Postclassic Incense Burner

Bowls of unslipped pottery standing on a flaring pedestal and adorned with a modeled head are known as “Lacandon-type” incensarios because they resemble the läkil k’uh, the „god-pots“ still produced by the Lacandons of Naha, Chiapas, Mexico (McGee 1990: 49–53). This particular example was found by chicleros in a freshly looted site in the vicinity of Dos Lagunas in the north-eastern Peten. It was brought to Uaxactun and is now on display in the local „Museo Juan Antonio Valdés“. The incense burner featured here is 19 cm high, its diameter is 15.5 cm. The headdress of the modeled head, which presumably represents a god to whom incense was offered rises above the rim. The headdress seems to be the only feature identifying the face with a god. Similar headdresses of interwoven bands of cloth have been found adorning the heads of several other Postclassic incense burners (Thompson 1977: Plates 1–3, 1–7, 1–8; Chase and Chase 1988: Fig. 26b). Incense burners standing on flaring pedestals have hardly ever shown up in controlled excavations. The little information available describes them as found close to the surface, often in caves and sometimes in front of stelae and other Classic Period remains. Most likely, censers of this type date to the Late Postclassic, if not Early Colonial period.

Photographs and Text: Nikolai Grube

Three-quarter view of the incense burner

To Our Readers

Here we are again, at the end of another millennium (not yet mexicon’s, but we’re taking bets for the next), and it’s time to reflect on the year past – and it’s been quite a positive one for our area.

These last twelve months have seen promising developments in Eastern Europe with regard to Mesoamerican studies. Warsaw and Moscow now have flourishing new centres for research on Latin America and Mesoamerica in particular. We have every reason to be confident about the future importance of cooperation between scholars in Western and Eastern Europe, which will most likely be on a par with the already existing intensive exchange between Mesoamericanists in Europe and the Americas. The traditional differences in orientation and perspective have already begun to enrich the burgeoning dialogue between these cultural areas. And mexicon is very much looking forward to submissions from our Eastern European readers.

You will probably have noticed that we have managed this year to increase the size of mexicon from the usual 20 pages to 24 per issue on the average, giving you even more for your money. We take this opportunity to extend a hearty thanks to our intrepid U.S. bibliographer par excellence, Richard Williams, who has contributed so much to our publication listings, already the fullest and most thorough anywhere, including on the Internet. Which brings me to some good news for the next millennium – in the year 2000 mexicon will be embarking onto the Internet. Stay tuned!

mexicon wishes you, our faithful readers (just as I wish all our editorial staff and supporters), a joyful holiday season and the best for the millennial year. The Aztec aficionados among you will hopefully be asking yourselves “Which one – 2000 or 2001?”, a question as much a matter of debate as the one about when the Aztec year began, and whether it was named after its beginning or end. In any event, mexicon intends to celebrate both millennial years with abandon. Cheers!

Gordon Whittaker
General Editor

Additions and Corrections

GRAZ (K.H. Mayer). In mexicon, Vol. XXI, Nr. 5, 1999, p. 96, three figures illustrate the note entitled “Two carved Maya doorway columns at Hacienda Tabi, Yucatán” by Karl Herbert Mayer. Inadvertently the two photos of doorway columns (Figure 4 and 5) are presented in the wrong order. Xcorrarche Doorway Column 3 (Figure 4) is shown in the middle, the unprovenanced Doorway Column (Figure 5) is shown to the left.