

CODEX TLAXCALA: NEW INSIGHTS AND NEW QUESTIONS

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Codex Tlaxcala, also known as the “Glasgow Manuscript”,¹ comprises an anonymous copyist’s transcription of Diego Muñoz Camargo’s alphabetical text, *Descripción de la ciudad y provincia de Tlaxcala* (1580-1585), together with a corpus of 156 pen and ink drawings to which the same copyist added a series of explanatory glosses in Spanish alongside others in Nahuatl; the latter correspond to a hand which is neither Camargo’s (Brotherston & Gallegos 1990: 120-122) nor the copyist’s. Prepared on European paper, the manuscript is understood to have been assembled and bound in Madrid between 1584 and 1585 where Camargo, official interpreter of the 1583-1585 Tlaxcalan embassy to the Spanish Court, signed it (f. 1v) and delivered it personally to Philip II (Acuña 1981: 9-12, 1984: 13-14). Although written as a response to the 1577 *Relaciones geográficas* questionnaire, the prime objective of this and other Tlaxcalan histories destined for Spain in the sixteenth century was to emphasise the role of Tlaxcala’s rulers and warriors in the Spanish conquest of Mexico and thereby secure exemptions from tribute, together with other royal favours not usually accorded to native polities in New Spain.²

First published by Acuña in facsimile (1981) and in edited version in the *Relaciones geográficas* series (1984), the relationship between the alphabetical *Descripción* and Camargo’s later *Historia de Tlaxcala* (ca. 1592-1595) is now well-established, some passages being shared almost word for word. The parallels are such that the much-worked (but today fragmented) manuscript of the *Historia* may have been the original “draft” of the *Descripción* (Acuña 1981: 29, 1984: 17).³ In addition,

¹ *Codex Tlaxcala* is housed at the Hunterian Library, University of Glasgow, Scotland (Ms. Hunter 242 [U.3.15]). I wish to thank the library staff, especially David Weston, Keeper of Special Collections, for allowing me direct access to this manuscript and for their kind attention and assistance during and after my visit in September 2000. I am grateful also to the Hunterian Library for permission to publish the photographs included in this paper.

² See Gibson (1967: 158-167).

³ See also Vázquez Chamorro (1986: 22) on the missing sections of the *Historia*.

80 of the 156 drawings following on from the *Descripción* are very close in content and composition to the panels which make up the earlier pictographic text known as *Lienzo de Tlaxcala* (ca.1550-1564);⁴ they also appear in the same order. Within this group of Tlaxcalan manuscripts, and although more heavily influenced by European artistic conventions than the *Lienzo*, the *Codex's* drawings cannot, then, be seen as "illustrations" but rather a greatly extended pictographic history of Tlaxcalan participation in the conquest and the early process of colonisation which followed.⁵

Although the size and complexity of the manuscript must demand considerably more work than afforded to date, some of its salient aspects in respect of the *Lienzo* and related documentation have been the focus of several cogent studies.⁶ This paper seeks to add to these studies by addressing other areas of the *Codex* which have received little or no attention: the architectural plan of Tizatlan on f. 244r (Acuña 1984; plate 16),⁷ which sheds new light on the pre- and postconquest development of the site; this and two further architectural plans (ff. 244r-245v; 16-18) which together offer insights into the dating of some of the pictographic material; the process of preparation of the *Codex* as a whole and the identity of those who assisted Camargo in its production; and, in respect of both preparation and participation, the changes made to the pictographic history as recorded in the cognate panels in the *Lienzo*. While, in places, the arguments which follow might

⁴ Space here does not permit commentary on the complex history surrounding the *Lienzo* and its copies but see, among others, Chavero ([1892] 1979) who reproduced in full the Cahuantzi version (which I use here), and Martínez Marín (1983, 1989). Given the representation of Viceroy Luis de Velasco I (1550-1564) on the title panel of the *Lienzo*, its preparation is usually dated to this period, although most agree that it corresponds to the early years of the vice-regency (Gibson 1967: 247, 252; Glass & Robertson 1975: 214; Martínez Marín 1983: 150; Martínez 1990: 156).

⁵ Here I am not asserting that the cognate *Codex* pictographs were copied from one of the copies of the *Lienzo*, but the similarities in content and composition that obtain must indicate the existence of a very closely related source. It is significant, for example, that what must be an original error copied to the Cahuantzi version of the *Lienzo* (Chavero 11) was repeated in the cognate panel of the *Codex* (f. 257r; 38), as if taken from the same source. The glosses in both refer to Cortés in conversation with Moctezuma and his cortege at Tenochtitlan but in fact it is Tlaxcalan rulers and nobility who are depicted, identified by their distinctive twisted headbands; in both cases, Moctezuma is relegated to the roof of his palace. I suspect that the panels actually describe Tlaxcalan briefings on the Mexica capital and its ruler prior to the initial advance. See, for example, Chapters LXXVIII-LXXIX of Díaz's account (Díaz del Castillo 1994: 134-138).

⁶ For a full history of the *Codex* and related commentary, see Acuña (1981: 9-40, 1984: 13-22); Martínez Marín (1989); Brotherston & Gallegos (1990); Martínez (1990); Brotherston (1995: 41-44).

⁷ Hereafter, plate numbers corresponding to Acuña's 1984 edition are given after the folio number on the manuscript.

appear conjectural, the main aim of this essay is to show that at an internal level *Codex Tlaxcala* does raise a number of questions which demand we look at it in a rather different historical light.

Folio 244r and Tizatlan

As published by Acuña, f. 244r showed only the layout of the palace of Xicotencatl, ruler of Tizatlan at the time of the Spanish conquest, this being where Cortés and his army were received and lodged by the Tlaxcalan confederacy prior to their first advance on Aztec Tenochtitlan. It was also here that the same rulers were supposedly baptised into the Christian faith.⁸ Fully extended (Fig. 1), the folio also includes a layout of the atrium of the sixteenth-century open chapel of San Esteban Tizatlan and, together with other architectural elements, a stylised representation of the chapel itself.

The first formal excavations at Tizatlan took place in 1926 and 1927 in an effort to deter local inhabitants from digging for the rumoured buried treasure of Xicotencatl and, in the process, destroying the few prehispanic ruins still remaining. The two celebrated polychrome altars and flanking columns, together with a flight of steps, were uncovered at the northwest side of the large platform on which the prehispanic ceremonial centre of Tizatlan had been constructed (Fig. 2: A, B).⁹ These structures belong to the earliest (*ca.* 1100 A.D.) of two stages of the development of the centre (García Cook 1991: 106) and would not have been visible or in use at the time of the conquest. In 1934, Benalí Salas extended excavations to the perimeter of the platform where he found steps and balustrades corresponding to the south-east and southwest accesses to the site; the balustrade of the eastern

⁸ Gibson, who was unaware of the existence of the *Codex*, observed that the legend which tells of the baptism of Tlaxcala's rulers during the first twenty days of Cortés's stay at Tizatlan appeared in the late sixteenth century (Gibson 1967: 30). This argument is echoed well in the *Lienzo* for (and despite Gibson's insistence to the contrary) it shows only the rulers being blessed with a communion wafer (Chavero 1979, plate 8). Neither Cortés's nor Díaz's accounts mention their baptism; Díaz states that mass was said in the presence of the rulers the morning following the arrival (Díaz del Castillo 1994: 131). Camargo, however, states that the baptism took place where the first cross was raised, shortly after the Spaniards' arrival (*Descripción*, ff. 22v, 196r). The pictographic section of the *Codex* narrates two baptisms, one by Juan Díaz, the cleric who accompanied Cortés's expedition (f. 254v, plate 33), and the other by a Franciscan friar (f. 240r, plate 9), which may well have taken place at Ocotelulco where the mission first established itself after 1524. The former is almost identical in composition and detail to the "blessing" panel in the *Lienzo*, but the communion wafer has been replaced by a small pitcher of holy water.

⁹ See the 1927 reports of Concepción Fuentes, and Noguera.

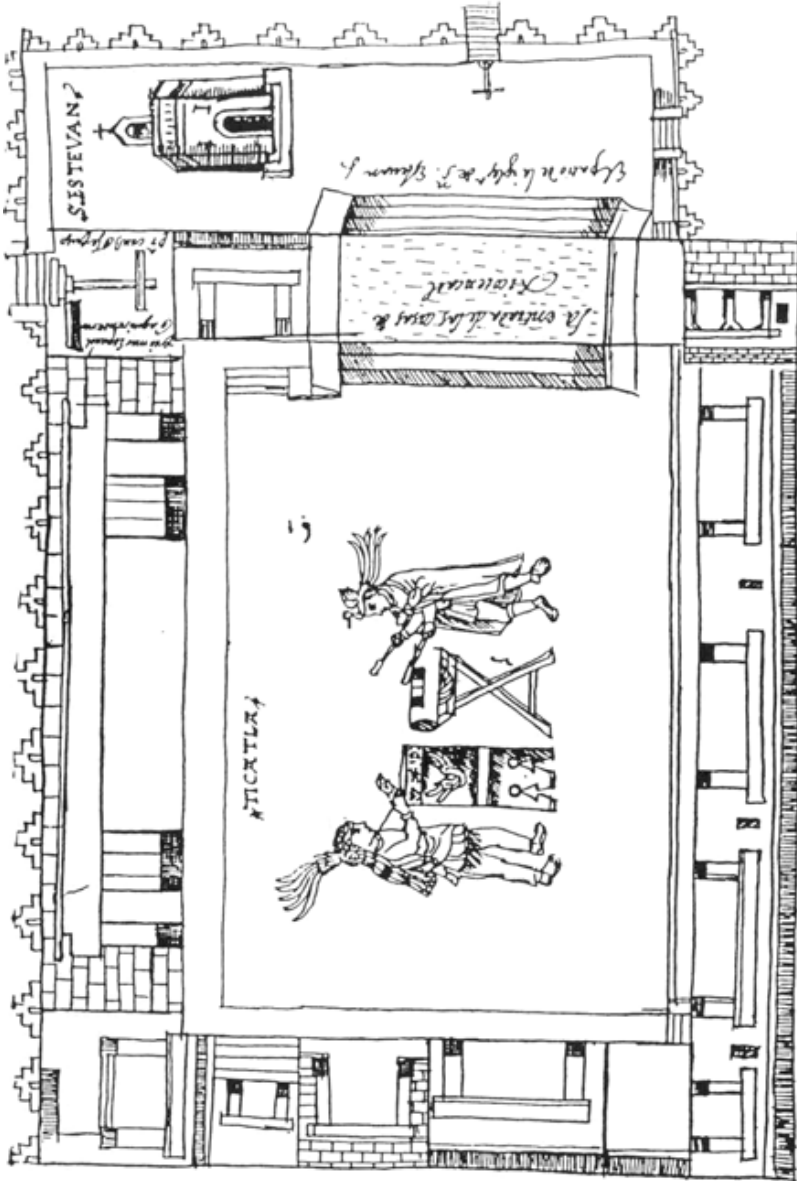


Fig. 1. *Codex Tlaxcala*, f. 244r: The palace of Xicotencatl and atrium of San Esteban Tizatlan (photo courtesy of Glasgow University Library)

*El templo de las casas de Xicotencatl y de San Esteban
en Tlaxcala, donde se hizo un templo de San Esteban
en el año de 1519*

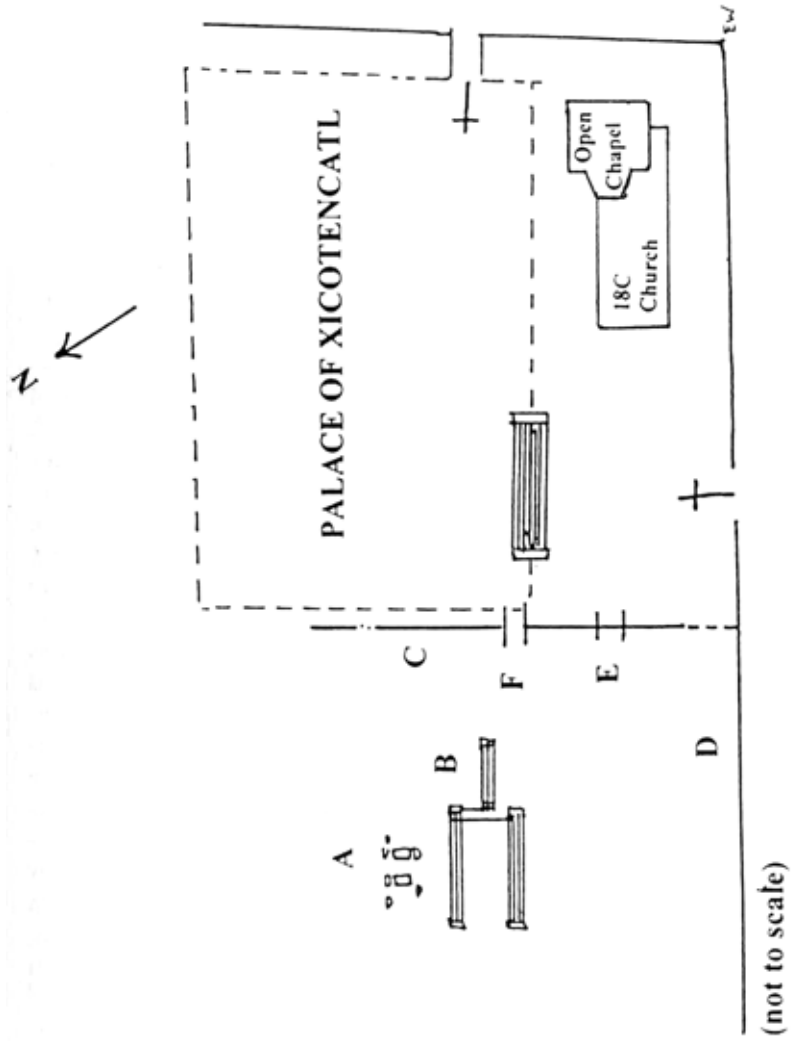


Fig. 2. Plan of the hilltop site of Tizatlan, Tlaxcala showing the site of the palace of Xicotencatl in relation to the Franciscan establishment (adapted from García Cook, 1991, fig. 46)

entrance was hidden beneath a stone cross mounted on a pedestal, both of which were demolished during the works (Salas 1996). Marked with wooden crosses on the *Codex's* plan of the site, these entrances are confirmed as the original points of access to the platform, the southwestern example once opening to a wide prehispanic road (García Cook 1991: 101).

