

REPORTS

TEXCOCO REGION ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE CODEX XOLOTL

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ABSTRACT

The use of a hypothesis of conflict between Tula and Cholula by Parsons (1970) to account for settlement patterns and ceramics of the Toltec periods in the Texcoco region has resulted in the introduction of inconsistencies in the settlement interpretations of the preconquest Texcoco sequence. The Tula-Cholula Conflict Hypothesis is based on inadequate data and not supported. However, it is possible to interpret the settlement and ceramic changes of the Texcoco sequence using ecological and cultural factors suggested by Parsons for periods earlier than the Early Toltec. The correlations suggested by Parsons (1970) between the *Codex Xolotl* and the Early Toltec period rested in part on the use of the Tula-Cholula Conflict Hypothesis. With the elimination of this hypothesis, it is possible to correlate the 2 basic culture patterns of the Codex, as defined by Parsons, with terminal Late Toltec and Early Aztec. These correlations support Dibble's original thirteenth century date for the early events depicted in the *Codex Xolotl*.

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In an earlier paper, Parsons (1970) correlated some features of the *Codex Xolotl* as interpreted by Dibble (1951) with aspects of Postclassic period settlement patterns and ceramics in the Texcoco region of the Valley of Mexico. He postulated that the uninhabited areas of the central and northern Valley of Mexico, encountered by the Chichimecs of the *Codex Xolotl*, may be represented archaeologically by the almost complete lack of settlement in the central Texcoco region during the Early Toltec period. He further suggested that reported later conflicts between acculturated southern Chichimecs and conservative northern Chichimecs were reflected both by the settlement patterns of the Early Toltec period and by the ceramics and settlement patterns of the Late Toltec period (Parsons 1970:438, 439).

His interpretation of the archaeological settlement patterns and ceramics of the Early and Late Toltec periods hypothesizes a conflict between Tula and Cholula (Fig. 1). The frontier

or border of this postulated conflict is the central Texcoco area during the Early Toltec period (Fig. 2; Parsons 1970, Fig. 8). Subsequent changes in settlement patterns and ceramics in the Late Toltec period reflect the resolution of the conflict through the collapse of Tula (Parsons 1970:437).

A careful reading of this paper yields several areas of concern in the interpretation of the archaeological data. Parsons' interpretations of Toltec period data are at variance with the underlying assumptions he used in the interpretation of both earlier and later data from the same region. A consistent systematic approach suggests alternative interpretations for the Early and Late Toltec archaeological data. These interpretations also correlate with the *Codex Xolotl*.

THE TULA-CHOLULA CONFLICT HYPOTHESIS

Parsons (1970:437) explained the absence of significant settlement in the central Texcoco area during the Early Toltec period on the basis of non-ecological factors. He suggested that we should regard

the wide unoccupied central zone as the manifestation of a political frontier between new major centers at Cholula (to the southeast) and Tula (to the northwest)—a kind of no-man's land, which offered little possibility for permanent residence, lying midway between the domains of two competing, militaristically oriented states . . . [Parsons 1970:437].

Since adequate data for Tula and Cholula are not yet available, these interpretations are based for the most part on the virtual absence of settlement and ceramics in the central Texcoco area during the Early Toltec period.

In the Texcoco region, the ceramics in the occupied northern and southern areas were quite similar, belonging to the Coyotlatelco complex. During the Late Toltec period, 2 distinct ceramic traditions replaced the Coyotlatelco complex in the Texcoco region. The Mazapan ceramic complex appeared in the northern and central areas. It did not extend into the southern area where an Aztec I ceramic

