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"*Quetzalcóatl*" (1988)

VERSIÓN ORIGINAL ESPAÑOLA¹

1.

Quetzalcóatl llegó a Tlapalan.
Y desapareció en el mar.
Dijo a su pueblo que no lloraran por él.
 Que volvería.
Quetzalcóatl se fue a Tlapalan, "El País de la Aurora"
también "El País del color rojo y negro",
donde murió en el año 1-Caña
y se transformó en la Estrella de la Mañana
también llamada 1-Caña.
 Pero:
 ¿Qué
 Quetzalcóatl?
 ¿Cuál Quetzalcóatl?
 En este enredo
 ¿con cuál Quetzalcóatl nos quedamos?

¹ The red line indicates a page separation in the Spanish edition by Visor Libros (1988); while the black line and numbers correspond to the English translation. The English translation is found below the Spanish versión. Textual notes are found in the English translation [La línea roja indica un cambio de página según la edición de Visor Libros de 1988 y el número rojo indica la página; la línea y el número negros corresponden a la traducción inglesa, la cual se halla después de la española. Las notas se hallan en la traducción inglesa].

2.

Según Sahagún
los toltecas tenían un solo Dios que se decía Quetzalcóatl
y al sacerdote de ese Dios le decían Quetzalcóatl
quien les decía que había un solo Dios que se decía Quetzalcóatl
quien no quería más sacrificios que de culebras mariposas ...

3.

Quetzalcóatl, la Serpiente Emplumada.
La serpiente era la tierra
devoradora de vida
y dadora de vida.
Serpiente-pájaro = material alada.
Unión de la tierra con el cielo.
Tierra que se eleva y cielo que desciende.
(Unidos en la cima de la pirámide.)
Culebra erguida y pájaro que baja.
La materia ascendiendo hacia la luz.
La lucha de la luz.
Venus 90 días invisible.
Después arde 250 días en el cielo de la tarde.
Después desaparece 8 días
y vuelve a aparecer en el oriente como estrella de la mañana.
(El descenso a los infiernos.)
Quetzalcóatl ocho días entre los muertos.

4.

También le decían Moyocuyatzin *ayac oquiyocux*, *ayac oquipic*,
que quiere decir que nadie lo creó
sino que lo hace todo
(el que se piensa o inventa a sí mismo).
Su rostro iluminado en tantos tiestos rotos en Mesoamérica.
El Lucero nacido de las cenizas del rey de Tula.
Ocho días en *Mictlan*, la Región de los Muertos.
Llegó allí a sacar los huesos de los hombres.
“Vengo en busca de los huesos preciosos.”
Porque
“los Dioses se preocupan porque alguien viva en la tierra.”
Estaban juntos los del hombre y de la mujer.
Los regó con la sangre de su pene.
Y revivieron.

5.

Los del hombre y la mujer.
Así nacieron los *macehuales* (el pueblo)
“los merecidos por la penitencia.”
Uno de los arquetipos mitológicos.
Guía luminoso de las tribus
y del perfeccionamiento interior.
También él es Ehécatl, el Dios del Viento
con pico de pájaro en los libros de pinturas.
Lo espiritual, lo que se eleva, el viento.
(Noche y Viento.)

6.

Creó Quetzalcóatl el Quinto Sol.
Nuestra era actual
que empezó en Teotihuacán.
Creó el calendario.
Creó las artes y el toltequismo.
El comportamiento ético, las joyas y los cantos.
La doncella se tragó una esmeralda
y así concibió a Quetzalcóatl.
Quetzalcóatl, la piedra preciosa,
la esmeralda de los toltecas.
De él empezó, de él vino
todo Arte y Conocimiento.
Fue el Dios de Tolan
creador del pulque y el maíz.
El Dios de Tolan, “corazón del pueblo.”
El es el mismo Ometéotl
(Ome = Dos, Téotl = Dios)
la Santísima Pareja.

7.

De donde son goteados los niños a la tierra.
El Dios–Dos.
“El verdadero Dios y su Esposa”
(*Códice Florentino*)
¿Y el Hijo?
El hombre.
La Pareja que dijo
hagamos al hombre a nuestra imagen

y lo creó pareja.

8.

El es el Dios Dialéctico Ometéotl
Vida–Muerte
Mujer–Hombre.
Transforma la muerte en vida.
En el Códice Borbónico está con una tibia en la mano
y de la tibia saliendo una flor:
la resurrección.
Venus que arde en la tarde y en el alba.
Y me salen más y más imágenes de la bibliografía
como van saliendo de una tumba jades, turquesas, mariposas de oro.

9.

El inventor de los hombres, así también fue llamado.
El que puso el maíz en nuestros labios.
La Suprema Pareja
Ome–Tecutli y Ome–Cíhuatl
Señor de la Dualidad y Señora de la Dualidad.
¿Y cuál es el hijo?
Todos nosotros.
Quetzalcóatl–Dios y Quetzalcóatl hombre confundidos.
Los dos son llamados “1–Caña.”
Su peregrinaje por las tinieblas...
O la expulsión de la ciudad.
Y como el arqueólogo que recoge lo disperso
y lo va juntando, esto era el friso de abajo,
unos tigres caminando,
y estas figuras gigantes estaban en la cima de la pirámide...

10.

Serpiente de plumas verdes de ave *Kuk* (quetzal).
La conciencia de un orden superior.
Reptil y ave: la elevación de la materia.
El hombre conciente.
El cuerpo que encontró su liberación interior.
Dejar de reptar y remontarse al cielo.
El pájaro es el cielo.
Quetzalcóatl es espíritu elevado de la carne
como el canto.

La condición divina de lo humano.
La revelación
del origen celeste de la tierra.
Está en los códices con una piel de tigre.
porque la estrella de la mañana arrastra a todas las otras
y el cielo estrellado todo manchado de luces
es como una piel de tigre.
Pero Quetzalcóatl fue echado de la ciudad.

11.

En el 1–Caña nació Quetzalcóatl
“se cuenta que este año nació Quetzalcóatl.”
Su niñez cerca de Tepoztlán
donde los niños de la escuela ahora escalan las empinadas breñas
hasta llegar sin habla a la ruinoso pirámide
del dios pulque.
En el año 5–Casa lo llamaron los toltecas
y lo eligieron rey en Tula.
Su sacerdote y rey.
Y en Tula desarrolló las artes y las ciencias.
Templos, casas
progreso económico y social.
Una nueva religión.
(Contra los sacrificios humanos.)
Quetzalcóatl, vencido.
Y huyó con los suyos.
Allí es cuando se fue a Tlapalan.
Simplemente desapareció.

12.

O según otros murió en la costa.
O se embarcó en el mar.
Ondulando sobre las olas su balsa de culebras.
O se pegó fuego en la costa y se convirtió en la Estrella Matutina.
... En piedras y madera te quedaste pintado
allá en Tula ...
Profetizó hombres blancos y con barba como él
que derrocarían a dioses y reyes.
Y por generaciones, los padres a los hijos reunidos:
“Sepan que vendrán unos con barbas, vestidos de colores,
y se abrirá el mundo a todas partes,
todas las tierras se comunicarán entre sí.”

Empezó a construir su templo
con columnas en forma de serpientes,
pero no lo acabó ...
En Tula, a 70 kilómetros de México, D.F.
Estuvo meditando, buscándose un dios.
Sus palacios oscuros para hacer oración.

13.

Los hechiceros presionándolo para que sacrificara hombres
¿Fueron varios los sacerdotes Quetzalcóatl?
El dominico creyó
que Quetzalcóatl era el Apóstol Santo Tomás.
Oraba y ayunaba
en su palacio junto al agua color de estaño.
Allí sacrificaba serpientes, pájaros, mariposas.
Su casa de plumas,
toda tapizada de plumas,
el aposento del oriente de plumas amarillas,
el del poniente plumas de un pájaro azul,
el aposento del norte de plumas rojas
y el del sur todo de plumas blancas.
“El oraba, así se sabía,
hacia el lugar de la Dualidad.”
El Negro y el Rojo:
La de la Falda de Estrellas y El Plumaje de Sol.
(Biblioteca Nacional de París.)

14.

De noche oraba junto al agua en el palacio del musgo acuático.
Invocaba a alguien que está en el interior del cielo,
Señora de nuestra carne,
Señor de nuestra carne,
La que de noche tiene una falda de estrellas,
El que de día cubre la tierra de algodones.

15.

La muerte de Quetzalcóatl en Tlapalan
es también Venus, cuando se hunde en el poniente.
“Se dice que todavía existe.”

El año *1-Caña* (1-Flauta)
el rey de Tula se transformó en estrella de la mañana.
Los sabios son flautas de Dios.
Por ellos él habla como por una flauta.
En los Anales está que fue a Tlilan-Tlapalan,
“la tierra del rojo y del negro”
(la sabiduría).
Negro y rojo: oscuridad y luz.
Los colores negro y rojo son los del sabio.
El mismo era:
“tinta negra y roja, escritura y sabiduría.”
Murió en Tlilan Tlapalan, que significa tinta roja y negra
es decir el país de la escritura.
“Trajo las pinturas de Tula a los príncipes quichés.”
(*Popol Vuh*)

16.

Su niñez (tal vez) junto a Tepoztlán,
es decir en el cerro Tepozteco.
En mitad del gran ventanal de la quinta de Pellicer
se recortaba entero el empinado Tepozteco, y en su cima,
borrosa la pirámide pequeña del dios del pulque
Ddel pequeño Quetzalcóatl
y una veintena de pequeños quetzalcóatls salían de la escuela
y corrían al Tepozteco.
Me parece que había en el pueblo muchas pulquerías.
Salió con su gente para Tlapalan
donde desapareció.
Para Tlapalan, la tierra roji-negra.
Está en las Escrituras.
Cuando bajamos del Tepozteco ya era tarde.
Y sobre la pirámide del dios del pulque
el planeta Venus.
Obligado a abandonar la ciudad
desapareció de la historia y entró en el mito.

17.

Ejerció en Cholula un gobierno pacífico.
No podía oír hablar de guerras.
Jamás quiso matar en sacrificio a los toltecas
Porque amaba a sus vasallos como a hijos.
Los de Cholula deben a él sus leyes y sus ritos.
Su calendario.

Enseñó la metalurgia en Cholula.
Cholula, la ciudad de la paz.
Donde las naciones enemigas hacían la paz.
El descubrió el oro y la plata y las piedras preciosas.
El uso de las conchas y las plumas.
Les enseñó la cerámica
para que el barro volara como ave.
Descubrió el cacao y el algodón de muchos colores.
La pluma del pájaro quetzal y del pájaro turquesa,
las amarillas del pájaro zacuán,
Las plumas color de llama.
El barro en que comían y bebían
Azul, verde, blanco, rojo y amarillo.

18.

Enseñó a cantar.
A tener bondad en el corazón y a cantar.
Cuali in iyolo: bondad en el corazón.
Una ética social.
Les enseñó que enseñaran a hacer sabios los rostros.
Una gran tradición humanista.
“Sólo un dios tenían.
Su nombre era Quetzalcóatl.
Su sacerdote,
su nombre era también Quetzalcóatl:
Todo lo de Quetzalcóatl
Se los decía su sacerdote Quetzalcóatl:
Quetzalcóatl nada exige
sino serpientes, sino mariposas,
que vosotros debéis sacrificarle”.
El nunca permitió los sacrificios humanos.
Estos comenzaron con el gobierno de Huémac.
Esto lo empezaron los hechiceros.

