

## VOTIVE AXES FROM ANCIENT MEXICO

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IN A paper in *Indian Notes* for July, 1928, the writer treated of a certain class of ceremonial axes from western Mexico, based primarily on material in this Museum. In that brief study no mention was made of another much rarer type of votive ax from ancient Mexico, which type will be considered now in view of the acquisition of an interesting example included in a small but splendid collection of unique Mexican antiquities purchased last year by the Director in Switzerland. We shall endeavor to throw some light on the peculiar significance of these ax idols.

Many years ago the writer published an illustrated description of a remarkable votive ax of jadeite in the American Museum of Natural History, New York.<sup>1</sup> It had been previously described by Dr. George F. Kunz, but without illustration. This splendid specimen (fig. 83) is nearly 11 inches in length; its color is light grayish-green with a tinge of blue and with streaks of an almost emerald-green on the back. It is the larg-

<sup>1</sup> See the references at the end of the article.



FIG. 83.—Votive ax of jadeite from Mexico. Length, 10<sup>13</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. (American Museum of Natural History)

est known sculptured object of jadeite of this brilliant color thus far found in Mexico. As Dr. Kunz pointed out: "The lapidarian work on this piece is probably equal to anything that has been found, and the polish is as fine as that of modern times." The carving on the front represents the conventional mask of a tiger, with peculiar slanting almond-like eyes, prominent canine teeth, small nostrils, and an immense flaring upper lip. This mask occupies the entire upper half of the object and rests on the shoulders of a man with arms extended over the chest, the hands brought together one above the other, clasping a stone knife (of which the lower part only is visible) that projects downward from the left hand. The lower part of the specimen is fashioned in the form of a conventional ax, no trace of legs or feet of the idol being present. There are dull markings or abraded sections connected by incised lines to form a design in outline around the upper part of the mouth and reappearing below the arms. Marks are shown also on the ears and on the cutting edge of the ax. These latter, teeth-like markings, may possibly be intended to indicate toes. Dr. Kunz conjectured that these abrasions might have been designed to hold gold-leaf, but they might also have served to contain a turquoise mosaic decoration.

Nothing definite is known respecting the history of this idol, but it is supposed to have come from the State of Oaxaca and was brought to New York by a sailor about fifty years ago. In our former paper we called attention to two other votive axes known at that time, one in London and the other in Mexico. Since then two others have come to light. We now illustrate all five specimens. The neck groove in all the axes is so well defined as to bring the series into the typically American grooved-ax group as distinct from the petaloid or celt form. The grooved ax is relatively rare in Middle America.

The second example, in the British Museum, has been illustrated by Joyce in a drawing which does not do justice to the beauty of the sculpture, as brought out in our photographic reproduction (fig. 84). It is carved from a piece of aventurine quartz and is 11 inches long. The eyes do not slant as in the first example, and the canine teeth are not visible. The hands are clasped, but are placed apart opposite each other on the breast. Between the hands is an object, probably a knife, point downward, with incised decoration; the upper end is attached to a bar resting on the thumbs and a vertical line extends downward from the tip of the knife, intersecting a horizontal line near the edge of the blade, a feature found



FIG. 84.—Votive ax of aventurine quartz from Mexico.  
Length, 11 in. (British Museum)

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also in the jadeite ax but absent from the other three specimens. In the forehead of the effigy is a deep cleft, a feature which will be considered in describing certain analogous specimens, not axes. The ears have markings similar to those on the ears of the jadeite specimen. Although not quite so striking as the jadeite ax, this example nevertheless displays a splendid piece of workmanship.

The ax mentioned as having been formerly in Mexico has now come into the possession of the Museum by way of Switzerland; it is illustrated in figs. 85-87. Said to have been discovered in the coastland of the State of Vera Cruz, this specimen is of almost black granite,  $11\frac{1}{8}$  inches long, and was described and illustrated by Chavero in 1887, when it was in private hands in Mexico.<sup>2</sup> The carving is decidedly inferior to that of the jadeite ax, but the general concept of the idol is the same in both specimens. It is unfortunately weathered, and the arms and hands are not distinct in our photograph. The slanting oval eyes, the canines, the upper elongated lip, and the small feline-like nose are present as in the other ax. On the back near the top is a vertical groove corresponding to the forehead

<sup>2</sup> Chavero, p. 64; illustrated by front and side-view drawings. The cross-section of the knife held in the hands is distinctly shown in the drawing.

