

ZÒCALO: TRANSFORMATION OF AN AZTEC RELIGIOUS CENTER  
INTO A COLONIAL TOWN SQUARE IN MÈXICO CITY

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **ZÒCALO: TRANSFORMATION OF AN AZTEC RELIGIOUS CENTER INTO A COLONIAL TOWN SQUARE IN MÈXICO CITY**

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This thesis investigates the evolution of the main square (Zòcalo) in Mèxico City, Mexico, from pre-colonial times to the present in terms of its spatial characteristics and public life.

This thesis introduces wide-ranging information about Pre-hispanic America, mainly Aztecs and their urban culture; Spaniards, their background in Europe, and their colonial urban culture in America; and the culture of the Mexican Revolution.

After 1810, the ‘independence soul’ created a nation of so-called ‘cosmic race’, whose aspirations were concretized through new political and social transformation of the main square. The new naming of the square as Plaza de la Constitucion and the demolition of the Pàrian introduced this new concept. Even though later social and political developments changed the main character of the square, colonial urban texture still exists.

Zòcalo faced major modifications in its eventful history, but still demonstrates the traces of the transformation from Aztec Great Sacred Center, first to colonial town square (Plaza Mayor), second to the national square (Plaza de la Constitucion), and finally to the public arena (Zòcalo).

Key words: Plaza Mayor, Spain, Social Transformation, Ideal City,  
Cosmology.

## ÖZ

### ZÒCALO: MEKSİKO CITY'DE BİR AZTEC DİNİ MERKEZİNİN KOLONİ KENT MEYDANINA DÖNÜŞÜMÜ

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Bu tez, Meksika'da Mexico City şehir merkezindeki ana meydanın (Zòcalo) koloni öncesi dönemden başlayarak günümüze dek geçirdiği değişimleri mekansal nitelikler ve toplumsal yaşam bağlamlarında araştırmaktadır.

Bu çalışma, İspanyolların Amerika'ya ulaşımı öncesindeki Aztek kent kültürü; İspanyolların Amerika öncesinde Avrupa'daki kent kültürü ve daha sonra Amerika'daki koloni kent kültürü; ve geç dönemde Meksika'da Cumhuriyet dönemi kent kültürü hakkında kapsamlı bilgi sunmaktadır. İspanyol kolonizminin modern Meksika üzerindeki etkileri tezin üzerinde durduğu diğer bir konudur.

1810'da ortaya çıkan 'bağımsızlık ruhu', 'kozmik ırk' adı verilen bir ulus ortaya çıkartmıştı. Yeni ulusun hedefleri ana meydanın politik ve toplumsal dönüşümünde somutlaştırılmıştır. Plaza Mayor adının Plaza de la Constitucion olarak değiştirilmesi ve Pariàn adı verilen koloni dönemi yapısının yıkılması kozmik bir milliyet yaratma isteminin somut göstergeleri olmuştur. Yaşanan sosyal ve politik gelişmeler meydanın karakterini değiştirse de, koloni kent dokusu şehrin bünyesinde hâlâ gözlemlenebilmektedir.

Zòcalo olaylı tarihinde pek çok değişim görmüştür. Öte yandan bu meydan hâlâ Aztec Büyük Kutsal Meydanı'nın önce koloni kent meydanına (Plaza Mayor), sonra milli meydana (Plaza de la

Constituciòn), ve son olarak da halk meydanına (Zòcalo) dönüşümünün izlerini taşımaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Plaza Mayor, İspanya, Sosyal Dönüşüm, Kozmoloji, İdeal Kent.

To My Parents and people that I love

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Mèxico City, 2006

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

All those cities and villages built in the water, and other great towns on dry land, and the straight and level causeway leading to Mèxico City. These great towns and temple crested pyramids and buildings rising from the water, all made of stone and seemed like an enchanted vision from the chivalric book of Amadis of Gaul. It was a first glimpse of things never heard of, seen or dreamed of before.<sup>1</sup>

These are the words of Bernal Diaz Castillo, who was one of the important commanders of the Spaniards in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. He described what he had once seen in the Aztec capital of 'Tenochtitlàn' and could not forget its appearance even after 40 years. It was his amazement at the city's beauty and magnificence which guided him to write a memorable remembrance of Tenochtitlàn in *Historia Verdadera de la Conquista de la Nueva Espana* (Real History of the Conquest of the New Spain), which is an important source that helped new generations to recognize the Aztec capital as a glorious and dazzling city that is today known as Mèxico City, or with another name Distrito Federal (Federal District).

Mèxico City is located on the southern portion of the high plateau in the central valley of Mèxico and has an extension of 9560 square kilometers which is part of North America (**figure 1**) Its population is over 20 million and thanks to its history, the city shows an exciting combination of ancient, colonial and modern art and architecture (Castillo, 2004; Early, 2000, Greenfield, 1994).

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<sup>1</sup> This is a book written in Spain whose character was named Gaules, the Spanish knight, loyal to his lover and likes traveling and been in beautiful gardens in the 16th century (Luraghi, 2000: 66).



**figure 1. Location of the Mèxico in general world map**  
(source: [www.lib.utexas.edu](http://www.lib.utexas.edu), color modified by the author)

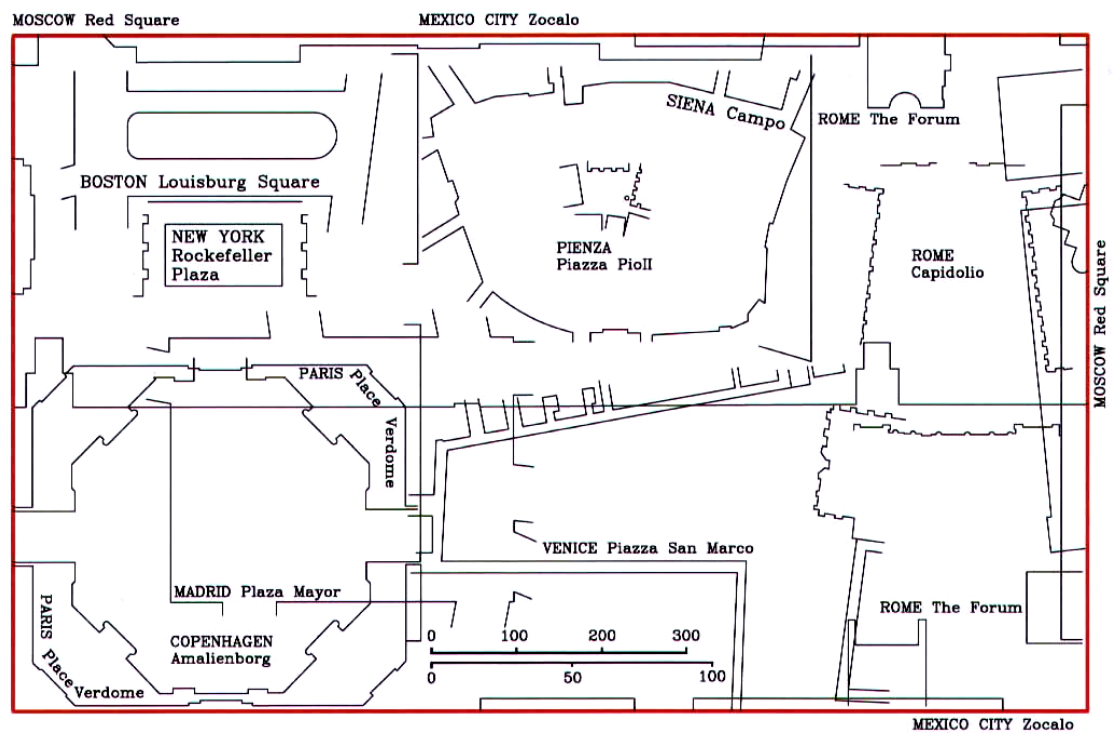
By 1524, the conquered capital became viceroyalty, governed by a Viceroy who represented the king of Spain and very soon most of It was the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century when Spanish Commander Hernàn Cortès took over the Aztec land and finally conquered the Aztec capital Tenochtitlàn on August 13, 1523, which was a turning point for the Aztec art, architecture and society. It was not long before the entire Aztec Empire was conquered and renamed as New Spain. the Northern, Central, and Southern America were colonized by the Spaniards, including the islands in the Caribbean (Grizzard, 1986).

The urban scale and architecture changed radically as a result of this colonization. The Great Sacred Square was a significant main Aztec sacred area, which was situated at the heart of the Aztec capital 'Tenochtitlàn' and had strong symbolical and political meanings. In its time, the Great Sacred Square was used as a ceremonial center and its obvious architecture was very different. There were Aztec temples which were later destroyed by the Conquerors and then the side of the center was transformed into a colonial town square and named as Plaza Mayor surrounded by new buildings that perfectly reflected colonial ideology. Today, Plaza Mayor is known with the official name of Plaza de la Constituciòn and it is the second largest public plaza in the world after the Red Square in Moscow <sup>2</sup> **(figure 2)**

The Spanish colonial period lasted from 1521 to 1821. Today, the traces of this period can be seen in modern Mèxico and the U.S. Southwest. In ancient times, Spain, like the Imperial Rome, imposed its urban planning principles on Mèxico. So deeply it penetrated its influence that its effects can be traced long after the collapse of colonialism (Grizzard, 1986; Webb, 1990: 105)

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<sup>2</sup> Some sources state that the square is the third of the world's squares.



**figure 2. Scale of the world squares, red line refers to the scale of Zòcalo  
(source: Zucker, 1966, reproduced by Enrique Loredó)**

The present knowledge about the Pre-colonial period was derived from some of the bishops who were sent by the Spanish King to evangelize the Aztec, and some conquistadors like Bernal Diaz del Castillo, Hernàn Cortès, and Francico de Aguilar, who left very detailed information. The architectural history of the Colonial Mèxico is wide-ranging and has extensive academic themes. There are important works on Colonial Art and Architecture that were written in Spanish, such as that of Diego Angulo Iniguez, Carlos Chanfon Olmos, Eduardo Matos Moctezuma, Manuel Sanchez de Carmona, Manuel Toussaint, Federico Gomez Orozco, and Justino Fernàndez. There are significant studies which were written in English as well. One of them is that of George Kubler, whose detailed analysis provides foreign researchers opportunity to investigate in this field.

Recent investigations have been based on archeological discoveries of the Aztec period. Objects recovered from underground have shed light on the past and changed the perspective towards the Aztecs. The first archeological discovery was the sun stone revealed in 1790 in Plaza Mayor.<sup>3</sup> After that, especially the discovery of the monolith of Coyolxauhqui, which was found accidentally, attracted the attention of the government. Thus, archeological excavations gained speed in 1978, through which many other new objects were unearthed. These discoveries opened the door for the Templo Mayor Project. A very well organized team of archeologists and specialists of different disciplines worked in collaboration with enthusiasm. Today, it is their work that unearthed the Templo Mayor Archaeological Zone and Museum situated at the northern side of Metropolitan Cathedral, whose rich collection was borne out of the excavations carried out in the archeological zone of Templo Mayor.

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<sup>3</sup> It is known as the stone of the sun or the Aztec calendar, built around 1479. The rock of basalt is about 25 tons and 3.58 meters. The sculpted figureures represent the complex of Aztec cosmogony.

This thesis explores the role of the Main Square in the development of the space from the pre-colonial times to the present. The Main Square in particular encapsulates a country's political, commercial, intellectual, cultural, and religious identities. The focal points of this research constitute these characteristics of the square which are also shared by the other cities of New Spain and their spatial organization demonstrates a number of frequent political and religious alterations. Meanwhile, this research aims to emphasize the spatial continuation of the main square, which can also be observed in the urban texture of the city in general.

In addition, this thesis will introduce some wide-ranging basic information about the Pre-hispanic America, Aztecs and their social and architectural features, Spaniards and their colonial movement in American Continent, Spanish American urban life and the Mexican Revolution. Moreover, the Spanish Colonial impact on Modern Mexico and its European background will be examined.

## CHAPTER 2

### PREHISPANIC PERIOD: AZTECS AND FORMATION OF TENOCHTITLÀN (MÈXICO CITY)

#### 2.1 Historical Background

The pre-hispanic period refers to the history of the American peninsula before the conquest of the Mesoamerica and South American terrain. With the conquest of the Spaniards and the Portuguese, the Maya, the Aztec and Inca Civilizations were eradicated, thereby unexpectedly disrupting their roots and centuries of cultural development. Although the Maya, Aztec and Inca are well-known civilizations today, the record related to the people who lived on the continent goes archaic stage of the history. This ethnic diversity of the Mesoamerican people was considered to be a result of an exodus <sup>4</sup> **(figures 3-6)** During the passing centuries, Mesoamerican cultures like Olmec (1500-400 B.C.), Teotihuacan (100 B.C.-A.D.750), and Toltec (A.D. 900-1150) created well-off civilizations in the Valley of Mèxico. For example, the pyramids of Teotihuacan (Place of Gods) near Mèxico City and archaeological ruins of Toltecs at Tula near Mèxico City are the witnesses of these glorious old days. **(figures 7-9)**

As the Toltec Empire lost its power and was dismantled in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, its collapse gave speed to immigration and new patterns of settlement, demographic growth and political arrangement in the area.

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<sup>4</sup> It is considered that groups of Asian people immigrated to the American Continent by canoes in prehistoric ages.

DATE:	PERIOD	SOUTHERN MESOAMERICA	NORTHERN MESOAMERICA
AD 1500	POSTCLASSIC		AZTEC
AD 1000		CHICHENITZA	TOLTEC
AD 500	CLASSIC	CLASSIC MAYA	
0	FORMATIVE	MONTE ALBAN	TEOTIHUACAN
500 BC		OLMEC	
1000 BC			
1500 BC		OCOS	
2000 BC	POSTCLASSIC		
8000 BC	CLASSIC		
20,000 BC			

**figure 3. Time Table of the Mesoamerican Continent**  
 (source: Carmack; Gasco; Gossen, 1996: 43, color and drawing modified)





**figure 4. Building of Hochob, Yucatan,Maya Culture**



**figure 5. Machu Picchu, Inca Culture, Peru**  
(source: [www.bikertony.com](http://www.bikertony.com))







**figure 7. Sculpture of the emperor, Olmec culture, San Lorenzo**  
(source: Carmack, Gasco, Gossen, 1996: 31)



**figure 8. Pyramid of Sun, Teotihuacan, Mèxico**



**figure 9. Toltec sculptures, Tula (source: Glubok, 1968: 14)**

Not only the Aztecs, but all of the tribes in the region were influenced by the Toltec culture, whose civilization created prosperity in the Valley of Mèxico and was an extremely important cultural benefit for the newcomers. After the fall of the Toltec civilization, many groups of people immigrated into Anahuac (Valley of Mèxico). The Chichimec were warrior nomads, some of the first big groups of whom settled in the valley, mainly in Tenayuca and some 100 years later in Texcoco. Some time later they would be known as Acolhuas. Soon, the Valley became overcrowded. For this reasons, it witnessed numerous tribal battles. The Tepanecas were another group of people who immigrated from Chicomoztoc and founded the city of Azcapotzalco.<sup>5</sup>

The last of the seven ethnic groups to settle in Anahuac was the Mexica. Today this group of people is known as Aztecs, whose name was coined by modern scholars in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>6</sup> Tezozomoc, the King of the Azcapotzalco, allowed the Aztecs to settle down in an island in the middle of the lake under the condition of paying tribute. In addition, he forced other groups to pay tribute including those in the city of Texcoco (Acolhuacan) and Tlacopan (Tacuba).<sup>7</sup>

The Aztecs were the final and best documented of the Mesoamerican cultures who gained a very complicated social structure through the centuries. Unfortunately, there is limited knowledge about the earliest Aztecs due to lack of sufficient records. At the very beginning, the Aztecs were a nomadic tribe of Nahuatl-speaking Indians. Their story started in Aztlan located at the Northern

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<sup>5</sup> Chicomoztoc is the northern part of Mèxico.

<sup>6</sup> Mexica is an expression derived from conceivably their god Meztli or from the words of *meztli* (moon), and *xictli* (center), which refers to the city in the middle of the lake of the moon.

<sup>7</sup> The governor of Acolhuacan was murdered and the throne was usurped by the lord of Azcapotzalco. Later, there was an alliance between Izcoztl governor of Tenochtitlàn, Nezahualcoyotl legitimate governor of Acolhuacan by inheritance, and the lord of Tlacopan. They rose to fight against Azcapotzalco and when it was destroyed in 1431, Nezahualcoyotl regained his supremacy.

part of Mèxico. Their settlement is said to have been in a small Island surrounded by a lake.<sup>8</sup> The origin was driven from Chicomoztoc.<sup>9</sup> During their long-lasting exodus, they settled in different places. One of these was the Coatepec, which was in close proximity to Tula. Here, Aztecs had one of the greatest battles to gain their sovereignty, a battle which took place in their famous legends.<sup>10</sup> After all, Atitalaquia, Tequixquiac, and Zumpango were just some of the places that accommodated by Aztecs. Later on, they settled in Chapultepec near Lake Texcoco and stayed there for almost 20 years until they were excluded by their neighbors **(figure 10)**

Aztecs were considered as uncivilized and vulgar by their neighbors and became their servants and helped them as mercenary soldiers at the beginning.<sup>11</sup> In time, with their vigilant political performance, their feeble situation in the community completely changed. As a result of the triple alliance and the war made between the Acolhaus and Tepanec, the Aztecs declared their independence. They made important marriages with chief families which assisted them to gain prestige in the society.<sup>12</sup> These marriages helped the Aztec leaders to claim the inheritance of the Toltec.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> This is the place of the Crane which some researchers named to be a Place of Heroes.

<sup>9</sup> 'seven caverns'

<sup>10</sup> Coatepec; 'serpent hill'

<sup>11</sup> As a matter of fact even when they were in Aztlan, they had already become a settled community and developed an agricultural system as Mesoamerican farming people.

<sup>12</sup> An example is Acamapichtli, a new ruler (1372) who was the son of the Aztec nobleman and a Toltec princess.

<sup>13</sup> For the Aztecs history and detailed information: Parkes, 1969; Davies, 1980; Rosaldo Wirth, 1982; Calnek, 1982; Miller, 1986; Caso, 1988; Matos Montezuma, 1989; Lathrop, 1991; Day, 1992; Azpeitia, 1992; Weaver, 1993; Townsend, 2001; Rosenberg, 2003.



**figure 10. Map of the possible immigration route of Aztecs.**  
(source: Davies, 1980: 9)

## 2.2 Foundation of Tenochtitlàn

Proud of itself  
Is the city of Mèxico-Tenochtitlàn  
Here no one fears to die in war.  
This is our glory  
This is your command  
Oh Giver of Life!  
Have this is in mind, oh princes,  
Do not forget it  
Who could conquer Tenochtitlàn?  
Who could shake the foundation of heaven?<sup>14</sup>

It was the year of 1325 A.D. when the city of Tenochtitlàn was founded in the middle of the lake of Texcoco, which was the largest body of the water system that circulated the Valley of Mèxico<sup>15</sup> **(figure 11)** The initial step to build a city started with the construction of a temple in a marshy area which was offered to Aztecs' god. The construction of a temple was very simple in this earliest temple. Wood and mud were the main elements to shape the temple. This temple transformed the site into a sacred place and constituted the center of the religious precinct. The buildings constructed after the main temple were made in accordance with cosmological notions of Aztecs (Towsend, 1979: 9; Matos Montezuma, 1987: 51). Their cosmological notion will be investigated in following parts of the thesis.

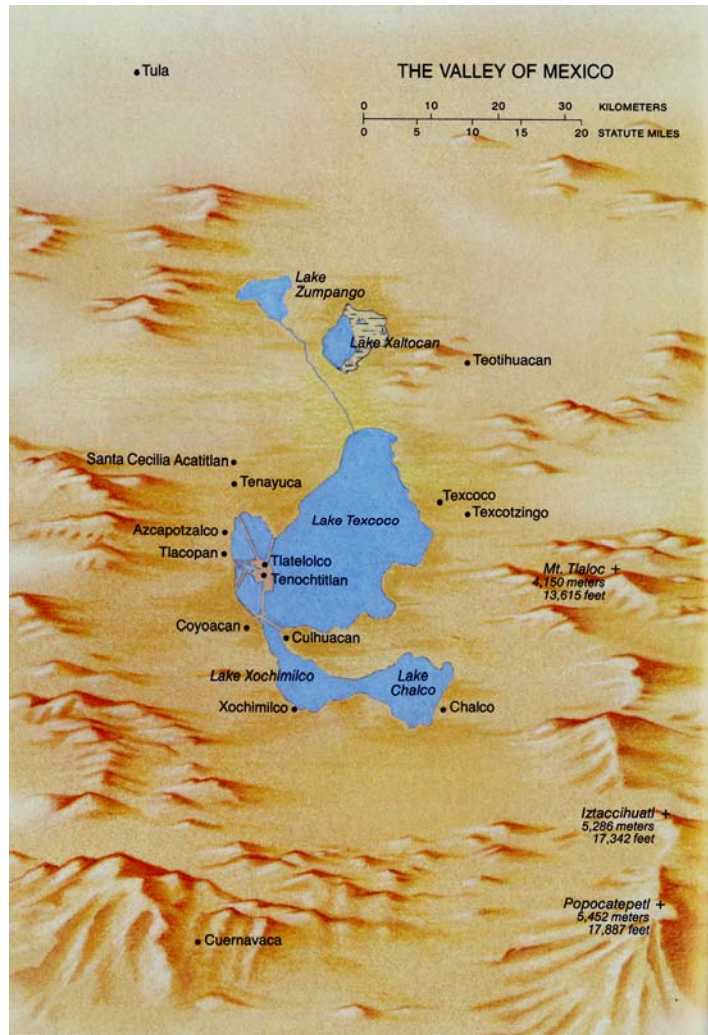
The economic development of the Aztecs allowed the transportation of specialized craftsmen and common laborers into Tenochtitlàn so that they supplied the architectural and sculptural demands of the enlarging city.

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<sup>14</sup> Mexica song.

<sup>15</sup> Tenochtitlàn refers to 'Among the Stone Cactus Fruit' (Smith, 1996: 197).





**figure 11. General view of the Lake Texcoco, Valley of Mexico  
(source: Gene, 1987)**

Before the construction activity, first of all large wooden stakes were driven into soft land to make the ground available and secure for new building activities.<sup>16</sup> After getting secured ground, *tezontli* kind of volcanic stone was obtained nearby and carried by canoes to the construction area. This stone was the main element for these deeds. The political system of Aztecs also shaped their cities, which increased the power of the city strengthened by marriages in a few years (Towsend, 1979: 11; Lathrop, 1991: 154).

After 90 years of establishment of the Tenochtitlàn, Aztecs served their neighbors, especially the Tepanec Empire, which ruled the area. In 1426, the ruler of Tepanecas, Tezozomoc, died and the empire fell into pandemonium. Aztecs took advantage of the situation and with Tlacopan and Texcoco they occupied Azcapotzlco and ruined the Tepanec Empire in 1428. After that, they created the triple alliance in the valley which is composed by Tlacopan, Texcoco and Tenochtitlàn ruled the Aztec Empire and the valley witnessed the growing supremacy of the new power (Schütz, 1991: 29).

### **2.2.1 Foundation Legend**

The legend starts with the big exodus from North America through the South. Initially, big groups of the tribes, seven in number, migrated into Anahuac, today Valley of Mèxico.<sup>17</sup> In keeping with legend, “the promised land” was an idea that pushed Aztecs from the north to the south. They were guided by their protector god Huitzilopochtli until the Lake of Texcoco to find their ‘promised land’

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<sup>16</sup> Creating a secure ground level before the building usually not worked because of the geographic configuration of the land which made common rebuilding and restoration activities be required.

<sup>17</sup> Anahuac refers to ‘on the edge of the water’ which denotes to all Valley of Mèxico.

as assured by their god.<sup>18</sup> (Townsend, 2001: 64) It was a very long migration through the south part of the continent, which started in about 1000 A.D. and lasted almost 200 years. They settled in some fertile places for one or two years, after which they kept their hazardous migration until 1193. A.D.<sup>19</sup> During their tiresome exodus, they settled in numerous of places, one of which was the Tizapan ruled by Culhuacan. The leader of Culhuacan, named Achitometl, permitted the group to settle down despite adverse conditions of the area. He thought that the place where the Aztecs settled in was hazardous and he envisaged that the group would leave the area soon. However, the Mexica coped with diverse geographical hardships and changed the unproductive area into a fertile basin, even using snakes for their diet. After some time they fought against Achitometl, which gave a closer location to the Lake of Texcoco (Matos Montezuma, 1989: 49).

They encountered Anauhac (Valley of Mèxico), a highly populated and fertile inland basin, at the very end of the exodus. Huitzilopochtli, the protector of the Mexicas, appeared to the one of the priests and told where the tribe should settle down. Huitzilopochtli whispered that whenever the group would see an eagle perched on a cactus, it would be a sign to indicate where the tribe must be established. The members of the tribe followed the instruction given by the God. The place where they saw an eagle perching on a cactus and holding a snake was the Tenochtitlàn, surrounded by marshy area and cacti in the middle of the Lake of Texcoco<sup>20</sup> **(figure 12)**

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<sup>18</sup> Huitzilopochtli is known as god of war and the morning sun.

<sup>19</sup> Huitzilopochtli could be the leader who was later deified.

<sup>20</sup> An eagle holding a snake on a cactus is the emblem of the Republic of Mèxico.



**figure 12. Representation of the symbol of Tenochtitlàn.  
(source: Duran, 1994)**

As soon as they settled, they built a temple for their God of war and the sun, where once stood an eagle (Parkes, 1969: 20; Lathrop, 1991: 153; Gruzinski, 1992: 18-23; Townsend, 2001: 53, 64).

The foundation of the Tenochtitlàn is described in Duran's study. The description of the place where once the foundation sign had been seen by the Aztecs is as follows:

The first thing they found was a beautiful, pure white juniper tree, at the foot of which the spring came forth. The first thing they saw was that all the willows around that spring were white, without a single green leaf. All the reeds of that place were white, and all the cattails around. There began to come forth from the water pure white frogs and fish and among them some water snakes, white and showy. This water came out between two large boulders, and it was so beautiful and clear that it gave pleasure. Wandering from place to place, they spied the nopal, and on top of it, the eagle, with its wings extended toward the sun's rays, taking the warmth of it and the cool of the morning and in its talons it held a very handsome bird with precious and shining feathers (Duran, 1994).

After the construction of the main pyramid, once again their god communicated with one of the priests and gave the instruction for the formation of the city. God whispered that the city should be divided into four principal quarters and the home most follow the center, which was to be preserved for god (Matos Montezuma, 1987).

### **2.2.2. Description and Earlier Plans of Tenochtitlàn**

Early information about the old Aztec capital was derived from the conquistadors and priests. They usually described the city with its pyramidal temples, which were great in number, palaces and market places. It is known from the book of Bernal Diaz Castillo that they were all surprised by the appearance of Tenochtitlàn at the first glimpse over the city. They saw the stone as a main construction element and stucco used as an ornamentation element to shape the formation of the buildings of Aztec city. The use of these materials gave magnificent appearance to the settlement with their paintings made on. The architecture was not the only element which shaped the

urban scale. They were accompanied by gardens laden with flowers, fruit trees and statues. This made the Conquistadors feel that they had discovered the one of the worlds wonders. However, this beauty did not last long. As Castillo narrates, *'now all that I then saw has vanished, nothing remains'*(Early, 1994; Diaz Castillo, 2004

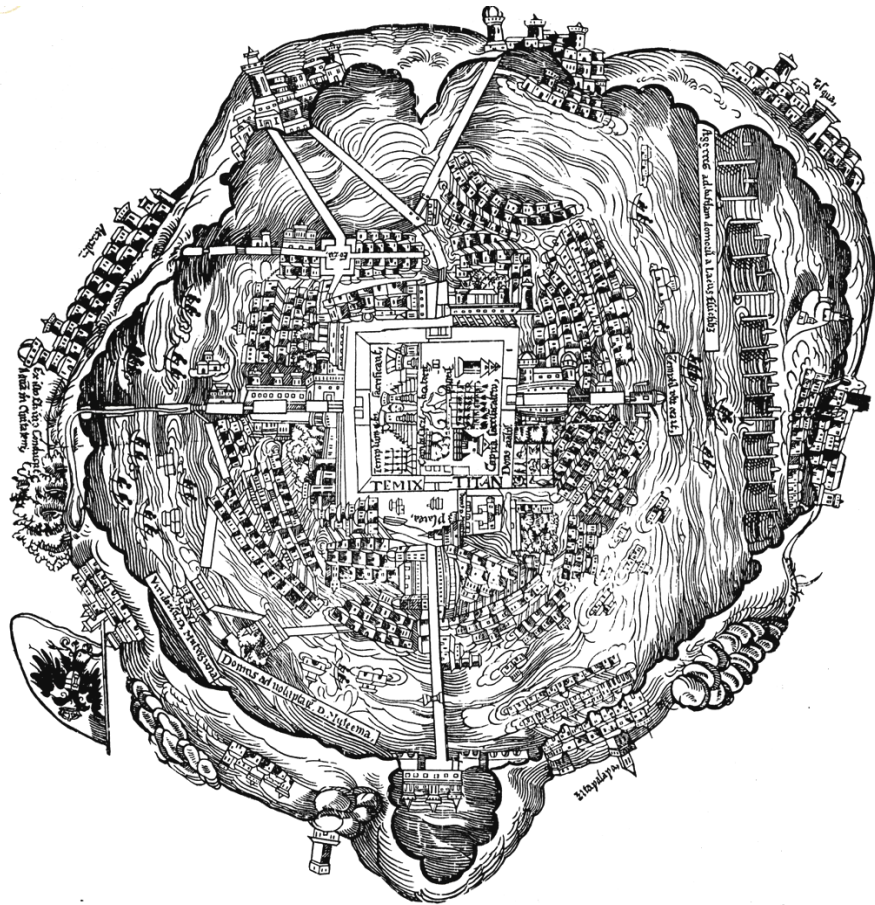
There is no doubt that there were sketches of the Aztec capital made by the natives although they cannot be seen today. Despite the lack of a complete representation of the original Tenochtitlán, it is known that there were some main elements like the sacred area with the temples and palaces of Montezuma and some causeways which run through the lagoon towards the cardinal points. <sup>21</sup> The only graphic representation that exists about Tenochtitlán is the plan reproduced in Cortès's letter, published in Nürenberg in 1524 **(figure 13)** The plans of Tenochtitlán based on observations were printed in 1524, which was conventionalized for its appearance by the European engraver. The masterful study by Manuel Toussaint, Justino Fernández and Federico Gómez de Orozco was produced in 1938. It demonstrated the location of the parts that can be trusted to be the image of Tenochtitlán. In accordance with the plan of the scholars, the center would be occupied by the sacred space, the ceremonial enclosure, where the Great Temple (Templo Mayor/Twin Temple) was located. It was the fundamental center of the town. From this sacred place would run the roadways oriented toward the cardinal points which give the city a shape of regularity <sup>22</sup> (Palm, 1969: 127; Benevelo, 1978: 450; Fernàndez; Orozco; Toussaint, 1990; Matos Montezuma, 1997: 177) **(figure 14)**

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<sup>21</sup>Montezuma was the emperor of the Aztecs

<sup>22</sup> Templo Mayor means the main temple.





**figure 13. Plan of the Tenochtitlàn attributed to Heran Cortès.  
(source: Toussaint, Orozco, Justino; 1990)**



figure 14. Plan of the Tenochtitlàn produced by Manuel Toussaint and Justino Fernàndez. (source: Toussaint, Orozco, Justino; 1990



In the plan of Tenochtitlàn, the grid pattern is favored in order to generate a regular configuration for all buildings as similar to that of Teotihuacan and cardinal points are emphasized.<sup>23</sup> These cardinal points and their importance amplified the whole Tenochtitlàn area. Because of the orientation of the sun, the east and west axes gained significance and these directions occupied the architectural design.<sup>24</sup> A city was urbanized around the religious center and pyramids, which were constructed in the sacred area dominating the city scale and governmental buildings, which enclosed the important holy zone. The arrangement of these buildings was preceded by astronomical rules.

