

Lori Diel. 2018. *The Codex Mexicanus. A Guide to Life in Late Sixteenth-Century New Spain*. Austin: University of Texas Press, and María Castañeda de la Paz and Michel Oudijk. 2019. *El Códice Mexicanus, I y II*. Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas.

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In the second half of the sixteenth century, several indigenous artists worked to produce an extensive pictorial manuscript, known today as Codex Mexicanus. Working on top of erasures of a prior text, a primary artist and those working alongside him, recorded content that reflects preoccupations with time, health, history, and the legitimacy of the Tenochca line of rulers, as well as the complex intersection of the pre-Hispanic past and the Christian world the *tlacuiloque* (artist-scribes; sing. *tlacuilo*) inhabited. The subsequent additions of at least two other hands, further dialogue with these concerns. The manuscript is diminutive in size (10×20 cm), and consists of 51 leaves, or 102 pages of amate bound as a true codex (in European book form). Today it is housed at the Bibliothèque nationale de France as Codex Mexicanus 23-24.

As Lori Boornazian Diel (Diel 2018), and María Castañeda de la Paz and Michel Oudijk (Castañeda de la Paz and Oudijk 2019) note, the wealth of content in Codex Mexicanus has not been systematically explored since Ernst Mengin's 1952 study. In addition to Mengin, the authors often turn to subsequent focused studies like Joaquín Galarza's analysis of the glyphic representation of European names (Galarza 1996), Hans Prem's work on the almanacs, astrological content, and Nahua chronology (Prem 1978), and Susan Spitler's work on the intersection of Mesoamerican and Christian calendar systems (Spitler 2005). The recent books on Codex Mexicanus, addressed here, are a welcome addition and much needed update to the scholarship on this manuscript. The authors often coalesce in interpretations, reinforcing our understanding of glyphic content and contextual



meaning. However, their different scholarly emphases, and some significant departures in interpretation, enhance the scholarly dialogue and result in slightly different casts to the way the manuscript as a whole is interpreted.

Lori Boornazien Diel's book, *The Codex Mexicanus: A Guide to Life in Late Sixteenth-Century New Spain*, departs from earlier scholarship by describing the manuscript as a document whose seemingly disparate contents are united by their practical and functional role relevant to the lives of the Christian Nahuas that produced it. One finds in the manuscript multiple Christian and Nahua calendars, medical information tied to European astrology, a genealogy of Tenochca rulers, an annals history that extends from the departure from Aztlan to the last decades of the sixteenth century, and a scene depicting a biblical vision. Diel argues that the *Codex Mexicanus* authors, in addition to using central Mexican pictorial manuscripts as sources, turned to Spanish books called *Reportorios de los tiempos* as a model. Like *Codex Mexicanus*, the *Reportorios* of early modern Spain often contained Christian calendric content, astrological and medical information, and historical records of an early pagan past that helped to shape and define a modern Christian political and social identity. As Diel states,

by focusing on the codex in its entirety and relating it to the *Reportorio* tradition and its late sixteenth-century context, it becomes clear that the *Mexicanus* was not a compendium of random information but a carefully curated collection of information that its native compilers must have considered essential to know and remember, a guide to life in New Spain (Diel 2018, 3).

She is quick to point out the agency exercised in the use of this model, as content was selected for its relevance to an indigenous audience, modified for a new context, and translated to the Nahua pictorial system of writing as well as alphabetic Nahuatl. Diel's reading of *Codex Mexicanus*, explored in a wholistic context, counters notions of a conquered people passively receiving European culture. Rather, she paints a picture of the late sixteenth-century Christian Nahua authors as thoughtful actors who drew on a variety of sources and were keen to cull interesting and relevant aspects of the Spanish *Reportorio* tradition, and to adapt it to suit their purposes.

