

# TLACAXIPEUALIZTLI: A RECONSTRUCTION OF AN AZTEC CALENDAR FESTIVAL FROM 16TH CENTURY SOURCES (\*)

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## INTRODUCTION

In the study of Mexican ritual a few interpretations have become established and have been repeated many times. Many of these concepts were taken from 19th century study of folklore and religion and were used to interpret the phenomena in terms of a fertility cult or an astral religion. These clichés which were applied to gods as well as ceremonies, have been very harmful to the development of a more objective understanding of their character. With such labels in mind, one arranges the material according to a preconceived framework. Already the primary sources were recorded in a biased way, since the chroniclers reproduced the material according to their own deficient understanding of it; as Spanish friars they also had their specific interests in writing about old Indian religion. In order to use their information well, first of all a strict criticism of sources is necessary. The next step

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is on a purely descriptive level and consists in putting together and arranging systematically the material which seems trustworthy. Only then is an analysis meaningful. It might already bring some interesting results, new material which so far has passed inadvertently and observations which do not correspond to the current preconceived ideas. At this point it might not yet be possible to give a coherent interpretation. The latter task will never be accomplished completely satisfactorily due to the insufficiency of our sources and the impossibility to fill up the gaps, but it can be more or less approximated. The possibilities of investigation have not been exhausted so far.

The aim is to gain a better understanding of Mexican religion —of the gods, the mythology and the ritual. It is a particularly fascinating subject to study the calendar festivals, as they were developed to such a high degree of complexity in ancient American society. Their elaboration and influence on the daily life of the people was unique. A tremendous amount of time and energy was spent on the temple rituals. The ceremonies carried a heavy symbolism which was the product of a long historical development.

The festivals were fitted into the calendar year of 365 days, which consisted of eighteen monthly periods of twenty days each and five remaining days, the *nemontemi*. It was an elaborate ritual structure. The basic units were the main festivals at the end of every month; to these belonged a variety of smaller celebrations and ritual periods, mostly of preparatory character, which usually began twenty days before the main festival, but also forty or up to eighty days before it. At such dates living impersonators of gods were selected, who represented the god until the festival when they were sacrificed; at some of these dates, priests began particular fasts which they kept until the festival. After a number of festivals the ritual period continued again for some twenty days.

Besides the main festivals, small independent ceremonies were performed which served specific ends in agriculture, events of the life cycle like baptism or marriage, undertakings of daily life or other particular purposes. Finally, there also existed the so-called «movable feasts» which did not belong

to the 365-day calendar, but were fixed on specific days (day signs, e. g. «4 ollin») of the tonalpohualli. Since these days repeated themselves after 260 days, it happened that some movable feasts were celebrated twice within a calendar year of 365 days. These ceremonies are the least well known because most chroniclers did not grasp their significance. Only Sahagun gave a coherent, although incomplete account of them in Book II of the *Historia General*, after his description of the monthly festivals.

The calendar festivals were celebrated with a tremendous display of people and decorative as well as symbolic elements. These dramatical representations were set against the background of the impressive temple architecture of Tenochtitlan. Many ceremonies took place at night, in the glaring light of torches and great fires. The richness of the array of the participants, with the lavish use of gold, feathers and beautifully woven colourful materials, combined with the dramatical power of the ceremonies, must have had an overwhelming effect on the spectator, which cannot be grasped by our modern secular mentality. In this tense atmosphere the human sacrifices were performed. Myth was enacted and became reality in an overwhelming theatrical setting. It is against this background that we have to understand Aztec ritual.

The organizers of these dramatical representations were the priests. All the year round a large priesthood with many specialized functions was busy with the preparations for the ceremonies. The relation of the branches of the priesthood to particular festivals and ceremonies is an important point which has not yet been sufficiently studied.

The social set-up was also closely connected to the ritual. The Aztec warrior nobility played the most important role in it, and it seems that there existed a certain tension between them and the priests which found expression in the mock battles taking place at some festivals between representatives of the two groups. The system of social rank as a consequence of military exploits was reflected in the right to perform certain ceremonies. Since the provision of victims for the sacrifice was of primary religious importance, the

captors who were considered «their fathers», became directly involved in the ceremonies; for them it was an expression of their social prestige. At many festivals the king honoured his warriors by distributing garments and insignia to them. In the dances which formed part of most festivals, the nobles participated together with the priests and temple youths, while the common people watched as spectators. The sons and daughters of the nobles also participated actively in the ceremonies during their time of temple service. Married women sometimes joined in the dancing, as well as the auanime, the companions of the young warriors.

The common people took part in the more popular and customary aspects of the festivals, like ceremonies performed in the fields, first fruit offerings, or the begging processions of the xipeme at Tlacaxipeualiztli and the impersonators of the rain gods at Etzalcualiztli.

An important role in the ritual was played by the barrios. In their relation to the ceremonies old traditions from tribal times were reflected, which make this item one of the most interesting chapters in the study of ancient American religion. Unfortunately very little is known about it, because the chroniclers were not aware of its interest and make only sporadic references to these circumstances.

Another insufficiently known subject is ancient Mexican mythology. Since the old authors recorded only a small proportion of all Mexican myths, we lack important evidence which might help to explain the significance of many rites. However, the existing material should be studied more thoroughly in regard to mythical themes.

Very little work has been done on the interpretation of Mexican ritual since the time of Eduard Seler. His studies are some seventy years old and necessarily antiquated in many respects (1). In order to go beyond commonplace statements and penetrate deeper into the matter, one has to start on a descriptive level.

In this paper one particular festival will be studied in detail. Tlacaxipeualiztli, «the Flaying of Men», was one of the most

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(1) Recently, K. A. Nowotny has been working on an interpretation of the yearly cycle of festivals; see Nowotny 1968 a— and b—.

important calendar festivals and had a very wide distribution in Mexico. It is mentioned by many sources on Mexican religion as well as on history. Therefore the material existing about it is particularly abundant. This is a great advantage, because by comparing the different accounts one gains a fuller picture of the festival and it is possible to detect errors in some descriptions. The central part of this paper is a reconstruction of the ceremonies based on the materials of Bernardino de Sahagún, Diego Durán, Alvarado Tezozomoc, Toribio de Motolinia, Juan Bautista Pomar, Juan de Torquemada, Gerónimo de Mendieta, Juan de Tovar and anonymous sources like the «Historia de los Mexicanos por sus Pinturas», the «Anales de Quauhtitlan» and the «Historia Tolteca-Chichimeca» (2). This type of research work resembles a puzzle, because one proceeds by putting together elements from the different materials according to the reconstructed scheme of the festival. It emerges that the different accounts really complement each other to a large extent.

The most conspicuous characteristics of the Tlacaxipeualiztli festival were that 1—it was dedicated to the god Xipe Totec, 2—some victims were flayed and later their skins put on by other Indians, 3—the famous sacrificio gladiatorio was performed. Since Seler, interpretations of the symbolism of these ceremonies have been along the lines of fertility rites which were related to agricultural practices and the renewal of vegetation. This theory has to be examined in the light of a detailed reconstruction of the festival, to see how far it corresponds to the evidence. In the second part of the paper a few subjects related to the festival will be discussed, like the god Xipe-Totec-Tlatlahuqui Tezcatl, similarities to Ochpaniztli and the flaying of female goddesses, as well as the Tlacacaliliztli or sacrifice of shooting by arrows; finally some observations about the symbolism and functions of the Tlacaxipeualiztli festival will be proposed.

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(2) See Appendix on the Sources.

## 1. DESCRIPTION OF THE FESTIVAL

### Ceremonies before the main festival

Sahagun records that during the month of Quauitleua captives were chosen for the gladiatorial sacrifice which was to take place at Tlacaxipeualiztli; these captives were called «the striped ones» (3). They were taken to Yopico, Totec's temple (4). There they made them fight in mock battle, in the same manner as the real sacrifice would be performed at the main festival; tortillas of ground corn were used as mock hearts in imitation of the heart sacrifice. Thus the captives appeared four times before the people (to fight these mock battles four times?). The first time they were arrayed in red paper garments, the second time in white ones, the third time again in red ones and the last time in white garments. In this last array they remained until the sacrifice.

The captors (the warriors who had brought the prisoners from the war) also arrayed themselves, anointing their bodies with red paint and covering their arms and legs with white turkey feathers. They were given costly insignia exclusively for this period, to dance the captives' dance with them. They also carried their shield and rattle stick and went about rattling it. In this array they appeared before the people, «only thus men marveled at them..., only thus did one make known to men that his captive was to be offered as a sacrifice.» (5) In the afternoon before the festival the captors danced the captives' dance. Sahagun does not describe it in more detail, but his few references indicate that it must have been an important event.

(3) Sahagun CF, Book II, ch.20, pp.44-46. (For an explanation of the abbreviations used for Sahagun's materials see Appendix on the Sources). «tlauauanqui», «the striped one» was the name for the victim, but also at the same time of the one who fought against the captive in the sacrificio gladiatorio (Sahagun CF II, p.49; Duran 1967 II, p.275; Tezozomoc 1944, p.221). The name derives from «uauana», «to stripe, mark, scarify» («rayar, señalar, sajar»), the noun «tlauauanaliztli», «the striping», was the name for the sacrificio gladiatorio.

(4) Yopico was one of the temple pyramids within the precinct of the Templo Mayor of Tenochtitlan.

(5) The rattle stick, «chicauaztli», was an attribute of the god Xipe Totec. The shield and rattle stick were later carried by the xipeme in the same way (CF II, p.45; see also CF, Book VIII, App.B, p.84).

## The Main Festival

### *First Day: Sahagun (6)*

1—The night before the festival (7) the captors held a vigil for their captives in the tribal temple (calpulli). In the middle of the night near to the fire they cut hair from the crown of the captives' heads and made offerings of blood from the ear.

2—The captives were called xipeme or tototecti (8). In the morning the captors took them as tribute or offering to the big temple, delivering them to the priests. They were taken up the pyramid before the sanctuary of Huitzilopochtli, stretched out on the sacrificial stone (techcatl) (9) and their chests were cut open with a wide-bladed flint knife. The hearts of the captives, called the «precious eagle-cactus fruit», were lifted up to the sun as an offering. Thus the sun was nourished. Then the hearts were placed in the eagle-vessel (quauhxicalli). The sacrificed victim was called «eagle man» (quauhtecatli). Their bodies were sent rolling and bouncing down the steps of the pyramid until they reached a small terrace projecting at its foot (apetlatl).

3—From there, the old men of the tribal temples (the quaquacuilti or calpulueuetque) «carried them to their tribal temples, where the captor had promised, undertaken and vowed (to take a captive).» Then the body was taken to the house of the captor where it was cut into pieces. One thigh was

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(6) CF II, ch.21, pp.46-48.

(7) Here and in another passage further down in the same chapter a day beginning at nightfall is implied. This is interesting, because the hour with which the day began is one of the controversial items of the Mexican calendar. The chroniclers seem not to have realized that the Indian day was counted from nightfall.

(8) The victims were given the same name as the people who later dressed their flayed skins.

(9) «Techcatl» was the sacrificial stone for the ordinary heart sacrifice, on top of the platform of Huitzilopochtli's temple, near to the stairs. The chroniclers generally translated it as «tajon»... «Esta piedra, dicen algunos, que era a manera de pirámide, más puntiaguda que llana, para mejor atesar los hombres para el acto y buena expedición del sacrificio...» (Torquemada, 1943, B.VII, ch.XIX). Sahagun specified that there was one techcatl in front of each one of the shrines of Huitzilopochtli and Tlaloc.

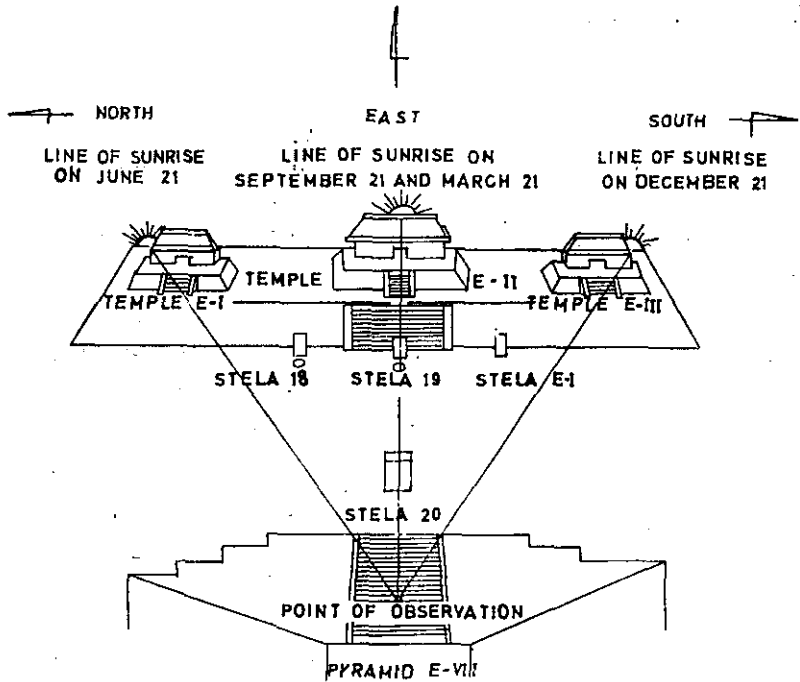


Fig. 1. Diagram of the astronomical observatory at Group E, Uaxactún, Petén, Guatemala, for determining the dates of the solstices and equinoxes. (After Morley).

reserved for Motecuhzoma and sent to the palace. The captor had down of birds put on his head and received gifts. He was called «the sun, white earth, the feather», being decked with feathers and whitened with chalk; this symbolised that «he had not died there in the war, but was yet to die, and would pay his debt (in war or by sacrifice). Hence his blood relations greeted him with tears and encouraged him» (10).

(10) CF II, p.47-48. White earth (tizatl) and feathers (iutl) were the adornment of the sacrificial victim. His body and face were painted with white earth or chalk, white feathers were pasted to his head, arms and legs, his lips and chin were painted red (tlapalli), yellow stripes were made on the white face (tecozauitl) and with black colour (tilli) he was painted with the symbol of the morning star: «tizatl iutl in tilli in tlapalli in tecozauitl.» (Olmos, 1875, ed. Rémi Siméon, p.213). The captor received the same array as the captive, since he himself was considered a prospective sacrificial victim. White earth and feather were also sent to the enemy as a declaration



The relatives of the captor gathered in his house to eat a stew made of dried maize mixed with the captive's flesh (tlacatlao-lli). Each participant was given a bowl of the stew with a piece of flesh in it.

*Second Day until the gladiatorial sacrifice: Sahagun*

1—The following night, which was the last one before the gladiatorial sacrifice, the captors again held a vigil in the tribal temple, this time together with the captives chosen for the gladiatorial combat. At midnight they took hair from the crown of the captives' heads. The captor kept this hair safely, because it proved that he had made a captive and thus it became the foundation of his prestige «...because thus he attained honours, flowers, tobacco prepared for smoking, and (rich) cloaks. Thus the captive's valour would not in vain perish; thus he took from the captive his renown.» (11)

2—The captors of these victims were again adorned with white turkey feathers which were pasted on their arms and legs. This was done at (the tribal temple of the barrio of?) Tecanman, in Tenochtitlan (12).

*Ceremonies before the festival, first and second day until the gladiatorial sacrifice: Duran (13)*

Duran's description of the first part of the festival (before the gladiatorial sacrifice) is very different from Sahagun's

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of war; thus the enemy was symbolically declared a sacrificial victim (Codex Mendoza 67, 12-14). In the C. Telleriano-Remensis a captive pasted with feathers is the symbol for the conquest of a town (Seler GA, vol. I, p.221; II, p.970, 1000 ff.).

(11) CF II, p.48. The taking of the hair implies that the hair was considered as carrier of life; by cutting it the life energy or courage of the captive was transferred to the captor. This belongs to the same complex of ideas as the ritual cannibalism and cutting of the heads of the victims which were kept at the tzompantli, the skull rack.

(12) In the following paragraph Sahagun speaks of the xipeme —people wearing the flayed skins of the victims—, who arranged themselves upon «zacapan» and began mock fights with groups of warriors. This point is treated in the chapter on the xipeme; see below.

(13) 1967, vol. I, ch.9, pp.96-98. Vol. I of the edition of 1967 contains the «Libro de los Ritos» y «El Calendario Antiguo». See Appendix on the Sources.

account. At first sight one does not find any similarity at all. However, it is possible to make an interpretation, although only a tentative one, which cannot be proved until further evidence from some other sources has been found. Since such evidence might never materialize, it is useful to make the interpretation. However, to keep it apart from the material first a summary of Duran's account will be given and only afterwards the interpretation.

1—Forty days before the festival a slave was selected as impersonator of Totec-Xipe-Tlatlahuqui Tezcatl and dressed in the array of the god. Thus he went among the people who worshipped him like the god himself. Tlacaxipeualiztli was the only festival at which an impersonator of the god was not only put up in the main temple, but in all the barrios as well, «de manera que, si había veinte barrios, podían andar veinte indios representando a este su dios universal, y cada barrio honraba y reverenciaba su indio y semejanza del dios, como en el principal templo se hacía.» (14)

2—Early in the morning of the festival day, the impersonator of Xipe was sacrificed by the heart sacrifice; together with him they sacrificed the impersonators of other gods, who were the patrons of the most important barrios according to Duran: «la semejanza de Huitzilopochtli, de Quetzalcoatl, de Macuilxochitl (15), de Chililico (16), de Tlacauapan (17), de Ixtlilton (18) y de Mayauel (19).» According to Duran this

(14) *Ibid.*, p.96.

(15) Macuilxochitl, «5 flower», was the god of music and dance and closely related to Xochipilli.

(16) Chililico was not really a god, but a building forming part of the great temple, where impersonators of Chinunau Eecatl (Quetzalcoatl) were sacrificed on a day of the same sign as well as at the festival of Atlcualo. (Sahagun, CF II, p.173) Maybe Chililico stands here as a synonym for Quetzalcoatl.

(17) Tlacauapan-Ixteucalc-Teicautzin was related to Huitzilopochtli, possibly as a synonym; his impersonator was sacrificed at the Toxcatl festival, while his tzoalli image was made at Panquetzaliztli. (Sahagun, CF II, pp. 73, 161, 165).

(18) Ixtlilton, «little black face», was a god of dancing and brother of Macuilxochitl (Seler GA IV, pp. 14, 632); besides he had functions of a medicine god.

(19) Mayauel was the goddess of the agave plant and the pulque which was made of it; she was a fertility goddess and mother of the 400 (innumer-

meant that «all the gods» («todos los dioses en una unidad») were worshipped at this festival. The hearts of the victims were raised towards the East and thrown to a place called zacapan (20); the sacrificial priest placed himself next to the hearts and the common people came there to offer ears of corn (ocholli) which they put on top of green zapotl leaves (21).

