

## **Female Town Founders, Female Town Defenders: Women and Gender in the Kislak Techialoyans of Late Colonial Mexico**

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### **Introduction**

We are indebted to the authors of Mesoamerican pictorial manuscripts (ca. 1500-1800) for painting indigenous women into the landscape, women whose roles and status are notoriously obscure in history. Alphabetic texts in indigenous languages, which arose after the Spanish invasion and occupation of this hemisphere and the founding of schools for elite native men in the early sixteenth-century, are more likely to describe the activities and concerns of men. Only a relatively small proportion of native men were taught to read and write their languages using the Roman alphabet.<sup>1</sup> At first, these were men who lived in the capital, and later, in the provincial cities. Eventually, there were native notaries and historians in almost every indigenous community of any size, but they, too, tended to write about the activities of the municipal and parish office holders – all men, as dictated by Spanish colonialism.<sup>2</sup>

Painted histories – especially cartographic and genealogical – stand apart from alphabetic historical texts for perhaps a greater likelihood to include representations of indigenous women and their participation in community events.<sup>3</sup> While as far as we know the painters were men, and they may have been as fascinated as their counterparts who wrote alphabetic histories with the activities of their fellow males, when they painted the scenes around them they included women. The women were present, after all, and their activities in the community were not insignificant.<sup>4</sup>

Techialoyan “codices” or manuscripts, which are largely pictorial but with usually short texts and glosses in Nahuatl (the indigenous language spoken by the largest number of people in Mesoamerica) are typical in their inclusion of women on the landscape of central highland Mexican indigenous communities. Techialoyan manuscripts are, however, unusual in their format and composition. Unlike the most famous pre-contact-style pictorial codices, they were made late in the seventeenth century or first years of the eighteenth on *amatl* (native fig-bark paper), a kind of paper that was rarely used for history writing after the sixteenth century. Techialoyan manuscripts were apparently painted and written by a studio or group of men who were trying to provide communities with documentation of their land claims, some recognition of their ruling families, and narratives about primordial town founding. However, Spanish colonial authorities preferred more orthodox legal or written records that had evolved organically within a given community. The Techialoyans, with more than a whiff of contrivance about them, could be seized by these authorities and denounced as fraudulent.<sup>5</sup>

The Techialoyan authors’ desire to focus on town histories and founding families is perfectly standard in terms of the conventions of indigenous-authored narratives. Here again, however, the Techialoyan manuscripts diverge from the norm by pushing the envelope in terms

of their depiction of local historical agency, and because their creators may have invented some of the town founders. The group of painters/writers who made the Techialoyan manuscripts, likely brothers and cousins, seem to have been members of a particular lineage of *cacique* (indigenous noble) families with the name Mendoza Moctezuma. While some members of that family were legitimate heirs of the second to last reigning Aztec monarch, Moctezuma (or Motecuzoma), other purported “Moctezumas” were seemingly stretching their supposed familial connection in order to obtain honors and wealth they might not otherwise legitimately enjoy. They apparently could not resist sprinkling their purported ancestors throughout central highland town histories, in an effort to increase their own status.<sup>6</sup>

Yet even if the real town founders’ identities had been forgotten (a reasonable assumption, given that these records were painted at least two hundred years after town-founding events had occurred), and even if imagined names and personalities have been inserted, we can still legitimately examine the gender constructs imbedded in these manuscripts. Techialoyan painters, of course, would be representing their own thinking about who would have played these important roles in community origins and guardianship over time, rather than some accurate portrayal of pre-Columbian events and people. And their thinking would be colored by contact with Spanish ways, something that increased as the colonial period dragged on. But their paintings nevertheless allow provide us with some important insights into later colonial indigenous male memories of women’s roles in such momentous occasions. We are also able to corroborate in separate, more organically produced pictorials that women were, indeed, involved in (or remembered as being involved in) similar activities in other Mesoamerican communities over the same range of time.

The four Kislak Techialoyans under study here, recently published in the Mapas Project,<sup>7</sup> comprise less than ten percent of the known manuscripts in the genre. But like many other examples of this genre, they include depictions of a number of indigenous women. Women tend to appear in three roles in Techialoyan pictorials. They turn up as the female members of couples who started elite lineages, the leaders of Nahua peoples who had migrated from distant northern regions where people were non- or semi-sedentary. We also see women among the town-founding couples of the period shortly after the Spanish occupation of Mexico. Finally, we find women in the audience at what were probably readings of the town history and land titles in open-air ceremonies outside churches – events that may have taken place anytime between the mid-sixteenth century and into the eighteenth. In all three settings, women as well as men participate in and mark key moments in the early evolution of a native town, helping attest to its antiquity and their own roles as town founders and community guardians over time.

