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TRADICIONES DE GUATEMALA



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ESSAYS

POTTERY AND POTTERS IN TOTONICAPÁN

Roberto Díaz Castillo

Department of Totonicapán

The territory of Totonicapán, described as a “wide and detailed circuit”, was considered one of the most valuable and esteemed regions of the Quiché kingdom and lordship. It was separated from what was once the great district of Quetzaltenango, and its capital was established on a “vast plain of exceptional flatland clarity, making it a healthy land thanks to the openness of its horizon”.¹

Totonicapán (from the Nahuatl *totl* = bird; *nica* = hill and the locative suffix *pan* which means “place” or “hill of the bird”, although many authors agree that it means “above the hot water”). It is one of the twenty-two departments of the Republic of Guatemala.² It borders to the north with Huehuetenango, to the south with Sololá, to the east with El Quiché, and to the west with Quetzaltenango.

1 Francisco Antonio de Fuentes y Guzmán, *La Recordación Florida* (Biblioteca “Goathemala”, Sociedad de Geografía e Historia), Guatemala: Tipografía Nacional, 1932. T. III, p. 2.

2 Cf. Dirección General de Cartografía, *Diccionario Geográfico de Guatemala*, Guatemala: Tipografía Nacional, 1962. T. II, pp. 343-346; y Mateo Morales Urrutia, *La división política y administrativa de la república de Guatemala con sus datos históricos y de legislación*, Guatemala: Editorial Iberia – Gutenberg, 1961. T. II, p. 719.

Totonicapán consists of eight municipalities: Momostenango, San Andrés Xecul, San Bartolo, San Cristóbal Totonicapán, San Francisco el Alto, Santa Lucía La Reforma, Santa María Chiquimula y Totonicapán.

It is located on the Sierra Madre, which crosses from the northwest to the southeast. Totonicapán has a territorial extension of 1,061 km². Its climate is generally cold except in the municipalities of Santa María Chiquimula and Momostenango, which are temperate areas. Winds and mists often create a kind of drizzle, locally known as “salud del pueblo” (the town’s blessing), which makes the climate even more pleasant.

During the colonial period, the province of Totonicapán was divided into two districts: Totonicapán and Huehuetenango. The first one was located in the eastern part of the province and had as its capital the town of San Miguel Totonicapán (today the municipality of Totonicapán), which, according to Juarros, was the largest and most important in the entire region. It also served as the provincial capital and the residence of the mayor.

Four years after the independence in 1825, the assembly decreed the territorial division of the State of Guatemala, then part of the federal republic of Central America, into seven departments. Totonicapán was one of them and was assigned eight districts: Totonicapán, Momostenango, Nebaj, Huehuetenango, Malacatán, Soloma, Jacaltenango y Cuilco. The capital of each district had the same name except Nebaj whose capital was Sacapulas.

From June 5, 1838 to February 26, 1840. Totonicapán became part of the State of Los Altos, along with Suchitepéquez, Sololá, Quetzaltenango, Soconusco and Huehuetenango.

In 1872, as an established decree signed by President Miguel García Granados, a part of its territory was taken, along with another area from Sololá, this served to create the department of El Quiché.

With the enactment of the constitution in 1879. El Quiché was assigned the municipalities that has nowadays, with the exception of Santa Lucía La Reforma.

Regarding pottery production, there are two particular important municipalities: Totonicapán, the departmental capital and San Cristóbal Totonicapán.

Municipality of Totonicapán:

Archbishop Cortés y Larraz, who visited this municipality in the second half of the 18th century, describes it as follows: “Totonicapán is located on a flatland in a fairly spacious valley; it is a well-developed town, very beautiful, with straight streets and tile-roofed houses; so that, seen from above, it appears to be a very beautiful city. This valley is surrounded on all sides by very high mountains, covered with many pines and oaks, and with many fields for planting corn and wheat, which makes this land very bountiful, and right through the town flows a small stream.”³

As the capital of the department of the same name. This municipality has an approximate territorial extension of 328 kms². It borders to the north with Santa María Chiquimula, Momostenango (Totonicapán) and Patzité (El Quiché), to the east with Chichicastenango, Santa Cruz del Quiché y Patzité (El Quiché), to the south with Nahualá and Sololá (Sololá), to the west with San Francisco el Alto, San Cristóbal Totonicapán (Totonicapán) and Cantel (Quetzaltenango). It is located at 2,495 meters above sea level, its latitude is 14°54'39", and its longitude is 91°21'38".

For the most part of the department to which it belongs, the municipality of Totonicapán is cold but healthy. Its terrain is rugged with the exception of the municipal city, that is located on a small flatland. The irregularity of the terrain can be appreciated at the exit of Nahualá and the sulfurous and thermal baths, heading toward the capital of the republic and Quetzaltenango. So there is a profusion of ravines and gullies that form part of the municipality.

3 Pedro Cortés y Larraz, Descripción geográfico-moral de la Diócesis de Goathemala (Biblioteca "Goathemala" de la sociedad de Geografía e Historia de Guatemala, vol. XX), Guatemala: Tipografía Nacional, 1958. T. II, p. 99.

The orographic system of this municipal district is made up of the mountains of Cuxniquel, Campanabaj, Cerro de Oro, Tunabaj, Caxtum, and others. Vegetation is diverse, with pine, cypress, and oak trees being bountiful. The large forests in this region are owned by the Indigenous communities.

The capital of Totonicapán is divided into four neighborhoods or zones, according to the current classification: Tenerías, Agua Caliente, Palín Primero, and Palín Segundo. Its hamlets are the following: Chuculjuyub, Nimasac, Quacquix, Xolsacmaljá, and Mactzul; and the following villages: Chiyax, with the hamlets Xenajtijuyub, Chicaxtum, Pacapox, Xolbalam, and Patzunoj; Chotacaj, with the hamlets Cruz Verde, Chuiboy, and Chicojxac; Paquí, with the hamlets Nimapá, Juchaneb, Paracansiguán, and Pacharajcán; Rancho de Teja, with the hamlets Chitabaj, Paxot, and Xemán; La Concordia, with the hamlets Xoljuyub, Chipachaj, and Xoloquiej; Barreneché, with the hamlet La Esperanza; Tzanixnam, with the hamlets Pamaxjal, Pasacul, and Xolvellá; Pachoc, with the hamlets Cuxilcajá, Chipachec, Chocruz, Papuerta, Panabesac, and Chuijox; Chimenté, with the hamlets Guachibal and Coxom Segundo; Vásquez, with the hamlets Chuatroj, Chuanuj, Paxtocá, Chipuac, Pasacoj, Chuixtocá, and Chuixchimal; and Coxom, with the hamlets Patzarajmac, Chuisuc, Chuicruz, Poxlajuj, and Panquix.

The places that belong to the municipality of Totonicapán are: Chomanzán, Las Trojadas, El Desconuselo, Empuxet, Setesic, Muchulic, María Tecún, Cerro de Oro, País de Paquí, Alvarado de Paquí, and Xetunabaj.

The hydrographic streams that irrigate the municipality are numerous. Among them are the rivers Pacoto, Chojoj, Xolpequelá, Panimá, Samalá, Tzununá, Tzancam, Panimajox,

Chimoral, Xantún, Paquí, Juchaneb, Agua Tibia, Bocobá, Cacá, Chimente, Tzanixnam, Pimut, the stream of La Esperanza, and the Barreneché ravine.

The most important land route connecting to the municipality of Totonicapán is National Route 1, which connects with the Interamerican highway (CA-1), and crosses the municipality from the west.

Municipality of San Cristóbal Totonicapán:

After his journey to this municipality, Cortés y Larraz wrote: “From the town of San Miguel Totonicapán to San Cristóbal Totonicapán there are three leagues, going from east to west, the road is good although there are some slopes, sharp and narrow paths, but there are no stones or rocks. After two leagues a small stream comes across which flows from east to west with an inclination to the south. At the entrance of San Cristóbal, a river called Nimá is crossed by a bridge, it is a very fast-flowing river and it goes to the same direction as the previously mentioned stream, which joins it. The entire road is filled with valleys and fields planted with corn and wheat; the hills are not high, but they are covered with pine and other trees.”⁴

San Cristóbal Totonicapán has an approximate territorial extension of 36 kms². It borders to the north with San Francisco el Alto (Totonicapán), to the east with Totonicapán (Totonicapán), to the south with Salcajá (Quetzaltenango) and San Andrés Xecul (Totonicapán), and to the west with San Francisco La Unión (Quetzaltenango) and San Andrés Xecul (Totonicapán). It is located at 2,330 meters above sea level, its latitude is 14°55'05”, and its longitude is 91°26'36”.

Its terrain is rugged and mountainous with small valleys spread wide out by the Samalá river which divides the municipal capital into two parts, connected by a bridge. The town of San Cristóbal is located on a rolling plateau from which the plains extending toward Salcajá and San Andrés Xecul can be seen.

This municipality lacks high mountains but has hills with extremely fertile soil. The foothills bordering the municipality of Totonicapán are not very tall, yet they offer an attractive landscape of groves and cultivated fields.

4 Ibid. p. 104.

The cold climate of San Cristóbal is one of the best in the western region of the country, and its beautiful landscapes are really famous and well known.

The town of San Cristóbal Totonicapán is formed by the neighborhoods of El Salvador, San Sebastián, El Calvario and Saantiago, along with the following hamlets: Paguán, Colombé, Coxliquel, Pachaj, Ciénaga, Xetacabaj and Chicotón.

The municipality of San Cristóbal Totonicapán has the following villages: Nueva Calendaria, Patachaj, Pacanac, Xesuc, San Ramón and Xecanchavox.

Its hydrographic system is formed by the rivers Samalá, Xeaj, Xol, García, Los Tuises, Chuquisaquijá, Pabacul and Pasutulé, and by the streams Xecuxcubel and Xesalabaj.

To travel by land to San Cristóbal Totonicapán, you can take the Interamerican Highway and reach the point known as Cuatro Caminos, the intersection of the roads that lead to Quetzaltenango, Totonicapán, Huehuetenango, and Guatemala City.

