

with arrows and shields to seize your lands. He forced you to be his servants. But now that I have come, I set you free. You are no longer his vassals. Your lands are your own again."

¹ The *macana* was a sort of flattened club edged with sharp pieces of obsidian. It was the dreaded closing-in weapon of the Aztec warrior.

² August 13, 1521.

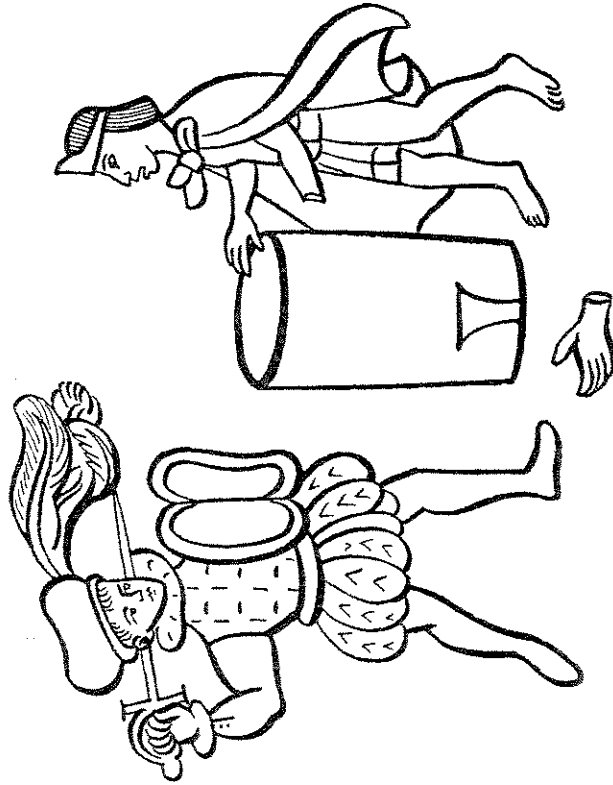
³ See Chapter 10, note 6.

⁴ There was a triple alliance among the Aztecs, the Tepanecas of Tacuba and the Acolhuas of Tezcoco. Motecuhzoma, King of Mexico around 1440, became the leader of the allied armies, conquering towns and small states in what is today Guerrero and Morelos.

⁵ August 13, 1521.

⁶ See Chapter 3, note 1. Tlilpotonque, who held this office under Motecuhzoma, had apparently died in battle or in the siege.

*The Broken Spears: The Aztec Account
of the Conquest of Mexico*
ed Miguel Leon-Portilla 1962
Boston: Beacon Press



one hundred and twenty-six

THE BROKEN SPEARS



Chapter Fourteen

The Story of the Conquest as Told by the Anonymous Authors of Tlatalolcol

Introduction

In the thirteen preceding chapters we have presented the story of the Conquest in selections from various native sources, arranged according to the chronological sequence of events. Now, as a recapitulation, we offer another indigenous account. It describes all the major incidents of the Conquest in briefer form, but it also contains a considerable amount of material that cannot be found in other documents. Therefore it is not a mere summary but an important, independent narrative. As such, it inevitably introduces a

one hundred and twenty-seven

number of discrepancies, both with the texts we have presented earlier and with the Spanish chronicles of Bernal Diaz and others.

This account was written in Nahuatl in 1528 by anonymous authors in Tlatelolco. Like several of the texts by Sahagun's native informants, it reflects the pride of the Tlatelolcas in their home quarter of the city. It is probably the oldest prose document of all those drawn upon in this book. The original is now in the National Library in Paris, where it forms part of *Unos anales historicos de la nacion mexicana*—the so-called Manuscript 22.

The Arrival of Cortes

Year 13-Rabbit. The Spaniards were sighted off the coast.

Year 1-Canestalk. The Spaniards came to the palace at Tlayacac. When the Captain arrived at the palace, Motecuhzoma sent the Cuetlaxteca¹ to greet him and to bring him two suns as gifts. One of these suns was made of the yellow metal, the other of the white.² The Cuetlaxteca also brought him a mirror to be hung on his person, a gold collar, a great gold pitcher, fans and ornaments of quetzal feathers and a shield inlaid with mother-of-pearl.

The envoys made sacrifices in front of the Captain. At this, he grew very angry. When they offered him blood in an "eagle dish," he shouted at the man who offered it and struck him with his sword. The envoys departed at once.

All the gifts which the Cuetlaxteca brought to the Captain were sent by Motecuhzoma. That is why the Cuetlaxteca went to meet the Captain at Tlayacac: he was only performing his duties as a royal envoy.