19.

El primer rey con monumento en el bosque de Chapultepec.
El primer rey en sentarse en el trono.
El trono de todos los reyes de México era prestado
y un día sería regresado a Quetzalcóatl.
Pero al fin tuvo que huir Quetzalcóatl.
Quedó sólo su recuerdo y la esperanza de que volviera.

Quetzalcóatl, el de la cultura tolteca.

Perfrección moral.
Como si fuera un tolteca el artista actuará con tiento.
El buen pintor, creador de cosas con el agua negra
y con el agua roja.

22.

El mal pintor, engañador.
Los toltecas, para los aztecas:
pueblo legendario de un país de ensueño.
Los primeros que sembraron en México la semilla de los hombres.
Las excavaciones de los aztecas sacaban a luz a los toltecas.
Las ollas y joyas de los toltecas salían de la tierra.
 Aquellas vasijas coloreadas como códices.
 Los de las construcciones indestructibles.
“Las pirámides toltecas,
 los templos pintados... allí están a la vista.”
Quedaron después cubiertos de cactus y magueyes
pero allí están otra vez a la vista del turista.
 El arte para darle rostro a la gente.
Todavía para darle rostro a la gente
 hasta en las fotografías de las guías.
 Las pinturas aún brillantes en el subsuelo
después de siglos de enterradas
 y los restos humanos aún junto a las pinturas.
Pero Quetzalcóatl fue echado de la ciudad,
 y huyó a Tlapalan.

23.

El libro de pinturas de los toltecas llegó a su fin.
 (O está sin acabar en el Museo Británico:
La última página del Códice Nuttall apenas coloreada
donde el pintor sólo había empezado con el color amarillo
y las siguientes en blanco...)
 Y salieron de Tula siguiendo a Quetzalcóatl.
¡La repentina despoblación de ciudades aún sin² ser explicada!
Ciudades santas que surgen y se hunden en Mesoamérica
como la estrella de Quetzalcóatl.

² Nota de WTL: se ha corregido un error de imprenta cambiando “si” en el texto original con “sin”.

La casa de turquesa que te construiste en Tolan
donde llegaste a gobernar...

Tolan está en ruinas.

Las serpientes de piedra quedaron quebradas.

—Pero: “La disparidad de los hallazgos arqueológicos de Tula
y las maravillosas descripciones de Tolan.”—

27.

La pérdida de un rey y la pérdida de un reino.

Tolan la ciudad del orden cósmico.

De la armonía celestial.

¿La Tula a 70 kms. de México, D.F.?

Su poder venía del cielo.

Con sus 2 Quetzalcóatl, el dios y el sacerdote.

El Quetzalcóatl que rige el cosmos

y el Quetzalcóatl que rige una ciudad.

Del uno, la agricultura; del otro, la cultura.

La armonía del cielo y de la tierra.

En un solo ritmo los ciclos del cielo y de la vida humana.

Una estructura social según los astros.

La reproducción del cielo aquí en la tierra:

“el régimen de Tolan”.

Una copia del cosmos a escala humana.

Más que una ciudad, una visión...

Una copia urbanística del cielo.

La caída de Tolan,

...un sueño colectivo.

28.

Una armonía social la tal Tolan.

Una ciudad y sobre ella el cielo surcado de caminos,

los caminos del sol, la luna y las estrellas.

Y la nostalgia de Tolan.

La pérdida de la capital santa.

La Tolan de Quetzalcóatl.

Localizar Tula

como localizar la Jerusalén Celestial.

La capital espiritual de Mesoamérica.

A través de todo el período Clásico y Post Clásico

como un anhelo aún oscuro del futuro

o un recuerdo del pasado desmoronado.

Un orden natural y social ideal.

Un reino mítico tropical.

La Tolan de los toltecas
con los blancos juncos junto al agua azul
y junto a la arena blanca los blancos sauces.

29.

Donde nadan los nenúfares y los ánades.
Donde está el mágico juego de pelota celestial.
El paraíso de Quetzalcóatl también Tolan.
La esquina de aquel mural de Teotihuacán:
Un manantial con dos ríos, entre zapotes y cacao,
en las orillas figurillas humanas de distintos colores
se bañan y retozan en el agua,
se arrojan de cabeza,
uno nada de espaldas. Otro salido del agua
exprime su calzoneta de la que caen gotas.
Otros descansan bajo los árboles o cortan flores.
Más arriba unos danzan,
otros juegan una especie de fútbol con réferi.
Otros cazan mariposas.
Hay una libélula de alas transparentes.
Casi todos hablan o cantan
(les salen de la boca las volutas, glifo de palabra o canto).
Sólo uno no parece participar de la alegría,
un recién llegado al paraíso, según el Dr. Caso.
No está en las guías turísticas,
no se puede ir allí en bus con un lunch.

30.

Veinte pueblos había en la gran Tolan,
20 que eran sus manos y sus pies:
Pantécatl, Itzcuítzóncatl, Tlematepehua, Tezcatepehua, Tlecuaztepehua,
Tecolotépec, Tochpaneca, Cempohualteca, Cuatlachteca,
Cozcateca, Nonohualca, Cuitlapilzinca,
Aztateca, Tzanatepehua, Tetetzíncatl, Teuhxícatl,
Tzacanca, Cuixoca, Cuahchichinolca, Chiuhnauhteca.
Tolan centro del mundo y centro del cielo,
en especial del cielo nocturno.
Sobre ella brillando las estrellas como modelo celeste.
La ciudad del orden cósmico.
Agricultura, cultura, culto
en Tolan un todo armónico.
Dios Quetzalcóatl y héroe cultural Quetzalcóatl,
creador de la vida, el dios,
y organizador de la sociedad el héroe.

31.

La sociedad de Mesoamérica como una copia de la del cielo.
Las piedras esculpidas contra el caos.
 Ordenadas las calles como las estrellas.
La piedra informe cogió forma.
Pulida suavidad lo que era áspera dureza.
 Pirámide el antiguo cerro.
Como la caña del lago vuelta flauta,
 y una música sopla de la flauta
 como las cañas del lago movidas por el viento.
Tolan, “lugar de cañas”.
Lugar de cañas que cantan.
Fue un modelo de liberación de las civilizaciones de Mesoamérica.
 Pero después las pirámides vueltas cerros otra vez...
Los hechiceros dijeron:
“Quetzalcóatl debe abandonar la ciudad
porque no quiere los sacrificios humanos.
Nosotros viviremos aquí.”

32.

Teotihuacán, la primera Tolan.
O Tolan empezó en Teotihuacán.
Teotihuacán de los Toltecas.
Tolan igual a Teotihuacán la primera capital.
 “Tolan Teotihuacán”.
Teotihuacán = “La ciudad de los dioses.”
Así se decía
porque era el lugar donde enterraban a los señores
y encima de ellos construían pirámides que aun ahora están,
una pirámide es como un cerro sólo que hecho a mano.
Y decían: cuando morimos
 no en verdad morimos,
 despertamos.
Les cantaban a los muertos “Las mañanitas”:
 Despierta que el cielo enrojece
 ya los pajaritos cantan
 ya cantan los faisanes color de llama
 mira que ya amaneció.

33.

Se hizo allí dios, quiere decir que murió.
Centro ceremonial convertido en metrópoli.
No tenía cuarteles.

No encuentran armas los arqueólogos.
Las ofrendas eran hule, jade, plumas de quetzal ...
Teotihuacán: la divinidad humana.
Donde la serpiente voló.
Una elevación interior.
En la vasta aridez erizada de cactus
allá lejos casi en el horizonte
la pirámide como un éxtasis de piedra.
Un indio de pie en el campo
quieto como el cactus junto a él.
Al fondo la pirámide: un culto de la altura.
Ciudad sagrada para observar el cielo
y trazada de acuerdo con el trazado del cielo.
Donde los sabios fueron comandantes, dirigentes.
Los arcanos de los arquitectos teotihuacanos.

34.

Urbanismo determinado por el cielo.
Templos para implorar el oro del maíz
y los jades y esmeraldas de la lluvia.
Columnas, terrazas, plataformas, escalinatas ...
Enormes escalinatas hacia el cielo,
exactamente hacia el sol en el cenit.
Y en el centro de todo
la Pirámide de Quetzalcóatl.
En ella las cabezas sonrientes
de Quetzalcóatl.
Por primera vez en Teotihuacán, la primera Tolan,
la sonrisa de Quetzalcóatl.
La pirámide era una montaña sagrada.
Una réplica de la pirámide del cielo
donde el sol asciende y desciende.
El templo de Quetzalcóatl
en el centro de Teotihuacán

⁴que era el centro de Mesoamérica que era el centro del mundo.
Pirámides, adoratorios, palacios,
escuelas, almacenes, mercados,
terrazas, plazas, calzadas,

⁴ El siguiente trozo, desde “que” hasta “pájaro,” (sic), parece seguir directamente al trozo anterior, el cual termina con “de Teotihuacán” (sin punto), pero, como se coloca en su propia, y siguiente página, lo estoy formateando después de un espacio en blanco. Lo mismo se da para los siguientes trozos que termina con “de Teotihuacán.” Por eso, estos trozos no se encabezan con su propio número como si fueran poemas independientes.

barrios residenciales ...
La Pirámide de la Luna al final de la Calzada de los Muertos.
 La ciudad edificada a la serpiente emplumada.
 La mayor metrópoli prehispánica.
La Tolan más importante.
La Tula o *Tolan* (“metrópoli” en náhuatl) más importante.
La Calzada de los Muertos y la Pirámide del Sol
 vistas desde la Plaza de la Luna.
El canto coral en los patios ceremoniales.
 Los muros recubiertos de visiones.
Decoraciones de dioses animales o animales dioses.
 Sobre la arquitectura rectilínea
 (cubismo teotihuacano)
 la ondulante serpiente pájaro,

 la sonrisa saliente de la piedra,
 dioses animales y animales dioses
 hombres animales y animales hombres
 dioses hombres y hombres dioses.
La armonía del cielo era la de la sociedad.
Ciudad del Lucero de la Mañana
 “que brilla sobre los campos y las casas”.
La ciudad atraía a la gente dispera.
El perímetro se ensanchaba.
 Las avenidas más largas
 y más altas las pirámides.
Cuando las grandes renovaciones urbanas.
La población muy apiñada según los arqueólogos
 pero sin villas miserias.
Fue el boom de la obsidiana.
 La pintada de nuevos murales.
El azul-cerúleo para los jades y turquesas.
El amarillo-ocre para las plumas y joyas de oro.

El ocre-rosado para la piel humana.
El blanco para los ojos, colmillos, huesos, algodón.
La procesión sacerdotal aún se mueve inmóvil en el mural.
 Los edificios como libros de piedra.
 Frisos de tigres caminando
 allá por donde están los buses.
El éxito de la vida urbana teotihuacana.
Su gobierno no se sabe.
 Si personal o colectivo.
¿Federación? ¿Alianzas?