Diel's book is well-organized in six chapters and two appendices that reflect her thinking on the categories of knowledge contained in the manuscript. Chapter 1: "The *Codex Mexicanus* and Its World of Production,"

offers historical context, an overview of the Codex Mexicanus, and information on its sources. An insightful analysis of the biblical visions that appear on page 88, toward the end of the manuscript, is used as a lens for understanding the Christian identity of the native artist-scribes.¹ Chapter 2, “Time and Religion in the Aztec and Christian Worlds,” tackles the calendric pages that focus on the relationship between time and the sacred, regardless of their location in the manuscript. This convenient approach results in a chapter that addresses the perpetual calendar and *tonalpohualli* (260-day calendar) that begin the book (pages 1-8); the calendar wheels (page 9); the *tonalpohualli* (pages 13-14); an enigmatic record of dates (page 15); and the *tonalpohualli* in *trecenas* that appears at the end of the manuscript (pages 89-102). Chapter 3, “Astrology, Health, and Medicine in New Spain,” addresses astrological relationships to the lunar calendar, used in relation to bleeding and purging (page 10); astrological records of how the zodiac signs relate to the elements, used to understand the effects on one’s humors (page 11); and the Zodiac Man that diagrams the way movements of the sun, moon, and planets through the signs of the zodiac affect the human body (page 12). Chapter 4: “Divine Lineage” interprets the Tenochca genealogical history on pages 16-17. The extensive annals history (pages 18-87) is covered in Chapter 5: “A History of the Mexica People: From Aztlan to Tenochtitlan,” followed by a brief summary of ideas in Chapter 6: “Conclusions and an Epilogue.” The appendices are useful and translate the pictorial catechism found on pages 52-54 (Appendix 1) and Diel offers her own transcription of the Zodiac Text from pages 24-34 (Appendix 2).

María Castañeda de la Paz and Michel Oudijk approach Codex Mexicanus from a slightly different perspective. The authors attend especially closely to the different hands at work in Codex Mexicanus, identifying at least eight participants. Although it can be difficult to be definitive in such analyses, they introduce the different painters and their styles in the Introductory chapter and point out their presence throughout their examination of the manuscript. This informs their conclusions about Codex Mexicanus’ dating and phases of production, which are outlined by Oudijk in Chapter 5. Likewise, these authors often tackle the elusive task of attempting to identify specific sources that the *tlacuiloque* relied upon for various parts

¹ All references to “pages” in this review refer to Codex Mexicanus. Any references to pages in the books by Diel and Castañeda de la Paz and Oudijk will appear as citations.

of the manuscript. These authors express doubts about the *Reportorios* as a key source (Castañeda de la Paz and Oudijk 2019, 23). Instead, they suggest that the small size of Codex Mexicanus and the medical and calendric content, bear more in common with the vademécum, a small handheld medical almanac used in early modern Europe. Since the vademécum included content on how the saints influenced certain moments of the calendar and calendric influences on life, these authors group the calendric and astrological content in Chapter I, under the heading “The Medical Almanac.” This chapter, authored by Oudijk, addresses the Christian perpetual calendar and the Mesoamerican calendar beneath (pages 1-8); the calendar wheels (page 9); the tables concerned with blood and bloodletting (pages 10-12); the *tonalpohualli* that appears at the end of Codex Mexicanus (pages 89-102) and its related pages (pages 13-14); as well as the calendric table on page 15. Oudijk and Diel address the same content at the beginning of their books, but Diel divides the material into two chapters, separating the calendric content that addresses the sacred from that focusing on astrology. Castañeda de la Paz authors Chapter II on “The Genealogy of the Royal House of Tenochtitlan.” While Diel treats the annals history (pages 18-87) in one chapter, these authors break the content into two, with Castañeda de la Paz handling the pre-Hispanic annals (Chapter III) and both addressing the colonial content (Chapter IV). After the chapter on dating (Chapter V), a brief chapter attends to the religious vision depicted on page 88 (Chapter VI), and the authors conclude.

