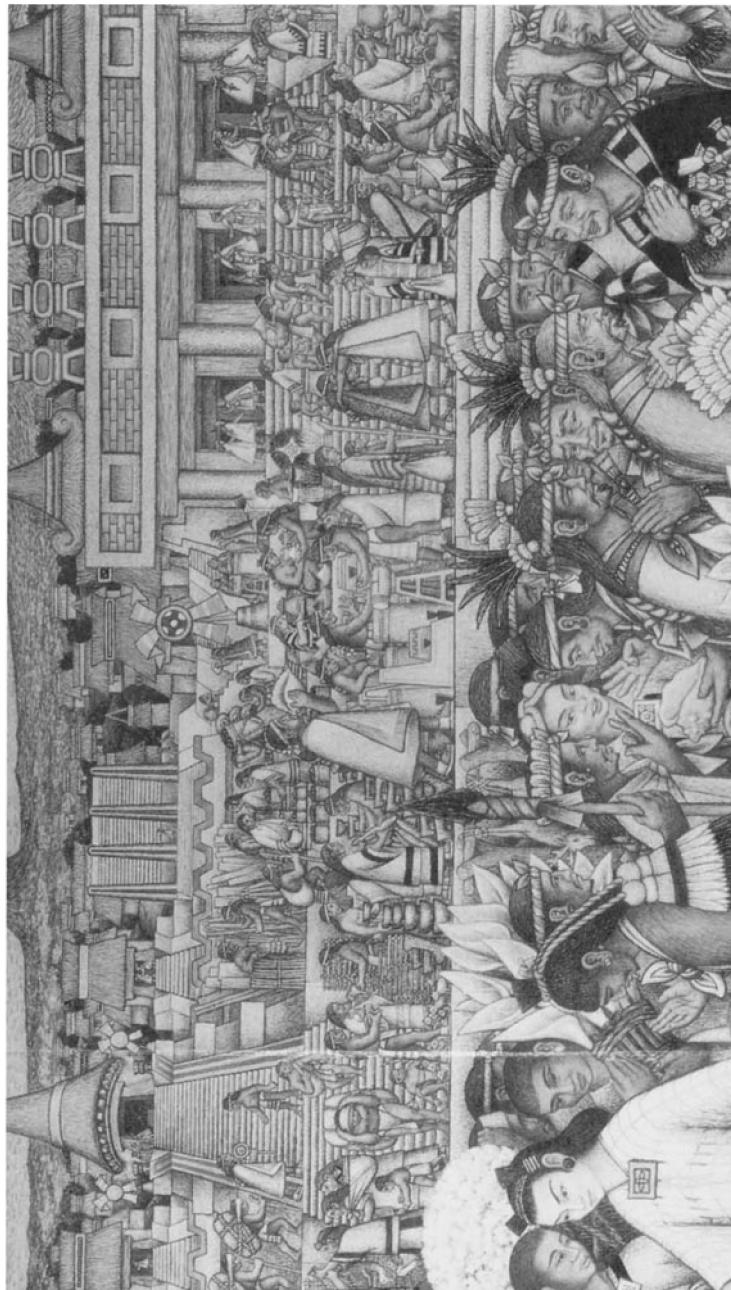

4

The March Inland: Tlaxcala and C

From the town of Vera Cruz Cortés entered into peaceful contact with the coastal peoples, especially in the major city of the region, Huautla. According to his report, the Cempoalans only recently had been subjugated under Mexica domination and were restive under their overlords. They easily changed their support to the Spaniards. Once Cortés decided to strike inland, he left a garrison of about 150 men in Vera Cruz and took with him his remaining 350 Spaniards, now aided by large numbers of native porters, or *tememes* and bearers, he began to trek westward, climbing through the mountains that lay just beyond the coast. The expedition passed through a number of small towns and at various points they received "messengers," forward observers sent from Tenochtitlan by the Aztecs to gather information about the strangers. Cortés used a combination of diplomacy, bravado, guile, and terror to impress these representatives well as to awe the towns and villages through which his force passed. Cortés, by now well informed about local and regional politics, chose to lead his force through Tlaxcala, an *altepetl* whose people were linguistically and culturally akin to the Mexica, but who were also traditional political enemies.

Despite Cortés's diplomacy, the Tlaxcalans received him with suspicion and hostility. Under the leadership of a transigent captain, Xicotencatl the Younger, some of the tlatoanis and their Otomí allies carried out an active resistance. The Tlaxcalan state itself was composed of four major political divisions, and the leadership was not united on the course of action to take against the Spanish invaders.

Figure 6. (opposite) The Lords of Tlaxcala. The present-day town of Tlaxcala has been decorated with murals of the region's history by Desiderio Hernández Xochitiotzin. In this section of the mural the ancient city and the marketplace are represented.



This indecision certainly helped the Spaniards defeat the number of open battles which Bernal Díaz recounts in ally, the factions in favor of an alliance with the Spaniard the strangers were welcomed into the city with the usual of food, supplies, and women. Some Tlaxcalans viewed the potential allies. Caciques or leaders like Mase Escasi and Elder, father of the hostile captain, gave Cortés much info Tenochtitlan and Moctezuma. With the alliance with Tl now had a firm logistical base for further operations.

