

## **Global Interactions (1200-1650): The Conquest of New Spain**

Based on The Conquest of New Spain by Bernal Díaz (Penguin Books)

Translated with an Introduction by J.M. Cohen

Topic: Global Interactions (1200-1650): The Conquest of New Spain (three day lesson)

Lesson 1 Aim: Why did Bernal Díaz tell the story of the Spanish conquest of Mexico?

Do Now: Copy chronology

### Spanish Conquest and Exploration in the Americas

1492 Christopher Columbus voyages from Spain to the West Indies

1513 Vasco Nuñez Balboa crosses Central America to the Pacific coast

1513 Ponce de Leon lands in Florida

1519 Hernando Cortes leads defeat of the Aztec Empire in Mexico

1519 Ferdinand Magellan lead expedition that circumnavigates the world

1533 Francisco Pizarro leads defeat of the Inca Empire in Peru

Activities:

1) Motivation: If you found a wallet on the street, would that make it yours? Why or why not? Would you keep it under any conditions? Explain.

2) Read Bernal Díaz's Introduction to The Conquest of New Spain. Answer questions. 3) Examine Maps. The Caribbean Basin and central America. North and South America. Locate places mentioned in the chronology and the introduction.

4) Read "Who was Bernal Díaz?" Answer questions.

5) Introduce group projects for days 2 and 3.

Day 2 will be used for research. Day 3 will be used for presentations.

Homework- Write a "fictional" newspaper account of one of the events or scenes described by Bernal Díaz. Include an interview with Bernal Díaz. The article must be consistent with historical facts. Sample headlines- "Rebels Join Spanish Force"; "Native Women Treated As Slaves"; "Opulence in Montezuma's Court".

Group Project: Students will work in pairs or groups of three. Each group will examine a different reading passage on the conquest of Mexico.

1- Make an outline of the important information in the reading passage. Highlight evidence of global interaction.

2- Answer the questions that accompany your reading passage.

3- If you were interviewing Bernal Díaz about these events, what questions would you ask him (between 3 and 5 questions)?

4- Groups will report on the conquest of Mexico. Include examples of global interaction in the 15th century in your reports.

Lesson 2/3 Aim: Why was Spain able to conquer Mexico?

Based on student reports complete the chart

Key Questions for class discussion:

What did the Spaniards view as positive in Aztec culture? As negative? Do you agree with their assessment? Why?

How were these cultures similar? How were they different?

Is it valid for one culture to evaluate another? Why?

What was the role of women in these societies? How do we know?

What was the role of religion in these societies? How do we know?

Is it right to conquer another people if you believe you are doing it in the name of good or of God? Explain.

Are the Spaniards who explore and conquer in the Americas heroes or villains?

Summary Question: In your view, why was Spain able to conquer Mexico?

Application: Are initial global interactions doomed to be so destructive? Explain.

In your view, could these events have happened differently? Explain.

Is this a legitimate question for historians to ask? Why?

### **A) Bernal Díaz's Introduction to The Conquest of New Spain**

I have observed that before beginning to write their histories, the most famous chroniclers compose a prologue in exalted language, in order to give lustre and repute to their narrative, and to whet the curious reader's appetite. But I, being no scholar, dare not attempt any such preface. For properly to extol the adventures that befell us, and the heroic deeds we performed during the conquest of New Spain and its provinces in the company of that valiant and enterprising Captain, Don Hernando Cortes -- who, as a reward for his heroism, was afterwards created Marques del Valle -- would require eloquence and rhetoric far greater than mine. What I myself saw, and the fighting in which I took part, with God's help I will describe quite plainly, as an honest eyewitness, without twisting the facts in any way. I am now an old man, over eighty-four years of age, and have lost both sight and hearing; and unfortunately I have gained no wealth to leave to my children and descendants, except this true story, which is a most remarkable one, as my readers will presently see.

