



# RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE ARTS REVIEW

Director and Review Editor:  
Jacinto Quirarte

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## DIRECTOR'S NOTE:

This issue marks the first time the acronym for the Research Center for the Arts (RCA) - except for the logo - will not be used in reference to the *Review*. This is to avoid confusion with another *Review* which has been published by the RCA, formerly the Radio Corporation of America, since 1936! We were not aware of their publication nor they of ours until a few months ago when some of their subscribers began to renew their subscriptions with our office! The initial confusion has been amicably settled with the cancellation of a few misdirected subscriptions and the decision to avoid using the acronym for the Research Center for the Arts.

Another way to solve the problem would be to change the name of the Center to better reflect its activities in which humanities disciplines, other than art history and musicology, have been used. The disciplines of history (political, social, legal), literature and dramatic literature have been included in research and curriculum projects, and scholarly events (symposia and lecture series) sponsored by the Center. Plans are also underway to broaden the scope of the Center by including other humanities disciplines as well, and enlarging the geographic area to encompass Western Europe (along with Spain and Portugal) and the Americas (Canada, the United States and Latin America).

A possible change of name would be the Research Center For the Arts and Humanities (RCAH). This would also be in keeping with the change in name of the College which will more than double in size in September 1982 when two more Divisions (Departments) will be added to its present two Divisions of Art & Design, and Music. The new Divisions are English, Classics and Philosophy, and Foreign Languages. The name of the College of Fine and Applied Arts will be changed to The College of Fine Arts and Humanities.

Please let us know what you think of the name change and the planned broadening of the scope of the Center's activities.

Finally, in this issue for the first time, we include an excerpt from a forthcoming publication on *The Decorative and Applied Arts of the San Antonio Missions* to give our readers an indication of its contents.

## THE DECORATIVE AND APPLIED ARTS OF THE SAN ANTONIO MISSIONS

A nine month project, to carry out research on the Decorative and Applied Arts of the San Antonio Missions, is nearing completion and will soon be published. The final text is presently being prepared for publication. Specific information on the publication will be included in the next issue of the *Review*.

The publication includes a discussion of the four San Antonio Missions which comprise the National Historical Park: Mission Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción, Mission San José y San Miguel de Aguayo, Mission San Juan Capistrano and Mission San Francisco de la Espada.

### Acknowledgements:

The work was carried out by the Director and staff of the Research Center for the Arts and outside consultants under a contract awarded by the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park. Specifically, the archival work was done by Donna Pierce who worked as a consultant with materials available in San Antonio and in Mexico City. The photography was done by Kathy Vargas, a Research Assistant with the Research Center for the Arts. On site research was carried out primarily by Donna Pierce and Kathy Vargas to check out details and to determine what decorative and applied arts had to be photographed. On site research was also carried out by Jacinto Quirarte, Project Director, and Robert Mullen Faculty Associate with the Research Center for the Arts.

The assistance and expert advice provided by Harvey Smith, Jr. and Mardith Schuetz was of great value. Harvey also provided photographic materials and newspaper clippings from his own collection as well as information on the restoration work carried out by his father, himself and others at the missions. Mardith also provided research materials on the paintings found by Carlos Castañeda in the 1930's.

Others who assisted in the research effort are Lorene Pouncey, who worked on the bibliography relating to the missions, Felix Almaraz, who assisted in the work relating to the history of the missions, and Nodé Mac-Millan, who provided information on archival materials relative to the missions.

Staff members, Graciela Rodriguez and Margaret Rogers had the patience to type the many drafts, often





under very trying conditions, and usually without complaints.

The Data Sheets, part of the research model formulated by Jacinto Quirarte, were filled out by Donna Pierce following the preliminary data compiled by the Project Director early on in the project. The Data Sheets, completed by Donna Pierce, were set in the final format by the Project Director. They will be included in the publication as Tables to which the narrative description will be keyed.

### *The Content*

The arts included in the discussion are fresco (found on exterior and interior surfaces) and other wall paintings; stone facade sculpture and other elements; metalwork such as door and window grills, wall sconces and chandeliers, hardware and other fasteners; and woodwork on exterior and interior surfaces used for architectural as well as sculptural decoration. Each decorative and applied element is identified as to material, type, style, function, date, name of the artist, artisan, and/or craftsman, and the chronology of repair or replacement with original differentiated from later work.

Each of the decorative and applied arts relating to the project were considered as integral parts of the architectural surroundings rather than as isolated items. The Tables (Data Sheets on each Mission) were arranged by Mission and type of subject, material, and/or classified by medium (painting, sculpture, and so forth) and listed according to location (exterior first, followed by interior). The discussion follows the same format - exterior, then interior location - but cuts across the four Missions by type of art and its function as follows: *Architectural Sculpture; Stone (Figural) Sculpture; Architectural Polychromy; Metalwork; and Woodwork*. Essentially the same breakdown was used for the materials found on and within the interior surfaces, but with a slightly different sequence: *Woodwork; Architectural Sculpture; Sculpture; (Freestanding); Architectural Polychromy; Figural Painting (Fresco); Painting (Oil); Metalwork*.

### *An Excerpt:*

Part of the text relating to the west portal architectural and figural sculpture of Mission San Jose y San Miguel de Aguayo is included here to provide our readers an idea of the material which will be contained in the publication. Also included are photographs of the materials included in the discussion.

