



Mexican Culture Taught Through the Aztec Calendar

Curriculum Unit 85.06.02
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It was dark, a dark night of *nemontemi* (the five useless days) at the end of the fiftysecond year. There were no stars in the sky. No fires were visible anywhere, not even on the temple altar where a fire had been burning continuously for fiftytwo years. There was silence everywhere. The whole earth was waiting.

Through the darkness, priests dressed as the different gods and goddesses climbed up *Huixachtecatl* (the Hill of the Star), an extinct volcanic crater visible throughout the Valley of Mexico. On the summit of *Huixachtecatl* rested a temple.

Once the priests reached the temple, they anxiously studied the sky as the stars appeared. Finally, Aldebaran or the Pleiades appeared in the center of the sky. This was the sign they had been waiting for: the sign that the world, as they knew it, would continue for another fifty two years.

At this exact moment, the priests turned to the sacrificial stone on the altar where a prisoner of war was stretched out with his chest arched in the air. With an obsidian knife, they slit open his chest, and pulled out his heart (which might be used later in another religious rite). They lit a torch, and placed it in his chest as a signal to all that life was reborn. Runners came from everywhere to light their torches from the sacrificial torch. They then ran throughout the country lighting fires in the hearths of houses, and on the temple altars of every town.

The next morning, the people began repairing their houses and temples which they had destroyed in anticipation of the end of the world. They had to make new furniture and utensils, as well. They celebrated by eating special foods, burning captives for sacrifices to the gods, and making themselves bleed from the fleshy parts of their bodies. The celebration thanked the gods for not ending their world and their way of life.

This story illustrates a major point about Mexican Indian culture: its focus on the Aztec Calendar. Put even more strongly, it shows the development of a society around the beliefs and world views incorporated in this twelve foot, twenty ton calendar stone that occupied the altar of the Temple of the Sun.

The Aztec Calendar Stone represents the Aztecs' concept of the universe. On its most basic level, it served as an agricultural map which indicated when to plant and reap crops, and when to hold festivals for the gods who regulated the elements. On a deeper level, this agricultural worship, imbedded in the symbols of the Aztec Calendar, belied concerns and beliefs about the natural world in which they lived, the gods who controlled that world, and their attempts through ritual and worship to communicate with those gods, and thus gain control

over their environment.

Aztecs tried to explain celestial phenomena through myths that recount the struggle of the heavenly bodies. This led them to make exact observations, which they recorded on their monuments and in their codices, that are evidence of the advanced stage they had reached in the science of astronomy. It also led them to adopt a calendar which was. . . the product of older cultures that had preceded them. (Cave, pp. 312)

As with any primitive peoples, the Aztecs needed to explain the natural phenomena which surrounded them. The natural phenomena were often attributed to the gods' behavior and activities. Thus in prehistoric times the people made idols and monuments to appeal to and appease the gods, and thus control the natural world. The PreColumbian peoples took idol worship one step further by trying to regulate their lives in obeisance to their gods (the natural phenomena). Their attempts led to the fabrication of a calendar, based on simple astronomy and the seasonal changes.

The Aztec Calendar was invented possibly in the Eleventh Century A.D. Historians are not quite certain where it originated. Thompson's book *Mexico Before Cortez* states that there existed many calendars in Mesoamerica of which only the Aztec and the Mayan survived. There are many similarities among the fragments of these other calendars, such as the names for the days, certain holidays, and certain gods.

Two important points from Thompson's book highlight the problem of where the Calendar Stone originated. One possible explanation is that Quetzalcoatl brought the calendar from the Yucatan to the Aztecs. And, the calendar probably did not come from the plateau region, as there are day signs using animals which were not indigenous to the region. Such animals include the howling monkey, the sign for the day Ozomatli; ocelot, sign of the day Ocelotl; and the blue iguana, sign of the day Quetzpalin. (Thompson, p. 204)

The *Tonalamatl* (Aztec Calendar) probably originated at a very early time in the lowlands among a preMaya people, and with maize, cotton, pottery-making and fundamental religious concepts was among the cultural traits inherited by the later civilizations, both Maya and Mexican (Aztec). In other words the Mexicans did not borrow their calendar either directly or indirectly from the Mayas, nor the Mayas from the Mexicans, but both civilizations were coheirs of an earlier culture. (Thompson, pp. 2056)

As the Calendar Stone formed an integral part of the Aztecs' way of life, I have chosen it to be the focus of a unit designed to help students understand the Mexicans of today. Using an object as the key to an entire civilization is a unique approach to the study of a people's culture. A more typical approach is to study a particular group by learning about the geography, history, daily life and customs first, then make conclusions about the artifacts which represent that people.