Further excavations have taken place at Tizatlan since that time (*ibid.*: 92-93) but, as far as I am aware, none have focused specifically on locating the site of the palace of Xicotencatl (second period of occupation). This is possibly due to a general understanding that the sixteenth-century open chapel of San Esteban and the eighteenth-century church annexed to its southwest side were built over the prehispanic structure's foundations, an assumption made by twentieth-century historians on the basis of early reports (Toussaint 1996: 121; Moedano Koer 1996: 185).¹⁰ Confirmation of the superimposition may well have come during the later excavations when the remains of sixteenth-century walls (Fig. 2: C, D), believed to be those of the original atrium (García Cook 1991: 92-93, fig. 46) were unearthed, pointing to the Franciscan establishment having occupied the greater part of the eastern side of the prehispanic platform. Camargo's description of Tizatlan and the glosses on the plan clearly refer to the chapel and the palace as being coexistent and contiguous in his day but these were only to be published after 1980. By then, it seems, the fate of the palace had already been sealed.

The plan explains that the north side of the Franciscan atrium was originally annexed to the facade of Xicotencatl's palace which looked out to the southwest, the other three sides being composed of free-standing walls, parts of which were possibly the original structures enclosing the prehispanic royal compound. The great entrance to the palace was aligned directly with the main southerly access to the ceremonial site, and depicted in the plan almost exactly as Camargo described it, '...one ascends eight steps...and descends the same number to the courtyard [of the palace]. In the middle there is a levelled area or terraplein...' (*Descripción*, f. 24v).¹¹ In addition, '...before entering this courtyard of Xicotencatl there is another levelled courtyard...which serves as the cemetery and atrium of the church...' (*Descripción*, f. 25r).¹²

¹⁰ Torquemada (1977: 116), for example, stated that the chapel was built over the great hall of the palace.

¹¹ '...se sube por ocho escalones...y baxan por otros tantos al patio. Hace en medio un descanso o mesa de terrapleno...'

¹² '...antes de entrar en este patio de Xicotencatl está otro patio llano...que sirue de cimenterio y patio de la igles[ia]...'

The layout of the plan is also accurate in terms of orientation for where Camargo notes that the back of the palace lay to the north, the open chapel is shown as opening in a westerly direction. Folio 244r of *Codex Tlaxcala* thus not only confirms Camargo's description of the palace site, but shows that the structure itself occupied the better part of the northeastern sector of the prehispanic platform, an area now given over to a small park whose pathways lead visitors to the open chapel and the polychromed altars. This being the case, when the palace was finally demolished, or fell into ruins, the original atrium was extended northwards, its west-side entrance blocked in, and a new access opened roughly at the southwest corner of the palace's groundplan (Fig. 2: E, F). Noticeably, the later section of walls would also appear to follow the trajectory of the west side of the palace.

That the palace of Xicotencatl remained intact until at least 1580—the year in which it is assumed Camargo began to write the *Descripción*—is not unusual. The dwellings of native nobility were often respected by the new political power, especially if they were willing to cooperate, or had offered valuable service; these structures would also have been viewed as “secular” in nature and, therefore, of no threat to the colonial religious purpose. The Franciscan decision to establish the mission first at Ocotelulco and, shortly afterwards, at nearby Cuitlixco before moving permanently to the monastic complex in the valley below (Gibson 1967: 44-45) probably also furthered the life of the palace at Tizatlan, as did the fact that the village itself saw very little expansion in the sixteenth century (*Descripción*, f. 25r); the structure was not, therefore, used as a source of building material.¹³ Temples, pyramid platforms, or sacred sites dedicated to the deities of old were not accorded the same respect, however; being systematically demolished and replaced initially with a wooden cross. A religious edifice usually followed, a process which we may call “topping”, or the Christian occupation of pagan space. One chapter of the *Codex's* pictographic history narrates the process of conversion at Tlaxcala in some detail, to include a panel describing how the first Franciscans preached

¹³ I have no information on the source of the stones used to construct the extended atrium walls, but it would not be entirely speculative to state that, in part or in whole, they were drawn from the prehispanic palace. The remains of the palace may also have been used for private dwellings in and around Tizatlan from the seventeenth century onwards. Alfonso Caso observed that the north corner of the open chapel had been repaired with prehispanic bricks and one of its arches blocked off with them. This probably took place in the eighteenth century when the later church was annexed (Caso 1996: 69). The bricks may have been drawn from the same source for the plan depicts an ashlar design on sections of the palace. Whatever the case, little or nothing of the structure appears to have been left when the twentieth-century park was laid out.

to the nobles of the four houses of the Tlaxcalan confederacy (f. 238v; 6). The gloss in Nahuatl nevertheless clarifies that the graphic “houses” represent ‘the stone houses of the idols’ (Acuña 1984, glossary), that is, the temples of old. McAndrew refers to a mid-seventeenth-century report from Gil González Dávila which stated that the chapel of San Esteban was constructed in [*sic*, McAndrew], or on the site of, the prehispanic temple (McAndrew 1965: 438). It seems probable, then, that the open chapel at Tizatlan was eventually built where a temple or oratory still stood within the royal compound when the missionary body arrived. This may well have been the same structure which Cortés ordered the Tlaxcalans to empty of their idols and limewash over so that a cross and an image of the Virgin Mary be placed therein. It was here that the daughters of the native rulers were baptised (Díaz del Castillo 1994: 133).

The arrival of Cortés at Tizatlan and the erection of a celebrated first cross is included in several sixteenth- and seventeenth-century accounts, although all differ slightly in detail. Camargo acknowledges that the cross was erected in the open air (‘...when they saw this cloud descend over the cross...’ (*Descripción*, f. 22v),¹⁴ stood near to the site of the tomb of the first Spaniard to die at Tlaxcala, and that this was where ‘...the valiant Hernán Cortés was received by the rulers and nobles of Tlaxcala and they made their peaces. Here there is a room of singular size...’ (*ibid*).¹⁵ That is, by implication, the cross was also close to the great hall of the palace. Although there are problems with Camargo’s description which I will return to shortly, his observations concur with the glosses alongside the black rectangle (the tomb) and the cross at the top edge of the plan, respectively ‘*primer español q. aquí se entervo*’ (first Spaniard buried here) and ‘*pr^a cruz q. se puso*’ (first cross raised here), to the immediate north of which lies the great hall of the palace.¹⁶ Following a, now lost, history of the conquest written in 1548 by the Tlaxcalan historian, Thadeo de Niza, and considered to be ‘the

¹⁴ ‘...y quando esta nube vieron baxar sobre la cruz...’. The erection of this first cross appears to have coincided with some sort of celestial phenomena over Tlaxcala, giving rise to legends surrounding its miraculous appearance, fleeing demons, and panicking (native) priests (Mendieta 1997, I: 474-475). Neither the *Lienzo* nor the pictographic section of the *Codex* make reference to this, although the latter (f. 251v, plate 28) shows a flash of lightning descending from a ball of fire over the message sent by Cortés to the Tlaxcalan rulers. A gloss identifies this as the Holy Spirit.

¹⁵ ‘...el valeroso Her[nan]do Cortes fue recibido de los principales y señores de Tuxcala [*sic*] y se dieron de paz. Aquí está una sala de extraña grandeza ...’

¹⁶ Mazihcatzin’s eighteenth-century description of the *Lienzo de Tlaxcala* states that the Spaniard, named Esteban, was killed in a scuffle with a Tlaxcalan warrior (Mazihcatzin 1993: 66). The decision to dedicate the Franciscan establishment to Saint Steven was possibly connected to this event.

most accurate and true of any written', Ixtlilxóchitl also wrote that Cortés was received at the entrance to the palace, and it was 'at this very spot' that a cross was raised (Alva Ixtlilxóchitl 1985: 212, 214). Both the *Lienzo* (Chavero 1979; panel 5) and the *Codex* (f. 254r; 32) show the first meeting as taking place out of doors with a large (wooden-*Codex*) cross at the centre.¹⁷ Together, then, these accounts appear to confirm that the Spaniards ascended the platform by way of its eastern access and from there were led into the great hall of the palace.

Mendieta's end-of-century chronicle also states that the first cross was raised at the spot where Cortés was received by his future allies but, echoing Díaz's account, then adds (in parenthesis) that it was placed in the temple of the native deity Camaxtle (Mendieta 1997, I: 474-475). The confusion here may well arise from the fact that two crosses were raised during the Spaniards' sojourn at Tizatlan. In the same passage, Díaz does in fact refer back to a second cross (which he neglects to mention earlier): '...and this done [the baptism of the rulers' daughters], they were told why two crosses were placed...' (Díaz del Castillo 1994: 133).¹⁸ The referred second cross must be that raised at the meeting point. Ixtlilxóchitl (after de Niza) also commented on the existence of a second cross although, apparently, located it inside the great hall of the palace.¹⁹

While on the plan the first cross erected at the arrival is shown *in situ*, a second was drawn in at the southerly, and main, entrance to Xicotencatl's palace compound. Given that Cortés entered Tlaxcalan territory from the northeast, it seems unlikely that this marks another arrival point (movement between the two entrances would have meant a detour around the foot of the hill rather than the platform's perimeter wall). As a point of speculation only, then, it is possible that it represents the second cross which was moved to the main entrance of the compound when the palace was vacated, or the pagan temple demolished. Alternatively, both may be replacements of the originals, but it is worth emphasising that they are shown on the plan as being made of wood and, therefore, early. Their inclusion on the plan, however, evidences an interesting strategy of Christian architectural occupation, and an acknowledgement of the same by the native artist who drew up the plan.

¹⁷ In the *Lienzo*, panels denoting indoor scenes are framed with architectural elements; in the *Codex*, the presence of Cortés's horse at the meeting point suggests an outdoor setting.

¹⁸ '...y después de esto hecho, se les declaró a qué fin se pusieron dos cruces...'

¹⁹ The wording is ambiguous: '... [Cortés] hizo la sala principal oratorio de Xicotencatl, poniendo una cruz y una imagen de nuestra señora, en donde de ordinario los días que estuvo allí se decía misa...' (Alva Ixtlilxóchitl 1985: 214).

The main hall and chambers of the palace of Xicotencatl are represented as splayed out from the central *patio*, a native convention which occurs commonly in both pre- and postconquest graphic expression, and which indicates that the viewing point is from within (Brotherston 1992: 83, 1997: 8). The same convention is followed for the Franciscan atrium although, in profiling the open chapel itself, additional emphasis was given to the Christian structure as viewed from the exterior of the west-side entrance.²⁰ Noticeably, however, the artist of the Tizatlan plan placed the two crosses in a reverse position. That is, he understood their viewing point to be from outside the atrium. Standing at the centre of the prehispanic entrances, the crosses therefore not only announced that the interior space beyond was now Christian, but they symbolically blocked access to the atrium from the exterior, encouraging those who entered to do so from the west side atrium gate proper which was open and welcoming and, further, aligned directly with the portal of the chapel to the east. This pattern is consistent with the layout of most surviving examples of sixteenth-century Mexican church atria, the purpose being to architecturally enhance the worshipper's approach to the inner sanctum of the church: on ascending a flight of steps, the atrium gate is seen to frame the main portal of the church which, in turn, frames the altar and the holy image thereon. Most completed atria also included a central stone cross aligned with the atrium gate, the church portal, and the altar, thereby guiding the approach along a perfectly focused line.

The reason why crosses were placed at these points at Tizatlan may also extend to the view of the exterior from the interior; although the artist does not acknowledge this. Despite several campaigns against the persistence of prehispanic religious practices, it was only in the early years of the 1530s that the conversion programme in Tlaxcala started to make anything like promising headway (Gibson 1967: 33-34). Anyone familiar with the site at Tizatlan will know that from within the palace compound the location of the two prehispanic entrances would have —probably purposefully— afforded a vista of the sacred rain mountains of Matlalcueye to the southeast, and Popocatepetl-Iztaccihuatl to the southwest. While temples and idols could be demolished, and idolaters severely punished, mountains obviously required a different solution. By erecting the crosses at the centre of the old accesses, any attempt to acknowledge the presence of these, the most revered elements of Indian sacred geography, from within

²⁰ Again, this is not unusual in native graphic expression; sixteenth-century area maps, for example, often include several viewing angles which can be internal or external, thereby offering more than one reading of their narrative content.

the Christian atrium would have met with an immediate visual reminder—in Mendicant understanding, at least—that the new religion had also neutralised their power.