The indigenous name of this municipality is Pauhlá (which means “Waterfall” in K'iche'),⁵ a town evangelized by Franciscan missionaries who accompanied the Spanish conquistadors.

Its Spanish name is said to come from a hypothesis — before the bridge over the Samalá River was built, it was necessary to cross the river on foot, under the protection of Saint Christopher, the patron of travelers. (A 1721 color map revealed that at that time the town was located on both sides of the river.)

The oldest known document referencing the evangelism of the town of San Cristóbal Pauhlá is from 1578.⁶ Later documents, from the early 17th century, mention the appearance of a new name: San Cristóbal Totonicapán (or simply Totonicapán), which coexisted with the earlier name until the latter became definitive.⁷

5 Bruno Frison, Pauhlá (Publicaciones del Instituto Tecnológico Salesiano, Colección Histórica, No. 1), Guatemala: Talleres Tipográficos E. A. Galindo. 1975, p. 12.

6 Ibid., p. 13

7 Ibid., p. 16

Popular arts and handicrafts in Totonicapán

The indigenous texts, especially those of the K'iche culture, reveal how the arts and handicrafts of the population conquered by the Spanish are the antecedents of today's popular traditions.

The Popol Vuh (ancient histories of the K'iche') The Título de los Señores de Totonicapán (Title of the Lords of Totonicapán), The K'iche' history by Don Juan de Torres; The Título de la Casa de Ixcuin-Nehaib (Title of the House of Ixcuin-Nehaib), Señora del territorio de Otzoyá (Lady of the Territory of Otzoyá); The Histories of the Xpantzay, and The Título de los indios de Santa Clara la Laguna (Title of the Indians of Santa Clara La Laguna) contain lots of references to musical instruments, flutes made of bone, conch shells, drums, gourds, chirimías (a kind of rustic oboe), and pitos (like a whistle); to songs; to sacred and magical games and dances, the *Puhuy* dance (owl or goatsucker); the *Cux* dance (opossum); the *Iboy* dance (armadillo); the *Ixtzul* dance (centipede); and the *Chitic* dance (performed on stilts).

Let's now look at some of the references to popular arts found in The Title of the Lords of Totonicapán:

Spanish:

“Tomaréis cuatro grandes ollas; haced llenar una de avispones, otra de avispas pequeñas, otra de culebras y otra de ronrones⁸, y, entre cada cuatro espantajos pondréis una olla.”⁹

“Tomad, dijo Tohil, tres cobijas: es una pintad una avispa, en otra una águila y en otra un tigre, y entregándolas a los jóvenes decidles que es la señal y también regalo que remitís para los principales señores de aquellos pueblos.”¹⁰

English:

“You shall take four large pots; have one filled with wasps, another with small wasps, another with snakes and another with ronrones⁸, and between every four scarecrows you shall place one pot.”⁹

“Take this, said Tohil, three blankets: one painted with a wasp, one with an eagle, and one with a tiger, and give them to the young men and tell them it is the token and also a gift that you shall give to the principal lords of those towns.”¹⁰

8 Scarab.

9 Título de los Señores de Totonicapán (Traducción del original quiché por el P. Dionisio José Chonay: introducción y notas de Adrián Recinos), México: Fondo de Cultura Económica. 1950. p. 219.

10 Ibid., p. 121.

Spanish:

“Habiendo cumplido con estos deberes, se alegraron, cantaron y al fin se embriagaron con miel fermentada que hallaban en los palos. Luego comenzaron a ofrecer a sus hijas que casaron con ciertas ceremonias y unas tinajas de batido blanco y tenían un canasto de aguacatillos...”¹¹

“Decid a Qotuhá que mande por ella, y en señal llevad estas tres jícaras de batido y masa para lo mismo.”¹²

“Con esta respuesta marcharon los enviados y luego mandó Qotuhá a cuatro Ahpop-Camhá llevando unas andas pintadas de amarillo, un petate colorado y unos caites.”¹³

English:

“Having fulfilled these duties, they rejoiced, sang, and in the end became drunk with fermented honey that they found in the branches of trees. Then they began to offer their daughters in marriage with certain ceremonies and some jars of white batter, and they had a basket of small avocados...”¹¹

“Tell Qotuhá to request her hand in marriage, and as a token, take these three jícara (Gourd bowls) of batter and some dough for the same purpose.”¹²

“With this response, the messengers departed, and then Qotuhá sent four Ahpop-Camhá carrying some litters painted in yellow, a colored mat, and some sandals.”¹³

The Spanish chronicles of the conquest also record the presence of arts and manual trades in the lands of *Chimekénhá* (Chequemequena, according to the Castillian adaptation of the term), the Quiché name for the many towns of Totonicapán. Fuentes y Guzmán writes: “...and thus came forth the king *Tecún Umán* himself from the castle of his great Court of Quiché, with supreme authority and great ceremonial splendor, carried in a litter upon the shoulders of the elders of his kingdom, preceded by a grand display and the music of flutes, horns, sea conch shells, and drums. Seventy-two thousand warriors followed, under the command of his great captain *Ahzol*, his immediate lieutenant named *Ahzumanché*, and the king’s shield bearer *Ahpocab*, along with other military officials, and a multitude of feathered parasols and fan bearers attending to the king himself, all of them well-armed and prepared with arrows, spears of flint, shields, throwing sticks, stones, and slings. A large number of native porters (*tamemes*) also carrying the gear and supplies of that army.”¹⁴

11 Ibid., p. 230.

12 Ibid., p. 231.

13 Ibid., p. 231.

Juarros, for his part, notes, referring to the inhabitants of Totonicapán: “Its natives make guitars, boxes, and other wooden items; they make vessels, pots and similar glazed clay works, and some woolen manufactures.”¹⁵

Currently, Totonicapán is a fertile land of popular arts and handicrafts. The neighborhoods of the departmental capital, the districts, villages, and hamlets spread throughout the region are inhabited by potters, weavers, carpenters, painters, tinsmiths, basket makers, and many other craftsmen in these types of traditional trades. In some cases, the specialization in these handicrafts becomes so prominent that there are districts and villages in San Cristóbal Totonicapán and in the departmental capital, such as the so-called Vásquez and Paquí, almost exclusively dedicated to pottery, painted chests, and toys and boxes dyed with multicolored anilines.

Pottery in Totonicapán

One of the visual arts that developed the most during pre-Columbian times in what is now Guatemala was pottery. This includes both the expression of the complex culture typical of the dominant classes, monumental architecture, sculpture, painting, codices, polychrome ceramics, mural painting, numeric and calendrical systems, and the one that was created by the popular masses or traditional culture.

The pottery of the pre-Hispanic peasant had the most utilitarian character and no ceremonial as the cult. It was also, for that very reason, more perishable. Of one and another types of pottery, only archeological remains and documentary testimonies now remain. As Bernal Díaz del Castillo, regarding the latter, enthusiastically mentions in his chronicle of the conquest, he alludes to the ceramics he observed in the indigenous markets.

14 Francisco Antonio de Fuentes y Gúzman, ob. cit., T, II. p. 397.

15 Domingo Juarros, *Compendio de la Historia de la Ciudad de Guatemala* (Biblioteca "Payo de Rivera"), Guatemala: Tipografía Nacional, 1936, p. 47.

Within the framework of pre-Hispanic society, the class-based division conditioned marked inequalities. Thus, for example, among the Quichés, the inhabitants of Totonicapán belong to this ethnic group. Archeological findings at sites reveal a significant difference between the dwellings of lords and vassals: "The houses of the vassals were humble, made of wood and mud, with thatched roofs. In contrast, the lords lived in palaces. Our excavations in Uatatlán and those of Guilleméin in Iximché confirm what the conquistadors said; which is, they felt as comfortable as if they were in their own homes in Spain."¹⁶

The cited author also notes that the activities performed by the lords and the vassals were very different, and that this difference was due to social stratification. Carmack points out that only in three types of tasks, the division of labor between lords and vassals was mixed: handicrafts, trade, and war.

Regarding the first of the mentioned activities, Carmack notes a particularly interesting fact: there was a group of artisans, neither lords nor vassals, whom the Spaniards (Las Casas) identified as "ingenious officials", such as painters, featherworkers, inlayers, silversmiths, and others of their kind.¹⁷ In addition, the significance of this fact lies, first of all, in that such artisans sold their products in the market and not in the palace. And secondly, that at the same time, the potters began to be integrated into this highly skilled group. After all, as Carmack states, the vassals also sold their goods in the markets, in the same way as they still do today in Guatemala.¹⁸

16 Robert M. Carmack, *la estratificación quicheana prehispánica* (Congreso Internacional de Americanistas, septiembre, 1974), México: Ed. mecanografiada, p. 9.

17 Ibid., p. 18

18 Ibid., p. 21

It is clear, then, that craftsmanship in pre-Hispanic Guatemalan society, even this sector made up of individuals who were neither lords nor vassals, occupied a place not only distinct but opposite to that of the ruling classes. And their artistic works expressed conceptions different from those held by the elites in power and formed part of an ideological system that challenged the official status.

This situation explains how in contrast to that official culture, a popular culture emerged, a heritage that belonged to the subdued masses, which during the rebellions that

occurred in the 9th century. People took over ceremonial centers, destroying and mutilating the monuments that represented the dominant classes.¹⁹

Technically, pre-Columbian ceramics were made (though with non-essential variations) of refined clay in a *piedra de moler* (grinding stone), almost always mixed with water, sand, and plant roots to give it consistency. This mixture was sieved through a piece of hollowed-out gourd or another similar instrument, to rid it of foreign particles and turn it into a soft, fine mass that was easy to handle. The so-called *piedra de rayo* (obsidian) or any other similar material was used to assist in shaping the clay, a process that was a completely hand-modeled process. Once finished, the objects were dried in the sun and then fired in an earthen bed, using firewood and leaves.

First the conquest, and then the long colonial period brought significant changes to pottery. But perhaps the three most important ones were: the introduction of the potter's wheel (called "*Rueda del alfarero*" in Guatemala), the brick kiln, and the "glazing" technique. The latter involved the use of oxides (lead, tin, cobalt, manganese, copper, iron, and others), which, when fired at temperatures of 900 degrees Celsius, turned into shiny glazes.

