CULTURAL INFERENCES FROM THE ART
OF EL TAJIN, MEXICO

by

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STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

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Field work for this thesis was carried out at site of El Tajín, Mexico from late October to late November, 1964. I was accompanied in the field by my wife, Vivian, and my brother, Gerald. I spent the greater portion of the time in the field in producing one-half scale drawings of the sculptured drums of the Building of the Columns. My brother made a nearly complete photographic collection of the sculpture which is on the surface at Tajín, including that from the Building of the Columns. Later, in Tucson, I made an attempt to reconstruct the scenes that had existed on the columns by use of the strips of scaled-down drawings of the drums and by reference to photographs. The results of this attempt at reconstruction are found reproduced in this paper, and form the main body of material that has been the object of the cultural analysis herein.

Quotations from Spanish sources are my translations in this paper.

Before I acknowledge those persons important to the present paper, I would like to mention my first thesis committee which presided over an earlier and aborted topic. So for their efforts and
patience may I thank Dr. Frederick Hulse, my graduate advisor and chairman of my first thesis committee, Dr. Edward Dozier and Dr. Malcolm MacFee.

Without question the first person to receive acknowledgment in regard to this study on Tajín must be Arqueol. José García Payón, who has carried out excavations at Tajín for more than two decades and who is responsible for most of the information which is now available on this site. It was in the summer of 1962 in his class on Mesoamerican archaeology at the Universidad Veracruzana that Professor García Payón first imparted to me his enthusiasm for El Tajín; and his imaginative interpretations of Tajín archaeology and culture have been major inspirations for my own work.

Thanks is to be given my present thesis committee: Dr. T. Patrick Culbert, Chairman, Dr. Raymond H. Thompson, and Dr. Edward H. Spicer; and to Dr. Malcolm MacFee, who having been a member of both of my thesis committees, left the university before I finally came through, and who was replaced by Dr. Spicer.

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ABSTRACT

The sculptured stone art from the columns of the Building of the Columns at El Tajín, Mexico has been reconstructed for this paper, and this art, which is in the form of scenes, and the scenes of the sculptured ball-court walls of this site provide the material for cultural analysis, particularly the analysis of religion. Tajín art is mentioned as one of the variations of Classic Central Veracruz art. Noted are the major influences on Tajín art and architecture from Teotihuacán, the Maya area, and in the last period of Tajín, the Tula Toltecs.

Ten scenes from the columns' sculpture have been reconstructed and analysis indicates five categories of activity, including warriors taking captives and preparing them for sacrifice, ceremonies on the ball-court, priests and gods in concourse, priests impersonating gods in a Tree of Life Scene, and priests conducting sacrifices.

Interpretations of ball-court sculpture which have appeared in the literature are summarized and alternate interpretations are presented.

Conclusions on the nature of Tajín religion are drawn dealing with the importance of the ball-game, blood-sacrifice, pulque, fertility in general, and the underlying concept of duality.
Fig. 1. Map of Mexico and Central Veracruz.

△ = archaeological sites
○ = present-day cities
Fig. 2. Map of the Archaeological Zone of El Tajin showing Structures Relevant to this Study

(Modified from Garcia Payon 1957)
Scale: 2.6 cm. = 100 m.
INTRODUCTION

In the state of Veracruz, Mexico, on the Gulf Coast lies the archaeological site of El Tajín (Fig. 1). This site is located in a small valley, about ten miles from the present town of Poza Rica, and about forty miles from the coast. It has an elevation of some 230 meters above sea level.

The terrain of the Tajín area is rugged low hills which are covered with tropical rainforest where deforestation has not occurred. Despite this being a tropical area with 1,376 millimeters of rain per year, there is a chronic water problem, as there are no large streams in the area, few perennial springs, and even present-day attempts to provide wells have been largely unsuccessful. Only thin topsoil overlies a limestone base. Rainfall is extremely irregular, although there is a season of heavy precipitation from May to October, and periods of intensive drought may occur. The temperature from May through August averages around 27 degrees centigrade, but drops to a humid 18 or 19 in December. Large animals, including deer, peccary, and jaguar, were once common (Kelley and Palerm 1950: 46-9).

The total area of the site is approximately 2,350 acres, but the main structures are found in a central section of some 150 acres.
(García Payón 1957: 4). Within this central area of Tajín García Payón has identified a number of civil and religious structures, including three dwellings (Edificios A, B, and C) which may have been the habitations of priests or priest-rulers, six ball-courts, and a large number of pyramids, the most notable being the Pyramid of the Niches, the Building of the Columns, and Pyramid 5 which is adjacent to the Large Ball-court (Fig. 2). This central area of Tajín is quite rich in sculptured stone art and it is this art which is the concern of the present paper. Much of the art is representational, depicting numerous ceremonies, most of them of religious significance. The central area of Tajín with the many temples, ball-courts, and religious art was certainly a very large and important ceremonial complex.

Tajín sculpture—largely bas-relief—comes from three main sources: the Building of the Columns, the Pyramid of the Niches, and two ball-courts (Fig. 2). The relief of the Building of the Columns is found on large drums. These drums have been thought to be altars (Palacios 1937: 72), but were actually originally stacked so as to form columns which surmounted this pyramid and acted as front supports for the roof of a portico. This portico was anterior to a walled but roofless enclosure whose facade (the rear support of the portico roof) was divided by a flight of stairs (García Payón 1957: 29-30).
García Payón has indicated that there was a total of six columns, although I found evidence of only three. The drums which formed the columns are 1.10 meters in diameter and vary in width from 15 to 50 centimeters, with most being in the range from 20 to 30. Most of these drums are now scattered on the face of the pyramid, but others have been taken to the local "Museo Provisional".

Most of the sculptured stones from the Pyramid of the Niches have been placed in the local museum. According to the work of García Payón this sculpture adorned the sanctuary that stood atop the pyramid, and his reconstruction is shown in Fig. 3. Included here are large panels with scenes, pillars with single figures, and horizontal bands of design. There were originally 20 panels of which fragments of 18 have been recovered in excavation (García Payón 1951: 171). However, to my knowledge, sections of large size remain from only eight of these panels (Spinden 1933: Fig. 1; García Payón 1951; 1952). These panels or their fragments are all to be found in the local museum, with the exception of three, whose locations are unknown to me. Fig. 6 (M-138) is a panel which is also reported to have come from the debris of the Pyramid of the Niches, but it varies from the other panels in a number of ways. It has a different border design, the scene carries into the border area as it does not on the others, and it appears to be trapezoidal in shape rather than having the approximately square shape that the other panels do.
Fig. 3. García Payón's Reconstruction Drawing of the Sanctuary of the Pyramid of the Niches (García Payón 1951, Fig. 6)
The third major source of Tajín art is the sculpture of the ball-courts. Although there are six known courts at Tajín, only two of these are reported to have carved sides. These two courts are generally known as the North or Small Ball-court and the South or Large Ball-court (Fig. 2). The Large Ball-court is oriented 93° east of North and the Small Ball-court 66° of North (Spinden 1933: 236).

The Large Ball-court is some 62 meters long and 10.5 meters wide. Its walls are vertical and stand 1.65 meters in height. The sculpture of this court consists of six panels carved on the stone sides of the court (Fig. 4). Each side has two end panels and a central one. The end panels are some 1.55 by 1.86 meters and the central panels are 1.65 by 2.63 meters. Two of the panels (SE, SW) are in a poor state of preservation, but not to the degree that it is impossible to determine most of the major features.

Smaller in every dimension than the other, the Small Ball-court is 27 meters long, 5.58 meters wide, and the stone walls are 94 centimeters high. There are also six sculptured panels on the sides of this court which are positioned in the same manner as are those of the Large Ball-court. The panels vary somewhat in size, but average 62 centimeters in height by 77 centimeters in width. Other than size, the factor which most distinguishes this court from
Fig. 4. Schematic Diagram Illustrating Relative Positions of Ball-court Panels

a. Large Ball-court; b. Small Ball-court; Not to Scale.
the Larger one is a sculptured band, 15 centimeters wide, which runs the entire length of each wall (Fig. 32).

Two of the panels (mid-South and mid-North) of the Small Ball-court have been nearly totally effaced, another (SE) has some one-third of its surface destroyed, but the other three (NE, NW, and SW) are well preserved.

The end panels of the Large Ball-court have been reproduced in the literature numerous times (e.g., Spinden 1933; Marquina 1951; García Payón 1959), while the center panels have been reproduced only once to my knowledge (García Payón 1963). Two of the Small Ball-court panels, as well as a portion of the band, are reproduced in Spinden (1933). Reproduction of carvings from the Pyramid of the Niches has been sparse (Spinden 1933; García Payón 1951; Marquina 1951). The columns have received the least attention of any Tajín art, and photographs of small sections of only a few drums are to be found (Spinden 1933; Melgarejo Vivanco 1950; García Payón 1954; Westheim 1957). As far as I am aware, a reconstruction of column scenes from the drum fragments has never appeared in the literature, and thus the entire body of material that these scenes represent has never been exploited.

One of the purposes of this paper is to produce such a reconstruction of these column scenes on paper, and this may be seen in
Figs. 12-15, 17, 19-22. However, the major purpose of this study is the presentation of a description and cultural interpretation of the content of these column scenes, and to add to this the cultural material that can be obtained from the panels of the ball-courts and the Pyramid of the Niches. Through the art of Tajín a number of cultural facets are open for exploration, but because of the problem of length, this study will largely be confined to that area which is most prominent: religion. Thus the ultimate goal of this study is to set forth some statements on the nature of the religion of the Tajín culture as it is expressed in the sculptured art.
THE RELATION OF TAJÍN ART TO
THE CLASSIC CENTRAL VERACRUZ SCULPTURE STYLE

The art style of Tajín has long been seen as related to that of the objects known as yokes, hachas (or thin stone heads), and palmas (or palmate stones) (Fig. 37). This style has been most commonly referred to as Totonac or Tajín, the first being the name of the cultural group which at the time of conquest occupied the area that archaeologically shows the greatest concentration of yokes, hachas, and palmas; and the second being due to the fact that Tajín is the only actual site complete with architecture and non-mobile art to which this style and these objects can be related. However, Classic Central Veracruz, a term suggested by Proskouriakoff (1953: 389), is becoming the accepted designation for this art style.

Spinden (1933: 263) describes the salient characteristics of "Totonac" art (Classic Veracruz) as scrolls that "are softened rectangles rather than parts of circles," and "double outlines made by two grooves of equal length." Covarrubias (1957: 120) characterizes Classic Veracruz very generally as "baroque combinations of meanders and volutes derived from water, lightening and cloud motifs." The most complete analysis and description of this art style comes from
two articles by Proskouriakoff (1953; 1954). In general terms she describes it as dominated by the scroll which "is simple in outline and uniform in its width" while "its form is rigid and does not change when it combines with another." The scrolls are composed in patterns, "combined by merging or interlacing" (Proskouriakoff 1953: 390).

Making a trait analysis using 26 elements of Classic Veracruz, Proskouriakoff is able to show aggregations of traits which suggest major stylistic divisions of the sculptured objects. As seen by the clustering of traits with which Proskouriakoff is working, the yokes and hachas may be grouped into one major division (which is broken down into a number of yoke styles: A, B, B1, C, D). A second major division derives from the clustering of traits in large part associated with the palmas and the art of Tajín. The specific aspect of this analysis that is important to this paper is that Tajín art is a sub-category, a specialized version, of Classic Veracruz.

The temporal range of Classic Veracruz art is not clear. The best dating on the early end comes from a plaque with Classic Veracruz design found at Kaminaljuyú that is of the Early Classic horizon. The substyle that this plaque displays is full-blown in character, and thus the beginnings of Classic Veracruz may extend into the Formative. Another substyle shows relationships to Tohil Plumbate, suggesting
survival into the Postclassic (Proskouriakoff 1954: 75). These two substyles are, however, confined to the yoke-hacha division of Classic Veracruz. The substyle of the palmas is placed in the Late Classic because of its affiliation to Tajín art and the dating of Tajín in this time period.

The Tajín material on which Proskouriakoff bases her analysis (the published sources on the Pyramid of the Niches, the ball-courts, and the columns) is considered to date around the close of the Late Classic or the beginning of the Postclassic. There is, however, one piece of sculpture (Fig. 5a) which apparently comes from a much earlier period. According to Proskouriakoff (1954: 85) the design of this sculpture "shows that it represents an earlier phase of the same tradition, "as that of the ball-courts, but that "in many respects it seems closer to the designs of Yoke 28 and of Hacha 2 than to the later designs of Tajin." Yoke 28 is a marginal style and not temporally placed, but Hacha 2 belongs to Yoke Style A which Proskouriakoff places in the Early Classic. This constitutes a definite link between the divergent Tajín and yoke styles, even though there is no question that these are basically related.

The problem for historical reconstruction is when the Tajín-palma style diverged and what socio-political reasons there were for this divergence. The Tajín-palma style is late, but it is not just a
Fig. 5. Two monuments from the Pyramid of the Niches

a. Early Classic (Proskouriakoff 1954, Fig. 9a);
b. Late Classic (Proskouriakoff 1954, Fig. 9g).
Fig. 6. Panel M-138, Possibly from the Pyramid of the Niches

Scale: 1 cm. 12 cm.
late yoke style, that is, a late phase of the main stream of Classic Veracruz (even though in another context Proskouriakoff [1954: 84] suggests that it is), because this position is held by Yoke Style B, which is Late Classic and possibly Postclassic.

Related to this problem is the question of the palma-hacha relationship. Spinden (1933: 243) suggests that these two forms may be derived from a single figure in the round with the triangular base that is typical of them. Proskouriakoff (1954: 68) supports this idea to an extent, but is more inclined to see the palma as a late development of the hacha. But if the palma is derived from an hacha form, it is a divergent and specialized branch, as the main trunk of hacha forms seems to continue into the Postclassic. It is possible that the divergence of the palma form from the base hacha form may be coeval with the divergence of the Tajín-palma style from Classic Veracruz.

A Tajín monument (Fig. 56) found above the Early Classic one previously mentioned displays an element (Proskouriakoff's Trait 4) of a style which Proskouriakoff considers intrusive at Tajín, and this is Yoke Style B. It "can hardly be conceived of either as a link between the early style of the buried monument [Fig. 5a] and the ball courts or as a final stage of the ball-court style...it may belong to an earlier stratum not yet uncovered at Tajín or it may represent a contemporary style of some other region" (Proskouriakoff 1954: 85).
This "contemporary style" should presumably be the Yoke Style B tradition.

Another example (unreported by Proskouriakoff) of Trait 4 of Yoke Style B occurs on a column drum not reproduced in this paper. The columns probably date into the Postclassic and this Trait 4 seems again to be intrusive. These two intrusive cases of this trait indicate the contemporaneity of the specialized Tajin-palma substyle with the yoke substyles which seem to be of the basic or more nearly central tradition of Classic Veracruz. Covarrubias has summarized the "history" of Classic Veracruz style as the following:

the conclusion one inevitably arrives at is that the scroll style began in central Veracruz in Pre-Classical times, spread rapidly to the north and south, developing into various local styles and influencing practically all the Classic cultures, among them the Maya; ... and in time decayed slowly in its ancient home, with, however, one place--the great city of Tajin--where it was intensely cultivated and elaborated upon until the thirteenth century (Covarrubias 1957: 189-90).

To be more specific in regard to Tajín, apparently the city was founded in the third or fourth century A.D. and whether or not its founders were part of the cultural group within which Classic Veracruz developed, it soon began participating in this art style which had been flourishing from possibly the time of Christ in areas of Veracruz to the south. In the early period of Tajín, its art--as shown by one monument (Fig. 5a)--was close to the main stream of Classic
Veracruz, but probably by mid-Classic it was quite divergent, continuing with its own cultural elan, and giving its stamp to the old and now decaying parent style. Part of the explanation for this divergence may be found in Jiménez Moreno's view of the Classic. According to this the cultures of the Early Classic were kept under a cultural yoke by the tremendous influences and power of Teotihuacán. With the fall of this metropolis around 600 A.D., the other Classic centers were able to express fully their own identities, thus making for the florescence of the Late Classic (Jiménez Moreno 1959). Although some of the latest dating of Teotihuacan indicates that monumental building ceased around 300 A.D., but that the city continued to exist until around 600 to 650 (Bernal 1965), Jimenez Moreno's theory still seems valid. Tajín had many of its basic cultural roots in Teotihuacán, but its art style was part of the Veracruz tradition. The Tajín variation of Classic Veracruz may be seen as a function of this general Teotihuacán cultural base, but also of the decline of Teotihuacán. When Tajín received its cultural "freedom" from Teotihuacán at mid-Classic the tendency away from the Central Classic Veracruz style became a clear break as Tajín strove for its complete self-identity in every respect. The energy shown in the art of Late Classic Tajín is evident in the other facets of its culture which remain. Why this cultural energy seems to have reached its
peak at the end of the Late Classic while most of the other Classic centers were in states of decline or abandonment will be discussed later.

There seems to be little doubt that Classic Veracruz is ultimately derived from the classic Olmec style (Covarrubias 1957: 187; Krickeberg 1961: 338; Wicke 1965: 159), and is related to the transitional art of such pre-Classic or Early Classic sites as Alvarado, Tepatlaxco, El Baul, El Meson, Chalcatzingo, and Loltun Cave (Covarrubias 1957: 168). Some of the closest ties of Classic Veracruz are to Maya art, but this is to be expected as Maya art has been shown to be definitely linked to Olmec (Wicke 1965: 150). The Classic Veracruz-Maya similarities have been noted at least as early as Joyce (1914: 139-40) and numerous subsequent writers have remarked on them (e.g. Spinden 1933: 243; García Payón 1951: 172; Krickeberg 1961: 338). Proskouriakoff (1954: 88) admits a general similarity between Classic Veracruz and Peten Maya styles, but points out a great many major differences; for example, Maya art is concerned with "adaptive organic forms," while Classic Veracruz concentrates on "simple, relatively unvarying, basic forms." Animal motifs are quite common in Classic Veracruz art, but are rare in Maya. The possibility remains, however, for
strong stimulation between the two areas, particularly in the
Peten to Veracruz direction (Proskouriakoff 1954: 72), and there
is evidence which will be mentioned shortly for an even stronger
relationship between Tajín in particular and the Peten Maya.

Classic Veracruz exemplifies little direct relation to the art
of Teotihuacán. This is hardly surprising in light of the fact that the
differences between highland and lowland styles are pointed out (and
often overstated) in nearly every discussion of Mesoamerican art.
There is a mural from the Temple of Agriculture at Teotihuacán
which is frequently mentioned as showing Classic Veracruz influence
(Thompson 1941a: 39; Krickeberg 1961: 293), but as Thompson
(1941a: 39) points out, a color reproduction of this mural is less
convincing for this relationship than is a drawing (compare Gamio
1922, Pl. 30, Fig. 149). A few pieces of Classic Veracruz sculpture
have been sporadically reported from Teotihuacan (Proskouriakoff
1954, Fig. 3, hacha 5; Krickeberg 1961: 269), but the best-documen-
ted material is coming from the recent work at La Ventilla, Teotihua-
cán, from which have been reported a Classic Veracruz composite
stela, a Tlaloc hacha of Veracruz type, and a plain yoke (Arroya de
Teotihuacán motifs such as the owl and the butterfly god (Covarrubias
1957: 168).
THE RELATION OF THE ART AND ARCHITECTURE OF TAJIN TO
THAT OF OTHER AREAS OF MESOAMERICA

Many of the external relationships of Tajin art and architec-
ture can be singled out much more easily than can those of Classic
Veracruz art in general. Here again the main links are with the
Maya area and Teotihuacan. Garcia Payon (1951: 171; 1954: 42)
feels that Tajin and Teotihuacan are very closely related. He con-
cludes this on the basis of ceramics and the fact that the nearly unique
niches construction is superimposed on a talud and cornice base that
is fundamentally a stylization of a Teotihuacan model. The simi-
larities between the two sites are great enough for Wolf (1959: 96) to
suggest that Tajin was an Early Classic satellite of Teotihuacan.

Second to Teotihuacan in influence, according to Garcia Payon,
but still of great importance are the Maya sites, and particularly those
of the Puuc, with which Tajin shares a number of architectural elements
(Garcia Payon 1954: 43). At Tajin a number of objects suggesting
Maya influence have been found, including a palma with two glyphs
similar to ones found on the carving of the Cross of Palenque, a piece
of bas-relief bearing the likeness of god A, and a potsherd with a
representation of the Moan bird (García Payón 1951: 172). A stela from the rubble of the Pyramid of the Niches is said to have definite Maya affiliation (Proskouriakoff 1950: 178). The Maya stance is seen a number of places in Tajín sculpture (Proskouriakoff 1954: 84). Spinden (1933: 243) mentions a certain similarity of ideas involved in the expression of the Maya Long Nosed God and the Tajín serpent, while "Serpent X" is seen by Covarrubias (1957: 179) as the basic motif of both Gulf Coast and Maya art. A comparison between Herbert Spinden's "typical serpent head" of the Maya with two probable serpent heads from the bands of relief of the Small Ball-court indicates that these creatures are of related stock. (Fig. 7). Maya serpents frequently have a tubular object associated with their upper lip. This is usually identified as a nose plug, and if this is so it is interesting to note that it is missing from the Tajín serpents, corresponding to its respective presence and absence on humans in the Maya and Tajín sculptures.

