he began by depicting these people in a series of water colors. *The Outcasts* consists of one hundred studies portraying their tragic condition of life in Mexico City. The exhibition received highest praise for the vigor and plastic power of his art. His style underwent a decided change about 1915 when he began to emphasize strict simplification of forms and undertook to develop an entirely personal version of Expressionism. His new approach was characterized by more rhythmic organization and willful distortion, which he employed to enhance the emotional content of his compositions. Though bearing resemblance to modern Expressionistic styles, his original version offered a far more powerful interpretation. Orozco's art then became characterized by forceful direction and great strength of movement, very different from the static, decorative orchestration that had been perfected in Rivera's murals.

After a visit to New York in 1921, Orozco returned to Mexico, where he assisted in forming the Syndicate of Artists and Sculptors, taking an enthusiastic lead in this project, a chief aim of which was to revive the pre-Hispanic heritages and cultures. He was then led into thorough research in Aztec, Toltec, and Mixtec art sources found in ancient Mexican relics, ceramics, and folk art. At this time he made an extensive study of color chemistry found in relics of art in Teotihuacán's murals and fragmentary remains of pre-Columbian paintings at Monte Albán. He analyzed these specimens and was enabled to develop a new paint formula which permitted greater brilliance of the paint after it dried. Orozco's experiments between 1922 and 1928 brought satisfying progress to the vast mural art program.

Orozco's murals at the National Preparatory School include a large array of native scenes, the Conquest, and Colonial days—an example from this group being the fresco detail, (1922–27) *The Franciscan Father and the Indian* (Plate 89). Certain of these murals are scenes of war showing wretched wives and mothers of soldiers, aged folk, and destitute beggars. These murals were rendered in deep, rich tones, portraying with symbolic realism the times of national despair and bloodshed. An easel painting of the period shows the death of Zapata (Plate 90. *Zapata.* Oil). Because both Orozco and Siqueiros had seen active service in the Revolution, they vividly portrayed its horrors and the dire aftereffects of it on family life. Orozco interprets this deeply felt soldier-mother relationship in a fresco detail, *The Mother's Farewell* (Plate 91). The mother's bent figure and deeply set eyes with their intense expression are reminiscent of Giotto's great emotional art.

On a return visit to New York, Orozco was joined by Siqueiros, and together they in-

spected modern manufacturing installations to learn new and efficient methods for use of labor-saving machines, which they hoped could be introduced into Mexico for improvement of labor conditions. On a later trip to New York, Orozco exhibited his art widely and received encouragement from many sales to museums and universities. Private collectors also began to seek his art, and he was commissioned to paint murals for the New York School of Social Research. On these walls he painted (1930) several panels featuring the brotherhood of all races of men. Although Orozco was associated with very advanced thinkers who had strong ideals with which he entirely agreed, he explained that it was his desire to champion only oppressed Mexicans through the influence of his art. He refused to join political associations or attend their gatherings, saying "I live quietly with my family and present my true feelings and beliefs in my paintings." But his art nevertheless was filled with deep and vigorous messages for the world.

PLATE 89. *Franciscan Father and the Indian.* Fresco detail. National Preparatory School, Mexico City, D.F. 1922–1927. Courtesy *Art of Mexico.*

Orozco's Revolutionary murals realistically present battle scenes in which gunfire with its accompanying smoke is dramatically rendered. The horror of active warfare is shown by uprising swirls indicating havoc and devastation. Orozco had never favored Impressionism as a method of painting, his color tones were deep, earthy colors mixed with gray but enlivened with brighter, warm tones which brought contrast. His murals

PLATE 90. *Zapata.* Oil. Courtesy The Art Institute of Chicago

PLATE 91. *The Mother's Farewell.* Fresco detail. National Preparatory School, Mexico City, D.F., 1922–1927. Courtesy *Art of Mexico*

in two colleges—at Pomona in Claremont, California and at Dartmouth in Hanover, New Hampshire—portray Orozco's powerful imaginative concepts and emotional intensity.

Orozco began work on the murals at Dartmouth College in 1932, the gigantic task being completed in two years. His theme there portrays Mexico's ancient peoples—the Mongolian migration and the trail of Mexican tribes, which contains men ten feet high arranged to give the impression of humanity pressing forward to reach higher goals. Other panels show *Settlement* and *Human Sacrifice.* The most moving feature of the murals is Orozco's showing that men were offered a chance to follow higher goals but they refused Quetzalcoatl's admonition to live in peace. The *Legend of Quetzalcóatl* presents

the theme of mankind's being offered the worthy way of peace. The *Departure of Quetzalcóatl* (see Plate 17) shows this god, clad in white robe, sailing off in a dramatic dark sea and sky into a scene "of the unknown." Orozco's interpretation of this most important of all Indian legends brings appreciation of pre-Hispanic primitives in this appeal for peace. The *Return of Quetzalcóatl* foreshadows the *Coming of Cortés, Revolution,* and *The Machine Age.* Another fresco of the series (Plate 92. *Christ Destroying His Cross.* Fresco detail) presents a militant Christ who holds an axe; His cross is at His feet, which is intended to present aroused spirituality rising above war weapons, which symbolize violence and hatred. The composition, based on strong diagonal lines, presents Christ in front-center, standing with power as the judge of men. His eyes are focused to meet eyes of spectators in a compelling gaze.

Orozco's first trip to Europe was in 1932, when he had become world famous. He spared the time from work to study art masterpieces in order to find his way further to help all people through his great gift. On returning to Mexico he painted a commission for the government in the Palace of Fine Arts, the subject being *Strife; A Condemnation of War.* In *Martyrdom of St. Stephen* (Plate 93) a group of six men participate in the tragic stoning of a saint. Orozco's interpretation is a denunciation of prejudice practiced by a group. It offers a plea to all men to cease the overbearing, destructive forces of hatred, prejudice, and bigotry, and presents Orozco's strong feeling for human rights. He continued painting with seemingly unlimited power and imaginative invention, next decorating (1936–39) the assembly hall, dome, and walls of the University of Guadalajara, fulfilling a commission from his native state. At this time Orozco's power and capacity attained their height; the subject *Creative Man* shows how

PLATE 92. *Christ Destroying His Own Cross.* Fresco detail. Dartmouth College, Baker Library, Hanover, N.H. By permission of the Trustees of Dartmouth College

each man can become, through his life service, a mystical source of help for all mankind, which is the responsibility of each. The mural presents mankind in all walks of life, showing how each man fights against sin; Orozco presents the belief here that the gift of life is a sacrament given by God's love of humanity to all men. He was next commissioned to paint the walls of the Government Palace (1937), and there he worked in the historic building which, from his childhood in Guadalajara, he remembered with awe and wonder. Panels there show historic and Revolutionary subjects and one, in the Senate Chamber, contains his famous portrait of Father Hidalgo (see Plate 59).

