

YOEME PASCOLA MASKS

FROM THE TUCSON COMMUNITIES

A LOOK BACK

Thomas M. Kolaz



1. Pascola masks carved by Frank Martínez, Old Pascua, Tucson, Yoeme. Left: Coyote face, 2001. Cottonwood limb, acrylic paint, cow tail hair, shoelace. 7¹³/₁₆" long, 5⁵/₁₆" wide (19.8 cm x 13.2 cm). Cat. No. 2003-69-1. Middle: Owl face, early 1990s. Cottonwood limb, acrylic paint, horse tail hair, string. 7¹³/₁₆" long, 5¹/₂" wide (19.7 cm x 13.9 cm). Cat. No. 2003-1222-1. Right: *Chango* or ape face, early 1980s. Cottonwood limb, acrylic paint, cow tail hair, goat(?) fur, rhinestones, string. 7¹/₂" long, 5" wide (19 cm x 12.5 cm). Notice the fur attached to the mask's sides. Cat. No. 2003-1605-1.

2. Pascola dancing to drum and flute music, Fiesta de San Ignacio, Old Pascua, Tucson, 1955. Notice his mask and regalia, which are the same as regalia worn today. Cat. No. 43065. Photograph by George Iacono.

In 1985, I wrote an article for this magazine discussing the state of contemporary Yoeme (Yaqui) pascola mask carving in Tucson, Arizona (Kolaz 1985).¹ At that time, eleven carvers in the city's Yoeme communities were consistently making traditional and innovative pascola masks. In June 2006 Frank Martínez, one of the last traditional carvers of Yoeme masks in the Tucson area, passed away. In this article, I will discuss the reasons for the decline in the number of carvers and the future of Yoeme pascola mask carving.²

The homeland of the Yoemem (Yaquis) is located along the Río Yaqui in Sonora, Mexico. The Yoeme language is part of the larger Uto-Aztecan language family spoken by many groups in the western United States such as the Shoshone and by groups such as the Nahuatl as far south as central Mexico. Yoeme language and customs are most closely related to those of the Mayo (Yoreme), who occupy the Río Mayo and Río Fuerte regions of Sonora and Sinaloa.

The Yoemem who now live in Tucson are descendants of families who fled from their homeland in Mexico to avoid persecution and warfare during the late 1800s and early 1900s, as a result of the Mexican government's forcible attempts to occupy their fertile river valley. To avoid being killed or deported to Yucatán, the Yoemem dispersed across northwest Mexico and across the international border into Arizona.

There are approximately fifteen thousand Yoemem living in Arizona and between thirty and forty thousand living in Sonora. The majority of Arizona Yoemem live in Tucson-area communities, including Old Pascua, New Pascua (the tribal headquarters and official reservation), Barrio Libre (South Tucson) and Yoem Pueblo (Marana). Phoenix-area Yoemem live primarily in Guadalupe, as well as in small communities in Scottsdale and Chandler.³ The cities of Coolidge and Eloy also have small Yoeme communities.

YOEME MASKING

Pahko'ola (singular) or pahko'olam (plural) — more commonly called pascola or pascolas in English and Spanish — open each of the Yoeme ceremonies that occur throughout the year on various saint's days, anniversaries and, most familiar to non-Yoemem, during the Easter week.⁴ The masks worn by pascola dancers are one of the most distinguishing items seen at these Yoeme ceremonies.

According to most of the Yoeme consultants interviewed by Muriel Painter between 1940 and the 1970s, "A central theme of many legends about pascolas is that the first pascola was the son of the devil and that he was enticed to join the first fiesta, which was created by God (Jesus), Mary, or both" (1986:258). This raises the question of whether there were pascola dancers prior to the arrival of Spaniards and Catholicism. The devil, God, Jesus and Mary were introduced to the New World with the arrival of Jesuit missionaries, though it is probable

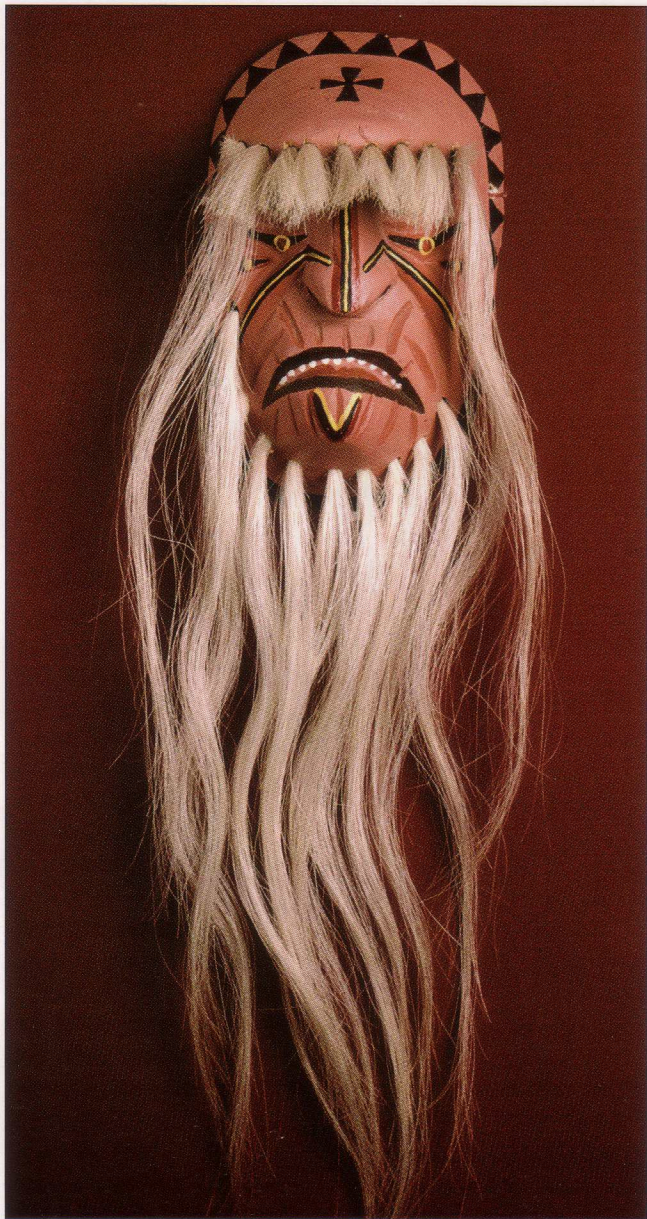


3. Pascola human face mask, Yoeme, 1932. Collected at Old Pascua, Tucson. Cottonwood, paint, horse tail hair, leather. 8 $\frac{5}{8}$ " long, 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ " wide (21.8 cm x 14.1 cm). Classic black, white and red colors with lines, dots, swirl and rabbit designs as well as forehead and chin crosses. Cat. No. 3293.

that pascolas or similar dancers were in place before the arrival of the Spaniards. The most plausible explanation is that several decades, if not centuries, of mixing Catholicism with Native religion formed the person today called a pascola.

