

## THE GREAT NITPICKER

**David Carrasco**

I met H. B. Nicholson for the first time in 1974 at a session on Magic Books of Mexico at the 41<sup>st</sup> Internacional Congreso de Americanistas in Mexico City. He and the great Wigberto Jiménez Moreno were chairing the session, and I was thrilled to be in the audience and listen to these two wonderful scholars. Afterward I walked up and introduced myself to Professor Nicholson and told him I was planning to write a dissertation on Quetzalcoatl while completing my Ph.D. at the University of Chicago. We spoke for a few minutes as he was clearly interested in talking about Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl. He wondered if I'd read his dissertation. When I said I had come to know about it through reading Alfredo López Austin's (1973) book, *Hombre-Díos*, but had not been able to obtain a copy, he promised to send me one. Soon after returning to Colorado I wrote him to thank him for our exchange and inquired about his Harvard dissertation. To my surprise and delight, a photocopy of his 1957 dissertation, *Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl of Tollan: a Problem in Mesoamerican Ethnohistory*, arrived at my home. As a student of religion struggling to make my way through the primary sources, a great feeling of relief came over me: *I've just been saved!*

Reading through Nicholson's dissertation focused my mind and work. The clarity, the pinpoint research, the overall organization, and the reconstruction of the "tale" all read like a tour de force legal argument making the case that the Aztecs had inherited and internalized a sacred history about the Toltec priest-king that shaped their priestly practices, religious world view and, later, their interpretation of the encounter with the Spaniards. Reading the thesis convinced me I had to become, albeit from a geographical distance, one of H. B. Nicholson's many students, and I set about that task of starting a lifelong conversation with him.

I drew on many of Nick's research works and ideas in writing my Ph.D. thesis. This was done under the direction of Paul Wheatley, J. Z. Smith, and Charles Long, the effort becoming *Quetzalcoatl and the Irony of Empire: Myths and Prophecies in the Aztec Tradition* (Carrasco 1982). I followed in H. B. Nicholson's footsteps in reading the sources on "TQ" but never, even after 30 years, was able to adequately cover the trails he had blazed. When my book came out, it was a significant success and placed me toward the front of the line in Quetzalcoatl interpreters. Nicholson could have seen me as an upstart rival or been critical of the book and could have focused his public evaluations on the weak spots. Instead, he supported my work and continued to tutor and talk with me about all aspects of Mesoamerican, especially Aztec history. I soon learned I was one among a very sizable group of student colleagues.

When Eduardo Matos invited me to collaborate with him on the first scholarly gathering on the just discovered Coyolxauhqui stone in 1978, the first name out of his mouth was "Nicholson." When Matos and I were planning the first scholarly conference in the United States on the Templo Mayor excavations, he said, "We must include Nicholson. I want us to collaborate with Nicholson because he knows so much about the Aztecas." From that day until his passing 29 years later, Nick was a crucial and productive part of my Moses Mesoamerican Archive and Research Project at Colorado, Princeton, and Harvard.<sup>1</sup> One of our gatherings in Colorado included a dinner honoring H. B. I never called him "Nick" to his face. Somehow out of respect I preferred "H. B." as it kept him in an elevated location. We had a ball with food and wine, and I remember during our toasts and reminiscences of Nick's career that Elizabeth Boone fondly

awarded Nick the *Nitpicker Award*. Elizabeth enjoyed ribbing him for the ways he always found some small, even minute problem in the ways the rest of us presented the Mesoamerican sources and our research. Nick, rising to the occasion after a two-hour-long celebration of his career announced, “I want to thank you all for that summary of my work but I have a nit to pick about a few of the historical details.” We roared in delight!

As time went on, I decided that by hook or crook I was going to persuade him to publish his dissertation so that the scholarly world and especially a new generation of students could benefit from his research and interpretation. Its appearance in print would allow us all to carry on with the historical reconstruction of the Quetzalcoatl tradition, but no matter what I tried it just didn’t work. Then, at one of our meetings in Boulder, I finally found a way. I figured I needed the help of a leading Mexican scholar in persuading Nick to overcome his resistance and let us publish his dissertation as a book in the *Mesoamerican Worlds* series at the University Press of Colorado.

I maneuvered Nicholson into a conversation with Alfredo López Austin concerning the TQ dissertation because I knew Nick had enormous respect for Alfredo. I cued Alfredo, and he spoke up, encouraging Nick to finally publish the book. This softened Nick up, but it took several years and the editorial work of my former student, coeditor, and colleague, Scott Sessions, to finally turn the tide. Nick had come to know and admire Scott’s bibliographic and interpretive abilities, and I turned the project over to him. Sessions sacrificed a significant amount of time from his own graduate researches to make this publication happen. Scott puzzled over how to turn the 1957 dissertation into a text file. The uneven condition of the blurry old Harvard Xerox copy made computer scanning nearly impossible, and the original, which Nick’s wife Margaret had typed out in the Utah desert during his first season of fieldwork at UCLA, had many typos, patches, and other problems. Scott scanned what he could, rekeyed large portions to clean up the text, and then copyedited the entire manuscript for style and content—fixing the typos, standardizing the orthography, verifying all the quotations and citations, updating the bibliography, etc.

After about two weeks, working day and night, Scott finished the project. He sent it to Nick along with a long letter explaining exactly everything he had done and then waited in some trepidation for Nick’s reply to his nitpicking of the great nitpicker! A few weeks later Nick wrote back, graciously thanked him, and said, “I can see that you’ve saved me an enormous amount of grief from the press!” The book was published in 2001 under the title *Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl: The Once and Future Lord of the Toltecs*, to international appreciation and acclaim.

When I moved to Harvard and Bill Fash found a wonderful space for the Moses Mesoamerican Archive to be housed, I realized I was back in Nick’s old neighborhood. Gordon Willey, Nick’s teacher and mentor, had recently passed away. It came to me one day that we should set up the H. B. Nicholson Award for Excellence in Mesoamerican Studies, and Bill and Barbara Fash, along with David Stuart, heartily agreed. Nick was thrilled, and when I told him that we had decided to cast a medal in his honor as part of the award he immediately had a design in mind: The Hacmack Box design that showed his beloved Quetzalcoatl in dynamic movement. To draw the image for the medal, we turned to the artistic talents of Barbara Fash, who did a superb job in creating the H. B. Nicholson Medal. Then, as though to close a magic circle, the first recipient of the award was none other than Eduardo Matos Moctezuma, who traveled to Harvard University in 2002 to receive the Nicholson Medal at a dinner in his and Nick’s honor at the Peabody Museum. Nick was back at his alma mater, Harvard, and joined in honor to his admirer and colleague Eduardo Matos, and a great time was had by all. H. B. Nicholson was, in my view, the

greatest Aztec scholar not only of his own generation but of the entire twentieth century. He knew the sources far better than anyone else, understood their interrelationships, and he shared his enormous knowledge with us in generous and unique ways.

In closing, I recall his powerful response to Vincent Stanzione at the initial gathering of the Mapa de Cuauhtinchan No. 2 group in Puebla, Mexico. During the various presentations on how to approach this early colonial masterpiece of narrative and imagery, Stanzione (2000), who wrote the excellent book *Rituals of Sacrifice*, gave a talk about his own personal and ethnographic experiences among the contemporary Maya peoples in and around Santiago Atitlán, Guatemala. Stanzione has been living in the Maya Highlands for 15 years, learning the languages, observing the human landscape, reading texts, interacting with a *cofradia*, asking questions, and lending his hands and heart to local needs. Nicholson was deeply moved by Stanzione's life, commitments, achievements and report of a pilgrimage he had taken with local *indígenas* that paralleled the sacred history narrated within the MC2. In his excitement, Nick bellowed, "I am amazed at what you have presented. It reminds me immediately of old Father Sahagún's achievement. I congratulate you." The comment struck some of us as both accurate and ironic. It was as though H. B. Nicholson was both seeing the truth of Stanzione's achievement and describing himself as well.

For throughout our time with him, talking and learning, Nicholson always amazed us, reminding us of Sahagún and Seler, and setting the standard for Mesoamerican scholarship. His memory will always call us back to the texts and to the tale of that other great adventurer in Mesoamerica, Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl.

#### ENDNOTE

1. Founded in 1982 at the University of Colorado at Boulder, the Mesoamerican Archive and Research Project (MARP) moved to Princeton University in 1993 when historian of religions, David Carrasco, joined the Department of Religion faculty. Established with a generous grant from the Raphael and Fletcher Lee Moses Trust, the Archive has organized an international, interdisciplinary group of scholars and students interpreting sacred space and ritual performance in Mesoamerican religions. Currently at Harvard University, the MARP provides support for various research projects in Mexico and houses a collection of over 10,000 transparencies and photographs of excavations and sites, architecture, artifacts, and pictorial manuscripts, as well as a library with over 3,000 books, articles, and conference papers pertaining to the study of Prehispanic, Colonial, and contemporary Mesoamerican cultures. Guided by its director, David Carrasco, and an advisory board whose distinguished members includes Eduardo Matos Moctezuma, Anthony Aveni, and Johanna Broda, the MARP continues to host a series of conferences and lectures leading to new scholarly publications and is currently involved in research on colonialism and the study of religion and in archaeological excavations at the Great Aztec Temple of Tenochtitlan and at Teotihuacan, the ancient "City of the Gods."

## A MODERN AZTEC

### C. William Clewlow Jr.

Upon meeting Henry B. Nicholson, some three decades ago, I recall telling someone that I had met a true Aztec. His knowledge of Aztec history and culture was so profound that it appeared to have widened his thought patterns to include an Aztec wisdom about things both arcane and mundane. Nick often seemed to be about duality, not unlike the ancient deities whose many aspects his scholarship had so carefully unraveled. He was universally admired for his public persona of published research and brilliant lectures. A smaller, though certainly substantial, number of the fortunate enjoyed the rewards of his personal acquaintance. As a teacher, Nick was a master swordsman when etching knowledge upon student minds. He was no less skilled in cutting to the essence of personal matters. Never prying, always positive and amazingly knowing, these were gifts that Nick brought to private encounters. In matters grave or whimsical, in subjects small or global, Nick could hit the full range of notes. But one constant chord was a sincere concern for the other person and an astounding awareness that seemed to govern his words.

Nick's oratory was the stuff of legend. Those who were lucky enough to know him personally could hear in his private words the same soaring verbal ability and vocabulary that characterized his public presentations. There were also endearing quirks, such as his habit of inserting quotidian Spanish phrases, like *sin embargo*, into his observations and opinions. It was so like Nick to spice up his narratives with something we had all learned in our first semester of Spanish but had not used since. It was also his manner to recall things we all knew about ourselves but too often had forgotten. A chat with Nick was like reading Aztec poetry. His insights often seemed to come from the deep wisdom pools of ancient philosophers. Nick once told me that the term "good friend" was redundant and misleading because anyone called a friend should automatically be a good and loyal one. It was a credo that Nick followed in friendship, collegiality, and as a teacher. Anyone, regardless of social status, who became a friend of Nick usually found that they had signed on for life.

It can be said with confidence that any student who was exposed to Nick in lectures, seminars or as an advisor considered the exposure to be an educational high point. He was funny, compassionate, brilliant, freethinking and genuine. Every superlative fit him, and even hardened souls wept at his passing. Nick's enchantment with the personage of Quetzalcoatl was one of his defining attributes. Some folks could see in Nick an embodiment of the best Nahuatl character traits. His powers of observation were shamanic. Over time I came to think of Nick as being akin to the archetypal Aztec shaman—the one who risks death to go into the other world and has knowledge of both darkness and light. His stories about several escapes from near-fatal circumstances only strengthened that impression. His knowledge of the many Aztec masks seemed almost a metaphor for his awareness that each thing has many layers. For Nick, compassion was at an outermost level of the layerings. For all his insights, discoveries and contributions, compassion was the catalyst that I saw most over the years that I knew him. For many of us he added greatly to our understanding of pantheons, and his memory will, for some, have a pantheonic aura. Simply put, in his soul Nick was a modern Aztec.

## OFF TO THE RACES WITH NICK

**Sarah Cline**

I had heard of H. B. Nicholson since the time I was a little girl. My father, Howard F. Cline, was part of a small, smart group of American oddballs, including Nick, whose passion was ancient Mexico. My father was a scholar first of all, but he knew how to get things done, and so getting a compendium of scholarly articles and a comprehensive bibliography into the hands of a large readership was the project that became the *Handbook of Middle American Indians* (HMAI) volumes on Mesoamerican ethnohistory (Cline 1972-1975; also see Bernal 1962). Nick, as an expert in ancient Mesoamerican religion and ace analyst of Mexican codices, was part of the committed crew working on that project,

The HMAI was written and produced with the old technology. It is hard for my students today to understand the world we lived in where the Xerox machine was a huge innovation, whiteout correction fluid a godsend, and the IBM Selectric typewriter the most sought-after tool. There were no computers, no Internet—none of that. The old technology worked! The HMAI volumes on Mesoamerican ethnohistory were written by specialists with a deep knowledge of the sources and could convey that knowledge in accessible language. The bibliographic compilations remain valuable for published sources, as well as pointing scholars to manuscript sources. Before the age of electronic citation searches, the *Handbook* was an almost unbelievable mother lode for scholars of Mesoamerican ethnohistory. It took the dedication of scholars such as Nick to bring the project to fruition.

So far as I know, Nick never came through Washington, D.C., doubtless because the manuscripts he needed were not in the collections of the Library of Congress where my father presided over the Hispanic Foundation. But others came and were invited home to dinner, such as Charles Gibson, another HMAI stalwart no longer with us. I would be the fly on the wall, listening to the table talk about the *Handbook* while my mother was the gracious hostess. Nick's progress on his section was a topic of some those conversations I remember. Recently I reread my father's letters to my mother during his extended trip to Europe in the mid-1960s. There were several amusing anecdotes of his trying to gather the scattered Mesoamericanists to plot the course of the *Handbook* while they were all in Vienna at the International Congress of Americanists. Apparently it was like herding cats.

In the early 1970s I had just graduated from college, a student radical who took off to Canada and wasn't quite sure what I wanted to do with my life. But my mother asked me to help her edit a Sahagún manuscript my father was working on when he died. That's when I encountered Nick's writings on Fray Bernardino in the HMAI. In the mid-1970s I decided to go to graduate school to pursue something about Latin America. I wasn't sure exactly what, but UCLA seemed a good fit for me.

Nick, of course, had been teaching there for years, and his presence in Anthropology was of interest to me. My first quarter as a shiny new Latin American Studies MA student I took Nick's Sources of Mesoamerican Ethnohistory, an upper division course. I wasn't quite sure what to expect, but I had heard my father's stories of Nick. The room was packed with undergrads, and we waited. Then the door burst open, and in came Professor Nicholson in a rumpled suit, slide carousel in hand. Then it was off to the races. Nick was a fount of information on the

iconography and historiography of the manuscripts. We madly scribbled. Each session he delivered huge amounts of information at breakneck speed. I would try to find the images he'd shown—not so easy in those days—and try to absorb all that he'd lectured on.

As a graduate student I had to write a lengthier paper than the undergrads and needed to talk to him. Dozens of other students were also trying to secure a few minutes with him, since his was a popular class. Indeed, the first time I went to his Haines Hall office at the end of one hallway, the line of students stretched almost to the other end. Clearly I needed to be more persistent and clever, so I took to showing up an hour beforehand.

But all that was worth the trouble, since when he did focus on my project, he gave me insightful advice. I was not so much interested in his beloved iconography. Instead, Sahagún had captured my attention, and Nick gave me the freedom to explore the Florentine Codex to my heart's content. Nick served on my doctoral committee and gave comments on my dissertation on sixteenth century Nahuatl wills. To my surprise, I got an academic job, and I'm grateful for the role Nick played in my achieving that. In later years I saw Nick at Mesoamerican sessions at the American Society of Ethnohistory or roundtables in Mexico where he presented even more findings on Quetzalcoatl or a newly discovered source.

I never learned why H. B. Nicholson devoted his life to the ancient cultures of Mesoamerica. Nevertheless, this subject was the organizing principle of his scholarly life. I am certain he would be pleased to see the tributes collected here honoring both his central passion and his life.

Nick was a real force in the field, and we all regret his passing.

## ***TLAMATINI FOR OUR TIME***

**Michael D. Coe**

The wise man [*tlamatini*]: a light, a torch, a stout torch that does not smoke.  
 A perforated mirror, a mirror pierced on both sides.  
 His are the black and red ink, his are the illuminated manuscripts, he studies  
     the illuminated manuscripts.  
 He himself is writing and wisdom.  
 He is the path, the true way for others... [León Portilla 1963:10]

I first met “Nick” Nicholson in September 1954, on my return to Harvard as a graduate student after three years absence from academic life. There were then precious few Mesoamericanist students in residence, but a plethora of Southwest specialists with spade tie clips, turquoise finger rings, and tales of digging in Alkali Ridge. Dave Kelley was there, Bill Sanders was in the field, but there was a face that was new to me. Nick, then a tall, blond student, was deeply into Central Mexican archaeology and ethnohistory and already committed to solving the problem of Quetzalcoatl the god and Quetzalcoatl the man.