Then the Captain marched to Tenochtitlan. He arrived here during the month called Bird,³ under the sign of the day

one hundred and twenty-eight

8-Wind. When he entered the city, we gave him chickens, eggs, corn, tortillas and drink. We also gave him firewood, and fodder for his "deer." Some of these gifts were sent by the lord of Tenochtitlan, the rest by the lord of Tlatelolco.

Later the Captain marched back to the coast, leaving Don Pedro de Alvarado—The Sun—in command.

The Massacre in the Main Temple

During this time, the people asked Motecuhzoma how they should celebrate their god's fiesta. He said: "Dress him in all his finery, in all his sacred ornaments."

During this same time, The Sun commanded that Motecuhzoma and Itzcohuatzin, the military chief of Tlatelolco, be made prisoners. The Spaniards hanged a chief from Acolhuacan named Nezahualquenzin. They also murdered the king of Nauhla, Cohualpopocatzin, by wounding him with arrows and then burning him alive.

For this reason, our warriors were on guard at the Eagle Gate. The sentries from Tenochtitlan stood at one side of the gate, and the sentries from Tlatelolco at the other. But messengers came to tell them to dress the figure of Huitzilopochtli. They left their posts and went to dress him in his sacred finery: his ornaments and his paper clothing.

When this had been done, the celebrants began to sing their songs. That is how they celebrated the first day of the fiesta. On the second day they began to sing again, but without warning they were all put to death. The dancers and singers were completely unarmed. They brought only their embroidered cloaks, their turquoises, their lip plugs, their necklaces,

one hundred and twenty-nine

their clusters of heron feathers, their tinkets made of deer hooves. Those who played the drums, the old men, had brought their gourds of snuff and their timbrels.

The Spaniards attacked the musicians first, slashing at their hands and faces until they had killed all of them. The singers—and even the spectators—were also killed. This slaughter in the Sacred Patio went on for three hours. Then the Spaniards burst into the rooms of the temple to kill the others: those who were carrying water, or bringing fodder for the horses, or grinding meal, or sweeping, or standing watch over this work.

The king Motecuhzoma, who was accompanied by Itzcohuatzin and by those who had brought food for the Spaniards, protested: "Our lords, that is enough! What are you doing? These people are not carrying shields or *macanas*. Our lords, they are completely unarmed!"

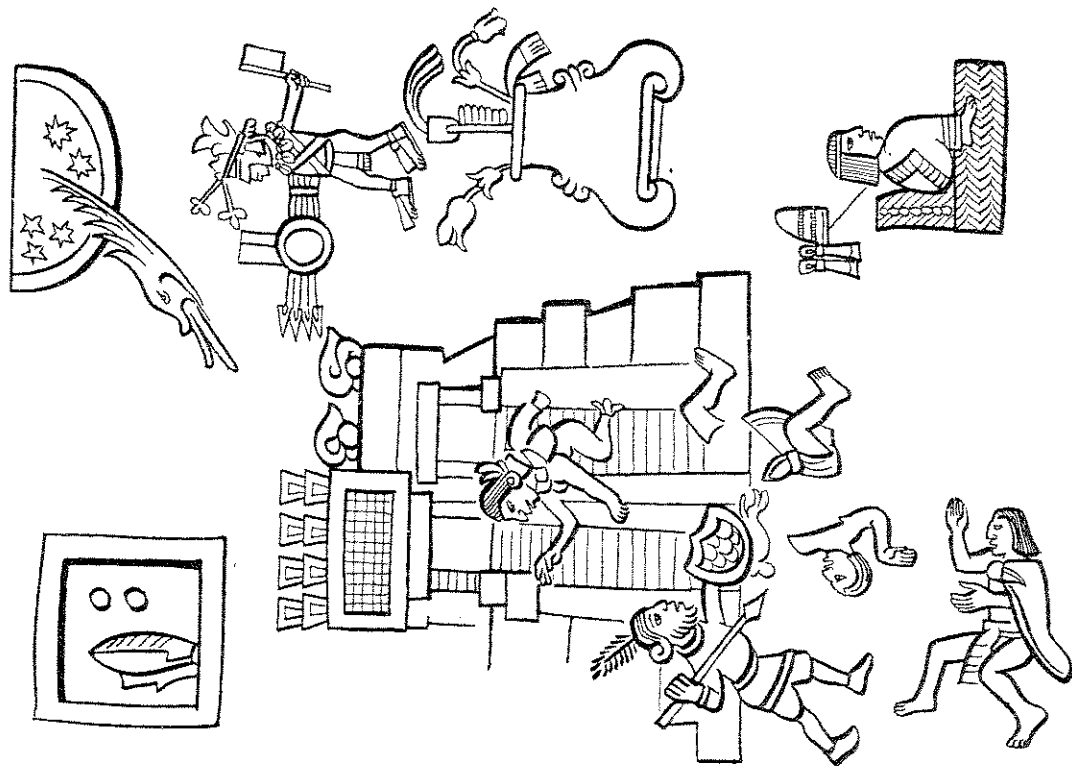
The Sun treacherously murdered our people on the twentieth day after the Captain left for the coast. We allowed the Captain to return to the city in peace. But on the following day we attacked him with all our might, and that was the beginning of the war.

