

## THE AZTLAN MIGRATIONS OF THE NAHUATL CHRONICLES: MYTH OR HISTORY?

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### Abstract

This article examines one of the major themes of central Mexican native history—the Aztlan migrations—and attempts to establish its historical validity. Two independent sets of historical accounts are analyzed, revealing considerable consistency and agreement. First, narrative accounts of Prehispanic history concur in the relative arrival order of three major contingents of Nahuatl speaking immigrants: an early Basin or Mexico contingent, followed by one settling the surrounding valleys, and finally the Mexica. Second, arrival dates from diverse local histories throughout the highlands corroborate this tripartite ordering and provide calendar dates for the arrival of the Aztlan migrants. The resulting historical reconstruction is supported by current work in Mesoamerican historical linguistics and by available archaeological data.

The various Nahuatl speaking peoples of central Mexico encountered by Cortes in 1519 traced their ancestry to one or both of two semi-mythical places in northern Mexico. According to written and oral native histories, their ancestors had migrated south from either Aztlan or Chicomoztoc several centuries before the Spanish conquest. Although the bulk of the extant information on these migrations pertains to the Mexica, the politically and economically dominant group in 1519, the Mexica in fact represent only the last of a series of migrating peoples said to have settled in the Basin of Mexico and adjacent valleys. In the sixteenth century, the inclusion of these various groups in lists of migrants from Aztlan and/or Chicomoztoc served to reinforce and validate their ethnic identities (Davies 1980:85f). Although it is often the case that such accounts of “tribal” or “ethnic” origins belong more to the realm of mythology than history (see for example Brown 1973), there are two strong *a priori* reasons for attributing a large measure of historical validity to the Aztlan chronicles. First, central Mexican native history is notable for its attention to chronology and record-keeping (Nicholson 1955, 1971), and the migration accounts are presented in the historical as opposed to the ritual or patently mythological portions of indigenous accounts. Second, Mesoamerican historical linguistics has established that the Nahuatl language is not native to central Mexico, but was carried south from a north Mexican hearth in the final centuries of the Prehispanic era. Since the Aztlan migrants were Nahuatl speaking, an association between the historical and linguistic movements is likely. Given the general historical plausibility of the Aztlan migrations, this article attempts to determine: (1) how reliable are the native sources on the migrations? (2) who were the migrating groups? (3) when did they arrive in central Mexico?

Mesoamerica is the only area of the New World in which indigenous cultures developed written historical records prior to the arrival of Europeans. Within Prehispanic Mesoamerica, four independent traditions of written history evolved—the Maya, Zapotec, Mixtec and Nahuatl traditions (Marcus 1976). The Nahuatl written histories of central Mexico are the best documented and most understood corpus of the four, due to the efforts of Spanish and native

chroniclers in the early decades of the Colonial period. The economic and social center of New Spain—the Basin of Mexico—coincided with the economic and social center of prior Nahuatl culture, and it is not surprising that a relatively large effort was devoted to documenting native history in that area.

Nahuatl history was transmitted both orally and pictorially. While there appears to have been both oral history without a written component (Nicholson 1971:52ff) and self-contained written texts without accompanying oral narrative (Calnek 1978:242ff), the most common method of transmission combined both media. The primary written documents, called “continuous year count annals” by Nicholson, contain an unbroken sequence of years following the Mesoamerican 52-year calendar. Year glyphs (1 Tochtli, 2 Acatl, 3 Tecpatl and so on—see Caso 1967) are generally arranged in a line along one side of the screen-fold page. Pictorial glyphs and scenes, which include pictographic, ideographic and phonetic elements, indicate events that happened in particular years and served as points of departure for oral narrative regarding the events portrayed. The purpose of these annals was to record the occurrence of events significant to the ruling dynasties of the city-states. They tend to focus on ethnic origins and later dynastic history—accessions and deaths of rulers, wars, alliances—with other kinds of information (like famines or migrations) occasionally included. Such histories were recorded and kept by most if not all of the indigenous city-states of central Mexico at the time of the Spanish conquest (Nicholson 1971; 1978).

Although no undisputed Prehispanic examples of these texts survive, many were painted early in the Colonial period, either copies of Prehispanic texts or new texts written with the same style and conventions. Some of these survive today (see Nicholson 1971:45-49 for a discussion of the major examples), but most of our knowledge of the Nahuatl histories comes from what Nicholson (p.48) calls “textual histories.” These are descriptions and transcriptions of native chronicles (both written and oral) recorded in Spanish and Nahuatl in the sixteenth century. Because the Spanish (and sometimes indigenous) compilers of these textual histories did not always understand the nature and conventions of native history, and because most of the original sources of the Colonial period compilations are now lost, there are a number of obstacles to the use of these chronicles for historical reconstruction. The major problems are dealt with in the appropriate sections below, but it may be observed here that the most important methodological tool for overcoming them is that of textual comparisons. Treatments of Nahuatl native history cannot rely upon one or two sources, but must use as many of the relevant texts as possible; historical reconstruction can only be trusted when considerable agreement is established among independent sources.

The subtitle of this article—“myth or history”—should not be interpreted as implying a rigid classification of the oral and written accounts into historical (accurate) and mythological (false or inaccurate) categories. Many myths contain accurate or reasonable statements about past events, while all historical sources, both primary and secondary, originate in a given cultural milieu and are influenced by cultural practices and beliefs. Because of this, it can be said that all historical accounts, whether Aztec, European, Chinese or Fijian, are to some extent “myths” (see Sahllins 1983). Nevertheless, historical traditions vary widely in the accuracy with which concrete events like wars, migrations and

coronations are depicted in terms of chronology and the identification of persons, groups, places and the like. The extent of such "historical accuracy" in a given case is an empirical issue which may be determined by the historical method—source criticism, comparison of independent accounts, and external verification. The goal of this article is therefore not to classify the Nahuatl migration chronicles as true or false, but rather to explore the extent to which they preserve valid, verifiable historical information.

### **Postclassic Migrations In Central Mexico**

#### **Historicity of the Migrations**

The arrival in central Mexico of waves of immigrants from a northern direction is one of the major topics covered in the Nahuatl native histories. Because of the manifestly mythological nature of at least some elements of these accounts (see Nicholson 1971:66) and the fact that the very existence of the migrations has been questioned (e.g. Price 1980), some words should be said at the outset concerning the historical reliability of the migration chronicles. Modern scholarly judgments of their historicity range from the liberal view of Carrasco (1950, 1971), who appears to accept most of the accounts at face value as historically accurate, to the conservative position of Nicholson (1971:66), who is "skeptical of the historicity of these migration accounts." While Nicholson does accept the occurrence of Nahuatl migrations in the Postclassic period, he initially assigned them to a stage before "genuinely historical" accounts begin (1971:47). An intermediate position is taken by Kirchoff (1948) and Davies (1980), who follow the sources and accept the existence of a number of waves of immigrants and attempt to relate these events to the sociopolitical dynamics of Postclassic central Mexico, without necessarily accepting as historical fact all of the details of the accounts. This perspective, also espoused by Gibson (1964:9,21) and Nicholson in a later article (1978), is taken here. Price's (1980) contention that the "Aztecs" (Mexica) were native to the Basin of Mexico and that the migrations did not take place at all is based upon a highly selective reading of a small number of native historical accounts in English translation, and upon a very idiosyncratic and unsupported interpretation of Mesoamerican linguistics (e.g. that Nahuatl has a time depth of several millenia in the Basin of Mexico). Her dismissal of the entire corpus of Nahuatl indigenous history because of its manipulation by the Mexica for political ends is quite extreme and counter-productive.

Price nevertheless does point out an important issue concerning the interpretation of these accounts as historically accurate. The migrations played a significantly ideological role in later Mexica political cosmology (Davies 1980:85f), and therefore may have been consciously manipulated by the Mexica nobility. Umberger (1981) suggests that because these and other native historical chronicles were used by the Mexica to justify their rule through an elaborate state cosmology, they should not be interpreted as historically valid texts. Two arguments may be advanced against such a notion. First, on a general level, Vansina (1965:49ff) shows that "official traditions," or accounts whose "function is to

justify the existing political structure" (1965:51) are still valid as sources of historical information. The Nahuatl histories, although transmitted orally (see Calnek 1978), relied upon pictorial devices to delineate the passage of years and the nature of the major events included; thus their reliability as "historical" sources is considerably greater than the purely oral traditions analyzed by Vansina (1965). Nicholson (1971:64-69) discusses this issue of "propagandistic bias" and its effects on historical accuracy in some detail. Second, on a specific level, not all of the sources utilized in the present analysis of the composition of the migrant groups are Mexica in origin, while only a few of the sources relied on for dating the migrations derive from Mexica state traditions. Even accepting the biased nature of many of the native historical sources, the method of textual comparison (Vansina 1965:121-139) can compensate for this (see Davies 1973a, 1973b, 1977, 1980 for examples). Significantly, none of the authors denying the historical validity of the native chronicles (e.g. Price 1980; Umberger 1981) cite more than a very few sources in their discussions.

### The Two Migration Themes

The native historical treatments of Postclassic migrating populations may be divided into two themes. The first, which I call the Chichimec migration theme, refers to the central Mexican immigrant peoples as Chichimeca, Tolteca, or derivations of these terms (e.g. Teochichimeca or Tolteca-Chichimeca). "Chichimec" and "Toltec" are general terms which are usually not associated with any particular ethnic or linguistic group. The former refers primarily to non-sedentary hunting populations living to the north of central Mexico, although it may also designate simple farming groups in the north. In the context of the migration accounts, however, the term is extended to cover central Mexican immigrant populations whose ancestors had been either hunters or northern farmers—that is, descendants of "true" Chichimeca (Kirchoff 1948:83). The term Toltec, on the other hand, designates on a general level the "civilized" element in central Mexican culture—city-dwelling agricultural populations with a long history of sedentary life. It also refers more specifically to the residents of Tollan, the Toltec capital (see Davies 1977:55; 1980:3-22; Kirchoff 1948).

These two concepts—Chichimec and Toltec—were important components of ethnic identity in sixteenth-century central Mexico. The Toltec element emphasized a continuity of sophisticated urban culture and at the same time provided a sense of political legitimacy to those polities who could trace their lineages to the Toltec kings (Davies 1973a:22ff). In contrast, Davies describes the Chichimec element of ethnicity as follows:

The claim to rustic—or 'Chichimec'—ancestors lent color to tales of tribal origins and satisfied a Mesoamerican yearning for a pedigree that spelled progress from rags to riches...the 'rags to riches' legend almost amounted to a status symbol. (Davies 1980:85,86)

Both of these terms are used in the historical accounts to describe various migrating groups, although the term Chichimec is far more common.

