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Gisela von Wobeser y Ricardo Sánchez (editores)

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James Lockhart*

Complex Municipalities: Tlaxcala and Tulancingo in the Sixteenth Century

Since the appearance of Charles Gibson's *Aztecs* in 1964, it has been known that indigenous states at the subimperial level were the essential carriers of continuity past the sharp break created in central Mexico by the Spanish conquest. Persisting in recognizable form through the sixteenth century and in many cases to the end of the colonial period or beyond, they provided both the shape and the organizational core for the basic institutions of the post-conquest countryside. These entities were like city states in size, and also in their degree of independence and strong ethnic awareness. But though the Spaniards were to see each state as a *cabecera* sorrounded by *sujetos* (and Gibson too makes much use of this terminology), nucleation and urban domination were not central to their manner of organization. Rather each *altepetl* (the indigenous term) consisted of a set of quite equal, distinct, independent units, often called *calpolli* or *tlaxilacalli*, which divided the entire territory of the altepetl among them. No indigenous term differentiated a core settlement (to the Spaniards, cabecera) from outlying settlements (to the Spaniards, sujetos), nor was there any special role for such a settlement in the scheme.

As a confederation of equal constituent parts, the altepetl stood in need of principles of unity, of which the strongest was the common allegiance of the parts to the same *tlatoani* or dynastic ruler. Each part separately paid its allotted share of the general tax to the tlatoani and rotated in services to him; sharing and rotation in relation to the tlatoani were thus the basic mechanisms of the altepetl. Hence the tlatoani was to be crucial for the Spaniards as well, not only in channeling benefits, but also in defining units. Gibson saw the essence of the process when he wrote that "despite exceptions, a one-to-one relation between tlatoani community and encomienda was surely regarded as a norm".[1] The general sense, then, of what happened in central Mexico after the conquest is that each altepetl under its tlatoani became an encomienda, and following that successively a parish and a Spanish-style municipality with a cabildo. The basic truth and explanatory power of this insight are such that it should by no means be abandoned. Yet as we learn ever more about central Mexico before and after the conquest, we realize that the process in all its purity may have taken place in only a minority of cases.

Sometimes a new entity was created where no recognized tlatoani had existed, and often the borders of the three new units (encomienda, parish, and town) coincided less than perfectly. But the greatest and most common exceptions to the norm were cases in which the entity contained more than one ruler. By the time the Spaniards came no independent altepetl was without its tlatoani, and the office remained crucial to operations and structure, but many of the most important states were composite altepetl with two or more sets of calpulli and a tlatoani for each, quite a few of these complex states surviving as viable units after the conquest.[2] Xochimilco, Tlalmanalco, Amecameca, Coyoacan, Huejotzingo, and Tlaxcala are among the examples. Clearly entities such as these must be integrated into our view of regular post-conquest processes. In fact, as we proceed to

*University of California at Los Angeles.

[1]Charles Gibson, *The Aztecs Under Spanish Rule* (Stanford, 1964), p. 65.

[2]Gibson was fully aware of the composite states and himself contributed a great deal to our understanding of them.

delve deeper into documents in Nahuatl throwing light on the creation of Spanish-style Indian municipal corporations and their manner of operation, we find that an inordinate amount of the best evidence concerns precisely those prominent complex altepetl, and indeed that it was apparently in such situations that the new system first took root and reached full development. Often we must use evidence from complex situations to deduce basic processes that must have been in operation in simple altepetl as well, but which remain undocumented.

In all central Mexico the largest complex altepetl to survive was the quadripartite kingdom of Tlaxcala (Tlaxcallan), and it has also left the largest legacy of documents, Nahuatl or otherwise, on the manner of operation of its municipal corporation in the sixteenth century. Over thirty years ago Gibson used much of this documentation to produce, among other things, the fullest large-scale portrait of the structure and operation of an Indian town government that we have to this day.[3] Now a unique resource only partially utilized by Gibson has become available, the Nahuatl minutes of the Tlaxcalan cabildo (primarily for the years 1547 to 1567).[4] Close work with the minutes, the only such series known to exist, has made me more aware of several patterns, which I will briefly present in the following pages; some are perhaps specific to conglomerate towns, others more general. More especially I wish to discuss another, less well known complex situation, that of Tulancingo (Tollantzinco), for which some fresh (if highly fragmentary) evidence is also available.[5] The Tulancingo data at times reinforce and at times complement or throw a different light on what can be learned from the Tlaxcalan records. It is the reinforcing that interests me in the present context, for Tlaxcala is so prominent and has played such a peculiar role in the mythmaking of the twentieth century that it is all to often looked upon as an altogether exceptional phenomenon rather than as the in-many-ways typical Indian corporation that it was. Tlaxcala was perhaps the first and probably the greatest ally the spaniards had in the conquest of Mexico, but it found early and expert imitators. In the sixteenth century other Indian towns resented Tlaxcala not because, as the twentieth century has tended to feel, they were traitors for turning on the "Aztecas", but because they seemed to get all the credit and reward for doing the same thing everyone else was doing all over the country.