Today pascolas are secular performers at all Yoeme ceremonies. They are not part of a religious society as are other ceremonial participants, though they are said to dance for Jesus and other Catholic saints. Their presence is mandatory at all Yoeme ceremonies and a *moro*, or manager, arranges for their participation and attends to their needs.

Pascolas dance in a designated ramada for most, if not all, of the ceremony. At certain ceremonies they



4. Pascola human face mask carved by Jorge García, Old Pascua, Tucson, Yoeme, 1980s. Cottonwood limb, acrylic paint, cow tail hair, nylon cord. 7½" long, 4¾" wide (19 cm x 12 cm). This style is called an "Apache" mask by most Tucson carvers. Notice the "war paint" on the nose, cheeks and chin. Private collection.

dance in the open plaza or in procession with others. They dance alternately to two styles of music throughout the night. Ceremonies usually end by noon the following day.

While pascolas dance to the music of the two-piece cane flute and drum musician (*tampaleo*), their masks are positioned over their faces. While they dance they move their heads up, down and side-to-side in a fast jerky motion. They also lightly hit a hand rattle (*sena'asom*) containing stacked metal disks into the palm of their opposing hand, which follows the rhythm of the *tampaleo*. However, when pascolas dance to the music provided

by harp and violin musicians (introduced European instruments), their masks are worn on the back or side of their heads. They lean forward with their arms dangling and their feet follow a rhythmic shuffling step that is accentuated by the strings of cocoon rattles (*tenevoim*) wrapped around their ankles and calves. In addition, for both dance styles, the pascolas wear wide leather belts (*koyolim*) around their waists with several chrome or brass bells suspended on twisted leather thongs. Around their necks are necklaces of strung glass beads (*hopo'orosim*), usually with several abalone shell crosses attached. The final touch to their accouterments are crepe-paper flowers, usually red, tied to a tuft of hair in the center of their heads (Fig. 2).

The small carved, wooden masks worn by the pascola dancers average about six inches wide by eight inches long. Cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*) is the preferred wood, especially cottonwood root, but desert willow, pine, palm frond (the base of the large palm leaves) or any other available or suitable wood can be used. The wood is not primed nor is gesso applied before the masks are painted. Traditionally, after the masks are carved, they are given a black basecoat, and then design elements are added in white and red paint. Rhinestones, cut abalone shell pieces, sequins, pieces of glazed mirror and glitter sometimes provide embellishment. The masks have beard hair, about twelve inches long, and short brow hair, about three inches long. Tucson carvers used primarily cow and horse tail hair, though goat fur or wig hair and twisted agave fiber have been employed as well. Head strap materials range from thin kite string, usually added to masks made for sale, to leather straps and shoelaces for masks made for dancing.

In general, mask designs include a forehead cross and sometimes a chin cross, triangular borders, and stylized animal and floral patterns. According to Yoeme teacher and scholar Felipe Molina, these traditional symbols "painted on a pahko'ola mask represent ancient traditional knowledge that goes back to about ten thousand years" (Molina 2005).⁵ Molina also states that the cross design symbolizes *Itom Achai Taa'a* or Our Father the Sun, and that the sun makes life possible. Triangles along the mask edge are *Taa Himsim* or Sun's Moustache, and they represent the sun flares or rays that are the life force from the sun. The triangles under the eye openings are *Oppuam* or Tears, and they represent tears and also rain that waters the crops. Animal symbols such as snakes, lizards and insects represent nature, which is central to Yoeme beliefs (Molina 2005).

1970s–1980s: FLORESCENCE IN SOUTHERN ARIZONA

Masks made for sale to an outside market are a relatively new phenomenon. One Yoeme carver writes about selling masks during the Depression to earn a few dollars (Savala 1980:80–81), but until about the 1960s, pascola masks were primarily carved for use at traditional Yoeme ceremonies (Fig. 3). James Griffith writes:

Over the years, Yaquis have discovered that Anglos will buy *pascola* masks. Since about 1930, masks have been produced specifically for sale to Anglos. These masks, made for the most part in Arizona, may have only one coat of paint, little or no incised detail, and very rough finishing on the back. They frequently lack the forehead cross. Finally, due to the high degree of communication between Arizona and Sonora Yaquis, many Sonoran *pascolas* will make masks and bring them up to the United States in the hopes of selling them. These masks are apparently offered first to Arizona Yaquis, and then to dealers or anyone else who will buy them. They are in no way different from other Yaqui *pascola* masks (1972:192).

The number of masks carved and sold to non-Yoemem from the 1930s to about the 1960s must have been low. The Arizona State Museum, University of Arizona, Tucson has only two Arizona *pascola* masks made around the 1930s; the other carved masks from Tucson in the museum's collection date to around the 1960s and later. Perhaps other Southwest museums or collections carry such vintage masks, but I have been unable to locate them.

By the 1970s the Indian art market experienced a tremendous growth and captured a large and diverse audience. Arts and crafts from all tribes — including, to some extent, Yoeme *pascola* masks — became collectors' items. Many Indian art stores, museum gift shops and souvenir stores began to carry the masks. By the early 1980s there were no fewer than twenty stores in the Tucson area with a fairly consistent supply of *pascola* masks for sale. Today, I am aware of fewer than ten shops that periodically carry an inventory of *pascola* masks.

Another force driving the carving florescence in the late 1970s was the opening of several museum exhibits devoted to the arts and crafts of northern Mexico. The Heard Museum in Phoenix and the Arizona State Museum had the most influence. The Heard's exhibit, *The Other Southwest: Indian Arts and Crafts of Northwestern Mexico*, ran from May 20 through August 27, 1977 and the Arizona State Museum exhibit *Los de la Sierra: The Tarahumara Indians of Chihuahua* opened in March 1979 and remained on display into the 1980s. A catalog, *The Material World of the Tarahumara*, accompanied the Arizona State Museum exhibit (Fontana 1979). Published in conjunction with the Heard Museum's exhibit, *The Other Southwest: Indian Arts and Crafts of Northwestern Mexico* (Fontana et al. 1977) opened the eyes of many United States collectors who had never thought of collecting material from Indian tribes in northern Mexico. Two of the authors of that book, Barney T. Burns and Edmond J. B. Faubert, were responsible for collecting and importing the majority of this new material to the United States, which included Yoeme and Mayo *pascola* masks. A new market was born, and the supply of traditional *pascola* masks seemed endless.

Pascola mask carvers were delighted to make masks to meet this new demand. Young carvers were learning the craft from established mask makers in the



5. *Pascola* human face mask carved by Gabriel García, Old Pascua, Tucson, Yoeme, 1981. Redwood, acrylic paint, cow tail hair, leather. 7 $\frac{3}{16}$ " long, 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ " wide (18.2 cm x 10.8 cm). It has the deeply carved designs and quality typical of masks carved by the friends of Frank Martínez in the 1980s. Notes on the catalog card read, "[García] believes that the use of colors other than black, white and red isn't traditional. Masks with nontraditional colors are sometimes used by young men learning to dance *pascola*. He was learning how to carve from Frank Martínez." Cat. No. 82-36-7.

