

PASTE-OVER ILLUSTRATIONS IN THE DURAN CODEX OF MADRID

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The manuscript Codex of Fray Diego de Durán, "Historia de los Yndios de N[ueva España] y Yslas y Tierra Firme," in the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid contains pre-Hispanic history of the Aztecs, an account of their rites, feasts and ceremonies, and a version of the 18-month calendar.¹ The author of this article was able to examine it at some length in March of 1965 during a year's research trip to Europe.² The original manuscript was compared with the published editions. This confirmed earlier doubts of the usefulness of these editions. Peculiarities discovered in some of the illustrations in the original, not to be seen in the reproduction, prompted this note.

Until now publication of the illustrations has been essentially the lithographs made for Ramírez. These were published as the *Atlas de Durán*, but since this was not a photographic edition, our knowledge of the illustrations even after this publication was still somewhat limited.³ In the publication the many vignettes scattered throughout the text were gathered together on

¹[Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid,] No. 40 in Octavio Paz, *Catálogo de manuscritos de América en Madrid*, Madrid, 1933.

²Later it was sent to New City to be exhibited in the Spanish Pavilion of the World's Fair. I wish to thank the Guggenheim Foundation, Social Science Research Council, and U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (NDEA-related Fulbright-Hays Award) for support permitting me to examine at first hand Mexican pictorial manuscripts in European archives, libraries, and museums during the academic year 1964-1965 while on leave from Tulane University.

³See Fray Diego Duran, *Historia de las Indias de Nueva España y Islas de Tierra Firme*, Mexico, 1867-1880, 2 vols. and *Atlas*. The original Atlas plates

individual plates (*láminas*) so that their relation to the text is not precisely determinable, and significant elements such as the elaborate frames are eliminated completely. More reliable reproductions with color are to be found for an extremely limited number of the illustrations in a few scattered publications.⁴ It is because of this inadequate publication history that the physical composition of the illustrations is not well known and their relation to the text unsure.

Observation in Madrid showed that, in many in-

have been rebound with a new title page as: *Atlas de la Historia de las Indias de Nueva España y Islas de Tierra Firme*, Mexico, Echaniz, 1963. The Atlas has also been reproduced in a smaller format in Mexico by Editora Nacional in 1951. See also Alfredo Chavero, *Historia antigua y de la conquista* in Vicente Riva Palacio, ed., *México a través de los siglos*, Mexico and Barcelona, n.d., t. 1, and Doris Heyden and Fernando Horcasitas, eds., *Aztecs: the History of the Indies of New Spain*, New York, Orion Press, 1964.

⁴ Colored photographic reproductions from the original Madrid Codex are as follows: Irwin R. Blacker, *Cortes and the Aztec Conquest* (A Horizon Caravel Book), New York, American Heritage Publishing Co. and Harper & Row, 1965,

- pp. 10-11, Folio 197 r. (Tratado 1º, Lámina 27, Capº. 69);
- pp. 32-33, Folio 202 r. (Tratado 1º, Lámina 27, Capº. 71);
- pp. 36-37, Folio 152 r. (Tratado 1º, Lámina 18, Capº. 52);
- pp. 94-95, Folio 213 v. (Tratado 1º, Lámina 30, Capº. 76);
- pp. 106-107, Folio 219 v. (Tratado 1º, Lámina 31, Capº. 78).

Agustín Velázquez Chávez, *Tres siglos de pintura colonial mexicana*, Mexico, Editorial Polis, 1939, [Plate] I, Folio 37 r. (Tratado 1º, Lámina 6, Capº. 12). It is to be noted that only two of these plates have frames of any degree of elaboration. The one published in Blacker, pp. 36-37, as the Duran frames and framing elements go, is not a significant one. The other, Velázquez Chávez, [Plate] I, is thus the only example of elaborate Renaissance (or better Mannerist) framing elements in the Codex Duran to be published as of this writing.

Black and white photographic reproductions from the original Madrid Codex are as follows:

Blacker, *op cit.*, p. 35, Folio 208 v. (Tratado 1º, Lámina 29, Capº. 74) and pp. 126-127, Folio 216 v. (Tratado 1º, Lámina 30, Capº. 77).