- 19 Cf. Alberto Ruz Lhuillier, "Caracterización socioeconómica de la sociedad maya", en *Estudios* (Anuario de la Escuela de Historia, Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala, 1975), Guatemala: s.p.i., p. 9.

These innovative changes led to the coexistence of two different pottery techniques, due to the beginning of the Spanish rule: the traditional Indigenous method and the Spanish or colonial method. Likewise, alongside the ceramics made by the conquistadors in their own workshops. Fuentes y Guzmán states that Dominican friars produced pottery in the convents they established in Guatemala, an understandable phenomenon began to take shape: Indigenous people started applying oxides to the surface of their traditional pieces, often zoomorphic in form or not, and due to the lack of kilns, they fired these pieces with wood and leaves.

This explains why today, in our country, not only do we find ceramics of pre-Columbian origin (hand-modeled and fired in the open air) and Spanish glazed ceramics (modeled with the help of a potter's wheel, glazed with oxides, and fired in brick kilns), but also that hybrid type previously mentioned.

The most illustrative contemporary example of this hybrid pottery, originating in pre-Hispanic traditions that Indigenous people learned to glaze during the colonial period, are the pitos ("a kind of whistles") of Totonicapán. It is worth recalling that the chronicles of the conquistadors recorded the existence of "little trumpets and horns"²⁰ that made noise during battles, undoubtedly instruments similar or identical to these now-glazed whistles.

In Totonicapán, more than anywhere else in Guatemala, someone can still appreciate colonial-style pottery, ceramic tableware in different styles and colors, as well as Indigenous glazed ceramics, sometimes only partially glazed, which are so abundant in the markets: everyday cooking pots, giant pots for weddings and religious celebrations, pans, braziers,

pichachas (a kind of jug used for nixtamal), duck-shaped jugs baroquely decorated with reliefs and incisions, and small vessel sets used as children's toys.

The glazed earthenware made in Totonicapán includes a style known as majolica or whiteware of Spanish origin, related to the traditions of Talavera de la Reina, Seville, and Puente del Arzobispo (Spanish municipalities).

This type of earthenware is characterized by a white base, achieved using tin oxide, and decorations in various colors. It clearly serves a utilitarian function: tableware, kitchenware, candlesticks, incense burners, vases, flowerpots, washbasins, whisks, gargoyles, tiles...

20 Cf. Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *Historia de la Conquista de la Nueva España*, Buenos Aires: Espasa-Calpe Argentina, S.A. 1955.p. 132.

It is known²¹ that the first reference to majolica earthenware in Guatemala dates back to 1585, in a mention of Juan Rodríguez Camacho, described as a “master in making whiteware.” It is also known that this type of pottery was first produced in Antigua Guatemala, reaching its peak there in the 18th century. By that time, fifteen individuals were documented as being involved in this handicraft trade. After the earthquakes of 1773, which destroyed the city of Antigua, artists and potters dispersed to Nueva Guatemala and San Miguel Totonicapán, today simply Totonicapán, the capital of the department of the same name, which gave rise to the development of majolica in this part of the country.²²

Painted ceramics is also produced in Totonicapán. It is made of kiln-fired clay, later covered with oil-based paints, and serves decorative and recreational purposes: large pieces are used as decorations, while smaller, multi-colored ones, some really miniatures, are made as children's toys.

The pottery of Totonicapán clearly shows when this trade becomes an art and when it remains a popular handicraft.

According to the criteria established by the Center for Folklore Studies at the University of San Carlos of Guatemala, popular arts are cultural expressions of a plastic nature, endowed with aesthetic qualities, traditional, utilitarian, anonymous, and the result of individual, manual, and domestic labor. Meanwhile, popular handicrafts are also expressions of plastic nature, not necessarily endowed with aesthetic value, but still traditional, utilitarian, and anonymous, the result of division of labor, predominantly manual, using simple tools.

21 Cf. Luis Luján Muñoz, “Notas sobre la mayólica de Antigua Guatemala”, en *Tradiciones de Guatemala* (Revista del Centro de Estudios Folklóricos, Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala, No. 3. 1975), Guatemala: Editorial Universitaria. p. 132.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 35

In the cases of Antonio Simeón Marto Pec, Santiaga Cux, widow of Cuc, Juana Antonia Cuc Cux, and Juana Ola, we find true creators of popular art: their work is mostly

manual, personal, domestic, learned at home through the example of elders. Their access to raw materials is easy, and their production volume is limited to the local market.

On the other hand, Federico López Tumax, Celso Elías Ixcaquic, Josefina Chaclán, and Juan Teodoro Batz are genuine popular artisans, as they work in family workshops, which are mechanized and organized according to division of tasks, and they produce in large quantities.

The case of Pablo Francisco Gutiérrez is different because his work is a blend of art and popular handicraft: in the *pitos* he creates, the personal touch of the artist prevails, but there is also some division of labor and the mechanical use of the potter's wheel.

Potters of Totonicapán

The following data about some of the most important potters of Totonicapán reveals how the artists and artisans of this department, dedicated to the production of painted ceramics and glazed earthenware, in all its forms, are people who almost exclusively live off their artistic and handicraft production, organized around the family unit. Most of them lack land ownership, or possess it in very small amounts, and in all cases, the cultivation of such land is only intended to meet family needs.

Painted ceramics

1. Celso Elías Ixcaquic

Age: 28 years old

Place of origin: Municipality of Totonicapán.

Relatives:

Father: Pedro Elías Ixcaquic (69 years old, potter).

Brothers: José Ixcaquic (45 years old, potter, makes small pots, jugs, and candle holders), Nicolás Ixcaquic (47 years old, potter; makes piggy banks), and Santiago, Julio, and Sebastián Ixcaquic.

Main occupation: Potter

Secondary occupation: “We only work in this handicraft most of the time, but we also work on our land when it is the right season.”

Tradition Lineage: He learned pottery from his father, who as well learned from Felipe Robles, a well-known potter from Totonicapán.

Raw materials and places to get them:

- White clay, (obtained in Chuiboy, a hamlet in the municipality of Totonicapán, known as the “cradle of white clay”.)
- Oil-based paints, branded “Briolac”, in the following colors: yellow, green, “German” (a specific shade), carmine red, light blue, sea green, and pink (all obtained from stores in the municipality of Totonicapán).
- Pine firewood.

Equipment:

- Potter’s wheel
- Bamboo stick
- Grinding stone
- Sieve made of mesh and wooden board

Product: Painted ceramics

Making process:

The clay is acquired in lumps. It is then ground using a grinding stone. Next, it is refined by passing it through a sieve. Afterward, it is mixed with “*moja*” (the coarse residue from the sifting) and water in a large container called a “*campana*” (“bell in English”) to give the clay its desired consistency or “body.” The clay mass is prepared in small portions called “*peyas*” or “*marquetas*”, grouped in sets of six. The “*peyas*” are taken to the potter’s wheel, where the pieces are shaped with the aid of a bamboo stick. Once off the potter’s wheel, each piece is given a hand-finished touch.

The pieces are dried in the shade, placed on a wooden board. Before they are completely dry, the “ears” (handles) are attached. Then, they are dried in the sun, also on wooden boards. Finally, the pieces are fired in a kiln and painted.

Product varieties:

- Small coffee tableware sets that are used as toys and decorations.
- Slightly larger small clay vessels for decorative purposes (pitchers or jugs, sugar bowls, little pots, small jars, whisks).
- Zoomorphic piggy banks (such as piglets and hens sitting on their nests).
- Candlesticks

Work system:

The work is collective, based on a division of tasks.

In the house, there are pottery wheels for each of the brothers, installed in separate rooms.

Each brother directs the work in his own workshop.

Women and children assist them in their tasks.

The modeling on the wheel is done by the men.

The women are in charge of painting.

The children collaborate with the tasks when “they enjoy working in the crafting”.

Other information:

Celso Elías Ixcaquic states that only his family is dedicated to producing painted ceramics. When he was asked about the Artisan Center operating in the departmental capital, he expressed disapproval. He was also dissatisfied with a course offered by the Technical Institute for Training and Productivity (INTECAP for its acronym in Spanish), which he attended, saying “it had too much theory.”

NOTE: This information was obtained directly by the author of this study on April 26, 1975.

Glazed earthenware:

1. Federico López Tumax

Age: 54 years old

Relatives:

Father: Benigno López Mazariegos (Potter)

Brother: Luis Andrés López Tumax (Potter)

Spouse: Catalina Cutz

Place of residence: Municipality of Totonicapán (The capital of the department of the same name)

Main occupation: Potter

Secondary occupation: He cultivates a “cuerda” of land (a traditional unit of measurement) that he owns. The production from this plot is destined exclusively for family consumption.

Tradition Lineage: He learned pottery from his father, who, in turn, learned it from his own father. His spouse assists him in painting the pieces.

Raw materials and places to get them:

- Black and white clay (from Chuculjuyup, a hamlet in the municipality of Totonicapán)
- Lead (purchased in the stores of Totonicapán)
- Copper (purchased in the stores of Totonicapán)

- Cobalt (purchased in the drugstores of Totonicapán; it is an imported product)
- Manganese (purchased in the drugstores of Totonicapán)
- Silica or rock sand
- Firewood

Equipment:

- Large wooden table
- Grinding stone
- Sieve
- Potter's wheel
- Wooden boards (used to dry the pieces under the sun)
- Stone mill, also known as "turtle" mill (used to grind the glazes)

Product: Dark glazed earthenware (brown or green) and majolica.

Making process:

The clay is acquired in lumps.

The lumps are crushed with a large mallet. The crushed clay is then ground using a grinding stone (this task is typically carried out by a woman).

Afterward, it is refined using a sieve, whose base consists of a large wooden box.

To sift the clay through the mesh, a crank is turned, a motion that separates the fine clay from the coarse residue that is discarded.

The sifted clay is deposited into a pit or basin to be mixed with water and turned into a workable mass.

The mass is then divided into small portions called "marquetas" or "peyas", which are kept covered with damp cloths or leaves to prevent them from drying out.