Tucson communities and selling their work to local shops. Traditional mask forms — human and goat faces — and more experimental forms such as rooster, coyote and pig faces, were sold. The colors of traditional *pascola* masks — black, white and red — now expanded, and many colors formerly deemed nontraditional were included. Were these new face forms and colors a direct result of market demand for a wider variety of masks to sell to collectors, or did these new, young carvers come up with the new styles and colors on their own? It was probably a combination of both.

Some Yoemem were not impressed by or supportive of these new expressions. Many of the older carvers stuck to traditional forms and colors. By the late 1990s it



6. Pascola horse face mask carved by Frank Martínez, Old Pascua, Tucson, Yoeme, 2000. Cottonwood limb, acrylic paint, leather ears, leather. 7½" long, 5" wide (19 cm x 12.5 cm). This is a well-carved and painted mask depicting a horse with painted leather ears and painted bridle. Notice the black horse tail hair. Private collection.

was obvious that these new forms were popular and were becoming part of the masking tradition. Today, though some traditionalists may not like the forms that evolved in the 1980s and 1990s, these masks are being carved and worn by pascolas on both sides of the border.

1980s–1990s: TRADITION AND CHANGE

Almost thirty years ago the quality of the masks carved in the Tucson communities was consistently high. The same was true of masks carved by the Sonora

Yoemem. A large percentage of the masks sold in the Tucson area for the tourist trade in the 1980s could just as easily have been masks carved specifically for use by pascolas to wear at local Yoeme ceremonies (Kolaz 1985). At that time, the masks were carved out on the inside to fit over the pascolas' faces comfortably. The masks' exteriors were painted with appropriate designs and symbols, including a forehead cross, and the cow or horse tail tufts that made up the brows and beards were securely fastened to the mask with string. But as demand waned by the mid-1990s, so did quality. Many masks no longer fit over the face and would be considered wall hangings or plaques today. Masks became smaller. Choosing quality wood was not as much of a factor (wood filler began to be used to disguise cracks). Painting became sloppy and simplified. Crisp incised designs all but disappeared. Beard and brow hair tufts were glued into holes in the mask exterior instead of carefully tied in the interior of the mask. Hair color was almost always blond until the 1980s, but later any available color was used. Today it is quite common to see hair in black, brown, red and every color in between attached to masks made for sale or even being worn by pascola dancers at Tucson-area ceremonies. This was partly the result of the closing of two slaughterhouses from which carvers formerly obtained blond cow tails. The inferior products were a direct result of giving the buyers what they were willing to pay for — quickly made, largely nontraditional, cheap masks.

Carvers found work or other activities to fill the time they previously spent making masks. The fact that Arizona carvers could not compete on an economic level with their Sonora counterparts was essentially the beginning of the end of Arizona pascola mask carving. Sonora carvers were content with the prices they received for their masks but Arizona carvers were disappointed. A Sonora carver received up to four days' wages, by Mexican standards, for his mask if it sold in the United States, while an Arizona carver received less than one day's pay, using the United States minimum wage scale.

TODAY: CULTURAL LOSS

There are many reasons for the dramatic drop in the number of Yoeme mask carvers in southern Arizona today. They include a decline in market demand, the fact that carvers cannot realize a reasonable price for their work, the influx of less expensive masks carved by Sonora Yoemem, and illness and death among local carvers. Indian art stores that purchased Yoeme pascola masks in the 1980s have either closed or now only occasionally carry an inventory of these masks, and the masks they do stock are primarily made by Yoeme carvers from Sonora. The masks offered for sale by Sonora Yoemem are half or less of the price of those made by Tucson carvers. Most dealers and collectors look at price first and mask maker and origin second, if at all. Tucson carvers and would-be carvers no longer have

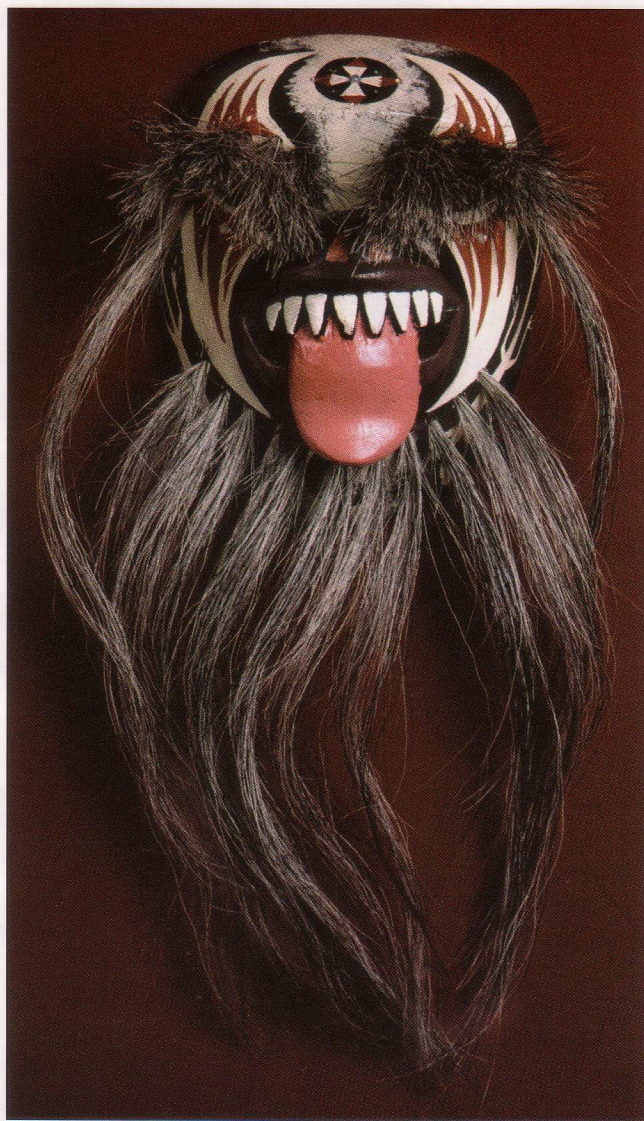
a financial incentive to carve masks. This has affected mask choices of Tucson pascola dancers as well.

Pascola dancers who live in the Tucson communities usually receive their dance masks from relatives in Sonora who carve or who know a carver. Some pascola dancers do not own a mask but instead use one provided by their *moro*. To my knowledge, not one pascola dancer in the Tucson communities today carves his own mask or wears a mask that was carved by any of the past Tucson carvers.