Finally, f. 244r appears to section off the easterly access to the compound from the palace itself (there is no indication of an entrance to the edifice), a detail which suggests that the rulers of Tlaxcala led Cortés through the courtyard to the main entrance, thereby passing the site (of the temple?) where the open chapel was eventually constructed.

Folios 244r-245v and the Descripción

The three architectural plans (which do not appear in the *Lienzo*) stand apart from their *Codex* companions in several ways. Rather than containing historical narrative proper, they present detailed layouts of—as we have seen—the hilltop site of Tizatlan; the main square of the Spanish-founded city of Tlaxcala; and the monastery complex of San Francisco Tlaxcala. In addition, and while both the *Lienzo* and the *Codex*'s pictographic history were possibly based on a prototype in the form of a series of mural paintings executed in and around sixteenth-century Tlaxcala (Acuña 1981: 32-35; Martínez Marín 1989: 154-156; Brothers-ton & Gallegos 1990: 129-131; Martínez 1990: 153-155),²¹ it seems unlikely that the plans would have formed part of these programmes. The layout of a city's main square on, for example, the walls of one of its own public buildings would have served no functional or decorative purpose. Given that all three sites were described in detail by Camargo in the alphabetical *Descripción* (ff. 21v-25v, 8v-13v, and 13v-20r; in the order I choose to discuss them) but not in the *Historia*, we might also be tempted to deduce that the plans were produced especially for the *Codex*. Item 10 of the 1577 *Relaciones geográficas* questionnaire certainly requested a map of the layout of each town, to include streets, squares, and monastic establishments.

²¹ Motolinía's account of the 1539 pageant organised to celebrate the Spanish-French Treaty of Cambay (1538) might also suggest that some of the murals were inspired by theatrical representations taking place at Tlaxcala before their host structures were erected. "Participants" in the pageant included Charles V as Holy Roman Emperor; native representations of the ten provinces of New Spain, '*Iba en la vanguardia Tlaxcala México...*'; '*los del Perú e islas de Santo Domingo y Cuba...*'; and Hernán Cortés (Motolinía 1990: 67-68). Folio 246r (19) of the *Codex*, which opens the section of allegorical panels, depicts nine native representatives of the ten provinces listed in the accompanying gloss; these are indeed led by Tlaxcala. Other portraits in this group include Cortés (ff. 246v, 248v; 20, 23), Columbus, carrying '*las yslas de Santo Domingo y Cuba*' (f. 247r; 21), Pizarro (ff. 248r-v; 22-23), and Charles V (f. 249r; 24).

The inclusion of an allegorical portrait of Philip II as king (1556-1598) (f. 249v; 25), together with a representation of the stone *picota* (f. 245r; 17), symbol of colonial judicial rule and understood to have been installed before 1560 (Gibson 1967: 129), is seen as indicative that the drawings in *Codex Tlaxcala* date to *ca.* 1556 at the very earliest (Acuña 1981: 35; Martínez 1990: 157). But where Acuña has posited that the paper carrying the “pilgrim and staff” watermark with surmounted crucifix, on which all were made, was available in New Spain from 1569 onwards (Acuña 1981: 10-11),²² attempts to date them in this manner can only refer to their content and not the date of actual execution; the pictographic text in this case must be a copy of an earlier original or originals. Based on a study of dated manuscripts held by the Mexican Archivo General de la Nación, Rafael Mena has shown that the same watermark was in fact being used in New Spain from 1548 through to 1605 (Mena 1926: 18). Thus, the pictorial text might have been prepared around 1556, in the form of a ‘portable’ collective work prepared by one or more *tlacuiloque* (artist-scribes) on the orders of Tlaxcala’s Indian *Cabildo* (Martínez 1990: 153), and taken to Spain to be included in the *Codex*. Alternatively, all its panels may be copies of a similar collection of originals, drawn up especially for the *Codex* after 1577 when Camargo embarked on the project.

Here, neither option is entirely satisfactory. As I will argue in more detail later, internal evidence in the long chapter narrating the military conquest indicates that while it was certainly based on an original out of Tlaxcala, the changes made to the historical content were of such a nature that not all the artist-scribes involved could have been Tlaxcalan. It was, therefore, not prepared in Tlaxcala, but most probably in Madrid. Conversely, the contents of the three architectural plans on ff. 244r-245v (f. 244r carries the pilgrim-staff-crucifix watermark) appear to have been drawn up around 1550—that is, in Tlaxcala— or were copied from originals of that date. If the former case applies, it would seem that Tlaxcala’s seat of Indian government not only provided Camargo with original pictographic material for inclusion in the *Codex* but also possessed sufficient quantity of the same paper on which to copy other sections; Camargo took this paper with him to Madrid to complete the work. If the latter is the case, then the artist or artists involved copied the earlier, original plans exactly as they found them, making no effort to portray the city as it looked in 1580-1585.

²² The paper on which the pictographs were produced carries a different watermark to that of the alphabetical text (Acuña 1981: 10-11). Although a complete examination has not been carried out on a folio by folio basis, there exists sufficient evidence to indicate that all pictographs were produced on the same paper (David Weston-personal communication).

It is appropriate to note here that the ink used by the copyist for the glosses added to the pictographic text is (today, at least) dark brown, an aspect of the *Codex* not apparent in the 1981 and 1984 monochrome reproductions. Both colour of ink and mode of writing in upper case show that, for example, it was he who inserted 'PHILIPPVVS. HISP.ET.IND.REX' above Philip's portrait, raising the possibility that the original drawing may actually have been executed before the monarch's accession in 1556. He also added 'FRACISCVS' [*sic*] before PIÇARVS written in a second hand (f. 248r; 22), 'CAROIVS.V.' on the portrait of Charles V, and the legend on Columbus's shield (ff. 249r; 24), as well as inserting a series of other glosses in lower case, such as '*ofreçe el Peru*', '*ofreçe la nueua españa*', all of which might suggest that these examples were simply lacking sufficient titling. Of significance, however, is that the original glosses in upper case on the allegorical portraits (PERV, PIÇARVS; MEXICO, PIÇARVS, CORTESIVS) and on the three architectural plans are from the same second hand, and are unique to these two chapters of the pictographic text.²³ Again, this would seem to suggest that both chapters are earlier originals, possibly prepared before 1556 by the same artist and inserted into the *Codex* along with the later copies.

The proposed earlier dating of, at least, the contents of the three plans can be substantiated in part by examining the discrepancies which exist between them and Camargo's alphabetical description of the same written in or after 1580. In effect, what Camargo was describing was not the Tlaxcala recorded by the plans' artists but the sites as they looked in later years. Although at this stage I wish to concentrate on the architecture of the plans, the discrepancies are also instructive of the degree of Camargo's involvement in the production of the pictographic text: while his copyist evidently wrote in the internal glosses on the plans on the basis of information given in the alphabetical text, Camargo neither used them to write the *Descripción* nor, as we will see, supervised the preparation of other chapters of the pictographic text very carefully at all.

Camargo's description of the prehispanic palace of Xicotencatl concurs with the plan on f. 244r (Fig. 1) in almost every way, the small exception being the number of ascending and descending steps of the main entrance. Referring to it in the present tense (thereby acknowledging that it was still standing at the time of writing), he had evidently documented the edifice carefully, offering measurements of length, width and height, materials used and their emplacement, and a description of the

²³ This hand does not correspond to the lower case glosses in Nahuatl either; the occasional use of the 'A' (ff. 263r-v, 277r; 50-51, 78) shows it to be different.

layout of the great hall, other rooms, and the corridor which linked them together around the central courtyard. He also comments on interior elements not shown in the plan, such as the great stone hearth in the centre of the hall, and the concave wooden benches around its walls. Significantly, he makes no mention of any entrance to the palace other than that on the north side of the atrium. His commentary on the Euro-Christian elements at the site, however, is not only inordinately sparse but inaccurate in terms of the details included in the plan.

In reference to the location of the first cross and the tomb of the Spanish soldier, we are told,

...and here [Tizatlan and the palace in general] the first cross in all this province was raised, and where the first Spaniard of this company was buried; as the tomb was cut from rough stone it is very notable and [well] known today, and this cross was the first that the Indians saw...I was told about this cross by many of the aged rulers...the native peoples venerated this cross with great reverence and awe. I have been many times in those houses and palaces of Xicotencatl and seen the place where the tree of the holy true [cross] was placed' (*Descripción*, ff. 22r-v).²⁴

Despite the glossator's work on the plan, Camargo nevertheless discusses the cross as if it was not known to him. Referring to it in the past tense on the basis of information gleaned from rulers and local inhabitants old enough to have remembered it, he ends by saying that he has only seen 'the place' where the cross stood. This passage also comes before he launches into his description of the site proper, forming an aside to the story of Cortés's arrival at Tizatlan. Basically, while the tomb was still there, no cross of any type stood alongside it at the end of the sixteenth-century.²⁵

Camargo makes no mention of the second wooden cross included at the southerly opening to the platform, which probably explains why the glossator ignored it. In fact, Camargo's wording suggests that this was the very access which he used to visit the palace, having arrived by ascending the prehispanic road:

²⁴ '...y aquí se puso la primera cruz de toda esta prouincia, y donde esta enterrado el primer español que murió desta compañía que como la sepultura fue [a]cabada en piedra tosca esta muy señalada y conocida oy en día y esta cruz fue la prim[er]a que los Indios vieron...Desta cruz fuy informado de muchos prin[cip]ales, viejos y ancianos...venerauan los naturales esta cruz con mucha reuerencia y acatam[en]to. En las quales casas y palacios de Xicotencatl he estado muchas vezes y visto el lugar donde se puso el arbol de la s[an]ta vera [cruz]...'

²⁵ In the eighteenth century Mazihcatzin surmised that the first cross was the one which in his day stood near to the tomb of the Spanish soldier, this being made of stone as the legend of its [miraculous] appearance told (Mazihcatzin 1993: 66). This may have been the example mounted on a pedestal over the balustrade of the easterly access, demolished by Salas during the 1934 excavation.

...[facilitating] the ascent with eighty steps placed at intervals, [Xicotencatl] ordered the road to be made to his house on the mountain...and before entering this courtyard of Xicotencatl there is another levelled courtyard, large and spacious, which serves as the cemetery and atrium of the church of lord Saint Steven, with strong and firm standing walls and parapets of over one *estado* in height which completely close in the courtyard... (*Descripción*, f. 25r).²⁶

Camargo's concept of what constitutes a 'large and spacious' atrium is not easily addressed by the plan, but his description of its walls standing at over seven foot high and topped with a parapet hardly matches the low, merloned versions depicted by the artist. Indeed, Camargo's enthusiasm about identical merlons on the walls surrounding the monastery complex (see below) must also tell us that they no longer existed at the Tizatlan he knew.

Finally, and although brief, Camargo's reference to the chapel of San Esteban to the east side of the atrium, '...the said church, although small, is of marvellous construction' (*ibid*),²⁷ defines it as the polygonally-fronted sixteenth-century structure which still stands at the site, with the apse of the eighteenth-century church annexed over three of its five original porticos (Fig. 2). Again, the three dimensional, stylised drawing bears no resemblance to it.

Sixteenth-century native mapmakers frequently depicted Christian churches as stylised models copied from European printed sources, most commonly employing them as new cartographical signs for a town or village. However, where maps included other elements such as the atrium, the grid-iron *traza*, and the *picota* —that is, where maps become urban plans— the churches were also represented accurately. This is not a hard and fast rule, but examples relevant to the argument here can be seen in the maps of Huejutla, Cempoala, and Epazoyuca in the modern-day state of Hidalgo, Yuririapúndaro (Mich.), Teotenango (Méx.), Cholula (Pue.), Huaxtepec (Mor.), Tējupa (Oax.), **and** the monastery church of La Asunción at San Francisco Tlaxcala (Fig. 3), all of which belong to the 1579-1581 *Relaciones geográficas* corpus. Thus, if the plan of Tizatlan was prepared as part of Tlaxcala's *Relación geográfica*, why did its artist not follow suit? Why did he go to such lengths to detail the palace, the meeting place, and the layout of the atrium, only to ignore the church?

²⁶ '...hizo hacer el camino para subir a su casa de ochenta gradas atrechos, al çerro...y antes de entrar en este patio de Xicotencatl, está otro patio llano grande y espacioso, que sirue de cimenterio y patio de la igles[ia] del s[en]or San Esteuan, con unos pretiles y paredones muy fuertes de cal y canto a manera de muralla de mas de un estado de alto que quadran el patio por gran nivel...'. An estado de alto was equivalent to 7ft (Acuña 1984: 298).

²⁷ '...la qual iglesia, aun que pequeña, es de maravilloso edificio...'