Cortés's victories over Tlaxcala impressed Moctezum tives, and they realized that the strangers had gained a val Mexica, dangerous ally. Cortés's decision to march from' nearby city and religious center of Cholula, a firm support tlán and a traditional enemy of Tlaxcala, may have been i ngs of the Tlaxcalans who hoped to take advantage of th to settle traditional grudges. In any case, although the S welcomed at first, fighting erupted in Cholula and result massacre of the inhabitants, which was perhaps intend the Mexica.

The whole story of the defeat of and then alliance with tral to the course of subsequent events. Without Tlaxcala jectory of the conquest might have been very different. Tl a privileged province after the conquest. Tlaxcalans alw their vital role as a justification for honors, rewards, at during the colonial era. Twentieth-century critics have scribed the Tlaxcalans as traitors to a "native" cause, b make little sense in the context of the ethnic rivalries and tral Mexico at the time of the conquest.

The selections on the campaign against Tlaxcala incl excerpts from Bernal Díaz's account of events, the descri by another conquistador Andrés de Tapia, the Mexica vie Sahagún, and a sixteenth-century Tlaxcalan pictorial ac called *Lienzo de Tlaxcala*, that combines indigenous elem pean artistic influences.

BERNAL DÍAZ

From *The True History of the Conq of New Spain*

In an extensive excerpt, Bernal Díaz provides the feel of battle, the ferocity of Spanish tactics in the fighting against Tlaxcala. Despite his admiration of the ferocity of battle, the low casualty rate of the Spaniards suggests a technological disparity between the opponents. Díaz also provides evidence of which the soldiers like himself influenced Cortés rather than Gómara's history is apparent in a number of ways. In Díaz's account of the events at Cholula, he emphasizes the treachery of the Cholulans and the role of doña Marina in revealing their intentions.

... In such order we arrived at a little town of Xalacingo, where we found us a golden necklace and some cloth and two Indian women. From that town we sent two Cempoalan chieftains as messengers, each with a letter, and a fluffy red Flemish hat, such as was then worn. They knew that the Tlaxcalans could not read the letter, but when they saw paper different from their own, they would know that it contained a message; and what we sent to tell them was that we were coming to their town, and hoped they would receive us, not to do them harm, but to make them our friends, because in this little town they assured us that the whole country had turned up in arms against us, for it appears that they had already heard of our approach and that we were accompanied by many enemies from Cempoala and Zocotlan, and other towns through which we had passed. As all these towns usually paid tribute to Montezuma, the Tlaxcalans took it for granted that we were coming to attack them. The country had often been entered by craft and cunning as well as waste, and they thought that this was another attempt to conquer us. Soon as our two messengers arrived with the letter and the hat, and began to deliver their message, they were seized as prisoners. The story was finished, and we waited all that day and the next, but none arrived.

Then Cortés addressed the chiefs of the town [where] and repeated all he was accustomed to tell the Indians about religion and how we were vassals of our Lord and King who these parts to put an end to human sacrifices, and the eating of flesh, and the other evils which they were used to practise; them many other things which we usually repeated in most of the towns we passed through, and after making them many promises he asked for twenty Indian warriors of quality to accompany us on the march, and they were given us most willingly.

After commending ourselves to God, with a happy countenance, we set out on the following day for Tlaxcala, and as we were marching we met our two messengers who had been taken prisoners by the Indians who guarded them were perplexed by the words of the Indians and had been careless of their charge, and in fact, had let them escape from prison. They arrived in such a state of terror at what they heard that they could hardly succeed in expressing themselves.

According to their account, when they were prisoners they had threatened them, saying: "Now we are going to kill you all, and eat your flesh, and we will see whether you are as valiant as you announce; and we shall eat your flesh too, here with treasons and lies from that traitor Montezuma!" When the messengers could say, that we were against the Indians, and wished to be brothers to the Tlaxcalans, they could not believe it of its truth.

When Cortés and all of us heard those haughty words, we knew how they were prepared for war, although it gave us mat thought, we all cried — "If this is so, forward — and good luck!" We commended ourselves to God and marched on, the Alfonso furling our banner and carrying it before us, for the people of the town where we had slept, as well as the Cempoalans assured us that the Tlaxcalans would come out to meet us and resist our entry into their country.

Marching along as I have described, we discussed how we should act in case of an attack. We decided that the men — in parties of three so as to help one another — should return at a hard gallop with their lances held rather short, so that the Indians should break through the hostile ranks should hold their lances upright, faces and not stop to give thrusts, so that the Indians should not seize hold of their lances; and if by chance a lance were

the use of all this preparation when there were no host
sight to attack us? I answer this by repeating the word
“Gentlemen and comrades, seeing how few of us there are
to be always as well prepared and as much on the alert as the
enemy approaching to attack us, and not only saw them
but we should behave as though we were already fighting
it often happens that they seize the lances with their hands
be prepared for such an emergency as well as for anything
happen to a soldier. I have fully understood that, when
there should be no need of directions, for I know, and am very
knowledge it, that you behave much more courageously
them].”

In this way we marched about two leagues, when we
fortress strongly built of stone and lime and some other
strong that with iron pickaxes it was difficult to demolish
constructed in such a way both for offence and defence, that
very difficult to capture. We halted to examine it, and the
Indians from Zocotlan for what purpose the fortress had
such a way. They replied that, as war was always going on
people of Tlaxcala and their lord, Montezuma, the Tlaxcalans
this fort so strong the better to defend their towns, for we
in their territory. We rested awhile and this, our entry in
Tlaxcala and the fortress, gave us plenty to think about
“Sirs, let us follow our banner which bears the sign of the lion;
through it we shall conquer!” Then one and all we answered
good fortune attend our advance, for in God lies the true
we began our march again in the order I have already noted.

