



Landing of the Spaniards in New Spain
 (Paso y Troncoso copy of illustration
 in Book 12 of the *Florentine Codex*
 by Fray Bernardino de Sahagún).

Conquest of New Spain

1585 REVISION

by Bernardino de Sahagún

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 and
 Carlos Maria de Bustamante 1840 Edition*

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Chapter Sixty	Further interpretation of <i>Inter Caetera</i> .	353
Chapter Sixty-One	How the Catholic kings interpreted <i>Inter Caetera</i> , especially in the codicil to Isabella's will.	356
Chapter Sixty-Two	Further interpretation of <i>Inter Caetera</i> .	358
Chapter Sixty-Three	Conclusion.	361
Translator's Commentary		363

092

Preface

THIS edition of Las Casas's *Defense* was originally intended for publication in 1966 as part of the international Las Casas year, commemorating the four-hundredth anniversary of the great Bishop's death. The project was initiated by Doctor Lewis Hanke, then of Columbia University, now of the University of Massachusetts (Amherst), an internationally known *Lascasista*. The actual work of translation was to have been done by the Dominican Fathers in Washington, D.C., under the direction of Father William Hinnebusch, O.P., and the first draft of a translation was undertaken by Father Christopher Lehner, O.P., who did yeoman's work on the entire Latin treatise. However, the Dominican Fathers were reassigned to work on a new critical edition of the works of Thomas Aquinas, and Father Hinnebusch had to begin writing an English history of the Dominican Order. It was at this point, in 1966, that Doctor Hanke asked me to finish the task.

And so, at the beginning, credit and acknowledgment must be given to Father Lehner for his work. Without it, this translation would have been many more years in preparation.

My translation is based on Father Lehner's. I went through the Latin and compared his translation with the original, and then either made a new one, altered his, or did some other type of editorial work. The result is a substantially different translation, but it is impossible to say for sure in any passage which is his work and which is mine. However, I must bear final responsibility for the completed translation and for any inaccuracies or infelicities.

sent [Cortés] help in order to return to the conquest after having been destroyed by his enemies; and in the course of which many times after, He saved him from the hands of his enemies when they were at the point of killing him.

Finally, having emerged victorious, [Cortés] conducted himself in a most Christian, loyal, and gentlemanly manner toward his king, in that immediately he offered the fruit of his labors to his king and emperor, Charles V. He wrote to the Supreme Pontiff requesting that he send preachers of the Holy Gospel for the conversion of this Indian people. All this was God's objective in having begun this enterprise as described in the brief history that follows below.

Fray Bernardino de Sahagún

Chapter 1

Concerning the signs and omens that appeared for the period of a year in this New Spain before the fame of the Spanish people or their coming was known.

A full two years before the Spaniards arrived in this New Spain,¹ many signs and omens were seen. They appeared in the sky, on land, in the air, and on the water: particularly one. It was that in the sky a tongue of fire of notable size and brightness [appeared]. It was shaped like a pyramid of a great bonfire, which began to appear at midnight and continued to grow, so that at sunrise it was directly overhead; and when the sun came out, it lost all its brilliance until the middle of the following night when it reappeared. This continued every night for the period of a year.² When the people saw this flame emerge they would cry out, sensing that it was an omen of some great event to come.³

The second omen that occurred in Mexico was the burning of the temple of Huitzilopochtli (who is the principal god of the Mexicans, and therefore his was the largest temple of all)⁴ which caught fire without anyone knowing how or why. When it began to burn, it seemed that the flames came out from the heart of the beams. This occurred without thunder or lightning, nor even a cloud in the sky. When they saw this, the *tlapixques* who guarded the temple began to shout so that they would come to extinguish the fire. Although many came and threw a lot of water, nothing helped. Instead, the water made the fire burn even harder until the temple was destroyed.

The third omen was that the temple of the god Xiuhtecutli (who is the god of fire) caught fire without there being thunder or

¹ FC gives ten years (f.1.).

² FC gives the date as Twelve House (f.1v).

³ The FC description indicates this was a frightening omen of some great evil: "se espantaua: todos sospechauan que era señal de algun gran mal" (f.1v).

⁴ FC says only "vn cu de Vitzilobuchtli que se llamaua Tlacatecca" (f.1v).

lightning⁵ (although it was cloudy and drizzling). This temple was in the district called Tejunmulco.⁶ The fire was taken as a bad omen. It was said, "The Sun has set this temple on fire because we have not seen either lightning or thunder."

The fourth omen occurred in broad daylight. It was the fall of a comet that had three heads and a very long tail. It began near the west and traveled toward the east shooting out sparks of fire. At the news of this comet, there was great fear among those who saw it.

The fifth omen was that this lake, which lies between Mexico and Texcoco,⁷ (without wind or other cause) began to seethe like water that is brought to a boil. The lake rose considerably in depth and width. The foundations of the houses that were built upon or near it were severely pounded. Some of them completely collapsed and others were partly ruined. This movement of water caused great fear throughout this land.

The sixth omen which occurred was that at night they often heard voices like that of a woman in torment who was weeping and crying, "Oh, my children, your destruction is at hand."⁸ Other times she would say, "My children, whither shall I take you so that you will not utterly perish?"

The seventh omen was that the fishermen, who fish in this lake (which lies between Mexico and Texcoco) and who also hunt birds there, caught a bird the size and color of a crane (the like of which had not been seen previously on this lake).⁹ They then brought it before Moctezuma, who at that time was in some palaces called Tlillan calmecatl (which means "palaces colored black"); it seems, although he had other palaces, richly built, in which to amuse himself, this Tlillan calmecatl was used by him as a retreat in time of adversity and sadness. They came to where he was when the sun had passed mid-day, and they laid before him that bird. It had in the middle of its

⁵ FC says it was indeed a lightning bolt: "cayo vn rrayo sobre el cu" (f.2).

⁶ FC gives Tzunmulco (f.2). Bustamante, in his 1840 edition of the revision, gives Tezunmulco (p. 10).

⁷ FC indicates it is "la mar de Mexico" (f.2v).

⁸ FC gives, "ya nos perdemos" (f.2v).

⁹ FC gives, "aue parda" (f.2v).

head a kind of mirror, in which could be seen the skies and the stars, especially that constellation we call Gemini.¹⁰

When Moctezuma saw this wondrous bird, he became very frightened and began to look at the sky, where no stars were to be seen.¹¹ Returning to look into the mirror on the bird's head, he saw armed warriors on horseback coming from the east, fighting and killing. Seeing this, he immediately summoned the sorcerers to look at it and tell him what it meant. When they looked and saw what he had seen, they too were afraid; when they looked up again they saw nothing; and so they made no reply because the bird and everything else had disappeared.

The eighth omen was that there appeared several times monstrous persons, such as the body of a man with two heads, and other similar things.¹² They brought it before Moctezuma himself,¹³ and as soon as he had seen them, they disappeared.

This variety of novelties and fearsome omens were predictions of what later happened and of various plagues that came upon them, and even the light of the Holy Faith which then arrived.¹⁴

¹⁰ *Mastelejos* is apparently the same as *astillejos*, the stars Caspar and Pol-lux of the constellation Gemini. FC continues, "que andan cerca de las *cabrillas*" (f.3).

¹¹ FC says only, "como vio esto Motecucoma espantose" (f.3).

¹² FC says, "aparecieron muchas vezes mostruos, en cuerpos de mostruosos" (f.3).

¹³ FC specifies where: "en su aposento que se llamaua Tlillancalmecac" (f.3).

¹⁴ Passage completely original to the 1585 revision.

just outside; it may please your majesty to enter and see them." Then he said, "Bring them here and we shall look into it."

When they had come in and reached the place where Moctezuma was, they threw themselves on the ground and kissed the earth. As they got up they said, "Our lord, we merit death for having come without your permission, but the matter is so grievous that it warrants it. The fact of the matter is that all of us who have come here have seen gods who arrived at the coast in large ships. We have spoken, conversed, and eaten with them. We gave them rich mantles, and they gave us in exchange for them these precious stones that we bring here."

Then they presented to him the false stones. They said to him, "They gave us these stones and told us, 'Go and give them to your lord, Moctezuma, and tell him that we are returning to our land and we shall return another time and see him.'" Moctezuma said to them, "You must be tired and weary; relax and rest. See that you tell no one of what you have seen and brought. Because I am keeping this a secret, I want you to do the same. I shall summon you when I think that I should be informed more about this matter."

106

Chapter 3

What Moctezuma decreed when he had heard the report of his captains and stewards who reside in Cempoala.

After Moctezuma had pondered the news which his stewards and captains brought him from the coast, he immediately summoned a gathering of all the elders and leaders of his kingdom and court. He reported to them the message that they had brought and showed them the stones that they had brought.¹

Once the consuls, elders, and leaders of his court had heard that message and seen those stones (the likes of which in size and appearance had never been seen), they began to discuss the matter by order or rank, starting with the most important down to the least important persons who were there.² After having deliberated on the matter in full accord, they decided what should be done about it. This was that competent and able persons be appointed to take the decision of this council to the *calpixques* and captains on the coast,³ in order that they watch in their lookouts all along this coast. They were to keep watch with great diligence, night and day, so that as soon as they saw the ships returning, they would return to give the news to Moctezuma.

The lookouts spent a whole year awaiting with great vigilance for what might appear from the sea. After a year (that is, the year 1518),⁴ one day they saw approaching by sea the fleet carrying don Hernando

¹ FC says, "y dixo los pareceme que son piedras preciosas quardense [*sic*] mucho en la recamara. No se pierda njnguna y si alguna perdiere pagar la [h]an los que tienen cargo de guardar la recamara" (f.5v).

² FC names them: "Cioacoatl. Otro Tlilpotonqui otro Tlacochealcatl otro Quappiatzin otro Ticociacacatl otro Quetzalatzatzin otro Vitznaoatlaylotlac otro hecatempatiltzin" (f.5v).

³ FC indicates this decision was Moctezuma's, not the council's: [Moctezuma] "mando los que pusiesen guardas y atalayas en todas las estancias de la ribera de la mar" (f.5).

⁴ FC gives, "el año de treze conejos" (f.5v).

Chapter 4

How the ships, in which don Hernando Cortés came, appeared on the sea.

Cortés, Pedro de Alvarado, and the other captains who conquered this land.⁵ As soon as the coastal guards saw this, they drew pictures of the ships that had arrived, how many they were, and the kind of people who came on them. Having done this, they then came in all haste to report to Moctezuma, who was residing in this city of Mexico, and showed him the pictures of the ships that had arrived.⁶

Having heard this report, Moctezuma, emperor of these realms of New Spain, immediately called a meeting of his elders and consuls, and informed them of what had happened. The latter determined in council that their great emperor, Quetzalcoatl (who had departed eastward across the sea many years ago and whom they were awaiting), had arrived and that with all haste they should go to welcome him.

Immediately, five very high ranking persons were appointed to go and receive him bearing rich gifts: the foremost leader, who was called Ioalliyltha,⁷ and another, who was second only to him, who was called Tepuztecatl.⁸

⁵ FC does not mention Spaniards by name nor the Conquest. The arrival is viewed as the return of Quetzalcoatl: "Motecucoma despacho luego gente para el recibimiento de Quetzalcoatl porque penso que era el" (f. 5v).

⁶ FC does not mention a written record.

⁷ FC gives Yoalliichan (f. 5v).

⁸ FC goes on to name "el 3°. Tīçaoa, y el 4°. Veuetecatl y el 5°. Veicazmecatl heca" (f. 5v).

