

The Institution of the *Teccalli* in the Pre-Columbian and Colonial *Altepetl* of Tlaxcallan/Tlaxcala: A Re-Evaluation

La institución del teccalli en el altepetl prehispánico y colonial de Tlaxcallan/Tlaxcala: una revaloración

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Abstract

Based on new data emerging from the study of the archives of the *Fiscalías* del Estado de Tlaxcala, the main goal of this article is to clarify the position and function of the institution of the *teccalli*, as well as to further identify local social structures within *altepetl* of Tlaxcallan: what was the inner structure of the *altepetl* in Tlaxcallan, before and after the Spanish conquest? What was the real relationship of the power division between the *teccalli* and *calli* (*pilcalli/pilchantli*)—as minor noble houses within a given *teccalli*? In contrast to what Lockhart originally proposed, it is suggested here that in pre-colonial Tlaxcallan, the *calpolli/tlaxilacalli* were integral components of the “estate” of the *teccalli*, in spite of the fact that jurisdictional limits among the social structures often encroached on each other. One of the direct consequences of *tlaxilacalli*'s *itech pohuaqui* in *teccalli* [the number of persons counted in a given *teccalli*] in Tlaxcallan, as this paper highlights, was the pattern under which their *macehualtin* were made to levy tribute payments and services directly to the *teccalli/tecpa*, rather than to the *altepetl*. In addition, *calli*, minor lordly houses, as they are defined in this article (also, McCaa 2003) were inseparable from a given *teccalli*'s social jurisdiction in Tlaxcallan. In direct contrast to what Fargher and Blanton argue, the present paper demonstrates that, in effect, *teccalli* did maintain their independence within the *altepetl*, and their *tlahtohcayotl* was passed on within the relevant dominant *calli*, or lordly houses.

Keywords: Archivos de Fiscalías del Estado de Tlaxcala; *pilcalli* and *teccalli* in Tlaxcala; inheritance patterns in colonial Tlaxcala; *teixuihuan* versus *terrazqueros*; *tlaxilacalli* in Tlaxcallan; corporate entities in Tlaxcallan; *tecpa* versus *calli* in Tlaxcala; *terrazqueros* versus *macehualtin*; Santa Inés Zacatelco

Resumen

Con base en nuevos datos obtenidos en el estudio de archivos de fiscalías del Estado de Tlaxcala, el objetivo principal de este artículo es retomar el tema de la posición y función de la institución de los teccalli, así como seguir identificando las estructuras sociales locales dentro del altepetl de Tlaxcallan: ¿cuál era la estructura interna del altepetl en Tlaxcallan, antes y después de la conquista española?, ¿cuál era la relación de división de poder entre las diversas estructuras sociales y políticas de teccalli y calli (pilcalli/pilchantli)—como casas nobles menores dentro de un

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teccalli? *En contraste con lo que Lockhart sugirió originalmente, se propone aquí que en el Tlaxcallan prehispánico calpolli/tlaxilacalli eran componentes integrales del “patrimonio” de los teccalli, a pesar de que los límites jurisdiccionales entre las estructuras sociales a menudo se invadían entre sí. Una de las consecuencias directas del itech pohuaqui teccalli del tlaxilacalli (el número de personas de un tlaxilacalli contadas en un determinado teccalli) en Tlaxcallan, como destaca este artículo, fue el patrón bajo el cual sus macehualtin pagaban tributos y servicios de gravámenes directamente al teccalli /tecpa, en lugar del altepetl. Además de eso, los calli, casas señoriales menores, tal como se definen en este artículo (véase también McCaa 2003), también eran inseparables de una jurisdicción social del teccalli dada en Tlaxcallan. En contraste con lo que Fargher y Blanton argumentan, el presente ensayo demuestra que, en efecto, los teccalli mantenían su independencia dentro del altepetl, y su tlahtohcaoyotl se transmitía dentro del calli dominante o entre las casas señoriales.*

Palabras clave: *archivos de fiscalías del Estado de Tlaxcala; pilcalli y teccalli; padrones de herencia en Tlaxcala colonial; teixuihuan versus terrazgueros; tlaxilacalli; entidades de corporación en el antiguo Tlaxcallan; tecpa versus calli; terrazgueros versus macehualtin; Santa Inés Zacatelco*

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Introduction

What was the actual nature and function of *teccalli* in Pre-Columbian times, as well as during the first half of the sixteenth century? There appears to be some confusion and blending of terminologies concerning this institution. A number of past and present scholars refer to the *teccalli* as “a noble institution that constituted a fundamental subunit of the *altepetl*” (e.g., López Corral 2012, 22; Hirth 2003); a landholding lineage, or a landed estate in the Puebla area; and an administrative district headed by a *teuctli* in Tlaxcallan; notwithstanding, other scholars characterized it in the following manner: each *teccalli* formed a politically distinctive entity, though stratified (Anguiano and Chapa 1976; Chance 2000; Olivera 1978; Perkins 2005). *Teccalli* possessed patrimonial lands and levied two kinds of parallel forms of taxation: labor tax, by way of a rotative mobilization of male laborers to work the fields of nobles and repair roads and buildings (*tlacalaquilli*), as well as tax in the form of a certain percentage of the commoners’ agricul-

tural products (López Corral 2012). Pedro Carrasco's earlier discussions identified the *teccalli* as the most fundamental framework in Pre-Columbian Mexican political, social, and economic elite organization, defined by both its lands, its *teuctli* (the noble head of the *teccalli*), noble descendants, and subjects (Carrasco 1976, 21–22; Reyes García 1996, 94–97). As Chance (2000, 487–89) describes it, *tlahtohcayotl* (rulership) was organized around landholding lineages (*teccalli*) and not *tlaxilacaltin*, and, therefore, it was not a group of coherent entities but a collection of *tlatoque* and *teteuctin* (*teuctli* plural) that recognized some form of shared ancestry, shared identity, or alliance (Martínez 1984, 25). The extent of power assigned to *teteuctin* over their political entity “was, usually, extremely limited and fragile” (Chance 2000, 488–89; Martínez 1984, 25; Reyes García 1996, 82–85).

In his article on the noble houses in the town of Tecali, Chance (2000, 485–502, esp. 495) asserts, for example, that, “The terms *teccalli* (noble house) and *tecpan* (palace) employ place and architectural metaphors, while *tlahtohcayotl* (rulership), another equivalent, is a political term.” James Lockhart, concurrently, accentuates that, “In Tlaxcala, the general census of the population in the 1550's ignores the *teccalli*, putting command and succession on commoners and nobles into various *altepetl* divisions and subdivisions with no distinction between *altepetl* subjects and *teccalli* dependents” (Lockhart 1992, 107). Nonetheless, at the same time, Lockhart emphasized the “cellular” nature of the *teccalli*, which was “relatively separated and self-contained” (Lockhart 1992, 15–20, 435–38).

Based on new data emerging from the study of the *Fiscalía* archives of the State of Tlaxcala,¹ the goals of this article are twofold: a) to clarify the position and function of the institution of the *teccalli*, as well as to further identify local social structures within the *altepetl* of Tlaxcallan: what was the inner structure of *altepetl* in Tlaxcallan, before and after the Spanish conquest, and what was the real relationship of power division between *teccalli* and *calli* (*pilcalli/pilchantli*)—as minor noble houses within a given *teccalli*; and b) to shed new light on varying patterns of inheritance within the *teccalli* in Tlaxcallan and demonstrate (in direct conversation with Chance and Hicks) how, between the late fifteenth

¹ A pioneering study of the repositories of the *Archivos de las Fiscalías* of Tlaxcallan was carried out by Luis Reyes García and his students, especially, at the archives of Atlahuetzian, Zacatelco, Acuitlapilco, Ixtlacuixtla, and Tlatlahquitepec. Copies of the documents that were surveyed are to be found in Luis Reyes's private archive. <https://www.librosocias.com/producto/archivos-de-las-fiscalias-de-tlaxcala/>

century and the beginning of the seventeenth century, identifiable Nahuatl traditional patterns of inheritance lingered on, in spite of the impending Spanish-colonial legacy.

The present article engages in direct dialogue with John Chance's study of the institution of the *teccalli* (noble houses), in the town of Tecali, (Chance 1996, 2000); Stephen M. Perkins's study of *altepetl* and *teccalli* in Tepeaca (Perkins 2005); Frederic Hicks's articles on land and succession in Tlaxcallan (Hicks 1982, 1986, 2012); Benjamin Johnson's recent studies on the *tlaxilacalli* of Texcoco (Johnson 2018a, 2018b), as well as the classic studies crafted by Charles Gibson (1952), Pedro Carrasco (1976, 2016), James Lockhart (1992), Hildeberto Martínez (1984), and M. Olivera (1978). Nevertheless, throughout the Nahuatl and Spanish-translated primary sources uncovered in the Archivo de la Fiscalía de Zacatelco, Tlaxcala, and at the Archivo Histórico del Estado de Tlaxcala (hereafter AHET), cited below, *teccalli* and *tecpa* are seen as identical and the word *tecpa*, utilized to denote an actual structure of the palace (*tecpancalli*), is also normally used for the sake of describing a social structure/framework forming around it.