The second major theme in the accounts may be termed the Aztlan migration theme, and it concerns specifically named ethnic groups who migrated to central

Mexico from Aztlan and the seven caves of Chicomoztoc. In this theme, the Mexica represent the last of a series of Nahuatl speaking peoples who made the southward journey into the Basin of Mexico and surrounding valleys. Because the majority of the native historical sources originate with the Mexica, many details of their migration are preserved, including the towns visited, various events along the way, and the chronology of the journey (see Acosta Saignes 1946 or Davies 1973a:1-34). In the face of this relatively abundant data on the Mexica migration, scholars tend to pass quickly over the scanty information on the other Nahuatl groups that preceded the Mexica.

The precise relationship between the Chichimec (and Toltec) migrants of the first theme and the named Nahuatl groups of the second theme is not explicitly dealt with in the native historical sources. Most accounts discuss only one of the two themes, and those that do contain both themes tend to discuss them separately without explicitly tying the two together (e.g. Chimalpahin 1965 or Torquemada 1969). Modern students of central Mexican native history are of little help here. Treatments of the Aztlan theme generally focus on the Mexica migration and ignore the pre-Mexica groups and their possible relationship to the Chichimeca (e.g. Acosta Saignes 1946; Davies 1973a:1-34; Calnek 1978:253-264); similarly, discussions of the Chichimec and Toltec migrations usually ignore the Aztlan theme or mention it only briefly (e.g. Nicholson 1978; Davies 1980; Carrasco 1971; Kirchoff 1948). A comparison of the two themes, however, reveals considerable temporal and geographical overlap between the events portrayed. This finding, together with passages calling the named Nahuatl groups of the Aztlan theme "Chichimeca" and/or "Tolteca" (e.g. Ixtlilxóchitl 1975, 1:306f; Sahagún 1950-69, bk. 10:197; Chimalpahin 1965:66) suggests that the Chichimec theme and the Aztlan theme in large part describe the same migrations. I argue that the Aztlan migrations are a subset of the Chichimec migrations and comprise all but the earliest of these southward movements of peoples. Before turning to the Aztlan migration theme which is the major focus of this article, some space is devoted to a review of the more inclusive Chichimec migration theme.

### **The Chichimec Migration Theme**

The period from ca. A.D. 1100 to 1400 was characterized by a general deterioration of climate in northern Mesoamerica. Annual rainfall declined, and as a result the Mesoamerican frontier—marked by the rainfall requirements of maize agriculture—moved progressively southward. Armillas (1969) presents the data for this change, and he correlates the climatic shift with the southward migrations of Chichimec populations which are said to begin at roughly the same time. These migrating groups of northern peoples probably played a role in the destruction of Tollan in about A.D. 1175 (see Davies 1977:410-414, 441-466), although the nature of that role is difficult to determine (Davies 1977:398-408). In the majority of the native historical sources<sup>1</sup> the Chichimec migrants did not arrive in the Basin of Mexico and adjacent valleys until after the fall of Tollan (see Davies 1980:114; Nicholson 1978:295; Carrasco 1971:459; Armillas 1969:701). Aside from the *Anales de Cuauhtitlán* (1975:3), whose seventh-century date for the arrival of Chichimec migrants is almost certainly incorrect

(see Nicholson 1978:284f), the major evidence for Chichimec settlement in central Mexico before the fall of Tollan is found in the *Historia Tolteca-Chichimeca* (1947:75-100). In this source, some Chichimec groups are said to have moved southward from Tollan in the year 2 Tochtli, which corresponds to either A.D. 1122 or 1130 depending upon the year-count used (see Davies 1977:363f). On the basis of this and other accounts, Davies concludes that "some Chichimec migration into the Valley of Mexico seems to have begun well before the end of Tollan" (Davies 1980:162).

The migrants described under the Chichimec migration theme probably represent a mixture of ethnic and linguistic affiliations. As Davies puts it,

The Chichimecs, or Tolteca-Chichimecs as I prefer to call them, who penetrated to Tollan and beyond in the twelfth century are unlikely to have been of homogeneous stock; their numbers surely included disparate elements, differing in their cultural attainments and ethnic affiliations (Davies 1980:79).

Davies presents a convincing argument that many if not most of these early Chichimeca were Otomi speakers (1980:74-79). It is significant that those sources which explicitly equate the Chichimeca with Otomis do not refer to the migrant Nahuatl groups of the Aztlan theme as "Chichimeca" (e.g. *Historia Tolteca-Chichimeca* 1947:93; *Historia de los Mexicanos* 1941:216), while those sources which *do* call these latter groups "Chichimeca" *do not* equate Chichimeca with Otomis (e.g. Ixtlilxóchitl 1975, I:306f; Sahagún 1950-69, bk. 10:197; Chimalpahin 1965:66). This separation of sources suggests that the initial Chichimec migrants were primarily Otomi speakers while the later Chichimec groups of the Aztlan theme were Nahuatl speakers. In addition to Otomi and Nahuatl, Pame has been suggested as a possible language for at least some of the early Chichimec migrants (Carrasco 1950:244), and a few sources speak of a "Chichimec" language which is explicitly said to differ from both Nahuatl and Otomi (e.g. *Relación de Chicoloapan* 1905:80; *Relación de Coatepec* 1905:42).

### **The Aztlan Migration Theme**

The Aztlan migration theme consists of lists of explicitly-named ethnic groups who migrated from Aztlan and/or Chicomoztoc to the Basin of Mexico and surrounding valleys. I have been able to locate 15 separate discussions of the Aztlan migration theme in the central Mexican native historical sources; these are listed in Table 1 (four sources have been combined under the *Crónica X*, source number 1). Vaillant (1938:550) was the first to compile such a chart comparing sources and groups of the Aztlan theme; however, his table contains a number of inaccuracies and is not complete (see Nicholson 1955:599 for a critique of Vaillant's use of the historical sources). Other tabular comparisons of the sources on the Aztlan migration theme include Acosta Saignes (1946) and Calnek (1978), but these address problems other than those under consideration here. The major questions to be asked of the data in Table 1 are: (1) who were the migrant Nahuatl groups? and (2) in what order did they migrate? Before these issues are addressed, the historical sources listed in Table 1 are discussed.

### The Sources

Native historical sources on the Aztlán migration theme may be divided into two categories on the basis of whether they explicitly state that the Nahuatl groups migrated consecutively, one after another (sources 1 through 4), or whether they merely list the groups without stating whether there is any temporal or other significance to the ordering of the list (sources 5 through 12). The ordering of the various groups is indicated in Table 1; for sources 1 to 4 this is the stated arrival order, while for sources 5 to 12, this is the order in which the groups are listed in the text. The sources utilized here are the following:

1. *Crónica X*. A comparison of sixteenth century historical sources leads Barlow to postulate the existence of a now-lost native chronicle which was presumably written in Nahuatl by a native historian, and contained glyphic elements as well as the prose narrative (1945:69). Both Durán (1967; written in 1581) and Tezozomoc (1975b; written in 1598) derive from this source, while Tovar (1972), Acosta (1940), and the Códice Ramírez (1944) secondarily derive from Durán's or Tezozomoc's version of the *Crónica X*. The Aztlán migration theme, in terms of the groups listed and the order of their migration, is identical in all of these sources although Tezozomoc does not include the theme at all (see Durán 1967, II:21; Códice Ramírez 1944:19-22; Acosta 1940:515; Tovar 1972:10). Clavigero (1964:63) also presents identical data, presumably derived from one or more of the above sources.
2. *Chimalpahin A*. Chimalpahin (1965:75).
3. *Sahagún A*. Sahagún (1950-69, bk. 10:195).
4. *Anales de Tlatelolco* (1948:31f).
5. *Torquemada A*. Torquemada (1969, I:256f).
6. *Torquemada B*. Torquemada (1969, I:78). In this account Torquemada first lists four migrant groups—Mexicana, Tlacoachcalca, Chalmeca and Calpilca. He then says that, "otros dicen, que estas familias, eran nueve: conviene a saber, Chalca, Matlatzinca, Tepaneca, . . ." I include here only the latter list of nine groups, since the first four do not pertain to the Aztlán theme.
7. *Chimalpahin B*. Chimalpahin (1965:65f).
8. *Sahagún B*. Sahagún (1950-69, bk. 10:197).
9. *Códice Aubin* (1963: Plate 3). See the commentary of Dibble (1963:18).
10. *Historia de los Mexicanos* (1941:219).
11. *Códice Azcatitlan* (1949: Plate 3). See Barlow (1949).

**Table 1**  
**Náhuatl Groups of the Aztlan Migration Theme and the Order of Their Migration**

Sources  Migrating Groups														Total number of mentions
		1. Crónica X	2. Chimalpahin A	3. Sahagún A	4. Anales de Tlatelolco	5. Torquemada A	6. Torquemada B	7. Chimalpahin B	8. Sahagún B	9. Códice Aubin	10. Historia de los Mexicanos	11. Códice Azcatitlan	12. Tira de la Peregrinación	
CHICHIMECA	Chichimeca	-	-	1	-	1 <sup>d</sup>	* <sup>l</sup>	* <sup>l</sup>	-	* <sup>l</sup>	-	* <sup>i</sup>	* <sup>j</sup>	2
	Michoaque	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
BASIN OF MEXICO	Xochimilca	1	1	-	2	7	5	3	-	3	2	6	6	10
	Chalca	2	2	5	3	3 <sup>c</sup>	1	2 <sup>f</sup>	3	2	5	7	7	12
	Tepenaca	3	3	3	1	6	3	7	1	7	6	2	2	12
	Acolhua	(4) <sup>a</sup>	4	4	4	2	(7) <sup>l</sup>	(6) <sup>l</sup>	2	(6) <sup>l</sup>	7 <sup>8</sup>	-	5 <sup>k</sup>	11
	Culhua	*	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	5 <sup>k</sup>	3
	Cuitlahuaca	-	-	-	7	-	6	4	-	4	3 <sup>h</sup>	5	5 <sup>k</sup>	7
	Mizquica	-	-	-	8	-	8	-	-	-	4	-	-	3
	Amecameca	-	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
SURROUNDING VALLEYS	Tlahuica	5	5	-	9 <sup>c</sup>	8	-	-	4	-	-	(3) <sup>i</sup>	(3) <sup>j</sup>	7
	Tlaxcalteca	6	6	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	8 <sup>8</sup>	-	-	4
	Huexotzinca	-	-	6	5	-	-	1	6	1	9 <sup>8</sup>	8	8	8
	Matlatzinca	-	7 <sup>b</sup>	-	11	-	2	8	7	8	-	1	1	8
	Malinalca	-	-	-	12	-	4	5	-	5	-	4	4	6
	Cohuixca	-	-	-	10	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	2
MEXICA	Mexica	7	-	8	13	-	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	4 <sup>m</sup>

\*An asterisk indicates groups which I believe to be incorrectly listed in one of the sources; the preferred interpretation is given in parentheses, and each such modification is discussed in these notes.