In addition to its Teotihuacán and Maya affiliations, Tajín also displays certain similarities to Xochicalco, another center that survived the upheavals at the end of the Classic and persisted into Post-classic times. Florescano (1964: 161) mentions Tajín influence at Xochicalco, along with that from the Maya and Zapotecan areas, and Tajín-Xochicalco relationships are also pointed out by Escalona Robles (1953: 358).
Fig. 7. Mesoamerican Serpents

a. Serpent X (Kidder, Jennings and Shook 1946, Fig. 97c);
b. "Typical Conventionalized [Maya] Serpent Head" (Spinden 1957, Fig. 30);
c. Izapa Mask (Miles 1965, Fig. 8a);
d. Tajín Serpent, Band of the Small Ball-Court;
e. Tajín Serpent, Band of the Small Ball-Court.
Fig. 7. Mesoamerican Serpents
The art of Santa Lucía Cotzumalhuapa has been mentioned as related to that of both Tajín and Xochicalco (Burland 1951: 71; 1958: 326). Each of these sites shows a certain affiliation to the Toltec tradition but each is dated in the pre-Toltec Late Classic. The art of remote Cotzumalhuapa is not allied stylistically to that of Tajín, but in subject matter there is much resemblance. Prominent at both sites are the ball-players equipped with yokes and palmas (?), the skeleton of death, sacrifice associated with the ball game, decapitation as a form of sacrifice, and a sun cult; in general a concern for the ball-game and death (see illustrations in Thompson 1948).

One small body of material to which little attention has been paid, but which seems to show much Tajín influence, is the art which comes from the Sola region of Oaxaca. Berlin (1951) described it, but did not know of any art with which to link it. Later, Peterson (1956) was able to show the similarity of the Sola art's dominant feature, human heads, to representations found in the designs on the "smiling heads" from Central Veracruz. There is an even closer resemblance between one of the Sola heads and a head in one of the bands of Tajín's Small Ball-court (Fig. 8) than that which Peterson notes. But Berlin does not present enough material to permit a detailed comparison of Tajín and Sola art.
Fig. 8. A Comparison of Sola and Tajín Heads

a. Sola Head (Berlin 1951, Fig. 2);
b. Tajín Head from South Band of Small Ball-court.
One of the outstanding problems of Tajín archeology and history is the Tula Toltec affiliation. Spinden's early work on Tajín (1933) concluded that Tajín had a very late occupation, and was abandoned only shortly before the Conquest. As such, she considered Tajín art to have developed under direct Toltec domination. More recent work has shown that this dating was not correct, rather that Tajín was founded in the 4th or 5th centuries A.D., but that it did last until around 1200, or through the period of Toltec domination of Mesoamerica (García Payón 1954: 41). Spinden (1933: 234, 244) indicated a number of Tajín traits that are associated with the Toltecs, such as the crossed-arrow motif and the sky monster. García Payón (1951: 173) adds features that are common to both Tajín and Toltec Chichén Itzá which include the use of columns, walking tigers, and natural scenes of life. He also notes in turn that a number of elements characteristic of Chichén Itzá do not appear at Tajín: the atlatl, the year symbol, the solar disk, lip plugs, the tlecuilli "fire-pit" see Tozzer 1957: 79 and serpent-headed columns. However, the only example of the walking tiger at Tajín is on an Early Classic monument. Also there is an example of an atlatl (but not Toltec style) on a Tajín drum, and Tozzer (1957: 120) points out an example of a sun disk in the border of the Small Ball-court.

Apart from these miscellaneous elements the problem revolves
about the complex of the ball-court, human sacrifice, eagle-solar
cult, and the importance of war; a complex directly associated with
the Toltecs and the "militaristic" Postclassic. Tozzer (1957: 67)
says for comparisons to Chichén Itzá, the subject matter of the art
of Tajín makes it "next in importance" to Tula, but that the style of
the art and architecture has a life of its own. Proskouriakoff (1954:
84) holds a similar point of view:

Whatever the chronological position of the Tajín sculptures
may be... their style is so clearly an integral part of the
complex of traits that characterizes the Classic Veracruz
style, that to call it Postclassic would rob the term of
all significant connotations. The style is a late phase of a
development that had been going on perhaps for centuries,
and so far as we know knows no strong departure from the
Veracruz tradition.

In contrast García Payón feels that there are strong Toltec influences
in the Postclassic period of Tajín and that toward the end of this time
there may have been Toltec occupation as several significant architectu­
tural changes were brought about (García Payón 1954: 41). He also
reports the find of a bas-relief monument in the vicinity of Tajín that
is unquestionably Toltec in style (García Payón 1955: 13, Pl. 44).
There are also a few other large sculptures at the site that are com­
pletely removed from the Classic Veracruz tradition, and which García
Payón apparently believes are Toltec (Paula Krotzer: verbal communi­
cation). But even though the sculptures at Tajín, at least the ball-courts
and columns, are generally considered to be quite late, it is not clear if García Payón considers these to be the result of Toltec influence. The scene of the SW panel of the Large Ball-court (Fig. 24) is usually interpreted as an eagle cult ceremony, but García Payón rejects the identification of the bird involved as an eagle. However, he does see evidence of an eagle cult on the columns (García Payón 1959: 458). On the basis of this it seems as though he is implying that the ball-court reliefs are earlier than the columns and that the art of the columns received strong Toltec influence while the ball-courts did not. The view that the columns are very late and show major Toltec influence is also held by Krickeberg (1961: 334).

In essence the problem hangs on two factors: the dating of the monuments and the presence or absence of these Toltec ideas throughout the culture history of Tajín and Mexico in general. García Payón and Ekholm both have arrived at 1200 for the end of Tajín. Proskouria-koff (1954: 84) however, is not inclined to accept this date due partly to the lack of occurrence of any of the major ceramic Postclassicc horizon markers at Tajín and partly to the lack of any suggestion of Toltec influence in the art style of the reliefs of Tajin which are presumed to be late. Even if the end date of 1200 is correct, it does not necessarily mean, of course, that the sculpture must be dated close to it. It seems that most of the arguments for a late dating of the reliefs
are ultimately based upon subject matter. But the ball-game as subject matter does not support this. The ball-game is certainly Classic and probably Early Classic or before at Teotihuacán. At Tajín it is seen to appear at least by 600 if the individual on the early monument (Fig. 5a) is a ball-player as he seems to be. This same figure gives early precedence for a bird cult, eagle or not, at Tajín. Human sacrifice was certainly not a Toltec innovation, but at Tajín sacrifice has a prominence that is more closely allied to Toltec thought than to that of the Classic. But Jiménez Moreno (1959: 1056) feels that human sacrifice and the eagle as a religious symbol existed at Teotihuacán. To be noted is that the panels from the Pyramid of the Niches show no concern with the complex of sacrifice. But this is somewhat mitigated by the fact that there are fewer than half (8 or 9 of 20) of these panels that have been reconstructed or which retain enough of the carved surface to be able to tell something of the subject matter. The panels aside, all of the other relief from the Pyramid displays some of the standard stylistic traits of the ball-courts. The panels, however, have a peculiar border of a rectangle with a circle in the center alternating with two interlocked U-shaped units. I know of no appearance of an even remotely similar design in any other Classic Veracruz art. The details of the panels show a general correlation with those of the ball-court. There is certainly a continuity between
the reliefs of the Pyramid and the panels of the ball-courts. But what this may say about dating is not very definitive. The Pyramid is dated somewhere around 650 (García Payón 1951: 174), and this would tend to exert some downward pull on the dating of the ball-courts.

The evidence considered to this point for Toltec relationship to Tajín art certainly leads to no clear-cut answer, but it does seem to indicate a somewhat earlier and non-Toltec origin for Tajín. Jiménez Moreno (1959: 1056-70) takes the view that the "Toltec" traits of Tajín were well-developed in Tajín II, that is, the Late Classic. He concurs with García Payón and others that early Tajín culture is basically derived from Teotihuacán. With the fall of Teotihuacán, Tajín then went on to develop its own individuality. Part of the heritage from Teotihuacán was an eagle-sun complex including the aspects of human sacrifice and an incipient cult of death, but these were buried within the much greater whole of Teotihuacán philosophy and religion. But given the independence of Tajín, these were the things its culture chose to develop. The post-Teotihuacán classical world was reaching its peak and at Tajín the elements that were to mark the Postclassic were being brought into full life for the first time. Jiménez Moreno speculates that these elements actually may have reached the Toltecs by way of Tajín through the medium of the migrating Pipiles, descendants of the
groups from Teotihuacán, carrying their ancient "Nahuatí" culture with them, but now mixed with elements from Tajín and other cultures (Jiménez Moreno 1959: 1088-9).

The relief at Tajín which shows possibly the strongest connection to Toltec ideas is that of the columns. Proskouriakoff (1954: 84) indicates that she used material from the columns in her analysis of Classic Veracruz, but if she depended primarily on published material, it is certain that she had little of this with which to work. That this is the case is indicated by the fact that she does not mention the columns in her trait list.

The first aspect of this relief to be considered is that it is on architectural columns. Columns are not rare in Mesoamerica, but sculptured ones are infrequent, while columns with sculptured scenes seem to be very uncommon indeed. The only examples of the last of which I am aware come from Toltec Chichén Itzá: Room E (Spinden 1933: 256) and the North Building of the Great Ball-court (Breton 1917) are recorded as having them. At Tajín on the largest building of the site the sculptured column appears, late in Tajín history, taking the place of the panel, which has been the dominant surface up to this time. The procession is an innovation in Tajín art that is found on the columns, and it is of great importance. The procession exists in Classic Maya art, but it is certainly one of the most characteristic features at Chichén Itzá (Tozzer 1957: 163). A number of the Chichén processions
(e.g. the Mercado scene) are very similar to those of the columns. It is here on the columns also that another feature of Toltec art appears, and that is militancy: the carrying of weapons and shields, the herding of prisoners. There are also a large number of sacrifices portrayed. Finally, there is the striking occurrence of Aztec day signs accompanied by bar and dot enumeration. Neither of these seems to have occurred previously at Tajín, nor, as well, in any other Classic Veracruz art. But the style of the columns is demonstrably Tajín. The outlining of masses continues to appear and traits of the ball-court are found. There are lines of intertwined creatures quite like those of the bands of the Small Ball-court, and classic Tajín motifs, such as the serpent eye, are still frequent. And the content is classic Tajín; there are no Toltec figures; the stances, the clothing—all have close correspondence in the ball-court reliefs.

There are basically two hypotheses to explain this material. The first is that the idea of the column diffused from a Maya or Zapotecan area and that the other "Toltec" elements were a result of the natural extension of previous Tajín concepts, also transformed to a certain extent by the new surface provided by the columns. For example, the militancy and desire for sacrifice possibly increased a good deal from the earlier to the later periods of Tajín. It may be that the columns provided the Tajín artists a surface more conducive to portrayal of the
procession, possibly due to the fact that it is impossible to see everything on a column and thus it would be better to show an entire ceremony which can be viewed in pieces rather than one section which could be shown on a panel but on a column would be broken into nearly incomprehensible elements.

In regard to the first part of this hypothesis it should be mentioned that other Maya art and architectural elements diffused earlier than the period of the columns and there is apparently little Zapotecan influence in general at Tajín. Any explanation in the nature of the second aspect of this hypothesis is, of course, only speculation of limited value.

The second hypothesis is that the columns do indeed indicate a diffusion of ideas from the Toltecs. Since the columns are the latest of the Tajín sculptures it is highly probable that the people of Tajín and the Toltecs had some, and possibly extended, contact. The Toltec town of Teayo, twenty miles from Tajín, was probably occupied during this late period and provides one close center of possible influence, although there are no carved columns at this site. The day glyphs also support strong argument for Toltec diffusion. That this would have been diffusion, rather than influence through occupation, is determined by the strong Tajín nature of the art work. The appearance of the few completely Toltec sculptures and the minor architectural changes just
before the fall of Tajín suggest that the contact eventually did resolve into domination.

The second hypothesis is the stronger and completes a suggestive outline of Tajín-Toltec relations, which may be summarized by saying that Tajín received its basic culture from Teotihuacán, that it emphasized and elaborated a few aspects of this, and in art mixed with the developing Classic Veracruz to produce its own unique tradition. If Jiménez Moreno is correct, the Toltecs may have been significantly influenced by Tajín toward the end of the Classic, but in turn exerted a reciprocal influence upon Tajín later in the Postclassic. Both the content and the style of the monumental art of Tajín seems to chart this history. From the art of the Pyramid of the Niches, presumably produced sometime after 650, through the carving of the ball-courts in the Late Classic, to the sculpture of the Building of the Columns, dated in the Postclassic, there is an unquestionable continuity in both art style and content. But there is also change occurring in both of these facets, and the changes found in the Columns' sculpture may most easily be viewed as a result of Tula Toltec influence. After this period of influence there must have been a brief moment of history when the Toltecs actually dominated Tajín, and with the fall of the Toltecs came the fall of Tajín. As for all arguments of this kind, the answers with the greatest degrees of probability will come when the most accurate
dating of the various remains has been attained.

Kubler (1962: 188) argues that the "Mexican" elements at Chichén Itzá antedate the similar elements at Tula, and if this should prove to be the case, the "Toltec influence" at Tajín might well be only a continuation of Maya contact and influence which had persisted throughout the Classic.

In this general discussion of influence on the art and architecture of Tajín, one last case should be mentioned. Heine-Geldern (1959) shows that there is a remarkable similarity between some of the interlacing designs of the Late Chou period of China and those of Tajín. Coe (1962: 194), Covarrubias (1957: 179) and others have also remarked on this correspondence. Heine-Geldern suggests that this is an influence from China to Veracruz, but the date of 200 B.C. for the end of the Chou probably precludes this.
Fig. 9. Building of the Columns

a. Eastern Face;
b. Section of Eastern Face, Present Location of Drums.
Fig. 9. Building of the Columns
Fig. 10. Examples of Drums

a. Drums 23, 24;
Fig. 10. Examples of Drums
Fig. 11; Examples of Drums

a. Drums M, N;
b. Drums 31-34.
THE COLUMNS AND THEIR SCULPTURED SCENES

On the Pyramid of the Columns lie some 68 sculptured drums or pieces of drums (Figs. 9-11). Over 40 additional fragments have been carried to the local museum. These drums have been believed to be altars (Palacios 1937: 72), but Spinden (1933: 260) thought that they more probably formed columns, and García Payón (1954: 41) states with certainty that they were, indeed, sections of columns. My own work supports the conclusion of Spinden and García Payón.

Spinden (1933: 261) mentions finding foundations for three columns, while García Payón (1957: 29) reports that there were originally six columns. I was able to find possible foundations for only three columns and I am reasonably certain that the sculptured material I have recorded would be reconstructed into no more than this number.

The columnar surfaces of the drums were entirely covered with low carving, the scenes that were depicted covering from three to four drums, so that each drum carries a horizontal section of some scene. Thus on some drums are found the feet of figures, on others the torsos, and still others the heads. The horizontal divisions appear not to be spaced in any patterned fashion, but only as a function of the heights of the individual drums and the size of the scenes. In all
probability the drums were placed on top of one another to form columns; then the columnar surfaces were laid out into scenes and carved. For the scenes to emerge the drums must be reconstructed, of course, in their proper sequences. I do not know of any such reconstruction. The columns have not been actually reconstructed at this time and I know of no plans to accomplish this.

With the use of drawings of the drums done at Tajín, a hypothetical reconstruction has been produced for this paper. The drawings yield 7.75 meters of column. Considering that some drums have been removed from the site and thus were not available for this study, it is estimated that each of the three columns was 2.5 to 3 meters high. There were perhaps three to five scenes on each column, with a band of stylized serpents separating each scene and one capping the entire column, but I have been unable to reconstruct an entire column. The largest section of column I have been able to put together with certainty is 1.80 meters (Fig. 12) in height, little over one-half of probable column height.

From sections of columns that have been reconstructed, seven major scenes are evident in some completeness (Figs. 12-15, 17, 20; Scenes A, B, C, D, E, H, G). Another major scene is found on a drum that is nearly complete in itself (Fig. 21), but whose companion drums (except for one section) are missing, so that the heads and most of the
feet in the scene are lacking. Pieces of drums have been placed to­
gether to form two very incomplete scenes (Figs. 19, 22). There are,
then, ten scenes in varying degrees of completeness which provide
material for analysis, while some supplementary data are provided
by other scene fragments.

In working with the material of the columns I have given each
piece of drum a designation (these designations are circled in the
illustrations). Each scene which has been reconstructed has been
given a capital letter to identify it. The scenes were in random order
when they were awarded letters and as these original designations have
been maintained, the organization and discussion of them does not
follow alphabetical order (e. g. scenes E and B form one group and are
discussed first). Each of the figures, human and non-human, in each
scene has been given a numerical designation (indicated on the illustra­
tion) and is referred to, for example, as figure 2 in Scene E (or for
brevity, E2).

The Scenes in General

Little mention of the subject matter of the columns' carvings
appears in the literature. Spinden (1933: 260-2) notes a few of the out­
standing details, some elements of the costuming, and the probable
portrayal of gods. García Payón (1957: 9, 30) mentions a few specific
features, and more generally that the columns are "covered with
sculptures of warriors and priests in relief as also with names and calendar dates and some scenes either of a ritual character or else portraying daily life." Elsewhere (García Payón 1954: 42) he includes some of the items from the columns in a general discussion of adornments shown in Tajín art.

I have grouped the ten reconstructed column scenes into five categories based on both the types of personages involved and the activities that are occurring. The first category (grouping) is of scenes containing warriors and captives. Included here are Scenes E and B (Fig. 12), located on the same column. Scene E seems to be a portrayal of events just after a battle has taken place, when prisoners are being taken into custody. The event in Scene B chronologically follows E, as the war captives are prepared for sacrifice.

The second category is ball-court ceremony, the examples of this being Scenes A and G (Figs. 13 and 14). In Scene A a number of ball-players face one another in pairs, possibly as representatives of two ball-teams. Ceremonies of sacrifice and fertility are being carried out on the ball-court by priests in the second ball-court depiction, Scene G.

The subject of the third grouping is the concourse of gods and men, and found here are Scenes C and H (Figs. 15, 17). In these scenes priests, priestesses, and animals supplicate gods in ceremonies
apparently directed toward fertility.

A fourth category is of priests impersonating gods, with only one example of this occurring, Scene D (Fig. 20). The priest-gods are engaged in a ceremony involving a Tree of Life, and again the main focus seems to be fertility.

Priests involved in ceremonies of human sacrifice constitutes the subject of the last grouping, which includes Scenes F and J (Figs. 21, 22).

**Description and Interpretation of the Scenes**

**Scenes E and B**

In Scene E (Fig. 12) there are ten standing figures and one (figure 5) who is nearly to his knees. No clear direction of movement stands out, but there seems to be a tendency toward the fallen figure and the area containing the plants. The persons involved in this scene are evidently warriors and their captives. Weapons brandished and persons naked, tied, and paraded by their hair dictate this interpretation. In the hands of warriors is seen the following armament: a spear (figure 9), clubs (figures 3 and 11), an atlatl (figure 6; the only example I know of this weapon at Tajín), and possibly a small shield (figure 9). There are in this scene proper no darts which could be used by an atlatl, although these do occur in other places (e.g. Scene H, Fig. 17; SE panel of Large Ball-court, Fig. 23).
one spear that is still being carried by the owner (figure 4) at his side, and another that a captive (figure 10) rests on his shoulder. From the end of this latter spear hangs war gear that has been stripped from the carrier; a helmet with a bird headdress, possibly a shield or chest protector, and a tuft of ornamental plumes.

Three aspects of victor-vanquished behavior are evident in this scene. The first is that the captives are stripped of their clothing, particularly that which covers their genitals. Secondly a method of handling prisoners is demonstrated by figures 3 and 4. The warrior has grasped the captive by his hair and is thus marching him forward. This can also be seen in Scene B. This means of controlling the vanquished, and probably symbolizing their degradation, is illustrated frequently in codices (e.g. Codex Nuttall, sheet 76) and Aztec sculpture (e.g. the Tizoc Covarrubias 1957; Pl. 60). A third feature is what appears to be a sign of surrender, the gesture made by figure 10 as he prepares to hand over his spear and other equipment: the right arm is raised so that the hand is higher than the head, the hand is open, and the palm is upward or forward. That this gesture is a sign of capitulation is fairly evident from the context, but it is confirmed by the fact that every standing captive in Scene B holds an arm in this manner. The captive with his spear at his side (figure 4) in Scene E also evidently makes this sign as determined by what remains
of his left hand. No warrior in either Scene E or B makes such a gesture.

Of interest is the fact that the prisoners are generally considerably shorter than the captors. It is an open question as to whether this is a real indication of a racial difference between the two groups or whether it is an artistic means of showing social inferiority.

The scene that unfolds here is presumably taking place immediately after a battle. Figure 10 is now only giving up his armament, while figure 4 still carries his spear and wears his battle helmet. One individual (figure 5) shows bodily evidence of the conflict as he has crumpled to the ground, the possible recipient of a dart from the atlatl held by the figure to his left, although there is no dart shown. Rather than a dart, from his chest or abdominal cavity emerges a twisted element, a motif found with a number of sacrifice victims on other columns (e.g. Scene J, Fig. 22).

One of the apparent centers of focus of this scene is the enigmatic aggregation between figures 7 and 8. Unfortunately, about one quarter of this area is missing. At the bottom are two plants, probably magueys, as they show the leaf structure and grouping characteristic of this plant. Very similar plants are found on both of the center panels of the Large Ball-court (Figs. 29, 31) and these
have been identified by García Payón (1963: 248) as magueys. Between the plants appears the head of a serpent, but what happens to its body, if it has one, is not clear. In the right corner of this section is a tape-like band which seems to partially frame the maguey. A curving band whose width is nearly equal to that of the latter band is near the upper left and this one possibly drops to join a third piece which is next to the left plant in the bottom of the section. If these two pieces are joined, the band forms a border for the entire lower area. The bands again recall the panels with maguey of the Large Ball-court where narrow bands curve and delineate areas in a manner very similar to these. In the upper part of the section the left perpendicular object is somewhat like the pillars of the Scene C temple upon which figure 2 sits (Fig. 15) or possibly which is behind Tlaloc in the mid-South panel of the Large Ball-court. The vertical shaft to the right in the upper portion of this section is reminiscent of another one in Scene F (Fig. 21; next to figure 5) which seems to be a ceremonial object among other ritual paraphenalia. Thus this section of Scene E is certainly an important area. The evidence is tenuous, but it is possible that the ceremony involved here is related to fertility. The suggestions for this are the presence of the plants and the serpent, and the relation of this section to the two center Large Ball-court panels. In Mesoamerican art plants are usually associated with
fertility, while the serpent is a symbol of rain and fecundity almost universally in Mesoamerica, if not indeed the entire New World. The center panels of the Large Ball-court are almost unquestionably portrayals of fertility ceremonies, as shall be indicated later.