Gordon Willey’s graduate seminars were amazing, not only from the quality of students taking them but for the sheer amount of work that each participant was expected to put into them. At the start of each session, two students had to submit mimeographed copies of what were virtually finished papers, each of which would then be assigned to another student for thorough discussion in the next session. My interests from the beginning had always been the beginnings of civilized life in the pre-Columbian New World, and so in Willey’s seminar on the Andes, I chose Chavín as my topic. Nick was also in this seminar. Already deep into Aztec ethnohistory, he naturally chose the Inca. In a way, we were intellectual bookends, and we remained such throughout our research careers.

Nick came to class on the appointed day with an enormous manuscript with the impressive title “Tawantisuyu, Empire of the Four Quarters.” It was almost an inch and a half thick. My heart sank; how could I possibly get all this done in time for next week’s class? Even worse, it turned out that this was only one half of the projected whole! Eventually, the day before the class, Nick came up with the rest of it, and I read and worked most of the night to meet my obligation to Willey, the boss. Nicholson’s paper was really a masterpiece, and we spent much of the ensuing seminar session debating the role of Pachacuti Inca in the formation of the Inca Empire, as well as the pros and cons of the “great man theory of history” à la Tolstoy, et al.

I soon found out that Nick had been trained as a lawyer, and I doubt that there has ever been another Mesoamerican ethnohistorian with his ability to gather and weigh evidence from often mutually conflicting sources. Nick never had any pet theories to inflict on other scholars and no axes to grind. He was a true scholar of the old school, and it is no surprise that the Mesoamericanist he most admired was the great German scholar Eduard Seler, whom he intellectually resembled in so many ways. When all the trendy theorizing and paradigm changing have long been relegated to the “dustbin of history,” it is the solid achievements of people like Nick that will remain basic to our field.

The 21 volumes of the *Handbook of Middle American Indians* are on a shelf above my desk. Published from 1964 through 1996, most of the articles in it are already severely dated, including my own two in Volume 3 (Coe 1965a, 1965b). I must admit that I seldom consult any of them, with one great exception. This is the truly magisterial article by Nick in Volume 10 of the *Handbook*: “Religion in Pre-Hispanic Central Mexico” (Nicholson 1971b). In my opinion, this paper is among the greatest intellectual contributions to Mesoamerican studies ever made. Anyone who had ever delved into the subject of Aztec religion knows how bewilderingly complex it is, but Nick made sense out of it all. Over the years at Yale, I’ve taught quite a few advanced seminars on the Aztec and their mental system, and we always began and ended with “Nicholson 1971.”

Like the true *tlamatini* extolled by Sahagún’s informants, Nick himself was “writing and wisdom,” a “teacher of the truth.” He will never be forgotten



*Nick, Grace Johnson, and Alana Cordy-Collins at the Museum of Man celebration, San Diego, February 16, 1992. Note the Clan Nicholson tartan tie behind the cerveza. Maria C. Nissley photo.*

## ***HOMENAJE A H. B. NICHOLSON***

### ***Alana Cordy-Collins***

As Steve Colston and I drove north to Los Angeles for Nick's Memorial Service, we reminisced about what it had been like as Nick's students. They are all good memories, often funny, always warm, and frequently inspirational.

My initial meeting with Nick was rather fleeting, to say the least. It was my first quarter at UCLA, spring 1968. I had enrolled in his Mesoamerican Archaeology, Western Sphere course, but on the first day no one showed up to teach the class. He rushed in to the next meeting, a few minutes late, to explain that he was on sabbatical and his replacement (Wigberto Jiménez Moreno) was still in Mexico! At the time, I wasn't too clear as to what a sabbatical was, but have since come to appreciate how valuable every moment of one can be. That Nick used even a brief portion of his to attend to the needs of students in a course he wasn't even teaching offers a glimpse of his dedication to his "day job" which, thankfully, he never gave up.

To speak of an “H. B. Nicholson student cult” is not too far from the mark. Over the eight years I spent at UCLA (freshman to Ph.D.), I took each of his classes at least once. For many of us it was something of a ritual: every time the Mesoamerican courses were offered, we (Patty Anawalt, Gary Pahl, Jill Vexler, Mike Gleason, Sandy Orellana, Wayne Ruwet, and many others) were in attendance. When the slides of teosinte and tripsicum appeared on the screen, we would lip-synch his admonition that the next time we bit into a ripe ear of corn, dripping with butter and salt, we should “thank the noble Red Man.” And, to this day, I never look at a piece of jade without thinking, “quintessence of preciousness.”

The facts he taught us were important, but the scholarship that he embodied was breathtaking. I recall Nick’s amazing patience when I came to his office to ask for direction in untangling the confusing sixteenth century Spanish references to the Colombian culture hero, Bochica. “Why, Alana,” he said gently, “you put them in chronological order.” In the wake of that humbling experience, I asked if I might read his (then unpublished) doctoral dissertation on Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl. I remember the weight of the thing when he handed it to me. In reading it, I had my first real understanding of scholarship.

Nick’s seminars were as memorable for his bibliographic citations as they were for course content. As each student chose a research topic, Nick would reel off a daunting literature that should be consulted. Occasionally, however, to our frustration and amusement, when we looked for those references in the library, we’d find that they had been checked out, sometimes years before to a certain Professor Nicholson.

The man read everything, retained it, and frequently used it in analogies and comparisons. My dissertation topic dealt with a group of ancient Peruvian textiles that functioned as a catechism. During my doctoral oral exams, Nick took up that theme, asking me to compare my research with what had happened in Central Asia in the thirteenth century, I had absolutely no idea what he was alluding to and, looking around the room at his fellow professors, I’m sure that no one else did either. Nick seemed somewhat perplexed that none of us there suggested the banners of Chinggis Khan. Eventually, Nick the mentor became Nick the colleague. I was much honored when, in 1979, he asked if I’d coauthor an exhibit catalogue with him. Would I! Fortunately for me, his portion of *Pre-Columbian Art from the Land Collection* (Nicholson et al. 1979) was already written, so I had his skillfully composed text as my model.

When Nick retired from UCLA in 1991, I had the delightful opportunity to give something back. I was then tenured at the University of San Diego and worked part-time as Consulting Curator of the Museum of Man’s pre-Columbian collection. It was in that latter context that I, along with several colleagues, organized a symposium to honor Nick in his hometown. Drs. Patricia Anawalt, Arthur Anderson, Frances Berdan, Stephen Colston, Nigel Davies and Cecelia Klein all presented research papers in his honor (Cordy-Collins and Sharon 1993). Following a meal of *huitlacoche* tacos and cerveza, we toasted him with his own favorite exhortation, *adelante y arriba*.

In the wake of his final apotheosis, I reiterate: Nick, *Onward and Upward!*



*Rush hour in México D.F., Summer 1946, taken at the time of H. B. Nicholson's first visit to the Anahuac Basin. Richard H. Dillon photo.*

## ***EL GRÁN TLATOANI***

**Brian Dervin Dillon**

One day in the early 1980s, while hosting a daylong seminar at UCLA, I asked Dr. H. B. Nicholson how he would like to be introduced. Without blinking an eye he said that when his time came, he would like to be summoned as *El Grán* or *Huey Tlatoani*. And this was how I introduced him. In retrospect, now that he has been summoned for the final time, I realize that this was how he would most like to be remembered.

Henry B. Nicholson was the world's leading Mesoamerican ethnohistorian, yet for all of his prolific writing and lecturing, he was human and approachable. He was in love with history and in love with his research location. He actually lived in the past, sometimes giving the impression that he was only a temporary visitor to the here and now, who would, if he could, return to his true home in the Anahuac Basin five centuries earlier at the drop of a hat. No stuffy or wooden old fud, Nicholson was an animated, fire-breathing, and unapologetic historian, a true knight of the research library. With his passing, a great and learned voice has been stilled.

I first met Dr. Nicholson at Berkeley in 1974. He was a distinguished visiting speaker at an all-day lecture series alongside some of my own professors such as John A. Graham and Robert F. Heizer. Only later did I come to realize that Nick considered UC Berkeley as a kind of shrine,

and that he was there, at least in part, to worship. I had, of course, previously read everything penned by Dr. Nicholson that I could get my hands on and was in awe of his literary and editorial contributions to the *Handbook of Middle American Indians* and other landmark volumes. As the most rabid graduating senior in Anthropology (in Mesoamerican archaeology, no less) that year at Berkeley, I had been given the enviable job of running the audio-visual component of the lecture series. Thus, as “TA for a day” I was the only young mortal thrown in with a roster of much older Olympians. I took advantage of this opportunity by introducing myself and engaging the great scholar from the south in conversation.

I was immensely gratified that Nick and I hit it off right from the start, especially once he learned that I was something of a third generation Mexicanist. My grandfather rode, if not with Pancho Villa, then at least with the U.S. Army on the California/Mexican border before, during, and after Pershing’s 1916 invasion farther east. I still had my grandfather’s army issue spurs, stirrups, and .45. Granddad spoke Spanish, attended Catholic Mass with his Mexican military counterparts, and had been decorated by Colonel Cantú, the Villista military commander of Baja California. I myself was named for Presidente Alvaro Obregón, the subject of my father’s UC Berkeley MA thesis in Mexican history, and used his patronymic as my nickname whenever south of the border. I found that Dr. Nicholson was a learned gentleman of the old school, well-read, and well-traveled. He was quick to point out that while a native southern Californian, he was not from Los Angeles, but from San Diego.

Dr. Nicholson returned to Berkeley the following year to speak at a second such all-day Mesoamerican seminar, and again I was tapped to run the A.V. component. This time, however, I was a young Turk first-year grad student in Maya archaeology, just back from fieldwork in the Guatemalan rain forest supported by a Doherty Foundation grant. The great Aztec scholar greeted me as an old comrade and mentioned that he too, had been a Doherty Foundation recipient as a grad student. He was so friendly and engaging during this second encounter that for a while I thought he had mistaken me for someone else.

The lecture series was held at Kroeber Hall, just down the street from the law school, and Nick let drop the surprising admission that, in addition to his better known accomplishments, he was also a UC Berkeley Boalt Hall graduate in law. I forgave him this failing, admitting that one of my own in-laws had been similarly afflicted (my uncle Bill Dillon was the UC Hastings Law School of San Francisco honor graduate of 1936), but that in both cases no permanent harm had been done to society. This was because neither had actually taken the irredeemable step of becoming a lawyer. Nicholson, regaining his senses, went off to Harvard to pursue his Mesoamerican academic dreams, while Uncle Bill went directly into the FBI. Dr. Nicholson then apologized for having gone to Harvard for his advanced degree, which both of us understood to be something of a betrayal of his preceding years at Berkeley; the statute of limitations on that transgression had probably expired years before. By this time I had come to understand that his friends and admirers called him “Nick.” Already in the category of the latter, I hoped some day to be promoted to the status of the former.

This hope was realized a few years later when I washed up at UCLA as a minty-fresh Ph.D. in Maya Archaeology. Like Nick himself, I had been recruited from UC Berkeley by Clem Meighan, and like Clem, despite having my name placed on “Sweet Old Bob” (S.O.B.) Heizer’s infamous “marked for death” list, I had survived Big Brother U. and come south. I now had the opportunity of “interacting” (one of Nick’s favorite words) with H. B. Nicholson on his own turf on a regular basis. Nick took me through the Haines Hall basement, showing me long-abandoned

archaeological laboratory projects and crate after crate of precomputer punchcards, one for each potsherd, that he had inherited from George Brainerd upon his own arrival at UCLA.

We also found that we had a remarkable number of family historical convergences, both military and academic, beyond the training of terrestrial *tiburones*. Both my dad and Nick entered UC Berkeley at age 17, and Nick had met his wife-to-be Margaret at Berkeley's International House, where my own mom and dad also met. I House was then called "the Zoo" by non-residents because of its cosmopolitan nature and its babel of different languages. Nick was a WWII combat veteran and immensely proud of his army service in the European Theater of Operation. He liked to reminisce about being a brash young 19-year-old in the smoking ruins of Hitler's Berlin in 1945, amazed that he had come through the carnage unscathed. My own father, just like Nick, had also marched off to war from UC Berkeley (albeit a year before him) and was in the Sudetenland on VE Day. Less lucky than Nick, my dad had been badly wounded in action, as had my grandfather, great-grandfather, and great-great-grandfather, albeit in previous wars. I was surprised to learn that Nick had been briefly stationed in the Philippines, where my own grandfather had served three tours. Beginning in 1898, granddad fought against the Spaniards, then Aguinaldo and his *insurrectos* with "time outs" to go off and fight in South Africa with the Boers against the British (Nick's own people) and then the Boxers in China, before returning to the San Francisco Presidio and the Marin Forts.

Nick and my own dad both returned to Berkeley immediately after being cut loose from the Army in order to finish up their undergraduate degrees, Nick's in anthropology, my dad's in history. Both took courses from the same professors around the same time, and both Nicholson and my father went off to explore Mexico for the first time in the summer of 1946. Both were married in Berkeley, albeit one year apart, and both the Dillons (1950) and the Nicholsons (1951) left Berkeley for México, D.F., and the Pyramids at Teotihuacan on their respective honeymoons. Anecdote by anecdote, unidirectional hero worship on my part became trans-generational friendship between him and me. Before too long "Dr. Nicholson" as a form of address had been dropped in favor of "Nick."

Nick had a healthy respect for, but aversion to, archaeological fieldwork in rural Latin America. In his younger days he had paid his dues as a field archaeologist for as long as he could stand it, and then he gratefully left the machete and trowel to others. On what must have been our third or fourth meeting Nick told me about being surrounded by an angry mob in Chimalhuacán, Mexico chanting *¡Maten los Gringos...Maten los Gringos!* (R. Troike, this volume). Having been surrounded by my own angry mob in the Maya Highlands a quarter-century after Nick's near-lynching in the Mexican Highlands, ending up in jail for my own protection, and also having had every possible kind of firearm including M60 machine guns and M79 grenade launchers shoved up my nose in Central America, I could identify quite closely with Nick's "cheated death again" recitation.

Nick preached the *Mexica* gospel with missionary zeal, gaining many converts throughout the world. He was the promoter and the defender of the Aztec, who he rightly believed were pretty much taken for granted by most Mayanists and by those Mesoamericanists primarily interested in the origins of New World civilization. If Nick tended to view all of Mesoamerican culture history through Nahuatl-colored glasses, he nevertheless corrected the common Mayanist misperception that the Aztec or Mexica were merely the last and least of all Central Mexican civilizations. Nick reminded us just how quick a study the Aztec were and also how paradoxical they were, going in less than two centuries from hunters and gatherers to the most prolific

Mesoamerican sculptors in the round, to the most accomplished militarists, and so forth and so on. A champion of Central Mexican art and art styles, he never passed up an opportunity to remind the more Maya-centric of us that there were indeed Mesoamerican art styles that owed little or nothing at all to Maya antecedents.

Nick and I cordially disagreed about the relative positions of Central Mexico versus the Maya area in terms of overall Mesoamerican development. Nick, the honorary *Defeño*, always taking the Mexico-centric view, me the honorary *Chapín nacido en gringolándia* always supporting the Maya position. Throughout the many years we knew each other, Nick and I developed a pattern of friendly intellectual bantering, a kind of Mesoamerican, *¿quién es más macho?*, if you will. This extended into other areas apart from the Ford vs. Chevy, Mexico vs. Maya rivalry: historian vs. field archaeologist, for example. Since Nick was of old English and Scots stock, and liked to claim intellectual descent from Shakespeare, etc., etc., this of course provided an opening for me to play the Irish rebel, reminding him that literacy in the “English” language would not have been possible without medieval Irish monks, that the greatest “British” General (Wesley = Wellesley = Wellington) was actually Irish, etc., etc. But these were only minor differences of opinion. Together, most often, we harmonized intellectually, and very infrequently we even tried to harmonize vocally. The most memorable time this happened was once when Nick and Clem Meighan and I all attempted a three-part version of the “California Drinking Song,” a staple of UC Berkeley undergraduates of the 1930s and ‘40s, much to the amazement if not shock of the perplexed UCLA types within earshot.

Nick detested the “New Archaeology,” which he rightly saw as an effort not so much to make the discipline “more scientific” as to dehumanize it. Nicholson warned of throwing the cultural baby out with the historical bathwater, but his cautions often fell on deaf ears. He and I both considered the “New Archaeology” to be something like a mental virus, the first observable symptoms in the student being: 1) attempts to reduce cultural phenomena to mathematical equations; 2) word-mongering (*methodology* for method, *recordation* for recording, *explication* for explanation, etc.); 3) aggressive ignorance of any fundamental contribution to the field by anyone over 40 years old, anyone deceased, or anyone not writing in English; and 4) a loss of all normal senses, the first to go being the sense of humor.

Nicholson would sometimes ask, “Now could I have that translated into English?” after long, rambling, New Archaeology student diatribes. He would try to gently correct promising students charging off down the New Archaeology path, a dead-end detour on the road to progress, but not always successfully. Most students under the spell of New Archaeology were too busy “designing research” to actually get around to doing any research themselves. Nick cautioned any who would listen that the “New Archaeologists” rejected old research and writing simply because it was old and therefore did not feel obligated to read it, understand it, or give credit where credit was due. When, on the infrequent occasions the New Archaeology student could overcome his chronic cranio-rectal inversion, take a break from reciting his theoretical mantra, and actually do some research, the typical result would be the trumpeting of a “major” discovery when actually only just a single small spoke in the proverbial wheel had been reinvented.

