

The Facsimile Editions of El Colegio Mexiquense, A.C.

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El Colegio Mexiquense, A.C. was founded on October 10, 1986, during a time of important changes in Mexican society. The opening of centers of graduate studies in particular in the provinces of Mexico during the 1970's, gave additional impetus to research in the Social Sciences. While their primary purpose was to decentralize research, these new centers led to more specialized studies of the historical development of each State of the Union.

The Center for Historical Studies was one of the first units established at El Colegio Mexiquense, A.C. The numerous native Indian manuscripts or codices, discovered in what is now the State of Mexico, became one of the Center's main research subjects. These codices are invaluable resources for studying the early years in what was then the Viceroyalty of New Spain.

Before the Spanish conquest, the population of what is now the State of Mexico consisted of several important kingdoms or *señoríos*, including Texcoco, in the Indian province known as Acolhuacan, Chalco in the southeastern section of the State of Mexico, and Toluca, which is now the state capital. The indigenous population included Matlazincas, Otomis and Mazahuas, that still inhabit the region. Some of these groups recorded their histories in pictorial manuscripts today known as codices.

An administrative agrarian codex was a carefully designed and executed pictorial manuscript in which the native authorities and inhabitants requested that the Spanish legally recognize their system of "communal ownership" of land. They wanted the boundaries of their communal lands to be recognized in colonial law. They also wanted

the Spanish rulers to reduce the amount of goods and services that the local Spanish landlord was demanding as tribute. These codices were accepted by the Spanish rulers as legal documents of protest and petition to have rights to the land, whether individual or communal, confirmed by colonial government. Claims for recognition of native communal land were very common.

These codices are important examples of cultural fusion because they illustrate how the formal language of the Pre-Columbian Indian world was transformed after the arrival of the Spaniards. The Indian painters, called *tlacuilos*, assimilated elements of Spanish drawing and writing and combined these with their traditional pictographic system.

Through the publication of carefully prepared facsimile editions of these ancient manuscripts, El Colegio Mexiquense, A.C. has made them more accessible to local specialists and international scholars. At the same time, we hope that the general public and students at all levels will benefit from the greater accessibility provided by the publications.

We attempted to locate the specific places where codices were produced on a map of the State of Mexico and discovered a group of documents produced after the arrival of the Spaniards known as *Techialoyan*. So far fifty-seven codices belonging to the *Techialoyan* group have been located. They comprise a large number compared to other groups. Within the body of pictorial documents from the State of Mexico, this group is noteworthy for the style, the type of lettering and the late date of production. It is probable that a group of the Indian *tlacuilos* and Indian scribes traveled together around the area collaborating in the making of the manuscripts.

The data that are contained in these pictographic manuscripts were obtained by carefully combining documents and information collected from various Indian villages. One of the principal sources of information was the oral tradition provided by local authorities and elders who told the *tlacuilo* what he should depict and describe. The task was long and sometimes very cumbersome, since it was necessary for all the inhabitants to reach an agreement on the final content and form of presentation.

Of the fifty-seven codices in the *Techialoyan* group, only two are inscribed on rolls of *amate* paper. The *amate* paper codices are called *Tizayuca* (729) and *García Granados* (715), the latter being of special importance because of the great quantity of data it shows. It was with

great pride that the institution produced the first complete edition of the *Códice Techialoyan García Granados* with introductory notes written by Professors Xavier Noguez and Rosaura Hernández, both from the Center for Historical Studies at El Colegio Mexiquense, A.C. This manuscript contains carefully detailed descriptions of individuals and places which provide invaluable information to specialists and the general public interested in reconstructing Pre-Hispanic and Colonial history in Central Mexico.

The next manuscript published was the *Códice Techialoyan de Huixquilucan*. Huixquilucan is a town in the western section of the State of Mexico adjacent to the Federal District. This manuscript introduction, written by Herbert R. Harvey, from the University of Wisconsin, explains the pictorial as well as the textual content. The publication is enhanced with illustrations and charts as well as a translation of the *náhuatl* glosses. This enables the general reader to learn the history of a specific area, as well as permitting the specialist to compare and contrast interpretations of the pictographs. A brief overview of the origin and types of *Techialoyan* pictorials is also included in the publication.

The next non-*Techialoyan* publication is that of a 16th century codex from Tepetlaoztoc in the ancient province of Acolhuacan, which had Texcoco as its political center. This time, Professor Perla Valle made an invaluable contribution to the knowledge of the codex, with a long and thorough study of its content. This is an example of a codex produced for a different reason than those previously discussed. The codex contains specific complaints about excessive tributes demanded by the Spanish *encomenderos* to the members of the community.

The *Tepetlaoztoc codex* contains 144 plates, some of which are accompanied by explanations written in Spanish. In addition, the complaints are recorded in a legal file documenting the controversy that is a helpful reference for the study of the pictorial section. Two interesting maps in which native and Spanish cartographic elements are mixed, serve as an introduction and geographic reference. Then there follows a summary of the history of the domain of the *señorío*. The summary begins with the Chichimeca origin and mentions the important date of the founding of the town, its settlement, and the creation and continuity of the local rulers lineage, until the time in which the codex was painted in 1554.

The next section describes the institution of the *encomienda* and lists the *encomenderos* who possessed it. The list begins with Hernán

Cortés and continues to Gonzalo de Salazar. At this point the codex tells us the amount of tribute set for Tepetlaoztoc by the judges Vergara and Quezada. The document ends with a complicated section which shows in detail the goods and services demanded by the Spanish landlord and provided by the Indians. This section is the most important because it gives the rationale for all that precedes it.

Finally, there is a request to the king of Spain to moderate the taxes and tributes which, as the document demonstrates, were excessive. This carefully planned and painted legal document demonstrates how sophisticated the traditional writing systems were before the Spanish conquest.

The next codices to be published come from the towns of Xiquipilco-Temoaya and San Pedro Tototepec, both in the western section of the State of Mexico. The first one is a 16th century tributary list, accompanied by miscellaneous documents concerning land ownership. Tototepec's is a recently rediscovered *Techialoyan* manuscript which was in the hands of a group of elders. Fortunately, they lent it for a certain period of time to the Instituto Mexiquense de Cultura to be restored.

Later, the Instituto asked El Colegio Mexiquense, A.C. to work on the translation and study of the content. Our Colegio decided to publish it in a facsimile format accompanied with an appendix containing texts about its process of restoration and scientific studies on the *ámatl* paper and color.

The publication and distribution of the facsimile editions make these ancient codices available for study and research without subjecting the original manuscripts, many of which are in poor condition, to the hazards of further handling.

Since the original codices are widely scattered throughout Europe and the United States as well as within Mexico, the facsimile editions allow scholars to study and compare the manuscripts without having to travel to consult them. For instance, the codices which have been mentioned in this article are found in three different countries: *Tepetlaoztoc* in England, *Huixquilucan* in the United States and *García Granados* in the Gallery of pictorial documents at the National Library of Anthropology in Mexico City.

Still other codices are found in private collections with limited accessibility. Our research has also uncovered original documents still jealously guarded by the Indian communities which originally created them.

Thanks to the collaboration of Mexico and the foreign institutions with the Center for Historical Studies of El Colegio Mexiquense, the rescue and distribution of previously unknown codices was accomplished, and by that facilitates the comparative studies of widely scattered documents, not only for scholars in Mexico but also for the international academic community.

