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**TLAMACHILIZTLAHTOLÇAÇANILLI: A Performance Translation of the Náhuatl  
"Wisdom-Discourse Fables" from the Manuscript of 1558<sup>1</sup>**

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The 10 page Náhuatl manuscript included at the end of the so-called *Codice Chimalpopoca* and commonly referred to since 1903 as *Leyenda de los soles*, "Legend of the Suns," or the "Manuscript of 1558," is a fundamental witness to indigenous Nahua-Mexica memories of their own cosmogony and earliest history as they recalled these things some twenty-five-plus years into the colonial era. As supplement to the later *Anales de Cuauhtitlan* manuscript (ca. 1570-73) which accompanies it in the *Chimalpopoca*, the 1558 manuscript provides a privileged view of Nahua-Aztec genesis myths, from a Mexica informant. The narrative frame of this retelling makes it clear that by 1558 these memories had become "fables," tales, fictions--a mythology--but fables of still haunting power and beauty, unforgettable and irrepressible for all their putative demonic origins. I have chosen to call this witness record by the name it gives itself: *Tlamachiliztlahtolçaçanilli*, "Wisdom Discourse Fables." (see EndNote 1)

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<sup>1</sup> A published version of this article/translation appeared in *Estudios de Cultural Náhuatl* 28, 1998: 159-96. Due to uncorrected printers' errors, however, in addition to multiple misspellings the theory of poetic structure put forward in this introduction and illustrated on p. 6 was hopelessly distorted by the failure to reproduce faithfully the illustration in print. Original spellings and the original illustration are reproduced here. Any errors of translation from the Náhuatl remain my responsibility.

### Performance Reading in Nahua Context

The text appears on internal evidence to be the redaction of a specific performance event or, more likely, sequence of events by an unknown Mexica Aztec speaker and recorded by an unknown amanuensis, from a lost pictographic manuscript (or manuscripts) beginning on the date mentioned in the prologue, “today, the 22nd of May, 1558”. The final lines of the text refer to the arrival of “the Marqués,” who is Cortés, in Mexico “forty-two years ago” which would give a date of 1561 for this final entry. The bulk of the performance(s), however, must have been on or close to the first date. The *Codex Chimalpopoca* is a 17th century copy of the original redaction, also lost; and the *Codex* copy itself hasn’t been seen since 1949, so the only “original” now available is the photographic facsimile of the *Chimalpopoca* copy published in the Primo Velázquez edition.

We know this text is the result of more than an isolated instance of authorial inscription because liberally scattered through it are indicative and formulaic phrases giving repeated evidence of a speaker pointing to specific visual images as the prompts for his discourse-narrative which describes a pre-Christian Mexica account of origins of the cosmos as his ancestors believed it to be, a brief survey of their Chichimec ancestors, the fall of the Toltecs and rise of the Mexica, and a complete list of the conquests of nine Mexica Aztec “Speakers” or kings, from Acamapichtli through Moteuczomatzin II.

Gillespie has described how historical traditions specifically, often highly diverse and even contradictory among themselves, were nurtured and preserved in formal and informal teaching events within the preHispanic Nahua **calmecac** “court or priestly school”:

“Even given the Aztecs’ stated emphasis on the importance of rote memorization, the texts of these histories cannot have been fixed, because verbal art is recreated every time it is performed” (xxvi). “The transmission of historical traditions,” she notes, “was . . . subordinated to the form and context of these performances.” Somewhere between this traditional codex reading-performance and a solitary, single-author occasion of writing, the **Tlamachiliztlahtolçaçanilli** is a liminal document of the first order, **nepantla** “in the middle” (León-Portilla 1974; Klor de Alva), and in it we catch a glimpse of the negotiation of spiritual and historical identities which evangelization had made inescapable. Every aspect of its form is a product of the dialogic frontier Louise Burkhart (1989) has described: the indigenous language transcribed into the Spanish phonetic alphabet, but with no Spanish words entering the performance; the neologism of its name which in itself juxtaposes ancient wisdom or tradition against frivolous fable or tale; the stories themselves which, as we can tell from supplementary sources, are probably not always complete; and the oral poetics which gets nearly lost in the scribbled blocks of transcription. James Lockhart gives us the best description of the modality by which such a document was generated in the period of Nahua transition from oral textuality to written literacy.

The products of the preconquest pictorial tradition have much in common with the items called “handouts” that play such a role in academic and business presentations today [now we would probably add PowerPoints]. The handout contains some diagrams, numbers, and key words or concepts, useful both to the audience, who thereby get the core elements of the message in easily comprehensible form as a guide and reference, and to the speaker, who is reminded of the main points in sequence and, even if a polished prose statement has been prepared, may speak extemporaneously from the handout, reconstructing the largely memorized statement. In an alphabetically written text, the Nahuas had in the first instance not something to compete with the skeletal, handout-like pictorial document, but something able to complement it through a faithful record of the extensive accompanying oral statement. Paradoxical as it may seem, the primary original

purpose of alphabetic writing in the Nahua system of communication was to reproduce the oral component, and though things would change with time, this orality would always adhere to Nahua alphabetic documents more than to most comparable European texts. (Lockhart, 335)

It is this reproduction of the oral component that we see with special clarity in the 1558 manuscript and which gives us reason to believe some aspects of the original performance poetics might be recoverable in it. Of course, the preconquest **tlacuilo** “painter\writer” held his handiwork in far higher regard than we hold even our finest computer-crafted handouts; each one was in fact a work of pictorial art intended to be at least as permanent as the Kelmscott Chaucer or any medieval scribe’s breviary or book of hours. More specifically Lockhart also defines “reading” as it was performed in the preHispanic pattern.

The Nahuas’ concept of reading was also different from the Europeans’. **Pohua** had the additional, actually primary, meaning “to count,” corresponding well to the very prominent numerical facets of preconquest records. The word also meant “to relate, recount, give an account of,” hinting at the oral recital that accompanied a preconquest document, interpreting and expanding on it. The visible artifact was thus only a part of the total communication, which proceeded on two partially independent tracks. The pictorial part could convey some things that were beyond spoken words and had the ability to pass through time unchanged but the oral part carried much of the burden of narration, formulation, and conceptualization . . . . (327)

The visual artifact(s) on which the *Tlamachiliztlahtolçaçanilli* performance was based are gone; the oral recital is only partially reflected in the derivative manuscript witness which survives. In his Introduction to the first complete English edition of the two Náhuatl sections of the *Codex Chimalpopoca*, Bierhorst notes specifically how the 1558 manuscript fits this model of reading.

. . . In the Legend of the Suns, the second of the two Náhuatl texts preserved in the Codex Chimalpopoca, the reliance on pictures is much more obvious. Here the author speaks to us as though we were looking over his shoulder, while he points to

the painted figures. In places the text reads like a sequence of captions, as though the unseen pictures could carry the burden of the tale. Yet the narrative relaxes into an easier style wherever the story implied by the paintings happens to be already on the author's lips. The overall effect is of a knowledgeable traditionalist making his way through a single, well-integrated work of mytho-history. (Bierhorst, *History*, 7)

Substitute “performer” wherever Bierhorst says “author” and we have a precise description of the scene of performance my translation attempts to restore. I am less sure that the performer worked from a single source, especially when we arrive at the conquest lists of Act 5, Episode II. Also, there seems to be an especially abrupt transition between the Stinking Giant episode and Huemac's ball game (Act 4, Episodes I & II).

### Genre

The *Tlamachiliztlahtolçaçanilli* has been called an “epic” by several commentators, but its true structural identity and aesthetic is only obscured by such a European comparison and the expectations it evokes. It is a dialogic form, poised somewhere between preHispanic and European genres, rather closer to the former, and identified by the unique name it gives itself. The performer is clearly echoing a **xiuhtlapoalli**, a “year-reading,” of a **(ce)xiuhamatl**, “(each) year book,” annal of some sort, but the performance also has features of a postconquest chronicle, telling sequential stories unmarked by specific year names. There is also the remnant of pictograph writing in the center of page 4 of the manuscript, describing the lineage and sacred landscape of **Ce Acatl** “One Reed.” The text witnesses the narrative performance of a sophisticated traditional individual who is still competent to reproduce a preHispanic genre event, but under the genre constraints of a new historical consciousness: linear, monotextual, episodic, and plotted toward a unique terminal event--the arrival of “the Marqués.”

## Narrative Units

While the overall performance reading is a one-person dramatic event, hence “Acts,” the form of that event is clearly narrative, a narrative which encompasses vast panoramas of a past broken into events, not re-enacted in scenes; therefore I have chosen to designate these larger semantic units as “Episodes.” It seems to me this deliberate mixing of (admittedly alien) dramatic and narrative genre terms is the only way to represent the structure of this specifically American literary genre-event in terms which have recognizable meaning within our education in EuroAmerican literary structures but with minimal distortion from broad genre preconceptions; this performance is not an epic, drama, novella, one-act play, short story or narrative poem, but a thing uniquely itself and unknown in European genre taxonomies. There are no specific textual cues of any kind for these divisions into prologue, act, episode, preface, body, or coda; they are imposed on the text as highlights of the narrative structure implicit within its movement and plot.