<sup>a</sup>The sources deriving from the Crónica X (see text) all list “Culhua” as the fourth group, but it is clear that they are actually referring to the Acolhua of the Texcoco area. For example, Durán (1967, I:21) lists Culhua, but then refers to this group on the follow-



ing page as “la tribu tezcucana” (i.e. the Acolhua); similarly Acosta (1940:515) mentions “los que poblaron a Tezcuco, que son los de Culhua.” This confusion of Culhua and Acolhua is fairly common in the native historical sources, as both Davies (1980:178) and Gibson (1964:471, note 43) point out.

<sup>b</sup>Chimalpahin lists “Teutenanca” as the seventh group; I follow Piña Chán (1975) in the interpretation of this as a synonym for Matlatzinca.

<sup>c</sup>Group 9 in the *Anales de Tlatelolco* is “Quauhnhuaca,” a synonym of Tlahuica (see below).

<sup>d</sup>Groups 4 and 5 in Torquemada A are Olmeca and Xicalanca, respectively; these are omitted from the table for reasons of space.

<sup>e</sup>The third group in Torquemada A is “Chalmeca,” which I interpret as Chalca. Torquemada discusses these two groups separately, but appears to be referring to a single group; for example his description of “la Provincia de Chalco” (1969,I:261) is almost identical to that of “la Provincia de los Chalmecas” (p. 262); similarly, Muñoz Camargo (1892:19) speaks of “los Chalmecas, que fueron los de la provincia de Chalco.”

<sup>f</sup>Chimalpahin B gives “Chalcas totolimpanecas” as the third group. Of the many ethnic groups that are listed as migrating to the Chalco area (Chimalpahin 1965; *Anales de Cuauhtitlán* 1975), it is the Totolimpaneca who are said to have come from Aztlán/Chicomoztoc (see Kirchoff 1954/55:297). However, in other places, Chimalpahin (1965:129; 1958:16,40) states that the Totolimpaneca left Aztlán *after* the Mexica; this probably refers to a separate group of the same name.

<sup>g</sup>The *Historia de los Mexicanos* (1941:219) lists six groups who came from Aztlán (nos. 1 to 6), and then says, “Estos pueblos dicen los mexicanos que salieron, y no más, aunque los de Tzacoco y Tzacala y Guejocingo dicen y se glorian dello, que vinieron cuando los de México, y que son de su tierra.” I therefore list Acolhua (i.e. from Texcoco), Tlaxcalteca and Huexotzinca as the seventh, eighth and ninth groups in this source.

<sup>h</sup>Group 3 in the same source, which is not noted for its accuracy of spelling, is listed as “Atitlabaca.” I interpret this as Cuitlahuaca, since the pronunciation is similar. Also, the fourth group in the *Historia de los Mexicanos* is Mizquica, and the only other sources who list the Mizquica (nos. 4 and 6) also precede them in order by the Cuitlahuaca.

<sup>i</sup>Glyph number 3 in the *Códice Azcatitlan* is a bow (tlahuitolli). While it is glossed as “Chichimeca” in the Codex, this is probably an error and should be changed to Tlahuica (see discussion in the text).

<sup>j</sup>There is a difference of interpretation of the unglossed bow glyph in the *Tira de la Peregrinación*, with some students reading Chichimeca and others Tlahuica; the latter is probably correct (see text for discussion).

<sup>k</sup>There is disagreement over the reading of the fifth glyph in the *Tira*. The corresponding glyph in the *Códice Azcatitlan* is glossed “Cuitlahuaca,” and Nicholson (1973:21) reads the *Tira* glyph similarly. However, this glyph is quite distinct from other examples of the Cuitlahuaca sign (e.g., *Códice Mendoza* 2v; *Códice Xólotl* 1951:plates 4,5,6), or from other relevant place signs as well. Davies (1980:178) and Anonymous (1944:14) read the glyph as Acolhua; Corona y Nuñez (1964:8) as Colhua; and Chavero (1892:7) and Orozco y Berra (1960,III:64; 1864:91f) interpret it as Cholulteca. I would favor Acolhua for glyph 5 of both sources 11 and 12, since the Acolhua are listed in every other source, while the alternative groups are relatively rare among the Aztlán migrants; this is not a certain interpretation, however.

<sup>l</sup>As explained in the text, “Chichimeca” in sources 6, 7, and 9 probably refers to Acolhua.

<sup>m</sup>While the Mexica are included in the same list as the other groups in only four of the sources, they are mentioned or implied as following the other Aztlán groups in virtually all of the sources listed.

12. *Tira de la Peregrinación*. Anonymous (1944:14); Corona y Nuñez (1964:8). Sources 11 and 12 are both pictorial codices which exhibit identical series of 8 glyphs for the Nahuatl migrant groups. These glyphs have been labelled with the names of the groups in the Azcatitlan codex, while the Tira is unglossed. For the former, the written names are given in Table 2; however, there is reason to believe that at least one of these glosses—"Chichimeca" for the third group—is incorrect (this is discussed below). The unlabelled glyphs in the Tira de la Peregrinación have given rise to disagreements over the interpretation of the third and fifth groups; these are discussed in notes j and k to Table 1.

### The Migrants

Whenever the sources mention the language of the Aztlan migrants, it is invariably Nahuatl; in fact these groups are often referred to as "in naoatlaca" (Sahagún 1950-69, bk. 10:197) or "los nahuatlaca" (Código Ramírez 1944:17; Acosta 1940:514); Clavigero 1964:63). Except for the "Chichimeca," all of the groups listed under the Aztlan theme represent ethnic groups which existed in central Mexico at the time of the Spanish conquest. However, these peoples in all likelihood did not exist as corporate groups before or during their migration. Rather, successive waves of related Nahuatl populations probably moved into the various territories of central Mexico and then took as their own the names of those areas. This situation is described by Chimalpahin:

Pero estos nombres que han sido enumerados [Xochimilca, Tepaneca, etc.], entonces aún no los poseían y solamente eran conocidos como chichimecas teocolhuacas. Pero como era la costumbre que cuando alguno marchaba de su pueblo y se iba a establecer a otro pueblo de los que ya existían desde átes, que ese tal tomase en su boca como su nombre el propio nombre del pueblo al cual se había traslado (Chimalpahin 1965:66).

If Chimalpahin is correct in associating the names of peoples more with localities than with ethnic origins, then we should expect diverse ethnic or linguistic groups living in a single area to be referred to by a common name. This is indeed the case, and one of the clearest examples is provided by the Toluca Valley, or "Matlatzinco." This area was multilingual in the sixteenth century, with considerable numbers of both Nahuatl speakers and Matlatzinca speakers (Quezada 1972:Map 3), all of whom were referred to in the sources by the Nahuatl term "Matlatzinca." The Matlatzinca language belongs to the Oto-Pamean stock and probably has a time-depth of several millenia in the Toluca Valley (see Quezada 1972), and thus it would be unlikely to find Matlatzinca speakers migrating southward from Aztlan with the Nahuatl populations. Piña Chán (1975:544f), citing Chimalpahin, interprets the Matlatzinca group listed with the Aztlan migrants to represent Nahuatl speakers from the north who settled in the Toluca Valley. This interpretation accounts for the anomaly of the presence of a non-Nahuatl group among the otherwise Nahuatl speaking ethnic groups of the Aztlan theme (all of these groups, with the exception of the Michoaque in Sahagún's list, spoke Nahuatl in the sixteenth century). It should be pointed out that Carrasco (1950:248) is either unaware of Chimalpahin's

interpretation, or does not agree; he accepts the presence of “elementos no-naua como los matlatzinca” among the Aztlán groups. Before approaching the problem of the relative chronology of the migrations, the anomalous presence of “Chichimeca” as an Aztlán group must be addressed; other problems and modifications of Table 1 are discussed in the notes to the table.

### The Chichimec Anomaly

As noted above, “Chichimec” is a very broad classificatory term which does not refer to any specific ethnic or linguistic group, and the Nahuatl groups of the Aztlán theme are sometimes referred to *collectively* as Chichimeca. For this reason, the presence of “Chichimeca” as one of the specific Nahuatl ethnic groups in seven of the twelve sources on the Aztlán migration theme (Table 1) represents an anomaly. I believe that this problem may be resolved in three distinct fashions as follows:

(1) “Chichimeca” in sources 6, 7 and 9 refers to Acolhua; this is indicated in Table 1. Davies (1980:114-119) marshalls considerable evidence to show that Acolhua and Chichimeca are synonymous in many sources, and refer in these contexts to early, pre-Nahuatl migrants to the Acolhua area on the eastern shore of Lake Texcoco. Xolotl was the most famous (though perhaps mythological) personage of these Acolhua/Chichimeca, who spoke Otomi or some other Oto-Manguéyan language (*ibid*). If “Chichimeca” was used to refer to some specific Basin of Mexico ethnic group, Acolhua is the most likely; for example, the Acolhua leaders were called “Chichimecatl tecuhtli” (Ixtilxóchitl 1975, I:427ff), and Davies (1980:115-117) provides other supportive examples. Given the association of Chichimec and Acolhua in the case of pre-Nahuatl inhabitants of the Texcoco region and considering the importance of locality in ethnic group names (see above), it is not surprising that “Chichimec” would be used to refer to later Nahuatl immigrants in that area as well. This interpretation is strengthened by the fact that with the possible exception of the two pictorial codices, sources 6, 7 and 9 are the only chronicles of the Aztlán theme that fail to mention the Acolhua by name. Switching Chichimec to Acolhua in these cases brings the sources in line with other treatments of the Aztlán theme and accords with Davies’ analysis of the Chichimec/Acolhua relationship.

