



PROJECT MUSE®

Anonimo Mexicano

Richley Crapo, Bonnie Glass-Coffin

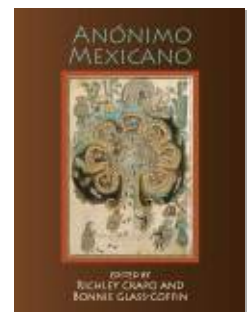
Published by Utah State University Press

Crapo, Richley & Glass-Coffin, Bonnie.

Anonimo Mexicano.

Logan: Utah State University Press, 2005.

Project MUSE., <https://muse.jhu.edu/>.



➔ For additional information about this book

<https://muse.jhu.edu/book/9872>

INTRODUCTION



When Hernán Cortés arrived in Mexico in 1519, the Mexica of the Valley of Mexico ruled an empire of three to four million people. A million of these lived in the Valley of Mexico, where the Mexica capital city of Tenochtitlan was located. The other two or three million people were made up of conquered tributary groups outside the Valley of Mexico. The Tlaxcalteca, who resided in the next valley to the east of the Valley of Mexico, were a traditional enemy of the Mexica; they had not been conquered and incorporated into the Mexica domain even though they were surrounded by peoples who were tributary to the Mexica. Cortés found in the Tlaxcalteca a powerful ally in his war against the Mexica. Although estimates of its size vary greatly, the Tlaxcalteca army that supported Cortés was formidable. Bernal Díaz del Castillo (1552) estimated that there were 40,000 Tlaxcalteca warriors, while Cortés himself set the number at 100,000. Both the Mexica and the Tlaxcalteca were speakers of the Nahuatl language whose ancestors had migrated south from the high deserts of northern Mexico and adopted an agriculturally based, urban way of life in Mexico's high plateau. Both documented their histories in traditional "painted books" that were created and interpreted by specially trained scribes, but the history of central Mexico is dominated in popular imagination by the stories that the Mexica of the Valley of Mexico recounted about themselves and their ancestors, while relatively few are aware of the Tlaxcalan histories. *Anónimo Mexicano* is particularly valuable because it is one of the rare non-Mexica accounts of the history of ancient Mexico. It was preserved because the Franciscan friars who settled in Tlaxcala and converted the native population to their Christian religion taught some of their converts to read and write using the Latin alphabet also used for writing Spanish, and encouraged their students to preserve the traditions of their native books in this new system of writing by adapting it to the writing of their own Nahuatl language.

Two Franciscans accompanied Cortés when he arrived in New Spain in 1519. They baptized their first

converts, four Tlaxcalan caciques, in 1520. Three more arrived in 1522, and others—called the Twelve Apostles of New Spain—joined them from Spain in 1524 under the leadership of Martín de Valencia. The Franciscans were offspring of the Renaissance and its humanistic emphasis on the importance of education, and the socializing of the Indians into following Spanish customs, law, and religion was a high priority for them. To this end, they founded schools at San José de los Naturales and Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco in Tenochtitlan. In 1529, the Franciscans finished building a monasterial complex in Tlaxcala, La Catedral de la Asunción. In order to learn about those they hoped to convert, the friars sought out native books, but almost all of these had been destroyed by the Conquistadors, so they encouraged their students to record information about their native culture in books which were written with a Latin alphabet. One of these was the monumental work of Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, his twelve-volume *General History of the Things of New Spain* (1963). New codices were created in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries using contemporary knowledge of Indian scribes and students, including the *Mendoza Codex*, *Codex Mexicanus*, *Telleriano-Remensis* (1553–63), and the *Codex of Ixtlilxochitl*. A very few of the pre-Conquest native Nahuatl books were also preserved, notably those of the Borgía group of codices.