We had not gone far when our scouts observed about
who were spying. These carried two-handed swords, shields
plumes of feathers. The swords are made with stones wider
than knives, so cleverly arranged, that one can neither break
the blades; they are as long as broadswords; and as I have
these spies wore devices and feather headdresses, and when
observed them they came back to give us notice. Cortés
the same scouts to follow the spies, and to try and capture
without hurting them; and then he sent five more mounted
escort, in case there should be an ambush. Then all our men
on in good order and with quick step, for our Indian friends

them to come up and capture one of them; furthermore, themselves so well, that with their swords and lances some of the horses.

When our men saw how fiercely the Indians fought horses were wounded, they were obliged to kill five of them soon as this happened, a squadron of Tlaxcalans,* more than sand strong, which was lying in ambush, fell on them a with great fury and began to shower arrows on our horse now all together; and they made a good fight with their a hardened darts, and did wonders with their two-handed s moment we came up with our artillery, muskets and c little by little the Indians gave way, but they had kept tl fought well for a considerable time.

In this encounter they wounded four of our men and I of them died of his wounds a few days later.

As it was now late the Tlaxcalans beat a retreat and we them; they left about seventeen dead on the field, not c wounded. Where these skirmishes took place the ground there were many houses and plantations of maize and m is the plant from which they make their wine.

We slept near a stream, and with the grease from a fat we had killed and cut open, we dressed our wounds, for and we supped very well on some dogs which the Indians [food] for all the houses were abandoned and the provisic and they had even taken the dogs with them, but these their homes in the night, and there we captured them, at good enough food.

All night we were on the alert with watches and patrols and the horses bitted and saddled, in fear lest the Indian us. . . .

The next morning, the 5th of September, 1519, we horses. There was not one of the wounded men who did ward to join the ranks and give as much help as he could. bowmen were warned to use the store of darts very cauti them loading while the others were shooting, and the m to act in the same way, and the men with sword and s structed to aim their cuts and thrusts at the bowels [of the that they would not dare to come as close to us as they d

artillery was all ready for action, and the horsemen had al-
structed to aid one another and to hold their lances short,
to spear anyone except in the face and eyes — charging at
a hard gallop and no soldier was on any account to break
ranks. With our banner unfurled, and four of our comrade
standard-bearer, Corral, we set out from our camp. We ha-
half a quarter of a league before we began to see the fields
warriors with great feather crests and distinguishing d-
hear the blare of horns and trumpets.

Here would be a great opportunity to write down in pro-
happened to us in this most perilous and doubtful battle.
warriors surrounded us on all sides that [the situation] ^{was}
pared to a great plain, two leagues long and about the sam-
in its midst, four hundred men. Thus all the plain was s-
warriors and we stood four hundred men in number, and
sick and wounded. And we knew for certain that this time
with the determination to leave none of us alive except
would be sacrificed to their idols.

To go back to our battle: How they began to charge on
of stones sped from their slings! As for their bowmen, t-
like corn on the threshing floor; all of them barbed and
which would pierce any armour and would reach the vita-
is no protection; the men with swords and shields and oth-
than swords, such as broadswords, and lances, how they
and with what valour and what mighty shouts and yells
upon us! The steady bearing of our artillery, musketeers
men, was indeed a help to us, and we did the enemy muc-
those of them who came close to us with their swords and
met with such sword play from us that they were forced
did not close in on us so often as in the last battle. The h-
so skilful and bore themselves so valiantly that, after God
us, they were our bulwark. However, I saw that our troo-
siderable confusion, so that neither the shouts of Cortés
captains availed to make them close up their ranks, and so
charged down on us that it was only by a miracle of swo-
could make them give way so that our ranks could be i-
thing only saved our lives, and that was that the enemy w-
ous and so crowded one on another that the shots wrought

quarrels between the Captain Xicotenga and another cap Chichimecatecle, over what the one had said to the other not fought well in the previous battle; to this the son of Ch replied that he had fought better [/] than Xicotenga and prove it by personal combat. So in this battle Chichimec men would not help Xicotenga, and we knew for a certain also called on the company of Huexotzinco to abstain from sides this, ever since the last battle they were afraid of the musketry, and the swords and crossbows, and our hard all was the mercy of God which gave us strength to endure was not obeyed by two of the commanders, and we we damage to his men, for we were killing many of them, and to conceal; for as they were so numerous, whenever one of wounded, they immediately bound him up and carried h shoulders, so that in this battle, as in the last, we never sa

The enemy were already losing heart, and knowing that of the other two captains whom I have already named, who to their assistance, they began to give way. It seems that it had killed one very important captain, not to mention other enemy began to retreat in good order, our horsemen follow hard gallop for a short distance, for they could not sit their tigue, and when we found ourselves free from that multitu we gave thanks to God.

In this engagement, one soldier was killed, and sixty wounded and all the horses were wounded as well. They gave me two in the head with a stone, and one in the thigh with an arrow, but not prevent me from fighting, and keeping watch, and h diers, and all the soldiers who were wounded did the same. wounds were not very dangerous, we had to fight and wounded as we were, for few of us remained unwounded.