Nick was gregarious and very sociable and liked to interact with his students and colleagues informally as well as within the formal constraints of academia. Informal social gatherings were sometimes particularly memorable when visiting academics, the Mesoamerican intellectual royalty, if you will, came to call, and Nick had the chance to show off his L.A. sphere of influence to them. For example, at one party, held at a wealthy booster’s home in an upscale part

of L.A., Nick took great pleasure in introducing Scotty MacNeish to all and sundry as the “Hero of Tehuacán.” MacNeish, for his part, modestly belittled his own archaeological accomplishments in favor of reminding those present of his prowess as a boxer and, at age 20, in 1938, a Golden Gloves champion. As the night wore on, the more sedate guests migrated towards the living room, while Nicholson, MacNeish, and most of the younger archaeologists, now all very well lubricated, gravitated through the sliding glass back door outside to the patio. Here, unfettered by social niceties, the intellectual discourse became more and more frequently punctuated with yelling, singing, and even shadowboxing with the “Hero of Tehuacán.”

The night reached its climax when Scotty MacNeish, by now closely resembling an inebriated, myopic, bipedal gopher, suddenly realized his glass was empty. Breaking off his conversation in mid-sentence, the “Hero of Tehuacán” charged off towards the house for a refill. Unfortunately, the decibel level from the patio had risen to the point that one of the interior guests had closed the sliding glass door so as to maintain the gentility level of conversation inside. MacNeish, hurling himself up the stairs, consequently ran full tilt into the nearly invisible plate glass door, which launched him bodily backwards to land dorsally extended on the cement floor of the patio, down for the count. The living room crowd, curious as to the source of the house-shaking boom, slid the door back and saw MacNeish’s inert form supine on the patio.

“Is he dead?” came the inevitable question.

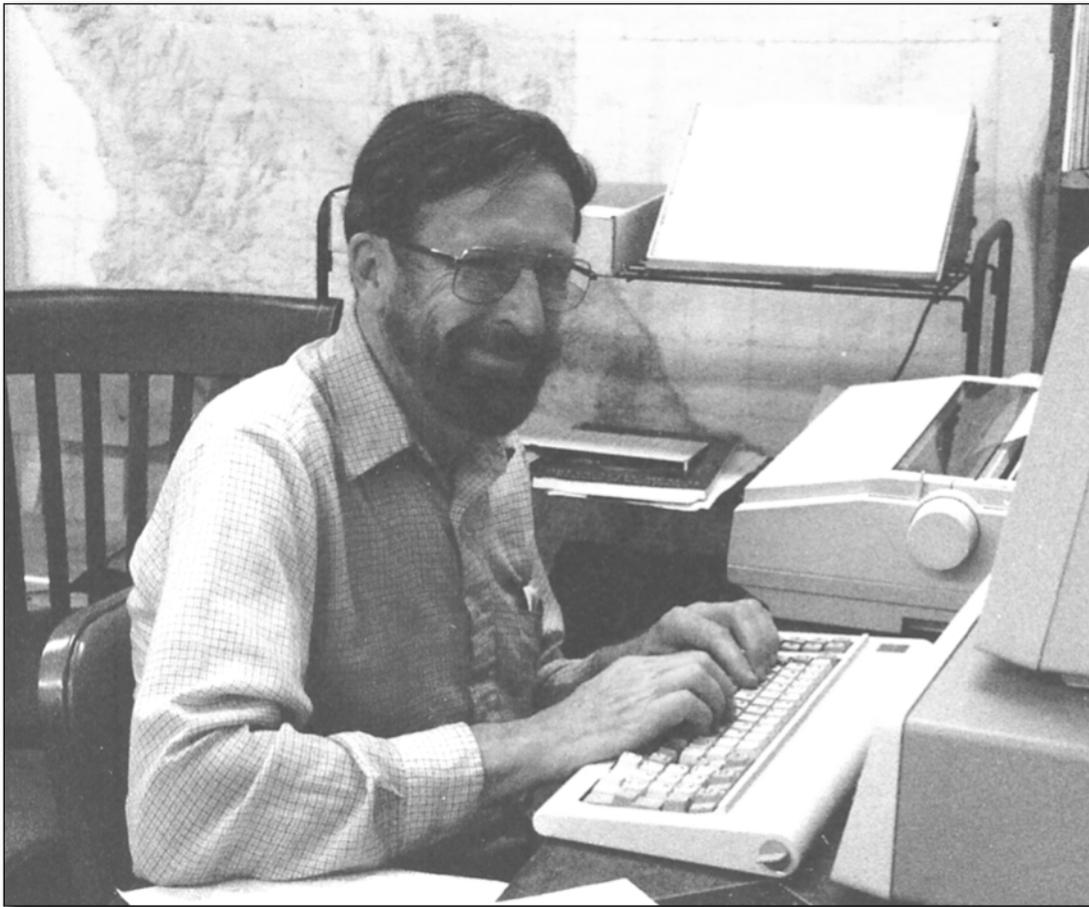
“No, he’s an archaeologist—he’s only resting,” came the response.

Subsequently, no conversation with Nick about the Tehuacán sequence, the domestication of maize, etc., could be held without reference to the one and only time that Scotty MacNeish, 1938 Golden Gloves champion, knocked himself out in an unopposed one-man bout in L.A.

Nick Nicholson was friendly, generous with his time, enthusiastic, warm, gracious, and supportive. Sympathetic to the hopes and dreams of his own graduate students, he was genuinely interested in the experiences and aspirations of Mesoamericanists of all ages and nationalities, wherever they were to be found, but Nick had a touch of paranoia as well. What he was most afraid of was that people would waste his time, time which he would much rather devote to his own beloved archival and art historical research.

A vivid and recurring memory is of him in his office surrounded by what I thought of as his “children”—students, admirers, and hangers-on, some truly gifted, some merely sycophantic, but all unfortunately making demands on his very limited research time (Haskett, this volume). While Nick appreciated the adulation, he sometimes seemed trapped like an academic rat, cornered by the rich and pretentious social climbers who simply wanted to bask in the reflected glow of his intellectual gifts and enhance their own prestige through proximity to him, always at the cost of his precious time. If the faces changed over the years, the circumstances never did. Perhaps this is why Nick so relished escaping to Mexico as often as he could, if only for a day or two, where he could shrug off the limpets and do what he liked best, research.

Nick had a tremendous bi- or tri-cultural sense of humor that endeared him to Latin Americans and all Latin Americanists. He adored Mexico, Mexicans, and all things Mexican, and he would bang the Mexican gong at every opportunity. He would pepper his English conversation with Mexican Spanish words (*ojalá*) and phrases making you realize that while Nick might be physically present in his gringified Ivory Tower, his mind was often elsewhere. Once while



*Nick AD (AfterDigital) in his Aztec Archive, his favorite lair at UCLA. Photo by Eloise Quiñones Keber, 1986.*

visiting him in his office, I began serenading him with the Mexican truck drivers' National Anthem, Vicente Fernández' incomparable "El Rey," and was very pleased but not at all surprised to hear him join in with the chorus *Con dinero, y sin dinero, Yo hago siempre lo que quiero...* A master of *Real Academia* quality written Spanish, Nick never lost his border gringo accent in spoken (or, in this case, sung) Spanish, which remained one of his most charming qualities.

Accident prone in the extreme, perhaps owing to a preoccupation with people long dead and places far away, Nick was always clobbering himself in one unusual way or another, showing up on campus with a bandage on his head, his arm in a sling, or a cast on his foot. My most treasured and indelible memory of Nick was a rapid-fire series of embarrassing physical faux pas worthy of Buster Keaton, yet completely illustrative of his humanity and his character. I had the very great honor to host Nick as a speaker in yet another all-day Mesoamerican symposium at UCLA along with other academic bigwigs from a variety of different universities. Carefully orchestrating the event, I had all the distinguished speakers sit in the front row of the gigantic, amphitheater-style lecture hall so that no time would be wasted as I called them one at a time up to the stage for each of their presentations, and no speaker would be inconvenienced by having to squeeze past corpulent students or librarians.

All seemed to be going well as the day wore on, with each speaker in turn standing up, walking left in front of the large gathering of several hundred students, climbing the half-dozen stairs to

the small door leading backstage, then appearing as if by magic at the podium as I myself faded, stage right. All was going well, at least until it was Dr. Nicholson's turn on stage. When I called his name, Nick bolted upright, lecture notes in hand, then rushed to his right, to and through the self-locking fire door on the wrong side of the hall. This was before anybody could tell him that it led directly outside the building, not to the stage. The few of us who knew where this door led, or more accurately, didn't lead, had a hard time suppressing our laughter at first, but the laughter became general when a loud banging on that door shattered the silent expectation within the hall. Prompted by Nick's hammering on the locked door, another of the front row speakers finally attempted his rescue and got the door open from the inside. Unfortunately, now there was no Nick awaiting this development, for by this time he had given up and was circumnavigating the building, a pedestrian journey of at least a city block.

Several student bloodhounds now left the lecture hall in search of our missing speaker. Something like three minutes (it seemed like three hours) after going out the wrong door, Nick came striding down the aisle from the top of the auditorium, down the steps past a couple hundred laughing, clapping people until he confronted the stage and podium once again. Starting towards the wrong door a second time, Nick stopped short, then, discretion being the better part of valor, climbed hand over foot up the elevated front of the stage to thunderous applause. Composing himself behind the podium with *gravitas*, Nick apologized for the delay, and then promptly dropped his lecture notes. Hitting his head on the podium as he made a grab for them, the audience was now rolling uncontrollably in the aisles. After recovering his notes, and while shuffling them back into some semblance of order, Nick got a paper cut and began bleeding profusely all over the papers. Nobody could make an entrance like Nick.

But, finally, the lights were dimmed, the slides came on, Nick's stentorian yet mellifluous voice boomed out over the audience, and the laughter died down. Once again we were all mesmerized by the man and his message. Nick being Nick, he immersed the crowd as well as himself in his favorite subject, Aztec iconography, and, as always, transported us back through the centuries. All of us marveled at his aplomb, his quick recovery, and his ability to turn a seeming disaster into yet another roaring success. Later that night, on my living room sofa, we all had a good laugh about Nick's bad day, nobody laughing more than Nick himself.

If a polytheistic church of Tenochtitlan was still in existence, Nick would be its archbishop, if not its pope. Today, just about any inebriate you meet on the Mexico City subway will tell you with great pride *soy puro Azteca* without really understanding much more than the modern, popular mythology surrounding the term. Nick Nicholson, on the other hand, despite the time and place of his birth, was the genuine article.

Nick may have been born into the wrong century and into the wrong country, but he was a living link with the ancients, and one of the very few people who could really, truly, make the past come alive. Born a mere gringo on the Mexican border, through his remarkable life of scholarship H. B. Nicholson transformed himself into the foremost Aztec authority of his time.

Nick was many things to many people,  
but to all who knew him and loved him,  
he was *puro Azteca*,  
he was and still is *El Rey*,  
and he remains the one and only  
*grán Tlatoani*.

## NICK IN EUROPE

### Wolfgang Haberland

We met for the first time on July 12, 1960, after a guard in the lobby of the Hamburgisches Museum für Völkerkunde (Anthropological Museum of Hamburg) called my office and told me that there was a foreigner who wished to see the Aztec “Hackmack” stone box. I went down, and there he was, Henry B. “Nick” Nicholson. I do not remember whether the box was on exhibition or was in storage. In any case, I showed it to him, not knowing at the time that the feathered serpent on the lid was something like an heraldic crest for him. I remember that we discussed the box and that I didn’t have too much spare time, since I had to meet my wife and Henri Wassén from Göteborg, Sweden, who was then our house guest. So, after a while I told Nick (I didn’t yet call him that) that I had to leave and asked him to come along, which he did. We met my wife and Henri at the Alster (a lake in the middle of Hamburg), took a short cruise on one of the small lake steamers, and then went to the central railway station, since Henri was going on to Berlin. After Henri left we took Nick to lunch, then on to his lodgings. Next morning I picked him up to show him the other Aztec sculptures and artifacts at the museum, before he, too, went on to Berlin. We all met a few days later in Vienna, Austria, to attend the 34<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Americanists.

This was the beginning of a long, long friendship. We met again at some of the Americanist Congresses (the last time being in 1991 at the 47<sup>th</sup> in New Orleans) and at other conferences. Nick’s second visit to Hamburg was in August-September 1980, after the Wartenstein, Austria Conference on settlement patterns in honor of Gordon Willey, which we both attended. We sometimes exchanged long letters, discussing as during our first meeting, Aztec art, especially stone sculpture, the numerous fakes and early colonial pieces, showing European influences, like the famous feather shield in Vienna, and last but not least, the questions, “What is Aztec or What is not Aztec in the late pre-European art of Central Mexico?”

We never finished that discussion. I shall miss Nick, not only because we still had so much to talk and to write about, but also for his humanity, his humor, and warmth. I shall miss him most of all because he was one of the last archaeological friends of my generation. I very much regret that Nick isn’t among us any more and that his voice will never be heard again.

## ALL JAMMED UP

**Robert Haskett**

Nick was always a busy man; as he put it, he was “all jammed up.” Yet without missing a beat, he would usually proceed to spend at least a moment or two addressing whatever it was that concerned you. This temporal generosity of his was both a blessing and a curse. It was a blessing because Nick not only remembered who you were and what your project was, but he always seemed to have the information we students desired at his fingertips. It was a curse because one of the things that was “all jammed up” in his life at the UCLA Department of Anthropology was the hall outside his office. I remember waiting in a kind of ragged, cacophonous line of undergrads and grads leaning against the wall, sitting on the floor, or, if an individual was of a nervous or impatient character, pacing in tight holding patterns while Dr. Nicholson talked with the fortunate one inside. Nick’s ringing voice could always be heard above the hubbub swirling outside his door. I have to admit that I occasionally had to leave for class or some other activity before actually reaching the inner sanctum, but this was, generally speaking, when I had neglected to plan my visits carefully and to give Nick fair warning of my intentions.

I arrived at UCLA in 1976 as a callow new MA student, having been out in the real world working as a printing press jockey for over a year. Though my main field of study was in Colonial Latin American history, which I pursued under the sure guidance of James Lockhart, Nick agreed to become my “outside” research field advisor. I had always had an interest in ancient worlds, particularly the ancient Mediterranean and the Egypt of King Tut (I remember making a pyramid out of sugar cubes as an elementary school project), an interest that Nick turned out to share. But his enthusiasm for and magisterial knowledge of pre-contact Mesoamerica soon infected me. From him I learned about Pacal, about the pre-contact Nahuatl, and about the Maya, as well as the complex cosmology associated with a galaxy of deities, above all (and not surprisingly) the Feathered Serpent Quetzalcoatl. Sitting in one of Nick’s anthropology courses I remember being amazed at the ease with which he could read Maya glyphs, even though epigraphy wasn’t his scholarly specialty. Had I known more details about his background, training, and long experience, I probably wouldn’t have been surprised; being a timid sort back then, I might well have been intimidated. But Nick didn’t arrogantly wear his learning on his sleeve. He just lived it in a very down-to-earth manner, yet in a way that conveyed the joy he found in his calling, in the raveling of the textures of the far past.

Nick was one of the key forces in my formative years as an ethnohistorian. Along with Lockhart, he helped inculcate the certainty in me that I could never understand what happened to indigenous people after the Spanish invasions unless I also understood the vast cultural experience, the fascinating history of the diverse peoples who had inhabited the Americas long before Columbus’ accidental arrival in the hemisphere. It was a lesson that continues to shape my own scholarship and teaching to this day.

I have many fond memories of Nick, but one that said something about his poise and good humor under duress still strikes a chord. One of the classrooms he was given to teach in was an early-day “high-tech facility,” or at least it was supposed to be. It was unfinished, however, and remained so throughout the quarter. It had a lectern that was supposed to have a built-in control panel; however, this was yet to be installed, and a gaping hole was there instead. To make matters even more challenging, projecting above one side of the lectern there was some kind of

arm or bracket, the purpose of which I could never fathom. The lectern's *cenote* left Nick with nowhere to put his notes, and so he had to balance them precariously on one edge; inevitably, these notes mimicked the nubile sacrificed Maya virgins popularly supposed to have been thrown into such sinkholes by disappearing into the no-control-panel's central void at inconvenient moments. The inscrutable projecting arm was a menace, hovering threateningly about Nick's forehead level; the occasional meeting of the two was surely preordained.

Not content with the incomplete installation of this inquisitional device at the front of the room, the mischievous designers of this classroom had begun a state-of-the-art projection system for slides and movies in the back. Of course, since the panel that was supposed to control this splendid new system was missing, Nick couldn't run the slide or movie projectors himself from the benighted lectern. Instead, he stationed one of his teaching assistants up in the projection booth to run the show. This would have been fine, except the new projection booth was soundproof; the TA couldn't hear Nick very well (despite his booming lecture hall voice), and to make matters worse the "assistant" assigned to the booth was episodically inattentive. Nick would call out "next slide," nothing would happen, he'd yell even louder, then try to attract the TA's attention by waving. It was funny, and Nick knew this too, so instead of being a distraction the daily drama of the slides was a kind of ritualistic attraction. Having some years later been, more than once, the victim of quirky high-tech equipment in my own classrooms (I had one with fancy automatic shades that suddenly opened and closed all by themselves as if the room was possessed), I can now appreciate Nick's aplomb in the face of these pedagogical nuisances.

