

Account by Rodrigo Rangel

On the seventh of May, Friday, Baltasar de Gallegos went with most of the people of the army to Ilapi to eat seven barbacoas of corn that they said were there, which were a deposit of the **cacica (tribal chief or leader)**. This same day the Governor and Rodrigo Rangel entered in the temple or oratory of these **idoltrous (practicing idolatry)** people, and having unwrapped some **interments (burial, funeral)**, they found some bodies of men tied on a barbacoa, the breasts and openings and necks and arms and legs covered in pearls; and as they were bringing them out, Rangel saw a thing like a green and very good emerald, and he showed it to the Governor, and he was very delighted. And he commanded that he should look out of the wall and call Juan de Anasco, accountant of Their Majesties, and Rangel told him: "My Lord, do not call anyone: it could be that there might be some precious stone or jewel here." And the Governor replied, somewhat angrily, and said: "Even if there were, do we have to steal it?" Juan de Anasco having come, they took out that emerald and it was made of glass, and after that one, more and more beads of glass and rosaries with their crosses. They brought out from there eight or nine arrobas of pearls;

Some things were made there as in Spain, which must have been taught by the Indians who went away to the licenciado Lucas Vazquez de Ayllon, because they made breeches and buskins, and black gaiters [antiparras] with laces of white hide, and with fringes or edging of colored hide, as if they had been made in Spain. In the temple or oratory of Talimeco, there were breastplates, as well as **corselets (a piece of body armor for the trunk; usually consists of a breastplate and back piece)** and helmets, made from raw and hairless hides of cows, and from the same [hides] very good shields. This Talimeco was a town of great importance, with its very authoritative oratory on a high mound; the caney or house of the cacique very large and very tall and broad, all covered, high and low, with very excellent and beautiful mats, and placed with such fine skill, that it appeared that all the mats were only one mat. Only rarely was there a hut which might not be covered with matting.

This town has very good savannahs and a fine river, and forests of walnuts and oak, pines, evergreen oaks and groves of sweetgum, and many cedars. In this river it was said that Alaminos, a native of Cuba, had found a bit of gold; and such a rumor became public in the army among the Spaniards, and for this it was believed that this is a land of gold, and that good mines would be found there.

Consult glossary for underlined words