The Organizational Hierarchy: Teccalli/Tecpa, Calli, and the Altepetl

The four *cabeceras* that made up what one could consider to be a "Tlaxcallan confederacy" or Huey Altepetl Tlaxcallan (the greater ethnic state) were actually rather amorphous constellations. They were superimposed upon much older and far more cohesive, local social frameworks, networks, and institutions. In his classic study of Tlaxcallan after the conquest, Charles Gibson categorized four types of "estates" that were recognized in Tlaxcallan: *teccalli*, *pilcalli*, *huehuecalli*, and *yaotequihuacalli* (Gibson 1952, 144). For him, the first two were, "approximate equivalent to the Spanish *mayorazgo* and *casa solariega*"; however, just as for Diego Muñoz Camargo, in the late sixteenth century, according to Gibson, these "estates" were the very essence of *tlahtohcayotl* in the Tlaxcallan domain, *not that of the altepetl*. This is also the very impression gleaned from the Tlaxcallan primary sources scrutinized below. The first two of Gibson's categories are related to stratified noble houses. The *teccalli* can be described as a major, lineage-based ruling house within a given *altepetl*, ruled by a *teuctli*, while *calli* could be defined accordingly as a minor lordly house, dependent on the *teuctli* of its associated *teccalli*, within the latter's framework of

cross-generational power and authority (Carrasco 1976). Hicks contradicts Gibson, by emphasizing that the noble house “was not a lineage, clan, or other entity based on kinship” (Hicks 2009, 571). For him, the noble house was a perpetual social unit, unattached to other functioning social organizations beside it, more similar in nature to how Johnson describes the Texcocan *tlaxilacalli* (Johnson 2018b). Hicks further designates the *calli* (namely, *pilcalli*) as “houses headed by *pipiltin* of a *teccalli* who had been granted lands and subjects by a *teuctli* ... and [the *altepetl* of] Ocotelolco had between 36 and 48 *teccalli*, with three *pilcalli*” (Hicks 1986, esp. 39, 41; 2012, 48; see also, Anguiano and Chapa 1976, 143–47, 151–52). Diego Muñoz Camargo, in his *Suma y epíloga de toda la descripción de Tlaxcala* describes the *teteuctin* of Tlaxcallan as “originated [...] from houses that are called *pilcales*, which is, ancient Houses belonging to noble families” (Muñoz Camargo 1994; Carrasco 2016, 142).

Added to that is the term *tecpa* or *tecpancalli*, which Bernardino de Sahagún describes as “tecpancalli: quitōznequi in tlahtoani īcal ahnōzo āltepēcalli, in oncān cah in oncān nemi tlahtoāni, ahnōzo in oncān mo-centlāliah tlahtoqneh, in ahnōzo āltepēhuahqueh, in chānehqueh” (the house of the ruler, or the government house, where the ruler is, where he lives, or where the rulers or the altepetl men of the lordly houses assemble) (Wimmer 2004, in *Compendio Náhuatl* 2012). Molina (2001) uses almost the same wording to describe the meaning of the word *teccalli*. Pedro Carrasco (1976, 21) suggests that the meaning of *tecpa* (palace) in the western part of Mexico was identical to the meaning of *teccalli* in the east (the Tlaxcallan area), insomuch as that the actual building/structure represented a lordly socio-political entity based upon a *tlacamecayotl* (genealogical descent group) and on strict rules of inheritance.² Recent archaeological studies of the towns of Cuauhtinchan, Tecali, and Tepeyacac, however, do not attest to sumptuous palaces and private temple complexes that could be associated with the numerous *teccalli* that were evidently located there (Fargher et al. 2011, 315).

In keeping with Chance’s terminology, the evidence presented above clearly suggests that, first, the *tecpa* (palace) was an actual building that represented a metaphorical structure of authority and assets. Furthermore, a *tecpa* was also the entire complex of a noble lineage (*tlacamecayotl*), em-

² See also Lockhart’s extensive discussion on this issue (Lockhart 1992, 102–09). Rik Hoekstra (1990, 86) employs the two terms interchangeably, as I do in the present article.

bodied in this kind of primordial structure; subsequently, the *tecpa* itself evolved into a fully-fledged *teccalli*. Take, for example, *don* Baltazar Memeloc's lawsuit with *doña* Inés Tehuaxochitl from 1573, over the ownership of the lands in Tlaltepexic, in the province of Tlaxcala. According to what she claimed, these properties had been owned by her grandfather beginning in 1473, eventually passing to her through inheritance. The governor of Tlaxcala, *don* Diego de Soto, dispatched the town's constables to survey the contested lands in the presence of *doña* Inés, her husband, *don* Julián de Contreras, and her son, Juan de Contreras. During this investigation they uncovered in Tlaltepexic the remains of what was once *doña* Inés's grandfather, Tecpatzin's *tecpa*, made of adobe, with thick sunken walls covered with plaster.³ Or, as an example of a *tecpa* plus the social organization coming with it: "vinieron los señores y principales de la dicha *tecpa* con Tecpanecatl."⁴ As the map below shows, Baltazar Memeloc's land borders Juliana Catalina's land, to its left side, and Baltazar Tochtli's lands, in the lower part of the map. Still below, in Tochtli's land, we see a Nahua temple with a straw roof. A river delimits Tochtli's land from those of Memeloc's (see figures 1 and 2).

*Patterns of Inheritance within Teccalli/Tecpa and Calli in Tlaxcallan:
Contested Land Tenure in the Colonial Era*

Chance (2000, 494) claims for the town of Tecali (State of Puebla) that, "Male heirs to cacicazgos sometimes listed their holdings and assigned specific plots to their wives, children, and other heirs. Others, especially women, simply stated that the unspecified lands they held were to be divided equally among their offspring: nieces were also given lands by their aunts/uncles." Madajczak (2014, 190) assumes that, "Altogether, these features suggest that within a family the number of *teixhuihuan*, a group of people who were in capacity of claiming the same rights, must have been quite large." Hicks (2009, 573), in turn, highlights the fact that lands belonging to the *teccalli* were either privately-owned [by a *pilcalli?*], or commonly owned, by both men and women. It is, however, far more likely to

³ Archivo de la Fiscalía de San Mateo Huexoyucan, municipio Panotla, Tlaxcallan, expedientes 1, 2 (March 10, 1550–51), eighteenth-century copy.

⁴ Archivo Histórico del Estado de Tlaxcala (hereafter AHET), caja 1, expediente 8, no. 95, 1554.

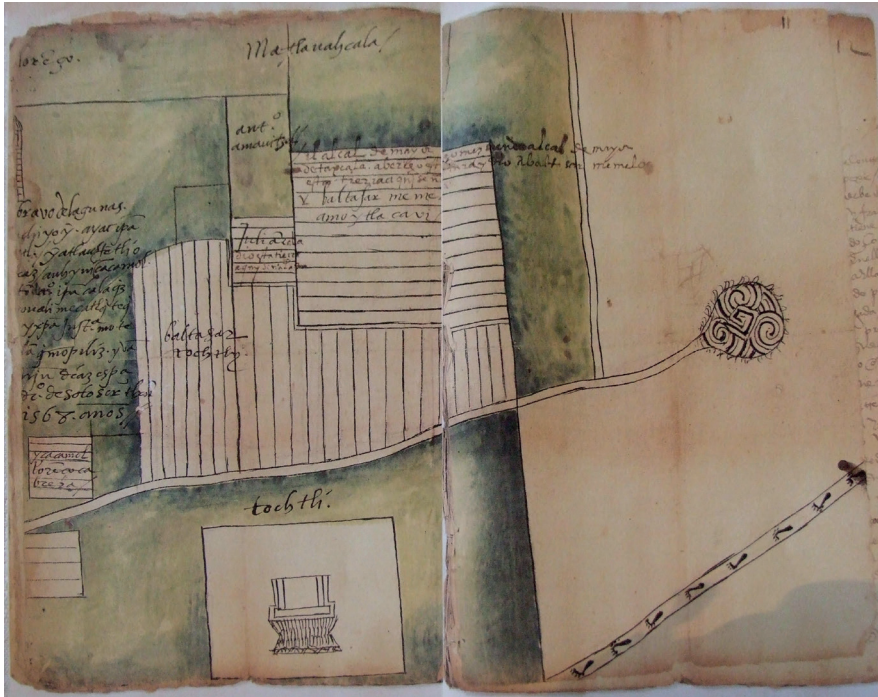


Figure 1. Baltazar Memeloc's Land Map, drawn by the Alcalde Mayor of Tlaxcala.
Source: Archivo de la Fiscalía de San Mateo Huexoyucan, municipio Panotla,
Tlaxcallan, Expedientes 1, 2 (March 10, 1550–51)



Figure 2. Matlahuacala: The river course and “lakes” (on the left), next to
Matlahuacala. Source: Google-Earth. <https://www.google.com/intl/es-419/earth/>
Coordinates: 19°56'46.48”N 98° 1'59.59”W

assume that the land itself belonged to the “corporate entities,” of the *calli* lineages entailed, and were not to be divided and sold as personal property (Lockhart 1992, 106; Lockhart et al. 1986, 85–86). Nevertheless, Fargher et al. (2010, 234) argue that, “In Tlaxcallan, however, inheritance of *teccalli* estates and *teuctli* status was less often based on kinship” in direct contrast to my own findings described here.