Outside the central religious zone, there were public houses, which were flat-roofed, single-storied and constructed from stone or clay bricks according to social condition. These houses lacked formal planning. The houses were small in size and their general outward shows were rural. Palm suggests that the reason for having a rural area near the monumental centre was due to special circumstances like the lack of space in the aquatic city. Houses, workshops, schools, markets and neighborhood sanctuaries were separated by a wall all the way through from the sacred territory and alienated by gardens<sup>25</sup> (Kubler, 1948: 53; Palm, 1969: 108,128; Smith, 1996: 186; Schütz, 1991: 30).

For the transportation system, only canals were used to transport products by canoes to the marketplaces and houses. The width of the canals was not bigger than the streets and one of them ran from south of today's National Palace, fifteen feet wide and almost

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<sup>23</sup> In Mesoamerican cosmology, every cardinal point has its own color and is represented by God. For each of four, different rituals are held (Smith, 1996: 198).

<sup>24</sup> The orientation of streets and buildings was 6.5 degrees east of the true north.

<sup>25</sup> School known as telpochcalli.

six feet deep. The water level was lower than the street level by almost three feet (Kubler, 1948: 77). The main streets of the city consisted of these canals. The other parts of the city had such narrow streets that only two people could walk side by side (Sanchez De Carmona, 1989: 21-22; Lucena Salmoral, 1990: 82). **(figure 15)**

Aztecs obtained knowledge about their sacred zone from the Tula. Their buildings were particularly similar that of Tula. As far as it is known, Aztecs derived many of the cultural knowledge like architectural and sculptural styles from the previous civilizations, which was mainly from Teotihuacan and Toltecs. (Smith, 1996: 198) Tenochtitlàn's shape has its antecedent in Tehotihuacan, where it can be seen that the citadel is considered the center of itself. From the citadel, the roadways extend from north to south (Matos Montezuma, 1997: 177). However, Tenochtitlàn had a different urban layout from the other settlements of the Valley of Mèxico. Even though the plan of Tenochtitlàn conserved the composition of ceremonial center, it had the residential area as well (Palm, 1969: 198). The most notable difference is that Aztecs had the sacred precinct fortified by a wall and it was surrounded by the wall along residential areas and barrios. Their relationships strengthened with common activities held in the secret space. Yet, the ritual center has similar features with Teotihuacán and Tula. <sup>26</sup>

However, besides religious and political reasons, there was another reason to adopt a grid layout. It was the competence of the plan while creating new settlements. In other words, this type of plan provided for the need of the rapidly expanding of the city scale. For that reason, the grid layout was the easiest plan to be used by civilizations during the centuries.

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<sup>26</sup> The Teotihuacán was collapsed in 7<sup>th</sup> century.



**figure 15. Xochomilco, one of the original canals of Aztecs.**

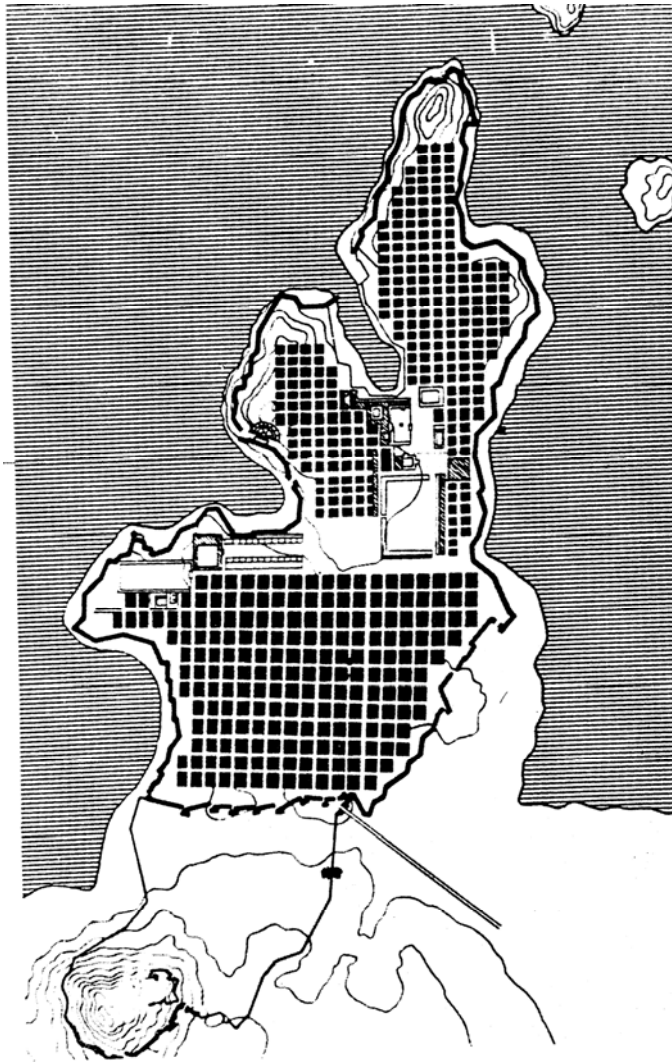
For example, this type of plan was favored by the Greeks as well, as in the example of Priene and Miletos (Smith, 1996: 198-199) **(figure 16)** In the 1400s, Tenochtitlàn mostly completed its transformation and it turned to be one of the significant and remarkable urban centers of Mesoamerica. The centre and the main avenues guided according to the cardinal points, the wall, and the aqueduct. This planning system and the great size indicated Tenochtitlàn's magnificence **(figure 17)**

The urbanization of the Tenochtitlàn was particularly affected by the *chinampas* that surrounded the city in a radial form. These *chinampas* can be seen also in the interpretive plan of Toussaint and Fernández. *Chinampas* was the artificial small islands, which surrounded the main island. While the main plaza was situated upon the original island, the other buildings and fertile gardens were located on the artificial islands. This *chinampa system* of the Mexica expanded the marshy area into fertile inland and they helped the expanding city scale **(figure 18)** The buildings constructed upon *chinampas* took advantage of these fertile grounds that helped to city look emerald. This system is usually considered as an exclusive factor of the Aztec civilization<sup>27</sup> (Palm, 1969: 127-129; Townsend, 1979: 7,11; Lucena Salmoral, 1990: 82; Smith, 1996: 196,200) **(figures 19)**

It has been said that during the reign of Montezuma, the population was estimated to be 400, 000. For this reason, it was the largest city with the area of between 12 and 15 sq.km. Tenochtitlàn was divided into four districts. After some time, these districts were subdivided into 80 zones. The smallest size of these governmental organs, named as *calpulli*, had its council leader and assembly room (Schütz,1991: 30).

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<sup>27</sup> As a matter of fact it is better to consider the Aztec example as a solution for the characteristic of geographical and human situation, which can be seen in other parts of the world like that of Mesopotamia.



**figure 16. Plan of Miletos (source: Sanchez De Carmona, 1989: 52)**

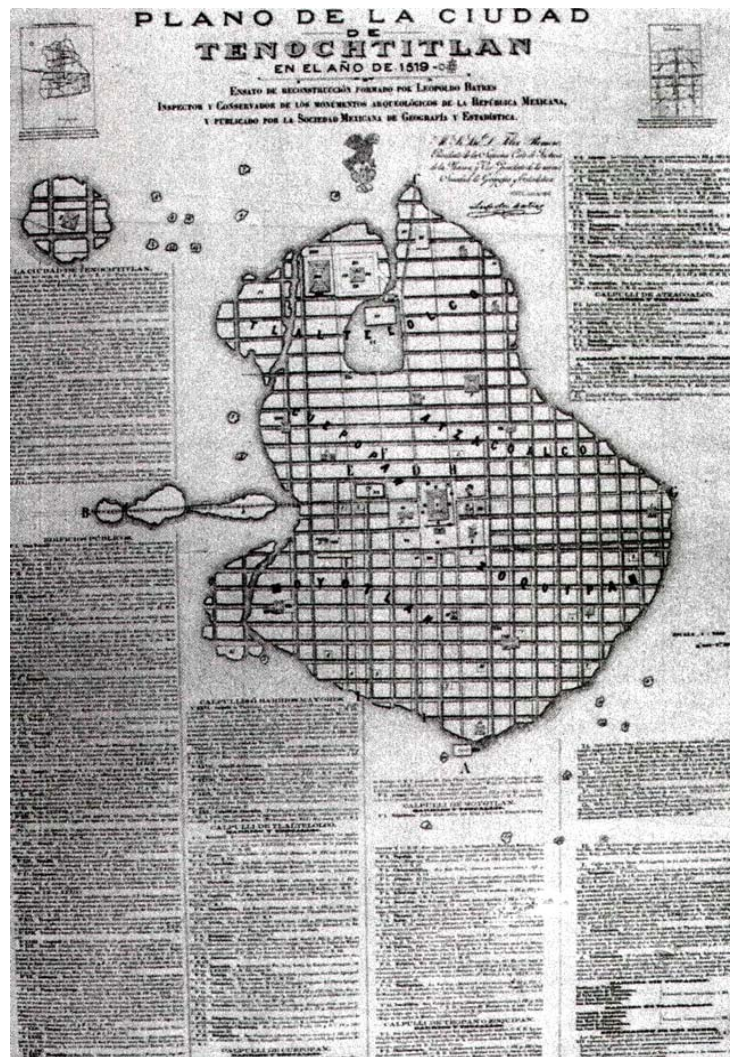
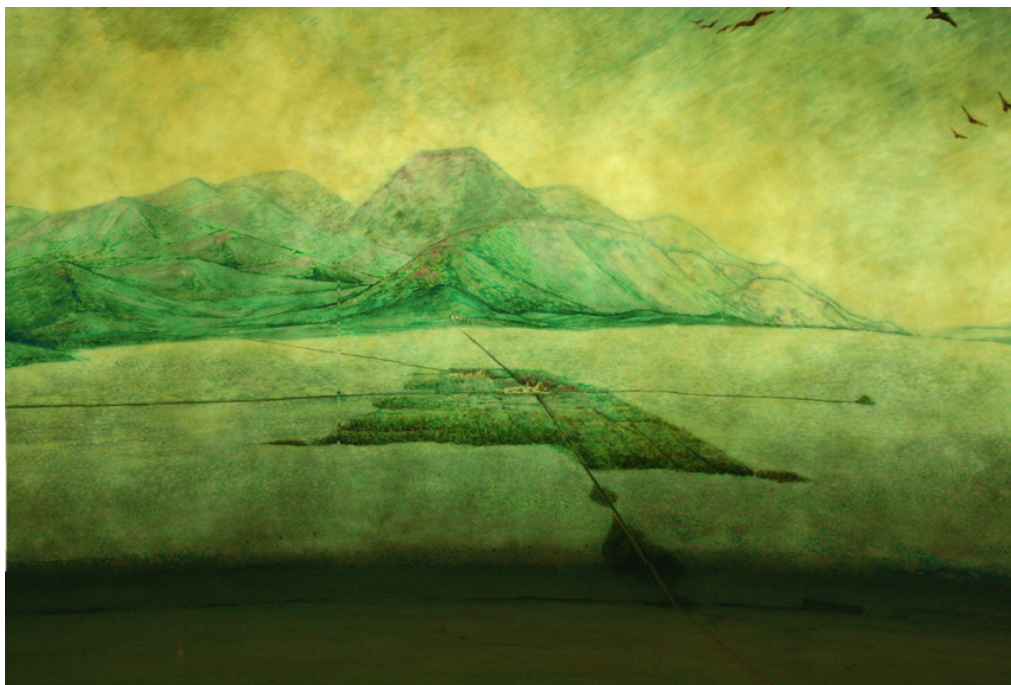


figure 17. Hypothetical plan of Tenochtitlàn before the conquest, attributed to Leopoldo Batres (source: Sanchez De Carmona, 1989: 18)





**figure 18. A model for chinampa system, Templo Mayor Museum**



**figure 19. Hypothetical reconstruction of Tenochtitlàn, Templo Mayor Museum**

The area had eighty thousand and one hundred and twenty-five thousand residences. There were also carefully attended zoos where all animals and snakes of the country were represented (Lathrop, 1991: 157).

After the foundation of Tenochtitlàn, small groups of Aztecs moved to Tlatelolco, the small island at the neighbors of Tenochtitlàn. Tenochtitlàn and Tlatelolco expanded in the same period with one important difference. While Tlatelolco was the financial center, Tenochtitlàn displayed the characteristic of a religious and political center. They were just divided by a branch of the lake and attached by a viaduct. Being built on an island, the two settlements had linkage with the causeways which connected to Coyohuacan, Tlacopan, and Tepeyacac (Matos Montezuma, 1989: 52; Lucena Salmoral, 1990: 82).

Even though Aztec cities were a small version of the capital, from the archeological excavations, it is understood that the idea about other Aztec cities is not true. Until now, it had been considered that all Aztec cities were planned and demonstrated to have the same order like Tenochtitlàn but urban centers like Otumba, Huexotla, Xaltocan, and Yautepec proved that different types of settlements were preferred by Aztec Civilization. Most of them had a rural appearance due to their unplanned residential regions and agricultural events held within the urban sites (Smith, 1996: 186,195).



### 2.2.2.1 The Great Sacred Square

Today, the Great Sacred Square lies mostly under the buildings and a square which belongs to colonial period. After the fall of Tenochtitlàn in 1521, the Great Sacred Square was almost entirely destroyed and Avila brothers built a home at the top of the ruins that was the Great Temple of the Sacred Square. In 1566, the brothers were detained by Martin Cortès for conspiring with the Spanish crown. The Avila brothers were sentenced to death and beheaded, while their houses were destroyed, the property remained abandoned for many years and it was used as a trash heap for years **(figure 20)**

Then the land of the Avila properties was granted to the Universidad Real Pontificia (Royal and Pontifical University) to construct main quarters. However, the project was never carried out and the lands later passed into the hands of different owners.

In 1928, the bookshop Libreria Robredo was opened on the land where the ruins of Templo Mayor were still hidden (INAH). In 1913, the Mexican anthropologist Manuel Gamio found the place where the remains of the Mexica temple was.

It was an important step when Coyolxaunqui stone was discovered in 1978 while some workers of the Electric Company were working in the area. It was to be the starting point for new excavations.<sup>28</sup> Since Coyolxauhqui stone was almost intact, this new discovery attracted the attention of the Government.

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<sup>28</sup> Coyolxauhqui is in the Museum of Templo Mayor and its copy can be seen in the open area of the ruins of the pyramid. Coyolxauhqui is the moon goddess and the sister of Huitzilopochtli, who has a naked and crashed body. In legends, it is said that the goddess was killed by his brother Huitzilophoctli and was thrown down from the hill (Schütz,1991: 33).



**figure 20. Templo Mayor before the excavation (source: INAH)**

Then the immense Templo Mayor project was started with leadership of the archeologist Moctezuma, who followed the trace of Ignacio Marquina's map about the plan of the Great Sacred Square(**figures 21-22**)When they excavated the ditch which had already been opened by workers, they encountered the lower steps of the pyramid of the Templo Mayor. In order to continue the excavation, unfortunately, some of the 16th century colonial buildings had to be demolished(Smithson, 1996) (**figures 23-24**)The recent excavations and especially the Templo Mayor Projects were introduced to the Aztec civilization in modern times. From the excavations, it is once more understood that the center of the Great Sacred Square was divided into four directions, which lead to the principal road (avenue). Meanwhile, they created four neighbors with each having its own ceremonial center (**figure 25**) This grand plaza was surrounded by a wall that had stairs on its interior façade (Matos Montezuma, 1989; Sanchez De Carmona ,1989)

The center measured approximately about 500 meters on a side and in rectangular form. Dances would take place in the courtyard, where up to 10,000 people could participate (Angulo Iniguez, 1974: 9-10; Lucena Salmoral, 1990: 87). Four gates led into the Plaza, which leaned in the direction toward the west. From these openings, by the walkway, one can reach Ixtapalapa, Tacuba, and Tepeyac. The inside of the plaza consisted of schools, altars, shrines, temples and assembly halls (Schütz, 1991: 32; Smith, 1996: 203) (**figure 26**)

Bernal Díaz del Castillo narrates about the physical appearance of the Great Sacred Square as follows;

The center had, a great circuit of court yard that I believe are bigger than the square at Salamanca, and surrounded by two fences, the patio and place is totally paved of stones, of big flat stones, and where there is no stones it was whitewashed and polished and so clean that I would not find a straw or powder on it. (Diaz Castillo, 2001)



**figure 21. Coyolxauhqui stone, Templo Mayor Museum**

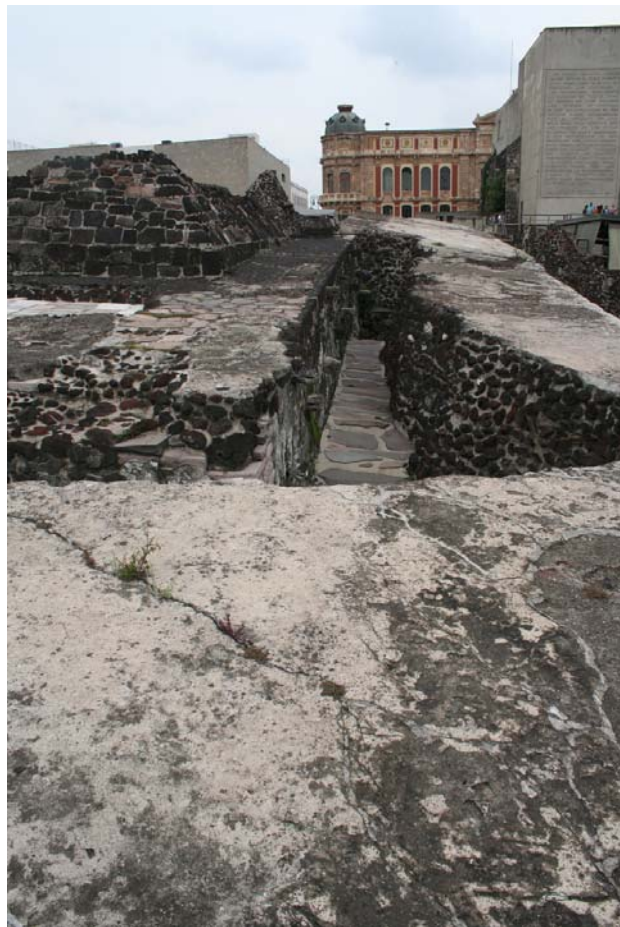


**figure 22. Archeologist with Coyolxauhqui stone, Templo Mayor Museum**





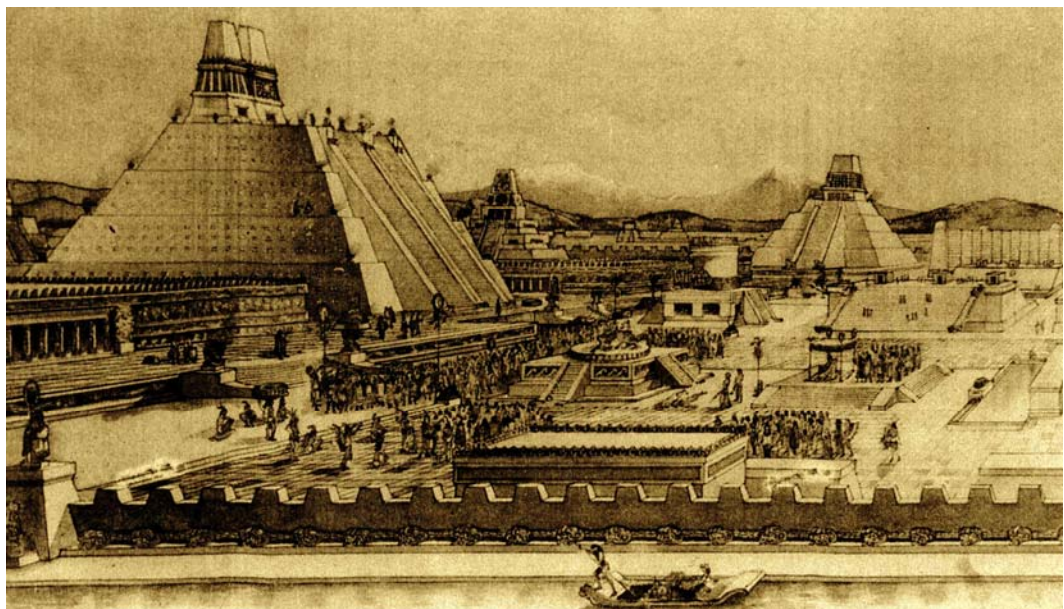
**figure 23. View source: the Templo Mayor through the colonial buildings.**



**figure 24. View source: Templo Mayor surrounded by colonial buildings**



**figure 25. Model of the Great Sacred Square and its causeway**



**figure 26. Illustration of the Great Sacred Square.**  
 (source: Sanchez de Carmona, 1989: 16, color modified by the author)

Religion in some way was bound to the government and it was something traditional in the prehispanic trace. Montezuma's and previous emperors' houses were situated outside of the district wall, which showed political and religious formation of the city. (Towsend, 1979: 7) There was the *calmecac* school, meeting halls, and the palace for Montezuma's father, Axayacatl.<sup>29</sup> The architectural style of these buildings was similar to the previous examples of Teotihuacán and Tula, which show their association with old civilizations.<sup>30</sup> (Smith, 1996: 200)

This center was surrounded by a profane palace, homes of emperors and noble people. (Sanchez De Carmona, 1989: 21-22). As chronicles inform, in order to build homes the Aztecs, first of all the platform is made firm by sinking wooden piles into the ground and tightened with stones between them.

The stone was the main construction element for these houses and their façade was covered by stucco created by a mixture of sand and lime (Matos Montezuma, 1989: 52).

The temple was the most important building type for the architectural program of the Aztecs. *Teocali* was the general name given to these temples and they became the focal point for the settlements. It was estimated that the country had up to forty thousand *teocali* that was dedicated to their Mexica gods. The main center of the Tenochtitlàn had 79 sacred buildings. Every single part of these temples occupied a very important role for the religious composition and was accompanied by sculptures and paintings which

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<sup>29</sup> Calmecac School served for noble people.

<sup>30</sup> Archeologists excavated the sculptures made by style of Teotihuacán and Tula in Tenochtitlàn. (Smith, 1996: 200)

helped to create the Aztecs cosmogony (Toussaint, 1967: 3; Matos Montezuma, 1989: 127; Chanfor Olmas, 1997: 195).

The volcanic stone *tezontle* was the main element for the temples that was carried by canoes from the place once it was found. After securing the ground by driving the stakes, the temple was erected and covered by limestone. This was the way how they prepared the land to build platforms with earth and volcanic rock core. The technique was so effective that the Spaniards adopted it in their first constructions (Reina, 1986; INAH) **(figures 27-32)**

#### **2.2.2.1.1 The Great Temple (Twin Temple/Templo Mayor)**

Today from its ruins the Main Temple can still be read. The excavated site is arranged with walking paths. In addition, some parts of the temple are covered with materials in order to supply protection from the destructive physical conditions. The exhibition of the Great Temple is arranged according to the construction phases. A visit to this site starts with the panels that give information about the Great Temple. From the beginning of the journey through the museum, different stages of the Twin Temple can be seen on these platforms. **(figures 33-36)**

The Great Temple was the key monument constructed during the lapse of 200 years and finished just before the arrival of the Spaniards. Constructed on a great platform, it measured approximately 80x100 meters. Because of a having double shrine on its top and its dimensions, it could easily be distinguished from the other temples, so it was named as the Twin Temple. Both shrines were located approximately on 30 meters of height. Its construction was begun in the year of 2-rabbit-1390 and its stucco-covered walls were ornamented. (Schütz, 1991: 32)

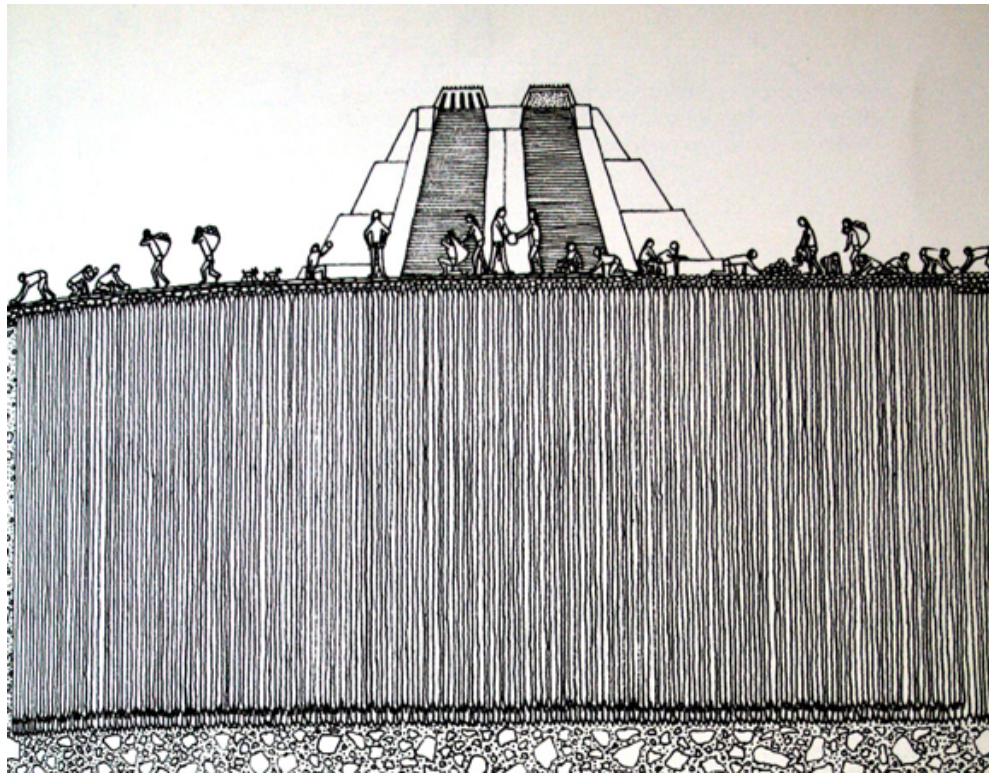




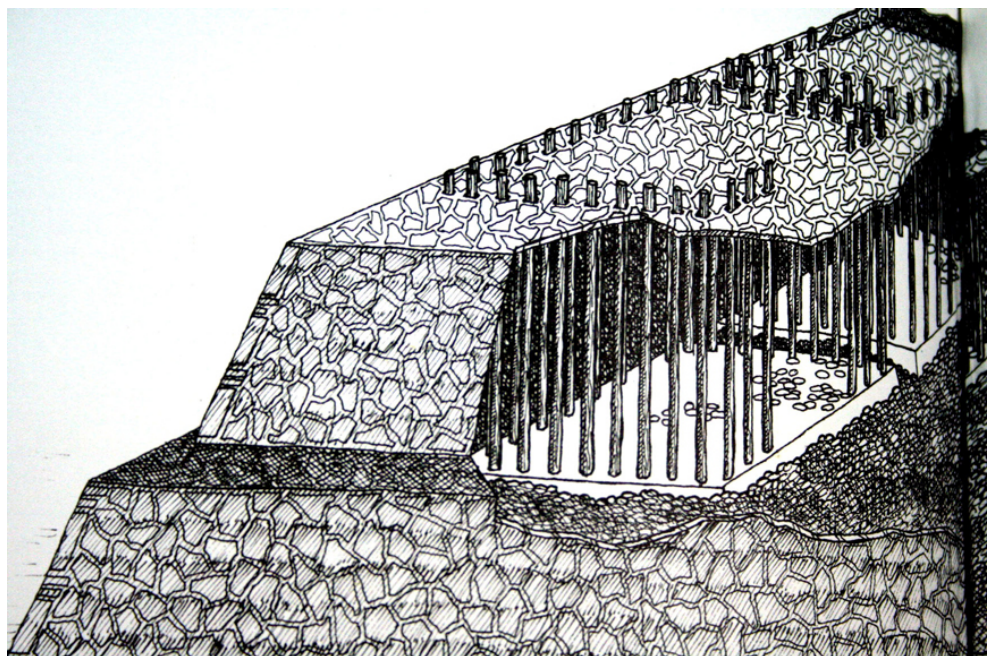
**figure 27. Aztecs obtaining 'tezontle' (source: Reina, 1986)**



