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## Sahagún's *Tonalpohualli*

Se procedió a examinar el Tonalpohualli con el propósito de esclarecer la relación de las investigaciones tempranas de Sahagún en Tepepulco y su posteriormente iniciada elaboración de la "Historia" en Tlatelolco. La estructura básica de veinte grupos de 13 días es idéntica en ambos, pero el punto de partida es diferente. Las características buenas/malas relativas a los grupos, respectivamente los días principales de cada grupo, con unas pocas excepciones, concuerdan asimismo. La importancia de la posición del día sólo se destaca en los manuscritos de Tlatelolco. En Tepepulco se recalca muy en especial la diferenciación entre comunes y nobles, mientras que los materiales de Tlatelolco se refieren sobre todo a los comerciantes. De estos resultados se deduce que Sahagún ocupó su material de Tepepulco como base para la posterior elaboración, pero sólo en el sentido de que se dejó guiar por éste para sus nuevas investigaciones, y que de ningún modo se trata de una forma de adopción directa.

In the Prologue to Book 2, Fray Bernardino de Sahagún recorded the procedures he followed to secure early versions and the final version of his "Historia". The work commenced in Tepepulco, where, during a two year period, he secured pictorial information from knowledgeable natives. The meaning of the pictorial material was explained orally in Nahuatl, and his scribes recorded the Nahuatl explanation at the foot of



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each painting. This material from the Tepepulco years is known as the "Primeros memoriales" (1559 – 1561).

Sahagún subsequently moved to the Convent of Santiago Tlatelolco with his Tepepulco manuscripts. There for more than a year, with the help of native informants and scribes, he corrected, explained, expanded and rewrote the Tepepulco material. One of the manuscripts resulting from this period is the "Memoriales en tres columnas". Some of the material from this manuscript will be utilized for comparison in this study.

It would be of interest to query the relationships of the Tepepulco manuscripts to the Tlatelolco manuscripts in the light of Sahagún's assertion that the former provided the working basis for the Tlatelolco material. Nicholson (1973: 217 f.) has considered this problem and concludes that there is little carry-over of the ethnographic information collected by Sahagún in Tepepulco, and that "the Primeros memoriales can generally stand on its own as a separate document and should be handled as such rather than merely as a brief, preparatory stage in the compilation of the 'Historia general'". A partial answer to this problem would result from comparing and contrasting a single topic, the *Tonalpohualli*, as it is presented in the Tepepulco and Tlatelolco manuscripts.

Sahagún's recording of the *Tonalpohualli* during his Tepepulco residence is found in the Real Palacio Ms. fols. 286r – 303r (Sahagún 1905 – 1908, VI: 73 – 107).<sup>1</sup> The Tlatelolco discussion of the *Tonalpohualli* in "Memoriales en tres columnas" is found in the Real Palacio Ms. fols. 189v – 242v (Sahagún 1905 – 1908, VII: 280 – 386). Since the Nahuatl text in "Memoriales en tres columnas" and the Florentine Codex are virtually identical, Book 4 of the Florentine Codex has also been consulted and cited (Sahagún 1957).

At Tepepulco, Sahagún's artists and scribes, under his direction, painted and named the 260 days of the *Tonalpohualli*, dividing the days into twenty thirteen-day groups. Sahagún made no comments or corrections. A scribe did add a notation on the day Nine Wind (fol. 289r) observing that this day corresponded to September 25, 1560. For reasons not clear to this writer, the series begins with the day One Dog, rather than the customary beginning day of One Crocodile. An artist's error appears on fol. 288r where the day Two House is substituted for the day Two Motion (Fig.). The error appears to have gone undetected.

