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NAHUA AND MAYA CATHOLICISMS:
ECCLESIASTICAL TEXTS AND LOCAL RELIGION IN COLONIAL
CENTRAL MEXICO AND YUCATAN

A Dissertation in
History
by
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Abstract

For years the spread of Christianity has interested scholars. In recent years, scholars have increasingly examined how non-Western cultures make Christianity their own through existing linguistic, social, and cultural practices. For scholars of colonial Latin America, this interest has chiefly settled on Central Mexico and the evangelization of the Nahuas (Aztecs). Recent advances in the translation of the written language of the Nahuas (Nahuatl) have allowed for a better understanding of how the Nahuas and their culture contributed to the formation of a unique brand of Catholicism—a Nahua version of Christianity sometimes referred to as “Mexican Catholicism.” Yet despite the excellence of such studies, their intimate focus on Central Mexico unintentionally creates a uniform, Nahua portrait of religion that encompasses all the diverse cultures of Mesoamerica. Such studies also generally limit their examination to a particular set of Nahuatl sources, thus restricting their ability to appreciate the variation and evolution of the Catholic message that indigenous-language religious texts conveyed. Nor do existing studies comparatively examine the cross-cultural similarities and differences in the messages such texts presented to the natives.

This dissertation challenges the traditional, monolithic portrait of “Mexican Catholicism” in colonial Mesoamerica. Employing a variety of colonial Nahuatl and Maya religious texts, this dissertation explores their role in the diversification of Catholicism. Upon examination, these texts present an image of variegated Catholicisms throughout Central Mexico and Yucatan that recognizes local, regional, and cultural variations of belief and practice. In addition, this study demonstrates how published and
unpublished religious texts produced “official” and “unofficial” versions of Catholicism, and how these versions changed throughout the colonial period according to indigenous culture, local situations, and broader early modern events. Furthermore, this work highlights the role natives played in the evangelization of Mesoamerica and the formation of Nahua and Maya Catholicisms. Overall, this study compares religious texts written in Nahuatl and Maya to illustrate how Christianity’s continual negotiation with linguistic, cultural, and everyday barriers produced various Catholic messages—and thus Catholicisms—tailored to the local demands of a colonial New World.
Contents

List of Tables vii
List of Figures viii
Abbreviations ix
Conventions of Translation x
Acknowledgements xi

Chapter 1: Introduction 1
Chapter 2: Spelling Out Salvation 17
Chapter 3: The Pen is Mightier than the Sword 58
Chapter 4: Getting Down to the Basics: Commandments and Prayers 107
Chapter 5: “One God, One Faith, One Baptism” 139
Chapter 6: The Various Confessions of Mesoamerica 181
Chapter 7: Adam’s World Tree and Paul’s Idols 220
Chapter 8: Voices from the Dust 241
Chapter 9: When the Saints Go Marching In 275
Chapter 10: Nahua and Maya Catholicisms 290

Appendix A: Employed Nahuatl and Maya Ecclesiastical Texts and Corpora (1546-1855) 298
Appendix B: Nahuatl Translations of the Creed 300
Appendix C: Maya Translations of the Creed 307
Appendix D: Nahuatl Baptismal Discourse from Fray Juan Bautista’s 1606 *Sermonario* 310
Appendix E: Nahuatl Baptismal Discourse from Andrés Saenz de la Peña’s 1643 *Manual de los santos sacramentos* 313
Appendix F: Nahuatl Baptismal Discourse from Ignacio de Paredes’ 1759 *Promptuario* 320
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appendix</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Maya Baptismal Discourse from Juan Coronel’s 1620 <em>Discur**os predicables</em></td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Nahuatl Emergency Baptismal Discourse from Fray Alonso de Molina’s 1569 <em>Confesionario mayor</em></td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Ignacio de Paredes’ Nahuatl Instructions on Emergency Baptisms in his 1758 Translation of Ripalda’s <em>Doctrina christiana</em></td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>The Conversion of Paul (c. 1550)</td>
<td>352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>The Creation of Adam (c. 1576)</td>
<td>361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Cacalchen Preambles (1646-54)</td>
<td>367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Maya Testament from Ixil (1748)</td>
<td>371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Works Cited</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Tables

Table 3.1. Religious texts and their categories 98

Table 5.1. Baptismal texts and their topics of discussion  
(Maya works are shaded) 167

Table 6.1. Confessional manuals and their questions concerning the Decalogue  
(Maya works are shaded) 217

Table 7.1. Comparisons between the biblical and Nahua accounts  
of the conversion of Paul 235

Table 7.2. Comparisons between the biblical and Maya accounts  
of the creation of Adam 237

Table 8.1. Notaries in Culhuacan (1572-1599) 250

Table 8.2. Notaries in Ocotelulco (1572-1629) 253

Table 8.3. Notaries in Cacalchen (1646-1679) 259

Table 8.4. Notaries of testaments in Tekanto (1750-1799) 263

Table 8.5. Notaries of testaments in Ebtun (1785-1813) 265

Table 8.6. Notaries in Ixil (1738-1777) 267

Table 9.1. Appearance of saints in Culhuacan (1579-1599) 277

Table 9.2. Appearance of saints in the Toluca Valley (1654-1783) 278

Table 9.3. Appearance of saints in Ocotelulco (1572-1673) 279

Table 9.4. Appearance of saints in Ixil (1738-1779) 280

Table 9.5. Appearance of saints in Ebtun (1785-1813) 281

Table 9.6. Appearance of saints in Cacalchen (1646-1679) 281

Table 9.7. Appearance of saints in Tekanto (1726-1814) 282

Table 9.8. The presence of the cult of the saints in indigenous polities  
via testaments (Maya towns are shaded) 286
List of Figures

Figure 2.1. Otomí testarian 23

Figure 3.1. Diversification Cycle of Category 1 texts 72

Figure 8.1. Preamble of Ana Tiacapan, 1580 249

Figure 8.2. Preamble of Catalina Quetzalamel, Ocotelulco, 1590 251

Figure 8.3. Preamble of Augustín Tecpantepetzin, Ocotelulco, 1592 252

Figure 8.4. Preamble of Diego Hernandez, Ocotelulco, 1663 252

Figure 8.5. Preamble of Francisco de la Cruz, Toluca, 1735 256

Figure 8.6. Preamble of Francisco Martín, Tepemaxalco, 1735 256

Figure 8.7. Preamble of Bonaventura Canche, Cacalchen, 1647 260

Figure 8.8. Preamble of Andres Uitz, Cacalchen, 1654 261

Figure 8.9. Preamble of Salvador Camal, Tekanto, 1744 263

Figure 8.10. Preamble of Bernardo Canul, Tekanto, 1772 263

Figure 8.11. Preamble of Rosa Camal, Ebtun, 1785 265

Figure 8.12. Preamble of Couoh, Ebtun, 1812 265

Figure 8.13. Ixil’s core preamble 268

Figure 8.14. Juan Cetz’ 1738 changes to the Ixil preamble 268

Figure 8.15. Salvador Coba’s 1748 changes to the Ixil preamble 269

Figure 8.16. Joseph Cob and Marcos Poot’s 1765 changes to the Ixil preamble 269

Figure 8.17. Pablo Tec’s 1766 changes to the Ixil preamble 269

Figure 8.18. Marcos Poot’s 1767 changes to the Ixil preamble 270
Abbreviations

AGI          Archivo General de Indias
AHAY         Archivo Histórico del Arzobispado de Yucatán
AHDC         Archivo Histórico de la Diócesis de Campeche
AHN          Archivo Histórico Nacional
BNE          Biblioteca Nacional de España
CAIHY        Centro de Apoyo a la Investigación Historica de Yucatán
GCMM         Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University
             Library, Garrett Collection of Mesoamerican Manuscripts
GGMMC        Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University
             Library, Garrett-Gates Mesoamerican Manuscript Collection
SC           Schøyen Collection, Oslo and London
TULAL        Latin American Library, Tulane University
UP-RBML      University of Pennsylvania, Rare Books and Manuscript Library
Conventions of Translation

My transcriptions of the Nahuatl, Maya, and Spanish remain true to the spelling, capitalization, paragraphing, punctuation, and abbreviations of the original text. When orthographic errors occur I indicate them in the transcription with [sic]; missing syllables or words appear in brackets. The translations reflect my own syntax, and all transcriptions and translations represent my own work unless otherwise noted. Throughout the study, I retain the Hispanized form of all proper names. Also, with the exception of direct quotes, all Nahuatl, Maya, and Spanish words are italicized in their first appearance only and retain roman font thereafter.
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To Natalie, *in hatsuts colel in uatan*

and

Macy, *nochocacatzitzin*
Mesoamerica
Chapter 1

Introduction

In the spring of 2009, I found myself in Santa Fe for the annual conference for the Rocky Mountain Council for Latin American Studies. One night while at dinner with a few other Latin American scholars the conversation turned, as it frequently does, to the individual courses we were currently teaching and the curriculum assigned. I was amazed at the variety of textbooks, novels, secondary and primary sources the group assigned to their classes. The historical topics each of us chose to emphasize throughout our surveys similarly varied and reflected our individual preferences as scholars. In the end, although we were all teaching Latin American history, each one of us presented our classes with distinct versions of that history so that, in the end, what Latin American history meant to my students surely differed from what it meant to the students of another instructor.

The same paradigm can be applied to colonial Catholicism. How Catholicism was presented to the Nahuas and Mayas, and what version of the religion the natives received largely depended on the preferences of their instructors, and the religious texts they composed and used. Each religious text presented Catholicism in its own way, thus diversifying the Catholic message. Indeed, rarely did two Nahuatl or Maya texts contain identical messages or interpretations of the religion. Moreover, the diversification evident between texts of the same language becomes even more apparent when examined across cultural divides through the comparison of Nahuatl and Maya religious texts. The texts all preached Catholicism to be sure, but different versions of Catholicism. The
purpose of this dissertation is to illustrate how Nahuatl and Maya religious texts contributed to the diversification of Catholicism and its various forms throughout colonial Central Mexico and Yucatan. In so doing, this study illustrates the roles Nahuas, Mayas, and Spaniards played in the creation and promulgation of diverse Catholicisms.

Historiographical Context and Structure of the Work

Within the study of religion in colonial Mesoamerica, the use of indigenous-language religious texts primarily appears in the growing body of scholarship that contests Robert Ricard’s thesis of a “Spiritual Conquest.” When Ricard published his Conquête Spirituelle du Mexique in 1933, he employed mendicant accounts to present a monolithic view of the Church that lauded both its successful expansion and its victory over the unorthodox practices of Mexico. His work was in part a response to the work of the father of Mexican anthropology, Manuel Gamio, and his students—such as Anita Brenner’s Idols behind Altars (1929)—that in the 1920s and 30s suggested the “survival” of precontact religion within a New World Catholicism to form a “mixed religion.” This idea appeared anathema to Ricard. For Ricard, “pagan” beliefs existed only as the victim of Catholic supremacy, vanquished in the nearly instantaneous process of conversion; they did not survive to form a popular religion, or “mixed-religion.” When Ricard does speak of surviving precontact beliefs, he labels this as “resistance” and acknowledges its

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2 Ibid., 276.
existence outside Catholicism and not among its believers. Although he recognizes some heterodoxy in Mexico, whatever unorthodox beliefs exist among Catholics are attributed “to ignorance, but only to ignorance” and not the influence of precontact beliefs to form a “pagan-Catholicism.”

Yet more recent studies question the conversion of the natives and the successful elimination of their precontact beliefs. Indeed, scholars began to search both Spanish and indigenous-language sources to reveal the presence of what was termed a “mixed religion.” For example, the works of Miguel León-Portilla, J. Jorge Klor de Alva, Charles Gibson, James Lockhart, and Louise Burkhart to name a few argue how preexisting cultural, structural, and linguistic traits in Central Mexico allowed Nahuas to convert to Catholicism on terms familiar to their preexisting culture. Subsequently, a wave of scholarship using both Spanish and native texts debunked many of Ricard’s arguments while complicating others. Catholicism no longer dominated the religious field of Mesoamerica, nor was it practiced free from non-Christian elements and influences. The widespread, rapid conversion of the natives became replaced with a

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3 Ibid., 279.

4 Manuel Gamio and his students provided the original foundation for this term in the 1920s and 30s. See for example Anita Brenner, Idols behind Altars (New York: Payson and Clarke, Ltd., 1929).

more gradual conversion continually negotiated to this day. Moreover, the processes of conversion now took into account a Catholic discourse made indigenous through its translation into native languages and cultures. In short, scholars increasingly argued for the role of negotiation in the evangelizing and conversion process, and the presence of a “mixed” religion in Mesoamerica whose inhabitants were far from spiritually conquered.

Traditionally, the failure of colonial natives to practice an orthodox Christianity was blamed on their inability to understand the Catholic discourse and not on the discourse itself. However, in the process of examining and reexamining the Spiritual Conquest, scholars began to recognize the role of native-language religious texts in illustrating how a variety of interpretations of Catholicism emerged. Leading the way, Burkhart’s *The Slippery Earth* greatly contributed to the recognition of how Christian moral dialogue in Nahua religious texts became indigenous, and sometimes unorthodox, through its translation into and use of Nahuatl rhetoric. In a case of what James Lockhart describes as “Double Mistaken Identity,” the use of indigenous vocabulary and rhetoric loaded with precontact meaning to represent Christian concepts would result in both Spaniards and natives giving the text their own interpretations without taking “cognizance of the other side’s interpretation.”

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8 Burkhart, *Slippery Earth*.

Yet Christian concepts “lost in translation” were not the only contributors to colonial Catholicism’s unorthodox diversity. Sometimes the Catholic doctrine that ecclesiastical texts delivered to natives was simply incorrect. Indeed, the important Nahuatl Theater project (2004-2009) examining a number of Nahuatl religious plays illustrates how at times native playwrights took great liberties with events in Christian history, or even doctrine, to increase their appeal and familiarity to a Nahua audience, even if such liberties “bordered on the sacrilegious.”

However, despite these and scant other examples, few studies revising the Spiritual Conquest take full advantage of indigenous-language ecclesiastical texts. Fewer still are studies examining ecclesiastical texts other than religious plays. Overall, although scholars have made significant contributions to understanding colonial religion


in Central Mexico, there are still many elements of the Spiritual Conquest that await revision through the use of indigenous-language religious texts.

For example, within the current historiography reexamining Ricard’s thesis, a large portion of the native-language texts studied concern the Nahuas of Central Mexico. This focus risks the formation of a monolithic, Central Mexican model for natives’ reaction to Catholicism that encompasses all the diverse cultures of Mesoamerica. Such a model requires revision through comparative studies that employ the religious texts of various regions, cultures, and languages to illustrate how such texts created versions of Catholicism unique to both preexisting cultural frameworks, and local situations. Much attention is directed toward what Charles Dibble termed the “Nahuatlization of Christianity.” But what do religious texts reveal of the “Mayanization of Christianity”? Until now, this question has remained unanswered as works on colonial religion employing Maya religious texts are virtually nonexistent. Moreover, differences in local situations allowed texts of the same language to differ from each other. Nahuatl texts produced in Mexico City differed from those in Guadalajara or Toluca. Similarly, Maya texts composed in Merida could differ from those composed locally in Tixcacalcupul or Ixil. Such distinctions remain largely unstudied.

Furthermore, scholars generally neglect the doctrinal variation among published texts, and between published and unpublished texts. Each author—whether Spanish, Nahua, or Maya—composed his version of Catholicism according to his religious training and personal preferences. This allowed, for example, two confessional manuals or catechisms produced in the same time period to vary markedly. Also, unpublished

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12 The most notable exception would be William Hanks’ very recent Converting Words: Maya in the Age of the Cross (Berkeley: University of California Press), 2010.
texts avoided the rigorous editorial process of publishing and could more easily contain material the Church would have considered “heretical.” Composed by or with the assistance of native aides, such texts oftentimes contained local versions of Catholicism that strayed from the orthodox doctrine of the Church. Largely unrecognized by scholars, such “unofficial” religious texts provide an important glimpse into how local ecclesiastics and Nahua and Maya religious stewards interpreted Catholicism.

Because the majority of unpublished ecclesiastical texts have either been destroyed, lost to time, or remain hidden in obscure and private archives, their number is unknown. But surely the number far exceeded those published—especially in those towns at a distance from colonial metropolises, the pueblos de visita. In reality, unpublished, unorthodox, indigenous-language religious texts likely comprised a significant part of the Catholic message (or better messages) natives heard, and thus warrant an increase of scholarly attention. The various works of Burkhart on Marian devotion demonstrate how select unofficial texts could convey distinct messages. Yet the topic remains woefully understudied, particularly for the Maya, and requires further analysis into how unofficial texts came about and their role in shaping the Catholic message.

Finally, the misconception exists of a single “Mexican Catholicism,” or “Mexican Christianity.” Much of the scholarship perpetuating—however unintentionally—this

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13 In particular see Burkhart, *Holy Wednesday*; and Burkhart, *Before Guadalupe*.

image focuses on specific religious Nahuatl texts, or other religious documents, from a specific place within a specific period. These studies, although important, reveal only a single snapshot of insight. Without comparative studies, the spatial and temporal boundaries of these snapshots can spread to the whole of Mesoamerica, or at least Mexico, and the entire colonial period. The threads holding together such a single Catholicism quickly unravel upon incorporating other Mesoamerican cultures such as the Maya, and expanding the documentary evidence to include various locales and time periods within the colonial era.

To expose the image of diverse, colonial Catholic discourses that changed among Nahuatl and Maya ecclesiastical texts throughout the colonial period, a comparative examination of a variety of published and unpublished indigenous-language religious texts is needed. Such an examination places snapshots of insight together to form a collage representing a larger, diverse scene of many Catholicisms extending the colonial period and branching outside Central Mexico. Yet such a study of Nahuatl and Maya religious texts does not exist. This dissertation fills that void.

The use of a comparative eye to illustrate religious variation is not new. Scholars have long been aware of the diversity in Christianity and the inability of the Council of Trent to eliminate variations in practice and belief. Indeed, although this dissertation frequently references “Catholicism,” it does so with the knowledge that “one” Catholicism never truly existed. It is folly to assume that a single Catholicism was ever universally accepted or conveyed, even after Trent. Many excellent studies exist demonstrating the diversity in Europeans’ conceptualization of Catholicism from the
unofficial to the official, the local to the central.\textsuperscript{15} And as Chapter 3 demonstrates, however briefly, European religious texts contributed to this diversification. Moreover, the evolution and change in Catholicism and Christianity as a whole since its conception has likewise received attention from scholars.\textsuperscript{16}

Regarding Spain, William Christian, Henry Kamen, Jaime Contreras, and Sara Nalle all demonstrate the local variations of Catholicism’s religious and institutional practice vis-à-vis peripheral and central locations and situations.\textsuperscript{17} Yet with the exception of a few recent edited volumes, similar studies examining the diversity of religious belief and practice remain largely absent from the religious study of colonial Latin America.\textsuperscript{18}

As William Christian recently stated, “The study of variation in Catholicism as practiced,


historically or in the present, is in its infancy.”¹⁹ This dissertation carries this conversation of Catholicism’s diversity to Mesoamerica through its Nahuatl and Maya religious texts.

To be sure, most Latin American scholars would support the idea of a multifaceted Catholicism. Many would likely cite Inquisition cases demonstrating deviant practices to support their supposition. Yet studies providing concrete examples of the norm rather than the exceptional are few. This dissertation attempts to provide a sound documentary foundation for the idea of diverse Catholicisms through Nahuatl and Maya texts containing the Christian message.

As mentioned, few studies employ native-language sources when examining colonial religion—a dearth intimately connected with the limited number of sources, especially those in languages other than Nahuatl, and the difficulty of translation.²⁰ However, the recent heightened interest in indigenous-language texts over the past years has made Nahuatl religious texts—primarily testaments²¹—increasingly available, thus augmenting the feasibility of a comparative study among Nahuatl works. Indeed, the comparative study of religious texts of the same native language is a necessary step for the historiography reexamining the Spiritual Conquest, and one that few have taken and

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²¹ Although notarial in style, I classify testaments as ecclesiastical texts for their religious nature. In such documents, testators invoke the divine and arrange their burial and posthumous care. Unlike standard bills of sale or land documents, testaments had direct spiritual impact on testators’ souls. Therefore, although not didactic religious texts, I allow testaments a religious connotation.
only for Nahuatl texts. Yet the subsequent step, the one crossing cultural boarders (in this case into Yucatan), is equally essential and awaits taking. This dissertation takes these two steps.

Chapter 2 examines the process of creating orthographies and vocabularies in the Roman alphabet from spoken Nahuatl and Yucatec Maya. This section exposes the challenges of translating Christian concepts into indigenous languages, and the role of the friars and their native assistants in overcoming such challenges. The diversification of Catholicism in Mesoamerica began in the initial stages of composing religious texts with the creation of written languages and vocabularies shaped by culturally- and regionally-specific influences.

Chapter 3 provides new insights into the composition of religious texts, both official and unofficial, and their colonial messages—messages natives received and, at times, delivered. Employing a variety of religious texts, this chapter reveals the concern of many ecclesiastics for orthodoxy and accurate translations, and their attempts to use the printing press to obtain such conformity. However, such a hope failed to come to fruition. Not only did published texts differ in their doctrinal instructions, but unofficial, unpublished texts continued to exist as well. Thus, these native-language religious texts conveyed various official and unofficial versions of Catholicism to Nahuas and Mayas.

This formation of various Catholicisms becomes evident in subsequent chapters. Each chapter highlights one of the many examples of how religious texts contributed to the diversification of Catholicism. Chapter 4 considers how Nahuatl and Maya religious texts

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22 For examples of comparative examinations among Nahuatl texts that, among other things, betray such diversity see Schwaller, “The Ilhuica”; Tavárez, “Naming the Trinity”; Burkhart, Holy Wednesday; and Burkhart, Before Guadalupe.
conveyed the basic tenets of the Catholic faith. The Ten Commandments, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Creed appeared in a variety of Nahuatl and Maya texts. Although such doctrines occasionally became obscured through translation, interpretation, and authorial preference, the primary impetus for diversification lay in their explanation and application. This diversification is further seen through Nahuatl and Maya texts and their explanation and application of the doctrines of baptism (Chapter 5), and confession (Chapter 6).

Chapter 7 offers a closer examination of unofficial religious texts, their native authors, and their contribution to the various versions of Catholicism. Employing a Nahua sermon on the conversion of Paul and a Maya manuscript relating the creation of Adam, this chapter demonstrates how religious texts could offer unorthodox, culturally-shaped versions of Catholicism. Such cultural and local distinctions continue in Chapter 8 with a study of Nahuatl and Maya testaments, and in Chapter 9 with an examination of communal relationships with the cult of the saints. Both chapters highlight local, cultural, temporal, and regional differences among and between Nahuatl and Maya testaments. Chapter 9 additionally examines how differences in testaments’ formulaic preambles and bequeathed goods reveal the cult of the saint’s diverse impact among Central Mexican and Yucatecan indigenous polities, and how varying degrees of native-Spaniard interaction contributed to create such diversity.

Additionally, the chapters afford insights into the influence of time and location vis-à-vis centers and peripheries on the texts themselves. The nuanced differences between sixteenth- and late eighteenth-century texts become increasingly apparent—whether through the loss of millenarian rhetoric, shortened texts, or changing vocabulary or doctrine. Moreover, frequent references in the texts themselves to the differences
between centers and peripheries, and the distinction between the Catholicism preached and practiced in Central Mexico and that of peripheral Yucatan, draw attention to the impact centers and peripheries had on the versions of Catholicism.

Finally, the chapters provide a new appreciation for the role of Nahuas and Mayas in the evangelization of Mesoamerica. Behind nearly every Nahuatl and Maya religious text lay a native assistant. These assistants played variegated roles from scribes, to ghostwriters, to authors. These assistants also served as the representative of Catholicism in their towns during the frequent absence of the priest. Thus, although Spaniards played a large role in disseminating and shaping Catholicism, Nahuas and Mayas played an equal if not larger role—a role exposed through the religious texts examined here.

The sources for this study derive primarily from archival research in Mexico, Spain, and the United States. From such research, and the generosity of other scholars in sharing their finds, I have compiled a cache of Nahuatl and Maya religious texts (see Appendix A). The work of previous scholars on Nahuatl and Maya texts—both religious and secular—has also facilitated the comparative nature of this study. Spanish documents from official proceedings and correspondence, councils, reports, religious texts, and inquisition accounts supplement these native-language sources.

Admittedly, the comparative aspect of this dissertation falls vulnerable to some unavoidable limitations. First and foremost, the number of available Nahuatl religious texts vastly outnumbers those in Maya. Any scholar with experience in Yucatecan archives could offer a variety of plausible explanations for such a dearth including weather conditions, archival funding, preservation techniques (or lack thereof), and so on.

23 Indeed, if not for the existing translations of myriad native-language texts from The Bancroft Dialogues to the Chilam Balams, this dissertation never would have been possible.
Yet surely the lack of a printing press in Yucatan until 1813, and the loss of Merida’s Franciscan monastery, San Francisco de Merida, played a large role. Regarding the latter, the grandiose monastery was a key center of Catholicism in the Yucatan. Established in 1547 upon part of Tihó’s (Merida) largest pyramid, the complex housed up to 50 friars and contained an infirmary and school. For nearly 300 years the archives of the monastery collected priceless texts. Yet when the Franciscans opposed the new Spanish constitution in 1821, local mobs raided the monastery destroying the archives and what must have been countless religious texts in Maya.24

To appreciate the enormity of this loss one only need peruse Alfred Tozzer’s list of Maya works at the back of his grammar. Next to nearly every entry of a religious text composed in Maya known to Tozzer is the word “missing.” Take for example the writings of Juan Coronel, a prolific seventeenth-century Franciscan missionary. His pupil Diego López de Cogolludo reports Coronel having written a volume of pláticas (speeches or sermons), a catechism, and a confessional manual for new ministers.25 To this list Tozzer adds Coronel’s Discursos predicables and a second catechism more complete than the original.26 All but the last two, which are exceedingly rare, are lost.

However, as seen in Appendix A, I have succeeded in locating a sizeable number of Maya religious texts, many of which are manuscripts. Most of these texts are stored in the various archives of Merida and Campeche where they remain un- or miscataloged.

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25 Diego López de Cogolludo, Historia de Yucatán (Madrid: J. García Infanzón, 1688), 440.

As such many lay hidden. Indeed, the majority of the Maya religious texts appearing in this study were the result of a document-by-document search through endless *legajos*. In addition, early twentieth-century collectors have endowed various archives throughout the United States with random Maya religious texts. Princeton and Tulane University hold many unique manuscripts, as does the University of Pennsylvania. Research in these archives, supplemented with Matthew Restall’s own personal collection, resulted in the corpus of Maya religious texts employed in this dissertation.

Admittedly, many of the Maya texts are brief manuscripts on specific religious topics. Others were published after Independence. This imbalance of substantive, colonial Maya religious texts vis-à-vis those in Nahuatl, coupled with the diverse genres of religious texts, limits the comparative examination of Catholicism and its diverse conveyance in texts to certain doctrinal concepts. However, this imbalance fails to eliminate the possibility of significant comparisons and insights.

It would be a mistake to assume that indigenous texts represented the sole religious instruction for Nahuas and Mayas. The many undocumented sermons, conversations, and other mundane interactions between native and Church played a large role that eludes the archives. Also, I am aware that any religious text is susceptible to bias, particularly those intended for Spanish eyes, and care is taken throughout the work to indicate when such might be the case. Finally, similar to any participant of a history class who ultimately decides what he/she gleans from the course, so too each individual Nahua and Maya had the ultimate say in what Catholicism meant to them. The transformation of words on a page into beliefs of the heart remains difficult to document. Yet, as will be shown, native-authored religious texts do provide uncommon insights into
how Nahuas and Maya interpreted and applied Catholicism. In the end, even with such limitations, the present study aspires to provide a new appreciation for the various Catholicisms that leapt from the pages of Nahuatl and Maya ecclesiastical texts.
Chapter 2

Spelling Out Salvation

“The language…is nothing but a continuous use of metaphors.”

—Hernando Ruiz de Alarcón (1629)¹

The Spaniards made a mistake when they reached [Yucatan], for as they talked with the Indians of that coast, to all their questions the Indians answered: ‘tectetan, tectetan,’ which means: ‘I don’t understand you, I don’t understand you,’ and the Spaniards, not understanding what the Indians were saying said: ‘Yucatan is the name of this country.’

—fray Toribio de Motolinía (c. 1541)²

“When Francisco Hernández de Córdoba came to this country…[he] asked them how the land was theirs, they replied ‘ci uthan,’ meaning ‘they say it,’ and from that the Spaniards gave the name Yucatan.”

—fray Diego de Landa, (c. 1566)³

Translation is typically an arduous process subject to misunderstandings, revisions, and various interpretations. Yet it is a necessary process for any world religion taken out of its ancient cultural and linguistic context. Regarding Catholicism in Mesoamerica, before religious texts could be constructed ecclesiastics needed to convert the native languages into a Roman alphabetic script. Over the years, scholars of colonial Latin America have illustrated the pattern of Spaniards establishing their culture upon


preexisting indigenous frameworks that they gradually attempted to modify to meet colonial demands. The translation of Catholicism proved no exception. Certainly Catholicism strove to eliminate key features of precontact religious practices—such as human sacrifice—and certainly ecclesiastics derived their inspiration from European orthographers. However, Catholicism’s translation into indigenous languages depended on select preexisting indigenous worldviews, characters, and customs that the authors attempted to align with Christian concepts. In this process, features of Nahua and Maya cultures that were either similar or disparate to that of the Spaniards became key ingredients in the formation of the localized orthographies and vocabularies of New World Catholicisms.

This chapter’s first half examines the orthographies the early friars created for the Nahuatl and Yucatec Maya languages. Differences in the processes of creating these orthographies, their regional variations, and their evolution foreshadow similar distinctions between Nahua and Maya Catholicisms. Moreover, although scholars have examined Nahuatl religious vocabulary, Maya vocabulary remains neglected. Nor have scholars provided a comparison between the religious terms of both cultures. This chapter’s second half thus provides a unique examination of Maya religious vocabulary, while comparing the vocabulary employed in Nahuatl and Maya ecclesiastical texts. Such an examination and comparison reveals both the similarities and differences between how Nahuatl and

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5 For an example of this attempt to align indigenous concepts with Catholic doctrine see Schwaller, “The Ilhuica.”
Maya vocabulary both expressed Catholicism and related unique interpretations of the religion. Through their distinct orthographies and vocabularies, Nahuatl and Maya texts began the process of shaping various New-World versions of an Old World religion.

Creating Orthographies

The composition of religious texts in indigenous languages was a common tactic of many early-modern ecclesiastics throughout the world, both Catholic and Protestant. The New World was no exception. Preexisting systems of writing and oral tradition aided the native acceptance of alphabetic writing allowing ecclesiastics and/or their native aides to produce an extensive colonial corpus of doctrinal primers, sermons, catechisms, plays, testaments, and other religious texts written in the vernacular throughout Mesoamerica.

Nahuatl and Maya religious texts, with the exception of testaments, were didactic in nature, providing friars with the means of knowing how to preach Catholicism in the vernacular, and natives with the ability to receive the Christian message in their own

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languages. In short, these texts became an important medium through which native parishioners came to understand Catholicism in New Spain. The task of translating Catholic concepts into indigenous languages void of many such beliefs was, no doubt, daunting. Yet early friars were able to draw inspiration from European predecessors such as Antonio de Nebrija who produced the first grammar of the Castilian language in 1492.8

First, the Spanish clergy needed to learn the indigenous languages—a task at which only a few were truly successful. For example, in 1573 Andrés Mexía seems to have struggled with Yucatec Maya as his indigenous parishioners of Xecpedz complained that he said the masses “in a twisted fashion.”9 An eighteenth-century visita (ecclesiastic visit) to Mococha inquired after the ability of priests to adequately evangelize Mayas in their own language.10 And in 1782, the cabildo (town council) of Macanú mentioned in their visita record of the visiting bishop’s need for interpreter.11 To be sure, the indigenous interpreter was a common staple for most ecclesiastics throughout the colonial period.

Moreover, in the introduction to his Nahuatl/Spanish large confessional manual, fray Alonso de Molina, whom fray Martín de León claimed “was the first that gave light to the Mexican language and opened the door for other to learn it,” himself admitted the “obscurity and difficulty of the language of these natives whose manner of speaking is

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8 Sell, “Friars, Nahuas, and Books,” 36.


10 Visita Pastorales 1784, vol. 3, Archivo Histórico del Arzobispado de Yucatán [AHAY].

11 Visita Pastorales 1782, vol. 1, AHAY. The bishop being fray Luis de Piña y Mazo. Indeed, most visitas were conducted through the intérprete de visita, “visita interpreter”; Visita Pastorales 1782-1785, AHAY; Visita Pastorales, 1784, AHAY.
very different in many ways from our Castilian language and Latin.”

When trying to make sense of the Nahuatl phrases concerning precontact religion the priest Hernando Ruiz de Alarcón lamented that “the language…is nothing but a continuous use of metaphors.”

Regarding Yucatec Maya, Coronel—himself an instructor of the language—excuses any errors that might occur in his *Discur sos* “for there are many ways to speak in this language.”

While learning the languages, friars also began the production of the first religious texts: pictorial texts. Commonly referred to as testarians after fray Jacobo de Testera—who used such texts in his evangelization of the Nahua, Maya, and Otomi—these initial religious works employed pictures and images that translated into specific series of words or sounds to produce texts such as the Ten Commandments or Catholic prayers. Because pictorial writing existed among the natives before the arrival of the Spaniards, friars believed testarians would effectively serve to teach specific doctrine. Additionally, the Council of Trent surely influenced friars to adapt this tactic with its order that bishops use images to instruct the illiterate.

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Testarians played an important role in the early evangelization process, and evidence suggests that some continued to be used in peripheral areas well into the late eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{16} Fray Gerónimo de Mendieta describes how friars attempted to use images to phonetically spell out words, and Ricard states how early friars including Bernardino de Sahagún, Mendieta, Luis Caldera, and others employed images to supplement their sermons.\textsuperscript{17} Indeed, in 1524 fray Pedro de Gante composed a testarian to teach the \textit{Pater Noster}, \textit{Ave Maria} and the \textit{Credo}. As friars understood more and more of the native languages, strictly pictorial manuscripts gave way to alphabetic writing and/or began to include alphabetic writing by the 1540s.\textsuperscript{18} Today, only approximately 32 testarians exist.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{16} The Garrett Collection of Mesoamerican Manuscripts (C0744) [GCMM] contains two Testarian Otomí catechisms. Although both were likely copies of earlier works, the existing manuscripts date between 1775 and 1825. “Catecismo pictórico Otomí,” GCMM, no. 3a. Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library; Francisco Perez, “Catecismos pictóricos otomíes,” GCMM, no. 3b. Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.


\textsuperscript{18} Lockhart, \textit{The Nahuas}, 331.

After learning the languages, ecclesiastics then faced the daunting task of creating orthographies for indigenous languages that contained sound systems not represented by letters of the Roman alphabet. In Central Mexico, the first friar/grammarians, including Gante, Andrés de Olmos, Francisco Jiménez, and Molina, undertook the chore of reducing indigenous languages to the Roman alphabet and then teaching alphabetic writing to indigenous nobles in their own languages. The successful military campaign, general stability of the region, and Cortés’ endorsement of the friars provided the evangelization efforts of early friars in Central Mexico with sure footing.\(^\text{20}\)

The organization of this effort began with the arrival of the Twelve Franciscans in 1524, the Dominicans in 1526, and the Augustinians in 1533.\(^\text{21}\) Dictionaries and


\(^{21}\) These first Franciscans, or “Twelve Apostles,” represent the apocalyptic notions held by many of the initial friars that the evangelization of the New World played a key role in hastening the Second
grammars quickly appeared with Jiménez—one of the original Twelve—producing the first manuscript grammar,\textsuperscript{22} Olmos producing the same in 1547, and Molina publishing the first grammar in 1571.\textsuperscript{23} Prior to these works, however, Mendieta claims that approximately six months after their arrival, God had given the Franciscans the ability “to speak and be understood reasonably with the Indians.”\textsuperscript{24}

As in Central Mexico, the Franciscans dominated the early evangelization of the Yucatan. But in contrast to the central Mexican case, the early invasions, or \textit{entradas}, of Francisco de Montejo paid little attention to the conversion of the Maya. Indeed, Montejo disliked the presence of the Franciscans altogether.\textsuperscript{25} After the Queen complained about the matter, the Franciscan Testera and four assistants entered the Yucatan in the early 1530s armed with paintings and most likely testarians to convey something of Christianity.\textsuperscript{26}

However, unlike Central Mexico the conquest of the Yucatan was a protracted event of multiple entradas and this instability wreaked havoc on the early evangelization attempts of the friars. After subsequent entradas forced Testera and his companions to

\textsuperscript{22} Mendieta states the Jimenez produced the first grammar of Nahuatl although no copy exists. Mendieta, \textit{Historia eclesiástica}, vol. 2, 165.

\textsuperscript{23} Olmos’ grammar was later published in 1875 by Rémi Siméon as \textit{Grammaire de la langue nahuatl ou mexicaine}.

\textsuperscript{24} Mendieta, \textit{Historia eclesiástica}, vol. 1, 136.


abandon their mission, a second group of friars returned in 1537. Military campaigns forced these friars out also in 1539. Not until Spanish colonists of Merida complained to the Crown about the lack of friars and Montejo’s opposition to them did the Franciscans finally establish a consistent presence in the peninsula in 1545—four years after the final military entrada.27 Once there, the work of the Yucatecan Franciscans progressed slowly. By 1553, no more than thirty Franciscans inhabited the peninsula. And while Jiménez and Olmos had already produced their grammars, the Yucatecan friars struggled to meet the demands of up to 300,000 Maya living in over 200 pueblos.28

Despite these various setbacks early notarial documents dating to the 1550s and '60s indicate that friars soon developed an orthography and taught such to local natives.29 Fray Diego de Landa commented on the friars’ adept linguistic abilities, boasting, “The friars learned to read and write in the language of the Indians, which was so successfully reduced to a grammatical art that it could be studied like Latin.”30 By the mid 1500s, Maya dictionaries and grammars appeared. Among the first grammarians, fray Luis de Villalpando was perhaps the most famous. Of him Landa stated, “The one who succeeded the best [with Maya] was fray Luis de Villalpando, who commenced to learn it through signs and small stones; he reduced it to a certain form of grammar and wrote a


30 Landa, Yucatan, 29.
Christian catechism in the language.” Villalpando produced no extant printed works, but composed a grammar, *doctrina* (a book of Christian doctrine), and worked on a dictionary (later printed in 1571) before he died in 1551 or 1552. Landa, who took up Villalpando’s torch as the most expert in Maya, supposedly perfected Villalpando’s grammar with his own, but this manuscript is also lost. Fray Alonso de Solana and fray Antonio de Ciudad Real both composed manuscript grammars in the late sixteenth century, yet the first printed Maya grammar does not appear until fray Juan Coronel’s work in 1620, which was likely based on Villalpando’s earlier work. And in 1684, fray Gabriel de San Buenaventura produced a grammar strongly based on Coronel’s earlier work showing the persistence of the original orthography.

As is to be expected, the orthographies established by the early friars saw variations over time. Regional dialects and personal preferences surely affected the orthographies. For example, the 1645 grammar of Carochi used a complex system of diacritics to mark the glottal stop and vowel quantity of Nahuatl (although few outside

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33 Landa also produced a doctrina which is likewise lost, Tozzer, *Maya Grammar*, 196-7.


Carochi’s circle marked vowel quantity).\textsuperscript{36} For the Maya such a complex system did not arise until the work of fray Joaquin Ruz in the mid nineteenth century. Moreover, Gerónimo Tomás de Aquino Cortés y Zedeño comments how spoken Nahuatl varied “much in the accents according to the variation of places or of people, as occurs in Italian.”\textsuperscript{37} In Yucatan, fray Pedro Beltrán de Santa Rosa’s 1746 Maya grammar was the first to truly vary from existing works. This is not surprising when considering the later date of Beltrán’s work. Furthermore, the dialect of Merida, where Villalpando, Coronel, and San Buenaventura likely composed their work, differed from Teabo, where Beltrán wrote his grammar.\textsuperscript{38}

In general, orthographic variations were relatively small in printed religious texts exposed to the auspices and scrutiny of ecclesiastics and editors alike. However, for reasons more fully explained in the next chapter, unpublished texts and documents were vulnerable to much more variation. Unlike ecclesiastics who usually spelled words correctly, natives transferred what was spoken directly onto paper. For example, because \( n \) appears to have been Nahuatl’s weakest consonant, at times it is missing from syllable-final positions in printed texts leaving only \( y \), \( i \), or \( yua \) for \( yn \), \( in \), and \( yuan \). This omission becomes amplified in native-authored texts. The weak \( n \) does not appear in Maya texts. More common is the trend of native-authored Maya texts to omit the final syllables of various words likely to reflect their spoken, shortened versions.

\textsuperscript{36} Lockhart, \textit{Nahuatl as Written}, 104.

\textsuperscript{37} Gerónimo Tomás de Aquino Cortés y Zedeño, \textit{Arte, vocabulario, y confessionario en el idoma mexicano, como se usa en el obispado de gaudalaxara} (México: Imprenta del Colegio Real de San Ignacio de la puebla de Los Angeles, 1765), reproduced in \textit{Obras Clásicas sobre la Lengua Náhuatl}, vol. 8 of \textit{Fuentes lingüísticas indígenas}, compiled by Ascensión Hernández de León-Portilla, CD-ROM (Madrid: Fundación Histórica Tavera, 1999), preliminary leaf, unnumbered.

\textsuperscript{38} Brinton, \textit{Maya Chronicles}, 73-4; Tozzer, \textit{Maya Grammar}, 10-14.
Two Maya works poignantly demonstrate how native-authored texts varied according to spoken and preferential differences. In Beltrán’s 1757 *Doctrina christiana* we find the words *uaix*, “perhaps, or,” and *>abilah*, “gift or mercy.” Sometime in the same century, a Maya author created a copy (or the original) of Beltrán’s work that survives today in manuscript form. Yet in this manuscript, both words appear as *uais* and *>abilah*. The use of *x* or *s*, and the double-vowel, glottalized *aa* or *a*—both common variations—reflects the varying pronunciations of each term and the lack of a need for native authors to standardize spelling.

The spell-as-spoken nature of native authors is most evident, however, in their spelling of Spanish loanwords in their unpublished texts. The spelling of loanwords in most indigenous texts followed the respective language’s rules of pronunciation. Whenever a Spanish word contained a sound that did not exist in spoken Nahuatl or Maya, it was replaced with the closest familiar sound. In Nahuatl, the basis for substitution centered upon its lack of voiced stops, the fricative *f*, and the liquid *r*.

Although possessing more glottalized constructions, the Maya faced similar problems.

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39 Fray Pedro Beltrán de Santa Rosa María, *Declaracion de la doctrina christiana en el idioma yucateco* (México: Imprenta del Colegio Real y mas Antiguo de San Ildefonso, 1757), 1868 reproduction by Carl Hermann Berendt, University of Pennsylvania, Rare Books and Manuscript Library [UP-RBML], MS. Col. 700, item 21, 98. Beltrán first published his doctrina in 1740. It was reprinted in 1757 and 1816. Berendt places his copy of the 1757 edition of Beltrán’s doctrina within his reproduction of Beltrán’s *Novena de christo crucificado con otro oraciones en lengua maya* (1740), UP-RBML, Col. 700, item 21. Although a complete example of the novena fails to exist, when Beltrán offers up the work for approval to the bishop Francisco Matos Coronado, he mentions including corrections to Coronel’s doctrina (see Chapter 4). When Berendt made his copy of the doctrina, he omitted the corrections but mentioned their presence. Thus, it is likely that Beltrán’s novena included his doctrina; Berendt also posits such in his reproduction. Aside from Berendt’s reproduction of the work, today pieces of the novena can be found in the Centro de Apoyo a la Investigación Historica de Yucatán [CAIHY] SM-46 in photostat form; and in an online transcription of Berendt’s reproduction by David Bolles, [http://www.famsi.org/reports/96072/beltdoctorg.pdf](http://www.famsi.org/reports/96072/beltdoctorg.pdf).

40 “Doctrine and Confession,” Garrett-Gates Mesoamerican Manuscripts Collection (C0744) [GGMMC], no. 73b, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, unnumbered. The title of the manuscript erroneously interprets the catechistic questions of the doctrina as a confessional manual, but no such manual exists within the manuscript.
For the voiced $b$, $d$, and $g$, Nahuatl and Maya speakers pronounced the unvoiced $p$ or $u$, $t$, and $c$.

For example, one Nahuatl manuscript uses *cauallo* for “caballo,” and *tiaplos* and *diaplos* for “diablos.”

Similarly, the Maya testament of Miguel Tun contains *helusalem* for “Jerusalem,” *solalil* for “solar,” and *baca* for “vaca.”

Another Maya manuscript writes *Lusifere* for “Lucifer” and *franetasob* for “planetas,” and a notary from Cacalchen uses *canderas* for “candelas.”

Finally, native authors could also create their own abbreviations for words. In a pre-1560s Nahua manuscript relating the conversion of Paul, the Nahua author uses a symbol resembling @ for the word “auh,” and $e_\zeta$ for the word “yez.” These are a few of many examples that exist in manuscript works while the editorial process for printed texts purged them of such innovative creations. In the end, although derived from early sixteenth-century models, the orthographies found in unpublished religious texts betray the individual style of each author, *altepetl* (Nahua sociopolitical unit), and *cah* (Maya sociopolitical unit, plural *cahob*) in more evident ways than in published texts.

Like religion itself, languages and their orthographies and vocabularies never stand still. Over time, Nahuatl texts reflect different degrees of acculturation as a result

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42. MS 1692, The Schøyen Collection [SC], Oslo and London, 1, 3.


45. In 1882, Brinton mentioned such variation when discussing the Chilam Balams; Brinton, *Maya Chronicles*, 69-73. Since, various studies have examined these regional variations including Restall, *Maya World*, 302-3; and Knowlton, “Indigenous Language Ideologies.”
of interaction with the Spanish. Attempting to map the degree of Nahua-Spanish interactions through Nahuatl texts, James Lockhart identifies three stages of change. In Stage 1, roughly 1519-1550, with little sustained contact between individual Nahuas and individual Spaniards, Nahuatl hardly changed at all; Nahuas at times constructed new Nahuatl terms, often cumbersome and lengthy, that described Spanish introductions. In Stage 2, roughly 1550-1650, Nahuatl incorporated Spanish nouns as loanwords producing statements such as *mopenitencia*, “your penance.”46 The onset of Stage 2 reflects not only the growing Spanish presence, but also the generation of Nahuas who spent their formative years in the postcontact period. And in Stage 3, roughly 1650-present, with a growing number of bilingual Nahuas, Nahuatl borrowed other parts of speech, including verbs, and other Spanish conventions, such as Spanish derived phraseology.47 Thus, a Stage 3 text could contain *nicpresentaroa*, “I present it,” or a Spanish phrase in Nahuatl such as *amo çanyeyyo…no yuan*, “not only…but also.”48

Aquino Cortés y Zedeño provides an excellent example of a Stage 3 text. In his 1765 *Arte, vocabulario y confesionario*, Aquino Cortés y Zedeño states that in his works “you will not find those phrases that the ancient Ciceros of the Mexican language used, those who were the Carochis, the Antonio del Rincons, Vetancures, Guerras, and others…they drank, as is said, the water…when it was not far from its origin.” Aquino Cortés y Zedeño says that his work reflects the spoken language of his time, when

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46 Molina, *Confesionario mayor*, f. 9r.


centuries of Spanish/Nahua contact has joined “Mexican words with Castilian, or Mexicanizing Castilian [words] as it has Castilianized some Mexican [words].” Thus, Aquino Cortés y Zedeño—or his native assistant(s)—displays no qualms in including copious loanwords while omitting the / syllable to reflect the dialect of the region, Guadalajara. The result is a unique, and slightly annoying, Stage 3 Nahuatl. Observe the following question from his confessional manual; loanwords are underlined and omissions are indicated with brackets:

Quizá tienes mas cariño, y amor á alguna persona, ó algun Caballo, ó algun Perro, que á Dios?


Perhaps you have more affection and love for some person, or some horse, or some dog than God? 50

Although most ecclesiastics followed Aquino Cortés y Zedeño’s same belief that written Nahuatl should reflect the spoken dialect, others opposed the practice. Father Ignacio de Paredes stated in his Promptuario that he used only the most “pure” and “genuine” version of the language of the classic authors such as Molina, Carochi, and Bautista, and not language used in various parts that is “in reality barbarous.” 51

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49 Aquino Cortés y Zedeño, Arte, vocabulario, y confessionario, preliminary leaf, unnumbered.

50 Ibid., 134. English translation from the Nahuatl. Noteworthy is the author’s use of the Nahuatl verb pia “to guard, keep, control.” By the 1570s, this verb began to take the meaning of the Spanish tener, “to have,” and appears in phrases indicating possession as it has here. Also interesting is the author’s indigenous spelling of dog, “pelo” for “perro.” Either Aquino truly desired to have confessors speak as natives would speak, or native assistants composed the Nahuatl. My opinion resides on the latter.

51 Ignacio de Paredes, Promptuario manual mexicano (México: Bibliotheca mexicana, 1759), reproduced in Obras Clásicas sobre la Lengua Náhuatl, preliminary leaf, unnumbered. Barry Sell addresses the disparity between classical and post-classical authors of Nahuatl in his “Friars, Nahua, and Books,” 233-72.
Restall states that, “Whereas Nahuatl can be clearly seen evolving during the colonial period as a result of contact with Spanish…the impact of Spanish on Maya is not so obvious.” Due to their peripheral location and cultural characteristics, the Maya seem to have immediately reached Lockhart’s stage 2 and then remained there throughout the nineteenth century. Indeed, many if not all of the Maya religious texts, even those in the nineteenth century, demonstrate the persistence of Stage 2 among the Maya. Recent philological research also points to variation among the Nahuas reminding us that a static philological timeline for any language is impractical as it cannot account for local and regional nuances. Lockhart himself explains such variations in his stages through the role of the natives in dictating the process of their postcontact evolution.

In short, the different processes in the creation of Nahuatl and Maya orthographies, their variations within published and unpublished texts, their regional nuances, and their evolution over time all serve as a metaphor for the larger picture of Nahua and Maya Catholicisms. The temporal, regional, and authorial variations that appear in Nahuatl and Maya orthographies foreshadow those that appear in religious texts. Furthermore, the different paces at which Nahuatl and Maya evolved according to their exposure to Spaniards and their language similarly sets the pace for the evolution of the Catholic messages. Such foreshadowing continues with the ecclesiastical vocabulary of Nahuatl and Maya.

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Ecclesiastical Vocabularies

The difficulty in creating indigenous-language ecclesiastical texts lay not only in the creation of new orthographies, but also (and most especially) in translating Christian concepts into indigenous vocabularies lacking exact parallels. To overcome such difficulties, friars enlisted indigenous aides trained in alphabetic writing and Christian doctrine to help compose their texts. From the 1540s to 1578-79, the Franciscan Sahagún worked with a team of Nahuatl writers and informants to produce a survey of precontact Nahua civilization in twelve books known today as the Florentine Codex. To compose his Coloquios y Doctrina Cristiana in the 1560s, Sahagún similarly employed Nahua elders and aides, among whom he names Antonio Valeriano, Alonso Begerano, Martín Iacobita, and Andrés Leonardo.\(^{56}\) Indigenous aides also certainly contributed to Molina’s sixteenth-century works. Although Molina fails to mention his aides, fray Juan Bautista, a fellow author of Nahuatl texts in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, claims that the indigenous aide Hernando de Ribas, who also greatly contributed to Sahagún’s Florentine Codex, helped compose Molina’s grammar and dictionary.\(^{57}\)

Aside from their occasional mention in the texts themselves, frequent misspellings of Spanish loanwords, indigenous tropes, and above all the influence of precontact rhetoric and culture on ecclesiastical terms all betray the hands of indigenous aides. When translating Christianity into Nahuatl or Maya, native aides commonly relied on preexisting concepts or terms. For example, Nahuas usurped the epithets from a

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\(^{56}\) Bernardino de Sahagún, Coloquios y doctrina cristiana, ed. Miguel León-Portilla (México: Fundación de Investigaciones Sociales, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1986), 75.

variety of deities to translate the Catholic Dios. The advantages and disadvantages of such substitutions are discussed later on.

Other times, native aides coupled preexisting terms with those in Spanish to form semantic couplets. Semantic couplets consisted of a Spanish term coupled with a preexisting native term that helped “make sense” of the foreign word. Typically, after the meaning of the Spanish phrase had taken root, the native term would disappear leaving only the Spanish loanword. For example, in Molina’s large confessional manual he couples the Spanish penitencia, “penance,” with tlamaceualiztli, “the meriting of things.” Eventually, “penitiencia” would appear on its own.

However, this general trend of accommodation was not universal and depended on the native aide’s varying exposure to Spanish society and its religion. A corpus of testaments from the Toluca Valley in the eighteenth century typically translates anima, “soul,” with a Nahuatl couplet, “yn –yolia, yn –anima.” Furthermore, the Mayas’ position on the periphery of Central Mexico enabled semantic couplets to retain both indigenous and Spanish elements throughout the colonial period. Indeed, the couplet cilich nabil iglesia, “holy house, church” remains ubiquitous throughout Maya ecclesiastical texts and appears into the late eighteenth century and perhaps longer.

However, such couplets are more abundant in Nahuatl texts, for Maya texts display an overall reticence in employing Spanish loanwords.

58 Molina, Confesionario mayor, f. 16v.


60 See for example the 1760s testaments from Ixil in Restall’s, Ixil Testaments.
When no preexisting Nahuatl or Maya term adequately expressed a Catholic concept or practice, indigenous aides created one that described the appearance, manner of action, interaction, or function of the Catholic concept, thus creating vocabularies composed of descriptive nouns and verbs. For example, for the sacrament of Baptism Nahua scribes originally constructed the term *quaatequia*, “to pour water on one’s head,” and Maya scribes created variants of *oci ha tu pol*, “to enter water on his/her/its head.” The fact that much of the Nahuatl and Maya vocabulary for Catholic concepts either drew from indigenous antecedents and inspirations, or followed the pattern of describing the outer act of Catholic concepts suggests that a significant portion of ecclesiastical vocabulary was probably influenced and/or created by Nahua and Maya aides, not friars.

Moreover, indigenous aides consistently couched the contents of religious texts in native rhetoric. Before the Spaniards arrived, both Nahuas and Mayas augmented their various forms of writing with oral discourse and imagery. Indigenous aides continued this tradition within religious texts throughout the colonial period. These preexisting elements indigenous aides included influence the prose of the text. Such is seen when comparing the Spanish and Nahuatl translations of Alva’s bilingual large confessional manual. Although the Spanish text was written for a Nahua audience and thus engages aspects of its culture, the Nahuatl text includes additional indigenous elements.\(^\text{61}\)

**Spanish**

Listen attentively, all of you who say you are Christians, and note and take for a certainty how your mouth and belly cause your soul to be lost and cast it without forgiveness into hell…For how many sins will a drunkard, a man lacking good judgment, commit in a day? Consider him when he goes along those streets: there is no viper nor serpent so swollen and conceited, shooting arrows of venomous

poison at the honor of as many as he comes across, or like a dog rabidly going along hurting those whom it encounters; there is nothing which equals him in presumption and pride, now there is nothing but his guts and belly. He gives nothing of value to his soul.

Nahuatl

Listen, all of you who called yourselves Christians, your innards are putting your souls in great danger, for they are casting them down into hell and hurling them down [there] as from a height….Because how many things is the drunkard and the intoxicated person who is ignorant responsible for doing in a day? If he goes following along the road he excites and upsets himself like a snake, throwing up at and shooting poison at other people’s honor, or like a dog who goes repeatedly dragging his poisonous spittle down the entire street, there being nothing else as proud [or] excited as him. He shows no favor, has pity on no one, his mouth and his innards are all he pays close attention to and serves. With not one coin of little value, with not one cacao bean, does he favor his soul (emphasis mine).

The fall into hell from height reflects the Nahuas’ suspicion of the peripheries and the abnormal movement that occurs there; the inclusion of the cacao bean illustrates its precontact monetary use; and the metaphors and overall prose of the text all betray the hands of native aides fluent in Nahua culture.62

Another example comes from a Maya author trying to convey the shame in not trusting in God to care for the needs of His children. He writes, “Would a child of a batab, (Maya ruler) not shame his father if he went to beg alms house to house without wanting to ask from his father whatever is necessary for him?...So it would be and likewise shameful were you to rely on men…without wishing to ask from God whatever is necessary for you.”63 The Maya author, well versed in his own culture, understood that the disgraceful image of the son of a Maya noble begging in the streets would poignantly illustrate the shame in doubting God among a Maya audience.

62 For more on center and peripheries see Burkhart, Slippery Earth, 46-86.

Yet despite this large indigenous influence, the friars also contributed to the formation of ecclesiastical texts. Indeed, in 1614 León claimed full responsibility for his published Nahuatl sermons stating explicitly that he “did not trust the Indians to make them.”  

Despite León’s personal declaration, most ecclesiastics contributed to their texts through a supervisory or editorial role to their indigenous aides. When attempting to find indigenous counterparts for Catholic concepts, ecclesiastics (like their aides) commonly selected indigenous terms that appeared to run congruent to Christian ones. In some cases, the clergy purposefully used culturally- and religiously-charged indigenous terms within a Catholic context. In others, they were seemingly unaware or did not closely check the work of their native aides.

Either way, ecclesiastics—at times knowingly, at times unknowingly—allowed ecclesiastical texts to draw from preexisting frameworks and rhetoric to convey Catholicism. The following comparison of Nahuatl and Maya terms for “God,” “devil,” “hell,” “sin,” “soul,” and “saint” demonstrates how such frameworks shaped the translation of Catholicism within Nahua and Maya religious texts in both similar and disparate ways. Because excellent scholarship exists on many of the Nahuatl terms, those in Maya receive additional attention.

64 Léon, Primera parte, f. **.

65 Lockhart, The Nahuas, 335-45.
God

Teotl, “deity,” represented the Nahuas’ concept of divine beings. Early Spanish friars adopted the use of “teotl” for “Dios,” but usually augmented the phrase with particles. For example, Molina frequently employs the phrase ycel teotl dios, “one God, Dios.” Moreover, Ignacio de Paredes uses ce nelli teotl dios, “one true god, Dios,” while Gante frequently reversed the phrase to make ca nelli dios teotl, “our true Dios, God.” Burkhart explains, however, that a teotl derived from a pantheon of deities, some orderly, some mischievous and disorderly, and thus contradicts the Christian belief of a perfect God. In the end, Nahuatl religious texts increasingly abandoned the use of teotl for “deity” replacing it with the loanword “Dios,” although teotl continued to make sporadic appearances in nearly all colonial Nahuatl texts.

Because the friars believed all precontact deities and idols were creations of the devil, ecclesiastes disapproved of using a native deity to represent God. Thus, religious Nahuatl and Maya texts made ubiquitous use of the Spanish loanword “Dios.” Occasionally, as mentioned above, indigenous scribes translated “God” using the epithets and descriptions of precontact deities. Early on, Nahuas usurped the epithets from a variety of deities—Ometeotl, Tezcatlipoca, and Quetzalcoatl in particular — to

66 Its combined form teo- can mean fancy, large, holy, and so on; Lockhart, Nahuatl as Written, 234.

67 Molina, Confesionario mayor, f. 5v.

68 Paredes, Promptuario, 247; Léon, Sermonario, passim.

69 Burkhart, Slippery Earth, 124.


translate the Catholic god as *tloque nahuage*, “possessor of the near or close,” *ilhuicahua tlatlicpaeque*, “possessor of earth and heaven,” *tlachihualeh*, “possessor of that which is created,” and *teyocoyani*, “creator of people.” The particularly interesting title *centlatquiuhacatzintli*, “master of the owners of common property,” translates the omnipresence of God within Nahua concepts of ownership.

Most common, however, was the Nahuas’ use of *ipalnemohuani*, “the giver of life” appearing well into the seventeenth century in original works and later through reprints. This epithet belongs to creator deities including Tezcatlipoca and even Quetzalcoatl. An interesting association of the epithet with the Quetzal-bird occurs in a Nahuatl manuscript of Aesop’s fables. In the fable “The Quetzal-Bird and the Parrot,” different types of birds gathered to decide which bird should be their leader. The sixteenth-century Nahua author(s) described the avian supporters of the quetzal-bird as the *Quecholli* (birds with red plumage) of ipalnemohuani.

Similar to the Nahuas’ teotl, the Maya employed a standard term, *ku*, “deity or place to worship a deity.” In the Maya pantheon, “*ku*” is coupled with other words to represent the names of a variety of deities: Amaite Ku, (Corner God), Chikin Ku, (West God), U Hahab Ku, (Much Rain Maker God), Oxlahun ti Ku, (Thirteen-as-Deity), Bolon

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ti Ku, (Nine-as-Deity), and many others. However, in his 1688 Historia de Yucatan fray Diego López Cogolludo wrote that when the Maya employed “ku” alone, they were not invoking any god “of the kind the Gentiles vainly worshiped,” but the one true God. Whether this statement reflected the reality of the situation, or an image seen through a Christian looking glass, “ku” frequently appears in the Chilam Balams (Maya-authored texts combining Maya and European culture) and other early manuscripts, as representing both the Christian God and gods in general. For example, a sixteenth-century Maya manuscript speaks of San Joseph and “y ocol ku” (his faith in God), while encouraging idolaters to abandon their “pimtuba ku” (many gods). The interchangeability of “ku” in the manuscript no doubt created misunderstandings, or at the least ambiguities, between the Maya and Spanish ku.

Also similar to the Nahuatl teotl, the Maya ku increasingly became replaced with the loanword “Dios.” However, the phrase hahal dios, “true god,” seemingly became the standard name for God. Perhaps a carryover from the sixteenth-century Hahal Ku (discussed below), “hahal dios” frequently appears throughout all colonial Maya religious

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76 Cogolludo, Historia de Yucatán, 192.

77 For an excellent overview of the Chilam Balams see Knowlton, “Indigenous Language Ideologies,” 92-6. Also, Victoria Bricker and Helga-Maria Miram’s work An Encounter of Two Worlds: The Book of Chilam Balam of Kaua deftly exposes the influence of European works on the Maya that composed the Chilam Balam. See Victoria R. Bricker and Helga-Maria Miram, trans. ed., An Encounter of Two Worlds: The Book of Chilam Balam of Kaua (New Orleans: Middle American Research Institute, Tulane University, 2002).

texts. Indeed, in the recent Maya translation of the New Testament used by Yucatec Maya today, I have yet to find the loanword “Dios” without its preceding adjective “hahal.”\textsuperscript{79}

Whereas Central Mexican ecclesiastics found no evidence of a precontact belief in the Christian god convincing enough to portray God through that deity, Cogolludo claims that along with ku, the deity Hunab Ku (Unified God) also represented the Christian God. Cogolludo states:

The Indians of the Yucatan believe that there was one sole living and true god that they said to be the greatest of all gods, and that he lacked a form, nor could he appear for being incorporeal. They called him Hunab Ku, as is found in [its] large dictionary which begins with our Spanish. From him they said that all things proceeded, and as he was incorporeal, they did not worship him with any idol, nor did they have one of him…and [they said] that he had a son whom they called Hun Itzamna or Yaxcocahmut.\textsuperscript{80}

J. Eric S. Thompson notes that this statement derived from both the Motul dictionary—composed circa 1570s—and the Vienna dictionary (1670) which both contain similar statements. The Vienna dictionary also associates Hun Itzamna and Yaxcocahmut with Colop u Uich Kin (Tears our Sun’s Eye or Face). Thompson states, “the only possible deduction I can make is that Hunab Itzamna was the creator and that he was also known as Hunab Ku, Yaxcocahmut, and Colop u Uich Kin.” Furthermore, Thompson and the Maya scholar Ralph Roys both argue that although the deity Hunab Ku likely existed, even perhaps as an all-powerful god, his portrayal as the one, true god was likely a colonial distortion.\textsuperscript{81}

\textsuperscript{79} El nuevo testamento en maya de yucatán (México: Sociedades Bíblicas Unidas, 2004).

\textsuperscript{80} Cogolludo, Historia de Yucatán, 192.

\textsuperscript{81} Thompson, Maya Religion, 203-5.
The direct association of Hunab Ku with the Catholic god exists, but it varied among texts and over time. Indeed, Hunab Ku did not appear to become the Christian god until later in the colonial period. For example, the early passages of the native-authored Chilam Balam of Tizimin distinguish between the Spanish god, whom they called Hahal Ku (the True God) and the indigenous Hunab Ku. Later, the two merged into representing the same Christian deity. This is understandable when considering that these codices were written and rewritten over the years. Similarly, the Chilam Balam of Chumayel seemingly distinguishes between Hunab Ku and Hahal Ku with the latter arriving as the new god of the Christians, while other times conflating the two deities.

Even if Hunab Ku was indeed a colonial construction, Maya authors employed other deities from the Maya pantheon to represent God. In his comparison of the Chilam Balams of Chumayel and Tizimin and the Codice Pérez, Timothy Knowlton illustrates how the last two identify the deity Oxlahun ti ku (Thirteen-deity) as some variant of the Christian god. In general, these precontact representations of God lacked consistency and varied greatly throughout the texts illustrating a variety of individual Maya interpretations. All such instances of employing indigenous deities for God are unique to the Maya and occur in Maya-authored texts written without Spanish supervision that would have likely removed the unorthodox representations. That such

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82 Edmonson, *Tizimin*, 44.

83 Ibid., 144.

84 Munro S. Edmonson, *Heaven Born Mérida and Its Destiny: The Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), 73-7; see also Timothy Knowlton’s translation of manuscript pages 42.6-42.21 of the Chilam Balam of Chumayel in his “Dialogism in the Languages of Colonial Maya Creation Myths,” (Ph. D. diss., Tulane University, 2004), 51. For a few of many examples employing Hunab Ku see Edmonson, *Chumayel*, 73; Edmonson, *Tizimin*, 113, 144.

representations existed throughout various texts demonstrates the deviations inherent of peripheral locations with an insufficient Spanish presence.

Although precontact Maya deities were used to translate the foreign god, the use of various epithets seemed more common and even appears in early published texts. Maya authors attached the agentive prefix *ah* to terms that, from a Maya perspective, best represented “God.” For example, God became *ah sisah*, “the giver of life or birth.” In Maya creation myths, life began and continued on earth as a gift from the gods, thus making *ah sisah* seem an appropriate epithet. *Ah tepal*, “one who reigns, governs, is powerful, provides shelter,” translates “God” through the characteristics and responsibilities of precontact Maya rulers and, most likely, deities. Interestingly, this fluid term also appears in a Maya visita report from the cabildo of Maxcanú who employed “ah tepal” to refer to the King, and in an 1847 catechism referring to the angel Gabriel.

Finally, Maya authors translated the Spanish god with the term *ah chaabtah*, “he who generates, creates.” Interestingly, this term is an indigenous epithet for Hunab Itzamna—the creator god, supreme ruler of the sky, and one of the most important and

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powerful deities to the Maya. Maya epithets frequently appear throughout the colonial period. Indeed, a Maya redaction of the Passion of Christ composed in 1803 still referred to God as “ah tepal.” In the end, although making similar use of preexisting epithets and descriptions for rulers and deities, Nahuas and Mayas translated the Catholic god within existing frameworks specific to their culture. Moreover, in the Yucatan this foreign god occasionally appeared as preexisting Maya deities.

**The Devil**

Because the authors of religious texts viewed Nahua and Maya religion as the work of the devil, they had limitless precontact models from which to paint a portrait of the devil. Oftentimes, perhaps in a dual attempt to condemn precontact deities and place them within a Christian perspective, when speaking of past events or recounting histories, early ecclesiastical texts embodied the devil and his demons within preexisting deities. For example, in Central Mexico Bartolomé de Alva’s large confessional manual elucidates how devils took the forms of Tlalocan Tecuhtli (Tlaloc), Huitzilopochtli, and “others who went about lying to the ancients.”

Furthermore, in various publications Sahagún identifies the devil with Tezcatlipoca, “the mirror’s smoke.” In Nahua mythology, Tezcatlipoca, among other

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90 *Diccionario Maya*, 4th ed. (México: Editorial Porrúa, 2001), 120; Thompson, *Maya Religion*, 204. See also Knowlton’s discussion of these terms in his “Dialogism,” 133-4.

91 “Discourses on the Passion of Christ and other Texts,” GGMMC, no. 66.


things, was a cunning deity perhaps best known for his expulsion of Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl from Tula. Appearing in various guises and using deceit and trickery, Tezcatlipoca succeeded in overthrowing the more peaceful Quetzalcoatl.\textsuperscript{95} Seeing opportunity in aligning together the two deceiving figures of the devil and Tezcatlipoca, Sahagún and his aides employed Nahua culture to provide both Lucifer with a precontact embodiment, and an explanation for the “heathen” practices of Nahua natives.