When Moctezuma's stewards and captains who were guarding the coast saw other ships appearing from the sea (which was one year after the first ones), they straightaway went to give the news to Moctezuma. They brought pictures of the ships, as well as of those who came on them, to show to Moctezuma. When they had arrived in his presence, they spoke to him at once and showed him the pictures of what they had seen on the sea.

Moctezuma immediately called a meeting of the elders and wise men of his kingdom and informed them of what had again appeared upon the sea, whereupon they all conferred with each other concerning what should be done in this matter. All agreed by saying that according to the report from the ambassadors the one who had arrived was Quetzalcoatl. A long time ago he had gone by sea to join the Sun God, who had summoned him to the kingdom of Tlapalla, leaving word he would return, and that all their predecessors had expected him. It was impossible that he be anyone else.

Therefore, they decided to send ambassadors and very prominent figures to go to welcome him. They selected five important persons to do this, and to bring him a great gift. These five were sent by Moctezuma to go and receive Quetzalcoatl.¹ The present that they were to take with them was given to them, which was precious stones, jewels, and very rich plumage,² as innumerable in the first column of this page.³ They wrapped these in rich mantles and placed them in leather chests.

¹ Recapitulation of the narrative of Chapter 3 does not occur in the FC.

² FC records a speech by Moctezuma: "yd y recebilde [*sic*, for recibidle] y oyd lo que os dixere con mucha diligencia mjrad que no se os olujde nada de lo que os dixere veys aquj estas joyas que le presentey de mj parte que son todos los ataujos sacerdotales que a el le conujenen" (f. 6).

³ An obvious reference to the now lost parallel texts of the 1585 revision.

107

Who
is
Quetzalcoatl
- who's the
returning?

Chapter 5

Concerning what happened to Moctezuma's
ambassadors after they boarded
don Hernando Cortés's vessel.

When they had prepared their cargo and all their baggage, they went to take their leave of Moctezuma. He spoke to them in the following manner: "Go now, and fulfill your embassy as I have commanded you. See that you do not linger anywhere but that you arrive without delay in the presence of our Lord and King, Quetzalcoatl. Say to him, 'Your vassal, Moctezuma, who now has charge of your kingdom sent us to greet your majesty and gave us this present which we have now brought you.'" Then these ambassadors departed, and with all speed reached the ships.⁴

Once they had arrived, they went to the flagship and asked for the lord and king whom they were seeking. There was much give and take until the Spaniards understood what they had come for. The Spaniards planned among themselves that don Hernando Cortés should dress himself up like a prince. He seated himself on a chair, like a monarch, on the quarterdeck of the stern.⁵

⁴ FC gives more precise details of the journey: "Tomaron luego el camino los mensajeros, y llegaron a la orilla de la mar, y allí entraron en canoas, y llegaron a vn lugar que se llama Xicalanco, dalli [de allí] tornaron, otra uez a entrar en otras canoas, con todo su hato, y llegaron a los naujos" (f.7v).

⁵ This matter of Cortés is not mentioned in the FC.

When Moctezuma's messengers reached the coast, they boarded canoes with all their baggage and began to approach the place where the ships of don Hernando Cortés were. The lead canoe, which was the guide, made straight for the flagship, where the banner was. All those who were aboard the ships eagerly watched what was happening. When the Indians drew alongside the flagship, those on it asked them where they were from, who they were, and what they wanted.

To this they replied that they were Mexicans, that they came from Mexico in search of their lord and king, Quetzalcoatl, and that they knew he was there.¹ The Spaniards were astonished when they heard the answer and made no response. They began to whisper among themselves, saying, "What can this mean when they say that they know their king and god is here and that they wish to see him?" Don Hernando Cortés heard this reply, with all the others, and they began to confer among themselves about the matter; and after a good deal of discussion, they agreed that don Hernando Cortés should dress himself in the best apparel that he had. They prepared for him a throne on the quarterdeck where he was to sit and look like a king.² And so disguised, those Mexican Indians who had come in search of Quetzalcoatl were to enter to see him and to speak to him.

Once this was done, they told the Indians that they would be very welcome, that he whom they sought was there and that they would see him and speak to him. Having heard this, the Indians assembled their canoes around the flagship, and those on board threw down rope ladders so that they could board.

¹ FC says, "sepa el dios a quien venjmos a adorar en persona de su sieruo Motecucoma, el qual le rige, y goujerna, la su ciudad de mexico. Y dize a llegado con trabaxo el dios" (f.8).

² FC does not record this exchange among the Spaniards.

They then climbed into the ship, at the same time [taking] with them all their baggage which they put on board the ship. Once on board with their cargoes, they sat down on deck, and don Hernando Cortés was inside the quarterdeck on his throne, which was not visible from outside. They adorned themselves and began to unpack what they had brought in the leather chests. When the Spaniards saw them wanting to go in and enter and see the one whom they were seeking, they told them to go in and see and speak with their god and lord whom they sought. They entered the room where don Hernando Cortés was, and they all carried in their hands the gift. When they saw him, all prostrated themselves on the ground and kissed it as a sign of adoration. Then they raised themselves up. The one who acted as the leader of all of them began by saying, "Our god and our lord, be very welcomed, for we, your servants and vassals, have been waiting for you a very long time. Your vassal and lieutenant of your kingdom, Moctezuma, has sent us to greet and receive you. He says that our lord and god should be very welcome, and here we bring all the precious adornments that you used among us as our king and god."

And so saying, they then began to dress him with those adornments which they brought. They placed upon his head a piece made like a helmet, in which there was much gold, precious stones, and plumage. They put on him a vesture of excellent cloth, which is called *xicolli*, that covers from the throat to the waist, and with half sleeves. They then placed upon him a collar of precious stones of great value and beauty. In this fashion they were adorning him from head to foot with priestly ornaments of great value. They placed the other precious ornaments of *Tezcatlipoca* and *Tlalocatecutli* in an orderly manner at his feet, as they do when they give some present to any person of high rank. After they did this, Captain don Hernando Cortés (or someone in his name) said to them, "Well, do you not bring more than this to welcome me with?" To this their leader replied, "Our lord and our king, they told us that we should bring this to your majesty and no more."

Then don Hernando Cortés told his men in the Castilian language to treat the messengers very kindly and to put them in the forecastle where they might rest and be given Spanish food to eat with all courtesy and kindness.³

³ This courteous treatment is not mentioned in the FC.

When the [Indians] came on board, all the Spaniards came to the ship to see what was happening. They saw the gift, and they admired the adornments and the personages who brought them. On the following day the Spaniards carried out their plan of terrifying those poor Indians by fettering them with handcuffs and chains, by firing off rounds of cannon shots,⁴ and by challenging them to fight; and so they arranged it.

⁴ FC goes on to say that the Mexicans "cayeron en el suelo, como muertos: y los españoles leuantaronlos // del suelo, y dieron les a beber vino conque los enforçaron: y tornaron en sí" (f.8r.v).

Well in the ground of Moctezuma

*you then see to work
(f.8r.v)*

Chapter 6
How Moctezuma's ambassadors returned
to Mexico after receiving Quetzalcoatl.

When the Spaniards had greatly urged Moctezuma's ambassadors to fight with them, one on one, or two against two, in order to test their strength and skill in combat (which they could not get them to do with them),¹ they insulted them, saying that they were cowards and effeminate.² And as such that they should go to Mexico, for the Spaniards were going there to conquer the Mexicans; and that [the Indians] would die by their hands; that they should tell Moctezuma that his gift had not pleased them; and that when they went to Mexico, they would rob them of all they had and take it for themselves.³

This said, thereupon the Indians entered their canoes and began to row in great haste. They couldn't wait to get away from the Spaniards, and some were urged by others to row hard in order that soon they would be far away and no other harm would befall them.

With this haste they reached a little island called Xicalanco, where they ate and rested a little. From there they continued until they reached the town called Tecpantlayacac, which is on the coast. They left there at once and arrived at a town that is called Cuetlaxtlan, which is further inland. There they ate and slept; and in the morning, the leaders of that town implored them to repose and rest that day there. They replied to them, "Gentlemen, we cannot rest. We are in a hurry, for we bear to our lord, Moctezuma, a message of great importance and wonder, such has never been seen in these parts. Nobody needs to know about it before he does, and therefore we are going in great haste."

¹ FC has a much fuller description of these events in its Chapter 5, with speeches of both Cortés and the ambassadors (f. 8v, 9).

² The charges of cowardice and effeminacy do not appear in the FC.

³ Passage unique to 1585 revision.

And so saying, they departed. They went so disturbed and hard pressed that nothing could console them, neither food nor sleep, nor anything that gave them pleasure. They went with many great and deep sighs, full of anguish and affliction throughout the journey.⁴ When some spoke to others, they said, "We have seen such strange and frightening things that they portend that great seas of tribulation are about to befall us. But, lord god, who can they be and from where can they be, to conquer us, the Mexicans, who are the most powerful, ancient, and most feared in all these realms? Why are we so worried and so tormented that our heart is full of grief? This is a sign of some great evil which approaches us."

Reaching Mexico, they went directly to the palaces of the king, Moctezuma, and spoke to the guards who guarded his chamber, saying to them, "If our lord, Moctezuma, sleeps, wake him and tell him, 'Sir, the ambassadors whom you sent to the coast to welcome our god, Quetzalcoatl, have returned.'" The guards went in to report this to Moctezuma and when he had heard it, he said, "Tell them that they are not to enter here, but that they should go directly to the Hall of Justice." And he immediately ordered that some slaves be brought, in order to cut their throats in front of the ambassadors and to sprinkle them with their blood. They performed this ceremony when any great ambassador returned.⁵ And so it was done.

⁴ In the FC this behavior is attributed to Moctezuma: "Motecuçoma no podia comer ni dormir ni hazia de buena gana ninguna cosa, sino estaua muy triste: y suspiraua espesas vezes, estaua con gran congoxa" (f. 10).

⁵ FC gives the reason: "hizieron esta cerimonja porque aujan vjsto grandes cosas y aujan visto a los dioses, y hablado con ellos" (f. 10v).

cut
throat =
killing or rob?

Chapter 7

Concerning what the ambassadors said to Moctezuma after returning from the coast.

After performing that idolatrous ceremony of sprinkling the ambassadors with the blood of those who had been killed for this purpose,¹ lord Moctezuma seated himself on his throne or seat of judgment to hear the news brought by those ambassadors whom he had sent to receive Quetzalcoatl (whom he imagined to have come by sea). Then prostrated in his presence, they kissed the ground, a pagan ceremony of adoration,² and the chief of the ambassadors began to speak, giving an account to Moctezuma of what they had seen and heard and suffered on the ships on which they thought Quetzalcoatl had come.

He spoke in this fashion: "Our lord, when these gentlemen here and I had arrived on the coast, we saw upon the sea some very large houses completely of wood, with great structures, inside and out, which moved upon the sea like the canoes that we use to travel by water. They told us that these houses are called ships. They are admirable, very large buildings, made for traveling on the sea. None of us is capable of describing in detail the diverse structures contained on these ships or water-houses. In the canoes that we had, we tried immediately to reach the principal ship or water-house, where we saw the banner they used. Drawing near, we saw more than twenty ships, and in each one of them there came many people, and all were watching us until we entered the principal ship. Once on board, we sought to see lord Quetzalcoatl, whom we were seeking in order to give him the gift which we brought. There inside the ship, on a deck, they showed us a gentleman seated upon his throne, of whom they told us, 'This is he whom you seek.' Then we prostrated ourselves before him, worshipping him as a god, and we told him what you com-

¹ This pejorative interpretation does not appear in the FC, which says only, "Hecho lo que arriba es dicho" (f.11).

