

# THE FINDING AND FOUNDING OF MEXICO TENOCHTITLAN

From the *Crónica Mexicayotl*, by Fernando Alvarado Tezozomoc  
Translation and notes by Thelma D. Sullivan

## TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

The *Crónica Mexicayotl*, written in 1609 by Fernando Alvarado Tezozomoc, a grandson of Moctezuma on his mother's side and a great grandson of Axayacatl on his father's, is one of the great documents of Nahuatl lore. His account of the emergence of the Aztecs from Aztlan-Chicomoztoc, their peregrinations and the vicissitudes of their fortune while being driven on by their god, Huizilopochtli, until they finally reached Tenochtitlan is not only a mine of mythico-historical data but also a saga of true literary merit and heroic dimensions.

In the translation I am offering here, which as far as I know is the first in English, I have selected and threaded together only those texts which, in my opinion, narrate the events that directly led the Aztecs to the finding of their promised land. I have not, in any way, altered the sequence of events as they appear in the text.

A Spanish translation of the *Crónica Mexicayotl* by Adrián León was published by the UNAM in 1949. In the opinion of A. M. Garibay, León's translation "... no da al público en general la comprensión exigida, ya no solamente para aprovechar el dato escueto para la historia, pero ni siquiera la recta inteligencia del texto:"\* Nahuatl scholars who compare the two versions will discover some differences between mine and León's, and I believe that my translation will clarify a number of texts that have long puzzled them.

The original manuscript of this work is in the Bibliothèque National de Paris, M.S. #311, entitled *Crónica Mexicana*. A photocopy made by Del Paso y Troncoso is in the Archivo Histórico of the Museo Nacional de Antropología in Mexico City, in Paquete #21. A copy of this was used in the preparation of the following translation.

fo.67 Here it is told, it is recounted,

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\* A. M. Garibay, *Historia de la Literatura Náhuatl*, Porrúa, 1953.

how the ancients who were called, who were  
 named,  
 Teochichimeca, Azteca, Mexitin, Chicomoztoca,<sup>1</sup> came, arrived,  
 when they came to seek,  
 when they came to again possession of their  
 land here,  
 in the great city of Mexico Tenochtitlan. . . .  
 In the middle of the water where the cactus  
 stands,  
 where the eagle raises itself up,  
 where the eagle screeches,  
 where the eagle spreads his wings,  
 where the eagle feeds,  
 where the serpent is torn apart,  
 where the fish fly,  
 where the blue waters and yellow waters join,  
 where the water blazes up,<sup>2</sup>  
 where feathers came to be known,<sup>3</sup>  
 among the rushes, among the reeds where the  
 battle is joined,  
 where the peoples from the four directions are  
 awaited,  
 there they arrived, there they settled. . . .

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<sup>1</sup> *Teochichimeca*, "The Great Chichimecas," or the "True Chichimecas."  
*Chichimeca*, "People of Chichiman," "Place of the Dogs."  
*Azteca*, or *Aztlan tlaca*, "People of Aztlan," "Place of the Herons."  
*Mexitin*, Etymology undetermined.  
*Chicomoztoca*, "People of Chicomoztoc," "The Place of the Seven Caves."  
 The place of origin of the Aztecs and their predecessors.

<sup>2</sup> See note 28, p. 81.

<sup>3</sup> ". . . their insignias as knights . . . were two or three feathers, green or blue, bound to their hair with red ties . . . from these hung as many tassles as the number of feats and exploits they had performed in war. . . . (Durán, Vol. II p. 363; see also Durán, *The Aztecs*, p. 204.)

fo.73 They called themselves Teochichimeca, Azteca,  
Mexitin.

They brought along the image of their god,<sup>4</sup>  
the idol that they worshipped.

The Aztecs heard him speak and they answered  
him;  
they did not see how it was he spoke to them. . . .

fo.74 And after the Azteca, Mexitin sailed here from  
Aztlan,  
they arrived in Culhuacan. . . .

fo.76 They went everywhere in Culhuacan,  
in far-off Culhuacan, in Tona ichuacan or Tonallan.

All of them journeyed far —  
the people of Michoacan, kin of the Mexicans,  
and the people of Malinalco —  
for all of them came.