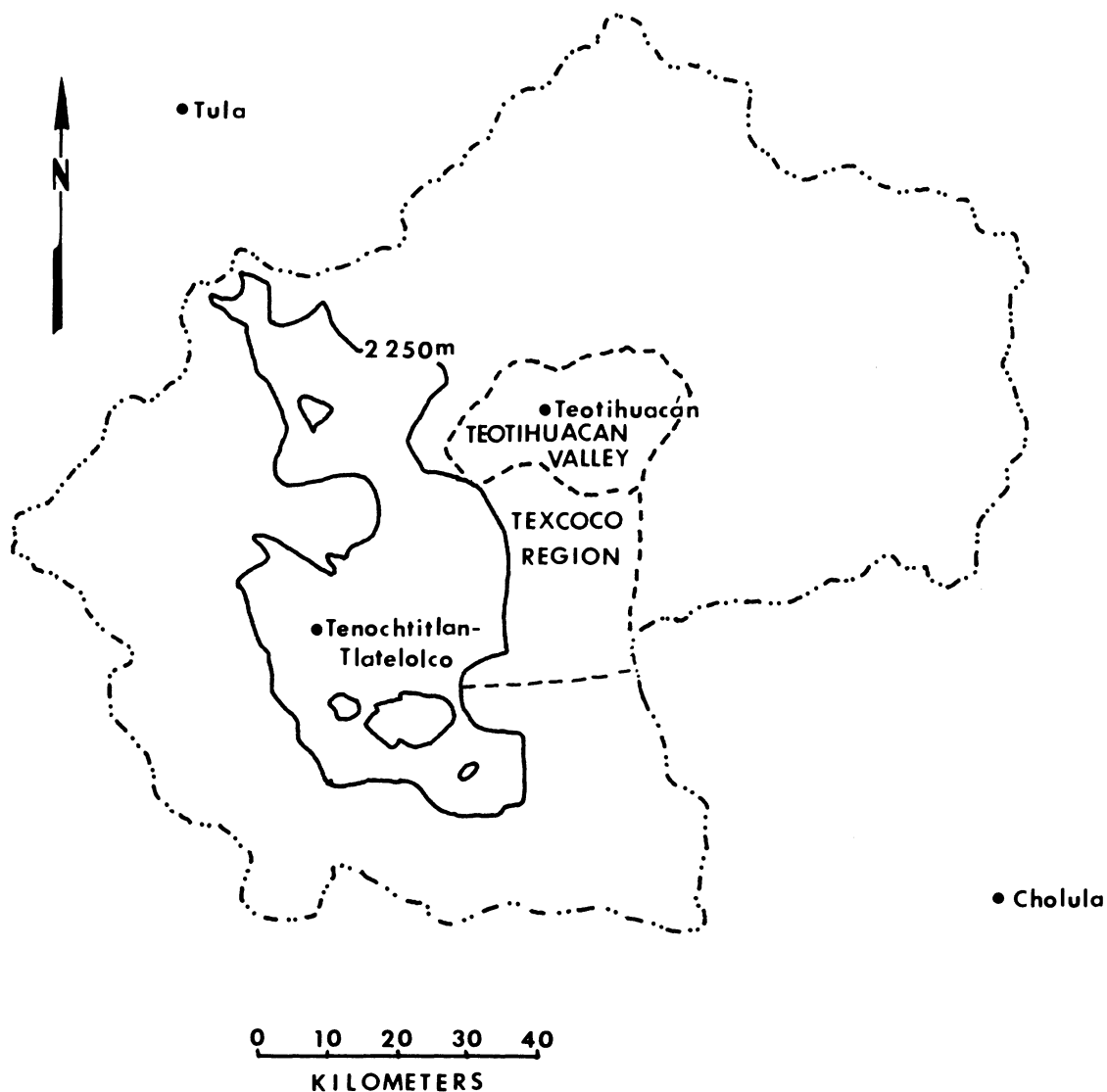


Fig. 1. Map of the Valley of Mexico and adjacent portions of Central Mexico showing the location of the sites and subareas referred to in the text (after Lorenzo 1968:54).

complex, related to Cholula ceramics, occurred (Bennyhoff 1964; Parsons 1970). Parsons has suggested that this distribution of Late Toltec period ceramic complexes "reinforces our foregoing interpretations, based upon settlement distribution, relating to the frontier status of the Texcoco Region in Early Postclassic times" (1970:437).

The restricted distribution of settlement patterns in the Early Toltec period occurs with a relatively uniform ceramic complex, while in

the Late Toltec period differing ceramic complexes occur with a different settlement distribution. The exact significance of differing ceramic complexes is, of course, open to much more investigation. Parsons assumes that they indicate separate and competitive state organizations. If this is the situation, then one would expect to find a correlation between the ceramics and the settlement patterns which he assumes also reflect competition between states. In the Texcoco region this correlation