**figure 28. Illustration shows Aztecs carrying tezontle by canoes. (source: Reina, 1986)**

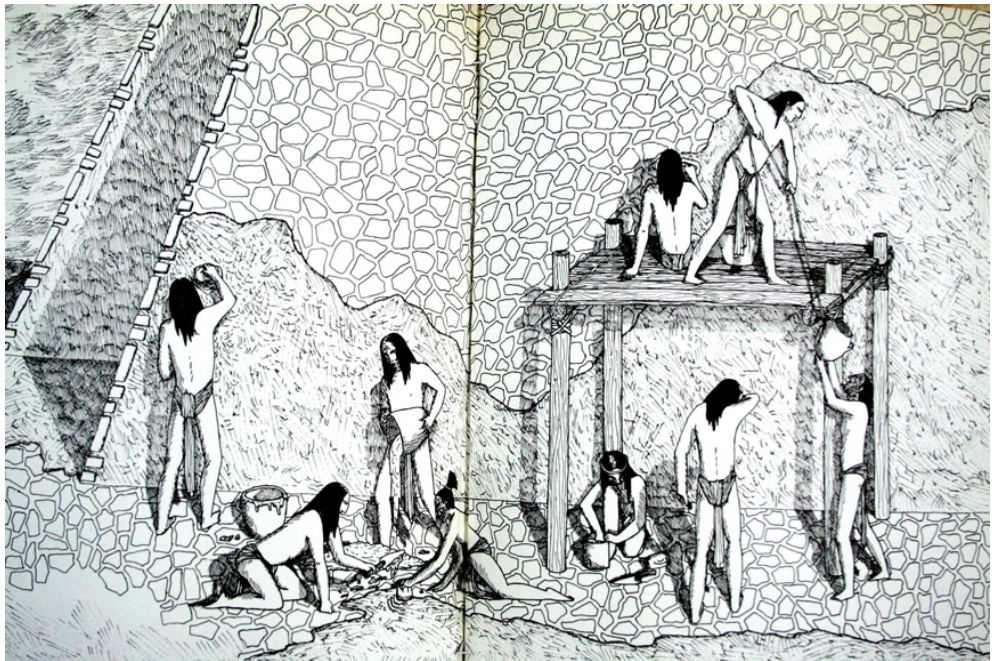


**figure 29. Construction technique of the temple (source: Reina, 1986)**

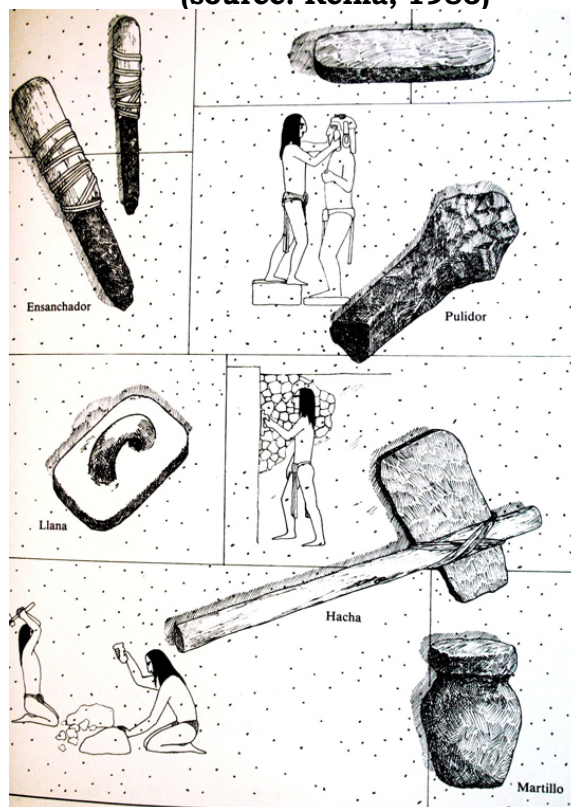


**figure 30. Detail from construction process of a temple.  
(source: Reina, 1986)**





**figure 31. View from the construction of a temple.**  
(source: Reina, 1986)



**figure 32. Types of tools used for the construction activities**  
(source: Reina, 1986)



**figure 33. General view from the Great Temple**



**figure 34. General view from the platform of the Great Temple**

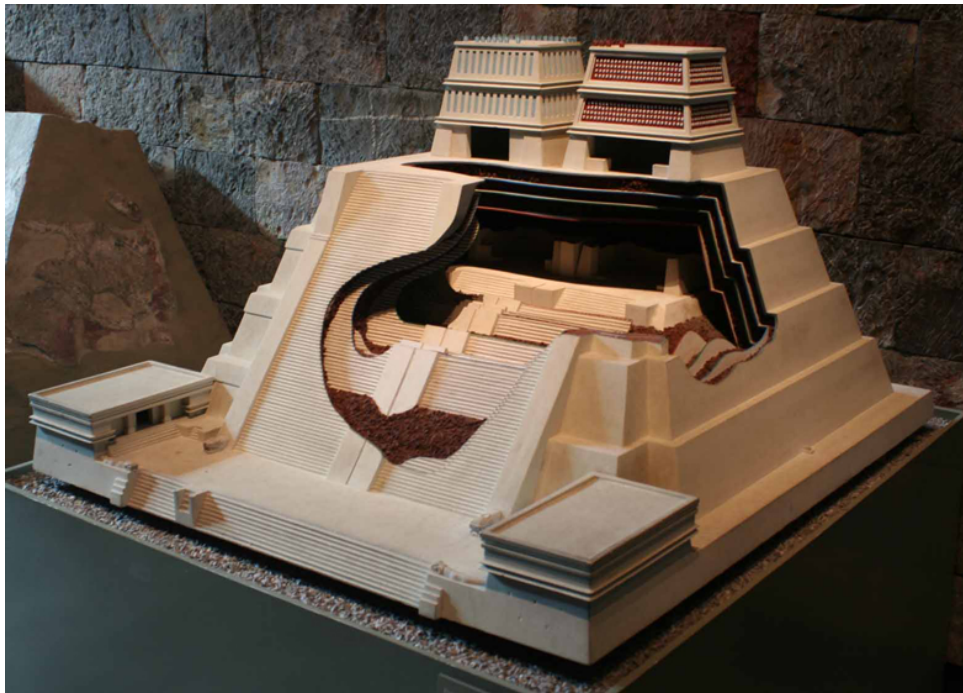




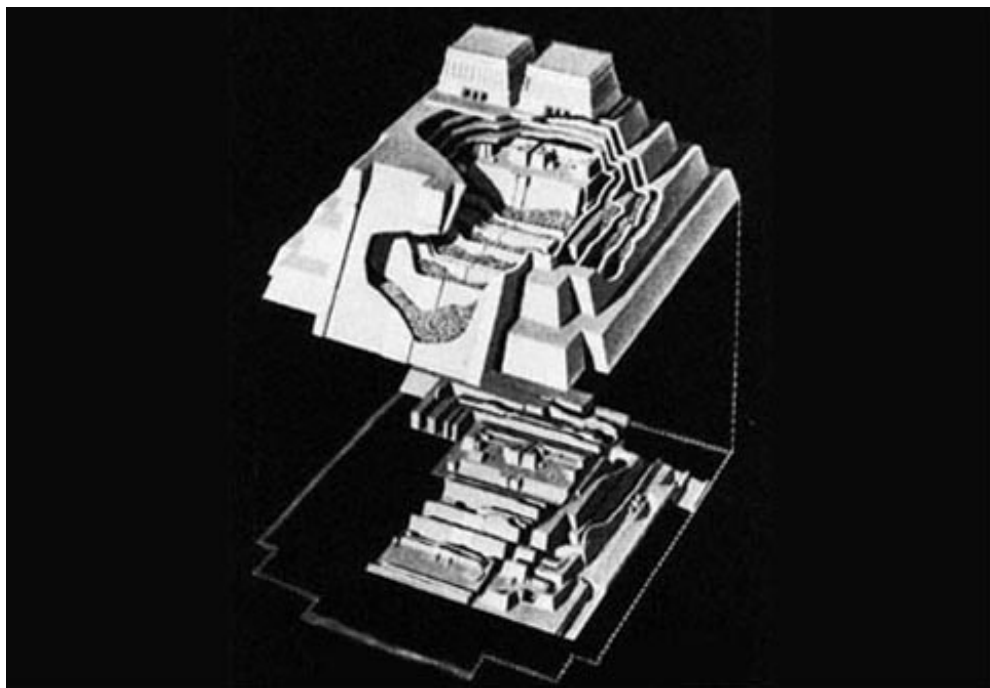
**figure 35. Templo Mayor Muesum**



**figure 36. General view of Satage IV**



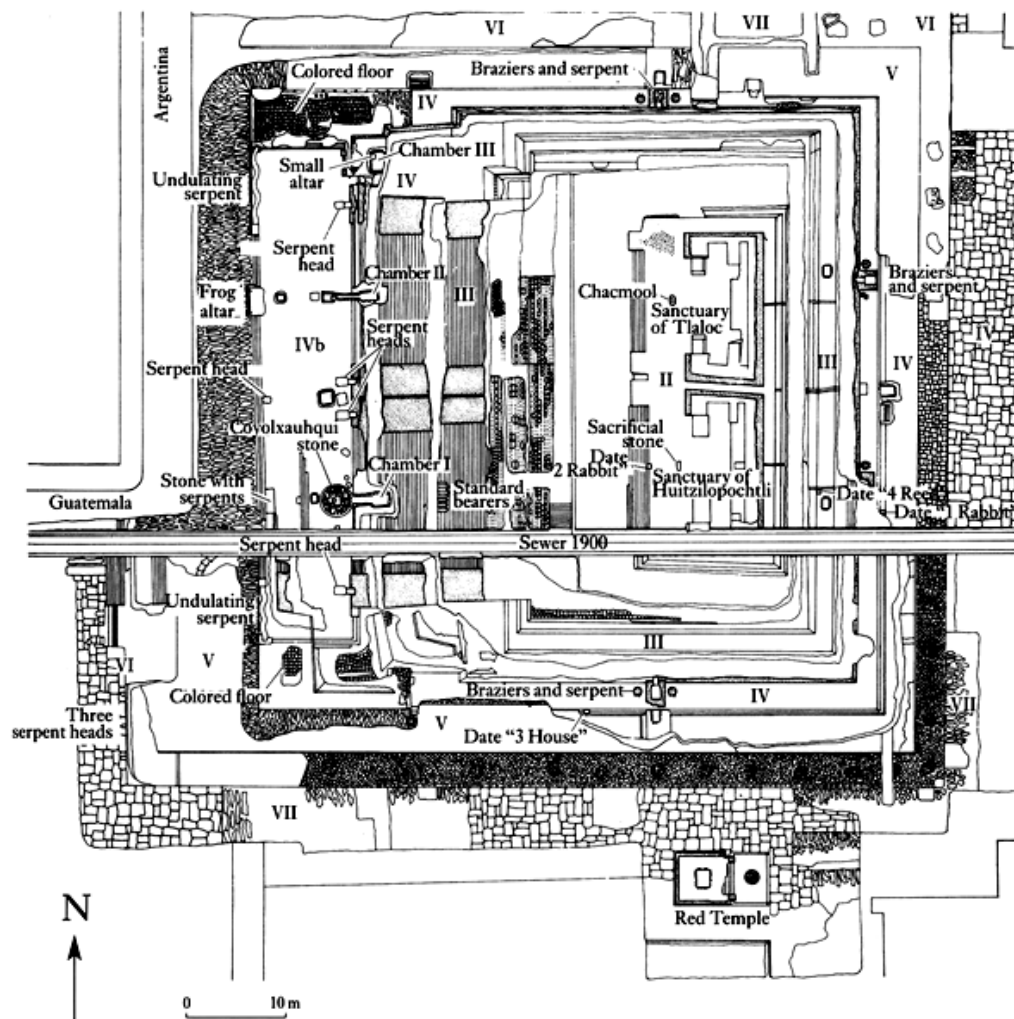
**figure 37. Model of different construction process of the Great Temple**  
 (source: National History and Anthropology Museum of Mexico)



**figure 38. Hypothetical representation of the model of the Great Temple**  
 (source: INAH)

Each ruler was responsible for enlarging the dimensions of the Great Temple because every *tlatoani* who ruled the empire enlarged the temple as a mission. The enlargement was also motivated by the constant floods which the city suffered. (from the INAH) Even though the building of the temples was made on the already secured ground by the wooden stakes and stones, it could not prevent the buildings from suffering from the geographical configuration and the physical conditions that required additional construction activities. Since its construction, the Great Temple was enlarged on all four sides on seven different occasions. By 1521, the year of the conquest of Tenochtitlàn, the Great Temple had reached its maximum dimensions: a height of 45 m. The next phase of the construction consisted of a low stage with two temples and two stairways. The stage and the lower lines of the fortifications remain today. Up to five additional phases of enlargement were carried out, but only the lowest segments of the external walls and lowest steps for each phase are left today (Smithson, 1996: 230)(**figures 37-38**)

Classifications of different stages of Templo Mayor were made by the archeologist who worked in the archeological zone of the Templo Mayor at the leadership of Eduard Matos Moctezuma. (**figure 39**) Stage II is one of the oldest phases of the Great Temple. It was built around 1400. A.D. The only remnants of this phase that have been discovered are a part of the pyramidal platform and the Tlaloc and Huitzilopochtli shrines. The rest of the building is still hidden beneath the city's subsoil. (**figure 40**) In its platform, two shrines dedicated to Huitzilopochtli and another deity belong to Tlaloc. The lower part was wooden and stucco, and the superior body was rich in molds profusely carved.



**figure 39. Map of the different construction periods of the Templo Mayor Project by Eduardo Matos Moctezuma**





**figure 40. Recent appearance of Great Temple**

The cover seems was enclosed for skulls and both were finished off by ribbon. Access to these shrines was made available by double stairways that are seen only in Templo Mayor and the double shrines.

The top of the temple in the company of shrines represented two mountains. The shrine of Huitzilopohchtli corresponds to the mountain of Coatepec and the shrine of Tlaloc characterizes the mountain of sustenance.<sup>31</sup> **(figures 41-43)** Their mythological background will be explained in the cosmological meanings of the Great Sacred Square (Angulo Iniguez, 1974: 9-10; Matos Montezuma, 1989: 194)

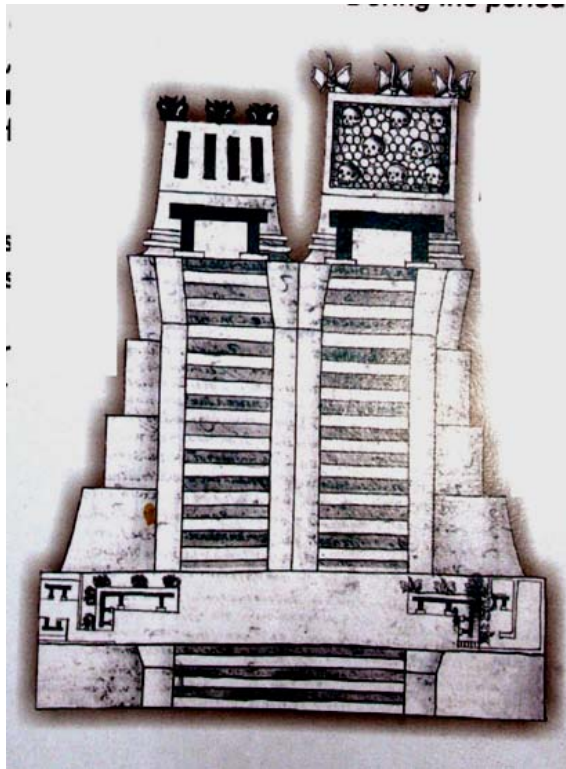
Between the different stages of the temple, the ruins of an open duct lined with bricks can be seen. This water channel, built around 1900, crosses beneath the modern-day street of Guatemala. The construction of these public works cuts right through the Great Temple, destroying all building phases in a path about 2 m in width **(figure 44)** (from the INAH).

#### **2.2.2.1.2 The Other Buildings**

Marquina states, in his early work *Arquitectura Prehispanica*, that the chain of pyramids was arranged in four or five overlapping stages creating a narrow corridor among them. Most of the temples had a stairway on the west façade and was bordered with wide *alfardas* (Molina Montes, 1987: 98). **(figures 45-47)**

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<sup>31</sup> Previously, the terrace was the altar for the sacrifices. In the shrine, the image of Huitzilopochtli, the god of war, dressed in yellow glossy feathers like those of the hummingbird, was the representation of the sun of dawn, rising with the fire snake to destroy night and put in flight the stars. He was in human form with the fire globe, symbol of the sky and was covered by a bird of showy feathers, pick and crest of gold (Angulo Iniguez, 1974: 9-10).



**figure 41. Representation of the double shrines of Huitzilopochtli and Tlaloc (source: INAH)**



**figure 42. Representation of Tlaloc (source: Gruzinski, 1992: 63)**



**figure 43. Representation of Tlaloc, Templo Mayor Museum**

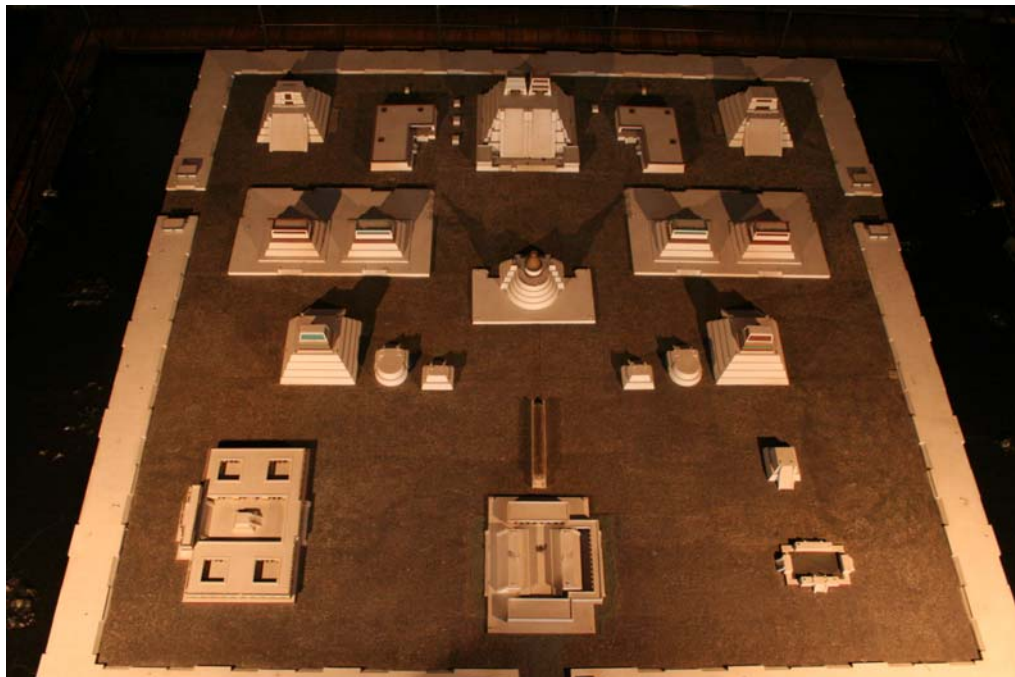


**figure 44. Tunnel in the Great Temple**

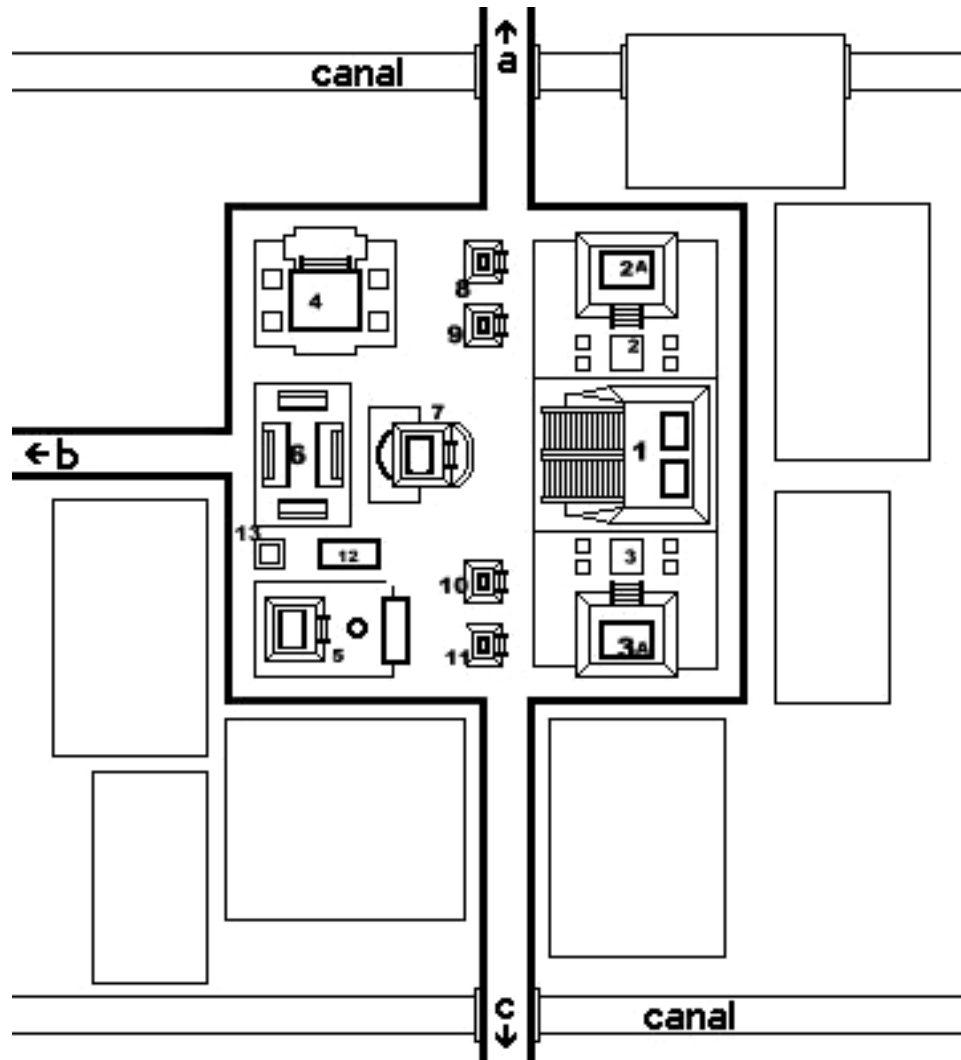




**figure 45. Hypothetical reconstruction of the Sacred Precinct of Mèxico, Tenochtitlàn. (source: Schütz, 1991: 28, color modified by the author)**



**figure 46. Hypothetical reconstruction of the Great Sacred Square, Templo Mayor Museum**



1. Greate Temple 2. House of Eagles 2.A Temple Red Tezcatlipoca 3. Enclosure of Horsmen Ocelote 3A. Tezcatlipoca Temple 4. The Residence of Priests 5. Temple of Quetzalcqatl 6. Ballcourt 7. Temple of Sun 8. Coateocalli 9. Temple of Chihuacòatl 10. Temple of Chicomecòatl 11. Temple of Xochiquetzal 12. Tozpalatl 13. Huey Tzompanti

**figure 47. The Great Sacred Square and its causeways.**  
(source: Templo Mayor Museum)

One of the most important places in the Sacred Center was the building, known as the House of the Eagles, in which the Aztec elite used to gather for ceremonies, including meditation, prayer, penitence, and the rendering of offerings. **(figure 48)** The rooms in its interior date to an earlier construction phase between 1481 A.D. and 1486 A.D. The building was raised and then amplified three times between 1430 A.D. and 1500 A.D. Seeing the interior of this house was a privilege that only the Aztec elites were able to attain.

The House of the Eagles is the best preserved place in that the stairways, porticos, rooms, and a small interior patio can be seen. This patio allows for the entrance of light and rain and facilitates the circulation of air. Rainwater runs into a drain in the floor. The inner rooms reflect the influence of the ancient Toltec style. Some examples are the banquettes and the braziers resembling the face of the god Tlaloc. The flowers with four petals, located at the doorways to the rooms on the east of the building, symbolize the four corners of the universe. Excavations at this site since 1981 have produced surprising results. Noteworthy is the find of sculptures of two people dressed as eagles. Due to these sculptures, the building derived its name **(figure 49)**

Thanks to interdisciplinary investigation, it has been possible to learn about the kind of ritual activities that were performed in this building. Evidence of the rituals was left on the floor. Ritual activity occurred near the altars, braziers, and sculptures. The chemical analysis of the floors showed residues of animal and vegetable products, pulque, and blood spread over specific areas. During the most recent excavation period, ceramic sculptures were recovered representing the God Mictlantecutli. He was the Lord of the Underworld, the destination of the souls of those who had died a natural death or died of old age (from the INAH) **(figure 50)**



**figure 48. House of the eagles**



**figure 49. Sculpture, house of eagles, Templo Mayor**





**figure 50. Representation of the Mictlantecutli, Templo Mayor Museum**

One of another interesting remains of the sacred zone is the *tzompantli* (skull wall). This building is located on the northern side of the Great Temple next to the ball court, symbolically alluding to the region of the dead known as Mictlampa, according to Meixca cosmogony **(figure 51)** In this area, skeletons were arranged in a row and two hundred forty stone skulls, covered with several layers of stucco, decorate the back and sides of the structure. The main façade has a stairway flanked by balustrades. Its interior contained a spectacular offering, including representations of musical instruments, along with puma and wolf skeletons and other elements (Lucena Salmoral, 1990: 87; INAH).

Even though the main temples within the plaza were that of Huitzilopochtli, the god of war, and Tlaloc, the god of rain, there were edified different shrines for different deities as Quetzalcoatl's temple, which is located in the Templo Mayor. When the Spaniards saw this temple, they felt uncomfortable because the entrance of this temple was horrified them as the temple looked like an image of a monster (from the INAH).

Behind the Quetzalcoatl's temple, there erected a ballcourt. The ballcourt was encircled with the statues of Xochipilli and atlantes. Next to the Templo Mayor, to the south, there was a round temple which was dedicated to Tezcatlipoca. It was 20 m. in height and had 80 steps. Next to the temple of Tezcatlipoca side, four more temples were situated. The temple which is on the south was dedicated to gods of the conquered peoples. The others were offered to the goddesses Cihuacoatl, Chicomecoatl and Xochiquetzal.



**figure 51. View of scull rock**

At the north side of the ballcourt was the *calmecac*, where only the people from the noble class could attend classes to learn mathematics and poetry among other arts.<sup>32</sup> It was a school of high level. In the southern part of the center, there was the temple of Xipe Totec. Next to the *tzompantli* was a sacred spring dedicated to Tlaloc (Lucena Salmoral, 1990: 87)

The god of the sun, *Tonatiuh*, had its own temple to the northwest of the sacred court. This is where the famous calendar stone was found in 1790. It depicts the prior world history and glyphs depicting the 21 days of the ceremonial calendar. Today it is located in the National Museum of Anthropology of Mèxico (Schütz, 1991: 33)

These shrines were small free-standing constructions made of stone covered with stucco and decorated with mural painting. According to ancient documents, the upper part of each one of these shrines was very tall and was decorated with large architectural ornaments along the roofline. At the front of each statue of god, there was a round stone, called *techcatl*, where all victims were sacrificed in respect of gods.<sup>33</sup> From the block to the floor was a puddle of blood from those who were sacrificed on it, and this was the same for all the places of worship (Lathrop, 1991: 155-156). At the central area was created an inner city because of the walls and prevention of people from entering the sacred place. Only privileged people could join religious activities or come close. However, people of the public had to stay away from the sacred area and could only watch the events from afar (Smith, 1996: 203).

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<sup>32</sup> “calmecac” means school.

<sup>33</sup> “Techcatl” is similar to a slayer’s block..

In the construction of the Great Sacred Square, the influence of Toltec and Teotihuacan can easily be seen. The pyramids at Teopanzolco in Cuernavaca and Tenayuca in northern Mèxico are examples which carry the features of Tenochitlan's pyramid that of twin stairs which was popular during the Early Stage of Aztec construction. For example, the Ehecatl pyramid has its replication in the Toluca Valley. There is a pyramid of Calixlahuaca in Toluca, which has a similarity with the pyramid of Ehecalt in Tenochtitlàn. Both have a round shape (Smith, 1996: 234). Moreover, architectural similarities attract attention like that of the head of the serpent in Tenayuca (**figures 52-54**)

#### **2.2.2.1.3 Archeological Findings**

The importance of animals in Aztecs ritual is evident in the Great Sacred Square, especially in the Great Temple, both in architecture and the offerings buried there. Different species of serpents were represented in architecture. To illustrate, their bodies were decorated with symbolic elements, such as feathers, rings or spirals. On the four façades of the platform, there are monumental serpent heads carved of basalt.

Two enormous serpents, each measuring 6 m. long and with an undulating body, flank the access to the platform (from the INAH). The use of the snake ornamentation as strongly connected with the cosmological datum of the Aztec society will be examined in next section of the study. (**figure 55**)



**figure 52. The pyramids at Teopanzolco in Cuernavaca  
(source: [www.donporter.net](http://www.donporter.net))**



**figure 53. Calixtlahuaca in Toluca (source: Smith, 1996: 234)**





**figure 54. Tenayuca, Northern Mèxico**  
(source: [www.newodysseyart.co.uk](http://www.newodysseyart.co.uk))



**figure 55. Snake ornamentation, archeological zone of the Great Temple**

In the excavations, a large amount of offerings were encountered. Some of them were found under the stairways, which were supposed that they had been placed in every phase of the construction activity of the Templo Mayor. From the only Temple of Tlaloc, nearly 100 offerings were found. The reason of having such an amount of offerings can be explained by the importance of god for people. Tlaloc, the rain god, was venerated by the Mexicas and by many other groups in Mesoamerica since ancient times. This deity was responsible for bringing rain, which enabled crops to grow. However, he could also bring storms, easily destroying them, which corresponds to the duality of god. A frog altar stands in the middle of the Stage IVb platform because during the festival honoring the *veintena* of Tozoztontli, a celebration related to corn, frogs were dressed in blue, sacrificed, and roasted. The image of god probably once stood on the bench inside the shrine. Some offerings like the masks reflect the style of previous civilizations like Tula, Teotihuacán. In this regard, it can be said that the reflection of previous civilizations is represented in Aztec art and architecture. It is also interesting that the kind of offerings which belong to different parts of the continent were discovered. It is considered that they were the products given as tribute brought by people to the Aztec empire. Therefore, this once more proves the domination of Aztec Empire in geographical extension and her political superiority (Smithson, 1996: 232; Lòpez Lujàn, 1994; INAH) **(figures 56-61)**





**figure 56. Offering 7, Figureure of Tlaloc,Templo Mayor Museum**



**figure 57. Offering of Tlaloc, Templo Mayor Museum.**



**figure 58. Offering of Tlaloc, Templo Mayor Museum**



**figure 59. One of the Tlaloc figureurine, Templo Mayor Museum**





**figure 60. Mask, Teotihuacán, Templo Mayor Museum**



**figure 61 Vase of ashes, Toluca, Templo Mayor Museum**

### 2.3 Cosmological Notions of Aztecs and Its Effects on Tenochtitlàn and the Great Sacred Square

Beliefs of the Nahua people allowed them to develop a cosmological concept that was strongly nourished by the natural environment. The arrangement of the stars, the earth all were sourced the Aztecs Cosmogony. In accordance with this worldview; the diagonal arrangement of the Tenochtitlàn reflects the symbolic importance of the settlement. The center of the settlement is crossed by the road in the direction of north-south and the east-west. The Mendoza codex indicates such crossed channels. In the center, at "the place where the waters cross ", the eagle-premonition posed in the cactus. It is the place where the future city of Tenochtitlàn would be founded.<sup>34</sup> The crossed channels are not only a characteristic that distinguishes and identifies the Promised Land, but, inside the aquatic square, are the roads that lead to the final point of migration. At the same time, they direct the space in four fields that correspond to the four cosmic Kingdoms.<sup>35</sup>(Palm, 1969; Townsend, 1979)(**figure 62**)

The four directions of the cosmos, north, south, east and west, begin from the centre on the horizontal plane, which is identified by colors, a god and a special symbol. In this classification, north signifies the 'black Tezcatlipoca' place of underground (Mictlampa) symbolized by flint.

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<sup>34</sup> All of the cities have a sign that helps their foundation. These signs also help to shape the city scale. It can be seen that the creation of the world was repeated by the foundation of the new city. They usually divided it into four just like the cosmos (Matos Montezuma, 1987).

<sup>35</sup> Some sources mention the cosmic trees named *axis mundi*, four in number, and grow at the cardinal points. This notion of the cosmic tree is supposed to have derived from the Maya, who lived in the same geographical location. According to this belief, *axis mundi*, the cosmic tree grew from the navel of the earth until the highest level of the celestial level. It was seen as a source of life. It was called *ceiba* in the southern Mesoamerican traditions(Townsend, 1979).



**figure 62. Foundation sign of Tenochtitlàn**  
 (source: Gruzinski, 1992: 105)

East signifies the 'red Tezcatlipoca', represented with the reed. South corresponds to the 'blue Tezcatlipoca', concerned with Huitzilopochtli, whose symbol is the rabbit. <sup>36</sup> West corresponds with the white, symbolized by the god of wind named Quetzalcoatl, represented with a house '*calli*'. The centre is where the horizontal and vertical level surfaces cross. On the vertical plane, there are three levels. The centre was accepted as the earthly level where the vertical and horizontal lines intersected. The centre also signified the notion of duality called Ometeotl (Two Lord-Two Sacred Spirit).<sup>37</sup> The higher level constituted thirteen of havens. <sup>38</sup> The lower level signified the underworld, called Mictlan.<sup>39</sup> **(figure 63)** The importance of these levels emerges in the construction of the Great Temple. All levels join in one formation and they reflect universal order. <sup>40</sup> In other words, the Great Temple occupies the founded principle sign and the cosmological notion of Mexica. In addition to being a cosmological centre, it also represented the centre of the whole universe. All of these planes were nourished by the idea of an earth formed of a wheel and encircled by water. This idea was known as *cem-anahuac* (Townsend, 1979;37; Matos Montezuma, 1987: 186) **(figure 64)**

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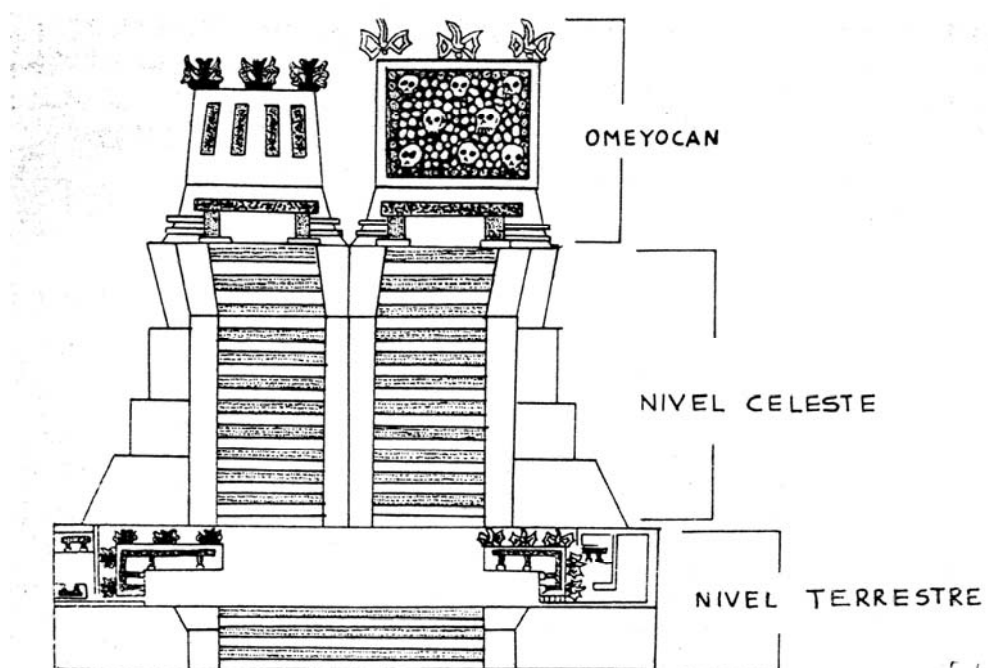
<sup>36</sup> Huitzilopochtli: *huitziztli* refers to hummingbird in Nahuatl and *pochtli* means to the left, hence as a whole, it means hummingbird to the left. (Schütz, 1991: 32)

<sup>37</sup> Everything has its dual form in the celestial levels and the lower world (Matos Montezuma, 1987: 186).