The "peya" is then given to the person in charge of the potter's wheel, who forms the bases of each piece on the wheel, and subsequently models the pieces by hand with the mechanical assistance of the wheel. The pieces are inspected and polished.

Once shaped, the pieces are placed on wooden boards and dried in the shade. Then they are left to dry under the sun.

The pieces are decorated with paint made from either black or white clay mixed with water, depending on the background color of each piece.

The pieces are fired for the first time in a kiln at a temperature of 900 degrees Celsius, using pinewood as fuel, "because it produces a strong flame."

After the first firing, the pieces are coated with metallic oxides to achieve the characteristic glazed finish.

The pieces are fired again (sometimes they are painted after being glazed).

The glazes are made from oxides of lead, copper, cobalt, and manganese.

Lead is calcined and then ground.

Copper is burnt, and the resulting oxide layer (“cascarita”) is removed, ground, and mixed with water.

Cobalt produces a blue color; lead, a gray color; copper, a green color; and manganese, a brown color.

These oxides are mixed with water and silica (rock sand).

The glazes are ground in a circular basin with a central axis operated by a T-shaped lever, which rotates two large grinding stones called “tortugas” (turtles) located at the bottom of the basin.

The prepared glazes are stored in containers known as *campanas*.

Product varieties:

- Pots
- Whisks
- Serving bowls
- Plates
- Large plates
- Tableware sets (for 6, 8, or 12 people)

Work system:

The master potter acts as the head of a group of workers composed of his spouse, three assistants who divide the tasks of wheel-throwing and painting, and four children known as *alcanzadores* (“runners”), who are responsible for transporting raw materials and finished pieces from one place to another.

The master potter oversees and directs all stages of the production process.

Raw material cost:

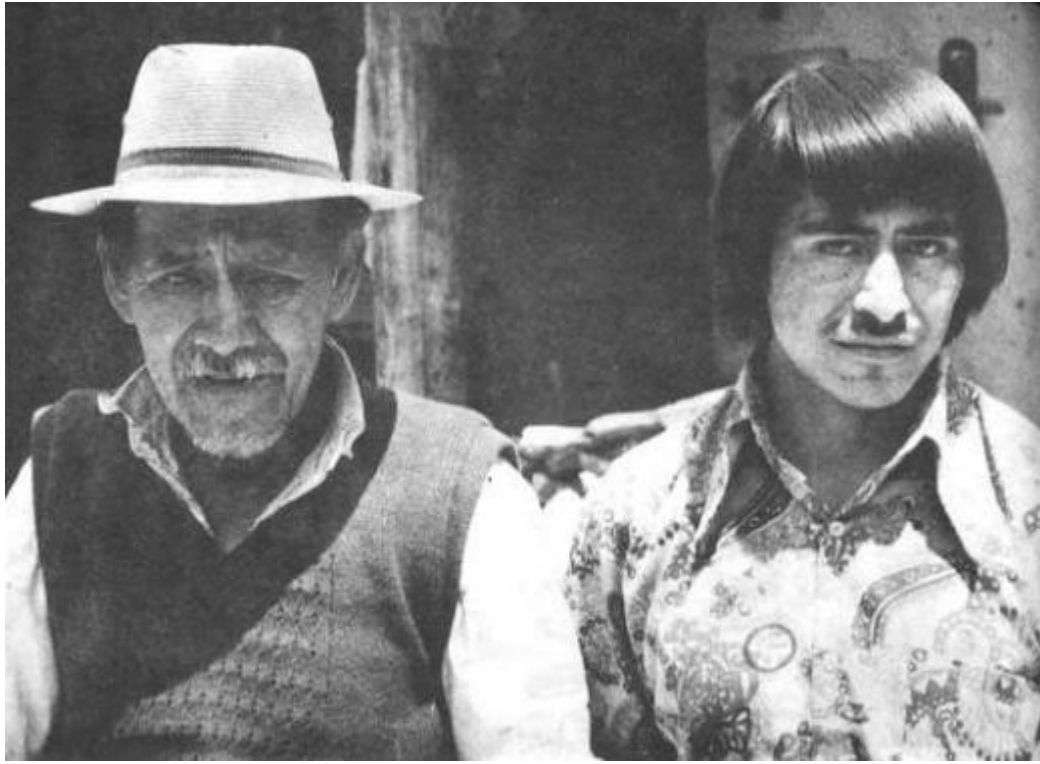
- Lead: Q 35.00 per quintal (purchased in ingots)
- Copper: Q 0.50 per pound
- Cobalt: Q 10.50 per pound
- Manganese: Q 8.00 per pound (extracted from burned-out batteries used in flashlights)

Product distribution:

The products are sold directly from his home to merchants and personal clients who place special orders. These clients often reside in other parts of the country or outside as well.



Painted ceramics made by the Ixcaquic family, drying in the sun.
(Photograph: Mauro Calanchina).



Pedro Elías Ixcaquic and his son Celso Ixcaquic. (Photograph: Mauro Calanchina)



Small vessels. Painted ceramics made by the Ixcaquic family.
(Photograph: Mauro Calanchina).



Sugar bowl. Painted ceramics made by the Ixcaquic family.
(Photograph: Mauro Calanchina).



Small vessels. Painted ceramics made by the Ixcaquic family.
(Photograph: Mauro Calanchina).



Federico López Tumax. (Photograph: Mauro Calanchina).



Federico López Tumax and his spouse Catalina Cutz. (Photograph: Mauro Calanchina).



A person in charge of the potter's wheel working in the workshop of Federico López Tumax. (Photograph: Mauro Calanchina).



The house and workshop of Federico López Tumax.
(Photograph: Mauro Calanchina).



Partial view of the production made in the workshop of Federico López Tumas.
(Photograph: Mauro Calanchina)

Lifestyle:

He makes his living from the production of glazed earthenware. The *cuerda* (unit measurement) of land he personally cultivates only produces enough to meet his family's consumption needs.

Mr. López Tumax states that all the potters of Totonicapán own only a few *cuerdas* of land.

He also affirms that his income is limited, which is why he cannot afford the tuition fees charged by the university for his son's education.

Other Information:

Mr. López Tumax mentions the names of the following potters working in Totonicapán: Josefina Chaclán, who makes glazed earthenware flower vases; Jorge Tacam, who also produces glazed earthenware; Pedro Ixcaquic, who specializes in painted ceramics, particularly in miniature; and Luis Andrés López Tumax, who works in glazed earthenware.

Mr. Federico López Tumax is a rural schoolteacher, graduated during the presidency of Jorge Ubico (who governed the country from 1930 to 1944), and he states that he has been dedicated to pottery for 25 years.

He assures that he greatly enjoys his trade and has no interest in changing it.

NOTE: This information was obtained directly by the author of this study on April 25, 1975.

2. Antonio Simeón Marto Pec

Age: 60 years old

Place of origin: Municipality of San Cristóbal Totonicapán

Relatives:

Spouse: Mercedes Chuc Silverio

Children: Santos Félix Pec Chuc (19 years old, shirt maker), Juan Alberto Pec Chuc (16 years old, potter).

Place of residence: Barrio Buena Vista, San Cristóbal Totonicapán.

Main occupation: Potter

Secondary occupation: He works the land, growing *milpa* (corn crops) on a piece of property he owns.

Tradition Lineage: He learned the craft of pottery directly from his parents. He says: "My parents used to do this work."

Raw materials and places to get them:

- Black clay (from a place called Coxón, San Cristóbal Totonicapán)
- Lead (from the stores of San Cristóbal Totonicapán)
- Sulfur (from Zunil, municipality of Quetzaltenango)
- *Tizate* or soft soil mixed with water (from San Francisco El Alto, municipality of Totonicapán)
- Pine firewood (from Chicabal, municipality of Huehuetenango)

Equipment:

- Grinding stone
- Hoe
- Clay mold (a circular template used as a base to begin shaping the pieces)
- Xilote (corn cob core) or cylindrical stick
- Tin thimble

Product: Greenish-brown glazed earthenware

Making process:

The clay is acquired in lumps.

Then it is left to dry.

After that, it is ground using a grinding stone.

Next, it is mixed with water and turned into a thick mud.

The mud is stirred with a hoe (*azadón*) and with the feet. Then it is kneaded and prepared into large and small “balls.”

Each “ball” is broken into pieces and turned into a flat disc or *tortilla*, which is placed on a board dusted with fine sand to prevent the clay from sticking.

The *tortilla* is kept moist during handling.

It is then placed on a clay mold (base or seat).

From this *tortilla*, the hand-modeled vessel is “built up.”

Using a *xilote* (the corn cob core) or a small cylindrical stick, the artisan continues shaping the vessel.

To smooth the piece, it is rubbed with a damp cloth. With a thimble made of tin that the potter places on their thumb, grooves are incised into the neck of the vessel, marking the final stage of modeling.

The pieces are left to dry in the shade.

When half-dried, handles (*orejas*) are added.

The pieces are then sun-dried.

The first firing is done with pinewood on a platform prepared with broken pottery shards as a bed. To prepare the glaze, lead is broken down in sulfur and ground using a grinding stone.

Tizate is added to the lead “so it rises, because it comes out very heavy.”

The lead is mixed with water.

Once the lead is prepared, which is called *betún*, is applied to the pieces “just by hand.”

After that, the pieces are *jateadas* (shaped, arranged) and fired again using a flame from split pinewood.

The fire is covered with dry pine so the flame doesn’t escape.

Product varieties:

- Everyday clay pots (ollas)
- Giant pots (for weddings and religious festivities)
- Pans (sartenes)
- Pitchers (jarros)

Work system: This is an individual activity. Each potter crafts the pieces from beginning to end within the family unit.

NOTE: During summer, the potter produces two *gruesas* (24 dozen) in fifteen days. In the rainy season, they produce one *gruesa* (12 dozen) in a month.