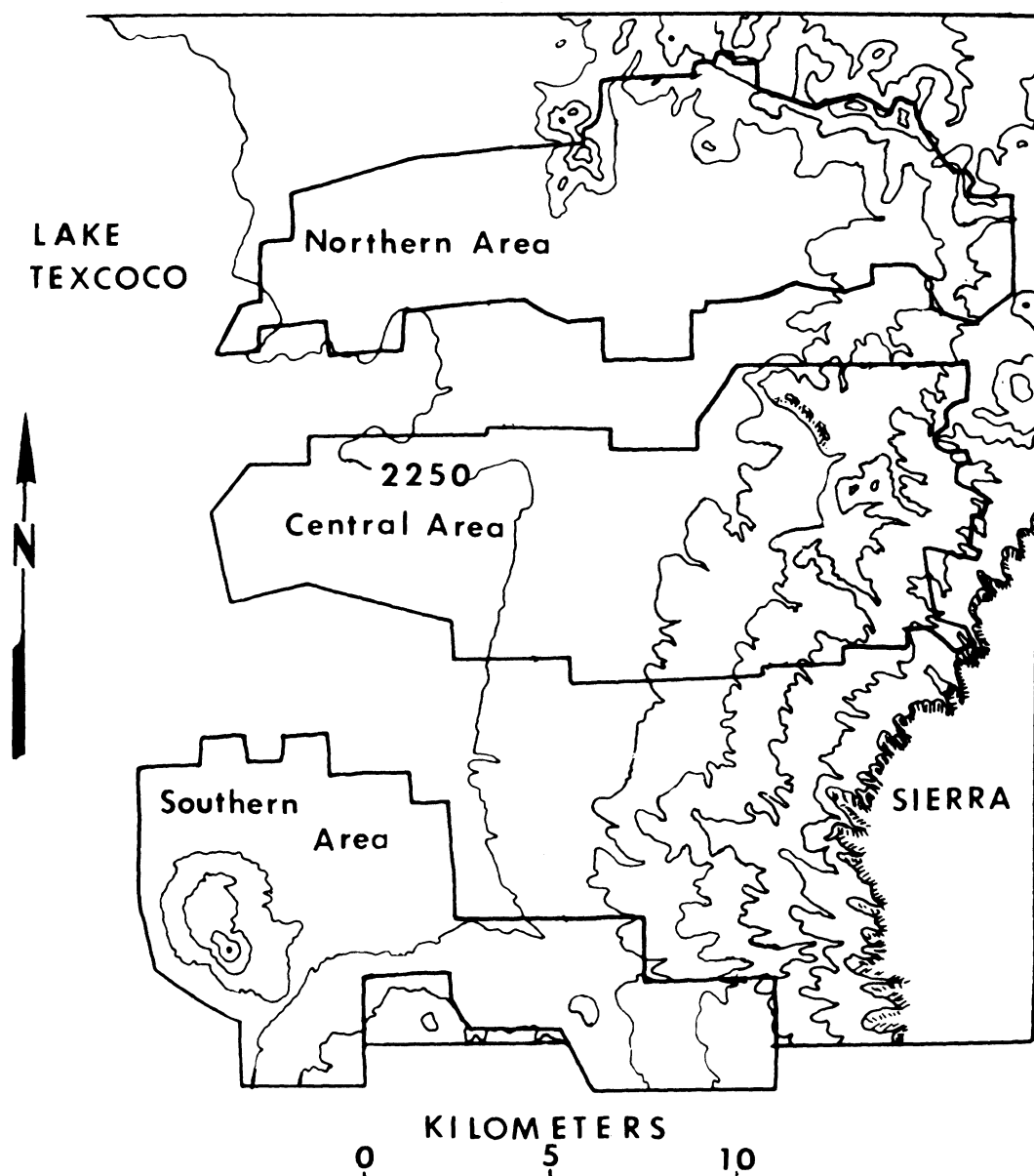


Fig. 2. Topographic map of the Texcoco region showing survey areas. Contour interval 100 m (after Parsons 1970:436-438).

does not exist. During the Early Toltec period, while the central Texcoco region is nearly unoccupied the settlements of the northern and southern areas have very similar ceramic complexes (Coyotlatelco). The different ceramic complexes (Mazapan and Aztec I) appear in the Late Toltec period, at which time the central area is no longer unoccupied. The settlement

and ceramic data cited by Parsons to support the Tula-Cholula Conflict Hypothesis do not occur at the same time. The period of restricted settlements is Early Toltec; the period of 2 new and different ceramic complexes is Late Toltec.

Included in Parsons' hypothesis of conflict between Tula and Cholula is a suggestion about the resolution of the conflict in the Texcoco

region during the Late Toltec period. He interprets the settlement pattern changes of that period to reflect the defeat of Tula by Cholula.

The succeeding Late Toltec period . . . is characterized by a substantial increase in numbers of sites, together with a marked population dispersal, a decline in community size and degree of nucleation, and an apparent decrease in overall population. I would suggest that these combined processes of demographic depression and ruralization are largely the product of two related processes: (1) an intensification of the hostile confrontation between Tula and Cholula (leading ultimately to the collapse of Tula as major power center by the end of the Late Toltec period); and (2) the final erosion of the remaining vestiges of Teotihuacan's influence as a regional power center [Parsons 1970:437].

This interpretation of the Late Toltec period data, necessitated by the introduction of the Tula-Cholula Conflict Hypothesis for the Early Toltec period, has resulted in the creation of a major inconsistency in the interpretation of settlement pattern data from the Texcoco region. Parsons interpreted the similar settlement pattern data of the Early and Late Classic periods to support the rise of Teotihuacan (Parsons 1968:873-875, 1969:29-34, 1970:436). This shift in interpretation, attributing ruralization and demographic depression not to the dominance of Teotihuacan in the Classic period, but to the fall of Tula in the Late Postclassic, derives directly from the use of a hypothesized conflict to explain Early Toltec settlement patterns in the Texcoco region.