Nick deftly shepherded me through my Mesoamerican Anthropology research field, folding me into the Aztec Tertulia that he helped found. These meetings, a mix of graduate students and faculty, featured scholarly presentations, discussions, and debates. The regulars and guests who attended were often a pretty rarified bunch; besides Nick and assorted graduate students, there were James Lockhart, Hasso Von Winning, Cecelia Klein, Frances Berdan, Arthur J. O. Anderson, Patricia Anawalt, Jeanette Favrot Petersen, Ruth Gubler, Scotty MacNeish, and Nigel Davies. It was like participating in a conference-style round table on a much more regular basis than otherwise would have been possible for a lowly graduate student. Thanks to Nick I was also able to participate in a "community" of scholars mainly interested in the Maya, being present at such intriguing events as a screening of an early, trial version of the animated *Popol Vuh* film by Patricia Amlin, a resource I now use in my own teaching.

Once I passed my orals—Nick was a nurturing presence during that ordeal—we eventually moved to Maine, where I finished writing my dissertation while my wife, Stephanie Wood, undertook her first university teaching job. When it came time to get a signature on my shiny new complete dissertation Nick was in the hospital. I can't quite remember why now, but since he was a martyr to his feet—his "pins," as he called them—in some ways it might have had something to do with that. But whatever the cause, Nick cheerfully received me in his hospital room dressed in natty pajamas. He wanted to know about my life in Maine, my job prospects, and my future. It was as if HE were visiting ME in the hospital and trying to cheer me up.

That was the last time I saw Nick in person for a number of years. We ran into each other at conferences after that once in a while, but the comfortable contact we had had while I was in graduate school was broken, mainly, I'm ashamed to admit, because of my poor skills as a correspondent. Whenever we did meet, however, Nick was friendly and interested, making me wish I still lived close enough to UCLA so that I could continue attending things like the Aztec Tertulia and other Mesoamerican-themed events.

Nick will remain in my memory as an energetic exponent of Mesoamerican studies. Others have and will be stimulated by his work enough to question it, add to it, and bring a revisionist eye to it, which is of course the nature of the scholarly enterprise at its best. But none of this will ever dim Nick's many enduring contributions to his field, nor to the formation of a diverse body of people whose interest in the indigenous peoples of Mexico was sparked and encouraged by his mentorship. Nick may have been all "jammed up" a lot of the time, but that was only because he cared so much about what he was doing.

## “HANK” THE NOVELIST

**David H. Kelley**

H. B. Nicholson and I were friends at Harvard, interested in many of the same subjects. I called him “Hank” because of his Western birth and upbringing.

At one point he told me that he had written a novel. I have little doubt, now, that he was pulling my leg, for the novel alluded to, *The Jade God* (Sullivan 1925), had been published the year of his birth. For some reason I had the impression then that he was talking about a cowboy novel. But I think that he moved the conversation to cowboys to either distract me or mislead me. In later years I discovered that Nicholson liked to spin yarns out of whole cloth to put on the “rubes” in proper Western fashion. “Rubes,” by definition, were any and all gullible Easterners.

He and I and Herb Harvey and Kim Romney took a very exciting course on linguistics and archaeology from Demitri Shimkin, studying Uto-Aztecan plant terms and linguistic distributions. We intended to publish a joint paper, but Hank and Herb thought that Kim and I were not conservative enough. Eventually Kim in 1957 and Herb in 1963 published on this topic, while Hank and I did not.

Despite many disagreements on details, Hank Nicholson and I were probably the greatest admirers of Quetzalcoatl and the Toltecs during our time at Harvard, and I remember him with admiration and affection.

# NICHOLSON'S SACRED REALM OF THE AZTEC

**Richard M. Leventhal**

I first got to know Nick when he, Gordon Willey, and I gathered in Cambridge, Massachusetts, during the summer of 1980 in preparation for travel to Austria for the 86<sup>th</sup> (and last) Burg Wartenstein Wenner-Gren Conference. I remember that we all three had lunch a few times at Gordon's usual haunts in Cambridge. Then, we were off to the airport together to take a Lufthansa flight. I recall that the three of us were in a bulkhead row—three across. Nick was at the window, Gordon in the middle, and I had my usual aisle seat. Nick was clearly in a good mood, and as we headed over the Atlantic he continued to talk about Austria, historical facts and interpretations of Europe, and the ancient Aztecs. After dinner, Gordon clearly was ready for sleep and began to settle into his seat. But I remember that Nick did not really pick up on this and continued to pop his head and upper body forward to talk to me, across Gordon, about some interesting idea or fact in his usual booming voice. It was a long trip but one of the most interesting in terms of conversation and ideas.

It was during this flight and then during the following conference that I identified two very endearing things about Nick. First, he was very solicitous of Gordon and specifically was incredibly proud to have been one of Gordon's first Ph.D. students. He would constantly tell stories about those early years in the 1950s after Gordon had come to Harvard to take over the Mesoamerican/Maya program in the Department of Anthropology and at the Peabody Museum as the Bowditch Professor. These stories were long and rambling discourses about Nick, Gordon, other graduate students who were at Harvard at the same time and the trajectory of anthropology, and there was a constant discussion of the Aztecs.

This brings me to a second endearing quality of Nick's as related to the Aztecs. During this trip, during the Wenner-Gren conference, and then, when I was at UCLA, I found Nick to be incredibly knowledgeable about ancient Mesoamerica with great focus on the Aztecs. In discussing this ancient culture, Nick would often use phrases such as:

If we think about that city that we all know and love...  
...that huge city in Central Mexico...  
...that first great American city under Mexico City...

Often, Nick would simply not say the name, Tenochtitlan. It was almost as if this was a sacred word and a sacred concept. And as I think about Nick and the years that I knew him, I now realize that this was indeed the case. Tenochtitlan was the center of his research universe, and the city and the concept of the city were, indeed, sacred for him.

And this brings me to my main point about Nick and his scholarship. I want to make a comparison with Gordon Willey's approach and emphasize the value and importance of both scholars and approaches, not to make a qualitative comparison but to contrast two important individuals and styles in Mesoamerican studies. In the end, it is clear that both approaches and styles are critical for the future growth and development of research in Mesoamerica. Nicholson's Ph.D. dissertation was entitled, *Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl of Tollan: A Problem in Mesoamerican Ethnohistory* (Nicholson 1957). He completed his Ph.D. in 1957 and then started an academic career at UCLA. His dissertation was not published until 2001, and during the

intervening 43 years, copies of his dissertation circulated throughout the Mesoamerican academic world. Stories about copies of this dissertation were common within the field. Copies of copies were even more common, almost to the point where one could not read the typescript.

But this dissertation was an essential tool for Mesoamericanists studying the Mesoamerican Postclassic Period. The Tollan-Quetzalcoatl story touched not only the Toltecs but also the Maya, the Aztecs, and even the Spaniards, for it is intimately connected to the Spanish-Aztec interaction of the sixteenth century. It is a culturally defining story for the entire Postclassic and Contact periods of Mesoamerica.

Nicholson, in his 1957 dissertation and the eventual (2001a) publication that it became, attempts to methodically and carefully examine and assess all of the sources to understand better the nature of the Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl of Tollan tale. These sources included the ethnohistoric documents, the iconography, and all other material related to this story. Nicholson did not attempt to identify whether this story was, in fact, true. Rather, he wanted to separate out the material, information, and identity of the historic figure, Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl, from that of the god, Ehecatl Quetzalcoatl.

I am not going to go into Nicholson's dissertation and publication in any detail. But this work clearly shows Nicholson's style of research and presentation. Although he is clearly interested in the nature of Toltec kingship and of the role of the Toltecs within Mesoamerica, Nicholson does not delve deeply into the theoretical realm. He does not present cross-cultural theories about the nature of kingship or the nature of political power. Rather, Nicholson is completely focused upon the identification of the data, the analysis and translation of the data, and developing a close reading of the nature of the contrast between the historical and deity figures.

Let me hasten to add, however, that this lack of a theoretical basis was not due to Nicholson's lack of knowledge or understanding of much of this theoretical literature. From personal experience I know that he was one of the most widely read individuals. When I was teaching a theoretical course on the nature of kingship and applying these ideas to the ancient Maya, Nick was quoting from all of the major sources including Hocart (1970), Dumézil (1973), and others.

But Nicholson's *modus operandi* was that of tight, detailed scholarship with a breadth of information that allowed his final arguments to come to the surface, not through personal persuasion, but rather through a clear preponderance of the data and information, all controlled and presented by Nicholson.

In 1976 Gordon Willey published a paper entitled "Mesoamerican Civilization and the Idea of Transcendence," in which he tries to do two things:

1. to bring a theoretical perspective to Mesoamerican studies and specifically to demonstrate the viability of developing an ideological model for our interpretation and understanding of the ancient world;
2. to insert Mesoamerican and pre-Columbian studies into the discourse related to an interpretation of the past. Constructs, such as "transcendence," are not simply associated with the Old World but can be and must be utilized in our understanding of the New World civilizations both before and after contact.

The idea of transcendence came into Willey's view from a 1975 special issue of the journal *Daedalus* entitled, *The Age of Transcendence*. The idea of transcendence within the context of civilization is one of society looking both back at the past and then to the future in terms of thinking and rethinking about the nature of cultural identity and cohesion. The authors of this *Daedalus* volume argue that the eras of transcendence in the Old World were connected to what we know as classical Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Jainism, Confucianism, and Taoism. It can be argued that the rise of Akhenaton in Egypt is tied to an abortive transcendent movement.

Willey noted that the introductory *Daedalus* article by Benjamin Schwartz (1975) makes only passing reference to the New World and states that, "as far as we know, transcendent movements did not occur in the Mayan-Aztec civilizations." Willey clearly disagreed and feels that the Mesoamerican sphere has both the time depth and civilizational growth and development to allow for the existence of a transcendent movement. Willey believed that the Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl story is just such a transcendent movement during the Postclassic.

According to Willey, this story carries five basic criteria that allow it to fit within the transcendent concept as presented in the special *Daedalus* issue:

1. There is the required time depth for the Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl story, which comes about 2000 years after the development of complex societies in Mesoamerica.
2. There is also a broad geographic scope to the story, for it relates to much of Mesoamerica that can be called a broad interaction sphere.
3. The existence of in situ prototypes relates to the earlier ideological systems that existed in Mesoamerica from the Olmecs in the Preclassic through the Classic Period of the entire region.
4. There also seems to be a requirement for a transcendent movement to come along during a period of trouble and crisis within the society. Willey argues that the end of the Classic Period is clearly this moment of change and crisis with the collapse of a variety of important societies and the growth and development of others.
5. The final criterion identified by Willey is that in the Old World, these transcendent movements do not normally take place within the "hearth area." but within its margins. Again, the Toltecs and the story fit the criteria.

In the end, Willey (1976:211) argued for the Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl story to be that of a transcendent movement in which there was "criticism of the times and of the established lifestyles of war, violence, and human sacrifice." It is a story that argues for the broad continuation and development of the Mesoamerican worldview with its concepts, as with many transcendent movements, becoming routinized and structured within the realm of the political and ideological system.

As a side note to the Nicholson-Willey discussion above, David Carrasco wrote an article in 1980 within which he presented a broad structural argument for the relationship of the Quetzalcoatl story and the nature of kingship and power among the Aztecs at the time of the arrival of the Spanish. He did not agree with Willey's argument of transcendence for two reasons:

1. Carrasco (1980:299, footnote #9) believed that Willey emphasizes the peaceful and anti-human sacrifice nature of Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl well beyond the information within the sources. Carrasco argues, "Quetzalcoatl's upbringing is riddled with warfare, human sacrifice and aggression."
2. Carrasco also argued (ibid) that Willey's ideas of transcendence are too one-sided and tied to the *Daedalus* articles. For Carrasco, transcendence, "can both criticize and support social and political regimes."

This notwithstanding, Nicholson's dissertation and 2001 volume and Willey's transcendence article are emblematic of a much larger body of work from both individuals. In fact, both H. B. Nicholson and Gordon R. Willey are considered to be primary scholars in the study of the ancient Mesoamerican world. It is clear that within the works discussed, these two incredible scholars are intimately linked. Nicholson's detailed assessment and analysis of the data provides a strong background for Willey's theoretical foray into the construction of the Mesoamerican world in the Postclassic. Willey was an unusual scholar, providing both a strong corpus of field data and, at the same time, developing and presenting ideas and theoretical interpretations of the past. He liked theory and enjoyed the application of new interpretive constructs for the ancient world.

Nicholson, on the other hand, knew theory well but preferred to remain within the sacred realm of the Aztec or Mesoamerican world. In fact, Willey, in the Foreword to the 2001 Nicholson book, wrote:

I was becoming more and more fascinated with the subject. I corresponded with Henry, telling him what I was up to. As I remember, he was slightly amused by the sudden foray of mine in a direction in which I had shown no previous interest; nevertheless, he was sympathetic and encouraging (Willey 2001).

Nicholson set his research agenda very clearly in the early part of his career. One of his earliest research works, his 1957 dissertation, was also one of his last publications (2001a). Nicholson focused upon a very detailed and extensive examination of the ethnohistoric documents and the additional data sets without making huge leaps of theoretical logic for his interpretation.

Nicholson is acknowledged to be one of the great scholars of the ancient and historic Mesoamerican world. Although he had many accomplishments in his career, I think that he moved Mesoamerican studies forward in two important ways. First, he moved ethnohistoric research into the forefront. Although he was not the first person to work on important documents, he was one of the first to demonstrate clearly their value in our study of the past. Second, Nicholson, as an incredibly detailed scholar, created a foundation based upon both a strong methodology and detailed data and information. Willey and others built their interpretations and cultural theories on the material gathered and studied by Nicholson during his career.

H. B. Nicholson put Mesoamerican studies, particularly the ethnohistoric part of the program, on a solid footing. And even though he did not often speak the name of the Aztec center in Central Mexico, his mastery of data and the ethnohistoric material turned his words into sacred research documents for all who have followed him.

## NICK IN THE CITY OF QUETZALCÓATL

**Michael D. Lind**

My first encounter with Dr. Henry B. Nicholson was in August of 1966 at the Mesa Redonda on Teotihuacan held at the then new Museo Nacional de Antropología in Mexico City. Dr. John Paddock introduced us and informed Dr. Nicholson that I was writing my MA thesis on Mixteca-Puebla polychrome pottery. As a lowly graduate student, meeting this giant in the field and the world's foremost expert on the Mixteca-Puebla style left me speechless.

Nicholson asked me what I had found in my investigations, and I stammered that I believed I could clearly distinguish between Cholula and Mixteca polychromes. He was clearly excited by this and poured forth his ideas and observations. Soon we were chatting amicably, my apprehension gone, and as I departed it struck me that he had truly treated me as a colleague instead of an academic tyro or dilettante. This was one of Dr. Nicholson's great gifts, despite his lofty status, he just naturally reached out to engage, inspire, and share his vast knowledge with students and made them feel like colleagues.

Following my initial meeting with Dr. Nicholson (out of respect for the man I was never able to call him Nick, although he encouraged me to do so), it always amazed me that he remembered who I was when I ran across him at various meetings. He had a copy of my MA thesis and told me how much he liked it and that I should publish it (Lind 1967). He also always asked about my current research and told me some of what he was doing. During the 1970s, I informed him that I was excavating in the Mixteca Alta on Dr. Ronald Spores' Nochixtlán Valley Project and that I had been able to distinguish between Prehispanic and Early Colonial Mixteca polychromes. During the 1980s I told him that I had directed my own excavations at Cholula and was now able to distinguish polychrome types diagnostic of the Early, Middle, and Late Postclassic. He was always very excited about this research, encouraging and inspiring me to continue, and providing me with very pertinent and important information from his incomparable knowledge of Mixteca-Puebla iconography.

Knowing that I was attending the Second Cholula Symposium at the Universidad de las Américas in Cholula in July of 1990, Dr. Nicholson phoned me and informed me of his intention to present a paper there. He asked where I stayed when in Cholula, and I told him at the Hotel de las Américas that had very plain, but clean, rooms for less than \$10 a night and was frequented by lower middle class Mexicans. However, I recommended that he stay at the Villa Arqueológica which was a first class hotel with fine dining. Much to my surprise as I entered the hotel lobby at Las Américas, Dr. Nicholson was at the desk registering!

We proceeded to our respective rooms on the top (third) floor of the Américas and agreed to meet for breakfast the following morning. The Hotel de Las Américas is two blocks directly east of the Great Pyramid of Cholula. In the morning I left my room to meet with Dr. Nicholson and found him standing in front of his room, leaning on the balcony railing, and gazing at the Great Pyramid with the snow-capped volcanoes, Popocatepetl and Iztaccíhuatl, in the background. He was positively glowing and said, "It's wonderful being back in the city of Quetzalcóatl." This is how I'll always remember him, standing on the balcony gazing at the Great Pyramid and the volcanoes, his face beaming with absolute contentment to be once again in the city of Quetzalcóatl.

At the Symposium he presented an excellent paper on a Cholula polychrome vessel, entitled “A Cholulteca Ceramic ‘Cariacature’ of a Totonac” (Nicholson 1991). Afterward, he invited me to participate in a symposium that he and Dr. Eloise Quiñones Keber were organizing for the International Congress of Americanists to be held at Tulane University in New Orleans the following summer (1991). He said he wanted me to write on the differences between Cholula and Mixteca polychromes that had been the theme of my MA thesis and informed me that they planned on publishing the papers.