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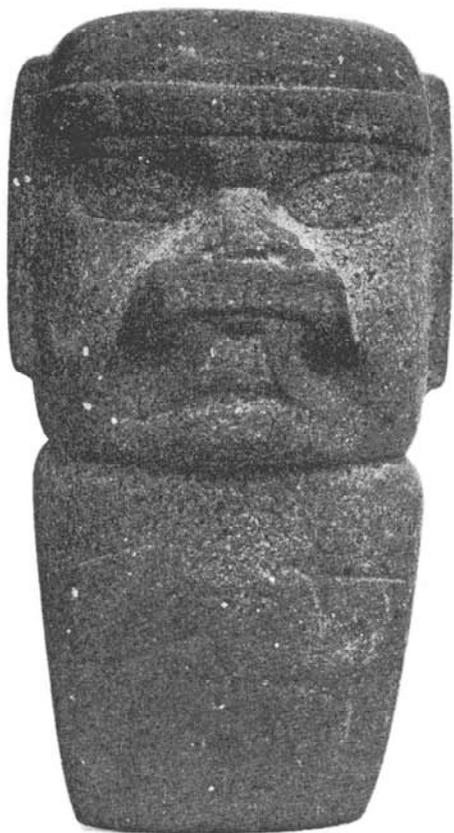


FIG. 85.—Votive ax of granite from Vera Cruz. Front view. Height,  $11\frac{1}{8}$  in. (16/3400)

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FIG. 86.—Votive ax of granite from Vera Cruz. Rear view. Height,  $11\frac{1}{8}$  in. (16/3400)

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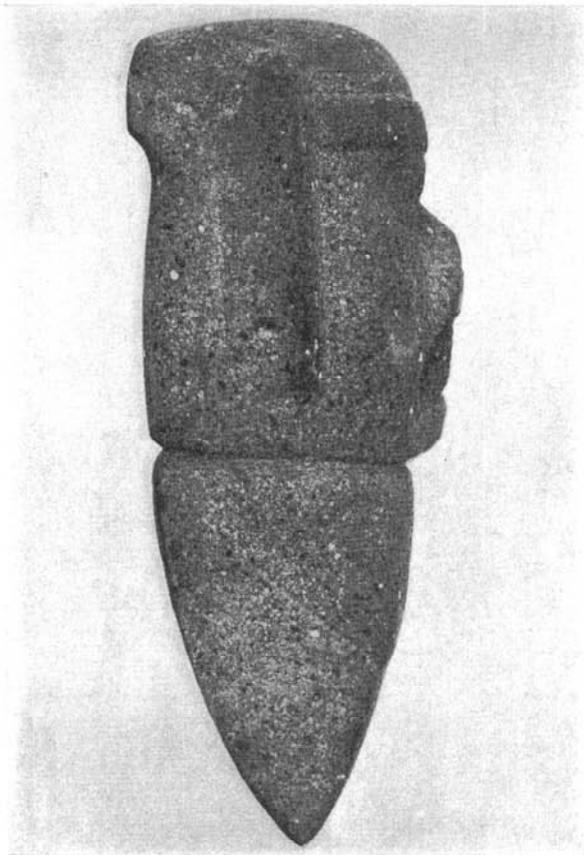


FIG. 87.—Votive ax of granite from Vera Cruz. Side view. Height,  $11\frac{1}{8}$  in. (16/3400)

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FIG. 88.—Votive ax from Mexico. Height, 12 in. (American Museum of Natural History)

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cleft in the London ax which will be dwelt on later.

The fourth and last analogous ax (fig. 88), in the Dorenberg collection in the American Museum of Natural History, was obtained about thirty years ago. It is the largest of the series, being 12 inches high. The collection of Consul Dorenberg was gathered largely while he was a resident of Puebla, and most of the objects in it presumably came from places not far from that city, either in the State of Puebla or in Tlaxcala. Hence, although the provenience of most of the objects in the collection is not definitely known, it is to be presumed that the Dorenberg ax is from this highland area. In detail and material it is quite like our ax.

The last example of a votive ax of large size of which we have knowledge (fig. 89) is in the Peabody Museum, Cambridge, but other than that it came from Mexico we have no information concerning it. As the cutting edge is partly broken off, the object was probably a little longer than the others in this series of five, and it is more massive and of cruder workmanship as well. The face of the mask has a peculiar central V-shape projection from the upper lip, and fangs are seen in the mouth. The face somewhat resembles that of the effigy shown in fig. 92.