## Verse Structure

Náhuatl verse structure has been discussed extensively (Bierhorst 1985b, Bright, Gingerich 1991, Haly, Karttunen and Lockhart, León-Portilla 1983, Lockhart) but little of that discussion contributes to understanding the verse behavior of the *Tlamachiliztlahtolçaçanilli*. This narrative exhibits little of the widely observed parallel verbal structures characteristic of mesoamerican oral poetics and which Tedlock notes is dominated in every language by two-fold or coupleted patterns; in Náhuatl this is the well-known diphraasis. It certainly does not display the elaborate tropological language which is so remarkable in the **tecpillahotli** “nobles’ discourse” style of formal prayers, private discourses of admonition and public discourses of investiture and in Náhuatl song, nor does

it display the parallel verse patterns so typical of the latter. Nevertheless, there is a verse poetics of narrative performance which can be deciphered, to a point.

A sample of what the verse structure of this performance might look like is given below, using the prologue and first two “ages”. From large to small the units are **strophe** (not stanza), **verse-phrase**, and **stich**. The only one of these which can be identified with near-certainty by the use of verse-initial particles (see note 3) is the verse-phrase. Both the strophe and the stich are semantically or syntactically determined units, and the stich especially is a visual unit, corresponding to what we call lines in written verse, and therefore the most tenuous and artificial of the three. The strophe-unit is too irregular to be called a stanza and defined only by semantic units of narrative, not always evident. A verse-phrase may be a single stich or as many as three stichs in the sample below; it may be much larger. It may encompass less than, more than, or exactly one grammatically complete utterance. It may be as brief as four words--verse phrase 11: **Inin tonatiuh nauhuecatl ytoca**--or as long as twenty-two--verse phrase 16--in this brief. The verse-phrase unit appears sometimes to be something very much like the “phonological phrase” Lockhart identifies as an essential unit of Náhuatl writing, a written image of the speech unit as perceived by Nahuatl writers listening to their own performance of the language. “The phonological phrase, consisting of a nuclear nominal or verb stem with its affixes and its adverbial or other modifiers, is a far more obvious, detectable entity in Náhuatl than either the ‘word’ or the complete utterance (sentence); frequently the phrase in fact is a complete utterance” (338-39). But the verse phrase in the 1558 manuscript appears more consciously constructed and is probably more rhythmic and tending more to parallel structures of various sorts than the phonological phrase unit. The verse-phrase seem to be the closest thing to what Tedlock



identifies as a “line” in Quiché performance. While my stich units closely parallel what William Bright, in his uniquely valuable poetic transcription of the *Coloquios* manuscript calls a line, a stich is not a line, the latter being an intonation unit which, following Tedlock, I agree can only be determined for an oral poetry in the measure of actual performance utterances and cannot reliably be equated to any syntactic unit. Without a more complete model of the actual performance modalities and practices for Náhuatl texts, such as Tedlock is able to reconstruct from contemporary Quiché performers, I don’t believe a compelling definition of the Náhuatl line as performed in a text such as this (and probably not for any 16th century transcription) can be reconstructed. The stich is a function of semantic, lexical or syntactic units, which may or may not have corresponded to the “cola” or “periods” (Tedlock) marked by open-ended pauses or falling-pitch pauses which define performance.<sup>2</sup> Certainly the present text exhibits little of what Tedlock calls “paradigmatic verticality,” the piling up of repetitious epithets or parallel modifiers and phrases with little forward movement of syntax or action, and little of the formal couplet structure and embedding that Bright finds in the *Coloquios*. The 1558 narrative is more inclined to display Tedlock’s “syntagmatic horizontality,” moving the syntax of utterance unit and narrative action on to closure--with the blatant exceptions, however, of the conquest lists in the last pages of the manuscript, which pile up vertical lists of towns conquered by the nine Aztec Speakers with almost no forward syntactic movement whatever. Very little of the dialectic Tedlock identifies in Quiché poetics “between paradigm and syntagm, or between the vertical movement of verse and the horizontal movement of prose” is identifiable here. The 1938

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<sup>2</sup> This theory has much in common with Charles Olson’s theory of “projective verse” which has had such a wide influence in contemporary North American poetry; Olson describes a poetics which included somatic qualities and defines the line as a function of breathing in poetic performance.

Lehmann transcription, incidentally, did a thorough job of measuring the text out in discreet discourse units, sometimes corresponding to my verse phrase.

My translation attempts to give an English approximation of these strophe, verse-phrase and stich units, but of course only a full transcription of the original could display the theory completely. Occasionally, where the verse-phrase seems to run at length, as in verse-phrase 6 below, I have allowed it to swallow up any visual stich units completely, considering the latter a print-medium invention.

**Prologue<sup>3</sup>**

**verse-phrase 1 In nican ca** tlamachiliztlatocāçanilli ye huecauh mochiuh **stich 1**  
inic mamaca tlalli, cecentetl in itla mamaca

**verse-phrase 2 inic peuh** i[n] zan iuh macho iniqui tzintic in izquitetl in omaca tonatiuh  
chiquacentzonxihuitl ipan macuilpohualxihuitl ipan matlacxihuitl omei  
axcan ipan mayo, ic 22 ilhuitia de 1558 anos==<sup>4</sup> **5**

**strophe 1**

**v-p 3 inin** tonatiuh nahui ocelotl ocatca--676 anos.

**v-p 4 inique in** izcepan ono[c]ca ocelloqualloque ipan nahui ocellotl in tonatiuh.

**v-p 5 auh in** quiquaya chicome malinalli in i[n] tonacayouh catca.

**v-p 6 auh inic** nenque centzonxihuitl ipan matlacpohualxihuitl ipan yepohual xihuitl  
ypan ye no caxtolxihuitl oze. **10**

**v-p 7 auh inic** tequanqualloque matlacxihuitl ipan ye xihuitl  
inic popoliuhque  
inic tlamito.

**v-p 8 auh** iquac polliuh in tonatiuh.

**v-p 9 auh in** inxiuh catca ce acatl. **15**

**v-p 10 auh inic** peuhque in qualloque in cemilhuitonalli nahui ocelotl,  
zan no ye inic tlamito  
inic popoliuhque---

**strophe 2**

**v-p 11 Inin** tonatiuh nauhecatl ytoca.

**v-p 12 inique in** inic oppa onoca. **20**  
yecatocoque ipan nauhecatl in tonatiuh catca.

**v-p 13 auh inic** poliuhque yecatocoque, ocomatin mocuepque in incal no inquauh moch ecatococ,

**v-p 14 auh inin** tonatiuh zan no yecatococ.

**v-p 15 auh in** quiquaya matlactlomome cohuatl, in tonacayouh catca.

**v-p 16 auh inic** nenca. **25**

caxtolpohualxihuitl ipan yepohualxihuitl ye no ipan nahui xihuitl  
inic popoliuhque

zan cemilhuitl in ecatocoque.

nauhecatl ipan cemilhuitonalli

inic polliuhque. **30**

**v-p 17 auh in** inxiuh catca ce tecpatl.

<sup>3</sup> This prologue is not part of the traditional poetic structure.

<sup>4</sup> Dashes, commas and periods are given only as they appear in the text.

## Mythology and Other Sources

There are numerous texts which provide witness to the extensive body of origin and charter myth-narratives treasured and performed by the Nahua peoples of the basin city-states around Lake Tetzaco. Major sources for stories of the five ages and related events beside the **Tlamachiliztlahtolçaanilli** and the *Anales de Cuauhtitlan* are Motolinia's *Memoriales*, Muñoz Camargo's *Historia de Tlaxcala*, Alva Ixtlilxochitl's *Sumaria relación*, and *Historia de la Nación Chichimeca*, Book VII of Sahagún's Florentine Codex, the Codex Vaticanus A (important for Quetzalcoatl stories), and the *Histoyre du Mechique* and *Historia de los mexicanos por sus pinturas*, both attributed ultimately to Fr. Andrés de Olmos (see Moreno de los Arcos and Elzy for brief summaries). Of these, the most parallel is the *Historia de los mexicanos por sus pinturas*, which is compared to the 1558 manuscript in detail in de la Garza. She claims that the coincidences of sequence especially in the two accounts "demonstrate that the author of the *Leyenda* [1558 ms.] reasonably had at hand the same account on which the *Historia* is based"(130). The conquest lists are closely parallel in both. Bierhorst also supplies a brief running comparison of the two narratives in his Introduction (*History*, 8-10). Gardner performs an interesting structuralist exercise on the 1558 text in an attempt to reconstruct "a hypothetical deep myth"(20) narrative for the five suns myth specifically and provides useful tables comparing descriptive details of the five ages as told in *Historia de los mexicanos*, *Histoyre*, Motolinía, Codex Vaticanus, *Anales*, Muñoz Camargo, and Alva Ixtlilxochitl. The 1558 manuscript is an important and unique source for some aspects of both the creation work of the demi-urge Quetzalcoatl and of the "historical" life work of the god-man culture hero, **Ce Acatl** "Our Precious Lord One Reed Quetzalcoatl"; the torture death of his murderous

uncles, for example, is interestingly out of character with many of the other accounts of him as the “enlightened” antagonist of all forms of human sacrifice.

