

# Contents

<i>List of Map and Figures</i>	viii
<i>List of Tables</i>	ix
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	x
<i>Note on Translation and Terminology</i>	xii
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xv
Introduction	1
1 Living with Death	14
2 Birth and Blood	41
3 Growing Up	66
4 Tying the Knot	89
5 Marriage and Partnership	103
6 Outside the Norm	133
7 Aging and Mortality	155
Conclusion	178
<i>Glossary</i>	183
<i>Notes</i>	185
<i>Index</i>	219

# 1

## Living with Death

Do not think that you have been brought here by mishap, nor that you have come here to seek a living; you have come to die [for Huitzilopochtli], to offer your chests and throats to the knife. Only in this way has it been your fortune to know and delight in this great city ... We welcome you and say to you that you should be consoled that no womanly nor infamous deed has brought you here, but manly feats [have been responsible]. You will die here but your fame will live forever.<sup>1</sup>

In welcoming prisoners on their entry into Tenochtitlan, the words of the Aztec priests made clear the bleak future which awaited the vanquished warriors.<sup>2</sup> Perceptibly morbid preoccupations mingled with a sense of shared identity and principle, through which the fated victims were implicated in a reciprocal relationship of shared honour and obligation. The sacrificial fate of the captives is made plain, their impending violent death explicitly and bluntly stated, but the immediacy of their death is tempered by an unambiguous affirmation of their courage and masculinity. For these men, masculinity is explicitly identified with sacrificial death. There was no detectable disgrace in captivity, no weakness or lack of pride; in falling to a superior foe these warriors had merely assured their 'fame' and, in fact, their eternal future. Not only Aztec combatants but also their foes were granted the honour of perpetual glory and spiritual survival. Although one might suspiciously suggest that such ideologies were an ethnocentric justification for the mass sacrifice of captives, there is substantial supporting evidence for the existence of a shared tradition among the cities of the Valley of Mexico.<sup>3</sup> A descendant of indigenous nobles, Don Carlos Ometochtzin, was

famously burnt at the stake by the Inquisition in 1539 for sedition, apostasy and concubinage. During his trial, he likened the regional differences in religion to the differences in doctrine and practice between different Christian religious orders, each with their 'own way of sacrificing, their own way of praying and of offering'.<sup>4</sup>

Human sacrifice was central to Aztec religion, and lines of despondent captives must have been a familiar sight for the men and women who inhabited the great island city of Tenochtitlan. As the victorious warriors returned home, bringing their human tribute, they were welcomed as husbands and fathers and saluted as soldiers. As men, their duty to the community, to the gods and to their families had been fulfilled; theirs was the glory of victory. For most of their captives, however, crossing the causeway to the Aztec capital symbolized a transition from warrior to victim, indicating an end to their social, familial and personal ties and preparing them to die as sacrificial offerings. But, despite the explicit forfeit of their lives, the captives experienced no disgrace. As warriors, theirs was the honour of battle and masculinity, a badge of courage and commitment, which was universally recognized and which transcended both defeat and death.

Many of the values of Aztec culture were tightly linked to ideals of martial success and, in the Aztec capital, the practice and principles of war structured society and shaped its expectations and standards. From their settlement in the Valley of Mexico at the turn of the fourteenth century until their conquest by the Spanish in the early sixteenth century, the Aztecs were a warrior culture, with their values and attitudes firmly rooted in the necessities of a martial life. The fundamentally warlike nature of their culture was firmly established upon their arrival in the Valley of Mexico.<sup>5</sup> In 1298, the Aztec people had paused in their wanderings and were settled at Tizaapan, a barren, snake-infested wasteland to the south of the great, salt-water Lake Texcoco in the Valley of Mexico. Rather to the surprise of the inhabitants of the nearby city of Culhuacan, who had only permitted their settlement because they believed the area unworkable, the Aztecs thrived in this inhospitable landscape and made what appears to have been a conscious and sustained effort to put down roots in the region.<sup>6</sup> The Culhuaque remained suspicious of this 'evil people, of bad habits', but the peoples quickly mingled and intermarriage and trade became common.<sup>7</sup> This industrious agricultural scene did not last for long, however, and the Aztecs fairly swiftly justified their neighbours' misgivings.

According to the legends, Huitzilopochtli, god of war and the tribal god of the Aztecs, 'was an enemy of this quiet and peace and sought

unrest and strife'. Believing that the Aztecs had settled too soon, and that Tizaapan was not the homeland which he had promised them, he ordered them to find a 'Woman of Discord' and prepare themselves to take up arms and display their valour to the world. The Aztecs sent emissaries to Achitometl, the *tlatoani* (or ruler) of Culhuacan, requesting that he bestow upon them his daughter to become the bride of Huitzilopochtli and a living goddess. A significant misunderstanding occurred at this point. Achitometl correctly identified the request as a great honour, but failed to realize its full implications, with devastating consequences. He granted the Aztecs his daughter and she was borne with great solemnity to Tizaapan. Invited to attend the festival in which his daughter was to become a 'living goddess', the ruler Achitometl and his dignitaries dressed in their finery and, bearing gifts to honour the gods, proceeded to Tizaapan, where they were welcomed by the Aztecs. After resting, Achitometl and his court were invited to enter the temple and perform reverences to his daughter, the new goddess, bride and mother of the great god. The king entered the darkened temple and began to perform many ceremonies, sacrificing birds and offering incense and flowers. Casting a handful of incense into one of the braziers, Achitometl saw the temple illuminated by flames, revealing a priest dressed in the skin of his daughter. In keeping with tradition, she had been sacrificed and flayed as an *ixiptlatl* or 'impersonator' of Toçī ('Our Grandmother'), the most primal and inclusive of the personifications of the earth goddess. In horror, Achitometl fled from the temple, cursing the Aztecs and vowing to annihilate them. The 'Woman of Discord' had indeed brought the dissension which Huitzilopochtli sought. War was forced between the Aztecs and Culhuaque, and the Aztecs were driven away from Tizaapan, eventually settling at the site which would become their great capital of Tenochtitlan.<sup>8</sup> From these belligerent beginnings arose the Aztec culture encountered by Cortés and the conquistadors in 1519. Around a quarter of a million people were packed into the 13 square kilometres of the island city of Tenochtitlan, a crowded metropolis which was the heart of a broad network of subject and allied cities. Only two centuries after their expulsion from Tizaapan, the Aztecs had risen through a combination of force, fear and respect to become a potent political force centred on a sophisticated urban civilization.

The development of a society tailored to the needs and expectations of military service was fundamental to this dramatic rise. In Tenochtitlan, military hierarchy and privilege were based largely on a system whereby personal advancement was accomplished through the

taking of captives, and the Aztec practice of war, designed though it was in later years to further their expansionist policies, was also tailored to fulfil the needs of both state hierarchy and religious imperative by providing opportunities for the securing of victims for sacrifice. The occasion of a young warrior's first individual victory marked his initiation into true manhood and warrior status, and future success was founded in his ability to continue to better a variety of opponents in battle.<sup>9</sup> Great ceremony and pageantry accompanied the sacrifice of captives and the rituals, which surrounded such events, promoted the personalization of official sacred ideologies and encouraged a private intimacy with the horror and anguish of sacrifice. The relationship between captor and captive was extremely intimate and one which was promoted by a system of sacrifice in which the prestige of a warrior was located in the valour of his captive.

After being seized in battle, a captive retained a close relationship with his captor. On the day of the captive's death, the warrior would accompany him to the sacrificial stone, delivering the prisoner to the place of his death. Having witnessed the sacrifice, the warrior then returned home with the body following the ceremony, a portion of which was sent to the emperor and the remainder consumed in ceremonial cannibalism by the captor's family and friends. The warrior did not participate in this element of the ritual, however. He stood apart, adorned in white. This abstinence from the festivities emphasizes the closeness of the relationship which was developed between the two warriors – captor and captive. A sixteenth-century account explains the warrior's actions thus:

the captor could not eat the flesh of his captive. He said. 'Shall I perchance eat my very self?' For when he took [the captive], he had said: 'He is as my beloved son.' And the captive had said: 'He is my beloved father.'<sup>10</sup>

This ritual exchange, which took place following the capture, emphasizes the importance of mutual respect and acceptance in the process of sacrifice. In standing apart, the captor gave honour to the victim by refusing to eat the flesh of his metaphorical 'son', and also provided a constant reminder to his family and to himself that such a poignant end was also very probably his own fate. The highly visible behaviour of the captive before his death reflected on the warrior's prestige and on that of his *calpulli* (city district), a 'manly' performance bringing them respect and credit. Here, the importance of sacrifice in determining and

maintaining masculinity is clear – as warriors, as captors and as victims, men were honoured.

With the exception of priests, all male citizens, nobles and commoners alike, were obliged to perform military service, taking up arms as a warrior to defend and promote the aims of Tenochtitlan. Even the *tlalmaitl* (literally ‘hand of the earth’) were included in this obligation. These rural manual labourers were landless peasants, probably refugees from other cities or remnants of pre-Aztec influence, who fell outside the *calpulli* system and usually sustained themselves by sharecropping or tenant farming. They were not citizens and as such had the benefit of being exempted from the payment of taxes and provision of labour services to the city. These detached people remained subject to military service, a fact which displays the importance of the warrior life in Tenochtitlan.<sup>11</sup> The only possible exception to this rule were the *pochteca*, or merchants, who appear to have formed a distinctive group within the population. The many men and women who bought and sold their goods within the local markets of Tenochtitlan, the *pochteca* were the powerful class of merchants who controlled the broader networks of travelling traders. The *pochteca* were given significant authority, as well as possessing important rights within the city, and they stood outside of standard social expectations. Ranging widely in both friendly and hostile territory, often in disguise and fully armed, a *pochtecatl* lived a difficult and sometimes dangerous life, and so was permitted to count himself a true man, almost a warrior.<sup>12</sup>

