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## **El Mapa de Tezacoalco**



**Research Year:** 1999

**Culture:** Mixtec

**Chronology:** Post Classic

**Location:** Highland México

**Site:** Tezacoalco

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### **Introduction**

Phillip II, King of Spain decreed in May of 1577 that the Council of the Indies prepare a general survey of all the Crown's holdings in the Americas. In response to this royal request Juan Lopez de Velasco, *cosmografo-cronista mayor* of the Council of the Indies,

designed a fifty-question inquiry to be sent to the various Viceroy's of the Americas.<sup>1</sup> The Viceroy's, in turn, passed the questionnaire on to the *corregimientos*, the local governmental administration units.

The fifty question survey asked the compiler to provide information on the political geography, environment and terrain, town boundaries, languages, indigenous systems of government, historical traditions, economic life and religious institutions. Questions 6, 7, 8, 12, 16, 19, 34, 39, 41, 43 and 45, for example, ask for textual geographical information, while 42 and 47 request maps of nautical information.<sup>2</sup> It is Question 10 that specifically asked the respondent to "Describe the sites upon which each town is established. Is each upon a height, or low lying, or on a plain? Make a map of the layout of the town, its streets, plazas, and other features, noting monasteries, as well as can be sketched easily on paper. On it show which part of the town faces south or north."<sup>3</sup> The corpus of respondent information provides an invaluable primary source of knowledge for the analysis of pre-contact, as well as, early colonial indigenous cultural practice. These texts are known as *Relaciones Geográficas*, with the largest number of respondents coming from New Spain. The extant documents are housed in three depositories. The *Archivo General de Indias* in Spain holds eighty texts and twenty-two maps. The Royal Academy of History of Spain possesses forty-five documents. And the final collection of forty-one texts and thirty-five maps reside at the University of Texas, Austin in the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection.<sup>4</sup>

As a student of Latin American/Mesoamerican art history *las pinturas* or *mapas* of the *Relaciones Geográficas* present an interesting corpus of sixteenth century colonial Mexican painting. As Barbara Mundy points out in her study, *The Mapping of New Spain*, there is a marked difference in *las pinturas* painted by the non-indigenous artist and those executed by an indigenous hand. In her analysis of sixty-nine *pinturas* she finds that 45 or 65% of the works were by an indigenous artist. In her examination of the fifteen *Relaciones Geográficas* executed by Spaniards and Creoles she found that while the textual portion of the questionnaires was "often discursive and thorough," the maps by the non-indigenous artists were "perfunctory, awkward, almost careless," in marked contrast to the care given the text. According to Mundy, the native artists, again in marked contrast, have an expertise in both the artistic conventions of their (the indigenous) world and the western traditions.<sup>5</sup> *Los indios*, survived in a world where "both ideology and practice pulled the image to center stage." Mundy states, as the world around them changed, they were compelled to find new ways to represent it. This reflected a totally different alignment toward the iconography and the status of the image in the maps painted.

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<sup>1</sup> Barbara E. Mundy, *The Mapping of New Spain Indigenous Cartography and the Maps of the Relaciones Geográficas*. (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996):17.

<sup>2</sup> Mundy, 20.

<sup>3</sup> Mundy, 228.

<sup>4</sup> Robert J. Coffman, *San Pedro Teozacoalco: The Political Geography of a Sixteenth Century Pueblo*. Seminar Paper, (University of Texas: 1982):2.

<sup>5</sup> Mundy, 30.

## Caso and the *el mapa*

The Mapa de Teozacoalco offers an unique opportunity to study multiple levels of the processes that Mundy and others maintain took place during this period of initial contact in the sixteenth century. The richness in the visual imagery and the underlying ideological schematic suggested the potential in this project. Housed in the University of Texas collection, the extant texts of the mapas for Teozacoalco (size 142 x 177 cm and covers 1200 sq km) and the neighboring communities of Amoltepec (size 86 x 92 cm) and Los Peñoles, viewed as an unit, represent an important section of the Mixteca Alta.