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FIG. 89.—Votive ax from Mexico. (Peabody Museum, Harvard University)

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We shall now consider some other specimens which appear to be intimately related to the votive ax cult. In fig. 90 is reproduced a photograph kindly placed at our disposal by Mr. Frans Blom, of Tulane University, who discovered the interesting sculpture which it represents on his trip through southern Vera Cruz in 1925.<sup>3</sup> The image was photographed *in situ* in the dense tropical forest on the summit of a volcano called San Martin Pajapan, from the name of the nearby town. This ancient site, in Olmecan territory, is a little southeast of San Andrés Tuxtla where the famous Tuxtla statuette with an early Mayan inscription was found a number of years ago. The image illustrated, which has been figured and described by Blom, is about four and a half feet in height and is much mutilated. The illustration shows the huge mask surmounting the head of a kneeling human figure. In all respects it embodies the same motive as is found both in the jadeite ax and in our specimen, with its slanting oval eyes, flattish broad nose, and large flaring upper lip. In the forehead, moreover, is the cleft characteristic of the London ax and seen also on the back of our specimen.

In his review of Blom's work, Beyer published

<sup>3</sup> Blom, 1, pp. 45-46, figs. 41-43.



FIG. 90.—Stone idol at San Martin Pajapan, Vera Cruz, Mexico. Height, about 4½ ft. (After Blom)



FIG. 91.—Greenstone idol from Mexico. (After Beyer)

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a picture of what he calls "an Olmecan idol" formerly in his possession and now in a private collection (see fig. 91). It is of greenstone, and the carving on the front, which has been accentuated by whitening, shows it to be of the class of our votive axes and of the San Martin idol just described. Beyer writes: "In the almost cubical part of the monument, above the mutilated head of the idol, appears the face of a deity pertaining to the Olmecan or Totomac civilization. It has the gullet of

an animal inserted in the mouth. The face is very like that of a stone idol formerly in my possession. In both representations not only do we note the inclined eyes, wide nose and monstrous mouth, but also another significant detail, a cleft in the forehead. This detail recalls the heads of Teotihuacan and Atzacotalco, which equally have an entrance in this part." It will be noted that this small idol made known by Beyer is a conventionalized human figure, with the feet crudely represented.

Fig. 92 shows an idol of schistose,  $5\frac{1}{8}$  inches in height, said to have come from the Mixteca region of Oaxaca.<sup>4</sup> It was sold at auction in Paris in April, 1929. The human body with the feline-like head falls into the group of objects which we have under consideration. It is not ax-like, for the feet are crudely though clearly carved, as in the idol shown in fig. 91. The fangs are in evidence as in the jadeite ax and the ax of this Museum; and, as in the jadeite example, the hands grasp an object having the appearance of a stone blade or knife. In both the examples with this feature the upper right hand completely conceals the upper part of the knife, which is recognizable only by the lower end projecting below the left

<sup>4</sup> Illustrated in pl. iv, 167, of the Catalog noted in our References.

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FIG. 92.—Schistose idol from Mexico. Height,  $5\frac{1}{8}$  in. (From the Hôtel Drouot Catalogue)

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closed hand. In the London specimen the closed hands are opposite each other, and between them is shown the lower portion of a knife.

In figs. 93 and 94 are illustrated two jadeite ornaments from Oaxaca. The former is in this Museum. This small, beautifully carved breast-ornament of highly polished gray-green jadeite has the tiger mask on a band perforated for suspension. The features are strikingly similar to the mask of the London ax; the eyes are not slanting, but originally had been in-

serted in a deeply abraded groove in mosaic fashion; the fangs are absent. Another important point of resemblance is the forehead cleft. Markings on each side of the face and over the eyes are present as in both the jadeite and the London ax.



FIG. 93.—Jadeite breast-ornament from Oaxaca. Length,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  in. (2/6676)

Fig. 94 shows a fragmentary carved slab of deep-green jadeite, in the National Museum of Mexico, which represents a human figure in a crouching position, the hands clasped around the right knee. The characteristic tiger mask is in relief.