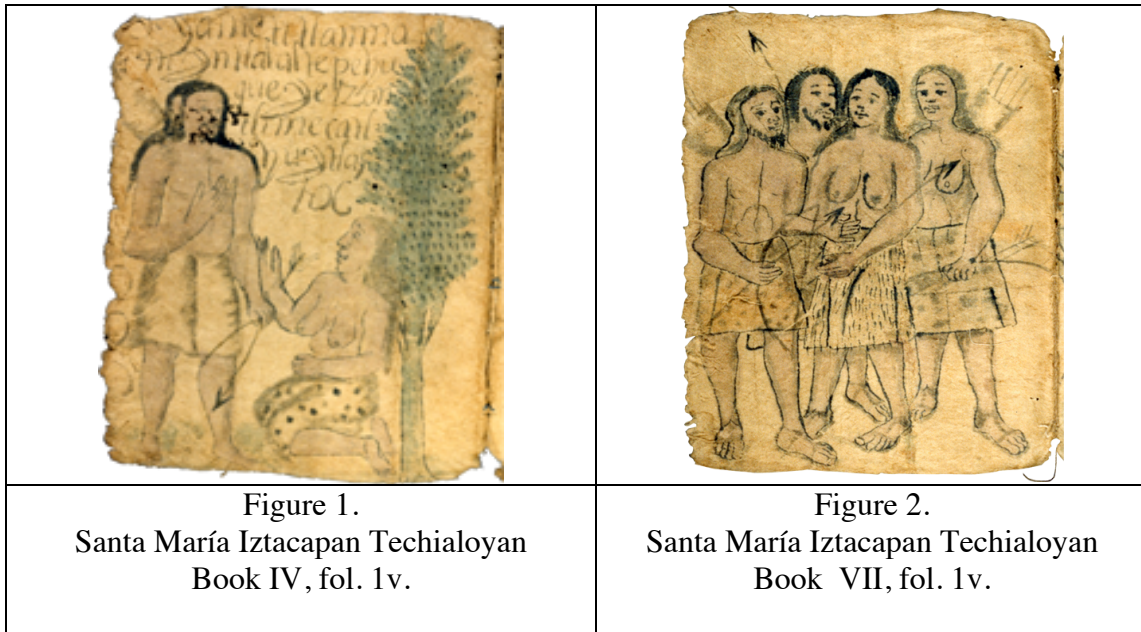
### **Semi-Sedentary Women and Early Town Origins**

The Kislak Techialoyan known as the Mapa de Santa María Iztacapan (associated today with El Cardonal, Hidalgo, Mexico) includes a representation of a very early couple, a man and a woman, half dressed in animal skins, and wearing their hair long (see Fig. 1). The woman’s spotted (jaguar?) skirt, bare chest, and un-styled hair are all clues to her ethnicity as a “Chichimec,”<sup>8</sup> or a woman from the North who migrated into the central highlands to participate in the establishment of a more sedentary society. The man next to her carries a bow and arrows,

another reference to hunter-gatherer associations from long ago. They are both bare-footed, a further indicator of their non- or semi-sedentary status or ethnicity.<sup>9</sup>

But this couple is not without social status. They are not just part of a massive group of undifferentiated migrants; they are a select couple, a male and a female, complementary and somewhat balanced. The fact that they are both gesturing with their hands suggests that they were people with authority. In Nahuatl, the word *tlatoani*, or dynastic ruler, has at its root the verb “to speak.” While speech scrolls emerging from the mouths of figures are clearly about speaking and having a voice, as we see in sixteenth-century codices, gesturing with arms, hands, and fingers also captures something of this privilege, akin to commanding.



Some might question why the woman is seated on the ground while the man stands, as though this was some embodiment of hierarchy. Rosemary Joyce, however, suggests that in pre-Columbian Nahua thinking women were more associated with the earth and men with the skies, which is why women are often portrayed sitting on the ground, with their legs tucked under them, in a posture that gave them considerable contact with the earth.<sup>10</sup> When men were seated, in contrast, they were more likely to be seated with their knees up under their chins or with their bottoms resting on some kind of object that lifted them off the surface of the earth.



The text on this page (Book IV, folio 1 *verso*; see Fig. 1) does not identify these people by name. The authors may be suggesting that this site, Coyametitlan, was settled in ancient times, and that this “first couple,” multiplied and populated the locale, which would become part of the larger community of Santa María Iztacapan. Whereas some cultures might remember “founding fathers,” in Mesoamerican society “mothers and fathers” were equally important. Women were an essential part of the equation, judging by their formulaic inclusions in scenes such as this one.

The Mapa de Iztacapan also has a somewhat curious scene with four standing Chichimec figures. Two of them (on our right) have what appear to be large breasts and no beards, which sets them off from the other two (on our left) and suggests that they were women (see Fig. 2). It may be that Techialoyan artists were unfamiliar with traditional representations of Chichimec women. For women to be holding bows and arrows clearly falls outside the norm, even for Chichimec women, who would more likely be shown in association with a baby in a basket and a pot of food over a fire.<sup>11</sup> For men to hunt and women to take care of the babies and the cooking were complementary gender roles in hunter-gatherer times, not that such boundaries were impermeable.<sup>12</sup>

The Kislak Techialoyan pictorial linked to San Martín Ocoyacac (modern state of Mexico), has multiple renditions of what appear to be non-sedentary women and men, wearing animal skins and carrying bows and arrows. In one of these scenes (folio 5 *recto*), the gloss informs us that they are “our grandparents” (i.e. ancestors), Acolhua people (near contemporaries of the Chichimecs). The woman, standing topless holding an arrow, illogically has the sedentary woman’s hairstyle called the *axtlacuilli*.<sup>13</sup> The scene in Book IV, folio 2 *verso* (Fig. 3.), is more standard for the Techialoyan corpus, with the Chichimec men shown wearing animal hides, with quivers of arrows on their backs, and bows and arrows in their hands.