### **Editions**

Francisco del Paso y Troncoso first brought the text to light in 1903 with his edition in *Biblioteca Nauatl*, vol 5, cuaderno 1. Since then the 1558 text has been translated and published in four versions: Lehmann (1938) in German, with transcription; Velázquez (1947 [1975]) in Spanish, with photographic facsimile of the manuscript; Bierhorst (1992) in English, with transcription. These three include the 1558 text with the much longer and more historically detailed *Anales de Cuauhtitlan* text. An earlier, prose version of my translation appears in Markman and Markman (1992).

**TLAMACHILLIZTLAHTOLÇAÇANILLI:**  
"Wisdom-Discourse Fables"

Prologue

Here are the wisdom-discourse fables,<sup>1</sup>  
     how in ancient times it happened that the earth was established,  
     and each individual thing found its place.  
 This is the manner in which it is known how the sun gave rise to so many things,  
     two thousand five hundred and thirteen years before today, the 22nd of May, 1558.

Act 1 - The Five Ages of Creation

Episode I: Four Ages Rise & Die

This sun<sup>2</sup> was **Nahui Ocelotl**, 4 Jaguar-- 676 years.  
     Those who lived here first were eaten by jaguars on [the day] 4 Jaguar, of this sun.  
 And<sup>3</sup> they ate **chicome malinalli**, 7 Grass, which was their sun-sustenance;<sup>4</sup>  
 And so in this way they lived<sup>5</sup> six hundred seventy-six years  
     until they were savagely devoured in thirteen years.  
     So they completely perished,  
     so they were abolished.  
 And then the sun disappeared.  
 And their year was the year **Ce Acatl**, 1 Reed.  
 And they were first eaten under this same day-sign 4 Jaguar;  
     by just this means [jaguars]<sup>6</sup> they were abolished, they completely perished.

This sun is named **Nahui ecatl**, 4 Wind.  
 Those who lived in this second place were swept away by the wind;  
     during the sun 4 Wind it was.  
 And this way they were destroyed: they became monkeys.  
     Their houses and even their trees were all swept away by the wind.  
 And this sun itself was carried away by the wind.  
 And they ate **matlactlomome cohuatl**, 12 Serpent; it was their sun-sustenance.  
 And so in this fashion they lived three hundred sixty-four years;  
     in this way they were utterly destroyed:

in one day they were swept off by wind.  
 Under the single day-sign 4 Wind they were destroyed;  
 And their year was 1 Flint.

This is the sun **Nahui quiyahuitl**, 4 Rain.  
 And these are the ones who lived during the sun **Nahui quiyahuitl**, which was the third.  
 And thus they were destroyed, in a rain of fire;  
     they were all transformed to birds.  
 And the sun itself also burned; all their houses burned.  
 And so they lived three hundred twelve years;  
 And so they were totally destroyed by a rain of fire in only one day.  
 They ate **chicome tecpatl**, 7 Flint; it was their sun-sustenance.  
 And their year is 1 Flint,  
 And in only one day-sign, 4 Rain, thus they were destroyed:  
     they became the Pipiles.<sup>7</sup>  
 This is why today children are called **pipilpipil**, ["little gobblers."]<sup>8</sup>

This sun is called **Nahui atl**, 4 Water.  
 And the water gathered for fifty-two years.  
 These are the ones who lived in the fourth age, the sun of 4 Water.  
 And so they lived six hundred seventy-six years,<sup>9</sup>  
 And in this way they were destroyed: were inundated:  
     they were transformed into fish.  
     In only one day the heavens came down to inundate them,  
     and they were destroyed.  
 And they ate **nahui xochitl**, 4 Flower; it was their sun-sustenance.  
 And their year was 1 House  
 And on the single day-sign 4 Water they were destroyed in this way;  
     all the mountains were destroyed.  
 And in this manner the water gathered for fifty-two years.

## Episode II: The Deluge and Fire-Drill

And so their years being finished,  
 Then<sup>10</sup> **Titla[ca]huan**, "Our Master", [**Tezcatlipoca**] called forth the one known as "Our Father"  
 and his consort known as "Nene."  
 He said to them, "You will want nothing more.  
 Hollow out a large ahuehuatl log;  
 And you will enter it during the month of **toçoztli**<sup>11</sup> when the heavens will come crashing down."  
 And so they entered it,  
 And then he sealed them in.  
 And he said, "You will have a single ear of corn to eat and likewise your woman will have one."  
 And when they had finally consumed all the kernels, they heard the water outside receding.  
 Their log no longer moved.  
 Then they opened the log, they saw a fish, they drilled a fire from the wood and cooked the fish for  
 themselves.  
 Then the gods<sup>12</sup> **Citlallinicue** and **Citlallatonac** gazed down on them and said, "Who has made  
 fire? Who is now smoking up the heavens?"  
 And so then Our Master **Tezcatlipoca** descended; he scolded them and said to them, "What are you  
 doing, Grandpa? What is this fire?"  
 Then he struck off their heads and reattached them over their buttocks; they became dogs.  
 And here at the sign 2 Reed [you can see] the way in which the heavens were smoked up.<sup>13</sup>

Here are we ourselves, this was already us.<sup>14</sup>  
 Here the fire-drill sticks<sup>15</sup> fell [to earth];  
 Here the heavens were stabilized<sup>16</sup> in the year 1 Rabbit.  
 Here it is [shown] how the fire-drill sticks fell when fire appeared,  
 And here how darkness covered everything for twenty-five years,  
 And here the heavens stabilized in the year 1 Rabbit.  
 And when the heavens were stabilized, then the "dogs" smoked them up, as already mentioned.

And so finally the fire-drill sticks fell and **Tezcatlipoca** lit a fire, so that once again the heavens  
 filled with smoke in the year 2 Reed.

Episode III: We Are Created<sup>17</sup>

And then the gods called an assembly; they said, "Who will be seated there, now that the heavens  
 have been established and the Earth Lord has been established? Gods, who will be seated?"  
 The gods **Citlallinicue**, **Citlallatonac**; **Apanteuctli**, **Tepanquizqui**;  
**Tlalamanqui**, **Huictlollinqui**; **Quetzalcohuatl**, **Titlacahuan** were distressed.

And then **Quetzalcoatl** went off to Mictlan, the Region of the Dead, where he came before the Lord  
 and the Lady of Mictlan.



Then he said to him, truly thus to him, "I come to take away the jade bones which you so honorably guard."

And so then the Lord of Mictlan said to him, "What is it you will do, O **Quetzalcoatl**?"

And again he said, truly thus to him, "The gods are anxious to know who will be settled on the earth."

And so once again the Lord of Mictlan spoke, "Very well; Blow on my conch trumpet and carry it four times around my jade-encircled throne."

But the conch trumpet had no holes for finger-stops.

Then **Quetzalcoatl** called the worms who filled it with holes,

And then bees and hornets quickly rushed inside and filled it with sound so that the Lord of Mictlan heard it.<sup>18</sup>

And then once again the Lord of Mictlan said, "Very well, take them."

And then the Lord of Mictlan said to his messengers, the Mictecans, "Tell him, O gods, that he must leave them."

And **Quetzalcoatl** then came forward and said, "I will take them, once and for all."

And then he said to his spirit-double, his **nahual**, "Go tell them that I will leave them."

Then the **nahual** came saying loudly, "I will leave them."

Then **Quetzalcoatl** went up quickly and took the jade bones, those of the man on one side and of the woman on the other. In this way he took them: he wrapped them in a bundle which he carried up with him.

And once again the Lord of Mictlan said to his messengers, "O gods, **Quetzalcoatl** is in fact carrying off the jade bones! Gods, go dig a pit."

Then they went to dig it, so that **Quetzalcoatl** fell down into it. He was startled by a covey of quail and fell down as though dead, scattering the jade bones across the ground,

And then the quail nibbled and pecked at them<sup>19</sup>.

And then **Quetzalcoatl** revived; he began to weep and said to his **nahual**, "How can this be?"

And then his **nahual** answered, "As it must. Things have gone wrong but let us go on."

Then **Quetzalcoatl** gathered up the bones and made a bundle and carried them at once to Tamoanchan.

And as soon as he brought them the goddess named **Quilaztli**, who is also **Cihuacoatl**, ground them in her jade bowl.

And then **Quetzalcoatl** bled his penis over it.

Then all the aforementioned gods performed penance: **Apantecutli**, **Huictlollinqui**, **Tepanquizqui**, **Tlallamanac**, **Tzontemoc**, and the sixth, **Quetzalcoatl**.

And then they said, "The gods have given birth to men, the common people," for certainly they performed penance on our behalf.<sup>20</sup>

Episode IV: **Quetzalcoatl** Discovers Our Sun-sustenance

So once more they spoke:

"What shall they eat, O gods? Already they are searching for nourishment, a sun-sustenance."