Representation of sub-units

It now appears that one of the deepest-reaching differences between municipal governments as they existed among Spaniards of early modern times and as they took shape among indigenous central Mexicans lay in the nature of representation. In a Spanish cabildo each member, although joining the others in dealing with general concerns, represented primarily the interests of his own family; the strongest family complexes of the entire municipal unit, based essentially in the unit's urban core, somehow found representation, with minimal attention to distribution of seats among geographical districts or subjurisdictions. In indigenous cabildos, on the other hand, each member was chosen as a function of belonging to a certain constituent part, so that through rotation and proportional representation each part would get its due. In simpler municipalities, where the parts (calpolli/tlaxilacalli) were closely interlocked in a traditional, well defined

[3]Charles Gibson, *Tlaxcala in the Sixteenth Century* (New Haven, 1952).

[4]James Lockhart, Frances Berdan, and Arthur J. O. Anderson, *The Tlaxcalan Actas: A Compendium of the Records of the Cabildo of Tlaxcala (1545-1627)* (Salt Lake City, 1986). Where not otherwise specified, all statements about Tlaxcala rest on data contained in this publication.

[5]Tulancingo collection (1), in Special Collections of the UCLA Research Library, a corpus of modest size especially notable for its Nahuatl documents from the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. The materials are arranged only by folders and lack consistent foliation. Where not otherwise specified, all statements about Tulancingo rest on data contained in this collection. UCLA's Tulancingo holdings, valuable as they are, represent only a small portion of the archive of the Tulancingo alcalde mayor's office, reputed to be virtually intact and in private hands.

scheme, sub-unit representation functioned so automatically that specific connections between cabildo member and sub-unit hardly ever get mentioned. It is in a situation where the actors are larger, weightier, and more independent that the process is more likely to become visible, especially in the Tlaxcalan cabildo minutes, which give us a documentary dimension unmatched for any other indigenous corporation of any size. The first organization of the Tlaxcalan municipality, apparently conceived by the Spaniards in ignorance of the entity's complexity, led to internal strife, followed by a definitive reorganization in 1545. As Gibson has shown, the result was a cabildo chosen rigidly on the basis of equal representation of the four constituent altepetl. Each contributed one alcalde, three regidores, and a tlatoani sitting as perpetual regidor, while the governorship rotated among the four altepetl in an eight-year cycle.

Close examination of the Tlaxcalan cabildo minutes reveals how far the principles of equal representation and rotation went, affecting every known sphere of the municipal government's activity. An elaborate scheme was devised to have notaries rotate equally by altepetl, with two always present at sessions (though in fact two of the corps were so much more expert than the others that they did most of the writing). The city majordomos (treasurer/stewards) at first rotated by twos among the four altepetl, then it was found necessary to have four majordomos, one from each, but this proving unwieldy, the earlier scheme returned. Each altepetl took its turn providing tribute labor to the City of Tlaxcala, with cabildo members from that particular altepetl providing supervision. Deputies supervising the market rotated by altepetl. A delegation sent to Spain in 1562 consisted of four members, one from each altepetl. A single chest contained Tlaxcala's city treasury, but inside that chest were four separately managed funds into which all payments were made and from which all disbursements came. Although fully unambiguous evidence is lacking, apparently the officals at the clearing house for city tribute (*tequicalco*) and at the inns the city ran were also appointed proportionately or in rotation, and where applicable they performed duties relevant to their home altepetl. And needless to say, provincial peace officers named by the cabildo operated in their own home regions. Indeed, officials at all levels were doubtless chosen not merely from a certain altepetl but from a specific sub-entity which would figure in a scheme of rotation or proportional representation in that framework in turn. Unfortunately (but typically) the Tlaxcalan records hardly descend to this level. The sub-entities which are most likely to have been relevant to the choice of officials are *teccalli* (lordly houses), *tequitl* (tax-paying jurisdictions into which each altepetl was divided), and a large number of named settlements within each tequitl. At present these entities and their relationship to each other are little understood, and the municipal records tell practically nothing about the cabildo members' more specific bases.