Orozco had painted many mural panels in 1926 in the National Preparatory School hav-

PLATE 93. *Martyrdom of St. Stephen.* Oil. I.B.M. Collection of Art, N.Y. Courtesy Mundelein College, Chicago

ing historic significance and great and compelling art value, such as his large, full-size portraits of Cortés and Malinche, his native interpreter. The characterization of both is both notable and interesting in Orozco's forceful style. A chapel in the ancient Foundling Home contains a memorial panel to a priest offering aid to oppressed Indians. *Man of the Sea* (Plate 94), a fresco detail of *The Four Elements* painted by Orozco between 1936 and 1939 in the Guadalajara Orphanage, interprets how primitive Indians who were worshipers of nature forces, after becoming Christians were aware of spiritual mystic presences which offered them hope of a better life. Among the great masterpieces Orozco painted in Guadalajara are those which are judged monumental works of twentieth-century art. The Cupola of the Auditorium there shows his ease in rendering foreshortened figures with much the same power as that possessed by Michaelangelo and Tintoretto. The numerous easel paintings and portraits of Orozco's later years,

now in important world collections, show his keen powers of interpretation. The magnificent portrait of the Archbishop of Mexico is one of his last works in Mexico City.

Orozco was always ready to accept new ideas, approaches, and techniques, and he constantly tried to promote improvement in methods of work though he appreciated the art of ancient Aztec and pre-Columbian workers and was able to correlate their aims and accomplishments with present-day innovations. An example is the modern panels he made for the open-air theater and concert hall of Mexico City's Conservatory of Music, *The National Allegory* (Plate 95). This work, consisting of four panels entitled *Defeat and Death of Ignorance,* was designed for the National Normal School in Mexico City. Here Orozco used a combination of ethyl silicate paint on a base of concrete surface.

In 1941 Orozco painted the Supreme Court Building walls, inside the ancient structure

PLATE 94. *Man of the Sea.* Fresco detail from *The Four Elements.* Orphanage, Guadalajara. Courtesy *Art of Mexico*

located on the southeast corner of the Zocalo. These frescoes are considered to be among his finest achievements. The first-floor frescoes show the present-day values of *Labor* in the world. The famous murals in the Hospital of Jesus, Mexico City (1942), interpret the Apocalypse and include one supreme panel, *The Judgment Day*. During his last year Orozco painted a masterful work for the Chamber of Deputies in Guadalajara, a masterpiece regarded as the best example of Mexican Expressionism. By that time his emphasis had become more subjective in its expression. *Humanity* was the theme of Orozco's great work in Guadalajara, and it was there and in Mexico City that his art rose to its greatest creative heights.

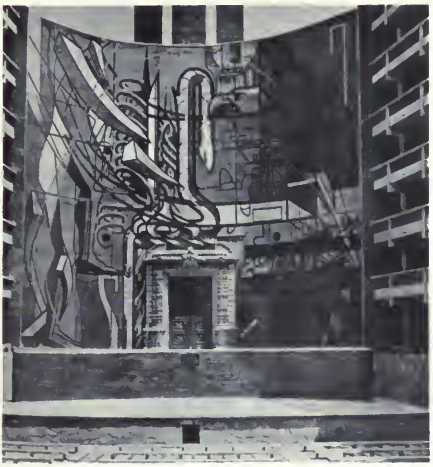

PLATE 95. *National Allegory*. Exterior mural, National Normal School, Mexico City, D.F., 1947–1948. Courtesy Mexican Government Department of Tourism

Orozco died of a heart attack on September 7, 1949, in his sixty-sixth year in Guadalajara and his memory is greatly revered by all Mexicans. Appropriately, his remains were laid in the foyer of the Palace of Fine Arts, Mexico City, which he had decorated for the government. The supreme majesty and magnitude of Orozco's art lifts it to a universal level, for which he is counted among the great in the world's history of art.

11

DAVID ALFARO SIQUEIROS, 1898-

David Alfaro Siqueiros, one of the three "greats" of the Golden Age of Mexican art, was born at Chihuahua on December 29, 1898. Along with Orozco, Rivera, and others, he led the pioneer Syndicate Art Movement, and is a prominent contributor to modern art methods and techniques. Although a famed artist, he leads a busy life sponsoring improvement of various social patterns in his homeland and in the world. Siqueiros's murals depict stirring scenes of Revolutionary conflict and feature post-Reconstruction needs for the development of Mexico. As a leading contemporary artist he is exploring new and untried media to discover better methods; his talents and skills are exerting important influences today. Siqueiros stands alone as Mexico's "last angry artist," though he is now living graciously in his Cuernavaca studio-home, where he fills commissions for portraits and easel paintings and willingly does all he can to help Mexican art and people.

The artist's mother, of Portuguese descent, died when he was two, and paternal relatives reared him in Irapuato, Guanajuato. At age eleven he entered a Jesuit school in Mexico City, later (1911) attending the National Preparatory School by day and San Carlos Academy classes at night. He studied painting at Martínez's open-air school, Santa Anita, and Dr. Alt's art courses at Orizaba. Siqueiros's grandfather, a retired colonel, encouraged him to follow a military career and at age fifteen he joined the Revolutionary forces, soon becoming a lieutenant and seeing active duty at the front; later (1914), as captain, he served under Zapata. His friendship with a fellow-officer, Manuel Suarez, has grown through the years, his friend, as was mentioned above, now being a leading industrialist who has generously sponsored many of the artist's projects. Following the Revolution, Siqueiros received a diplomatic appointment as military attaché of the Mexican Legation in Paris, and meeting Rivera there, both young artists became interested in post-Impressionism and Cubist art. They felt the need to improve art in their homeland, which needed direction and guidance. Soon after (1921), Siqueiros left Paris for Barcelona and while there published an art manifesto urging Mexican artists to follow indigenous sources, thereby strengthening native art with originality and creativity. This early manifesto prepared Siqueiros to write the Syndicate Manifesto in Mexico City in 1921 and to become the Syndicate's organizing director. The principal aims of the Syndicate were to make Mexican art independent of