	
<p>Figure 3. Santa María Iztacapan Techialoyan Book IV, fol. 2v.</p>	<p>Figure 4. Santa María Iztacapan Techialoyan Book V, fol. 1v.</p>

### Colonial Town-Founding Women

The Iztacapan Techialoyan also includes two indigenous women from colonial times, doña Ana and doña María Cortés (rendered “Coltex,” in the unusual orthography of this genre). Several elements in this scene (Book V, folio 1 *verso*; see Fig. 4) let us know that these are elite women and that they lived in this community after contact with Europeans. The most obvious clue is, of course, that the women have been baptized and have Spanish names; they in fact bear the surname of the most famous conqueror, Hernando Cortés. Cortés, also often called by the title he obtained in 1529, the Marqués (marquise), lived in the central highlands, amassed properties around the new capital, and collected tributes from many of the indigenous

communities found within the circuit encompassed by the Techialoyan genre. It may seem ironic today that indigenous people would proudly take and bear the name of the Spaniard who led a conquering expedition against the Nahuas, but in that period it was a name with considerable power and stature. Parallel with this use of a high-status surname, only privileged women were allowed to use the title, “doña,” which these two women enjoyed. The woman on our left may be gesturing with her right hand, another signal of her elevated position in local society.

The two women in Figure 4 are also shown wearing the white cotton clothing, a large blouse over a long skirt, which was an indication of their sedentary socio-political status as members of a people sustained by agriculture and characterized by advanced production of cloth. The blouse of the woman on the left has a rectangle at chest height, which suggests that it is a *huipilli* (Nahuatl for indigenous blouse). Their hairstyles show some change from the Chichimec pattern, but one thing they lack that was typical of colonial Nahua elite women is the feature of shaping the coiffure into two peaks or points above the forehead, the *axtlacuilli*, something we will see farther on (and which we have already observed in the depiction of one “Chchimec” woman).

The page facing these two women (Book V, folio 2 *recto*; see Fig. 5) shows three indigenous men wearing the corresponding style for colonial, elite, indigenous men of such communities, white cotton clothing again, but with capes tied at the shoulder. We may presume that these men and women together were the town founders or first families in this community after the Spanish invasion of Mexico in the early sixteenth century. Unlike the women, however, the men have an indigenous surname – they are don Domingo, don Gaspar, and don Andrés Motecuzoma (Motecçoçomatitzin here, with the plural honorific ending).<sup>14</sup>

In more recent Mexican thought, Motecuzoma (the younger) has been a discredited figure for not blocking the Spanish seizure of the Mexican capital city in 1521. Cuauhtemoc, who died resisting the Spanish incursion, has been remembered as the greater hero, especially after the Mexicans had thrown off Spanish colonialism in the nineteenth century. But here, perhaps owing to the Mendoza Moctezuma family’s involvement in Techialoyan manuscript distribution (and possibly production), we see no embarrassment or disinclination to celebrate supposed descentance from Moctezuma. Through the entire colonial period, some Moctezuma family members – those who had convincing proof of their claims – continued to benefit from inherited wealth and stature.<sup>15</sup>





Figure 5.  
Santa María Iztacapan Techialoyan  
Book V, folio 2r.



Figure 6.  
Texcalucan and Chichicarpa Techialoyan  
Folio 11v.

Returning to the Cortés women, we are left to wonder about their relationship with the Moctezuma men linked to Iztacapan or El Cardonal featured in this particular manuscript, for the text does not clarify the association. Did they intermarry and form the founding families? This is the presumption, for the text pages in this manuscript refer to the founding of the town in colonial times -- after the “Castillians came from the east” (Book IV, folio 5 *recto*). While we have no corroborating manuscripts from this community for either surname nor evidence that unites the Cortés women with the Moctezuma men, we have nothing to contradict the possibility, either. And, whether married or from separate and parallel families, the manuscript painter honors the two groups as town founders.<sup>16</sup>


It certainly was not unusual for the individual partners of a couple to maintain different names; it was a customary practice for Spaniards and for elite indigenous couples. The Techialoyan manuscript associated with Cuajimalpa (modern state of Mexico), for example, has a portrait of don Bartolomé Tezozomoczin and dona María Tlilazcatzin. Although they are not affiliated with a specific community, one presumes they are town founders.<sup>17</sup> The pictorial linked to San Bartolomé Tepanohuayan (modern state of Mexico) pairs don Manuel Nopaltzin and dona Ana Tlaltecatzin.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, the Techialoyan manuscript associated with San Cristóbal Texcalucan and Santa María Magdalena Chichicarpa (modern state of Mexico, republic of Mexico), another one of the Kislak Techialoyans, features a doña María Tezozomoc (Teçoçomoczin here) united with a don Lucas Chimalpopoca (see Fig. 6). The text names her as “his woman” (wife, being the implication, when possessed). One of them (probably he, but impossible to determine owing to the lack of gender indicators in some Nahuatl pronouns) is said to have founded Santa María Magdalena, a lesser settlement or division of a town, here called a *tlaxilacalli*. But the two are credited as being “our lords, the *altepetl* founders.” So this doña María is an illustrious, titled, noblewoman credited with one or more vital activities that established Texcalucan and Chichicarpa.<sup>19</sup>