In writing the article for publication, I found Dr. Nicholson to be an absolutely superb editor. His criticisms were constructive and to the point. His knowledge of English grammar, punctuation, and syntax rivaled that of the finest and most exacting English professor. He was a demanding editor, but the results were most gratifying. The papers were published in the volume *Mixteca-Puebla: Discoveries and Research in Mesoamerican Art and Archaeology*, edited by H. B. Nicholson and Eloise Quiñones Keber (1993). After nearly 30 years, the essence of my MA thesis was finally published due entirely to the kind efforts of Dr. Nicholson (Lind 1994).

From 1990 on, Dr. Nicholson and I communicated on a sporadic but relatively frequent basis. We exchanged Christmas cards each year and on occasion engaged in lengthy phone conversations in which we discussed current research, and he reminisced about his days at Berkeley when he was in contact with the great Aztec scholar Robert H. Barlow. During this time, I encouraged him to publish his dissertation which was a brilliant and exhaustive study of all the ethnohistorical sources relating to Quetzalcóatl. In 2001, Dr. Nicholson wrote a new introduction to his dissertation, and it was published under the title *Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl: The Once and Future Lord of the Toltecs*, by the University Press of Colorado (Nicholson 2001a). David Carrasco and Eduardo Matos Moctezuma rightly characterize the book as a true classic.

The last time I had a lengthy phone conversation with Dr. Nicholson was near the end of November in 2003. He was very excited about an article to be published in 2004 by Gilda Sánchez in the *Journal de la Société des Americanistes* entitled “Temas Rituales en la Cerámica ‘Tipo Códice’ del Estilo Mixteca-Puebla,” which he had been asked to review for publication (Sánchez Hernández 2004). Dr. Nicholson knew that I had been a consultant for Gilda’s undergraduate thesis at the Universidad de las Américas on the iconography of Cholula polychromes and her doctoral dissertation at Leiden University on the iconography of Cholula and Mixteca polychromes (Sánchez Hernández 2005). We discussed her ideas at length, and Dr. Nicholson was very impressed with her analysis. His last word to me was, “¡Adelante!”

## NICK AND THE HISTORIANS

**James Lockhart**

Having appeared on the scene at UCLA in 1967 in the guise of a social historian of early Latin America working on Spaniards in Peru, I at first had little occasion to get to know Nick Nicholson and his world. But in 1972 I turned seriously in the complementary direction of indigenous people after European contact, and that soon landed me in Central Mexico, studying Nahuatl and the people who spoke it. I began to accumulate doctoral students working on the same topic in the same way, students in great need of appropriate fields for their qualifying examinations, and especially for the obligatory field outside history. Nick's precontact Mesoamerican ethnohistory looked ideal for the purpose, in principle, and soon it proved to be ideal in practice as well. Taking a research field with Nick became virtually universal among my graduate students in history; one could say obligatory, but there was no need for compulsion. The word spread, and a field of study with Nick was always included in doctoral candidates' first proposals.

I did not actually follow just what my students did with Nick, but through some combination of lectures, seminars, and readings they did absorb things; they began to spout the names of codices and to me obscure gods and sets of gods. They imbibed an enthusiasm, also a degree of hermeticism, and something like the aura of a fantasy world, a bit reminiscent of the works of Tolkien or, later on, of some elaborate contemporary computer game.

My first close contact with Nick himself took place as some of the students got as far as the doctoral qualifying exams and as Nick duly began to appear at these functions (one learned to be sure the students gave him frequent reminders of the time and place, right up to the day before). The qualifyings, as they were in Latin American history at that time, were a rather odd mixture. Only the major field, early Latin America in my case, had a written component, done before the orals. At the orals, I would primarily deal with the candidate's dissertation project, and the other members would examine quite seriously, if selectively, on the substance of their own fields. Nick didn't take cognizance of this system. He didn't really examine; he chatted with the candidate. With their small exposure, none of my students were truly qualified in the labyrinthine matter of precontact Central Mexican ethnohistory any more than I was, but Nick neither exposed their ignorance nor embarrassed them, much less voted against them. He seemed content that they had learned anything at all.

It was in this context that Nick invited us to attend his intermittent Aztec Tertulia, where he, colleagues, visitors, and students of his held forth on various topics of interest in his field. (We postcontact ethnohistorians of Mexico have big problems with the term "Aztec" as many anthropologists still use it, but that is neither here nor there.) I was surprised to learn how important art historians were in the group, and that their expertise and Nick's virtually merged, which broadened my horizons considerably. The Tolkien, or "buff," aspect colored everything, and it all seemed very much an insider's game. But we historians picked up a lot of things we would never have heard of otherwise. If nothing else, we learned who Eduard Seler was, and that alone was worthwhile. We were on our best behavior and never gave the slightest sign of noticing that in that ambience the Nahuatl language was regularly murdered, though a good deal of basic dictionary vocabulary was understood.

Nick not only tolerated our presence, he invited us to participate actively; after their research trips the students would give presentations on their postconquest topics, and I held forth on my own work once or twice. In one sense it was two groups speaking right past each other. But it would have been impossible to destroy the wall between pre- and postcontact by a direct attack on it; here both realms were at least coexisting in close and friendly proximity. And it never would have happened if Nick had not actively promoted it. Speaking to the Tertulia was surely just what the doctor ordered for my students, motivating them, concentrating their thoughts, making them aware of another dimension of the meaning of their work. And Nick was the same as he was at qualifying exams, never negative, always finding something from his own world that in some way touched on the presentation and to that extent helped bring things together.

What my students and I were doing concentrated overwhelmingly on alphabetic texts produced by the Nahuas in Nahuatl on matters having to do with their contemporary, i.e., postcontact lives. It was the opposite of studying pictorials, and we were very aware of that. The first published collection of our kind of thing was called *Beyond the Codices* (Anderson et al. 1976). Nick's study of all aspects of iconography and pictorial expression, and particularly some work he did exploring the content of precontact pictorials in terms of actual words and even phonetic syllables, stimulated us to look for points of comparison and transition. We had after all believed from the beginning that the reason the Mesoamericans took to alphabetic expression immediately, whereas the Andeans didn't, was that the Mesoamericans already had a form of writing.

Without Nick we would have been much longer in discovering that if a postcontact alphabetic genre had a pictorial component, it continued a precontact written genre, and if it had no such component, it didn't, or that in some genres, such as historical annals, for a time after contact the pictorial element remained essentially the same and the alphabetic element represented the oral component that would have accompanied precontact pictorials as well. Not only I myself but several of my former students were moved in this direction; Kevin Terraciano, Stephanie Wood, and Robert Haskett have gone far in studying the postcontact pictorial element itself.

Thus perhaps without consciously meaning to, simply out of enthusiasm and an openness to things on the edge of his own world, Nick made substantial contributions toward a goal still not yet achieved. We hope that one day Mesoamerican ethnohistory will not be separated chronologically into two camps, each hardly aware that the other holds keys to many secrets in its own bailiwick. When this day arrives, we will all have Nick to thank for helping us reach it.

## FOND MEMORIES OF H. B. NICHOLSON

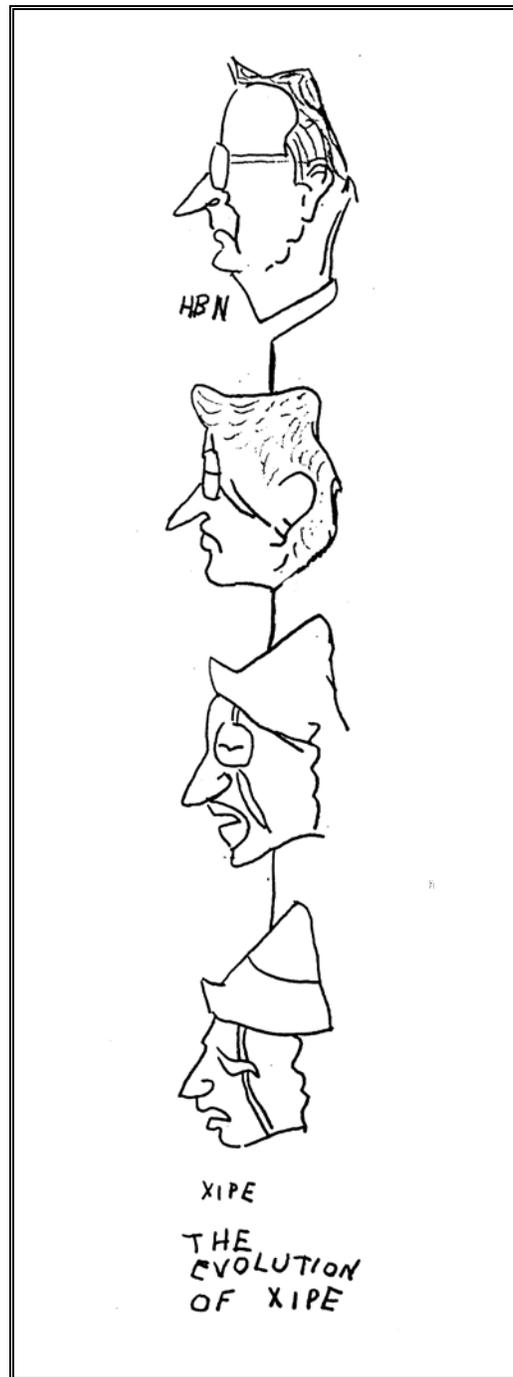
### Alfredo López Austin

I enjoyed two very different relationships with H. B. Nicholson. The first, that benefiting my own scientific research through consultation with the work of an academic colleague, is still ongoing. The second, that of personal friendship, has now, sadly, ended. Both relationships arose through our common, obsessive affinity for similar research topics. We were both committed to increase the awareness of an ancient people and the symbolism derived from their view of the cosmos. Nicholson and I both sought to understand, at least to some extent, the thoughts of ancient men who created gods, felt indebted to them, and gave them the most precious part of their being. Within our shared perception of that past reality, there were enough agreements and disagreements to stimulate debate and make such discourse attractive, agreeable, and frequently, revealing.

Several decades have passed since my introduction to H. B. Nicholson's writings, but my original admiration for this wise man has remained constant. Nicholson was 11 years my senior, an age that in the scientific world might amount to two generations. His advantage in cumulative experience led to my recognition of him as a master; his scientific honesty greatly increased my respect for him. From my first readings of his work, I was captivated by his erudition, the soundness of his ideas, and the lucidity of his global concepts. My critical reading of his work taught me much, sometimes supporting my own research conclusions, other times challenging them. There was an important original proposition in each of his publications, well supported by evidence. His perfectionism in all literary efforts, no matter how brief, may have unfortunately delayed for many years the publication of his final and outstanding tome *Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl: The Once and Future Lord of the Toltecs*.

Our friendship, born in the rarified world that we specialists construct, was subject to accidental encounters at professional meetings and conferences. Nick and I enjoyed each other's company whenever we could. There were never appointments. We met one another by accident all over the world at irregular intervals. We initiated conversations without any preconceived plan, aware that there would always be passionate discussion between us. We always knew that we would see one another again, often when least expected, at which time we could resume our dialogue. I must confess that I recall some of our exchanges more from their circumstances than from their content; some interaction from long ago springs back into focus when I look at some of my line drawings inspired by H. B. Nicholson.

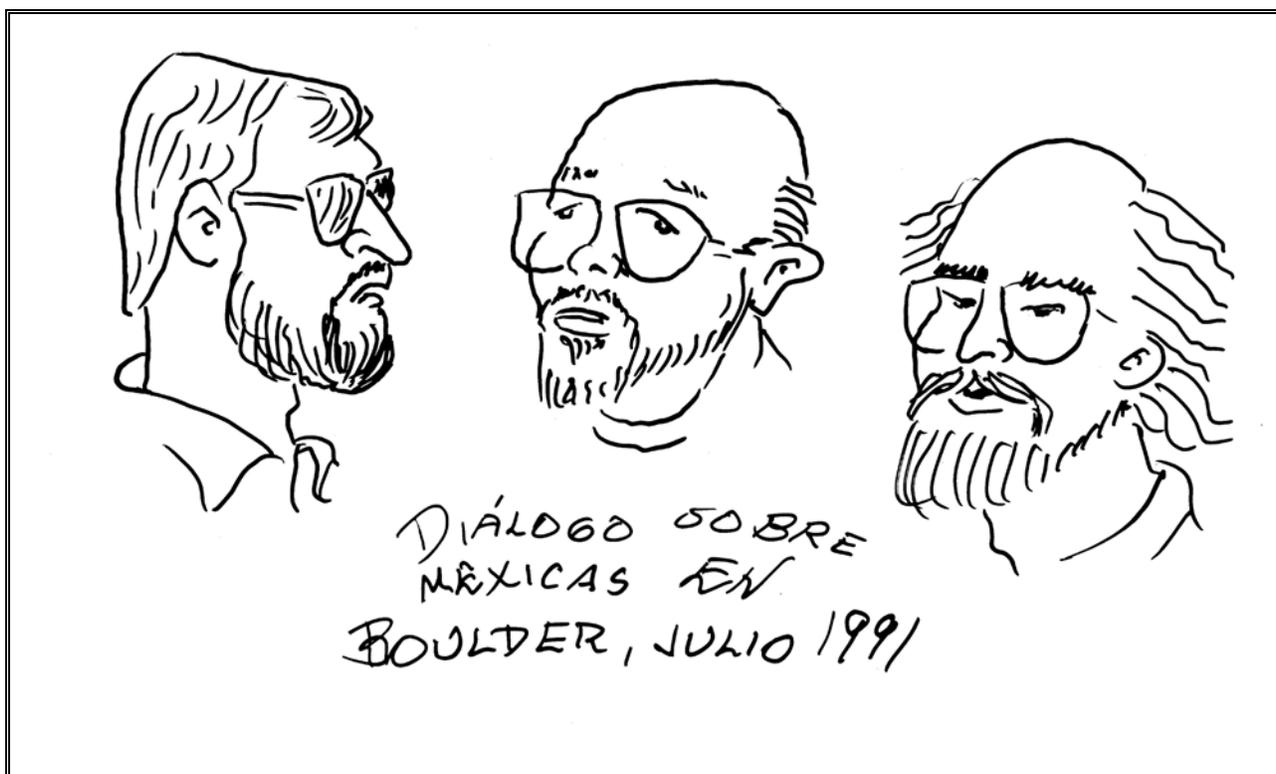
One such cartoon I drew in Cholula, in June 1972, while listening to Nicholson's presentation on the cult of Xipe Tótec in Mesoamerica. In the style of archaeologists, who represent the most ancient times in the lower stratigraphic depths of their excavations and more recent periods in the upper levels, I changed the face of Xipe as it moved stratigraphically upwards so as to evolve into that of Dr. Nicholson. At the time this seemed entirely appropriate for Nick, if not actually wearing a flayed skin, then he at least had assigned himself the role of the ancient gods' most impassioned spokesman. Another fond recollection is of a stroll through a park in Boulder, Colorado, with Nick and our mutual friend Bernardo R. Ortíz de Montellano. This took place in July of 1991, during a recess from academic meetings and the presentation of papers and formal discussions. We halted our ambulatory discussion with frequent rests on park benches. In the



*The evolution of Xipe Tótec into Henry B. Nicholson.  
Cartoon by Alfredo López Austin, Cholula, Mexico, 1972.*

park the boundaries between friendship and scientific discourse began to disappear, helped along by my own lack of discipline.