It appears from the sources utilized by Chance, Hicks, Madajczak, and myself, that a pre-contact pattern whereby two brothers concurrently inheriting the *tlahtohçayotl*, just as two nephews, was, indeed, plausible. A famous lawsuit over the rights of inheritance in the *teccalli* of Tecpa of the *altepetl* of Ocotelolco involving the estate of the lord Maxixcatzin can serve as another representative case study of Tlaxcallan rules of inheritance of a given *tlahtohçayotl* and how inheritance patterns were translated from the pre-colonial era into the new Hispanic era. A reconstruction of the trajectories of inheritance found in the Maxixcatzin case study strongly suggests that Tlaxcallan customary rules of inheritance lingered on well into the mid-sixteenth century. They indicate a preference for passing the *tlahtohçayotl* from one brother to another and, thereafter, transferring rule either to the brother’s son, *ixhuiuhçtli*, or an elder sister’s son, *machtli*, if the brother had no male successor.⁵ In the *teccalli* of Ayapanco, in Ocotelolco, for example, the brothers Itzconecatltepanecal (d. 1514) and Cihutlacantetle (d. 1521) were joint heirs, while, after their deaths, they were succeeded by their two elder sons (two nephews), Julian de la Rosa and Juan Ximénez, who both inherited the *teccalli*’s rule:

F. 5r: response by *don* Juan de la Rosa and *don* Julian Ximénez:

Los dichos no proceden ni vienen de los dichos barrios, ni sus padres ni vivieron ni estuvieron ni tenían parte en los dichos barrios; decimos que **Aloteuctli**, señor y cacique de nuestra casa y mayorazgo que se dice **Ayapanco tecpā** que es de Ocotelolco y poseyeron la dicha casa y mayorazgo, los dichos vinieron con otros muchos y **de este vinieron los señores y principales de la dicha casa con tecpanecal**.⁶

According to the *Anónimo Mexicano* chap. 9, f. 23r–25r, among the most prominent founders of this *teccalli/tecpa* (during the latter part of the

⁵ The *tlahtohçayotl* of the Maxixcatzin lineage of Ocotelolco has already been analyzed in-depth by Gibson (1952), followed by Hicks (2009), followed in particular by Emmanuel Rodríguez López in his master’s thesis (Rodríguez López 2014).

⁶ AHET, caja 1, expediente 8, No. 95, 1554.

fifteenth century), a lordly ancestor of Maxixcatzin's was named Tlacomihuatzin, from a lineage that can be traced back to a *pilcalli* of Cholollan (Cholula), and back to the Nonohualca migration from the area around Teotitlan-Tehuacan:

Inic huel malehuac matiz in ipehuhca in itlahtocaiopillo. Inicpal yeyentli, Ocotelolco Callacuitlapan [...] Omocauhquizaco Cholollan miequintin mecehualtin, pipiltin Momahiztliya. Inic ye huehcauhca ompa catcayaia [...] Niman quil mamicpiltizpan in icpalli tlahtohcayotl Ocotelolco.

Thus, it is truly difficult to know the beginning of his rulership, his noble domain. Their seat of residence was Ocotelolco Catlacuitlapan [...] He himself left many vassals and nobles at Cholollan. He was respected. Thus, already he was old there [...]. Then it is said that he became the noble on the throne of the rulership of Ocotelolco (Crapo and Glass-Coffin 2005, 49–52, esp. 49, 52).

From Cholollan, Tlacomihuatzin and his *pilcalli* made their way to Tlaxcallan and settled on lands around the Popocatepetl pertaining to the *altepetl* of Ocotelolco (Crapo and Glass-Coffin 2005, chap. 9, f. 23r–25r). One little known issue in this case in sixteenth-century Tecali was noted by Chance (2000, 489): “a father, a ranking noble in the house of Tecpan [or rather the *tecpan* building itself, bequeathed the property] to a daughter [...] the eldest child.” The lawsuit arising from this situation affected *doña Juana* and her daughter Francisca because they allegedly “belonged to the other house,” the *teccalli* of Cuitlixco. According to the Spanish-language source, the owner of the house “dice ser *doña Juana de Xipincoltzin, de su hijo Tlepapalotzin, y de don Diego Tlilquiyahuatzin, padre de la dicha doña Juana, la cual sucedió en la casa que llaman Coyotlaco, que está apartada de la casa de Ocotelolco.*”⁷ Furthermore, if we analyze the above according to Nahuatl terminology, *doña María Jacobo* was a *chauapilli* (stepchild), while *doña Juana* was her *chahuanantli* (stepmother), who was thought to enjoy an inferior status to that of *doña María Jacobo*.⁸ Such pre-contact Nahuatl terminology was apparently still in use during the period when this document was created. A connection to the Maxixcatzin line is suggested by Rodrigo de la Torre Yarza's identification of lands owned by a *doña Francisca Maxixcatzin*, as depicted in the upper-right section of the Mapa de Santa

⁷ AGN, *Tierras*, vol. 20, primera parte, exp. 1, f. 65v.

⁸ AGN, *Tierras*, vol. 20, primera parte, exp. 1, f. 65v.

Bárbara Tamazolco, Tlaxcallan (in the British Museum), that corresponds to the boundaries of the former *teccalli* of Cuixinco located across the hill of Ocotelolco, where an early Franciscan church was established on the site of the former palace of Maxixcatzin, in the *teccalli* of Tecpa.⁹

One among the most significant documents found in the Archivo de la Fiscalía de San Mateo Huexoyucan (Panotla), now held in the private archive of the late Luis Reyes García near Tlaxcallan, is a lawsuit from 1573. This suit pitted *doña* Inés Tehuaxochitl against *don* Baltazar Memeloc over the ownership of the extremely fertile and extensively cultivated lands of Tlattepec, of the *teccalli* of Matlahuacala.¹⁰ According to this document, *doña* Inés Tehuaxochitl was the great-granddaughter of Chiquatzin (on her mother's side), the founder of the *teccalli* of Matlahuacala, who was alive around 1473. Chiquatzin's daughter and heir was Mollactzin, *doña* Inés's grandmother. Mollactzin married Tecpatzin, from the *altepetl* of Oztompan but who became naturalized in Tlaxcallan, as a consequence of this marriage. Mollactzin brought many lands to this marriage as a dowry, but Tecpatzin did not possess any properties in his new home province independent of his wife. Mollactzin had two daughters from this marriage. *Doña* Inés's mother was the elder daughter (*teyacapan*) who was baptized as Angelina Tehuaxochitl after the arrival of the of the Spaniards. She had succeeded in coming into possession of these lands after her father died in 1510. By 1533, *doña* Inés had herself inherited the properties after her mother's death. *Doña* Inés's claims in this lawsuit seem to be similar to those found in a lawsuit involving Iztac Chichimecatl and his heir, Diego Yahualahuachtli (Hicks 2009, 575). In this suit, Yahualahuachtli attempted to prove his private ownership of lands at a site called Xonacayuca, as being patrimonial, rather than part of the common lands of the *teccalli*, which was clearly contrary to traditional conventions.

⁹ "Pintura de propiedades territoriales de descendientes de los señores de Tlaxcallan," document in the British Museum catalogued as (Ms. Add. 22070); "Mapa de santa bárbara tamazolco tlaxcallan", Proyecto TETLACUILOLLI, propuesta de interpretación de Rodrigo de la Torre Yarza, CIESAS 2011: <http://www.tetlacuilolli.org.mx/codices.php>. Gibson (1952, 44, 48) describes the early Franciscan house and their move in 1580 to a site across the hill to the *teccalli* of Cuixinco.

¹⁰ Archivo de la Fiscalía de San Mateo Huexoyucan, municipio de Panotla, Tlaxcala, expediente 2. The *teccalli* was set in the area, which is today located in the State of Puebla, northeast of Tlaxcallan, next to the Zacatlan-Huauchinango highway, at 2 600 meters above sea level.

Don Baltazar Memeloc, the other contender, argued that the lands belonged to his ancestors, as a common *teccalli* possession and that the recorded memory of this possession went back to 1490. He claimed to be the grandson of Timaltzin, the presumed founder of the *teccalli*. Timaltzin's name is indeed on the list of the Nonohualca-Chichimec lords, who migrated from the area of Teotitlan-Tehuacan (State of Oaxaca) into the central and eastern valleys during the thirteenth century, given in Section 44 of the *Historia Tolteca Chichimeca* (1976, f. 3r):

auh yzcate yn tlatoque yn uallaque...	here there are the <i>tlahtoque</i> who came
Quautzin, Citlalmacuetzin, Xelhuan,	[...] Quauhtzin, Citlalmacuetzin, Xel-
Huehuetzin, Coyotzin, Cotzin, Ocellot-	huan, Huehuetzin, Coyotzin, Cotzin,
zin, Yaoquentzin, Tilmatzin,	Ocellotzin, Yaoquentzin, Tilmatzin,

while the name of *doña* Inés's ancestor, Chiquatzin, is nowhere to be found. During December 1573, the governor of Tlaxcallan, Diego de Soto, dispatched the town's *alguaciles* to survey the contested lands in the presence of Inés Teohuaxochitl, her husband, *don* Julián de Contreras, and her son, Juan de Contreras. As anticipated by Memeloc, there they uncovered the remains of what was once Tecpatzin's palace, made of adobe, with thick sunken walls covered with plaster. Nevertheless, the lands of Tlaltepexic were subsequently granted to *doña* Inés Teohuaxochitl. The governor's decision was on the grounds that the records demonstrated that her maternal ancestors had been acknowledged to be the original owners of the lands, preceding Tecpatzin, in spite of the fact that he [Timaltzin], as a noble who belonged to the same *teccalli*, as well as his heirs, were dwellers on the lands. *Doña* Inés Teohuaxochitl thereafter took possession of them.