The more book-like manuscript from San Juan Tolcayuca (modern state of Hidalgo, Mexico), another one of the four Kislak Techialoyans, does not feature any women in its pages,

nor does it go into detail about the founding couples or first families. Perhaps those details were forgotten. One possible founding father appears on the cover of the manuscript (see Fig. 7). He is a famous figure from the Mendoza Moctezuma genealogies, don Diego de Mendoza Austria Moctezuma, reminding us, once again, of that family’s connection to—and probable involvement in the manufacture of—the Techialoyan corpus. The text also mentions a famous sixteenth-century indigenous chronicler, don Hernando Alvarado Tezozomoc, a possible source for some of the greater Basin of Mexico history the Techialoyan authors tried to weave into the community-specific narratives. But, the emphasis in this manuscript is not as much on the founding of the town as it is a survey of its boundaries, supposedly in 1542. The lengthy text, not a very common feature of the Techialoyan genre, appears to be a prose translation or explanation of the other Tolcayuca manuscript in the Kislak group, a large-format map.

### Women at Open-Air Readings of Town Titles and Histories

The Mapa de Tolcayuca is a pictorial record of a boundary survey of the town of San Juan, and it shows a public gathering in front of the church (see Fig. 8) that probably coincided with the survey – perhaps the one said in the other Tolcayuca manuscript to have taken place in 1542 (although the short text here refers to 1520, impossible given the presence of so many Christian churches on the landscape, which would not have existed prior to the Spanish consolidation of power). It is on this “map,” or pictorial, in the central scene of activity, that we find a group of women. They are seated in front of a table where, presumably, the history of the town and its land titles would have been read aloud to the gathering (the standard procedure on such occasions). This element is vital for understanding women’s position of importance in indigenous communities. Why would the audience for this gathering consist solely of women? Perhaps the men were occupied with the survey, but they are not portrayed on the landscape. The boundary survey is not in motion, only footprints indicate that it took place or point the way. Regardless, the women would not be present for the reading of the town history and land titles if it was not felt that they needed to know this information, so essential for defending the town from encroachments.

	
<p>Figure 7. Manuscrito de Tolcayuca</p>	<p>Figure 8. Mapa de Tolcayuca</p>

	
<p>Figure 9. Mapa de Tolcayuca Central Scene (detail)</p>	<p>Figure 10. Mapa de Tolcayuca Central Scene (detail)</p>

In this central scene, the local Spanish friar (on our left) sits in the company of the indigenous male authority (wearing the cape and holding the staff), and both are seated at the table (tables and these kinds of chairs were European introductions) (see Fig. 9). What appear to be nine women occupy the ground in front of the table (Fig. 10). These women sit on their legs, as was customary for Nahua women. The one in the upper right seems to wear the blouse (*huipilli*) with the rectangle at her chest and to have her hair arranged with the two points above her forehead (the *axtlacuilli*), the proper “look” for a sedentary, “civilized,” indigenous woman. One could postulate that the men are the more important figures in this scene, the ones with the central roles, whereas the women are nearly an undifferentiated mass, on the receiving end of the information. Nevertheless, their numbers are notable and they are present at a momentous occasion. The recurrence of such scenes across other manuscripts suggests this was not an exceptional situation.

	
<p>Figure 11. San Pedro Atlapulco Techialoyan Central Scene (detail)</p>	<p>Figure 12. Lienzo de Malinaltepec Central Scene (detail)</p>

The Techialoyan manuscript associated with San Pedro Atlapulco (modern state of Mexico) shows a scene quite similar to the one from Tolcayuca, although there are more people present (Fig. 11). This gathering puts the priest in the principal role, standing at the table, with a group of at least eight indigenous men behind him, all wearing a cape tied at the shoulder, as was



customary for noblemen. On this table we can clearly make out the town papers, ink, and quill pen. Fourteen women sit on the ground, some of them facing the table, some seemingly talking among themselves and gesturing with their hands. The separation of men and women may have been the wish of the friar, for we know that inside the church men and women occupied opposite sides of the main aisle. But the postures we see suggest once again an association of women with the earth and men with the skies. In this scene, too, we can more easily make out the traditional hairstyle of the Nahua woman, suggesting that the artist was conscious of representing women either as they really looked or as they were expected to dress, do their hair, and sit at formal gatherings.

While the state of the original is too deteriorated to reproduce here, the Techialoyan pictorial associated with San Cristóbal Coyotepec has a strikingly similar format to the one connected with Atlapulco. It, too, consists of a large panel showing people arriving by various roads, carrying burdens, coming toward a gathering in front of the church, where indigenous men stand behind a table and indigenous women sit in front of it. Although the numbers of people are fewer, the arrangement is quite comparable.<sup>20</sup> Thus, we have three Techialoyan manuscripts with this same theme.