### *Mission San Jose:*

There are few detailed descriptions of the architectural and figural sculptures of the west portal of Mission San Jose y San Miguel de Aguayo in the 18th and early 19th century inventories. Fr. Juan Augustin de Morfi described the facade of the unfinished church (started in 1768) in his travel diary (1778) as having "... a balcony above the door (which) makes it beautiful. . . The portal (is made) of white stone (which is) easy to work.<sup>1</sup> Some years later, in his formal report,

he described the facade more fully and added several assessments of the architectural and figural sculpture as follows: "... (it detracts) somewhat from. . . (the) natural beauty (of the facade). . . a large balcony . . . gives much majesty to the building, and the effect would have been enhanced if the hexagonal window that illuminates the choir. . . had been made to simulate a door. . . The figures of the facade of the church . . . were made more beautiful by the ease with which the stone is worked.<sup>2</sup>

Fr. Jose M. Salas referred to "six statues carved from the same type of stone" in the 1785 Inventory.<sup>3</sup> Finally, there is a reference in the 1824 Secularization Inventory to "The facade. . . (made) of very beautifully-carved stone with five stone statues."<sup>4</sup>

All 19th century travelers writing in English mention the carved portal with its figural sculptures. It was described as showing "... some sculptural elegance-six full sized images of saints and two angels handsomely carved. . ." by Gregg (1840-1847)<sup>5</sup> "... much exquisite work and labor. . ." by Bollaert (1843)<sup>6</sup> "... elaborate finish. . . richly sculptured ornaments . . ." by an unknown traveler (1850's)<sup>7</sup> "... elaborate carving. . ." by Bartlett (1851)<sup>8</sup>; and finally "... its carving is surely 'a joy forever' . . . the facade is rich with repletion with the most exquisite carving. . . wonderful. . . daring in its unique ornamentation. . . of surprising workmanship" by Corner (1890)<sup>9</sup>

Soon after the 1824 Secularization of the mission, the destruction of the portal sculptures began and is described by several writers in the 1840's and 1850's as follows: "... it is painful to see that some wretched persons have wantonly mutilated them (the figural sculpture) by shooting at them. . ." by Gregg (1840-47)<sup>10</sup>; "... the images of saints and other ornamental parts have been sadly mutilated by the

<sup>2</sup> Juan Augustin Morfi, *History of Texas 1673-1779*, translated by Carlos E. Castañeda, Quivira Society, Albuquerque, 1935, pp. 96-97.

<sup>3</sup> Fr. Benedict Leutenegger and Fr. Marion A. Habig, *The San Jose Papers: Edited Primary Manuscript Sources for the History of Mission San Jose y San Miguel de Aguayo, Part I: 1719 to 1791*, Old Spanish Missions Historical Research Library at San Jose Mission, San Antonio, p. 217.

<sup>4</sup> 1824 Inventory of Secularization (Unpublished), Archive of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de Zacatecas, Microfilm (Zacatecas 4) in Archive of Old Spanish Missions Research Library, Our Lady of the Lake College, San Antonio.

<sup>5</sup> *Diary & Letters of Josiah Gregg, 1840-1847*, Edited by Maurice Garland Fulton, with an Introduction by Paul Horgan, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1941, p. 235.

<sup>6</sup> *William Bollaert's Texas*, Edited by W. Eugene Hallon and Ruth Lapham Butler, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1956, p. 232.

<sup>7</sup> Unidentified excerpt from a book, *Notes from my Knapsack, (February 1854)*, p. 176.

<sup>8</sup> John Russell Bartlett, *Explorations and Incidents in Texas, New Mexico, California, Sonora, and Chihuahua*, Vol. I, D. Appleton & Company, New York, 1854, pp. 42-43.

<sup>9</sup> William Corner, *San Antonio de Bexar*, Bainbridge & Corner, San Antonio, 1890, p. 17.

<sup>10</sup> *Diary & Letters of Josiah Gregg, 1840-1847*, 1941, p. 235.

<sup>1</sup> Fray Juan Agustín de Morfi, *Diario y Derrotero (1777-1781)*, Edición de Eugenio del Hoyo y Malcolm D. Mc Lean, Monterrey, Mexico, 1967, pp. 99 and 103.





San Jose y San Miguel de Aguayo. West portal. (Butterfield file)  
-Courtesy Library of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas at the Alamo, San Antonio, Texas.

soldiery during the wars. . .” by Bollaert (1843)<sup>11</sup>; “The action of the weather has done much to destroy the figures; and the work of ruin has been assisted by the numerous military companies near here, who, . . . (found). . . in the hands and features of the statues convenient marks for rifle fire and pistol shots. . .” by Bartlett (1851)<sup>12</sup>

There was no apparent outrage during the remainder of the 19th century as the destruction continued. Gentilz, the artist, simply referred to the condition of the figural sculptures in his notes without comment as follows: “On the south St. Ann (gone), on the north St. Joachim (headless), above the door the Virgin, above this a large window, over this a statue of St. Joseph, on the left St. Francis, on the right St. Dominic. . .”<sup>13</sup>

Finally, the interest in preserving what was left and restoring the missing portions began in the late 19th century following the publication of Corner’s book in 1890.<sup>14</sup> Actual restoration work began in earnest in 1917 and continued over the next fifty years.

The condition of the portal sculpture will be discussed starting at the bottom and continuing to the top in each case with the architectural sculpture discussed first followed by the figural.

#### *Architectural Sculpture:*

The architectural sculpture of the area between each base and the platform for the figural sculpture of the first story niche-pilasters is damaged. The accumulated dirt which covered the base of each niche-pilaster was cleared away in the 1930’s when the initial restoration work was carried out on the church.<sup>15</sup>

The only other portion which seems to have been extensively damaged, aside from the figural sculpture, is on the upper area of the second story. Most of the frieze and the capital on the left side of the top entablature is missing in mid 19th and early 20th century photographs.<sup>16</sup> The floral patterns to the left of St. Joseph directly above the oval choir window are slightly damaged. The rest of the architectural sculpture seems to have survived intact.

<sup>11</sup> William Bollaert’s *Texas*, 1956, p. 232.

<sup>12</sup> Bartlett, *Explorations and Incidents*, 1854, pp. 42-43.

<sup>13</sup> Dorothy Steinbomer Kendall and Carmen Perry, *Gentilz: Artist of the Old Southwest*, University of Texas Press, Austin, 1974, p. 20. (Kendall has left and right reversed)

<sup>14</sup> William Corner, *San Antonio*, 1890, between pp. 20-21.

<sup>15</sup> The restoration of the church began in early 1934 and halted in May 1935 due to a lack of funds. Work was resumed in October 1936 and continued until it was completed in April 1937. The church was re-dedicated on April 18, 1937. *The Restored San Jose Mission Church*, booklet published for the re-dedication of the church. No pagination.