Tulancingo, my secondary example, had been a double altepetl in preconquest times, containing two named parts or halves, each with its own supreme dynastic tlatoani. Tlatocan in the south hailed back to conquering and immigrating Nahuas, Tlaixpan in the north to the Otomi,[6] though by post-conquest times both parts appear to have been dominated by Nahuatl speakers. The kingdom of Tulancingo underwent a more radical division than Tlaxcala. Although the area remained a single jurisdiction under one Spanish corregidor, based in the settlement called Tulancingo which served as capital for the entire region and contained a Franciscan church shared by the two parts, each part became a separate encomienda, and above all each acquired its own separate governor and cabildo. Here, then, the principle of representation of constituent parts is carried to the extreme of creating two entirely separate governing bodies. The only hint in the formal structure that the two might in some sense belong together is the apparent existence in each of a single alcalde rather than a cabildo's normal complement of two. About the constituent parts of

[6]See Pedro Carrasco, "Los caciques chichimecas de Tulancingo", *Estudios de Cultura Náhuatl*, 4 (1963), p. 90.

the two halves and their manner of representation, as little is known for Tulancingo as in the case of the inner workings of the four Tlaxcalan altepetl. From miscellaneous partial glimpses of the membership of the two cabildos (see Tables 2 and 3), I surmise that each had four regidores, who probably represented an equal number of sub-entities. By the late seventeenth century the monastery of Tulancingo had seven dependent *visita* churches, three belonging to Tlatocan and four to Tlaixpan (possibly Tulancingo proper represented a fourth sub-entity of Tlatocan).[7] Some unlabeled papers from the Tlaixpan half, dated 1567 to 1571 and apparently constituting records of extraordinary tax levies and expenditures for miscellaneous purposes, speak of separate collection made by the officials in four calpolli which seem to be the constituent parts of Tlaixpan.[8] The number of collectors named, however, does not correspond exactly to the number of parts (see Table 1). In only one year are there the expected four; one year there are three, one year six, and two years five. Nevertheless, my impression is that the normal complement was one collector for each calpulli plus a general coordinator or supervisor (Pedro Colhuateuctli).

In Tlaxcala, where four entirely parallel, distinct, and complete entities were brought within a single institutional framework, unity was achieved only through a kaleidoscopic turn-taking and sharing; in any one function at any one time, in truth only one of the four parts was generally at work. This manner of operation satisfied each of the four constituents and made it possible to get something done, because officials were always dealing with people from their own unit who would obey them and identify with them, and they were primarily concerned with carrying on that unit's affairs. The main problem was coordination of the four parts. Over the twenty years of the mid-sixteenth century closely covered by the cabildo records, council members again and again expressed concern over how to combine unified management with operation by fours. With the appointment of majordomos, collection of the maize tax, and supervision of rotary labor on city projects, the same pattern is observed: fluctuation between fewer officials, in the name of unity, and more officials, in the name of satisfying the four parts and making things work. No definitive solution emerged; rather one sees a periodic swing from one pole to its opposite. Nevertheless, the complex unit held together into the seventeenth century and beyond. Eventually many smaller settlements all acroos Tlaxcala's territory gained a great deal of autonomy, but the municipal corporation never split at the center.[9]

Having been decentralized into its two main constituents, Tulancingo would seem to have found a permanent solution to Tlaxcala's dilemma, but not so. The nobles of the two halves were probably closely intertwined through marriage, descent, and economic interests. Both governors maintained residences in Tulancingo proper, and so in all likelihood did many of the other members of both cabildos. In the monastery atrium on Sundays after mass, one could find the two governors surrounded by a large number of present, former, and future cabildo members, not noticeably segregated according to the two halves, to judge from the Spanish-made list that has come down to us of those present on one such occasion. Although each cabildo paid tribute to a different encomendero and dealt separately with the corregidor, there were still things they needed to do together, and such common action could run into serious difficulties. For example, in 1582 the Franciscan monastery church needed a bell, and a bellmaker was in town. Tlatocan and Tlaixpan agreed to share the cost equally, but the delegation going to borrow 100 pesos from a local Spanish resident and minor corregimiento official consisted only of the governor, alcalde, and regidores of Tlatocan. The Tlatocan governor then took the money to the monastery and in the presence of the father guardian paid it to the bellmaker. In

[7]Fray Agustín de Vetancurt, *Chrónica de la provincia del Santo Evangelio de México, quarta parte del Teatro mexicano* (Mexico City, 1697), p. 63.

[8]I have as of the present not arrived at a satisfactory analysis of the relevant phrase, which accours as "nauhcoco calpoli" and "(ypan) calpolli nauhcoco", but it does clearly contain "calpolli" and "nauh-" ("four").

[9]The situation as to indigenous government in the Tlaxcalan region in the eighteenth century remains to be investigated in detail.

