DOI: 10.18441/ibam.19.2019.71.51-76

Reading Between the Lines: An Indigenous Account of Conquest on the Missing Folios of *Codex Azcatitlan*

Leyendo entre líneas: Un relato indígena de la conquista en los folios desaparecidos del *Códice Azcatitlan*

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| **Abstract:** Sometime between 1565 and 1743, three folios were removed from the central Mexican manuscript known as *Codex Azcatitlan*. Two of the missing folios were part of a section referring to the conquest history in this manuscript. Through an analysis of extant images and the comparison with other indigenous accounts of the conquest, this study makes an argument for the possible content on these pages and proposes that the missing folios recorded significant sacrificial events and acts of violence against the Spaniards that were of great importance to the indigenous Tlatelolca authors and their intended indigenous audience. This paper argues that those images that might have been considered most offensive to a Spanish Christian viewer were excised, at a time when censorship was on the rise in New Spain.
Keywords: Conquest; Manuscripts; Colonial; Nahua; Mexico

| **Resumen:** En algún momento entre 1565 y 1743, tres folios fueron removidos del manuscrito mexicano conocido como *Códice Azcatitlan*. Dos de los folios perdidos formaban parte de la sección dedicada a la historia de la conquista. A través de un análisis de las imágenes sobrevivientes y la comparación con otras relaciones de la conquista, este artículo intenta reconstruir el contenido de las páginas perdidas y propone que representaban eventos sacrificiales importantes, así como actos de violencia contra los españoles que eran de gran trascendencia para los autores indígenas del manuscrito, provenientes de México-Tlatelolco,

y para sus audiencias indígenas. Se propone por ello que estas imágenes fueron suprimidas posteriormente porque podían resultar ofensivas a los lectores españoles cristianos, en un periodo en que la censura se hacía más estricta en la Nueva España.

Palabras clave: Conquista; Manuscritos; Colonial, Nahuas; México.

INTRODUCTION

Sometime between 1565 and 1743, three leaves were removed from the painted manuscript known as *Codex Azcatitlan*.[1] Painted in New Spain by indigenous artists of Tlatelolca descent, *Codex Azcatitlan*'s twenty-five extant leaves record an account of Mexica migration history from Aztlan to Tenochtitlan-Tlatelolco, an imperial history, an account of the conquest, and a record of post-conquest events that occurred between 1521 and 1527-1528. Michel Graulich (1995, 16) has described the manuscript as originally consisting of fourteen folios of European paper, folded in half to render twenty-eight painted leaves. Thus, three leaves are missing. In each case, the missing leaves had images on the recto and verso sides that completed paintings meant to be read originally across a two-page spread. One leaf was removed from the migration history between the extant folios 4v and 5r (fig. 1). Two of the missing leaves were in the conquest section of the manuscript, leaving the four extant images on pages 22v, 23r, 23v, and 24r incomplete (figs. 2-5).

The task of considering what might have been present on the missing leaves of *Codex Azcatitlan* is decidedly difficult and inherently speculative. Nonetheless, careful analysis of the extant images and the comparison with the existence of numerous pictorial and scripted accounts of the conquest and of Mexica migration history allow us to make some reasonable propositions. This act of reading between the lines (or the images) may help to further our understanding of indigenous perspectives on the conquest and the reception of these histories by both intended and unintended audiences. Through comparison with other sixteenth- and seventeenth-century source material, and particularly indigenous Tlatololca accounts of the conquest, such as those found in the *Florentine Codex*, Book 12, and the Annals of Tlatelolco, this study indicates that the missing leaves recorded significant sacrificial events and acts of violence against the Spaniards that were of great importance to the indigenous authors and their intended

[1] The original *Codex Azcatitlan*, also referred to as the *Histoire mexicaine*, is located in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, where it is catalogued in the Département des Manuscrits as *Mexicain 59-64*. The presence of parasols of Asian manufacture (page 25v) (*Codex Azcatitlan* 1995b, 152, n. 100) indicates that the manuscript was created after the Manila galleons began circulating in 1565. We know that the leaves were removed from the manuscript prior to entering the collection of Lorenzo Boturini Benaducci because his 1743 catalogue entries describe the manuscript as having "twenty-five sheets" (Peñafiel 1890, 56-68).

Fig. 1: *Codex Azcatitlan*, Pages 4v (left) and 5r (right). Courtesy of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

indigenous audience.[2] I suggest that *Codex Azcatitlan*'s narrative, especially the very indigenous-centric account of the conquest, was modified after or late in production as a means of preserving the manuscript. The extant images in *Codex Azcatitlan* do not cater to a Spanish audience; I argue that those images that might have been considered most offensive to a Spanish Christian viewer were excised, perhaps in the second half of the sixteenth century when censorship was on the rise in New Spain, and that the excisions may be coeval with the late addition of pigmentation.

Although more than one *tlacuilo* (artist-scribe, pl. *tlacuilome*) worked on *Codex Azcatitlan* (Herren 2012, 1-13; Rajagopalan 2019, 43-68), a primary hand produced the images under consideration and the overall conceptual scope of the manuscript, thus I will refer to this individual in the singular. In approaching this material, I do not take for granted that the Nahuatl glosses and Arabic numerals in *Codex Azcatitlan* were added by the primary *tlacuilo*. Throughout this study, I take the glosses into account, but give primacy to the meaning contained in the pictorial content. Like the compositions and the pigmentation, the glosses are incomplete. They appear primarily in the migration segment and there are a few brief entries in the early part of the imperial history. While the sequence of year-bearers runs consistently through the migration segment, they are recorded in a hybrid fashion. The cartouches and glyphic renderings of House, Rabbit, Reed, and Flint are pre-Hispanic in style. However,

[2] Book 12 of the *Florentine Codex*, or *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España*, addresses the conquest and was written around 1555 when Bernardino de Sahagún was in Tlatelolco; the text was compiled with the aid of Tlatelolco leaders and students of the Colegio de Santa Cruz in Tlatelolco (Terraciano 2014, 219). Unless otherwise noted, references here are to the images and Nahuatl text of the manuscript housed in the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana. The Annals of Tlatelolco (comprised of Ms. 22 and a later copy, 22bis) is archived in the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

instead of adding in the numbers one through thirteen with circles or dots (as for example, in the pre-Hispanic Codex Nuttall), we find Arabic numerals and the further addition of years correlated to the European calendar. It is possible that this is an innovative approach on the part of a *tlacuilo* intent on communicating to an indigenous audience more versed in European methods of time keeping; because they lack the dots, the year-bearers would not be comprehensible to someone unable to read Arabic numerals. However, the hybrid year cartouches are also characteristic of the kind of reconciling of years and of multiple sources that the indigenous chroniclers frequently engaged in. Thus, it is equally possible that the glosser was another Nahua *tlacuilo*, historian, or collector who attempted to emend the document by completing the date cartouches and adding occasional explanatory text, perhaps even at the same time or after the leaves were excised.