Most of what we know of the Nahuatl-speaking peoples of the high desert of Mexico comes from materials compiled in the Mexica capital city of Tenochtitlan in the Valley of Mexico, which was transformed after the Conquest into what is now Mexico City. The city of Tlaxcala had a population of 300,000 when Cortés arrived. It was situated in the next valley to the east of the Valley of Mexico and was the capital of an independent state that had not been conquered by the Mexica. Therefore, a Tlaxcalan perspective on the history of the Nahuatl-speaking peoples is a particularly important addition to the more well-known Mexica viewpoint. Tlaxcala was not only important in its role as ally of Cortés in the conquest of the Valley of

Mexico, but it also continued to have an important role in the ensuing history of New Spain. For instance, Tlaxcala became the first diocese in New Spain to function under the guidance of a bishop, the Dominican Fray Julián Garcés (whose arrival in Tlaxcala in 1527 is described in *Anónimo Mexicano*). The original diocese of Tlaxcala comprised the states of Puebla, Tlaxcala, Vera Cruz, Tabasco, Hidalgo, and Guerrero—all outside the Valley of Mexico. It was from the Franciscan monastery at Tlaxcala in 1541 that Juan Diego Bernardino, an Indian servant in the monastery, began his walk to visit his sick family in Xiloxotla during a plague of smallpox in the region, the journey on which he is said to have had his vision of Our Lady of Ocotlán, a story that has striking similarities to that of the similarly named Juan Diego of Tlatelolco in the Valley of Mexico from a decade earlier, but one that emphasized the piety rather than skepticism of the Franciscan religious leaders of Tlaxcala to whom the Indian reported his message.

Between 1581 and 1584, the historian Diego Muñoz Camargo—the son of a conquistador and a native woman—wrote his *History of Tlaxcala*, a work in both Spanish and Nahuatl as a gift for the Spanish king, Philip II. In 1615, Fray Juan de Torquemada published his *Monarquía Indiana*, a work that drew on various earlier sources, including the work of Muñoz Camargo, as well as Indian memories of their own native books. One of his Indian sources was most certainly *Anónimo Mexicano* itself, as documented by the extremely close parallels between Torquemada's Spanish text and the Nahuatl history preserved in *Anónimo Mexicano*.

The Nahuatl text of *Anónimo Mexicano* is a twelve-chapter document concerning the history of the Nahuatl Tlaxcalteca, who migrated from the northern frontier of the Toltec empire at its fall. It is housed in the Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris in the Aubin-Goupil collection, within which it is identified as document number 254 under the title, *Documents en nahuatl relatifs aux Toltèques, etc.* The acquisition was dated 5 August 1898. The manuscript was described as consisting of two notebooks with thirty folio pages. Lorenzo Boturini Benaduci visited Mexico from 1736 through 1744 and gathered the first important collection of native writings. In his catalog of July 1743, Boturini indicated that the manuscript was in his possession. He described the manuscript as consisting of eleven chapters that contained a history of the four cabeceras of Tlaxcala that had been copied on two cuadernos of European paper by the interpreter Francisco de Loaysa. In the September 1743 Balbuena catalog, the same manuscript is listed as inventory 5, number 22, a designation that also appears on the

verso of folio 30 of the Paris manuscript as “en^o ff os n^o 22 ynb^o ff 5^o” (bundled together as number 22 in inventory 5). This note was written in handwriting that Gómez de Orozco (1927) and, later, Francisco del Paso y Troncoso (see Gibson 1952) identified as that of the Mexican lawyer and historian Mariano Fernández de Echeverría y Veytia (1718–1780). Balbuena described the manuscript as having been written in two memorandum books on twenty-nine leaves of Castilian paper. The discrepancy in the number of pages in the manuscript is likely a result of the fact that the thirtieth leaf was blank on the recto side and contained only Balbuena's inventory number on the verso, so was likely disregarded by Balbuena in his description. It should be noted that although the manuscript contains eleven full chapters as described above, its main body actually ends with the heading and introductory paragraph of a twelfth chapter which was intended to be a history of Tizatlan (later known as Xicotencatl), and that the manuscript now held in Paris has three more folios written on leaves that had been damaged prior to the time of the writing and that consist of copies by a second writer, in a clearly later style of writing, of parts of some of the chapters by the primary scribe.