Three of the four appendices in the book by Castañeda de la Paz and Oudijk are related to tracing the source materials of the *tlacuiloque*. Appendix 1 reproduces relevant material from the *Chronographia, y reportorio de los tiempos* by Francisco Vicente Tornamira (Tomas Porrális de Sauova, Pamplona, 1634 [1584]). Appendix 2 reproduces passages from Chimalpahin’s account of the Mexica migration that correspond closely to Codex Mexicanus’ annals. Appendix 3 records dates from Chimalpahin’s account that the authors believe derive from Codex Mexicanus. Appendix 4 reproduces Mengin’s transcription and French translation of the Zodiac Text found on pages 24-34, with the addition of Oudijk’s translation to Spanish.

The authors of these two books often present conflicting ideas that, read together, add complexity to our understanding or make clear that there are many instances where this complex manuscript defies a single definitive understanding. Below, I highlight some informative points of contention

between the two studies. These include differences in dating, differences in how the Tenochca genealogical history is framed, and differing approaches to historical content.

Dating of Codex Mexicanus

Lori Diel dates the production of Codex Mexicanus to approximately 1579-1583. Diel, following Prem (Prem 1978) and Brotherston (Brotherston 2005), notes an alphabetic Nahuatl reference on page 9 of the codex, that announces the arrival of Augustinian friars at the Colegio de San Pablo. Diel interprets this as a reference to the founding of the Colegio de San Pablo in 1575, in the San Pablo Teopan barrio of Mexico City. The Nahuatl statement is linked by the painter's line to the date 1575 and the dominical year "b" on the calendar wheel.

The letter of the calendar date on which the first Sunday of the year falls in a given year is known as that year's dominical letter, and these cycle through a standard sequence that repeats every twenty-eight years and are charted by dominical wheels like the one seen here. . . which is meant to be read in a clockwise direction (Diel 2018, 45).

Diel notes that the first Sunday of 1575 did fall on the dominical letter "b" (Diel 2018, 46). Reading clockwise, the cross that appears at the top of the wheel thus falls between the years 1578 and 1579. She suggests that the contributors to Codex Mexicanus may have been affiliated with the barrio of San Pablo Teopan and possibly the colegio, and that they likely began work on the codex between 1578 and 1579. Noting the years 1579-82 on page 15 of the codex and the last entry in the annals history in 1583, she suggests that "the majority of the codex was created and updated during these years" (Diel 2018, 8).

Diel finds further support for a 1579 start date in some of the other calendars as well. The perpetual calendar that begins Codex Mexicanus (pages 1-8) includes glosses that note "quatollotepore," an approximation of the Latin phrase *quattuor tempora*. This gloss references three-day periods of prayer and fasting, or "Ember Days" that occurred in each of the four seasons. Some of the Ember Days were tied to moveable feasts, which meant they did not have a "perpetual" date and might be celebrated in different

months. The reference to the Ember Days registered at the beginning of the June month (page 2) is one such example, as the days of prayer and fasting always occurred during the week after Pentecost.

As Pentecost is a moveable feast, this set of Ember Days would not have been fixed in the Christian calendar. Their placement in June supports a correlation of 1579 with the painting of this calendar, as the Ember Days fell in early June in that year, whereas those for the year just before and after fell in May (Diel 2018, 27).

Diel views the *Codex Mexicanus* at this time as a living document that registers several hands. She notes the later addition of an idiosyncratic historic event associated with October 4th (page 6) and identifies it as the arrival of Viceroy Mendoza in 1580. Diel interprets this as further support for her dating, “as it points to the event being added to the book soon after the actual arrival happened” (Diel 2018, 29). Additionally, using correlations proposed by Alfonso Caso (Caso, 1971), Diel points to the documentation of Mexica monthly feasts in the *tonalpohualli* on pages 13 and 14; the celebrations occur on Reed days, thus corresponding with the year 1579. The alphabetic references to the feast days that appear in the *trecenas* at the end of the manuscript are also on Reed days.

In contrast, Oudijk argues for an earlier start date of 1551, based on his analysis of the different hands at work.² He suggests that the first master painter and his assistants began the manuscript by painting the almanac, genealogy, and annals, including the date cartouches up to the year 1571. He suggests that this artist’s last addition to the annals occurred in 1557, indicating that the manuscript had to have been begun prior.

