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## (Aztec Astronomy) Astronomical Monument found in the road from the Village of Tlalmanalco to that of Amecameca in the estate of Señor Don Joseph Tepatolco

**Stock#:** 102311  
**Map Maker:** Shippard  
**Date:** 1834  
**Place:** London  
**Color:** Pen & Ink  
**Condition:** Good  
**Size:** 10 x 16 inches  
**Price:** SOLD



### Description:

#### *Aztec Astronomer and Observatory*

A most unusual and intriguing 1834 watercolor wash drawing by Captain William H. Shippard, depicting an Aztec monolith unearthed on the road between Amecameca and the village of Tlalmanalco, in the modern-day state of Mexico. Several writers assert that this stone served as an observatory for Aztec astronomers. This image was copied by Shippard from a lithograph plate by Agostino Aglio, which appeared in Dupaix's *Monuments of New Spain*.



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**(Aztec Astronomy) Astronomical Monument found in the road from the Village of Tlalmanalco to that of Amecameca in the estate of Señor Don Joseph Tepatolco**

Shippard has written a lengthy caption beneath the drawing in his distinctive hand:

*Plate (facsimile) from M. Dupaix's Monuments of New Spain, Astronomical Monument found in the road from the Village of Tlalmanalco to that of Amecameca in the estate of Señor Don Joseph Tepatolco.*

*The figure holds to his eyes a tube or optical instrument in front of the figure is engraved the likeness of a rabbit sitting as well as two parallel rows of Numerical signs. In addition to these are two signs connected with science.*

*Aglia's Mexican Antiquities vol. 6, page 441.*

*British Museum 25 July 1834*

The description from Dupaix adds further details about this unusual stone carving:

*Going from the town of Tlalmanalco to that of Mecamecan, at a distance of a league to the east of the latter and in the confines of the estate of Don José Tepatolco, is an isolated rock of granite stone artificially cut into a conical form with a series of six steps cut in the solid rock itself on the eastern side, the summit forming a platform or horizontal section suitable for the purpose of observing the stars at all points of the compass. It is, therefore, most evident that this ancient monument or observatory was employed solely for the astronomical observations, and it is further proved by various hieroglyphs cut in the south side of the cone; but the most interesting feature of this side is the figure of a man standing upright and in profile directing his gaze to the east with the arms raised, holding in the hands a tube or species of optical instrument. Beneath his feet is seen a carved frieze with six compartments or squares and other symbols of a celestial nature are engraved on their surfaces, evidently the product of observation and calculation. Some of them have connection with those found symmetrically arranged in circles on the ancient Mexican calendar.*

**Detailed Condition:**

Original ink and wash drawing. Lower right-hand edge of sheet rough, but image and text unaffected.