The data used to support the Conflict Hypothesis are not too convincing, selected as they are from 2 different periods. Although it is an interesting idea to suggest that the unoccupied central area of the Texcoco region during the Early Toltec period originated as a result of conflict between 2 states, Tula and Cholula, there are no data to support it. The data cited, Early Toltec settlements and Late Toltec ceramics, are chronologically separate. Further evidence for warfare or conflict such as fortresses, outposts, fortifications, and weapons are either not found or not reported. The use of the Conflict Hypothesis for the Early Toltec period results in the introduction of interpretations for the Late Toltec period which are not consistent with previous interpretations of similar data of the Early and Late Classic. It is

possible to interpret the settlement pattern data of the Texcoco region without the use of the Tula-Cholula Conflict Hypothesis.

SETTLEMENT PATTERNS OF THE TEXCOCO REGION: A REANALYSIS

In order to evaluate the interpretations of changes in the settlement patterns of the northern, central, and southern Texcoco region, I determined the percentages for the settlement types found within each area during the periods discussed (Table 1). I grouped the settlements located outside of the 3 intensive survey strips with the central area. I also placed Parsons' settlement types into 2 major categories. The first category includes the Hamlet, the Small Dispersed Village, the Large Dispersed Village, the Small Nucleated Village, the Large Nucleated Village, the Secondary Regional Center, and the Primary Regional Center. These are residential types and reflect differences in population size and density along with variations in the complexity of social, political, and religious organization. The second category includes the Hilltop Temple Platform, the Small Segregated Elite District, the Large Segregated Elite District, the Small Isolated Ceremonial-Civic Precinct, and the Large Isolated Ceremonial-Civic Precinct. These settlement types reflect increased complexity in social, political, and religious organization.

The systematic reanalysis of the settlement pattern data indicates clearly the nature of the interpretative inconsistencies of the Toltec period resulting from the use of the Tula-Cholula Conflict Hypothesis for that period. In the reanalysis, I have assumed that the range of settlement types present in an area is correlated not only with features of population size and degree of population nucleation, but also with socio-cultural features indicative of social, political, and religious independence or lack thereof. The greater the variety of sites present (especially in Group 2) the probable greater degree of cultural independence. This is linked to the concept that local expression of various cultural activities indicates some independence relative to those activities, whereas centralization of the particular activities signifies loss of independence relative to them. Thus, the greater the number of different cultural activities

Table 1. (continued)

		Early Toltec						Late Toltec						Early Aztec						Late Aztec					
		North		Central		South		North		Central		South		North		Central		South		North		Central		South	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Group 1																									
(a)	8	57.14			2	25.00	27	93.10	16	94.12	2	25.00	40	90.90	41	91.11	15	83.33	10	30.30	29	49.15	5	41.66	
(b)	1	7.14	1	100.0	3	31.50	2	6.90	1	5.88	5	62.50	4	9.10	2	4.44			12	36.70	15	25.42	3	25.00	
(c)	1	7.14			1	12.50													7	19.40	8	13.56			
(d)																	2	11.11							
(e)																	1	6.55							
(f)												1	12.50												
(g)	2	14.29			1	12.50									2	4.44			1	3.00	3	5.08	1	8.39	
Group 2																									
(a)	2	14.29			1	12.50													2	6.00	2	3.39	2	16.66	
(b)																									
(c)																									
(d)																					1	1.69			
(e)																			1	3.00	1	1.69	1	8.33	

being carried out locally, as reflected in site differentiation, the less outside control and direction of those activities.

Using these assumptions, some of which are also used by Parsons (1968, 1969, 1970), I have reviewed the data presented in conjunction with the Tula-Cholula Conflict Hypothesis (Parsons 1970). During the Terminal Formative period (Parsons 1970, Fig. 4) each of the 3 areas of the Texcoco region had a wide range of settlement types (Table 1). The northern and southern areas had comparable frequencies of types. In the central area fewer sites of Group 2 occurred and there was a higher percentage of low density residential units than in the other areas. These may have resulted from expanded agricultural activity on the Lower Piedmont. "The proliferation of sites on the gentle slopes of the Lower Piedmont suggests that agriculture in this zone was further expanded and intensified relative to Late Formative times" (Parsons 1969:18). The distribution of settlement types does suggest a situation of small but equal political units in the Texcoco region at this time (Parsons 1969:22).

In the Early Classic period, there was a reduction both in total number of sites and in total variety of sites. Reduction in site types was pronounced in the northern area (Table 1). The central and southern areas retained some residential units other than Hamlets. This trend continued through the Late Classic period (Parsons 1970, Figs. 5, 6). At this time, both the northern and central areas had only small and dispersed residential sites. The southern area alone retained a large center (Table 1). Parsons (1968) suggested that Teotihuacan was responsible for this reduction in site types and frequencies in the Texcoco region. This reanalysis of his data indicates that the demographic impact of Teotihuacan as described by Parsons (1968) was less in those parts of the Texcoco region furthest away from the city.

