Mestizísmo: The Onomastics of Cultures in Contact in Mexico and Mesoamerica*

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In the Plaza de las Tres Culturas in Mexico City one can see the remains of the principal Aztec market, a restored Franciscan church of the Colonial period, and ultramodern towers of urban housing. There stood Tlateloco, the largest market in the world of its time in the capital where Cuauhtémoc (last of the Aztec emperors) was captured by the *conquistadores*[1] and which Cortés described to the King of Spain as a gem set in the waters of Lake Texcoco, "the most beautiful city in the world." There the Franciscans (soon to be followed by Dominicans, Augustinians, and Jesuits) established the missions of His Most Catholic Majesty (beginning in earnest as early as 1524) and built the sixteenth-century church, still standing as a symbol of the work of such men as Pedro de Gante, the marvelous Vasco de Quiroga (who taught the various tribes different trades which they practice to this day), Toribio de Benavente ("Motolinía"), Bartolome de las Casas ("Protector of the Indians"), and the ecclesiastic and historian Bernardino de Sahagún (a converted Jew who spread the faith of Christ and recorded the last days of Moctezuma and his great city of Tenochtitlán). And there also is evidence of the modern Mexico, with nearly nine million inhabitants in its metropolitan area, the thriving heart of a vast nation, eighth largest in the world, which supports well over 50 million people though only 15 percent if its mountainous land is even potentially arable.

The Plaza of the Three Cultures can stand as an example of the rich history of onomastic interaction, of the way in which names record and are affected by the clash of cultures in contact. In this paper we shall examine some of the names of this land, its peoples and its history, and discuss how they succeed each other — or succeed in mingling and merging. It is a study of *mestizísmo.*

Of course the Spanish names on the vast territory they conquered are everywhere: Fresnillo (little ash tree), El Alamo (cottonwood tree),

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[1] Hernán Cortés and his 11 ships landed at Veracruz in Easter week 1519. He reached the Aztec capital. Moctezuma was killed and his brother Cuitlahuac died of fever a few months later. Moctezuma's 22-year-old nephew (and son-in-law) became leader but was captured after an 80-day seige on August 13, 1521.

Minas Viejas (old mines), Capulines (grasshoppers), Esperanza (hope), Puerto Lengua de Vaco (Port Cow's tongue), Mil Cumbres (thousand peaks), La Guitarrera (the girl guitarist), Poza Rica (rich hole = oil well).[2] They can be as unusual as Los Anteojos (eyeglasses) or as simple as Los Piños (the name of Mexico's "White House"). They named their estates as well as their cities, towns, and villages: some ruined *haciendas,* monuments to great nineteenth-century fortunes in Jalisco, for instance, are La Troje, La Esperanza, Trancoso, or simply Estancia Grande. Spanish became the dominant language (though to this day there are at least 40 other languages and dialects in Mexico and about ten percent of the population, even those living in villages with Spanish names, speak no Spanish at all) and, for example, the opposition newspapers in the time of the tyrannical Porfirio Diaz (1896 - 1911) were called *Regeneración* (begun 1900), *La Libertad* (begun 1896), *El Silbato de Tlaxcala* (begun 1899), etc., while Diaz was supported in his own journals *El Partido Liberál* (1885) and the very biased *El Imparciál* (1896). The Spaniards gave their own names to geographical features whether they had been named by the earlier inhabitants or not and christened the remains of earlier cultures at places sometimes renamed (Palenque = palisades) and sometimes not (Chichén Itzá, Uxmal) rather fancifully "House of the Governor," "The Palace," "The Temple of the Sun," *La Cruz Folida* and *La Cruz Enramada,* "Temple of the Inscriptions," even "The Nunnery" (*Las Monjas* — thinking there may have been a sort of vestal virgins housed there). Often the names suited. Sometimes they did not.[3] Sometimes they mangled the native names, as the French-Canadians made Saint-Mâchoine out of the Indian place-name Aćwapmuśwan. But as the Mexicans mixed old and new, as today you can see figures dressed as ancient corn gods and mother goddesses dancing in the same procession as the Eucharist and the Virgin Mary, they often mixed old and new names or permitted ancient ones to exist side by side with

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2 A few of these are familiar as names in California (which the Spaniards named for a legendary island in Pre-Conquest literature) or other places in North America where they penetrated such as Colorado (red). More typical Mexican-Spanish names include Alazan (sorrel horse), Gaviotas (seagulls), Mt. Pajaro Azul (blue bird), Mt. La Rata (the rat), the Bajío (lowlands) area, La Noria (the well), El Faro (the lighthouse), El Naranjo (the orange tree), El Porvenir (the future), Mata Naranjo (orange bush), La Única (unique), Rio Boca de Ovejas (sheep-mouth river), named on principles working in place-names of Spain.

3 Diana Vinding and Kees Scherer in *Mexico* (Methuen & Co. Ltd., The World in Colour series, 1968, p. 125) say of Villahermosa (pretty town), "the capital of Tabasco, has the good fortune to have the fascinating La Venta sculptures moved to one of its parks laid out as an exact replica of the discovery site. Otherwise, the city does not deserve its name." *La Venta* (wind) yielded much art of the Olmecs, "People of the Jaguar," more of which is indoors, in the museum of the State of Tabasco, in Villahermosa. "Progresso, the port of Merida, belies its name." [*Ibid., p. 128.*]

modern ones.

We have already mentioned a few Aztec emperors, the largest of the *tiaquiz* (market) places (of which there were five in the capital), and heard the place-name Tlaxcala (whose people, rebelling against vassal status under Moctezuma II, made Cortés' conquest possible), so we may examine now, out of historical order, probably the best-known of early Mexican civilizations — the Aztec — and a few of its names.[4]

First of all, the name is wrong. "Aztecs" were Tenochas (hence Tenochtitlán):

> The Aztecs, of course, did not call themselves "Aztecs." And very definitely they were not an empire. Moreover they arrived so late on the Mexican scene and were so unimportant when they did come to the lakes, which was Mexico, that not a single tribe recorded their arrival. Their "kings" were in reality elected "speakers" and there were no "halls of Montezuma" (except in song), so that the misconception of their being an "Aztec Empire" is actually a non sequitur [*sic*] of history just as was in fact the Holy Roman Empire which was neither holy, Roman, nor an empire.[5]

They settled on lakes named for the Chalcas tribe of Nahoas (Chalco), Xochimilco (place of flowers), Texcoco, Xaltocan, and Zumpango, some 32 miles from the Toltec city of Teotihuacán (place of the gods), which had flourished as a temple centre from 200 B.C. to about A.D. 900, and copied the Toltec 52-year cycle or *tonalpohualli* (numeration of fate), their basic social structure, even their *huipilli* (skirts), *temascal* (steam bath), and pulque (used in the veneration of the goddess Xochitl), and especially one worship of Quetzalcoatl Ce Acatl

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[4] Early accounts of the Aztecs are in *Five Letters, 1519-1526, Cortés* translated by J. Bayard Morris (London 1928, New York 1929); *Narrative of Some Things of New Spain and of the Great City of Temestitan,* anonymous, translated Marshall H. Saville (New York, 1917); *Relación hecha por Andres de Tapia sobre la Conquista de México* (Mexico, 1866);*História de las Indias de Nueva-España,* Fray Diego Durán, sixteenth century (Mexico, 1867-1880); *History of Ancient Mexico,* Bernadino de Sahagún translated by Fanny R. Bandelier (Nashville, 1932); *Crónica de la Nueva-España con la Conquista de México,* Francisco López de Gómara (Zaragosa, 1552); *The Discovery and Conquest of Mexico* 1517 - 1521, Bernal Díaz del Castillo translated by A.P. Maudsley (New York, 1956). Personal and place-names undergo natural Hispanization and variation.

[5] So begins the excellent basic introduction to this vast subject, Victor Wolfgang von Hagen's *The Aztec: Man and Tribe* in the Mentor Books series Ancient Civilizations (New York: New American Library, 1961). Voltaire was the first to make this remark about the Holy Roman Empire. We do know that the Aztecs moved to the Anáhuac lakes in their year *Ome Acatl* (2 Reed, *i.e.* A.D. 1168) from some legendary Aztlán, so the Spaniards called them Aztecs, and that they founded Tenochtitlán in A.D. 1325 (4 Snake) and by the time archaeologists call the Third Aztec Period (1403-1455) reached a high civilization. Their "speakers" were Acamapichtli (1375-1395), Huitzilhuitl (1395-1414), Chimalpopoca (1414-1428), Itzcoatl (1428-1440), Moctezuma I (1440-1469), Axayacatl (1469-1481), Tizoc (1481-1486), Ahuitzotl (1486-1503), Moctezuma II (1503-1520), and (very briefly) Cuitlahuac and Cuauhtémoc (as we have said above).

Topiltzin (feathered serpent [born on the day numbered] 1 Reed, our venerated lord) brought from the north (Tula). It was because the year 1519 was one of the infrequently occurring years numbered 1 Reed that Moctezuma at first believed that the Spaniard Cortés might be the "feathered serpent" himself, who had promised to return in 1 Reed.[6]

Aztec names are in the Nahuatl language, a Uto-Axtecan language now used by various tribes from Utah to Nicaragua and one which "belongs to one of the five large phyla of Macro-Penutian speech." Pronunciation is difficult for us — Xoxtla ("soaks-tla") and Chiugue ("chee-wee") — but it is terse, poetic, and colorful. The place-name Tajin meant "place where there is smoke, fire, and light," a necropolis. Michoacán (place of the fisherfolk) natives were called Tarascans by the Spanish. Mazatlán, now an international resort,[7] was "place of the deer," Cyoacán the "place of the coyotes." (At Coyoacán, Cuauhtémoc is supposed to have been tortured in a vain attempt to wrest from him the whereabouts of a vast Aztec treasure.) At Tonalá (place where the sun is found) superb pottery is now made (though recently debased with American and even Japanese touches since its potters began to study abroad) as it was in the days when the town was the "center of the Chimalhuacan nobility, where there was a special worship of the sun."[8] Zihautenejo (a port which once vied with Acapulco for the orient trade) is named after a "dark woman." Querétero (where the Emperor Maximilian was shot) means "ball court," the Aztecs having picked up the Olmec *tlachtli* ball game. Tenancingo (place of wells) was founded in 1425. Taxco used to be Talacho, the Aztec market.

Some mountains in this country which has 22 peaks over 10,000 feet bear beautiful if complex Aztec (Nahuatl) names. Best-known are Popcatépetl (note the accent — "smoking mountain," which last

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6 Moctezuma is frequently called Montezuma by Americans (as in "Montezuma's Revenge," an intestinal disease the Mexicans call appropriately *turista*). He is now honored by a Mexican beer (XX and XXX — called "dos equis" and "tres equis" — indicating quality, as the legend of "EST EST EST," this is *it*, i.e., the best, is supposedly to have been written on wine barrels in Europe). So is his successor Cuauhtémoc. There is no Cuidad Moctezuma but there is now in Chiapas a Cuidad Cuauhtémoc, formerly called El Ocotal. A handsome statue of Cuauhtémoc, symbol of resistance, today stands in the Paseo de la Reforma in Mexico City.