En mi opinión, el primer pintor fue el que hizo el almanaque (que incluía las láminas 16 y 17) y los anales (hasta 1571 en la lámina 85). No obstante, su último añadido en los anales corresponde al año 1557, lo cual quiere decir que la manufactura del códice comenzó antes (Castañeda de la Paz and Oudijk 2019, 203).

Like Diel, he reads the cross at the top of the dominical wheel on page 9 as a reference to the start date of the manuscript. He thus seeks a dominical “d” year prior to 1557 and suggests 1551 as the most likely (Castañeda

² Throughout this review, when discussing the book by Castañeda de la Paz and Oudijk, I will reference the author making the primary argument (e. g., the author of a given chapter addressing that topic), with the understanding that both authors are likely in agreement.

de la Paz and Oudijk 2019, 39). Oudijk notes the reference to the arrival of the Augustinian friars, the year 1575, and the dominical letter “b,” but does not link these to the manuscript’s production start date (Castañeda de la Paz and Oudijk 2019, 40). He also explores the possibility that the ambiguous numeral gloss may record “155,” rather than “1575,” perhaps registering the first master painter’s death in 1558 (the only year in that decade with a dominical “b” designation).

Oudijk reads the lunar letters that appear just below the dominical letters of the perpetual calendar and the references to the Ember Day feasts as shifting the perpetual calendar to one fixed in time. In examining the correlation between the dominical letters associated with the perpetual calendar and the lunar letters, Oudijk counts back to determine that the date of January 1st would have corresponded to a lunar day “a.” The related golden number of the Metonic cycle was xiv, which corresponded to the years 1533, 1552, and 1571 (Castañeda de la Paz and Oudijk 2019, 204). While Diel reads the “quatollotepore” glosses as general references to where the feast days occurred in the calendar, in keeping with a perpetual calendar, Oudijk reads the vertical gloss on page 2 as directly associated with June 1, therefore implying a Pentecost date of Sunday, May 29th. This would imply a dominical “b” year of 1547, 1558, or 1569. From these analyses, the authors conclude that the first painter began work in 1551, added the lunar years on pages 1-8 in 1552, and ceased work in early 1558.

Oudijk identifies a second phase or “program” of painting that occurs during the years 1582 and 1583. Like Diel, he suggests that a different painter entered the Mexica feast days that are linked to the Christian perpetual calendar (pages 1-8). Diel associates these additions with a three-year period (1579-81), and suggests that the painter may have been updating the correlations during these sequential Reed, Flint, and House years. Oudijk argues for 1582-83, citing evidence on page 6 of the painter deciding, in November 83, to attempt to edit his material to reflect Pope Gregory XIII’s calendar reform; the Gregorian calendar reform would effectively eliminate 10 days from the European calendar. He believes this same painter was responsible for the calendric table on page 15, where the years 1579-82 are recorded; the ten year bearers on page 86 that record 1572-81; and that this painter erased the guidelines for the year bearers on the final pages and painted a *tonalpohualli* (Castañeda de la Paz and Oudijk 2019, 52, 204). This painter is also associated with recording the 1580 arrival of Viceroy Mendoza on page 6.

A third program of painting is associated with the years 1583-88. According to the authors, this painter erased the glyphs of the *tonalpohualli* (pages 89-102), wrote in the alphabetic texts, and added references to the Mexica feasts. Since some of the end pages had been lost by this point, the painter erased the contents of pages 13-14 and continued the *veintenas* (20-day calendric periods) there in a new format (Castañeda de la Paz and Oudijk 2019, 205, 52). This painter may have added the glyph and gloss for “mayanalloc” that appears on page 86. At this time painters added some additions to the annals and the Zodiac Man was added on page 12. The year bearers on page 87, recording 1582-90, are also among the late additions.