The application of simple quantification to Parsons' data of the Terminal Formative and Early and Late Classic periods of the Texcoco region supports his interpretations of the processes responsible for settlement patterns during those periods (Parsons 1968, 1969, 1970).

During the Early Toltec period (Table 1), there were large population increases in the northern and southern Texcoco areas with the virtual abandonment of the central area (Parsons 1970, Fig. 7). The range of settlement

types present in the northern and southern areas supports his interpretations of these 2 areas as autonomous cultural units emerging after the decline of Teotihuacan (Parsons 1969:37-38, 1970:437).

Although he recognized that the abandonment of the central Texcoco area was the "end point of a process of population decline and abandonment of this area initiated in Late Classic times" (Parsons 1969:36) he has treated it as a "startling Early Toltec abandonment of the broad central section of the Texcoco Region" (1969:38). This position is clearly present when he offers his Tula-Cholula Conflict Hypothesis to account for the abandonment (1969:43-45, 1970:437).

The central area of the Texcoco region is almost completely unoccupied during the Early Toltec period. The process of abandonment began, however, in the Early Classic period (Table 1). Presumably, this resulted from the growth of Teotihuacan and the centralization of population within the city (Parsons 1968, 1969, 1970). Although the northern Texcoco region remained stable during the Late Classic period, the central and southern areas underwent further population and site decline (Table 1). A similar continuing rural site and population decline occurred during the Classic period in the Teotihuacan Valley to the north (Charlton 1965; Sanders 1965).

With the fall of Teotihuacan, the settlement pattern data from both the Teotihuacan Valley (Sanders 1965) and the Texcoco region (Parsons 1968, 1969, 1970) indicate that there was a development of regional concentrations of population, possibly from the city, in autonomous cultural units. These were smaller than Teotihuacan but represented similarly nucleated population centers. Within the Texcoco region, they occurred in the northern and southern areas. The city of Teotihuacan had collapsed, its population moving out but still residing in centralized or nucleated settlements. Parsons considered the 3 major Early Toltec period centers to be "populated primarily by large blocks of people moving outward from the decaying urban center at Teotihuacan into sparsely occupied lands" (1970:436-437).

Given the probability of population and settlement pattern continuity, albeit on a much reduced scale, from Teotihuacan to the Early Toltec period, it is also possible that some of the processes responsible for Classic period

settlement patterns in the Texcoco region continued to operate during the Early Toltec period. The settlement pattern data indicate smaller but still nucleated populations continuing into the Early Toltec period. These populations are represented in regional concentrations, 2 of which are located within the Texcoco region. With the introduction of nearby nucleated population centers and with the continued operation of a process of population centralization which began in the Early Classic period, the rural population remaining in the central part of the Texcoco region was absorbed into the local Early Toltec states. Since these were located in the northern and southern areas, the central area became virtually unoccupied. Distance had prevented the complete absorption of all of this region's population into Teotihuacan during the Classic period. This can readily be seen in Table I, and I have mentioned it in connection with the differential demographic impact of Teotihuacan on the northern, central, and southern areas of the Texcoco region.

The abandonment of the central area of the Texcoco region probably occurred in the Early Toltec period as a result of continued operation of Teotihuacan population centralization on the part of Teotihuacan derived local Early Toltec states. This is the end result of a long process of abandonment brought about finally through the introduction of a local power carrying out the population centralization. The abandonment of the central area is not startling. It is consistent with postulated ongoing processes of settlement patterns of the Classic period. This explanation, using settlement pattern process continuity between Teotihuacan and the Early Toltec period, accompanied by a population relocation from Teotihuacan to various places within the Teotihuacan Valley and the Texcoco region, accounts for both the available settlement pattern data and the ceramic data of the Early Toltec period.

The other side of the problem revolves around the reasons why the northern and southern Texcoco areas were intensively re-occupied while the central area was ignored during the Early Toltec period. Early Toltec settlements seem to be located with a preference for certain types of ecological settings. "From Rattray's [1966, Map I] distributional map of known Coyotlatelco sites in the Valley of Mexico, one has the distinct impression that

a major consideration in their location was the association of steeply sloping ground, gently sloping land, and lakeshore" (Parsons 1969:34). Early Toltec period sites in the Teotihuacan Valley, just north of the Texcoco region, were located around the prime agricultural land in the Lower Valley (Sanders 1965:123). In the Texcoco region Parsons has noted the "clear orientation of Early Toltec occupation toward only the best *naturally* productive agricultural land . . ." (1969:37).