And when they (the Aztecs) abandoned the  
people of Michoacan,  
the men and women were amusing themselves  
in the water at a place called Pátzcuaro.

fo.77 They made off with the men's capes and breech-  
cloths  
and they took the women's skirts and *huípiles*.  
The men no longer had breechcloths;  
they went about with their bottoms bare,  
rather, they go about with their bottoms bare,  
uncovered.

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<sup>4</sup> In *tlein intlapial*, in *intlaquimilol*, lit. "that which is guarded, that which is wrapped up," a metaphor for the idol they carried on their backs in a shawl-like cloth, the way some Indian mothers carry their babies. (See *Crónica Azcatitlan*, Planches V, VI, VII; *Códice Boturini*, Plates II, IV.)

The women gave up their blouses and the men  
 became wearers of *huipiles*.<sup>5</sup>  
 In this manner they abandoned the people of  
 Michoacan.

And the reason Huitzilopochtli went off and  
 abandoned his sister, named Malinalxoch,  
 along the way,  
 that all his fathers abandoned her while she was  
 sleeping,

was because she was cruel,  
 she was very evil.

She was an eater of people's hearts,  
 an eater of people's limbs — it was her work —  
 a bewitcher of people,  
 an enchanter of people.

She put people to sleep,  
 she made people eat snakes,  
 she made people eat scorpions,  
 she spoke to all the centipedes and spiders  
 and transformed herself into a sorceress.

She was a very evil woman;  
 this was why Huitzilopochtli did not like her,  
 this was why he did not bring his sister, Mal-  
 inalxoch, with him,  
 that they abandoned (her and) all her fathers  
 while they were sleeping.

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<sup>5</sup> *Izca in imitlacauhca in michoaque: amo momaxtlatiaya, zan maxauhtinenca: zan yehuatl ic motlapachoaya incicuil, in mitoa inxicola: zan huel iuhqui in huipilli conmaquiaya . . . in cihua: zaniyo mocuetiaya, atle inhuipil catca. . . .* "These are the defects of the people of Michoacan. They (the men) only covered themselves with shirts called *xicolli* (a sleeveless jacket). They put it on like a *huipil* (over the head). . . . The women only wore skirts, they did not have *huipiles*. . . . (Cod. Mat. Acad. fo. 190 v; Cod. Flor. Book X, fo. 139 r; A & D. Book X, p. 189.)

Then the priest, Huitzilopochtli spoke,  
he addressed his fathers, called the "idol-bearers"

... he said to them,  
"O my fathers, the work that Malinalxoch does  
is not my work.

When I came forth, when I was sent here,  
I was given arrows and a shield,  
for battle is my work.

And with my belly, with my head,  
I shall confront the cities everywhere.  
I shall await the peoples from the four directions,  
I shall join battle with them,  
I shall provide people with drink,  
I shall provide people with food!<sup>6</sup>

Here I shall bring together the diverse peoples,  
and not in vain, for I shall conquer them,  
that I may see the house of jade, the house of  
gold, the house of quetzal feathers;  
the house of emeralds, the house of coral, the  
house of amethysts;  
the sundry feathers — the lovely cotinga  
feathers, the roseate spoonbill feathers, the  
trogon feathers —

all the precious feathers;  
and the *cacao* of variegated colors,  
and the cotton of variegated colors!<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Although I have translated the text as it reads, I believe that it was meant here that he will provide the gods with food and drink via the sacrifice of captives. In the *Cod Flor.* Book VI, fo. 71v. is the statement: . . . *yehautl tonatiuh inan ita mochihua, yehuatl teatlitia, tetlamaca in topan, in mictlan.* . . . "he (the warrior) becomes the mother and father of the Sun. He provides drink, he provides food for those Above and in the Region of the Dead. . . ."

<sup>7</sup> "They (the Toltecs) sowed and harvested cotton of every color. . . . Also, Quetzalcoatl possessed an abundance of bushes of *cacao* of different colors. . . ." (*Hist. Gen.* Book III, p. 279.) Chocolate was mixed with herbs and spices which altered its color.

I shall see all this,  
for in truth, it is my work,  
it was for this that I was sent here.  
And now, O my fathers, ready the provisions.  
Let us go!

Off there we are going to find it. . . !"

And when the sister of Huitzilopochtli, called  
Malinalxoch,

whom they had abandoned while sleeping,  
whom they had gone off and abandoned,  
when Malinalxoch awakened, she wept.