3—Then the victims were flayed. The body was given to the captor, while the skin and array of the sacrificed «gods» was put on by some men who from now on impersonated the same gods. One of these impersonators went towards the East, one towards the West, another one towards the South and another one towards the North. They took some Indians with them whom they grasped like captives; this ceremony was a demonstration of their power and was called neteotoquiliztli, «reputarse por dios» («to show oneself as god») (22). It seems that the common people stood watching this ceremony. Afterwards the impersonators of the gods came together again; they were tied to each other by their legs (up to the knees) and went about like this the whole day, sustaining each other mutually. Finally they were taken to the temple square (quauhxiccalco: «in the place where the quauhxicalli is») where the two stones of sacrifice, the temalacatl (23) and the quauhxicalli (24) were situated. At that moment the gladiatorial sacrifice began.

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able) pulque gods (centzon tochtin). Her sacrifice at Tlacaxipeualiztli is confirmed by Sahagun (CF II, p.174).

(20) Zacapan, «en la grama» (on the grass); the meaning of it in this context is obscure. The xipeme arranged themselves upon zacapan: see below, ch.on xipeme. The raising of the hearts towards the East, the direction of sunrise, seems to correspond to the raising towards the sun which is generally mentioned.

(21) Ocholli as well as the leaves and wood of the tzapotl had a specific significance at this festival and were used in many ceremonies; see below.

(22) «Neteotoquiliztli»: es el sustantivo de tal verbo. Acto por el cual se estima alguien como divino.» (Garibay, vocabulary to Duran, 1967, I, p.311).

(23) Temalacatl, «round stone»; it was the round sacrificial stone on which the sacrificio gladiatorio was performed; to reach it, the platform had a number of steps; in the centre there was a hole to which the captive was tied by a rope.

(24) Quauhxicalli, «eagle vessel»; was a recipient for the hearts of the sacrificed victims; at the same time it seems to have been the name for certain temple buildings. Duran explains: «quauhxicalli, que quiere decir «vaso

Duran tells that a living image was selected to impersonate the god for forty days before the festival. Sahagun does not mention anything of this kind, which makes Duran's record *highly important*. We may very well give credit to Duran's record, since the impersonation of gods was a frequent phenomenon in Mexican ritual. Motolinia's short but interesting account of Tlacaxipeualiztli might be interpreted as further evidence for it: «En este día desollaban a todos los que tenían tomados de los enemigos, y vestíanse los cueros; y hacían esta fiesta a Tlatlauhqui Tezcatlipoca, y principalmente se compraba un esclavo por su honra.» (25) In a similar way Juan de Tovar also mentions specifically the sacrifice of one slave. He was flayed and his skin hung up in the (tribal?) temple and used for auguries concerning the fertility of the forthcoming year (26).

Duran adds that Tlacaxipeualiztli was the only festival in the year when an impersonator of the god was put up and sacrificed in every barrio. This information is very interesting, although we lack further evidence from other sources to substantiate it. Sahagun only confirms that the barrios played an important role in the course of this festival, many ceremonies taking place in the tribal temples.

Another interesting point concerns the impersonation of «all gods» at the festival and Duran's indication that they were the gods of the most important barrios. Whether Huitzilopochtli, Quetzalcoatl, Macuilxochitl, Tlacauepan, Ixtilton and Mayauel were the patron deities of particular barrios is not known, the information on the cult of the barrios being so scanty. Chililico was a temple building, where human sacri-

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de águilas», porque xicalli en la lengua es un lebrillo, o como batea, que se hace de unas calabazas grandes, y quauhtli quiere decir «águila», y así la llamaban qu... Algunos entendían —y yo el primero— que quería decir «lebrillo de palo», pero venido a entender, no quiere decir sino «vaso de águilas» (1967, II, p.189). The mistake of translating qu... as wooden vessel was made by many old authors. The qu. was made of stone, but might have been made of wood originally. There were several quauhxicallis in the temple precinct; Sahagun mentions five among the buildings of the great temple.

(25) 1967, p.44 (materials included in Motolinia's Memoriales which are of uncertain origin).

(26) Tovar Calendar (Kubler and Gibson, 1951, p.22).

fices were brought to Chicunau Eecatli (Quetzalcoatli) on a day of the same sign as well as at the festival of Atlcaualo. Mayauel is the only goddess whose sacrifice Sahagun confirms for Tlacaxipeualiztli (27). However, he does not mention it within his account of the festival, but in his chapter of the temple buildings, in reference to the temple of Yopico. The coincidence for this particular sacrifice suggests that the others might have simply passed unnoticed by Sahagun, their character being similar to Mayauel's sacrifice.

Since Sahagun and Pomar also mention that the impersonators of «all gods» played a rather important role, we might assume that they are speaking of the same impersonators, only at different periods of the festival. That would mean that the impersonators of the gods were in some way related to the barrios or were the patron deities of the barrios. If that is the right interpretation, this would establish an important link between the barrios and the ritual, since the impersonation of «all gods» was a striking feature of a number of monthly festivals.

The most obscure point of Duran's account is 3—. After the sacrifice the gods were flayed and their skins put on by some (priests?) who again represented the same gods. That would mean that the impersonators which Sahagun mentions later, were actually going about in flayed skins. Duran's explanation of the ceremony *neteotoquiliztli* and the tying of the gods by their legs to symbolize their unity, rather seems to have been his own interpretation and is not satisfactory. Finally, the gods were brought to the temple square, where the *sacrificio gladiatorio* was to begin. This fits with Sahagun's information that the impersonators of all gods came down from the temple Yopico to watch the sacrifice.

### *Second Day (continuation): The Gladiatorial Sacrifice*

1—The captives were assembled at the skull frame (*tzompantli*). The captors accompanied them (28). Pomar tells that they were brought there by two men who guarded them; one was the captor «y el otro era otro valiente que llamaban te-

(27) CF II, App., pp.173, 74; see below «Other Sacrifices».

(28) Sahagun, CF II, p.49.

quihua» (29). The captives were made to dance while they stood waiting for their sacrifice.

According to Duran the captives wore no clothes except their maxtlatl of painted paper; they are portrayed in this way on the two illustrations of Duran, as well as on the illustration of the *Codice Ramírez* which is a copy from Duran (30). In the *Historia* he adds that body and face of the captives were both painted white; their eyelids and their skin around the lips red, their head was anointed with melted rubber and feathers were pasted to their head (31). According to Pomar not only their head was covered by white feathers, but their arms and legs as well, and they wore a sleeveless paper jacket (32). This array can be seen on the illustration to *Tlacaxipeualiztli* in the *Codex Magliabecchiano*, where the captive wears additionally the cone-shaped hat of Xipe (33).

2—The musicians (*los cantores*) installed themselves in the centre of the temple square to play their *teponaztli* and *tlapanhuehuatl* (34); together with the priests they sang hymns appropriate to the festival. Maybe they were singing Xipe's song, although no direct reference is made to it. According to Duran, these musicians were wearing the headdress *yopitzontli*, a pointed cap with bifurcating lappets which was an attribute of the god Xipe (35). In the «*Relación breve*» of

(29) 1964, p.169. «Tequihua, -que, capitán de guerra, lit. el que tiene a cargo el trabajo por excelencia, que es adquirir víctimas para el dios.» (Garibay, *Vocabulary to Duran*, 1967 II, p.588).

(30) See Lam.4, figures 9, 10; Lam.5, fig.11. The illustration of the C. Ramírez shows clearly that it is a copy (of inferior quality) made of the two illustrations of Duran. This is important regarding the relationship between Duran and the C. Ramírez. The Aztec words written on the drawing of the impersonator of Xipe refer to the colours of Duran's original.

(31) Duran 1967, II, pp.171, 275.

(32) 1964, p.169.

(33) See Lam.3, fig.8.

(34) The *teponaztli* was a wooden gong, which was fashioned from a hollowed-out tree-trunk. The base was open, and on the top were two tongues of wood, each of which produced a different note when struck. The *teponaztlis* were often beautifully carved and decorated with ornaments. The *tlapanhuehuatl* was a standing drum with a membrane of skin. Other musical instruments used in the temple ritual were rattles, conch-shells of various kinds, pan-pipes, whistles, and several types of trumpets; stringed instruments were entirely unknown.

(35) Duran 1968 II, p.277; 173. The impersonator of Xipe wears the

Sahagun a musician is also pictured with the same headdress, and the illustration to Xipe's song in the Florentine Codex again shows two musicians in the same array (36).

At this point the eagle—and ocelot warriors appeared armed with their shields and war clubs. There were two of each («el águila mayor y menor» and «el tigre mayor y menor» according to Duran) and they were known as «sacrificers» (sacrificadores) or «tlauauanque» (37). They came out dancing, raising their weapons towards the sun and imitating a fight in their dance (38). Tezozomoc reveals that underneath the animal skins they were well protected by ichcahuipiles, the quilted cotton armour used by the Mexicans (39).

3—At the same time the impersonators of the gods emerged in a procession by order of their rank. They came down

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same headdress on Duran's illustration; see Lamina 4, fig.9. The yopitzontli is used as a symbol for the god Xipe and the month Tlacaxipeualiztli in the Codex Humboldt, Codex Rios, Codex Vaticanus 3738 as well as in several other manuscripts. (Kubler and Gibson 1951, p.22.)

(36) See Lamina 2, fig.6; Lamina 3, fig.7.

(37) See footnote 1. Duran 1967 II, pp.172, 275. Duran translates t. as «curtidor o raedor de cueros» («tanner or scraper of skins»). The word derives from «uauana», «rayar, señalar» and rather means «the one who stripes, marks, scarifies», since it was applied to the eagle-and ocelot warriors who performed the sacrificio gladiatorio. Sahagun gives the same name for them (CF II, p.49). In Spanish Duran and Tezozomoc use the word «sacrificadores». Interesting enough both authors also include under «sacrificadores» the impersonators of all gods who watched the sacrificio gladiatorio. (Duran II, p.172; Tezozomoc, p.220).

Were these «sacrificadores» (in the skins of eagles and ocelots); warriors or priests? Sahagun says that «those who contended against him (the captive) in gladiatorial sacrifice were the fire priests and the (other) priests.» (CF, Book VIII, Appendix B —this App. is not included in the HG). On the other hand, Pomar says: «eran cuatro indios, los más valientes y escogidos que había en la ciudad y su provincia.» (1964, p.169). It seems that they were members of the famous order of the eagle-and ocelot warriors, which was a semi-religious institution in the service of the sun. The eagle and the ocelot were sacred animals closely related to the sun. Behind their association to the warrior order was the concept of the naualli or protective animal spirit. The order had its own house in the temple precinct which was called Quaquahtin inchan, or Quauhcalli, «eagle house». Duran describes in detail the specific festival which they celebrated to the sun; it was a movable feast fixed to the day «Nauholin», «4 ollin or movement». (1967 I, pp. 105-9; 113).

(38) Sahagun CF II, p. 49; Sahagun's description of this dance is very evocative. In the CF the eagle-and ocelot warriors are portrayed in a dancing movement; see Lam.1, fig.4 (pictures 5 and 6).

(39) Tezozomoc 1944, p.222; ichca-huipilli, «cotton shirt».

from the temple Yopico, gathered around the temalacatl and seated themselves according to rank on large chairs called quecholicpalli (40). While Sahagun does not mention any specific gods which were impersonated, Duran names Huitzilopochtli, Quetzalcoatl, Toci, Yopi, Opochtzin, Totec, Itzpapalotl; Tezozomoc adds Tlaloc (Tlalotla?), Toci-Ixcuina and Napatecuhtli (41). Pomar also records that the impersonators of «all gods» («todos aquellos que representaban a los ídolos») watched the sacrifice, but gives only the names of the most important ones: Tezcatlipoca, Huitzilopochtli, Tlaloc and Xipe «y los demás de quien no se trata por (no!) ser de mucha cuenta» (42).

On top of the temple Yopico an arbour of tzapotl branches had been prepared for these gods, called tzapocalli (43). Inside this arbour they sat down on seats made of sapota wood (44). The leaves and wood of the tzapotl tree had a special significance at this festival and were used in a number

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(40) Sahagun CF II, p.50.

(41) Duran 1967 II, p.172; Tezozomoc 1944, p.220; This list from the *Historia* does not coincide with Duran's list of «all gods» mentioned above (*Libro de los ritos*; 1967 I, p.97). Toci, «our grandmother», was one of the most important earth-and mother goddesses. Ixcuina, «four faces» was one of her synonyms referring to a goddess of Huastec origin. Yopi and Totec were both names for Xipe. Opochtli, «the left one», was a god of fishing related to the rain gods. According to Sahagun the left-handed warrior, who fought in the sacrificio gladiatorio, was dressed as the god Opochtli. Itzpapalotl, «obsidian butterfly», was a deity of an enigmatic character —an old Chichimec goddess with stellar aspects as well as a relation to earth and fertility. Napatecuhtli, «4 times lord», was a specialized god belonging to the Tlaloques. —It is interesting to see that all these gods were impersonated in the cult.

(42) 1964, p.171.

(43) The tzapotl is a fruit-tree with different species. Tzapocalli, «house of tzapotl», is explained by Garibay as a «recinto especial de ramas de este árbol para hospedar dioses o personajes.» (*Vocabulary to Duran 1967 II*, p.589) According to Tezozomoc a tzapocalli was prepared for the invited enemy guests: «...fueron puestos en lugares y partes secretas y buenos lugares emparamentados y adornados de hojas de fruta de zapote que llamaban tzapocalli con asentaderos muy supremos que llamaban quecholicpalli.» (1944, pp.222, 450). The same chairs are mentioned by Sahagun, when the impersonators of «all gods» sat down on them to watch the sacrificio gladiatorio. Possibly they were made of tzapotl wood. One might assume that tzapocallis and special seats were prepared for the gods as well as for the invited guests.

(44) Duran 1967 II, p.173.



of ceremonies. According to Tezozomoc the floor of the temple square was also covered with tzapotl leaves (45). Apparently the gods sat in this arbour before they came down to watch the sacrifice.

Among «the gods» was the chief priest, who was called Youallauan, «the night drinker», or Totec like the god Xipe himself. He was richly arrayed with green and blue feathers as well as his insignia (of Xipe Totec) and carried a broad, black knife, called ixcuaual, with which he was to carry out the heart sacrifice. His place was the first by order of rank.

4—Foreign rulers and nobles from the enemy territories had been invited by the king to assist the festival. They came secretly, not to be recognized by the population of Tenochtitlan. They watched the gladiatorial sacrifice from a kind of arbour made of branches and many different kinds of flowers, from where they could not be seen by the rest of the people (46). According to Tezozomoc this place was called tzapocalli, like the one in which the gods sat, and was decorated with sapota leaves. They were sitting on splendid chairs called quecholicpalli (47), which according to Duran were lined with ocelot skin. As a protection against the sun they had fans of large and rich feathers.

5—Trumpets and conch-shells were sounded. One of the captors who stood waiting next to the tzompantli, seized his captive by the head and led him to the round sacrificial stone. He made him drink some sacred wine, teooctli (48). A priest beheaded a quail for the captive. The Totec went twice around the temalacatl, consecrating the captive. Then they made him climb upon the stone.

Now the (priest in the array of the) cuetlachtli who was called the «Old Cuetlachtli» (Cuetlachueue) approached the captive (49). He was the captive's «uncle» or his «godfa-

(45) Tezozomoc 1944, p.117.

(46) Duran 1967 II, p.278; see below «Historical and Political Aspects of the Gladiatorial Sacrifice.»

(47) See footnotes 39 and 42.

(48) «Teooctli», «vino divino». Bebida de pulque con algún ingrediente estupefaciente, v.gr. tabaco, datura, etc., que daban a los guerreros, a punto de entrar al combate y a los sacrificados, al ir al sacrificio.» (Garibay, Vocabulary to Duran, 1967 II, p.588).

(49) This personage is a problem, because it was said by different old

ther» (50). He moved about dancing. According to Duran the *cuetlachtli* came out accompanied by four priests who were dressed in a white, green, yellow and red array respectively and were called «las Cuatro Auroras» (the Four of the Dawn). They later joined the combat, after the two eagle- and ocelot warriors had become tired, and were the most *dangerous ones, because they fought with the left hand*. They were further accompanied by the gods Ixcozauhqui and Titlacauan. The Cuatro Auroras and the two gods took their position (with the other impersonators of the gods?) (51), while the *Cuetlachtli* proceeded to tie the captive by a rope to the hole in the centre of the sacrificial stone (52). This rope was called *centzonmecatl* according to Duran and *aztamecatl* according to Tezozomoc (53). Then he gave the captive a wooden shield and a war club decked with feathers instead

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authors to represent three distinct animals: a wolf, a bear and a puma (lion). In the Aztec text of Sahagun his name is given as *Cuitlachueue*, «Old *Cuetlachtli*» (CF II, p.51), while in the corresponding Spanish version Sahagun explains that it was a priest dressed in the skin of a bear. According to A. M. Garibay the *cuetlachtli* is the «oso mielero» (*Tamandua Myrmecopaha*, *tetradactyla*). Seler also interpreted c. as a species of bears: «Wickelbär» («Kinkajou») (GA II, p.89; IV, p.18).

In contrast to that translation, *cuetlachtli* means «lobo» according to Molina and Rémi Siméon («loup mexicain»). Anderson and Dibble thus translate *Cuitlachueue* as «Old Wolf». A third translation was given by Duran who said that the priest was wearing the skin of a lion. What the Spaniards interpreted as lion, surely refers to the puma, the American beast of prey resembling most closely the lion. On the other hand, Molina gives for lion the word «miztli» and for bear the word «tlacamayetequani».

Whatever animal it was whose skin the priest put on, it was meant to symbolize a strong and brave beast and like the ocelot and the eagle, it ultimately stood for a brave warrior. As far as the personage who impersonated the *cuetlachtli* is concerned, it seems that he was a priest and not a warrior. The *Cuitlachueue* is represented on the illustration of Sahagun's «Relación Breve»; see Lam.3, fig.7. The drawing rather resembles a wolf or a puma instead of a bear, but the nature of the animal is not clearly recognizable.

(50) Sahagun CF II, p.51; Pomar 1964, p.169.

(51) Duran 1967 I, pp.98, 99.

(52) Duran tells that he was tied by the foot and thus he is pictured on the two illustrations of Duran, while according to Sahagun he was tied by the waist. Pomar also describes that the rope was tied around the captive's waist, and that it was just long enough that he could descend the steps of the *temalacatl*. In the C. Magliabecchiano the rope is also fastened around the captive's waist. See Lam.3, 4, fig. 7-10.

(53) Duran 1967 I, p.98; Tezozomoc 1944, p.118. *Mecatl*, «string»; *centzon*, «400 or innumerable»; *aztatl*, «heron» (*garza*).

of obsidian blades; he further placed before him four pine cudgels («le ponían a los pies cuatro pelotas de palo para con que se defendiese»). Sahagun describes this very evocatively:

«...When the Cuetlachueue had arrayed the captive, thereupon he went, and gave him to drink wine which was called the gods' wine. He took it to him (in) a vessel (painted like) reeds and edged with feathers. When (the victim) had drunk, then he raised (the wine) in dedication (toward) where the sun came forth. So the Cuetlachueue did with all the shields and war clubs; he raised all of them as offerings which he gave the captive. When the Cuetlachueue had offered the captive (wine) and made him drink it, thereupon the slayer of the sacrificial victim went forth in order to sacrifice him. (He had) his shield and his war club edged with obsidian blades and covered with feathers.» (54)

6—Now the Cuetlachueue retired and to the sound of drums and singing the first ocelot warrior came out, dancing with his shield and war club, lifting them up towards the sun and lowering them again, thus encircling the stone two or three times. When the captive perceived him, he began to shout and whistle, to jump and clap his hand against his thigh, lifting his wooden sword and shield towards the sun (55). He threw the wooden balls at the warrior who warded off the blows with his shield. Then they began to fight with their uneven weapons. The ocelot warrior aimed at wounding the captive in any part of the body. Therefore the ceremony was called *tlauauanaliztli*, «que quiere decir 'señalar o rasguñar' señalando con espada. Y hablando a nuestro modo, es dar toque, esgrimiendo con espadas blancas», as Duran explains it very clearly (56).