The northern and southern areas of the Texcoco region have a combination of "deep soil cover, good drainage, and relatively high water table" (Parsons 1969:37). In both areas, "small networks of irrigation canals would have been feasible . . ." (Parsons 1969:37). Both areas are highly productive today. Exploitation of these areas would not have required any construction of extensive hydraulic systems. Floodwater irrigation systems would have been relatively small and easy to construct. Similar systems could have been constructed for the central area. However, permanent irrigation based on the springs in the sierra to the east probably was not feasible since the springs are "widely scattered and far removed from prime agricultural land" (Parsons 1969:18). Their "effective exploitation would have required the construction of massive aqueduct and causeway systems extending for several km across the rugged lower Sierra and Upper Piedmont" (Parsons 1969:18). The central area, although possessing characteristics of deep soil cover, good drainage, a high water table, steep hills, gently sloping land and lakeshore, does not have these situated as close together as they are in the northern and southern areas (Fig. 2).

The Early Toltec period failure to reoccupy the central area of the Texcoco region resulted from the *relatively greater distances* between features of the environment of importance to the inhabitants of this region. The springs did not offer an inducement for settlement as they would have required large amounts of construction to be made useful. The sierra springs "very probably remained only marginally useful until quite late in the prehispanic era" (Parsons 1969:18).

The Early Toltec period is probably one of low population pressure with independent socio-political units located near prime agricultural lands which are naturally productive (Parsons 1969:37). The absence of significant

settlement in the central Texcoco region may be understood in terms of the continuing centralization of population during the Early Toltec period accompanied by the lack of closely juxtaposed ecological features significant for agriculture within the central area. Given conditions of low population pressure and abundant land, only the best areas were selected.

During the Late Toltec period, the northern Texcoco region underwent a reduction in the total range of sites present during the Early Toltec period (Table 1) (Parsons 1970, Fig. 8). The small, low density sites characteristic of the northern area at this time also occur throughout the central area. The southern area retained a slightly greater variety of sites including a Secondary Regional Center. At the same time the ceramic unity of the Early Toltec period in the Texcoco region disappeared. The Mazapan ceramic complex appeared in the northern and central areas and the Aztec I complex occurred in the southern area (Bennyhoff 1964; Parsons 1970). To the north, the Teotihuacan Valley also experienced a proliferation of small Mazapan sites during the Late Toltec period (Sanders 1965:127).

This reduction in range of settlement types present within the northern Texcoco region during the Late Toltec period is similar to that which occurred in the Texcoco region during the Classic period. In both periods, the changes were less drastic in the southern area with the apparent survival of the socio-political unit. However, it did not expand. During the Late Toltec period, the central area was reoccupied, apparently by people from the northern area using a Mazapan ceramic complex.

I suggest that the settlement pattern changes in the northern and central areas during the Late Toltec period (reduction in settlement types, ruralization, demographic depression, population expansion into the central Texcoco region) may be understood as a result of the breakdown of the Early Toltec socio-political unit in the north (reflected in the reduction of variety of settlement types) and the incorporation of this unit and the northern and central Texcoco region into the newly dominant and expanding orbit of Tula. The ruralization of the population would result from a shift of cultural activities such as political and religious organization to the new center. At the same time, the northern and central areas began to participate

in the marketing system which distributed pottery of the Mazapan complex.

It is probable that the southern area may have retained some socio-political independence as evidenced by the wider range of settlement types present in that area; however, it did begin to participate in the market system which distributed pottery of the Aztec I ceramic complex related ultimately to Cholula ceramics.

The Texcoco region Late Toltec period settlement pattern data suggest ruralization and demographic depression in the northern and central areas. For the Early and Late Classic periods, Parsons interpreted these types of changes in connection with the rise to dominance of Teotihuacan. He interprets the same kinds of data from the Late Toltec period to support his Tula-Cholula Conflict Hypothesis of the Early Toltec period. The model, as I have stated previously, does not fit the data for that period. However, its use did influence Parsons' later interpretations of the Late Toltec period data. He interpreted the settlement pattern changes by suggesting that they indicated the resolution of the conflict through the defeat of Tula by Cholula.

Through the elimination of the Conflict Hypothesis, it is possible to interpret the Late Toltec period settlement pattern changes in terms of processes operative throughout the Texcoco region archaeological sequence. The Late Toltec period settlement patterns and ceramics of the Texcoco region reflect the expansion of Tula's influence into the northern and central areas. The expansion of population into the central area probably resulted from the breakdown of the northern area Early Toltec socio-political unit. This would represent a return to Classic period conditions. The greater the distance between the centralizing dominant center and the areas controlled, the greater the possibility for small rural populations to remain. This applies equally to Teotihuacan and Tula as dominant centralizing centers.

The continued existence of a nucleated settlement and probably autonomous socio-political unit in the south may represent both the limits of Tula's influence as dictated by distance, and the presence of the influence of another center, possibly Cholula, as reflected in a differing ceramic tradition, Aztec I. It is possible to suggest that economic and, perhaps, political boundaries between Cholula and Tula may have developed in the Late Toltec period.