#### **Questions**

- 1- According to Bernal Díaz, what are his reasons for writing this story?
- 2- Why does Díaz feel he is inadequate to the task of retelling this story?
- 3- What qualifies Díaz to tell this story?
- 4- Where does this story fit into the chronology of the conquest of America by Spain?
- 5- Based on this introduction, and what you already know about these events, what other reasons would you add to Díaz's explanation for writing the story? Why?
- 6- As an historian, would you accept Díaz's account as historical fact? Explain your answer.

### **B) Who was Bernal Díaz?**

I, Bernal Díaz Del Castillo, citizen and governor of the most loyal city of Santiago de Guatemala, one of the first discoverers and conquerors of New Spain and its provinces, and of the Cape of Honduras and Higueras, native of the most noble and famous city of Medina del Campo, and son of its former governor Francisco Díaz del Castillo, known as the Courteous -- and his legal wife Maria Diez Rejon -- may their souls rest in glory! -- tell you the story of myself and my comrades; all true conquerors, who served His Majesty in the discovery, conquest, pacification, and settlement of the provinces of New Spain; one of the finest regions of the New World yet discovered, this expedition being undertaken by our own efforts, and without His Majesty's knowledge.

My ancestors having always been servants of the Crown, and my father and one of my brothers being in the service of the Catholic Kings, Don Ferdinand and Doña Isabella, I wished in some sort to emulate them. When, therefore, in the year 1514 a gentleman named Pedrarias Davila went out as Governor of Tierra Firme, I agreed to accompany him to the newly conquered country.

#### **Questions**

- 1- What is Díaz's official position when he tells his story?
- 2- What does Díaz believe he and his comrades achieved?
- 3- According to Díaz, why did he decide to join this venture?
- 4- In your opinion, does Díaz have any reservations about what the Spanish did? What evidence do you have to support your opinion?

## Packet 1: Hernando Cortes

Hernando Cortes was a valiant, bold, and enterprising Captain. As soon as Hernando Cortes was appointed General, he began to collect arms of all kinds -- guns, powder, and crossbows -- and all the munitions of war he could find, also articles for barter, and other material for the expedition. Moreover, he began to adorn himself and to take much more care of his appearance than before. He wore a plume of feathers, with a medallion and a gold chain, and a velvet cloak trimmed with loops of gold. In fact he looked like a bold and gallant Captain. But he had nothing. He was very poor and in debt.

When some merchant friends heard about this expedition, they lent him four thousand pesos in coin and thousand in goods, on the security of his Indians and his estate. He then had two standards and banners made, worked in gold with the royal arms and a cross on each side and a legend that read: 'Brothers and comrades let us follow the sign of the Holy Cross in true faith, for under this sign we shall conquer.' And he ordered a proclamation to be made that anyone who wished to accompany him to the newly discovered lands, to conquer and settle would receive a share of the gold, silver, and riches to be gained, and an *encomienda* (plantation with slaves) of Indians once the country had been pacified.

Once the news had spread through Cuba, and Cortes had written to his friends in different towns asking them to get ready to accompany him on the expedition, some of them sold their farms to buy arms and horses, and others began to prepare casava bread, and to salt pork for stores, and to make quilted cotton armour. They made ready all that was necessary as well as they could.

Now more than three hundred and fifty of us soldiers were collected at Santiago de Cuba, whence the fleet was to sail. From the Governor's own household came one of his stewards, whom he had himself sent to keep a watch on the expedition and see that Cortes did not play him a trick. For he was always afraid that Cortes might turn against him, although he concealed his fears. There were also many more who were friends and followers of the Governor.

### Questions

- 1- How did Cortes prepare for the expedition?
- 2- What promises did Cortes make to recruit soldiers for the expedition?
- 3- Why did the Governor send his followers on the expedition?
- 4- If you were a Spaniard living in Cuba at this time, would you have joined this expedition? Explain your decision.

## Packet 2- Initial Contact

Cortes, who was very shrewd in all matters, said with a laugh to those of us who happened to be standing with him: 'Do you know, gentlemen, I believe it is the horses that the Indians are most frightened of. I've thought of a way of confirming their belief.'

