
Florentine Codex

General History of the Things of New Spain

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de Sahagun*

Book 3—The Origin of the Gods

Translated from the Aztec into English, with notes and illustrations
(Second edition, revised)

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Fourth Chapter, which telleth how the glory of Quetzalcoatl came to an end and how three sorcerers came to him and what they did.¹

But at last Quetzalcoatl and all the Tolteca became continually neglectful. And then there arrived, there came as an evil omen, three demons, Uitzilopochtli, Titlacauan, Tlacauepan.² The three prognosticated that Tula would be destroyed.

This Titlacauan began what was prognosticated. It is said that he turned himself into a little old man. He represented, he appeared in the form of one who was much bent, whose hair was very white, who was small and very white-headed.³ Thereupon he went to the home of Quetzalcoatl.

When he had gone there, he thereupon said to [the retainers]: "I wish to see the lord Quetzalcoatl."

Then they said to him: "Go hence, little old man. The lord is sick. Thou wilt vex him."

Then the little old man said: "Nay, but I will see him; but I will come to him."

They said to him: "It is well. Wait yet. Let us tell him."

And thereupon they informed Quetzalcoatl. They said to him: "My prince, some little old man hath come to see thee. He is like a snare for thee, like a trap for thee.⁴ When we turn him away he wisheth in no way to go. He saith: 'But I will see the lord.'"

Then said Quetzalcoatl: "Let him come; let him enter here. For I have awaited him for some little time."

Then they brought him in to Quetzalcoatl.

The old man thereupon greeted him.⁵ He said: "My grandson, my lord, how dost thou feel as to thy body? Here is a potion which I have brought for thee. Drink it."

And then Quetzalcoatl said: "Come here, O old one. Thou art fatigued; thou art tired. For some time I have awaited thee."

1. *quiqujuhque*: read *quichihuhque*.

2. Tezcatlipoca (Titlacauan), Ihuimecatli, and Toltecatli, according to Lehmann, *Geschichte der Königreiche*, p. 80. Torquemada, *Segunda parte*, p. 79, says that Tezcatlipoca descended from heaven by a rope of cobwebs, changed himself into an ocelot during a game of *tlachtli* with Quetzalcoatl, drove him from Tula, and pursued him from city to city and finally to Cholula.

3. *ocomo, quaztapaton*: read *oc omoquaztapaton*.

4. *amollacal ma* may be a copyist's error. Reading and translating it and *mopevil ma*, we follow Angel María Garibay K., *Llave del náhuatl* (Mexico: Editorial Porrúa, S. A., 1961), pp. 141, 225.

5. *quiltaltoa*: read *quiltapaltoa*.

And then the little old man said to him: "My grandson, how indeed dost thou feel as to thy body?"

Then Quetzalcoatl said to him: "Much do I ail everywhere. Nowhere are my hands, my feet well. All tired is my body, as if undone."

And then the little old man said to him: "Here is the potion. It is very good, mellow, and it intoxicateth one. If thou shalt drink of it, it will intoxicate thee, and it will refresh thy body; and thou wilt weep; thou wilt be compassionate. Thou wilt think of thy death. And also thou wilt indeed think upon where thou wilt go."

Then Quetzalcoatl said: "Where shall I go, old man?"

Then the little old man said to him: "Thou wilt just go there to Tollan-Tlapallan. A man guards there, a man already aged. Ye will consult with one another. And when thou wilt return here, thou wilt once again have been made a child."

On this, Quetzalcoatl was stirred. And the little old man once again said to him: "Be of good cheer. Drink the potion."⁶

Then Quetzalcoatl said: "Old man, I will not drink it."

Then the little old man said to him: "Just drink of it. Thou wilt be in need. Just in truth place it before thee as thy portion, thy need.⁷ Taste just a little of it."

And Quetzalcoatl then tasted a little, and afterwards drank deeply of it.

Then said Quetzalcoatl: "What is this? It is very good. It hath abated the sickness. Where went the pain? No longer am I sick."

Then the little old man said to him: "Drink of it once again; the potion is good. With it thy body will gain strength."