An object analysis approach focuses on the object first, learns as much about it as possible, makes some hypotheses, then proves or disproves these theories with research. An excellent article explaining this approach is "Mind In Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method" by Jules D. Prown (see Bibliography). In this article, Prown delineates clearly the method of analyzing an object, and its three major phases. The first phase is *description*. Description is limited to what can be observed in the object itself, its measurements and weight, the materials used in the object, and the ways in which these materials are put together. Also, any and all decorations, designs, words and letters are noted. The final step of description is called "formal analysis" in which the object is described two and threedimensionally, and in terms of colors, lights and darks, and textures.

A pi-ata shaped like a burro will serve as a good example of this approach. The analyst, not knowing the

function of a pi-ata, nor what this burro is, begins the investigation. He determines that this object is approximately two feet in length and two and a half feet in height, at its highest point. Its height approximates one and a half feet on the rest of the structure. Its width is consistent at one foot except at four places where it equals four inches, and at another point where it reaches six inches. It weighs about five pounds. The materials consist of paper, paste or glue, some metal, and some shiny metallic paper. These materials are put together in the following way: long solid pieces of paper seem to be glued together forming all parts of the object. It appears to be several inches thick everywhere. Thinner paper, almost translucent, covers the object. This paper seems to have been cut and it curls. This light paper seems to be pasted onto the thicker paper forming the shape of the object. The shiny metallic paper seems to be used in patterns, and only on certain areas of the object. There is a thin metal formed into a loop on the top of the object. There are words on the bottom of the object which read "Hecho en México" (Made in Mexico). The top and the bottom have been determined by the fact that there are four rectangular shapes which, when placed on a flat surface, allow the object to stand without falling over. The metallic paper forms eyes, a nose, a mouth, the insides of ears, a collar, and hooves.

The object contains shapes such as rectangles, triangles, and circles. All of these shapes form solids. The paper forming the shape of the object is white. The thinner paper adds colors such as gray, black, pink, red, and yellow. The metallic paper colors certain parts of the object with black, red, pink, and yellow as the major hues. There appear to be no shadings of any of the colors. All appear bright and pure. The curled paper gives the impression of depth. This paper covers the object uniformly, with no areas lacking their curls.

The second phase of an object analysis approach involves *deduction*; the person studying the object uses the information gathered in the first phase to interact with the object and to draw some conclusions about its use in the society from which it comes. These activities reflect the person's sensory approach to the object, and his/her intellectual and emotional responses to it.

The analyst uses all five senses while making some deductions about the object. It makes noises when shook and when the curly paper is brushed by fingers or another object. It smells like paste and candy. Nothing is rough on the surface of the object. It tickles when it is brushed by parts of the analyst's body. It is exciting to look at, but it doesn't have a good taste.

The object appears to be a burro or donkey. The bright, cheerful colors give it a festive air. It seems strong and delicate at the same time. The metal piece is not just for decoration; it appears to be strong enough to hold the burro in the air. It feels too heavy to be hollow, and something seems to be inside it. A person looking at this object feels happy and in a party mood.

The third and final phase of *speculation* requires the observer to use his/her imagination creatively to arrive at some hypotheses about the object, and to test these theories through research into questions formed by the close observation of the object.

Some questions which were raised during the deductive phase relate to the use of the burro: when? why? how? where? by or for whom or what? Through the use of speculation, the observer concludes that the burro could be hung from a tree or ceiling by the metal. This burro might appeal to children rather than adults because of the colors, textures, and possibly because it resembles a toy. Burros are very common as beasts of burden, especially in Mexico. The object might have different shapes and designs. It certainly must be used for a festive occasion, like birthdays and holidays. Only one question remained to be answered: what moved around inside the burro? A simple slit on the bottom revealed that the burro was stuffed with candy and small toys. The research proved that the speculations were correct.