Implicit in the vocation of the warrior was the assumption that he was prepared to die, either on the battlefield or on the sacrificial stone, both fates which were regarded as honourable and even desirable, for (as I will discuss later) they led one to a privileged afterlife. Honour accrued to both captor and captive as shared ideals of valour and principle were expressed in the ceremony of human sacrifice. Significantly, human sacrifice was not a fate limited to strangers, but also befell individuals from within Tenochtitlan itself, and not only in foreign lands. While there is some doubt over the frequency with which Aztecs became victims, it is clear that different categories of victim existed and that slave victims at least were frequently ‘not strangers or foreigners or prisoners of war, as some have declared, but were natives of the same town’.<sup>13</sup> It is important to note at this point that slavery in Aztec society was a practice clearly distinct from our western conceptions. An Aztec slave, or *tlacotli*, although clearly at the bottom of the social scale, possessed some personal rights. Slaves could marry freely, to another slave or a free person, and their children were born free. Although

unpaid for their work, slaves were fed, clothed and housed as any citizen, living, according to some accounts, 'almost free' on their masters' estates.<sup>14</sup> Slavery could be a punishment, but many were 'voluntary slaves', lazy, tired, poor or in debt, who sold themselves for a fixed sum, which they had the right to spend before undertaking their servitude. A family, or group of families, might even sell a member into slavery and take turns at sharing the burden for a number of years. Slavery was not perpetual – emperors frequently performed mass manumissions at times of celebration, and masters often freed their slaves in their wills. A slave who was to be sold also had a brief chance to escape. If he fled the market successfully, only the slave's master and his sons having a right to stop him, then he would be set free if he could reach the *tlatoani's* palace. Only an idle and delinquent slave could be sold, and not until he or she had been declared delinquent and traded three times did a slave become eligible to be sold as a human sacrifice. Slaves were very much a part of Aztec society, with both rights and responsibilities, though they were exempt from the military and labour services, which would have entitled them to the privileges of citizens.<sup>15</sup> The sacrificial death of slaves was not the detached slaughter of strangers but the killing of familiar members of the community.

Human sacrifice has often been described as a cynical device used by the elite to maintain their influence, imposed upon the unfortunate masses. In the last century of Aztec influence, however, the fatal destiny of a warrior appears to have applied equally throughout the social strata.<sup>16</sup> It seems that in the early years, during the 'flower wars' which were designed specifically for the taking of captives, nobles from both sides may have been spared while their less fortunate, and less aristocratic, comrades were offered up to the Sun.<sup>17</sup> After 1415, however, as the Aztecs' military ambition and focus escalated, nobles became part of the deadly game of war and all were expected to make the ultimate warrior's sacrifice.<sup>18</sup> For the most prominent and privileged of the captives, however, the ritual of their death offered greater rewards of honour, as a celebration of masculinity and of the glory of the warrior. A chosen few were the victims of the 'striping' or gladiatorial sacrifice, which took place during the great feast of Tlacaxipeualiztli, the 'Flaying of Men'.<sup>19</sup> The 'striping' provided a forum in which warrior ideals were exhibited unambiguously and where the masculinity of both captor and captive were affirmed and integrated, creating a cycle of obligation and reciprocity through which men's status was supported. The honoured captives chosen to participate in the striping were adorned as warriors, furnished with weakened weapons, and

placed one by one upon the *temalacatl*. Tethered to this round gladiatorial stone, each was then confronted with a series of warriors whose task it was to vanquish him, weakening him sufficiently to be thrown across the stone and have his heart torn out to honour the Sun. A ritualized dance of battle, this was nonetheless a ferocious and potentially fatal combat for the Aztec warriors who participated. While theirs was the task of inflicting skilful wounds, their opponent fought with the desperation of a man faced with the inevitability of death whose only potential reward was glory.

The ritual potency of the striping, the greatest and most deadly expression of warrior masculinity, was emphasized by processes which furthered the identification and intimacy between captor and captive which took place in the standard ritual. Throughout the night before the striping, the warrior 'father' held vigil with his 'son', as they prepared themselves for the emotional and physical exertions of the ritual. Once again, the warrior accompanied his captive to the stone and witnessed his death, deriving honour from the valour displayed by his prize. Following the final gashing of the chest, a green bowl edged with feathers was filled with the gushing blood, and the captor, adorned in his warrior's insignia, went throughout the city, daubing the lips of each of the images of the gods with blood. Feeding and giving honour to the gods, through this sacred tour the warrior also displayed his own valour, exhibiting his success to the wider community.<sup>20</sup>

This bloody demonstration of spirit inaugurated a new chapter in the distinctive captor-captive relationship. Through his valiant death, the captive had brought esteem to his captor and, after his death, his courage was explicitly adopted by his captor as the identification between warrior and captive was made complete. The body of the captive was flayed and the skin given to the captor, the remainder of the corpse being consumed in the traditional cannibalism from which the captor abstained. The flayed skin then became a macabre costume for the captor and his associates, who wore the skin to beg for gifts for 20 days after the sacrifice. Dressed in the captive's shell and adorned with his reflected glory, these young men advertised their status and boasted their courage. The captor was, quite literally, rewarded for his victory, receiving the fruits of this ritual begging in both honour and goods. The taking of captives was unambiguously associated with manhood; being taken prisoner, as a natural consequence of courageous manhood, brought no shame, but there was certainly a sense in which greater prestige accrued to one who triumphed over others. However, without conceding his own honour, the captive also served to bring esteem to his

captor by his behaviour. Through an appropriate death, the masculinity of both the captor and the deceased was affirmed and enhanced.

Not only the 'striped ones' but also every other victim was implicated in the distribution of honour which occurred in the practice of sacrifice, though most were not permitted the dignity of confronting their deaths with a weapon in their hands. Most of the captives who trudged across the causeway into Tenochtitlan would find themselves stretched on one of the sacrificial stones at the summit of the Templo Mayor, their hearts excised and their bodies dismembered to satisfy the demands of the impassive idols. Towering over the city, this great pyramid with its twin temples of Huitzilopochtli and Tlaloc was the centre of the Aztec cosmos and the seat of their symbolic and religious power.<sup>21</sup> In a typical ritual, the victim ascended a great pyramid, through the blood which flowed from the summit to the base, perhaps even passing the bodies of previous victims which had been cast down the steep steps.<sup>22</sup> Reaching the temple platform, the helpless individual was confronted with the sight of the great sacrificial stone, stained with the blood, which also matted the hair of the magnificently adorned priests. Seized by these gory apparitions, the victim was stretched backwards over a stone altar, each limb extended by a priest so that the back was arched and the chest stretched taut and raised high toward the heavens. A fifth priest struck open the chest with an obsidian knife, excised the heart with knife and hands and raised the fertile offering to the heavens, displaying to the gods the sacrificial fruit.

The formal procedure of oblation varied according to occasion and location, but the cutting out of the heart on a stone formed the peak of the ritual on all but a few rare occasions. Despite their common climax, it is tempting to conclude that this archetypal ceremony disempowered and objectified the victim to a far great degree than the explosive confrontation of the striping. Intimations of shared honour were still important for the temple ritual, however. Accounts of sacrifice make it plain that, even as they climbed the steep pyramid, every person still possessed a degree of power, the ability to choose the manner in which they faced their death.

And when some captive lost his strength, fainted, only went continually throwing himself on the ground, they just dragged him.

But when one made an effort, he did not act like a woman; he became strong like a man, he bore himself like a man, he went speaking like a man, he went exerting himself, he went strong of heart, he went shouting. He did not go downcast; he did not go spiritless; he went extolling, he went exalting his city.<sup>23</sup>

Displaying horror and glory in equal measure, this intriguing passage highlights the swell of emotions that must have seized the victims on their long walk to the stone. Even those who presumed that their place in paradise was assured by their sacrifice must have been daunted and awed by the looming pyramid, but while the proximity of death might have diminished the spirit of some, others clearly rose to the challenge and displayed the courage which was demanded of them. Francisco de Aguilar, one of the original conquistadors who later became a Dominican monk, recalled that the 'men and women who were to be sacrificed to their gods were thrown on their backs and of their own accord remained perfectly still'.<sup>24</sup> This stillness at the critical moment may be read in many ways: immobility in the face of fear and shock; a passive resignation to inevitability; a desire to lessen their suffering and quicken the final act or consenting acceptance. The possibility of misinterpretation by Aguilar of course remains, but there seems little motivation for this witness deliberately to distort the event in a fashion which would lessen its horror. Aguilar mentions both men and women and, although ideals of masculinity were plainly identified in the way one faced death, the reality of gender was consumed by the value of courage. A distinctive liberty may be found in the face of this dread – a dignified death lay within everyone's reach. There is no suggestion that standards of behaviour applied only to men. In the moment of greatest terror, all were measured by their conduct, freed from the constraints of sexual imperative and given, for an instant, the opportunity to aspire to a single, albeit primarily male, ideal. Consent may have been no more than illusion, and acquiescence was certainly not universal, but courage in defeat was an honour available to all.

Despite this shared, genderless glory in the shadow of death, however, it is undeniable that sacrificial display lends itself more obviously to the demonstration and perpetuation of masculine ideals. The importance of sacrifice for men and for masculinity is unambiguous and the male role is well established in the history of this violent spectacle. As glorious warriors and pious executioners, Aztec men have peopled the pages of history, myth and fiction. Women, however, have remained largely silent in this story of sacrifice, ciphers standing by, mere witnesses to the bloodshed, which characterized their culture. In reality, however, ritualized violence formed a central focus of the life of every Aztec, and women's roles in this field were diverse and significant. At first glance, men seem most clearly pivotal in this collective social association with the gods; to them fell the charge of appeasing the incessant blood

demands, while women were more passively, although crucially, involved in the transaction. Moving further into this realm of death, however, women may be seen to play a critical and often unique role in the contract of blood, which linked the spiritual and physical worlds in Aztec perception.