Table 1

Tribute collectors (*tlapachoani*) in the Taixpan half of Tulancingo, 1567-71

1567	
Pedro Colhuateuctli	
Andrés Tlapaltecatl	
Pedro Xochicalcatl teuctli	
Andrés Huecamecatl teuctli	
Juan de la Cruz	
Juan Tezcacoacatl teuctli	
1558	
Pedro Colhuateuctli	
Andrés Huecamecatl teuctli	
Juan Tlacochteuctli	
1569	
Pedro Colhuateuctli	
Juan de la Cruz	
Andrés Huecamecatl teuctli	
Pedro Xochicalcatl teuctli	
Baltasar Tlapaltecatl teuctli	
1570	
Pedro Colhuateuctli	
Juan Tlacochteuctli	
Andrés Huecamecatl teuctli	
Baltasar Tlapaltecatl teuctli	
1571	
Pedro Xochicalcatl teuctli	
Pedro Colhuateuctli	
Andrés Huecamecatl teuctli	
Martín Macuexhua	
Martín Coçotecatl	

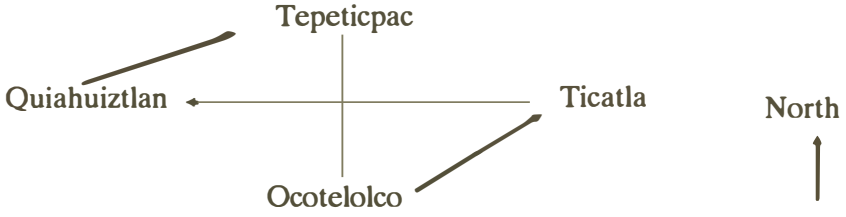
Source: Tulancingo collection. The names are in their original order. Spanish is written according to modern conventions and Nahuatl according to the conventions of Horacio Carochi (with omission of diacritics).

due time Tlatocan repaid its share, 50 pesos, but Tlaixpan did not. After two and a half years the Spaniard sued not Tlaixpan but Tlatocan for the remaining 50 pesos, and the alcalde mayor jailed several Tlatocan officials for the debt. The latter naturally asked that the Tlaixpan people acknowledge responsability, which they immediately did, but instead of releasing the Tlatocan cabildo members already in jail the alcalde mayor imprisoned some Tlaixpan officials in addition. They remained in jail as the alcalde mayor tried unsuccessfully to auction off a house in town belonging to Tlaixpan to cover the debt. How the issue was resolved remains unknown.

Similar problems may have arisen with the joint municipal sheep-raising operation, often leased out to Spanish entrepreneurs. Aside from the lack of coordination on the Indian side, a persistent problem was Spanish failure to recognize the existence of two entities in the same town. Clerks speak of one or the other of the governors simply as "the governor of Tulancingo". Surely the alcalde mayor grasped the dual organization, to which after all Spanish officials must have assented, if they did not indeed foment it. In keeping Tlatocan leaders in jail even after Tlaixpan's responsability was established, the alcalde mayor may have been making Tlatocan as the senior entity ultimately responsible,[10] or he may have felt that despite the formal division the two halves were really one and must answer together. At any rate, by the mid-seventeenth century (and probably before) the Tulancingo municipal corporation had been reorganized as a single set of officials with one governor, though the rest seem still to have been divided between Tlatocan and Tlaixpan in the expected way.

Order of rotation and preference

We have already observed the importance of rotation among constituents in altepetl structure. Rotation cannot proceed smoothly without a fixed order, and such an order was therefore the most basic part of what one might call the specific constitution of an altepetl in either pre-conquest or post-conquest times. For Tlaxcala the historical writings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries often use an order based on the supposed chronological sequence of foundation of the four altepetl: Tepeticpac, Ocotelolco, Ticatla, and Quiahuiztlan. In the Tlaxcalan cabildo records this sequence is in a sense confirmed; ongoing rotations operate as follows:



Whenever something begins anew, however, one starts with Ocotelolco, which by mid-sixteenth century seems to have been the strongest of the four altepetl, Tepeticpac the weakest. The simple device of beginning with number two, leaving year-round rotations untouched, accomplished a major adjustment in matters of precedence. In the cabildo minutes lists of cabildo members or other officials almost always begin with Ocotelolco and end with Tepeticpac.