7 Tennessee Williams uses its name (in his play *The Glass Menagerie*) to evoke an escapist's paradise: it was less honky-tonk and familiar in the Forties.

8 "Elsewhere I have found reference," writes Lester D. Mallory, "to a temple of the sun which was destroyed" and he adds: "This kingdom or chiefdom had as provinces those of Titlan, Tolalatlan, Tlaxcomulco, Tlallan, and Altemaxaque. Tonala was then an important pottery center, as it is today." As a single example of the many fine works on Mexican sociology (often rich in onomastic and folkloric interest) see May N. Díaz's *Tonalá*, University of California Press, 1974, a well rewritten dissertation on the *destino* and way of life of the potters there.

"smoked" in 1802) at 17,761 feet and its companion Ixtaccihuatl (named for a supposed resemblance, which I confess I find hard to discern, to a "sleeping woman") at 17,343 feet. The last settlement on the way to the top of "Popo" (as tourists call it) is Ozumba (summit of the highroad). Cortés described Mexico as so mountainous that it looked like a sheet of crumpled parchment and there are many other peaks. The highest is the gorgeous Orizaba with its Pico de Citlaltepetl or "Peak of the Star."

Had the forever contemptible Bishop Diego de Landa not burned most of the *amatl* (paper) codices of the Mayas — only three of these brilliantly-illustrated historical records have been preserved — and Fray Juan de Zummarraga (another name to go down in infamy) destroyed what he called the "royal library" of the Aztecs at Texcoco — only 14 "books" survive — we might have had more evidence about Aztec names and their connections with those of other peoples in Mexico and Central America. We have enough to know that places had conventional symbols (Itztepec = an obsidian dagger over a mountain) and that the 20 days of the month included *misiguiztli* (skull), *mazatl* (deer), *malinalli* (grass), *ocelotl* (ocelot), *tochtli* (rabbit), *coatl* (snake), *calli* (house), etc., and that calendars were comparable, both sacred (13 days in each of 20 months) and profane (20 days in each of 18 months with five *nemontemi* or "empty days"). [9]

We know, thanks to Sahagún and others who set busily about recording the nature and history of the culture their countrymen were destroying, of many interesting Aztec names which gave us valuable insights into the customs and beliefs of the people. For instance, the Aztec equivalent of the modern Mexican *curandero* (witch-doctor) was the *ticitl* and his job was to remove the magical object which had entered the sufferer's body and brought illness through imbalance and interference with nature: thus he was called *tetle-acuicilique,* "he who removes the stone." Medieval pictures show us charlatans pretending to cure mental illness by "removing" a stone (which they palmed off) from the head of a lunatic (a word which suggests the *moon* caused it).

Many of the old words have gone: *uei tlatoani* (chief speaker), *techuhtli* (heads of *calpulli* or clans); the whole system of government as well as the warrior-farmers (*macehualli*) and merchants (*pochteca*) and the rest are all gone, their great cities with their temples (*teocalli* = house of gods) and their colonies (*pipil*) merged with the jungles and the invaders. But some names which were not translated—*calpulli*

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[9] The "empty days" were unlucky and, like the missing thirteenth floor, had no designations. The years also had names, such as 1 Reed. It would be interesting to collect names of recurrent periods (such as the Holy Year, that has been filling Rome with pilgrims and the coffers of the Vatican with cash since the Renaissance every 25 years) in our culture as well as to study terms for periods such as Renaissance, Dark Ages, Middle Ages (no longer exact), etc.

became *barrios*—are still familiar: *cacao* and *tabaco* and *chocolatl* and *ahucacati* (avocado), for instance. The odd names of their gods are still remembered.[10]

Some Aztec names survive for people (Itzcoatl or Obsidian Serpent and Quauhtlatoa or Speaking Eagle for men, Matlalzochitl or Green Flower, Quiauhxochitl or Rain Flower for women, names reminiscent of American Indian or the poetry of the Chinese names) and place-names are sometimes combined with Spanish saints' names: as there is San Isidro de Arriba, San Luis La Loma, San Antonio de la Punta (confusing foreigners who have "never heard of these saints" as in Quebec, with its dual culture, we have Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes-de-Ham and Ste.-Susanne-de-Boundary-Line. So we can buy our serapes in San Miguel Texmulcan and Teotitlán del Valle and travel to Santiago Acatlán, Santiago Tangamandapio, or Santa Rosa de Tlahuapán. My favorite Aztec place-name is attached to a village and ruined temple (its *yacata* or giant platform bearing five connected structures, dating from before A.D. 800) near San Pablo and (the former) Santa Clara del Cobre: it is Tzintzuntzán. The name imitates the sound of the hummingbird!

The Aztecs, or Mexicas, may be better known to the average non-Mexican, but great civilizations preceded theirs, some going back to five millennia before Christ. The Olmecs of Tabasco and southern Veracruz, the "People of the Jaguar" with their massive sculptures and strange baby-faced statues, were the earliest people of note in Mesoamerica. Their name meant "people of rubber," for they had learned to tap the "weeping trees." Vast remains at Cerro de las Mesas, Tres Zapotes, San Lorenzo Tenochtitlán, and La Venta bespeak their glory. They probably introduced writing and an inscription on an

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10 Fire was Huehueteotl (the old god), later called Xiuhtecuhtli (the Aztec lord of the year) and Ixcozauhqui (yellow face). Sahagún wrote it as "Turquoise Lord, the yellow-faced one, the holy flame. This one was known as fire, the old god, our father." Teteoinnan (grandmother of the baths) was the mother of the gods, Iztaccihuatl (mother goddess). Tocititlán (place of Toci) was sacred to the mother goddess. Xochiquetzal (in whose name the familiar flowers and bird are seen) was the goddess of pregnancy and childbirth. Chalciuhtlicue (she who wears a skirt of *chalchihuitl,* jade) was the goddess of water, Tlaloc (the Mayans called him Chac; the Zapotecs, Cocijo) was the rain god, "he who makes things sprout." The serpent we have seen as Quetzalcoatl appears again in Chihuacoatl (woman serpent) and Coatlicue (she who wears a serpent skirt). There were gods for the Milky Way (Mixcoatl), the rush-mat weavers (Napatecli), and much more. a whole pantheon, all under Huitzilopochtli, the supreme deity. The names differed among different peoples: Mixcoatl among the Tlaxcaltecas was Camaxtli.

"Animal" names seem to have been common among Aztec rulers. Nezahualcoyotl (poet and king of Texcoco) contains "coyote" and Itzcoatl (who freed Tenochtitlán from the power of the people of Atzcapotzalco and allied himself in 1428 with Texcoco and Tlacopán) contains "serpent." The gods and goddesses were, likewise, often mixtures of human and animal elements.

object at San Andrés Tuxtla (Veracruz) is dated the equivalent of A.D. 162. The Mexicans call the Olmec the *cultura madre* and it spread very early to the Valley of Mexico, Guerrero, Michoacán, Chiapas, and into Guatemala and farther south. They influenced the civilzation at Teotihuacán (where we see the magnificent temples to the sun and moon) and their neighbors the Mixtecas and Zapotecas. The first Zapotec city of any size was Xaguixe (now called Teotitlán del Valle) but the vast ceremonial centre the Spaniards dubbed Monte Albán (outside Oaxaca) is best known and was still used (mostly for burials) after the Conquest.[11] The Mixtecs were at the place the Spaniards called Monte Negro and at Yucñudahui and elsewhere, most notably at Mitla. Its Zapotec name, Yupa (place of the dead), underlines its function as a necropolis. The names often tell us as much about these lost cities as the pottery and other artifacts. The Olmec name for the important Huastec people, for example, was Toneyo (our neighbors). The Itz in Chichén Itzá referred to the rain, so the place was "at the well opening of the people of the rain," a *cenote* (sacred well) into which virgins were thrown in sacrifice to the gods. Way up in Jalisco, far from Yucatán (a Mayan word for the place of the *yuccas,* a delicious fruit), there is both an Ixtlahuacán de los Membrillos (of the quinces) and an Ixtlahuacán del Rio and the names tell a story. Guyamas (on the west coast, due South in Sonora of the border town called Nogales in both Mexico and the United States) is named for the Guymenas who once lived there, just a small tribe but still commemorated.

A great people, spread over the Mexican states of Tabasco,

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11 When the Spaniards came, Monte Albán (continuously occupied or, since its function was largely if not completely ceremonial, perhaps one ought to say used, since 500 B.C.) was in the hands of the Aztecs who had captured it in 1469 under Moctezuma I ("The Wrathful") and held it thereafter to protect their trade routes to Central and South America. Other movements had other causes. Probably the most notable was that of the demiurge "Plumed Serpent" who ruled Tula (perhaps Sahagún's "Tollan," the place of reeds) for 20 years and was forced out in a Toltec civil war. He took his people to Coatzacoalcos River and the culture of Yucatán therefore echoes that of Tula. Around the historical character (as with King Arthur, that famous *dux bellorum*) a legend has been woven: like King Arthur he set out to sea and promised one day to return. Like Christ, he was said to have been born of a virgin. (His mother got pregnant when she swallowed a piece of the jade which the Chinese call the "food of the immortals" and which the early Mexicans likewise revered and treasured.) Tula flourished from the tenth to the twelfth centuries of our era, beginning a little later than Xochicalco (a great pyramid erected by the Toltecs near present-day Cuernavaca and spurring archaeological interest when discussed by António Alzate in his *Descripcion de las antiguedades de Xochicalco* in 1791, repeated by Alexander von Humboldt in *Atlas Pittoresque,* Paris 1810, the year of his invaluable *Vues des Cordilléres et Monuments des Peuples indigènes de l' Amérique*). The "plumed serpent" Quetzalcoatl was worshipped in both these locations and his cult spread from Yucatán south as well as accounting for the *tlachihualtepetl* (man-made mountain) of the pyramid of the Mixtecs at Cholula, once the largest structure in the world's history and torn down by the Mexicans to build the churches of puebla. One can still tour its labyrinths. Its name means "place of flight."