The Night of Sorrows

The Spaniards attempted to slip out of the city at night, but we attacked furiously at the Canal of the Toltecs, and many of them died. This took place during the fiesta of Tecuilhuilit. The survivors gathered first at Mazatzintamalco and waited for the stragglers to come up.

Year 2-Flint. This was the year in which Motecuhzoma died. Itzcohuatzin of Tlarelolco died at the same time.

one hundred and thirty-one



An Incident During the Conquest (Codex Vaticanus A.)

one hundred and thirty

The Spaniards took refuge in Acueco, but they were driven out by our warriors. They fled to Teuhcalhueyacan and from there to Zoltepec. Then they marched through Citlatepec and camped in Temazcalapan, where the people gave them hens, eggs and corn. They rested for a short while and marched on to Tlaxcala.

Soon after, an epidemic broke out in Tenochtitlan. Almost the whole population suffered from racking coughs and painful, burning sores.

The Spaniards Return

When the epidemic had subsided a little, the Spaniards marched out of Tlaxcala. The first place they attacked and conquered was Tepeyacac. They departed from there during the fiesta of Tlahuano, and they arrived in Tlapechhuan during the fiesta of Izcalli. Twenty days later they marched to Tezcoco, where they remained for forty days. Then they reached Tlacopan and established themselves in the palace.

There was no fighting of any kind while they were in Tlacopan. At the end of a week they all marched back to Tezcoco.

Eighty days later they went to Huaxtepec and Cuauh-nahuac,⁴ and from there they attacked Xochimilco. A great many Tlatelolcas died in that battle. Then the Spaniards returned to Tezcoco again.

Year 3-House. The Aztecs began to fight among themselves. The princes Tzihuacpopocatzin and Cicipatzin Tecuencuotzin were put to death, as were Axayaca and Xoxoehualoc, the sons of Motecuhzoma. These princes were killed be-

one hundred and thirty-two

cause they tried to persuade the people to bring corn, hens and eggs to the Spaniards. They were killed by the priests, captains and elder brothers.

But the great chiefs were angry at these executions. They said to the murderers: "Have we ourselves become assassins? Only sixty days ago, our people were slaughtered at the fiesta of Toxcatli!"

The Siege of Tenochtitlan

Now the Spaniards began to wage war against us. They attacked us by land for ten days, and then their ships appeared. Twenty days later, they gathered all their ships together near Nonohualco, off the place called Mazatzintamalco. The allies from Tlaxcala and Huexotzinco set up camp on either side of the road.

Our warriors from Tlatelolco immediately leaped into their canoes and set out for Mazatzintamalco and the Nonohualco road. But no one set out from Tenochtitlan to assist us: only the Tlatelolcas were ready when the Spaniards arrived in their ships. On the following day, the ships sailed to Xoloco.

The fighting at Xoloco and Huitzillan lasted for two days. While the battle was under way, the warriors from Tenochtitlan began to mutiny. They said: "Where are our chiefs? They have fired scarcely a single arrow! Do they think they have fought like men?" Then they seized four of their own leaders and put them to death. The victims were two captains, Cuauhnochrli and Cuapan, and the priests of Amantlan and Tlalocan. This was the second time that the people of Tenochtitlan killed their own leaders.

one hundred and thirty-three

The Flight to Tlatelolco

The Spaniards set up two cannons in the middle of the road and aimed them at the city. When they fired them, one of the shots struck the Eagle Gate. The people of the city were so terrified that they began to flee to Tlatelolco. They brought their idol Huitzilopochtli¹⁸ with them, setting it up in the House of the Young Men. Their king Cuauhtemoc also abandoned Tenochtitlan. Their chiefs said: "Mexicanos! Tlatelolcas! All is not lost! We can still defend our houses. We can prevent them from capturing our storehouses and the produce of our lands. We can save the sustenance of life, our stores of corn. We can also save our weapons and insignia, our clusters of rich feathers, our gold earrings and precious stones. Do not be discouraged; do not lose heart. We are Mexicanos! We are Tlatelolcas!"