Another case revealing patterns of inheritance within a *pilcalli* is that of Pascual Tlepetzin of the *altepetl* of Quiahuitztlan, who in his testament of 1598 states that Diego Tlepetzin and his wife Juana Cacahuaxochitl, his brother and sister-in-law, should each receive two plots of land measuring 40 by 40 *brazas* in the *pago* de Acolco, at the foot of Cerro Zacatelco. Pascual's son, Juan Bautista, was another heir who was set to receive 200 *brazas*. Tlepetzin left each of the following heirs an equal share of 40 *brazas* of another tract of land: Pascuala and Francisca, Pascual's sister Clara's two daughters; Matías Huecatlatzin's daughters (the testator younger brother=*teicuh*), Ana Xaltzin and María Xaltzin (Rosa de Castilla, by her Spanish name), while Simeón Motl, Pascual's nephew, received land measuring

50 × 20 *brazas*. The *calli* and the *calmilli* next to it were left to Pascual Tlepetzin's wife and their young children. Among the Nahuas, individual parcels of land around a house (*calpantlalli/calmilli*) normally measured 20 × 20 (*tzontli*=400) *mecatl* (*cordeles*), which is equivalent to 33 square meters. In Panotlan, part of the *tecalli/tecpa* of Teotlalpan, Quiahuitztlan, in the central part of Tlaxcallan, was in 1537 *doña* Isabel Tellez's inherited landed property from the former *tlatoani*, *don* Diego Texinqui by way of her father and mother.¹¹ *Doña* Isabel's mother, *doña* María Cozcapetlatzin, was said to have brought the lands to the marriage as her dowry. In 1572, legal questions arose about the validity of a bequest made of three plots of land in the *tecalli/tecpa* of Teotlalpan amounting to 120 × 160 *brazas* (1,162 square meters) to *doña* Isabel. The land came with the *terrazgueros* María Tlapalahuatl and her husband, Benito Cozcacauhtli, who were to continue to serve the heiress, *doña* Isabel, "according to the ancient practice and custom in this province, they had to come and serve personally in the calli of *doña* Isabel, to prepare tortillas, to guard the lands, and fetch wood, together with all the rest of the *terrazgueros* who live on these lands." But at issue was a claim from these same *terrazgueros*, Benito Cozcacauh and his wife, María Tlapalahuatl, who went to court arguing that these three plots of the land actually belonged to them, treating them as their own private property. However, on December 6, 1572, the *alcalde mayor* of Tlaxcala, Diego de la Palma, ruled in favor of *doña* Isabel, although stipulating as well that one-half of the maize gathered there should be given to Benito and his wife. The verdict was, no doubt, impacted by what the witnesses appearing before the judge testified:

Dionisio Cuicuiscatli pareció ante Diego de la Palma en las dichas tierras, indio que está a los linderos de las dichas tierras, y el cual mediante Juan Ruiz, interprete, fue tomado y recibió juramento. Y él dijo que vio a Benito Cozcacauhtli y a María Tlapalahuatl, su mujer, labraron y sembrar el maíz, hasta que era alta de media barra y más, hasta que tomó la dicha sementera la dicha Doña Isabel.¹²

Miguel Quecholtzin, from the far-removed *altepemaitl* (hamlet) of Tlapizahuacan (today, within Aquixtla, in the State of Puebla), left a last will and testament dated July 15, 1572, in which he instructed the notary

¹¹ AHET, caja 5, exp. 5, f. 25.

¹² AHET, caja 5, exp. 5, f. 24r.

to indicate that his wife, Luisa Iztaxochitl, should continue living together with their small children, Juan, Ana, Salome, Isabel, Elena Teyacapan, and Felipe, in the *calli* overlooking the family *calmilli*. She was also to maintain possession of the lands in the *pago* de Mizcuican. To his elder son, Mateo, who was already living away from home, he gave four plots of cultivated lands situated on a hillside (“del cerro”) in Tlapizahuacan (see figure 3). To his niece (his late sister’s daughter), Isabel Nezahualxochitl, Quecholtzin gave a piece of land in the *pago* de Tequixquitenco, and on the other side of Tlaxcallan, she was given 2 400 square *brazas* (9 967 sq. meters) in the *pago* de Hueyotlipan, “which she already owned.” Isabel also received 12 000 square *brazas* (or *brazas*) (49 800 sq. meters) in the *pago* de Couahuitzocan and 1 022 square *brazas* (4 241 sq. meters) in Tizaoztoc.¹³ Miguel Quecholtzin’s widow, Luisa Iztaxochitl, fought in court against her husband’s lavish bequests to his niece, eventually succeeding in having these lands restored to her control. It appears that the court of Tlaxcallan weighed the widow and the orphans’ natural rights as having more legitimacy than those of the testator’s late sister’s daughter. Under the Spanish colonial regime, both widows and single mothers remained legally inferior to men: neither of them could exercise *patria potestas* over their children; although they maintained the legal responsibility to support their children, they had no authority over them, contrary to rights of men (Dore 1997, 109). Therefore, rights to inheritance for children of single women/widows were certainly closely associated with the recognition of these children by their biological father, prior to his death. Clearly, children who were orphans, after both their father and mother had died, stood far less chance of representing themselves in court and fighting for a share of their late father’s bequest (Megged 2019).

Broadly speaking, traditional Nahua patterns of inheritance lingered well into the sixteenth century and beyond it, though they did not remain completely unaltered in the face of new norms of conduct brought by the Spanish colonial legal system. In local property-related lawsuits in sixteenth century Tlaxcallan over inheritance of lands and property from the 1560s onward, Nahua traditional norms and terminologies came to be challenged more directly in the arena of the local court system. One of those at issue was the bequest of property either to a second wife or to her offspring, which became illegitimate with the implementation of the Church regulations stip-

¹³ AHET, caja 6, exp. 5, 8 f., 1574.



Figure 3. Tlapizahuacán and the surrounding terrain. Some of the plots are situated on the hillside. Source: Google-Earth. [https://www.google.com/intl/es-419/earth/Coordinates: 19 47' 59.94" N 97 56' 24.79" W](https://www.google.com/intl/es-419/earth/Coordinates:19%2047%2059.94%20N%2097%2056%2024.79%20W)

ulating that a legitimate marriage could occur only between one man and one woman. By the end of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth, the Church synods established different sanctions against simple cohabitation, so that “those that will be newlywed would not lead a married life without receiving first these nuptial blessings in Church” (Astorga Synod 1553; Oviedo Synod 1553; Sigüenza Synod 1553) (Tanner 2016, 754–55; Cárcel Ortí 1999; Seidel 1995). That is to say, those who failed to become legally married in the eyes of the Church and colonial authorities faced the threat of serious legal sanctions. The sanctions established against the partners who did not celebrate the *velaciones* of their marriage were excommunication and a series of other penalties. Also sanctioned were cases of bigamy, or alleged promises of marriage made to one partner, while at the same time an actual marriage contract was forged with another. The lack of paternal or family consent to a marriage could also become an issue. The teaching of matrimony as a sacrament was confirmed by the Twenty-Fourth Session of the Council of Trent, between February 3 and November 11, 1563, devoted to the traditional doctrine on matrimony (Tanner 2016, 754–55). The Church thus re-established its dominion over marriage, confirming it as a sacrament (Duby 1978; Goody 1984, 157–82). Of signif-

icance, in the aftermath of the Council of Trent, despite the Church's formal stance during the last session of the council that discussed the issue of matrimony and subsequently insisted on the child's "free will" in choosing his/her partner for life, it was not uncommon for parents to coerce their child into unwanted marriage at a young age or to arrange such marriage with the groom's parents. The life stories of young plebeian women belonging to the *castas* are often filled with accounts of having been abused for the sake of cohabitation from a very young age and thereafter deserted or left on their own, as litigation and Inquisition records reveal.

Therefore, in post-Tridentine New Spain, diverse examples of transgressions against normative family bonds, especially by women reaching menopause, can be found in such places as testimony presented during Inquisitorial interrogations. Yet the Tridentine model of marriage on the native population of New Spain was not enforced until 1730, and even then, considerable ground was still left for local, informal norms to set the tone.

Among the prescriptions that the Council of Trent approved was one which dictated that marriage was to be accompanied by public pronouncement of the relevant bans. Consent of the parents was to remain a precondition, but marriage without parents' consent was legal under certain circumstances in Spain and its New World colonies. Wives were called upon to accept the authority of their husbands, to win them over to the faith without speaking a word by the example of their good conduct, purity, and reverence (Bell 1999, 237). The proper sexual conduct of husband and wife in marriage was an inseparable part of this package, precluding any sort of extra-marital relationships. What was the position of Nahua traditions vis-à-vis concubinage? Among the local nobility of Tlaxcallan, polygamy was still practiced at least during the first three decades of the sixteenth century. In Molina's Nahuatl-Spanish dictionary from 1571, one finds the following entries concerning concubinage: *chahuacocoya*, "the woman is tormented because her husband has a concubine"; *nochahuanan*, "my stepmother"; *chauapilli*, "women's stepchild/stepson," or "child of one's former woman"; *tlacpahuitectli*, "stepchild." In the *Florentine Codex*, *mecapil* is translated as "hijo de manceba," or a slave's child (Sahagún 1950, bk. 10, chap. 1). We are aware of the fact that polygamous traits were still practiced among the Nahua nobility, but transliterated now into Spanish-Catholic terminologies, which does not necessarily mean that the former woman/wife had died, or had been permanently abandoned, but that a second wife exists, and even gives birth to heirs, and that those heirs could well be adopted by the subsequent wives as their

own. Referring to the latter, Bernardino de Sahagún, in his *Calidades de parentesco*, writes that *ie pilitzin teconeuh in tepiltzin tlaçopilli* (legitimate son or daughter), *ichtacaconetl, calpan pilli, calpan conetl, mecaconetl mecapilli*, means, “the secret child, the bastard; the bastard, the child of a slave, the slave’s child” (Sahagún 1950, bk. 10: 2). Camilla Townsend cautions that the terms *-tlaçopil* and *-calpanpil* were used only among nobles, because commoners did not maintain numerous wives and did not need to differentiate among their children (Townsend 2006).