At this conference, Nicholson's brilliance, his academic rigor, and the incisiveness of his interpretive syntheses, as expressed from behind the podium, contrasted greatly with the actions of one irreverent colleague in the audience, me. Instead of taking notes on the central points of

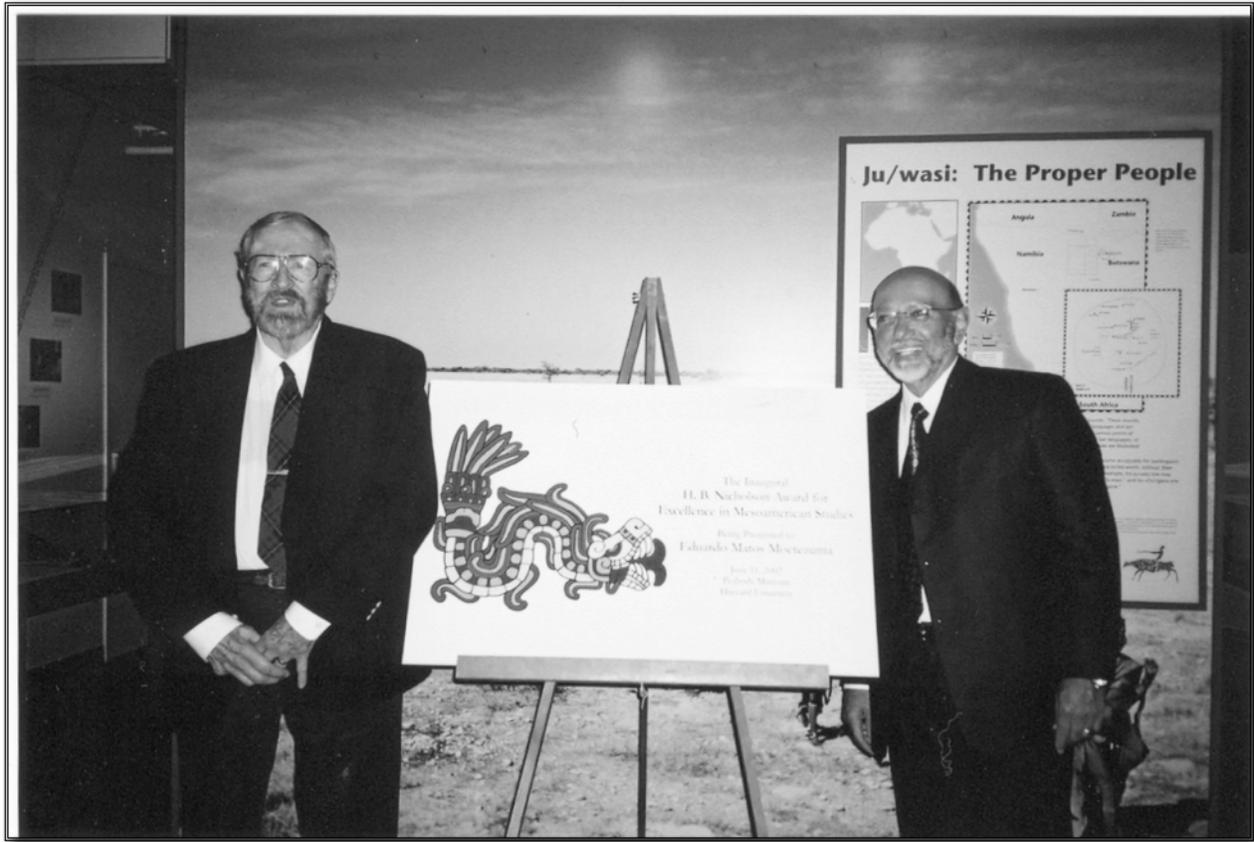


*Los tres barbudos: from left, H. B. Nicholson, Eduardo Matos Moctezuma, and David Carrasco.  
Cartoon by Alfredo López Austin, Boulder, Colorado, USA, 1991.*

Nick's lecture, I drew cartoons of him in a notebook. My doodling was both a kind of mnemonic aid and also a form of self-entertainment justified by that familiarity which can exist amongst a friendly group of specialists. Later, while reviewing my drawings, I remembered and joined together the words heard in the auditorium. My notebooks with their sketches fulfilled their original functions for a while, but then, as with so much of the evidence of our daily activities, they passed from the desk drawer to a cardboard box, to await accidental rediscovery through unplanned excavations.

This rediscovery indeed occurred. Some time ago I found my drawing of Xipe Tótec metamorphosing into Nicholson, and was very pleased to present a copy of it to Nick at one of our meetings. The second discovery was another drawing made 19 years after the first. In this more recent sketch, I sought to capture the moment when Nick conversed with Eduardo Matos Moctezuma and David Carrasco, in Boulder, Colorado, in July 1991.

These two drawings now fulfill a different function from their original one. At first, they were simply transitory mnemonic notes, but over time they came to document the evolution of scientific collegialism into warm personal friendship. Today my sketches reflect my admiration for and recognition of a brilliant colleague, Dr. H. B. Nicholson. Also, and more importantly, they document my affection for Nick, my friend.



*H. B. Nicholson (left), wearing his Clan Nicholson tartan tie and Eduardo Matos Moctezuma at the Peabody Museum, Harvard University, 2002. Matos is being awarded the very first H. B. Nicholson Medal for Excellence in Mesoamerican Studies. David Carrasco photo.*

## H. B. NICHOLSON: WISE MAN AND FRIEND

### Eduardo Matos Moctezuma

Whenever someone of remarkable wisdom passes away, it is an enormous loss to his discipline. Such is the case with H. B. Nicholson, wise man and friend. His understanding of the archaeology and history of Mesoamerica was so broad and he clarified so many aspects of Prehispanic Mexico that his passing creates a void impossible to fill. All the writings within this volume are a fitting memorial to Nick.

Nick told me about his first trip to Mexico in 1946 when he met Dón Wigberto Jiménez Moreno and Dón Alfonso Caso. These doyens of Mexican archaeology not only inspired Nick to pursue a career in Mesoamerican research, but remained close friends all their lives. In 1952, with his arrival at Harvard, Nick's devotion to Mesoamerica, especially ancient Maya culture, was revitalized. Soon thereafter, however, his interest in the Maya was overshadowed by the Aztecs of Central Mexico. The Mexica claimed his attention and nourished his intellectual appetite because of the abundant archival sources available for them and because he was captivated by their compelling art and iconography. Since Nick loved books and libraries, reading about ancient peoples in their own words and symbols was immensely satisfying to him. Nick was also

seduced by the strength and virility of Aztec art, especially stone sculpture, which he considered to be among the world's greatest aesthetic achievements.

One of the professors who most influenced Nick as a graduate student was Gordon R. Willey, also the chair of his doctoral committee at Harvard University. Nick's Ph.D. dissertation, *Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl of Tollan: A Problem in Mesoamerican Ethnohistory*, would remain unpublished (but not forgotten) for decades. It was through the initiative of David Carrasco, Director of Moses Mesoamerican Archive and Research Project at Colorado, Princeton, and Harvard University, that Nick's dissertation was ultimately dusted off and published. In it, Nick addressed a vital problem in ancient Mesoamerica research: who was Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl? Was he man or myth? Did he represent a legendary or historical character? Nick's revised dissertation was published under the title, *Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl, the Once and Future Lord of the Toltecs* (Nicholson 2001a); it contained a new introduction and laudatory comments by Gordon R. Willey (2001) and Alfredo López Austin (2001).

David Carrasco and I were proud to comment upon Nick's magnum opus:

Remembering [Italo] Calvino, we can say forty-four years after its completion at Harvard, Nicholson's previously unpublished classic is coming out of the "folds of memory" and we can discover just how much more it has to say to us about Mesoamerican history and religion than even H. B. Nicholson and his Ph.D. committee could have imagined. [Carrasco and Matos Moctezuma 2001:viii]

Throughout his career, Nicholson felt compelled to produce concise syntheses on ancient Mesoamerican cultures. Thus, he was an active contributor to the *Handbook of Middle American Indians* (Nicholson 1971a, 1971b, 1973a, 1973b, 1975). An explosion of archaeological research between 1975 and 2000 was the impetus for the publication of two important compendia of data relevant to Mesoamerica. Nick was invited to contribute to the *Oxford Encyclopedia of Mesoamerican Cultures* (Nicholson 2001b-g) and to *The History of Ancient Mexico and Central America: an Encyclopedia* (Nicholson 2001h). It was Nick's desire that the kinds of data presented in the *Handbook of Middle American Indians* be continued in a new publication series by a new generation of scholars.

Looking back, Nick once told me that of all his contributions to Mesoamerican studies, two were worthy of special consideration, his publication on the Mixteca-Puebla Concept (Nicholson 1960) and his articles in the *Handbook of Middle American Indians*, Vol. 10 (Nicholson 1971a, 1971b) on the art and religious systems of Postclassic Central Mexico. Nick dedicated a lifetime to researching the aesthetics, rituals and religion of the Aztec people. His work is required reading for all who wish to familiarize themselves with this culture, for few have contributed as much to our understanding of ancient Mesoamerica.

In March 1978 my team of collaborators and I embarked upon excavations following the unexpected discovery of the Coyolxauhqui sculpture. Our work immediately attracted Nicholson's (1982b) attention. His unbridled enthusiasm and influence stimulated a 1983 international meeting on the Aztec Great Temple. For the first time in the history of the Dumbarton Oaks (D.O.) symposia, the protocol of inviting only a few select researchers to discuss a specific issue was broken. Instead, on that occasion, there was so much interest that over two hundred researchers attended, all of them anxious to learn what my team was finding at

the Templo Mayor. These excavations marked a turning point in Aztec archaeology, representing the first scientific work to be conducted in the heart of the Mexica Empire. Our efforts were concentrated near the Zócalo, the sanctum sanctorum of Mexico City and the Aztec capital, Tenochtitlan. Another consequence of this gathering was the exhibition at the National Gallery in Washington, D.C., which featured objects recently excavated from the Great Temple and was the greatest all-Aztec exhibition ever to travel outside of Mexico (Nicholson and Quiñones Keber 1983).

The Dumbarton Oaks meetings were held on October 8-9, 1983. Dr. Nicholson summarized the proceedings, enriching the discussion with his own perspectives. His knowledge of sixteenth century chronicles was impressive, and his ability to integrate archival and archaeological data was extraordinary. Commenting on the D.O. meeting, he wrote:

The INAH *Proyecto Templo Mayor* has provided one of the best opportunities for this type of correlation in the history of Mesoamerican research. It also well illustrates the challenging problems that confront the investigator when he attempts to link events described in the native historical traditions with architectural and artifactual sequences revealed by excavation. [Nicholson 1987:464]

Nick's opinion of the contributions of the Great Temple Project was always positive and generous. In the interview he gave to the magazine *Arqueología Mexicana* in 1998, Nicholson said, among other things:

The Great Temple Project is a turning point in Aztec archaeology. Skillfully led by Eduardo Matos Moctezuma, the project, so carefully controlled and well published, has shed new light on the study of Aztec religion and rituals. The large quantity of literature derived from the project, which includes a small contribution of my own published in 1982, is impressive. No other archeological project carried out at sites of the Aztec period can compare with this one in scale and importance. (translated by EMM) [Olmedo Vera 1998:64-65]

The last time I saw and chatted with H. B. Nicholson was 2005 in London. We were attending a meeting on Tezcatlipoca (Baquedano, this volume). Once again, I was impressed by Nick's sagacity. At the end of my own presentation, he asked what I thought about the map of the ceremonial precinct that appears in the *Primeros Memoriales* by Sahagún (1993); did it refer to the ceremonial precinct at Tenochtitlan or to the precinct at Tepepulco, where the friar had written a great deal of his work? I favored the former position. It was not the first time we had disagreed regarding some matter involving the Aztecs. We also had different views regarding the sculptures of Xiutecuhtli, which he believed could be of Tepeyólotl (Heart of the Hill), while I was inclined to think that they were of the Old God of Fire. After these discussions we went out and dined together so that we could continue conversing about subjects of mutual interest.

Nick's physical disappearance leaves us without his wisdom and kindness, but his life's work lives on through his articles and books. These contain a treasure trove of knowledge that future generations of Mesoamerican researchers will find a priceless inheritance. Scholars not yet born will greatly value the contribution of a researcher who, long before his own death, was already considered a classic in Mesoamerican studies.



*Ce Acatl Topiltzin arriving in Cholula, mural in the Municipalidad de Cholula.*

## A CLOSE ENCOUNTER WITH H. B. NICHOLSON

**Geoffrey McCafferty**

Summer 1990, in the dingy dining room of the Hotel las Americas, Cholula, Nick Nicholson and I were simultaneously trying to roust the cook for morning coffee and, secondarily, for a breakfast menu. I was in Cholula surreptitiously for one of the short-lived International Congresses on Cholula, a by-invitation-only conference sponsored by the Universidad de las Americas (UDLA) that had attracted a small contingent of students and an even smaller group of scholars. This was not surprising, since Cholula studies is a lonely business. Professor Nicholson was the master of the Mixteca-Puebla and the high priest of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Quetzalcoatl cult, a revered authority on all things Cholulan, and the conference headliner. Because of academic turf wars, I was an uninvited “lurker,” although, ironically, at the time I was the only North American archaeologist actively working on the topic of the congress.

So while grumbling about poor service and instant coffee, we struck up a conversation and discovered we were both there for the conference. I had tried corresponding with Nicholson in the pre-Internet era, and he had written some kind comments about an ultimately unsuccessful manuscript that I had under review, so there was some degree of name recognition. As the caffeine kicked in, we became more animated. Soon Mickey Lind wandered in and joined us, and then my wife and collaborator Sharisse. Lind had been my professor at the UDLA in the early 1980s, and besides fanning my interest in Cholula, he had also introduced me to Sharisse, so this was a grand homecoming.

Giving up on the hotel restaurant, we set out for the *zócalo* of San Pedro Cholula, about 2 km west and past the Great Pyramid. The Cholula plaza is one of the largest in Spanish America and at the time of the Conquest was associated with the Pyramid of Quetzalcoatl, now probably buried beneath the Cathedral of San Gabriel. The west side of the *zócalo* features the *portales*, said to be the longest continuous span of architectural arches in the world. These were described by Juan de Pineda in a 1593 petition to the king of Spain, in which he complained that the *portales* were frequented by merchants and infested with loafers, hiding, depending upon the weather, either in the shade or out of the rain (Carrasco 1970). Today the *portales* feature a series of sidewalk cafes with some of the best food in town. Settling into a table facing the square, we continued our spirited conversation, which turned into a game of Florentine Codex trivial pursuit, with Nick and Sharisse dueling over ever more obscure “factoids.”

After a late breakfast that lapsed into a lunch washed down with beer, we wandered back toward the hotel, but with a stop in the municipal offices where a vivid mural had recently been installed. In several panels, the pre-Columbian history of Cholula was depicted, beginning with the Olmeca-Xicalanca of the Early Postclassic, followed by the arrival of Ce Acatl Topiltzin to herald in the Late Postclassic, and culminating with a violent scene from the Cholula massacre. The figure of Ce Acatl Topiltzin stands out, looking very Christ-like in keeping with the chronicle of Diego Durán (1971), although, if given a haircut and eyeglasses, he also bore a striking resemblance to Nicholson himself.

Our chance meeting led to my participation in Nick’s symposium on the Mixteca-Puebla style, co-organized with Eloise Quiñones Keber, at the International Congress of Americanists in New Orleans, and later published. And later still we were reunited at Princeton for the Classic Heritage conference convened by David Carrasco in the mid-1990s. But that one day in Cholula stands out in my memory as my close encounter with H. B. Nicholson.

## A MEXICAN STUDENT DISCOVERS “DR. NICK”

**Xavier Noguez**

A few decades ago, while attending the School of Letters and Philosophy at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), I was faced with the dilemma of selecting a topic for my *Licenciatura* thesis. I was a novice in the field of Mesoamerican studies, yet I was certain that my thesis would focus on ideology and imperial iconography of the Mexica polity. My advisor, Alfredo López Austin, recommended that I investigate the Huehuetéotl-Xiutecuhtli complex and its symbolic relationship to the Triple Alliance, better known as the Aztec Empire. At López Austin’s insistence, I familiarized myself with the literary corpus of H. B. Nicholson. I spent long hours at the Central Library of the Ciudad Universitaria and at the National Library of Anthropology, looking for the tesserae of the mosaic I hoped to build. I ventured slowly and cautiously into the world of pre-Columbian iconography. To my great fortune, I read Nicholson’s (1961) article, “The Chapultepec Cliff Sculpture of Motecuhzoma Xocoyotzin,” and everything fell into place.

This paper inspired me, giving me the sense of possibility that I could achieve my goal. Moreover, his multidisciplinary integrative approach to the traditional way of studying culture-history provided a template for my own academic inquiry. I marveled at Nick’s scholarship and his ability to bring the past to life; his 1961 article drew blood from stones that had lain silent for centuries. I met Dr. Nicholson in Mexico City in 1974 at the 41<sup>st</sup> International Congress of Americanists. His presentation on 9 Wind, or Ehécatl-Quetzalcóatl, in Mixtec pictorials remains forever etched in my memory; I will never forget his distinctive stentorian speaking voice. In fact, I sincerely doubt that any of us who have heard him lecture publically will ever forget that experience.

Nick had a lifelong fascination for Mexico. Making his first visit shortly after World War II, he arrived fortuitously just as the feverish spirit of post-revolutionary nationalism was being grafted onto Mexico’s deep Prehispanic roots. This exciting era was marked by the establishment of archaeological and anthropological curricula at the national level and by the grassroots recognition among many Mexicans of their rich indigenous past. Mexico City’s effervescence was celebrated by scholars, artists, and literati, carding, spinning, and weaving the tapestry of modern and ancient Mexico into one cloth. Within this heady environment, H. B. Nicholson realized his professional ambition to study the past.

We remember Nick for many things. His academic legacy represents 200-plus articles and books, and his UCLA Aztec Archive quite possibly houses the greatest cross-referenced inventory of Aztec art and iconography in the world. Nick is recognized by many to be one of the first, if not the first of the North American scholars to witness and report on the archaeological discoveries in the Great Temple of the Tenochcas, starting in 1978. Nicholson’s (1982b) publication, “Revelation of the Great Temple,” introduced Eduardo Matos Moctezuma’s Templo Mayor excavations to an English-speaking audience, as did his paper on Coyolxauhqui-Chantico (Nicholson 1985).

Since my student days at UNAM, I have cited the works of H. B. Nicholson in my own publications. In fact most, if not all of my contemporaries at UNAM, whether they are Mesoamerican historians, archaeologists, or art historians, do the same, consulting the writings

of our professor, yes, “our” Professor H. B. Nicholson. Nick belonged to us, too. Scholarship has no national boundaries, and in a manner of speaking, we are Nicholson’s academic offspring. In Mexico, we acknowledge with utmost respect Nick’s half-century of writing one of the most compelling chapters in our nation’s history with accuracy and clarity. H. B. Nicholson’s impeccable scholarship was tempered by his deep respect for the people who created the vanished civilizations of Mesoamerica; he approached his work with dedication and verve.