She said to her fathers, "O my fathers, where  
shall we go?

My brother, Huitzilopochtli, has abandoned us  
by trickery.

Where has the evil one gone?

Let us seek the land where we are to dwell. . . ."

Then they saw the mountain called Texcaltepetl;  
they established themselves upon it. . . .

fo.78 Along the way Malinalxoch became big with  
child,  
and the child of Malinalxoch, a son named Copil,  
was born.

His father's name was Chimalquauhtli;  
he was king of Malinalco. . . .

The others settled at Coatepec. . . .

The Mexicans erected their temple, the house  
of Huitzilopochtli . . .

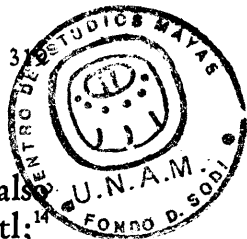
and they laid down Huitzilopochtli's ball court  
and constructed his skull-rack.

Then they blocked the ravine, the gorge.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> In *atlauhtli*, in *tlamimilolli*, the metaphor for ravine, is, literally, "the ravine, the cliff," the bottom and sides that form a ravine.





Then he sang his song,  
They all sang and danced;  
the song was called Tlaxotecayotl and also  
Tecuilhuicuicatl;<sup>14</sup>

he composed it there.

Then his fathers, the Centzonhuitznahua,<sup>15</sup>  
spoke, they said to Huitzilopochtli,  
"O priest, the work for which you came shall  
be done here.

You shall await the people,  
you shall meet in battle the people from the  
four directions,

you shall arouse the cities.

With your belly, with your head,  
and your heart, your blood, your substance,  
you shall capture them,  
that you may see what you promised us —  
the many jades, the precious stones, the gold,  
the quetzal feathers and sundry precious  
feathers,

the *cacao* of variegated colors,  
the cotton of variegated colors,  
the diverse flowers, the diverse fruits, the diverse  
riches.

For, in truth, you have founded,  
you have become the ruler of your city, here  
in Coatepec.

Let your fathers, your vassals, the Aztecs, the

<sup>14</sup> Tlaxotecayotl, "Song in the style of the people of Tlaxotlan"; Tecuilhuicuicatl, "Song of the Festival of the Lords." This was sung in Panquetzaliztli, the festival to Huitzilopochtli. (Cod. Flor., Book II, fo.83r; A & D Book II, p. 130; Hist. Gen. Vol. 1, p. 206.)

<sup>15</sup> Centzonhuitznahua, "The Four Hundred Southerners," symbolic of the innumerable stars in the southern skies whose light is obscured (killed) by the young, vigorous sun, Huitzilopochtli.



Mexicans, gather here!" the Centzonhuitznahua beseeched him.  
 Huitzilopochtli became enraged,  
 "What are you saying?" he said.  
 "Do you know?  
 Is it your work?  
 Are you greater than I?  
 I know what I must do!"  
 Then, atop the temple, his house, Huitzilopochtli  
 began to array himself.  
 When he had arrayed himself,  
 when he had arrayed himself for battle,  
 he painted his face the color of a child's excrement,<sup>16</sup>  
 he made circles around his eyes,  
 and he took up his shield. . . .  
 Then he went off;  
 he went to destroy, he went to slay his uncles,  
 the Centzonhuitznahua.  
 On the sacred ball court he devoured his uncles;  
 and his mother, she whom he took as his mother,  
 called Coyolxauhcihuatl . . .<sup>17</sup>  
 he cut off her head there and devoured her heart,  
 Huitzilopochtli devoured it. . . .  
 The Mexicans were frightened.  
 The Centzonhuitznahua had thought that the  
 city was to be there in Coatepec,

<sup>16</sup> Also called *pilnechihualli*. Blue stripes are painted across the eyes and mouth. This is thought to be an allusion to his youth, to his rôle as the young sun. (*Cod. Flor.*, A & D, Book III, p. 34; Seler, *Borgia*, Vol. I p. 55; Spence, p. 66.)