This unit proposes to study the Aztec Calendar using the object analysis method developed by Prown. Through this approach students will experience the Aztec culture, its customs, attitudes and behavior, and its extensions practiced today in modern Mexico. The students' active involvement in learning about the Aztec civilization will be much more meaningful than being passive receptacles for the teacher's knowledge.

Such an approach adds an important perspective to the Spanish Curriculum of the New Haven Public Schools for it seeks to examine how a culture has come to be and has developed meaning for its peoples from within. Since the Aztec Calendar Stone is the key to all that happened in Aztec society, it can be used to approach any part of the society and still maintain its natural focus. Furthermore, the physical calendar itself, is fascinating. It is like a puzzle. Properly introduced, the Calendar can excite the students and motivate them to learn.

As the students' interest develops, the ten week design of the unit could be expanded to twenty weeks or more. Then there would be opportunities to delve into certain aspects of the Mexican culture in more depth. The unit could be taught in conjunction with a World Civilization, American History, Mythology, Comparative literature, Art, or Music class.

OBJECTIVES

As the major concentration of this unit is for an advanced Spanish class (Levels III, IV, V), the first objective is to stimulate the students' interest in using the language as a means of finding out information about the Aztecs. One way of achieving this excitement is to read legends derived from the Calendar symbols. Legends are fascinating and appealing subjects which contain a natural interest level for students. Presumably the students will work through the Spanish in order to read and discuss assigned legends. *Leyendas Mexicanas* (published by the National Textbook Company, see Bibliography) is a good source of material.

A second objective is for the students to learn about the importance of the Aztec Calendar, its symbols, and the relationship of these symbols to Aztec Life. Students will be taught how to analyze the Calendar using Prown's method of object analysis as stated above. They would develop a list of helpful Spanish vocabulary for use in this activity. All discussion would be in Spanish. They would read certain chapters in books (see Bibliography) that discuss the composition of the Calendar Stone, its symbols, its mathematical divisions, and other pertinent information.

My third objective is to encourage students to learn about the daily practices of the Aztecs, how these practices revolved around the concept of the gods, and how the Aztecs attempted to conciliate nature through the gods. As will be discussed more fully later, some of the symbols on the Calendar Stone are the symbols of certain gods. Students could choose a god or goddess to research. They could then report on the god or goddess with his/her various names, costumes, and function in the Aztec culture. An explanation for the various representations would be necessary as well.

The fourth and final objective is to discover the Aztec festivals, holidays, customs, games, foods, and behavior whose trades still exist in Mexico today. Thus students can gain a better understanding of Mexican culture. As has been stated above, all of Aztec life was determined by the Aztec Calendar, even the games they played, and the food they ate. It is most interesting to realize, for example, that chocolate was as important to the Aztecs as it is to the Mexicans. Cacao was used for money by the Aztecs, which indicates its importance. They

also used cacao to make *chocolate* (hot chocolate), which today is called Mexican Chocolate.

LEGENDS CONTAINED IN THE SYMBOLS OF THE AZTEC CALENDAR STONE

The Aztecs believed that several worlds had existed before theirs. Each had been destroyed and mankind was wiped out. These worlds were called the four suns, and the Aztecs' was the fifth. The Calendar Stone indicates the five periods of the history of the earth: 1) "Water Sun": the world was destroyed by a great flood and men were turned into fish (this event occurred about four thousand years after the creation of the earth); 2) "Wind Sun": about four thousand years later, the world was destroyed again, but by violent winds, and men were turned into monkeys; 3) "Fire Sun" followed and almost completely destroyed the world by fire; 4) about 5,000 years later, man was almost eliminated by famine; and 5) the present age would be destroyed by earthquake.

At the center of the Calendar Stone is a symbol, 4 Olin (4 earthquake), which indicates the destruction of the world by earthquakes. At each corner of the sign is located one of the other days that ended the world: 4 Quiauitl (4 rain) for the great flood, on the bottom left-hand corner; 4 Eecatl (4 wind) which indicated the destruction of the world by wind, on the top left-hand corner; 4 Ocelotl and 4 Atl which showed the other destructions of the Earth, on the top and bottom right-hand side.