Both authors agree that there was active work on the manuscript in the early 1580s and that initial production began prior to that. Overall, Diel offers a more conservative date range. Diel notes sequence at times. For example, she points out that the Mexica feasts on pages 1-8 were added subsequent to the perpetual calendar; she notes where uses of space indicate that some items were added later; and she points out that in the *tonalpohualli* on pages 89-102, black alphabetic texts overlap the red roman numerals showing that they were painted subsequently. Oudijk and Castañeda de la Paz focus extensively on the painterly hands and offer related insights. Their broad concept of “programs” or phases of production is useful and convincing. Arguments about particular dates lead to more complex proposals, including a much earlier start date. The arguments rely on particular interpretations of content such as: 1) accepting that the first painter ceased work or oversight in the year 1557; 2) reading the date associated with the Gregorian reform as 11 Reed (Diel interprets this as 13 Reed [Diel 2018, 40]); and 3) reading the “quatollotepore” gloss on page 2 as a reference to the first Wednesday of the Ember feast days that occurred on the specific date of June 1, rather than as a general reference to the calendric period in which the prayer and fasting days occurred. Both authors build on and counter ideas presented in earlier scholarship. These new observations and proposals, and the implicit dialogue between them, will be crucial to contemporary scholars interested in pursuing *Codex Mexicanus*’ complexities.

The Genealogy

Another place where the authors diverge significantly is in the genealogical interpretation. Both Castañeda de la Paz and Diel read pages 16-17 as a bid to reinforce the legitimacy of the Tenochca ruling line and note the particular emphasis on Itzcoatl and Huitzilihuitl, but they differ in interpreting the thrust and motivations of that argument. Diel links the genealogy to Spanish *limpieza de sangre* documents (that attempted to demonstrate the purity of one's ancestry) and the *Reportorio* tradition, which sometimes traced historical lineage back through ancient Roman origins (thereby linking an illustrious pagan past to a Christian present). She argues that the tlacuilo emphasizes pure Mexica bloodlines and divine origins. Castañeda de la Paz finds less evidence for a focus on divine origins and instead argues that the genealogy serves to reinforce the legitimacy of the reign of Itzcoatl and his descendants. In large part, the scholarly differences are tied to the interpretation of the figures and place signs at the far left of page 16, where the genealogy begins.

While acknowledging that these images are difficult to interpret, Diel identifies the prominent central place sign with reeds and a banner as potentially representing Aztlán, with the eagle to the right labeling the seated ruler as a representation of the tutelary deity Huitzilopochtli. Huitzilopochtli's sister Malinalxochitl appears just below and is named by her son Copil's sign. Copil and his daughter Xicomayahual (Busy Bee) appear just above Huitzilopochtli, linked by a yellow line to Malinalco (Place of Twisted Grass), a locale founded by Malinalxochitl. Footsteps lead Xicomayahual to Chapultepec (Grasshopper Hill), where she marries Cuauhtlequetzqui (Eagle-Leg) after her father's defeat and begins a royal bloodline, rooted in divine origins, that will endure in this region until the 1560s. This reading associates the start of the genealogy with the 12th to 14th centuries when the Mexica ancestors, led by Huitzilopochtli, departed from Aztlán and arrived at the Basin of Mexico where they would soon found their capital city of Tenochtitlán. According to Diel, the genealogy emphasizes the divine origins of the Tenochca royal line and the pure Mexica blood lines.

Castañeda de la Paz also argues that the figures on page 16 are there to reinforce the important lineage of Acamapichtli and his sons, especially Itzcoatl, but differs in her interpretation of some of the initial glyphic components. Like Diel, she sees the upper left figures of Copil and Xicomayahual at Malinalco as reinforcing the prestigious lineage of Acamapichtli's principal