PAGES 22V-24R – AN INDIGENOUS ACCOUNT OF THE CONQUEST

The *Codex Azcatitlan tlacuilo* painted his brief account of the conquest on folios 22v through 24r.[3] As historian Federico Navarrete Linares has noted, a shift in the compositional layout of the manuscript sets the conquest material off from the other narrative components (Navarrete 2004, 155). As several authors have demonstrated, *Codex Azcatitlan*'s content reflects Tlatelolca interests (Castañeda de la Paz 1997, 1999, 2005, 2009a, 2009b; Navarrete 2004; Rajagopalan 2019). The extant pages record a historical narrative designed to appeal to an indigenous audience, most likely a group of Nahuas of Tlatelolca descent living in the capital of New Spain in the second half of the sixteenth century. On page 22v the *tlacuilo* depicts Hernando Cortés for the first time (fig. 2). Accompanied by his translator Malinche, an African slave, Spanish conquistadors and indigenous porters, he stands ready to greet Moteuczoma and his party on the Ixtapalapa causeway on November 8, 1519. This scene inaugurates the conquest account. On page 23r, the *tlacuilo* depicts the massacre during the Feast of Toxcatl and, more importantly, its aftermath; the events of this day occurred in late May or June of 1520 (fig. 3). The reverse of this page, 23v, shows the rout of the Spaniards at Tlatelolco, an indigenous victory that occurred at the end of the conquest in the late summer of 1521 (fig. 4). The lower scene shows Cortés, surrounded by conquistadors, being rescued by the indigenous lord Ixtlilxochitl from the water along the northern Tacuba causeway. In the upper register, the Tlatelolca noble Ecatl (also called Martín, his Christian name, or Ecatzin, an honorific) captures the Spanish banner from conquistador Pedro de Alvarado. By this point in time, the Tenochca rulers Moteuczoma and Cuitlahua had both died. The final scene on page 24r depicts

[3] My interpretation of the pictorial content in the conquest and post-conquest histories derives from arguments presented in *Portraying the Aztec Past: The Codices Boturini, Azcatitlan, and Aubin* (Rajagopalan 2019).

Tecuichpotzin, wife of the ruler Cuauhtemoc, evacuating the city along with other noble women (fig. 5). This final page formally closes the conquest account, and another shift in compositional format on its reverse, 24v, begins a post-conquest history that covers the years 1521-1527 or 1528. Notably, the *tlacuilo* chose conquest episodes that took place in the capital and that would presumably appeal to an audience living in this region decades later. Half of the scenes, those on pages 23v and 24r take place in Tlatelolco. An analysis of the *tlacuilo's* aesthetic, compositional, and narrative practices helps to shape our understanding of the content on the missing pages.

A FOCUS ON INDIGENOUS PARTICIPATION IN THE CONQUEST

Throughout the conquest history, the *tlacuilo* highlights indigenous participation. On page 22v, indigenous figures flank Cortés and his men (fig. 2). At the head of the party, Malinche occupies a place of importance. Like Cortés, she is shown frontally, rather than in profile, and she would have appeared at the center of the two-page composition standing closest to Moteuczoma's party. She looks toward the opposite page and points to Cortés, indicating that she is in the act of translating his words. In contrast to the very similar composition that appears on folio 208v of Diego Durán's *Historia de las indias de Nueva España e islas de la tierra firme*, the *tlacuilo* reminds his readers that Cortés depended on indigenous support to stage an encounter with the Mexica ruler (fig. 2).[4] Even in Francisco López de Gómara's history, an account by Cortés' secretary that was designed to aggrandize the conquistador's role, the indigenous allies on this day are described as vastly outnumbering the Spanish troops (López de Gómara 1965, 138). At the rear of Cortés' party, indigenous men bear tumplines full of supplies. These figures may represent those allies, as most scholars assume.

A passage in the Annals of Tlatelolco, however, suggests a slightly different reading. In a brief description of the encounter, the author writes:

> He [Cortés] reached Tenochtitlan very quickly; he arrived [in the month of] Quecholli, on a day Eight Wind. When he reached Tenochtitlan, we gave him turkey hens, turkey eggs, shelled white maize, and white tortillas, as well as providing water, as well as delivering deer fodder and wood. The Tenochca made their contributions separately, and the Tlatelolca made their contributions separately (Lockhart 2004, 257).

Like the Annals of Tlatelolco author, the *Codex Azcatitlan tlacuilo* may wish to register this indigenous contribution, since the porters on page 22v hold, from left to right, turkey hens, tortillas, and eggs (*Codex Azcatitlan* 1995b, 136). Navarrete has noted that these figures stray from the speckled path and some float above the horizon line (2004, 155). The *tlacuilo* may wish to record Cortés' indigenous allies who have received these

[4] Diego Durán's *Historia de las Indias de Nueva España e islas de la tierra firme* is located in the Biblioteca Nacional de España.

Fig. 2: (Above) *Codex Azcatitlan*, Page 22v. Courtesy of the Bibliothèque nationale de France. (Below) *Historia de las Indias de Nueva España e islas de la tierra firme*, Folio 208v. Courtesy of the Bibioteca Nacional de España, Madrid.

gifts, or perhaps the visual separation is meant to show the Tlatelolca delivering the items. Scripted accounts suggest that food items were only delivered later, after Moteuczoma and Cortés exchanged necklaces and other goods, but, as discussed below, it is not uncommon for the *Codex Azcatitlan tlacuilo* to collapse different temporal moments into a single representation of an event. The encounter between Moteuczoma and Cortés encapsulated in Cell 11 of the *Lienzo de Tlaxcala* also depicts food gifts.[5]

The next three conquest scenes are filled with indigenous protagonists and heroes. On page 23r, only indigenous figures represent the events surrounding the massacre

[5] Images of the *Lienzo de Tlaxcala* can be found in Alfredo Chavero's *Antigüedades mexicanas* (1892).

during the Feast of Toxcatl. Nobles, ritual participants, and warriors fill the extant right half of this battle scene. On page 23v, the *tlacuilo* depicts an indigenous man pulling Cortés from the water (*Codex Azcatitlan* 1995b, 140; Castañeda de la Paz and Oudijk 2012, 10-12; Rajagopalan 2019, 78). While the Spanish accounts describe Cortés being rescued by a Spaniard (Cortés 1986, 238-239; Díaz del Castillo 2012, 406; Durán 1994, 554; López de Gómara 1965, 281), the *Codex Azcatitlan* imagery seems to align with Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl's claim that his great-great grandfather Ixtlilxochitl, ruler of Texcoco, had saved Cortés (Alva Ixtlilxochitl 2015, 49-50). According to Alva Ixtlilxochitl, a painting on the main door of the monastery church at Santiago Tlatelolco depicted this subject (49-50); in this prominent location, the subject would have been well known before the church was rebuilt and consecrated under Fray Juan de Torquemada in 1610 (*Codex Azcatitlan* 1995b, 140; Castañeda de la Paz and Oudijk 2012, 10-12; Rajagopalan 2019, 78). The complementary image on this page also highlights indigenous valor. The Tlatelolca warrior Ecatl captures the Spanish banner from his adversary; Barlow identified the figure who carries a solar shield as Pedro de Alvarado, because the indigenous called him Tonatiuh (sun) (Barlow 1949, 130). Alvarado was also leading the Spanish avant-garde during this attack (Rajagopalan 2019, 76-83). Finally, Tecuichpotzin, her elite companions, and the men who transport them dominate the composition of page 24r. The predominance of indigenous figures reflects, in part, the intended audience, who would have taken an interest in individuals like Malinche, Tecuichpotzin (later known as Isabel de Montezuma), Ixtlilxochitl, and don Martín Ecatzin (described in some accounts as a governor of Tlatelolco), each of whose lives and descendants continued to impact life in New Spain.