<sup>17</sup> In the myth of the birth of Huitzilopochtli, recorded in the *Madrid* and *Florentine Codices* of Sahagún, Coyolxauhqui appears as his sister. His mother is Coatlicue. *Cod. Flor.* Book III fo. ir. ff., A & D p. 1 ff.; *Cod. Mat. Pal.*, Vol. VII, fo. 132v ff.; *Hist. Gen.* Vol. I, p. 271 ff.

that Mexico was to be there,  
but Huitzilopochtli did not want it so.  
He made a hole in the dam where the water  
had been,  
and the water broke the dam.

All the bald cypresses, willows, reeds, rushes  
and water lilies withered.

All the fish, frogs, *ajolotes*, ephydrids and insects,  
and the crayfish and dragonfly larvae that lived  
in the water died . . .  
and all the birds perished.

Then Huitzilopochtli set out,  
he went off with his fathers, his vassals, the  
Mexicans. . . .

fo.80 They came, they settled behind Chapultepec in  
a place called Techcatitlan. . . .

Then Huitzilopochtli gave orders to the Mexi-  
cans . . .

he said to the idol-bearers,  
"O my fathers, wait, for you shall see,  
Wait, for I know what is to happen.

Gird yourselves, be courageous.

Gird yourselves, prepare yourselves.

We shall not dwell here,  
we shall find it (the place) off there,  
there is where we shall possess it.

Let us await those who shall come to destroy  
us. . . . !

\* \* \*

The son of Malinalxoch, sister of Huitzilopoch-  
tli, whose name was Copil, spoke, he said  
to her,

"O my mother, well I know that your brother  
is off there."

"Yes, your uncle, named Huitzilopochtli, is  
yonder," she said.

"He abandoned me,  
he abandoned me while I was sleeping,  
he abandoned me by trickery along the way.  
Then we settled here in Texcaltepeticpac."<sup>18</sup>

"Very well, O my mother," said Copil  
"I know that I must look for him in the place  
he has found contentment,

in the place he has settled.

I shall destroy him,

I shall devour him,

and I shall destroy, I shall vanquish his fathers  
and the vassals that he took with him.

Well I know all the gifts that are marked for  
him who is to see,

who is to behold the manifold riches.

And it shall be I.

Mine shall be the knowledge of all the sundry  
jades and gold,

of the quetzal feathers and the other feathers,

of the *cacao* of variegated colors,

of the cotton of variegated colors,

of the diverse flowers and diverse fruits.

O my mother, be not sad.

I go now to seek out the evil one, my uncle. . . ."

Then he came.

He arrayed himself, he adorned himself, he who  
was called Copil.

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<sup>18</sup> "On top of Texcaltepetl," "Lava Rock Mountain."

He was very evil,  
he was a greater sorcerer than his mother, Ma-  
linalxoch;

Copil was a very evil man.

He came in the year 1-House, 1285  
and in the place called Zoquitzinco he trans-  
formed himself.

Once more he came, and in the place called  
Atlapalco he transformed himself.

He came once again and in the place called  
There you shall halt  
and you shall cast away the heart of Copil."

Then Quauhtlequetzqui went off to cast away  
the heart.

When he came to the place he had described  
to him,

he saw the Mat of stone,  
and he halted there and cast away the heart;  
it fell in among the rushes, in among the  
reeds. . . .

The place where Quauhcoatl<sup>20</sup> stopped and cast  
away the heart,  
we now call Tlalcocomoco. . . .

fo.82 Then the Mexicans went to Acuezcomac,  
they passed through Huehuetlan, Atlixocan,  
Teoculhuacan, Tepetocan, Huitzilac, Culhua-  
can,  
Huixachtla, Cahualtepec, Tetlacuixomac.  
They settled in Tlapitzahuayan in the year  
2-Rabbit, 1286. . . .

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<sup>20</sup> There is some confusion as to his name. As will be seen further on, he is called "Quauhtlequetzqui, or Quauhcoatl."

In the year 11-Reed, 1295 . . . the Mexicans  
passed through Zacatla. . . .

The people of Chalco drove them out,  
they stoned them.

Once again they went to Chapultepec. . . .

Behind Chapultepec all the Tepanecas, Azca-  
potzalcas and Culhuacans,  
the Xochimilcas, Cuitlahuacas and Chalcas  
besieged the Mexicans. . . .

The Mexicans were besieged in Chapultepec in  
2-Reed, 1299.

he whom my sister, Malinalxoch, brought  
into the world?"

"Yes, I am he," Copil said,

"and I shall capture you, I shall destroy you!  
Why did you abandon my mother while she  
was sleeping?