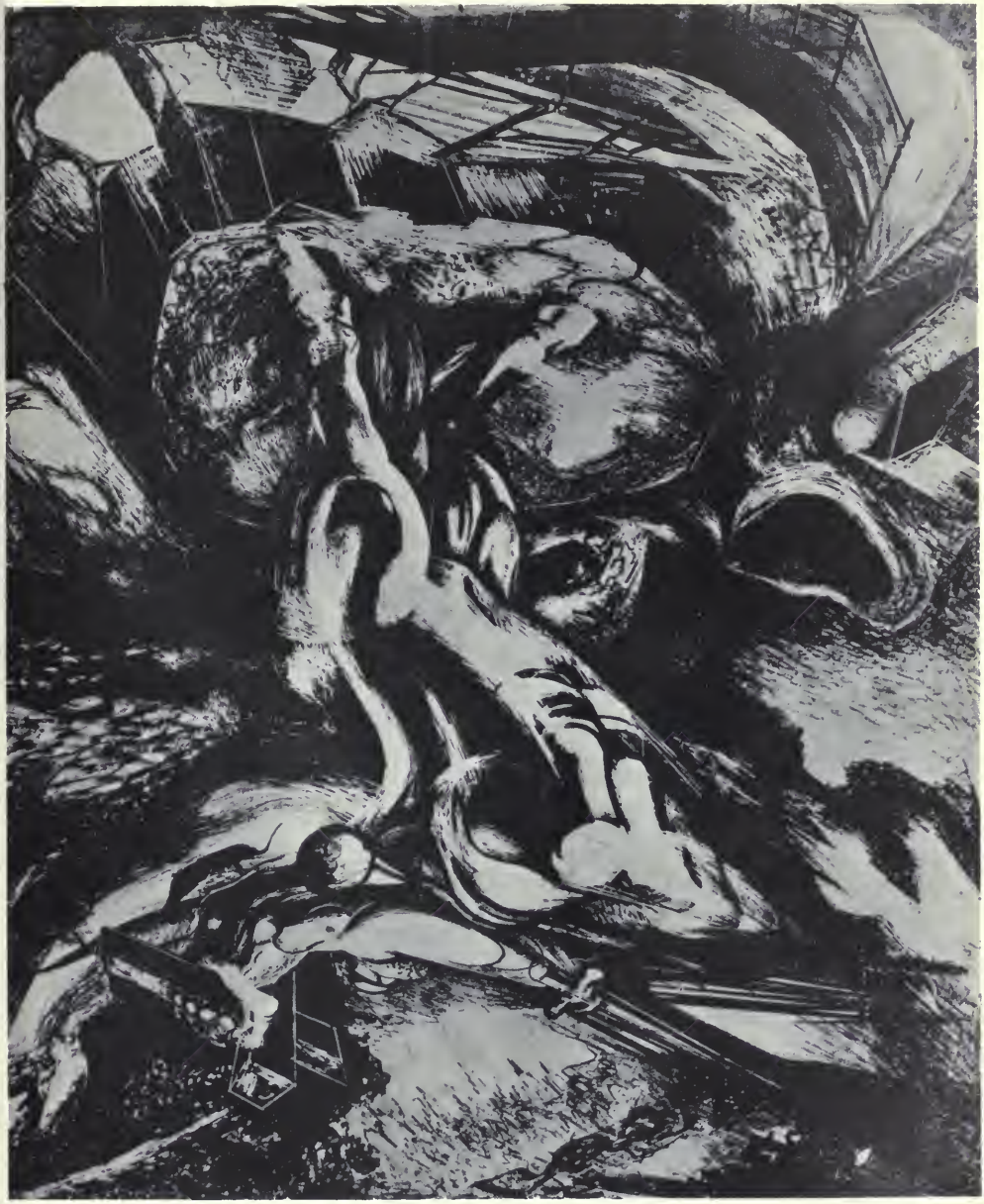

PLATE 96. *Pegasus of the Conquest.* Lithograph. I.B.M. Collection, N.Y. Courtesy of Mundelein College, Chicago

foreign domination, to help native artists develop a socially conscious national art, to promote Mexican art traditions, and to insist that art be shown publicly in places where the masses could enjoy it.

In 1923 Siqueiros founded *El Machete* (The Scythe), official newspaper of the Mexican Communist Party, while also serving as secretary of the Syndicate. *El Machete* was suppressed on government orders because of seditious inclusions and Siqueiros was prevented from working on murals in the National Preparatory School because of public opposition to a few of his panels although he was allowed to complete them in 1927. During his difficulties Orozco asked him to assist on a large commission at the University of Guadalajara, where a series of superior panels was made.

Siqueiros developed a sculpturesque style of painting by which he achieved heightened realization of structural form, exemplified in his famous mural, *Burial of a Dead Worker.* Inspired by the murder of his friend, the Governor of Yucatan, the work is characterized by extreme simplification, the forms rendered with sculptural depth based on a version of cubist masses. Because Siqueiros was interested in archaeological research of ancient stone masks, he made the faces of the four men standing beside the coffin resemble such masks. The simplification in this painting gives it added solemnity and quiet force.

Pegasus of the Conquest (Plate 96), a lithograph, was made by Siqueiros during a period when he was painting numerous easel works in a flexible Expressionist style that led him toward production of nonobjective works. His theme is the Pegasus legend of the winged horse which sprang from Medusa at her death, the symbolism being related here to the Conquest of Mexico by Cortés. A highly imaginative work, it shows a series of rhythmic swirls used to create an effect of dynamic power and force, qualities which became a dominant characteristic of many of his later works. Because his activities in labor organizations increased after he became director of the large miner's union, Siqueiros had less and less time to devote to art. While attending a 1930 labor conference in Buenos Aires, he was expelled from the Argentine because of ultra-radical public statements, and later that year he was jailed in Taxco, Mexico, for a demonstration on

PLATE 97. *The Sob.* Pyroxoline. Courtesy Museum of Modern Art. N.Y.

May Day. But while serving his jail sentence he made a series of excellent woodcuts, which were published, and numerous easel works expressing the sad condition of Mexicans, which were sold. A typical work of this period is an oil painting called *The Sob* (Plate 97).

In 1932 he painted a large mural for the Chouinard School of Art, Los Angeles, and while in that city he gave a series of lectures on methods and processes of modern art. Successful experiments led Siqueiros to the use of newer kinds of materials as substitutes for conventional paints, and he shifted from oils to pyroxilin, which served the good purpose of quicker drying. Murals that he painted for the California Worker's Union were produced entirely with quick-drying paints combined with glazes applied by spray gun and airbrush. Siqueiros was now allowed reentrance into the Argentine, to teach art and lecture on modern mural painting. His outdoor painting classes were successful and he received numerous portrait commissions, all of which are fine characterizations (Plate 98. *Portrait of a Girl.* Duco on wood). This work is in his highly individualized style and successfully captures in a glowing interpretation a momentary pose of an active young girl.

On returning to Mexico Siqueiros soon encountered difficulties with the police because of his political activities and served a year in the penitentiary in Mexico City, during which time he painted over seventy easel works, which were exhibited. These superior paintings proved him an artist of high ability. His color was of a distinctive depth, the tones being applied freely with heavily laden brush or palette knife; these combined happily with his sureness of stroke and a style that suggested great speed and force in execution. His New York exhibition in 1936 was also highly successful; he received many commissions for portraits, among them that of George Gershwin. This portrait is in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, as are also three airbrush paintings which are of special interest.

Siqueiros was invited by Spain's loyalists to direct a propaganda program for promotion of the war, but he refused the offer and joined the army in 1938 as a lieutenant-

PLATE 98. *Portrait of a Girl.* Duco on wood. Private collection. Courtesy Madame Angélica A. de Siqueiros

colonel. He later helped Spanish Loyalists who desired to settle in Mexico, making all arrangements for them to be received suitably there. In 1940, following the murder of his friend Trotsky and during unsettled political conditions in his homeland, Siqueiros departed for South America, where he painted a mural commissioned by the Mexican government, one to be given to Chile. Later he painted several murals in Cuba, then returned to Mexico to fulfill a commission for a mural in the Electrical Union head-

quarters in Mexico City. He also painted many easel works at this time.

One of these easel paintings, *Sunrise of Mexico* (Plate 99), executed in oil with heavily loaded brush, depicts the national rejoicing when Mexican oil fields and their rights were taken away from English and American interests and returned to the nation. The painting is unique among Siqueiros's work, with joy depicted in a wildly spontaneous emotion of Mexico's long-suffering people as it beckons the nation's entrance into a better life. Siqueiros invented here a freely expressive treatment with empasto paint, in swirls handled with vigorous, bold energy and yet highly controlled direction. This modern Expressionistic work exudes a feeling of joyous freedom, its distortion of natural form and elimination of detail helping create an empathy which heightens its emotional force.