Throughout his life, Nicholson was many things to many people; what stands out in my mind, however, was the special love that *Doctor Nick* expressed for my country. I am eternally grateful for having known him. We mourn the passing of *Doctor Nick*, a giant in the field of Mesoamerican culture history. Let the New Fire Ceremony begin!

# A BORN RACONTEUR AND WARM HUMAN BEING

## Guilhem Olivier

On March 2, 2007, H. B. Nicholson, known to all his friends and colleagues as Nick, went to sleep at home, surrounded by his books, and never woke up. Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at UCLA, he had dedicated his life to the study of ancient Mexico and especially to the life and religion of the ancient Mexica, a domain he had made his own and in which he was the foremost world specialist.

Animated by a fierce passion for art and archaeology, he directed and participated in digs at Cerro Portezuelo, Chimalhuacán, and Ixtapaluca Viejo in Mexico. Throughout his life he gathered an invaluable amount of information on the sculpture, manuscripts, ceramics, and other arts produced in ancient Central Mexico. A tireless visitor to archaeological sites, museums and private collections in Mexico, the United States, and Europe, he also amassed an enormous collection of photographs and bibliographic notes, concentrated within his famed Aztec Archive, now located at UCLA's Institute of Archaeology. Many writers have made use of this resource.

In several publications Nicholson proposed that the concept of "Mixteca-Puebla" should correspond to a "style" shared by several peoples from the Oaxaca, Puebla-Tlaxcala, and Gulf Coast regions and not to a culture or a civilization, as asserted earlier by George Vaillant. On this theme, besides articles that have by now become classics in their own rights, Nicholson, together with Eloise Quiñones Keber, edited the publication of an important collection of essays on Mixteca-Puebla art and archaeology.

H. B. Nicholson also worked on the pictographic manuscripts of the ancient Mexicans. He compiled and updated a list of the extant codices and important articles on members of the Borgia Group, the Codex Borbonicus, and the Codex Mendoza. Nick also wrote very detailed reviews on the various editions of the codices, including the Codex Borgia, Codex Selden 3135, Codex Colombino, and Codex Cospi. These reviews continue to be quoted, as would scientific articles, in specialized bibliographies, rare occurrence that deserves to be underlined.

Throughout his career, H. B. Nicholson was fascinated by the shape-shifting figure of Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl of Tollan. The origin of that passion was when young Henry Nicholson attended a lecture given in 1936 in which a young speaker identified Quetzalcoatl with Jesus Christ. In Nick's momentous doctoral dissertation he gathered and analyzed all the available sources dealing with the "historical personage" of Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl. After a long documentary, which he organized in a clear and concise manner, Nicholson concluded, with a number of reservations, it is true that an individual named Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl may have indeed existed at the roots of Toltec history. He added that this historical figure, very often confused with the deity Ehecatl Quetzalcoatl, may have been the model for numerous later rulers, who then adopted his name. Lastly, Nick examined the influence of the myth of the announced return of Quetzalcoatl on the Conquest of Mexico, a subject to which he later dedicated an excellent monograph.

In fact, Nick was to return several times during his career to questions raised by his Ph.D. dissertation, such as the relationship between the man Topiltzin and the god Quetzalcoatl, the Mixtec deity called 9 Wind, a critical review of the identification of 4 Jaguar with Topiltzin

Quetzalcoatl, and the iconography of the Plumed Serpent. Nick's doctoral dissertation was very difficult to access until it was published in 2001 by the University Press of Colorado. Nick took great care to add a new scholarly introduction to the volume, where he compiled and commented on new bibliographical material that had been published on the subject in the preceding 50 years.

Nick's great interest in ancient written sources was also manifest in several studies on the work of the sixteenth-century Franciscan missionary Bernardino de Sahagún and his indigenous Nahuatl informants. Besides general articles consecrated to Sahagún's life and work, there were investigations on the missionary's period of residence in Tepepulco as well as a critical compilation of the vast scientific corpus generated by his writings. Similarly, Nicholson published several studies focusing on the very rich pictorial section of the *Primeros Memoriales*, representing deities such as Huitzilopochtli and Chalchiuhtlicue, the iconography of the *veintena* celebrations, and the famous and much-debated plan of the sacred compound of the Great Temple of Tenochtitlan.

Finally, one owes him the completion of a grand project, started by the late Thelma Sullivan, which had been stalled by her death in 1981. This was the publication of a superb facsimile of the *Primeros Memoriales*, accompanied by the complete translation of the Nahuatl text included in the manuscript, which had remained partly unpublished. With the contributions of art historian Eloise Quiñones Keber and of translators of the caliber of Charles E. Dibble and Arthur J. O. Anderson, who finished Thelma Sullivan's incomplete translations, Nick took on the responsibility of writing the introduction to the volume, compiling the bibliography, and, above all, writing copious notes which are spread throughout the whole book.

The complex pantheon of the ancient Mexicans was another compelling subject for Nicholson's investigations. As early as 1959, he published contributions within this area. Nick's *Handbook* synthesis, "Religion in Pre-Hispanic Central Mexico," is probably the most cited of all his writings. In this publication not only does he describe the sources, the myths, the worldview, and the rituals of the Mexica of ancient Central Mexico, but he also organizes the numerous deities into three overarching categories: I. Celestial Creativity-Divine Paternalism; II. Rain-Moisture-Agricultural Fertility; and III. War-Sacrifice-Sanguinary Nourishment of the Sun and Earth. Each of these incorporates a series of "complexes" associated with the main themes, such as the Omoteotl Complex, Tezcatlipoca Complex, Xiuhtecuhtli Complex, Tlaloc Complex, and so on. Nicholson briefly describes these "divine complexes," underlining the relations that united or opposed them. In this invaluable contribution, one also finds useful tables gathering the various names of the gods as well as of the religious celebrations associated with them. Nicholson was to continue, in later works, his quest for understanding pre-Columbian deities such as Xipe Tótec and the group of deities linked with agave wine.

Whatever subject he tackled, Nick always demonstrated an extraordinary erudition, incorporating with great ease English, Spanish, French, German, and Nahuatl source material. Nick was a born raconteur and a warm human being. His knowledge of primary sources and of the specialized interpretive literature was remarkable. One cannot but be in awe of the diversity of subjects that he pursued, always with the strictest scientific rigor. He always responded to a constant flood of inquiries from students and colleagues, generously sharing his immense knowledge. With gratitude we acknowledge the profound debt owed to H. B. Nicholson. All of his many friends and admirers feel an immense sadness as we come to grips with his untimely departure.

## NICK'S *CHALCHIHUITL*

**Gary W. Pahl**

I first met H. B. Nicholson in 1972 and have vivid recollections of my earliest academic encounters with the professor identified by many graduate students of my generation with the endearing monikers of Nick, and H. B. I remember walking into his remote office, tucked conveniently (for him, at least) away from nonpersistent students. Nick's lair was situated around several turns in the creaking hallways of Haines Hall, secreted into a discrete corner. It was the proper aerie, on reclusive afternoons, for a professor preferring to stay close to his current research project or paper over dealing with students. However, when the stars were appropriately aligned and Nick was amenable, I could find him munching on a sandwich fished out of a crumpled brown paper sack and waving me in to sit down across from his desk. His gesticulations of greeting were always effusive and disarming.

For me Nick was the stereotypical true scholar fully engaged in his field of study every hour of the day. An endearing characteristic was his penchant for wearing his academic "uniform," his pastel blue-and-white seersucker sports coat, over dark slacks. The jacket reflected his exclusive concern for things academic and his complete lack of concern for matters of style. A delightfully loose thread could usually be perceived dangling from the base of the jacket, always roughly in the same obvious location. The seriousness of his enterprise in teaching and researching his beloved Mesoamerican archaeology and ethnohistory never allowed trivialities such as contemporary fashion to take him off focus. We students were all the better off for this.

Nick's attention to detail was legendary. He was the first scholar I encountered who could reel off a page-specific, full bibliographic set of references on a subject presented to him by a graduate (let alone an undergraduate) student. His photographic memory had conveniently filed away a veritable library of up-to-date references and classic references to boot. Nick's mind was so chock-a-block full of detail that a favorite pastime of mine was to make casual reference to an interesting article I had recently seen in the archaeological journal pertaining to Mesoamerica to see what sort of a rush of information would come pouring out in response. I would stand in the deluge that followed and scramble for pen and paper to capture every fragment of wisdom I could as he flitted through his masterful mind-file, his eyes focused off into the distance as he transported himself to the time and place of the work he was citing.

Mind you, this was in the days before the advent of the World Wide Web. Stumbling upon such a marvelous resource as Nick to share his carefully stored mental annals would always save frustrating days of reference library searching but never really saved much time. This was because Nick would happily talk at length in such detail that a constellation of new leads, books, and articles would be laid out as a challenge for me to track down on top of the raft of answers he provided to my original question. Occasionally I wondered, after the fact, whether or not it might have been wiser on my part not to have asked my question in the first place.

Over time it became clear that Nick did not suffer fools gladly. If he knew that you were genuinely putting out effort and even minutely as dedicated as he was to all things Mesoamerican, his capacity to share and impart information and thought in the off-hours was nothing short of magnanimous. When he was not in a rush to attend a meeting or meet other obligations after class, finding Nick on a sunny relaxed afternoon with his sandwich in hand,

smiling, laughing and sometimes talking to his clock on the wall, promised a special shared academic treat. I always remember a tight clutch of similarly inclined graduate students, crowding into his office, gratefully sitting like disciples at Nick's feet so as to collect pearls of wisdom and bask in the warmth of his stellar academic mind. A reference librarian from the undergraduate library, a reputedly reformed collector of antiquities, and graduate students specializing in Maya hieroglyphic texts, modern Maya language, Aztec and Mixtec codices, and the challenges of field archaeology in Mesoamerica, might be found on any such lazy afternoon locked in animated conversation with Nick, absorbing his knowledge.

It came as a surprise to find that Nick would turn a finely tuned ear to the graduate student who might share something new in the way of an article, academic event, or news about a particularly interesting archaeological excavation being planned. Nick would stop thoughtfully and graciously recognize new material that he could tuck away into his own reference log.

I felt extremely fortunate to have been able to experience a side of Nick that occurred outside of academia. Nick loved to explore the domains of those nefarious purveyors of illicitly gotten pre-Columbian antiquities. He allowed himself and occasionally his graduate students the peccadillo of visiting private collections and Los Angeles area antiquities dealers, both of which represented a source of pre-Columbian material culture outside the realm of museum holdings. He quaked at the moral issues surrounding such visits but ultimately rationalized on one occasion over lunch that the dealers "...have our data." This didn't always wash for him, and he would allow some of the graduate students to go in his stead and report back on what was seen and photographed within such dens of iniquity.

The bookstores specializing in collections of out-of-date material were also favorite haunts which Nick enjoyed sharing with graduate students. He delighted in having students identify a treasure-trove of out-of-date pre-Columbian journals at bargain prices.

Nick was capable of maintaining solid high standards for the work of his graduate students even after he had gotten close to them. I remember all too well the amazement I felt at the detailed red ink notations that infiltrated my painstakingly rendered dissertation drafts. His notations challenged and questioned appropriately; I gratefully accepted his professional guidance and review standards. By the time I had finally passed muster and submitted the final draft of my dissertation to the UCLA Graduate Division, I felt that what I was offering was at least well thought out and could be defended, thanks in no small measure to Nick's focused criticism.

With the passing of such a great academic from this "vale of tears," as Nick himself put it, it is humbling to feel myself advanced into the next cadre of "elder" professors. Under Nick's tutelage, I was constantly reminded of how little I knew of my specialized field in comparison with the depth of wisdom demonstrated by Nick. I think of him often and am mindful of the debt I owe to his spirited guidance as one of his fortunate pieces of *chalchihuitl* over the years.

## A FORMIDABLE VOICE

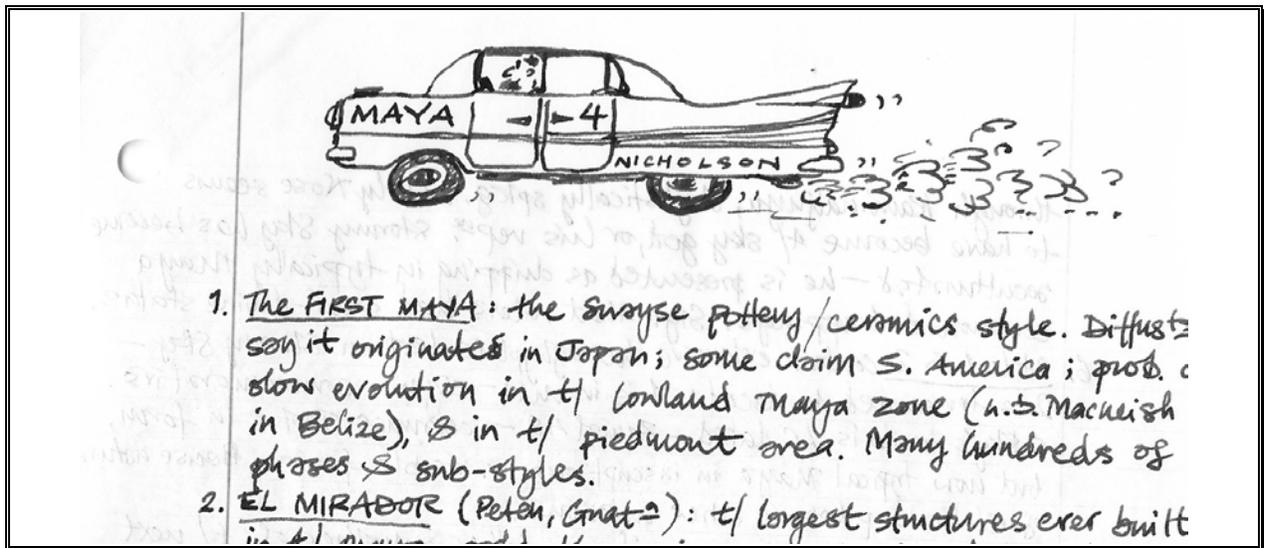
### Jeanette Favrot Peterson

There was something familiar in the inflection and volume of that voice. Its sonorous tones soared over the din of the tables, crowded with locals and tourists eating in the cavernous restaurant near the Honduran border. We followed the compelling cadence of that voice to the far end of the room and found its owner, H. B. Nicholson. He was expounding robustly on some aspect of Mesoamerican art or culture, a captivating monologue interspersed with laughter. Nick had a commanding presence to match his voice, ever so apparent when seated with a rapt cluster of students and colleagues. I was traveling with my family from Guatemala City to Copán, and this was the major rest stop en route. Still a graduate student, I hardly expected to find my esteemed professor in such a remote locale.

Characteristically, Nick welcomed us warmly during the meal and, on the following day, invited us to visit Quiriguá with his group. Although I had taken several of his courses, it was during Nick's explication of the images and glyphs on Quiriguá's stelae that I began to fully appreciate the breadth of his compelling intellect. Even the weary teenagers in our company became fascinated with the trials of Copán's King, 18-Rabbit, at the hands of Quiriguá's ruler, Cauac Sky. An indefatigable Nick strode from stela to stela narrating their story; not only in his telling of the tale but in his vocal tenor, he managed to slice through the stultifying humidity and sustain our interest. And it was Quiriguá's stelae that also helped forge a bond between myself, a fellow San Diegan, and Nick. Whenever we met, as colleagues and friends in the many years that followed this encounter, Nick never failed to remind me that it was the plaster casts of some of the Quiriguá stelae at the San Diego Museum of Man that catalyzed his fascination with all things Prehispanic.

Although first and foremost a dedicated scholar with a stunning retentive capacity, Nick's humanity and oversized generosity were equally unique and memorable. Nick's enthusiastic and painstaking pursuit of iconographic and cultural themes in the ancient cultures of Mesoamerica has left a lasting imprint on the field. His work will forever inspire the many aficionados he engendered. I am grateful to be counted among them.

We have lost his spoken, but not his equally formidable written, voice.



*From my class notes: “Nich” driving through Week 4 of his Maya class, without his glasses. The vehicle was a classic, and he drove it with purpose.*

## DISCIPLES OF “NICH-NESS”

### Matthew Restall

The first class I ever took as a graduate student at UCLA was “Aztecs,” we colloquially called H. B. Nicholson’s “Ancient Civilizations of Western Middle America.” It was offered most fall quarters and was typically followed in the winter quarter by “Ancient Civilizations of Eastern Middle America (Maya Sphere)” (or “Mayas,” as we cleverly dubbed it). I also took “Mayas” that first year. Both classes were 100-level undergraduate courses, but there were usually half a dozen or so graduate students taking it for graduate credit. We tended to hang out in the back to mark our “advanced” status and also to be on hand to help operate or unjam the slide projector when asked to do so by Nick (or “Nich,” as I styled him in my notes).

We were certainly eager to be helpful—did we even vie for his approval?—and we took the courses seriously enough, in terms of our commitment to the subject and to producing written work of which Nich would approve (with, on my part, mixed success). But there was also a fair amount of note passing and whispered joking, and amidst my notes I scribbled cartoons. Most of these are too ribald or puerile to be reproduced here. Among the more innocuous scribbles, was a depiction of Nich driving “Week 4” of the “Maya” class without his glasses on, and therefore it can be shared with a larger audience. Nicholson gave the impression of being sight challenged, even when bespectacled, by squinting towards the back of the class and calling us by the wrong names. Is Kevin [Terraciano] there? he’d ask, looking straight at him.