Campeche, Yucatán, Chiapas and Quintana Roo and parts of Guatemala, Honduras, and Belice (or British Honduras), was the Maya. Vast temple cities still stand at Chichén Itzá, Uxmal, Tulúm, Jaina, Chetumál, Uaxactún, Palenque, Tuxtla, Bonampak, Yaxchilan, Tikál, Quirigua, Copán, and elsewhere. The Spaniards gave their own names to these pyramids and palaces: they called the main temple at Chichén Itzá *El Castillo* (though it has been found to have been a temple to Kulkulkan, the Quetzalcoatl of the people of Tula who fled to the south) and a towering structure at Uxmal *El Adivino* (though there is no evidence that it was connected with any magician). To later ages the excavations and restorations of British, American, and other archaeologists, the murals (as at Bonampak), steles (as at Copán), and unearthed artifacts have been informative and have added to the facts derived from the Mayan *hunn* (paper) codices, some of which existed as early as a thousand years before Christ, most of which have perished with the *teoamextli* (book of the gods, ca. A.D. 660) of the Toltecs and other early documents. Díaz saw piles of Totonac books at Cempoala. All gone. We have mentioned the bishop in Yucatán and his book burning. In the absence of so much, every shred of onomastic evidence takes on extra importance and we study the history of the country not only in noting that Nueva Italia was founded by Italian immigrants in 1873 but in examining why Rio Cupatitizo (whose source is in the Parque Eduardo Ruiz in Urapan) is a "singing river" and who named it that.[12] Names can be as valuable in their way as the stela at the first great Mayan pyramid (Uaxactún, with the date equivalent to A.D. 328) that Sylvanus G. Morley found (1916), the Mixtec tombs excavated at Monte Albán by Alfonso Caso (1932), the sculptures of La Venta (discovered by Matthew Stirling in 1940) or the treasures of Palenque (unearthed by Alberto Ruiz L'Huillier in 1953). They, too, can speak from the past of men and migrations, of ways of life and ways of thought. "There is so much to think over," said Bernal Díaz del Castillo.[13]

Bolonchen (nine wells in Mayan) and *La Gruta de Xtacumbil-Xunan* (Cave of the Hidden Women) as much as *Alvarado's Leap* and *Tampico* have information for us about ancient ways — the earliest "American" date Matthew Stirling found at Tres Zapotes: equivalent to 31 B.C.! —

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12 Urapan means "where flowers grow" — and I noted a couple of dozen kinds of orchids in its plaza. (The Urapan Orchid is purple.) Some ten miles downstream from this wonderful park full of "singing" waterfalls is the cascade of Tzararacua, which is Tarascan for "sieve."

13 Interest in onomastics is growing in Mexico and this bad joke from the Guadalajara Unicode Guide (Guadalajara: Rehuere S.A., 1974, p. 27) is a typical: "Ajijic (pronounced ah-he-HEEK and derived from a pre-Hispanic sneeze)." Actually the name of this village on Lake Chapala, the retired Americans who live there in large numbers insist, is pronounced "ah-hee-HEE" and the final "c" is silent, as in nearby Jocotopec "ho-co-tuh-pay."

even though the various ancient languages seem to give us knotty problems![14] Mexico, with its layers of culture, is especially rich in onomastic material, for it is a Mexican habit to have, sometimes, several words for the same thing: no one who has driven Mexican roads can forget *topes, zumbadores* and *tumulos* — all bumps. The state name of Jalisco used to be Nueva Gallicia (you can see where the earliest explorers originated) and before that the area was called Chimahuacán. In Guadalajara, which the Spaniards brought over (with Matamòros and such) from Moorish Spain, and which many resident Americans call nothing but Guad, the Mercado Liberdad is also San Juan de Dios and Avenida Hidalgo Poniente[15] is Antigua 3 Calle (but you have to know the street by number even today, because the telephone book uses that system and not the named one — of which more later, after you have brooded on that for a while). Avenida Juárez Sur (of course the Sur is simply "south") used to be Antigua Calle de los Cinquo Señores. And those five gentlemen? Ah, *señor,* once upon a time....

Every place has some local variations of names, some names the inhabitants will not accept (e.g., Avenue of the Americas for Sixth Avenue in New York City) or make jokes about (Perishing Square in Los Angeles — "where they have railings to keep the fruit from picking the people"), some features with two or more names. Mexico is especially rich in this respect. What we call the Rio Grande (a Mexican name, one might say, from when Texas was Mexico) the Mexicans call the Rio Bravo as soon as it crosses their line. (Similarly, the Rio Grijalva in Mexico becomes the Rio Chiapas. The year Francisco Hernandez de Cordoba discovered The Yucatan, 1517, at Cape Catoche, Juan de Grijalva landed on the beautiful Island of Cozumel and called the country Nueva España.) Officially the Plaza de Mariachis (those strolling musicians who, as Tom Lehrer pointed out,

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[14] The *quipu* (knotted string records) of the Incas (who could not write) yield information when wrapped around the proper "core." What onomastics as a science always requires is a "core" to give the verbal facts significance.

[15] Hidalgo was the patriot. Poniente, which many tourists take for a surname in Mexican street names, means just "West." Some travelers think Puente Angosto (narrow bridge), Poblando Proximo (town nearby), and Curva Peligroso (dangerous curve) are towns just off the road. The habit of naming suburbs (*colonia*) with "Col." convinces many foreigners that a number of colonels are commemorated (as, in comparison, there is a Doctor González suburb of Monterrey). One tourist of my acquaintance thought *Topes* was a common town name — these bumps are deliberately put in the road, among the accidental bumps, to slow you down — and the same sort of thing obtained when an American on an Italian train was asked "What's the name of this town?" and, looking out the window at the station platform, read the largest visible sign and replied "Uscita." Even when one can cope with the language (more or less) one cannot always be sure. In Campeche the Bridge of Dogs (*El Puente de los Perros*) refers to those "dogs of God," the Dominican friars, not the fattened dogs the Aztecs kept to eat or the skinny ones one sees today in Mexican streets.

will not "go away until they are paid"), the people-watching square of Guadalajara, is the "Lesser Sombrillas," for a sidewalk cafe there is *Las Sombrillas,* for its street umbrellas. That is on the corner of Juárez and Colón — but Juárez later changes its name to Avenida Vallarta as it passes the university. In Durango each year (founded by Francisco de Ibarra, 1568, on the site of a Tepehuac indian settlement) they celebrate the discovery of the world's largest mountain of iron ore, called locally Cerro de Mercado. The south beach at Puerto Vallarta the natives call Los Muertos (though a more touristy name may soon be found by the go-ahead chamber of commerce, given a great boost by the filming on location of Tennessee Williams' *The Night of the Iguana* which brought Richard Burton, "Liz" Taylor, and the jet set there). At Acapulco — where (as I write) the newest "in" place is *Las Hadas* (fairyland)—the beaches are Hornos (for the morning), Caleta (for the afternoon), and Condessa (no special time — the Hotel Condessa del Mar was opened in 1971). The so-called thieves' market of Guadalajara is *El Barratillo* (little cheap one) and those who live near Mt. Bernal call it *El Sombrero.* Coatzacoalcos (Veracruz) is likewise Puerto México—and a clever American resident of Mexico I know always calls it "Coca Cola."

Government policy changed Xicotepec to Villa Juárez, but the natives take little notice. Anti-clericalism changed Santa Clara del Cobre (Don Vasco de Quiroga passed through there and taught the inhabitants copper working, which they still do; Santa Clara, sister of St. Francis of Assisi, shows the Franciscan hold on the town and hints at the existence of a convent) to Villa Escalante. Few people pay any attention. People may call a beach Las Margaritas (for the flowers, not the drinks)[16] whatever it says on the map. Rio Nautla is also called Rio Bobos, but nobody there seems to know which "fools" it was named for. Perhaps those who want to know why it is not called Rio Nautla locally?

The Cuyutlán Lagoon at Manzanillo on the west coast is locally called Laguna de los Caimanes (Alligator Lagoon) for they abound there. The Zona Rosa, Mexico City's fashionable quarter, sounds as if

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16 The *margarita* (daisy) is somewhat white and yellow, a mixture of tequilla and cointreau (which is colorless also, but is made from oranges, at least). The rim of the glass is salted. Pseudo-Mexican drinks include the Black Russian (kahlua and vodka — actually a Black Russian ought to be stout and champagne mixed in equal parts, but the day when people would put anything into expensive champagne is apparently past) and the Sunrise (tequilla base again) and the Bull Shot (vulgar name, vulgar drink—it seems people will drink anything, like a Moscow Mule, just to make the name work: "7 and 7," which is Seagram's 7 Whiskey and, God help us!, 7-Up, is fun to say but disgusting to drink and people go on ordering it). The psychology of cocktails — the name is *not* from the Aztec, or anything like it, despite the folk etymologies — would make a nice onomastic study....

it got its designation from a map — or from its rich visitors being "in the pink." The only roses are on the tables of expensive restaurants. Zempoala or Cempoala. Your Choice. El Huizachi junction is also known as San Juan sin Agua. No water there! Ixtapán de la Sal is joked about as "The Jewish Cuernavaca." (Cuernavaca might well be "The Non-Jewish Miami." Or is Miami "The Cuban Havana" by now?)

Jocotepec is the least "American" of the towns around Mexico's largest lake, Chapala![17] Its dusty plaza is Graham Greene rather than green and a few natives weave a white serape (more sought before it broke out in mod designs). Its neighbors at the western end of the lake called this burg El Pueblo, though it seems to have only one hotel (the quaint La Quinta, still going after 150 years or so) and few tourists, even for the Nuestro Señor del Monte fête. Protracted road repairs persuaded the neighbors to call it Pozotepec — *pozo* being a well, or a large hole in the road — but all who did so were "retired Americans" and the Mexicans claimed they did not even get the joke. The road was repaired after a couple of years and the name was added to the legends of the town.[18] When misunderstood, or forgotten and rediscovered, simple names can spawn weird explanations: Tiajuana is nobody's Aunt Juana — it is *teehuana*, "city of the sea," no more Spanish than "Cuernavaca," which does not mean "cow's horn", but is simply a corruption of an Indian name for running water.[19]

The Mexican habit of creating diminutives is well-known. Everyone has been asked to wait if not until *mañana* (which confusingly means both "morning" and "tomorrow" — and "sometimes never," others would add) a *momentito.* Jesus becomes Jésusito, a *chica* (little girl)

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17 When I first went there, there were really only three, the others being Chapala and Ajijic. Now there are "developments" at Chula Vista (darling view), La Floresta, around Montecarlo (a failed luxury hotel now a club on the site where Porfirio Díaz is supposed to have kept his mistress), Roca Azul, etc.

18 Fray Nicolas Antônio de Ornelas Mendoza y Valdiviva in *Crónica de la Provincia de Santiago de Xalixco* tells the legend of the destruction of Jocotepec's church by a great wind (hurricane?) and of the devil appearing to the populace to complain he was not being paid sufficient attention by them (sounds unlikely on several counts). He threatened to flood the whole town with boiling water — hot springs abound and the spa at San Juan Cosalá just down the road still operates — so the locals sacrificed five babies to him, tossing them into a hot spring one at a time. No trouble reported since. The church is restored and across from it is a little shrine with an allegedly Immovable Christ. The wooden figure looked quite portable to me but, unlike a fellow American who (in Europe) was shown an "eternal flame" that was said to have been burning for centuries and was supposed to burn until the end of the world (he instantly blew it out — great consternation), I did not venture to incur local wrath by disturbing it. Or maybe it was immovable only once, as when someone tried to steal it or something. There are a few European legends of that sort. Someday there may well be a complex tale of virgins thrown into boiling *cenotes* to explain "Pozotepec," but you now have the true story and, like many behind onomastic legends, it is a simple one.