<sup>16</sup> All citations to photographs in the text refer to those found in the Library of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas at the Alamo (DRT) and the private collection of Harvey Smith (HS). All photographs consulted are of the facade of Mission San Jose and are identified by date and source with the acronym in parenthesis as follows:

1855. De Ryee? file (DRT)

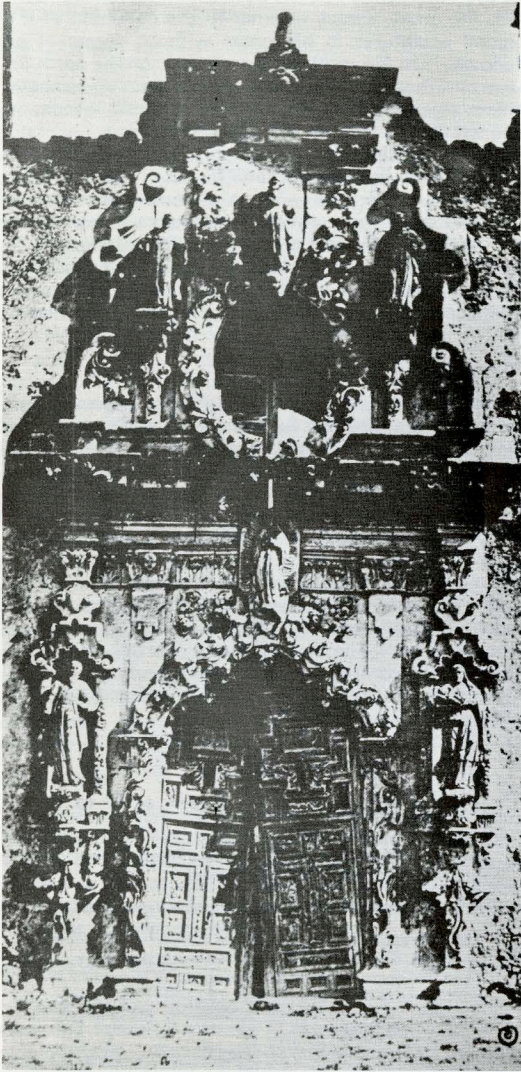
No date. (Probably late 1880’s) Rose -3-file (DRT)

No date. (Probably before 1895), Butterfield file

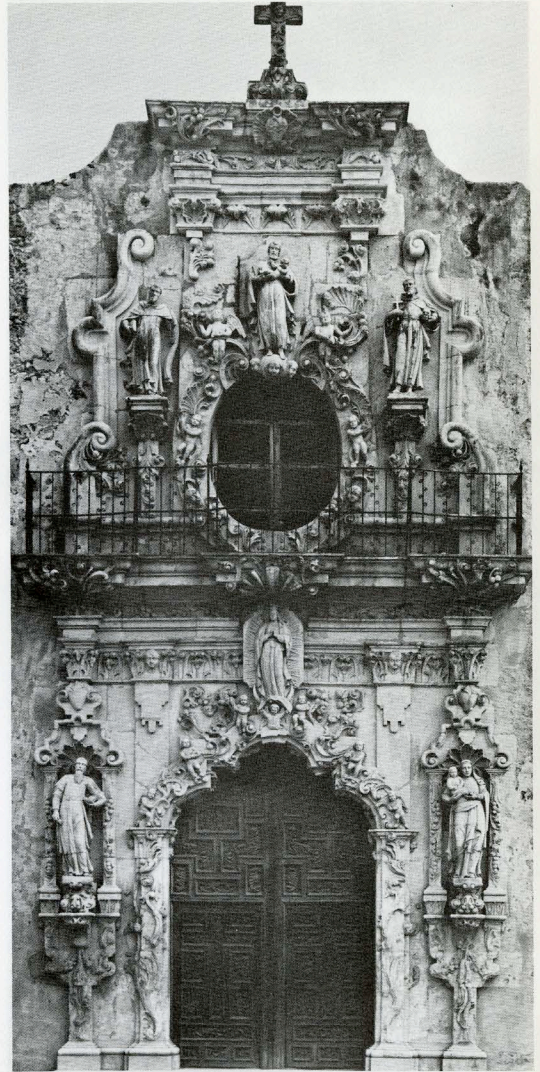
Before 1879 (possibly 1860), Sommerville photograph (HS) 1926 (HS)

After 1940, Harvey Patterson photograph (HS)





San Jose y San Miguel de Aguayo. West portal. Photograph by Sommerville before 1879, possibly 1860. Courtesy of Harvey Smith, Jr.



San Jose y San Miguel de Aguayo. West portal. Photograph by Kathy Vargas, 1982.



The stump of a stone cross which originally was on the upper most part of the portal is shown in various stages of destruction in mid and late 19th and early 20th century photographs as well as late 19th century paintings.<sup>17</sup> The cross was in place in 1848 as shown in a drawing by Seth Eastman done in that year.<sup>18</sup> By 1854, the cross had been destroyed, probably by the soldiers who, according to Bartlett, used the portal sculpture for target practice.<sup>19</sup> Another traveler of the same period relates that "A large stone cross, which originally rose over the entrance, has been broken off, and its fragments still remain on the roof."<sup>20</sup>

#### Figural Sculpture:

Nineteenth and 20th century photographs of the west portal show the extent of the damage on the five freestanding sculptures placed on pedestals. Two are framed by niche-pilasters on either side of the doorway. Three surround the oval choir window. The sixth sculpture, in high relief, is located directly under the projecting cornice of the entablature and above the header of the mixtilinear arch of the doorway.

Bartlett identified the sculptures of St. Joseph and the Virgin and Child and went on to discuss the materials used as having "...the appearance of stone but ...found on examination that it was a hard kind of stucco."<sup>21</sup> Corner quotes Bishop Neraz who gave tentative identifications for the figures as "...the Virgin, San Jose, San Benedict, San Augustine and San Francisco. Other authorities have given a slight variation of the list."<sup>22</sup> Evidently, this was a problem until the 1930's when the present identification of the figures, followed here, was made. Although the entire church was restored from 1934 to 1937, the architectural and figural sculpture of the portal was not restored until 1949.<sup>23</sup>

The reading and discussion of the west portal figural sculptures follows in boustrophedon or zig-zag fashion from left to right on the first story up to the lower center, then left to right on the second story and finally to the upper center. This will provide an appropriate iconographic and temporal sequence since St. Joachim and St. Anna, the parents of the Virgin Mary, are represented on either side of the entrance to the

church, followed by Our Lady of Guadalupe over the doorway, and finally on the upper story the founders of the Dominican Order on the left and the Franciscan Order on the right of St. Joseph, to whom the church is dedicated.

