The Tlaxcala-Puebla Family of Annals
Frances Krug and Camilla Townsend*

The present article is the only one in this volume with two authors. Let us explain how this dual authorship came about. In the early 1980s Frances Krug undertook a study of the Nahua annals of the region of Tlaxcala and Puebla as a dissertation project with Jim Lockhart at UCLA, concentrating on lines of genetic influence of one work on another. The research produced significant results, and most of a dissertation manuscript took shape. Then, for reasons of health, work gradually stopped, and until today the substantial manuscript lacks a conclusion and other finishing touches, although it is not impossible that in time the dissertation may be completed after all. Meanwhile, Lockhart in the section on annals in his The Nahuas (1992) made significant use of some of Frances's conclusions, and through the references some scholars became aware of the nature and importance of her work.

Among these was Camilla Townsend, who had been exposed to Nahuatl with Jonathan Amith in a course at Yale and continued in 2002 with Jim Lockhart and Michel Launey. Jim and Susan Schroeder introduced her to the Nahual annals corpus and literature, and she became especially interested in the Tlaxcalan annalist Zapata y Mendoza, on whom she began a research project. Gradually she has widened her scope to the point that she is presently undertaking a general treatment of the Nahual annals corpus and genre. One item that Jim provided her with was a copy of Frances's manuscript, which was an eyeopener for her, and she studied it so closely that she produced notes and drafts summarizing some of the main facets of Frances's work.

For some years Jim and Frances had been out of touch, Frances having changed residence, and there was some discussion of having Camilla do an article about the Tlaxcalan-Puebla annals corpus on behalf of both Frances and herself, with the double intention of representing her ongoing work and bringing Frances's conclusions before a wider audience. Fortunately Frances announced her new address in a number of the Nahua Newsletter, contact was established between all three parties, and the result is the present article, of which the first part deals primarily with Frances's work, the second with Camilla's, but both authors have contributed in different ways to both parts.

Part I: The Tlaxcala-Puebla Annals as a Network

A complete genre study of the Nahual annals corpus, fundamental as it is, remains to be accomplished. A crucial building block toward this end is a careful study of all the extant annals of one particular region. Frances Krug worked with the group of texts originating in Tlaxcala and Puebla, which offered the most apt subject for such a study because of its extensiveness. It is perhaps no accident that a large number of the surviving Mexican annals come from this region. Tlaxcala, we must remember, was allowed to retain a great deal of autonomy as a reward for its services during the conquest; the larger altepetl structure was preserved,
and the settlements of the region were not given out in encomienda. No Spanish city was established in their midst, and they governed themselves through a single indigenous council. When the Spanish city of Puebla de los Angeles was later founded just to the south, a number of Tlaxcalans settled there, carrying some of their traditions with them.

The Tlaxcala-Puebla family of annals studied by Frances Krug consists of twenty-three documents, all apparently being productions of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Stage 3 in Jim Lockhart's schema (though probably descending in part from earlier texts). Some are merely direct copies of others: perhaps fifteen really qualify as distinct compositions. (This, however, is something of a gray area, as all of them share text to some extent, as will be seen.) Only seven still exist in original form, but thirteen others were transcribed in the nineteenth century from colonial documents, written out by Faustino Galicia Chimalpopoca and carefully preserved by José Fernando Ramírez.1 The rest are known only through fragments copied out by earlier scholars before the originals were lost. Eight of the family of 23 were primarily authored by writers located in Tlaxcala, and six by writers in Puebla (though three of these were almost identical copies of each other). Two come from San Luis Huamanlta, three from Tecalochicalco, and four are of miscellaneous origin.