An examination of the rituals, which are related in the second book of Sahagún's *Florentine Codex* can help us in clarifying the respective roles of men and women in Aztec sacrificial tradition. This book of *The Ceremonies* details the annual sequence of customs, which structured the spiritual lives of the men and women of Tenochtitlan. This comprehensive record is a practical point to commence any investigation of sacrificial practice; an extensive and well-structured document, Sahagún's thorough investigation provides an unparalleled source. There are alternative sources for the sacrificial calendar, but the use of this single source provides a coherent model and reduces the possibility of confusing duplications. Unfortunately, and inevitably in such a text, the quantity and nature of the detail varies between festivals, but with careful examination, we are still able to obtain a substantial quantity of serviceable data.<sup>25</sup> In a single round of the Aztec religious calendar around 90 instances of human sacrifice occurred, the majority of which involved nondescript 'victims', 'slaves' or 'captives'.<sup>26</sup> In some of these ambiguous cases, such as the striping, it is clear that male captives were sacrificed, providing for an appropriately vigorous contest, but in the majority of these vague victims, the gender appears immaterial. Inevitably, due to the military manner in which the bulk of these captives were taken, the greater preponderance are likely to have been male, and this is confirmed by the sources, but in philosophical terms, the sex seems rarely to be relevant. 37 ceremonies have explicitly and deliberately gendered victims, however: 21 ceremonies incorporate male victims, while women feature in 16 instances.<sup>27</sup> Evidently, both men and women fulfilled necessary roles in the pledge of physical payment which bound the Aztecs to their divine realm.

In the majority of gender-identified instances of sacrifice, the victims were *ixiptla* or 'impersonators' of the gods – individuals who embodied the deity whom the ceremony was intended to honour.<sup>28</sup> Through a comparison of the themes associated with the various male and female *ixiptla*, it is possible to establish a sense of coherence between the functions performed by male and female victims and hence the abilities accorded to masculine and feminine influence.

Tables 1.1 and 1.2 demonstrate the themes associated with the deities impersonated by the *ixiptla* in a single round of the ritual calendar. (Deities frequently possessed multiple aspects in Aztec culture and these tables display the major themes associated with the relevant *ixiptla* in each particular festival.) Many of the most important Aztec deities are represented here in their primary identities and a useful trend is evident. The male *ixiptla* are associated with gods whose influence lies in a variety of fields. Occasionally a natural influence is demonstrated, Quetzalcoatl appears in his guise as the god of wind and Tlaloc was supplicated to bring the rain necessary for the success of the crops; but these deities are exceptions, removed from the general model by their primeval origins and awesome inherent authority. In the main, male *ixiptla* participated in rituals concerned with more earthly matters, touching very human concerns and areas of life such

*Table 1.1* Deities and their associations in sacrifices featuring male *ixiptla*

Deity	Associations	Number of sacrifices
Amapan	ball court	1
Cenzonuitznaua	southern stars	2
Cinteotl	maize	2
Izquitecatl	pulque and agricultural fertility	2
Macuiltotec	war and the arsenal	1
Mixcoatl	hunting	3
Nappatecutli	mat makers	1
Omacatl	feasts	1
Ome tochtli	pulque	1
Papaztac	pulque	1
Quetzalcoat	wind	4
Tepoztecatl	pulque	1
Tezcatlipoca / Titlacauan	sorcerers	2
Tlaloc	water	5
Tlamatzincatl	pulque	1
Totoltecatl	pulque	1
Uapatzan	ball court	1
Uitzilopochtli	war	5
[Xipe] Totec	sacrifice (flaying)	2
Xiuhitectuli / Ixocoçauhqui	fire	5
Yacatecutli / Yacatecutli	merchants	1

Table 1.2 Deities and their associations in sacrifices featuring female *ixiptla*

Deity	Associations	Number of sacrifices
Atlantonan	lepers	1
Chalchiuhtli icue	water	2
Cihuapipiltin	childbirth	1
Cihuateotl	disease	1
Cihuateteo	spirits of women who died in childbirth	1
Illamatecutli / Tonan / Cozcamiauh (Cihuacoatl/Quilaztli)	earth, death, milky way	1
Mayauel	maguery, alcohol	1
Teteo innan / Toçi	earth force	2
Uitzilinquatec	hummingbirds	1
Uixtociuatl	salt	2
Xilonen	tender maize	1
Yeuatl icue / Cuetlacihuatl	consort of Mixcoatl	2

as *pulque* (an alcoholic drink made from the fermented juice of the agave cactus), war, mat-making and the ball game.

From the data in Table 1.1, there is insufficient evidence to establish a distinctive overall pattern in the themes associated with the male *ixiptla*. A significant minority of the male *ixiptla* are certainly associated with the alcoholic *pulque*, but there is insufficient evidence to establish a unique male association with alcohol (especially as its prohibitions and licences applied to both men and women). It seems likely that this pattern is related to the significance of this, otherwise carefully controlled, intoxicant in public religious practice, largely the domain of priestly men. Drunkenness was a sacred state, which was carefully prohibited except on certain ritual occasions. David Carrasco, who has worked extensively on the history of religion, associates this prohibition of drunkenness with a fear of too close a contact with the sacred.

The gods gave, in mythic time, alcoholic drinks to humans to bring them happiness. Humans were required to consume this happiness in moderation because drunkenness meant one was possessed by the god of the *pulque*; he who drinks *pulque* imbibes the god into the body, of which the god then takes possession. To take too much of the god into one's body was a dangerous offense to the gods.<sup>29</sup>

This association with the sacred is probably responsible for the frequent male association with alcohol, but we must not overlook the presence of a female *ixiptla* of Mayahuel, goddess of the maguey cactus and creator of alcohol, who clearly undermines any unique male claim to the alcoholic realm. Overall, however, the *pulque* deities constitute less than a fifth of the total group, and the only detail, which is truly evident in the spread of themes in Table 1.1 is the miscellaneous nature of the authority accorded to masculine deities. An assessment of the influences involved with the female *ixiptla* provides a considerably more coherent impression. The themes involved are all either wholly or peripherally concerned with questions of nature. Male *ixiptla* were associated with many diverse ideas, but women were primarily allied to the earth and to naturally occurring forces, substance and conditions.

In some senses this appears to accord women a special significance, placing them in a uniquely identified role. This association situates women as the link between man and nature, mediators and guardians of the earth forces, possibly even their human interpreters. If such a position is verifiable, then this accords to Aztec women a great 'natural' or innate influence, but such an exclusive attribute brings with it associated difficulties. In suggesting that women were associated with nature and natural authority, we implicitly open the door to a set of assumptions and arguments, which have characterized recent debates regarding the boundaries between nature and culture.<sup>30</sup> The assumption that nature must necessarily oppose culture has been an anthropological model for more than 40 years. The most influential exponent of this theory, Claude Lévi-Strauss, argued that all cultures structured their understanding of the world through binary pairs, expressed in myth and ritual. One of the most fundamental of these dichotomies was the opposition between nature and culture. For Levi-Strauss, this distinction was exemplified by the binary of 'raw' and 'cooked', which epitomized the fundamental axis between the 'natural' or 'primitive' and the 'cultured' or 'socialized'. In this structural model, the process of 'cooking' socialized the 'raw', moving it from the natural world to the world of human culture. Thus nature was inevitably separated from and opposed to culture.<sup>31</sup> Feminist debate has often laboured to break the nature-culture model, fearing that women's association with nature inevitably produces a separation from the concept of 'culture' which causes women a sense of alienation and exclusion from the social advantages and structure which 'culture' offers.<sup>32</sup> In suggesting that a distinctive relationship between women and nature existed in Aztec civilization, we are not necessarily acquiescent in these assumptions, and there is no

indication that the Aztecs perceived an exclusive relationship between these two concepts. In their more fluid and symbiotic society, I suggest that the 'natural' associations of women carried more positive attributes than in Judaeo-Christian European civilizations.<sup>33</sup>

Throughout Aztec practice and ritual, natural allusions and imagery were explicit. Glorious warriors adorned themselves with feathers and stones, evoking the splendours of their environment, and it is essential to understand the Aztec relationship with the natural world in order to access the mindset which determined their social structure and individual attitudes. Gods and humans possessed *nahual*, animal alteregos, who were so closely bound with them that the death of the animal spirit could lead to the death of their human counterpart.<sup>34</sup> Nature was an intrinsic part of culture in the Aztec world; no opposition was perceived or even possible. The people of the Valley of Mexico lacked the Judaeo-Christian perspective of man as established 'over' nature. They were integrated with their entire realm and did not set themselves above, or apart from, its values and realities, a fact which made the female association with nature powerful and positive. The connection to nature and to the earth is a theme which pervades Aztec understandings of femininity and which shaped their roles in both society and sacrifice. The endorsement of female influence was not feminism, or equality, or anything like it, however; their respective male and female roles do not necessarily carry our contemporary inferences.

Female Aztecs were invested with an innate and ominous power by their association through childbirth with the potent earth force and its deities, and this gave them access to energies which were at once powerfully creative and potentially destructive. It is this potent duality which lent them significance as sacrificial figures in both myth and reality, and this is a duality which is visible in the seminal sacrifice of Achitometl's daughter. Although I have discussed the deliberately confrontational nature of the Aztecs' brutal slaughter of the young woman, an alternative interpretation of her legendary death also exists. Colonial chroniclers, emphasizing the Aztecs' martial disposition and the warlike nature of the goddess Toçï into whom the princess was transformed, have attributed deliberately provocative motivations to their ancestor's actions. Toçï was a goddess with multiple personalities however. Her connection to the earth forces not only bestowed her with threatening power but also with the potential for creation. As a primal earth deity, Toçï was closely connected with agriculture, and one might choose to identify this aspect of her personality as that evoked by the sacrificial

ritual. Through the goddess's death and rebirth, the Aztecs marked their transition from a nomadic hunting people to a settled farming community. The 'natural' associations of femininity are explicit in this interpretation. Women were bound up with the earth – and this connection gave both their lives and their deaths significance. But where were men located within this distinctive sacred relationship? The participation of men in sacrificial practice was not questioned: theirs was an established involvement, in contrast to women's often more nebulous and less active role. While it is hard to ascertain the respective functions of male and female victims, the sex of their executioners was never in doubt – male priests alone were charged with the responsibility of the violent death of sacrificial victims.<sup>35</sup> However, while the practicality of men's role as executioners is clear, what was their importance beyond the purely physical?