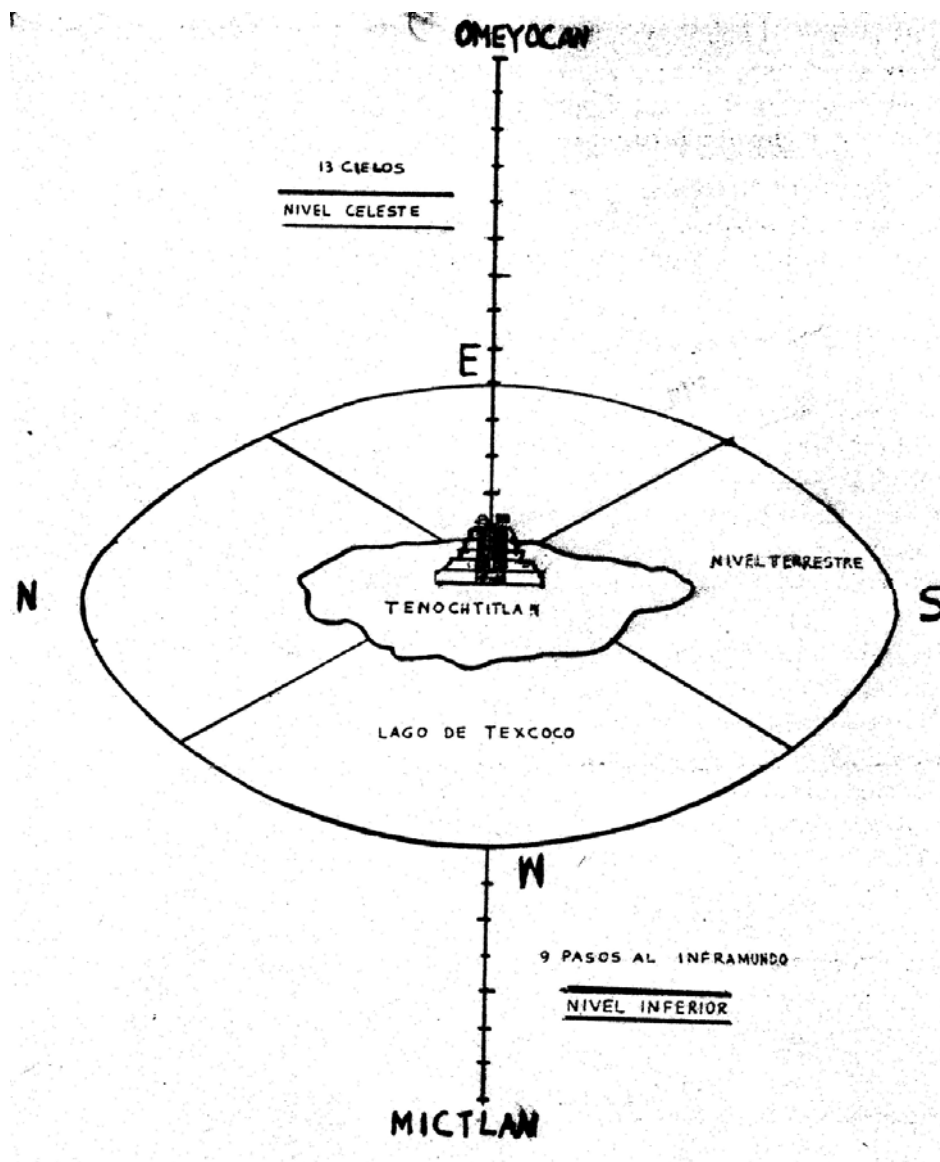
<sup>38</sup> The first haven is in the moon and clouds, the second is in the stars, the third on the sun route, the fourth in Venus, the fifth in comets, the next two represented by the color of green and blue, the eighth in the palace of storms, the next three place of gods, and the last two are Omeyocan, the place of duality.

<sup>39</sup> For the dead body to reach Mictlan takes 4 years (Matos Montezuma, 1987: 186).

<sup>40</sup> As Eliade states; 'all these sacred constructions symbolically represent the whole world: the platforms or terraces are identified with the heavens or the cosmic levels. In a sense, each one reproduces the cosmic mountain, that is, it is considered to be built in the 'center of the world'.



**figure 63. Templo Mayor and its symbolic parts.**  
(source: Townsend, 1979)



**figure 64. Cosmological formation of Tenochtitlàn**  
 (source: Townsend, 1979)



The myth of birth and struggle are between Huitzilopochtli and Coyolxauhqui on Coatepec Hill. is represented by the ritual of human sacrifice in Templo Mayor. As already mentioned, Coyolxauhqui stone was found at the foot of the stairway in the faded location that correctly matches with the Coyolxauhqui myth. As known from the legend, she was thrown down by his brother Huitzilopochtli and fell from the skirt of the mountain and died. As a result of the figureht, Huitzilopochtli occupied the summit of the mountain and Coyolxauhqui occupied the bottom. In the sacrificial ritual, the slaves were sacrificed. Then they were thrown off the temple like it was narrated in the legend.<sup>41</sup> The Mexica myth states that the Huitzilopochtli was born in this mountain and for this reason one of the double shrines of the Great Temple is full of symbols of the mythological occasion. The other shrine which belongs to Tlaloc signifies the Hill of Sustenance. In accordance with mythology, there would be food that could found all the time. As a matter of fact, the duality of the Templo Mayor reflects the dual need of water and war in other words the Mexica economy (Matos Montezuma, 1989: 127-128; 195; Schütz, 1991: 33). Agriculture and war was the main elements of Mexica life. For this reason, their need shaped mythology and these mythological beliefs were practiced by rituals in the temple. The cosmological chart structure of Templo Mayor represents the navel of the universe and its structural formation reflects myths.

Furthermore, we can say that mythologies turned into a ritual in the Great Temple. For example, according to the legend, each person after dying makes a journey through Mictlan, the place of death. These shrines of Templo Mayor signify the first journey of

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<sup>41</sup> According to Aztec cosmology, in life there should be a balance and that balance was possible by two gods. People needed the god of rain, which represented life, sustenance for people, and life was followed by death which symbolically has to be with the god of war. In addition politic life was bound to this god, since warriors of highest range occupied the best positions within government.

demise. With these sacrifices they kept universal survival because they thought that their gods needed the blood of these victims. Consistent with the legend at the very beginning, there was an Omēteotl (Two Deity), who had two forms, one female and the other male.<sup>42</sup> This God gave birth to children and they are charged with creating the earth and people.<sup>43</sup> It was the cycle of creation and destruction with the birth of the Gods that still survives (**figures 65-66**) So as to keep life going, gods sacrificed themselves, so the duty of human beings must be to follow the paths of the Gods. For that reason, it was man's turn to sacrifice themselves to Gods so that they would be satisfied by blood, which will keep universe alive.<sup>44</sup> Their legend said that the earth was created four times before but in those times because the nourishment of their gods was neglected, the earth was destroyed with different catastrophes by the hand of gods. The fifth sun is the present days. It will also get destroyed by earthquakes and people are going to be eaten by sky monsters.<sup>45</sup> The mighty destruction period come in every 52 years of Aztec calendar, which is known as critical periods (Smith, 1996: 205). Because of the mythological experiences, the Aztec society required these sacrificial ceremonies. They believed that the sun was condemned and Huitzilopochtli was the only god who fights and saves the earth. However, god had to be nourished by human blood and heart in order to become powerful. When he has not, his vows would not fight against darkness and rescue the sun from the hands of night and evil.

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<sup>42</sup> Female form of Omēteotl called Omecihuatl (Two Lady), and the male form of the God known as Omētecuhli (Two Lord).

<sup>43</sup> Tezcatlipoca, Xipe Totec, Quetzalcoatl, and Huitzilopochtli.



**figure 65. Representation of Quetzalcoatl**  
(source: Gruzinski, 1992: 63)



**figure 66. Representation of Quetzalcoatl and Tezcatlipoca**  
(source: Gruzinski, 1992: 63)

Life itself only could be the most valuable offering that man offered to gods. Thus the victims usually wore special clothes and flowers to content the gods. Larthop suggests that;

Human sacrifice among the Aztecs was inspired by neither cruelty nor hatred. It was their response to their existence in a continuously threatened world. Blood sacrifice was necessary to save their world and the men in it; the victim was a privileged intermediary sent by man, in dignity, to the gods. Thus, human sacrifice was only a means by which life was made out of death. (Larthop, 1991: 157)

These were done by the Aztec gods for the human beings to save universe as we learn from Friar Bernardino de Shagun.

How the gods had their beginning and where they began is not well known. But this is plain, (that) there at Teotihuacán.. when yet there was darkness, there all the gods gathered them selves together, and they debated who would bear the burden, who would carry on his back-would become- the sun. And when the sun came to arise, then all (the gods) died that the sun might come unto being.. And thus the ancient ones thought it to be..

Friar Bernardino de Shagun<sup>46</sup>

There were some types of sacrifices held on within the Aztec society. Auto-sacrifice and human sacrifice were the most common sacrificial activities. As a matter of fact human blood had general importance in Mesoamerican history because blood signified fertility. Blood could be the only precious gift the can be offered to gods. One of the most important auto-sacrifice actions was body piercing (Smithson, 1996: 221; Klein, 1987: 297).

Friar Sahagun relates that;

Thus was performed the sacrificial slaying of men, when captives and slaves died, who were called 'Those who have died for the god'.

Thus they took captives to the pyramid temple before the priests going holding him by his hands. And who was known as the arranger of captives, this one laid him out upon the sacrificial stone. And when he had laid him upon it, four men stretched him out, his arms and legs. And already in the hand of the fire priest lay the sacrificial knife, with which he was to slash open the breast of the ceremonially bathed.

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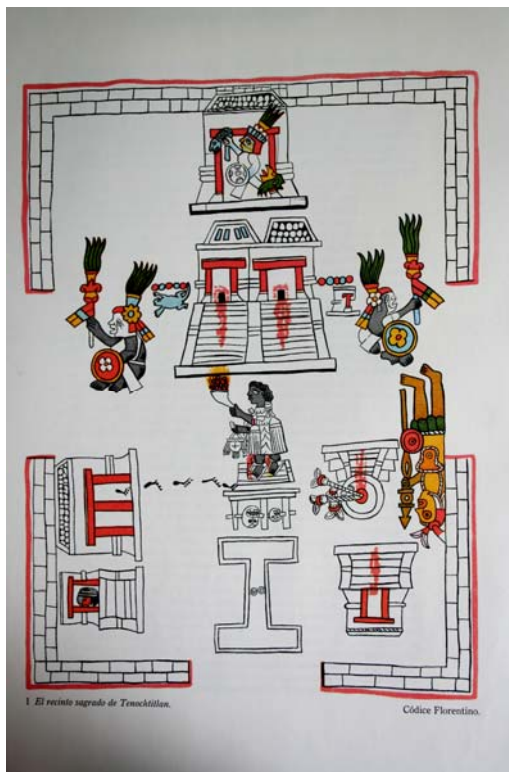
<sup>46</sup> Translated by Smith, 1996: 204

And then, when he had split open his breast, he at once seized his heart. And he whose breast he laid open was quite alive. And when the priest had seized his heart, he dedicated to the sun. (Smithson, 1996: 224/223)

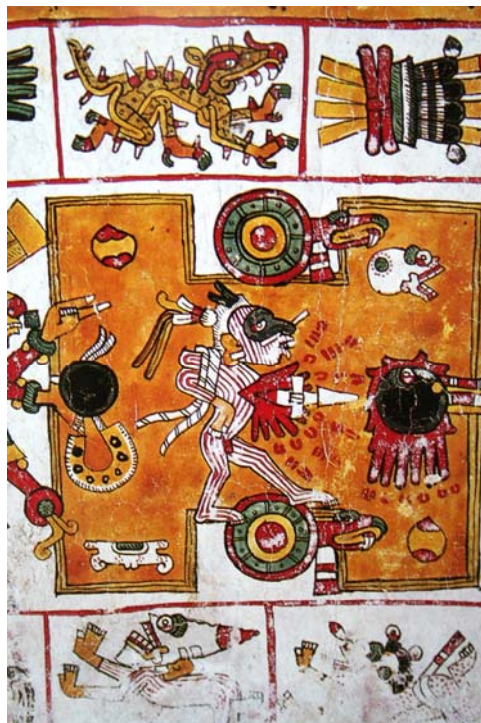
After the sacrificial ceremony, the victims were thrown off the stairs of the pyramid. Then the priests cut off the head to exhibit on the skull rack which had close proximity to the pyramid (Smithson, 1996: 223). One of the Spanish soldiers reported that in the skull rack were about 136.000 skulls exhibited, although this seems to be obviously exaggerated (**figures 67-71**)

It was believed that after the sacrificial ceremony, there was another ceremony in which a portion of the body of the victim was eaten. In the 1970s, an anthropologist, Michael Harner, was a polemic figure with his extraordinary hypothesis. According to him, the reason of frequency of human sacrifices in the Aztec society resulted from the Aztec diet. He says that the Aztec diet did not contain a large amount of meat. Because of lack of protein, human sacrifice was the way to obtain the needed proteins. As a matter of fact, this argument seems not to have been corrected since the Aztec diet certainly had varied types of meats. Their diet contained beans, corns, which are rich in protein, especially beans and some types of animal meat. If we question the frequency of Aztec sacrificial ceremonies, we can see political reasons behind this action, besides religion. In order to horrify enemies, the Aztecs practiced sacrificial ceremonies as a political principle. Within the Aztec Army, an individual would increase his rank according to the number of enemy warriors they capture so that the captives could be sacrificed. The tradition of human sacrifice of Aztecs was derived from Teotihuacan and Tula ancestors. When we look up the gods' pantheon of the Aztecs, we see that while they adopted the already existing gods of the Valley of Mexico, they brought their gods from the Aztlan as well.





**figure 67. Illustration of sacrificial ceremony in Templo Mayor  
(source: Gruzinski, 1992)**

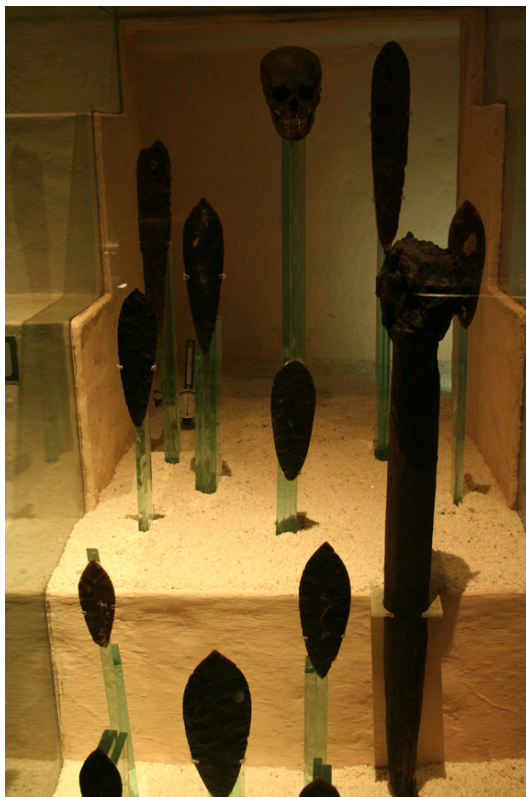


**figure 68. Illustration of sacrificial ceremony in Templo Mayor  
(source: Gruzinski, 1992)**

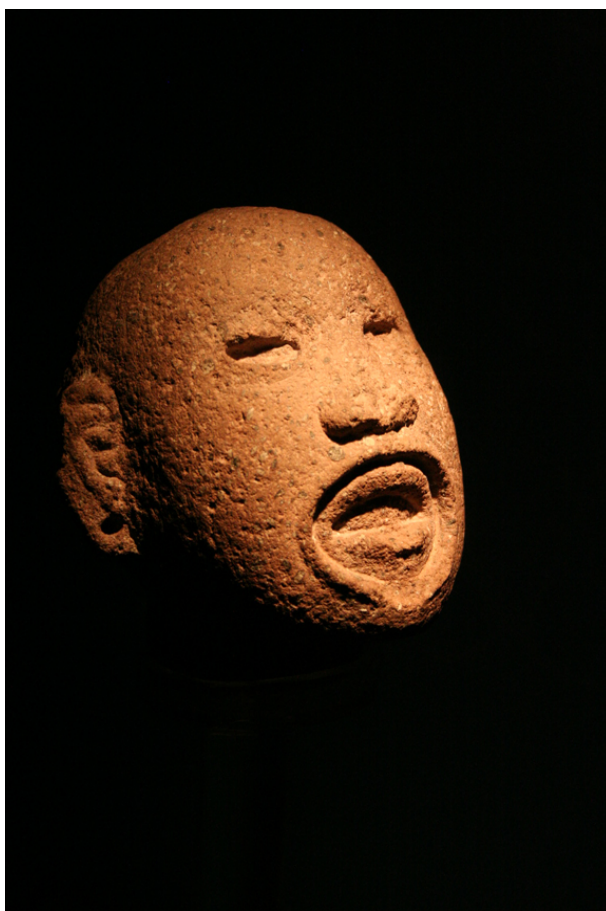




**figure 69. Figureure, representing the death, Templo Mayor Museum**



**figure 70. Obsidian knives, Templo Mayor Museum**



**figure 71. Sculpture representing the victim, Templo Mayor Museum**

During the early stages of the Aztec history, their religion was not strict but by the passing time, their ceremonies became more rigid than the previous civilization of Mesoamericans (Larhop, 1991:157; Schütz, 1991: 30; Smith, 1996: 204-208,227).

We can stress that the architectural formation of the Aztecs was mostly affected by their religious culture. For example, the skull rock used to serve to demonstrate the victims' skulls after the sacrificial ceremonies of the Great Sacred Square. The Aztec ballgame costumed in Great Sacred Square also shows the religious perception completed with ritual, sport and entertainment. Related with religion, the ball represents a sun that came from underground whose counterpart was the ball court. The ballgame was a symbolic figureht between the sun and moon and other planets or between the youth and old age. In other respect, the ball seen as a skull of victims and the result of the play also was accepted as the destiny of the universe (Smithson, 1996: 240-241). There was a large I-shaped court that witnessed ballgame where solid rubber ball was used. In order to understand Aztecs' cosmological structure and its effects on art and architecture, their mythological configureuration must be well understood.

Additionally, not only the architectural formation but also some sculptural ornamentation shows a very important connotation for the Mexica worldview. They helped the creation of cosmological datum while decorating the temple. Every single fragment had its meaning in the course of cosmological chart. These fragments had a connection with each other. The roofs of the temples had sculptures in the shape of human skulls alternating with spherical elements, which symbolized the night and the stars. At the upper edge of these rooms were placed figureures carved in stone, which invoked the god's dominant element: cut snails represented wind, sun beams, etc. At

the top of the pyramid, facing the temple was the sacrificial stone called the *techcatl*. To the sides of the entrances, there were huge braziers, where the fire of life would permanently burn. On the platform, where the pyramid was built, there were sacrificial stones and payee banner that held flags with the names of the gods. At the bottom of the staircase, there were the heads of serpents, opening their mouths threateningly and the platform of the Great Sacred Square refers to the *terrestrial level*, the horizontal plane *with* its serpents. One of the shrines of the Great Temple belongs to Quetzalquatl, which represents the Coatepec, which means the 'mountain of serpent'. This demonstrates the importance of serpents. For that reason, it is not surprising to see that amount of snake ornamentation in the temple (Matos Montezuma, 1987: 193, 199, 200, INAH)

To sum up, Tenochtitlàn, the Great Sacred Square, in particular the Twin Temple, encapsulates the certain points of beliefs of the Aztecs. The Aztec city planning was shaped around their mythological configuration since the orientation of the sun, east and west directions, occupied the architectural design and arrangement of the buildings preceded by astronomical rules. Additionally, it can be said that the mythological configuration of the Aztecs was practiced and became concrete in the rituals of the Great Temple, which in turn affected the architectural formation as well.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **SPANISH EXISTENCE IN AMERICA**

#### **3.1 Spain and Its Dominion in America**

Spain is a country located in Southern Europe and its origin goes back to early stages of history. According to historical sources, the Iberians and Celts were the groups of people who are believed to have come to the area from North Africa and Central Europe. Then these groups of people were succeeded by Phoenicians, Greeks, and Carthaginians, who created colonies in this peninsula. Their main aim was to run their commercial activities; therefore, they did not interfere with the inland and limited themselves to the coast. Rome and Carthage struggled during this time but the natives of the area arose among of them in 201 B.C. After that, during the next six centuries, Rome was the dominant power in the peninsula.

In the early stages of fifth century, dominancy passed onto some barbaric people whose origin was Germanic. One of them was called Visigoths, who gained supremacy at the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century. It was 711 A.D. when the dominancy of the country passed to the hands of Moslems, which was the turning point for the Spanish culture. As Moslems created a rich cultural value in the area, their effects penetrated deeply into culture of Spain, which still can be seen in Modern Spain. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Ferdinand and Isabella, the Catholic Kings, regained Spain's political control from the hands of the Moslems. They expelled their Jewish population and destroyed the Granada, which was the last headquarter of the Moslems. As said in previously, even though Spain is one of the European countries, she sharply differs from the others because of its political history that

shaped their culture. Spain was considered as a lost past to the Moslem dominancy in their history and this lost past encouraged Spain to subsequently create 'the Christian Spain' image. After all she was ready for exploring other countries which was going to make her closer to the European realm spiritually

Rumors of gold reserves and prosperity of Mesoamerican civilizations attracted the attention of the Spaniards in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In order to confirm the rumors of those rich American Civilizations, in February, 1519, eleven Spanish soldiers left their colony, Cuba, and began their expedition around the Mexican Gulf and Yucatan peninsula. As a matter of fact, it was not the only expedition made through the American Continent since the continent was discovered in 1492 by C. Columbus, who had believed that the new places he encountered were some islands of India. He made three expeditions, and in each one, he discovered a new land but interestingly he thought that those places must have been some islands of Asia. Nevertheless, he could never realize what a great achievement he had reached, a discovery that would change the course of history. Soon after, new discovery voyages were made by the Spaniards, who established the colony in Cuba about the year 1500.<sup>47</sup>

Diego Velasquez, the governor of Cuba, dispatched some of his army to explore the west sea of Cuba. Hernàndez de Cordoba was in charge of the first expedition. He discovered a portion of land which he believed to be an island, and called it Yucatan. He found people of a developed culture there "the Maya", but he was not welcomed by them. He was attacked by the Maya and lost almost half of the men of

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<sup>47</sup> Among those who moved by the desire to seek adventure, new discoveries, and fortune were Hernàndez de Cordoba; Juan Grijalva, explorer of Yucatan, the golf of Mèxico and discoverer of the river which took his name "Grijalva river"; Orellana, explorer of the Amazon River; Mendoza, discoverer of the Plata River; Nuñez de Balboa, discoverer of the Pacific Ocean; Ojeda, discoverer of the Orinoco River; Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca, explorer of the area from Florida to California; and Francisco Vasquez de Coronado, did expeditions to Arizona, New Mèxico, and Texas.



his crew. He was wounded to die of his wounds after returning Cuba. Hernàndez de Cordoba found evidence of gold in the land, and his report fascinated Velasquez, who persisted on expeditions. Not even the big defeat impeded Velasquez from his desire for new discoveries for the kingdom of Spain.

In 1518, Juan de Grijalva was sent out to explore the country further. Grijalva landed on the Cozumel Island and then sailed to Yucatan and continued southwest toward Campeche. Grijalva had orders not to explore inland, but their reserves of food and water were low, so they disembarked at Campeche, where they were attacked. With forty Spaniards wounded and one killed, they sailed continuing to the southwest. They arrived at a lagoon, which they called Puerto Deseada. This time Grijalva established a good relationship with the native people. There they exchanged some golden stuffs, necklaces, jewels, precious materials, and foods. Here the Spaniards were told that there was more gold to the west in some places known as Colua and Mèxico. After returning to Cuba, Grijalva gave the good news to Velasquez about the richness of the New Continent in February, 1519. Following this information of an affluent civilization in Mèxico, Velasquez nominated Cortès as a commander of the Spanish army. Although everything was ready, Velasquez changed his mind about Cortès because of some news told to him, and he took back his mission at the very last minute of the voyage. It was Cortès who did not obey the command of Velasquez and quickly sailed from Cuba with 550 soldiers, 100 sailors and from 10 to 20 horses. People who joined this journey dreamt of becoming rich in the end and before a month they landed at the coast of Mèxico and conquered the city of Tabasco. There they founded the Villa Rica de la Veracruz in February, 1519 and the Spaniards controlled the site immediately. The Villa Rica de la Veracruz became the first Spanish city.

Once Cortès understood that he could gain power, fame and wealth by means of the Conquest, he disdained the power of Velasquez and refused his domination, but there were some soldiers who were loyal to Governor Velasquez. However, in order to prevent potential revolts and returns to Cuba, Cortès burned down the vessels so that there could be no retreats. As a result, they had to survive in the New Continent, which they did. Cortès also sent one emissary to Spain offering his services to the king. After conquering Tabasco, Cortès had many captives. Among them was Malintzin (Marina), a woman who played an important role in the conquest of the Aztec empire. Cortès learned about the Aztecs with the help of Marina, and thus he walked forward this town, which the Spaniards had imagined to be something fabulous. Cortès and his troops marched toward Tenochtitlàn on August 16, 1519.

Cortès had disobeyed the command of Velasquez; however, he was aware of his political responsibility to Charles V, the king of Spain. Very hastily, Cortès sent a letter about asserting himself as representing the Christian world and Spain. In his letter, he also mentioned the wealth of the Aztec civilization and sent many valuable presents as proof from the New World to Charles V. **(figures 72,73)** New Comers of the American Continent advanced through inland and on the way they encountered the Tlaxcaltecas, people who hated the Aztecs. Cortès knew about the hatred that reigned between Tlaxcaltecas and Aztecs, so he took advantage of this and established an alliance with a Tlaxcalteca town, which wished to defeat Aztecs.



**figure 72. Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor and King of Spain.**  
(source: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles\\_V\\_Holy\\_Roman\\_Emperor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_V_Holy_Roman_Emperor))



**figure 73. Spanish Comander Cortès in 16 th century.**  
(source: Templo Mayor Museum)

That was the only society which resisted the Aztec domination. Other groups of natives were forced to pay tribute to the Aztec empire and obeyed their commands. For this reason, like the other tribes, they hated the Aztecs.<sup>48</sup> **(figure 74)** It was an element which the Spaniards took advantage of to make an alliance. “If you join us we will help you to destroy the yoke of your oppressors”, so these tribes became one of the Spaniard allies and joined the Spanish army, which was the turning point for the Conquest.

The alliance of the Tlaxcaltecas and the Spaniards was heard in Tenochtitlàn, the Aztec capital, and the Aztec Emperor Moctezuma decided to formulate a new military strategy.<sup>49</sup> According to this strategy, some traps were planned for the Spaniards in Cholollan (Cholula). Kinds of ditches were created and some combatants were located on the roofs. Moctezuma planned that the enemy would be smashed in the narrow streets of Cholula.

However, before entering the city of Chlollula, Cortès heard about the traps prepared for them and developed a strategy which saved them from the traps set for them in Cholollan. In October 1519, the united power of the Spaniards and Tlaxcaltecas arrived at the Aztec rural community of Cholollan and slaughtered over 3000 people of Cholollan. The news created an echo in the palace of Moctezuma. He and his council was dumbfounded and decided to develop a similar tactic for Spaniards but this time in Tenochtitlán.

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<sup>48</sup> The Aztec political system was theoretical and they established leadership as did other Mesoamerican countries. *Tlatoani* was the title given to all Aztec emperors who ruled big immense parts of the geography. As far as we know, their territory spread from Guatemala to Northern México and from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean, and almost 6 or 7 million people lived under his rule. Acamapichtli was the first Aztec sovereign who ruled the country from 1376 to 1396 and was descended of Toltecs, whose civilization broke down in the 7<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>49</sup> Moctezuma: in Nahuatl the real name was Motecuhzoma, which means irascible prince.



**figure 74. Map of the geographical extent of the Aztec Empire in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. ( source: Boone 1994: 13)**

Actually this decision shows how they were confused by the Spaniards' progress. There are some interpretations made for the conquest especially for the acts of Moctezuma, which are generally seen as weakness. On the other hand, it is said that Montezuma, actually, considered Cortès as the Aztec god Quetzalcoatl. The god Quetzalcoatl had prophesied that some day fair skinned gods would come out of the east to rule the Aztec land. When Cortès just disembarked his army, the natives were amazed by those Spanish people who seemed to be mythological beings riding beasts of the underworld (horses) managing monsters which threw fire by the mouth with remarkable noise. It is so interesting that the arrival of Cortès fortuitously overlapped with the legend that announced the return of Quetzalcoatl, who was going to return with his white ship to proclaim his lost throne. The year in which Cortès arrived at the Aztec Country coincided with the year known as an ill-fated year in their calendar, and all these predictions were good enough to confuse Aztecs' mind. **(figure 75)** One cannot forget that those predictions were so important for the Aztec cosmogony that even the foundation of their city Tenochtitlán is related with those kinds of predictions as mentioned in the previous chapter. When Moctezuma heard about their undefeatable enemies who were defeated by the Spaniards, the situation pushed him to think about Spaniards to be *White Gods*.

Cortès reached Tenochtitlán on November 8, 1519, and was welcomed affectionately by Montezuma. Moctezuma wore green feathers of Quetzal as a symbol of his kingship and torques crown and a precious necklace. **(figure 76)**





**figure 75. Illustration shows Montezuma saw a sign.  
(source: Gruzinski, 1992)**



**figure 76. Illustration of Cortès and his troops when they saw  
Tenochtitlàn (source: Reina, 1986)**

He walked through Cortès with his chiefs and gave a necklace to him which was made of gold. Cortès also gave his present to Montezuma. All the conversation was interpreted by Malinche (Doña Marina).<sup>50</sup> Following that first meeting, Montezuma allowed the Spaniards and his allies to settle down on one of the headquarters which belonged to Moctezuma's father, named Axayacatl palace, located at the eastern part of the city.

When Moctezuma showed the view of the city to the New Comers, they were all confused about what they saw. The architecture was much more different than theirs. In their culture, there were cathedrals with domes and arches. The pyramids were so strange for them, especially the religious ceremonies held in the Great Sacred Square. The transportation system of the natives was also different. Aztecs had never known about horses. They used to transport people and their goods by canoes. This type of system created the canals which were also main streets of the city. Montezuma showed his city to Cortès from the top of the temple of Tlatelolco, which was a clear evidence of the richness of the Aztecs.

At that time Bernal Diaz del Castillo was a member of the expeditions made by Francisco de Cordoba and Juan de Grijalba, and later wrote a book about the Real History of the Conquest (*Historia Verdadera de la Nueva España*) when he was with Cortès forces and he wrote;

And so we were looking, from that great and accursed temple which stood so high that it commanded the view of all around very well; and from the top of it we saw the three causeways which enter into Mèxico- that of Ixtapalapa, which is the one by which we had entered four days ago; that of Tacuba, which was the one where we later left fleeing on the night of our great defeat.... And that of Tepeyacac; and we saw the sweet water (aqueduct) which came from Chapultepec to provide the city, and upon the three

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<sup>50</sup> Malinche was a native who later became the wife of Cortès.

causeways the bridges placed at intervals, under which the water from the lake flowed from one place to the next... (Diaz del Castillo, 2004)<sup>51</sup>

As time went by, Montezuma was discontented with the Spaniards because he realized that Cortès did not have any sacred feature as had been believed. The Spaniards were also disgruntled by the condition they fell into, and were scared about an attack by the Aztecs, since they could still remember the trap of Cholollan. The Spaniards felt to be pledged in the center of the city since the city was in the middle of a lake and isolated by water. Thus, with a sudden attack they had decided to take Montezuma captive. Therefore, they did as they had planned. As time passed by, Montezuma had to develop a political agreement which was moderate for dealing and assuaging of the New Comers. In the early 1520's Montezuma declared his devotion to Charles V and offered his economic income to the Spaniards.