The eight annals that originated in Tlaxcala compose the most complete subset. Of the eight, one exists only as a partial fragment copied out in the eighteenth century, and seven are accessible to us today in full form, either as colonial manuscripts or in the nineteenth-century transcriptions by Ramírez.2 These seven consist of three pairs of documents whose content is extremely close in nature, plus the unique and very detailed work of don Juan Buenaventura Zapata y Mendoza, who was an officeholder in the indigenous cabildo of Tlaxcala in the second half of the seventeenth century. Of the six Puebla annals studied by Krug, four exist only as copies preserved by Ramírez, and two as colonial manuscripts. They cannot be outlined in terms of a pattern of pairs as clearly as can the Tlaxcalan pieces, but they do show considerable overlap with each other, and demonstrate that much of the Puebla work was done in the barrio of San Juan del Río, where most of the migrants from Tlaxcala settled. Indeed, a recently discovered document underscores that the patterns discerned by Krug from the Puebla

---

1José Fernando Ramírez entitled his two-volume collection Anales antiguos de México y sus contornos. It is housed in the Archivo Histórico of the Museo Nacional de Antropología e Historia in Mexico City. In 1948, four of the annals in his collection were published by Vargas Rea, but these did not include any of the annals emanating from Tlaxcala, which were numbers 16 through 18 in the Ramírez schema. See Gibson and Glass 1975.

2Only two exist in original form. One is the work of don Juan Buenaventura Zapata y Mendoza (see note 7), housed in the Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris as Mexican 212, Collection Goupil. The other is document 872, Colección Antigua, Archivo Histórico, Museo Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Mexico City.

3Frances Krug used Gibson and Glass 1975 as a starting point in her search for documents in the Tlaxcala-Puebla family of annals. Their list was indeed thorough. Despite continuing searches on the part of numerous Mexican scholars, almost no new sets of annals have come to light. (Several documents that Krug worked with have since been published, but interestingly, the most complete set of Puebla annals, [cont’d]
documents known to her in the 80s still hold true.\textsuperscript{3}

The annals that have come down to us are always in some way the work of more than one person. Very often, two obviously distinct authorial voices are present within one document; someone has copied out an older piece covering the period up to his own lifetime, but then begins to include fuller, richer entries for the period in which he is actually living. Naturally, a person might well rephrase his source, or even significantly alter the record of the earlier period, in keeping with what he believes ought to have been included by the previous annalist. For example, in a set of annals completed in 1737 in Puebla, the year of a large gathering to honor the Virgin Guadalupe, the 1531 entry mentions Juan Diego’s supposed sighting of the virgin, a story which historians now know to have been fabricated in the seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{4}

The concept of “genetic relationship” may be used to characterize the connections existing between annals due to the copying that occurred. It provides us with a truly apt metaphor; just as in genetic replication, annalists took material directly from already existing sources, but given the frequency with which this activity took place, changes or mutations—occurring by accident or design—were bound to be introduced, which in turn might be passed on to those who copied from them as well as from others. The result is a collection of documents that are similar in some regards, but not all, and almost never literally identical.

Some might conclude after a brief survey that the result is in fact a confusing hodgepodge, that the annals might indeed be related, but might simply look alike because they more or less record the same major events. Yet a careful tracing of connections proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that literally all the extant Tlaxcalan annals are in fact somehow genetically related. Not one was produced completely independently and then stored in isolation. Annals, it turns out, were the productions of an active network of people working beyond the “radar” of the Spaniards who were bent on preserving their own history and believed they could do so only in consultation with other keepers of Nahua annals, not with Spaniards. They maintained a closed circle.

Such a dramatic statement requires a careful breakdown of the evidence. Lining up all the Tlaxcala annals’ entries year by year, for example, we learn that the documents are virtually all copies of each other up to 1538: the differences are negligible, and easily explainable as matters of error or style, and the various versions are far too close for the similarity to have been a coincidence. Someone must have prepared a document—perhaps several copies of it—that later became part of the work of all other Tlaxcalan annalists. After the year 1538, divergences in the accounts multiply. To determine if there was a positive connection among the documents after that point, one can look either for the same sequence of years

\textsuperscript{3}See Sousa, Poole and Lockhart 1998.

\textsuperscript{4}See Gómez García, Salazar Exaire and Stefanón Lopez 2000.
existing without entries, or for an unusual error in dating (as, for example, when a viceroy took office) that appears in more than one set of annals. To measure the degree of independence of a certain production, one can count the number of unique topics mentioned in no other set of annals.