Then we returned to our camp, well contented, and give God. We buried the dead in one of those houses which they built underground, so that the enemy should not see their tal s, but should believe that, as they said, we were Teu much earth over the top of the house, so that they should bodies, then we doctored all the wounded with the fat of which we have related before. It was cold comfort to be even without which to cure the wounded. There was another want from

covering. That night we slept with more tranquility than before, when we had so much duty to do, with scouting, spying and patrols.

I will leave off here and relate what we did on the next day. In the battle we captured three Indian chieftains.

... When we awoke and saw how all of us were wounded, with three wounds, and how weary we were and how others clothed in rags, and knew that Xicotenga was always already over forty-five of our soldiers had been killed in combat, cumbered to disease and chills, and another dozen of them our Captain Cortés himself was suffering from fever as we were de la Merced, and what with our labours and the weight which we always carried on our backs, and other hardships and the want of salt, for we could never find any to eat, we wondered what would be the outcome of all this fighting, and where to do and where we should go when it was finished. To march we thought too arduous an undertaking because of its great distance, and we said to one another that if those Tlaxcalans, which our friends had led us to believe were peacefully disposed, came to these straits, what would happen when we found ourselves surrounded by the great forces of Montezuma? In addition to this we had heard from the Spaniards whom we had left settled in Villa Rica, that there were among us very excellent gentlemen and some valiant men of good counsel, Cortés never said or did anything important] without first asking well considered advice, and he cert with us. Although the historian Gomara says Cortés that, and came here and went there, and says many other reasons, even if Cortés were made of iron, as Gomara in his opinion was, he could not be everywhere at once. Suffice it to say that himself like a good commander. This I say, for after all the which our Lord granted us in all our doings, and in the late in everything else, it seems that God gave us soldiers good counsel to advise Cortés how to do all things in the right

Let us cease praising and cease speaking of past praises, let us not add much to our history, and let me relate how one man put his heart into Cortés, and told him that he must get well again upon us, and that as with the help of God we had escaped

them to peace, when all that had taken place would be
cluding the death of the mare.

Let us leave this and say how Doña Marina who, alth
woman, possessed such manly valour that, although s
every day how the Indians were going to kill us and eat
chili, and had seen us surrounded in the late battles, and l
us were wounded and sick, yet never allowed us to see a
in her, only a courage passing that of woman. So Doña M
nimo de Aguilar spoke to the messengers whom we wer
and told them that they must come and make peace at o
it was not concluded within two days we should go and ki
destroy their country and would come to seek them in
with these brave words they were dispatched to the ca
cotenga the elder and Mase Escasi were [residing].

Let us leave this, and I will mention another thing that
that the historian Gomara does not mention or make an
history of the fact that any of us were killed or wounded,
any hardships, or suffered, but writes about it all as thoug
ing to a wedding, and it is thus that we find it recorded. Ol
those men advised him when they told him to put such th
tory! It has made all of us conquerors reflect upon what h
which not being true, he ought to have remembered, that
saw his history we must out with the truth! . . .

As our Lord God, through his great loving kindness, was i
us victory in those battles in Tlaxcala, our fame spread t
surrounding country, and reached the ears of the great
the great City of Mexico; and if hitherto they took us for
is the same as their idols, from now on they held us in e
spect as valiant warriors, and terror fell on the whole cour
how, being so few in number and the Tlaxcalans in such
had conquered them and that they had sued us for peac
Montezuma, the great Prince of Mexico, powerful as he w
of our going to his city, and sent five chieftains, men o
tance, to our camp at Tlaxcala to bid us welcome, and say
joiced at our great victory against so many squadrons of w
sent a present, a matter of a thousand dollars worth of go
jewelled ornaments, worked in various shapes, and twen

[Cortés] should decide how much tribute he wished for our great Emperor, and that he [Montezuma] would give silver, cloth and chalchihuites, provided we would not co This was not because he would not receive us with the ingness, but because the land was rough and sterile, and gret to see us undergo such hardships which perchance be able to alleviate as well as he could wish. Cortés answe that he highly appreciated the good will shown us, an which had been sent, and the offer to pay tribute to his M begged the messengers not to depart until he went to the cala, as he would despatch them from that place, for they how that war ended, and he did not wish to give them his because he had purged himself the day before with soi such as are found in the Island of Cuba, and are very god knows how to take them. I will leave this subject and tell pened in our camp.

Cortés was talking to the ambassadors of Montezuma, as said, and wanted to take some rest, for he was ill with purged himself the day before, when they came to tell him Xicotenga was arriving with many other Caciques an clothed in white and red cloaks, half of the cloak was white half red, for this was the device and livery of Xicotenga, proaching] in a very peaceful manner, and was bringing company about fifty chieftains.