In both the Teotihuacan Valley (Charlton 1965; Sanders 1965) and the Texcoco region (Parsons 1969), the Mazapan or Late Toltec population provided the demographic basis for the subsequent Aztec population expansion. In both regions, there is abundant evidence for local population growth. The population in the northern and central Texcoco region increased during the Early Aztec period but remained basically rural in distribution with the exception of the development of 2 Primary Regional Centers in the central areas (Parsons 1970, Fig. 9). The southern area underwent increased ruralization but retained some nucleated sites (Table 1). Ceramics throughout the Texcoco region during the Early Aztec period belong to the Aztec II ceramic complex.

Both the settlement patterns and the ceramics suggest that influences into the Texcoco region moved from south to north during the Early Aztec period. At the very least, the ceramics are obvious indicators of some change in marketing systems. Furthermore, the retention of the rural character of the northern area while the central and southern areas show wider ranges of settlement types, perhaps related to the development of local socio-political units, suggests that the influences responsible for these developments also came from the south (Table 1).

During the subsequent Late Aztec period, all 3 areas of the Texcoco region were equivalent in range of settlement types present (Parsons 1970, Fig. 10) (Table 1). This suggests the development of local socio-political units known also from documentary sources of the Postconquest period. The ceramics throughout the Texcoco region belonged to the Aztec III and IV complexes. Unlike the earlier periods, the influence of a dominant political unit (Tenochtitlan) is not reflected in changes in settlement patterns. It is possible that the state organizations of Teotihuacan and Tula differed from that used by Tenochtitlan. This could account for the lack of changes in settlement patterns during the Late Aztec period. It is also possible that the expansion of Tenochtitlan as a major power was relatively recent, occurring perhaps a century before 1519. If this were the case then there may not have been enough time for changes in settlement patterns to have occurred.

The appearance of local socio-political units accompanied by the expansion of Aztec

ceramics suggests that Tula's influence in the Texcoco region had declined or ended. The low frequency of Aztec II pottery in the Teotihuacan Valley to the north (Sanders 1965) indicates that Aztec expansion was later there. Richard Diehl (personal communication, 1971) has found Aztec II pottery at Tula in association with a Late Mazapan ceramic complex, thus raising the possibility of a trade connection between Tula and the expanding sphere of Aztec ceramic influence. As in the Teotihuacan Valley, only Aztec III and IV occur in quantity at Tula (personal communication, Eduardo Matos M. 1970). I have assumed that Mazapan ceramics indicate the continued influence or control of a site by Tula. The ceramic distributions and site types suggest a gradual replacement of Tula's influence in the Texcoco region during the Early Aztec period.

The review of the archaeological data and interpretations of the Texcoco region (Parsons 1970) using stated assumptions and a simple quantification of the data reveals some broad patterns of cultural development and change in the area. Initial growth up to and including the Terminal Formative period involved the development of local and presumably autonomous socio-political units. This was followed by the emergence of Teotihuacan to the north, outside the Texcoco region, resulting in the incorporation of the area into the sphere of dominance of that city. Demographic depression and ruralization occurred. With the decline of Teotihuacan, the Texcoco region once again became the scene of local socio-political units. The removal of a major centralizing power, Teotihuacan, resulted in the formation of these local units. This was followed by the rise of another centralizing power, Tula. Tula incorporated the northern and central Texcoco region within its sphere of influence. With the decline of Tula, the development of local states occurred again in the Texcoco region. By 1519, these local states were under the control of Tenochtitlan. The process of local development followed by domination by major powers outside the area is a recurrent theme throughout Texcoco region prehistory.

The review of the archaeological data of the Early and Late Toltec periods and Early and Late Aztec periods supports interpretations of their settlement pattern and ceramic data without use of the Conflict Hypothesis postulated by Parsons (1970).

(1) The virtually unoccupied central area of the Texcoco region during the Early Toltec period may be attributed to a combination of a local centralizing state and ecological factors. The use of these factors to interpret the settlement patterns is consistent with the interpretations of earlier periods. There is no need to introduce conflict between Tula and Cholula, and there is no evidence for it.

(2) The settlement patterns and ceramics of the Late Toltec period suggest the expansion of Tula's influence and market system into the northern and central areas of the Texcoco region. The southern area of the Texcoco region participated in a different ceramic distribution system and ceramic complex, derived ultimately from Cholula. By avoiding the Conflict Hypothesis for the Early Toltec period it is possible to interpret the Late Toltec period settlement patterns and ceramics with reference to the Classic period when demographic depression and ruralization are attributed to the centralization tendencies of Teotihuacan. For the Late Toltec period, Tula is postulated as the centralizing state.