Fernando Horcasitas, "La prosa Náhuatl," in *Esplendor del México Antiguo*, México, Centro de Investigaciones Antropológicas de México, 1959, to. 1, pp. 199-210:

stances, the illustrations of the present Codex are cut from an older manuscript and pasted on to their present positions on the pages of the Madrid Codex.⁵ In some instances the "cut-out" illustrations have a fragment of prose in Spanish on their reverse.⁶ This older prose as of now has not been collected with the text of the Codex of Durán, because the fragmentary prose is only preserved on the reverse face of the paste-overs where they are attached to the present Codex. The pages of the Codex also have text, so the usual pattern of paste-over "palimpsests" is as follows:

r. <u>illustration</u>	Paste-over
v. earlier prose	
r. <u>blank</u>	Codex page
v. later text	

It will be extremely difficult to photograph the reverse of the paste-over or to read the earlier prose unless sometime in the future the paste-over can be detached for the purpose and then be replaced.

The published lithographic reproductions show through a series of otherwise meaningless lines and boundaries of areas within single compositions that they are often composed of several discrete units. The

p. 202, fig. 3, Folio 227 v. (Tratado 1º, Lámina 32),

p. 204, fig. 4, Folio 278 v. (Tratado 2º, Lámina 8, Capº. 13, fig. a),

p. 206, fig. 5, Folio 152 r. (Tratado 1º, Lámina 18, Capº. 52),

p. 207, fig. 6, Folio 149 v. (Tratado 1º, Lámina 18, Capº. 51),

p. 210, fig. [7], Folio 1 v. (First illustration) and Folio 2 r. (Tratado 1º, Lámina 1, Capº. 1).

⁵ For purposes of simplification we will use the following somewhat arbitrary vocabulary: Fragments of the text of the older *manuscript* will be referred to as *fragments of prose* or *prose* in contrast to the *text* of the later Madrid *Codex*. The word *publication* is self-explanatory and refers to the *Atlas de Durán*.

⁶ Some of the paste-overs have become partly unglued at the corners. In other cases ink stain traces of prose can be seen through the paper of the paste-overs.

lithographs do not show explicitly, however, that these are separate pieces of paper pasted together to make a unit out of sometimes unrelated parts. It is to be noted that in general the paste-overs occur in the Second and Third *Tratados* concerning the feasts and the calendar.⁷

The paste-over illustrations begin with Folio 225 r., where the picture once pasted on is now missing; thus there is no reference to it in the *Atlas*. This Folio has no text, so the subject of the missing illustration cannot be identified. This is followed by another paste-over illustration of "Tenochtitlán" on Folio 227 v. (*Tratado* 1^o, Lámina 32).⁸ Paste-overs follow from here to the end of the Codex. In addition to the one now missing on Folio 225 r., another on Folio 287 ([*Tratado* 2^o, Cap^o. 16]) was lost before the Ramírez copy and the lithographs were made; the picture was of "Toçì" according to the text. Another missing illustration was once on Folio 316 r. just before the beginning of the section on the calendar.

The paste-over illustrations in *Tratado* 3^o dealing with the 18-month calendar consist of single pieces of paper. In some cases they were placed so high on the page that some of the top was cut off when the Codex was bound, mutilating figures and scenery.⁹

⁷ In the published *Atlas* additional illustrations not present in the Madrid Codex have been added at the end. These are from Codex Ixtlilxochitl. While adding these extraneous data, the lithographs of the edition unfortunately omit elements present in both the original and Ramírez' copy, now in the Archivo Histórico of the Museo Nacional de Antropología in México. See Note 4 *supra*.

⁸ Foliation given is of the Madrid Codex, followed by the identification as given on the lithographed plates made for Ramírez in parentheses. See Note 3 *supra*.

⁹ Folio 327 r. (*Tratado* 3^o, Lámina 3, 2^o Mes); Folio 330 r. (*Tratado* 3^o, Lámina 3, 5^o Mes); Folio 333 v. (*Tratado* 3^o, Lámina 4, 7^o Mes); Folio 340 r.