The warrior (figure 8) to the right of this area of Scene E has in front of him an element which has a form similar to a wide S with in-turned ends. In front of this come three more elements that are also somewhat S-shaped, but have their ends partially straightened out and lose the in-turning, so that the bordering band is continuous. In front of the captive (figure 7) facing the warrior is another of these latter symbols. The element immediately before the warrior (figure 8) is undoubtably a speech glyph issuing from his mouth. Speech glyphs of this type occur in a number of other places on the columns (e.g. G4, A3), as well as in the reliefs of the Large Ball-court (Fig. 26, figure 5). There is no indication that the other element in this section is a speech glyph, and a similar symbol is found only one other time in the column reliefs and this is in the just mentioned ceremonial area of Scene F. Elsewhere in Tajín art similar symbols are encountered in the center sculptures of the Large Ball-court: in the mid-North panel the Tlaloc figure holds one of these objects, but it is more curved at the ends than are those of Scene E; in the mid-South panel two of these are evident, one being held by the seated figure in the upper left, and
the other, a more aberrant form, by the rabbit at the top. García Payón (1963: 248-9) calls the one in the mid-South panel a bolt of lightning and those in the other ball-court relief he implies are snake motifs, apparently meaning the same thing in each case, the snake and lightning being frequently interchangeable symbols, and having the significance of rain, or water, and fecundative powers. Tlaloc is often seen in the codices carrying a snake-lightning symbol (Seler 1902-3, Fig. 305). It is possible that the S-shaped glyphs in Scene E are representations of this snake-lightning motif.

Another aspect of these glyphs worthy of note is that they are positioned in something of a "stop-action" manner, which gives the definite impression of a movement or flowing, either into or out of the presumably sacred area and indicates a play of forces or a transference of power that could be the keynote to the entirety of Scene E. If the area between figures 7 and 8 is one in which ritual objects and maybe ritual activities, possibly associated with fertility, are involved, it is an open suggestion that the glyphs represent emanations of forces, the flow of a warrior's power into a sacred area or event, or the transference of sacred energy to the warrior from this area. Within this context it is possible that power (or forces of some nature) is being sucked from the captive into the area.

Glyphs associated with numbers expressed in the bar and dot
system appear in various places in columns' sculpture and as these are almost always in association with a personage (e. g. in Scenes E and A every individual has a glyph and number) it is assumed that these represent calendrical names. The single known exception to the association of name glyphs with persons occurs on Scene E in the section between figures 7 and 8; the number is 13 and the glyph is "rabbit." Because of the broken and missing parts to this section it may be that there was a person close to this name glyph, but who is no longer in evidence. However, the amount of space available for another figure argues against this, for the figure would have to be much smaller than the others in this scene. An even stronger indication that there is no figure here is that there is another "13 rabbit" glyph definitely associated with a personage (figure 11) in this scene. An individual identified as "13 rabbit" appears in other scenes as well as it seems that this is either an important personage or office. I would suggest that in the ceremonial area of Scene E, the sign "13 rabbit" is a reference to this individual or the position that bears this name, and is thus an indication of the relationship of his activities to the ritual meaning of this area. The larger problem of "13 rabbit" will be discussed later.

The last aspect of this section of Scene E to be mentioned is the area of horizontal stripping that crosses the top and that are vertical
stripping which is toward the upper left. That to the left is in layers, and the top, while effaced, seems to be the same. These two areas of stripping seem to be contiguous, but the actual connection between them is destroyed. What is intended to be represented by them is unknown to me, except for the possibility that they form a thatched roof which covers the sacred area.

Scene B is on the same column and immediately above Scene E, and is also a relief of warriors and captives. In B there are 14 standing figures, one seated, and one prone. Of the standing persons, seven are warriors, six are prisoners, and one (figure 9) is not surely identified, but is probably an additional captive. The seated individual (figure 16) is a captive tied to two poles, while the one lying on a bench (figure 1) is undoubtably a sacrifice victim. These last two captives seem to be in the center of the scene. Taken from a point between figures 9 and 10, every individual, save one, is moving toward these two figures, the tied captive and the sacrifice. Also in each procession on either side of the center, it can be seen that there is an alternation of one prisoner with one captor.

The captives have been stripped of all clothing and headgear, except for the headband. The warriors are dressed in elaborate costumes as are those in Scene E, but they have very few weapons. One warrior (figure 6) holds a spear, while there are two more spears
standing in front of him. Another warrior (figure 13) wears what may be shield on one arm and carries a club (or perhaps a rattle). Warrior 4 wears a tunic that suggests feathers, but it may be quilted cotton armor.

Figure 1 is certainly being sacrificed for he lies on his back atop a bench, the position of numerous other victims (e.g. Scene G, figure 2; Fig. 14). Staked out next to the sacrifice is figure 16, who apparently awaits his turn on the bench. It is also possible that he is being prepared for sacrifice by arrowing, although his arms being tied across his chest would argue against this.

Several interesting objects are being carried in this scene, one by a warrior, and two others by prisoners. The warrior (figure 15) holds in his right hand an object from which feathers emerge. A similar item is noted by Proskouriakoff in Classic Maya sculpture (Proskouriakoff 1950; Ill. XIII, Ilx and y), but she does not attempt to identify it. Captive 14 holds aloft another object which is also of an unknown nature, but because of the stiffness, it does not seem to be made of feathers. Finally, figure 12, a captive, carries upright a very peculiar, long item which has lines of indentation along each side.

These persons with objects are three of the first four people to the left of the two central personages (figures 1 and 16), and thus the things they carry may be ceremonial items which will be used in the event
that is taking place and is the focus of this scene.

As noted previously, each of the captives in this scene has one of his arms raised and the palm upward in the gesture of submission. The one variant occurrence is the gesture made by captive 3: the thumb and last two fingers are closed, but the center and index fingers are opened and pointed upward. Again the grasping of captive's hair is used as a device of control. The holding of the arm of prisoners is an additional method of handling, encountered in this scene but not in E.

The impression given by this entire scene is that the event shown chronologically follows that depicted in Scene E. The captives in B are no longer in partial battle dress as they are in Scene E. In B order has replaced the confusion of the previous scene; the captives are being marched purposefully along, completely under control, all headed in one direction: the sacrifice.

Other evidence that these scenes are related in this fashion comes not only from the fact that they are both on the same column (Scene B above Scene E), but that individuals common to both can be identified. Figures B6 and E6 both wear tunics that have distinctive tails and very similar designs, and B14 and E1 wear headbands composed of two crossed strips. Neither the tunic nor the crossed headband is seen on any other person in either scene, nor actually anywhere
else in Tajin art, which suggests that these are the same individuals in each scene. But of even greater certainty is that figures 11 in both scenes represent the same person. Both of these figures wear nearly the same attire: a headdress that includes a band, with a feather or a lock of hair hanging over it, and a staff with feathers attached which is apparently inserted into the band; a tunic which is quilted or made of strips of material, and has a v-neck (an effect which could be produced by a pendant with a bead-covered string); earrings which are composed of two disks with a crescent element attached. In E, number and glyph indicate that this is "13 rabbit."

That material is missing from each of the scenes hampers analysis, but there seems to be enough evidence to substantiate a conclusion that these are two scenes of related action. E portrays the events immediately after a battle in which the defeated enemy is being taken into custody. In B the captives have been brought to the victors' locale and the ceremony of sacrifice is in progress. There are five more people in B than in E; a greater number of captives is shown and more persons have joined the ranks of the captors. As indicated, there seem to be some of the same captives and warriors in the two scenes. Some warriors may have changed garb. Even though the captors in B have all been referred to as "warriors," it is evident that some are actually priests (e.g. figure 15). It is quite possible that a number of
persons function in both roles, that is, as warriors and as priests.

In Mesoamerica from Late Classic times on, one of the major purposes of war was the capturing of enemies for later sacrifice. Of course, one of the finest portrayals of this is found in the murals of Bonampak, where Maya warriors attack a neighboring village to capture prisoners for use as sacrificial victims in later ceremonies. Unquestionably, something very similar to this is taking place in the Tajín sculptures. However, where at Bonampak the battle was actually a raid on an undefended settlement (Thompson 1955), at Tajín a true battle seems to have occurred between two sides fully armed for war, and there is at least one casualty, as there is not at Bonampak. But the end result is the same, and that is the capture of enemies and their sacrifice. Thus the militarism of Tajín as expressed on the columns is fundamentally tied into Tajín religion as it is a means of procuring sacrificial victims for religious ceremonies.

In regard to the "day names," that is, numbers and glyphs, that appear in Scene E, there is an interesting problem. Of six definite numbers, five are the number 13. There are three problematically identified numbers, none 13. There are only two day glyphs associated with these numbers (the others are destroyed) and in each case it is "rabbit" next to a number 13. Mentioned before has been the occurrence of "13 rabbit" in two places in this scene, that one of these is not clearly
related to a figure, and a possible explanation for this. But what is the explanation for there being four other instances of "13"? Is it coincidence, the result of some process of naming that allows for a large percentage of the number "13", or that each of these persons is actually "13 rabbit"? If the last were true, rather than having a unified scene, one taking place at a single point in time, E would actually be a series of scenes with "13 rabbit" taking part in each. Factors which rule against this possibility are first, that two men named "13" (figures 1 and 2) face each other is what would be the same scene; secondly, that figure 1, who bears a "13" is probably a captive, so that both a captive and a warrior would have this name; and third, there appears to be no attempt to make the facial features similar among those individuals named "13."

It should also be noted that "13 rabbit" appears in other scenes as well. It was mentioned just above that B11 is probably also "13 rabbit" due to the similarity of his dress to that of E11. An individual with the name "13 rabbit" appears also in two other column scenes (figure 2 in Scene A and in a carving not reproduced here, but which may be found in Spinden 1933, Plate XI). He is also found on a carved sherd that is illustrated by Du Solier (1939: 28, no. 4) in a scene in which he dressed as a warrior and holds a prisoner by the hair. "13 rabbit" is thus seen four times as a warrior, once as a personage in a
ball-court ceremony, and once in unidentified circumstances, while his name apparently appears once in what is thought to be a sacred ritual area. No other glyphs that are definitely names appear more than once in columns' relief. It seems quite likely that "13 rabbit" is an historical person, a great warrior or chief who lived during the last major period of Tajín's occupation, and whose exploits were recorded in stone, so that Scenes E and B, as well as others, may be of an historical nature. If more of the columns can be reconstructed and more of the carved pottery unearthed, it may be that a full history of "13 rabbit" will come to light, a history that might be similar to those Proskouriakoff is demonstrating can be found in Maya sculpture (1963; 1964), or to that of "8 deer", one of the main personages in the Mixtec historical document, the Codex Nuttall.

But there are certainly other possible interpretations for the Tajín material: that "13 rabbit" is a legendary personage, or that "13 rabbit" is a title and that its various appearances indicate the activities associated with this title, to mention but two of the possibilities.

Scene A

If the fragments in the lower left corner of the illustration are correctly placed, there are twelve standing men in Scene A (Fig. 13). The nature of what occurs here is certainly very different from the scenes previously described. This is probably the depiction of a ceremony
related to the ball-game which transpires on the ball-court itself. The evidence that supports this is the equipment of the persons depicted, and the significance of individuals 6 and 7, factors to be discussed in turn.

The equipment in question is the complex of the yoke and palma, with the addition here of the glove. The yokes, palmas, and hachas (Fig. 37; mentioned earlier in reference to the Classic Veracruz style) have long been well-known pre-Hispanic objects from the Veracruz area, and for an equal length of time have been subjected to much speculation regarding their use. Only one use will be of concern for the moment and that is as ball-game equipment. Although Lothrop (1923: 98) first suggested that yokes were worn around the waist, it was the work of Ekholm (1946; 1949) that established the use of stone yokes, palmas, and hachas as ball-game ceremonial gear, probably counterparts of more lightweight equipment worn in the game itself. Yokes and palmas are being worn by figures on the NE and NW panels of the Large Ball-court. Both of these scenes are depicted as taking place in the confines of the ball-court, as indicated by the wall cross-sections shown in the relief. Although the greatest numbers of yokes and palmas are found in the central and southern Veracruz areas, they are reported from the region of Tajín (García Payón 1939: 95; Proskouria-koff 1954, Fig. 6, 2; 12, e), and there is an uncarved yoke in the museum.
at the site. In Scene A, figures 4, 6, 7, and 8 all appear to be equipped with yokes and palmas. The palmas of 4 and 8 are of the long and thin, laterally flattened variety, while those of 6 and 7 are the smaller, more nearly standard style (see Proskouriakoff 1954 Figs. 6 and 8).

Another piece of equipment related to the ball-game is the glove, for which there is apparently no archaeological survival (unless Borhegyi (1961) is correct in his guess that "slingstones" had many of the same uses as gloves). Although there is some question as to whether gloves were used to strike the ball in the Mesoamerican version of this game (Borhegyi 1961; Clune 1963), there is no doubt that a glove was frequently worn, and that at least one of its uses was to steady the player, when he would bend to strike the ball with his hip and drop his gloved hand to the ground. This is the report given by at least one of the chroniclers (Stern 1948: 39). On the NE panel of the Large Ball-court, both the sacrificer and the victim wear a covering over the left hand. García Payón (1959: 57) refers to these hands as "gloved". This is certainly a correct interpretation. Very similar gloves may be seen as elongations of the arms of figures 4 and 8 in Scene A. As opposed to the gloves in the Large Ball-court relief, these are beveled on the ends and worn on the right hands. A beveled end is probably more advantageous than a square one for the positions in which a man would be when he struck the ball, so the gloves on the columns may be more accurately
portrayed than those in the ball-court scenes.

The kneepad is another item which is related to the ball-game, but not exclusively so, and although it occurs elsewhere on the columns, no identification can be made on this stone because of the great degree of erosion. There is a faint suggestion of a kneepad on the left knee of figure 6.

This equipment that these men wear is ceremonial ball-court costume. It might be inferred from this that the event recorded is happening in or near the ball-court. Strong support of this inference is the evidence presented by a comparison of figures 6 and 7 to the two central figures (2 and 3) of the NW relief of the Large Ball-court. The same or very similar dress, stances, and positional relationships are found in these two sets of figures. The left person in each scene is dressed simply. Each wears a yoke and palma, a band covering the groin, a small loincloth (?) to the front or side, and a waist train to the rear. They stand in exactly the same position: sideview, the left leg slightly forward, the arms folded so that only showing are the upper right arm and the fingers of the left hand, which are folded over the arm. Folded in this fashion the arms are held at an angle to the body rather than resting on the chest. The only differences in the two figures are that the one from the Large Ball-court has a palma and a train unlike those of the columns' figure (A6) and that he wears a chest pad which the other
does not. A6 possibly has a kneepad while his counterpart definitely has none. The other two figures are equally as similar. They have in common a yoke and a palma (in this case the palmas are alike, except that A7 has a feather attached to his), a short skirt with the loincloth, or maxtlatl, hanging in front, and a chestband. Their positions are alike in that the right arm is thrust forward and upward, and the stance is the Maya pose, that is, a frontal view of the torso, but the feet in profile facing opposite directions. The differences are found in the skirt styles, the waist trains and the positions of the left arms. The skirt of A7 sweeps up in front while that of the panel figure is square; the train of A7 is more elaborate; and while A7 holds his left arm upward from the shoulder, his counterpart holds it upward from the elbow. The heads of the columns' figures are missing so comparison here is obviously impossible, but it can be seen that a long earring like that worn by the figure on the panel does not protrude into the scene on the columns, so this and probably other features of ornamentation are distinct. In each of the scenes the figures are closely facing one another, the arm of the right person being extended over the crossed arms of the left. In the instance of the columns' scene this arm is much closer to the arms and face of the opposite individual than is observed on the panel. The conclusion that the evidence suggests is that the same kind of ceremony is being portrayed in both scenes.

The environments of these two sets of figures are different. In
Scene A the two figures are only one set of a number of similar ones, that is two figures facing one another. The two figures on the ball-court panel are the focus and center of the scene (there is no indication that this is true of 6 and 7 in Scene A), and there are no other sets of person-ages. These two central individuals stand in the center of the ball-court as shown by the flanking profiles of the walls. On each of the walls is a figure facing the center, both smaller than those in the center. There are also a number of symbols and elements found in the Large Ball-court panel that are not in Scene A.

The explanation for the differences in the ball-court and the column scenes can be found largely in what I consider to be a difference in orientation of the sculpture of these two places. The scenes of the Large Ball-court (and probably the Small) seem to be "myth-oriented", while those of the columns are "reality-oriented"; the ball-court carvings are presented in a context of myth as shown by the large number of symbols, symbolic headdresses, and "mythical" creatures; and those of the columns in a context of reality, indicated by a deemphasis on, or complete lack of, these elements, and a generally realistic presentation of material. The realistic style of the columns' reliefs is noted by Krickeberg (1961: 334). But a "mythical" aspect is maintained in the columns' sculpture in the bands which separate scenes (e.g. between scenes E and B, or above Scene A).
This difference between the carving of the two structures is typified by the two scenes under discussion, as the solar or serpent eyes and the many symbols of the ball-court panel are not to be seen in Scene A. Thus the ceremony shown in the two reliefs is depicted in Scene A from a realistic standpoint and in the NW panel from a mythical one. The latter is then a presentation in large part of the meaning of this particular ceremony, a point to be taken up shortly.

In addition to the above, a factor which accounts for the greater number of figures in Scene A than in the ball-court panel is the much greater amount of surface available for carving. The figures in each scene are approximately the same size (about 60 centimeters in height), but the ball-court scene (exclusive of the small panel with the skeleton) is only 1.20 meters in width while the column scene is over 3.30 meters in circumference. Thus the columns' artist was able to portray much more of what may be considered the actual ceremony than was the ball-court artist, who apparently chose the most important figures from the ceremony to place in his limited space, as well as inserting them into the mythical context.

Because of the time differential (the columns being somewhat later than the ball-court reliefs) some minor differences in costuming may be expected, such as the innovations of the laterally-flattened palma and the feathered headdress staff.
There have been several interpretations of this scene of the Large Ball-court's NW panel. Spinden (1933: 251) considered the four end panels of the Large Ball-court to represent a series of related ceremonies: the presentation of a warrior on the SE, his dedication to the eagle on the SW, ceremonial fire on the one that is of concern here, the NW, and finally the sacrifice on the NE. All of these she considers related to the ball-game.

On the NW panel the new fire is being made by the dog-headed figure to the right, whom Spinden identifies as the god Xolotl. García Payón (1959: 452, 456) disagrees with Spinden's interpretations of this scene as a new fire ceremony, but accepts the designation of Xolotl. He apparently misunderstands to which figure Spinden is referring as the fire maker, for his objection rests on the identification of the object in the left hand of figure 1 as a roll of paper or hide rather than the mamalmaztli (fire-drill), which he implies is what Spinden considers it. However, it is figure 4, the dog-headed personage, which, as I have indicated, is Spinden's firemaker. I am inclined to accept this as a firemaking ceremony, whether new fire or not. Spinden (1933: 253) points out an illustration on page 18 of the Codex Vindobonensis which bears great similarity to this dog-headed Tajín figure. The codex illustration is of Xolotl, who is shown with a human body and a dog head, and resting on one knee, as is the Tajín creature. He is making fire in the conventional manner, that
is, by twisting a stick, the mamalmaztli, in a cavity of a log. Nearly
every figure making fire in the Vindobonensis is shown in a position
nearly similar to that of the Tajín Xolotl (e.g. sheets 12, 14). In the
Tajín relief no kindling log appears, however, and only one hand is seen
holding the drill. But there are definitely five fingers on this side of
the stick, and because it is rare in Tajín art to show only one arm, it
might be guessed that in this case it is due to the far arm paralleling the
near—both aspects suggesting that the stick is between the palms of the
hands, the position for making fire. Supporting evidence for firemaking
is found in the interpretation of the glyph in front of Xolotl's left leg. I
believe that represented here are two interlocked symbols for fire or
smoke. Although fire (or smoke) is not usually represented in this
fashion in Mesoamerican art, a few similar cases may be noted: the bra­
ziers portrayed at Xochicalco (Tozzer 1957, Fig. 103) and in the Codex
Desden (sheet 69). Finally, according to Spinden (1933: 253), the
"Mexican and Maya [believed] in a god who was associated with a beast
of prey and dealt thunder and lightning at the ball-court". The Tajín
creature is doubtlessly a version of this god, identified with Xolotl, or
perhaps a priest who is.

The indication of the importance of fire in this ball-court ceremony
is also carried into Scene A. There is no representation of Xolotl, nor a
ceremony of firemaking, but fire itself does appear. Between figures 4
and 5, and between 6 and 7 are what seem to be two tall braziers with several glyphs for fire at their top. Because of the worn condition of the stone, this cannot be concluded with certainty, but the glyph above the brazier between 6 and 7 is definitely the glyph which I consider "fire" and thus reinforces this identification for the others.

In regard to the two central figures of the NW panel, Spinden (1933: 251-2) notes that the left one is dressed as a ball-player and is in an attitude of submission as indicated by his folded arms. The person to the right bears a sacrificial knife. Because of this last fact she sees the entire scene as related to the NE panel of sacrifice. García Payón (1959) goes further. He believes both of the central personages are ball-players, but players of the ritual game and ones who also participate in the related religious ceremonies. They are dressed according to their hierarchical positions in the game. The person to the right García Payón identifies as a representation of the sun because of the "solar eye" in his headdress, and the player on the left he considers identified with Venus in accordance with his interpretation of the interlaced element above the headdress of the figure. Each man represents a team identified respectively with the sun and Venus and they will engage in play, the loser to be sacrificed. The sacrifice then follows on the NE panel (García Payón 1959: 454-8). In essence García Payón is suggesting that the ball-game is astronomical symbolism, and that this scene is the confrontation of two
players who represent teams that stand for heavenly bodies symbolically in conflict in the game.

