

# THE RELACION DE TECUANAPA, GUERRERO

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The *Relación* of Tecuanapa and the area to its north, given below, survives only in English translation. It was included by Richard Hakluyt (1552?-1616) in his great work, *The principal navigations, voyages, and discoveries of the English nation made by sea . . .*, first published in 1589. Hakluyt, a clergyman of the Church of England, was deeply interested in geography and the discoveries of his age. His studies in those fields won for him much admiration.

The Hakluyt Society, publisher of so many early books of travel and discovery, commemorates his activities. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, but the site of his grave is unknown.

The original *relación* came into his hands probably in England, but perhaps in France where he lived 1583-88, as chaplain to the British embassy. One must assume that, like the Codex Mendoza, it was aboard some Spanish ship captured by corsairs. Although it bears no date, it was probably composed about 1580. It refers to the governor of Cacatepec [Zacaltepeque] as Raphael de Treyo [Trejo], the sixteenth century *Suma de visitas de pueblos* says "en el hijo de Rafael de Trexo" so it is certainly earlier than the *Suma*.

The reason why this *relación* alone survives, for it is difficult to believe that there were not others in the supposed captured ship, is not far to seek: Unlike most *relaciones*, it contains information of very considerable interest to English sailors and those planning English expansion. Englishmen were still hoping to discover the "northwest passage" believed to unite

the Atlantic and Pacific oceans and so provide a short route to Asia, and it was widely believed that the western (Pacific) end would prove easiest to find. Accordingly, English sailors were interested in voyaging along the northern Pacific shores of America. Indeed, this was one of the objectives of Drake's famous circumnavigation of the world in 1578-81. Data on harbours such as Tecuanapa, which were both remote from urban centers and possessing facilities for the repair or building of ships were the kind of information English sailors most wanted.

If, as seems probable, this was one of several *relaciones* which fell into the hands of corsairs, one fears that the others were neither translated nor saved because they contained no information of interest to sailors. At least no such material exists among the Hakluyt papers preserved in the Bodleian Library of Oxford University.

As Hakluyt's spelling and sentence construction are a little difficult, particularly for those without a complete mastery of English, I have taken the liberty of modernizing spelling throughout and sentence construction in a few places. All matter between brackets are my additions. For the most part these are corrections of spellings of place names, but I have also added headings to help the reader follow the description by river drainages.

The present *relación* in part supplements those of *Cuabuitlan y su partido* and *Xalapa y su partido*, as well as the *Suma de visitas de pueblos* published by F. del Paso y Troncoso in *Papeles de Nueva España*, Ser. 2, vol. 4, pp. 155-62 and 252-66, and vol. 1. These are referred to henceforward as *Relación de Cuabui-*

*tlan, Relación de Xalapa* and *Suma de Visitas* respectively.

The various references in our *relación* to Niciécan language and Indians are puzzling. I have thought it possible that this is a misreading of the word Misteca, which nowhere appears in the *relación*. Certainly the term must refer to some Mixtec dialect. The Ayacasteca language spoken at Igualapa, together with Amusgan and Niciécan, presents another problem. The language is also mentioned in *Relación de Xalapa* as spoken at Igualapa and Ometepec.

Our *relación* says that Tlapanec was the language of Cuahuitlan; the *Relación de Cuahuitlan* says it was Mixtec speaking; *Relación de Xalapa* says the inhabitants spoke the Quahu[i]teca language. *Relación de Cuahuitlan* is probably correct for the town appears to be too far east to be Tlapanec speaking.

Many of the towns discussed in this *relación* are located in the map of the Mixtec area in Barbro Dahlgren de Jordan — *La Mixteca, su cultura e historia prehispánicas*, a most excellent study of the Mixteca.

I am much indebted to Ing. Roberto Weitlaner for advice and for a sketch map of the area locating known sites, and to Mr. J. P. Elsdén, of Saffron Walden, England, who kindly redrew and relettered that map with additions.