Why did you abandon her by trickery?  
I shall slay you!"

"Very well," Huitzilopochtli said, "Come  
ahead."

They pursued each other with cunning,  
and they captured Copil in Tepetzinco.

When he was dead he (Huitzilopochtli) cut  
off his head and slashed open his chest,  
and when he had slashed open his chest, he tore  
out his heart.

Then he placed his head on top of Tepetzintli,  
which is now called Acopilco,  
and there the head of Copil died.

And after Huitzilopochtli slew him,  
he ran off with Copil's heart.

And the idol-bearer, called Quauhtlequetzqui  
came upon Huitzilopochtli.

When he encountered him, he said,

"You have wearied yourself, O priest."

"Come, O Quauhtlequetzqui," he said.

"Here is the heart of the evil one, Copil.

I have slain him.

Run with it into the rushes, into the reeds.

There you shall see the mat of stone

on which Quetzalcoatl rested when he went  
away,

and his seats, one red and one black.

fo.83 Then the Mexicans moved to Acuezcamac. . . .

Then they came, they settled in Mazatlan,

and all the Mexicans gathered in Tepetocan.

The from there they went to Culhuacan.<sup>21</sup>

Coxcoxtli was the king of Culhuacan. . . .

Then Huitzilopochtli said to the Mexicans,

"My fathers, say to Coxcoxtli, 'Where shall we  
live?' "

They addressed Coxcoxtli, they said to him,

"O lord, O king, we are beseeching you.

Where shall we go?

We have known this to be your city.

Have mercy on us with a small piece of your

land on which we may live!

Coxcoxtli replied, he said, "Very well."

He summoned his Culhuacan chiefs, he said to  
them,

"Where shall they live?"

"O lord, O king, let them go there," his chiefs  
said.

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<sup>21</sup> According to this text this was still in 1299.

Let the Mexicans live beside the mountain, here  
in Tizaapan."

The they took them, they established them in  
Tizaapan."

They advised Coxcoxtli, the king, they said,  
"O lord, O king, we have taken the Mexicans  
to Tizaapan."

"Good," Coxcoxtli said, "They are monstrous,  
they are evil.

Perhaps they will meet their end there,  
perhaps they will be devoured by the snakes,  
for it is the dwelling place of many snakes."

But the Mexicans were overjoyed when they  
saw the snakes.

They cooked them,  
they roasted them over the fire, and they ate  
them. . . .

fo.84 In the year 13-Reed 1323,  
the Mexicans had passed, had spent twenty-  
five years in Tizaapan Culhuacan.  
Then Huitzilopochtli spoke to his fathers, he  
said to them,  
"O my fathers, another person shall appear  
whose name is Yaocihuatl.<sup>22</sup>  
She is my grandmother and we shall have her.  
And hear this, O my chiefs, we are not to remain  
here.

We shall find (the place) off there.  
There is where we shall possess it. . . .  
And now gird yourselves,  
make yourselves ready,

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<sup>22</sup> "Enemy-Woman," "Woman of Discord."

for you have heard that Yaocihuatl, my grandmother, will manifest herself there.

I command that you go,  
that you ask Achitometl for his child, his daughter.

You are to ask him for his precious child,  
for I know I shall give her to you."

And then the Mexicans went off,  
they went to ask Achitometl for his daughter.  
The Mexicans spoke to him, they said,

"O my prince, O lord, O king, we your grandfathers, we your vassals, and all the Mexicans,  
pray that you grant, that you give us, your jewel, your quetzal feather,  
your daughter, our granddaughter, the princess.  
There, beside the mountain in Tizaapan she will keep guard.

Achitometl said, "Very well, O Mexicans, you may take her with you."

He gave her to the Mexicans.

They went off with the daughter of Achitometl,  
they brought her,  
they settled her in Tizaapan.

Then Huitzilopochtli spoke . . . he said to them,  
"O my fathers, I order you to slay the daughter of Achitometl and to flay her.

When you have flayed her, you are to dress a priest in her skin."

Then they slew the princess and they flayed her,  
and after they flayed her, they dressed a priest in her skin.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> "This is the same woman that henceforth the Mexicans worshipped as the mother of the gods . . . called Toci. . . ." *Duran*, Vol. II, p. 42. She was sacrificed and flayed in the festival of Ochpaniztli.