Finally, in fig. 95 the same motive appears on the side of the face of a remarkable little human head of jadeite, now in the Ethnographical Museum in Berlin. It was secured by Dr. and Mrs. Seler in Tuxtla Gutierrez, State of Chiapas, but the information obtained at the time was that it

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FIG. 94.—Chloromelanite figure from Oaxaca. (Museo Nacional, Mexico)

markings forming a design over the mouth. Only in this group of artifacts have we found this fea-

was brought from the State of Tabasco.<sup>5</sup> The lips are characteristic of a class having the broad protruding flat lips of the tiger masks, a number of green stone human masks possessing this feature. Like several of the specimens already described, notably the jadeite ax, we find here on the right side of the face an incised representation of the tiger mask in profile, and other

<sup>5</sup> Caecilie Seler, p. 129.

ture of secondary designs by abrading and incising, pointing to a rather restricted center of origin.

I believe that, notwithstanding our lack of knowledge concerning the provenience of most of these objects, especially the votive axes, this peculiar type of mask may be safely assigned to the ancient Olmecan culture, which apparently had its center in the San Andrés Tuxtla area around Lake Catemaco, and extended down to the coast of the Gulf of Mexico in the southern part of the State of Vera Cruz. This area has been made archeologically famous as the place whence came the so-called Tuxtla statuette, which up to the present bears

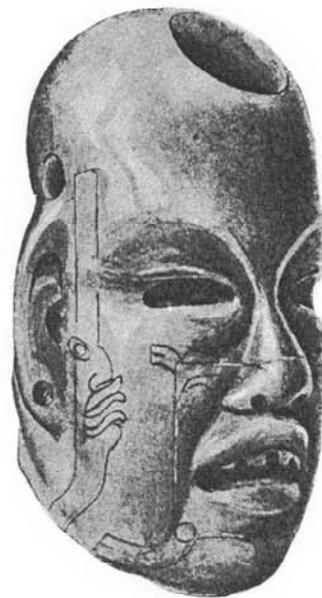


FIG. 95.—Human head of jadeite from Tabasco. (Berlin Ethnographical Museum)

the oldest known Mayan date. This inscription is a secondary feature, being made by incised lines, recalling the same style of decoration alluded to as appearing on some of the specimens under discussion. There was undoubtedly an extension of this Olmecan culture into the adjoining State of Oaxaca, accounting for the fact that undoubtedly some of the pieces, especially those of jadeite, came from that region. The jadeite head from Tabasco, above mentioned, perhaps came by trade from the Olmecan region, as the place of finding is on the line traversed by the Mexicans en route to Yucatan during the later centuries before the Spanish conquest, when Toltecan influence was being felt in the old "Mayan empire."

Aside from the dominant feature of the tiger mask, another character is the forehead cleft, seen in the idol *in situ* in southern Vera Cruz, the London ax, the Beyer idol, and the jadeite ornament from Oaxaca. Beyer has called attention to this feature in the small pottery heads of Teotihuacan and Atzacotalco, a type segregated by Mrs. Nuttall in a study published in 1886.<sup>6</sup> In a recent report on La Población del Valle de Teotihuacan, issued under the direction of Dr. Manuel Gamio, we find a selection of these heads

<sup>6</sup> Nuttall, Terra Cotta Heads, pl. III, figs. II-c-1, II-c-2.

so characteristic of the Teotihuacan site, the largest city of the Toltecs, in which are grouped under the caption "Transition of the archaic type to the Teotihuacan type," a number of specimens with the forehead cleft.<sup>7</sup> The stratigraphic classification of the remains in Teotihuacan and the Valley of Mexico is respectively archaic, transition, Teotihuacan (Toltecan), and Aztec. If this sequence is correct, as now seems to be well established, we thus have the occurrence of the cleft in the forehead as a feature that has persisted in Mexico from very early times. Taking the enormous mass of Mexican antiquities into consideration, the head cleft is exceedingly rare. I have called attention to all examples which have come to my notice, without making a more intensive study of the subject than I am now able to devote to it.

It is somewhat hazardous to attempt to correlate the attributes of the votive axes with a definite cult or with the worship of a particular deity, yet one seems to be justified in assigning the cult of the votive ax and its tiger mask accompaniment to a phase of worship of the god Tezcatlipoca. In a previous paper I published an illustration of a stone mask in the National Museum of

<sup>7</sup> Gamio, I, lam. 94.

Mexico, formerly inlaid with turquois and other mosaic, and gave cogent reasons for the assumption that it probably represents the god Tezcatlipoca. The upper part of the mask has a cleft, to which feature at the time I attached no particular



FIG. 96.—Large stone tiger representing Tezcatlipoca.  
(Museo Nacional, Mexico.)

significance.<sup>8</sup> In the light of the present study, however, this piece falls into line with this supposition, and strengthens the belief as to its meaning.