During the whole time we were fighting, the warriors of Tenochtitlan were nowhere to be seen. The battles at Yacocolco, Atezcapan, Coatlan, Nonohualco, Xoxohuitlan, Tepeyacac and elsewhere were all fought by ourselves, by Tlatelolcas. In the same way, the canals were defended solely by Tlatelolcas.

The captains from Tenochtitlan cut their hair short, and so did those of lesser rank. The Oromies and the other ranks that usually wore headaddresses did not wear them during all the time we were fighting. The Tlatelolcas surrounded the most important captains and their women taunted them: "Why are you hanging back? Have you no shame? No woman will ever paint her face for you again!" The wives of the men from Tenochtitlan wept and begged for pity.

When the warriors of Tlatelolco heard what was happening, they began to shout, but still the brave captains of

one hundred and thirty-four

Tenochtitlan hung back. As for the Tlatelolcas, their humblest warriors died fighting as bravely as their captains.

The Tlatelolcas Are Invited to Make a Treaty

A Spaniard named Castaneda approached us in Yauhenco. He was accompanied by a group of Tlaxcaltecas, who shouted at the guards on the watchtower near the breakwater. These guards were Itzpalanqui, the captain of Chapultepec; two captains from Tlapala; and Cuexacaltzin. Castaneda shouted to them: "Come here!"

"What do you want?" they asked him. "We will come closer." They got into a boat and approached to within speaking distance. "Now, what have you to say to us?"

The Tlaxcaltecas asked: "Where are you from?" And when they learned that the guards were from Tlatelolco, they said: "Good, you are the men we are looking for. Come with us. The 'god' has sent for you."

The guards went with Castaneda to Nonohualco. The Captain was in the House of the Mist there, along with La Malinche, The Sun (Alvarado) and Sandoval. A number of the native lords were also present and they told the Captain: "The Tlatelolcas have arrived. We sent for them to come here."

La Malinche said to the guards: "Come forward! The Captain wants to know: what can the chiefs of Tenochtitlan be thinking of? Is Cuauhtemoc a stupid, willful little boy? Has he no mercy on the women and children of his city? Must even the old men perish? See, the kings of Tlaxcala, Huexotzinco, Cholula, Chalco, Acolhuacan, Cuauhnahuac, Xochimilco, Mizquic, Cuitlahuac and Culhuacan are all here with me."

one hundred and thirty-five

One of the kings said: "Do the people of Tenochtitlan think they are playing a game? Already their hearts are grieving for the city in which they were born. If they will not surrender, we should abandon them and let them perish by themselves. Why should the Tlatelolcas feel sorry when the people of Tenochtitlan bring a senseless destruction on themselves?"

The guards from Tlatelolco said: "Our lords, it may be as you say."

The "god" said: "Tell Cuauhtemoc that the other kings have all abandoned him. I will go to Teocalhueyacan, where his forces are gathered, and I will send the ships to Coyoacan."

The guards returned to speak with the followers of Cuauhtemoc. They shouted the message to them from their boats. But the Tlatelolcas would not abandon the people of Tenochtitlan.

The Fighting Is Renewed

The Spaniards made ready to attack us, and the war broke out again. They assembled their forces in Cuexpopan and Cozcauahco. A vast number of our warriors were killed by their metal darts. Their ships sailed to Texopan, and the battle there lasted three days. When they had forced us to retreat, they entered the Sacred Patio, where there was a four-day battle. Then they reached Yacacolco.

The Tlatelolcas set up three racks of heads in three different places. The first rack was in the Sacred Patio of Tlilcalco [Black House], where we strung up the heads of our lords the Spaniards. The second was in Acacolco, where we strung up Spanish heads and the heads of two of their horses.

one hundred and thirty-six

The third was in Zacatla, in front of the temple of the earth-goddess Cihuacoatl, where we strung up the heads of Tlaxcaltecas.

The women of Tlatelolco joined in the fighting. They struck at the enemy and shot arrows at them; they tucked up their skirts and dressed in the regalia of war.

The Spaniards forced us to retreat. Then they occupied the market place. The Tlatelolcas—the Jaguar Knights, the Eagle Knights, the great warriors—were defeated, and this was the end of the battle. It had lasted five days, and two thousand Tlatelolcas were killed in action. During the battle, the Spaniards set up a canopy for the Captain in the market place. They also mounted a catapult on the temple platform.

