

**MUSEUM
OF NATURAL
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HISTORY**

Two Pictorial Documents from the Colonial Period in Mexico

A Guide and Commentary by Don E. Dumond



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Acknowledgments

First of all, it must be noted that photographs of the copies of the two *mapas* held by the University of Oregon Museum of Natural and Cultural History, the subject of the present guide, and of which a selection is reproduced here, were by photographer Jack Liu, to whom the museum is indebted for the uniform high quality of the work. In addition, selections of his photographs were delivered to certain other locations (and individuals) in Mexico, as is indicated in the Prologue of this bulletin below.

We are also indebted to Dr. Stephanie Wood, a major force in the Wired Humanities Project of the University of Oregon. Dr. Wood has also been an effective go-between, connecting the museum to interested people in Mexico (as is also indicated in the Prologue of this bulletin). Dr. Wood has her own history of involvement with documents of the colonial period in Mexico. Notably, sometime before she moved to Oregon (in the late 1980s) in a research visit to Tulane University she became aware that they held a copy of the *Mapa de Cuauhtlantzinco*. Intrigued, she obtained permission and photographed pictures in that holding, and upon connecting with the Wired Humanities Project at Oregon she succeeded in incorporating these images into a “Mapas Project.” It was sometime later that she learned that the University of Oregon Museum of Natural and Cultural History also holds a version of that *Mapa*. Her Tulane photographs, then, illustrate what is evidently a separate copy of the *Mapa de Cuauhtlantzinco*, between which and the copy held by this museum close comparisons have not yet been completed. For those readers interest-

ed, as of the present writing the Tulane University version held in the “Mapas Project” can be opened via the URL http://mapas.uoregon.edu/mapa_single_intro.lasso?&mapaid=cuauh. Sometime after this, she incorporated photographs of the *Mapa de Mixtepec* in the “Mapas Project.” These can be accessed by the URL at http://mapas.uoregon.edu/mapa_single_intro.lasso?&mapaid=mixtepec. In addition to this, Dr. Wood, a student of the Nahuatl languages, has provided a number of communications regarding aspects of the text to follow, which are cited within it.

Of the staff of the Museum of Natural and Cultural History, we are especially indebted to Elizabeth White for professionalizing the original draft of Figure 3.1 herein, and to Kristin Strommer, for her untiring efforts in seeing the draft finally through to press.

Finally, I am grateful to two anonymous reviewers for helpful comments on the text of this bulletin. Although there were disagreements with some of the comments, simply because the reviewers approached the text as though it were expected to be an up-to-the-minute contribution to matters of the ethnohistory of Mexico, the aim of this bulletin has been to provide significant aspects of such a contribution, but with the additional expectation that a number of readers, perhaps even a majority, will be self-selected as a result of interest in the museum displays although with no prior knowledge of this complex social history. Hence, background to some localized civilizational developments are summarized more extensively than more professional readers may find entirely useful. We ask for their forbearance.

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Prologue

This brief report concerns two colonial-period picture documents from Mexico that are now in the possession of the Museum of Natural and Cultural History at the University of Oregon. Both concern historical matters of geographical import, both are termed *mapas* (“maps” in Spanish) but most strongly represent political statements.

The first of these treated, identified as the *Mapa de Cuauhtlantzinco*, is apparently one of at least a half-dozen known copies, or partial copies, of an older document now unknown, and concerns especially people said to represent the town of Cuauhtlantzinco, which is located on the central Mexican highlands somewhat more than one hundred kilometers (62 miles) southeast of the heart of modern Mexico City. The second, now designated the *Mapa de San Andrés Mixtepec* is evidently a single, original document that directs itself to the history of a small settlement in the state of Oaxaca, and at a point located well over four hundred kilometers (249 miles) southeast of Mexico City, and more than three hundred fifty kilometers (217 miles) from Cuauhtlantzinco. Both of these *mapas* are of evident interest to local inhabitants of the two areas, which led the museum some years ago to gift photographic copies to people of these areas, which were delivered in Mexico through the good offices of a museum colleague, Dr. Stephanie Wood, of the University of Oregon. The first of these towns was Cuauhtlantzinco (on modern maps spelled Cuautlancingo) which led a local resident and student, Alberto Sarmiento Tepoztecatl (his surnames repeating two of those connected historically to the *Mapa de Cuauhtlantzinco*, as will be seen in Chapter 2) to visit the University of Oregon in the fall of 2002 and present a talk about the local *mapa* to an audience in the museum. The second (largely a matter of bad roads) was delivered not to the very rural town of San Andrés Mixtepec but to a regional alternative, the Francisco de Burgoa Library in Oaxaca City (capital of the state of Oaxaca), a library with affiliations to the Museum of Oaxacan Cultures as well as to the Universidad Autónoma Benito Juárez, both located in the state capital.

As a pair, the documents—clearly of import for local aspects of Mexican post-colonial history—represent relatively untypical properties for holdings of this Oregon

museum, so it seems well to begin with a brief history of how they came to be in the museum collection, and to summarize efforts made to determine precisely both what it is they represent—in a historical sense—and also the ways they can be seen to relate to the time and conditions of their Mexican places of named relationship. To approach this, Chapter 1 unwinds to provide information regarding the comparatively recent discovery of the documents within the museum and then summarizes research that revealed how they came to the institution. It goes on to discuss the specific geographical areas and ethnic regions of Mexico to which the documents each relate and adds basic information regarding the substantial differences between the *mapas* in construction and physical appearances and then of their apparently much smaller differences in probable dates of actual creation.

Following this, Chapters 2 and 3—each of them devoted to a separate document—will delve at least superficially into the specific historical and ethnic backgrounds against which the documents themselves should be viewed, considering their differing geographical sources within Mexico. Each of these documents also focuses especially on matters of concern to aboriginal people of Mexico, rather than on those of overriding concern to their new colonial Spanish masters. As historical details emerge regarding each document and its milieu, questions can be raised as to why they were composed and completed at the dates that seem indicated by the evidence—dates that in both cases are more than a century after the actual Spanish conquest of Mexico was brought to completion.

Chapter 4, then, provides further examinations of historical details that bear strongly on these questions—especially on just why the documents were created at the time or times in which they evidently emerged. Finally, although there will be no attempt in this brief guide to present complete and fully satisfactory color reproductions of either of the documents, portions of them will be presented in hopes of stimulating interest in obtaining more direct views of the documents themselves. In later pages, additional information pertinent to each of the documents will also include relevant addresses of materials on the University website.

Chapter 1

Stunning Discoveries

The early seeds of this story were planted at the Museum of Natural and Cultural History (then simply titled Museum of Natural History) in the very end of the year 1942 or the beginning of 1943. For this is when the two documents were received, although almost immediately they were to become effectively hidden due principally to budgetary and staffing issues. The more active story took off almost exactly forty years **after** they had been received, this only in the early 1980s and shortly after the appointment of a new museum director; the remainder of the staff was then limited to graduate students.

The First Document

For it was in early 1983 that members of this student curatorial staff announced to the director that they had discovered a strange, rolled-up, unknown, and unlabeled canvas-like cloth several feet in length, on which were pasted lots of relatively small colored pictures on paper. This had been stashed in a cabinet without identification. The individual pictures represented people apparently doing different things, and with some kind of writing visible on the backgrounds of the scenes. As luck would have it, the director, a portion of whose student training had been in central Mexico, recognized differently garbed figures in the individual scenes as apparently representing, on the one hand, European soldiers of times gone by, and on the other, individuals who could presumably represent non-European natives of some sort. Indeed, in the written glosses in the pictures' backgrounds he recognized words written in Nahuatl—the language of the Aztecs—using letters of the Roman alphabet as in Spanish orthography.

Nahuatl, it should be said by way of early explanation, is the dominant language of the Nahua people, their Nahuatl language a subdivision of the larger Uto-Aztecan language family, members of which at the time of first European arrival in America were to be found from as far north as what is now southern Oregon, to as far south as points in Central America (see Campbell 1997:133-138). This Nahuatl sub-group of the family was itself aboriginally to be found confined from north to south within what more than seventy years ago was recognized as a cultural region of Middle America and designated *Mesoamerica* (e.g., Kirchoff 1943); this area was characterized among other things by the presence of a stratified social order involving an elite rank of leaders within an overarching and complex religious, economic, and political organization—more specifically marked by

urbanism, by public and professionally run markets, the use of a hieroglyphic system of writing, of positionally valued numerals, and with a complicated calendar system. The Nahuatl speakers, including the Aztecs, formed the northernmost of this Mesoamerica cultural area, located essentially at its northern edge, the more precise northern boundary of which was the fairly sharp divide between the relatively highly organized socio-cultural groups in the south (the so-called “high cultures”), and other Uto-Aztecan-speaking but hunting-gathering people or more rudimentary agriculturalists extending farther to the north. The southern edge of Mesoamerica, bordering on South America, was less abruptly demarked, both economically and linguistically. For to the south of Nahuatl speakers, but still within Mesoamerica, were to be found representatives of other substantial language families—Otomangue and Maya among them.

To return to the newly discovered document: With evidence for the presence of the Nahuatl language, plus the apparent European soldiers and others, it seemed almost like it could be a contemporary picture manuscript representing the Spanish invasion of Mexico by Cortés in 1519-21, although the individual paintings (each on paper) were done in what seemed to be European-style colors and with apparently European-style drawings of human figures—and, of course, with use of Roman letters in the Nahuatl glosses. Specifically, there were twenty-eight of these colored scenes, attached in three horizontal rows on the lengthy strip of canvas, which when rolled out was some three feet by twelve feet in size.

What in the world **was** it, specifically, and how in heaven did it come to be **here**?

Fortunately, despite wide reorganizations at the university, there were still enough individuals on staff with relatively long local memories that it was possible in interviews to glean at least hints. Among them, that in the past the Museum had from time to time received objects sent over to it by the University of Oregon Museum of Art.

Until the 1950s, the predecessor of the present art museum had been directed by its original founder—Gertrude Bass Warner—who with her husband had spent considerable time in the Orient, and who then as a tribute to his memory established at the University of Oregon the Murray Warner Collection of Oriental Art. Thus, when she received gifts to her museum of items she chose to regard as indicative of “natural history” rather than art, and especially as anything not “Oriental art,” Mrs. Warner was wont to bundle them up and send them to the university's Museum of Natural History (which had been established in 1936). Was this document the fruit of a referral of that sort, albeit one that



10	9	8	7	6	5	4	23	1
16	15	14	13	12	11	3	3	2
25	21		24	18	22	19	27	28

FIGURE 1.1. Representation of the Mapa de Cuauhtlantzinco held by the University of Oregon Museum of Natural and Cultural History. Above, photograph showing the twenty-eight color scenes as affixed to the cloth backing and as gifted to the museum. Below, diagram identifying the individual scenes by number as indicated in individual glosses or otherwise assigned by Starr (1898), with certain further simplifications.¹

must have received little attention when it was received by this forerunner of the present Museum of Natural and Cultural History?

Fortune smiled again, and some long-time associates of the Museum of Art were able to recall that among large gifts of various sorts—“oriental” and otherwise—a number were credited to the estate of one Frederick Starr, a former anthropologist not at Oregon, but who had been on the faculty of the University of Chicago.

By this time, a sixteen-volume set of *The Handbook of Middle American Indians* had been published (Wauchope, ed. 1964-1976) by the University of Texas Press. In volume 14 of that set is a substantial catalog of pictorial ethnohistoric source-documents credited to Middle America (Glass and Robertson 1975). Examination here led to a gratifying entry in the published catalog to the effect that Frederick Starr had indeed been involved with one certain Mexican picture manuscript, which he had photographed and presented as “The Mapa of Cuauhtlantzinco or Códice Campos” in a pamphlet published by the University of Chicago (Starr 1898). What is such a *mapa*? Although the word means simply “map” in Spanish, it is used more broadly to refer to documents that appeared widely in the first centuries following the Spanish conquest of New Spain (a.d. 1519-1521), and imparting historical details (real or contrived)

of the aftermath of conquest important to the now-subject native peoples—the stories told through pictures (one or many) somehow anchored to geography and inevitably carrying implied political statements told from the point of view not of the new Spanish rulers, but from that of the earlier native people.

A copy of the Starr pamphlet was obtained on interlibrary loan, and even with those dingy black-and-white prints in the 1898 publication it became clear that the colored pictures in our frame were versions of the same scenes as twenty-eight of the 44 reproduced by Starr! At least **that** question was answered: The Oregon set was, or was some portion of, the set labeled by Starr as the *Mapa of Cuauhtlantzinco*—not necessarily the identical set photographed by Starr, but at least **copies** drawn from the same **source**, wherever it might have been.