In the *Lienzo de Malinaltepec* (modern state of Guerrero, not dated) (see Fig. 12) we find an outdoor gathering of a similar nature, where town titles and history were probably being written, signed, and/or being read aloud.<sup>21</sup> In this scene, likely dating from the eighteenth century, the priest and the provincial Spanish colonial official are in the background, observing from afar what is otherwise a relatively autonomous indigenous community event. Once again reflecting a separation by sex, four noblemen stand at or near the table, and four noblewomen flank one side of the table.<sup>22</sup> One of the women seems to be standing, and the other three appear to be kneeling or sitting on their legs. Diverging from the Techialoyan genre, the indigenous women here are not raising their hands in a gesture of speech (and its concordant authority); rather, their hands are clasped in prayer or supplication.<sup>23</sup> Regardless, the symmetry of numbers of men and women, and the presence of women at such a weighty gathering is noteworthy.

We do have one example, in a pictorial from San Lucas Tecopilco (modern state of Tlaxcala), of a Nahua woman actually being seated at the table with the men (see Fig. 13).<sup>24</sup> This late colonial document is not a Techialoyan manuscript, but more of a lienzo. Still, it is roughly contemporaneous with Techialoyans and it does depict the same kind of activity, highlighting the table al fresco in front of the church, with the town papers being written, signed, and/or read aloud. We do not see an audience in this scene, but there surely was one. We may be too close to the major players, forming part of the audience ourselves.

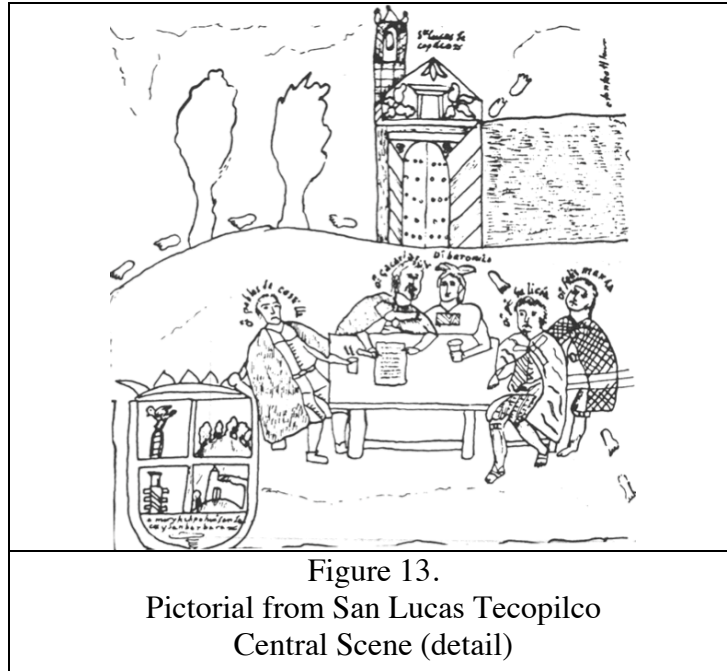


Figure 13.  
Pictorial from San Lucas Tecopilco  
Central Scene (detail)

In the Tecopilco example we have been given a treasure in the details, helping us contextualize and better comprehend the foregoing cases. All five figures at this meeting are glossed with their names. All have titles of nobility, don (for the men) or doña. The woman is named doña Beronica (i.e., Verónica). The noble titles confirm the fact that these kinds of scenes in manuscripts drawn or painted by indigenous people typically depict the power holders of a given community. The men's capes, shoes or sandals, and doña Beronica's *huipilli* and *axtlacuilli* hairstyle also attest to the group's status. Doña Beronica and one of the men at the table have cups in their hands. Steam appears to rise from one of the cups, suggesting that the drink was hot chocolate, the beverage of the elite in this (and earlier) time periods.

### Concluding Remarks

This essay has taken the representations of women from four pictorial Mesoamerican manuscripts, all in the Techialoyan genre dating from the late seventeenth century, and contextualized them in comparison with the larger corpus of Techialoyan manuscripts as well as with other late-colonial pictorials that have similar historical, community-centered scenes. We find an importance attached to women's representation as lineage founders dating back to the earliest migrations into the central highlands from the more arid, semi-sedentary North (migrations that were believed to have occurred between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries). We know from sixteenth century manuscripts that women were often connected with migration, even migration leadership, as the example of Chimalma shows. She appears in several manuscripts as a leader in the migration from Aztlan.<sup>25</sup> The Techialoyan painters' recognition of women's originary cultural roles in ethnic origin stories and in stories of community foundation gives them status as part of an ancestor pair or couple, which was so clearly embedded in ways of thinking about the past that it could not be overlooked, even when men might have been more typically concerned with their own and other men's activities.

