



43 Stone figure of Xiuhtecuhtli, the Fire God.  $13\frac{1}{2}$  inches high

part has the glyph 8 Reed (1487), the year in which the new building was finished, and above are two rulers offering a blood-sacrifice from their earlobes. The two kings are identified by their name-glyphs: on the left is Tizoc, who began the work, and on the right Ahuítzotl in whose reign it was finished. Above the central device is the date 7 Reed (1447) on which Montezuma I made the first efforts towards extension (42).

Many other carvings have been preserved: statues of the gods (43) and of important people, naturalistic renderings of coyotes (44), birds, grasshoppers, and plants, numerous versions of Quetzalcoatl in the

form of a coiled rattlesnake (70), calendrical inscriptions, Eagle Knights, standard-bearers, models of temple pyramids, and carved vessels for temple use (86 and 87).

All work, from the heaviest to the most delicate, was done without the aid of metal tools. No suitable stone was available in Tenochtitlán, and the most popular material was basalt from the quarries on the lake shore to the south. The blocks of stone for the huge sculptures described above had therefore to be hauled to the city by gangs of men using only ropes, poles, and wooden rollers.

## Markets

Every town had its market place, and in the larger cities there were several of them. Even the villages held markets at five-day intervals, and people came in from all the country areas round about, walking up to 10–15 miles each way. The attraction was not just the opportunity to buy and sell, but also the chance to meet friends, to gossip, and to exchange items of local news. The law decreed that nobody might sell his goods on the way to market for fear of offending the market gods, and, although the

old gods are no more, the custom has persisted until the present day in parts of rural Mexico.

Certain towns were famous for their specialities: Acolman for edible dogs, Azcapotzalco for birds and slaves, Cholula for featherwork, and Texcoco for its textiles and painted gourds. But the greatest market of all Mexico was in Tlatelolco, close to the main temple, and both Cortés and Bernal Díaz were so impressed by what they saw there that they have left extensive descriptions of it.

Cortés writes: 'There is one square twice as large as that of the city of Salamanca, surrounded by arcades where there are daily assembled more than 60,000 souls, engaged in buying and selling.' The market was under the direct control of the ruler. Pedlars and stall-holders paid a fee to the market superintendent, and inspectors mingled with the crowds, checking the quality of all merchandise and making sure that the prices were not too high. False measures were smashed, and any trader caught passing off shoddy goods had his entire stock confiscated. Thieves, or persons suspected of selling stolen property were taken to the market court where they were tried on the spot by 12 magistrates. Punishment followed directly on sentence, and convicted thieves were beaten to death in the market place where they had committed their crimes. The same court dealt with any disputes between traders.

Each commodity was sold separately. In one part of the square were the vegetable sellers with piles of maize cobs laid out on mats, or with strings of peppers and heaps of fruit, beans, and tomatoes spread out in front of them, each type and quality kept separate from the others. Elsewhere were the sellers of embroidered capes and skirts, agave-fibre sandals, skins of wild beasts, and coarse everyday cloth. From another corner rose the smell of cooked food—roasted meat in various sauces, tortillas and savory tamales, maize cakes, dishes of fish or tripe, and toasted gourd seeds sprinkled with salt or honey. Other



44 Stone sculpture of a coyote