It was midday and forty Indians arrived, all *Caciques* (chiefs). They asked our pardon for their past conduct, and promised to be friendly in future. Cortes answered them through our interpreter somewhat sternly. He reminded them, with a show of anger, how often he had requested them to keep the peace, and said that they had committed a crime and now deserved to be put to death, together with all the inhabitants of their towns. He then pointed out that we were vassals of a great king and lord named the Emperor Charles, who had sent us to these parts with orders to help and favour those who would enter his royal service.

At this moment he secretly gave the order for the loaded cannon to be fired, and it went off with the requisite thunderous report, the ball whistling away over the hills. The *Caciques* were thoroughly terrified. Next they brought the horse that had scented the mare, and tied him up near the place where Cortes was talking to the *Caciques*. The horse began to paw the ground and neigh and create an uproar, looking all the time towards the Indians and the place from which the scent of the mare came. But the *Caciques* thought he was roaring at them and were terrified once more. When Cortes observed their terror he rose from his seat, went over to the horse, and told two orderlies to lead him away. He then informed the Indians that he had told the beast not to be angry, since they were friendly and had come to make peace.

Cortes then had a long talk with the three important chieftains, who promised that they would return next day with a present and discuss other matters. After this they departed quite happily.

### Questions

- 1- Why did Cortes meet with the *Caciques* (native chiefs)?

- 2- According to Cortes, why did he have the right to punish the *Caciques* and their villages?
- 3- In your opinion, why were the Spaniards able to frighten the *Caciques*?
- 4- If you were a member of the Spanish expedition, what do you think you would have concluded after watching this incident? Why?

### Packet 3- Building Alliances

Many *Caciques* and important persons came from Tabasco and the neighbouring towns, and paid us great respect. They brought a present of gold and some other things of small value. These gifts were nothing, however, compared to the twenty women whom they gave us, among them a most excellent person who when she became a Christian took the name of Doña Marina.

Cortes drew all the *Caciques* aside to tell them how grateful he was for what they had brought. But there was one thing he must ask of them, he said, that they should bring all their men, women, and children back to the town, which he wished to see settled again within two days. This he would recognize as a true sign of peace. The *Caciques* then sent at once to summon all the inhabitants, and they, their wives, and their children resettled the town in the stipulated time.

Here the conversation ended until the next day, when we set up the sacred image of Our Lady and the cross on the altar, and all paid reverence to them. Friar Bartolome de Olmedo said mass before all the *Caciques* and important persons, and we named the town Santa Maria de la Victoria. The same friar told them not to believe in the idols they had worshipped, since they were evil things and not gods, and to offer them no more sacrifices. He said they had been deceived, and must worship our Lord Jesus Christ, and immediately afterwards they were baptized. One of the Indian ladies was christened Doña Marina. She was a truly great princess, the daughter of *Caciques* and the mistress of vassals, as was very evident in her appearance. They were the first women in New Spain to become Christians.

Cortes gave one of the women to each of his captains. Doña Marina, being good-looking, intelligent, and self-assured, went to Alonso Hernandez Puertocarrero, who was a very grand gentleman. When Puertocarrero returned to Spain, Doña Marina lived with Cortes, to whom she bore a son named Don Martin Cortes.

### Questions

- 1- In your opinion, why did the *Caciques* give gifts to Cortes and the Spaniards?
- 2- What did the friar tell the native people?
- 3- The Spaniards were Christians. Why did they accept the women as gifts?
- 4- If you were a native *Cacique*, would you have had your people convert to Christianity and join the Spaniards as allies? Explain.

### Packet 4- Doña Marina's Story

Doña Marina was a great lady and a *Cacique* over towns and vassals since her childhood. Her father and mother were lords and *Caciques* of a town called Paynala, which had other towns subject to it, and lay about twenty-four miles from the town of Coatzacoalcos. Her father died which she was still very young, and her mother married another *Cacique*, a young man, to whom she bore a son. The mother and father agreed that he should succeed to the *Caciqueship* when they were dead. To avoid any impediment, they gave Doña Marina to some Indians from Xicalango.