This trend suggests that we might expect to see a strong indigenous presence on the missing pages. For example, the page opposite 22v probably featured Moteuczoma near the seam of the book, in the center of the composition, like Cortés and Malinche. He too may have been frontally positioned with his head turned toward Cortés. Malinche appears in the act of translating as she points to Cortés and gazes toward the opposite page, so he surely would have been depicted in close proximity. One would expect to find a similar size entourage behind Moteuczoma, perhaps made up of the well-known high-ranking individuals listed in other accounts. The Nahuatl text of the *Florentine Codex*, for example, states that:

> And as to each of the rulers who went with him, they were: first, Cacamatzin, ruler of Tetzcoco; second Tetlepanquetzatzin, ruler of Tlacopan; third, the Tlacochcalcatl Itzquauhtzin, ruler of Tlatelolco; fourth, Topantemoctzin, Moteucçoma's storekeeper in Tlatelolco. These were the ones who went (Lockhart 2004, 118).

The text goes on to name some of the additional Tenochca noblemen. Both the Annals of Tlatelolco and the *Florentine Codex* emphasize the presentation of gifts. Moteuczoma may have held the necklace or flowers he would present to Cortés, as in the related Durán image (fig. 2). The oddly spotted terrain beneath the Spaniards on

page 22v may represent the marks left by the many horses that preceded Cortés on the causeway. The *Florentine Codex* describes the impact of these new creatures on the causeway and depicts the round marks left behind in an image on folio 429v:

> The horses, the deer, neighed, there was much neighing, and they would sweat a great deal; water seemed to fall from them. And their flecks of foam splatted on the ground, like soapsuds splatting. As they went they made a beating, throbbing, and hoof-pounding like throwing stones. Their hooves made holes, they dug holes in the ground wherever they placed them. Separate holes formed wherever they went placing their hindlegs and forelegs (Lockhart 2004, 110).

If this is what the *Codex Azcatitlan tlacuilo* recorded, the trampled terrain may have been absent on Moteuczoma's side to contrast their means of transport. Perhaps the Tenochca ruler's elite attendants and feathered litter would have provided a counterpoint to Cortés' African servant and horse.

Since the depiction of the massacre during the Feast of Toxcatl on page 23r features Mexica performers, spectators, victims, and warriors, the page opposite surely must have registered the Mexica foes. The three Mexica warriors engaged in active combat face foes that were ignominiously placed along the book's seam. The adversary located at the bottom of the seam wears indigenous dress and represents one of the Spanish allies. Graulich interpreted the figure holding the banner as a Tlaxcalteca ally of the Spanish (*Codex Azcatitlan* 1995b, 138, n. 92). However, because this individual wears a net cape, he likely represents a Mexica who has captured the Spanish banner; both the Annals of Tlatelolco and the *Florentine Codex* indicate that dancers during the Feast of Toxcatl wore such garments (Lockhart 2004, 130, 132, 257, 259). Visual evidence along the seam indicates that the missing page featured Cortés' indigenous allies and this is in keeping with the *tlacuilo*'s focus on indigenous participation. Given the nature of the event, a surprise ambush during a sacred ritual event at the Templo Mayor, and a vengeful retaliation that would ultimately drive the Spanish from the city, the missing page must also have depicted Spanish conquistadors. Since most accounts concur that Pedro de Alvarado instigated the attack in Cortés' absence, and because Alvarado is pictured on page 23v, he may well have figured in the missing part of the composition. Ecatl battles Alvarado on 23v and may have appeared in the missing composition opposite 23r as well. *Codex Aubin* describes the Tlatelolca general Ecatl as warning Moteuczoma of the ambush (Rajagopalan 2019, Appendix 2). According to the Annals of Tlatelolco, Moteuczoma and Itzquauhtzin, the *tlacochcalcatl* (military governor) in Tlatelolco, were already being held by the Spanish and would not have been part of the retaliation (Lockhart 2004, 257, 259).

Plate 23v depicts two triumphant indigenous nobles. Although on opposite sides of the battle, each one experiences a moment of success during the rout of the Spaniards at Tlatelolco. Ixtlilxochitl saves Cortés from near death and Ecatl captures the Spanish banner from Alvarado. Since the extant images on pages 22v and 23r imply that each formed part of a coherent scene encapsulating an event in a two-page composition, we might

Fig. 3: (Above) *Codex Azcatitlan*, Page 23r. Courtesy of the Bibliothèque nationale de France. (Below) *Historia de las Indias de Nueva España e islas de la tierra firme*, Folio 211r. Courtesy of the Bibioteca Nacional de España, Madrid.

assume the same for page 23v. Immediately following the capture of the Spanish banner, both Spanish and indigenous sources document the devastating losses on the part of the Spaniards and the ensuing Mexica sacrifice of Spanish conquistadors, along with their indigenous allies and horses. Related subject matter likely filled the page opposite 23v. Perhaps Cuauhtemoc, who was heading the Mexica forces at this time, appeared in the composition. As a ruler of Tlatelolca descent (Terraciano 2014, 224-225) he was of particular interest to the *Codex Azcatitlan tlacuilo* and his death is given prominent coverage in the center of the composition on pages 24v-25r (Rajagopalan 2019, 88). The pictorial representation of his death has much in common with the account in Document 1 of the Annals of Tlatelolco, where Cuauhtemoc is presented as a Tlatelolca ruler (*Anales de Tlatelolco* 1999, 28-47; Rajagopalan 2019, 93-99; Terraciano 2014, 224-225).

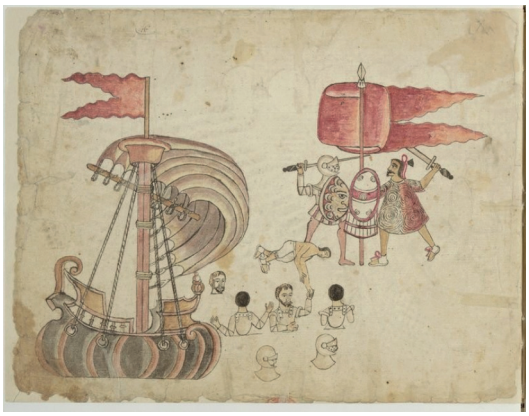

Fig. 4: *Codex Azcatitlan*, Page 23v. Courtesy of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

The events on 23v occurred toward the very end of the conquest of Tenochtitlan-Tlatelolco, leaving few narrative possibilities for the final missing page opposite the evacuation of the noble women on 24r. If we assume that the page opposite recorded another part of the same event, the most likely subject matter is the surrender of Cuauhtemoc to Cortés. Sixteenth-century Spanish accounts describe García Holguín capturing Cuauhtemoc from his boat and taking him to a rooftop location in Tlatelolco to surrender (Cortés 1986, 264-265; Díaz del Castillo 2012, 430-433; López de Gómara 1965, 292). The account of conquistador Bernal Díaz del Castillo specifically mentions Cuauhtemoc's wife. He describes Cuauhtemoc as trying to escape in several canoes filled with his possessions, family, and women. After his capture and surrender:

> Cortés asked after his wife and the other great ladies, wives of the other captains they told him came with Guatemuz [Cuauhtemoc]. Guatemuz himself replied and said that he had begged Gonzalo de Sandoval and García Holguín to allow them to stay in the canoes while he came to see what Malinche ordered. Cortés sent for them at once and ordered them given the best food they had in the camp, and then, because it was late and beginning to rain, Cortés arranged for them to go immediately to Coyoacan… (Díaz del Castillo 2012, 432-433).