Today, many of the pascolas who participate in Tucson-area ceremonies, especially during Easter week, live in one of the Río Yaqui villages in Sonora. Most travel to the Tucson ceremonies year after year, and enjoy visiting Arizona relatives before and after the ceremonies. They often bring a few masks with them either to sell or give to Tucson pascolas. Tucson pascolas have little reason to support local mask carvers when masks are so easily available from Sonora relatives. The Sonora Yoemem continue to sell masks to a few Tucson stores and collectors. In addition, it is not unusual to see Tucson pascolas wearing masks made by Mayo Indians, especially by carver Francisco "Paco" Gamez from Masiaca (one of the Río Mayo area villages), Sonora. Gamez's masks appeared in Tucson in great quantities in the 1980s and 1990s. They were brought by Yoemem, as well as collectors and dealers, and found their way to Tucson pascolas and Indian art stores as well. Some shop owners would lend or trade Gamez-made masks to Tucson pascolas who liked the fit and look of the Mayo pascola masks. Sometimes the long brow hair used on Río Mayo pascola masks would be cut to conform to Yoeme mask standards; at other times the hair would be left long.

Border crossing for indigenous groups like the Yoemem was not a major issue until recently. We are all aware, from the media, of the problems regarding the United States/Mexico border. One effect on the Yoemem that is not reported in the local or national news is the extra steps — including an agreement between the Pascua Yaqui Tribal Council and the United States consulate in Nogales, Mexico — that have had to be taken to ensure safe passage for deer dancers, deer singers, pascola dancers and their accompanying musicians. Even with this agreement, "immigration and customs officials, searching for drugs at the border, have destroyed Yaqui ceremonial deer heads and masks" (Norrell 2006). A stuffed white tail deer head (*maso kova*) with red ribbons or embroidered red scarves tied around the antlers is worn on top of the head by the deer dancer (*maaso*) during most of the ceremonies in which the pascolas appear.

The reduction of mask carving in Tucson is not an economic tragedy since mask carving was never a full-time occupation for local carvers. The real tragedy is cultural, the probable death of a decades-old mask-making tradition among Arizona Yoemem. For most Yoemem, this may seem a subtle change or even a non-issue, since most ceremonial participants and observers do not



7. Pascola badger face mask carved by Frankie Martínez Jr., Old Pascua, Tucson, Yoeme, 2004. Cottonwood limb, acrylic paint, horse tail hair, shoelace. 7½" long, 6" wide (19 cm x 15 cm). The mask is well carved and painted, and shows the talent that put the carver in the same league as his father, Frank Martínez. This was the first badger face mask he carved. Notice the rhinestones glued on the forehead cross and tears below the eye openings. Private collection.

distinguish between Sonora- or Arizona-carved masks. But from an ethnographic and collecting standpoint, this shift is profound.

At an informal meeting between Arizona State Museum curators and Yoeme elders at the Pascua Neighborhood Center in spring 2005, curator Diane Dittmore reported that several Yoemem acknowledged the creativity of Frank Martínez's masks. The purpose of the meeting was to solicit input by Yoeme elders prior to the opening of the museum's exhibit *Masks of Mexico: Santos, Diablos y Más* (October 22, 2005 – July 2007), which was to include several Yoeme pascola masks. The elders' remarks were positive, and several said they, as well as others in the community, proudly



8. Pascola human face mask carved by Eddie Martínez, Old Pascua, Tucson, Yoeme, 2000. Cottonwood limb, acrylic paint, cow tail hair, yarn. 7" long, 6" wide (18 cm x 15 cm). It is simply carved and painted with one black front tooth. Eddie carved masks periodically at his father's house, and he was about twenty-four years old when he carved this mask. Private collection.

collected pascola masks made by Tucson carvers (Dittemore 2006). Even though Tucson pascola dancers were not supporting Tucson carvers, many community members were.

Anthropologists may see the reduction in mask carving as analogous to the fact that the Yoeme language is being spoken by fewer Tucson Yoemem. In 2002 Rogelio Valencia, a board member of the Yoeme Takia Foundation, was raising funds and awareness for a tribal museum and said, "Only about 100 people still speak the language and only 10 or 20 of those can read or write it" (Ioffe 2002:B3). Little by little, assimilation into mainstream culture is taking place. Collectors purchase masks by certain carvers in the same way that pottery collectors seek pots by specific makers. Mask collectors, whether they knew it or not, were helping to keep the Tucson Yoeme masking tradition alive by their purchases. Today, pascola mask

collectors are limited to collecting masks carved south of the border, with the exception of masks carved by Louis David Valenzuela and, as of August 2006, by Eddie Martínez, who began carving and selling masks again after a six-year hiatus.

There were about a dozen Tucson carvers selling masks twenty-some years ago and today there are two. The numbers are not huge but are still significant. The same mask collectors who were unknowingly supporting Tucson carvers twenty years ago are now unwittingly contributing to the craft's demise. Even though collectors still want pascola masks, they generally want to pay the amount they paid in years past.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SONORA AND ARIZONA MASKS

There are few differences between most Arizona- and Sonora-made pascola masks, though someone with a trained eye can often discern the differences. Wood is one diagnostic feature. Sonora cottonwood usually has a reddish hue, and Arizona cottonwood is usually white. Sonora carvers use a wider range of wood species not available to their Arizona relatives. Also, after viewing hundreds of masks from both sides of the border, one can begin to discern individual carving styles. Mask shapes, eye, nose and mouth shapes, design elements and color palette are indicators of who carved a mask and on which side of the border.

There are probably close to two dozen active carvers in Sonora (Burns 2006). Many of the masks they carve are being sold in the United States, but important information related to the carvers, their names, villages and ages is either lost, not collected or of no importance to the buyer. The information usually given is only whether the mask is Yoeme or Mayo in origin, and even that fact tends to get lost.

Mayo masks that were brought to the United States by Yoemem are often sold in Tucson Indian art stores as Yoeme pascola masks. It is easier to sell a mask without having to give the collector or shop owner a lesson in the difference between the two styles. Some Yoemem have said that they carved the Mayo masks they were selling and have even signed them. This has not necessarily been done as a deceptive practice but merely to make for a smooth and fast transaction.

THE ROLE OF INDIAN ART DEALERS

No meaningful discussion of pascola masks can take place without acknowledging the wholesale import business, Unknown Mexico, which is owned and operated by archaeologist and cultural historian Barney T. Burns, and his wife Mahina Drees. Burns has worked and traded with the Yoemem and Mayos since 1973, and cofounded, with Drees and two others, Native Seeds/SEARCH (www.nativeseeds.org), a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving and distributing traditional native seeds from the southwestern United States and northwestern Mexico. Their interest in native seeds and

traditional native crafts from northwest Mexico has taken them to villages, large and small, in Sonora, Sinaloa and Chihuahua. This interest also introduced them to many pascola mask carvers in Mexico. I believe it is fair to say they have imported more pascola masks to the United States over the last thirty years than all the other Mexican craft dealers combined.