The Indians of Xicalango gave the child to the people of Tabasco, and the Tabascans gave her to Cortes. As Doña Marina had proved such an excellent person, and a good interpreter in all the wars of New Spain, Tlascalala, and Mexico, Cortes always took her with him. Doña Marina was a person of great importance, and was obeyed without question by all the Indians of New Spain.

Cortes summoned all the *Caciques* of that province in order to address them on the subject of our holy religion. Doña Marina's mother and her half-brother Lazaro were among those who came. Both she and her son were very much afraid of Doña Marina; they feared that she had sent for them to put them to death, and they wept.

When Doña Marina saw her mother and half-brother in tears, she comforted them, saying that they need have no fear. She told her mother that when they had handed her over to the men from Xicalango, they had not known what they were doing. She pardoned the old woman, and gave them many golden jewels and some clothes. She sent them back to their town, saying that God had been very gracious to her in freeing her from the worship of idols and

making her a Christian, and giving her a son by her lord and master Cortes, also in marrying her to such a gentleman as her husband Juan Jaramillo. Even if they were to make her mistress of all the provinces of New Spain, she said, she would refuse the honour, for she would rather serve her husband and Cortes than anything else in the world.

Doña Marina knew the language of Mexico, and she knew the Tabascan language also. I have made a point of telling this story, because without Doña Marina we could not have understood the language of New Spain and Mexico.

### **Question**

- 1- Who was Doña Marina?
- 2- Why were her mother and brother afraid to meet her?
- 3- According to the author, why was Doña Marina important in the conquest of Mexico?
- 4- In your opinion, should Doña Marina be celebrated as a hero? Explain.

### **Packet 5- Challenging Montezuma's Authority**

The fat *Cacique* broke into bitter complaints against the great Montezuma and his governors, saying that the Mexican prince had recently brought him into subjection, had taken away all his golden jewellery, and so grievously oppressed him and his people that they could do nothing except obey him, since he was lord over many cities and countries, and ruler over countless vassals and armies of warriors.

Five Indians came in great haste from the town to tell the *Caciques* who were talking to Cortes that five of Montezuma's Mexican tax-gatherers had just arrived. As soon as they had dined, the tax-gatherers sent for the fat *Cacique* and the other chiefs and scolded them for having entertained us in their villages, since now they would have to meet and deal with us, which would not please their lord Montezuma. They continued to reproach the fat *Cacique* and his nobles for their actions, and ordered them to provide twenty Indians, male and female, as a peace-offering to their gods for the wrong that had been done.

At this point Cortes asked our interpreters why the arrival of these Indians had so agitated the *Caciques*. As soon as Cortes understood what the *Caciques* were saying, he reminded them that our lord the King had sent him to chastise evildoers and prevent sacrifices and robbery. He ordered them to arrest the tax-gatherers and to hold them prisoners until their lord Montezuma was informed of the reason: namely that they had come to rob the Totonacs, to enslave their wives and children, and to do other violence.

When the *Caciques* heard this they were appalled at his daring. They dared not do it. But Cortes insisted that they must arrest them at once; and they obeyed him. They secured them with long poles and collars so that they could not escape, and they beat one of them who refused to be bound. Cortes ordered all the *Caciques* to cease paying tribute and obedience to Montezuma, and to proclaim their refusal in all the towns of their friends and allies. The act they had witnessed was so astonishing and of such importance to them that they said no human beings dared to do such a thing, and it must be the work of *Teules*. Therefore from that moment they called us *Teules*, which means gods or demons.

### **Questions**

- 1- Why did the fat *Cacique* complain about Montezuma?
- 2- Why were the native chiefs afraid when the representatives of Montezuma arrived in their village?
- 3- How did Cortes challenge the authority of Montezuma?
- 4- In your opinion, why did the native people believe that Cortes and his followers were *Teules*?