Where was this Cuauhtlantzinco? In the central highlands of Mexico, more specifically in the Valley of Puebla-Tlaxcala (elevation 7,000 feet or more above sea level) in modern Puebla state and located between the better-known centers of Tlaxcala and Cholula. It was also not far east of the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan—which itself was located on islets in Lake Texcoco, then the largest in an interconnected system of lakes (mostly drained after the beginning of the Spanish colonial period), and today the center of the oldest part of modern Mexico City.

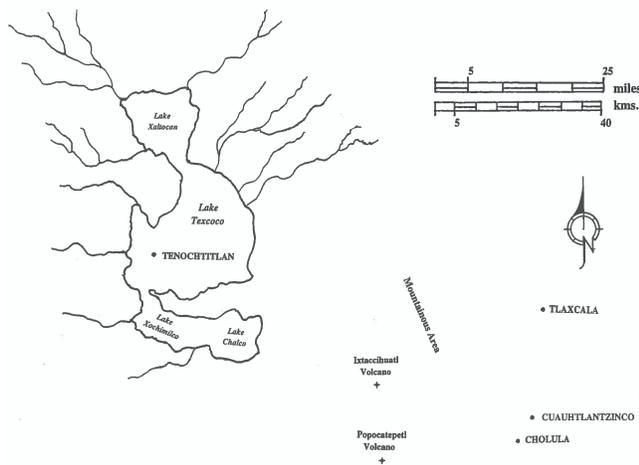


FIGURE 1.2. Location map of Cuauhtlantzinco, with the lake system approximately as positioned at the time of the Spanish arrival in 1519. (A geographically broader location framework appears as Figure 1.3, in text to follow.)

Who was this anthropologist Frederick Starr? An obituary in the major American anthropology journal provided an answer here (Cole 1934). In brief, Starr's life stretched from 1858 to 1933. Born in New York, he was educated in New York and Pennsylvania and received the degree of Ph.D. in 1884, at which time he was appointed to the teaching staff in biology at Coe College, located in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. With his interest shifting more to anthropology, in 1889 he assumed charge of the ethnology section at the American Museum of Natural History in New York. In 1892 he accepted a position at the newly formed University of Chicago, charged with the organization of a program in anthropology; there he served until his retirement in 1923. This information led to a posthumously-organized set of Starr's papers, library-archived at the University of Chicago (e.g., Starr 1894-1928), which revealed further details: Starr had shown himself an inveterate traveler and also collector, his research travels including fourteen trips to Mexico (between 1894 and 1928), one each to the Philippines (1908) and Central America (1916), two to Africa (1905 and 1912), three to Korea (1911 to 1916), and six to Japan (1904-1933), during the last of which he died of pneumonia. Collections of artifactual objects were especially heavy from Mexico and Japan, as the numbers of his visits to those countries would suggest, but while there he also collected data regarding the physical conformation of populations (see Starr 1894-1928; also Cole 1934).

What was the connection between Starr and Cuauhtlantzinco? At the outset of his published report, Starr (1898: 3) indicates that his inspiration was a footnote in a book by Adolph Bandelier (1884: 123, n.1) that had revealed the existence of the picture material at the

village of San Jose Cuauhtlantzinco (more usual present spelling "Cuautlancingo") near Cholula in the central Mexican state of Puebla, and attracted him to the idea of photographic reproductions. He quotes Bandelier's note almost in full:

These paintings, which are known by the name of *Mapa de Cuauhtlantzinco*, I wish to call *Código Campos*, in order to distinguish them from the old map of the pueblo, as well as to do justice to the venerable curate of Cholula, to whom we owe their preservation. They are of the highest importance for the history of the conquest of Mexico, and are executed in oil-colors, on European paper, filling two wooden frames. By direction of the Padre D. José Vicente Campos, who discovered the sheets some thirty years ago and saved them from decay, they were pasted on cotton sheeting and framed. Each sheet is 0.40 by 0.30 metre (16 by 12 inches) in size, and contains scenes from the Conquest—not badly executed—and portraits of aborigines. Each bears a text written in Nahuatl, which the Padre Campos translated into Spanish by the aid of the Indians themselves, and the translation he has added to the charts. The Indians claim that the paintings are of the sixteenth century, and that they were executed by one Tepoztecatl. All my endeavors, and those of the venerable priest, to secure permission to copy the mapa utterly failed. The natives actually concealed the pictures ... after having invited me to their pueblo to take a copy, and having permitted me to see them for a few moments only.

Bandelier's problems with the pueblo folk are the result of chicanery on the part of some other outsider to the village (see Hammond and Goad 1949: 73).² Starr himself, although welcomed to the village in 1895, nevertheless had his own problems there, but of a different sort.

Starr visited the pueblo in that year with a photographer. From Bandelier's descriptive footnote (quoted above) he expected to "see two frames, each 0.40 m. by 0.30 m. in size" (roughly 16 x 12 inches) and so had armed himself with a dozen 5 x 7-inch photographic plates. After a wait for the local people to produce the pictures, he says that,

four Indians appeared, each couple carrying a frame of stretched cotton some ten feet or so long and a yard high. Upon these were pasted forty-four pictures each of them the size indicated by Bandelier. One of them contained twenty-seven pictures in three horizontal lines of nine each; the other contained seventeen in two horizontal lines of eight each, with the odd one set crosswise at the right-hand end (Starr 1898: 4).

That is, Bandelier's "frames" were composites each holding multiple copies of pictures of the size Starr had expected. Although Starr's available photographic plates were used for overall exposures of the two composite sheets of pictures, the resulting miniatures of the 44 individual scenes were unsatisfactory for the reproductions he desired. A return visit was therefore scheduled, but while there for that first time he obtained copies of the

Spanish translations of the Nahuatl glosses that had been secured and copied by Padre Campos. An actual return visit, however, was not feasible for Starr until early 1898, when he found that a fireworks mishap in a fiesta during the preceding year had destroyed a portion of the pictures in one of the frames. The surviving pictures were finally photographed individually, the results providing most of the images in his 1898 report, which also included the Spanish translations of the Nahuatl glosses. Starr's published report, then, presents black-and-white prints of the original colored pictures, plus his earlier photos of the subsequently destroyed scenes, an English translation of the Spanish version of the Nahuatl glosses that had been obtained by Padre Campos, and also the text of the Spanish version itself.³

More of a description of the picture document held by the Museum of Natural and Cultural History will appear later in the present guide, but for the present a few remarks regarding preservation of the document and matters of its dating are relevant. First of all, it must be noted that this multi-pictorial document is not the only derived version in existence of what must have been an earlier original. Indeed, Starr (1898: 12) reported that villagers claimed that some agency of the Mexican government had once made a copy of the paintings, although he was unable to obtain further details. Even more to the point, however, the census of pictorial ethnohistoric documents included in the *Handbook of Middle American Indians* (Glass and Robertson 1975: 120-122), which was referred to earlier, traces indications of at least seven versions of the same document or fragments of it known at that date, as variously reported within the recent past. Starr's version is thus scarcely alone. Indeed, the use of paints and European paper for the pictures suggest that all of these were copies of some single earlier original.

The next question concerns the dating of both this copy and of what may be an original document. Neither Starr nor the priest Campos, who had discovered the existence of the document at Cuauhtlantzinco in 1835 and then arranged for a translation of the Nahuatl glosses into Spanish, had doubts. Although recognizing certain minor anachronistic elements, both saw the painted *mapa* as an immediate after-effect of the Spanish conquest—that is, as a direct rendition of events from very closely following the original Spanish campaign of 1519-21, estimating the creation of the document at somewhere around 1530 (Starr 1898: 8). This is despite the renderings of the pictures in bright oil colors on European papers and drawn in what seems rather easily to be thought of as a medieval European figural style. Despite the Nahuatl language of the glosses, there appear nothing like dates or other graphic elements in the well-developed modes such as were used by the Aztecs in times before, and for some decades after, the conquest itself; rather, the total written reliance is on

the imported Latin alphabet. Indeed, the Nahuatl text preserved in imported Spanish characters seems to have been as important to the story as were the pictures themselves.

There are, in addition, contextual matters that lead to questions (also discussed by Wood 2003, 2007). Among them, Spanish soldiers are pictured as having just arrived in Mexico (as had happened in 1519, well before Spaniards made direct contact with natives of the interior). The conqueror Cortés himself is shown in a picture and described as leaving Mexico for Spain, which he did not do for the first time until 1528, almost a decade after the conquest was complete. Further, Cortés is consistently referred to in glosses as the “*Marqués del Valle*,” a title conferred on him only when he was in Spain in 1529 during that same first return visit. Otherwise, references refer to Bernal Díaz del Castillo as the chronicler of the conquest (see Díaz del Castillo 1956), although his chronicle was not written until sometime in the 1570s—well after Díaz himself had settled permanently in Guatemala, a substantial distance from central Mexico—to be first published (and that in Europe) only in 1632.

Finally, there are elements in the Nahuatl of the glosses on the paintings themselves that speak of somewhat later times. Unfortunately, the language of the Nahuatl on this (University of Oregon) copy itself has not yet been directly subjected to complete study, but studies have been accomplished of other documents in Nahuatl among the many created widely throughout central Mexico as the local people adapted themselves to aspects of the Spanish legal system. The language used has been considered carefully in terms of loan words from Spanish (see, for instance, Karttunen and Lockhart 1976). Through the years the appearance of Spanish loans in otherwise fully Nahuatl texts progressed from nouns and adjectives to verbs and finally to grammatical particles. Of these last, especially noteworthy are said to be borrowings of Spanish words *sin* (“without”), *para* (“destined for”) and *hasta* (“until”), all incorporated within Nahuatl by sometime around 1650 (Karttunen and Lockhart 1976: 35). Of these, at least *hasta* has been spotted in the glosses of the present document, as well as some use of *ll* for the sound *y* (personal communication of Dr. Stephanie Wood; see also Wood 2003:81-83). Other such appearances can be expected to be discovered as local studies continue on the Nahuatl of the glosses. As of the present, however, it appears that this language study will further confirm a suggestion that the original document, of which the present is evidently a copy, dates from a number of years after the conquest itself. The non-language elements mentioned above would seem to be in agreement with those within the somewhat modified Nahuatl—with the most reasonable conclusion at this time being that the original document reflected in this *Mapa of Cuauhtlantzinco* dates from a century or so after the actual Spanish subjugation of Mexico.

Other questions also remain. For one, how certain are we that the document under consideration came to the Museum of Natural and Cultural History from Frederick Starr? For it seems clear from the text of his own report (Starr 1898) that at the time he made his photographic record, finally completed early in 1898, he did not himself possess a copy of the pictures such as this one. To resolve this question it seemed that examination of Starr's papers (Starr 1894-1928) at the University of Chicago should provide clues, for that archive includes fifty-seven separate field notebooks in diary form that meticulously document Starr's travels and collecting activities in various countries. Unfortunately, there was no certain reference in them to his having obtained a property such as the present *Mapa de Cuauhtlantzinco* held by the University of Oregon, and, indeed, review of the full sequence of notes revealed only one period on any of Starr's trips to Mexico that is simply lacking all diary entries. Tantalizingly, this one gap is for 1898, in that there is evidence of tearing in the appropriate notebook, and the period from June to December of that year is not covered by any pages at all. Could this be significant? Did Starr perhaps obtain this particular copy in that same period in which he actually completed his photographic record of the document held at Cuauhtlantzinco? Perhaps. Other than that, on a still later trip to Mexico, he mentioned in a letter to his mother, of December 20, 1904, that he had gone from Mexico City to the east coast, to "Jalapa and Xico, at which latter place I secured my long-labored-for Aztec MS." Was this a copy of the *Mapa of Cuauhtlantzinco*? Perhaps, again. Unfortunately, there are no other such mentions.

To pursue this same question a little further, given the lapse in the museum's records regarding receipt of the specific document, as well as indications of the existence elsewhere of other copies (with other potential donors) of presumably the same *Mapa de Cuauhtlantzinco*: the evidence here is circumstantial, but convincing. After his retirement from the University of Chicago in 1923, Starr and his sister, Lucy—neither of whom had ever married—moved together to Seattle. Sometime after Frederick's death (1933) Lucy began disposing of such collections as had survived him. Many of these items he had obtained in Japan, and as World War II came to a head in the early 1940s, relatively few museums in the United States were drawn to acquire Japanese objects. The University of Oregon Museum of Art may have been somewhat more tolerant, for it was in this connection that Lucy Starr and Gertrude Warner, of the University of Oregon Museum of Art, came into correspondence, with the Museum acquiring some objects obtained by Frederick Starr in Japan, especially among them a large collection of *nōsatsu*, the decorated cards Japanese pilgrims were wont to paste on walls of temples they visited (e.g., Camozzi 2016). It was also about this time that

Lucy herself fell ill. In late 1942 she laid plans to move into a nursing home. On November 30 she wrote the art museum that, "There will be only one more item sent.... It is a map ... from Mexico and is several feet long and about 1 yard wide...." This was followed on January 14, 1943, with, "Just before I left I sent you the last item ... some sort of map from Mexico...." Later that year, shortly before her death, "I would like it if you felt you could buy some of the items, but if you do not—I ask you to keep such as you can use and dispose of the rest."