Epic Description of the Besieged City

And all these misfortunes befell us. We saw them and wondered at them; we suffered this unhappy fate.

Broken spears lie in the roads;

we have torn our hair in our grief.

The houses are roofless now, and their walls
are red with blood.

Worms are swarming in the streets and plazas,
and the walls are splattered with gore.

The water has turned red, as if it were dyed,
and when we drink it,
it has the taste of brine.

We have pounded our hands in despair
against the adobe walls,

one hundred and thirty-seven

for our inheritance, our city, is lost and dead. The shields of our warriors were its defense, but they could not save it.

We have chewed dry twigs and salt grasses; we have filled our mouths with dust and bits of adobe; we have eaten lizards, rats and worms. . . .

When we had meat, we ate it almost raw. It was scarcely on the fire before we snatched it and gobbled it down.

They set a price on all of us: on the young men, the priests, the boys and girls. The price of a poor man was only two handfuls of corn, or ten cakes made from mosses or twenty cakes of salty couch-grass. Gold, jade, rich cloths, quetzal feathers—everything that once was precious was now considered worthless.

The captains delivered several prisoners of war to Cuauh-temoc to be sacrificed. He performed the sacrifices in person, cutting them open with a stone knife.

The Message from Cortes

Soon after this, the Spaniards brought Xochitl the Acol-nahuacatl,⁶ whose house was in Tenochtitlan, to the market place in Tlatelolco. They gripped him by both arms as they brought him there. They kept him with them for twenty days and then let him go. They also brought in a cannon, which they set up in the place where incense was sold.

The Tlatelolcas ran forward to surround Xochitl. They were led by the captain from Huitznahuac, who was a Huasteco.⁷ Xochitl was placed under guard in the Temple of the Woman⁸ in Axocotzinco.

one hundred and thirty-eight

As soon as the Spaniards had set Xochitl loose in the market place, they stopped attacking us. There was no more fighting, and no prisoners were taken.

Three of the great chiefs said to Cuauhremoc: "Our prince, the Spaniards have sent us one of the magistrates, Xochitl the Acolnahuacatl. It is said that he has a message for you."

Cuauhremoc asked them: "What is your advice?"

The chiefs all began to shout at once: "Let the message be brought here! We have made auguries with paper and with incense! The captain who seized Xochitl should bring us the message!"

The captain was sent to question Xochitl in the Temple of the Woman. Xochitl said: "The 'god' and La Malinche send word to Cuauhremoc and the other princes that there is no hope for them. Have they no pity on the little children, the old men, the old women? What more can they do? Everything is settled.

"You are to deliver women with light skins, corn, chickens, eggs and tortillas. This is your last chance. The people of Tenochtitlan must choose whether to surrender or be destroyed."

The captain reported this message to Cuauhremoc and the lords of Tlatelolco. The lords deliberated among themselves: "What do you think about this? What are we to do?"

The City Falls

Cuauhremoc said to the fortune tellers: "Please come forward. What do you see in your books?"

One of the priests replied: "My prince, hear the truth

one hundred and thirty-nine

that we tell you. In only four days we shall have completed the period of eighty days. It may be the will of Huitzilopochtli that nothing further shall happen to us. Let us wait until these four days have passed."

But then the fighting broke out again. The captain of Huitznahuac—the same Huasteco who had brought in Xochitl—renewed the struggle. The enemy forced us to retreat to Amaxac. When they also attacked us there, the general flight began. The lake was full of people, and the roads leading to the mainland were all crowded.

Thus the people of Tenochtitlan and Tlatelolco gave up the struggle and abandoned the city. We all gathered in Amaxac. We had no shields and no *macanas*, we had nothing to eat and no shelter. And it rained all night.

The People Flee the City

Cuahtemoc was taken to Cortes along with three other princes. The Captain was accompanied by Pedro de Alvarado and La Malinche.

When the princes were made captives, the people began to leave, searching for a place to stay. Everyone was in tatters, and the women's thighs were almost naked. The Christians searched all the refugees. They even opened the women's skirts and blouses and felt everywhere: their ears, their breasts, their hair. Our people scattered in all directions. They went to neighboring villages and huddled in corners in the houses of strangers.

The city was conquered in the year 3-House. The date on which we departed was the day 1-Serpent in the ninth month.⁹

one hundred and forty

The lords of Tlatelolco went to Cuauhtitlan. Even the greatest captains and warriors left in tatters. The women had only old rags to cover their heads, and they had patched together their blouses out of many-colored scraps. The chiefs were grief-stricken and mourned to one another: "We have been defeated a second time!"¹⁰

The Offering of Gold

A poor man was treacherously killed in Orontlan as he was seeking refuge. The other refugees were shaken by his death and began to discuss what they could do.¹¹ They said: "Let us beg mercy of our lord the Captain."