And then once again he drank one vessel of it. Then he became drunk. Thereupon he wept; he was very sad. Thus, then, was Quetzalcoatl affected; his heart was then inflamed. No longer did he forget it. He only continued to reflect on that which he was reflecting. The devil had indeed tricked him.

And the potion which [the little old man] had given him, it is told, was white pulque. And it is said that it was made of the sap of the yellow-leaved maguey.⁸

6. See Pl. 11.

7. In Seler, *Einige Kapitel*, p. 273, and in Garibay, *Llave del nahuatl*, p. 143, *timotoliniz* and *motoliniz* are transcribed as *timotoliuiz*

and *motoliuiz*. The present version follows, however, both the *Real Palacio MS* and the *Florentine Codex*.

8. The medicinal qualities of *teometl* are described in Dibble and Anderson, *Book XI*, p. 149.

Fifth Chapter, which telleth of another portent which the sorcerer Titlacauan brought about.

And here is still another thing which Titlacauan brought about in order to bode ill. He appeared in the form of, he represented a Huastec.¹ He just walked about with [virile member] hanging; he sold green chilis. He went to sit in the market place at the palace entrance.

And the daughter of Uemac was very fair.² There were many Tolteca lords who coveted her, who asked for her, who would marry her. But to none would Uemac give his consent; he gave her to none.

But this daughter of Uemac looked out into the market place. She saw the Huastec with [virile member] hanging.

And when she had seen him, then she went into the house. Thereupon she sickened. She became swollen, she became tumid. It was as if the Huastec's virile member tormented her.

And Uemac then learned that his daughter was already sick. He said to the women who guarded her: "What hath she done? What is she doing? How began that which made my daughter tumid?"

Then the women who guarded her said to him: "It is he, the Huastec, the seller of green chilis. He setteth her on fire; he tormenteth her. Thus it began; thus she already took sick."

And the ruler, Uemac, thereupon commanded; he said: "O Tolteca, let the seller of green chilis, the Huastec, be sought out; he must appear."

1. The corresponding Spanish text has: "*se baltujo, y parecio, como un yndio forastero, que se llama toueyo. . .*" In Sahagún Robredo ed., Vol. III, pp. 130, 132, 140, the terms *toueyo* and *cuextécatl* are given as equivalent. See also Seler, *Einige Kapitel*, p. 274, n. 1, who refers to him throughout as a Huastec (*cuextecatl*).

2. Reigned A.D. 994-1070, according to Lehmann, *Geschichte der Königreiche*, p. 42. Torquemada, *Segunda parte*, p. 48, has him contemporary with Quetzalcoatl—"aunque en lo temporal era el que gobernaba un Señor, llamado Huemac; en lo espiritual, y Eclesiástico este Quetzalcoatl era supremo, y como Pontífice Maximo." Fernando Alvarado Tezozomoc, in *Histoire des chichimèques ou des anciens rois de Tetscuco*, ed. H. Ternaux-Compans (Paris: Arthus Bertrand, 1840), Vol. I, p. 6, identifies one with the other. Désiré Charney, in *Ancient Cities of the New World*, trs. J. Gonino and H. S. Conant (New York: Harper, 1887), says the same. So does Paul Kirchoff in "Los pueblos de la historia tolteca-chichimeca," *Revista Mexicana de Estudios Antropológicos*, Vol. IV (1940), p. 97, citing Ixtlilxochitl, *Obras históricas*, Vol. I, pp. 19-20, although the *Historia tolteca-chi-*

chimeca makes him a child adopted by the Chichimeca (p. 79). Of Quetzalcoatl, Tezozomoc says: "*On dit qu'on lui donna le nom Huemac, parce que pour prouver que tout ce qu'il avait annoncé s'accomplirait, il imprima ses mains sur un rocher comme sur de la cire molle.*" (See Twelfth and Thirteenth Chapters, *infra*.) Citing Ixtlilxochitl, p. 1, rel. 3, Ternaux-Compans says Huemac was an astrologer and sage who led the Tolteca and wrote the *Tcoamoxtli*, a work dealing with the history, genealogy, moral principles, religious beliefs and ceremonies, philosophy, astrology, agriculture, and prophecy of the times; he died aged more than 300 years (p. 6, n. 1).