(2) “Chichimeca” in sources 3 and 5 refers to migrating peoples, probably not Nahuatl speaking, who preceded the Nahuatl groups of the Aztlán theme proper. In these two sources (which both include the Acolhua), Chichimec is listed as the first migrating group (although Torquemada’s ordering is not necessarily significant). In Sahagún’s account, the Chichimeca leave Chicomoztoc, followed by the Michoaque (Tarascans), who “travelled there to the west, where they dwell today” (1950-69, bk. 10:195). After these two groups departed, “then the Nahuatl, the Tepaneca departed,” implying that the previous migrants had not been Nahuatl speaking.

(3) “Chichimeca” in sources 11 and 12 is one of two possible readings of the bow glyph which identifies the third group in these pictorial codices; this glyph is more plausibly interpreted as Tlahuica. The glyph is commonly used in pictorial manuscripts to identify individual persons holding bows as Chichimeca; out-

side of this context, however, representations of the bow glyph are rare in central Mexican pictorial sources. In the *Códice Xólotl* (1951), for example, there are scores of examples of persons holding bows, but in only four cases does the bow glyph occur apart from a (Chichimec) person. Two of these occurrences refer to warfare (1951: Plate 3, section A-4; Plate 7, section D-2), one to wild game (1951: Plate 2, section C-2; see Ixtlilxóchitl 1975, I:297 for comment), and one refers to the "Chichimec" dynasty of Acolhuacan (1951: Plate 8, section A-2; see Dibble 1951:100). Thus when a bow is depicted in the *Códice Xólotl* (and other pictorial sources) as an independent glyph rather than as an object held by a Chichimec personage, it more often than not refers to some concept independent of "Chichimec." This would imply that if the author of the *Códice Azcatitlan* and the *Tira de la Peregrinación* intended to portray Chichimeca as the third migrant group, he would have pictured a person, probably dressed in skins (another Chichimec emblem), holding a bow. This is not the case, and Chichimeca do not belong in the Aztlán lists, so the written label in the *Códice Azcatitlan* is almost certainly incorrect in identifying glyph three as Chichimec.

The bow glyph is interpreted to mean "Tlahuica," based upon one of the three possible etymologies of that term. Simeon (1977) gives two spellings of Tlahuica: *tlahuican/tlahuicatl* (p.599) and *tlahuican/tlahuicatl* (p.693). Neither is presented as preferable to the other, and many native historical accounts use the two spellings interchangeably (e.g. Durán 1967; Ixtlilxóchitl 1975), although some authors use the former version exclusively (e.g. Sahagún 1950-69, bk. 10; Torquemada 1969). The spelling with two l's suggests an etymology involving *tlalli* (land; see the *Códice Ramírez* 1944:21, "gente de hacia la tierra"), while the alternative version points to either *tlauitl* (red ochre; see Clavigero 1964:63) or *tlauitoli* (bow; see Anonymous 1944:8) as the root of Tlahuica. The latter as to be favored because it yields a straightforward phonetic reading of the bow glyph in sources 11 and 12. Similar phonetic use of the bow glyph is seen in the Humboldt Codex, fragment 6, in which the name of Antonio Pimentel Tlahuilotzin is signified by a bow (Cline 1966: Figure 6). This phonetic reading of the bow glyph is certainly the most likely interpretation, since most if not all of the other seven glyphs in these sources are also phonetic representations. Most authorities agree and interpret the bow glyph in the *Tira* as Tlahuica (see Corona y Nuñez 1964:8; Anonymous 1944:14; Davies 1980:178), although Orozco y Berra (1960, III:64) and Nicholson (1973:21) read the glyph as Chichimec, following the written gloss in the *Códice Azcatitlan*. It is perhaps ironic that Nicholson's use of an ideographic reading instead of the more likely phonetic reading is found in an article on phoneticism in central Mexican writing.

The revisions proposed above under categories 1 and 3 eliminate "Chichimeca" as members of the Aztlán Nahuatl groups, substituting either Acolhua (sources 6, 7 and 9) or Tlahuica (sources 11 and 12) in its place. The remaining two references to Chichimeca in the Aztlán migration lists (sources 3 and 5) signify non-Nahuatl Chichimec groups who preceded the Nahuatl groups of the Aztlán theme. These changes produce a more consistent and logical list of migrant groups which may now be analyzed for its chronological implications.

## Dating The Arrival Of The Aztlan Migrants

### Relative Arrival Order

Classification of the migrant groups of the Aztlan theme in Table 1 follows a general chronological trend evident in those sources which are concerned explicitly with the order of the migrations (sources 1 through 4). As discussed above, the Chichimeca and Michoaque of the Sahagún A list represent non-Nahuatl migrants who preceded the Nahuatl speaking Aztlan groups; these belong to the "Chichimec" category that has temporal priority. The sources which specifically include the Mexica together with the other Aztlan groups (sources 1, 3, 4, and 6) agree that the Mexica were the *last* of the migrants, while the remaining sources either imply or state elsewhere that the Mexica followed the other Aztlan groups. Therefore, the remaining Aztlan groups are bracketed temporally between the non-Nahuatl Chichimeca and the Mexica.

This basic chronological scheme for the overall Chichimeca migrations—non-Nahuatl Chichimeca followed by the Nahuatl Aztlan groups, and then the Mexica—is further supported by five sources not listed in Table 1. Motolinía (1979:2-4), Mendieta (1971:147), the Origen de los Mexicanos (1941:258), the Relación de la Genealogía (1941:240-247), and the Histoyre du Méchique (1905:8-19) all list the following as the major migrant groups to settle in central Mexico:

1. Chichimeca.
2. Culhua.
3. Mexica.

The term "Culhua," like the terms Chichimeca and Tolteca, has a variety of connotations in the Nahuatl native histories. First, it may refer simply to the inhabitants of Culhuacan in the Basin of Mexico. Second, it is often used to signify the prestige of the Toltec heritage based upon Culhuacan's role first as partner with Tollan (Chimalpahin 1958:14), and later as Tollan's successor after the fall of the main Toltec capital (see Davies 1977:297-345). Third, the term may refer to civilized, Nahuatl speaking peoples of central Mexico, synonymous with the generalized meaning of the term Tolteca and opposed to the general non-Nahuatl savage connotation of the term Chichimeca. In the five sources listed above, it is this third definition of Culhua which is employed (although Mendieta confuses Culhua and Acolhua in the passage cited). The Culhua are described by Motolinía (1979:2-4) as civilized agricultural Nahuatl speaking peoples who migrated to central Mexico after the non-Nahuatl barbarous Chichimeca. This conception fits the Aztlan groups, an identification which is strengthened by Chimalpahin's name for the Aztlan migrants as "chichimecas teocolhuacas" (1965:66; Chichimeca here is used in its more general connotation of migrant peoples from the north, as opposed to Motolinía's explicit non-Nahuatl savage definition). Thus Motolinía, Mendieta, the Origen de los Mexicanos, the Relación de la Genealogía, and the Histoyre du Méchique all provide

the same basic chronological structure as the 12 sources that deal explicitly with the Aztlan theme.

Using the orders given in sources 1 through 4, the pre-Mexica Aztlan groups may be divided into an early contingent who settled in the Basin of Mexico, and a later contingent who settled in the surrounding valleys (see Table 1). This distinction is quite consistent among sources 1 through 4, there being only one exception (Huexotzinca in source 4) to the principle that all Basin of Mexico groups precede all surrounding valley groups. Among the other sources, whose orderings of the groups are not explicitly said to be temporal orderings, two follow this principle precisely (sources 8 and 10), one follows it generally (source 5), while the remaining five present ambiguous orderings with respect to the geographical division. Based solely upon the data presented in Table 1 and the five additional sources discussed above, the order of arrival of the immigrant groups is:

1. Chichimeca (non-Nahuatl).
2. Basin of Mexico groups.
3. Surrounding Valley groups.
4. Mexica.

No attempt is made here to go beyond the above chronological division of the Nahuatl migrant groups from Aztlan. Finer distinctions (e.g., did the Chalca precede the Tepaneca?) are probably beyond the precision of the sources, and the geopolitical significance of such distinctions is probably less than that of the above classification. The temporal ordering of the three Nahuatl groups as derived from the sources on the Aztlan theme is completely relative in nature. Although these sources do not provide specific native dates for the arrival of the migrant groups in central Mexico, many local historical records *do* give specific native dates for the arrival of Nahuatl migrants in various areas; these sources are considered next.

#### **Arrival Dates**

The local histories which give specific dates for the arrival of Nahuatl migrants are in large part independent of the fifteen sources that list the Aztlan groups (see Table 1). In those cases where a single source provides both kinds of information (e.g. Chimalpahin 1965; Sahaġn 1950-69; the *Anales de Tlatelolco* 1948), the arrival dates and the Aztlan listing are presented separately, and thus probably derive from different original native accounts. In most cases, the arrival dates are said to signal the founding of a town or dynasty, or else the arrival of Chichimeca in an area. In the discussion which follows, individual calendar dates for the arrival of various migrant groups must be treated with caution. Problems and methodological issues in the interpretation of central Mexican native historical chronology are discussed at length elsewhere (see Nicholson

1971, 1978; Davies 1973b, 1977, 1980); here I only mention two of the primary obstacles to accurate chronological inference. First, the cyclical nature of the 52-year calendar round in the absence of any continuous cumulative calendar makes for a situation in which native dates (e.g. 2 Tochtli) may be correlated with a number of different Christian years. The appropriate cycle for a given native date can be determined only in one of two ways. First, if it is of a continuous year-count annal which is unbroken from some known date, such as the Spanish arrival in central Mexico, then the date can be figured directly by simply counting back from the known date. Second, and more common, if the date is not part of an unbroken year-count, then the appropriate 52-year cycle can be determined only through comparative analysis. The second major obstacle to Nahuatl chronological studies concerns the existence of several separate 52-year calendars in simultaneous use in various city-states (see Davies 1973b:193-210; 1980:34ff, 235ff for extensive documentation of this). The most prevalent calendar was the "Tenochca year-count" in which the year 1 Acatl corresponds to 1519, but at least four other counts were in use (for example, the Culhua count in which 1 Acatl = 1539). This situation obviously presents dangers when dates from separate histories are compared.