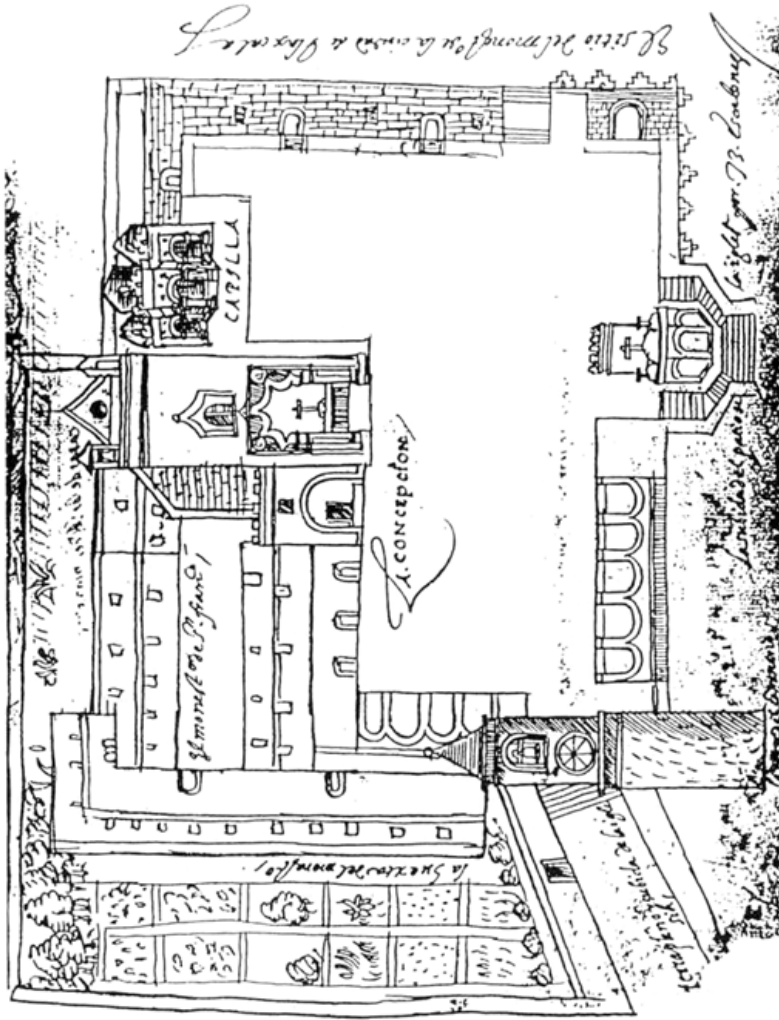


Fig. 3. *Codex Tlaxcala*, f. 245v: The monastery complex of Asunción Tlaxcala
(photo courtesy of Glasgow University Library)



Fig. 4. *Codex Tlaxcala*, f. 245r: The main square of the colonial city of Tlaxcala (photo courtesy of Glasgow University Library)

In April 1550, the Indian *Cabildo* of Tlaxcala ordered the ruler of Tizatlan to supervise the building of the site's church courtyard (*Actas* 1986: 47), the resulting layout, with its traditional west-side entrance, probably being that represented in the plan. Toussaint dated the open chapel to the mid-sixteenth century (Toussaint 1996: 125), an estimation which accords with the records of the *Cabildo* which, in December 1553, agreed that [only] the religious sites at Tizatlan, Ocotelulco, Tlapitzahuacan, and Tepeticpac be 'fully developed', and their churches brought to 'full splendor' (*Actas* 1986: 54, 90) This not being an order to proceed with work, but a permit to carry it out, the primitive "church" at Tizatlan was probably replaced with, or elaborated as, the extant chapel at some time towards the middle of the decade of the 1550s.²⁸ It is perhaps significant to comment here that the title panel of *Lienzo de Tlaxcala* (ca. 1550-1564) presents an image of the portal of the monastery church of Asunción Tlaxcala that is identical to that on the *Codex's* plan of the same site (Fig. 3). The structure is known to have been completed shortly after 1540, although work on the original building continued through to ca. 1564 (Kubler 1992: 588; McAndrew 1965: 419; Gibson 1967: 45). At either side of the *Lienzo* panel, however, the churches of Ocotelulco and Tizatlan are represented as stylisations: that is, they also had not been built in a permanent form when the original *Lienzo* and its copies were produced.²⁹

Based on the representations of the wooden (and therefore, early) crosses, merloned walls and stylised church, together with data recorded in the Tlaxcalan *Actas*, I would propose that the plan of Tizatlan as it stands in the *Codex* was drawn up shortly after 1550, when the atrium had been reconfigured in accordance with missionary ideals, but the primitive church was still standing.

The plans of the monastery complex (Fig. 3) and the main square (Fig. 4) also pre-date Camargo's descriptions by some decades. While the history of the various chapels constructed within the monastery atrium over the course of the sixteenth century remains largely unresolved, it is clear that the five small chapels, 'around this courtyard... which serve as stations and covered altars when processions take place'

²⁸ The tightly arched, raised apse area of the chapel might suggest that it was the original "open" chapel, the polygonal fronting being added in the upgrading programme. The practice of adding a nave to very early open chapels was certainly not uncommon in Tlaxcala (cf. Wilder Weismann 1985: 69).

²⁹ The detail of a pine tree (*ocoll*) near to one of the churches glyphs it as Ocotelulco ("place of pine trees"); the "white" water (*tizatl*, white earth; *atl*, water) pouring from the second church can be read phonetically as *Tiz-atl(an)*. If my observations are correct here, this would certainly place production of the *Lienzo* much closer to the beginning of Velasco's vice-regency.

and ‘to indoctrinate children...’ (*Descripción*, f. 15r, my emphasis),³⁰ are not included on the plan. Here he is referring to the, normally free-standing, *posa* —or, possibly, *cofradía*— chapels of which only two are shown, the one constructed over the open chapel below the atrium (bottom, centre) and the other at the southwest corner of the atrium proper (bottom, right); the remaining three (if, indeed, we can call these “chapels”) are depicted as little more than niches in the south-side wall. Neither was the hospital of La Anunciación and its church —in front of the tower, and ‘of very good design and workmanship’ (*Descripción*, f. 19v-20r)—³¹ included because, we must deduce, it was not there when the plan was produced; Tlaxcala’s sixteenth-century hospital was, in fact, still at the base of the north ramp in the mid-1560s (Cervantes de Salazar 1985: 245). The chapel off the church transept, ‘small and of very good design and proportion, although it is somewhat narrow’ (*Descripción*, f. 14v),³² is also missing. This may correspond to the early *capilla mayor*, which still extends from the south side of the nave (although now dedicated to Saint Anthony) and was ordered to be built by the *Cabildo* in January of 1564 (*Actas* 1986: 64).³³ Instead, the plan shows an eight-sided (but not octagonal), freestanding building, with five arched portals, set back from the church on its south side. Marking it simply as ‘CAPILLA’ (the ink is brown), the glossator seems to have made a cautious guess that it corresponded to the chapel of San José,

...of exceptional construction and wonderful workmanship; eight-sided, with well-carved arches in white stone and their corresponding pedestals, bases and columns; formed of five naves...It has two collateral altars where on solemn and paschal days Mass is said...inside, this Chapel has two choir lofts, one for the musicians and the other for the chapel’s singers; to each side extend the schoolrooms where the Indians learn to read and sing... (*Descripción*, f. 14v).³⁴

Given the form of the structure depicted on the plan, the five arches would not appear to access five aisles, although it is possible

³⁰ ‘...entorno de este patio...que siruen de estaciones y humilladeros para quando ay procesiones... para doctrinar los niños...’

³¹ ‘...de muy buena traça y obra...’

³² ‘...toda pequeño [sic] y de muy buena traça y proporción, aun que no es muy ancha...’

³³ The Capilla de San Antonio is the only chapel annexed to the monastery church to have been built in the sixteenth century (*Catálogo* 1994, III: 8).

³⁴ ‘...de singular edificio, y de obra maravillosa, ochauada y arqueada de piedra blanca muy bien labrada de pedestales basas y columnas de lo proprio, formada de cinco naves...Tiene dos altares colaterales donde los dias solemnes y pasqual se dize missa...tiene dentro de si esta Capilla dos choros altos, que el uno sirue para los menestres y, el otro, para los cantones desta capilla, salen y corresponden, auna mano y aotra las escuelas donde los naturales aprenden a leer y a cantar...’

that the graphic representation was compressed to fit into the space available. Its two separate schoolrooms (boys and girls would have been segregated), approved by the Tlaxcalan *Cabildo* in 1548 and under construction through to 1550 (McAndrew 1965: 432), are not depicted either, unless they correspond to the wings on the plan. In this case, the central structure would not be eight-sided. Overall, the image of this building with respect to the *Descripción* remains somewhat problematic; in fact, it corresponds much more closely to Motolinía's description of the 1539 chapel of *Belén* which did boast five 'ochavos' on which the Indians painted their frescoes (Motolinía 1990: 64-65).

The surviving *posa* at the southwest corner of the atrium and the polygonal open chapel (bottom, centre) date to *ca.* 1547, while the *posa* over the vaulting of the open chapel was possibly in place around 1550. Remodelling of the ogee arches of the open chapel to square-headed windows may have taken place shortly after that date in order to provide additional support for the superimposed *posa* (McAndrew 1965: 314, 433, 437). That the open chapel's entrances were depicted still in portal form on the plan again points to it having been drawn up before 1550, if only by one or two years.

Admittedly, the dating of these chapels is vague, but Camargo also describes the monastery cloister as having arched walkways and a central fountain (*Descripción*, ff. 16r-v). Neither was included in the plan. The precise date of installation of the fountain is unknown, but the Acts of the *Cabildo* record that in December 1552, rebuilding of the cloister with stone arches was in process; by December of the following year the work was complete (*Actas* 1986: 52, 54, 90). The upper walkway carries the same date (Gibson 1967: 45).

Finally, and with work on the atrium still incomplete in 1550 (*ibid*), the atrium wall as represented on the plan also provides a clue to its early dating. According to Camargo, '...the whole courtyard [is] closed in with a very good mortared wall of half an *estado* in height, the top of which is **all** crowned with very good merlons.' (*Descripción*, f. 15r, my emphasis).³⁵ Mortar-built or not, the south- and east-side walls on the plan are clearly not finished for they still lack their plastering; the merlons only extend past the southwest corner.³⁶

³⁵ '...*todo el patio cercado de medio estado en alto de muy buena pared de argamassa, encima dela qual pared va todo almenado de muy buenas almenas...*'

³⁶ In his *Apologética* (1550-1555), Las Casas described the atrium walls as twice the height ('*obra de un estado del suelo poco más o menos*') and topped with merlons (Las Casas 1992, VII: 601). Given that his only (documented) visit to Tlaxcala took place between 1538 and 1539, this might indicate that the plan shows the walls in the process of rebuilding.

It would seem that work at the Franciscan establishment was still very much in progress when this particular drawing was produced and that what it actually shows is the site as it stood shortly before 1550. It is not surprising, then, that the copyist encountered some difficulties in reconciling Camargo's description of the complex with the edifices marked on the plan. The ramp and tower to the north, the steps leading up to the atrium from the west, and the cloister buildings —however primitive— posed few problems, and we might forgive him for being unable to mark in the three non-existent *posa* chapels and the hospital. But, even though Camargo placed some emphasis on the structure (*Descripción*, f. 16r), the copyist also failed to gloss the Capilla del Rosario (the open chapel). In addition, the gloss 'LA CONCEPCION' is particularly puzzling, the article having been added by the copyist as if to correctly title the edifice above (the church of La Asunción). Camargo makes no reference to this dedication in the alphabetical text, although Vetancurt mentions a [*posa*?] chapel of the same name standing near to the church at the end of the seventeenth-century (Vetancurt 1971: 54). Given that the monastery complex of San Francisco was built over a sacred spring, the focus of diverse ceremonies and sacrifices in prehispanic times (*Descripción*, f. 17v-18r), I can only suggest that a primitive chapel dedicated to Santa María de la Concepción once "topped" the site and the early name was retained by the artist who produced the plan. Despite Camargo's text, and prone to making errors (as we will see), the copyist assumed this to be the dedication of the monastery church; indeed, he makes no reference to La Asunción anywhere on the drawing.³⁷ In addition to the evident architectural discrepancies, there is also a sense here that the copyist was not at all familiar with Tlaxcala's monastery complex, either past or present: finding himself working with a plan produced some thirty years previously he was unable to glossate it properly, or find anybody to update it for him.

If the copyist encountered problems with Camargo's description of the monastery, he nevertheless showed considerable confidence in bringing the drawing of Tlaxcala's main square up to date (Fig. 4). His hand (his ink) and, in all probability, that of one of the artists working on the pictographic section of the *Codex*, made considerable changes to not only the glosses but also the architectural features.

Both the gaol ('CARCEL') and the fountain ('LA FUENTE') existed before 1548, with the inn ('MESON') dating to before 1551; these were

³⁷ The dedication of the church to *La Asunción* commemorates the defeat of Tenochtitlan on 13 August 1521, the important Catholic festival of the Assumption of the Virgin falling two days later.

marked in by the original hand. Construction of the covered galleries (*portales*) on the east and south sides was ordered by the Spanish *corregidor* Ramírez in 1549, and in the same year the Indian *Cabildo* urged speed in the building of the *Casas Reales*, or Royal Houses (*Actas* 1986: 39, 41, 44; Meade de Angulo 1986: 45), thereby implying that work had already commenced. Camargo informs us that the *Casas Reales* were completed under *Corregidor* Verdugo (*Descripción*, f. 13[53]r), that is, before 1559.³⁸ From 1558 the *Cabildo* was also able to meet in the building's upper floor: 'Cabildos are no longer to be held as in the past, in the place where the *corregidores* and *alcalde mayor* mount their horses' (*Actas* 1986: 58).