A typical example illustrating the patterns found throughout the corpus exists for the year 1611:

**Krug’s #3:** “Anales de Puebla y Tlaxcala, no. 1, pt. 2” in Ramírez
1611 Acaxihuítl ocaloc Tonalli ihuitzin San Bernabe viernes ipan yei hora (p.762). (1611 Reed year. There was a solar eclipse on Friday, the day of San Bernabé, at three o’clock.)

**Krug’s #4:** “Anales de Puebla y Tlaxcala, no. 2” in Ramírez
1611 2 Acatl Xihuitl ocaloc tonali ihuitzin S. Bernabe viernes ipan ey ora (p.729) (1611 2 Reed year. There was a solar eclipse on Friday, the day of San Bernabé, at three o’clock.)

**Krug’s #5:** “Anales de Puebla y Tlaxcala, no. 1, pt. 3” in Ramírez
[identical to #6 below] ā

**Krug’s #6:** “Anales de Tlaxcala” manuscript in INAH
1611 2 Acaxivitli gōt d. Diego monos camarco yuā [?] Cualoc tonatiuh huei otlayohuac viernes yluuitzin Sancto San barnabe yuā yquac monexti pē San Diego sn gregorio yey ora qualo tonali (f. 18v) (1611 2 Reed year. The governor was don Diego Muñoz Camargo. And there was a solar eclipse. It got very dark on Friday, San Bernabé’s day. And at this time Father San Diego appeared [at the town of] San Gregorio. The solar eclipse happened at three o’clock.)

**Krug’s #19:** don Juan Buenaventura Zapata y Mendoza
1611 … Ycuac monextin sōt St Diego gregorio metepec çatepā momiquili yn čihuazintili quimonextili Yei xihuitl (f.22) (1611 … At this time lord San Diego appeared at San Gregorio Metepec. Three years later, the woman to whom he appeared died.)

[marginal note in same hand] yn iquac monextin Sr. San diego st gregō metepec ocotelolco (f.21v) (It was when lord San Diego appeared at San Gregorio Metepec in Ocotelulco.)

1612 … Ycuac qualoc tonatiuh ye teotlac Yiqué Bisperas St Berdé Apostol (f. 22) (At this time there was a solar eclipse in the afternoon on the eve of [the day of] San Bernabé the Apostle.)

[marginal note in same hand] Ypan biernes qualoc tonatiuh Bisperas St. Berdé huellayohuac coro yhuā yquac miqui D. Doribio gosaes a 7 de otobre yqac huala Rey (f. 22) (On Friday there was a solar eclipse on the eve of St. Barnabas. It got very dark [?]. And at this time don Toribio González died on the 7th of October. At this time the [vice]roy arrived.)5

As is typical of many years, the entries for annals 3 and 4 are practically identical, and have a relationship to the fully identical numbers 5 and 6. Here the first two

---

5This material is from Krug’s “Chapter 2: The Tlaxcalan Group of Annals.”
have one of the topics of second two, but with different wording. Number 19 shows its usual patterns in the ways in which Zapata y Mendoza’s work stands out from the rest as more highly developed and yet is similar to them; it reports the two topics of number 6 (though in two different years), both in the marginal notes and in the main text, as well as supplying additional information and making a unique statement (giving an erroneous date for the eclipse, which in fact occurred in 1611).

Among the Tlaxcala annals there are, in overview, besides a brief fragment and the more detailed manuscript of Zapata y Mendoza, three rough pairings—that is, three sets of two documents each that are very similar to each other—two of which are analyzed above as the ones with entries for 1611. One pair has only very brief and sparse entries after 1539, and, significantly, absolutely no topics that are not found somewhere else in the collection: they were either sources for, or extracts of, some of the others. Another pair of documents is also very similar, but with one striking difference. One, but not both, contains an ongoing error of dating, in which a string of postconquest events is given preconquest dates. Somebody started the account of history under the Spaniards in “1501” rather than “1519” and calculated from there. However, the member of the pairing that appears to have been a later production written by someone with a greater familiarity with the Spanish world (given a later end date, more Spanish-style dates, and some additional information about Spanish priests not found in the other) is also the one that includes the chain of errors. Significantly, this identical chain of errors is found in several of the annals written in the city of Puebla: a document containing the error had probably been carried there by one of the many Tlaxcalans who settled in the city at various points in time.