At the beginning of each thirteen-day group, a Nahuatl text gives the fate for those born during the corresponding thirteen days (Fig.). The texts are brief, but they can be collectively characterized. Part of the Na-

1 The fol. numbers in the original Ms. are irregular. Paso y Troncoso arranged them to give the days their proper sequence: fols. 286r – 288v, 297r – 300v, 289r – 296v, 301r – 303r.

huatl text from the first thirteen-day group reads as follows (Real Palacio Ms., fol. 286r; Sahagún 1905 – 1908, VI: 73): *Izcatqui in cecemilhuiltlapovalli Compevaltiaya yn itoca 'ce itzcuintli'. Ynin matlaquilhuiltl ome yzquilhuiltl qualli tonalli* (Here are each one of the day counts. The one named One Dog started it. All of these thirteen days are good days). It is thus clear that the assigned fate applies to the thirteen-day group and to each of the days therein. With minor exceptions each Nahuatl text distinguishes between the fate of men and women and between the fate of nobles and commoners. No deities are mentioned in any of the Nahuatl texts.

There is no evidence that any of the Tepepulco texts were utilized in the Tlatelolco Ms. In “*Memoriales en tres columnas*”, the discussion of the *Tonalpohualli* was written anew and with a single pictorial representation. The opening text reads: *Achto tonalpoalli ytoca ce cipactli. vel ipeuhca, vel ytzin ȳ cemilhuiltlapoalli ynic ompeuhtiuhtlatocatiuh yoan ynic ontlatiuht ce xiuitl* (The name of the first day count is One Crocodile. It is the very beginning, the very starting point of all the day counts. In this manner the year [*Tonalpohualli*] goes beginning, goes continuing and goes ending).<sup>2</sup> The proper day, One Crocodile, thus becomes the beginning day of the *Tonalpohualli*. In the longer and more detailed Nahuatl texts, the fate of men vs. women and nobles vs. commoners is often indicated but not with the consistency of the Tepepulco Ms.

The entire text dealing with the *Tonalpohualli* (Book 5 of the “*Memoriales en tres columnas*” and Book 4 of the Florentine Ms.) has been examined to pin-point its salient characteristics. In the early sections the first day of the thirteen-day group becomes the leader and determiner. The remaining twelve days are said to share the qualities of the first day, they become its companions. Had this practice been carried out throughout the entire *Tonalpohualli*, it would have shared a characteristic with the Tepepulco Ms., that is, assigning a uniform fate to each thirteen-day group.

A second characteristic is that an uneven attempt has been made to indicate the unique fate of each of the 260 days of the *Tonalpohualli*. In the first nine thirteen-day groups, a consistent effort was made to mention the singular quality of each day. Furthermore, gods and goddesses are related to specific days: One Reed, Quetzalcoatl; One Death, Tezcatlipoca; Two Reed, Omacatl; One Dog, Xiuhtecutli; Seven Monkey, Chicome Coatl; One Flint, Huitzilopochtli. Reflecting the likelihood that some of the Tlatelolco informants were merchants, extended discus-

2 Real Palacio Ms., fol. 189v; Sahagún 1905 – 1908, VII: 280. For *ontlatiuht* read *ontlantiuht*. Although the Nahuatl text has the term *xiuitl*, “year”, the 260 day period is meant.

sions of merchant ceremonies are given for the days Four Wind, One Serpent, Two Death, and Three Motion.

A third practice was to assign a quality to each of the positions of the thirteen-day group. Since the number and the position correspond, it might be reasoned that the fate relates to the number rather than the position. The reasons favoring position over number are found in the Nahuatl text. The suffix *can* "place" occurs. Also the word *calli* "house" is used and refers to position or place rather than number. Sahagún translates the term *calli* as "casa", and it is to be recalled that in the game of chess "casa" refers to the squares on the chess-board. Based on the information supplied in the Nahuatl text and Sahagún's corresponding Spanish text, the first position is variable, the second, fourth, fifth, sixth, eighth and ninth are bad; the third, seventh, tenth, eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth are good. The tenth position is said to lead and influence the three following positions for good.

While a pattern designating the initial day of the thirteen-day group a leader and determiner of its companions, a second pattern attributing a unique quality to each of the 260 days and a third pattern stressing the position as the determining factor may appear to be mutually exclusive or contradictory, it might be preferable to view them as variables, which could be weighed and manipulated by the soothsayer. In an effort to ascertain which of the patterns prevailed, a tabulation has been made of each of the twenty thirteen-day groups with a listing of the good or bad quality for each of the thirteen positions.<sup>3</sup> A heading lists the good or bad quality for each position as extracted from the texts (table).