(figure available in print form)

Fig. 1

The Aztec Calendar is circular with fifty-two squares or years, which were the equivalent of one cycle or century. At the end of the cycle was held a solemn feast, *Nexiuhpiliztli* (completion or binding of a perfect circle of years), which was described at the beginning of the unit. The round circle reached the end of its cycle and returned to its starting point. The circle was divided into four equal parts, each containing thirteen years. The first part belonged to the East, whose thirteen years were *Reeds*. This selection has thirteen squares containing a picture of a reed and a number of the year. These years were good, fertile, and abundant. People were healthy and participated in lucky events.

The second part belonged to the West, whose years were *Houses*. Each square contains a picture of a house, and the number of the year. Unhappy events occurred during these years. They symbolized evil. The house was used to indicate that during these years the sun would hide within that house and never help the land to produce crops. These were cloudy years, with much rain, and people were without work.

The third section belonged to the North, which was symbolized by a *Flint Knife*. Each of these thirteen squares shows a flint knife and the number of the year. The Aztecs did not like this cycle of years either. Many unhappy events occurred during these years, too. Also, and more importantly, the underworld, *Mictlampa* (the Infernal Region), was located to the North. The flint knife represented cold, ice, and thin air. These were barren and fruitless years. Little rain fell. The people were hungry.

The fourth part of the Aztec Calendar belonged to the South, and was called *Rabbit*. These thirteen squares contained a picture of a rabbit's head and the number of the year. These years were not considered favorable by the Aztecs, but they were not as bad as House and Flint Knife, nor as good as Reed. The rabbit became the

symbol because it leaps back and forth and does not stay in one place.

(figure available in print form)

Fig.2

The Aztec Calendar is an elaborately decorated disk representing the sun. At the center appears the face of *Tonatiuh* ("the shining one," "the beautiful child," "the eagle that soars") with his tongue sticking out. The tongue seems to be a knife used for sacrifices. On the sides are represented his hands, like eagle's talons, clutching human hearts. Because the Aztecs considered the sun and the eagle as the same, it was said that when the sun rose in the morning sky it was like the "eagle who ascends" so the Aztecs called it *Cuauhtlehuani*. In the evening the sun was called *Cuauhtemoc*, the "eagle who fell." (Caso, p. 67) (see Fig. 1)

Around the figure of the sun are the signs for the four former destructions of the Earth, as well as "4 Earthquake" the day on which the present sun will be destroyed. These signs form large sculptures. Symbols, not words, are used on the Calendar such as the head of Echeatl-Quetzalcoatl to represent wind; the head of Tlaloc to symbolize rain; a jar of water from which rises the bust of Chalchiuhtlicue to symbolize flood; and a jaguar to symbolize fire. (see Fig. 1)

A ring containing the signs for the days surrounds the figures mentioned above. The twenty day signs circling the sun makes the Aztec Calendar a Calendar Stone. At the top of this ring is located the head of the crocodile, *Cipactli*, and reading the calendar clockwise, it ends with the sign for flower, *Xochitl*.

(figure available in print form)

Fig.3

There are other bands which contain illustrations of the rays of the sun, and of jewels made of jade or turquoise, symbols of the sun (which sometimes was called *Xiuhpiltontli*, "the turquoise child"). The sun was the most precious item in the universe to the Aztecs, so they used a jewel quite often to represent the sun. These jewels also symbolized the color of the heavens. Another strip represents signs for the stars, and the sun's rays. There are symbols of blood and flowers which are connected to the worship of the sun.

(figure available in print form)

Fig.4

The two outer bands of the Calendar Stone form two Fire Serpents (*Xiuhcoatl*), symbols of the year and passage of time, which carry the sun through the sky. The designs on their backs do not represent anything. The Fire Serpents have their mouths open. Between their fangs can be distinguished the faces of the gods who use the Serpents as their disguises. They encircle the whole of the Aztec Calendar and meet face to face at the bottom of the Calendar. (Vaillant, pp. 163-4; Caso, p. 67) A more details description of the Calendar, and the Aztec holidays and customs based on the Calendar, may be found in Duran's *Book of the Gods and Rites and the Ancient Calendar* (see Bibliography).

(figure available in print form)

Fig.5

A POSSIBLE LESSON

Objective Students will begin to explore the meanings of the Aztec Calendar's symbols as they mold them into a papier-mâché model of the Calendar Stone.