When Xicotenga reached Cortés's quarters he paid hi respect by his obeisance, and ordered much copal to be b with the greatest show of affection, seated him by his side said that he came on behalf of his father and of Mase Esc Caciques, and Commonwealth of Tlaxcala to pray Cortés to our friendship, and that he came to render obedience to Lord, and to ask pardon for having taken up arms and n us. That this had been done because they did not know and they had taken it for certain that we had come on bel enemy Montezuma, and as it frequently happened that cra was used to gain entrance to their country so as to rob and had believed that this was now the case, and for that r deavoured to defend themselves and their country, and v

precious stones, they had been given to Montezuma occasions when, to save themselves from destruction, they had or a truce, and this had been in times long past; so that if we were to give now, we must pardon them for it, for poverty and of good will was the cause of it. He made many comp tezuma and his allies who were all hostile to them and them, but they had defended themselves very well. I thought to do the same against us, but they could not do it had gathered against us three times with all their warrior be invincible, and when they found this out about our wished to become friends with us and the vassals of the g Emperor Don Carlos, for they felt sure that in our com their women and children would be guarded and protec not live in dread of the Mexican traitors, and he said mai placing themselves and their city at our disposal.

Xicotenga was tall, broad shouldered and well made long, pockmarked and coarse, he was about thirty-five years dignified deportment.

Cortés thanked him very courteously, in a most flatt and said that he would accept them as vassals of our King as our own friends. Then Xicotenga begged us to come to the Caciques, elders and priests were waiting to receive us joicing. Cortés replied that he would go there promptly, and at once, were it not for some negotiations which he was carrying on with the great Montezuma, and that he would come after he had sent the messengers. Then Cortés spoke somewhat more seriously about the attacks they had made on us both by adding that as it could not now be mended he would pardon us to it that the peace we now were granting them was an without any change, for otherwise he would kill them and their city and that he [Xicotenga] should not expect further talk but only of war.

When Xicotenga and all the chieftains who had come to these words they answered one and all, that the peace would be true, and that to prove it they would all remain with us as

There was further conversation between Cortés and most of his chiefs, and they were given blue and green cloths, Xicotenga's father, for himself, and for the other Caciques,

weighed on them heavily, for they fully understood that no good. And when Xicotenga had taken his leave these A Montezuma half laughingly asked Cortés whether he b those promises which were made on behalf of all Tlaxc that it was all a trick which deserved no credence, and t those of traitors and deceivers; that their object was to att as soon they had us within their city in a place where they safety; that we should bear in mind how often they had pu strength to destroy us and had failed to do so, and had lc and wounded, and that now they offered a sham peace s themselves. Cortés answered them, with a brave face, th belief that such was the case did not trouble him, for ever he would be glad of it so as to punish them [the Tlaxcal their lives, that it did not matter to him whether they attack or by night, in the city or in the open, he did not mind c other, and it was for the purpose of seeing whether they v truth that he was determined to go to their city.

The Ambassadors seeing that he had made up his mir to wait six days in our camp as they wished to send two panions with a message to their Lord Montezuma, and would return with a reply within six days. To this Cortés one hand because, as I have said he was suffering from fe other because, although when the Ambassadors had ma ments he had appeared to attach no importance to them, l there was a chance of their being true, and that until the certainty of peace, they were of a nature requiring much

As at the time that this peace was made the towns all that we had traversed from our Villa Rica de Vera Cruz w and friendly, Cortés wrote to Juan de Escalante who, as mained in the town to finish building the fort, and had i mand the sixty old or sick soldiers who had been left be letters he told them of the great mercies which our Lor had vouchsafed to us in the victories which we had gained and encounters since we had entered the province of T had now sued for peace with us, and asked that all of th thanks to God for it. He also told them to see to it that th on good terms with our friends in the towns of the Totona him to send at once two jars of wine which had been left

These letters were most welcome, and Escalante wrote what had happened in the town, and all that was asked for quickly.

About this time we set up a tall and sumptuous cross in Cortés ordered the Indians of Tzumpantzingo and those in the houses near our camp to whitewash it, and it was finished.

I must cease writing about this and return to our neighbors. The Caciques of Tlaxcala, who when they saw that we did not intend to go to their city, came themselves to our camp and brought poultry and venison, which were then in season, each one brought some of the food which he had in his house and gave it to us with the greatest good will, asking for nothing in return, and they always begged Cortés to come to their city as soon as possible. As we had promised to wait six days for the Mexicans, Cortés put off the Tlaxcalans with fair speech, saying that the time expired, according to their word, six chieftains, of great importance, arrived from Mexico, and brought a rich present consisting of valuable gold jewels worth three thousand pesos in gold, and two hundred pieces of cloth, richly worked with feathers and other patterns. When this present was shown to Cortés, the Chieftains said to him that their Lord Montezuma was delighted to hear of our success, but that he prayed that he might not account to go with the people of Tlaxcala to their city, for he had no confidence in them, that they wished to get him of his gold and cloth, for they were very poor, and did not have a decent cotton cloak among them, and that the knowledge of Montezuma looked on us as friends, and was sending us gold and cloth, which would still more induce the Tlaxcalans to rob us.

Cortés received the present with delight, and said that he would repay their Lord Montezuma with greater if he should perceive that the Tlaxcalans had that in mind. He said that Montezuma had sent them to warn him, they would pay for all their lives taken, but he felt sure they would be guilty of robbery, and he still meant to go and see what they would do.

While this discussion was proceeding, many other men from Tlaxcala came to tell Cortés that all the old Caciques from the neighboring towns and from the whole province had arrived at our ranchos; in order to see Cortés and all of us, and to take us to their city.

heard this he begged the Mexican Ambassadors to wait for the reply to their prince, as he had at present to deliberate about the past hostilities and the peace which was now offered. The Ambassadors said that they would wait. . . .