Similarly, when speaking of the past, Yucatec friars and their scribes embodied the deceiving Christian devil within precontact deities. One Maya religious text employs the deity Hun Ahau “One Lord” to represent Lucifer as the source of false wisdom.\textsuperscript{96} Maya myths of the underworld, creation, and death make Hun Ahau an understandable choice. Associated with the day 1 Ahau, Mayas identified Hun Ahau with putrescence and the underworld—indeed his Popol Vuh alias, Hunahpu, literally means “one lord of putrescence.”\textsuperscript{97} Hun Ahau was one of the Hero Twins that descended into the underworld to play a ball game and undergo a variety of deadly ordeals. Through trickery, cunning, and deceit, Hun Ahau overcame the challenges—even death—to earn an elevated position among the underworld deities.\textsuperscript{98} Indeed, Landa states that Hun Ahau was the “prince of all the devils whom all obeyed” and the deity is listed in colonial


\textsuperscript{96} “The Morley Manuscript,” 125, as appears in Whalen, “An Annotated Translation.”

\textsuperscript{97} Taube, \textit{The Major Gods}, 116.

Maya dictionaries as “Lucifer.” Additionally, the *Ritual of the Bacabs* places Hun Ahau at the entrance to the underworld. The superior position of Hun Ahau among the gods of the underworld, his association with death and sacrifice, and his deceptive attributes made him appear to the authors a suitable candidate for the precontact embodiment of Lucifer.

When speaking of the colonial devil, however, ecclesiastical Nahuatl texts chose not to portray the devil as a deity, but rather as a shaman. Indeed, the overwhelming majority of Nahuatl texts used *tlacatecolotl*, “human owl,” as the most common synonym for both the devil, and his minions. In Nahuatl culture, tlacatecolotl was a shape changing shaman, not a deity, who took the form of an owl during his or her trances and who, while in this form, inflicted sickness and death on people at night.

The Yucatec situation was different. Maya ecclesiastical texts chose a deity, not a shaman, to represent the devil and his followers in the colonial world. The skeletal death god Cisin or “flatulent one” became the devil of the Yucatan. Cisin presided over the afterlife of the deceased and is often associated with the decay, filth, and stench of decomposition. In the codices he is represented as God A and is often portrayed with an exaggerated and prominent anus. Throughout the examined Maya religious texts, *cisin* and its plural *cisinob* consistently appear representing the devil and/or his minions. Similar to the translation of “God,” then, distinct preexisting indigenous frameworks translated the devil into Nahua- and Maya-oriented discourses.

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99 Landa, *Yucatan*, 58; *Diccionario Maya*, 245.
Hell

To translate “hell,” Nahua and Maya culture drew heavily upon their concept of the afterlife and descriptive terms. In the large confessional manual of Molina, Nahua scribes used the invented term *tlatlacoltecalco*, “in the sin oven,” to represent hell. Yet throughout all Nahuatl ecclesiastical texts *mictlan*, “place of /among the dead,” is the most common representation for “hell.” In Nahua culture, mictlan was the underworld where all, except a fortunate few, dwelled after death. Thus, the term did not unequivocally convey a “bad” place as does its Spanish counterpart.

Maya ecclesiastical texts also drew heavily upon preexisting culture to translate “hell” selecting to use *metnal*. Metnal was the underworld for the Yucatec Maya and although scholars have purported its etymological origins from the Nahuatl mictlan, my philological research suggests another option. According to modern Maya linguists, metnal originally derives from the Tzotzil word *metsel*, “to lie down,” and *nal*, “maize,” thus carrying a literal meaning of “maize lying down.” The Maya believed that the gods made humans out of maize, and contemporary Maya continue to perpetuate the human/maize connection. Similar to mictlan, metnal failed to unambiguously convey a “bad” place. Yet although “hell” for both Nahuas and Mayas became located among

103 Molina, *Confesionario mayor*, f. 4r.

104 Thompson, *Maya Religion*, 300.

105 Personal correspondence with Gaspar A. Cauich Ramirez, Secretario de la Academia Campechana de la lengua Maya, August 9, 2007.

the dead, the Maya translated the term through a localized creation myth to distinguish a place where bodies (maize) went upon death.\textsuperscript{107}

\section*{Sin}

The Nahuatl texts examined routinely use \textit{tlatlacolli}, “something spoiled, ruined, wrong, damaged or fault,” to represent sin, and \textit{itlacoa}, “to spoil, ruin, do something wrong, damage something” to represent the verb “to sin.” As Burkhart notes, tlatlacolli and itlacoa held a wide range of meaning in Nahua culture and largely represented any kind of mistake, error, or imbalance.\textsuperscript{108} Thinking they had found familiar precontact synonyms for the noun “sin” and the verb “to sin,” the authors adopted the Nahuatl terms and consistently used them in religious texts.

Throughout Maya texts, \textit{keban}, “something wrong or prohibited” consistently represents sin with \textit{sip} “to offend, err, fault” as the most common synonym for the verb “to sin.” The similarity of both Nahuatl and Maya terms for sin as common errors or faults is notable. However, within Maya culture sip also represents spirits and/or deities. The Cordemex dictionary states that sip are Maya deities of the hunt that protect deer from hunters.\textsuperscript{109} Sip can also be malevolent spirits in the form of the wind that attach themselves to people and can be removed with the branches of the \textit{siipche} tree.\textsuperscript{110}

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\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., 334. \\
\textsuperscript{108} Burkhart, \textit{Slippery Earth}, 28-34. \\
\textsuperscript{109} \textit{Diccionario Maya}, 730; Thompson, \textit{Maya Religion}, 308. \\
\textsuperscript{110} Personal correspondence with Gaspar A. Cauich Ramirez, August 9, 2007.
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The Soul

It appears that most Central Mexican religious texts hesitated in using a precontact synonym for this central concept of Christianity. Indeed, when writing of the soul most Nahuatl texts strictly used the Spanish loanword *anima*. However, select texts chose to tap into Nahua culture to employ indigenous synonyms. López Austin argues for three Nahua concepts of the soul.\(^{111}\) One is *ihiyotl* “breath,” which represented an animistic matter centered in the liver that the gods breathed into a person at birth. Another is *tonalli*, “irradiation, solar heat, day, personal fate or day sign,” which originates from the word *tona*, “to irradiate, make warmth or sun.” Nahuas believed that upon creation, the creator deity Ometeotl breathed into the embryo his/her tonalli that determined the child’s personality and destiny. Located in the forehead, one’s tonalli increased throughout life according to his/her experiences. Although Sahagún’s Nahuatl author(s) glossed tonalli as “soul by which we live” in the trilingual vocabulary that accompanies his *Evangeliarium*, such a heretical association of the soul with precontact concepts of predestination contributed to the scant use of the term for the Christian “soul.”\(^{112}\)

The third concept of the soul, and the Nahuatl synonym used for the Catholic “soul,” is *teyolia*, “one’s means of living,” from the verb *yoli*, “to live.”\(^{113}\) Everything in

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\(^{112}\) Burkhart, “Sahagún’s Colloquios,” 72.

\(^{113}\) See for example fray Domingo de la Anunciación, *Doctrina cristiana breve y compendiosa por vía de dialogo entre un maestro y un discípulo* (México: Pedro Ocharte, 1565), ff. 24v, 25r, 29r.
the Nahua universe—humans, animals, lakes, mountains, and so on—had a –yolia.114 The teyolia resided in the heart, yolollol, and could be negatively and positively affected through one’s acts, misdeeds, or illnesses. Teyolia’s root yol, meaning volition or emotion, serves as the root of many other Nahuatl words associated with the Catholic soul: vitality, knowledge, consciousness, imagination, reason, will, feelings, and emotions.115 In addition, after death one’s –yolia would continue into the afterlife. All these aspects, no doubt, made teyolia an appealing translation for “soul” to the authors of ecclesiastical Nahuatl texts who possibly even engineered the term.

Throughout Nahuatl religious texts teyolia appears as the overwhelmingly popular choice for “soul.” However, rarely does the term appear alone or in later Nahuatl texts. Indeed, the most common use of the word occurs in the semantic couplet in teyolia in anima. Moreover, despite teyolia’s association with the “soul,” the undoubtedly most common word for “soul” was the Spanish loanword anima. The loan appears ubiquitously throughout Nahuatl religious texts and was likely an everyday term used among Nahuas by the end of the sixteenth century.116

Somewhat similar concepts of the “soul” exist in Maya culture. Cuxtal, from the verb cux, “to live,” occasionally appears in Maya texts representing the “soul,” but was likely the creation of colonial authors.117 However, precontact Maya culture did believe

114 Carrasco, Religions of Mesoamerica, 69-70.
117 This also gives credence to the possibility that teyolia, which derived from the Nahua verb “to live,” was similarly a colonial creation.
that everyone had a *pixan*, “essence,” that grew as one gained experience in life. For example, a child could be referred to as *chan pixan*, “small essence.” Furthermore, the Maya believed that everyone had a *wol*, “spirit.” The *wol* originated from Hunab Itzamna and continued to exist after death in *metnal*. Similar to *teyolia*, the *wol* also resided in the heart and its root, *ol*, served as the root of many other words associated with the Catholic soul.  

Following a Central Mexican pattern, then, Maya authors would have appropriated *wol* or even *cuxtal* as the synonym for “soul.” However, *pixan* became the popular selection in Maya ecclesiastical texts likely due to its strong precontact origins. Also unlike Nahuatl texts, Maya texts did not hesitate to abandon the loanword *anima* for its translated counterpart *pixan*. Indeed, outside the formulaic structure of testaments, *anima* is hardly seen within Maya religious texts although *pixan* is more than commonplace. Again, this significant difference is likely associated with the peripheral nature of the Yucatan and sparse Spanish presence that allowed *pixan* to largely continue throughout the colonial period without replacement.

**Saint**

The Spanish loanword *santo* consistently appears in ecclesiastical Nahuatl texts representing the household saint, and the adjective “holy,” while *San/Santa* is employed

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119 Interestingly, the residence of the *teyolia* and *wol* in the heart mirrored medieval Christian thinking that argued that the better instincts of the soul were located in the thoracic cavity.
when referencing the saints’ names. Perhaps the most deviation occurs in reference to household saints. In most Nahuatl texts, household saints appear as “santos.” Yet Nahuas also employed *ixiptlatl*, “image, representative, replacement,” as a translation for the Spanish *imagen*, “image.” Although the Spanish imagen eventually dominated, variants of ixiptlatl continued to appear as late as the 1790s in certain areas such as Metepec. Other creative terms also existed. For example, a 1661 Nahua testator from Coyoacan referred to her saints as *ipilotzintzihua dios*, “children of God.” “Santo” also appears to serve similar functions in Yucatan. However, in many instances Maya religious texts elucidate the term “saint” with the phrase “*ah/ix bolon pixan*.” Indeed, when speaking of saints—both household figures and those in heaven—Maya texts often refer to the saint as *ah/ix bolon pixan*, “he/she of the many/great/nine spirits/essence,” as in *ah bolon pixan San Bernarbe.* Because colonial dictionaries translate “*ah/ix bolon pixan*” to mean “blessed, or one who is blessed” many excellent scholars translate the phrase as such.

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121 Personal correspondence with Caterina Pizzigoni, November 6, 2007.


123 Restall, *Ixil Testaments*, 177; Francisco Eugenio Domínguez y Argáiz, *Pláticas de los principales mysterios de nvestra Sª fee*...(México: Colegio de S. Ildefonso, 1758), f. 2r.

124 For a recent example, see Victoria R. Bricker and Rebecca E. Hill, “Climatic Signatures in Yucatecan Wills and Death Records,” *Ethnohistory* 56, no. 2 (Spring, 2009): 258. Although the authors do concede the literal translation of “nine souls.”
While I agree the phrase carries the meaning of “blessed,” it is curious that authors failed to use instead the more common word for “blessed,” *pixanil*. Indeed, *pixanil* appears the adjective of choice throughout Maya religious texts. Yet when referring to saints, in nearly every circumstance “ah/ix bolon pixan” appears or nothing at all. For example, the standard preamble for Cacalchen testaments invoke the Trinity and the name of “*ix bolon pixan ca cilich coel ti çuhuy S’a m’*” (“blessed” our holy lady the virgin Saint Mary,” while just a few lines below the testator asks “*ca yumil pixanilob ti padresob*” (our fathers, the blessed padres) for a mass.125 Why not use *pixanil* for Mary?

I argue that ah/ix bolon pixan was used not as an adjective, but a noun to convey the title of “Blessed”—a title given to saints during the canonization process.126 Evidence suggests that the “ah bolon” construction had precontact origins and described various demigods, which Thompson named “lesser gods,” that certainly shared similar attributes to saintly figures with the titles of “Blessed.”127 Thompson describes these deities as those commonly associated with mundane tasks such as hunting, selling, traveling, and so on. Moreover, the *Ritual of the Bacabs* describes similar deities within its incantations,128 a portion of which deities contain the “ah bolon” phrase such as *ah*

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125 LC, 27. Note that the agentive prefix is gender-specific: “ah” for males, and “ix” for females as shown above. The use of the agentive “ix” for Mary appears throughout Maya religious texts.

126 I thank Matthew Restall, Victoria Bricker, and Timothy Knowlton for their input on the matter. However, the interpretations here reflect my own opinions and not necessarily those of these excellent scholars.


bolon yocte, “he of many strides,” while others simply contain the “bolon” prefix such as bolon hobon “many colors” or bolon choch “many releases.”

Likely augmented with pixan in the colonial period, ah/ix bolon pixan routinely preceded the names of saints indicating a continuation of the “ah bolon” concept. The ability for ah/ix bolon pixan to indicate a saint’s heightened spirituality is indicated by the phrase’s alternate translation “he/she of the nine souls, or the nine-souled.” Nine was a significant number throughout Mesoamerica. Not only did it represent the layers of the Nahua and Maya underworld, but also has significance in numerous Maya incantations and rituals. Although associated with the underworld, it would not be a far stretch for the Maya to view saints as “nine-souled.” The alternate translation of bolon as “many” also conveys a similar superior spirituality.

The precontact antecedent seemingly paired well with a saint’s title of “Blessed” as it appears repeatedly throughout colonial texts. One of many examples is found in a manuscript collection of Maya prayers from Teabo. The prayers routinely employ ah/ix bolon pixan when introducing such figures as San Joseph, San Joachin, Santa Maria, and other saints. In addition, a sixteenth-century Maya religious manuscript demonstrates the intimate relationship of ah/ix bolon pixan with saintly figures. Discussing the reward of those obtaining divine wisdom, the manuscript states that “bin ococob tah bolon

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129 Ibid., 144; Thompson, *Maya Religion*, 320-22.

130 For example, see Thompson, *Maya Religion*, 280-1, 116, 147, 173-4, 181, 195, 261.

131 “Yucatec Prayers,” GGMMC, no. 71. Interestingly, in one instance “ah bolon pixan” is extended beyond saints to appear before the names of biblical figures such as David or Tobit. This likely a simple mistake of the Maya author who equated such biblical figures as saints. “The Morley Manuscript,” 75, as appears in Whalen, “An Annotated Translation.”
“pixanil” (they will enter into sainthood). In this light, then, a 1769 land sale from La Mejorada, a cah-barrio (cahob Spaniards viewed as suburbs) of Merida, locates the bill of sale as occurring in the “cahil ca yumilan San minguel ahcangel ah bolon pixan” (cah of our lord San Miguel archangel, the nine-souled), while the cabildo of Maxcanú refers to their patron saint as “ah bolon pixan San Miguel” (he of the nine souls, San Miguel).

Because the term more frequently appears in Maya-authored texts well into the nineteenth century and seldom appears in printed texts, ah/ix bolon pixan reflects the preferences of Maya authors and their influence on shaping ecclesiastical vocabulary. For Maya authors, saints and other religiously superior figures fit well into the ah bolon pantheon of minor deities. Nahua and Maya religious texts, then, frequently translated “saint” according to preexisting cultural frameworks that allowed for unique and differing concepts, and thus Catholicisms.

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133 Archivo Notarial del Estado de Yucatán [ANEY], 1814i, f. 76r. For more on the cah-barrio see Restall, Maya World, 29.


135 “Passion of Christ,” GGMMC, no. 66. One notable exception of a printed work containing “ah bolon pixan” is Beltrán’s Novena which records a Maya prayer to ix bolon pixan Santa Rosa Maria. Fray Pedro Beltrán de Santa Rosa, Novena de christo crucificado con otro oraciones en lengua maya (México: don Francisco de Xavier Sanchez, 1740), photostat reproduction, CAHY SM-46.
Conclusion

The formation of orthographies and vocabularies was a necessary precedent to indigenous-language religious texts. Ecclesiastic linguists and native assistants created orthographies and vocabularies specific to Nahua and Maya culture. The diverse development and change to Nahua and Maya orthographies reflects the larger religious picture of Nahua and Maya evangelization. Generally speaking, early support and Spanish inhabitation of Central Mexico allowed for a quick start to the evangelization process that adopted Spanish society at a faster pace than the rest of Mesoamerica. In contrast, the inconsistent support and minimum Spanish presence in the Yucatan delayed Catholicism’s spread and initiated what would be a slower absorption of Spanish society and its religion. Yet both regions experienced authorial and regional orthographic distinctions that parallel those doctrinal and instructional in religious texts.

Ecclesiastics and their native assistants frequently employed preexisting indigenous beliefs to familiarize unfamiliar Christian concepts. The cultural interpretation of the Christian message became essential in the process of translation. This resulted in the creation of religious vocabularies that carried culturally-specific meanings. Simply put, the translated Catholic message for the Nahuas was not the same as the one for the Mayas. The above comparison of vocabulary demonstrates how distinct characteristics of Nahua and Maya culture shaped the translation of Catholicism. Indeed, although the colonial Church in Central Mexico and the Yucatan shared many general characteristics, nuances between Nahua and Maya beliefs created branches of Catholicism individually tailored to fit the needs of each culture.

Thus, before the first religious texts even left the press, the diversification of Catholicism had begun. Cultural diversification had unavoidably occurred with the creation of religious vocabulary. The diversification of Catholicism would only continue, not just along cultural lines between Nahuatl and Maya texts, but intraculturally between texts of the same language. Now that friars, Nahuas, and Mayas had successfully created orthographies and vocabularies from which to write Nahuatl and Maya religious texts, they faced the challenge of how to compose such doctrinal treatises.
Chapter 3

The Pen is Mightier than the Sword

“[I]t would be a convenient thing to order that [Molina’s doctrina] be used in all [regions] which use the Mexican language…to avoid confusion and diversity of doctrines for this thing above all others requires unity and conformity.”

—Codice Franciscano (1570)

The production of religious texts certainly did not begin in the New World. Indeed, every genre of religious text published in the New World had a European counterpart. Today, Spain’s Biblioteca Nacional houses thousands of colonial religious texts. Indeed, from 1500 to 1670, more than half of all books printed in Spain concerned religion. Such texts are the result of a variety of circumstances that included the invention of the printing press, the Renaissance-driven desire for reform epitomized by such figures as Erasmus, and the Reformation. The result was a sea of religious works each with its own interpretation of Catholicism and its own audience.

Demand for works in the vernacular allowed the contemporary translation of many texts including works from the Middle Ages, hagiographies, doctrinal treatises, and biblical exegesis. Some texts, such as the Council of Trent’s 1566 Catechismus Romanus, emerged as the papally sanctioned version of Catholicism. Yet this text took over 200 years to finally appear in Castilian, and in the meantime, other more local

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1 Joaquín García Icazbalceta, Códice Franciscano, vol. 2 of Nueva colección de documentos para la historia de México (México: 1886; reprint, Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint, 1971), 60 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

2 Hsia, Catholic Renewal, 52.

versions began to appear such as Gerónimo de Ripalda’s famous 1591 *Doctrina christiana*.4 This frenzy of publication also inspired Castilian translations of works in other languages such as Luis de Vega’s translation of Santo Roberto Bellarmino’s 1750 Italian *Declaración copiosa de la doctrina christiana: para instruir los idiotas, y niños en las cosas de nuestra santa fé cathólica* or don Miguel Ramon Linacero’s translation of Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont’s 1773 French *Conversaciones familiares de doctrina christiana entre gentes del campo, artesanos, criados y pobres*.5 These works illustrate the role of social status in determining the form of Catholicism delivered. Fray Juan de Pineda makes such a distinction clear in his 1589 work *Diálogos familiares de la agricultura cristiana*. Segmenting Spanish society into farmers, artisans, men of war, scholars, courtiers, and clerics he states, “Each of these estates requires a belief that is different from the others.”6

Thus, each European religious text represented a specific interpretation of Catholicism and how it should be conveyed producing a multifaceted Catholicism before the religion even crossed the Atlantic. The number of texts suggests dissatisfaction with previous editions and a desire to somehow write a more useful and/or correct version for either a local or regional audience. As Pineda demonstrates, ecclesiastics understood that


5 Santo Roberto Bellarmino, *Declaración copiosa de la doctrina christiana*…, trans. Luis de Vega (Madrid: A costa de la Hermandad de S. Juan Evangelista, de Impressores de Libros, 1750); Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont, *Conversaciones familiares de doctrina christiana entre gentes del campo, artesanos, criados y pobres*…(Madrid: En la Of. de D. Manuel Martín, MDCCLXXIII (1773)).

6 Hsia, *Catholic Renewal*, 53.
these texts presented distinct versions of Catholicism. When speaking of the diverse interpretations of the past that Nahua pictorial codices offered, an unknown author stated in 1532 that such diversity should not cause Spaniards to marvel, “for we see in our Spain printed books from learned Catholic men that are contradictory, and even in the lives of saints.”

This strong European tradition of text production and its role in the diversification of Catholicism journeyed to the New World via ecclesiastics who, after developing the proper orthographies, wasted no time in publishing their versions of Catholicism.

Collaborating with indigenous scribes Spanish missionaries produced a wealth of ecclesiastical texts meant to provide both teacher and native pupil with a translation of Catholic doctrine in the native languages. Didactic religious texts played an essential role in evangelization and dominated the printing press in the New World to produce catechisms, plays, sermons, confessional manuals, and so on. This chapter provides an overview of the authors of Nahuatl and Maya religious texts and the various works they published. It separates native-language religious texts into three general categories and discusses the characteristics of each. In the process, the following illustrates how despite the Church’s efforts to generate and maintain an orthodox, uniform message, ecclesiastical texts produced a variety of interpretations of Catholicism and its rituals.

This chapter also provides a unique glimpse into the role of indigenous religious stewards in both the production and use of religious texts, particularly those unpublished.

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7 P. Mariano Cuevas, Historia de la iglesia en Mexico, vol. 1, Libro preliminar: estado del pais de Anahuac antes de su evangelizacion, y Libro primero: origenes de la eglesia en Nueva España 1511-1548, 3d ed. (El Paso, TX: Editorial “Revista Catolica,” 1928), 466. The quote derives from the “Libro de oro y tesoro indico,” of García Icazbalceta’s collection which contains a variety of early sixteenth-century documents now housed in the Latin American Library of the University of Texas, Austin.

8 Sell, “Friars, Nahuas, and Books,” 4-11.
Although the frontispieces commonly only listed a Spanish religious author, native ghostwriters haunt nearly every word of religious texts. In the end, the following allows a clearer understanding of indigenous-language religious texts, their authors, and their role in the evangelization and diversification of Catholicism in the New World. For the missionaries and natives of colonial Mesoamerica engaged in evangelization, the pen was truly mightier than the sword.

Printing Catholicisms: Category 1 Texts

Category 1 texts are printed religious texts written by ecclesiastic authors and/or their indigenous aides for a broad readership of both ecclesiastic and native populations. They experienced the highest degree of censorship and diversified the Catholic message through the various messages they produced. Understanding why such texts were written, who wrote them, and what they contained is essential to understanding colonial religion in Mesoamerica.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Spanish missionaries relied on their indigenous aides to help them produce didactic religious texts in the vernacular. Upon their arrival, Franciscans used their churches and convents as informal boarding schools for noble indigenous youth. Their purpose was twofold: to learn the native languages, and to train native assistants that could assist them in their evangelization, composition of religious texts, and eventually enter into the priesthood. The aptitude of the natives to learn to read and write in Spanish, Latin, and their native languages impressed and encouraged many friars. Queen Isabella even expressed her admiration and appreciation
of the friars’ successful work. Although clandestine idolatry and social barriers would later end the early hope for an indigenous clergy, various impromptu schools became colleges starting in 1536 with the Colegio de Santa Cruz in Tlatelolco, the New World’s first college.10

Such schools also appeared in Yucatan, specifically Campeche and Merida, then branched out into Mani and Izamal. Both Mani and Izamal were territories of the Xiu and Chel respectively who were allies to the Spaniards. A 1700 census of Yucatecan tributaries states that its numbers fail to include “young Indians…that since a young age spend every day in school where the ministers teach them…the Christian doctrine with questions and answers about the articles of the faith.”11 The church typically served as the schoolhouse with the idea that the youth would gather there daily for instruction. When speaking of the efforts of the preachers and their native assistants in preventing spiritual backsliding, Cogolludo states that such religious leaders “institut[ed] that all the boys and girls of the towns go on the weekdays to the church where they are taught prayers and Christian doctrine.”12

The major work that occurred in these colleges was the translation and composition of indigenous-language religious texts. Native aides trained in Catholicism

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9 Archivo General de las Indias [AGI], Mexico, 1088, L. 3, ff. 4r-6v.


11 AGI, Mexico, 1035.

12 Cogolludo, Historia de Yucatán, 229. Such schools also occurred in other regions of the world, for example, in India. See Ines Zupanov, “Language and Culture of the Jesuit Early Modernity in India,” Itinerario XXXI, no. 2 (2007): 2-5.
and writing played an essential role. Consider Sahagún’s remarks concerning Nahua aides: “And they, being knowledgeable in the Latin language, inform us of the properties of the words, the properties of their manner of speech. And they correct for us the incongruities we express in the sermons or write in the catechisms.” Yet the lines distinguishing who contributed what to ecclesiastical texts oftentimes remain obscured. As religious authorities became wary of “indigenous influences” in ecclesiastical texts they increasingly omitted any mention of their indigenous aides. Indeed, due to the doctrinal errors ecclesiastics saw in the translation work of natives, the First Mexican Provincial Council of 1555 prohibited natives from translating sermons unless the sermons were given to knowledgeable natives and subsequently proofread by the friar or minister who gave it to them.

Translated religious texts destined for publication had even more restrictions. The Council of 1555 declared, “From experience, we know how many times errors are caused and introduced among Christians by bad and suspicious Doctrinas de libros that are printed and published.” Thus, the Council ordered that all printed material be approved “by us or by the diocesan.” Such approbations particularly included “catechisms put in

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14 Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, Florentine Codex: General History of the Things of New Spain, part 1, Introductions and Indices, ed. and trans. Arthur J.O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble (Santa Fe, New Mexico and Salt Lake City: School of American Research and University of Utah, 1982), 83-4.


16 Lorenzana, Concilios provinciales, 149. This restriction also applied to printers and book vendors who similarly needed the necessary civil and ecclesiastic approvals, AGI, Mexico, 2711; AGI, Indiferente, 1655.
the native languages of the Indians, to make them...avoid any equivocation in that which
interests...the spiritual health of the faithful and neophytes of theses dominions.” These
orders merely reflect the already extant publishing procedure established in Spain
requiring the approval of the civil and religious authorities.\(^\text{17}\)

Thus, Category 1 texts published after the Council of 1555 dedicate numerous
introductory pages to the endorsements of fellow clergymen expert in the language—
often titled *Examinador de lengua Mexicana* or *Yucateco*\(^\text{19}\)—and flowery praise to the
ecclesiastic hierarchy for allowing such a publication to occur including the viceroy and
archbishop or their deputies.\(^\text{20}\) For example, following the requirement to have all
religious works approved before publication, don Francisco Eugenio Domínguez y
Argáiz submitted his Maya *Pláticas de los principales misterios de nuestra santa fee* to
the archbishop fray Ignacio de Padilla y Estrada for approval on July 30, 1757. The
bishop sent the work to the prebendary of Merida’s Cathedral, Augustín Francisco de
Echano, who endorsed the work on August 8\(^\text{th}\), and to the curate of the San Cristobal

\(^{17}\) AGI, Mexico, 2711.

\(^{18}\) Sell, “Friars, Nahuas, and Books,” 58-9. All religious works, whether in Castilian or indigenous
languages, were subject to scrutiny and the Inquisition. Spain’s archives contain many examples of the
editorial process concerning Castilian works. See AGI, Indiferente, 1655.

\(^{19}\) Various self-promoting works (*relacion de meritos y servicios*) from such examiners of
indigenous-language texts are found scattered throughout the archives. See, for example, AGI, Indiferente,
194, 196.

\(^{20}\) Earlier works such as Gante’s c.1547 *Doctrina* and a 1548 Dominican *Doctrina* lack such
introductory matter, thus emphasizing the effect of the 1555 Council. See fray Pedro de Gante, *Doctrina
chistiana en lengua Mexicana* (1553), with a critical study by Ernesto de la Torre Villar (México: Centro
de Estudios Históricos Fray Bernardino de Sahagúín, 1981); *Doctrina Cristiana en lengua española y
mexicana por los religiosos de la Orden de Santo Domingo. Obra impresa en México por Juan Pablos en
1548 y ahora edidata en facsimile*, vol. 1 of Colección de Incunables Americanos (Madrid: Ediciones
Cultura Hispánica, 1944).
parish, Díego Antonio de Lorra, who approved the work on August 11th. In light of such approbations, the archbishop licensed the work for publication on August 17th.\textsuperscript{21}

However, rarely do Category 1 texts mention the role of native assistants in such preliminary pages. This lack of recognition reflects merely the Spanish author’s attempt to facilitate the approbation of his work. Indeed, despite both the 1555 decree and the editorial rigors of publication, friars continued to use native ghostwriters.\textsuperscript{22} From examples already seen in Chapter 2 and from those extant throughout this study, it seems reasonable to argue that although we might reference works as “Sahagún’s sermons” or “Molina’s confessional manual,” rarely are the accredited Spanish composers the sole authors.

The presence of indigenous assistants was not the only potential hiccup in the editorial process. The approving licenses of ecclesiastics also occasionally fell subject to debt patronage, prejudice, and/or other personal opinions. Certainly it was no coincidence that the Franciscan Molina approved the Dominican Anunciación’s 1565 doctrina, and Anunciación approved Molina’s 1565 confessional manuals and his 1571 grammar.\textsuperscript{23} This arrangement particularly benefitted Molina whose Dominican-authored licensees likely aided in receiving the necessary approval of the archbishop at the time: the Dominican fray Alonso de Montúfar.

\textsuperscript{21} Domínguez y Argáiz, \textit{Pláticas}, preliminary leaf, unnumbered. Many approbations contain elements similar to Jacinto de la Serna’s approval of Bartolomé de Alva’s 1634 confessional manual in which he states, “[T]here is nothing in it that contradicts our holy Catholic faith and good instruction….As much for the superiority in the language as for experience as a minister with which [Alva] writes, [the manuals] would be of great service to our Lord.” Alva, \textit{Guide to Confession}, 56. Translation courtesy of Sell and Schwaller.

\textsuperscript{22} Sell, “Friars, Nahuas, and Books,” 120-1. For a discussion on the degree of Spanish supervision and inspiration, see Lockhart, \textit{The Nahuas}, 402-3.

\textsuperscript{23} Sell, “Friars, Nahuas, and Books,” 59.
Other times, individual personalities seemingly affected the editorial process. In his 1836 review of the Franciscan Joaquin Ruz’ Maya collection of sermons, the priest José Gregorio Canto stated the work’s words were “poorly written, neither does the translation [Ruz] has given conform to the present time, and that publishing it to distribute it in all the towns could result in a great disorder in varying the style and mode that their inhabitants use.” Canto fails to provide specific examples to support his opinion and justifies his returning of the work “without a single note” due to his age and reoccurring illness.\(^\text{24}\) In his defense of such censure, Ruz asks the bishop of Yucatan, José María Guerra y Rodríguez Correa, to send the work to other ecclesiastics “less occupied.”

Canto’s seemingly caustic and obtuse disposition is supported by other colonial characters. Among the Maya of Bolompoche, Canto acquired a poor reputation of having beaten 16 people, including an ex-batab.\(^\text{25}\) Among his ecclesiastic peers, Canto’s opinion of Ruz’ work caused a subsequent reader to be “very embarrassed.”\(^\text{26}\) In the end, the subsequent readers and the bishop of the Yucatan judged Cantos’ comments to be either erroneous or biased or both as Ruz gained—albeit ten years later—all necessary licenses for publication.

Although the printing press attempted to regulate the religious message produced in New Spain, ecclesiastics soon realized that it could also generate various messages that would prevent a unified or common religion. Spain informed the world of her concern with orthodoxy through the expulsion of the Jews in 1492, the Inquisition, and her

\(^{24}\) Fray Joaquin Ruz, *Coleccion de sermones para los domingo de todo el ano, y cuaresma* (Mérida: José D. Espinosa, 1846), 3-4.

\(^{25}\) Restall, *Maya World*, 160.

\(^{26}\) Ruz, *Sermones*, 7.
countless engagements in religious wars. That such a concern included printed materials should come as no surprise, especially in the light of Protestantism’s use of the printing press to evangelize.\(^\text{27}\)

The *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* (Index of forbidden books) of the Inquisition established in 1559 embodies this concern. Produced in the mid sixteenth century, the Index included hundreds of works from religious titles to vernacular translations of the Bible to secular readings the Inquisition deemed to contain or to propagate ideas contrary to Catholic belief. The Inquisition’s hand reached New Spain to touch numerous works, including Sahagún’s *General History of the Things of New Spain* or *Florentine Codex*. The debate over the manuscript’s contents—particularly its relation of precontact deities and rituals—resulted in confiscations, petitions, and overall delays in its completion.\(^\text{28}\) Even Pedro Ocharte, a printer who published numerous sixteenth-century Nahuatl religious texts, was imprisoned and tortured upon the Inquisition’s accusations of reading Lutheran material and publishing unorthodox material on the intercessory powers of the saints.\(^\text{29}\)

This problem was not unique to the New World, but rather continued from the printing presses of the Old. The Archivo Histórico Nacional in Madrid (AHN) contains numerous examples of Spanish printers and book vendors examined by the Inquisition.

\(^{27}\) Hsia provides an excellent summary of Catholicism’s use and regulation of printing in his *Catholic Renewal*, 172-86.


\(^{29}\) Louise Burkhart, “‘Here is Another Marvel’: Marian Miracle Narratives in a Nahuatl Manuscript,” in *Spiritual Encounters: Interactions Between Christianity and Native Religions in Colonial America*, ed. Nicholas Griffiths and Fernando Cervantes (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 109-10.
Many were accused of possessing and printing illicit material including catechisms and other religious works.\textsuperscript{30} Yet the Index primarily concerned itself with texts containing unauthorized translations, pagan elements, or other heretical teachings and failed to prevent the diversification of Catholicism via authorized religious texts.

In 1555, the First Mexican Provincial Council decided to address the diversity that had arisen in New Spain. The Council ordered the composition of two doctrinas, one brief and one lengthier, and their subsequent translation into many languages for the use of all ecclesiastics.\textsuperscript{31} In addition, to remedy the existing variety in administering the sacraments of baptism and marriage, the First Provincial Council ordered the reprinting of the \textit{Manual de adultos} and commanded that all priests should adhere to its instructions.\textsuperscript{32} Composed under the directives of the Mexican Junta Ecclesiastica of 1539 and derived from European missals, this manual first saw publication in 1540 under Zumárraga’s name. The \textit{Manual} presented a New-World rendition of the sacraments that inserted a more welcoming, communal greeting of the baptized who, more often than not, were adults.\textsuperscript{33}

Yet apparently the reprinting of the \textit{Manual de adultos} still left the conservative Alonso de Montúfar, archbishop and organizer of the Council, uneasy regarding the uniformity of the sacraments. Montúfar’s concern with conformity foreshadowed the

\textsuperscript{30} For example, see Archivo Histórico Nacional [AHN] Inquisicion, 3723, exp. 152; Inquisicion, 3726, exp. 225; Inquisicion, 3730; Inquisicion, exp. 323, 353. See also, Rodríguez, \textit{El catecismo Romano}.

\textsuperscript{31} Lorenzana, \textit{Concilios provinciales}, 45. The whereabouts or identities of these doctrinas are uncertain. However, Montúfar, who presided over the Council, instructed fray Domingo de la Anunciación to compose two doctrinas, one brief, another longer. It is possible that these two doctrinas are those ordered by the Council.

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., 142.

\textsuperscript{33} Lara examines the manual in detail and even posits that fray Juan Focher’s \textit{Itinerarium catholicum proficiscientium, ad infidels convertendos} might have been the original transcript of the work. Lara, \textit{Christian Texts}, 93-4.
drive for uniformity which characterized the post-Trent era. Five years after the First Provincial Council, Montúfar ordered the composition and printing of the *Manuale sacramentorum*, the ritual handbook of the Mexican Church.  

Such efforts, however, apparently did not cure the variation in administering the sacraments. In the late 1560s and early 1570s, the *Codice Franciscano*—a compilation of Franciscan correspondence written at the request of Juan de Ovando and later published by Joaquín García Icazbalceta as *Nueva colección de documentos para la historia de méxico*—acknowledges that the Archbishop of Mexico and his suffragan bishops made their own manual for the administration of the sacraments. However, the work states that the friars “only use this manual for Spaniards….But for the Indians, and even for Spanish children, for baptism we use the short manual of the ancient Roman rite that was found in the Roman manual printed in Venice and then was reprinted here in Mexico by order of Fray Juan de Zumárraga.” The short manual referred to was the *Curial Missal* printed in 1498 in Venice. Interestingly, when reprinted in Mexico, the text became slightly altered.

Ecclesiastics outside Mesoamerica faced similar problems. In 1573, Fray Dionisio de los Santos named bishop of Categena de Indias (Colombia) wrote a letter to Juan de Ovando complaining of the natives’ inadequate evangelization due to the various messages ecclesiastics administered. To solve the problem, Santos offered his own catechism that he deemed suitable for any priest. Moreover, in 1577 Phillip II considered the Council

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34 Mathes, *First Library*, 78.
35 García Icazbalceta, *Códice Franciscano*, 87.
37 AGI, Patronato, 196, R. 10.
of the Indies’ request to compose a single “catechism for all parts of the Indies…to not have variety in words” per the letter of the archbishop of Nueva Granada who complained of the “diversity that those who teach the Indians have in the way of instructing.” The King told the Council of the Indies to send him the catechism which archbishop Luis Zapata de Cárdenas later issued throughout New Granada.

From the mid to late 1570s, the Council of the Indies continued to address the issue concerning the variety of Catholic messages taught to the natives. Responding to a letter from the archbishop don Pedro Moya de Contreras who also complained about the “diversity that those that teach the doctrine to the Indians have in the way of teaching them,” the Council of the Indies ordered a catechism be made for all ecclesiastics to employ. It is likely no coincidence that on January 26, 1585, during Third Mexican Provincial Council, Contreras and the attending bishops ordered that a single catechism be composed and made obligatory throughout New Spain. The proceedings indicate that five theologians were assigned to compose the catechism, but later note that the Jesuit Juan de la Plaza composed the work alone.

Although Rome approved the Third Provincial Council’s decrees in 1589, not until 1621 did the Council of the Indies and the monarchs provide their approval. By then, the

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38 AGI, Santa Fe, 1, N. 6.


40 AGI, Santa Fe, 1, N. 6.

41 It is interesting that the Council did not simply order the translation of the catechism derived from the Council of Trent or *Catecismo Romano* published in 1566. Indeed, this catechism was not translated into Nahuatl until 1723 by Manuel Pérez. Not until 1846 did Joaquin Ruz finally translate the work into Maya in his *Manual romano toledano y yucateco para la administracion de los santos sacramentos* (Mérida: José D. Espinosa, 1846).
1591 catechism of the Jesuit Gerónimo de Ripalda had become the most popular religious text throughout Spain’s territories and, thus, eliminated the need for Plaza’s catechism. In the end, the seeming monopoly of Ripalda’s catechism—still used today throughout Mexico, albeit in modern editions—within the Spanish empire prevented the publication of the Third Council’s catechism written by Plaza, and led to the common, yet erroneous, assumption that the Council had produced the catechism with Ripalda as the author.\(^\text{42}\)

Even if publication had occurred, the Council’s catechism would not have slaked the demand for “better” or “more accurate” religious works in indigenous languages. And herein lay the conundrum. In order to fix the multiplicity of texts, other texts deemed superior needed to take their place, thus contributing yet another text (see Figure 3.1). Indeed, each Category 1 work claimed to be the best version of that particular genre of text, or the most correctly translated, or the most useful.

In short, the problem the religious and civil authorities repeatedly tried to prevent had occurred. Instead of each genre of publication producing one work for all ecclesiastics to work from, multiple versions emerged, each claiming to solve the problems and treat the ailments previous works failed to address. Authors commonly couched the goals and benefits of their work among its introductory pages. Among other things they cite the clarification of various doctrinal messages and the correction of previously mis-translated texts.

For example, after recognizing the many extant religious works at the time, fray Ignacio de Paredes states he translated Ripalda’s work because he could not find any catechism that was similar to Ripalda’s Castilian version which, according to Paredes, all Spaniards used. Don Carlos de Tapia Zenteno endorsed Paredes’ 1759 *Promptuario* for

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its unparalleled translation of Christian doctrine into Nahuatl stating that “neither Castilian nor Latin could more expressively persuade nor teach the mysteries of our Catholic religion.” Fray Martín de León composed his extensive *Sermonario* in 1614 because of the lack of complete, well-translated sermons designed for a whole year and appropriately adapted to the needs and capacity of the natives. And so much confidence was placed in Bartolomé Castaño’s 1758 Nahuatl *Doctrina christiana* that the front page claimed whoever listened to it received forty days of indulgence, in other words, forty fewer days spent in purgatory.

Maya authors similarly validated their Category 1 works through linguistic genius and doctrinal acumen. Coronel states that his 1620 *Discursos* is a compilation of “various papers, that with my labor I have collected and copied, that the ancient padres had written, amending some things that in this era are not used, and correcting that which was not correct.” Interestingly, in his 1740 Maya doctrina, Beltrán included a list of corrections to Coronel’s 1620 Maya doctrina that no doubt helped validate his eighteenth-century work. More interesting still, Ruz’ 1846 collection of sermons cites Beltrán’s correction of Coronel’s doctrina to validate his retranslation of existing Maya religious tracts.

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45 Léon, *Sermonario*, f. **.

46 Ripalda, *Catecismo mexicano*, 143.

47 Coronel, *Discursos*, preliminary leaf, unnumbered.

48 Berendt mentions these “Advertencias” in his 1868 reproduction of the doctrina and argues that the corrected doctrina referred to was Coronel’s. UP-RBML, Col. 700, item 21, *Novena*, [86]. Later in his 1846 collection of sermons in Maya, fray Joaquin Ruz’s reference to Beltrán’s corrections of Coronel solidify Berendt’s assumption; Ruz, *Sermones*, 5.
According to Ruz, “there is not a language that is not susceptible to correction and perfection.”\textsuperscript{49}

Archbishops also ordered their own versions of Catholicism when existing versions seemed inadequate. After composing his own Nahuatl doctrinas in 1539, the first Archbishop of Mexico, fray Juan de Zumárraga, ordered Molina to compose a brief doctrina for the Franciscans. Molina’s doctrina first saw publication in 1546 and was repeatedly reprinted into the mid eighteenth century. One such copy exists in the \textit{Codice Franciscano} to which is attached an explanation for the reprint. Written in 1570, the unknown author of the explanation details how there should be “one doctrina only among this people…[so that] wherever they go they find this conformity” and no longer offer the excuse that “it is not taught that way in our village.”\textsuperscript{50} The author states that Molina’s work was superior to all other existing doctrinas, and that “it would be a convenient thing to order that [the doctrina] be used in all [regions] which use the Mexican language…to avoid confusion and diversity of doctrines for this thing above all others requires unity and conformity.”\textsuperscript{51}

In eighteenth-century Yucatan, the archbishop fray Ignacio de Padilla y Estrada struggled with the evangelization of the Mayas. Encomenderos and public civil servants occupied nearly all the time of their Maya laborers, and ecclesiastics had difficulty gathering children into the age-worn schools. In order for priests to make the best of the time they had with their Maya pupils, and in order to ameliorate and unify the doctrina,

\textsuperscript{49} Ruz, \textit{Sermones}, 5.

\textsuperscript{50} García Icazbaleeta, \textit{Códice Franciscano}, 33.

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 60.
the archbishop ordered Domínguez y Argáiz to compose his Maya Pláticas published in 1758.\textsuperscript{52}

Not surprisingly, although ecclesiastics desired a uniform message, they typically wanted that message to originate from their own order. Indeed, finding the Franciscan and all other doctrinas deficient, the second Archbishop of Mexico, the Dominican Alonso de Montúfar, requested a fellow member of his order, fray Domingo de la Anunciación, to compose a shortened doctrina from those extant, and another lengthier doctrina. Recording his mandate, Anunciación states,

\begin{quote}
[Fray Alonso de Montúfar] ordered me that I take the charge of composing or compiling a short catechism and another more copious that will be a summarized declaration of the things of our holy Catholic Faith so that both come out in all possible languages of our New Spain and that they are printed following the order of the holy Mexican Council.\textsuperscript{53}
\end{quote}

Anunciación mentions the shortcomings of the corpus of existing doctrinas stating that parts of the works “appear to be contrary to one another.”\textsuperscript{54} The final product included both the shortened doctrina and a lengthier one Anunciación made in previous years, and saw publication in 1565, thus fulfilling the mandate of the First Mexican Council.\textsuperscript{55}

Although intended for all languages and regions of New Spain, the work seemingly only appeared in Nahuatl.

Secular priests also desired their own message. Frustrated with the plethora of religious texts that “have resulted in this disorder” which causes “great inconveniences to

\textsuperscript{52} Don Crescencio Carrillo y Ancona, El obispado de Yucatán: Historia de su fundacion y de sus obispos desde el siglo XVI hasta el XIX, vol. 2 (Mérida: Imprenta de Ricardo B. Caballero, 1892), 841-2. See also Domínguez y Argáiz, Pláticas, preliminary leaf, unnumbered.

\textsuperscript{53} Anunciación, Doctrina cristiana, ff. 2r-2v.

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., f. 2v.

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., f. 2v.
the good form, discretion, and purity that the Church ordains” and that “scar [its] beautiful unity,” the archbishop Juan de Palafox y Mendoza determined to create a manual to end such diversity.\textsuperscript{56} Surely it is no coincidence that the secular archbishop chose a fellow secular Andrés Saenz de la Peña to compose his 1642 “Manual de los santos sacramentos.” To the 16 existing manuals on how to appropriately administer the sacraments among the Nahuas, Saenz de la Peña adds his 1642 manual as a “remedy.”\textsuperscript{57} According to Palafox y Mendoza, the strength of this manual was its conformity to the \textit{Catecismo Romano} containing the mandates of Trent, authorized by Pope Paul V himself, and published in Latin in 1566. The archbishop vehemently demanded that all priests adhere to this manual and issued a penalty of excommunication and a fee of 200 pesos for all those who used another.\textsuperscript{58}

Even the Church itself contributed to the melee of Category 1 religious texts. After the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767, the Church could no longer use Ripalda’s work to fulfill the decree of the Third Council for the employment of a uniform catechism. Moreover, the Church was aware of the many versions of Catholicism produced thus far and sought to remedy the issue. Thus, one of the goals of the Fourth Mexican Provincial Council of 1771 was to yet again take up the task of producing a single catechism that all ecclesiastics were to employ.\textsuperscript{59} In the process, the Council discovered Plaza’s original


\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., “A los curas benficiados…,” preliminary leaf, unnumbered.

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., “A los curas benficiados…,” preliminary leaf, unnumbered.

\textsuperscript{59} AGI, Mexico, 2711. The only exception being for the \textit{Catecismo Romano}.
catechism composed for the Third Provincial Council and, after a few minor adaptations, ordered its publication.

To prevent any assumption that the 1771 catechism was also Ripalda’s, the Council states at the beginning of the work,

This catechism of Christian doctrine can be considered and really is the work of two councils. It was formed by the venerable and learned Fathers of the Third Mexican Provincial Council in 1585 more than thirty years before that of Ripalda, whose first edition was in 1616. Our Council’s catechism was never printed, due no doubt to the hardships of the time, but it owes its formulation to the solid wisdom of seven eminent prelates” (emphasis mine).

The catechism was printed in 1771 in Spanish but, to this author’s knowledge, never saw print in Nahuatl or Maya. In 1772, the Fourth Council also published a catechism for the use of parish priests that included full explanations and discussions of the doctrine. Evidence exists to suggest these catechisms’ circulation, even in Yucatan. Indeed, part of the visitas performed in Yucatan during the 1780s included verifying the presence of the catechisms—referred to as the catechisms of the Third Council—in each town.

Unlike Central Mexico, however, seldom do Yucatecan ecclesiastics complain about the abundance of printed works. In contrast, they justify their works through the

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60 Until 1909, the 1616 edition of Ripalda’s catechism was thought to be the first. See Burrus, “The Author,” 175.

61 Catecismo y suma de la doctrina Christiana: con declaracion de ella ordenando y aprobado por el III concilio provincial Mexicano celbrado en la Ciudad de Mexico el año de 1585. Revisto, aprobado, y dado a luz por el IV concilio provincial Mexicano celebro en dicha Ciudad año de 1771 (México: Imprenta de la Bibliotheca Mexicana del Lic. D. Josef de Jauregui), preliminary leaf, unnumbered.


63 AHAY, Visita Pastorales, 1782-1785; AHAY, Visita Pastorales, 1784.
paucity of such texts. Don Francisco Eugenio Domínguez y Argáiz published his 1758 *Platicas* to remedy the “rudeza” of a land still in an “embryonic state” since the conquest.\(^{64}\) Beltrán explains this perpetual state of “rudeza” through the lack of religious works in Maya to accompany the verbal instruction the natives receive; he intended his Maya novena and accompanying doctrina to remedy this situation. Moreover, the visita report of Xcanbolona speaks of the need to publish more ecclesiastical texts in Maya for the natives’ instruction.\(^{65}\)

In response to the numerous orders from various Councils, archbishops and bishops to use a particular religious work, most ecclesiastics employed the well-worn phrase “*obezco pero no cumplo*” (I obey but I do not fulfill). Saenz de la Peña states that although some regions use the *Manual Mexicano*—likely the *Manual de adultos* which was also known as the *Mexicanensis*\(^{66}\)—ordered by an unspecified Provincial Council (although likely the first) others continue with the manuscripts and printed works they had before.\(^{67}\) One need not look any further than the repeated attempts of the Provincial Councils and myriad ecclesiastics to create standard works to confirm the failed attempts of the Church and Crown to enforce a few authorized texts.

Overall, although the printing press was intended to regulate the Catholic message, it contributed to the message’s diversification. Ecclesiastics soon realized the dangers of multiple discourses. Yet the remedy of printing remedial Category 1 texts only exacerbated the situation. Now that the traditionally neat image of the printed word’s

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\(^{64}\) Domínguez y Argáiz, *Pláticas*, preliminary leaf, unnumbered.

\(^{65}\) AHAY, *Visita Pastora 1783-1784*, vol. 2.

\(^{66}\) Lara, *Christian Texts*, 94.

orthodox uniformity has been muddied with diversity, let us turn to the inspirations of many Category 1 texts.

Influential Models for Category 1 Texts

As seen in various cases above, European manuals often served as models to native-language religious manuals. For example, Ripalda’s catechism was well-known throughout the Spanish sector of New Spain. Yet ecclesiastics’ contentment with their own, locally produced indigenous-language texts delayed the translation of Ripalda’s work. Indeed, the first translation into Nahuatl of Ripalda’s famous catechism did not officially occur until 1758 by Paredes, although an unofficial version does appear in a Pérez de la Fuente’s 1713 manuscript “Relación mercuriana.”68 The Maya waited until 1847 for fray Joaquin Ruz to provide them with their translation.69 However, it is likely that Ripalda’s work served, either consciously or unconsciously, as a model or guide to ecclesiastics producing their own works. Interestingly, Ruz claims that Coronel’s 1620 doctrina was a Maya translation of Ripalda’s work, although Coronel himself makes no such claim.70 Nevertheless, upon comparison, although Coronel’s doctrina fails to

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68 “Traducese al Romance castellano, la Relación Mercuriana...,” GCMM, no. 10. There is an additional Nahuatl/Spanish copy of the Relación in the Bibliothèque de France, Paris, and of the Spanish in the Biblioteca Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Mexico. Fuente signed Princeton’s copy May 3rd, 1713 thus making it a later copy than the one in the BNF. He claims to have worked on the project from Sept. 26, 1666, to May 3rd, 1713, making it (as he states) 47 years, 7 months, and 7 days.

69 Ripalda, Catecismo mexicano; Ripalda, Catecismo y Exposicion.

70 Ruz, Sermones, 5
represent an exact copy of Ripalda’s work, strong similarities exist. At the very least, Coronel used Ripalda’s catechism as a model.  

Other influential works included the *Rituale Romanum* which was, and continues to be, the ceremonies guide for the Roman Catholic Church. Another common ritual manual was the *Manual Toledano*, or the Visigothic or Mozarabic rite. The rite was practiced by the Visigoths of Toledo prior and during Muslim occupation. After the Christian conquest of Toledo in 1085, King Alfonso VI gave the rite a trial by fire to determine whether it should continue alongside the Roman rite. He tossed a book of each rite into a fire to see which one best survived. Because the Roman rite burned and the Visigothic rite survived, the latter is still celebrated today in the cathedral of Toledo.

Ecclesiastics throughout the colonial period continually employed both the Roman and Toledan rites as models. Francisco de Lorra Baquio’s 1634 Nahuatl *Manual Mexicano* derived from the *Manual Toledano*, as did Ruz’ later 1846 Maya manual. In some cases, these Old World models trumped their New World spin-offs. In 1792 the bishop of Yucatan, fray Luis Tomás Esteban de Piña y Mazo, conducted visitas with the intent to ensure that Church rites and customs conformed to the *Manual Toledano* and not local adaptations. The same bishop also employed the *Rituale Romanum* during visitas when offering prayers, particularly for the dead. Indeed, many late eighteenth-century visitas in Yucatan ordered all priests and their assistants to “abstain…from using in their

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71 For example, Coronel’s questions and answers concerning the sacraments closely follow those found in Ripalda’s catechism.

72 “Visita del Pueblo de San Luis,” Oficios 1748-1749, 1801-1884,” vol. 1, AHAY.

73 Visita Pastorales, 1784, Visita Pastorales, 1782-1785, AHAY.
functions the *Ritual Mexicano* and any other that is not the *Rituale Romanum* with the additions and the appendices of the Toledan manual."  

Some authors employed existing native-language religious texts as models. Mendieta states that Molina had a superior understanding of Nahuatl and regards him above even the legendary fray Bernardino de Sahagún. Not surprisingly, then, Molina’s works were particularly influential. For example, Bautista’s 1599 confessional manual copies, sometimes verbatim, large sections of Molina’s 1569 confessional manual. Later, in 1718, the Augustinian Manuel Pérez published an updated edition of Molina’s 1565 doctrina. Sahagún also inspired subsequent authors such as Bautista whose 1606 *Sermonario* contained large sections of his predecessor’s 1548 *Sermonario*.

Authors of Maya texts similarly derived influence from previous works. Coronel compiled sections of his 1620 *Discursos predicables* from a variety of existing Maya-authored manuscripts. Yet the most common case concerns the production of doctrinas. Coronel published his Maya doctrina in 1620. Then, in 1740 Beltrán published his doctrina a large portion of which appears as a virtual copy of Coronel’s work. The 1816 and 1866 editions of Beltrán’s doctrina would boast additional content including the “Act

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74 “Santa Visita del Pueblo Calotmul,” Visita Pastorales, 1782-1785, AHAY.


76 Sell, “Friars, Nahuas, and Books,” 37.


78 For a more detailed comparison of Coronel and Beltrán’s doctrinas see Hanks, *Converting Words*, 245-50.
of Contrition” which itself appears to have been taken from Domínguez y Argáiz’s, *Pláticas*.

**Audience and Use of Category 1 Texts**

What audience did indigenous-language Category 1 texts reach? First and foremost these texts intended to aid ecclesiastics in fulfilling their religious duties in native tongues. Yet the readership also included natives; the friars intended many of the texts for their schools and colleges in which they instructed the indigenous youth. Early books of doctrine, such as Gante’s 1553 doctrina, served a dual purpose of instructing natives in both the alphabet and Catholic doctrine.\(^{79}\) Similarly, Molina’s 1546 doctrina was “for the children that study in the schools,” and “for the Indians who know how to read, and for those that want to read it in their houses.”\(^{80}\) Fray Juan de Mijangos in his 1607 *Espejo divino* states that he organized his work in speeches “because it will be easier to understand for the natives that read it.”\(^{81}\)

Evidence similarly exists for Maya literacy. Copious notarial documentation from the cahob of Yucatan clearly illustrates the importance of alphabetic writing for each Maya town. The cah notary and his role in producing testaments, bills of sale, petitions, criminal records, tribute and census records, *cofradía* (religious confraternity) reports, church

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79 Gante, *Doctrina christiana*, 20.

80 García Icazbalceta, *Códice Franciscano*, 61.

records, and more was an essential part of the cah entity.\textsuperscript{82} Furthermore, a 1582 document in the Archivo General de las Indias (AGI) mentions the doctrinal/cartilla (primer) of Yucatecan fray Gaspar González de Nájera.\textsuperscript{83} And in his approval of Domínguez y Argáiz’ \textit{Pláticas}, Augustín Francisco de Echano argues that the Maya are eager to learn how to read, and that “as many that have paper in hand read.”\textsuperscript{84} Yet not all ecclesiastics shared this optimism, and Beltrán laments the fact that very few Maya know how to read.\textsuperscript{85}

In the end, native literacy was likely limited to the elite, those educated in the religious schools, and/or those who served in municipal positions. However, some evidence exists to suggest a wider body of native readers. In the prologue to his large confessional manual, Molina states the design and intended audience of both his large and small manuals:

\begin{quote}
\end{quote}

For this reason, I thought I would write you these two confessional manuals as reminders. The first is a bit long. It is necessary for you as with it I will help you a small bit concerning your salvation; you Christian who is dedicated to our savior Jesus Christ, who is already a believer and observes the holy Catholic faith. And the second, only smaller,

\textsuperscript{82} Restall covers this matter extensively in his \textit{Maya World} particularly pages 299-250.

\textsuperscript{83} Mexico, 2999, AGI, cited in David Bolles, “The Mayan Franciscan Vocabularies: A Preliminary Survey,” [Report on-line], available from \url{http://www.famsi.org/research/bolles/franciscan/section01.htm}.

\textsuperscript{84} Domínguez y Argáiz, \textit{Pláticas}, preliminary leaf, unnumbered.


\textsuperscript{86} Molina, \textit{Confesionario mayor}, 6v.
confessional manual will belong to your confessor for the purpose of him being able to understand your Nahua speech.

Molina leaves no doubt that while his small confessional manual was geared to the confessor, his large confessional manual also addresses Christian Nahuas.

In outlining the reasons for his translation of Ripalda’s Spanish catechism, fray Ignacio de Paredes states he designed his work, among other things, “for the benefit and usefulness of the poor Indians to whom we do not go visit in our journeys nor enlighten them all with our presence.” This suggests that natives used religious texts outside the presence of ecclesiastics. To be sure, local priests employed religious tracts to help them fulfill their parochial duties in indigenous languages. Yet in reality, such duties and such texts largely fell under the purview of the community’s head indigenous ecclesiastic steward, generally named *fiscal* in Central Mexico and *maestro* in the Yucatan. Similar to precontact Maya priests endowed with the religious care of their cah, these religious officers held high prestige in their communities. Also similar to precontact times, the community supplied fiscales and maestros their material needs. The Maya regidor mayor of Chunhuhub records that he took three pesos from the community chest to pay the salary of the maestro.

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87 Ripalda, *Catecismo mexicano*, preliminary leaf, unnumbered.

88 Although the terms were used interchangeably between in both Central Mexico and the Yucatan. Spaniards typically referred to Maya stewards as *maestros de capilla*, “chapel masters,” while the Maya frequently referred to them as either *ah cambeza*, a precontact role meaning “he who instructs,” or *maestros cantores*, “song masters.” No doubt the musical aspect of Catholicism captured the interest of the Maya more than the recitation of prayers. See Karttunen, *Between Worlds*, 94. However, in both Central Mexico and the Yucatan, various names applied to such native assistants including the popular *teniente*. Farriss, *Maya Society*, 333-43; Restall, *Maya World*, 148-51; Lockhart, *The Nahuas*, 210-15.

89 Visita Pastorales 1784, vol. 3, AHAY.
The regular and secular clergy relied upon these indigenous stewards to aid them in their duties to baptize, administer to and bury the dead, celebrate feast days, and compose and deliver doctrinal discourses in their absence. Many of the duties fell under the normal tasks of assistants that ranged from calling the youth together for their daily catechism, to collecting fees for masses or other religious services. Other times, their duties exceeded the norm as they played the role of an absentee priest. In the 1560s Yucatan’s bishop, Francisco del Toral, instructed the clergy that maestros could catechize, baptize the sick, administer extreme unction, and hear confessions from the sick and dying.

The roles of indigenous church stewards became amplified in peripheral towns, the pueblos de visita, that lacked a resident priest and oftentimes received very little ecclesiastical supervision, as Paredes hinted above. Icazbalceta made record of a Franciscan document that details the duties of Nahua fiscales, here called tlapixque or “those in charge of things,” in the pueblos de visita. Among the many duties, the

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92 Interestingly, priests were called “teopixqui,” (those in charge of god, or the divine). Fray Martín de León discusses the use of teopixqui at length in the initial pages of his *Camino del cielo en lengua mexicana* (México: Emprenta de Diego Lopez Daualos, 1611), preliminary leaf, unnumbered. Examples also exist of church stewards being called tepixqui “one in charge of someone,” and even teopantlacatl “church people” in Cline and León-Portilla, *Testaments of Culhuacan*, 51-3; see also Lockhart, *The Nahuas*, 210-18. Pizzigoni also has an interesting variant, teopanecatzintlin, “one in charge of the church.” Pizzigoni, *Testaments of Toluca*, 123.
document lists the maintenance of written records, instruction of the Christian doctrine “as is done in the monasteries,” baptism of near-death infants, and the burial and recitation of prayers for the dead. 93 Indeed, the Franciscans of Guadalajara reported each town contained Nahua assistants trained in administering emergency baptisms, helping the dying, and burying the dead, and a native _alguacil de la doctrina_ (doctrine constable) to ensure Christian behavior. 94 Fray Pedro de Gante frequently spoke of the role of indigenous aides in the evangelization effort and relates how on Saturdays such assistants would travel to the peripheral towns of Mexico City to teach people on Sundays. 95

After Yucatecan Franciscans trained Maya youth in their religious schools, the boys were to prepare sermons under the supervision of the friars. These youth would then return to their towns to become resident instructors of religion and preach the sermons. 96 Due to the Yucatan’s peripheral location vis-à-vis Mexico City, maestros likely played a larger role in indigenous communities. Indeed, they frequently appear in the reports of Yucatecan ecclesiastics for reasons ranging from praise to criticism. 97 The numerous visita reports of bishops clearly indicate that most towns possessed at least one Maya trained to administer baptism or help the dying in the absence of the priest. Even when present, ecclesiastics could take advantage of their trained assistants. For example,

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93 García Icazbalceta, _Códice Franciscano_, 82-84. Zumárraga also comments on the duties of such stewards he phonetically spells “calpisques” in a letter detailing the responsibilities of priests performing visitas; Cuevas, _Historia_, 462-63.

94 García Icazbalceta, _Códice Franciscano_, 169-70.


96 Karttunen, _Between Worlds_, 93.

97 Many such reports lay in the AHAY cache of visita records and religious correspondence. See also Nancy Farriss’ discussion on maestros in her _Maya Society_, 335-43.
in 1784 the curate of Chunhuhub was reprimanded for making his assistants do too much, including the sacraments.  

Overall, in understanding the essential role native stewards played in shaping multiple versions of colonial Catholicism, consider that in towns outside Mexico City in 1570 there was an average of one cleric for every 1,125 families. In the Yucatan, at the apex of Franciscan influence, approximately 62 friars served 186 indigenous towns. And by the end of the colonial period, only approximately 37 percent of the 215 native towns in the Yucatan had resident priests. Commenting on the roles of indigenous church stewards, fray Diego de Landa wrote that everything depended on them, “because of the confidence placed in them, having been made almost the friars’ colleagues in preaching and instructing the Indians in the things of our Holy Faith.”

Thus, colonial realities made the clergy dependent on training indigenous aides not only in text production, but also as ecclesiastic stewards. The need for such stewards was realized early on with the 1512 Laws of Burgos instructing encomenderos with more than fifty natives to “have a boy…taught to read and write the things of our Faith so that he can later show them to the said Indians.” The Laws complemented this order with another one which ordered all sons of native nobility under the age of fourteen to spend

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98 “Visita de Chunhuhub,” Visita Pastorales, 1784, AHAY.

99 Charles Gibson, The Aztecs, 112.

100 Collins, “Maestros,” 238.

101 Philip C. Thompson, Tekanto, A Maya Town in Colonial Yucatan (New Orleans: Tulane University Middle American Research Institute, 1999), 17.

102 France V. Scholes and Eleanor B. Adams, eds., Don Diego Quijada, Alcalde Mayor de Yucatán, 1561-1565, vol. 1 (México: Editorial Porrúa, 1938), 190-1; cited in Farriss, Maya Society, 335.
four years with the Franciscans so that they may later return to their *encomiendas* and teach the other natives the Catholic doctrine.  

Although it is doubtful that many encomenderos strictly adhered to this rule, native religious stewards were surely no anomaly within indigenous polities. Writing to Charles V in 1550, fray Rodrigo de la Cruz reported that since the friars in Ahuacatlán—roughly 350 miles west of Mexico City—could only visit the neighboring towns infrequently, they gathered natives from the surrounding towns into newly formed schools to be instructed in religion, reading, and writing. After their instruction, the native pupils were instructed to return home and repeat the catechism and religious teachings to others. Furthermore, in his sacramental manual, Saenz de la Peña instructs priests of native parishes to gather the native children and teach them the doctrine so that they may subsequently “select one, or one of the elder natives, to go and teach [the natives].”

Similar procedures occurred in Yucatan during the early stages of the Franciscan’s evangelization, and in most Maya towns maestros were the only representatives of Christianity present. Although at one point ecclesiastics were authorized to vacate their towns for up to four months because of the Maya “intermediaries that serve them,” longer periods of absenteeism were not uncommon.

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106 Collins, “Maestros,” 236.

107 Mexico, 1036, AGI.
In 1702, the bishop of Yucatan, fray Pedro de los Reyes Rios de la Madrid, wrote to the procurator of the Franciscans complaining that many doctrinas (head towns with parochial jurisdiction) had lacked an authorized priest for a “very long time.”

Beltrán lamented this dearth of ecclesiastic presence in native communities. He believed it was impossible for Mayas to learn even the basic concepts of hell and glory “when they only have of these things a brief mention in a sermon that is perhaps preached to them each year.” To ameliorate the situation, Beltrán published a Maya novena in 1740. Even when priests were present, very few possessed an adequate knowledge of the language to fulfill their religious role. Indeed, the Fourth Provincial Council of 1771 rebuked ecclesiastics for not knowing the language to the point of not understanding the dying words of those receiving their last rites.

Because the point is traditionally overlooked, it is worth reiterating: indigenous stewards employed religious texts to instruct the natives of their towns and fulfill their roles as surrogate priests. To enforce adherence to Saenz de la Peña’s sacramental manual, the archbishop Palafox y Mendoza declared that “no curate, beneficiary, priest, vicar, deputy, nor others that administer in their place use another” (emphasis mine).

Indigenous stewards’ use of religious texts is also likely implied in Paredes’ Promptuario

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108 Mexico, 1035, AGI.


110 Mexico, 2711, AGI. To remedy the situation, the Council ordered all ecclesiastics to learn the indigenous tongues so that they can teach Castilian to natives. Indeed, the Council viewed the continuation of preexisting indigenous beliefs as a result of natives continuing to speak in their own languages and thus desired that Catholicism be preached solely in Castilian, see Mexico, 2711, AGI; Diversos Colecciones, 28, N. 46, AGN. The archives contain many legajos expressing concern over the ecclesiastics’ poor language capabilities and their need to continually use native interpreters. See for example, Mexico, 1035, 1036, 2711, AGI; Indiferente, 427, AGI; Santo Domingo, 869, L. 7, AGI.