#### St. Joachim:

The figure holds a book in its left hand and a scroll (?) in its right. The traits of the saint - the lamb, lilies, and doves in a basket in reference to his pious offerings at the temple<sup>24</sup>, - are not seen in this representation.

The entire figure appears to be intact in a photograph taken in 1855.<sup>25</sup> Only the right hand appears to have been "shot" off as demonstrated by a photograph possibly taken as early as 1860 and certainly before 1879.<sup>26</sup> Even as late as 1884, the arms and possibly the head were intact as shown in a painting done in that year by Stephen Seymour Thomas.<sup>27</sup> By the end of that decade, the head and the forearms would disappear as indicated by a photograph published by Corner.<sup>28</sup> The figure remained in that condition until it and all the others were restored in 1949.

#### St. Anna:

"Her chief emblems are the green mantle and red dress. She may also be depicted holding a book."<sup>29</sup> In this representation, the book is held by the Child Mary.

As far as can be determined, the two figures were intact in the 1855 photograph.<sup>30</sup> However, the head of the Child Mary was gone as shown in the 1860 (?) photograph and in a Gentilz watercolor of the figures done in 1882.<sup>31</sup> In the Thomas painting, dated 1884 and in the late 1880's photograph published by Corner the entire sculpture was gone.<sup>32</sup> By 1895, the lower portion of the sculpture was back in place as demonstrated by a photograph taken in that year.<sup>33</sup> It remained in place as shown in all photographs taken in the 20th century.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>24</sup> George Ferguson, *Signs & Symbols in Christian Art*, Oxford University Press, London, Oxford, New York, 1961, p. 125.

<sup>25</sup> Photograph, 1855, De Ryee? file (DRT).

<sup>26</sup> Photograph, 1860 (?) (HS)

<sup>27</sup> Pinckney, *Painting in Texas*, 1967, Pl. 95.

<sup>28</sup> Corner, 1890, Between pp. 20-21.

<sup>29</sup> Ferguson, *Signs & Symbols*, 1961, pp. 103-104.

<sup>30</sup> Photograph, 1855, De Ryee? file (DRT)

<sup>31</sup> Photograph, 1860(?) (HS); and Steinbomer Kendall and Perry, *Gentilz: Artist of the Old Southwest*, 1974, Pl. 14, p. 64.

<sup>32</sup> Pinckney, 1967, Pl. 95 and Corner 1890, between pp. 20-21.

<sup>33</sup> Photograph, 1895. Butterfield file (DRT).

<sup>34</sup> Photograph, 1926 (HS) and Harvey Patterson photograph, after 1940 (HS).

<sup>17</sup> An oil painting (24" x 30") by Stephen Seymour Thomas is reproduced in Pauline A. Pinckney, *Painting in Texas: The Nineteenth Century*, University of Texas Press, Austin 1967, Pl. 95.

<sup>18</sup> *A Seth Eastman Sketchbook, 1848-1849*, Introduction by Lois Burkhalter, University of Texas Press, Austin, 1961, Pl. 43 bottom.

<sup>19</sup> Bartlett, *Explorations and Incidents*, New York, 1854, p. 43.

<sup>20</sup> Unknown author, *Notes from my Knapsack*, 1854, p. 177.

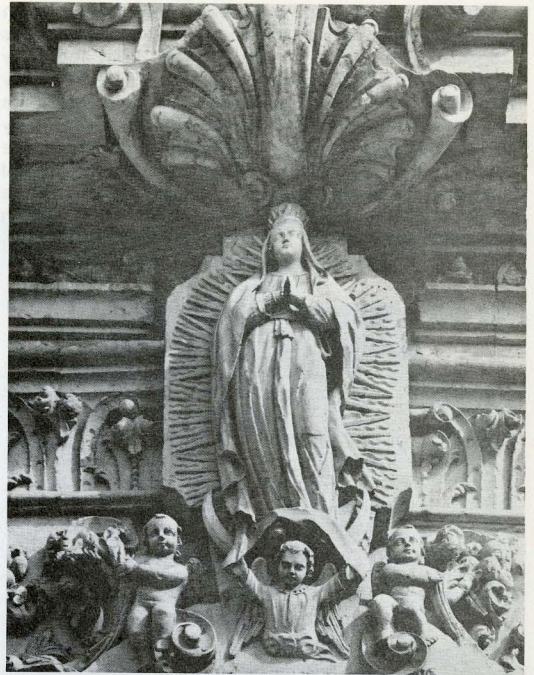
<sup>21</sup> Bartlett, *Explorations*, 1854, p. 43.

<sup>22</sup> Corner, *San Antonio de Bexar*, 1890, p. 19.

<sup>23</sup> "San Jose Lives Again". *San Antonio Express Magazine*, Sunday April 16, 1950, p. 25. According to Harvey Smith (personal communication), a proposal to repair the two sculptures on either side of the doorway was submitted by R. Oerter in 1934.



San Jose y San Miguel de Aguayo. Detail of the west portal. *Virgen de Guadalupe*. The figure has remained virtually intact. The angel beneath the Virgin has been completely reconstructed. The two cherubs on either side have been partially reconstructed. Photograph by Kathy Vargas, 1982.



San Jose y San Miguel de Aguayo. Detail of the west portal. *St. Joachim*. The head and both arms (from the elbow of the right and from the upper part of the left) have been reconstructed. The cherub to the right on the archivolt is a reconstruction. Photograph by Kathy Vargas, 1982.