### **Packet 6- Emissaries from Mexico**

Cortes took the *Caciques* aside and asked them very detailed questions about the state of Mexico. They said that Montezuma had a vast host of warriors, and that if he wanted to take a great city or attack a province he could put a hundred and fifty thousand men in the field, as they knew from the experience of more than a hundred years of war. The Mexicans had several times defeated them, killing many of their subjects and taking away others to be sacrificed, they had also left many dead and prisoners on the field. All the towns and provinces that Montezuma had raided and subdued were very hostile to the Mexicans.

Montezuma kept strong garrisons in every province, and all the provinces paid tribute of gold and silver, feathers, precious stones, cloth, and cotton, also men and women for sacrifice and for servants. Montezuma was such

a great prince that he had everything he desired, and the house in which he lived were full of riches and precious stones. All the wealth of the country was in Montezuma's hands.

As a result of the victories which God granted us in battles, our fame spread through the surrounding country and reached the ears of the great Montezuma in the city of Mexico. When the news came that so few of us had conquered such a huge force of Tlascalans, Montezuma sent five chieftains of the highest rank to our camp to bid us welcome and congratulate us on our great victory. He sent a present of very richly worked gold and jewel ornaments worth quite a thousand pesos, and twenty loads of fine cotton, with the message that he wished to become the vassal of our great Emperor, and that he was glad we were near his city. Moreover, he asked Cortes to tell him how much yearly tribute our great Emperor required, and promised to give it provided that we did not come to Mexico. This, he said, was not because he would not be very pleased to receive us, but because the land was rough and sterile, and he would not like to see us suffering hardships. Cortes answered that he was most grateful to Montezuma for his good will and presents, and his offer to pay tribute to His Majesty.

### Questions

- 1- What did Cortes learn about Montezuma and Mexico from their enemies?
- 2- What presents did Montezuma send to Cortes?
- 3- In your opinion, why did Montezuma offer to pay tribute to the Spanish king?
- 4- In your opinion, what evidence is there of weaknesses in Montezuma's empire? Explain.

### Packet 7- The Spaniards Arrive in the Mexican Capital City

With a large escort we followed the causeway, which is eight yards wide and goes so straight to the city of Mexico. Wide though it was, it was so crowded with people that there was hardly room for them all. Some were going to Mexico and others coming away, besides those who had come out to see us, and we could hardly get through the crowds that were there. The lake was crowded with canoes. At intervals along the causeway there were many bridges, and before us was the great city of Mexico.

We were met by many more *Caciques* and dignitaries in very rich cloaks. The chieftains wore different brilliant liveries, and the causeways were full of them. Montezuma had sent these great *Caciques* in advance to receive us, and as soon as they came before Cortes they told him in their language that we were welcome, and as a sign of peace, they touched the ground with their hands and kissed it.

When we came near to Mexico, the great Montezuma descended from his litter. Great *Caciques* supported him beneath a marvelously rich canopy of green feathers, decorated with gold work, silver, and pearls. Montezuma was magnificently clad and wore sandals, the soles of which were of gold and the upper parts ornamented with precious stones. The four lords who supported him were richly clad. There were four other great *Caciques* who carried the canopy above their heads, and many more lords who walked before the great Montezuma, sweeping the ground on which he was to tread, and laying down cloaks so that his feet should not touch the earth. Not one of these chieftains dared to look him in the face. All kept their eyes lowered most reverently.

When Cortes was told that the great Montezuma was approaching, he dismounted from his horse, and when he came near to Montezuma, each bowed deeply to the other. Cortes offered Montezuma his right hand, but Montezuma refused it and extended his own. Cortes brought out a necklace which he had been holding. It was made of elaborately worked and colored glass beads and was strung on a gold cord and dipped in musk to give it a good odour. This he hung round the great Montezuma's neck, and as he did so attempted to embrace him. But the great prince grasped Cortes' arm to prevent him, for they considered this an indignity.

### Questions

- 1- Why were the Spaniards impressed when they approached Mexico?
- 2- In your opinion, why did Montezuma dress and travel this way?
- 3- Why was there danger of misunderstanding when the Spaniards met the Mexicans?
- 4- In your opinion, what was going through the minds of the Spaniards and the Mexicans when they met on the causeway to Mexico City?