⁵Las grecas son ya con muchas fallas.
Las filas de jaguares y coyotes alternados
uno con la cola hacia arriba y el otro hacia abajo,
incorrecta, con fallas.
Y como Teotihuacán
Tula también tuvo un fin misterioso.
¿Descontento popular?
Hubo luchas internas
por la tiranía de Huémac, último rey de Tula
quien casó con un demonio hembra.
(Quetzalcóatl se había ido.)
Evidentemente arrasada por un gran incendio
y después el saqueo.
Por todas partes carbón, cenizas, madera a medio quemar.
Lodo hecho cerámica por el fuego.
La adversa fortuna de Troya.
Y sobre los escombros, tiestos inferiores,
cerámica llamada “Azteca II”.
Los invasores.

“¡Tu reino que dejaste allá en Tula
donde gobernabas!”
Se acabó la vida pacífica en Tula
cuando se fue Quetzalcóatl.
Empezó la era de las guerras y los sacrificios humanos.
El régimen de terror de Huémac.
Importó a Tula todos los sacrificios humanos existentes.
Con él hubo hambre, guerras, pestes, terremotos.
Ya diferenciaban a los “sabios” del resto de los toltecas.
Y a los toltecas legítimos de Quetzalcóatl
los toltecas vendepatria de Huémac llamaron *nonohualca*
“los que hablan una lengua extranjera”
(o ideología exótica).
Se fue, se fue de Tula,
donde todavía están las columnas de serpientes
abandonadas.
Se fue a Tlapalan, donde reposa.

Al Valle de México empezó a llegar una nueva cerámica.
Polícroma como los códices.
Vasijas con tres pies cónicos

⁵ Ver el apunte anterior (no. 4).

o en forma de cabezas de águila:
Cholula.
Cholula, otra Tolan.
Y aquí otra vez Quetzalcóatl,
el que comandaba los éxodos,
el que fundó ciudades.
La Gran Pirámide de Cholula, la mayor del mundo, y al fondo
los dos volcanes pirámides
el Iztaccíhuatl y el Popocatepetl.
En tiempos tiempos de la conquista
recordaban a Quetzalcóatl en Cholula
el fundador de la ciudad, constructor de templos y pirámides.
Creador de una estructura social.
La mayor del mundo: “y llegaban en romería al templo de Quetzalcóatl
como a Roma los cristianos y a la Meca los moros”.
Pero después cayó en el militarismo.

Pero Quetzalcóatl también se fue de Tola, Rivas.
Al llegar los españoles había sacrificios humanos,
hasta aquel 19 de julio
(de nuestra era actual que empezó en Teotihuacan)
cuando aterrizó por primera vez en Managua
en el Aeropuerto Internacional Augusto C. Sandino
entre banderas roji-negras
el Avión Presidencial mexicano QUETZALCÓATL.

38.

También otra Tolan en Nicaragua
(el ahora polvoriento pueblito de Tola, en Rivas)
fue el centro del Mundo.
Apareció una nueva cerámica: “Tola tricoma”,
y después la de animales abstractos, serpientes, pájaros,
dibujo rojizo y negro con fondo blanco.
También aquí, en el museíto Rivas, jaguares caminando.
Tola también: la gran capital.
Todo el subsuelo lleno de cerámica de colores,
esplendor bajo la pobreza.
En el ahora polvoriento pueblito de Tola.
Vinieron huyendo de la dictadura instaurada en Cholula,
con su fe en Quetzalcóatl
 (“hará siete u ocho vidas de viejos antes que yo”)
hacia una tierra profetizada,
un lago y una isla con dos volcanes altos y redondos
 (“Ometepe” = “Dos Cerros”).

Fundadores de una ciudad “Quetzalcóatl” (Quezalguaque)
y adoradores de Ehécatl, que también es Quetzalcóatl,
el dios del viento y los chubascos del lago,
el Noche y Viento.

Adoradores también de la Divina Pareja
(Tamagastad y Cipaltonal).

Toltecas que no pronunciamos la “tl”,
Ometépetl convertido en Omotepe,
los llamados *Pipiles* (“niños”),
como el niño chiquito náhuatl
que no puede decir todavía “Tlalnepantla”, “tlapalería”,
o los del habla incorrecta,
según los Académicos de la Lengua
pre-cortesianos.

39.

Pero Quetzalcóatl también se fue de Tola, Rivas.
Al llegar los españoles había sacrificios humanos,
hasta aquel 19 de julio
(de nuestra era actual que empezó en Teotihuacan)
cuando aterrizó por primera vez en Managua
en el Aeropuerto Internacional Augusto C. Sandino
entre banderas roji-negras
el Avión Presidencial mexicano QUETZALCÓATL.

40.

Y también el que Quetzalcóatl llegó a Yucatán.
Con el nombre Kukulcán
que es Quetzalcóatl en maya
(Kuk = Quetzal).
Fundó Mayapán.
Llevó a los mayas las artesanías toltecas.
El culto a la Serpiente Emplumada.
En Chichén Itzá
sonriente en los templos la serpiente emplumada.
También aquí tigres caminando.
Pero fundó Mayapán.
La rodeó de murallas.
La ciudad militarista.
Introdujo los ídolos y los sacrificios humanos.
Y combatió a los mayas.
Les tomó ciudades.

Ya aparecen en la plástica representaciones guerreras.
Impuso en Mayapán a los Cocom.

La dinastía Cocom.

La tiranía.

Y con ellos, mercenarios.

Contra la rebeldía, mercenarios.

El arte tolteca en Yucatán ya en decadencia.

Esta fue otra Tolan. Adulterada.

(Otra Tolan, pero adulterada.)

¡Ay, en el *Popol Vuh* estaba Tolan
como patria de toda cultura superior!

Adonde peregrinaban las tribus prehistóricas.

Con los Cocom comienza la decadencia de Chichén Itzá.

En el Templo de los Guerreros:

un relieve está puesto bocabajo.

Estelas estereotipadas.

El barroco maya ya rococó.

Después, los primeros brotes de la jungla
comenzando a salir de las escalinatas de las pirámides
y los techos de los palacios.

41.

Ya última Tolan, Tenochtitlán .
Hasta hacía poco cazadores y recolectores.
En 1325 llegan a Tenochtitlán
donde estaba el águila alegre sobre el nopal
devorando algo,

lo desgarraba al comer.

(Allí se sentaron.)

Un pueblo al que nadie conocía su rostro.

Y pronto la superpotencia militar de Mesoamérica.

Contrapusieron la serpiente de turquesa (Huitzilopochtli)
a la serpiente de plumas de quetzal (Quetzalcóatl).

Ahora Huitzilopochtli,

el Señor de la guerra:

el dios supremo.

Después de la derrota de los adoradores de Quetzalcóatl
los sacrificios humanos.

42.

¿A qué tribu tocó la triste primacía?

Quemados por Itzcóatl

los libros de historia, los llamados “libros de pinturas”
donde ellos aparecían bárbaros en un pasado sin gloria.
Implantada una clase social superior
distinta de los *macehuales*, el pueblo.
Irradiando cual plumas de quetzal está Tenochtitlán.
En barcas vienen los príncipes.
Junto al agua de jade se alza la ciudad.
Cual garza azul que sale volando del agua.
Desde lejos se oyen sus cantos.
Se miran sus saucos blancos.
Sobre la ciudad una aurora de guerra.
Sus soberanos, los herederos legales del mitológico Quetzalcóatl.
(Pura propaganda de Estado)
“Recuerda que este no es tu trono,
te ha sido prestado,
y será devuelto a Quetzalcóatl.”

En el centro de Tenochtitlán
el Templo Mayor
santificando las conquistas.
En él la inmensa pirámide de Huitzilopochtli.
Huitzilopochtli: el militarismo.
Enfrente, mucho más pequeña
la de Quetzalcóatl.
Quetzalcóatl ahora
solamente un dios más de la clase dominante.
Una manipulación del mito para su imperialismo.
Una ideología que la realidad desmentía.
Orando a un Señor humanísimo
en honor del cual desollaban.
El jefe de los sacerdotes debía ser devoto, pacífico, compasivo.
Era el representante de Quetzalcóatl.
Y le enviaban a Moctezuma un muslo para que comiese.
... que sólo exige sacrificios de serpientes, flores, mariposas.
Traicionada una herencia espiritual
por el despotismo.

Un plan diabólico de control mitológico.
Huitzilopochtli el más cruel y el más hábil de los políticos.
El corazón sacado palpitando, humeante,
y el cuerpo echado a rodar por las gradas ensangrentadas
en esquina de Argentina y Donceles.
“Operarios de la muerte”
dice el código.

En honor de Huitzilopochtli.
Aunque no importaba nada mítico, sólo lo político.
Los sacrificios de cautivos expandían las fronteras.
Ensanchaban Tenochtitlán.
Cada vez más y más chinampas
(las islas artificiales
como jardines flotantes
que ahora son atracción turística en Xochimilco).
Toda su grandeza:
por los impuestos.
Llegaban a Tenochtitlán todos los tributos.

En el centro del altiplano mexicano
Tenochtitlán: la noche y el terror,
y como cautivos escalando la Gran Pirámide
la escalada de la violencia.
En honor de Huitzilopochtli.
A Quetzalcóatl desplazó Huitzilopochtli.
Para que el mundo siguiera: el sacrificio.
Pero con Quetzalcóatl, autosacrificio.
No sacrificar a otros.
Moctezuma: Jefe Supremo del ejército
y personificación de Huitzilopochtli.
Despotismo sin resistencia, el de Moctezuma.
Pero había una contradicción interna: los tlamantinimes.
Por un lado la mitología oficial
y por otra los tlamantinimes. Los seguidores de Quetzalcóatl.
Preservaban la tradición luminosa
en las bibliotecas de sus libros de pinturas.
“Enseñaban a los niños a vivir”:
Han de evitar lo malo,
huyendo con fuerza de la maldad.

43.

Al hombre debe honrarsele como a piedra preciosa y plumaje rico.
(En el *Calmecac*
los centros prehispánicos de educación.)
Piensa mucho en él, el Noche y Viento,
y se te hará sabroso el sueño,
tortolita.
Dicen que es muy difícil vivir en la tierra
lugar de espantosos conflictos,
palomita.
Antifascistas.

Y en el pueblo se mantenía viva la doctrina...
Y había habido la contradicción con Netzahualcóyotl.
(cf. Don Juan Pomar, viznieto del rey de Texcoco
sobre la revolución religiosa de Netzahualcóyotl).
Se declaró adepto de un principio invisible.
En el templo de Texcoco ninguna efigie.

44.

Retomó la teología de Quetzalcóatl.
Las dos figuritas arriba son Netzahualcóyotl y Netzahualpili,
abajo figuritas que pintan, esculpen, tejen, cantan.
El canto son volutas.
El canto delante de sus bocas pintado como una flor.
Y en el pueblo viva la doctrina.
Hasta la llegada de las carabelas
como pirámides sobre el agua...
Moctezuma, con su monumento en Chapultepec
como Quetzalcóatl, que
fue el primero en tener monumento en Chapultepec
(posiblemente por donde está el Museo Antropológico de México
y el Hotel Presidente).
Recuerda que no es tu trono...
Era entre los aztecas una Teología de la Liberación
Quetzalcóatl.
Netzahualpili, el hijo de Netzahualcóyotl, había dicho
que se acercaba el tiempo en que los hijos de Quetzalcóatl
vendrían del este y tomarían posesión de la tierra.