Procedure

- The following materials will be made available to students: a large heavy piece of cardboard
1. (perhaps the cardboard from a large pizza); newspapers, flour, water, paint, paint brushes; and papier-mâché should proceed as usual, over a period of two weeks.
 2. The students, in small groups, will study pictures of the Calendar Stone.
 3. They will isolate the symbols that appear on the Calendar.
 4. Class discussions will focus on the significance of these symbols.
 5. Students will be assigned reading for the purposes of discussion, and fabrication of the Calendar Stone.

Results The students can then use their Calendar Stone as the point of departure for the study of the Aztecs. They will also begin to learn about the culture through the experience of trying to understand the Calendar's symbols.

THE AZTEC CALENDAR STONE (TONALAMATL)

The Aztec Calendar was arranged in two parts: *tonalpohualli* (a ritualized succession of days), and a solar calendar, which was divided into eighteen twentyday months, with a fiveday unlucky time. The agricultural names of the months reflected the crops and the agricultural origins of the solar calendar. The two systems together helped in numbering the years, which made up a fiftytwo year cycle. The two systems overlapped at the end of the fiftytwo years which meant that the Aztecs had to appease the gods or their world would be destroyed.

The *tonalpohualli* was sacred. It included 260 days which were either astronomical or magical. There were twenty day names to the Aztec month, along with numbers 1-13. The numbers were represented by dots placed next to the pictograph of each day. At the end of the sequence of days, the names were repeated. The numbers were repeated also. For example, an Aztec month might be: 1 Cipactli 2 Ehecatl 3 Calli 4 Cuetzpallin 5 Coatl 6 Miquiztli 7 Mazatl 8 Tochtli 9 Atl 10 Itzcuintli 11 Ozomatli 12 Malinalli 13 Acatl 1 Ocelotl 2 Cuauhtli 3 Cozcaquauhtli 4 Ollin 5 Tecpatl 6 Quiauitl 7 Xochitl; and the next month would begin 8 Cipactli 9 Ehecatl etc. Therefore, in 260 days, every day was identified by a combination of one of the day names and one of thirteen numbers. Weeks were designated by the number one and the day name according to the sequence. No day in a week could be mixed up with another because of the rotation sequence of days and months.

AZTEC DAY NAMES

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| <i>Day 1</i> | <i>Day 2</i> | <i>Day 3</i> | <i>Day 4</i> | <i>Day 5</i> |
| Cipactli (crocodile) | Ehecatl (wind) | Calli (house) | Cuetzpallin (lizard) | Coatl (serpent) |
| <i>Day 6</i> | <i>Day 7</i> | <i>Day 8</i> | <i>Day 9</i> | <i>Day 10</i> |
| Miquiztli (death'shead) | Mazatl (deer) | Tochtli (rabbit) | Atl (water) | Itzcuintli (dog) |
| <i>Day 11</i> | <i>Day 12</i> | <i>Day 13</i> | <i>Day 14</i> | <i>Day 15</i> |
| Ozomatli (monkey) | Malinalli (grass) | Acatl (reed) | Ocelotl (ocelot) | Cuauhtli (eagle) |
| <i>Day 16</i> | <i>Day 17</i> | <i>Day 18</i> | <i>Day 19</i> | <i>Day 20</i> |
| Cozcaquauh tli (vulture) | Ollin (motion) | Tecpatl (flint knife) | Quiauitl (rain) | Xochitl (flower) |

A god or goddess served for each twenty day cycle. Another god or goddess controlled each of the twenty weeks. There was a certain order followed for the day gods, and the week gods. Thirteen gods ruled the thirteen parts of the Aztec day, and nine took care of the night. A complete list of gods, goddesses, and their functions is given in *Aztecs of Mexico* by George C. Vaillant on pages 192-197 (see Bibliography).

Priests who interpreted signs and events from the *tonalpohualli* were called *tonalpouque*. They recorded the predictions and events in sacred books called *tonalamatl* (paper or book of the days). The priests were the only ones who could read and explain the Aztec Calendar.

Children were given the name of the day on which they were born. Priests then predicted whether or not they would be rich; whether or not they would be lucky in life; whether they would be sacrificed or made prisoners of war; whether they would be honest or loving or kind or gentle; whether or not they would be criminals; and any number of other predictions. More importantly, these names duplicated the names of the gods.