Thus it seems that the pairing consists not of two documents one copied from the other, but rather of two documents each copied from similar (but not identical) sources, no longer extant, that had probably themselves ultimately descended from some common source. The situation is in fact far more complicated than first meets the eye. It is not enough to say that a few men who were friends with each other made some copies of each other’s work: we apparently have only a limited sample of the points of production. The network of men who relied on one another’s efforts was indeed wide.

We find comparable commonalities in the annals originating in other towns in the area—Puebla, Huamantla, and Tecamachalco. Furthermore, the number of common topics across all the annals studied, despite their being profoundly different in numerous regards, is so striking as to nearly preclude the possibility of the phenomenon’s being coincidental. A careful study of the nine most distinct members of the family originating in Tlaxcala and Puebla reveals that all nine recorded the epidemic occurring about a year after the Spaniards arrived, the arrival of Viceroy Mendoza, and a major 1625 eclipse; eight recorded the arrival of the Franciscans and a 1612 eclipse. Since these would have been very noteworthy events, it is perhaps more significant that six or seven recorded the arrival of Cortés (often ignored in indigenous annals), the arrival of Bishop Garcés, the arrival of Zumárraga, a 1545 epidemic, a 1540s expedition to Xochipilcan, the death of Bishop Mota y Escobar (see Part II), a flood ca. 1630 in
Mexico City, a 1632 eclipse and a 1634 epidemic. It seems extremely likely that there was sharing between men from different towns in the region, and possibly even from as far away as Mexico City.

**Part II: The Work of Zapata y Mendoza**

Even the annals of the Tlaxcalan cabildo member Zapata y Mendoza, though much richer and more detailed than the work of the other annalists, in fact still has much in common with them, and clearly was part of the same production apparatus. Zapata left a set of annals beginning in preconquest times and ending only with his death in the late 1680s. His family was apparently descended of a *teuctli* household in the sub-altepetl of Quiahuiztlan; they certainly were landholders there at the start of the seventeenth century and defined themselves as caciques. In his work, we find the same pre-1538 material common to all, and up to 1650, almost all the content that appears in the second pairing described above also appears in his manuscript, either in the main text or in marginal notes in his handwriting.

Such an educated and politically active man did not, of course, include the dating error that envisioned Hispanic history as beginning in 1501. However, the member of the pairing in the paragraph above that includes that remarkable error also includes labored imitations of traditional Nahua year signs which, in the aspect they take after 1669, seem to have been done by the same hand as the year signs seen in Zapata’s manuscript. All commentators agree that those signs were almost undoubtedly added after Zapata’s death by don Manuel Santos y Salazar, the indigenous son of one of Zapata’s friends, who was himself a priest and who added various other marginalia as well. A document sounding much like the ones in our pairing was known to have been in the hands of the Santos y Salazar family. It is even possible that the enthusiastic priest-scholar was influential in the production of at least one of the annals mentioned earlier, which were apparently extracts of larger works and dated from the 1690s, for one of them uses a similar and unusual dating scheme, mixing preconquest and Christian forms in a particular way, and also shares some missing dates with the one bearing the indigenous year signs. There is no doubt that Santos y Salazar was a key figure in the production and ultimately the preservation of a number of the annals that have come down to us.

---

6From Krug’s “Table Two: Common Topics in the Tlaxcalan-Puebla Annals, 1500-1650.”

7The work has only relatively recently appeared in print, with a Spanish translation: See Reyes García and Martínez Baracs 1995. A few entries were in fact added after Zapata’s death, first by his son and then by a son of a good friend of his, who annotated the whole manuscript. The Zapata family appears relatively frequently in documentation preserved in the Archivo Histórico del Estado de Tlaxcala.