During the early seventeenth century, Juan de Torquemada described extramarital relationships as they had existed in indigenous society, as well as the fate of concubines. However, his work seems to be transcribing these things into characterizations that were influenced by Spanish-Catholic ways of thinking: *tlacallalcahuilli*, which means someone who deserted, as if to say, a person who could leave, without an insult to the marriage, as opposed to *cihuatlanito*, one’s own wife or to seek or gain a woman for marriage (Gran Diccionario Náhuatl, in *Compendio Náhuatl* 2012); and in the case of which there was no need to claim the daughter of her parents, so as “To take a woman as a concubine” was glossed, in a way, by the noun *temecauh* (concubine of a single person). Torquemada writes that they were commonly accustomed for the most part, that after the male partner had begotten a son from his female concubine, then he would be obliged to abandon her or take her as his legitimate wife, which was required by her parents. Another type of concubines that they had and which they were allowed to have was accordingly, that either the lords and nobles would supplicate prior to their marriage, or, after they had already been married with their lawful wife, whom they called *cihuapilli* (Torquemada 1723, bk. 12, chap. 3; bk. 13, chap. 15).

By the 1560s, the competing parties in lawsuits deliberated in the local court of Tlaxcallan over rights of inheritance would attempt to mobilize the aforementioned Church’s stance on marriage and marital relationships in their favor so as to denigrate the other party when it came to the involvement of noble “concubines.” In such cases, one can clearly sense the tinting of the discourse with pure Spanish-Catholic terminology and wording in order to gain advantage over the other party in the minds of the colonial magistrates adjudicating these disputes. For example, in a dispute between Tomás de San Miguel and Lorenzo Tlahuihuitztl over the alleged expropriation of lands, Lorenzo presented himself deceitfully as a direct heir to the *teccalli* of Maxixcatzin, and depicted Tomás’s father, Pedro Tlamencagua,

as “having been formally married to María, and during the matrimony maintained as a ‘concubine’ a woman by the name of Tlamiatzin, who was Tomás’s mother, and thus he is a bastard” unable lawfully to inherit the lands of the *pilcalli*.¹⁴ One should note that in this particular case, as in others of the kind, the testimony did not concern practices of concubinage per se, but rather, unlawful second wives who were still maintained clandestinely by the *pipiltin*. Therefore, if this could be proven, Tomás’s status as an *ichtacaconetl* (“bastard”) would make him ineligible.

Tlaxilacalli and Their Teixuihuan

In contrast to what Lockhart (1992, 98) originally outlined that *teccalli* were fitted within the *calpolli-altepetl* structure and Luis Reyes García’s (1996) stance that the *calpolli* transcended the *teccalli* social and political framework, it is proposed here that in Tlaxcallan, *calpolli/tlaxilacalli* were in fact inseparable from the “estate” of the *teccalli*, and therefore, their *macehualtin* were made to levy tribute and services directly to the *teccalli/tecpa*, rather than to the *altepetl*. Based on the evidence before us, I further suggest that in Tlaxcallan, *teccalli/tecpa* were assigned distinct *calpolli/tlaxilacalli* under their direct authority. Nonetheless, the Nahuatl word *tlaxilacalli* appears in the Zacatelco documentation only during the second decade of the eighteenth century. As seen in Table 1, only six *tlaxilacalli* of varying sizes are recorded (see Table 1).

In his recent extensive study of the *tlaxilacalli* in Acolhua history, Benjamin D. Johnson (Johnson 2018a, 24) asserts that *tlaxilacalli* predated *altepetl* on the eve of the Aztec empire “and often grew into full and functioning existence before their affiliated *altepetl*.”

In order to further clarify this paper’s assertion that *tlaxilacalli/calpolli* were part of *teccalli* organization, rather than that of the *altepetl*, I would like to adopt here Luis Reyes García’s (1996) position that *tlaxilacalli/calpolli* predated the *altepetl* structure, and could be described as settlement nuclei, of different sizes and levels of coherence spread out around a temple, as they are also described in the *Historia Tolteca-Chichimeca* (Kirchhoff, Güemes, and Reyes García 1976; Reyes García 1996; also Hicks 1982; Granados 2005). Hicks suggests that people belonging to entities

¹⁴ AHET, caja 2, exp. 7, fs. 29, f. 18r.

Table 1
THE ZACATELCO TLAXILACALMEH DURING THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

<i>Name of tlaxilacalli</i>	<i>No. of persons + civil status</i>
Ateopan pilpan	95 couples (190 men and women) + 8 widows
Chalchihuhcontlan	25 couples (50 men and women) + 8 widows
Xalatlamiloltitlan	50 couples (100 men and women) + 6 widowers and 9 widows
Ixquitlan	74 couples (148 men and women) + 3 widowers and 12 widows
Quauhtzinco	94 couples (188 men and women) + 4 widowers and 18 widows
Ayeltitlan	52 couples (104 men and women) + 1 widower
Total	
6 tlaxilacalli	780 married men and women, 21 widowers, and 55 widows, excluding children and single men and women

Source: "Padrón por el que cuenta el pueblo de Santa Inés Zacatelco," text in Nahuatl, 1715, Archivo de la Fiscalía de Zacatelco, Tlaxcala.

such as *pilcalli* (but also to *tlaxilacalli*, as asserted here) may have been recently arrived newcomers in-migrating from other territories who "pledged allegiance to the ruler" (Hicks 2012, 48). Those newly arrived migrants would integrate within host *teccalli*, as argued here. For example, Tecpatzin, who was originally from the ethnic state of Oztompan, arrived together with the people of his *tlaxilacalli* into the territory of the *teccalli/tecpa* of Matlahuacala, Tlaxcallan, where the *teuctli* during the late fifteenth century was named Chiquatzin. Tecpatzin's migrants had arrived without any property, but once he married Chiquatzin's daughter and became linked to that *teccalli*, he gained access to the lands held by his wife, Molactzin. In this way, Tecpatzin's *tlaxilacalli* became formally affiliated with Chiquatzin's *teccalli*.¹⁵

¹⁵ Archivo de la Fiscalía de San Mateo Huexoyucan, municipio Panotla, Tlaxcala, expediente 2.

Another sort of linguistic wrinkle connected with the term *tlaxilacalli* was noted by Olivera, who found that during the sixteenth century the Spanish terms “*estancia*” and “*barrio*” were both equated [by Spaniards] with *tlaxilacalli* (Olivera 1978, 142). Adding to the picture of the fluidity of these terms is Johnson’s contention that in colonial Tetzaco the Spanish term “*estancia*” corresponded to a *tlaxilacalli* sub-district, or *altepetl* (Johnson 2018a, 97). His descriptions of *tecpa* may also be applicable to Tlaxcallan. As in Tetzaco, in Tlaxcallan a *tecpa* may have been established by an incoming group of closely related kin, just like a *tlaxilacalli*, led by their noble forming a settlement nucleus that included a temple (*teopan-calli*) and the ruler’s palace. Johnson describes this process in the following manner: “Once accommodated within the setting of the *tlaxilacalli*, each and every *calli* joined a larger group of households, that also were differentiated among themselves” (Johnson 2018a, 24). Whatever the case, thereafter, a *teccalli* was formally and permanently created around it, with its territorial limits finally established, even if they did not necessarily occupy a single *tlaxilacalli* or *altepetl* jurisdiction but rather were found in different locations scattered around a larger area.

Moreover, one can say that *altepetl* organization maintained distinct relationships with its *tlaxilacalli*, as Johnson shows in his discussion of the *tlaxilacalli* of Cuauhtepoztlan, in the *altepetl* of Tepetlaoztoc, and *tlaxilacalli* structures in the imperial state of Texcoco: “In their fractious diversity [...] [they] structured both order and division in central Mexico” (Johnson 2018a, 30, 46). The Tlaxcallan case may well have been a variation in process. Lockhart (1991, chap. 2) had already devoted some space to this kind of variation.

Corporate Social Entities in Tlaxcallan

In the Nahuatl language, *huanyolque* means “those living with one another,” which would be the right parallel to what Perkins probably means by asserting that the *teccalli* per se was “a corporate organization” (Perkins 2005). Living arrangements in such corporate organizations, such as *teccalli* and *calli*, were multigenerational, with joint households, characterized either by bilateral kinships or by what we would term pseudo-consanguinity. Such corporate communities did exist in Tlaxcallan during the mid-sixteenth century. They included both *teixuihuan* (“descendants/

grandchildren”), as well as *macehualtin-terrazgueros* (discussed below; Hicks 2009, 582; Johnson 2018a; Perkins 2005). Perkins asserts that the *macehualtin* of the *teccalli* were never genealogically related to their local nobility (Perkins 2005, 282). Julia Madajczak (2014) observes that the terminology *ixhuiuh* follows the general rules of the Nahuatl kinship system and as such, it extends to collateral kin (like many other Nahuatl terms). James Lockhart associates this term with descendants of artisans or low-ranking nobles from among the social group that formed part of the *teccalli/tecpa*, while Susan Kellogg proposes that the word *teixuihuan* referred to a “social unit of descent” (Kellogg 1995, 227; Lockhart 1992, 97; also, Rojas Rabiela, Rea López, and Medina Lima 1999, 128–29). Madajczak (2014, 88–90) further asserts that “They did not mark the actual distance from the source of nobility (a parent or grandparent), but rather a degree of accuracy to which one could have claimed his noble status from his more remote ancestors.” In yet another context, Madajczak (2014, 186) refers to the pairing of *tepilhuan*, *teixuihuan* appearing in Alonso de Molina’s Nahuatl-Spanish dictionary: “When juxtaposed, these two terms seem to refer, not to particular children and grandchildren of a reference point, but rather, generally, to his/her descendants.” Moreover, the juxtaposition of these two terms resonates with a kind of social bonding among all the members of the *teccalli/tecpa*, as well as paternal responsibility of the *teuctli* over those members, the former regarding them as “his children.” This is exactly the content and context found within all the sources in the Archivos de las Fiscalías of Tlaxcala, in which the designation clearly refers also to the *macehualli* ranks, and was in effect a generic designation given within the *teccalli/tecpa* to all those who were intimately associated with its social group, including the *macehualtin*.