Siqueiros has in recent years staffed his workshop in New York, which produces large mural commissions and where experiments are conducted in use of pyroxylin, plastics, and lacquer. He advocated use of cheaper materials, which encourages frequent changes in murals where no need for permanency exists, and his experiments have brought flexibility and diversity to modern art production.

When Siqueiros plans a work of art and

PLATE 100. *March of Humanity.* Fresco detail. Olympic Stadium, Mexico City, D.F. Courtesy Inés Amor, Mexico City, and *The Chicago Tribune*

PLATE 99. *Sunrise of Mexico.* Oil, 1945. I.B.M. Collection, N.Y. Courtesy Mundelein College, Chicago

PLATE 101. *The New Democracy.* Fresco detail. Palace of Fine Arts, Mexico City, D.F. Courtesy Inés Amor, Mexico City

outlines his ideas he often welcomes a group of trusted helpers who may then proceed to complete it without weakening his original concept or the quality of painting. In Siqueiros's extensive travels in Cuba, Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Uruguay, Chile, the United States, and Spain he finds suitable helpers who have the qualities as artists to meet his need for highly qualified assistance.

Large murals were painted in 1962 for the Museum of History at Chapultepec Castle, Mexico City, to celebrate the end of dictatorship in Mexico following the Revolution. One section is *Cuauhtemoc Against the Myth,* exalting the last Aztec Emperor, a great patriot dear to all Mexican hearts. Another more recent undertaking is a gigantic mural covering 48,000 square feet designed for the 1968 Olympics, a fresco detail entitled *The March of Humanity* (Plate 100). This section depicts, in the artist's words, "unhappy mothers with sick and hungry children." Siqueiros's art follows and flows from his feeling for mankind. The concept is humanistic, profound, and useful, because it promotes a sense of values to direct and aid humanity. This series of murals consists of fifty-four giant panels and presents a history of the Mexican people, the vast work being sponsored in part by the artist's long-time friend, Manuel Suarez, the Mexican industrialist. Some of the scenes represent historical events; others are of pre-Columbian men, the arrival of Cortés, the Revolution, the Mexican people, and benefits brought Mexico by modern machinery.

His *New Democracy* (Plate 101), a fresco painted for the Palace of Fine Arts in Mexico

City, shows in detail a clenched fist symbolic of unity. Here the painting is highly skillful and exact, and the work expresses an impulsive and monumental vitality and an exalted force for the noblest ideals of justice and heroism.

Present-day Mexican art, born of the Revolution, is ably exemplified in the art of Siqueiros, whose wide contribution covers frescoes, easel paintings, and expressive portraits. His art represents a high level of plastic power and creativity, and though he is often thought of as an Internationalist, Siqueiros has made Mexico his predominant interest, always featuring help for its people. Siqueiros's progressive methods and sure-handed, well-studied craftsmanship give life to modern art. His creativity covers a wide range, some of his art being purely abstract. He is not limited by time or space, and offers a wide range of aesthetic accomplishment that results from his amazing powers of perception and observation. Along with his experimentation in new materials, he has always conducted a scholarly investigation of mediums used by pre-Hispanic artists, including such materials as colored stones and metals.

Siqueiros is rightly proud of his ability to achieve a fine quality of team-work with his assistants on large art projects—for the Palace of Fine Arts and the Museum of History, Mexico City, and on other extended works of vast scale. In his younger years he successfully painted frescoes in the chapel and old university at Guadalajara and a later large work was the murals in the Subtreasury Building in Mexico City. His art career began when he painted frescoes in a small stairway wall space in the Preparatory School (1922–24).

In 1950, Siqueiros, together with Rivera, Orozco, and Rufino Tamayo, represented Mexican painting in the twenty-fifth Biennial Exhibit at Venice. He was highly honored by the award of second prize, following Pierre Matisse who was awarded first. David Alfaro Siqueiros ranks as one of Mexico's three great muralists, although his dynamic approach to art requires him to offer change and innovation to mural art expression in our day. His chief emphasis is on achieving a new dynamic expression and he is ever searching for ways and means to solve the problems of to-day's art. For this reason he is a forerunner.

A champion of the rights of the Mexican masses, Siqueiros is affectionately called "El Maestro." The tremendous energy with which he has fought for social justice in his beloved homeland has been lifelong.

12
MODERN MEXICAN ART

Giants of the Mexican art Renaissance—Rivera, Orozco, and Siqueiros—brought great publicity and popularity to Mexico, and they inspired enthusiastic later artists to create a modern native art. Many younger artists were born after the Reconstruction period, which had previously been distinguished by spectacular mural art, but there was no need later to require artists to use art for social reform or to satirize unworthy politicians. Their concern was the seeking of methods to arrive at plastic art values primarily to render the Mexican scene—subjects expressive of life's activities. Although today's native art is not politically motivated, it retains the true values of Orozco's and Siqueiros's Expressionism along with the narrative harmonies of Rivera's decorative art. Modern artists have been redirected in ways leading to Abstractionism, Surrealism, and the newer Expressionism, finally to achieve a poetic, exotic, modern result. Although present-day Mexican artists draw inspiration from pre-Columbian sources, they are featuring industrial development and its impact on life. Siqueiros's art is presenting new ideals and a reevaluation of Mexican life with its machine-saving innovations and materials practical for the art of today.

When Adolph Best-Maugard introduced modern methods of teaching art in Mexico's public schools, emphasizing originality and creative expression, he provided ways to lead young pupils to paint pictures of scenes in their own lives. The schools provided capable, well-prepared art teachers who earned government scholarships for advanced art study to improve their art careers, and several of today's leading artists began their life work as teachers in government schools. Alfredo Ramos Martínez assembled a Mexican Children's Art Show, which was shown in many cities of the United States and abroad and received enthusiastic appreciation and high praise. Maugard presented a first Folkloric Festival in Chapultepec Park, featuring native dances and music. Many of the colorful native costumes and stage sets were designed and executed by student art classes.

Modern Mexican artists began to feature more easel paintings and many murals were made for recently built schools. Folk art is the popular subject and it was presented with special emphasis on simplification and the achieving of plastic excellence. Carlos Mérida, who came to Mexico from his home in Guatemala following art study abroad, exhibited a series of watercolor folk subjects featuring dances in native costume;

PLATE 102. *The Bird.* Oil. Carlos Mérida. I.B.M. Collection, N.Y. Courtesy Mundelein College, Chicago

these folkloric scenes were rendered with plastic intention and they realized a fine integration of art values. Mérida taught in government schools and the municipal open-air classes, his later work being frescoes for the Department of Education's recently built schools. His success in the latter has made him a leader in Mexico's modern art movement. After returning from further study abroad, his art became increasingly simplified, finally becoming abstract; he now is the recognized leader of Mexican Abstractionism. Among his recent easel paintings is *The Bird* (Plate 102). Augustín Lazo, Orozco Romero, and others are using abstract decorative treatments in their recent easel works, while Mérida and Rufino Tamayo are now tending toward Surrealistic studies in their paintings. Georg Gonzales Camera has been praised for his highly original art panels designed for commercial use by the Bank of Mexico.