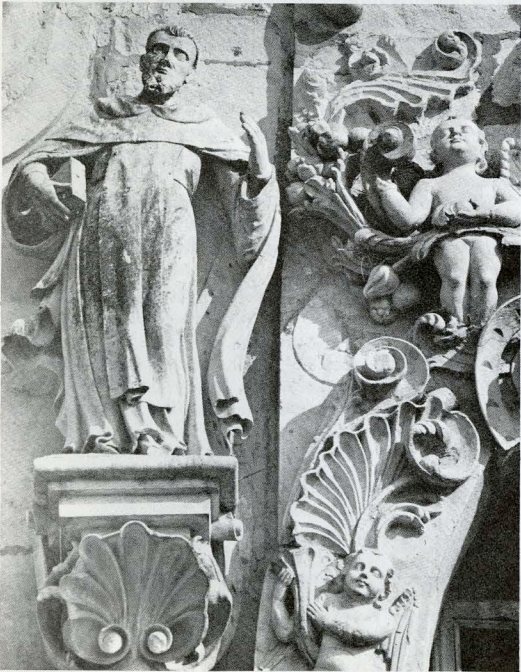


San Jose y San Miguel de Aguayo. Detail of the west portal. *St. Anne*. The entire upper part (from the thighs on up) has been reconstructed. The cherub to the left on the archivolt is a reconstruction. Photograph by Kathy Vargas, 1982.

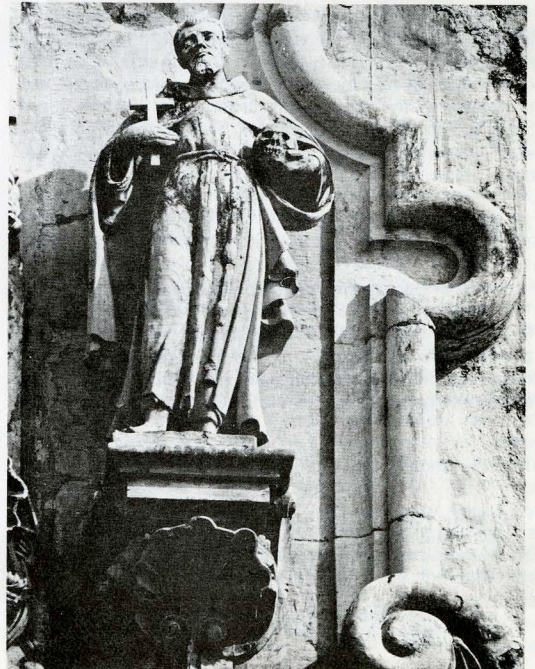




San Jose y San Miguel de Aguayo. Detail of the west portal. *St. Joseph*. The head and most of the Christ Child are modern reconstructions. The legs and right arm of the latter are extant in late nineteenth century photographs. Photograph by Kathy Vargas, 1982.



San Jose y San Miguel de Aguayo. Detail of the west portal. *St. Dominic*. The left hand has been reconstructed. The staff is missing. The cherub to the immediate right has been completely reconstructed. Photograph by Kathy Vargas, 1982.



San Jose y San Miguel de Aguayo. Detail of the west portal. *St. Francis*. The cross held in the right hand is a reconstruction. The rest of the figure has remained intact. Photograph by Kathy Vargas, 1982.



### *Our Lady of Guadalupe:*

Representations of the Virgin are always modeled on the miraculous image in the basilica of Guadalupe in Mexico City. "She is in the pose and colors of the Immaculate Conception and stands on the crescent moon above a cherub with outstretched arms. She wears a simple spiked crown and is surrounded by a mandora of golden rays."<sup>35</sup> "She wears a red gown and a star strewn blue cloak."<sup>36</sup>

It is difficult to determine the extent of the damage in the early photographs. In the 1860(?) photograph the cherub with outstretched arms is missing as are the heads of the cherubs on either side.<sup>37</sup> The other four cherubs located on the archivolt halfway up and on each side of the springer of the mixtilinear arch were evidently destroyed in the mid 19th century as were the two cherubs on the oval frame of the choir window. The figure of the Virgin itself appears to have survived without any damage.

### *St. Dominic:*

The founder of the Dominican Order (13th century) " . . . is generally represented in the Habit of his Order (black and white robes). . . His special attribute is the rosary, for it was he who instituted the devotion of the rosary. . . "<sup>38</sup> He usually carries a book, a reference to his preaching and sometimes he carries a staff with the arms of the Order.

In this representation, the robe, (which would be white) with the front panel extending from the upper to the lower part of the body and the cloak and capelet (which would be black) are clearly meant to represent the Habit of the Dominican Order. The figure holds a book in the right hand and the left may have held the staff associated with this saint. The left hand was probably destroyed by the mid 19th century.

### *St. Francis:*

The founder of the Franciscan Order (13th century) " . . . is generally shown in the dark brown habit of his Order. In addition to the stigmata, his principle attributes are the skull, . . . the crucifix, . . . (and) his receiving the Infant Christ from the hands of Mary, are important gestures of his pictorial style."<sup>39</sup>

The figure clearly represents St. Francis for it has the attributes of the saint - the Habit with the Franciscan cord, the cross and the skull.

The only portion missing in the late 1880's photograph is the crucifix held in the figure's right hand.<sup>40</sup>

### *St. Joseph:*

The husband of Mary is frequently shown holding the Christ Child in his arms and is always bearded. "The first church dedicated to St. Joseph in the New World was San Jose de los Naturales, the chapel of the Indians in Mexico City, founded in 1527. St. Joseph thus became a special patron of the Indians."<sup>41</sup>

The upper part of the figure already appears damaged in the 1884 painting by Thomas.<sup>42</sup> The head of St. Joseph and upper part of the Christ Child's body, with the exception of its right arm, are missing in the late 1880's photograph.<sup>43</sup>

### *Summary:*

It is evident from this brief survey of the archival, and published writings, photographs, drawings, and paintings of the facade of Mission San Jose, that the architectural and the figural sculptures began to suffer damage during the second quarter of the 19th century. Some architectural sculpture and the smaller figural sculptures - the cherubs - on the first and second stories (on the archivolt and the choir window frame), and the cross were destroyed during this period as were certain parts of the large figural sculptures - the right hand of St. Joachim, the head of the Child Mary, the left hand of St. Dominic, the Crucifix held by St. Francis, and the top part of the Christ Child held by St. Joseph.