<sup>8</sup> Saville, Mosaic Decorated Stone Masks, fig. 2.

Another sculptured figure associated with the worship of Tezcatlipoca, shown in fig. 96, is that of a tiger of enormous size, with a deep bowl-like cavity in the back. It is generally designated as representing an ocelot, and has also been identified as a giant *quauhxicalli*, or receptacle designed to receive penitential blood, in this case, owing to its great size, having served to receive the palpitating hearts of the human victims sacrificed to Tezcatlipoca, represented in visible form in the sculpture in the guise of a tiger or an ocelot. It was found in 1901 in excavations made in the patio of the edifice used as the Secretaria de Justicia é Instrucción Pública in the City of Mexico, which stands within the area occupied in ancient Tenochtitlan by the great teocalli, or temple, devoted to the worship of both Tezcatlipoca and the dreaded war god Huitzilopochtli. The tiger face of this wonderful sculpture corresponds closely to the conventionalized mask of our votive axes.

In the mythology of the ancient Mexicans we find the belief that there was originally a primeval pair of gods, who engendered four sons. In the *Historia de los Mexicanos por sus Pinturas* it is recorded: "Of this god and goddess were engendered four sons; the eldest was called Tlaclauque Teztatlipuca, whom the people of Guaxocingo and Tascala revered as their chief deity under

the name of Camastle, and who was said to have been born of a ruddy color all over. They had a second son named Yayanque Tezcatlipuca; he was the greatest and the worst, who overpowered and bore sway over the other three, because he was born in the middle of all: he was totally black at birth.”<sup>9</sup> In the same relation in the confused myths concerning the gods, Tezcatlipoca is said to have been a sun god and to have had an altercation with another god, Quetzalcoatl, who caused him to cease to be a sun “because he gave him a blow with a great stick and threw him down into the water, and there he was transformed into a *tiger*, and issued forth to slay the giants; and this appeared in the heavens, for it is said that the ursa major came down to the water because he is Tezcatlipoca, and was on high in memory of him.”<sup>10</sup> May not the forehead cleft seen in six of the specimens described be reminiscent of the blow received by Tezcatlipoca from the antagonistic Quetzalcoatl?

Another myth recorded by the old chroniclers gives Tezcatlipoca the attributes of a magician and sorcerer, who transformed himself into a

<sup>9</sup> I quote from the translation by Henry Phillips (p. 617), but with changes in spelling to correspond with the original.

<sup>10</sup> Phillips translation, p. 621.

*tiger*. It is related that the chief motive for the abandonment of Tula was the rivalry between Quetzalcoatl and Tezcatlipoca, and that while playing ball one day, Tezcatlipoca transformed himself into a tiger, so frightening the spectators that many of them fell into a ravine and were killed.

Tezcatlipoca has been defined as a sun god, specifically of the winter sun of the cold dry sterile season. He was one of the most important deities of the Mexican pantheon. The short chapter of Sahagun on the esteem in which this god was held is given in translation:

*Of the esteem in which the god called Titlacaoan or Tezcatlipuca was held.*

The god called Titlacaoan, they said was the creator of the heavens and the earth and was all-powerful; he gave to the living all that was needful of food, drink and riches: and the said Titlacaoan was invisible, and like darkness and air, and when he appeared and spoke to some man, he was like a shadow, and he knew the secrets that they had in their hearts, for which reason, they cried out and implored him, saying, “Oh god, all powerful who givest life to men, and whom we call Titlacaoan, have favor on us and give us what is necessary for food, drink, in the enjoyment of tranquility and pleasure, because we live with great difficulty, and necessity in this world; have mercy on me, because I am so poor and