We also see women in a variety of groupings linked to town (re)founding in early Spanish colonial times (especially the sixteenth century). It is noteworthy that Mesoamerican male artists chose to remember their “founding mothers” along with their “founding fathers,” if we speak in terms drawn from European experience. In fact, the founding mother and father was the “symbolic incarnation” of the town in the view of some historians.<sup>26</sup> We have yet to know whether this was a layover from a pre-Hispanic gender parallelism or complementarity, but it did give women more space and recognition than “Western” cultures did.<sup>27</sup>

Finally, we spot women at mid-colonial (seventeenth and eighteenth-century) open-air document readings, sometimes in larger numbers than men. They could also be present for community boundary surveys.<sup>28</sup> Thanks to the work of William B. Taylor, we know that indigenous women were especially numerous in rural riots and uprisings in defense of their communities in Spanish-colonial Mesoamerica in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Taylor writes:

The place of women is especially striking [...] more women than men usually took part. In at least one-fourth of the cases, women led the attacks and were visibly more aggressive, insulting, and rebellious in their behavior toward outside authorities.<sup>29</sup>

This phenomenon has yet to be fully analyzed, but it does suggest that indigenous women felt they had a major stake in defending their communities. Even if colonial political structures did not give them a role in holding offices within the indigenous municipal council, they clearly felt they had a say in local affairs, that they had a vested interest in ensuring the community’s survival and warding off external threats. Other studies have shown that indigenous women of colonial Mesoamerica were “active, sometimes eager, seekers of redress for themselves, their families, and their communities in Spanish courts.”<sup>30</sup> Women’s defensive or protective posture would appear to relate to their female ancestors’ presence in founding lineages and towns, and it helps us understand why late-colonial women would be on the scene for the reading of histories about the original establishment of their towns and information about territorial boundaries, which primordial titles nearly universally included.

As we have seen, it is primarily elite women who got their portraits painted onto the landscapes of their pictorial town histories as lineage and town founders. The scenes around the tables for the reading (and possibly the writing or signing) of documents may encompass women from a greater range of social status. We may be able to clarify this with further research. The nobility of a given community could include a considerable number of present and past officers and their female partners. But it would make sense if such public gatherings were aimed at the entire community, or anyone who was free to attend at any given time. The research findings of William Taylor about women’s involvement in spontaneous acts of resistance speak to more than the experience of the noblewomen. So, we might conclude that women of any standing, whether noblewomen or commoners, would take an interest in and attend the public meetings.

As we continue to survey examples of women on the landscape in pictorial manuscripts that comprise part of the indigenous-authored histories coming out of Mesoamerica, we hope to be able to add nuance and a deeper understanding of women's roles and status in their communities over time, whether prior to contact with Spanish colonialism or during the ensuing confrontations and methods for coping that emerged.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> See James Lockhart, "Ways of Writing," *The Nahuas after the Conquest* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 330, for an explanation about the introduction of Spanish-style writing to "Nahua student-aides" under the friars' tutelage. Governed by the social mores that restricted the clergy from having much contact with women, the friars would not have included indigenous females in their classes.

<sup>2</sup> On the importance of indigenous staff in parish churches, see Lockhart, *The Nahuas*, 210; on town councils, see 35-40. See also Robert Haskett, *Indigenous Rulers: An Ethnohistory of Town Government in Colonial Cuernavaca* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991), for information on "interdynastic" marriages of elite men and women associated in some way with the Hinojosa family. Relevant, too, is the section on fiscales in Haskett's book *Visions of Paradise: Primordial Titles and Mesoamerican History in Cuernavaca* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005). Municipal council records written Nahuatl, such as the *Tlaxcalan Actas: A Compendium of the Records of the Cabildo of Tlaxcala (1545-1627)*, eds. James Lockhart, Frances Berdan, and Arthur J.O. Anderson (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1986), emphasize the doings of local men of authority. Annals written in Nahuatl about the Spanish colonial period, such as the *Annals of His Time: Don Domingo de San Antón Munón Chimalpahin Quauhqueanitzin*, eds. James Lockhart, Susan Schroeder, and Doris Namala (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), emphasize events and activities of both Spanish and indigenous people, but again, largely men. This particular historical text reflects the diversity of Mexico City, with a few references to mulatto, *morisca*, and black women (215, 219, 221), the German wife of a marquise (231), and convents of Spanish nuns (221-23, 241), for example. References to indigenous women tend to include exceptional women or the scandalous treatment of women, as we see, for instance, in a reference to the death of a noblewoman, the daughter of the indigenous ruler of Xochimilco, in 1608 (111), and, in 1612, complaints about a Spanish chaplain who punished indigenous market women by stripping them and exposing their breasts in public (195). Fortunately, we do have mundane records in indigenous languages, such as testaments and bills of sale, that let us access women's lives. See, for example, "Matters of Life at Death: Nahuatl Testaments of Rural Women (Central Mexico), 1589-1801," and "Concluding Remarks," in *Indian Women of Early Mexico*, Susan Schroeder, Stephanie Wood, and Robert Haskett, eds., 165-182 and 313-330 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997).

<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth M. Brumfiel notes how the illustrations in the Florentine Codex provide more information about women than the texts, something a student and I also discovered in the 1980s. See Brumfiel's article, "Asking about Aztec Gender: The Historical and Archaeological Evidence, 59, in *Gender in Pre-Hispanic America: A Symposium at Dumbarton Oaks, 12 and 13 October 1996*, ed. Cecilia F. Klein (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2001), 57-85.

<sup>4</sup> It may well be that pre-Columbian writing systems, which lived on for a time in the shape of colonial pictorials, were less biased in favor of men, but that has yet to be proven.