45.

Cuando vieron las velas blancas
Creyeron que era Quetzalcóatl trayendo sus templos por el mar.
Y así el mito desmoralizó a Moctezuma.
“Tu trono está prestado.
Quetzalcóatl volverá.”
Había prometido volver en el año de su nombre, un *1-Caña*,
y el *1-Caña* cayó precisamente en 1519,
el año de la llegada de Cortés.
...Dudaron si tal vez con el capitán Hernando Cortés
hubiese llegado Quetzalcóatl.
(¿Sería esta propaganda antiazteca,
del antimoctezumismo?)
El hecho es que desmoralizó a Moctezuma.
Envió como regalo a Cortés el Tesoro de Quetzalcóatl, que vio Durero.

Chac Mool: el despertar del indio, dijo Martí.
Quetzalcóatl, o la historia del mito.
Carrasco le llama subversivo.

and giver of life.
Serpent–bird = winged matter.
Union of earth and sky.
Earth rising and sky descending.
(United at the pyramid’s peak.)
Erect snake and sinking bird.
Matter ascending toward the light.
The struggle for light.
Venus,⁹ invisible 90 days.
Afterwards it burns for 250 days in the afternoon sky.
Afterwards it disappears for 8 days,
and it appears again in the east like the star of the morning.
(The descent to the hellish underworld.)
Quetzalcóatl eight days among the dead.

4.

They also called him Moyocuyatzin *ayac oquiyocux*, *ayac oquipic*,
that means that no one created him;
rather, he makes all things
(he who thinks himself into being or invents himself).
His luminous face decorates so many broken Mesoamerican vessels.
The bright Morning Star born from the king of Tula’s ashes.¹⁰
Eight days in *Mictlan*, the Zone of the Dead.
He came there to remove mens’ bones.
“I come searching for precious bones.”
Because
“the God’s concern was for someone living to be on the earth.”
The bones of men and women were found together.
He watered them with the blood of his penis.
And they revived.

5.

The bones of the man and the woman.
Thus were born the *macehuales* (the people)
“those made worthy by the act of penitence.”
One of the mythological archetypes.

⁹ Venus is the second planet from the Sun. It orbits the Sun every 225 days. Its name comes from the Roman goddess of love and beauty. Venus is the second-brightest object in the night sky, meaning that it is able to cast shadows. Venus commonly symbolizes the feminine. Venus is called the Morning Star when it is seen before sunrise.

¹⁰ For **Tula** and its destruction, including a brief tour of image of the ruins at Tula, see the references in the **Tula** Notes pages under (T) in the **Index** in this Website.

The luminous guide of the tribes
and inner perfection.
He is also Ehécatl,¹¹ el Wind God
with a bird's beak in the books of paintings.
Pure spirit, that which rises, the wind.
(Night and Wind.)

6.

Quetzalcóatl created the Fifth Sun.
Our current era
that began in Teotihuacán.¹²
He created the calendar.
He created the arts and Toltecism.
Ethical behavior, jewelry and chants.
In one gulp the young woman swallowed an emerald
and in this way conceived Quetzalcóatl.
Quetzalcóatl, the precious Stone,
the emerald of the Toltecs.
All art and all knowledge
began with, came from him.
He was the God of Tolan
creator of pulque¹³ and maize.
The God of Tolan, "heart of the people."
He and Ometéotl and one and the same
(Ome = Two, Téotl = God)
the Holy Pair.

¹¹ Ehécatl is an Aztec wind god who was also worshiped as a creator god in other pre-Columbian Mesoamerican cultures. In fact, Ehécatl is also associated with Quetzalcóatl and is known also as Ehécatl–Quetzalcóatl. As one of the gods of wind, Ehécatl was also associated with the four cardinal points. On pictorial representation of this god showed him with two masks or tubes through which the wind was designed to blow. The wind tubes are shown in red on the left side of the figure's face:



¹² For comments about Teotihuacán, see the [Teotihuacán Notes](#) pages under the [Index](#) (T) in this Website.

¹³ Pulque is a fermented alcoholic drink made from the sap of the agave or maguey plant. In prehistoric Meso-America it was a sacred drink among the elite classes, but with the arrival of the Spanish in the 16th century, it became popular among the middle and lower classes. In part, beer has replaced pulque in Mexico.

7.

The place from which children are dripped onto the earth.
The God–Two.

“The true God and his Spouse”
(*Codex Florentino*)¹⁴

¿And the Son?

The man.

The Couple that said
let us make man in our image
and he created him, a couple.

8.

He is Ometéotl, the Dialectical God
Life–Death

Woman–Man.

He transforma death into life.

In the Bourbon Codex¹⁵ he is holding a tibia
and a flower is flowing from the tibia:
resurrection.

Venus who burns brightly in the evening and the dawn.

And more and more images from the bibliography flow from me
as from a tomb there flow jades, turquoises, golden butterflies.

9.

The inventor of men, that was also his name.

He who put maize in our mouths.

The Supreme Couple

Ome–Tecutli y Ome–Cíhuatl¹⁶

Lord of Duality and Lady of Duality.

Then, who is the son?

All of us.

¹⁴ The Florentine Codex was produced by Fr. Bernardino Sahagún (a Franciscan friar) from 1545 to 1590, the year he died. The correct original title is *La historia general de las cosas de Nueva España* [General History about New Spain], but it is known as The Florentine Codex since the best MS is in the Laurentian Library in Florence, Italy. In collaboration with his Aztec students at Tlatelolco (now a neighborhood in Mexico City), they produced 2,400 pages in twelve books and 2,000 illustrations, which cover native Mexican culture, religious, cosmology, society, commerce; in other words, a kind of pictorial encyclopedia or compendium of the Nahuatl-speaking people. The work has been fully digitized by the World Digital Library at this URL: [The Florentine Codex](#). Printed copies are also found in Library West at the University of Florida.

¹⁵ The Bourbon Codex, or Codex Borbonicus, was composed by Aztec priests around the time of the Spanish conquest of Mexico (1519-1521). This codex is named after the Palais Bourbon, but it is housed in the Bibliothèque de l'Assemblée Nationale in Paris. It is one continuous sheet of Aztec parchment (*amatl*) that originally had forth folded pages; however, two of these accordion-like pages are now missing. The current state of this codex contains both Aztec pictographs or polychrome paintings and Spanish superscript commentaries.

¹⁶ Ometeculti and Omecíhuatl are, as the poet tells us an Aztec deity with a dual aspect:

Quetzalcóatl—God and Quetzalcóatl man consubstantial.
Both are called “1—Cane.”
Their pilgrimage through the shadows...
Or their expulsion from the city.
And just as an archeologist collects fragments
and goes about putting them together, this was the frieze on the bottom,
a few walking jaguars,
and these giant figures were on top of the pyramid ...

10.

Serpent with the green feathers of the *Kuk*¹⁷ bird, or quetzal.
Consciousness of a superior order.
Reptile and bird: elevation of matter.
Conscious man.
The body that encountered its inner freedom.
To stop crawling and to rise again to the sky.
Dejar de reptar y remontarse al cielo.
The sky is the bird.
Quetzalcóatl is the heightened spirit of flesh
akin to song.
The divine condition of what is human.
Revelation
of the earth’s celestial origins.
It’s found in the codices with the hide of a panther.
because the morning star gathers all others
and the light-spotted starry sky
is like a panther’s skin.
But Quetzalcóatl was driven from the city.

11.

In the year 1—Cane, Quetzalcóatl was born
as it is told, “Quetzalcóatl was born in this year.”
His childhood he spent near Tepoztlán¹⁸
where now school children climb up through the torturous brambles
until, speechless, they reach the ruins pyramid
of the god of pulque.

¹⁷ This word, *kuk*, meaning ‘quetzal,’ as the poet tells us, is one of the roots of Quetzalcóatl’s name in a Mayan dialect of Guatemala; hence, Kukulcán, among the Maya. In the dialect of the Maya’s sacred book, the *Popol Vuh*, Maya Quiché, the Plumed Serpent deity is called Gucumatz.

¹⁸ For a tour of the town of Tepoztlán (or Tepoztlan—without accent mark) and its adjoining archeological pyramid site of Tepozteco, where the god Tepoztécatl was worshiped by the Aztecs, see the following site in the online textbook for Latin American Humanities: [Tepoztlán](#).

He would pray and fast
 in his palace alongside the tin-colored lake.
There he would sacrifice snakes, birds, butterflies.
His plumed house,
 feather-covered everywhere,
yellow feathers for the eastern room,
feathers from a blue bird for the room on the side of the setting sun,
red feathers for the room on the north side
and the southern one, nothing but white feathers.
 “He prayed—it was known—
 facing the site of Duality.”
The Black and the Red:
 The Duality of the Star Skirt and the Sun Plumes.
 (National Library of Paris.)

14.

At night he prayed near the palace pool with its aquatic moss.
He would invoke someone who was in the heart of the heavens.
 Mistress of our flesh,
 Lord of our flesh,
the Lady who, at night, wears a starry skirt,
the Lord who, by day, covers the cottony earth.

15.

Quetzalcóatl’s death in Tlapalan
is also Venus, when it plunges into the place of the setting sun.
 “They say he still exists.”
In the year *1-Cane* (1-Flute)
the king of Tula became transformed into the Morning Star.
 Sages are God’s flutes.
 Through them he speaks through a flute.
In their Annals we find that he went to Tlilan-Tlapalan,
“the land of red and black”
 (wisdom).
Black and red: darkness and light.
The colors of black and red belong to the sages.
He himself was:
 “black and red ink, writing and wisdom.”
He died in Tlilan-Tlapalan, which means red and black ink,
that means the land of writing.
 “He brought the paintings of Tula to the Quiché princes.”

patron saint of India. Again, perhaps, our poet’s cultural identification of the St. Thomas who evangelized India with the mistaken 1492 Spanish encounter with Latin America as if it were the Indies.

16.

His childhood (perhaps) near Tepoztlán,
which is to say on Tepozteco mount.
Amidst the huge box canyon on the Pellicer estate
the steep chizzled cliff of Tepozteco was outlined, and at its dimly viewed
peak, the small pyramid of the god of pulque
of little Quetzalcóatl
and a score of little quetzalcóatls were leaving school salían
and running to Tepozteco.
As I recall the town had lots of beer parlors.
He and his people left for Tlapalan
where he disappeared.
That is, Tlapalan, the reddish black land.
It's in the Scriptures.
It was already late when we left Tepozteco.
And high above the pyramid of the pulque god
the planet Venus.
Forced to quit the city
he disappeared from history reappearing in myth.

17.

He led a peaceful government in Cholula.²¹
He allowed no one to speak of war.
He always refused to kill Toltecs as sacrificial victims
because he loved his vassals as his own children.
To him the Cholulans owe their laws and rituals.
Their calendar.
He taught metallurgy in Cholula.
Cholula—the city of peace.
Where enemy nations would make peace.
He discovered gold and silver and precious stones.
How to use shells and feathers.
He taught them ceramics
and how to make clay fly like a bird.
He discovered cocoa and many-colored cotton.
The feathers of the quetzal bird²² and the turquoise bird,²³

²⁰ For general textbook notes on the *Popol Vuh*, see: => [Popol Vuh](#). See also various links concerning the *Popol Vuh* under “P” in the textbook [Index](#).