The Tulancingo papers deliver no particulars on rotation order. It is to the Nahua historian Chimalpahin and his home region of Chalco that we must look for well depicted

[10]Several considerations lead to the conclusion that Tlatocan had precedence. Torquemada and Vetancurt both mention Tlatocan first. Normally the conquering, invading group (here Tlatocan) becomes the upper half in dual organization arrangements, the conquered (here Tlaixpan) the lower. "Tlatocan" means "were the ruler is". "Tlaixpan" is ambiguous; though it can mean "in front", it can also mean "facing, opposite", which I take to be the sense here; that is, Tlaixpan would be "the other one".

ranking systems. Chimalpahins's constant concern with who is first, second, or third underlines the importance of sequence in his view of political structure. Primarily referring to the pre-conquest period, he establishes a consistent order for the four parts making up greater Chalco (each of the four itself a composite altepetl) and for the sub-kingdoms of one of the parts, Amaquemecan (Amecameca). In both cases, as originally in Tlaxcala, the sequence of foundation dictates the order, though again as in Tlaxcala certain posterior adjustments took place.[11] Despite the importance of chronological sequence, however, the possible relevance of the four cardinal directions to ordering schemes cannot be dismissed. The four parts of Chalco and Tlaxcala have the same relative orientation, and both orders originally began in the north (though from that point on they vary). It now also appears that a fixed order of rotation characterized the internal parts of Mexico Tenochtitlan.[12]

The role of tlatoque

The Tlaxcalan cabildo minutes confirm what was already known: in the post-1545 scheme, the tlatoque or dynastic rulers of the four constituent altepetl sat on the cabildo as permanent regidores but were excluded from the governorship or any other office. The time of more open tlatoani dominance had been the early, poorly documented period of the 1520s and 30s. After 1547, when complete records begin, the tlatoque were in fact rigorously restricted to their prescribed positions as perpetual regidores (except that one of them once held office as annually elected regidor before becoming the Quiahuiztlan tlatoani, which after all does not represent a violation of the rule). A more covert dominance may have persisted for some time, however. The tlatoque are once referred to obliquely as the wealthiest of the Tlaxcalans, while the four tlatoque plus the governor held the keys to the municipal treasure chests, and the same group, rather than the entire cabildo, made the decision to defy the corregidor's wishes on a matter of tribute collection. The governor, however, seems to have been rising in power and protocol above the tlatoque, and the body of governor, alcaldes, and tlatoque in some ways acted as a unit with formal precedence over the regidores. The overall impression is one of the tlatoque gradually merging into an upper group of noble cabildo members from whom they were hardly distinguishable. Yet the formal distinction (and restriction) continued to obtain.

That Tlaxcala had four high tlatoque rather than one doubtless served to shorten the long transitional period typical of altepetl with a single clearly supreme tlatoani, in which the dynastic ruler would also serve as governor, in many cases for a lifetime. Tulancingo had two tlatoque, but the existence of two corporations with separate governorships created a situation potentially favorable to continued tlatoani dominance. In fact, a document published by Pedro Carrasco shows very much the picture one would expect.[13] In 1579 witnesses say that a don Julián de San Francisco, the tlatoani of Tlatocan for over thirty years in the middle part of the century, was "cacique y gobernador", giving the impression that he monopolized the governorship. The same double title is given to don Julián's son don Miguel Alejandrino, who inherited the rulership from his father, and don Miguel is in fact found as governor of Tlatocan in 1570, in the first direct documentary attestation of the occupation of Tlatocan's governorship. By 1579 don Miguel has died and his son don Diego Alejandrino, having inherited the rulership and its perquisites, is bidding for official approval of the succession. Don Diego did not, however, immediately become governor; the post changed hands frequently among non-tlatoque in the 1580s (see Table 2). Yet don Diego was not permanently out of the picture, for in 1587 he appears as alcalde, and by 1590 he seems to have acceded to the governorship.

[11]See Susan Schroeder, "Chalco and Sociopolitical Concepts in Chimalpahin: Analysis of the Work of a Seventeenth-Century Nahuatl Historian of Mexico" (Ph.D. dissertation, UCLA, 1984).

[12]My book manuscript "The Nahuas After the Conquest" contains a detailed section on this topic (Chapter 2).

[13]Carrasco, "Los caciques", pp. 85-91.

Table 2

Known officers of the Tlatocan cabildo, sixteenth century

	1570	
governor		Don Miguel Alejandrino
alcalde		Don Antonio de Padua
regidor		Antonio de Santiago
regidores?		Martín Cortés Tlacochteuctli
		Cristóbal Sánchez
	1579	
alcalde		Don Cristóbal Sánchez
regidores		Martín Tapia
		Domingo de Santiago
		Pedro Juárez
		Domingo de Valencia
	1582	
governor		Don Cristóbal Sánchez
alcalde		Don Martín de Tapia
regidores		Calisto de Santa Ana
		Pedro Bazán
regidores?		Juan de San Francisco
		Martín de Santa Cruz
	1585	
governor		Don Gabriel Vásquez
alcalde		Don Domingo de Valencia
regidores		Don Bernardino de San Juan
		Antonio Hernández
	1587	
governor		Don Cristóbal Sánchez
alcalde		Don Diego Alejandrino
regidores		Juan de San Francisco
		MArtín de Santiago
		Joaquín hilario
		Gabriel Vásquez
majordomo		Juan de San Pedro
	1590	
governor?		Don Diego Alejandrino
	1600	
alcalde		Don Gabriel Vásquez
regidor		Don Juan Lorenzo de San Franciso

Source: Tulancingo collection; Pedro Carrasco, "Los caciques chichimecas de Tulancingo", *Estudios de Cultura Náhuatl*, 4 (1963), p. 87. All the office titles appear as loan words in the Nahuatl texts.