Then the ant went to take kernels of corn from within the Mountain of Food-Stuffs.

And then **Quetzalcoatl** encountered the ant and said to it,

"Tell me where you went to get it."

And persistently he questioned the ant but it did not wish to tell him.

Then finally it said, "Over there," and led him to the place.

And then **Quetzalcoatl** transformed himself to a black ant, accompanied the first ant, and they went into the mountain together.

That is, **Quetzalcoatl** followed the red ant to the storage bin, gathered up the corn and carried it quickly to Tamoanchan.

And then the gods chewed and ate of it

And then fed it to us, to nourish and strengthen us.

And then they said, "What shall we do with this Mountain of Food-Stuffs?"

And then **Quetzalcoatl** went and tried to pull it with ropes but could not lift it.

So then **Oxomoco** performed divination with the kernels;

And then also **Cipactonal**, his wife, performed divination (**Cipactonal** is the woman).

And then they said, **Oxomoco** and **Cipactonal**, "The kernels revealed that only **Nanahuatl** would be capable of breaking open the Mountain of Food-Stuffs."

And then the attendant gods of **Tlaloc**, the **tlaloque**, lords of rain, appeared:

the blue **tlaloque**, the white **tlaloque**, the yellow **tlaloque**, the red **tlaloque**, and **Nanahuatl** broke open the corn.

And then the food-stuffs were all stolen away by the lords of rain;

the white, black, yellow and red corn, beans, chia, amaranth, fish-amaranth-- everything was stolen.

Episode V: Our Sun, 4 Motion, Is Created  
by the Sacrifice of **Nanahuatl**

Preface<sup>21</sup>

The name of this sun is 4 Motion.

This is now our sun, the one under which we live today.

This is its figure, the one here,<sup>22</sup> because this sun fell into the fire at the sacred hearth in Teotihuacan.

It is the same sun as that of **Topiltzin**, Our Beloved Prince of Tollan, **Quetzalcoatl**<sup>23</sup>.

Before becoming this sun, its name was **Nanahuatl**, whose home was Tamoanchan.

Eagle, Jaguar, Hawk, Wolf, 6 Wind, 6 Flower--all are names of this sun.

This thing is called the "sacred hearth", and it burned for four years.

Body

And **Tonacateuctli** and **Xiuhteuctli** called to **Nanahuatl** and told him,

"Now you shall become guardian of heaven and earth."

And then he was much saddened and said,

"Truly the gods live, and I am only a sickly person."

They also summoned there **Nahuitecpatl**, 4 Flint, who is the moon.

Him the Lord of Tlalocan, **Tlaloc**, called upon, and also upon **Napateuctli**.

Then **Nanahuatl** fasted in penance.

He took up his maguey thorns and his pine branches [upon which to offer them].

Then the Moon provided his own thorns and performed his penance.

Then **Nanahuatl** was the first to be bathed,

And then the Moon was bathed also;

quetzal feathers for his pine branches and jade for his thorns,

he burns jade incense.

When four days had passed, they coated **Nanahuatl** in chalk and down feathers and he went to throw himself into the fire.

**Nahuitecpatl** made a kind of female song for him<sup>24</sup>.

Then **Nanahuatl** fell into the fire and afterward the Moon fell also but only into the ashes.

When **Nanahuatl** fell, the eagle lifted him and carried him off.

The jaguar could not carry him, but only leapt into the fire and was spotted.

Then the hawk smoked himself and the wolf was scorched.

None of these three was able to carry him.<sup>25</sup>

And so when he arrived in the heavens,

then [the high gods] **Tonacateuctli** and **Tonacacihuatl** bathed him,

then sat him on a mat of flamingo plumes,

then wrapped his head with red bands.

Then he spent four days in the heavens;

And then he stood still at the sign 4 Motion,  
And for four days he did not move, only stands still.

Then the gods asked, "Why doesn't he move?"

Then they sent **Itztlotli** to speak and inquire of the sun.

He said to him, "The gods say, 'Ask him why he will not move.'"

Then the Sun answered, "Because I require the blood of their legitimacy and their reign."

Then the gods consulted with each other

And then **Tlahuizcalpanteuctli**, Lord of the House of Dawn, became angered and said,

"Why don't I put an arrow into him?

He'll wish he had never stood still!"

Then he shot at the sun but missed him.

For this the sun shot **Tlahuizcalpanteuctli**;

he shot him with the flaming plumes of the cuetzalin-papagayo

and suddenly brought down the entire nine heavens on his face.

This way **Tlahuizcalpanteuctli** became the ice-god.

And then the gods **Titlacahuan** and **Huitzilopochtli**

and the goddesses **Xochiquetzal**, **Yapaliicue** and **Nochpaliicue** gathered in council,  
and from then on the gods in Teotihuacan began to die.

And when the sun rose into the sky, then the moon, which had fallen in the ashes, went also.

He had no sooner arrived at the edge of the sky than

**Papaztac** came to smash his face with a rabbit-jar.

And then the female demons and other demons<sup>26</sup> came out to confront him at the intersections of  
the roads

And they said to him, "May you be welcome."

Nevertheless they stopped him there, clothed him in rags, and came to make offerings.

And when the sun came to halt at 4 Motion it was also then that the sunset was stabilized.<sup>27</sup>

## Act 2: Origins of "One Reed" and Rise of the Toltecs

Episode I: **Mixcoatl** and the Cloud Serpents

[Note: At this point in the manuscript the scribe inserts a crude pictographic sketch outlining the mythic precincts of Tula (Tollan) with **Topiltzin Ce Acatl Quetzalcoatl** "Our Beloved Prince One Reed Quetzalcoatl" standing at its center. Marking the four corners are his "Four-part" temples: "Serpent House," "Gold House," "Jade House," and "Turquoise House." (In the *Anales de Cuauhtitlan* these are called "his turquoise-plank house, his coral-inlay house, his whiteshell-inlay house, and his quetzal-feather house.") In the center under the glyph for town which bears the name "Xicococ", the names of **Ce Acatl's** parents, **Mixcoatl** and **Chimalman** appear on either side and are joined by a long, chain-like umbilical, which attaches in the center under the glyph to an oblong figure which could be a supine child (Gillespie, 138). Directly below the figure stands **Topiltzin**. **Mixcoatl's** age at the time of his son **Topiltzin's** birth, 39, is written in the upper right corner of the pictograph, above the date 1 Flint.]

## Preface

And so **Mixcoatl** had lived 39 years.

And his wife was named **Chimalman**.

And **Topiltzin** lived 56 years [the drawing indicates 52, the figure given in other accounts.]

In the same year 1 Reed in which he moves, here he also leaves his city, Tollan.

And here he died on 4 Rabbit there in Tlapallan.

## Body

In the year 1 Flint the **mixcoa** "Cloud serpents" were born, they were created. **Iztacchalchiuhtlicue** "White Jade Skirt" bore the Four Hundred Cloud Serpents.

Then they entered a cave;

And when they had entered the cave, again their mother gave birth;

Then "the Five" were born, also cloud serpents:

this one is named **Quauhtliicohuah** "Eagle's Twin",

this second is named **Mixcohuatl** "Cloud Serpent",

this third, a woman, is named **Cuitlachcihuah** "Wolf Woman",

this fourth is named **Tlotepe** "Hawk Mountain",

and this fifth is named **Apanteuctli** "Lord of the River."

And when they were born they entered the water, they threw themselves into the water;

And then they emerged again and were nursed by **Mecitli**, she who is Lord [sic] of the Earth,

**Mecitli**.

And so it is that today we are "Mexica" --not properly "Mexica" but "Mecitin".

And then the sun sent forth the Four Hundred Cloud Serpents. Giving them arrows, darts and shields, he said, "Here is that with which you will satisfy my thirst, with which you will serve my table."

And [he gave them] arrows, precious-feather arrows, fletched with quetzal plumes, heron plumes, troupial plumes, roseate spoonbill plumes, flamingo plumes, cotinga plumes.

"And," [he said,] "furthermore, she is your mother, Lord of Earth."

But they did not perform their calling; they only shot at birds, they only enjoyed themselves; so it is that place is called "Bird Arrow."

And occasionally they caught a jaguar; they did not offer it to the sun.

When they did capture a jaguar, they decorated themselves with plumes and down, they slept with women, drank **tzihuac**<sup>28</sup>[yucca] liquor and wandered about completely drunk, wandered about completely intoxicated.

So the sun then called "the Five" who had been born later. He gave them **tzihuac** arrows [made with yucca tips] and lord's shields and said, "Listen carefully now, my sons; you must destroy the Four Hundred Cloud Serpents who offer nothing to Our Father, Our Mother."

So they gathered together in a large mesquite, from which the others saw them and said, "Who are these, so like ourselves?"

And the time came to make war:

**Quauhtlicohauh** hid inside a tree;

**Mixcohuatl** hid within the earth;

**Tlotepetl** hid within a hill;

**Apanteuctli** hid in the water;

and his older sister, **Cuetlachcihuatl**, hid in the ball court.