### Packet 8- Cortes Explains Christianity to Montezuma

Cortes decided to go to Montezuma's palace. When Montezuma was informed of our coming, he advanced into the middle of the hall to receive us. Cortes and Montezuma exchanged bows, and clasped hands.

Cortes began to make a speech through our interpreters. We were Christians and worshipped one God alone, named Jesus Christ, who had suffered His passion and death to save us; and that what they worshipped as gods were not gods but devils, which were evil things, and if they were ugly to look at, their deeds were uglier. But he had proved to them how evil and ineffectual their gods were, as both the prince and his people would observe in the course of time, since, where we had put up crosses such as their ambassadors had seen, they had been too frightened to appear before them. We had only come to give them warning.

"My lord," Montezuma replied, "these arguments of yours have been familiar to me for some time. We have given you no answer, since we have worshipped our own gods here from the beginning and know them to be good. No doubt yours are good also. Regarding the creation of the world, we have held the same belief for many ages, and for this reason are certain that you are those who our ancestors predicted would come from the direction of the sunrise. As for your great King, I am in his debt and will give him of what I possess."

He said that he had wanted to invite some of these men to visit the cities of his kingdom, where he would receive them and do them honor, and that now his gods had fulfilled his desire, for we were in his house, which we might call our own. Here we might rest and enjoy ourselves, for we should receive good treatment. If on other occasions he had sent to forbid our entrance into his city, it was not of his own free will, but because his vassals were afraid. For they told him we shot our flashes of lightning, and killed many Indians with our horses, and that we were angry *Teules*, and other such childish stories. But now that he had seen us, he knew that we were of flesh and blood and very intelligent, also very brave. Therefore he had a far greater esteem for us than these reports had given him, and would share with us what he had.

### Questions

- 1- How does Cortes begin the meeting with Montezuma?
- 2- In your opinion, does Cortes respect the religion of the Mexicans? Explain.
- 3- How does Montezuma respond to the Spanish?
- 4- Based on this meeting, do you think there can be peace between the Spaniards and the Mexicans? Explain.

### Packet 9- The Great Montezuma

The great Montezuma was about forty years old, of good height, well proportioned, spare and slight, and not very dark though of the usual Indian complexion. He did not wear his hair long but just over his ears, and he had a short black beard well-shaped and thin. His face was rather long and cheerful, he had fine eyes, and in his appearance and manner could express geniality or, when necessary, a serious composure. He was very neat and clean, and took a bath every afternoon. He had many women as his mistresses, the daughters of chieftains but two legitimate wives who were *Caciques* in their own right. He had a guard of two hundred chieftains lodged in rooms beside his own, only some of whom were permitted to speak to him. They had to be clean and walk barefoot, with their eyes downcast, for they were not allowed to look him in the face.

For each meal his servants prepared him more than thirty dishes cooked in their native style. I have heard that they used to cook him the flesh of young boys. But as he had such a variety of dishes, made of so many different ingredients, we could not tell whether a dish was of human flesh. After our Captain spoke against the sacrifice of human beings and the eating of their flesh, Montezuma ordered that it should no longer be served to him.

When he began his meal they placed in front of him a sort of wooden screen, richly decorated with gold, so that no one should see him eat. Four great chieftains, all old men, stood beside him. He talked with them every now and then and asked them questions, and as a great favour he would sometimes offer one of them a dish of what ever tasted best.

Sometimes some little humpbacked dwarfs would be present at his meals, whose bodies seemed almost to be broken in the middle. These were his jesters. There were other Indians who told him jokes and must have been his clowns, and others who sang and danced, for Montezuma was very fond of music and entertainment and would reward his entertainers with the leavings of the food and chocolate.

### Questions

- 1- How does the author describe Montezuma?

- 2- Why does the author describe the meal in such detail?
- 3- In your opinion, why is Montezuma treated the way he is treated by his people?
- 4- In your opinion, what is the most striking aspect of this description of Montezuma? Why?