## THE RELACION

*A relation of the haven of Tecuanapa, a most convenient place for building ships, situated on the South sea, not far from Nicaragua, which was sent to the Viceroy of Mexico or to the king of Spain, in*

*which are described the rivers of Ometepec, Tlacamama and Tlacolula falling into the said haven, with the towns, people, and mountains adjacent to the said rivers and other things fit for the building and provisioning of ships*

The port and small harbour of Techuanapa [Tecuanaapa] has in the dry summer season less than a fathom of water in the channel at low tide and a fathom and a half at high tide; in the rainy season with the increase of water from inland it has three fathoms and more. It lies toward the west and there the bishoprics of Guaxacan and Tlarcali [Tlaxcala]. From there toward the point called Punta de Intla [Cintla] and Dordaci there is a bay two leagues distant, in which, although it is no special harbour, ships may come and ride there in an extremity, as they have done in times past. This bay on the right hand toward the north makes a lake, somewhat large towards the middle of the channel and in some parts deep, especially on the side of Cuahintla [Quahuitlan], but it is shallow on either side. As you pass between the sea and certain great and large [long?] woods<sup>1</sup> of orange trees and other trees which grow along the coast which are of no great breadth, all the country appears very open. However, on the side of Cuhintla [Quahuitlan] the mountains have many creeks and a small lake called Tulaningo [Tulancingo?], and the country is impassable unless you take the way between the sea and the end of this lake which may be about two leagues of sandy way. And on the north side there is another small creek. Going by the sands side, you come after a quarter of a league to the way

<sup>1</sup> "Great and large." Probably *large* is a mistranslation of *largos*.

that leads to Quacapotla [Quauhzapotla], a mansion [estancia?] of Intla [Cintla].

### [THE OMETEPEC DRAINAGE]

The Ometepec river, the chief river which flows into this haven, has its beginning in the mountains of Xicayan de Tover [Tovar], about twenty-four leagues from this haven, originating from several streams which flow from the mountains of Cacatepec [Zacaltepeque] and below a town called Suchistlahuaca a little more than three leagues [where] all the streams join together. And from that place you may pass down to the sea in canoes and lighters, and you might come farther were it not for falls and rapids between two great rocks from Cocahulapa, a mansion [estancia?] of Ometepec as far as Yanguitla; also a mansion of Ometepec. These inconveniences, which I judge to extend about a league, being passed, the river is more navigable, so that you sail for about twelve leagues. Along those twelve leagues and at about a league and a half from the water side and in many other parts of the same river there are great quantities of trees such as grow in hot lands and which are suitable for ship's timber, such as huber [?] trees and Suchicuhitil, from which the people of Nicaragua make great profit. There are also white oaks and Tehegurtes [?] in great quantity and many other kinds of timber, and in the mountains there are fir trees, oaks, and cork trees, which may easily be carried down the river because they may be cut some two to five leagues from the river and brought to the water's edge with the service and help of those dwelling in the towns thereabouts.

At the source of these streams where the river begins is the town called Xicaian, belonging to the heirs of Francis de Tover [Tovar] y de Guillen, containing about three hundred and fifty Indians of rude speech and little policy,<sup>2</sup> and more or less twenty-four leagues from the sea, The place itself is hot although the mountains round about are cold.

A little from this is the town of Aionapa [Ayo-zinapa] possessed by the heirs of Pérez Gómez, having in it about three hundred Indians of the same speech and quality. The country is more subject to heat than to cold, although it is near cold country and mountains. It is distant from Xicaian de Tover four leagues and from the sea twenty leagues.

The town of Suchistlahuaca is six leagues downward toward the south on the same river; the inhabitants are of the same speech and qualities. It is in the charge of Gonzalvo Fernández, a citizen of Mexico, has about one hundred and fifty Indians and is fifteen leagues from the sea.

From this town to the town of Ometepec there are six leagues. The place is very hot and in the same government and lies one league from the river between hills. He and his followers have under them about seven hundred Indians who speak the Ayacastecan, Amusgan, and Niciecan tongues. It is nine leagues from the sea.

From this town to Ihualpa are two long leagues. It is governed by the heirs of Lawrence de Castro, of the same climate and the people use the said language[s], and are of the like stature. It lies three

<sup>2</sup> *Relación de Xalapa* gives the languages as Mixtec and Amusgan. Policy meant form of government when Hakluyt wrote.

leagues from the river and ten leagues from the sea.

These are the best towns and those with the best commerce on the coast. The Indians are rich with cacao and food supplies, and the Indians of Niciecan principally trade in these towns, and in the town of Ihualapa the chief *aguacil* of the province resides for most of the year.

### [THE TLACOLULA DRAINAGE]

More lowe beneath [lower downstream] the river of Tlacolula, about a league or a league and a half from the town of Ometepec is the town called Pio which used to be a town of Tlacolula and was a frontier town against the Mexicans. There are in it about fifty Indians of the ancient inhabitants. One Grauiel de Chiauez [Gabriel de Chávez?], a citizen of Mexico, has the government. It is four leagues from Ihualpa and six leagues from the sea.