And so when the Four Hundred came near, none of the Five were left in the mesquite tree.

Then the tree cracked open and fell on them and out came **Quauhtlicohauh**;

And then the earth shook and out came **Mixcohuatl** from within the earth;

And then the hill erupted and fell down and out came **Tlotepetl**;

And then the water boiled and out came **Apanteuctli**.

So then they eliminated and destroyed [the Four Hundred],

And then served the sun at his table and gave him to drink.

And others who had escaped came to supplicate and plead with them, saying, "We have been a great trouble to you. Please, won't your Honors go in to Chicomoztoc 'Seven Caves'; certainly it is your beloved cave. Won't your graces please go in, since it is your beloved home.

Could it be that you have just now damaged our caves, our home?<sup>29</sup> We will only sit outside the cave."

## Episode II: **Xiuhnel** and **Mimich** Discover the Star-Demon, **Itzpapalotl**

And then there came down two deer, each with two heads, and also these two cloud serpents named **Xiuhnel** and **Mimich**, who hunt in the Sacred Lands [to the north].

Then Xiuhnel and **Mimich** pursued the two deer, trying to shoot them. A night and a day they pursued them and by sunset they were tired.

Then they said to one another, "You build a hut there and I'll build one here." Ah, soon the malevolent creatures come!

And then they came, they who were deer but had become women. They came calling, "**Xiuhnel**, dear; **Mimich**, honey, where are you? Come, come to drink; come to eat."

And when they heard them they said to one another, "Well, why don't you answer?"

And then **Xiuhnel** called to them and said, "You come here, sister."

Then she said to him, "Won't you drink, dear **Xiuhnel**."

And so then **Xiuhnel** drank the blood

And then immediately lay down with her;

She lay down with him

and then turned herself face down upon him,

then devoured him, tore open his breast.

And then **Mimich** said, "Iyo! She has actually eaten my elder brother!"

And the other woman was still standing and calling, "Lover, won't you come and eat!"

But **Mimich** did not call her.

And then instead he took the fire-drill and lit a fire,

And when it was lit, **Mimich** ran and threw himself into it.

The woman, pursuing him, also entered the fire. She followed him there the entire night, until noon of the following day.

And then he descended into a thorny barrel cactus, fell into it, and the woman fell down after him.

And when he saw the star-demon had fallen, he shot her repeatedly. Only then could he turn back.

Then he returned, parting and tying up<sup>30</sup> his hair, painting his face and weeping for his elder brother who had been eaten.<sup>31</sup>

Then the fire gods heard it and they went to bring the woman, **Itzpapalotl**, Obsidian Butterfly.

**Mimich** went in the lead.

And when they took her, they burned her and she burst into bloom.

First she blossomed into the blue flint;

The second time she blossomed into the white flint, and they took the white and wrapped it in a bundle.

The third time she blossomed into the yellow flint, but no one took it, they only watched.

The fourth time she blossomed into the red flint which no one took.

And the fifth time she blossomed into the black flint which no one took.

Episode III: **Mixcoatl** Goes to War

**Mixcohuatl**, Cloud Serpent, took the white flint for a god and wrapped it and carried it in a bundle, And then went off to make war in a place called Comallan. He went carrying his goddess of flint, **Itzpapalotl**.

And when the Comalteca learned of it, they came out to meet **Mixcohuatl** and placed food before him, and with this put his heart at rest.

And then he went to Tecanma where also his heart was rested. They said to him, "What does the Lord wish? May he be satisfied here.

And bring him his beloved **tzihuac**; let me here chop it up [and make him pulque]."

And then he went to Cocoyama where at once he came pulling down the high places.

And he conquered there in Cocoyama then went to Huehuetocan and conquered in Huehuetocan, Then went to Pochtlan and came there to conquer also.

And then when **Mixcohuatl** went to conquer in Huitznahuac, the woman **Chimalman** came out to confront him.

Then she<sup>32</sup> laid down her shield and filled it with arrows and atlatl darts.

She stood naked, without skirt or shift.

And when he saw her **Mixcohuatl** shot his arrows:

The first went over her and she only turned aside slightly;

The second arrow passed by her side and she deflected it;

The third she merely caught in her hand;

And the fourth she passed between her legs.

And since **Mixcohuatl** had shot at her this way four times, he turned and immediately went away.

And the woman fled away at once to hide in a cave among the canyons.

And again **Mixcohuatl** came to prepare and supply himself with arrows.

And again he went to look for her but saw no one.

So then he attacked the women of Huitznahuac,

And then the women of Huitznahuac said, "Let us go in search of her." They went to take her; they said, "**Mixcohuatl** is searching for you. On your account he is mistreating your younger sisters."

Then when they had taken her, they came to Huitznahuac.

Then again **Mixcohuatl** went and again met her, finding her crotch open<sup>33</sup> as before.

Again she laid down the shield and the arrows and again he shot at her.

Again the arrow went over her head, and one went by her side and one she caught in her hand and one passed between her legs.

And then when this had occurred, he took the woman of Huitznahuac, the one who is **Chimalman**, and lay with her and so she became pregnant.



Act 3 - Life and Death of **Ce Acatl**  
Episode I: Youth of **Ce Acatl**, "One Reed"

And when he [**Topiltzin**] was born, for four days he caused his mother to suffer.  
Then One Reed was born and as soon as he was born his mother died.  
And One Reed was then raised by [the divine women] **Quillaztli** and **Cihuacoatl**.  
And being already grown, he accompanied his father on campaigns. In this way he became exercised in arms, in a place called Xihuacan there he took captives.

The Four Hundred Cloud Serpents, the uncles of One Reed, they despised and killed his father,  
And when they had killed him they went to bury him in Xaltitlan.

And One Reed then went in search of his father; he said, "What is this about my father?"  
**Cozcaquauhtli**, King Vulture, then said, "Well, they killed your father; he lies over there where they went to bury him."

And so [One Reed] went and took him and seated him in his temple, Mixcoatepetl, "Mixcoatl Mountain."

And the uncles who had killed his father were named **Apanecatl**, **Zolton** and **Cuilton**.

Then he said, "How will I dedicate the temple?"

[the uncles] said, "If with only a rabbit, with only a snake, we will be angered; better would be a jaguar, an eagle, a wolf,"

When they said this, One Reed spoke: "Very well, so it will be."

Then he called the jaguar, the eagle, the wolf; he said to them, "Won't you please come in, uncles? They say with you I must dedicate my temple. Certainly, you shall not be the ones to die. Instead you, my uncles, will eat [these] men and with them indeed will I dedicate my temple."

The ropes which tied the [maneaters] by their necks were rotten.<sup>34</sup>

And so then One Reed called the moles and said to them, "O Uncles; won't you come here? We will tunnel into our temple."

And the moles then promptly scraped down and tunneled and One Reed entered into it and emerged at the summit of his temple.

And the uncles [who had killed his father] said to him, "We will light fire with the fire-drill stick there on the summit."

And they were delighted; they saw the jaguar, the eagle, the wolf and the weeping.

And as they came back to their senses, One Reed himself lit fire with the fire-drill stick.

Then the uncles became enraged, and they came running up, **Apanecatl** rushing to the front.

And then One Reed rose up and threw into his face a polished clay vessel so that he came falling back down.

And then he quickly seized **Zolton** and **Cuilton** and whistled to the man-eaters, who proceeded to kill them. He brought them together and cut their flesh a little.

And when they had tormented them then they cut open their chests.

## Episode II: Conquests and Death of One Reed

And then One Reed conquered once more in a place called Ayotlan.  
 And when he had conquered there, he went on to Chalco and Xicco where he conquered also.  
 And having conquered there he went to Cuixcoc where he also conquered.  
 And then he went to Zacanco where he also conquered;  
 Then he went to Tzonmolco where he also conquered;  
 Then he went to Maçatzonco where he also came to conquer;  
 Then he went to Tzapotlan where he also came to conquer;  
 Then he went to Acallan where he crossed a river and also there conquered completely.

So he came to Tlapallan.  
 And then in that place he became sick and was ill for five days until he died.  
 And when he had died there in honor, they immolated him, he was burned.

And so then in Tollan no one remained.  
 . . . [section of text damaged by ink spill here]<sup>35</sup>

**Huemac** was installed as Speaker,  
 and the second was this one named **Nequametl**,  
 the third, this one named **Tlalchicatzin**  
 and the fourth, this one named **Huitzilpopoca**.  
 These four succeeded **Topiltzin**.

### Act 4 - Decline of the Toltecs

#### Episode I: The Stinking Giant

The Speaker of Nonohualco is named **Huetzin**. . . .  
 . . . [more inkblot damage]. . .

