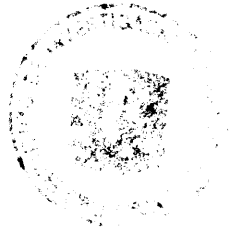


TLALOCAN

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R. H. BARLOW AND "TLALOCAN"

ROBERT HAYWARD BARLOW ended his career as an anthropologist at an age when most students are beginning theirs. He was born May 18, 1918, at Leavenworth, Kansas, and died at his home in Azcapotzalco, D. F., Mexico, January 2, 1951. He devoted the last ten years of his life to research in fields of Mexican history, anthropology and linguistics, and wrote, usually in Spanish, more than a hundred and fifty scholarly articles which were published in Mexican, American and French scientific journals. His loss will be deeply felt in these fields, but his numerous studies will maintain their importance as reference works for years to come. Many of these studies appeared in *Tlalocan*, a journal of which he was both the soul and the driving force and in which appeared his first serious contributions. But while giving a historical sketch of *Tlalocan*, we must also present a brief résumé of Barlow's life in order to appreciate the growth of that brilliant and forceful intellect which impelled him to attain enviable fame as an anthropologist and linguist.

Barlow was a very precocious, sensitive and lonely child. Before he finished grammar school, he showed inquisitive interest in poetry and story writing, in sketching and painting, in printing and publishing, activities far removed from those of his family, who lived a professional army life. These artistic activities, however, laid the foundation for his future interest in anthropology.

In 1931 when Barlow had just graduated from grammar school, he began a correspondence with Howard Phillips Lovecraft, the dean of weird fiction writers, which continued until Lovecraft died in 1937, after having appointed Barlow his literary executor. Soon Barlow was cor-

responding with a number of poets and writers on subjects of literary criticism and problems in an author's life. In the following year Barlow began writing a series of episodes called the *Annals of the Jinns*, all relating to a mythical race of ancient times, living by a haunted black tower on the winding river Olacae near the hamlet of Droom. The *Annals* were supposedly found in musty manuscripts which had lain for centuries in the black tower and were written in a strange language of long ago. As one reads these *Annals* it is easy to comprehend the eager interest Barlow had at that early age for archaic races and curious languages.

For the next six years Barlow lent himself to writing stories and poems, to studying art and painting, to dabbling with bookbinding and printing, but these activities (he performed them all better than average) left him unsatisfied, for he felt that none of them offered him a proper career by which he could earn a modest living. One must recall that these were the years of the Great Depression.

After a hurried trip to Mexico in the spring of 1938 Barlow returned to California to work in a small private press at Lakeport. He was still undecided about his future. One day he visited Miss Barbara Mayer, a leader of the National Youth Administration, who had the perception to understand Barlow's problems. It was she who suggested to him that he study Anthropology and make that his life's work. She even suggested Mexican Anthropology, introduced him to leading California professors in this field, and encouraged him to pursue such courses in the local junior college. In the summer of 1940 he was again in Mexico, registered as a student of the National University Summer School. There in the class in Náhuatl language, taught by Prof. Wigberto Jiménez Moreno, I met Barlow for the first time.

We were both serious students and both overawed by Mexico's vast ancient culture, apprehended at that time by only a few world scholars. Pre-Columbian ruins, weird stone images and carvings, clay figures and pottery had been known for centuries. Many of the movable objects were gathered into collections and appeared in impressive displays in museums, but their very existence raised still unanswered questions, such as: What kind of people made these objects? Why did they make them? In what type of society did they live? What were their religious beliefs? What was the history of these many tribes, their conquests and defeats? What languages did they speak? Our introduction to Náhuatl opened our eyes to the immense quantity of early manuscripts written by or under the supervision of friars who began arriving in Mexico soon after the Conquest. A serious study of these manuscripts, scattered in archives

throughout Mexico and in various cities of the world, would surely provide part of the answers to the questions above. The problem, therefore, as we saw it at that time, was to make these documents available to students of Mexican history through their publication. It was then that *Tlalocan* was conceived, but we did not know it until two years later.