First the leaders of Tlatelolco demanded gold objects from everyone. They collected many lip rings, lip plugs, nose plugs and other ornaments. They searched anyone who might be hiding objects of gold behind his shield or under his clothing.

When they had gathered everything they could find, they sent the treasure to Coyoacan in the custody of several chiefs. The chiefs said to the Captain: "Our lord and master, please hear us. Your vassals, the great lords of Tlatelolco, beg you to have mercy. Your vassals and their people are being mistreated by the inhabitants of the villages where they have taken refuge. They scorn us and treacherously kill us.

"We have brought you these objects of gold, and we beg you to hear our pleas."

Then they set the baskets of gold objects before him.

When the Captain and La Malinche saw the gold, they grew very angry and said: "Is this what you have been wasting

one hundred and forty-one

your time on? You should have been looking for the treasure that fell into the Canal of the Toltecs! Where is it? We must have it!"

The chiefs said: "Cuauhtemoc gave it to the Gihuacoatl and the Huiznahuacatl. They know where it is. Ask them."

When the Captain heard this, he ordered that the chiefs be placed in chains. La Malinche came to them later and said: "The Captain says that you may leave and speak with your leaders. He is very grateful to you. It may be true that your people are being mistreated. Tell them to return. Tell your people to come back to their houses in Tlarelolco. The Captain wants all the Tlarelolcas to reoccupy their quarter of the city. But tell your leaders that no one is to settle in Tenochtitlan itself, for that is the property of the 'gods.' You may leave now."

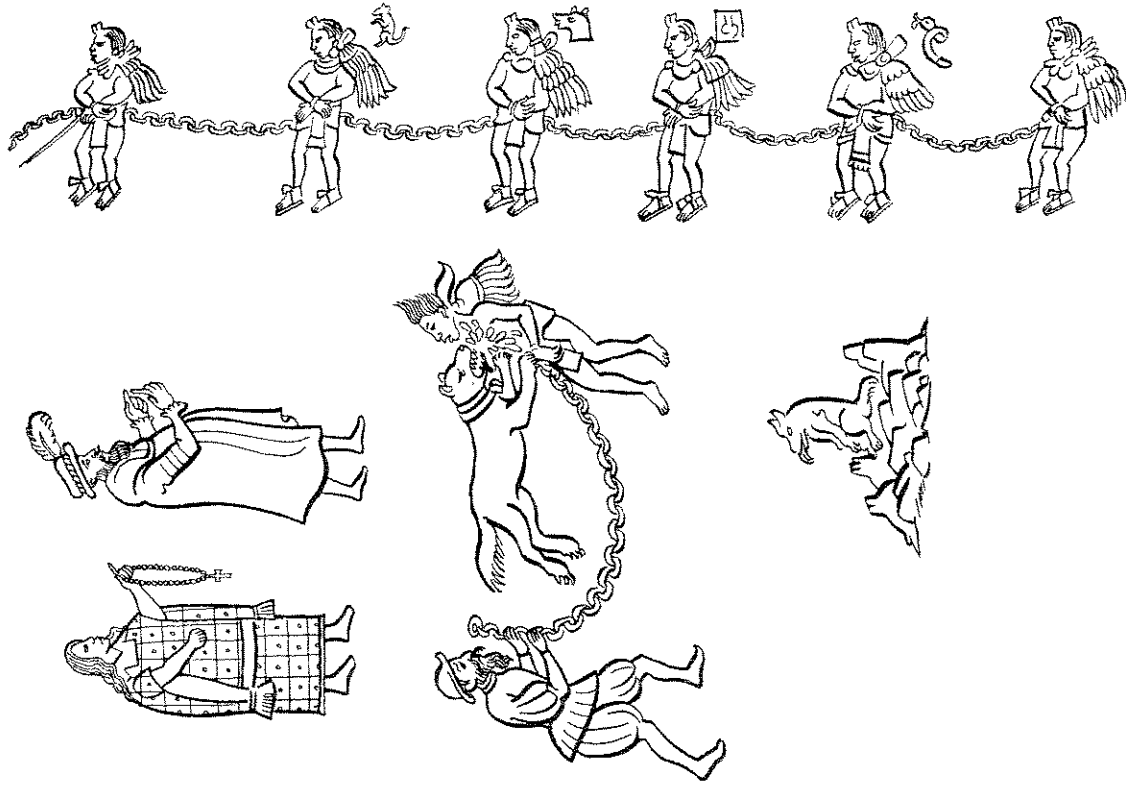
Cuauhtemoc Is Tortured

When the envoys from Tlarelolco had departed, the leaders of Tenochtitlan were brought before the Captain, who wished to make them talk. This was when Cuauhtemoc's feet were burned. They brought him in at daybreak and tied him to a stake.