They were startled and horrified; they saw the **tlacanexquimilli**,<sup>36</sup> the night-being without head or arms, the "long man."  
 This then is he who ate people.  
 And then the Toltecs said, "O Toltecs, Who is this man-eater?"  
 Then they guarded him, they seized him; and having seized this huge young man, toothless, lipless and filthy-faced<sup>37</sup>, they killed him.  
 And having killed him, they opened him up to look inside, and found no heart, no guts, no blood.  
 Then he stank, and whoever smelled him died and even he who did not smell him but only passed by.  
 And in this way many died.  
 Then they dragged him but he would not move, and the rope broke.  
 And those who fell died where they fell.  
 And when he did move, everyone died wherever he went, he devoured everyone.

And when he did move along, everyone arrayed him, the lineage-bearers, the elders, the beloved sons, the matrons. They tied him with eight ropes and dragged him along to Itzocan. And then he stood up. Those who dragged him did not let go of the ropes but were carried along dangling from them. And all who hung on to the rope were lifted high in the air.<sup>38</sup>

### Episode II: **Huemac** Loses the Corn

And so then **Huemac** played ball; he played ball with the lords of rain, the **tlaloque**.

And the lords of rain said to him, "What shall we wager?"

**Huemac** said, "My jade and my quetzal plumes."

And again they said to **Huemac**, "None other than this shall you also win: our jade and our quetzal plumes."

Then they played and **Huemac** beat them.

So the lords of rain went to transform that which they would give to **Huemac**, the ripe maize ear and their quetzal plumes the green maize leaves in which the ear swells.

But he would not accept them; he said, "Can this be what I have won! Was it not jade? Was it not quetzal plumes? And this stuff? Take it away!"

So then the lords of rain said to him, "Very well; 'Give him the jade and the plumes and take away our jade and our quetzal plumes.'"

Then they took them and went away, then said to **Huemac**, "Very well, for now we are hiding our jade; the Toltecs will continue to work in suffering but only for four years."

And then the hail fell; and it fell to the height of the knee, destroying all food-stuffs. The hail fell in the month of **Teucilhuitl**.

And then especially on Tollan the sun shone; the trees, the nopal, the maguey all dried up; And even the stones broke, everything disintegrated because of the sun.

And the Toltecs struggled and died of hunger.

Then a sacrificial prisoner, who was probably kept guarded in some place by his uncle [his captor]<sup>39</sup>, [miraculously, somehow] bought himself a small bird, made himself tamales from it and ate them.

And in a place called Chapoltepec Cuitlapilco, on Mt. Chapoltepec, an old woman sat selling paper banners.

He went and bought from her a banner and then went to be sacrificed on the **techcatl** stone.

And when the four years of famine had passed, the lords of rain again appeared there in Chapoltepec where there is water.

Then suddenly to the surface of the water rose a green ear of maize that had been chewed upon,

And a certain Toltec man happened to see it, took up the chewed ear and chewed it himself.

And then from out of the water came a priest of **Tlaloc** who said, "Mortal, have you learned something here?"

Then the Toltec responded, "O most certainly, Our God. It has already been a long time that we lost it for ourselves."

Then the other spoke: "Mortal, that is very good; sit here while I speak to the Lord."

And he returned once more into the water but did not tarry long;

Then once more he emerged bringing with him an armload of fully ripened ears.

Then he spoke: "Mortal, deliver this to **Huemac**. And [tell him] the gods request the daughter of **Tozcuecuex**, the Mexitin [Mexica], for indeed as they will be eating this [the maize], a little at a time she will go eating<sup>40</sup> the Toltec.<sup>41</sup> For certainly the Toltec will be destroyed and the Mexica will be coming along.

And over there at Chalchiuhcoliuhyan in Pantitlan they will go to deliver her."

And so then he went to tell everything to **Huemac**; thus he said just as **Tlaloc** had commanded it.

And then **Huemac** was filled with contrition and wept;

he said, "So it will certainly be;

so the Toltecs will indeed depart;

so Tollan will indeed be destroyed."

### Episode III: Sacrifice of **Quetzalxochtzin** and Arrival of the Mexica

And then he sent to Xicococ two messengers, **Chiconcohuatl** and **Cuetlachcohuatl**, to request of the Mexica the young woman named **Quetzalxochtzin** who was not very old, still a little lady.

So then they went there to Xicococ, and they spoke: "Here have we been sent by **Huemac**; he says, 'the lords of rain have shown themselves in a sacred manner. They request a young Mexica woman.'"

And so in a four-day fast the Mexica mourned for her.

And when the four days were completed, then they carried her to Pantitlan; Her father went with her.

Then they sacrificed her.

And then again there the lords of rain appeared and spoke to **Tozcuecuex**:

"**Tozcuecuex**, don't be lost in your grief, for you will be with your young lady. Open your tobacco pouch."

There they placed the girl's heart and all the many and varied foodstuffs.

They said, "Here indeed is what the Mexica shall eat, for the Toltecs will certainly be destroyed."

And so then suddenly the clouds gathered and it began to rain furiously; for four days and four nights it rained without ceasing and the water was eaten [by the earth].

Then sprouted all the different green edible plants and all the herbs and grasses.

And all were extraneous when our sun-sustenance [the maize] was created and brought to life.

And then the Toltecs planted; twenty and forty days days pass and we arrived<sup>42</sup>, already it was rounded and full;

in only a moment our sustenance [the maize] was produced.  
And when our sustenance was produced, 2 Reed was the year-sign.<sup>43</sup>

In 1 Flint the Toltecs were destroyed.

Then **Huemac** went into [the cave] at Cincalco [where he committed suicide]. Some returned and others dispersed themselves in all directions.

## Act 5: Sojourns and Establishment of the Mexica-Aztecs The Historical Year-Count Begins

### Episode I: Wandering and Humiliation

1. **Tezcacoatl Huemac**. 2. **Chiconcohuatl**. 3. **Cohuatlayauhqui**. 4. **Cuitlachcohuatl**.

Thirteen years. 1 Reed.<sup>44</sup>

And the names of the four protectors who led them in their departure are--name of the first lord, **Cohuatlayauhqui**; name of the second, **Cuitlachcohuatl**; name of the third, **Chiconcohuatl**; name of the fourth, **Tezcacoahuatl** (this one was **Huemac**).

They served as protectors for thirteen years, always wanderers.

And here they are coming from Colhuacan, from Aztlan;  
Here the Mexica are fleeing, fifty-eight years.

1 Flint. Here it shows<sup>45</sup> they lived in Chapoltepec still in the time of **Huitzillihuitl**; they lived there forty years.

13 Rabbit. Here it shows they lived in Colhuacan, in Tīçaapan, twenty-five years.

When the Toltecs departed in 1 Flint, the Mexica were arriving at the same time; they came from there, from Xicococ and it took them thirty-seven years to arrive at Chapoltepec. There they stayed, in Chapoltepec, for forty years.

And then the Colhua rented them out as slaves; the Xaltocameca came to rent them.

There the Mexica settled for a time, as the saying goes, "I'll only sleep here nearby you, because I'm headed over yonder."

So they "slept" there near the Colhua but in such a way that it seemed they went there only to guard them.

And then the Colhua came forth and they met them; they said, "You have come into the home of the Colhua;

"And where the Xaltocameca and the Quauhtitla are householders;  
also the Acolhua, also the Tenayo, also the Azcapotzalca, also the Quahuaca, also the Maçahuaca, also the Xiquipilca, also the Matlatzinca, also the Ocuilteca, also the Cuitlahuaca, the Xochimilca."

and others there were under watch of the Colhua.

These [Colhua] captured [the Mexica chieftan] **Huitzillihuitl**.

Then the Mexica were robbed of their woman, the princess.

And other Mexica escaped into the tule marshes at Acocolco and went to camp there for six days.

Episode II: The Founding of Tenochtitlan, The Sequence of Speakers,  
Conquests of Empire

And here it shows the arrival on dry land here at Tenochtitlan, which was still nothing but tule marsh, still nothing but a reedy place; there [the Mexica] endured their labors for fifty years.

No one was their Speaker.

The Mexica kept exclusively and singlemindedly to their own affairs.

[Year] 51. 2 House: Colhuacan, Tenayocan.

And here it was that the Mexica made their [first] conquests: only Colhuacan and Tenayocan.

1.<sup>46</sup> And it was also there that Lord **Acamapichtli** was installed as The Speaker. He ruled twenty-one years. 20. 1 Flint: Xochmilco, Cuitlahuac, Quauhnahuac, Mizquic.

And here are shown the conquests which he made: Xochmilco and Cuitlahuac and Mizquic and Quauhnahuac. In four places he conquered.

2. And here it is indicated that the son of **Acamapichtli**, named **Huitzilihuitl**, ruled for twenty-one years; here he ruled--21. 9 House: Xaltocan, Acolman, Otompan, Chalco, Tetzco, Tollantzinco, Quauhtitlan, Toltitlan.

And here are shown the conquests which he made; Eight cities **Huitzilihuitl** conquered.

3. And here it is indicated that the son of **Huitzilihuitl**, named **Chimalpopocatzin**, ruled; for ten years he was The Speaker. Chalco, Tequixquiac. 10 years. 4 Rabbit.

And here are shown the two cities which **Chimalpopocatzin** conquered.