As soon as the captive was hit on the head, leg, or arm and some blood came out, the priests sounded the trumpets, conch-shells and flutes and the captive let himself fall to the

(54) Sahagun CF, Book VIII, App.B; part IX, p.84.

(55) Duran 1967 II, p.278; Tezozomoc, p.221. Tezozomoc gives the Aztec expression: «...luego dase una palmada en un muslo, moquezhuitequí.»

(56) Duran 1967 I, p.99. Sahagun mentions the ceremony «*tlauauanaliztli*» twice separately in the Appendix to Book II, pp.176, 190.

ground. As he was falling, the sacrificial priests came towards him, untied him from the rope and sacrificed him on the very edge of the *temalacatl*. Five priests held him tight, while the Totec opened his breast, pulled out his heart and offered it to the sun, lifting his hand high up (57). Afterwards the heart was placed into the *quauhxicalli*. With the blood which was still warm the image of the sun was sprinkled as well as the statue of *Huitzilopochtli*. A priest set a hollow cane (the eagle cane) in the breast of the captive, there where the heart had been. He stained it with blood and offered it to the sun. «It was said: 'Thus he giveth (the sun) to drink.'» (58) Thus one captive after the other had his turn in the gladiatorial combat, to be sacrificed in the end.

7—Some captives fought so bravely that they consumed all four warriors, who relieved each other when they got tired. It even happened sometimes that a captive killed a warrior. If all four eagle-and ocelot warriors had already fought—also in case there were too many captives to be sacrificed—, the left-handed ones took their turn. According to Duran they were the «*Cuatro Auroras*» mentioned above. Sahagun speaks only of one left-handed sacrificer who was dressed as the god *Opochtli* (59). Pomar also mentions only one «*zurdo*» and adds that it was impossible to escape his skilful left hand.

After the captor had left the victim on the *temalacatl*, he returned to the *tzompantli* to remain there dancing and observing his captive's performance in the combat: «He stood dancing, looking upon, and studying, his captive.» «He who died was indeed before (his captor).» (60) The braver the captive fought, the greater became the fame of the captor «...de manera que tanto cuanto más esfuerzo y ánimo mostraban peleando en este sacrificio, tanto más fama de valientes cobraban los que en la guerra los habían vencido y preso y traído al sacrificio, teniéndolos en tanta más estima cuanto de más valor

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(57) Tezozomoc 1944, p.118; Sahagun CF II, p.52; Duran 1967 II, p.174.

(58) CF II, p.52.

(59) CF II, p.51. *Opochtli*, «the left one» is mentioned by Duran as one of the gods who were impersonated at the festival; see above.

(60) Sahagun CF II, p.52, Duran 1967 II, p.174.

se habían conocido en el prisionero. Y esta era una cosa tan deseada entre ellos que, aunque había muchos indios que habían prendido en la guerra muchos enemigos, no llegaban a sacrificar ninguno en este sacrificio de Xipe, si ... no era averiguado ser valiente para la dignidad de este día» (61).

Some captives, however, disappointed the hopes of their captors. Sahagun describes their sad end in a powerfully dramatic way: «And when one went faltering, sinking down on all fours, reeling and overcome in the fray, uselessly and vainly holding the war club, which they snatched from him, thus his adversaries contended with him. And this useless one could now no longer do more; no more could he use his hands; no longer defend himself; no longer make himself do anything. No longer did he move; he did not speak. Then, faltering and fainting, he fell upon the surface, tumbling as if dead. He wished that he might stop breathing, that he might suffer (no longer), that he might perish, that he might cast off his burden of death. And thereupon they quickly took and seized him, pushed him, and dragged him, and raised and stretched him out upon the edge of the round sacrificial stone.» (62).

8—After the sacrifice the victim's blood was filled into a recipient with which the captor went to all the shrines and tribal temples of the town, placing the blood on the lips of the idols with a hollow cane.

The bodies of the victims were deposited in a row in front of the skull frame. From there the captors took them away to the tribal quarters (calpulli), where they flayed them. What remained of the body was taken to the captor's house to be eaten «to bestow as a favour to others.» The captor himself did not eat from the flesh. He said: «Shall I, then, eat my own flesh?» When the body was divided up, one thigh bone was sent to Motecuhzoma, while the other one was kept by the captor as a trophy and was put up on a pole in the captor's house twenty days later (63).

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(61) Pomar 1964, p.170.

(62) Sahagun CF II, p.46.

(63) Sahagun CF II, p.52. See above: First Day (Sahagun 3—) and below: Ceremonies in the House of the Captor.

9—After the gladiatorial sacrifice had ended —sometimes it lasted a whole day (64)—, the impersonators of the gods and those who had fought the victims performed a dance, in which they went around the *temalacatl*, each one carrying in his hands the severed head of a captive; it was called *motzontecomaitotia*, «the dance with the severed heads». The *Cuetlachueue* also participated in it, raising the rope (by which the captives had been tied to the stone) as an offering to the four directions. He went weeping and howling, lamenting the dead sacrificial victims, «weeping for those who had suffered and died.» (65).

### *Third Day*

1—The third day of the festival, very late in the evening (66), the ceremony of «the bringing out (of the skins)» began at the great palace. First the *Tlatelulca* danced and then the priests, the latter in a variety of arrays: with butterfly nets, fish banners, *ocholli*, with several kinds of tortillas and figures made of *tzoalli*, and with ears of green maize. They danced until midday.

Then a very solemn dance of the nobles began, performed by a group of *Tenochca* and a group of *Tlatelulca* who danced facing each other in a row. In this dance *Motecuhzoma* participated, accompanied by the king of *Texcoco*, *Nezualpilli*, and the king of *Tlacopan*, *Totoquiuztli*. This dance lasted until the evening. —*Motolinia* mentions that *Motecuhzoma* joined in dances of the *Tlacaxipeualiztli* festival, himself wearing the skin of the most important played victim. *Motolinia* does not specify which dance this was, but the information seems rather improbable (67).

In the evening until midnight the warriors and nobles danced (with interlocked hands) together with the women, «those known as mothers, but only if they wished», as well as with the

(64) *Tezozomoc* 1944, p.222.

(65) *Sahagun CF II*, p.53. Note the cutting and worshipping of the heads of the sacrificed captives.

(66) I.e. the evening of the second day according to our count or the beginning of the third day if one counts the day-beginning from the evening. *Sahagun, CF II*, pp.53, 54.

(67) 1967, p.60.

women known as auianime (68). This dance took place every evening for the next twenty days, that means, all through the next month of Tozoztontli.

2—The nobles from enemy territories, who had assisted the gladiatorial sacrifice on the invitation of the king, left Tenochtitlan terrified of what they had seen. They were determined to abstain from any further resistance against the Mexicans, remembering how the latter treated their captives. When they had arrived and when they left, the king made them rich presents of cloaks, adornments and perfumes. They were received with great honours, although secretly, so that the population of Tenochtitlan might not realize that enemies were in the town (69).

3—After the gladiatorial sacrifice the king distributed presents of cloaks and food to those who had carried out the sacrifice (the eagle-and ocelot warriors?). He honoured the brave warriors for their achievements: «...todas las personas señaladas... que hubiesen hecho alguna cosa notable en la guerra... Cuando todos estaban juntos en sus lugares, Motecuhzoma mandó sacar grandes riquezas de sus tesoros, de mantas, joyas y plumas, armas y rodela: a cada uno del género que le pertenecía, porque en esto había gran cuenta, de dar a cada uno según su dignidad y estofa y según el linaje de donde descendía. Y así les gratificó el trabajo que habían tomado y el contento que a los dioses habían dado y a ellos, en traerles carne humana que comer...» Long elegant speeches concluded the ceremony (70). Tezozomoc records the same: «...mandó llamar Motecuhzoma a los que hicieron presa, para darles el premio de su trabajo. Venidos ante él, hizo a Petlascalatl que trajese lo que tenía guardado. Traído, llamó a Tlacochealatl y a Tlacateccatl, para que repartiesen aquellas divisas a los que habían hecho presa, y se le dio a cada uno divisa, una rodela y espadarte: acabádoles de repartir las armas y divisas, propónenles de que es galardón de su trabajo, que es señal de señorío y valor, para que en

(68) Sahagun CF II, p.54. The auianime were the companions of the young men in the *telpochcalli*.

(69) Duran 1967 II, pp.174, 278.

(70) *Op. cit.*, pp.174, 483.

adelante se esforzasen en hacerlo doble.» (71). Motolinia equally tells that the king honoured the warriors: «...y daba de comer Motecuhzoma, y daba libreas a los valientes hombres» (72).

*The Xipeme or Tototecti (Third Day)*

According to Sahagun the captor himself flayed the body of his captive in the tribal quarter. None of the sources is clear on the point which and how many victims were later flayed. It is logical to assume that not all of them were flayed, considering the high number of sacrifices. Duran records that at Tlacaxipeualiztli more victims than in any other festival were slain, «por ser la fiesta tan general como era, que aun en los muy desastrados pueblos y en los barrios sacrificaban este día hombres.» He estimates that in Tenochtitlan at least sixty victims were sacrificed and at least a thousand in the whole country (73). In the Historia Duran and Tezozomoc mention that after the wars against Yanhuitlan and Tlachquiauhco in the Mixteca some thousand captives were sacrificed in the capital alone (74). It is difficult to judge the reliability of this information, but all sources coincide in that the number of sacrifices was very high. Tlacaxipeualiztli and Panquetzaliztli were the two festivals when mass sacrifices of victims took place.

Motolinia is the only author to state explicitly that «de los sacrificados desollaban algunos, en unas partes dos o tres, y en otras diez y en otras más, y en México desollaban doce o quince...» (75). Duran mentions that twenty to twenty-five «limosneros» (almoners, i. e. xipeme) went about in the town, which implies that this number of victims was flayed.

The other unclear point is which victims were flayed: those who died on the first day by the ordinary heart sacrifice, those from the *sacrificio gladiatorio*, or some from both? If one studies carefully Duran's text, the following reconstruction emerges: On the first festival day the impersonator of Xipe together

(71) Tezozomoc 1944, p.493.

(72) 1967, p.44.

(73) Duran 1967 I, p.96.

(74) See below: «Historical and Political Aspects...» Duran 1967 II, pp.437, 482; Tezozomoc 1944, pp.448, 492.

(75) 1967, p.60.



with the impersonators of the gods of the most important barrios were sacrificed by the ordinary heart sacrifice. These victims were flayed and their skins put on by «otros tantos indios» (were they priests?) who continued to represent «all gods» and watched the sacrificio gladiatorio, sitting on special chairs (quecholicpalli) around the temalacatl. After the gladiatorial sacrifice «todos aquellos que habian representado a los dioses, que habían estado vestidos con aquellos cueros de hombres, se iban y los sacerdotes los desnudaban y los lavaban con sus propias manos y colgaban aquellos cueros, con mucha reverencia, de unas varas» (76). Duran continues his account by telling that the next morning poor people asked the captors to lend them the skins to go about asking for alms.

If this interpretation of Duran's material is right, that would mean that the flaying was something quite apart from the sacrificio gladiatorio; the impersonators of all gods (dressed in the flayed skins of the first victims) were spectators of the sacrificio gladiatorio. Sahagun's account also suggests that the first victims were flayed, because he mentions the xipeme immediately after the sacrifices of the first day and not after the sacrificio gladiatorio. In relation to the god Xipe he mentions the flaying as well as the going about of the xipeme, but not the sacrificio gladiatorio (77). However, the item is not sufficiently clear due to the lack of evidence.

Concerning the point about who went as «limosneros» the sources also contradict each other. Duran informs that «esto hacian los pobres en todos barrios», and Pomar confirms the same (78). However, Sahagun and Mendieta tell that it was the priests who put on the skins (79). An explanation of this contradiction might be that in the ceremonies in the temple priests put on the skins (to impersonate «all gods»), while the xipeme, who later went about in the town for twenty days, were poor people from the barrios.

In another passage Sahagun indicates that people suffering from skin diseases put on the skins; however, this is not clear

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(76) Duran 1967 I, p.100.

(77) Sahagun HG I, ch.XVIII; 1956, vol.1, p.65.

(78) Duran 1967 I, p.100; Pomar 1964, p.170.

(79) Mendieta 1945, p.110; Sahagun HG IX, ch.XV; 1956, vol.3, p.57.

either because somewhere else he says that these people only participated in the procession of hiding away the skins at the end of the festival period (80). The latter information does not contradict the assumption that common people went as xipeme. Duran's remark that «con estas limosnas remediaban muchos pobres su necesidad» (81) sounds convincing. Besides, we know of a similar custom during the VIth month Etzalcualiztli for which Sahagun, Duran and Tovar record that common people, dressed in the array of Tlaloc, went from house to house asking for alms.

The xipeme put on the skins and over them the array of the god Xipe Totec. A comparison between the description of the array of the xipeme and of the god proves their identity (82). However, the different sources in which the array is described and represented on illustrations (83), only mention each an incomplete number of characteristics —or do they reflect regional or other differences in the array of the xipeme?

The most important elements of their array were: in the right hand they carried their rattle stick (84) and in the left one a shield with a pattern of red and yellow concentric circles. The head-gear «yopitzontli» was a cone-shaped cap with bifurcating lappets framing the head of the wearer, which was characteristic of the Yopi-people. A golden bifurcated ear pendant (teocuitlanacochtli) also belonged to the array (85). On some illustrations the xipe wears instead of the yopitzontli a head-gear of green feathers (86), or of red Quechol fea-

(80) HG I; ch.XVIII; 1956, vol.1, p.65; HG II, ch.XXII; 1956, 1, p.148.

(81) 1967 I, p.101.

(82) Duran's description of the array of the god as well as his picture really refer to the living impersonator and not to the statue of the god as he erroneously said so himself. In Sahagun the array of the god and of the xipe are also identical. See below, chapter on the god; see fig.2; Lam.1, fig.4, Lam.4, fig.9.

(83) Sahagun: *Relación breve*, 1948, p.293; HG IX, ch.XV; 1956, vol.3, pp.56, 66; CF II, Duran 1967 I, p.96; Tovar Calendar 1951, p.22. See Lam.1, fig.4; Lam.3, fig.7; Lam.4, fig.9.

(84) The *chicauaztli*, «wherewith anything is made strong» (Seler GA II, p.1073) has to do with fertility magic; rattle sticks are instruments used in fertility rites all over the world.

(85) To be seen on the illustrations of the Tovar Calendar and the C. Humboldt.

(86) In the Tovar Calendar.

thers (87), while in the Codex Florentinus the xipeme are pictured with a down of feathers on the head, the adornment of sacrificial victims.

The flayed skin usually reaches down to the ankles, only in the Tovar Calendar the xipe wears a knee-long tunic without legs. The human skin is painted yellow. On the Duran illustration the uniform colour-combination of red and yellow is striking; red and yellow were the colours of the god. According to the Codex Matritense the xipe was wearing a skirt of zapote leaves, in other representations an ordinary maxtlatl. According to Sahagun and Duran he was carrying a device of three red flags on his back.

Sahagun does not mention the array of the xipeme in Book II; he gives the best coherent description of it in the Aztec text of the chapter on the gold-and silversmiths (tecuilhuaque) whose patron was Xipe. There he gives an especially vivid account of the use which the xipe made of the chicauaztli, his rattle stick (88):

«Le ponían su plumaje de quechol fino, de quechol rojo en la coronilla de la cabeza, como si por cabellera le tocara tener las plumas finas del quechol legítimo, y su luneta en la nariz, de oro y sus orejeras, de oro; y su palo de sonajas: resonaba, en la mano derecha lo mantenía aferrado: cuando en la tierra lo paraba fuertemente percutiendo, resonaba; y andaba trayendo sus escudos con un rodete o anillo de oro (89), y sus sandalias eran rojas, con un adorno de codorniz. Y este aderezo de codorniz era así: plumas de codorniz tenía esparcidas en la superficie de las sandalias (90), y estaban colocadas en su espalda tres banderas, que llevaba a cuestras e iban resonando como papel (91); y su falde-

(87) See below, footnote 88.

(88) The following text was translated by Garibay from the Aztec text of the Ms. of the Academia de la Historia, f.44 re; it corresponds to B.IX, ch.XV of the HG, but is more extensive. This translation is included in HG 1956, vol.3, pp.66, 67.

(89) «Como los usaban los de Anauac»; HG, Spanish text; 1956, 3, p.57.

(90) In the description of the array of the god Xipe it says «su rostro pintado color de codorniz». Sahagun 1958/1, p.129.

(91) On the ill. of Duran these three flags can be seen, as well as in the C. Ramírez; see Lam.4, fig.9; Lam.5, fig.11.



Fig. 2: Array of the god Xipe (Anavaill itec). Codex Matritense.

llín de (hojas) de zapote (92), todo de hechura de plumas finas: eran las llamadas «chiles» y «espinas de quetzal»: éstas arregladas y bien dispuestas en hileras y con éstas estaban sus sandalias recubiertas por todas partes. Y su collar de oro, batido y adelgazado, y su asiento de (madera) de zapote.

...Y al ir exhibiendo sus insignias (el representante vivo), bailaba, con lo que se va manifestando el escudo suyo, y va dando fuertes golpes en el suelo con su palo de sonajas.»

When the xipeme came out for the first time, they placed themselves «upon white earth or upon grass» (tizapan, zacapan). Sahagun does not fail to mention this ceremony in the

(92) Only the ill. of the C. Matritense shows this skirt of tzapotl leaves: Lam.4, fig.7.

Aztec text as well as in the «Relación Breve» and in his Spanish version; in the «Relación Breve» it reads: «...en la grama (zacapan) vienen a formarse: esto cuando recientemente se habian metido en el cuerpo la piel los hombres; por esto se dice 'en la grama': porque se esparcía grama sobre la cual venían a formarse los desollados» (93). Sahagun explains this more clearly in the Spanish text: «Poníanse todos sentados sobre unos lechos de heno, o de tizatli o greda; y estando allí sentados, otros mancebos provocábanlos a pelear, o con palabras o con pellizcos, y ellos echaban tras los que incitaban a pelear, y los otros huían, y alcanzándolos comenzaban a luchar o pelear los unos con los otros.» Part of the game was that the warriors pinched the xipeme's navels. The xipeme in turn took after them. Among the xipeme was the Totec or Youallauan who participated in the skirmishing. If the xipeme seized a warrior, they struck him with their rattle stick and carried him to the temple Yopico, where he had to pay some ransom in order to be let free again (94).