According to Francisco del Paso y Troncoso (cited in Závala 1938), the director of the National Museum of Mexico, *Anónimo Mexicano* was written in a cortesana style script in a late sixteenth- or early seventeenth-century hand (see also note 339). This suggested dating places the manuscript within what James Lockhart (1992) classified as stage two of a four-stage process of change in post-Conquest Nahuatl. Stage one was a short period from the arrival of Cortés in 1519 to about 1545, during which time there was relative stability in Nahuatl and the only known alphabetic documents were census records from the area of Cuernavaca. Stage two, the period to which *Anónimo Mexicano* belongs, was from that time until near the mid-seventeenth century. This period was one of a massive influx of Spanish loan words into Nahuatl, but little other influence from Spanish. This was the period to which Fray Alonso de Molina's Nahuatl dictionary belongs, a work that began to appear as early as 1555. This was a period of intense collaborative work by Franciscan friars and the native students who were being training to write Nahuatl in an adapted Spanish alphabet, and who were simultaneously serving as resources of knowledge about pre-Spanish native culture. Examples of Spanish loanwords that are found in *Anónimo Mexicano* include *mitxa* (mass), *Castilianos* (Spaniards), *Franciscanos* (Franciscans), and, of course, several personal and place names.

The author of *Anónimo Mexicano* is not known with certainty, but Boturini thought that the manuscript was an extraction from a history of Tlaxcala by a Tlaxcalan cacique named Miguélé Tlacuitlocintlí. On the other hand, in his inventory, Patricio Ana López ([1745–46] 1925), who undoubtedly knew Boturini's opinion and used Boturini's catalog identification, insisted that the work was anonymous. Rosa y Saldívar ([1847] 1947) believed that one section, chapter 5, was authored by Benito Itzcacmacuetzli (as the chapter itself suggests).

A full English translation of *Anónimo Mexicano* has never been undertaken. A Spanish translation of the first five chapters by Mariano J. Rojas is housed in the Instituto Nacional de Antropología, and another Spanish translation of the first three chapters by Padre Aquiles Gerste was published by Alfredo Chavero (1903) in the *Anales del Museo Nacional de México*. John A. Hasler (1958) also published an edited work, *Anónimo Mexicano: Paleographia* which presented both the Nahuatl and parallel passages of "Historia y fundación de la ciudad de Tlaxcala y sus cuatro cabeceras" which, like *Anónimo Mexicano*, has parallels with book 3, chapters 6 and 12–19 of Torquemada's *Monarquía Indiana*, and which Gibson (1952) regarded as a translation into Nahuatl of those sections of Torquemada's work.

Gerste noted that the Nahuatl manuscript is difficult to interpret due to scribal errors, the paucity and equivocal nature of its punctuation, the spelling variations which it contains, and the presence of a number of terms not found in other sources such as Molina ([1571] 1966) and Rémi Simèon (1963). We handle the scribal errors by reconstructing the intended form, noting this in our end notes. Unfortunately, Gerste's transcription also introduced numerous errors. Gerste also regularized Nahuatl spelling to a more contemporary form in his transcription. For instance, he regularly rewrote initial *y* as *i*. Our own transcription returns to the original spelling of the Nahuatl text.

Our re-publication of *Anónimo Mexicano* is being undertaken in order to provide a full English translation of all twelve chapters of the Nahuatl text. It is also motivated by the fact that the manuscript contains not only a number of previously unattested Nahuatl words, but also because it contains heretofore unpublished information of historical interest.