Map of San Pedro Teozacoalco

*El Mapa de Teozacoalco* historically played an important role in the interpretation and validation of the Mixtec group of the codices. Alfonso Caso called *el mapa* the "Rosetta Stone" because it enabled him to conclusively demonstrate that the pre-Columbian manuscripts Vindobonensis, Nuttall, Columbino, Bodley, Seldon I and II, and Becker I and

It were Mixtec in origin and depicted the histories of various Mixtec entities. Caso's primary interest centered on the map's genealogies organized in ascending order from bottom to top on the far left hand side and in the interior of the circle. He successfully argued that the genealogies' place signs are Tilantongo and Teozacoalco and represent the same place signs, or their derivatives, appearing throughout the Mixtec codices. Caso established the four dynasties of the sites Tilantongo and Teozacoalco, both on *el mapa* and in the codices.

The cartographic section of *el mapa* in Caso's seminal 1948 work, *El Mapa de Teozacoalco* received a briefer and less detailed treatment in comparison to his analysis of the genealogies. *El mapa* can be and is analyzed from 3 structural or physical levels, first, the genealogical which includes the two dynastic columns outside of the painted circle and the shorter column appearing inside painted circle; second, the painted geographical circle that includes the cabecera, San Pedro Teozacoalco and the 13 estancias; and finally, *el mapa* can be considered as a whole, taking into simultaneous account both the genealogical and the geographical records of the Teozacoalco realm. In the Caso investigation many of the place signs marking the boundaries are also found in the codices, however, he did not say where in the codices. Caso also neglects the location of the thirteen estancias, although he lists the Mixtec names on the *mapa* and in the *relación*. It is therefore surprising that further analysis has not occurred on *el mapa* in the past fifty or so years. I want to emphasize further because of course Dr. Caso's work remains an extremely important starting point and the works of others such as Robert J. Coffman, Maarten Jansen, et al. have added to this area in the field but all have stopped short of the kind of endeavor exemplified by Caso's genealogical work on *El Mapa de Teozacoalco*.

## **Project Proposal**

This project of *Retracing El Mapa de Teozacoalco* proposed to investigate certain aspects of the cartographic section of *el mapa* and the map as a structural whole. As stated previously the cartographic part of the *pintura* is reflected within the circle surrounded by 44 to 54 toponyms, place signs, the majority of which lack meaning or location. The project also proposed to locate and document archaeological sites that the team came across, and to locate and document the thirteen *estancias*, paying particular attention to the sites that are unknown in the present era. The project also proposed to establish a relationship with the local authorities and people that would both facilitate our work and assist the local communities, particularly San Pedro Teozacoalco, in developing the community's sense of historical place in relationship to *El Mapa de Teozacoalco*.

The project team consisted of David Shoemaker, Project Director/Coordinator, Stephen Whittington, archaeologist and Director of the Hudson Museum at the University of Maine, and Nancy Anchors, educational specialist. At this initial stage of the project the team devoted a considerable amount of time in developing relationships with the people/authorities represented by the locations on the map. We cultivated particularly strong working relationships with the communities of San Pedro Teozacoalco, San Miguel Piedras, and San Sebastián Yutanino. A dialog, for example, between the team and the

officials of San Pedro (Sr. Alberto León Mendoza Cruz, Presidente Municipal and Sr. Mario Silva, Suplente del Presidente) focused on their interest in developing a local museum, and our desire to investigate local sites and geographical features depicted in the map. This exchange of information provided the foundation for a very strong local relationship. The local interest in learning about their particular communities' role and depiction on the map facilitated our access to the community; and this included the community as represented in its various constructed levels.



**This image demonstrates the teams' corroboration with el Presidente Alberto Cruz of San Pedro (pictured are Sr. Cruz, Nancy Anchors and Stephen Whittington).**



**This photo illustrates a mini-lecture on sixteenth-century San Miguel Piedras and the pueblo's position on the map as related to San Pedro. Pictured are David Shoemaker in center with a map copy and the men of San Miguel. These local dialogs developed in the visited communities reinforced our efforts to maintain strong provincial ties.**



**Team members in ballcourt.**



**Corner stairway in ballcourt.**



Stone carving found on ballcourt floor.