Huitzilopochtli then said,  
 "O my chiefs, go and summon Achitometl."  
 The Mexicans went off, they went to summon  
 him.  
 They said, "O our lord, O my grandson, O  
 lord, O king . . .  
 your grandfathers, the Mexicans beseech you,  
 they say,  
 "May he come to see, may he come to greet  
 the goddess.

We invite him."

Achitometl said, "Very well. Let us go."  
 He said to his lords, "Let us go to Tizaapan,  
 the Mexicans have invited us. . . ."

They took along rubber, *copal*, papers, flowers,  
 and tobacco,  
 and also what is called the "lord's food"<sup>24</sup> to  
 set down in offering before the goddess. . . .

And when Achitometl arrived in Tizaapan, the  
 Mexicans said, as they received him,  
 "You have wearied yourself, O my grandson,  
 O lord, O king.

We, your grandfathers, we, your vassals, shall  
 cause you to become ill.<sup>25</sup>

May you see, may you greet your goddess."

"Very good, O my grandfathers," he said.

He took the rubber, the *copal*, the flowers, the  
 tobacco, and the food offering,  
 and he offered them to her,  
 he set them down before the false goddess whom  
 they had flayed.

<sup>24</sup> Tlacatlaqualli; a food offering. This also could be translated as "fast food."

<sup>25</sup> These are words of welcome and should not be read literally.

**26** A spear with a barbed tip.



the white willows,  
and the white reeds and the white rushes;  
and also the white frogs, the white fish, and the  
white snakes that lived there in the water.<sup>28</sup>  
And they saw the springs that joined;  
the first spring faced east and was called Tleatl  
and Atlatlayan,  
the second spring faced north and was called  
Matlalatl and also Tozpalatl.<sup>29</sup>  
And when they saw this the old men wept.  
They said, "Perhaps it is to be here.  
We have seen what the priest, Huitzilopochtli,  
described to us  
when he sent us off.  
He said, 'In the rushes, in the reeds, you shall  
see many things'  
And now we have seen them, we have beheld  
them!  
It has come true, his words when he sent us  
off have come true!"  
Then they said,

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<sup>28</sup> The Aztecs came from *Aztlan*, "The Place of the Herons," a white aquatic bird, hence white was a symbolic color for them. Also there is an expression in Nahuatl, *noyollo iztaya*, my heart becomes white which means that one is joyful because a longed for desire has been fulfilled.

(Sullivan, T.D. *Proverbs, Conundrums and Metaphors, Estudios de Cultura Nahuatl*, UNAM, 1963, p. 121.)

<sup>29</sup> Tleatl, "Water of Fire" and Atlatlayan, "The Place Where the Walter Blazes." Matlalatl, "Blue Water" and Tozpalatl, "Yellow Water."

"Again they came upon the spring . . . and they saw that the water which had been clear and lovely the day before, that day was red. The water divided into two streams and the second stream, at the point at which it divided, was so blue and thick it was frightening. (Duran, Vol. II p. 48; almost identical, *Códice Ramírez* p. 37.)

A spring called Tozpalatl is mentioned in the Florentine Codex as located within the great ceremonial center of Tenochtitlan. (*Hist. Gen.* Vol. I, p. 241; *Cod. Flor.*, A & D, Book II, p. 178.

"O Mexicans, let us go, for we have beheld them.  
Let us await the word of the priest;  
he knows how it shall be done."

Then they came, they sojourned in Temazcal-  
titlan.

And during the night he saw him,  
Huitzilopochtli appeared to the idol-bearer,  
called Quauhtlequetzqui, or Quauhcoatl.  
He said to him, "O Quauhcoatl, you have seen  
all there is in among the reeds, in among the  
rushes,

you have beheld it.

But hear this:

There is something you still have not seen.

Go, go and look at the cactus,  
and on it, standing on it, you shall see an eagle.

It is eating, it is warming itself in the sun,  
and your hearts will rejoice,

for it is the heart of Copil that you cast away  
where you halted in Tlalcocomocco.

There it fell, where you looked, at the edge of  
the spring,

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These springs appear to be symbols for *teoatl*, *tlachinolli*, "divine liquid, fire," a metaphor for the ritualistic wars staged for the purpose of taking captives for sacrifice to the gods.