8There is no implication that Santos y Salazar was the motivating force behind most of the annals that were written: on the contrary, he was obviously significantly younger than a number of authors, including Zapata y Mendoza. But because he was an active preservationist, and because he was a priest, a collection of his papers came into the hands of Europeans and thus they are known to us today. Other works that have been ascribed to him that could be researched include a Spanish document in the AGN, Ramo de Historia, entitled “Computo cronológico de los indios mexicanos,” and a [cont’d]
Despite its commonalities with others, however, both in terms of content and in terms of whose hands it passed through, Zapata’s work is in some ways unique. It includes a large amount of material found nowhere else in any of the other extant annals. Indeed, the text is so rich that it demands that we seek out what other sources the author used besides the known Tlaxcala annals. Mexican scholars Luis Reyes García and Andrea Martínez Baracs say they were inspired by Frances Krug in the methods they chose to pursue the matter.9 Zapata’s Historia cronológica opens with a section that is not at all like other annals: “El Origen de la nación tlaxcalteca,” rather than being a year-by-year account, is a simple narrative, in a typical European vein. In the “Fifth Chapter” of an account listed as being authored by an “Anonymous Mexican” in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, and reproduced by Alfredo Chavero in 1903,10 Reyes and Martínez found a similar account of Tlaxcalan origins. The “Anonymous Mexican” begins as follows: “It is told, it is said, in the papers of the Tlaxcalans, that a nobleman named Benito Itzcacmacuechtli, one of the first who was taught by the Franciscan fathers who baptized him, wrote it in his hand . . .” and Zapata says, “To Benito Itzcacmacuextli and Lucas García, father of don Juan Ponce de León, they gave a big book for them to study. They were disciples of fray Martín de la Coruña . . .” Reyes and Martínez then present a line-by-line comparison of several paragraphs and conclude that it is statistically impossible for language to have been so similar in two accounts unless they were working from a common source. Furthermore—and this, the two scholars argue, a la Krug, is the clincher—the two versions share a significant error: in a list of towns following geographical reality, they both say “Cuauhtitlan” when the town in that spot is—and has always been—“Cuauh- tinchan.”

It also seems clear that Zapata worked with a copy of the document now known as the “Anales de Tula” in front of him. The latter is an interesting post-conquest document consisting of a mixture of pre- and postconquest-style drawings, as well as brief statements in Nahuatl in the Roman alphabet.11 Zapata’s entries for fourteen years in the fifteenth century are taken almost verbatim from that document. The “Anales de Tula” contain other year entries which Zapata’s record does not have, but they mostly mention items only of very local interest: either he himself was picking and choosing, or someone before him had done so. For ancient history, he was clearly looking to documents carefully preserved by his ancestors or the ancestors of people with whom he exchanged information.

Zapata became an officer of the cabildo in the 1650s, began to write in the 1660s, and maintained the annual record until his death in the late 1680s. In the entries for the more modern period, he of course moved beyond using fragments of aging paper kept by friends and acquaintances and purporting to have come down from “the ancient ones.” The entries dating from his lifetime are full of

---
10Chavero 1903.
11Barlow 1949 includes a complete transcription.
details he knew from first-hand experience. But even for the period between 1538 and the start of his own memory, his entries range far beyond other existing annals in the topics they cover. Clearly, he was doing more research than his peers, was not content to copy over one interesting set of annals, but rather, gathered a number of documents together and constructed his own synthesis. Those documents were not always other annals, in a technical sense. However, it seems that Zapata remained utterly faithful to the spirit of the traditional method: he used only documents written in Nahuatl by other Nahuas who had had the intention of keeping a record for posterity. He does not appear to have deviated from this rule.