They found the gold in Cuiclahuacronco, in the house of a chief named Iztpotonqui. As soon as they had seized it, they brought our princes—all of them bound—to Coyoacan.

About this same time, the priest in charge of the temple of Huitzilopochtli was put to death. The Spaniards had tried to learn from him where the god's finery and that of the high priests was kept. Later they were informed that it was being guarded by certain chiefs in Cuauhchichilco and Xaltocan.

one hundred and forty-two



Incidents After the Surrender of the Aztecs
(Proceso de Alvarado)

one hundred and forty-three

They seized it and then hanged two of the chiefs in the middle of the Mazatlan road.

The Return to Tlatelolco

The common people began to return to their houses in Tlatelolco. This was in the year 4-Rabbit. Then Temilotzin and Don Juan Huehuetzin came back, but Coyohuehuetzin and Tepantemotzin both died in Cuauhtitlan.

We were left entirely alone when we reoccupied Tlatelolco. Our masters, the Spaniards, did not seize any of our houses. They remained in Coyoacan and let us live in peace.

They hanged Macuilxochitl, the king of Huiztilopochco, in Coyoacan. They also hanged Pizotzin, the king of Culhuacan. And they fed the Keeper of the Black House,¹² along with several others, to their dogs.

And three wise men of Ehecatl,¹³ from Tezcoco, were devoured by the dogs. They had come only to surrender; no one brought them or sent them there. They arrived bearing their painted sheets of paper. There were four of them, and only one escaped; the other three were overtaken, there in Coyoacan.

¹ The Cuertlaxteca were the allied people from Cuertlaxtla in central Mexico.

² Gold and silver.

³ The fourteenth month, October 20–November 8.

⁴ Present-day Cuernavaca.

⁵ Not the seed-paste figure described in Chapter 9, but the wooden sculpture in the temple on top of the main pyramid.

⁶ The Acolnahuacatl was a high priest from the Acolnahuac quarter inside Mexico-Tenochtitlan.

⁷ An Indian from eastern Mexico.

⁸ The earth-goddess Cihuacoatl.

⁹ July 12–July 31.

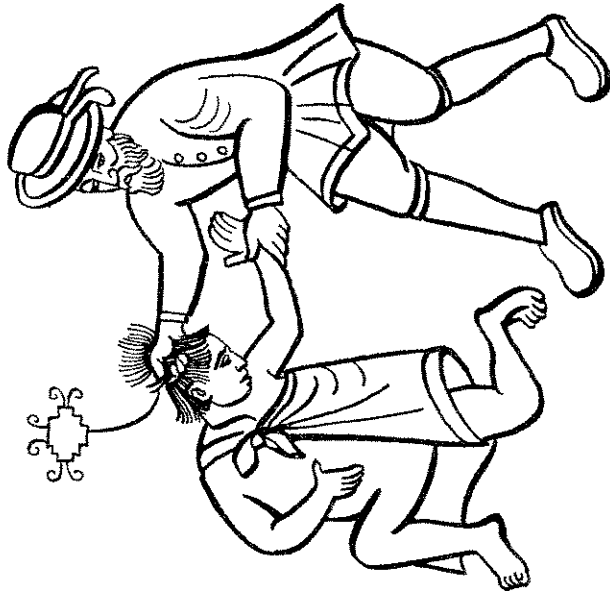
¹⁰ The first time by Tenochtitlan.

¹¹ To avoid the same fate. They wanted to return home.

¹² See Chapter 1, note 5.

¹³ God of the wind, a frequent disguise of Quetzalcoatl.

one hundred and forty-four



Chapter Fifteen

Elegies on the Fall of the City

Introduction

By way of conclusion, we present three “songs of sorrow,” true elegies written by the post-Conquest Aztec poets. The first song, from the collection of *Cantares mexicanos* in the National Library of Mexico, was probably composed in 1523. The second is part of a whole series of poems recounting the Conquest from the arrival of the Spaniards in Tenochtitlan to the ultimate defeat of the Aztecs. We have selected only the most dramatic moments

one hundred and forty-five

from the last section of this series. The third song, also from the *Cantares mexicanos*, recalls the traditional symbolism of "flowers and songs." It laments that only grief and suffering remain in the once proud capital.