111 Saenz de la Peña, Manual, preliminary leaf, unnumbered.
when he instructs curates to have “someone else” read the Nahuatl text if they could not. In addition, penned in the margins of various Category 1 Nahuatl texts are glosses in Nahuatl. The handwriting and misspelling of loanwords suggests that such notes possibly originated from the hands of indigenous fiscales who used the text. Also, Molina dedicates entire sections of his Confesionario mayor, including instructions on how to interview couples intent on marriage and compose testaments, to the indigenous fiscal and escribano. In sum, the hands that wrote, the eyes that read, and lips that spoke the words of Category 1 indigenous-language religious texts were not restricted to Spaniards, but also included Nahuas and Mayas.

Writing Catholicisms: Category 2 Texts

Category 2 texts are unpublished, unofficial texts written by ecclesiastics and/or their native stewards for more local audiences including religious authorities. They experienced some censorship and diversified the Catholic message through variety and, in rare instances, unorthodox content. Simply put, although official Category 1 ecclesiastical texts emerged with the intent to lighten the burden of both priest and steward, not everyone had access to printed works. Thus, many unofficial Category 2 texts appeared out of necessity to assist local religious leaders.

112 Paredes, Promptuario, preliminary leaf, unnumbered.

113 For example, I found various handwritten glosses in a copy of Juan de Mijango’s Primera Parte del Sermonario dominical y sanctoral en lengua Mexicana (México: Juan de Alcaçar, 1624) located in the Biblioteca Nacional de España [BNE] (R/14228).

114 Molina, Confesionario mayor, ff. 44v-56r, 58r-63v.
Many Category 2 texts are handwritten copies of printed works. For example, a 1774 manuscript Nahuatl doctrina composed in Taxco closely mirrors that of Ripalda. An anonymous eighteenth-century manuscript of a Maya doctrina—located in the Princeton’s Special Collections and erroneously labeled as a doctrina and confessional manual—is a near verbatim copy of Beltrán’s 1757 doctrina. The lack of a printing press in the Yucatan until 1813 no doubt encouraged the copying of existing manuscripts.

Other Category 2 texts were written to appease local situations of paucity and preference. In 1846 José Mariá Meneses encouraged the publication of Ruz’ Maya book of sermons saying, “[it could] begin to serve in the small parishes (visitas) in which it is very necessary since I do not know that there are any in the Yucatec language but manuscripts for the private use of the curates that they have translated out of necessity.” One particular case illustrating the role of Category 2 texts in fulfilling personal preferences concerns a short, Maya confessional manual the Franciscan in charge of the parish Tixcacalcumpul composed, or had composed for him. Following the concluding words of the manual are 32 folios of Spanish phrases and their Maya translations the Franciscan thought necessary for conducting daily affairs.

Similar to their European predecessors, such manuscripts were generally small in size, brief, and typically housed between a makeshift leather cover. This made the text extremely portable and convenient for any priest or native religious steward burdened

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115 “Doctrina and Confession,” GGMMC, no. 73b.

116 Ruz, Sermones, 10.

117 “Modo de confesar en lengua maya, año de 1803,” Col. 700, item 26, UP-RBML, f. 1v. Some of the phrases were callous inquiries such as, “Porque faltaste ayer, no tiene boca para responder?” Whereas most phrases dealt with ecclesiastical matters, others did not. For example, there are Maya translations for the statements “Lava ese plato, no esta bien lavado,” and “Has me una torta con sebolla de huevos.”
with the care of so many. Also, Category 2 texts were infinitely cheaper to produce than those printed. These unpublished confessional manuals, books of sermons, catechisms, and so on lack both the lengthy prologues and the censorship of their published counterparts. At times, their content occasionally strays a little off the “official” path of orthodoxy, but it is not so far as to become doctrinally incorrect.

Indeed, although the orthography of most unpublished texts betrays native hands, the format and layout of such texts suggest the supervisory role of a priest familiar with such formulae, the use of a similar work as a template, or the native author’s familiarity with the genre through religious training. The University of Pennsylvania contains an extensive manuscript of 373 folios likely composed by various Nahua assistants under the auspices of an ecclesiastic, in which appears a variety of Nahuatl sermons and translations of biblical chapters with Latin headings. Regarding Yucatan, fray Lazaro Calderón stated that in his parish of Mococha, ministers received instruction on how to compose catechisms in Maya. Additionally, in a small leather cover no more than seven inches tall is a “libro de matrimonio de predicaciones de pariente.” Penned in remarkably small Maya letters circa the 1700s, each page betrays a skillful native hand whose perfect spelling of Spanish loanwords and use of Latin indicates either the supervision of an ecclesiastic, or a firm grasp on Spanish ecclesiastical texts and Catholic doctrine.

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118 For more on manuscript works see Jaime González Rodríguez, “La difusión manuscrita de ideas en Nueva España (siglo XVI),” Revista complutense de historia de América 18 (1992): 89-116.

119 “Sermonario la lengua Nahuatl,” UP-RBML, Col. 700, item 189.

120 “Visita de Mococha,” Visita Pastorales 1785, AHAY.

121 “Maya Sermons,” GGMMC, no. 65.
The most famous Maya assistant to the Franciscans, Gaspar Antonio Chi, poignantly demonstrates the role of indigenous aids in composing unpublished religious works. Describing his own service he states,

*I aided and served…as the first native who learned the Spanish and Latin languages, interpreting to (the natives) the things concerning their conversion to the Holy Catholic Faith…. (I) have taught the said friars…the language of these natives, which I interpret to them…I have made…a grammar for this, and I have written sermons for them in the language to preach to the said natives (emphasis mine).*

In the end, the occasions where clerics and natives composed unofficial Category 2 texts are not as infrequent as we may think.

**Configuring Catholicisms: Category 3 Texts**

Surely in many cases unpublished texts and discourses ran more or less parallel to Catholic doctrine. Yet in others they did not. Due to their role in many communities as the only representative of Catholicism, it is likely that many indigenous stewards had ample opportunities to not only assist ecclesiastics compose religious texts, but also write some of their own. In the process, Nahuas and Mayas reinterpreted, composed, and recited religious discourses with little or no supervision to ensure orthodoxy. These are Category 3 texts.

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Category 3 texts are unpublished, unofficial texts written by natives for natives. As such, they underwent little or no censorship and diversified the Catholic message through the various messages they produced. These messages had the greatest likelihood of being unorthodox. Although trained in Catholicism, indigenous stewards occasionally were caught engaging in unorthodox practices. Sometimes the acts derived from inadequate training. The priest Tirso Díaz doubted fiscales’ ability to teach the Christian doctrine correctly when they themselves barely understood it. Other times the acts derived from subterfuge intended to preserve precontact practices. Hernando Ruiz de Alarcón’s 1629 treatise on the persistence of precontact beliefs included the separate experiences of a fiscal and a choir member confessing their possession of idols. And while not an acting fiscal, don Carlos Ometochtli cacique (ruler) of Texcoco who received a Christian education in the College of Tlatelolco was tried in 1539 and executed for concubinage and idolatry.

In still other occasions, the unorthodoxy of was the result of native religious stewards conveying Catholicism in ways deemed appropriate and effective to them, and not necessarily ecclesiastics. The occasionally diverse and unacceptable instruction of indigenous religious stewards prompted Zumárraga and Torquemada’s concern, the latter complaining that they lack the understanding to be preachers. Logically, one can

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assume that the unorthodox beliefs of native stewards also appeared in the religious texts they penned. Louise Burkhart has provided evidence of such through unpublished Nahuatl texts associated with Marian devotion and religious theater. Yet the phenomenon extends to all doctrine and doctrinal texts throughout Mesoamerica.

To be sure, occasionally unorthodox teachings infiltrated Nahua- and Maya-authored Category 3 texts. In the 1570s friars Bernardino de Sahagún of Central Mexico and Diego de Landa of the Yucatán both admitted to continually finding and confiscating handwritten sermons and religious tracts in which they had found things that displeased them. A Nahuatl manuscript containing a sermon on the life of Sebastian no doubt fell into this category. Among other unorthodox elements, the sermon has the Old World prophet preaching in a New World Nahua altepetl.

Priests stationed in Yucatán frequently referred to Category 3 texts as Maya-made cartapacios, or “notebooks,” and fought their existence with Category 1 texts. For example, Coronel states that he produced his Discursos so that the Catholic doctrine “does not run in handwritten cartapacios where many lies are found.” His familiarity with cartapacios no doubt stemmed from the above-mentioned fact that large sections of Coronel’s work derived from “what the ancient fathers had written” including a cartapacio

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127 In particular, see Burkhart, Holy Wednesday, 65-73; Burkhart, Before Guadalupe.


129 MS 1692, SC, 9-16.

composed by a Maya maestro and known today as the Morley Manuscript.\textsuperscript{131} The concern of indigenous stewards possessing and using non-approved religious texts is evident in declaration of the Second Mexican Provincial Council of 1565 that such stewards can only employ the “approved doctrina”—perhaps referring to the 1565 Doctrina Montúfar ordered Anunciación to compose.\textsuperscript{132}

Had such unofficial texts been submitted for publication, the above-mentioned editorial process would have rejected them outright. Yet Category 3 texts were not written with the intent of publication. Indigenous stewards wrote these texts to use in their indigenous communities. Illustrating the local origins and maintenance of such unpublished texts, Baltasar Mutul, the native notary of Teabo, composed a Maya text recounting the Passion of Christ which he titled “libro fassion” or passion book. Many years later, in 1875, the notary of Teabo used the remaining blank pages of the same book to record the deaths of the town.\textsuperscript{133} However, even these unofficial texts were susceptible to some degree of local scrutiny. At the conclusion of his passion book Mutul asks forgiveness from his fathers/parents “\textit{he max bin ylic uayan kasite ten u >e>il u Palilob}” (who will see and examine my errors, (I who am) the least of their children/servants).

\begin{flushright}
\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{131} Ibid., “Al maestro don fray Gonçalo de Salazar,” unnumbered. Gretchen Whalen discusses various parallels between the Morley Manuscript and Coronel’s \textit{Discursos} in her “An Annotated Translation,” \textit{passim}.

\textsuperscript{132} Lorenzana, \textit{Concilios provinciales}, 201-2.

\textsuperscript{133} “Passion of Christ,” GGMMC, no. 66.
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Categories of Religious Texts and the Texts Themselves

In short, three general categories of indigenous-language ecclesiastical texts exist. Category 1 texts concern published “official” texts written by ecclesiastic authors and/or their aides intended for a broad readership of both ecclesiastic and native populations. These texts experienced the most editorial scrutiny for unorthodoxy, and are more commonly found today due to the multiple printed copies of each text. With few exceptions, most texts in this category avoided heretical doctrine. However, their multiplicity of elucidations and interpretations of basic doctrine greatly contributed to Catholicism’s diversification process.

Category 2 regards those unpublished, unofficial texts written by ecclesiastics and/or their supervised stewards for more local audiences including religious authorities. Whereas some texts were the inventions of ecclesiastics and/or their native stewards, others were likely patterned after existing models, such as the manuscript copy of Beltrán’s doctrina previously mentioned. Overall, these texts contained few examples of blatant unorthodox doctrine. However, similar to texts in Category 1, Category 2 texts’ varied explanation and application of basic doctrines contributed to the diversification of Catholicism.

Category 3 concerns unpublished, unofficial texts written by natives for natives. Composed with minimal or no ecclesiastic supervision and avoiding the strict editorial process of publishing, these texts often crossed the boundaries of orthodoxy to present unofficial and unorthodox interpretations of Catholicism. The audience of these texts did not include the Spanish priest, but focused primarily on the local indigenous population. The authors of these unofficial works drew upon their training, available material—
including European works\textsuperscript{134}—and their own interpretations to compose local treatises and religious accounts containing both orthodox and unorthodox teachings.

To be sure, all indigenous-language religious texts contributed to Catholicism’s varied interpretation. Yet this third category of texts largely represents those interpretations considered most unorthodox, and because these ephemeral texts never experienced the multiplicity of publication, their locations and contributions to the evangelization of New Spain are less recognized. However, examples do exist to provide unique examples of unorthodox religious discourses (see Chapter 7).

What both published and unpublished indigenous-language religious texts contained and how they conveyed their Catholic message and contributed to multiple versions of Catholicism are questions this study will address shortly. But now, let us examine the various genres of indigenous-language ecclesiastical texts which appear in this work, and the categories of texts they include.

\textbf{Table 3.1. Religious texts and their categories}

\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|c|}
\hline
Genre & Category 1 & Category 2 & Category 3 \\
\hline
Books of Christian Doctrine & X & X & X \\
Confessional Manuals & X & X &  \\
Books of Sermons & X & X & X \\
Religious Dramas & X & X & X \\
Testaments &  & X & X \\
Sacramental Manuals & X & X &  \\
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\end{tabular}

\textsuperscript{134} For an example concerning the Chilam Balam of Kaua see Bricker and Miram, \textit{Chilam Balam of Kaua}, 34-5.
Books of Christian Doctrine (Doctrina Christiana)

Doctrinas contained the de facto doctrine of the Church. These compendiums typically contained common prayers such as the Padre Nuestro, Ave Maria, and so on, as well as the Decalogue, Sacraments, Articles of Faith, Commandments of the Church, and the seven mortal sins and virtues. Many of the native-language doctrinas paralleled their Spanish predecessors. When compiling his doctrina, Anunciación admitted to using doctrinas previously printed in Spain for inspiration. Produced in both small and large versions, some manuals presented the material in a straightforward manner while others couched the doctrine in a catechistic format of questions and answers. Indeed, the catechism represents the most common mode of instruction for Christian doctrine thus allowing both genres to meld into one such as Paredes’ Nahuatl translation of Ripalda’s Doctrina that became titled Catecismo mexicano.

Although this combination or piggybacking of genres resulted from the similarities of doctrinas and catechisms, many religious works contained the gamut of topics due to the effort and expense of printing, and matters of convenience for the user. León’s Camino del cielo provides an excellent example. Included among its pages were all the prayers, a reprobation on idolatry, the Mexican calendar, two confessional manuals, instructions on taking communion, a model testament, an arte de bien morir or “art of dying well,” and other prayers and instructions on how to do mundane religious tasks such...

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135 Anunciación, Doctrina cristiana, f. 2v.

136 Tozzer, Maya Grammar, 196-99. León also describes his Camino del cielo as a catechism and doctrina in his Primera parte, f. **.
as burying the dead.\textsuperscript{137} Moreover, the concluding pages of Nahuatl grammars occasionally contained doctrinas, catechisms, and other religious material.\textsuperscript{138}

Regardless of its presentation, the doctrina represented the meat and potatoes of the priest’s culinary menu. It comes as no surprise, then, that one of the first published books in New Spain was fray Juan de Zumárraga’s 1539 \textit{Breve y mas compendiosa doctrina cristiana en lengua Mexicana y Castellana}.\textsuperscript{139} Moreover, the first publication in Maya was likely a doctrina composed by Villalpando in the mid sixteenth century.\textsuperscript{140} Doctrinas appear mostly as Category 1 and 2 texts.

\textbf{Confessional Manuals (Confesionario)}

As the sacrament of Confession became an annual requisite for penitents in the early thirteenth century, confessional manuals emerged to provide both confessor and penitent the questions and answers related to the sacrament of Confession. Confessional manuals experienced widespread popularity in Spain. Indeed, over fifty Spanish authors composed such manuals between the initiation of Trent to the end of the seventeenth

\textsuperscript{137} León, \textit{Camino del cielo}, preliminary leaf, unnumbered; Sell, “Friars, Nahuas, and Books,” 33-34.

\textsuperscript{138} This trend continues with modern authors. For example, when Raoul de la Grasserie published his 1903 Nahuatl grammar, he included 16 fables from the Nahuatl manuscript of Aesop’s fables. See, \textit{Aesop’s Fables}, 225.

\textsuperscript{139} Although many believe this work to be the first published in New Spain, existing scholarship and documents, including letters from Zumárraga himself, suggest the publication of two earlier works: \textit{Escala espiritual para llegar al cielo, traduccion del latín al castellano por el ven. padre Juan de Estrada} (1535) and a \textit{Catecismo Mexicano} (1537). Both were the likely products of Esteban Martín, a printer who probably accompanied Zumárraga to New Spain in 1534 and established his humble operation. Juan Cromberger and his larger, better-equipped printing firm began operation in New Spain in 1539, dwarfing and making obsolete Martin’s business. Indeed, all books printed in Mexico up to 1548 bear his mark. Carlos E. Castañeda, “The Beginning of Printing in America,” \textit{The Hispanic American Historical Review} 20:4 (November 1940): 673-76.

\textsuperscript{140} Tozzer, \textit{Maya Grammar}, 196.
century, and most achieved multiple editions. Martín de Azpilcueta’s manual was exceptionally successful having a minimum of 81 printings and being abridged and translated into various languages on 92 occasions between 1553 and 1650. The work even spread to the New World reaching Mexico City and Peru.  

Nahuatl and Maya confessional manuals typically contained instructions, prayers, and questions in both Spanish and the native vernacular. Thus, like most religious texts, ecclesiastics intended the manuals to aid both priests and native. The manuals vary in size from large to small, with smaller manuals becoming more common as the colonial period progressed. In addition, various Nahuatl grammars inserted small confessional manuals among their final pages. Both printed and manuscript copies of confessional manuals exist, although manuscript copies are rare. Thus, confessional manuals appear as both Category 1 and 2 texts. Chapter 6 discusses in detail Nahuatl and Maya confessional manuals and the various confessions they produced.

Books of Sermons (Sermonario, Platicas, Discursos Predicables, Prompuario)

Perhaps the most-inclusive genre of texts, books of sermons supplied priests and/or their assistants with already-made lectures for their dominical discourse. These texts covered a wide variety of topics from the Mysteries of the Faith to history of the Virgin of

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142 See for example, fray Augustín Vetancourt, Arte de lengua mexicana... (México: Francisco Rodriguez Lupercio, 1673), reproduced in Obras Clásicas sobre la Lengua Náhuatl, unnumbered; don Antonio Vázquez Gastelu, Arte de lengua mexicana (México: Imprenta de Fernandez de León, 1689), reproduced in Obras Clásicas sobre la Lengua Náhuatl, ff. 33-9; fray Juan Guerra, Arte de la lengua mexicana... (México: Viuda de Francisco Rodriguez Lupercio, 1692), reproduced in Obras Clásicas sobre la Lengua Náhuatl, ff. 49v-54v.
Guadalupe. Although they appear in a variety of sizes, many are quite extensive in their attempts to provide a sermon for each Sunday of the year. Paredes’ work contained 568 pages of sermons and platicas. Ecclesiastic authors repeatedly cite the importance of such texts in conveying Catholicism to the natives in the introductions to such works. Approbations in León’s sermonario declare it will be a great aid to both the “preachers and the native Mexicans of this kingdom.” Paredes states that his 1759 Promptuario is the best as any curate who simply reads the sermons in order from the beginning of the year will fulfill his obligation to preach to his parishioners. Moreover, among other reasons discussed above, Coronel composed his 1620 Discursos predicables in Maya so that “those trained in instructing…can easily give spiritual fodder to their lambs.”

In short, sermonarios provided overburdened priests oftentimes unfamiliar with the native tongue with short, succinct discourses in the vernacular, thus easing a bit their pastoral burden. Yet indigenous religious stewards shared this burden and created their own texts that occasionally conveyed unorthodox doctrine. Thus, books of sermons and sermons themselves appear as Category 1, 2, and 3 texts.

**Religious Dramas**

Originating in the Middle Ages, European religious theater provided didactic dramatizations of key events in Christian history such as the Nativity of Christ, the Epiphany or the visit of the three kings, the Passion, and the Resurrection which usually

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143 Paredes, Promptuario, preliminary leaf, unnumbered.
144 León, Primera parte, f. *3v.
145 Paredes, Promptuario, preliminary leaf, unnumbered.
146 Coronel, Discursos, unnumbered.
included the finding of Christ’s vacant tomb by the three Marys. These performances occurred both inside and outside church buildings and typically during Christmas or the Holy Week. Although originally composed in Latin, such plays eventually emerged in Castilian and subsequently spread to the New World to be translated into indigenous languages.  

Nahuas and Mayas quickly adopted religious drama no doubt for its similarities to preexisting religious activities centered on theatric displays and rituals. Nahuatl dramas appeared as early as the 1530s. From the beginning, ecclesiastics became concerned with how natives conducted the plays and portrayed the sacred roles. The Third Provincial Council cautioned ecclesiastics to oversee the use of masks, singing, and to control the dancing which oftentimes was described as profane. Despite these and other restrictions of illicitly composing religious dramas, indigenous stewards composed such dramas throughout the colonial period. This allows religious dramas to cover all three categories of texts. Although this study does not delve deeply into this genre, others more expert have already taken up a Nahuatl Theater project. However, the discovery and examination of Maya religious plays still await attention and fall within the scope of my ongoing research.


150 I refer to, of course, the work of Fernando Horcasitas and more recently, Louise Burkhart and Barry Sell’s *Nahuatl Theater* series from University of Oklahoma Press.
Testaments

More commonly referred to as the “last will and testament,” testaments are undoubtedly the largest body of indigenous-language ecclesiastical texts extant today. It is true that testaments are mundane, notarial documents. But their pious invocations and requests also award validity to testaments as religious texts. With roots extending back to the early Church, the testamentary genre was well established in Europe before it came to the Nahuas and Mayas. Christian testaments were both secular instruments used for the legal postmortem settlement of one’s estate, and spiritual aides to one’s soul after death. In principle, the Church required a will from each of its members. In Spain, the Synod of Zaragoza in 1357 forbade the burial of any intestate, thus linking the testament to salvation. Indeed, the archives of Spain are replete with testaments and demonstrate the strong European tradition this genre of texts enjoyed. Early missionaries included the composition of testaments among the religious training given to Nahuas and Mayas, and the natives quickly adopted the practice. Although models existed for the natives to follow, indigenous notaries and stewards produced testaments which reflected local interpretations of Christianity. Chapters 8 and 9 address this and all other topics related to testaments in greater detail. Testaments, then, largely fall within Category 3.

Sacramental Manuals (Manual de los Santos Sacramentos)

Inspired by European predecessors, native-language sacramental manuals provided ecclesiastics and native religious stewards with a guide book on the administration of the sacraments. That ecclesiastics disagreed on how such sacraments should be performed is

made evident by the plethora of published manuals. As mentioned, Saenz de la Peña cites 16 circulating manuals by 1642! The manuals’ discussion of the sacraments vary in length and thoroughness. Saenz de la Peña’s manual is very thorough and in even instructs priests on how to baptize monsters. Yet each ecclesiastic was biased to his own preferences, at times creating manuscript manuals. Sacramental manuals fall into Categories 1 and 2.

Conclusion

In the famous 1956 film The Ten Commandments the Pharaoh of Egypt (Yul Brynner) ended his decrees with the now-famous line, “So let it be written, so let it be done.” This phrase was to ensure uniformity that what he ordered was written and carried out. The Council of Indies, the Provincial Councils, Archbishops, bishops, and clergy all similarly made Pharoah-like decrees intended to eliminate the presence of the various and diverse discourses on Catholicism. Yet to no apparent avail. Like many aspects of the Spanish colonial empire, what was ordered and written was far from what was actually done.

In reality, the production of official texts to combat the existence of various versions of Catholicism only contributed to the problem: a problem which was greatly


154 The gradual rise of written law over oral law in Europe is well documented by Harold Berman, Law and Revolution: The Formation of the Western Legal Tradition (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983).
exacerbated by the presence of unpublished texts. Primarily authored by Nahua and Maya religious stewards, these unofficial manuscripts not only further diversified the Catholic message, but also could more easily infuse it with unorthodox teachings. Although we are seldom sure what, if any, texts native stewards used, their role as authors, teachers, and consumers of indigenous-language religious texts, particularly those unpublished, cannot be denied. What published and unpublished texts contained, and how they contributed to convey various Nahua and Maya Catholicisms are the topics of the remaining chapters.
Chapter 4

Getting Down to the Basics: Commandments and Prayers

Given that in the words of the Creed and the rest of the prayers of the Christian Doctrine consists all the entire foundation of our holy Catholic faith…it would not be right to let pass some of the improper words that until today have appeared both in the Creed and in the rest of the prayers…that are so improper and ambiguous that they only mean the opposite of what they then endeavored to mean.

—Bartolomé de Alva (1634)¹

To examine the various versions of Catholicism native-language religious texts helped produce, we must begin with its basic doctrines. The Bible and tradition (the established teachings of the Church recognized and applied locally) largely established these doctrines that all early-modern Catholics were expected to know. Indeed, the First Mexican Provincial Council of 1555 ordered that all natives should know the Christian Doctrine, including the Ten Commandments, Articles of Faith, Sign of the Cross, the Lord’s Prayer, Creed, Ave Maria, and the Five Senses. The Council stated that all natives should recite the Catholic prayers before the sacraments of Confession and Matrimony could be administered.² And during their visitas, bishops in Yucatan frequently recorded the names of those who failed to adequately recite the doctrina.³

How did such doctrines appear in Nahuatl and Maya religious texts? Did the many texts

¹ Bartolomé de Alva, Confessionario mayor y menor en lengua mexicana... (México: Francisco Salbago, 1634), reproduced in Obras Clásicas sobre la Lengua Náhuatl, ff. 48r-48v.

² Lorenzana, Concilios provinciales, 38-42. For an examination of Marian prayers see Burkhart, Before Guadalupe, 115-30.

³ Visita Pastorales, 1784, AHAY; Visita Pastorales, 1782-1785, AHAY. What prayers and doctrines of the bishops expected each Maya to know is unknown.
similarly translate the core doctrines, and did the various Catholicisms emerge simply as a result of their various translations into foreign languages?

This chapter answers such complex questions through an examination of how the Ten Commandments, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Creed appeared in Nahuatl and Maya religious texts. The similarities and variations in their appearance offer a nuanced view into the diversification process of Catholicism. It is nearly impossible to recreate the fluid mind of the Nahuas or Mayas throughout the colonial period to analyze what a specific term meant, or failed to mean, to them at a specific time. Therefore, this chapter focuses on what texts convey through the vocabulary itself, and not the ability or inability of that vocabulary to convey a specific Christian concept (although surely such existed).

The following demonstrates how, for the most part, such basic doctrines similarly appeared throughout native-language religious texts. In most cases, their journey from one language to another required little additional interpretation or explanation, just translation. However, as demonstrated in Chapter 2, the process of translation itself opens the door for authorial interpretation, and thus variations did exist among the texts. In the end, the version of doctrine appearing in Nahuatl and Maya religious texts depended on the author and era of the text. Most variations simply concern the rephrasing of traditional teachings. Others variations, however, were more substantive and altered the basic doctrines themselves.
The Ten Commandments

The Ten Commandments, also referred to collectively as the Decalogue, represent the basic tenets of the Mosaic Law. Written by the finger of God on Mount Sinai and given to Moses and Israel’s descendents, the commandments provide simple guidelines that govern a Christian’s actions, thoughts, and deeds towards God and his fellow man. Thus, a fundamental part of the Nahuas’ and Mayas’ evangelization necessarily included the Decalogue. Many indigenous-language religious texts contain the commandments: doctrinas list them for rote memorization, catechisms ask questions about them, sermons organize their contents around them, and confessional manuals base their questions upon them.

Because the Ten Commandments came from a single source, the Latin Vulgate, one would expect the translation of the commandments to display a large degree of consistency throughout texts. And for the most part, they do. Yet even among the most fundamental of doctrine, variation exists. Authors of the texts sometimes used what seems to have been a common translation, while others chose their own translations. Some of the commandments remain faithful to their Vulgate originals, while others included extra explanatory “baggage” their author deemed relevant. The following examines each of the Ten Commandments to demonstrate how they appeared in Nahuatl and Maya texts and to their native audiences.

“Thou shalt have none other gods before me.”

Molina’s 1546 doctrina translates this as “ticmotlaçotiliz yn icel teutl Dios yca muchi moyollo” (you will love the one lord

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4 Deuteronomy 5:7 (AV).
God with all your heart). Gante provides a very similar translation in his circa 1547 doctrina. But beginning with the anonymous 1548 doctrina, the translation changed to “ticmaiztiliz yuā ticnotlaçotiliz yn çć ce uel nelli Dios ipā inixqčh noũáonoc” (you will honor and love the only one true God above all dwelling things). As seen above, the Nahuatl translation typically adds the emphasis of “the one true God” likely in attempts to discern the singularity of God amongst precontact pantheons of Nahua deities. Although shortened somewhat in later years, this 1548 translation was maintained throughout the colonial period and appears in most texts.

The Maya translation of the first commandment also maintains notable consistency throughout the colonial period. The first example comes from the anonymous 1576 Morley Manuscript: “bin a yacun Dios. paynum yokol tulacal” (you will love God most above everything). This phrase appears duplicated nearly verbatim in the subsequent works of Coronel (1620), Beltrán (1757), and an eighteenth-century manuscript doctrina with significant differences occurring only in the orthography.

Only an 1803 confessional manual contributes a different orthography for the phrase, “Tu yax yalmathanilob Dios, bin a yacunt Dios” (Of the first commandment of God, you will love God). Here, the manual negates the nuance that one’s love for God should supersede all other desires is absent. Yet the change, however small, is significant.

5 García Icazbalceta, Códice Franciscano, 42

6 Doctrina christiana en lengua española y mexicana: hecha por los religiosos de la orden de Santo Domingo (México: Juan Pablos, 1548), reproduced in Obras Clásicas sobre la Lengua Náhuatl, f. LXXXv.

7 “The Morley Manuscript,” 97, as appears in Whalen, “An Annotated Translation.”

8 “Modo de confesar,” f. 5v.
as the whole purpose of the commandment is to elevate one’s devotion to God above all else.

“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.”9 Again, the most variation among the Nahuatl translations occurs among the early texts. Molina lists “amo tictlapicte nueuaz in itocatzin in Dios” (you should not say the name of God in vain); Gante’s work has “amo nictlapicte nuehuaz amo çā tlapic ic nitlateoneltiž in iteotocatzī dios” (I should not say in vain nor without good reason realize the name of God); and the anonymous 1548 doctrina contains “amo tictlapicte nueuaz amo ticauliquixtiz yn itocatcin” (you should not say in vain nor debase his (God’s) name).10 These additional explanations were for the benefit of the Nahuas to further explain that taking the Lord’s name in vain was to speak his name “without good reason.” Although different, all texts convey the same meaning and Molina’s phrase becomes the one chosen to appear throughout subsequent texts, no doubt due to its brevity.

The Morley Manuscript translates the commandment as “ma a halach thantic. u kaba ca yumil ti Dios” (do not swear falsely in the name of our lord God).11 Coronel, Beltrán, and the confessional manual all use a very similar variants of “ma à pakmab halach thhantic ù cilich kaba” (you do not swear in vain his holy name).12

9 Deuteronomy 5:11.

10 García Icazbalceta, Códice Franciscano, 42; Fray Pedro de Gante, Doctrina Christiana en lengua Mexicana (México: Imprenta de Juan Pablos, 1553), reproduced in Obras Clásicas sobre la Lengua Náhuatl, f. 37v; Doctrina christiana, f. LXXXIIr.


12 See for example Coronel, Discursos, unnumbered.
“Keep the Sabbath day to sanctify it.”\textsuperscript{13} The Catholic Church expands this commandment to include other holy days of obligation, or feast days, typically honoring saints. Indeed, Spanish catechisms commonly omitted Sunday all together and simply stated the commandment as “Sanctificarás las fiestas” (You will keep holy the feast days).\textsuperscript{14} Early Nahuatl translations, however, included both Sunday and the feast days: “yn domingo yuan in ilhuitl ypan atle taiz çan tiquixcauíz in titateomatiz” (on Sundays and feast days you should do nothing, you should only be engaged in spiritual matters).\textsuperscript{15} Yet most seventeenth-century translations eventually aligned with the Spanish and dropped the inclusion of Sunday, “Ca tlateomatiliztica tic píez in Pieloni Ilhuitl” (You should keep\textsuperscript{16} with devotion the feast days).\textsuperscript{17} Variations, however, do exist. For example, Aquino Cortés y Zedeño’s 1765 confessional manual shortens the commandment even further, “Santificar os ilhuíme” (Keep holy the days).\textsuperscript{18} Although perhaps the context of the text would allow Nahua listeners to understand “days” as “feast days,” the translation itself fails to convey such a meaning.

Interestingly, the Maya translations similarly follow the pattern of including Sunday in early translations only to omit it in later texts. The Morley Manuscript

\textsuperscript{13} Deuteronomy 5:12.

\textsuperscript{14} See for example Jerónimo de Ripalda, \textit{Doctrina christiana con exposición breve} (Burgos: Phelippe de Junta, 1591) reprinted by Juan M. Sánchez as \textit{Doctrina christiana del P. Jeronimo de Ripalda e intento bibliográfico de la misma, años 1591-1900} (Madrid: Imprenta Alemana, 1909); \textit{Catecismo y suma}, 8-9.

\textsuperscript{15} García Icazbalceta, \textit{Códice Franciscano}, 42.

\textsuperscript{16} The Nahuatl verb “pia” actually means “to guard, keep, hold, have.” But by the time this appeared in Paredes’ 1759 \textit{Promptuario}, the verb conveyed a meaning similar to the Spanish “tener” (to keep, to have).

\textsuperscript{17} Paredes, \textit{Promptuario}, 142.

\textsuperscript{18} Aquino Cortés y Zedeño, \textit{Arte, vocabulario, y confessionario}, 142.
incorporates Sunday, but falls silent on feast days, “*bin a santocint Domingo*” (you will sanctify Sunday).\(^{19}\) Ironically, the translation, with regards to the Vulgate, is correct, but it fails to include a vital part of Catholicism. However, Coronel and Beltrán swing the pendulum the other way to include feast days and omit Sunday altogether, “*bin a tilizcunt ù kin mankinalob tacumbilobe*” (you will sanctify feast days).\(^{20}\)

The cause for the eventual omission of Sunday among Nahuatl and Maya texts is uncertain, but perhaps reflects a practiced religion wherein (similar to today) parishioners place greater emphasis on feast days than the regularly occurring Sabbath. Or, perhaps the reoccurring Sabbath day exempted it from mention in such texts. Another possibility includes the way natives celebrated feast days. Natives received a “day off” during feast days and typically attended the celebrations to partake, among other things, of the food and drink. Clerics frequently complained that natives reserved such days for drinking.\(^{21}\) Thus, perhaps the focus represents ecclesiastics’ concern with natives celebrating such days in an unholy fashion and broader issues of social control.

“Honor thy father and thy mother.”\(^{22}\) All Nahuatl texts largely contain the translation, “*Ca tiquimmahuiztiliz in Mota ihuan in Monan*” (You should honor your father and mother).\(^{23}\) The only variations come from, again, earlier texts such as Gante, the anonymous doctrina, or Anunciación’s 1565 doctrina that augments the translation

\(^{19}\) “The Morley Manuscript,” 99, as appears in Whalen, “An Annotated Translation.”

\(^{20}\) Coronel, *Discursos*, unnumbered; Beltrán, *Doctrina Christiana*, 89.

\(^{21}\) Taylor, *Drinking*, 57-72.

\(^{22}\) Deuteronomy 5:16.

\(^{23}\) Ripalda, *Catecismo mexicano*, 38.
with an admonition to obey parental figures.\textsuperscript{24} Maya texts maintain a standard translation throughout the colonial period: “\textit{Tu canpel yalmatkanil bin a tzic a Yum yetel a Naa}” (Of the fourth commandment, you will honor your father and your mother).\textsuperscript{25} “Thou shalt not kill.”\textsuperscript{26} As expected, earlier translations varied and included additional elements. The anonymous 1548 doctrina has, “\textit{ca yehuatl in amo titemictiz. Yuan yn ayac tiquelehuiz yn ayac ticmicultiz im amomac miqui in manoço polini: in manoço mococo}” (you should not kill people, and you should desire that no one dies by your hand, or is destroyed, or is sick).\textsuperscript{27} This Nahua-inspired coupling and augmentation of the commandment to include not only actions but desires fades over time as most late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century texts simply state, “\textit{Ca ayac momac miquiz}” (No one should die by your hand).\textsuperscript{28} Once again, however, Aquino Cortés y Zedeño shortens the phrase even further, this time into an incoherent translation, “\textit{amo mictiz}” that he claims represents the spoken language of Guadalajara.\textsuperscript{29}

This and the other remaining commandments are missing from the Morley Manuscript, although they surely existed at one time. Although earlier texts may have

\textsuperscript{24} Gante, \textit{Doctrina}, f. 38v; \textit{Doctrina christiana}, LXXXIIIv.

\textsuperscript{25} “\textit{Modo de confesar},” f. 1v.

\textsuperscript{26} Deuteronomy 5:17.

\textsuperscript{27} \textit{Doctrina christiana}, f. LXXXIIIr.

\textsuperscript{28} Paredes, \textit{Promptuario}, 159.

\textsuperscript{29} Aquino Cortés y Zedeño, \textit{Arte, vocabulario, y confessionario}, 151. One can assume that the once transitive verb \textit{mictia} was commonly used in this region without a necessary object to simply mean “to kill,” thus making \textit{amo mictiz}, “he should not kill.”
included the aspect of desire, Coronel and Beltrán list the translation as, “ma uil à cimzah,” (you do not kill), and subsequent texts adhere to this rendition.  

“Neither shalt thou commit adultery.” This commandment demonstrates perhaps the most variation in Nahuatl translations due to the different translations of the “adultery” or “fornication.” However, most texts used the phrase “ahuilnemiz” (to go about playing, wasting time, or to live pleasurably), to make “amo taahuilnemiz” (you should not fornicate). Unlike the Nahuatl, the Maya translations share the same phrase, “ma uil à pakkeban,” (you do not fornicate). Moreover, the Maya word for fornicate, pakkeban, derives from pak “to unite” and keban “evil or sin” to make a literal translation of “evil unison.” Because the precontact Maya did not view sexual relations as evil, this is likely a colonial construction inspired by Catholic beliefs heralding the sinful nature of intercourse. Although the original commandment addressed the sexual activities of married persons, the Nahuatl and Maya translations warned against all illicit sexual behavior through their oftentimes nebulous translations of “fornication.” One exception is Anunciación who offers, “amo tahauilnemiz, amo titetlaximaz” (you should not fornicate, nor commit adultery).

“Neither shalt thou steal.” All the Nahuatl and Maya translations of this commandment are consistent throughout all texts. The eighth commandment, “Neither shalt thou bear false witness against thy neighbor,” is similarly consistent among Maya texts, although Nahuatl translations contain a few variations. Most Nahuatl texts add to

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30 Coronel, Discursos, unnumbered; Beltrán, Doctrina Christiana, 89.
31 Deuteronomy 5:18.
32 García Icazbalceta, Códice Franciscano, 42.
33 Anunciación, Doctrina cristiana, f. 37v.
the commandment a caution typically found in Spanish works—even today—about lying
to make, “Ca amo titetentlapiquiz; ámo no tiztlacatiz” (You should not give false
testimony about someone, nor lie).34 Yet the earlier texts of Gante and the anonymous
doctrina use a couplet to explain the concept creating, “Amo nitetētlapiq̓ z / amo çā tlapic
tetech nictlamiztitlacolli” (I should not give false testimony about someone, I should not
allocate sin on someone without good reason).35

The Nahuatl and Maya translations of the final two commandments—“Neither
shallt thou desire thy neighbor’s wife, neither shalt thou covet…anything that is thy
neighbor’s”36—also display a large degree of consistency. The only significant variation
occurs early on with Anunciación adding to the translation the phrase, “in anoço çan
iuhnemi” (or someone single), and later with some Nahuatl translations choosing
“tenamic” (someone’s spouse) and “teciuah” (someone’s wife).37 The Maya translations
always contain “yatan a lak” (wife of your neighbor).38

In short, Nahuatl and Maya translations of the Decalogue are largely consistent
throughout indigenous-language religious texts. To be sure, variations exist. Many result
from the initial years of evangelization when friars and their native aides deemed more
explanation necessary, or when concepts had yet to settle into fixed translated phrases.
Others result from the author’s personal preferences and at times pose different

34 Ripalda, Catecismo mexicano, 38; Catecismo y suma, 7-8; Jerónimo de Ripalda, Catecismo de
la doctrina cristiana (Aguascalientes, México: Secretaría de Organización de la Unión Nacional
Sinarquista de Aguascalientes y Siete Comunicación, 2001), 4.

35 Gante, Doctrina, f. 40r.

36 Deuteronomy 5:21.

37 For example, Anunciación, Doctrina cristiana, f. 37v.

38 Coronel, Discursos, unnumbered; Beltrán, Doctrina Christiana, 89.
interpretations. Also, the large lack of variation among the Maya texts not only likely resulted from the copying of texts, but also due to the limited texts available for examination. Yet as a majority, Nahuatl and Maya texts translate the Ten Commandments in a similar fashion. Even Sahagún’s *Psalmodia* of canticles follows the norm when relating the Decalogue.\(^{39}\)

Such consistency is not only limited to the Decalogue, but to other standard teachings such as the five commandments of the Church, Act of Contrition, the sacraments, the Articles of Faith, seven deadly sins and seven virtues, and fourteen works of mercy, and others.\(^{40}\) Indeed, although variations similar to what was demonstrated above exist, the translation of such concepts largely maintained uniformity.

Why are these phrases similarly translated throughout all Nahuatl and Maya texts? A simple answer could be that these are immutable phrases of doctrine that require rather straightforward translations and little or no interpretation. As such, they are susceptible to little deviance. To be sure some concepts failed to easily translate into Nahuatl or Maya, thus making room for interpretation. Yet I do not here speak of deviance in native understandings of the translated words—for more on that subject see Burkhart’s *Slippery Earth*—but deviance in the translation themselves. Most of these doctrinal phrases derive from written scripture or papal decree, thus reducing the degree of error or alteration when translated into other languages. Even if the author did not have a written original to translate from, such doctrines were simple enough for any

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\(^{40}\) All such teachings represent the core of the Tridentine catechism designed to delineate the doctrines of the Church. For more information on each of these components see *Catechism of the Catholic Church: Revised in Accordance with the Official Latin Text Promulgated by Pope John Paul II* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997).
parish priest to memorize, as was their obligation. As demonstrated above, deviation did occur at times in significant ways. But such was the exception rather than the norm.

Thus, generally speaking, Nahuas and Mayas received a rather uniform instruction on the Decalogue that paralleled official doctrine.

The Lord’s Prayer

According to Christian belief, in response to his disciples’ inquiry on how to pray, Christ responded with what is commonly known as “The Lord’s Prayer,” or “Our Father,” or Pater Noster. Explaining the prayer to its Maya audience, the Morley Manuscript states,


You children, we greatly thank our redeemer Jesus Christ, because He wished to compose and establish for us His prayer, this "Our Father," which is the real perfection of prayers, because man did not speak and invent it; rather our redeemer Jesus Christ composed it, from His mouth, and it was brief, the saying of the "Our Father" by our redeemer, so that we may memorize it quickly and say it frequently every day also. Although brief the words, nevertheless it has whatever is necessary for our soul and body, so these few words have contained everything we need to ask from God, then.\[41\]

In his instructions to the Nahua, Sahagún states that “inin tlaltatlauhtiloni, cenca uimouelcaquitia in totecui Dios: iehica ca itlatlaliltzin in itlaçopiltzin in

*totemaquisticatzin Iesu Christo*” (to this prayer our Lord God listens with great favor, because it is the composition of his beloved son, our savior Jesus Christ).\(^{42}\)

The importance of the prayer in Catholicism cannot be understated and it forms a large part of every Catholic’s basic indoctrination. Besides personal recitation at night and in the morning, the Lord’s Prayer is recited during numerous Catholic rites including the Eucharist. Such commonality extended to the New World where a 1547 Nahua testator requested that the Lord’s Prayer be recited upon his death.\(^{43}\) Thus, indigenous-language religious texts frequently contained translations of the prayer followed by explanations of its significance. Because the Lord’s Prayer derives from the Vulgate and was expected to be memorized by all Christians, its translation maintained a large degree of consistency. However, similar to the Decalogue, differences existed and at times were quite significant.

Testarians frequently contained the Lord’s Prayer and one particular example includes a Nahuatl translation of the pictures. Housed in the British Library and likely an early seventeenth-century copy of an earlier original, the *Egerton Manuscript* 2898 provides a unique glimpse of an early Nahuatl rendition of the Lord’s Prayer. Compare its English translation with the modern English version:

**English Version**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by they name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.\(^{44}\)


\(^{44}\) I am grateful to Stafford Poole for providing this rendition.
At first glance, one notices the reference to *tlaxcalli*, “tortillas,” although the meaning encompassed any kind of bread. Wheat bread was an introduced item and was initially referred to as *Caxtillan tlaxcalli*, “Castile tortillas,” and more commonly by its loanword “*pan*.” Also, “lead us not into temptation” becomes “do not abandon us” in the Nahuatl text. Here, the author adds his own interpretation: the Lord’s abandonment of someone would lead to his/her committing mortal sin. All other deviations are minute preferences in prose expected in translation that fail to significantly alter the meaning of the prayer. However, other translations wielded a greater impact on the prayer’s meaning. Let us consider both while examining other renditions of the prayer.

Molina’s rendition of the Lord’s Prayer in his 1546 Doctrina closely mirrors that of the testarian:

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45 The British Library, MS Egerton 2898. My transcription and translation of the manuscript’s Nahuatl derived from an excellent photographic image of the manuscript in Lara’s *Christian Texts*, 143. A brief description of the manuscript can also be found in Samuel Y. Edgerton, *Theaters of Conversion: Religious Architecture and Indian Artisans in Colonial Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001), 28-9.

O our Father who is in heaven, may your name be praised. May your kingdom come, may what you wish be done on earth as is done in heaven. Give us today our tortillas we need daily. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who wrong us. Do not abandon us so that we do not fall into temptation. Save us from evil. May it be done (Amen).

Other than orthographic differences, the most significant change occurs in Molina’s use of the word *teneyeyecoltiliztli*, “temptation,” rather than *temictiani tlatlacolli* “mortal sin.” The consequence of the withdrawal of the Lord’s presence, then, lessened in Molina’s prayer from a mortal sin to general temptation. However, Molina’s version more closely represents the biblical version.

This Nahuatl version of the prayer appears in most Nahua religious texts with most variations occurring in prose and not in doctrine. However, this stability largely occurred in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Indeed, like the Decalogue, the formula expressed more significant variation within sixteenth- and even seventeenth-century texts. Such variation is evident in the testarian and Molina’s prayers, and continues with Sahagún. Sahagún’s Nahua aides inserted within the friar’s 1583 *Psalmody* a discussion of the Lord’s Prayer that detailed its various parts. Attempting to replace precontact Nahua song and dance rituals to pagan deities with Christian canticles, Sahagún’s *Psalmody* provided the following formula:

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47 García Icazbalceta, *Códice Franciscano*, 36.

48 For more on Sahagún’s Psalmody see Sahagún, *Psalmodia*; Burkhart, *Before Guadalupe*, 40.
O our Father who is in heaven, may your name be known everywhere for it is perfectly good. May your kingdom come, may you really govern us, may you also assign to us your kingdom. May your will be done everywhere on earth as it is done there in heaven. Give us today our food we need daily. Forgive us of our sins as we forgive those who wrong us. O our lord, I also implore you that when the devil tempts us, may you not abandon us so that we fall into his hands. O lord, ruler who is in heaven, I really implore you, save us from all evil, may we not fall into sin, your rage, your anger.

Admittedly, the musical aspect of the text could have produced the prayer’s heightened degree of variation. However, the text was didactic and, therefore, conveyed this version. Here, “food” replaces “tortilla,” the specific Nahuatl word motlanequilitizin enters for “your will,” and the prayer expresses the desire to be governed by God.

However, more significant alterations exist. Instead of pleading with God for his help in avoiding temptation the passage asks for his help in avoiding sin and his rage and anger. Yet the coupling Nahuatl construction of the text “macamo ipan tiuetzitcā in tlatlaculli, in motlaueltzin, in moqualantzin” (may we not fall into sin, your rage, your anger) also allows for sin to be equated with the rage and anger of God, as if sin were a result of such divine wrath. Such a concept is most unorthodox as it strips personal responsibility for

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49 Sahagún, Psalmodia, 20-3. To avoid attributing any differences among the prayers to differences in the translator’s preferences, I have used my own translation of the passage while recognizing the excellence of Arthur Anderson’s translation in his work.
sin from the sinner making God the source of sin and misfortunes—a concept that aligned well with precontact Nahua deities.\textsuperscript{50}

Variations also exist in Alva’s 1634 version of the prayer, but, unlike Sahagún, they are the result of omissions:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Totatzine in ilhuicac timoetztica, ma çenca yectenehuallo in motocatzin, ma hualauh in motlatocayotzin ma chihuallo in motlanequilitzin in yuh chihuallo in ilhuicac in tlalticpac, auh ma xitechmomaquilli in axcan in totlaxcal momotlaye totech monequiz, auh ma xitechmopopolhuillilli in totlatlacol, in yuh tiquinpopolhuia in techtlatlacalhuia, auh macamo xitechmocahuilli inic ipan tihuetzizque in tene[y]ecoltiliztli. Ma in mochihua.}
\end{quote}

O our Father who is in heaven, may your name be greatly praised, may your kingdom come, may your will be done as it is done in heaven and earth. Give us today our tortillas we need daily. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who wrong us. Do not abandon us so that we fall into temptation. May it be done (Amen).\textsuperscript{51}

Regarding the final line, the usual Nahuatl rendition reads “Macamo xitechmomacahuili; inic amo ipan tihuetzizque in teneyeecoltiliztli, çan ye ma xitechmomaquixtilli in ihuicpa in amo qualli” (Do not abandon us so that we do not fall into temptation, but save us from evil). However, Alva omits a negative statement so the passage reads “inic ipan tihuetzizque in tene[y]ecoltiliztli” (so that we fall into temptation). The omission is likely a simple error and the passage still carries the basic meaning that the presence of God prevents sin. Also, Alva omits the plea of salvation from evil. Ironically, at the end of his small confessional manual, Alva inserts a note elucidating the problems with previous translations of Catholic prayers while offering his versions as a remedy. Yet in the end, Alva’s self-proclaimed perfected prayer contains various unorthodox elements.

\textsuperscript{50} See Burkhart, \textit{Slippery Earth}, 15-45.

\textsuperscript{51} Alva, \textit{Guide to Confession}, 162. Transcription by Barry Sell and John F. Schwaller. To avoid attributing any differences among the prayers to differences in the translator’s preferences, I have used my own translation of this and all other Nahuatl passages unless otherwise noted while recognizing the excellence of Sell and Schwaller’s original.
In 1718, the Augustinian Manuel Pérez published his “corrected” version of Molina’s 1546 doctrina. Generally speaking, Pérez made few changes to Molina’s original rendition of the Lord’s Prayer adding the word motlanequilitzin (your will) and changing the plea “do not abandon us” to “macamo xitechmomacahuili” which although conveying the sense of abandoning, does so with macahu which extends a meaning of being let go or dropped.52 Such changes continued throughout the colonial period as seen in Paredes’ 1758 translation of Ripalda’s catechism and Paredes’ own 1759 Promptuario with the primary variation occurring in the choice between “do not abandon us” and “do not let go of us.”53 Even the 1774 manuscript doctrina of an anonymous Franciscan from the convent of Taxco contains a nearly verbatim copy of Pérez and Ripalda’s edition of Molina’s prayer.54 Thus, most indigenous-language religious texts similarly conveyed the Lord’s Prayer, particularly those of the mid seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. However, variations existed ranging from simple orthographic preferences to more substantial changes that distinguished one prayer from the next.

Maya religious texts translate the Lord’s Prayer in a fashion similar to Nahuatl. Also, similar to earlier Nahuatl texts, the most variation is found among early Maya texts.

The Morley Manuscript translates the prayer as thus:

*ca yum yanech ti caane Sanctocinabac cilichcunabac a kaba Tac a uahualil* [sic]  
c okol Vrzcinbac a volah: ti luum: bay te ti caane Dza ca çamal kin uah toon

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54 “Breve Tratado de Doctrina Christiana puesto en lengua mexicana…”, GCMM, no. 9, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
helelae. & Haues ca sipil bay licil. ca hausic V sipil sipan toone chanix a uilab ca lubul: ti tumtahil Dzal pach Heuac lukeçon ychil lobil.\textsuperscript{55}

Our father who is in heaven, sanctified, blessed is your name. Your royalty comes for us, your will will be done well on earth as there in heaven. Give our daily tortilla to us today, etc. Remove our sins as we now remove the sin that was sinned against us, do not allow us to fall into coerced trials, but take us from evil.

Following the prayer, the manuscript states that Mayas are to also say:

\begin{quote}
yumile lukesoon ti tzicba lukesoon ti nonohbail lukeçoon ti tzuc achil lukeçoon. ti hunkul cimil lukeçoon tu kakil mitnal lukeçoon tu Dzal pach y tu tabsah lobil Uincob lukeçoon tu tabsah y. tu Dzalpach ca cucutil lukeçoon ti Uaçut cimil Dzocebali tun luesoon. ychil lobil tulacal yoklal ma hunppelobili ca nahil lukiabal heuac hach yab ti hunlukule.
\end{quote}

Lord, deliver us from pride, take us from arrogance, take us from lust, take us from eternal death, take us from the fires of hell, take us from coercion and the deceits of evil men, take us from the deceits and the compulsion of our bodies, take us from sudden death, and finally then, take us from all evil, because there is not only one of them from which we need to be taken, but very many, always.\textsuperscript{56}

This passage is an elaboration of the final line of the prayer “deliver us from evil.”

It is unclear whether or not this last segment was to be included with the prayer.

However, the prose of the text suggests its inclusion and such elaboration is not uncommon among unofficial, native-authored texts. Interestingly, the additional passage fails to appear in any other official Maya translation of the prayer thus aligning its existence with the preferences of the author and the unsupervised nature of the text’s composition.

When Coronel used parts of the Morley Manuscript to compose his 1620 doctrina, he omitted the addition while altering other bits of syntax:


Ca yum yanech ti caane, sanctocinabac a kaba tac a uahaulil c okol, utzcinabac a uolah ti luum, ba te ti caane, >za ca çamal kin uah toon, heleleæ cateçix ca çipil, bay ca çatçic v çipil, ah çipilob toone, maix a uilic ca lubul, tac tumtabale heuac lukezon, ychil lobil. Amen Iesus.57

Our father who is in heaven, sanctified is your name, your royalty comes for us, your will will be done well on earth as there in heaven, give our daily tortilla to us today, forgive our sins as we forgive the sins of sinners against us, do not allow us to fall into trials but take us from evil. Amen Jesus.

However, Coronel did make notable alterations to the previous edition of the prayer. Coronel reduces “tumtal dzal pach” (coerced trials) to “tumtabale” (trials) likely to avoid the assumption that God “coerced” or “forced” people into trials thus negating free will and overall responsibility for one’s actions. Coronel also uses “çat” or “sat” (to lose) for “forgive” instead of “haw” (to remove, cease, or divert). Although neither truly conveys the Catholic meaning of forgiveness, “sat” becomes the popular choice in Maya religious texts.

Beltrán’s 1757 edition of his 1740 doctrina contains the prayer which mirrors Coronel’s version. Yet Beltrán makes some corrections in the translation. Indeed, in the Prologue to the 1740 doctrina published alongside his Novena, Beltrán mentions—similar to Alva—his inclusion of a section that corrects certain words in Coronel’s original which, again, actually derived from the native-authored Morley Manuscript. He states, “Likewise, I offer to Your Illustriousness in this book more admonitions or corrections that I have made concerning the prayers and doctrina that [Mayas] pray.”58 Written in Spanish, these corrections explained the various errors in the Maya translation. To mend such errors, Beltrán assembled together a group of fellow ecclesiastics to review the manuscript.

57 Fray Juan Coronel, Doctrina Christiana en lengua maya. México: Diego Garrido, 1620. TULAL, photostatic copy, 1.

58 Beltrán, Novena, preliminary leaf, unnumbered, photostat reproduction, CAIHY SM-46.
with him “punto por punto” to ensure its correctness. In the end, ecclesiastical peers deemed Beltrán’s work free “of anything that goes against our holy faith,” and approved its publication in January 11, 1739. Although somewhat out of the ordinary, this corrective section seems logical when considering that Beltrán’s doctrina closely parallels Coronel’s earlier work.

Here now is Beltrán’s 1757 version of the Lord’s Prayer as transcribed by Berendt:

_Ca yum, yanech ti Caanob, cîlichcunabac à kaba: tac à uahaulil c okol: utzcînabac à uolah, ti luum, baix te ti caane; Dza ca zamal kin uah toon helelae: zatez ix ca zipil, bay ca zatzic ù zipil ah zipiloob toone: maix à ca uilic lubul ti tumtabale; heuac lukecoon ichil lobil. Amen Jesus._

Our father who is in the heavens, blessed is your name, your royalty comes for us; your will will be done well on earth as there in heaven. Give our daily tortilla to us today; forgive our sins as we forgive the sins of sinners against us; do not allow us to fall into temptation, but take us from evil. Amen Jesus.

Among his corrections, in the first line of the prayer Beltrán changed “yanech ti canne” (you are in heaven) to “yanech ti Caanob” (you are in the heavens). Perhaps referencing both the European and Maya belief in a stratified heaven, this reference to multiple heavens persisted throughout the years and appears in the 1847 Maya translation of Ripalda’s doctrina.

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59 Ibid., preliminary leaf, unnumbered.
60 Ibid., preliminary leaf, unnumbered.
61 Reflecting the high expectations of early friars, Coronel’s work represents a more lengthy instruction than Beltrán’s doctrina. In addition, although when Hermann Carl Berendt made a handwritten copy of Beltrán’s 1757 doctrina he excluded the corrective section, he did note with footnotes throughout his copy which words Beltrán changed.
62 Beltrán, _Doctrina Christiana_, 87.
63 Ripalda, _Catecismo y esposicion_, 7.
Although only making minor changes, Beltrán and the religious authorities of the time—including the bishop of Yucatan, don Francisco Pablo de Matos,—deemed Coronel’s version of the prayer sufficiently unsatisfactory to encourage the use and publication of Beltrán’s edition “throughout all the province.”64 Changes to the Maya translation of the Lord’s Prayer continued well beyond the colonial period. Interestingly, the most obvious changes to the formula occurred in the nineteenth century when Ruz translated Ripalda’s catechism into Maya in 1847:

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H\ c\ Yum,\ cá\ yanéech\ ti\ le\ cáanoob\ cilichcuntabac\ á\ kaba,\ talac\ ti\ c\ toon\ a\ ahauil,\ mentabac\ á\ uolah\ bay\ ti\ le\ lúum\ hebic\ ti\ le\ cáan:\ Le\ ti\ c\ uah\ ti\ zamalkinil\ c\ >atoon\ behelé,\ iiix\ c\ zatez\ c\ tóon\ c\ paxóob,\ bay\ hebic\ c\ tóon\ c\ záat-zicóob\ ti\ ah\ paxoob\ c\ tooné:\ Iix\ má\ á\ paticón\ lubul\ ti\ tuntahul\ kaz,\ hebac\ tocón\ ti\ lobil.

Bay\ layac\ Jesus.\ 65
\]

Our father who is in the heavens, blessed is your name, your royalty comes to us, your will will be done, as on earth as in heaven. Our daily tortilla give it to us today, and forgive us our debt as we forgive our debtors; and do not leave us to fall in the bad tests, but take us from evil. As it is done (Amen), Jesus.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, Ruz’ catechism was the first official Maya translation of Ripalda’s 1591 Spanish work. The prose and style of Ruz’ work betrays his attempts to more closely mirror a Spanish model. Most notable is his use of pax, “debt” instead of the colonial sip, “sin.” This ambiguity in terminology did not originate in the colonial period, but among the New Testament authors themselves: St. Matthew uses the word “debt,” and St. Luke employs “sin.”66 In Aramaic, the prayer’s original language, the word for “debt” can also mean “sin.” Following Ripalda, Ruz choose the translation found in St. Matthew. Moreover, when compared with the preceding versions of the


65 Ripalda, Catecismo y esposicion, 7.

Lord’s Prayer, Ruz’ version and its attempt to mirror Spanish precedents reflects a literary version of the prayer, while its predecessors reflect the versions spoken at the time.

As mentioned, the Maya version is reminiscent of Nahuatl passages, even making similar use of “tortilla”—the most common “bread” to both Nahuas and Mayas. However, the Maya versions are unique from those Nahuatl. Besides the Maya texts’ philological preferment to not use the optative (unlike the Nahuatl texts), the Maya texts make sense of the prayer in different ways. For example, Nahuas forgive those that have offended them, Mayas forgive sinners who have sinned against them. Nahuas ask God to save them from evil, Mayas ask him to take them from evil. To be sure, these are minor variations that do not profoundly affect the prayer’s intent. However, such variations fall consistently and distinctly into Nahua and Maya versions. It appears that both Central Mexico and the Yucatan established a formula for the prayer in the mid to late sixteenth century that continued throughout the colonial period with stylistic, and the occasional, contextual variations. Each author modified the prayer as he saw fit. Yet such modifications generally did not prevent Nahuas or Mayas from receiving a rather uniform, accurate rendition of the Lord’s Prayer.

The Apostles’ Creed

Catholic tradition states that the Creed arose from the declarations of faith the twelve apostles uttered upon receiving the Holy Spirit during Pentecost. Similar to the

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67 Although the Maya word for “sin,” çipíl, can also mean offense, it universally appears for “sin” in Maya religious texts.
Lord’s Prayer, the Creed plays a large part in the catechism. Indeed, instructing Nahuas on the importance of these prayers, Sahagún relates the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer to “incomparable feathered bracelets and a variety of precious spiritual flowered vestments” that require recitation upon arising and lying down or risk “sin[ning] grievously in taking no care of the lordly necklace, of their spiritual adornment.” As such, native-language religious texts frequently included their translation (see Appendix B and C).

Similar to the Lord’s Prayer, the translations are based on existing models and every priest and devout Catholic knew the prayer by memory. As with the Decalogue and the Lord’s Prayer, early sixteenth-century versions of the Creed contained the most variation. Yet overall, all colonial texts show a great degree of consistency. Molina’s version in his 1546 doctrina juxtaposed with the English version provides an early example:

**Standard English Version**

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.

**Molina’s Doctrina, 1546**


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68 Sahagún, Psalmodia, 17-21.

69 Again, I thank Stafford Poole for providing this rendition.
I believe in God the Father All-powerful who created and made the heaven and earth. I believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, the really only child of God, our really true ruler. He came to assume flesh through the Holy Spirit. He came to be born of the always very true virgin Holy Mary. He suffered for us by order of Pontius Pilate, his arms were spread on the cross, he died, and was buried. He descended to hell, on the third day he revived from among the dead. He ascended to heaven to go sit at the right hand of his father, God All-powerful. From there he will descend to come to judge the living and the dead. Also, I believe in God the Holy Spirit and I believe in the Holy Catholic Church. Also, I believe in the spiritual gathering of the saints. Also, I believe in the forgiveness of sins, and I believe that all people will revive, and I believe that everyone will live eternally. May it be done (Amen).  

Generally speaking, Molina presents a faithful rendition of the original. He includes all basic concepts and main points with some augmentation. Unfamiliar terms such as “resurrection” or “life everlasting” are fleshed out in description, and familiar terms, such as “mictlan,” (place of/among the dead) are used as substitutes for Christian concepts, in this case “hell.” Where variation does occur is in the epithets for Mary and God. Nahuatl religious texts employed a variety of epithets for Mary including the above “always true virgin.” Carrying the specific intention of conveying the Catholic belief of Mary’s perpetual virginity, this phrase also appears in Anunciación’s 1565 doctrina whose version of the Creed parallels Molina’s with the primary exception that Anunciación did not employ purposive motion forms as readily as Molina.  

70 García Icazbalceta, Códice Franciscano, 35-6.  
71 Anunciación, Doctrina cristiana, ff. 13r-13v.
For God, earlier texts such as Molina’s commonly used the phrase “ixquich ihueli,” (all his power) for “almighty.” “Ixquich ihuili” appears throughout many early texts and represents the initial attempt at translating “omnipotent.” Yet not all friars agreed with this chosen phrase. Within the corrective discourse following his confessional manuals, Alva states that, “it would not be right to let pass some [of the] improper words that until today have been accepted both in the Creed and in the rest of the prayers.” Alva takes particular umbrage with “ixquich ihuili” stating, “the suitable and native meaning of these words…does not mean the same as Omnipotentem (Almighty)…but the same as if they had said ‘so much power.’” This is proved because the word ixquich signifies a very finite and limited thing.” Instead, Alva argues “çenhuellitini,” (someone able to do all) is the better choice. (Interestingly, Alva himself, or better his aides whose work he apparently did not check closely, employed mochi yhuelitzin for “almighty” in his large confessional manual). He then provides his version of the Creed and other prayers which correct additional words that “to avoid long-windedness” he does not mention. Here is Alva’s version:

Nicnoneltoquitia in çenhuellitini Dios Tetatzin in oquimochihuilli in ilhuicatl in italipcactli, no nicnoneltoquitia in Totecuyo Iesu Christo in çan huel yçeltzin yplitzin Dios in iteotlamahuicolticatzinco Spiritu Sancto omonacayotzino: omotlacatilli yetzinco in Santa Maria mocmaçitzinotica çemicac ychpochtli: motlahyyohuilli ytencopa in Pontio Pilato, + Cruzitech mamaçoaltiloc, momiquilli tococ motemohui in mictlan, yyełhuitica [sic] mozcallitzino intloc in

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72 See for example its use by a notary in 1580 Culhuacan. Cline and León-Portilla, Testaments of Culhuacan, 66-7.

73 Alva, Guide to Confession, 158. Translation by Sell and Schwaller.

74 Ibid., 160.

75 Ibid., 79.

76 Ibid., 161, 158-164.
I believe in the Almighty God the Father who made the heaven and earth. Also, I believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, the really only child of God who assumed flesh through the divine miracle of the Holy Spirit. He was born of Holy Mary, entirely pure, eternally virgin. He suffered by order of Pontius Pilate, + his arms were spread on the cross, he died, was buried, descended to hell, on the third day he revived among the dead, he ascended to heaven to go sit at the right hand of the Almighty God the Father. And from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. Also, I believe in God the Holy Spirit, Holy Catholic Church, and I believe concerning the spiritual gathering of the saints and concerning the forgiveness of sins, and that life will go on again.

Among other variations, Alva uses different epithets for the Virgin, attributes Christ’s birth as the divine miracle of the Holy Spirit, and describes the resurrection as living again. Yet perhaps more significant is his omission of the belief in life everlasting. Similar to his omissions found in the Lord’s Prayer, Alva either forgot or simply omitted this final statement of faith.

Despite Alva’s attempts at correcting the prayers, old epithets and phrases resurfaced, but with a twist. Paredes’ 1758 translation of Ripalda’s Spanish catechism adds the particle “cem,” (forever, entirely, wholly) to the familiar “ixquich ihueli” for “Almighty.” Other differences exist such as the use of the nominalized noun “nezcalilizhtli,” (resurrection) from the verb “izcalia,” (to revive or be restored) for “resurrection” instead of a descriptive sentence. In addition, the anonymous 1774 manuscript doctrina parallels Ripalda’s version very closely. Overall, the Nahuatl versions of the prayer resembled each other while containing nuances that made each one

77 Ibid., 162. Transcription and translation by Sell and Schwaller with some modifications by the author for comparative purposes reflecting personal preferences.
distinct. Some distinctions were simple changes in prose that left the prayer’s intent unaltered; others affected the prayer’s meaning in ways that alarmed friars.

The existing examples of the Creed in Maya also seem to have derived from a single model that continued throughout the colonial period. Coronel’s 1620 Doctrina provides the first example:

Ocaan ti uol Dios citbil, uchuc tumen tuçinile, y ahmenul caan yetel luum, Ocaan ix ti uol, ca yumil ti Iesu Christo, uppelel mehenile, lay hichhnabi ti Spiritusancto, çihijx ti çuhuy sancta Maria, tali tuchi Poncio Pilato numci ti ya, çijn ciix ti Cruz, cimi tun ca muc'i, caix emi tu kaçal mitmal, limbo u kabae tu yoxkin caput cuxlahi ychil cimenob ca naaci ti caan tij cuman tu nooh Dios citbil vchuc tumë tuçinile tij tun likul cabintac v xotob v kin cuxanob yetel cimenob. Ocaan ix ti uol Spiritusancto, yetel sancta Yglesia Catolicae v molay sanctoobe v çatalix keban xan v caput cuxtaliç ca bakel yetel ix hūkul cuxtale. Amen Iesus.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, I believe also in our lord Jesus Christ, the only one son, that was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born also of the virgin Holy Mary, from the command of Pontius Pilate he suffered, he was extended, pricked on the cross, he died, then was buried, and descended to the horrible hell called Limbo, on the third day he lived again (resurrected) among the dead, he ascended to heaven to sit on the right hand of God the Father Almighty, then from there he will return to judge the living and the dead. I also believe the Holy Spirit, and holy Catholic Church, the gathering of saints, the forgiveness of sins, also the living again of our flesh, and also eternal life. Amen Jesus.  