Anónimo Mexicano is an important document because of its relationship to other early histories. Taken at face value, the manuscript portrays itself as recounting material from one or more native pictographic codices. Rosa y Saldívar, in his catalog of 1791, described what may be

the same manuscript as that examined by Boturini but cataloged it as "Legajo 2, Cuaderno 1." He interpreted it as made up of translations of parts of Torquemada's three-volume *Monarquía Indiana* on twenty-nine manuscript pages. Paso y Troncoso believed that it had been used by Alva Ixtlilxóchitl (1840), and noted that it contained data very similar to those reported by the sixteenth-century historian Muñoz Camargo ([1585] 1966), whose sources seem now to be lost. Rosa y Saldívar also noted that, with the exception of chapter 5, *Anónimo Mexicano* contains many parallels with Torquemada's *Monarquía Indiana*. He asserted that *Anónimo Mexicano* was a translation of portions of Torquemada's history into Nahuatl. Similarly, Gibson (1952) has contended that *Anónimo Mexicano* might be a partial back-translation into Nahuatl by Torquemada. On the other hand, Jiménez Moreno (1938, pp. 575–76) viewed it as one of the sources that Torquemada drew upon, an opinion with which we concur for reasons which we give below.

Although each document contains information absent in the other, the history given by the anonymous writer does parallel that of Torquemada's *Monarquía Indiana* quite closely in many respects, including important similarities both of sequencing and phraseology. The parallels are more extensive than has been noted previously, and are particularly striking for book 1, chapters 14–21, 23–25, 27, 29, 33, 37, 41, 42–44, and 48; book 2, chapter 1; and book 3, chapters 6, 9–10, and 12 of *Monarquía Indiana*. The degree of parallelism is clearly suggestive of some connection between the two documents. Both writers may have drawn upon a common source. Jiménez Moreno (1938) has suggested that Torquemada may have drawn upon *Anónimo Mexicano*.

Torquemada began collecting material for *Monarquía Indiana* as early as 1595, and published his work in 1615. It is known that Torquemada used a variety of previous sources, including Diego Muñoz Camargo's *Historia de Tlaxcala* ([1585] 1966) and Gerónimo de Mendieta's *Historia Eclesiástica Indiana* ([ca. 1596] 1870) as well as native codices or references to them. It is our opinion that *Anónimo Mexicano* predates *Monarquía Indiana* and that it is one of the various sources which Torquemada drew upon in the preparation of his history. Indeed, it may well have been written by scribes trained by Franciscan friars.

Anónimo Mexicano not only contains information such as details about the death of Tenancaltzin and the rule of his son Tecatlalatzin that are absent from *Monarquía Indiana*, but it also contains information which was

apparently present in sources used by Torquemada but which he chose to withhold from *Monarquía Indiana*. For instance, *Anónimo Mexicano* declares the number of men who accompanied Nopaltzin to Nepoalco to have been 3,200,000, whereas Torquemada takes pains to justify his not declaring the unrealistically high figure found in his sources: “If I were to go on, without numbering the people who arrived in this place, I would do an injustice to the history (if I were to tell it without telling the number), but if I do refer to it, I fear that it would be viewed as unbelievable. But, if it is not a clever rationale that forms the opinion but rather things that are found written (if the ancient paintings are true and not mistaken) these say that the people who left these caves and regions numbered more than a million people, because in addition to the six kings and lords who came with Xolotl, there were more than twenty thousand subordinate leaders and captains who had more than a thousand persons each under their care, all of them being under Xolotl’s command, as well as under that of the other six lords who had departed from their rulerships and province with him. And so that the ears of the prudent and the cautious reader might not be scandalized, since the number appears to be exaggerated, let me say that near the village that is now called Tenayuca (which at that time was the capital of this great kingdom) is a place where there are twelve little hills of small rocks. As told in the accounts, there are those that were gathered together there, each person carrying one [rock] and placing it on the multitude, such that in viewing these, it seems awesome. And considering that each one of these little rocks had been put there by each one of them, it may not be difficult to believe that the number of people was as large as has been said and that thus that place came to be named Nepoalco, which means Place of Counting.”¹ Where Torquemada adds clarifications concerning Aztec history or geography for Spanish readers who would lack that information, these clarifications are not found in the parallel passages of *Anónimo Mexicano*. For instance, where *Anónimo Mexicano* simply refers to various cities by name, the parallel account by Torquemada frequently adds a statement indicating how far from Mexico City and in what direction they lie. Similarly, Torquemada’s philosophical digressions are consistently absent from *Anónimo Mexicano*.