Many of these cartoons were inspired by Nich himself, who was an immensely entertaining lecturer. His slides of Mesoamerican sites were full of pictures of himself as a younger man, often standing beside a colleague—with Nich always wearing the larger hat. He claimed that some of the pictures were recent, yet others appeared so old they may have been snapped not long after the ancient buildings themselves were constructed. To our amusement, Nich always seemed to look more or less the same in every frame.



*Nich popping out from behind my class notes, striding directly from the jungle into the classroom, wielding his staff of office, deadly tropical insects still attempting to penetrate his impenetrable beard. His words were a "babble" to some (the word was an in-joke reference to a question asked by a student earlier in the quarter), but to others an inspiration for a lifetime studying Mesoamerica's wonders.*

Any slide with him in it prompted diversionary tales of adventures among the pyramids, both his own and those of others. Such stories lent Nich the air of a Clark Kent version of Indiana Jones. He seemed physically frail, harmlessly jovial, and somewhat bumbling in his professorial manifestation, but that was just a convenient disguise; once in Mexico, he turned into a daring discoverer, a fearless man of action. Another drawing shows Nich himself emerging from behind my notes, with the "Week 5" header taped to his shirt like a name tag, dressed ambiguously (for the classroom or the field?), wielding a cane (to steady himself before the slide screen, or to fend off hostile wildlife amidst the ruins?); one could never be sure if the real Nich was Kent or Jones.

As the weeks passed, and the fall quarter gave way to the winter quarter, my notes became longer and denser and included a mounting list of Nich catch phrases. These were always uttered in response to student questions which Nich viewed as falling into particular (and predictable) categories. One was, "What's the relevance, man?" At the start of the quarter, he'd tell a story of a student in the 1960s who had asked that very question, but towards the quarter's end he'd simply repeat the phrase when a student's question seemed to inspire it. "Will this be on the final?" Nich's response, with a wry smile was, "What's the relevance, man?" Another of Nich's

catch phrases was “Thank you, Karl Marx!” It was delivered in response to a comment or question that struck Nich as coming from the left, but in a superficial or stereotypical way. We were delighted with its every usage.

My notes also grew longer and denser because Nich’s bottomless fascination with Mesoamerican civilization, his enduring passion for its study, and his amazement that it was possible to make a living talking about it, were infectious. By the end of the second quarter, in an elaborate, sophomoric cartoon, I had divided the graduate students in the class into two groups: those of us who appreciated Nich in all his dimensions and those who had not yet perceived his many rich layers. The former group I labeled “The Disciples of Nich-ness.” Since not all the members of the latter group have yet gone to their reward, discretion forbears me to provide the reader with the label I bestowed upon them.

It has been many years since my first exposure to Henry B. Nicholson, and, sadly, he is now no longer with us. The infectious strain of Mesoamericanismo that Nick, or, “Nich,” was a carrier for has proven resistant to any and all modern cures, the proof being that I as well as many others remain to a greater or lesser extent a Disciple of Nich-ness to this very day. It is no coincidence that two decades later I’m still immersed in some aspect or another of Nich’s “Middle America.” And now, just possibly, some student lurking in the rear rows is drawing cartoons of me. So, thanks, Nich!

## MY FAVORITE GUY

### Susan Schroeder

I was generations older and painfully shy, but standing in line outside Nick's door during his office hours was an inevitable way to get to know fellow students and future colleagues. The wait was long and occasionally futile but ultimately worth the while, for Nick always seemed to know who I was and expressed unlimited enthusiasm and support for my prospective work on Chimalpahin, "my favorite guy," as he used to say. And I was honored and very pleased when he agreed to serve on my doctoral committee.

I used to sit toward the back of Nick's classroom where I had a full view of the endless number of slides that he would show in only 50 minutes. I would also sit back and marvel at the breadth and depth of his knowledge and how he could bring so much information to what might have otherwise been ordinary class sessions. Nick knew about Chimalpahin and challenged me to consider his Nahuatl annals in the greater scheme of Aztec history. My plan was to translate all of Chimalpahin's writings; that probably isn't going to happen now, but there will be four volumes, at least, that furnish a rich, original, and serious perspective on early Nahua Mesoamerica that we did not have before (Chimalpahin 1997, 2006, 2010).

I thank Nick for the Aztec Tertulia and the Mesoamerican Network; both had his constant support, and he was there to make certain that anyone interested in Mexico's natives had the opportunity to share an afternoon or evening with whomever was in town. We all gave talks and papers, too, and he listened and then graciously always had a comment to make. He was a gentleman and old school professor, thank heavens.



*¿Siga la huelga? Student protest on April 23, 1956, in the Zócalo, México, Distrito Federal.  
United Press Photo, Matthew A. Boxt collection.*

## “AULD LANG SYNE”

**Nancy P. Troike**

His parents named him Henry, but almost all of his friends called him Nick. When I think back over the 50 years I knew him, I see a kaleidoscope of events in my mind’s eye. We encountered each other sporadically at scholarly meetings in the U.S. and at various locations all over Mexico during the summers. We wrote a lot, mostly my asking advice on research problems, and later switched to talking on the phone, often for the better part of an hour at a time. Here I want to mention only a very few of the memories that have come to mind, particularly from the earlier years of our friendship.

I met Nick in 1956 at the Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia in Mexico City. At that time I was interested in the U.S. Southwest, particularly the Hopi, and had a scholarship from the University of Texas to do research in the Mexican Archives, looking for documents on the Pueblo Revolt of AD 1680. The Archivo General de la Nación was then tucked into the Palacio

Nacional on the east side of the Zócalo. I had to enroll in some school so that I would still be a student, and the logical choice was the Escuela, located within the Museo Nacional, which sprawled over the rest of the block behind the Palacio Nacional. Moneda 13 was the street address of the imposing metal gates that led into the Museo's open-air patio, and the Escuela consisted of four small lecture rooms upstairs, plus a library. I enrolled for several courses, including "Historia Antigua de México" taught by *Maestro* Wigberto Jiménez Moreno.

Escuela classes began at five o'clock in the afternoon because both teachers and students usually worked day jobs. Jiménez Moreno arrived promptly at 5:20 p.m. (from teaching at Mexico City College), went to the front of his room, drew on the blackboard the outline of the lakes in the Valley of Mexico in AD 1500, and began talking nonstop about the Mexica. I was fascinated by this material and often discussed it with Nick, who was sitting in on the class.

I had a car, and Nick asked if I would like to go see archaeological locations. So nearly every Saturday or Sunday we organized a trip, sometimes also taking along one or two of our fellow Escuela students. Nick knew the most obscure Mexica sites imaginable, all of which are probably now gone. But we also found our way to better known places, such as the unfinished sculpture of the rain goddess when she was still attached to the living rock. Nick always had a camera available to document these sites. Years later he told me that generations of UCLA students had seen these slides, in some of which I served as scale because it never occurred to either of us to bring a metric bar.

The spring of 1956 ran along placidly. I went to the archive every day for the limited hours it was open, and then around the corner to the Escuela's library to read the sources cited by Jiménez Moreno. Finally, about five o'clock I would drift up to the school to chat with Nick and other students as we awaited our professors' arrivals. On days the Museo was closed, we often wandered around its open-air patio, sitting on the great Mexica basalt sculptures to talk or eat. One day a serpent slithered into this academic Eden. I got to the Escuela to find that a mass meeting was scheduled instead of classes. The 30 or 40 of us who actually attended the Escuela were drowned in a sea of strangers we had never seen before; hundreds of them claimed to be Escuela students and voted to go on strike. The red and black *Huelga* flag was raised at the Escuela, and everything stopped.

The strike lasted for months. Since hardly anyone in Mexico City had a telephone at that time, keeping in contact with friends was nearly impossible. The Escuela was the last to come off the strike, and the only visible result of the whole mess was that the school was given a small red jeep, which was a far cry from the demands of the strike's organizers. Then they discovered that none of the Escuela staff or students knew how to drive, and Rudy Troike, who arrived after the end of the spring semester at the University of Texas, had to teach Roberto Gallegos how to drive so a Mexican could be at its wheel. Nick did not reappear after the strike ended; we heard that he had been hired at UCLA and were happy for him. We finished out what was left of the ill-fated year of 1956 at the Escuela, and then the whole of 1957, finally returning to Austin. By this time I was no longer interested in the Southwest but had become a confirmed Mesoamericanist, having discovered the Mixtec codices that I have spent the rest of my life studying.

When Nick first began to teach at UCLA, he was asked to wrap up some colleagues' unfinished archaeological projects in Mexico. One of these involved brief excavations near the town of Chimalhuacán and led to the events that became Nick's most notorious tale (Rudy Troike, this

volume). Rudy and I were part of the group that he assembled to undertake fieldwork in the summer of 1958. At Chimalhuacán, following the usual accusations that we were stealing the village's patrimony, a mob of angry townspeople rang the church bell and surrounded the UCLA Carryall, threatening to lynch us. Nick and Rudy went to the Palacio Municipal to attempt to reason with them, and they were joined by two representatives from the INAH, but all to no avail. A politician from nearby Tecamachalco was inflaming the situation for his own political ends. For over an hour the rest of us sat nervously in the Carryall in the completely deserted village plaza, until Nick and Rudy finally found an opportunity to slip away from the mob. A young boy on a bicycle attempted briefly but unsuccessfully to prevent the Carryall from driving off. The next evening, the eight of us whose lives had been threatened celebrated our survival at the Chalet Suizo restaurant in Mexico City with a quiet and thankful meal.

That wasn't the end of Nick's archaeological duties in Mexico that summer. Three of us went with him to spend the remaining weeks in the Sierra de Tamaulipas at a site on a ranch owned by the wealthy Murchison family. The whole time we were there we were fed only sandwiches of dry bread and canned Vienna sausage. All these years later I still have a distaste for that particular food.

In August of 1970, the International Congress of Americanists met in Lima, Peru. Near its end, Nick, Rudy, and I decided to make a quick trip to Machu Picchu. We flew to Cuzco, and that night we were surprised to find our hotel overrun with young U.S. students about 14 or 15 years of age. A Peruvian woman with them explained that they were part of an international exchange program in which a similar group of young Peruvians were touring the United States. We left the hotel to go to Machu Picchu long before dawn the next morning, stepping around the kids sleeping on the lobby sofas and on cushions on the floor because there weren't enough rooms for them all. We came back that night well after dark to the news that LANSA Flight 502 had crashed shortly after takeoff from Cuzco's Quispiquilla's Airport on Sunday, August 9, 1970, at 2:56 p.m., killing 101 people: eight crew members, 49 U.S. students, 42 other passengers, and two on the ground. The copilot was the sole survivor. It was years before Nick and I discussed our feelings about this, and particularly what we both felt when we left the hotel the next morning to return to Lima.

While Rudy and I were living in Turkey, we spent our vacation time driving around Europe. In Scotland in a woolens shop, I found a red plaid tie labeled simply "Nicholson Clan." Nick was delighted with the tie and wore it to meetings and on special occasions. I have been told that he was buried wearing it.

Nick rarely ever talked about his wartime experiences; I can recall only a handful of passing comments. The exception came in 1981 when we were driving from the SAA meeting in San Diego to Los Angeles along the Pacific Coast Highway. As we drove north he pointed out some of the beaches where he had trained as a young 18-year-old soldier in preparation for an amphibious landing. He described in some detail a particularly windy day with huge waves that flipped over their flimsy rubber boats, dumping soldiers into the sea wearing their full 80-pound packs; many of them drowned. Nick's lieutenant refused to order his men into their boats, probably saving their lives, but was court-martialed for cowardice. Farther along, he asked to make a short detour off the highway to see a bridge his father had built; he said his father was an engineer and that he had photos of almost everything he had built, but not this bridge. We got to Redondo Beach about dark, and Nick's wife Margee made supper. Afterwards she sent Nick on a short errand, took me aside, and quietly told me that he had diabetes; he didn't want anyone to

know about it, and she worried a lot about him when he was in the field. She asked me not to tell anyone but to keep an eye out for his well-being, especially in Mexico. I promised that I would, and I did. When Nick came back, he showed me his fabled library, metal shelves from floor to ceiling and all jammed with books. All three of their children were away that night, and I was put in Alice's room.

Another time Nick and I were talking about time machines and how interesting it would be to go back in time to see what actually had happened. I mentioned that many people would probably choose to witness religious events. Not Nick. His choice would be to see the first meeting of Cortés and Motecuhzoma on the causeway at Tenochtitlan. If he could really have gone back, I'm not sure he would have returned to the twentieth century; he might well have stayed in Tenochtitlan to see how the whole Mexica tragedy actually played out.

Beardless for many years, when Nick first grew his beard it was as though he had become invisible. He said that people he had known for years walked right past him without speaking. My introduction to his beard came at a meeting in Mexico. I heard Nick's unmistakable voice coming from a nearby room. I stuck my head in the door and saw two men inside, both strangers to me, but clearly heard Nick's disembodied voice urging me to come in. I looked vigorously around the small room for him, but he wasn't there. With one eye I continued to scan the room for hiding places, while with the other I evaluated the intentions of one of the two strangers, who was rapidly bearing down on me. Only when he was right in front of me, with Nick's voice coming from his mouth, did I recognize his completely unfamiliar bearded face.

Nick's dissertation was often quoted but little seen. He gave me a Xerox copy, and reading it showed me that no crumb of data was too small to be useful. I will always be grateful to David Carrasco for persuading Nick to finally allow it to be published. When I was writing my own dissertation, I sent Nick carbons of the drafts as I wrote them. Even though it was entirely on Mixtec codices, I knew that his grasp of all things Mesoamerican was so thorough that he would have no trouble following all the ins and outs of these complicated events. I was not mistaken; he waded through my piles of carbons and wrote back words of encouragement.

Many who knew him have mentioned the vacuum left in their intellectual and human environments by Nick's loss. Our recognition of that loss has not lessened even after five years. I recently had a radical, even heretical, idea about Quetzalcoatl, a matter that cried out for discussion with Nick. But he wasn't there to discuss it. I wanted to pick up the phone and say, "Operator, I'd like to make a long distance call. I need to talk to Nick Nicholson. Please find him for me. He's somewhere in Tlalocan."

It has been my privilege to know two of the greatest Mexica specialists: Nick and Wigberto Jiménez Moreno. They shared a number of traits. Both had an encyclopedic knowledge, not only of the Mexica but also wide-ranging throughout all of human history. Both had very distinctive voices, easily discernable in a crowd. Both had gigantic libraries that reached mythic proportions (Jiménez Moreno bought the house next door just to store his books). But to me there was always a very fundamental difference between them: Jiménez Moreno lived in Mexico City while Nick always lived in Tenochtitlan.

For those who weren't around in the 1950s, it may be difficult to realize that the ethnohistoric approach to Mesoamerican studies barely existed in the United States at that time. Individual scholars scattered around the country had been using the approach for quite a while, and with

good results, but it had not yet become a recognized field within anthropology departments. Students who were interested in it, like Nick, were pioneers helping to invent it, with or without support from their professors. In those days anthropology was often loudly and proudly ahistorical; the idea was to create a “snapshot” of a culture as it existed at one particular moment in time. Anthropology departments wanted to turn out well-rounded anthropologists who could teach all the sub-fields, and a series of tests were often used to sieve out those individuals considered less capable of achieving this goal. There was usually not a lot of in-depth teaching in specialties because scholars had a life-long duty to continually educate themselves in their chosen fields.

In Mexico, however, the ethnohistorical approach had long been normal for Mesoamerican studies, as exemplified by the Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia, where all the great Mexican ethnohistorians did their teaching. There was no exam to get into the Escuela or to stay in it, other than passing the courses. The tuition, as best I recall, was 200 pesos a semester, equivalent to \$16 U.S. at the exchange rate of the time. Literally, almost any Mexican (or foreigner) could become an Escuela student and daily hear the greatest minds in the country talking about Mexico’s past. This past was viewed as a single unbroken continuum extending from the present moment back through time to the remote traces of ancient man. Because this wholistic view yields an overwhelming amount and variety of information, all approaches that help to evaluate and analyze these data were eagerly received and deeply appreciated. Thus ethnohistory had long been established in an honored position in Mexico.

Those of us who instinctively craved the approach as taught at the Escuela in the mid-1950s found the Mexican view of Mesoamerican ethnohistory to be like a welcoming embrace. Knowledge was poured into us as fast as our teachers could talk, and it was organized in a matter that we could immediately understand and absorb. Learning was not a chore but a joy. We spent countless hours in the library reading the sources they cited, not because we had to but because we wanted to. They instilled within us a lifelong fascination with Mesoamerica and a fierce desire to learn more about it. In short, they inspired us. I think it was this Mexican approach to Mesoamerican scholarship that Nick sought to re-create among his students, to fire their imaginations with the many possibilities that lay within the gigantic and enigmatic puzzle of the Mexican past.

In Mexico, long ago, I once bought a big box of airmail onionskin stationery whose every sheet bore a large romanticized drawing of a Mexica warrior. I used these only for writing Nick. I still have a few sheets of it left, but now I’ll never get the chance to use them. I’m putting them in the file with all of Nick’s letters.

R.I.P., Old Friend.

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