The only other example of this prayer in Maya comes from Beltrán’s 1757 edition of his 1740 doctrina. The prayer is nearly an exact copy. Yet similar to the Lord’s Prayer, Beltrán inserted his corrections into the translation.

Most significant is his replacement of “citbil” with “Yumbil.” Berendt’s footnotes contain Beltrán’s reason for the substitution. According to Beltrán, citbil “is the name of an idol” still worshiped in secret. Indeed, the Chilam Balam of Tizimin

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78 Coronel, Doctrina Christiana (photostat), 2.

refers to the 13 nameless Itza gods as “cilich, citbil,” (the Holy, the Remote). ⁸⁰ Among scholars, “Dios citbil” contains two popular translations. In his translation of the Chilam Balam of Chumayel, Edmonson translates the phrase as “God the remote.” ⁸¹ This interpretation likely derives from “c’itbil” which can mean something scattered or spread out. However, other translations of the same work translate the phrase as “God the father” as “citbil” can literally represent the reverential form of “father.” ⁸² Yet as glottal stops are only sporadically represented in the texts themselves, “citbil” could also be “c’itbil” thus making either interpretation plausible, although the translation of “father” is much more likely.

Given the context and intended representation of “God the Father,” the translation of “Dios citbil” as “God the Father” appears more accurate. Whether an ecclesiastic-inspired Maya equivalent of a Christian phrase, or a Maya-inspired term to familiarize the unfamiliar, “Dios citbil” appears in the Maya-authored, unpublished and unofficial Chilam Balam and Morley Manuscript. The phrase also appears in the Maya-authored testaments of Cacalchen and Ebtun. However, according to Beltrán, the term held a strong relationship to the name of an idol, and thus a precontact deity, making the epithet heretical.

Aside from the prayer’s early reference to a Maya deity, other differences exist that distinguish the Maya prayer from its Nahuatl counterpart. Although both cultures

⁸⁰ Edmonson, Tizimin, 45.

⁸¹ For example, Edmonson, Chumayel, 77, 121, 129. Edmonson must have read citbil with a glottal stop to make c’itbil which represents something scattered or spread out, although other times he translates the word as “holy.”

similarly employ descriptive phrases for unfamiliar terms such as “resurrection,” the Maya redaction includes a further description of Christ’s place of destination after his death. Catholic tradition has Christ descending into the first level of hell, Limbo of the Fathers, to free the righteous awaiting his redemption to enter into heaven. Whereas most texts simply refer to Christ as descending into hell, the Maya text gives the specific location of “kaçal mitnal” (the horrible hell) for Limbo. One cannot wonder if the author mistook the first level of hell, which is the least undesirable, for the fourth level or the Hell of the Damned.

The Maya also created an epithet for “Almighty.” Yet unlike the Nahuatl phrases, the Maya phrase “uchuc tumen tu çinil” (power throughout everything) suffered no colonial rivals. Indeed, once created this phrase appeared throughout the majority of Maya religious texts, and always in association with God as the “Almighty.” The only colonial alteration to speak of is its augmented form “uchuc tumen tusinil maix pimobi” (power throughout everything, however many)—a phrase commonly found in testaments. However, as with the Lord’s Prayer, Ruz’ 1847 version of the Creed changed much of the prayer’s colonial vocabulary, including “uchuc tumen tuçinil” to “yuchucil zinil” (power extended). 83 Similar to the Lord’s Prayer, then, the version of the Creed native-language religious texts delivered depended on author and era with much of the consistency occurring after the sixteenth century. Yet most deviations failed to prevent Nahuas and Mayas from receiving a rendition generally reflective of the traditional Catholic prayer.

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83 Plácido Rico Frontaura, Explicacion de una parte de la doctrina cristiana, trans. Joaquin Ruz (Mérida, México: J. D. Espinosa, 1847), 5; Ripalda, Catecismo y esposicion, 8-9.
Conclusion

When comparing the basic doctrines found in the many Nahuatl and Maya ecclesiastical texts, both similarities and variations appear. Generally speaking, most texts—even those unofficial—produced similar translations of the basic doctrines including the Decalogue, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Creed. This is due to a number of factors.

First, all such doctrine derives from a similar source—the Vulgate and/or tradition—and are least likely to display variation. Second, once Nahuatl and Maya formulae became established in the sixteenth century, they served as templates for future works. Although no two prayers mirror each other exactly, many come very close. This is primarily the result of a handful of early work which, after some modification, formed the intellectual well from which all other doctrinas drew their content.

However, the translations of such basic doctrine were far from static. When variations do occur they typically fall along the lines of translation and cultural/regional differences. Colonial authors did not always agree on how to translate certain concepts. Indeed, translation was not always straightforward and occasionally demanded the use of explanation or interpretation, particularly when performing lengthier translations such as in the Lord’s Prayer and the Creed. In such circumstances, variations occurred according to the preference of the Spanish and/or native author. Sometimes the variations included words the author deemed most appropriate or accurate. Other times the variation derived from preferential inclusions or omissions to existing formulae. Regardless of the motives, variations did exist to produce different renditions of the commandments and prayers.
Here now is the larger question: Did the various Catholicisms emerge as a result of the translation of their basic doctrines into foreign languages? The answer is both yes and no. As demonstrated above through the Decalogue, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Creed, basic doctrine occasionally became obscured through translation, interpretation, and preference. Sometimes the variation failed to alter the meaning of the text, while other times it did. Yet generally speaking, instruction conveying the core beliefs of the Church to Nahuas and Mayas paralleled official doctrine.

Alone, then, differences in how the core doctrine was translated can not be held responsible for the overall diversification of the Catholic message. These variations are but the beginning of a larger diversification process whose primary formation lay not in how religious texts translated core doctrine—the commandments, prayers, and so on—but in how they explained and applied such doctrine. For example, most Nahuas and Mayas understood they should be baptized. But why and what baptism should mean to them differed according to the sacrament’s explanation and application in religious texts. Such is the topic of the next chapter.
Chapter 5

“One God, One Faith, One Baptism”

“[T]here were many contradictory opinions about the manner of celebrating the sacrament of baptism and the ceremonies which must accompany it.”

—Motolinía (1541)¹

And with the [catechism], perhaps it will succeed in being extremely convenient, that is, in all regions only this Mexican Catechism will be used and it will remove the variety that exists so that the declaration of Saint Paul, that everything be reduced to unity, will be fulfilled in every way: one god, one faith, one baptism. And we could add: one doctrine, one catechism, because with this is removed all occasion for error from those that are of little ability, like the Indians, for whom anything causes them to doubt, stop, and even stumble.

—fray Ignacio de Paredes (1758)²

In 2001, Louise Burkhart’s *Before Guadalupe* illustrated the prevalence of a pre-Guadalupean devotion through a variety of early Nahuatl ecclesiastical texts that similarly discussed aspects of the Virgin’s life (the Conception, Annunciation, Assumption, and so on). The result was a portrait of Nahua Marian devotion distinct from its European predecessor and firmly planted before Guadalupe. However, as one reads the various texts and their discussions of the Virgin, variations become apparent. Indeed, Burkhart herself indicates that “the texts bespeak a rich and *varied* devotion to Mary among at least some of the Nahuas (emphasis mine).”³

Such variations were not limited to Marian devotion, but to all fundamental teachings of the Church. Indeed, even with the strict editorial procedure the first Provincial Council established for all printed works, Paredes’ comment illustrates how the

¹ Motolinía, *History*, 137.

² Ripalda, *Catecismo mexicano*, preliminary leaf, unnumbered.

production of multiple texts produced a diverse religious discourse. The varied explanation and application of basic doctrines found in these texts represents the largest contributor to Catholicism’s diversification process.

The following employs a wide variety of Nahuatl and Maya published, Category 1 texts to expose how they conveyed both the sacrament of Baptism, and its emergency administration to natives. Throughout the chapter, the unique interpretations and methods of instruction each text employs illustrate how native-language religious texts contributed to the diversification process of Catholicism. Although every text similarly conveyed the essential nature of baptism, what the sacrament was, what it did, how it applied to Nahuas and Mayas, and how it should be administered in emergencies varied from text to text.

Precontact and Early Colonial Baptisms

Evidence suggests that Nahuas and Mayas practiced a precontact ritual bathing of infants and children. The Nahuas bathed their infants to rid them of the physical impurity associated with their conception and birth. Sahagún recorded the ritual and the words of the midwife in his Florentine Codex. As seen in the Codex Mendoza, following the bath, male infants had masculine tools and weapons placed in their hands; female infants had a spindle, weaving shuttles, and a broom placed in their hands, symbolic of their

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future labor roles. The Maya displayed similar practices of ritualistic bathing accompanied by the binding of the infant’s head between boards to shape the skull to a form considered beautiful. Maya infants also had tools and weapons placed in their hands but at certain ages: females waited until the age of three months symbolic of the three stones that comprised the hearth; male infants waited until four months symbolizing the four sides of the milpa.

Moreover, the Maya also practiced a baptism/purification rite. Various reports exist to paint an eclectic picture. In 1581 and as a part of the fifty-item questionnaire sent to encomenderos by Phillip II known as the Relaciones Geográficas, the encomendero of Izamal, Juan Cueva Santillán, reported that the “ancients” of Izamal practiced a ceremony similar to baptism. Yet other reports in the census provide much more detail that seemingly blends precontact and Christian ritual. Take for example the description the cabildo of Merida, with the aid of Gaspar Antonio Chi, provided:

The Holy Gospel was preached to [the Maya] because they had baptism and they baptized in this manner: the senior priest took from the idols water and in it he threw certain flowers and said some words over it and wet a stick and touched [the baptismal candidates] with it on the forehead, the eyes, and the face saying three times ah, ah, ah, that seems to signify and to say “revive” or “awake,” and they could not marry neither be priests if they were not baptized, and if one died without baptism, they would have to have more punishments in hell than the baptized.

See Miller and Taube, An Illustrated Dictionary, 44; Motolinía, History, 132; Burkhart, Slippery Earth, 112-15.

Thompson, Maya Religion, 166.


Relaciones Histórico-Geográficas, 72. Many of the reports resemble one another indicating some degree of borrowing existed when composing these forms.
Unlike the Nahua ceremony, the age of baptism seemingly varied, at least in Spanish reports which provide ages ranging from three to fifteen.⁹

According to their own reports, early missionaries took heart when they discovered such preexisting practices. The Dominican friar Diego Durán stated that the Nahua rite closely paralleled the Catholic practice, and Motolinía even claimed the precontact practice cleansed their souls and consciences so that “Christ might enter.”¹⁰

Interestingly, Diego de Landa argued that native baptism was present only in the Yucatan before the arrival of the Spaniards.¹¹ Landa describes a ritual that included the use of water set apart for baptisms. Although Landa states that the origins of such baptismal practices are unknown, others such as Durán believed that Saint Thomas, equated with the Nahua Quetzalcoatl, had originally taught natives the gospel which later became corrupted by Satan.¹² This is one of many examples where ecclesiastics selectively chose which precontact rituals were inspired by the devil, and which ones came from God.

Regardless of the accuracy of these accounts, it is clear that natives participated in some form of precontact purification rite that involved the washing away of impurities.

Upon the arrival of the Spaniards, baptism was the first sacrament introduced to the natives of mainland New Spain. The documents disagree as to when the first baptism occurred and who received the rite. The Primera Junta Apostólica in 1524 believed that

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⁹ Relaciones Histórico-Geográficas, 270; Cogolludo, Historia de Yucatán, 191. Because of the close correlations perceived between both Nahua and Maya precontact baptismal rites many early Spaniards believed that Saint Thomas had preceded them in missionary work.


¹¹ Landa, Yucatan, 42.

the four lords of Tlaxcala were the first to be baptized.\textsuperscript{13} The *Lienzo de Tlaxcala* portrays a painting of the baptism of these lords which further encouraged the legend. However, although their political alliance to the Spaniards and personal motivations for domination over Tenochtitlan encouraged Tlaxcala’s purported early devotion to Catholicism, it is unlikely that Tlaxcala was the site for the sacrament’s first performance. Indeed, Bernal Díaz and Francisco López de Gómara record its first administration in 1519 to twenty women the Tabascans gave the Spaniards.\textsuperscript{14}

Baptism was also the first sacrament to provoke disputes among the early friars. Baptism represented the first step in becoming a Christian and obtaining salvation. Not only did its recipients receive pardon for Adam’s Original Sin, but they also became members of the Catholic Church and, as such, placed their feet firmly upon the path to salvation. Thus, the friars desired natives to receive the sacrament early on. First on the scene and fueled by millenarian zeal, the Franciscans reported baptizing incredible numbers of natives. Mendieta reported that the Franciscans baptized adults after they were “sufficiently instructed,” while children quickly received the rite to cleanse them of sin and deter them from following the idolatrous practices of their forbearers. While the First Mexican Provincial Council of 1555 ordered that all adults be “sufficiently instructed” prior to baptism, what that meant varied from friar to friar, and order to order.\textsuperscript{15} Molina’s 1546 doctrina prescribes a few questions that merely quiz the

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\textsuperscript{13} Lorenzana, *Concilios provinciales*, 2.
\textsuperscript{15} Lorenzana, *Concilios provincials*, 42.
\end{flushright}
baptismal candidate on their belief in the Trinity, the Church, eternal life, and if they are repentant and have the desire to be baptized.\textsuperscript{16} In contrast, Andrés Saenz de la Peña’s 1642 \textit{Manual de los santos sacramentos} provides a more detailed baptismal interview that included lengthy, thorough questions.\textsuperscript{17} Even the Franciscan’s themselves varied on the prebaptismal instruction with Motolinía providing a watered-down version and Sahagún issuing a more detailed experience.\textsuperscript{18}

Mendieta, like many other Franciscans, interpreted the early baptisms as a fulfillment of biblical prophecy and as recompense for the Church members lost in the Reformation. He states, “[Natives] came to the baptism with open arms, some begging and pleading, others ask for it kneeling, others raised high folded hands wailing and crouching, others sighing and crying received baptism.”\textsuperscript{19} Such a description was meant to justify the subsequent numbers of baptisms Mendieta reported. He claimed that one friar in Taxco could baptize 6,000 natives in a day while two friars in Xochimilco could average 15,000. He further asserted that oftentimes the multitude of natives requesting baptism left the friars without the strength to even lift their arms.\textsuperscript{20} Motolinía, from whose work Mendieta largely borrows, claimed that in a matter of fifteen years, more than nine million natives received baptism.\textsuperscript{21} For the early Franciscans, such numbers

\textsuperscript{16} García Icazbalceta, \textit{Códice Franciscano}, 58. Lara states these questions were Nahuatl translations of those found in the 1540 \textit{Manual de adultos}; Lara, \textit{Christian Texts}, 94.

\textsuperscript{17} Saenz de la Peña, \textit{Manual}, ff. 31v-36r.

\textsuperscript{18} Ricard, \textit{Spiritual Conquest}, 83-95.

\textsuperscript{19} Mendieta, \textit{Historia eclesiástica}, vol. 1, 159.

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 160.

\textsuperscript{21} Motolinía, \textit{History}, 133.
were not unprecedented. Indeed, they were merely following in the footsteps of the original disciples of Christ who similarly baptized numerous converts, such as Peter who contributed to the baptism of approximately 3,000 people on the day of Pentecost.  

Yet other ecclesiastics viewed such success with suspicion. Indeed, the Dominicans, Augustinians, and secular clergy all blew the whistle on what they deemed to be an inappropriate administration and version of the sacrament. However, Mendieta states that they themselves could not agree on one “correct” version. The main complaint concerned the lack of traditional elements, the pomp and ceremony typically associated with baptism. This included the use of holy water, salt, saliva, candles, the white garment, and the oil of both the chrism and catechumens. Although the Codex Franciscano detailed a baptismal procedure that followed traditional standards, Franciscans were accused of omitting nearly all such elements in their mass baptisms.

Mendieta never claimed the Franciscans’ version of baptism was not different. In fact, he defends their shortened version. He questions his accusers,

How is it possible…that a poor priest in one day can with so many say mass, fulfill the Liturgy of the Hours, preach, marry and veil, and bury, catechize the catechumens, learn the language, arrange and compose sermons in it, teach the children to read and write, interview marriage couples, settle and reconcile the discords, defend those that seldom can [for themselves], and baptize three or four thousand (I do not want to say eight or ten thousand) keeping with them the ceremonies and pomp of baptism? What saliva is enough to be put on everyone, even if you were drinking every other minute?

Motolinía contributes to the defense saying,

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23 For the prescribed Franciscan method of baptism see García Icazbalceta, Códice Franciscano, 85-97.

24 Mendieta, Historia eclesiástica, vol. 1, 162.
“[H]ow can a single priest baptize two or three thousand in a day and give them all the saliva, breath, the candle and the white garment and perform all the ceremonies over each one individually and lead them into the church where there are no churches?...How can they give lighted candles when they are baptizing out in the courtyard in a high wind?25

For Motolinía and Mendieta, local situations justified the sacrament’s unorthodox alteration. Differences between central and peripheral locations also existed. Indeed, Saenz de la Peña affords peripheral parishes the option of altering the official baptismal ceremony while expecting those “metropolitan churches and cathedrals” to follow his version of the sacrament.26

The Primera Junta Apostólica of 1524 discussed the matter and acquitted the early friars of their emergency mass baptisms because the action paralleled those of Cardinal fray Francisco Ximénez de Cisnéros regarding the conversion of the Moors of Granada.27

The debate eventually reached Pope Paul III who sent the papal bull Altitudo divini consilii in 1537 excusing the Franciscans for their abbreviated version of baptism, while ordering its proper and traditional administration except in cases of grave necessity. Attempting to find a middle ground, Paul III allowed the ecclesiastics to use the salt, saliva, cloth, and candles for two or three natives who would represent all others in attendance. However, the Pope expected each native to be anointed with oil and chrism.28 Although the synod of 1539 ordered the adherence to this bull, the bull left room for wide interpretations of “grave necessity” and variations persisted.

25 Motolinía, History, 135.
26 Saenz de la Peña, Manual, f. 7v.
27 Lorenzana, Concilios provinciales, 2.
28 Bautista cites sections of this bull in the Tabla of his Advertencias under “baptisterio.” Fray Juan Bautista, Advertencias para los confessores de los naturales, vol. 1 (México: M. Ocharte, 1600), reproduced in Obras Clásicas sobre la Lengua Náhuatl, unnumbered. Mendieta has a copy of this bull in
The continued debate on the administration of baptism is lengthy and covered by other scholars. However, existing studies neglect key discussions of the sacrament and its performance found in religious texts. For example, Saenz de la Peña provides detailed instructions in Nahuatl and Spanish in his 1642 *Manual de los santos sacramentos* on how to baptize Spanish and Nahua infants and adults that previous studies have overlooked. He prescribes an extremely detail-oriented baptism for Nahuas that paralleled a Spaniard’s baptism and starkly contrasted the Franciscan practice as described by Motolinía, and even added to that ordained by the 1537 papal bull.

Similarly overlooked is the Augustinian fray Manuel Pérez’s 1713 *Farol indiano y guía de curas de indios* and its elucidation on the problems Pérez encountered with the administration of baptism. Juxtaposing actual practice with that detailed in the *Rituale Romanum*—a handbook for priests on the sacraments, rites, and prayers of the Church originally composed by Pope Paul V and published in 1614—Pérez provides priceless details on the performance of the rite in the early eighteenth century. Thus, a complete picture of ecclesiastics’ various opinions on the correct implementation of baptism and its actual performance is still lacking and awaiting some future scholar. For the purpose of this work, it is enough to say that multiple versions existed throughout the colonial period.

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32 For an example of an Augustinian baptism see Lara, *Christian Texts*, 89.
Recognizing that the baptismal ceremony itself varied greatly, let us now examine how indigenous-language religious texts instructed natives on the subject. Indeed, largely ignored are the instructions indigenous-language religious texts offered Nahuas and Mayas on baptism.\(^3^3\) How was the sacrament presented to natives? Were such presentations similar or different? The following comparative survey of the matter in Nahuatl and Maya Category 1 texts addresses these questions. Moreover, this comparison plunges into the uncharted waters containing priests’ instructions to Nahuas on how to baptize in the case of emergency to illustrate the similarities and differences between even official, published versions of the sacrament.

**Baptism in Nahuatl Religious Texts**

First printed in 1546, Molina’s Nahuatl doctrina continuously conveyed the Franciscan version of baptism through various printings throughout the colonial period. As mentioned, the doctrina provides various prebaptismal questions. Following such questions, Molina provides a post-baptismal admonition to the new adult converts. Although merely a lengthy paragraph, this admonition represents the small doctrina’s most extensive discussion of baptism and the version mid sixteenth-century Franciscans desired all ecclesiastics to use.\(^3^4\) In other words, this was the extent of the knowledge Franciscans deemed reasonable for Nahuas to possess concerning baptism.

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\(^3^3\) Burkhart addresses the matter with regards to sin and filthiness in her *Slippery Earth*, 115-17.

\(^3^4\) See García Icazbalceta, *Códice Franciscano*, 60.
To begin, the text acknowledges the convert’s new status as a Catholic as an adopted child of God. The text encourages the newly baptized to greatly praise and thank God for such privileges and for having forgiven him/her of their sins. The convert should memorize and live by the Articles of Faith and the Decalogue to fulfill their duties as Christians. As a reward, Molina states, “Auh in iquac timomiquiliz mitzmouiquiliz in ichantzinco in ilhuicac, ynic ipaltzinco cemicac timotlamachtiz” (When you die he (God) will take you to his home in heaven so that you can be eternally happy with him).35

Yet other, lengthier doctrinas allot more attention to the sacrament of Baptism, and in different ways. Early religious texts often made great efforts to present Christian doctrine in familiar or culturally-specific ways. As mentioned, Sahagún and his native assistants even composed a book of psalms to be sung to the tune of precontact canticles.36 In 1548, an anonymous author and his indigenous aides composed a Nahuatl doctrina for the Dominicans. Whereas Molina’s discussion contains overtones of praise, responsibility, and reward, this 1548 doctrina couches its discussion of baptism within a rhetoric of war—a common theme used throughout the lengthy doctrina to teach various doctrines. As warfare was a large part of precontact Nahua mythology—indeed a prime deity, Huitzilopochtli, demanded the sacrifice of war-captives for his sustenance—such a metaphor would surely make sense to any early colonial Nahua.

The discussion within the 1548 doctrina delivers perhaps the most extensive discourse on the sacrament.37 The passage begins by comparing the sacraments to

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35 Ibid., 59.
36 Sahagún, Psalmodia.
37 Doctrina christiana, ff. CXXXIIr-CXXXVIIIr.
containers of water that when drunk satiate spiritual thirst. The text then outlines the
Passion of Christ and the ability of baptism to engage this atonement in the absolution of
sins. Subsequently, the discussion shifts to an explanation of the use of the sign of the
cross in the ritual. During a baptismal ceremony, the Catholic priest traditionally makes
the sign of the cross numerous times and traces the sign on various parts of the child’s
body. The doctrina explains this stating:

\[
[C]a
yehuatl in cruz + ca uel yeuatl teoyotica totlauiz inic ticpeuizque in diablo
yuā inic uel ticquixtizque in campa yez yuan inic uel imacpa titomanauizque ica
in Cruz +. Auh ca ipampa y mieccan ticquechilia in cruz in tipadesme in aquin
ticuaatequia...auh ca oncan tictçacuilia in diablo in tlatçacuilolt inic amo yiitc
calaquiz ca nouiampa ticyautilatquichichiua.
\]

The cross is really our spiritual weapon with which we can conquer the devil and
remove him from where he is, and so that we can shelter ourselves from his hands
through the cross. And for that reason in many places, often we padres make the
sign of the cross over the one whom we are baptizing…and thereby we close the
door to the devil so that he cannot enter inside; everywhere we arm ourselves with
it (the cross).39

This explanation of baptism, and the use of the cross during the ritual as a form of
armament to be used as a weapon against the devil, become fully militarized in the
subsequent passage: “Yehica cēca anmochicauhtinemizque mochipa yuan
amixtocotinemizque yuan anmopixtemizque in iuhqui ameuantin yiaopen anemi inic uel
anquichicaucatopeuaqzque in amoyaouan inic uel amquimpeuaqzque yuan inic huel
anquinchololtizque” (Therefore you should always go about steeling yourself, being on

38 The Nahuatl, ticquechilia in cruz “we raise the cross,” seems to be an idiomatic phrase
originally associated with the physical raising of crosses now frozen and used in this text to indicate the
making of the sign of the cross.

39 Doctrina christiana, f. CXXXIIIr.
the alert and on your guard as if you were at war, so that you will greatly overcome your enemies and put them fully to flight).\textsuperscript{40}

The work then lists the other elements included in the baptism describing the strengthening effects of the salt, chrism, the cloth, and the lighted candle. Once baptized, the Nahua is counseled to remain pure by avoiding a plethora of sins the text outlines. Written in the early aftermath of the Conquest, many of the sins mentioned concern precontact rites including idolatry, sacrifice, and painting and/or bleeding parts of the body. The text labeled these rites as “deceits of the devil” and as impurities that would dirty the newly-baptized body and prevent such from entering into the kingdom of God which was free from stain.

The 1565 doctrina of the Dominican Domingo Anunciación similarly employs a militaristic rhetoric in his explanation of baptism. “\textit{Auh in íqc titoqateqá ca titonetoltia yn ixpáztíco totecuyo dios: ynic mochipa tiquiyaochihuazque yhuan vel toquicheuazquez ynic tiquintopehuazqá yn yehuātin hyn toyaohua, niman ayc tiquintocniuhtizque}” (When we are baptized we make a vow before our lord God that we will always fight against and really bravely rise up to conquer our enemies, and never ever will we befriend them).\textsuperscript{41}

Yet Anunciación elucidates the matter even further with a hypothetical illustration. Using an example that would have made sense to both Nahuas and Spaniards, he recounts how a war captain marks his soldiers so as to distinguish them in battle from his enemies. Similarly, Christ marks his soldiers with the cross during baptism to set them apart from the infidels. He further explains the obvious distinction the “mark” of a Christian awards

\textsuperscript{40} \textit{Doctrina christiana}, f. CXXXIIIv.

\textsuperscript{41} Anunciación, \textit{Doctrina cristiana}, ff. 6v-7r.
its owner through a vivid example. He states, “ca *yn iquac timoquateq yca yn iyatzin Dios, yquac otimachiyotiloc yn maca çan tichcatl otitlahuiloc” (when you were baptized with God’s water, at that time you were marked as though you were a sheep that had been colored red).\(^42\) Anunciación refers to such a mark as a “character” and exhorts the Nahuas to never lose it through sin in their battle against the devil.\(^43\)

During the text’s subsequent explanation of the sacraments, baptism is again referenced as a promise to fight for Christ against his enemies. The mark, or the character, is also readdressed and made wondrous through its association with the heavens: “Yuā ōcā yc techmomachiyotilia yn itemac hiyotia yatzī yn charater, yuhqm ma citlalī cuepōtica: ytech q́ otlali a yn taīā” (And there it (baptism) marks us with its means of marking, a sign; it (baptism) places it on our souls as though it were a shining star).\(^44\) Interestingly, the discussion avoids describing baptism as a cleansing agent for the filthiness of sin—a common metaphor most texts employ. However, Anunciación does augment the instruction with insights into baptism’s spiritual regenerating effects and ability to turn the recipient into adoptive children of Christ. He also explains the need for all, old and young, to receive baptism for salvation or face the horrors of condemnation.\(^45\)

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\(^{42}\) Ibid., f. 8v.

\(^{43}\) In Spanish, “charater” is a sign of something in the manner of a device or logo. This reference to character derives from European missals. Castellani’s 1523 *Liber sacerdotalis* states “The effect of Baptism is manifold. 1. The impression of a character, by which he is joined to the people of God; and therefore it cannot be repeated.” Lara, *Christian Texts*, Appendix C, 277.

\(^{44}\) Anunciación, *Doctrina cristiana*, f. 30r.

\(^{45}\) Anunciación, *Doctrina cristiana*, ff. 30r-30v.
Such militaristic rhetoric is largely absent in fray Juan Bautista’s brief discourse on baptism in his extensive 1606 *Sermonario* (see Appendix D).\(^{46}\) Intended for delivery on the third Sunday of Advent, the lengthy sermon preached of John the Baptist’s role as the forerunner of Christ.\(^ {47}\) In its discourse, the sermon discusses baptism primarily through the context of how John’s baptism differed from the one Christ offered. Quoting John himself the sermon states:


I merely bathe, clean people with water, but understand that the Savior is already among you and you do not see him, you do not recognize him; I am only his messenger, the one who goes before him, his announced... for he greatly surpasses me, for he is God, for he is the Possessor of the Near. I am merely a poor commoner, I am an insignificant person, I am nothing, and not worthy even though I should loosen his sandal strings, even to go about carrying his sandals, or even to serve him by some truly despicable task. When he comes, he will dispense baptism by which people will be saved; my baptism merely counts as a preparation. May you not be angry with me, merely gladly, patiently await his mercy.\(^ {48}\)

The difference between the baptisms of John and Christ is a unique nuance.

Most, if not all, indigenous-language texts omit this detail. Yet here, it represents Bautista’s most extended discussion of baptism within his *Sermonario*. In the Bible, the

\(^{46}\) This book of sermons is part one of a two-part work. The second half of the work never saw publication.

\(^{47}\) The season of Advent begins on the fourth Sunday before December 25.

difference between being baptized after the manner of John and of Christ is that the latter included a devotion to Christ and the reception of the Holy Spirit. The Nahuatl text fails to convey this to its native listeners. Instead, the text explains the difference in the two baptisms as a difference in the social status of the baptizer with John as a poor commoner, and Christ as the Possessor of the Near (Tloque Nahuaque), an indigenous epithet for the precontact deity Tetzcatlipoca.

The text’s obvious indigenous prose betrays its Nahuas ghostwriter(s). In the initial pages of his work, Bautista openly admits that various native assistants “have helped me in this work.” He then goes on to list eight in particular: Hernando de Ribas, don Juan Berardo, Diego Adriano, don Francisco Bautista de Conterras, Esteban Bravo, don Antonio Valeriano, Pedro de Gante, and Augustín de la Fuente.49 Such assistants no doubt are responsible for the rhetoric of the text that parallels precontact traditions of oral discourse as it provides a Nahua version of a biblical account.

Avoiding militaristic rhetoric and minute nuances, is an admonitory speech on baptism located in Alva’s 1634 small confessional manual. Unlike Molina’s 1546 doctrina that addressed adult catechumenate, Alva directs his unique discourse toward the parents and godparents of small children. This simple change in audience probably reflects the effects of time and personal preferences on religious discourses. Here, Alva expects that most adult Nahua, at least in the surroundings of Mexico City where he likely composed the work, had already received baptism.

49 Bautista, Sermonario, “Prologue,” preliminary leaf, unnumbered. For a description of these assistants see Burkhart, Holy Wednesday, 68-70.
This admonition also complies with Tridentine reform which encouraged priests to instruct godparents in their responsibilities.\textsuperscript{50} Alva explains to parents and godparents the need for baptism through the original sin newborns inherited from their mothers, and the need to become once again beautiful in the sight of God. Parents and godparents are then counseled to teach their children to serve God. Similar to the 1548 doctrina, Alva lists potential sins that could violate the purifying rites of the sacrament. Yet unlike the doctrina and other texts, Alva omits discussing precontact idolatrous practices and avoids a militaristic rhetoric. Instead, Alva focuses exclusively on the dangers of illicit sexual relations and specifically warns parents and godparents against future sexual relations with the baptized child; a caution that no doubt reflected the realities of the time and was echoed by subsequent authors.\textsuperscript{51} Indeed, the small confessional manual affixed to fray Juan Guerra’s 1692 Nahuatl grammar specifically queries the Nahua penitent if he/she had sexual relations with a godchild or godparent.\textsuperscript{52}

A note here is needed about godparents. Godparenting has a long tradition in the Church as providing the recently baptized with both spiritual and temporal support throughout his/her life. Both Nahuas and Mayas seem to have been frequently instructed in this European practice as the topic appears in many native-language texts. Precontact traditions regarding kin and near-kin networks of mutual aid no doubt facilitated the

\textsuperscript{50} Amos Megged, \textit{Exporting the Catholic Reformation: Local Religion in Early-Colonial Mexico}, Cultures, Beliefs, and Traditions, vol. 2 (Leiden and New York: E. J. Brill, 1996), 68.

\textsuperscript{51} Alva, \textit{Guide to Confession}, 143-45.

\textsuperscript{52} Guerra, \textit{Arte}, ff. 51r-51v.
natives’ acceptance of the practice.\textsuperscript{53} The Maya testators of Tekanto frequently bequeathed items to their godparents.\textsuperscript{54} Moreover, that the natives accepted the custom is clear in the writings of Alva and others.\textsuperscript{55} Pérez records that the baptism of a child was sometimes postponed until the arrival of godparents coming from other towns.\textsuperscript{56} He also supplies an admonition in Nahuatl for all potential godparents instructing them on their roles and responsibilities, and claims that no one should be made godparents without knowing by memory the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer.\textsuperscript{57} Such strict requirements represent his version, and were not shared by all texts.

Yet it appears that Alva’s expectation that most adult Nahuas had received baptism was not shared by all ecclesiastics. Indeed, with few exceptions, the majority of existing Nahuatl discussions on baptism address adult catechumenates or at least include them as part of the audience, thus supporting Sara Cline’s arguments that many adult Nahua remained unbaptized. The 1642 Manual of Saenz de la Peña provides a unique

\textsuperscript{53} Sahagún relates that during the last month of the Aztec calendar, Izcalli, children would receive adult supervisors that served a similar role to godparents. Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, Florentine Codex: General History of the Things of New Spain, part 2, Book I: The Gods, ed., trans., Arthur J.O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble (Santa Fe, New Mexico and Salt Lake City: School of American Research and University of Utah, 1970), 29-30.

\textsuperscript{54} ANEY, Documentos de Tekanto, 209. All references to the Documentos de Tekanto were made from Matthew Restall’s transcriptions and notes of the documents; I thank Restall for his generosity in sharing his notes with me. For more on the practice of bequeathering items to godparents see Thompson, Maya Religion, 216-19.


\textsuperscript{56} Pérez, Farol indiano, 13.

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 13-14.
explanation of baptism intended for such adults (see Appendix E).\textsuperscript{58} In a speech ecclesiastics were to deliver to every Nahua adult prior to baptism, Saenz de la Peña provides a detailed instruction that intended to emphasize the need for the sacrament, its features, and its deserved reverence. Quoting Christ’s commandment that all receive baptism or be damned, the Nahuatl text emphasizes the power of baptism to turn the candidate into an adopted child of God through the removal of sin. However, this is done through physical descriptions of sin as dirt and baptism as the water of life that would resonate with Nahua concepts of the terms.

\textit{Yehica ca yn ixquich yn tlacocolli, yn aço tlacocolpeuhcayotl, noçe yehuatl yn temictiani tlacocolli, in manel ye huel temahmauti, yn ahmo tenehualoni, ca ic polihui in iteyectilitzin, yhuin yca in itechicalitztin yn nequaatequiltizSacramento. Auh inin yolilizintli ca ahmo çanyyo techipahuac, quiquixtia, yn icatzahuacca, yn tilitica yn tlacocolli, ca çan no yhui ipampa tipopolhuilo yn yxquich yn tlayhiyohuilitzti yn itzacuilo yezquia in tlacocolli.}\textsuperscript{59}

Wherefore all sin or original sin or mortal sin, even though really frightening and unmentionable disappears because of the purification and the strengthening of the sacrament of baptism. This water of life not only cleans one, removes the dirt and blackness of sin, but likewise because of it we are forgiven of all the suffering that would have been the punishment of sin.

The text continues to expound on baptism describing it as the source of the Virtues of the Church, and the head of Christ from which emerges all grace. Unlike Anunciación’s “character” and its association with a shining star, Saenz de la Peña’s baptism places upon its recipients a “mark of richness” that never disappears and, thus, prohibits one from receiving the sacrament twice. He explains that baptism opens the doors to heaven and emphasizes the importance of those receiving it to follow up their words with deeds so as to attain their eternal happiness.

\textsuperscript{58} Saenz de la Peña, \textit{Manual}, ff. 33r-36r.

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., ff. 33v-34r.
The text then outlines the events of the baptism itself, explaining that the candidates must wait outside the church until receiving an exorcism and demonstrating proper devotion to Christ. Sliding into a militaristic rhetoric the text explains that the candidates are then named “ynic mochipa quilnamiquizque, ca mochiuhticate mahuiztique, yaoquizque, auh ca yquachpantitlâtzinco yn toTecuyo Iesu Christo pouhticate, yhuan yyaopantzinco monemitia” (so that always they will remember that they have been made persons of honor, warriors, that they belong to the banner of our lord Jesus Christ and they take part in his war). The text then instructs baptized Nahuas to continue to study the scriptures to understand their obligations as Christians, and, in the case of infants, for godparents to care for their young godchildren.

The text’s final pages describe the purpose of the salt, saliva, cloth, candle, oil, and chrism in the ceremony. Saenz de la Peña again employs a rhetoric of war to explain the last two elements stating that the recipient of baptism marks himself with such liquids “yn yuhqui momaiztlacohuani, ynic quilnamiquizcá Christiano, yhuan ynic quimicxitoquiliz yn toTecuyo Iesu Christo” (like a warrior so that he will remember that he is a Christian and follow in the footsteps of our lord Jesus Christ). Concluding remarks concern the solemnity and gravity of the responsibility those baptized take upon themselves.

Published in 1759, the Jesuit Ignacio de Paredes’ Promptuario contains forty-six platicas (speeches) and six sermons all in Nahuatl. His thirty-first speech addresses the

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60 Ibid., f. 35r.
61 Ibid., f. 35v.
sacrament of Baptism (see Appendix F). Lengthy and detailed, Paredes claimed that
the text contained “in izquitlamantli in itech pohui inin cenca mahuiztic Tepâtilon,
Nequaatequilisacramento” (everything that pertains to this very marvelous remedy,
sacrament of Baptism). And although it shares similar elements with the other texts—the
necessity of baptism, its saving power, and so on—in many ways it is markedly different.

Paredes begins with an account of the creation of Paradise, Adam and Eve, and
their creation of original sin. According to Paredes, Paradise contained seven fountains
that cleansed sin. The text describes how these fountains were the sacraments and how
Christ locked away his saving grace in each one. This introduction then leads into a
discussion of baptism. Similar to Saenz de la Peña, Paredes uses a metaphor of filth and
purity to describe the positive effects of the rite. Yet unlike Saenz de la Peña whose
description indicated a physical purification, Paredes provides more specifics on what
baptism actually cleans, “in Teoyotica Nequâatequiliztli techpâpaca, techyolchipahua, in
itechpa in Icatzahuaca, in Itlaello, in Ipallanca in Toyolia, in Tanima” (divine baptism
washes us and purifies our spirits of the dirt, the grime, the putrefaction of our souls).

After encouraging adult baptismal candidates to prepare well for the rite, the text
then proceeds to use an unnamed catechism to explain what baptism means. To do so,
the text elucidates the concept of spiritual death and rebirth:

Auh yehuatl in quîtoznequi, N. P: Ca in îquac titoquaatequià, ca oc ceppa
yancuican teoyotica titlcatî. Ipampa ca immanel yê ceppa nacayotica intechpa
in Tonanhuian otitlcatque; tel ca nelli, N. P: ca zan tlâtlacolpan otitlcatque;
auh immanel yolticatca in Totlanacayo; tel in Toyolia, in Tanima, ca niman âmo
teyotica yolticatca; ca zan yê teoyotica micticatca, ipampa in
tlâtlcolpeuhcayotl; in totech oâcic, in zan niman imictic, in inxillantzinco in

63 Ibid., 244.
**Tonanhuin otichihualoque, otitlacañiltloque....Auh ic ipampa otitlacatque in Dios in Tiiyaohuan; ihuan in Tiipilhuan, in Tiimalhuan, ihuan in Tiitlacôn in Mictlan Tlacatecolotl. Auh ihui in, intla yuh otimiquinh, ca niman ám nítmaquixtizQui; ihuan niman âic in Dios in Ilhuicac tictocentlamachtitirzinozQui. Auh ca nelli, N. P: Ca in iquac titoquatequiá, ca zan niman mozcalia, oc ceppa teoyotica tlacati in Toyolia, in Tanima. Zan niman tehnomopôpolhuilia in Dios in cemixquich in totlâtlacol, ihuan in Imacpa timaquizá in Mictlan Tlacatecolotl. Zan niman in Dios techmomaquilia in Teoqualtiliztli, Gracia, ihuan in izquitlamantli qualtihuani, yectihuani; ic teoyotica yancuican tinemizque.**

That means, my children, that when we are baptized, we are spiritually born again. Because even though we were already born once in body through our mothers, truly, my children, we were born in sin. Although our earthly bodies were living, our souls were not living at all in the divine sense, but were dying in the divine sense because of original sin which reached us right away inside the wombs of our mothers when we were engendered and conceived....And because of this we were born enemies to God, and we are the children, prisoners, and slaves of the devil in hell. And so, if we had died that way, we would not have been saved at all and would never at all enjoy God in heaven. Truly, my children, when we are baptized right away our souls come to life and are spiritually reborn; right away God forgives us every one of our sins and by his hands we are freed from the devil in hell; right away God gives us divine purification, divine approval, Grace, and everything to make good and purify with which we can spiritually live for the first time.

Although absent in other discourses, the concept of being born with a dead soul as enemies to God and slaves of the devil played a large role in Paredes’ explanation of baptism. This doctrine subsequently allows the text both to solidify the necessity of the sacrament for salvation, and detail the rewards for those who receive it. Like Anunciación, Paredes also speaks of the “character” one receives after baptism and the permanence of such a mark that makes rebaptism a great sin. Yet unlike others, the text avoids any militaristic rhetoric and simply describes the “character” as a mark on the soul that separates the believers from the nonbelievers and makes the Christian the property of God.

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64 Ibid., 245-6.
Next, the text addresses the duties of godparents. Paredes explains that godparents should learn well the Christian doctrine in order to teach their godchild. Moreover, he discusses their responsibility in guiding the child throughout its life along the paths of Christianity. Interestingly, Paredes echoes Alva’s concern for sexual relations between godparents and godchildren. He details how godchildren become spiritually related to their godparents thus prohibiting any physical relationship between the two. Paredes extends Alva’s restrictions to include the parents of the baptized child for the same reasons of spiritual consanguinity with the godparent. Guerra’s confessional manual again confirms the reality of this situation asking if the penitent had sexual relations with a “spiritual relative.” In addition to illicit sexual relations and also contrary to orthodox practice, parents occasionally served as godparents. María Salomé of Ocotelulco bequeathed a portion of land to her godfather who was also her father.

Paredes’s conclusion to his discourse on baptism is unique. He provides a Nahuatl translation of a story recounted in Andrés Pérez de Ribas’ 1645 Historia de los triumphos de nuestra santa fee. In the Nahuatl version of the story, two Jesuit priests in an unknown altepetl in the diocese of Mexico come across a Nahua in the last extremity. They ask the Nahua if he desires baptism to which he responds affirmatively. After his baptism the Nahua told the priests the following tale:

65 “Mocotoncahua teoiotica.” Guerra, Arte, ff. 51r-51v.


67 Andrés Pérez de Ribas, History of the Triumphs of Our Holy Faith Amongst the Most Barbarous and Fierce Peoples of the New World, trans. Daniel T. Reff, Maureen Ahern, and Richard K. Danford, with a introduction by Daniel T. Reff (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1999), 671-2. Although the differences between both Ribas and Paredes’ accounts are not addressed here, they are extant nonetheless albeit seemingly minor. Moreover, Paredes’ knowledge and use of this tale recorded by a fellow Jesuit joins other philological aspects of the text to suggest his principal role its composition.
You should know, my father, that when I began to be sick two perfectly beautiful and radiant people entered where I was. I don’t know where they took me, but I beheld a palace, a place to give people great happiness, where many people were seated. And when I tried to sit down in a particular one of the seats that was empty, the people restrained me and told me, “You cannot yet sit down here until you are baptized. Therefore hurry, go to your home, for two religious will arrive there who will baptize you so that you can immediately return here to heaven.” When the poor commoner had said this, he died immediately. 68

Using this example to reiterate the grave necessity of baptism for salvation, Paredes ends his speech.

Baptism in Maya Religious Texts

Yucatecan ecclesiastics also employed native-language religious texts to instruct the natives on baptism. However, few examples exist and those that do indicate a much more abbreviated approach to instruction. Included in Juan Coronel’s 1620 Discursos predicables is a brief discussion of baptism (see Appendix G). Lacking the detail and military rhetoric of other Nahuatl discourses, the Maya text gives the sacrament a brief treatment. Indeed, the passage brusquely discusses baptism’s removal of original sin and cites the New-Testament conversation between Christ and Nicodemus to solidify the

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68 Paredes, Promptuario, 249-50.
rite’s necessity. Interestingly, the text seems more preoccupied with godparents and spends the majority of the discourse on their duties and selection. Painting a picture for the reader on the proper role of a godparent at the baptism and the questions he/she is to answer on the child’s behalf the text states:

*He total v caput cihil paale Payanbe v uacunabal vinic mekic yokol pila caix v nucub v than padre tuhunal, heuac lay v conpadre nucic than v mahante, tilic yalice, v olab caput cihil, yetel Ocol ti christianoil, volah in hunkul ppecobe ciçin, yetel v beelee cie baix licil v nucic v chayan tha[n] lic v katbal ti tumenel padre loye.*

At the baptism, first a man is appointed to hold the child at the basin and alone answer the padre’s words. However, the godfather answers on his (the child’s) behalf in which he will say they want the baptism and to enter into Christianity, “I desire to eternally hate the devil and his dangerous path.” Then he answers the remaining words asked by that padre.

The text then elucidates how to select a godparent. Parents should take careful consideration in the choice to make sure the candidate not just anyone who knows the child, “heuac hach yan vcuxyolten vic, y. aloltzil vchristianoil vnahil vacunabale” (but a man with much discernment and who is a true Christian, will be granted the privilege).

Here, Coronel directs nearly half his discourse toward godparents. Why is unclear. One may speculate that, inspired by Trent, he saw vigilant godparents as an answer to the spiritual backsliding of the seventeenth century. Indeed, similar emphases on godparenting also occurred in Europe for the same reasons. Regardless, Coronel devotes a large section of his discussion to the subject while allotting the significance and meaning of baptism scant attention vis-à-vis Nahuatl texts.

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69 Coronel, *Discursos*, unnumbered.

70 Ibid., unnumbered.
Also in 1620, Coronel published a Maya doctrina that briefly discusses baptism, albeit in a question and answer format. The response to his question of “What is a Christian?” states, “Lay octi vinic, yan y ocolal Christo tie, v çebchitah ti Baptismo, caput çihilloe” (A man that has faith toward Christ, he promises during Baptism).\(^{71}\) This single question also appears, albeit with different orthography, in both Beltrán’s later 1757 Maya doctrina and an eighteenth-century manuscript copy of that doctrina; the question comprises of his full treatment of the sacrament.\(^{72}\)

In addition to this initial question, Coronel’s doctrina adds a somewhat lengthier interrogation when discussing the sacraments. He asks:

*Kat: Balx u ka Baptismoe.*

Question: What is Baptism?

*Kam:* Lay pixanil çihil licil v dzabal v hach yanhal graçia too[n] .y. v chicil Christianoile.

Answer: A holy birth at which time grace, a really special thing\(^{73}\), is given to us and the sign of the Christian.

*Kat: Balx licil yanticon Baptismo .y. caput çihil tac cuxtal .y. tac Christianoile.*

Question: How does baptism help our soul and us Christians?

*Kam: Lay y utztacil be yantac v uilale.*

Answer: Its purpose is to create good works.

*Kat: Balx kebanil lic v lukçic caput çihile.*

Questions: What evil does baptism remove?

*Kam: Lay çihnalil kebane .y. v chayan kebanob.\(^{74}\)

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\(^{71}\) Ibid., unnumbered.

\(^{72}\) UP-RBML, Col. 700, item 21, *Novena*, 98; “Doctrine and Confession,” GGMMC, no. 73b, unnumbered.

\(^{73}\) Here, the concept of grace appears as a loanword illustrating the difficulty in translating such a difficult and abstract theological concept. The best the author (likely a Maya) could do was define grace as “a really special thing.”

\(^{74}\) Coronel, *Discursos*, unnumbered.
Answer: Original sin and other sins.

Although continual searching will hopefully uncover additional examples, this is largely the extent to which baptism appears in existing Maya texts. In other words, this is the extent of explanation that a Maya parishioner would expect to receive on baptism via these religious texts.

The Various Baptisms of Mesoamerica

When comparing the various ways the above Nahuatl and Maya texts present baptism to natives, the individual understandings of and experiences with the sacrament these texts created become evident. Molina’s short admonition encourages the candidate’s gratitude to God and duty to memorize the Articles of Faith and the Decalogue. The 1548 Dominican doctrina throws the candidate into battle with the baptism as his most valued weapon against evil, and with the instructions to remain pure by avoiding precontact rites of painting and bleeding the body. This theater of war continues in Anunciación’s doctrina who distinguishes his baptized soldiers of God with a mark, a “character.” However, it gives way to an oral rhetoric in Bautista’s sermon on baptism addressing the differences between John and Christ’s baptism. Alva’s speech focuses primarily on godparents, and Saenz de la Peña gives the sacrament a thorough explanation rivaled only by Paredes’ discussion that includes an anecdote.

These differences can be explained through temporal change and authorial preferences. Early descriptions of precontact rites fade from later manuals that, instead,
focus on godparents. Some chose a militaristic rhetoric; others, stories. Some betray a Spanish author or influence; others were penned by Nahuas. In the end, each text contained its own distinct explanation and application of baptism.

Regarding Maya texts, Coronel’s Discursos addresses the fundamentals of the sacrament through scripture, while dually focusing on the roles of godparents. Yet his doctrina restricts its discussion to catechistic questions asking what baptism is and its purpose. The subsequent doctrina of Beltrán and an anonymous eighteenth-century doctrina reduce the treatment even more allowing for one simple question. To be sure, the Maya texts address the basic principles of the sacrament, but the explanations, examples, and exhortations seen in Central Mexico are largely absent.

In short, baptism’s explanation in religious texts not only differed from text to text, but also varied from Central Mexico to Yucatan.

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75 One cannot help notice the increasing attention the sacrament warrants in later Nahuatl texts. Perhaps the increasing realities of the failed “spiritual conquest” and “backsliding” resulted in an emphasis on teaching Nahuas what it meant to be baptized and how to live up to their initial commitments as Catholics.
Table 5.1. Baptismal texts and their topics of discussion (Maya works are shaded)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Removal of Sin</th>
<th>Required for Salvation</th>
<th>War Rhetoric</th>
<th>Original Sin</th>
<th>“Mark” Elements (Salt, Cross, etc.)</th>
<th>Duty of the Baptized</th>
<th>God-parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Molina Dominican doctrina</td>
<td>1546</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anunciación Bautista</td>
<td>1565</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coronel (discursos)</td>
<td>1620</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coronel (doctrina)</td>
<td>1620</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alva</td>
<td>1634</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peña</td>
<td>1642</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beltrán Anon.</td>
<td>1757</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paredes Anon.</td>
<td>1700s</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>70%</strong></td>
<td><strong>60%</strong></td>
<td><strong>30%</strong></td>
<td><strong>60%</strong></td>
<td><strong>40%</strong></td>
<td><strong>30%</strong></td>
<td><strong>50%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 5.1 illustrates this diversity in the treatment of various aspects of the sacrament of Baptism among Nahuatl and Maya texts. Most Nahuatl texts covered the fundamentals of the sacrament: its removal of all sin including original sin, and its necessity for salvation. Maya texts, however, frequently fail to convey even the most basic points of the sacrament’s doctrine. Indeed, existing religious texts in Maya barely discuss baptism at all. Given the central role of baptism in Christian theology, this is a significant catechetical shortcoming of Yucatec Maya religious texts. Yet one must wonder how much the everyday Nahua (or Spaniard!) cared to understand of the sacrament even with such detailed and extensive instruction. Overall, all the above texts discuss baptism, but how each text presented, discussed, and explained the sacrament differed to form unique versions of baptism that could turn its recipients into soldiers, award them a seat in heaven, or simply place a shining star on their soul. And when the texts’ discourse ran silent on the matter, we are left only to imagine what instruction the recipient received, if any at all.
How to Baptize en Caso de Necessidade

Not all baptisms occurred under ideal circumstances. Indeed, considering the complications and dangers for both mother and child during colonial childbirth, instances logically occurred when infants would not live long enough to receive an ecclesiastic’s baptism in the local church. In such cases the Catholic Church allowed laypeople to perform the sacrament to prevent the child from dying unbaptized and, thus, from an eternal state in limbo. Yet this exception, this infringement on the ecclesiastic’s spiritual domain, was protected with strict instructions on when and how to perform the ceremony. Put into practice in the early centuries of Christianity, the exception and instructions surrounding emergency baptisms were well known to the Spanish friars and priests that came to the New World and eventually made its way into indigenous-language ecclesiastical texts; an outcome that would later inspire many debates.

For Yucatan, no religious texts in Maya explain how maestros were trained to perform emergency baptisms. However, colonial documentation suggests that they did perform the sacrament. When late eighteenth-century bishops visited the outlying visitas to ensure the proper function of ecclesiastic matters, they typically followed a 30 question questionnaire. Question 19 inquired after the town’s possession of trained Maya who could baptize in cases of emergency. Most of the visita towns affirmed that they did. How well they were trained is left to speculation.

For Central Mexico, more extensive documentation survives. The Codex Franciscano instructs friars to ensure that Nahua fiscales know how to correctly perform an emergency baptism, and Paredes’ Promptuario instructs Nahuas to follow an

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76 AHAY, Visita Pastorales 1782-1785, 1784.
unspecified catechism to ensure that they perform the ceremony properly. Moreover, Saenz de la Peña discusses the matter in his manual for priests. Although the work only provides the instructions in Spanish—thus gearing the discussion primarily toward ecclesiastics—it provides some insights on native baptizers. In a section outlining how to baptize in Nahuatl a Nahua infant, the manual informs the priest to first “find out if [the godparents] had already baptized [the infant],” thus suggesting its common occurrence. If baptized, the priest was to have whoever performed the baptism show him how it was done to ensure its proper administration. Yet in the end, the manual gives priests the impression that they should just rebaptize the infant due to the “brutishness of these people” rather than risk the chance of it dying without a proper baptism. Perhaps his skepticism of the natives’ ability to perform the sacrament prevented his inclusion of instructions for Nahuas on how to do so.

This skepticism reached its apex in fray Manuel Pérez’ 1713 *Farol indiano*. As mentioned above, the manual lists various problems Pérez viewed in the administration of the sacraments. The Augustinian’s opposition to emergency baptism is enlightening. His overall view holds Nahuas incapable, “principally in isolated towns,” of performing the baptism. (Indeed, many of his examples of erroneous behavior concerns towns he considers distant from cabeceras, or head towns). He cites the second part of the Franciscan Juan Bautista’s *Advertencias* where on folio 224, number 46 he instructs

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80 Ibid., f. 31r.

natives in each town to be taught how to baptize in cases of necessity. These natives were likely fiscales and indeed the *Codice Franciscano* lists the baptism of sick children as among their duties and later states that such are “more instructed in it than many curates in Spain.” 82 Yet Pérez claims that Bautista gives a condition that makes the rite morally impossible for Nahuas to perform: the Nahua performing the baptism must be sober. 83 With irony that nearly leaps from the page (and perhaps also reeks of rivalry between orders) Pérez quips, “In sixteen years of administering to [natives], I have not been able to find one.” 84

Pérez does, however, admit that Bautista’s method of instructing a few, select natives could work, but only if they lived in “large towns” and met a list of strict criteria he provides. In any case, Pérez instructs ecclesiastics to “conditionally baptize” any child baptized by natives giving particular emphasis to those priests in charge of distant towns where, according to him, oftentimes children were baptized while waiting for the priest to arrive. 85 As illustrated below, the great sin of receiving baptism twice mandated the conditional element of the baptism, and allowed the presence or lack thereof of a previously acceptable baptism to validate or invalidate the conditional rite.

But if ecclesiastics were to follow the instructions of various authorities, including Bautista, to train natives to baptize in cases of necessity, what would such instruction look like? What would ecclesiastics teach? And would they teach it the same way? As such instructions have yet to be found in a Yucatec Maya text, the following examines

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82 García Icazbalceta, *Códice Franciscano*, 83, 96.


84 Pérez, *Farol indiano*, 7.

85 For Pérez’s full discourse see his *Farol indiano*, 1-15.
the only two known Nahuatl texts to extensively discuss the matter: Molina’s 1569 *Confesionario mayor* and Paredes’ 1758 translation of Ripalda’s *Doctrina Christiana* to which he added at the end of the work “other things very useful to everyone” including instructions on emergency baptism.\(^{86}\) Written nearly 200 years apart from each other and by members of separate orders (Molina was a Franciscan, Paredes a Jesuit), both illustrate the similarities and differences between their instructions of how to baptize in an emergency. In the end, although both texts intended to convey the correct procedure, both created distinct versions of the ritual.

At the end of his manual’s interrogation surrounding the first commandment, Molina inserts four folios of instruction on the correct manner for Nahuas to baptize in emergencies (see Appendix H). Molina divides his treatise into five sections with the first dedicated to strongly admonishing Nahuas not to employ this emergency baptism unless the person is absolutely unable to be taken before a priest before he/she dies. Molina seems concerned with allowing lay Nahuas any ecclesiastic privilege and declares that those who baptize healthy persons “will sin greatly…will incur in mortal sin, because it is the charge and duty of priests alone to baptize people and administer the sacrament called baptism and the other sacraments.”\(^{87}\) This concern is understandable, especially when considering that sixteenth-century friars were still very much wrestling with precontact religious figures over supernatural rights. Here, Molina uses the threat of mortal sin to keep the Nahuas’ emergency religious privileges on a short leash.

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\(^{86}\) Ripalda, *Catecismo mexicano*, preliminary leaf, unnumbered.

\(^{87}\) Molina, *Confesionario mayor*, ff. 22r-22v.
Also betraying the early nature of the text is its delineation of who can be
baptized in cases of emergency. Molina states that men and women can “tiquéz y ye
donquilizneq piltzílli, yn anoço aca ye yxtlamati” (baptize a child or someone in the age
of reason who is about to die) (emphasis mine).\footnote{Ibid., f. 22r.} The reference to “someone in the age
of reason” referred to any non-child including adolescents and adults. Despite the reports
of early friars, many adults remained unbaptized in the sixteenth century.\footnote{See Cline’s “Spiritual Conquest Reexamined.”} Thus, in the
case that such an adult experienced a change of heart and could not make it to a priest,
Molina authorizes their baptism by a fellow Nahua.

Second, Molina instructs Nahuas to use non-blessed water (\textit{atl amo tlatechiualli})
when baptizing. Again making a clear distinction between the supernatural rights of
priest and parishioner, Molina states “ca çan yceltin y sacerdotesme yn nemac ynic
tlateochialatica tequatequizque” (it is for priests alone to baptize someone with blessed
water).\footnote{Molina, \textit{Confesionario mayor}, f. 22v.} His concern for this division is aptly felt in his statement that that Nahuas
should baptize with any water other than blessed water, even though it is dirty, or “yn
manel çan nexatl” (even though it should be merely lime water).\footnote{Ibid., f. 23r.  This permission to use non-blessed water has European origins. Alberto
Castellani’s 1523 \textit{Liber sacerdotalis} permits the baptizer to even use animal blood in cases of emergency. See Lara, \textit{Christian Texts}, 93, 274.} Molina’s cautions
against the use of blessed water include two distinct types: \textit{agua bendita}, or blessed
water, and \textit{agua sanctificada}, or sanctified water. According to Molina, \textit{agua bendita}
was holy water blessed weekly by the priest, while \textit{agua sanctificada} was blessed with
chrism. Either could be used if no other form of water was available. However, such
forms of blessed water are found only in the church. Thus, we have a scenario of a near-death Nahua being brought to the church for an emergency baptism where a Nahua fiscal or bystander replaced the absent priest. The aforementioned lack of priests in native towns surely made this scenario common.

Molina’s third section elucidates on how to perform the emergency baptism in various possible situations. During a partial birth where only the child’s hand, foot or head appears, the Nahua baptizer is to cover the woman’s body with a cloak and pour water on the emerged body part and baptize the child. If the child survives, he/she should be taken to the priest who will verify if the baptismal words were spoken correctly and if the child needs rebaptizing. Molina also informs Nahuas of the sin of baptizing someone who has already died. In such cases of uncertainty regarding whether the child is alive or dead, the Nahua baptizer is to say, “Yntla otimic, amo nimitzquatequia: auh yntla tiyoltica, Ego te baptizo. etc” (If you have died, I do not baptize you, but if you are alive, Ego te baptizo, etc).”

In the last two sections, Molina instructs Nahuas on the baptismal words and emphasizes their correct recitation. Before the baptism, the Nahua baptizer should mentally say, “Yn axcan, nicchiuaznequi yn quimonequiltia tonantzin sancta yglesia, yn iuh nechmonauatilia” (What I am about to do now, our mother the Holy Church wants and commands me).” Following this mental prayer, Molina explains that Nahuas are to baptize in Latin or Nahualtl and gives the prayer for both. He then expounds on the need

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92 Molina, Confesionario mayor, f. 23v.

93 Ibid., f. 24r.
to name the child before baptism. After providing a few examples of names—Pedro and Juan for males, Maria and Francisca for females—the manual states that “yn ticquatequiznequi, intlcamo vel neci in aço oquichtli, yn anoço cihuatl, atle ticotecayotiz, atle yc ticnotzaz, çan mitic tiquitoz. Yn axcan, nicquatequiznequi y çaço tleyn ye tlacatiznequi piltzintli, yn iuh nechmonahuatilia tonantzin sancta yglesia” (if you are about to baptize and cannot tell whether it is a male or female, you are not to call it anything, but say to yourself, “Now I want to baptize whatever child is about to be born as our mother the Holy Church commands me”). Again Molina reminds the Nahua to take surviving children to the priest who can complete the baptism with oil, chrism, and other traditional elements. All this conforms to the summary of emergency baptisms in the Codice Franciscano.

Molina ends his discussion acknowledging the blessings for those who help perform this ordinance, and the condemnation for those who fail such an obligation. Overall, the manual prescribes a form of emergency baptism that included various forms of blessed water, mental prayers, prayers for those of an undetermined sex, and a choice between either a Latin or Nahuatl baptismal prayer. Yet throughout, Molina continually reminds the Nahuabaptizers of their limitations to guard the rights of the priest.

As one would expect, Paredes’ discussion shares many similarities with Molina’s. Although not organized into five sections, Paredes’ text also cites the Christian duty of everyone to help their fellow man through emergency baptism (see Appendix I). The

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95 Molina, Confesionario mayor, ff. 24v-25r.

96 García Icazbalceta, Códice Franciscano, 96-7.
Nahuatl text provides more specifics on who can baptize in such cases that include a
“Caxtiltecatl, ma Macehualli; ma Oquichtli, ma Cihuatl; ma huei Tlacatl, ma Piltontli, inla yê ixtlamatqui” (Spaniard or indigenous person, male or female, adult or child, if it has reached the age of reason).\footnote{Ripalda, \textit{Catecismo mexicano}, 164.} In addition, unlike Molina, Paredes makes it clear throughout his text that such people should be Christians and that the recipients of the baptism are near-death children. Although they surely existed, Paredes is not preoccupied with unbaptized adults by the mid eighteenth century.

The text first provides baptizers with the prebaptismal mental prayer, “\textit{Noteotziné, nictlal" in Noyollo; inic nictequipanoz, in tlein in Santa Iglesia in Tequaatequiliztica quimonequiltia. Nicnequi, ma inin motlachihualzin, Christiano mochihua; inic momaquixtiz, ihuan cemîcac mitzmocuiltonôtzinoz}” (My God, I determine (the literal meaning here is “I set my heart in order) to perform that which the Holy Church wants concerning baptism. I desire that this your creature become a Christian so that he will be saved and eternally make you happy).\footnote{Ibid., 165.} Differing from Molina’s version, both the Christianizing and saving role of baptism, and the need for the Nahua baptizer to “set in order” their hearts before performing the sacrament are reoccurring themes throughout the text and significant to Paredes version.

Paredes proceeds to instruct the baptizer to retrieve any type of water to perform the baptism, but not blessed water, and to name the child. Although Molina’s baptizers could use blessed water in dire need, Paredes baptizers lacked such an option. Paredes next advises Nahuas to name the child prior to baptism and provides examples of
names—Joseph and Juan, Maria and Anna. Yet he states that “intlacamo ticmati; cuix Oquichtontli, nozo Cihuatontli; immanel âtle in Itoca tictlaliz. Ca nel in Tocaitl âmo huel ommonequi; inic qualli quizaz in Tequaatéquilitl” (if you do not know whether it is a little boy or girl, then you are to not to name it anything because the name is not entirely necessary for the baptism to turn out good).99 Unlike Molina, no mental prayer is provided for such situations. The lessened importance of naming the child seems prevalent given that the Fourth Mexican Provincial Council of 1771 would later produce a catechism that also considered the naming of a child prior to baptism unnecessary.100 Yet things change over time as a modern edition of Ripalda’s doctrina printed in 2001 includes the naming of the child in the ritual of emergency baptism.101

Subsequently, the text imparts the words to the baptism. However, although Molina allowed early natives to choose between Latin and Nahuatl, Paredes provides no such option. His text gives the prayer in Spanish stating, “Auh ca huel ticmocuitlahuiz; inic zan yehuatl tlâtolli in Caxtillancopa; auh niman âmo Mexîcacopa tictenehuaz” (And you should take great care that this statement is in the manner of Castile; you are definitely not say it in the manner of Mexico).102 Despite his firm instructions, Paredes was not ignorant to his surroundings and conceded that when the baptizer does not know Spanish he can give the prayer in “the manner of commoners,” which the text then provides in Nahuatl.103 Here, Paredes betrays the realities of the mid eighteenth century

99 Ibid., 166.
100 Catecismo y suma, 81.
101 Ripalda, Catecismo de la doctrina cristiana, 17.
102 Ripalda, Catecismo mexicano, 166.
103 Ibid., 167.
where anyone ignorant of even basic Spanish and still employing Nahuatl was considered a commoner. Yet regardless of the language, Paredes emphasizes the need to say the baptismal prayer word for word. Molina also shared this concern regarding emergency baptisms as did the catechism of the Fourth Provincial Mexican Council of 1771.  

Paredes’ reluctance toward a Nahuatl prayer echoes ecclesiastics’ continued debate over the adequacy of Nahuatl to accurately translate with precision Latin prayers. Perhaps most vociferous on the topic was Pérez. Indeed, a large portion of his *Farol indiano* argued that baptism performed in Nahuatl was not valid. Through a philological analysis examining the Nahuatl words used in the baptismal prayer, he points out various incongruities between the Nahuatl and intended meanings. For example, in examining the Nahuatl verb used for “to baptize,” *quaatequia*, Pérez explains, “it is composed of *quaitl* for the head, *atl* for the water, and the verb *tequia* that means ‘to pour’ or ‘to spread’; that all together means ‘to pour water on the head.’” If, he argues, others see this as sufficient, then why don’t Spaniards say “Echote agua en la cabeza” instead of “Yo te baptizo?” For Pérez, then, the Nahuatl does not capture the meaning of baptism and thus is invalid. Pérez does allow, however, for the small chance that a Nahua could say the Nahuatl prayer with the correct meaning of baptism in his mind, thus making the baptism valid. Such cases justify his instructions for ecclesiastics to baptize conditionally every infant that was baptized in Nahuatl. Although Paredes does not go as far as Pérez, it is obvious he shares similar sentiments.

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104 *Catecismo y suma*, 81.


106 Pérez then proceeds to examine the Nahuatl *ica* stating that it carries a meaning of “with” and not the intended meaning of “in.” As a result, *ico tocatzin* means “with the name” instead of the intended “in the name.” The same argument is made for the relational word –*pan* “on, of, for, in, as, relating to,
Also included in Paredes’ text is a discussion of how to baptize partial births. This section largely parallels Molina’s with a few additions. Paredes declares his preference that a woman baptize partially born children, preferably a midwife, most likely for reasons of discretion and practical availability. Indeed, Yucatecan ecclesiastics expected Maya cah to possess one or more midwives trained in emergency baptism. Despite such texts as Paredes’, midwives occasionally incorrectly performed the rite. The curia of Tlaola in 1790 accused a midwife of incorrectly baptizing 60 dying infants.107

Moreover, Paredes instructs the baptizer only to perform the baptism after he/she knows for certain that the child is alive. Whereas Molina provided an altered, conditional baptismal prayer for such cases, Paredes’ version does not. However, Paredes does detail the proper procedures for if the child survives and if he dies. Here, parents are counseled to take their child to the priest who will either complete the ceremony, or bury the child. The text then concludes emphasizing the importance of knowing these things, particularly for physicians, healers, and midwives.