Similarly, cell 48 on *Lienzo de Tlaxcala* depicts several elegant women on a rooftop, including Tecuichpotzin who is named with a glyph, as they witness Cuauhtemoc's surrender and await evacuation. In *Codex Azcatitlan*, Cuauhtemoc's wife Tecuichpotzin is identified by her *huipilli* (blouse; pl. *huipilme*) that incorporates the *xiuhtlalpilli tilmatli* (turquoise-tied mantle) design, associated with rulers in the Valley of Mexico (Olko 2005, 228; Rajagopalan 2019, 83-85).

While Spanish sources claim that Cuauhtemoc was captured, some indigenous sources present his surrender as voluntary. The Annals of Tlatelolco describe the end of the war at Amaxac: "When it was done, when it was over, Coyohuehuetzin, To-

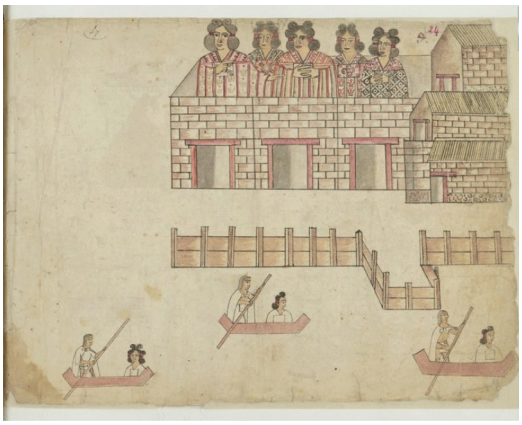

Fig. 5: *Codex Azcatitlan*, Pages 24r.
Courtesy of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

pantemoctzin, and Temilotzin went and delivered Quauhtemoctzin [Cuauhtemoc] to the place where the Captain, don Pedro de Alvarado, and Marina were" (Lockhart 2004, 269). The *Florentine Codex* names these and other rulers as present at the end and states that:

> Then they took Quauhtemoctzin [Cuauhtemoc] in a boat. In it were only two people accompanying him, going with him: Tepotzitoloc, a seasoned warrior, and Iaztachimal, Quauhtemoctzin's page, with one person who poled them along, named Cenyaotl. When they were about to take Quauhtemoctzin, all the people wept, saying, "There goes the lord Quauhtemoctzin, going to give himself to the gods, the Spaniards" (Lockhart 2004, 244).

The page opposite 24r probably provided a continuation of the aquatic scene and may have shown Cuauhtemoc approaching Amaxac by boat or surrendering to Cortés on a rooftop at Amaxac. Since *Codex Azcatitlan* emphasizes the indigenous roles in the conquest, the *tlacuilo* may have depicted indigenous witnesses to the surrender.

AN UNFLATTERING VIEW OF THE SPANISH

Another thematic tendency that should inform our understanding of *Codex Azcatitlan*'s missing pages is that the *tlacuilo* opts to present the Spanish in an unflattering light. In contrast to related scenes in the *Lienzo de Tlaxcala* (cell 11) and Book 12 of the *Florentine Codex* (folio 433r), when Cortés meets Moteuczoma in *Codex Azcatitlan*, he appears deferential as he removes his hat and he is not seated on a throne or Spanish chair. In comparison to the related image in Durán's *Historia* (fig. 2), he is not allotted as much compositional space and there are no feathers in his hat to add

prestige. The use of pigment draws the viewer's attention equally to Cortés, Malinche, and the African servant.

The next two scenes mark two moments in the conquest when the Mexica gain the upper hand. The *tlacuilo* shows the massacre during the Feast of Toxcatl on page 23r by recording the attack on the drummers, the death of a visiting ruler, and the treatment of the fallen, but the center of the composition, and presumably a good portion of the missing page, depicted the retaliation. According to the *Florentine Codex* and through the *Codex Azcatitlan tlacuilo's* choice of narrative content, this retaliation marked the true start of the war (Lockhart 2004, 21). It leads to the imprisonment of the Spanish in Axayacatl's palace and within a short time to their disastrous retreat on the Noche Triste. In contrast to indigenous scripted accounts and images in Durán's *Historia* (fol. 211r) and the *Florentine Codex* (fols. 440r-440v), the brutality of the massacre is downplayed and the acts of vengeance take center stage (fig. 3). In his record of the rout of the Spaniards at Tlatelolco on page 23v, the *tlacuilo* painted both Cortés and Alvarado in defeat. Images of the ensuing sacrifices would have furthered the humiliation. This victory in Tlatelolco marked the second and last expulsion of Cortés' troops before Cuauhtemoc's surrender. The surrender opposite page 24r, would have represented a Spanish triumph, but the *tlacuilo* likely expressed the indigenous loss with dignity and probably followed other indigenous sources in presenting the surrender as a choice made by Cuauhtemoc and his men (albeit under duress), rather than an involuntary capture. The women evacuating the city are well dressed and coiffed and there is no evidence of the devastation chronicled in so many other accounts. None of Cortés' many successful martial maneuvers are recorded.

A reading of these pages is also informed by the representation of the Spanish in the post-conquest pages (see Rajagopalan 2019, 87-127). On pages 24v-25v, the religious figures are shown in a relatively neutral fashion. The tonsured friars introduce Christianity and baptism on page 24v and the arrival in 1527 of Fray Julián Garcés, first Bishop of Mexico, is documented on page 25v. Cortés is not pictured in these pages, but the events recorded allude to his actions and, from an indigenous perspective, again position him in an unfavorable light. On pages 24v-25r, the *tlacuilo* records the conquistador's assassination in 1525 of the indigenous rulers Cuauhtemoc (of Tenochtitlan), Coanacoch (of Texcoco), and Tetlepanquetzal (of Tlacopan) on the Honduran expedition. On page 25r, the *tlacuilo* records the plot against Cortés that occurred during his absence on the Honduran expedition. On page 25v, the arrival of Fray Julián Garcés, bishop of Tlaxcala, in Mexico City in October 1527 coincides with the date of Cortés' forced exile from the city at the hands of Alonso Estrada, who had been recently appointed as acting governor of New Spain (López de Gómara 1965, 383-384). An oral recitation of the history presented in *Codex Azcatitlan*, one that supplemented or read between the lines of the pictorial content, may well have mentioned this, in effect, Cortés' third expulsion from the city. Finally, the image of a greedy, treasure-seeking Spaniard overseeing the torture and death of two figures appears on the lower part of page 25v.

While the post-conquest images arguably present an unflattering representation of the Spanish and of Cortés, as viewed from an indigenous perspective, they do not show overtly controversial imagery. I suspect that the pages opposite 23r, showing Mexica violence against the Spaniards after the Feast of Toxcatl, and 23v, showing the sacrifice of numerous Spaniards, were considered more problematic in the late sixteenth century. I suggest that the narrative and pictorial content on these pages was the reason for their excision.