During that summer I often went to Barlow's apartment to study Náhuatl with him. This studying together gave me the opportunity to see Barlow's keen, nimble, and retentive mind at work. He had an intellectual driving force that never seemed to relax, that picked me up and carried me along with it, as it likewise did later many others. He had a facility of expression that brought to life long-dead happenings. This happy facility was a carry-over from his years of reading and writing fantasy fiction and composing poetry. But there was nothing fantastic in this carry-over. He now insisted on accuracy of fact with brilliance of expression. At last he had discovered the career that appealed to him. He once said to me that summer, "This is the first time in my life I knew what I wanted to be. I'm going to devote myself to Mexican Anthropology."

After completing a year at the Polytechnic Institute and another summer session, Barlow returned with my wife and me to Berkeley, where he began work in earnest in the department of Anthropology under Dr. A. L. Kroeber and soon became a Research Associate in Anthropology. I went back to my position as a printing teacher in the Sacramento City Schools, but we corresponded with each other and discussed many plans for beginning the publication of Náhuatl texts. During the year Barlow unearthed a long Indian *Memorial* written in Náhuatl, one of the many miscellaneous manuscripts in the Bancroft Library, which described in detail the founding of the city of Nombre de Dios in Durango in 1562. Barlow prepared the footnotes and appendices; I made the English translation from the Náhuatl with the help of Chimalpopoca's Spanish text, the index, and with the permission of the school authorities, I set up and printed the book under the imprint of The House of Tlaloc, which Barlow and I chose as the name of our publishing venture. Only 130 copies of *Nombre de Dios, Durango* were printed and distributed, and it has now become a very rare item.

In spite of the impressive-looking book we turned out, we were not satisfied with this type of publication for issuing manuscript material. We then hit upon the idea of publishing a journal which we called *Tlalocan* (meaning Tlaloc's Heaven), to average ninety-six pages per number, four numbers per volume, but numbers would be issued, not

regularly, but whenever we could get them out, and subscribers would be charged so much a volume. *Tlalocan, a Journal of Source Materials on the Native Cultures of Mexico*, has been well received by students of Mexican history since the appearance of the first number in 1943, but its publication from time to time meant a tremendous amount of extra work and money from our own pockets to support it, since subscribers were few, because it dealt with a narrowed field of study and because, unfortunately, we began its publication during the war years.

Barlow returned again to Mexico in the fall of 1942 after receiving his A. B. degree and continued to receive the grant from the University of California for a few months. Now all our editorial work on *Tlalocan* had to be carried on by correspondence. Censorship of the mails caused delays and difficulties. One time I sent Barlow a copy of a manuscript in Náhuatl relating to Philip II of Spain, but the censor returned it, saying that nothing could be sent to Mexico in code. After explaining to the censor the nature of the document and assuring him that there was no imminent danger of Philip II invading the United States, he reluctantly allowed the document to go on through to Barlow.

We were fortunate to have made such friends as Rafael García Granados, Wigberto Jiménez Moreno, and Federico Gómez de Orozco in Mexico, and Paul Radin and Carl Sauer in Berkeley, all of whom became our editorial advisers. For our first issue Paul Radin permitted us to begin publishing his *Cuentos y Leyendas de los Zapotecos*, which he had collected in 1912 in Oaxaca but had never published; Angel Ma. Garibay K., canon of the church of Guadalupe and ardent Náhuatl scholar, prepared the text and translations of *Huehuetlatolli* (old sayings of the Aztecs); Barlow furnished a bibliography on 18th Century *Relaciones Geográficas*; and I prepared a few book reviews besides setting up, proofreading, printing and mailing the issue.

In 1945, after completing the first volume, I left my position in Sacramento and came to Mexico to become head of the Microfilm Laboratory in the Benjamin Franklin Library, a position I owe to Barlow, who had recommended me highly to the Director of the Library. This new position kept me so occupied that I was unable to collaborate with Barlow in publishing *Tlalocan*. He, however, made arrangements with Allan Farson, a printer of Indian texts, to print the journal, and Barlow then assumed the entire responsibility for editing, publishing and mailing the numbers. Volume II appeared between 1945 and 1948. With the first number of Volume III, Barlow had obtained financial assistance from the late George A. Hill Jr. and the San Jacinto Museum

of History Association, which also assumed the responsibility of distributing copies in the United States.