Overall, both texts similarly address the necessity and importance of emergency baptism. Yet they both prescribe different procedures for how to perform the sacrament. Although protecting the ecclesiastic’s spiritual domain throughout, Molina’s millenarian ideals created a thorough version of emergency baptism that included a series of prayers adapted to a variety of circumstances including the uncertainty of gender and life, and the option to use blessed water and to say the baptismal prayer in either Latin or Nahuatl.

etc.” for the intended meaning of “in.” Pérez offers the relational word –tencopa as a better option. Yet the word, meaning “by order of,” also has its setbacks.

107 Taylor, Magistrates, 609, n. 90.
Molina does not specify whether or not the Nahua baptizer should be a Christian or not, but does include adults as candidates for emergency baptism and the penalty of a mortal sin for baptizing healthy persons.

However, Paredes limits his instructions to Christian Nahuaas baptizing children who are determined to be alive. Paredes lacks the modified prayers of Molina for children of uncertain gender and life and demands a Spanish baptismal prayer whenever possible. However, he does prescribe women a more prominent role and provides a more detailed treatment of post-care than Molina. Overall, Paredes seems more preoccupied with reminding Christian Nahuaas of their duty to help others in need and to prepare themselves before baptizing, than creating a protocol for myriad circumstances. Such differences may seem slight and insignificant to modern readers. Yet to a Church intent on orthodoxy, they show the ability for even sacramental rites to vary and change.

Conclusion

Although Nahuaas and Mayas’ instruction on baptism and its emergency administration likely was not limited to religious texts, each indigenous-language religious text conveyed baptism in a unique way to convey distinct interpretations and versions of the sacrament. Overall, baptism not only differed in its explanation, but also in its application. Furthermore, the ability for natives to baptize in cases of emergencies, and how such a baptism was to be performed also fluctuated. One thing was clear: baptism was essential for salvation. Yet that fact largely remained the only constant
throughout the colonial period. For how Nahuas and Mayas should understand, access, and perform this redeeming sacrament varied from text to text.
Chapter 6

The Various Confessions of Mesoamerica

It happened that by the roads, mountains, and deserts one thousand and two thousand indios and indias followed the Religious just to confess, leaving deserted their houses and farms, and many of them pregnant, so many that some gave birth by the roads, and almost all loaded with their children on their backs....To see the fervor and tears with which they asked for [confession], and the hunger and exhaustion they had to endure was to break the heart
—fray Gerónimo de Mendieta (1596)\(^1\)

In some parts, the Indians are so lazy in coming to confession [during] Lent that except you take great care in warning them since the Sunday before the week that they come from their neighborhoods to confess, they don’t come. And if ministers press the mandones to bring them…and if they tell them to wait and think about their sins…it happens that when the confessor agrees [to begin], they have already gone and never return again.
—fray Juan Bautista (1600)\(^2\)

Did you steal something, perhaps a cloak, money, hens, or sheep, or oxen; perhaps you stole a horse, or precious metals, fine feathers, or some jewel, or you took a bracelet from someone, or harvested the maize of someone’s field, or sowed someone’s field; perhaps you took a dried ear or fresh ear of maize, squash, chilies, beans, chia, or you felled trees or went looking for firewood in another’s wooded land? And when you sell something, or buy something, or exchange something at the market place, do you deceive others and cheat people?
—fray Alonso de Molina (1569)\(^3\)

Have you stolen?
—fray Juan Coronel (1620)\(^4\)

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\(^1\) Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica*, vol. 1, 170.

\(^2\) Bautista, *Advertencias*, vol. 1, ff. 9r-9v.


\(^4\) Coronel, *Discursos*, unnumbered.
The need to appropriately administer the sacrament of Confession to the Nahuas and Mayas inspired the production of many native-language confessional manuals. Friars enlisted indigenous aides to compose these manuals to instruct the natives on Catholic doctrine, and monitor their adherence to such doctrine. As shown in the quotes above, some friars were optimistic about the natives’ acceptance of the sacrament, others expressed skepticism; some used lengthy, detailed questions, others preferred basic inquiries.

This chapter employs confessional manuals written in Nahuatl and Maya to reveal the diversity in the intended confessional experience for natives. After an examination of precontact confessional practices and confessional manuals themselves, this chapter compares a variety of Nahuatl and Maya confessional manuals and their preconfessional admonitions and questions, discussion of the first and seventh commandment, and assigned penance. This comparison reveals how the era, place, author, confessor, and penitent inspired the manuals to produce different versions of Catholicism and its sacrament of Confession throughout the colonial period, and thus the various confessions of Mesoamerica.

Precontact Confessional Practices

Although containing the biases of both Sahagún and his Nahua assistants, the *Florentine Codex* provides a wealth of information on precontact Nahua society and
culture. The first book describes Nahua confession made to the god of punishment and justice, Tezcatlipoca, through the diviners of the goddess Tlazolteotl, “filth deity.” Tlazolteotl’s diviners directed the rite as Nahua confessed any impure acts to Tezcatlipoca. Both Tezcatlipoca and Tlazolteotl governed tlaolli (impurities) and thus had the power to cause immorality, punish immoral Nahua, and remove tlaolli from them. The Franciscan chronicler Mendieta claims that Nahua performed this confession twice a year and when they were very sick. Indeed, Mendieta describes how pregnant women, the sick, the handicapped, and the elderly went to great efforts to find confessors. In such cases, Mendieta states that the infirm sought out respected local figures, both male and female, to serve as confessors.

According to various Spanish accounts, which likewise must be read with care for European influences, the Mayas also practiced a precontact rite of confession. Cogolludo claims that the Mayas confessed their grave sins to priests and doctors. Husband and wives would also confess to one another. Their sins would then be publicized to their

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6 Burkhart, Slippery Earth, 92-93.


8 Mendieta, Historia eclesiástica indiana (1945), vol. 2, 132. With regards to eighteenth-century confessional practices William Taylor states, “Indians paid too little attention to the soul’s eternal salvation…[and confessed]…for material ends and collective well-being in this world. Taylor, Magistrates, 50.
relatives so that all could ask god for forgiveness through a prayer designated for such.9 Interestingly, public confessions administered prior to one’s participation in ceremonial rituals survive today among select Maya communities.10

Confessional Manuals

Confessional manuals appeared as Catholicism restructured the confession from a public, once-in-a-lifetime practice to one that was private and performed periodically. Between the third and seventh centuries, Europeans guilty of significant sin presented themselves to the local bishop to petition for enrollment in the order of the penitents. Once within the order, a penitent withdrew from daily society, wore special clothing, and worshiped in a designated space in the church, thus making his/her penance a “public” confession for all parishioners to see. This form of penance had certain inconveniences. A penitent could undertake this rite only once in his/her life, and once admitted to the order of penitents, carried lifetime obligations and restrictions that isolated him/her from “proper” society. The Catholic Church sought alternatives and in the ninth century adopted a Celtic practice that assigned each sin a corresponding penalty. Penitents could then repent as many times as they were willing to perform the sin’s designated penance. Because of the role sin played in determining the penance, confession became both more common and more private from the ninth to the twelfth centuries.11

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10 Thompson, *Maya Religion*, 175.

Between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the sacrament of Confession underwent another fundamental change. As Aristotelian doctrine of cause and effect began to influence the Church, the confession placed a stronger emphasis on the sinner’s motive and remorse. This new emphasis required priests to probe into the penitent’s innermost thoughts in an attempt to discover the details and intentions of potentially sinful actions, thoughts, and even dreams—a daunting task for both priest and penitent. When the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 issued a canon that required annual confession by all men and women who had reached the age of reason, the need to prepare the priest and the penitent for the sacrament became increasingly apparent. As a result, the summ\a de casibus or summa confessorum appeared in the thirteenth century as a guide to confession.

Derived from this thirteenth-century model and written in the vernacular, fifteenth- and sixteenth-century European confessional manuals became essential to the priest and penitent’s navigation of the confession.\(^\text{12}\) Following the summ\a, these manuals structured the discussion of possible sin around the Decalogue, the five rules of the Church, the fourteen works of mercy, the five senses, the seven deadly sins, and the seven virtues.\(^\text{13}\) Using carefully constructed questions, confessional manuals guide the priest on a tour of the penitent’s soul to expose all of its impurities. Some manuals were so thorough that they even probed the penitent’s dreams for traces of sin and impurity.\(^\text{14}\)

\(^{12}\) Kathleen Ann Myers, Neither Saints Nor Sinners: Writing the Lives of Women in Spanish America (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 11.

\(^{13}\) Homza, “European Link,” 42.

Moreover, because free will was essential to assess the severity of sin, many of the manual’s questions were designed to help the priest distinguish between voluntary and involuntary transgressions.

Along with intimate questions, confessional manuals also included admonitions to instruct the penitent on the requirements for salvation.\(^{15}\) Allowing penitents to know what questions would be asked in a confession and how a confessor would ask them provided a means for the penitent to evaluate the confessor’s performance and encouraged laypersons to prepare for the sacrament through self-examination.\(^{16}\) The manual, then, provided parishioners with access to Christian morals outside the walls of the parish church. In addition, the sacrament of Confession allowed parishioners an annual one-on-one encounter with their priest, and thus their religion. However, this encounter varied from penitent to penitent as European manuals differed in complexity and content.\(^{17}\)

As Christianity spread to New Spain, so did confessional manuals. Confessional manuals produced in Spanish America, however, were distinct from their European counterparts.\(^{18}\) First and foremost, they provided native-language translations of a traditionally Spanish and Latin discourse. The translation of the Christian doctrine into

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\(^{15}\) For more information on the didactic role of confessional manuals, see Serge Gruzinski, “Individualization and Acculturation: Confession among the Nahua of Mexico from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century,” in *Sexuality and Marriage in Colonial Latin America*, 96-112. Also, see Elisa Sampson Vera Tudela, *Colonial Angels: Narratives of Gender and Spirituality in Mexico 1580-1750* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), 47.

\(^{16}\) See also Homza, “European Link,” 33-48.


\(^{18}\) For more on Spanish confessional manuals in the early modern period see O’Banion, “‘A Priest.’”
indigenous languages imbued within it a native rhetoric distinct from European manuals. Furthermore, although the structure of indigenous-language confessional manuals was based on the *summae* of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the contents responded directly to the local and immediate issues of the colonial society in which they appeared.\(^{19}\) Indeed, a European penitent would find it strange that Molina’s Nahuatl manual asked, “*miyec yn izhuatl ye ticpiqui, ynic tichueyliya?*” (do you wrap [tamales] up with many leaves so that you enlarge them?).\(^ {20}\)

Indigenous-language confessional manuals, like their European counterparts, were distinct from each other. Some manuals were lengthy with over a hundred folios of various admonitory speeches, questions and their corresponding answers, and prayers. Others were basic, four-folio works listing only the most rudimentary questions. Still others simply provided native penitents with a ready-to-recite confession that confessed any and every sin the author(s) deemed relevant. Some boasted elaborate woodcarvings, while others appeared on bark paper. Some experienced multiple printings and renown, others were written for personal use and remain undocumented, lost, and forgotten. In the end, no two native-language manuals were alike.

However, such distinction did not prevent one confessional manual from influencing another, or from subsequent printings. Indeed, Bautista’s 1599 Nahuatl confessional manual copied large sections of Molina’s 1569 manual. Moreover, Secundino Baeza’s 1883 Maya confessional manual is thought to be a copy of an earlier

\(^{19}\) For more on the ancestry of confessional manuals, see Homza, “European Link,” 33-48.

\(^{20}\) Molina, *Confesionario mayor*, f. 39v.
Regarding multiple printings, Antonio de Vázquez Gastelu’s 1689 Nahuatl manual saw additional printings in 1693, 1716, 1726, and 1756, demonstrating its continued popularity for nearly a century. Likewise, Molina’s 1565 large and small confessional manuals proved very popular and experienced three printings during the 1560s and 1570s. Once printed, these manuals and their messages continued in circulation and allowed for a variety of versions of the sacrament of Confession to exist simultaneously.

Similar to their Spanish counterparts, published indigenous-language manuals intended to instruct both the confessor and native penitent, and they appeared in various forms. Printed manuals were either of standard length or written as “large” or “brief” versions, confessionarios mayor and breve. Large confessional manuals illustrate the ideal and most thorough confession natives could receive. Additionally, it appears that some ecclesiastics intended large manuals particularly for indigenous nobles. León states that large confessional manuals should be used for “principales y Gobernadores” (nobles and rulers) as expectations were different for such penitents. The rhetoric of large manuals also suggests an urban indigenous audience. To be sure, expectations varied between urban and rural penitents. Aquino Cortés y Zedeño instructs confessors to use different questions for “country people [than] those that live in the cities.” Because most natives lived outside large metropolises, they likely failed to receive confessions derived from large manuals.

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22 León, *Camino del cielo*, f. 127r.

Although both large and small confessional manuals contained the vital components of the sacrament, confessors seemingly preferred small manuals—particularly once millennial aspirations ran their course—for a variety of reasons. Simpler, more practical, and easier to become familiar with or memorize, small manuals seemed to meet the needs of a confessor burdened with the care of many. In his small Nahuatl confessional manual, León states that it is short “so as to not waste time when you have so many to confess and to help those confessors who are just starting out and are new.”

Even small manuals could be abridged, as seen in fray Marcos de Saavedra’s comment at the end of his small Nahuatl manual stating “it is not necessary to ask all that is here, but only that which is necessary according to the quality of the people and their confessions.”

Considering that ecclesiastics expected natives to confess once a year during Lent, the duties of the priest visiting a native town during that period would be overwhelming. William Taylor provides a poignant example of a Nahua assistant, Juan Miguel Tinoco, helping the curate of Zinacantepec—a town roughly thirty-five miles west of Mexico City—confess his parishioners. Tinoco states that he was in the confessional all day from the second week of Lent to Pentecost confessing over 1,300 natives and non-natives. This is a period of approximately seventy-eight days, and Tinoco averaged about seventeen people per day. One can only imagine how many questions such a task allowed the confessor to ask or the penitent to answer.

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24 León, Camino del cielo, f. 101r.

25 Fray Marcos de Saavedra, Confessonario breve activo y pasivo en lengua mexicana (México: Imprenta real del superior gobierno y del Nuevo Rezado de doña Maria de Rivera, 1746), reproduced in Obras Clásicas sobre la Lengua Náhuatl, unnumbered.

26 Taylor, Magistrates, 224.
Thus, confessors, particularly those serving in the peripheries and responsible for overwhelming numbers of native parishioners, preferred these small, succinct manuals that oftentimes conveniently appeared together with grammars or other religious texts. Indeed, the Nahuatl grammars of fray Augustín de Vetancourt (1673), Antonio Vázquez Gastelu (1689), and fray Juan Guerra (1692), all included small manuals. Likewise, Coronel inserted his Maya manual within his larger *Discursos predicables* containing sermons, a catechism, and other religious material. Frequently, the back matter of small manuals included prayers or sermons making it an all-in-one item. Alva’s small manual, for example, contained various prayers and speeches in its concluding pages.

Small confessional manuals also were used when the confessor judged the penitent’s indoctrination insufficient for a lengthy confession. Saavedra mentions that the contents of his small manual are sufficient for whomever while they learn more.

From the initial years of evangelization, ecclesiastics varied their religious instruction according to the perceived “ability” of the recipient. During the first years of colonization, the sons of the indigenous nobility received more extensive instruction, while those of commoners were taught only the basic prayers and doctrines. However, as the colonial period progressed, friars such as León increasingly believed that the natives’ limited capacity made large confessional manuals futile. The last large manual in Nahuatl was don Bartolomé de Alva’s manual published in 1634.

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27 Alva betrays his or his aides’ mental reference to Mexico City when writing his large confessional manual. See Sell, “The Classical age,” 32.

28 Saavedra, *Confessionario breve*, unnumbered.

29 Ricard, *Spiritual Conquest*, 98.

30 León, *Camino del cielo*, f. 101v.
Unlike Central Mexico, Yucatan never produced a single large confessional manual. Various circumstances might explain the preference for small manuals in Yucatan and their scarcity today. Small manuals more adequately fit the needs of Yucatecan priests whose limited numbers gave them larger indigenous folds than their companions in Central Mexico. Also, because the Yucatan lacked a printing press until 1813 most manuals appeared in manuscript form as Category 2 texts. These manuscript manuals were generally more basic than Nahuatl manuals and provided the penitent with the barest bones of a confessional experience. Unfortunately, the manuscript nature of most Maya confessional manuals largely prevented their survival in modern archives.

In general, the role unpublished confessional manuals played in shaping the confessional experience remains difficult to determine as they were illegal altogether during the colonial period and extant examples are few. Yet we might surmise with some certainty that they played a substantial role in both Central Mexico and Yucatan. During the colonial period, ecclesiastics printed only fourteen Nahuatl and one Maya confessional manual. Considering the number of priests, it seems unreasonable to assume they primarily employed printed manuals. When found, these manuscript

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31 Circa 1620s-30s, Coronel apparently composed a confessional manual for new priests that has since been lost. This manuscript might have been a large confessional manual. But it is more likely that the manuscript became the small confessional manual included in his Discur sos. See Cogolludo, Historia de Yucatán; and Tozzer, Maya Grammar, 198.

32 Coronel, Discur sos; and “Modo de confesar.”

33 Sell, “Friars, Nahuas, and Books,” Appendix 1, 305-310. The only recorded printing of a confessional manual was by Coronel in the seventeenth century; today the work is missing. Tozzer, Maya Grammar, 234. Continued research in both Nahuatl and Maya confessional manuals will hopefully modify these numbers.
manuals are archival gems. Commonly written for the personal use of the confessor, they more accurately represent the actual confession administered.

Finally, when discussing confessional manuals it is folly to assume that confessors restricted themselves to a manual for all confessions. To be sure, certain confessors memorized or became familiar enough with these manuals to conduct confession without needing to read the work itself. Bautista cites the father Henrico Henriquez who commented that confessors should have a short confessional memorized so as to remove any hindrance when examining penitents. Moreover, it should be remembered that trained Nahua and Maya assistants could both serve as interpreters, and hear confession from the sick and dying in the absence of priests. Thus, whereas a native residing in a central city might hear confession once a year from a priest, a native in a peripheral town would have a much more sporadic experience with the sacrament that, more often than not, was performed by the local indigenous religious steward.

It is equally unreasonable to assume that nothing was “lost in translation” if an interpreter was used, or that the confessional dialogue of either priest or native assistant repeated any given manual line-for-line. More likely, the confessor (both native assistant and priest) personalized, adapted, and modified a manual’s contents to satisfy his needs and preferences. Inquisition dossiers illustrate how sometimes this modification ignored the manual (and Church law) altogether. But the majority of memorized or otherwise modified confessions elude the archives, although they too contributed to shaping the

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35 The work of John Chuchiak demonstrates how a significant number of priests in the Yucatan sexually solicited their penitents during the confession. See John Chuchiak, “Secrets Behind the Screens: Solicitantes in the Colonial Diocese of Yucatan and the Yucatec Maya, 1570-1785” in *Religion in New Spain*. 
various confessional experiences of Central Mexico and Yucatan. The archives do, however, contain confessional manuals that illustrate the intended confessional experience for natives.

Yet how could confessional manuals shape the versions of Catholicism extant throughout the colonial period? During the confession, the questions the confessor asked, or did not ask, surely conveyed to the penitent the important, and not so important, aspects of the religion. For example, if a manual focuses its questions on idolatry, a large part of Catholicism for the native penitent becomes the denunciation of this practice. If a penitent’s confession primarily discusses fornication, drunkenness, and the seven commandments of the Church, then these doctrines come to shape his understanding of what it means to be a Catholic in colonial New Spain. Thus, what is said and not said in a confession contributes to shape the natives’ relationship with Catholicism.

The remaining discussion examines the various experiences Nahuatl and Maya confessional manuals prescribed throughout the colonial period, and explores the motives behind such variation. Out of the fourteen Nahuatl manuals published throughout the colonial period, the following specifically examines six: Molina’s *Confessionario breve* (1565) and *Confesionario mayor* (1569), Alva’s *Confessionario mayor y menor* (1634), Saavedra’s *Confessionario breve activo y pasivo* (1746), and Cortés y Zedeño’s *Arte, vocabulario, y confessionario* (1765). The following also examines the only two Maya confessional manuals known today: Coronel’s *Confessionario breve* (1620), and the Campeche manuscript of a small manual (1803).  

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36 John F. Chuchiak discovered a copy of Coronel’s manual in private holdings in Merida. Although the original copy is now lost but Professor Chuchiak has graciously allowed me access to his copies. Also, David Bolles transcribed a copy of Coronel’s *Discursos* that contains the confessional manual which he has posted to the FAMSI website, [http://www.famsi.org/reports/96072/index.html#other](http://www.famsi.org/reports/96072/index.html#other).
Preconfessional Admonitions and Questions

If receiving confession from a large confessional manual, the penitent would hear a prologue of admonitory speeches explaining the need for all to confess in order to please God and live in accordance with the commandments of the Catholic Church.

Here, the native penitent repeatedly receives instruction on the importance of the confession for salvation and the need to divulge every sin, no matter how large or small. Using a common European metaphor that relates sin to sickness, Molina states in the prologue to his large confessional manual,


[I]f you hide your sore that makes you very sick, how will the healer heal you? How will he apply his medicine in order to mitigate your torment, your pain? It will be entirely impossible for you to recover your health. You will only worsen and your suffering, your torment, your pain will only grow. On account of this, it is very necessary for you to understand that this is the foundation of your salvation: the knowledge of your sins by which you confess and acknowledge your wickedness.37

Large manuals also contain instructions by which the confessor conveys the general structure of the confession to the penitent and advises him38 how to confess well.

Here, the priest relates the elements essential to a good confession, emphasizing humility,

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37 Molina, Confesionario mayor, f. 4v.

38 For editorial reasons of simplicity, I represent the penitent in the masculine form recognizing that women also confessed.
sorrow, and personal responsibility. He provides copious examples of the ways one can commit sin and explains the proper way to relate sins during confession. For example, in his large confessional manual, Alva instructs the Nahua penitent to make his heart “huel xictonehua in moyolo, inic oticmoteopohuilli” (really burn with the pain of having offended [God]).

However, despite general similarities, the admonitions of large confessional manuals vary greatly depending on author and time of publication. The unique detail of Molina’s 1569 large manual represents the early Franciscan millenarian hopes for the natives. Throughout nineteen folios of admonitory text—nearly twice the size of his entire small confessional manual!—Molina describes the formula for a contrite confession and the necessary steps the penitent must take to receive God’s forgiveness. He is particularly adamant about remembering sins and instructs the penitent thus:

*Motech monequi ompa mopiltian ticanaz, in ticpeualtiz monemiliz, tiquilnamiquiz in iquac oc tipiltontli...ahu yn iquac ye titelpochtli, yuan y ye yyolloco toquichtli, yuan y ye tihueue, tleyn yc oticmoyolitlacalhui totecuiyo....No yuan xiquilnamiquir, yn yzquican otiten, yuan in aquique intlan otinen: quezquintyn tiquimmocniuhti: ahu quezquintyn ym motlan enenque, yn omitzpaleuigue ynipā monetlayecotiliz, yn anoço otiquinpalehui, yntiquimixima, in anoço omitzyoleuhque yn anoço tiquiyoleuh in tetchpa tlatlacolli.*

In beginning your life you need to start from your childhood, to remember what you did when you were still a little child…and then when you were a young man, and then a mature man, and an old man in what ways you offended our lord….In the same way remember all the places you lived and those you lived next to and how many you became friends with and how many you lived next to, who helped you in your making a living, whom perhaps you helped and knew, whether they provoked you or you provoked them concerning sin.

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40 Molina, *Confesionario mayor*, ff. 9v-10v.
To be sure, these expectations are unrealistic. Yet they represent the version of confession Molina intended for Nahuas.

Printed in 1634, Alva’s large manual shows no sign of millenarian expectations and reflects the seventeenth-century concern with the clandestine practice of idolatry. Thus the manual dedicates only eight folios to his admonitory address to the Nahuas, who he states “àmo, antlanetoquiliztlapaltique” (are not strong in the faith) and continue to live in the “in cantehuatl [sic] in za ie noma tlai[o]huayan mextecomac” (dark and obscure night) of sin.⁴¹ Alva shares Molina’s concern with Nahuas remembering their sins, and he counsels them not hide any out of embarrassment and to “xictlaolpoa, in izquixiuhtlatlacolli” (count with dried kernels of maize the sins of all the years).⁴² However, unlike Molina’s manual designed to perfect the Nahua penitent, Alva’s focused particularly on the abolition of idolatry. His preconfessional speeches encourage the penitent to confess such sins no matter how frightening and scandalous.⁴³ Overall, Alva’s confession illustrates a seventeenth-century, Tridentine version of Catholicism less optimistic of native potential and appointed as a cure to “a night of Mexican ignorance.”⁴⁴

Interestingly, the Franciscan Juan Bautista’s 1600 Advertencias para los confessores de los naturales considers useless most of these admonitions to remember and count every sin. Bautista produced his Advertencias to lessen the burden of all confessors, both within and without the order, and instruct them on what was necessary

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⁴² Ibid., 73. Transcription and translation by Sell and Schwaller.
⁴³ Ibid., 67.
⁴⁴ Ibid., 57.
and unnecessary in a confession. His two-volume work exempted natives “of little capacity” from having to remember their sins, know the sacraments or the Christian doctrine, and show real contrition because their “invincible ignorance excuses [them].”

Although Molina’s work precedes the *Advertencias*, the manuals of Alva and others (even those of fellow Franciscans) largely appear to ignore Bautista’s guidelines, thus further contributing to the diverse versions of the sacrament of Confession.

The admonitions of large confessional manuals typically end by mentioning the benefits for those who confess, and providing a translated version of the Latin *Confiteor* for the native penitent to recite. The *Confiteor*—frequently referred to as the “General Confession” in the manuals—was a prayer the penitent would recite before his actual confession that established a formula for a correct confession. Both Molina and Alva’s large manuals employ loose translations of the *Confiteor* to provide rather different formulas. Although most small confessional manuals omit the *Confiteor*’s translation, Molina’s small manual includes it—albeit nearly a verbatim copy of the one in his larger manual—and Saavedra’s small manual also contains a brief redaction.

**Confiteor**

I confess to Almighty God, to Blessed Mary Ever Virgin, to Blessed Michael the Archangel, to Blessed John the Baptist, to the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and to all the saints, and to you, Father, that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word, and deed, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault. (At this point the penitent made his or her confession). Therefore I beseech Blessed Mary Ever Virgin, Blessed Michael the Archangel, Blessed John the Baptist, the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, all the saints, and you, Father, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

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45 Bautista, *Advertencias*, vol. 1, ff. 5r, 33r-37v.

46 I thank Stafford Poole for providing me with a translation of the prayer and his insight on the matter.
Molina (large)

Ma xiquito yn p signum crucis, yuan yn neyolmelahualoni....Nehuapol nitlatlacouani nynoyolmelaui ixpantzinco yn Dios, no yehuatzin in sancta Maria muchipa vel ichpochtli, yuā yn sant Pedro, yuā in sant Pablo, yuā yn sant Miguel archāgel yuan yn sant Francisco, yuan y ye muchintin sanctome, yn ihuiac monemitia: no tehuatl yn tipadre, ca onitlatlaco, tlalqualitzica, atlilitzica, vetzáztica neuaultilitzica, tepan ahahuélitzica, chicotlatoltica, auilhemiltizica, amo vel niccuepa n nonemiltiz: yequene nicchihuazquia yn qualli, çan amo nicchihui: niccauazquia yn xquich amo qualli, amo niccauh, yc choca yn noyollo xypantzinco yn Dios, niquiouthoua onitlatlaco, onitlatlaco, encenca onitlatlaco: yn axcan niccentelchiua n tlacatecolotl, auh nicrocema n toteuiyo dios. No nicnotlatlauhtilia n sancta Maria in muchipa vel ychpochtli, yhuel teatlatlauhtiliiani, incin nopāpa quimotlatlauhtiliz ytlacōconetzin Jesu christo, ynic nechmopopolhuiliz yn ixquich notlatlacol, ynic nechmotlaocoliziliz: auh yn tipadre nimitznotlatlauhtilia, ytencopatzinco yn toteuiyo Dios xinechmoteochiuili.

Say the “through the sign of the cross” and the confession….Unworthy I, a sinner, I, a great sinner, confess before God and also holy Mary, forever truly virgin, and Saint Pedro, Saint Pablo, Saint Miguel the archangel, Saint Francisco, and all the saints that live in heaven, and also before you, father, for I sinned through eating, drinking, with laughter, frivolities, taking pleasure in others’ misfortunes, wrong words, and carnal living. I cannot change my life. Finally, I was going to do good things, but I did not; I was going to abandon all that is not good, but I did not. Because of that my heart weeps before God. I say, “I sinned, I sinned, I sinned greatly,” yet now I entirely reject the devil, and I give myself entirely to our Lord, God. I also implore holy Mary, forever truly virgin, great imploer for people, to pray to her precious child Jesus Christ on my behalf to forgive me all my sins and be merciful to me. And I implore you, father, at the order of our Lord God, absolve me!  

Alva (large)

Ica in imachio in Cruz ninomachiotia, ma xitechmomaquixtili, toTeotzine, in inhucpa in toyaohuan, yca in iotecatzin teTatzin, Tepiltzin, spiritu Sancto, ma yu mochihua. Ninoyolcutia ixpantzinco in çenhuelitini, teotl Dios, yhuau in mochipa moçemaçitzinotica çenquizcachipahuac ichpochtli Santa Maria yhuan in San Miguel Archangel, San Iuan Baptista Santotin Apostoles San Pedro San Pablo in mochintin Sanctome yhuau tehuatzin tinoteyolcuicatzin, canel çenca onitlatlaco, tlalnamiquilitzica, tlaloltica tlachihualitzica, ica in notlatlacol in notlatlacol, ica in nohueytlatlacol. Auh ypampa in cenca nicnotlatlauhtilia in çemicac moçemacitzinotica, çenquizcachipahuac ichpochtli, Santa Maria, yhuau in San Miguel Archangel, San Iuan Baptista, Santotin Apostoles San Pedro San

47 Molina, Confesionario mayor, ff. 19r-19v.
Pablo, yhuan in tehuatzin tinoteyolcuiticatzin ma nopampa xicmotlauhtilican in notlatocatzin Dios, ma yuh mochihua.

I make the sign of the cross on myself. O our God, save us from our enemies. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen. I confess before the all-powerful deity God, and the ever perfectly and completely virgin Saint Mary, and Saint Michael Archangel, and Saint John the Baptist, and the holy apostles Saint Peter and Saint Paul, and all the saints, and you my confessor, for I have sinned with thought and word and deed, with my sins, my sins, with my great sins. Because of this I greatly implore the eternally perfect and completely pure virgin Saint Mary, and Saint Michael Archangel, and Saint John the Baptist, and the holy apostles Saint Peter and Saint Paul, and you my confessor: pray to our Ruler God for me. Amen.48

**Saavedra (small)**

Notecuiyoe, oninotlapololti onitlactlaco, ma xinechmoittilili, ca ninotequipachoua, ynic onimitznoyolitlacaluitzino.

My lord, I acted foolishly, I sinned. May you look after me for I am concerned because I offended you.49

As demonstrated above, the recitation of the Confiteor represented an intimate moment wherein the native penitent engaged the Catholic religion. Yet this experience differed from manual to manual. Molina’s confession requires the penitent to divulge a variety of specific sins regardless of his actual transgressions. Alva requires a similar, yet more general confession. And Saavedra’s is simpler still. Both Molina and Alva allow Mary and numerous saints to aid the penitent, thus encouraging and enforcing a relationship with the cult of the saints. Yet Saavedra’s penitent lacks the opportunity both to garner a relationship with the saints and to ask for their aid in the confession. His brief rendition of the Confiteor vividly reflects ecclesiastics’ lowered expectations for

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49 Saavedra, *Confessionario breve*, unnumbered.
natives (and themselves) by 1746, and the abbreviated version of Catholicism small manuals provide. Without the recourse to saints, Saavedra’s penitent is on his own.

Directly after the Confiteor typically follow questions the confessor is to ask the penitent before the actual confession. Having omitted the admonitory speeches and Confiteor, most small confessional manuals begin with these questions generally intended to discover when the penitent last confessed, if he fulfilled the penance ordered, and whether or not the penitent came prepared having already pondered their sins. Other questions follow regarding the penitent’s marital status, occupation, and knowledge of basic doctrines such as the Trinity and the Articles of Faith.50

Despite such commonalities, each confessional manual varied greatly from the other regarding what and how many preconfessional questions it contained. Such variation reflects the preferences and concerns of each author. For example, the questions in Molina’s 1569 small manual resemble those of his large manual and reflect his concern with the Nahua penitent’s baptism. Although early friars reported remarkable numbers of baptisms, more recent studies demonstrate that not all Nahuas fled to the waters of baptism.51 Aware of this, and not content with simply asking if the penitent had received baptism, Molina’s small manual pries into the Nahua’s intent. It asks, “cuix moyollocopan ticceli yn yatzin Dios, yn itoca baptismo: aço çan camanalli tentlamachtli ypan ticma? Aço çan ticuitlahuitilloc, aço çan mitzhuillantiaque ynic timoquatequi?” (did you voluntarily receive God’s holy water called baptism; perhaps

50 However, Molina’s small confessional manual does contain some admonitory speeches.

you merely thought of it as a joke or trick? Perhaps they dragged you along to be
baptized)?\(^{52}\)

Although Alva’s small manual omits the preconfessional questions altogether, they are found in his large manual. Here, Alva demonstrates his particular concern with uncovering sexual sin prior to the confession. Alva asks, “\textit{Cuix oticçemixnahuati? Cuix otictelchiuh in tlatlacolli, cuix noço àca mochan ticpia, in axcan in mitztlacolcuitita.}” (Have you firmly resolved to despise sin or do you now have in your home some person who makes you sin?).” He then provides the Nahua’s answer, “\textit{Ca quimaca ca çe çihuatzintli nochan nicpixtica auh ca ye iquich, cahuitl in àmo niccahuaznequi.}” (Yes, I am keeping a woman in my house and for some time I have not wanted to leave her).\(^{53}\)

While not particularly interested in the natives’ baptism or sexual deviancy, Aquino Cortés y Zedeño appears more concerned for their understanding of the Trinity.\(^{54}\)

In his 1765 manual intended for priests of the Guadalajara region, Aquino Cortés y Zedeño queries, “\textit{Ticneltoca, que in icque [sic] ici tacazizime [sic] distinas hualalo quichihualo [sic] zan ce huel neli Dios?}” (Do you believe that they are three distinct persons that come to make only one really true god)?\(^{55}\)

\(^{52}\) Fray Alonso de Molina, \textit{Confessionario breve de lengua mexicana y castellana} (México: Antonio de Expinoza, 1565), f. 4v.

\(^{53}\) Alva, \textit{Guide to Confession}, 73. Transcription and translation by Sell and Schwaller.

\(^{54}\) For more on indigenous understandings of the Trinity, see Tavárez, “Naming the Trinity.” Bautista’s \textit{Advertencias} also instructed priests to make sure the natives understood the Trinity. Bautista, \textit{Advertencias}, vol. 1, f. 52.

\(^{55}\) Aquino Cortés y Zedeño, \textit{Arte, vocabulario, y confessionario}, 129.
The preconfessional questions found in extant Maya manuals are succinct and represent the bare minimum. Coronel’s 1620 small confessional manual is the only published, and thus official, Maya manual available today and illustrates the concise confessional experience ecclesiastics intended for the Mayas. Indeed, Coronel uses only eight questions to determine when the penitent last confessed, if he completed the prescribed penance, if he felt bad for having sinned, and so on. The Campeche manuscript similarly betrays the rudimentary manner of Maya confessions using merely four standard preconfessional questions. Similar brevity can be found in the preconfessional questions of the small manuals couched in late seventeenth-century Nahuatl grammars.56

Overall, the preconfessional admonitions and questions of confessional manuals are both similar and different depending on the era, place, author, and confessor. A Nahua parishioner receiving confession through Molina’s manual received a lengthy preconfessional experience required of the most devout. Alva’s large manual provided Nahuas with a detailed preconfessional experience oriented toward discovering idolatry and clandestine wickedness. Maya penitents of the same era hearing Coronel’s 1620 confession experienced a significantly abridged, shorter version. And while Aquino Cortés y Zedeño’s penitents answered an average amount of questions, those hearing Saavedra’s or the Campeche manuscript’s version had barely any such experience at all.

56 For examples of brief preconfessional questions see the manuals in the grammars of Guerra, Vetancourt, and Vázquez Gastelu.
Questions Concerning the First Commandment

Following the preconfessional admonitions and questions, the confession begins with a series of questions structured around the Ten Commandments. All confessional manuals, regardless of size, follow this basic structure. Alva’s small manual even gives an example of a recited confession failing to follow the Decalogue to demonstrate how not to confess, and then provides a correct model of confession founded on the Ten Commandments.⁵⁷

All confessional manuals, however, differ on the type and amount of questions concerning the Decalogue. For example, Molina’s large manual spends six folios on the first commandment—to love God above all else. Later manuals generally used this section to address idolatry. Yet although Molina inquires after the continuation of pagan rites, it does not dominate his discussion as 61% of his questions concern the penitent’s love and devotion to God. In one instance he asks,

\[
\text{Cuix muchipa ticmocnelilmachitia n totecuiyo dios, yn ipampa yxquich yc omitzmocnelili? Auh in iquac ye ticochiznequi, yn anoço yquac timeua, cuix tiquitohua Pater noster, Ave maria, Credo Salue regina? Cuix timotlāqua-quetza, cuix ticmoyectenehuiila yn dios, inic cemilhuitl cehyoual omitzmopieli?}
\]

Do you always thank our lord, God for all the favors he has done you? When you are about to go to sleep or when you rise, do you recite the Pater Noster, the Ave Maria, the Creed, the Salve Regina? Do you kneel down, do you praise God for having guarded you all day and all night?⁵⁸

Molina’s small manual solely contains excerpts of his larger manual’s general discourse on loving God and heretical practices.

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⁵⁸ Molina, Confesonario mayor, ff. 21r-21v.
Not surprisingly, the most protracted discussion of the first commandment comes from Alva’s large manual sixty-five years later. In contrast to Molina’s focus on one’s love for God, Alva is primarily concerned with the persistence of idolatry. He uses over seven folios to question and instruct the penitent on the myriad ways he could break this commandment. Indeed, 91% of all his questions concern precontact rites. Attempting to discover if the penitent still has anthropomorphic beliefs he asks,

*Cuix tiquinpixtica in mochan in chalchiuhcoconeme, chalchiuhtamaçoltin?...Cuix tonayan tiquinquixtia cuix, tiquintotonia? Cuix tiquimiyuchaquimiloa tiquinmahuiztillia?...Cuix ticnetotoca in ca yehuantin mitzmaca, in mocochca in moneuhca in yuh moztlacahuittihu huehuentoton mocohuan in ipan omique in huey tlatlacolli tlateotoquiliztli?*

Are you guarding in your home [idols called] “turquoise children” and “turquoise toads”?...Do you bring them out into the sun to warm them? Do you wrap them up in cotton, honoring them?...Do you believe they give you your daily sustenance as the little old men your grandfathers (who died in great sin and idolatry) went along deceiving themselves? As expected, Alva’s small manual, which is merely a model confession, omits such detail on precontact rituals or gender distinction.

Furthermore, if the penitent was a woman she would be asked, “*Cuix in yquac, omomiquili moconeuh, cuix acatica, otictlallilli in momemeyalo, in mochichihualayo? Cuix ipan otictocac. Cuix noço, in campa toctoc? Cuix ompa tiauh, ticnoquiz ticpipiaçoz, in mochichihualayo.”*” (When your child died, did you put your breast milk on him with a reed? Did you bury it with him? Or where you buried him, do you go to spill and pour your breast milk on him?). As expected, Alva’s small manual, which is

59 Diego Jaimes Ricardo Villavicencio illustrates ecclesiastics’ increasing concern for idolatry with his 1692 Nahuatl/Spanish supplemental guide on how to confess idolaters titled *Luz y metodo de confesar idolatras, y destierro idolatrias debajo del tratado sigviente* (México: Diego Fernández de León, 1692).

60 Alva, *Guide to Confession*, 75.

61 Ibid., 85
Indeed, when treating the first commandment the manual simply has the sinner automatically confess his idolatry by reciting, “\textit{ca tlen inxolpilatol huehuentoton, onicchichiconeltocac}” (I perversely believed the foolish words of the miserable little old men).\textsuperscript{62}

Saavedra’s small manual poses only three questions regarding the first commandment asking if the penitent loves God or believes in dreams and in the cries of owls and birds.\textsuperscript{63} As a member of the Dominican Order, which distinguished itself as the order of preachers, one would expect Saavedra’s manual to contain more instruction. Instead, his manual represents the most concise treatment of the first commandment in a Nahuatl confessional manual. For Saavedra, a shorter interrogation, possibly made even shorter by the “quality” of the penitent, was the appropriate confession for Nahuas.

Published only nineteen years after Saavedra’s, the small manual of Aquino Cortés y Zedeño provides a substantial amount of questions (117!) on the subject for an eighteenth-century work. Like Saavedra, Aquino Cortés y Zedeño instructs the confessor to adapt the confession according to the penitent’s “quality” stating that “all [questions] are not for everyone.” According to the manual, “you would not proceed in the same way with the very stupid (\textit{rudos}) as with those that have their eyes wide open for malice.”\textsuperscript{64} Yet unlike Saavedra, Aquino Cortés y Zedeño provides unprecedented variety and detail tailored to the ailments of his resident diocese of Guadalajara.

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 137.

\textsuperscript{63} Saavedra, \textit{Confessonario breve}, unnumbered.

\textsuperscript{64} Aquino Cortés y Zedeño, \textit{Arte, vocabulario, y confessionario}, 128. Vetancourt provides his confessors with similar instructions that encourage common sense. For example, he states, “it would not be convenient to ask a young woman the questions for an experienced woman.” Vetancourt, \textit{Arte}, unnumbered.
Many of Aquino Cortés y Zedeño’s questions concern the myriad ways Guadalajaran penitents could betray God and the Catholic Church. Yet whereas Alva primarily focused on precontact rituals, Aquino Cortés y Zedeño expands the discourse to include non-Catholic, early modern religions asking, “Oticelli Sacramentos de hereges ihuan oticcaqui, ySermones?” ([Have] you received the Sacraments from heretics and heard their sermons?). Also, “Oticpia trato innahuac enemigos de toReligion, ihuan oticquinmaca armas, para momictilozquiaia tonahuac?” ([Have] you had dealings with the enemies of our Religion, and you gave them weapons so that they would fight against us?). The questions continue to inquire if the penitent has married, spoken with, or knows a heretic, or if he believes that Jews can go to heaven. This condemnation of heretics also appears in abridged forms throughout both Molina and Alva’s manuals. Yet the emphasis it receives in the manual of Aquino Cortés y Zedeño is unique and reflects the local concerns of Guadalajaran ecclesiastics.

Finally, particularly interesting are his questions surrounding illicit reading material. Aquino Cortés y Zedeño not only asks if the penitent has read books on “magic and superstition,” he also inquires if he had, has, or ever gave or sold such a book to someone. Unpublished manuscripts of all types no doubt fell into this category and the manual makes plausible their continued appearance in Guadalajara by the mid eighteenth century.

65 Ibid., 131.
66 Ibid., 130.
67 For example, Molina juxtaposes Jews with Chichimecs, the latter nomads considered uncivilized by Nahua in his Confeesionario mayor, f. 80v; Alva expresses condemnation on the Jews and the Lutherans who “damage and ruin God’s divine commandments,” Alva, Guide to Confession, 89.
68 Aquino Cortés y Zedeño, Arte, vocabulario, y confessionario, 132.
This variegated treatment of the first commandment also appears among Maya confessional manuals. As expected, the Maya manuals are brief in their discussion. Coronel devotes only two questions to the subject. After asking the penitent if he loves God above all else, Coronel simply asks, “Yanxin auocçic tauol auayak, bax yauat chhichhob” (Perhaps you set your mind on your dreams? Perhaps the cries of birds?). Many of the Nahua manuals ask similar questions regarding dreams and the sounds of animals demonstrating a similar Central Mexico-Yucatan tradition.

The Campeche manuscript pays more attention to the subject allowing for five questions. However, the manuscript fails to ask anything unique and queries the penitent’s previous divulgence of sins and belief in the Catholic faith. Although the manual fails to mention idolatry, dreams, or bird cries, the final question does ask if the penitent has cured someone with enchantments. Various Nahua manuals ask a similar question illustrating the general concern of the Church regarding healings wrought by powers not of God. Healers and curers had deep roots in both Nahua and Maya cultures, roots that the Maya manual suggests never fully died in the Yucatan by the end of the colonial period.

Overall, although Nahua and Maya confessional manuals shared similar themes in discussing the first commandment of the Decalogue, each manual constructed a different confessional experience through its choice of questions, emphases, and instructions. Molina’s manual focused on love; Alva, idolatry. Saavedra prescribed a

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69 Coronel, Discursos, unnumbered.

70 “Modo de confesar,” f. 1r.

71 Indeed, the importance of the local healer in Maya towns is apparent even today. Moreover, peripheral towns in Central Mexico continue to employ local healers.
short interrogation, while Aquino Cortés y Zedeño structured his confessional experience around the needs of Guadalajara. Moreover, when comparing Nahuatl and Maya manuals, Maya penitents generally received the briefest interrogation and instruction.

Questions Concerning the Seventh Commandment

Let us examine the selected manuals’ discussion of another commandment, the seventh commandment, “thou shalt not steal.” Molina’s large manual contains the most extensive treatment. His manual asks questions intended to weed out the myriad ways Nahuas, especially market vendors, can cheat, trick, and deceive others—in short, commit what might be termed “economic sin.” Why include a detailed questionnaire on the means and modes of production and sale in a confessional manual? Sahagún answered the question in the prologue to the Florentine Codex, stating that such details are “for the confessor, in order to know how to ask what is proper and understand what [the Nahuas] may say pertaining to his work….To preach against these matters [of wickedness], and even to know if they exist, it is needful to know how they practiced them in the times of their idolatry” (emphasis mine). Thus, taking a leaf from his contemporary’s book, Molina intended to specifically delineate the realms of sin in a colonial economic setting through a detailed questionnaire tailored to specific identities.

For example, addressing merchants the manual asks,

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72 Exod. 20:15. This is the seventh commandment according to Catholic tradition.

73 Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, part 1, Introductions and Indices, 45-46.

74 Due to their similarities, it is possible that book ten of Sahagún’s codex served as inspiration to the confessional manual’s discussion on the seventh commandment.
Yn iquac ticcouh qualli tilmatli, aço ytzalan ticaquí yn amo qualli? auh yn coyóqui catca tilmatli; oticaaquí, acanoçomo tiquittiti yn motlacohuiani ynic coyonqui ynic ytlacauhqui tilmatli, ynic yca timocayauh? Auh y çan xaxaltic catca ychcueytí, aço ticteui, anoço tictequalti, anoço tictequitaqui, ynic tictilahuacanextia? Auh yn tilmatihua, aço ticnextlati, yn camissatiu aço ticpac aço otictequili yni quechcuicuiluhca, yni matlacuicuilollo: ynic titeyxcuep? Auh yn tilmatihua, aço ticpac, ynic oticxaquetachiuh anoço oticcapachiuh?

When you bought fine cloaks did you place poor ones among them? Did you put here and there cloaks with holes in them, did you not show the perforated and ruined cloaks to the buyer, by which means you deceived him/her? And the skirts that were only thinly woven, did you pound them, make them better with stones, or apply glue to them in order to cause them to appear thick? And the used cloaks, did you dye them with a mixture of ash and water; did you wash the used shirts, did you put embroidered collar bands and wristbands on them so that you swindled someone? And the used cloth, did you wash it so that you made jackets and capes? Remember how many times you did this, and how much you took each time by deceiving others?

A section addressing penitent cacao sellers provides another example of this pedantic interrogation:

Auh yn ticacauanamacac, yn aqualli mocacauauh, aço ticnenelo yuan yn aqualli, ynic ticcepanaquitia, ynic teca timocacayahuah? Auh yn xoxouhqui cacauatl aço tienexuia, aço tictiçauia, inic tiquialnextia [sic], anoço tzoualli ynic tictlalia yn iyeuayo cacauatl, anoço auacayollotli, ynic çan ticchichiuac cacauatl? Auh yn tepitoton, yn patzauac cacauatl, aço tiquicequi, ynic tichueyliya, ynic neciz ca chamauac?

And you seller of cacao, did you mix your poor cacao with the good in order to place them together and deceive others. And the green cacao, did you cover it with ashes or chalk so that you caused it to appear good, or you place amaranth paste inside the skin of the cacao or a paste of avocado pits in order to merely fix up the cacao? And the small, cloudy cacao beans, did you roast them in order to augment them and so that they will appear larger?

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76 Molina, *Confesionario mayor*, f. 37r.
Subsequently, Molina addresses the indigenous nobility, asking them questions specifically designed to discover their dishonest acts. Among other things, Molina asks the Nahua noble if he mistreats his *macehuales* (commoners) requesting high amounts of tribute to provide him with marketable excesses. He inquires if the nobles rent out their macehuales or send them to distant lands to work without payment, arrange marriages to their benefit, or mismanage their altepetl.\textsuperscript{77} Finally, Molina’s questionnaire on this commandment turns to counsel as he instructs the indigenous fiscal and notary on the proper questions to ask couples desiring marriage and how to compose testaments. In all, Molina’s discussion of this particular commandment addressing commoners, vendors, nobles, and fiscales alike, endures for twenty-eight folios, and contains 141 questions.\textsuperscript{78}

Other confessional manuals lacked Molina’s apparent enthusiasm for such minutia. Indeed, in 1600 Bautista counsels confessors not to waste time on excessive questions concerning this commandment.\textsuperscript{79} In his large manual, Alva simply asks his penitents if they are guilty of stealing, and if so, what. Interestingly, Alva’s discussion again betrays his concern with heathen practices, asking the penitent if he put people to sleep with “diabolical words of enchantment” to steal their possessions.\textsuperscript{80}

Some small manuals trimmed the discussion further while others extended it. Molina’s small manual provides a summarized version (barely two folios) of his large manual compiling a variety of questions to commoners, nobles, fiscales, and notaries into

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., ff. 41v-45r.

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., ff. 35v-63v. This discussion, however protracted, paled in comparison to Fernandez de Cordoba’s later 1622 manual. Published in Spain for a European audience, Cordoba spends 286 pages questioning the penitent on occupational and social sins. See O’Banion, “‘A Priest,’” 343.

\textsuperscript{79} Bautista, *Advertencias*, vol. 1, f. 13r.

\textsuperscript{80} Alva, *Guide to Confession*, 111.
one section. Yet not all of his questions mirror those in his large manual. Indeed, he poses an interesting question regarding recreation, “Auh yn iqau tetepatou, titeollami, titequahtelolomimilhui, cuix titexixico, cuix teteyztlacau, aço çan otitexictlan?” (And when you played dice, ball with your buttocks (ulama), or boules with others, did you deceive someone? Did you lie to someone? Perhaps you deceived others)?

Reflecting both the continuation of the precontact ballgame ulama and the inclusion of Spanish forms of recreation, Molina’s question instructs the penitent that cheating in a game is coterminous with stealing.

Curiously, Molina’s small 1565 manual is the only one that mentions the precontact ballgame. In his Historia, Diego Durán mentions that all precontact ball courts were destroyed around 1585, and modern studies illustrate how although the ballgame does continue in various forms, it does so primarily in peripheral areas. If Molina’s question reflected the continued practice of the ballgame in 1565, why then does only his small manual contain the question? It is possible he simply forgot to include it in his large manual. More probable, however, he included the question in his small manual due to its likely use by priests serving in peripheral areas where ulama was more commonly played. Regardless, the question reflects a distinct form of confession that paradoxically includes the sin of cheating in a precontact ballgame with pagan religious roots.

The model confession in Alva’s small manual gives the seventh commandment scant attention, as does Saavedra, who merely asks if the penitent stole, what it was, if he

81 Molina, Confessionario breve, ff. 14v-15r.

returned it, and if he helped someone else steal. However, Aquino Cortés y Zedeño gives the matter a thorough treatment that addresses the general basics while providing specific questions tailored to Guadalajara. Like Molina, Aquino Cortés y Zedeño asks native penitents, both common and elite, if they have deceived others when playing dice or cards, although he fails to mention ulama. Yet unlike Molina, Aquino Cortés y Zedeño expresses concern for the theft of church items such as the lamp, chalice, ornaments, or bells. Extending this line of inquiry he asks,

_Azo tiquinpia, ihuan tiquintatia vienes de ten Cofradía, nozo occequinint bienes de Teopan?...Azo oticnamaca cosas tateochihualme, quenami mo oraciones, quenami Custodia, quenami virtudes hual Dios omixmaca, ihuan Dones del Espiritu-Santo &c?_

Perhaps you keep and hide goods of some cofradía, or other goods of the church?...Perhaps you sold blessed things like your prayers, the monstrance, or the virtues God gave you, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, etc.?  

Other unique questions include his asking about unlawful lawsuits, usury, and whether or not the penitent is a pirate. The reference to piracy seems odd, but it also appears in the manual’s discussion of the fifth commandment where it asks if the penitent aided any pirates. These references to piracy illustrate the effects local situations had on confessional manuals. The immediate region surrounding Guadalajara included costal bays—today Puerto Vallarta and Banderas Bay—that provided refuge for both the Manila Galleon and pirates. Moreover, Aquino Cortés y Zedeño’s concern for pirates

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83 Alva, _Guide to Confession_, 139; Saavedra, _Confessionario breve_, unnumbered.

84 Aquino Cortés y Zedeño, _Arte, vocabulario, y confessionario_, 170-71.

85 Ibid., 156. Interestingly, Aquino Cortés y Zedeño’s Nahuatl for pirate, _t[l]aixtequini ipan teoatenco_ “one who stabs on the edge of the large water (ocean), and _hual t[l]aza[l]cuililo ipan teoatenco nozo ipan mar_ “one who takes things by force on the edge of the large water or on the ocean.” The reference to “the edge” of the ocean refers to the shores and the coastal raiding more commonly associated with pirates at the time.
might further explain his preoccupation with heretics as both were commonly seen as one and the same.86

The Maya manuals’ treatment of the commandment pale in comparison to such detail and resemble the shorter discussions of Alva and Saavedra. Coronel’s manual adds slightly to Saavedra’s commentary by asking the penitent the worth of the stolen items, and if he knew their owners. The Campeche manuscript provides ten questions that repeat the basic inquiries of other manuals. Similar to various parts of Aquino Cortés y Zedeño’s manual, the Maya manuscript asks if the penitent is guilty of usury and of hiding thieves. Some questions, however, are surprisingly detailed for such a short discussion and include asking the penitent if he has even thought of stealing, or tried to find the owner of an item he found. One particular question equates stealing with the failure to support the Church financially by asking, “>ocan ua a botic Dño y primi...hecen bix u nahe” (Did it happen that you paid the tithes and offerings the entire amount they warranted)?87 No doubt such unique details are products of the local situation in Campeche.

As seen with their treatment of the first commandment, each Nahuatl and Maya manual differed in its discussion of the seventh. Each reflects the effects of various elements including era, location, penitent, and confessor. Such elements allowed Molina to perfect his penitent through an extended questionnaire tailored to commoners, nobles, fiscales, notaries, and merchants; Aquino Cortés y Zedeño to inquire after pirates; and


Coronel to address the mere basics. In the end, the contents of each manual prescribed a distinct form of confession.

Penance

Following official procedure, after the penitent confesses his sins, the confessor gives an admonition encouraging the penitent to thank God for his mercy and assigns the penance. The penitent then prays an Act of Contrition following which the confessor delivers words of absolution. Finally, the penitent gives thanks and leaves to perform the pance. No Nahuatl or Maya confessional manual extant today contains all such parts. The most commonly included fragments are the confessor’s admonitions both before and after confession. Furthermore, of the works examined only Aquino Cortés y Zedeño and Saavedra include the Act of Contrition. It is surprising that the majority of confessional manuals omit many of these parts. No doubt necessity and practicality prevented their insertion. In fact, Bautista asserts that confessors only need say “ego te absolve” (I absolve you) to absolve sins, a phrase all priests had memorized.88

Yet confessors still needed to know how to convey the assigned penance to their indigenous penitents. In general, by the time most confessors heard confession in the native tongue many would have acquired sufficient skills to instruct the penitent to say one Pater Noster or three Ave Marias. However, some manuals do include translations of specific penances confessors should administer. At the conclusion of Saavedra’s small manual he informs all penitents, regardless of their sins, to say “macuilpan Totazi, iuan

88 Bautista, Advertencias, vol. 1, f 59r.
Santa Maria” (five Our Fathers and Holy Marys). Subsequently, the confessor receives the option of assigning the Nahua penitent “caxtolpan, cemoulpan, centetl ixuchi ixczuzcatzin Santa Maria” (five, twenty, or one rosary bead of Holy Mary). For Saavedra, this simple penance would work for all Nahua sinners. The only distinction the confessor had to make concerned the number of Rosary prayers to assign.

The Campeche manuscript also includes various penances at the end of the confession. Here, the manual details what the confessor should say and do beginning with, “Hetun cin >aic tech u yayatulul ca yanac a payalchitic oxpel Estacion a zinme a kab Cruz ti cilich Sm° Saur” (Therefore I give you the penance, that you pray three Stations (of the cross), you extend your hand for me [like the] cross of the holy savior). Afterwards, the manual provides the confessor a choice of various penances. The list of penances is brief and includes thee days of fasting, three Our Fathers and three Ave Marias, five Our Fathers and five Ave Marias for the five wounds of Christ, and three Salves for “hecen mac luban ti no keban” (those who fall in great sin (mortal sin)). The priest is then to instruct the Maya penitent, “Ale tu uolol a puczikal in Yumile J.C.” (Say with all of your heart, “my lord Jesus Christ”).

Unlike the Nahuatl manual, the Maya manuscript makes no mention of praying the rosary. Yet this is hardly surprising when considering their absence from the homes of the majority of Mayas. Indeed, only four of more than 100 Maya testators from the cah of Ixil bequeathed a rosary. Instead, the Campeche manuscript prescribes a few options from which the confessor can choose depending on the severity of the sins.

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89 Saavedra, Confessionario breve, unnumbered.

90 “Modo de confesar,” f. 4r.
confessed. The remaining manuals fall silent on penance, but surely each confessor varied in what he deemed sufficient for absolution. In the end, the penance manuals prescribed differed from one manual or confessor to the next.

Conclusion

This brief comparison of Nahuatl and Maya confessional manuals reflects only a portion of the myriad confessional experiences natives had throughout the colonial period. Surely there are many manuals and manuscript versions of manuals that time either lost or destroyed. And surely native fiscales and maestros created written and memorized versions of the sacrament that are difficult to document. Also, the more lengthy and complex the manual, the more likely confessors made undocumented alterations for reasons of practicality. Ironically, the shorter manuals—particularly manuscript manuals—are more likely to reflect the delivered confession. In general, confessional manuals simply tell us what should or could have been said, and not necessarily what was said. This, however, does not render them useless. Through comparison, confessional manuals reveal their versions of the sacrament of Confession that varied according to the era, author, confessor, penitent, and region.
Table 6.1. Confessional manuals and their questions concerning the Decalogue (Maya works are shaded)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manual</th>
<th>Large/Small/MS</th>
<th>Pre-confessional Questions</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Molina L</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>in 6th</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molina S</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>in 6th</td>
<td>in 7th</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coronel S</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alva L</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alva S</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saavedra S</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>in 5th</td>
<td>in 6th</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aquino Cortés y Zedeño S</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>in 6th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campeche MS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Molina, Confesionario mayor; Molina, Confessionario breve; Coronel, Discursos; Alva, Guide to Confession; Saavedra, Confessionario breve; Aquino Cortés y Zedeño, Arte, vocabulario, y confessionario; “Modo de confesar.”

* This is a model confession. Instead of questions, I counted the number of topics covered in the penitent’s confession.

Nahuatl works dominate the extant indigenous-language manuals. Boasting examples both large and small, these manuals varied according to time. Molina’s unrealistic standards and expectations recorded in his large and small manuals reflect the Franciscans’ early millenarian hope for the Nahuas. Such hope succumbed to the realization of persistent idolatry by the early seventeenth century inspiring Alva’s manuals to focus on pagan practices. Bautista’s instructions to confessors also reflect the end of millenarianist hope encouraging them, above all else, to simplify their confessions and expectations.

Although Saavedra’s 1746 manual seems to reflect this continued turn toward a simplified confession, Aquino Cortés y Zedeño’s more detailed manual in 1765 is an anomaly explained solely through the author’s personal preferences for his diocese. He provides confessors with 609 questions from which to construct their confession, nearly
twice the number of Molina’s large manual (see Table 6.1). Indeed, the manual’s lack of extensive admonitions and speeches is the sole justification for its categorization as a small manual, especially given its era of publication. Regarding Yucatan, the few examples of Maya manuals extant today fail to provide a clear analysis of temporal change. However, they do illustrate the absence of large confessional manuals and the early establishment of a brief confessional experience.

The confessional experience not only changed over time, but also varied from author to author, confessor to confessor, penitent to penitent. The confession a Nahua or Maya received—the questions asked, the topics covered, the doctrine taught, the penance administered—largely depended on the manual the confessor utilized. Moreover, the confession also depended on the confessor’s preferences. Each author determined the best version of confession, and each included questions he thought most relevant. Some manuals address specific classes of natives, while others dilute them all into “penitents.” Many seventeenth-century authors made it clear that confessors should use judgment when considering which questions to ask. Such judgment largely depended on the penitent’s identity as a commoner, noble, man, woman, rural worker, or city dweller, and overall “quality.” All factors combined to determine the type of confession received.

Finally, the manuals betray regional variations. Established upon an immense precontact empire and attracting the first missionaries, Central Mexico possessed the most ecclesiastics and produced the most religious texts including large confessional manuals. From the extant copies available, Maya confessional manuals appear as simplified, abridged versions of their Central Mexican counterparts (see Table 6.1). Yet this is not because the Mayas were somehow less “sophisticated” than the Nahuas. In
reality, Maya manuals were victims of their environment and time. If priests were spread
thin in Central Mexico, they were even more so in the Yucatan, a region considered a
periphery even today. Maya manuals, then, needed to be succinct and to the point for
those ecclesiastics and maestros burdened with the care of so many.

Thus, Nahuas and Mayas throughout the colonial period experienced a wide
variety of confessions. For some, confession was to be a lengthy examination of all
aspects of Church doctrine; for others, confession was a brief chat discussing the mere
fundamentals of the Catholic faith. Some were asked about ulama, others were asked if
they wrapped their idols in cotton cloths. Some were interrogated on piracy, others on
heresy. And others—particularly Mayas—only had to answer a few questions before
going on their way. In short, the varying, fluid, and multifaceted sacrament of
Confession was anything but monolithic or static throughout colonial Mesoamerica.

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91 Brief confessional experiences were likely typical occurrences in the small, peripheral towns of Central Mexico, although this awaits future documentary research.
Chapter 7

Adam’s World Tree and Paul’s Idols

[Priests should use]…an abbreviated catechism, scrupulously extracted from the Roman one so that the faithful receive the pure and sound Doctrine of the Church with uniformity and with the authority accordant to the Provincial Council…therefore, with luck, random works destitute of legitimate authority and revision in matters so grave will not circulate such important material.

—IV Mexican Provincial Council (1771)

It would be very useful for there to be printed books in the language of these [Maya] that deal with Genesis and the creation of the world; because they have fables, or very dangerous histories, and they have written some of these, and they guard them and they read them together. And I have one of these notebooks that I confiscated from a schoolmaster named Cuytun of the town of Sucop, who escaped me. And I was never able to make known to him the origin according to Genesis.

—Pedro Sánchez de Aguilar (1615)

When in the late eighteenth century the prelates of the Fourth Mexican Provincial Council ordered all clergy to strictly employ their newly printed catechism, they provided a valuable description of the colonial Church and its relationship to unofficial ecclesiastical texts. The Fourth Provincial Council’s call for the faithful to receive the doctrines of the Church in a sanctioned and uniform manner acknowledged the presence of a variety of Catholic discourses that stemmed from colonial religious works deemed to

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1 This chapter is based on my article “The Tales of Two Cultures: Ecclesiastical Texts and Nahua and Maya Catholicisms,” The Americas 66, no. 3 (January 2010): 353-77.

2 Catecismo y suma, preliminary leaf, unnumbered; AGI, Mexico, 2711.

be “destitute of legitimate authority and revision.” Such unofficial ecclesiastical texts avoided the editing process that both the clergy and Crown established to ensure the orthodoxy of all printed religious material. In so doing, the texts could convey diverse, unorthodox interpretations of Catholicism—a reality Aguilar addresses in his above concern over the Mayas’ “notebook” accounts of Genesis.

How did these manuscripts explain Catholic doctrine? The following provides an intimate look into how such texts—primarily those in Category 3—instructed Nahuas and Mayas on important figures and events in Christianity. Numerous native-language religious texts speak of the Creation, or quote Paul or Adam. Yet the following manuscripts demonstrate how unofficial texts could explain the importance and position of such figures and events in Catholicism in varied and unorthodox ways. Indeed, it is these native-authored, unofficial ecclesiastical texts, and the role they played in producing multiple versions of Catholicism, that are the focus of this chapter.

The Conversion of Paul

Penned over the space of eight folios of paper and amatl—figtree bark paper—in eloquent Nahua handwriting, the redaction of the conversion of Paul finds itself in a small, makeshift book sewn between two limp, vellum covers, one of which likely came from an old choirbook leaf. On the inside of the front cover are 64 profiles of Nahua heads arranged in eight-by-eight lines and drawn in black with some colored in blue-
green, and pink. Although a recent scholarly work presented the text as “a translation of several chapters in the Acts of the Apostles dealing with the conversion of Saint Paul,” my translation of the Nahuatl text proves otherwise (see Appendix J). The work itself is a sermon with two topical themes; one concerning the conversion of Paul, the other regarding the ministry of Sebastian—neither are translations of biblical verse. My transcription and translation of the manuscript did not uncover its date, author, or provenance. However, philological examinations of its terminology and orthography made by both James Lockhart and myself suggest its creation sometime before 1560 by two distinct Nahua hands.

According to the Nahuatl manuscript, as Paul was traveling on horseback, God struck his horse causing Paul’s body to crumble and turn to dust. As demons collected his body-turned-dust in a cloak, Paul found himself in heaven and facing God. God questioned Paul as to why he killed Sebastian who righteously built holy temples and swept the roads that lead to heaven. After lecturing Paul on the privileged position of the poor and meek who in heaven receive golden seats and houses, God commanded his

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6 Don Lorenzo Boturini Benaducci originally owned the manuscript which fell into the hands of Ramón Mena who later gave it to the father of Federico Gómez de Orozco. In 1945 Mexico’s Museo Nacional acquired the manuscript, but Horcasitas noted its absence in his 1974 *El teatro náhuatl*. Today, the manuscript is housed in the Schøyen Collection as MS 1692, The Schøyen Collection, Oslo and London. See Horcasitas, *El teatro náhuatl*, 447-59, 610-3; Gómez de Orozco, *Catalogo*; and John Glass, “A Census,” 175, no. 236.

7 Personal correspondence with James Lockhart, December 13, 2007. A transcription and loose Spanish translation of the text by Galicia Chimalpopoca first appeared in Horcasitas’ *El teatro náhuatl*, 449-58. While similarities exist, my transcription of the original manuscript varies, at times markedly, from that found in Horcasitas’ work; mine is the first English translation.
angels to take Paul to hell to witness the torments imposed on sinners. Among the fire and smoke that “recks badly,” Paul stood on hot coals for what seemed like twenty years, and witnessed devils and demons use iron tongs to cut up sinners and place their bodies in metal tubs. As he sobbed at the scene before him, the angels told Paul to no longer venerate his gods, before whom he had bled himself and cut his ears.

Muttering the phrase, “Jesus, Jesus, Jesus,” Paul regained consciousness startling his companions who were keeping his body-turned-dust in a cloak. After reassuring his followers that he was neither a bad omen nor something monstrous, Paul informed them that their killing of Sebastian was a sin and that they should retrieve Sebastian’s body from where they had executed him with arrows. Upon arriving at Sebastian’s body, however, Paul’s followers found Sebastian alive and unharmed—a miracle ascribed to the angels of God—and led him to Paul’s home.