² The setting of the scene does not occur in the FC.

manded and we adorned him with the jewels which you gave us, and the remainder we offered to him and placed it at his feet. They gave us to understand that what we brought was very little.³

"That day they treated us well and gave us food and drink from what they ate and drank, which is excellent food and drink. That night we slept on the ship, and in the morning they began to talk to us, that they wanted to see our strength and manner of fighting, and urged us to fight with them, one on one, or two against two. We declined to do so, whereupon they put us in irons and they fired off cannon shots which frightened us greatly and made us fall down as dead. Once we came around they gave us food. We saw their weapons, their horses, and the dogs which help them in battle, all of which frightened us a great deal. It would take too long to tell you in detail all of what we saw.⁴ They say they come here to conquer and rob us. Here all will be seen. We come in great terror."⁵

When Moctezuma heard this, he too became very frightened, and turned pale and showed great sorrow and dismay.

³ None of the above report of the ambassadors appears in the FC. However, in the FC there is extensive detail about the Spaniards' weapons.

⁴ FC includes a description of the Spaniards and their auxiliaries excluded from the 1585 revision: "[Los españoles] tenjan las caras blancas, y los ojos garços, y los cabellos rojos, y las barbas largas: y de como venjan algunos negros entre ellos, que tenjan los cabellos crespos, y prietos" (f.11v).

⁵ This interpretation is not found in the FC.

Chapter 8

How Moctezuma assembled all the necromancers, witches, soothsayers, tricksters, and wizards that there were in all his kingdom, in order that they go to cast spells and incantations to stop the Spaniards from reaching Mexico.

When Moctezuma had heard the report brought back from his ambassadors, who went to welcome Quetzalcoatl, he became extremely depressed and sent them home. He entered his retreat and stayed there for a long time, very pensive and troubled. Finally he decided to assemble all the elders of dignified and high birth and all the wise men and men of good counsel of his court and kingdom, in order to communicate to them the news that the ambassadors had brought.¹

When they were gathered, he delivered to them a very grave and eloquent speech, which was their custom in such cases and as he was accustomed to speak, because he was very wise, well spoken, and persuasive for what he wanted. At the end of this address, he asked them to tell him what should be done in order to deal with his enemies so that those who came, bent on their destruction, would be prevented from achieving their goal.

The response to this question began with the most important, wise, and dignified men present in the council, and all spoke. The matter was argued at great and earnest length. Finally it was decided all the witches and necromancers should be brought together, and as was their custom, they were to make the first assault and employ all their knowledge and power to harm, impede, and frighten off the Spaniards so that they would not dare to come to Mexico.

All the necromancers and witches were brought together. To them Moctezuma vividly described the matter at hand and commissioned them to exercise all their skill against the enemies of the state who were coming to destroy them. When they had heard this, the

¹ This chapter in the 1585 revision differs significantly from the corresponding FC. The revision presents the scene as a debate among the political and religious advisers, whereas the FC places all the decision making with Moctezuma.

oldest and wisest of them replied with all their customary rhetoric and pomp and ended by saying that they would carry out with great diligence and care what his majesty commanded, according to all their skill and wisdom; whereupon they took their leave of him.

Having left, all these necromancers of Moctezuma assembled and discussed with each other and proposed to destroy the Spaniards. Quite confident of victory, they went to meet the Spaniards in the place they deemed most appropriate to carry out their plan; and without the Spaniards seeing them, they cast all their spells, hexes, sorceries, and incantations in order to destroy the Spaniards. But as Divine Providence² had determined otherwise, whatever they did, said, and bargained with the demons, patrons, and supporters was to no avail and they returned confused and distraught to report this to Moctezuma.

After hearing them, he was filled with dread and felt very faint. Finally upon the advice of his elders and the wise men of his court, he ordered his stewards, captains, and warriors to go and receive [the Spaniards] in peace, and to bring them provisions and slaves to be sacrificed in their presence, and to try to ascertain what manner of gods were those who marched against them.

They went and did what was commanded of them, but when the Spaniards saw the provisions splattered with blood, they abominated and utterly rejected the supplies and refused to eat or look at them.³

Upon seeing this, the Mexicans said to one another, "These gods are not like ours; they are heavenly gods. We should worship and appease them." So among themselves they decided to find them some of the very best food from among the most delicious they ate, bread as well as meat, fruit, and roots that the Indians prized highly, to see if the Spaniards liked them. They presented these to the Spaniards, who welcomed and ate them willingly, which greatly pleased the Mexicans. From then on they considered the Spaniards to be gods and they also considered the Negroes who were among them as black gods, and called them Teucacatzactli.⁴

² This Christian interpretation is not present in the FC.

³ FC says, "offrecieron les tortillas, rociadas con sangre humano: como vieron los españoles aquella comjda tuujeron grande asco della. Començaron a escupir y abomjnarla, porque hedia el pan con la sangre" (f.12).

⁴ FC says only, "y los negros // pensaron que eran dioses negros" (f.12r,v).

When this was learned by Moctezuma, he too believed that the newcomers were heavenly gods. With great haste he ordered all his governors, rulers, and officials of the state that, with the greatest diligence, they were to provide and serve the heavenly gods who had arrived with everything they could possible desire. And so it was that the Spaniards were treated as if in a very bountiful and pleasant paradise for the whole time until they arrived in Mexico.

113

Chapter 9

Concerning how Moctezuma wept, along with all those of his court, when he learned from his envoys that the Spaniards were valiant and powerful men.

When Moctezuma learned from his envoys that the Spaniards were so brave and mighty, which was very well represented by their character and acts, great fright and fear overcame him. Suddenly it occurred to him that not only was he to see great hardships and injuries but also would all of his kingdom and empire and all his leaders and vassals. Overcome by this feeling, he began to weep bitterly, and so did all those who were with him. From there this lamentation spread to all the small and great of his kingdom. Some people began to assemble in groups and weep in the plazas and in the streets, and some incited others to tears and they talked to each other with great sorrow, saying that great misfortunes were soon expected and would soon overcome them. Everyone walked through the streets despondent and tearful. In the homes, the fathers wept with their children, telling them, "Alas for me and for you, my children, what great evils you are going to see and suffer!" Crying, the mothers wept and told the same to their sons and daughters, along with other misfortunes that the great terror and grief led them to say.

The envoys also told Moctezuma that the leader of the Spaniards brought with him an Indian woman who was called Marina.¹ Born in this land of Mexico, she acted as his interpreter to translate what was said to him in the Mexican tongue into Spanish, which she also understood, and to tell the Mexicans whatever the Captain told her to say.

Then after he recovered somewhat, Moctezuma again commanded all his subjects to take great care in serving the gods who had arrived; and, therefore, he stationed on all the roads a great number

¹ FC says, "los españoles trayan vna india mexicana que se llamaua Marina vezina del pueblo de teticpac que es a la orilla de la mar del norte" (f.13v).

messengers who traveled endlessly, day and night, bearing news of what was happening and with supplies for the Spaniards.

The Spaniards then began to question the leaders who were now with them about Moctezuma. They asked them, "What sort of person is he? What features does he have: How old is he?" Those who were present replied that he was a man of ideal age, lean, of medium build and that in his appearance much seriousness, wisdom, and great valor were displayed.

After Moctezuma learned of the interest the Spaniards were showing in the quality and nature of his person, he became greatly distressed and debated within himself: What should he do? Should he flee, wait, or hide himself?

He communicated these uncertainties to his leaders who passed them on to the wizards and necromancers,² whose opinion it was that he should hide himself. They told him they could conceal him securely in one of many places. If he wanted to go to the House of the Sun, they would take him there; if he wished to go to a terrestrial paradise, they would place him in it; if he wanted to go to the underworld, they would guide him; and if he desired to go to a very secret and suitable place near the city, called Cincalco, they would station him there. Moctezuma replied that he was inclined to have them take him to the cave of Cincalco,³ and this rumor was spread throughout his court; however, as matters developed, he changed his mind⁴ and courageously decided to await whatever might occur, so that the stains of cowardice and faintheartedness not be added to his royal name.⁵ He soon decided to leave his royal houses and to live in his own houses, and so it was done.

² FC indicates just that these persons were friends: "y esto trataua con sus amjgos aquellos de qujen se confiaua y ellos le dezian" (f.14).

³ FC goes on to say, "que esta cabe a tlacujoaian detras de chapultepec donde ay fama que ay grandes secretos" (f.14).

⁴ FC says the reason for Moctezuma's changing his mind was that "nyn-guna cosa de lo que dixeron los njgromanticos se pudo verficar" (f.14v).

⁵ FC does not comment on Moctezuma's bravery but says merely, "y ansi Motecuçoma procuro desforçarse y de esperar a todo lo que venjese, y de ponerse a todo peligro" (f.14v).

Moctezuma
 changing his mind
 courageously
 decided to await
 whatever might occur

Chapter 10

How the Spaniards penetrated inland, having scuttled all their ships, and concerning the hostile reception they received from the Otomi.¹

The courage of don Hernando Cortés, valiant leader of the conquest of this land,² was shown in the way he had all his ships unloaded and then scuttled to deprive his soldiers of all possibility for turning back from this conquest.³

Once this was done, they began to move inland. All those who were fit to fight were made ready for war, leaving behind those whom he deemed suitable to guard the baggage. In due course, they reached the boundaries of Tlaxcala, a province called Tecoac (which means "place where the fierce and warlike people live"⁴ because of the very large number of Otomi, who were very brave and experienced in warfare and who were chosen as the guards of that kingdom of Tlaxcala). The [Spaniards] brought with them a Mexican, whom they had taken from Cempoala, to act as guide and interpreter since he knew a little Spanish.⁵ He guided them toward the place where

¹ FC chapter heading does not include the Otomies' role, but emphasizes that of Moctezuma: "y de como Motecuçoma dexo la casa rreal y se fue a su casa propria" (14v).

² This praise of Cortés does not appear in the FC. The FC passage begins, "Motecuçoma tenjendo ya por // aueriguado ansi por las cosas que auja oydo de los españoles como por los prognosticos que aujan pasado y profecias antiguas y moternas [*sic*] que tenjan que los españoles aujan de reynar en esta tierra: saliose de las casas reales, y fuese a las casas que el tenjan [*sic*] ante que fuese rey o emperador" (f.14v,15).

³ An event not reported in the FC.

⁴ The gloss of the toponym does not appear in the FC.

⁵ FC indicates that the Spaniards were led by an important Indian: "tomaron a vn indio principal que se llamauan Tlacocheacatl, para que los mostrase el camjno: al qual indio aujan tomado de alli de aquella prouincia los primeros naujos que vinjeron a descubrir esta tierra el qual indio el capitan don hernando cortes truxo consigo, y sabia ya de la lengua española algo" (f.15).

that army of Tlaxcalan Otomi soldiers was posted. There is no doubt he led them there so that the army of Otomis should kill all the Spaniards without sparing any.⁶

The reverse was to happen to them when the Otomis, ready for war, came forth to confront them. When they began to engage in fight, the poor Otomis, because they did not know the Spaniards' strength and military prowess, the speed of the horses, and the range of offensive as well as defensive arms, immediately suffered great loss on all counts. But they, being fierce, without fear of the death that they saw as consuming and swallowing them, neither fled nor retreated, but fought on until not one of their men remained. This action lasted for only about two hours.⁷

This report was then carried to the lords of Tlaxcala (who were very confident that they had their kingdom very well protected by the Otomi soldiers). Upon receiving the news that all had been killed (to the last man), they were terror-struck, so much so that they were beside themselves, and began to tremble with fear.

The Spaniards, when they had rested that day from the effort of that battle, began the next day to march toward Tlaxcala.