In comparison to Perkins (2005), it is emphasized here that *teixuihuan* and *macehualtin* formed, in effect, semi-autonomous, “corporate communities” within a given *teccalli*. In Huamantla, for example, the Hñähñu (or Otomí) *tlaxilacalli* that formed a part of the *altepetl* was just such a corporate community. There, *tequitlatoque* (tribute officers) came from within the same *tlaxilacalli*, and were also very possibly of the same *macehualli* class: “Anton Sanchez, alguacil, indio Otomitl y de la lengua mexicana declaro a los indios del pueblo que son Otomitl en especial a Pedro Cuixintle, Benito Muñoz, Pedro Coyote, Baltazar Xehual, son indios tequitlatos del dicho pueblo.”¹⁶

¹⁶ AHET, caja 5, exp. 8, f. 36, 1573-1989, f. 31r.

In the sixteenth century *Actas capitulares de Tlaxcallan*, a certain differentiation can be discerned between *macehualli* and *teixuihuan*, for example, as to tribute levying or their *tequitl* duties (Medina Lima 1985). For example, in the last will and testament of *don* Antonio de Castañedas, a noble member of Topoyanco, Ocotelolco, in 1560, he says: “Yten declaro que los teixihuan les tengo repartidas y dado a cada uno de ellos tierras donde labren [...], y tres casas que están en la suerte de tierra de teixtlihuan, y ansi mismo les tengo repartidas a cada uno de ellos sus tierras donde labren a dos suertes de tierras a cada uno de ellos,” followed by his bequest to his biological grandchild.¹⁷

In a lawsuit between *don* Domingo Pelayo y Calderón and Juan Alejandro Pacuex, on the one hand, and Álvaro Eletehutli, on the other, a list of the eight *tlaxilacalli* that belonged to their forefathers, the *teteuctin* of their *teccalli*, was provided by Pelayo and Pacuex (Anderson 1976; Hicks 2009; Lockhart 1992, 107; Olko 2014, 343). Although their claims were proved to be false, what is relevant here is their use of terminology: “We say that Coalotlehutli, Yayapancatle teuctli, and Patzin teuctli, and Yxcotecuitl, our fathers and grandfathers owned these barrios of Indians as *teixihuas*. These are: Tzonpantitlan, Zonpilan, Amacac, Teponzinco, Tecoaan, Acxotlanzinco, Mizinco, Xialhuacan. Peacefully, and with no opposition by any other person, these were acknowledged as the patrimony of the nobles of these barrios.”¹⁸ A document produced in San Luis Huamantla in 1572 attests to the fact the community was fully established on its present location 50 years earlier (1523), which is not supported by any other sources. The town included both “barrios” (*tlaxilacalli*) around the major nucleus and outlying “estancias” (*altepemaitl*) of San Miguel Tzaquala, San Bartolomé Atlaxelihuan San Benaventura, Santiago Xalachco, Santa María de la Concepción, and San Juan.¹⁹ The lands owned by the local *teteuctin* were characterized as being private property, which is highly unlikely, and more plausibly they were owned by the lineage group as a corporate entity, but the plots that were rented out to the local *terrazqueros* were common lands.²⁰

¹⁷ AHET, caja 2 exp. 9, f. 5, 1560.

¹⁸ AHET, caja 1, expediente 8, no. 95, 1554.

¹⁹ Sarah Cline’s data from colonial Culhuacan’s last wills and testaments demonstrates how two-thirds of them (65, in total) were from residents of what would be called *altepemaitl* (Cline 1986, 12).

²⁰ AHET, caja 5, exp. 8, f. 36, 1573–89.

Meanwhile, *don* Juan Maxixcatzin, the *tlatoani* of the *teccalli* of *tecpa*, Ocotelolco, was quoted as saying:

I order that all the *teixhuihuan* who are subjects of the House and belonged to *don* Francisco, my uncle, although they behaved as though they were already freed, they forever belong to this House and mayorazgo [the *teccalli*] residing in the forests and in Santa Isabel, and in Ocotitlan, and in Macetlecoxco, and in Santa Catarina, and in Mauhtutlan, and in Teacatl Panecatl, and in San Juan Totolan, and many others who are known, whom I held under my seigniory all through that time that I reigned [...] As to the *teixhuihuan* of Atlamaxat, that I inherited, who always came to obey me, I order them to continue doing so. (Yten declaro que todos los *teixihuas* que son sujetos a la casa y mayorazgo de la parte de don Francisco, mi tío, que él tenía, aún procedían como que eran ya librados, ellos sean ansimismo sujetos a la dicha casa y mayorazgo para siempre, residiendo en los montes y en Santa Isabel, y Ocotitlan, y Macetlecoxco, y Santa Catarina, e Mauhtutlan, y en Teacatl Panecatl, e San Juan Totolan, e en muchos otros que se sabe, los cuales yo tenía durante todo aquel tiempo que yo reinaba [...]. Yten ansi mismo todos los *teixihuas* que con la casa de mayorazgo se cuenta, y de Atlamaxat, que yo heredé, que siempre venían obedecerme, les ordeno a continuar en ello).²¹

Terrazgueros versus Macehualtin

Who were the commoners (*macehualtin*) living under the jurisdiction of a given *teccalli*, and how were they named (and what was their status)? In the documentation from various parts of Tlaxcallan, the distinction between *macehualtin* and *terrazgueros* is blurred. In some records, it is possible to identify *macehualtin* who were part of a particular estate (*teccalli/tecpa*) being designated by the term *terrazgueros* (tenants). Pedro Carrasco claims that the *macehualtin* were normally “assigned to their *teteuctin* as spoils of conquest or through administrative decisions” (Carrasco 1996, 32–33). In Tlaxcallan, the *macehualtin* were levied tribute directly by *tequitlatoque* appointed by the *teteuctin* of the *teccalli/tecpa*, who were in charge of the *tequitl* unit drafting *macehualtin* to labor by *veintenas* (cycles of twenty laborers each). Molina describes them as “mandon o merino, o el que tiene cargo de repartir el tributo o el tequio a los maceuales” (Molina 2001, f. 105v). *Tecpa* Ocotelolco was, in effect, the first *tequitl* of Ocotelolco.

²¹ AGN, *Tierras*, vol. 20, primera parte, exp. 1, f. 50v–52v.

Johnson outlines for the Texcoco area that *tequitlatoque* or *topiles* were generally commoners who belonged to the *tlaxilacalli* (Johnson 2018a, 13). That this was true for Tlaxcallan, as well, is corroborated by the following citation from the abovementioned Julian de la Rosa lawsuit from 1554 over the inheritance of the *tecpa* of Ayapanco:

The other is that, Coalotleuctli, Yayapancatle teuctli, and Patzin teuctli, and Yxcotecuitl, the grandparents of the counter parties, were neither nobles nor chieftains of the said eight neighborhoods and wards, but *calpolleque tequitlatlos* [...] assigned by our parents, whose duties were to distribute the land and receive the tribute of part of the population, the *macehualtin*.²²

As for the *terrazgueros*, in some of the colonial documentation utilized here they are described as follows: “according to the ancient practice and custom in this province, they had to come and serve personally in the calli of *doña* Isabel, to prepare tortillas, to guard the lands, and fetch wood, together with all the rest of the *terrazgueros* who live on these lands.”²³

Hicks distinguishes between the *macehualli* and mid-sixteenth-century commoners who were not *macehualtin*, nor were they *terrazgueros*, but people who were no longer under the control of their former *pilli*. In the Huamantla document from 1572, there is no real distinction between the designation “*macehualli*” and “*terrazguero*,” with both categories juxtaposed with the estate of the local *teccalli*. During the 1570s, the total population of Huamantla (Tlaxcallan) was around 6 000 inhabitants, while by 1589 it had fallen sharply to a mere 2 000 inhabitants, a third of the total size of this population prior to the *cocolitztl* plague of the 1570s. As a result of this demographic disaster, many vacated lands were being sold to Spaniards. This document begins as follows:

Don Martin Enríquez, viso-rey, gobernador y capitán general de la Nueva España, y presidente de la audiencia real que se ha residido, por cuanto entre algunos principales de la ciudad de Tlaxcallan e indios allá sujetos, especial en el de Huamantla y los indios macehuales del dicho pueblo que viven en las tierras de los dichos principales que se aprovechan de ellos como sus *terrazgueros*.²⁴

²² AHET, caja 1, expediente 8, no. 95, f. 6v.

²³ AHET, caja 5, exp. 5, f. 25, 1572.

²⁴ AHET, *Huamantla*, caja 5, exp. 8, f. 36.