For Tlaixpan the situation is even more sketchily documented. From the 1560s into the 1580s several governors held office for short periods. Whether or not any of them was also tlatoani is not known at present, but the fact that a don Juan Maldonado was governor of all Tulancingo as late as 1720 inclines one to suspect that the don Pedro Maldonado who was governor of Tlaixpan in 1570-71 was, if not tlatoani, at least a member of the Tlaixpan dynasty. Apparently a situation was growing up by the late sixteenth century in which, in both halves of Tulancingo, members of the tlatoani family were highly eligible, indeed almost predestined for the governorship, but did not monopolize it. This is indeed the picture quite generally, where, as the situation in Tlaxcala, with no tlatoque-governors, would seem to be exceptional (though it remains to be seen if the same did not happen in altepetl like Huejotzingo and Xochimilco, where as in Tlaxcala multiple tlatoque corresponded to only one cabildo).

Other offices and career patterns

In the Tlaxcalan records it becomes apparent that there was a career ladder by which certain individuals advanced from regidor to alcalde and finally governor, after which they might return to occupy some of the lower posts. At the same time, other cabildo members never reached higher than regidor. Unlike Spanish cabildos, where regidores in many ways outranked alcaldes, in Tlaxcala the alcalde post was treated as the higher of the two. Frequent repetition in cabildo office kept the total number of officeholders very small. Individuals holding higher posts had more prestigious names. Generally speaking, indigenous surnames ranked lowest, saints' names and other religious surnames next up the scale, and Spanish surnames highest, with some but not much distinction being made between plebeian patronymics (Hernández, etc.) and high-sounding last names taken from encomenderos, corregidores, and ecclesiastics. The title "don" was the ultimate symbol of having attained the highest level. Although more highly valued names correspond quite closely with those individuals holding higher office, or who had at least held such office earlier, the system was not rigid, since as a cabildo member gained in experience, influence, and rank, his name would change accordingly. One Tlaxcalan abandoned an indigenous name for a religious surname, then a Spanish one, and finally, at the time of being made governor, he acquired the "don" too.

Tulancingo confirms the wider existence of all these phenomena. As can be seen even in the fragmentary data of Tables 2 and 3, returning to office after a short interval was a common pattern. Few indigenous names are seen on the cabildo, and their possessors are lower-ranking persons not going above regidor and often associated with the sub-cabildo post of majordomo. Individuals may rise from regidor to alcalde to governor. In Tlaixpan, Martín de Valencia (named after a famous Franciscan friar, hence probably an especially high-ranking nobleman) was apparently regidor in 1567, alcalde in 1568 and 1570, possibly regidor again in 1571, and again in 1582 (and very likely in office in the intervening unrecorded years as well), by now having acquired the "don", and then governor in 1585. By 1580 it had become the practice that anyone holding the office of governor or alcalde in either cabildo was automatically "don", where as most regidores remained without the title. The "don" could actually be lost when one went back to being regidor, as for example in Tlatocan with don Gabriel Vásquez, governor in 1582, who as regidor becomes plain Gabriel Vázquez in 1587, and don Gabriel again as alcalde in 1600. The same happened in Tlaxcala, too, but rarely. Even in Tulancingo, once the "don" was acquired, it generally stuck regardless of what office one might hold subsequently, as in the just-cited case of don Martín de Valencia of Tlaixpan. Within the context of close similarity, Tulancingo does manifest one significant difference: relatively fewer of the name attributes associated with highest rank appear. By the 1570s and 80s, most Tlaxcalan cabildo members bore the "don", and the proportion of surnames in the full Spanish style was