(3) A south to north movement of settlement pattern complexity and ceramic complex during the Early Aztec period represents a southern expansion into an area formerly controlled by and from Tula. The evidence of the expansion from the Texcoco region and other areas indicates that it occurred gradually as Tula's power was declining.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA AND THE *CODICE XOLOTL*

In his paper, Parsons correlated some of the Postclassic archaeological data of the Texcoco region with features of the *Codex Xolotl* (1970:438-439). Through these correlations, he concluded that the *Codex Xolotl* referred to events beginning in the Early Toltec period, that "the first segment of the *Codice Xolotl* appears to have genuine historical validity" (1970:439), and that this historical validity, without the correlations between the *Codice* and the archaeological data, would not be apparent (1970:439).

The correlations were made between 2 basic culture patterns of the *Codex* and interpreta-

tions of the Postclassic data based on the Tula-Cholula Conflict Hypothesis. The culture patterns delineated by Parsons are (1) "the *Codice's* depiction of *Nopaltzin's* initial reconnaissance of the Texcoco region, which he found to be unoccupied" (1970:438), and (2) "the *Codice's* portrayal of warfare between acculturated Chichimecs in the central Valley of Mexico and more conservative hunting groups along the northern edge of the Texcoco Region" (1970:439). The first pattern is correlated with the virtually unoccupied central Texcoco region of the Early Toltec period, thus giving an early date to the *Codex*. The second pattern is correlated with the postulated conflict between Tula and Cholula, the collapse of Tula, and the Aztec expansion, ranging from the Early Toltec period to the Early Aztec period.

I am impressed with Parsons' delineation of 2 basic culture patterns within the *Codex Xolotl* and with his attempt to demonstrate their historical validity through the use of archaeological data. Given the alternative interpretations of the archaeological data suggested in this paper, I think the correlations should be restricted to the Late Toltec and Early Aztec periods. The postulated correlation of the empty central area during the Early Toltec period with *Nopaltzin's* reconnaissance report of no occupation rested in part on the correlation of the interpretations embodied in the Tula-Cholula Conflict Hypothesis with conflict reported in the *Codex*. I have suggested that such an interpretation of the archaeological data should be applied not to the Early Toltec period, but to the Late Toltec and Early Aztec periods. If correlations are to be made between the Texcoco region archaeology and the *Codex Xolotl*, then they should be with the later part of the sequence. Only the unoccupied central Texcoco region links the Early Toltec period with the *Codex Xolotl*. With the restriction of interpretations of conflict to later periods, this correlation, too, should be revised to a subsequent period.

The complex events described in the *Codex Xolotl* and interpreted by Parsons (1970:439) as Tula-Cholula confrontation, Tula's collapse, and Aztec south to north expansion probably refer to a very complicated expansion of socio-political power and economic control into areas formerly controlled from and by Tula. The Early Aztec period expansion of ceramics

into the Texcoco region and the increase in population are 2 pieces of archaeological data reflecting a much more complicated situation referred to in the *Codex Nopaltzin's* reconnaissance to take possession of unoccupied areas would then refer to the time immediately prior to this expansion, when legal title to the area was obtained. The 2 culture patterns noted by Parsons then can be reduced in temporal scope and correlated with the revised interpretations of the archaeological sequence presented in this paper. These correlations support Dibble's (1951) original dating of the early events of the *Codex Xolotl* to the thirteenth century. This was a time of transition between control by Tula and control by the Aztecs over the Texcoco region and other parts of the Valley of Mexico.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this paper, I have examined Parsons' (1970) interpretations of archaeological data of the Texcoco region, offered alternative positions, and proposed a revision of correlations between the archaeological data and the *Codex Xolotl*. The major interpretative difficulties could be traced to his use of a hypothesis of conflict between Tula and Cholula to account for Early Postclassic settlement patterns and ceramics in the Texcoco region. The data did not support the hypothesis. With its elimination the data were interpreted using assumptions applied to earlier and later settlement patterns. Through these analyses, alternating patterns of independence and subordination of the Texcoco region through its prehistory became clear. The correlations between the *Codex Xolotl* and the archaeological data were altered by being restricted to a much later period and reducing the time depth suggested by Parsons from the Early Toltec period to the terminal Late Toltec period.

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THE HISTORICAL VALIDITY OF THE CODEX XOLOTL

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ABSTRACT

Parsons (1970) has attempted to prove that the first part of the *Codex Xolotl* (Dibble 1951, Planchas I-IV) is based on "folk tradition" rather than actual history. He notes that the codice's claim that the northern and eastern sectors of the Valley of Mexico were depopulated in the early thirteenth century A.D. is contradicted by the archaeological evidence. He believes that this fact, in itself, is sufficient to invalidate the entire text of this important pictographic manuscript. This paper summarizes historical evidence which confirms the general validity of the *Codice's* references to persons, places, dates, and events; illustrates the kinds of errors and misrepresentations which characterize early Mesoamerican historical sources of this type; and suggests that the contradiction between historical and archaeological evidence, which is a central issue in Parsons' "folk tradition" hypothesis, is more easily explained in terms of the political and ideological objectives of prehispanic historians, and by the conventions and