In the meantime, the lords, leaders, and valiant men of Tlaxcala entered into a council by themselves to see what they should do at this crucial point. Offering and accepting opinions for a long time, they came to the conclusion that since that army that was coming had wrought great destruction and slaughter of their bravest soldiers in such a short time, it was not in their best interest to march against them. Rather, they would surrender to them, coming out in peace, and offering them food and supplies with much humility and reverence.

So it was done, and all the leaders, lords, and chief warriors went out without any arms, dressed as for a festival, carrying all the provisions that were possible for them [to carry]. With great reverence and humility they offered their gifts and their persons to the will of Captain don Hernando Cortés. The Captain received them with goodwill, and showed himself well disposed to them and offered them the friendship of all his army.⁸ And so all went together to the city then

⁶ This interpretation of treachery does not appear in the FC.

⁷ FC does not indicate the length of time.

⁸ Cortés's friendliness is not stated explicitly in the FC.

called Texcalla.⁹ Afterward they named the city Tlaxcala, as it is now called, and these people are called Tlaxcalans.

⁹ FC says more amply about the Tlaxcalans that "Ellos dixeron somos de la ciudad de taxcala: y venjmos a recebiros porque nos holgamos de vra. venjda, aveys llegado a nra. tierra, seays muy bien venjdos es vra. casa y vra. tierra donde estays que se llama Quauhtexcalla" (f. 15v).

Chapter 11
How the Spaniards arrived in Tlaxcala.¹

The Tlaxcalans, who spent much of the night in deciding what they should do in that situation, departed in the early morning to go to welcome the Spaniards in peace.² The Spaniards had spent the night near the place where they had fought the Otomis, watching the many wild animals that came down from those mountains to devour the corpses that covered the field. They suffered uneasiness, even fear, from the noise that those wild beasts made eating the corpses. Early in the morning they began to march toward Tlaxcala.³

Midway in their journey, the Tlaxcalan leaders threw themselves on their knees before the Spaniards, kissing the ground with much reverence, and spoke to them with all humility, greeting them with their welcome. They spent a long while reciting the long-winded ceremonial speech given by some flowery speaker or orator who had come prepared for this. Then they placed the present they had brought in an orderly manner before the Captain.

Captain don Hernando Cortés listened to their oratory with good grace and accepted the gift of food and other things that they gave him. Through his interpreters he let them know that he was very pleased with their restraint and with the good reception that they were giving him, for which no harm, but much benefit, would come to them.⁴

¹ Both the FC (f.15v) and the 1585 revision have similar chapter headings which exclude mention of the Cholula massacre. The event is described in the main texts of both versions.

² Recapitulation of events not found in the FC.

³ Information not reported in the FC.

⁴ Recapitulation and amplification of events reported in Chapter 10 of the FC.

Then together they all journeyed to the city of Tlaxcala, and the Tlaxcalans lodged them in the finest palaces they had. Here they conferred at length about the peaceful reception and signed and established a peace [treaty] in perpetuity. All dined together with much pleasure, and after the meal, the nobles and senators went home.

They all met in their council chamber, where they discussed giving their daughters to the Spaniards as a confirmation of peace. They then brought together a number of beautifully dressed maiden daughters of the princes and lords, who, with their mothers and fathers, presented them to the Spaniards. The Captain and the other Spaniards greatly enjoyed that gift, and divided them [the maidens] among themselves.⁵

Early the following day, the Tlaxcalan lords and leaders went to visit the Captain and the other principal Spaniards. The Captain began to question the Tlaxcalan lords concerning the city of Mexico and about the distance they might be from here to it. They replied to him, "It is not very far, about three days' journey. It is a very great city, and its inhabitants are brave men and very warlike and great tyrants."⁶

The Tlaxcalans said this because the Mexicans were their enemies⁷ and because the people of Cholula were also their enemies. They insinuated, telling the Spaniards that the people of the city of Cholula, who lived quite near, were friends of the Mexicans⁸ and their enemies, and had caused them great harm as support of the Mexicans.

When Captain don Hernando Cortés had heard this, through his interpreters, he told the Tlaxcalans, "Tell them that all those who are present here are my brothers and all their subjects [are] my children. All their enemies are my enemies, and on their behalf I will avenge them. In order that they may know this is true, tell them that they should prepare immediately for war. We will all go against those who are their enemies."⁹

⁵ FC says succinctly about the whole matter, "Y tambien les dieron a sus hijas donzellas muchas y ellos las recibieron y usaron como de sus mugeres" (f.16).

⁶ FC says, "son valientes y grandes conquistadores en todas partes hazen conquista" (f.16).

⁷ Statement not found in the FC.

⁸ FC also includes the comment, "y valientes como ellos" (f.16).

⁹ This speech of Cortés is not reported in the FC.

Having agreed to all this, within a few days all made themselves ready for war and the Spaniards, Tlaxcalans, and Cempoalans began to march toward Cholula. Reaching Cholula,¹⁰ they began to proclaim (this must have been the day after they arrived) that all the rulers, princes, soldiers, and common people should gather in the courtyard of the main temple, which belonged to Quetzalcoatl and which was very great, with large buildings.

After the courtyard had been filled with people, the Spaniards posted themselves at its entrances, which were usually three, one facing west, another to the south, and the other to the north.¹¹ Then the cavalry entered by all three gates and began to spear them, and there carried out a great massacre.¹² Those who managed to escape from there and those who had not come all took flight and abandoned the town. The envoys of the Cholulans went to tell Moctezuma what had happened, how treacherously [the Spaniards] had taken them [by surprise] and killed all their leaders.

The Spaniards, Tlaxcalans, and Cempoalans, having perpetrated this massacre and stolen what they could in the town,¹³ then began to march toward Mexico in a most terrifying army.¹⁴

When Moctezuma heard what had happened and about the troops who were marching against him, he began to shake like a leaf. Not only he but also all his kingdom heard the news of what had happened and about the approaching troops. They began to be afraid and tremble, and did not know what to do.¹⁵

¹⁰ FC indicates that "llegando todos a chololla: los chololtecas no hizieron cuenta de nada nj los recibieron de guerra nj de paz estuuieron quedos en sus casas desto tomaron mala opinjon // dellos los españoles y coniecuraron alguna traicion" (f.16r,v).

¹¹ FC says only, "tomado todas las entradas del patio" (f.16v).

¹² FC indicates that "Los chololtecas, nj lleuaron armas offensiuas ni defensiuas sino fueron se desarmados pensando que no se haria lo que se hizo: desta manera murieron mala muerte" (f.16v).

¹³ FC does not indicate this.

¹⁴ FC is more specific: "los españoles con todos los indios sus amjgos venjan gran multitud en esquadrones con gra [sic] ruydo y con gran poluoredo y de lexos respandecian las armas y causauan gran mjedo en los que mjrauan asimjsmo ponja gran mjedo los lebreles que trayan consigo que eran grandes, trayan las bocas abiertas las lengua sacadas y yvan carleando ansi ponjan gran temor en todos los que los vian" (f.17).

¹⁵ This is not reported in the FC.

Chapter 12

How Moctezuma sent a noble from his court disguised so that the Spaniards would think he was Moctezuma, and with him he dispatched many other leaders from his court with great gifts of gold, jewels, and plumage in order that the Captain would think that he who came to receive him was Moctezuma, and how this deception turned out the reverse.¹

When Moctezuma was informed by the travelers who were coming and going that the Captain and all the Spaniards conveyed a great desire to see him and speak with him (even though they were not thinking of seizing him or killing him, he thought that they would do this if they saw him),² he therefore attempted a ruse. It was that with the counsel of his senators and elders, they chose one of the leading courtiers who in body and face bore resemblance to Moctezuma. Once he had been summoned and instructed in what he had to do, they supported him with many other leading courtiers.³ A great gift of gold, jewels, and plumage was given them in order to make the Spaniards think that he was Moctezuma who had come to receive them in peace.

This trick was discovered before they reached the presence of Captain don Hernando Cortés. When they arrived in his presence (which was in the midst of the mountains, by a volcano and snowcapped mountain, on a plain which they called "the courtyard"), having made their customary homage, they offered their present to the Captain, laying it at his feet. He and all his men received them with great pleasure.⁴

¹ FC chapter heading does not indicate a ruse.

² This is not reported in the FC.

³ FC chapter 12 begins, "Quando supo Motecuçoma, que los españoles aujan partido de cholula y que yuan camjno de mexico, despacho luego a vn principal suyo el mas principal de su corte que se llamaua Tziaic-pupuca y con el muchos otros principales" (f.17v).

⁴ FC indicates, "y regozijaronse mucho con el oro mostrando que lo tenja es mucho" (f.17v). The Nahuatl text says, "As if they were monkeys they seized upon the gold. . . . They starved for it; they lusted for it like pigs" (Sahagún 1950-82, pt. 13, 2d ed.:31).

After this, the Captain asked (through his interpreters) the leader who was representing Moctezuma if he were he. He answered "Yes," that he was his vassal, Moctezuma. The Captain turned around to the Tlaxcalans and Cempoalans and asked them, "Is this Moctezuma, your king?" They replied, "No sir, he is not the one, for we know Moctezuma well, and we also recognize this person who is here; he is one of his leaders, who is called Tzeoacpupuca."

Then the Captain spoke to him (through his interpreters) reprimanding him for the deception he had attempted by his lord's command,⁵ and ashamed and confused, he returned to Moctezuma while [the Spaniards] enjoyed the gifts which they had brought and continued on their march.

When [Tzeoacpupuca] returned to Moctezuma to give a report on what had happened with the Spaniards, fear increased in Moctezuma from imagining [then] what later happened to him.⁶ But he did not stop seeking ways of escaping from the hands and presence of the Spaniards, as will be related in the following chapter.

⁵ FC directly quotes Cortés's reprimand: "Vete de ay mjentes! que no eres Motecuçoma piensas de engañar nos? Piensas que somos algunos nescios, no nos podras engañar. // Ni Motecuçoma se nos podra esconder por mucho que haga, aunque sea ave y aunque se meta debaxo de tierra no se nos podra asconder de verle avemos de oyr avemos lo que nos dira" (f.17v,18).

⁶ Moctezuma's reaction is not reported in the FC.

Chapter 13

What Moctezuma did after he learned what had happened to the ruse he had arranged, and what went on between Tezcatlipoca and the wizards and necromancers whom he sent against the Spaniards for the second time.

When Moctezuma learned that the strategem he had devised to fool the Spaniards had been uncovered, and that on account of that the Spaniards became angered at him, and that the gift he had sent was of no avail, that the Spaniards only laughed at it, he conceived of another idea to keep the Spaniards from reaching Mexico. He brought together all the nobles and satraps of his kingdom who were wiser than the first ones so that they should go to cast their incantations and necromancies.

And so it was that the nobles and satraps discussed this matter among themselves with full accord. They decided to send all the necromancers and wizards they could find to frighten away the Spaniards. Having brought them together, with great solemnity they entrusted them with this task. Whereupon the latter exchanged ideas about what they were to do and set off with great hope that they could achieve this undertaking, cowed by the threats Moctezuma made to them.

They all left in the direction of Tlalmanalco in order to meet the Spaniards wherever they might encounter them. Climbing uphill on the road by which the Spaniards were coming, they encountered Tezcatlipoca (who was one of their principal gods)¹ coming toward them ahead of the Spaniards. He appeared to them in the garb of a man from the province of Chalco, seeming very intoxicated and beside himself, not from wine he had drunk but from the fury and rage that filled him. When he reached close to that troop of necromancers and wizards, he stopped and began to berate them in a loud voice. (His

¹ FC does not indicate at this point that he is an image of Tezcatlipoca, but says merely that the enchanters "toparon con vn borracho en el camjno y no pasaron adelante parecia / / les que era vn indio de los chalco, parecia les que estaua borracho" (f.18v,19).

chest was bound from his waist upward with eight turns of hemp rope.)