In Scene A, as there are several sets of players, it is probable that each set is composed of one member from each team. This seems to be the case with figures 6 and 7 as it is with their counterparts on the Large Ball-court relief because of the dominance-subservience relationship and it is very likely that it is also true of figures 4 and 5, because here is found another indication of the same type of relationship. The figure on the right holds in one hand a long staff with twisted serpent heads at the top (symbol of rain: see discussion on pages 36-37), while the person opposite him (figure 4) holds the knuckles of his left hand against the staff, apparently a symbol of submission. This same gesture is made by a subservient jaguar to a priest in Scene D (Fig. 20).

Between figures 4 and 5 is a brazier at the foot of which is a small unidentified animal. There seems to be no sacrifice in the scene itself, and the only way to relate a sacrifice scene to this one is to find them associated on the same column, which of course has not been done. A guess association might be made because of the fact that one of the players is named "13 rabbit." Thus Scene A might be on the same column with Scenes E and B, which contain "13 rabbit", or drum H (Spinden 1933, Pl. XVII), where "13 rabbit" also appears. Scene B has a sacrifice, while drum H possibly does. Other than the presence of "13 rabbit" in all
three, in favor of A being associated with E and B are the following:
the figures of A are closer in size to those of E and B than are figures
from any other scene; the addition of the drums of A to those of B and
E would make the entire column come close to the height I have estimated
(2.5 to 3 meters) for the columns; the actual drums of these three scenes
were found in close association of the face of the pyramid. The last
point is not especially strong as the drums have obviously been moved
around to some extent, but by and large, the drums of the same scene
are found to cluster. If A is on the same column as E and B, it must
surmount them, due to the fact that at the bottom of E a part of another
design is beginning, whereas the design at the top of A seems to be com­
pleted, that is, it was not continued on another drum. This would mean
that the sequence of scenes on this column would be first on the bottom
the capture, Scene E, followed by the sacrifice, B, in the center, and
ended with a ball-game ceremony, A, on top. The argument against this
is that while there is evidence that a band of stylized serpents forms the
top layer of each column and separates the representational scenes, the
only definite base of a column does not have this band, rather the scene
begins above a plain surface (Scene F, Fig. 21). The base of E is not
plain, but is the top portion of a serpent band. It is possible, but by no
means certain, that A belongs with E and B. For drum H there is no
evidence that it belongs with the same column as Scene A, other than the
mutual presence of "13 rabbit". That the figures of drum H are consider­ably smaller than those of Scene A argues against their being associated.

In conclusion, Scene A is probably the representation of a ball-court ceremony that is taking place on the ball-court itself, with the players being members of opposing teams, one the winner, one the loser in a ritual game. Fire, perhaps firemaking, seems to be of some importance. Whether the ceremony is related to a sacrifice, as that of the Large Ball-court scene is, it is impossible to say, although there are some weak indications in that direction.

Scene G

It is probable that Scene G (Fig. 14) is also a ball-court ceremony, but differing from the last in that ball-players, or priest-ball-players are not involved, but instead priests dressed in simple garb, who in themselves show no relation to the ball-game. There are eight standing figures in this scene, probably all priests, a seated personage who is perhaps a high priest, and two sacrificial victims. There is no definite focus to the scene but it breaks down into four sections.

In the first section to the left in the illustration is seen a sacrifice on what appears to be a high altar and to the right of this is a priest holding the sacrificial knife. The altar is composed of two parts, the small primary one upon which the victim lies directly, and the much larger,
lower or secondary one. The secondary "altar's" profile facing the priest begins with a flying cornice, followed by a wall that slopes out toward the bottom, and ends with a step. The flying cornice is a common feature in Tajín architecture, but this entire profile is found repeated, as far as I am aware, only in the representations of ball-courts that are on the panels of the Large Ball-court (Figs. 25, 26) and on panel M-138 (Fig. 6). The backs of the ball-court structures are not indicated in the Large Ball-court reliefs, but on panel M-138 they are clearly shown and indicated that this "altar" in Scene G is actually one of the side structures of a ball-court, the front wall of this structure being one of the sides of the court itself. A sacrifice is thus being performed on top of this ball-court building and the entire scene is either taking place on the court or in an area directly associated with it.

The design on the ball-court structure is of great interest and is one which I can find nowhere else in Tajín art. It is composed of double columnar elements with knobs at the ends, which are repeated three times, but each time a columnar element is repeated it is enlarged, so that its occurrence to the left is much larger than that to the right. It is possible that these represent stylized long bones. Their design is similar to elements from a "Mexican vessel" which Spinden (1931: 15) identifies as bones.

The priest in this section wields his knife over the legs of the
victim, and beneath the arm bearing the _tecpatl_ are two elements that may be either lightning symbols or feathers. In his left hand he holds a rope which has probably just been untied from the victim who now lies atop the altar.

On the step of the wall of the ball-court are two items that are encountered together in another place in this scene (next to figure 10) and in Scene E (at the feet of figure 7). These items are a flat, dish-like container and, within that, a circular object. The codices very often show containers in cross-section in a manner very similar to this (e.g. Thompson 1941a, Fig. 1). However, an object drawn as a circle with no other distinguishing characteristics is not easy to classify. In the codices circular objects associated with ball-courts are variously identified as rubber balls, copal balls, rings, or holes in the court, depending upon exact context, but the context is not infrequently ambiguous, so that identifications are sometimes in conflict. The object in question is not a ring; although it is possibly a copal ball; but I am most inclined toward an interpretation of it as a rubber playing ball. García Payón reports the find of a stone slab, with a cavity of 13 centimeters width, at each end of the Large Ball-court's North wall, next to the carved panels (García Payón 1955: 7). In other words these concave stones were found in positions nearly the same as that of the container in Scene G, given the fact that there is no step at the bottom of the actual court wall as there is
in the relief. García Payón concludes that these slabs were used to hold balls, as there is no indication that incense was burned in them. It is quite likely that the containers shown in the columns' reliefs are these slabs and that the circular objects are rubber balls, a nearly inevitable conclusion in regard to the particular case of Scene G's first section.

In the second section there are three individuals, a seated figure (10) and a standing person (9 and 11) on either side of him. The person to the left carries an elaborate sack with a tail, an item frequently seen in Tajín art, and he seems to be presenting it to the seated figure. The right personage holds a fringed pole, either a spear or staff. The center figure sits upon a bench that is matched in the NW and SE panels of the Small Ball-court. Counterparts are also known in Maya art. However, the Maya benches are usually much larger than those of Tajín and hold several individuals, who are normally seated in a cross-legged position rather than having their legs over the side as is usual in the Tajín carvings. The significance of the benches is probably the same in both instances, that is, denoting authority, and the persons seated on them may be considered high officials. In this case the official is probably a high priest.

The seated person's importance is further demonstrated by the fact that at his feet are placed two severed heads. The first indication that these heads are severed is that the spacing does not allow for bodies beneath them. There is no position of bodies in Tajín art that would allow
their placement in the amount of space remaining between the bottom of their heads and the baseline of the scene as determined by the space needed for the completion of the legs and feet of the other figures. Thus if these heads had bodies, the bodies would extend below the presumed baseline, which is done nowhere else on the column and only once in other Tajín art (SE panel of the Large Ball-court). The second indication of decapitation is the treatment of the eyes of these heads, that is, a stylization that is reserved for non-human beings: gods, monsters, and stylized animals. These are the only two examples of the use of this type of eye on humans, and it must indicate a state that is no longer human: death. Another strange feature of these two heads is the elongation of the upper lip. The Tlaloc in the mid-South panel of the Large Ball-court has this characteristic, and it is, in fact, one of the elements that is used to identify this god. Tlalocs in the codices are very frequently shown with this elongation, but it is usually a bucal mask which is ultimately derived from a serpent. In other instances in the codices this mask has been abstracted into an elongation on the upper lip, as it is in the Tajín Tlaloc. A long upper lip is also characteristic of the serpent creatures who inhabit the bands of the Small Ball-court, and can be seen on the flying skeletal monster who looms over the ceremony in the SW relief of the Large Ball-court. Thus this is another element which places these heads slightly out of this world and into that of the gods, monsters, and the after-
These severed heads have been placed before the seated personage as a part of the larger ceremony that is transpiring in the rest of the scene. This section is between two ceremonies of sacrifice. The seated high priest holds in his left hand a bag with a tail attached, the second one in this section, while his right arm is associated with what I believe to be a rubber ball. The actual significance of the sacks in this scene is not really discernible, but it is clearly an important one. The elaborate bag is found only two other times in the major scenes of the columns, with figure 9 in this scene and carried by the jaguar in Scene C, but it is a prominent feature on several drum fragments which are not reproduced in this paper. The bag also occurs in at least three of the Small Ball-court panels (SE, NE, and NW) and one is being carried by the central figure in the ceremony of the SE relief of the Large Ball-court. Bags of this general type are encountered in codices and Maya carvings (Proskouriakoff 1950: 89). The bags in the codices are frequently labeled copal-bags, and the bag that was the Aztec sign for the number 8000 is usually considered a cacao-bean bag, probably as representation of the idea "innumerable." The bag can obviously be used for a great number of things, but the question at hand is its ceremonial utilization. In Tajín art the bag may very likely be a container for various items, including copal, but I would like to suggest that they may have been used.
ceremonially to carry the rubber playing ball. There is certainly no conclusive proof for this, but the frequent occurrence of bags on the ball-court panels and in this ball-court scene suggests that it and its contents are related to the ball-game in more than a haphazard manner. Another suggestion that the sack was used to carry the ball is found in the Codex Borgia representation (sheet 21) of the Red and Black Tezcatlipocas facing each other on the ball-court, each carrying an object that Seler refers to as "hip-leather." Stern (1948: 58) criticizes this interpretation and suggests that what is actually represented is a sack. The Red Tezcatlipoca holds this object in the same hand as he does a ball, the possibility being that the object is the container for the ball. Balls in net sacks are shown in the Vaticanus B (e.g. sheet 67). Finally, the most suggestive evidence is that on a majority of the bags in Tajín reliefs, the main decorative element is the sign ollin, motion, a sign which generally means duality, and in specific instances it denotes the ball-game.

The third section is again composed of three figures, two persons flanking and facing a central one, but this time the central personage is a sacrifice victim. The sacrifice lies with his back upon a bench and has one leg flexed as is the usual position for these victims. High on his chest is an object which may be a stone knife entering his body, or his heart emerging from it. From lower on his chest comes an enigmatic
twisted element, a feature of other sacrifices which will be discussed under Scene F. The left figure in this section has a knee placed on the head of the sacrifice, and he seems to have feathers in the form of wings at his right side, but this identification is questionable since he has no corresponding wings on his left side, but these could be held above the area of this stone. Little remains of the person to the right of the sacrifice except the knot of a sash to his rear and what at first appears to be a wing that hangs over the left leg of the victim. But this is probably not a wing as it is not handled in a manner that is even similar to that used for other wings, and there are no indications of feathering.

The section that comes last in the illustration is also a composition of three figures in positions similar to the two previous except that the central figure is standing rather than sitting or lying down. The most arresting aspect of this section is that the figure to the left is emitting a liquid from his penis, the liquid flowing to the base of the stem of a maguey plant. As the event can only be part of a fertility ceremony, the liquid is assumed to be semen. The act of directly "fertilizing" fields or crops, or the less direct but more common method of holding intercourse in the field are of course well-known ethnographically from all over the world. But this type of fertility ceremony and general eroticism are rare in Mesoamerica. Also sexual abstinence, especially for priests, was usually the rule during sacred periods among the Aztecs
(Tozzer 1957: 257; Thompson 1941a: 49-50). It was the Veracruz area where "phallicism was most strongly developed" (Thompson 1941a: 50), and the historic Totonacs were regarded as being much less strict in such matters as drinking and sexual activities than were the Aztecs (Burland 1948: 71).

The priest who is fertilizing the maguey also carries a ceremonial sash similar to the one held by the Tlaloc figure in the mid-North panel of the Large Ball-court.

Whatever the person on the righthand side of this section is engaged in has been destroyed. The individual in the center, who is noticeably short, holds a staff in his right hand and a severed hand in his left, and he directly faces the maguey. The staff has a rectangular element placed in its center, and it is topped by another rectangular piece with bordering incised lines and stepped upper edge. Above this staff is a large disk with the sign of ollin, or movement, in the center.

The severed hand that the small central figure carries may be from one of the two sacrifices in this scene, but it is not possible to tell, as the arms of the two victims are located in effaced areas. From Ranchito de las Animas comes a palma which as part of the design carries a row of severed hands strung on a rope (Medellín Zenil 1960, Pl. 67).

Medellín Zenil reports a burial from Viejón (Central Veracruz coast) whose remains indicate that the hands and feet were chopped off. He
thus suggests that the people of Remojadas Inferior, the period of the burial, practiced body mutilation of captives as a war custom. This example from Tajín indicates that mutilation was closely tied to fertility rites, with nothing to support a theory that it was related to war. It should also be mentioned that in many of the serpent friezes, as integral parts of the design appear various human parts, particularly heads, legs, and arms, disassociated from bodies (e.g. Fig. 32).

Thus Scene G provides a clear exposition of the ceremonial relationship of sacrifice, mutilation, and fertility rites, and of their association to the ball-game as the rituals transpire on or near the ball-court.

Scene C

In Scene C (Fig. 15) there are nine standing personages, one being carried, and two bipedally positioned animals. The immediately striking feature of this scene is the size disparity of the figures of human form. Five of these are more than twice as tall as are the other four. Spinden (1933: 262) noticed this size differential and suggested that when the drums were put together the larger figures might prove to be gods. This is certainly the case here as their much greater size, the attitudes of the smaller persons toward them, and the solar or serpent symbols associated with them all suggest that the larger individuals are gods. The smaller figures include what seem to be two priests (4 and
of two gods facing one another, between them a temple in which sits a priestess. The second section is a roofed structure containing two persons, one seated cross-legged, the other lying on a bench. God 6, who carries a small figure, and a dog-like creature face each other in the third section, and in the fourth two sets of figures are found, as a jaguar and a priest stand back to back, each facing a god. It is obvious that there is here a unifying theme of religious ceremony and direct petitions to the gods, but probably even more specifically, all ritual directed toward a common end.

In the first section the figure seated within the confines of the temple is identified as a priestess by the quechquemitl which she wears. This poncho-like garment seems to have been worn exclusively by women in Mesoamerica and it is particularly identified with the Gulf Coast area, possibly originating there (Krickeberg 1961: 324). The seated position of the priestess is very similar to that of figure 4 in this scene, as well as figure 4 in Scene H, all three persons clerics of some type. The priestess is holding her hands outward and upward, but because of the effacement of the stone above her, it is not possible to tell what she has in them. However, she is obviously performing a ceremony or making an
offering to the gods who tower above her temple. Behind or to one side of the priestess is a small dome-shaped object on top of which is a bird. The domed object is cross-hatched and has a certain resemblance to the helmet being carried by captive 10 in Scene E, which also has a bird as ornamentation. If this is the helmet of an enemy or even a local warrior it might suggest that ceremonies related to war are being carried out. It is also possible that the bird is alive, not part of the helmet, for elsewhere on the columns birds seem to play a significant role in various aspects of religion.

A suggestion as to interpretation of the ongoing ceremony is the glyph in front of the shin of god 3. This is a glyph which has been identified as a lightning symbol, and thus the ceremony may involve a request for rain or be directed toward the gods of rain.

The temple of the priestess has no counterpart as far as I know in any of the hypothetical reconstructions of Tajín buildings. Only the roof structure has a vague resemblance to some of these reconstructions (e.g. Pyramid of the Niches, Fig. 3) by virtue of the importance of bands as architectural elements. The roof supports in the relief probably represent walls as is the case of the temples shown in the carvings of the central panels of the Large Ball-court, and in the codices. There is also a slight possibility that these supports may be columns, in which case this could be a reference to the Building of the Columns itself. It
is of interest to note that they are marked with several horizontal lines which could indicate drums, while there are only three or four vertical lines which would show stone work such as characterizes the temples carved in the Large Ball-court panels.

The base of the structure seems to be unique. Rather than being a stepped pyramid or one based on tablero and talud, it rather is composed of two bodies trapezoidal in cross-section one resting inverted on top of the other. There is no structure of this type known at present at Tajín, except for those that have sloping sides and a projecting cornice, that is, like the ball-court wall sections shown in the Large Ball-court reliefs (NW and NE panels). But this structure in Scene C has an upper body which is nearly as large as the lower, an aspect which rules against its interpretation as a cornice. Also I could find no codex temples with a double trapezoid base.

On the sides of the temple are found designs of crossed bands and a stepped element. The crossed bands know no counterpart in the architecture of Tajín, but the stepped designs again relate to the Building of the Columns where on the sanctuary, the stepped elements resolve into crosses as they may well do on this carved pyramid in Scene C.

Most of the second section of this scene is badly worn and few details are discernible. But it is clear that a ceremony involving two persons is taking place inside a roofed structure. This structure is
placed directly on the ground, rather than on a pyramid, and it is supported at the corners by poles slanting inward. The roofing may be small poles and thatching.

Beneath the roof the person to the left (figure 4) is possibly a priest. He is seated in a cross-legged position in profile, and in his left hand he holds a staff or rod of some kind, apparently resting its lower tip in the palm of his right hand. The other figure in this section lies on his back on a bench which is reminiscent of that upon which the eagle "initiate" lies in the SW relief of the Large Ball-court. Above him a pole is suspended horizontally a short distance down from the roof. From this pole hang two objects, the one on the left, possibly a sack, has a square shape and is textured, and the right one might be a textile of some kind. The reclining figure is raising his arm and perhaps is holding this latter object. On his near side is something which could be his upraised bent leg, but if so it is very peculiarly done. It appears that there is actually an object that is standing next to his right thigh. It is possibly a large phallus as is seen in the Chichén Itzá carvings of the North Temple (Marquina 1951: 867); but although some lines support this interpretation, it seems to be too wide. It is not clear if this object even ends with the structure, as there is a carved area just outside that might be associated with it.

Again the nature of the ceremony in progress is obscure, and
little more is evident than that there is a priest performing a ritual involving the prostrate individual. There are no gods directly associated with this section and nothing indicates that this is a sacrifice or a warrior initiation. On a very general level it may be a curing ceremony, a purification ritual, or an initiation into the priesthood. The first two are the more likely possibilities. In the dealings of men with gods, purification was of the greatest importance among both the Maya (Thompson 1954: 254) and the Aztecs (Sahagun 1932: 35). As this general scene is of men engaged in ceremonies with the gods or directed toward them, it is possible that a ritual of purification would be included as the first act. This would also provide an explanation for the apparent absence of gods associated with this section, as a rite of purification would be preparatory to the encounter with the gods.

Recommending this as a curing rite are the hanging objects which suggest curing paraphernalia. An Aztec herbal advises that one "hang close to the nostrils [of the sick person] the heart of a kestral wrapped in a deerskin" (VonHagen 1961: 113). According to Palerm (1953: 173) the main religious cults of the Totonacs of Cempoala were directed toward health as well as fertility and abundance. Another indication that this may be a curing ceremony comes from a possible interpretation of the god (6) to the left of this section.

God 6 carries on his back a small figure of human form with a
shawl-like garment used as a carrying strap. As far as I know there are no Nahuatl gods who are characterized by carrying a creature in this fashion, and there are none reported for the historic Totonacs. However, goddesses carrying an assortment of beings on their backs in this fashion are found in the Dresden Codex (e.g. sheet 16). Thompson has interpreted these deities as the moon goddess, and some of the creatures on her back as death symbols (Thompson 1939: 144-5). He later expands this to show that most of the beings on the back of the goddess are actually representations of different types of diseases primarily associated with the skin (Thompson 1958). The columns' carving may express a similar idea, although the deity is a god, not a goddess, and the exact nature of the creature being carried cannot be determined as its head is destroyed. On a monument from the Pyramid of the Niches (Fig. 16) can be seen a personage carrying a creature in exactly the same manner as is the one on the column, but in this case the thing that is being carried, while of human form, is almost fleshless. A being very similar to this one also appears on another drum fragment. Here is possibly a concept very close to that of the Maya as Thompson has interpreted it, and it may be that it applies to the god in Scene C.

Consequently if the ceremony beneath the shed is a curing rite, it may be related to this god who perhaps carries a demon of disease or death. It is, of course, possible that the Maya ceremony does not apply here, and
Fig. 16. M-96, A Monument from the Pyramid of the Niches

Scale: 1 cm. = 10 cm.
it should again be noted that god 6 is not directly involved with the ceremony, but is rather turned away from it toward an animal, and, as I will indicate, I feel that he and the animal actually are part of the last section.

All in all no definite conclusion can be drawn regarding the ceremony, only these various possibilities kept in mind, but I favor its interpretation as a purification rite, as this seems to be more in keeping with the rest of the scene.

Along with the animal facing him, god 6 has been described as forming a separate section, or possibly as related to the curing or purification ceremony, but I think the strongest evidence points to another conclusion. The animal, or what remains of him, seems to be a coyote or a dog. The coyote was one of the lesser war cult animals of the Aztecs, but was also functionally allied with the jaguar in Mexican and Maya thought (Spinden 1933: 252). The last section of this scene includes a jaguar and a priest, each in attendance upon a god. All of these figures, the three gods with their attendant animal or priest, should probably be considered as forming one section. In each case the figure before the god is in an attitude of supplication. The priest seems to be holding both hands up to the god he faces and perhaps bears an offering in them. The god in turn is holding out to the priest a sash, below which is a large glyph, both things perhaps indicating beneficence, that is, the
granting of that which is being petitioned. Back to back to the priest is a standing jaguar who, as he faces a god, holds upward in his right hand an object whose top is missing but whose bottom indicates that it is some sort of a staff or sceptre. In his left hand the jaguar carries what may be a sack. Thus like the priest he is making an offering to the god. The jaguar is known to have been an animal closely linked to both the rains and the earth, that is, fertility, from the time of the Olmec culture through his inclusion into the composite being of the rain god Tlaloc (Armillas 1947: 169; Covarrubias 1957: 57; Florescano 1964: 153). The fact that this jaguar is shown with an erect penis removes any doubt that his appearance is here for purposes related to fertility, and that he, the coyote, and by association the priest, are making their offerings and directing their invocations to the gods for the granting of abundance. Also, in front of god 6 may be seen the symbol that possibly represents lightning.