Turning once more to mythical histories, it is possible to shed some light on the masculine role in the collective social association of the Aztecs with the gods and their world. The obligation to provide blood was a male duty rooted in the mythical and spiritual past of the Aztecs. In the creation stories, the dual roles of men and women appear very clearly; women hold a creative and generative 'natural' status, while male spiritual duties and obligations are more clearly displayed. Aztec mythology upheld a cyclical idea of the universe, within which the creation of nature and humanity was repeated. At the beginning of this, the fifth incarnation of the world, the Aztecs believed that the gods created a new generation of men and women through the joint endeavours of both male and female deities. Accompanied by his *nahual* spirit twin, the great god Quetzalcoatl journeyed into Mictlan, the land of the dead, to obtain the bones of a man and a woman from a previous era. In this dark land, he faced Mictlantecuhtli, the lord of the dead, and asked him for the bones. In exchange, Mictlantecuhtli demanded that Quetzalcoatl play a conch shell. The great god called worms to burrow holes in the shell and he then called the bees and hornets, which entered into the conch and made it sound. Having passed this seemingly impossible task, Quetzalcoatl went to take the bones and sent his *nahual* to distract the reluctant lord of the dead. But Mictlantecuhtli realized his trick and ordered his servants to dig a hole into which Quetzalcoatl, startled by a quail flying up, fell, dropping the bones he had stolen. Urged by his *nahual* to make the best of a bad situation, he gathered the spilt bones up in a bundle, mixing them together as he wrapped them, and carried them to the paradisiacal realm of Tamoanchan. There the goddess Cihuacoatl ground them up in a jade

bowl and Quetzalcoatl and other male gods let blood from their penises to moisten the dough, from which humans were formed.<sup>36</sup>

In this well-known mythic history, various gender-specific roles of Aztec culture are transferred to the divine sphere: a woman is seen in the classic position by the grinding-stone, and men bring home the 'crop' and let blood in penance. It also shows the primal origins of bloodletting and sacrificial practice and the importance of the male role in this fundamental contract. The male gods were required to let blood from their penises, doing penance in order to 'fertilize' the dough and allow it to become the foundation of humanity. Thus, the reciprocal 'blood debt' was established, whereby the Aztecs were obliged to feed, nourish and nurture their deities with blood in return for the blood which was let by the male gods to bring about their own birth.<sup>37</sup> In this account, men and women appear as partners in the creative process, as well as equals in the creation. While Judaeo-Christian tradition upholds feminine inferiority by the tradition of the fabrication of Eve from the rib of Adam, in Aztec mythology, both sexes were clearly created at the same time, from a common origin, and of a shared source. In the myth, however, although both male and female contributions were required to generate human life, it was to the men that the responsibility fell for the provision of blood, an obligation that was mirrored in earthly gendered occupations. Men were tied into a reciprocal relationship with the male gods regarding mutual nourishment and creation and thus, in sacrificial practice, Aztec men were accountable both for the provision of victims through captive-directed warfare and for the ultimate extraction of the blood which granted life to the gods. Although religious patterns do not, of course, transfer automatically onto human civilization, the intricacy and diversity of the ties which bound the Aztecs to their spiritual world dictated that the effects of such fundamental beliefs upon gender roles were evident throughout their culture and were reflected in temporal realities. The constant round of ritual activity and a comprehensive educational system reinforced gendered patterns expressed in myth, even while the exact meaning of the ritual activity may not have been precisely the same for every participant.<sup>38</sup> Thus the male sacrificial and military roles demanded by the Aztec hierarchy were reinforced by religious and mythical imperative. As the male gods let blood to bring life to the people of this world, so human men shed blood to sustain the gods and their world.

Only in a single instance in *The Ceremonies* is the gender of the sacrificing priest even metaphorically ambiguous. Associated with crop fertility, the festival of Ochpaniztli or 'the sweeping of the roads' took

place at harvest time in September and saw the beheading and flaying of an impersonator of Toçi, very much in the manner that Achitometl's daughter was sacrificed.<sup>39</sup> This celebration brings together many of the gendered issues associated with immolation. At the same time as demonstrating the complementary duality of male and female spheres of influence and authority, Ochpaniztli provides a powerful example of the strength and depth of the creative/destructive duality which characterized women's existence and which was most vigorously demonstrated in their role as sacrificial victims. This was a comprehensively female festival, encompassing women from all walks of life in ceremonies which emphasized femininity and fertility. Young and old women, maidens, midwives, physicians and courtesans, all played their part in the celebrations, and a young woman adorned in the likeness of Toçi stood among them.<sup>40</sup> During the day, mock battles took place between the different groups of women, revealing the practical as well as the metaphorical demands of such festivals. Through these skirmishes, 'they banished her [Toçi's] sorrow, they kept gaining her attention, they kept making her laugh that she might not be sad. But if there were weeping, it was said that it would be an omen of evil.'<sup>41</sup> A practical necessity was combined with a symbolic aim. The busy women and their dramatic performance served to honour female responsibilities and to allow women to participate in a public forum, but their activities were also vital in consoling, supporting and entertaining the victim during her final hours. The acquiescence, or at least the perceived acquiescence of the victim, directly affected the successful completion of her sacrifice. The female physicians surrounded the *ixiptla* as she was escorted to the temple. 'They did not tell her of her death; it was as if she died unaware.'<sup>42</sup> The idea that the young woman could genuinely have remained 'unaware' of her fate seems highly unlikely, however. As this was a prominent and public festival, with widespread participation, the possibility that any young woman could have lived to maturity in ignorance of Ochpaniztli's sacrificial dimension seems implausible, especially as much of this festival occurred in the marketplace. In order for the sacrifice to be effective, it was vital that the victim submitted willingly and that the communality of the ritual was undisturbed.

The Aztecs naturally wished to present sacrificial death as an honourable, even a desirable, fate, but the reality of consent is a complex one and the feelings of victims are difficult to reach. The guileless complicity of victims in their own gruesome demise is a difficult prospect for our modern sensibilities to acknowledge, and as we saw in the sixteenth-century accounts, at least some sacrificial victims despaired,

lost their strength, and were dragged to their deaths.<sup>43</sup> The most valiant walked to the stone however, shouting and exalting, with their heads held high. Many victims seem to have been complicit in their prospective sacrificial fate.<sup>44</sup> An *ixiptla* of Tezcatlipoca roamed freely throughout the city for the year before his death, and supposedly chose the very moment at which he was to die; his acquiescence in the sacrificial contract was apparently explicit. The *mestizo* great-grandson of the ruler Nezahualcoyotl wrote:

[I]t was never found out, whether anyone of those that were chosen for this had fled, for to flee seemed a thing unworthy of men that represented such great majesty as this idol, so as not to be held as cowardly and fearful with perpetual infamy, not only in this land, but also in his own, and so they wished first to die to earn eternal fame, because they held [this] to be glory and a happy end'.<sup>45</sup>

In the case of the *ixiptla* of Toçī, it is possible that the victim may have tacitly, or even explicitly, consented to her fate, but widespread complicity in the popular fiction of her ignorance served to preserve the illusion of harmony, ensuring social and religious concord. At dusk, a complete silence fell over the crowd, and the impersonator of Toçī was swiftly borne to the temple. There, she was stretched on the back of a priest and decapitated.<sup>46</sup> Her head and body were then flayed, and a leading priest donned her skin and proceeded to embody the goddess in various ceremonies throughout the night. At daybreak, Toçī, for so the priest was personified when he wore the flayed skin, sacrificed four captives.<sup>47</sup> Displaying a metaphorically feminine figure in the position of executioner, this ritual seems to contradict the idea that sacrifice was a purely male preserve, but in actuality, it substantiates an hypothesis of dual organization, displaying Aztec society as structured according to gender-specific tasks. As a principal identity of the earth goddess, Toçī was revealed during the festival of Ochpaniztli in her aspect as the potential devourer of humanity, disclosing to the Aztecs the potential power for harm which stood in conjunction with female generative energy. It was necessary for a male to embody a female; it was the earthly bloodlust of the woman Toçī that demanded satisfaction, but only a man was permitted to perform the sacrificial act. The sacrificial roles of men and women were thus exhibited and perpetuated. In addition, the multiple nature of femininity which lent women such a special significance was reinforced. In the sacrifice itself, Toçī's hunger was displayed and satisfied but, through the ceremonies that surrounded it,

female importance and influence were visibly and vigorously promoted. The powerful duality of life and death which characterized female identity was revealed, and the masculine duty to supply blood was fulfilled. There is, of course, an interesting disparity in the priest dressed in Toçî's skin, for we never see a woman wearing a man's skin to make sacrifices in her turn.

It is important not to overstate the elite and masculine nature of this realm, however. While the duty to provide hearts was principally a masculine responsibility, ordinary people, including women, were also regularly implicated in this cycle of obligation, permitted and even prompted to give their own lifeblood for the nourishment and veneration of the gods. But although for most men, as priests and warriors, this painful duty was a compulsion, women appear to have been given the choice whether or not to participate in this aspect of religious observance. Among 'ordinary people', both men and women used cactus spines to pierce their ears, arms and the tip of their tongues, suffering the sharp pain as the drops of blood were squeezed from their flesh. The 'most devout, both men and women, had their ears and tongues torn', offering their own blood to succour the gods.<sup>48</sup> By adding the painful process of autosacrifice to their devotions, ordinary people could share the suffering of their victims and sustain their culture and their world. For each person this seems to have been an individual choice however; piety and conscience, and possibly public expectation, dictated the frequency and severity of one's suffering. For Aztec men as a group, the provision of blood was clearly a compulsion, but for women it was an individual offering, an issue for personal resolution. Their role in religious function, as in many aspects of life, was adaptable and variable. Certain key attributes characterized women's contribution, but their participation was frequently distinguished by its variety as much as its consistency.

In the unremitting duty of sacrifice, it is therefore possible to reveal fundamental elements of masculinity and femininity. For both men and women, the fatalistic focus of their lives provided a forum in which to determine and illustrate gender identities. For warriors, however, there was perhaps a greater sense of urgency in matters of death. Bearing his captives to the altar, a warrior was confronted directly with the horrors of sacrifice. Adorned in white at the communal consumption of his captive, watching and abstaining from the festivities, a warrior was constantly reminded of the likelihood that he too would fall victim to the same fate. Priests and nobles paid penance, releasing their blood to succour the gods. Although pain and mortality were unremitting companions of every

Aztec's existence, it was for warrior men that a precipitate death appeared preordained. For them, to die upon the stone or the battlefield was idealized as the defining endeavour of their life and their ultimate fate. The male lifespan was circumscribed by the demands of his destiny, and one might suggest that his aspirations and ambitions might be similarly restricted.