4. And here it is indicated that the son of **Acamapichtli**, named **Itzcohuatzin**, was made The Speaker, and so he was Speaker for thirteen years. 13. 1 Flint.

And here are all the conquests which **Itzcoatzin** made: Azcapotzalco, Tlacopan, Atlacuihuayan, Coyohuacan, Mixcohuac, Quauhximalpan, Quahuacan, Teocalhuiyocan, Tecpan, Huitzitzillapan, Quauhnahuac, Tetzco, Quauhtitlan, Xochmilco, Cuitlahuac, Mizquic, Tlatelolco, Itztepec, Xiuhtepec, Tzaqualpan, Chalco, Yohuallan, Tepequacuico, Cueçallan.

5. And here it is shown that the son of **Huitzilihuitl**, named **Ilhuicaminatzin Moteucçomatzin the Elder**, was made The Speaker, and so he ruled for twenty-nine years. 29. 1 House.

And here are the conquests which **Moteucçomatzin the Elder** made: Coaixtlahuacan, Chalco, Chiconquiyauhco, Tepoztlan, Iyauhtepec, Atlatlauhcan, Totollapan, Huaxtepec, Tecpatepec, Yohualtepec, Xiuhtepec, Quiyauhteopan, Tlalcoçauhtitlan, Tlachco, Quauhnahuac, Tepequacuico, Cohuatlan, Xillotepec, Itzcuincuitlapilco, Tlapacoyan, Chapolicxitla, Tlatlauhquitepec, Yacapichtlan, Quauhtocho, Cuetlaxtlan.

6. And here is indicated how the grandson of both Speakers **Moteucōmatzin the Elder** and **Itzcohuatzin**, named **Axayacatzin**, was made The Speaker; he ruled for twelve years. 12. 4 Rabbit.

And here are all the places which **Axayacatzin** conquered: Tlatilolco, Matlatzinco, Xiquipilco, Tzinacantepec, Tlacotepec, Tenantzinco, Xochiyacan, Teotenanco, Callimayan, Metepec, Ocoyacac, Capolloac, Atlapolco, Quapanohuayan,<sup>47</sup> Xalatlahuco, Tecalco, Tepeyacac, Oztoman, Tlaximaloyan, Ocuillan, Cuezcomatliyacac, Matlatlan, Oztoticpac, Tlaollan, Ahuilizapan, Tetzapotitlan, Mixtlan, Quetzaloztoc, Cuetlaxtlan, Poxcauhtlan, Miquetlan, Tenexticpac, Tochpan, Tampatel, Quauhtlan, Tamooc.

7. And here is shown how the grandson of two Speakers, **Moteucōmatzin the Elder** and also **Itzcohuatzin** was made Speaker. Five years he ruled. 5. 3 Rabbit.

And here are all the place this **Tiçocicatzin** conquered: Tonalliimoquetzayan, Yecatepec, Toxico, Matlatzinco, Mazahuacan, Atezcahuacan, Cillan, Tlapan, Yancuitlan, Tamapachco, Coatl, Iquauhpechco, Xochiyetla, Miquetlan.

8. And here is shown how the grandson<sup>48</sup> of both Speakers **Moteuczomatzin the Elder** and also **Itzcohuatzin** was made Speaker. Sixteen years he ruled. 16. 8 Reed.

And here are the conquests he made: Tlapan, Tziuhcohuac, Molanco, Tzapotlan, Xaltepec, Tototepec, Xallapan, Apancallecan, Xihuacan, Acapolco, Xollochiuhcan, Cozohuipillecan, Acatepec, Cozcaquauhtenanco, Amaxtlan, Xochtlan, Coyocac, Chiyapan, Tecpatepec, Huexollotlan, Teocuitlatlan, Xiuhteucçatlan, Xicochimalco, Tequantepec, Coyollapan, Huehuetlan, Huipillan, Cahuallan, Iztatlan, Nantzintlan, Comitlan, Izhuatlan, Quauhxacatitlan, Iztactlallocan, Huitztlan, Xollotlan, Quauhnacatzlan, Maçatlan, Mapachtepec, Cueçalcuitlapillan, Quauhtlan, Tlacotepec, Mizquitlan, Quauhpilollan, Ayotochcuitlatlan.

- [9.] And here it shows how the son of **Axayacatzin**, named **Moteucōmatzin** was made Speaker; he ruled sixteen years. 16. 11 Reed.

And all the places where this **Moteucōmatzin** made his conquests: Achiotlan, Çoçollan, Nocheztlan, Teuctepec, Huillotepec, Tlaniztlan, Çollin, Tzinacantlan, Huitztlan, Oxitlan, Piaztlan, Texotlan, Chichihualtatacallan, Iztactlallocan, Icpatepec, Tlatlatepec Amatlan, Pipioltepec, çaquantepec, Nopallan, Tecoçauhtlan Hueiapan, Quimichtepec, Malinaltepec, Tlachqui, Auhco, Teochiapan, Tecatzinco, Pantepec, Caltepec, Tecpatlan, Çentzontepec, Queçaltepec, Cuezcomaixtlahuacan, Çacatepec, Xallapan, Xaltianquizco, Tolloxonecuilco, Comaltepec Atepec, Huexollotlan, Tliltepec, Iztitlan, Miquiztlan, Itzcuintepec.

#### Coda

The day-sign on which the Marques arrived was 1 Reed, forty-two years ago.

The one who laid down the dagger<sup>49</sup> was the second one to enter Mexico.

1 Reed. 42. 11 Reed, 12 Flint, 13 House. 1 Rabbit, 2 Reed, 3 Flint, 4 House.<sup>50</sup>

## ENDNOTES

1. **Tlamachiliztla[h]tolçaçanilli** - Velázquez: **tlamachiliztli** - **tlahtolli** - **çaçanilli**. A neologism unattested, so far as I can determine, anywhere else. Bierhorst, 1985a, p. 15: "**zazanilli** (trifle) applies only to jokes, animal stories, and what Molina calls old wives' tales. Unfortunately, there are no recorded Aztec **zazanilli**--though the term was applied to a collection of Aesop's Fables translated into Náhuatl in the late 1500's." On leaf 179 of the *Cantares Mexicanos* manuscript a Náhuatl version of Aesop's Fables begins with this title phrase: **Nican ompehua y çaçanillatolli ynquitlali ce tlamatini ytoca Esopo** "Here begin the fable-discourses which were composed by that wise man named Aesop." In Book VII of the Florentine Codex, Chapter 2, Sahagún records the "Rabbit-in-the-Moon" myth—one of the finest extant Náhuatl accounts of the creation of the 5<sup>th</sup> Sun—and the informant concludes his tale with the following line: **Nican tlami ynhin nenonotzalli, çaçanilli, in ye vecauh yc tlatlanonutzaya veuetque, yn impiel catca** "Here ends the ancient legend, the fable, from long ago, so the elders narrated it, it was their treasure." (Sahagun 8). This text is repeated in the *Memoriales con escolios* text of the same story, found in Sahagun's *Primeros memoriales* and appended to the Anderson and Dibble edition of Book VII, p. 59.

Clearly the genre of **çaçanilli**, whatever it was before evangelization, became a key term for desacralized narrative of the preHispanic past, now demoted to the level of Aesop. By labelling his performance with a derivative of this name, our Mexica narrator proclaims his distance from any faith or belief in these old stories, but respects them nonetheless (assuming the Prologue was composed by the performer—it may have been a scribal addition). The genre label assures that no reader any longer will believe these stories as cosmogonic truth, but implicitly recognizes, calling them "wisdom", that they stand in competition with the "new" accounts of *Genesis*.

2. **inin tonatiuh** - "this sun" indicates visual reading from a pictograph; strophel.

3. **Auh** - Anaphoric verse-unit indicator; appears throughout alone or in combinations: **auh in** "and so"; **auh inin** "and thus"; **auh inic** "and so this" or "and so here"; **auh ic** "and this"; **auh niman** "and then". See **auh izcatqui inic**, note 44, below. **Niman** "then" also functions by itself as a secondary verse-indicator and more often (in the present text) as a stich-indicator within the verse unit.

4. **Tonacayouh; to-** "our" **nacayo-** "flesh, body," i.e., "what sustains the body." May also imply through rhyme a relationship with **tonal-** "day, day-sign, destiny," and the root **tona-** "vital heat" and **tonatiuh** "sun." My translation attempts to suggest all these meanings.

5. **nenque** - In an earlier translation of this text (in Markman & Markman) I rendered this word as "wasted" fr. Molina, **nen-ca**, "*estar ocioso y sin alguna ocupación*" and Karttunen, **nēncah**,



“to be idle, without profit, in vain, futile.” It occurs four more times below as **nenca**. However, as Karttunen points out, this adverbial contrasts phonemically with the preterit form of the verb **nemi** “to live,” which is **nen-**, only by vowel length, which is not marked in this manuscript. Since in all four occurrences **nenca** is the only verb option in the phrase and clearly is not functioning adverbially, the more valid contextual choice must be “they lived.”

6. **zan no ye inic** - The narrator would seem to be highlighting, perhaps by pointing to the pictograph figure, the correlation between the day-name and the agency of destruction.