As noted earlier, Burns coauthored *The Other Southwest*, and supplied ethnographic and craft items for most, if not all, of the museum exhibits in the United States focusing on northwest Mexico. The importance and influence Burns and Drees have had on establishing a market for traditional native Mexican arts and crafts cannot be stressed enough. They have made it possible for dozens of Yoeme and Mayo (as well as Tarahumara) families to continue to farm and gather wild food sources in a traditional manner by selling crafts for cash.

Burns believes there are more Sonora Yoeme mask carvers today than twenty years ago and that the overall carving quality is better (Burns 2006). This change is probably fueled by the recent economic support of a Sonoran developmental office to promote arts and crafts from northern Mexico.

Unknown Mexico always provides buyers with a mask maker's name, village and cultural affiliation, and sees that the carver's initials and the date of collection are written inside each mask.

Richard Rosenthal, owner of Morning Star Traders in Tucson, has been buying and selling Yoeme and Mayo pascola masks for almost thirty years. His gallery has been a destination for many Yoeme mask carvers from Tucson and Mexico. He usually makes it a practice to have carvers sign their masks. During the 1980s and 1990s, it was not unusual to see more than fifty pascola masks hanging in Rosenthal's gallery. He remembers frequent visits by a Tucson pascola who sold masks carved by his stepfather, Antonio Bacasewa, a prolific carver from Vicam Pueblo, Sonora (Rosenthal 2006). Rosenthal also bought dozens of masks from Tucson carver Frank Martínez.

Bahti Indian Arts in Tucson has been purchasing Yoeme pascola masks since the 1950s (Bahti 2006). Mark Bahti, who now owns the gallery, remembers his father Tom carrying masks by 1956 or 1957 and possibly as early as 1953. Mark noted that between 1972 and the 1980s, the majority of carvers from whom he purchased pascola masks were from the Río Yaqui villages of Vicam and Potam. He also remembers about a half-dozen local carvers bringing large quantities of masks to the shop during those years. There was a carver from the Marana community of Yoem Pueblo, whom he remembers as doing the finest and most delicately painted masks. This was the only carver he remembers who used gold paint on his masks. I frequented Bahti's gallery in the 1980s and remember there being a good supply of masks carved by Frank Martínez and his group of friends from Old Pascua.

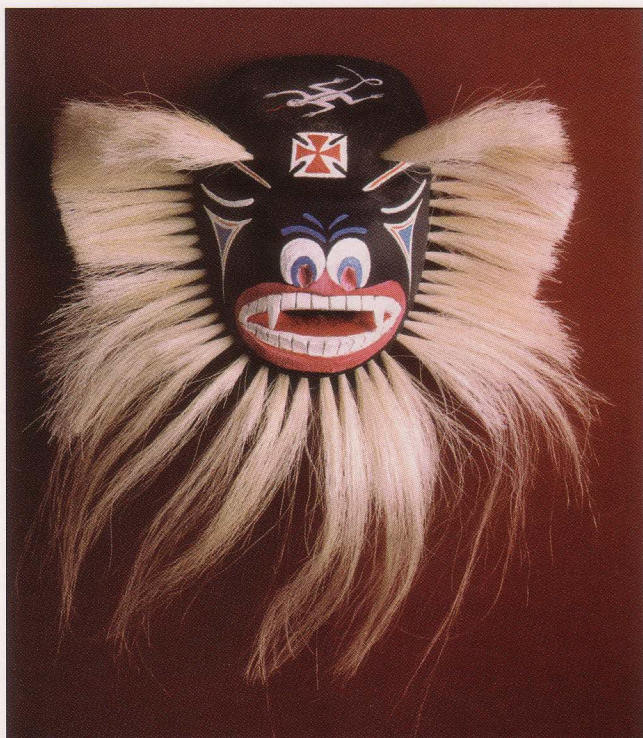


9. Pascola goat face mask carved by Albert Ríos, Old Pascua, Tucson, Yoeme, 1996. Cottonwood, acrylic paint, horse tail hair, leather. 7¼" long, 6" wide (18.5 cm x 15 cm). Notice the white basecoat and the black horse tail hair. Notes on the catalog card read, "According to Albert Ríos, the carver, this is a goat face mask carved from cottonwood that he gathered in Sierra Vista, Arizona. Horse tail hair is from a slaughterhouse in Tucson. He painted the mask with acrylic paints purchased from Tucson stores. Mr. Ríos...has been making pascola masks for about six months. He learned to make masks from Frank Martínez at Old Pascua." Cat. No. 96-50-3.

THE MARTÍNEZ FAMILY

To my knowledge, no institution has systematically collected and documented Yoeme pascola masks. There are a handful of private collectors who have done so, but their masks are inaccessible to the public and most researchers.

The Arizona State Museum has taken steps to correct this institutional oversight by documenting masks carved by Frank Martínez, arguably the best and most creative pascola mask carver from Tucson since the early 1980s. In 2002 curators Suzanne Griset and



10. Pascola canine mask carved by Louis David Valenzuela, Claypool, Arizona (now a Tucson resident), Yoeme, 1995. Cottonwood, acrylic paint, horse tail hair, leather. 6 $\frac{5}{8}$ " long, 5" wide (17.5 cm x 12.25 cm). Notice the fifty-one tufts of horse tail hair that circle the face. Cat. No. 95-131-1.

Diane Dittmore and I actively sought donations from private collectors of pascola masks carved by Martínez to augment the museum's permanent collection. We solicited masks carved by Martínez from the 1970s to the present (Fig. 1). To date, the museum has received six masks and intends to continue this collection and documentation project.

As a result, the museum mounted an exhibit of Frank Martínez's masks in February 2006, titled *Carving Culture: The Yoeme Masks of Frank Martínez*, which showed the range of Martínez's carving skill and how his work evolved over thirty years. Along with the museum's masks, masks from private collections were borrowed to add depth to the show. In total, twenty-five of Martínez's masks were displayed.

Also included in the show were two masks carved by Martínez's son, Frankie Martínez Jr. Frankie inherited his father's mask-carving skills and was considered to be the future of pascola mask carving in the Tucson communities. Sadly, Frankie was killed in an accident in October 2004 at the age of twenty-one. The exhibit was dedicated to his memory.

Even in the 1990s, when Tucson mask making began to decline in quality, every so often a great mask would appear among the mediocrity. More often than not, it was carved by Frank Martínez. When other carvers gave up, Martínez persevered. His masks reflected pride in his work and in the legacy of his teacher, his uncle Luís García.

Frank Martínez was born in 1958 at Old Pascua village, on the west side of Tucson (Fig. 13). He started carving by about the age of twelve. He was a pascola dancer and by the late 1970s he was dancing at most of the ceremonies at Old Pascua. At that time and into the 1980s his masks were well crafted but simple. He carved traditional-style masks but began experimenting with new forms such as roosters and javelinas. Instead of applying even coats of paint, he mixed and layered colors, which gave the masks more dimension and depth. And he used dozens of colors, which was a bold departure from the traditional blacks, whites and reds.