19 Mexican spelling (Jalapa was Xalapa, Jalisco was Xalisco and Ajijic was Axixic) varies. I have seen *papalla* for *papaya, bugambilia* for *bougainvillia* (from a French surname, of course) and our *colonel* is *coronel* in standard Spanish.

chicita, a *rato* (moment) a *ratito* or *ratitito,* as we in the United States ask people to wait a while, a minute, "a second" or "an instant." This carries over into names as well. As Paco is short for Francisco, Mamacita is loving for Mama. The statue of Charles IV (at Juárez and Paseo de la Reforma in Mexico City) is *El Cabalito* (little horseman). Nuestra Señora de Zapotán (a small, corn-paste statue said to have been brought from Spain by Fray Antonio de Segovia and much revered) is affectionately *La Generalita.* Place-names include San Jeronimito, El Limoncito, and Palmarito (Palmar de Bravo).

Most Mexicans are a mixture of races. Their language is a mixture too. Here are some peculiarly Mexican words more or less at random: *maleteros* (tramps — the people who steer tourists to hotels), *chihuahua* (a hairless dog whose name is taken from its at least supposed state of origin, as with Weimaraners, Pekingese, Pomeranians, Afghans, Dalmations, Skye terriers, Kerry Blues and so on), *guacamole* (an avocado paste), *guescomate* (a globular "silo on a stick"), *tortillas* (bread, not the Spanish omelette), *semafora* (traffic light—recalling the days when moving arms and not lights were used), *pesos* (money, literally weights, of the M.N. or *moneda national*), *calandria* (horsedrawn vehicle), *diligencia* (old stage coach, which gave its name to inns, restaurants, hotels — on the plaza in Veracruz, for instance, stands *La Diligencia,* the third hotel on the site in a century but with the old name), and *columnaria* (the old piece of eight, the "pillar dollar" bearing the Pillars of Hercules from the Spanish *Plus Ultra* sign, from which we are supposed to have derived our dollar sign and the Mexicans their sign for pesos, which the old Chinese traders called "two candlesticks dollar"). Mexican Spanish is alive with colorful idiom: *a carta cabal*=thoroughly, *ir al grano*=to get to the point, *poner el grito en el cielo*=to hit the ceiling (put the cry in the sky) in anger, and *calentarse los cascos* means to rack one's brains (heat up the skulls), not to mention equally vivid but less printable phrases. So also there is slang and jargon. *Pan frío* (cold bread) is day-old baked goods sold by the *expendio de pan frío* of the Bimbo factory. (The American meaning of "bimbo," a cheap "broad," is unknown in Mexico.) *Medias noches* are small rolls (a midnight snack?) and a *bolillo* is a small roll that supposedly resembles a bullet but also (because it is baked to a very light color) is a nickname for the *gringos.*[20] *Mocha* is slang for "very religious." *Comida corrida* (lunch) foreigners get confused with *corrida* (six bulls).

Just as the Danes have no Danish Pastry (they say it comes from Vienna) and in Bologna bologna is "Parisian sausage," so our

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20 Many writers claim *gringo* comes from Texans (or other *nordeamericanos*) singing the folksong "Green Grow the Lilacs." I do not believe it.

"Mexican tea" (also called Mormon tea and Squaw tea — made from small pine twigs on the frontier) is unknown in Mexico. But they do have many dishes with Mexican names, often Nahautl. They no longer eat the *xoloitzcuintli* (hairless dogs) but they make *guacamole* (which has no *mole* in it) and *mole negro de guajolote* (turkey in chocolate sauce) and *mole* (ditto with chicken).[21] In addition to the standard *flan* and *tocos* and *tamales* and *frijoles* and *chiles* they have *hitomates* and *tomates* (the latter smaller and greener) and manufacture several odd and delicious kinds of candy, including *ate, cajeta,* and *queso de tuna* (this is not "tunafish cheese" but made from the *tuna,* a prickly pear). At Tula stands the ancient giant cyprus, *ahuete.* Hippies (Mexicans render this *jipis*) have made *peyotl* (peyote) famous and christened a kind of "pot" (*cannabis*) "Acapulco Gold." (Next the *jipis* should turn to *barbasco,* now used to produce synthetic hormones but early employed by the natives to stun fish, which were then caught by hand.) *Teocintle* (a wild grass which may have been the distant ancestor of corn — which the British call maize or Indian corn, like the French) and *tezontle* (a red volcanic stone used in some Aztec buildings) are very old words. So is *hueytzahuatl* (great leprosy), which the Spaniards are accused of bringing (alleging in return that they got syphillis in America).[22] Probably the most commonly used Indian word is *zŏcalo,* a name given to the main square of Mexican towns, the *plaza major.* On the site of the great Aztec temple (bits of which can still be seen in the walls of nearby colonial buildings) of Mexico City, which the Spaniards destroyed to replace with their cathedral and principal square, stood a *zocalo* or pedestal. Or perhaps the reference is to the pedestal for the monument to Independence (which still has not been erected there). In any case, Mexico City has the main *zócalo* and other cities have followed suit.

While the Indian heritage has influenced their language, the Mexicans have been a little less influenced by the Moors who for eight centuries dominated Spain. Like their Spanish cousins they use Arabic words such as *alcohol* (*al-quhl*), *alcalde* (*al-qâdi*), *alcacel* (*al-qasîl*)—in English we derive *admiral* and *algebra,* etc., from Arabs — but they

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21 Puebla cherishes a story about nuns with scant provisions whipping up the odd ingredients of *mole* to entertain an unexpected dignitary (variously the governor, the viceroy, the bishop, or some combination of these), making it a dish for a demanding occasion (like Chicken Marengo) but it seems to be an old Aztec receipt. The Spaniards noticed that the Aztecs served anything containing chocolate "with great ceremony." Aztec nuns is stretching the imagination.

22 The Mexicans say it was introduced by a black soldier in the troop to Panfilo de Narvaez in 1520. The "great leprosy" reached plague proportions soon after Joaquin de Montserrat, Marques de Cruillas, arrived at Veracruz (September 4, 1760) to be the forty-fourth of the 62 viceroys of New Spain. Montserrat (born 1725) was appointed by Charles III. He entered Mexico City in October 5, 1760 and the next year 14,600 persons died there and 80,000 in Puebla. He remained in his viceregal post until August 23, 1766.

use the word *colonia* (as we have said) for *arrabal* though they have the place-name Izucarde Matamoros and other Moorish touches. Stronger is the influence of Andalusia on the Mexican language.[23] It was the Andalusian *gaucho* and not the Toledan who first put his mark on the vast *encomiendas* (estates) of the colony. Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán has proved that the slave trade brought more blacks to Mexico than whites in the colonial period but no study of the effect, if any, of their languages upon Mexican speech has been done. In place-names the effect of these hundreds of thousands of people seems to have been nil, but their contribution to the racial stock is obvious in the country. There are even some black Jews on the west coast.

The Americanization of Mexico continues, reversing the process that gave us *vamoose, buckaroo, chaps,* and made *braceros* (vulgarly called "wetbacks" because they are supposed to have sneaked in to work by swimming the Rio Grande) and *chili con carne* common American words. Retirees to Guad speak of Minerva Circle (named for a statue of the goddess) as "Manoeuvre Circle" or "Nervous Circle" because of the traffic and Melaque (near Bara del Navidad) as "Malarkey." (One dizzy tourist thought Barra del Navidad translated "contraceptive device," making up for the Mexican lady who explained in broken English she was constructing "an activity scene" for the church at Christmas.) Many pets are given "American" names by Mexicans who have them (pets are rarer than in the United States) though Americans living in Mexico tend to choose Spanish names for pets.[24] Mexicans are picking up the habit of initials (more than acronyms) and have created Pemex (Petroleos Mexicanos) and Cordemex (which deals with ropes and fibres) but this is an international rather than narrowly U.S. trend. Tourist centres inevitably name restaurants El Shrimp Bucket (Mazatlán), El Bistrot [*sic*], (Guadalajara), The Pink Panther (Chapala — from an old film, itself based upon a cartoon character), Chalet Suizo (Mexico City) and boats that tourists might rent are given names to appeal to them

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23 Alfonso X standardized Spanish (which first was written in the eleventh century) in 1253 on the dialect of Toledo, but most of the *conquistadores* came from farther south than that great centre of Christian, Arabic, and Jewish learning. Cadiz was the principal port of the New World trade. A study of the origin of early explorers, missionaries and other *gachupines* (newcomers from Spain) will explain the peculiarities of early Mexican Spanish. Easy to notice is the way Mexicans pronounce *ll*, like the English *y*, and this can affect spelling.

24 I discovered when visiting one American family at Ajijic that "Dido" the dog was not named for the lady with Aeneas but from *perdido* — he had turned up as a lost dog. The parrot was Mango (yellow blob on the head) and the new kitten Mantequilla (butter, from the color — though it was suggested that he be called Monty for Monty Zoomer, since he zoomed around so much).

(though Patycake at Chapala seems inexplicable).[25] Multilingual menus (as everywhere) contain numerous errors (barely soup, chicken in chalk or late souse, goot pasture stile for *cabrito al pastor*) and at Carlos Anderson's restaurants the menu humor is deliberate (if as unfunny as the food): Dinosaur Egg Soup, Heartburn Chicken (Horrible), and Moo, Oink, and Peep. Scallops Cure-All and Green Gawd Salad — I have never liked this dressing, based (I suppose) on a play by William Archer — are more amusing. One of Carlos Anderson's[26] establishments is called Carlos O'Willy's (& Polo) & Tony. It used to be Willy's Pub, Willy's last name being Gomez. *Vuestra merced* (your grace) became *usted*: times change. Mazatlán's eateries include (all *sic*) Le Belle Epoque, Lafitte Gormet Restaurant, and (as in many other places) La Copa de Leche (cup of milk — but it is the name of a native flower), while nightspots include Caligula and Mauna Loa a Go-Go ("a huge thatched cabana nestles under the towering cliffs of 'Ice Box Hill' "). The steakhouse Caballo Loca unfortunately suggests horsemeat, but the inspiration was probably Paris' "Crazy Horse Saloon." There is a "Yate Fiesta" (yacht), Hobbie Cat (sailboats for rent), and ABZ Travel.

Some insight into the trendy naming process can be gleaned from this paragraph from a Mexican newspaper (September 8, 1974):

> There are two singular characteristics about the circos (circuses) playing the pueblos of Mexico. First are their names, which most often have no reasonable meaning in any of man's known languages. For instances [*sic*], "Klay Vire" is the name of the troupe playing last week at Lake Chapala towns. Klay Vire? Yes, and no one knows what that might mean. Then why choose it? "Pues, it's...you know...Interesting! It sounds unusual!" a member of the Osorio family that owns the Circo Klay Vire happily exclaims. "It's very rare, no?" He grins as if to produce a free-form logic out of illogic.