In 1566, Cervantes de Salazar described Tlaxcala's *Casas Reales* in terms of 'two sumptuous houses' (Cervantes de Salazar 1985: 245-246). Camargo was to labour the point,

...these houses have two entrances in the form of two dwellings with two portals of beautiful masonry, carved in the Roman manner and of graceful style, so fine and high that three men on horseback could comfortably pass through them abreast of each other: (*Descripción*, f. 9r).³⁹

Despite later remodelling of the building after the sixteenth century, the two portals carved in the manner of the classical *grotesque* ('in the Roman manner') still remain today, the largest of which—complete with an elaborate six-pointed arch—is totally covered with these designs. Yet, and making no graphic reference to this particular work, the *Codex* representation depicts a rather untidy building divided into four equally-sized houses, each with a large, but plain, entrance (and one small arched doorway); part of it is also constructed in ashlar-cut stone, or brick. The thatched roof of the tower at the east side is significantly incongruous. Camargo assures us that 'these Royal houses and the other edifices of this Republic...are [built] in the Castilian mode...' (*Descripción*, f. 13[53]r),⁴⁰ that is, they followed the accepted conventions of formal Spanish architecture. This being the case, and given colonial Spanish notions on the relative values of different building materials *vis-à-vis* the sophistication of the culture which used them (Fraser 1982: 42-44; 1990: 25-27, 108-111), it is extremely unlikely that either Ramírez or Verdugo would have permitted a rustic thatch to remain on this, the most im-

³⁸ Folios 13 and 53 are transposed. Ramírez was *corregidor* from 1546 to 1550; Verdugo from 1556 to 1559 (Gibson 1967: 215).

³⁹ '...*tienen dos entradas estas casas, en forma de dos moradas con dos portadas de hermosa cantería labradas alo romano y de graciosa arquitectura tan buenas y tan altas que podran entrar por ellas holgadamente tres hombres de acauallo a la par...*'

⁴⁰ '...*estas casas Reales y demas edificios de esta Republica...esta[n] en modo castellano...*'

portant building in the city to be constructed under their supervision. If they had, Salazar, connoisseur of all that was fine in Spanish colonial architecture, would surely have made an appropriate observation.

Again, then, this drawing represents the Tlaxcalan seat of government only partly completed: the structure is up but requires a proper roof and finalisation of its exterior decoration. With the *picota* and fountain *in situ*, this might tentatively place the date of execution of the original plan to between 1555 and 1558.

However, when the copyist came to gloss the plan prepared for the *Codex*, he evidently saw that it was the most unsatisfactory of the three in respect of Camargo's description of the architectural reality of late sixteenth-century Tlaxcala: it did, indeed, depict a rather poor and simple main square. There was little he could do about the thatched roof of the *Casas Reales*, or its section of ashlar wall but, again in his distinctively coloured ink, he carefully shaded in the portals (undoubtedly, to show that the building had proper doors as opposed to the reed mats of native usage) and added the decorative motifs over the openings on the upper floor. He then modified the original gloss 'CASA REAL' to read 'CASAS REALES', thereby giving the structure a title appropriate to its size and functions. On the west side of the square, he marked in the houses of the *alcaldes mayores* (royal district governors) and *carnicerías* (butcheries), although for reasons best known to himself he labelled one of these latter commercial outlets as the *cauallerizas*, or stables.⁴¹ Realising that the house of the *alcaldes* was not, in fact, 'quaintly ornamented' (*curiosam[en]te adornado*) as Camargo had stated (*Descripción*, f. 9r), he proceeded to add the diagonally lined cornice and the heavily carved flying facade to the otherwise flat roofs of the whole block. A further point of interest in the plan comes in the arcades for shops on the east and south-sides, represented as a lintelled gallery supported by European columns, but topped with a native decorative frieze and crowned with castellated merlons. Again, Camargo made no mention of these details. If construction of the Spanish-style *portales* did not get underway until 1549, it is possible that the drawing's artist was obliged to improvise the finished gallery on the basis of his own architectural traditions, or his memory of something similar.⁴²

⁴¹ The detail is interesting for it is unlikely that horses would have been stabled alongside an outlet working with raw meat.

⁴² See again Motolinía's descriptions of the 1539 celebrations of the Treaty of Cambrey, where a theatrical Jerusalem was erected on what were still the foundations of the primitive *Cabildo*, with the remaining sides of the plaza designated as the seats of those participating in the pageant: '*...todos estos lugares estaban cercados y por de fuera pintados de canteado, con sus troneras, saeteras y almenas bien al natural*' (Motolinía 1990: 67).

On the square proper, the copyist marked the ground with rough lines to give it some texture, perhaps as an indication that the surface was sanded rather than left as the muddy quagmire which characterised the streets of many early Spanish colonial towns. The fountain and the *picota* are drawn in with a dark grey paint, a second tone which occurs in many of the later pictographs alongside the primary black ink. The suggestion here, then, is that the representations of both structures were added to an originally empty square, although the gloss 'LA FUENTE' in black ink was inserted by the same person who labelled the 'MESON', 'CARCEL', and 'CASA REAL'. The area around the *picota* shows considerable interference from the copyist's hand. An attempt seems to have been made to erase the black ink representation of the gallows (which Camargo did not mention), the resulting smudge being partially hidden by re-inserting the image slightly to one side of the original. This may have been a correction made by the original artist, but very clear from the heavy smudging on the other side of the *picota* is that the copyist did remove some lettering and replaced it with the gloss 'LA PICOTA' (again, in brown ink) over the top. Examination of the amendment under ultra-violet light reveals an original *R* close to the copyist's *P*, followed, possibly, by a slim *C* which he converted into the *I* (David Weston, personal communication). Although the remainder is illegible, the *RC* together suggest that it once read LA [H]ORCA (gallows). It is in this detail that the efforts of the copyist to align the plan with Camargo's descriptions are most apparent. Even if he was not responsible for trying to remove the heavily inked gallows, he ensured that the *picota*, symbol and site of the 'execution of justice', was present and did 'impose rule over the whole square' (*Descripción*, f. 9v).⁴³ Here, then, I am proposing that the representation of the *picota* was an addition to the original plan. Given its match of paint with the fountain, it seems feasible to argue that the representation of the latter was also drawn in at the same time. Although a fountain existed before 1548, it was not necessarily the elaborate eight-channelled model described by Camargo (*Descripción*, f. 9v) and Cervantes de Salazar (1985: 244).⁴⁴ By 1540, the new city had already been laid out around the square, with its streets and dwellings occupied by Tlaxcala's Indian nobility

⁴³ The grim images of early Tlaxcalan idolaters hanging from gallows on ff. 241r-v and f. 242v (11-12, 14) which precede the architectural plans in the *Codex* would not have overly troubled the pious Philip whose intolerance of prehispanic religious practices was well known. However, Spanish colonial rule was (in theory at least) based on the principles of Spanish secular justice; Philip would also expect Indian Tlaxcala to acknowledge this and adhere to its precepts.

⁴⁴ The fountain on the plan depicts only seven water channels.

(Motolinía 1990: 67, 186); a central water supply, albeit simply accommodated, would not have been lacking.

If my observations with respect to the dating of the architecture represented in the three plans are correct, then their originals cannot have been prepared specifically as a result of the 1577 *Relaciones geográficas* questionnaire but probably formed part of a much earlier graphic record of the city maintained by Indian Tlaxcala and given to Camargo to elaborate the *Relación* in accordance with the information requested. Also evident is that the copyist was working on the three plans on the basis of Camargo's text and, finding that some of the written references did not tally with their content, he either ignored them, made guesses, or asked for graphic details to be added. Finally, it is clear that Camargo did not consult the plans as he wrote the *Descripción* and I suspect that he was not, in fact, responsible for suggesting the amendments made to the square. If he had deemed that drawing to be inadequate, why did he not order modifications to the plan of the monastery complex? Insertion of the hospital or the three missing *posas* would not have been too difficult for a skilled artist. Or, to put it another way, why did he not order the three plans to be redrawn in order to properly reflect the splendid architectural reality of Tlaxcala that he was so keen to emphasise?

Preparation of the Codex

Camargo's decision to personally deliver the *Relación geográfica* to the king, rather than send it by the normal route to the Council of the Indies, would have had the initial purpose of placing Tlaxcala apart from the remainder of the population of New Spain. In this context, the physical make-up of the *Codex* shows that it was also a project carefully designed to attract the king's attention. With the exception of, again, the three architectural plans, the pictographic history was executed in portrait after the European mode, as opposed to the more traditional landscape format of native convention that would have characterised earlier and related pictographic narratives (Brotherston & Gallegos (1990: 129). Many of the *Codex's* pictorial panels certainly suggest that they were copied from an original prepared in landscape although, in the main, the transformation was achieved by slicing figures at the edges of the frames; in this way, internal spacing was retained without crowding.⁴⁵ While

⁴⁵ The exclusivity of the three architectural plans in this respect again raises questions as to the date of their execution. Panel 30 of the *Lienzo*, essentially a wide map in landscape format narrating the trip to the coast for supplies, was successfully transformed into portrait mode in the *Codex* (f. 266v; 57).

much native artwork became progressively europeanised in style and presentation as the century proceeded, portrait format may also have been on the initiative of Camargo who, well-versed in European ways and aware of the importance of his commission, intended his manuscript to be more accessible to the European eye. Together with this, the neat pre-delineation of regularly-sized margins within which to write the alphabetical text and, notably, the overall monochrome presentation of the pictographs⁴⁶ strongly suggest that the manuscript was intended to emulate a printed book, the use of grey with black serving to reproduce the contrast of light and shade achieved through shallower and deeper scoring of engraved plates or woodcuts. Again, this does not mean that the *Codex's* drawings were included as illustrations to lighten royal reading, but rather as a traditional native text in "printed" form. Indeed, given that the pictographic history deals with many events which are referred to only in passing in the *Descripción*, or omitted completely, comparatively few of its images could have served as "illustrations" if that had been their intended role. As a parallel, but separate, historical text, the pictographs focus on Tlaxcala's exemplary participation in the conquest in a manner the *Relación geográfica* questionnaire had not allowed for; by presenting it in native mode, emphasis was also placed on the fact that that participation had been Indian. In this sense, and following on from a "Spanish" (alphabetical) section, they also expound the underlying message contained in the manuscript as a whole: Tlaxcala stands beneath Spain as her loyal subject; Tlaxcala is nevertheless an Indian Republic. Polychromed coats of arms at front and back of the manuscript echo the statement. Quite naturally, the emblazon of Philip II takes pride of place, while that which closes the manuscript is probably indigenous, thereby neatly "sealing" the alliance within.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ At some stage in the *Codex's* history, a person or persons unknown added two streams of crimson blood to the human sacrifices on ff. 239r (7) and the self-sacrifice (body piercing) on f. 241v (12), while also filling in the knotted tassels on Xicotencatl's cape with the same colour (f. 251v; 28). Traces of the same ink/paint can be seen on respective opposite pages indicating that this was done after the manuscript had been bound and, therefore, was not the work of the *Codex's* artists.

⁴⁷ As an acknowledgement of services rendered to Spain during the conquest, the Crown granted a number of coats of arms to Indian personages, many of which contain native glyphic inserts (cf. Villar Villamil 1933). The second coat of arms has yet to be identified but within its European iconographic whole it carries four, glyph-like "discs" which may well represent the Indian houses of the Tlaxcalan confederacy.

The alphabetical text

Given that the manuscript of Camargo's *Historia* remained in Mexico until the nineteenth century,⁴⁸ it might be assumed that Camargo left it in Tlaxcala before travelling to Spain, thereby implying that the *Descripción* was already copied before departure. Yet as Acuña has pointed out, use of the present tense in the section of the *Descripción* which deals with the native calendar of Tlaxcala's then Indian Governor, Don Antonio de Guevara, indicates that this section at least must have been written after the embassy had departed (Acuña 1981: 12, 1984: 14). There is a clean physical break in the text at this point (f. 177r), raising the possibility that f. 178r onwards may already have been copied and the calendrical material inserted later. Clearer from the text itself, however, is that the break was made to accommodate the two calendar wheels which occur at this point, thereby rounding off one section before proceeding immediately to the next: 'Having dealt copiously with the counts and calendars of the Indians we will now turn to the arrival of Cortés...' (*Descripción*, f. 178r).⁴⁹

Further evidence here comes in the fact that the *Descripción* is very much an unfinished text in terms of Camargo's original intentions. The wealth of detail poured out over some four hundred and fifty sides of paper stands in sharp contrast to the final eighteen pages of short, uninformative paragraphs, almost all of which open with the words, 'Well we might discuss and give an account of. ..', 'We still need to refer to...', or similar.⁵⁰ It would appear, then, that even the draft of the alphabetical *Descripción* was far from complete when the embassy departed Tlaxcala, was hurriedly terminated in Madrid as the royal deadline approached, and the whole copied at the Spanish Court by the anonymous scribe (Acuña 1984: 10, 14), perhaps on paper supplied this time from Spanish holdings. Camargo possibly retained his original and took it back to Tlaxcala where it was used to elaborate the manuscript we know as the *Historia*.

⁴⁸ Removed from Mexico by Joseph Aubin, the manuscript was passed to Eugène Goupil in 1891, whose widow donated it to the National Library of Paris in 1899 (Acuña 1981: 37, 1984: 18).

⁴⁹ 'HAVIENDO PUES tratado copiosamente delas quantas y calendarios de los naturales tornavemos agora a referir la llegada de Cortes ...'