Both of these problems—the 52-year repeatability and the existence of different counts—are greatly compounded by the fact that much of our knowledge of the native chronicles derives from 16th century sources which based their accounts on now-lost native codices and oral traditions. In addition to expected contradictions *between* sources, there are examples of contradictions and inconsistencies of dating *within* a given source (Chimalpahin 1965 and Ixtlilxóchitl 1975 are the most notable cases of this). These inconsistencies derive in large part from the failure of the Colonial period chroniclers to deal adequately with the above two sources of indeterminacy in the original accounts. Davies (1980:258ff) has shown, for example, that Chimalpahin was not aware of differences between the various year-counts, and as a result many of the Christian year equivalents he gives are incorrect (even though his native dates may be regarded as essentially accurate).

Because of these and other problems, there is a consensus among contemporary scholars that the reliability or accuracy of native calendrical dates drops off with time, and the early-to mid-fourteenth century is often given as the limit to accurate, reliable dates (Nicholson 1971:47,60; Davies 1980:183). Beyond this point, some authorities deny the validity of chronological analysis (Nicholson 1971; although see Nicholson 1978 for a more liberal view), while others pursue chronological studies for earlier times, acknowledging the decreased reliability of native dates for this era (Davies 1977, 1980).

The position taken here is that if a number of native dates for a single event converge, then some reliability may be granted for the dating of the event; the greater the number of independent dates and the closer the convergence, the greater the confidence that may be placed in the dating. No attempt is made to date events to the precise year. Given the uncertainties of pre-fourteenth century chronology, a convergence of dates within a decade or so is considered significant. While the native dates for the arrival of the Aztlán migrants are discussed separately for each named group, analysis of the chronology and its implications will proceed on the level of the three categories described in the previous section (Basin of Mexico, Surrounding Valleys, Mexico).

The hypothesis under investigation here is that, if native dates for each of these three main Nahuatl migrant groups cluster in time, and if the ordering of these clusters replicates the order derived from Table 1 above, then the dates may be accepted as generally valid. It should be emphasized again that in most cases the dates used here are derived from sources independent of those listed in Table 1. Unless otherwise specified, natives dates are assumed to correspond to the Tenochca year-count.

### **Xochimilca**

*A—1182.* The *Anales de Cuauhtitlán* (1975:16) mention hostilities between the Xochimilca and the Culhua in the year 2 Tochtli (=1130), implying that the Xochimilca had arrived in the southern Basin of Mexico by that date. All of the twelfth and thirteenth century dates in the *Anales de Cuauhtitlán* have been advanced one calendric cycle (52 years),<sup>2</sup> yielding a date of A.D. 1182.

*B—ca. 1240.* Ixtlilxóchitl (1975, I:309) states that the Xochimilca arrived and settled Xochimilco several years prior to the death of the Acolhua ruler Tlotzin. For reasons discussed in the Mexica section below, I estimate Tlotzin to have lived ca. 1200 to 1250, yielding 1240 as an approximate date for the arrival of the Xochimilca. Doubts have been expressed as to the historicity of Tlotzin (e.g. Davies 1980:29), however, making this date somewhat tentative.

Nicholson (1978:303) cites Durán as placing the Xochimilca arrival at ca. A.D. 902. Durán (1967, II:22) states that the Mexica had possessed their land for 301 years (i.e. from about 1220), and that the other Nahuatl groups had been in place in the Basin of Mexico for 602 years (which yields 919, rather than 902). Durán is not to be trusted here, however. His work is notable for its lack of attention to dates and chronological accuracy. In his later discussion of the Mexica arrival (p.28), he gives one of his rare native dates (A.D. 1193); this date agrees with other sources (see below), indicating that his 301 figure is only an approximation. Therefore the related 602 year figure for the arrival of the other groups, of which the Xochimilca were the first in Durán's account, is almost certainly far less accurate.

### **Chalca**

*A—1195.* Chimalpahin (1965) and the *Anales de Cuauhtitlán* (1975) speak of many different ethnic groups migrating into and out of the Chalco area in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; Davies (1980:263-276) attempts to sort out these groups and to provide a chronology for their movements. The group most likely to correspond to the Nahuatl speaking Chalca of the Aztlán accounts is not given a name, however. The *Anales de Cuauhtitlán* (1975:16) state that during the reign of the ruler "Acatl," which lasted from 3 Acatl (=1131) to 1 Acatl (1155), "llegaron todos los que hoy se dicen Chalcas, etc." Adding one 52-year cycle to these dates (see note 2) gives a reign of 1183 to 1207, of which 1195 is the midpoint.<sup>3</sup>



## Tepaneca

The Tepanec area, on the western shore of Lake Texcoco, was multilingual in the 16th century, with Nahuatl, Matlatzinca, Otomi and other Oto-Pamean languages all spoken (see Carrasco 1950:32f). While Carrasco (1950) emphasizes links between the Tepaneca and various Oto-Pamean cultures, Sahagún (1950-69, bk. 10:195) explicitly calls the Tepaneca Nahuatl speakers ("in noatlaca, in tepaneca"). Davies (1980:134-143) discusses the evidence for both Nahuatl and the Oto-Pamean languages in the Tepanec area, and concludes that a process of Nahuatization had taken place, though he states that "no information survives concerning when the Tepaneca became Nahuatized" (1980:143). I would suggest that Nahuatl was brought to this area by the Tepanec migrants of the Aztlán accounts, who arrived in the period A.D. 1150-1225.

*A—1152.* This is Barlow's (1948:Table) interpretation of the date of the foundation of the Tepanec dynasty as given in the *Anales de Tlatelolco* (1948).

*B—1184.* Ixtlilxóchitl (1975, I:296) states that Azcapotzalco, the Tepanec capital, was founded by Izpotal in 10 Calli with the permission of Xolotl, early in the latter's reign. While there are some doubts about the historicity of Xolotl, who is said to have lived 112 years (see Davies 1980:42ff), it is nevertheless possible to use the Xolotl accounts of Ixtlilxóchitl for comparative chronological analysis. Xolotl is said to have arrived in the Basin of Mexico in 5 Tecpatl, several years after the fall of Tollan (Ixtlilxóchitl 1975, I:293). Given Davies' (1977) date of 1175 for Tollan's end, he equates Xolotl's 5 Tecpatl arrival date with 1179 (1980:43). The date of 10 Calli, given for the foundation of Azcapotzalco early in Xolotl's reign, comes five years after 5 Tecpatl, that is, A.D. 1184.

*C—ca. 1210.* Chimalpahin (1958:9) has Chichimeca settling Azcapotzalco in 10 Acatl, which he equates with A.D. 995. Although Nicholson (1978:296) gives this date as a possible origin date for Azcapotzalco, it is almost certainly incorrect; as Davies (1980:258-268) and others have shown, there are many problems with Chimalpahin's dates, and few of his Christian year equivalents can be taken at face value. However, the 10 Acatl date in question may be put into perspective by comparison with Chimalpahin's (1958:7) date for the arrival of Xolotl in 12 Tochtli (which he incorrectly equates with A.D. 958), 37 years prior to the Azcapotzalco date. This comparison allows three possible interpretations for the Christian year equivalent for 10 Acatl. First, if 37 years are simply added to Davies' date for the arrival of Xolotl (1179), a date of 1216 is obtained. Second, if Davies' equation of 5 Tecpatl with 1179 is utilized, then counting years to 10 Acatl yields a date of 1210. The third and least likely correlation is done by assuming 10 Acatl to be in the Tenochca year-count, thus producing a date of 1203. As these alternative correlations for 10 Acatl center around 1210, this is given as the date for the Nahuatl settlement of Azcapotzalco.

*D—1226.* Ixtlilxóchitl (1975, II:17) describes the arrival of three groups—Acolhua, Otomi and Tepanec—in the Basin of Mexico 47 years after Xolotl's arrival, which is taken here as happening in 1179. Carrasco (1950:249-251) associates these three groups with the Toltec dispersal, and thus by implication with the Aztlán migrants. Ixtlilxóchitl states that each spoke a distinctive language, however, this indicates that the Acolhua and Tepaneca mentioned here could not both be Nahuatl speaking, and thus probably only one of the two groups pertain to the Aztlán migration theme.

### Acolhua

At least two major influxes of Chichimeca populations into the Acolhua area may be discerned in the native historical sources: a non-Nahuatl group arriving among the first Chichimec migrations, and a later Nahuatl contingent who then settled among the earlier populations. Davies (1980:94-125) synthesizes available information on the first of these groups, which include the Chichimeca of Xolotl (see Ixtlilxóchitl 1975; Códice Xólotl 1951) and concludes that the "Acolhua [were] part of the original movement of Otomi speakers, accompanied by Pame and other Teochichimecs" (1980:118). The ruling lineage of Texcoco was descended from these early Acolhua. The rulers did not speak Nahuatl until the tlatoani Techotlalatzin, who had been educated by a Nahuatl speaking noblewoman from Culhuacan, decreed that Nahuatl was to be the official language of Acolhuacan (Chimalpahin 1965:74; Pomar 1975:4; Ixtlilxóchitl 1975, II:34). This relatively late Nahuatization of the Acolhua dynasty (Davies gives 1377-1409 as the dates for Techotlalatzin—1980:59) was facilitated by the fact that many Nahuatl speakers already lived in the Acolhua area:

Techotlalatzin. . . fué el primero que uso hablar la lengua náhuatl que ahora se llama mexicana, porque sus pasados nunca la usaron; y así mandó que todos los de la nación chichimeca [i.e. the original Acolhua] la háblasen, en especial todos los que tuviesen oficios y cargos de república. . . lo cual les fué fácil, *porque ya en esta sazón estaban muy interpolados con los de la nación tulteca* [i.e. Nahuatl speakers] (Ixtlilxóchitl 1975, I:34; emphasis added).

Davies (1980:129-131) suggests that many of these pre-Techotlalatzin Nahuatl speakers migrated to Acolhuacan during the reign of his predecessor, Quinatzin II (1330-1374; see Davies 1980:59). I would like to add that the first Nahuatl speakers to settle in this area were probably the "Acolhua" of the Aztlan migration theme who arrived over a century earlier. There is a problem in the interpretation of the following dates, however. It is not possible fully to distinguish references to the two series of Acolhua migrants; both are called Acolhua and both are referred to as Chichimeca.