But although men appear to have been condemned to a life of ominous expectation, we must not overstate the inevitability or imposition of such ideals. Personal choice and individual constructions of masculinity are also visible in attitudes to death and sacrifice. The life and death of an enemy commander, Tlahuiccolli, shows clearly the nuances and ambiguities of warrior masculinity. Leader of the Tlaxcalan army, Tlahuiccolli was a distinguished soldier, renowned throughout the Valley of Mexico for his courage and valour and, in the early sixteenth century, he was captured by Aztec forces and carried to the *tlatoani* Moctezuma II. Respecting his opponent's courage and ability, the Aztec ruler welcomed Tlahuiccolli and consoled him upon his capture, reminding him that 'all warriors were subject to such conditions'. Seizure by an enemy was evidently assumed to be a realistic expectation of any soldier, and Moctezuma treated his recent foe with considerable charity, providing lavishly for his needs and making no suggestion of the possibility of a sacrificial death. Two different versions exist of Tlahuiccolli's reaction to such munificence. A Tlaxcalan account of this incident, naturally concerned to bring credit upon their city, relates that, following his capture, Tlahuiccolli integrated with Aztec society and became a great commander in the army. Fighting on the side of his former enemies, he won a number of grand victories, but eventually entreated Moctezuma to give him the honourable death which his status as a captive should have merited. Granted a gladiatorial 'striping' the Tlaxcalan was reputed to have killed eight Aztec warriors and wounded 20 others before he fell exhausted on the stone and the priests tore his heart from his chest, sending him to his glorious fate.<sup>49</sup>

Aztec accounts give a far less glorious report of Tlahuiccolli's behaviour after his capture. Far from welcoming Moctezuma's benevolence, Tlahuiccolli spent his days weeping for his family and home, arousing the scorn of the Aztec ruler. Despising the cowardly actions of his prisoner, Moctezuma ordered that he should be permitted to return to his own city, but stripped of the trappings of noble manhood. Tlahuiccolli was cast out and left to wander the streets of the city, famished and alone. Once again, the behaviour of a captive reflects not only his own pride and masculinity, but also that of his captor. The ideals of manhood

were reinforced by Moctezuma's expectations of Tlahuiccolli's behaviour. As a warrior colleague, the *tlatoani* was content to comfort his enemy on the misfortune of his capture, but as soon as the Tlaxcalan infringed masculine ideals by his cowardly display of homesickness, it became impossible for him to receive 'manly' treatment. In the behaviour and expectations of both warriors, ideals of manhood were displayed and reinforced. There is no suggestion that Tlahuiccolli was concerned for his own life or condition: the assumption was made and unchallenged that, as a warrior, he was disdainful of his own life. But to mourn the absence of his wives and children was unacceptable conduct. His value as a captive was diminished by his lack of fortitude and Moctezuma treated him with the contempt which was merited by his disregard for shared ideologies of conviction. A man who failed to honour himself and his captors was not a complete man and was therefore disqualified from access to both the fundamentals and the privileges which his position would usually entitle him: Tlahuiccolli was deprived of food, shelter, property, servants, companionship and respect.

That honour was central to masculinity is clear in Moctezuma's actions in this very male interaction, and Tlahuiccolli's reaction to the Aztec's scorn dramatically demonstrates the psychological importance of perceived reputation or 'masculinity' to male identity. Driven to despair and realising that 'he and his descendents would live under a cloud of shame forever', Tlahuiccolli fled to the temple of Tlatelolco and cast himself down the steps, sacrificing himself to the gods.<sup>50</sup> For Tlahuiccolli, the fundamentals of masculinity were located in and redeemed by his death on the stone. Only by attaining the death of a warrior could his honour be confirmed. Regardless of the debates concerning voluntary sacrifice, this is an instance in which the choice of the victim is explicit. Naturally, a less gloriously symbolic interpretation of Tlahuiccolli's death is also possible, likening his death to simple suicide in the face of disgrace, but a fascinating similarity remains in the facets of masculinity revealed by the different versions of this story. The volatile and competitive situation in the Valley of Mexico makes the existence of multiple versions of a narrative so clearly associated with national identity and prestige unsurprising.<sup>51</sup> Despite the shifting narrative foci and details, however, the models and ideals of masculinity presented by this story remain consistent and comprehensible. Displaying the ideal, if not the reality, both traditions seem clear that voluntary sacrifice was a means to restore and retain privilege and reputation. Whichever rendering of events we choose to favour, it remains clear that masculinity

and sacrifice were intrinsically associated, whether it be as a means of obtaining redemption or as a channel to glory.

Even in a deeply devout and superstitious culture, however, religious and functional imperatives hardly seem sufficient to allow for the development of a culture which could accept without question so many bloody deaths. So extreme became the Aztec tradition of sacrifice, that scholars have been led to extraordinary reinterpretations to account for the practice. The Harner–Harris interpretation of Aztec culture claims that its priests were simply butchers, distributing a readily available source of otherwise scarce animal protein.<sup>52</sup> These modern anti-intellectual positivists are successors to the positivists of the early twentieth century who attributed the Aztec tradition to the ‘error’ in their science, which led them to believe that blood was necessary for the sun to rise. The most famous exponent of this tradition is Frazer, who wrote: ‘Thus the ceaseless wars of the Mexicans and their cruel system of human sacrifices, the most monstrous on record, sprang in great measure from a mistaken theory of the solar system. No more striking illustration could be given of the disastrous consequences that may flow in practice from a purely speculative error.’<sup>53</sup> It is the blind refusal of many theories to acknowledge indigenous people’s views of their own motivations that has been found ‘particularly offensive’ by many ethnologists, and it is in the realm beyond the physical that we may trace the motivations and justifications for mass human sacrifice.<sup>54</sup> The brutal violence of Aztec ritual challenges our understandings of civilization, but as Jay so rightly responds to the weaknesses of one groundbreaking interpretation: ‘The moment we say “The celebrants do not and must not comprehend the true role of the sacrificial act” ... we have lost any possibility of gaining any understanding beyond the one we already had and brought along with us.’<sup>55</sup> Rituals are comprehensible only within their own context, and it is vital to understand that death on the stone was an honourable, even a desirable, fate. For not only the Aztecs, but also their foes, sacrifice ensured perpetual glory and spiritual survival. Victims were honoured in life as much as in death, particularly the *ixiptla*, who were revered as the gods they ‘impersonated’, and at times lived a privileged and luxurious existence in their final months.<sup>56</sup> Warrior victims were heralded and the tangible honour of facing death with fortitude was supported by the promise of a privileged and glorified afterlife for victims.<sup>57</sup> Thus victims were powerfully implicated in a cultural framework that ensured their glorification in life and death as well as in the afterlife. The after-death fates accorded to victims and other

honoured individuals are central in understanding both the binary pattern which existed in male and female relationships to death and also the motivations which compelled complicity in sacrificial ritual. The destiny that awaited those who died on the stone was a critical factor in obtaining the cooperation, and perhaps even the consent, of victims, and once again the complexity of the ties which bound the Aztecs to their spiritual world is clear. Permeating into personal life, religious principles conditioned attitudes and shaped individual perceptions.

As I will discuss further in Chapter 7, tradition asserted that most Aztecs were destined to spend the infinity after death inhabiting Mictlan, the land of the dead, a realm of gloom under the disc of the earth in which misery and deprivation reigned. There were certain ways that this eternity of darkness might be escaped, however. The warrior who died in battle or as a sacrifice at the hand of a priest received 'the flowered death by the obsidian knife'.<sup>58</sup> He was elevated to the sky, there to drink the fragrant juices of the god and to give honour by accompanying the Sun – from its rising in the morning to the noonday zenith. A military or sacrificial death was a fate to be envied and craved; warriors lived their lives in anticipation of the day when they would join those elevated to the Sun's domain. It is possible that women were also elevated by a military or sacrificial death, but this naturally occurred more rarely and is only ambiguously alluded to by the sources. More conspicuously, the status of companions of the Sun was awarded to women who died in childbirth. These honoured women carried the Sun from its zenith at midday to its setting.<sup>59</sup>

On the surface, a clear parallel is being drawn in this picture of the afterlife. War or sacrifice and childbirth were the respective goals of men and women, apparently possessing equal honour and privilege. Belief was clear upon this point – parturition elevated a woman to the ranks of warriors, and this powerful and pervasive analogy shaped understandings of femininity. The struggle to bear a child was understood as a great battle in which the woman was personified as a warrior engaged in 'capturing' a child. A woman who came safely through this battle was heralded and welcomed as if returning from a great combat.

My beloved maiden, brave woman ... thou hast become as an eagle warrior, thou hast become as an ocelot warrior; thou hast raised up, thou hast taken to the shield, the small shield. ... Thou hast returned exhausted from battle, my beloved maiden, my brave woman; be welcome.<sup>60</sup>

This evocative imagery makes a clear parallel between motherhood and warriorhood, underlying the binary organization of Aztec gender relationships. However, there is also a more literal understanding of struggle inspiring the Aztec conceptualization of childbirth as a battle. During the act of childbirth, women were understood to have been possessed by the being of the Earth Mother, a powerful divinity possessing a variety of primal aspects. This great natural deity was best known in her guise as Cihuacoatl (Woman Snake), a potent goddess, whose power was so great that her mere presence was a threatening force.<sup>61</sup> The energy of this goddess infused a woman during the act of parturition and a woman who died giving birth became frozen in this state, her body imbued with the power and presence of Cihuacoatl. The potential of this force is evident in the awe which it inspired. Pieces of the corpse became powerful talismans, capable of imparting martial prowess and shielding the bearer. For four nights after burial, the woman's corpse was carefully guarded by her grieving relatives against the young warriors who sought to steal her fingers and hair, or even her forearm. Said to paralyse the feet of their foes, such talismans were potent military weapons, as well as forceful reminders of feminine power.<sup>62</sup> In Greek society, childbirth was 'none other than the filth that distances man from the gods'.<sup>63</sup> In Aztec culture, the exact opposite was the case: through childbirth women drew too close to the gods for comfort.