So it was that a copy of the *Mapa de Cuauhtlantzinco* came to the University of Oregon, and into the collection of the present Museum of Natural and Cultural History.

The Second Document

It was only a few short weeks after the discovery of the *mapa* described above that a second one emerged, again unlabeled and uncataloged, from behind another cabinet door. This, however, consists of only a single picture, a sort of map painted in color on a single sheet of rawhide some 19 x 24 inches in size.

Unlike the case of the first (or Cuauhtlantzinco) document, however, the careful survey of Starr's field diaries at the University of Chicago did lead to information regarding this one. For in notebook 31, on page 41 (Starr 1894-1928, Box 21), appears a very clear report of Starr's purchase of the item in the city of Oaxaca on December 5, 1900, for the sum of 80 pesos. This city is capital of the present Mexican state of Oaxaca, located somewhat more than two hundred miles southeast of Mexico City (and some 2000 feet lower in elevation) and central to the Valley of Oaxaca, which is among the southernmost of the string of highland valleys that lead southeastward from the central highlands to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec.

Back to the purchase: the object was said by Starr's journal to be a "skin map" showing a place called "Cuixla"—evidently a reference to a contemporary town now written Cuixtla, or Santa Catarina Cuixtla, which is located somewhat more than sixty miles south of Oaxaca City and outside of the central valley complex of Oaxaca. This is only a few kilometers southwest of the modern town of Miahuatlan, the major settlement within the formal district of the same name, and in what is known as the Southern Sierra. It places the region of interest outside of the sphere of the heaviest Nahua occupation, while still within the area termed Mesoamerica. More specifically, it is within a region in which languages of the Otomangue group are dominant. These specifically include the somewhat distantly related languages of Zapotec and Mixtec, of which it is dialects of the former that are paramount in the Southern Sierra.

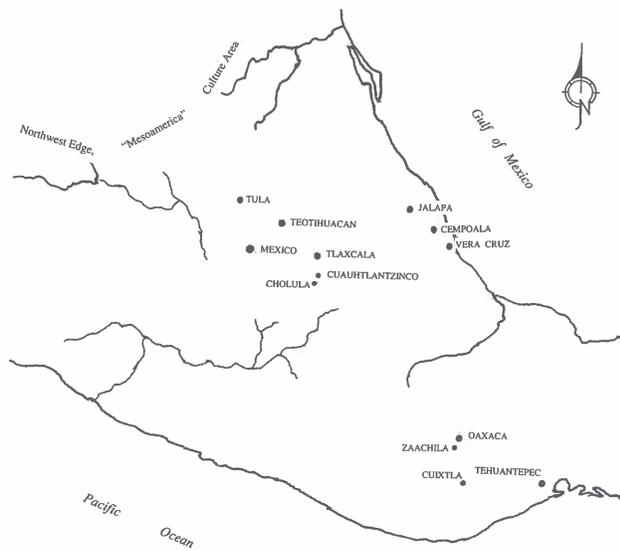


FIGURE 1.3. Outline map of central Mexico, showing certain locations mentioned in the text. Direct distance from central Mexico City (formerly Tenochtitlan) and the city of Oaxaca is an approximate 220 miles, or 350 kilometers.

On the single piece of rawhide on which the map is drawn there are directional markings (in Spanish) of *north*, *east*, *south*, and *west* on top, right, bottom, and left edges as indeed might be the case on a modern map. In accord with this, the geographic aspect of this document appears to have at least equal importance with history—that is, history told with pictures. On the lower and far left side is the drawing of a church and the nearby label “Cuixla,” and yet certainly not in a location on the “map” that would suggest any central emphasis. There are glosses, some in what turns out to be the native Zapotec language (written with Roman characters), although still more labels seem to be in Spanish. If it purports to be a map, just what is the place?

It is the top center of the document itself that attracts more attention, with a great swooping line that is labeled as representing a hill, and which bears the numeral 1 (as apparently to designate first in order of other numbered features appearing on the map). It is also apparently labeled *Mogote de Zachila Teozapotlan*. Turned into English with some correction toward modern spelling, this is “Hill [or possibly Mound] of Zaachila Teozapotlan”—Teozapotlan being the Nahuatl rendering of the more local Zapotec name Zaachila. The center of Zaachila, located within the southern extension of the central valley complex of Oaxaca, is familiar as the city state that reputedly had become an important capital of the Zapotec people sometime before the creation of the Spanish colony, and which has been characterized as the strongest Zapotec center in the region at the time the first Spaniards arrived in the area in 1521, only a few months

after the final surrender of Tenochtitlan in central Mexico (e.g., Chance 1986: 168).

Even more attention is attracted by an area a little above the document’s very center, with a rendition that clearly represents a building with a relatively embellished roof and with two (unlabeled and unnumbered) people within it. Some distance below this, and slightly below actual document center, is another, smaller, structure that just as clearly represents a church (with steeple), and near it appears the gloss “San Andrés.” So, some place with a church and named San Andrés, located near the center of the map, would seem to have some major importance. These hints led us to a modern map that covers the area around and especially east and north of Cuixtla.

On the modern map to the east and somewhat north of present Cuixtla is the present hamlet of San Andrés Mixtepec. Is this the *mapa*’s San Andrés? Apparently, for from the vicinity of the *mapa*’s supposed Church of San Andrés are drawn several departing roads. To the southwest, one is labeled (in Spanish) “Road to San Agustín,” and a town marked “San Agustín Mixtepec” now lies some 7 km in that direction. Pointed to the south-southwest is “Road to San Lorenzo” and San Lorenzo Mixtepec sits 4 km in that direction. More directly to the south is “Road to San Juan,” and San Juan Mixtepec lies 6 km in that direction. To the southeast on the *mapa* is represented a church that is marked simply “El Zapote,” but at 8 km from San Andrés in that direction is located present San Pedro Mixtepec. One is thus inclined to think all of these “Mixtepec” designations indicate some sort of affinity. Is this the case with all towns shown (other than Cuixtla, which is not a “Mixtepec”)? No, for to the northeast of San Andrés is a separate road marked “Road to Quiechapa,” and some 13 km in that direction lies a modern San Pedro Martir Quiechapa. So “Mixtepec” must have some sociopolitical significance? Is this, then, some indication of history? Evidently so, wrapped up in the geography and encapsulated in this document.

With the presence of illustrations of some three apparent church buildings (i.e., with small steeples) it seems clear that the map drawing itself is meant to represent conditions following the Spanish conquest with the religious conversion it implies. Is there further evidence of dating? There is indeed a signature near the upper left center, that of Gero[ni]mo Galban, labeled as Ynterprete Gen[era]l or “Interpreter General.” Relevant here, an index of material from the Archivo General de la Nación (Spores and Saldaña 1975) lists one Jerónimo Galván in connection with a position of interpreter at San Baltasar Chichicapa (or Chichicapan, a town now mapped as some 40 km north-northwest of San Andrés) in the year 1678, which may indeed point to the approximate date of the copy of the *mapa*—and which, given the presump-



FIGURE 1.4. Color photograph of the original Cuixtla Mapa (see Figure 3.1, below, for additional detail).

tion that the Spanish glosses may represent statements translated from native language elements earlier than the customary use of Zapotec words here written with Spanish lettering, also suggest this document to represent a copy of something actually created somewhat earlier.

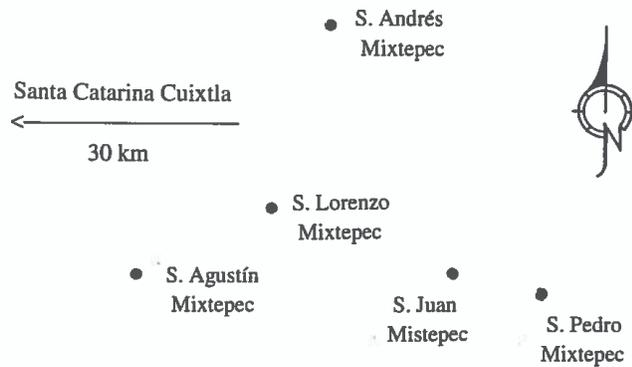


FIGURE 1.5. Diagram showing locations of features described with regard to Figure 1.4, above.

Indeed, as is the case with the *Mapa de Cuauhtlantzinco*—or at least of its Nahuatl glosses—the date indicated for the map itself would seem to be sometime after 1650—a century or somewhat more following the conquest itself. The two documents today, both presumably of the seventeenth century, thus call for some examination of conditions a century or so after the conquest that must apparently have demanded the production and preservation of map-like documents yielding historic—or at least putatively historic—information.

Summary

This chapter has described the discovery of two documents at the Museum of Natural History (now the Museum of Natural and Cultural History) in storage at the University of Oregon, and, after some study, the recognition of at least their approximate subject matter. Both were acquired from the former collection of Frederick Starr through the agency of his sister. The first of these documents, consisting of a series of twenty-eight colored drawings affixed to a single cotton cloth, clearly draws for its background an area of central Mexico leading from the coast to the vicinity of present Mexico City in the highlands. It is set in a time approximately that of the Spanish entry and conquest of Mexico in AD 1519-21, but it includes various internal elements that suggest the extant physical document was almost certainly brought into being at least a century following the conquest, while allowing the recognition that it could well be a copy of something created earlier. The second document, on the other hand, is a single painted map-like picture with elements in it labeled so as to suggest that it related to an area south of the present city of Oaxaca,

which is located in the Mexican state of the same name some 220 miles southeast of Mexico City. Although glossed text references refer to the occurrence of native religious conversions only slightly postdating the Spanish conquest of Mexico, the name of a supposed translator is affixed to the document, and other available historical records indicate him to have functioned in the region in the latter part of the seventeenth century—somewhat more than a century after the conquest itself.

That is, both of the existing documents embody evidence of having been created sometime in the middle to late seventeenth century, more than a century after the Spanish conquest, although both of them, in their turn actually seem to hinge on events in and around that conquest, and of course may be copies of somewhat earlier documents. Yet the local areas and situations covered by the two are quite different, one from the other. A question arises immediately from this circumstance: That is, what are the local historical backgrounds of the two? Are they somehow similar enough that each could have led to the local creation of its document for essentially the same underlying reason? These questions will be addressed in Chapters 2 and 3, to follow—the first with regard to the central Mexican highland background and its history in the region of Cuauhtlantzinco, the second with the local history of the region south of the present central Valley of Oaxaca. Clearly, as will be seen, both histories share some events and, indeed, to some extent ethnic identifications of the occupants. Yet the course of events in the two is strikingly different in some important ways. This will be explored further in the final Chapter 4.

Endnotes to Chapter 1

¹As is clear from Figure 1.1, the scenes, which were mounted on their present cloth backing in the mid-nineteenth century following their discovery by the priest Father Campos (as will be explained shortly in the text) were not placed in strict order as suggested by visible glossed numbers. Present simplifications also eliminate cases in which more than a single number seems to appear on a single scene. Further, note that the scene here numbered 23 in the lower diagram, in the colored version above actually bears no number at all; the number 23 was assigned by Starr on the basis of apparent subject content and picture chronology (Starr 1898: 27). Also note that presently two scenes bear the number 3 (see Starr 1898: 12-13).

²The details need not concern us here, although we can note that such “chicanery” was presumably a matter of repercussions from outsider’s attempts to abscond with local objects seen as having possible value. Similar behavior, of course, was likely responsible for the appearance outside of the villages (and local hands) of the documents reported here.

³Black-and-white copies of versions of the same twenty-eight scenes in the Museum of Natural History collection, but from the copy of the *Mapa de Cuauhtlantzinco* held at Tulane University, are reproduced in Wood (2007).