ANDRÉS DE TAPIA

Another Spanish View of the Cholula Massacre

Cortés's own report of the events in Cholula gave little detail of his actions, but another Spanish observer, the captain Andrés de Tapia, gives a succinct and frank record of the destruction of that city. Tapia was one of Cortés's captains and a man of great courage. In his narrative of the conquest, he was often mentioned in Bernal Díaz's account as a reliable commander and companion. "Well-made and with a strong heart," Díaz wrote, "he always did well." During the conquest, he was often mentioned in Bernal Díaz's account as a reliable commander and companion. "Well-made and with a strong heart," Díaz wrote, "he always did well." After the conquest, Tapia was asked to give testimony in an investigation of Cortés's actions. This deposition formed the basis for his "Relation of some things that happened to the Marqués Don Hernando Cortés, Marqués del Valle. . . ." A copy of this manuscript, written by another eyewitness of the conquest, Tapia's brutally frank deposition, was published in 1886. The original manuscript, however, remained in the possession of the Marqués's descendants until the late 19th century, when it was sold to the Biblioteca Nacional in Mexico City. It was not published until the nineteenth century.

... The marqués left Tlaxcala after gathering as much information as he could of the territory ahead, and the Indians said they would show the way as far as they knew it. They also said that about three leagues from here was an enemy city called Cholula which was itself and a friend and ally of Moctezuma. And so the Spaniards, who were to march for this city accompanied by forty thousand warriors who were to march for the marqués marched at a distance from us.

The morning of the day we arrived at the city of Cholula, there were about ten thousand men in squadrons came out to meet us, bringing with them bows and turkeys. Each squadron advanced toward the marqués.

welcome and then withdrew. The Cholulans earnestly begged the marqués not to allow the Tlaxcalans to enter their territory, so they ordered them to go back, but the Tlaxcalans said: "Beware of this city, who are traders and not men of war, and who will not leave you, for we gave ourselves as your friends." In spite of this the marqués ordered that all their men were to go back, but that some notables wished to stay they could be quartered outside the city, and that is the way it was done.

As we entered the city the rest of the men came out in squadrons, greeting the Spaniards they met, who were marching in ranks. After the squadrons came all the ministers who served the marqués. They were dressed in sleeveless robes, some of which were close fitting, others like surplices, with heavy cotton fringe at the edges, and a white dress. Many of them were playing flutes and trumpets, and certain idols that were covered, and many incense burners. They approached the marqués first and then the other men, passing with a resin they burned in the censers.

In this city they had a principal god who at one time had been a man. They called him Quetzalcoatl. He is said to have founded this city. He is said to have founded it, and to have commanded them not to kill men, but instead to bring offerings to the creator of the sun and the heavens, in which to offer other things of the hunt. They were to wish no harm and good to one another. Quetzalcoatl is supposed to have worn a white monk's tunic, and over it a mantle covered with red crosses and certain green stones there, one of them a monkey's head. It is said had belonged to this man, and they regarded them as gods.

The marqués and his men stayed here several days, and sent certain men as volunteers to explore a volcano we could see across five leagues away, and which gave out much smoke. They were to go out from there in all directions and bring back news of the country and the land.

Certain persons of rank came to this city as messengers of Moctezuma and made their speeches over and over again. So Moctezuma said there was no reason for us to go on, and where would we go since they had no provisions for us to eat where they went? Sometimes they told us Moctezuma said that if we went to see the volcano we would die of fright. Also they said there was no road by which to

of lions and tigers and other wild beasts that he let loose wanted to, and that they were enough to tear us to pieces

When they saw that none of this served to deter us messengers plotted with the people of the city to kill us. proposed to do it was to take us to the left of the road lead where there were dangerous crossings formed by the from the ridge where the volcano was. Since the earth th sandy, a little water can make a big ravine, and some of t than a hundred *estados* deep. They are also so narrow th ber tall enough to make bridges across the ravines, and t cause we later saw them.

As we were preparing to leave, an Indian woman Cholula, the wife of one of the notables, told the woman w terpreter along with the Christian, that she would like he because she was very fond of her and would be grieved to Then she told her what they were plotting and thus the ma of it and delayed his departure two days. He repeatedly t lans that it caused him no surprise or anger when men : they fought against him; but that he would be greatly dis told him lies, so he warned them not to lie in their dealings to resort to treachery. They assured him they were his : ways would be, and that they would never lie to him. Th him when he wished to leave, and he said that on the follow said they wanted to assemble many men to send with hin qués said he wanted only slaves to carry the Spaniards' l still insisted on giving him warriors, and he refused, rep wanted only enough men to carry the baggage.

Next day there came unbidden many men with weapons they use, saying they were slaves and bearers, though it la that they were among the bravest of their warriors. The m wished to take his leave of all the lords, and asked that moned. There was no one lord of this city, but only capt public, since it was in the nature of a dominion and they g selves in that way. The dignitaries then arrived, and the about thirty of them, those who looked most important, ir of the house where he was lodged, and he said to them: have I spoken the truth to you, and I have given orders to tians of my company to do you no harm, and no harm has h

should, I have not allowed so much as a chicken to be taken from you. Also I have asked you not to lie to me. But in payment of your sins, the deeds you have conspired to kill me and my companions, to fight me as soon as we have reached the bad terrain of the mountains, plan to lead us. For this wickedness you shall all die, and you are traitors I shall destroy your city so that no edifice will remain. It is needless for you to deny this, for I know it as well as you.”