In warfare and in childbirth, therefore, men and women found honour, ascending to join the Sun in its triumphal march across the sky. Even in these parallel fates, however, it is possible to detect a fundamental distinction between the male and female aspect in Aztec metaphysical ideology. Although both men and women shared the privilege of escorting the Sun, there was a clear distinction made between their roles. To the men was accorded the task of accompanying the Sun to its glorious zenith, leading and heralding this greatest of gods to its peak of luminous resplendence at noon. The women received their burden from the hands of the warriors and bore the Sun to the horizon, where they passed it into the hands of the people of Mictlan. The land of the dead lay under the disk of the earth, and the Sun had to fight his way through this dread land every night, before finally emerging triumphant to celebrate with his warriors at daybreak. The distinction of male and female roles is clear in this analogy – to the men was accorded the glorious rejoicing, while the women bore a potentially dreadful responsibility (for the Aztecs lived in fear that the Sun would fail to arise victorious).

This was only a temporary phase in the afterlife of these privileged spirits, however and it is the ultimate fate of the Sun's attendants which offers the most interesting revelations regarding notions of the masculine and feminine. After four years accompanying the Sun, the companion spirits were destined to return to earth – the souls of men and women taking very different forms. The essences of the glorious warriors were transformed into the vivid beauty of the humming birds and butterflies whose delightful destiny it was to dance forever in the sunlight and sip the nectar.

There, always, forever, perpetually, time without end, they rejoice, they live in abundance, where they suck the different flowers, the fragrant, the savory. In this wise the valiant warriors live in joy, in happiness. It is as if they live drunk, not knowing, no longer remembering the affairs of the day, the affairs of the night. ... Eternal is their abundance, their joy.<sup>64</sup>

The blissful oblivion into which the warriors are plunged is evident, and a fascinating reflection on the bleak view which Aztec men and women took of their lives. Austerity and suffering characterized much of Aztec existence, and the prospect of everlasting bliss, untouched by the world's travails, was a paradisiacal dream.

A very different future was decreed for the souls of women once their time in the sky was exhausted. These spirits became the *cihuateteo* (Woman Gods) who were doomed to return to earth to torment humanity, haunting the crossroads on five ceremonial days of great ill fortune and bringing suffering and affliction to all those unfortunate enough to cross their path<sup>65</sup> (Figure 1.1). These 'inhuman ones, mockers of the people', particularly feared for their potential to inflict deformities on children, presided over a day sign of 'evil, vice, misery, orphanhood, affliction, suffering, anguish, misfortune and indigence'.<sup>66</sup> This dreadful day shows clearly the malevolence of these powerful, though revered, figures, but even this awful potential was only another phase for these female spirits. From the spectres of the *cihuateteo* were destined to arise the *tzitzimime*. With their skeletal faces, clawed hands and feet, and necklace of hands and hearts, these demonic women would descend to earth to devour humanity during times of threatening darkness and at the end of this fifth age of the world.<sup>67</sup> This transformation from nurturing mother figures into goddess of destruction is typical of the obsession with death and its associated earth forces which characterizes Aztec society – a fine line separated the powerful life-giving female creativity



Figure 1.1 Sculpture of a *cihuateotl* from the Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City

from its binary opposite power for harm. Unfortunately, these women also seem to be condemned to a far more disagreeable fate than their male counterparts.

One important detail should be noted at this point, however: although women were being reincarnated into violent and opprobrious spirits whose powers tormented humanity, they were also being elevated to the status of goddesses. Their presence was certainly feared, but it was also revered and celebrated. Aztec religious belief lacked the Christian conception of a benevolent and paternally just god. Deities embodied every aspect of their existence and the necessity to glorify the

benevolent and appease the malevolent was a fact of daily life. All were worthy of exaltation, even while they might also merit fear and foreboding. The earth was universally acknowledged as a place of suffering and affliction, and the harsh realities of life were revealed to children from the very hour of their birth. Although women who died in childbirth were transformed into violent wraiths, doomed to haunt mankind, they were far from ideologically subordinated by this ominous prospect. Childbirth was a powerful and meaningful act, which infused women with importance and influence, in both the practical and spiritual spheres.

# Index

- abortion, 42, 45  
Acamapichtli, 52–4, 57–9, 205n35  
Achtometl, 16, 27  
adolescents, 68–88, 91–4, 97, 109,  
121–2, 146, 179–80  
    *see also* children, education  
adultery, 122, 137–40, 142, 154, 165  
afterlife, 14, 18, 35–40, 45–6, 51,  
157, 166, 168, 171–7, 179–81,  
217n40  
    *see also* *cihuateteo*, death, mourning,  
    *tzitzimime*  
Aguilar, Francisco de, 22  
Ahuitzotl, 6, 59, 157, 167–71  
Alcobiz, Andrés de, 138  
alcohol, 25–6, 59, 79, 96, 163–6  
    religious associations, 25–6, 38, 65  
Amantlan, 81, 204n21  
androgyny, 11, 68–70, 147–50  
    *see also* hermaphrodites,  
    transvestism  
*Annals of Cuauhtitlan*, 55–6, 129, 131  
anthropology, 5–6, 8, 26, 111–12,  
114, 117, 143–4, 194n38,  
210n25  
appearance, 62–3, 75, 84, 87, 96–9,  
110, 116, 125, 137, 148, 151–3,  
158, 169–72, 179, 204n23  
    *see also* hair, transvestism  
archaeology, 3–5, 13, 107–8, 126, 170,  
186n9  
Atonal, 115  
Atotztl, 53–4  
Axayacatl, 6, 59–60, 83–4, 124, 127–9,  
131  
Azcapotzalco, 60, 152–3, 215n71  
Aztecs, *passim*  
    expansion, xii, 11, 17, 60, 83,  
    118–20, 155, 185n3, 191n3  
    history, 1, 60, 77–8, 80, 89–91, 116,  
    160–2, 171  
    migration, xii, 1, 15–16  
    *see also* emotion, individuality  
bathing, 45, 47, 49–50, 53, 130, 159,  
173, 175, 179, 197n20  
birth, 27, 36–40, 41–61, 107, 117,  
123, 137, 161, 166, 173, 179–81,  
197n18, 199n59  
    *see also* creation, midwives,  
    pregnancy  
blood, 2, 20, 21, 28–9, 31–2, 35, 50,  
57–8, 60, 63, 75–7, 156, 159, 161,  
170, 182  
blood debt, 29, 166, 194n37  
    *see also* human sacrifice, violence,  
    war  
Brown, Betty Ann, 9, 193n27  
Burkhart, Louise M., 10, 196n7  
calendars, 23–5, 48–9, 65, 77  
    *see also* cyclical, soothsaying  
*calpulli* (district), 11, 17–18, 58–9, 67,  
72, 81, 94, 96–7, 103, 112–13,  
118, 134–5, 175, 178, 189–90n49  
cannibalism, 17, 20, 35, 60, 141  
*Cantares Mexicanos*, 83–4, 202–3n60  
captives, 2, 14–15, 17–26, 29, 31–4,  
46, 55, 76, 78, 83–4, 89, 155  
Carrasco, David, 25, 192n19, 193n27  
Centeotl, 109  
Chalchiuhnenetzin, 124–32  
Chalchiuhtlicue, 47, 52  
chastity, 79–80, 85–8, 101–2, 122, 137  
Chichimecs, 53, 198n34  
Chicomecoatl, 110  
children, 18, 38, 40, 57–8, 63–88,  
100–1, 105–8, 110, 117–18,  
126–7, 130, 156–8, 160–4, 197n8,  
199n59, 217n40  
    *see also* adolescents, birth,  
    education, family, infants,  
    pregnancy  
Chimalaxoch, 55–6, 89–91  
Chimalpahin, 52–6, 124, 127  
Cihuacoatl (goddess), 28–9, 37, 41,  
45, 47, 116, 132, 181

- cihuacoatl* (official), 115–20, 124  
*see also* Tlacaoel, Tlacotzin
- cihuateteo*, 38, 39, 45–7, 179–81, 195n65
- citizenship, 12, 18, 19, 73, 94
- class, *see* social stratification
- Clavigero, Francisco Javier, xii
- cleanliness, 2, 41, 47, 49–50, 75–7, 85, 91, 106, 125, 145, 159, 172
- Clendinnen, Inga, xii–xiii, 178, 192n19, 197n8, 199n59, 199n4, 217n40
- Codex Borbonicus*, 48
- Codex Chimalpahin*, 52–6, 124, 127
- Codex Mendoza*, 49–50, 61–2, 67–71, 79, 96–100, 126–7, 137, 139, 163–4, 197n19, 204n21
- Codex Telleriano-Remensis*, 80–1
- codices, *see* sources and *under individual names*
- colonial period, 5–9, 14–15, 48–9, 52–4, 68, 95, 100, 120, 134, 141–4, 152, 161, 170
- community, 19, 20, 30, 42, 49, 63, 82, 93–9, 103–4, 109, 111–18, 133–6, 140–1, 144, 156–7, 166–7, 178–82
- accountability, 60–1, 73, 139
- obligations, 11–12, 15, 32, 58–9, 61, 65, 67, 70, 84, 87–8, 94, 103–6, 112, 118, 171
- see also calpulli*, citizenship, public activity, social stratification
- complementarity, 10–13, 30, 66–9, 86–7, 99, 100, 106–7, 111–12, 115–19
- see also* duality, reciprocity
- concubines, *see* courtesans
- Cortés, Hernán, 2, 76, 86, 120, 141–2
- courage, 14–16, 20–2, 31–5, 59, 77, 92, 106, 135, 157, 160, 165–6, 172
- courtesans, 30, 79–80, 83, 100–1, 124–5, 129–30, 136–7, 146, 148, 150, 153–4, 157, 202n50, 211n33
- courtship, 82, 89–96
- Coyoacan, 152–3
- craft work, 8, 11, 50, 67–70, 81, 86, 101, 107–8, 146, 158–9, 197–8n28
- creation, 12, 27–31, 123, 140, 194n36
- female creative/destructive potential, 27–31, 38–40, 42, 107, 110, 123, 125, 132, 181, 194n36
- crime, 82, 116, 122, 137–9, 141–5, 148–9, 151–2, 154, 165, 181
- see also* death penalty, law, punishment
- Cuauhtitlan, 55
- Culhuacan, 15–16, 57
- cyclicality, 12, 28–9, 48, 90, 161, 166
- dance, 65, 79, 82–3, 91–2, 147, 153, 158, 193n27, 199n59
- see also* music, song
- Darnton, Robert, 13
- death, 2, 13–14, 21–2, 32–3, 36–40, 41, 51–2, 76, 121, 155–60, 166–77, 179–81
- fatalism, 17, 32–3, 44, 51–2, 201n31
- see also* afterlife, death penalty, human sacrifice, mourning, violence, war
- death penalty, 87, 137–9, 142–4, 148–9, 152, 154, 161
- deformity, 38, 45, 47, 150
- Díaz del Castillo, Bernal, 76
- divorce, 56, 128, 133–6
- documents, *see* sources
- domestic sphere, 86–7, 91, 99, 105–20, 129–30, 156, 162, 180, 214n57
- see also* community, household, public activity
- duality, 10–13, 26–32, 36–40, 50–2, 58, 61, 64, 66–9, 71, 82, 85–7, 94, 99, 101, 104–7, 112, 115–20, 124, 132, 134–5, 153–4, 162, 181–2, 193n33, 214n57
- see also* complementarity, reciprocity
- Durán, Diego, 73, 99, 124, 130–1, 134, 161
- economy, xiii, 18–19, 67, 104, 107–8, 112–15
- see also* craft work, labour, markets, merchants