### Table of Sites located

The following chart documents the majority of the sites located by the team:

Position Name	Location	Elevation	Description	Period
Palm Tree Paradise	17° 07.44 N 97° 18.71 W	5477 FT	Ceramic production site; extensive walls & kilns; widespread surface sherds: Red, cream, tan sherds/some with polished surfaces; intact kiln on southern slope.	Postclassic
Pine Tree Overlook	17° 00.38 N 97° 15.73 W	5530 FT	Ceramics: <i>Teozacoalco</i> red-on-cream (equivalent to Yanhuatlán red-on-white), obsidian, chipped quartz.	Postclassic
Milpa Locally known as <i>Jarro</i>	17° 00.48 N 97° 15.60 W	5726 FT	Ceramics: red-on-white, red-on-tan; mano, obsidian; terraced-stone walls; Plaza construction: lg mound facing west with 2 smaller mounds North & South with opening to west. Large mound 4 m high with evidence of looting.	Postclassic
Rocas	17° 00.40 N 97° 16.01 W	5764 FT	Ceramics (usual assortment); chert; walled terraced area: 1st mound 2 m high, 2 mounds 1 meter high with plaza in between.	Postclassic
San Pedro Teozacoalco*			Pictured on the map, we found extensive archaeological evidence of documented structures. Corners to the cacique's palace, measurable size of Palace. Also oral tradition and some structural	Postclassic to Modern

			evidence of tunnel that extends from outer slope of cacique's palace to underneath the church.	
Cerro Amole	16° 59.10 N 97° 17.55 W	7870 FT	Five meter high mound at highest point of mountain known as <i>Iglesia gentil</i> ; east of Iglesia another large 5 meter high construction; mountain top is characterized by stone constructions: walls, structures, terraces. Major feature of cerro top is large "I" shaped Mesoamerican style ballcourt. Positioned in/on ballcourt playing surface are 3 carved stones. The carved images on the sides of each stone hints at various aspects of the Mixtec Rain God. Ceramics are non-diagnostic; however, ballcourt suggests Classic element.	Classic

Position Name	Location	Elevation	Description	Period
Santa Ana	17° 01.33 N 97° 16.92 W	5324 FT	Site is located on the north east fringes of San Pedro Teozacoalco and the structural mound is referred to locally as <i>Iglesia gentil</i> . The 5 meter pre-contact construction with red-painted plaster floor contains evidence of numerous looters' pits. Variety of the characteristic ceramics, quartz, obsidian, green obsidian, rhyolite mano, brushed clay chert, and non-rhyolite mano. Evidence of causeway extending west to east side of mound.	Postclassic
Mama 1	17° 02.98 N 97° 17.40 W	4988 FT	One of a pair of walled terraced cerros northeast of Yutanduchi. Mama 1 is the more southerly and has quartz, chert, a light ceramic scatter that includes a fine grey jar with combed bottom corresponding to Monte Albán I. G. 12	Late Preclassic
Mama 2	17° 03.08 N	5037 FT	Second of a pair of walled terraced	Late



	97° 17.36 W		cerros northeast of Yutanduchi. Mama 2 is the northerly hill with a light ceramic scatter and low quality chert.	Preclassic
Patricío/ Nuzgdiguy	17° 02.91 N 97° 19.11 W	5643 FT	Hill top site with two mounds, under larger mound is an extensive hole either a looters' pit or a cave. Adjacent to smaller mound is a red-painted plaster floor that also appears in the road cut profile. Site is known in Mixtec as Nu Yi Digui tilli which translates into Spanish as " <i>lugar donde está metida la cabeza del muerto</i> " or in English " <i>the place where one puts the heads of the dead</i> ".	Postclassic

