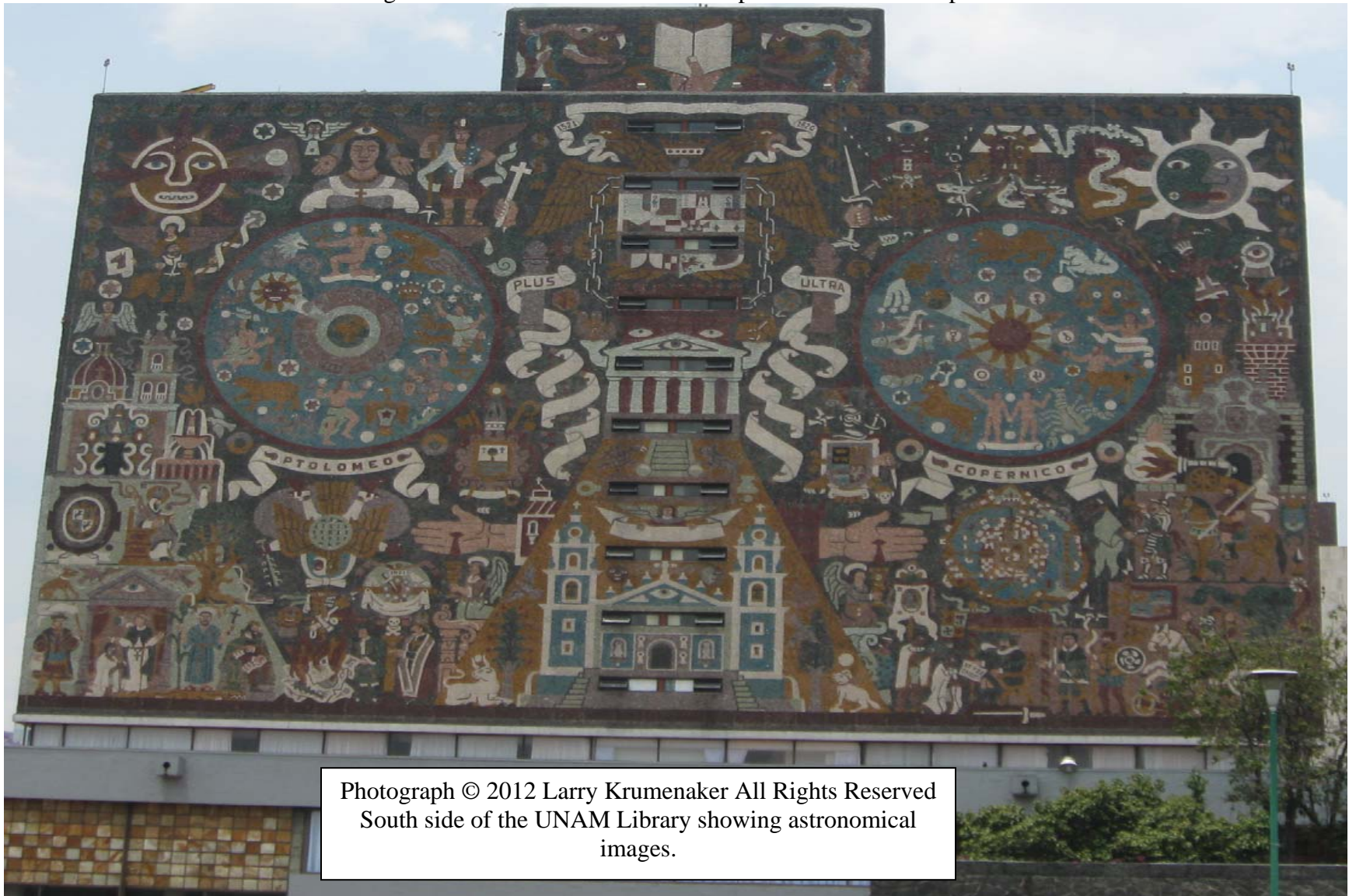


Photographs of the astronomical Images on the National Autonomous University of Mexico's library building.
Photographs taken April 2012 by Dr. Larry Krumeraker, © Larry Krumeraker
Appeared in the Summer 2012 Issue of *The Classroom Astronomer Magazine*, pp. 22-23. South side image in magazine was split,
removing some of the center artwork. This photo shows the complete side.



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South side of the UNAM Library showing astronomical
images.

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East side of the UNAM Library showing astronomical
images.

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Relevant Article Text:

The Universe on A Library's Walls

We all know that we expect a universe within a good library's walls...but a universe *on* a library's walls?

An unexpected and surprisingly delightful part of my visit to the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) was UNAM's library. What appears to be one massive graffiti-covered brown behemoth from the highway is actually a masterwork of Mexican artwork. The murals were created by the artist Juan O'Gorman in 1950, a huge mosaic of tiles of 150 colors that hide the brickwork underneath. In 2007 it became a UNESCO World Heritage site. All four sides are covered but the two that are more astronomical or scientific are the broad South side and the narrow East side.

Below is the South side, enlarged (with a center area cut out). It depicts the Ptolemaic and Copernican theories of the solar system, along with Sun images, zodiac constellations, and historical persons along with, I'm guessing, comparable points from Mexican history, from Mayans to the Conquest. Notice that on the Ptolemaic circle, the planets are depicted as stars but on the Copernican circle they are disks with planetary symbols. The total story represents the contradiction of conquest by spirit versus by evil.

On the East side of the building is a more modern view of Mexican history and science. Representing progress in science and culture, as seen here, there's a large symbol of an atom, and inside its various orbits are symbols of other sciences—biology has a fetus, there's an image of Galileo's poorly-seen-in-his-telescope Saturn. Upper left and right are Sun images, an eclipse by the Moon and a more modern, perhaps Hydrogen-alpha, view with prominences. At lower left is apparently a set of rooftops with Sun-facing (solar?) panels. The detail is intricate and bears magnification and deep examination!

Educationally, this should be useful as a bridge to, and source of pride for, your Hispanic students. It also is a neat idea for adapting to American views of science and history together, si?