THE USE OF SIMULTANEOUS NARRATIVE

The pages in question, 23r and 23v, are characterized by the artist's use of simultaneous narrative, (Castañeda de la Paz 2012, 8; *Codex Azcatitlan* 1995b, 138, n. 92; Rajagopalan 2019, 69-86). On each extant page, he creates a unified composition that records several discrete temporal moments. On page 23r, the *tlacuilo* depicts events that occurred during the day of the massacre during the Feast of Toxcatl. The attack began in the morning, in the main plaza before the Templo Mayor, on a day set aside to honor the deity Huitzilopochtli, at the beginning of the ritual month of Toxcatl. Both the *Florentine Codex* and the Annals of Tlatelolco describe the violence as beginning with the attack on the drummers and the severing of their hands (Lockhart 2004, 133-5, 259). On 23r, the severed hands of one drummer mark the very start of the conflict. The drummer's eyes are open and he has not yet perished. His assailant is not pictured. Both accounts describe how the Spanish cut off the four entrances to the plaza and commenced an unimpeded massacre of the unarmed ritual participants (Lockhart 2004, 126-136, 257, 259). The Annals of Tlatelolco state that the attack went on for three hours and that some of the visiting noblemen were killed, including Cohualpopocatzin, the ruler of Nauhtla who was shot with arrows and then burned alive; the fallen ruler on 23r with an arrow through his leg probably represents this elite guest (Lockhart 2004, 257, 259).[6] Although the Annals of Tlatelolco make it clear that Moteuczoma and Itzquauhtzin were already incarcerated before the attack began, it describes their verbal pleas for the Spanish to cease the violence. This relatively compact account of the massacre proceeds immediately to twenty days later when Cortés returned and the Mexica bested his forces on the Noche Triste.

[6] While this figure has sometimes been interpreted as the fallen Moteuczoma Xocoyotzin (*Codex Azcatitlan* 1995b, 138, n. 92; Navarrete 2004, 156), most sources describe the Mexica ruler receiving his fatal wounds from a flat rooftop, rather than a temple (Graulich 2014, 452). The *xiuhtlalpilli tilmatli* this figure wears marks his high status, but is not exclusive to Moteuczoma. In *Codex Azcatitlan* it is associated with Moteuczoma (21v), a poorly painted version appears on Axayacatl (18v), and it is used on the *huipilli* of Tecuichpotzin to signal her relationship to Cuauhtemoc (24r). Justyna Olko notes that this mantle was associated with Mexica rulers, but also worn by other Valley of Mexico rulers (2005, 228).

In contrast, the lengthy account in Book 12 of the *Florentine Codex* describes additional events of the day (Lockhart 2004, 136-142). When word of the massacre got out, there was a call to arms and the retaliation began. The text and images describe the Spaniards eventually retreating to the Palace of Axayacatl where they had been staying, continuing their attack from within the fortified palace, and shackling Moteuczoma. It also describes the Mexica identification of the bodies, mourning, and the burning of bodies at the *cuauhxicalco* (a round circular platform used for cremation) and other locations. On that same day, at sunset, Itzquauhtzin addressed the Mexica warriors from a rooftop terrace and conveyed Moteuczoma's desire for them to cease fighting; the Mexica responded with derision and shot arrows to the rooftop. In the following days, the Mexica held the Spaniards hostage in the palace and cut off supplies of food and fresh water.

Codex Azcatitlan depicts some of these events that followed the massacre. On page 23r, the *cuahxicalco* appears at the foot of the Templo Mayor, between the drummers and the figure bearing the banner (Rajagopalan 2019, 74-75). It is marked by a glyph made up of an eagle and a vessel: cuauh[tl] (eagle) + xical[li] (vessel) + -co (locative suffix). The deceased figures next to this sign reference the victims to be cremated; two are still costumed in ritual attire. The location at the foot of the temple reflected the site of cremation. Similarly, the *Florentine Codex* depicts the cremation of Moteuczoma and Ixquauhtzin at the foot of the temples at Copolco and Tlatelolco respectively (Lockhart 2004, 150-153). The armed figures represent Mexica warriors in the act of retaliation that occurred several hours after the massacre. The three closest to the seam of the book carry shields with down balls (associated with the Mexica) and the other two wear clothing associated with the ritual activities of the day (a net cape and a hummingbird costume appropriate for the veneration of Huitzilopochtli).

Since the composition on page 23r combines events that occurred throughout the day, we might expect to see additional moments associated with the massacre on the missing opposite page. All of the living figures on 23r face left and one can imagine that all or most of the figures on the missing opposite page would have faced right. The right half of the missing page must have had scenes of armed conflict and Spaniards would have appeared somewhere in the composition. Since the Spanish banner appears in the hands of a Mexica warrior, the *Codex Azcatitlan tlacuilo* depicts a moment when the tide has turned. As the *Florentine Codex* informants describe:

> And when it became known [what was happening], everyone cried out, "Mexica warriors, come running, get outfitted with devices, shields, and arrows, hurry, come running, the warriors are dying; they have died, perished, been annihilated, o Mexica warriors!" Thereupon there were war cries, shouting, and beating of hands against lips. The warriors quickly came outfitted, bunched together, carrying arrows and shields. Then the fighting began; they shot at them with barbed darts, spears, and tridents, and they hurled darts with broad obsidian points at them. A cloud of yellow reeds spread over the Spaniards (Lockhart 2004, 136).

The *Codex Azcatitlan tlacuilo* privileges this moment by placing it at the center of his two-page composition. In the *Florentine Codex*, the corresponding image on folio

441r is one of the few pigmented images in Book 12 (fig. 6). As in the retaliation scene in Durán's *Historia* (folio 213v), the colorful Mexica warrior garb contrasts with the uniform gray of the Spanish armor. In the *Florentine Codex* image the spear of the Mexica warrior crosses the face of his opponent, prefiguring his death, a second Spaniard falls to the ground, and a third is trampled below.

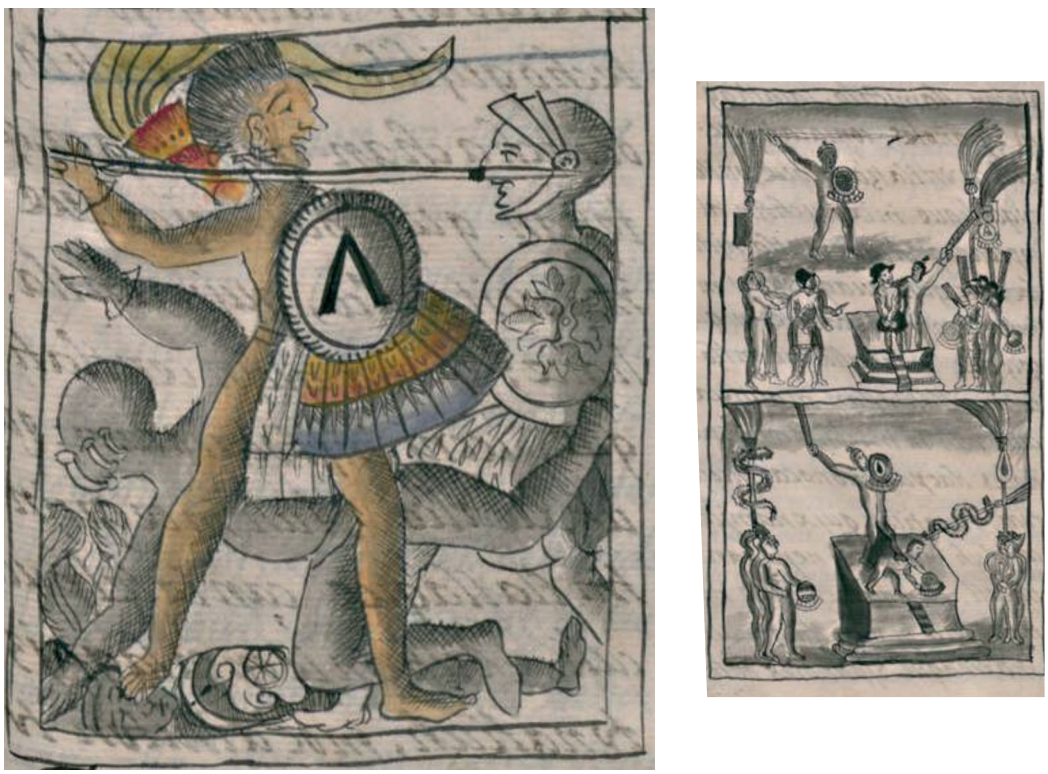

Fig. 6: (Left) *Florentine Codex*, Book 12, Florence, The Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Med. Palat. 220, vol. 3, folio 441r. Reproduced with permission of MiBACT. Further reproduction by any means is prohibited. (Right) *Historia de las Indias de Nueva España e islas de la tierra firme*, folio 213v. Courtesy of the Bibioteca Nacional de España, Madrid.