Don Juan Zapata, as he was known to his cohort, may well have had access to the Actas de Cabildo that we know the indigenous kept. Fortunately, those records still exist for a significant period of time—from 1547 through 1567. In comparing the cabildo records and Zapata’s annals, it becomes clear that Zapata correctly recorded the terms of Tlaxcalan officeholders, lending weight to the idea that he used the cabildo records. However, Zapata regularly introduced an error that he is unlikely to have made repeatedly if he had actually had the Actas open before him: he always got the dates of the Spanish corregidores wrong. (See Table 1.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of corregidor</th>
<th>Dates in “Actas”</th>
<th>Dates in Zapata</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diego Ramírez</td>
<td>1547–1550</td>
<td>1546–1552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alonso de Galdó</td>
<td>1550–1553</td>
<td>1552–1554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerónimo Flores</td>
<td>1553–1555</td>
<td>1555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francisco Verdugo</td>
<td>1555–1559</td>
<td>1556–1559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>don Felipe de Arellano</td>
<td>1559–1562</td>
<td>1560–1562</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From: Actas de cabildo de Tlaxcala, 1547–1567 (México, 1985), and Historia cronológica (Tlaxcala, 1995).

It is notable that Zapata always began a corregidor’s term of office with a date in which the man actually did serve. This suggests a probable explanation. Indigenous annals often referred to Spanish officeholders only when their lives directly touched that of the altepetl—when a viceroy came for a visit, for example, or sent a letter to the town, or died and required that a sumptuous mass be said for him. Thus it is often impossible to tell from indigenous sources what the inclusive dates were for a Spanish authority, even for a viceroy. The same is true in the Actas, but the corregidores in this case were an exception, as they officiated at the cabildo, and so were regularly reported. It seems likely that Zapata was looking at some sort of notes written in Nahuatl—but not the official cabildo record—in which corregidores made periodic appearances, perhaps to

---

12 These were published in Celestino Solís, Valencia and Medina Lima 1985.
13 Reyes and Martínez (1995, pp. 51–52) show that Zapata made errors in this regard, but interpret it as a curious phenomenon, as they still assume he was using the cabildo records.
collect taxes, issue decrees, or die. He then assumed it safe to record that they served from the year of their first appearance in his record, until the year before some other corregidor was mentioned. This alternate source (or sources) would explain why Zapata also includes some details of cabildo business that do not appear in the Actas. In 1550, for example, the cabildo decided to build a town clock and recorded it in their annals, but it is Zapata who tells us that they actually constructed it in 1560, and who the builder was, even though he could not possibly have known this from his own experience.\(^{14}\)

We find a comparable situation in matters relating to the church. Zapata clearly had access to records produced by someone who took Christian religious matters seriously, given the detailed presentation he makes concerning religious issues from a time long before he could remember. Consider the following entry under 1622, when he himself could have been no more than a few years old: “16 nobienbre ycuac huela obispo nican ciudad Tlaxcalla tequaylpeco ytoica don fray Aloso de la Mota amo huela Sepania huela Quadalaxara ynic nican motlali Cuitlaxcohuapan.” (“On the 16th of November the bishop named fray Alonso de la Mota came here to the city of Tlaxcala to carry out confirmations. He did not come from Spain. He came from Guadalajara to establish himself in Cuitlaxcohuapan.”)

In our search for sources, we first turn to the records kept by bishop Mota himself—who, it is true, did not come from Spain, but from another bishopric in Mexico (he had actually been born in the New World), having been a Dominican friar and bishop of Guadalajara first. He confirms what Zapata had to say: “El 13 de Noviembre Sali a la décima vissita hazia la povincia de Táscala, y hize jornada a Topoyanco doctrina de frailes franciscanos. Sujeto de Táscala lengua mexicana. . . . E yo confirme en tres dias que alli estube 518 personas asi españoles como naturales . . .” After stops in several more villages, Fray Alonso adds: “En 22 Sali para Taxcala que es la Cabezera desta provincia.” \(^{15}\)

It seems highly unlikely that Zapata had an official church record in front of him when he wrote: if he had, he would not have said that the bishop came to Tlaxcala on 16 November. He was still in Topoyanco on that day. It seems that instead Zapata had comments written by someone who lived in Topoyanco to work with: perhaps it comes as no surprise to learn that a close family friend who was also interested in history was apparently from there.\(^{16}\)