Besides working on *Tlalocan* during these seven years, which took only a portion of his time, Barlow learned to speak Náhuatl more fluently than any foreigner in Mexico today. So well did he handle the language and understand the psychology of the Indian that the Mexican Government appointed him in 1945 as director of the Náhuatl project for the State of Morelos in Mexico's literacy campaign. A year before he died he began the study of Maya, and was progressing very rapidly in this language. Barlow was so interested in indigenous Mexico that his secretary, Lieutenant Antonio H. Castañeda, wrote to me after his death, "Vivió entre nosotros saboreando nuestros idiomas con dulzura, y amó tanto al indio mexicano que convivía con él a gusto pleno; pero al mismo tiempo que saboreaba sus idiomas, sus platillos y sus costumbres, lo estimulaba hacia el progreso que había de redimirlo de las condiciones en que vive. . . . Yo me considero altamente privilegiado por haber estado al servicio de ese genio en ciencia y en bondad. Mi agradecimiento como Mexicano hacia él será imperecedero, porque en verdad genios extranjeros como él que se dedicó en cuerpo y alma a todo lo mexicano, son muy raros en mi país."

Barlow did most of his research work through grants in aid. After the University of California research grant terminated, Barlow received a fellowship from the Rockefeller Foundation through 1944. Then on April 14, 1946, he received his first Guggenheim fellowship. Later he was an associate of Carnegie Institution's Division of Historical Research to study the Maya language and culture of Yucatán. Many of his articles in *Tlalocan* were the results of his investigations through the assistance of these grants. But Barlow also gave lectures before scientific societies, taught classes at the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, and for two years prior to his death was chairman of the Department of Anthropology at Mexico City College.

Happily *Tlalocan* will continue to appear from time to time in the future with the collaboration of the San Jacinto Museum of History Association. A very capable editor has been selected, Dr. Ignacio Bernal, present chairman of the Department of Anthropology at Mexico City College. Dr. Bernal will be ably assisted by Fernando Horcasitas Pimentel, professor of Spanish Literature, who acted as secretary for *Tlalocan* under Barlow for the past two numbers.

Although I have been unable to assist in the publication of *Tlalocan* for some years, I have always had a keen interest in its progress, and

now, after recovering from the shocking blow of Barlow's sudden death, I am happy that *Tlalocan* can continue under such capable and enthusiastic leadership.

Microfilm Laboratory in Mexico
George T. Smisor, Head
Library of Congress
Washington, D. C.

April 5, 1951

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R. H. BARLOW

LA MUERTE súbita de Roberto Barlow fué un duro golpe no sólo para sus amigos sino para toda la antropología y la historia mexicanas. Rara vez se vieron reunidos en un individuo un número tan grande de talentos, un esfuerzo tan constante y un amor tan profundo a su trabajo. ¡Descanse en paz!

Tlalocan era el hijo querido de Barlow además de ser una publicación que estimamos de alto valor científico. Estas dos consideraciones me movieron a no permitir su muerte prematura y por tanto a atreverme a seguir publicándolo. Esto ha sido posible gracias a la generosidad de la señora Bernice Barlow, madre del desaparecido, y a la ayuda permanente del San Jacinto Museum of History Association. Para este número se ha tenido también el sostén económico del Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia y del señor don Guillermo Cabrera cuyo manuscrito publicamos en primer lugar.

Gracias también, y muy especiales, merece el doctor don Pablo Martínez del Río que como apoderado de la testamentaria de Barlow ha dado su más eficaz apoyo al proyecto, lo mismo que Fernando Horcasitas Pimentel por su trabajo valioso y desinteresado.

A todos los colaboradores, suscriptores y amigos de *Tlalocan* en todo el mundo, pido ayuda científica o pecuniaria pues sólo así podré continuar con esta carga que con gusto tomo pero no sé si sabré llevar a buen puerto.

Es mi intención publicar *Tlalocan* con cierta regularidad, tal vez dos números anuales, pero esto no es una promesa, es sólo un deseo, ya que el camino es duro y los pies se cansan. Ahí va de todos modos el primer número cuyos materiales habían ya sido casi íntegramente preparados por Barlow antes de su muerte y de los que no tengo más mérito que la labor de editarlos.

Ignacio Bernal.