By the mid-1980s, due to illness, Martínez was no longer able to dance but his mask carving continued to develop and evolve. He took traditional human faces such as a *viejito* (old man) and added dried *carrizo* (*Arundo donax* L.) teeth and deeply carved and layered wrinkles that gave a new look to this old-style mask. During this time, it was not unusual for Martínez to carve more than fifty masks per year. His house became the epicenter for most, if not all, of the mask carvers from central Tucson. Several of the carvers working over the last twenty years were friends and students of Martínez's. Most of the carvers used his tools and paints, and Martínez would help them with carving and drawing designs on their masks, which they would then paint. Some men tried their hand at one mask and gave up, but others were able to carve and sell many masks (Fig. 4). It was an interesting and exciting time. On any given day, Martínez and his friends would be working on one or several masks in various stages of completeness. Once the paint was dry (and sometimes even before the paint was dry), the masks were in the hands of collectors (Fig. 5).

By the 1990s Martínez's masks showed a distinct style and the unmistakable mark of a great carver and mask painter. Martínez's only handicap was the lack of good wood, especially cottonwood root. Martínez used cottonwood limb and often had to work around knots, cracks and grain. Wood filler became a part of these masks. From the front one would never know Martínez had had a hard time carving the wood, but from the back the wood showed its toughness. Martínez carved a wide range of faces, including owls, roosters, birds, pigs, javelinas, horses, badgers, dogs, coyotes and the traditional human and goat faces. He often said that goat masks were his favorite.

Martínez had several collecting patrons over the years. At times, he was swayed by a demanding Indian market that encouraged unusual or nontraditional masks. Martínez did not disappoint his collecting public, as many of his animal masks demonstrate (Fig. 6).

In the early 2000s Martínez was carving approximately fifteen masks per year, with few exceptions all masterful carvings. He was skilled in carving well-proportioned, symmetrical and finely painted masks. Even after having eye surgery, Martínez continued to carve, though he could barely see the masks while

painting them. Martínez did not quit carving until the death of his son Frankie. He carved primarily to preserve his cultural traditions and secondarily to supplement his income. After Martínez's death in 2006, there were no traditional Yoeme carvers in the Tucson area who made masks with any regularity.

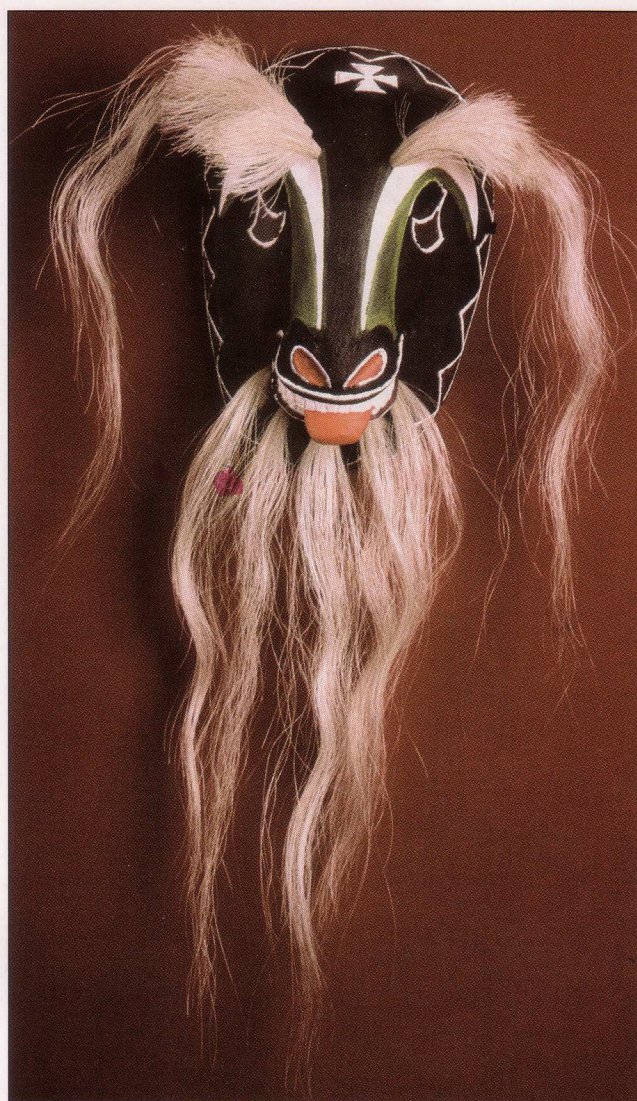
Martínez taught both of his sons, Frankie and Eddie, to carve at about the same age as he learned the craft. The boys watched their father work, then picked up small pieces of cottonwood or palm and carved and painted masks. Frankie was more attracted to mask carving. Early on it was easy to see his father's influence and style in his masks (Fig. 7). By his late teens, it was clear that Frankie was his father's heir apparent. It was difficult to tell the difference between the two carvers' masks at times, although Frankie always signed his masks while his father did not always do so. Also, Frankie purposely made his crosses different from his father's by adding a triangle to the end of each of the cross arms. By the time of his death, Frankie was well on his way to surpassing his father's talent.

When I spoke with Eddie about mask making in the summer of 2006, he said that he had not carved much since about 2000 (Fig. 8), but he indicated that he might start carving again (Martínez 2006). He also expressed a desire to teach his nephews how to carve pascola masks. Fortunately, in late August 2006, I received a phone call from Eddie saying he had two pascola masks for sale, a human face and his first coyote face. Eddie, it appears, is now part of the future of Tucson Yoeme pascola mask carving.

JULIAN MORILLO

Julian Morillo was perhaps the most enigmatic pascola mask carver from Tucson. Like Louis David Valenzuela (see below), he carved wood sculptures as well as masks. But Morillo was self-taught, very traditional and carved pascola masks for eight years before progressing to wood sculptures. His masks were carved primarily from cottonwood, but it was not uncommon for him to carve masks from exotic woods he collected from trimmed or fallen trees while working as a groundskeeper at the University of Arizona. He also carved several small sculptures from maple flooring removed from the old Bear Down Gym on campus. Helga Teiwes, the former photographer at the Arizona State Museum, persuaded a shy Morillo to carve a mask in the museum and allow her to photograph his carving process. The end result was a simple yet traditional goat mask (Fig. 11).

In 1995 Mark Rossi, owner of Rossi Gallery in Tucson, put on a one-man show of Morillo's work that included dozens of masks he had carved over a thirty-five-year period. Morillo was too ill to attend the opening night reception but delighted in hearing of the attendees' comments. He was a proud and humble man who used most of the proceeds from the sale of his masks and artwork to buy needed items for his family and relatives. Morillo passed away in 1995 at New Pascua.