naked, and work to serve thee and in thy service sweep, clean and put fire in this poor house, where I am awaiting that which thou carest to command, or cause me soon to die that I may soon end this life so miserable and laborious, that I may rest and relax my body." And they say also that this god gave to the living poverty, misery, and the incurable and contagious infirmities of leprosy, boboes, gout (*gotas*), itch, and dropsy, which infirmities he ordered when he was angry with them for not complying with and breaking the vow and penitence, when they were obliged to fast, or if they slept with their women, or the women with their husbands or friends during the period of fast. And the said sick ones, being very afflicted with pain and harmed, called and implored [the god], saying, "Oh god, whom we call Titlacaoân, have mercy on me and take away this infirmity that is killing me, for I can do nothing unless thou curest me; if I am made well from this infirmity, I will perform vows in thy service and seek life, and if I gain a little by my labor, I will not eat nor spend it in anything else than to honor thee by making a feast and banquet for a dance (festival) in this humble house." And the sick one in despair, if he could not be cured, reproached in anger, saying, "O, Titlacaoân, why dost thou make a mockery of me; why dost thou not kill me?" And some sick ones are cured and some die. Titlacaoân is also called Tezcatlipuca, and Moiocoiatzin, and Iaotzin, and Necociautl, and Naca-

oalpilli. They call (the god) Moiocoiatzin because he can do whatever he wishes and thinks, and no one can contradict him in whatever he does, neither in the heavens nor on the earth, and in giving riches to whomsoever he desires. And they say also that the day when it is his will to destroy and demolish the heavens he will do it and those living will come to an end. And the said Titlacaoân is adored and prayed to by all, and in all the roads and divisions of streets they place a seat made of stones for him which they call *momuztli*, and they place certain branches on the said seat in his honor and service every five days of those during the twenty days of festival which they make, and they have always had this custom, regularly so doing.<sup>11</sup>

Another quotation from Sahagun throws light on our problem. In a chapter devoted to "impositions" practised on the people by Tezcatlipoca in his rôle as a magician and sorcerer, Sahagun writes:

Another imposition was done by the magician in the town of Tulla, for they say that a white bird called Iztaccvixtla, transfixed with an arrow, was clearly seen by the Tultecas flying in the distance when they directed their eyes toward the sky. He also did another imposition, which was that the Tultecas saw at night a hill called Çacatepec ablaze,

<sup>11</sup> Sahagun, I, lib. III, cap. II, pp. 241-42.

and the flames were seen from afar. When it was seen they were much disturbed, shouting and speaking, and were much disquieted, saying one to the other, "O, Toltec, it is all over with us now; now we shall perish, the end of Tultecaiutl is at hand; alas for us, bad luck has come; whither shall we go; how unfortunate we are; give us aid!" Still another imposition was done by the magician, for there rained upon them stones, and afterward there fell from the sky a great stone called *techcatl*. From that time onward there went (about) an old woman in a place called Chapultecuitlapico, otherwise named Veizinco, who sold little paper banners, crying, "Look at the little flags, who is determined to die soon; buy from me a little banner," and having made the purchase they went to where the said stone was, and there they got themselves killed; and no one was found to say so much as, "What is this that happens to us?" for they were all like insane people.<sup>12</sup>

In the prayer made by the priests to Tezcatlipoca in time of pestilence, as recorded by Sahagun, we read:

O, our Lord, protector of all, most valiant and most kind, what is this? Thine anger and indignation, does it glory or delight in hurling the stones, lances and arrows?<sup>13</sup>

Later in the same invocation the priest says:

<sup>12</sup> Sahagun, I, lib. II, cap. X, p. 254.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., II, lib. XI, cap. I, p. 34.

O, our Lord, all powerful, full of mercy, our refuge, though indeed (through) thine anger and indignation, thy arrows and stones have sorely hurt this poor people, let it be as a father or a mother that rebukes children, pulling their ears, pinching their arms, whipping them with nettles, pouring cold water over them, all being done that they may amend their puerility and childishness.<sup>14</sup>

From the foregoing statements of the chroniclers, especially Sahagun, it is seen that Tezcatlipoca was conceived of in one phase as a tiger, and that *thunderbolts*, in the form of "stones rained from heaven," were attributed to his activities. This function is found also in connection with the Maya-Quiche god Hurakán, of Guatemala, for in the Popol Vuh we read, "Cakuljá, the flash, is the first sign of Hurakán; the second, Chipí-Cakuljá, is the track of the flash; and the third manifestation is Raxá-Cakuljá, the thunderbolt that strikes."<sup>15</sup> Here we see the relation between our votive axes with the tiger mask and the conception of a powerful deity with stone axes, for the Maya-Quiche god Hurakán was apparently the counterpart of the Nahuatl god Tezcatlipoca.

<sup>14</sup> Sahagun, II, lib. VI, cap. I, p. 36.

<sup>15</sup> This translation is based on a concordance of the texts of the four editions cited in our References.