Codex Azcatitlan's missing opposite page likely added the additional temporal component of the Spanish retreating to their fortified palace and may have depicted Itzquauhtzin and Moteuczoma addressing the Mexica. Related pictorial images appear in the *Florentine Codex* (folios 443r-443v), the *Lienzo de Tlaxcala* (cell 14), and Durán's *Historia* (folio 213v). In the *Lienzo de Tlaxcala*, armed and costumed warriors surround the palace walls, while Malinche, mounted Spaniards, and their allies huddle

within. The severed body parts that litter the interior of the enclosure document the violent success of the Mexica warriors. Both Durán's *Historia* and *Codex Azcatitlan* depicted the structures that lined the main plaza of the Templo Mayor with arcaded walls, an anachronism that helped their contemporary viewers place the historical events they depicted (fig. 3). In the late sixteenth century, the site of Axayacatl's palace, today found on the Calle Monte de Piedad opposite the Metropolitan Cathedral, would have been one of those arcaded structures.[7] The structures on the missing page might have had components similar to the arcade on page 23r.

The rout of the Spanish at Tlatelolco on page 23v also combines different temporal moments and geographic spaces (Castañeda de la Paz and Oudijk 2012, 10-12; Rajagopalan 2019, 76-83). Both events depicted took place on the same day along the northern Tacuba causeway at some distance from one another. On that day, Cortés was leading the rear guard and Alvarado was in the vanguard, pushing closer to Tlatelolco's center. The rout occurred when Alvarado advanced over a poorly filled bridge that failed. Unable to retreat, the Spanish-led troops succumbed to a Mexica ambush. For the Mexica, the battle represented a tremendous success. According to indigenous sources, one of the defining moments of the victory occurred when the Tlatelolca warrior Ecatl captured the Spanish standard on the Tlilhuacan road near the terminus of the causeway, a place later known as San Martín. This event is described in multiple sources, including the accounts of Alva Ixlilxochitl, Durán, Sahagún, and the Annals of Tlateloclo (Alva Ixtlilxochitl 2015, 49; Durán 1994, 555-556; Lockhart 2004, 212, 216, 265, 267, n.30; *Anales de Tlatelolco* 1999, 45). In addition to scripted references, the *Florentine Codex* depicts Ecatl's capture of the banner twice (folios 473r and 474r) (fig. 7).

As with page 23r and its opposite, page 23v's missing page probably continued the narrative by recording additional events of that day. Without doubt, the most notable activities following the capture of the banner were the seizure and sacrifice of the Spanish, their allies, and their horses and the mounting of the victims' heads on skull racks. While the capture of the banner was of particular importance to the indigenous chroniclers, the subsequent sacrifices profoundly impacted both sides and are well documented in numerous accounts. The Annals of Tlatelolco describe the fighting at this time as led by Tlatelolca forces and they claim credit for the victorious actions of the day:

> And when they reached Yacacolco here, Spaniards were captured on the Tlilhuacan road, as well as all the people from the various altepetl. Two thousand died there, and the Tlatelolca were exclusively responsible for it.
>
> At this time we Tlatelolca set up skull racks; skull racks were in three places. One was in the temple courtyard at Tlillan, where the heads of our lords [the Spaniards] were strung; the second place was in Yacacolco, where the heads of our lords were strung, along with the

[7] A map of the Plaza Mayor of Mexico City from 1563 depicts these arcaded walls reproduced in Mundy (2015, 76).

Fig. 7: *Florentine Codex*, Book 12, Florence, The Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Med. Palat. 220, vol. 3, folio 474r; 474v; and 475r.
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> heads of two horses; the third place was in Çacatla, facing the Cihuateocalli [Woman-Temple]. It was the exclusive accomplishment of the Tlatelolca (Lockhart 2004, 265, 267).

Just after the mention of the skull rack at Tlillan, the Ms. 22bis copy of the Annals adds "and there they placed the banner that the tlacatecatl Ecatzin tlapanecatl Popocatzin captured", thereby intimately linking these two events (Lockhart 2004, 313, n. 30). The *Florentine Codex* claims that fifty-three Spaniards were taken, "as well as many Tlaxcalans and people of Tetzcoco, Chalco, and Xochimilco" and that "they killed all of them before their former gods" (Lockhart 2004, 214). After describing how "a great abundance were captured and killed," the text describes the ushering of the captives to Yacacolco and then the sacrifice:

> When they got them to Yacacolco, they lined them all up. Each one went to the altar platform, where the sacrifice was performed. The Spaniards went first, going in the lead; the people of all the different altepetl just followed, coming last. And when the sacrifice was over, they strung the Spaniards' heads on poles [on the skull rack]; they also strung up the horses' heads. They placed them below, and the Spaniards' heads were above them, strung up facing east. But they did not string up the heads of all the various [other] people from far away. There were fifty-three of the Spaniards they captured, along with four horses (Lockhart 2004, 216, 218).

The pictorial images in the *Florentine Codex* show Ecatl's capture of the banner, the taking of captives, and the transport to Yacacolco (folio 474r); the sacrifice of Spaniards and indigenous allies (folio 474v); and the skull rack displaying Spanish heads on top and horse heads on bottom (folio 475r) (fig. 7). These are some of the last images in Book 12 and they mark the final Mexica victory. Thereafter, the Spanish drove the warriors into the marketplace and, as the Annals of Tlatelolco put it, "That was when the great Tlatelolca warriors were entirely vanquished. With that the fighting stopped once and for all (Lockhart 2004, 267).

The Spanish accounts describe the events of this day in grave terms. Bernal Díaz del Castillo was fighting alongside Alvarado in the vanguard and reports hearing the doleful sound of the drums at a distance, writing that "at that moment, as we learned later, they were offering ten hearts and much blood from our companions to the idols I have mentioned" (2012, 408). His account suggests that the Mexica then used the severed heads as a terrorizing tactic:

> Because we were in that condition, greatly distressed and wounded, and we knew nothing of Cortés and Sandoval and their armies, we did not know whether or not they had been killed or defeated, as the Mexicans told us when they threw the five heads before us, which they held by their hair and their beards; and they said they had already killed Malinche and all the teules and that they were going to kill us in that way that same day. We could not know anything about them because we were battling about half a league from each other, and where they defeated Cortés was farther away… (Díaz del Castillo 2012, 408-409).