- education, 6, 29, 61, 66–88, 126, 162, 194n38  
*calmecac*, 6, 61–3, 70–81, 84–8, 93–4, 192–3n, 200n18, 200n21, 200n22, 200–1n26, 202n44  
*cuicacalli*, 71, 82, 91  
*telpochcalli*, 61–2, 71–3, 78–81, 84, 93–4, 103, 118, 145, 154, 200n18, 200n21, 200n22, 202n44, 203n63  
*see also* family: parenting, warriors: training
- emotion, 3, 21–2, 43–4, 51–6, 66, 75–6, 82, 89–93, 156–9, 178–82  
*see also* individuality
- ethnography, 5–7, 35, 141
- etiquette, 55–6, 79, 94–6, 119, 146
- family, 11, 17, 41, 43–57, 63–5, 74–6, 92–9, 103–6, 127–9, 155–63, 170  
 fathers, 17, 51, 53–8, 61–3, 66–71, 93, 97, 107, 121, 134–5, 138, 160, 163, 201n30  
 godparents, 63–5  
 parenting, 41, 61–71, 73–5, 93–7, 134–5  
*see also* birth, children, grandparents, infants, lineage, women: as mothers
- fasting, 65, 75, 79, 87, 89, 91, 101
- femininity, 11, 26–32, 36–43, 46, 50, 52, 58, 68–70, 107–10, 113–14, 116–20, 125–6, 129–32, 146, 150, 157, 180–2, 214n57
- feminist theory, 26–7, 117
- fertility, 29–30, 56–8, 63, 109, 172–3, 199n59
- festivals, 16, 23–6, 48, 86, 91–2, 109–10, 173, 176–7  
*see also* Huey Tozoztli, Izcalli, Ochpaniztli, ritual, Tlacaxipeualiztli, Tlaxochimaco, Toxcatl
- Florentine Codex*, *see* Sahagún, Bernardino de
- flowers, 2, 16, 19, 36, 38, 83–4, 96, 150–1, 153, 163, 173
- food, 44–5, 65, 67, 86–7, 96, 101, 104, 105, 109, 129, 169
- feasting, 41, 50, 103, 105, 109, 165–6, 167
- female associations, 86–7, 107, 108–13, 118, 125–7, 129  
*see also* grinding, maize
- Frazer, James, 35
- funerals, *see* mourning
- gender, xii, 9–13, 22–40, 46–7, 66–70, 93, 117–18, 120, 146, 150, 152–3, 166, 173–4, 180–2  
*see also* complementarity, duality, feminist theory, femininity, masculinity, patriarchy, sexuality, women
- genitalia, 29, 77, 129–32, 147–50
- Gillespie, Susan D., 90
- gods and goddesses, 11, 20–32, 39–40, 48–52, 63–4, 76, 83–7, 89–90, 104–8, 110, 132, 138, 156, 158–9, 168–71, 181–2, 201n32, 203n1, 216n10  
*see also* creation, Centeotl, Chalchiuhtlicue, Chicomecoatl, Cihuacoatl, *cihuateteo*, Huitzilopochtli, *ixiptla*, Izquitecatl, Mayahuel, Mictlantecuhtli, Quetzalcoatl, Tezcatlipoca, Tlaloc(s), Toçi, Tonacatecuhtli, *tztzimime*, Xilonen
- grandparents, 41, 51, 160–5  
*see also* family, old age
- Greeks (ancient), 37, 145, 197n18
- grinding, 28–9, 105, 107, 110–11, 125–7, 151  
*see also* food, maize
- hair, 21, 37, 45, 75–7, 78, 79, 87, 148, 150, 151, 158, 169, 179–80  
*see also* appearance
- Harwood, Joanne, 68
- healing/health, 30, 41–2, 44–5, 53–4, 88, 105–6, 122–5, 140–5, 163, 167, 172, 188n26, 204n21  
*see also* deformity
- hermaphrodites, 147–50, 154, 214n57  
*see also* androgyny

- Herrera, Antonio de, 141  
 Hicks, Frederick, 113  
 homosexuality, 141–54  
 honour, 14–15, 17–22, 33–7, 60, 114, 133–8, 153, 157–8, 160, 163–6, 179–82  
 household, 11, 45, 67, 97–9, 101–2, 108, 111–13, 115–16, 129–30, 144, 167, 173, 175, 178  
   female associations, 42, 46, 86–7, 91, 99, 105–6, 108, 118, 135, 162  
   hearth, 46, 96, 98  
   *see also* domestic sphere, food  
*huehuetlahtolli*, 3, 5, 42–4, 50–2, 68–70, 77–9, 95, 97, 103–6, 121, 168, 196n6, 196n7, 201n30  
 Huey Tozoztli, 109–10  
 Huitzilhuilitl, 59  
 Huitzilopochtli, 1, 14, 15–16, 21, 161, 169  
 human sacrifice, 2–3, 13–38, 74–7, 108, 148–9, 153, 155–6, 166, 170, 176–9, 186n12, 190n53, 192n16, 193n28, 194n35  
   autosacrifice, 32, 63, 75–7  
   consent to, 22, 30–2, 34, 36, 194n44  
   flaying, 16, 19–20, 30–1, 171  
   gladiatorial striping, 19–21, 23, 33–4, 192n19  
   Harner-Harris interpretation, 35  
   victims, 14–18, 21–6, 30–6, 47, 76, 108, 192n19, 194n37  
   *see also* blood, cannibalism, captives, *ixiptla*, slaves, violence  
 Illancueitl, 53–4, 57–8  
 Incas, 112, 143  
 individuality, 3, 5, 10, 12, 32–3, 43–4, 52–6, 66, 72, 83–5, 91–3, 118, 119, 122, 124, 136, 144–6, 166, 171, 178–82  
 infants, 42, 44–58, 61–8, 72, 123, 161, 172–3, 217n40  
   *see also* children  
 infertility, 56–8, 110, 122–3, 140, 166  
 Itzcoatl, 59, 90, 153  
*ixiptla* (deity impersonators), 16, 23–6, 30–2, 35, 177, 193n27, 193n28  
 Ixtlilxochitl (*tlatoani*), 153, 215n71  
 Ixtlilxochitl, Fernando de Alva, 143  
 Izcalli, 63–5, 199n59  
 Izquitecatl (nobleman), 53–5,  
 Izquitecatl (god), 166  
 Jay, Nancy, 35, 194n35  
 Kimball, Geoffrey, 147, 151, 213n51  
 Klein, Cecelia, 9–10, 68  
 labour, 11–12, 18–19, 45, 59, 60, 67, 79, 104–7, 111–13, 156  
 Las Casas, Bartolomé de, 141–2  
 law, 19, 82, 94, 96, 99–101, 112, 116, 118, 133–45, 152, 161  
 Lévi-Strauss, Claude, 26  
 lineage, 57–61, 115, 134, 163, 170–1  
 Macuilxochitzin, 83–4  
 maize, 67, 96, 105, 109–10  
   spiritual associations, 67, 173, 217n40  
   female associations, 109–10  
   *see also* food, grinding  
 Marina, Doña, 76, 201n35  
 markets, xiii, 2, 30, 113–14, 152, 165  
 marriage, 44, 75, 79–80, 88–107, 112–13, 120–139, 156–9, 163, 179–81, 203n63, 203n9  
   *see also* complementarity, courtship, divorce, family, women  
 masculinity, 11, 14–15, 17–26, 28–35, 42, 46, 50–2, 70, 92, 96, 117, 119, 135–6, 145, 149–50, 153, 194n35, 206n3, 214n57  
   *see also* complementarity, courage, duality, gender, warriors  
 Matos Moctezuma, Eduardo, 4–5  
 Maxiscatzin, 139  
 Maxtla, 152–3  
 Mayahuel, 26  
 McCafferty, Geoffrey and Sharisse, 107–8  
 merchants, 18, 68, 72, 109, 114, 191n12, 206n3  
   warrior masculinity of, 18, 165–6  
   *see also* economy, markets  
 Mictlan (land of the dead), 28, 36, 37, 166, 171–6