*Matlalatl* and *Tozpalatl* were considered purifying waters as, for example, in the oration on the bathing of the new born baby, the midwife says, "*Ma ximocalaqui, ma xontemo in matlalac, in toxpalac (sic): ma mitzmopapaquili, ma mitzmahaltili in tloque nahuaque*, "Enter, go down into the blue water, into the yellow water. May the Lord of all, the Supreme Lord, cleanse you, purify you. (Cod. Flor. Book VI, fo.150v.) Also, the father instructing his sons on their roles as ruler says, "... *Imac quimanilia in matlalatl, in toxpalatl, inic altilo in cuiclapilli, in atlapalli*, "In his hands he (the Lord of All) places the blue water, the yellow water with which the people are cleansed. . . , "that is, with which people are punished for their crimes. (Cod. Flor. VI, fo.71 V.)

An analysis of these concepts, too lengthy for a footnote, will appear at some future time.

among the rushes, among the reeds.  
And from Copil's heart sprouted what is now  
called *tenochtli*.<sup>30</sup>

There we shall be, we shall keep guard,  
we shall await, we shall meet the diverse peoples  
in battle.

With our bellies, with our heads,  
with our arrows, with our shields,  
we shall confront all who surround us  
and we shall vanquish them all,  
we shall make them captives,  
and thus our city, shall be established.

Mexico Tenochtitlan:

where the eagle screeches,  
where he spreads his wings,  
where the eagle feeds,  
where the fish fly,  
and where the serpent is torn apart.

Mexico Tenochtitlan!

And many things shall come to pass."

Then Quauhcoatl said to him. "Very well, oh  
priest. Your heart has granted it.  
Let all the old men, your fathers, hear."

Then Quauhcoatl gathered the Mexicans to-  
gether,  
he had them hear the words of Huitzilopochtli;  
the Mexicans listened.

And then, once more, they went in among the  
rushes, in among the reeds, to the edge of  
the spring.

And when they came out into the reeds,

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<sup>30</sup> *Opuntia ficus-indica* (L). A cactus that produces a red fruit. (Standley, Part 4, p. 886; Bravo, p. 187.)

there, at the edge of the spring, was the *tenochtli*,  
and they saw an eagle on the *tenochtli*, perched  
on it, standing on it.

It was eating something, it was feeding,  
it was pecking at what it was eating.<sup>30</sup>

And when the eagle saw the Mexicans, he bowed  
his head low.

(They had only seen the eagle from afar.)

Its nest, its pallet, was of every kind of precious  
feather —

Itztapaltemoc he transformed himself,  
and because Copil transformed himself, because  
he turned himself into a flagstone,<sup>19</sup>

it is now called, all of us call it, Itztapaltetitlan.

And after the transformation of Copil,  
after Copil had transformed himself into a flag-  
stone,

fo.81 once again he returned to his home called Tex-  
caltepeticpac;

(they now call it Malinalco because Malinalxoch  
dwelt there . . .)

Once more Copil came . . .

and in the place called Tecpantzinco he trans-  
formed himself.

But Huitzilopochtli knew him at once,  
he recognized his nephew, now grown, called  
Copil.

Then he said to his fathers,

"O my fathers, array yourselves, adorn your-  
selves,

my nephew, the evil one, is coming.

I am off.

<sup>31</sup> A serpent.

I shall destroy him, I shall slay him!"

He encountered him at the place called Te-  
petzinco,

and when he saw him, he said,

"Who are you? Where are you from?"

"It is I," he replied,

Again he spoke to him.

"Where is your home?"

"In Texcaltepeticpac," he answered.

Then Huitzilopochtli said, "Good. Are you not  
of lovely cotinga feathers, roseate spoonbill  
feathers, quetzal feathers.

And they also saw strewn about the heads of  
sundry birds,

the heads of precious birds strung together,

and some bird's feet and bones.

And the god called out to them, he said to them,

"O Mexicans, it shall be there!"

(But the Mexicans did not see who spoke.)

It is for this reason they call it Tenochtitlan.

And then the Mexicans wept, they said,

"O happy, O blessed are we!

We have beheld the city that shall be ours!

Let us go, now, let us rest. . . ."

fo.88 This was in the year 2-House, 1325.

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<sup>19</sup> Itzapaltetl.



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