⁵⁰ 'Bien pudieramos tratar y hazer relacion de...'; 'Faltanos por referir la...' (See *Descripción*, ff. 226r-234v). As Acuña (1984: 281, n.381) points out, there is also evidence in this last section that Camargo attempted to rearrange the order of his material, but he either neglected to delete pieces of text re-elaborated further on, or the copyist ignored his instructions in this respect.

Internal evidence in the *Descripción* offers some clues as to the identity of the copyist. The little we know of him is that his initials were PB or BP, entered as a monogram at the end of the *Instrucción y memoria* (Acuña 1984: 31), that is, his copy of the *Relaciones geográficas* questionnaire which precedes the alphabetical *Descripción*. He evidently experienced considerable difficulties in reading Camargo's handwriting, leaving occasional gaps which, presumably, he intended to fill in later. He also indulged in some less than coherent guesswork, rendering what was obviously 'se bautizaron' as 'se bañaron' (*Descripción*, f. 22r), for example, or 'guardaron' as 'quebrantaron' (*ibid* f. 98r). Other errors demonstrate that he not only had a poor understanding of written Nahuatl (Acuña 1984: 21) but that, again, he was unfamiliar with Tlaxcala and its surrounding territory. In this context, his spelling of Tlaxcalan placenames is particularly erratic. *Ocotelulco*, one of the four Indian houses, appears once as 'Ocotetulco' and later as 'Teocutelulco'; *Matlalcueye*, the great Tlaxcalan volcano, as 'Mettalcueye' and 'Matlalquehe'; and [Santa Ana] *Chiyautempan* as 'driahuhtempan', where 'd' is not a Nahuatl sound (*Descripción*, ff. 22v, 132r; 43r, 161v; 34v). *Pán[uf]co* is written as 'Panico' throughout (see Fig. 6). Difficulties with Camargo's handwriting aside, this was, then, not the work of a *nahuatlato*, and much less a Tlaxcalan. A further telling error—and I suspect that it is far from circumstantial—comes in the elaboration of the framework for the alphabetical day count in the calendrical section (f. 165r). Two parallel lines of zig-zags with interspersed dots run up the centre of the frame, separating two 26-day sequences. To the right, the dots number 26; to the left, only 25. The same design runs horizontally across the lower and upper edges of the frame, the dots numbering 18 (again a primary calendrical notation) below, but 19 above. The notations of the native calendars served a multitude of purposes in prehispanic life from the structuring and pagination of texts to the organisation of ornamental architectural detail, conventions which persisted through to the post-conquest era.⁵¹ It would seem that the copyist understood the original frame to be purely decorative and reproduced it as it appeared to him, without realising that it too was

⁵¹ See Mullen (1983), and Wake (1995: 342-345, 629-639) on the use of calendrical notations in colonial architectural decoration. The *Lienzo* certainly appears to have been structured on the basis of the calendrical system for several permutations obtain. For example, title panel + 12 rows of main panels = 13 (the basic count of the day-signs of the *tonalamatl*), or 10 rows x 7 panels + 2 x 5 panels = 80 (4 x 20-day periods, where the ritual year was divided into 18 x 20 = 360 days + 5 "dead" days); 7 subordinate panels attached to the base of the *Lienzo* + 4 at its sides = 11 (the number of signs in the zodiac - Brotherson 1992: 66-67); total: 80 + 11 = 91 x 4 = 364 + 1 = 365. Perhaps not coincidentally, the number of drawings in the *Codex* (156) is divisible by 52 (the number of years in one calendar round).

constructed on the basis of the calendar it encased. The whole points to this person being, possibly, a peninsular Spaniard or *criollo*, but, more probably, a highly acculturated native or mestizo, perhaps living and working at the Spanish Court and delegated to assist Camargo in Madrid in the transcription of the clean copy of the *Descripción* and the addition of the explanatory glosses on the pictographic text. If the copy had been made in Tlaxcala, it seems unlikely that the author would have employed a scribe with little or no knowledge of Nahuatl or, as the glosses on the plan of the monastery complex also suggest, of the city of Tlaxcala itself.

The pictographic text

Where all the original pictographs may have formed part of a Tlaxcalan archive produced together or over time, it is very clear that those which were copied for the *Codex* were the combined effort of a group of artists working together simultaneously. A brief analysis of the ninety-five panels describing the “pacification” of Mexico is instructive in this respect. With the exception of Teocallhueyacan which includes a perimeter enclosure, the panels consist of two compositions of figures after the European mode: a grouping of Tlaxcalan warriors and one or more mounted Spaniards to the left attack a second grouping of other native warriors on the right. In each, the numbers and positions of figures change from panel to panel. Unsuccessfully defended by their inhabitants, the besieged localities are named by use of European landscaped versions of the native *tepetl* (mountain) place-sign, although in most cases a traditionally-executed glyphic toponym is retained. Forty-seven of the ninety-five *Codex* panels also occur in the *Lienzo* and are identically structured (see Figs. 5, 6).

Among the hands working on this chapter, some are overtly sketchy while others adhere to the clear, unbroken outlines common to native artwork; across the latter, however, lighter and heavier hands of varying expertise are also in evidence. The distribution of the different styles across the pacification panels tends to run in sequences, suggesting that they were prepared in batches, or that the artists were working in shifts. For example, and following the outline mode, the exquisitely executed Tlaxcalan warriors in battle regalia over ff. 277r-282v (78-89) all evidence the same hand, with an abrupt change in style occurring from ff. 283r-285r (90-94), after which the first artist takes over again.

Closer examination reveals, however, that many of these panels were also prepared on a production-line system. On ff. 276r-277r and

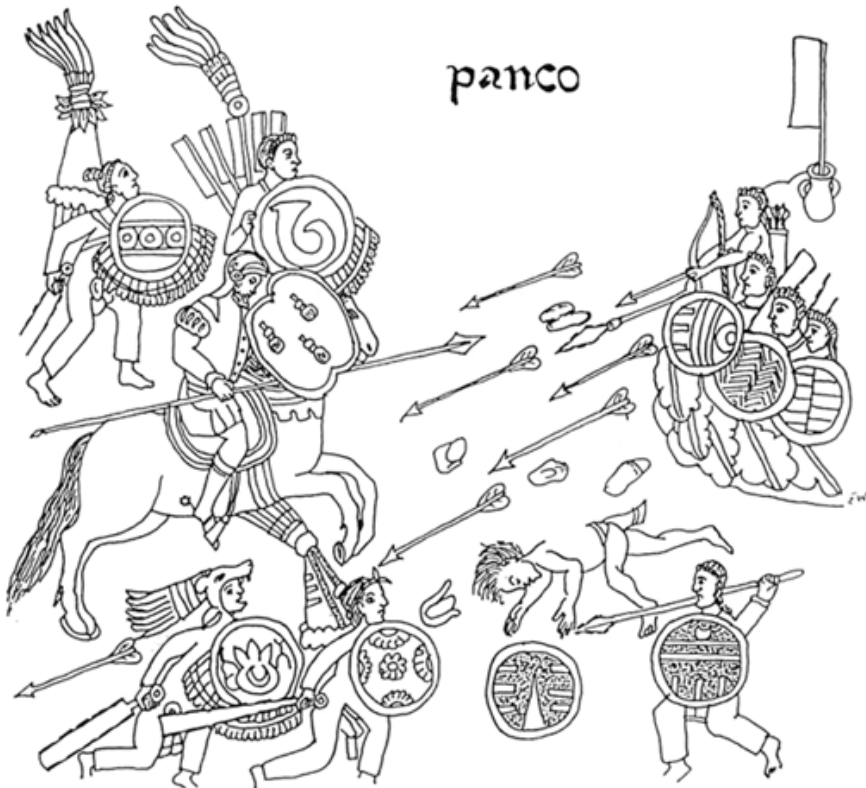


Fig. 5. *Lienzo de Tlaxcala* 50: The battle of Pan[u]co (redrawn after Chayero 1979)



Conquista de Panico y siempre los tlaxcaltecos fueron en ella

Fig. 6. *Codex Tlaxcala*, f. 276v: The battle of 'Panico'
 (reproduced from Acuña 1981, with kind permission of Glasgow University Library)

278v-280r (76-78, 81-84), the horses' undersides are shaded in with scoring and/or hatching in the manner of European engravings; however, the style and/or expertise in drawing the outlines of these animals varies so considerably that all cannot be attributed to the artist who inserted the shading. The *Codex* occasionally employs a single heel-spur for the mounted Spaniards (as is the norm in the *Lienzo*), but wheel-spurs are also included in three different forms: as an "asterisk"; as a circle radiating short, thin lines; and as a well-defined five- or six-spiked star. Again, the distribution of the four types of spurs does not correlate with the stylistic execution of the horses and their riders.⁵² Therefore, at least some of the artists were arbitrarily employed in drawing horses in one batch of pictographs, in delineating their riders or other human figures in another, adding details such as saddlery and attire in a third, and so on. While a more in-depth analysis of the stylistic differences occurring throughout the whole pictographic history still needs to be made, I would estimate that some five to seven different hands worked together on this chapter alone.

Certain graphic elements in the pictographic narrative overall also indicate that not all of the artists were specialist *tlacuiloque* for some of the panels reveal problems in their understanding of the most basic conventions of native writing systems. Perhaps more heavily influenced by the colonial pressures exerted on native graphic expression than their workshop companions, they appear to have copied the originals as accurately as possible but occasionally failed to recognise some of their glyphic elements. Examples exposed by Brotherston & Gallegos include the panel depicting Cortés's entrance into the Tlaxcalan town of Atlihuahuetzia (f. 253r; 31), where the style belongs to the sketched mode. The town's toponym ('where water falls') is clearly glyphed on the *Lienzo* version of the same event (Chavero 4), but in the *Codex* is rendered as a hastily scribbled motif (perhaps a plant?) on the rock where Cortés stands. The *Lienzo*'s 'split mountain' which names Tepexic (Chavero 64) was omitted completely on the corresponding *Codex* panel (f. 270r; 64), the landscaped mountain being depicted as a non-specific mass (Brotherston & Gallegos 1990: 123, 127).

Important differences in the panel describing the mustering of armies for the final attack on Tenochtitlan offer a further example of the degree of artistic acculturation to which some of the artist-scribes had apparently succumbed. The most traditionally-executed of all, the

⁵² As with the original glosses, the horses in the allegorical portraits referred earlier are also unique within the *Codex*'s pictographic section: the width of their muscular upper legs is overly exaggerated, while their ears are stylised as small, almond-shaped forms.

panel is based on the quincuncial composition of the native cosmic plan, constructed from four stylised, glyphically-named temples (representing four lakeside towns) with Tenochtitlan at its centre (Figs. 7, 8). In the *Lienzo* (Chavero 42), the internal order is also structured around the notation 5 and its multiples: 15 Mexica warriors in canoes circle a lake composed of 10 stylised waves at the centre of which the 10-stepped temple represents the island capital; distributed around each of the four towns at the corners of the panel, 5 Spaniards and 10 Tlaxcalans prepare to converge on the enemy. At one level, the panel functions as a secondary “title-page”, again in the native tradition,⁵³ which sets the scene for the narrative of the defeat of Tenochtitlan that follows - from the Tlaxcalan point of view, probably the most important event in the history of the conquest. It also makes the point that massive Tlaxcalan assistance (10) raised the strength of Cortés’s army (5) to equal that of the Mexica (15). And, with understandable enthusiasm to reach their much-loathed enemy, we see the Tlaxcalans striding ahead of the Spaniards, some entangling their legs with the horses’ hoofs as if trying to hold them back. Such graphic exaggeration may have been intended to emphasise the willingness of Tlaxcalan warriors to participate in the Spanish project, but here it is perhaps the very “nativeness” of the panel itself that also comes into play: the attack on Tenochtitlan is between “us” and “them”, the Tlaxcalteca and the Mexica.

In the *Codex* version (f. 272v, 69), the quincuncial composition and toponyms were retained —were copied— but the internal structuring was ignored completely, the one-time narrative and political statement being reduced to a jumbled array of warriors and Spaniards assembling for battle. In addition, this time the Spaniards were placed to the fore, thereby losing an all-important reference to Tlaxcalan commitment to the Spanish cause, not to mention their eagerness to get at the enemy. Two artists worked on this panel, the one drawing the horse to the bottom right, the other, a sketcher with considerably less expertise in equine representation, apparently taking charge of the remainder and therefore probably responsible for its deconstruction.

Oversights such as these would not be expected of any artist working in the native tradition and, again, if prepared in Tlaxcala it seems unlikely that the Indian *Cabildo* (or even Camargo) would have employed artists who could not accurately copy a pictographic text. However, if the clean copy was destined to be prepared in Spain, it is

⁵³ The title panel of the *Lienzo* is also constructed in this manner. See Brotherston (1992: 90-96) on native usage of the quincunx as a literary device.