The results of the tabulation reveal that the leader One Crocodile influences its twelve companions for good. The leader One Reed influences several but not all of its companions for bad. Other than these two, no leader has a discernible influence over its companions.

The evidence in the tabulation favors the assigning of the fate according to position. Many of the exceptions to the pattern can be explained by citing alternate influences. In the second position, a bad position, Two Wind is good because of its leader One Crocodile, and Two Reed is good because the day is influenced by the god Tezcatlipoca. In the third position, a good position, Three Eagle is bad because of its leader One Reed. In the fourth position, a bad position, Four Lizard is good because of its leader One Crocodile, and Four Dog is good because the influence of the dog takes precedence. In the fifth position, a bad position, Five Serpent is good because of its leader, and Five Monkey is good because the influ-

3 The data is taken from "Memoriales en tres columnas", Book 5, and Florentine Codex, Book 4.

ence of the monkey takes precedence. The seventh position is uniformly good. With the one obvious exception, the sixth and ninth positions are bad. The thirteenth position is good, and with one exception the tenth, eleventh and twelfth positions are good.

After the thirteen-day group One Serpent, the informants tired of their labors and questioned the value of additional useless repetition (Sahagún 1957: 82 f., 85, 92, 96 f., 100, 106, 124). This thirteen-day group encompassed the major ceremonies of the merchants, and beyond this point they appear to have lost interest. For the next thirteen-day group, One Lizard, they conclude by stating:

“However, all were as their account told elsewhere. But they were so regarded as they went arranged in their order as [is told] in their separate accounts. There the third place was mentioned as good, and [others] evil.” (Sahagún 1957: 82)

The constant reference to the previously established pattern is clearly a reference to the position as the determining factor. This is attested by the fact that the scattered references to specific days after the One Serpent group all conform to the established position pattern (table).

There is no evidence that Sahagún expanded or corrected the Tepepulco *Tonalpohualli* at Tlatelolco. The basic structure consisting of twenty thirteen-day groups remains the same, but the starting day of the *Tonalpohualli* differs. There is agreement between the good or bad qualities of the thirteen-day groups in the “Primeros memoriales” and the leaders in the “Memoriales en tres columnas”. With three exceptions, One Reed, One Monkey and One Lizard, the two sources agree. It becomes apparent that Sahagún studied and reworked the *Tonalpohualli* with two distinct groups of informants. The Tepepulco informants were much concerned with the distinctions between nobles and commoners, whereas the Tlatelolco informants, located in the commercial center, were knowledgeable and interested in merchant activities. The importance of the position is stressed only by the Tlatelolco informants. The Tepepulco *Tonalpohualli* can be said to be the working basis for the Tlatelolco *Tonalpohualli* in the sense that Sahagún took with him his *minuta*, the overall plan for his project, his method of gathering data, and a wealth of basic information, which enabled him to utilize his new informants more effectively and more extensively.

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Table: Good or bad quality of the thirteen positions.

Position:	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	13th
Fate of Position:	Var.	Bad	Good	Bad	Bad	Bad	Good	Bad	Bad	Good	Good	Good	Good
Thirteen-day Groups:													
Crocodile	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G
Ocelot	B			V			G		B				
Deer	G	B	V	G	G	B	G	B	B	B	B	B	G
Flower	V												
Reed	B	B	B	B	B	B	G	G	B	G	G	G	G
Death	V	B	G	B	B	B	G	B	B	G	G	G	G
Rain	B		G	V	B	B	G	B	B	G	G	G	G
Grass	B	G	G	B	B	B	G	B	B	G	G	G	G
Serpent	G	B	G	B	B	B	G	V	B	G	V	V	G
Flint	G												
Monkey	G	B											
Lizard	G			B	B	B							
Motion	V												
Dog	G												
House	B	B	G					G					
Vulture	G							G					
Water	B												
Wind	B									B			
Eagle	B	B	G				G						
Rabbit	G												