Raw material cost:

- Lead: Q 0.33 per pound
- Sulfur: Q 0.05 per pound
- Tizate: Q 0.03 per pound
- Firewood: Q 5.00 per *tarea* (load)

Product distribution:

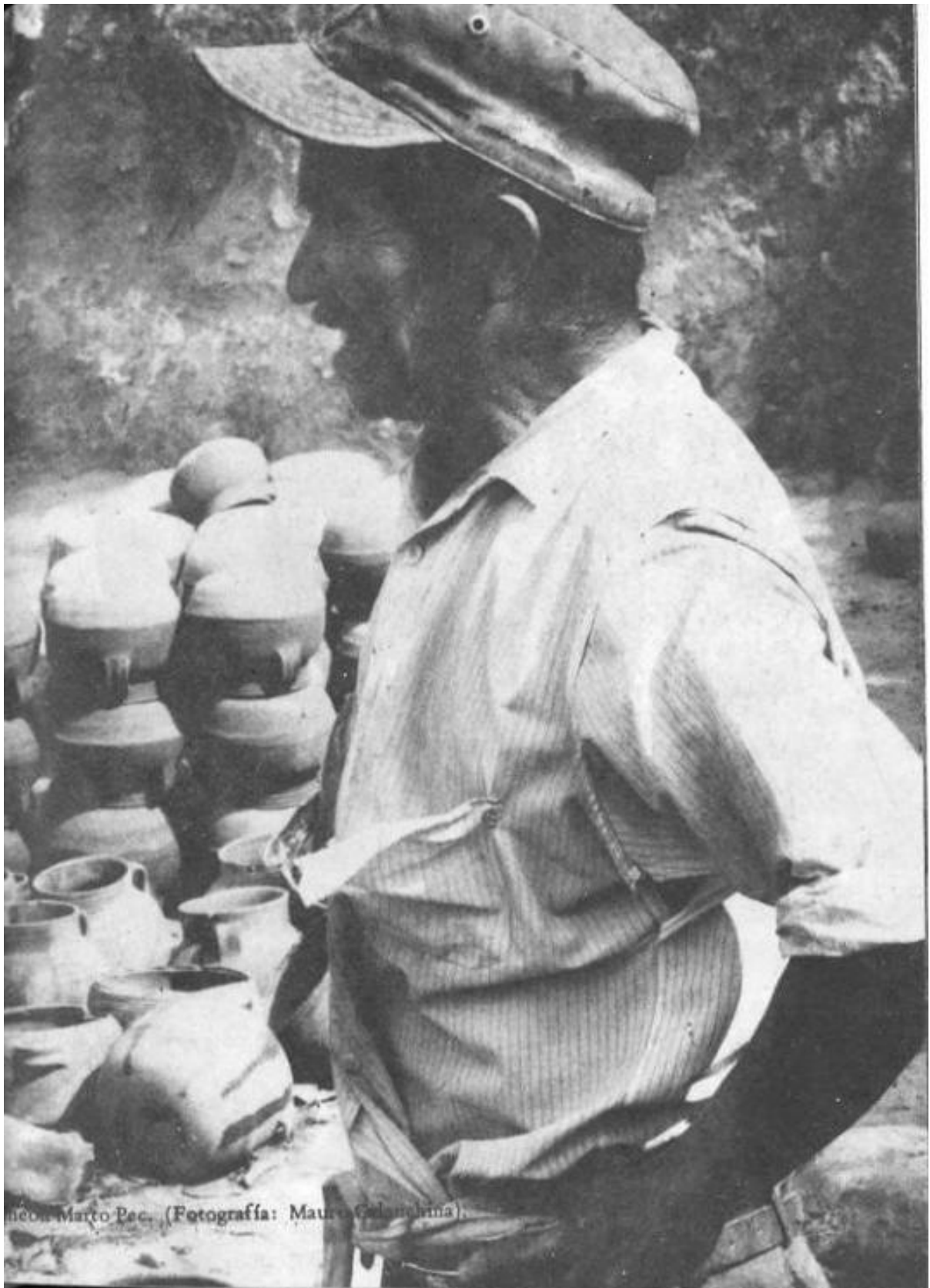
The pieces are sold to merchants.

Occasionally, the potter sells directly his pieces in the marketplace.

The pieces are sold by the dozen.

Each dozen is priced at Q 1.30.

Each pot costs Q 0.12 (due to rising material costs).



Simeón Marto Pec. (Photograph: Mauro Calanchina).



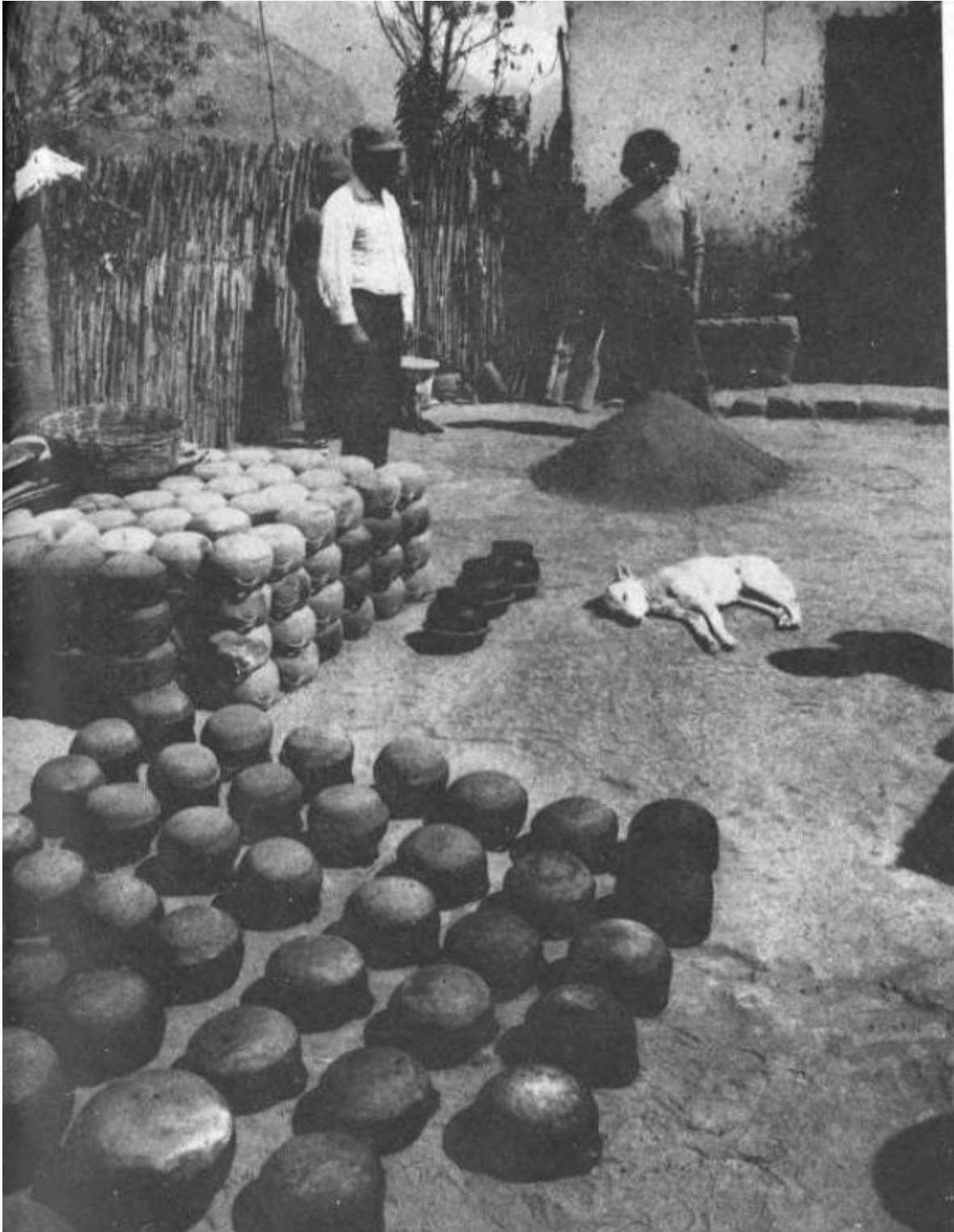
Simeón Marto Pec and its family unit. (Photograph: Mauro Calanchina).



Preparing the clay to make the “balls” in the workshop of Simeón Marto Pec. (Photograph: Mauro Calanchina).



Smoothing a piece in the workshop of Simeón Marto Pec.
(Photograph: Mauro Calanchina).



Some drying pieces in the sun on the workshop of Simeón Marto Pec.
(Photograph: Mauro Calanchina).



Pots, after being fired, in the workshop of Simeón Marto Pec.
(Photograph: Mauro Calanchina).

Lifestyle:

He lives primarily from ceramic production.

He plants and harvests *milpa* (traditional corn fields) on his small piece of land.

He keeps poultry and three Castilian rabbits, which he says are used for food.

Other information:

When asked about the places where pottery is produced in San Cristóbal Totonicapán, he lists the following communities:

- Pacanoc,
- Patachaj,
- Chucotón,
- Xetacabaj,
- La Ciénaga,
- Xecanchavox,
- Xexuc,
- Chutucuyub,
- Coxliquel.

Among the potters he knows, he mentions Esteban, Laura, and Basilia, without specifying surnames.

He asserts that all potters in these communities “do the same,” each in “their own style.”

NOTE: This information was obtained directly by the author of this study on April 26, 1975.

3. Pablo Francisco Gutiérrez

Age: 73 years old

Relatives:

Father: Antonio Teodoro Gutiérrez (Potter).

Spouse: Catarina García.

Children: He has one son who is attending university, “but he also works in this and enjoys it. He works on this after his classes in the *canton*”, and a daughter, who works as a teacher in Santo Tomás La Unión.

NOTE: He is also responsible for two orphans, Jesús and Juan José Gutiérrez, who are part of the household.

Place of residence: Barrio de Palín, in the municipality of Totonicapán (capital of the municipality with the same name).

Main occupation: Potter.

Secondary occupation: He has none. He says: “We have no land. We live from art.”

Tradition Lineage: He learned the craft directly from his father, who “worked in this for forty years, during the time they were persecuted by the military recruiters.” At that time, he says, young men were taken to the capital to serve in the *Guardia de Honor*, *Castillo de Matamoros*, *Fuerte de San José*, and *Cuartel Número 3*, now *Mercado Colón*.