The second characteristic, by the way, is that they are "mud shows" (not the big-time big top) and "possess a rather vulnerable down-at-the-heels ambiente of uncertain and scattered goals, uncoordinated talent, cast-off equipment (and sometimes acts), and

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25 Ajijic's nightclub was Praxis, then *Las Cucharaches* (Beetles or Cockroaches?), one hopes from the song. Now people go to *El Tejeban* (tile roof) which is "the place." There is another place called simply "The Place." The *naturales* seem almost as extinct in Ajijic as the *caciaque* Chapalac after whom the nearby lake was named. In Puerto Villarta (that *Paraiso Escondido* before The Taylors came) a signpainter's error "Tony's Please" was "too good to change" and remains that way.

26 His name sounds South American rather than Mexican. In South America names like that of film star Carlos Thompson or Enrique Schweitzer are common. A Mazatlán promoter ("founder of Mazatlán Arts & Crafts Centre") is Carlos Irvine.

whimsically-neglected animals."[27]

We must come now to the Spanish names which centuries of Spanish domination stamped on Mexico. On Tuesday, August 23, 1521, the Feast of St. Hippolytus, the "Aztec empire" fell. "Let us leave the city," said the inhabitants of Tenochtitlan. "Let us live on weeds." The spoils of Mexico were melted down: 132,000 *castellanos.* Each horseman among the conquerors was offered 80 pesos. "Not a single soldier was willing to accept his share," writes a chronicler, for it was "hardly enough to buy a sword." But over the succeeding centuries hundreds of tons of gold were shipped out of the New World to the Old. In exchange, Spanish culture was impressed upon a million Indians or more, a population which, enslaved and degraded, had shrunk by the seventeenth century to a pitiful 70,000. In time the tyranny vanished. The Spanish names remain: Alamo, Barranca Sera, Casa, Dinamita, Ensenada, Frontera, Guadalupe, Hidalgo, Isla, Jimenez, Loreto, Matamoros, Nogales, Ojo Caliente, Pozo Rico, Quila, Rioverde, Sombrerete, Torreon, Union Hidalgo, Valladolid, Zaragosa, to list a few. Some are beautiful or interesting. Venta Prieta (blackish sail) is the name of a place near Pachuca where this still is a colony of Jewish Indians, with a synagogue. Jardines de Pedregal (lava gardens), near University City outside the capital, is a lavish modern housing development on the site of the area where, 2,500 years ago, the volcano Xitle (now extinct) buried the civilization of the builders of the great round "pyramid" of Cuilcuilo. There is an Aquascalientes (hot waters) and an Agua Caliente and an Agua Hedionda (stinking water), an Agua Blanca, Agua Nueva, and Agua Prieta. At the Vista Hermosa (pretty view) ranch near Monterrey there is Cola de Caballo (horsetail) falls. The Casa Villanueva in Taxco is now the Casa Humboldt. Once

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[27] The search for "free-form logic out of illogic" is Mexican. The American answer would be a "put on" in the style of The Beatles. (When greeted upon arrival in America with "What do you call that haircut?" a Beatle snapped back "Arthur!" "Arthur" became an appropriate answer to a demand for a name for things that needed no names—or no sensible ones. So Sybil Burton (as she was then; later she divorced Richard Burton and married a singer who called himself Jordan Christopher) called her New York discotheque "Arthur" and the pop groups started to call themselves Strawberry Alarm Clock, The Joy of Cooking, Pink Floyd, etc. I have discussed this trend (and pop names such as Chicago Transit, Jefferson Airplane, etc. — which are not really meaningless, since they are ways of taking *trips*) elsewhere.

Performers in the Circo Klay Vire (*clavier?*) included trapeze artists Joaquin and Chato Osorio, lion-tamer Jorrocho, magician Luciant, dwarf David Martinez, and knife-thrower "El Americano de Alaska, Wade Gillmore, diestro de chuhillos." *The News* (Mexico City) added: "To small-town audiences, Alaska must seem terribly distant and vaguely romantic, outlined by geography-book polar bears and grade school lessons about igloos and Eskimos." The whole thing contained much of the essence of the small-time entertainment parodied in *El Grande de Coca-Cola* which came to New York from the Hampstead Theatre Club (London) — and was forced by the company to call itself *Coca-Cola Grande* in the United States!

the home of that explorer, later a pension, it is now a tourist agency and shop. The Casa Figueroa is called La Casa de las Lagrimas (house of tears) because the Conde de Cardena made the Indians he judged work on it to pay the fines for their crimes.[28] Near "The Very Noble and Loyal City of Our Lady of Zacatecas" the Spanish thought the mountain looked like a Cerro de la Bufa (wineskin). At El Sumidero, Textla Guitérrez the Indians leaped to their deaths rather than submit to the conquerors. Puebla (just "people") is really Puebla de Nuestra Señora los Angeles, having dropped all but the first part, as the Los Angeles of California dropped all but the last.[29] There is Baja California and Baja California Sur (as well as the Gulf of California and the Sea of Cortés) and other places with names redolent of romance.[30] El Triunfo's name bespeaks the pride of the miners who made the great Baja silver strike in the last century: today it is a ghost town. San Luis Potosí (the capital of the state of the same name) was once Tagamanga (place of water and gold). When the Spaniards struck gold there in 1592 it became San Luis Mina de Potosí, the miners undoubtedly hoping that its riches would equal those of the great Potosí mine in Peru. So a Mexican city and a Mexican state received a name partly Spanish and partly Quechuan. Made a city by the Duque de Albuquerque (a name familiar to Americans) in 1665, it was confirmed as such by Felipe IV (1735) and became the capital of a territory that once stretched to the borders of the French possessions in Louisiana, named for the same canonized king. The mine (and the Mina) are gone. The name remains; as does that (for instance) of Plaza de la Universidad in Guadalajara, though the university has moved away.

As in a few cities in Spain, the inhabitants gave themselves odd names. In Oaxaca are the Oaxaqueños, in Puebla the Polblanos, in Veracruz the Jarochos (from the *jaracha* dance), in Jalisco Tapatíos (from the native coin *tapatía*), but most such names are based on

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28 Fidel Figueroa restored it as a studio in 1943.

29 A Dominican priest said that in a dream he saw two angels laying out a city. It was done, not by angels but by 8,000 *indigenes* rounded up for the purpose, and settled by 40 Spanish families. (Thirty knights and their families settled Córdoba, named for the Spanish city and where the last of Spain's 62 viceroys surrendered to Augustín Itúrbide, first Emperor of Mexico, and so called "The City of the Thirty Knights.")

30 Baja California is divided at the Twenty-eighth Parallel. President Echeverría in his fourth annual state of the union address moved to make Baja California Sur (and the territory of Quintana Roo) a state of the United States of Mexico. In the Sea of Cortés there are 650 varieties of fish — their names alone would make a fascinating onomastic study, especially if Spanish names admit of as many variations as (e.g.) French or English. (The chavender, now chub, in French is *chevenne, chevène, chevensne, chevanne, chevanneau, chavanne, chavaine, chevasson,* and, adds, Waverley Root in the *International Herald Tribune* for July 18, 1974, "in the Île-de-France, where, other Frenchmen say, people 'talk pointed' (*parler pointu*), the contraction ch'vene has even been turned into *juène,*" not to mention the nicknames *rôtisson* and *vilain* or smaller versions named *meunier, vandoise, aubour, gravelet, dard, soufia, souffe, blageon, cabot, chabot* and *testard.*)

standard Spanish practice.

Nor are the divisions of towns and cities into sectors so unusual, however much they seem to create a "typically Mexican confusion," as one guide book dares to put it.[31] The American residents can turn a beautiful place-name Tamazunchale into "Thomas and Charlie" and are completely floored by the Nahuatl for "Emeralds in the Rough" (Chachihuiches). They are the ones who are most confused, and perhaps the Mexicans like it that way! The secret is to develop an interest in names, to be on the lookout for (e.g.) "four dotted letters in a row" (Ajijic) or even five (Pijijiapán). On the road between Rio Hondo (a word more common in American usage now because of the horse-operas in which it is used for "boss") and Quiriguá (a Mayan site in Guatemala), I noted Delicias y Jones. The next town's name coincided with my startled reaction: Jésus María! By the time you get all the way down to El Salvador (with its Cada Sucia, "Dirty Face" and

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31 Actually it is the guide books which are more often confusing — and inaccurate as well. John Wilhelm (who is capable of identifying La Malintzin, later baptized as Marina and after Cortés' death married to Juan Xaramilo, as "his native interpreter and loyal companion"), for example, in his *Guide to Mexico City* (1968) despite the fact that it is the twelfth edition and "revised" writes of the cathedral of Cuernavaca: "which is called the Cathedral of the Resurrection after the colorful statue near the altar of the Virgin Mary and the angels who are lifting her into heaven" (p. 176). Of course that is the Assumption, not the Resurrection (Mary in Roman Catholic belief never having died but having been taken bodily into heaven). Another writer gets into difficulties over an "Emperor's Bridge" which is older than both Maximilian and Iturbide, while Selena Royle in Guadalajara ("I live it..I love it") turns out a popular handbook which goes out of its way to praise Neill James for contributions to the life of the Ajijic and does not realize that she is a woman, confused by the name and clearly not acquainted with this lively and long-term resident. Occasionally, these books are funny, as when Wilhelm writes (p. 158) "the church fell into abandon" or the Guad lady waxes lyrical.

Here is Richard Bloomgarden (*The Easy Guide to Guadalajara and Suburbs,* Mexico, D.F.: Ammex Associados S.A., "First Edition, January 1969," p. 111):

> The south-north axis of the city (Guadalajara) is Avenida Independencia. The western axis running off of Independencia is Juarez-Villarta, the same street with just a change of name along the way. The eastern axis is harder to define. It starts on Gomez Faria and then sort of struggles down any street it can find to keep going due east.
>
> These four main cross streets divide the city into four quarters (roughly) called SECTORS. Each sector is individually named: one Juarez; one Hidalgo; one Liberdad; and one Reforma.
>
> So far it all makes sense, right? The center of the city is where the four streets meet and here is where the confusion starts. All the streets today have names but in the early days they had only numbers. Everyone calls them by the names, no one knows the numbers, but the phone book only lists the numbers and not the names. Therefore I found the phone book absolutely no help in finding anything. If you don't know the number of the street, and nobody else does, you can't find the place through the phone book. If you do know the name, you don't need the phone book. What a system.

In Guatemala City and elsewhere the same "sectors" system is to be found and street names become a very big problem for all but the most alert locals.

lots of Sucio rivers) you are collecting interesting onomastic examples and worrying less about systems and rules. What melody in "Kamiñalyuyú"! How beautiful the story behind a name like Acolmán (*acolli*=shoulder, *maitl*=hand): the Sun having shot an arrow which made a hole in the surface of the Earth, Man arose, consisting at first of only a hand and an arm, but followed by Woman! What a charming creation myth, and what a comment on the cosmic rays of sunbeams, or whatever, that first created sex (in the blue-green algae) and led to animals (who could roam the earth) and not just plants which thrust their "hands and arms" out of the earth! How lovely the names of drinks in Mexico; the fruit *acahul* (Puebla), *chumiates* (México, Tenancingo), *guasimo* (Tabasco), *huikimo* (Chichuahua), *moscos* (México, Toluca), *nanche* (Veracruz, Nayarit, Campeche), and a cider, *sidra* or *sidral* (Puebla, Huejotzing); from cati *bacanora* (Sonora), *colonche* (San Luís Potosí, Guanajuato), *chichihualoo* (Guerrero), *mezcal* (Oaxaca, San Luís Potosi), *pulque* and *tequila* in many places (especially Tequila, in Jalisco) and *xotol* (Chihuahua); from sugar cane *comiteco* (Chiapas), *charanda* (Michoacán), *habanero* (Veracruz, Campeche), *holanda* (Guerrero), *lechuguillia* (Sonora, Puebla); *tesguino* from corn and *rompope* from milk and eggs in several places; *holcatzin* from rum and herbs (Campeche); *jamaica* in many places and *xtabentun* (Yucatán), from flowers!