But since the gods also took the names of the days on which they were born or of those on which they had performed some important deed that was to be commemorated, the ceremonies celebrated for this reason took place each 260 days, that is, when the name of the day in the tonalpohualli was repeated again. (Case, p. 66)

The name formed a powerful bond between the children, the Calendar, and the gods. They became somewhat godlike, perhaps taking on some of the characteristics of the god.

A POSSIBLE LESSON

Objective To understand the importance of Calendar symbols to the Aztec culture.

Procedure

1. The students will make a calendar for the present school year creating their own symbols to represent the important facets of school culture.

2. The class could be divided into small groups of students, each making their own calendar with their individual symbols.
3. Each group would present its calendar, explaining the meanings of the different signs.
4. Class discussion would take place to determine why a culture chooses certain symbols to represent its beliefs, and how the people decide which signs to use.

Results The students can do research on the symbols of the Aztec Calendar to determine how universal these signs were in Mexico. They can then decide the importance of a Calendar Stone to the peoples of Mexico. The solar year, made up of eighteen months of twenty days each, and a fiveday unlucky time (*nemontemi*), was the means by which the Aztecs regulated their great ceremonies. The months were dedicated to the major gods. The ceremonies varied for each god. The general purpose of these festivals was to symbolically portray the life or birth of the god. In this manner the Aztecs tried to ensure the continued benevolence of the god, and thus of that part of nature which that god represented or controlled. A chart follows which indicates the months of the solar year, when they occurred, the gods honored, and how they were celebrated.

(table available in print form)

A POSSIBLE LESSON

Objective To become familiar with Aztec gods and goddesses, and the role they played in the development of Aztec society.

Procedure

- From a list of Aztec gods and goddesses, each student will choose one to research: life, deeds, costumes, holidays, customs, foods, animals related to the festival of the god or goddess.
1. Students will work in small groups dictated by the choice of god, to write skits in Spanish based on the life of that god and the interactions between gods, or, skits based on the Aztecs' celebration of that god (goddess).
 2. These skits can be 1015 minutes long. The students will prepare scenery and costumes and will present the skits to an audience.
 3. No more than two skits a day will be presented. The two skits will be related; that is to say, one skit will be about the life of the god or goddess, and the other one will show the celebrations honoring him/her.
 - 4.

Results Students will have a better understanding of the Aztecs' way of life and how their lives were dominated by their religion. They will also be aware of the Aztec Calendar's importance in the regulation of religious rites.

SOME CONCLUSIONS

The Aztecs lived in an environment which they treated as if it were human. They were constantly cajoling it, through the worship of their gods, to be favorable to them and grant them the benefits of nature: more rain, enough sun for their crops, and no storms. Their very lives depended on the benevolence of nature. So their calendar charted the times of the year which needed special attention and the gods to whom they owed obeisance. The intimacy between the Aztecs and nature was the foundation of their civilization.

The Mexicans of today are also very close to nature. Their main crop, like that of the Aztecs, is corn. Corn forms the basis for their cuisine, as it did for the Aztecs. They eat certain foods such as turkey, for special occasions as did the Aztecs. They drink *pulque* (an alcoholic beverage) and *chocolate* as did the Aztecs. Certain activities like *los voladores* (a type of maypole in which one man stands and four other men swing around it on ropes) performed today to celebrate special events, come from Aztec rites honoring their gods (each man on a rope completed thirteen turns, and the four together equalled fiftytwo which made up an Aztec century of fiftytwo years).

Many more vestiges of the Aztec civilization can be found in Mexican culture today through careful investigation. The information and the activities presented in this unit result in an exciting byproduct. The students will use Spanish almost effortlessly as their means of oral and written expression, thereby increasing their ability to use the language for communication.

A PRONUNCIATION GUIDE TO THE AZTEC LANGUAGE

1. All vowels are pronounced as in Spanish: A= ah, E= ay, I= ee, O= oh, U= oo.
2. Vowels are pronounced at all times.
3. Consonants are like English, except: X= ski, Z= ess, QU= k before e and i but kw before a.
4. H= huh, LL= like ll in English, U= can also be pronounced like wuh, Y= yeh.
5. The accent falls on the second to last syllable of a word in most cases. (Soustelle, p. 245)

The Aztec Calendar Stone

(figure available in print form)

Fig 6. (Helfritz)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A Coloring Book of Incas , Aztecs and Mayas and Other PreColumbian Peoples (Santa Barbara, California: Bellerophon Books), 1984.