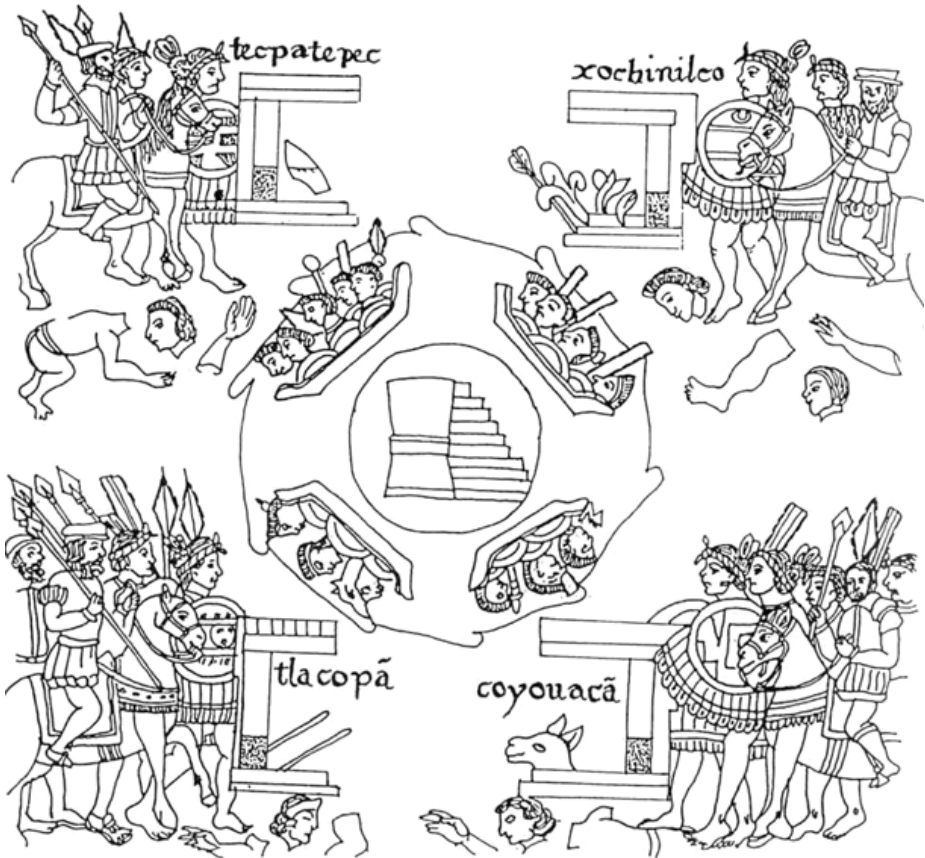
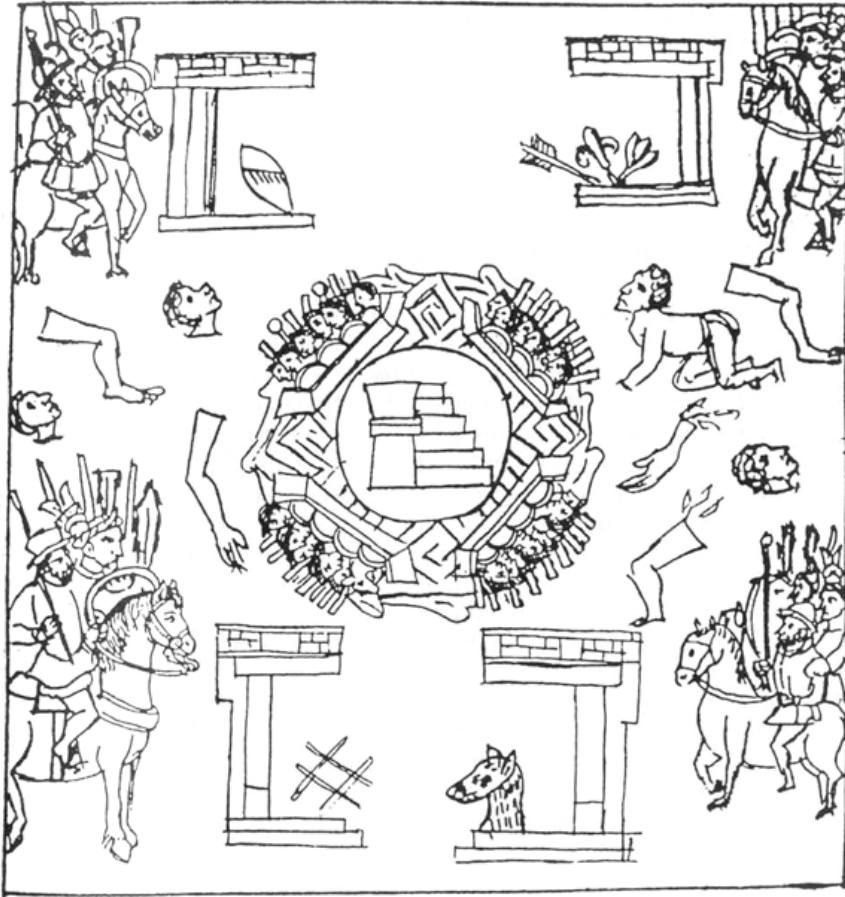


Fig. 7. *Lienzo de Tlaxcala* 42: The Tlaxcalan-Spanish attack on Tenochtitlan
(redrawn after Chavero 1979)



*Entrada por la calçada de nra s^{ta} de Guadalupe llamada tequapayme
y tenayucan para la conquista de Mexico*

Fig. 8. *Codex Tlaxcala*, f. 272v: The Spanish-Tlaxcalan attack on Tenochtitlan (reproduced from Acuña 1981, with kind permission of Glasgow University Library)

possible that Camargo found himself with no choice in respect of artists available to complete the work. This argument might seem purely conjectural, but *Codex Tlaxcala* evidences a cloud far more threatening to the Tlaxcalan project than a few glyphic omissions: together, some of those who participated in copying the pictographic history succeeded in nullifying its most important internal message.

War Games?

Over the course of the sixteenth century, Tlaxcala's Indian government sent five embassies to the Spanish Court (and, possibly, two despatches in the form of pictographic histories, one of which may have been a copy of the *Lienzo*) with the purpose of securing royal favours for the city (Gibson 1967: 158-181). The strength of these appeals lay almost exclusively on Tlaxcala's unerring role in the conquest of Mexico. In this respect, the *Lienzo* is highly subjective in its presentation of historical fact, omitting all references to the Tlaxcalans' initial and hostile reaction to the Spaniards' presence in their territory and passing over completely the participation of other native allies from Cempoala, Cholula, Huejotzingo, Chalco, and Texcoco in the military conquest itself. Camargo also pursued the Tlaxcalan historical tradition, reducing the early hostilities to a brief skirmish provoked by Otomi frontier guards and acknowledging only the participation of the Tlaxcalan 'amigos' in the process of conquest and pacification of the land (*Descripción*, ff. 184r; 198r, 200r-v, *ad passim*). In both the *Lienzo*'s and the *Codex*'s pictographs, native warriors fighting alongside Spaniards are also restricted to Tlaxcalans and the occasional Otomi conscript.⁵⁴

Across the long series of battle panels, the *Lienzo* reflects well Tlaxcala's privilege-seeking agenda in a second way, although without entirely stealing the limelight from the Spanish effort: diplomacy would have demanded that the conquest be acknowledged as a Spanish triumph, but the point had to be carefully made that this was mainly so because of crucial Tlaxcalan support. Of the forty-seven panels which employ the fixed composition described earlier, six (13%) show Tlaxcalans and Spaniards standing together on an equal line of attack.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Otomi peoples lived alongside Tlaxcalans within Tlaxcala's territory. Valued for their ferocity in battle, their warriors were conscripted to fight for whichever group controlled the territory they inhabited. In the *Lienzo* and *Codex*, Tlaxcalans are identifiable by their distinctive twisted headbands; the Otomis wear their hair drawn up at the tops of their heads.

⁵⁵ My criteria here is based on an even graphic line-up of horses' noses or hoofs; Tlaxcalan legs, feet, or shields.

Sixteen further panels (34%) magnanimously place the Spaniards to the fore. Overall credit is nevertheless given to Tlaxcalan warriors: twenty-five panels (53%) boast that it is they who surged ahead of the conquistadors to do battle in the name of the Spanish king.

Here there may be secondary readings at issue in terms of old Tlaxcalan relationships with the towns besieged, but when we come to look at the same point made in the *Codex* a very different story unfolds.

In much the same way as the *Codex* version of the attack on Tenochtitlan gave pride of place to the Spaniards, the forty-seven cognate battles panels now give the Spaniards the overall glory. At Aztaquemecan, Tonayxpan and, Temalacatitlan (ff. 263v-264r; 51-53), for example, the Tlaxcalans who led the attack in the *Lienzo* (Chavero 24-26) have been pushed to the rear of the Spanish-mounted horses, or their presence eliminated completely. At Zacatepec (f. 267r; 58), where Tlaxcalans and Spaniards were originally on an even footing (Chavero 31), it is the mounted Spaniards who lead the charge. At Pánuco (Chavero 50), the omission of a leading Tlaxcalan and a second's shield again places the Spaniards ahead (Figs. 5-6). (Note the precision of the line-up of shield and nose in the *Lienzo* version.) As if in artistic retaliation for changes made in favour of the Spaniards, the reverse occurs: at Quecholac (Chavero 32), an armour-clad Spaniard originally leading the fray has been omitted (f. 267v; 59); at Tepeyacac and Ayotochcuitlatlan (Chavero 34, 51) it is the Tlaxcalans who have moved ahead of the horses (ff. 268v, 277r; 61, 68). In the cases where omissions occur, none can be attributed to lack of space which may have resulted from the decision to convert the original drawings to portrait format; as noted above, the transformation did not impinge on internal space.

By the time this chapter of the *Codex* was completed, the distribution of graphic advantage stood as Spain 25/47 (53%), Tlaxcala 19/47 (40.5%), equal footing 3/47 (6.5%). The Spaniards had overtaken the Tlaxcalans in fifteen additional panels and moved forward to gain equal footing in two more ($17/47=36\%$). Six of their *Lienzo* advantages were however lost to the Tlaxcalans ($6/47=13\%$) but in the native camp these apparent gains were offset by their fifteen losses and the two Spanish promotions. Twenty-four panels remained unchanged (Spain 10; Tlaxcala 13, equal footing 1).

A percentage breakdown of the remaining forty-eight battle panels exclusive to the *Codex* shows that the ratios are very similar, suggesting that they too had been modified against the original source material. Twenty-three (48%) battles give glory to the Spanish effort, twenty (42%) to the Tlaxcalans, while five (10%) place both on an even

footing. By applying the same shift rates occurring between the cognate panels of the *Lienzo* and the *Codex*, we can therefore hypothesise that eight (36%) of the twenty-three pro-Spanish panels had originally favoured the Tlaxcalans or placed them on an even footing, while approximately three (13%) of the twenty pro-Tlaxcalan panels had favoured the Spaniards. The possible original distributions from which this section of the *Codex* was copied were, then, Tlaxcala 25/48, Spain 18/48, equal footing 5/48.

It is virtually impossible to pinpoint the order in which the figures were produced on any of the *Codex*'s panels. As often occurs on other native pictorial manuscripts of the period, some pages still carry the remains of lightly sketched outlines to the sides of their figures, showing that the compositions were drafted, probably in charcoal, before being inked in. This being the case, and with different artists working on different areas of each pictograph, the opportunity would have arisen to move horses or warriors permanently in one direction or the other, depending on the order in which the figures were finalised. On ff. 297v-298r (119-120), the feet of a Tlaxcalan warrior standing behind a, once-rearing, horse were drawn in at a lower level than the horses' hind hoofs, the artist responsible thereby ignoring an original baseline dictated by these hoofs throughout the remainder of the drawings and, in the process, giving the animals an uncharacteristic "bouncing" movement. Here it would appear that the horses were inked in first. In these two panels the Tlaxcalans lead the advance and are on an equal footing with the Spaniards respectively, but given their exclusivity to the *Codex* no conclusions can be drawn with respect to any intervention on the part of the artists involved.

In panels shared between the *Lienzo* and the *Codex*, what we may call for the moment "pro-Spanish" and "pro-Tlaxcalan" batches can be found. Folios 263v-264v (51-53), for example, are from the same hand and all change the Tlaxcalan advantage to a Spanish one. The artist responsible for the Tlaxcalan warriors on ff. 287r-288v (98-101) appears to have kept them in the lead by depicting their shields thrust forward in front of the horses' noses and hooves. A change of hand then occurs, with the two following panels (ff. 189r-v; 102-103) showing very awkwardly drawn warriors pushing ahead of poorly proportioned horses to, this time, gain new Tlaxcalan victories. The same artist also drew the warriors in the next panel (f. 290r; 104), but a different hand portrayed the horse and the Spaniards took the day.

If we accept that the corpus of drawings in the *Codex* constitutes a native pictographic text annexed to the *Descripción* to complete and enhance the history of Tlaxcala's role in the conquest, these changes

must be seen as highly significant. It is, of course, most unlikely that the king would have noticed the distribution of Spanish and Tlaxcalan action across the drawings (the European eye could not have seen them as other than illustrations of Spaniards and Indians doing battle together), but from a native perspective—that is, in a native reading which would have encompassed the whole text—Tlaxcalan participation in the conquest had been very clearly demoted to a secondary level.⁵⁶ The question remains, however, whether the changes can be attributed to the circumstances under which the *Codex* was prepared, where heavily acculturated artists no longer fully recognised the internal readings of the material they were copying, or whether they represent a deliberate attempt on the part of some of the artists present to reduce Tlaxcala's prestige in the eyes of the Spanish king and/or promote the heroism of Cortés and his men.