I think I have listed most of the drinks native to Mexico. I cannot attempt a complete list of the names associated with the almost daily fiestas and celebrations. Cholula claims 365 churches. That is a lie. One would have to scour a dozen or more nearby places (and be very broad in one's interpretation of "church") to make up that number. But if anyone told me there was a Mexican festival for each day of the year, I should unhesitatingly believe him. Somewhere someone has taken nearly 150 pages to discuss them all. Here one can mention just a very few. The Mexican Christmas is the Day of the Three Kings (the Magi); Epiphany or "Little Christmas" is the last of the Twelve Days of Christmas, the sixth of January. On that day one should see the Indian dancers at Cajititlán, near Guadalajara. The next week the flying voladores are at Ahila (Puebla). Later in January there are the feasts of San Antonio Abad (patron of animals) and Santa Prisca at Taxco. More animals are blessed on Candelaria (February 2) at places like San Juan de los Lagos, Cuajimalpa; February 5 is Constitución (commemorating the end of the revolution of 1910 which resulted in that document of rights); and February 27 sees gladiator fights at Ocoyoacac. Children of Taxco do the cockfight dance on March 4 and throughout the month there are political and religious festivities throughout the republic. In April you get the flower fair at Fortín de las Flores and various saints' days, including St. Mark's (very big at Aquascalientes). The first of May is Labor day. May 3 is the feast of

the Holy Cross, obviously a "natural" for Santa Cruz Acalpizcán (near Xochimilco) but observed in other places as well. From May 1-6 there is a fair at Veracruz as there has been every year since they celebrated the arrival of a Spanish fleet centuries ago. All over Mexico you find streets named Cinco de Mayo and, come May 5, the nation all turns out to mark the Battle of Puebla. More festivities follow in May and wind up the month with the fiesta at Tehuantepec on May 31. Then comes June with a rash of festivals: one must attend many and especially not neglect Midsummer, the Feast of St. John the Baptist (June 24). Get up early and bathe at dawn. That is half the year in brief. The other half is no less busy, the biggest day being Mexican Independence with *el grito* in September. The names of many of these festivals are full of onomastic interest and the saints' days alone, quite apart from survivals of the earlier religion and the commemorations of Mexican history, could fill a book.

That brings us to history, which preserves onomastic details like flies in amber and which in Mexico's case is at least 7,000 years long. Though Mexico has no places continuously inhabited for as long as Cuzo (Peru), its place-names are ancient, varied, colorful. History shines with little facts as the Green Wave does at Cuyutlán,[32] having as many uses in onomastic studies as the maguey does as raw material. [33] The characters of various races and religions who stalk the pages of Mexican history are as different as the *conquistadores* who were greedy for gold [34] and the rich miner of Taxco who covered its church with precious metal, saying that God had been generous to him and he would be generous to God. They include the *peninsulares* who come from Spain, succeeding the *guachupines* in spurs, to sit in the *audiencias* of government and to rule and the *criolles* like Padre Hidalgo and Allende whose *insurgentes* brought them down. They include presidents like Guadalupe Victoria (Mexico's first — and the only one for the next half century to finish his term of office) and Benito Juárez (who Henry Bamford Parkes in his *History of Mexico* says displayed a moral grandeur unequalled in his nation's history), emperors like Itúrbide and Maximilian, good viceroys like António Maria Bucareli y Usúa and the Conde Revilla Gigedo and evil ones like

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32 This wave, 50 feet or more high, crests in Spring near Manzanillo in Colima, phosphorescent with millions of microorganisms.

33 This cactus produces rope, fibre, needles and thread, molasses and vinegar, medicine and drink (as we have seen, a number of varieties), forage and fences, etc. From cartamo they make drugs, dye, diet safflower oil, drying agents for paint, etc. There are dozens of other kinds of maguey and more than that many uses.

34 Cortés sent a message to Moctezuma on landing that "I and my companions suffer from a disease of the heart that only gold can cure."

Don Diego López Pucheco Cabrera ya Bobadilla[35] and oddly-named ones like the last of them all: Juan O'Dónoju! There are intrepid explorers (Nuño de Guzman, Hernán de Soto) and headline-makers as different as Primo Ramos and Primitivo Rom.[36] There are protectors of the Indians like fathers Buceta and de las Casas and those who left little, as the Aztecs said, but "flowers and songs" among them. There are popes like Clement VII who *baptized* coffee and declared it the official Christian drink and Pius IX who excommunicated the entire Mexican government when the constitution they adopted (1857-1917) insisted on the dominance of the state over the church;[37] painters and print makers like Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, David Alfara Siquieros, Rufino Tamayo, Guadalupe Posada; poets and writers like Amando Nervo, Ramón López Velarde, Alfonso Reyes, Octavio Paz, Carlos Fuentes, Torres Bodet; composers like Carlos Chávez and Julian Carillo; "Americans" for good (Ken Edwards, John Wilmot, Juan O'Gorman, William Spratling) or bad (General Zachary Taylor, Colonel Philip Kearney, Ambassador Henry Lane Wilson); and many others of all sorts and conditions. It is said to be illegal to have a statue of Cortés in Mexico. The Emperor Itúrbide's is under water. There is none to Huerta (who replaced Madero as president in a revolt of the palace guard). But *names* keep the memories alive. General Winfield Scott defeated Santa Anna on Cerro Gordo (April 18, 1847). Who has not heard of Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata? Who has not heard the names?

For Morélos the city named for Valladolid in Spain was changed.[38] Tuxtal became Tuxtal Guitérrez; the capital of Tamaulipas, Cuidad Victoria for the first president. San Cristóbal Martin is now San Cristóbal de las Casas, not for its houses but as a tribute to "The

35 This man, born 1599, became Marqués de Villena, Conde de Xiquena, Duque de Escalona, viceroy (appointed January 22, 1640 by Felipe IV) of Nueva España. He arrived at Veracruz June 24, 1640 with Juan Palafox y Medoza (Bishop of Puebla), a name connected with the famous Palafoxiana library and the early viceroy António de Mendoza (appointed 1535). Cabrera not only sold (at high prices) licenses to deal in slaves (and freedom to some mulattos and blacks) but even water from the public fountains for three *reales* (about 40 cents American at current rates of what the Mexicans call "U.S.Cy.") a load.

36 Francisco Primo de Verdad Ramos was an eighteenth century precursor of the *independistas* after whom are named such places as Dolores Hidalgo and San Miguel de Allende but has received no such honor. Primitivo Rom assassinated General Ramón Corona (1899) and the (dried up) arm that did the deed you can still see in the state museum (first a seminary, then a boys' school, a cavalry barracks in the Revolution of 1910) in Guadalajara.

37 Anti-clerical movements account for changes such as the name of the Tres Marías (near Cuernavaca) to Tres Cumbres. But the change could not be effected and to this day three scoops of ice cream in a sundae (the equivalent of our so-called Neapolitan striped-brick slice of chocolate, vanilla, and strawberry) as well as the mountains are called Tres Marías.

38 So the house of José María, Morélos y Pavón is now at Morélos 323 in Morélos in the state of Morélia. It was Valladolid 1541-1828.

Protector of the Indians. Not only is "Hidalgo" added to Dolores[39] but the great Tarascan center of Tajimora in Michoacán is now Hidalgo too. The town named for Melchor Ocampo (lawyer and scientist, associated in the Ayutla Plan which threw Santa Anna out of the country for good) is now named for Lázaro Cárdens (who seized U.S. petroleum interests in Mexico in 1938 when Americans would not support his welfare programme). Chicontepec is now called Tejeda after the first Communist governor of the state of Veracruz.[40] San Benito is usually called Puerto Madero (Chiapas) and San Juan de la Punta is now Cuitlahuac (Veracruz),[41] the faith that caused the Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz to be so named because it was founded on Good Friday 1519, (or Florida to be so called because discovered in Easter Week, "The Feast of Flowers") giving way to other influences.

There is even a Mexican town named for 14 anonymous bandits! It is now called Catorce but it used to be Real Catorce (royal 14) for, before the Revolution of 1910, it yielded, in the state of San Luís Potosí, some three million dollars a year in silver.[42] It can take its place among place-names such as Los Remedios (a sanctuary built in 1629 for a statue of La Virgén de los Remedios brought from Spain), The Desierto de los Leones (from the Carmelite monastery of Santo Desierto built 1606), Valles (founded 1533 as Valle de Santiago de los Valles de Oxitipa, perhaps the earliest settlement in San Luís Potosí), Nuevas Casa Grandes (about five miles from the "big houses" of a Pueblo culture in Chihuahua, the most northern *pyramides* of Mesoamerican culture yet discovered), Arroyo Agrio (sour gulch) — its waters yielded water

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39 At dawn on September 16, 1810, Hidalgo, the parish priest, here raised *el grito* (the cry) for Mexican independence from Spain which is now repeated each year in the Zócalo in Mexico City and throughout the country. It made the insignificant village of Nuestra Señora Madre de Dolores the *Cuna de la Independencia Nacional,* the cradle of Mexican independence.

40 Brigadier-General Adalberto Tejada (1883-1960) was governor 1920-1924 and 1928-1932.

41 This is another example of phasing out religious names. Santa María de las Parrás (founded 1598, said by those who forget about the Vikings' Vineland to have introduced viniculture to North America but still boasting a winery opened 1626) is Parrás de la Fuente now. The Ley Lerdo (1856) and the Ley Calles (1926) struck at the power of the church. Increasingly the saints' names are disappearing from the Christian/Indian combinations (onomastic equivalents to the brown cherubs in the churrigueresque church at Tepotzotlán and the *Cristo Negro* in ebony in the Sanctuário del Señor de Santa María at Valle de Bravo) like San Martín Texmulucán (of the serapes), San Augustín Acolmán, and San Bartolo de Coyotopec (where the "Oaxacan" black plumbago pottery comes from).