Soon Cortès asked from Moctezuma a Christian chapel at the top of the big pyramid. After a little while they started to pray at the top of the big pyramid with the soldiers in front of a cross and a picture of Madonna, disregarding the natives. As mentioned in the previous chapter, religion was so important to the Aztec that it centered everything. For this reason, the behavior which was accepted as a symbolic confiscation probably led to new events. Reactions started among natives. Thus Moctezuma stated to Cortès that if Spaniards kept staying in the city it would create a big rebellion which would possibly turn into a big disaster for the Spaniards.

On the other hand, in April 1520, Cortès was notified that the Governor Velasquez of Cuba had sent a group of soldiers to arrest Cortès and take him back to Cuba. However, as soon as Cortès heard

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<sup>51</sup> Translation made by Townsend (Townsend, 1979: 7)

about the new development, he left Pedro de Alvarado with 200 soldiers in Tenochtitlàn and marched to encounter and face the groups that came from Cuba to arrest him. Cortès and his group went through the camp where the soldiers of Velasquez were stationed. It was night time and Cortès's tactic once more worked out successfully. After Cortès captured the leader Panfilo Narvaez and offered gold, telling the rest of Narvaez' group that there would be more for everyone who joined him, they became allies with Cortès like the others who dreamt of becoming rich and joined to the group of Cortès.

As Cortès was away from Tenochtitlán, Pedro de Alvarado, who was one of the commanders of Cortès, could not manage the situation at Tenochtitlán, and the Aztecs began to rise up against the Spaniards. Even Moctezuma failed to control his people because they had already lost their confidence in him. Consequently, he was murdered by his own people. He was killed while talking to them in the balcony while trying to calm his people down. People started to throw stones and arrows, which killed Moctezuma. Some sources state that Moctezuma was choked to death by the Spaniards. After Montezuma, Cuitlahuac became the emperor but did not last long as the emperor since he died from a disease, as a result of which Cuauhtémoc succeeded him.

After Cuauhtémoc took the power and when Cortès was back at Tenochtitlán, Cuauhtémoc allowed the troops of Cortès to enter the city, but once they were inside they were attacked by the Aztecs. Cortès understood that it was impossible to defeat the Aztecs under those circumstances. Cortès retreated and ordered the evacuation from the city on June 30, 1520. The Spaniards started to leave the city but the Aztecs ran after them. Many of the Spanish soldiers and Tlaxcalteca people died in the attack of the Aztec warriors. That night Cortès felt defeated, and sat down under a tree, crying. That day is known as Noche Triste, 'Sad Night'. From the attack, Cortès lost

many of his soldiers but after this event they returned to Tlaxcala and recovered armies in one year. They also persuaded the allies of the Aztecs not to support the Aztec community, which pushed the Aztec Society into isolation in the geography. The ultimate step for the conquest of Tenochtitlán was taken by the Spaniards on 1521. After Cortès collected reinforcement, he started to march towards the city of Tenochtitlán until he cordoned it. He formed the cordon for earth by the roadways and for water, from the flotilla that he had built quickly for this purpose. Over 40.000 people, a vast number of Aztec populations, were slaughtered by Conquistadors.

Actually, the collapse of the Aztec Empire was not because of a lack of Aztec defense against Cortès, the commander of Spaniards, who used a good strategy among Indians while turning different groups of people against the Aztec Empire. We have to consider that Mèxico was a country made up of different ethnic groups, among which the Aztecs can be mentioned, and Tlaxcaltecas who made an alliance through an intelligent movement of Cortès, who took advantage of the circumstances, the Tlaxcaltecas being enemies of the Aztecs. Note also that the Aztecs were never able to conquer the Tlaxcaltecas. Another important fact was that the Aztec religious beliefs made them believe in their god, Quetzalcoatl, who was supposed to return and acclaim his crown. In addition, the Spaniards brought to Tenochtitlán a mortal enemy, “smallpox”, a disease unknown in the new world and would take the lives of a vast number of people. Another element which helped the Spaniards in their conquest is that Aztec weapons were not designed to kill but to hurt people, giving advantage to the Spaniards.

Due to the triumph over the Aztecs, Cortès was forgiven by Carlos V. Carlos V sent colonists and the first viceroy was appointed in 1535. The aim was to limit Cortès’s power in New Spain and to put

royal control over Cortès and the Continent. After some time, Cortès merely had the title of Marques del Valle de Oaxaca.<sup>52</sup>

### **3.2 Social Transformation**

Colonialism in generally is an economic, political and social sovereignty of a country which dominates over the other nations as defined in the dictionary of Turkish Language Institution. The records about colonialism go back to the early stages of human history while the dynamics of the colonial past show changes from time to time. For example, the colonialism of the 4<sup>th</sup> B.C. differs from that of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18-19<sup>th</sup> centuries, and even that of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Even though colonialism is a historic action of human beings, the discourse about these colonization proceedings began after the colonization disappeared from the social scene.

The discovery of the American Continent by Christopher Columbus in 1492 was an important step for the traditional colonization. Unfortunately, technical superiority was strong enough to demolish other cultures in order to make them civilized since colonization appeared as part of modernization period. Colonial ideology verified itself in pretending that Westerners/Christians civilized people who were primitive and underdeveloped. They treated other civilizations not only as different, but also as inferior. For this reason, colonization became a struggle between civilizations, among whom were the technically developed and undeveloped.

Critical days for colonization started during the Second World War, which was a decline worldwide. Facing the threat of Communism and socialist ideas, a more liberal economy and social system was

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<sup>52</sup> For detailed information, Keen, 1967; Davies, 1980; Wepman, 1986; Early, 1994; Kirkwood, 2000; Townsend, 2001; Castillo, 2004



introduced in Europe. Thus, this global and liberalistic environment brought the end of traditional colonization (Luraghi 2000, 14, 18, 21). Especially colonizers avoided the provocation of Russia. However, today colonization keeps its existence by international trade companies, which swallow the developing or less developed countries.

The Spaniards may not have been the first colonists seen in the world scene. However, she acquired a very important place within the colonial history. The end of Aztec progression turned out to be the continuation for the Spaniards.<sup>53</sup> Not surprisingly, the Spaniards could not understand the culture they encountered in America because the Aztec culture had its own progress. Perhaps cultural and value differences let them see the Aztecs as vulgar and uncivilized. For that reason, they did not show any respect for the natives.<sup>54</sup> (Luraghi, 2000: 18) For example, the Spaniards could not realize the formation which was hidden underneath the structure of the Aztecs because of their symbolical habits shaped by their cultural formation. For example, they used cathedrals which had domes but in the Aztec Land there were no cathedrals but pyramids that were pointless for the Spaniards since their form was triangular (Early, 2000: 1). Even though the Spaniards changed the architectural program, language, and religion of the Aztecs, they could not stop cultural continuity. In Mexican history, ethnographical aspects such as traditional songs, food, and languages were kept alive. On the other hand, transformation in the Tenochtitlán and other parts of the old Aztec civilization can mostly be observed in architecture. After the

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<sup>53</sup> Human history has had different progress in different geographies in time. One of the most important progresses that marked human history lasted until industrial revolution but turned into a transformation in the 1950s.

<sup>54</sup> In general, every culture has its own dynamics and it can not be criticized by different dynamics, but if people consider or criticize the others from their own cultural facts, it is impossible to appreciate different cultures. Then distinctions and comparisons between the cultures arise. This is how 'the others' is generated. "The others" leads to a cultural war among people which has been the general problem of human history.

Conquest, first of all language and religion of the native people were changed and people were forced to adopt the Catholic world view. The Jesuit priests entered the country and converted the Aztecs through a planned campaign (**figure 77**) While social structures were changing in the New World, the physical environment was also transformed under the Spaniards rules.

It was the first imperial step when churches were built all over the continent. The architectural language was transformed and new styles of architecture were introduced to the New World. The Spaniard population in the New World increased with the new arrivals from Spain. The total population in Mexico was 10.000.000 by the middle of the sixteenth century while in the same period Spain just had 7.000.000 of the population in mother land (Early, 1994: 40) (**figure 78**) On the other hand, the Indian population decreased due to the Conquistadors, who not only brought their culture but also new diseases unknown in the New World, causing a total death of the Aztecs (Sablaff, 1989: 130). Lost natives worked under the Spaniard dominion because in Spanish culture a large amount of Spaniards considered themselves to be the 'sangre limpio' (purebred). For them, work was the duty of indigents, which turned into a labor system called 'encomienda'. Usually lands and some slaves were granted to rich Spaniards by the Government of New Spain (Luraghi, 2000)

The New Culture shaped the New World quickly. It was Charles V who sent the first Franciscan missionaries to Cortès in 1523. The first bishop of Mexico was Juan de Zumarraga. The first viceroy of New Spain was Antonio de Mendoza. He was well-educated and was the first chancellor of the University of Mexico in 1553.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> By the end of 16<sup>th</sup> century the collection of books of the university reached up to 10.000 volumes.



**figure 77. Illustration of the religious procession in Tenochtitlàn.  
(source: Templo Mayor Museum)**



**figure 78. Illustration of the ethnic diversity of the Mesoamerican  
people (source: INAH)**

All these new factors shaped the new culture in the New World (Benevolo, 1978: 439).

The Aztec society was deeply influenced by the conquest of the Spaniards. Cultural continuity suddenly ceased. For example, human sacrifice was forbidden but the language of Nahuatl survived even until modern times. Today in Mexico, over one million people speak Nahuatl. Like language, some traditional patterns also survived despite the upheaval of the Spanish conquest. Today's Mexico originated from the Aztecs, the Spanish and linkage of the Aztecs and Spanish ancestors. Some African, Asian and other European genes contributed to formation as well (Smith, 1996: 292-293).

However, the cities of Spain in American Continent were the consuming cities since goods were taken away to Spain which later became the problem for colonized places (Gibson, 1969: 236; Fox, 1977: 177).

### **3.3 An Outline of Urban Structure in New Spain**

Hernán Cortés and his soldiers were in Tenochtitlán after two years of their arrival to the American Continent and were surprised to see a capital which was constructed over a lake. Their puzzlement was raised because of unfamiliarity to this type of urbanization, which had beautiful gardens accompanied by flowers and trees surrounding the island like a crown. The appearance of Tenochtitlán impressed Cortés and his troops deeply. The letters written by Cortés indicate what they saw at the first glimpse over the Aztec city center and how they felt. In his book, he calls Tenochtitlán "Temixtitan" and describes it in detail as follows;

This great city of Temixtitan is founded in this salted lagoon, and from mainland until the Center of this city,+ from anywhere, any one who want to come into it, there are two league. It has four entrances all roadways made by hand, and so wide. The city is as big as Seville and Córdoba. the streets of the city, I mean the main streets, very wide and right, some of these streets and all the other streets are half of ground and for the other half it is water, for which they sail in their canoes, and all the streets from side to side, they are opened for where the water crosses from canal to canal, and in all these openings, some are very wide, there are bridges of wide and very great beams, and very good carved, and by these streets even 10 horsemen can pass together at the same time. And realizing that if the naturals of this city want to make some betrayal, they were ready, to be the this city built in the way that I say, and by removing the bridges of the entrances and exits, they could allow us to die from hunger without letting us leave to the earth. Then as I entered in the city I hurry up and made some brigs, and I made them in a brief time, such that three hundred men could be taken to land and to take the horses every time we want.

There is in this great city many temples or houses very beautiful buildings of their idols, for the collations and neighborhoods, and in the main shrines there are religious people of their sect that reside continually in them, for those which, besides the houses where they have the idols, there are good rooms.

There are in this great city many very good and big houses, and the reason of having so many main houses is that all gentlemen of the land, vassals of Moctezuma, have their houses in this city and they reside in here certain time of the year, in addition, there are many rich citizens that have very good houses also. All them, other of having very big and good lodgings, they have very gentile gardens of flowers in diverse ways, in the high lodgings as in first floor. By one roadway that enters to this city there are two cement pipes, as wide as two steps each one, and as high as a state, and by one of them a blow of good sweet water comes, of the wide of a man body and end up in the center of the city, every body is served and drink of it. The other pipe which is empty, it is for when they want to clean the other pipe, because they toss the water as long as it is clean; and because the water must go by the bridges because the openings in the water canals where salted water crosses, they toss the sweet water by some channels so thick as a cow and the longitude is as big as the bridges, and the whole city is served in this way.

They bring to sell the water in canoes by all the streets, and the way in which they take it from the pipe is that the canoes arrive under the bridges, by the channels, and from there some men are in the top so that they fill the canoes, and they pay them for their work. In all the entrances of the city, and in the parts where they discharge the canoes that it is where the most quantity of the maintenances that enter in the city comes by, are cottages where there are people as guards and they receive *certum quid* form each thing that enters into the city. This I do not know if is for the owner of the land or if it is for the city because up to now I have not reached it; but I believe that for the owner, because in other markets of other countries it has been seen to get that right for the

owner of them. There are in all the markets and public places of this city, every day, many people, workers and masters of all occupations, waiting for whom rent them for their services. (Cortès, 2002)

This Aztec city was twice the size of Seville, the capital of Spain. The aspect which amazed the Spaniards was the notion of the *ideal city* that had already been created by the Aztecs (Webb, 1990: 99). Tenochtitlàn was built on many islands which were connected to each other by big stone bridges and water dikes that were separated from each other again by bridges that could be lifted. They were confronted by a nine-mile ditch, which was constructed around the city to prevent floods into the city, and a number of land bridges built across the lake. A double-tube aqueduct which was stretched through Chapultepec was one of the attracting achievements without using metal material but human creativity.<sup>56</sup> (Early, 1994: 2) It was used to carry drinking water since the water of the Lake of Texcoco was salty and it was not suitable. **(figure 79)**

One of the most important features of the city was the pyramids built everywhere. They were called *teocalli*, the name given to these religious buildings in the native language. Their smoking chimneys attracted attention. Their supremacy over city scale was stressed by palaces whose white walls dominated over city scale and dazzled the visitors as well.

The Aztec territory was entirely unknown to the new comers, so the new group of people had to build a city according to their needs, a preconceived plan, which would prevent them from falling into chaos. For this reason, every little detail had to be simple to prevent this chaos. Then they laid out an uncomplicated plan; however, there were areas, which had already been planned by the Aztecs.

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<sup>56</sup> Later on these techniques were replicated by Conquistadors.





**figure 79. Hypotetical reconstruction of Tenochtitlàn, beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. (source: National Anthroplgy and History Museum)**

Therefore what conquistadors did was to mix the old tradition with new ideas. They followed the path of an already existing one and took the chance to project their plan freely in terms of space. For the first time, Alonso Garcia Bravo's plan, which was rather detailed, was used.<sup>57</sup> Garcia Bravo's plan showed a certain place for the church, square, naval shipyard and other places as necessary to build a sophisticated city. Garcia Bravo's plan converted the ruins of the Tenochtitlán into a New Spanish capital while following the principal lines of the old Aztec city. For example, all the streets and plazas were laid out as they were (Benevelo, 1978: 450-451; Rasmussen, 1997: 8) **(figure 80)** In the plan, there were fourteen intersecting streets. The main roads ran throughout the central plaza, where the Cathedral and the governmental buildings were built. Around the Cathedral, a commercial center came into existence. Around the main avenues, wealthy people resided in stately houses (Greenfield, 1994: 371).

As Cortès worked in the capital of New Spain, he continually informed the Spanish emperor, Charles V, about his undertakings and sent a plan which showed the appearance of the Old Aztec capital. Cortès assured to Charles V that in as short time as a year he would build an unforgettable Spanish city that had never been seen before (Benevelo, 1978: 448). Architectural progress was taken seriously in New Spain by her mother land since it had to be approved by the King. The Spaniards had a close relationship with her colonies, giving the opportunity for sustaining control over the area for each single building, whether religious, military or even public. Only after obtaining a building license from Spain would the architectural program be in its secure progress. These facts make the history of colonizers unforgettable.

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<sup>57</sup> Garcia Bravo was born in Rivera in the last decade of the 15th century. Bravo was the creator of the plan of Veracruz and Antequera as well. Today Oaxaca has streets planned in an orthogonal shape (Sanchez De Carmona, 1989: 85).



**figure 80. Urban layout of the Aztecs and Spaniards (Darker lines refer to the Aztec period and others to the Colonial lay out)  
(source:, Sanchez de Carmona, 1989: 21)**

Still there are large amounts of documents which can be seen in the archives of the Indies in Seville as evidence of the curious behavior of Spain (Gosner, 1996: 28).

There were instructions given for new building activities during the long-lasting urbanization period of New Spain. King Ferdinand was an important person who put ordinances for the city planning in 1501. In his instruction, he considered that it was unavoidable to start construction activities if there was a colonial settlement; however, he stated that not all the places were suitable for the new settlement, so newcomers first of all would find an appropriate area to settle down.<sup>58</sup> In 1525, Cortès formed rules for town planning and told the people what they would have to do in detail for the new construction. He indicated where buildings were to be erected and what kind of construction was supposed to be around of the center.<sup>59</sup> In order to complete urbanization well, organized teams of Spain were charged. At first, three different order teams operated the construction activities in Mèxico. One of these Mendicant orders was the Franciscans, who settled in the Central and Western Mèxico; another was the Dominicans in the South, and one other was the Augustinians in Michoacan. Franciscans were the first settlers on April 16, 1531. They settled at the east side of San Francisco River. There were almost forty people who joined this project and after a few

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<sup>58</sup> “as it is necessary in the island of Hispania to make settlements and from here it is not possible to give precise instructions, investigate the possible sites, and in conformity with the quality of the land and sites as well as with the present population outside present settlements in the numbers and in the places that seem proper to you” (Translation of Benevelo) (Benevelo, 1978: 455)

<sup>59</sup> “After feeling the trees you must begin to clear the site and then, following the plan I have made, you must make out the public places just as they are shown; the plaza, church, town hall and jail, market and slaughterhouse, hospital.... Then you will indicate to each citizen his particular lot, as shown on the plan, and do the same for those who come later. You will make sure that streets are very straight, and accordingly we will find people who know how to lay them out” (Translation of Benevelo) (Benevelo, 1978: 453)

months they crossed the river and started to construct the modern urban plaza of Puebla.<sup>60</sup> (Kubler, 1948: 83-85; Kilham, 1971: 24)

All of these previous undertakings and growing population required new rules for the city organization. Philip II (1527-1598), the king of the Golden Age of Spain, promulgated the law on town planning, whose rules routed towards a real town planning and did not change for the next two centuries. **(figure 81)** It could be said that the rules of Philip II were the summary of the already existing ones and that they were mostly based upon Mendicant experiences. He published these orders as a '148 ordinances' on town planning in 1573. And his laws were mostly influenced by theoretical sources: St. Thomas Aquinas' *De regimine principum*, Eximenics' *Crestia*, the treatises of Vitruvius and Alberti (Benevelo, 1978: 458, 466; Kubler, 1948: 90). Then cities were founded and developed according to the rules of 1573.

These composed rules were expressed the collective memory of the Spain about the town planning which matured by the centuries and can be accepted as first principles of the modern city planning in the American Continent.<sup>61</sup>

There were still exodus from the mother land to New Spain and this increasing population amplified construction activities. As known from the Archivo de Indias at Sevilla, over a hundred cities were founded in the New World in just fifty years after the conquest and population shaped urbanization. For example, the Indians were forced to live far away, at the northern and western edges of the European colony.

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<sup>60</sup> The plan of Puebla was made by Alonso Martin Perez. Population grew so quickly and needed new plan and it evolved in 1532. (Kubler, 1948: 83-85)

<sup>61</sup> for '148 ordinances' see Appendix A



**figure 81. Philip II, the Spanish King**  
(source: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philip\\_II](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philip_II))



The white population was not permitted to live among the Indians. The first towns in New Spain were created and were called *cabeceras*, where Spaniards lived. According to this hierarchy of urban process, settlements of *villa*, *pueblo*, and *aldea* were created. Ciudad was a term used for big cities founded by Spaniards, *pueblo* was a small town and *aldea* was a village. On the other hand, Indian towns were known as *barrios* or *estancias*. They lived at the skirts the *cabeceras*.<sup>62</sup> Most importantly, these settlements provided thousands of laborers for construction activities since the *encomienda system* transformed the Indian laborers for the Spaniards. Moreover, tribute payers and this system shaped the urbanization process until 1542. With the New Laws, the system of *Labor Repartimiento* dominated in 1550 in New Spain. Repartimiento obligated native employees to serve Spanish employers in proportion to a rotational quota, but differences between *cabeceras* and *sujetos* still existed with the rapartemiento. In the system of *encomienda*, private persons were granted but in the repartamiento private individuals and corporations created labor together. Because of these foundations, a large quantity of labor services offered a good amount of benefits for the new urbanization practice as the construction activities and necessary goods of the cities were supplied by this institution (Kubler, 1948: 83, 98; Gibson, 1969: 227-28,31; Benevelo, 1978: 438-440).

Spaniards particularly needed labor and supplies taken from the ruins of the Aztec Capital. In doing so, it can be stated that the old city served as a store for construction activities (Schütz, 1991: 37). To create new cities which would demonstrate the power of the god and the king, urbanization in the New World gained speed, and as it

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<sup>62</sup> There was more than one type of space that Indian population used. One of the styles had a round shape called *caney*. Some types were called *bohios*. These houses were covered with straw or long grass which protected from rain. Walls were created with bamboo tied with liana and splashed by earth (Gosner, 1996: 29).

stressed *encomienda* and *repartimiento* nourished by colonial institutions. It can be said that the Spanish Urbanization in the American Continent, while creating “*ciudades de españoles*”, owe a lot to the founded Institutions in order to provide service for Spaniards. On the other hand, their ability for building activities was another factor seen by the New Comers. After the Conquest, Indian masonry men were forced to work in reconstruction activities of New Spain. Indians were excellent at masonry works. As a result, they created the buildings of Tenochtitlán in eighty years (Gibson, 1969: 238, 239; Early, 1994: 2, 7).

Like Mèxico City, other early towns and their locations were carefully chosen by Cortès. Because Mèxico City was the first city to be founded, its influence passed over the other cites and regions in terms of city planning.<sup>63</sup> All the buildings in the old Veracruz, established in 1519, were governmental, religious and public, and were laid out upon ground previously used. These three settlements, Mèxico, Veracruz and Oaxaca, show us the same concept about the creation of the city scale. These three settlements were established in a very short time.<sup>64</sup> In Oaxaca, the plan was arranged according to the square and it strongly reflects a general characteristic of Spanish urbanization in the American continent. As a general feature of Latin American cities, they mostly had a center, and organizations of the administrative buildings were also similar (Kubler, 1948: 80; Benevelo, 1978: 452-455; Sanchez De Carmona, 1989: 85; Chanfor Olmas, 1997: 195).

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<sup>63</sup> The same town planning system was used in South America. The climate and circumstances did not affect the planning system in Cartagena in 1533, Guayaquil and Buenos Aires in 1535, Bogota in 1538, Santiago in 1541, Concepcion in 1550, Caracas in 1567 and Manila in 1571 (Benevelo, 1978: 452-455).

<sup>64</sup> The foundation of Mèxico and Veracruz lasted 2-3 years. Oaxaca lasted 5-6 years. (Sanchez De Carmona, 1989: 86)

Not only social but also geographical factors shaped the building activities throughout the history of colonial areas. Churches and aqueducts were usually the buildings which centered the colonial settlement in Mèxico. After the Spaniards dried out the lake in order to break the Aztec resistance, Mèxico became an arid region. Noteworthy is that there was big floods that occurred in the Old Aztec Land since Spaniards filled up the canals which had been created by Aztecs. As a result, the hydraulic balance was completely damaged, and a disaster occurred. Rains caused incredible floods which lasted from 1629 to 1633 and smashed an immense portion of the city. The number of people who died in the flood is estimated as 30.000 natives. Spanish families left, reducing the number of 20.000 to only 400 neighbors. Due to general effects of the Mexican climate, hydraulic architecture was developed and numerous aqueducts were built in the region, many of which still stand in good shape (Grizzard, 1986: 2,5). New building types were introduced to the New World, such as the cathedral, hospitals, schools, universities, printing press, libraries, mint and military barracks (Webb, 1990: 99). Universities and libraries helped the Spanish cultural expansion in the Old Aztec territory.

Urbanization of the American Continent attracted the attention of the European visitors. The great size and wide streets of New Spain fascinated visitors like Robert Thomson, an Englishman, in 1555, the future creator of French Canada, Samuel de Champlain in 1599, the world traveler Giovanni Francesco, Gemelli Garreri in 1697, and the Prussian scientist Alexander von Humbolt in 1803. What impressed the visitors was that New Spain did not have a fortification wall which was unfamiliar in the 16<sup>th</sup> century European cities. European cities were normally fortified with strong walls. Even though Mèxico had no fortification walls, buildings had the appearance of castles due to the towers and an upper storey probably because of the fears from

possible attacks of the natives. As a unique example, the Cathedral walls were fortified. On the other hand, in the seaports like Cartagena, Havana, Santo Domingo, Acapulco, and Old Panama, the walls were fortified due to possible attacks of pirates.<sup>65</sup>

The reason was very simple. In 1574, the Colonist population was not considerably large. Seven thousand Europeans faced three million and five hundred thousand Indians. Under these circumstances, Spaniards felt unsecured. Private Citizens were allowed by Cortès in order to supply necessities of defense of lands to build houses with towers, which would serve to protect the land. In the colonial settlement, there were two storied buildings. Their exterior walls were created by *tezontle*, the volcanic native stone also used in Aztec temples in large amounts. The Colonists' buildings with *tezontle* looked like castles and their interior courtyards were driven from the Andalusian examples. However, there were no attacks that happened (Kubler, 1948: 78-95; Benevelo 1978: 465; Schütz, 1991: 38; Early, 1994: 8).

The strategic reason of the Spaniards for choosing a place to construct their capital upon the old Aztec city was symbolic since they wanted to create a colonial image. For example churches were built on Aztec temples, which reflected the Christian piety, as a symbolic culture of the New World (**figure 82**)

European people, who lived there in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, believed that cities were a demonstration of the civilized Christian Image. As Bernal Diaz del Castillo noted, Spaniards came to serve God and the King and also to get rich. They had the need for an impregnable metropolitan center, which they acquired.

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<sup>65</sup> Santo Domingo was the first European city model practiced in the New World by Nicolàs Ovando.



**figure 82. The place of three cultures, Mèxico City**

The Spaniards built a new '*Civitas Dei*' in the American Continent. The colonial cities in America can be considered to be a result of the new economic and politic discoveries of the Spaniards. The city became the main element to show this superiority. What Spaniards did in the new continent was the creation of a new mythos. This development could be compared with ancient Rome with its method of trying to create political and social mythos in their period (Kubler, 1948:71; Rasmussen, 1997: 22; Lawrence, 1999: 26; Lejeune, 2005: 31). Another factor for Spanish urbanization may be confusion of the New Comers. It may have been one of the reasons which forced them to create a new type of city, different and more glorious than the previous ones, those of the Aztecs. If architecture is accepted as a way of showing political and economic power in general meaning, it could then be said that the Spaniards wanted to prove their majestic supremacy to the natives and other European countries. <sup>66</sup>

### **3.3.1 Components of Urban Heritage in New Spain**

In general meaning, a city is the manifestation of the diversity of social relationships which have transformed into a single organism and is called 'urban' where 'cosmopolitan use' has acquired position. As far as we know, the first cities have been born in Mesopotamia in 3000-2000 B.C. in order to control places, accumulate and exchange agricultural products. Since the early ages of history, cities had their own character due to their different geographies and cultures. As the 3000 B.C. was related with districts, the changes in urbanization gained speed. While architecture stressed social and economic life, it

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<sup>66</sup> Contemporary with these developments in Mexico, in the architecture of Spain, Mudejar style or the style of the Christianized Moors reigned entirely. Such stucco wall patterns of geometric figures, carving of wall surfaces reflected some Moorish ancestry. Mudejar, Native and Spanish influences of the design are so complicated in Spanish art and architecture. Chronological classification according to style is difficult (Kilham, 1971: 19,24).



assisted the metamorphosis nature of urbanization (Giedion, 1962; Benevolo, 1995).

Spanish cities in the New World are the outcome of the pre-conquest tradition of the Mesoamerican people and the Spanish concept which was developed and strongly nourished by the Renaissance ideas. Even though Spain is one of the important European countries, its past separates Spain from other European realms. The distinction and political isolation mostly reflect in urban form. For instance, the organization of Spanish cities differs from its European counterparts as a result of the Moslem dominance in the Middle Age, which lasted for almost centuries. As an oriental character, the houses were close to each other. On the other hand, the example of Santiago de Compostela shows the general unplanned characteristic of the oriental Spanish town planning and space organization (**figures 83,84**) (Gosner, 1996: 21; Zucker, 1966: 101).

Despite eastern influences, Spain, after the 'Reconquesta', tried to be part of the European cultural union. Actually, the Spanish urbanization in the New World is a consequence of such a desire since the urbanization of New Spain reflects the characteristic of Renaissance. Furthermore, 'Ordinaces', in other words Laws of the Indies nourished from the ideas of Greco-Roman post-Hipodamic concepts, which were popular thought of Renaissance. In fact, at the very beginning, the ideas of Italian theoreticians were not known by Spain but after 1523, Charles V noticed the Renaissance writers and sent rules to New Spain, which had been mostly influenced by the Renaissance ideas. Fascinatingly, it was the ideas of Vitruvius introduced to Charles V by his humanists of the court. They interpreted Vitruvius and some other humanist sources. Examples of such ideas of the arcades can be seen the Plaza Mayor, derived from the Vitruvius concept (Zucker, 1966) (**figure 85**)



These examples on one occasion prove that the architectural activities of New Spain were based on rich theoretical sources.

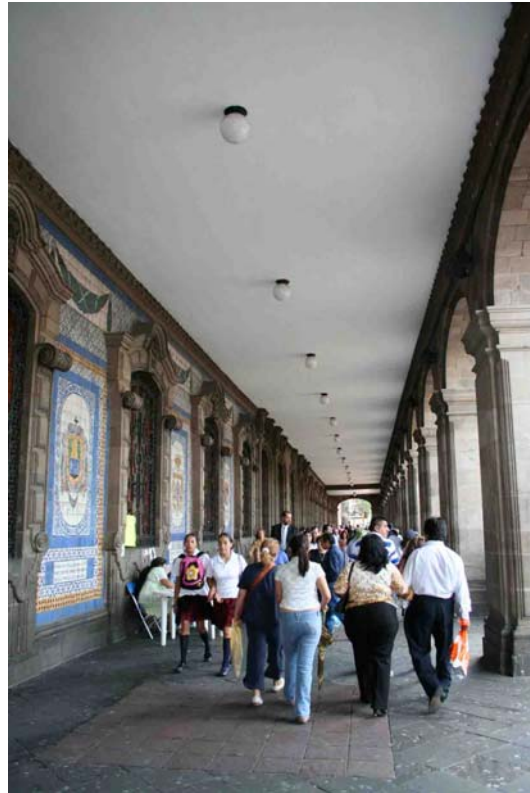
As it is known, due to its environmental perfections, the cities of the Western European Civilization attained an extremely important position in the history of urbanism. These towns reflect different features and ideas of the passing centuries. The idea of living together was the beginning of urbanism in Europe in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Fights occurred between the lords who thought that they would lose their wealth if towns were created.<sup>67</sup> Consequently, the formation of towns was the winner at the end of this struggle. Following the establishment of towns, new economic groups of people emerged with their own coins and they were called burghers (Rowland, 1964: 8-10; Rosenau, 1983).

An examination of characteristics of the first European cities shows that a total organism of the Greek, Roman and the Jewish tradition. The Jewish tradition was based on Babylonian myths, which related the idea of heavenly Jerusalem, depicting innumerable mosaics, murals, and manuscripts. (Argan, 1969: 13-14) **(figure 86)** Additionally, there were still Roman buildings in different parts of Europe, whose impact can be observed within the European architectural program. Some architectural elements were transformed from Roman Periods to Europe, such as Roman barrel vaults that were used in churches in accordance with architectural purposes (Rowland, 1964: 14).