Table 3

Known officers of the Tlaixpan cabildo, sixteenth century

1567	
governor?	Don Pedro de San Cristóbal
regidor?	Martín de Valencia
majordomo	Pedro Mexicatl
1568	
governor?	Don Pedro de San Cristóbal
alcalde	Martín de Valencia
majordomo	Luis de León
1569	
alcalde	Francisco de San Juan
regidor	Pedro Jiménez Tepanecatl teuctli
majordomo	Pedro Huecamecatl
1570	
governor	Don Pedro Maldonado
alcalde	Martín de Valencia
regidores?	Martín de Santiago
	Francisco de San Juan
majordomo	Pedro Tlacochcalcatl
1571	
governor	Don Pedro Maldonado
alcalde	Don Pedro de San Critóbal
regidor	Fransisco de San Juan
regidor?	Martín de Valencia
majordomo	Pedro Tlacochcalcatl
1582	
governor	Don Francisco de San Juan
alcalde	Don Bernardo de San Juan[a]
regidores	Don Martín de Valencia
	Martín de Santa Cruz
	Martín de Santiago
majordomo	Pedro Jiménez
1585	
governor	Don Martín de Valencia
alcalde	Don Andrés de Soto

[a]Doubtless not the same person as the regidor of Tlatocan in 1585.
Source: Tulancingo collection.

much higher than in Tulancingo. The general meaning of the divergence appears to be that Tulancingo was following the same path as Tlaxcala but had probably got a later start, and being more distant from the centers of Mexican life and having a smaller base was moving more slowly.

Looking at municipal officeholding beneath the level of the cabildo, the Tlaxcalan records provide a considerable amount of data. The cabildo directly appointed a large number of peace officers in the province and in the city of Tlaxcala, as well as tribute supervisors, market constables, and persons in charge of special enterprises, notably the city-run inns for travelers. As mentioned earlier, all seem to have been primarily on behalf of and in relation to their home unit. Incumbents usually held any one post for only one year, but as at the higher level they might return to office quickly. Individuals tended to circulate among all the positions at this level without much regard to specific expertise; clearly the general managerial and judicial/supervisory aspects took precedence.

In a Spanish municipality, a sharp distinction was made between the cabildo members, who were well connected and presumed noble, and the sub-cabildo employees of the city, who were plebeians with no claim to high status and would never expect to serve on a cabildo at any time in their lives. In Tlaxcala, on the other hand, it appears that even the lower municipal posts were associated with nobility and that all the occupants were nobles or accepted as such. Many were so prominent as to be members of the corps of 220 electors who chose the governor and cabildo. Nor did any absolute barrier stand in the way of lower officials' advancement to the cabildo. Sometimes passing first through the positions of cabildo notary, city majordomo, or provincial lieutenant, which stood highest in rank, over the years persons who had occupied the lower posts repeatedly became cabildo members, and a couple got as far as alcalde. Despite all this, a distinction existed between the cabildo members and the others. Only a small proportion of the lower officials ever rose to cabildo membership. Their names were of the less prestigious sort, with mainly indigenous surnames, some saints' names, and no "don" at all. Cabildo members with the highest lineage or best education, those who frequently served as alcalde and governor, had rarely done duty in lower posts.

For Tulancingo, the information on sub-cabildo posts is presently very sparse, and it appears unlikely that the staff of lower municipal officials with direct connections to the cabildo was as elaborate as in Tlaxcala (which was perhaps New Spain's most highly developed indigenous municipal corporation), but some similarities do emerge. As in Tlaxcala, so in Tulancingo the post of majordomo was just at the edge of cabildo membership. Some majordomos have indigenous surnames, some religious, and some fully Spanish; one of them, Pedro Jiménez (Tepanecatl teuctli), had previously served as regidor. For the most part they hold office for only one year at a time, as in Tlaxcala. All the rest of the data on lower officials come from the fragmentary records of Tlaixpan's extraordinary collections and expenses which form the basis of Table 1. The documents show some officials collecting tribute items from the populace and making disbursements of both those items and money, with the permission of the majordomo, so we are justified in considering these persons to be collectors and managers of tribute. They refer to themselves once as *tlapachoani*, "governors", although the term seems to have had the specific sense, according to the dictionary of fray Andrés de Molina, of manager of someone's property and family. In an accompanying document the term *tequitlayacanque*, literally "tribute leaders or guides", is found, apparently with reference to the same group. No Spanish word for them appears (nor does it for their approximate counterparts in Tlaxcala).