This mock battle between the xipeme and a group of warriors took place at Totecco («in our lord») where there was (a temple or shrine with) a statue of the god Totec (95). In his chapter on the god Sahagun also refers to these mock battles (96): «Hacían como un juego de cañas, de manera que

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(93) Sahagun 1948, p.294. «Zacapan», «sobre la grama»; el zacatl es una graminea, *Epicampes macroura* y otras sp. (Garibay, Vocabulary to Duran 1967 I, p.315). In the chapter of the CM in which particular rites and ceremonies are described, the ceremony of zacapan is explained in the way that it was simply an expression of religious piety, in the same way, as e.g. the eating of earth: «Nezacapehtemaliztli (Ofrecimiento de lechos de grama). El ofrecimiento de lechos de grama se hacía de la siguiente manera; también se hacía por la misma razón que el comer tierra. Cuando la gente salía hacia algún lugar, donde quiera que había una figura del dios, al pasar frente a él, se llevaba grama y se echaba delante de él.

Aún otros cuando van por su camino y cuando están en guerra, como si con esto se hicieran votos, cuando alguien va a la guerra, si con algo está afligido decía: «¿no moriré en la guerra? ¿voy a morir?» Cuando había de hacerse la guerra, primero toman la grama, la arrojan hacia el Sol, y decían: «¡allá he de acabar!» Si es que muere o hace un cautivo, como con esto había hecho su voto hacia el Sol.» (Sahagun 1958/1, p.69).

(94) CF II, p.49; HG II, ch.XXI; 1956, 1, p.144.

(95) «Un lugar cuyo nombre es Totecco ('en nuestro Señor'). También allí estaba parada una imagen de Totec, de piedra esculpida.» Quotation from footnote 88.

(96) HG I, ch.XVIII; 1956, vol.1, p.65. The description in the Aztec text

el un bando era de la parte de este dios o imagen del dios Totec, y estos todos iban vestidos de pellejos de hombres que habían desollado en aquella fiesta, todos recientes y sangrientos y corriendo sangre; los del bando contrario eran los soldados valientes y osados, y *personas belicosas y esforzadas* que no tenían en nada la muerte; osados, atrevidos que de su voluntad salían a combatirse con otros. Allí los unos con los otros se ejercitaban en el ejército de la guerra; perseguían los unos a los otros hasta su puesto, y de allí se volvían huyendo hasta su propio puesto; acabado este juego... los tototecti ibanse por todo el pueblo, y entraban en las casas.»

After these skirmishes the xipeme began to go from house to house asking for alms. Each xipe went by himself to one part of the town. It seems that the distribution was along barrios. The xipe went dancing, hitting the ground with his rattle stick. According to Mendieta «andaban saltando y gritando por las calles con los cueros: y algunas mujeres con sus niños, por devoción, se les llegaban y dábanles un pellizco en el ombligo del cuero del muerto. Y con las uñas (que siempre las traían largas) cortaban algo de allí, y teníanlo como reliquia, y guardábanlo, o lo comían o daban al niño» (97). Duran also tells that the women came out to greet the xipe with their children in their arms. The xipe lifted the child up, made four rounds with it in the courtyard of the house and spoke some words to it. In return, he received his alms (98). Sahagun mentions that the common people went into the street to look at the xipeme (99).

First they visited the houses of the nobles, from whom they received clothes, feathers and jewels, while the common people gave them food and bunches of ears of maize (ocholli) (100). The women called the xipe into the house by saying:

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is more vivid, but less clear than Sahagun's version. In the Aztec account the place or temple Totecco is also mentioned (CF II, p.17). The «juego de cañas» to which Sahagun compares the mock fighting, was a war-game taken over by the Spanish nobility from the Moors and consisted in a picturesque exercise in horsemanship and spearthrowing.

(97) 1945, p.110.

(98) Duran 1967 I, pp.101, 175.

(99) 1948, p.294.

(100) The ocholli maize had a special significance at this festival. Accord-

«¡Señor nuestro, favor de pasar por aquí!» They prepared for him a seat of tzapotl leaves, and gave him special tortillas called huilocpalli (101), ocholli, flower garlands, and some wine to drink. In the chapter on the goldsmiths Sahagun adds a very interesting piece of information: besides the food, the people offered the xipe «todo fruto que primeramente se daba y toda flor que recientemente había abierto la corola. Todo esto primeramente pasaba ante su vista, con esto le daban culto» (102). Thus the xipe received first fruit offerings. In the interpretation of the Codex Vaticanus A it is mentioned that the houseowner rubbed the xipe's body with a bunch of green branches (tzapotl branches?); this was a kind of purification or benediction, and the xipe was very satisfied about it (103).

The xipe did not eat any of the offerings he received, but took them away. According to Sahagun he had to bring all that he collected to the captor who later divided up the alms between himself and the xipe (104). Duran records that the xipe deposited his alms at the temple where they were divided up between the captor and the xipe at the end of the twenty day period. «Con estas limosnas remediaban muchos pobres su necesidad.»

Every evening the xipeme had to take the skins to the temple and fetch them again the next morning. There were twenty to twenty-five of these «limosneros conforme a los barrios que había». They avoided meeting each other in the street because if they did so, they had to fight and try to break each other's skins and clothes «...lo cual era estatuto y orde-

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ing to Duran they were «unos manojos de mazorcas que los indios guardaban todo el año colgado de los techos de las mismas hojas» for the following purposes: a— to prepare the tortillas characteristic of this festival (cocolli), b— to give them as alms, to the xipeme, c— to offer them in the temple, put on tzapotl leaves, d— to keep them as seed-corn. Duran tells that he had still seen ocholli bundles hanging from the roofs of Indian houses (1967 I, pp.243, 97).

(101) According to Sahagun the tortilla characteristic of the day was called huilocpalli: («asiento de paloma») «no de masa de maíz calentado con cal era esta clase, sino de pura harina seca de maíz... los hacían, los formaban panes.» (HG IX, ch.XV; 1956, vol.3, p.66; HG I, ch.XVIII; vol.1, p.66).

(102) HG IX, *ibid.* 66.

(103) Seler 1899, p.98.

(104) CF II, p.53.

nanza de los templos.» Each xipe went accompanied by a group of people who warned him if another xipe was in sight and who also carried his alms for him (105).

Duran's information that each xipe corresponded to a barrio is highly interesting. There might exist some connection between the xipeme and the impersonators of the god, who according to Duran were put up in each barrio forty days before the festival. He refers to both in similar terms: a) the number of impersonators of the god before the festival was thus «de manera que, si había veinte barrios, podían andar veinte indios representando a este su dios universal, y cada barrio honraba y reverenciaba su indio y semejanza del dios, como en el principal templo se hacía»; b) the number of xipeme was twenty to twenty-five «conforme a los barrios que había». This might mean that in each barrio a living impersonator of Xipe went about for forty days before the festival and afterward a xipe dressed in the flayed skin of a sacrificial victim went asking for alms; one is tempted to infer that the xipe was wearing the skin of precisely this impersonator.

According to Tovar a slave was sacrificed, his skin used for predictions of fertility and later put on by a man who went among the people announcing the abundance of the future year, for which he received *ocholli* and other gifts. Tovar might very well refer to such a case of a particular barrio, because it is conspicuous that he mentions only one single xipe. How the impersonators of the «gods of the most important barrios», whom we have related to the xipeme, fit into this picture is obscure. Maybe there existed some connection between all of them.

#### **Period After the Main Festival (Tozoztontli)**

1—Going about of the xipeme for twenty days.

2—The captors with all members of their household did penance for twenty days; they did not bathe themselves nor wash their head until the flayed skins were finally buried. Then they gave a banquet for their kin and friends.

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(105) Duran 1967 I, p.101.



3—During twenty days after the festival hymns in honour of the gods were sung in the houses called cuicacalli (106).

4—On the 20th day after the festival rattle boards were sown at the temple of Yopico («se siembran sonajas»: aya-cachpixolo). The old men belonging to Yopico (calpulueuetque) sat singing and rattling their rattle boards the whole day (107). Flowers were offered in the same temple as first fruit offerings (primicias). Nobody dared to smell a flower before this offering had taken place (108). According to the *Relación Breve* the expression «se siembran sonajas» referred to a dance with rattles which the common people danced on the market square; there, however, it is still related to the period of Tlacaxipeualiztli (109).

Duran and Motolinia also mention dances on the market square for the whole month of Tlacaxipeualiztli (110). For the end of the festival period Duran describes a dance of the veteran soldiers, the captors in their new insignia which they had received from the king, and the xipeme; it was called the dance «of taking off skins» (de quitar cueros) and in the course of it, the xipeme were divested of their skins (111). It seems, that dances in connection with the Tlacaxipeualiztli festival began already in I Atlcahualo, took place during the whole month of Tlacaxipeualiztli and continued until III Tozozontli, until the skins were buried.

### *The Burying of the Skins (Euatlatilo)*

It took place on the 20th day after the festival and ended

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(106) CF II, pp.5, 6. Cuica-calli, «house of singing»; there was one in each barrio. They sang «cantares a loor de sus dioses sin bailar.»

(107) CF II, p.55. In the Spanish text Sahagun renders calpulueuetque as «vecinos de aquel barrio». Is the reference here to the barrio of Yopico?

(108) HG II, ch.XXII, 1956, 1, p.148.

(109) 1948, p.294.

(110) Duran 1967 I, p.245, Motolinia 1967, p.44.

(111) 1967 I, p.101. Duran tells that this dance began on the 20th day after the festival and was continued for another twenty days, in which every day one or two xipeme were divested of their skins. Thus he speaks of a period of forty days after the main festival instead of twenty days like the other sources and he himself somewhere else (II, p.175). It rather seems that he made a mistake and that this dance really took place either on a single day —the 20th after the festival— or during the twenty days of Tozozontli.

the period of activities of the xipeme. Sahagun records that the captors accompanied the tototecti, who were still wearing the skins, to the temple of Yopico. Some skins were already so dried up and crumpled, that they were carried in baskets. The captors offered incense and other gifts at the temple (112).

Now the xipeme took off their skins. The latter were buried in a «cave» or subterranean chamber at the foot of the pyramid Yopico. «Se ocultan pieles (euatltilo): '...las escondían en una cueva, las enterraban, las tapaban con tierra; allí se pudrían'» (113). According to Duran it was «un subterráneo o bóveda, la cual tenía una piedra movediza que se quitaba y ponía. Enterraban los cueros con canto y solemnidad, como a cosa sagrada». At the end of the ceremony a priest gave a sermon to the assembled people, exhorting them to lead a moral life (114). The subterranean chamber was called Netlatiloian and was also used during the festival of Ochpaniztli, when the flayed skins of the impersonators of the Ciuateteo were buried there (115). It seems to have been the place where the flayed skins of sacrificial victims were generally buried.

People who suffered from an infection of the skin or eyes made vows to hide away the skins in order to recover from their illness. The god Xipe was considered the patron against these diseases. It seems that the sick people were only supposed to bury the skins, not to go as xipeme themselves (116).

After the xipeme had taken off the skins, they cleaned themselves, scrubbing their faces with corn meal. Then they went to the temple to be washed. Those who bathed them had to strike and slap them with their hands in order to get the grease off from their bodies (117).

#### *Ceremonies in the House of the Captor*

After the skins had been buried, the captors and those

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(112) This ceremony is represented in the CF; see Lam.2, fig.5.

(113) 1948, pp.295, 96.

(114) Duran 1967 I, p.102.

(115) CF II, App., pp.172, 175.

(116) This point does not come out clearly from Sahagun's material. See below, chapter on the god.

(117) CF II, pp.56, 57. «In teupan» —it is not clear to which temple they went.

of their household who had kept a fast for twenty days, bathed themselves and washed their heads (see Lam 2, fig. 5). Then the captor put up a woven twig ball on three small feet in the courtyard of his house; upon it he placed the paper adornment which the sacrificial victim had worn (118). Afterwards the captor dressed a handsome man (apparently one of his slaves) in Xipe's paper vestments (the above mentioned paper adornment). Like the xipeme, this man also carried a shield and a rattle-stick. He began to run through the streets chasing the people. When the people saw him coming they said: «ya viene el tetzonpac» (119). Then they took after him, attacking him with stones. If he caught someone, he seized his cloak. All the cloaks he obtained in this way, he took to the house of the captor, casting them on the ground in the middle of the courtyard.

Thereupon the captor planted his «pole of the flaying of men» (itlacaxipeualizquauh) in the courtyard, which was the token that he had flayed a captive and the emblem of his social prestige. On top of the pole he fastened the sleeveless knotted cord jacket and a small spray of heron feathers. He wrapped the thigh bone in paper and provided it with a mask; this was called «malteotl», «the god-captive» (120). Tezozomoc also mentions the «malteteo», although in a different context. The «god-captives» and «malli y omio», «los huesos de los sacrificados habidos de las guerras» (121) were used in some ceremonies which the wives of the warriors performed in the calpulli when their husbands were at war. They took the bones, wrapped them in paper and suspended them from the beams of the calpulli. They put incense to burn in a fire-pan, placing it underneath the bones; they incensed the bones and the idols which were in the calpulli, and prayed for a happy return of their husbands.

The planting of the pole was a very important event in the career of the captor and was celebrated by a feast to which the captor invited his kin and friends. The old men and wo-

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(118) The shape of this object is rather obscure. In the Spanish text Sahagun explained that it was «un globo redondo, hecho de petate con tres pies y encima del globo ponía todos los papeles con que se había aderezado el captivo cuando murió (HG II, ch.XXII; 1956, 1, p.149).

(119) Tetzon, «somebody's hair of the head»; paca, «to wash something».

men drank wine. The old men of the tribal temple (*calpulue-uetque*) were singing, while a man dressed in the attire of the captor leapt about <in jest> (imitating warfare?); he offered white wine in a round gourd, threatened it, shot it with an arrow and then drank it. This he did in four places (122).

### **Other Sacrifices at Tlacaxipeualiztli**

From dispersed information which Sahagun collected in the Aztec material on the buildings of the great temple, we find out that some more human sacrifices took place during Tlacaxipeualiztli. Their relationship to the sacrifices for Xipe is not clear. At Yopico, during the day, impersonators of Tequitzin and of the goddess of pulque, Mayauel, were slain:

<Yopico: here men were slain as offerings; here very many captives died. And here died he whose name was Tequitzin and Mayauel; who died by day, not by night. And he died during the feast of Tlacaxipeualiztli; and (this was done) each year.>

<At the priests' House at Yopico (*Yopico calmecac*): here were slain as offerings and died very many captives. (This was done) also at night during the feast of Tlacaxipeualiztli, and also every year, here at the dwelling of the priest, the *Youallauan*.>

<Tlacochealco *Quauhquiauac*: here was (the god) whose name was *Macuiltotec*. Here a feast was celebrated in his honour. And when they observed the feast day of *Macuiltotec*, here men were slain as sacrificed (to him). Captives died here at Tlacochealco *Quauhquiauac*. Perchance it was when the fire drill was used (for the new fire); perchance at another time. Likewise this was done yearly, at the feast

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This name seems to be a reference to the captor himself who, after doing the penance, had washed his hair again. See footnote 123.

(120) CF II, p.57. Seler 1927, p.81 translates *malteotl* as <Gefangenens-fetisch> (captive's fetish).

(121) Tezozomoc 1944, p.358. *Malli*, <captive>; *omitl*, <bone>. *Malteotl* is plural. Tezozomoc did not understand well the meaning of the word, translating it as <dioses de las guerras>. Duran records the same ceremony, but without giving the Aztec expressions; he did not understand either the meaning of *malteotl*. (II, p.164).

(122) CF II, p.58. Was this impersonator of the captor the same as <te-zonpac> mentioned above? The significance of these ceremonies is rather obscure.

of Panquetzaliztli, or at the feast of Tlacaxipeualiztli.» (123)

Tequitzin and Macuiltotec are non-identified gods. The references to these sacrifices remain enigmatic because we do not have any other information about them. Sahagun's Spanish version of the text is much shorter, the sacrifice of Tequitzin and Mayauel is not even mentioned (124). The chapter on the buildings of the great temple of Mexico is full of such enigmatic short references to sacrifices of impersonators of gods which are often hardly known. It makes us realize how faulty our knowledge of the full scope of the ritual is.

## 2—THE GLADIATORIAL SACRIFICE:

### Historical and Political Aspects

In the historical chronicles of Duran and Tezozomoc, Tlacaxipeualiztli is the festival which is most often mentioned in the text. It was the most important festival for mass sacrifices of prisoners of war. The bravest captives were kept to fight the gladiatorial sacrifice; this enhanced the prestige of the captor. Motolinia records that on the first day of the Tlacaxipeualiztli festival the young men (*los muchachos*) were sacrificed, while the captives of higher standing (*los grandes*) were sacrificed on the stone the second day (125). Pomar is more explicit on this point: «...los sacrificios de los indios más valientes que se habían escogido a elección del rey, haciendo primero muchas averiguaciones y diligencias del esfuerzo y ánimo de cada uno y su valentía; porque si no eran tales, no morían en el sacrificio de este ídolo, que... era como dios particular de guerras y batallas... Aunque había muchos indios que habían prendido en la guerra muchos enemigos, no llegaban a sacrificar ninguno en este sacrificio de Xipe, si, como se ha dicho, no era averiguado ser valiente para la dignidad de este día.» (126)

The festival had an important political aspect because foreign rulers and nobles from the subdued provinces as well as from enemy territory were invited to watch the gladiatorial

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(123) CF II, pp.174, 178.

(124) HG II, App.II; 1956, 1, pp.238, 39, 41.

(125) 1967, p.44.

(126) 1964, pp.169, 171.

