

# The Further Adventures of Merle (continued)

MERLE GREENE ROBERTSON

## Cacaxtla

Mural painting at Cacaxtla was unknown to everyone before Marta Foncerrada de Molina, my friend from the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) in Mexico City, circulated pictures that came from the site near Puebla, not anywhere near Maya territory. I had been with Marta when she went to Puebla to write up the material on Cacaxtla and for me to take pictures for her. There were no tents covering these mysterious murals, so we could get right up next to them and see the wonderful color that was still in pristine condition.

These murals had been discovered by looters who were so astounded by what they had found that, realizing they must be very important, they turned them over to the authorities instead of stealing them. If these murals had not been found intact like that, but brought to some other place, no one would have believed that they had come from near Puebla, so far from Maya territory. I took dozens of pictures of this unusual find. I sent the film to the States to be processed with instructions that 8" x 10" copies should be sent to Marta, to George Kubler at



Figure 1. The Portico, South Panel (photo: Merle Greene Robertson).





**Figure 2.** The Portico, South Jamb  
(photo: Merle Greene Robertson).



**Figure 3.** The Portico, North Jamb  
(photo: Merle Greene Robertson).

Yale, and to me.

Well, a funny thing happened. Later, I was at a party at the home of Donald Robertson, a professor at Tulane University and my mentor. There were probably 75 people in attendance. FedEx came to the door with a huge package for me. I didn't know anyone knew I was in New Orleans then, so why would I be getting a package? Everyone wanted to see what it was. Well, the photo company got their directions wrong and sent 18" x 20" copies of everything to me. Nobody there had ever seen the Cacaxtla murals or pictures of them, so they were all amazed. We tacked these large, beautiful, color prints on every open space on Don's walls. The rest of the time at his party was spent just looking at them. The

outcome was that Don Robertson was accused by INAH of selling photos of Cacaxtla. Don is as honest as the day is long and would never think of doing anything illegal. Someone was at the party (we didn't know who) that wanted to get him in trouble. There were people from other countries at this party, but who the guilty person was we never found out.

It wasn't until the next Mesa Redonda that we learned that Kubler had not received his copies of the Cacaxtla mural photos. What had happened was that when FedEx delivered the package at Yale, someone in Kubler's office put the package way up on top of the bookcase and never told him. A cleaning lady found it there, much later. Mystery solved.





Figure 4. The Platform, East Talud (photo: Merle Greene Robertson).



Figure 5. The Portico, North Panel (photo: Merle Greene Robertson).