These elegies are among the first and most poignant expressions of what Dr. Garibay has called "the trauma of the Conquest." They reveal, with greater eloquence than the other texts, the deep emotional wound inflicted on the Indians by the defeat.

The Fall of Tenochtitlan

Our cries of grief rise up
and our tears rain down,
for Tlatelolco is lost.

The Aztecs are fleeing across the lake;
they are running away like women.

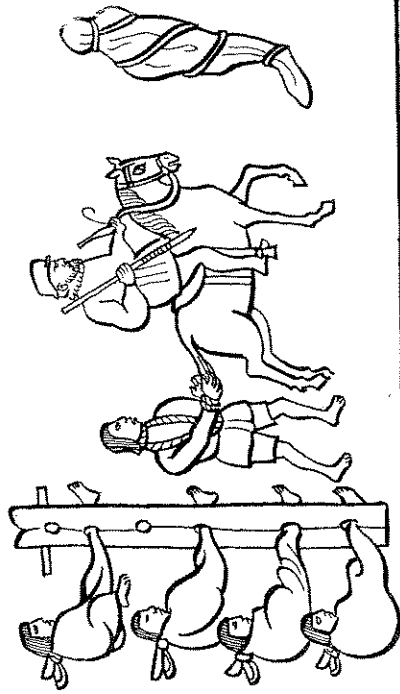
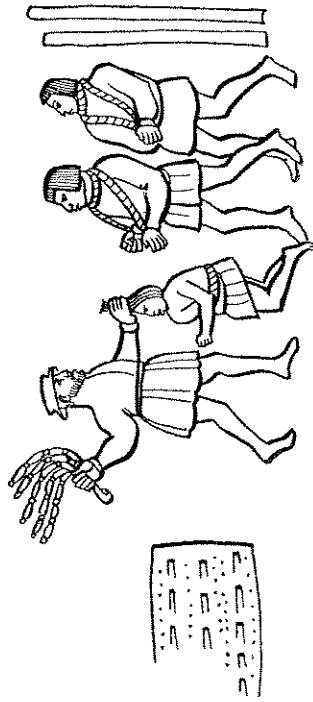
How can we save our homes, my people?
The Aztecs are deserting the city:
the city is in flames, and all
is darkness and destruction.

Motelchiuhztzin the Huiznahuaatl,
Tlacorzin the Tlailotlacatl,
Oquitzin the Tlacatecutli
are greeted with tears.

Weep, my people:
know that with these disasters
we have lost the Mexican nation.
The water has turned bitter,
our food is bitter!

These are the acts of the Giver of Life. . . .

one hundred and forty-six



Misfortunes of the Conquered (Archives of the Indies)

one hundred and forty-seven

The Imprisonment of Cuauhtemoc

The Aztecs are besieged in the city;
the Tlatelolcas are besieged in the city!

The walls are black,
the air is black with smoke,
the guns flash in the darkness.
They have captured Cuauhtemoc;
they have captured the princes of Mexico.

The Aztecs are besieged in the city;
the Tlatelolcas are besieged in the city!

After nine days, they were taken to Coyoacan:
Cuauhtemoc, Coanacoch, Tettlepanquetzaltzin.
The kings are prisoners now.

Tlacotzin consoled them:

"Oh my nephews, take heart!
The kings are prisoners now;
they are bound with chains."

The king Cuauhtemoc replied:

"Oh my nephew, you are a prisoner;
they have bound you in irons.

"But who is that at the side of the Captain-General?
Ah, it is Dona Isabel, my little niece!

Ah, it is true: the kings are prisoners now!

"You will be a slave and belong to another:
the collar will be fashioned in Coyoacan,
where the quetzal feathers will be woven.

one hundred and forty-eight

"Who is that at the side of the Captain-General?
Ah, it is Dona Isabel, my little niece!
Ah, it is true: the kings are prisoners now!"

Flowers and Songs of Sorrow

Nothing but flowers and songs of sorrow
are left in Mexico and Tlatelolco,
where once we saw warriors and wise men.

We know it is true
that we must perish,
for we are mortal men.
You, the Giver of Life,
you have ordained it.

We wander here and there
in our desolate poverty.

We are mortal men.

We have seen bloodshed and pain
where once we saw beauty and valor.

We are crushed to the ground;
we lie in ruins.

There is nothing but grief and suffering
in Mexico and Tlatelolco,
where once we saw beauty and valor.

Have you grown weary of your servants?
Are you angry with your servants,
O Giver of Life?

one hundred and forty-nine