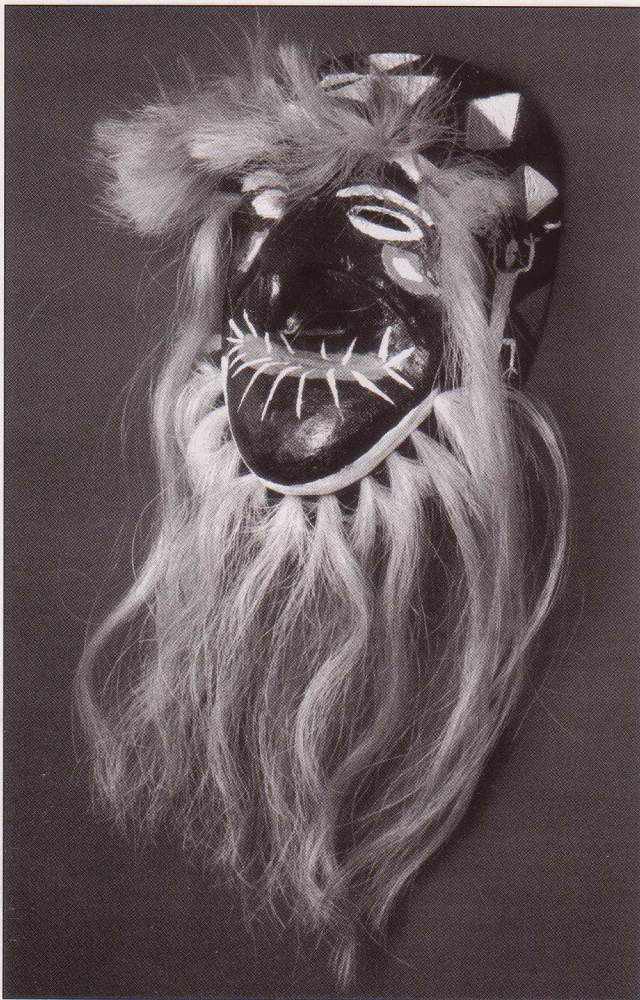
11. Pascola goat face mask carved by Julian Morillo, New Pascua, Tucson, Yoeme, 1981. Cottonwood limb, acrylic paint, cow tail hair, string. 7 $\frac{3}{8}$ " long, 5 $\frac{1}{8}$ " wide (18.6 cm x 13.2 cm). The interior is signed "JM." Cat. No. 82-6-3.

JOSÉ GUADALUPE FLORES

José Guadalupe Flores was a fairly prolific mask carver in the 1980s and most of the 1990s. He was a respected deer singer at local ceremonies and was a traditional pascola mask carver from Barrio Libre who later moved to New Pascua. He made many more human-faced masks than animal ones and almost always used the traditional colors — black backgrounds with white and red designs. However, he was not averse to adding little bits of color, especially to his butterflies and other insects and animal design elements (Fig. 12). Poor health took its toll, and by the late 1990s Flores was no longer able to carve. He passed away in the early 2000s.

ALBERT RÍOS

In February 1998 Albert Ríos and a couple of other part-time carvers from Old Pascua joined Frank and Frankie Martínez at the annual Southwest Indian Art Fair at the



12. Pascola *viejito* (old man) face mask carved by José Guadalupe Flores, Barrio Libre (later moved to New Pascua), Tucson, Yoeme, 1980. Cottonwood, acrylic paint, cow tail hair, string. 7¼" long, 5⅝" wide (19.7 cm x 13.5 cm). Flores made primarily human, goat and coyote faces. His human faces were often *viejitos*, which Flores depicted by carving the mouth with no teeth and the face with carved or painted wrinkles. His designs were almost always incised as they are on this mask. Flores used the traditional black, white and red colors, but this mask has a brown basecoat. Lizards or butterflies were usually painted on the sides. In the 1970s and early 1980s, Flores gave his masks to a young man from Barrio Libre to sell for him. It was not unusual for the young man to sign his name inside Flores's masks and tell the buyer that he was the carver. Cat. No. 82-36-3.

Arizona State Museum. Ríos and the other carvers were friends and students of Martínez's and spent numerous hours honing their carving skills under his ramada. The group brought a few masks for sale, and they demonstrated mask carving and painting. Once their mask supply sold out, the group took names and telephone numbers of people who wanted to order masks. Yet not long after the fair only Frank and Frankie continued to carve. The other Old Pascua carvers went on to other endeavors; in October 1998, Ríos died (Fig. 9).

LOUIS DAVID VALENZUELA

The only other Yoeme carver to participate in the museum's annual art fair is Louis David Valenzuela, who

attended in 1998, 2003 and 2006. In each of these years, Valenzuela brought several masks along with his sculptures and usually sold out. In January and February 2003, the museum's gift shop featured a one-man exhibition and sale of Valenzuela's artwork that included pascola masks (Fig. 10). Valenzuela is the only other Yoeme from the Tucson area who continues to carve pascola masks. His masks reflect an art background that includes study at the Chicago Art Institute, with a non-Yoeme mentor, Arturo Montoya, and with Jesús Acuña, a Yoeme mask carver from New Pascua. His formal art training, combined with the informal apprenticeship with Acuña, is what differentiates Valenzuela from the other mask carvers in the Tucson communities. Even though Valenzuela continues to carve pascola masks, he is better known as a painter and wood sculptor. Valenzuela purposely does not carve out the back of his masks to fit over the face because he does not want pascolas to wear his masks and then sell them to collectors (Valenzuela 2006).⁶ He was taught that masks worn in ceremonies are not to be sold, so most of his masks have a traditional front but flat back. Many collectors have interpreted this as a sign that Valenzuela does not know how to carve traditional masks. According to a recent article in a Tucson magazine, Valenzuela now works out of his studio where he continues to paint and sculpt Yoeme-themed pieces as well as to carve masks (Mussari 2006:104–105). Valenzuela has even begun to offer his work on a large auction web site.

These are a few of the memorable carvers from the Tucson Yoeme communities over the last twenty or so years. Their masks will continue to surface, and with luck they will be signed. Perhaps some of these masks will find their way into the hands of Tucson pascolas as well.