Thus fertility or abundance seems to be the general theme of the scene which begins with a purification ceremony (or a curing rite), followed by a priest and companion animals in direct communication with the gods, and then a priestess performing ceremonies in the presence of gods. Requests for protection from disease or ill health may also be part of the rituals of supplication.
In Scene H (Fig. 17) again the presence of gods is found. They are identified by their great height as they tower above the human priests and by their costuming which is similar to that of the gods of C, particularly in regard to the elaborate trains. Another feature which indicates that they are gods is the association of monsters with them, but monsters that are generally unlike any that are found elsewhere in Tajín art. There are four gods in this scene, two priests, and three animals, including one bird, as well as the creatures of the gods.

The scene is divided into two sections. The first one is defined on the left by god 8 and on the right by god 3. God 7 should probably also be included in this section. The second section includes god 6, the priest in front of him, and the temple with a second priest inside.

The first division of this scene is immediately reminiscent of the well-known tablets of "crosses" from the Temple of the Foliated Cross at Palenque (Maudsley 1889-1902; Vol. IV, Pl. 76, 81). These have also been referred to as "trees of life". Woodford (1953) analyzes "tree of life" scenes which include these examples from Palenque as well as a number of others from archaeological and codex sources. Elements which she has noted to occur frequently in these scenes are the cross-like tree, a bird, a monster, a serpent, and two personages. One of the best
examples of this complex is the Palenque Tablet of the Cross, which has as a central element a tree in the shape of a Latin cross, which rests on the head of a monster. In the top of the tree sits a quetzal bird with a serpent head, and from its neck hangs a Maya lightning symbol. The ends of the tree's branches are the heads of serpents. The two personages in this tablet are standing at either side of the tree facing it. According to Woodford, for the ancient Maya the creation of the earth included placing trees at the cardinal points and one in the center, a "given tree of abundance". In an Aztec ceremony, a cross-shaped tree was set up, believed to have first been done by Quetzalcoatl, and this tree was called tonacaquahuitl, or "tree of sustenance". Woodford considers the trees of Palenque to be stylized maize plants, that is, the plant of life. Considering all of the elements associated with the tree in the Tablets to have a relation to or symbolism of life, water, or fertility and the tree to be maize, she concludes that the Palenque tree and others of the codices are representations of the Maya "given tree of abundance" or the Aztec tonacaquahuitl.

The "trees of the four directions" or of the cardinal points are frequently seen in the codices (Borgia, sheets 52-48; Vaticanus B, sheets 17 and 18; Fejervary-Mayer, sheet 1 [Burland 1950, unnumbered illustration]). The fifth section or center of the earth is not shown in the Vaticanus B (Seler 1902-3: 77), and in the Fejervary-Mayer it is the
fire god. However, in the Codex Borgia the center of the earth ("der Nabel der Erde" according to Seler) is a tree (sheet 53) with the bird in the top, a god on either side, and its roots in the body of the earth goddess. Some of the trees of the four directions are associated with fertility and abundance, but others not (Seler 1902-3). But there is no question that the central tree as it is portrayed in the Borgia Codex is a tree of life, supported by the presence of the sun god, symbol of life, in the center of the earth in the Fejérváry-Mayer. All five of the Maya trees seem to have been trees of abundance (Thompson 1954: 225-6).

Thus the tree in Scene H must certainly be one of the trees of the four directions or the central one, the latter more likely as it occurs alone, but in either case it is a Tree of Life. This is not without precedent at Tajín, for a panel from the Pyramid of the Niches (Fig. 3) also bears a tree which García Payón calls a "Tree of Life" (1951: 21). The tree on the column is strikingly similar to those from Palenque as well as a number illustrated in the codices, and fits Woodford's prototype exceedingly well. Because of the destruction of the surface it is not possible to tell if the tree is of the shape of a cross. However, in its top is a quetzal-bird (compare: Séjourné 1965, Fig. 12), and at the bottom a plumed serpent, symbol of water and fertility, and a jaguar, an earth and rain animal which is also found in association with trees of the four directions in some codices. The plumed serpent seems to have taken the place
of the earth monster in this representation. At either side of the tree is a god, and in front of the one to the right (god 3) is the glyph which has been identified as the symbol of lightning. In this context this interpretation of the glyph is strengthened. Also of interest are the crosses in the design of god 3's skirt. Among the Maya the cross is often a representation of the tree of abundance. The cross is also a symbol often associated with Quetzalcoatl, and this god is one of the two deities next to the tree of life of the Borgia Codex (sheet 53). However, the Greek cross, as this is, is also a reference to the sun (Medellín Zenil 1960: 30). In any of these cases the linkage to fertility or life is again borne out.

God 3 carries a pole with strips of some material hanging from its upper end. The pole may be a staff or more likely a spear because of the fringing, even though this cannot be proved because the upper end of the instrument is destroyed. If it is a spear, it is probably a reference to war, as it may indeed be if it is only a fringed staff. The "flags" carried by figures in Aztec art, especially jaguars and eagles, are usually considered signs of war (see Marquina 1951, Fig. 15).

Each of the gods associated with the tree has one arm outstretched as if making an offering, as are the priests in the Palenque tablets. Both the plumed serpent and the jaguar face god 3. The jaguar is dressed in bracelets, a necklace, and a chestband. With his left hand he makes a
gesture apparently directed toward the god, in which he forms a circle
with his thumb and forefinger. He probably carries something in his
right hand. The jaguar is in an obvious attitude of supplication toward
the god, the same relationship seen in Scene C.

An interesting aspect of this section is the monster found on the
shoulders of god 3. But this is not an occurrence unique to this scene,
for at least three of the four gods have monsters of some variety
associated with them. God 6 has one just above his shoulders in a
position similar to that of god 3, while god 7 bends over a monster at his
side. Because of missing stone, it is impossible to tell if gods 7 and
8 have monsters on their shoulders. The creatures associated with gods
6 and 7 have a serpentine nature, but that of god 3 is not identifiable,
partly due to the erosion of the stone. It may well be that he is some
type of earth monster.

God 7 and his attendant monster are probably associated with the
first section of this scene, that is, with the Tree of Life. God 7 leans
over and extends a very stubby arm toward a serpentine creature of
quite unusual characteristics: elongated and bifurcated lips and a head
that extends into a half loop. In front of the face of the god is what appears
to be a speech glyph, one that has great resemblance to those found at
Teotihuacán, so that he appears to be addressing the monster while
extending his hand toward it. It is interesting to note that there is a very
feminine quality about the face of this god, but the clothing, as far as I can identify it, indicates that this is a male figure.

Thus in the first section of Scene H there is a Tree of Life with two, perhaps three, gods in ritualistic attendance to it, while creatures associated with rain and abundance take part. The jaguar and the plumed serpent, and possibly the serpentine creature, may be votaries or acolytes of the Tree, or its spiritual representatives, ceremonially in concourse with the gods.

Dominating the second section of Scene H is a god who wears the costume of an eagle, and whose great winged arms are spread to either side in a flying or dancing position. Below this figure and nearly engulfed in the spread of his wings is a much smaller form, presumably a human priest who is himself dressed in the assemblage of a bird, although it does not seem to be that of an eagle. But the feeling of the priest ceremonially impersonating this feathered god, and being overwhelmed by the presence of the very god himself is not lost. The priest raises his left arm in supplication toward the god and at the same time with his right arm he points to something that is on the missing lower drum. Issuing from his mouth is a glyph which probably denotes ritual address to the god.

Among the Toltecs and Aztecs the complex of the solar cult and the associated Eagle and Jaguar Knights is a maze of complications. For present purposes only a few of the major aspects will be considered. Al-
though the orders of Jaguar and Eagle Knights were military cults, the conflicts in which they were engaged were all part of the much greater scheme of the Sacred War, the war of eternal opposites. The Knights' role of supplying captives for the feeding of the sun was vital in this "war" for it was the sun itself which was recognized as fundamental to life, as the very essence of life, the negation of darkness and death. If the sun lost its power, the forces of darkness would triumph and the fifth world, the present one, would be destroyed. The eagle was a frequent symbol of the sun. The Eagle Knights were considered to be of the cult of Huitzilopochtli, the war god, but considered by Seler as also a god of the sun and fire (Thompson 1933: 156). But the sun god proper, Tonatiuh, was also a patron of warriors, and the Knights were naturally considered his servants (Thompson 1933: 149); Vaillant 1950: 175, 196; Tozzer 1957: 129). In Scene H is a combination of elements which suggests that not dissimilar concepts are being employed.

In Scene H the bird-dressed priest (or knight?) and the eagle god certainly refer to a cult of the sun, the god probably being a representation of this astral body. But as has been mentioned previously, the eagle-solar cult is by no means new to Tajín when it appears on the columns, for the ball-player dressed as a solar bird is seen on the monument from the Early Classic, and the bird called a faisán by García Payón (1949c: 14) or an eagle by most other writers, but in every case named as a symbol of the
sun, appears once on the Large Ball-court, and at least twice on the Small Ball-court. On the Large Ball-court the solar bird is in a scene that is connected with the NE panel of sacrifice, either directly (Tozzer 1957: 133) or indirectly (García Payón 1959), depending upon interpretation. In the SW panel of the Small Ball-court, Spinden 1933: 246) thinks that the bird may be eating a human heart. If both of these interpretations are correct, that is, seeing the Tajín eagle consuming human hearts and being related to sacrifice, these are unmistakable references to the later religious concepts of the Aztecs and perhaps to the Sacred War itself. In the ball-courts' reliefs there are three references to war. The most prominent one occurs in the SE panel of the Large Ball-court in which the figure seated at the left holds a bundle of three arrows, an Aztec war symbol, and also on the Large Ball-court in the NW panel, the sacrifice scene, a fringed spear, another reference to war, forms part of the accoutrements of the solar or serpent eye to the left. In the NW panel of the Small Ball-court the standing figure carries a fringed spear in his left hand and possibly a shield in his right. In none of these cases is there evidence of blatant militarism, rather each is an integral part of a complex ceremonial scene.

The bird-priest in Scene H may be holding something up to his god, but it cannot be identified as a heart. Neither is there any certain indication of a sacrifice although the pointing of the bird-priest recalls the
figure in the mid-North panel of the Large Ball-court who is pointing toward a bound personage who is a probable sacrifice victim. But although sacrifice and heart extraction are lacking, there is a reference to war directly related to the eagle-god and his priest, for in the temple that is very obviously a part of their section, is a priest who holds a dart and a stick whose top is missing but which could be an atlatl, in either instance a reference to war. But this arm with the hand bearing a dart and a stick is quite similar to a representation in the Codex Borgia (Seler 1902-3, Fig. 47) in which the stick is seen to be a club. The assemblage of the arm, stick, and club is interpreted by Seler as a representation of lightning, as it is splitting a house which bursts into flame. So whether a sign of war or lightning, it is symbolic of destruction.

The body of this priest in Scene H is covered by what seems to be a shield. The shield has a toothed edge which suggests a sun-disc and on its surface it carries the interlocked design that García Payón has identified as ollin, the Aztec sign for movement. He believes that ollin in various places refers to celestial movement, the ball game, or perhaps a combination of the two, as the ball game may itself be symbolic of celestial movement. The basic explanation of the sign ollín given by Séjourné (1960: 117-8, 119) is that it stands for the conflict of opposites, although she goes much beyond this in her highly personal interpretations.
I am inclined to accept the core of her interpretation of this sign and to see it as symbolic of universal duality, or in Aztec terms, the Sacred War. Thus García Payón's explanation can be seen as encompassed in this concept, for celestial movement and the ball-game are particular expressions of the dualistic conflict which ollin seems to represent on the universal level.

In Aztec art the relation of the sign ollin to the Sacred War is shown by its inclusion as a major element in the scene on the famous teponaztli showing the eagle and jaguar carrying symbols of war (marquina 1951, Fig. 15). Another example of the sign ollin associated with an eagle (in this case an eagle-man) comes from the west end of the North Wall of the Great Ball-court's North Temple at Chichén Itzá (Tozzer 1957, Fig. 433). The representation of ollin in this scene is even closer to that of Tajín than the common Aztec design.

The scene from the North Temple at Chichén Itzá is very large and incorporates a great many figures, but closely associated with the eagle-man mentioned above are a large plant, a dog, and a dog-headed man (Breton 1917, Pl. IV), exhibiting a correspondence to this scene from Tajín with its eagle god, tree, and jaguar.

In sum, the section under discussion presents indications of an eagle-solar cult, as well as references to war, possibly the Sacred War. The presence of the concept of the Sacred War is further bolstered when
Scene H is considered as a whole, that is, when a sun and war ceremony is seen as associated with ceremonies involving the Tree of Life. The references to war become suggestions of the struggle for life, the attempt to maintain the power of the sun, the source of life, and the tree that is the source of abundance and fertility, against the opposing forces of sterility, death, and the destruction of the world.

The temple depicted in this scene carries two decorative elements, a stepped fret along the bottom, and on the sides of the walls an undulating step. The stepped fret is an extremely common architectural motif at Tajin, one found on nearly every major building (e.g. Fig. 18). It is also a design that is found in the art of nearly every culture in Mesoamerica. In the codices it is frequently encountered as an architectural element in representations of temples, sometimes in the same area as are those on the temple in Scene H (e.g. Codex Nuttall, sheet 21). García Payón believes that the stepped fret at Tajin represents in some cases a serpent (1957: 10), and in others, particularly when it is combined with a niche, light or lightning (1951: 175).

I do not know of any instance of the second element, the undulating step, in Tajin architecture, but this design is found commonly at other Mesoamerican sites, Classic and Postclassic, as well as in the codices (Tozzer 1957: 95). This motif is the bottom element in place names in the Mixtec Codex Yanhuitlan and is interpreted by Jiménez Moreno to
Fig. 18. Stepped Frets as Architectural Elements

a. East Face of Building A;
b. West Face of Building C.
Fig. 18. Stepped Frets as Architectural Elements
mean "earth" (Tozzer 1957: 95).

Two other features of this second section should be mentioned: the small heads (eagle or serpent?) that line the arms of the eagle god (figure 6), and the strange figure to the left of the god's head. This form seems to be composed of an eye, an arm, and possibly a nose. This abstracting treatment of figures is very common in some of the serpent bands of Tajín, particularly those of the Pyramid of the Niches.

Scenes H and C are possibly complementary in subject matter, and thus perhaps belong on the same column. The equal sizes of the figures and the present distribution of the drums on which they are carved support this, but as no connecting drums have been found it must remain speculation.

Scene I

A fragment of a scene (Scene I, Fig. 19) which possibly belongs to the group under discussion is one of the most fascinating and enigmatic of any to be found at Tajín. It is unfortunate that so little of it remains. To describe it from right to left, on the far right is seen the large head of a personage who must be identified as Tlaloc because of his fangs. Two other aspects which indicate that he is a god are the non-human treatment of the eye and his large size compared to the other figures in the scene. To his right is a human figure who wears a peculiar headdress, one which includes the feathered staff, and between them, but.
nearer the human is what has been referred to as a lightning symbol. This is one of the few places where this might be a speech glyph, but its presence in association with Tlaloc might be significant. The third person from the left is another human figure. This individual carries a staff of undeterminable nature but which seems to be related to his apparent function of attendance upon Tlaloc. In the center of this scene fragment is a complex area involving two figures, a Tlaloc mouth, and a number of hanging and entwined ropes. Only the head of one figure is to be seen while the other figure seems to hang by his feet from ropes in a position that is very reminiscent of the Tuxpan "diving god" monument (Tozzer 1957, Fig. 257), often said to represent Tlauizcalpantecutli, or Quetzalcoatl in his form as the morning star. The Tuxpan "diving god" does not hang from anything, but his clawed feet are in a grasping position as are those of the figure in Scene I. The one hand of the Tajin figure is different from those of the "diving god" in that it is turned palm outward rather than in, which indicates, as does the position of the legs, that this figure is shown with his front forward as opposed to the Tuxpan figure whose back is forward. The Tlaloc mouth may belong to this hanging figure, but it is positioned just ambiguously enough that it is not quite possible to tell. If this figure were shown with his back forward the mouth would be in the logical position, as illustrated by the Tuxpan god, but as he is not, if this is his mouth his head is shown in a completely
illogical position, that is, completely upside down in relation to his body.

Two more figures are found on the far left of what remains of this scene. The right person has features that characterize certain types of dwarfism, a heavy face with an elongated chin, and a deformed barrel chest. Above him is a serpent eye. The figure to the far left faces the dwarf-like person and is holding out a hand to him, possibly to take what the dwarf carries. He wears a helmet that is the head of some fanged animal, and in front of his face is a glyph that has a resemblance to speech scrolls and the lightning symbol, but is different from both of these. Between this individual and the dwarf is a curved area that is completely unintelligible to me.

For interpretation I have nothing to offer except the rankest speculation. It gives me the impression of being a mythical scene, perhaps the Tajín conceptualization of Tlalocan, for here is Tlaloc being waited upon by at least three attendants (the third one survives only by the hand protruding into the scene from the left), and a dwarf, dwarfs being reported sometimes as dwellers of Tlalocan who were responsible for bringing the souls of the dead to this abode, and mentioned other times as assistants to the rain god who would pour water over the earth when he commanded (Seler 1904b: 268).
Scene D

Rather than being broken into different sections, Scene D is a unified design. There are seven standing human figures, all moving in the same direction, presumably toward the complex of features that confronts figure 9. In the procession but facing the opposite direction are two bipedal animals. The figures of human form in this scene have attire which is very similar to that of the gods of Scene C and H, and which is unlike the dress of any other figures in Tajín art. But there are several factors which indicate that these are not actually gods. Primary is the fact that they are not only smaller than the large C and H figures identified as gods, but smaller than most of the human figures in the columns' scenes. The two standing animals in this scene are not as large in relation to human figures in this scene as they are in others, but neither are they as small as they are in relation to gods. In other scenes prone sacrificial victims are generally much smaller than the standing human figures in the same scene. The skeleton, which I assume to be human, at the right "end" of this scene has a length in approximately the same ratio to the standing figures here as do sacrifices to standing figures in other scenes. (It may be noted that the prone figure in the SW panel of the Large Ball-court is of considerably greater height—i.e., length—than the two individuals to the sides. There is an interesting question here as to whether this size differential in each case
is purposeful or a function of some conception or layout problem.)
The headdress of these men, while elaborate, are not of a nature that
could be actually constructed. They are remindful of some of the very
grandiose headdresses depicted in the murals of Bonampak. The head­
dresses of the gods in other scenes are not elaborate, but the complex
solar or serpent eyes are associated with them. The headdresses of
the figures in Scene D may in fact be representations of the gear used
by priests to duplicate the conception of these "eyes." Finally there
are possibly some day names accompanying these personages, but there
are none known for any figures identified definitely as gods. The con­
clusion is that these are priests impersonating gods.

The ceremony in which the priest-gods are involved is directly
related to the events in Scene H, for the object of the procession is
again what is probably a representation of the Tree of Life. This is the
same variety of plant as in Scene H, and although the top section of the
plant is missing so that it is not possible to tell if a bird is there, there
are to one side a bird, a jaguar, and a serpent.

This tree in Scene D appears to be growing from the abdominal
area of a skeleton, and the skeleton is in the sacrificial position, that
is, on the back with one knee raised. In the Codex Borgia each of the
Trees of the Four Directions grows from the body of an earth goddess,
as does the fifth tree, the Tree of Life. The Trees of the Four Directions
in the Codex Vaticanus B "are drawn as if growing out of the body of a god clasping the stem, or else growing right through him" (Seler 1902-3: 78). The Codex Dresden has an illustration (sheet 3) of a sacrificial victim from whose opened body grows a tree with a vulture in the top. In the Borgia Codex the symbolism of the trees growing from the body of an earth goddess is obvious. The example from the Dresden is an illustration of life coming from the giving of life, the same concept that so captivated the Aztecs. Among the Aztecs this idea is forcefully presented, aside from the normal sacrifices, in the making of new fire at a transition of 52 year cycles. The ceremony was held on a special hill outside Tenochtitlan and when the moment came for the change from the old cycle to the new, the sacred fire was kindled in the newly opened chest of a sacrifice (Vaillant 1950: 195). In Scene D the Tajín version of life from the giving of life varies in details from these, but the underlying concept is analogous. Here, the Tree of Life grows from a skeleton, so that the emphasis seems to be more upon death itself as the source of life, than upon that which is alive and then submits its life through death for the greater life of the community. Also at Tajín it is the abdominal area, rather than that of the chest, which is apparently represented as that part of the body most closely identified with life. This is illustrated by the tree coming from the abdominal area of the skeleton, and by a number of other instances of sacrifice in the column's scenes. To be more specific, it seems as if it may be the womb, not the
heart, which is seen as the seat of life. To carry this one step further, it seems to be logical corollary that as death is emphasized rather than the giving of life, birth, as shown by the significance of the womb, is emphasized, not the process of living, as would be the case were the heart of great importance. That is, the implicit dualism appears to be one of birth:death instead of living:giving of life.

There are possibly a number and a glyph associated with figures 2 and 6, but it has not been possible to determine what they are. However, another glyph and number, the same or similar in each case, are found with figures 3, 6, and 9. The number is "9", while the glyph seems to be a fret in a box, possibly a symbol of lightning, but in no instance is it distinct. The frets related to figures 3 and 9 appear to turn in the direction opposite to that next to figure 6. These do not appear to be day names, that is, that each of these is the same individual, as the personages are quite distinct in dress and, for the two that are not destroyed, in facial features. The numbers, if this is what they are, are not executed in the style that characterizes those that are surely day names on other columns. Also, one of these "9 lightning (?)" glyphs appears with a figure (6) who probably has a day name in the conventional style. But all in all the significance of these glyphs is to me unknown.