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<sup>5</sup> For a description of the genre, see Stephanie Wood, “The Techialoyan Codices,” in *Sources and Methods for the Study of Postconquest Mesoamerican Ethnohistory*, James Lockhart, Lisa Sousa, and Stephanie Wood, eds. (Eugene, Ore.: Wired Humanities Project, University of Oregon, 2007) < <http://whp.uoregon.edu/Lockhart/index.html>>.

<sup>6</sup> See Stephanie Wood, “Don Diego García de Mendoza Moctezuma: A Techialoyan Mastermind?” *Estudios de Cultura Náhuatl* (Mexico) 19 (1989), 245-268. Since I published that study, I have identified another example of the Mendoza Moctezuma name appearing in the Techialoyan corpus. The manuscript related to San Simón Calpulalpan has a don Juan de San Pedro de Mendoza Moctezuma and a don Alonso de Mendoza Moctezuma (actually written here as Mentoza Motecçoçomatzin and Mentoza Motecçomatzin). See *lámina 8, cuadro 1* (page 73) in Fernando Cortés de Brasdefer, “Códice de San Simón Calpulalpan,” in *Historia y sociedad en Tlaxcala: Memorias del Primer Simposio Internacional de Investigaciones Socio-Históricas sobre Tlaxcala, Octubre 1985* (Tlaxcala: Guberino del Estado de Tlaxcala, Instituto Tlascalteca de Cultura, Universidad Autónoma de Tlaxcala, Universidad Iberoamericana, 1985).

<sup>7</sup> The Kislak Techialoyans are four examples (although two are related to one another) of the genre that are part of a private collection owned by Jay I. Kislak of Miami Lakes, Florida. If he has not already done so, Kislak is considering giving these manuscripts to the Library of Congress. In 2004, he made a huge donation of maps, other manuscripts, and artifacts to the Library. It was in anticipation of that gift that the Wired Humanities Project at the University of Oregon proposed, and the National Endowment for the Humanities agreed to fund, the publication of the Kislak Techialoyans in 2008. See: <http://mapas.uoregon.edu> (accessed in April 2009).

<sup>8</sup> Hunter-gatherer people from the North were generally described this way. See Lockhart, *The Nahuas*, 16.

<sup>9</sup> We find a very similar scene in the Techialoyan manuscript associated with Santa María Zolotepec (Ocelotepec), in the municipality of Xonacatlan, modern state of Mexico. The standing male in this example, however, wears sandals. See the copies in the files of Donald Robertson in the Latin American Library at Tulane University, page 19. See also page 27.

<sup>10</sup> Personal communication. See also Rosemary A. Joyce, *Gender and Power in Prehispanic Mesoamerica* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001).

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, the ancestral Chichimec family in the Mapa Quinatzin, *Códices del México antiguo*, Carmen Aguilera, ed. (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1979), 97.

<sup>12</sup> Cecilia F. Klein finds that Nahua gender ideology of the Late Post-Classic period (1250–1521) “perceived gender as neither immutable nor stable,” and included the belief that social and supernatural circumstances could influence sex and gender. See her essay, “None of the Above: Gender Ambiguity in Nahua Ideology,” 184, in *Gender in Pre-Hispanic America: A Symposium at Dumbarton Oaks, 12 and 13 October 1996*, ed. Cecilia F. Klein (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2001), 183–253.

<sup>13</sup> See Figure 5 in Ulf Bankmann, “Das Ortsbuch von San Martín Ocoyacac, México,” *Indiana* 2:1974), 133–65. Perhaps she is in transition from non-sedentary to sedentary here. We also find an example of a Chichimec or Acolhua male, in hunter-gatherer attire, paired with a fully sedentary woman in cotton clothing, as though she were living well after 1521. She does hold a bow and arrow, perhaps symbolic of her origins, and suggesting that she has nearly made the transition to represent sedentary society. This couple is found in the Apaxco *altepeamatl*, or

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Techialoyan manuscript, linked to Apaxco de Ocampo (modern state of Mexico). See *Apaxco*, ed. Rosaura Hernández Rodríguez (Zinacantepec: El Colegio Mexiquense, 2002), 99. The diversity may reflect the colonial evolution of the image of the Chichimecs and some degree of ambivalence about representing them as “uncivilized” ancestors.

<sup>14</sup> The Techialoyan manuscript linked with Santa María Zolotepec (Ocelotepec), in the modern state of Mexico, includes two very similar groups of men and women. In the Zolotepec case, the women are named *dona Ana* and *dona Agustina Cortés* (here, *Coltex* again) *Chimalpopocatzitzin*, and the men are *don Domingo*, *don Melchor*, and *don Bartolomé Moctezuma* (here, *Motecozomatitzin*). See the copies in the files of Donald Robertson in the Latin American Library at Tulane University, pages 29 and 30. The arrangement of the figures and the echoing surnames may suggest some copying was involved in the creation of one or the other manuscript. We also need to remember that these are possibly imagined names, not necessarily historical individuals.