Chapter 2

The Central Highlands and the *Mapa de Cuauhtlantzinco*

As noted in Chapter 1, the aboriginal speech of the Nahua people of what is now the Mexico City region of the central Mexican highlands was Nahuatl, classified as a member of the Uto-Aztecan language family. At the time of these Nahua people's first contact with Europeans, languages of this great Uto-Aztecan family included forms of speech spread from southern Oregon in the north to Central America in the south (see Campbell 1997: 133-138). Among all of the recognized sub-divisions of the family, the region of greatest internal diversity was somewhere around the present Mexico-US border, a situation that has suggested to linguists that this area may have been the homeland of a more ancient (and as of now hypothetical) linguistic parent. When might such a Uto-Aztecan parent have existed? According to calculations of the length of times individual languages have been separated from one another using lexical comparisons in the system called glottochronology, the initial breakup must have occurred at least 5,000 years before present.¹

In any event, at the time of the Spanish invasion in 1519, Nahuatl was supreme among citizens of what is now central Mexico, which includes the location of Cuauhtlantzinco and the presumed place of origin of its *mapa*. The Nahua people, however (including the Aztecs), are thought to have been relatively recent intruders in the Mexican highlands, an interpretation of modern linguists that accords with accounts found in local traditional histories. Specifically, in the migration accounts associated with the Aztecs and related Nahua groups, their recent ancestors had arrived in the central region from the west and north.

If this was the case, did these immigrant Nahua encounter another people as they came south? Some archaeologists have suggested that inhabitants of Teotihuacan, the earliest urban center to rise in the central highlands (to be characterized briefly below) were themselves speakers of an ancestral form of Nahuatl (e.g., Millon 1981: 232). However, given broader studies of linguistic distributions (as, for instance, those summarized in Campbell 1997), it seems more likely that when Nahuatl-speakers arrived they instead met people speaking one or more languages of what is designated the Otomangean language family. Also, scattered and relatively isolated communities of languages such as Otomí and of that family are known at the arrival of the Spanish to have been present within the area that otherwise came under Nahua dominance. All told, degrees of differenti-

ation between separate language subgroups of Otomangean suggest that divisions within that family began to appear more than 6,000 years ago (e.g., selections in Josserand et al. 1984; see also Campbell 1997: 159; and cf. Marcus 1983d)—apparently earlier than such breakup is proposed for the earliest Uto-Aztecs. Indeed, it has been remarked that the Otomangean language family was perhaps the “oldest” such family group in Mesoamerica (Marcus 1983c: 4).

Whatever the time of the first arrival of Nahua people and their presumed encounter with Otomangean speakers in the central highlands, it appears that some Otomí-speaking peoples were displaced, or to some extent absorbed, by the new arrivals, with some enclaves remaining in the areas newly covered by Nahuatl speakers. Upon the arrival of the Spaniards, much later, additional remnants of presumably earlier Otomangean peoples were heavily scattered farther to the south. Such a group will be returned to more fully in the later discussion (Chapter 3) that is focused on the second and smaller colonial manuscript to be addressed here—a manuscript that deals with a region in the present Mexican state of Oaxaca, in an area of Zapotec speech of the Otomangean group.

In short, at conquest Nahua people and their Nahuatl speech were dominant in the central highlands, but it can be presumed that these people had largely displaced speakers of what may well have been one or more languages of the Otomangean family, leaving a major population of such speakers present farther to the south.

What Else the Newcomers Found

When the Nahua arrived in this highland area, at an elevation of some 7,300 feet (2,240 m) above sea level, it was to enter a region of internal drainage around a complex of interconnected lakes, most of them saline (see Figure 1.2, in Chapter 1). It was also to find an area in which their predecessors—whoever they were—had been responsible for a series of highly developed societies, in major part urban, that had been in existence for virtually a millennium altogether. The earliest, centered in the massive urban center of Teotihuacan, has been shown through archaeological research to have had an occupation span of around AD 150 to 750, its pinnacle extending especially from around AD 450 to 650. Extensive research surveys serve to date its beginnings from a couple of centuries before AD 150, as the young center became highly nucleated, soaking up previous farming hamlets and hinterland villages to the point that the city held some 80 to 90 percent of the entire population of the Basin of Mexico, with perhaps 90% of the city dwellers at that time being working farmers. Further explo-

sive growth brought the city to a possible population of 200,000 at its apex, making it one of the largest cities of the world at that period (around AD 500), its population still including an estimated 50 to 60 percent of the total Basin inhabitants (Sanders et al. 1979: 105-115). Much of this later growth, studies have suggested, was fueled both by developments of a religious hierarchy and by specialized craft production and trade. Favored by proximity to multiple obsidian sources, obsidian workshops were plentiful in Teotihuacan from the very beginning of its growth, and were then joined by ceramic productions and work with shell and cinnabar, and perhaps by work in organic materials (such as fancy work with feathers) for which little evidence has survived. In line with this, archaeological research suggests that the Teotihuacan period saw the major beginnings in its region of writing, of the calendar system,² and of associated ritual.

Within this period of florescence, Teotihuacan artistic motifs and trade objects spread widely throughout the Mexican and Central American region, leaving plentiful evidence of contacts from coast to coast (e.g., Santley 1989), in the highlands of what is now Guatemala (Sanders and Michels, eds. 1977; Michels 1979), and into the lowland area, home of the contemporary Mayan civilization of Central America. This is within what is now known as the Classic cultural period of Mexico and Central America (see also Smith 1998 for a brief outline of chronology from the viewpoint of the central highlands of Mexico).

From sometime around AD 750, however, its major center of Teotihuacan was largely abandoned, leading to a period (the so-called Epi-Classic) in which derivative and much smaller, decentralized, and independent “city states” were spread through the central Mexico region (e.g., Clayton 2016, Dumond and Muller 1972). In general, the presumption by a majority of linguists and prehistorians is that these events all predated the arrival of Nahua peoples to the central highlands. A reasonable guess, in line with comments above, is that the major earlier population of this region—including that of the time of the Teotihuacan ascendancy—was by one or more of the Otomangean peoples. Whether such people had a significant share in events of the Epi-Classic period is less clear.

A somewhat greater degree of centralization returned to the central highlands in the Early Postclassic period (AD 950-1150), with the rise of the so-called Toltec people at their center of Tula, located near the northern edge of the previous area of strong Teotihuacan influence. Of much less strength insofar as evidence of contacts is concerned, Toltec influence apparently lacked the territorial impact of its major predecessor. By somewhere around AD 1150 the Tula center itself was

largely abandoned, its urban population at least partially dispersed, with crucial elements evidently moving closer to the lake system. This is according in part to traditional history, for it was to Tula and the Toltecs that the Nahua of still later arrival looked as their great spiritual ancestors in the region, occasioning efforts by the newer Nahua rulers to obtain wives of Toltec descent to stimulate their own movement into an aboriginal nobility. One center at the lakes that is mentioned in a number of sources as including a population of people dispersed from Tula and mixed with some of the newer Nahua arrivals is Culhuacan (e.g., Smith 1998:46; see Fig. 2.1).

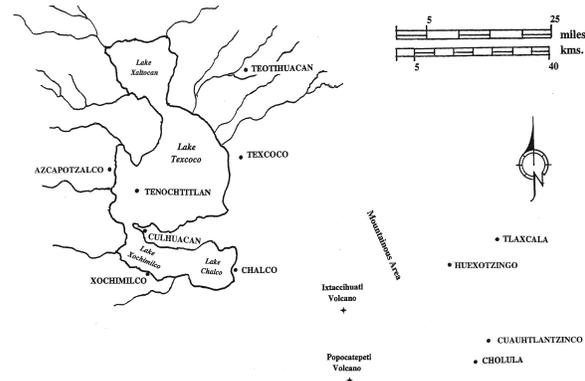


FIGURE 2.1. The region around the lake system, showing locations of certain settlements referred to in the present chapter (cf. Figure 1.2 in Chapter 1).

What, then, of the arrival of new Nahua from the north? linguists do not agree as to the time of the very earliest arrival in central Mexico of Nahuatl speakers, save for the likelihood that it occurred sometime after the fall of Teotihuacan. The largest body of traditional Nahua historical accounts refers to their having moved from a place called Aztlan (a word that led to the later term “Aztec”). One particular study (Smith 1998) summarizes dates of these later migrants as follows, based both on native traditional accounts and archaeology:

1. The first contingent of these migrants (presumably speakers of Nahuatl) arrived and settled the Valley of Mexico proper, including ancestral centers of Azcapotzalco, Culhuacan, Chalco, Texcoco, and Xochimilco, and other towns. This arrival seems to be dated about AD 1200. Competition between these towns, no doubt exacerbated by the presence also of survivors from the Tula period and perhaps from Teotihuacan as well, led to the growth of two regional groupings. One included towns of the eastern side of the lake system, the inhabitants known to history as the Acolhua, their area called Acolhuacan, within which the town of Texcoco was largely dominant. In the other grouping, on the western side of the lakes, the people were referred to as Tepanecs, their area called Tepaneca, with Azcapotzalco the major center.

2. Some years later, a second wave of Nahuatl speakers are thought to have found sites close to the lake system already occupied and so moved into surrounding valleys of more highland areas—sites such as some in the present state of Morelos and in the Toluca Valley, both areas to the west—plus Tlaxcala, Huexotzingo and no doubt Cholula to the north and east.
3. The third and last major group to arrive, this sometime around AD 1250, were the Nahuatl-speaking *Mexica*, who found all of the good lands settled and were forced to move into still less desirable areas. In the course of time they became allied with people of Culhuacan, whom they reportedly aided in fighting against the people of Xochimilco. They soon became estranged, however, as a result of events leading to the death of a Culhuacan ruler's daughter, which forced the Mexica to flee to unoccupied islets with the lake system—but which they would develop into their impressive center known as Tenochtitlan (Smith 1998: 44-45), or simply Mexico, i.e., “place of the Mexica.”³

Social Organization in the Highlands

What was the organization of these people at this time, before the Spanish conquest? Recent scholars are consistent in indicating that the common settlement was that called *altepetl*, a descriptive term based on a combination of the Nahuatl words *atl* (water) and *tepetl* (hill), pointing to a control of territory. At the level of leadership of any of these land-owning *altepetl* was a petty noble and ruler called *tlatoani* (plural *tlatoque*), below the ranking family of which were citizens of the township, who in most cases were members of smaller component units termed *calpulli* (or *calpolli*)—largely kinship-based and perhaps clan-like, but not exogamous (Lockhart 1992: 15-20). There were also some more complex *altepetl*, in which several otherwise individual *altepetl* could be allied, among whom leadership rotated on a regular basis among the component *altepetl* and their component *tlatoque* (as, Lockhart 1992: 20-26). One of the best known of these at the time of the Spanish conquest was the complex *altepetl* of Tlaxcala, composed of four component *altepetl*, each with its *tlatoani* and his capital town, and each of which served terms in the overall headship according to a fixed order of rotation (e.g., Gibson 1967: 1-6). Although it is remarked by some observers that the rather uniform presence of these organizational characteristics among the Nahuatl of central Mexico suggested that these, “migrants had experience with Mesoamerican Civilization long before they arrived in central Mexico,” (e.g., Smith 1998: 41), the contrast between them and their simpler linguistic relatives of northern Mexico and beyond would seem to raise questions. Indeed, linguistic studies focused on relevant as-

pects of Uto-Aztecan, although yielding some vocabulary indications of practices such as maize agriculture held in common between people of Southern and Northern Uto-Aztecan subfamilies, present nothing suggesting that practices of stratified social organization were similarly shared (see Shaul 2014: Chapt. 11). At this point it seems more reasonable to suppose the social practices involving inherited rank were acquired only after Uto-Aztecan (specifically Nahuatl) people arrived in Mesoamerica from the northwest.

Finally, it must be observed that the presence of a relative multitude of these independent, town-based, and land-owning political units within the central Mexican highlands was clearly conducive to competitive strife between settlements. As remarked by one student, these city-states, “interacted intensively with one another in both friendly and antagonistic fashions. Alliances between dynasties and trade between city-states were accompanied by warfare and aggression,” (Smith 1998: 42). Furthermore, during the period of Mexica hegemony when communities were reduced to subservience, as in the so-called Aztec “empire” (which at the onset of the sixteenth century stretched from Atlantic to Pacific), this did not include the total domination of the subservient centers; rather, this “empire” was based on the regular payment of tribute to the central power (Tenochtitlan) by local rulers who in general retained their positions of local leadership. Indeed, it was this latent tendency toward competition among the native people plus the continuation of local leadership that made possible the sixteenth-century conquest of Mexico by only a small Spanish military force. For no sooner had Hernán Cortés landed on the east coast in what would become the Mexican state of Veracruz than he was joined by local leaders and their forces in joyful rebellion against the Mexica of Tenochtitlan and their immediate allies.