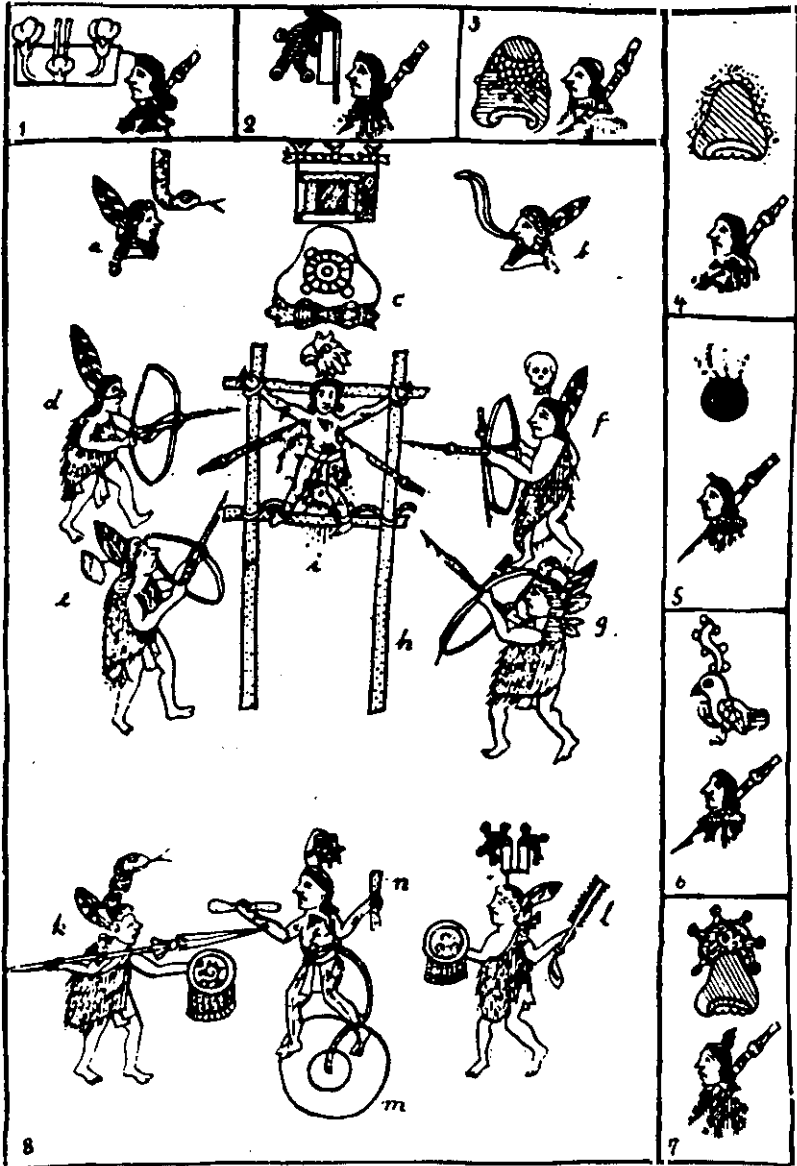


Fig. 3. Historia Tolteca Chichimeca (plate XV). The Chichimec princes d) Moquulix, e) Tecpatzin, f) Tzontecomatl, g) Teuhctlecozauhqui or Couatzin shoot with arrows at l) Quauhtzimitl who is tied to the h) quauhtatzatztl. k) Teuctlecozauhqui and l) Aquiauatl fight against h) Tlazotli who is tied to the m) quauhtemalacatl.

combat. It was thus used as a means of terror and intimidation. Pomar also explains this point: «Hallábanse a este sacrificio mucha más gente que a los demás, porque como era cosa famosa de hombres valientes que en él morían, concurría de todas partes a verlo, y aun los reyes permitían que pudiesen hallarse en él libre y seguramente indios tlaxcaltecas y huexotzincas, sus enemigos, para que de su vista, como de cosa espantosa, pudiesen dar razón en sus tierras.» Pomar, Duran in his *Historia* and *Tezozomoc* describe only the gladiatorial sacrifice, the subsequent flaying and going about of the xipeme are left out of the description. It is interesting to note this because it brings out the political relevance of the sacrificio gladiatorio against the politically insignificant rest of the ceremonies.

Duran and Tezozomoc record in their historical chronicles the following sacrifices:

1—After the successful war against the Huastecs, Motecuhzoma el Viejo inaugurated the stone *temalacatl* by the sacrifice of Huastec and Tochpanec prisoners of war. On this occasion the sacrificio gladiatorio was performed for the first time. Duran attributes the invention of it to Tlacaelel: «Porque este Tlacaelel, demás de ser valeroso y muy avisado en ardidés de guerra, fue inventor endemoniado de sacrificios crueles y espantosos.» He told the priests to practise the ceremonies beforehand in order to perform the sacrifice well: «Mirad que todos los días os ensayéis para ejercitar este sacrificio, porque han de ser convidados a esta fiesta todos los señores de las ciudades y provincias comarcanas y es menester que no nos echéis en vergüenza.»

Motecuhzoma invited the kings of Texcoco and Tacuba, as well as the princes and nobles from Chalco, Xochimilco, the Marquesado, Couixco, Matlatzinco and the Mazahuaques. On their arrival he gave them rich presents of cloaks and insignia and offered them banquets with an exuberant variety of food. When they left at the end of the festival, he again gave them presents. Duran indicates which ends the king pursued in staging the gladiatorial sacrifice: «Esta es la solemnidad que Motecuhzoma el Viejo, primero de este nombre, hizo al estreno de la piedra llamada *temalacatl*, que quiere decir 'rueda de

piedra'. ...A honra de la cual fiesta, hizo un gasto excesivo y muy costoso, con mucha liberalidad y generosidad, que dejó espantados a los forasteros y muy contentos y ufanos a todos los señores y populares de la ciudad. Desde entonces, todos los de las provincias y ciudades comarcanas dejaron de traer rebeliones, ni contiendas con los mexicanos, viendo qué adelante estaban y como traban a sus enemigos.» (127)

2—Under the king Axayacatl the temalacatl was renewed and enlarged. It was inaugurated by the sacrifice of a great number of captives from the war against the Matlatzincas. The king invited the Nonoalcas, Cempoaltecas and Quiahuitztecas —populations which had not yet been conquered— to watch the sacrifice. Should they have refused the invitation, it would have been considered a reason to make war against them. The lords of the three provinces accepted the invitation and arrived in Tenochtitlan, where they were received with great honours. After the festival they left Tenochtitlan horrified and promised to keep peace with the Mexicans (128).

3—After the war against Yancuitlan (Yanhuitlan) which was won by Motecuhzoma the Younger, over a thousand captives were sacrificed in the Tlacaxipeualiztli festival. As guests they invited the Tlaxcaltecas, Huexotzincas, Cholultecas, Tliluhquitepecas, Huastecas and lords from Michoacan, Meztitlan and Yopitzinco; they were received with many presents as usual (129).

4—After the war which Motecuhzoma II led against the population of Tlachquiauhco in the Mixteca, one thousand captives were sacrificed by the gladiatorial sacrifice. Guests were invited from all the provinces of the empire and from enemy territories like Michoacan, Meztitlan, Tlaxcala, Cholula and Huexotzinco; they were received with great splendour. After the festival Motecuhzoma honoured those Mexican wa-

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(127) Duran 1967, vol.II, ch.20, pp.171-75; Tezozomoc 1944, ch.30, pp.116-19.

(128) Duran 1967 II, ch.36, p.275; Tezozomoc 1944, ch.49, p.216.

(129) Duran 1967 II, ch.57, p.437; Tezozomoc 1944, ch.93, p.448.



riors who had excelled in the war by bringing home captives. He distributed cloaks, jewels, feathers and arms to them, following a strict order of rank (130).

The other sources, among them Sahagun, do not give descriptions of historical sacrifices comparable to the accounts of Duran and Tezozomoc (131).

Tlacaxipeualiztli was aimed at terrorizing the enemies and subdued peoples, while filling the people of Tenochtitlan with satisfaction and pride. The sacrificio gladiatorio was an important show-off for the warriors who had made the captives. They performed a number of ceremonies together with the victims before the festival. They took the captives personally to the temple on the day of the sacrifice. During the combat they watched the performance of their captive closely, since it was important for their own prestige. After the sacrifice the captor gave a banquet in his house to which he invited his friends and relatives. Twenty days later he put up the «pole of the flaying of men» in the courtyard of his house which was a token of his social prestige. On this occasion another feast was celebrated.

Besides this significance for the individual warrior, the festival was also an important occasion for the whole warrior caste. After the sacrifices had finished, the king honoured the warriors by distributing rich presents of cloaks, insignia and arms to them. In this the king followed a strict order of rank, giving to each one the insignia which corresponded to his social and military position.

Tlacaxipeualiztli was also one of the main tribute-dates (the other tribute dates were VI Etzalcualiztli — XI Ochpaniztli — XV Panquetzaliztli). We may assume that the clothes, adornments and arms which formed an essential part of the tributes, were not stored away, but that at least some of them were im-

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(130) Duran 1967 II, ch.65, p.482; Tezozomoc 1944, ch.101, p.492.

(131) According to Sahagun CF II, p.53 the following enemy tribes were invited to watch the gladiatorial sacrifice: the Nonoalcas, Cozcatecas, Cempoaltecas, and Mecatecas. They came secretly as Motecuhzoma's guests. The *Historia de los Mexicanos por sus Pinturas* records that in the year 136 Motecuhzoma el Viejo inaugurated the round stone by the gladiatorial sacrifice of captives from the Cuaistrauaca (Huaxteca?) (1941, p.230). This seems to refer to the sacrifice recorded by Duran and Tezozomoc (see 1—).

mediately used by the king to award them to his warriors. The tributes belonged to the king and he himself distributed them to the people (132). After a successful war, the war booty was also very considerable and part of it was equally distributed to the warriors. Certainly these ceremonies must have been more spectacular after a successful war than in ordinary years.

### 3—THE DATING OF TLACAXIPEUALIZTLI

According to Sahagun's calendar correlation with a year beginning with I Atlcaualo on the 2nd of February, the month of Tlacaxipeualiztli fell to February 22-March 13. In the short description of the festival, Sahagun says that it took place on the first day of the month, while in the long Spanish description he dates it to the last day of the month (133). The festival days of the Mexican calendar were in fact always the last days of the months but most chroniclers did not recognize this; many mixed up the first days with the festival days and thus created a lot of confusion (134).

Duran gives slightly differing dates in his Book on the Ceremonies (A) and his Calendario Antiguo (B): according to A) Tlacaxipeualiztli was the first festival of the year and fell on March 20; according to B) the year began with I Atlcaualo on March 1; accordingly, Tlacaxipeualiztli began on March 21. He wrongly assumed that the festival took place on the first day of the month. Leaving aside a more detailed discussion of these contradictory statements of Duran, we may assume that the festival date of March 20 corresponds to the original material he was using (135).

In the sources on the Mexican calendar year-beginnings with I Atlcaualo or II Tlacaxipeualiztli appear by far more frequently than those with any other month. The proponents of the Atlcaualo system were mainly authors related to the tradition around Bernardino de Sahagun, while the Tlacaxipeualiztli system is represented by a tradition derived from

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(132) Oral communication from K. A. Nowotny.

(133) CF II, p.3; HG II, ch.II, XX; 1956, 1, pp.110, 142.

(134) See Broda de Casas 1969, p.33.

(135) Interpretation of the contradictions in Duran's correlations by the author, unpublished.

Toribio de Motolinia (136). On the other hand, there seem to have existed strong local variations concerning the beginning of the year, so that it is not possible to speak of a single year beginning for Mexico in general. The problem of the Mexican year beginning is far from being solved. We do not pretend to give here an answer to the problem, however, there are a few references in our sources in regard to the dating of Tlacaxipeualiztli which are worth while mentioning. In Tezozomoc's *Cronica Mexicana* we find a few enigmatic passages which do not have any correspondence in Duran's text (137):

1—ch. 30 (see last chapter, point 1—) «...habemos llegado al tiempo y año que llaman Tlacaxipeualiztli, tiempo de desollar y aspar en sacrificio a los vencidos en guerras...»

2—ch. 39 (see last chapter, 2—) «...es llegada la fiesta que llamamos Tlacaxipeualiztli, la fiesta del año del desollamiento de las gentes...»

3—ch. 101 (see last chapter, 4—) «...Y era entonces cabo de año y sacrificaron luego a los miserables cautivos...»

This last passage is the most explicit one. In Motolinia's «*Memoriales*» and in the «*Historia de los Mexicanos por sus Pinturas*», we find two more passages of a similar enigmatic character. Motolinia writes in reference to Tlacaxipeualiztli: «Esta fiesta caía estando el sol en medio del Uchilobos, que era equinoccio, y porque estaba un poco tuerto lo quería derrocar Mutizuma y enderezarlo.» (138)

In the «*Historia de los Mexicanos por sus Pinturas*» it reads: «Contaban el año de equinoccio por Marzo cuando el sol hacía derecha la sombra, y luego como se sintía que el sol subía, contaban el primer día, y de veinte en veinte días que hacían sus meses contaban el año y dejaban cinco días; así que en uno no tenían sino 360 días; y del día que era el equinoccio contaban los días para sus fiestas.» (139)

In the latter source the year beginning is connected to the spring equinox. It is not possible to judge whether the author implied that the year began on this day; that would mean that

(136) See Kubler and Gibson 1951, pp.49-52.

(137) 1944, pp.116, 216, 492.

(138) 1967, p.44.

(139) 1941, p.234.

the first festival took place 20 days later (April 9). Such a late dating does not appear in any other source. In the sentence further down it is rather implied that the first festival fell to the equinox and the year beginning thus to March 2. This dating agrees much better with the statements in other sources. Motolinia is the main source with a year beginning on March 1. (140)

The words «cuando el sol hacía derecha la sombra» could be interpreted as referring to some kind of observatory, where the shadow of the rising sun fell in a straight line on March 21. The existence of such sun observatories is proved for the Mayas; an example of it is the observatory of Uaxactun, Guatemala (141) (see fig. 1).

Motolinia's unclear statement might refer to the circumstance that *Huitzilopochtli's* temple—which was called *Uchilobos* by the first chroniclers—was constructed in a way to allow this type of observations. Motolinia seems to imply that its construction was not completely precise and therefore *Motecuhzoma* wanted to adapt it accordingly. In case such a sun observatory was actually built into the great temple of Tenochtitlan, it would have been possible to correct the calendar every year by the simple observation of the sun's shadow reaching a straight line.

Unfortunately, our sources are, at least for the time being, too faulty in this respect to permit us to know what the Mexicans really did.

#### 4—THE GOD XIPE-TOTEC-TLATLAUHQUI TEZCATL

The god *Xipe* is not our main object of study because an exhaustive study of his character would have to include an analysis of his representations in the codices. Information about the god is, on the whole, rare and modern interpretations of his character are more numerous than the sources which mention him.

(140) López de Gomara and Valades also have a year beginning with *Tlacaxipeualiztli* on March 1; they both took their calendrical material from Motolinia. See Kubler and Gibson 1951, pp.49, 69. Bartolomé de las Casas recorded that the Indians began their year on March 1 in 1518, but without mentioning a particular month (*Historia Apologética*, Madrid, 1909).

(141) Morley 1947 (fig.33), p.333; see fig.1.

### Array of the God:

His array is described by Sahagun in Book I of the *Historia General* as well as in the Aztec text on the «Atavios de los Dioses.» The array coincides with the one of the living impersonators of the god, the xipeme. Duran confused the description of the two, and it seems that the same thing happened to Sahagun. Xipe's array is described most clearly and evocatively in the Aztec text of Sahagun:

«(Xipe's) garb (was thus): he had the quail-painting on his face. Rubber divided his lips in two parts. On his Yopicrown was placed (a band) with forked ends. He wore a human skin, the skin of a captive. He had a wig of loose feathers, golden ear-plugs, a zapote-leaf skirt. He had rattles. His shield was red and had circles. His rattle stick was in his hand.» (142) In the Spanish text of Book I Sahagun gives the following description of the *chicauaztli*: «...tiene un cetro con ambas manos, a manera de la copa de la adormidera donde tiene la semilla, con un casquillo de saeta encima, empinado.» (143)

The rattle stick was not only an attribute of Xipe, but of a number of other gods as well. Sahagun mentions the rattle stick as part of the array of the following deities: of Xipe, Opuchtli, Yauhqueme, Chalchiuhtlicue, Xilonen and Tzapotlatena (144). However, their rattle sticks have different shapes, the one of Xipe being the tallest one and most distinct from the rest. Three of the mentioned gods were water-gods (Opuchtli and Yauhqueme were Tlaloques and Chalchiuhtlicue was the goddess of the waters); Xilonen was the goddess of the young maize; Tzapotlatena was the patroness of skin diseases and was in some ways related to Xipe. We cannot conclude which group of gods had the *chicauaztli* as its characteristic attribute, because we have evidence for three water-gods, one maize goddess, for Xipe and Tzapotlatena. Their common characteristic is however, that they were all in some way related to fertility.

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(142) CF I, p.17. Sahagun 1958/1, p.129; see fig.2; this illustration accompanies the text of the CM.

(143) HG I, ch.XVIII; 1956, 1, p.66.

(144) Sahagun 1958/1, pp.128-135.

The insignia which the gods carried in their right hand form a very interesting part of their array. They include attributes characteristic of one particular deity like e.g. the *xiuhcoatl* which *Huitzilopochtli* carried in his right hand, the broom of *Teteoinnan*, the weaving instrument of *Cihuacoatl-Quilaztli* or the cactus arrow of *Otontecuhtli*; besides, we find groups of insignia like the looking instrument (*mirador*) which is characteristic of *Tezcatlipoca* and some other gods, or different types of sticks (*bastones*) which belong to some groups of gods. *Tlaloc*, the salt goddess *Uixtociuatl* and other rain gods carry a reed cane. Some other rain gods carry the *chicauaztli* as we have seen.

Rattle sticks are instruments used in different kinds of rites all over the world. Their basic symbolism has to do with fertility and well being of people, animals and crops. E.g. in Alpine Europe rattles are traditionally used at Easter and other spring ceremonies symbolising the expulsion of the winter demons and the awakening of the dormant vegetation.

#### Functions of the God:

About the functions of *Xipe* very little is known. No myth has been preserved which tells about his origin or birth. Only his sacred hymn is recorded in Sahagun's 'Cantares de los Dioses'.

According to Sahagun's account in the Book on the Gods, *Xipe Totec* was the patron against the following skin diseases: the pocks, all kinds of tumours and inflammations of the skin as well as eye illnesses. People suffering from these infections made a vow sometime during the year to put on the skins of the flayed victims at the *Tlacaxipeualiztli* festival. However, the information that these people went as *xipeme* is not confirmed by any other source and somewhere else Sahagun himself says that these people only participated in the procession of hiding away the skins at the end of the festival period. Other vows consisted in promising to bring offerings to the god or dance for him at the festival, to give a banquet in one's house or to make for the god *«una manta de las llamadas franjas de colores.»* (145)

(145) HG I, ch.XVIII; HG II, ch. XXII; 1956, 1, pp. 65, 148; HG IX, ch.XV; 1956, 3, p.67.

According to Sahagun Totec was also the patron of the gold-and silversmiths (tecuilhuaque, «gente que trata los metales finos de oro y plata»): «Y en cuanto gremio aparte, en cuanto agrupación de los que entre sí se entienden, de estos artifices del oro y de la plata, antaño el dios era a quien tenían por su divinidad propia, Totec. Cada año le hacían fiesta, le rendían veneración allá en su templo, en un lugar de nombre Yopico, en la «Desolladura de hombres». Y entonces, un hombre se aderezaba para hacer las veces de Totec. Se embutía en el cuerpo el pellejo de un esclavo cuando desollaban a éstos...» (146)

### Names of the God:

The name Xipe Totec was rendered by the chroniclers as «Our Lord the Flayed One» (Totec, «our lord»; Xipe, «the flayed one»). The word Xipe is derived from xipe-ua, «to flay». However, Schultze Jena has pointed out that this generally accepted translation is incorrect as far as the grammar is concerned, because xipe is not a passive form and the god himself was not flayed, but was wearing the flayed skin of his victim; thus Xipe Totec really means «Our Lord the Flayer» (or «the one who flays») (147). On the other hand, Garibay has suggested a completely different etymology for the word Xipe, as «el que tiene miembro viril» with a phallic meaning (148). Torquemada was the only chronicler to give an etymology for Xipe as «calvo o atezado» (bald or black one) (149).

The people who dressed in the skins of the victims were called by the god's name, which implies that they were consi-

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(146) HG IX, op. cit., pp.65, 66. Translation of the Aztec text by Garibay. Is «slave» here used as a synonym for «captive»? The description of the array and activities of the xipe forms the rest of the chapter.

(147) Schultze Jena 1950, p.395.

