

THE CODEX OF SAN CRISTOBAL AND SANTA MARIA: A FALSE TECHIALOYAN

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The codex of San Cristóbal Tezcalucan and Santa María Magdalena Chichicaspa was presented as evidence in a land dispute before the Audiencia of New Spain in 1703. While the Audiencia considered it fraudulent and ordered it burned, a translation and description was fortunately made and is preserved among the records of this case. It is located in Volume 1798 of the Ramo de Tierras of the Archivo General de la Nación.

Modern San Cristóbal Tezcalucan and Santa María Magdalena Chichicaspa are both small towns, situated in the municipio of Huixquilucan, State of Mexico. According to the 1960 census, the population of San Cristóbal is 573; that of Chichicaspa is 1,044. In both, the indigenous component is Otomi, and, in fact, a considerable amount of Otomi is still spoken in these towns and their environs.

The codex, which was translated and described in 1703, contained 16 leaves, of which 4 were text and 12, pictorial. The text was written in Nahuatl, as were the descriptions in the pictorial section. It was concerned with the land titles of these towns, and the delineation of their respective holdings. According to the text, one Don Miguel de Santa María Chimalpopoca was sent to Tezcalucan from Tacuba in August, 1555 in order to prepare a description of their lands. The document states that there had been much confusion in land holdings since the time of the conquest, and that a delegation of officials from the town had

earlier appealed to Viceroy Mendoza to confirm their titles. By recording these in the form of a document, Don Miguel's chore, in the presence of all those concerned, including the people of Huixquilucan where the parish was situated, the document expresses the idea that it will serve, by having such matters clarified, to avoid future confusion and litigation. The text goes on to say that when it was finished, Viceroy Luis Velasco gave his approval to it. Thereupon, follows a description of the lands:

<i>page</i>	<i>Name of Tract</i>	<i>Amount of land by cordeles.</i>
Fol. 5 R	Texcalteticpac	400
Fol. 5 V	Atlanmani	800
Fol. 6 R	Ytzatlanu	300
Fol. 6 V	Totomochio	800
Fol. 7 R	Cacalotepec	1200
	Tepetlyzintla	
	Tetitlan	
	Tepetlapa	
Fol. 7 V	Yzatlantotimonco	400
	Yzcuintla	2000
	Pouhtla	
	Natzoyatlan	
Fol. 8 R	Tequantitlan	
Fol. 8 V	Tlilzoquiapan	300
Fol. 9 V	Texcalteticpac	
Fol. 12 R	Mernetlan	800
Fol. 12 V	Tlamayan	300
Fol. 13 V	Atzitzincuilco	
Fol. 14 R	Atlihuetzi	160
Fol. 14 V	Ahuaquauhtitlan	400
Fol. 15 R	Tetzmolitlan	300
	Mazatlan	
Fol. 15 V	Tepetlapan	800
	Tlahuitzca	

	Tepechpan	
	Hueytlatzintla	
Fol. 16 R	Tototlan	300
	Atlahueytec	
Fol. 16 V	Tlachichilco	400

The paraje of Tequantitlan (Fol. 8 R) was included within the paraje of Ytzatlan, and pertained to the people of Axoxochcan. The lands of Tlamayan (Fol. 12 V) belonged to the barrio of Hueytlattoc. Atzitzincuilco (Fol. 13 V) was the source of water. Atlhuetzi (Fol. 14 R) pertained to Tlachichilco (Fol. 16 V), which, in turn, belonged to Santa María Magdalena Chichicarpa. The parajes of Tototlan and Atlahueytec (Fol. 16 R) also pertained to Santa María. All of the others listed presumably pertained to Tezcalucan.

In the codex, the pages of land descriptions were illustrated with pictorial representations of mountains and meadows, rivers and rocks, trees and wooded areas, magueys, reeds, flocks of birds, a lion, crows and deer. Fields were shown planted and plowed. One page contained a church with its lands; another, a church and some houses. There were depictions of men—standing idle, seated, conversing, fishing.

The other pages contained representations of important historical personages. Chimalpopoca, King of Tacuba, and "Acolnahuaca," King of Azcapotzalco are shown together (Fol. 9 R), the one with a batón and shield, the other with a *macana*. Don Alonso and Don Martín Chimalpopoca appear on Fol. 10 V, and are mentioned as having once governed the towns. The founders of Huixquilucan and conquerers of San Cristóbal, Manuel, Salvador, and Miguel "Totocua-

huatzin” are depicted on Fol. 11 R. The founders and lords of Santa María Magdalena Chichicaspa, Lucas Chimalpopoca and his wife María Tezozomoc, are shown on the following page.