Several passages in the document suggest that it was written from the point of view of a Tlaxcalan author. Other aspects of the text suggests a writer who was working under the tutelage of the Franciscans. The writer of the manuscript appears to be drawing from one or more earlier sources,

possibly ideographic codices. The point of view of the text suggests that its source material was also Tlaxcalan—the information about Tlaxcala being the most detailed and elaborate. Internal evidence, including the handwriting of the manuscript, suggests a date for the original manuscript close to 1600.

The handwriting of five persons is found on the manuscript: (1) the primary scribe, (2) a secondary copyist who reproduced three folios of the original manuscript, (3) an early editor who made copyediting corrections of errors by the primary scribe, (4) a commentator who added occasional marginal notations at a later date, and (5) one possible notation at the end of the manuscript by Mariano Fernández de Echeverría. The Nahuatl dialect of the manuscript is nonstandard compared with the usual canons of Classical Nahuatl in a number of particulars. For instance, it includes the frequent use of the imperfect tense *-ia* as a suffix to the distant-past-as-past *-ca* in *catcaya*. The writer also formed *inahuachuic* (toward the vicinity of) by suffixing *-huic* (toward) to *inahuac* (in/to/from the vicinity of it). In several cases the preterit plural number dyad *-que* is suffixed to a pronoun, e.g., *inque*. The marginal commentator noted that Torquemada followed *Anónimo’s* wording in chapter 2 concerning the death of the Chichimec leader Xolotl only to the word *ymixpan* and then omitted the ensuing material that added little to the history (see note 225). This, too, suggests that *Anónimo* predates Torquemada and was drawn on by him. The extraneous material in *Anónimo* does not support the back-translation position. To make characteristics of the original manuscript accessible to researchers, we have adopted a three-column format in which the first column reproduces the spelling, punctuation, and underlining of the original manuscript. In the second column we give our own rendition in a contemporary orthography, and in the third, our translation.

In our transcription of the original text we have not attempted to reproduce every characteristic of the original, such as errors that were corrected by the original scribe or emended by the editor. Since it is a characteristic of the scribe’s writing that may be of interest to some researchers—that he frequently rested his quill in a manner that left what looks like a period but is not actually a punctuation mark—we have included these in our transcription. In such cases we do document the characteristics (such as a crossed-out letter or letters or the scribe’s original spelling versus the editorial emendation) in the notes. Two conventions are reproduced but not annotated. When a hyphen or dash or sometimes an equal sign was used simply

to mark the end of a line (a convention analogous to what we might call keeping the text “right-justified”), we have reproduced that mark (even when it occurs when part of a word is written on one line and the rest on the next line) without commenting on this in the notes. Such marks will readily be recognized by the reader. (Except where it marked the division of a word, we have not attempted to note this “right-justification” when it merely involved lengthening the end of the last letter of a line, a convention that was frequently used by the scribe when certain letters such as *l*, *n*, and *e* were line-final.) The second nonannotated convention of the scribe that we have transcribed is that of words broken at the end of a line. We have maintained such non-hyphenated word breaks simply as a break within the word. We have maintained word-internal spaces when they are clearly larger than the scribe’s usual spacing between letters. This and other transcription conventions—such as distinguishing between an ordinary dotted *i* and a clearly accented *í*—sometimes involve a judgement call: for instance, the difference between a hurriedly dotted *i* in which the dot has been slightly extended and a hurriedly written accent mark in which the mark is not ended with its usual counterclockwise curve. We have followed Gerste’s lead in making the translation a literal one, and have appended notes that indicate problematic aspects of the translation. In order to place the narrative in a broader historical context, we have also included notes concerning the approximate times of the events described, and about the events themselves where other sources might add to the readers’ understanding of the history in question. To facilitate the reading of the translation and to make it easier to find the equivalent part of the Nahuatl, we have followed the convention of English punctuation and carried that punctuation over into the Nahuatl of the second column. There is one exception to this deference to English punctuation that needs to be noted. In lists of three or more nouns, Nahuatl does not use a word for *and* before the final noun in the list. In the case of such lists, we have inserted a comma at that location in the Nahuatl for the sake of consistency. We have transcribed the first letter of proper nouns and of each new Nahuatl sentence in upper case and have ignored the scribe’s use of upper case for non-proper nouns elsewhere. In some cases, the spacing conventions followed by the scribe create ambiguities or easy misreadings that we hope to help the contemporary reader to avoid. The most common of these changes involves the fact that the scribe consistently appends the pronominal prefixes *i-* and *in-* to the preceding article *in* instead of to the following noun. When the