The treatment of the eye of priest-god 3 is quite unusual. The
eye is incised in the form of a cross, as opposed to the quite realistic manner in which it is normally rendered as can be seen by the eyes of the other figures in this scene. The eye gives the impression that it is closed, and the arms are thrown out in front of the body in such a fashion as immediately recalls the manner of a sleep-walker or a blind-folded person. Each of the priest-gods whose upper body is shown is carrying something, except for this one. Is he possibly impersonating a blind god?

The objects being carried by the priest-gods include two long staffs (figures 2 and 4), an unidentified item (figure 1), and a short staff (figure 6) that may actually be a roll of paper or skin as it seems to give where it is being held. This last object is quite like the things being held by the seated figures in the NW panels of the Large Ball-court, these also being probably scrolls of some kind.

Meeting the priest-gods within the procession are a dog and a coyote (?). The dog has an erect penis. The coyote grovels before a priest and holds one arm up in supplication, while the dog holds the knuckles of his paw against the staff of another god, certainly a sign of servility. Beneath the Tree itself and meeting the priest leading the procession are other animals, one directly associated with rain and fertility, a serpent and a bird, and what may either be a dog or a jaguar, but whichever, he has an erection.
In sum, this scene shows men as gods coming to perform ceremonies of the gods to assure abundance, to assure the continuation and flowering of the Tree of Life. The impersonation of the gods and performance of their rituals was a form of sympathetic magic directed toward fertility, rain, and the seasonal renewal of life, that was the essence of probably the majority of Aztec religious ceremonies. The festivals of the months of Tlacaxipeualiztli, dedicated to Xipe Totec, and Ochpaniztli, dedicated to Tlazolteotl, are two of the outstanding examples of this.

Another possibility for the interpretation of this scene is tied to the Tree not only being a Tree of Life, but as the central Tree, the original home of man, the place where man was created. A superb illustration of this comes from the Codex Vindobonensis, sheet 37 (Nowotny 1961, Pl. 54) in which a nude "first man" emerges from the split trunk of the Tree and Séjourné (1960: 118) reports that the Mixteca were known as "descendants of the trees." There are a number of legends of the world which record the mythical return to the home-land, the Tree of Life, and Scene D may be a representation of the ritual reenactment of this return.

Scene F

Unfortunately there have been found no fragments of the upper stone to Scene F (Fig. 21) so that a detailed account of the activities in
this scene is impossible to obtain. Several priests (figures 3, 4, 8, 11) wear the simple garb that was encountered in Scene G: crotch bands, strips around the waist, and sashes hanging from the back with a knot at the waist. In addition there are others (figures 1, 6, and 10)' who wear long skirts with elaborate designs on them. It is possible that the figures in long skirts are priestesses. Figure 6 probably wears a quechquemitl, which would identify her as a woman. The quechquemitl and long skirt combination is certain in regard to the left figure in the SW panel of the Small Ball-court, and the cross-hatched design on this skirt is like that of figure 1 in Scene F. As determined by the quechquemitl there are also three other priestesses on the columns. One (figure 2) in Scene C, one (figure 1) in Scene J, and a third on a small fragment not reproduced here. Although the basic garment for women in Classic Maya art is the "narrow, ankle-length skirt" (Proskouriakoff 1961: 81), in general in Mesoamerican art a skirt does not necessarily indicate a female. The donor sorcerers of Chichén Itzá wear long skirts and most of them are male (Tozzer 1957: 110).

There are no priestesses reported for the Totonacs of Cempoala. The Aztec had some orders of priestesses, but apparently their role was not of great importance (Vaillant 1950: 117). The major part that women seemed to have played in Aztec ceremony seems to have been as goddess impersonators destined for sacrifice. Even in the ceremony of
Ochpanitztl for the goddess Tlazolteotl, the major role of the ritual was played not by a woman, but by a man wearing the flayed skin of a woman who as original impersonator of the goddess had been sacrificed (Thompson 1933: 186-7). Among the Maya, women seem to have been generally excluded from religious ceremonies (Thompson 1954: 239, 250), but they are involved in the ceremonies at Bonampak, at least as spectators (Thompson 1951b: 64), or possibly to the extent of performing blood rites and arranging of prisoners (Proskouriakoff 1961: 82).

The dress of priestesses in other scenes at Tajin allows the conclusion that the long-skirted figures in F are women, and consequently that women play a much greater role in the priesthood and its ceremonies at Tajín than they generally do in the rest of pre-Hispanic Mesoamerica.

There are nine standing figures in Scene F, three priestesses, five priests, and one captive who is presumably bound for sacrifice. Two other persons have just been sacrificed. To the left of figure 1 two small legs come into the scene, the rest of the body is missing. This may be a small child that is being held by figure 1, possibly for sacrifice, or it could be something similar to the Maya manikin sceptres, although it seems too large to be the latter. The legs may not actually be associated with figure 1, because this person is possibly faced in the
opposite direction, as indicated by the large knot and sash which are usually to the rear. What is to the other side of the small legs is nearly totally destroyed.

The first sacrifice, figure 2, wears a headband with the same design that is found on the headbands of the two severed heads in Scene G, elsewhere. This design will be discussed shortly. The most important aspect of this sacrifice is the area above him. From the abdominal area of the victim emerges a thick twined element which enters the banded rectangular area just above his body. At the top of the rectangle is a band which seems as though it forms the bottom portion of another enclosed section. What may be three more of these banded or enclosed areas appear in other sections of this scene, one above a sacrifice (figure 9) and the other two over a section containing a number of ceremonial objects. In the one above sacrifice 9 a portion of a leg and foot is in evidence so that some of these rectangular areas (if they should so prove to be) may contain small scenes. These areas are reminiscent of the panels of the Pyramid of the Niches which are banded squares, and of codex illustrations where sections are blocked off with a band of design (e.g. Codex Nuttall, sheet 15). Of the only complete rectangle, that above figure 2, the design of the band is similar to that of a serpent body in the Codex Borgia (sheet 72) which delineates a rectangular area.

Splitting the rectangle above the sacrifice is the twisted element
which comes from his abdomen. This element has been noted previously coming from the dying figure in Scene E and from a sacrificial victim in Scene G. It emerges from yet another sacrifice in Scene J. For the figures in Scenes E and F this intertwined element divides at the top and the two ends loop off to either side. But in the case of J, the element either ends abruptly or is being taken into the mouth of a descending bird-headed creature. In the NE panel of the Large Ball-court a skeletal death god descends to receive the breath of life as it is being exhaled by the sacrifice. Is the bird-headed creature a demon of death grasping a symbol of life, or soul, from the sacrifice? Not only may he be taking the twined element into his mouth but he is reaching out a hand as if to seize it. Is the twined element a mythical umbilical cord that unites man to the other world, this world being glimpsed in the banded rectangles, especially where this element enters one, or personified by the "diving" god? As suggested earlier, the fact that these do emerge from the abdomen (as does the Tree of Life from that of the skeleton), the abdomen (or womb) may have been thought of as the seat of life.

The second sacrifice (figure 9) in Scene F varies from these others in two significant ways. First, rather than a twined element coming from him, what is probably blood seems to be spurting forth, and secondly, it emerges from the chest area, not the abdomen. This is what
I consider to be the only certain case of death by heart extraction in Tajín art. In the sacrifice on the NE panel of the Large Ball-court, the priest is about to make what appears to be a chest incision, but there is room for the possibility that he is about to open the throat of the victim instead, for following decapitation.

From the open chest of the sacrifice in Scene F the blood pours to the side and also gushes upward in three streams, and atop of them, as if balanced on the blood, is a serpent. Immediately above the serpent is the banded area that is associated with this victim.

Between figures 5 and 6 is an area which contains a number of ceremonial objects. To the right is a small stool which has the head of a jaguar on it. A panel (Spinden 1933, Fig. 1c) from the Pyramid of the Niches has a very similar stool on top of which is the head of a monster. A jaguar head carried in a scene on a Yaxchilan lintel (number 26) has been interpreted as a helmet (Proskouriakoff 1961: 87) and as the decapitated head of a jaguar (Knouth 1961: 194). The head in the Tajín relief is evidently a helmet as there is a large rear attachment of feathers. Directly in front of the jaguar helmet is a tall object that appears to be a leaning pole with circles or ovals marked on it. These ovals are similar to the carving on a "Tree of Life" that is seen on the sarcophagus from the famous tomb at Palenque (Sejourné 1960, Pl. 12). Thompson (1933: 178-80) in describing the ceremonies of the Aztec second month,
Tlacaxipeualiztli, mentions that a warrior who had captured prisoners for the main rituals constructed a tripod and a column, on the first of which he placed the paper ornaments of his victim and on the latter the ornamented thigh bone of the captive. The column was a sign that the warrior had taken captives. The ceremonies of this month were dedicated to Xipe Totec, a god of planting. It may be wondered if the stand and pole in Scene F, a scene of sacrifice, may not denote some analogous ceremony. To the left of the pole is the glyph that possibly represents lightning, and the apparent use of a jaguar helmet in this ceremony is a further reference to rain, so that the ideas of fertility, perhaps related to Xipe, are involved in the ongoing rituals.

Although Scene F has much potential significance, no general conclusions will be drawn because of its incompleteness.

Scene J

A scene that is probably directly related to the latter one is J (Fig. 22), but only a small part of it is available for study. In this scene there are four standing figures, three priests and a priestess, as well as a child in a cradle-board arrangement, an adult sacrifice, and lastly the bird-headed deity who descends toward the sacrifice. Two ceremonies are being carried out, one centering around the child, the other around the adult sacrifice.

On the left side of the child is a person identified as a priestess
Fig. 22. Scene J

Scale: 5 cm. = 40.6 cm.
by the quechquemitl and by what, emerging from beneath her garment, is possibly a breast, although it is somewhat peculiarly shaped. A similar wearing of the quechquemitl with the uncovered breast is shown in the Codex Borgia (sheet 17). The priestess holds in her left hand a strange instrument which might be some type of eccentric flint, perhaps of the "claw-knife" variety (see Proskouriakoff 1950, I11. XIII, Flp). The identification of this instrument is fundamental to an interpretation of the ceremony as a whole. This has been interpreted as a scene of head-deformation (García Payón 1957: 7 mentions a scene on the columns of a "child undergoing cranial deformation," and it is presumably to this piece that he refers), this apparently being based on the fact that the child is on something resembling a cradle-board which has a piece at the top which might be the deforming agent that comes down over the child's forehead. The main objection to this interpretation is that this occurs next to a ceremony of sacrifice, and I know of no reason why these two acts would be linked. Also the piece of the cradle-board which comes down over the head appears to be a flexible object rather than a stiff one that would be used in this type of deformation, and it may thus be a feather. As opposed to the explanation of deformation, it seems more reasonable that this is a ritual of child sacrifice. Child sacrifice was practiced among the historic Totonac (Krickeberg 1933: 81), and of course it is well known for both the Maya and the Aztec. The child is
tightly bound by four straps across him and his legs are flexed, two features which also characterize the "Chac" figure of the mid-North panel of the Large Ball-court, a personage which I believe to be a sacrifice. If the instrument held above the child is a knife, the bulk of the evidence points to this as a child sacrifice. But a third possibility should be mentioned and that is that a circumcision ceremony is being conducted. Among the Totonacs, circumcision was necessary for every male child by the age of one month (Melgarejo Vivance 1943: 93). This latter fact militates against the interpretation of this scene as circumcision, for the child appears to be considerably older than one month. Again the relation to the sacrifice is a negative factor, except in the case that circumcision should have some ritual association to sacrifice that is unmentioned in the chronicles.

The adult sacrifice is being decapitated with the usual instrument of ritual death in Mesoamerica, the tecpatl, an unhafted stone knife. The twined element issues from his abdomen to be taken by the bird-headed demon who descends upon him. Across the chest of this "diving god" is a sash that has a design which appears to be a large oval through which the sash itself is threaded once. This chest sash and oval appear on eight other figures in Tajín art. Two of these are also bird-dressed personages, either gods or god-impersonators, and these are found in Small Ball-court reliefs (SW and NW panels). Two other personages
with this sash and design are the Tlalocs who appear in the central panels of the Large Ball-court, and another example comes from a stela representation of a god, possibly Tajín, located in the local museum. In two of the three other occurrences (all three are on small fragments of drums which are not illustrated in this paper) the identification of the figure is not certain but both may be priests, while the third is on a figure who seems tied for sacrifice, possibly by means of the 
flechamiento, or "arrowing." The specific meaning of this band and its symbol is unknown to me, but it seems to be clearly associated with divinity by virtue of its frequent incidence on gods. The sacrifice may be impersonating a god to be slain in this capacity.

This same design of the oval with the lace through it is also found on several headbands. Three of the four instances are on sacrifices (the decapitated heads in G and figure 2 in F), and the fourth occurs on a young priest or warrior (figure 1, SE panel of the Large Ball-court), in either case, a person possibly intended for sacrifice. And again these may be ceremonial impersonators of gods already sacrificed or destined for sacrifice, and who wear this design as a sign of their assumed divinity.
THE SCULPTURED PANELS OF THE BALL-COURTS

As mentioned previously, the art of the columns has received very little attention and this is one of the reasons that the main body of this paper is devoted to a discussion of this sculpture. However, an understanding of the rest of Tajín representational art, particularly the panels of the ball-courts, is fundamental to a fuller understanding of Tajín religion, the ultimate goal of the study.

The Panels of the Large Ball-Court

This ball-court has six sculptured panels, three on either side of the court. The end panels seem to form one group, as determined by common features and related subject matter, and the two central reliefs another. In the literature most of the discussion of art from the site of Tajín has dealt with the four end panels (e.g. Spinden 1933; Westheim 1957; García Payón 1959; Krickeberg 1961), and the interpretation has been generally uniform. Because of these two factors, only a brief summary of the content of the end panels will be made here, with some critical remarks added.

Common to the four end reliefs (Figs. 23-26) are upper and lower bands of design and a division of the main panel into two tablets, a large and a small one. In each case the small panel is located on the side of
Fig. 23. Large Ball-court, SE Panel

Scale: 1 cm. = 14 cm.
Fig. 24. Large Ball-court, SW Panel

Scale: 1 cm. = 13 cm.
Fig. 25. Large Ball-court, NW Panel

Scale: 1 cm. = 12 cm.
Fig. 26. Large Ball-courts, NE Panel

Scale: 1 cm. = 11 cm.
the relief toward the center of the ball-court and is the same subject: a skeleton of death issuing from a pot which stands in water, or at least a liquid of some nature. A different scene takes place in each of the large tablets.

The four panels are usually seen as representing a sequence of events. The SE panel is considered to show the presentation or selection of a young warrior. The SW panels portray the dedication or initiation of the young warrior to a bird cult. The third scene, the NW panel, is a ceremony of new fire and takes place on the ball-court itself (a discussion of this scene may be found on pages 52-3). Finally, on the NE panel comes the sacrifice, with the initiate warrior possibly being the victim, and this presumably takes place after the ceremonial ball-game which has been referred to in the previous scene.

García Payón (1959: 447-8) has produced a brilliant elucidation of the obscure design on the upper bands of these scenes. In each case the band above the large tablet has the same designs, while above the small tablets of the NW and SW panels the design is alike, but differs from that above the small tablets of the NE and SE panels. Above the large tablets the design in the band begins with a large eye, which García Payón believes to be a representation of the sun, that is, a solar eye, and this is followed by a twisted element in a frame. The element is ollin, movement, which he suggests here represents the celestial
movement of the sun. Above the small tablets of the NW and SW panels are stylized rabbit heads, symbols of the moon, and the elements in the corresponding position on the SE and NE panels are representations of the moon in conjunction. Between this wide top band and the actual scene is a narrow strip which has several small circles, probably jade symbolizing stars.

In regard to some variation in interpretation for the panels, Tozzer (1957: 133) sees the SE relief as a scene just prior to sacrifice, rather than initiation. The presence of the skeleton to the side in these reliefs shows that death is ever present, but even more specifically in this SE scene is a skeletal demon who flies over the ceremony; almost certainly he is another reference to death, as is the somewhat bony creature who descends in the scene of unquestioned sacrifice. There is an interesting similarity between the positions of the eagle-priest and man in this scene to that of a Toltec eagle and his victim in one of the gold disks from the cenote at Chichén Itzá (Lothrop 1952, Fig. 41).

I would like to suggest another possible interpretation for this scene and that is that the eagle-priest and the warrior are engaged in ceremonial copulation. The eagle-priest sits astride the warrior in a position that suggests this hypothesis. Stone carvings in-the-round from the Olmec area show jaguars having intercourse with humans (Wicke
1965: 73; Figs. 18, 21) in positions quite similar to that of the two figures in the Tajín relief. The art and culture of Tajín and the Central Veracruz area is derived in great part from the Olmec and it is possible that this ceremonial relationship to a totemic animal shown in the Olmec carvings may be carried on in the Tajín carving.

The bird in this scene is usually identified as an eagle (e.g. Spinden 1933: 249; Thompson 1941a, Fig. 8), but García Payón (1959: 450) disagrees with this, and sees it rather as a quetzalcoatl, or a faisán. Faisán is usually translated into English as pheasant, but the pheasant is an Old World bird and has even today been little introduced into Mexico. It is probable that García Payón is referring to some form of quail or partridge, the family Phasianidae, of which there are a number of species native to Veracruz (Blake 1953: 105-16). But there are numerous representations of birds in Mesoamerican art and codices which are quite similar to this one from Tajín and considered to be eagles (e.g. Tozzer 1957, Figs. 430, 437; Mendoza and Soto 1959: 917). In either case as the eagle is generally associated with the sun or thought a representation of it, so García Payón considers the quetzalcoatl to be.

In the previous discussion of the NW panel (page 52) it was argued that a ceremony of fire-making is being carried out, that one, possibly both, of the central figures is a ball-player, and that one of these
individuals is probably destined for sacrifice as shown in the last panel. García Payón believes each of these persons to be a ball-player representing opposing teams. Above the person to the left is an interlaced design in a rectangle which García Payón sees as a sign for Venus, while the person to the right has a solar eye in his headdress. Thus the teams these persons represent, symbolically stand for Venus and the sun, and the ball-game is a representation of the celestial conflict between these two bodies, with Venus the winner as shown by the same interlaced design behind the sacrificer in the NW panels.

Between the two players is a glyph that García Payón notes is the sign ollin, and he here indicates that is is a symbol for the ball-game (García Payón 1959: 454). Below this glyph is an indented circular object which García Payón suggests is a ring. Proskouriakoff (1954) sees this as a ball, but this interpretation possibly comes from the fact that the indentation is not shown in her illustration of this scene and she may have thus been unaware of it. However, Spinden (1933: 251) noted the indentation and still suggested that the object was a ball, and supports this by referring to representations in the Codex Laud of balls with slightly sunken centers. If Spinden is correct, I am inclined to see this object as a ball rather than a ring because of its position in the center of the court rather than on one side or wall as it should be if it were a ring.
García Payón (1959: 452) points out that the individual to the far left in this scene is carrying a roll of paper or skin. This identification is certainly correct and undoubtedly also applies to the object being held by the person to the right in the NE panel. This latter personage is in all probability the same as the former, as his position and headgear indicate. In each of these scenes the object that he carries has a large glyph associated with it, located next to its bottom end. The glyph is different in each case, and I would like to suggest that each represents the contents of the roll with which it is associated. On the NE panel it is the sign García Payón interprets as "Venus" that would be the symbol of the contents of the roll. If this is the case, it is uncertain whether this represents the winner or the loser, that is, the sacrificer or the sacrifice. The glyph on the NW panel is unknown to me, but it is interesting to note that it could be another version of the fire glyph that is in a corresponding position on the other side of the panel. The fire glyph on the right side shown union, while on the left side, if they are the same, they could show division.

The central panels (Figs. 28-31) of the Large Ball-court have been uncovered only since 1961-2, and as far as I know have been the subject of only one discussion (García Payón 1963). In subject matter the central panels do not fit into the sequence established by the end ones, and vary in a number of ways from these. The central panels are
some 60 centimeters wider than the end ones, although the main scenes are approximately the same size; they have a figure in the band at the top rather than a design; and they have four bands of design at either side of the main tablet, where the end panels have none (at one side they have the smaller tablet with the skeleton). The composition of these central reliefs is also rather different from that of the end ones.

The following analysis and interpretations are based on the work of García Payón (1963: 246-50). Each of the central panels can be divided into eleven sections (Fig. 27): the top and bottom bands (sections 1 and 2), the four left vertical bands (3-6), the central scene (7), and the four right vertical bands (8-11). The relief of the bands on one side is matched by that of the corresponding bands of the other side (e.g. bands 3 and 11 are equal). Bands 3 and 11 are stylized interlacing femurs. Bands 4 and 10 are composed of stylized owls (symbols of the night and the dead), interlaced elements (ollin), and various parts of the human body. Bands 5 and 9 repeat the femur motif, and 6 and 8 are stylized rabbit heads. In the central scene of the mid-North panel (Fig. 31) can be seen to the right a number of maguey plants in various stages of growth. To the left of these is the outline of a temple: a roof with steeped turrets, a front and back wall, and a front platform. The temple is filled with liquid, and lying halfway into the temple and just above the water is a figure like a Chac-mool, with what may be yokes placed over his body. A volute issues from his mouth to show
Fig. 27. Diagram Showing Numbered Sections of the Central Panels of the Large Ball-court.
Fig. 28. Large Ball-court, Mid-South Panel

Scale: 1 cm. = 13.5 cm.
Fig. 29. Large Ball-court, Mid-South Panel, Detail
Fig. 30. Large Ball-court, Mid-North Panel

Scale: 1 cm. = 12.5 cm.
Fig. 31. Large Ball-court, Mid-North Panel, Detail
that he lives, and that he is giving his beneficios. A figure stands at his head and holds a pot and points to him. On the roof of the temple sit two personages, the first one, who carries an S-shaped symbol of lightning, is a fanged Tlaloc, while the second is Quetzalcoatl, identified by the ecallicatcozcatl, the wind jewel. The stylized rabbits in the side bands represent Ometochtli, the god of the fiesta of pulque.