When Sebastian arrived, Paul greeted him with the story of his journey to hell. Immediately following the tale, Paul gathered all his idols, burned them in the patio, and asked to be baptized. Sebastian refused arguing that Paul was to be baptized by one named Peter who lived far away. Upon Sebastian’s request, Peter came to Paul’s house where—similar to Sebastian—he was greeted with the narrative of Paul’s journey to hell. After hearing the story, Peter baptized Paul, changed his name from “Paul” to “Pablo” (Paul), and taught him how to read, write, pray, and live respectfully on earth.

To conclude, the text uses the first person voice to explain why natives should venerate and pray to Saint Paul, who, after all, is similar to them. The text states,
The conditions under which the manuscript was created are ambiguous and offer a variety of plausible possibilities. Nahua aides could have copied the text from another existing manuscript, or penned the account as dictated by a friar. It is true that the text contains many obvious influences from indigenous culture, but this could be the result of a friar modifying his sermon to his audience. Yet the sermon’s misspelling and confusion of names, and its unorthodox events makes this possibility less probable. It is hard to believe that a friar or priest would have knowingly allowed such glaring errors to be preached. Moreover, the sermon’s conclusion in the first person voice associates the author with the idolatrous parishioners and their culture:

The reason that we will earnestly pray to him (Paul) is that he believed afterward, and with us too it was after we believed that we burned the evil demons we had taken to be gods. We are not alone or the only ones who have done it this way; for our father Saint Paul did it the same way, for which reason we will earnestly pray on his feast day to our lord. Also, he (Paul) will pray to our lord God for us; that is all of the statement; it is to be observed well.8

It is unlikely a friar or priest would use such rhetoric.

Finally, the Nahua profiles on the inside front cover convincingly indicate the indigenous authorship of this small book. Each of the eight lines of profiles concludes with a larger head and a name sign. Federico Gómez de Orozco notes that the profiles

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8 MS 1692, SC, 8-9.
9 Ibid., 8-9.
resemble those on tribute censuses. He also comments that Nahua fiscales used similar lines of profiles to represent a native fold and their corresponding tutor or instructor.10 Believing the manuscript was a religious play, John Hubert Cornyn posited that the heads represented the names of the actors.11 Yet the figures also resemble those seen in select pictorial catechisms, or testarians.12 Regardless of their meaning, the presence of such profiles in a manuscript written by, and/or intended for a priest’s personal use seems unlikely.

More likely, Nahua fiscales or assistants, either under their own or an ecclesiastic’s charge, penned this manuscript for their own personal, local use to recount the conversion of Paul in a way that would be familiar to a Nahua audience, endear Paul to them, and encourage them to end idolatrous practices.13 In the process, the authors used the names and stories of key Christian figures and intentionally, or unintentionally, conflated and rearranged them to relate a new, unorthodox, Nahua version of the account.

10 Gómez de Orozco, Catalogo, 157-8; Horcasitas, El teatro náhuatl, 601-2.

11 Horcasitas, El teatro náhuatl, 603. Cornyn believed the manuscript to date from 1530. He likely thought it was the same play he and Byron McAfee claimed was performed in the atrium of Mexico City’s parish church in 1530. John H. Cornyn and Byron McAfee, “Tlacahuapahualiztli (Bringing up Children),” Tlalocan 1, no. 4 (1944): 316.

12 I thank Elizabeth Boone for her aid in analyzing the profiles.

The Creation of Adam

The Maya account is a small excerpt of a larger discourse on the Creation found in the Morley Manuscript. Bequeathed to the Museum of New Mexico by Sylvanus Morley, and recently translated by Gretchen Whalen, this codex contains a compilation of writings on a variety of Christian topics written in Yucatec Maya. The inscription “año 1576” appears below a heading on one of the pages and analysis of the manuscript indicates that the book is a late eighteenth-century copy of an earlier original likely penned in 1576. Moreover, Whalen notes that sections of the manuscript were translations from Las preguntas que el emperador hizo al infante Epitus, a 1540 publication later banned by the Inquisition in 1559.\(^\text{14}\) The provenance of the manuscript is unknown.

The Maya tract on the creation of Adam states that after discussing the matter, the Holy Trinity decided to make an Earthly Paradise where God’s creations could reside (see Appendix K). In the center of this paradise, God created the first tree of the world and made it the greatest of all his wondrous creations. In the midst of the tree was a spring from which poured very sweet water and at whose source was a chair for a ruler under the command of Jesus Christ. The commentary mentions that the spring is “really wondrous to be seen, the marvel, the delight of the garden.”\(^\text{15}\) As the Holy Trinity stood in the middle of Earthly Paradise, they discussed among themselves their desire to make man in their own image. Retreating to the back of Earthly Paradise, they gathered from the very center of the earth the best earth anywhere called “Damascene,” meaning from Damascus. God used the Damascene earth to mold Adam’s body; a body that could not

\(^{14}\) Whalen, “An Annotated Translation.”

\(^{15}\) “The Morley Manuscript,” 195, as appears in Whalen, “An Annotated Translation.”
move, see, hear, or speak, and that lacked skin and hair. After creating the body of Adam, God blew into him the breath of life and commanded him to see. Immediately, Adam could see and his hair and skin began to appear, as well as his veins. Then, God spat into the palm of his hand and placed his saliva on Adam’s mouth and ears to open both. The story concludes with Adam declaring that he will give thanks to God for creating his body and the earth.¹⁶

Although the work’s 346 pages fail to mention their author, the orthography of the manuscript, its misspelling of common Spanish words, its confusion and conflation of various biblical events, and its command of Maya rhetoric strongly indicate a Maya author, likely a maestro serving as a school master teaching indigenous youth—a common duty of indigenous religious stewards.¹⁷ In fulfilling their duties to instruct the cah in Catholicism, Maya maestros oftentimes used locally-made handwritten books (cartapacios) that couched Christian concepts within precontact history and tradition.

As seen in the quote at the beginning of the chapter, the early seventeenth-century priest Pedro Sanchéz de Aguilar mentions his confiscation of such books from maestros due to their erroneous depictions of the creation of the world according to Genesis. Cogolludo’s Historía similarly cites this event while providing another example. He claims that upon his arrival from Spain, he heard mention of a fray Juan Gutiérrez who had seen Maya cartapacios in which related the creation of man as being made from earth, grass, or thin straw, and whose bones, flesh, beard, and hair were made from grass or straw mixed with earth. Cogolludo then states how many such examples of

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¹⁶ Ibid., 194-99.
¹⁷ Ricard, Spiritual Conquest, 98.
Culturally-Specific Catholicisms

Although both tales represent biblical stories, distinct native traditions from two Mesoamerican cultures have influenced their retelling in unique ways. In the Nahua account of the conversion of Paul, Sebastian’s sweeping of the roads to heaven, the golden seats awarded to the meek, and the tendency for Paul’s followers to fear him as a bad omen or something monstrous after his extraordinary restoration are but a few of the many indigenous characteristics that betray its Nahua origins. For the Nahuas, sweeping held the practical and spiritual significance of removing the unclean from public and private spaces. Nahua priests routinely swept the temples of their gods. This precontact practice continued in the colonial period as the duty of Nahua sacristans and stewards of Catholic churches. Moreover, when Nahua testators of the Toluca Valley bequeathed household saints in their testaments, they oftentimes included the request that the recipient sweep around the altar of the saint. In one instance, to ensure that his wife and children swept for his saint, a testator requested that his brothers “yell at them to

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19 For example, see Lockhart and Karttunen, *The Bancroft Dialogues*, 120. The Maya seem to have also appreciated sweeping for its spiritual significance as the ruler Mizcit Ahau swept the roads of Chichén Itzá, see Thompson, *Maya Religion*, 14. However, the act of sweeping appears much more frequently associated with the pre and postcontact Nahua whereas such references for the Maya are scarce and typically refer to Mizcit Ahau and Chichén Itzá which, interestingly, is a settlement with Central Mexican influence.
Here, Sebastian’s service of sweeping the roads to heaven would have made perfect sense to Nahua listeners.

In addition, the reference to golden seats appeals to both the Nahuas’ appreciation of gold, considering it the “excrement of the gods” for its beauty, and their association of seated figures with rulers. Indeed, the phrase petlapan ycpalpan nica, “I am on the reed mat, the seat,” served as a metaphor for governing. The use of golden thrones as an image of power and privilege granted to the worthy surely resonated among Nahuas and was not uncommon as fray Pedro de Gante’s 1553 Doctrina Christiana states how Christ will give the righteous golden thrones.

Finally, Paul’s plea for his followers not to take his sudden and miraculous restoration as a bad omen reflects the Nahua belief in anything frighteningly extraordinary or unexpected as portents of calamity. Sahagún recorded that someone who unexpectedly heard animal cries would either die or experience other misfortunes. Likewise, in Molina’s Nahuatl/Spanish Confesionario mayor the priest asks the Nahua penitent, “cuix noço tictetzamma yn chiquatli, yn tecolotl, yn coçamatl, yn pinahuiztli, yn tlatlactl, yn epatl, omiex mochan... yn anoço tixpapatlaca, yn anoço motozqui choco, yn anoço teucchoua? Aço tictetzamma yn tletl tlatlatzca, xixittomani, yn icoyoca” (did you

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21 For more on the symbolic significance of seats see Terraciano, The Mixtecs, 32-38.

22 Molina, Vocabulario, f. 81r.


24 For more on omens, see Burkhart, Slippery Earth, 64.

take as a bad omen the barn-owl, the owl, the weasel, the black beetle, the big, russet beetle, the skunk that made a stink in your home,…or when your eyelids tremble, or you hiccup, or you sneeze? Perhaps you took as a bad omen the fire loudly crackling and exploding?).

Overall, the Nahua sermon on the conversion of Paul employed precontact elements to create a mental performance in the minds of the listeners that would allow them to place an unfamiliar Catholic tale within a familiar cultural setting. Indeed, unlike a traditional sermon that resembles a lecture, and similar to precontact Mesoamerican traditions that employed oral discourse and imagery to accompany forms of writing, the Nahua sermon with its characters speaking and interacting with one another in Nahua-familiar ways truly would have allowed the listeners to think of Paul as a fellow Nahua and ex-idolater who would understand their struggling efforts to convert.

However, in the second tale concerning the creation of Adam, the discursive nature of the Trinity, Adam’s lack of sight, speech, and hearing, the world tree, and the spring of water are key characteristics that betray its Maya origins. Similar to the actions of the Trinity, Maya creation myths typically include a group of deities that first discuss the creation of the earth and humans, and then perform such creations in a series of cycles. For example, a Maya creation myth recorded in the Chilam Balam of Chumayel states that before the creation of the world a group of individuals pondered the

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26 Molina, *Confesionario mayor*, f. 21r.

27 For more insights into the Maya influences on the Genesis account see Whalen’s comments on the Creation of Adam in her “An Annotated Translation.” Her preliminary work inspired much of my analysis on the Maya account.
question, “How shall we make manifest and see man upon the road?” Moreover, Whalen comments how the Morley Manuscript resembles a passage in the *Popol Vuh* detailing how at the beginning of creation the deities Tepeu and Gucumatz “talked then, discussing and deliberating; they agreed, they united their words and their thoughts.”

Furthermore, the Maya redaction seems to conflate various Maya myths that describe the creation of man as a series of processes starting with a sightless, speechless man made out of mud, and finishing with a man in possession of all his senses and faculties that could adequately venerate the gods. In the Chilam Balam of Chumayel the creators of the earth shaped man from moistened earth, but the humans lacked the ability to speak “for their organs of speech were not yet opened.” God then subsequently “said for speech to emerge.” Moreover, the *Popol Vuh* details the progressive process by which man was formed ranging from mud-men to wooden effigies. Yet all such attempts were “merely an experiment, an attempt at people,” for they “did not possess their hearts nor their minds; they did not remember their Framer, or their Shaper; they walked without purpose.” Finally, the gods succeeded in their attempt at man creating from maize humans who, like Adam, would praise and venerate their creators. Certainly,


29 Whalen, “An Annotated Translation.”

30 The Nahua also believed that the earth and humanity were formed through a series of creative cycles. See Miguel León-Portilla, *Native Mesoamerican Spirituality: Ancient Myths, Discourses, Stories, Doctrines, Hymns, Poems from the Aztec, Yucatec, Quiche-Maya and other Sacred Traditions* (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), 137.

31 Edmonson, *Chumayel*, 125.

then, a Maya listener of this tale on the creation of Adam could relate to a Trinity of deities discussing both the creation of the world and Adam who gradually obtained his human form and faculties to eventually praise his creator.

The tale’s emphasis on the greatness of the first tree of the world situated in the middle of Paradise strongly resembles the world tree of the Maya. Seen inscribed throughout most pre-Columbian Maya sites, the world tree was a symbolic axis mundi rooted in the underworld, extending through the middleworld, and reaching the upperworld with its branches. For a Maya parishioner, it would seem only fitting that the world tree appear as the central, most grandiose creation in Earthly Paradise.

The placement of the ruler’s seat at the source of the spring of water would also appeal to a Maya audience. Similar to Central Mexico, the Maya associated seated figures with rulers. Yet here, the account emphasizes not the seat but its location at the source of a spring. Devoid of many rivers, lakes, or streams, the Yucatec Maya survived their arid climate with the aid of cenotes, wells, and natural springs. Such natural water sources served as the cosmological center of many Maya settlements including Palenque, Dos Pilas, and Chichén Itzá. Moreover, water sources held religious significance as entrances to the underworld and the residences of deities, especially the chaaks or rain gods. The connection of these water sources to the “other world” also endowed them as sites of ancestor worship.

Thus, seating a ruler at the source of a spring in the center of Paradise resonated theologically and spatially with Maya culture.

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33 Carrasco, Religions of Mesoamerica, 98-103.
34 Cenotes are sinkholes containing groundwater.
Finally, inserting a spring into the tale and describing it as the marvel and delight of the garden reflects Maya culture on a number of levels. To begin, springs are rare in the Yucatan making any such appearance a “marvel” and pleasant “delight.” Also, the Maya considered water originating from springs as the most pure and without pollution, and water from the center of the source was especially coveted for ritual purposes. In a place termed “Paradise” where sin and misery had yet to enter, the purest water—spring water—would be the logical type found in the garden.

Overall, similar to the Nahua tale the Maya manuscript employs precontact traditions and culturally-specific elements to produce an oral discourse that would evoke a mental performance in the minds of the listeners, and that placed the foreign characters and events within a Maya setting. Indeed, one can imagine the maestro reading aloud the tale to a native audience that surely used the story’s Maya-specific additions to make sense of the creation of Adam along familiar lines of thought. Speaking of the Nahuas’ evangelization, Burkhart states that “Christian teaching was effective only to the extent that it was compatible…with preexisting belief and practice.” These two tales provide unique examples that both exemplify her statement, and extend its application to the Maya.

Yet despite whatever success the texts enjoyed in allowing Nahuas and Mayas to make sense of Catholicism on their own terms, the religious instruction both tales delivered was rife with unorthodox doctrine. Such unorthodoxy becomes apparent when


37 Burkhart, Slippery Earth, 190.
juxtaposing the tales with their biblical originals. According to the biblical account of the conversion of Paul, as Saul—the man who held the cloaks of those who stoned the prophet Stephen—journeyed to Damascus to persecute the disciples of Christ, a bright light from heaven surrounded him and he heard the voice of Jesus. As a result, Saul lost his sight and his companions took him to Damascus. There, a man named Ananias blessed Saul and returned to him his sight after which Saul was baptized and began learning and preaching of Christ. In later chapters of the Bible, Saul is referred to as Paul, but although the exact moment this change took place is unclear, it did not happen at his baptism. Contrary to the Nahua version, then, in the biblical account Saul never goes to heaven to converse with God, never goes to hell to witness the torments of the wicked, never kills and subsequently meets with Sebastian, nor did Peter ever baptize Saul or change his name. Moreover, Saul never cut and bled his ears before his gods to venerate them, or owned a houseful of idols (see Table 7.1).  

38 Acts 9-10 (AV). Saul is continually referenced by his original name after his baptism. It is not until Acts 13:9 that he is referred to as Paul.
Table 7.1. Comparisons between the biblical and Nahua accounts of the conversion of Paul

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Biblical Account</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-Saul holds the cloaks of those that stone the prophet Stephen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Saul loses his sight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Saul goes to Damascus to receive his sight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Saul is baptized and learns the Christian doctrine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Saul begins to be referred to as Paul</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nahua Account</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-Paul and his followers shoot Sebastian with arrows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Paul is turned to dust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Paul goes to Heaven to converse with God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Paul goes to Hell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Paul’s body miraculously regains its form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Paul and his followers retrieve Sebastian and take him to Paul’s home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Paul burns his idols</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Peter comes to Paul’s home to baptize and instruct him in reading and writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Peter changes Paul’s name to Pablo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Sources:* Acts 9-10 (AV); MS 1692, SC, 1-9.

All such unorthodox elements originate from either of two sources. As seen above, the first derives from the tale’s inclusion of Nahua-specific elements into the account. The second stems from misrepresentations of the biblical account. The Nahua tale’s neglect to distinguish between the names “Saul” and “Paul” could be a simplification of the story’s characters, or reflect the ambivalence of representing the unfamiliar “s” syllable in Nahuatl, although generally speaking Nahuatl texts typically use “x” for “s.”

Furthermore, the tale melds together two religious histories. Although Paul does (however passively) take part in the death of a Christian, it was Stephen not Sebastian. According to Catholic tradition, Sebastian was a Christian who lived hundreds of years later and was shot full of arrows by Roman soldiers at the end of the third century. When St. Irene of Rome went to retrieve Sebastian’s body for burial, she found

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39 Personal correspondence with James Lockhart, March 31, 2009. For more on the orthography of “s” see Lockhart, *Nahuatl as Written*, 114-5.
him alive and brought him to her house where he healed a blind girl. In the end, the Nahua tale employs elements from Sebastian’s legend to create an unorthodox Nahua version of Paul’s conversion that allows him to martyr, retrieve, and take Sebastian to his home where he meets Peter. The author(s) are either only superficially familiar with Sebastian’s legend and Peter’s biblical story, or simply disregard orthodoxy to create a place for both figures in their interpretation of Paul’s conversion story.

In the biblical account of the creation of Adam, God formed Adam from the dust of the ground, breathed into his nostrils and gave him life, and placed him in the Garden of Eden where in the midst stood both the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The garden also had a river. Although the phrase in Genesis 1: 26 “let us make man” indicates a plurality to the creation, the Trinity never discusses at length Adam’s creation, nor do they use earth from Damascus to create him. After its creation, Adam’s body does not lack skin, hair, or the ability to see, hear, or speak. The world’s first tree is not planted in the garden, nor is it God’s greatest creation, and although the biblical account mentions a river that flows through the garden, the river does not originate from a spring in the midst of the first tree of the world, nor is there a chair for a ruler at the source of the river (see Table 7.2).

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40 Although Genesis 1: 26-31 and 2: 1-11 present distinct accounts of the Creation, both combine to form the standard Christian narrative.
Table 7.2. Comparisons between the biblical and Maya accounts of the creation of Adam

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Biblical Account</th>
<th>Maya Account</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-God creates the Garden of Eden</td>
<td>-God creates Earthly Paradise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-God places the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the</td>
<td>-God places his greatest creation, the world’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>garden</td>
<td>first tree, in the center of the garden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-God creates a river for the garden</td>
<td>-God creates a spring of sweet water and a chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-God forms Adam from dust</td>
<td>for a ruler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-God breathes into Adam’s nostrils</td>
<td>-God forms Adam from Damascene earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Adam is cognizant and has control of his faculties</td>
<td>-Adam cannot see, hear, or speak, and lacks skin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and hair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-God gives Adam his “breath,” sight, hair, skin,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and veins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-God uses his saliva to open Adam’s mouth and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Adam praises God for his creation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Similar to the Nahua account, then, the unorthodoxy in the Maya tale stems from both cultural adaptations and misrepresentations of the biblical account. The Morley Manuscript appropriated common biblical names, such as Christ and Damascus, and included them in the tale. Although the use of Christ to add clout to story is understandable, the purpose of using Damascene earth remains puzzling as the ancient city holds no real biblical significance other than as the birthplace of Eliezer, Abraham’s steward, the residence of Naaman the Syrian who Elisha cured of leprosy, and as part of the history of Paul. The Maya account also melds biblical accounts together in its redaction of the Creation. For example, God spitting into the palm of his hand and using the spittle to unstop Adam’s mouth and ears strongly reflects the biblical accounts of

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41 Genesis 15: 2; 2 Kings: 5; Acts 9: 1-27. I thank Stafford Poole for his insight on the matter.
Christ giving sight to a blind man and healing a deaf man by anointing both with his spittle.\(^\text{42}\)

Truly these were unpublished, unofficial texts “destitute of legitimate authority and revision” written by natives, under little or no ecclesiastic supervision, for natives. Both tales not only betray their distinct Nahua and Maya influences, but also illustrate the possibility for ecclesiastical texts to contain heretical messages. For the authors of both tales, orthodoxy paled in comparison to conveying a message that appealed to the listener. Certainly for the Nahua author(s) the goal was to increase devotion to Paul and decrease idolatry, not give an accurate retelling of the biblical account. Similarly, the Maya author seems more preoccupied with familiarizing the creation of Adam and promoting man’s veneration of God than providing a faithful translation of Genesis. Ultimately, these unofficial religious texts produced culturally-specific versions of Catholicism that strayed greatly off the straight path of orthodoxy the Fourth Provincial Council desperately wanted to preserve.

**Conclusion**

In his work *The Conquest of Mexico*, Serge Gruzinski briefly mentions “unauthorized” texts and how “we would give a good deal to discover examples of these works” for their potential insights into natives’ interpretation of Christianity.\(^\text{43}\) Yet despite their promise and their likely role as a significant part of the Catholic message (or

\(^{42}\) Mark 7:34; Mark 8:22-6.

\(^{43}\) Gruzinski, *The Conquest of Mexico*, 56.
messages) Nahuas and Mayas heard, unpublished, unofficial indigenous-language ecclesiastical texts remain understudied. This study brings to light two unofficial texts that provide a rare glimpse into what surely was common practice regarding the religious instruction natives received, and allow for some general conclusions.

The simplified and generalized term of “Mexican Catholicism” fails to appreciate the diverse branches of Catholicism that emerged throughout Mesoamerica in response to local and cultural preferences. Contributing to and expanding the burgeoning historiography using indigenous-language ecclesiastical texts to reexamine “the Spiritual Conquest” and its monolithic portrayal of Catholicism, this chapter provides two unique examples of how distinct cultures and traditions joined with colonial realities to create discourses—and thus versions—of Catholicism that varied from the Valley of Mexico to the Yucatan.

Indeed, the training of indigenous elites in writing and in Christian doctrine, and the paucity of ecclesiastic supervision of native communities enabled what must have been an extensive corpus of unpublished, unofficial texts written by native stewards charged with the spiritual care of their towns. Such authors and their texts inserted cultural elements within Christian teachings to form unorthodox, culturally-specific versions of Catholicism that appealed to native listeners. The tales’ use of cultural elements and rhetoric inspired mental performances that enabled Nahuas and Maya parishioners to envision unfamiliar Catholic doctrine along familiar, yet unorthodox, lines of thought.

In short, the two accounts illustrate how Nahuas and Mayas could create unofficial that employed culturally-specific beliefs to shape the discourses of Catholicism
and how these discourses could vary in orthodoxy. Furthermore, the tales have implications for how scholars envision Maya and Nahua colonial Catholicism and offer a glimpse into the creation of diverse Mesoamerican Catholicisms that extend beyond a single Central Mexican model. In the end, each of the unpublished manuscripts discussed represents a different brand of Catholicism whose unorthodox doctrines allowed a Nahua Paul to kill a road-sweeping Christian prophet, and a Maya Adam to rule from a spring under the shade of the world tree.
Chapter 8

Voices from the Dust

“I wish my body to be buried inside the home of our temple.”
—Francisco Itza (1748)

“And I say that the bells are to ring for me in my tlaxilacalli.”
—Sebastián de Santiago (1731)

Testaments represent the largest body of indigenous-language ecclesiastical texts. However, they are distinct from all other texts. Nahuas and Mayas did not compose testaments for didactic purposes, but to fulfill personal spiritual and temporal demands. Moreover, penned by the community’s indigenous notary in the presence of the dying individual, testaments uncover the voice of both the notary and every-day testator. As such, testaments speak as voices from the dust providing a unique view into the diverse personal and communal relationships with Catholicism.

Cabildo notaries produced testaments by the hundreds making them a mundane document accessible to even the poorest of testators. Testaments are formulaic and often follow the standard operating procedures of the cah, altepetl, or tlaxilacalli (altepetl constituent) in which they were made. Yet they provide a window of insight into the

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2 Pizzigoni, Testaments of Toluca, 111.

3 Each town was responsible to maintain a variety of mundane records for ecclesiastical purposes including birth, marriage, and death records, cofradía records, and testaments. As part of the visita, bishops were to inspect such documents. AHAY, Visita Pastorales, 1782-1785; AHAY, Visita Pastorales, 1784.

4 Each Nahua altepetl consisted of separate constituent subunits called tlaxilacalli. For more on the functions of tlaxilacalli see Lockhart, The Nahuas, 14-58.
religious atmosphere of such communities. Testaments provided natives with a way to organize their death and afterlife experience around Catholic beliefs. Much of this organization is detailed in the first lines of the testament within the formulaic preamble. Yet who contributed what to this important religious statement? Who determined what Catholic elements testators would employ in their preambles, what aspects of Catholicism they would embrace or ignore? How did the preamble contribute to the diversification of Catholicism?

After an overview of testaments in general, the following examines such questions through various corpora of Nahuatl and Maya testaments. Existing scholarly works on select Nahuatl corpora greatly facilitated my examination. However, with the exception of Restall’s work on Ixil and other cahob, and Philip Thompson’s work on Tekanto, the Maya corpora remain largely unstudied and deserve even more attention than what this chapter can provide. Nevertheless, the following examination of the preambles of various cahob, altepetl, and tlaxilacalli illustrates how the dying native residents of each polity engaged Catholicism in both similar and different ways. Indeed, how Nahuas and Mayas prepared their souls to meet their Maker largely depended on the preferences of the notary, local tradition, and personal circumstances.

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6 Restall, Ixil Testaments; Restall, Maya World; Thompson, Tekanto.
Testaments

The last will and testament contains roots leading back to the Roman Empire as secular, legal instruments. As an established institution, the Church exercised control over the administration of testaments and their estates, and extended to them a religious function. Indeed, in sixteenth-century Madrid testaments became essential for one’s salvation.7 At the time of the Europeans’ arrival in the Americas, testament production and preservation reached its apex in the Christian church and soon became ubiquitous in New Spain among Spaniards and natives alike.8 The widespread native acceptance of testaments, however, was not all the doing of Spanish missionaries charged with the instruction and conversion of the natives. The well-developed oral tradition of speeches, chronicles, and possibly testaments within Mesoamerica contributed to the testament’s successful transition as a genre into a New World setting.9

The spread of the writing of indigenous testaments accompanied the spread of Christianity. Coronel’s Discursos even contains a section dedicated to informing the Maya of the chastisement God issues to those who die intestate.10 Written by the community’s indigenous notary and imbued with many indigenous characteristics, Mesoamerican testaments follow a prescribed European structure that includes a formulaic preamble. The preamble is an important religious statement for the testator as he/she prepares for death. After invoking the Holy Trinity and identifying the testator, the

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7 Eire, Madrid to Purgatory, 21.
8 Sara Cline, “Fray Alonso de Molina’s Model Testament and Antecedents to Indigenous Wills in Spanish America,” in Dead Giveaways, 14-17.
9 Restall, Sousa, and Terraciano, Mesoamerican Voices, 12.
10 Coronel, Discursos, unnumbered.
preamble of a Spanish-Christian testament typically consisted of a supplication, a
meditation on death and the final judgment, and a profession of faith proceeded by an
encomienda of the soul and body.\textsuperscript{11} Although the preambles within native testaments
largely followed this prescribed formula, discrepancies within the preamble itself suggest
the various participatory roles of the notary and the testator. Indeed, the most obvious
deviation of Nahuatl wills from their Spanish counterparts is their inclusion of perorations
that seem more appropriate within an oral performance before and audience.\textsuperscript{12} In addition,
unlike Spanish testaments that required only three witnesses, both Nahua and Maya wills
include lengthy lists of witnesses that included both religious and civil authorities
representing the communal aspects of composing testaments.\textsuperscript{13}

As one trained in religious doctrine and procedure, the notary was primarily
responsible for the testament’s preamble omitting or adding to the formula according to his
preferences. At times the testator would also participate in the preamble contributing
random religious statements or declarations of belief, but the primary contribution of the
testator came after the religious preamble and during the mundane bequeathing of his/her
possessions. Here the testator dictated while the notary wrote. To be sure, variation in
these participatory roles existed, particularly among the more wealthy and educated
testators who might demand more involvement. Yet overall, the notary took primary

\textsuperscript{11} Kevin Terraciano, “Native Expressions of Piety in Mixtec Testaments,” in \textit{Dead Giveaways},
125. Burkhart does some comparison of encomienda among Nahuatl wills in her “Death and the
Colonial Nahua,” 43–47.

\textsuperscript{12} Pizzigoni, \textit{Testaments of Toluca}, 1.

\textsuperscript{13} Rebecca Horn and James Lockhart, “Mundane Documents in Nahuatl,” in \textit{Handbook of Middle
American Indians}, ed. Michel Oudijk and Maria Castañada de la Paz (Austin: University of Texas Press,
forthcoming), 7.
responsibility for the formulaic religious preamble while the testator dictated the contents of the secular bequeathment.

Thus, a standard testamentary procedure likely consisted of the testator who, in his last extremity, calls for the cabildo to record his final words. This public nature of the testator’s final words is in keeping with the precontact tradition where Nahuas and Mayas bequeathed their property before the polity’s principal men.\textsuperscript{14} The notary would then pen the preamble according to tradition and personal preferences, including whatever addition the testator chose to add, and then record the testator’s bequeathed items. When finished, the notary would include the names of those cabildo members present at the time and, on occasion, included their signatures. Both Nahua and Maya testaments generally follow this testamentary procedure. Yet many differences existed to produce cultural, regional, and local versions of Catholicism; a diversification illustrated in the subsequent section through an examination of Nahua and Maya testamentary corpora and their preambles.

\textbf{Nahuatl Testaments and their Preambles}

As mentioned, natives organized their death and afterlife experience through the testament’s preamble. Fray Alonso de Molina provided indigenous notaries with a Nahuatl model of how to write a testament in his 1569 \textit{Confesionario mayor}. Translated into English the model prescribes the following formula:

\begin{quote}
In the name of the Father, the son, and the Holy Spirit, I begin to make my testament.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{14} Landa, \textit{Yucatan}, 33. See also Restall, \textit{Maya World}, 234-5.
Know all who see this document, this written word, that I, Francisco Gómez, (or I, Juana Sánchez), resident in the city of Texcoco, in the parish of St. Mary of the Assumption, I make and ordain my testament. Even though my body is ill, my heart and will, memory and understanding are well and happy. And I am awaiting death, which no one escapes nor is one able to be free of it. And for this reason I made this, my testament, my last and final will, in order that it will always be kept, and no one is to go with another and it is that which here I begin to declare.

First, I commend and place my soul in the hands of our lord God, who made it, and I ask him for mercy. I beg him to keep my soul, and I desire that he pardon all my sins, and I wish that he carry me to his house in heaven, after my soul has left my body. And my said body I leave and commend to the earth, from which it came, because it is earth and mud. And I wish my body to be wrapped in a winding sheet for burial. And I desire that it be buried in our church of St. Anthony of Padua, where the priest indicated the tomb and burial place. And this is my will, for the aid of my soul, in order that it not stay much time in Purgatory. A vigil and a mass are to be said for me when my body is entombed. And if it is not possible to say it that day, it should be the next one. And the offering will be taken to the church. And if desirable some masses will be said. The money I have left to the church is in order to buy some ornaments, or so that what is necessary is give to the ministers [or church people] for their sustenance, etc.  

This model followed its Spanish archetype rather closely and it is likely that many friars in Central Mexico had access to such a model. The Nahuatl Diario of Juan Bautista mentions that in 1565 notaries received instruction on how to compose testaments according to Molina’s instructions. However, although the following discussion, among other things, exposes similarities between the preambles of various locales and Molina’s model, deviations are more obvious. Much like any ecclesiastical text, the individual explanation and application of basic doctrines (in this case formulae) produce various interpretations.

15 Molina, Confesionario mayor, 61r-63v. Lockhart provides a detailed examination of the model testament in his The Nahuas, 468-74. Sara Cline also discusses the model at length and provides its Nahuatl translation in “Molina’s Model Testament.” The translation here is from Cline’s work, 28.

As mentioned, the notary was the primary culprit of this diversification. His training and stylistic preferences greatly affected the formula a dying testator received and, thus, his/her experience with Catholicism. Some formulae allowed testators access to special burial clothes, bells, and saints while others excluded such benefits and options. The following examination of various Nahuatl corpora of testaments illustrates the role of preamble, notaries, and sometimes testators in structuring this experience with Catholicism.

Individual Nahuatl testaments from myriad locations can be found scattered throughout the world’s archives and testify to the Nahuas’ familiarity with their composition. Yet occasionally scholars uncover large corpora of bound testaments. These corpora and their homogenous testaments provide scholars with the best insight into the local understanding and/or application of Catholicism. The largest corpora of known testaments belong to the Nahuas of Central Mexico. It was to this region that scholars initially directed their gaze thus providing us with detailed studies examining the general and the minutia of each collection of testaments.

Sara Cline and Miguel León-Portilla struck first with their 1984 publication of Testaments of Culhuacan. Before the arrival of the Spanish, Culhuacan was a prominent altepetl in the Aztec Empire. Thought to be the refuge of the Toltecs, the Mexica of Tenochtitlan used their connections to the Culhuacan royal line to assert their legitimacy as heirs to the empire.\(^\text{17}\) The Culhuacan corpus is a bound collection of 52 complete testaments and 13 fragments ranging between 1572-1606 with the majority composed in 1580 and 1581 reflecting the effects of an epidemic. Several indigenous notaries

\(^\text{17}\) Coe and Koontz, Mexico, 152-3.
composed the testaments with each serving a fixed term—typically one year—where he composed all the testaments for that time period for the various tlaxilacalli of Culhuacan. Falling under the jurisdiction of the Augustinians, the friars housed the testaments in their convent of San Juan Evangelista Culhuacan until it passed into private hands sometime in the late seventeenth or eighteenth century.

The testaments indicate that after the Conquest, colonial Culhuacan served as a large producer of chinampa agriculture. In addition, the many references to old boats and nets found in the testaments suggest a lakeshore industry that likely included the use of boats to transport goods into the Tlatelolco market. Indeed, Culhuacan found itself along the route of the only canal that remained opened through colonial times, traveling through Lakes Chalco and Xochimilco and ending near the main plaza of Mexico City. Yet the declining water level of the lakes increasingly distanced Culhuacan from the canal and perhaps explains the testaments’ mention of “old” boats and nets. The corpus examined for this study consists of sixty-one wills ranging from 1579-1582.

The Culhuacan corpus is unique in that many of the testators represent the first and second postconquest generation. As such they include many precontact elements in their testaments absent from seventeenth and eighteenth-century documents. Most obvious are the names of the testators. Many Culhuacan testators retained their original indigenous name as a surname, such as Maria Tiacapan, Juan Tezca, Baltasar Nentequitl, Luis Tlauhpotonqui, and many others. Furthermore, nine Culhuacan testators use the indigenous title of nobility, teuctli, instead of the Spanish “don,” merchants are still called

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18 Cline and León-Portilla, *Testaments of Culhuacan*, 49.

by their Nahuatl name “pochteca,” and the testament of one noble woman indicates that she still lives in a tecpancalli (noble household). Finally, the presence of such items as painted or glazed bird tecomates and hammered gold, and the frequent mention of using stone rubble (from precontact edifices) for the construction of Culhuacan’s church also betray the testaments’ reflection of an immature colonial society.

Compared to Molina’s model and later testaments, Culhuacan’s Nahuatl preambles are simple and plain containing the basic invocations of the Trinity, declarations of faith, and the assurance of a sound mind. Figure 8.1 illustrates one of the more detailed preambles of the corpus.

Figure 8.1. Preamble of Ana Tiacapan, 1580

In the name of our lord Jesus Christ and of his precious mother Holy Mary, eternally virgin, know all who see and read this document that I am Ana Tiacapan, whose home is here in San Juan Evangelista Culhuacan in the tlaxilacalli of Santa Maria Magdalena Tezcacoac. Even though I am ill, nonetheless my spirit and soul are calm and healthy. And I truly believe in the Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and God the Holy Spirit, and I believe all that the Holy Church of Rome believes. Therefore with invocation and supplication of our lord God, I make and ordain my testament. Let no one violate my final will.

First I declare that I place me spirit and soul in the hands of our lord God because he made it and redeemed it with his precious blood. And my body I give to the earth because from there it came.

To be sure, this preamble varies from Molina’s. Particularly noteworthy is the lack of burial arrangements, although some testators do include requests for posthumous masses in the body of the testament.

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20 Cline and León-Portilla, Testaments of Culhuacan, 9, 134.

21 Ibid., 57. Translation from Nahuatl by Cline.
However, this preamble is far from static and the semi-consistent annual change of notary facilitates tracing whatever changes did occur back to the notary and his preferences (see Table 8.1).

Table 8.1. Notaries in Culhuacan (1572-1599)

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<tr>
<th>Notary</th>
<th>1572</th>
<th>1577</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diego Hernández</td>
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<td>Alonso Davila de Santiago</td>
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<td>Miguel García</td>
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<td>Miguel Jacobo de Maldonado</td>
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<td>Juan Ceferino (for the subdivision of Tetla)</td>
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*Source: Cline and León-Portilla, Testaments of Culhuacan.*

For example, there is a drastic change in the preamble’s formula from 1580-1581 as the notary changes from Juan de San Pedro to Miguel Jacobo de Maldonado. Yet variations could also occur in testaments from the same notary. On occasion a single notary could either neglect the preamble, or ornately decorate it with religious “catchphrases.” The variance suggests not only notarial preferences, but that notary took greater care with specific testaments, or that certain testators took a more active role in their preambles, or both. Overall, Culhuacan preambles reflect a rudimentary preamble that allowed dying testators a varying experience with Catholicism.

In 1999 a corpus of testaments from Ocotelulco appeared in Teresa Rojas Rabiela’s *Vidas y bienes olvidados*. Ocotelulco is one of four altepetl that comprises the complex
altepetl, or *tlayacatl*, of Tlaxcala.\textsuperscript{22} Tlaxcala appears most commonly in the historical narrative as a crucial military ally to the Spaniards against the Mexica. But it was also a major locale in the conversion of the Nahuas. As mentioned, popular legend claims the four lords of Tlaxcala as the first recipients of baptism on mainland New Spain. Moreover, Tlaxcala appears numerous times throughout Motolinía’s *Historia* which on one occasion accredits the Tlaxcalan monastery with 20,000 baptisms.\textsuperscript{23}

The early exposure to and evangelization of Catholicism among Tlaxcalans and its being a “center of philology”\textsuperscript{24} no doubt contributed to Ocotelulco’s testaments’ early mastery of the Spanish art of testament production. More aligned with Molina’s model and occasionally more complex than those from Culhuacan, Ocotelulco’s Nahuatl testaments could include invocations to Mary, specific burial sites and clothing, requests for indigenous singers and sung masses, and donations to cofradías, although the latter two were typically included in the body of the testament. Yet not all notaries prescribed the same religious experience for all testators, and variations existed.

**Figure 8.2. Preamble of Catalina Quetzalamel, Ocotelulco, 1590\textsuperscript{25}**

In the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, three persons, and my precious mother, the precious noblewoman Holy Mary always very true virgin, I make my testament, I, Catalina Ametl, my home is in Santo Damián, where my late spouse left me and where his affiliation belongs in the

\textsuperscript{22} For detailed accounts on Tlaxcala and its constituent altepetl see Gibson, *Tlaxcala*; Lockhart, *The Nahuas*, 20-3; Motolinía, *History*, 257-60.

\textsuperscript{23} Motolinía, *History*, 139.

\textsuperscript{24} Horn and Lockhart, “Mundane Documents,” 3.

\textsuperscript{25} Rojas Rabiela, Rea López, and Medina Lima, *Vidas y bienes*, vol. 1, 224-29. Personal translation from the Nahuatl. Although Spanish translations accompanied most of the Nahuatl testaments in this corpus, the Spanish varies, at times markedly, from the Nahuatl. Moreover, I have made modifications to Rojas’ transcriptions of the testaments when obvious errors are evident.
cabecera Ocotelulco called Chimalpan. I want and desire to give my earthly body to the earth because it was made of it; my soul I give to my ruler God, may he receive it. If I die I am to be buried here in the home (church) of Santa Isabel; for my burial four tomines, and to the singers two reales so that they will come to get me.

Figure 8.3. Preamble of Augustín Tecpantepetzin, Ocotelulco, 1592

In the name of God the Father, God the Son (child), and God the Holy Spirit, three persons. I make my testament, I, Agustín Tecpantepetzin, by my will although I am sick concerning my body, my soul is very healthy and I wish to make my testament. I belong to the cabecera church of Ocotelulco and I wish to be buried here in the home (church) of Santa Maria. I wish my earthly body to be shrouded in an old cloak (tilma). And so that the father guardian and the other (friars) will help my soul, two pesos are my offering for a mass to be performed for me, and I am to be buried where the holy water is, my offering is four tomines, and the singers will come here to get me, I give them two reales. With this ends the testament that I have mentioned, my will; no one is to cancel it, it is to be truly be carried out and done, et cetera.

Figure 8.4. Preamble of Diego Hernandez, Ocotelulco, 1663

In the name of God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, three divine persons, three persons but only one really true deity, God, in whom I entirely believe and the noblewoman Holy Mary always really true virgin my advocate, I leave my soul entirely in her hands. I am the sick person named Diego Hernandez, I am a citizen here in Santa Ana Acolco in my cabecera of Ocotelulco, I begin my memorandum, my testament so that it will be read to my relatives. No one is to ever cancel it.

As is evident, one dying testator’s experience with Catholicism differed from the next. Although Catalina and Augustín died within a couple of years of each other, Catalina included Mary in her invocation while Augustín was shrouded in an old tilma (cloak or cloth). Although both requested specific burial sites in churches, Augustín specifically requests a spot near the stoup. Roughly 70 years later, Diego not only

26 Chimalpan is likely a tlaxilacalli or some other constituent of Ocotelulco.


28 Ibid., 182-85. Personal translation from the Nahuatl.
employed Mary as an advocate, but consigned his soul to her safe-keeping.\textsuperscript{29} In comparison, similar to Molina’s model Catalina gives her soul to God while Augustín omits the bequeathment altogether. Diego also makes the distinction that the Trinity is just one god and neglects to mention any burial site.

Such differences are best viewed through select analytical lenses. Notarial styles no doubt impacted the testaments. Yet Catalina and Augustín both shared the same notary, Bartolomé de Ledesma (see Table 8.2). Indeed, Ledesma served a variety of tlaxilacalli in Ocotelulco, although the majority of his testaments are from Santa Barbara.

**Table 8.2. Notaries in Ocotelulco (1572-1629)**

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<th>Notary</th>
<th>1572</th>
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<th>‗85</th>
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<th>‗98</th>
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<td>Bartolomé de Ledesma</td>
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<td>Ernandes Abila Meneses</td>
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<td>Miguel de San Pedro</td>
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This, then, illustrates that although years of having only one notary generally create a consistent preamble, notarial styles could vary and evolve even among the same notary. However, such variations are typically minor and less frequent than those seen among different notaries. This also suggests that other factors besides notarial preferences

\textsuperscript{29} The Nahuatl here is *ca yeemactzinco nococahua y naminatzin*. It is possible that the possessive “y” in cemactzinco refers back to God, or that it means “yn” making it “their hands.”
played a role in Catalina and Augustin’s testaments. Although such factors are nearly impossible to discern through the document, they likely include the testator’s personal preference.

Time also is influential. In general, preambles composed early on typically followed Spanish conventions more closely; the later the testament, the more chance for variation to such conformity. Moreover, as the religious atmosphere of the polity evolves over time, so does the preamble. Diego’s preamble demonstrates this with its increased attention to Mary (a topic further discussed in Chapter 8) and nuanced invocation of the Trinity defining three persons in one god; both are common elements in seventeenth-century Ocotelulco testaments.

Yet even the most flamboyant preamble from Ocotelulco falls short of the opulence some Toluca testators would include in their testaments. The ever-increasing corpus of testaments from the Toluca province represents the largest body of extant wills in any indigenous language of New Spain. Located some thirty miles outside the capital of Central Mexico, Toluca remained largely autonomous from Spanish settlers who themselves preferred the Valley of Mexico until the early seventeenth century. Building upon the work of Stephanie Wood, Caterina Pizzigoni’s Testaments of Toluca compiled a corpus of 98 testaments originating from the Toluca Valley: 38 from Toluca proper and 60 from the neighboring complex altepetl of Calimaya/Tepemaxalco. Interestingly, the Toluca corpus contains testaments that largely fall within the mid-eighteenth century. The preservation of such eighteenth-century documents likely represents the Nahuas’ need to defend their land as the rising indigenous and Spanish populations strained available

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30 For a study examining the most recent additions to this corpus see Melton-Villanueva and Pizzigoni, “Late Nahuatl Testaments.”
Thus, the corpus provides an excellent glimpse into lives and holdings of testators during that century.

Testaments from the Toluca region belong to a variety of notaries which served its various tlaxilacalli. Although a notary typically serves in a single tlaxilacalli, in Toluca they are seen frequently serving in others as well. Moreover, unlike Ocotelulco or even Culhuacan which generally have one notary serving at a particular time, more often than not the corpus contains examples of two separate notaries writing for the same tlaxilacalli in the same year. This results in an extremely fluid preamble that varied significantly from notary to notary, tlaxilacalli to tlaxilacalli, altepetl to altepetl. Despite its diversity, general preferences are detectable and Pizzigoni mentions such in her work.

Similar to Culhuacan and Ocotelulco, Tolucan testaments frequently request masses in the body of the text. However, some aspects of previously seen preambles were omitted or shortened in those from Toluca while others became elaborated. Perhaps the most apparent distinctions of the Toluca Valley preambles are the increase in devotion to and awareness of the cult of the saints, and the added request for specific burial clothing and sites. Although Ocotelulco testaments could include burial sites and clothing, Tolucan testators elevate such requests to new heights. Pizzigoni elaborates upon such regional and temporal differences in her work while also demonstrating the differences between the preambles from Toluca proper and Calimaya/Tepemaxalco, with the latter’s consistent invocation of a variety of saints.32


May the precious revered name of the most holy Trinity and God the father, God his precious son, and God the Holy Spirit be entirely praised. May it be done, amen. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.—Today Sunday the 3rd of April of the year 1735, here I named Francisco de la Cruz begin my memorandum of testament in my tlaxilacalli holy San Pedro of Tototepec.—I say that first of all I place my spirit and soul entirely in the hands of my precious revered father God, and I say that if my precious father God brings something upon me [if I die], my children are to grant me what will be my shroud and that with which I will be girt, the precious rope of my precious father holy San Francisco. And I say that when I shall have attained the precious death of my precious father God, my grave will be at the church; there my earthy body is to lie buried. My will is to be carried out.

In the precious revered name of God the father, God his precious son, and God the Holy Spirit; may it be done. I named Francisco Martín make my testament; I believe in my deity and ruler God, and also may my precious revered mother Santa María speak for me and pray to her precious revered only child our lord Jesus Christ to pardon me my sins and evil doing, and I implore the saints San Pedro and San Pablo and all the apostles to speak for me [so that he] will take my spirit and soul to praise him in heaven. May it be done, amen. Jesus, Mary Joseph.

Figures 8.5 and 8.6 demonstrate that although penned in the same year and within a few miles of each other, the two dying testators experienced Catholicism in unique ways. Indeed, the preambles of both testators betray two separate Catholicisms. One allowed Francisco de la Cruz to elect specific burial clothes and a location for his grave. The other allowed Francisco de Martín to invoke San Pedro, Pablo, and all the apostles. Here, the role of Catholicism in the lives of each testator differed within miles of each other according to notarial and local customs.

Moreover, Martín’s testament illustrates yet again the role of notaries in shaping the preamble. In the body of his will Martín bequeaths a large number of household

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33 Pizzigoni, *Testaments of Toluca*, 102-05.

34 Ibid., 152-54.
saints, none of which appear in his preamble’s invocation despite Martin’s personal devotion to and relationship with them.\textsuperscript{35} Indeed, most Tolucan testators bequeathing saints similarly fail to invoke them in their preambles. Thus, the neglected invocation to bequeathed saints in the preamble is likely the result of notarial formula.

The corpus also reveals differences between the testaments of the various tlaxilacalli themselves and even illustrates the differences between preambles from peripheral and central tlaxilacalli.\textsuperscript{36} Unlike the more complex preambles of central locations, those from more peripheral tlaxilacalli oftentimes are simpler with less elaboration, especially on the saints.\textsuperscript{37} The overall variety of Catholicisms available to the Tolucan testators to aid their souls upon dying is staggering. Some sought posthumous solace through the ringing of church bells and sung masses, others implored Mary and the saints, while others, particularly the poor, often died without such benefits. Indeed, Antonia María of Calimay/Tepemaxalco requested her husband to pay for a mass and responsory prayer explaining, “ca amo tle nicnopielia ca huel nimotolinia” (I have nothing; I am very poor).\textsuperscript{38} Antonia would not receive the benefit of a burial shroud or the sung mass her more wealthy neighbors could afford. Thus, the version of Catholicism available to dying Nahua depended not only on the notary and local custom, but financial means as well.

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 153.

\textsuperscript{36} Burkhart provides various excerpts of preambles dealing with the encommendation of the soul and body that, when compared with each other, illustrate the variety of formulae, tradition, and interpretation among various altepetl; Burkhart, “Death and the Colonial Nahua,” 44-6.

\textsuperscript{37} More details can be found in Pizzigoni, \textit{Testaments of Toluca}, 10-11, 39-45.

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 235.
In the end, the Culhuacan, Ocotelulcan, and Tolucan corpora demonstrate that far from being static documents of mundane reproduction, Nahua testaments reflect the evolution of Christianity throughout the colonial period, and its varied comprehension and application among distinct altepetl and even tlaxilacalli. Notarial preferences, time, location, wealth, and testators all contributed to the diversification of a dying testator’s experience with Catholicism.

Maya Testaments and their Preambles

As expected, the number of extant Maya wills is few in comparison to their Nahuatl counterparts. Similar to those in Nahuatl, individual Maya testaments can be located scattered throughout various archives. Yet their scarcity reflects merely the difficulty in both preserving and locating such volumes, not the lack of production. Indeed, the four known corpora of Maya testaments demonstrate the quick adaptation of the Mayas to testamentary practices allowing testaments to represent nearly half of extant notarial documentation in Maya, and the majority of Maya ecclesiastical texts.\textsuperscript{39} The four surviving corpora of Maya testaments come from the cahob of Cacalchen, Tekanto, Ebtun, and Ixil, and nearly all reflect epochs of famine and/or epidemics.\textsuperscript{40} Similar to their Nahuatl counterparts, Maya testaments illustrate Catholicism’s local variations.

\textsuperscript{39} Restall, \textit{Maya World}, 247.

\textsuperscript{40} For more on the effects of famine and/or epidemics in Tekanto and Ixil, see Bricker and Hill, “Climatic Signatures.” Also, for a list of extant Maya wills see Matthew Restall, “Interculturation and the Indigenous Testament in Colonial Yucatan,” in \textit{Dead Giveaways}, 146. Absent from this list is the corpus of Ixil testaments I discovered in 2007, and various testaments located in Princeton’s Special Collections.
Situated roughly 20 miles due east of Merida, Cacalchen, like many other cahs, contained an archive of municipal records. A portion of Cacalchen’s archives survives today in a collection entitled by an archivist the Libro de Cacalchen. Somehow, William Gates discovered this collection and took photographs from which photostats were made that today are housed in Tulane’s Latin American Library. Fortunately, the photostats include 34 testaments from 1646-1679 accompanied by codicils and an election record. Although performed in the presence of the cabildo, the cah’s stylistic preferences omitted the mention of the indigenous notary. However, orthographic analysis allows for a general distinction between notaries, indicating that notaries rotated regularly with one-to two-year terms (see Table 8.3). The remaining members of the cabildo apparently followed an annual rotation.

Table 8.3. Notaries in Cacalchen (1646-1679)*

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*The notaries of Cacalchen failed to leave their name. Thus, the notaries listed do not necessarily indicate separate individuals, just changes in orthography. Therefore, Notaries A and E could be the same man. 

Source: Tulane University, Latin American Library, Rare Book Collection, Libro de Cacalchen [LC].

41 I thank Matthew Restall for his willingness to share with me his photocopies of the photostats. Once owned by William Gates, the Libro de Cacalchen’s present location is unknown. Tozzer give an extended description of the collection in his Maya Grammar, 204.

42 For an extensive survey of the material and social/political components of Cacalchen’s testaments see Restall, Maya World, passim.
The limitation of one notary per year resulted in a fairly consistent preamble that the various notaries continued to copy over a 33-year span. All testators similarly invoke the Trinity and Mary, request a sung mass from the padres at the convent—sometimes referred to as a monastery—and employ the same phraseology throughout. In addition, each notary was particularly loyal to their own version of the preamble some of which declared a belief in the holy Catholic Church while others specifically requested a sung mass from the Padre Guardian (the head Franciscan friar). The testators also varied the amount of their donations both to pay for the requested mass and to support the convent. One testament gives lengthy descriptions of the items to be used for fees and donations including three tostons, two measures of corn, four chickens, twelve candles, and two reals for Jerusalem, while others omit such details altogether.

Figure 8.7. Preamble of Bonaventura Canche, Cacalchen, 1647

In the name of the almighty God, father, son and Holy Spirit, one true God; in the name of the nine-souled, our holy [noblewoman] the virgin Saint Mary; all men will know and see my testament, my final words, I the dying Bonaventura Canche resident here in the cau of Cacalchen; however, in prudence (intelligence) it is related to you my understanding and my ...as is natural; now at this time follows what I put in order my testament, my final words, I who am dying. If I die of the sickness I have today, then I ask I supplicate the blessed fathers that are here in the convent of Cacalchen that they say one sung mass for my soul.

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45 LC, 7.
In the name of the almighty God, father, son and holy spirit, three persons in one true God; in the name of the nine-souled our holy noblewoman the virgin Saint Mary; as all men know, the father will see my testament, my final words, I the dying Andres Uitz resident here in the monastery of Cacalchen in which I arrange my final words, composed today September 30, 1654. If I die of the sickness I have today, then I supplicate our father, the holy padres that are here in the convent that they say one sung mass for my soul.

Figures 8.7 and 8.8 demonstrate the consistency and nuances among Cacalchen notaries and their preambles (see Appendix L). In all, both preambles contain the standard invocation of the Trinity, which becomes augmented in the later of the two, and an invocation to Mary. Besides a simple request for a sung mass—which both testators likely could not afford as the friar recorded only delivering a recited mass—the preamble omits any other posthumous arrangements. Burial sites, clothes, bells, and other Central Mexican accoutrements evade the testament making it a simplified counterpart to Nahuatl wills.

Moreover, the format of Cacalchen testaments differ from most Maya wills in that they fail to list the cabildo members at the end of the testament. Witnesses (albaseas), appear during the testator’s bequeathment of items, and regidors and others officers are mentioned toward the end of the testament, but not in a list of names followed by signatures. Finally, the corpus does not mention the lineage of the testator by naming the parents. In a culture where chibal (patronym group) lineage largely determined one’s social and economic standing, such an omission is strange—although not unique, as the testaments of Tekanto likewise omitted the testator’s lineage through his/her parents.

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46 Ibid., 27.
47 For an example of the typical list of cabildo members see Appendix M.
An additional journey of approximately ten miles due east of Cacalchen uncovers the cah of Tekanto. Franciscan missionaries established Tekanto’s church and convent in 1576 and, despite the secularization efforts of the Ordenanza del Patronazgo in 1574, remained the cah’s spiritual “guardians” until the 1820s.\footnote{Thompson, Maya Religion, 27. For more on the Ordenanza see Schwaller, The Church and Clergy, 82-109.} By the end of their term and as early as 1684, the Franciscans’ presence had created a rather complex indigenous ecclesiastical hierarchy complete with a maestro and his tupil doctrina mandamientos (constable of catechism responsible for the religious instruction of children).\footnote{Thompson, Maya Religion, 54.} From such a town comes a corpus dubbed the Documentos de Tekanto, a collection of roughly 550 notarial documents initially examined by Philip Thompson.\footnote{Thompson, Tekanto. Presently the whereabouts of the corpus is unknown.} Within this collection are 412 wills ranging from 1661 to 1833 with a high concentration in the early to mid-eighteenth century. Most of the testaments are simple preambles; indeed only 56 testaments include bequeathed items.\footnote{Bricker and Hill, “Climatic Signatures,” 236.} This polity-specific anomaly alone separates the corpus from any other as being quite unique.
As seen in Table 8.4, Tekanto notaries in the late seventeenth to early eighteenth century rotated semi-regularly. One would expect that this frequent turnover would result in diverse preambles. To the contrary, similar to Cacalchen, the standard preamble for Tekanto exhibits remarkable consistency throughout many notaries (see Figure 8.9), although the formula becomes shortened by specific notaries toward the end of the eighteenth century (see Figure 8.10).

**Figure 8.9. Preamble of Salvador Camal, Tekanto, 1744**

In the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, and in the name of the nine-souled, our holy Lady who is Virgin Saint Mary, all men are going to know that my last will and testament exists. I who am Salvador Camal here in Tekanto in the jurisdiction of our father blessed Saint Augustine here in Tekanto. And we are all mortals. For I do not know if I am going to die from this illness of mine. Thus I believe in our Blessed Mother who is the Holy Church. This will snatch my soul away from wicked things.

**Figure 8.10. Preamble of Bernardo Canul, Tekanto, 1772**

Jesus, Mary. In the name of God the Father, and God the son, God the Holy Spirit, in the name of our holy lady virgin Saint Mary mother of our lord God; my final words, I the dying Bernardo Canul.

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52 Translation from Maya by Bricker and Hill with a few changes by the author. Bricker and Hill, “Climatic Signatures,” Appendix A, 257.

53 Documentos de Tekanto, ANEY, f. 93r.
Similar to the Cacalchen preamble, Tekanto’s formula is basic and simple. Also similar, the Tekanto corpus occasionally omits mentioning the presence of cabildo members other than the notary. However, the preamble differs from most testaments by failing to mention specific requests for masses or fees either in the preamble or the body of the text, although added notes on the testaments themselves from ecclesiastics or notaries indicate that masses were either sung or recited for each testator. In addition, the declaration of faith in the Church and the snatching of the soul from evil are somewhat unique, although it is not added until the mid eighteenth century. Eventually around 1759, the preamble would include the phrase Jesus Maria, “Jesus, Mary,” in the heading before the preamble.

Located 80 miles east of Merida (today, directly in between Merida and Cancun) and a few miles south of Valladolid, is the cah of Ebtun. Ebtun lies within the territory over which the Cupul chibal held sway and was infamous for its uprisings against the Spanish. Yet after a tenuous peace in the 1540s, Ebtun acquired all the attributes common to a colonial town, including a cabildo which produced a large collection of documents commonly referenced as The Titles of Ebtun. Originally located, photographed, and bound by William Gates, Ralph Roys subsequently transcribed, translated, and commented on the corpus in his work The Titles of Ebtun.54 The corpus contains eight Ebtun testaments no doubt included for their proof of land ownership in legal cases. The testaments range from 1699 to 1813 and although few in number, they provide a valuable insight into the testamentary procedures of the cah. The documents

54 Gates’ photographs are now housed in Harvard’s Peabody Museum. For more on the Titles of Ebtun, see Roys, Titles of Ebtun. For a brief comparison between the Cacalchen and Ebtun corpora see the above, 56-7.
mention a *Libro de Testamentos* maintained by Ebtun’s cabilido. Yet the present whereabouts of such a corpus remains unknown.

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<th>Table 8.5. Notaries of testaments in Ebtun</th>
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<td>Bernardino &gt;ul</td>
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<td>Manuel &gt;ul</td>
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*Source: Roys, *Titles of Ebtun.*

Although limited by the data, Table 8.5 suggests that much like other Maya cah, the position of notary in Ebtun remained in the hands of certain Maya families, oftentimes being passed from father to son or between brothers. Indeed, the >ul family largely monopolized the position of notary in Ebtun from 1787-1823 and likely beyond.

**Figure 8.11. Preamble of Rosa Camal, Ebtun, 1785**

I Rosa Camal, who am ill, resident here at the town of our patron, the ...saint, San Bartolomé...Ebtun, begin to set in order my will, because I am apprehensive of death. Likewise, [in the name of] the Holy Three, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, three holy persons in one true God, Amen. I first commend my soul to our lord God...

**Figure 8.12. Preamble of Couoh, Ebtun, 1812**

In the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, [three] holy persons, one true God. This has been my faith. I, ...Couoh, resident at Ebtun, the town of our patron the ...San Bartolomé; Likewise I petition my spiritual father, the Padre, that he say one sung mass for the aid of my soul in the pains of Holy Purgatory....My vigor is failing; my mind is sound. Amen.

Although the Ebtun corpus is much more spread out chronologically, each notary betrays his own preferences in the preamble which changes significantly over the years. Indeed, the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century testaments fail altogether to request the

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55 Roys, *Titles of Ebtun*, 413.

56 Ibid., 295. Translation from Maya by Roys with some changes by the author.

57 Ibid., 347. Translation from Maya by Roys with some changes by the author.
masses or make the donations so evident in other cah (see Figure 8.11). Yet those penned by Bernardino and Manuel >ul in the early nineteenth century are nearly identical in formula and could include requests for sung masses with donations to Jerusalem appearing in the body of the text (see Figure 8.12). Moreover, the inclusion of religious expressions and catchphrases in the preambles depended on the notary. For example, a testator falling under the auspices of Bernardino >ul would frequently not only mention the pains of Purgatory, but also the common declaration of a sick body and sound mind. Regardless of the era or author, however, all Ebtun testaments retain a simple and terse preamble.

The most substantive collection of testaments comes from the small cah of Ixil. Situated twenty miles north-east of Merida, Ixil’s moderate size—a census in 1700 listed 729 tributaries—58—and distance from the colonial Yucatecan capital entitled it with its own indigenous cabildo and protected the community from the acculturation of Merida and Spanish settlers. In 1995, Matthew Restall published his transcription, translation, and analysis of a bound corpus of 68 testaments from Ixil mostly from the 1760s. My own recent discovery of an additional, earlier corpus of 34 Ixil testaments dating from 1747-1760 now creates a corpus of testaments 100 strong between 1738 and 1779. It is the largest corpus of substantive Maya testaments to date.59

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58 Mexico, 1035, AGI. Moreover, the number of adult Maya in 1721 was 715. Robert W. Patch, Maya and Spaniard in Yucatan, 1648-1812 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 60.

59 The Tekanto corpus is, admittedly, larger but only contains preambles and no real substantive material on bequeathed items. I discovered the additional Ixil corpus in the AHAY, “Oficios 1748-1749, 1801-1884,” vol. 1, “Peten Itza.” Written in pencil on the first testament are the words “oraciones-Mayas.” Mine and Restall’s forthcoming Return to Ixil provides a more detailed examination of the newly expanded corpus.
The notaries of Ixil’s testaments strictly followed an annual rotation that allowed for one notary per year. Despite the constant turnover of notaries, the testaments of Ixil demonstrate significant consistency and continuation in the preamble. Indeed, it is not uncommon to find large sections of the preamble repeated word for word in testaments written 30 to 40 years apart. This is remarkable compared to any other Nahuatl corpus. The slow-to-change nature of these testaments reflects the overall nature of Maya ecclesiastical texts. Indeed, the peripheral location of most Maya cah vis-à-vis Central Mexico tempered the Spanish presence and thus delaying Catholicism’s evolution. Yet change did occur. By the late eighteenth century the typically requested sung mass had changed to a recited mass and specific Spanish loanwords began appearing juxtaposed their Maya predecessors. Moreover, the cult of the saints began to slowly creep into the lives of Ixil’s residents and thus into their preambles.

Table 8.6. Notaries in Ixil (1738-1777)

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Ironically, like so many other Nahua and Maya polities, Ixil’s restriction of notaries to one per year limited the effect multiple notaries working simultaneously would have on the preamble and contributed to its remarkable consistency from 1738-1779. Indeed, notaries within this timeframe work from the same “core” preamble.
oftentimes repeating it word-for-word displaying a degree of retention unparalleled in any other corpus of testaments.

**Figure 8.13. Ixil’s core preamble**

In the name of God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, three persons, one god almighty. The document of my final words in my testament will be seen, insomuch as I whom am (name), the son of (name) the child of (name) residents here in the cah of Ixil. Although I am dying, well is my heart and my understanding is sound. Likewise, I wish my body to be buried inside the home of our temple. Likewise, I supplicate our blessed father Padre Guardian to say one mass to help my soul in the suffering of souls in purgatory, and that a prayer be said for me in that mass. Likewise, it will be given in alms three tostons and two tomines for Jerusalem.

The corpus’ systematic rotation of notaries and consistent use of this core preamble allows for a unique study that traces any alterations back to the annual notary and his preferences. Indeed, the slight modifications to the formulaic preamble that appear each year match the rotation of the notary, thus making the year-by-year, individual influence each notary had on the preamble easier to visualize and document. The following figures demonstrate the influence each notary’s preferences had on the core preamble, or in other words, the influence each notary had on Ixil’s experience with Catholicism and its organization of death and the beyond; words in bold italics are additions, and those in bold strikethrough are omissions.

**Figure 8.14. Juan Cetz’ 1738 changes to the Ixil preamble**

In the name of God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, three persons, one god almighty. The document of my final words in my testament will be seen, insomuch as I whom am (name), the son of (name) the child of (name) residents here in the cah of Ixil. Although I am dying, well is my heart and my understanding is as it should be. Likewise, *as God wishes to end my life here on this earth*, I wish my body to be buried inside the home of our temple. *Nobody shall redeem themselves from death.* Likewise, I supplicate our blessed father Padre Guardian to say one mass to help my soul in the suffering of souls in

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60 Restall, *Ixil Testaments*, 174-75.
purgatory, and that a prayer be said for me in that mass. Likewise, it will be given in alms three tostons and two tomines for Jerusalem.

Figure 8.15. Salvador Coba’s 1748 changes to the Ixil preamble

In the name of God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, three persons, one god almighty. The document of my final words in my testament will be seen, insomuch as I whom am (name), the son of (name) the child of (name) residents here in the ca'h of Ixil. Although I am dying, well is my heart and my understanding is as it should be. Likewise, I wish my body to be buried inside the home of our temple. Likewise, I supplicate our blessed father Padre Guardian to say one mass to help my soul in the suffering of souls in purgatory, and that a prayer be said for me in that mass. Likewise, it will be given in alms three tostons and two tomines for Jerusalem.

Figure 8.16. Joseph Cob and Marcos Poot’s 1765 changes to the Ixil preamble

In the name of God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, three persons, one god almighty. The document of my final words in my testament will be seen, insomuch as I whom am (name), the son of (name) the child of (name) residents here in the ca'h of Ixil. Although I am dying, well is my heart and my understanding is as it should be. Likewise, although my life is ending, I wish my body to be buried inside the home of our temple. Likewise, I supplicate our blessed father Padre Guardian to say one mass to help my soul in the suffering of souls in purgatory, and that a prayer be said for me in that mass. Likewise, it will be given in alms as we are believing Christians three tostons six tomines and two tomines for Jerusalem.

Figure 8.17. Pablo Tec’s 1766 changes to the Ixil preamble

In the name of God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, three persons, one god almighty. The document of my final words in my testament will be seen, insomuch as I whom am (name), the son of (name) the child of (name) residents here in the ca'h of Ixil governed by our lord St. Barnabas of Ixil. Although I am dying, well is my heart and my understanding is as it should be.* Likewise, as it is the wish of our Lord to end my life I wish my body to be buried inside the home of our temple. Likewise, I supplicate our blessed father Padre Guardian to say one mass to help my soul in the suffering of souls in purgatory, and that a prayer be said for me in that mass. Likewise, it will be given in alms as

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61 Data taken from “Peten Itza,” Oficios 1748-1749, 1801-1884, vol. 1, AHAY. The testaments of 1748 begin in January, end in December, and are all written by Coba.

62 Restall, Ixil Testaments, 25-37.

63 Ibid., 37-105, 106-114.
we are believing Christians three tostons six tomines and two tomines for Jerusalem.

Figure 8.18. Marcos Poot’s 1767 changes to the Ixil preamble

In the name of God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, three persons, one god almighty. The document of my final words in my testament will be seen, insomuch as I whom am (name), the son of (name) the child of (name) residents here in the cah of Ixil. Although I am dying, well is my heart and my understanding is as it should be. Likewise, as God wishes to end my life on this earth I wish my body to be buried inside the home of our temple. Likewise, I supplicate our blessed father Padre Guardian to say one mass to help my soul in the suffering of souls in purgatory, and that a prayer be said for me in that mass. Likewise, it will be given in alms for we are believing Christians three tostons six tomines and two tomines for Jerusalem.

