Aztec Antichrist: Christianity, transculturation, and apocalypse on stage in two sixteenth-century Nahuatl dramas

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AZTEC ANTICHRIST:
CHRISTIANITY, TRANSCULTURATION, AND APOCALYPSE ON STAGE
IN TWO SIXTEENTH-CENTURY NAHUATL DRAMAS

by

Benjamin H. Leeming

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Aztec Antichrist:
Christianity, Transculturation, and Apocalypse on Stage
in Two Sixteenth-Century Nahuatl Dramas

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Abstract

This dissertation centers around two recently-discovered early works of indigenous American literature, a pair of religious plays that take as their subject matter the medieval legend of Antichrist. The author of this dissertation located the plays, which are written in Nahuatl, the language of the Nahua (or “Aztec”) people, within a bound manuscript dating to the later half of the sixteenth century that is currently held in the library of the Hispanic Society of America in New York. The manuscript is signed in multiple places by a Nahua named Fabián de Aquino, in whose hand the plays are written. This dissertation presents for the first time a full transcription, translation, and analysis of the Antichrist plays of Fabián de Aquino, possibly the earliest complete New World treatments of the medieval Antichrist legend and among the oldest surviving dramatic texts in the Americas.

Much of the historiography of the evangelization and indoctrination of New Spain’s indigenous populations has been written in the framework of “spiritual conquest,” that is, a view that deems this work as having resulted in wholesale conversion to Christianity and the successful eradication of pagan beliefs and practices. However, in recent years, scholars working in the “New Philology” school have largely rewritten this narrative by engaging in the careful translation and analysis of colonial-era documentation written in indigenous languages. These studies have shown that rather than abandoning indigenous cultural and intellectual frameworks, literate native writers creatively appropriated elements of Christianity and recast them in terms that made sense to native audiences. This dissertation is situated within this revisionist mode of interpretation and argues that Fabián de Aquino’s Antichrist plays constitute works of appropriation which produced uniquely native adaptations of one of the colonizer’s central eschatological narratives. As such, it argues that Aquino’s plays offer meaningful insights into
the processes of transculturation and the performance of Christian identity among central
Mexico’s Nahuatl-speaking populations of the sixteenth century. For one, Aquino’s choice of the
Antichrist legend highlights his agency as a writer, since the friars who were responsible for the
indoctrination of his people were largely silent on the subject. Furthermore, he re-casts Antichrist
as a thoroughly native being who speaks like a native nobleman, demonstrates intimate
knowledge of sacrificial rituals, and inhabits an indigenous, not a European, cosmos. Finally, his
plays can be seen as works of “autoethnography,” engaging critically with some of the negative
stereotypes of indigenous Americans propagated by Europeans and offering counter narratives
that imagine space for Nahuas to act as fully-formed, mature Christians.
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Conventions of Translation

My transcription of Aquino’s work strives to precisely reproduce his orthography so that the Nahuatl reader may have as direct an access to the original as possible. When my transcription diverges from the original, it is always with an eye to facilitate the intelligibility of the Nahuatl text. One exception to my claim of fidelity to the original is in the case of the spacing of words and lines. Sixteenth-century writers tended not to approach spacing (or capitalization, punctuation, etc.) with the same concern for rules and standardization as modern writers. Spacing within and between words was very fluid and could change from line to line. This was, in part, due to the fact that indigenous writers tended to write as they spoke, allowing words to flow together as they do in natural speech and sharing little of their European counterparts’ concern with grammatical rules. Therefore, I have taken the liberty of inserting spaces between and removing spaces within words so that the Nahuatl is more readily comprehended.

Additionally, I have included line breaks in places where Aquino both omitted and included them. In both play scripts, he frequently employed the pilcrow (paragraph mark, ¶) and drop cap initial letters to emphasize the beginnings of new sections or to introduce new speakers. I have recorded both of these in my transcription (through the use of a pilcrow or a larger font size) and reflected this in the translation as well. However, since he frequently let his writing accumulate into long blocks of undifferentiated text, I have broken these up into lines to make the plays more readable. Typically this has meant inserting breaks in between speakers.

The reader of Nahuatl will quickly notice a number of idiosyncrasies in Aquino’s writing. In order to keep footnotes to a minimum, I will summarize the most common of these here so as to avoid having to mention each one individually in the notes.
Aquino tended to insert an 

h (a glottal stop) between words that ended in a vowel and began with the same vowel. For example, he wrote *cahamo* for *ca amo*. I have not omitted the *h* but inserted a space between the two words, as in *ca hamo*.

The inconsistency with which Aquino wrote Nahuatl’s ubiquitous /tʃ/ sound may be evidence of an early date of composition, since this became standardized as *tz* as early as the middle of the sixteenth century.¹ Throughout the text he writes *tz*, *z*, *ʃ*, *ç*, and a barred-*z* for /tʃ/. I have tried to transcribe each instance as it appears in the text and I have not included a footnote, except in cases where I have deemed that not doing so would result in confusion. The one exception is with the barred-*z*, which I have not been able to replicate in Microsoft Word.

Elision is common in Aquino’s writing. One of the most common instances is when Nahuatl’s particle *in* is immediately followed by a word beginning with *n*. In this case, Aquino always combined both words and dropped one of the *n*’s. Common examples include *caniman* for *can niman* and *ynelli* for *yn nelli*. In these cases I have separated the particle from the word and restored the missing *n*.