The physical appearance of the towns of the medieval period followed the main paths of the natural environment. For instance, hilltops or the river beds were areas used for town settlement.

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<sup>67</sup> It is highly interesting that some lords supported change. They may have considered these changes unavoidable.



**figure 85. Arcades from the Plaza Mayor**



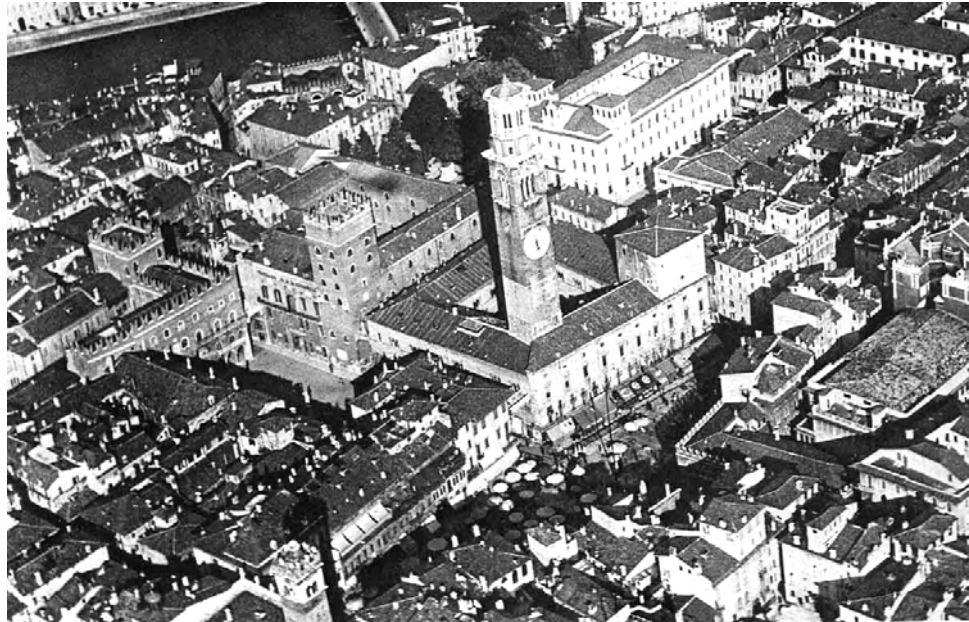
**figure 86. The Heavenly Jerusalem, by Franz Hogenberg  
(source: Zucker, 1966)**



Materials of the buildings were obtained from the same natural source; therefore, all buildings had the same urban texture which can be considered common sense and the logic of the structure.

However, the cities of Europe in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries looked like intimately crowded aggregation of houses. These houses and craftsmen's shops were usually close to each other. The streets were narrow and squares were very small and limited for the buildings. They were not arranged in line (Rowland, 1964: 12) **(figures 87-88)**. The military requirements of feudalism and domination of the church is also another important subject that shaped these mediaeval cities. The castle and the church were the most important building types around of the city squares (Chanfon Olmas, 1997: 164). The medieval city was the social and economic organism, but it transformed to political organism and was based on geometric and rational criteria in Renaissance when the cities were shaped under a planning system and were modeled by geometric rules. It was believed that the perfection of the political and social system would reflect itself within a perfect city. For that reason, in order to correspond to this idea, skilled architectures practiced their broad knowledge on buildings, which nourished from ancient roots and was followed. All of these experiments were going to be answered as '*the ideal city*' (Argan, 1969).

It would be quite uncomplicated to state the reason for the new approach for the cities as the realization of social values as mostly related with the new theoretical developments. People started to see life from a different angle and most importantly realized the significance of space. The new conception of space was promoted from such a theoretical progression. This concept developed and showed itself as an artistic discovery of perspective. Pierro della Francesca's painting once more proves us that the ideal town is a complex system of perspective that was promoted from mathematical rules **(figure 89)**



**figure 87. Arial view, Verona. (source: Zucker, 1966)**



**figure 88. Piazza del Signori, Verona (source: Zucker, 1966)**





**figure 89. Painting of Piero dela Francesca**  
(source: [www.math.nus.edu.sg](http://www.math.nus.edu.sg))

The discovery of perspective helped people to create perfect cities under the mathematical rules. In this regard, Leon Battista Alberti was the first theoretician of city planning. His research gave answer for the ideal plan and ideal topographical location of the town. He also mentioned squares and their proportions. Later on, domed buildings were recommended as a chief monumental structure by Alberti and this idea became one of the main elements of the Renaissance City. Despite this theoretical development, the Renaissance movement could not create a new kind of city but succeeded at modifying cities that already existed because there was limited space. For this reason, a new and big amount of construction activities could not be carried out. Medieval cities were transformed. The open new streets and squares were wide and standard and sometimes new buildings were added as much as possible. The city was modified by new sections, while planning and its function gained importance and the emphasis was given to the governmental buildings (Giedion, 1962: 31; Rowland, 1964: 34; Argan, 1969: 11,15; Zucker, 1966: 101; Benevelo, 1978: 430) **(figure 90,91).**

Filarete was one of the first architects to make conscious effort to enhance life expectations (Rosenau, 1983: 4). Regularity of the plan combined with a concern for a better society characterized and enhanced ideal planning **(figure 92)**. There were some plan types practiced during the architectural history of Europe. Moreover, all of these plan types gave a birth to *Ideal City* planning, in which the city was considered as the heart of the organized society and must function as one. <sup>68</sup> (Argan, 1969: 11, 15)

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<sup>68</sup> *Star shaped* which has radial streets lead to a main center from a symmetrical fortified polygon was one of the plan type practiced in order to reach ideal planning system. (Giedion, 1962: 43-47) The plan type which offered by Francesco Di Giorgio, was called *Polygonal plan*, crossed by river. *Sforzinda*, is another plan type, As an *Ideal city* planning, *Sforzinda* had to be a symmetrical eight-pointed.

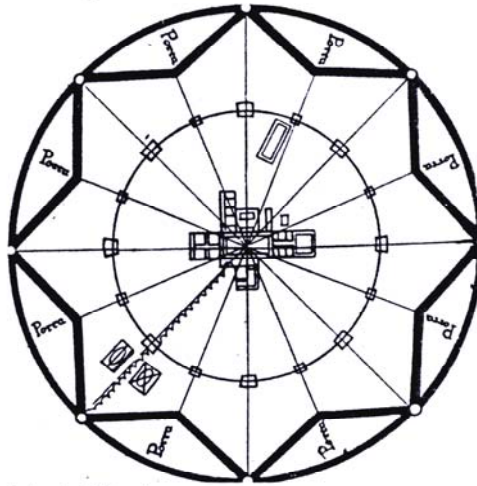


**figure 90. Florence, Alberti, Santa Maria Novella.**  
(source: [www.pages.drexel.edu](http://www.pages.drexel.edu))



**figure 91. Florence Palazzo Rucellai, Alberti** (source: [www.xtec.es](http://www.xtec.es))



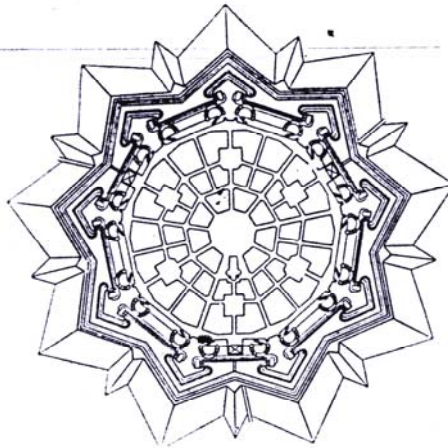


Antonio Filarete



Pietro Cataneo (1554)

Buonaiuto Lorini (1592)



Palma Nuova, Scamozzi (1593)

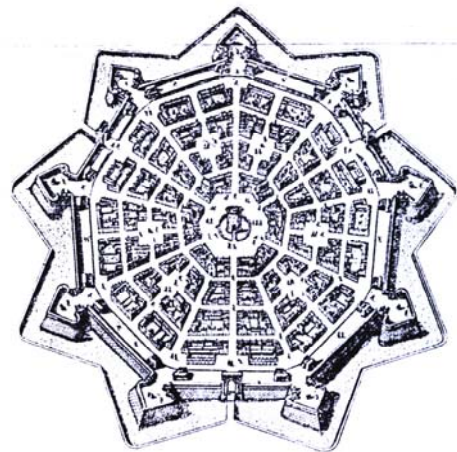


figure 92. Ideal plans (source: Sanchez de Carmona, 1989)

Evolution of the ideal city planning of Europe tried to give a universal answer for temporary questions. As one of the European countries, Spain was supposed to be aware about this progression of plan types. One can not ignore the influence of the historical development of these plans on construction activities of Spain (Giedion, 1962: 31, 43-47; Benevelo, 1978: 430; Rasmussen, 1997: 22). For that reason, not surprisingly one confronts the desire for the ideal city on the city scale of New Spain. On the other hand, maybe most importantly it should be considered that the Island 'Tenochtitlàn', where Spain settled in the American Continent, had already had a tradition of space and planning system.

To sum up, in Renaissance the recognition of the social values originated the 'ideal city' since in medieval period planning was rigid and town was a series of human habitations, so many houses were located in a row and they usually faced streets which gave the characteristic of gathering place to houses. What Renaissance brought is unity and order to integrate the spatial conception with its lines and squares. As a further step, Baroque added movement to this progression of the urbanism linkage. This movement created important points for settlements (Rowland, 1964: 66).

Baroque was the most important period affecting planning history of Europe because it created spatial liberty. Dramatization and movement were key elements which added to spatial liberty. Autonomy of the baroque architecture destroyed the rules of Renaissance. Ellipse and some other interesting structural elements and concave formations were used within the baroque ideology and they became characteristic of baroque formation.

One of the most remarkable features of the baroque was the creation of the baroque axle and three dimensional movements within the city scale.

Especially, emphasis was given to religious buildings and streets in order to create the baroque axis. These religious buildings centered the city scale as well. A famous example, Spanish Steps in Rome, is the most remarkable experience of baroque because it shows the importance of the design of outer space.

In this regard, the landscape arrangement gained importance in baroque conception **(figures 93-97)**. One of the finest examples of baroque landscapes can be seen in French Culture especially the gardens of Andre Le Notre **(figure 98)**. Supplementary to this spatial organization of the landscape repeats the eternal space. It should be noted that baroque requires enormous urban and artistic ability.

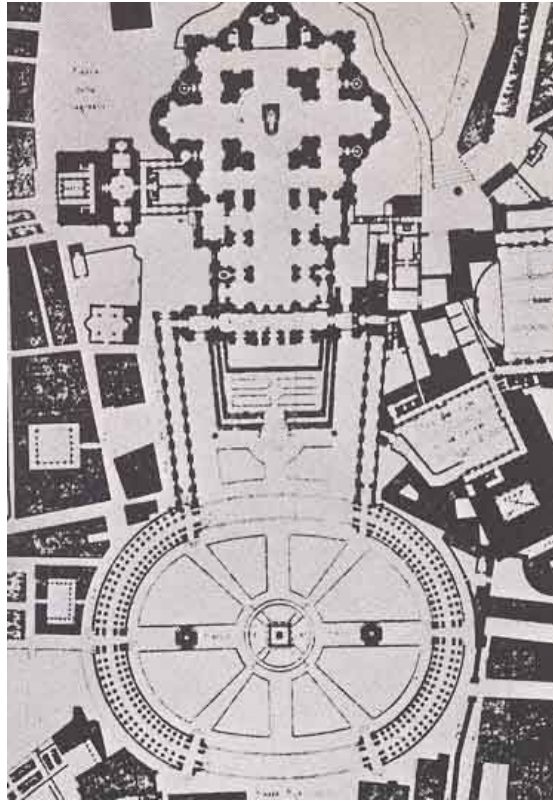
Cosmic movement of the European baroque changed its characteristic in New Spain since baroque of New Spain was mostly seen in single buildings. Spain's political history combined the baroque with the some characteristic of the gothic and Arabic elements that created the 'plateresque' <sup>69</sup> (Pevsner, 1970: 120; Rowland, 1964: 51; Norberg-Schulz, 1980: 14; Conti, 1982a: 28-29; Millon, 1985: 10; Bakır, 2003: 6) **(figure 99)**

Until now, it was stated that the baroque was the spatial organization in European countries but in Spain this characteristic of baroque was mostly decorative (Bazin, 1964: 215). In New Spain, baroque, like that of her mother land, had a different development process.

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<sup>69</sup> Plateresque is given because of the similarity to the work of silversmiths which is known as platero in Spanish. Plateresque was the combination of Gothic, Renaissance and Mudejar, but this combination changed from time to time and from place to place while being applied (Sanford, 1947: 106).

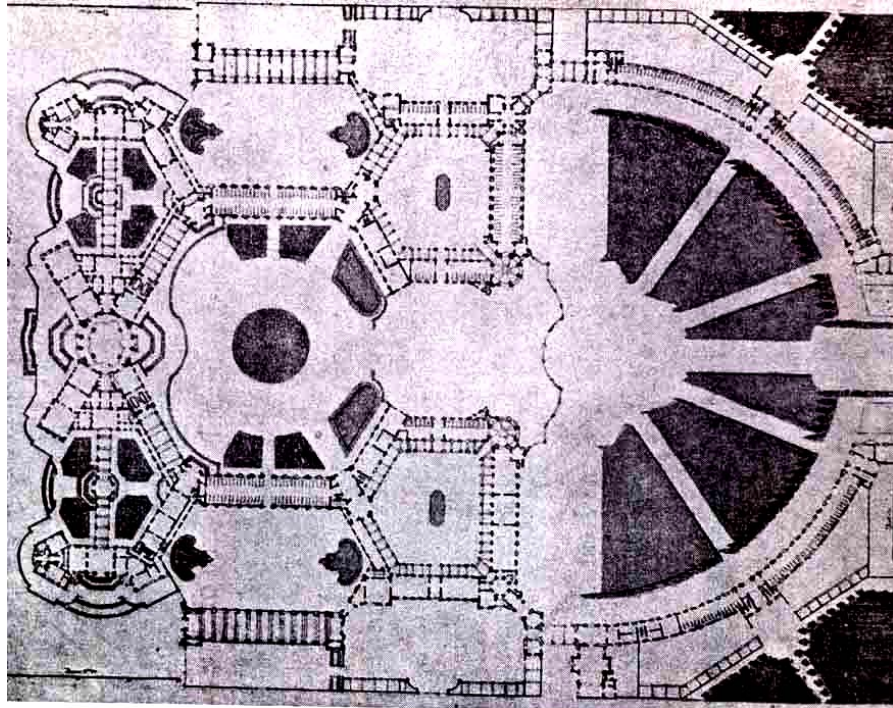




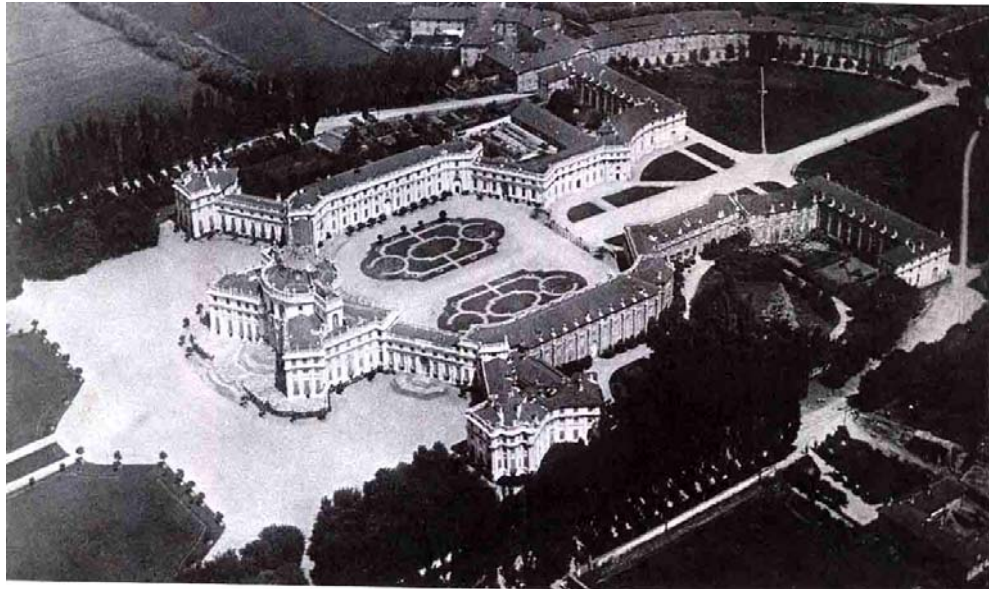
**figure 93. Plan of St.Peter's and its square, (source: Zucker, 1966)**



**figure 94. St.Peter's and its square, Rome (source: Jung, 2004)**



**figure 95. Plan of Castle of Stupunigi(source: Zucker, 1966)**



**figure 96. Arial view of Castle of Stupunigi (source: Zucker, 1966)**





**figure 97. Spanish Steps, Rome. (source: [www.bjdecastro.com](http://www.bjdecastro.com))**



**figure 98. Versailles, France (source: Borngasser, 2004)**



**figure 99. Interpretation of the baroque in Mèxico,  
Cathedral of Puebla, Puebla**

Apart from the European counterparts, its decorative aspect was more dominant and perfectly fit for the ideology of Colonial Society.<sup>70</sup> Since the baroque principle creates network between urban areas, the presence of the baroque in New Spain is most evident in the network that was created by streets. Also, the Plaza Mayor and its background were designed regarding social hierarchy. Space and separation of the classes are evident in the formation of the baroque square. In figureure 103, there is a hypothetical formation of the baroque area is demonstrated. Relating with this figureure, the fortification area is not acceptable since it did not exit in Mèxico maybe because of having the large area of the geography. On the other hand other points of the settlement can be observed in Colonial Mèxico like, port zone, commercial area, squares, and governmental places, high and low income groups and monument. As it known, Mèxico was supplying the large demand of the sugar of Europe which later was going to one of the reason for the end of the colonialism. (Rowland, 1964: 62)

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<sup>70</sup> Baroque style strongly nourished from religious movement after the time of Renaissance against humanism. Some facts gave shape to the baroque formation; one of them was the 30 years war, which pushed people into desperation. People searched thoroughly to escape from these troubles in terms of taking refuge behind autocracy. That is the reason why there are many governmental palaces in Baroque style. In this problematic century, wealthy people lost their economic power. Churches began to be powerful. Following the Counter Reformation, the growing power was the Catholics. The church aimed to use architecture in order to represent eternal truths in temporal forms. Dynamism and spatial effects were created. Moreover, the Gothic Spirit was awakened by the emphasis given on the '*open of the structure*' and '*imaginative control of light*'. The terms such as 'system', 'centralization', 'extension' and 'movement' describe the general characteristic of the baroque. Scientific discoveries stimulated and influenced art and architecture. Artists, sculptors, and architects endeavored to create dynamism in their work. This style developed in Catholic countries. Demonstration was a passion and dominated during the whole baroque period and showed itself in every part of life. Baroque likes exaggeration. The aim of *baroque illusion* is to take the mind from material to the spiritual. Baroque mind is not satisfied with balance but curved shapes. Baroque is the expression of an intrinsically more homogenous world view, but one which assumes a variety of shapes in different European countries. The style embraces so many ramifications of artistic endeavor and appears in so many different forms in the individual countries and sphere of cultures. It is only recently that the art of the seventeenth century, as a whole, has been classified under the name of baroque. In New Spain Baroque buildings were supported by private donors. To being donor of churches was a social prestige in the community. Even from records, in many cases, the architect and artisans name cannot be seen in important baroque works, but can be seen the patrons of the buildings. (Grizzard, 1986: viii; Hauser 1999, 158)

Since the Spanish cities in the New World were considered as a microcosmos of the universe, the squares occupied a vital position in the component of urbanism. As they reflected the micro space of urban life, they gave excellent opportunity for urban settings of commercial, religious, public and governmental buildings due to its empty area, which also gave a good chance to buildings to be perceived easily and to be separated from the other (Moughtin, 2003: 87).

Even though the square is the basic pattern of social city life in New Spain, the square and circle are as well the basic mathematical forms that can be seen in various civilizations as urban solutions. These basic geometric forms symbolically express the universal connotation. As it is known, in ancient time the square was based on ancient cosmological traditions, which were largely caused by mathematical considerations as a result of the gridiron plan in 500. B.C. In Hellenistic Period, most of the squares were planned. In Rome, this tradition still existed. After the fall of the Roman Empire, planned squares appeared in French and English territories. This architectural interest in designing of well-planned squares attained its peak in 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century. Large quantities of squares are explained by psychological datum of the Romance people. Public life of Romance people necessitated open areas in which big groups could gather (Rosenau, 1983; Zucker, 1966). As one of the Roman settlements, Spain had acquired this square culture from its ancient communities, and they practiced their anterior knowledge in New Spain.

For New Spain and other parts of world, squares meant space therefore; it can be considered that the history of the square is the history of space. Space is a there-dimensional expansion and representation of the organized city scale. Moreover, space is not only a three-dimensional expansion but also a structural organization as a frame for human activities and specific visual and kinesthetic



relations that stress the real characteristic of space. For that reason, the square represents actually a psychological parking place <sup>71</sup> (Zucker, 1966: 3).

To sum up, it is considered that Latin American cities reflect the synthesis of four main influences. One of these is the new foundation of Spain after medieval Reconquista; the second is the Renaissance and the Ideal City; the third one is the Roman-imperial inspiration which was the extension of the castrum of the Roman armies with its cardo and decamanus, and the last one is pre-Colombian civilizations (Lejeune, 2005: 32). The example of the Plaza Mayor with its governmental places surrounding the area corresponds to the idea that, *Spanish cities were administrative organ of monarch government*, even thousands of miles away to control people perfectly.<sup>72</sup> (Lawrence, 1999: 26) They sustained hierarchy of authority in which the Spanish King was the most important of this hierarchy.

#### **3.3.1.1 Plaza Mayor**

A plan of the Great Square drawn between 1562-1566 is still conserved in The Archivo de Indias of Seville, and it accurately responds to the descriptions of the number of buildings in the plaza at the time, showing its character of strengths, which were prepared in order to receive attacks that never happened (Martinez del Rio de Redo, 1976: 21). **(figure 100)**

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<sup>71</sup> There are some principal elements shapes the square as a spatial organization one of them is the floor. Existence of the space can be recognizing by the emergence of its limits. One of the important factor for the revealed the square is the floor itself or surface of the space can serve as unification element or isolating element of the vertical structure, slopes, steps, pavement that all shapes the process. The sky can be considered as ceiling of this limit. It offers visual limits for the square. Another important fact helps to creation of the space is the buildings. And they give identical character to its surrounding. (Zucker, 1966: 7) There is a distinctive connection between of the open area, sky and buildings and they create combination which can be considered as an art. (Zucker, 1966: 1)

<sup>72</sup> it can also be seen as the general missions of the towns.

After the conquest, a series of buildings were built in old Tenochtitlán, buildings which had religious and political character. Most importantly, the need occurred. It was a square, and the buildings around of this square were to be according to Spanish urban heritage as mentioned in the previous chapter. Buildings constructed around the Plaza Mayor mostly reflected religious, political and economical feature. The Metropolitan Cathedral is located on the north side, the Viceregal Palace, on the east, the Municipal Palaces (City Hall-Governmental Palace) on the south, the merchants' arcades on the west and the Pariàn in the center of the square.<sup>73</sup> It was the Metropolitan Cathedral whose construction started first in the area. Soon after the Viceregal Palace, the present the National Palace came into existence. Governmental Palaces and Pariàn were the other buildings erected during the time. **(figures 101-103)** Next to the Pariàn, the statue of Charles V occupied the square.**(figure 104)** Additionally, workshops for silverwork, carpentry, tint ware, shoemaking, and tailoring were opened around the square. Main avenues were occupied by wealthy people (Greenfield, 1994: 371). The porticoes, which surrounded the main plaza, were built by wealthy citizens under the strict city regulation.<sup>74</sup> For example the façade of the streets was under the government control, regularity became the result of well-planned urbanization (Kubler, 1948: 75).

While religious buildings once indicate that the Spanish King had control over the church, not only in Europe but also in the American Continent, the political buildings of colonies prove the Spanish monarch power over the ruins of the old Tenochtitlán.

The Plaza Mayor was well-designed architecturally and has a flat appearance due to the height of the buildings that surround the

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<sup>73</sup> Pariàn does not exist anymore.

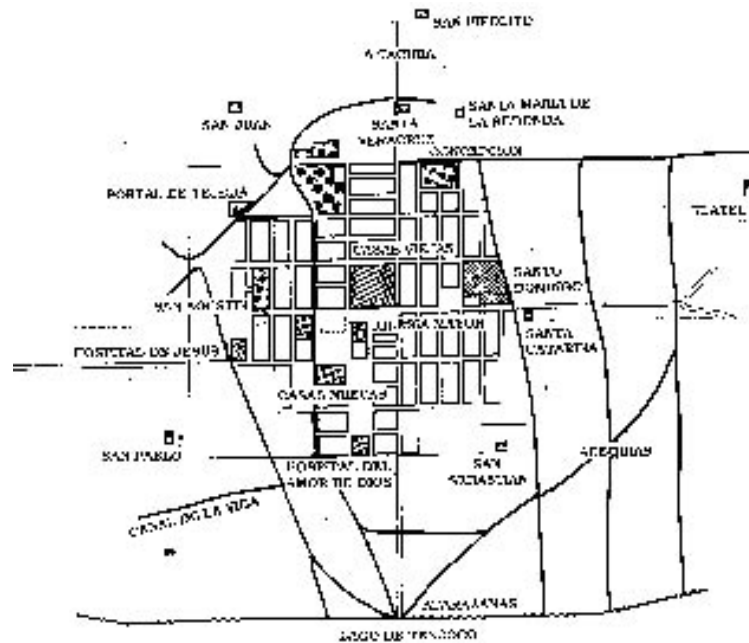
<sup>74</sup> These portals had to be twenty-one feet deep (Kubler, 1948: 75).

main plaza. It has arcades, portals and colonnades at the lower section which protect from the sun and rain, and give additional opportunity to merchants to sell their products. The appearance of the lower sections with a row of arcades gives the unique impression to the Plaza Mayor (Schütz, 1991: 38)

Some early information about the Plaza Mayor is obtained from Francisco Cervantes of Salazar, who came to live in Mexico and, as so many other people, had a strong connection with the country.<sup>75</sup> He was, besides being one of the founders of the University, an intellectual, arts teacher, doctor in theology, twice a rector and rhetoric professor, and author of works of great erudition. His intellectual background allowed him to write books, some in Spanish and others in Latin. Among these works is *The Three Dialogues Latinos*, in which book dialogues of three people are narrated. The importance of the book in particular derives from the second of these dialogues, since the capital of New Spain was described, especially Plaza Mayor. According to his novel, Zamora and Zuazo are the two Spaniard characters living in New Spain, intending to show New Spain to a friend who just came from the main country to visit the city. These two friends show the surroundings of the city to the well-educated new comer Alfaro. With such illustrious a guide as Cervantes de Salazar, the reader is provided the opportunity to walk on the streets of the historic city. (Salazar, 1939)

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<sup>75</sup> Francisco Cervantes of Salazar was born between 1511 and 1518, in Toledo. He is known as a great humanist (Martinez del Rio de Redo, 1976:21)



**figur 100. Plaza Mayor and its surroundings by Alonso de Santa Cruz**  
(source: Sanchez de Carmona, 1989: 32)



1. Cathedral 2. Vice regal Palace 3. Pariàn 4. Governmental Palace

**figure 101. Plaza Mayor with its buildings**  
(source: Sanchez de Carmona, 1989: 81)



**figure 102. Plaza Mayor in the 18<sup>th</sup> century  
(source: the archive of UNAM)**



**figure 103. Plaza Mayor in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (source: INAH)**



**figure 104. Statue of Charles V, (source: UNAM)**



Below is a part from Cervantes of Salazar's novel, which passes around of the Plaza Mayor;

They arrived to the Square. Zuazo, proud of it, shows it to the amazed Alfaro, advising him to examine it in a detailed manner and say if he has seen another that equals it. He exclaimed: "truly I don't remember any; I do not believe that in both worlds can be equal. My God! How flat and extensive! How cheerful! What adorned of high and superb buildings, for all four sides! What regularity! What beauty! Truly that if those portals would be taken off the plaza, it would fit in the plaza a whole army (Salazar, 1939)

The visitors were surprised at the quantity of portals which had different names like the Portal de Las Flores (Portal of the Flowers) and the people who sold their stuffs in them. These portals gave harmony to the plaza, where each proprietor was entitled to have twenty one feet of land on the square starting from the arcade, being responsible for its maintenance and cleanliness. It is pleasant to think that the current buildings of recent invoice have almost completely the same functions and, despite their transformed architecture, they still conserve portals (Martinez del Rio de Redo, 1976; Schütz, 1991).

#### **3.3.1.1.1 The Cathedral**

The Metropolitan Cathedral is the only religious building and one of the most important architectural examples of the *Plaza Mayor*, built a little to the southwest of the great *teocalli* of Huitzilopochtli and Tlaloc. Because of its proportions, it takes a place among the world's largest churches (Kilham, 1971: 93). It impresses visitors with its baroque façade and ornaments made of marble, which stress the plastic appearance of baroque. **(figure 105)**

The Cathedral was the first and the most important building in the American Continent. The building was erected for the Brief of the Pope Clemente VII on September 9, 1530 and for the pontiff Pablo III in 1547, being placed under the invocation of Asunción.



**figure 105. General view of the Cathedral**

The old cathedral was in the atrium of the current cathedral and it was prolonged toward the south until the today's street of Francisco I.Madero. For the construction activities, the materials of the pyramids were used. Because of problems with costs and the flooding of the location, the plan failed to be achieved, even the façade faced to the south(Sanford, 1947:178; Grizzard, 1986: 41; Carrillo, 1992: 99).

The new one was built in 1577 and completed in 1667, rebuilt and finished in 1797. The inscription over the portal states that 1672 is the date for this great capital. The construction history of Metropolitan Cathedral is long; therefore, the slow nature of construction made the Spanish kings impatient. In 1665, the king said to the viceroy Duke of Albuquerque: "the factory of the metropolitan church, that whole governments have passed for years without putting a stone in the cathedral", and he added: "having all the religions (monastic orders) completed their churches, the cathedral to be my property should be the first one, and is only the last one. The construction activities for the Metropolitan Cathedral gained speed in the last part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and it took three hundred years for termination. Because of the long time of construction period, the cathedral witnessed many different styles of colonial period, like gothic vaults, baroque portals and neoclassical façade. Otriz de Castro and Manuel Tolsa helped to create an eclectic appearance for the cathedral

The Cathedral of Mexico is the most important Catholic monument in the American Hemisphere because, as mentioned before, this construction is the first building started by the Colonists and it became the proof of the Catholic power on the American Continent. It can be seen as a symbol of the dialogue of big groups in the New World while summarizing the art of three centuries. Despite the long construction activities and the different architectural

programs, they created a harmonious architecture with its huge image. The Cathedral still attracts attentions.

The Plan of the cathedral was rectangular in shape, 378 feet long and 177 feet wide as sketched by Alonzo Perez de Castaneda, who was the Royal Master of Architecture, but while the cathedral was under construction new plans were drawn by Juan Gomez de Mora. The building was completed in 1667 with the head Pedro de Arrieta, who was the famous architect of the new continent. Even the towers of the cathedral had not been built at that time. The Cathedral acquired its most recent appearance after 1797.<sup>76</sup> For that reason, it is possible to see more than one style on the building <sup>77</sup> (Kilham, 1971: 15; Weismann, 1985: 220; Grizzard, 1986: 39; Carrillo Azpeitia, 1992).

The Exterior façade is covered with cut stone which has the material of buff limestone (Sanford, 1947: 181). Isodoro Vicente de Balbas, the son of Jeronimo de Balbas, gave a more baroque appearance with his touch. The second design made by Jose Garcia de Torres gave neoclassical features to the façade, and Jose Damian Ortiz de Castro made a third design for the cathedral with his neoclassical touch. Today's appearance of the cathedral was mostly given by Manuel Tolsa. He enlarged the dome and replaced the lanterns which are bigger in size.