A Spanish survey was conducted there in 1573, just before the outbreak of the plague among the Hñāhñu *macehualtin* of Huamantla (and of Atiqueza). Within the data contained in this record there is a full list in Spanish of the names of 149 *terrazgueros* who were subject to 28 local *pilli* (nobles), six of whom were women, among them, *doña* Brigida, “india principal del dicho pueblo,” who was also Diego Muñoz Camargo’s noble wife. As this document attests, the aforementioned *macehualtin terrazgueros* were serving these lords “for the past 50 years,” namely, ever since the beginning of the Spanish conquest (see Figure 4).²⁵ This document also contains an appeal by the “naturales, macehuales y tequitlatos común y universidad del pueblo de Huamantla” to the governor of Tlaxcallan to relieve them of their heavy duties that they owed to the local *teteuctin*, as well as to prohibit further sale of the lands. Upon establishing themselves in this location, the *teteuctin* had allowed these *macehualtin* to settle on their lands, in exchange for a certain rental payment: each was made to cultivate a maize plot 50 *brazas* in length and five in breadth every year, apart from giving the lord one turkey every year; in addition to that, each and every inhabitant had to help the *teteuctin* with their lands, and serve in their households one week each year.²⁶

The Spanish term *terrazguero* was possibly in use during the 1560–70s only as a Spanish loanword by bilingual scribes, not by the local nobles and *macehualtin*. If we take, for example, the testament made by Miguel Quecholtzin on July 10, 1574, the translated text of the testament in Spanish applies the word *rentero*, rather than *terrazguero*: “Las tierras que hay las partí por medio, con mi hermano Juan Xochitlatohuatzin, y en el pago de Hueyotlipan, dos mecates que lindan con Antonio Axocotzin, **a donde hay renteros.**” (The lands that are there I divided in the middle, with my brother, Juan Xochitlatohuatzin, and in the location of Hueyotlipan, two *mecatl* that are bordering with Antonio Axocotzin, where there are tenants).²⁷ Molina provides the following usage for *rentero*: *tlacalaquilli*, from *calaquia* (rentar) (Molina 2001, 103).

The pairing of *macehualli* and *terrazguero* is also found in *don* Antonio de Castañeda’s testament in a passage stating, on f. 2v: “Yten declaro que los teixihuan les tengo repartidas y dado a cada uno de ellos tierras donde labren.”

²⁵ AHET, *Huamantla*, caja 5, exp. 8, f. 26r.

²⁶ AHET, *Huamantla*, caja 5, exp. 8, f. 10v.

²⁷ AHET, caja 6, exp. 5, 8 f., 1574.

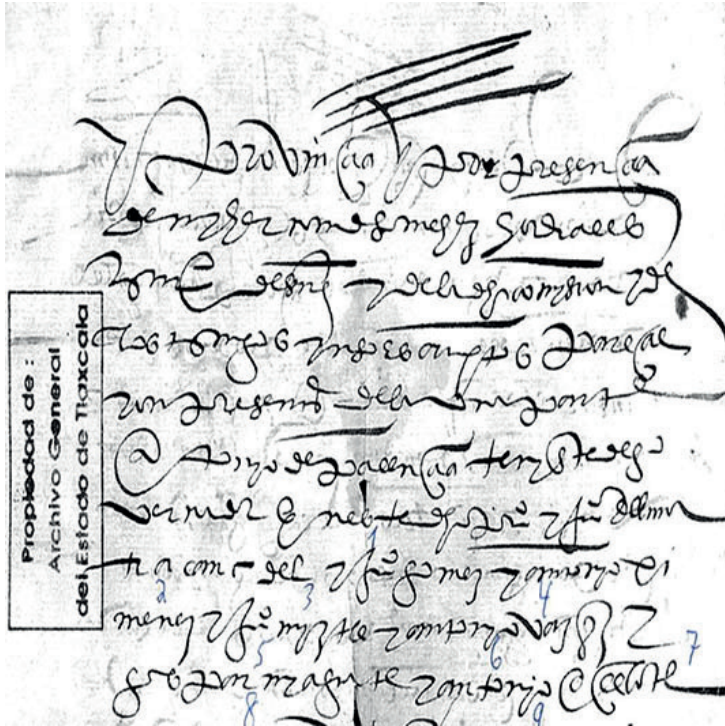


Figure 4. The list of *terrazgueros* of Huamantla. A list of all the *terrazgueros* and nobles in Huamantla = 142 *terrazgueros* + 28 noble men and 6 noble women, appears on folio 10v of this document. Source: “Los *terrazgueros* en contra los principales,” AHET, caja 5, exp. 8 (1573)

Significantly, in his original testament in Nahuatl *don Antonio de Castañeda* utilized the term *teixihuan*, and did not use the Spanish loanword *terrazgueros* and thus it was likely translated as such by the interpreter; however, on f. 4r of this document, when introducing the witnesses in this lawsuit, the bilingual interpreter translated the wording in Nahuatl of Hernando Cortes, Miguel de Paredes, and Antonio Mixtli, Indian dignitaries, who declared under oath that “Cacax was a *macehual terrazguero* of the aforementioned María, Indian woman, whom she inherited from her father.”²⁸

The definition of *-tech pouhque*, or *pouqui* means “someone who belongs to someone” (1551-docs Mexico, in *Compendio Náhuatl* 2012). Lockhart (1992, 97) refrains from associating it with debt-relationships, namely, a

²⁸ AHET, caja 2, exp. 9, f. 5, 1560.

person who rents land from someone and pays him/her tribute. Nevertheless, we may reconsider this term from the vantage point of the documents before us and reach a possible conclusion that by the mid-sixteenth century some of the abovementioned testators and claimants had already been using this terminology of *tech pouhque* to refer to debt-relationships, translated by the bilingual scribes in the court of Tlaxcallan as “*terrazgueros*” imported from Spain and by that time already impacting local arrangements. If we return to the Huamantla list of *terrazgueros*, we find the following citation on folio 11r:

todos los demás indios e indias principales y naturales de esta ciudad y del pueblo de Atlequetza, y de otros cualquiera partes y lugares que tienen y pertenecen tener tierras y *terrazgueros* en este dicho pueblo de Huamantla y las estancias de su comarca y con el Pedro de Castro Gallego marido y conjunta persona de doña María, su mujer, india, natural del pueblo de Tzimpantzingo, sujeto de la dicha ciudad de Tlaxcallan, todos juntos como el dicho y cada uno por sí, debajo del dicho mandamiento, en voz de sus consortes, en cualquier momento buscaban y prestaban de rato el mejor vía y forma que nos de derecho alguno y dijeron que cuanto de un año poco más o menos, tiempo los señores del dicho pueblo de Huamantla ha querido acudir a los dichos principales de Tlaxcallan y Atlequetza, con este razón.²⁹

The Fluidity of Teccalli Jurisdictions

Following Tomaszewski’s and Smith’s *Personen verband* (personal association) approach, it may be plausible that *teccalli/tecpa*, as well as *tlaxilacalli* frameworks did not necessarily consist of distinct, demarcated physical territories, but instead, as in other parts of the Basin of Mexico, projected an identifiable pattern of what these authors term “overlapping areas of villages and peoples” (Tomaszewski and Smith 2011), which

²⁹ AHET, caja 5, exp. 8, f. 36, 1573. One additional term in Nahuatl denoting a dependent person who served under a *tlatoani/teuctli/pilli*, was *mayeh* (dependant/tenant) which is also found in the sources under the usage of: *ca timayecahuan* (we are his mayeque) (Reyes García et al. 1996, 99). I was unable to locate either of the two latter terms in the Tlaxcallan sources at my disposal. A plausible explanation for this is that despite this differentiation in the above terms, all of them may well have applied to the same person.

means that jurisdictions and actual limits among the different social structures remained fluid, in this connection, *teccalli* and *tlaxilacalli* as well. In fact, as we will be able to see from the evidence on patterns of *teccalli/tecpa* inheritance discussed below, *teccalli* lands often extended well beyond the limits of the *altepetl* to which they belonged; for instance, Chance (2000, 110) notes that “The *teccalli* thus had no geographical unity nor precise boundaries.”

Furthermore, Magdalena A. García Sánchez suggests that the *tlaxilacalli* are inseparable of the *calpulle* and cover the same space-territory of the main *calpolli* (García Sánchez 2015). She asserts that these *tlaxilacalli* seem to also form a lower level of the *calpoltin*, precisely because they are units that are part of the total territory of the *calpolli*. However, Johnson’s recent study (2018a) clearly contradicts this, though the subject needs further research in order to verify this point.

Another possibility is that the people of a certain *tlaxilacalli* would migrate into a new territory, taking their micro patriotic identity with them, as could be evinced in the Codex Xolotl, plate X.040, in which the four migrating *tlaxilacalme* from Chalco are seen in Tlalnepantla, on the way to Texcoco, with their ethnic affiliation glyphs attached, where they would have been absorbed into an already established *teccalli/tecpa*, perhaps by way of inter-marriage between nobles of the two entities (see figure 5).

Calli

Information in Domingo Calderón’s lawsuit demonstrates that within the inner structure of the *teccalli/tecpa* of Ayapanco in Tlaxcallan there were 30 minor lordly houses (*calli*). Lordly houses (*calli*) were, in effect, minor noble houses within the *teccalli/tecpa* structure and organization, and nuclear family heads within them resided within one residential compound (*callatelli*). As studies on urban Tenochtitlan and its environs and *chinampas* indicate, multifamily residences or house compounds were virilocal, with multi-residents, and were arranged with their separate structures facing a common patio (Calnek 1972; 1976, 298; Carrasco 1964, 1976; Caso 1954; Chance 2000; Kellogg 1992, 212; Nutini 1961; Perkins 2005; Robichaux 2005; Santley and Hirth 1992; van Zantwijk 1963). All these



Figure 5. Four migrating *tlaxilacalli* from Chalco, stopping in Tlalnepantla, on their way to Texcoco. Source: Codex Xolotl, plate X.040. Courtesy of the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

studies highlight the fact that the standard pattern of living during that time was a “joint-compound bilateral system of co-residence,” made up of multigenerational and joint households, characterized by bilateral kinship. Descriptions of these compounds suggest there were most commonly three structures (or *calli*), arranged around a central patio, with each *calli* inhabited by an individual nuclear family. *Calli* compounds in Tlaxcallan, most probably accorded the “complex household,” or the joint-families type, consisting of a bipartite, or tripartite, co-resident structure, that is, two or more either relative or non-relative nuclear families residing in the same compound, with an average of 8.5–10 persons per unit. As Sarah Cline has shown for Morelos, during 1540, there were four conjugal unions within the same compound (Cline 1993, 62–63, 281). In the Tepetlaoztoc area the joint-family type amounted to as high as 42.2 percent of the population (Williams and Hicks 2011, 58–62). The *calli* structure in Tlaxcallan can be gleaned from the following citation:

F. 5r: Response by *don* Juan de la Rosa and *don* Julian Ximenez

Nuestro mayorazgo, tenía por sus sujetos otros ocho casas de mayorazgos y estas ocho casas tenían treinta casas de principales, y cada una de ellas era un barrio, dentro de los cuales dichos treinta barrios están los dichos ocho barrios.³⁰

Even though we do not have the original document in Nahuatl in hand, we can certainly adopt Gibson's (1952, 144) terminology of "*mayorazgo*" into its analysis and, accordingly, define the above expression, *casas de mayorazgos*, to mean what in other areas are properly named *pilcalli*. In the documentation from the Archivo de la Fiscalía de Zacatelco and the AHET the word *pilcalli* does not normally appear, but rather *calli*, and the denomination such as the example cited below, *ichan Ocelotzin* (his home Ocelotzin/Ocelotzin's home), effectively means, Ocelotzin's lordly house, as Gibson defines it: "The term *calli* common to all four [the four types of estates in Tlaxcallan] suggests both the dwelling residence of the family and the estate itself, with all its internal social stratification and its material goods" (Gibson 1952, 144).