The temple is filled with pulque and the person with the jar is Ixtlilton, another god of pulque. Chac-mool has also been interpreted as a god of pulque, representing the divine drunkenness. There are two legends which bear upon this scene. The first is Huastec which dates from a 1579 document which relates that Tezcatlipoca killed Ometochtli with the latter's consent so that he might have eternal life. There is a modern Totonac legend that tells of a supernatural being called "Old Thunder" who is chained to the bottom of the sea and whose rumblings are heard from June to August. There are many versions of this legend, but all relate of a god of storm who is placed in a position similar to Chac-mool.

Continuing with García Payón's analysis, but now in reference to the mid-South panel (Fig. 29), to the left in the central scene are found magueys again, and next to these a temple that is like the one of the other panel. The temple is filled with water and from it partially emerges a human figure with a fish helmet. In front of the temple is a Tlaloc who has an acocote a gourd that was used to extract the liquid from the
maguey from which the fish-man is drinking pulque. Tlaloc holds in his hands a rod with an angular handle and the lower end of the rod passes through an object connected with the acocote. Over the temple is Quetzalcoatl, again wearing the wind jewel, and he holds a lightning symbol. Above Tlaloc is an anthropomorphic rabbit, also carrying the lightning symbol. The material suggests that

the representation of beings who live in the water and depend on the god of this element, rise to the surface in order to receive from Tlaloc the teoctli, the divine drink, and the rabbit is the representation of the Centzon Totochin, the four hundred or innumerable gods of pulque (García Payón 1963: 249).

Over this panel is a frieze (section 1) with a loudly laughing face in the center, and a body that is horizontally unfolded, and represents a dancing figure. His feet are on hieroglyphs that differ from the north to the south panel, and may represent night and day. This person probably suggests "life under the euphoria of the divine drink" (García Payón 1963: 250), and his unfolding body is a representation of duality expressing masculine-feminine, night-day, wet-dry, and similar contrasting concepts.

I would like to offer some additional notes and alternate interpretation of this material.

In regard to the side bands of owls (section 4 and 10), it should be mentioned that the representation of an owl in the Codex Vaticanus B (sheet 91) is extremely close to that of these Tajín owls. Seler's
comment on the owl and the temple in which he resides is that this is "the Owl's House, the Dark House of the Earth" (Seler 1902-3: sheet 91 of Codex). The portrayal of the temples as found on both central panels is one frequently seen in the codices, and the stepped roof-turrets are also encountered (e.g. Seler 1902-3, Fig. 46).

In the north scene the identification of Tlaloc seems certain enough, but that of the other three is open to question. If the interpretation of the glyph which the seated figure to the right wears is correct as being a wind jewel, there is no question but that this is Quetzalcoatl. However, the wind jewel is said to be a transverse cut of a marine snail (Saenz 1962: 20), and the Tajín glyph bears little resemblance to the usual representations of this element, so that another personage may be represented here. The glyph seems to be an eye and because of the spiked lower edge, this may be a variation of the solar eye, identifying this figure as a sun god.

In regard to the "Chac-mool" figure, there are actually very few similarities between this person and the Chac-mools from Tula and Chichén Itzá, the main resemblances being that the figure is on his back and has his knees raised. But the Tajín figure does not have his head raised off the ground and turned to one side or his arms up with the hands holding a container over the stomach, as are characteristics of the Chacs (compare Tozzer 1957, Figs. 71-6). The Tajín personage is also bound
down as none of the Chacs are. Thus there seems to be little reason
to consider the Tajín figure to be a Chac-mool. It seems more likely
that he is a sacrifice victim; this is indicated by the fact that he is
bound and by the relation of the features of his head to those of the
severed heads in Scene G: the stylized eye, the elongated upper lip,
and the hair style. García Payón suggests that those things holding him
down are yokes, but it is probable that they are straps of some kind.
The profile of the top of them conforms to the contours of the figure's
torso, and there is no room allowed for the width of the yoke's body
over the top of the figure's body. The similarity of this figure to the
bound child in Scene J has already been noted.

There is no question that a pulque ceremony is the subject of
this scene, but it is not clear why García Payón has chosen Ixlilton
as the pulque god represented. Ixtlilton, "Little Black Face, "is
mentioned as being the god "who broaches the pulque jar" (Seler
1902-3: 68), but he is not an actual pulque god, but a god identified with
either the dance (of course associated with pulque), or with health and
curing (Seler 1902-3: 68; Vaillant 1950: 181). Directly associated with
pulque are a large number of deities, the main god being Patecatl and
the main goddess Mayauel (Seler 1902-3: 169-79; Vaillant 1950: 180).
Although this figure in the Tajín relief has no identifying characteristics
other than the jug he holds, if he is a Nahuatl pulque god, he is probably
Patecatl. It may be argued, of course, that by virtue of the jug he should be associated with Ixtlilton, despite the fact that this is a relatively minor aspect of this god's activities. The pot that is being carried is the same shape as the pulque-pot that is depicted numerous times in the Codex Vaticanus B (e.g. sheets 56, 89).

In assembling the diverse elements of the scene it is first apparent that a ceremony of maguey fertility is being represented. The maguey plants in different stages of growth are unquestionable indications of this. A sacrifice has been made or is about to be made to the gods of pulque or of the maguey plant. Present is one of these gods, as well as Tlaloc, god of rain and fertility, and either Quetzalcoatl or a sun god, both deities of life. Seler believes that the gods of pulque were essentially harvest gods, for the drinking of pulque was intimately associated with the completion of the harvest, and drunkenness is related to the dying and renewal of life, as in the slaying of Ometochtli by Tezcatlipoca where his death "'was only like the sleep of one drunk that he afterwards recovered and again became fresh and well'" (Seler 1902-3: 167). Thus the growth of maguey becomes more generally related to the success of other crops and the reason for the presence of Tlaloc and Quetzalcoatl or a sun god becomes clear.

In the central panel of the south wall, it is again the maguey and pulque which are the essential elements involved. The growing magueys
are repeated in this scene, and above is the rabbit, basically the representation of all the pulque gods, that is, the essence of pulque. The stylized rabbits are also in the side bands. In addition to the innumerable gods of pulque, the rabbit is also a symbol of the moon. In this regard it is of interest to note the rabbit's positive relative to the seated person whom García Payón has suggested is Quetzalcoatl, but whose glyph in this case is even less like the wind jewel and more like a sun disk than in the other panel. If this is a sun god, he and the rabbit are quite comparable to two figures in the Borgia Codex (sheet 71), one being a sun god who sits on the left of the scene and the other rabbit as a part of the more complex symbol of the moon which is to the right and higher than the sun god.

But the center of attention of this scene is the Tlaloc and the fish-helmeted man. At variance with García Payón's interpretation, I would like to suggest that Tlaloc is engaged in a ceremony of auto-sacrifice, in which he is running a rod through his penis, and that which was termed as acocote is actually blood flowing toward the fish-man. In a squatting position, Tlaloc holds his penis in his right hand and with his left hand turned over in a pushing position at the top of the rod, he passes the rod through the penis and it emerges between the fingers of the hand holding this organ, while the blood pours out to the fish-man. Blood-letting was quite frequent over all of Mesoamerica and the penis
was a common source (Thompson 1961: 17). On a Maya vase which has figures which Thompson interprets as carrying out a ceremony of blood-drawing from the penis, the figures are in positions quite analogous to that of Tlaloc (Thompson 1961, Fig. 1). Each squates with one hand between his legs, presumably holding his penis, and he carries an instrument for blood-letting in his other hand which he holds at chest level. On the Maya vase there is a decoration which Thompson thinks may be a sign for jade, a symbol of water and precious objects and possibly for blood as a precious liquid. On sheet 4 of the Codex Borgia is a group of elements including a pot that Seler identifies as a pulque vessel, and above it is an arm and hand holding a bone awl, the instrument frequently used to draw blood, with flowers—symbol of blood—associated with both the awl and the vessel. Thus auto-sacrifice, blood, and pulque are shown associated in this drawing, as they are in the sculpture at Tajín.

Further, on sheet 40 of the Codex Vaticanus B is seen a maguey plant over an upturned vessel which contains liquid, certainly pulque, and a fish—symbol of water—drinking at the inverted bottom. In the Borgia (sheet 16) there is a representation of Mayauel, goddess of maguey, at whose breast a fish is suckling. In Borgia 14 a Tlaloc is shown in front of a fish in water. In the Tajín relief the fish-man rises from the temple's liquid, pulque or water, and takes the sacrificial blood
offered by Tlaloc, god of rain. Seler (1902-3: 75) says that the word chalchihuitl, meaning "jewel-water," or "precious moisture," was "conceived as blood which is drawn from himself by the penitent," and that the connection between rain and blood, the "blood of mortification," was "that the one was intended to draw down the other, that the blood which was offered was intended to bring down the rain on the fields."

In an analysis of the blood sacrifice complex in the New World, Acosta Saignes (1950: 36) suggests that the drinking of blood which forms part of this complex in South America, is in Mesoamerica substituted for by the drinking of the precious liquid, by which he apparently means pulque. Finally, Seler indicates that the rebus combination to form Tlaloc (tlalli and octli, "pulque of the earth") is used to suggest the presence of this god in a scene of fertility and growth (Seler 1902-3: 230).

Consequently this scene from the Tajín Large Ball-court is an extremely complicated one in its symbology, but it ties together all of the elements for a blood-pulque-water complex. All of these liquids are precious elements, and in some senses divine. Tlaloc provides his blood in sacrifice to the beings representing the water of the earth, who drink it in a ceremonial reception of rain and life. As these beings receive this precious liquid the water of the earth is thus replenished and the maguey will prosper, and as there is maguey (that is, pulque), so there is a harvest in general, so there is life. Blood, pulque, and water may all be seen as liquids of life.
But the significance of this scene does not end here, for the pulque gods were not only gods of harvest, that is, beneficence, but they could also wreak destruction on mankind; they were gods of malevolence who worked through individuals who came under their influence through intoxication. Among the Aztecs the man who committed crimes while drunk was excused, for it was the gods of pulque who were responsible (Sahagun 1950: 48). The fish is not only associated with water, but is part of a complex related to death, the underworld, and the earth monster (Tozzer 1957: 105). The thunderbolt, carried by the figures in this scene, is not only a symbol of rain but of fiery destruction (Seler 1902-3: 22, Figs. 47, 48, 170). And in the side bands are interlaced femurs, symbols of death, and stylized owls which are associated with the underworld and death and are rulers of the House of Drought (Seler 1902-3: sheet 13). So here as has been seen elsewhere is the duality that so characterizes the glimpses which can be obtained of the theological and cosmological thought of Tajín's builders. García Payón must be quite correct when he suggests that the figure above each of the central panels represents duality. This figure's body is unfolded so that he has two legs on either side, not as if he has been split down the middle, but as if each side is the mirror image of the other.

The fundamental duality of the Tajín world-view seems to be
life-death (as opposed, for example, to the Oriental which is masculine-feminine) and this duality is superbly expressed in the two central panels of the Large Ball-court: in the south panel the drawing of blood to bring life, with death omnipresent; in the north panel, the taking of life, that is, death, to bring new life. In both scenes the magueys grow and blossom.

The Panels of the Small Ball-Court

The only discussion of any length that deals with the panels of the Small Ball-court comes from Spinden (1933: 245-6). The material that follows is a summary of this work. The SE panel (Fig. 32) shows seated on a bench a figure with guardian serpents around him. On the NE panel (Fig. 34) there is another seated personage who carries a shield on his right arm and may hold part of his necklace with his left hand. Two intertwined serpents are between his legs. The NW panel (Fig. 35a) carries two figures, the one to the left holding a staff and a shield or a fan. The Codex Colombino portrays around a ball-court four merchants holding fans and staffs. The second person is dressed as an eagle and holds a pouch. A string of beads hangs over his forehead. There are three figures in the SW panel (Fig. 33b), an eagle-man between two humans. Beads hang into the right hand of the eagle-man, and he has a heart in his beak. A woman who may be
Fig. 32. Small Ball-court, SE Panel and Portion of the South Band
Fig. 33. Small Ball-court

a. Mid-South Panel;
b. SW Panel.
Fig. 34. Small Ball-court, NE Panel

Scale: 1 cm. = 9 cm.
Fig. 35. Small Ball-court
a. NW Panel;
b. Mid-North Panel.
Fig. 35. Small Ball-court
Chalchiuhtlicue stands to the left in water. Both she and the man to the other side hold slender wands. A symposium paper by Herbert Spinden is referred to which shows how the eagle-men in these latter two scenes and that of the SW panel of the Large Ball-court are involved in warrior society activities and engaged in receiving jade tributes. A Codex Laud scene depicts eagles, men, and women holding strings of beads in their mouths.

To amend and expand these notes from Spinden, the SE and NE panels will be mentioned first. Both of these show a single person with an intertwined snake associated with him. The figure in the NE panel carries a decorated sack rather than a shield (the usual tail can be seen under the chin of the snake on the figure's right). The other figure holds a sack in his left hand. The significance of these carvings is pointed to by representations in codices of two crossed or intertwined snakes which are interpreted by Seler as Rain Snakes, snakes of beneficence (Seler 1902-3: 45-6, Figs. 148, 162, 163). The resemblance between the Tajín snakes and these of the codices is very striking. The heads are very similar and of each pair of Rain Snakes as illustrated by Seler, one snake has a plain body and the other has a banded one, while on the NE panel at Tajín one snake is plain and the other is designed.

The sack design of the SE panel is destroyed, but that of the NE
is the sign of ollin. As mentioned earlier, I believe that this sign is a representation of duality, but which at different times may have specific referants. Here the sign may refer to the ball-game and the bag may be a container of the ball. A further indication that these two scenes are related to the ball-game is the presence of the circular central portion of the body of each monster above three of the four end panels of this ball-court. Above the SW panel the ring contains the sign of ollin. These rings are possible representations of ball-court goals. However, no rings or goals have ever been reported from the Tajín area.

On the SW panel the objects held in the hands of the two side figures cannot be wands as Spinden suggests, for they are made of very flexible material and seem to be some sort of rope or vine that bends and runs horizontally above the eagle-man, but ends in an undetermined manner. A palma scene of two creatures eating serpents (Proskouriakoff 1954, Fig. 6, palma 3) may suggest an explanation for this. The area just above the head of the eagle-man is badly worn, while on the top stone it is largely broken out. The nature of the ceremony is thus lost. However, two more suggestive elements are the water in which the eagle-man sits and the sun-disk ring (ball-court goal) with the sign of ollin as part of the body of the monster who looks down on this scene. Whether there is a heart in the mouth of the eagle-man
is debatable. As best can be determined, the item is not of the shape that is characteristic of the Mesoamerican rendering of the human heart.

The interpretation of the NW panel is no more clear than the last one. The standing figure holds a spear, not a staff, and whatever he holds in his right hand, shield or fan, it seems to be upside down, as determined by the hand position. Here again the sign of ollin is the central design, as it also is on the bag which the eagle-man holds. It may be speculated that the circular object held by the standing figure is a ball-court ring, the ollin symbol being a reference to this function, and that the bag of the eagle-man is a ball-sack.

Each of these scenes is small; little activity and few figures are represented. Many interpretations are thus feasible. For the NW panel it is certainly possible that a scene of trading or one with reference to war is depicted, or still another interpretation that has yet to be suggested. However, as these scenes are placed on the walls of a ball-court, I am inclined to look first to the ball-game and attendant ceremonies for explanation. The fact that two of the six scenes of the Large Ball-court actually have the ball-court as part of the relief supports this view. It is certain that ollin, in some contexts, refers to the ball-game. This symbol appears in each of the three better-preserved panels of the Small Ball-court, and in at least four of the six of the
Large Ball-court, adding further weight to this position. Nonetheless, it must be emphasized that this stand is only one of speculation.

The two central panels are the most badly effaced of those on the Small Ball-court and little can be said about them. On the south side virtually only the bottom stone relief remains. On it can be seen a bench like that of the NW and SE reliefs, and one figure to either side, the left person with a knee up as is often seen above sacrifice victims, but it is also the position of the man to the right of the eagle-man in the SW panel. In front of the bench is a turtle, an animal associated with water, but also with death (Tozzer 1957: 105). At the top of the center stone is a small figure seated with his legs crossed.

The bottom of the mid-North relief shows two seated personages with their legs crossed. One of these figures seems to be seated on water. At the top of this scene are again encountered the intertwined Rain Snakes, this time their bodies forming a circle. Thus the only references discernible in the central reliefs are to water, and in one case, water and death.
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

One of the main theses of León-Portilla's *Aztec Thought and Culture* (1963) is that Nahuatl theology and worldview in general were pervaded by dualism. This was most cogently expressed in the nature of Ometéotl (Huehueteotl), the god of duality, also known simultaneously as Tonacatecuhtli, Tonacacihuatl, Lord of our flesh, Lady of our flesh. His dwelling place was Omeyyocan, the place of duality, the thirteenth level of heaven, the "place of the cosmic origin of all things" (León-Portilla 1963: 31). Ometéotl was also at the center, the "navel" of the earth, the mid-point of the four directions, and León-Portilla feels that the Nahuatl "wise men believed that all of the gods who appeared in pairs (man and wife) were manifestations or personifications of the dual god" (1963: 97), that

whatever pantheism there might be in the wise men's concept of the Divine and of the world could only be described by such a hybrid term as the dynamic 'Ometéotization' ("dualization") of the universe. For to the Nahuatl mind all activity was determined by the intervention of Ometéotl. There was always the need for an active masculine aspect and a passive or conceiving feminine counterpart. And that was precisely the origin of the countless dual deities; in every area they symbolized the activity of Ometéotl. Generation and conception were moments inseparably unified in the dual divinity. They made possible his very existence and that of all things. From a dynamic point of view, all existing things received 'truth', 'foundation', from this timeless ambivalence of Ometéotl (León-Portilla 1963: 99).
It is possible that a similar dualistic world-view was held by the priest-elite of Tajín. García Payón (1951: 175; 1954: 26) has suggested that the architectural elements of the niche or the niche with the stepped fret are representations of the dualism of light and darkness, with the associated concepts of life and death, night and day, sky and earth. Further, he sees the double or "split" figure above the central panels of the Large Ball-court (Figs. 28, 30) as an expression of duality (García Payón 1963: 250). In the scenes of the central panels themselves are other indications of dualism, the drawing of blood on one side, the taking of life on the other, and a number of symbols in each, representing life and death. Another expression of this dualism may possibly be found in the sign ollin (movement). The interlocked element between the two central figures of the NW panel of the Large Ball-court (Fig. 25) is identified by García Payón (1959: 454) as ollin. The usual codex representations of ollin vary from this one in that rather than being interlocking, the two main elements touch at their apexes (that point then being covered with an eye; Fig. 36). However, the interlocking style does occur in the Codex Borgia (Seler 1902-3: 180, Fig. 384). Also identified by García Payón in Tajín sculpture is another variation of this sign, one in which the interlocking elements are not curvilinear, but right angles (Fig. 36d). Seler believes that the common codex representation of ollin was probably meant to
symbolize the course of the sun one of the sides being light for the day sky, the other side dark for the night sky. The ruler of the day-sign ollin was Xolotl, god of twins, monstrosities, and the ball-game, and Seler feels that the original root of ollin is ol, meaning "something round", "ball", "rubber ball", (ol also occurs in olli, the word for rubber; Seler 1902-3: 179-83). All of this seems to suggest that the basic concept involved in the sign ollin was duality: the complementary halves of the sign were colored light and dark; if the motion of the sun was represented, this is dualistic in that the sun moved in the day through the heavens, properly the sun's realm, and at night it was swallowed by the earth or moved through the underworld, still the region of the earth; Xolotl was the god of doubleness; and ollin, through Xolotl and its own derivation, is related to the ball-game, a ceremonial representation of duality.

More light is thrown on the problem of the Nahuatl concept of motion by León-Portilla. The Aztecs believed that we are in a fifth "age", the four previous ages having been destroyed by the gods' battles for supremacy. The gods here represent forces and while the gods, or forces of the universe are in harmony, an age endures, but when, as in the first four suns, one god holds power, the harmony is only temporary, for another god soon attempts to gain ascendancy, and with the overthrow of the reigning god, the world ends in cataclysm and a new age
begins. But after the first four suns,

a certain harmony was established by the gods who agreed to sacrifice themselves at Teotihuacán. As a result of this harmony, the Fifth Age, the Sun of Movement, had begun.... And according to the myths, "the sun moved, it followed its path" as a consequence of the sacrifice of the gods (the cosmic forces).

But to keep the sun in motion, constantly moving, a concession had been necessary. To each of the four fundamental gods, to each of the four directions, a specific period of time within the Fifth Age was allotted for domination and subordination. This division of time gave rise to the years of the East, of the North, of the West, and of the South. In abstract terms, motion appeared as a consequence of the spatialization of time and of the orientation of the years and days toward the four directions....not only in each year, but also in each day, the influence of one of the four spatial directions predominated. Space and time, combining and interpenetrating, made possible the harmony among the gods (the four cosmic forces) and, consequently, the movement of the sun and the existence of life. The profound significance of movement to the Nahuas can be deduced from the common Nahuatl root of the words movement, heart, and soul. To the ancient Mexicans, life, symbolized by the heart (y-ólo-tl), was inconceivable without the element which explains it, movement (y-ólli).

The Nahuas, therefore, believed that movement and life resulted from the harmony achieved by the spatial orientation of the years and the days, in other words, by the spatialization of time. So long as this harmony continued...the Fifth Sun would continue to exist--it would continue to move (León-Portilla 1963: 54-6).

This becomes more clear if the sign ollin (that is, the concept of movement) is seen as being basically an expression of dualism, an expression of that balance which makes movement possible. That the balance is dualistic is indicated by the fact that the forces are opposing pairs: fire and water; air (or wind) and earth; and that in the four
previous ages, which were not in true balance, each was ended by a
dualistic struggle, one god overthrowing the one in power. Thus
movement has its source in dualistic harmony and this is shown by
the two opposing but balanced elements of its sign. And it is not so
much "movement" which is fundamental to life ("heart"), but its
underlying concept of a balanced duality.

