

A MEXICAN EFFIGY PIPE

THE ceremonial use of tobacco held an important place in the religious rites of the Mexican peoples, yet pipes are among the rarest of Mexican antiquities. This apparent contradiction is explained by the statement of early chroniclers of New Spain that little tubes of wood or reed served for the burning of tobacco mixed with liquid amber or sweet gum. The pipes, through which the notables drew their after-dinner smoke, are described as beautifully "varnished," painted or gilded, while a few were of less perishable material.

The University Museum possesses a remarkable Mexican pipe of buff pottery, the gift of Dr. William Pepper in 1916. The form is that of a man, seated, with left leg extended, the right drawn up with foot resting on the left knee. The right hand lies upon the right knee, but the left is raised as if to adjust a head-band, apparently of plaited fibre or of cloth with chevron design. The head is crowned by a dahlia and a second flower of five petals projects from the front of the head-dress. Other than this, the figure wears no ornament but ear-disks and a button-like labret protruding from the lower lip, and no clothing save the *maxtli* or breech-cloth.

The bowl of the pipe lies in the body with opening just below the shoulders; the stem is formed by the straightened left leg and its mouth-piece extends beyond the figure's foot.

The modeling of the form shows the sinewy spareness of age—age, which is emphasized by the deeply wrinkled face. It is the familiar face of Huehuetēotl, the Old God. In another of his aspects, perhaps his earliest, he is known as Ixcoāuhqui, the Yellow-Faced, god of fire—an appropriate figure for a pipe from which would rise incense clouds, even as they rose from the fire-bowls of his volcanoes. The artist who modeled this pipe would seem to have let his thought run further to that other aspect of the Old God, when, as Xiuhtēcutli, he was Lord of the Circle of the Year. Thus the Old God rests in a posture of careless repose, but crowns himself with the five-petaled flower, which is the symbol of Xochipilli, the youthful Flower Prince, personification of upspringing vegetation.

The age of the pipe may not be definitely assigned. It is believed to belong to the Teotihuacan culture—the so-called Toltec period.

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