The Story Told by the Manuscript of Cuauhtlantzinco

In addition to the pictures that are basic to the tale seemingly told by this *mapa* (associated now with a town whose modern spelling is Cuauhtlancingo), the translations of the background glosses provided to Frederick Starr to accompany his photographs provide further, often crucial, detail. For present purposes, when these seem to provide information helpful for interpretation they will be referred to, although as indicated above exact meanings of the Nahuatl text in many cases have not been verified, so the use of those translations here must be considered tentative. At the same time it must be pointed out that the account as a whole, although on the surface apparently reciting basic history of the first decades following the Spaniards' arrival and succeed-

ing conquest of Mexico, is in certain respects woefully incomplete and somewhat misleading.

As the Spanish historical accounts have it, for instance, the basic tale of the conquest proceeds from the arrival of Cortés on the eastern Mexican coast and his meeting with native people there, through his move inland and later contact with representatives from the center of Tlaxcala—which alone among local *altepetl* had stood firm against the Aztecs (i.e., the Mexica and their adherents), retaining their independence and freedom from tribute. With these Tlaxcalans the Spanish force had a brief but active battle before talking peace. Then, in a quick reverse, from Tlaxcala Cortés acquired supporting troops, as well as a few smaller numbers of reinforcements from other towns restive under Mexica rule and their forcible collection of tribute. The story then proceeds with a relatively triumphant entry by Spaniards into Tenochtitlan, abetted by Tlaxcalans, followed soon by the successful Mexica recovery of strength and determination and the violent battle of the Noche Triste that forced a Spanish retreat again to Tlaxcala. This led in turn to Spanish recovery and regrouping with Tlaxcalan support, then to violent battles around Tenochtitlan and the ultimate (but fairly rapid) consolidation of Spanish power and victory, tellingly aided by their (non-Mexica) aboriginal allies. There then ensued a period in which Spanish hegemony was rapidly extended to outlying regions of central Mexico, in which a focus was on religious conversion—or at least baptism—of subdued people.

In the Cuauhtlantzinco version, however, this basic tale is compressed and, in effect, highly edited. The official meeting of the Spaniards is shown to be with four Indian nobles, each of whom seems to represent a separate entity or *altepetl*; although the four are obviously allied with one another as though from a single place, there is no mention by name of any specific single center (such as Cuauhtlantzinco). This version with its four leading nobles, uniting as one to aid the Spaniards, is strikingly reminiscent of the Tlaxcala alliance with Cortés, although again in this case there is certainly no reference to Tlaxcala, which is geographically near but to the northwest of Cuauhtlantzinco itself.⁴ Thus, the first page of the Cuauhtlantzinco *mapa* shows four chiefs greeting Cortés, the four led evidently by Tepostecat (or Tepoztecatzin, in the honorific form); two of the other three are identified by glossed names as Sarmiento and Cencamo, the fourth, untitled in this image, but on the basis of the rest of the document is certainly Cacalotl or, honorifically, Cacalotzin. The background inscription seems to indicate that this (fictional) meeting took place at Jalapa, in what is now the coastal state of Veracruz. This location varies from Spanish accounts that indicate that direct contact of Cortés and his force with officials of interior people with whom they would be allied (those from Tlaxcala, in major case) came



FIGURE 2.2. *Mapa de Cuauhtlantzinco*, panel 1. Gloss translation (Starr 1898: 11): “This represents how we went to meet [the Spaniards who disembarked with Hernan Cortés] when they set forth from the pueblo at Jalapa and directed themselves toward Mexico; how I inquired about their religion; how they asked that I should guide them on the road, as in fact we did.”



FIGURE 2.3. *Mapa de Cuauhtlantzinco*, panel 5. Gloss translation (Starr 1898: 13): “Here is represented how finally the inhabitants of Malacatepec were converted and believed in God.”



FIGURE 2.4. *Mapa de Cuauhtlantzinco*, panel 9. Gloss translation (Starr 1898: 14): “This shows the place where those who were made prisoners were induced to believe and be baptized. I, alone, went to draw them forth from where they were preaching their idolatry and conducted them before the Señor Don Fernando Cortés as is here seen. They were worshiping wolves like those, the skins of which they wear as clothing. I am named Tepoztecatzin.”

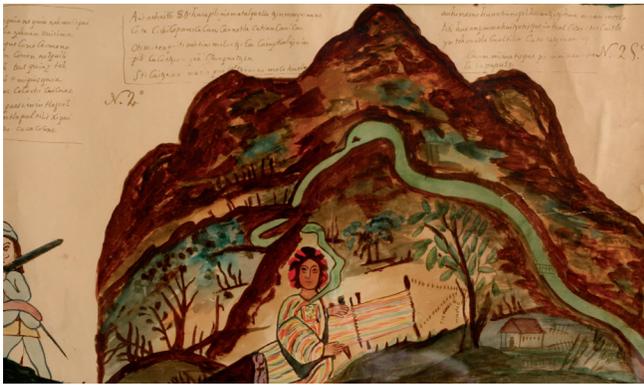


FIGURE 2.5. *Mapa de Cuauhtlantzinco*, panel 2. Gloss translation (Starr 1898: 12): “I am the Princess and Lady Matlequilletzin (who weaves every class of garments), and, although I am here with frequency, it is because here is the place where I was born, because here I bring the clothing with which our principal ladies clothe themselves, and because here is the land of Prince Cacalotzin, where he himself has built me a bath, as is shown in this picture made by his hand.”



FIGURE 2.6. *Mapa de Cuauhtlantzinco*, panel 13. Gloss translation (Starr 1898: 16): “I was baptized in this my beloved Pueblo, as is here shown to his Majesty, the Señor Emperor Charles V, who conceded to me the privilege of these my arms, as is stated in the royal grant which he condescended to send me, and which is preserved in my Pueblo.”



FIGURE 2.7. *Mapa de Cuauhtlantzinco*, panel 21. Gloss translation (Starr 1898: 18): “Here we honor and feasted them, when they divided the lands and assigned to each one of us what belonged to us, as is stated in the letters-patent of this grant.”

only after the Spaniards had moved inland from the coast for a significant distance.

Thereafter, the major thrust of the Cuauhtlantzinco tale (in terms of the numbers of images involved) is not focused on conquest of the Mexica, but is toward forcible religious conversion of the Indian peoples, in which adherents of the four native nobles are active. That is, battles are depicted not as steps in the conquest of Aztec Tenochtitlan, but as the rounding up of candidates for baptism at various local centers. Altogether, these coercive events occupy picture-pages numbered 3 through 12 of the document, as Figures 2.3 and 2.4 suggest.

Standing apart as an apparent diversion from this narrative, however, is the image given number 2 in the series. In this case, what is enumerated as the second picture of the set appears to be a digression from the basic tale, as suggested by the associated gloss quoted in the caption.

At this point, and no more than a year following Starr’s publication, a renowned German scholar of things Mexican, Eduard Seler, took issue with the picture and its gloss translation in a review (Seler 1899): “It is a picture of a jagged mountain with trees and bushes and a snake crawling up it. At the foot an Indian woman sits at a loom.” He cites the translation essentially as given by Starr, but Seler goes on to say that this Matlequilletzin is “a corruption of the name Matlalcueyetzin, the ‘Lady in the blue robe’, the old name of the goddess of water and of the mountain of this name, which is known today by the name Malintzin or Malinche.... This ... picture and the legend, therefore, represent that Cacalotzin built a bath for the goddess of water and of the mountain, i.e., there was probably a spring here enclosed in a basin.”

This suggested correction in identification of the goddess and the mountain is confirmed by other sources based specifically on sixteenth-century materials, indicating Matlalcue as designating both goddess and mountain in what is now the state of Tlaxcala (e.g., Duran 1971: 256, 466), with the same mountain being now identified as Malinche. One can reasonably point out, therefore, that this picture is suddenly intruded to show a situation that had existed locally *before* the arrival of the Spaniards—an image reflecting conditions before any thrust toward conversion to Christianity. Are there other images of similar apparent pre-Spanish vintage, essentially as part of a flash-back to preconquest times?

There is at least one other, in panel 14 (not reproduced here) of which Starr quotes the gloss as “Here is represented the place of the god Copistlin where our fathers and mothers gathered to sing and dance in the manner here shown.” Although the picture seems to per-



FIGURE 2.8. *Mapa de Cuauhtlantzinco*, panel 27. Gloss translation (Starr 1898: 20-21): “You, who have received this precious and distinguished document, this is the royal letters–patent of the grant of lands which he gave us, who have to instruct others by our example and by the Christian doctrine, which has taught us to embrace the faith we profess; greatly appreciate this gift, respect and love your Pueblo, instruct your elders and fathers; never fail in respect for my kin and relatives recognize in this document the title to my royal office and nobility, and to my landed property, which I merited by my sweat and efforts.”

mit its interpretation as a pre-Spanish event, there seems to be no clear reference in other available sources to any god of preconquest times with a name such as “Copistlin.”

Otherwise, the story in the glossed pictures carries on in a fairly straightforward and entirely post-conquest story. Pictures 13 and 15 through 20 concern not people from other regional centers, but rather baptisms of adherents of the four chiefs seemingly identified with Cuauhtlantzinco, all stating their new faith and admiring a figure of the Virgin of Remedies said to have been given them by Cortés. Figure 2.6, as an example, is said to show Tepoztecatzin accepting baptism, a picture claimed in the gloss to have been shown to the Spanish monarch, who rewarded him for his cooperation with the Spanish forces.

The account then proceeds to a feast-like gathering said to represent the formal assignment of lands to the people by the Spaniards, together with expressions of grief at word that Cortés was preparing to depart New Spain for Europe, interlarded with acknowledgments that Cortés had rewarded the Cuauhtlantzincans’ brave service (panels 21 and 22).

The picture story moves then to depictions of Tepoztecatzin accompanying the Spaniards toward the coast, followed by his showing of grief at their departure (23 and 24). The story then closes with Jacinto Cortés (Tepoztecatzin’s baptismal name) as he is recognizing his title of Cacique awarded for service (panels 25-26), and closes as he flaunts his new coat of arms and acknowledges his grant of lands by the Spaniards (Fig. 2.8).

So, what, finally, has been gained by the story? A recitation of loyal acts in support of the Spaniard invaders by people somehow linked to Cuauhtlantzinco. These acts were apparently limited to force applied to neighboring population centers to coerce surrenders to baptism, accompanied by conversions of the Cuauhtlantzincans themselves, and resulted in recognition of those acts by grants of lands and of personal status to the local leaders. As shown in Chapter 1, the document incorporating this story apparently came into existence sometime around 1650—a century or somewhat more after the conquest. And, indeed, since it was the military conquest of the Mexica in 1521 that was key to the change in hegemony on which hinge the actions depicted in the document, including the property distributions by the new Spanish rulers, are the events as depicted important enough to be reemphasized so long after the crucial events?

This question calls for discussion, which will be deferred to Chapter 4, below.

Endnotes to Chapter 2

¹One must note that although the system is used by many historians to estimate how long specific languages have been divided from one another (Swadesh 1967; cf. Marcus 1983d), Campbell (1997: 133) reports it to be “rejected by most linguists.”

²The system of calendar notation, versions of which were to be found throughout Mesoamerica, involved two overlapping means of recording. First, a ritual calendar was keyed to a 260-day cycle in which thirteen numbers were linked to twenty day-names (as, “1 Alligator” followed by “2 Wind,” and so on up to “13 Reed,” when the numbers begin to repeat now as “1 Jaguar,” etc., with the same “1 Alligator” only as it begins the next 260-day cycle). Second, there was also an approximate solar cycle of eighteen “months” of twenty days each, followed by five extra “unlucky” days at the end, to round out an approximate year of 365 days. Each such solar year was identified by the ritual day that coincided with the first day of the first solar-calendar month, thus an entire year might be referred to with a designation such as “1 Alligator.” Because the ritual and solar cycles of different length ran concurrently, a year such as one designated “1 Alligator” for instance, would recur only one time each fifty-two years. Relatedly, a ritual designator of this sort “1 Alligator” would also be added to a person’s name according to the person’s birthday to the ritual calendar—that is, as a number and name combination again like “1 Allegator.” Such a system as this, although with variant day-names in the systems employed by the major Middle American groups (including Nahuatl, Zapotec, Mixtec, and Maya) was paralleled throughout the region. As will be indicated in Chapter 3, Teotihuacan was not the earliest to make use of such a system

³For a much more complete, and certainly more complicated rendering of this tale see the early pages in Brundage (1972).