*A—1149.* The Relación de Chicoloapan (1905:80) states that this town was founded by Chichimeca from Chicomoztoc in 1149. These founders are said to have spoken a "Chichimec" language distinct from both Nahuatl and Otomi. This account appears to combine elements of the early and late Acolhua migrations; if the reference is to the non-Nahuatl early Acolhuas, then the mention of Chicomoztoc is probably incorrect, while if the reference is to the Nahuatl speaking Acolhua from Aztlan and Chicomoztoc, then the language is incorrect.

*B—1158.* This date refers to the founding of the Huexotla dynasty as listed in Sagagún (1950-69, bk. 8:13). He lists Mazatzintecutli and Tochintecutli as the first two rulers of that town, reigning for 78 and 38 years respectively. Based on Davies' (1980:58) date for the death of the latter ruler (1274), the start of the dynasty may be figured at 1158. This may pertain to the pre-Nahuatl Acolhua, however.

*C—1164.* The Relación de Coatepec (1905:42) contains an account identical to that in the Chicoloapan relacion (date A above), with "Chichimec" speaking Chichimeca settling the town in 1164.

*D—1197.* Sahagún (1950-69, bk. 8:15) states that Chichimeca arrived in Acolhuacan 22 years after the fall of Tollan, dated by Davies at 1175 (1977:410-414). Since the Chichimeca of Xolotl are generally listed as arriving *immediately* after Tollan's fall, I take this reference to later Chichimeca to refer to the Acolhua of the Aztlán theme.

*E—1226.* This is the same date that is listed as date D for the Tepaneca (see above).

*F—1259.* The *Relación de Chimalhuacán* (1905:66) states that the town was founded in 1259 by people from the province of Tula who spoke "chichimeca y mexicana."

### Northern Basin of Mexico

The *Relaciones Geográficas* of two towns in the northern Basin of Mexico mention their dates of foundation. It is not clear which of the Nahuatl groups of the Aztlán theme settled in the towns, however.

*A—1219.* The *Relación de Hueypochtla* (1905:26) states that the town was settled in 1219. Since the town's name, a Nahuatl toponym, is said to date to the initial settlement, it may be inferred that those settlers were Nahuatl speakers.

*B—ca. 1280.* The *Relación de Tezcatepec* (1905:32), written in 1579, states that the town was settled approximately 300 years ago ("poco más o menos").

### Tlaxcalteca

*A—ca. 1220.* Muñoz Camargo (1892:70) relates that the Chichimeca had been in possession of Tlaxcala and surrounding areas for 300 years prior to the Spanish conquest, giving a date of 1220.

*B—1224.* Muñoz Camargo (1892:19-68) and Torquemada (1969, I:256-270) both describe the migration of the Tlaxcalteca from Aztlán, giving native dates without Christian year equivalents. The major events and their dates are listed in Table 2, along with the four most likely Christian year correlations (all using the Tenochca year-count). Orozco y Berra (1960, III:110) favored correlation A, giving 1384 for the battle of Tepeticpac. Nicholson (1978:313) favors correlation B, for two reasons. First, the length of time between the founding of Tlaxcala and the Spanish conquest in this correlation is said to fit Gibson's (1952:5) calculation of reign-lengths better than do the other correlations. Second, Nicholson states that 1250 in correlation B is "in better conformity with Muñoz Camargo's round figure" [i.e. 1220, date A above] (Nicholson 1978:313). However, the appropriate date to compare with Muñoz Camargo's estimate of Chichimeca arrival in Tlaxcala is 5 Tecpatl, the arrival in Tlaxcala, and not 5 Tochtili, the departure from Aztlán. This comparison, then, actually favors correlation D (5 Tecpatl = 1224), which is further supported by statements in the *Historia Tolteca-Chichimeca* (1947:111) and the *Anales de Cuauhtitlán* (1975:17) that the battle of Tepeticpac took place in 9 Tecpatl (=1228). Therefore, correlation D of the Tlaxcalteca migration is followed here.

**Table 2**  
**Chronology of Tlaxcalteca Migration**

Event	Native Date	Alternative Correlations			
		A	B	C	D
1. Departed from Chicomoztoc	5 tochtli	1302	1250	1198	1146
2. Settled in Poyauhtlan	2 tecpatl	1312	1260	1208	1156
3. Battle of Poyauhtlan	1 tochtli	1350	1298	1246	1194
4. Arrived in Amecameca	2 calli	1377	1325	1273	1221
5. Arrived in Tlaxcala area	5 tecpatl	1380	1328	1276	1224
6. Battle of Tepeticpac	9 tecpatl	1384	1332	1280	1228

### Northern Puebla

The *Relaciones Geográficas* of a number of towns in northern Puebla state that the towns were settled by Chichimeca in the thirteenth century. While these towns cannot be specifically matched with any of the named Nahuatl groups of the Aztlan theme, the Chichimeca in question are most likely part of the Aztlan migrations. Three of the accounts (dates A, D and E below) state that the Chichimeca were from Colhuacan, closely linked to Aztlan and Chicomoztoc in the Aztlan chronicles. Muñoz Camargo (1892:45) mentions that some of the Chichimeca who had accompanied the Tlaxcalteca migrated further eastward as far as the Gulf of Mexico; this is probably a reference to the Chichimec settlers of the northern Puebla towns. The following dates are all from various parts of the composite *Relación de Xonotlan y Tetellan* (1905).

*A*—1200. Xonotla (p. 131).

*B*—1215. San Esteban (p. 152).

*C*—1219. Tetela (p. 145).

*D*—1219. Zuzumba (p. 163).

*E*—1241. Capulapan (p. 158).

*F*—1281. Tututla (p. 168).

Nicholson says of these dates:

Most of these specifications of years are so precise that it seems likely they were derived from authentic dated local histories. The "Chichimeca" who overran much of Totonacapan appear to have been closely connected with those who similarly moved into the Basin of Mexico and Puebla no later than [the] wake of Tollan's fall (Nicholson 1978:311).

### Mexica

*A*—1211. Chimalpahin (1965:69) places the arrival of the Mexica in Chapultepec in 11 Acatl, which he converts to A.D. 1191. Adding 20 years to this date to correct for Chimalpahin's use of the Culhua year-count (see Davies 1980:258ff) yields a date of 1211.

*B*—ca. 1220. As mentioned above under the Xochimilca, Durán (1967, II:22) gives a vague figure of 300 years for the period of Mexica settlement prior to the Spanish conquest. This date may or may not refer to the arrival of the Mexica

in Chapultepec—it could refer to the founding of Tenochtitlan or some other event. A more precise date is given elsewhere by Durán (see Date G below), throwing doubt on the validity and relevance of the 300 year figure.

*C—1246.* Ixtlilxóchitl twice mentions the arrival of the Mexica in Chapultepec in a year 1 Tochtli (1975, I:409, 427), which he equates in the first instance with 1204 and in the second with 1140. In both places, however, the Mexica arrival is said to take place in the same year as the death of Tlotzin, the third “Chichimecatecuhtli” or emperor of the Acolhua. Although Ixtlilxóchitl gives at least five different Christian year dates for Tlotzin’s death (see O’Gorman 1975:101), the most likely correlation for the 1 Tochtli date here is 1246. While doubts have been voiced as to the historicity of Tlotzin (Davies 1980:45ff), he is listed as the father of Tochintecuhtli (Ixtlilxóchitl 1975, I:424, 533) and the father-in-law of Huetzin (ibid:429), two figures of generally accepted historicity. Davies (1980:45-69) figures the reign of Huetzin to have taken place from 1253 to 1274, and also fixes the death of Tochintecuhtli around the year 1274. This would put Tlotzin’s life in the first half of the thirteenth century, with 1246 (=1 Tecpatl) a reasonable date for his death. Accepting Ixtlilxóchitl’s two statements that this event coincided with the arrival of the Mexica gives 1246 for this latter event as well.

*D—1257.* The *Anales de Tlatelolco* (1948:34) place the arrival of the Mexica in Chapultepec at four years after 8 Calli (i.e. 12 Calli). Barlow (1948:xvi) lists 1253 as the date of this arrival, but he is incorrectly using 8 Calli here instead of the proper date of 12 Calli which corresponds to 1257.

*E—1246.* The Mexica arrival is given in the *Anales de Cuauhtitlán* (1975:17) as 1 Tochtli, equated in the source with A.D. 1194. Advancing this date one cycle (see note 2) yields a date of 1246.

*F—1247.* Tezozomoc (1975a:39) has the Mexica arrive in Chapultepec in time to celebrate a New Fire ceremony in 2 Acatl, which he equates with 1195. Following the same procedure used for date E above, one cycle is added to this Christian year equivalent to bring it into close agreement with dates C, D, and E.

*G—1245.* Durán (1967, II:28) gives 1193 specifically as the date of the Mexica arrival in Chapultepec. Although no native date is given for this, Durán’s information probably derives from the same source(s) used by Tezozomoc for this event (i.e. *The Crónica X*), and 1193 would correspond to 13 Calli. Adding one cycle to this date as in the previous examples yields an arrival date of 1245.

## Conclusion

The arrival dates of the Nahuatl migrants discussed above are presented graphically in Table 3, where the mean arrival date and one standard deviation are indicated for each of the three geographical groups defined previously. The two Northern Basin of Mexico dates are treated separately, because it is not clear how they fit into the geopolitical scheme of central Mexico; although located in the physiographic Basin of Mexico, Hueypochtla and Tezcatepec are not necessarily aligned with any of the named Nahuatl groups and may in fact pertain more to the Surrounding Valley groups. Dates in parentheses in Table 3

**Table 3**  
**Arrival Dates for the Nahuatl Groups<sup>a</sup>**

A. Basin of Mexico				B. Northern Basin	C. Surrounding Valleys		D. Mexica
Xochimilca	Chalca	Tepaneca	Acolhua		Texcala	Northern Puebla	
1320							1320
1300							1300
1280						(F)	1280
1260			F				1260
1240	B		D			E	1240
1220		D	E				1220
1200		C					1200
1180	A	B					1180
1160			C B				1160
1140		A	A				1140
1120							1120

<sup>a</sup>Dashed lines indicate the mean arrival date for each group, and the enclosed areas indicate the extent of one standard deviation. Dates in parentheses are questionable and are not used in the calculation of means and standard deviations (see text for explanation).

are not included in the statistical calculations. Most of these are not acceptable dates (see preceding section), with the exception of Northern Puebla date F and Mexica date A which are omitted simply due to their extreme values which would bias the mean and standard deviation calculations.