42 At random, some more places named for people: León and Zaragosa (the latter in honor of a general born in Goliad, now Texas, who was a hero of the Cinco de Mayo) are really named for people, not places, as in Monterrey; Emiliano Carranza (a village near the Rio Juchique) is named for an aviator, not for the president (Venustiano Carranza) who wiped out Zapata and Felipe Ángeles and was assassinated to be followed by the man who wiped out Villa, Obregoñ. Gómez Farias (between Saltillo and Concepción del Oro) is named for a

which when mixed with honey made a fine lemonade for the Indians near Catemeco (Veracruz), Cerro de Cubilete (cakepan hill) in Guanajuato (said to be the geographical centre of Mexico), Jerez de García Salinas (Zacatecas) named for Francisco García Salinas (also called Tata Panchito) the proponent of compulsory free education, Hermosillio named for José María Gonzales Hermosilla of the War of Independence, Durango (which founder Don Francisco de Ibarra in 1563 named for his birthplace in Spain), Quiroga (named for the bishop of Pátzcuaro, once a judge, who taught the Indians trades and vastly improved their lot), and El Sesto de los Aves (perch of the birds), an abandoned mountain town between Monterrey and Saltillo (waterfall).

Chipangcingo in Guerrero is called "the city of the Bravos" in honor of the revolutionary heroes Nicolás, Leonardo, and Victor Bravo. "El Padre" is Father Hidalgo.[43] The Niños Héroes were the boy heroes of Chapultepec who wrapped themselves in the Mexican flag and jumped to their death from the castle parapets rather than surrender to the Americans. Huajuapan de León is not in the state of León but in Oaxaca, for it is named for its native son General Antonio de León, hero of the Battle of Los Molinos (windmills) during the invasion of 1847. The *soldaderas* were the brave women who fought beside their

president of two terms (1832-1833 and 1846-1847). Guerrero is named for Vincente Guerrero, a patriot executed at Cuilpán (site of the never-completed Dominican monastery begun 1555, stopped by papal order for its extravagance; burial place of the Zapotec princess, Donají, who became Doña Juana de Cortés and a Christian) on February 14, 1831. (He is buried in Mexico City.) There is no place named for Francisco (Pancho) Villa, whose real name was Doroteo Arango, but there is a town named for General Bustamante, a president of the last century just after Santa Anna lost Texas to Sam Houston at San Jacinto. There is a López Mateos dam after a president of the 1960s. The Casa Montejo (on the main plaza of Merida) is named not for the conqueror of Yucatán but for his son. Serdan (Puebla) was named for the revolutionary martyr Aquilles Serdan and was first San Andrés Chalchicomul (burranca of emeralds): Gustavo Díaz Ordaz (president1964-1970) was born there in a tiny adobe building. Colonia Industrial (Hidalgo) has a nicer new name in honor of historian Sahagún. The Minerál de Santiago de las Sabinas (Nuevo León) became Sabinas Hidalgo. Monterrey (founded 1596) was settled by Don Diego de Montemayor and named for the viceroy Don Gaspar de Zuniga y Acevedo, Conde de Monterrey. Linares was the bishopric of San Felipe Linares (founded 1712). Zacoalcos (locked-up place) is now San Andrés Tuxtla. (The nearby volcanic crater holds the Laguna Encantada, "enchanted" because it falls during the rainy season and rises during the dry season.) San Miguel de Allende (already mentioned) was named by Fray Juan de Miguél, a Franciscan, and the Allende added to honor the hero who raised the *grito* (cry) of freedom of 1810. (The old Franciscan church was ruined in the last century by the Indian architect who worked from picture postcards of French cathedrals to construct new towers and a laughable facade. His name ought to be recorded: it was Cerefino Gutiérrez.)

[43] He is claimed as a native son by both Abasola (where he was baptized) and by Penjamo. He was born on Rancho Corralejo, nearer the latter. He was ordained a priest (though he did not have the necessary doctorate in theology, having lost the money for his studies at the gaming tables) but had two children by the actress Josefa Quintana. Their names, in case you need them, were Micaela and Maria Josefa, and he brought them up in Dolores, where he also raised bulls for the ring, ran a mine, served as village priest — and started a revolution.

men in the Revolution of 1910. "Pancho Villa" was killed at Hidalgo del Parral (Chiapas) — his grave you can easily find in the *panteón*: it is the one without a cross. "Pipila" was the young miner José Barajas: he burned down the front door of the Alhondiga de Granaditas (built 1798-1809) in Guanajuato during the uprising. Lagunilla (little lake) is the flea market of Mexico City. "Los Olvidados" (the forgotten ones) is what Luís Buñuel called the poor. Malintzin, daughter of a chief near Coatzacoalcos and mistress of Cortés (also called Maniche and Marina) gave her name to *malintzismo* (unpleasant attraction for all things foreign). And there are so many more names on the pages of history: the Battle of Buenavista (or Angostura), the Pact of Cordoba (by which Mexico gained independence, 1821), the Madero Revolution (1909), the Act of Chapultepec (a security arrangement of 1945 adopted by the Inter-American Conference on Problems of War and Peace), the Plan of Independence (proclaimed in Iguala in 1821), the Leyes de Reforma (by which Juárez established his *República Federal Laica*), the Mistón Rebellion (by Indians in 1540), the secession of the United Provinces of Central America (of February 1823 after Itúrbide had been elected emperor as Augustín I on May 19, 1822 by the new National Congress), the Pastry War of 1838-1839 with France (involving a baker's claims, among others, following riots in Mexico City), the *Trigarante* Army of 1821 (not to be confused with Tresguerras, the architect, 1765-1833, from Celaya),[44] the Shrine of the Virgin of Guadalupe and the Plan of Guadalupe (from a *hacienda* of that name where Carranza organized the leaders of the north to defy Huerta and his *federales*), and *La Noche Triste* of July 1, 1520 when the Spaniards were driven from the Aztec capital at a cost of 450 Spaniards, 4,000 friendly Indians, 46 horses, "and I believe," as the chronicler added, "all the prisoners." How many names tell the history of Mexico from ancient times before the Conquest, from the first news of the *conquistadores* in what was probably the most notable letter ever written on this continent,[45] to the zenith in the eighteenth century (when Mexico extended south to the Isthmus of Panama and north to a line running from San Francisco, California, to St. Augustine, Florida, by way of Sante Fe, New Mexico, and St. Louis, Missouri), and into modern times! How they epitomize

[44] The "three guarantees" of Itúrbide were (1) Mexico will be free and independent, (2) all Mexicans are to be equal under law, and (3) Roman Catholicism will be the official religion. The Plan of the Three Guarantees was drafted in Iguala, where the Mexican flag first flew over a government building February 24, 1821.

[45] "Oh great Huetlatoani, great houses float softly upon the sea and from their interior arise white and bearded men who pass the time fishing." This message from Aztec scouts at Veracruz was painted and delivered 300 kilometers away in Tenochtitlan *the same day*. (What modern messengers travel on foot or any other way 17 to 21 kilometers an hour, non-stop, to their destination to deliver today's mail?) The first letter ever sent *to* America (by Ferdinand and Isabella, dated April 3, 1492) never was delivered. It was addressed to the Great Khan of India, and the American natives have been "Indians" ever since!

what the Mexican ambassador to Britain during World War II called in his book *la mexicanidād!*[46]

And all this is related very closely to the countries of Central America with which the *sacbés* (highway system) of the Mayans connected it. Cortés, conqueror of Mexico, was created Marqués del Valle de Oaxaca (not ruler or even viceroy of Nueva España),[47] and (I am one of those who believe) it was into the Valley of Oaxaca that people from Guatemala came to build, on the site of a great lake which had dried up in pre-historic times, Monte Albán and at various times Mitla. Yagul, Cuilapan, Xoxo, Etla, Noriega, Loma Larga, Xaaga, Dainzu Lambityeco, Zaachila—settlements whose glorious ruins show evidence of the influence of tribes from the south as well as from the eastern coast (Olmec), where the civilization of La Venta has been dated 800 B.C. The connections between the Aztec-Totonac culture of the Valley of Mexico and the Mixtec-Zapotec culture of the Valley of Oaxaca are paralleled by connections with the Mayas of Chichén Itzá (Tutui Xius) and those of Mayapán (Cocoms), the former having fled the Spaniards in Yucatán (1527) and survived in the jungles of Petén (Guatemala) at Tayasal, their new capital (not conquered until 1697). The Mayan history is a long one, going back (they calculated) to the Year Zero, which seems to have been 3373 B.C. in their *tzolkin* or calendar. During its course it became very involved with the Mexican cultures, though not with the Incas of Peru: all roads met as at the Laguna de Términos (where the trading center of Xicalango stood).

The onomastics of Mexico, then, are intricately interconnected with those of other Latin countries (not to mention, of course, those parts of the United States that were once under the same sovereignty). And so before we conclude this study we must mention if only very briefly the onomastics of the neighboring countries which link two oceans and two continents and lie south of Mexico.

There was a time when the modern borders of Mexico and Guatemala, for instance, did not exist. The Mayans had ceremonial cities of great size and culture in both countries and the *gebeloc* (Mayan for "idyllic") area of Guatemala was the *terra esplendida* where the Spanish conquerors set up their government. Pedro de Alvarado had a brief capital at Iximiché (the main city of the Cechichel people) but the hostility of the natives compelled Avarado's brother Jorge, who had been installed there as governor, to flee in the same year (1524) to the valley of the Almolonga and set up a city of Santiago de los Caballeros de Guatemala, later called Antigua. There a palace was built for the captain-general and to it Pedro de Alvarado returned

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46 Alfonso de Rosenzweig Díaz, *La Mexicánidad de México.*

47 He did receive 22 cities and almost 25,000 vassals. When António de Mendoza arrived as viceroy (1535), Cortés returned to Spain, angry and powerless.

from Spain with his bride, Beatriz de la Cueva.[48] Its successor became, with Mexico City and Lima, one of the great cities of Mesoamerica, the capital of the whole Spanish empire there. But as the first Antigua was destroyed by water, the second was destroyed by fire a little more than 230 years later.[49] Again an attempt was made by civil and ecclesiastical authorities to rebuild Antigua but the Council of State was moved to the valley of the Hermet, some 40 miles away, the present capital, Guatemala City. In Antigua the archbishop defied government orders and began to reconstruct the city, but he was finally persuaded to desist (by a papal bull) and returned to Spain. That was in 1780. Today Antigua is, as the VIII General Assembly of the Panamerican Institute of Geography dubbed it, "The Monumental City of America," but many Guatemalans and foreigners are reconstructing it while preserving the quaint charm of the old plaza and many ancient buildings reminiscent of a long and eventful history.[50]

As in Mexico, the ancient streets of Antigua are sometimes numbered (from the main plaza), sometimes named for saints (mostly female), sometimes given descriptive names (Calle Ancha, Calle Vieja) or named after important edifices (chiefly religious) which they pass (Avenida de la Recolección, Calle de las Beatas Indias). They very

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48 Doña Beatriz was to become the first female head of state in the Americas. In 1541 her husband was ordered to the Spice Islands but, in what is now Mexico, was killed while assisting Diego López de Zuniga to put down a native rebellion. In August news of his death reached Antigua. His wife ordered the palace painted black, in mourning. On September 9 she herself became governor and the very next day the storm that had raged for three days brought destruction and death: water collected in the crater of an extinct volcano (Volcano de Agua) was released when tremors shook the mountain. Doña Beatriz and 11 attendants fled her private apartments and sought refuge in the chapel; it collapsed, burying them all. Had she remained in her apartments she would have been safe. In all 700 Spaniards and 600 Indians were killed in the odd "eruption of the lake."