He said to them, "Why are you returning here again? What is Moctezuma trying to accomplish by your action against the Spaniards? He has realized too late that they are determined to strip him of his kingdom and all he has, including his honor, because of the great tyrannies he has committed against his vassals. He has not reigned as a lord, but rather as a tyrant and traitor."

Upon hearing these words, the necromancers and wizards, now aware of who he was, prostrated themselves and began to entreat him humbly, while others among them started to make an altar of rocks and earth that they covered with the herbs and flowers they found nearby. [Tezcatlipoca] would have nothing of this offering; he only proceeded to berate and insult them ever more loudly.

With even greater effort he said to them, "Traitors, why have you come here? You can accomplish nothing. Turn and look toward Mexico, and you will see what will befall it before long." Then they turned toward Mexico and saw it devoured by flames: temples and other places of worship, all the seminaries, all the dwellings of the nobility and common people;² there was presented to them the war that would end with the destruction of Mexico. Upon seeing this, the necromancers' and sorcerers' spirits melted like wax,³ and a lump in their throats made them speechless.

After a short time, the leader of the group began to speak, saying, "We are unworthy of seeing this marvel. It would be more fitting for Moctezuma to see it, because he who has appeared unto us is the god Tezcatlipoca."⁴ The latter then disappeared, and the necromancers and wizards did not dare to go any further. They abandoned their mission and returned at once to Mexico. At this juncture, they were overtaken by those who went to present the gifts in the above-mentioned ruse, and all returned together to give a report of what had transpired to Moctezuma.

When they arrived in his presence, their leader, Tzeoacpupuca,⁵ told them what had happened with the Spaniards. The necromancers

² FC says, "vieron que todos los cues ardian, y los calpules y calmecates, y todas las casas de mexico" (f.19v).

³ An image not found in the FC.

⁴ FC says for the first time that this is Tezcatlipoca: "Este que nos a hablado no es persona humana, es el dios Tezcatlipuca" (f.19v).

⁵ FC does not indicate who gave the report.

who were there also related what had transpired with Tezcatlipoca. Upon hearing these two tales of misfortune, Moctezuma became greatly saddened and crestfallen; seated on his throne, he could not speak; he lost his speech and had a lump in his throat. After composing himself, he spoke with that leader, Tzeoacpupuca, saying, "Well, what are we to do, since the gods and their friends oppose us and our enemies go on prospering? Now I am resolved, and we should do likewise, to face whatever might ensue. We must not hide, nor flee, nor show cowardice, and let us not imagine that the Mexican glory is going to perish here. I pity the old men and women and the boys and girls who do not have feet or hands to defend themselves. As for the rest of us, we are now resolved to die in the defense of our homeland."⁶

⁶ Not the conclusion of the speech recorded in the FC, which is: "Nacido [sic] somos vengamos lo que vinjere" (f.20).

Chapter 14

How Moctezuma blocked the roads so that the Spaniards should not enter Mexico.

So that the Spaniards should not enter Mexico, Moctezuma resorted to all the ancient measures used by the Indians in their warfare, except the peremptory one, which was to come to blows with the Spaniards. Having learned what had happened to the Tlaxcalans when they tried this, and also the Cholulans, and having deceived [the Spaniards] as they had at the meeting between the mountains, the only measure that remained for Moctezuma was to try to block off the roads that ran toward Mexico, on this side of the mountains. And so Moctezuma commanded the Mexicans to build fences at the entrances of the roads and put [there] many dense magueys (as was their ancient custom), planted so that upon arriving there, the Spaniards should not move on under pain of death.¹

When the Spaniards had reached the closed roads, they destroyed all those fences, uprooted the magueys with great laughter and scorn, throwing them all around,² and then they made their way toward the town of Cuitlahuac. During the days they rested in Amaquemecan,³ they brought together the leaders of Tlaxmanalco and the surrounding district.⁴ The Tlaxcalans spoke to them,⁵ reminding them of what the Spaniards had done to them upon entering their lands, so that [the leaders] might offer peace to the Captain and to the Spaniards

¹ FC says this was done so that "los lleuasen hazia Tetzucucu" (f.20v).

² FC says only, "los españoles conocieron el cerramiento de los caminos, y tornaron los abrir, y echaron por ay los magueyes" (f.20v).

³ FC indicates that "dormjeron en Amaquemecan, y otro dia partieron de alli, y llegaron a Cujtlaoc" (f.20v).

⁴ FC says more precisely, "Don hernando cortes embio a llamar, todos los Señores que estan en chipan, queso Xochimjico, Mizqujc: y todos los pueblos de la chinapan" (f.20v).

⁵ FC indicates that Cortés, not the Tlaxcalans, addressed them, "y rescibieron de paz a Don hernando Cortes, segun dizen alli los hablo" (f.20v).

and so they would know that [the Tlaxcalans] were united with them against their enemies, the Mexicans. They also reminded the leaders of the harsh treatment that Moctezuma had shown them and the great burden of the work that he had imposed on them; so, by allying themselves with the Spaniards, the latter would set them free and destroy and punish Moctezuma and all the Mexicans. This was the reason for their coming.⁶ When the people of Tlaxmanalco and its districts had heard this plan, it seemed very good to them and they readily agreed to it. They immediately addressed Captain don Hernando Cortés and yielded themselves as his allies. He welcomed them with complete goodwill, showed them much benevolence, and exhorted them to help him with men and supplies with which to fight the Mexicans.⁷

Having taken the road to Cuitlahuac, on their arrival they called together all the leaders, who were called Chinampanecas, and spoke to them in the same fashion as they had addressed the mountain dwellers or the people of the sierra, and then they too agreed to join with the Spaniards. After they had rested a day in Cuitlahuac, the Spaniards left for Ixtapalapa. When they got there they summoned the lords of the four main towns, namely, Ixtapalapa, Mexicatzinco, Culhuacan, and Huitzilopochco [Churubusco], speaking to them in the manner they had spoken to the Chinampanecas. They too were easily persuaded, and allied themselves with the Spaniards.

Throughout all this, neither Moctezuma nor any of his leaders appeared, nor did they speak to the Captain or the [other] Spaniards.⁸ The [Mexicans] were, however, sending them provisions as was their custom before, but on the roads to Mexico no one appeared on their behalf, which was a sign of hostility.⁹

⁶ The report of this speech does not occur in the FC.

⁷ The material aid to the Spaniards is not recorded in the FC.

⁸ FC says, "Motecuçoma en todo esto njnguna cosa de guerra proueyo, nj mando que los hiziesen enojo njnguno" (f.21).

⁹ FC continues, "Estando los españoles en Yztapalapan njnguno de los mexicanos fue a verlos, nj osauan salir de sus casas nj andar por los caminos todos estauan amedrentados de lo que aujan oydo que los españoles aujan hecho por el camjno todo: estauan esperando la muerte, y desto hablan entre si diziendo que avemos de hazer vaya por donde fuere ya es venido el tiempo en que emos de ser destruidos esperemos aqui la muerte" (f.21).

Chapter 15
How the Spaniards left Ixtapalapa and reached Mexico.

When the alliance mentioned in the preceding chapter concluded in Ixtapalapa, Captain don Hernando Cortés,¹ with his Spaniards, concluded and decided to enter the city of Mexico with flags flying,² ready for war. They alerted the entire army, so that all should prepare themselves for war. Appropriately, very early one day, the field marshals and captains began to put the army in order, placing the cavalry and infantry each in their own ranks, the musketeers in their place, and also the crossbowmen in their rank, and all the others in accordance with standard military practice. This was done in such a manner that the vanguard led the army, the baggage train went in the middle, and the rear guard behind in the battle order,³ all under directions as to who should give battle to the Mexicans if they were to attack them.⁴

Having placed the army in its proper array, they began to move from Ixtapalapa on the road to Mexico, unfurling the flags and beating the drums with great haughtiness and pomp, so as to instill fear into all who saw them. The rear guard had scarcely left Ixtapalapa when the vanguard was already entering Mexico, where they marched

¹ FC merely says, "Partieron los españoles de Itztapalapan" (f.21v).

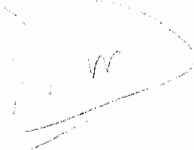
² FC does not mention flags. It does, however, note that "fueron algunos de acaballo, delante a descubrir si auja alguna celada; lleuauan tambien los lebreles delante" (f.21v).

³ FC specifies that "Con todas sus armas muchos Tlaxcaltecas, y vexozincas desta manera ordenados en / / traron en mexico" (f.21v,22).

⁴ Not noted in the FC. Chapter 15 in the FC ends abruptly: "En todo lo restante desde capitulo, no se dize otra cosa, sino la orden que lleuauan los españoles: y los yndios amjgos quando entraron en mexico" (f.22). All that follows in the chapter of the 1585 revision is unique to it.

straight for the royal houses. When they got there, the artillery fired its salvo.

In this entire distance, no sign of hostility appeared. Mexico seemed so abandoned, as no one appeared on the roads or near the dwellings. This was a sign, not of peace, but of resentment that was building for the appropriate moment. It signified the violence that the Spaniards had perpetrated against them by entering the city against their will. They did not, however, cease performing hospitable acts, by allowing [the Spaniards] to take up lodging in the city and providing them with food. The king, Moctezuma, came out to welcome them as strangers because he was not able to offer resistance at that time; nevertheless, the Mexicans always considered this arrival as an act of violence and tyranny.



Chapter 16

Concerning the welcome that Moctezuma gave the Spaniards and their Captain on their arrival in the city of Mexico.¹

122 Although² Moctezuma learned what had happened in Amaquemecan, how the mountain dwellers of Tlalmanalco had allied themselves with the Captain and how the Spaniards had reopened the roads he had ordered closed, he also knew what had occurred in Cuitlahuac and about the alliance of the Chinampanecas with the Spaniards; and although he knew what had happened in Ixtapalapa, which the Spaniards were about to leave in order to enter Mexico, he gave one last indication that it was not his desire that the Spaniards enter Mexico. Thus, he commanded that when the Spaniards moved out of Ixtapalapa to enter Mexico not a living soul should appear on the road which goes between Ixtapalapa and Mexico, nor on either side at any distance.

The entire distance was to be deserted as a clear sign that he, Moctezuma, did not want the Spaniards to enter the city. This was discussed among Moctezuma, the lord of Texcoco, the lord of the Tepanecas, and all the friends of Moctezuma and those of his senators, leaders, and important nobles. It was also decided (according to reliable sources, both public and private) that if the Spaniards persisted in entering the city, in battle formation, they would not make any attempt to resist such an entrance, giving them to understand that they would be welcome; and with the greatest effort, they received them.

¹ FC heading is more detailed: "de como Motecuçoma salio de paz a reseibir a los Españoles, a donde llaman xoloco, que es el acequja que esta cabe las casas de albarado o vn poco mas aca que llaman ellos Vitzillan" (f.24).

² This paragraph and the one following are unique to the 1585 revision.

Thus, in that area that lies between the church of San Antonio³ (which they call Xoloco), which passes right by the houses of Alvarado and the hospital of the Concepción, Moctezuma came out to receive don Hernando Cortés and his Spaniards peacefully, accompanied by the lords and elders mentioned above, and offered them flowers (as was their custom) and also a present of gold and jewels.

When this had been received by the Spaniards, Moctezuma spoke with great reverence and goodwill⁴ to the Marquess.⁵ After learning via his interpreters⁶ what had been said, don Hernando Cortés answered Moctezuma most cordially, allaying his fears that his person or his kingdom would suffer any harm and telling him that he would explain the reason for his coming.⁷ When Moctezuma and those who were with him heard this, they all went directly to take lodging in the royal houses.⁸

³ FC does not mention this church.