(148) «Xipintli» is given by Sahagun in the chapter on the parts of the body (Ms. de la Real Academia, F.146 y ss.) as a word for the penis. Garibay derives «Xipe» from a hypothetic form xipitl, xipilli, with the possessive ending of —e, thus arriving at a meaning of «el que tiene miembro viril». Garibay assumes that Xipe was originally a phallic god with a close relationship to fertility and to the sun. Garibay also attributes a phallic character to the tlacaxipeualiztli as well as the tlacacaliliztli; see below. (Sahagun 1958/2, p.177, 78).

(149) 1943, vol.II, pp.58, 253.

dered to be the living impersonators of the god. The Youalluan, the chief priest of the festival, was also called «a Totec» and was wearing the array of the god (150).

Another name of the god was Tlatlahuqui Tezcatlipoca, «Red Tezcatlipoca or Red Smoking Mirror». According to Sahagun this name belonged to the god of the Yopime and Tlapaneca tribes; he explains that his name derived from his clothes, which were red like the body-painting of the Yopime and Tlapaneca (Tlapaneca, «the red people») (151). Duran gives the three names of the god Totec-Xipe-Tlatlahuqui Tezcatl. According to Tezozomoc, Tlacaxipeualiztli was the festival of «Tlatlahuqui Tezcatl de el colorado espejo; con la sangre de la víctima rociaban la estatua de Huitzilopochtli y luego al otro ídolo nuevo dios Tlatlahuqui Tezcatl». Pomar records the names Xipe and Tlatlahuqui Tezcatl, while Motolinia mentions only «que hacían esta fiesta a Tlatlahuqui Tezcatlipoca.» (152)

The forms Tlatlahuqui Tezcatl and —Tezcatlipoca are variably given in the sources, but it is not clear whether they really had the same meaning. Maybe in Tezcatl the second part of the word was only lost. In the syncretistic efforts of Mexican theology the god Tezcatlipoca was conceived in quadruple form and associated with the four directions and their symbolic colours. The black Tezcatlipoca of the North was the deity proper, the blue Tezcatlipoca of the South was identified with Huitzilopochtli, Quetzalcoatl became the white Tezcatlipoca of the West, while the red Tezcatlipoca of the East was associated with Xipe. Since all our sources record this name for Xipe, this association must have been more than pure theological speculation of some temple schools; it must have had some deeper connection with Xipe's cult.

### Origin of the God:

Another name of the god was Anauatl itec; «the Lord of the Coast.» (153) The Aztecs attributed a foreign origin to

(150) CF II, p.49.

(151) HG X, ch.XXIX/9; 1956, 3, p.205.

(152) Tezozomoc 1944, p.218; Pomar 1964, pp.167, 70; Motolinia 1987, p.44.

(153) Sahagun 1958/1, p.129.



him. However, different regions of origin have been suggested. A southern origin seems to be most probable, from the modern states of Oaxaca and Guerrero, or the tribal regions of the Zapotecs, Tlapanecs and Yopime. Some archaeological evidence also points to this origin (154).

1—«Estos yopimes y tlapanecas son de los de la comarca de Yopitzinco; llámanles yopes porque su tierra la llaman Yopitzinco, y llámanlos también tlapanecas, que quiere decir hombres almagrados, porque se embijaban con color; y su ídolo se llama Totec Tlatlahqui Tezcatlipoca, que quiere decir ídolo colorado porque su ropa era colorada, y lo mismo vestían sus sacerdotes, y todos los de aquella comarca se embijaban con color... A estos tales en general llaman tenime, que quiere decir gente bárbara, y son muy inhábiles, incapaces y toscos; y eran peores que los otomíes y vivían en tierras estériles y pobres con grandes necesidades, y en tierras fragosas y ásperas; pero conocen las piedras ricas y sus virtudes.» (155)

The Tlapanecs were a small tribe with their own language, living on the western slopes of the Sierra Madre del Sur which stretch towards the maritime coast of Guerrero. They were people of the Pacific coast; thus Xipe's name Anauatl itec fits well into this context. Their southern neighbours were the Mixtecs and Zapotecs of Oaxaca. The Tlapanecs belong to the oldest stock of Mexican population. They never reached a high culture themselves and have kept, up to modern times, concepts and rites typical of hunting tribes (156).

Their other name, Yopime, indicates a relationship between them and Xipe, for the god was sometimes called Yopi and his temple Yopico, «the place of Yopi». Yopicalco, «in the house of Yopi», was apparently another building related to Xipe's cult; it is mentioned by Sahagun as the 67th building of the Great Temple of Tenochtitlan: «Yopicalco and Euacalco: here stayed the leading men from Anauac, who came from distant cities. And greatly did Motecuhzoma honour them. Here he gave them gifts: he gave them rich mantles,

(154) Vallant 1965, p.90.

(155) HG X, ch.XXIX/9; 1956, 3, p.205.

(156) See Schultze Jena 1938.

or precious necklaces, or costly arm bands. Whatever was of value, he gave to all of them.» (157) This also seems to have been the place where the enemy guests stayed during Tlacaxipeualiztli.

Besides, one of the oldest original barrios of Tenochtitlan was called Yopico. Caso has reconstructed its boundaries within the bigger unit or «parcialidad» of San Juan Moyotla (158). In the Historia Duran mentions the seven original «congregaciones o parcialidades» (*calpullis*) of the Mexicans and their respective patron gods; the god of the first barrio was called Yopican teuctli. In the corresponding passage Tezozomoc gives the name of the barrio as Yopico (159). The fact that Yopico was one of the original barrios of the Aztecs, rather contradicts the assumption that the cult of Xipe was introduced in Tenochtitlan at later date. However, the god Xipe Totec is not mentioned in this reference to the barrio Yopico; the god Yopican teuctli need not have been Xipe.

There are certain indications that the cult of Xipe goes back to Toltec times in Central Mexico, or to Classic Teotihuacan. In that case, the Aztecs would have adopted his cult from the agricultural peoples among whom they settled. It has even been suggested that Xipe was already known in late Preclassic times in the Valley of Mexico together with the fire god, the rain god and an earth goddess. But the cult of these times rather seems to have been centered around peaceful fertility deities and there is no conclusive evidence for human sacrifices (160). Some authors believe to find in Teotihuacan archeological evidence for the cult of Xipe together with the worship of the rain god, the water goddess, feathered serpent, the sun god and the moon goddess (161). However, this evidence as well as the one proposed for the Toltecs remains controversial.

2—In the chapter on the god, Sahagun says in the Aztec

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(157) CF II, p.177; HG II, App.II; 1956, 1, p.241. The Aztec text is more detailed than Sahagun's version.

(158) Caso 1956, p.13.

(159) Duran 1967 II, p.29; Tezozomoc 1944, p.8.

(160) Jiménez Moreno 1959, vol.II, p.1047.

(161) Coe 1966, p.109; Sejourne 1957, pp.163-72.

text that he was «the god of the sea-shore people, the proper god of the Zapotecs» (162). An origin of Xipe from the Zapotecs who lived along the Pacific shore of southern Oaxaca, does not necessarily contradict the theory of his origin among the Yopime and Tlapaneca. If his home was along the Pacific coast of Guerrero and Oaxaca, both peoples might have worshipped him originally or one of them might have taken him over from the other.

However, to make things even more confusing, Sahagun does not mention the Zapotecs in the corresponding Spanish version, but says that Xipe came originally from Tzapotlan, a village in Jalisco (163). It remains mysterious where this village was and on what grounds Sahagun changed the information from the Zapotecs to Tzapotlan. The modern state of Jalisco is situated to the Northwest of the Valley of Mexico; such a location of the village is contradicted by the considerable evidence which points to a southern origin of the god. However, there was a region called Jalisco in southern Mexico as well. Referring himself to this region in a different context, Jiménez Moreno points out that: «una de las cosas que han hecho mal entender los datos de las fuentes, es que siempre que éstas hablan de Jalisco, automáticamente se piensa que se trata de la región del actual Estado de Jalisco, pero hay que reconocer que también había un Jalisco en la zona del Sur de Veracruz, cerca de Coatzacoalco, y por eso se dice en algunas historias que doña María, por ejemplo, que sabemos que era de Zaltipán, era de Jalisco. De modo que tenemos que tomar en cuenta este otro Jalisco» (164). Although not in the area of the Zapotecs or Tlapanecs, the village Tzapotlan would then at least be situated to the South.

Besides, one of the barrios of Tenochtitlan was also called Tzapotlan or Tepiquehuya. Its extension has been reconstructed by A. Caso in his study on «Los barrios antiguos de Tenochtitlán y Tlatelolco» (165). However, this barrio seems not to have had anything to do with Xipe's place of origin.

Tzapotlan means «place of tzapotes». This is worth while

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(162) CF I, p.16. «Anaoatl iteouh; tzapoteca in vel inteuh catca».

(163) HG I, ch.XVIII; 1956, 1, p.65.

(164) 1959 II, p.225.

(165) 1956, p.10.

remarking, because, as we know, the branches and leaves of the tzapotl tree were so conspicuously used in many ceremonies of the Tlacaxipeualiztli festival. No source gives an explanation of this custom. A relation between it and the village of Tzapotlan might have only consisted in a pun—the tzapotl being used because Xipe came from «the place of the tzapotes»—, but there might have also existed some myth which related Tzapotlan to the tree of the same name and thus Xipe's relation to the tzapotl dated from his place of origin (166).

In this context one is also reminded of the goddess Tzapotlatena, «the mother of Tzapotlan». Besides coming from a place of the same name, she was the patroness of similar skin diseases as were attributed to Xipe. She was said to have discovered a kind of oil made from the rosin of the pine tree, which was called uxitl and used to cure infections of the skin like pustules, tumours, a sore throat, scratches in the skin, etc. The people who dealt with this oil celebrated a festival and sacrifice for her (167). Once Sahagun identifies the goddess with Toci; besides he says that she was the goddess of the steambath (temazcal) and a medicine goddess (168). Her array on the other hand brings her in close relationship to the rain gods (169); with Xipe she shares the chicauaztli or rattle stick.

It is not possible to establish a more intimate relationship between the two deities, we could only point out the similarities. It seems that Tzapotlatena was related to the barrio of Tzapotlan, and that an impersonator of the goddess was sacrificed in the temple of this barrio (170).

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(166) Of course such a myth might have also existed for the Zapotecs.

(167) HG I, ch.IX; 1956, 1, p.49.

(168) HG XI, App./8; 1956, 3, p.353.

(169) «Su pintura facial con dos pendientes, y su gorro de papel pintado con hule y con penacho de quetzal» (Sahagun 1958/1, p.135). Seler identified Tzapotlatena in the C. Borgia, where she has similar two black lines in her face like the water-goddesses.

(170) Sahagun 1958/1, p.93. Seler, on the other hand, wanted to find the origin of this goddess in a village of the same name situated on the northern shore of the lake of Xochimilco. This region was heavily wooded and thus the uxitl could have naturally been invented in such a place. (GA II, p.475).

3—Some authors have suggested that Xipe Totec originally came from the Huasteca and the Gulf Coast. The main evidence for this theory is the information given by Duran and Tezozomoc that the gladiatorial sacrifice was performed for the first time after Ueue Motecuhzoma's successful war against the Huastecs. Garibay expressed himself in favour of this interpretation and an affinity between Xipe and the Huastec goddess Tlazolteotl-Ixcuina (171).

In the Classic Gulf Coast culture a representation of Xipe dressed in the flayed skin, has been identified at the site of Remojadas in Central Veracruz (172). Otherwise, however, less evidence exists for this hypothesis than for the one of an origin of Xipe from Guerrero and Oaxaca.

#### 5—SIMILARITIES TO OCHPANIZTLI AND THE FLAYING OF FEMALE GODDESSES

Tlacaxipeualiztli was not the only festival in which victims were flayed. The second kind of victims were women to be flayed in the honour of the mother goddess Toci-Teteoinnan and a number of other female deities during the festival of Ochpaniztli.

The prototype of Toci's sacrifice is related in a historical myth, one of the few myths which were recorded by several sources. When the Mexicans lived as vassals of the king of Culhuacan and had already gained considerable prestige and confidence with the Culhuas, their god Huitzilopochtli, who was an enemy of peace, told them to ask the king Achitometl to give them his daughter to become their queen and goddess. When the king granted them their petition, the Mexicans sacrificed and flayed the princess. A young noble put on her skin and in the dark chamber of the temple waited for the king of Culhuacan who was invited to pay honours to his daughter. When the king realized the abominable deed, the Mexicans had to flee from the enraged Culhuas, taking up their migration once again. The flayed princess became their «mujer de la discordia» and «mother» (or grandmother)

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(171) Sahagun 1958/2, p.178.

(172) Coe 1966, p.123.

of their god Huitzilopochtli (173). Later, she was one of the most important goddesses in the Aztec pantheon. It is remarkable that this prototype of the sacrifice of flaying is related in a completely warlike context, lacking any connotations of fertility.

At the festival of Ochpaniztli several impersonators of goddesses were sacrificed. The most important one, around whom the dramatical representations were centered, was Toci. Besides, Chicomecoatl, the goddess of the young maize, also played an important role in the ceremonies. While there are only a few references to the ceremonies of this goddess in Sahagun, Duran describes them at length, before his account of Toci's festival (174).

Further sacrifices are mentioned by Sahagun in his chapter on the temple buildings: at Xochicalco impersonators of the Iztac Cinteotl, the Tlatlahqui Cinteotl and Atlatonan were sacrificed. Cinteotl was the maize deity (175); the White (Iztac) and the Red (Tlatlahqui) Cinteotl were specialized functions of the same deity. Atlatonan was the goddess of leprosy according to Duran. He also mentions her sacrifice which took place one day before Chicomecoatl's sacrifice. Otherwise little is known about this goddess.

From dispersed information in Sahagun, we learn that still other female impersonators were sacrificed during Ochpaniztli. The Ciuateteo also died at the Xochicalco, while the goddess Ciuateotl of Atlauhco was sacrificed at Coatlan, at the base of (the temple of?) Atlauhco (176). The Ciuateteo, «women gods», were thought to represent the spirits of women who had died in childbirth. A woman in childbirth was considered to be like a warrior; thus the Ciuateteo represented the counterpart of the warriors who had died in battle or on the stone of sacrifice. Nothing specific is known about a goddess called Ciuateotl (the singular form of ciuateteo) of Atlauhco.

The significance of the Ochpaniztli festival has not been

(173) Duran 1967 I, p.41. Toci, «nuestra abuela».

(174) *Op. cit.*, pp.137-40.

(175) CF II, p.177. Cinteotl's sex is ambiguous; sometimes it is given as masculine and sometimes as feminine. Garibay has pointed out that the maize was conceived as sexually neutral (Sahagun 1958/2, p.89).

(176) CF II, pp.175, 76.

studied sufficiently so far. Seler proposed the interpretation that the dramatical representations of the festival symbolised the union between the earth-and fertility goddess Toci with the sun god Huitzilopochtli, from whose marriage the maize god Cinteotl was born. In his article on the festival, Margain Araujo follows Seler closely in his interpretation (177). That the fertility symbolism was very important in the Ochpaniztli festival, can be seen from the goddesses which were sacrificed in it. After the sacrifice of Toci, an impersonator of Cinteotl-Itztlacoliuhqui appeared (178). He wore the mexayacatl, a mask made of the skin of the thigh of Toci. Rich decorations of maize and other foodstuffs were used during the ceremonies, especially in the ones for Chicomecoatl, which turned this festival into one of the most picturesque and exuberant ones.

Besides the fertility symbolism, the important role played by the warriors is conspicuous. At various stages of the festival, mock battles were fought between the servants of Toci (i.e. priests) and groups of warriors. Later the king honoured the warriors by distributing insignia and cloaks to them (179). According to Torquemada the warriors made a parade in front of the king, in which participated the young men who had not yet been in the war. P. Kirchhoff pointed out that among the Mayas brooms and sweeping were a symbolic expression for war (180). Brooms were the most conspicuous objects used in the ceremonies of Ochpaniztli and the month itself was called «festival of sweeping». It is possible that a warlike symbolism was also inherent in these ceremonies.

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(177) 1945.

(178) Itztlacoliuhqui, «the curved, bent one» or «the curved obsidian-knife» (Seler GA I, p.433) was a god of the North, the cold, the frost; one of the enigmatic deities.

(179) The warriors waited for the king in «zacapan», «encima de la grama», where the xipeme also arranged themselves before they went asking for elms. Duran gives an explanation of this ceremony: «Después de haber bailado y regocijado la fiesta a la manera dicha, entrabanse todos en una ancha pieza que la llamaban zacapán, que quiere decir «encima de la paja», que en realidad de verdad, estaba todo el suelo de paja seca cubierto, a la manera que hoy en día ponen el suelo de los aposentos donde reciben los huéspedes y mensajeros.» There the king distributed presents to the warriors. (Duran 1967 I, p.140). See footnote 93.

(180) Oral communication, lecture given on Jan.11, 1967 in Vienna.

The significance of the Ochpaniztli festival cannot be studied more closely here. Our intention was to point out the elements which are interesting in comparison to Tlacaxipeualiztli: Besides Xipe's victims the sacrifice of flaying was performed on impersonators of mother-and fertility goddesses. However, these victims were sacrificed by night and beheaded before flaying. Afterwards the fire priests (tlenamacaque) put on their skins. At the end of the festival the skins were hidden away in Netlatiloyan, the same subterranean chamber at the base of Yopico where the skins of the xipeme were buried at the end of the festival period (181). A phenomenon similar to the activities of the xipeme did not take place at Ochpaniztli. The fact that the goddesses were sacrificed by night and beheaded, indicates that here the flaying was combined with a sacrifice of a different character than the one of Tlacaxipeualiztli.

#### 6—TLACAXIPEUALIZTLI — TLAUUAANALIZTLI — TLACACALILIZTLI

Motolinia recorded an interesting piece of information which Torquemada and other later authors have copied from him. In the month of Izcalli a sacrifice to the fire god took place in Quauhtitlan, a town on the western shore of the lake. On the eve of the festival two women slaves were beheaded on top of the temple pyramid in front of the god's altar; afterwards they were flayed. As a detail Motolinia mentions that «sacábanles las canillas de los muslos», which is unclear but seems to refer really to the thigh bones. The next day in the morning two nobles put on the skins; in their hands they carried the (thigh) bones. Thus they came down from the temple where the people stood waiting for them; when the public perceived them they said: «Ya vienen nuestros dioses, ya vienen nuestros dioses.» Then the two impersonators danced and more victims were sacrificed in front of them. Later the same day another sacrifice took place:

«En seis palos... ataban aspados seis cautivos de guerra, y estaban debajo a la redonda más de dos mil hombres... con flechas y arcos, y éstos... disparaban en ellos muchas flechas,

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(181) CF II, p.175.



y así asaeteados medio muertos, dejábanlos caer de aquella altura, y del grande golpe que daban, se machucaban y quebrantaban los huesos, y luego les daban la tercera muerte sacrificándolos y sacándolos los corazones... De seis en seis... mataban todos los que para esta fiesta tenían; un año 40, otro 50, y alguno había de 60, y esta cruel fiesta hacían en este pueblo de Quauhtitlan de cuatro en cuatro años.» (182)

This combination of the flaying and shooting by arrows in the course of one festival, leads us to another problem in connection with the Tlacaxipeualiztli festival. The question is whether there existed any intrinsic connection between the sacrifice of flaying (tlacaxipeualiztli), the sacrificio gladiatorio (tlauauanaliztli) and the shooting by arrows (tlacacaliztli) (183).

