***Source:* Cortés, Hernán. Hernán Cortés to Emperor Carlos V., 1522. In *Hernán Cortés:***

***Letters from Mexico*. Translated and edited by Anthony Pagden, 72-74. New Haven and**

**London: Yale University Press, 1986.**

The following morning, they came out of the city to greet me with many trumpets

and drums, including many persons whom they regard as priests in their temples,

dressed in traditional vestments and singing after their fashion, as they do in the temples.

With such ceremony they led us into the city and gave us very good quarters, where all

those in my company were most comfortable. There they brought us food, though not

sufficient. On the road we had come across many of the signs which the natives of that

province had warned us about, for we found the highroad closed and another made and

some holes, though not many; and some of the streets of the city were barricaded, and

there were piles of stones on all the roofs. All this made us more alert and more cautious.

There I found several of Mutezuma's messengers who came and spoke with

those who were with me, but to me they said merely that they had come to discover

from those others what they had agreed with me, so as to go and inform their master.

So after they had spoken with them, they left; and with them went one of the most

important of those who had been with me before. During the three days I remained

in that city they fed us worse each day, and the lords and principal persons of the city

came only rarely to see and speak with me. And being somewhat disturbed by this,

my interpreter, who is an Indian woman from Putunchan, which is the great river of

which I spoke to Your Majesty in the first letter, was told by another Indian woman

and a native of this city that very close by many of Mutezuma's men were gathered,

and that the people of the city had sent away their women and children and all their

belongings, and were about to fall on us and kill us all; and that if she wished to

escape she should go with her and she would shelter here. All this she told to

Gerónimo de Aguilar, an interpreter whom I acquired in Yucatán, of whom I have

also written to Your Highness; and he informed me. I then seized one of the natives

of this city who was passing by and took him aside secretly and questioned him; and

he confirmed what the woman and the natives of Tascalteca had told me. Because of

this and because of the signs I had observed, I decided to forestall an attack, and I

sent for some of the chiefs of the city, saying that I wished to speak with them. I put

them in a room and meanwhile warned our men to be prepared, when a harquebus

was fired, to fall on the many Indians who were outside our quarters and on those

who were inside. *And so it was done, that after I had put the chiefs in the room, I left*

*them bound up and rode away and had the harquebus fired, and we fought so hard*

*that in two hours more than three thousand men were killed.* So that Your Majesty

should realize how well prepared they were, even before I left my quarters they had

occupied all the streets and had placed all their people at the ready, although, as we

took them by surprise, they were easy to disperse, especially because I had

imprisoned their leaders. I ordered some towers and fortified houses from which

they were attacking us to be set on fire. And so I proceeded through the city

fighting for five hours or more, leaving our quarters, which were in a strong

position, secure. Finally all the people were driven out of the city in many

directions, for some five thousand Indians from Tascalteca and another four

hundred from Cempoal were assisting me.