⁴ The speech is recorded at length in the FC. To summarize, Moctezuma welcomes Cortés as the rightful ruler and says that he and the previous Tenochcan kings ruled Mexico waiting for him to return, as the prophecy foretold (f.24v; 25r.v).

⁵ FC does not call Cortés "*el marqués*," the title he received from the Spanish king.

⁶ FC indicates one interpreter, Marina (f.25v).

⁷ FC records this speech by Cortés through his interpreter Marina. "[Cortés] Dixo a Marina dezilde [*sic*] a Motecuçoma que se consuele y huelque [*sic*] y no aya temor que yo le qujero mucho y.todos los que comjgo vienien, de nadie recibira daño emos recebido gran contento en verle y conocerle lo qual emos deseado muchos dias a, ya se cumplido nuestro deseo emos venjdo a su casa mexico despacio nos hablaremos" (f.25v).

⁸ FC indicates that "don hernando cortes tomo por la mano a Motecuçoma, y se fueron ambos juntos a la par para las casas reales" (f.25v). The FC names those who were with Moctezuma, which included Cacamatzin, the ruler of Texcoco; the lord of Tlacopan, Tetelepanquetzatzin; and the governor of Tlatelolco, Itzquauhtzin, among others (f.25v,26). The passage and chapter end saying, "Todos estos quando fue preso Motecuçoma les desampararon y se ascondieron" (f.26).

Chapter 17

What happened after the Spaniards entered the royal houses of Mexico.

123 When the Spaniards had entered the royal houses, they were straightaway lodged in places and parts that were appropriate to their rank, assumed or known grades, in such a fashion that the Captain and leading Spaniards were in the best rooms of the palace. Because the Mexicans are very considerate, they serve and honor each person according to his importance, both in lodging and food and in other types of service. Accordingly, in lodging all these who came, first of all the Spaniards and after them the Tlaxcalans and all the remaining Indians, they lodged and served them according to their importance. The Captain always kept Moctezuma and his lords in the suite of rooms next to his own. This was not to affront them, but to keep them safe from any disrespect or injury from anyone who might do them wrong, such as the Tlaxcalans and their other enemies.¹

The next night,² the Spaniards fired artillery to celebrate their having arrived without harm at where they wanted to be.³ But the Indians, unaccustomed to the sounds of the artillery or the stench of [gun]powder, were upset and afraid throughout the night.

The next day,⁴ Captain don Hernando Cortés assembled Mocte-

¹ FC account is quite different, immediately stating that Moctezuma was taken captive: "Desque los Españoles llegaron a las casas reales con Motecuçoma: luego le detuujeron consigo nunca mas de dexaron apartar de si, y tambien detuujeron consigo a Itzquauhtzin gouernador del tlailulco: a estos dos detu / / ujeron consigo, y a los demas dexaron a yr" (f.26v,27).

² FC indicates it was the same night (f.27).

³ FC does not report their reason.

⁴ The account in the rest of this chapter differs significantly from the FC. In brief, the FC describes the provisioning of the Spaniards. In addition, the FC indicates how native treasures were brought to the Spaniards, who were not interested in native feather art and separated the gold from the rest. The FC does not summarize the Spaniards' version of the reasons for the Conquest.

zuma, leading Tlaxcalans, and his other important people who came, Cempoalans and Tliluhquitepecans, in one of the rooms of the palace. There, seated upon his throne, he spoke to all of them in the fashion as he had promised Moctezuma the day before, when he talked with him on the road.

He spoke to them in this manner: "Lords, brothers, and friends, you know that my brother Spaniards and I who are here have come from the east, where we were born. Our own country is called Spain. It is a very great kingdom of brave and mighty people. We have a great lord, who is our king and emperor; he is called Charles, fifth of that name. With his permission we are spreading throughout all these western lands. Arriving in this New Spain, we came to the kingdom of our brothers and friends, the Tlaxcalans, who received us in their capital city, called Tlaxcala, with great kindness and made a pact of friendship and brotherhood with us. After showing us much kindness, they complained to us that you Mexicans cause them great grievances and great damages and wage war upon them continuously so that they do not enjoy peace or safety of their persons, lands, and properties, but instead you always impose great burdens on them. Having heard this, my brother Spaniards and I, together with them, have come here to your city to learn from them and from you who is to blame for these damages and disturbances in order to put an end to them so that you may live in peace and conduct yourselves as brothers and neighbors. Until we discover this and make this peace, we will remain here with you as lords and friends, and this will be achieved little by little, without any disturbance or ill treatment on either side."

After he delivered his very Catholic speech, the lord, Captain don Hernando Cortés, then tried through the help of his interpreters, to communicate it well to all those who were present. When all had understood it, they all thanked him for coming with such good intentions, and were greatly pleased at his coming.

Chapter 18

How the soldiers plundered Moctezuma's own residence.

Many times captains permit a lesser damage in order not to incur a greater one.¹ In this fashion, Captain don Hernando Cortés permitted his soldiers to sack the royal houses of Mexico, and the private residence of Moctezuma,² in order not to bring upon himself the ill will and anger of his soldiers, even though it angered and distressed the Mexicans greatly and even posed the risk to the Spaniards of losing their daily supplies.

When the Mexicans saw the devastation and destruction that had been committed in the royal palace, as well as in Moctezuma's own, they were greatly disturbed. They absented themselves from the presence of the Captain, Moctezuma, and all the court. They hid themselves in their houses and elsewhere, believing that the matter would not end there but that [the Spaniards] would kill and rob many more than they already had.³

And so, there was a great interruption in the necessary provisions.⁴ All the food and drink began to dwindle, as much for people as for the horses and the dogs that the Spaniards brought with them

¹ The justification for looting Moctezuma's palaces does not appear in the FC.

² FC indicates that the Spaniards "procuraron de saber de la recamara de Motecucoma y el los lleuo a su recamara que se llamaua tototalco que qujere dezir // la casa de las aues" (f. 28r,v).

³ FC does not report this conjecture.

⁴ FC says, however, that Marina, on orders of Cortés, "començo a llamar a voces a los tecutles, y piles mexicanos paraque vinjessen a dar a los españoles lo necesario para comer, y nadie osaua venjr dellante dellos nj llegarse a ellos, todos estauan atemorizados y espantados, embiauan los lo necesario para comer, y los que lo lleuauan, yuan temblando en ponjendo la comjda o parauan mas alli y luego se yuan casi huyendo" (f. 28v). The FC passage ends here.

in order to fight in the war. [The war dogs] were many, and gave great help to the Spaniards because they were well-trained to fight. For this reason, [Cortés and Moctezuma] found it necessary to send the Indian allies to go forth with the Mexicans in search of supplies and to reestablish the earlier command to provide all the things necessary for the public good. To accomplish this, it was necessary to run the risk of many injustices, disorders, and harms that went on until the status quo of the state of the republic was restored. They suffered many privations from hunger and from sickness as a result.

Chapter 19

Concerning what happened in the absence of Captain don Hernando Cortés when he went to meet Diego Velásquez, or rather Pánfilo de Narváez, and left in his place Pedro de Alvarado, or perhaps Jorge de Alvarado.¹

Captain² don Hernando Cortés showed his good intentions and purposes toward God and toward the Indians of this New Spain. But just as some incident (I do not know which one) arose to separate Adam and Eve, giving the serpent an opportunity to engage in a long conversation with Eve, which offended God and destroyed the agreement, so, Eve, giving credence to the serpent with her appetite for greater knowledge and power, made a slip whereby Adam and she, along with all the Indians and Spaniards, fell into grave difficulties and into great evils and offenses against God.

So, at the request of that Alvarado who remained as the Captain's lieutenant, it was agreed among him, the Spaniards, Moctezuma, and the Indians, that a most solemn festival should be held in honor of Huitzilopochtli.³ There⁴ [Alvarado] hid and unleashed the slaughter of the Indians in the courtyard of Huitzilopochtli, where a very large part of the Mexican leaders died as well as innumerable soldiers and Indian common people. The enmity between Indians and Spaniards was prolonged and cruelly aggravated and could not be brought to an end until after many great misfortunes had happened to the

¹ FC chapter heading differs from the 1585 revision, focusing on events leading up to the Alvarado massacre: "de como los españoles mandaron a los yndios hazer la fiesta de Vitzilobuchtl: esto fue en ausencia del capitan quando fue al puerto por la venjda de Panphilo de narbayez" (f. 29v).

² This passage is unique to the 1585 revision.

³ FC says that Alvarado "persuadió a Motecuçoma paraque mandasse hazer la fiesta de Vitzilobuchtl, porque querian ver como hazian aquella solemnidad" (f. 29v). The rest of the Spanish text of the FC chapter concerns the making of a dough statue of Huizilopochtli and a short passage on the celebration itself. The Nahuatl text of the FC goes into extensive detail about the ceremony (Sahagún 1950-82, pt. 13, 2d ed.:51-54).

⁴ The rest of the narrative is original to the 1585 revision.

Spaniards and many more to the Indians, as in the death of Moctezuma, and the return of Captain don Hernando Cortés, victorious over his rivals.

This blunder almost brought about the death of all the Spaniards, the Tlaxcalans, and their other allies, and on one or two occasions, the Captain was at the point of being caught and imprisoned by the Indians. If God had not miraculously shown His favor to the Spaniards, all would have perished.

When the Captain returned victorious over those who had come against him, he found Alvarado and all the other Spaniards and Indian allies in dire straits. They were besieged in the royal houses, with many trenches all around them, in such a fashion that no supplies could reach them, besides which they were by then dying of hunger with no way to escape.

Captain don Hernando Cortés, hearing of the dire straits in which his men found themselves, came with great haste. As he came into sight of the city of Mexico, it seemed to him altogether deserted. Not a soul could be seen on any road, in any house, or in any square. No one came out to meet him, neither friend nor foe. This was a sign of indignation and enmity because of what had happened.

The Captain, with all his reinforcements, entered the place where his men were [besieged]. There they held council about what had occurred, and they reviewed the situation, and what they had best do in order to escape from the great peril in which they found themselves.

Chapter 20

Concerning the massacre that the Spaniards perpetrated on the Mexican Indians when they were busy with the ceremonies and songs of their god, Huitzilopochtli, in the very courtyard of this idol.

The greatest evil that one can do to another is to take his life when [the victim] is in mortal sin. This is what the Spaniards did to the Mexican Indians because they provoked them by being faithless in honoring their idols. [The Spaniards], catching [the Indians] enclosed [in the courtyard] for the feast [of Huitzilopochtli], killed them, the greater part of whom were unarmed, without their knowing why.¹

When the great courtyard of the idol, Huitzilopochtli, god of the Mexicans, was full of nobles, priests, and soldiers, and throngs of other people, intent upon the idolatrous songs to that idol, whom they were honoring, the Spaniards suddenly poured forth ready for combat and blocked the exits of the courtyard so that no one could escape. Then they entered with their weapons and ranged themselves all along the inner walls of the courtyard. The Indians thought² that they were just admiring the style of their dancing and playing and singing, and so continued with their celebration and songs.

At this moment, the first Spaniards to start fighting suddenly attacked those who were playing the music for the singers and dancers. They chopped off their hands and their heads so that they fell down dead. Then all the other Spaniards began to cut off heads, arms, and legs and to disembowel the Indians. Some had their heads cut off, others were cut in half, and others had their bellies slit open, immediately to fall dead. Others dragged their entrails along until they col-

¹ The sentiments and judgments in this paragraph are not expressed in the FC.