His grandfather, he adds: was a weaver and made *manta* (cotton cloth).

Mr. Pablo Francisco Gutiérrez learned the pottery trade at age 12, “during Cabrera’s time” (referring to Manuel Estrada Cabrera, president of Guatemala from 1898 to 1920).

He teaches pottery to the orphans in his home, and they help him with daily tasks.

Raw materials and places to get them:

- White clay (from Chuiboy, *caserío* (a hamlet) in the municipality of Totonicapán).
- Lead.
- Firewood.
- Copper.

Equipment:

- Grinding stone
- Hoe
- Potter’s wheel
- Stone mill, also known as *tortuga* (used for grinding glazes)
- A small bamboo cane stick (or *borbal*)

Product: Glazed earthenware in green and brown colors.

Making process:

The clay is acquired in lumps.

It is ground on a grinding stone.

It is refined using a sieve made with metal mesh and a wooden beater.

It is then mixed with water to form *peyas* (balls of moist clay).

Hand modeling is used for *pitos* (clay whistles).

The *trastecitos* (small cooking sets) are made using a potter’s wheel.

The *pitón* (the hole through which the whistle is blown) is made using a small bamboo stick, when the clay is “neither too wet nor too dry.”

“For a small sound,” says Juan José Gutiérrez, “a small stick is used. And for a bigger sound, the hole is made purely by judgment.”

The pieces are dried in the shade.

In the case of whistles, the head is attached.

The pieces are then dried in the sun.

They are fired (or placed in *jagueta*) inside a brick kiln.

The lead is ground in a mill consisting of a circular basin and a wooden shaft turned by hand, which moves two large grinding stones known as “*tortugas*”.

The ground lead is strained through a cloth filter.

The filtered lead (or glaze) is stored in containers called “*campanas*”.

The pieces, held by hand, are dipped into the *campanas*, where they are coated with oxides of lead and copper, leaving part of the pieces unglazed.

The pieces are then fired a second time (a process referred to as the “*cargada*”).

With the second firing, the pieces become glazed.

Product varieties:

Large and small *pitos* shaped like birds or fish.

Small toy cooking sets.

He has been making giant *pitos* for about ten or fifteen years.

Work system:

In the case of *pitos*, the informant makes the bodies and his wife makes the heads.

In the case of the cooking sets, work is divided among several people, including the potter who works the potter’s wheel. Catarina García, his wife, helps him coat the pieces with the oxide mixture that becomes glaze.

Pablo Francisco Gutiérrez states that pottery is a masculine occupation. However, he notes, women sometimes help. For instance, in making *pitos* and toys. This happens, he adds, when women have no other work.

Product distribution:

The pieces are sold directly to customers and indirectly through the market.

A gruesa (12 dozen) of small *pitos* is priced at Q1.50.

A gruesa of large *pitos* is priced at Q3.00.

Lifestyle: Pablo Gutiérrez and his family depend exclusively on pottery for their livelihood.

Other information:

When asked his opinion about the *Centro Artesanal* (Handicrafts Center) established in the departmental capital of Totonicapán, Pablo Francisco Gutiérrez replies: “Those are government employees. There’s no reason for them to come teach us. The best work is made right here in Totonicapán.”

NOTE: This information was obtained directly by the author of this study on April 26, 1975.

4. Juana Antonia Cuc Cux

Place of origin: Paraje Camán, cantón Xecanchavox, San Cristóbal Totonicapán.

Relatives:

- Mother: Santiaga Cux widow of Cuc (Potter).
- Brother: Juan Cuc Cux (Potter).
- Spouse: Bernabé Ola (makes roof tiles and bricks).
- Daughter: Juana Ola (14 years old, potter).

Place of residence: Paraje Camán, cantón Xecanchavox, San Cristóbal Totonicapán.

Main occupation: Potter.

Secondary occupation: She cultivates land owned by the family. She says: “We have eight *cuerdas* of milpa.” (Cuerda is a traditional unit of land measurement; milpa refers to a plot of maize or mixed crops.)

Tradition Lineage: She learned the trade of pottery from Ana Sabaj, a native of the municipality of San Cristóbal Totonicapán. She adds: “She was a relative of my mother; I don’t think I’m related to her anymore.” Juana Antonia Cuc Cux has taught pottery to her daughter Juana Ola.

Raw materials and places to get them:

- Black clay (from Pacanac, a village in the municipality of San Cristóbal Totonicapán)
- Lead
- Sulfur
- Tizate (a white soil mixed with water)
- Pinewood (used as firewood)

Equipment:

- Grinding stone.
- Clay mold (a circular template used as a base to begin modeling the pieces)
- A piece of leather from a shoe

Product: Glazed earthenware in green color.

Making process:

The clay is acquired in lumps.

It is then ground on a grinding stone.

After that, it is moistened and turned into mud.

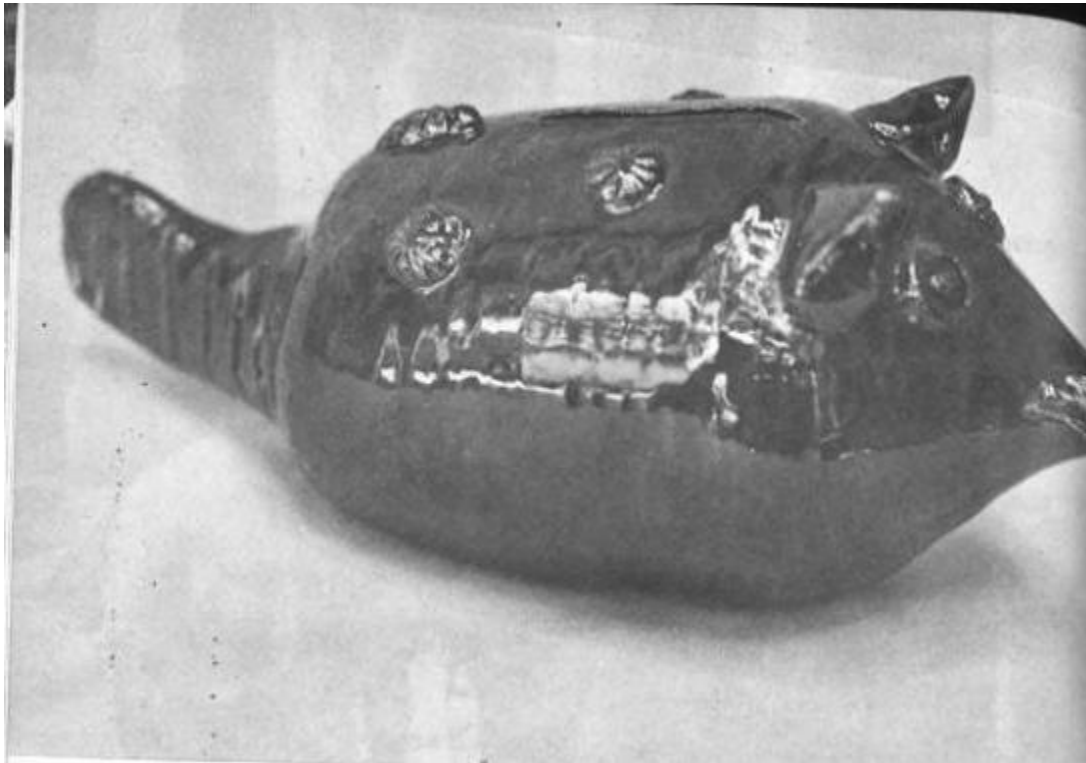
The mud is then kneaded into dough or clay.

Next, a flat round of clay (“tortilla”) is formed.

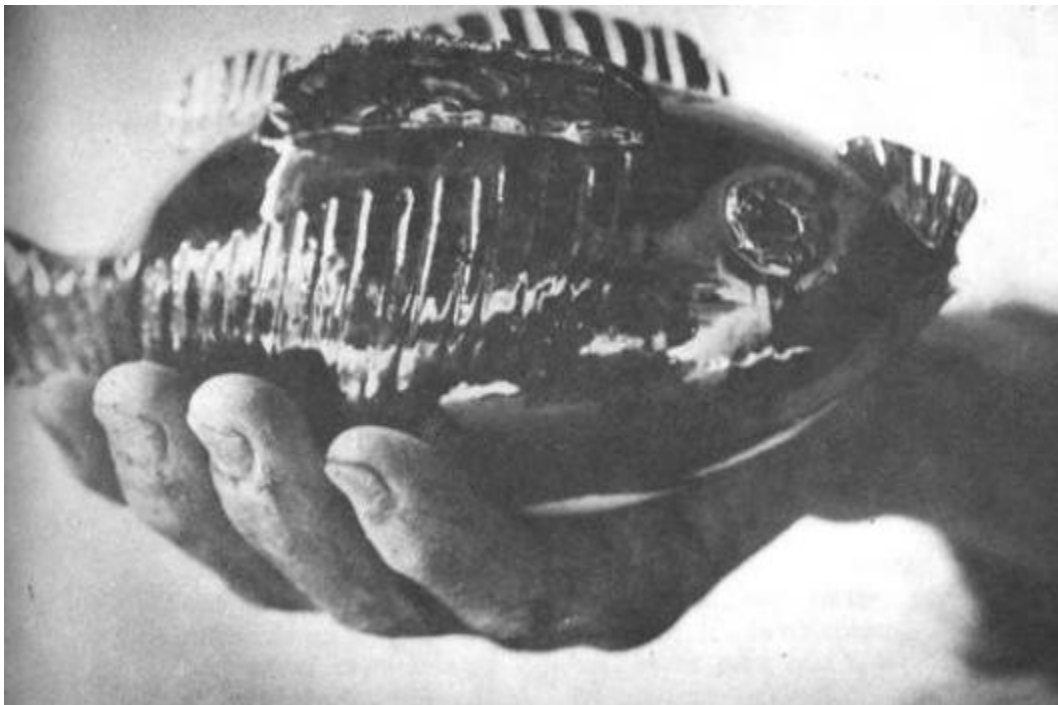
This tortilla is placed on a mold (a circular template that serves as a base or seat for shaping the pieces). The hand-modeling process begins from there.