All of the other illustrations in this section were pasted on sideways and escaped being cropped in binding except for four, pasted on the bottom of their pages, which also did not suffer appreciable damage.¹⁰

Paste-overs are sometimes composite—made of fragments cut so that they will fit together more as parts and fragments of now lost larger designs than complete unified compositions. Folio 231 r. (Tratado 2º, Lámina 2, Capº. 2, fig. A) is one of the most elaborate, composed of seven fragments on separate pieces of paper. Folio 228 r. (Tratado 2º, Lámina 1, Capº. 1, fig. A) shows a king in his litter associated with figures in six caves, whereas Folio 230 r. (Tratado 2º, Lámina 1, Capº. 1, fig. B), another paste-over, shows figures in a single cave, clearly part of a larger design. The seven cave figures appearing in two different illustrations may have come from an earlier design showing the seven caves of Chicomoztoc. One of these composite paste-overs consists of a central scene flanked by more or less symmetrical units almost suggesting the “supporters” of heraldry; for example, see Folio

(Tratado 3º, Lámina 5, 14º Mes); Folio 342 r. (Tratado 3º, Lámina 6, 16º Mes); and Folio 343 v. (Tratado 3º, Lámina 6, 18º Mes). In addition one paste-over at the bottom of a page was damaged: Folio 340 v. (Tratado 3º, Lámina 5, 15º Mes).

¹⁰ Illustrations pasted on sideways are as follows:

- Folio 328 r. (Tratado 3º, Lámina 3, 3º Mes),
- Folio 329 r. (Tratado 3º, Lámina 3, 4º Mes),
- Folio 31 v. (Tratado 3º, Lámina 4, 6º Mes),
- Folio 333 v. (Tratado 3º, Lámina 4, 8º Mes),
- Folio 335 r. (Tratado 3º, Lámina 4, 9º Mes),
- Folio 336 r. (Tratado 3º, Lámina 5, 10º Mes),
- Folio 339 r. (Tratado 3º, Lámina 5, 13º Mes).

Undamaged illustrations pasted at the bottom of their pages:

- Folio 325 v. (Tratado 3º, Lámina 2, 1º Mes),
- Folio 337 r. (Tratado 3º, Lámina 5, 11º Mes),
- Folio 338 r. (Tratado 3º, Lámina 5, 12º Mes),
- Folio 342 v. (Tratado 3º, Lámina 6, 17º Mes).

235 r. (Tratado 2^o, Lámina 2, Cap^o. 2, fig. C). This pattern appears commonly in the earlier pages of the Codex where the illustration is painted directly on the same page with the text and is not a paste-over. Folios 29 r. (Tratado 1^o, Lámina 5, Cap^o. 10) and 155 r. (Tratado 1^o, Lámina 19, Cap^o. 53) are the first and last examples in this first section, although the flanking supporters are not reproduced in the Ramírez edition. Other examples of fragments of earlier compositions pasted together to make a single illustration include Folio 235 r. (Tratado 2^o, Lámina 2, Cap^o. 2, fig. C) and Folio 236 r. (Tratado 2^o, Lámina 4, Cap^o. 2, fig. D).

The Madrid Codex is most probably the oldest complete text remaining to us, but the assumption that some of its illustrations derive from an older version it cannibalizes is almost inescapable. This hypothesis would have an earlier manuscript copied up to the end of the First Tratado. At that point illustrations were no longer copied but cut out of the earlier manuscript and re-used *after* the prose had been copied. This can be explained, hypothetically, as the result of lack of interest in the pictures, pressure of time, or the loss of a competent artist-copyist. Still another possibility is that Tratado 1^o is the original manuscript and that Tratados 2^o and 3^o are *copied* from the original manuscript into the present text, with the illustrations salvaged for use in these later parts of the Madrid Codex. There is also the possibility that at least some of the pasteover illustrations come from a distinct and lost account, not directly related to the Madrid Codex as original to copy. This question can only be resolved by a study and collation of the fragments of prose on the reverse of the paste-overs with

the text of the Durán Codex. The author had neither the time nor the technical facilities to make such a detailed study in Madrid. It is to be hoped that future study will enable such text collations of the paste-overs to be made.¹¹

The minimal publication to date of this important work of the early colonial manuscript painter's art has obscured the heavy debt it owes to sixteenth century European Mannerist style, since much of the flavor of the illustrations lies in the complex framing elements omitted by the lithographer, Jules Desportes.