wife and descendants. While Diel interprets the important central glyphs below this as potentially representing Aztlán and Huitzilopochtli, Castañeda de la Paz offers evidence for reading this site as Tlacopan and the associated male figure as Totoquihuaztli, the second lord of Tlacopan who assumed the throne after the Tepanec war led by Itzcoatl in 1428. She identifies the female figure below as his wife. Diel interprets the untethered figure of Chimalpopoca on page 16 as the Mexica ruler, separated from the dynastic line because of Tepanec parentage on his mother's side. Castañeda de la Paz argues that this figure's proximity to Totoquihuaztli and his wife indicates that this is not the Mexica ruler, but rather a son named Chimalpopoca who would rule Tlacopan after his father. She acknowledges the complexity that there are no kinship lines connecting Totoquihuaztli with the female figure below or Chimalpopoca, and the fact that the female figure's name glyph is anomalous. Both Diel and Castañeda de la Paz identify the figures above the Chapultepec place sign as the parents of the sisters who married Huitzilihuitl and Itzcoatl. Diel argues that the parents are associated with Tlatelolco and therefore purely Mexica. Castañeda de la Paz argues that the parents are from Tliluhcan rather than Tlatelolco. Both authors identify the female figure as Chalchiuhnenetzin, but Diel reads the male figure as Epcoatl, while Castañeda de la Paz interprets him as Huehue Tlacacuitlahuatzin.

Overall, Castañeda de la Paz argues that Itzcoatl is the central figure in the genealogy. The prestige of the royal house of Tlacopan is subsumed within Tenochtitlan under his reign. Though Itzcoatl's mother was not of royal lineage, he is shown as on equal footing with his half-brother Huitzilihuitl because of the shared ancestry of their wives. The legitimacy of Itzcoatl's heirs is reinforced when the descendants of Itzcoatl and Huitzilihuitl marry, generating future tlatoque and colonial-era leaders. Castañeda de la Paz also argues that the genealogical pages of the *Codex Mexicanus* informed Fernando de Alvarado Tezozomoc's *Crónica mexicayotl*. She points out that Tezozomoc's mother's second husband was a lord of Tliluhcan, and that *Codex Mexicanus*' record of this site as part of the origin of the lineage of the royal house of Tenochtitlan, would have been of interest to him. She suggests that *Codex Mexicanus* may have been kept at the tecpan of San Sebastián Atzacualco in Tenochtitlan where Tezozomoc resided. She employs convincing comparisons to argue that don Diego García may have encountered the genealogical pages while writing the *Techialoyan García Granados* in the latter third of the seventeenth century.

The Annals History

Diel's book addresses the annals history in its entirety in Chapter 5. The annals history is formatted as a *xiuhpohualli*, or continuous year count, that records the years 1 Flint (1168) to 7 Rabbit (1590) and is recorded on pages 18-87. Diel considers the history in parts, addressing the migration, imperial, and colonial history in turn. Diel is conservative in her conclusions, putting forth the strongest interpretation based on evidence and noting where identifications cannot be reached or are tenuous. She points out different artist hands and shifts in modes of visual representation along the way. In considering the colonial context in which the manuscript was made, she writes that, "The underlying message is that the Mexica ancestors were destined to find and found Tenochtitlan, grow it into an imperial power, and facilitate its transformation into Christian New Spain (Diel 2018, 95)." As Diel notes, the drive to record this history also tied into the Spanish *Reportorio* tradition and shared Nahua and Spanish concerns with history. In both Spanish *Reportorios* and Codex Mexicanus, knowledge of the distant past is presumed necessary for understanding the present moment. She proposes that the cyclical nature of the Aztec calendar "suggests an underlying cyclical patterning and a sense of history as prophecy that will be emphasized in the Mexicanus account (Diel 2018, 97)." Diel compares the Mexica migration history against other pictorial and alphabetic accounts and suggests that the *tlacuiloque* writing the Codex Mexicanus migration history made associations with Roman and Old Testament exodus narratives.

Castañeda de la Paz and Oudijk address the annals history in parts, with Castañeda de la Paz investigating the prehispanic annals in Chapter III, and both dealing with the colonial annals in Chapter IV. As with other chapters, the authors take a scholarly interest in identifying source material and circuits of influence. Castañeda de la Paz's extensive treatment of the migration history includes a study of how Aztlan and other closely related sites of origin are represented in this and comparable works. She also charts, in some depth, the relationship between Codex Mexicanus and other sources, including alphabetic texts, pictorial manuscripts, and oral traditions, examining where possible how they are rewritten or reinterpreted in Codex Mexicanus. She identifies the *Historia de los mexicanos* and the *Anales de Tlatelolco* as part of the same historical tradition. In their analyses of the colonial annals, Castañeda de la Paz and Oudijk track the events registered,

making frequent comparisons with Codex Aubin, Codex Azcatitlan, and other annals histories. The nature of their work pushes at times into territory that is harder to prove, but worthwhile to explore.