²¹ Cholula: see the references in the [Cholula](#) Notes pages under the [Index](#) (S) in this Website.

²² The habitat quetzal is humid forest highlands, mostly in Baja Verapaz, Guatemala. They are rather large birds with iridescent green wing covers, back, chest, and head and a red belly.

the yellow feathers of the zacuan bird ,²⁴
The llama-colored feathers.
The clay from which they ate and drank.
Blue, green, white, red, and yellow.

18.

He taught them how to sing.
To hold goodness in their hearts and to sing.
Cuali in iyolo: goodness in their hearts.
A social ethics.
He taught them how to have wise faces.
A great humanist tradition.
“They had only one god.
His name was Quetzalcóatl.
His priest,
his name was also Quetzalcóatl.
Everything about Quetzalcóatl
their priest Quetzalcóatl told them:
Quetzalcóatl demands you sacrifice nothing to him
but serpents, but butterflies.”
He never allowed human sacrifices.
These began with the government of Huémac.²⁵
This is what the sorcerers started.

19.

The first king with a monument in Chapultepec forest.
The first king to sit on the throne.
The throne of every king of Mexico was on loan
and one day it would be returned to Quetzalcóatl.
But in the end Quetzalcóatl had to flee.
Only his memory remained and the hope that he would return.

The Quetzalcóatl, that is, from Toltec civilization.
From the *Toltecáyotl* (Toltecism).
Toltecs, the people who worshiped Quetzalcóatl.

²³ This bird is the *Cyanolyca turcosa*. It is a vibrant blue bird with a black face mask and collar, and its habitat is humid mountain evergreen forests.

²⁴ This bird is an *Icterus Dominicanus*. It has beautiful yellow feathers on its upper wings, breast and lower body.

²⁵ Huémac is the last king of the Toltecs at their capital of Tula/Tollan, north of what is now Mexico City. Huémac appears in Aztec historical myths, because no records exist from the Toltecs, who preceded the Aztecs in central Mexico. The name Huémac may mean either “big hand” or “big gift.” According to Aztec chronologies, after the fall of Tula, Huémac fled, eventually dying in a cave at Chapultepec, which now is a park in Mexico City and under the Aztecs was the pleasure garden of Moctezuma II. Huémac’s death occurred between 1090 and 1170 CE.

Also whose cultural hero was Quetzalcóatl,
devoted to worship and meditation,
whose theological doctrine was the duality principle,
male and female,
which impregnates and conceives
everything in existence.
The Creating Pair.
And they, the Toltecs, summoned him to rule in far off Tula.

20.

Dressed in a white cloak with blue scorpions
strolling among the plumed serpent-decorated columns.
With the still-nomadic Aztecs roaming the northern plains ...
“which is what we ought to preserve ...”
They gave wings to stone.
Imitating living things
perhaps a fleet-footed lizard
in metal.
Those who left so many things buried.
Their sherds and their pots are everywhere:
orange on white,
cloisonné decoration,²⁶
champlevé²⁷ decoración,
raised white outline edges,
al fresco decoración, etc.

21.

Th esplendor of the Toltecs is buried in the ground.
Along with broken “Moctezuma” beer bottles.
With bird feather they made pictures that flew.
Pictures made with pretty feathers of birds that sang sweetly.
In London’s British Museum.
The first they were to work with obsidian dark as moon-lit nights.
Aztecs, Texcocans,²⁸ Tlaxcalcans²⁹ ... when they referred to Toltecs

²⁶ Cloisonné is an ancient method for decorating various kinds of art objects produced with various materials. The technique involves making compartments (*cloisons* in French) to the object by fixing strips the edges of the *cloisons*, and these strips then are still visible in the finished work, as kinds of inlays of (often) multiple colors. The finished work is fired in a kiln.

²⁷ Champlevé is an artistic technique similar to cloisonné in that it too uses compartments; however, it differs from cloisonné in that champlevé is used more to cover larger areas and to depict figurative images.

²⁸ Texcocans (Tetzcoatl (sing) or Tetzcoah (plural) were the people of a Mesoamerican tribe that founded Acolhua in the 12th century (CE), a major city-state on the northeastern side of Lake Texcoco in the Valley of Mexico just outside the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan. Both cities were subsumed by Spanish conquistadors into Mexico City in 1521. Before the arrival of the Spanish in 1519, Texcoco was part of the Aztec Triple Alliance.

they meant perfect artists.

“Which is what we ought to preserve from the Toltecs.”

The polished and imaginative

Toltec officials, like our Flemish ones now.³⁰

Every tribe glorified Toltec technology.

Moral perfection.

Artists will act with care as if they were Toltecs.

A good painter, creator of things with black water and
with red water.

22.

The inept painter, a fraud.

The Toltecs, about the Aztecs:

a legendary people from an enchanted land;

the first people to sow the seed of men in Mexico.

Aztecs excavations brought the Toltecs to the light of day.

The Toltecs’ pots and jewels came forth from the earth.

Those multi-colored vessels like codices.

Their construction was indestructible.

“Toltec pyramids,

their polychrome temples ... they are there to be seen.”

Later they disappeared below layers of cactus and maguey plants,
but they are there again to be seen by tourists.

Art to give a face to their people.

And still giving a face to their people

including even in guidebook photos.

Even after being buried under ground for centuries
their paintings are still clear and gleaming

and human remains still resting alongside the paintings.

But Quetzalcóatl was expelled from the city,

and he fled to Tlapalan.

23.

The Toltec’s book of paintings went all the way to its end.

²⁹ Tlaxcalans were people who occupied a territory and major city-state from 12,000 BCE to the arrival of Spanish conquistadors in 1519. Various pre-Columbian peoples occupied the area, which is in the Mexican Trans-Volcanic Belt east of Mexico City, including the Olmecas, Chichimecas, Toltecs, and finally the Tlaxcalans, who spoke a Nahuatl language similar to the Mexica peoples including the Aztecs. From 1325 onward the Aztecs and Tlaxcalans engaged in constant war, but the Aztecs were never able to conquer them. Hence, the Tlaxcalans quickly allied with Hernán Cortés and supplied him with the vast majority of his fighting men.

³⁰ Flemish painting from the Dutch region of Flanders flourished from the 15th to the 17th century. Art historians generally attribute the decline of Flemish art, especially painting—as the theme our poet (Cardenal) is now expressing—to Rubens’ death in 1640. The Wikipedia list of Flemish painters, including notable ones such as van Eyck, Brueghel, Rubens, Rembrandt, and Vermeer, contains several hundred names. Perhaps the poet is impressed by the omnipresence of Flemish painting in the modern period as belonging to “our time,” or “now.”

(or, in the British Museum, it is unfinished:
The last page of the Nuttall Codex³¹ is barely colored in
where the painter had only begun to put in yellow touches
and then the rest is left blank...)

And they left Tula following Quetzalcóatl;
The sudden depopulation of their cities still has no explanation!
Holy cities that soared and sank in Mesoamerica
like Quetzalcóatl's star.

24.

So, which one is Tula?

And which one is Tolan?

Tolan means *metrópolis*.

The polemic about Tula.

In ancient ages he [Quetzalcóatl] would pray in Tolan,

his temple was very tall and very high,

and there he would raise his loud cries toward Duality's abode.

Naturally, according to archeologists,

Tolan is Tula.

But is Tolan really Tolan?

Tula, the one in Hidalgo state?³²

Tula, the great *metrópolis*.

Quetzalcóatl's great capital.

But EARLIER:

Teotihuacán, where wise keepers of knowledge arose to rule ...

25.

Mexican archeologists are still searching for Tula.

The Tula of the Toltecs.

Which is like trying to unearth New Jerusalem.³³

Myths are not History,³⁴ according to Old Brinton.³⁵

³¹ The Nuttall Codex is properly called the Codex Zouche–Nuttall because it was first published by Zelia Nuttall in 1905, and its donor was the Baroness Zouche. Like the Bourbon Codex, it is a long pre-Columbian (14th century) pictographic document on animal skin and arranged in fourteen accordion-like folds painted on both side in brilliant style; however, unlike the other Codices our poet refers to in this book, the Nuttall Codex is of Mixteca origin from the Oaxaca region in southern Mexico.

³² The Mexican state of Hidalgo borders the Federal District of Mexico on the south. It was named for Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, the (Catholic) priest of Dolores who started the uprising against Spain to begin the Mexican War of Independence in 1810.

³³ New Jerusalem refers to a prophecy in both the Hebrew Bible and the Christian New Testament whereby a new Messianic city, with a new Holy Temple, will be built in or near Jerusalem.

³⁴ In the original Spanish text, this phrase, “Miths (sic) are not History,” is printed in English without quotation marks or italics. Therefore, the italics are added to indicate that the rest of this poem is a translation from the Spanish whereas the indicated phrase is not-Spanish.

³⁵ Daniel Garrison Brinton (1837–99) was a medical doctor and an “old” (i.e., 19th century) archeologist and ethnographer from the United States. He taught at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia and the

Fabrications in the mind, not historical events.
The tiny city of Tula
was not the splendor of Tolan,
 which was the movement of the sun.
Quetzalcóatl, who arrives and leaves.
His fall happened because he opposed human sacrifice.
And he fled to Tlapalan, where he died.
 He leaves, he goes to Tlapalan.
You left behind the palaces, the temples,
the painted stones,
 in Tolan, where you had ruled.

26.

But your name will never be forgotten.
 Your people will be crying forever.
A mythical cultural kingdom.
The ideal Mesoamerican city.
 The archetype.
The turquoise house you had built in Tolan
where you came to rule...
 Tolan is now in ruins.
The stone snakes were left smashed to bits.
—But then, “the disparity among the archeological finds in Tula
and the fabulous descriptions of Tolan.” —

27.

A king and a kingdom, both lost.
The city of Tolan: consubstantial with the order of the cosmos.
 Of celestial harmony.
Tula, the one kms. from México, D.F.³⁶
 It power came from the heavens.
With its 2 Quetzalcóatls, the god and the priest.
The Quetzalcóatl who rules the cosmos
 and the Quetzalcóatl who rules the city.
From the first, agriculture; from the second, culture.
 Harmony from the heavens and on the earth.
For the cycles of heaven and human life, the same rhythm.
One social arrangement according to the stars.

University of Pennsylvania. He published many scholarly books including two on Mesoamerican cultures relevant to this poem: *The Annals of the Cakchiquels* (1885) and *Ancient Nahuatl Poetry* (1890).

³⁶ Tula, indeed, is a relatively (for México) small city 70 kms. north of Mexico City. “D.F.” stands for Distrito Federal, which is roughly parallel to D.C. in the United States. Since 1993, Mexico’s Distrito Federal and Mexico City per se are considered, in the Constitution, as one and the same. At the same time, the “state of Mexico,” which surrounds D.F. on two sides, is one of Mexico’s 32 states (i.e., “federal entities”).