Of the group of ten persons serving in this capacity over five years (1567-71 inclusive), all but one have indigenous surnames, and that one bears a religious name.[14] The

[14]Even that one may still have been using an indigenous name part of the time; I suspect that on Table 1 Juan de la Cruz and Juan Tlacochteuctli were the same person.

indigenous names, however, indicate high status, since the great majority of them end in *teuctli*, "lord". It is indeed apparent that all the surnames are actually high titles, either for traditional altepetl officers or for leaders of sub-units. None of the group is known to have risen to the cabildo or even to the majordomo position, but in a sample this small, with an equally small sample of cabildo membership for comparison, one would expect much the same thing in Tlaxcala as well. Two of the ten tribute collectors are present all five years, two more in three of the five years, another in two years, and the remaining five in one year only. This is a higher repetition rate in the same post than was typical of sub-cabildo office in Tlaxcala, but in fact there are relatively few data on rotation among Tlaxcala's tribute officials. The officers appear to vary in number from year to year, but this may be a result of chance appearance in the fragments preserved, or of the inclusion of the names of aides as well as principals. Pedro Colhuateuctli, present every year and named first every time but one, seems to have a special position. As mentioned above, I suspect that he is a superior and that normally there would be four others, one for each of the calpolli mentioned in the records. The overall situation implied by these documents is entirely compatible with the role and nature of sub-cabildo officeholding in Tlaxcala, except that we have no reason to imagine that officials in Tulancingo were equally numerous.

Miscellaneous parallel phenomena in Tlaxcala and Tulancingo

With both Spanish and pre-conquest indigenous precedent, Mexican Indian town corporations from the first gave strong support, including financial contributions, to ecclesiastical organizations and observances. The Tlaxcalan cabildo is known to have paid for vestments, ornaments, musical instruments, and other items for church use, as well as providing direct subsidies for the maintenance of the local Franciscan friars. We have already seen the largest example of such activity in Tulancingo, the two cabildos jointly paying for the bell at the monastery church. The Tlaixpan tribute collectors' records also contain yearly disbursements of three or four pesos as the pay of the church singers (*Tullantzinco cuicanime yntlaxtlahuil*); presumably Tlatocan contributed an equal amount (or each cabildo may have supplied half the singers and then paid its own people). Expenses in 1569 to buy nails and pay masons and plasterers (the latter from Tetzcoco) probably had to do with church maintenance.

A great deal of the support muncipal governments gave to ecclesiastical causes was not monetary, but consisted in channeling tribute goods and services to church purposes. In Tlaxcala the records make it clear that such was the primary mechanism for organizing religious festivities and carrying out church construction projects. Little specific evidence is forthcoming for Tulancingo, but similar efforts can be deduced from a petition by a group of eleven indigenous painters who had done work in 1570 on church buildings at the behest of the municipal officials (whether of one or of both cabildos is not specified). The painters complained to the alcalde mayor that the officials had withheld their pay, as had often happened before. The town officials, on the other hand, seem to have taken the attitude that what the painters did was simply their duty to the altepetl and not something meriting monetary pay. Tlaxcala had similar problems with artisans. In 1550 the people making an altarpiece in the monastery church wanted their work to be considered as performed in fulfillment of private vows and redounding to the credit of their own sub-unit, whereas the cabildo and the friars wanted it to be considered tribute duty for the city.

In Tlaxcala, the cabildo engaged in Spahish-style agrarian enterprise, including the ownership of a flock of sheep and the operation of a farm using European implements, animals, and techniques. These properties were managed by Spaniards, with whom the Tlaxcalan cabildo made partnerships (*compañías*), putting up the money for capital investment and either paying the Spaniards set salaries or sharing profits with them. Much the same arrangement is found in Tulancingo. By 1570 there were municipal sheep

estancias, one for each of the cabildos, although both were leased to the same Spaniard; 600 pesos was being offered for a new lease. Over time the leasing out of municipal ranches and farms became a popular option for Mexican Indian towns, and Tlaxcala too probably adopted the practice later (evidence in the Tlaxcalan cabildo minutes dates from the 1550s). By the 1580s the Tlatocan cabildo was selling maize futures to Spaniards (seventeen fanegas of *iztac tlaolli* or "white maize" for 25 pesos, 4 reales in 1587), presumably supplies acquired as tribute. In the single documented instance, however, the cabildo did not come through with the promised maize.

Finally, Tlaxcala's cabildo members frequently went on missions for which they received a per diem allowance from the city treasury. Many of these trips took them to Mexico City to make special pleas to the viceroy, be confirmed in office, or carry on litigation before the Royal Audiencia. The Tlaixpan tribute collectors' records show the same trends, and though no sophisticated per diem arrangement is in evidence, money, food, and other supplies were collected for cabildo members going to Mexico City for confirmation in office or to carry on lawsuits.

In brief, then, significant parallels to the structure and manner of operation of the complex and in some respects unique government of Tlaxcala in the sixteenth century can be seen in the more fragmentary documentation concerning another complex jurisdiction, Tulancingo, at around the same time. It appears that with testing in this way against various situations only partially recorded, we can make use of the unusual Tlaxcalan documentation to draw broader conclusions, and that more generally we can use the relatively well documented complex municipalities to throw light on processes affecting Indian towns of all sizes and configurations.