PLATE 103. *The Bone.* Oil. Miguel Covarrubias. 1940. Owned by the artist, Mexico City. Courtesy Inés Amor, Mexico City. Galería De Artes Mexicano, Mexico City

PLATE 104. *The Aunts.* Oil. Julio Castellanos. Museum of Modern Art. N.Y. Courtesy Museum of Modern Art, N.Y.

PLATE 105. *Children at Play.* Oil. Jesús Guerrero Galván. I.B.M. Art Collection, N.Y. Courtesy Mundelein College, Chicago

Leopoldo Méndez, an associate of Siqueiros who painted on many of the latter's murals, has become Mexico's leading lithographer. His works have a vigorous, strong style and are creative and especially original. He painted, with Pablo O'Higgins, Rivera's assistant, on large murals for a government hospital, later rendering several murals in South America. Another assistant of Rivera, Maximo Pacheco, a full-blooded Otomi Indian and an artist-naturalist, made murals for schools, including the open-air art school at Sarmiento, where his painting has been highly praised. Miguel Covarrubias has become famous for his creative interpretations of well-known contemporary people, and his singular portrait studies have often been featured on the covers of *Time* Magazine. His later works include realistic and sympathetic studies of New York's Harlem Blacks, which have evoked much interest and praise. The artist has been teaching at the School of Anthropology of the University of Mexico since 1947. *The Bone* (Plate 103) signifies by its title—a derisive name given patronage office-holders—a characteristic Mexican type. Covarrubias's fine easel paintings and portrait studies show modern stylistic simplicity,

though he relates his work to both conservative and modern art emphases. His exquisite book illustrations for *Isles of Bali*, and his mural panels for the Museum of Natural History, New York, and the Museum of Modern Art, Mexico City, proclaim his highly skilled decorative artistry of treatment of the theme "All Races of Men."

A new and harmonious plan has been worked out by muralists working on the same school building for the Department of Education, by which they agree on ways to integrate and relate their panels in style and color for an effect of unity. This arrangement was developed by Juan O'Gorman, the great Mexican architect-artist.

Julio Castellanos (d. 1947) was a gifted young artist whose fine frescoes in the Melchor Ocampo School have been highly praised as significant creative achievements. He was also a skilled lithographer, as is shown in his memorable work *Surgery*, which has great human interest. *The Aunts* (Plate 104), one of his oil paintings, is a notable portrayal of native women, showing the typical strong torso and short legs characteristic of most of the Mexican Indian type. This work shows the influence of primitive

PLATE 106. *The Group*. Watercolor. Jesús Guerrero Galván. I.B.M. Art Collection, N.Y. Courtesy Mundelein College, Chicago

PLATE 107. *The Little One.* Oil. Jesús Guerrero Galván. I.B.M. Art Collection, N.Y. Courtesy Mundelein College, Chicago

PLATE 108. *Music.* Fresco. Rufino Tamayo. National Conservatory of Music, Mexico City, D.F. 1933. Courtesy Mexican Government Department of Tourism

PLATE 109. *Water Girls.* Watercolor. Rufino Tamayo. I.B.M. Art Collection, N.Y. Courtesy Mundelein College, Chicago

native art, which Castellanos studied extensively. Throughout his short life he was much appreciated and became one of the best known of the younger Mexican painters.

Jesús Guerrero Galván, a native of Jalisco, painted numerous murals for schools and taught art for the Department of Education at Guadalajara and in various colleges. He now lives in Coyoacan, a suburb of Mexico City, in a comfortable old home surrounded by beautiful large trees, shrubbery, and flowers. He has been very successful in his mural paintings, and his special interest is in painting children (Plate 105. *Children at Play.* Oil). He uses tonal combinations of gray-blues, violets, and modulated light yellows in his many renderings of family life for which specialty he has become famous. Galván organizes his compositions in ways that often take liberties with true proportions of the body or of nature; his willful distortions are always used as organizing design elements in his compositions. *The Group* (Plate 106) presents strong contrasts in an interpretation of a bare Mexican scene, one of severe pathos which is enforced by the landscape background that creates a deeply felt, bleak realism focused on an overall tone of emotional sadness. *The Little One* (Plate 107) shows Galván's use of striking contrast in the rendering of form in this realistic interpretation in oils, of peasant children.

Rufino Tamayo, a recognized leader of modern Mexican artists, received his first instruction at the Academy, which included a series of courses at the government sponsored open-air art schools; he then studied abroad in the Paris studio of Georges Braque. Today, although he first won recognition as a fine colorist, Tamayo is in the forefront of the Abstractionists and Surrealists. Born at Oaxaca, of native Zapotec heredity, at the age of two when both his parents died, he was taken to live in Mexico City, where his aunt reared him. She sold fruits and flowers at the municipal market and Rufino learned to arrange her booth's colorful displays day by day. He tells that this opportunity gave him the pleasure of selecting color arrangements and helped him in later years to plan color syntheses for his art. Tamayo's still-life studies, portraits, and easel works are distinguished for their carefully organized color harmonies and their rich plastic values emphasizing structural form.

PLATE 110. *Self Portrait.* Oil. Rufino Tamayo. Private Collection (Solomon Hale, Mexico City). Courtesy Inés Amor, Galería De Artes Mexicano, Mexico City

In 1933 he painted a mural (Plate 108. *Music.* Fresco detail.) for the National Conservatory of Music, Mexico City. It combines in rhythmic treatment figures personifying themes of musical cadences. *Water-Girls* (Plate 109), a watercolor by Tamayo, has carefully studied tonal gradations and skill-

PLATE 111. *The Fire Eater.* Tempera. José Chávez Morado. I.B.M. Collection, N.Y. Courtesy Mundelein College, Chicago

ful textural rendition of hair, cape, and skirts, where careful color blendings enforce interesting linear emphasis. The flaring skirts such as the women of Oaxaca still wear provides Tamayo with his favorite female outline of spreading garments, which he delights to paint. Tamayo's color has become more somber in recent works but he always achieves beauty of color, especially in his reds and blues. Tamayo's art ever has a stylistic emphasis on values in deeply meaningful color. His abstract forms, often in the background, are inspired by the dilapidated walls of semi-deserted villages of the Mexican scene. Tamayo's *Self-Portrait* (Plate 110. Oil.) is a work of thoughtful simplicity rendered in a flexible style, with emphasis on the absorbed expression of his eyes. In 1938 Tamayo moved his studio to New York, though he frequently visits his Mexican home. Since 1940, Tamayo's art has become increasingly psychological and introspective, as may be seen in murals for the art library at Smith College, Northampton, Massachu-

setts, and for the Palace of Fine Arts, Mexico City. Abstractionist panels appear in several mural projects made for various cities in the United States. Tamayo's major influence stems from the art of Picasso and the Surrealism of Paul Klee, the Swiss artist. In recent works, Tamayo's individual style of Surrealism combines his concept of symbolic things seen or imagined, painted with an increasingly grayed color harmony which is so blended that the purity of color balance is enchantingly lovely.