Commenting on the *Anales de Cuauhtitlan*, Seler, in *Gesammelte Abhandlungen*, Vol. III, p. 331sq., states that by the time of Huemac, the priestly office was occupied by a priest titled Quetzalcoatl, and separated from the civil office, held by Huemac. This passage summarizes the history of Huemac, which may also be found in Lehmann's *Geschichte der Königreiche* or in Velásquez's *Código Chimalpopoca*. The text of this document, however, states that Huemac was a successor of Quetzalcoatl (see *Código Chimalpopoca*, pp. 12 sqq.).

Twelfth Chapter, which telleth how Quetzalcoatl fled, took flight, when he went there to Tlapallan,¹ and of the many things he did on the way.

And still many more portents came upon the Tolteca until Tula was destroyed.

And when these were happening, Quetzalcoatl, who already was troubled, who already was saddened, was thereupon minded to go, to abandon his city of Tula.

Thereupon he made ready. It is said that he had everything burned—his house of gold, his house of seashells; and still other Tolteca craft objects which were marvelous achievements, which were costly achievements, he buried, all; he hid all there in difficult places, perhaps inside a mountain or in a canyon.

And also the cacao trees he changed into mesquites. And all the precious birds, the resplendent trogons, the lovely cotingas, the roseate spoonbills, all of them he sent away beforehand. They kept themselves before him; they went toward Anauac.²

And when this was done, thereupon he departed; thereupon he followed the road.

Then he came to arrive elsewhere, at Quauhtitlan. A very thick tree stood [there], and it was very tall. He stood by it. Thereupon he called forth for his mirror. Thereupon he looked at himself; he saw himself in the mirror; he said: "Already I am an old man." Then that place he named Ueuequauhtitlan.³ Thereupon he stoned, he threw many stones at the tree. And as he threw the stones, the stones indeed went into it in various places, were stuck to the old tree in various places. Just the same has it continued to exist; thus is it seen. Beginning at the foot, [the stones] extend rising to its top.

And when Quetzalcoatl followed the road, they went blowing flutes for him.

1. See Fourth Chapter, *supra*; also Garibay, *Llave del náhuatl*, p. 310, or Caso, *The Aztecs*, p. 25.

2. Anauac. Seler, in *Gesammelte Abhandlungen*, Vol. II, pp. 49 *sqq.*, argues that the name always referred to the "reichen Küstengebiete der Nord- und Südmeers, die Länder der Golfküste und an der pazifischen Küste, und zwar insbesondere die Gebiete wohin von den mit México verbündeten Städten des Hochlandes aus die grossen Handelsexpeditionen unternommen wurden. . . ."

Of the phrase *ixpan onotiaque*, a note in Seler's *Einige Kapitel*, p. 287, n. 1, suggests that it might better be read *ixpan nonotiaque*, "auf die Nonotiaque zu' d. h. sie suchten auf die Leute von Nonotiaco, 'wo man stumm wird,' d. h. die fremdsprachigen Nonoualca in Anauac Xicalanco."

3. Cf. Garibay, *Llave del náhuatl*, p. 304.

Once again he came to rest elsewhere. Upon a stone he sat. He supported himself on it with his hands.* Thereupon he looked toward Tula, and thereupon he wept. As one sobbing violently did he weep. Two hailstones fell as his tears; over his face did his tears spread; as they dripped they indeed pierced holes in the stone.

4. There may be a copyist's error here. This paragraph could, by inserting here the first paragraph of the Thirteenth Chapter, read:

"Once again he came to rest elsewhere. Upon a stone he sat. He supported himself on it with his hands. And as he supported himself on the rock by his hands, they sank deeply; as it in mud did the palms of his hands penetrate. Likewise his buttocks, as they were on the rock, submerged deeply. They are clearly visible, so deeply are they pierced [in the rock]. Hence the place was named *Temacpalco*.