As described, the codex of San Cristóbal and Santa María seems unquestionably to have been done in the Techialoyan manner. Much has been written about the Techialoyans and a number of them have been described or translated. They are land title documents, whose primary purpose seems to have been the description of village land tracts. Usually, they are composed of a few pages of Nahuatl text plus a pictorial section, and are quite distinctive stylistically. They are quite uniform as to form and content, and so strikingly similar in art style and epigraphy that they could have been done by the same hand. Many of them indicate that their titles were confirmed by Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza, and either imply or state directly the date of this occurrence. The dates in some, however, are earlier than Mendoza’s arrival in New Spain, a fact which challenges the veracity of the group as being early post-conquest documents, and the reliability of the group as being bona fide land titles. In addition, they may also be rejected on stylistic grounds as being even relatively early post-conquest documents. When they were done, by whom, and for what explicit purpose has yet to be established. Robertson considers them forgeries, and suggests a date “after 1640-80 and before c. 1733.”¹ Actually, he feels that the early “eighteenth century would be more compatible with the artistic style of the paintings and

¹ Robertson, Donald. *The Techialoyan Codex of Tepotzotlan: Codex X* (Rylands Mexican Ms. I). p. 123.

also with the statement of Barlow's that some of the persons recorded in the genealogy of García Granados, Techialoyan Codex Q, lived as much as six generations after the conquest of 1521.² Insofar as the codex of San Cristóbal and Santa María existed in 1703 and seems to have been a land title document stylistically Techialoyan, it does serve to provide a probable *terminus ante quem* date for the group.

When the codex of San Cristóbal and Santa María was made, however, is another question—probably unanswerable. That it was a fraudulent document, fabricated for the purpose of the pending litigation, seems evident from the action of the Audiencia, based upon the evidence in the case. If this were a Techialoyan, then it would resolve the question of the origin of the Techialoyan group. From this point of view, fraudulent or not, it is an interesting manuscript.

There is a Techialoyan codex from Huixquilucan, the cabecera to which both San Cristóbal Tezcalucan and Santa María Magdalena Chichicaspa were subject. There are also Techialoyan codices from nearby municipios, such as Cuauhjimalpa, Totolapa, Xonacatlán, etc. A comparison with the codex of Huixquilucan³ indicates that many of the facts of the two are in conflict. In fact, the disagreements between the Huixquilucan codex and that of its two small subjects are considerable. In the matter of lands claimed, the codex of San Cristóbal and Santa María indicates their holdings to total 9,640 cordeles of land, distributed among more than two dozen named tracts. In the Huixquilucan codex, however, the combined holdings of the

² *ibid.* p. 122.

³ Harvey, H. R. *The Techialoyan Codices: The Codex Hemenway.* in press.

two towns total only 2000 cordeles. Insofar as Ahuaquatla of the Huixquilucan codex might be equated with Ahuaquauhtitlan of the San Cristóbal codex, and Tequantepec with Tequantitlan, an additional 500 to 1700 cordeles could be added to the Huixquilucan codex total as the case might be. In either instance, the difference in the amount of lands claimed is considerable.

The codex of San Cristóbal and Santa María purports to have been made in 1555, and to have received the approval, as a document, of Viceroy Luis Velasco. In contrast, the Huixquilucan codex alleges that its land grant was made by Mendoza in 1534. From the phrasing, it would appear that the draftsmen of the codex of San Cristóbal and Santa María might well have desired to convey the point in their text, albeit implicitly, that while Mendoza was confronted by the townspeople with the matter of confirming their titles, this confrontation did not result in the production of a title document during his reign.

All things considered, it seems improbable that the two codices could have been made under the same auspices. The Huixquilucan codex in all details pertains to the Techialoyan group, and reflects the motives, whatever they were, of the Techialoyan designers. The attribution of the land grant to Velasco, such an important departure from Techialoyan practice, would strongly suggest that it was not made by the Techialoyan makers, but rather was an attempt to copy them. It is, therefore, a fraud not only as a land title document as determined by the Audiencia, but also in terms of the other Techialoyans.