Position Name	Location	Elevation	Description	Period
Hornos/Corresponds to Palm Tree Paradise	17° 08.15 N 97° 19.24 W	5911 FT	A site that extends by kilometers in all directions. On the east side of the road there are numerous stone constructions with many kilns. Several of the examined structures were multi-roomed and complexly organized. On the west side of the road there is at least one nearly intact kiln with plaster on the lower walls and floor. Ceramics correspond to those at <i>Palm Tree Paradise</i> . There is no evidence of colonial artifacts. There is, however, a contemporary construction currently in use as a sacred/ritual site.	Postclassic
Maze	17° 08.12 N 97° 19.15 W	5779 FT	North of Hornos, west side of the road. Site consisted of numerous walls, terraces and kilns. Two kiln-like structures, each showing evidence of recent use, were probably roofed with perishable material. Surviving were charred lintels. The kilns contained remnants of ollas, comales	Postclassic

			(probably modern) and a small metate. Stuck in one wall of the kilns was half of an old doughnut stone. Progressing up the hill were more walls, terraces, rooms, and remains of kilns. Sections of the site consisted of parallel walls running for long distances and exhibited a possible defensive purpose, facing San Pedro Teozacoalco. The pattern here and at Hornos is to have walls on hillsides and edges of hilltop interspersed with U-shaped structures and open areas at the top devoid of stones. With the exception of modern ceramics, the sherds were Postclassic.	
Vista	17° 06.14 N 97° 20.65 W	4349 FT	In search of the colonial site San Andrés, the team came across a site with stone walls and a few nondescript ceramics probably Postclassic.	Postclassic

Position Name	Location	Elevation	Description	Period
Río Minas	16° 55.87 N 97° 14.39 W	4983 FT	The team believes this to be the first of the unknown estancias from <i>El Mapa de Teozacoalco</i> . The site corresponds to San Jerónimo Yutamañu. The site consists of remains of a vaulted ceiling with standing pillars thick brick mortared walls and arches. It is located in an agricultural field adjacent to river and bridge.	Colonial
Minas	16° 55.47 N 97° 14.80 W	4199 FT	Location of colonial era "gold" mine. The mine entrance is 6m wide and 3m high and the passage is 1/8 mile in a downward direction. There 10 to 15 defunct mines in the area.	Colonial
Dos Casas	17° 01.28 N 97° 17.70 W	5590 FT	The site is located among two abandoned houses outside San Pedro	Postclassic

			Teozacoalco on a sloping hillside of networked walls. The site contains 5 kilns including a double oven. The ceramics includes tan, orange, yellow and Teozacoalco red-on-cream.	
Esperanza	17° 01.09 N 97° 17.55 W	5575 FT	Small site west of Teozacoalco with small ceramic scatter which is a mixture of Teozacoalco red-on-cream and modern.	Postclassic
Cueva de Jasmin	17° 01.43 N 97° 14.68 W	6534 FT	A cave ritual site used by the people of Yutanduchi on May 1 to insure an abundant water supply in the incoming year. Ceramic sherds were found in certain areas, most were thin and undecorated. One sherd has a strap handle. The cave is located between San Pedro Teozacoalco and San Miguel Piedras. The entrance measured 25m by 25m and extended south into the hill side with fantastic natural shapes.	Postclassic to Modern



**Nancy Anchors beside the structure's colonial period column.**



**Distant view of San Andrés I.**

<b>Position Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Elevation</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Period</b>
Last-1	17° 01.36 N 97° 17.21 W	5296 FT	Hilltop site outside of San Pedro Teozacoalco on the road to Yutanduchi behind the Palacio Municipal. Consists of 3 structural mounds and evidence of two holes that could be looted burial sites. Ceramics were crude grayware probably Classic Period, Teozacoalco red-on-white, red-on-orange, Reddish-brown on tan, and modern-white glaze on pink and green glazed. Site looks like a Classic site.	Classic

*For information on this report submitted 09/01/2000 contact:*

Stephen L. Whittington  
 Museum of Anthropology  
 Wake Forest University  
[whittisl@wfu.edu](mailto:whittisl@wfu.edu)