The style of its artist or artists ranges from rather close adherence to native conventions surviving in the later sixteenth century to illustrations abreast of contemporary European artistic trends. Illustrations or vignettes with a more predominantly native cast include the "Temple and Skull Rack" of Folio 232 v. (Tratado 2^o, Lámina 3, Cap^o. 2, fig. B), the genre scene of Folio 300 v. (Tratado 2^o, Lámina 10, Cap^o. 20, fig. (a)), the "Round Dance and Musicians" of Folio 305 r. (Tratado 2^o, Lámina 11, Cap^o. 21), the "Patolli Game" of Folio 309 v. (Tratado 2^o, Lámina 11, Cap^o. 22, fig. (a)), and the "Ballcourt Scene" of Folio 313 r. (Tratado 2^o, Lámina 11, Cap^o. 23), all having suggestions of the style used in passages of Sahagún's Codex Florentino and all being paste-overs.

These particular illustrations are characterized by a rather strict two-dimensionality. The figures exist

¹¹At my suggestion Dr. Howard Cline, Director of the Hispanic Foundation of the Library of Congress, had the Madrid Codex photographed in kodachrome and microfilm while it was in the United States. These photographs are now in the growing Collection of Mexican Pictorial Documents in the Hispanic Foundation of the Library of Congress. Another microfilm is in the Biblioteca of the Museo Nacional de Antropología in Mexico and can be used to supplement the remarkably good Ramírez copy of the Madrid Codex. It is to be noted that the illustrations of the Ramírez copy are paste-overs even in Tratado 1^o.

in a world where space does not extend backward and forward into the picture space, but things further in depth are shown above things nearer to the viewer. In the "Patolli Game" and the "Ballcourt Scene" important forms are shown in plan, although the human figures appear in elevation. In the "Round Dance and Musicians" the dancers are shown as flattened into a ring radiating from a center, a center where the drums and drummers are shown in elevation. These particular vignettes are also those with the least interest in landscape and its dominant elements—sky, clouds and vegetation.

By and large the remaining illuminations rely heavily on elements of landscape to create three-dimensional spatial settings for human activities. European principles of perspective also give to the actors in the scenes the visualized space of nature or at least a space suggesting the space of a stage.

The Renaissance flavor of the Durán illustrations, however, is carried in large part by details in the elaborate framing elements omitted in the published lithographs. It is in these framing elements that one finds the vocabulary of form reminiscent of German and Netherlandish design books: strap-work, swags with boucraines, and the constant use of leaf forms suggesting the classic acanthus. They suggest similar classic forms to be seen in the Augustinian church of Ixmiquilpan and the painting of the patio of the Hospital of Jesús Nazareno in Mexico City.¹²

¹² Cf. Velázquez Chávez, [Plate] I; in this example the framing element of acanthus leaves includes a human skull wearing an Indian headdress, and slightly in front of it and a bit lower down, an Indian shield. The use of oval or rounded frames for certain of the vignettes is a fore-runner of the use of similar on a large scale in the Baroque period.

Round arches supported by columns, both with details from Spanish Plateresque architecture, echo the forms and shapes to be found in sixteenth century Mexican colonial architecture. Painted versions of similar architecture remain to us in the sixteenth century frescoes of conventos such as Acolman and are common in the Codex Florentino and other Mexican manuscripts of the same period.

Serious students of the Codex must go to the original manuscript or await a large-scale photographic publication of the original illustrations to understand the full extent of their heavy reliance upon contemporary European artistic conventions. With this note it is hoped that the relatively accessible lithographic editions can be better understood and their usefulness exploited, but at the same time, their limitations be taken into account.