Further damage was inflicted during the third quarter of the 19th century. The forearms and head of St. Joachim, the entire figure of St. Anna and the Child Mary, and the head of St. Joseph were destroyed.

The doors disappeared between 1880-1890; part of the north wall fell in 1868; the dome and the roof collapsed in 1874.<sup>44</sup> Fortunately, following the publication of Corner's book in 1890, serious restoration efforts were contemplated and finally begun in 1917. These were continued over the next fifty years with the portal sculpture finally being fully restored and reconstructed in 1949.

<sup>35</sup> *Santos Para el Pueblo/Saints for the People*, Exhibition Catalogue, Curator: Norman Neuerburg, Loyola Marymount University Art Gallery (February 22-March 20, 1982) 1982, p. 28.

<sup>36</sup> E. Boyd, *New Mexico Santos: How to Name Them*, Museum of New Mexico, International Folk Art Foundation, Santa Fe, 1966.

<sup>37</sup> Photograph, 1860(?) (HS)

<sup>38</sup> Ferguson, *Signs & Symbols*, 1890, p. 115.

<sup>39</sup> Ferguson, 1890, p. 121.

<sup>40</sup> Photograph, no date (probably late 1880's, Rose-3-file (DRT).

<sup>41</sup> *Santos Para el Pueblo*, Neuerburg, 1982, p. 58.

<sup>42</sup> Pinckney, 1967, Pl. 95.

<sup>43</sup> Photograph, no date (probably late 1880's), Rose-3-file (DRT).

<sup>44</sup> Marion A. Habig, *The Alamo Chain of Missions*, A History of San Antonio's Five Old Missions, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago, 1968. p. 111.



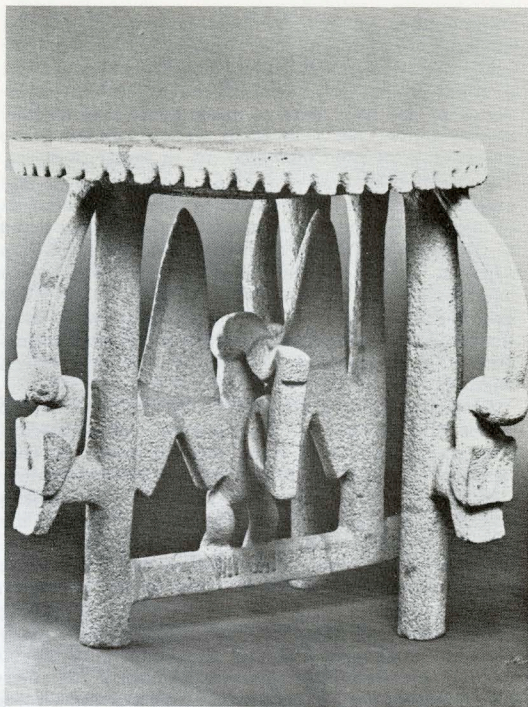
## EXHIBITION REVIEW

Ann Schlosser

### " 'BETWEEN CONTINENTS/BETWEEN SEAS' PRE-COLUMBIAN ART OF COSTA RICA "

A magnificent collection of pre-Columbian art from Costa Rica is now touring the United States (See *Research Center for the Arts Review*, Vol. 5, No. 2 for more information). The exhibition was organized by the Detroit Institute of Arts under the direction of Michael Kan, Assistant Director and Curator. A close relationship with the *Museo Nacional de Costa Rica* enabled the Institute to secure fine examples of stone sculpture, ceramics, jade work and gold work, dating from 500 B.C. to 1550 A.D. Objects were borrowed not only from the Museo but from the very important collections of the *Banco Central de Costa Rica*, the *Instituto Nacional de Seguros* and a number of private collections.

The reviewer had the pleasure of studying "Between Continents/Between Seas" at the San Antonio Museum of Art. There the exhibition is divided into three sections following the three archaeological regions of the country: Guanacaste-Nicoya in the northwest, the Central Highlands-Atlantic Watershed in central and eastern Costa Rica and Diquís in the southwest. The museum staff has placed each division on a separate floor of one of the building towers. The art objects are beautifully displayed, with warm cocoa walk, arrangements of green plants and subtle lighting. The sculpture of volcanic stone are placed on rough-textured stands - a nice touch. The previous gold and jade pieces, in addition to a number of ceramic vessels and sculptures, are well displayed in cases which allow viewing from all sides. At wide intervals on the walls are explanatory panels dealing with the classes of art pieces; for example, "Effigy Metates," "Jades" and "Polychrome Pottery." On the panels are displayed Costa Rican maps, photographs of burials containing similar artifacts and basic information such as names of

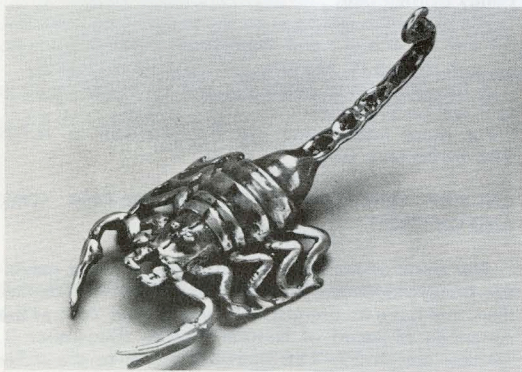


*Flying-panel metate.* Atlantic Watershed zone. Stone. These metates are among the best examples of stone carving in the Central Highlands. A raised-rim metate plate, usually in the shape of a rounded square, is perched upon a veritable panoply of zoomorphic deity images. The delicate openwork on these large sculptures was accomplished with only stone and organic tools, plus abrasive; the whole was carved from one boulder of andesitic rock. They were probably used to process special foodstuffs and/or drugs in ritual contexts, and many may have been made as mortuary furniture.

the more common types found, subjects portrayed, suggested dates and possible uses. Labels for each object contain a simple title such as "Axe-God," "Flying Panel Metate" or "Polychrome Vessel," along with dates and the general classification of the material, as "Jade," "Gold" or "Volcanic Stone." The San Antonio Museum of Art is to be commended for having its explanatory materials in both English and Spanish.