<sup>15</sup> *Tecuichpotzin*, Moctezuma’s principal daughter as far as the Spaniards were concerned, was baptized as *doña Isabel* and married several Spanish conquistaors in succession. A descendant of one of the sons resulting from these marriages, Gonzalo Cano de Moctezuma, became a Knight of Santiago and a Knight of Alcantara. Another descendent of Moctezuma became the Count of Moctezuma. In 1697, one of the Counts of Moctezuma (a Spaniard gaining the titles by marriage) became New Spain’s 32nd Viceroy (1697-1701), in other words holding power just when most of the Techialoyans were apparently distributed (and probably produced). See Donald E. Chipman, *Moctezuma’s Children: Aztec Royalty under Spanish Rule, 1520–1700* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), 136–139.

<sup>16</sup> The Techialoyan manuscript associated with San Miguel Mimiapan (modern state of Mexico), in a private collection in Ireland, has two facing pages with a group of women on one and a group of men on the other. All are standing. All have titles of nobility. This is reminiscent of the arrangement in the Techialoyan of Iztacapan.

<sup>17</sup> The same manuscript shows two additional, colonial couples as founders of specific *tlaxilacalli*, one pair sitting together and one standing. See Ignacio Silva Cruz, *Transcripción y Traducción del Códice Techialoyan de Cuajimalpa* (Mexico City: Archivo General de la Nación, 2002), 53, 54, and 69. The Tzictepec Techialoyan (also modern state of Mexico) has named ancestors sitting together and standing together in adjoining folios. See folios 34 and 35 in Fernando de Horcasitas and Wanda Tomassi de Magrelli, “El códice de Tzictepec: Una nueva fuente pictórica indígena,” *Anales de Antropología del Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas* 12: 243-272.

<sup>18</sup> See folio 15 *recto* of the *Códice Nahuatl C* in the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

<sup>19</sup> Unfortunately, *doña María* is the only woman to appear across the 37 pages of texts and images that comprise the Texcalucan and Chichicarpa manuscript. In contrast, the Techialoyan manuscript linked to Zempoala (modern state of Mexico), includes portraits of at least nine founding couples, standing, sitting, and with the man standing and the woman sitting. All are dressed in cotton clothing, and the women have their hair arranged in the sedentary style.

<sup>20</sup> See Figure 97 in John Glass, *Catálogo de la Colección de Códices* (Mexico City: Museo Nacional de Antropología, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1964). One significant difference, is that I cannot make out a friar at the table.

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<sup>21</sup> Cover image, Marion Oettinger, *Lienzos coloniales: guía de la exposición de pinturas de terrenos comunales en México (siglos XVII-XIX)* (Mexico City: Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas, 1983).

<sup>22</sup> We know these are nobles by the titles that appear with their names, written on the landscape above their heads and deciphered by Danièle Dehouve (*Entre el caiman y el jaguar: Los pueblos indios de Guerrero*, Mexico City: Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social, Instituto Nacional Indigenista, Colección Historia de los Pueblos Indígenas de México, 1994, 126).

<sup>23</sup> This is a Tlapanec or Me'phaa speaking community, and may have had traditions that varied from those of Nahuatl speakers, and yet this appears to be more of an adopted European practice than an indigenous custom. Or, it may be syncretic. Research is required to determine whether this reflects a true local practice. Another *lienzo* from the state of Guerrero shows a woman on her knees with her hands at her chest. In this one it is difficult to tell whether the hands are together in the form of prayer or flat on her chest. See Figure 1 in Flor Yenin Cerón Rojas, "El Lienzo de Citlaltepec, un documento histórico-cartográfico indígena de la Mixteca de Guerrero," published online by FAMSI at <http://www.famsi.org/reports/05052es/Ponencia.pdf> (visited April 2009), 2.

<sup>24</sup> Drawing by César J. Meléndez, in Luis Reyes García, ed., *La escritura pictográfica en Tlaxcala: Dos mil años de experiencia mesoamericana* (Tlaxcala: Universidad Autónoma de Tlaxcala, Secretaría de Extensión Universitaria y Difusión Cultural, Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social, 1993).

<sup>25</sup> See Stephanie Wood, "Gender and Town Guardianship in Mesoamerica: Directions for Future Research," 251–53, in *Journal de la Societe des Americanistes* 84:2 (1998), 243–276.

<sup>26</sup> See Robert Haskett, "Visions of Musicipal Glory Undimmed: The Nahuatl Town Histories of Colonial Cuernavaca," 3, in *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 1 (1992):1–36.

<sup>27</sup> See Stephanie Wood and Robert Haskett, "Concluding Remarks," 317, in *Indian Women of Early Mexico*, eds. Susan Schroeder, Stephanie Wood, and Robert Haskett (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 313–30.

<sup>28</sup> See Robert Haskett, "Activist or Adultress? The Life and Struggle of Dona Josefa María of Tepoztlan," 148, in *Indian Women of Early Mexico*, eds. Susan Schroeder, Stephanie Wood, and Robert Haskett (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 145–63.

<sup>29</sup> William B. Taylor, *Drinking Homicide, and Rebellion in Colonial Mexican Villages* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1979), 116.

<sup>30</sup> Wood and Haskett, "Concluding Remarks," 322, in *Indian Women of Early Mexico*, eds. Susan Schroeder, Stephanie Wood, and Robert Haskett (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 313–30.