Zapata’s text itself makes it clear that he was incorporating writings that his indigenous friends and connections had in their possession. Twice he lapses into the first person when quoting others. Once it occurs in the 1640s; he might conceivably have “interviewed” someone after he began writing in the 1660s. But the other occasion is in the year 1617, so he almost certainly had a written text to serve as a source: “Icuac niteniente nimochiuato Santa Ana Chiauhtepan nehuatl Sepeastian de Rozas.” (“At that time I went to become teniente at Santa Ana

\(^{14}\)Lockhart, Berdan and Anderson 1986, p. 69. Lockhart et. al. point out several such occasions on which Zapata provides more information than do the Actas.

\(^{15}\)Mota 1945, pp. 107–08. This is MS.6877 of the Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid.

\(^{16}\)The father of don Manuel Santos y Salazar, who annotated Zapata’s manuscript, was buried there.
Chiauhtenpan, I, Sebastián de Rosas.”) In both cases, the speakers are identified in other paragraphs as official scribes, one working for the cabildo, and the other either for the jail or for the cabildo, but out of an office located in the prison building.\textsuperscript{17}

This still leaves open, however, the question of where Zapata was getting the information he included on other Mexican towns, such as Tetzcoco, and on places as far away as Peru. Wouldn’t this material most likely have come from Spanish sources? Perhaps not. On occasion, we have seen that the Tlaxcalan annalists were borrowing from Mexico City; if Zapata borrowed from what we call “the Anonymous Mexican” and from the Anales de Tula, he certainly may have read other materials. Interestingly, for 1539, Zapata wrote a brief addition to his regular entry stating that in this year emperor Charles V died, as well as Francisco Pizarro.\textsuperscript{18} He was only a couple years off on Pizarro, and in any case, 1539 was the year of the great crisis with Almagro, rumors of which would have filtered back to Mexico in odd spurts. But Charles V died in 1558; no Spanish source would have put the event in 1539. Furthermore, it is probably significant that Zapata is exactly nineteen years off, in that one of the writers participating in the “closed circle” had in fact gotten most events in the first half of the sixteenth century nineteen years off, and as we know, was widely copied. Surely Zapata was getting his information for this entry from an indigenous source of some stripe. Spanish texts that Zapata might have had available to him do not seem to contain any narrative arc that matches his own. The work (in Spanish) of the famous Tlaxcalan mestizo Diego Muñoz Camargo might certainly have been available to him, but as relates to Peru, for example, that text gives different dates for the significant events of exploration and conquest, and for the death of Pizarro.

**Conclusion**

The analysis of Nahuatl annals can yield a variety of perspectives and a range of new information. Frances Krug developed a method in which she put aside for the moment the ostensible thrust of each manuscript and sought instead the origins of its contents. The work of Camilla Townsend proves that the method can be successfully borrowed and applied in a variety of ways, even in regards to apparently unique works. Searching for the sources of Nahuatl annals is of course not the only possible way to approach the documents, but the effort is a profitable endeavor in that it has illuminated a social-cultural network that would not otherwise have been visible. We do not have any indigenous men’s diaries or letters recounting their reading of each other’s materials, but through this method we have learned of the practice nonetheless. Comparative work of this nature has the potential of revealing broad themes and conventions within indigenous traditions of writing history.

\textsuperscript{17}Frances Krug first found the 1617 example. Reyes and Martínez (1995, p. 24), found the second, from 1643. They argue that there is a third example from 1640, using the first person plural. But that one might possibly be explained by Zapata’s having participated as a singer as a young person, for later he certainly uses \textit{ti}- (“we”) in discussing functions in which he participated as a cabildo officeholder.

\textsuperscript{18}Reyes y Martínez 1995, p. 144.
Bibliography


Gómez García, Lidia; Celia Salazar Exaire, and María Elena Stefanón López, eds. 2000. Anales del Barrio de San Juan del Río: Crónica indígena de la ciudad de Puebla, siglo XVII. Puebla: Instituto de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades.