To aid viewers of the exhibition there is, in the Museum's bookstore and elsewhere, an inexpensive brochure which contains printed information identical to that on the wall panels. This is a real convenience for museum goers, especially those with bifocals! Also in the bookstore are a handsome catalog (\$17.95 plus \$1.50 for postage and handling), and two books by Doris Stone, *Pre-Columbian Man Finds Central America* and *Pre-Columbian Man in Costa Rica* (each \$15.00 plus \$1.50). In addition a short movie is shown in the auditorium. Docents are on duty to give lunchtime tours for downtown business people and to other groups at arranged times. Special workshops are available for children.

It would appear then that this exhibition is well backed up with various aids for understanding and appreciation. Yet to be honest, it must be realized that the majority of viewers will not avail themselves of most aids.



*Scorpion pendant.* From San Isidro del General. Vicinity Diquís. Gold. The variety of gold ornaments from Diquís is noteworthy. While birds, alligators and felines are probably the most numerous, many other realistic sculptures are known. They include monkeys, deer, tapirs, armadillos, snakes, sharks, lobsters, shellfish, and even insects like the scorpion here that is poised, ready to strike.



Primarily they will be looking and occasionally reading labels and wall panels. The viewers will rely on their background knowledge of other pre-Columbia art and of American Indian culture. Unfortunately, the exhibition does not allow them to easily relate to what they already know. This Costa Rican art is not shown in the perspective of pre-Columbian art or Indian America. The goldworking, jadeworking, stone carving and ceramic manufacture traditions of Costa Rica are part of larger traditions which also encompass other areas of Central America and even Mesoamerica and South America. Trade items from other parts of America have been found in Costa Rica and artifacts from there have been discovered elsewhere. In this exhibition not even the strong Central Mexican influence on polychrome pottery is emphasized with illustrations of Mexican painting.

Furthermore, as a supplement to the often limited material furnished by archaeology, ethnopictorial sources should have been utilized. There is data available on many aspects of the life of 16th century Central American Indians. Showing the Indians costumed and ornamented would help illustrate the wearing of jade and gold jewelry. Picturing them engaged in activities which required such dress and using ceremonial objects similar to those in the exhibition would be enlightening. Some information explaining about death and burial customs would answer many viewers' questions. Perhaps the animals portrayed could be pictured. Naturally the utilization of 16th century materials would require warnings that there were differences in say, the 12th or 8th centuries. Nevertheless, it should be stated that there were continuities and similarities which enable us to make suggestions about the life of earlier Indians. A greater use of archaeological and ethnohistorical materials is not only helpful for the museum goer with some background, but it is absolutely essential for the less informed person.



## EXHIBITIONS

### SPANISH PAINTING AT THE DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS

*Painting in Spain 1650-1700* is on view at The Detroit Institute of Arts from July 20 - September 19, 1982. The exhibition focuses on Spanish painting after Velazquez. Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, an artist whose personality dominated the late Baroque period, is well represented in the exhibition along with works by Valdés Leal, Alonso Cano and Juan de Arellano. Approximately 45 of the paintings are from North American collections. Religious scenes are prevalent reflecting important patronage exerted by the powerful church and the devout court. The exhibition abounds also in portraits, genre scenes and still life paintings. A fully illustrated catalogue with essays by the organizers accompanies the exhibition which opened at Princeton in April and travels exclusively to the Detroit Institute of Arts.

The exhibition was organized by the Princeton Art

Museum with guest scholars Nina Mallory and Edward Sullivan.

### PAINTINGS OF EL GRECO IN WASHINGTON, D.C., TOLEDO, OHIO AND DALLAS

*El Greco of Toledo: An International Exhibition* opened at the Prado Museum in Madrid April 1 and remained on view until June 6; it moved to the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., on July 2 and will remain on view until September 6; it will be shown at The Toledo Museum of Art, September 26 through November 21. The show will then travel to the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts on December 12 where it will remain until February 6, 1983.

El Greco of Toledo is the first major international exhibition devoted to the paintings of Domenikos Theotokopoulos, called El Greco (1541-1614), and includes fifty-six paintings by this master.

The exhibition was conceived and coordinated by Roger Mandle, the Director of The Toledo Museum of Art. It was organized in cooperation with the Museo del Prado, Madrid, Spain; the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; and the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, Dallas, Texas.

The exhibition has been made possible by a generous grant from the American Express Foundation. Additional support has been provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

#### *The Exhibition at The Toledo Museum of Art:*

There will be an admission charge for the exhibition at The Toledo Museum of Art. Because of the anticipated high attendance, reserved-time tickets will be required. Advance reserved-time tickets may be purchased beginning September 1 at any Ticketron outlet in the U.S. or Canada, or at the Museum's ticket offices. The exhibition is open free on Fridays, but the free tickets must be picked up at the Museum on the Friday of their use.

The exhibition will be open to the public on Tuesday, 11 a.m. to 9 a.m.; and Wednesday through Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday the Museum is closed.

A fully illustrated catalogue and an audio cassette tour will be available.

For more information call the Museum at (419) 255-8000 (ext. 398).

### ANCIENT AMERICAN ASTRONOMY IN NEW YORK AND CHICAGO

*Star Gods of the Ancient Americas*, a major exhibition being produced by the Museum of the American Indian, will have its premier showing in New York at the American Museum of Natural History (December 3, 1982 - March 27, 1983). It will travel to the Adler Planetarium in Chicago in the summer of 1983. This exhibit, the first of its kind, is intended to express the unity of art, religion, astronomy, and seasonal cycles in ancient American thought. The approach is interdisciplinary and reflects the role of cosmology in codifying man's observations about natural cycles.



*Star Gods of the Ancient Americas* will include approximately 150 artifacts and photographs from the collection of the Museum of the American Indian. The geographic area covered will be extensive - all of Native America, with a particular focus on those cultures whose art forms display astronomical beliefs.

Exhibit pieces include ceramics, lapidary art, monumental stonework and wood carving, painted leather, textiles and goldwork. Similarly, the iconographic images are diverse, ranging from literal pictorial images of the sun, moon and stars, to elaborate metaphorical representations of the stars and planets as gods interacting in the celestial realm.