José Chávez Morado, a highly regarded modern, creative artist is a native of Guatemala. He creates delightful folk art scenes with graphic force and verve reminiscent of Posada's fantastic and original art. Morado's various accomplishments include fresco painting, wood carving, designing ballet sets, magazine illustration, lithography, and mosaic-mural design. He taught for a time at the Academy for the Department of Education, then collaborated with Juan O'Gorman on large mosaic-murals on University City structures. Morado's *The Fire Eater* (Plate 111. Tempera.) is a typically vigorous work of satiric force indicative of Mexican life, portraying an old Indian legend he adapted to modern use and succeeded in conveying truth with a segment of myth such as is still

PLATE 112. *The Dance of Death.* Lithograph. José Chávez Morado. I.B.M. Art Collection, N.Y. Courtesy Mundelein College, Chicago

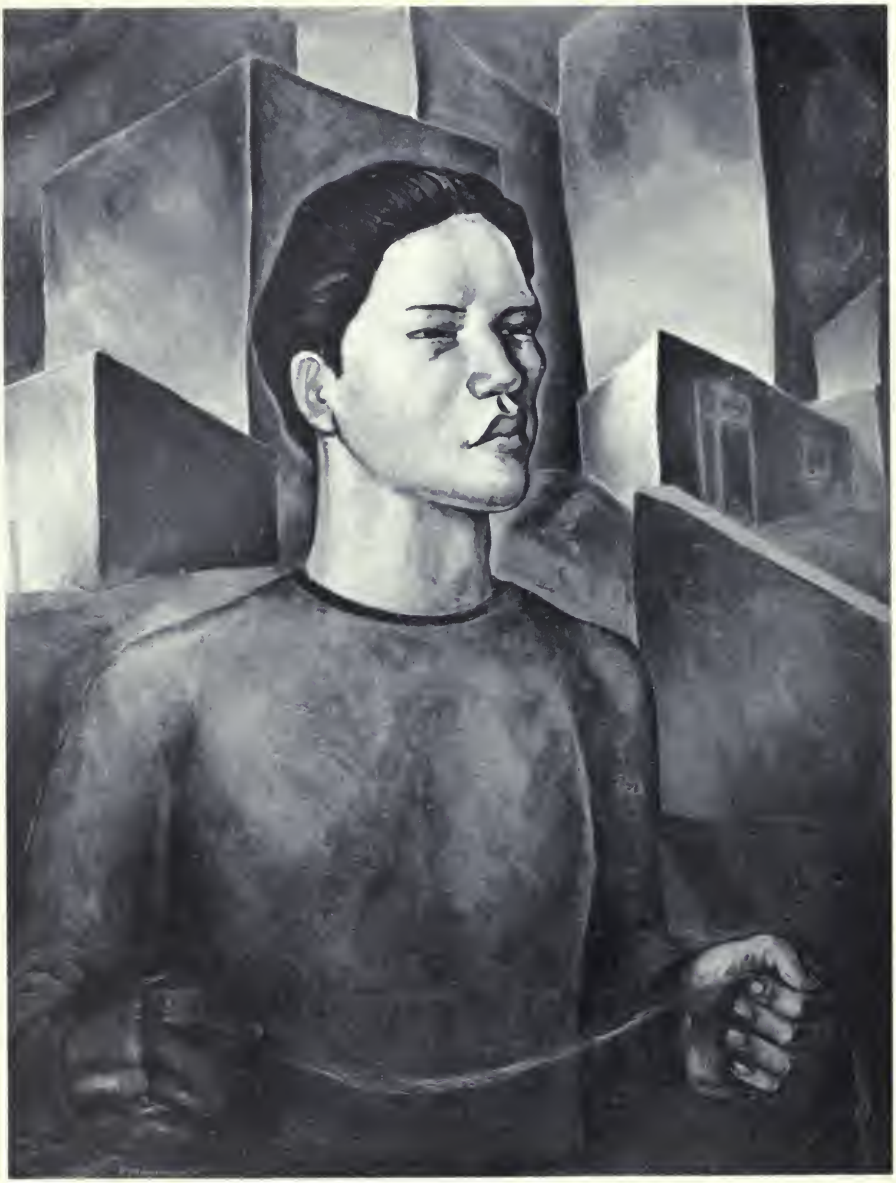

PLATE 113. *The Man from Vera Cruz.* Oil. Roberto Montenegro. I.B.M. Art Collection, N.Y. Courtesy Mundelein College, Chicago

strong among natives. Though a realist, Morado delights in his imaginary characters which exemplify in exaggerated ways the fantastic foibles of humanity; for this he is often regarded as was also his Mexican antecedent, Posada, as a modern follower of Daumier, the nineteenth-century French satirist. Morado's lithograph *Dance of Death* (Plate 112) is a satiric example of his macabre symbolism; its style resembles the art of Albrecht Dürer's famous woodcuts, though Morado's work shows in pathetic terms how a form of mesmerism is still typical of many Mexican people. His work is, like Dürer's, characterized by meticulous exactitude of line and shading, by which he creates his people. His characters express the undefinable quality in the Indian personality as it is revealed in thought and action. The foremost Mexican lithographer, Morado is supreme in his field of art, though there are now many highly regarded Mexican lithographers.

Roberto Montenegro, a successful artist in both easel and mural painting, expresses his insistence on structural form in *Man from Vera Cruz* (Plate 113. Oil.). This quiet portrait combines with an interesting use of geometric simplifications in a carefully arranged background. Similarly, his frescoes have thoughtfully planned elements throughout their composition. Montenegro is now working mainly on book illustration. He was an able assistant of Dr. Alt, helping assemble several popular arts and crafts shows. His murals for the Department of Education Building and the Benito Juarez School emphasize his special interest in Mexican folk art.

María Izquierdo was born in the State of Jalisco and later moved to Mexico City, where she became a pupil of Rufino Tamayo, whose guidance led her to become a highly successful portraitist and landscapist, exhibiting in Mexico, and the United States. Her *Self Portrait* (Plate 114) is a realistic, modern portrait study combining interesting and strong linear rhythms in the fabric design of her gown. The painting contains dark and light contrasts which assert primitive directness.

Frida Kahlo, the artist-wife of Diego Rivera, was a gifted and original painter, and an excellent art teacher and lecturer. Though

PLATE 114. *Self Portrait.* Oil. María Izquierdo. Private collection. Courtesy of the artist

a lifelong sufferer from a back injury incurred in an automobile accident when she was sixteen, she overcame her health difficulty and became a noted Mexican artist. She was honored with a prize for her painting in the 1946 exhibit held bi-annually for Mexican artists in the Palace of Fine Arts, Mexico City. Frida Kahlo, who died in 1954, was born in Coyoacán, a suburb of Mexico City, her mother being of Spanish-Indian descent and her father a German-Jewish photographer whose art was highly regarded.

PLATE 115. *Self Portrait.* Oil. Frida Kahlo (Rivera), artist wife of Diego Rivera. I.B.M. Collection, N.Y. Courtesy Mundelein College, Chicago

Her *Self Portrait* (Plate 115) is an interesting composition in oil that includes her pet monkey in a background of tropical foliage in a well-planned, skillfully interpreted, and characteristic portrait study.