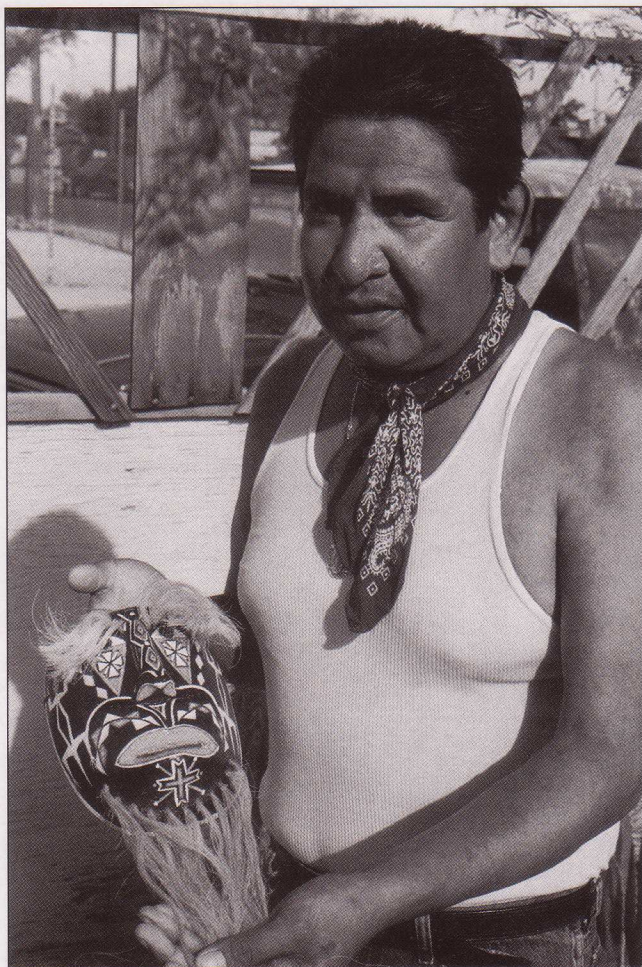
THE FUTURE

The hundred-year-old Tucson Yoeme tradition of mask carving has slowed down quite a bit since the 1980s and 1990s, but it is not the end of mask use in Tucson Yoeme communities. The loss of the mask-carving tradition in Tucson may be felt more keenly by non-Yoeme mask collectors than by some of the Yoemem. Pascola masks will always be available for Tucson pascola dancers and for the collectors of pascola masks. Where the masks are carved, as it turns out, is not a major concern among the Yoemem. With Louis David Valenzuela and Eddie Martínez carving again, it may just be a matter of time before other young Yoeme men bring the mask-carving tradition back to Tucson. Yet, if it does not happen, Yoeme ceremonies will continue as they always have over the last hundred years, but without the benefit of locally carved pascola masks.

FOOTNOTES

¹ The 1985 article gave a brief history of the Yoemem, described carving and decorating methods employed by Tucson pascola mask carvers and described the role of the pascola dancer at Tucson ceremonies. The three most common mask face types — human, coyote/dog and goat — were described and illustrated.

Louis David Valenzuela
'07'



13. Frank Martínez, Yoeme pascola mask carver, Old Pascua village, holding a recently carved mask from cottonwood limb, July 1999. Martínez said that some of the designs on the masks were taken from patterns on bandanas like the one he is wearing around his neck. Photograph by the author.

² This article reflects one non-Yoeme's view of the changes in Yoeme pascola masks carved for sale or use, as observed in the Tucson Yoeme communities over the last twenty-seven years. There may be other mask carvers in Tucson who carve for relatives and friends but who do not sell their work. I am unaware of such carvers, though I hope they exist.

³ I know of five pascola mask carvers in the Phoenix area today. With the exception of Merced Maldonado from Guadalupe, they carve very few masks each year, perhaps only one or two (Maldonado 2006).

⁴ "The pahko'ola – Pascola dancer means 'Old Man of the Ceremony.' The term comes from two words; pahko – ceremony and o'ola – an affectionate term for old man. The pahko'ola has many roles. He is first of all, the historian of the Yoemem, the Yaqui people. He keeps the history of the people alive through the legends, myths and sermons, and jokes. He is the host of the Pahko, and is an entertainer, with his jokes, stories and antics" (Valenzuela 2005).

⁵ Yoeme pascola masks are not considered sacred objects or objects of cultural patrimony as described by the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (NAGPRA). Even if they did fall under one of the NAGPRA categories, the masks made and used in Mexico would not be subject to United States law. Most public pascola mask collections consist of masks documented as having been collected in Mexico.

A misconception about pascola masks is that these masks are burned at the conclusion of the Easter ceremonies. People

who perpetuate this misinformation are likely thinking of chapayeka masks — full helmet, hide masks that are indeed burned on Holy Saturday. There are a few Yoemem who state that older pascola masks are burned or buried by their owners. But if they are burned, it is not done on Holy Saturday with the chapayeka masks (Valenzuela 2006). I have been unable to find reference to this practice in ethnographic literature.

⁶ In my 1985 article in this magazine I touched on the subject of collectors buying masks worn by pascolas in ceremonies (Kolaz 1985:45). I stated that while not all Yoemem approved of such sales, there was not a taboo against doing so since the masks are owned by the pascola and not the tribe. I have continued to bring up this subject when speaking with pascolas over the last twenty-seven years, and their position on the matter remains the same. Still, a small percentage of traditionalists, elders and pascolas do not believe these items should be sold (identities to remain anonymous). An elder and a carver in his forties have said that used pascola masks should be either burned or buried with their owner. The younger man said that when a pascola dances he receives a blessing for himself and his family. If he sells his mask, the blessing is taken away.

Another pascola dancer and mask carver said that the selling of masks and regalia is an individual decision. Some pascolas will never sell their masks and others see no problem with the practice. He also said that his respected elders told him that pascolas are like cocoons and snakes, that it is good to shed your skin (i.e., get a new mask and regalia) from time to time to renew yourself, especially as you gain more experience as a pascola dancer and you progress to higher levels of understanding and skill. He added that one elder told him that the mask can serve a dual purpose — to bring a blessing to the community during the ceremonies and to provide needed money for the pascola to pay his bills. In a sense, the mask provided two blessings: one for the community and one for the pascola and his family.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bahti, Mark
2006 Personal communication.
- Burns, Barney T.
2006 Personal communication.
- Dittemore, Diane
2006 Personal communication.
- Fontana, Bernard L.
1979 *The Material World of the Tarahumara*. Arizona State Museum, University of Arizona, Tucson.
- Fontana, Bernard L., Edmond J. B. Faubert and Barney T. Burns
1977 *The Other Southwest: Indian Arts and Crafts of Northwestern Mexico*. Heard Museum, Phoenix, Arizona.
- Griffith, James S.
1972 Cahitan Pascola Masks. *Kiva*, 37(4):185–198.
- Ioffe, Karina
2002 Putting the Past in Perspective. *Arizona Daily Star*, September 28:B3.
- Kolaz, Thomas M.
1985 Yaqui Pascola Masks from the Tucson Area. *American Indian Art Magazine*, 11(1):38–45.
- Maldonado, Merced
2006 Personal communication.
- Martínez, Eddie
2006 Personal communication.
- Molina, Felipe S.
2005 *Yoeme Pahko'ola Mask, Yaqui Icons and Imagery*. Pascua Yaqui Tribe. www.pascuayaqui-nsn.gov.
- Mussari, Mark
2006 Creative Spirits. *Tucson Guide*, Spring:104–105.
- Norrell, Brenda
2006 Indigenous Caught in Web of Border Policies. *Indian Country Today*, April 21. www.indiancountry.com/content.cfm?id=1096412864.

Yoeme Pascola Masks continued on page 106