Regarding the superstition which relates to the celestial origin of celts and axes, the Museum has published a paper by de Booy about certain superstitions pertaining to celts in the West Indies. This was a worldwide belief among primitive and even early civilized peoples. There were many cults of the ax around the Mediterranean to denote thunder and lightning. It was especially prevalent in Scandinavia. A scholarly monograph by the Scandinavian Blinkenberg on The Thunder-weapon in Religion and Folklore traces this belief in the ancient world, although his statement that this superstition in America was an introduction by Spanish and Portuguese influence after the discovery, was due to lack of data on the subject. The material we have brought forward about votive axes, and the fact that there was another extensive region where this cult was practised, namely in the Mexican highlands, probably emanating in the State of Guerrero, would seem to be sufficient to establish the same primitive beliefs of the heavenly origin of celts in connection with thunder and lightning. The Guerrero type of axes are *celts* (i.e. axes without grooves), with faces on them, of which many hundreds have been found. With rare exceptions they are axes which have served as utilitarian implements, and, found by later peoples, their form

was altered to conform to the belief in their supernatural or divine origin.

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# INDIAN NOTES

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## VOTIVE AXES FROM ANCIENT MEXICO II

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IN THE last issue of *Indian Notes* I presented an illustrated study of an interesting series of votive axes from ancient Mexico and the material related thereto. Additional data have come to hand which will be described in the present supplementary note.

Dr. Alfonso Caso, the distinguished student of Mexican archeology in the City of Mexico, has courteously sent me photographs of two related examples in the collections of the Museo Nacional of Mexico, and Dr. Walter Hough has been so good as to have photographed a highly important specimen in the United States National Museum at Washington.

In the two objects illustrated in figs. 97 and 98, in the National Museums in Mexico and Wash-

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ington respectively, a distinctive feature of the votive axes, namely, a cleft in the forehead, will be observed. This feature is much more highly accentuated than in the axes illustrated in the previous study (figs. 83-93). The V-shape cut extends well into the forehead.

From the photograph of the ax in the Museo Nacional of Mexico, above referred to (fig. 97), it is seen that the object is of celt form, in which it differs from the others of the series, which are of the grooved-ax type. Of

dark greenish-gray stone, it is eleven inches in height and four inches in width, hence is approximately the same height as the four analogous axes. This specimen was ac-

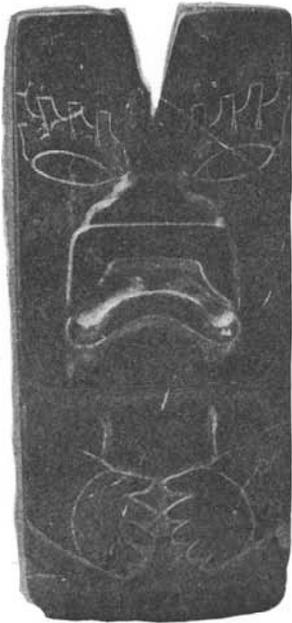


FIG. 97.—Votive ax of jadeite in the Museo Nacional of Mexico. Height, 11 inches. (Courtesy of Dr. Alfonso Caso)

quired by the Museo Nacional in 1927 from a collector in the State of Puebla, who had obtained it from the Mixteca region. Dr. Caso calls attention to the practical identity of the representation of the eyebrows in this specimen and of the votive ax in the British Museum. He notes, however, that while the eyebrows in the London ax are sculptured, in the Museo Nacional example they are incised. Incised designs are a feature of a number of specimens previously illustrated, especially those fashioned from jadeite and other hard green stones. In fact, the famous Tuxtla statuette of jadeite, now in the United States National Museum, has this secondary style of decoration in the hieroglyphic inscription which records the oldest known Mayan date thus far discovered.

The upward flaring, raised lips, and the hands placed together in the middle of the body, are dominant characteristics which bring this new example of votive ax into direct relationship with the others of this type. The other feature, the forehead cleft, is pronounced.

An even more striking addition to our series is the beautiful green-stone idol (fig. 98) in the National Museum at Washington. It is eight and five-sixteenths inches high, three and seven-eighths inches wide, and three-quarters of an

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FIG. 98.—Green-stone idol in the United States National Museum. Height,  $8\frac{9}{16}$  inches.

inch in thickness. The head is a close counterpart of that of the London ax, and the neck of the effigy simulates the groove of the other true axes of the series. The distinctive style of carving of the London specimen, emphasized in the treatment of the face of the idol, is almost duplicated in the Washington idol. Noteworthy are the eyes,

which are not of the sloping oval type, and the design of the eyebrows, identical in the two specimens. The forehead cleft is as deeply cut as in the specimen in the Museo Nacional. In the lower edge of this idol are nine little incisions, identical in number with those found on the jadeite votive ax in the Kunz collection of the American Museum of Natural History. This increases the force of my suggestion that the ten toes are represented, as also brought out in this manner in the jadeite idol illustrated in fig. 93 of my previous paper. In neither of the two new examples under consideration is there an indication of a knife held in the hands.