In direct relation to the above observations, let us look at the records pertaining to San Bartolomé Quahuixmatlac Atecochco, part of the *altepetl* of Tizatlan. The *teccalli* of Santa Ana Chiautenpan was within its bounds and the *tlaxilacalli* of Chimalpan was subject to it.³¹ According to the "Padrones de Tlaxcallan" of 1558, the Chiautenpantlaca of this *teccalli* included 54 male *calli* heads and three noble widows who headed the *calli*, as well.³² This *teccalli* was comprised of seven distinct *calli*, headed by their *teteuctin*, one of whom was Ocelotzin whose *calli* included in 1558 eight noble male *chantli* (nuclear family) heads.

Analysis of Pascual Tlepetzin's testament (1598), which is in the Archivo de la Fiscalía municipal de Zacatelco, contains information that helps to define *calli* and suggests its actual size. It concerns lands that were part of the *teccalli* of Tepeyanco (San Francisco Tepeyanco), in the *altepetl* of Ocotelolco. The lands were situated in Zacatelco, at the *pago* de Anal, and also included the houses located in the *pago* de Azespan, properties that

³⁰ AHET, caja 1, expediente 8, no. 95, 1554; also Hicks 2000, 581–82.

³¹ Chimalpan was a prominent *tlaxilacalli* name in various ethnic states, such as Texcoco, Chalco, and Tlacopan. BNF, *Manuscripts Mexicain* 1-10 (Codex Xolotl); Johnson 2018a, 27.

³² "Padrones de Tlaxcala siglo XVI", 1558, Archivo Histórico del INAH, BNA, f. 45r; Rojas Rabiela et al. 1987.

in total amounted to 2540 square *brazas*, which is equivalent to 10,550 square meters. The ancestral founder of this *calli* was Coatzin *teuctli*, who is depicted seated inside his *tecpancalli* [palace] in figure 6; his direct heir was Chichilli, followed by Tepetentztli, followed by Chimaltzin, followed by Francisco Itzpapalotzin and his wife, and lastly, Pascual Tlepetzin. Other members of his *calli* were Diego Tlepetzin, his brother; Clara, his sister; Matías Huecatlatzin, and Agustín Tlepetzin, his younger brother (*teicuh*). The latter inherited all the 400 *tlalquahuil* (square rods) of this estate from his father as elder brother (*tiyacapan*) (see Figures 6 and 7).

Conclusions

The goal of this article was twofold: first, to further clarify the nature and role of local social structures within the subdivisions of the Huey Altepetl Tlaxcallan, before and after the Spanish conquest. Accordingly, it explored the inner workings of *altepetl* in Tlaxcallan, and the real relationships of power divisions between *calpolli/tlaxilacalli*, *teccalli* and *calli* (as a minor noble house). Based on new data emerging from the study of the *Fiscalía* archives of the municipality of Zacatelco, Tlaxcallan, and in contrast to what Lockhart originally proposed, it is suggested here that in pre-colonial Tlaxcallan, *calpolli/tlaxilacalli* were integral components of the “estate” of the *teccalli*, despite the fact that jurisdictional limits among the social structures often encroached upon each other. In this regard, this article adopts Luis Reyes García’s (1996) position that *tlaxilacalli/calpolli* predated the *altepetl* structure, and could be described as settlement nuclei; it also accommodates Hicks’s assertion that people belonging to entities such as *pilcalli* (as well as to *tlaxilacalli*, as it is stressed here) may have been recent newcomers in-migrating from other territories who “pledged allegiance to the ruler” (Hicks 2012, 48) and it argues that those newly-arrived migrants would integrate within host *teccalli*. One of the direct consequences of *tlaxilacalli*’s *itech pohuaqui in teccalli*, or the number of persons counted in a given *teccalli*, in Tlaxcallan was the pattern under which their *macehualtin* were made to levy tribute and services directly to the *teccalli/tecpa*, rather than to the *altepetl*. In addition to that, *calli*, minor lordly houses, as they are defined in this article, were also inseparable from a given *teccalli* social jurisdiction in Tlaxcallan.



Figure 6. Coatzin teuctli – fragment of the *Geneología de Zacatelco*. Source: Archivo de la Fiscalía de Zacatelco (very possibly, an eighteenth-century copy)

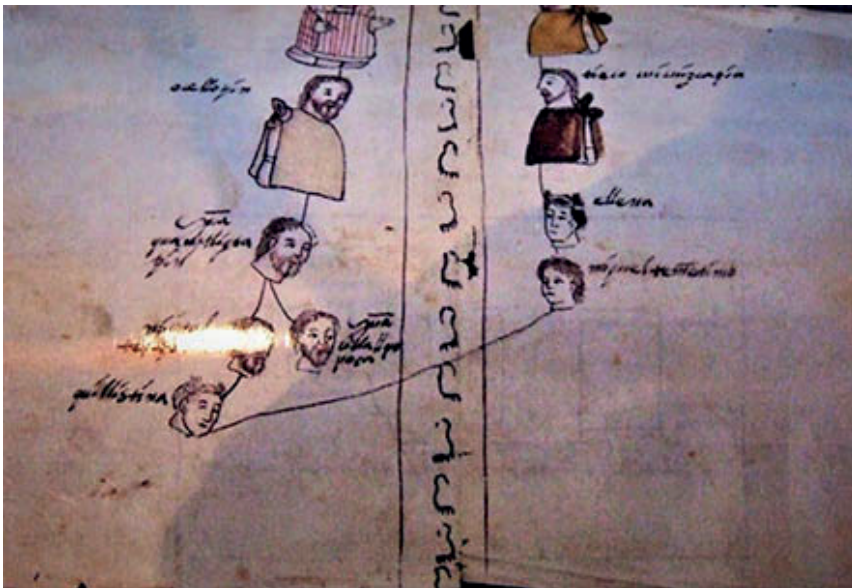


Figure 7. *Geneología de la casa de Ocelotzin*. A color painting mounted on European paper, 27.5 × 20 cm. Showing intermarriage between members of two parallel *pilcalli*. Source: Private archive of the late Luis Reyes García in Tlaxcallan

As envisaged in this article and based on early colonial documentation, some of the *teccalli* in Tlaxcallan were made up of as many as seven distinct *calli*, headed by their assigned *teteuctin*, and each one of such *calli* could, in turn, include as many as eight noble male *calli*, that is, nuclear family heads, most probably, residing within one residential compound. In direct contrast to what Fargher and Blanton argue, that the *teccalli* was not an hereditary institution and entity, and that its new *tlahtohcayotl* depended upon the *hueyaltepetl*'s sanction and its reassignment at the death of its *teuctli*, the present paper demonstrated through documentation that, indeed, *teccalli* did maintain their independence within the *altepetl*, and their *tlahtohcayotl* was passed on within the dominant *calli*, or lordly houses entailed.

Another outcome of this study concerning *macehualli/macehualtin* denominations is that in the Tlaxcalla documentation it is possible to identify *macehualli* who were part of a particular estate (*teccalli/tecpa*), designated in parallel and concurrently as *terrazqueros* (tenants). Corporate communities in early colonial Tlaxcala included both *teixihuan* ("one's descendants/grandchildren"), as well as *macehualli-terrazqueros*. However, by comparison with Perkins (2005), who claims that the *teccalli* were corporate organizations per se, it appears that *teixihuan* and *macehualtin* in Tlaxcallan formed, in fact, semi-autonomous, corporate communities within a given *teccalli*.

Finally, the aim of this study was also to shed new light on varying patterns of inheritance within the *teccalli* in Tlaxcallan and to demonstrate through this vantage point how such patterns could further clarify land and power divisions, assignments, and wealth among *teccalli* and *calli*, from the late fifteenth century to the beginning of the seventeenth century. Furthermore, apart from Church bans against second wives that directly affected rights of inheritance, traditional Nahuatl patterns of inheritance lingered on. Likewise, by the 1560s, as can be observed in the local *Fiscalía* archives, the competing parties in lawsuits deliberated in the local court in the city of Tlaxcala over inheritance rights would attempt to mobilize the aforementioned Church's stance on marriage and marital relationships in their favor so as to denigrate the other party when it came to the involvement of noble "concubines." In such cases, clearly the discourse was tinged with pure Spanish-Catholic terminology and wording in order to gain advantage over the other party in the minds of the colonial magistrates adjudicating these disputes.

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