### **Packet 10- Inside Montezuma's Palace**

Montezuma had two house stocked with every sort of weapon; many of them were richly adorned with gold and precious stones. There were shields large and small, and a sort of broadsword, and two-handed swords set with flint blades that cut much better than our swords, and lances longer than ours, with five-foot blades consisting of many knives. They had very good bows and arrows, and double and single-pointed javelins as well as their throwing sticks and many slings and round stones shaped by hand, and another sort of shield that can be rolled up when they are not fighting, so that it does not get in the way, but which can be opened when they need it in battle and covers their bodies from head to foot.

The Mexicans kept many idols whom they called their fierce gods, and with them all kinds of beasts of prey, tigers and two sorts of lion, and beasts rather like wolves and foxes and other small animals, all of them carnivores, and most of them bred there. They were fed on deer, fowls, little dogs, and other creatures which they hunt and also on the bodies of the Indians they sacrificed, as I was told.

I have already described the manner of their sacrifices. They strike open the wretched Indian's chest with flint knives and hastily tear out the palpitating heart which, with the blood, they present to the idols in whose name they have performed the sacrifice. Then they cut off the arms, thighs, and head, eating the arms and thighs at their ceremonial banquets. The head they hang up on a beam, and the body of the sacrificed man is not eaten but given to the beasts of prey. We know for certain that when they drove us out of Mexico and killed over eight hundred and fifty of our soldiers, they fed those beasts and snakes on their bodies for many days.

I must now speak of the skilled workmen whom Montezuma employed in all the crafts they practised, beginning with the jewellers and workers in silver and gold and various kinds of hollowed objects, which excited the admiration of our great silversmiths at home. There were other skilled craftsmen who worked with precious stones and specialists in feather-work, and very fine painters and carvers.

#### **Questions**

- 1- What kinds of weapons did the Spanish view in Montezuma's palace?
- 2- In your opinion, why are the Spanish so interested in these weapons?
- 3- What is the Spanish attitude toward Mexican craftsmanship?
- 4- In your opinion, why are the animals, statues of Gods, and sacrifices described in such detail?

### **Packet 11- The market place**

On reaching the market-place, we were astounded at the great number of people and the quantities of merchandise, and at the orderliness and good arrangements that prevailed, for we had never seen such a thing before. The chieftains who accompanied us pointed everything out. Every kind of merchandise was kept separate and had its fixed place marked for it.

Let us begin with the dealers in gold, silver, and precious stones, feathers, cloaks, and embroidered goods, and male and female slaves who are also sold there. Some are brought there attached to long poles by means of collars round their necks to prevent them from escaping, but others are left loose. Next there were those who sold coarser cloth, and cotton goods and fabrics made of twisted thread, and there were chocolate merchants with their chocolate.

There were sellers of kidney-beans and sage and other vegetables and herbs in another place, and in yet another they were selling fowls and birds, also rabbits, hares, deer, young ducks, little dogs, and other such creatures. Then there were the fruiterers; and the women who sold cooked food flour and honey cake, and tripe, had their part of the market. Then came pottery of all kinds, from big water-jars to little jugs, displayed in its own place, also honey, honey-paste, and other sweets like nougat. Elsewhere they sold timber, boards, cradles, beams, blocks, and benches, all in a quarter of their own.

I must also mention that they sold many canoe-loads of human excrement, which they kept in the creeks near the market. This was for the manufacture of salt and the curing of skins, which they say cannot be done without it. I know that many gentlemen will laugh at this, but I assure them it is true. I may add that on all the roads they have

shelters made of reeds or straw or grass so that they can retire when they wish to do so, and purge their bowels unseen by passers-by, and also in order that their excrement shall not be lost.

### Questions

- 1- What are the most striking features of the market place?
- 2- Why are the Spaniards so impressed with the market place?
- 3- Why do the Mexicans collect human excrement?
- 4- In your opinion, what does the Spanish reaction to the market place tell us about the Spanish?

