

About the Tzompantli

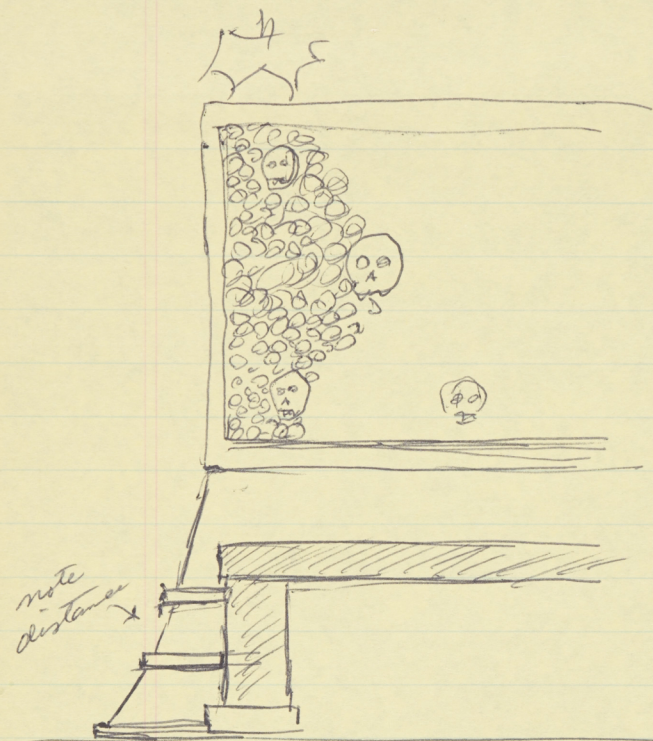
Number of poles not given

Duran lists 70 poles for the true Tzompantli and the Cortez map shows the number of poles for the Mipcaapan teotzompantli as slightly more than half of that which may or may not be a hint as to their relative sizes. (The length of 180 feet for the palisade is given and the distance between the poles of six feet is given as well.

After stating that there were 30 long steps 180 feet in length, he mentions "These were separated from the Courtyard wall by a passage". This has always bothered me both because of its ambiguity and because he later mentions a race from the Tzompantli to the top of Huilzilopochtli's temple run by the

boys in order to be the first to claim
the flowers placed on top. I think
we have a couple of good clues here
for the design and orientation of this
structure. ^{the} First question, that
of the wall and passage next to
the Court yard of Hueyitlopochtli
can be resolved when we think of
the Tzompantli's platform itself.
The Eastern wall of the platform
is the wall in question. It runs
some 15 feet to the passage in
question some 15 feet wide then
one comes to the ascent to
the skull rack itself.

As to the orientation when we
think of the boys lined up in front
of the tzompantli in order to make
the dash to the top of the temple in
order for them to all have an equal
chance the front of the Tzompantli
crowned have to be parallel to the
front of the Temple of Coatlicue.



from the yellow paperbook
 "Vida y Muerte en el Templo
 Mayor" P40

July 11, 1992
 just a thought:

Think of the transparent
 veil, spangled with stars,
 which often was placed over
 the head of the idol of Tzatzayon
 and probably of Huizlopochtli
 as well and then think

of the effect, upon
entering the sacred square
from the western gate, of
the great Tzompantli
with its thousands of
skulls and its vertical
and horizontal poles and
rods like the warp and
weft of ^{some} a great fabric.
~~with its weaving symbolism~~

This too, ^{usually} veils the ^{great} sanctuaries
of Tlaloc + Hueyelpochtli
~~the~~ and when one thinks
of the fertility imagery implied
by the nature of fabric &
weaving the effect becomes
even more powerful.

Also:

all vertical poles, whether
they are in the Tzompantli or
are isolated as in the Xocott pole
or ^{in the} Venus column or in the column
of a temple or house share to some

extant in the same symbolism,

Quetzilopochtli emerges
at noon (fully armed, fully
strengthened) in an explosion
of light vanishing ^{the} night and
the stars. This would place him above
the Tzompantli (and everything else)