Juan O'Gorman, the gifted contemporary Mexican architect-artist, has won fame as a creative leader of modern art. He has had success in original architectural use of native stones for mural-mosaics applied to large areas of exterior walls. These distinctive wall designs have helped make the structures he designed the most exciting architectural achievements of modern world art. O'Gorman has planned highly functional studio-homes for several Mexican artists and his fine plans for schools, libraries, hotels, hospitals, and civic structures have received high praise. O'Gorman's architecture is significantly turned to effective use of indigenous motifs and he incorporates into his exterior designs native symbols dear to the Mexican heart, making good use of strong, bold color. The Communication Center in Mexico City, designed by Juan O'Gorman (Plate 116), is a great structure, a Mexican Government commission that has native stone murals on the exterior of the building. It combines many Indian motifs conveying a message from the pre-Hispanic art of Toltec, Mixtec, and Aztec tribes united in an array of beautiful colors to perpetuate their meaning and value for posterity.

Mexico's architecture indicates a multitude of influences, from pre-Hispanic civilizations through the Colonial-Spanish and French domination down to the present space age of steel and glass. Mexico's archi-

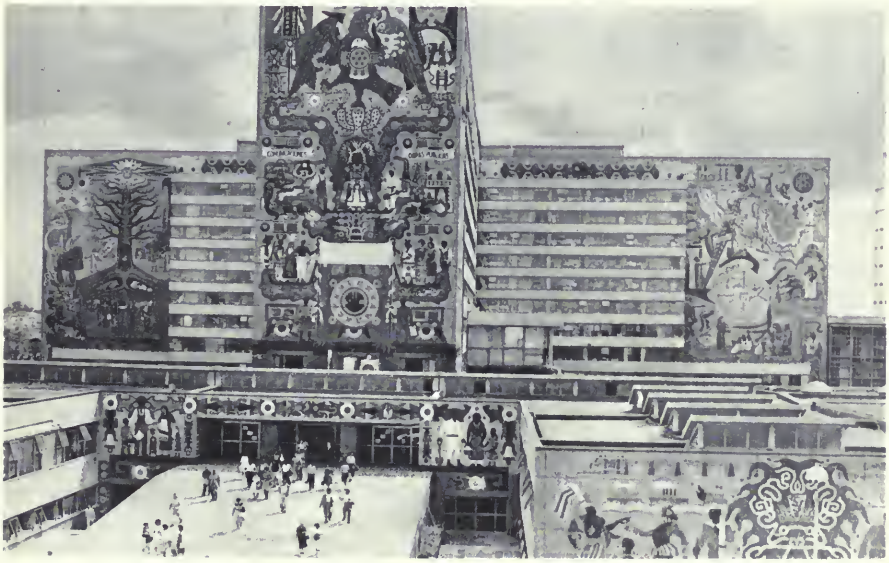

PLATE 116. *Communications Building.* Stone mosaic exterior. Juan O'Gorman, architect-artist designer. Courtesy Mexican Government Department of Tourism

PLATE 117. *National Museum of Anthropology,* Chapultepec, Mexico City. Architect Pedro Ramírez Vázquez. Courtesy Mexican Government Department of Tourism

tecture is characteristically daring and dramatic, an example of this being the marvelous ideas and construction offered in the spectacle of the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City (Plate 117). This outstanding structure was designed by the architect, Pedro Ramírez Vazquez. It contains twenty-five halls of display in the strikingly modern building housing the heritage of Mexico's long pre-Hispanic past, beginning with the primitive hunters of 15,000 B.C.

This great government project was erected at a cost of over eleven million dollars (estimated in United States money). In front of the structure stands a huge statue of Tlaloc, Aztec God of Rain, who provided water for the Indians' corn and beans. The statue is one of the world's largest, carved from a single rock and weighing one-hundred-and-sixty-seven tons. The museum is constructed entirely of native materials. Impressive marble-covered halls open onto a large patio, from the roof of which drips a

constant fall of water from an umbrella fountain, which also commemorates Tlaloc. Use of glass throughout the structure permits extended views and increases the effect of spaciousness. This great achievement of modern architecture helps promote Mexico's fine hopes for the future while offering appreciation of its legacy from the prehistoric past. In successfully reaching maturity, today's Mexican art proclaims the nation's freedom while also featuring indigenous values which preserve its ideals in a present flowering of beauty and utility.

13
POPULAR ARTS OF MEXICO

The popular arts of Mexico are among the most forceful of the nation's cultural expressions. Since the dawn of primitive men, survival, security, and comfort depended on man's resourcefulness in creating the necessities not offered him by nature. To make these useful objects required mental effort; to decorate them arose from instinctive delight in beauty and the need for dexterity in the use of hands. Gradually traditions about the making of things grew, and were handed down from generation to generation; present-day Mexican popular art is the culmination of this heritage in articles which are both practical and beautiful. Traditions have been modified to meet desirable improvements, which process has produced in Mexico a rich and varied cultural development for all its people.

Mexico is a land of contrasts emanating from three great legacies—the ancient, the Colonial, and the modern. It is, moreover, believed by many to be the most exotic of all places, for it breathes the air of a varied, vibrant, and colorful life freely expressed by its people in popular art.

A government commission for the huge sculptural mural at Malpaso Dam has commemorative interest for every Mexican. Carved on three sides of a high bluff, it overlooks a national project in Chiapas, near the Guatemala border. The subject, *Mexican Progress*, symbolizes electricity furnished by the dam, interpreted by a man holding a bolt of electricity in one hand; the other hand, outstretched, releases controlled water for irrigation of vast areas of barren land. Benefits from the dam are serving Mexico's people by providing a much-needed food supply. This art project, the world's largest stone mural (covering 65,000 square feet), was designed and executed under direction of Federico Ganessi (Plate 118. *Mexican Progress*. Sculptured mural on granite). Offering a definite link between primitive and contemporary art, it resembles ancient carvings by Olmec artists, whose huge sculptures were made 3,000 years ago. A modern art achievement, it serves as a reminder that the talents and skills of ancient art-conscious Indians furnished a legacy to modern artisans working in Mexican popular arts and handicrafts. Modern Mexicans maintain a stable source of livelihood by promoting various art enterprises and activities in the ancient Valley of Anáhuac.

Early folk artists were inspired by religious emotion and love of nature to create vital expressions of daring and dramatic inventiveness. Examples of their art are some-

PLATE 118. *Mexican Progress.* Sculptured mural on granite bluff. Malpaso Dam, Mexico. Federico Ganessi. Courtesy *The Chicago Tribune*

times found in mountain village churches and on walls of humble homes where wood-carved cruifixes, commemorative "miracle paintings," and retables were made as thank offerings in appreciation of unusual cures and of their new-found religion. Many were products of the Colonial period, when religious zeal flourished and folk artists enjoyed release from hard days of labor on haciendas through their spare-time artistry. Folk painters delighted in lavish use of bright colors, and their paintings, which were free of formal rules of perspective, featured keenly sensitive interpretations rendered with sympathetic feeling. The work of these humble artists sparked continued art interest and served to prepare for the great twentieth-century Mexican Renaissance. Folk artists often preferred to use symbolic meanings when interpreting their creatively organized impressions. This tradition pervades present-day Mexican art, which has become increasingly symbolic and psychological, even when it is inspired by exotic scenes of nature. The origin of the folk artist's vital art is found in an indefinable blend of influences steming from pre-Hispanic, Spanish, Colonial, and religious sources. But Mexican popular art emerged mainly because native artists created it in response to sheer love and joy in the doing.