He later goes on to state that the Mexica successfully employed the same tactic against Cortés' troops, throwing down four more heads, streaming with blood, and claiming they were Pedro de Alvarado, Sandoval, and Bernal Díaz (Díaz del Castillo 2012, 409). Likewise, six heads were thrown before Sandoval (Díaz del Castillo 2012, 410).

Cortés' letters offer a similar account, describing the use of the heads, the vast numbers killed, and the sacrificial acts (Cortés 1986, 240-241):

> Once they had gained their victory, the people of the city, in order to terrify the alguacil mayor and Pedro de Alvarado, took all the Spaniards they had captured dead or alive to Tlatelulco, which is the market, and on some high towers which are there sacrificed them naked, opening their chests and tearing out their hearts as an offering to the idols. The Spaniards of Alvarado's camp could see this clearly from where they were fighting, and recognized those who were being sacrificed as Christians by their white naked bodies (Cortés 1986, 241).

He also describes how the Mexica "carried about and displayed" the heads of Christians and horses among the subject provinces as proof of their victory (Cortés 1986, 242).

THE CONQUEST AND COSMIC TIME

In his study of Andean and Mesoamerican representations of the conquest, Federico Navarrete has discussed Mesoamerican conceptual links between massacre and sacrifice, arguing that in the *Lienzo de Tlaxcala*'s depiction of the siege of Tenochtitlan (cell 42), "the conquest is presented as an act of sacrificial violence that led to the destruction of the old cosmic order, centered on Mexico-Tenochtitlan, and, implicitly, to the foundation of a new political and Christian order" (2008, 67). *Codex Azcatitlan* too presents the conquest in cosmic terms. As I have argued elsewhere (Rajagopalan 2019, 81-83), the figure of Ecatl on page 23v links the past and the future. The *tlacuilo* depicts him with a shield that bears a quincunx pattern, a symbol of the four previous Eras, or Suns, and the fifth Era the Mexica understood themselves to be living in. Ecatl battles the coming Sun, the new era of Spanish domination, in the form of Alvarado. His tunic bears the twin flows of water that characterize descriptions of the sacred springs found at Mexica sites of origin and that accompanied the omen of the eagle on a nopal cactus when Ecatl's ancestors founded the twin cities of Tenochtitlan and Tlatelolco. This reference to the sacred springs also connects directly the figure of Ecatl, and the ensuing sacrifices, to page 4v of the manuscript, the site of another missing page.

THE FIRST MISSING LEAF – THE PRECEDENT FOR HUMAN SACRIFICE

The first missing leaf occurs between pages 4v and 5r in the account of the Mexica migration from Aztlan to Tenochtitlan-Tlatelolco. Page 4v features an anthropomorphized rendering of the Place of the Seven Caves, glossed Chicomoztoc, and a scene of

sacrifice presided over by the Mexica tutelary deity Huitzilopochtli (Hummingbird of the Left). Page 5r, one of the most highly pigmented scenes in the manuscript, depicts several Mexica travelers and two female godbearers traversing a winding and dangerous landscape. The lack of unity in the compositions of pages 4v and 5r is one of the first indications that a page is missing. Although the bundle of the leftmost figure on page 5r appears to be completed on page 4v, it is likely a later addition meant to unify the extant pages (*Codex Azcatitlan* 1995b, 60, n. 22). The elaborate landscape and painterly contouring of page 5r are not present on page 4v. Though the female figures are located at approximately the same place on the page, those on page 5r are considerably larger. Pages 4v and 5r also differ in their representation of space. On page 4v the *tlacuilo* combines profile perspectives with landscape elements that are depicted as if seen from above. In contrast, he uses color, scale, and figural positioning to create a sense of perspective and recession into space on page 5r. Such a marked contrast does not occur on facing pages in other parts of the manuscript. It seems likely that the page opposite 5r would have had a similar narrative content (the perils of the journey) and painterly landscape. Likewise, the page opposite 4v would have further amplified the narrative content in a similar aesthetic style.

Page 4v of *Codex Azcatitlan* depicts a crucial moment in the migration narrative when the Aztecs, through the intervention of their god Huitzilopochtli, take on a new identity as the Mexica people. The left side of the page is dominated by the profile rendering of an abstracted animal figure with a toothy open maw and two narrowed crescent eyes. By placing two biznaga cacti on the lower part of the figure and surrounding it with an exterior line in the shape of a place glyph, the *tlacuilo* reinforces our reading of this as a physical space. The openings between the six paws, and perhaps the maw itself, suggest caves, an interpretation reinforced by the gloss "Chicomoztoc" (place of the seven caves). Perched halfway up the hill, a representation of Huitzilopochtli (as a hybrid human-hummingbird figure) overlooks the results of a sacrificial offering below. In his talons, the deity holds the fire drill used to spark new fire every fifty-two years during *Toxhiuhmolpilia* (the New Fire Ceremony). Below him, the head of a male, adorned with a ball of heron feathers that signal his Mexica identity, appears above a bow and arrow (*Codex Azcatitlan* 1995b, 58). To the right, a spring that is bifurcated by two different colors of pigment flows from the base of a tree. Two sacrificed male figures float face down in the stream, along with a set of spiraling entrails. The reed mats that float next to each figure may signal their high status and are referenced in the gloss. To the right of the stream, two males and a female sit surrounded by a temple and three houses that indicate their settlement. All of the figures face right and the female points in this direction, signaling the reading order of the narrative. The eight year-bearers on the upper right of page 4v record the years 4 Reed to 11 Rabbit (glossed 1171-1178).

Codex Azcatitlan's page 4v approximates the pictorial content found in *Codex Boturini* on plate 4. On plate 4, the *Codex Boturini tlacuilo* depicts Huitzilopochtli, here in the guise of an eagle, conferring upon the Aztecs a new identity as "Mexica" with

attendant privileges and obligations. The four god-bearers lead the way; from right to left, they are Tezcacoatl, Cuauhcoatl, Apanecatl, and the female Chimalma. The figure of Huitzilopochtli emerges from the *tlaquimilolli* (god-bundle) carried by Tezcacoatl and issues directives as indicated by the speech scrolls. In the following scene, the directives are carried out. A figure bearing the reed-water sign associated with Aztlan is shown enacting a heart sacrifice on the first of three victims that are stretched out over barrel cacti and a mesquite. Shown in rough animal skin clothing, these figures embody rugged Chichimec ancestry. Two bear name glyphs (a turquoise mosaic and a fish). The narrative then moves to the upper register. Once they enact the sacrifice, Huitzilopochtli provides them with a new identity and the promise of future success. The male figure now appears with balls of feathers in his hair and is no longer associated with the glyph for Aztlan. He receives a bow and arrow, a net bag for gathering food, and a *xiuhmamalhuaztli* (the instrument used to light New Fire). In both manuscripts, Huitzilopochtli introduces the practice of human sacrifice; when the Aztecs engage in this act, they garner the support of their deity, a new identity, and the promise of future greatness.

