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Soyd + Paffen
Dear Ernst -

Bob Hulen
Marion Thomas
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The following is my description
of the two paintings you purchased at auction
after ~~them~~ exhibit at the Fort Worth Gallery.
The larger painting is titled "View of the Great
Temple from Teopan." The garden scene is titled
"In Xochitlapan Culli."

"View of the Great Temple from Teopan" In
this painting the ~~view~~ spectator ~~is looking~~ would be
standing in a canal in the middle of a wide
canal flowing through the Teopan district in
the south^{east} part of the island city of Tenochtitlan.
"Teopan" means "place of the gods" or "Divine
Place" in the Nahuatl language of the Aztecs.
This Teopan was a residential area of the islanders
who ~~were~~ claimed royal blood or pure Aztec ancestry.
The view is toward the northwest, toward the
back side of the Great ^{Temple} of Huitzilopochtli
(The God of ^{the Sun} War) and Tlaloc (the God of the earth and
rain)

Notice that the houses turn their backs on the
canal. Aztec houses were usually built facing inward

toward Central Courtyards. Notice also that ~~across~~
~~entrances~~ to these Courtyards were through "L"
shaped entrances that blocked the view from
the ^{wide} thoroughfare ^{and the foot paths.} It is about 10:30 in the morning.
The woman ~~is~~ ^{on the} ~~on the~~ ^{left} paddles her
Canoe home from the market. Another woman
can also be seen ^{on} ~~of~~ the roof to the ^{man on the left} ~~right~~ watering
her rooftop garden, ^{and} in the middle of the ~~canoe~~
Canal a young man ~~is~~ ^{is} poling his Canoe
~~to the~~ ^{out} ~~water~~ ^{August} ~~water~~ ^{August}. It should be noted
that the lake of Mexico is shallow - only about 8 to
12 feet deep. The entire island upon which the
city of Tenochtitlan was built was criss-crossed
with Canals for transportation and flood control, making
it a kind of Venice of the New World. In the middle
distance is a small temple complex at the intersection
of several Canals. Note the Thatched roofs.

This painting represents our first attempt at
a "definitive view" of a residential area of Tenochtitlan.
I know of no others that exist. Unfortunately Archaeological
information on Aztec houses is very scarce, so that
Scott and I have been forced to rely on the descriptions
of the Spanish Conquerors, early Colonial property documents
and the Archaeology of Teotihuacan and Tula. Since we
are near the center of the island where property is
at a premium we ~~have~~ believe that these
would be few plots of land used for agriculture
^{next to} kitchen gardens. As one moved out to the edge
of the city ^{however} one would see humbler houses and

more agriculture - even chinampas or floating garden
for staple crops. ^{and simple flowers} Do keep in mind that Tenochtitlan
on the eve of the Conquest was primarily a
~~administrative~~ ^{administrative}, craft and religious center producing
finished goods ~~for~~ manufactured for trade
while importing raw material and food through
forced tribute from the conquered provinces.

"Xachitlcpaualli" ~~topical~~ ^{topical} means "The
place of the lordly house of Flowers." This
scene of the royal gardens could be any where
~~on the island~~ ^{city} of Tenochtitlan or on certain other
islands in the lake or ~~the~~ ^{the nearby} mainland ~~city~~ where
there were a number of Royal Houses. ~~Do~~

Royal Gardens were probably laid out along
religious lines (There was no secular world in the
Aztec mind) and filled with symbolic plots. Colored
stone tiles were often employed in checkerboard style.
Water was an important ingredient with stone-
lined pools and fountains for fish and birds. Stuccoed
walkways ~~were constructed~~ ^{were constructed}, probably laid out in a grid
when land was flat and with formal plantings of
scented trees and flowers everywhere. This kind
of formality ^{might} ~~would~~ recall the gardens of Le Notre and
others of the 17th century. More "naturalistic" gardens
were built on slopes and hilltops where water
was available through springs or aqueducts. ~~The~~
The Aztecs were ^{also} very fond of Topiary, painted
sculptures, grotto fountains and latticed "summer houses"
and dancing pavilions. Evidence still exists of at least

from
~~these~~ major Aztec Gardens - at Chapultepec, Teotihuacan,
Oaxaca and Xochimilco. These ^{few} remains and the
descriptions of the Spanish Conquerors merely hint
at the great loving ~~and~~ side of the Aztecs - Their
love of poetry, song, dance, their love of flowers
and gardens - a side of their culture which
adds a human dimension ^{counterbalances our view of the} to the often awesome
and often frightening sculptures ~~which are the sole remaining~~ ^{of their life}
~~statues~~ which are the sole remaining ^{of Aztec society}
in the museums.

Ernest, Scott and I are literally just
beginning to ~~start to~~ ^{work} paint the
city as we think it may have looked to the
Spanish Conquerors. Carolyn Tate, Curator of
Pre-Colombian art at the Dallas Museum of
Fine Art has asked us to exhibit our Aztec
works at the opening of their new 30 million
dollar "American Art of the Americas" wing
in 1993. The Mexican Government wants us to
show in Spain in late 1992 at an exhibit
organized by the King of Spain. The public
reception of our work has been so exciting that
it is difficult for Scott and me to avoid being
rushed too fast to ~~print~~ ^{print} their extremely complicated
project. ~~To be~~

I am very excited that the Dallas Museum is
currently ~~beginning~~ ^{organizing} a symposium of major
Aztec scholars and archaeologists for the purpose of helping
us to envision Tenochtitlan according to the latest



and of the unpublished discoveries.

In closing, I hope that you like your copy of the Borgia Codex. It is a more expensive copy than your Vaticanus manuscript and quite spectacular. Your Vaticanus however gives me much new iconography not contained in the Borgia. I do thank you for making the trade and I think we both got a good deal.

Sincerely yours
H. M.