As the notaries’ stylistic preferences become clearer, so do the lines between what notaries and testators actually contributed to the preamble. The relative consistency of the preamble suggests notaries trained in Catholic doctrine and alphabetic writing composed it and are the primary architects of Ixil’s relationship with Catholicism upon dying. Yet how do we know the above changes came from the notaries and not the testators? As demonstrated, Ixil notaries harbor specific preferences for various religious catchphrases writing and inserting them in consistent, predictable patterns. Thus, because each catchphrase appears in its designated space throughout the preamble, and because such phrases follow the stylistic and orthographic preferences of the notaries, we can assume that the notaries were primarily responsible for such phrases, not the testators.

But this is not to say that testators failed to contribute to their preambles or testaments. In addition to the notaries’ predictable catchphrases, personal statements

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65 For other comparative studies examining the preamble see Restall, Maya World, 229-250; Terraciano, The Mixtecs, 125; Cline and León-Portilla, Testaments of Culhuacan, 86; Pizzigoni, Testaments of Toluca, 9-11; Terraciano, “Expressions of Piety.”
from the testator can be found at random throughout the preamble and testament. One might imagine the notary writing the preamble at the bedside of the testator when the testator speaks up to contribute a religious statement or blurb to ease their mind as it prepared to meet its maker. Whether or not the testator spoke up or the notary paid closer attention largely depended on the testator’s status with wealthier testators receiving more attention or contribution more. Moreover, most of such contributions occur later in the corpus in the 1760s. Regardless, unlike the notaries’ contributions, phrases and additions made by the testator follow no pattern, consistent placement, or spelling, and although a certain phrase might be repeated by another testator, its location in the preamble always varied.

For example, to the end of the formulaic phrase requesting a mass for the purgatory soul, Viviana Canche explains that the mass “heix bin nahaltic yn pixan lae” (shall reach my soul there). Other times, the testator will contribute his/her own entire phrase. After his formulaic request for a church burial and just before the supplication of the padre for a mass, Marta Chan recited the sentence, “heix yn pixan yn kubic tu kab Ca Yumil ti d. lae” (hereby I deliver my soul into the hands of our lord God). Luisa Tec similarly adds a unique line to her preamble stating that her payment of one trussed cockerel was to “cayx tac ca pixanil yum p. uchaben y ca palic tun” (empower our blessed lord Padre in [his] mediation” for her soul in purgatory. Furthermore, Ixil’s maestro Diego Chan played an unusually large role in the composition of his preamble

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67 Ibid., 102. Transcription and translation by Restall.

68 Ibid., 158. Transcription and translation by Restall with some minor changes by the author.
rearranging the formula with random phrases so that it varied completely from any other originating from Ixil. Although the notary could also be responsible for these random additions, such insertions are neither standard nor formulaic, and thus are more likely to represent the individual, spontaneous orations of testators who, unlike notaries, were not strictly bound to formulaic rules of placement and consistency.

Thus, concerning who wrote what in the preamble, the Ixil corpus confirms that notaries—at least in Ixil although evident in most cahob—were largely responsible for the preamble contributing religious catchphrases that appeared in predictable patterns according to the notary’s individual preferences. Testators, however, contributed the occasional random statements and declarations that followed no consistent pattern or repetition.

Although variations do occur throughout the 41-year span, Ixil preambles consistently include an invocation to the Trinity, the chibal lineage of the testator, a mass (either sung or recited) for the purgatory soul, and a donation to Jerusalem. Also, unlike the other Maya cahob examined, most Ixil preambles neglect the cult of the saints while entitling their testators to a church burial. As seen in the figures above, the phraseology included in a testator’s preamble largely depended on the notary, and, for the most part, most Ixil residents shared a similar testamentary and posthumous experience. Yet this experience differed from those Maya of Cacalchen, Tekanto, or Ebtun, not to mention Nahua polities.

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69 Ibid., 57-8.
Conclusion

During his work on Ixil, Restall posited that differences in preambles were more likely to exist between cah than within them. In broad terms of preamblaic style, this statement is true. Indeed, the above examination of Nahuatl and Maya preambles illustrates the differences in preambles between various cahob, altepetl, and tlaxilacalli. However, this chapter also reveals differences within polities, particularly larger altepetl, that can be ascribed to notarial preferences.

Notaries played a significant role in a polity’s interpretation of Catholic testamentary procedures. In a study of pious expressions in the preambles of Mixtec testaments, Kevin Terraciano posited that variations in the preamble’s length and content illustrate the testator’s personal contribution, and thus personal belief.\(^70\) To be sure a more wealthy and educated testator was likely to contribute to the preamble. However, the examined testaments in this study suggest that the preferences of the notary, not the testator, largely shaped the religious formulae of most testaments.

Generally speaking, notaries of smaller communities maintained the polity’s preamble throughout the years with some preferential change. In these cases, the greatest difference in preamblaic formula occurs between polities and not within. An exception to this was seen in Ocotelulco where one notary served various tlaxilacalli thus allowing a larger degree of stability between the districts’ preambles.

However, larger communities such as Toluca and Calimaya/Tepemaxalco commonly maintained notaries for each subdivision or tlaxilacalli of the polity. Here, with a higher number of notaries and with each notary having his own preference, a

\(^{70}\) Terraciano, “Expressions of Piety,” 115-40.
testator’s experience could vary from neighborhood to neighborhood. In the end, the preferences of individual notaries shaped Catholicism into specific versions that a testator would then have access to depending on the location of their residence.

A testator’s mortuary experience with Catholicism also differed between cultures and/or regions. Nahuatl preambles are typically lengthier, include more religious statements and requests, and include perorations. In contrast, Maya preambles are typically shorter than their Nahuatl counterparts including less religious statements and requests. Indeed, Maya requests for specific burial clothing are virtually non-existent! Furthermore, Maya testaments generally lack the sort of perorations found in Nahuatl testaments although their list of witnesses affirms their communal nature. Unlike those Maya, Nahuatl testaments frequently include a peroration similar to ayac quiquixtiliz, “no one is to take it away from him/her” at the end of a bequeathment.

Overall, Nahuatl and Maya testaments and their preambles demonstrate the diversification of Catholicism and how the dying native residents of each polity experienced Catholicism in both similar and different ways. Polity-specific notarial preferences and trends shaped the preamble either allowing its variation, or strictly curbing it. In the end, far from a monolithic experience, these preambles demonstrate how the version of Catholicism available to the Nahu and Maya testator varied not only culturally, but from cah to cah, altepetl to altepetl, tlaxilacalli to tlaxilacalli. Thus in the diversification process of Catholicism, notaries, local customs, and personal circumstances all contributed to the various ways Nahuas and Mayas engaged Catholicism in their last waking moments.
Chapter 9

When the Saints Go Marching In

By now, the similarities and differences in the way Nahuas and Mayas experienced Catholicism as reflected in testaments are evident. But what more can testaments illuminate of the broader cultural and regional similarities and differences between Nahua and Maya Catholicisms? Whereas preambles illustrate how different polities and cultures diversified Catholicism, the testament as a whole provides unique insights into the spread and evolution of certain Catholic principles. This chapter specifically examines the cult of the saints among the everyday Nahuas and Mayas. Indeed, whether or the notary mentions saints in the preamble via invocation or the town’s patron saint, and whether the testator bequeaths personally owned images of or items to saints all contribute to a clearer image of the impact of the cult on a particular polity, region, and culture.

This chapter, then, employs a wide variety of Nahuatl and Maya testaments to examine the diverse impact of the cult of the saints on everyday Nahuas and Mayas. Although much has been said of the essential role saints played among the Nahua and Maya, it is imprudent to assume that all Nahuas and Mayas unconditionally embraced the cult. As this chapter demonstrates, although the saints truly did go marching into the New World, the cadence of the march sped up and slowed down according to regional and local dynamics.
The Cult of the Saints in Central Mexico and Yucatan

The cult of the saints and its various figures imbued with specific powers and characteristics is a Catholic tradition that paralleled many precontact beliefs in Mesoamerica. As such, saints readily melded into indigenous cultures. The successful spread of the cult of the saints is well documented by both colonial and contemporary authors. Early chroniclers such as Mendieta and Motolinía frequently commented on the Nahuas’ devotion for the saints. And modern scholars and ethnographers provide excellent examples of the saints’ colonial and modern presence.¹ The names of people, churches, towns, and cofradías all bore the names of saints, and saints appear in the earliest examples of indigenous documentation including testaments, municipal documents, primordial titles, and annals. Natives possessed images of saints, churches dedicated alters to them, and cofradías spent lavish amounts of money on their veneration.

Yet such accounts and documentary evidence—many of which concern central polities—can create the illusion of a monolithic spread of the cult. Surely Nahuas and Mayas did not uniformly embrace saints; surely variation and gradation existed in the cult’s impact. Certainly a polity’s location, and thus access to the doctrine, traditions, and culture of the Church, influenced the rate and degree of absorption. The impact of the cult of the saints on Nahua and Maya communities can be gauged in phases. Phase 1 began with the community’s adoption of a patron saint as evinced in the preamble of the

testament. Phase 2 advanced to a Marian awareness to include her invocation in the preamble, service as a church patroness, and/or the private ownership of her image.

Phase 2 also included membership in cofradías designated to the worship of specific saints. Phase 3 reveals the permeation of the cult into the private lives of testators in the form of privately owned saints. Each community’s level in these phases varied and not all communities advanced from Phase 1 to 3. In fact, many communities, particularly in Yucatan, remained at Phase 2 throughout the colonial period. The various testaments from Nahua and Maya communities demonstrate how the absorption of the cult of the saints was not uniform throughout all native communities.

Table 9.1. Appearance of saints in Culhuacan (1579-1599)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n.d.</th>
<th>1572-79</th>
<th>1580</th>
<th>1581</th>
<th>1582-87</th>
<th>1588</th>
<th>1589-99</th>
<th>1599</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patron Saints</td>
<td>4/6</td>
<td>2/4</td>
<td>17/18</td>
<td>19/20</td>
<td>7/7</td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>54/60</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invoked Saints (Mary only)</td>
<td>1/6</td>
<td>0/4</td>
<td>13/18</td>
<td>0/20</td>
<td>0/7</td>
<td>0/2</td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>16/60</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bequeathed Saints</td>
<td>0/6</td>
<td>0/4</td>
<td>0/18</td>
<td>0/20</td>
<td>0/7</td>
<td>0/2</td>
<td>0/2</td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>0/60</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bequeathed to/for Saints</td>
<td>0/6</td>
<td>0/4</td>
<td>1/18</td>
<td>0/20</td>
<td>0/7</td>
<td>0/2</td>
<td>0/2</td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>1/60</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Cline and León-Portilla, Testaments of Culhuacan.

As early as the 1570s, notaries and testators in Culhuacan were already familiar with their community’s patron saints. Some notaries even began showing propensities toward including the name of Mary in the invocation to the Trinity (see Table 9.1). In fact, the awareness of Mary seemed to be widespread throughout Culhuacan as one testator gives the location of a piece of bequeathed land as being near the canal “ynn ocan motlapiellia yn totlaçonatzi sta m’” (where the (image of) our dear mother Santa Maria
stands guard). However, the cult had not reached its height as all testators’ donations go to the local church instead of a particular saint cult typically sponsored by a cofradía, and the bequeathment of saints had yet to appear. Although the cult of the saint had not reached its height in Culhuacan by the end of the sixteenth century, its progress thus far suggests its quick absorption. Thus, Culhuacan’s early adoption of the cult of the saints suggests its promising future in the town which had already reached Phase 2.

Table 9.2. Appearance of saints in the Toluca Valley (1654-1783)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1650-80s</th>
<th>1690s</th>
<th>1700-1709</th>
<th>1710-20s</th>
<th>1730-40s</th>
<th>1750s</th>
<th>1760s</th>
<th>1770-80s</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patron Saints</td>
<td>5/5</td>
<td>5/5</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td>11/12</td>
<td>30/35</td>
<td>20/21</td>
<td>14/15</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>90/98</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invoked Saints</td>
<td>2/5</td>
<td>2/5</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>4/12</td>
<td>10/35</td>
<td>16/21</td>
<td>12/15</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>48/98</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bequeathed Saints</td>
<td>1/5</td>
<td>3/5</td>
<td>2/4</td>
<td>6/12</td>
<td>13/35</td>
<td>5/21</td>
<td>6/15</td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>36/98</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bequeathed to/for Saints</td>
<td>2/5</td>
<td>3/5</td>
<td>0/5</td>
<td>3/12</td>
<td>7/35</td>
<td>0/21</td>
<td>1/21</td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>16/98</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pizzigoni, Testaments of Toluca.

By the mid-seventeenth century in the Toluca Valley notaries and testators had largely absorbed the cult of the saints into local traditions placing the Valley firmly within Phase 3. As a whole, testaments from the Valley of Toluca embraced patron saints, and those from Calimaya/Tepemaxalco consistently invoked saints in their preambles. Nearly all testaments refer to their altepetl, tlaxilacalli, and churches by their patron saint, while testators from Toluca proper routinely request to be buried in the shroud and with the rope of a particular saint. Indeed, the cult shows signs of immense popularity in the Toluca Valley making it not uncommon for testators to bequeath images of saints and/or designate specific funds, homes, and lands for their saints’ use.

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2 Cline and León-Portilla, Testaments of Culhuacan, 88-9.

3 For more on Toluca’s testaments see Wood, “Adopted Saints”; Pizzigoni, Testaments of Toluca.
Furthermore, the variety of saints and cofradías dedicated to saints illustrates the Valley’s familiarity with the diverse pantheon. To ensure testators from Calimaya/Tepemaxalco “covered all their bases” they routinely implored “mohtintzitzi quexquih Santtos ihuan Santas in onpa motemiltilitiCate in ilhuiCac” (all the male and female saints that fill heaven) to speak on their behalf.4

Table 9.3. Appearance of saints in Ocotelulco (1572-1673)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1570s</th>
<th>1580s</th>
<th>1590s</th>
<th>1610s</th>
<th>1620s</th>
<th>1660s</th>
<th>1670s</th>
<th>n/a</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patron Saints</td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>5/6</td>
<td>17/18</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>8/9</td>
<td>36/39</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invoked Saints</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>5/6</td>
<td>17/18</td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>7/9</td>
<td>33/39</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Mary only)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bequeathed</td>
<td>0/2</td>
<td>0/6</td>
<td>0/18</td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>0/9</td>
<td>0/39</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saints</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bequeathed to/for Saints</td>
<td>0/2</td>
<td>1/6</td>
<td>3/18</td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>4/9</td>
<td>9/39</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


By the end of the sixteenth century, the cult of the saints in Ocotelulco settled securely into Phase 2 while slowly progressing into Phase 3. Almost all testators identify their polity via its saint name and invoke Mary as their “tepanlatocatzintli” (advocate). Many others request a burial at her feet. This devotion to Maria likely derived from the friars’ early implementation of the Marian cult in Tlaxcala. To this, Mendieta implies that the first monastery built in Ocotelulco (1524-1527) was dedicated to Maria, and the second (1528) was dedicated to La Madre de Dios.5

Nearly a quarter of testators dedicate lands and fees to specific saints and their churches including Maria, Isabela, Bartolomé, and Barbara. One testator even refers to land being owned by San Cosme.6 Another dedicates land to San Bartolomé and orders

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4 Testament of Fabiana de la Cruz. Pizzigoni, Testaments of Toluca, 190.

5 Gibson, Tlaxcala, 44.

his wife to use the proceeds for his feast day and to buy copal—incense used since precontact times for the worshipping of deities—for the saint. The testaments also betray the presence of cofradías. What is lacking, however, are saint images as personal possessions, but given the early date of the testaments, this is not surprising.

Table 9.4. Appearance of saints in Ixil (1738-1779)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1738</th>
<th>1748</th>
<th>1765</th>
<th>1766</th>
<th>1767</th>
<th>1768</th>
<th>1769</th>
<th>1779</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Patron Saints</strong></td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>0/34</td>
<td>0/5</td>
<td>5/34</td>
<td>0/22</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>8/100</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Invoked Saints</strong></td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>0/34</td>
<td>0/5</td>
<td>0/34</td>
<td>0/22</td>
<td>0/2</td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>0/100</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bequeathed Saints</strong></td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>1/34</td>
<td>0/5</td>
<td>3/34</td>
<td>0/22</td>
<td>0/2</td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>4/100</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bequeathed to/for Saints</strong></td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>0/34</td>
<td>0/5</td>
<td>0/34</td>
<td>0/22</td>
<td>0/2</td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>0/100</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In contrast, not until 1766 did saints finally begin to appear in Ixil’s testaments, and then primarily associated with the patron saint of the cah. Whereas nearly 40% of testators from the Toluca Valley bequeath personally owned saints, only 4% of Ixil testators do likewise. In addition, the diversity in those bequeathed images of saints is limited to Mary in 1748 expanding to include San Diego in the 1760s. Overall, much like its preamble, Ixil’s religious atmosphere experienced change, but at a slow rate which maintained Ixil on the verge of entering into Phase 1.

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7 Ibid., 191.

8 San Barnabus appears in documents 20, 21, 27, 29, 33, ii, iii of Restall, Ixil Testaments; Ixil testators that bequeath saints are found in documents 24, 30, and ii of the same work.

9 In the Toluca Valley, men bequeath images of saints more often than women because of their close association to the household structure itself as it served as the saint’s home. This gender trend is even more striking in Ixil as all possessors of saints are male although the reason for which is less certain. However, variations occurred among indigenous polities as women bequeathed more saints than men in Mexico Tenochtitlan. Jonathan Truitt, “Nahuas and Catholicism in Mexico Tenochtitlan: Religious Faith and Practice and La Capilla de San Josef de los Naturales, 1523-1700” (Ph.D. diss., Tulane University, 2009), 255-56.
Table 9.5. Appearance of saints in Ebtun (1785-1813)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1785</th>
<th>1811*</th>
<th>1812</th>
<th>1813</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patron Saints</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>4/4</td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>8/8</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invoked Saints</td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>0/4</td>
<td>0/2</td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>0/8</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bequeathed Saints</td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>0/4</td>
<td>0/2</td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>0/8</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Roys, *Titles of Ebtun*.

*The formulae of some testaments are unreadable, but all share Bernardino >ul as a notary who is remarkably consistent. Therefore, general assumptions of consistency have been made at times.

Ebtun’s corpus is small, yet extant testaments provide a glimpse, however limited, into the cult of the saints’ presence. The cult seems to have reached Phase 1 by the end of the eighteenth century and likely sooner as this is the earliest testament. Interestingly, although the patron saint is systematically referenced, the cult stops there and does not mature into Phase 2 or 3. To be sure, Table 9.5 does not rule out the possibility of Ebtun’s Phase 2 or 3 characteristics. Yet if the cult of the saints was firmly rooted in Ebtun, similar to Toluca for example, the above survey likely would suggest as much.

Table 9.6. Appearance of saints in Cacalchen (1646-1679)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1646</th>
<th>1647</th>
<th>1648</th>
<th>1649</th>
<th>1650s</th>
<th>1678-79</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patron Saints</td>
<td>0/3</td>
<td>0/10</td>
<td>0/2</td>
<td>0/5</td>
<td>0/10</td>
<td>0/4</td>
<td>0/34</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invoked Saints</td>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>10/10</td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>5/5</td>
<td>10/10</td>
<td>4/4</td>
<td>34/34</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bequeathed Saints</td>
<td>0/3</td>
<td>0/10</td>
<td>0/2</td>
<td>0/5</td>
<td>0/10</td>
<td>0/4</td>
<td>0/34</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bequeathed to/for Saints</td>
<td>0/3</td>
<td>0/10</td>
<td>0/2</td>
<td>0/5</td>
<td>0/10</td>
<td>2/4</td>
<td>2/34</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: LC.

Cacalchen’s corpus provides another excellent example of how the influence of the cult of the saints varied. By the mid-seventeenth century Cacalchen notaries added Mary to the end of the formulaic invocation of the Trinity. However, although no testator ever bequeaths an image of Mary or another saint, one testator donates gifts and fees to

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10 I thank Matthew Restall for providing me access to his original notes on the wills.
“ca cilich colel” (our holy noblewoman).\(^\text{11}\) It is unclear whether this is a cofradía, a household saint maintained in the home, or one in the church. Either way, Cacalchen and its increasing devotion to Mary appears to have been becoming a mature Phase 2 by the end of the seventeenth century. Also by the late seventeenth century, Cacalchen begins to refer to the convent by its patron saints San Pedro and Pablo. Why the patron saint of the cah itself fails to appear is a mystery, but likely concerns the preferences of the notaries. Thus, Cacalchen remains a unique example of a Phase 2 cah that omitted mention of its patron saint.

**Table 9.7. Appearance of saints in Tekanto (1726-1814)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>'26-'28</th>
<th>'30-'38</th>
<th>'48</th>
<th>'50-'54</th>
<th>'57-'60</th>
<th>'72-'79</th>
<th>'89</th>
<th>'93</th>
<th>'98-'99</th>
<th>1804-'14</th>
<th>n/a</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patron Saints</td>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>8/8</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>11/11</td>
<td>13/13</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td>5/7</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td>58/63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invoked Saints</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Mary only)</td>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>8/8</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>11/11</td>
<td>13/13</td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>8/8</td>
<td>7/7</td>
<td>4/4</td>
<td>63/63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bequeathed Saints</td>
<td>0/3</td>
<td>1/8</td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>2/11</td>
<td>0/13</td>
<td>0/2</td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>0/3</td>
<td>0/2</td>
<td>0/8</td>
<td>1/7</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>5/63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source:* ANEY, Documentos de Tekanto.

Tekanto displayed Phase 3 characteristics by the 1720s. Testators routinely include Mary in their invocation to the Trinity while dutifully referring to Tekanto as being “tu mektan Cahil Ca yumilan ah Bolon Pixa Santo Agustin” (in the jurisdiction of our father the nine-souled Saint Augustine), the cah’s patron saint.\(^\text{12}\) Furthermore, in a sample of 63 testaments—a large majority of which listed bequeathed items—Tekanto testators possessed images of not only Mary, but also Jesus, San Francisco, San Antonio, and Saint Matthew. Yet when compared to the nearly 400 testators that failed to bequeath saints, those that did are few and primarily ranked among the wealthy who

\(^\text{11}\) LC, 31.

\(^\text{12}\) Documentos de Tekanto, ANEY, 117.
could afford such religious luxuries. Even if all 56 of the testaments that bequeathed items included a saint, it would only amount to barely 14% of the total 412 testators in the Tekanto corpus. Yet, as mentioned, testaments from Tekanto and their general lack of bequeathed items places the testaments in a unique category of their own. Therefore, it is possible that more Mayas possessed saints that, like their other possessions, were not included in the testament. Regardless, the presence of Mary and bequeathed saints places Tekanto in an early Phase 3.

Additionally, Tekanto sponsored five cofradías to which testators bequeathed items. In 1739, Batesara Chan donated a house-plot and ten palm trees to the cofradía of San Antonio Macha. Testators used cofradía lands, or estancias (farm or ranch), as points of reference when describing the location of their bequeathed land. For example, Domingo Canul described land “tu lakin u kax colebil” (to the east of the forest of the noblewoman) referring to the cofradía estancia of Nuestra Señora Kini. The influence of cofradías, then, was seemingly widespread. Indeed, perhaps the testaments’ failure to denote specific funds and fees for masses and to Jerusalem indicates the cofradías’ role in doing such. The scrawl of friars at the bottom of various testaments indicates the collection of fees and completion of masses, at least in some cases. But the limited data prevents any firm conclusions.

Perhaps the most obvious, and most difficult, question regards why the impact of the cult of the saints varied among the examined polities. Why did the wealthy Maya of

13 Thompson, Tekanto, 128.
14 Ibid., 129. Transcription by Thompson; translation mine.
15 For more on the impact of cofradías on Tekanto, see ibid., 278-82; Patch, Maya and Spaniard, 187-88.
Ixil not request shrouds, ropes, and specific burial sites? Why did the cult of the saints affect Tekanto to a greater degree than other Maya cahob. Why did the Toluca Valley embrace the cult so fully? Although the definite answers to such questions are beyond the scope of any scholar bound to study the past through archives, plausible explanations are attainable.

The most general explanation concerns centers and peripheries. Towns with a closer proximity to Spanish, and thus Catholic, centers of influence—such as Culhuacan, Ocotelulco, and those in the Valley of Toluca—demonstrate a larger presence of the cult of the saints. Towns at a distance from such centers—such as Cacalchen, Ebtun, Ixil, and even Tekanto—experienced the cult to a lesser or slower degree. This phenomenon can be explained with an adaptation to James Lockhart’s “trunk and feeder lines.” Lockhart plotted the settlement of Spaniards and their influence along trunk lines which fed into economically beneficial regions, and feeder lines which fed goods and people into the nearest center of consumption along these trunk lines. The majority of Spaniards and their civil and religious governments fell along trunk lines. The individual altepetl and cah examined illustrate this settlement pattern. The altepetl and cahob which possessed cabecera status similarly maintained convents which housed ecclesiastics and served as mini-centers for the ecclesiastic government of the area (see Table 9.8).

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Discussing social change, Lockhart argues that natives adopted Hispanic society more readily in central areas than those peripheral. I would emphasize that such models of social change similarly apply when examining religious change, in this case, the adoption of the cult of the saints. Those cabecera towns containing convents with resident ecclesiastics and located closer to feeder lines were exposed to the cult to a greater degree than those lacking such consistent exposure. In other words, increased and consistent exposure to Spanish society and Catholicism typically led to an increased or more rapid adoption of the cult of the saints.

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18 For more on the population density of convent areas see Sherburne F. Cook and Woodrow Borah, Essays in Population History: Mexico and the Caribbean, vol. 2 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 134-36.
Table 9.8. The presence of the cult of the saints in indigenous polities via testaments (Maya towns are shaded)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Polity/Region*</th>
<th>Cabecera</th>
<th>Convent</th>
<th>Resident Ecclesiastic</th>
<th>1550-1600</th>
<th>1601-1650</th>
<th>1651-1700</th>
<th>1701-1750</th>
<th>1751-1821</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mexico City</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Phase 2-3</td>
<td>Phase 3</td>
<td>Phase 3</td>
<td>Phase 3</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toluca Valley</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culhuacan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ocotelulco</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ixil</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>No impact</td>
<td>Phase 1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ebtun</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No**</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Phase 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cacalchen</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Phase 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tekanto</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Phase 2-3</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Phase 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources:
Toluca Valley (98): Pizzigoni, Testaments of Toluca.
Culhuacan (60): Cline and Leön-Portilla, Testaments of Culhuacan.
Ixl (100): Restall, Life and Death; “Oficios 1748-1749, 1801-1884,” vol. 1, “Peten Itza.”
Tekanto (63): ANEY, Documentos de Tekanto.
Ebtun (8): Roys, Titles of Ebtun.
Cacalchen (34): LC.

* Unless otherwise indicated, the testaments of each altepetl include its tlaxilacalli. Although differences existed between the impact of the cult of the saints between tlaxilacalli, the data base for such a comparison among most altepetl remains insufficient. Thus, the table provides a general indication while recognizing that differences among subunits surely existed.

** A mundane Maya document from Ebtun in 1817 does mention the use of communal funds for plates and a trough given for “the Holy Convent.” Yet this convent is the one at Chichimila to which Ebtun was subjected. Indeed, select testators refer to the convent as being in Chichimila. See Roys, 341, 343, 349, 355, 413.

For example, as early as 1564 a Nahua author in the Valley of Mexico referenced the personal construction of a building for his image. Furthermore, it is no coincidence that Mexico Tenochtitlan (Mexico City) boasts the earliest occurrence in a Nahuatl testament of a bequeathed saint appearing in 1570, and that the saint is Mary. In his

20 Only the Spanish translation of this Nahuatl testament survives today. The earliest Nahuatl language testament today containing the bequeathment of a saint also occurs in Mexico City but in 1576. Truitt, “Nahuas and Catholicism,” 254-5.
recent dissertation on Nahuatl testaments from Mexico Tenochtitlan, Jon Truitt presents data which indicates that out of 60 wills taken from the sixteenth and seventeenth century, 55% of testators bequeathed at least one image.\textsuperscript{21} Peripheral Yucatan is devoid of such an early impact.

The role of markets should also be considered in the promulgation of the cult of the saints. The presence of painted images in the round, \textit{lienzos} (canvas), and saints themselves indicate a market for vendors and their skills in creating the images. Many such vendors could be found in the large markets of Central Mexico. Certainly religious items were no strangers to the markets both before and after the conquest. Among the many vendors addressed in his large confessional manual, Molina includes the sellers of rosary beads and doctrinal primers.\textsuperscript{22} Additionally, a mid sixteenth-century Nahuatl annal (historical record typically organized by year) specifically mentions the presence of saints in the markets.\textsuperscript{23}

Unlike Central Mexico, Yucatan lacked central markets equipped with vendors of Catholic paraphernalia.\textsuperscript{24} Even much of the wax used for candles in religious worship became exported to Central Mexican markets.\textsuperscript{25} Perhaps this enabled the town of Uman,}

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 255-6.

\textsuperscript{22} Molina, \textit{Confesionario mayor}, f. 37v.

\textsuperscript{23} Luis Reyes García, ¿Cómo te confundes? ¿Acaso no somos conquistados?: \textit{Anales de Juan Bautista} (México: Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social; Biblioteca Lorenzo Boturini Insigne y Nacional Basílica de Guadalupe, 2001), 253. My thanks to Jon Truitt for informing me of this citation.

\textsuperscript{24} On the markets see Restall, \textit{Maya World}, 185-7.

\textsuperscript{25} Molina makes hints at the importance of wax from the Yucatan in his large confessional manual when he asks, “Auh yn campech vitz xicocuitlatl, aço castillan xicocuitlatl ypan othicquixti?” (And the beeswax that comes from Campeche, did you pass it off as Castilian beeswax?). Molina, \textit{Confesionario mayor}, f. 38v.
located just miles from Merida, to have never seen or used a rosary by the 1760s.\textsuperscript{26} To be sure, testaments prove that the Maya had access to religious items. Yet such access was certainly much more limited than that available to Nahuas in the Valley’s central altepetl.

Although the individuality of indigenous polities prevents any model for the cult of the saints from being completely absolute, generally speaking, out of the Maya testaments examined only cabecera polities with convents and resident ecclesiastics allowed to the cult of the saints to reach Phase 3. Individual Maya testaments outside the examined corpora likewise support this trend. For example, in 1689 Maria Catzim composed a testament which contained all the criteria of Phase 3 including the bequeathment of multiple saints and donations to various cofradías.\textsuperscript{27} Not surprisingly, Maria was from Tekax, a large cabecera cah which housed a convent and resident ecclesiastics.

Even the strongest evidence of the cult of the saints in Yucatan, however, fails to reach the degree of permeation evident in Central Mexico. Most towns in Yucatan adopted the cult to the extent of a patron saint and Marian devotion thus reaching Phase 2. Indeed, extant cofradía records scattered throughout the archives of the Yucatan suggest the predominance of both in many Maya communities.\textsuperscript{28} Yet for many Maya, the cult stopped at the communal level and failed to penetrate into the home for personal worship to reach Phase 3, at least nowhere near the degree of Central Mexico.

\textsuperscript{26} Chuchiak, “Indian Inquisition,” 456.

\textsuperscript{27} ANEY, 1826ii, ff. 301-2.

\textsuperscript{28} One archive containing a particular wealth of cofradía records is the Archivo Histórico de la Archidióces de Campeche [AHAC], many of which are written in both Maya and Spanish. See for example 1421, caja 220, AHAC; 1424, caja 221, AHAC. Nancy Farriss discusses cofradías at length in her \textit{Maya Society}, 320-33. However, testamentary evidence conflicts with Farriss’ argument of the centrality of the cult in the religious lives of all Maya.
Thus, although the cult does express pockets of intensity throughout Yucatan, it would be unreasonable to suggest its monolithic acceptance throughout all Maya cahob. Moreover, similar variation surely occurred among Nahua altepetl, particularly those peripheral towns with less exposure to Spanish society. Like any other aspect of Catholicism, different versions of the cult of the saints existed.

Conclusion

The varied impact of the cult of the saints proves to further illustrate the diversity of Catholicism among the Nahua and Maya. Perhaps best seen through phases, an examination of myriad Nahuatl and Maya testaments suggests that those polities with increased and consistent exposure to Spanish society and Catholicism experienced the cult to a greater degree. Indeed, the testators from altepetl and cahob with cabecera status, convents, and resident ecclesiastics betray an increased familiarity with saints than in other polities. However, the cult of the saints affected Central Mexico and Yucatan in diverse ways. While Central Mexican altepetl demonstrate Phase 3 qualities early on, few Maya cahob examined reached Phase 3 and then not until generally late in the colonial period. Although the assumption of a widespread acceptance and monolithic practice of the cult of the saints in Yucatan (and throughout Mesoamerica) has persisted, the dying words of testators seem to indicate otherwise. As with most aspects of Catholicism, a testator’s experience with Catholicism upon dying and his relationship with the cult of the saints varied.
Nahua and Maya Catholicisms

[Ecclesiastics] have gone forming so many manuals—both manuscripts and printed works—and with such diverse form of administration, that there are more than 16. And among them the Toledano, Salamantino, Sevillano, and Mexicano manuals, that of fray Miguel de Zarate, of fray Martín de León, of fray Pedro de Contreras, of the Licenciados Pinelo, Cantu, Lorra Baquio, and others. There has resulted from this disorder great inconveniences to that good form, discretion, and purity with which the Church orders that is issued in such grave material, and among those the disfiguring of that most beautiful unity, that uniform whiteness, that equal grace that the Church desires to be performed by its faithful. And likewise it can cause...great confusion believing that the administration that is diverse in the ceremonies is also in substance. Moreover, if everyone is permitted to administer with manuscript manuals and such that can be altered, even considering the care of the one that wants to celebrate and to administer, and the carelessness of him that transfers it, such serious material becomes exposed to terrible and irreparable disorders, excesses, and sins originated by unsound principles and inconveniences.

—Juan de Palafox y Mendoza (1642)¹

Through specific examples taken from Nahuatl and Maya religious texts, this dissertation has attempted to illustrate what Juan de Palafox y Mendoza realized in 1642: the presence of numerous official and unofficial religious texts presented diverse versions of Catholicism. Although specifically addressing those manuals detailing the administration of the sacraments, Palafox y Mendoza’s concern applies to all religious texts. The multiplicity of texts produced in both the New World and the Old destroyed what he saw as the “very beautiful unity” and “uniform whiteness” of the Church to the point where its members performed and understood the sacraments differently.

¹ Saenz de la Peña, Manual, preliminary leaf, unnumbered.
Palafox y Mendoza was also not ignorant of the contribution of unofficial, unpublished manuscripts to the diversification of Catholicism. Such unedited, unsupervised texts were susceptible to alterations, improper translations, and exposed “serious material” to the “irreparable disorders” of “unsound principles.” In a way, Palafox y Mendoza’s general concern reflected a world-wide, early modern phenomenon occurring in the Philippines, India, China, as well as Spain, Italy, and myriad other settings where multiple Catholicisms were the status quo. Religious texts composed and employed in such areas each contributed to the diversification of Catholicism. For its part, this dissertation has focused on Central Mexico and Yucatán to provide comparative examples of how religious texts composed in Nahuatl and Yucatec Maya contributed to the “disorder” of various Catholicisms.

At a time when elite scholars such as Erasmus revealed the “superstitious” and “pagan” nature of medieval religion and the clergy’s neglect and abuse of their ignorant flocks, and when Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, and other Protestant reformers brought a message of purification and reform that the Church could neither silence or ignore, the multifaceted role of printed texts became increasingly important. Printed texts could educate the clergy and parishioner alike to a reformed message a strict editing process and the Inquisition would regulate. Indeed, the printing press could greatly contribute to curing the Church of the two most obvious ailments to reformers: ignorance and unorthodoxy. These Old-World hopes continued in Central Mexico and Yucatán where ecclesiastics and their native assistants translated doctrinas, confessional manuals, and other religious works into Nahuatl and Yucatec Maya.
However, the printing press and its official texts became a double-edged sword. The production of texts to cure such ailments of the Church could also exacerbate them. The multiplicity of texts leaving the presses produced a variety of Catholicisms—a situation ecclesiastics became aware of yet were ultimately unable to cease. In general, native-language religious texts and their role in the diversification of Catholicism fall into three categories. Official, printed texts composed by ecclesiastics and/or their native ghostwriters represent Category 1. The multiple copies of such printed works captured a broad audience of ecclesiastics and natives alike, while their myriad interpretations and explanations of basic doctrine presented various versions of Catholicism. Category 2 texts are those unofficial, unpublished religious texts authored by ecclesiastics and/or their native aides. Intended for local audiences and personal use, these texts also diversified the Catholic message through their unique interpretations and presentations of basic doctrine.

As seen throughout this dissertation, Category 1 and 2 Nahuatl and Maya religious texts could vary—at times significantly—from similar works in the same language. Each text presented basic doctrines and principles in a unique way that created distinct versions of Catholicism. And such variation increased when compared cross-culturally. Generally speaking, official Nahuatl texts not only presented a lengthier, more detailed Catholicism than those Maya, but also vastly outnumbered their Yucatecan counterparts.

The impetuses for such diversification both intra- and interculturally were many beginning with translation. Nahua and Maya culture heavily influenced the translation of specific Catholic concepts and terms to form culturally-specific understandings both
similar and different from each other. When conveying basic doctrine such as the Decalogue, the Lord’s Prayer, or the Creed differences in translation appear in ways both minor and significant. Overall, however, the main culprit in the diversification process was not in the word-for-word translation of basic doctrine, but its explanation and application through religious texts. In short, most Nahuas and Mayas understood the need for confession or baptism, or the importance of biblical figures, but what these sacraments and concepts meant and what they entailed differed from one text’s explanation to the next.

An examination of such explanations exposes the influence of individual ecclesiastics and their preferences of rhetoric, description, elucidation, and application. The contents of sermons, explanation of doctrines, and length of confessional manuals all betray the inclinations of the ecclesiastic appearing as author. Yet the preferences of the indigenous ghostwriter also influence texts, most clearly along cultural lines. Although seldom mentioned in the work for their efforts, most ecclesiastics relied on indigenous aides to compose their religious texts. In consequence, many of the religious discourses found in ecclesiastic texts appear along cultural lines that differed from Central Mexico to Yucatan.

Time and location similarly played an essential role in the diversification of Catholicism. Early millenarian ideas shaped initial texts into lengthy treatises with grandiose expectations. As time progressed and “backsliding” became more evident, the discourses became shortened and simplified, with some focusing on the perceived evils of the time such as idolatry, sexual misconduct, and importance of basic doctrine such as baptism. Other texts were intended for specific locales such as Aquino Cortés y
Zedeño’s Guadalajara-specific Nahuatl confessional manual. Indeed, regardless of their wide dissemination religious texts often betray the impact of the author’s local surroundings.

Finally, Category 3 texts represent unofficial, unpublished religious texts written by natives for a native audience. As demand outstripped the supply, ecclesiastics and indigenous religious stewards produced their own texts. While some texts contained little or no unorthodox material, others did. Such texts contain gems of insight into native interpretations of Catholicism and frequently presented a message rife with unorthodoxy although congruent with native culture. To be sure, unofficial, unpublished texts greatly contributed to the diversification of Catholicism. Interestingly, Category 3 texts containing particularly unorthodox doctrine likely derived from religiously trained indigenous fiscales or maestros burdened with the spiritual care of their towns. As such, Category 3 texts provide a unique view into the natives understanding and conveyance of Catholicism, and their role in contributing to its diversity. Moreover, the versions of Catholicism these texts provided differed greatly from those of printed works and, above all, the orthodox message of Catholicism.

In general, many of the various Catholicisms Nahuatl and Maya religious texts conveyed existed at the same time while others evolved over centuries through multiple printings. Some were present among texts of the same language, others between Nahuatl and Maya texts. Yet at any given time in Central Mexico and Yucatan, different Catholic messages existed; messages that would change as the colonial period progressed.

A recent scholarly work stated, “The Nahuas did not generate any writings which would help to get a clue of how the Christian doctrine was understood and transferred to
daily life.” Nahuatl and Maya religious texts contest such a claim, particularly those unpublished and testaments. The discussion in Chapter 7 on the conversion of Paul and the Creation of Adam clearly illustrate how the Nahua and Maya authors of such texts understood the Christian doctrine along culturally-familiar lines of thought.

Indeed, the study of native-language religious texts clearly exposes the role of Nahuas, Mayas, and their culture in shaping the colonial faces of Catholicism. Far from a Spanish dominated enterprise, the evangelization of Mesoamerica largely depended on preexisting cultural traits, rhetoric, and native assistants to convey its message. This reliance resulted in texts that conveyed Catholicisms unique to individual, local, and cultural preferences. The fact that the majority of natives heard Catholicism preached through native voices and texts inspired the title of this work: Nahua and Maya Catholicisms.

Moreover, Nahuatl and Maya testaments demonstrate how natives interacted with Catholicism upon dying, and provide unique insights into how the cult of the saints permeated the lives of such natives. The various Nahuatl and Maya testaments examined demonstrate that far from a singular experience, Nahuas and Mayas’ Catholic preparation for the afterlife varied according to location, time, and individual circumstances. Similar to the scene cast by religious texts, Nahua testators in central locations experienced Catholicism upon dying in ways more rich and diverse than those evident among Maya testators.

This included the cult of the saints. As communal documents representing both local traditional and individual preferences, Nahuatl and Maya testaments betray a

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2 Klaus, *Uprooted Christianity*, 209.
variegated impact of the cult of the saints on indigenous polities. Measured in phases, communities in Phase 1 produce testaments that invoke the town’s adopted a patron saint. Phase 2 communities include such an invocation while also illustrating the inclusion of Mary into the cult and the establishment of cofradías dedicated to saints. Phase 3 communities contain testaments that illustrate the spread of the cult of the saints into the private lives of testators through the bequeathment of images or property to images of saints. Overall, whereas central Nahua polities betray a quick absorption and evolution of the cult, many Maya communities of peripheral Yucatan adopted the cult at a much more gradual rate.

Throughout, this dissertation refers to the “diversification of Catholicism.” That the version of Catholicism practiced in the New World differed somehow from that in the Old World is not new. Indeed, for years scholars of colonial Mesoamerican religion have continually created an indigenous/Spaniard paradigm that views religion through a comparison of how religion in the New World differed from its Old World origins. Such a comparison is essential, but unintentionally places all indigenous peoples into the same category as practicing a similar religion, a Nahua version of Catholicism.

Thus, this dissertation has attempted to examine the diversification of Catholicism through an expanded paradigm; one that, while exposing differences between New and Old World practices, focuses on recognizing the differences in Catholicism among the indigenous polities and cultures themselves. The fuel for such a paradigm are Nahuatl and Maya religious texts. Native-language sermons, confessional manuals, doctrinas and so on are key components to better understanding and illustrating the various versions of Catholicism Nahuas and Mayas heard and composed.
Just as this diversification did not begin in the colonial period, it does not end there. Although modern conveniences of communication, travel, and printing reduce the potential for variation in the Catholic message, religious texts still contain diversification powers particularly in outlying areas. Today, Maya and Nahua religious stewards in many towns still employ sermons and other doctrinal texts of questionable orthodoxy that continue to betray the presence of Nahua and Maya Catholicisms.
Appendix A

Employed Nahuatl and Maya Ecclesiastical Texts and Corpora (1546-1855)

Maya works are shaded

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Work/Genre</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
<th>Colonial Publication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1546</td>
<td><em>Doctrina Christiana</em></td>
<td>Alonso de Molina</td>
<td>Franciscan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1548</td>
<td><em>Doctrina Christiana</em></td>
<td>(Anonymous)</td>
<td>Dominican</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 1550s</td>
<td>“Sermons”</td>
<td>(Anonymous)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1553</td>
<td><em>Doctrina Christiana</em></td>
<td>Pedro de Gante</td>
<td>Franciscan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1565</td>
<td><em>Doctrina Christiana</em></td>
<td>Domingo de la Anunciación</td>
<td>Dominican</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1565</td>
<td><em>Confesionario mayor</em></td>
<td>Alonso de Molina</td>
<td>Franciscan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1565</td>
<td><em>Confesionario menor</em></td>
<td>Alonso de Molina</td>
<td>Franciscan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1570s-70s</td>
<td>Culhuacan Testaments</td>
<td>notaries</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1571-1617</td>
<td>Tula Testaments</td>
<td>notaries</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
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<td>1576</td>
<td>“Morley Manuscript”</td>
<td>(Anonymous)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1580s</td>
<td>Culhuacan Testaments</td>
<td>notaries</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>1583</td>
<td><em>Psalmodia Christiana</em></td>
<td>Bernardino de Sahagún</td>
<td>Franciscan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 16th-17th cen.</td>
<td>Testarian (Egerton Manuscript 2898)</td>
<td>(Anonymous)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16th-17th cen.</td>
<td>Ocotelulco Testaments</td>
<td>notaries</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1600</td>
<td><em>Advertencias para los confesores</em></td>
<td>Juan Bautista</td>
<td>Franciscan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1606</td>
<td><em>Sermonario</em></td>
<td>Juan Bautista</td>
<td>Franciscan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1607</td>
<td><em>Espéculo divino</em></td>
<td>Juan de Mijangos</td>
<td>Franciscan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1611</td>
<td><em>Camino del cielo</em></td>
<td>Martín de León</td>
<td>Dominican</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1614</td>
<td><em>Sermonario</em></td>
<td>Martín de León</td>
<td>Dominican</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1620a</td>
<td><em>Doctrina Christiana</em></td>
<td>Juan Coronel</td>
<td>Franciscan</td>
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<td>1620b</td>
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<td>Juan Coronel</td>
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<td><em>Sermonario</em></td>
<td>Juan de Mijangos</td>
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<td>1634</td>
<td><em>Confesionario mayor y menor</em></td>
<td>Bartolomé de Álva Ixtilxochitl</td>
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<td>1642</td>
<td><em>Manual de los santos sacramentos</em></td>
<td>Andrés Saenz de la Peña</td>
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<td>1640s-70s</td>
<td>Culhuacan Testaments</td>
<td>notaries</td>
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<td>1600s-1700s</td>
<td>Toluca Valley Testaments</td>
<td>notaries</td>
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<td>1673</td>
<td><em>Arte</em> (with a small confessional manual)</td>
<td>Augustín Vetancourt</td>
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<td>1689</td>
<td><em>Arte</em> (with a small confessional manual)</td>
<td>Antonio Vázquez Gastelu</td>
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<td>Religion</td>
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<td>1700s</td>
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<td>1700s</td>
<td>Para ayudar a buen morir</td>
<td>Bernardo Sierra</td>
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<td>1700s</td>
<td>Libro de matrimonio</td>
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<td>1713</td>
<td>Farol Indiano y guía de Curas</td>
<td>Manuel Pérez</td>
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<td>1713</td>
<td>“Relación mercurina”</td>
<td>Joseph Antonio Pérez de la Fuente</td>
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<td>1718</td>
<td>Doctrina Christiana y cathecismo</td>
<td>Manuel Pérez</td>
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<td>Tekanto Testaments</td>
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<td>Pedro Beltán de Santa Rosa</td>
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<td>1740b</td>
<td>Novena de Christo crucificado</td>
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<td>Marcos de Sauvedra</td>
<td>Dominican</td>
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<td>1747</td>
<td>Plácticas de los principales mysterios</td>
<td>Francisco Eugenio Domínguez y Argáiz</td>
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<td>Catecismo mexicano</td>
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<td>Jesuit</td>
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<td>1759</td>
<td>Promptuario manual mexicano</td>
<td>Ignacio de Paredes</td>
<td>Jesuit</td>
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<td>Arte, vocabulario y confeccionario</td>
<td>Gerónymo Thomás de Aquino Cortés y Zedeño</td>
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<td>Doctrina Christiana</td>
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<td>Liturgical Collection</td>
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<td>Coleccion de sermones</td>
<td>Joaquin Ruz</td>
<td>Franciscan</td>
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<td>Manual Romano Toledano y Yucateco</td>
<td>Joaquin Ruz</td>
<td>Franciscan</td>
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<td>1847</td>
<td>Catecismo y Esposicion Breve de la Doctrina Cristiana</td>
<td>Gerónymo de Ripalda, trans. by Joaquin Ruz</td>
<td>Franciscan</td>
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<td>“Yucatec Prayers”</td>
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Appendix B

Nahuatl Translations of the Creed

Fray Alonso de Molina 1546 (Códice Franciscano, 35-6)

Nicnoneltoquitia in Dios tetatzin ixquich
yueli: in oquiyocox yn oquimochiuilli in
ilhucatl in tlalticpac. No
nicnoneltoquitia in totecuyo Jesu Christo
yn çan huel yçeltzin ypiltzin Dios, in uel
nelly totlatocatzin. Ca yehuantzin
monacayutizinoco in ica Spiritu Sancto.
Auh itech motlacatilitzinoco yn Sancta
Maria muchipa vel nelli ichpuchtli. Auh
topampa motlayhiouilti ytencopa yn
Poncio Pilato: cruztitech
mamaçoualtiloc, momiquili yhuan tococ.
Auh motemoui in mictlan: yeylhuitica
mozcalitzino in yntlan mimicque.
Motlecaui in yluhicac ymayauchcampa
motlalitzinoto yn itatzin Dios yxquich
yueli. Auh ompa valmotemouiz yn
quintlatzentequiliquiu in yolque yn
mimicque. No nicnoneltoquitia in Dios
Spiritu Santo yhuan nicneltoca yn Sancta

I believe in God the Father All-powerful
who created and made the heaven and
earth. I believe in our Lord Jesus Christ,
the really only child of God, our really
true ruler. He came to assume flesh
through the Holy Spirit. He came to be
born of the always very true virgin Holy
Mary. He suffered for us by order of
Pontius Pilate, his arms were spread on
the cross, he died, and was buried. He
descended to hell, on the third day he
revived from among the dead. He
ascended to heaven to go sit at the right
hand of his father, God All-powerful.
From there he will descend to come to
judge the living and the dead. Also, I
believe in God the Holy Spirit and I
believe in the Holy
Iglesia Catolica. No nicnealtoca in
teoxtotica innecentlaliliz yn Sanctome.
No nicnealtoca in tlatlacolpiluiliztli
yhuac nitlanetloca ca oc çepa muchi
tlacatl muzcaliz yuan nitlanetloca ca
cemiac yolihuaz. Ma yuh muchiua.

Catholic Church. Also, I believe in the
spiritual gathering of the saints. Also, I
believe in the forgiveness of sins, and I
believe that all people will revive, and I
believe that everyone will live eternally.
May it be done (Amen).

Fray Domingo de la Anunciación, 1565 (Doctrina Christiana, 13r-13v)

Nicnoneltoquitia yn dios tetatzin
yxquich yhueli yn quiyocux yn ylhuicatl
yn tlaltpctli. Nonicnoneltcq́
ytocuyo Jesu xpo, yn çá huel yceltzí
ypiltzí dios. ca yehuatzí
monacayotitzőoco yca spú sancto, auh
ytech motlacatili yn sancta maria
mochipa huel nelli ychpochtli. Auh
topāpa motlayhiyohuitli, ypā mochiuh ĩ
pilato, cruztitech mamaçohualtiloc,
momiq́li yhuac tococ. Auh motemohui
yn mictlā, yeilhuitcha mozcalitzőo yn ñtlā
mimicq. Motle cahui yn ilhuicac
motlalitzőo ymayeccāpa yn tetatző dios

I believe in God the Father All-powerful
who created the heaven and earth. I
believe in our Lord Jesus Christ the really
only child of God; he came to assume
flesh through the Holy Spirit and he was
born of the always very true virgin Holy
Mary. He suffered for us, it happened
because of Pilate, his arms were spread on
the cross, he died, and was buried. He
descended to hell, on the third day he
revived from among the dead. He
ascended to heaven to sit at the right hand
of the Father, God.
yxquich yhueli. Auh ompa hualmotemohuiz quintlatzótequiliquiuh yn yolque ym mimicque. No nicnoneloquitia yn dios espiritu sancto, yhuan nicneltoca yn sancta yglesia yhuan yn innecentlaliliz sanctome, No nicneltoca yn tlatlapolihuiztli yhuan nitlaneltoca ca oc ceppa mochi tlacatl mozcaliz, yhuan nitlaneltoca ca cemicac yolihuaz, ma yuh mochia. All-powerful. From there he will descend to come to judge the living and the dead. Also, I believe in God the Holy Spirit and I believe in the Holy Catholic Church and the gathering of the saints. Also, I believe in the forgiveness of sins, and I believe that everyone will rise again, and I believe that everyone will live eternally. May it be done (Amen).

Bartolomé de Alva, 1634 (Confessionario mayor y menor, f. 50v)

Nicnoneloquitia in çenhullitini Dios Tetatzin in oquimochihuilli in ilhuicatl in tlalticpactli, no nicnoneloquitia in Totecuyo Iesu Christo in çan huel yçeltzin ypiltzin Dios in iteotlamahuïcolticatzinco Spiritu Sancto omonacayotzino: omotlacatilli ytetzinco in Santa Maria mocêmacitzinotica çemicac ychpochtli: motlahyyohuilli ytencopa in Pontio Pilato, + Cruztitech mamaçoaltiloc, momiquilli tococ I believe in the Almighty God the Father who made the heaven and earth. Also, I believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, the really only child of God who assumed flesh through the divine miracle of the Holy Spirit. He was born of Holy Mary, entirely pure, eternally virgin. He suffered by order of Pontius Pilate, + his arms were spread on the cross, he died, was buried,
motemohui in mictlan, yylhuitica [sic] descended to hell, on the third day he
mozcallitzino intloc in mimique, revived from among the dead, he
motlecahui in ilhuicac ascended to heaven to go sit at the right
ymayeccampantzinco omotllallitzinoto in hand of the Almighty God the Father.
çenhuellitini Dios Tetatzin, auh ye ompa And from there he will come to judge
in hualmehuitiz in the living and the dead. Also, I believe
quinmotlatzontequilliiquiuh in yolque, in God the Holy Spirit, Holy Catholic
yhuain mimique no nicnoneltoquitia in Church, and I believe concerning the
Dios Spiritu Sancto Sancta Yglesia spiritual gathering of the saints and
Catholica, yhuain nitlaneltoca in concerning the forgiveness of sins, and
itechcopa in inneçentlallilliz in sanctome that life will go on again.
yhuain itechpa, tlatlacolpolihuillitzli
yhuain ca oc çepa yolihuaz.

Gerónimo de Ripalda, 1758 (Catecismo mexicano, 35-6)

Nicnoneltoquitia in Dios Tetâtzin I believe in God the Father entirely All-
Cemixquich ihueli; in oquiyocox, ihuan powerful who created and made the
oquimochihuili in Ilhuicatl, ihuan in heaven and earth. I also believe in Jesus
Tlalticpactli. No nicnoneltoquitia in Christ, the really only son of God, and
Jesu-Christo, in zan huel iceltzin in Dios our ruler. He assumed flesh through the
Ipiltzin, ihuan Totlátocatzin. In miracle of God the Holy Spirit,
yehuatzin omonacayotitzinò ica in
itlamahuizoltzin in Dios Espiritu-Santo:
ihuan in itechpatzinco omotlacatili in
cemîcac Ichpochtli, Santa Maria:
Omotlaihiyohuitli in itencopa in Poncio
Pilatos: Cruzitech omâmazoaltiloc;
omomiquili; ihuan otococ: Omotemohui
in Mictlan: Yeilhuitica
omonômaizcalitzinô in intlan in
Mimicquê: Omotlêcahui in Ilhuicac:
Imayauhcampatzinco mehuiltîticà in
Dios Tetâtzin, Cemixquich ihueli. Auh
ompa hualmehuitiz,
quimmotlatzontequililiquiuh in Yolquê,
ihuan in Mimicquê. No nicnoneltoquitia
in Dios Espiritu-Santo. No nicneltoca:
Ca oncâ in Santa Iglesia Catholica. No
nicneltoca: Ca oncâ Innenepanicneliliz
in Santôme. No nicneltoca: Ca oncâ in
Itepôpolhuilocu in Tlâtlacolli. No
nicneltoca: Ca mochihuaz in Inezcaliliz
in Tonacayo: No nicneltoca: Ca oncâ in
cemîcac Yoltliztli. Ma im mochiua,
Jesusè.

and he was born of the eternal virgin Holy
Mary. He suffered by order of Pontius
Pilate. His arms were spread on the cross,
he died, and was buried. He descended to
hell, on the third day he spontaneously
revived from among the dead. He
ascended to heaven, he is seated on the
right hand of God the Father entirely All-
powerful. From there he will come to
judge the living and the dead. Also, I
believe in God the Holy Spirit. Also, I
believe that there is the Holy Catholic
Church. Also, I believe that there is the
joining in friendship of the saints. Also, I
believe in the forgiveness of sins. Also, I
believe that the resurrection of our bodies
will take place. Also, I believe that there is
eternal life. May it be done (Amen), oh
Jesus!
Unknown Friar from the Convent in Taxco, 1774 ("Breve tratado.")


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\(^1\) The author of this text often drops the “t” in “tz.”
no nicneltoca ca onca in **Sancta Yglesia** Catolica: no nicneltoca ca onca in inepanicneliliz in Santome: no nicneltoca ca onca in itepopolhuiiloca in tlatlacolli: no nicneltoca ca mochihuaz in inezcaliliz in tonacayo: no nicneltoca ca onca cemicac yoliliztli. Ma yuh mochiua. Jesuse.

Also, I believe that there is the Holy Catholic Church. Also, I believe that there is the joining in friendship of the saints. Also, I believe in the forgiveness of sins. Also, I believe that the resurrection of our bodies will take place. Also, I believe that there is eternal life. May it be done (Amen), oh Jesus!
Appendix C

Maya Translations of the Creed

Coronel, 1620 (*Doctrina Christiana*)

Ocaan ti uol Dios citbil, uchuc tumen tuçinile, y ahmenul caan yetel luum,
Ocaan ix ti uol, ca yumil ti Iesu Christo, uppelel mehenile, lay hichhnabi ti Spiritusancto, çihijx ti çuhuy sancta
Maria, tali tuchi Poncio Pilato numci ti ya, çijn ciix ti Cruz, cimi tun ca muci,

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, I believe also in our lord Jesus Christ, the only one son, that was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born also of the virgin Holy Mary, from the command of Pontius Pilate he suffered, he was extended, pricked on the cross, he died, then was buried, and descended to the horrible hell called limbo, on the third day he lived again (resurrected) among the dead, he ascended to heaven to sit on the right hand of God the Father Almighty, then from there he will return to judge the living and the dead. I also believe the Holy Spirit, and holy Catholic Church, the gathering of saints, the forgiveness of sins, also the living again of our flesh, and also eternal life. Amen Jesus.
Ocan ti uol Dios Yumbil, uchuc tumen tuzinile, y ahmenul caan, yetel luum.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. I believe also in our lord Jesus Christ, the only one son, that was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born also of the virgin Holy Mary, from the command of Pontius Pilate he suffered, he was also extended on the cross, he died, and was buried, and descended to the horrible hell called limbo. On the third day he lived again (resurrected) among the dead. He ascended to heaven. He also sat on the right hand of God the Father Almighty. Then from there he will return to judge the living and the dead. I also believe the Holy Spirit, and holy Catholic Church, the gathering of all saints, the forgiveness of sins also. The living again of our flesh, and also eternal life. Amen Jesus.
Joaquin Ruz, 1847 (Catecismo y Esposicion Breve de la Doctrina Cristiana por el padre Maestro Gerónimo de Ripalda, 8-9)

Yn uoczic uol ti Dios Yumbil yuchucil zinil, ah Zihzahul ti le caan iix ti le luum, iix ti Jesucristo úpel mehen h c
Yum cá hichnatabhi ti oklal ú meihul ti le Espiritu Santo. Iix zihí ti cilich zuhuy Maria: tu manzah numia yalan ti le ú yuchucil Poncio Pilato: Zinlahi ti Cruz, ti cimi iix t muucí; t emí ti le metnaloob, iix ti yoxpel kinil caput cuxlahi ti ichil le cimenoob t naci ti le canoob iix yan culaan ti le ú nooh Dios Yumbil yuchucil zinil; tac ti ló bin yanac ú tael ti ú chaic nuucul cuxtal ti le cuxanoob, iix ti le cimenoob. Yn uoczicuol ti le ti Espiritu Santo le cilich iglesia catolica, le ú etmalkam ti le Santoob, le ti ú zaat-zahul ti le kebanoob, le caput cuxtal ti le bakel, iix le cuxtal maxulunté. Bay layac Jesus.

I put my will in God the Father Almighty, the giver of life in heaven and on earth, and in Jesus Christ, the only son of our Father that was conceived through the doings of the Holy Spirit. Also, he was born of the holy virgin Mary, he endured suffering under the power of Pontius Pilate, he was stretched on the cross, he died and was buried; he descended to the hells and on the third day again he lived (resurrected) among the dead, he ascended to the heavens and there is seated on the right hand of God the Father almighty; he will come to redeem, from his breath comes the form of life to the living and to the dead. I put my will in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the returning of the Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the living again of the flesh, and the never ending life. So it is, Jesus.
Appendix D

Nahuatl Baptismal Discourse from Fray Juan Bautista’s 1606 Sermonario

[f. 583v]

*Ego baptizo in aqua. Medius autem vestrum stetit, quem vos nescitis. Ipse est qui post me venturus est, qui ante me factus est: cuius non sum dignus: ut solvam corrigam calceamenti.* q. n. In nehuatl ca çan atl inic nitequaatequia. Auh ca yehuatzin in nechhualmoteputztoquiliz, in ayamo noquichtli, in ayamo nixtlamati achto oquichtli catca, ye achto ye mixtlamachitla: auh inic huey, ahmo nomahcehual inic nicnocacopiniliz; inic nicnotomililiz in ilpica icactzin. Yuh quim ma quimihtalhuiznequi Sanct Ioan. In nehuatl ca çan atl inic nitealtia, inic nitechipahua: auh çan ye xicmatican, ca ye amotlan moyetztica in Temaquixtiani, in ahmo anquimottilia, in ahmo anquimiximachilia: in nehuatl çan nititlantzin, niteyacancatzin, niteihtocatzin, ye mohuicatz, ye monextitzinoz,

[f. 583v]

*I baptize with water. But in your midst has stood one whom you do not know. He is the one who will come after me, who was made before me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie. It means: “I merely baptize with water. One will follow me, who before I was a man, before I possessed reason, was a man first, exercised reason first, he is so great that I do not deserve to remove his sandals, to loosen the straps of his sandals.” It is as though Saint John means, “I merely bathe, clean people with water, but understand that the Savior is already among you and you do not see him, you do not recognize him; I am only his messenger, the one who goes before him, his announced; he is already coming, he will appear, you will*
see and recognize him; he became a man and attained reason before I was a man and possessed reason, for he greatly surpasses me, for he is God, for he is the Possessor of the Near. I am merely a poor commoner, I am an insignificant person, I am nothing, and not worthy even though I should loosen his sandal strings, even to go about carrying his sandals, or even to serve him by some truly despicable task. When he comes, he will dispense baptism by which people will be saved; my baptism merely counts as a preparation. May you not be angry with me, merely gladly, patiently await his mercy.”

This, then, is how it is seen that God’s beloved, Saint John, very truly performed and completed his duty for which our lord God appointed him so that he became His announcer, so that he made the people on the earth acquainted with him (Christ), so that he proclaimed to them, to be prepared,

to receive him and because of his mercy, his salvation, they will be happy. And although the Jews greatly opposed him (St. John), he was not at all perturbed but all the more he (John) acknowledged and exalted him right in the presence of many Jews.
### Appendix E

Nahuatl Baptismal Discourse from Andrés Saenz De La Peña’s 1643 *Manual de Los Santos Sacramentos*

| f. 33r | Consider and ponder on it with very great prudence. My beloved children, that which we do here is to perform spiritually the perfectly marvelous sacrament called baptism; it precedes and is taken first because really no one earthly human whosoever can be saved without first being baptized; for so it is in the order that our beloved redeemer gave his beloved disciples, “Go, all over the world and teach, the people of the earth, open their eyes,

| f. 33r |

Ma xicnemilican, yhuan má ypan ximoyolnonotzacan čenca huey neihmatiliztica.

Notlaçopilhuantzitzine, yn tlein nican tictochihuilia, ca teoyotica tictequipanohua yn

çēnquizcamahiiçauhqui Sacramēto, in motenehua nequaatequilitlzli, auh ca yehuatl in tlayacatiuh yn achtopa manaz, yehica ca niman ayac če tlalticpac tlacatl moquaixtiz intlacamo achtopa moquaatequiz; ca yuh catqui yn ypan yn ytlatecpantzín, yn tlaçoTemaquixtiani, yn iuh oquimmolhuili, yn ytlacotlamachtiltzitzinhuan. Xihuian yn nohnuian čemanahuac, auh mochintin, in tlalticpac tlaca xiquimmachtican, xiquimitxotamacan, xiquimixtlapocan,
xiquimmoquaatequilibican, yca yn ytocatzin Dios Tettatzin, yhuan Tepiltzin, yhuan Spiritu Santo, auh yn ixquich tlachihualli, yn aquin tlaneltocaz, yhuan moquaatequiz ca maquixtiloz, auh in aquin ahmo tlaneltocaz ca tlacentelchihualli, tlaçemixnahuatilli yez. Auh yca yn nequatequilizSacramento yhuā yca yn yteotequaltililtzin yn Teotl Spiritu Santo, oc çeppa yancuican teoyotica titolcatilia, ynic yancuican tiyolitilo. Auh ca yehuatl yc pehua ye tzinti yn oc çequi Sacramentos, auh quimoquixtilia yn ixquich yn ahqualli, yn ahyectli, yn ytech catqui in teyolia, yn teanima, yhuan quiçeñechichohua yn ixquich, yn qualli yectli, yn tecuiltonoli in tetlamachtli. Yehica ca yn ixquich yn tlatlacolli, yn aço tlatlacol-

peuhcayotl, noçe yehuatl yn temictiani tlatlacolli, in manel ye huel temahmauti, yn ahmo tenehualoni, ca ic polihui in iteyectililtzin, yhuan yca in itechicahualitztin yn nequaatequilizSacramento. Auh inin yolilizatzintl ca ahmo çanyyo techipahua, quiiquixtia, yn icatzahuaca, yn tliltica yn

baptize them in the name of God the father, the son, and the Holy Spirit; and all creation, whoever will believe and is baptized will be saved, but whoever will not believe will be entirely damned, condemned.” Through the sacrament of baptism and the divine amelioration of the divine Holy Spirit, we are spiritually reborn so that we live anew for the first time. With it begin and are founded the other sacraments and it removes all the bad that is in one’s spirit and soul, and entirely gathers all that is good, delights, and enriches. Wherefore all sin or original sin or mortal sin, even though really frightening and unmentionable, disappears because of the purification and the strengthening of the sacrament of baptism. This water of life not only cleans one, removes the dirt and blackness
tlatlacolli, ca çan no yhui ipampa tipopolhuilo yn yxquich yn tlayhiyohuiliztli yn itzacuilo yezquia in tlatlacolli. Auh in teyolia in teanima ca motemiltia yectiliztica gracia in techçenqualtilia, yhuan tiypilhuā techmochihuilia in toTecuiyo Dios, ynic tequicnopilhuizque in yluicac paquiliztli. Auh ca ytech quiça ytech monelhuayotia, yn qualtihuani yectihuani virtudes, inic moçentlamachtia, moçēcuiltonohua in teyolia in teanima; auh yn tlaquaatequilli ca teoyotica itechtzinco moçalihuiltia yn itlacomahuiztzontecontzin yn yehuatzin toTecuiyo Iesu Christo, ynic ye itlactzin moçēnhtia, yn tomahuiznantzin Santa Yglesia, auh in toTecuiyo Iesu Xpo in huel nellī çemihcac nemilizameialtzintli in itechpatzinco huel meya in ixquich yn teotequaltiliztli gracia, auh çā no oncā quiça in huelitiliztli, inic chihualoz in ixquich in itech pohui

_of sin, but likewise because of it we are forgiven all the suffering that would have been the punishment of sin. And one’s spirit and soul is filled with goodness, grace that turns us completely good and it makes us children of our lord God so that we will attain happiness in heaven. And the purifying virtues emerge from and take root in it (baptism) so that one’s spirit and soul is enriched, delighted. And baptism spiritually pertains to our lord Jesus Christ’s beloved, honored head so that the body of our honored mother Holy Church is made; and our lord Jesus Christ is the true eternal fountain of life from which really gushes all divine amelioration, grace, and likewise from there emerges the power with which all that pertains to Christianity can be done.

yn Christianoyotl. Auh ca çan no ihui ytech quimotlalilia yn toyolia in tanima çētlamātli necuiltonolizmachiotl, in iuhatzintli, yn intech ca in inemactzitzinhuā toTecuiyo Iesu Christo;

And in the same way it places on our spirits and souls a mark of richness as in those who have been gifted by our lord Jesus Christ.
This mark never ever disappears; if the sacrament of baptism has already been received once, it cannot be received again.