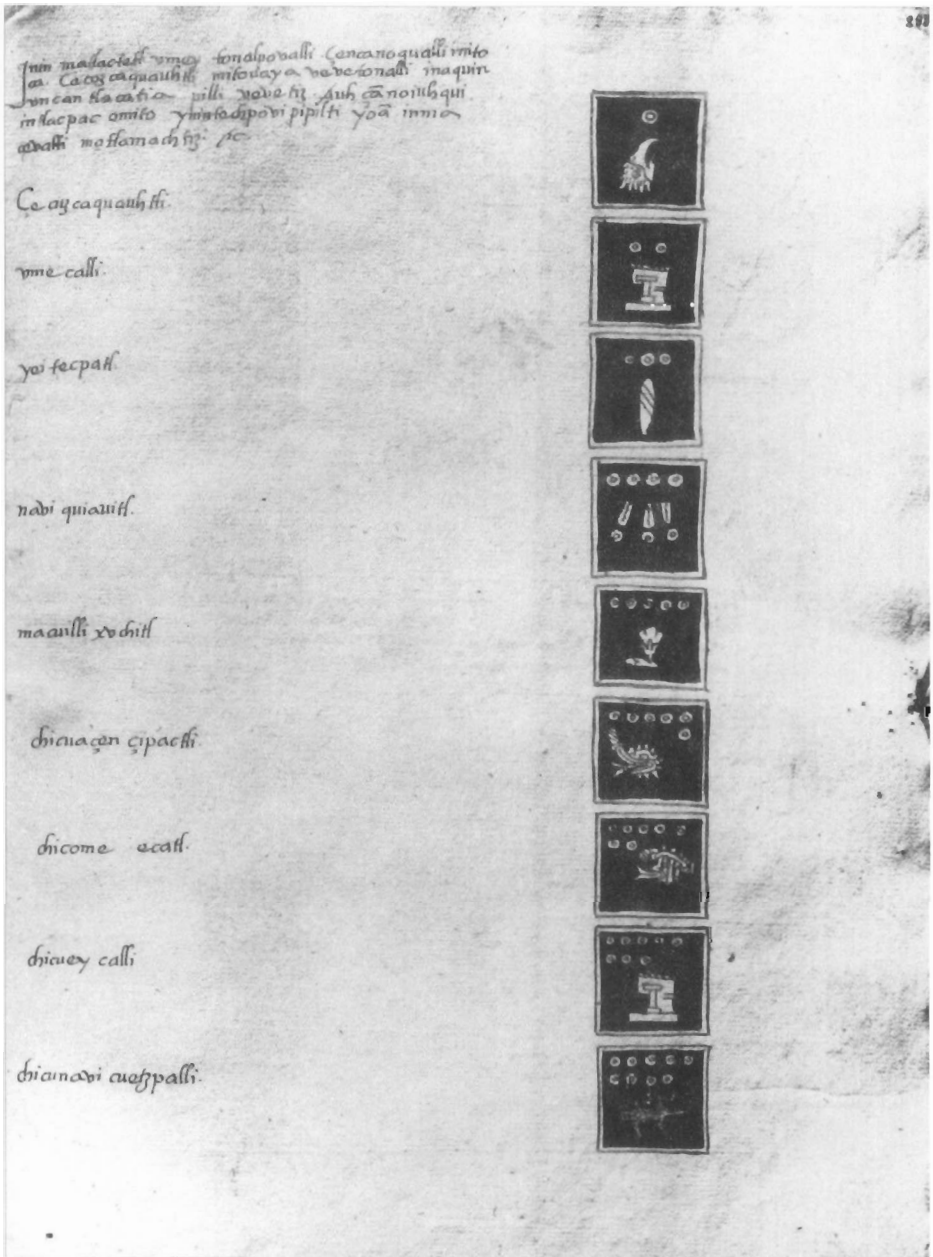


Fig.: Sahagún's recording of the *Tonalpohualli* (Real Palacio Ms., fo 228r).