It can readily be seen that the order of the mean arrival dates for the three groups—Basin of Mexico, 1195; Surrounding Valleys, 1220; Mexica, 1248—replicates the order for these groups derived from Table 1 above. The independence of the date in Tables 1 and 3 should perhaps be emphasized again. The convergence of these two data sets suggests strongly that the inferred ordering has historical validity. The standard deviations of the groups, arrival dates increases from 5.2 (Mexica) to 11.2 (Surrounding Valleys) to 35.2 years (Basin of Mexico), indicating less agreement on the earliest dates than on the latest dates. This numerical finding supports the interpretations of Nicholson (1971), Davies (1977, 1980) and others that historical accuracy or reliability drops off with time in the central Mexican native histories.

With the exception of Tepanec date A and Acolhua dates A, B and C, all of the arrival dates in Table 3 fall after A.D. 1175, the probable date for the fall of Tollan (Davies 1977:410-414). This agrees with the general consensus in the histories that most of the Chichimec migrations occurred at or after Tollan's destruction. Since the perhaps mythical Xolotl is said to have arrived in the Basin of Mexico only four years after the fall of Tollan (see Davies 1980:43), all of the dates with the same four exceptions post-date Xolotl's arrival as well. This supports my contention that the initial Chichimec migrants, who included Xolotl,

were not Nahuatl speakers (see Davies 1980:94-125), while the later Chichimec migrants (i.e., the named groups of the Aztlán theme) did speak Nahuatl. The three pre-Xolotl dates for immigrants into Acolhuacan may in fact be references to non-Nahuatl Chichimec preceding the Aztlán migrants. Although there is linguistic and historical evidence that Nahuatl was one of the languages spoken at Tollan (see below), there is no mention in the native histories of Nahuatl in the Basin of Mexico prior to the arrival of the Aztlán peoples. This implies that during the Early Postclassic period of Tollan's ascendance, Nahuatl had only penetrated as far south as Tollan, and that the language was later brought into the Basin of Mexico and the surrounding valleys by the Aztlán migrants after the fall of Tollan. This suggestion is supported by linguistic reconstructions of the time-depth of Nahuatl in central Mexico, which are considered next.

### Supporting Linguistic Evidence

In 1519 the Nahuatl language was spoken throughout central Mexico and served as a *lingua franca* in much of the rest of Mesoamerica. Research in North American historical linguistics shows that the origins of Nahuatl, classified in the Nahuan group of the Uto-Aztecan family of languages (Kaufman 1976a:957), are to be found in northern Mexico or the southwestern United States. Furthermore, Nahuatl speakers must have first arrived in central Mexico some time during the final millenium of Prehispanic times (Kaufman 1976a:958ff; Campbell 1979; Lastra de Suárez 1974; Knab n.d.).

Although some scholars (e.g., Coe 1977:99; Jiménez Moreno 1970:43; 59, Suárez 1983:149) postulate Nahuatl as the language of Classic period Teotihuacan, the present consensus in Mesoamerican historical linguistics is that the language did not reach central Mexico until after the fall of Teotihuacan (which occurred in the 7th or 8th century A.D.). Kaufman (1973:462) initially suggested A.D. 600 as the date of arrival of the first Nahuatl speakers in central Mexico, and associated them with the fall of the Teotihuacan state. He later (1976b:115) moved this date up to the Epiclassic period (A.D. 750-950), and concluded that,

1. The Toltecs probably spoke Nahua. 2. The Teotihuacanos can hardly have spoken Nahua—despite Coe's speculation. 3. The Cotzumalhuapa culture, even if only Late Classic, can hardly have been Nahua-speaking. 4. The earliest Meso-American culture that *may* have spoken Nahua is probably the [Epiclassic period] Coyotlatelco culture in the Valley of Mexico (Kaufman 1976b:115).

Supporting evidence for these points is presented in the original article (Kaufman 1976b:113-115); Campbell (1979) essentially agrees with Kaufman. Knab (n.d.) reaches similar conclusions in his analysis of Nahua diversification, while Luckenbach and Levy's (1980:458f) glottochronological study would appear to support Kaufman's earlier date for the Nahuatl penetration of central Mexico (they give A.D. 543). However, there are some problems with Luckenbach and Levy's analysis which when rectified modify their conclusions (Tim Knab, personal communication); such modification advances the date of Nahuatl arrival in central Mexico to approximately A.D. 800 (using their lexical data), which is more in line with the conclusions of Kaufman, Campbell, and others.<sup>4</sup>

Given an Epiclassic date for the arrival of Nahuatl speakers in central Mexico, it is not surprising that the native historical sources speak of Nahuatl as one of the languages of the city of Tollan (Tula) in the following Early Postclassic period (950-1150); Nahuatl probably co-existed with Otomi and possibly other Oto-Mangueyan languages at the Toltec capital (the historical data are discussed by Davies 1977:163, 168; 1980:9; see for example Sahagún 1950-69, bk. 10:170). The historical sources do not mention Nahuatl speakers in the Basin of Mexico, however, until the arrival of the Aztlan migrants, which according to my reconstruction did not occur until after the fall of Tollan. Since Tula is located to the north of the Basin of Mexico, the proposed dates for the arrival of the Aztlan migrants correspond to the north-to-south direction of Nahuatl movement and fit well with the linguistic dating of the penetration of the Nahuatl language into central Mexico.

While it cannot yet be determined whether the Aztlan populations represent the *first* Nahuatl speakers to settle in the Basin of Mexico and surrounding valleys, they almost certainly represent the largest and most important influx of Nahuatl peoples. This inference is based upon the continuity evident between the Aztlan groups and the sociopolitical groups of central Mexico at the time of the Spanish conquest. All of the named Aztlan groups correspond to known ethnic groups of the 16th century, for whom the migration accounts served as an element of ethnic identity (see discussion above). Furthermore, the arrival dates from local histories in most cases are explicitly said to signal the arrival of the direct ancestors of the 16th century local population. This linguistic and cultural continuity from the Aztlan migrations to the sixteenth century is paralleled by indications of archaeological continuity in some areas which provides further independent confirmation of the historical dating of the arrival of the Aztlan populations in central Mexico.

### Supporting Archaeological Evidence

Although scholars have searched for archaeological evidence for various events depicted in the Nahuatl histories, including the Aztlan migrations (e.g., Vaillant 1938; Noguera 1963), most of this effort has not been fruitful (see Nicholson 1955 or Charlton 1981:155 for comment). Two of the major stumbling blocks have been that (1) the degree of refinement of the archaeological chronologies in use was not adequate to monitor the fast-paced action of the native histories, and (2) archaeologists have tended to employ the simplistic notion of a one-to-one association of ceramic types or styles with ethnic groups (Vaillant 1938; Noguera 1963) which more often than not has proved to be inaccurate in Postclassic central Mexico. Although we still cannot claim to have unambiguous archaeological confirmation of the Aztlan migrations and their dating, recent research has revealed patterns of ceramic change and continuity entirely consistent with the notion that new populations established themselves in various parts of central Mexico around the turn of the thirteenth century.

At the present time there are only four regions within central Mexico where archaeological chronologies for the Postclassic epoch are sufficiently refined to attempt any kind of correlation with the native histories: Tula (Cobean 1978),



**Table 4**  
**Postclassic Archaeological Chronologies Showing Ceramic Styles**  
**Associated with the Aztlan Populations**

DATE. A.D.	PERIODS	BASIN OF MEXICO	MALINALCO	XOCHICALCO. MORELOS	CUERNAVACA. MORELOS	NATIVE HISTORICAL RECORD
1500	Late Postclassic	Late Aztec	7	Late Cuauhnahuac	Tecpan	Formation of Triple Alliance
1400				Early Cuauhnahuac		
1300	Middle Postclassic	Early Aztec	6	Temazcalli	Teopanzolco	Founding of Tenochtitlan
1200						Mexica Surrounding Valleys Basin of Mexico
1100	Early Postclassic	Mazapan	5	Tilancingo		Fall of Tollan ARRIVAL OF AZTLAN MIGRANTS
1000				Phase H		
900						

the Basin of Mexico (Sanders, Parsons and Santley 1979), Malinalco (Galván 1974/75), and western Morelos (Smith 1983; n.d.). In other regions, existing Postclassic chronologies are either too gross (e.g., Tlaxcala and Guerrero) or else quite confused and controversial (e.g., the Toluca Valley and Cholula); this situation is reviewed in Smith (1983: Ch. 7) and Smith and Heath-Smith (1980:35-37). Since the focus of this article is on central Mexico *south* of Tula, the archaeology of that site is not dealt with. The Postclassic ceramic sequences from the Basin of Mexico, Malinalco and two regions of western Morelos are depicted in Table 4. The Basin of Mexico column shows the consensus chronology as reported in Sanders, Parsons and Santley (1979). The Malinalco sequence was established by Galván (1974/75), but the phase dates used here represent the author's revision of Galván's dating (see Smith 1983:Ch. 7). The Xochicalco sequence and its derivation are described in detail in Smith (1983; n.d.), while the Cuernavaca sequence is presented in Smith (n.d.) and discussed briefly in Smith (1983).

The archaeological support for my dating of the Aztlan migrations consists of the inception of new ceramic styles or traditions in central Mexico at approximately the same time. These ceramic manifestations continue from their first appearance until the sixteenth century, at which time they are associated with Nahuatl speaking descendants of the Aztlan migrants. Although the origins of the ceramic styles are uncertain and cannot be traced to a north Mexican hearth, the fact that they first appear in central Mexico close to the historical

dates of arrival of the Aztlan groups and then continue with evidence of stylistic evolution until the 16th century strongly argues for their association with the Nahuatl immigrants and supports the historical dates derived above.