Pablo Francisco Gutiérrez, his spouse Catarina García and his son Jesús.
(Photograph: Mauro Calanchina)



Fish. Glazed fish bank made by Pablo Francisco Gutiérrez.
(Photograph: Mauro Calanchina)



Fish bank. Author: Pablo Francisco Gutiérrez. (Photograph: Mauro Calanchina)



Large pito of glazed earthenware. Author: Pablo Francisco Gutiérrez.
(Photograph: Mauro Calanchina)

Decorations are made by pressing a small piece of leather onto the moist surface of the clay and attaching tiny fragments of clay shaped into “stars,” “little branches,” and curved lines that, according to the potters, “are copied from the mountains.”

The pieces are dried in the shade, and then again in the sun.

When six or seven dozen pieces have been accumulated, they are fired over a bed made of broken vessels and arranged rows of firewood.

The pieces must remain in the fire “until they turn red.”

After being removed from the fire, they are “painted” by bathing them in a mixture of lead, ground sulfur, and tizate (a white earth). This is done in a clay vessel called an apaste.

The pieces are then fired a second time so the glaze (“vidriado”) can form.

Product varieties:

- Large, medium, and small braziers
- Jugs
- *Pichachas* (vessels with holes used for rinsing *nixtamal* or corn dough)
- Toys (small pieces)
- Large, medium, and small cooking pots
- Each piece is made in twenty or thirty minutes.

Work system: The process is individual. Each woman potter creates the pieces from beginning to end.

Raw material cost:

Clay is bought by the vara (a traditional unit of length), at Q1.00 per vara.

Lead costs Q0.42 per pound and is bought at the Gutiérrez family store in San Cristóbal Totonicapán.

Product distribution:

The pieces are sold directly at the market in “Xela” (Xelajú or Quetzaltenango, the name of the departmental capital).

They are transported by pickup truck to a place called Cuatro Caminos, where the potter waits to pick them up and sells them directly in the market.

Product prices include:

- Large braziers Q5.00.
- Medium braziers Q1.00
- *Pichachas* Q2.00
- Jugs Q0.50.
- Toys (small pieces) Q0.10

Lifestyle: Juana Antonia Cuc Cux lives primarily from pottery, but she also cultivates eight *cuerdas* of *milpa* (cornfields).

Other information: Juana Ola, daughter of Juana Antonia Cuc Cux, makes clay toys. When asked about her work, she replies: “I only make toys. That is my trade.”

She reports that Anastasio Bulux, from Totonicapán, makes candlesticks shaped like goats, and that Andrea Elías Tiu, from Xecanchavox, makes duck-shaped jugs.

NOTE: This information was obtained directly by the author of this study on May 31, 1975.



Juana Ola. (Fotografía: Roberto Díaz Castillo)

Juana Ola. (Photograph: Roberto Díaz Castillo).



Santiago Cux, widow of Cuc, her daughter Juana Antonia Cuc Cux and (in the middle) her Granddaughter Juana Ola. (Photograph: Roberto Díaz Castillo).

5. Santiago Cux, widow of Cuc:

Place of residence: Paraje Camán, municipality of San Cristóbal Totonicapán.

Relatives:

- Father: Juan Cux (makes roof tiles).
- Daughter: Juana Antonia Cuc Cux (Potter)
- Son: Juan Cuc Cux (Potter)
- Granddaughter: Juana Ola (Potter).

Main occupation: Potter.

Tradition Lineage: She says: It was ancient people who taught us, and they have already passed away.” She taught the craft to her daughter, Juana Antonia Cuc Cux, who in turn taught it to her own daughter, Juana Ola.

Product: Greenish-brown glazed earthenware.

Making process:

The clay is acquired in lumps.

It is left out to dry.

Then it is ground (with a grinding stone).

It is mixed with water and made into mud.

It is kneaded and prepared into large and small *bolas* (balls).

Each bola is divided into pieces, and from each piece, a *tortilla* is made, which is placed on a large board or plank, whose surface is sprinkled with fine powder sand to prevent the clay from sticking. The tortilla is kept moist while being handled.

The tortilla is placed on a mold (a circular clay base used to begin shaping the pieces).

The pieces are set to dry in the shade.

When they are halfway dry, handles are added.

They are then dried in the sun.

They are fired for the first time with firewood, on a “table” made of broken ceramic shards.

To prepare the glaze, lead is dissolved in sulfur and ground on a grinding stone.

Tizate (a white soil) is then added to the lead.

It is all mixed with water.

Once the glaze is ready, it is applied to the pieces by hand.

The pieces are fired again so that they become glazed.

Product varieties:

- *Pichachas* (perforated clay vessels used for rinsing nixtamal or corn dough)
- *Librillas* — possibly, lebrillas? — (shallow bowls used for washing dishes)
- *Jarros* (Jars)
- *Patos* (jar-shaped vessels in the form of ducks; small, medium, and large; used only for the festivities of Santiago Apóstol, María de los Ángeles, and Cantel)
- *Ollas* (large, medium, and small cooking pots)

Work system:

It is an individual task.

It is carried out by both men and women.

Each potter makes the pieces from start to finish.

Adults produce the larger pieces.

Children make toys, which replicate the forms of larger pieces.

All work, including shaping, is done by hand.

NOTE: This information was obtained directly by the author of this study on May 31, 1975.

6. Josefina Chaclán

Age: 47 years old.

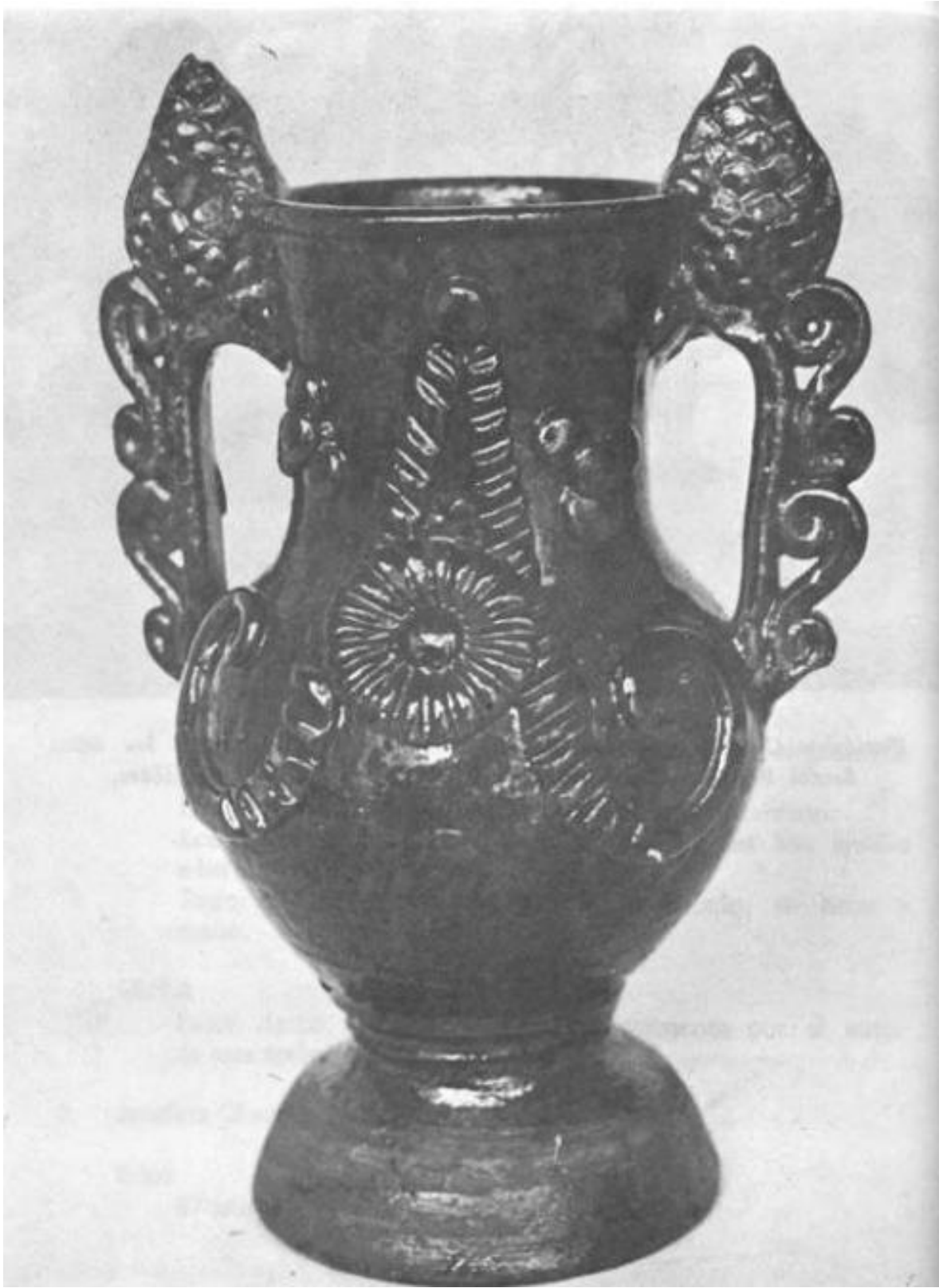
Relatives:

Spouse: Manuel R. Pacheco Pérez (48 years old, the one in charge of the potter's wheel).

Daughter: Floridalma Chaclán (15 years old).



Floridalma Chaclán, Francisco García, Manuel R. Pacheco Pérez and the kids Santos Rogelio Ordóñez, Alberto Isaías Pacheco and Trinidad Ordóñez.
(Photograph: Roberto Díaz Castillo).



Antique glazed flower vase. Totonicapán. (Photograph: Mauro Calanchina).



A glazed flower vase made in the workshop of Josefina Chaclán.
(Photograph: Mauro Calanchina).