Appreciation of the important role which

popular art furnished national life came in the post-Revolution period, when Mexico was in the midst of social reform and its leaders

PLATE 119. *The Burrito.* Wax sculpture. Luis Hidalgo. Mexico City. Courtesy *School Arts Magazine*

sought to utilize indigenous art found in the work of humble artisans throughout Mexico. Artists "of the fields" refused to use their art for personal gain or preferment; instead, they painted for the delight and satisfaction it gave. Recognition by government agencies of the potential national asset to be found in popular native arts and handicrafts led to sponsoring the program for Mexican Mural Art in public buildings. An exhibition of arts and crafts was initiated by Dr. Alt with the enthusiastic support of Montenegro, Rivera, Orozco, Tamayo, Siqueiros, Covarrubias, and other artists. Sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation, the exhibit toured larger cities of the United States and resulted in greatly widened interest in Mexican art.

Folk art finds magnificent expression in the ancient art of weaving and various woven fabrics for different uses are displayed at tiaquiz (markets). A famous Friday market is at Patzcuaro, in a distinctive Colonial town the style of which has remained typical of the sixteenth century. It is located in the beautiful lakeside region where Tarascan Indians weave quantities of wool blankets,

PLATE 120. *Lacquer Artist.* Isthmus of Tehuantepec. Courtesy Frederick Davis and Anita Brennen, Mexico City

bedspreads, rugs, cloaks, and serapes, using weaving techniques of entirely Spanish origin. Puebla's fine weaving is its leading

PLATE 121. *Ceramic Exhibit.* Seragalio Palace. From all sections of Mexico. Courtesy *School Arts Magazine*

craft product; the popular colors for woven designs remain red-brown and deep blue-black, although various patterns are definitely Indian in origin. These are geometric, stylized forms derived from fish, men, cougars, plants, and flowers. Beautiful blankets and rugs woven at Puebla adhere to boldly geometric patterns in abstract style; the various designs used may be easily classified by pattern, according to the region or states throughout Mexico.

The State of Tlaxcala became famous for wool weaving during the Colonial period, when raising sheep and goats ranked next to mining in economic importance and large herds occupied almost all the land. Natives there still weave practically all their woolen clothing, and quantities of cotton cloth are handwoven. At the close of the nineteenth century large cotton mills were built in Orizaba; the Indians there worked the machine-made cotton materials into fine hand-sewn garments for export. Handmade silk garments are sewn at Ajijic, where silkworms supply the material for a variety of articles which have an established world

market. In some villages the entire population is occupied in producing a popular handicraft, such as *rebozos*. This scarf for women is used as a shawl and head covering, and is made of hand-loomed textiles of either cotton or silk, a yard wide and two-and-a-half yards long. The finest rebozos are made in the town of Santa Ana, which is a weaving center featuring this specialty.

The famous Saturday tiaquiz at Oaxaca, the leading center of southern Mexico, is located amid beautiful verdant hills in the most popular of the Republic's states. Located in an ancient Zapotecan and Mixtec area, Oaxaca boasts of architectural relics of pre-Hispanic and Colonial days, and of families having Castilian forebears. Extensive displays of art and handicrafts are featured at this large market, including beautiful hand-loomed cottons and a large variety of fine woven articles. Designs are nearly always of Spanish origin in Oaxaca, Chiapas, and Michoacán, this influence being seen in hand-embroidered articles.

Toluca is a famed center of basket handicraft, where palm fibers are woven into hats, sombreros, rugs, *petates* (mats), and large hampers and baskets featuring bold designs in the strong, bright colors so dear to Mexican hearts. Fine willow reed baskets are woven by plaiting roots of young trees which, after being dried, are prepared for weaving by stripping to a light-cream base. Toluca's Friday tiaquez displays the finest and most varied basketry in Mexico. *The Burrito* (Plate 119), a wax sculpture by Luis Hidalgo deals realistically with a familiar Indian scene showing a typical Mexican subject with humor, pathos, kindliness, and understanding.

PLATE 122. *Clay Animal Banks.* Native craft. Courtesy *School Arts Magazine*

Leather work is a practical craft introduced by the Spanish over 400 years ago. It has become a commercially important handicraft with large outlets in Mexico City

where leather products of high quality—purses, briefcases, billfolds, handbags, saddles, and belts—are marketed. Indian workers excel in this craft, the products of which are made in large quantities.

Mexican artists rub colors on wooden bowls, trays, and furniture, later finishing with water-repellent shellac (Plate 120. *Lacquer Artist.* Isthmus of Tehuantepec). This craft is done exclusively at Janitzio, State of Michoacan, and is popular because of the bright coloring, typical Mexican designs, and the practical use of the products. Every state and many villages make their individual style of ceramics, though much of the finest pottery is made in Oaxaca, where traditional skills have been passed down in families since the art started there. However, some village potters in many other locations are capable of creating notable ceramics. Plentiful clay in certain areas throughout Mexico makes the glazing of beautiful and rare ceramics successful and potters vie with each other to create strikingly fine patterns and color harmonies (Plate 121). Puebla is the location long famed as the great tile-producing center where hand-wrought colorful Talavera tiles are made. The city's buildings

PLATE 123–PLATE 124. *Native artists creating designs on maguey paper.* Courtesy *School Arts Magazine*

PLATE 124.

feature multicolored tiles, especially in the arcades, art studios, and terra-cotta tile roofs, all of which enhances the mellow tonal effect in Puebla. Blue majolica tiles are especially popular there, and native onyx, which is plentiful in the area, is used for carving fine objects.

In the sixteenth century the Spanish introduced fine glazing processes in Oaxaca, where they made the first majolica and Talavera-Puebla ware. Clay animal banks (Plate 122) are a popular craft project which Mexican artists create with humor and lively charm. This typically native craft is possible because of the accessible supply of native material.

Mexican hand-blown glass is a craft introduced into Guadalajara and Mexico City over 400 years ago by Spanish experts. Today the same workshops are owned and operated by families directly descended from the original glass-making experts who arrived from Spain in the 1540s. Glass of rarely beautiful quality and color is made by using

PLATE 125. *All-over design.* Typical pattern of plant, flower, and bird. Courtesy *School Arts Magazine*

various mineral dyes for coloring, popular shades being blue, green, deep amber, and lavender.

Taxco, the oldest mining town in Mexico, has become famous for its fine craftsmanship of very fine silver. A world market has been established, and many of the most beautiful pieces are designed with pre-Hispanic Aztec motifs. These lovely hand-crafted objects produced by native artists meet the ever-increasing market. The fine artistry of technical workers in other metals predominates in the ancient Mixtec region, where, since pre-Conquest time, the descendants of able

PLATE 126. *Dolls of woven palmetto fiber, dyed.* Typical indigenous craft. Courtesy *School Arts Magazine*

craftsmen are busy in fine metal-working art shops.

Many untrained young Mexican art-and-craft workers enjoy creating designs to be applied to maguey paper, and some of these are used as well on pottery, in all-over patterns which are then brightly colored (Plates 123, 124, 125).

A popular and ingenious craft to be found in Mexican markets and shops throughout the Republic is doll making, using native materials. Creating dolls of dyed palmetto fibers (Plate 126) is a typically native craft in which Mexicans of all ages and locations delight, as did their forebears in ages past.

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INDEX

(Italic numbers refer to Plate Illustrations)