⁴For a more detailed discussion of parallels with Tlaxcala, see Wood (2003: 85ff), with parallels between images in the *Mapa de Cuauhtlantzinco* and some of those in the *Lienzo de Tlaxcala*.

Chapter 3

The Oaxaca Region and the *Mapa de San Andrés Mixtepec*

Shifting attention from the pre-Spanish and conquest period in the central Mexican highlands to the lower highlands of what is now central Oaxaca (elevation around 5,000 feet), one must recognize a somewhat different historical situation. Whereas the story in central Mexico was one in which apparent Nahua newcomers to the highlands entered an area where the notable Teotihuacan civilization had held sway for nearly a thousand years, in Oaxaca the full story is one evidently marked by longer-term ethnic continuity. That is, there had been a long-lived and stable state of sorts that had begun growth even earlier than Teotihuacan, with researchers in general agreement that local Oaxacan civilization was the development of the major ethnic population that was still to be encountered in that region when the Spaniards moved southeast from central Mexico following their conquests of 1521. These were the local Zapotec people, or *Bènzizàa*, representative of the long-lasting Otomangue language family.

A Note on Local History, as Now Understood

According to one generally accepted summary of developments (Marcus and Flannery 1996), as early as 3000 BC there were scattered farming villages in the central Oaxacan valley system, but these habitations remain provide no indications of rank differences between individuals or families. Such differences in status can be perceived a couple of millennia later, however, through variations in houses and with select customs such as artificial skull deformation among people of the upper classes, who would also be distinguished by being buried with jade adornments. Sometime before 500 BC, scattered farming villages had begun to coalesce into three clusters, each presumably headed by a relatively larger village and each cluster presumably to some extent united. At that time—after 600 BC—villages throughout the valley lost population, while a population influx occurred at the single metropolis-to-be, which was located on a previously unsettled hill complex that rises more than a thousand feet above the level of the surrounding valley system. After the Spanish conquest this mountain complex would be dubbed Monte Albán. By 400 BC this young metropolis had a population estimated at around 5,000, and by 200 BC the population had risen to more than 17,000. Also, “by then 3 km of defensive wall were under construction along the more easily climbed western slopes of the mountain, while an acropolis of public buildings crowned the summit,” (Marcus and Flannery

1996: 140). This simply means that thousands of people had left their villages on the valley floor to relocate on a previously unoccupied and rocky mountain.

Was there a local, proximate cause of such realignment of population? In the same period in which Monte Albán saw its beginnings (designated by archaeologists as period Monte Albán I), the remaining villages in the central valley system also tended to cluster in defensible hilltop locations. By the end of that period—100 BC—the central valley region has been concluded to have been brought to unity under Monte Albán, in the ceremonial center of which are stone monuments concluded to preserve memories of conquest, showing, for instance, figures interpreted as mutilated corpses of captives (e.g., Marcus 1983b).

In view of previous discussions, it should be noted that the rapid growth and florescence of Monte Albán predated by several centuries the centralizing developments at Teotihuacan in central Mexico. Further, evidence of writing and a version of the Middle American calendar system (described with regard to Teotihuacan, Chapter II), have been noted in the central valleys of Oaxaca before about 500 BC, and at the site of Monte Albán itself within a century of that time (Marcus 1983c). There are, however, other contrasts that must be noted. Thus, in comparison to Teotihuacan, Monte Albán was always small, expanding somewhat in area (finally to about 6 km², or two square miles) but with a population at its largest not exceeding 30,000 (Marcus and Flannery 1996: 234). Although Monte Albán has never been concluded to have been dominated by Teotihuacan—that is, to have formed part of a Teotihuacan empire, commercial or otherwise—there is evidence for contact between the two centers.¹ All in all, relations between the two urban powers appear to have been peaceful. Of the two, Teotihuacan appears to have lost its local primacy earlier than did Monte Albán, its decline presumed generally to date around AD 750, whereas Monte Albán’s loss may have been as much as a century later.

At Monte Albán there was no indication of destruction, selective or otherwise, such as the burning reported for parts of Teotihuacan. Rather, Monte Albán simply began to lose population, not as a massive emigration, but, “little by little over a considerable length of time,” (Paddock 1983b: 187). By AD 900, at least, Monte Albán’s heyday also had passed to several formerly secondary centers in the valley system, within which internally stratified societies maintained independence from one another, although elite “natural lords,” ruled, and married with outside noble families, while maintaining a consistent stratification within their seats (see Whitecotton 1977: 139ff). Unfortunately, in terms of specific histories, there is some uncertainty regarding this one pe-

riod in the local ceramic-marked sequence.² At any rate, during this developing period, power within the central valley area came to be held by several centers that had formerly been secondary and under Monte Albán hegemony. One of these centers was presumably Zaachila, in the southern valley of central Oaxaca, although precisely when it achieved the high position it had in legendary history, details of which were collected immediately following the Spanish conquest, is not certain. In any event, as the Spanish-recorded legendary history takes up the story the ruler of Zaachila (or Teozapotlan, as referred to by the Mexica) had achieved the allegiance of a number of other important Zapotec centers and was involved both in negotiations with, and hostilities against, expanding Mixtec towns.

Marcus (1983e, with references) provides a reconstruction of the Zaachila rulership sequence based on legendary sources. The first three of these rulers (or *coquis* in local usage) are designated only as Zaachila I, II, and III. Of these, then, the first reportedly died in AD 1415, to be succeeded by Zaachila II, who died in 1454, passing the torch to Zaachila III, who died in 1487. It is after this that the Zapotec leaders in the accounts appear with distinctive names. Thus, a Cocijoeza became ruler in 1487 and was given major credit for spearheading a defensive battle against the Aztecs, and then was said to have done well in negotiations with the enemy, for after the military stand-off (in which Mixtec troops aided) he married either a daughter of the Aztec ruler Ahuizotl or (according to Oudijk 2000) a sister of the Aztec ruler-to-be, Moctezuma II. In 1502 this woman bore him a son, Cocijopii, who in 1518 was appointed or confirmed by his father—who apparently remained at Zaachila—as ruler in Tehuantepec. In 1521, with the advent of the Spaniards, this Cocijoeza himself was baptized Don Juan Cortez; he died in 1529. In 1527, Cocijopii in his turn was baptized as Don Juan Cortez Cocijopii. The last of the notable Zapotec rulers, his seat was still in Tehuantepec when he died in 1563.

Considerable additional complexity is added to the rulership account by Oudijk (2000), who draws on a somewhat broader set of sources. One major addition is the identification of at least two rulers bearing the name Cocijoeza and at least two named Cocijopii. According to Oudijk (2000: 227-234), Zaachila's position of importance was achieved earlier, by or before AD 1300—this under a *coqui* with the ritual (i.e., calendrical) name “3 Alligator.” Around 1375 the first *coqui* of Zaachila to bear the name Cocijoeza (ritually “11 Water,” otherwise, here, Cocijoeza I) conquered the Isthmus region with some Mixtec aid, producing Zaachila control of much of the trade route from central Mexico to lower Central America (Oudijk 2000:227). Sometime after AD 1400, increased friction with Mixtecs led to full-fledged war

between Zapotecs and Mixtecs in central Oaxaca, which was accompanied by the movement of the *coqui* court from Zaachila to the Isthmus area (referred to above), an area that had been conquered by Cocijoeza I some 75 years earlier; this new capital was reportedly under the first *coqui* to be named Cocijopii.

The contemporary weakness in Oaxaca itself evidently attracted the attention of the Mexica Aztecs under their ruler Moctezuma I, weakness which permitted the establishment of a permanent (if somewhat limited) Aztec military garrison on a hill in the Oaxaca Valley. Attracted by trade with Soconusco (i.e., the Pacific coastal strip extending from southeastern Mexico into Guatemala), the succeeding Aztec ruler, Ahuizotl, began a military campaign that reportedly led to a brief sack of Zaachila itself around 1494 and to a renewed thrust against the new Zapotec capital on the Isthmus (see Oudijk 2000: 41-42), which was held off by a combined force of Zapotecs and Mixtecs at the Isthmian battle site historically famous as Guiengola; this around AD 1495 or even slightly later. Thus, these hostilities apparently occurred not long before the Spanish arrival (see Marcus 1983a). It was only shortly thereafter that testimony collected by Spanish witnesses provided information regarding the late Zapotec rulers, who entered the verbal or legendary history referred to by Marcus (1983e) and mentioned above. According to Oudijk (2000), then, it was the second *coquis* named Cocijoeza and the second one named Cocijopii who received baptism after the Spaniards' arrival.

This sets the stage for consideration of the *Mapa de San Andrés Mixtepec* which, as noted earlier, involves reports of Zapotec expansion beginning at Teozapotlan, also known as Zaachila.

The Story Told by the Painting of San Andrés Mixtepec

As noted in Chapter I, the story within this *mapa* begins at the very top center of the document, with the hill bearing the number 1, and labeled “Hill of Zaachila or Teozapotlan.” To the left of it sits the individual glossed as Coaaquelaa, a Zapotec name that was rendered by the seventeenth-century translator Galvan as “The king that drinks at night.” Michel Oudijk, however, the first author of a published description of the *mapa* (Oudijk and Dumond 2008), who is conversant with Zapotec, questions the particular translation and provides references to several calendar days that might be indicated as a ritual name, or suggesting that the word Coaaquelaa may combine the title *coqui* with *lao*, which translates as “great,” to yield something simply like Great Señor. This person's important position by the salient hill rep-

A.D. 1350 the lords of Zaachila sent representatives to contact and found pueblos in regions some distance away. Such was apparently the case in the areas of Cuixtla and of San Andrés, with the small stylized hills appearing to the right side of the ascending road, numbered but largely with glosses illegible, each of which presumably represents a place of importance in the Zaachila-spawned expansion through the Mixtepec zone.

Further, the gloss numbered 32 designates the Church of San Andrés itself. Lower and to the left of it, number 31 labels “Gregorio, the first Christian.” Immediately below the church is located number 30, glossed as “Francisco, the second Christian.” And, apparently with great significance, before Francisco appear some fourteen men, all marked with glosses, but most of which are illegible. This disposition suggests a scene found in other more or less comparable documents of the region (see Oudijk 2000), which can be referred to as the “taking possession.” This involves the recognition by rulers of subject pueblos of an overarching lord, who then distributes land among his subject pueblos. This is a common situation found in documents of the mid-sixteenth century, which is one element that suggests to Oudijk (see Oudijk and Dumond 2008) that the date of an original to which the present document refers was probably of that early post-conquest period—more or less a century before the dates associated with the office held by translator Jerónimo Galván who is identified on the present painting, as noted in Chapter I.

In short, the story apparently to be told in the *Mapa de San Andrés Mixtepec* is that the ruler of Zaachila dispatched representatives who established themselves in the Cuixtla area and then moved northeast somewhat and established themselves with adherents in the region of San Andrés, in which they were approved by the incoming Spaniards and for which from San Andrés they conducted a distribution of lands to subject villages. This map-like painting, like the picture manuscript of Cuauhtlantzinco now held by the University of Oregon museum—both of them perhaps copies of earlier documents—would appear to have been executed sometime in the latter part of the seventeenth century, more than a hundred years after the actual Spanish conquest that is in both documents referred to through clear indications of the apparently widespread religious conversions of local high-ranking individuals.

Why So Late?

In both of the *mapas* described here in Chapters 2 and 3, the major content is some variation on events that hinged upon the arrival of the Spaniards and its aftermath. Both of these documents have been accepted by some relatively modern scholars as depicting simply events of the time of the Spanish conquest of Mexico in the early

sixteenth century. This remains a slender possibility, although there is at least one other, stronger possibility that must be considered—specifically, the persistent and stubborn decline in the native population that lasted for a century and more after the actual conquest. This will be turned to in Chapter 4, to follow.

Endnotes to Chapter 3

¹For one thing, there was apparently a residential ward of Oaxacan Zapotecs at Teotihuacan, the so-called Oaxaca barrio, located on the western side of Teotihuacan some two miles from that city’s actual center. Although housed in locally standard Teotihuacan apartment compounds, these inhabitants made use of ceramics of Monte Albán style, possessed Zapotec-type funerary urns, and were buried in a tomb at the site adorned with Zapotec inscription (e.g., Marcus and Flannery 1996: 233; Paddock 1983a). In a reciprocal view, at Monte Albán there are also indications on monuments and murals of visits by Teotihuacanos (see Marcus 1983f).