Antique glazed flower vase. Totoncapán. (Photograph: Mauro Calanchina)-

NOTE: In addition to the previously mentioned individuals, the following people also form part of the working nucleus: Francisco García (worker), and the children Isidro Alfonso Solís (12 years old), Santos Rogelio Ordóñez (13 years old), Alberto Isaías Pacheco (11 years old, nephew of Manuel R. Pacheco), and Trinidad Ordóñez (11 years old).

Except for Isidro Alfonso Solís, who works all day, the other three named children work only half days because they attend school. All of them know how to read and write.

Place of residence: Municipality of Totonicapán (capital department of the same name).

Main occupation: Potter.

Secondary occupation: She does not have.

Tradition Lineage: She learned the craft of pottery from her in-laws.

According to her husband, Manuel R. Pacheco, “our parents and grandparents taught us.”

Raw materials and places to get them:

- Clay in lumps from the cantón of Chuculjuyup (municipality of Totonicapán).
- Copper oxide (brought by a man from Quetzaltenango).
- Lead oxide (purchased from local stores).
- Manganese (also brought by a man from Quetzaltenango).

Equipment:

- Large wooden table.
- Grinding stone.
- Sifter.
- Potter’s wheel.
- Wooden planks (for drying the pieces in the sun).
- Stone mill, also called “*tortugas*” (used for grinding glazes).

Product: Baroque-style glazed earthenware in green and brown colors.

Making process

NOTE: The style is, with minimal differences, the same as that of the potter Federico López Turnax.

Product varieties:

- Jugs (jarros).
- Vases (floreros).
- Braziers (Braseros).
- Candlesticks (candeleros).
- Incense burners (incensarios).

Work system: Mr. Manuel R. Pacheco Pérez is in charge of the activities carried out in the workshop, which follow a process that clearly reflects the division of labor.

NOTE: When asked about the plastic vases that imitate those he produces and are now common in the market, Mr. Pacheco Pérez replies: “The plastic ones serve a different use, and *barro* (made of clay) ones are more reliable.” He adds: “The plastic ones don’t hurt our business. We always have many orders. God willing, this craft will not die out. From time to time, a young one shows up and we teach them.”

For her part, in response to the same question, Josefina Chaclán states: “Plastic vases don’t have the same quality.”

Use of the products: Mr. Manuel R. Pacheco Pérez says that large vases are used for the final “*pedimento*” (the act of formally asking a woman in marriage). Mrs. Chaclán adds: “That’s how it’s done here, it’s the custom.”

Mr. Pacheco continues by explaining that candlesticks are used to hold candles offered to religious images, and that the *floreritos* (small vases) are made to decorate tables and headboards.

Products prices:

- Small jugs: Q 0.75 per dozen.
- Vases: Q 0.70 per pair.
- Braziers: Q 1.00 each.
- Small candlesticks: Q 0.70 per dozen.
- Large candlesticks: Q 0.30 each.
- Incense burners: Q 0.70 per dozen.

Product distribution: Mrs. Chaclán has a sales stall in the main market of the departmental capital of Totonicapán.

Lifestyle: Mrs. Josefina Chaclán and her family live solely from pottery.

Other information: When asked whether she enjoys her work, Josefina Chaclán responds affirmatively, stating: “I have given my life to it.” She does not allow photographs to be taken: “Maybe another time.”

NOTE: This information was obtained by the author of this study on September 11, 1976.

7. Juan Teodoro Batz

Age: 55 years old.

Relatives:

Spouse: Justa Grispina García (52 years old).

Children: Laureano Batz García (22 years old) and Braulio Nicolás Batz (32 years old).

Grandchildren: Justa Hermelinda Batz (7 years old) and Juan Francisco Batz (4 years old), both are children of Braulio Nicolás Batz and Justa del Tránsito Batz (3 years old), daughter of Laureano Batz García.



Juan Teodoro Batz and his relatives. (Photograph: Roberto Díaz Castillo).



Glazed flower vase, brown on the lower part and green on the upper part, acquired from Juan Teodoro Batz, who attributed it to his son Laureano. (Photograph: Mauro Calanchina).



Glazed candlestick, acquired from Juan Teodoro Batz, who attributed it to his son Laureano.
(Photograph: Mauro Calanchina).

NOTE: Mr. José Zunún (39 years old) is part of the working group.

Place of residence: Juchaneb, a hamlet in the municipality of Totonicapán.

Main occupation: Potter

Tradition Lineage: He learned the handicraft at home.

Product: Glazed earthenware.

Making process:

NOTE: His process is similar to that followed by the potter Juan Pablo Gutiérrez.

Product varieties: He makes *trastecitos* (small dishes used as toys), in green and brown colors.

NOTE: In his home there were two glazed candlesticks, the upper part green and the lower part brown. According to Teodoro Batz, they make them there. (He sold me the pair for Q 1.00).

When asked whether they made candlesticks shaped like goats, his son Laureano said he is the one who makes them. He immediately showed me one and sold it to me for Q 0.50.

As I did not see more two-toned candlesticks or goat-shaped ones, I asked why they were absent.

Both Teodoro and Laureano agreed that they only make them occasionally because they are costly.

As I was returning from Juchaneb, an Indigenous woman I had spoken to earlier that day in the municipal market of Totonicapán questioned me about the origin of the pieces I had just purchased from the Batz family home. Without hesitation, she assured me that the Batz family does not make that type of object and that what they told me was false.

Work system: Collective, organized through a division of tasks.

Product distribution: He sells his products to a woman at the *plaza* (town square, municipal market of Totonicapán), who is in charge of reselling them.

NOTE: This information was obtained directly by the author of this study on September 11, 1976.

8. Manuel Morales

NOTE: Potter from Chotacaj, a hamlet in the municipality of Totonicapán, whom the author of this study visited on September 11, 1976, but who was absent at the time. He makes *trastecitos* (small glazed earthenware dishes), in green and brown colors.

Totonicapán and the First Artisan Census

According to the First Artisan Census, conducted in 1978²³, the handicrafts produced in four municipalities of the department of Totonicapán, Momostenango, San Andrés Xecul, San Cristóbal Totonicapán, and Totonicapán (departmental capital), are as follows:

1. Textiles:
 - 1.1 Fabrics
 - 1.2 *Huipiles* (Indigenous clothing)
 - 1.3 Sacks and *ponchos* (Coarse wool blankets)
 - 1.4 Wool Blankets (chamarras)
2. Pine furniture
3. Leather goods
4. Candles
5. Fireworks (pirotecnia)
6. Brooms
7. Clay roof tiles
8. Paper flowers
9. Pottery²⁴

The information on pottery provided by the census is very limited, at least prior to final tabulation, as follows:

23 Anantonia Reyes Prado, Prado, Assistant Researcher at the Center for Folklore Studies of the University of San Carlos de Guatemala, was in charge of reviewing the results obtained in Totonicapán at the conclusion of this Census, and examined 985 forms, equivalent, approximately, to 20% of the total, which amounts to 5,050 forms. The author of this article is grateful to Anantonia Reyes Prado for her valuable collaboration.

24 In the census forms can literally read: “Clay cooking pots and *apastes*” (traditional earthenware containers).

Workshop:

Land where the workshop is located: The vast majority of artisans own the land on which their workshop is built. Few artisans rent, and even fewer reported that the land belongs to their parents.

Workshop ownership: Almost 90% of artisans are owners of their workshops. The remaining 10% corresponds to artisans whose workshops are family-owned.

The forms consulted do not report the existence of workshops that are cooperative or socially owned (e.g., by associations).

Type of workshops: In general terms, the workshop is family-based. In exceptional cases, it includes apprentices from outside the family.

Working time: The census forms collected data on the weekly, monthly, and annual time artisans dedicate to their respective trades. These data correspond to the period between June 1977 and May 1978.

Some artisans work four weeks per month because they depend primarily on their handicraft for a living. Others work three weeks, using one week for other activities. Finally, there are artisans who only work two weeks per month, dividing their time equally between pottery and other occupations.

Artisans who produce clay roof tiles dedicate only about twenty-four weeks per year to this work, since the rainy season in Guatemala, which lasts six months, prevents them from working more time in their handicraft.

Other activities:

The majority of artisans interrupt their work to attend to agricultural and commercial activities.

Women, who are primarily engaged in textile production, are also responsible for domestic duties.

In general, according to what the census forms reveal, nearly all artisans interrupt their work during religious or other types of celebrations.

Sources of income:

Potters who produce *ollas* (cooking pots) and *apastes* (storage vessels), like artisans who make wool blankets (chamarras), live off the income earned from their handcrafted work.

This differs from the situation of artisans involved in other trades, such as the production of clay roof tiles, candles, paper flowers, marimbas, leather goods, pine furniture, and toys, as these individuals also rely on income from complementary activities.

Product distribution:

As of now (prior to tabulation), the data gathered through the Census contains no references to the distribution of products in the field of pottery. However, it does record that wool blankets producers sell their goods directly to local consumers.

The census forms also indicate that the vast majority of artisans who sell their products outside their communities are weavers, carpenters, fireworks makers, marimba builders, and leatherworkers. Only a small number of artisans deliver their goods to those who supply them with raw materials.

From the forms reviewed, only twenty artisans, among the 985 cases examined, reported selling their products to intermediaries.

Obtaining Raw materials:

Potters, especially those from Xecanchavox, obtain their clay from their own land. Others, more numerous, purchase it from suppliers.

When potters work on commission for a *patrón* (patron/employer), it is the *patrón* who provides the raw materials.

Loans:

Of all the artisans registered in the examined census forms, only one, a carpenter by trade, has applied for and received a bank loan.

The remaining 984, including several potters, have not sought such loans due to the following reasons:

- a) Lack of knowledge of the required procedures;
- b) Desire to avoid debt;
- c) The conditions required to obtain credit;
- d) Lack of need for loans;
- e) Lack of interest in obtaining credit.

Artisan Participation in Cooperatives:

Among all the cases examined, only ten are affiliated with cooperative organizations. The cooperatives mentioned in the forms include: El Carmen, Movimiento Campesino Independiente, and the San Miguel Chuimequená Savings and Credit Cooperative.

The support artisans receive from these cooperatives is limited to basic consumer goods.

Exportation:

None of the artisans recorded in the census forms export their products.