They were astonished, and kept looking at one another. There were guards to keep them from escaping and there were also the people that would carry our baggage, who were outside the courtyards of the idols. The marqués then said to these: “I wish to have you tell me the truth, though I already know it. You are messengers and all the rest hear it from your mouths and I have accused you falsely.”

Five or six were taken aside, and each confessed separately to torture of any kind, that it was as the marqués had said. They said that they were in agreement with one another he brought them together again and they all confessed that it was so, and said to themselves: “He is like our gods, who know all; there is no use in lying to him.”

The marqués had Moctezuma’s messengers brought before him: “These people wanted to kill me, and they say that they were behind it, but I do not believe it because I hold him in high esteem. I know that he is a great lord, and a lord does not lie. I believe that they did me this injury by treachery, as scoundrels that they are. They are men who have no lord; and for this they shall die. But you have nothing to fear, for besides being messengers you are the envoys of a good lord as friend, who I have reason to believe is very good. I will hear to the contrary.”

Then he ordered most of those lords killed, leaving a few alive, and ordered the signal given the Spaniards to attack the courtyards and kill them all, and so it was done. They defended themselves the best they could, and tried to take the offer of safety. They were walled inside the courtyards with the entrance closed, and most of them died anyway.

This done, the Spaniards and Indians in our company divided into squads to different parts of the city, killing warriors and百姓.

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Certain priests of the devil climbed to the top of the tower and would not give themselves up but stayed there lamenting and complaining to their idol how wrong of him sake them. So everything possible was done to destroy the marqués ordered us to refrain from killing women and children. The destruction took two days, during which many of the inhabitants hide in the hills and fields, and others took refuge in surrounding country.

At the end of two days the marqués ordered the destruction and within another two or three days, it later appeared, natives of the city must have gathered together, for they sent the marqués begging for pardon and for permission to reoccupy their lands, offering themselves protectorate of the Tlaxcalans.

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From the *Florentine Codex*

The Nahua accounts collected by Sahagún emphasize the treachery of the Spaniards toward Tenochtitlan and the treachery of the Tlaxcalans toward the Cholula massacre is presented as an unprovoked act of war. In this chapter again we turn to the modern translations from the Nahuatl text. We People Here.

Tenth chapter, where it is said how the Spaniards landed and came on their way in this direction, and how Moteucçoma left his great palace and went to his personal home.

Then Moteucçoma abandoned his patrimonial home, his great palace, and came back to his personal home.

When at last [the Spaniards] came, when they were coming this way, a certain person from Cempoallan, who was Tlacochcalcatl, whom they had taken when they first came to land and the various altepetl, also came interpreting for them.

their route, conducting them, showing them the way, leading them.

And when they reached Tecoac, which is in the land of where their Otomis lived, the Otomis met them with host But they annihilated the Otomis of Tecoac, who were destroyed. They lanced and stabbed them, they shot them with bolts, crossbows. Not just a few but a huge number of destroyed.

After the great defeat at Tecoac, when the Tlaxcalan found out about it and it was reported to them, they became afraid, they were made faint; fear took hold of them. Then they and all of them, including the lords and rulers, took care of themselves, considering the reports.

They said, "How is it to be with us? Should we face the Otomis are great and valiant warriors, yet they thought nothing, they regarded them as nothing; in a very short time, in one eyelid, they destroyed the people. Now let us just submit and make friends with them, let us be friends, for something about the common people."

Thereupon the Tlaxcalan rulers went to meet them with food: turkey hens, eggs, white tortillas, fine tortillas. They said, "Welcome, our lords."

[The Spaniards] answered them back, "Where is your home? Where have you come from?"

They said, "We are Tlaxcalans. Welcome, you have arrived, you have reached the land of Tlaxcala, which is your home."

(But in olden times it was called Texcallan and the people)

Eleventh chapter, where it is said how the Spaniards called it, [also] called Texcallan.

[The Tlaxcalans] guided, accompanied, and led them, brought them to their palace(s) and placed them there. They gave them great honors, they gave them what they needed and then they gave them their daughters.

Then [the Spaniards] asked them, "Where is Mexico? What place is it? Is it still far?"

They answered them, "It's not far now. Perhaps one or three days. It is a very favored place, and [the Mexica] are great warriors, conquerors, who go about conquering every-

gust; they could come together on nothing. Because of thi
Spaniards] up to killing them treacherously.

They said to them, "The Cholulans are very evil; the
mies. They are as strong as the Mexica, and they are
friends."

When the Spaniards heard this, they went to Cholula. I
and Cempoalans went with them, outfitted for war. Whei
there was a general summons and cry that all the noblemen,
ordinate leaders, warriors, and commoners should come,
assembled in the temple courtyard. When they had all c
[the Spaniards and their friends] blocked the entrances, a
where one entered. Thereupon people were stabbed, stru
No such thing was in the minds of the Cholulans; they di
Spaniards with weapons of war. It just seemed that they
and treacherously killed, because the Tlaxcalans persuad
iards] to do it.

And a report of everything that was happening was giv
to Moteucçoma. Some of the messengers would be arri
were leaving; they just turned around and ran back. Thei
when they weren't listening, when reports weren't being
the common people went about in a state of excitement; i
quent disturbances, as if the earth moved and (quaked), a
were spinning before one's eyes. People took fright.