A little below is the town of Huehuatlan [Huehuetlan] in the same government. It has ten Indians. It stands on high hills a league from the river and five leagues from the sea.

One league from this town stands the town of Cuahcapotla [Quauhzaputla], a mansion [estancia?] of Antla or Intla [Cintla]. It has fifteen Indians and stands a league and a half from the river and four leagues from the river mouth.

At the sources of the rest of the streams is the town of Cacatepec [Zacaltepeque] in the government of Raphael de Trejo [Trejo]. He and his tenants have under them some seven hundred Indians of Niciecan. It is some twenty-two leagues from the sea.

## [THE TLACAMAMA DRAINAGE]

The river called Tlacamama comes from the mountains of Atoyaque and Amusgos which are some seventeen leagues from the sea. There it makes a formed river so big that it is navigable to the sea with canoes and lighters. I say from a little below Tolistlahuaca, a mansion of Xicaian. For eight months of the year it is navigable, but not the other four because the sands of the plains soak and drink up the water so much that there remains so little and there is no passage. However, timber may be brought down this river in small lighters one league from the place where it is cut to the place I have spoken of, where bigger vessels may be built, for nearby various streams unite to form an important river. It has near it the mountains of Atoyaque, Cacatepec [Zacaltepeque] and Amusgos many woods of pine, cork and oak of great size, and below these mountains, in the warm country, near the rivers, there is much timber of those kinds which I mentioned above as being near the Ometepec river. These may easily be cut and carried down to Tecuanapa in the time specified above.

This river also has towns adjacent to it. The first, at the foot of the mountains is the town of Atoyaque belonging to the king and to the heirs of Pronetto [Pedro Nieto]. Their language is Niciécan. It has about two hundred Indians. The country is hot and the people politic. It is fifteen leagues from the sea.

One league from this town is the town of Xicaian, also belonging to the king and to the heir of Pronetto [Pedro Nieto]. It has by account three hundred Indians. They are Niciécan people and very good-looking. It is hot country. The vicar and Justice reside there.



It is a league and a half from the river and fourteen leagues from the sea.

One league from this town is situated the mansion of Pinotespan [Pinotecpa la chica],<sup>3</sup> subject to Tututepec. With the manors subject to it it has five hundred Indians. It is fourteen leagues from the sea.

Two leagues from this town and one from Xicayan and thirteen from Tecuanapa and three from the river is the town of Tlacamama. It contains some hundred Indians who are very handsome and politique. It belongs to the king.

More toward the south and two leagues from this town is Pinotespan [Pinotecpa] del Rey. It is five leagues from the river and fourteen from the sea. The town contains about one hundred Indians like the former. They are handsome, but of slow speech. They are wealthy because they make great quantities of salt. For they have a lake in which salt grows under the water (a thing repugnant to nature that two contraries grow and are preserved together). They extract it by breaking it with stones upon the ground under the water.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> There are two towns called Pinotecpa or Pinoteca in this region as Barbro Dahlgren de Jordan has made clear. The *Suma de Visitas* confirms that Pinotecpa la Chica was subject to Tututepec and that its lands joined those of Xicayan. The second Pinotecpa is differentiated by the addition of the words *del rey*. This is supported by the words *en su magestad* which appear against the name of the town in the *Suma de Visitas*.

<sup>4</sup> The *Suma de Visitas* places Pinotecpa del Rey at three leagues from the sea; the *Relación de Cuahuítlan* at seven leagues. The distance here given as fourteen leagues is surely much too great. The *Relación de Cuahuítlan* also refers to the salt industry here, but with a different process: "En el pueblo de Pinotecpa se coxen sal en salinas que se seca naturalmente, y también se haze, con fuego del agua de algunas lagunas que se cuaxa con la calor del fuego: esto es en poca cantidad, pero podría ser en mucha . . ." The lagoon is marked on the map of the *Relación de Cuahuítlan*.

It has also the town of Amusgos which is in the government of Fernando de Avila, perhaps eighteen leagues from Tecuanapa. It has four hundred Indians more or less and they speak the Amusgan tongue. The country is hot and stands on the highway from Nicieca.

These are all the towns of any account situated near this river.