Reduplication of the heavens here on earth:
 “Tolan’s regime, Tolan’s system.”
The cosmos copied on a human scale.
More than a city, a vision...
 A copy of the heavens’ urban planning.
 The fall of Tolan,
 ... a collective dream.

28.

Tolan: social harmony.
A city and above furrowed pathways in the sky,
 pathways of the sun, moon, and stars.
And nostalgia for Tolan.
 The sacred city, lost.
Quetzalcóatl’s Tolan.
How to locate Tula
 like locating Heavenly Jerusalem.
 Mesoamerica’s spiritual capital.
Throughout the entire Classic and Post-Classic Periods³⁷
 like a still-obscure longing for the future
 or the memory of their crumbled past.
A natural order and a social ideal.
 A mythical kingdom in the Tropics.
 Tolan of the Toltecs
 with white reeds bordering blue water
 and white willows edging the white sand.

29.

Where ducks swim among lilies.
 The site of the magic, celestial ball game.
The paradise of Quetzalcóatl and also Tolan.
On the corner of a certain mural at Teotihuacán:
Two rivers from a spring, among zapote and cocoa trees;
on the banks multicolored small human figures
bathe and cavort in the water,

 some of them plunges head first,
one swims on his back. Another, fresh out of the water,
squeezes some drops from his swimming trunks.
Others pick flowers or rest under the trees.
 Farther upstream some are dancing,

³⁷ Roughly speaking the Classic Mesoamerican Period went from 353 to 900 CE; while the Post-Classic Period covered the years 900–1527; this last date refers to the Mayas in Guatemala; the ending date in the Aztec world would correspond to the Spanish conquest of 1519–21).

others are playing a kind of football with referees
 Others are hunting butterflies.
 And there's a firefly with transparent wings.
 Nearly all are talking and singing
 (word scrolls bubble from their mouths: glyphs of words or song).
 One alone seems not to share in the joy,
 a new arrival in paradise, according to Dr. Caso.³⁸
 He's not found in tourist guidebooks,
 you can't get there by *bus* and a *lunchbox*.³⁹

30.

There were twenty towns in greater Tolan,
 20 were their hands and feet:⁴⁰
Pantécatl, Itzcuitzóncatl, Tlematepehua, Tezcatepehua, Tlecuaztepehua,
Tecolotépec, Tochpaneca, Cempohualteca, Cuatlachteca,
Cozcateca, Nonohualca, Cuitlapilzinca,
Aztateca, Tzanatepehua, Tetetzíncatl, Teuhxícatl,
Tzacanca, Cuixoca, Cuahchichinolca, Chiuhnauhteca.
 Tolan—center of the world and center of the heavens,
 in particular, of the nocturnal sky.
 Hovering over her, stars shining like a celestial model,
 the city, mirroring cosmic order.
 Agriculture, cultura, ritual,
 in Tolan, harmonious totality.
 Quetzalcóatl God y cultural hero Quetzalcóatl,
 creator of life, the god,
 and the hero, society's organizer.

³⁸ Alfonso Caso y Andrade (1896 – 1970) was a major Mexican archeologist and professor of Mesoamerican studies. Ernesto Cardenal, in this book of poems about Quetzalcóatl, shows that he follows Alfonso Caso's understanding—which is also a premise of this course on Latin American humanities—that knowledge about pre-Columbian civilization and cultures foundational for understanding contemporary Latin America. It is important to note that Professor Caso was the first scholar to propose the theory that Olmec culture was “mother culture (*la cultura madre*) of pre-Columbian Mesoamerica. Among many other activities and achievements, he was a professor at the prestigious Colegio de México, and he was the President of the mega UNAM (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México) in the 1940s.

³⁹ “Bus” and “lunchbox” are italicized because in Cardenal's original Spanish poem they are both written without italics as if they were regular Spanish words, adopted, that is, as now-integrated, lexicalized loan words. The actual word for “lunchbox” in the Spanish version is “lunch,” which, I believe, in Spanish, refers both to the container and what is eaten.

⁴⁰ The Maya's mathematical system was based on 20, rather than the base of 10 in Western (and universal?) mathematics. Apparently, indeed, the Maya used—at least as a metaphor—the number of digits on our hands and feet together. For a chart of the Mayan numbering and calendric system based on 20, see: => [Notes on the Mayas](#). The poet then proceeds to list the twenty towns of Toltec legend surrounding Tula, or the mythical Tolan. The list is found in León Portilla, *Cantos y crónicas del México antiguo*. This book is fully digitized online.

31.

Mesoamerican society like a copy of heaven's society.
Rocks chizzeled against chaos.
 Streets arranged like the stars.
Natural rock became form.
Polished softness what had been hard and rough.
 Pyramid the ancient hill.
Like the cane from the lake become a flute,
 and a tune blowing from the flute
 like the cane stalks stirred by the wind across the lake.
Tolan: "where cane grows."
Where cane stalks sing.
It was a model of liberation for Mesoamerican cultures.
 But afterwards the pyramids became hills again ...
The shamans said:
"Quetzalcóatl must leave the city
because he rejects human sacrifice.
We shall live here."

32.

Teotihuacán, the first Tolan.
Or Tolan began in Teotihuacán.
 Teotihuacán of the Toltecs.
Tolan: equivalent to the first capital, Teotihuacán.
 "Teotihuacán Tolan".
Teotihuacán = "The city of the gods."
That's what they said
because it is where they buried their lords and rulers,
and above them they built their pyramids that are still there;
a pyramid is like a hill though it is built by hand.
And they repeated: when we die
 in truth we shall not die,
 we shall awake.
They would sing "Las mañanitas" to their dead:
 Awake, for rosy dawn is coming
 the little birds are already singing
 the flame-red pheasants are already singing
 look, morning light has already here.⁴¹

⁴¹ "Las mañanitas" is a traditional Mexican birthday song, equivalent, more or less to "Happy Birthday" in the U.S. Cardenal's version (and my translation) is his own adaptation for the purposes of the context in which he's using it. Here's the standard version in Spanish and English:

There he became god, meaning, there he died.
 Ceremonial center become metrópolis.
 Without barracks.
 Archeologists are not finding weapons.
 Offerings were of rubber, jade, quetzal feather ...
 Teotihuacán: human divinity.
 Where the serpent took flight.
 Inner elevation.
 In the vast prickly aridity of cactus
 there in the distance near the horizon
 the pyramid like an ecstasy of stone.
 An Indian standing in the field
 still like the cactus by his side.
 The pyramid in the background: a cult of elevation.
 Sacred city made to scan the sky
 and plotted out according to the blueprint of the heavens.
 Where wise men were commanders, leaders.
 The mysteries of Teotihuacán's architects.

Urbanization determined by the heavens.
 Temples to pray for golden corn
 and jades and emeralds from the rain.
 y los jades y esmeraldas de la lluvia.
 Columns, terraces, platforms, stairways ...
 Enormous stairways to the sky,
 precisely toward the sun at its zenith.
 And in the center of everything
 Quetzalcóatl's pyramid.⁴²
 On it, the smiling heads

Estas son las mañanitas que cantaba el rey David . Hoy por ser día de tu santo, te las cantamos a ti.	This is the morning song that King David used to sing. Today being the day of your saint, we sing it to you
Despierta mi bien, despierta, mira que ya amaneció ya los pajaritos cantan la luna ya se metió.	Wake up my dearest, wake up, see now that the day has dawned the little birds are singing, the moon has finally set.
Qué linda está la mañana en que vengo a saludarte venimos todos con gusto y placer a felicitarte.	How lovely is this morning, when I come to greet you we all come with joy and pleasure to congratulate you.
El día en que tu naciste nacieron todas las flores y en la pila del bautismo cantaron los ruiseñores	The very day you were born all the flowers first bloomed and in the baptismal font all the nightingales sung.
Ya viene amaneciendo, ya la luz del día nos dio. Levántate de mañana mira que ya amaneció.	The dawn has come my darling, and the sunlight is here for us. Rise and shine up with the morning and you'll see that here's the dawn.

⁴² See f.n. 11 for a link to references on this Website about the Teotihuacan places and structures (pyramids) in this major pre-Columbian city-state.

of Quetzalcóatl.
For the very first time, in Teotihuacán—the first Tolan—
 Quetzalcóatl's smile.
The pyramid was a sacred mountain.
A replica of the pyramid of heaven
 where the sun ascends and descends.
Quetzalcóatl's temple
in the center of Teotihuacán

⁴³which was the center of Mesoamerica which was the center of the world.
Pyramids, shrines, palaces
 schools, warehouses, markets,
 terraces, town squares, avenues,
residential neighborhoods ...
The Pyramid of the Moon at the end of the Avenue of the Dead.
 The city constructed for the plumed serpent.
 The greatest pre-Hispanic metropolis.
The most important Tolan.
The most important Tula or *Tolan* (“metropolis” in Nahuatl)
The Avenue of the Dead and the Pyramid of the Sun
 seen from the Plaza of the Moon.
Choral chanting in ceremonial courtyards.
 Walls covered with newly layered visions.
Decorations of animal gods and god animals.
 Over the rectilinear architecture
 (Teotihuacan Cubism)
 the undulating serpent-bird,

 smiles emanating from the stone,
 animal gods and god animals
 animal men and man animals
 man gods and god men.
Heaven's harmony was also society's.
City of the Morning Star
 “that shines over fields and houses.”
The city attracted diverse people.
The city limits were expanded.
 The longest avenues
 and the highest pyramids.
At the time of the great urban renewal.
The most crowded population according to archeologists

⁴³ The following segment, from “that” to “bird,” (sic), seems to follow directly after the previous segment ending in “of Teotihuacán” (no period); however, since it appears in the original on its own (following) page, I am formatting this segment following blank spaces. The same holds for the following two segments, down to #35.

but without slums.
When the obsidian boom occurred.
 Painting on new mural-covered walls.
Cerulean blue for jades and turquoises.
Ocre yellow for feathers and golden jewels.

Ocre pink for human skin.
White for the eyes, incisors, bones, cotton.
The priestly procession is immobile still moving on the mural.
 The buildings like stone books.
 Friezes of panthers walking
 over by the waiting tourist buses.
Success for Teotihuacán's urban life.
Its government, unknown.
 Whether of persons or community.
Federation? Alliances?
Class structure, unknown.
And always already:
 a phantom city.
The city lost its historicity.
The Aztecs already knew nothing about Teotihuacán.

35.

Afterwards, only mysterious ruins.
 A fall neither slow nor gradual.
 Una caída no lenta y gradual.
Teotihuacán was burned down
 (charred beams, rooms
 with smoke-sooted walls).
The resplendent city was plunged into night.
 ... in this land we now call New Spain
it's been a thousand years since it, that city
that once was called Tolan, was destroyed
 like Troy and its misfortune.
How the tour guide takes leave of us
where the kiosks full of false antiquities are sold
and the wind scatters picnickers' plastic wrappers.

36.