And after the dying in Cholula, [the Spaniards] set off
Mexico, coming gathered and bunched, raising dust. Th
and halberds seemed to sparkle, and their iron swords we
a stream of water. Their cuirasses and iron helmets seer
clattering sound. Some of them came wearing iron all ov
iron beings, gleaming, so that they aroused great fear ar
ally seen with fear and dread. Their dogs came in front, co
them, keeping to the front, panting, with their spittle han

Twelfth chapter, where it is said how Moteucçoma se
bleman along with many other noblemen to go to meet
and what their gifts of greeting were when they greeted t
ween Iztactepetl and Popocatepetl.

Thereupon Moteucçoma named and sent the noble
many other agents of his, with Tzihuacpopocatzin as thei
meet [Cortés] between Popocatepetl and Iztactepetl, at (

And when they had given the things to them, they set to rejoice and be very happy. Like monkeys they grabbed it as though their hearts were put to rest, brightened, fresh was what they greatly thirsted for; they were gluttonous for it, piggishly wanting it. They came lifting up the golden bags from side to side, showing them to each other. They babbled; what they said to each other was in a babbling tongue.

And when they saw Tzihuacpopocatzin, they said, "Is Moteucçoma?" They said it to the Tlaxcalans and Cenitlán lookouts, who came among them, questioning them secretly. "It is not that one, our lords. This is Tzihuacpopocatzin senting Moteucçoma."

[The Spaniards] said to him, "Are you then Moteucçoma? You are your agent Moteucçoma."

Then they told him, "Go on with you! Why do you lie to us? You take us for? You can't lie to us, you can't fool us, (you) flatter us, (make faces at us), trick us, confuse our vision for us, blind us, dazzle us, throw mud in our eyes, put mud on our faces. It is not you. Moteucçoma exists; he will not leave us, he will not be able to find refuge. Where will he go? Will he fly? Or will he take an underground route, will he go into a mountain that is hollow inside? We will see him, we will gaze on his face and hear his words from his lips."

. . . They spent the night at Amaquemecan, then carried along the road and reached Cuitlahuac, where they also stopped. They assembled the rulers from each of the kingdoms and chinampa people: Xochimilco, Cuitlahuac, Mizquic. They told the rulers that they had told the rulers of Chalco. And the rulers of the chinampas also submitted to them.

And when the Spaniards were satisfied, they moved on and made a halt in Itztapalapan. Then they summoned, had summoned the rulers there as well, called the Four Lords, of Itztapalapan, Colhuacan, and Huitzilopochco. They talked with them in the town, they had spoken to [the chinampa people] (as was said) and they peacefully submitted to the Spaniards.

Moteucçoma did not give orders for anyone to make war on them or for anyone to meet them in battle. No one was to go to battle. He just ordered that they be strictly obeyed and

LIENZO DE TLAXCALA

as if swept clean, wide open, as if at dawn, with no one cr
assembled in the houses and did nothing but grieve. Th
“Let it be that way; curses on it. What more can you do? Fo
to die and perish, we are awaiting our deaths.”

From the *Lienzo de Tlaxcala*

The Lienzo de Tlaxcala contains a series of paintings on cloth in the sixteenth century to celebrate the alliance with the Spaniards (1527–1530). It was apparently prepared for the Viceroy Luis de Velasco, who rewarded him for Tlaxcala's contribution to the Spanish conquest. The Lienzo emphasizes the importance of visual images to the indigenous people as a way of recording the past. The Tlaxcalan artists by this time were influenced by European artistic styles. This can be seen in the composition and manner of drawing the figures, although traditional graphic conventions such as burning temples signifying death and the stylized presentation of native warriors point to a continuation of the indigenous artistic and representational tradition.

The content of the Lienzo, like the history written by the native son Juan Muñoz Camargo in the sixteenth century, describes history as it was told and cannot be manipulated.¹ The early battles between the Tlaxcalans described by Bernal Díaz were carefully omitted from the Tlaxcalan record which preferred to concentrate on later compliance. In the Lienzo doña Marina or Malintzin plays a central role, shown as a major figure next to Cortés in many of the illustrations.

Three copies of the Lienzo were originally prepared but only one survived until the mid-nineteenth century. What survives is a copy that dates to the late nineteenth century.

¹Juan Muñoz Camargo, *Historia de Tlaxcala*, ed. Alfredo Chavero (Méjico: Imprenta del Ministerio de Fomento, 1892), also avoids discussing the first battles between the Tlaxcalans and the Spaniards.

Figure 7. (*opposite, top*) Cortés embraces the Tlaxcalan leader Malintzin while holding the symbol of the cross while Malintzin looks on.

Figure 8. (*opposite, bottom*) The baptism of the governors of Cholula by Cortés aided by Malintzin as witness. Here the Tlaxcalans emphasize their conversion and loyalty to Spanish aims.

Figure 9. (*page 126, top*) Tlaxcalans and Spaniards occupy Cholula. The taking of the city was the usual sign of conquest in indigenous painting. Notice once again Malintzin figures prominently in the scene. The lack of perspective in the presentation of the Cholulans in a building emphasizes the scale of the scene.

Figure 10. (*page 126, bottom*) Cortés aided by doña Marina and Malintzin. The game and fowls provided to the Spaniards are portraited. The leaders sit in European-style chairs which came to symbolize a new order.