The ruins were abandoned: they became *viejo Antigua* and a *nueva Antigua* (despite the confusing name) was built in the valley of Panchoy, not far off. The government moved there in 1543.

49 There had been warnings. Earthquakes shook Antigua in 1565, 1689, 1717, and through the early months of 1773. Then came the "St. Martha" earthquake (on her feast day, July 29): a minor tremor (hailed as "a divine mercy of a warning of the ruin to come," for it got most people out of their houses) was followed by a great shock ten minutes later which killed only 200 people but completely reduced the city to smouldering ruins in two minutes. Thus the mountains that figure so prominently in the arms of "The Most Noble and Loyal City of Antigua Guatemala" brought down the capital which had ruled the territories from the (now Mexican) provinces of Tabasco and Chiapas to Panama.

50 Antigua contains the "Royal and Pontifical" Universidad de San Carlos Borromeo, the first university of Central America, begun 1676; the house of the soldier-historian Bernal Díaz del Castillo; and many other buildings connected with art (the house of the poet Rafael Landivar), commerce (the Casa de Popenoes built by Luís de las Infantas in 1639), and religion (a church with the tomb of Brother Pedro de Bentancourt, "The St. Francis of Assisi of America," founder of the Bélemite Order and of the first hospital in Guatemala).

infrequently bear Indian names (Calle de Chipilapa) or names of local personages (Calle de Hermano Pedro). Though peculiarities arise — as when New Antigua becomes Old Antigua, disaster bringing tautology in its wake—it can be seen that as in Mexico the mixture of the culture of the *indigenes* and the *conquistadores* produced an onomastic record of peoples in contact. In Guatemala the early Indian and much later anti-clerical influences seem to count for less than in Mexico, at least in thoroughly-colonial cities such as Antigua. The modern capital is divided into sectors like (for instance) Mexico's second city Guadalajara — with the resulting difficulties for stangers. Toledo, Stann Creek, Livingston, Huehuetenango, Génova, Tikál, Berlin, and other names tell a story of many influences — an atlas is a capsule history.

Guatemala offers some onomastic oddities. Twelve villages around scenic Lake Atitlán are supposed to be named for the apostles.[51] Guatemala's second city is Quezaltenango, reminding us of the feathers that decorated the headdresses of the Mayans of Tikál (in the province of El Petén).[52] Yaxha's ruins reveal a modern street plan devised between 600 B.C. and A.D. 900 (when the city was abandoned), causing us to speculate on how the streets were named. At Topxte (built between 1200 and A.D. 1400 by the descendants of the Yaxha Mayans) and Quirigá (a colony of the Copán people in the so-called "Old Empire") some ancient onomastic evidence is now coming to light. Some of the old names have disappeared (Tayasal is now the fabled Flores) but others are reappearing (Kaminalyuyú is being excavated on the outskirts of Guatemala City). La Democracia and two towns called La Liberdád are among places which reflect political facts. The Cotzumalhuapa Indians (who spoke Nauhatl as did the Mexicans but built in the Mayan style), the (possibly) Olmec builders of Monte Alto (100 B.C.-A.D.400), and other tribes have left evocative and musical names on the land: Tontonicapán, Sololá, Poptún, Zunil, Chichicastenango, Zacualpa, Xicaco. Many of the early names, however, have been replaced with Spanish ones: Rio Dulce, Rio Hondo, Rio Bravo, Fuentes Georginas, Agua Caliente, Los Cerritos, Esquintla). American influences are being felt in the larger cities and the *nordeamericano* is beginning to have influence on the *americano* in many places, not just in the increasingly touristy feel of

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51 I could not locate that named for Judas Iscariot, and there must be few places in the world named for him, considering what a large part he plays in Western history.

52 The quezal is the national bird (cherished as a symbol of freedom because it dies in captivity) and also the unit of currency (divided into cents). The bird is also featured on the national flag. Its name is variously spelled *quezal* and *quetzal.*

Chichicastenango,[53] which is having its effect in naming.

The same holds for El Salvador (named for our Savior: the capital is San Salvador) where Coatepeque, Quezaltepeque, Sensuntepeque, and Texistepeque coexisted with Tecoluca and Zatecoluca, La Unión, and the usual saints, etc. In Honduras (named for a word meaning "depths" in a psalm) the naming patterns (and problems)[54] are the same, while in Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Panama there is the usual mix of Indian and Spanish names. In the Canal Zone the place-names are few: Balboa, Panamá, and two mentions of Columbus (in both Cristóbal and Colón). As I write, Belice (or, if you prefer, British Honduras) appears as Guatemalan on that country's maps and may soon be so in fact, though even if that occurs its sparsely-populated territory will undoubtedly continue to bear witness to British presence there (Monkey River, Roaring Creek, Middlesex — the county of London).

The patterns and problems we have noted in Mexico (and touched on in our mention of Central America) may well give us insights into the onomastics of both North and South America[55] and indeed are present to a greater or lesser extent in any area where cultures interface, invade or conflict. Indian names occur in odd combination with those of Christian saints in Mexico and other places. In Quebec one finds the names of French saints and English places tied together, and this is true of the so-called "Eastern Townships" that lie between French Canada and English-speaking Ontario. In our Southwest we see Indian, Spanish, and "American" names juxtaposed — and we need a more sensible word than "American" to describe all of them, for the

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53 One hears *kuqui* ("kooky") in conversation. An advertisement I saw in an Esquintla paper offered a *frenspud* for sale (a French poodle).

Guatemala not only has an El Progreso and a Nuevo Progreso but a Chicimula and Chicimulila, and Esquintla (as we have mentioned) and a Mataquescuintal, Quezaltenango and Quezaltepeque, two San Antónios (Sachit and Nuevo), three San Christóbals (including Tononicapán and Verapaz), six San Joses, San Juan Chimalco and San Juan Ixcoy, San Luís and San Luís Jilotepeque, three San Pedros (Carchá, Necta, and Pinula), San Rafael la Independencia and San Rafael Petzál, Santa Cruz and Santa Cruz del Quiché, and other problems for the traveler. Sometimes the name is commonly given only in part: (Santiago) Atitlán, for example.

54 Guatemala has a Cabañas; Honduras a Cuidad Cabañas, called Guagina also. In Honduras there are two La Uniónes, two La Ventas, two Potrerilloses, two San Jerónimos, two San Juans, two Trinidads, a Dulce Nombre and a Dulce Nombre de Culmi, a San Francisco and a San Francisco de la Paz, a San Juan de Flores and a San Juan Pueblo, a Santa Rosa and a Santa Rosa Aguán, etc. Gracias a Dios (the name of a town in Guatemala), the natives usually know what you are talking about. One explained, "Some places nobody ever goes to, so it doesn't matter if they have names like those people go to, does it?"

55 In Quebec, for instance, many places are named for persons by calling them after that person's baptismal saint: thus St. Helen's Island is named for the wife of the Sieur de Maisoneuve (founder of Montreal, 1642), not Constantine's sainted mother.

most *American* thing about them is the fact of the mixture. This will be found to apply in "Mexican" areas we have not discussed here such as Texas and other areas to the north of the present Mexican states.

They say that a happy country has no history, no record of internal or external clashes and involvements; but most countries have a complicated history — and a complex onomasticon to go with it. For in the place-names and other names of a nation are the chronicles of cultures that have come and gone, the records of revolutions and religions, invasions and influences; in brief, the story of cultures in contact.[56] There may be few places in the world like the Plaza de las Tres Culturas in Mexico City, with which we began, where cultural interaction is so visible, but many countries share a history of native civilizations, colonialization, and modern development which parallels that which we have so sketchily presented here.

Who was "La Corregidora" of Querétero? Why are there so many names for farms and estates (*rancho, estancia, quinta, granja, hacienda,* etc.) and what history stretches from the *encomiendas* of the conquest to the *ejidos* of a "Land for the Landless" revolution? What were the struggles between the Yaquis and the Qanquis, and how did each get their names? How can we find our way through the PRI, PRM, PRN, PAN, and other political parties, especially when the Masons — Juárez was, like our own George Washington, a very active member — produced such odd designations in Mexican politics as

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56 Of course the onomastic features will vary from country to country. The surnames of Mexico, to note but one example, follow the Spanish system, so that when the press was full of the kidnapping of Lic. (meaning "lawyer") Luís Echeverría Alvarez — the Alvarez is usually abbreviated to A., or omitted altogether—(President of Mexico)'s father-in-law in 1974 we learned that his wife's name is Esther Zuno de Echeverría and her parents are Lic. José Guadalupe Zuno Hernández and Sra. Carmen Arce de Zuno. In our United States (as opposed to the United States of Mexico), a wife's surname would be identical with her husband's and both her parents would bear her "maiden name" surname. In countries where a number of languages are (or have been) spoken, the personal and other names will offer great variety, and this is true whether we study Jugoslavia, Switzerland, or any other country. In my study of the place-names of Connecticut for a paper delivered at a conference held in Willimantic in 1974 I noted that the language of the conqueror can affect transmission of the names put on the land by the natives: many Indian names in Connecticut not only exist alongside names from Britain but have been modified or corrupted by the fact that the English settlers who first wrote them down not only did not have a good knowledge of the Indian languages but also tended to speak a West Country dialect of the eighteenth century or so and not even the Standard (or London) English of their time. When you consider that the name Hugh is rendered "Chew" in some current English dialects, you can imagine what orthographic liberties ill-educated pioneers must have taken with mouth-filling and strange Indian equivalents of "big river where there are fish" and other names. A study ought to be made of how settlers of different backgrounds rendered the same Indian words—sometimes there are different spellings in different places of a Mohegan (or Mohican) word, for example—and, most of all, when studying the Indian names of Mexico we must examine and evaluate the means by which the name reaches us and explain its present form.

escosseses and *yorkistas*?[57] We have heard of PEMEX. What are INFRATUR and all the other names fashioned during the same fad which has made it necessary to publish ponderous dictionaries of acronyms in America?[58] What a lively and varied onomastic heritage stretches from the *tamanes* (human beasts of burden) of the Aztecs to the *telesecundarias* (high-school education via television, a sort of junior version of Britian's Open University or New York University's "Sunrise Semester" of very early morning broadcasts)! Once again we have ample evidence of how the branch of the science of linguistics which concerns itself with man as a name-giving animal incorporates and illuminates the culture, the history, the folklore, the very nature of a people — or many peoples *in contact.*

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[57] The "Scottish Rite" Masons were Conservatives, the "Yorkists" Liberal.

[58] This refers to an "infrastructure of tourism" developed by the Banco de México to finance tourists facilities at Cancún (Quintana Roo), Zihuatanejo (Guerrero), in Baja California Sur, and elsewhere.

NECROLOGY

The Secretary-Treasurer regretfully announces the death of Professor Arthur B. Berthold on September 18, 1976.