²The period designated Monte Albán IIIb is considered to have marked the last days of Monte Albán as the functioning valley capital, with Monte Albán IV then presumed to mark the time of the center’s decline. Unfortunately, discriminating ceramics of IIIb from those of IV has turned out to pose a problem (see Winter 1989), the ambiguity arising precisely at the point when pressure on remnant Zapotec settlements in the central valleys was increased first of all by the burgeoning population of their linguistic cousins, the Mixtec people from surrounding highlands, and in later centuries by the expanding Aztec (or Mexica) power of central Mexico (Marcus and Flannery 1983).

Chapter 4

With a New Dynamic in the Active Colonial Backdrop

Following the early 1520s, Spanish control was established throughout Mexico and Central America with relative rapidity. This process was spurred from one direction by the strength of the Spanish urge to spread their religious faith, and from the other by the local propensity for indirect rule in cases where one town and its people exercised control over another. Behind these more or less complementary factors, however, was a situation that would exert what at least in the beginning was a largely unforeseen influence: the steady loss of the Indian population, a process that began following the conquest and continued for more than a century, spurring a drastic change in overall organization.

One must note with regard to the first of these that the spread of the newly introduced religion was of especial importance to the Spaniards, simply given the events of recent Spanish history. For from the early decades of the eighth century, Spain had been wracked by Moorish invasions from North Africa, and by AD 750 or soon after an independent Muslim emirate was established in southern Spain. Desultory warfare then continued between Moors and existent Christian statelets for more than 700 years. Only in the late fifteenth century was an increased measure of unity gained among the Christian states, culminating in 1492 with Spanish capture of the remaining Moorish center (see, for instance, Smith 1965).

In addition to simply the discovery of the New World, this date of 1492 is also telling in terms of the unfolding Spanish experience in that newly recognized hemisphere. That is, given the exhausting experience of centuries of strife against Muslim interlopers in their own Spanish lands and their efforts to make Christianity again supreme there, the Spaniards' zeal for conversion to their Old World religion of the newly found New World peoples is scarcely surprising. Indeed, subjugation and (if necessary) forcible conversion of these natives would appear to have been the major Spanish goal, within which a rapid beginning in the decline in numbers of the same native population tended to be little remarked. As this loss became more obvious, however, it was especially elements of cruelty in the Spanish contact with their new subjects that began to inspire protests in Europe. Major attention would fall on the activist Spanish priest Bartolomé de las Casas as he became more and more active in the New World. After 1552, he managed to publish his *Very Brief Relation of the Destruction of the Indies* (cited here as Las Casas 1992), which was almost immediately translated

and reprinted in French, Dutch, and English as an international exposé of Spanish atrocities.¹

From the New World direction, a major condition involved the very nature of the local aboriginal society. As pointed out in Chapter 2, the existence of an "empire" in the region first approached by the expanding Spaniards meant only that there were regularized payments of "tribute" (normally in expendable goods of some kind) by "subject" towns to a hegemonic center. Although specific personal relations might exist between high-ranking individuals (i.e., "nobles") of capital towns with leaders of subject communities, these did not involve direct government control by representatives of the ruling town, for within the system of indirect rule it was *local* "nobles" who still directly controlled the local government. The result was simply rule based on negotiation between subject and capital (as, for instance, is elaborated in Lockhart 1992 and dealt with in essays in Ruiz Medrano and Kellogg 2010). As was noted also in Chapter 2, this situation served to impart a potential fragility to any government that presumed to be widespread, in that there was little steady coercive power to finally support any such arrangement for rule.

This situation, of course, meant the incoming Spanish forces, even if vastly inferior to those of the local Indians, might be able to substitute themselves for the formerly governing nobles, thus inserting themselves at the pinnacle of any local ruling connection. This would also mean that their relationship with the subject towns was subject to negotiation, from both directions—that is, both from "above" and "below." It was the strength of the impulse to Christianize the locals that provided a most obvious subject for negotiation, however, and so served to potentially strengthen any negotiations that promised success. This was most notably the case in the region of central Mexico, where the number of missionary friars moving in from Spain was especially high, and where, indeed, they made use of Nahuatl (with the moral precepts carried implicitly in the tongue) in their ministry for greater efficiency in reaching the ears and attention of local people (see Burkhart 1989: 10-11). As a result, "the Nahuas managed to make of Christianity a variation rather than a new composition" (Burkhart 1989: 192). Indeed, "the friars' acceptance of Nahuatized Christianity constituted an implicit patronage of Nahua cultural continuity," so that for the majority of their proselytes, "it remained a Nahua earth," (Burkhart 1989: 193). The strength of this result is exemplified by the story as told by the *Mapa de Cuauhtlantzinco*, with its emphasis on aid extended to Christianization by the local native leaders, who became extenders of the imported European religion. Less strong, although not absent, was a reflection of a similar, if less pervasive (and less strongly missionized), process

in the rural mountainous region of Oaxaca (e.g., Yannakakis 2008).

This brings us to the situation hovering in the background: while the new rulers were actively dealing with, and accepting negotiations from, their new subjects, the native population was steadily declining. Las Casas, more sensitive than most of his countrymen to the condition of the native people, remarked that they, “are the most devoid of rancors, hatreds, or desire for vengeance of any people in the world. And because they are so weak and complaisant, they are less able to endure heavy labor,” and so “may die of no matter what malady,” (Las Casas 1992: 28).

Of a malady? What of this? They were those imported maladies that afflicted the native community largely to the exclusion of their new European rulers. It can reasonably be argued that in the longer run it was sickness and death that constituted the single major influence on the newly created subjects of the society now undergoing modification, and this is the dynamic that shaped early colonial Mexico.

The Decline

A list of epidemics, with tentative identifications (when possible) throughout the sixteenth century is set out in Table 4.1. These were largely, of course, diseases familiar to the Spaniards, but for which the New World natives had little or no built-up immunity. How high was

Table 4.1. Tentative list of epidemic maladies in sixteenth-century central Mexico¹

Year(s)	Simplified List of Tentative Identifications
1520-21	Smallpox
1531-32	Measles
1538	Minor variety of smallpox?
1545-48	Typhus or pneumonic plague
1550	Mumps
1558	Famine and widespread death
1559	Typhus or pneumonic plague
1563-64	Pleurisy
1566	Typhus
1576-81	Typhus
1587-88	Typhus
1590	Influenza
1592-93	Measles (probably)
1595-97	Unassigned, high morbidity but low mortality (possible measles?)
1601-02	Typhus
1604-07	Various? Including typhus
1613	Typhus
1615-16	Measles (minor)

¹Based on Whitmore (1992: Table 2.4), which uses dates and original characterizations of maladies from Gibson (1964: 448-450).

this mortality among natives? Although by sometime after the mid-sixteenth century it was becoming increasingly possible, with Spanish control of local records, to arrive at an improved understanding of native population size and density especially in the Basin of Mexico (the region in which the Spanish officials were in especially close control), considerable uncertainty remained and still remains.

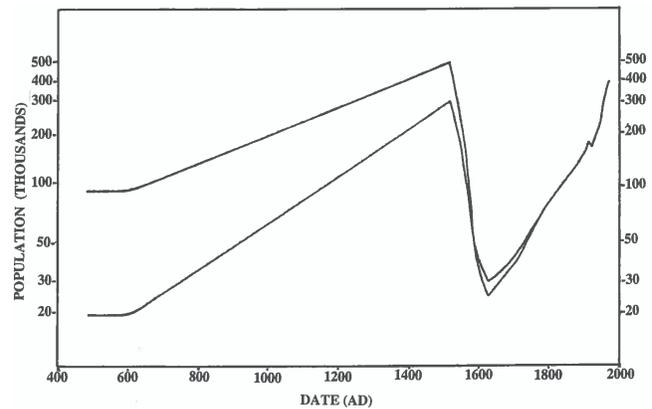


FIGURE 4.1. Population of Tlaxcala from AD 500 to modern years (high and low estimates shown). Abstracted with only slight reformulation from Dumond (1976: Fig.7).

As remarked by Lockhart (1992: 433), the

indigenous population dropped precipitously from a controversial but surely very high figure at contact all through the sixteenth century and beyond, with especially devastating epidemics in the late 1540’s and late 1570’s. In the early seventeenth century, the population of persons labeled Indians was a disputed but quite small fraction of its former size; by some indefinite point in that century, the nadir was reached, after which the Indian population began to recover, a trend that accelerated during parts of the eighteenth century. Meanwhile, the rest of the population—persons labeled Spaniards, those in categories indicating racial mixture, and other non-Indians—had grown constantly, if not exactly steadily; by the late colonial period, that sector was increasing so fast that even though “Indian” numbers were on the rise, persons labeled Indians represented an ever-decreasing share of the general population.

A somewhat simplified but graphic illustration of the drop and subsequent recovery of the native or “Indian” population can be drawn from a summary of the demographic history of the nearby district of Tlaxcala, immediately across the dividing mountain range east of the actual Valley of Mexico. A portion of this reconstructed demographic history is illustrated in Figure 4.1.

With regard to the precipitous decrease shown for the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries,

Dumond (1976: 22) remarks that the

post-conquest population decline . . . has often been suggested to have resulted from epidemic disease. . . . But some aspects of the figures [available for Tlaxcala] . . . suggest that these epidemics were not the most immediate causes of the sustained drop in population. Epidemic disease often may be expected to strike down adults and children alike. But the nature of the empirically indicated change [in Tlaxcala] in the proportion of adult men in relation to other segments of the population, implies that there

were fewer children in the population during the period of its greatest decline. One must conclude, therefore, that one of the crucial factors—probably indeed the most crucial single factor—in the prolonged decline was the existence of a newly endemic parasitism that resulted in increased infant mortality, or decreased fertility, or both.

A major problem in this consideration of population change, however, is in arriving at an acceptable figure for the native population at the “starting point”—that is, on the eve of the Spaniards’ arrival. In the absence of specific population figures clearly relevant for this date, historians have attempted to convert to such gross total population figures, say, the numbers of specifically tributary males as recorded by the Aztecs in preconquest picture documents, or of the Spanish estimates of the sizes of forces opposing them in the conquest; not surprisingly, such conversions have often met with less success than might be desired. Some indication of the ultimate spread of such estimates, together with those through later decades, is taken on for the Basin of Mexico by Whitmore (1992). Considering ten separately derived estimates by differing authors of the course of this population decline, he divides them into three separate groups, which he specifies as a “Mild” group (based on only one written source), a “Moderate” group (following four sources) and a “Severe” group (five sources) (all listed in Whitmore 1992: Fig. 3.2). Of these, he concludes that the Moderate group forms the most likely set of losses to be worthy of serious belief.² The more nearly full sequence of this particular group is set out in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2. Projected assessments of native population in the Basin of Mexico at some specific date ranges according to three groups of estimators.¹

Date Ranges	“Mild” Group	“Moderate” Group	“Severe” Group
1519-1520	1,293,700 (100%)	1,304,400 (100%)	2,736,600 (100%)
1565-1570	517,500 (40%)	343,000 (26.3%)	321,600 (11.75%)
1597-1607	346,700 (26.8%)	(not assessed)	141,200 (5.16%)

¹Based on Whitmore (1992: Fig. 3.2, with references: “Mild” group, draws on 1 source; “Moderate” group, on 4 sources; “Severe” group, on 5 sources. See also his Table 3.4).

Beyond this, Whitmore (1992) also reports the course of the decline to be marked through the sixteenth century by a chain of stair-steps, as decline variously speeded and slowed in response to the “virgin soil” epidemics, which he brands the most important factor in the decline, producing the so-called “steps” in the population collapse, while also noting that a, “longer-term consequence of these epidemics was an increasing non-crisis death rate along with a decreasing non-crisis birth rate for the first 30-40 years after contact. This, in turn, led to decreasing rates of growth (indeed, to [some] negative rates of growth) in the non-crisis intervals in this period.” He injects a further element, pointing out that, “epidemic-induced famines were ... significant.

Indeed, epidemic-induced famines probably accounted for about 10 percent of the total depopulation,” (Whitmore 1992: 199).

So much for the decline of the native population over the course of something more than a century, leading to an overall loss, according to the estimates and other elements mentioned here, of somewhere around ninety percent of the pre-Conquest population. What was the situation as the population nadir was passed and recovery began? With regard to Tlaxcala, it has been pointed out that the evidence is that a large number of pre-conquest native villages simply vanished, presumably largely because the decreasing set of survivors moved away to join the many fewer recipient villages that did not vanish. Meanwhile, their former place in the landscape was essentially taken by Spanish-derived haciendas which joined the newer Spanish-influenced economic networks (Dumond 1976, with references). A very large number of these newer introductions (especially favored by Spanish newcomers) involved the raising of livestock such as had never before grazed the hills and plains of the New World.