- Mictlantecuhtli, 28, 171, 174  
 midwives, 30, 41–7, 49–51, 55, 118,  
 163, 179–81, 196n5, 218n3  
 Moctezuma I, 59, 115, 137, 171  
 Moctezuma II, 33–4, 59, 60, 76, 78,  
 100, 118–20, 137, 139  
 Moquihuix, 124–31  
 Motolinía, 100  
 mourning, 155, 156–60, 166–76,  
 179–181  
 music, 28, 82–3, 158, 169–70  
*see also* dance, song  
 mythology, xii, 1, 25, 27–9, 78, 90,  
 129–32, 171
- Nahuatl, xiii, 5–6, 8, 52–3, 70, 83, 90,  
 186n8  
 naming, 42, 47–51, 53–6  
 Nezahualcoyotl, 83, 139, 144, 153,  
 215n71  
 Nezahualpilli, 139, 168–9  
 nobility, 53–61, 63, 72–3, 100, 108,  
 115, 119, 124–31, 139, 157, 169–70  
*see also* social stratification  
 nuns, *see* priestesses
- Ochpaniztli, 29–3  
 old age, 88, 94–9, 122, 126, 140, 158,  
 160–6, 179–80  
 Ometochtzin, Don Carlos, 14–15  
 oral tradition, *see* *huehuetlahtolli*
- painting, 3–9, 48, 54, 68, 78, 80–1, 152  
 by women, 80–1  
*see also* sources: pictorial  
 pairs and pairing, *see* duality  
 patriarchy, 10, 118, 120, 145  
 Paul, Lois, 111–12  
 Peter Martyr, 143, 144  
 poetry, 77, 82–4  
*see also* education: *cuicacalli*,  
*huehuetlahtolli*, song
- Pole, David, 178  
 polygamy, 57, 99–101, 136–7, 139,  
 205n35  
 pregnancy, 41–5, 52, 55–6, 66, 79–80,  
 100, 122, 123, 147, 148  
*see also* birth
- Prescott, William, xii, 100  
 priests, 2, 14, 16, 18, 21, 25, 28–33,  
 35–6, 51, 62–3, 72–9, 81–2, 85–7,  
 99, 112, 122, 140, 143, 156, 159,  
 161, 170, 173  
 priestesses, 84–8, 89–91, 118, 139  
 prostitutes, *see* courtesans  
 public activity, 11, 30, 42–3, 58, 65,  
 77, 85–7, 91–4, 96, 97–9, 114,  
 116–21, 129, 135, 145–6, 156,  
 160, 162, 178–9, 196n5  
 punishment, 68–71, 79–80, 87, 122,  
 148–9, 162
- Quetzalcoatl, 24, 28–9, 62  
 Quinatzin, 55–6, 89–91
- Read, Kay, 100–1, 173  
 reciprocity, 11–12, 14, 19, 29, 94, 99,  
 154, 167, 178  
 rhetoric, *see* *huehuetlahtolli*
- ritual, 3, 9, 13, 17, 20, 35, 42–3, 47,  
 49–52, 61–5, 86–7, 94–9, 101–2,  
 108–10, 157–9, 167–6, 178–81,  
 190–1n3, 193n27, 193n28, 194n38  
 penance, 29, 32, 75, 77, 87, 101,  
 205n37  
 prayer, 45–7, 49–50, 77, 156–7, 159,  
 181  
 sweeping, 29, 74, 86–7, 89, 91, 106,  
 111, 158, 168  
*see also* bathing, fasting, festivals,  
 human sacrifice, naming, temples
- Rosaldo, Michelle Zimbalist, 117  
 rulers, *see* *tlatoani*
- Sahagún, Bernardino de, 5–10, 23–6,  
 29, 48–9, 64, 68–70, 74, 81, 85,  
 95–6, 106, 145–52, 162, 173,  
 186n8, 186n9, 187n19, 188n26,  
 188n30, 191n12, 193n27, 196n6,  
 206n3
- Sanday, Peggy R., 114  
 sexuality, 10, 56, 77, 79–80, 87, 99–102,  
 121–3, 129–32, 136–54, 165,  
 205–6n38  
*see also* chastity, genitalia,  
 homosexuality, infertility
- sickness, *see* healing/health
- Sigal, Pete, 147, 151–2, 211n33, 214n62

- slaves, 18–19, 113, 130, 168–70, 176  
 as sacrificial victims, 18–19, 23
- social stratification, 18–19, 41, 45, 50,  
 58–61, 72–3, 96, 100–1, 106, 108,  
 113, 119–20, 134, 137, 167, 169,  
 173–6, 200n21, 200n22  
*see also calpulli*, community, nobility
- sodomy, *see* homosexuality
- song, 65, 71, 77–9, 82–4, 91, 158,  
 163, 169  
*see also Cantares Mexicanos*, music,  
 poetry
- soothsaying, 47–9, 77, 82, 96,  
 197n20
- soul, *see* spirits
- sources, xiii, 3–10, 23, 27–8, 33–4,  
 43–4, 48–9, 52–6, 105–6, 124,  
 129–31, 143–4, 146, 178
- alphabetic, 3, 5–10, 68
- informants, 6–7, 9, 78, 95–6, 144,  
 152, 188n26, 206n3
- pictorial, 3–4, 7, 9, 48–50, 54, 61–2,  
 64, 67–71, 78–82, 90, 98–9,  
 126–7, 147–8, 150–2, 163–4, 171,  
 191n5, 193n27  
*see also* anthropology, archaeology,  
 ethnography, Nahuatl, painting  
*and under individual names*
- Spanish, xiii
- attitudes, xiii, 2–3, 10, 22, 48–9, 71,  
 76, 86, 100, 118–20, 161
- chroniclers, *see under individual names*
- friars/missionaries, 3, 5–9, 68, 73,  
 100, 138, 141–2, 144, 161,  
 187n17  
*see also* colonial period
- spirits, 27–8, 38, 140, 146, 171–5,  
 217–18n49, 218n52  
*see also* afterlife
- Tamoanchan, 28
- Teconal, 131, 209n
- temples, 2, 16, 21–2, 30–1, 34, 58,  
 61–3, 65, 73–9, 84–90, 110, 159,  
 161, 169–70, 175, 186n9  
 Templo Mayor, 4, 21–2, 76, 169,  
 171, 193n33
- Tenochtitlan, xiii, 1–2, 11–12, 14–15,  
 18, 21, 120  
*see also* Aztecs, *calpulli*
- Tepanecs, 60, 152–3
- Tezozomoc, Fernando Alvarado, 78
- Tepecocatzin, 127–8
- terminology, xii–xiv, 11, 59–60, 73,  
 85, 115, 141–2, 147, 150–1,  
 190n2, 211–12n33, 213n51,  
 213n54
- Texcoco, 1, 15, 55, 89, 139, 144, 153,  
 168–9, 185n3, 198n34, 215n71
- Tezcatlipoca, 31, 55, 62, 177, 198n36,  
 201n32, 216n3
- Tizaapan, 15–16
- Tizoc, 59, 119, 171
- Tlacaelel, 83–4, 115–16, 119, 124,  
 208n43
- Tlacaxipeualiztli, 19–20
- Tlacotzin, 120
- Tlahuicolli, 33–4
- Tlaloc(s), 21, 24, 47, 172
- Tlatelolco, xii–xiii, 6, 34, 124–5,  
 127–31, 143, 185n3
- tlatoani*, 16, 57–60, 100–1, 115–20,  
 139, 167–71, 173, 176, 208n39  
*see also* Acamapichtli, Achitometl,  
 Ahuiztotl, Atonal, Itzcoatl,  
 Ixtlilxochitl, Maxtla, Moctezuma I,  
 Moctezuma II, Moquihuiux,  
 Nezahualcoyotl, Nezahualpilli,  
 Quinatzin, Tizoc, Xicotencatl
- Tlaxcala, 33–4, 100, 139, 148
- Tlaxochimaco, 81, 153
- Toçi, 16, 27–8, 30–2
- Tonacatecuhтли, 173
- Toral, Francisco de, 5
- Townsend, Camilla, 101
- Toxcatl, 177–8
- translation, xii–xiv, 8, 76, 115, 142,  
 147, 150–1, 173, 186n8, 201n32,  
 203n63, 203n1, 204n21, 205n37,  
 206n3, 208n39, 210n16,  
 211–12n33, 213n50, 213n51,  
 213n53, 216n3, 216n10, 217n43
- transvestism, 116, 151–3
- travel, 46, 68–70, 104, 127, 148,  
 152–3, 156, 165–6, 206n3
- Trexler, Richard, 68–70, 143–4
- tribute, xii, 1–2, 11–12, 15, 60, 107,  
 112–15, 167, 189n49, 198n34
- Tula, Lady of, 83
- tzitzimime*, 38–40, 175n65

- violence, 2–3, 13, 22, 35, 43, 51, 61, 71, 74–7, 125, 129–32, 148, 155, 179–80  
*see also* human sacrifice, war
- war, 15–17, 25, 29, 60, 78–9, 83–4, 107–8, 110, 114–16, 124, 128–31, 152–3, 155–7  
 civil war, 124, 127–31  
 flower wars, 19  
 as focus of society, 11, 15, 18–19, 116, 119–20  
 masculinity associated with, 17–21, 33–5, 37, 42, 47, 50, 116, 119–20, 153, 156–7, 165–6, 182  
 military service, 12, 16, 18–19, 155  
 paralleled with childbirth, 45–6, 179–81  
 weapons, 19, 37, 50, 94, 107–8, 128, 174, 179–81  
*see also* violence, warriors
- warriors, 11, 14–15, 17–20, 27, 32–8, 46, 51, 59, 61, 62–3, 72–3, 83–4, 91, 94, 112, 116, 119, 121, 145, 152–3, 155–8, 169–70, 179–81, 198n34, 214n57  
 Tlahuicolli, 33–4  
 training, 72–3, 75, 78–80, 200n22  
*see also* courage, masculinity, war
- water, 1, 24, 47, 49–50, 82, 113, 150, 172–6  
*see also* Tlaloc(s)
- weaving, 50, 67–70, 86, 101, 107–8, 111, 158–9  
 feminine associations, 50, 86, 107–8, 174  
*see also* craft work
- women, 9, 26–32, 36–7, 52–9, 89–91, 100–1, 104–115, 117–20, 122–3, 129–32, 146, 152–9, 165–6, 174, 179–82  
 as matchmakers, 95–6, 99, 101, 118, 204n21  
 as mothers, 36–7, 41–6, 52–8, 61–3, 66–71, 97–9, 103–6, 117, 126–7, 179–81  
 ‘natural’ associations, 24–8, 110, 132, 193n33  
 as painters and poets, 80–1, 82–4  
 as victims, 16, 21–8, 124–30, 176  
 Woman of Discord, 16, 132  
*see also* birth, *cihuateteo*, courtesans, domestic sphere, femininity, food: female associations, marriage, midwives, nature, pregnancy, priestesses
- Xicotencatl, 100, 148  
 Xilonen, 109  
 Xochitlacoatzin, 60
- Yahualihucan, 159
- Zorita, Alonso de, 136–7  
 Zuazo, Alonso, 141, 210–11n27