Fernando de Alvarado Tezozomoc's "History or Chronicle with Its Calendar of the Mexica Years", recorded by the Nahua scholar Domingo de San Antón Muñon Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin (hereinafter Chimalpahin) in the early part of the seventeenth century, links closely to the pictorial content on *Codex Boturini*'s plate 4 and *Codex Azcatitlan*'s page 4v:

> Later, as they continued on their way, they came to the devils of the barrel cactus; they lay beside it. And at the foot of the mesquites lay some seven of those whom they named Mimixcoa. One man was named Xiuhneltzin; the second was named Mimichtzin; the third was a woman, their elder sister, named Teoxahual; and there were four more devils whose names are not known. There Huitzilopochtli spoke to the aforesaid Azteca god-carriers… And also he spoke to the leader, the ruler of the Azteca Mexitin who had been dwelling in the very great altepetl and city of Aztlan Chicomoztoc or, as we name it, Aztlan Aztatlan, the abode of herons. Hence it is known as Aztlan. Now Aztlan Chicomoztoc is perhaps right by or near the very great shore, the great riverbank that the Spaniards now call New Mexico… Huitzilopochtli spoke to the god-carriers. He said to them: Take those who are by the barrel cactus. They will be the first to pay tribute (Chimalpahin 1997, I-73).

Plate 4 of *Codex Boturini* seems to indicate that the "tribute" in question was the loss of their life at the hands of the Aztecs. Of the seven referenced in the passage above, *Codex Boturini* depicts the three most important ones, naming Xiuhneltzin (turquoise mosaic) and Mimichtzin (fish). According to Guilhem Olivier, the face paint on the third figure may identify her as Teoxahual, obviating the need for a name glyph (Olivier 2015, 483-484). On *Codex Aubin*'s plate 5v, three figures, two men and a woman, are shown lying near barrel cacti and a mesquite.[8] In *Codex Azcatitlan*,

[8] *Codex Aubin* is located in the British Museum.

two sacrificed figures float in the water near a spring or riverbank that flows from a mesquite. The large barrel cacti on Chicomoztoc may also refer to the victims and their sacrifice. The missing page opposite 4v likely depicted additional acts of sacrifice.

Tezozomoc's account follows immediately thereafter by explaining that when they emerged from Aztlan they were called "Aztecs," but later they became "Mexitin":

And thus were they given their name: as the ancient ones have said, it was Huitzilopochtli who gave them the name.

> And then and there he changed the Aztecas' name for them. He said to them: Now no longer is your name Azteca: you are now Mexitin. There they also applied feathers to their ears when they took their name as Mexitin. Hence they are now called Mexica. And he then also gave them the arrow and the bow and the net carrying-bag. Whatever went [flying] above, the Mexitin could shoot easily (Chimalpahin 1997, I-73).

Just as in *Codex Boturini*, the sacrifice leads to the gifts that will ease their way. Next, it describes Huitzilopochtli's exhortations to Chalchiuhtlatonac, the ruler of the Azteca Mexitin and the promise of great wealth. As in *Codex Azcatitlan*, the text indicates that they left Quinehuayan Chicomoztoc in a 12 Reed year.

In his study of the sacrifice of the Mimixcoa during the Mexica migration history, Guilhem Olivier has suggested that those who were sacrificed on the biznagas were intended for the dwelling of the Sun (Olivier 2015, 492). In the narratives of Mexica migration, this represents the first sacrifice to the Sun, or Huitzilopochtli. Thus, on page 4v of *Codex Azcatitlan* and its opposite, the *tlacuilo* shows the first sacrifices that enable and create Mexica identity. It is presented as the moment when the New Fire Ceremony (and the reckoning of time) began to occur. In the conquest section of *Codex Azcatitlan*, on page 23v, Ecatl battles to protect the Fifth Sun and the final sacrifices are imminent. By page 24r, Huitzilopochtli has withdrawn his favor and a new era of negotiating Spanish hegemony will begin.

CONCLUSION

If the content of the missing pages of *Codex Azcatitlan* fell into the narrative categories described here, the missing leaves may have been excised because they depicted overt images of violence against the Spaniards and images of human sacrifice. In New Spain, book censorship was on the rise after 1560 and even works like Sahagún's *Historia* were considered suspect (Rajagopalan 2019, 123-126). The latter manuscript was banned from circulation in 1577. María Castañeda de la Paz has demonstrated that the handwriting in *Codex Azcatitlan*, Codex Cozcatzin, and Codex Ixhuatepec is the same (Castañeda de la Paz 2009, 86). Because scripted writing is integral to the function of the latter two documents, while the glosses are unfinished and more incidental in *Codex Azcatitlan*, it seems likely that *Codex Azcatitlan* was accessed or owned by the scribe that produced the written text of the other two manuscripts.

The style of the pictographic content in each varies, indicating different painters. It is possible that the *Codex Azcatitlan tlacuilo* himself, or a later Nahua custodian, removed the offending pages as a way to preserve the manuscript from the increased scrutiny of the Inquisition.

The scripted glosses on pages 4v and 5r, perhaps added after or at the time of the excision of the pages, belie or smooth over the non-consecutive content. On page 4v the glosses read, "*ymauh*," (their water) and "*omca motetzahuique nauhxihuitl. onca quissaia ssin. / tocoian yntlaca cuitlaxcolli petlatl onca quincauh ynteuh*" (There, they have been bewitched for four years. There they left to plant the dried maize / There they left the place where the corn is planted. Their god left them the human entrails on the mat). The former references settlement; the word *ymauh* also appears on page 3v where a group of figures are shown preparing food, constructing houses, and gathering the fresh water that has allowed them to settle temporarily. The latter gloss suggests that they were "bewitched" for four years at Chicomoztoc, but eight year-bearers, representing 4 Reed to 11 Rabbit or 1171-1178, appear at the top of the page. While *Codex Boturini* depicts the Aztec leader enacting the sacrifice, the gloss in *Codex Azcatitlan* implies that Huitzilopochtli carried out the violence (their god left them the human entrails on the mat). The glosses on 5r identify the god-bearers (*quimama inteo*), describe the hardships, "here, they were lost among the mountains, in the forests, in rocky spots, the Mexica followed their path wherever it led" (*homca mixpolloque tepetla cuauhtla texcallco can cani neneca mexica*), and label the varied physical terrain, "among the mountains" (*tepetla*); "in the forests" (*cuauhtla*); and "in rocky spots" (*texcallco*).

If the goal of excising the leaves was one of preservation, it is possible that some of the pigmentation was added at the same time and for the same reason. The application of pigment in *Codex Azcatitlan* is varied and was clearly applied by more than one person. As I have described above, *Codex Azcatitlan* does not cater to a Spanish audience in its narrative content. Perhaps the same person or persons who excised the potentially dangerous leaves added the image of a devil to Acamapichtli's cloak on page 13v, in order to introduce a Christian perspective. Likewise, it is possible that the inclusion of the dove of the Holy Spirit on two of the Spanish banners (22v and 23r) was a late addition designed to associate the arrival of the Spaniards with the coming of Christianity. The banner on 22v differs from the others in the conquest section; the borderline is wavy and uneven and the pigment is applied with an uneven red border and an orangey-red interior. A corresponding banner does not appear in the related Durán image (fig. 2). However, the Durán image uses similar shades of orange and red and similar uneven brushstrokes along the border. Together with all of the compositional parallelisms, one wonders if Durán's *tlacuilo(me)* modified *Codex Azcatitlan* while using it as a source for *Historia de las Indias de Nueva España e islas de tierra firme*, completed around 1581. Certainly *Codex Azcatitlan* appears to have been accessible to indigenous artists and historians well into the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century, since Castañeda de la Paz has shown convincing connections to the Techialoyan manuscript called Codex García Granados (Castañeda de la Paz 2009, 91-92). If the

missing leaves were removed for the reasons stated here, the continued survival and circulation of *Codex Azcatitlan* suggests that the ends justified the means.

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Manuscript received: 31.10.2018
Manuscript accepted: 04.03.2019

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