² This is not stated in the FC.

lapsed.³ Those who reached the exits were slain by the Spaniards guarding them; and others jumped over the walls of the courtyard; while yet others climbed up the temple; and still others, seeing no escape, threw themselves down among the slaughtered and escaped by feigning death.

So great was the bloodshed that rivulets [of blood] ran through the courtyard like water in a heavy rain. So great was the slime of blood and entrails in the courtyard and so great was the stench that it was both terrifying and heartrending.⁴ Now that nearly all were fallen and dead, the Spaniards went searching for those who had climbed up the temple and those who had hidden among the dead, killing all those they found alive.

When word of what had happened spread among the people, [the Mexicans] began to shout and yell, reporting what [the Spaniards] had done so that everyone should take up arms against them. Immediately, many soldiers converged with their weapons, shields, bows and arrows, many kinds of darts, and Mexican swords. They engaged the Spaniards with such fury that they forced them to retreat to the royal houses where they were quartered.⁵

³ The gruesome details of the massacre in this sentence of the 1585 revision are not recorded in the FC. The FC description of the events says, "a los que tañjan los cortaron las manos, y las cabeças y dauan destocadas, y de lançadas a todos quantos topauan, y hizieron vna mantança [sic] muy grande" (f.32v). Cline (1969:128) notes that Sahagún used additional documentary material for this chapter, including a Nahuatl text by an Indian present at the Alvarado massacre, probably the *Anales de Tlatelolco* written ca. 1528.

⁴ FC says, "y todo el patio estaua sembrando de cabeças, y braços y tripas, y cuerpos de hombres muertos" (f.33).

⁵ FC does not report this, merely saying, "se junto gran copia de gente todos con sus armas y començaron a pelear contra los españoles" (f.33).

Chapter 21

How hatred and war between the Spaniards and the Mexicans broke out in the absence of Captain don Hernando Cortés, according to the Spaniards' account.¹

Seeing themselves hotly pursued by the Mexicans, the Spaniards entered the royal houses and fortified and barricaded themselves as best they could to keep the Indians out. From inside they began to defend themselves, firing off crossbows, arquebuses, and cannon, and even aiming stones from the rooftop to drive off the Indians struggling to break down the wall and force their way in.

Having a convenient opportunity, the Spaniards conferred with each other, and also with Moctezuma² and his courtiers, and decided to put them in irons. Meanwhile, the Mexicans were busy performing burial ceremonies for those who had been killed in the ambush and so delayed a few days before returning to do battle with the Spaniards.³ Great was the Indians' mourning over their dead, because there had perished many persons of high rank, both priests and nobles, and dignitaries of the state. Thus, they performed funeral rites in various places, and performed the ceremonies due the different ranks of those being buried.

After they had finished the funerals and returned to fight the Spaniards, the Spaniards and their Indian allies took council and decided that Moctezuma and another Tlatelocan lord, called Itzquauhtzin, should show themselves on the rooftop and talk peace to the Mexicans and get them to stop fighting. Accordingly, the two leaders came out on the rooftop, accompanied by some Spaniards

¹ FC says merely, "de como començo la guerra entre los mexicanos y los Españoles en Mexico" (f.34).

² FC indicates at this point that Itzquauhtzin, governor of Tlatelolco, was also there (f.34v).

³ FC does not report this.

armed with shields to protect them from being killed by those below. Coming out in view, Itzquauhtzin, speaking for Moctezuma, told them to mind what they were doing. Because their lord [Moctezuma] was present, he begged them not to resist by force of arms, because it would be useless since the Spaniards were so numerous and so valiant that they could never prevail against them. [Moctezuma] was already a captive in irons, and if they resisted the Spaniards, he was afraid that they would kill him.⁴

When the Mexicans heard this,⁵ they began to murmur angrily among themselves, signifying great displeasure and rage. One of them spoke out, "What is he saying, this whore of the Spaniards?"⁶ Then all began to shout and rain projectiles at them. The Spaniards used their shields to protect them from being struck. Fighting broke out all around the palace as the Spaniards, with Moctezuma and Itzquauhtzin, came down from the rooftop.

The Indians then tightened their siege around the palace so that no food could get in. They killed all whom they suspected of providing [the Spaniards] with food and arms. And so many innocent people died, merely on the suspicion that they might have sneaked in food or arms or of conveying messages. If for any sign they believed that anyone was on the side of the Spaniards or was trying to help them in any way, they immediately confronted them and shouted at them, "Down! Down with the traitors!" Many were killed who harbored no intention of doing such a thing. Therefore all those who served the Spaniards food or any other thing, or those who were with them, ran away and hid in fear for their lives.⁷

⁴ FC says this occurred the same day as the funerals and the passage includes the speech of Itzquauhtzin: "Itzquauhtzin governador del tlatilulco, subiose sobre los tlapancos de casa real y començo a dar voces diziendo. A mexicanos a tlatilulcas mjrad que el señor Motecuçoma vuestro rey os ruega que se cesey de pelear y dexey las armas porque estos hombres son muy fuertes mas que nosotros: y si no dexays de dar les guerra recibira gran daño todo el pueblo porque ya an // atado con hierro v̄o. rey" (f.34v,35).

⁵ FC says Mexicans and Tlatelolcans.

⁶ In this passage the 1585 revision lumps insults to both Moctezuma and Itzquauhtzin into insults to Moctezuma. In FC: "Que dize el puto Motecuçoma? y tu vellaco [Itzquauhtzin] con el, no cesaremos de la guerra" (f.35).

⁷ FC description of the interdiction is much longer and more detailed.

The Spaniards were in this manner besieged for eight days⁸ without any food reaching them, while those on the outside made ditches and barricades around all the royal houses, so that no one could either enter or leave. They blocked the streets thoroughly with trenches and such.

⁸ FC says, "Dieron bateria los mexicanos a los españoles siete días y los tuujeron cecados veynte y tres días" (f.35v).

Chapter 22

How the news reached Mexico, which don Hernando Cortés was approaching, having defeated Pánfilo de Narváez, and was returning to Mexico.

After the Mexican Indians confined the Spaniards in their stronghold, and had hemmed them in so that no one could leave it, the Spaniards tried to get news to don Hernando Cortés of the dangerous straits in which they found themselves.¹ To this end, they chose as many as ten or twelve Indians from among the Tlaxcalans and Cempoalans, and secretly instructed them in what they were to do. They sent them out one by one on diverse routes and at various times so that they would go with all speed to tell Captain don Hernando Cortés on the coast what happened. Of those who went out to bear this news, most of them fell into the hands of the Mexicans, who killed them. Some two or three who did not fall into the hands of the Mexicans reached Captain don Hernando Cortés, not together, but one by one, not on one day, but at different times, and they told don Hernando Cortés what was happening in Mexico.

When the news reached him, he had already defeated Pánfilo de Narváez, and had captured all the men and weapons that he had brought. When [Cortés] heard what was happening there in Mexico, he was greatly distressed. Secretly, without saying anything about what was occurring, he departed for Mexico in great haste and with all the spoils.²

When don Hernando Cortés and his army were within sight of Mexico, and the Mexicans learned with what powerful forces he was coming, it is probable that they had already elected another ruler among themselves, whom all obeyed in place of Moctezuma, who was

¹ FC does not report the attempts to inform Cortés what happened.

² FC says that Cortés was already on the way: "vino nueva como el capitán Don hernando cortés, venja con muchos Españoles, y con muchos indios de Cempoalla, y de Tlaxcalla" (f.37).

now imprisoned.³ The ruler-elect had ordered that when the Captain arrived in Mexico, all the Mexicans should hide themselves and not a living person was to appear on any street or anywhere around, in order to signify that they were at war and greatly offended by the Spaniards whom he had left with them.

This caused great astonishment in all those who came, but they did not cease advancing until they reached where the Spaniards were trapped. All arrived very tired and weary and impatient to rejoin their brothers. At the sight of them, those within were greatly consoled and heartened. They saluted them with the cannon they had, greeting and welcoming them on their arrival.⁴

Then without delay, the Mexicans gathered in great number, armed for battle, and it seemed as if they had risen up suddenly out of the ground. They immediately began to shout and fight, and the Spaniards began to respond from within with all the artillery that recently had been brought and with all the newly arrived men. The Spaniards wreaked great havoc on the Indians with their firearms, crossbows, and other weapons of fighting.

Having seen those who died at each step and for fear of the artillery, some of the Indians began to place themselves side by side, others to throw themselves to the ground, and others to hide themselves as best they could at the moment of the artillery's discharge. Without ceasing, this battle went on for three or four days.⁵

When the Mexicans saw the damage they were suffering, they agreed among themselves to fortify themselves in a very large and high temple that stood near the stronghold of the Spaniards. All those who could, selected men and hardened warriors, climbed up there. They hoisted up large beams and a large supply of arms with which to harm the Spaniards from there and to be less vulnerable to their artillery and firearms.

When the Spaniards saw this, a squadron of them sallied forth, in proper battle formation, to seize that [Mexican] stronghold. Reaching the steps of the temple, they began to ascend, step by step, and [the

³ FC does not indicate this.

⁴ FC says that the Spaniards "començaron a soltar todos los tiros en alegría de los que aujan llegado, y para atemorizar a los contrarios" (f.37v).

⁵ FC says four days (f.37v).

Mexicans] began to drop large timbers and rocks on the steps below to defend [themselves]. Nothing hurled down impeded the Spaniards.

Finally [the Spaniards] reached the top of the temple, where they began to slay all those who were in front of them with swords and halberds. Many Indians, seeing that all those whom the Spaniards wounded immediately fell dead, threw themselves down the steps, and went tumbling into the hands of the Spaniards who were at the foot of the temple ready to slay them. Those [Indians] on top, seeing that those below were dead and seeing that those above were being killed, began to jump from the height of the temple. They died from the fall, arms and legs broken, and were dashed to pieces⁶ because the temple was very high. The Spaniards themselves threw others from the height of the temple, and so all the Mexicans who climbed up there died a bad death.

Having won this victory, the Spaniards had their pick of the spoils and returned to their stronghold. The Indians began to retrieve all the dead bodies. Their relatives came and carried them off for burial amidst much weeping, because all those who died there were select and noble people.

⁶ FC does not give these details.

they concluded that they would welcome and embrace [the Spaniards] as friends and brothers.

At this time the Mexicans were plagued with a smallpox epidemic, causing the death of their ruler.¹⁰

At that moment, a Spanish captain, called Francisco Hernández, landed and immediately came to Tlaxcala with all his men, ammunition for artillery, and many horses. All the hitherto despondent Spaniards took great consolation and courage from this. All were happy. They met and decided to return against their enemies, the Mexicans. Then they talked with the Tlaxcalans about what they had decided: that above all they thought it necessary to construct some wooden brigantines, which they were to carry on their shoulders until they could launch them on the inlet of Lake Texcoco.¹¹

¹⁰ FC Chapter 29 goes into considerable detail about the plague, but does not state that the Mexica ruler, Cuitlahuac, died.

¹¹ The brigantines are discussed in Chapter 30 of the FC.

130

Chapter 30

Concerning the smallpox and measles epidemic that came upon the Indians of this New Spain after the Spaniards fled from Mexico, and how the war against the Mexicans began in the year 1520.¹

After the previously mentioned hardships that befell the Spaniards in the year 1519, at the beginning of the year 1520 the epidemic of smallpox, measles, and pustules broke out so virulently that a vast number of people died throughout this New Spain.² This pestilence began in the province of Chalco and lasted for 60 days.³ Among the Mexicans who fell victim to this pestilence was the lord Cuitlahuac-tzin, whom they had elected a little earlier.⁴ Many leaders, many veteran soldiers, and valiant men who were their defense in time of war, also died.⁵

During this epidemic, the Spaniards, rested and recovered, were already in Tlaxcala. Having taken courage and energy because of reinforcements who had come to them and because of the ravages of the [Mexican] people that the pestilence was causing, firmly believing that God was on their side,⁶ being again allied with the Tlaxcalans, and attending to all the necessary preparations to return against the Mexicans, they began to construct the brigantines that they would need in order to wage war by water.