The exhibition artifacts will include several extraordinary and unique pieces that will receive special focus. Among these are a gold Peruvian plaque that may be a form of a calendar; a Mixtec turquoise mosaic disk from Mexico showing the sun suspended from a night sky band; an elegantly carved Maya vase depicting the sun; a Plains Indians rattle with different colored stars assigned to the four-inter-cardinal directions; and a Tlingit housepost group from the Pacific Northwest showing the phases of the moon. Many of these pieces have received attention in scholarly articles but never have been appropriately displayed by the Museum. **STAR GODS OF THE ANCIENT AMERICAS** will present these artifacts in a significant new interpretive context.

#### *Lecture Series*

During the three month run of the exhibition at the American Museum of Natural History, three guest lecturers will be invited to give presentations. The proposed lecturers are specialists in the astronomy of the culture areas highlighted in the second half of the exhibit.

Professor Anthony Aveni will speak about indigenous astronomy of tropical regions throughout the world. His lecture will relate astronomical concepts and architecture to the characteristic solar positions and seasons at tropical latitudes.

Mr. Von del Chamberlain will present a lecture on Plains Indians astronomy and cosmology, comparing the images of Plains astronomical art with the traditional art of the Southwest.

Dr. Susan Milbrath will discuss Mesoamerican astronomy and cosmology and the cyclical world view of the ancient Mexicans.



## **INSTITUTIONS**

### **SYMPOSIUM AT THE SAN ANTONIO MUSEUM OF ART**

The San Antonio Museum of Art will hold a symposium entitled "The Art of Costa Rica in Perspective" in conjunction with its "Between Continents/Between Seas" exhibition on Saturday, August 28, 1982 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in the museum. This will be a scholarly examination of Costa Rica from the historical and artistic viewpoints. On the program are: Larry

Patrick, Nancy Troike, Richard Sinkin, Terence Grieder, and Julio Ortega, all from the University of Texas-Austin, John Booth, the University of Texas-San Antonio and Nan Kelker, Assistant Curator, San Antonio Museum of Art.

### **KELLOGG GRANT FOCUSES ON FIELD MUSEUM AS NATIONAL CENTER FOR MUSEUM STUDIES**

A fellowship/internship program is being launched by the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, IL, to expand the educational role of museums in society. The project is funded by a three-year grant of \$405,750 from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation of Battle Creek, MI.

Monies from this grant will support one-week fellowships at the Field Museum for 150 museum educators, administrators, curators, and trustees; internships for more than 540 college and school teachers on learning to use museums instructionally; and two series of seminars for museum personnel on exhibit design. Field Museum staff will serve as faculty during these seminars for experienced museum professionals from across the nation who will be selected as Kellogg Fellows. Carolyn Blackmon, Chairman of the Field Museum department of education, will serve as project director.

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation, established in 1930 to "help people help themselves," has distributed more than \$585 million in grants during its five decades in support of programs in agriculture, education, and health. The Foundation is today among the largest private philanthropic organizations in the nation, and supports programs on four continents, including the United States and Canada, Europe, Latin America, and Australia.

Available for interview:

Carolyn Blackmon, project director.  
Museum Phone: (312) 922-9410



## **MEETINGS/CALL FOR PAPERS**

### **JOINT MEETING OF ASHAHS AND ALAA AT THE NEXT MEETING OF THE CAA IN PHILADELPHIA**

For the first time Spanish art scholars and Latin American art scholars will be participating in a special joint session in which papers relating to both areas will be presented. This will take place at the next meeting of the College Art Association, scheduled for February 1983 in Philadelphia. The special session is being sponsored by the American Society for Hispanic Art Historical Studies (ASHAHS) and the Association for Latin American Art (ALAA).

The date of the late afternoon session (4:30 - 7:00 p.m.) has not been set at this time. However, the session theme will be "Current Research in the 17th and 18th Century Arts of Spain and Spanish America."

Those wishing to be considered for participation in the session should address correspondence or call the following persons:



Phyllis Braff  
(Annual Meeting Organizer, ASHAHS)  
Curator of Art  
Nassau County Museum  
Sands Point Preserve  
Sands Point, N.Y. 11050  
(516) 883-1610

Jacinto Quirarte  
(President, ALAA)  
10902 Bar X Trail  
Helotes, TX 78023  
(512) 691-4358

topic, or the paper itself, to Jeff Karl Kowalski and Mary Ellen Miller by September 20, 1982.

Dr. Jeff Karl Kowalski  
Department of Art  
Northern Illinois University  
DeKalb, Illinois 60115

Dr. Mary Ellen Miller  
History of Art  
56 High Street  
Yale University  
New Haven, CT  
06520

Abstracts, no more than one page in length, should be submitted to the appropriate person by October 31, 1982. The actual presentations will be of 15-20 minute duration. This will allow the presentation of three papers on Spanish art and three on Latin American art. The special session will be held in conjunction with the business meeting of the ASHAHS which will be either before or after the presentation of papers.

#### PRE-COLUMBIAN ART SYMPOSIUM AT THE CAA

*The Symposium: Images of Rulership and Authority in Pre-Columbian Art* will be held in Philadelphia during the next annual meetings of the College Art Association scheduled for February 1983. The exact date of the symposium will be announced later.

Papers are invited for the symposium which place particular emphasis on the relationship between art and authority in pre-Columbian America. Anyone who would like to be considered for inclusion in this symposium should send a 300 word abstract of their paper

#### COMPETITION ANNOUNCEMENT:

The American Society for Ethnohistory announces competition for the annual Heizer Prize for the best article of the year, published in any journal, using an ethnohistorical approach. The Society also announces competition for the annual Wheeler-Voegelin Prize for the best book-length work of the year using an ethnohistorical approach. Nominated works must have been published between September, 1981 and the end of August, 1982. Nominations, consisting of a copy of the article (preferable) or a complete reference to it, may be submitted by the author or any other part to Professor Dean Snow, Department of Anthropology, SUNY Albany, Albany, NY 12222. The deadline for receipt of nominations is September 1, 1982. The award will consist of a citation, to be presented at the annual meetings of the Society, October 13-17, in Nashville. Winners will be notified in advance of the meetings.



RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE ARTS

REVIEW

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REVIEW

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