Some very clear line drawings of the gods and costumes. The teacher could make thermal transparencies to use with an overhead projector. This book can be bought at the Yale Art Gallery, Chapel Street New Haven, Connecticut. One is also available on loan from the YaleNew Haven Teachers Institute, 53 Wall Street New Haven, Connecticut.

Bernal, Ignacio. *Mexico Before Cortez Art , History and Legend* translated by Willis Barnstone from the Spanish, (Garden City, New Jersey: Anchor Press/Doubleday), 1975.

An important account of the PreColumbian peoples in Mexico. A helpful pronunciation guide is included with phonetic descriptions of names of cities, gods, and peoples.

Brundage, Burr Cartwright. *The Fifth Sun Aztec Gods, Aztec World* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1979).

An excellent source of information about the Aztec gods, religious rites, and how the Aztecs envision the universe. Terrific line drawings of the gods. I highly recommend this book'

Burnett, Jane. *Muchas Facetas de México* (Lincolnwood, Illinois: National Textbook Company).

A useful, appealing book to use with advanced Spanish classes. It contains a concise history of the Mexican people, ending in the Twentieth Century. Mexican culture is presented as well.

Carrasco, David. *Quetzalcoatl and the Irony of Empire Myths and Prophecies in the Aztec Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 1982.

This book is concerned with the Aztecs at the time of the Spanish Conquest. It gives a very detailed explanation of the god Quetzalcoatl's life as man and god. Several pages are devoted to the Aztec Calendar. While not the most detailed book about the Calendar, it gives some insight to its importance in the Aztec culture.

Caso, Alfonso. *The Aztecs People of the Sun* translated by Lowell Dunham, (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press), 1958.

A wellwritten, easytoread book. Another excellent source of information on the Aztec Calendar and Aztec gods. Good, clear illustrations of gods, ceremonies and festivals.

Crosher, Judith. *Aztecas* (Barcelona, Spain: Editorial Molino), 1979.

This book may be borrowed from the Migratory Children's Program based at the Cooperative High School, 800 Dixwell Avenue, New Haven, Connecticut. Aztec civilization is presented in a concise manner. There are many illustrations depicting Aztec life. Another important source of information.

Durán, Fray Diego. *Book of the Gods and Rites and the Ancient Calendar* translated by Fernando Horcasitas and Doris Heyden, (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press), 1971.

The definitive book on the Aztec Calendar! One of the most important sources because it was written by a priest soon after the conquest of the Aztecs by Cortez. There is much useful information in this book, but the reader must ignore the priest's comments about the rites and ceremonies of the Aztecs being sacrilegious, while gathering information on the ceremonies. His comments are interesting because they show the means by which the Spanish destroyed the Aztecs: the Catholic religion.

Helfritz, Hans. *Mexican Cities of the Gods An Archeological Guide* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger), 1968.

A very interesting book. Some very good information about Aztec civilization and the Calendar.

Leyendas Mexicanas (Lincolnwood, Illinois: National Textbook Company).

This book contains some very interesting Mexican legends. Students will enjoy reading them!

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A clear, exact explanation of object analysis and its method.

Soustelle, Jacques. *The Daily Life of the Aztecs on the Eve of the Spanish Conquest* (New York: The Macmillan Company), 1962.

Another important book on the Aztecs. An excellent source for details about their daily life. Good chapter on the Aztecs' concept of the universe.

Thompson, J. Eric. *Mexico Before Cortez An Account of the Daily Life, Religion, and Ritual of the Aztecs and Kindred Peoples* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons), 1933.

A highly recommended source of Aztec civilization. A good explanation of the Aztec religion and the Calendar.

Vaillant, George C. *Aztecs of Mexico Origin , Rise and Fall of the Aztec Nation* (Garden City, New Jersey: Doubleday and Company), 1947.

Another book well worth reading. The chapters on religion and ritual offer important information.

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