Both books on Codex Mexicanus provide tremendously useful page-by-page and glyph-by-glyph readings of the annals. The authors often use Mengin and Boone (Boone 2000) as an initial reference point for their interpretations, expanding, clarifying, or disputing as necessary. Both books helpfully address some of the different series of flags that appear throughout the annals history, providing overviews of how the banners mark counts forward and backward from momentous events like the departure from Aztlan and the foundation at Tenochtitlan. They also identify some of the anomalous annotations that appear throughout the record, clearing the way for a cleaner reading of the annals content. Thereafter, as they proceed through the annals history, they offer readings of most entries. Consensus on many of the interpretations provides readers with a reliable base narrative, while differences highlight complexities or offer different sets of data with which to approach the interpretation. All of the authors take advantage of addressing Codex Mexicanus wholistically to draw conclusions based on comparison against the genealogy where some of the same figures appear. Both authors rely heavily on Codex Aubin for interpretations of the colonial content. While I find Castañeda de la Paz's and Oudijk's use of Codex Azcatitlan in the colonial section less useful because I have differing views on the interpretation of the final pages (Rajagopalan 2019, 87-110), this does not detract from their interpretation of the Codex Mexicanus content. Throughout, there are many points where all authors find the content murky or impossible to decipher, reminding us that there is still much work to be done on Codex Mexicanus.

Conclusion

The different frames the authors use to approach the material lead to different observations. Diel's analysis takes an overarching view of indigenous Christian authors modifying the distant past to highlight and anticipate the transition to a Spanish Christian present, wherein native leaders retain some degree of power and play an important role. Among many useful observations, she provides a particularly insightful reading of the biblical vision registered on page 88. Her observations on the record of extra saints'

days and holy days (beyond those suggested by the Spanish church) provide insight on the identity of the *tlacuiloque* and their cultural context. She argues convincingly for the emphasis on continuity in Tenochca rulership, and the visual subtleties employed in ruler representation. Castañeda de la Paz and Oudijk see less unity in the manuscript. Readers will benefit from the in-depth comparative approach of the authors. Castañeda de la Paz brings her extensive previous studies of genealogy to bear. Although the calendric material can be complex and hard to follow, the authors guide the reader with many useful tables and appendices. This compilation of data will benefit scholars working on a variety of manuscripts.

While I have focused here on some interesting points of dissent in these two books on Codex Mexicanus, it should be stated again that in a majority of cases, the authors reach shared conclusions. The identification of most of the saints, Mexica feast days, historical events, and individuals registered in the genealogy are largely similar. The authors' understanding of the basic functioning of the calendars and astrological content overlap considerably. Many of the historical events are interpreted in the same or similar ways. These independently achieved results provide a solid armature for understanding Codex Mexicanus and it is particularly helpful for pedagogical purposes to have available comprehensive studies in both English and Spanish that can introduce advanced students to this manuscript page by page.

The publishers of both Lori Diel's book, and that of María Castañeda de la Paz and Michel Oudijk have produced high quality reproductions of the manuscript. While the digital facsimile available through the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BNF) website is very useful for zooming in on thorny details, it is immensely valuable to be able to work offline with convenient, portable, and reliable images at the ready. The colors on both are a close match to the BNF digital version, with the University of Texas Press (UTP) edition slightly closer. The life size images and separately bound facsimile of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) version are especially user friendly. The UNAM edition lacks an index and has a binding error, with some bibliographic content duplicated (pp. 225-240).

Overall, both books are filled with fascinating insights and proposals that foreground the intellectual choices and innovations made by the indigenous artists that produced Codex Mexicanus. These comprehensive studies will prove essential to scholars of Mesoamerica as they continue to tangle with the manuscript's complexities.

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