Tula comes next.
Innovative ceramics appeared in the Valley of México
with fine parallel, straight,
 or undulating

Tula style—lines.
Tula is also Tolan
naturally. Tula, Hidalgo.
Where the painted benches with plumed
serpents are found⁴⁴
on the western side of Quetzalcóatl–Tlahuizalpantecuhtli’s pyramid.
According to the Annals of the Cakchiquel people there are four Tolans.
Cities styled as Tolan.
Or with longing associations with Tolan.
Invoking Quetzalcoatlist Tolteckism.
Tula carried on the cult of Quetzalcóatl.
Its architecture showed Teotihuacan influence.
Friezes with walking panthers.
But Tula also has those Atlantes ...
those giant warriors atop the pyramids.⁴⁵

⁴⁶ Their ornamental fringes⁴⁷ now have many defects.
Rows of alternating panthers and coyotes
The former with tails up and the others with tails down,
faulty, wrong.
And like Teotihuacán
Tula also came to a mysterious end.
Popular discontent?
There was internal fighting
due to the tyranny of Huémac, Tula’s last king,
who married a female demon.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ All Mexico is famous for painting all every kind of object from ceramic cups to giant libraries. Here is an example of one of the painted benches in Dolores, one of the cities in the Mexican state of Hidalgo:



⁴⁵ Go to the link for Tula in f.n. 10 above for a photo series and analysis of the so-called “atlantes” in Tula.

⁴⁶ See f.n. #4 above for an explanation of the space above this section of this poem.

⁴⁷ These ornamental frets or fringes (*grecas* in Spanish) are architectural ornaments such often with right-angle patterns; for example:



⁴⁸ Information about Huémac, “the last king of the Toltecs,” comes from a Náhuatl/Aztec codex known as *The Annals of Cuauhtitlan*, which was composed mostly during the early Spanish period and completed around the year 1570. According to *The Annals*, after Quetzalcóatl dies (according to this codex), three rulers control Tula, the last of whom is the ill-fated Huémac, whose rule begins in 994. He cohabits with two women sorcerers, one of whom,

(Quetzalcóatl had already left.)
Clearly Tula was leveled by a massive fire
followed by a thorough sacking.
Charcoal everywhere, ashes, half-burned wood.
Mud fire-heated into ceramic.
Troy's adverse destiny.
And on top of the rubble, low-quality potsherds,
ceramics dubbed "Aztec II."
The invaders.

"Your kingdom, you left it behind in Tula
where once you ruled!"
The peaceful life in Tula ended
when Quetzalcóatl left.
The era of war began and also human sacrifices.
Huémac's reign of terror.
To Tula he imported all known manners of human sacrifices.
With him there was hunger, war, pestilence, earthquakes.
Then they distinguished "sages" from all other manner of Toltecs.
As for Quetzalcóatl's real Toltecs
Huémac's traitors called called them *nonohualca*,
"those who speak a foreign language"
(or an exotic ideology).
He left, he left Tula,
where the abandoned columns of serpents
are still standing.
He went off to Tlapalan, where he's resting.

37.

A new ceramic style began to enter the Valley of México.
Polychrome like the codices.
Vessels with three cone-shaped feet
or formed like eagle heads:
Cholula.
Cholula, another Tolan.
And here's Quetzalcóatl again,
commander of exodus after exodus,

Coacueye, he marries. They torment him and he quits and leaves Tula. In 1018, Tula suffers a seven-year famine. The two female sorcerers sacrifice all Huémac's children by throwing their bodies into nearby lakes. In 1058, "earth goddesses" take the many Toltecs captive and sacrifice them by shooting them, according to the codex, with arrows (enemy warriors?). In 1063 one of the sorcerers returns and starts a war between the remaining Toltecs and unidentified warriors. Both sides engage in wholesale human sacrifice, but the codex says that during Quetzalcóatl's rule there was no human sacrifice. The following year, the Toltecs flee from Tula and begin wandering throughout the Valley of Anáhuac in central México. Abandoned by his wandering people, Huémac hides in a cave and commits suicide by hanging himself.

the founder of city after city.
 The Great Pyramid of Cholula,⁴⁹ the largest in the world, and beyond
 the two pyramid–volcanos
 Iztaccíhuatl and Popocatepetl.⁵⁰
 at the time of the conquest
 the Cholulan still remembered Quetzalcóatl,
 their city’s founder, builder of temples and pyramids.
 Creator of social structure.
 The greatest in the world: “and they still made processions to the temple
 /to Quetzalcóatl
 as Christians do to Rome and Moors⁵¹ do to Mecca.”
 Then afterwards it fell into militarism.

38.

Also another Tolan in Nicaragua
 (now the dusty little town of Tola, in Rivas)⁵²
 was the center of the World.

A new ceramic style appeared: “Tola *tricoma*,”⁵³
 and later a style with abstract animals, snakes, birds,
 reddish and black design on a white background.
 Here too, in the little Rivas museum, walking panthers.
 Tola also: the great capital.
 The subsoil is jam packed with colorful ceramics,
 splendor below poverty.
 In the now dusty little town of Tola.
 Fleeing from the upstart dictatorship in Cholula, they came
 with their faith in Quetzalcóatl

⁴⁹ For a tour of the city of Cholula and comments about its great pyramid, see: => [Cholula](#).

⁵⁰ For a tour of these pyramids, see: => [Pyramids](#).

⁵¹ The term “Moors” (> *moros*) strictly speaking refers to people, usually Muslim, from North Africa, specifically the Maghreb. The majority of the Muslims who conquered most of the Iberian peninsula starting in 711 were, then, “Moors” (> *moros*). Traditionally, however, Spanish-speakers generally extended the term “*moros*” to all Muslims; hence, the reference here of pilgrimages to Mecca, the holiest site in all Islam.

⁵² Here is what the online website for the town of Rivas (or Tola Rivas) in Nicaragua—the poet Cardenal’s home country—says about the town: “The city of Rivas, known locally as “The City of Mangos” and its county seat were given incorporated status in 1720 with the name of “Town of the Pure and Clean Conception [Roman Catholic designation for St. Mary] Rivas.” The current name was given to honor Captain General Francisco Rodríguez de Rivas, president of the Captaincy General of Guatemala in those days [i.e., before Guatemala and Nicaragua became separate administrative units]. We know that the land comprising the Rivas isthmus separated from the sea relatively recently in geological time, with a maximum elevation of 477 meters above sea level. It also belongs to the department of the island of Ometepe, which has two volcanoes, one being Concepción at 1,610 meters above sea level.” (Nicaragua became a fully independent nation in 1838.

⁵³ “Tola” refers to the town in Guatemala; “tricoma” is a botanical term, which in English can be rendered “trichome,” “hair,” or “tufted.” I think leaving “Tola tricoma” in the translation honors Walter Benjamin’s theory of translation point to the effect that proper literary translation should leave “traces” (Jacques Derrida’s concept) of the original in the translation; Benjamin refers to this procedure as “translatability.” There is also a tiny rural community in Guatemala called Tola.

(“he will make seven or eight oldmen’s lives before me”)
 heading for the prophesied land,
 a lake and an island near two high and round volcanoes
 (“Ometepe” = “Two Hills”).
 Founders of “Quetzalcóatl” (Quezalguaque) city
 and worshipers of Ehécatl, who is also Quetzalcóatl,
 the god of wind and lake squalls,
 Night and Wind.
 Worshipers also of the Divine Pair
 (Tamagastad and Cipaltonal).⁵⁴
 We Toltecas who do not pronounce the “tl” sounds,
Ometépetl turned into Omotepe,
 who are called *Pipiles* (“children”),
 like the small Náhuatl boy
 who can’t yet say “Tlalnepantla”, “tlapalería”,⁵⁵
 or those who pronounce words badly,
 according to the pre-Columbian
 Academicians of the Language.⁵⁶

39.

But Quetzalcóatl also left Tola, Rivas.
 When the Conquistadors arrived on that July 19th
 they encountered human sacrifices
 (in our current era that began in Teotihuacan)
 when the Mexican presidential airplane QUETZALCÓATL
 landed the first time
 at the Augusto C. Sandino International Airport
 in Managua
 among reddish black flags.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Tamagastad and Cipaltonal are a pair of male and female pre-Columbian gods indigenous to Nicaragua:



⁵⁵ “Tlapalería” is a Mexican Spanish term taken from Náhuatl “tlapalli” (“fire liquid”) meaning “ironmonger’s shop” or simply “hardware store.” “Tlalnepantla” is a small city in the state of Mexico north of Mexico City.

⁵⁶ Most Spanish-speaking countries have scholarly institutions called Academia de la Lengua (Language Academy). Together they establish the worldwide lexical and pronunciation standards for Spanish as spoken variably in each of the associated countries.

This was another Tolan. Adulterated.
(Another Tolan, but adulterated.)
Ah! Tolan was in the *Popol Vuh*
as the homeland of all higher culture!
Where prehistoric tribes went on pilgrimage.
The decline of Chichén Itzá begins with the Cocombs.
In the Temple of the Warriors:
a high relief is placed upside down.
Stereotyped stelae.
Mayan Baroque become Rococo.
Afterwards, the first signs of the jungle
starting to grow on the stairways of the pyramids
and the roofs of the palaces.

41.

Finally the last Tolan: Tenochtitlán.⁶¹
Not long before neither hunters nor gatherers.
In 1325 they arrive at Tenochtitlán
where they found the happy eagle atop a nopal⁶²
devouring something,
tearing it apart as it ate.
(There they settled.)
a people whose face no one knew before.
Soon to become the military superpower of Mesoamérica.
They counterposed their turquoise serpent (Huitzilopochtli)⁶³
to the serpent with quetzal feathers (Quetzalcóatl).

Huitzilopochtli now,
the Lord of war:
the supreme god.
Following the defeat of Quetzalcóatl's worshipers
human sacrifice.

⁶¹ For a discussion and photo tour of Tenochtitlán on this text's website, see the page for: => [Aztec Notes](#).

⁶² The word 'nopal' is derived from Náhuat *nohpalli* for "pads." It is a cactus also called a prickly pear cactus. More than 100 nopal species are common to México, where it is featured in Mexican cooking including soups, salads, and candies (from the nopal's tuna fruit). The scene described here is shown at the center of Mexico's national flag:



⁶³ For Huitzilopochtli, the principal Aztec god of war, see also the page for: => [Aztec Notes](#).

Which tribe held the sad primacy?
 Itzcóatl⁶⁴ burned
 the history books, the so-called “books of paintings”
 in which his people appeared as inglorious barbarians.
 Then a superior social class was installed
 separate from the masses, the *macehuales*.
 There is Tenochtitlán fanning out like quetzal feathers.⁶⁵
 Their nobles coming in boats.
 At the jade-colored water’s edge the city rises.
 Like a blue heron taking flight from the water.
 Their chants are heard from a distance.
 We see their white willoos.
 A sunrise of war rises over the city.
 Its sovereign leaders, legal heirs of the mythological Quetzalcóatl.
 (State propaganda pure and simple)
 “Remember: this isn’t your throne,
 it is yours on loan,
 and it shall be returned to Quetzalcóatl.”

In the center of Tenochtitlán
 the Great Temple
 sanctifying their conquests.
 In the temple site Huitzilopochtli’s immense pyramid.
 Huitzilopochtli: militarism.
 Facing it, much smaller
 Quetzalcóatl’s pyramid.
 Now Quetzalcóatl is merely
 one more god among those of the dominant class.
 The myth manipulated for the goals of imperialism.
 An ideology refuted by reality.
 Praying to a very human Lord
 whom they honored by flaying alive.
 The chief priest was to be devout, peaceful, compassionate.
 He was the representative of Quetzalcóatl.
 And they sent Moctezuma⁶⁶ a thigh for him to eat.