Afterwards, the sacrament of baptism opens up for us the entryway to heaven (which had been fully closed because of sin) so that we can enter the place of supreme happiness, blessedness, glory, where we will be entirely happy and live forever where there is never affliction, suffering.

Very many things are done during the baptism that inaugurated the disciples and the prophets of our lord Jesus Christ; therefore we are to honor his marvelous works not only with words, but likewise with deeds which inspires us and moves our spirits to imprint it very strongly on our memories. Those that are to be baptized are detained at the entryway to the church because if they are not first freed from the labor and service of the
catecolotl yn diablo, auh yntlacamo achtotopa 
quimonepechetequililique, yn ytlacayotzin, 
yn toTecuyo Iesu Christo, ca ahmo huel 
ymicnipilti, ahmo ymmaçehualti, yn 
callaquizque, yn ichantzinco yn Dios. Auh 
oncan tocayotilo, ynic mochipa 
quilnamiquizque, ca mochiuhticate 
mahuiztique, yaoquizque, auh ca 
yquachpantiltātzinco yn toTecuyo Iesu Christo 
pouhticate, yhuan yyaopantzinco monemitia. 
Auh çan no yca ynyecnemiliznemachtizamatl 
teotlatoltica machtilo, yn quenami 
techmomachtitzinotehuac, yn toTecuyo Iesu 
Christo, ynic quimomachtizque yn ye 
miecxiuhtilia, yn tein quimocuitia, auh çan no 
yhui tein yntequih, yn innahuatil yez, auh auh 
yn inpāpa yn pipiltotontin yn âhuellatohua 
motlanāquililia yn tenapaloque inPadrinos. 
Auh motepotztoca yn tlateochihualitztlolli, yn 
quallatoltica, yhuan yecatlatlauhtiltzica 
mochihua, ynic tōtocoz, motlaçaz, yn 
tlacatecolotl yn oncan omoyeyanti yttic, yn 
ianima yn tlaaquatequilli. Yztatl ycamac 
motlalia, ynic momaquixtixt, yn ytechpa yn 

devil, and if they do not first bow down to 
the rulership of our lord Jesus Christ, they 
cannot attain entry into the home of God 
(church). And there they are given names 
so that always they will remember that they 
have been made persons of honor, warriors, 
and that they belong to the banner of our 
lord Jesus Christ and they take part in his 
war. Likewise through the book teaching 
proper living (scripture) they are taught 
how our lord Jesus Christ instructed us 
upon his departure so that those of 
advanced age (adults) will understand what 
to acknowledge and likewise what their 
duty and obligation will be; for small 
children that cannot speak, their godparents 
are responsible.

The words of blessing are followed through 
with good words and they are performed 
with prayer so that the devil will be chased 
away and evicted from where he resided 
inside the soul of the one baptized. Salt is 
placed in his mouth so that he can be freed 
from
tetlayelti, yn tlatlacolli, çan no, yhuan ynic quihueleticamiz yn yteotlamatilitzin, yn toTecuyo Dios. Auh yn inacaz, yhuan yn iyac mochichitlalilia, ynic oncan neix-

[f. 35v]
cuitloz ytechpa yn teotlamahuiçolli, yn oquimochihuilitzino in toTecuyo Iesu Christo, yn yhquac oquimopahtili, yn ixpopoyotl, yca yn chichiçoquitl, yn iixco oquimotlalili. auh yn toTecuyo Iesu Christo, oquimonahuatili, yn niman quipacazquia yn iyxtelolo yca yn atl Siloe, yn huel quinezcayotiaya yn nequaatequilizSacramento. Auh yca yn Santo Oleo, yhuan yca yn Santa Crisma, momachiotia, cohça, yn yuhqui momaiztlacohuani, ynic quilnamiquizcá Christiano, yhuan ynic quimicxitoquiliz yn toTecuyo Iesu Christo, yca yn iyecnemiliz, yhuā yca in iyectlachihualiz, ca huel yetzinco in Christo ohualquiz yn Christianotocaitl. Auh yn iztac tlapachiuhcayotl, no yhuan yn tlahuilli, yn ocotl tlatlatica, motlalilia imac yn tlaaquatequiliz, ca quinezcayotia in chipahuacanemiliztl in quipixtinemiz mochipa cemihcac, yhuan yn tlanextli, ynic mochipa

[f. 35r continued]

nauseous sin; likewise, so that he is able to savor the divine wisdom of our lord God. Saliva is placed on his ear and nose

[f. 35v]

so that people will take an example from the miracle our lord Jesus Christ performed when he cured the blind man with spit-clay he (Christ) placed on his eyes, and our lord Jesus Christ ordered him to immediately wash his eyes with water from Siloam\(^1\) which well signified the sacrament of baptism. With the holy oil and holy chrism it anoints him like a warrior so that he will remember that he is a Christian and follow in the footsteps of our lord Jesus Christ through his just life and good deeds, for the name “Christian” came right from Christ. And a white cloth and also the light, the burning candle that is placed in the hands of the baptismal candidate signifies the pure life he will go along maintaining forever, and the light which he will always

\(^1\) See John 9: 6-7.
motlanextilitinemiz; yhuā quallachihualitzica,
yecnemiliznezcayotica yn nican tlalticpac ypan
monemitiz.
Ynin ytlachihual, itlaailiz yn
nequaatequilizSacramento, ihuan yn
izquitlamātli, yn oticmelahuacatenquixtitiaque
ytechpatzinco yhuicpatzinco, ca huel yc
mochintin quimomachitizque yn quenin çenca
nepechte-

[f. 36r]
quiliztica, cenca neicnomachiliztica çeliloz
ynin Sacramento, auh çan no yc ypampa
tiquilnamiquizque, yn quexquich, ynnahuatil
yez, yn oncā omonetoltique; auh inic
quimiximachilizque, yn itetlaçotlalitzin, yhuā
yn ihuey teicnoittalitzin yn ycel teotl
Tlatohuani Dios, ynic ytechpa yn
ineltocatzin tipohui, auh çan no yhui, ynic
oncā yn nequaatequiliz ameyalco
ticenchipahualo, yn ahmo tocnopilti ahmo no
tonmacehualti, ca çan huel ypampa yn acan
tzōquizqui yn içenquizca huey qaültilitzin yn
toTecuyo Dios: yn ma mochipa cemihecac
yectenehualo, mahuiçotilo, huecapanolo,
tenyotilo. Ma yuh mochihua.

go about radiating; and he will live here on
earth with good deeds and signs of a just
life.
This is what the sacrament of baptism does
and effects, and through the many things
we truly declared regarding it, all should
really understand how with much

[f. 36r]
reverence, much humility this sacrament is
to be received; likewise concerning it
(baptism), we should remember how much
the obligation will be of those who there
vowed to recognize the love and great
mercy of the sole deity, the ruler God, so
that we belong to his faith; and likewise
how at the baptismal spring (baptistery) we
are entirely purified; not because we
deserve or merit it, but just because of the
all-encompassing, never-ending, perfect
great goodness of our lord God. May he be
forever praised, glorified, exalted, and
honored. May it be done (Amen).
Appendix F

Nahuatl Baptismal Discourse from Ignacio de Paredes’ 1759 Promptuario

[p. 242]
In iquac in Cenhuelitini Dios oquimoyocolili, yancuican oquimopiquili mochi inin Tlalticpactli, Nopilhuannè; ca no huel iquac in ipeuhyan in Cemanahuatl, oquimochihuili centetl huel tepâpaquiltican Xochitlâ, centetl huel tecuiltonocan Xochitepancalli, Paraiso; inic in oncan tipaccanemizquiâ, titocecemeltizquiâ; intlacamo otlâtlacoanî in Tlacaxinachtin, (lo...
Choaya (*regaba*) in cennonohuian

Cemanahuac: *Et fluvius egrediebatur de loco voluptatis ad irrigandum paradisum, qui inde dividitur in quattuor capita.* (V. 10.) Oc tlacempanahuia, N. P; in Teoyotica Xochitlā, in Xochitepancalli, in oquimochihuili in Totecuiyo Jesu-Christo; ca yehuatl, in Santa Iglesia. Ca nel in oncan Yehuâtzin oquimotlalili, iuhan otechmocahuilili Chicontetl Teoyotica Ameyalli, Chicontetl Teoytica Atoyatl; in mochipa ommemeyaticā, ompipicaticā, ommomolonticā; (*están siempre manando siete fuentes*) ic titopâpacā, ic titopâtiā in itechpa in totlātlacol, iuhan ic ixpantzinco in Dios titoqualtiā, titoyectiliā.

Auh yehuatl in teoyotica Cenyolilizameyalli; N. P; (*fuente de eterna vida*) ca yehuatl in Chicontetl Teoyotica Tepātiloni, Teyectililoni, Sacramentos; in otechmocahuililitehuac in Totemaquixticatzin Jesu-Christo; iuhan in itechcopa i axcan titlātozque.

Auh huel acachtopa ticmatizque, N. P: Ca zan huel Yehuâtzin, inomâtzinco in Totecuiyo Jesu-Christo, in įquac in nican Tlalticpac monemitiaya, oquimotecpanili, irrigated the whole world: *And the river was going out from the place of pleasure to water the garden which was then divided into four sources* (V. 10). Superlative, my children, was the divine place of flowers, the enclosed garden our lord Jesus Christ made. That was the Holy Church; for he established and left for us seven divine fountains, seven divine rivers that always are gushing, drizzling, springing forth (*they are always flowing seven fountains*) with which we wash ourselves and recover from our sins, and because of which we become good and pure before God. And that divine fountain of eternal life, my children. (*fountain of eternal life*); are the seven divine remedies, betterments, sacraments that our savior Jesus Christ left us upon dying; and now we will speak concerning them.

First of all you should understand, my children, that our lord Jesus Christ, when he was living here on this earth, himself and in person put in order,
oquimotlatlalili (*instituyó*) inin Chicontetl
Tepâtiloni, Teyectililoni, Sacramentos; auh in oncan Yehuâtzin oquimohuallaquili,
oquimotzaquili, ihuán in itech oquimopohuili
in ixquich in Ipetlacaltzin, in Itoptzin in 
Itlaâtiyohuilitzin, in Imiquitzin, ihuán in âmo pouhqui in Itlacnopilhuilitzin. (*encerró, y aplicó en los Sacramentos el thesoro infinito de sus merecimientos*) Ic titopalehuizque,
titlâtlacolpôpohuiloquze, ihuán ca za nelli, ca ic titomaquixtizque; in zazo itlâ cenca huei, 
cenca, temâmâauhti in totlâtlacol yez. Ipampa
cà za cenca huel huei in Ihuelitiliz, in 
Ichicahualiz, ihuán in Ihueliyo in Tepâtiloni
Sacramento. (*es muy grande el poder, y eficacia del Sacramento*) In zan niman
quipôpoloa âtle ipan quicuepa in izquitlamantli
tlâtlacolli, tlapiçhihualli, tlahuëlilocayotl,
ihuán tlacatecoloyotl. Auh ic ipampa, inin
Teotlamahuizolli Sacramento motenehua,
motocayotia Teoyotica Tepâtiloni, Teoyo-
[. . .]
Tica Teyectililoni. (*remedios, que nos sanan, y justifican, o nos hacen buenos*) Auh yehuatl
in quîtoznequi, N. P: ca in Tepâtiloni, in
[. . .]
signifies that as water washes us, we are bathed by it and cleansed from our filth, dirt, and grime (of our dirtiness), in the same way divine baptism washes us and purifies our spirits of the dirt, the grime, the putrefaction of our souls. And we should understand, my children, that baptism by no means performs that great miracle for us because of just the water itself, but it is because of and through (by means of) the sign appearing in it that our lord Jesus Christ assigns us and makes our own (assigns to us and makes our property) his precious revered boon with which we are cured, become good, and are saved. However, it is true,

my children, that in order to obtain this our help, this our forgiveness of sins, and this our salvation given to us we really need to receive the sacraments that bring remedy through good preparation. Because if we do not do this, my children, the sacrament will not avail us, it will not help us,
Sacramento; ca zan yè cenca ic titlătlacozque, ihuan in Toteouh, in Totlatocauh Dios tictoteopohuilizque.

Auh in axcan ma ye cuel ticmatican, N. P: *Tein yèhuatl, (que cosa ès) in Teoyotica Nequaatequilitztli?* In itechcopa i, yuh technanquilia in Nemachtiloni, Catecismo: *Ca yehuatl; in Centetl Teoyotica Tlacatilitztli; in techmaca in Teoyectilitztli, Gracia; ihuan in Imachiyo in Cristiano.* Auh yehuatl in quîtoznequi, N. P: Ca in iquac titoquatequià, ca oc ceppa yancuican teoyotica titlacatî.

Ipampa ca immanel yê ceppa nacayotica intechpa in Tonanhuan otitlacatque; tel ca nelli, N. P: ca zan tlâtlacolpan otitlacatque; auh immanel yolticatca in Totlalnacayo; tel in Toyolia, in T anima, ca niman ámo teoyotica yolticatca; ca zan yè teoyotica micticatca, ipampa in tlâtlacolpeuhcayotl; in totech oâcic, in zan niman imictic, in inxillantzinco in Tonanhuan otichihualoque, otitlacatililoque. (*contrabimos el pecado original, desde el primero instante de nuestra conception*) Auh ic ipampa otitlacatque in Dios in Tiiyaohuan; ihuan in Tiipilhuan, in Tiimalhuan, ihuan in but thereby we will greatly sin and offend our lord our ruler, God.

Now may we presently understand, my children, *what thing is divine baptism?* Regarding this, the teaching aid, Catechism, answers us thus, “It is a divine birth, it gives us divine purification, grace, and it is the sign of the Christian.” That means, my children, that when we are baptized, we are spiritually born again. Because even though we were already born once in body through our mothers, truly, my children, we were born in sin. Although our earthly bodies were living, our souls were not living at all in the divine sense, but were dying in the divine sense because of original sin which reached us right away inside the wombs of our mothers when we were engendered and conceived (*we contracted original sin from the first instant of our conception*). And because of this we were born enemies to God, and we are the children, prisoners, and
Tiitlacôhuan in Mictlan Tlacatecolotl. Auh ihui in, intla yuh otimiquinî, ca niman ámo otitomaquixitziquiâ; ihuan niman âic in Dios in Ilhuicac tictocentlamachtitzinozquiâ. Auh ca nelli, N. P: Ca in iquac titoquaetequiâ, ca zan niman mozcalia, oe ceppa teoyotica tlacati in Toyolia, in Tanima. Zan niman technopôpolhuilia in Dios in cemixquich in totlâtlaçol, ihuan in Imacpa timaquizâ in Mictlan Tlacatecolotl. Zan niman in Dios technomaquilia in Teoqualtiliztli, Gracia, ihuan in izquitlamantli qualthiuan, yectihuani; ic teoyotica yancuican tinemizque. Zan niman no Yehuâtzin in Dios techmopiltzintitzinoa, ihuan in cemîcac in Ilhuicac pâpaquiliztli Gloria techmaxcatilia. Ihuan zac no huel iquac in itech in Toyolia, in Tanima, quimotlalilia in Dios centetl teoyotica Machiyotl; (un character) ic timachiotilô, ic tinonquaquixtilô intechpa in ámo Tlaneltocanime, in ámo Christianotlacâ; ihuan yê in itetzinco tipohuî in Ineltococatzin in Totecuiyo Jesu-Christo: no yê in Tiipilhuan totoichihuà in Santa Iglesia; ihuan yê ic slaves of the devil in hell. And so, if we had died that way, we would not have been saved at all and would never at all enjoy God in heaven. Truly, my children, when we are baptized right away our souls come to life and are spiritually reborn; right away God forgives us every one of our sins and by his hands we are freed from the devil in hell; right away God gives us divine purification, divine approval, Grace, and everything to make good and purify with which we can spiritually live for the first time; right away God also adopts us as his children and makes eternal rejoicing in heaven, glory, ours; and also at that very time God places on our souls a spiritual mark (a mark) with which we are marked and set apart from unbelievers, non-Christians; and then we belong to the faith of our lord Jesus Christ, we also then become the children of the Holy Church; and then
we are helped by the various good works Christians perform; and also then we are able to receive every remedy, sacraments, that those unbaptized cannot receive. Therefore, we should understand, my children, that baptism is as if it were the door to the Holy Church, because of which we are counted as among his believers; and it is like the door to heaven, because no one can be saved if he is not baptized. Unless someone will have been born again of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God (John 3:5). And because of this, my children, really take care so that all your children will be baptized, and let no one die unbaptized, and so that you perform this baptism as I told and announced to you in the teaching aid, the catechism that everyone, whether male or female, adult or child, who is of the age of reason, can baptize someone when they are in great need since the child is about to die and is not able to be taken to the church and no
Teopixquí, in quimoquaatequiliz. Ma in oncan mochi xiquittacan, ihuan xiquicxitocacan;
(repassadlo allì) inic quimelahuacatequipanozque in Tequâatequilitztlí.

Auh in itechcopa in, ticmatizque, N. P: Ca in Nequâatequiliztlí ca zan niman quicempôpoloa ámo zan ixquich in Tlâtlacolpeuhcayotl; ihuan in oc izquitlamantli tlâtla-

[p. 247] colli, in zazo itlâ yez, in itech câ in moquaatequia; ca oc no ihuan ca zan niman quipôpoloa, quicaxahua in Itetzacuilltiloca in tlâtlacolli; in quihiyohuizquia, nozo in nican Tlalticpac, nozo in ompa Nechipahualoyan Purgatorio, ipampa in Itlâtlacol. Auh ihui in, intla Ce huei, ixtlamatqui Tlacatl, immanel cenca huel temâmauhti Tlâtlacoani oonyeni; tlaneltoquiliztica, ihuan neyoltequipacholiztica moquaatequia; ihuan zan niman momiquilia; ca za cenca huel nelli, huel melahuac: ca zan niman in Ilhuicac tlamelahuaz: ipampa ca in Inequaatequilitztica yê in Dios

[p. 246 continued] priest has been found to baptize him. Inspect and look into the matter there (in the catechism) (review it there) so that you can correctly perform the baptism.

Regarding this, you should understand, my children, that immediately it erases forever not just all the original sin, and every other sin

[p. 247] whatever it may be that attaches to him who is baptized; also immediately it erases and lessens the punishment of sin that he would endure either here on earth or in the place of purification, Purgatory, because of his sins.
And so, if an adult, a person with reason, although he had been a most frightful sinner, if through faith and repentance he is baptized and dies right away, it is really very true and correct that he will immediately go straight to heaven, because through his baptism God
oquimopōpolhuili âmo zan ixquich in mochi in
Iltatlacol; ca no ihuan oquimocaxahuilili in
Iltatzacuitloca, in quitzacuazquia, (que avía
de lastar) in quihiyohuizquia, ipampa in
Iltatlacol. Auh in yē yuh Aca Tlacatl, immanel
huei Tlātlacoani, omoquatequī; ca iquac on yē
âocmo omмонequi; inic moyolcuitiz, noze oc
centlamantli quichihuaz, inic tlāpōpolhuiloz; ca
zan yē inic in Dios quimotequipanilhuiz; ihuan
inic quineltiliz, in tlein ixpantzinzco in Dios ic
omonētolti, ihuan oquicemîtô: auh ca yehuatl
in: Ca quicentelchihuaya in cemixquich in
tlαtlacolli, in Tlacatecolotl, ihuan in
izquítlamantli tlacatecoloyotl; (todas las cosas
Diabolicas) ihuan no oquicemîtô; ca zan huel
iceltzin in Ce Nelli Teotl Dios
quimotlayecuitiz, quimotlazotitiz, ihuan
quimotlacamachiltiz. Ma yehuatl in Tonētol,
in Tonequâatequilizpan otičchihue, mochipa
tictolnamictican N. P; ihuan ma in toyollo itic
ticnemitican; inic âic tiqūtlacoquæ, âic
ticpanahuizque. Ma tiquitzmotlalican, N. P: ca
in Tonequâatequilizpan ca yē
oetchmomachiotili in Dios; yē in itech in
Toyolia, in Tanima oquimîcuilhui,

has forgiven him not only all his sins, but also
he has relieved him of his punishment he
would have to pay (that he had to pay) and
endure because of his sins. And any person,
although a great sinner, that was baptized; at
that time it is no longer necessary for him to
commis nor do anything else to be forgiven,
but only that he serve God and carry out what
before God he promised and swore. Which is
that he completely rejected all sin, the devil,
and all devilish things (all devilish things),
and also he swore that he would serve, love,
and obey the really only one true deity, God.
May we always remember our promise we
made in our baptism, my children, and may
we maintain it within our hearts so that we
will never spoil or transgress against it. May
we consider, my children, that God marked us
in our baptism, he wrote on our souls,
oquimotlalili in Imachiyotzin; ic zan huel in itetzinco tipohuit; ca zan huel in Tiiaxcatzin, in Tiitlatquitzin. (pertenecemos, y somos solamente de Dios) Auh inin in Imachiyotzin in Dios, (el character) in totech cã, ticmatizque, N. P: ca aic cahuiz, âic polihuihui; ca zan cem-

manca in itech in Toyolia, in Tanima yez. Auh ic ipampa, ca niman âic tihueliti opa tiquaatequiloquez; âic oppa ticcelizque inin Nequaatequilizsacramento; ca zan huel ceppa titoquaquiloquez; ca zan huel ceppa teoyotica titlacatizque; in quenamî zan huel ceppa Nacayotica in nican Tlalticpac otitlacatque. (una vez hemos de nacer espiritualmente, como una vez nacimos segun la carne, al Mundo) Auh ic ipampa, N. P: ca za cenca huel huei, huel tetzauhtlātlacollî quichihuaz, in aquin oppa, nozo yeixpa [sic] moquaatequilo.

Zan yê ommocahua, N. P; (solo nos falta) in titlátozque intechpa in Teoyotica Tetahuan, ihuan in Tenanhuán; ca Yehuantin, in Padrinosme, in Madrinasme; in quinapaloâ, in quihuicâ Teopan in Piltzintli; inic in ipampa placed on them his mark, because of which really we belong to him and really we are his property (we pertain to and are only of God). And this mark of God (character) on us, we should understand, my children, that it never will leave or disappear, but will be forever placed on our souls. And because of this, never ever can we be baptized twice, never twice can we receive this sacrament of baptism; but really only once can we be baptized, really only once can we be spiritually born, as really only once we were born in the flesh on this earth (we are to be born spiritually one time, as one time we were born according to the flesh, to the world).

Thus, my children, one who is baptized twice or three times will commit a really monstrous sin.

It only remains (we only lack), my children, for us to speak about spiritual fathers and mothers, who are the godfathers and godmothers who carry the child in their arms to the church in order to
tlátózque, ipampa quimonanquilizque in Teopixqui, in iquac Yehuatzin quimotlátlanilia in Piltzintli, in itechpa in Nequaatequiliztlì, in yê cuel quimomaquiliz. Auh in itechcopa i, ticmatizque, N. P: Ca Inhueinahuatl in Teoyotica Tetahuan, in Padrinosme, ihuin in Madrinasme; inic quimmachtizque in Teotlátotlli, Teoyotica quimizcalizque, (doctrinar) ihuin quinyecnemitizque in Teoyotica Impilhuan, in Intlaquaatequilhuan, in Intlanâpalôlhuan. (à los que bautizaron, ó tuvieron en el Bautismo) Ca nozo nel, ca yehuatl in Teoyotica tequitl oquimomamaltique; in iquac in Inequaatequilizpan in Piltzintli, oquitzitzquique, oquinapâloque, ihuin ixpantzinco in Santa Iglesia oquimopiltzintique. (lo prohijaron) Tel ca nellî: ca intla in huel Itahuan in Piltzintli quichihuâ, quineltiliâ in yehuatl in Teoyotica tequitl; ca in iquac on ca yê âocmo Innahuatl in Teoyotica Itahuan; inic quichihuazque, quitequipanozque in. No yuhqui huel totech ommonequi, in ticmatizque, N. P: ca in aquin Teoyotica in Itâtzin, nozo in Inantzin omochiuh speak for it and answer the priest for the child when he questions the child concerning the baptism he is about to administer. And concerning this we should know, my children, that is the great obligation of spiritual fathers, godfathers and godmothers, that they know the holy words, spiritually raise (indoctrinate) and cause to live well their spiritual children, those whom they have baptized, those whom they have adopted (to those whom they baptized or had in baptism). How can it be otherwise, for they assumed the spiritual duty when at the baptism of the child they took it and carried it in their arms and before the Holy Church adopted it (adopted it). However, it is true that if the actual parents of the child do and carry out that spiritual duty, then it is no longer the obligation of the spiritual fathers to do and perform this. Likewise, we really need to know, my children, that the one who became the spiritual father or mother
of a child truly became spiritually related to
that child and his father and mother (the
godfather became related to the godchild, and
his father

and mother); he (the godfather) became their
relative; thus he cannot by any means marry
the person he baptized, his spiritual child,
neither (neither) can he (the godparent) marry
its parents; for they are his ritual co-parents.
But he can marry the others, whether they be
older brothers or younger siblings of his
spiritual child, the one he baptized (but the
godparents surely can marry the siblings of
their godchild).

Here, my children, is everything that
pertains to this very marvelous remedy, the
sacrament of baptism. Now hear its power,
by which we can be saved and enter into
heaven (P. Perez History of the Provenance
of Mexico). In some altepetl here in the
kingdom of Mexico two
religious of the Company of Jesus arrived and asked the commoners (indigenous people) who were inhabitants of the altepetl if there was any sick person that they could help. The altepetl residents answered them, “There is no one any longer (there isn’t a single sick person any longer), because there was one sick person and he died yesterday.” The religious were concerned, and went to enter the sick person’s home, and they saw that he had not yet died but was in the last extremity.

The religious encouraged the sick person a bit and then taught him all that he really needed to be saved. Afterwards they asked the sick person if he desired to be baptized and if he rejected all his sins. Immediately the sick person answered them, “Yes, I desire to be baptized and I reject all sin, even though I believe I have never sinned. After the poor sick indigenous person was baptized he told a religious, “You should know, my father, that
I began to be sick two

perfectly beautiful and radiant people entered

where I was. I don’t know where they took

me, but I beheld a palace, a place to give

people great happiness, where many people

were seated. And when I tried to sit down in

a particular one of the seats that was empty,

(in an empty seat) the people restrained me

and told me, “You cannot yet sit down here

until you are baptized. Therefore hurry, go to

your home, for two religious will arrive there

who will baptize you so that you can

immediately return here to heaven.” When

the poor commoner had said this, he died

immediately. Here, my children, is how we

really need baptism in order to attain divine

purification, grace, and rejoicing in heaven,

glory. O Jesus, may it be done (amen).
Appendix G

Maya Baptismal Discourse from Juan Coronel’s 1620 *Discursos Predicables*

**Bautismo.**

Laitac v yaxchun caput čihillo lai v sacramentoil licil v ppobol v pixan paal yetel licil v čatçabal v čipil tumenel Dios loe.

¶ A uohel macxi ychilil keban licil caçihil taclacal tumenel v keban ca yax yumob, lay v chunlo. V abin cimic paal ti manan haa tupole maitac bikin yilic, yetel v ciciotic Dios. Bai yalci c ahlohil ti Nicodemuse, hach toh lic ualictech y. mac ma caput čiho[n] ti haa. y. ti Spiritus sanctoe, ma vchuc yocol ti yahaulil Dios cu than.

**Baptism**

The first sacrament is baptism (twice born) by which the child’s soul is washed and its sin is forgiven by God then.

¶ Do you know a man that is within wickedness? Now, baptism is necessary for all of you because of the wickedness of our first fathers, thus is the reason. The child that dies without baptism will never see nor please God. So said our Redeemer to Nicodemus a truth he says to you, “Whoever is not baptized with water and the Holy Spirit cannot enter the kingdom of God.” Thus he spoke.
At the baptism, first a man is appointed to hold the child at the basin and alone answer the padre’s words. However, the godfather answers on his (the child’s) behalf in which he will say they want the baptism and to enter into Christianity, “I desire to eternally hate the devil and his dangerous path.” Then he answers the remaining words asked by that padre.

This is why the child is cradled by the godfather, who really knows the cradled child. Likewise, its father and its mother too. Not just anyone for the child. What, a common man is granted the privilege of godfather? No, a man with much discernment and who is a true Christian will be granted the privilege.
Appendix H

Nahuatl Emergency Baptismal Discourse from Fray Alonso De Molina’s

1569 *Confesionario Mayor*

[21 verso]

¶ Cuix aca oticquatequi yn ye miquiznequipiltzītli? Acaçomo vel tictenquixti yn
teotlatolli yc tequatequilo: cuix ticmati? Cuixyzquitlamantli ticchiuh ynic mitzmonauatilia
sctā yglesia, in itechpa baptismo: cuix
ticchiuh yn izātlamantli ye yznimitztenehuiliz.

¶ Nicā motenehua, yn quenin tequatequizque
yn quimocuitlahuia, tequatequiliztlī, in iquac
aca ye miāqneq.

[21 verso]

Have you baptized some child that was about
to die? Or perhaps you did not declare well the
divine words with which people are baptized.
Do you know them? Did you do all things that
the holy church commands you concerning
baptism? Did you do all things I am about to
tell you here?

Here is given in what manner they will baptize,
those who are in charge of baptism will baptize
when someone is about to die.
I yehuātin quinquateqá pipyltzitzinti y ye
miquiznequi: ynic vel quichiuazque yn
intéquh yuan ynic amo quitlacoquelle yn
īnauatil, ynic ñmnonahuatilia tonantzín sancta
yglesia: macuillamantli yn monequi
quilnamiquizque, yuan yn quichiuzque.

¶ Ynic cētlamātli, y çaço ac teuatl yn
titequatequiznequi, in aço to qxhtli, in anoço
ticiuatl: moneq tictatiz, ca çā yehuatl
monauatil tictateqz y ye momiquilizneq
piltzītli, yn anoço aca ye yxtlamatí. Auh yn
chicauac, yn huel huicoz yxpan sacerdote, ca
amo vel ticatequiz: auh yntla ticatequiz
yn chicauatica, yc cenca titlatlacoq pcō
mortal ypā tiuetziz, ypāpa ca çan yehuantin
yn sacerdotesme innauatil, intequiuy ynic
ticatequizque

It is necessary that those who baptize children
who are about to die, in order to do their duty
and not go against the charge that our mother
the holy church gives them, should remember
and do five things.

First, whoever you are that is about to baptize
someone, whether you are a man or a woman,
you must understand that your only obligation
is to baptize a child or someone in the age of
reason who is about to die. You cannot
baptize one who is strong and can be taken
before a priest. If you baptize a strong
person, thereby you will sin greatly, you will
incur in mortal sin, because it is the charge
and duty of priests alone to baptize people
and
ynic quitemacazque sacramēto ym motenehua
baptismo, yuan in oc cequi sacramentos: auh
yn amo sacerdotesme, çāyyo ynnahuatil yn
quinquatequizque i ye momiquiliznequi
pipiltzitzinti, yn anoço ye yxtlamati, yn aoc
huel vicozque yn imixipan [sic]
sacerdotesme, yn ipampa ca vecca [sic] in
teopan, auh yntla oc nen ompa quihuicazque,
ca otlica momiquilitihui.

¶ Ynic vntlamantli, monauatil, çan atl ynic
titequatquiz [sic], amo tlateochiualli, amo no
monequi ticteochiuaz: auh in manel onca
tlateochiualli, yn oquimoteochiuili Sacerdote
ym moteneua agua sanctificada yca yn
chrisma, amo no monahuatil y yehuatl yc
titequatequiz, ca yc cenca titlatlazco yntla
yehuatl yc xitequatequi yhica ca çan yceltin y
sacerdotesme yn nemac ynic tlateochialatica
tequatequizque. Auh yntla cenca ye
momiquiliznequi piltzintli, yntlacatle onca
çan atl, yntla ye onca tlateochialatl, yn
tiquilhuia agua bendita, in chichicohometica
quiteochiuia sacerdote vel

[22 verso]
administer the sacrament called baptism and
the other sacraments. And those who are not
priests are charged only with baptizing children
or those in the age of reason who are about to
die, who can no longer be taken before priests
because the church is distant, and if they try to
take them there, they will die on the way.

Second, your obligation is that you will baptize
with plain water not blessed, nor is it necessary
for you to bless it. And although there is
blessed water, that a priest has blessed, called
sanctified water, [blessed] with chrism, nor is it
your charge to baptize someone with it because
you will sin greatly if you baptize someone
with; because it is for priests alone to baptize
someone with blessed water. And if the child
is about to die immediately and no plain water
is there, if there is consecrated water that we
call blessed water, that the priest blesses once a
week,

¶ Ynic etlamantli, monahuatil yn ticquatequiz piltzītlī, yehuatl yn oc yoli, yn ayamo quiça yaniman, ym manel ça moçaçamauhtica: amo yehuatl ticquatequiz yn o huel mic, yn o huel quiz yaniman, yn aocmo molinia, ca yc titlatlacoz. Auh yntlacamo ticmatiz yn cuix yoltica, yn cuix noç huel mic ī piltzītlī: moneq ça ticqua-

you can baptize with it. And if there is no blessed water, if there is sanctified water, then that is your obligation to take it quickly and baptize the one who is about to die. You are to say, “*Ego te baptizo,*” etc., {as is explained in the fifth part of your obligation that will be given later}. And if non-blessed water can be found quickly, only with it will you baptize someone, because it is not your obligation to take or touch the sanctified water blessed with chrism. If there is other water not blessed with chrism, even though it should be merely lime water, even though it should not be very clean, the child can be baptized with it.

Third, your obligation is to baptize a child who is still alive, whose soul has not yet departed, even though he is breathing his last breath. You are not to baptize someone who has really died, whose soul has really departed, who no longer moves, for in that you will sin. And if you do not know whether the child is alive or has really died, it is necessary that you baptize him.
And in order to baptize him, you are to say, “If you have died, I do not baptize you, but if you are alive, Ego te baptizo,” etc. And if he is not fully born, if a living child’s hand or foot has come out and appeared, then you are quickly to pour water on his hand or his foot and you will say, “Ego te baptizo in noē patris e filij e spūs sancti. Amen.” And if only his head has appeared, you are to baptize that; you are to cover with a cloak the body of a woman who is bearing a child and giving birth. And if afterwards the child is fully born, whose foot or hand you baptized for him, they are quickly to take him before a priest so that he can baptize him as our mother the holy church commands. And if you baptized his head, it is no longer necessary for him to be baptized again when he has been fully born. And this matter the priest will consider, whether the one who baptized the child pronounced the baptismal words properly, etc. Because if he pronounced them well, as is required, the priest will not baptize him again at all.
quatequiz in sacerdote, auh intlacamo
oquitenquixti, monequi niman
quimoquatequilibiz yn yehuatzin sacerdote.

¶ Ynic nahuatlamantli, yniqc ye
ticquatequilibnequi monauatil yn achtopa
moyollo ytic tiquitoz. Yn axcan,
icchiusazequi yn quimonequiltia tonantzin
sancta yglesia, yn iuh nechmonauatilia. Auh
yn o yuh tiquito yn, niman ticquatequiz yn
piltzintli, yn ayamo vellacati in anoço o
huellacat.

¶ Ynic macuillamantli, motech monequi,
cenca vel ticmatiz yn teotlatolli yc
tequatequilo, ynic amo tiquitlacoaz baptismo.
Yehica ca yntla tiquitlacoaz tequatequiliz
tlatolli, cenca yc titlatlacoaz: yuan amo nelli
baptismo yn tictemacaz, amo yc momaquixtiz
ym piltzintli, çan nen yn ticquatequiz.
Ypampa yn, cenca mohueynahuatil yn huel
ticmomachtiz, yhuan cenca huel tichenquixtiz
yn tequatequilibtlatolli, ynic motequatequiliza
sancta yglesia. Latinlatalolli ynic
titequatequiz, anoço nahuatlatolli: tiquitoz.
_Ego te baptize, in nomine patris_

But if he did not pronounce them [right], it is
necessary for the priest to baptize him right
away.

Fourth, when you are about to baptize him it is
your charge that first you will say to yourself,
“What I am about to do now, our mother the
holy church wants and commands me.” And
when you have said this, immediately you are
to baptize the child that is not yet able to be
born, or has been born already.

Fifth, it is necessary for you to know very well
the holy words with which people are baptized
so that you will not spoil the baptism. Because
if you do the baptismal words wrong, you will
sin greatly thereby and you will not provide a
true baptism; the child will not be saved
thereby, and you will baptize him in vain.
Because of this you have a very great
obligation to learn well and state very well the
baptismal words with which the holy church
baptizes people. You are to baptize in Latin or
Nahuatl. You are to say, “_Ego te baptize, in
nomine patris_”
Nimitzquatequia yca yn itocatzin tetatzin, yhuan tepiltzin, yhuan spiritu sancto. Amen.

et filii et spiritus sancti. Amen.” And if you baptize in Nahuatl, you are to say, “I baptize you in the name of the father, and the child, and Holy Spirit. Amen.” And then you are to begin to pour water on the head of the child, and you are to stop when you finished the holy words; no longer are you to pour the water. You are only to make the holy words accompany your pouring water on the head of the child or his hand or foot. And before you begin to baptize the child, first, you will name him Pedro or Maria, etc. You are to say, “Pedro or Maria, Ego te baptize, in nomine patris, et filii, et spiritus sancti. Amen.” And if you want to baptize in Nahuatl, you are to say, “Juan or Francisca, I baptize you in the name of the father, and the child, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.” And if you are about to baptize and cannot tell whether it is a male or female, you are not to call it anything, but say to yourself, “Now I want to baptize whatever
ye tlacatiznequi piltzintli, yn iuh
nechmonahuatilia tonantzin sancta yglesia.
Auh yntlacamo nimā miquiz yn oticquatequi,
monequi quihuicazque yn teopan, ynic
yehuatl sacerdote quitlaliliz olio yuan
chrisma. etc.

¶ Auh yn tehuatl titequatequia, yntla
yzquitlamantli tichiuaaz yn nican omoteneuh:
cenca yc títlacnopilhuiz yn ixpantzinco
totecuiyo, tiquittaz yn cenca vey motlaxtlāuil
yn ompa ylhucatl itic: yn ipampa ca
oticpalehui ym mouampo, ynic omomaquixti,
inic mopampa otlacnopilhui oquittac yn
igracia totecuiyo dios. Auh yntlacamo
titequateq̃z, yn iuh nican oticaquitiloc, yuā
yntla çan tictlatziuizcauaz yn monahuatil, yc
cenca timohuitiliz, yhuan yc
mitzmotlatzauintiliz yn ipalnemohuani:
yehica ca amo ticpalehui, amo tictlaocoli
yhuel tictlaocolizquia ticpalehuizquia intla
xicnequini.

child is about to be born as our mother the holy
church commands me. And if the one you
baptized does not die right away, it is necessary
they take it to the church so that the priest will
put oil and chrism on it, etc.

And you who baptizes, if you do all these
things mentioned here, thereby you will
become very deserving before our lord; you
will see a very great reward in heaven because
you helped your fellow man so that he was
saved and because of you he obtained, he saw
our lord God’s grace. And if you should not
baptize as you were told here, and if you
should forsake your obligation because of
laziness, you will place yourself in great
danger, and because of this the giver of life
will punish you because you did not help, you
did not show mercy on him whom you could
have mercy on, you could have helped if you
had wanted to
Appendix I

Ignacio de Paredes’ Nahuatl Instructions on Emergency Baptisms found in his 1758 Translation of Ripalda’s *Doctrina Christiana*

[p. 164]

NICAN MOTENEHUA,
in quenamî tequaatequiloz; in ïquac huel
tech ommonequi.

Cenca huel totech ommonequi, ihuan ma ic
compachiuhtie in Toyollo: Ca in ïquac aca
Piltzintli, in ayamo yuh omoquizôhuititicá,
ca huel icuha miquiz; auh niman ayac
monextia in Teopixqui, inic
quimoquaatequiliz; ca nelli: ca iquacon in
cemixquich Tlacatl; in zazo aquin yez; ma
Caxtiltecatl, ma Macehualli; ma Oquichtli,
ma Cihuatl; ma huei Tlacatl, ma Piltontli,
intltyê ixlamatqui: ca nozo mochi Tlacatl
huelti quiquaatequiz inon Piltzintli; inic
momaquixtiz. Auh zan ye no ihui,
intlacayac oc ce Tlacatl monextia, in

[p. 164]

Here is given
how people will be baptized when
they are in great need.

We very greatly need and would be greatly satisfied by (it). When some child who has not yet been saved is in extremity and will die very soon, and no priest appears to baptize it, in truth at that time any person at all, whoever it might be, whether Spaniard or indigenous person, male or female, adult or child, if it has reached the age of reason, so anyone can baptize that child so that it will be saved. And likewise if no other person is there
to baptize it, it will be even the father or mother of the child, they can baptize it, for so God advises us. If we do not do this when someone really needs it, we will greatly offend God.

It is like this: if the child is in the last extremity, let whoever it should be (as long as they have the use of reason) baptize it right away. But first, you Christian, open your eyes or prick up your ears so that you will see or hear how you are to correctly perform the baptism.

First of all, you will get in the right frame of mind to do that which our mother Holy Church wants concerning baptism which is for the child to become a Christian and belong to the faith of our lord Jesus Christ so that he will be saved. Here is what you are to say even if just to yourself before you baptize someone.
Noteotziné, nictlalia in Noyollo; inic nictequipanoz, in tlein in Santa Iglesia in Tequaatequilitztica quimonequiltia. Nicnequi, ma inin motlachihualzin, Christiano mochihua; inic momaquixtiz, ihuan cemîcac mitzmocuiltonôtzinoz.

Niman yê toconanaz in zazo itla Atl; immanel âmo Tlateochihualli yez; ihuan pacca, yocoxca tectecatiz in ipan in Itzontecontzin in Piltzintli. Auh in ñquac yê tipehuaz ticquaatequia; ca zac no huel ñquac tictenquixtitiaz in Teotlâtolli, in Tequaatequiliz-

[p. 166]

Tlatolli. Ca nel nozo in Teotlâtolli huel ie monepanôtziax, mocetíliitiax, ihuan quihuicaltíitiax in Tequaatequilitzli; auh niman ámo nônonquâ quizáz in cecentlamantli in.

Auh iz ca in Teotlâtolli, in tictenquixtitiaz, in ñquac in yê tipehua titequaatequia. Intla Oquichtli, tictocatlaliz, Joseph, nozo Juan: anozo oc centetl Oquichtocaítl; intla cihuatl, tictocayotiz, Maria, nozo Anna, ánozo oc centetl in Cihuatoctaítl. Auh intlacamo ticmati; cuix Oquichtontli, nozo Cihuatonztli; immanel

[p. 166 continued]

My God, I determine to perform that which the Holy Church wants concerning baptism. I desire that this your creature become a Christian so that he will be saved and eternally make you happy.

Then you will go to get some water of any kind, even if it is not holy water, and gladly, calmly pour it on the head of the child. And when you begin to baptize him, also at that same time you will pronounce the holy baptismal words, because the holy words will greatly join, unite, and guide, and each little thing will not come out separately. Here are the holy words you are to pronounce when you begin to baptize someone. If a male, you are to name him Joseph or Juan or another male name; if a female, you are to name her Maria or Anna or another female name. But if you do not know whether it is a little boy or girl, then
Joseph, nozo Maria, Yo te Bautizo
en el Nombre del Padre, y del Hijo,
y del Espiritu-Santo. Amèn.

Auh ca huel ticmocuitlahuiz; inic zan yehuatl tlátolli in Caxtillancopa; auh niman âmo Mexîcacopa tictenehuaz. Amo no âzitla occe tlátolli, nozo oc centlamantli oncan tìcnèneloz, tìcnènepanoz; inic âmo tiquîtlacoz in Tequaatequiliztli. Ca nel, ca zan ica in, ca yê qualli, yê ixquich; inic moquaatequiz in Piltzintli; in quenamî Ce Teopixqui oquimoquaatequiliani.

Auh ipampa ca huel mochihuaz; ca

you are to not to name it anything because the name is not entirely necessary for the baptism to turn out good. Afterwards, pour the water on the child which you will cause to be accompanied by these holy words:

Joseph, or Maria, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

And you should take great care that this statement is in the manner of Castile (Spanish hereafter); you are definitely not say it in the manner of Mexico (Nahuatl hereafter), nor make up another word or mix in anything else in order to not spoil the baptism. With just this much it is fine, that is all to baptize the child as a priest would have baptized it.

But because it can happen that no one is found who will know how to baptize in Spanish but only in Nahuatl, at that time let him baptize in Nahuatl so that it is possible for him to help his fellow man.

However, it is certain that first he should get
Josephê, nozo Mariaê, Nehuatl

Auh intla in Piltzintli âhuel quizaz, âhuellecatiz; ca zan huel in Imatzin, nozo in Icxitzin quinextiz; ca iquac on ma acachtopa motlapachô in Mixiuhqui; auh zatepan oc ye qualli yez; in ma in Cihuatl Temixihuitiani, anoze oc ce Cihuatl quiquaatequi in Piltzintli in ipan in Imatzin, anozo Icxitzin; intla nel in yehuatl in Cihuatl quimati, in quenami mochihua in Tequaatequiliztli; auh intlacamo quimati; ma in zazo acâ occe Tlamatini Tlacatl quimoquaquequili. Auh zan no yuh achtopa quitaliciz in Iyollo; inic tequaatequiz, intla on hueliti; ihuan in quenamî onhueliti. Auh zatepan quitecatiáz in Atl ipan in Imatzin, nozo in Icxitzin in Piltzintli; ihuan ic

in the right frame of mind so that he can baptize if he can and to the extent that he can. Here are the holy words to baptize in Nahuatl and he should add nothing else at all to it:

Joseph or Maria, I
baptize you in the name of the
Father, and the Son, and the
Holy Spirit, Amen.

And if the child cannot come out, he only really shows his hand or his foot, then at that time may the birthing woman be covered. And afterwards it will be good if a midwife or another woman baptizes the child on his hand or his foot; if the woman knows how baptism is done, and if she does not know it, let whatever other knowledgeable person baptize him. And in the same way, first she should set her heart in order so that she can baptize if she can and to the extent she can. And afterwards she will pour the water on the child’s hand or foot and
accompany it with the holy words as already mentioned here.

If it is not known whether the child is alive or has already died, then at that time first get in the right frame of mind so that you can baptize him/her if the child is alive. But on the contrary (nê is the vernacular, to say: to the contrary) but on the contrary, you really must not baptize the child if he is already dead. And not until afterwards should you pour water on him and pronounce the baptismal words in the manner already referred to.

That is all that is needed for the baptism be done correctly. And truly if the child dies his parents should take him to the church and advise the priest how they baptized him so that likewise the child will be buried at the church. And if the child does not die, likewise they should take him to the church and they should make it known to the priest how he was baptized so that he can consider what to do and so that
quimotzonquixtiliz in oc izquitlamantli, in itech ompohui in Tequaatequiliztli.
Auh in itechcopa i cenca huel nicnotlatlauhtilia in cemixquich in Christianotlacatl; in ipaltzinco in Iteoezotzin in Totecuiyo

Jesu-Christo, in ma in Cecentlacatl quimocuitlahui; in quimomachtiz, ihuau itencopa quimatiz inin Tequaatequiliztli.

he can finish everything that belongs to the baptism.
And concerning this, I very greatly implore all the Christian people for the sake of the divine blood of our lord

Jesus Christ, let each person take care to learn and know by heart this baptism. And especially physicians, the healers, and the midwives should know it so that they can correctly perform (the baptism) when it is necessary. For that reason it is written here about how this baptism it to be correctly performed, so that everyone will know and be inspired to do it, and in case of necessity will carry it out. Because in that way we can greatly help children who are afflicted and we will greatly please our God and our precious savior Jesus Christ.
Appendix J

The Conversion of Paul (c. 1550)

[p. 1]

Then, along with the others Paul’s horse was running; our lord God brought about that his horse was struck by lightning. And then Paul’s body quickly crumbled greatly and all turned to dust. His demons just gathered it up and put it in a cloak. And then Paul went straight to heaven. And when our lord God saw Paul he said to him, “Why did you kill Sebastian for he builds temples for me and sweeps on the road by which they enter my home in heaven? I am merciful to my children, the poor or humble who are afflicted, who endure hardships and earn their way with effort. I am not merciful to those who have possessions, belongings, and many houses but to those without houses on earth who greatly suffer.

[p. 1]

In axcan pauli huel xitlachiye yn oncan:

motlalliquihui : yn icnotlaca : ca niepixtica :
yn ipapaquilliz : ymnetlamachtilliz : yn
innecuiltonalliz yn aquíque : yn choca yn
tlaocoya : yn elçiçihui : y mochipa
nechtemotinemi : yn çêncà nentlamatinemì :
yn momanepeìnemì : y motláquaquetza
câ yehuatin : yncal yeç in : yn iz mani : callì :
yn teocuitlacalli yehuâtin : ypan:
motlalliquihui : yn teocuitlaycpalli Cayac :
onca motlallìya yn imicpal : Auh yn axca :
ca otitlamahuïçoco paul : cuix huel
ticpohuan : yn ixquich onoc : yn
cepaquillitzli : y netlamachtillitzli : Auh yn
axcan : Ca otitlámahuíço œc ye xitlachiye :
yn miiclà : ca cenca miec yn tletl : ceca :
popoca yhuan y cenca yac yn poctli
mitzpixtiazque : y nopillohuan : yn
angellome : y nimañ ye

Now, Paul, really look where the humble
come to settle. I am caring for the
happiness, prosperity, riches of those who
cry, are sad, sigh, who always go about
seeking me, languishing greatly, joining
their hands, who kneel down. This heaven
will be the house of them only; here are their
houses, houses of gold; they will come to sit
on golden seats, for no one else sits on their
seats. And now that you have beheld it,
Paul, can you count all that is here, the
eternal happiness and prosperity? And now
that you have seen it, look also at hell, for
there is much fire and smoke there, and the
smoke reeks badly. My children the angels
will go along taking care of you. Then the
The angels told Paul, “Be afraid, look upon the evil demons with fear! Serve them no longer, no longer make offerings to them, get rid of those whom you served and venerated as gods, before whom you bled yourself and also before whom you were cutting your ears, the evil demons.” And when he had regained consciousness, three times he said, “Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.” Then all those who were there, who had been keeping his body said, “Is the ruler (Paul) a bad omen for us? And how is it that his body was collected and we gathered it up in bits?” But Paul told them, “Don’t take me for something monstrous, my lords, let me loose.
As to what I saw and beheld, now I will speak to you and tell you what I beheld; for we sinned greatly when we killed God's beloved, such a thing should not have been done.  Go and bring back Sebastian’s body; because of this I had died.  But now our lord God still favors me.”  Then, they went to get Sebastian from where they had repeatedly shot arrows at him.  And when they went and got Sebastian, from very far away there could be seen his light that our lord God in heaven placed upon him (Sebastian).  Then they loosened his body, it was still as though he had not died; he was still very sound; the reason he was very sound was that the angels of God helped him,
they brought him to Paul’s home. Then he 
(Paul) said, “O my honored noble, greetings; 
I went to heaven and saw our lord God, and 
I also went to see things in hell. It was on 
your behalf that I went to behold things. 
And now, let the evil devils that are in my 
home be burned.” This is what Paul said. 
They then removed those they had taken to 
be gods and cast them down in the patio and 
there they burned and scorched them. And 
when they had burned, Paul told Sebastian,
“O my honored noble Sebastian, since the devils have been burned, for your sake baptize me.” Then, he (Sebastian) told him, “It is not I who is to baptize you; a person will baptize you who lives very far away; let them go call him; his name is Peter.” When he had come, Paul related to him how it was when he went to see heaven and hell. Then Peter baptized Paul and he (Peter) changed his name; he baptized and called him Paul. After he had baptized him, he taught him reading and writing. It did not take a whole day to teach him, but just a short time.
I nepantla motlallico : yn tonatiuh : ye cuele
tlacuilloc : yehuatl: mochi quicuillo yn
ixquich : yn teochihuialoni yn ixquich : y
neyxcuitilli : yn ixquich : ynic
timauhcanemizque : yn tpe titlaca : yn
timacehualtin : Auh yhuä : cenca :
tictlatlauhtizque : yn tixquichtin : yn totatzin
: yn Sa. Pablo yehyca : y cenca
tictlatlauhtizque : yn çatepan : tlaneltocac :
Auh yn tehuatin ca ça no tepan : yn
otitlaneltocaque : yn otiquítlatique : yn
otiquiteotiaya : yn tlahuelliloque : yn
tlatlacecello : camo çan toceltin Camo çaN
iyoque : yn iuhqui : oticchiuque ca no
yuhqui yn quichiuh : yn totatzin : yn Sa
pabla [sic] : yehyca : yn cencan :
tictlatlauhtizque : In ilhuitzin yn ñapan

By midday, he could already write; he wrote
everything having to do with prayer and
holy examples, and everything about how
we people of the earth, we humans, are to
live respectfully. And in addition, we all
will earnestly pray to our father Saint Paul.
The reason that we will earnestly pray to
him is that he believed afterward, and with
us too it was after we believed that we
burned the evil demons we had taken to be
gods. We are not alone or the only ones
who have done it this way; for our father
Saint Paul did it the same way, for which
reason we will earnestly pray on his feast
day to
yn totecuiyo : ca no topampa :
quimotlatlauhtilliz : yn totte°. d.s Ca ye
yxquich yn tlatolli huel pielloz :

our lord. Also, he (Paul) will pray to our
lord God for us; that is all of the statement;
it is to be observed well.
Appendix K

The Creation of Adam (c. 1576)

(Transcription and translation by Gretchen Whalen)

[p. 194]

[U cappel U ppicil = U Dzibal licil U cantabal
U nucul - patcij - U cucutil ca yax yum ti
aDan = tumen ca yumil ti Dios yt. U nucul
sihcij = ca yax naa = ti eVaa lae = Dziban yt.
Uo haan = ti yunil miaz = henisis U kaba cu
than - cu yalic
tuchij ca Dzocij U multumutoob = cilich
santissima = trinidad bay Dzibanil = ychil
kulem Dzib lae = ca emoob = cayx taloop
Parayo terenale tu hach ciotzilil cuch = yet
pisan uinbail yahaulil caan heklay yanil
tumenel ca yumil ti Dios = u hach yabal
mactziltac ti babale =

[p. 194]

The second part of the writing, in which is
taught the manner in which it was formed,
the body of our first father Adam, by our lord
God, and the manner in which our first
mother Eve was born, has been written and
inscribed in a book of wisdom; Genesis is its
name, in which there is the word, in which it
says, that when They had finished their
deliberation, the blessed most holy trinity, as
it has been written within this Sacred
Scripture, then They descended, and then
They came to Earthly Paradise, to a really
delightful place, similar in appearance to the
kingdom of heaven, in which exist, because
of our lord God, His really abundant
wondrous things,
tix yantac U yabal U sihsah babalil - tusinil U
nolhayl U yax cheel cab lae = Lahcaten U
uichancil = hunppel haab = tumen
hunhunppel .V. u yantal u uich Cu than San
Juº evangelista = yoklal yilah etsabix ti =
tumenel = huntul angel = heix tancah parayso
lae laahcappiz .V. tulumil u hool ti
lemlemmac = ti sac takin = yt. ti kankan takin
Laahcatul angel = Uaantacoob - tumil u hool
chakaxthantzil yilabal ti tx cu tox yalil =
hunppel sayab = hach ej likul tu chun - U
silla U kanche culic ah tepal yalan yoc Jhesu
christo Cu hokol sayab lae hach cha kaax
thantzil yilabal U mactzilil = U ciotzilil U
cuchil pakal ca yumil ti Dios - te parayso
terenal sihsahcij yax yum ti aDan cuchi loe.
Helel tun a Uuyic - christianos = U yanumal =

and among all of His many created things
that existed anywhere, the greatest is the first
tree of the world here. Twelve times it bears
in one year, because once in each moon
comes forth its fruit; so speaks St. John the
evangelist because he saw it, and it was
shown to him by an angel, here in the middle
of this paradise; twelve measured moons
encircled its boundary, shining with silver
and with gold; twelve angels standing,
encircled its boundary; it is wondrous to be
seen there where it pours out, the water of a
spring, really sweet; at its source is the chair,
the seat, on which sits the ruler, under the
feet of Jesus Christ. There comes forth a
spring here, really wondrous to be seen, the
marvel, the delight of the garden of our lord
God; it was there in the Earthly Paradise that
He created first father Adam long ago. Now
then, Christians, you hear the news,
and how it was that the body of first man Adam was made. Then when They stood in the middle of Earthly Paradise, the blessed three persons, the most holy trinity, while They speak among themselves, God the father, God the son, God the holy spirit. They say, "Let us create and let us make man in Our image, in Our likeness, that he may take, and own, and master My creations that are in the world, on earth, and also so that he may take and own the many seats and the many chairs, lost and abandoned because of the arrogance of the bad angels," so God speaks. Then when they had finished saying these words, they went farther along to the back of Earthly Paradise, in order to take and to bring forth from the very center of the earth, the depths, from the very boxed-in earth, the depths, the best earth anywhere, from twelve arm lengths, the depths from which it came forth, because of God, this earth;
Damascene is the name of this earth that came forth because of God. Then when the bringing forth of this earth was completed, then He came, and then He carefully made the body of a male person, a youth, very handsome, to be in His image - large his stature: there is his head, there are his ears, his eyes, his mouth, his hands, his feet, there he lies, before he could speak, before he had skin above, before he could see, and before he could move. Finished molding this image, the breath of life was blown into him by our lord God; then he lived, before he could see, so then our lord God said this word: "Hephetah, See," and then he saw, most handsome forever, a very wise man, so then the hair of his head began to come forth, and then his skin began to grow above; then his veins began to come forth above; then he moved himself;
then spittle was placed on him, and then our lord God spat in the palm of His hand, and saliva was placed on his mouth, and his mouth became open; and then saliva was placed and was anointed upon his ears, both of them, and then his ears became open, and his mouth became open; then he began to speak, while he gives thanks to God his creator, while he raises his sight on high, while sees the heavens, and the sun, and the moon, and the stars, really their countenances shone forth; really they are wondrous to be seen; when he saw them, he began to give thanks to our lord God, while he says this: "O lord God, truly perfected wisdom, truly perfected power, my lord, my Creator; I was nothing before, then you formed me; you made me enter into my body; I am marveling at everything, all that has been born because of you, here on earth, really miraculous to be seen and viewed forever,"
ciʃx U nib pixan = ca yax yum ti
aDan=

so he gave thanks, our first father Adam.
Appendix L

Cacalchen Preambles (1646-54)

Doc 3. Preamble of Juana Mukul, 1646

Tu kaba dios uchuc tumen tuçinil citbil mehenbil [y] espū santo oxtul personas tuhunali hahal dios [tu ka]ba ix bolon u pixin ca cilich colel ti çuhuy santa [m^a] yoheltob tulacal uinicob bin ylic in testamento [...] Ju^a mukul ah cimil heuac ti cux uol ti >a can in n[at] yetel in kahçah uet çihcie ti pecanix tin uol bin […] cimi cen ti yolah dios ah cimilioni tulacal tin c ohel uab kin uaix taba bayo cimil tin yoc ca [tzic]benil ca cilich ocolal yetel hibahun tub uinicob ocom ti yol ca cilich na ti Santa yglesia ti bay lic u talel in >olic in testamento lae

In the name of the almighty God, father, son and Holy Spirit, one true God; [in the name] of the nine-souled our holy noblewoman the virgin Saint Mary; all men will know and see my testament...I Juana Mukul am dying; but my reasoning is sufficient, my understanding and my memory are normal, also my will is sound; I am dying by God’s will, as we know some day all will die. As I am entering death in obedience to our holy faith, the many sufferings of men, our holy mother the holy Church, I therefore order this my testament.
If I die of the sickness I have today then I ask for myself for our blessed father the fathers here in the monastery of Calchen that they say one sung mass for my soul that it receives, the fee of three tostones is given, two candles, four chickens, two measures of maize our blessed fathers receives in alms for god.

Doc 7. Preamble of Bonaventura Canche 1647

Tukab dios uchuc tumen tuçinil citibil mehenbil .y. expr. [san]to tu hunali hahal dios tu kaba ix bolon u pixan ca cilich [colel] ti çuhuy santa m³ yoheldob tulacal uinicob bin y lic in testamento in takyathan cen ah cimil ti bíona canch[e] ah otoch nalen uay ti cah cacalchen heuac ti cuuxo ti >a can[ix] in nat .y. in kaḥcaḥ uet çihci lae ti bay licil u tal in tzo[lic] in testamento in dakyahthan cen ah cimil lae __________

uayx bin cimcen ti chapahal in yanil lae lic in katic licix uoktic inba tin pixaniyumob yanob uay ti conbento cacal chen lae ca yalab hunpe> kaybil missa yokol in pixan matab yoklal dios in u olah ca >abac oxpel tosdones u limosnail .y. lahca>iti canderas cappitz yxim cancuc castilla capel tomin jeruxalen u matan ti u men lae_____________

In the name of the almighty God, father, son and Holy Spirit, one true God; in the name of the nine-souled our holy [noblewoman] the virgin Saint Mary; all men will know and see my testament, my final words, I the dying Bonaventura Canche resident here in the cah of Cacalchen; however, in prudence (intelligence) it is related to you my understanding and my memory are normal; now at this time follows what I put in order my testament, my final words, I who am dying___________
If I die of the sickness I have today, then I ask I supplicate the blessed fathers that are here in the convent of Cacalchen that they say one sung mass for my soul that will be given to God; I desire that it will be given three tostones in fees and twelve candles, two measures of maize, four chickens, two tomines given to the work in Jerusalem; the fee will be realized.

Doc. 27, Andres Uitz, 1654

In the name of the almighty God, father, son and holy spirit, three persons in one true God; in the name of the nine-souled our holy noblewoman the virgin Saint Mary; as all men know, the father will see my testament, my final words, I the dying Andres Uitz resident here in the monastery of Cacalchen in which I arrange my final words, composed today September 30, 1654.
If I die of the sickness I have today, then I supplicate our father, the holy padres that are here in the convent that they say one sung mass for my soul; I ask that the fee come from the purchase of my possessions, as I now request.
Appendix M

Maya Testament from Ixil (1748)

[f. 1r-1v]

ygnasio pech cimi en 8 de enero de 1748 anös
tu Kaba dios yumbil y dios mehenbil y dios espi ritu santo oxtul personas huntulili dios
uchuc tumen tusinil maix pimobi lai bin ylabac u hunil yn tokyahthan tin testamento
hibicil tenil Cen ygnasio pech u mehen pedro pech u yalen lor ensa yam u Bacacix cimil
yn Cah tohuol tin pucskikal y tin nat uet sihcie Baixan u olah mucul in cucutil ychil y
othoch ca Kuna lae = Baixan cin uok tic yn bah ca pixanil yum padre guardian ca yalab
hunpe> missa yokol in pixan ca antabar tu numyail anima purgatorio y ca u masen tu pa
yalchi ychil u missa lae Baixan bin >abae u limosnayl oxpel tostones y Capel tumin
helulalem lai Bayxan hunpok macho y hunpok yeua tzimin y hunpel u hol Na y hunpay
caha y hun>it cuchara takin y hunpay silla kanche licil cutal y hunpel camisa hunpel ex
hunpay kaxnak hunpel panio y hunpel u silla bim Cin >aic tin mehen Saror pech Bayxan
hun>it >oon cin >aic tin mehen Saror pech y pasgual pech Ca nupobi lae Baixan hunpok
mula y oxtul capon tzimin y catul yeua tzimin y Capel u hol Na y Ca >it cuchara taKin u
frata y Capel silla kanche licil cutal y capel camisa y capel ex y capel kaxnak y capel
panyo y capel tzotz Cin patic tin u atan Ber na cante ca u thoxe tin mehenob pasgual pech
pedro pech lae Bayxan hun>it >oon cin >aic tin mehen pedro pech Bayxan hunpel cheen
y u solalil u pach cin >aic tin mehenob y ti yxmehen Saror pech pasg pech pedro pech
lorensa pech Can nupobi lae Bayxan hunpet Kax Cin >aic tin mehenob Saruor pech
pasgual pech pedro pech y lorenza pech Can napobi lae u tzayal lai Kax ti lakin D6
Joseph pech ti xaman man1 Juchim ti chikin
Joseph yam ti nohol Miguel tun lae _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Bayxan hunpok yeua tzimin y hunpay caha y hun>it cuchara takin Cin >aic ti yxmehen – lorensa pech lae Baixan hunpel c‘een y u solil u pach y hunpet Kax yan bolon chob u tzayal ti lakin clemente cime ti xaman Diego pech ti chikin mechor canche = ti nohol xp. toba tec – y hunpet u lak kax yan Nac ac u tzayal ti lakin u Kax Cah ti xaman pedro pech ti chikin D° lu° pech ti nohol pedro pech cin >aic tin mehenob saruador pech pasgual pech pedro pech y tin u >inob Damian pech Jasinto pech lae ca nupobi lae ------ halil u xul in tohya than tin testamento lae lic yn uacuntil catul al mehenob albaseasob lae mathe° tec y mathe° Na ------------------------

ygnasio coba the° D° gaspar canul gaspar tun
Bar° pech al° Batab Diego mitz
Sebastian uh al° Sarua° Coba ess° ant° Juchim

Regidoresob (sig)

Cumpliose este testamento y se le canto una missa espioso y lo firme

fr. Diego Perez Arrias

Ignasio Pech died on the 8th of January, 1748.

In the name of God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, three persons, one god almighty. The document of my final words in my testament will be seen, insomuch as I whom am Ignasio Pech, the son of Pedro Pech the child of Lorensa Yam. Although I am dying, well is my heart and my understanding is as it should be. Likewise,
I wish my body to be buried inside the home of our temple. Likewise, I supplicate our blessed father Padre Guardian to say one mass to help my soul in the suffering of souls in purgatory, and that a prayer be said for me in that mass. Likewise, it will be given in alms three tostons and two tomines for Jerusalem.

Likewise, a male mule, a mare, a house door, a chest, a metal spoon, a wooden chair from this time on, a shirt, a pair of trousers, a sash, a length of cloth, and a chair I give to my son Salvador Pech. Likewise, one shotgun I give my son Salvador pech and Pasgual Pech, both of them together. Likewise, a female mule, three geldings, two mares, two house doors, two silver spoons, two wooden chairs from this time on, two shirts, two pairs of trousers, two sashes, two lengths of cloth, and two fur blankets I leave to my wife Bernarda Cante to distribute to my sons Pasgual Pech, Pedro Pech. Likewise, a shotgun I give to my son Pedro Pech. Likewise, one well together with its house plot I give to my sons and daughter Salvador Pech, Pasgual Pech, Pedro Pech, Lorensa Pech, the four of them together. Likewise, one forest I give to my sons Salvador Pech, Pasgual Pech, Pedro Pech, and Lorensa Pech, the four of them together. Adjacent to the forest to the east is don Joseph Pech, to the north Manuel Juchim, to the west Joseph Yam, to the south Miguel Tun. Likewise, one mare, a chest, and a metal spoon I give to my daughter Lornesa Pech. Likewise, one well together with its house-plot, and a forest where there are many holes; adjacent to the east is Clemente Cime, to the north Diego Pech, to the west Mechor Canche, to the south Christobal Tec; and one other forest next to the willow tree adjacent to the east is the cah forest, to the north Pedro Pech, to the west don Loresno Pech, to the south Pedro Pech I give to my sons Salvador Pech, Pasgual Pech, Pedro Pech, and to my grandchildren Damian Pech, Jasinto Pech, the two of them together.
That is all; this is the end of my words in my testament. I appoint two noblemen as executors, Matheo Tec and Matheo Na.

Ignacio Coba, lieutenant don Gaspar Canul Gaspar Tun
Bartolome Pech, alcalde batab Diego Mitz
Sebastian Uh, alcalde Salvador Coba, notary Antonio Juchim

I completed this testament and sung him an expiratory mass and I signed it

fray Diego Perez Arrias
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Journal Articles

2010  “The Tales of Two Cultures: Ecclesiastical Texts and Nahua and Maya Catholicisms,” accepted for publication with The Americas 66, no. 3 (January 2010)

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Other Publications


submitted  “Colonial Yucatec Maya Literature,” (with Matthew Restall) in Handbook of Middle American Indians, revised volume on Literatures, ed. Michel Oudijk and Maria Castañeda de la Paz. Austin: University of Texas Press (chapter completed; volume forthcoming)