"Thereupon he looked toward Tula, and thereupon he wept. As one sobbing violently did he weep. Two hailstones fell as his tears; over his face did his tears spread; as they dripped they indeed pierced holes in the stone."

Cf. Seier, *Einige Kapitel*, p. 287, who suspected an omission; Garibay, in *Uaxacabal*, pp. 149 *sq.* and 253 *sq.*, who transposes the passages as above; and the corresponding Spanish text.

Thirteenth Chapter, in which are told the marks which Quetzalcoatl left in place upon the stone with his hands when he rested himself there, when he sat there.

And as he supported himself on the rock by his hands, they sank deeply; as if in mud did the palms of his hands penetrate. Likewise his buttocks, as they were on the rock, likewise sank, submerged deeply. They are clearly visible, so deeply are they pierced [in the rock]. Hence the place was named Temacpalco.

And then he went off. When he came to reach a place named Tepanoayan, there was water. Water was coming forth; it was very wide, broad. [Quetzalcoatl] laid stones; he made a bridge. Then he crossed over it, and then he named it Tepanoayan.¹

And once again he set forth. Then he went to arrive elsewhere, a place named Coaapan. And when he was there, demons there would turn him back; they would send him back; they would stop him.

They said to him: "Where dost thou go? Where art thou bound? Why already goest thou leaving the city? To whom dost thou go leaving it? Who will perform the penances?"

Then Quetzalcoatl said to the demons: "In no way will it be possible [to stop me]. I shall only go [on]."

Then the demons said to Quetzalcoatl: "Whither goest thou?"

Then Quetzalcoatl said to them: "I go there to Tlapallan; I go to learn [my fate]."

And then they said to him: "What wilt thou do?"

Then Quetzalcoatl said: "I am called; the sun calleth me."

Then they said to him: "It is well. Go, leaving all the works of craftsmanship."

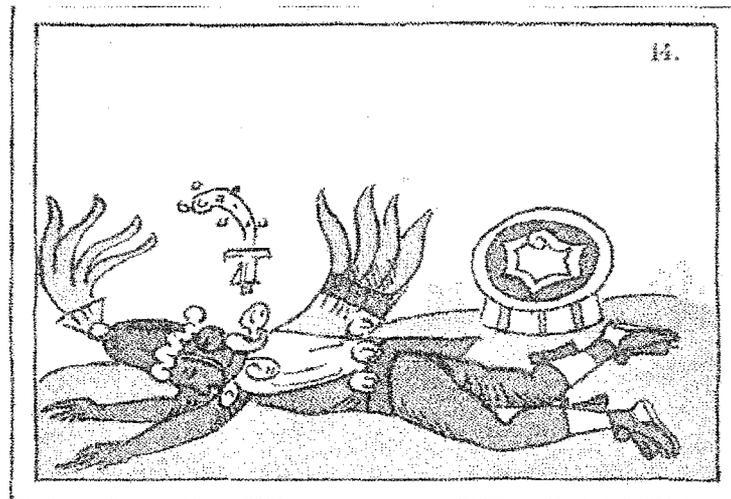
Then he left there all the arts. The casting of gold, the craft of the lapidary, the carving of wood, sculpturing in stone, the art of the scribe, the art of feather working they stripped all from him; they stole it all from him,² they took it all away from him.

1. Temacpalco, Tepanoayan: cf. Garibay, *Llave del náhuatl*, p. 308. Torquemada, *Segunda parte*, p. 50, states that Temacpalco was two leagues from Mexico City.

2. *quiltlacaltique*: read *quiltlaçaltique*.



Huemac offers Quetzalcoatl a potion to drink. Quetzalcoatl said, "I will not drink it." Huemac says, "Taste just a little bit," "Drink of it once again...the potion is good and your body will gain strength. Quetzalcoatl drank one vessel of it.



After having drank the potion, he became drunk. There upon he wept; he was very sad. Huemac had indeed tricked him.



Afterwards Quetzalcoatl bathes himself at midnight.