From the sources which we have been using, a reference of this kind is only found in Tezozomoc. He says in his account of the inauguration of the temalacatl (184): «...dijo Moctezuma a Tlacaeleltzin: estrenemos el templo cu y tajón, criese el sol, como suyo que es todo, y es menester que allí sean sacrificados los esclavos de Cuextlan y tuxpanecas gentes de la costa y mar, y allí mueren aspados en parrillas... Después de haber encerrado (los cautivos) llamó Moctezuma a los sacerdotes, que llaman tlamacazque y les dijo: habéis de iros a emborrachar, y a enseñaros a aspar en parrillas a los esclavos, porque habemos llegado al tiempo y año que llaman Tlacaxipeualiztli, tiempo de desollar y aspar en sacrificio a los vencidos en guerras... Después fueron los mensajeros de Moctezuma a dar aviso a todos los pueblos comarcanos sujetos a México, y no sujetos, para que viniesen a ver el gran sacrificio de Tlauauanaliztli, de aspar en parrillas en la gran piedra a los miserables esclavos...»

Duran describes the same event, but does not mention anything of a sacrifice of shooting by arrows. From the unclear account of Tezozomoc it rather seems that he confused the terms tlauauanaliztli and tlacacaliztli because they sound similar. Also he does not really describe any element belonging to the latter sacrifice; he refers only to the sacrificio gladiatorio.

(182) 1967, pp.61-63.

(183) Tlacacalli means «cosa flechada» according to Molina (1880).

(184) 1944, p.116; see ch. on the «Gladiatorial Sacrifice,» point 1—.

In the «Anales de Quauhtitlan» the institution of the tlacacaliliztli and the tlacaxipeualiztli are described in a historico-mythical account. The Anales tell of the bad omens which appeared in Tula predicting its near downfall. In the month of Izcalli of the year 8 tochtli the Ixcuiname, female demons, came from the Huasteca and sacrificed in Tula their Huastec captives, who were their own husbands, shooting them by arrows. Thus prisoners were for the first time shot by arrows (185).

It is difficult to interpret this strange mythical account. An interpretation in terms of a fertility cult has been given by Selser, Lehmann and Garibay. The connection which this source establishes between the tlacacaliliztli and the goddess Ixcuina-Tlazolteotl, rather associates the shooting by arrows with the ritual complex of the Ochpaniztli festival. Ixcuina-Tlazolteotl was related to Toci and sometimes used as her synonym. Sahagun does not mention the tlacacaliliztli at Toci's festival. However, it is described by Duran as forming part of the ceremonies for Chicomocoatl. Duran tells that the archers were dressed as the gods Tlacauepan, Huitzilopochtli, Titlacauan, the sun, Ixcozauhqui, and as the Cuatro Auroras (186). They tied the captives to some high wooden posts, with their hands and feet extended. In this position the archers shot at them with their arrows; afterwards they brought them to the ground and performed the heart sacrifice on them.

The «Anales de Quauhtitlan» continue their account by relating how the god Yaotl (187) instigated the Toltecs to make war and sacrifice their captives afterwards. Yaotl, who was singing and dancing at Texcalapan, also introduced the tlacaxipeualiztli. An Otomí woman, whom they saw washing agave fibres in the river, was captured and flayed. Then a Toltec called Xiuhcozcatl put on her skin. «Thus for the first time it began, that someone put on the skin of Totec. Only since then began really all types of human sacrifices (tlacamictiliztli)

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(185) Lehmann 1938, pp.101, 102. According to the reconstruction of the chronology by Lehmann the time of these events is the 11th century. The Ixcuiname are forms of the goddess Ixcuina-Tlazolteotl. Ixcuiname is a Huastec word meaning «the lady of the cotton».

(186) 1967 I, p.140.

(187) Generally taken as a synonym for Tezcatlipoca.

which existed...» (188) Unfortunately we do not know whether this myth was also known in any more elaborate form, and whether it was as important as the myth of Toci, the daughter of the king of Colhuacan. Whereas in the latter myth Huitzilopochtli instigates the sacrifice, in the former the instigator is Tezcatlipoca (Yaotl) who appears in this source as the tribal god of the Toltecs.

In the «Historia de los Mexicanos por sus Pinturas» we only find a short reference to the tlacacaliliztli, where it reads that in the year 184 (?) captives from Zozola were sacrificed in this way; from then on the festival was performed every year (189).

The «Historia Tolteca-Chichimeca» is the source which mentions most often the sacrifice of shooting by arrows. The tlacacaliliztli is mentioned five times in a historical context, in three of these cases the sacrificio gladiatorio is mentioned together with it: 1—The Nonoualcas were at war with the Toltecs and persecuted their king Uemac. He took refuge in the cave Cincalco, where they captured him and shot him by arrows (190). 2—The Tolteca-Chichimecas defeated the people of Nopallocan and shot their chiefs by arrows. 3—The Tolteca-Chichimecas fought against the Olmeca-Xicalancas, shot them by arrows, striped or marked them («les señalaron» —a reference to the sacrificio gladiatorio) and devastated their land (191). 4—Three Toltec princes were sacrificed by their enemies in the sacrificio gladiatorio («se les puso la señal» —however, the Aztec text is ambiguous). 5—The Toltecs

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(188) Lehmann 1938, pp.102-104.

(189) 1941, p.231.

(190) Preuss and Mengin 1937, p.16. Uemac, the last Toltec king, is an enigmatic figure. According to this source he was killed in the cave Cincalco. C. means «in the house of the maize» and was a mythical place of abundance like the Tlalocan. Duran and Tezozomoc record that Motecuhzoma II, in his mood of forbearance of the coming disaster, wanted to flee to Cincalco. He told his magicians to go to see the ruler of Cincalco. Uemac, and sent ten flayed skins to him as presents. Later, when Uemac was supposed to come to meet the king, a seat of tzapotl leaves was prepared for him. Additionally, the servant of Uemac was called Totec chicaua. All these elements bring Uemac in connection with the cult of Xipe. However, this mythological account remains completely enigmatic. (Duran 1967 II, pp.491-97; Tezozomoc 1944, pp.500-514).

(191) Preuss and Mengin 1937, pp.28, 29.

defeated their enemies and sacrificed them in Cholola, on the Chalchiultepec («jewel mountain»). One enemy prince was tied to a wooden frame, with his arms and legs extended, and four Toltec nobles shot him by arrows. Three more enemies were sacrificed by the gladiatorial combat; two heavily armed Toltec princes fought against them (192).

The latter sacrifices are pictured on a page of the codex (see fig 3). The sacrificers were Toltec-Chichimec princes. Their name glyphs are given; besides, their animal skin cloaks identify them as Chichimecs. It is conspicuous that these sacrifices were not performed by priests but by the warriors themselves; nor are the sacrificers of the gladiatorial combat dressed as eagles and ocelots (the Tolteca-Chichimecas probably did not have these warrior orders). Thus, the context of the sacrifices is completely warlike. According to the reconstruction of the chronology of the «Historia Tolteca-Chichimeca» by Preuss and Mengin, the time of these events was the 12th century.

The «Historia Tolteca-Chichimeca» indicates more clearly than any other source, that the tlacacaliliztli and tlaauuanaliztli were the customary ways by which the Chichimec tribes sacrificed their war captives. However, since these events took place at a relatively early period, they refer to a time when the practice of sacrificing prisoners of war was not yet integrated into a complex structure of calendar festivals. At any rate, this period was prior to the full development of Aztec ritual with its mass sacrifices of prisoners, which began only in the middle of the 14th century.

A relationship of the tlacacaliliztli to the tribal past of hunting tribes can be established relatively easily. Duran gives such an explanation when speaking of the type of sacrifice generally used by the Chalcas: «Luego tomaron a los presos y maniatados los hicieron sacrificar, asaeteándolos a todos; porque los chalcas no tenían otro modo de sacrificar; porque, como su dios era el dios de la caza, siempre sacrificaban con flechas.» (193) This does not mean that the tlacacaliliztli

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(192) *Op. cit.*, pp.62-65.

(193) Duran 1967 II, p.147.

was a commemoration of a hunting rite like e.g. the ceremonies which were performed for the god Mixcoatl-Camaxtli during the Quecholli festival, but rather that it was a practice which they had kept from their days as a hunting tribe. For the sacrificio gladiatorio the cultural background of a hunting tribe is not so obvious. However, the «Historia Tolteca Chichimeca» provides evidence that it was practised by the same people from at least the 12th century onwards, as another way of sacrificing prisoners of war.

Some authors have suggested that the sacrificio gladiatorio and the shooting by arrows were performed on the same captive. This is theoretically possible, but improbable. The «Historia Tolteca-Chichimeca» indicates that different captives died by the two types of sacrifices. The flaying would not have been possible after the shooting by arrows, because the skin would have been too seriously injured. Therefore, the tlacacaliliztli and the tlacaxipeualiztli could not form part of one succession of rites performed on the same victims, although they might have taken place in the course of the same festival, being performed on different victims. Their association at the Tlacaxipeualiztli festival can be excluded because none of our sources gives positive evidence in this respect. On the other hand, Duran tells of a tlacacaliliztli which followed the flaying of Chicomecoatl at Ochpaniztli, while Motolinia records the same after the flaying of two women at Izcalli in Quauhtitlan (naturally on different victims). The significance of the tlacacaliliztli in the latter context has to be studied more carefully.

## 7—SYMBOLISM AND FUNCTIONS OF TLACAXIPEUALIZTLI

Eduard Seler attributed a symbolism of fertility and renewal of vegetation to the tlacaxipeualiztli as well as to the tlauauanaliztli and the tlacacaliliztli, relating them symbolically to agricultural practices. All interpretations which have been given of these ceremonies since then, have followed Seler closely. In the tlacacaliliztli, the blood which flowed down from the wounded body of the victim was thought to fertilize the earth; it was a symbol for sexual fecundation and should make the vegetation grow. The expression tlauauana was interpreted by Seler as meaning «to furrow» («Furchen machen,

furchen»); as an action symbolising the ploughing of the earth. The dressing of the flayed skins represented the renewal of vegetation in the spring and the dancing of the xipeme with the chicauaztli the working of the earth by means of the planting stick. The chicauaztli was a magical instrument to produce abundance of plants and food (194).

Seler's interpretation reflects the concepts current at the end of the 19th century. Confronted with the strange cultic practices of Mexico which could not easily be explained in terms of religious phenomena known from Europe, concepts of «nature mythology» and a «demonic cult of agriculture» were borrowed from European folklore, where they were highly fashionable at that time (195). Far too many ceremonies which in reality had nothing to do with fertility and agriculture, were explained in these terms.

From the evidence which we have gathered on the tlacacaliztli, a fertility connotation seems improbable. The translation which Seler gave for tlaauauana is not correct, because instead of «to furrow» the word means «to stripe, to mark, to scratch». Duran explained the expression very clearly as «señalar o rasguñar, señalando con espada. Y hablando a nuestro modo, es dar toque, esgrimiendo con espadas blancas.» The aim was to hurt the victim, so that some blood came out; that was the signal to perform the heart sacrifice on him. The captive was fighting against members of the warrior order of the eagles and ocelots, and not against priests. To give the gladiatorial combat an agricultural significance symbolising the ploughing of the earth, is really far-fetched, because none of its elements implies it. On the other hand, a relation to agriculture, fertility and prosperity of the people seems to have been inherent in the sacrifice of flaying and the activities of the xipeme.

When talking about the functions of Xipe Totec, we did not mention any relationship of the god to agriculture and fertility; neither Sahagun nor Duran speak of it specifically. However, there exists one original piece of evidence in favour of such an aspect in Xipe's character. It is the hymn dedicated

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(194) Seler GA II, p.1073.

(195) See Nowotny 1959, p.124.

to the god, which Sahagun collected in his Aztec material on «los Cantares que decían a honra de los dioses en los templos y fuera de ellos» (196):

### **Song of Xipe Totec Youallauan**

«O Youallauan, why dost thou mask thyself?  
Put on thy disguise.  
Don thy golden cape.

My god, thy precious water hath come down from  
It hath made the cypress a quetzal. [Coapan.  
The fire serpent hath been made a quetzal ser-  
Want hath gone from me. [pent.

Mayhap I shall die and perish  
—I the tender maize.  
Like a precious green stone is my heart,  
(yet) I shall see gold in it.  
I shall be content if first I mature.  
The war chief is born.

My god, (give me) in part plenteous tender maize.  
Thy worshipper looketh toward thy mountain.  
I shall be content if first I ripen.  
The warrior chief is born.»

Seler published the first translation of this poem, with a commentary (197). The English translation of Anderson and Dibble corresponds closely to Seler's German version. The most recent translation of the Cantares was made by Garibay into Spanish; it differs from Seler's version in many details. Garibay adds an extensive commentary which should be consulted for a more detailed interpretation of the song (198). Here we are only concerned with the general implication of it which was an invocation for rain, expressing the preoccupation for the growth of the maize plant. The reference to the warrior

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(196) CF II, Appendix, p.213. A picture of a singing priest and another one playing a tlapanhuehuetl accompanies the text of the song. Both priests wear the yopitzontli. See Lam.2, fig. 6.

(197) GA II, pp.1071-73.

(198) Sahagun 1958/2, pp.175-85.

chief has been interpreted by Seler and Garibay as a symbol for the ripe maize cob.

Another element in relation to Xipe which has connotations of fertility, are the xipeme. They were believed to bring prosperity to the people whom they visited. Therefore the women were eager to call them into their houses, where a seat of tzapotl leaves had been prepared for them. In exchange for benedicting the children, they received food offerings consisting of specific types of tortillas, ocholli (dry maize cobs which were kept in the houses to offer them to the xipeme and to use them as seed corn) as well as first fruit offering. As they went through the streets they were dancing, jumping into the air and hitting the ground with their rattle sticks. They avoided meeting each other in the streets because if they did so, they had to fight and try to tear each other's skins and clothes. Before they went asking for alms, they also fought a mock battle against a group of warriors.

All these elements show a striking resemblance to customs from all over the world; they are well known from European folklore. The Alpine regions are especially rich in such customs; in Germanic folklore a special term is used for them: «Heischegänge», which means something like a «begging procession». «Heischen» has the double connotation of begging as well as demanding. During the midwinter period there exist various processions of masked figures which represent winter demons and other traditional folkloric figures. The people wearing the masks impersonate these demons. The processions go from house to house while they are singing, dancing and enacting some symbolic representations. The houseowners are obliged to give them food—*traditionally fixed forms of foodstuff, specific forms of pastry* («Gebildbrote»)—in return, the benediction of the masked figures brings good health and fertility to the family of the houseowner. Often conspicuous is a wild, demanding or even threatening behaviour on the part of the masked figures. Sometimes they have the right to steal food. This right to steal was more valid in bygone days. In the Alpine regions of Germany, Austria and Switzerland many of these process-



ions have today sunk down to the customs of children (199).

In Mexican ritual we find twice such processions of disguised people; besides the one of the xipeme, another one took place during the VIth festival Etzalcualiztli, when ceremonies to the rain gods were performed. After the ceremonies in the temple had finished, poor people put on the insignia of the god Tlaloc, which consisted of some kind of eye-glasses made of reed, a maize stalk in one hand and an empty pot in the other. In this array they went from house to house, dancing, singing and demanding the etzalli-dish, which was then made for the first time in the year. The houseowners were eager to give alms to them in order to receive their benediction.

In this context let us refer again to the short account which the Tovar Calendar gives of Tlacaxipeualiztli because it puts a stronger emphasis on a fertility symbolism than any other source. Tovar tells that a slave was sacrificed, flayed and his skin hung up in the temple to be used for prognostics about the fertility of the forthcoming year. If much grease ran from the skin it was considered a sign for «a year of plentiful waters, fertile and abundant. And thus the lords and chiefs collected their people, ordering them to work and cultivate the land rapidly, because the year was to be very abundant and plentiful with water, and one individual dressed himself in that skin and went among all the people announcing the abundance of the future year, receiving many tokens from all the people, because they gave and contributed to him many maize ears and other gifts...» (200) This close relationship between the xipe and the working of the fields is not mentioned by any other old author. The account might actually refer to the case of one individual barrio. As we know from Sahagun, the bodies of the victims were taken to the tribal temple to be flayed there. Their skin might have been hung up in the calpulli before a xipe put it on.

While there is a considerable amount of evidence indicating the fertility symbolism of the ceremonies for Xipe, no old

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(199) See Fehrle 1955.

(200) Kubler and Gibson 1951, p.22.

source tells that the dressing of the skins represented the covering of the earth by new vegetation in spring. The sacrifice of flaying was not always related to Xipe nor to spring rituals, but was an ancient cultic custom with a wide distribution in America.

According to the study which M. Acosta Saignes made of the distribution of what he calls the «Tlacaxipeualiztli complex», elements of it occurred from the southern United States to Mesoamerica, Central America, and northern South America as far as the central Andean region. This complex included the following elements (201):

- complete flaying
- partial flaying
- heart sacrifice
- shooting by arrows
- real or symbolic drinking of blood
- ceremonies of sacrifices on living individuals  
(tortures and mutilations)
- sacrifice of brave and highly ranked people
- ritual cannibalism
- ceremonial importance of the thigh.

Spanish chroniclers recorded evidence for the flaying in Mexico, Yucatan, Nicaragua, Peru, Ecuador, the western part of Columbia (among the Caribs) and in the Orinoco region (202). The dressing of the flayed skins, however, seems to have been a purely Mexican custom. In Peru the skins of prisoners of war were sometimes filled with ashes, and as a sign of victory hung from the doors of the temples. In Mexico there also existed the custom of flaying the skin of the head of brave warriors and prepare small shrunken heads similar to the famous «tsantsa» of the Jivaros in South America. Motolinia gives this interesting piece of information, proving thereby that this custom was practised in Central Mexico as well (203). According to Krickeberg it was also known to the Huastecs. The skulls of the sacrificial victims had a ri-

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(201) Acosta Saignes 1950, p.37.

(202) Chroniclers who recorded this information were principally López de Gómara, Antonio de Herrera, Cieza de León, Garcilaso de la Vega, Pedro Mártir and Juan de Torquemada.

(203) 1967, p.72.

tual significance in Mexico and were kept in tens of thousands on the tzompantlis or skull frames. Head trophies are a phenomenon known from North America to Nicaragua, Colombia and Peru.

For the heart sacrifice there exists abundant evidence reaching from the southwestern and southeastern United States over Mexico, the Mayas, Nicaragua, Panama, Colombia (the Caribs) and the Chibcha region to Peru. In many places the heart was eaten in order to obtain the energies and the courage of the victim; this was an ancient practice of sympathetic magic related to the other forms of ritual cannibalism. Acosta suggests that «tanto el desollamiento como el sacrificio de corazones deben haber originado en poblaciones cazadoras, diestras para descuartizamiento.» (204)

Among the Caribs of Colombia and the Venezuelan Coast, the blood was actually drunk after the sacrifice. In Mesoamerica and Peru this custom was substituted by a symbolic drinking of the blood—it was said that the gods drank the «precious liquid». Another element of the complex was the ceremonial use of the thigh. The Caribs of the Venezuelan Coast made flutes from the long bones of the legs, which were supposed to bring victory in war. Acosta assumes that the tlacacaliliztli also belonged to the same complex; there are indications that it was practised in southern North America, among the Pawnees, and in South America, among the Chibchas and Caribs.