While many native scribes did gradually assimilate European artforms to the detriment of their own (that is, they became “artists” in the European sense), appropriation and manipulation of those forms to continue expressing ideas and concepts in a traditional manner is also a common feature of indigenous pictographic texts produced across the sixteenth century and beyond. As a process which, rather than illustrating the impact of the cultural imposition, openly acknowledges the cross-cultural experience in play, the internal precision of texts of this type was not lost: size, numbers, and positions of figures, together with careful proportioning of overall composition remained crucial devices for their correct reading. Despite the heavier influence of the invader's art in the *Codex's* versions of the pacification battles, they all nevertheless follow the structure of the *Lienzo* panels which, in turn, adhere to Central Mexican graphic conventions employed in battle narrative. Opposing sides (usually represented as two single warriors)⁵⁷ are identified ethnically by costume and/or hairstyle, and shown in confrontation—rather than in battle enjoined—alongside a glyphic toponym naming the besieged locality. Physical contact is restricted to the vanquished being grasped by the hair, trodden on by the victor, or pierced with arrows, again standard conventions deployed to narrate defeat. Almost always authored from the victors' camp, texts of this genre not surprisingly present their warriors as overpowering,

⁵⁶ Accumulative repetition of the same word or phrase in an oral reading (for example, ‘at Xochipilla the brave Tlaxcalans surged forward; at Apçolco the brave Tlaxcalans surged forward; at Xonacatlan, the valiant Cortés surged forward; at Tlaltenapa the brave Tlaxcalans surged forward’) would provide the listener with an overall understanding of the extent of individual action of one or more parties.

⁵⁷ As noted earlier, the group compositions are European in origin.

menacing, and unscathed.⁵⁸ Neither the *Lienzo* nor the *Codex* deviate from this pattern: the pacification panels are each divided into two sections occupied by the opposing factions, the losers more often than not given less space and pushed up against the right-hand side of the panel. Ferocious and in control at all times, Spaniards and Tlaxcalans (identified by costume and, also, physiognomy) suffer no casualties, and despite the dismembered bodies of the besieged parties, one-to-one combat is not depicted. Defeat is represented by the bodies of the vanquished trampled on by horses' hoofs, or pierced by a Spanish lance. These latter details would appear to inform the reader that while both Tlaxcalans and Spaniards represent the winning side, the joint victory is made in the name of Spain.

A further important consistency which obtains between the cognate panels of the *Lienzo* and *Codex* (and therefore, we must assume, the source of the remaining *Codex* panels) is that where not omitted—the same pose and costumes of native figures occur in both, even though the figures themselves may have been shifted forwards or backwards on the battle line. The elaborate insignias strapped to the backs of the Tlaxcalan warriors were retained and redrawn accurately on most of the panels, often reappearing in the additional *Codex* panels.⁵⁹ Shield designs do change occasionally, but all still carry the standard motifs depicted on prehispanic weaponry.⁶⁰ Even in a process of straight copying, such accurate and painstaking treatment of warrior dress and battle regalia does not suggest the hands of artists who did not understand their sources, or were inventing imagery as they went along. Evidence of a lack of understanding of the glyphic toponym system might be present in some of the *Codex's* drawings, but it is far from converting Indian pictographs into European pictures. It is possible that those responsible for the changes may have been restricted to drawing horses and Spaniards but, again, with so many of the cognate panels affected and, hypothetically, a similar proportion in the remaining panels, this

⁵⁸ See, for example, the prehispanic Stones of Tizoc and Moctezuma which ostensibly record Mexica conquests made under these rulers' reigns, or ff. 26v-28r of the post-conquest *Codex Telleriano-Remensis* which narrate Aztec migratory conquests of Huastec territory to the north of the Valley of Mexico.

⁵⁹ The exception is the battle of Xayacatlan ("place of the face/mask") (f. 288v; 101), which bears little resemblance to the *Lienzo* version (Chavero 74). The plumed conical insignia elaborated with crescent moons carried by the *Lienzo's* Tlaxcalan warrior does occur in the early part of the additional *Codex* panels, however, specifically at Nantzintla ("place of revered mother") (f. 293v; 111). The proximity of these two panels, together with the fact that their toponyms are very similar (a human head) might suggest another toponymic oversight on the production line.

⁶⁰ Identical shields and insignia are listed in the native-produced *Matrícula de Tributos*, *Codex Mendoza* (ff. 19r-54r), and *Códice Matritense de la Real Academia de la Historia* (ff. 72r-80r).

would suggest rather too many non-specialist artists in the workshop. The greater part of the artists working on the drawings was, then, native-trained and would not have been prone to making so many mistakes. From this we must deduce that the changes were deliberate.

With the drawings produced in pro-Tlaxcalan and pro-Spanish batches, the fact that some of the *Codex* artists did try to reverse the tactical play also suggests an awareness on their part that such modifications were being made: that the history of the conquest of Mexico, as originally authored by Tlaxcala, was being re-written. As so many colonial native histories attest, old enmities and disagreements over pre- and postconquest events did not disappear under Spanish rule any more than did ethnic loyalties and notions of identity. *Codex Tlaxcala* therefore appears to reveal the presence of both Tlaxcalan and non-Tlaxcalan artists in the workshop, where the actions of the latter should not be seen as specifically pro-Spanish but directed at lessening Tlaxcala's prestige in the eyes of the Spanish king. In this manner they were exacting revenge on the city for its self-oriented opportunism within the colonial system.

History may yet throw more light on the ethnic make-up of Camargo's artists and how they came to be at the Spanish Court, but the *Codex* carries one further small graphic change -with major implications- which offers a final clue to the ethnic identity of at least one of the scribes present.

The murder of Moctezuma II, as he tried to pacify his subjects following Pedro de Alvarado's massacre of the festival of Toxcatl, remains one of the greatest mysteries of the conquest, some chroniclers placing responsibility on the Mexica, and others on the invader.⁶¹ Given Tlaxcalan hatred of the Mexica, and their projected loyalty to Spain, the *Lienzo* (Chavero 15) understandably narrates this event by showing the *tlahtoani* standing on the roof of his palace accompanied by two servants; stones are hurled at him from below while one of his own warriors leaps towards him in defiance (Fig. 9). In the meantime, a brave Tlaxcalan leads Cortés and his company —returned from a journey to the coast— into the seething city. Conveniently passing over the reason for the uprising, Camargo also attributes the ruler's death to the Mexica (*Descripción*, f. 201v) and his copyist dutifully wrote in the gloss beneath the corresponding pictograph: 'Death of Moctezuma by a blow from a stone delivered by his own [people]...' (*Muerte de Motecumatzin de una pedrada que le dieron los suyos...*) (Fig. 10). But the panel's artist had had other ideas. Perhaps not surprisingly, he removed the Tlaxcalan war-

⁶¹ Anderson & Dibble (1975: 65, n.1) offer a good listing of sources in this respect.



Fig. 9. *Lienzo de Tlaxcala* 15 (det.): The death of Moctezuma
(redrawn after Chavero 1979)

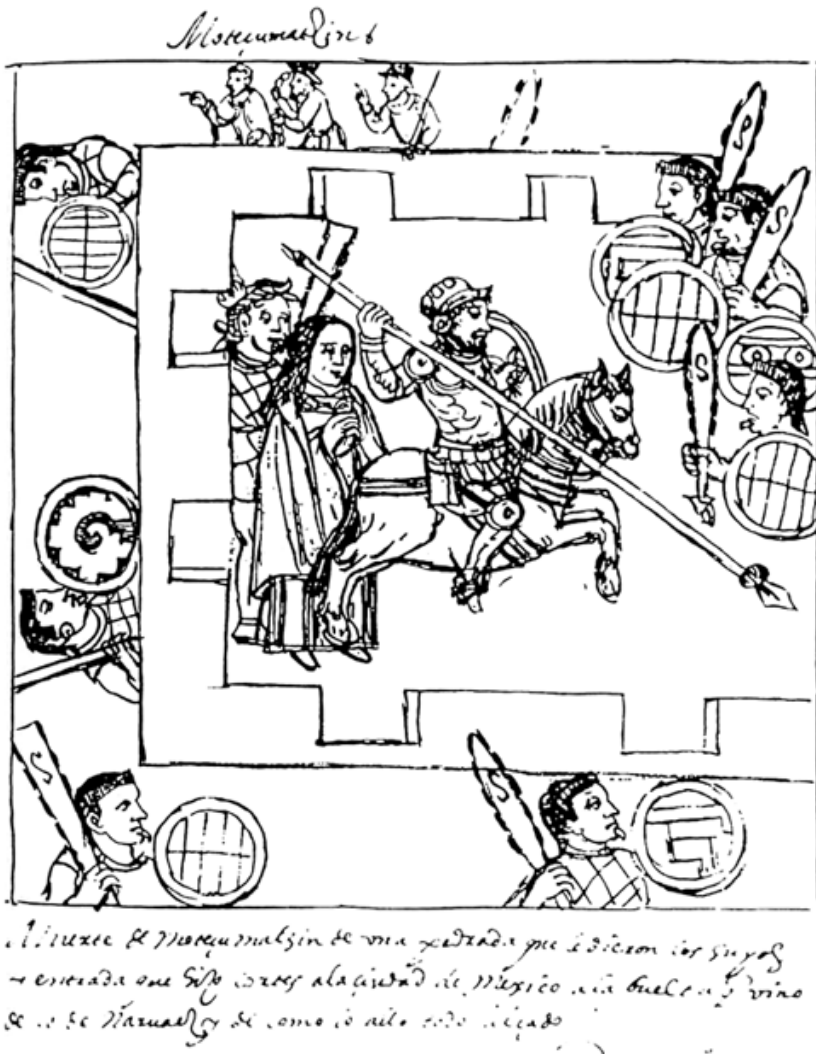


Fig. 10. *Codex Tlaxcala*, f. 259r: The death of Moctezuma
 (photo courtesy of Glasgow University Library)



Fig. 11. *Codex Tlaxcala*, f. 259r: The death of Moctezuma (det.)

rior, but he also omitted the flying stones. He showed the Mexica warrior turned away from Moctezuma, thereby offering no threat, and transformed the native servants into bearded, hatted Spaniards, one of whom raises a heavy chain to the back of Moctezuma's head (Fig. 11).⁶²

There can only be one explanation for this extraordinary intervention: that this artist identified himself with the Mexica. He may have been one of several who accompanied a larger native embassy from New Spain, to include delegates and scribes from Mexico City and elsewhere, these also being the men who worked alongside Camargo's Tlaxcalan scribes in the preparation of the pacification panels and, probably, other chapters in the *Codex*.⁶³ In removing the Tlaxcalan warrior from the text, this disaffected artist was openly adhering to the agenda of diminishing Tlaxcala's role in the conquest; in identifying Moctezuma's assassins as Spanish, he also seems to have been attempting to state his own people's case thereby, perhaps, exonerating them from a legacy of regicide.

Had Camargo been supervising the preparation of the *Codex's* pictographic history at all carefully, he could not have missed —nor, indeed, permitted— such an important change to the accepted version of the conquest, especially as the manuscript was destined for the King of Spain in person. But the anonymous copyist must have seen it as he wrote '*Moteçumatzin*' with a flourish over the doomed *tlahtoani's* head, thereby ensuring that a European eye would be drawn directly to the small detail at the top corner of the panel. What was his purpose? Is it possible that, as the non-Tlaxcalan he appears to have been, he also identified himself with the Mexica? Whatever the answer to this final question is, Tlaxcala's trusted friend, Diego Muñoz Camargo, and his small group of loyal artists, had now been irrevocably outplayed by a larger contingency of unforgiving enemies.

Epilogue

In 1585 Camargo returned to Tlaxcala, his mission completed and, it would seem, successfully so. He himself was to enjoy certain additional colonial privileges such as land grants (Miller 1997: 44) and received other special honours from the city's *Cabildo* (Mörner & Gibson 1962:

⁶² The chain may well have been part of Moctezuma's treasure which the Spaniards divided up amongst themselves. See *Lienzo* panel 11 where Moctezuma appears on the roof of his palace carrying the same chain, and 13 on which two Spaniards are depicted squabbling over a similar object.

⁶³ The 1528 Tlaxcalan envoys, for example, were accompanied by a group of Mexica nobles related to Moctezuma II (Gibson 1967: 164). The retinues of Indian nobility undoubtedly included scribes.

564). Any further recognition of the role of Tlaxcala in the Spanish Conquest was, however, shortlived. Although in the year of Camargo's return, and as a direct result of the mission, royal *cédulas* granting Tlaxcala a new series of exemptions and immunities were signed (*ibid*), a definition was immediately invoked to nullify exemption from tribute payment (Gibson 1967: 175). The following years also saw the overruling of earlier privileges. In effect, what Tlaxcala had received as a result of its intensive push for royal favours over the previous decades was lost after the 1585 campaign (*ibid*: 176-181). Notwithstanding these events, there is nothing to suggest that the contents of Camargo's manuscript played any part in Tlaxcala's fall from favour. After 1580, and with the initial era of exploration and settlement over, Spain embarked on a rigorous programme of imposing Crown authority over all her vast American domains, thereby securing political control and reaping the richest rewards possible. Tlaxcala became but another source of native tributary income.

It is not known if Philip II ever came to read Camargo's work. In the last decade of the sixteenth century, the New World historian Antonio de Herrera did consult the manuscript, writing in a series of marginal notes on the alphabetical *Descripción* (Acuña 1981: 13). The absence of similar annotations on the pictographs would indicate that they were of no interest to him in his quest for history: like its proud peoples, the native word had been consigned to the oblivion of time.

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