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<sup>76</sup> Plan of Juan Gomez de Mora had similar features with the cathedral of Salamanca and Segovia even though it lacked of apsidal chapels (Kilham, 1971: 15)

<sup>77</sup> Gothic style was the first style seen in colonial architecture of New Spain, it constituted the first phase of settlement. Then it was the *plateresque* seen in 16<sup>th</sup> century. In late 17<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of 18<sup>th</sup> century the late Renaissance and Baroque emerged in the building style. And then neoclassical style dominated in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. (Gosner, 1996: 27)

Doing so, he matched the proportion of the dome to the whole building. In order to create a rhythm in appearance of the outer surface, he used balustrades that gave a balance to the look of the Cathedral <sup>78</sup>(Grizzard, 1986).The surface of the façade is alienated into three segments by two immense buttresses limited by big consoles and three portals, which demonstrates a doric formation (Kilham, 1971).The main façade was completed in 1681, and its first wing of doric style, in the second, the columns “salomónicas” can be seen. The relief that adorned was inspired in the base of the engravings of the famous painter Rubens and they are also of baroque style. They Represent the Asunción- to whom the cathedral is dedicated. The clock and the decorations that finish off the façade are the work of Don Manuel Tolsá. The portal was completed in 1672 and it had some modifications in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century (**figure 106**)The towers remained in their first stile until 1788, the year in which the Town council hired the great Mexican architect Damián Ortiz de Castro so that he would finished up the towers in an original way: with two enormous stone bells. The statues which crown the tower were designed by Tolsá. These towers were made after the construction and rise up to 203 feet, and the bell-shaped domes were completed<sup>79</sup> (Sanford, 1947: 181; Carrillo Azpeitia, 1992).

The interior of the cathedral could be completed in 1667. The Dome has 179 feet of height. In the center, making a Latin cross the dome was concluded in 1813 (Carrillo Azpeitia, 1992:100-101). Several gothic vaults in the chapels and doric columns can be seen there. The central nave was covered with a barrel vaulting and lunettes. Each bay of the aisles has a dome while his sacristy has a gothic star-vaulted ceiling. The clustered piers of the nave are

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<sup>78</sup> His architectural experience had driven from the French examples that of St. Invalides in Paris of Louis XVI. (Grizzard, 1986: 41)

<sup>79</sup> Towers are similar to its Escorial ancestors in Spain. (Kilham, 1971: 15)

composed of four engaged columns of the Roman doric order. The arrangement of the vaults and the dome was planned by Juan Miguel de Argüero, who was the architect of the Cathedral of Merida. He used a wooden structure for the ceiling. Because of Spanish customs, the choir is located in the middle of the nave, which caused interruption of the interior view (Kilham, 1971: 93) **(figures 107-110)**

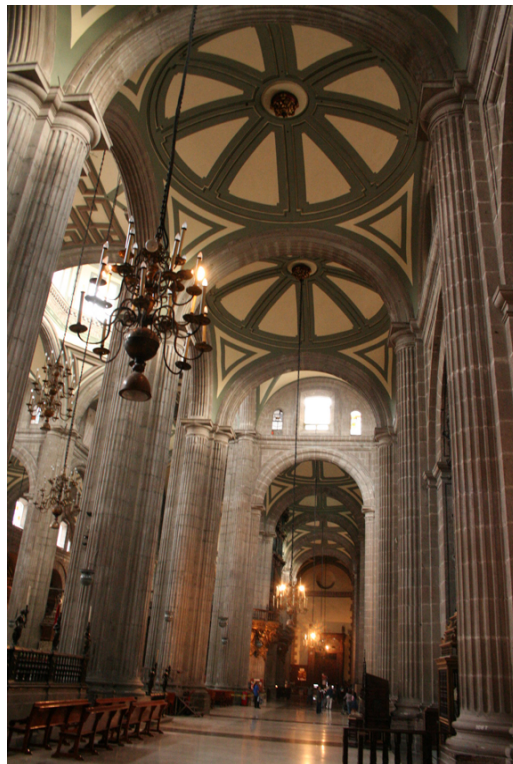
Some of the paintings were made by Juan Rodríguez Juárez. Adoration of the Kings, Patron of the Cathedral, and Assumption of the Virgin were the subjects of the paintings (Grizzard, 1986: 41). In the first place, the Altar del Perdon had an altarpiece thanks to Jerónimo de Balbás, who made these from 1718 to 1736. It had a beautiful painting of Simón Pereyns, the altarpiece and the paintings were lost in a fire (Carrillo Azpeitia, 1992:102). The main altar today does not exist. The original was a baroque jewel with silver columns made by Juan de Balbás. The most important artistic work is also 'el Altar de los Reyes' , 'the Altar of the Kings', made by Jeronimo de Balbas between 1718-1737. The paintings of the altar were made by Juan Rodríguez Juárez. The Altar de Los Reyes, which is a part within the Metropolitan Cathedral, is one example of ultra baroque seen in the City of México (Weismann, 1985: 153). In the Altar of the Kings (Los Reyes), Balbas used a kind of Neo-Mannerist column which is also known as *estipite* (Pierce, 1992: 81) **(figures 111-113)**

Actually, the Metropolitan Cathedral was generated from two splendid churches (Kilham, 1971: 93). The Sagrario was built in 1749-60 by Lorenzo Rodríguez and it shows a *Churrigueresque* style. It was an outstanding manifestation of the art of those years. (Sanford, 1947: 181; Schütz, 1991: 40) The famous academician Toussaint says that "all the cathedrals need an annexed sacrarium. Also it is the office in which the sacraments are administered and the census of the parishioners is taken." (Toussaint, 1973: 247).





**figure 106. Main entrance of the Cathedral.**



**figure 107. Interior of the Cathedral**



**figure 108. Interior of the Cathedral**



**figure 109. Detail from the dome**





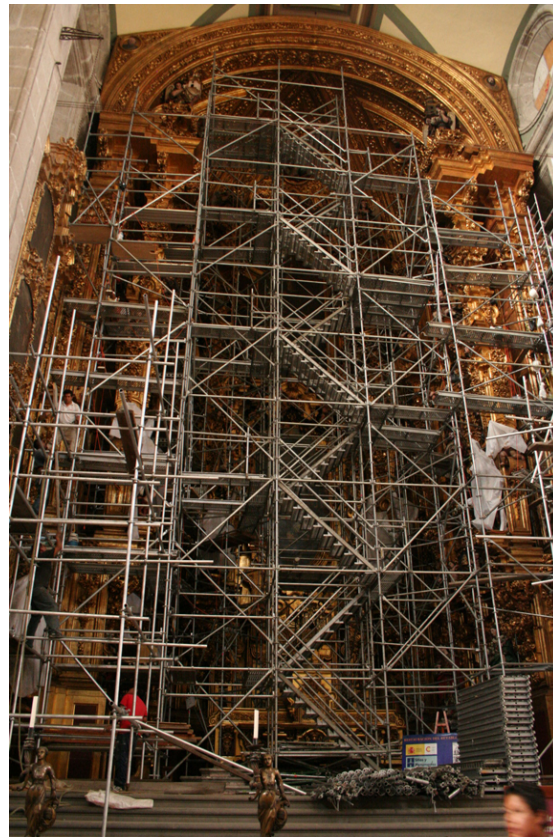
**figure 110. Interior of the Cathedral**



**figure 111. Altar del Perdon**



**figure 112. Main Altar**



**figure 113. Altar of the Kings, under restoration**



The growth of the population of the novo Hispanic capital raised the need to build the Sagrario (Sacrarium) to the east of the cathedral. Loranzo Rodriguez, the most important architect of the time, Lorenzo Rodríguez, taking charge of the construction, traced the plan for the construction of the Sagrario in the form of a Greek cross and allowed the new monument to be bound to the cathedral and to give its own autonomy (Carrillo Azpeitia, 1992:104) **(figures 114-116)**

Unfortunately the foundation was rather faulty and the building suffered effects of tremors. The Federal Government, then directed by the president General Lázaro Cardenas, interfered in the salvage of the sagrario. The Address of colonial Monuments then was carried out by the architect Luís Mac Gregor, the council of Bienes Nacionales and the Association of Architects and Engineers contributed to the restoration (Carrillo Azpeitia, 1992: 104).

#### **3.3.1.1.2 Viceregal Palace (Placio de los Vireyes)**

The Viceregal Palace is located at the right position of the Cathedral in the Plaza Mayor and occupies 40.000m<sup>2</sup> **(figure 117)** It is one of the biggest buildings in the country and was built at the place of Montezuma's house, which had once stood. It belonged to the Conqueror Cortès, but in 1562, the building was acquired by Martin Cortès and simultaneously got under construction during the time.

The vice regal government was established there along with the court and the house of coins. The viceroy Don Gaspar De la Cerda reconstructed it completely in 1693, because it had suffered many damages, being fired at by Indians and some protesting people (Early, 1994: 8).



**figure 114. General appearance of Sagrario**



**figure 115. Detail from the portal of Sagrario**





**figure 116. Interior of the Sagrario**



**figure 117. General appearance of the Vice Regal Palace, Mèxico, 1860  
(source: INAH)**

The three main doors of the façade which led to the square corresponded to the Virreinato's main administrative areas: the one at the middle had access to the main patio where the audiences places were located, the tribunal of Cuentas, the general Treasury, and the real chapel. The door on the left at the south led to a smaller patio, where the viceroy's rooms were located. The first floor was dedicated to the servitude, also containing the warehouses of the quicksilver. The second patio led to the garden that first served the viceroys and later would become the botanical garden. Except for the first viceroy, Don Antonio of Mendoza, and the last Juan O'Donojú all the viceroys lodged in the Palace (Sanford, 1947; Carrillo Azpeitia, 1992: 116). The Palace was planned to have a large number of rooms to supply for accommodation for soldiers of garrison as well

On the other hand, the National Palace had an unpleasant aspect because it was like a continuation of the market which was in the square. The garages had become store yards and the corridors and stairways were dirty. The viceroy Don Juan Vicente Güemes Pacheco and Padilla Earl of Revillagigedo (1789-1794) decreed radical and energetic measures to clean the palace and to clear the square, taking away the market that was transferred (Sanford, 1947; Carrillo Azpeitia, 1992: 115 Schütz, 1991: 38).

Even though the building was two storied, the height of the Vice Regal Palace dominated the square. Its simple architectural formation was due to being an official building. The decoration of the upper section obtained the identical character of the castle.

### **3.3.1.1.3 Governmental Palace**

Occupying the south side of the Plaza Mayor, this site has been the location for New Spain bureaucracy since the conquest. In 1691, heavy rains destroyed the wheat crop and brought on famine the following year. A rationing program was initiated, they were turned away because a group of indigenes went to investigate when rumors spread that the ration supplies were nearly depleted. This sparked the Riot of 1692, the most violent ever seen. Several buildings were burned, including part of the Vice Regal Palace and the Governmental Palace, which had held the city government offices and archives.

Two buildings now house the Departamento del Distrito Federal and Gobierno Municipal. The older one, at the southwest corner of the Plaza Mayor, was rebuilt in 1720 according to the plan of the original that burned in the riot. The newer one, at the southeast corner of the Plaza Mayor, was built between 1940 and 1948, 200 years after its twin. Fortunately, the building's archives had been saved, and are now in the National Archive.

The Governmental Palace, because of having arcades, gives opportunity to vendors. The formation of the Governmental Palace differs from the Vice Regal Palace in that its construction is vertical. On the other hand, as we know Vice Regal Place was constructed horizontally. The Governmental Palace gained its vertical formation with the edge towers at the upper section. These edge towers create the effect of a castle and as Vice Regal Palace it gives political and military messages to the square (Archive of UNAM) **(figures 118-119)**

The Governmental Palace gained its new building after the Independence, between 1941 and 1948.



**figure 118. Governmental Palace**



**figure 119. Governmental Palace**

#### **3.3.1.1.4 El Pariàn**

Today there is no remains from the El Pariàn. As mentioned before, it was totally destroyed. It was built as a market and filled the majority part of the space of the Plaza Mayor (**figure 120**) Marquess of Cerralvo, a political figureure of New Spain, was directed to construct a building for a quarter of cavalry in the 1624. The construction was started and location was specified as the front of the Palace of the City council. In time, this site was finished; however, it became the market for the sales of the diverse objects. However, the riot of July 8, 1692 gave serious damage to Pariàn as well as to the other buildings of the city. Thus, the building had to be renovated. The renovation work started in 1695, lasting until 1720. The Count of Gélves initiated the construction. This stone building was completed in 1720 and had two storeys. After the renovation, the building consisted of two storeys and took the name of Parián because of his resemblance to the building which had the same name in Manila, the Philippines, site which encompassed of most of the merchandises around of the world. Pariàn was considered as the center of commerce in the city and enormous variety of fine products that were sold there in its early time. The Parián was destroyed in a riot in 1828. Although the Pariàn was a clean building in its early time, it later became an area of dirt and pollution. It was demolished by Santa Anna in 1843 in order to build a monument which was subject to Independence (from the INAH) (**figures 121-23**)

Below is some statements taken from the 'Algunas Memorias de mis Tiempos' by Guillermo Prieto. From his work, it can be understood that Pariàn was the global market place by its variety of the products that were sold in stores. Salesmen from different countries came to sell their products.



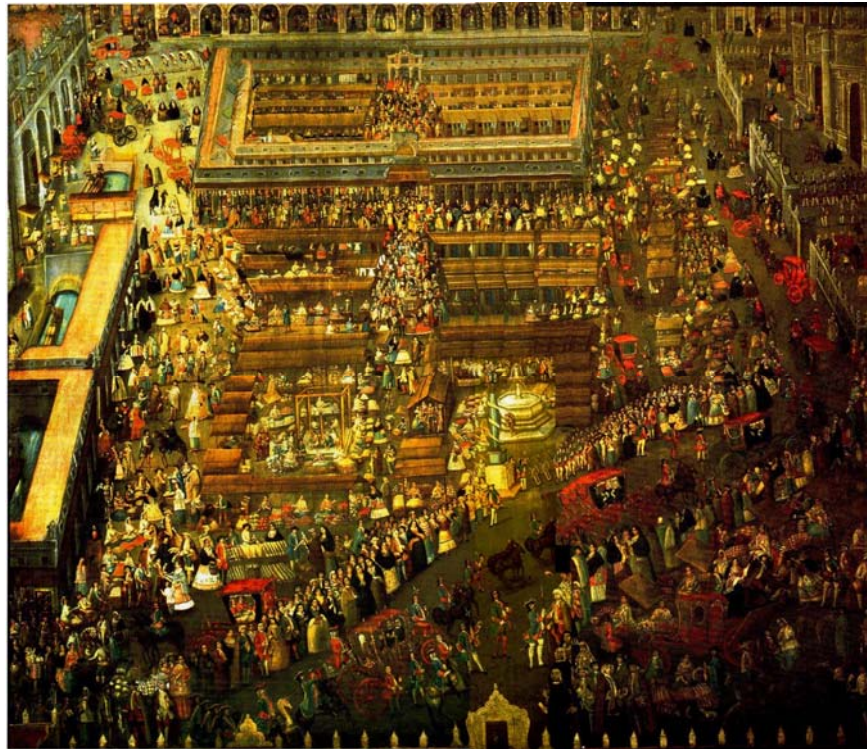


**figure 120.General Apperance of the Pariàn (source: INAH)**



**figure 121.Cathedral and Pariàn (source: INAH)**





**figure 122. Hypothetical reconstruction of the Parià (source: INAH)**



**figure 123. Painting of Villalpando, 1695 (source: Maza. 1968)**

...By that time the demolition of the Parián was ordered and carried out, Great Square that occupied all the extension that today occupies the Zocalò, with four great doors, one to each one of winds, and in the outer faces, doors of houses or stores of commerce. In the interior there was side streets and drawers like in the outside and cupboards of footwear, equipment of tailor, peletería, etc. In a time the Pariànistas constituted the flower and the cream of the mercantile society of México, and masters and employees gave the tone of the wealth, the influence and the fine ways of cultured people. The part of the building that saw the palace occupied iron drawers, in which plates and keys were sold, grills and tubes, without bullets and the ammunition of all calibers let expose themselves, and bells of all sizes. To the front of the cathedral, there were great jewelry stores..., the flat ones of Chinese, canelones and velvets, and richest in fabrics and beauties that the Nao de Dhina brought... In the interior, mainly, the drawers of clothes were of Spaniards... (Prieto, 1997)

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **THE INDEPENDENCE AND REVOLUTION: END OF THE COLONIALISM AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE DEMOCRACY**

#### **4.1 Historical Progress**

In 1821, Mexican Independence was declared. Mexican independence was inspired by the works of Hobbes, Voltaire, Rousseau and Spinoza. They helped to erase the effect of scholastic belief, and thus individualism appeared as nourished by French and American Revolutions (Grizzard, 1986). In fact, an inequitable distribution of richness, and social classes, along with events in Europe influenced Mexican thinkers to dream of an independent nation. They had a dream where the Spanish and Creoles would have the same rights within society.

In the viceroyalty, the natives were exploited as a result of a colonial social system. Although they were free man and could receive wages, almost all lived in the surrounding state, while the noblemen and Spanish soldiers received big extensions of land. The inequality among social classes motivated the movement of independence. The breeds were composed of white people, creoles, mestizos, natives, and black slaves. The creoles, which were Spanish descendants born in New Spain, lacked privileges and were considered to be inferior to peninsular people. Peninsular people were born in Spain and sent to New Spain with an important position within the government, while creoles hardly ever exercised positions of relevance. These conditions, as a fact of inequality destabilized the relation between Spain and New

Spain. In addition, political and economic changes in Europe in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century contributed to the Mexican Independence.

The Bourbon Reforms of trade of Spanish America concentrated on 'free trade' between Spain's commerce with Spanish America. Even though the 18<sup>th</sup> century witnessed the increasing number of the growth of agricultural, pastoral, and mining production, the trade of handicrafts industry declined due to cheaper European products. As a consequence, the Bourbon did the most important political reform. They used the intendants who charged to develop agriculture, industry and commerce. Behind these reforms, the intention of recovery of the Spanish power on the markets of Spanish America laid. While having commercial reforms, the agriculture of Spanish America expanded. Europe needed sugar, tobacco, coffee, and the like products. All of these necessary products were acquired from the Spanish America. Moreover, the trade of architectural products exceeded precious materials. Until the 18<sup>th</sup> century, New Spain was in a medieval sleep. The trade between of the non-Spanish land awakened the intellectual body. Colonial Universities, the movement for educational reform, the rise of scientific spirit and colonial journalism accelerated the new ideas which were opposed to colonialism. Especially journals nurtured reformist ideas among the educated creoles of New Spain. On the other hand, in order to make Spain strong, new taxes were added by the Bourbon dynasty. The suffering classes started to be discontented and revolts of 1780-81 were started, which later caused the Creole wars of Independence of the next centuries. Spanish restrictions on the economic and political activity caused many creoles to join the wars of Independence. Spain was pressured by England and France with their expanding industry

and commerce. They were trying to capture Spain's power in America. The French was trying to dominate Spanish colonies.

To sum up, numerous of factors gave way to the Independence of Latin America. The dissatisfaction of the class of Creole was the most important one. Then, the Intellectual expansion of the French and English liberal canons, the foreign policy of the countries which wanted the cease Spain's power over the American Continent were other factors. Most importantly, after the French Revolution, the French invasion of Spain could be counted. In order to establish a liberal, autonomic and local government, Mexicans took the advantage of events in Europe. While Spain focused on the Napoleonic war, and once the king Ferdinand VII was removed from his throne to be replaced by Joseph Bonaparte. The Napoleonic war caused Spain to lose its connection with her colonies. Subsequently, Spain could not send the necessary items to her colonies. Miguel Hidalgo, who was one of the important Creole priests, and other people took advantage of this event and encouraged independence. The first step for the Mexican independence started in Queretaro in 1809. This step was led by lawyers, priests and military people as Ignacio Allende and Juan Aldama. In September 16, 1810, Miguel Hidalgo, "a priest", gave "el grito de Dolores" the first Mexican manifestation against the Spanish dominance that would not be fruitful, but after the death of many people who would be remembered as Mexican heroes after 1821, when the dream of an independent nation became true. Following Hidalgo, Josè Maria Morelos devoted himself to unification of the Creole idea of Independence through a plan of social reform in place of the Indian and mixed-blood masses.

The day of independence is a memorable day for all Mexicans who come together year after year on the night of September 15 in the Plaza. The streets of Mèxico City are decorated with national colors,

green, white and red. The ceremony is led by the president who prostrate at the balcony of the National Palace. He rings a bell while says the name of the people who contributed to the independence of the country. The next morning, a military parade marches in the streets around the plaza.

After the war of independence, the country lived a stage of chaos. Agustin de Inturbide would be proclaimed emperor little after the entrance of the Trigarante army into the city of Mèxico, but some time later he would be substituted by Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna. There was a conflict between people who longed for power, especially between two groups of people, one formed by Religious people, Creoles, and army officials and the second group formed by those that supported the establishment of sovereign states, besides the social support to the natives and other oppressed groups.

In 1863, Mexican throne was offered to be governed by one of the European princes, the brother of the emperor Francisco José (Franz Joseph) from Austria, the oldest reigning family in Europe. Archduke Fernando Maximiliano was married with Carlota Amalia, daughter of the king of the Belgians. They accepted the crown. In June 1864, Maximiliano and Carlota made their victorious arrival in the capital, and were shouted by the same multitude that three years before applauded the entrance of Juárez. They went into the cathedral, to be consecrated as sovereigns of a country that had already adopted as their own. Three years after having arrived in Mèxico, in the bells hill, Maximiliano died and his last words were “! Viva Mèxico!” On July 15, 1867, another man left the balcony of the Palace, Benito Juárez, who spoke to the Mexicans: *We have reached the biggest goodness that we could wish, being consummated by second time the independence of our homeland. Let us cooperate all together to be able to bequeath it to our children on the way of prosperity, loving and supporting allays our independence.*



In this way, Juárez restored the republic which has lasted until recent days. On October 12, 1871, solemn ordinance is declared president of the Mexican Republic: "He competed in the election with the general Díaz".<sup>80</sup> As explained before, after Independence, Mexico became the land of a struggle between liberalism and conservatism during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There was no middle class and the next war of the reform transformed Mexico into a progressive middle-class state. The achievement of the United States of America encouraged the Mexican thinkers. Economic process of Mexico, which was nourished by trade made through Europe, giving the signals of political changes. Benito Juárez and Melchor Ocampo is the famous politicians who helped Mexico become the progressive middle-class state.

#### **4.2 Social Transformation**

The idea of a government and society are derived from its colonial tradition of Mexico. Strong hierarchy of colonialism, Spanish government and the church were at the top of this hierarchy. However, after the independence, a little amount of change occurred in hierarchy. The viceroy was gone but creoles became the owner of the first rank within the society as an aristocracy and continued their luxuries of life. The mestizos and the negros gained a step. Most of the negros obtained their freedom; however, slavery of the negros still existed in other countries (Keen, 1967: 260; Tannenbaum, 1968: 73).

After the revolution, a big change was seen in the field of education. The revolutionist soul wanted to bring the nation together. The leaders tried to include Indians while bringing them into the modern way of life. It was about time to close the big gap between the different social groups. In this respect, important attention was paid

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<sup>80</sup> for detailed information; Keen, 1967; Brenner, 1971; Grizzard, 1986; Knight, 1990; Meyer, 1991; Ruiz Ramon, 1992; Kirkwood, 2000

to education. People lived in extreme poverty; nonetheless, the country's politicians wanted to extend education to each single rural area inverting 20% of the annual budget to education. Most of the merit to the project was given to the Ministry of Education who made a big effort to achieve the task. Today education is a major concern for Mexicans and the government, who believe that social and economic improvements are impossible without proper education. In 1910, 80% of the population could not write or even read. Primary and secondary education became mandatory and free for all Mexicans. In addition to the long tradition in higher education in Mexico, as the National University of Mexico City planned in 1551 demonstrates it, there would be built other fine universities in other cities of the country.

While these changes were underway in the educational field, there was a problem with 'leadership'. The Cosmic Race was a solution created by José Vasconcelos. This term became popular due to the combination of races. It was not positive to separate Europeans, Africans, mestizos, and Indians. The cosmic race refers to the fact of being American. After the presidential term of Cárdenas, the Mexican dignity and self-confidence increased. Even though there was fear regarding national formation, now they thought they were neither European, nor North American, but they were Mexicans, integrated within a cosmic race which notion also nourished from the excavations of pre-hispanic period. (Tannenbaum,1968).

Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, and David Alfaro Siqueiros, the three giants of Mexican painting, had a significant influence in politics. Yet, they gained fame due to their murals on political and social themes. Their paintings were a way to bring the message of the Mexican revolution to the people who could not read. Revolution changed diverse aspects. On the one hand, it gave impetus to literacy activities producing important writers. On the other hand,

it gave birth to a Mexican nationalism. In addition, it influenced music, art, architecture, especially the gravity-defying creations in reinforced concrete, which was an important influence in western countries. Mexicans are in search of blending the Indian and Spanish with the modern and foreign to produce a unified culture.

One of the important transformations was seen in the field of architecture since the neoclassical style replaced the Baroque and it gave a new aspect to the city scale. It was the enlighten century and the notable urban changes seen not only in Mexico but all around the world. Like France, the neoclassical style became the politic style that supported by the governments.

#### **4.3 Transformation of Plaza Mayor Following the Independence**

The last ceremony that the Plaza Mayor witnessed was Viceroy Don Juan de O'donoju's funeral. After that, the viceroyalty died. This ceremony was proof of the superiority of Spain which then reached its own end in Mexican Land forever. O'donoju witnessed the arrival of the army to the city on September 27, 1821, which was controlled by Inturbide. It was a triumphant situation never before seen in Mexico, a column of sixteen thousand men that seemed to be more in number since half of them were cavalries. Although many were poor, who did not even have clothes, made the war since the beginning of the revolution of 1810, and presented a military aspect

Don Lucas Alamán relates those days that the houses had been adorned with flowers and draperies in green, white and red and the women took knot and buns of these colors, in their dresses and hairstyles. Especially, the entrance to the Cathedral was impressive: this was completely illuminated and the choirs and organs started. The velvets, the ornaments, and the candlesticks had been taken out

and with these treasures the Main Church shone in its entire splendor. The Bishop of Puebla was in charge of the decoration, on which was spent a lot of money.

There were two bishops waiting at the cathedral's door, who gave sacred water to the emperor and the empress, following them to the small low throne... from where the emperor came down to receive the sacred unction in the right arm, between the elbow and the hand...(Martinez del Rio de Redo, 1976: 81)

It was a short joy of the Plaza Mayor that would end very soon because after the independence, penalties began as well as the fight to obtain a unique and own identity. It was at that time when the Plaza Mayor lost its tranquility and the unawareness of the past centuries because of constant revolts (Martinez del Rio de Redo, 1976).

In 1843, an event occurred that allowed suddenly thousands of people that frequented the Square: the demolition of the Parián. This building was demolished because it was a building seen as ugly, antiquated, dirty and occupied the street in vain.<sup>81</sup> Some people considered that with its demolition, the Square lost a part of its soul forever because it was considered as a tradition, a legend and part of the soul of the town. Journalist José Ramón Malo, in his Newspaper, published on July 24, 1843: "*At five in the morning on this day the Parián's demolition was held by 500 convicts and 200 free peons, prepared since morning for this task*". On the other hand, the newspaper 'El Siglo XIX' was in favor of the demolition, arguing that it was the ornament of the cities, the comfort of the roads and good service of the housing (Martinez del Rio de Redo, 1976).

It was Santa Anna period when the Parián was demolished. In his time, people went out in the afternoon to the Plaza Mayor, to go for a walk on the historical square. On the other hand, the real

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<sup>81</sup> Haussmann had not begun yet its boulevards at that time.

transformation of the Plaza Mayor reflects itself with the changing of its name, which again corresponds to the time of Santa Anna. Following the independence, Plaza de la Constitución was the name given to this square and it referred to the Main Plaza, the name derived from the Constitution of 1812, which was held there and was also known as 'The Cadiz Constitution'. While this name was accepted as an official name, there was a term that occurred, Zòcalo, which is still quite popular because Santa Anna had ordered demolishing of the Mercado del Pariàn and the construction of a monument in the center of square in 1843, which was going to memorize the Independence. However, the construction was never completed. Only the pedestal (zòcalo) was completed and the project was abandoned due to economic problems that the country faced and another revolution came out in the South which put an end forever to his government. Because of the pedestal left in the spot, the area was named as Zòcalo. The name of Zòcalo can be considered to be a nick name given to this square (1864-67) (Martinez del Rio de Redo, 1976). The citizens of Mèxico began to refer to the square as El Zócalo, and most fascinatingly the name has become the generic name for the central plaza in most of the Mexican cities and towns.

Another adjustment in the Plaza Mayor was the changing of the name of the Palacio de los Vireyes to the National Palace since it became the power of the new government that was lodged. The third floor was added by the president Calles between 1926 and 1928. **(figures 124-125)**

Maximiliano I occupied the Palace on June 12, 1864 and his administration built three pedestals in front of the building, corresponding to the doors of the palace, and placed in them three flags: in the center, the Mexican with the crowned eagle; to the left, the Austrian; and, to the right, the French. He improved the interior of

the Palace furnishing and upholstering his living rooms. He also hang paintings and chandeliers from the factories of Hollenbach in Vienna on the walls (Sanford, 1947; Carrillo Azpeitia, 1992: 117).

Grandiosity of the National Palace was stressed by the works of the great muralist Diego Rivera, contributing to the aesthetic value **(figure 126)** Paintings of the Diego Rivera transformed the Nacional Palace into a national hub and today serves as a museum which promotes the intention of the construction of the nation. In 1929, Diego Rivera began his murals of the monumental stairway which is an astonishing synthesis of the history of Mèxico. The painting begins at the end of the first tract of the monumental stairway that fork in its first tract, in two big wings. The spectator contemplates on the figureht of the Conquest, Cortès and their allies defeating the Mexicas; and above, to the right, the Viceroyalty, standing out the evangelizing portraits as archbishop Zumárraga and the intellectual Don Vasco de Quiroga. In the center, the heroes of Independence: Hidalgo, Morelos, Allende, Galeana, Guerrero, Mina, Josefa Ortiz de Domínguez and Leona Vicario; Iturbide with the imperial crown; the North American and French invasions. The last one culminates with Maximiliano, Miramón and Mejía's shooting; Juárez and the men of the Reformation: Ocampo, Arriaga, Ramírez, Altamirano. Continuing this, the portraits of men involved in the Mexican Revolution can be seen: Zapata, Madero, Carrillo Puerto Obregón and Calles and, in the corridor to the left, the tomorrow's world is illustrated: the figurehts of the workers and the peasants and the destruction of the old order. In 1935, Rivera painted the old indigenous world in the corridor of the third floor, showing the handmade activities, the religious and ceremonial activities and finally their vision of the gigantic -market of Mèxico - Tenochtitlán with its boast composition, rhythm, and colors fascinating the spectator.





**figure 124. General appearance of the Plaza Mayor  
(source: archives of UNAM)**



**figure 125. General appearance of the Vice Regal Palace**



**figure 126. Detail from the fresco of the National Place by Diego Rivera**

All the presidents lodged in the Palace until the general's period, Don Manuel González, who moved to Chapultepec, thus Plaza de la Constitución lost its part of the governmental soul. General Lázaro Cardenas used the Residencia de Los Pinos in the office of government's matters, making the Castle of Chapultepec a National Museum of History. Many matters continue to be dispatched in the Palace, which still is the residence of the Executive Power (Toussaint, 1967; Carrillo Azpeitia, 1992: 117 Bustamente, 2001).

Until recently, Mexico City's Plaza de la Constitución had tall trees but they were destroyed in order to open the view to the cathedral and the National Palace. It was also the result of revolts which happened in the revolution that gave damage to the trees (Sanford, 1947: 308) **(figure 127)** Zócalo after that gained mostly park characteristic. **(figure 128)** Today the Zócalo is one of the attractions not only with its Cathedral and Governmental Palaces, but also with the shopping places of the merchants that are located in the ground, in addition to the story of the great houses and their colonnaded porticoes. Today, the Zócalo measures approximately 750 by 1000 yard (Early, 1994: 8) **(figures 129-130)** The twelve and back streets have connection with the square.