According to Acosta one can speak of a whole complex of rites because they had a similar function throughout the whole area; they were concerned with fertility and directed to agricultural gods, with the aim of securing the productivity of the crops in an unstable agricultural economy. The complex represents an ancient common heritage in these regions. Acosta takes it as evidence in favour of his hypothesis that the complex existed among the Caribs which had a simpler cultural level than the people of Mesoamerica and Peru; from this he concludes that the Tlacaxipeualiztli complex must have preceded the rise of the high cultures.

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(204) Acosta Saignes 1950, p.30.

The monthly name Tlacaxipeualiztli had an exceptionally wide diffusion in Mesoamerica, showing less variant names than most other months. We find derivatives of it as far as the Quiché and Cakchiquél tribes of Guatemala («Tekoxepual, Tequexepual or Tacaxepual»). The Tarascan name of the month, Cuingo, is an exact translation of it as well. This uniform geographical distribution argues for an ancient diffusion throughout Mesoamerica (205). However, evidence is lacking on the point of how far the same name corresponded to the same kind of ceremonies. Duran emphasized that the festival was celebrated throughout the whole country, «...era fiesta universal de toda la tierra», but his point of reference was scarcely the whole of Mesoamerica.

Thus it appears that the sacrifice of flaying was an ancient practice belonging to a complex of human sacrifices with a wide distribution from southern North America to Andean South America. The purpose of these sacrifices was to procure fertility of agriculture and prosperity of the community as well as to acquire the special faculties of the victims through ritual cannibalism and trophies of the head, the hair, the thigh bones, etc. Generally speaking, these concepts formed the background of Mexican ritual. The dressing of the flayed skins seems to have been a development peculiar to Mexico, which was associated with the cult of Xipe and the begging processions of poor people representing the god.

It is conspicuous that in the two chapters where Sahagun speaks of the god Xipe, he refers in detail to the xipeme, but not with a single word to the ceremonies in relation to the sacrificio gladiatorio. On the other hand, in his description of the festival in Book II he describes the latter at length while mentioning only briefly the xipeme. Duran and Tezozomoc likewise record in their historical chronicles only the ceremonies of the gladiatorial sacrifice.

This makes one suspect that the politically and socially significant ceremonies of the Tlacaxipeualiztli festival represented an altogether different aspect of it, most probably a

(205) Kubler and Gibson 1951, p.23. The only known variant names are Coailhuitl for Tlaxcala and the Otomí name Tzahio meaning «dog» for Meztitlan.

later addition to its traditional religious nucleus. While the latter was closely related to the barrios, the priests and the common people, the former centered around the nobles and warriors. Tlacaxipeualiztli was one of the most important calendar festivals—at least in some areas it was the first one of the native calendar as well—; at the same time it was one of the main tribute dates, at which great quantities of goods arrived in Tenochtitlan. The king used these circumstances to honour his warriors, distributing insignia to them. The festival was a great occasion for the warriors to enhance their prestige. Captives who had excelled most in courage, were kept throughout the year to fight the gladiatorial sacrifice. Their performance reflected itself on the prestige of the captor, the captive being his «beloved son, his own flesh». Thus the captor remained near the temalacatl, watching the combat with excitement. After the sacrifice he celebrated a banquet in his house, at which the flesh of the captive was eaten. After twenty days during which he and his family kept a strict penance, he planted «the pole of the flaying of men» with the thigh bone and paper array of the victim. It demonstrated that he had made a captive, and was an important moment in his career.

The festival acquired an extraordinary importance after a successful war, when the warriors came home with a rich crop of captives. Incredibly high numbers of victims were sacrificed in such years. With the growth of Aztec power, Tlacaxipeualiztli increasingly became a festival of terrorizing other peoples, whereas it enhanced the feeling of power of their own population. As Duran put it very aptly: «...dejó espantados a los forasteros y muy contentos y ufanos a todos los señores y populares de la ciudad... Desde entonces, todos los de las provincias y ciudades comarcas dejaron de traer rebeliones, ni contiendas con los mexicanos, viendo cómo trataban a sus enemigos.»

Along these lines of interpretation we may arrange the elements of the Tlacaxipeualiztli festival in the following two groups:

**Religious and Traditional  
Functions**

**Political and Social  
Functions**

**of the Festival:**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Festival of the god Xipe Totec, patron against skin diseases, patron of gold- and silversmiths.</li> <li>2. Impersonation of the god before the festival (for 40 days).</li> <li>3. Ceremonies in the tribal temple before the festival.</li> <li>4. Ordinary heart sacrifice.</li> <li>5. Flaying of some of the victims, dressing of the flayed skins.</li> <li>6. «All gods» assist the festival.</li> <li>7. Dance with maize and other foodstuff at the end of the festival.</li> <li>8. Rain auguries with the flayed skin (in the tribal temple?).</li> <li>9. Poor people dressed in the flayed skins go asking for alms for 20 days after the festival; in return for their benediction, they receive specific foodstuff and first fruit offerings.</li> <li>10. At the end of the 20 days hiding away of the skins, combined with first fruit offerings in the temple.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sacrificio Gladiatorio, performed by eagle- and ocelot warriors.</li> <li>2. Important role of the captors: take captive to the temple and watch the combat; afterwards banquet in their house with eating of the flesh of the victim. After 20 days planting of «the pole of the flaying of men» as an emblem of their prestige.</li> <li>3. Dances of warriors and nobles after the gladiatorial sacrifice.</li> <li>4. King honours warriors and distributes insignia to them.</li> <li>5. Important tribute date.</li> <li>6. Special importance after successful wars.</li> <li>7. Enemy lords invited to watch the sacrificio gladiatorio; political function of terrorizing enemies and subdued peoples.</li> </ol> |
|---|--|

—related to priests, barrios and common people.

—related to king, warriors and nobles.

## APPENDIX: Handlist of the Sources

Since a number of texts of Sahagun and Duran were used, it is convenient to describe them briefly. We add a short characterization of the other old sources which we have consulted.

Sahagun, Bernardino de: «Codex Florentinus» (CF): the final draft of the «Historia General» with Aztec and Spanish text. (The compilation of the Aztec text was finished in 1569, the Spanish translation in 1577). The illustrations of the CF are inferior to the ones of the Codex Matritense (CM: the Aztec original manuscripts preserved in the libraries of the Real Academia de la Historia and the Palacio Real, Madrid). Anderson and Dibble have translated the Aztec text of the CF into English; for great portions of the «Historia General» this is the only translation existing from the Aztec original. Book II on the Ceremonies was first translated into German by E. Seler (1927). Seler used the manuscript of the CM which, however, is practically identical with the CF in respect to Book II. In some other parts, the CM is more extensive. A complete translation of the CM is still lacking. Small portions of it have been translated into Spanish as separate publications (see below).

Sahagun refers to the Tlacaxipeualiztli festival in Book I (on the gods, ch.18 on Xipe), Book II (description of the festivals and Appendix on the temple buildings, priests and sacred hymns), Book VIII (on the kings and lords, App.B) and Book IX (ch.15 on the gold-and silversmiths).

Sahagun: «Historia General» (HG): Sahagun's Spanish version of the Aztec material. All editions are based on the Manuscript of Tolosa. Sahagun's translation is generally much less original than the Aztec text; however, he added some personal observations and explanations which are helpful for a better understanding of the original text.

In his edition of the HG (1956), A. M. Garibay included a direct translation of Book IX, ch.15 (Ms. de la Real Academia, f-44 re) which we have consulted here.

- Sahagun (1948): «Relación Breve de las Fiestas de los Dioses»: This short description of the monthly festivals exists only in the Aztec original, Ms. del Palacio Real (ff.250-254 r.), forming part of the so-called «Primeros Memoriales». The illustrations were made between 1558-60 in Tepepulco, a village of the ancient Texcocan domain; they are more original than the ones of the CF. The explanatory text was later added in the Colegio de Santa Cruz in Tlateloico. Garibay published a Spanish translation of the «Relación Breve», in 1948.
- Sahagun (1958/1): «Ritos, Sacerdotes y Atavíos de los Dioses»: Aztec text belonging to the «Primeros Memoriales» (materials collected in Texcoco), Ms. del Palacio Real ff.254v.-273 r.). The first and second part, on the rites, sacrifices and priests, have a correspondence in CF II, App. and HG II, App., while the third part, on the array of the gods, exists only in the Aztec of the CM. M.Léon-Portilla published a Spanish translation of the three parts in 1958.
- Sahagun (1958/2): «Veinte Himnos Sacros de los Nahuas» (De los cantares que decían a honra de los dioses en los templos y fuera de ellos): Aztec text from the «Primeros Memoriales», Ms. del Palacio Real (ff.273v.-281v.). These songs are also included in the CF and the HG, but Sahagun did not translate them. They were first translated into German by Seler (GA II, p.1071ff.); in 1958 A. M. Garibay published a Spanish translation of them; Anderson and Dibble include an English translation of them in CF II, App., p.207ff.
- Duran, Diego (1967): «Historia de las Indias de Nueva España: After Sahagun the second best source on Mexican ritual and in many ways complementary to Sahagun. The chronicle consists of three part which were completed in 1570, 1579 and 1581 respectively. The geographical origin of the material on the ceremonies is composite, although it derives principally from Tenochtitlan. A—«Libro de los Ritos y Ceremonias;» B—«El Calendario Antiguo: these two parts contain the extensive description of the Tlacaxipeua-



liztli festival (A: ch.9; B: ch.5); in the edition of A. M. Garibay they are included in vol. I (quoted as Duran 1967, 1, pp.). C—«Historia»; this part contains historical material on the sacrificio gladiatorio which is a valuable complement to parts A— and B—; it forms vol. II of the edition of Garibay. The relevant chapters are ch.20, 36, 57, 66 —quoted as 1967, II pp...). The Historia is Duran's version of an original Aztec chronicle (Crónica X) which was also used by Tezozomoc.

Tezozomoc, Hernando Alvarado (1944): «Crónica Mexicana» (completed in 1598): Tezozomoc translated literally from the «Crónica X», preserving a much more original flavour than Duran, but at a loss of clarity. Both versions complement each other in many details. (The relevant chapters are ch.30, 49, 93, 101).

Motolinia, Toribio de Benavente (1967): «Memoriales»: Motolinia's material on the ceremonies is not comparable to Sahagun or Duran neither in extension nor in quality. However, its importance lies in the fact that Motolinia is one of the earliest-known and most original sources. Internal evidence dates the composition of the Memoriales to the years 1536-41; their origin is geographically composite.

Pomar, Juan Bautista (1964): «Relación de Texcoco» (completed in 1582): Pomar's material on the festivals is not extensive, the most detailed description being the one of Tlacaxipeualiztli; in this case he gives original information derived from Texcoco.

Tovar, Juan de (1944): «Codice Ramírez» (Relación del origen de los indios) (written between 1583-87): This chronicle is a digest of Duran's work. Its short reference to Tlacaxipeualiztli is uninteresting; the illustration is a copy of Duran's illustrations of Tlacaxipeualiztli.

Tovar, Juan de (1951): «Calendario» (written around 1585): It consists of drawings for each month made by an Indian draughtsman, and a commentary by Tovar. It is independent

from Duran and contains interesting information on popular customs in connection with the festivals. It was edited and translated into English by Kubler and Gibson in 1951.

Mendieta, Gerónimo de (1945): «Historia Ecclesiastica Indiana» (completed in 1596): Book II contains material on the ceremonies, based on the lost work of Olmos and the Memoriales of Motolinia; there is only one short reference to *Tlacaxipeualiztli*.

Torquemada, Juan de (1943): «Monarquía Indiana» (published in 1616): Torquemada refers to *Tlacaxipeualiztli* in several parts of his work (Books II, VIII) in which he summarizes passages from Sahagun twisting the account to the degree of saying that the victims were flayed alive.

*Annals and Interpretations of Indian Codices:*

In these sources we find historical records of the performance of the *Tlacaxipeualiztli* festival, mythological-historical accounts about the institution of different types of sacrifices as well as purely mythological prototypes. This information is particularly important for the research on ritual.

«Historia de los Mexicanos por sus Pinturas» (1941): An interpretation of Indian codices composed by a Franciscan friar (Andrés de Olmos?), probably before 1541, contains material on mythology and history of the Mexicans.

«Anales de Quauhtitlan» (1938): Anonymous interpretation of Indian codices of mythological and historical content, completed in 1545; the author was possibly Sahagun. They were edited and translated into German by Walter Lehmann in 1938.

«Historia Tolteca-Chichimeca» (1937): Annals written in Nahuatl, interpretation of historical codices, completed around 1544.

It was edited and translated into German by Preuss and Mengin in 1937.

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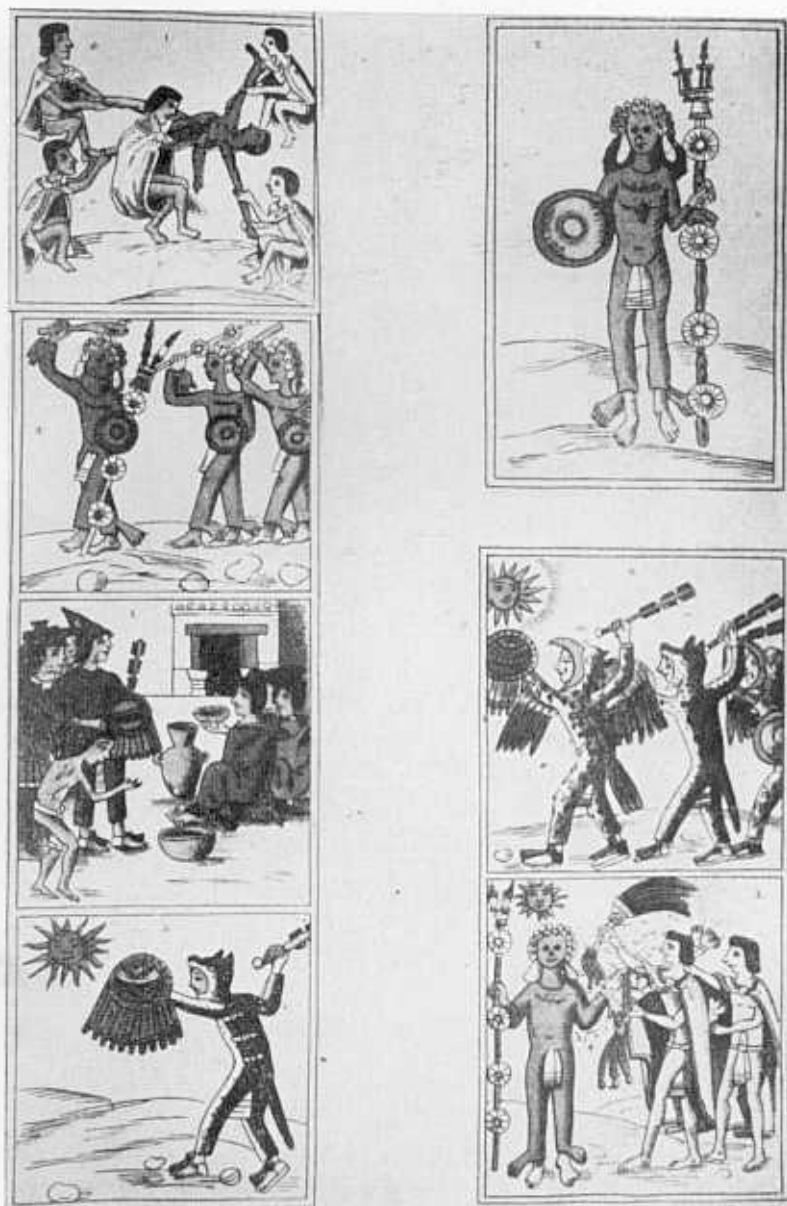


Fig. 4. The Tiacaxipeualiztli Festival. Codex Florentinus (Book II, ch.21)



Fig. 5 (left). Codex Florentinus (Book II, ch. 21; continuation).

Fig. 6 (right). Song of Xipe (priests singing and playing the tlapanhueuetl) (CF, Book II, Appendix).





Fig. 9. Impersonator of the god Xipe and Sacrificio Gladiatorio.  
Duran (Libro de los Ritos, ch.9).



Fig. 10. Sacrificio Gladiatorio performed before the king Axaycatl.  
Duran (Historia, ch.36).



Fig. 7. The Tlacaxipeualiztli Festival. Relación Breve... C. Matritense.

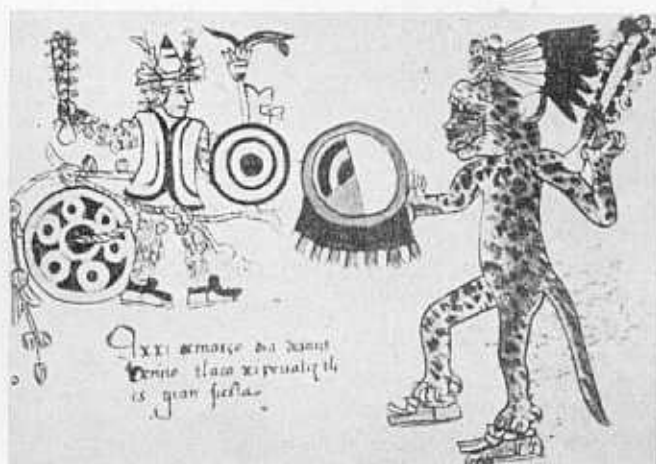


Fig. 8. The Sacrificio Gladiatorio. Codex Magliabecchiano.

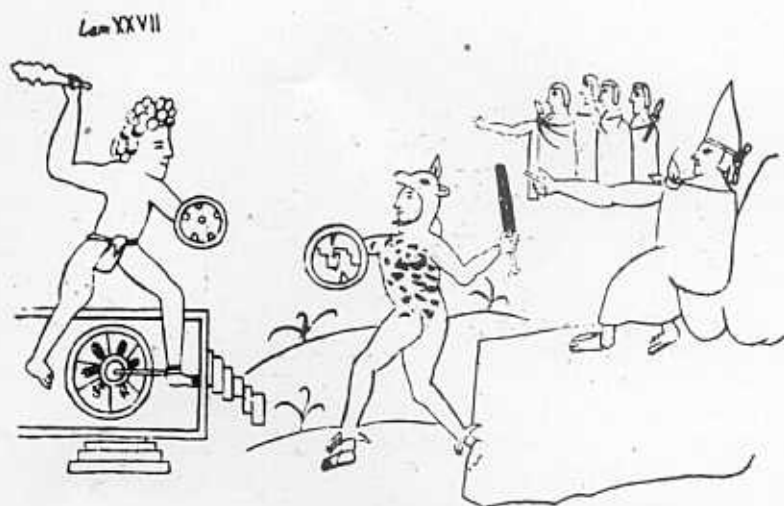


Fig. 11. Sacrificio Gladiatorio and Impersonator of Xipe. Codice Ramirez.