However, incongruously, the "harmony" was not peaceful, it
was harmony only in that it was balanced, for within the universal
scheme the dual forces continued to struggle for supremacy. This
aspect of duality found its expression in the Sacred or Flowery War
(la guerra florida), the war of opposites. This universal war was
kept in control only by the "spatialization of time", by the balance of
power that was imposed on the contrasting forces. If this balance were
to break down, the world would again be subjected to destruction.
It was in recognition of this but seemingly with reasoning in the opposite
direction that the Aztecs conceived their role of feeding the sun, assist­
ing it to maintain its power so that the balance would not fall. The
interlocked version of the sign for movement is considered by Vaillant
(1940: in discussion for the 13th week) as a symbol of the Sacred War.
He does not indicate that he also sees this as the sign for ollin, but it
is of value to note that the Borbonicus scene where the sign he mentions
occurs, is for the 13th week, the week which began with the day 1
ollin. In sum, the symbol ollin was a representation of the Nahuatl concept of the duality of the universe, opposing forces in conflict, but balanced; a concept which was sometimes expressed in the terms of the Sacred War, and which was used to apply to corollary ideas such as the movement of the sun or the ball-game. Fundamentally, it was the Nahuatl visualization of life.

At Tajín, the preponderance of the interlocked design among the glyphs provides a strong indication, taken with the other evidence presented above, that the Tajín world-view was basically dualistic. León-Portilla suggests that the Nahuatl dualism was probably basically masculine-feminine, but it seems to me that that of Tajín was life-death (or perhaps birth-death). The "cult of death" which is one of the most celebrated aspects of Tajín culture, is the expression of one side of this dualism, while a little noticed "cult of life" can be pointed out, to complete it. The recognition of the importance of death at Tajín, such as is mentioned, for example by Coe (1962: 122) and Jiménez Moreno (1959: 1070), is generally derived from the ball-court scenes of sacrifice, the skeletons in the side panels, the descending skeletal god of death found in two scenes, and the commonly found bone motif. This "death cult" can be seen also in the column scenes, where numerous sacrifices and several skeletons appear. But evidence for a "cult of life" can also be drawn from the ball-courts: the auto-sacrifice of
Tlaloc; symbols of life such as water, growing plants, lightning symbols, and Rain Snakes; and from the columns, the major example being the Tree of Life. Thus, at least as far as the world-view of Tajín has been expressed in stone, the dualism seems to be based on a life-death dichotomy. It is not at all impossible, of course, that this life-death could have been reduced to masculine-feminine in the more sophisticated elaborations of the religion which have not found expression in the carving.

One of the finest artistic representations of life-death dualism is to be found in the stone carvings of heads which come from the Central Veracruz area. These heads show one side of the face fully fleshed, but only skeletal on the other. One superb example is a palma illustrated by Anton (1961, Fig. 29), and another is located in the museum of archaeology in Jalapa, Veracruz. Also from the Central Veracruz area come clay death masks, fleshless humans, and representation of Mictlantecuhtli, all in association with the "smiling heads", which leads Jiménez Moreno (1959: 1070) to speak of the great ambivalence of world-view of this area: the love of joy (life), but with death "always waiting in ambush". In time, a life-death dualism reaches back to the Preclassic in Mesoamerica, as half flesh, half skeleton masks are known from Tlatilco (Covarrubias 1957, Pl. IV).

The Tajín dualistic world-view found one of its major expressions in the ball-game. The significance of the ball-game itself at Tajín is not to be doubted. There are six ball-courts, two elaborately
sculptured, within the central area of Tajín. Two of the six sculptured scenes of the Large Ball-court are depicted occurring within the walls of ball-courts, and two scenes from the columns display ball-court ceremonies. While the general meaning of the ball-court in Mesoamerica has never been clearly determined, it is probable that in the representation of duality, one of its significant aspects is indicated. Seler has said that "the ball game is quite properly the expression of duality, as well as of antagonism" (quoted in Stern 1948: 70). García Payón (1949a: 305) mentions the relation of duality and the ball-game, and Knouth (1961: 197) speaks of the ball-game as a symbol of the universal "state of flux", of delicate equilibrium. Stern, in his study of the ball game, suggests that its dualistic aspect may be the basic reason for its general occurrence in Mesoamerica (Stern 1948: 70).

Apart from the obvious aspect of having two opposing teams who play the game, evidence that the ball-game was a representation of duality includes the fact that Xolotl, the god of doubleness, was also god of the game, and, as Linga (1949: 120) has pointed out, the gods shown playing ball in the codices are frequently opposing pairs, such as Quetzalcoatl and Tezcatlipoca, or the Red and Black Tezcatlipocas. The relationship of the sign ollin and the ball-game was mentioned above, but an interesting association occurs between various
references to the game and a sign of ollin which has not, to my knowledge, been previously identified. This sign (Fig. 36e) Seler calls a "netted figure", and mentions that it is found with ball-game symbols, but he concludes that it refers to an "unknown game" (Seler 1902-3: 278). An examination of this netted figure shows that its central portion is formed by two interlocking right angles, the same motif that has been determined to be one of the Tajín symbols of motion. It is probable that the netted figure is a variation of the representation of the concept which the day-sign ollin stands for, that is, a symbol of movement or duality. This is supported by the fact that in the Wiener Handschrift (Seler 1904a; Vol. 2, Fig. 289) this figure has the day-sign ollin imposed over the area where the two angles interlock. Next to the total figure are two rubber balls, and further, shields and spears, references to war and the Sacred War. Other examples of this right-angle ollin in association with a rubber ball are to be found in the Codex Borgia (sheet 62) and the Vaticanus B (sheet 67), in both of which is present Xochiquetzal, goddess of flowers and of pleasure, but also frequently identified with the ball-game. This netted ollin and the ball-court are shown in the Aubin Tonalamatl and the Borbonicus (Seler 1902-3: 278).

Duality and movement, then, were concepts employed in the symbolism of the ball-game, and as these were considered fundamen-
Fig. 36. Representations of the Sign Ollin

a. from Tajín, NW Panel of the Large Ball-court;
b. from Codex Borgia (Seler 1902-3, Fig. 384g);
c. from Tonalamatl of the Aubin Collection (Seler 1902-3, Fig. 384c);
d. from Tajín, NW Panel of the Large Ball-court;
e. from Codex Vaticanus B, Sheet 67.
tal expressions of life, it is not surprising to find strong support for a further relation of the ball-game to general fertility and agriculture. Spinden (1933: 247) presents an argument for the fertility aspects of the ball-game based in part upon the association of ball-courts with water in the Codices Colombino and Borbonicus, and Tezozomoc's legend of the founding of Coatepec, where animal and vegetable life originate at the ball-court. She also mentions a number of ethnographic examples of ball-games in North America which were agriculturally oriented (Spinden 1933: 258-9). Stern reports that Tezozomoc described how a court was divided in half and in the center a triangle was drawn around a hole, which was called the well of water (Stern: 1948: 54). And from the Leyenda de los Soles comes the following story (as quoted by Florescano 1964: 136):

Jugó Huémac a la pelota, y jugó con los Tlaloque. Luego dijeron los Tlaloque: "¿Qué ganaramos en el J?" Y dijo Huémac: "Mis chalchihuites y mis plumas de Quetzalli." Otra vez dijeron a Huémac: "Eso mismo ganas tú: nuestros chalchihuites y nuestras plumas de Quetzalli." Jugó Huémac y les ganó. Fueron enseguida los Tlaloque a trocar lo que habían de dar a Huémac, esto es, elotes (masorcas de maíz verde) y las preciosas hojas de maíz verde en el que el elote crece.

Here, the ball-game's ritual importance for fertility is clearly seen, as it is maize, the Mexican staff of life, which is "won" on the playing field.
Of the gods associated with the ball-game a large number, including Xipe Totec, Centeotl, and Coatlicue, are fertility deities. Xochipilli and Xochiquetzal, in addition to Xolotl, are often mentioned as patrons of the game, a logical association as they are deities of games; but they are also gods of flowers and pleasure, and fundamentally, fertility gods. And Xochipilli is sometimes considered as a variation of Centeotl, the young maize god (Stern 1948: 64; 68; Vaillant 1950: 179).

In relation to its fertility association, it is sometimes suggested that the ball-game was direct sexual symbolism, the passing of the ball through the goal being a symbol of intercourse. In support of this hypothesis, Linga (1949: 121) reports that some chroniclers said that when a player managed the rare feat of actually scoring a goal, the crowd shouted "'Eres un gran adultero." However, he does not specify what chroniclers made this report.

The evidence for the association of the ball-game and sacrifice, both by heart removal and decapitation, is overwhelming, and here again it is fertility which is the unifying factor. Sacrifice is shown taking place in the ball-court in the NE panel of the Large Ball-court, and sacrifice, a fertility ceremony, and the ball-court are all shown on one scene (Scene G, Fig. 14) from the columns. In the Codex Borgia (sheet 21) and Red and Black Tezcatlipocas face one another across a
ball-court in the center of which is a human sacrifice and on the Black Tezcatlipoca's side is a severed snake, the symbol of drought, with a ball placed at its blood-spouting center. Stern (1948: 71) states that "human sacrifice, explicable in general terms as a measure to promote the favor of the gods, was especially directed toward ensuring fruitfulness" when it was involved with the ball-game. It is well known that among the peoples of Mesoamerica, human sacrifice and fertility were directly related and this need not be dwelled upon. But sacrifice involving decapitation is so important to the ball-game, as determined by the frequency with which they are associated, that it should be dealt with at greater length. In one Tajín sculpture two severed heads have been placed at the feet of a high priest in a ceremony related to the ball-game (Scene G, Fig. 14). In another scene a decapitation is shown taking place (Fig. 20), but as this is a fragment it is not possible to determine if it is involved with the ball-game. Examples of decapitated figures and the ball-court in codices are located in the Codex Borgia (sheet 42), the Borbonicus (the 19th week) and the Wiener Handschrift (Seler 1904a, Vol. 2, Fig. 3a). In the carvings from the Santa Lucia Cotzumahualpa region are a number of instances in which severed heads are shown being carried by or associated with ball-players (Covarrubias 1957, Pl. XLI). The reliefs from the Great Ball-court at Chichén Itzá show
two ball teams facing one another, with the leader of one team holding the severed head of the other, presumably losing, team. From the neck of the latter individual come six serpents and an elaborate vine-like blossoming plant (Marquina 1951, Fig. 266). From Sierra de Aparicio come four sculptures, each one having one figure, a ball-player who has been beheaded and from the stump of whose neck emerge seven serpents (García Payón 1949f, Fig. 1). In one of the myths involving Huitzilopochtli and his sister Coyolxauhqui, he slays her in the ball-court and cuts off her head (Knouth 1961: 192).

Suggesting decapitation, a skull is at the feet of ball-players in the Tajin relief M-138 (Fig. 6). In the Chichen Itza Great Ball-court carving there is between the two teams what may be a ball which has a skull on its side. In the Codex Borbonicus, the page of the 19th week, a skull is shown on a ball-court next to one of the rings. Referring to the hole in the center of the court, Tezozomoc used the word *itzompan*, which Seler has translated as "place of the skull" (Stern 1948: 54).

Regarding the illustration in the Codex Borbonicus, Vaillant comments that the ball is symbolized by a skull passing through the ring (Vaillant 1940). Knouth (1961: 196) implies that the ball and the skull associated with the ball-court may be synonymous symbols.

Assuming that the ball-game represents the delicate balance
of the universe, Knouth (1961: 197) believes that decapitation as a ball-game rite was symbolic of the sacrifice of the moon, allowing the passage of the sun, the source of life. He bases this primarily on the legend of Huitzilopochtli, a sun god, in which he slays his sister on the ball-court by beheading her, and he leaves her skull "as a symbol of the obscurity of night, thus as the moon" (Knouth 1961: 192). In order to gain support for ritual decapitation being even more closely linked with fertility, Knouth draws from the scene in the Codex Vindobonensis in which a Tree of Life grows from a severed head, with what he believes to be two burning rubber balls at the base. This is tenuous support for relation to the ball-game, however, as the identification of the rubber balls is open to question; the particular objects to which he refers are frequently called burning copal balls. For the Aztec ritual of decapitation in general Thomp­son (1933: 143) considers it to symbolize the harvest of the maize, the breaking of the ears from the stalk. Whatever the specific interpretation may be, the association of the ball, severed head, and skull is certainly suggestive. But this aside, the carvings from Chichén Itzá and Aparicio indicate that the basic reason for decapitation is fertility or growth. The plant that emerges from the neck of the beheaded ball-player in the scene of the Chichen Great Ball-court is an immediate reference to fertility, while the snakes coming from
the head of this player as well as those in the Aparicio carvings are symbolic of blood, the essence of life.

Some of the equipment being worn by the ball-players in the Tajin scenes (NE and NW panels of the Large Ball-court, and Scene A; Figs. 25, 26, and 13) has previously been identified as representations of archaeologically known yokes, hachas, and palmas. The theory, most forcefully advanced by Ekholm, that these items are ceremonial copies of gear actually worn in the game seems to have been generally accepted, with only a few dissensions (Castro Leal 1962: 28-9). But there is also good evidence that these objects were placed in burials (Ekholm 1946: 593; Medellín Zenil 1960: 113, 187).

The use of the yokes, hachas, and palmas (Fig. 37) has long been an object of speculation, and so also their symbolism. As early as 1893 Francis Parry suggested that the yokes were involved in fertility and phallic ceremonies, indicative of their symbolism (Fewkes 1907: 258). Two very frequent motifs found on the yokes are a crouching jaguar and a toad-like animal, both symbols of earth, and the shape of the yoke is like the Nahuatl sign for cave. These two facts have led many to suggest that the yoke represents the open jaws of the earth monster, the receiving mother earth, the entrance to the underworld (Covarrubias 1957: 181; Medellín Zenil 1960: 104; Feriz 1958: 400). The early find by Genin (Ekholm 1946: 593) is
Fig. 37. Type Examples of Yokes, Hachas, and Palmas

a. stone yoke;
b. hacha or "thin stone head";
c. "standard" palma;
d. laterally-flattened palma.
which a skeleton was placed with its head inside the open end of a
yoke is a strong support of this. In later finds more corroborative
data have been produced. Covarrubias (1957: 183) reports that in
a funerary mound near San Andres Tuxtla, hachas, the thin stone
heads that are usually considered to represent the dead, were loca-
ted inside yokes, and Medellín Zenil (1960: 187) uncovered a yoke
at Viejón which was placed with charred bones and pieces of cinne-
bar. A suggestion of the sexual significance of the yoke, supplement-
ing its interpretation as the mother earth, is that a number of yokes
have been uncovered in association with the so-called "mushroom
stones", very possibly phallic symbols. A number were found on a
Preclassic horizon in the region of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec
(Covarrubias 1957: 188), while Thompson (1948: 24) reports others
from the El Baúl area. The U shape of the yokes is itself a nearly
universal female sex symbol.

Assuming then in regard to the yoke's use and meaning that it
was worn as ceremonial representation of a belt of some nature which
was used in the ball-game and that it was symbolic of the receiving
earth or some analogous concept, the question that follows is what is
the significance of the palmas when they are worn with yokes as they
are shown in the Tajín reliefs? It is difficult to conceive of any func-
tional purpose for the palmas in actual play, thus their use in the
ball-game ceremony was very probably purely ritualistic, not as a copy of the ball-game equipment. In viewing the palmas worn by the individuals in the NW and NE panels of the Large Ball-court (Figs. 25, 26), the interpretation which presents itself most evidently is that these are phallic symbols. Although Mesoamerica is often said to be relatively free from phallicism and general eroticism the importance of phallicism at Toltec Chichén Itzá (Tozzer 1957: 111; Marquina 1951, Fig. 440), in other areas of the Maya zone (Andrews 1943: 83), and among the Aztecs (Margain 1939) is not to be overlooked. But Veracruz is considered to be one of the main areas of phallicism in Mesoamerica (Thompson 1941a: 50; Medellín Zenil and Peterson 1954: 168; Tozzer 1957: 111). Lombardo Toledano illustrates a number of somewhat crude figurines from the central Veracruz region which have elongations coming from their front waist areas and these elongations he believes to be "phalli". Ekholm (1949: 5) disagrees with this interpretation and considers the elongations probably to represent palmas. They may in fact represent both.

In Tajín reliefs, at the Large Ball-court a scene of ceremonial copulation is possibly presented (Fig. 24), while in columns' scenes a number of animals with erect penises have been pointed out (e.g. Fig. 20, figures 5 and 10), and in one scene that certainly portrays a ball-court ceremony is the figure who appears to be semenating upon
a maguey (Fig. 14). Thus "phallicism" is not only found in Tajín sculpture, it is also shown associated with the ball-game. Considering this latter, as well as the prominence of phallicism in Veracruz, and the significance of the ball-game and its attendant ceremonies, including sacrifice, as rites of fertility, it seems no large step to conclude that there is a very like possibility that the palmas, at least of the styles shown in Tajín reliefs, are phallic in nature.

As something of a parenthetical note, figure 7 in Scene A (Fig. 13) is of interest for he wears a palma which seems to have a feather attached to the end. Among some ethnographic groups in the Pacific, common male attire is the "penis-sheath", a cylindrical affair worn over the penis and held upward by strings tied around the waist. These symbolize masculinity as they represent a constant erection. The symbology is sometimes carried out to the extent that the sheath is adorned at its tip with a feather, a representation of semen.

Another ceremony which seems to be related to the ball-game involves the maguey plant or pulque. This is most clearly presented in the scene just mentioned of ball-game ceremonies in one of which a maguey receives the semen of a priest. Growing maguey plants and possibly pulque figure prominently in the two central panels of the
Large Ball-court. In the Wiener Handschrift a number of maguey plants are shown associated with a ball-court (Seler 1904a, Vol. 2, Fig. 3a).

One of the recurrent themes of Tajín sculpture seems to be a concern with fertility. The reason for this is seen when the climatic situation of the area is reviewed. Although there is much rain each year it sinks into the limestone base, and there are no large streams and few perennial springs in the vicinity of Tajín. In addition to this, rainfall is highly irregular. Kelly and Palerm (1950: 47) report for example that "April of 1929 had 0.5 mm. of rain; but April of 1934, 185.4 mm. Similarly, in September of 1930, there were 49.0 mm. of rain; but September of the preceding year is credited with 377.5 mm.; and of the succeeding year with 480.7 mm." Further, "during the spring months there may be a brief drought, which assumes catastrophic proportions if it continues through May" (Kelly and Palerm 1950: 48). A major drought had occurred in the area only five years before Kelly and Palerm published their report. In consequence, "it is small wonder that the Totonac farmer is mightily preoccupied with the rainfall and that one year he may have abundant crops, the next, virtually none" (Kelly and Palerm 1950: 47).

In the introduction it was mentioned that Tajín may have been dedicated to a rain god, a local Tlaloc, possibly having the very name
Tajín. In the material which I have examined, there has emerged no major deity, such as occurs at Tula or Teotihuacán, to whom it would be possible to say that the city was predominantly dedicated. From the central panels of the Large Ball-court it is certain that Tlaloc (or "Tajín") was important. But Tlaloc was the major deity of Teotihuacan in its last periods (Florescano 1964) and as much of Tajín culture is a heritage from Teotihuacán, it is quite possible that the supremacy of Tlaloc was a part of this. But at the same time there are suggestions that a god of death, Quetzalcoatl, and a sun god were also of great significance at Tajín.

In an effort to organize the material that has been derived from the sculpture of Tajín, the following final conclusion is presented; a conclusion which is a hypothesis on the nature of Tajín religion.

The world-view of Tajín is a dualistic one which is fundamentally based on a life-death dichotomy, with the corollary aspects of wet and dry, day and night, sun and earth. The symbol of this duality is the Tajín form of the sign ollin. Most of the ceremonies that are depicted in Tajín sculpture are directly related to this dualistic world-view. One of the most prominent of these ceremonies is the ball-game, which is itself an immediate expression of dualism, as it is the acting out of the conflict of opposing forces. Rituals of sacrifice, pulque, phallicism, and an eagle-solar cult all are associated
with the ball-game. Two of these, sacrifice and pulque ceremonies, are secondary expressions of the duality. Inherent in sacrifice, both heart removal and decapitation, is the concept that through death life can be obtained or continued. The head in the ceremonies of decapitation may represent the ball, symbol of the game, thus providing an even closer tie between sacrifice and the ball-game than exists by simple association. With pulque, if Nahuatl ideas apply, are involved both the ideas of life, as it is closely linked to harvest, and personal destruction and death. Phallicism and the eagle-solar cult seem to be affirmations of the life side of duality.

War, while possibly an expression of duality in its own right, apparently is predominantly a means of supplying prisoners for sacrifice.

In ceremonies not apparently related to the ball-game are seen expressions of both cult of life and a cult of death, that is, a complex of rituals directed toward one side or the other of the dualism. However, with each of these "cults" one side is only emphasized, for the seeds of the opposite are contained within each. Ceremonies which are dedicated to life are those in which man supplicate the gods, where the Tree of Life is centered, in which eagle-solar rituals occur, and possibly where phallicism and ceremonial copulation are present. The main ceremony expressive of a cult of death is sacrifice,
but the appearance of a skeletal god, skeletons, bones, and detached human parts are indicative of death's importance.

While these various ceremonies may be seen as expressions of a dualistic world-view, to what particular end are they directed? As has been indicated throughout, most of the religious practices seem to have as their immediate purpose the bringing of rain, the renewal of vegetation, fertility, harvest, that is, the general propagation of the sources of sustenance. Beyond this, the more esoteric, the ultimate purpose is possibly that, as these ceremonies are representations of universal duality, they are intended both as imitative and repetitive exercises to insure the maintenance of world balance, the dualistic balance or harmony in conflict upon which the existence of the present universe depends.
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Fig. 13. Scene A
Scale: 5 cm = 10.6 cm.
Fig. 15. Scene C
Scale: 5 cm = 40.6 cm.
Fig. 17. Scene H
Scale: 5 cm. = 40.0 cm.
Fig. 19. Scene I
scale: 5 cm = 40.6 cm.
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