**figure 127. Plaza de la Constitució̀n had long trees, beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (source: INAH)**



**figure 128. Plaza de la Constitució̀n, 20<sup>th</sup> century (source: Archivo General de la Nació̀n)**





**figure 129. General appearance of the Plaza de la Constitución**



**figure 130. General appearance of the Plaza de la Constitución**

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS

Whether small in size or not, all plazas serve as a gathering place for people. The squares are the focal point of the city planning (Zucker, 1966: 1)

'The Great Sacred Square' was one of the important degrees of cultural symbols of the old Aztec Civilization.<sup>82</sup> It was strongly nourished by the cosmological datum and this helped their society to get into communication with each other and diverse societies.<sup>83</sup> Though religion opened an area at center of the city scale as certain point of beliefs, the political care was the main reason that shaped the actual development of the Great Sacred Square. As it was mentioned, their enemies knew about the sacrificial ceremonies held in the centre, which horrified them. On the other hand, the Aztecs took advantage of their fear and increased the number of temples.

In the mean time, the plaza functioned as a gathering place in addition to holy events and the area was decorated with carpets, flags and flowers, and furnished in the company of mock -façades of timber and fabric. This holly event stressed the Aztec political power in the area of the Great Sacred Square surrounded by a wall that was the demonstration of the religion which centered the life.

After the domination of the Spaniards, to give a decision about founding a colonial city on the ruins of the old Aztec capital was not by chance. It had been considered very deeply. At the same time,

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<sup>82</sup> For detailed information about the cultural anthropology and seismology see Applebaum, 1987; Barthes, 2005

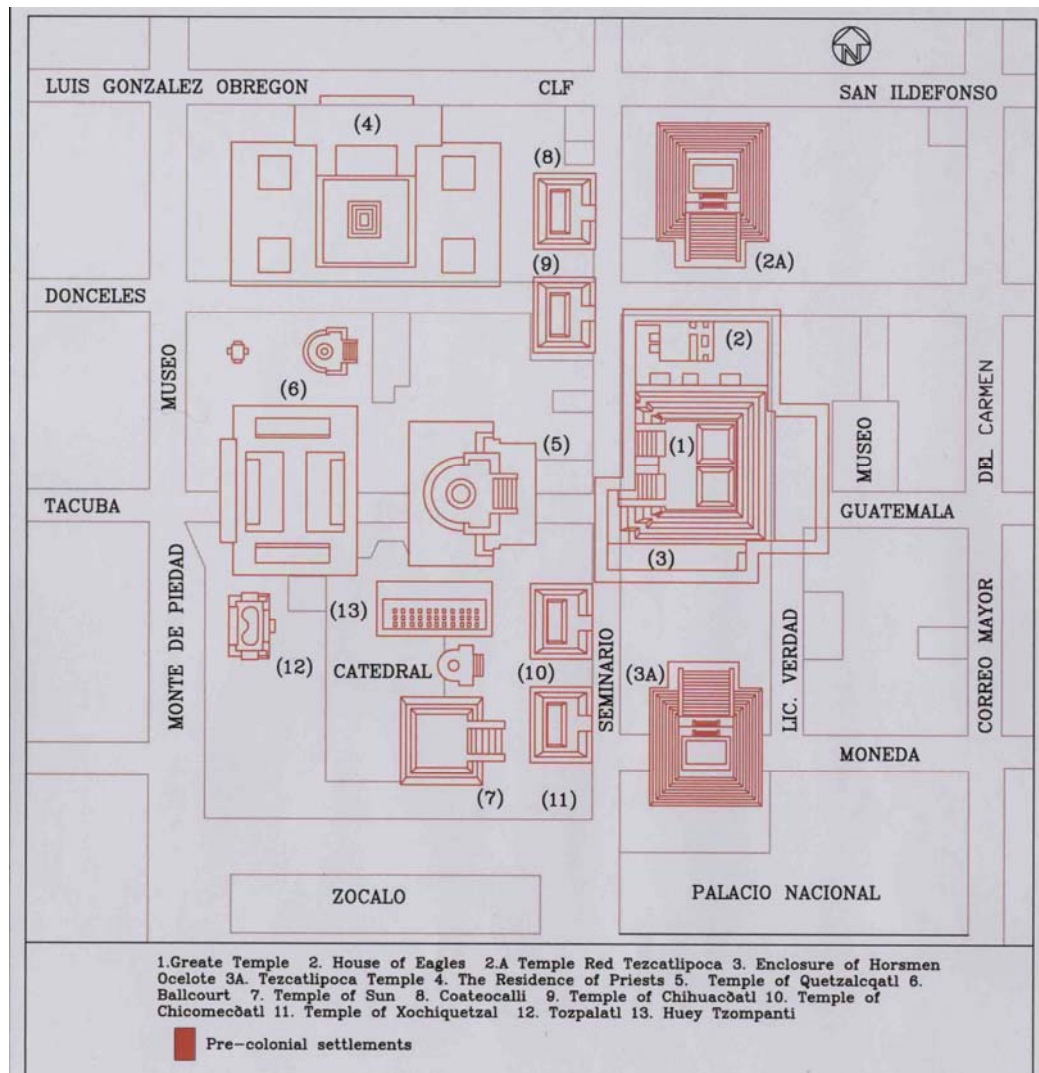
<sup>83</sup> While the anthropologists evaluate the culture as a total system of symbols, meanings and worth, they have created under disciplines such a semiology and symbolic anthropology. In this system signs and symbols usually evaluated together.



being symbolic and political act, it was a result of brilliant consideration of strategic, climatic, economic and practical solution of the New Comers. Even Cortès was distressed while destroying the city. He had to destroy the city because he had to discourage the natives. (Early, 1994: 6)

By Ignacio Marquina, the Templo Mayor and other buildings of the Great Sacred Square revealed a link to the present-day street and structures. However, no person imagined that after the destruction, there would be no archeological remains left. New excavations which are conducted on 'The Great Sacred Square' show that the Metropolitan Cathedral was not built on the exact place of the Templo Mayor but beside it. The author of this thesis is of the opinion that the place which Spaniards chose for the construction of a cathedral was due to its accessibility, since the Templo Mayor site was in existence for many years and it was not easy to clean the space and erect a new building. For that reason, it required cleaning in favor of a new religious building. Additionally, it can be imagined that Spaniards were in a hurry to build a cathedral since it appeared as a symbolic act and transformed the space into Catholic identity. **(figure 131)**

An example of cities and squares of New Spain gave competing examples to its mother land. They all created a virtual environment. Surprisingly, we see the example of New Spain as more successful in reflecting the center as a civic center (Zucker, 1966: 136). The Plaza Mayor created a model for other city centers and turned into a repeated city model in New Spain.



**figure 131. Overlapping of the ceremonial center buildings of Tenochtitlan over the historical center of Mèxico (source: INAH, reproduced by the Enrique Loredó)**

There are some signs which help us interpret the spatial relations in the Plaza Mayor, like the combination or difference of the objective and subjective factors, making the same square appear different for the each generation. In other words, the identity of the same location changed in time. Additionally, the Plaza Mayor reflects the hierarchy of the space. It can be questioned as “Is this hierarchy changed through centuries?” At this point, the following topics appear: the space and the form relationship, and the effects of architectural form to the spatial conception. The Plaza Mayor as a political center, a historical construe, a physical space, an artistic hub, a cultural and social melting pot, a human contestation witnessing hierarchical changes that can be related not only by the form, but also by some social and political behaviors. Social and political destiny changed the character of space. For example, the Plaza Mayor lost some of its governmental soul when the Don Manuel Gonzàlez was moved to the Chapultepec.

When the Plaza Mayor is examined physically, one can see that the visual distance of the sky is dominant because of the vertical formation of the buildings so, it has the characteristics of a dominated square and it encapsulates the focal point of the urban where the city would grow. On the other hand, while analyzing the historical progress of the Plaza Mayor, one has to stop at certain points to see the spatial conception affected by the changing social and political behaviors. The building of the Pariàn in the Plaza Mayor, which was constructed during the colony period, was a crucial step for transformation of the Main Square, because it was an indicator of the changing economy of the world and also New Spain. Pariàn transferred the religious and politic arena of the Plaza Mayor to the economic field. Functioning as a commercial center, the center had

products from all around the world therefore; it served as a connection place where once this culture had met with their products.

As mentioned before, the economic movement in New Spain was to prepare the end of colonialism since it created the creoles that had their own coin and wanted be Independent. Pariàn was the demonstration of the global reflections in Colonial Mèxico which also can be considered as a indication of the changing world economy.

The second step was the civic interval when Maximiliano and Carlota became the head of Mèxico. Before the Maximilian period, the Plaza Mayor was a kind of arid Square, paved with stones like the entire city square in Mèxico, serving for military purposes. Maximiliano's wife Carlota helped the Plaza Mayor, making it look green. Trees and flowers were planted around the square so the center was transformed into a public park.<sup>84</sup>

Independence was the third step in the transformation of the Plaza Mayor due to the political system which suddenly changed. The land is no longer known as New Spain, but as Mèxico. Moreover, there was a mixed race. For that reason, a need occurred, which meant the construction of a 'cosmic nation'. The Plaza Mayor turned into the Plaza de la Constitucìon, the demonstration of the Independence movement. As a strong proof of the changing political system, the Viceregal Palace was named as Palacio Nacional and to commemorate the Independence and the nationalism 'Bell of Dolores' was located on the façade of the National Palace (**figure 132**) Politics tried to make the Great square a national hub. For that reason, in order to escape from the Colonial remembrance, the Pariàn was demolished, which was once located at the heart of the Plaza Mayor. After the

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<sup>84</sup> In all the country it can be said that all Plaza Mayor's of today's Mèxico usually have appearance of the time of Maximiliano and Carlota's period. (Sanford, 1947: 306)

demolishing of the Pariàn, a sculpture was ordered to be replaced with the Charles V statue as a commemoration of the Independence. It was also to transform the Plaza de la Constitución into a national center. However, the project never could be carried out due to economic problems the new government faced. Here, another important matter occurred. The pedestal which was constructed for the sculpture was determined to be given the name of Zòcalo, as given to the Great Square and used for next centuries. Furthermore, it became the generic name for the all the Plaza Mayors in the continent.

During the different stage of the history, Zòcalo changed its physical appearance due to social, political and economical developments that the country was faced as it mentioned. Today, the square is surrounded by a roadway in which traffic flows. The middle of the square serves as a gathering place for the public so its colorful appearance acquires movement from the vendors. The hard floor of the Zòcalo softens under the feet of people. Additionally, carnivals and military events are usually held here **(figures 133-136)** The enormous size gives opportunity for people to come together especially to protest. **(figures 137-139)** A recent election is a good example. In the elections made on July 2, 2006, Calderon was elected, which then pushed groups of people gather at the Zòcalo since they did not support him, but rather protested him.



**figure 132. Bell of Dolores, National Palace**



**figure 133. From a traditional ceremony in Zòcalo**





**figure 134. Traditional dance, Zòcalo**



**figure 135. Celebration of the independence in Zòcalo**



**figure 136. Zòcalo with people**



**figure 137. Plaza de la Constitución with her protestants**



**figure 138. Plaza de la Constitución with her protestants**



**figure 139. Plaza de la Constitución with her protestants**



As a result, using their right as citizens, protestors were enclosed in the Zòcalo with big tents over them. This example can be evaluated as an indicator that the square in modern time gained public character **(figures 140-143)**

Today's Zòcalo is the outcome of a long history and progress. Zòcalo changed its characteristic to square or park up to social and economical progresses in diverse periods. Its earlier time served as a center of life while giving a message about religion and politics. The message turned into tradition which passed from the Aztecs to the Spanish. Still today it can be observed in the center scale. The reason of having this influence could be the supremacy of the spatial organization. Spaces have their own character and their influence pierce into social life and its effects cannot be erased for centuries. Zòcalo as a square is a living organism, changing continuously and is also the exact place once people confronted with the other. In spite of having social and political transformation, there is continuity that can still be observed in the urban structure of Zòcalo which also identified as Centro Historico de la Ciudad (Historic Center of the City).

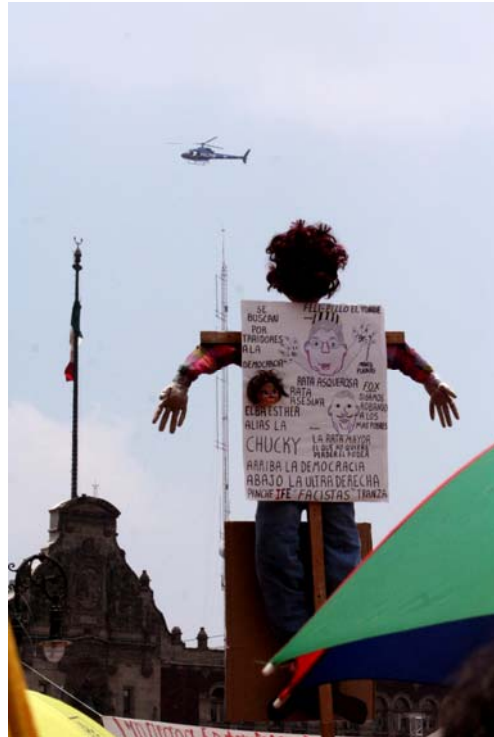


figure 140. From the protest that of recent selection of presidency



figure 141. From the protest that of recent selection of presidency





**figure 142. From the protest that of recent selection of presidency**



**figure 143. From the protest of recent selection**

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## APPENDICES

### A. '148 Ordinances', Laws of Philip II on Town Planning

**1.** No person, regardless of state or condition, should, on his own authority, make a new discovery by sea or land, or enter a new settlement or hamlet in areas already discovered. If he were found without our license or approval by those who had our power to give it, he would face a death penalty and lose all his possessions to our coffers. And, we order to all our Viceroy, magistrates, and governors and other justices of the Indies, that give no license to make new discoveries without previous consultation with us and only after having obtained our permission; but we do consent that in areas already discovered, they can give license to build towns as necessary, adhering to the other that in so doing they must keep to the laws regarding settlements in discovered lands, and then they should send us a description. **2.** Those who are in charge of governing the Indies, whether spiritually or temporally, should inform themselves diligently whether within their districts, including lands and provinces bordering them, there is something to be discovered and pacified, of the wealth and quality, and of the peoples and nations who inhabit there; but do this without sending to them war personnel nor persons who can cause scandal. They should inform themselves by the best means available; and likewise, they should obtain information on the persons who are best suited to carry out discoveries, and with those who are best fit for this purpose, they should inform themselves by the best means available; and likewise, they should confer and make arrangements, offering them the honors and advantages that justly, without injury to the natives, can be given them, and, before carrying out what has been arranged or has been learned, give narratives to the Viceroy and magistrates and also send them to the Council, which, after looking at the case, will issue a license to proceed with the discovery, which should be carried out in the following order. **3.** Having made, within the confines of the province, a discovery by land, pacified it, and subjected it to our obedience, find an appropriate site to be settled by Spaniards, and if not, by the vassal Indians so they be secure. **4.** If the boundaries of the settlement are populated, utilizing commerce and ransom, go with vassal Indians and interpreters to discover those lands, and with churchmen and Spaniards,

carrying offerings and ransoms and peace, try to learn about the place, the contents and quality of the land, the nations to which the people there belong, who governs them, and carefully take note of all you can learn and understand, and always send these narratives to the Governor so that they reach Council (of the Indies) **5.** Look carefully at the place and ports where it might be possible to build Spanish settlements without damage to the Indian population. **6-12.** These ordinances give information about the discoveries that are made by sea. **13.** Persons who participate in discoveries, whether by land or by sea, should take possession in our name, of all lands and provinces they might reach and, upon setting foot on to land, perform the necessary ceremonies and writs, thus providing public evidence and faithful testimony. **14.** Once the discoverers arrive at newly discovered provinces or land, together with the officials, they should name each land, each province, and the mountains and principal rivers they might encounter as well as the settlements and towns they might find or that they may begin. **15-31.** These ordinances train the Spaniards on the official issues of encountering, greeting, educating and exhausting the native Indian population. **32.** Before discoveries are duly recognized, no new population settlement are permitted, whether in the discovered areas or in those still to be discovered; but in those parts which are already discovered, pacified, and subjected to our mandate, population settlements, both of Spaniards and Indians, should be ordered having permanence and giving perpetuity to both groups as specified in the fourth and fifth books (of the Laws of the Indies), especially in those parts dealing with population settlements and with land allotments. **33.** Having populated and settled the newly discovered area, pacified it, and subjected it to our mandate, efforts should be made to discover and populate adjacent areas that are being discovered for the first time. **34.** In order to populate those areas that are already discovered, pacified, and under our mandate, as well as areas that might be discovered and pacified in the course of time, following sequence should be adhered to: choose the province, country, and place that will be settled, taking into consideration the health of the area, which will be known from the abundance of old men or of young men of good complexion, natural fitness and color, and without illness, and in the abundance of healthy animals of sufficient size, and of healthy fruits and fields where no toxic and noxious things are grown, but that it be good climate, the

sky clear and benign, the air poor and soft, without impediment or alterations and of good temperature, without excessive heat or cold, and having to decide, it is better that it be cold. **35.** And they should be in fertile areas with an abundance of fruits and fields, of good land to plant and harvest, of grasslands to grow livestock, of mountains and forests for wood and building materials for homes and edifices, and of good and plentiful water supply for drinking and irrigation. **36.** And that should be populated by Inidans and natives to whom we can preach the gospels, since this is the principal objective for which we mandate that these discoveries and settlements be made. **37.** And they should have good access and outlet by sea and by land and also good roads and passage by water in order that they may be entered and departed easily with commerce, while bringing relief and establishing defenses. **38.** Once the region, province, country, and land are decided upon by the expert discoverers, select the site to build a town and capital of the province and its subjects, without harm to the Indians for having occupied the area or because they agree to it of good will. **39.** The site and position of the towns should be selected in places where water is nearby and where it could be deviated to better service the town and the neighboring properties; where the materials that are essential for building can be found; as well as the lands for farming, cultivation, and pasture, so as to avoid excessive work and cost, since any of the above would be costly if they were far. **40.** Do not select sites that are too high up because these are affected by winds, and access and service to these are difficult, nor in low lands, which tend to be unhealthy; choose places of medium elevation that enjoy good winds, especially from the north and south, and if there were mountains or hills, these should be in the west or in the east, and if there should be a need a build in high places, o it in areas not subjected to fogs; take note of the terrain and its accidental features and in case that there should be a need to build on the banks of a river, it should be on the eastern bank, so when the sun rises it strikes the town first, then the water. **41.** Do not select sites for towns in maritime locations because of the danger that exist of pirates and because they are not very healthy, and because they do not make people able to warks and cultivate the land, nor is it possible to instill in them these habits. Unless the site is in an area where there are good and principal harbors, among these, select for settlement only those that are necessary for the entry of commerce



and for the defense of the land. **42-88.** These ordinances dictate the legislative, legal, and fiduciary regulations. **89.** The persons who were placed in charge of populating a town with Spaniards should see to it that, within a specified term assigned for its establishment, it should have at least thirty neighbors, each one with his own house, then cows, four oxen or two oxen and two young bulls and a mare, and it should have clergyman who can administer sacraments and provide the ornaments to the church as well as the necessary implements for the divine service; if this is not accomplished, they should lose everything already built or formed and they will incur a fine of a thousand gold pesos. **90.** The aforesaid stipulations and territory should be divided as follows: separate first the land that is needed for the house plots of the town, then allocate sufficient public land and grounds for pasture where the cattle that the neighbors are expected to bring with them can obtain abundant feed, plus another portion for the natives of the area. The rest of the grounds and territory should be divided into four parts: one is for the person in charge of building the town, the other there should be subdivided into thirty lots for the thirty neighbors of the towns. **91.** Land and boundaries for a new settlement can not be given nor taken at a seaport nor anywhere where it can ever be redundant and detrimental to the Crown because such sites will be reserved for us. **92.** We define a neighbor as the son, daughter or children of a new settler or his relatives to and beyond the fourth degree that have different households and families and, if they are married, each of them has his own household. **93-99** These ordinances deal with various topics ranging from town officials to nearby natives and taxes on items carried along to start a new town. **100.** Those who should want to make a commitment to building a new settlement in the form and manner already prescribed, be it of more or less than thirty neighbors, it should be of no less than ten, should be awarded the authorization and territory in accordance with the prescribed conditions. **101.** If there is no person with the duty to select a site for a new settlement and there are enough married men who agree to create a new settlement wherever they are directed to locate it, as long as they are no less than ten married men, they can do it and will be given land and boundaries accordingly and they will have the right to choose among themselves mayors and yearly councilmen. **102.** Having chosen a site for a new settlement, as a colony, a frontier town, a town proper, a district seat, or a village, the Council

and the governor of the Indies will not be satisfied by the mere fact of possession and continuity of rule and order from the start and a will make them responsible for its development. **103.** After the governor established a new settlement with a city directed by a mayor or a magistrate, the city or people who settle it will enlist each of the persons who had registered or comes to register from the new settlement, and the person responsible from the town must select urban lots, farm, and pasture lands for the person willing to populate the town, who shall receive the amount of peonias and caballerias on which he is willing and able to build as long as no one is awarded more than five peonias nor three caballerias if given the latter. **104.** A peonia is an urban lot that is fifty feet wide and hundred fifty-six bushels of either wheat or barley, fifteen bushels of corn, land sized for two days of plowing for vegetable garden, land sized for eight days of plowing to plant trees in dry land, and pasture land for ten fertile sows, twenty cows, five mares, one hundred sheep, and twenty goats. **105.** A caballeria is an urban lot that is one hundred feet wide and two hundred feet deep, and the rest is equivalent to five peonies which is land that will yield seven hundred and eighty bushels of wheat or barely for bread, seventy-eight bushels of corn, land sized for ten days of plowing for a vegetable garden, land sized for forty days of plowing to plant trees in dry land, pasture land for fifty fertile sows, one hundred cows, twenty mares, five hundred sheep, and one hundred goats. **106.** The caballeria, both the urban lots and the pasture and farm lands, should be clearly marked and surveyed in a defined area; and the peonias, both the urban lots and farm lands, shall be marked and divided, and the pasture land will be common to all. **107.** Those who accept settlement in the caballerias and peonias must build on their urban lots and live in their homestead and select the planting cycle of their farmlands and plant them and populate the pastures with cattle within the assigned time period and shall declare what will be accomplished within each period or they will lose their lots, lands and a monetary fine for the state, and must publicly accept these terms by way of a bond. **108.** Those who have homestead on the caballerias and have committed to plough them and populate them with livestock can convene with workers that they will help them for construction, plough and pasture, taking into account their mutual obligations so that the settlements will be easier to implement and the soil ploughed and pastured more

easily. **109.** The governor who authorize the settlement of a new town or concedes rights for an existing town to be populated anew, by means of his own authority or by making a request, should ascertain that those who have made a commitment to settle in a new town comply with the taking of seat in a proper manner. This should be done with great diligence and care. Also, the magistrates and Council procurer should initiate due process against the settlers who are bound up by a specified term and who have not complied with it to make them meet the terms, and those who might have left should be prosecuted, seized, and brought back to the town in order that they comply with the terms of settlement, and if they were in another jurisdiction, a requisitioning order should be issued in order that justice be done under penalty. **110.** Having made the discovery, select the province, country, and area that is to be settled, and the site in the location where the new town is to be settled, and the site in the location where the new town is to be built, and having taken possession of it, those placed in charge of its execution are to do it in the following manner. On arriving at the place where the new settlement is to be founded-which according to our will and disposition shall be one that is vacant and that can be occupied without doing harm to the Inidans and natives or with their free consent- a plan for the site is to be made, dividing it into squares, streets, and building lots, using cord and ruler, beginning with the main square from which streets are to run to the gates and principal roads and leaving sufficient open space so that even if the town grows, it can always spread in the same manner. Having thus agreed upon the site and place selected to be populated, a layout should be made in the following way; **111.** Having made the selection of the site where the town is to built, it must, as already sated, be in an elevated and healthy location; be with means of fortification; have fertile soil and with plenty of land for farming and pasturage; have fuel, timber and resources; have fresh water, a native population, ease of transport, access and exist; and be open to the north wind; and, if on the coast, due consideration should be paid to the quality of the harbor and that the sea does not lie to the south or west; and if possible not near lagoons or marshes in which poisonous animals and polluted air and water breed. **112.** The main plaza is to be starting point for the town; if the town is situated on the sea coast, it should be placed at the landing place of the port, but inland it should be at the center of the

town. The plaza shall be rectangular, and should have at least one and a half its width for length inasmuch as this shape is best for fiestas in which horses are used and for any other fiestas that should be held. **113.** The size of the plaza shall be proportioned to the number of inhabitants, taking into consideration the fact that in Indian towns, inasmuch as they are new, the intention is that they will increase, and thus the plaza should be decided upon taking into consideration the growth the town may experience. The square shall be not less than two hundred feet wide and three hundred feet long, nor larger than eight hundred feet long and five hundred and thirty feet wide in average. A good proportion is six hundred feet long and four hundred wide. **114.** From the plaza shall begin four principal streets, one shall be from the middle of each side, and two streets from each corner of the plaza; the four corners of the plaza shall face to four principal winds, because in this manner, the streets running from the plaza will not be exposed to the four principal winds, which would cause much inconvenience. **115.** Around the plaza as well as along the four principal streets which begin there, there shall be portals, for these are of considerable convenience to the merchants who generally gather there; the eight streets running from the plaza at four corners shall open on the plaza without encountering these porticoes, which shall be kept back in order that there may be sidewalks even with the streets and plaza. **116.** In cold places, the streets shall be wide and in hot places narrow; but for purposes of defense in areas where there are horses, it would be better if they were wide. **117.** The streets shall run from the main plaza in such manner that even if the town increases considerably in size, it shall not result in some inconvenience that will make ugly what needed to be rebuilt, or endanger its defense or comfort. **118.** Here and there in the town, smaller plazas of good proportion shall be laid out, where the temples associated with the principal church, the parish churches, and the monasteries can be built, in such manner that everything may be distributed in a good proportion for the instruction of religion. **119.** For the temple of the principal church, parish, or monastery, there shall be assigned specific lots; the first after the streets and plazas have been laid out, and these shall be a complete block so as to avoid having other buildings nearby, unless it were for practical or ornamental reasons. **120.** The temple of the principal church, where the town is situated on the coast, shall be built in part so that it may be

seen on going out to sea and in a place where its buildings may serve as a means of defense for the port itself. **121.** Next, a site and lot shall be assigned for the royal council and the city hall and for the custom house and arsenal, near the temple, located in such a manner that in times of need the one may aid the other; the hospital for the sick with contagious diseases shall be built in such a way that no harmful wind blowing through it may cause harm to the rest of the town. If the latter be built in an elevated place, so much the better. **122.** The site and building lots for slaughterhouses, fisheries, tanneries, and other business which produce filth shall be so placed and that the filth can easily be disposed of. **123.** It shall be of considerable convenience if those towns that are laid out away from seaports, inland, be built if possible on the shore of a navigable river, and attempts should be made to place the town on the side from which the cold north wind blows and that buildings that cause filth be placed on the side of the river or sea below the town. **124.** The temple in inland places shall not be placed on the square but at a distance and shall be separated from any other nearby building, or from adjoining buildings, and ought to be seen from all sides so that it can be decorated better, thus acquiring more authority; efforts should be made that it be somewhat raised from ground level in order that it be approached by steps, and near it, next to the main plaza, the royal council, the city hall and customs houses shall be built. These shall be built in a manner that would not embarrass the temple but add to its prestige. The hospital for the poor who are not affected by contagious diseases shall be built near the temple and near its cloister, and the hospital for contagious diseases shall be built in an area where the cold north wind blows, but arranged in such a way that it may enjoy the south wind. **125.** The same plan shall be observed in any inland place without shore, taking considerable care to ascertain the availability of those conveniences that are required. **126.** In the plaza, no lots shall be assigned to private individuals; instead, they shall be used for the buildings of the church and royal houses and for city use, but shops and houses for the merchants should be built first, to which all the settlers of the town shall contribute, and a moderate tax shall be imposed on goods so that these buildings may be built. **127.** The other building lots shall be distributed by lottery to the settlers, commencing with the lots closer to the main plaza, and the lots that are left shall be held by us for assignment to those who shall later

become settlers, or for the use that we may which to make of them, and so that this may be ascertained better, the town shall maintain a plan of what is being built. **128.** Having made the plan of the town and having distributed building lots, each of the settlers shall set up his tent on this plot if he should have one. For this purpose the captains should persuade settlers to carry them, and those who did not bring one should make their huts of easily available local materials, so that they may have shelter, and everyone as soon as possible shall make a palisade or ditch encircling the plaza so that they not be harmed by Indians or natives. **129.** Within the town, a commons shall be delimited, large enough that although the population may experience a rapid expansion, there will always be sufficient space where the people may go to for recreation and take their cattle to pasture without them making any damage. **130.** Adjoining the commons here shall be assigned pasture ground for the work oxen and for the horses as well as for the cattle for slaughter and for the usual number of cattle that the settlers must have according to these Ordinances, and in a good number so they can be admitted to pasture in the public lands of the Council; and the rest of the adjoining land shall be assigned as form lands, which will be distributed by lottery in such a number that the farm lots would be as many in number as the lots in the town; and if there should be irrigated lands, lots shall be cast for them and they shall be distributed in the same proportion to the first settlers according to their lots; the rest shall remain for ourselves so that we may assign it to those who may become settlers. **131.** In the farmlands that may be distributed, the settlers should immediately plant the seeds they brought with them and those they might have obtained at the site; to this effect it is convenient that they go well provided; and in the pasture lands, all the cattle they brought with them or gathered should be branded so that they may soon begin to breed and multiply. **132.** Having planted their seeds and made arrangements for the cattle in such number and with good diligence in order to obtain abundant food, the settlers shall being with great care and efficiency to establish their hoses and to build them with good foundations and walls; to this effect they shall go provided with molds or planks for building them, and all other tools needed for building quickly and at small coast. **133.** They shall arrange the building lots and edifices placed thereon in such a manner that when living in them they may enjoy the winds of the south and north as these



are the best; throughout the town arrange the structures of the houses generally in such a way that they may serve as defense or barrier against those who may try to disturb or invade the town, and each house in particular shall be so built that they may keep therein their horses and work animals and shall have yards and corrals as large as possible for health and cleanliness. **134.** They shall try as far as possible to have the buildings all of one type for the sake of the beauty of the town. **135.** The faithful executors and architects as well as persons who may be deputed for this purpose by the governor shall be most careful in observing that the above ordinances be executed; and they shall hurry in their labor and building so that the town may be completed a short time. **136.** If the natives should resolve to take a defensive position toward the new settlement, they should be made aware of how we intend to settle, not to damage to them nor take away their lands, but instead to gain their friendship and teach them how to live civilly, and also to teach them to know our God so they learn His law through which they will be saved. This will be done by religious, clerics, and other persons designated for this purpose by the governor and through good interpreters, taking care by the best means available that the town settlement is carried out peacefully and with their consent; but if the natives still do not want to concur after having been summoned repeatedly by various means, the settlers should build their own town without taking what belongs to the Indians and without doing them more harm than it were necessary for the protection of the town in order that the settlers are not disturbed. **137-147.** These ordinances deal with the conversion of the native Indian population. **148.** The Spaniards to whom the Indians are entrusted should seek with great care that these Indians be settled into towns, and that, within these, churches be built so that the Indians can be instructed into Christian doctrine and live in good order. Because we order you see to it that these Ordinances, as presented above, be incorporated, complied with, and executed, and that you make what in them is contained be complied with and executed, and never take action or move against them, nor consent that others take action or move against either their content or form, under penalty of our lady

.  
*Dated in the Forest of Segovia, the thirteenth of July, in the year fifteen hundred and seventy-three, I the King; the Licenciado Otalaza; the Licenciado Diego Gasca de Alazar; the Licenciado Gamboa, the Doctor Gomez de Santillan*

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