¹ FC Chapter 29 heading says, "de la pestilencia que vino sobre los yndios de viruelas despues que los españoles salieron de mexico" (f.53).

² In FC Chapter 29 it states that "Ante que los españoles que estauan en Tlaxcalla vinjesen a conqjuistar a mexico dio vna pestilencia de viruelas en todos los indios en el mes que llamauan Tepeilujtl, que es el fin de setiembre desta Pestilencia, murieron muy muchos indios tenjan todo el cuerpo, y toda la cara" (f.53).

³ FC says that "Duro la foerça deste Pestilencia sesenta dias, y despues que fue afloxando en mexico fue hazia chalco" (f.53).

⁴ This is not reported in the FC.

⁵ FC says only that "esta pestilencia mato gentes sin numero muchos murieron de hambre" (f.53).

⁶ This is not reported in the FC.

They cut all the timbers that were required, which were abundant in those woods. The shipwrights among them designed the construction of all the necessary parts to make a good brigantine. From these the Indians copied the timbers that had to be fashioned for ten or twelve brigantines.⁷ Having produced all the required pieces for all the brigantines, all began to busy themselves until they had fashioned all the parts needed for all the brigantines. They did not put them together, but they carried all the timber on their backs. Thus, the Spaniards as well as the Indians, having formed an army (which was impressive in number and equipment they carried) set out for the city of Texcoco. They set down the timber they were carrying at the inlet and started to nail the parts together. This done, they caulked them with pitch, as vessels used to be sealed. Others did the other necessary tasks, while they placed in the brigantines the cannon and weapons that were customarily used in naval warfare.

While these things were being done on the brigantines, the Captain managed to forge an alliance and pact with the lord of Texcoco, who was called Tecocoltzin, in order to enlist his help in the war. Not only in Texcoco did he make an alliance, but also with the people of Chalco, with the Chinampanecans, and the Tepanecans, using the Texcocans as intermediaries.⁸

When they had prepared everything necessary to launch the war, captains were recruited for fighting both on water and land. Captain Hernando Cortés chose the area most dangerous and in most conflict, Coyoacan, and from there began to conquer the Mexicans by land. He posted Pedro de Alvarado in the area opposite Tlatelolco so that he would conquer the Tlatelolcans there.⁹ Thus by water and by land they launched hostilities.

⁷ FC says concerning the construction of the brigantines, "Estando los españoles en tlaxcalla labraron doze vergantines y ante q. los armasen truxeron los en piezas los indios hasta tetzcoco y allí los armaron enclauaron y brearon los quales hechos y puesta en ellos la artilleria" (f.54v).

⁸ Information in this paragraph is not given in the FC.

⁹ FC Chapter 29 states that "A don Pedro de albarado le cupo el camjno que va de Tlacuba derecho al Tlatilulco: el capitan don hernando cortes se puso en coyoacan y guardaua el camjno que va de coyoacan a mexico" (f.53v).

Chapter 31

How in the inlet at Texcoco the Spaniards completed the brigantines¹ with which they conquered the Mexicans, and of the formal declaration of war in which don Hernando Cortés blames Mexican treachery for starting it and for the death of Moctezuma.²

Captain don Hernando Cortés, having outfitted the twelve brigantines with all their gear and equipment, ordered the whole lake sounded before they would begin the naval campaign. He wanted to know where there were shallows, where there were any dangers or any other hazards, and where there was a sufficient depth of water so that once the naval war began they would be thoroughly familiar with the whole area between Mexico and Texcoco where they would be sailing. To carry out this venture most appropriately, he ordered all the brigantines to a part of the lake, on the very limits of Mexico, called Acachinanco. He accompanied them in person and they began to sound the whole lake.³

This done, the Captain summoned the lord of Mexico and his nobles on his honor as a gentleman that they would be unharmed, saying that he only wished to speak to them and give them the reasons why he proposed to wage war on them.⁴ [Summoning them] to first hear his justification, without there being duplicity, pretense, or outrage, that he aimed to declare war on them in order that they understand they were to blame in this case, not the Spaniards.

¹ FC Chapter 30 heading says, "De como los vergantines que hizieron los Españoles en Tetzcuco venjeron sobre mexico. Estos vergantines se labraron en Tlaxcalla y los indios los truxeron en piezas acuestas hasta la lengua (*sic*, for laguna) donde se armaron" (f.54v).

² Judgments not included in the FC. The 1585 revision and the FC differ significantly here, one of the major divergences of the two texts.

³ This information is found in Chapter 30 of the FC (f.54v).

⁴ This meeting is not reported in the FC. The information in the rest of this chapter is unique to the 1585 revision.

Chapter 42

Concerning the speech that Captain don Hernando Cortés made to the lords of Mexico, Texcoco, and Tacuba after the victory, in which he held court with all the lords of this region of Mexico.¹

In this assembly that lord don Hernando Cortés held in this town of Tlatelolco with the lords of these districts of Mexico, it can be said that he held court, where many matters were discussed.² The first and foremost was to appoint Ahuelitochtzin the lord of Tlatelolco, with succession to pass on to his sons and grandsons.³ This⁴ clearly shows that the lords or kings who ruled in this land did not follow by inheritance, but by election, and Moctezuma, as emperor, confirmed them as his predecessors used to do.

The second [concession] concerned the collection of tribute, [that is,] how it was collected in the past. Here it was discussed how the lords of Mexico, Texcoco, and Tlacopan [Tacuba], united with all their troops, should go conquer some province, even though its rulers had never given any offense to these three lords or their domains. This indicates clearly that they were tyrants. When they had defeated those whom they had gone to conquer, they divided that province among themselves and took other measures to assure their rule over it. They commanded them to come to Mexico with their tributes, and there it was distributed among the three lords, according to the plan administered by the lord of Mexico. This matter is dealt with sum-

¹ FC Chapter 41 heading indicates the primary matter was finding the gold the Spaniards lost when they retreated from Tenochtitlan: "de la platica que hizo el capitan Don hernando cortes, a los señores de mexico, tetcucu, y tlacuba despues de la victoria, procurando por el oro, que se auja perdido, quando salieron huyendo de mexico" (f.84v).

² FC Chapter 41 discusses only the fate of the gold.

³ FC does not treat this matter at all.

⁴ The rest of this chapter is largely original to the 1585 revision.

marily in this chapter.⁵ But in the books of the history of this land, it is dealt with in many places, especially in book six⁶ concerning the way they conquered, divided the tributes, and imposed their laws upon the conquered.

Our lord, King Philip [II], sent for these books, twelve in all. I dispatched them to the hands of lord don Martín Enríquez, who was viceroy of this land, and I do not know what became of them, or in whose possession they now rest.⁷ After this, Father Fray Rodrigo de Sequera took them [another copy] after he finished his service as commissary of this land. Never has he written or informed me what became of those books that he took in the Mexican and Castilian languages and [that were] lavishly illustrated. Neither do I know in whose possession they now are.⁸ There it is written in twelve books everything that could be discussed about things divine, human, political, and natural concerning animals, birds, and herbs.

In this meeting was also discussed what might have happened to the gold, jewels, and precious stones that were lost in that canal called Tolteca acaloco, where over 300 Spaniards and a great many Tlaxcalan Indians perished and all the Spaniards' baggage and wealth were lost. Concerning this, a diligent inquiry was made. The gold that had been gathered in the conquest of Mexico was recovered, but not the treasure that [the Indians] robbed when the Spaniards fled from Mexico.⁹

⁵ Perhaps a reference to the lost Nahuatl text of the 1585 revision. It may, however, be a reference to the FC, which in Chapter 41 reports Ahuelitochtzin mixcoatlailotlactzin as saying, "quando viuja Motecucoma el estilo que se tenja en conquistar era este que yuan los mexicanos, y los tetcucanos, y los de tlacuba, y los de las chinampas, todos juntos yvan sobre el pueblo o proujncia que querian conqjstar: // y despues que la aujan conqjstados, luego se bolujan a sus casas, y a sus pueblos: y despues venjan los señores de los pueblos que aujan sido conqjstados, y trayan su tributo de oro, y de piedras preciosas, y de plumajes ricos: y todo lo dauan a Motecucoma, todo el oro venja a su poder" (f.86v,87). The FC text ends here.

⁶ A reference to other books of the *General History*.

⁷ This manuscript given to Enríquez and sent on the 1578 flota to Spain is considered lost. See D'Olwer and Cline 1973:196.

⁸ The manuscript given to Sequera can be equated with the *Florentine Codex* (D'Olwer and Cline 1973:197).

⁹ FC Chapter 41 contains some of the discussion of what happened to the treasure. There are only two suggestions, by the cihuacoatl, about what happened to the gold: first, that a commoner took some, and second, that women hid it beneath their skirts.

Here [in Nahuatl] are found the replies which the Mexicans and Tlatelolcans made in this official inquiry, each accusing the other of responsibility for the theft.¹⁰ Finally, after much investigation and torturing many Indians and leaders over this matter, it is not known how it all ended.

With¹¹ regard to the authority that was then bestowed upon that Indian, don Juan Ahuelitocztin, whom I knew for the many years that he held the lordship, I knew many other Mexicans who held the lordship. Ever since, inasmuch as the Audiencia always resides in this city, it was decreed, and rightly so, that there be no ruler either by election or succession, but rather governors appointed by the Audiencia itself, one to govern in Mexico, and the other, Tlatelolco, as is the practice today. The dominion of this land belongs to his Majesty, King don Philip, our master. May our Lord God give him life and prosperity for many years in this world and in the hereafter. Amen.

Having¹² written this here in this town of Tlatelolco, the Marquess [Cortés], with all the Spaniards, then went to the town of Coyoacan to finish his court, where many matters were discussed for many days. Allotments¹³ were given to the Spanish conquerors. Captain don Hernando Cortés remained as governor of this land. Then he, all the other captains, and principal persons wrote to the most invincible emperor, Charles V, who was then king of Spain. Captain and governor don Hernando Cortés wrote the emperor a letter in which he requested that preachers of the Catholic Faith and monastic friars of St. Francis be sent to these parts to preach the law of God to this idolatrous Indian people and convert them to the Catholic Faith of the Holy Roman church.¹⁴ This the emperor wrote to the pope, informing him of what had transpired in this land and what was needed in order to engage in the conversion of these idolatrous Indians. Pope Adrian VI, who had been the emperor's own tutor, arranged to send

¹⁰ The Nahuatl text is lost. It seemingly expanded on the FC account, which is short and without rancor.

¹¹ Paragraph completely unique to the 1585 revision.

¹² Paragraph completely unique to the 1585 revision.

¹³ Called in the 1585 revision "repartimientos," but which generally have come to be known as encomiendas, allotments of labor of a specific group of Indians.

¹⁴ This final linkage of Cortés and the Franciscans is crucial for understanding why Sahagún undertook revision of his history of the Conquest. See the Introduction for an explication.

to this land twelve monastic Spanish friars of [the order of] St. Francis from the province of San Gabriel, with full papal authority to organize and administer all those who could be converted among the Indians. [The friars] arrived in this land, with all the favors that the emperor himself gave them, in the presence of the governor, don Hernando Cortés, in the year 1525.

Fray Bernardino de Sahagún¹⁵

¹⁵ FC is not signed by Sahagún.