In my first study of these objects, the forehead cleft was noted in only two of the four major specimens of votive axes in the series; namely, in the London example and in the ax in the collections of this Museum.<sup>1</sup> A further examination of the two examples in the American Museum of Natural History reveals the same important characteristic. One of these, of jadeite, is now illustrated in three views in fig. 99. In the rear view will be seen a slight groove, which no doubt once extended to the occiput, but as a section of the ax

<sup>1</sup> In the first paper, through an unfortunate oversight, the votive ax recently acquired by this Museum was not credited as the gift of Mrs. Thea Heye, wife of the Director.

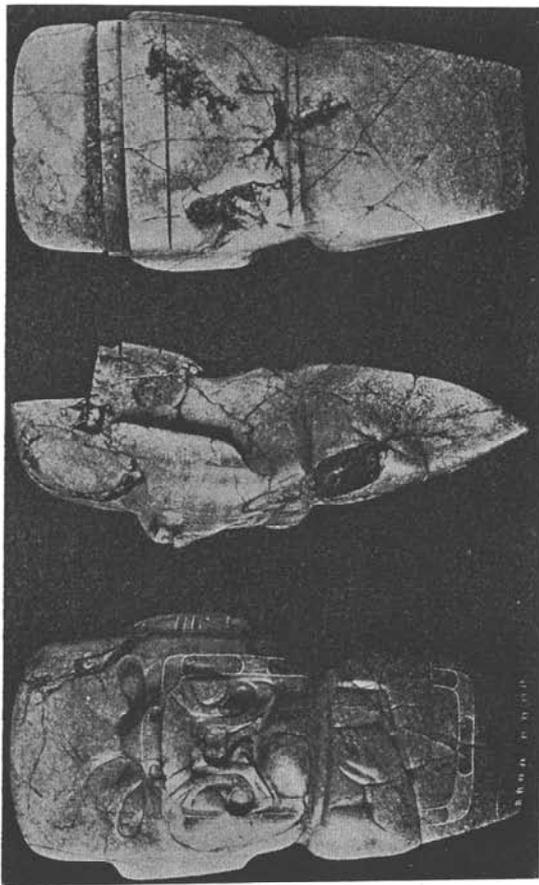


FIG. 99.—Votive ax of jadeite in the Kunz collection of the American Museum of Natural History. Height, 11 inches.

has been cut away at this place, the lower part of the groove has been destroyed. The removal of this piece was probably done by natives into whose hands the ax had fallen in later times, for it is hardly likely that an effigy of such a potent deity



FIG. 100.—Jadeite breast-ornament in the Museo Nacional of Mexico. Height, 4 inches; width, 5 inches. (Courtesy of Dr. Alfonso Caso)

would have been mutilated by those who held it as an object of worship.

The other ax in the American Museum of Natural History (fig. 88 of the previous publication) is provided with a groove or cleft beginning

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at the middle of the top of the head and extending downward in a deeper groove through the upper corner of the projection. In the three specimens to which I have now called attention, this cleft is not visible from the front, whereas in the two examples now presented for the first time, and in the several specimens of this class hitherto described, the contrary is the case.

The other specimen in the Museo Nacional of Mexico, of which Dr. Caso has kindly sent a photograph (fig. 100), is a beautifully carved piece of translucent green jadeite, acquired by the Museum in 1910, and believed to have come from the Mixteca. It is four inches in height and five inches long. It bears the tiger mask and has secondary incised decoration in various parts. In place of the cleft, there is a projecting block, recalling the treatment of the head in the votive ax in the Peabody Museum of American Archæology and Ethnology, illustrated in fig. 89 of our former article. On this block is this incised design, hardly visible in the photograph, but drawn from

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the original by Dr. Caso. While this specimen differs somewhat in



treatment from the others of the

series, Dr. Caso is of the opinion that it belongs to the same cult and should be included in a study of this class of idols.