Indeed, one can consider the numerical presence of these imported domestic animals as a kind of proxy of the growing non-Indian population. With this as focus, it is possible to provide not only indications of the situation in the Basin of Mexico, so much favored by historians, but by areas including such lesser centers of Zaachila and its environs, which was also discussed in earlier chapters.

One relatively early such study focused specifically on the matter of land exploitation in sixteenth-century central Mexico, a region essentially duplicating the total area commonly designated Mesoamerica, as was defined in Chapter 1. See, in this case, Simpson (1952), from which was drawn that historian’s report regarding both the Basin (or Valley) of Mexico and the region of southern Oaxaca that he designates Zapotecas South—this latter the area of predominantly Zapotec native population south of Oaxaca City. These resulting summary statistics are in turn used to generate Table 4.3, which presents sizes of livestock herds and farming tracts converted from sizes of lands granted using that author’s recommended conversion rates (Simpson 1952: 17). In this case, it is temptingly possible to consider the absence within “Zapotecas South” of reported transfers of Indian-held lands to other Indians specifically for *farming* purposes, in contrast to the conversion of formerly Indian holdings specifically to *pasturage* (by Spanish immigrants especially, but also including Indians who were evidently taking up the new subsistence regime) may indicate that competition for lands within that region was especially strong between Indians and expand-

ing Spanish communities. This apparent competition is in contrast to the Basin of Mexico, in which transfers of lands from older to newer Indian farming communities would appear to have been fairly substantial.

Table 4.3. Reallocation of Agricultural Resources in the Sixteenth Century¹

	To Spaniards	To Other Indians
Basin of Mexico:		
Pasturage sufficient for:		
Cattle	5,000 head	1,500 head
Sheep/Goats	450,000 head	76,500 head
Open land for:		
Farming	201,103 acres	15,915 acres
Zapotecas South:		
Cattle	43,500 head	1,000 head
Sheep/Goats	193,500 head	90,000 head
Open land for:		
Farming	19,183 acres	—

¹Information from Simpson 1952.

Other recent historians have produced evidence supporting the inferences drawn from Table 4.3 regarding both the central Mexican highlands and the region of southern Oaxaca. With regard to the former, but with obviously much broader relevance, Lockhart (1992: 164) remarks that with the sixteenth-century loss of population, the availability of lands through that century posed little problem, but, he goes on to say,

by the middle of the seventeenth century..., things were changing: the Hispanic population and economy had expanded greatly and taken vast amounts of land, indigenous population loss had nearly halted, and land values were on the rise. Suits involving pieces of land of all sizes were now common place, between Spaniards and Indians as well as inside the community.

He adds (Lockhart 1992: 165) that

for most indigenous people..., especially commoners, land rights rested on informal consensus or equally informal action by altepetl/calpolli authorities.... If there was any document at all, it was likely to be the testament of a family member mentioning the piece of land in contention.

That is,

a testament issued before the proper local authorities and some witnesses representing the community guaranteed that the testator had authentic rights....

Indeed, this can be considered as characteristic throughout the area of the mapas discussed here. That is, the Indian communities themselves were conceived above all to be land-based. In the aftermath of the Conquest, the principle of primitivo patrimonio, or ownership before the Conquest, was of paramount importance, and when attested by community agreement was generally affirmed by the Spanish courts (Taylor 1972:78). Further, those native leaders who embraced Christianity were considered to have ongoing rights to their pre-Conquest properties—this by order of the Spanish king in 1557. In practice, in addition to their traditional estates these native nobles received “a blank check to take whatever unoccupied lands they needed,” (Taylor 1972: 39-41, quote from p. 41).

In recent decades, study of native histories assignable to the developing part of the colonial period in Mexico has increased and has led to a focus that has included a group especially of prose statements in native languages. These have been simply designated *títulos*, “Titles,” more specifically *títulos primoriales*, or Primordial Titles. They are not, however, to be confused with actual title-conveying documents such as were rigorously developed and widely dispensed by the incoming Spaniards after their triumph, and used to support land and rank accorded to native nobility. Rather, these *títulos*, although paralleling much of the form of these earlier Spanish-engendered documents, were clearly products of individual native villages seeking to set out local claims, primarily for territory but without ignoring accepted rights of local native nobles. Although said to be based on “primordial” rights to rank and lands, and often phrased as though proceeding from the days of the conquest or before, various clues indicate much later authorship, not without at least occasional unsupported claims, although such documents are not widely considered to be forgeries. As indicated by Gibson (1975: 320), in defining elements of a census of such documents, “Títulos are commonly Indian statements of local boundaries with exhortations to maintain them. We consider in the census those that contain, in addition to the geographical notations, historical information on the original establishment of the boundaries or data on the past history of the communities.” In addition, as expanded upon by Lockhart (1982:372-373),

At the core of the “primordial title” ... is an account of an early local border survey, which is often overlaid with mention of subsequent surveys. The document has been prepared by local figures primarily for a local audience and has been redrafted as often as felt necessary. The style is declamatory, the tone that of advice by elders to present and future generations; much general historical material is often given, including versions of the first foundation of the town, the coming of the Spaniards, and the establishment of Christianity. Quite a few “titles” of this general type are known to exist for towns widely scattered through Mesoamerica....

In general, the period of authorship of the great mass of such documents as are known is in the seventeenth century and up to the beginning of the eighteenth. That is, including what seems to be the most likely time in which both of these picture documents (quite possibly both as later copies of earlier originals) held by the museum were authored.

This is not, certainly, to say that the two documents treated here were themselves examples of such *títulos*. It is, on the other hand, to assert that certain of the aims of examples of “primordial title” documents that have been described (e.g., Lockhart 1982; Wood 1991) also appear to be central to both of the picture

documents. So is it also to raise a more general question: What was it about the seventeenth century that may have led to introduction of many such documents at the time? Clearly, we can suppose, it must have rested in the resumption of growth in the native or “Indian” segment of the population.

As time passed, then, the place of *primitive patrimonio* was taken over in part by various forms of grants resulting from actions of the Spanish government and respected in the Spanish-derived courts. There were a number of such grants, many of them to villages and commoners. These included town sites of fixed sizes, communal lands for support of festivals and other village-wide endeavors, communal pasturelands and woods, lands controlled by certain village subdivisions (i.e., *barrios*), and others. There also came to be privately owned lands within communities, no longer restricted to nobles but including those of commoners who could by one chance or other afford them. Needless to say, as time passed native commoners also became adept at litigations and other manipulations of the Spanish courts (Whitcotton 1977: 196).

In this way, the native population were able to fight for their positions when their number began to increase as the seventeenth century wore on.

Developing Function of *Mapas*

As noted above, traditional credentials of ownership were based heavily on accepted public testimonials. These, of course, tended to decline in legal acceptance through time, as the local courts more and more required written documentation of one sort or other. As assertion of land ownership became more difficult with the increase of population of all sorts through the seventeenth century and into the eighteenth, the creations of a relic of such testimonials became crucial. Consequently, there came to be a decided uptick in the number of testimonials or “testaments” in graphic form. These might include later copies of actual early post-conquest documents, or graphic renditions of later and publicly supported verbal testimonials, or—indeed—might include some more nearly fictional accounts; but all of these would date from the mid-seventeenth century or somewhat later. It is therefore not surprising to find that an actual majority of the “native” pictorial documents known from Mexico’s colonial period date from this era, rather than from the days of the conquest itself. Indeed, it is clear that the tradition of creating such documents was of pre-conquest origin; nevertheless, it is now evident that only very few of such documents can be reliably claimed to be from the pre-conquest period or immediately post-conquest period proper—in part, of course, because of the active destruction of native docu-

ments by the Spanish priesthood in the days of their most enthusiastic conversion efforts.

Such specifically *pictorial* documents of the colonial period have been divided by recent historians into several descriptive categories (see, for example, Glass 1975). Two of these categories are of relevance at this point, as they include the two manuscripts held by the museum and discussed here; these are the categories labeled “historical” and “cartographic-historical.”

The *Mapa de Cuauhtlantzinco* has been specifically placed in the first of these categories (Glass 1975: 32, also Glass and Robertson 1975: 120). Of this category itself, Glass (1975: 32) states that in it they, “have classified those documents that narrate events in sequence through time or depict isolated military, political, or administrative events. The ... manuscripts so classified represent 18 per cent of the manuscripts in the census.” He goes on with an observation, saying that most, “historical manuscripts from Central Mexico are year-to-year chronicles or annals,” and that many of them are “time-oriented.” He also notes that this particular mode, of an ordered sequence of separate pictures, is particularly suited to the “screen-fold format”—that is, with the individual pictures folded one against the other in accordion fashion. In agreement with this classification, the individual time-ordered pictures of the *Mapa de Cuauhtlantzinco* suggest that it is not unlikely that the original document, wherever it was, had been folded in such a way, and it is not unlikely that the original “discoverer” of the manuscript in the nineteenth century, Father Campos, had changed the format by attaching the pictures to the sheets of cloth as described by Frederick Starr (1898).

The other of our documents, the *Mapa de San Andrés*, would fall into the second category, “cartographic-historical.” Into that category, Glass (1975: 35) says, “we have classified those manuscripts that in a single-panel format combine cartographic and historical or genealogical information. These documents are one of the more interesting realizations of the pictorial manuscript art of Mexico. The 87 available examples account for a fifth of all documents in the census.”

That is, these involve a single panel as background in map fashion, usually with landmarks around the map edges that identify the whole as a specific tract or territory, upon which roads or foot tracks trace the historical (or genealogical) content that relates to that space. In this case, although the historians cited did not include in their sample the *Mapa de San Andrés*—which was obviously unknown to them—it is clear that it fits their definition without question: the background being the region of eastern Mexico south of the present city of Oaxaca (and of Zaachila), with upon it diagrammed the

historical movements that led to the formation of San Andrés, the locale that was occupied at the time of the Spanish conquest and the ensuing religious conversion of the native people.

A Concluding Note

Given the experience of Spaniards struggling to hold on to their own European territory in the face of North African aggression, and with the strong religious currents involved, it is not surprising that the conquest of New Spain also involved much in the way of religious idiom. Both of the *mapas* discussed here reveal this, although the specific variations in the idiom were considerably different between them. Common to both, apparently, was the demographic pressure that developed within New Spain, not primarily as a result of warfare, but rather especially as an accompaniment to the introduction of disease parasites to which the native inhabitants had little or no immunity. Differing, however, were the specific situations of the two regions represented, although the religious idiom was similar in both.

In the *Mapa de Cuauhtlantzinco*, the story told by the inhabitants was to validate their own occupation of Basin of Mexico lands that presumably had been lost, or were on the verge of being lost, to European conquerors in the face of disease expansions, and then were being actively striven for in apparent reestablishment and validation. The history of these claims is thus phrased not as direct warfare against the Aztec power but as assistance to the Spanish intruders to add to Spanish success in expanding conversions among the native people in the Basin of Mexico. Success was then claimed in the form of land grants to villages and to select village leaders, with validation a century or more after the actual conquest.

A parallel story, but different in detail, was the case in the Oaxacan region south of Zaachila. Here the thrust was apparently simply expansion under Zapotec rulers. Expansion—into what? We are apparently not told “what,” on the *Mapa de San Andrés*, but we are provided the “where” with the movement from Zaachila to the region that would become Cuixtla and then further expansion especially to San Andrés where the first baptisms were claimed. These were evidently validated by the erection of churches in both these communities and elsewhere and by baptisms of the leaders at San Andrés, the second of whom (“Francisco the Second Christian”) is shown in what is evidently a climax of the *mapa* story: facing a group of sitting men in what can be interpreted as a formal allocation of lands by himself as village leader.

So in both cases, the idiom of religious conversion is peacefully embedded in what amount to quests

for territory—or, at least, the vindication of claims based on territory in a land no longer fully “native.”

Endnotes to Chapter 4

¹Why such a rapid international response? The date 1517 is often cited as the beginning of the Protestant Reformation in Europe, the year in which Martin Luther (1482-1546) promulgated his *Ninety-Five Theses on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgence* and began his active plea for Church reform. As we know, this served to unleash various reactions in Europe to Church procedures of the time and prepared the way for protests against religiously-connected practices of Spaniards in the New World. Further, the Las Casas cries against repeated cases of cruelty in dealing with natives clearly would form an important contribution to the unfavorable picture of the Spanish regime that was to be embodied in the horrors of the so-called Black Legend (see, e.g., Gibson 1971).

²Whitmore’s conclusion is based on a rather exhaustive set of computer simulations, working not only with these total-population estimates but also with separate figures regarding apparent mortality in individual epidemic spells. His conclusion seems reasonable.

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