⁶⁴ Itzcóatl (ruled 1427 – 1440; Itz = obsidian; cóatl = serpent) is the fourth Mexica or Aztec emperor (Aztec: *tlatoani*) whose victory over the Tepanecs led to the beginning of the Aztec Empire proper, which itself lasted until Cortés’ conquest in the war of 1519 – 1521.

⁶⁵ One thinks of peacock tail feathers “fanning out.” However, Cardenal’s image here of quetzal feathers seems, rather, to have in mind Moctezuma’s (Montezuma) monumental headdress of quetzal feathers as displayed in Mexico’s national archeological museum, a photo of which can be seen in this website link: => [Headdress](#).

... but the only required sacrifices were snakes, flowers, butterflies.
A spiritual heritage betrayed
by despotism.

A diabolical plan for mythological control.
The cruelest and cleverest of politicians: Huitzilopochtli.
A beating heart torn out, steaming,
and the body thrown bouncing down the bloody steps
at the corner of Argentina and Donceles streets.⁶⁷

The Codex says
“Death workers.”

In honor of Huitzilopochtli.
Still, nothing mythical mattered, only politics.
Sacrificing captives expanded the empire’s borders.
Tenochtitlán grew and expanded.
Expansion brought more and more chinampas
(artificial islands
like floating gardens:
now they’re a tourist attraction in Xochimilco⁶⁸).
Its entire grandeur:

due to their taxes.

All tribute come to Tenochtitlán.

At the center of Mexico’s plateau:
Tenochtitlán and night and terror,
and with each step of the captives scaling the Great Pyramid

⁶⁶ In the website for this course you can find some brief references to Moctezuma (Montezuma) in the following link: => [Aztec Notes](#).

⁶⁷ The intersection of these two streets (Donceles and República de Argentina) is situated in the heart—the beating civic heart, as it were—of downtown Mexico City. On one corner is the famous Porrúa bookstore and nearby is the Colegio de México, one of Mexico’s finest institutions of higher education. A block away is the great 16th century Metropolitan Cathedral. Opposite the bookstore is the site of the ruins of the Aztec’s Templo Mayor. For an online tour within this website of the archeological site and its attendant museum, see: => [Templo Mayor](#).

⁶⁸ Xochimilco is one administrative district within Mexico’s Distrito Federal (D.F.). In pre-Aztec times it was an independent city on the south side of Xochimilco Lake. As this poem says, Xochimilco is famous for its canals and artificial (floating) islands. Tourists traverse the 110 miles of canals in gondola-style boats (Spanish: *trajineras*). Basically, Xochimilco’s canals are what remains of the lake surrounding the island of Tenochtitlán, which was filled in by conquistadors, colonialists, and Mexicans over the following five centuries. You can see an example of *trajineras* in the image below on the left; on the right is the Aztec glyph for Xochimilco (*xochitl* in Náhuatl means “flower”):



rising violence.
 Paying honor to Huitzilopochtli, who displaced Quetzalcóatl.
 For the continuing existence of the world: sacrifices.
 However, Quetzalcóatl meant self-sacrifice.
 No sacrifice of others.
 Moctezuma: Supreme Commander of the army
 and personification of Huitzilopochtli.
 Moctezuma installed unopposed despotism.
 But there was an internal contradiction: that of the *tlamantinimes*.⁶⁹
 On the one hand, official mythology
 and on the other hand *tlamantinimes*. Quetzalcóatl's followers,
 who preserved the luminous tradition
 in the collections of their books of paintings.
 "They taught children how to live."
 They must avoid what is bad,
 fleeing from the power of evil.

43.

Man should be honored like precious stone and fine plumage.
 (In the *Calmecac*⁷⁰
 pre-Hispanic educational centers.)
 Concentrate on him, he of the Night and the Wind,
 and your dreams will be sweet,
 little mourning dove.
 The say it is quite hard to live on the earth,
 home to frightful conflicts,
 little dove.
 Antifascists.
 And among the people his doctrine was kept alive...
 And there had been contrary doctrine with Netzahualcóyotl,

⁶⁹ Tlamantinimes (more properly: tlamatinime (sic) are Aztec sages or wise men (the singular in Náhuatl is tlamatini). Mexican scholars often refer to them as philosophers: see particularly Miguel León Portilla and his major resource book *Aztec Thought and Culture*. A pictograph of a tlamatini in the act of instructing an acolyte from one of the Aztec's "books of pictures:



⁷⁰ "Calmecac" refers to the Aztecs' residential educational centers for children of the nobility. In Tenochtitlán, such a center was located in the precinct of the Great Pyramid, and it was dedicated to Quetzalcóatl. Such schools provided military and religious training along with literacy and singing or chanting.

who was an adherent and adept of an invisible principle.
(On Netzahualcōyotl's religious revolution
see: Don Juan Pomar, great grandson of Texcoco's king).⁷¹
No effigy to him in the Temple of Texcoco.

44.

He returned to the theology of Quetzalcōatl.
The two little upper images are of Netzahualcōyotl y Netzahualpili,
and below, images of painters, sculptors, weavers, singers.
Speech bubbles for their songs.
The song from their mouths in the form of a flower.
And among the people living doctrine.
 Until the arrival of the caravels
 like floating pyramids...
Moctezuma, with his monument in Chapultepec
like Quetzalcōatl, who
 was the first with a monument in Chapultepec
(possibly where now stands Mexico's Anthropological Museum⁷²
and the Presidente Hotel).⁷³
 Remember that is is not your throne...
Quetzalcōatl, among the Aztecs, stood for a Theology
of Liberation.
Netzahualpili, Netzahualcōyotl's son, had said
that the time was approaching when the sons of Quetzalcōatl
would come from the east and take possession of the land.

45.

When they saw the white sails
The thought it was Quetzalcōatl returning his temples from across the sea,
and the ancient myth demoralized Moctezuma.
 "Your throne is on loan.
 Quetzalcōatl shall return."
Who had promised to return during one of his year-names, 1-Cane,
and 1519, the year of Cortés's arrival

⁷¹ Juan Bautista Pomar (c.1535 – c. 1601) was, as the poet says, the great grandson of Netzahualcōyotl, king of the semi-autonomous city-state of Texcoco, on the east side of Mexico's central lake Texcoco. His father was Spanish and his mother Aztec, who taught him Náhuatl. He became an expert on Aztec language, history, culture, and religion. He was raised among Spanish Christians, whose leaders recognized his noble status. His major published work is an anthology of Náhuatl poetry, *Ballads of the Lords of New Spain*. Pomar's works stands for importance alongside those of Bernardino de Sahagún and Fernando de Alva Cortés Ixtlilxochitl. Furthermore, Pomar campaigned to inherit the rights held by his great grandfather Netzahualcōyotl.

⁷² For a photo tour and commentary about Mexico's Museo Nacional de Antropología, see: => [MNAM](#).

⁷³ This major Mexico City hotel is now called the Presidente Intercontinental. It is located in the trendy Polanco neighborhood north of Chapultepec Park west of the Anthropology Museum.

was numbered precisely 1–Cane.

... They wondered if perhaps Quetzalcóatl had arrived
with Captain Hernando Cortés.

(Or, might it be all that anti-Aztec,
anti-Moctezuma propaganda?)

The fact is that it demoralized Moctezuma.

He sent a gift to Cortés, Quetzalcóatl's Treasure, which Dürer⁷⁴ saw.

In Flanders Dürer said

he had only glimpsed such beauty in his dreams.

“It was as if he were our prince Quetzalcóatl.”

He was expecting him, so Moctezuma told him,
because that is what the sages of Tula had foretold.

“Verily, I replied to everything he said to mee
especially to maketh him believe Your Grace was
he whom they were expecting.”

And because Moctezuma possessed a guilty conscience.

The Empire had betraying Quetzalcóatl's doctrine.

... he sacrificed only snakes, birds, butterflies ...

“We, over a period of time
have foresaken the teaching of our Lord Quetzalcóatl.”

(Moctezuma to Cortés)

So he believed, he thought

that Captain Cortés was Quetzalcóatl.

He did not accompany these Spaniards with skin the color of chalk.

A bitter wind, sharp like obsidian, blew in with the conquista.

46.

But

they held in their hearts that he would return
to reclaim his mat, his throne.

Quetzalcóatl the Liberator.

He remained shown as a reclining figure in Tula.

(Tula's happy multicolored Chac Mools.)⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) was from Nuremberg, Germany. He was one of the great Western European visionary painters, engravers, and printmakers from the late Middle Ages to the early Renaissance. The following information from Wikipedia relates to Durer's contact with the so-called Treasure of Quetzalcóatl: “At the request of Christian II of Denmark, Dürer went to Brussels to paint the King's portrait. There he saw “the things which have been sent to the king from the golden land”—the Aztec treasure that Hernán Cortés had sent home to Holy Roman Emperor Charles V following the fall of Mexico. Dürer wrote that this treasure “was much more beautiful to me than miracles. These things are so precious that they have been valued at 100,000 florins. ”” ([Wikipedia article](#))

⁷⁵ A Chac Mool is a reclining Maya-Toltec-Aztec statue; however, it is to be noted that post-Cardenal research has shown that a Chac-Mool was most likely used by the Aztecs and other Mesoamericans for human sacrifices, not for the purposes alluded to by the poet. That is blood offering mentioned a few lines below is ... a poetic stretch. For a

“A reminder that he would return to rule once again,
and that that reclining statue must have signified his absence,
and that waking from that sleep of absence
he rises to rule.”

He is always that recumbent figure
resting on his elbows with bent knees
as if coming from a fetal position
his head turned to one side

with his hands holding a plate resting on his stomach
(seemingly containing a blood offering—his).

As it is in the Anthropology Museum of Mexico.

AND THUS THE ANCESTORS PROCLAIMED
IN FAR REMOTE TIMES
THAT NOW HE WILL RETURN
TO RULE AGAIN⁷⁶

Chac Mool: the awakening of the Indian, Martí⁷⁷ said.

Quetzalcóatl, or the history of the myth.

Carrasco⁷⁸ calls him a subversive.

brief description and photo of a Chac Mool in the associated course website: => see [Chac-Mool](#). Here is the photo by WTL of the Chac-Mool at the Mexican National Anthropology Museum in Mexico City:



⁷⁶ See [image #8](#) in the online textbook’s brief tour of the of the Anthropology Museum, you can see an example of such pre-Columbian sayings carved in capital letters on the walls outside each gallery.

⁷⁷ José Martí (1854–1895) is the martyred hero of Cuban Independence as possibly the major founder of the Latin American cultural movement of *modernismo* (c. 1875-1916).

⁷⁸ David Carrasco (b. 1944) is a Mexican American historian and anthropologist. He is the author of *Quetzalcóatl and the Irony of Empire: Myths and Prophecies in the Aztec Tradition* (2001), but Cardenal meet him decades earlier. Carrasco holds a named chair professorship at the Divinity School at Harvard University.