In the Basin of Mexico, the Middle and Late Postclassic "Aztec" orangeware tradition is clearly intrusive, since the component orange paste ceramics have no local antecedents (see Parsons 1966:442-445) and are quite distinct from the Early Postclassic (Tollan phase) orange ceramics of Tula (Cobean 1978). Although the probable *southern* origin of this tradition (Parsons 1966:442-445; Smith 1983:Ch. 6, 7) would not appear to support its association with the Aztlan migrants from the *north*, the stylistic origin or antecedents of the pottery are less important than: (1) its inception in the Basin of Mexico around A.D. 1150; (2) its continuation in that area until well past 1519; and (3) its documented association with Nahuatl speakers in the 16th century. The Aztlan migrants clearly did not bring these ceramics with them on their journey, but may very well have started using them upon their arrival in the Basin of Mexico. The changing temporal and geographical configurations of the constituent Aztec Black-on-Orange ceramic types are discussed elsewhere (see Sanders, Parsons and Santley 1979:466-471) and are not of direct relevance to the issue at hand. Nevertheless, the basic continuity in the Aztec orangeware tradition is striking (Parsons 1966:175f) and is entirely consistent with its association with Nahuatl speaking populations from their arrival in the Basin of Mexico until the 16th century and beyond. It should be noted that these ceramics are associated with the entire Basin of Mexico contingent of the Aztlan theme and its descendants; ceramic styles or types associated with the various component ethnic groups (Chalca, Acolhua, etc.) have not been identified. Thus while the Aztec orangeware tradition supports my dating of the Aztlan migrations, ceramics were evidently *not* an emblem of ethnic identification within the Late Postclassic Basin of Mexico.

Malinalco is located immediately southwest of the Basin of Mexico in the mountainous zone separating the Toluca Valley from Morelos. In Galván's (1974/75) seven-phase chronology for this area, I have changed the starting dates of the final three phases from A.D. 900, 1300 and 1450 to A.D. 950, 1150 and 1350 based upon trade pieces and cross-ties (see Smith 1983:Ch. 7; Smith n.d.). The dominant decorated ceramic type of Phases 6 and 7, which I call Malinalco Polychrome,<sup>5</sup> parallels Aztec orangeware in its dating and continuity until 1519. Although at present its origin is unknown, Malinalco Polychrome does exhibit affinities with the Tlahuica Polychrome style of nearby Morelos, which appears to have begun at a slightly later date.

Regional variants of a single polychrome ceramic style—the Tlahuica Polychrome style—appear simultaneously for the first time in at least two regions of Morelos around the year 1200: Cuernavaca (in the Teopanzolco Ceramic Complex) and Xochicalco (in the Temazcalli Complex). The variants undergo processes of stylistic evolution while maintaining a high degree of continuity from their inception until 1519, at which time the geographical distribution of the Tlahuica Polychrome style coincides with the distribution of the Tlahuica ethnic group; the tie between the Nahuatl speaking Tlahuica and these ceramics from 1200 to 1519 appears to be quite strong (see Smith 1983:Ch. 7; Smith n.d.).

In summary, all of the regions of central Mexico south of Tula whose Post-classic ceramic sequences are refined to the order of 200-year phases or better

exhibit dominant decorative ceramic styles which begin around A.D. 1150 to 1200 and continue until the Spanish conquest of 1519, at which time they are clearly associated with Nahuatl speaking descendants of the Aztlán migrants. The archaeological dates for the inception of these styles are close to the historical dates for the arrival of the Aztlán migrants, although all of the archaeological dates slightly precede the historical dates. Aztec orangeware (A.D. 1150) corresponds to the various named groups of the first Aztlán contingent (A.D. 1195), while Malinalco Polychrome (1150) and Tlahuica Polychrome (1200) match the Malinalca and Tlahuica groups of the second, "Surrounding Valleys" contingent of migrants (A.D. 1220).

Further archaeological support for the arrival of new populations at this time is found in the striking lack of continuity in settlement location between the Early and Middle Postclassic periods in the Basin of Mexico (Sanders, Parsons and Santley 1979:152) and western Morelos (Kenneth G. Hirth, unpublished data). Old settlements were abandoned and new settlements established in different locations, an expected pattern when an area is settled by an intrusive ethnic group. This disjunction in site placement between the Early and Middle Postclassic periods contrasts with a very high degree of settlement continuity between the Middle and Late Postclassic periods in these same areas; nearly all sites occupied in the former period continued to be occupied in the latter period (Sanders, Parsons and Santley 1979:149-153; Hirth, unpublished data). Given the complete independence of the historical data of Table 3 and the archaeological data of Table 4, the closeness of the dates is striking, and the available ceramic and settlement information may be interpreted as providing additional support for the historical dating derived above.

### Summary And Conclusions

It has been shown in this article that the Nahuatl histories discuss southward migrations in Postclassic central Mexico in two fashions. First, there are accounts of general population movements including both Nahuatl and Otomi speakers; this material is here called the Chichimec migration theme. Second, many sources speak of the migration of specific Nahuatl speaking groups, from Aztlán or Chicomoztoc, who were the direct ancestors of the sixteenth century peoples of central Mexico; this material is called the Aztlán migration theme. A comparison of sources dealing with these two migration themes indicates that the Aztlán migrations represent a subset of the overall Chichimec movements of peoples. Among the sources giving the order of arrival of the various groups, there is remarkable agreement on the relative orders of four contingents. An early group of non-Nahuatl Chichimecs is followed by three Nahuatl speaking Aztlán contingents: the first settled in the Basin of Mexico and the second in the surrounding valleys of the highlands, while the third group, the Mexica, settled among the earlier Aztlán populations in the Basin of Mexico.

This relative arrival sequence is corroborated when information from central Mexican local histories is considered. The arrival dates for Nahuatl speaking populations form clusters pertaining to the three Aztlán contingents previously isolated, and the mean arrival dates replicate the order derived above. These dates, whose accuracy as measured by standard deviations declines with the

earlier events, are A.D. 1195, 1220 and 1248 for the Basin of Mexico, surrounding valleys, and Mexica contingents respectively. This 12th to 13th century arrival of the Aztlan migrants fits well with historical linguistic reconstructions for the arrival of Nahuatl in central Mexico, and suggests that these populations represent the major and perhaps initial penetration of the language south of Tula and into the Basin of Mexico. Finally, archaeological indicators of continuity and change in Postclassic ceramic styles and settlement location in several regions provide further support of the dating and linguistic composition of the Aztlan migrations.

The evidence presented in this article shows that while the Aztlan migration chronicles may superficially appear to be fictional origin myths, they in fact preserve valid historical information on population movements in Postclassic central Mexico. This is hardly surprising, because in contrast with "ethnic history" in other parts of the world (e.g., Vansina 1965; Brown 1973), the Nahuatl histories are notable for their written component, their use of an advanced and accurate calendar, and their general emphasis on chronological history. Nicholson (1955; 1971) refers to these characteristics and the attitudes they represent as "chronicle consciousness" and discusses the historiography of the indigenous central Mexican chronicles in some detail. Although individual native accounts cannot be assumed *a priori* to be historically accurate due to their political and ideological role in 16th century Nahuatl culture, the method used here of comparative analysis compensates for the bias of single chronicles. It is only through such extensive comparison and cross-checking that the reliability of the central Mexican histories can be fully appreciated, and the resulting judgment of the essential historicity of the Aztlan migrations is confirmed by the available linguistic and archaeological data.

### Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge Cynthia M. Heath-Smith's advice and criticisms of an earlier draft of this article; the comments of two anonymous reviewers are also appreciated. Conversations with Ms. Heath-Smith, David C. Grove and Susan Gillespie were helpful in working out some of the ideas pursued here. Ms. Gillespie kindly let me use her English translation of Chimalpahin (1958). I would also like to acknowledge Tim Knab's help in working out some of the complexities of Nahuatl historical linguistics.

### Notes

1. The major native historical sources dealing with the Chichimec migration theme are: *Anales de Cuauhtitlán* (1975:3-18); Muñoz Camargo (1892:19-68); *Ixtlilxóchitl* (1975:passim); and the *Historia Tolteca-Chichimeca* (1947:passim). See Davies (1980:42-133) and Nicholson (1978) for discussion of these and other relevant sources.
2. Carrasco (1950:249) advocates shifting the twelfth- and thirteenth-century dates in the *Anales de Cuauhtitlán* (1975) forward one cycle (52 years), citing personal communications from Wigberto Jiménez Moreno and other reasons. This practice is followed here because it yields dates more in conformity with those of other sources, particularly in the case of the Mexica arrival in Chapultepec (see Mexica date E).

3. There is another date available for the arrival in Chalco of migrants from Chicomoztoc (9 Calli = 1241; Chimalpahin 1965:129), but since these migrants are said to have departed from Chicomoztoc a century *after* the Mexica (Chimalpahin 1965:128), they are not the same group as the Chalca of the pre-Mexica Aztlán migrants. This later group of migrants to the Chalco area are known as the Totolimpaneque.
4. Luckenbach and Levy's (1980) reliance upon lexical data in the absence of phonological and grammatical information leads them to classify incorrectly the Xochitlahuaca, Guerrero dialect together with Pochutec, the most divergent language in the Nahuatl or Aztec group (see Kaufman 1976a:958; Lastra 1974). Their date of A.D. 543 refers to the separation of these two languages from the rest of the Aztec complex, and is interpreted as indicating a central Mexican location for the various languages at that time (p.459). However, it is more reasonable to use the A.D. 543 date to indicate only the divergence of Pochutec from the remaining Aztec stock (which is in line with Swadesh's original figure of 14 centuries of separation for Pochutec and central Mexican Nahuatl—see Swadesh 1954/55:180), and this particular split probably took place north of the central Mexican area concerned with here (Tim Knab, personal communication). This interpretation would imply that Nahuatl entered central Mexico some time *after* the 6th century A.D. The succeeding major divergence postulated by Luckenbach and Levy takes place at A.D. 801, and correlates with the Pipil migrations (Campbell 1979:969 dates the Pipil divergence at "around 900 A.D."); this agrees with the reconstruction of Knab (n.d.) and suggests that Nahuatl entered central Mexico somewhere around this time.
5. Galván (1974/75) uses the term "Tlahuica laca" for the Malinalco Polychrome type, but his label is unacceptable on several counts. First, the type does *not* exhibit the "laca" technique of polychrome painting as defined by Noguera (1954:138ff). Second, Galván asserts (1974/75:79) that this type is imported from the Tlahuica area, which covers the modern state of Morelos. This is highly unlikely, because, (1) the type is quite rare in Morelos (Smith 1983: Ch. 6; Smith n.d.); and (2) it is too common at Malinalco to be considered an import in the absence of data to the contrary.

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