### Packet 11- The Temple

When we arrived near the great temple and before we had climbed a single step, the great Montezuma sent six *papas* and two chieftains down from the top, where he was making his sacrifices, to escort our Captain; and as he climbed the steps, of which there were one hundred and fourteen, they tried to take him by the arms to help him up in the same way as they helped Montezuma, thinking he might be tired, but he would not let them near him.

The top of the *cue* formed an open square on which stood something like a platform, and it was here that the great stones stood on which they placed the poor Indians for sacrifice. Here also was a massive image like a dragon, and other hideous figures, and a great deal of blood that had been spilled that day.

Emerging in the company of two *papas* from the shrine which houses his accursed images, Montezuma made a deep bow to us all and said: "My lord, you must be tired after climbing this great *cue* of ours." And Cortes replied that none of us was ever exhausted by anything. Then Montezuma took him by the hand, and told him to look at his great city and all the other cities standing in the water, and the many others on the land round the lake; and he said that if Cortes had not had a good view of the great market-place he could see it better from where he now was.

We saw the fresh water which came from Chapultepec to supply the city, and the bridges that were constructed at intervals on the causeways so that the water could flow in and out from one part of the lake to another. We saw a great number of canoes, some coming with provisions and others returning with cargo and merchandise; and we saw too that one could not pass from one house to another to that great city and the other cities that were built on the water except over wooden drawbridges or by canoe. We saw shrines in these cities that looked like gleaming white towers and castles: a marvelous sight. All the houses had flat roofs, and on the causeways were other small towers and shrines built like fortresses.

### Questions

- 1- According to the author, why is there blood on the temple stones?
- 2- In your opinion, why does Cortes refuse to be helped up the temple steps?
- 3- What do the Spanish see from the top of the temple?
- 4- In your opinion, why does Montezuma want the Spanish to visit the temple and climb to the top?

### Packet 13- The Fall of Mexico

I had taken part in many battles, but up to that time, I had never felt such fear as I did in these last battles. I was many times severely wounded, and for this reason was not able to go on all the expeditions. The hardships and risks of death to which I was personally exposed were not insignificant.

Everyone was agreed that all the gold and silver and jewels in Mexico should be collected together. But this seems to have amounted to very little. There was a report that Guatemoc (who succeeded Montezuma as ruler of Mexico) had thrown all the rest into the lake four days before we captured him. The officers of the Royal Treasury publicly proclaimed that Guatemoc had hidden the treasure. These officers decided to torture Guatemoc. The truth is that Montezuma's treasure-chamber, of which Guatemoc took possession at his death, did not contain many jewels or golden ornaments, because all the best had been extracted to form the magnificent offering that we had sent to His Majesty.

We captains and soldiers were all somewhat sad when we saw how little gold there was and how poor and mean our shares would be. They told us a horseman would receive eighty pesos, and a crossbowman, musketeer, or shield-bearer fifty or sixty and when we heard this figure not a single soldier was willing to accept his share.

Many of us were in debt to one another. Some owed fifty or sixty pesos for crossbows, and others fifty for a sword. A certain surgeon who tended some bad wounds, charged excessive prices for his cures, and so did a sort of

quack who was an apothecary and barber and also treated wounds. An order went out that whatever price was placed on our purchases or the surgeons' cures must be accepted, and that if we had no money, our creditors must wait two years for payment.

When the news spread through the distant provinces that Mexico was destroyed their *Caciques* and lords could not believe it. They sent chieftains to congratulate Cortes on his victories and yield themselves as vassals to His Majesty, and to see if the city of Mexico, which they had so dreaded, was really razed to the ground. They all carried great presents of gold to Cortes, and even brought their small children to show them Mexico, pointing it out to them in much the same way that we would say: "Here stood Troy."

### **Questions**

- 1- Why was so little gold found when Mexico was defeated?
- 2- Why were the soldiers so upset when they discovered their payments?
- 3- Why did other chiefs travel to view the destruction of Mexico?
- 4- In your opinion, were Cortes' soldiers victors or victims? Explain.

Group Members \_\_\_\_\_

What we learned about Mexico	What we learned about Spain	Questions to explore