7. **inic polliuhque pipiltin catca** - León-Portilla: “turkeys”; Velázquez: “*niños*”; Bierhorst: “children.” “Noblemen” would be another, particularly sarcastic, option, impossible here. But why would they become children? And if so, what sense are we to make of the next sentence? Could the narrator be saying that this previous race of proto-men became the Pipiles, Náhuatl-speaking groups to the south in Central America, suggesting their dialect, distorted to Mexican ears, sounded like turkey-talk? Consider the following citations:

1. “**Pípila**. (*Del Azteca pipilpipil, muchachuelo*). *En México, la hembra del guajolote o pavo*.” **Modernísimo Diccionario Enciclopédica Learte**, Tomo VII, P-R, p. 176.

2. “**Pípila**. (*Del azt. pipilpipil, muchachuelo, llamada así en castellano por ser la madre de ellos*) f. *En México, la hembra del guajolote*.” Santamaría, **Diccionario General de Americanismos**, Tomo II, p. 484.

3. “**Pípiles**. (*Del azt. pipil, muchacho, porque en un principio hablaron el azteca en forma corrompida, como lo hablaría un niño*). *Antiguas tribus indígenas de Centro América*” **Diccionario General**, p. 484.

4. “**Pípilo**. (*De pipilpipil*) *El guajolito tierno*.” **Diccionario General**, p. 484.

8. **monotza cocone pipilpipil** - León-Portilla: “The offspring of turkeys are now called pipilpipil.” Molina\Siméon: **pipilpipil** “*muchachos*”. Velázquez: “*se llama a los niños pipilpipil (muchachitos)*.”

9. The years for the four ages total 2,028, the same total--but not the same order--for the ages described in the **Historia de los mexicanos por sus pinturas**. If the total given in the Prologue, “2,513 years before today,” refers to time passed since the creation of the first sun (the most likely meaning), then the narrator is telling us the fifth age is 485 years old in 1558. Given the length of the first four ages, it is unlikely he means the fifth age itself is 2,513 years old.

10. **niman** - “then”; verse-unit or sub-unit indicator

11. The **ventena** (twenty-day “month”) corresponding roughly to April.

12. **teteo** - Various anthropomorphic beings of varying power and influence. **Tezcatlipoca** was considered one of the most active, immanent, polyvalent and dangerous.

13. Performing-reader speaks directly to the transcriber.
14. I understand “we” to mean all Native contemporaries of our narrator who still inhabit the existing Nahua world. It is very doubtful that any Native speaker in 1558 could still be sufficiently bold or ethnocentric to include Europeans in such a creation account. However, this statement would suggest that he still clings to an oppositional account for American origins, assuming he has been catechized in biblical stories of human origin, as his title for this performance would suggest. This statement may also suggest that this performance was without Spanish participants and that the scribe was native.
15. **Tlequahuitl** - Siméon: *"instrumento de madera para hacer fuego."* The ancient frictional tool for starting fires.
16. **o/moman in ilhuicatl** - *"se estancó"*. See Siméon.
17. See León-Portilla, **Native Mesoamerican Spirituality**, pp. 140-144, for another English translation of this section.
18. These challenges to Quetzalcoatl in the netherworld echo the much more demanding challenges to Hunahpu and Xbalanque by the Lords of Xibalba in the *Popol Vuh*, and foreshadow the rigorous challenges of the earth monsters to the Hero Twins of Pueblo and Navajo origin narratives.
19. Causing human mortality? An indiscretion for which they have paid ever since by being the primary bird offered in blood sacrifices.
20. See **macehualtin . . . otopantlamaceuhque**.
21. This material appears to be explanatory and introductory material which does not form part of the narrative performance itself. If the audience is Native, then we are witnessing a subversive event of cultural preservation and transmission. If on the other hand the transcription of this event was a piece of the Franciscan missionary-training enterprise, then the explanations are for quite opposite purposes--whether the performer knows this or not. This question of the relationship between the narrator and his most immediate audience, the amanuensis, is one of the most intriguing, and unanswerable, puzzles of this performance event.
22. Presumably pointing to a pictographic text.
23. Not the demi-urge seen in action above, but his human avatar and high priest, the “god-man” and culture-giver, “One Reed,” who appears in Act 3.
24. **quiçihuapancuicatia**
25. Therefore the “names” Eagle, Jaguar, Hawk, and Wolf mentioned in the Preface as ritual

identifications of this Sun, the most powerful being Eagle, **quauhtli**.

26. **coleletin** - See Siméon, and Bierhorst, *Concordance*, **tzitzimitl/coleletin**.

27. **zan no iquac in conmanaco ye teotlac**.

28. **tzihuac** - See Bierhorst, *Concordance*, p. 375; also Florentine Codex, Book XI, p. 218. See illustration in FC XI, #752: may be lechugilla.

29. Bierhorst, p. 92: **auh cuix quin ye toztouh ca ye ipa toztotouh ca tochan ca oanquitlacoque** .....Facsimile not clear.

30. See Lockhart, p. 269, on the verb **tzonilpia**, for ritual hair binding.

31. See Bierhorst's lengthy analysis of this line, *History*, p.152.

32. Because Náhuatl has no contrasting phonemes for gender in the third person, this might also be "he. . .his" shield. The narrator plays on her name **Chimal-** "shield" **man-** "to be, to extend, to lie" in the phrase **Chimalman çihuatl niman quimana in ichimal**, implying her name is a shield; for this reason I believe he says "..... the woman Chimalman, then *she* lay down *her* shield. . ." However, the phrase occurs again below, so either she laid down her shield and arrows in both confrontations, or he did. See Gillespie's discussion of this episode, pp. 138-40.

33. **Maxauhtinem(i)** – "anduvieras con las carnes defuera", in Karttunen from Carochi. "Naked" was **petlauhticac**

34. **auh çanempanca in tequehmecayotillo** - see Velázquez note 3, p. 139: "*en vano les fue atado el pescuezo, te, a personas, las que no pueden ser sino los animales dichos.*"

35. See Lehmann's, Velázquez's and Bierhorst's reconstructions. V. agrees with L; B. follows Leon y Gama copy.

36. "Ash-grey blanket-bundle man"

37. **amo tlanetentzotzoyotia** - very problematical, very hard to read ms.

38. Transition to the following episode seems especially abrupt. Perhaps something was left out in copying the original transcription.

39. Problematic passage

40. **conquatiaz** - See Siméon, p. 406, for **quatiuh, oquatia** - *andar comiendo*. Gender ambiguity.

41. Entire passage is ambiguous: **auh conitlani inteteo in Tozcuecux / [--]poch in mexitin**

**ca oc yehuantin in quicuazque ca achi** / (first 4-5 characters of this line are smeared out) [--]in **conquatiāz in toltecatl ca ye pollihuiz in toltecatl, ca ye o/tiaz in mexicatl** (very confused word--Lehmann and Bierhorst agree, but transcription is questionable).

Lehmann: **auh conitlani in teteo in tozcuecuex [im]ichpoch in mexitin ca oc yehuantin in quicuazque ac achitzin in conquatiāz in toltecatl ca ye pollihuiz in toltecatl, ca ye onoz in mexicatl**

These lines are problematic and complicated by a smudging erasure in the left margin which completely wipes out the first 4-5 characters in the two lines where this statement occurs. Context must solve the ambiguity; only "she will go eating the Toltec" makes sense in context of the following line--"For certainly the Toltec will perish and the Mexica will be coming along". Mexica will replace the Toltecs in the favor of Tlaloc; their moment has come, so they must pay for the fertility over which they will now rule in place of the Toltecs. Therefore, a charter myth for **atl cauālo** festival: "bring me a daughter, if you want maize." But she is also the consumer, an eater of Toltec destiny.

42. The speaker is Mexica.

43. A climactic moment in the narrative.

44. The performer now is reading literally from a Mexica pictographic **xiuhamatl** "year-book" which records the movements of the Mexica-Chichimec migration in a year-by-year account. This would seem to be a different codex than the one supplying the earlier cosmogony.

45. **auh izcatqui inic** - Narrator pointing to pictograph. Occurs sixteen times from here to end of the complete ms.

46. Numbers appear in the margin of the ms., counting off the Mexica Speakers.

47. See Tschohl for facsimile, transcription and German translation of the long-lost final leaf of this manuscript, discovered on pp. 121 and 122 of a copy of the *Codex Chimalpopoca* made by Leon y Gama in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Bierhorst, *History*, p. 11, has a summary.

48. **Ahuitzotzin**, named in other sources.

49. **Ye tocomana** - which seems to be readable only as **taca-** "dagger" from the Spanish *daga*, and **mana** "extend, spread out," meaning "to make war"? The word is obscure. As no other Spanish loanwords appear in the text, this reading would seem to argue for a later addition of this coda. See Bierhorst's note, *History*, 162.

50. If "now" is forty-two years from Cortés's entry into Tenochtitlan in 1519, 1 Reed, then the year is 1561, which does indeed correlate as 4 House.

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