Near this river are two farms, one belonging to Pedro Bravo, the other to him who makes this relation to your excellency. These are perhaps eight or nine leagues from the sea, all flat country. In this territory there is only one town. Called Quesala, it is situated on the river, six leagues from the sea, and three leagues from the farms. In times past it was a great town, but now it has only three Indians.<sup>5</sup>

The mansion house of Don Mattheo is more toward the south, in a mountainous waste land abounding with cattle.<sup>6</sup> It is three leagues from the river, and as far from Tecuanapa as from the place where all the cattle are, and the sea that way is distant only a league.

A little below this mansion, about four leagues, is an orchard of Alonzo Pedraza which yields cacao. It is seven leagues from the sea. The town of Cuahuitlan [Quahuitlan] is two leagues from this orchard and six [?] leagues from the sea. It is a town of nineteen households and belongs to the king. It is very rich for they gather much cacao, the best in

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<sup>5</sup> Quesala appears on the map attached to the *Relación de Cuahuitlan*. It lies due north of Cuahuitlan and west of Pinotepac.

<sup>6</sup> "La estancia de don Mateo" is marked on the map of the *Relación de Cuahuitlan* a short distance east of Cuahuitlan. The text informs us that Don Mateo is the son-in-law of Tristán de Arellano who originally settled the area.

that country. They speak the Tlapanec tongue.<sup>7</sup> This town hath the sea that way within half a league.

This coast from Cuahintlan [Quahuitlan] to Tecuanapa and the coast which continues to Huatulco [Guatulco] is a coast of much pearl, for in old times the Indians gathered much pearl there.

Two leagues from Cuahintlan [Quahuitlan] and four from Tecuanapa is an orchard of cacao in the lands of Francisco Maldonado which is called Cacahu-Atoyaque.

These are the things worth relating from the head waters of this River Tlacamama to the sea, and this river enters into the Ometepec river five leagues from Tecuanapa.

#### [THE TLACOLULA DRAINAGE]

The river of Tlacolula rises within the boundaries of Chilsiztlahuaca, subject to Comastlahuaca, a town of Suchistlahuaca, near which are many mountains. This river is navigable for little more than two leagues above where it joins the river of Ometepec, five leagues from the sea.

Close by is the town of Tlacolula, already mentioned, and three leagues from it is the town of Azoyoque,<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> As noted in the introduction, it seems doubtful that Tlapanec extended so far east along the coast. The *Relación de Cuahuitlan* has it Mixtec speaking; and the *Relación de Xalapa* says it was Quahu[i]teca speaking. Note that the town is first said to be six leagues from the sea, but a few lines later, only half a league from the sea.

<sup>8</sup> Azoyoque is the present-day Azoyú, in which were found twenty-five years ago the two fragmentary Tlapanec codices called Azoyú I and II. (Salvador Toscano — *Los códices tlapanecas de Azoyú*. Cuadernos Americanos, Mexico, 1943, no. 6.) Toscano notes Tlapanec towns given in hieroglyphs, but all seem to be outside the area covered in the present *relación*. Indeed, these two codices are believed to have originated elsewhere, in Tlapa itself. However, the fact that Azoyoque is called in our *relación* "an old manor of Tlapa" emphasizes its close connection with Tlapa and strengthens the belief that Tlapanec was the principal language of the town, and suggests how the

an old manor of Tlapa. The town of Chilsiztlahuaca has only three Indians; the town of Azoyoque has more than three hundred. But because in this haven must be the building of ships, the Province[s] of Talpa [Tlapa] and Tututepec may stand them in great stead, the Province of Tututepec being neighbour to the river of Tlacamama, and the Province of Tlapa elagues from Tecuanapa. It has four hundred Indians to the river of Tlacolula, for they may, as I have said, carry the timbers in lighters or rafts down the rivers, and may use the Indians in the towns thereabouts to fell and draw the wood out of the mountains in the cold zone, for in the warm zone most of the land is flat. Accordingly, the timber may be transported with very few men and oxen to the place of embarkation.

Flat-bottom boats and canoes can come to the towns thereabouts to load food supplies, for they have already come by that river to the road [ensenada] of Ometepec, and loaded supplies at the mansion of Don Mattheo and at the farms. This was at the time when His Majesty settled the plains between these rivers, an empty region, well furnished with water and pasture, free from any danger and sufficient to support twenty manors as the description here given makes clear.

This small harbour of Tecuanapa seems very commodious for building ships by reason of the great abundance of mountains full of good timber, the serviceable rivers, and the good local food sources.

The desire of the maker of this relation has been to serve your excellency with zeal, and he desires that the Lord God may give you every success.

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two codices may have found their way there. In the map I have followed the intermediary spelling Azoyuc given in the *Abecedario de las visitas*.