pronoun prefix is plural, the resulting *inin* could be read either as *in in-* (“the their”) or as *inin* (“this/these”). Spacing is quite irregular and we maintain the original spacing only when we feel that it represents the meaning intended in the manuscript. Where there are lacunae in the manuscript, we have used bracketed ellipses. The number of periods shown indicates the approximate number of letters and spaces that may have been present in the manuscript before the damage occurred. Finally, we have chosen to follow academic conventions for the spelling of Nahuatl personal and place names. In some cases, this results in the name being notably different in the third column from the spelling in columns one and two.

The manuscript consists of a total of thirty-four leaves. The recto sides of the first thirty-three were numbered consecutively. The first sixteen folio numbers were centered at the top of each page. Folios seventeen through thirty-three were numbered at the top right. The primary text of *Anónimo Mexicano* is written on the recto and verso of twenty-nine leaves. Leaf 30 is blank on the recto, while the verso bears only a brief annotation (see note 703) and the accession stamp of the Collection E. Eug. Goupil à Paris, Ancienne Collection J. M. A. Aubin, with the accession number 254. Finally, there are three additional leaves. The first of these, written on both sides of manuscript folio 31, is titled “Commencario de la guere de Mexico” (beginning of the war of Mexico) and contains material that repeats the primary text’s narrative of the war between Huexotzinco and the Tlaxcalan Chichimeca (on pp. 38–39 of this publication). In the left margin at the beginning of this material, there is a marginal note that reads, “Capitulo 12. lib 3. Saltando gran parte pero dio fin” (chapter 12, book 3. jumping over the greater part but giving the end). The recto of this leaf contains the same accession stamp as the previous page, without an accession number. The ensuing page (manuscript folio 32) contains a repetition of the primary text’s narrative of the reigns of Teuctotolin and his son Tlacomihua (chapter 9, on pp. 49–50 of our translation). The upper right corner of the recto of this leaf is missing, but the writing was done after that damage. The third additional leaf (manuscript folio 33) continues the war narrative of the first duplicate leaf, and repeats what is found on pages 39–40 of our translation. The material in both of these repeated texts is nearly identical to that of the primary text. The handwriting of these two duplicated sections differs from that of the scribe of the primary text. The writer of the duplicate material appears to have copied from the manuscript pages of the text’s primary scribe, as indicated by:

dittography, in which the corresponding duplicated material correspond to words in the original text that are located at the appropriate point for such an error; haplography, in which the omitted text is the entire ensuing line of the original page; and the ending of the copied text with words that are page-end words in the original even though the copy page has remaining space in which a sentence might have been ended. The copyist follows slightly different spelling conventions from those of the original scribe, notably preferring initial *i* over *y* in words such as *in* or *ihuan*, and *m* rather than *n* before *p*, while the scribe follows the opposite preference. The copyist also omits the scribe's *h* after *t* in words such as *theotl*. A final blank page contains only the

stamp of the Paris museum, one different from the other stamps. This one appears simply to identify the document as a manuscript of the museum collection, and reads "BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE MANUSCRITS".

Special thanks are due to Jerry Offner for his helpful suggestions. The primary author is responsible for any weaknesses in the English translation of the Nahuatl text. The second author has responsibility for all translations from the Spanish. Finally, we wish to dedicate this work to the memory of maestro Charles Elliot Dibble, who was not only a leading figure in Nahuatl research but also a man of the greatest kindness and humility.