Like other sixteenth-century writers trained in the schools of mendicant friars, Aquino employed certain standard abbreviations. These include *q* for *-qui*, *qˇ* for *-que*, *ā* for *-am/-an*, *ē* for *-en/-em*, *γ* for *yn [in]*, *tpc* for *tlalticpac*, *x po* for *Cristo*, and *ilh* for *ilhuicac*. I have left all abbreviations as they appear in the text, saving clarification for notes when necessary. Finally, in instances when wormholes have obfuscated parts of the text, I have inserted the hypothesized letter or letters within square brackets. In the few instances when I have been unable to resolve the mystery of worm-eaten words or certain abbreviations, I have indicated as much in the footnotes.

¹ Karttunen and Lockhart 1987:66.
Linguist Geoff Nunberg has said, “a great translation should allow us to hear a stubbornly alien language rustling in the background.”\(^2\) Though my translation may at times feel clunky, I have allowed it to retain some of this “background rustling” out of deference to the uniqueness of the Nahuatl language. As I work and re-work my translations (a never-ending, iterative process) I always try to walk a line between fidelity to the original and a desire to produce a translation that is at least readable and at best enjoyable. Fabián de Aquino’s Nahuatl prose contains little of the flowery quality of certain forms of more elegant Nahuatl writing. While he does incorporate the occasional *difrasismo* (semantic couplet) and some rudimentary forms of parallelism, his was a more work-a-day Nahuatl, less inclined to the flourishes common in the writing of some of his contemporaries. Rather, the rhetorical force of his work resided in his use of what has been called “didactic terror,” a strategy commonly employed by mendicant friars and Nahua writers in doctrinal literature.\(^3\) The apocalyptic tenor of his Antichrist plays coupled with the repeated mentions of the horrors of hell, bore the brunt of the didactic and admonitory intent of the plays. Despite the chasm created by the centuries, language, and orthography of Fabián de Aquino, his *conversos*, *mártires*, Antichrist, and hermit characters will, I have no doubt, startle and delight modern readers today.

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Christensen, valued colleague and friend, as well as Camilla Townsend, David Tavárez, Fritz Schwaller, Barbara Mundy, and the multitude of generous colleagues at the annual meetings of the Northeastern Group of Nahuatl Scholars at Yale University. Many of these offered encouragement and helpful suggestions regarding how to translate difficult passages from Aquino’s plays. Working with this group over the past six or seven years has been an honor and a whole lot of fun. Louise Burkhart’s colleague in the anthropology department at SUNY Albany, Walter Little, graciously agreed to sit on my dissertation committee, and for that I am truly grateful. Thanks also to John O’Neill and Vanessa Pintado at the Hispanic Society of America in New York who aided me in accessing the archives that yielded Fabián de Aquino’s devotional notebook, and to Janet Steins at Tozzer Library, Harvard, for many years of encouragement and assistance. I’ve always joked that when it came time to write my acknowledgments I would include a shout-out to the staff at my local Starbucks where I researched and wrote so much of this dissertation. Consider it done. I am also deeply grateful to the administration of The Rivers School, where I have been on the faculty for over twenty years, for their unflagging financial and moral support. Finally, I wish to offer love and gratitude to my family without whose support this project could not have been completed (at least not gracefully). My children Asher, Caleb, Maggie, and Rinny have grown up throughout this process, enduring many long absences as their father drove to classes at Albany, attended conferences, and hid out at Starbucks and wrote. My wife, Susi, has been my constant moral support, my writing partner, and the source of invaluable love and encouragement during this adventure. Thank you, Suz, for sticking with me all these years!
To Susi, *nocozqui noquetzal*. 
Introduction:

Fabián’s Notebook

[We order] that no sermons be given to the Indians in their language and no doctrine be translated into Indian languages without being examined by a cleric or friar who knows the language in question. We have discovered great mistakes that continue to be preached in Indian languages, either from not understanding or not having translated things well; we require and state by law that from now on no sermon be given to Indians to translate or keep in their power; and if any Indian has any it must be confiscated.

Ch. LXIX, First Mexican Provincial Council, 1555

ma yuh mochiva . ets . “May it thus be done [i.e., “amen”].
Fabian de Fabián de
quino ytlateqpa Aquino, [it is] his
nol. composition.”

Hispanic Society of America MS NS 3/1, Sermones y miscelánea de devoción, late sixteenth century

Introduction

With the above statement, a Nahua author named Fabián de Aquino placed a final flourish at the end of a treatise titled De terrebilitate judicii finali et penie iuterni [sic] (“On the Terrifying Final Judgment and Eternal Punishment”; see fig. I.1). There is a subtle but unmistakable note of pride in Aquino’s addition of the statement “his work” after his name. Though his signature appears three additional times elsewhere in the thick notebook of texts that contains the treatise, none but this received the extra flourish. Aquino had reason to be proud. The fact of his literacy, his knowledge of Latin (if rudimentary), Spanish (also tenuous), and his familiarity with Christian literature suggests he may have been a member of the native nobility. Since the earliest days of the evangelization of the native populations of Mexico (or New Spain as it was then called), it was exclusively from this segment of society that the Spaniards chose to grant the gifts of education and literacy. Aquino was certainly among the most literate and educated Nahuas of his
time. Earlier in his career he likely had aided his Franciscan teachers in the translation and composition of religious texts in Nahuatl, participating in a collaboration that resulted in the largest corpus of colonial native-language texts in all of the New World.\footnote{5}

However, read in light of the firm prohibitions of the First Mexican Provincial Council, Aquino’s statement takes on a somewhat more edgy tone. Is there also a note of defiance in his claim of authorship? While early on native peoples had been pronounced capable of becoming faithful subjects of Church and Crown, by 1585 they had been deemed of lesser ability (de menor capacidad)\footnote{6} than Europeans with respect to their capacity for spiritual and intellectual development. Even though their assistance in the production of Nahuatl-language religious materials was necessary, under no circumstances were Nahuas to take up the pen and compose their own religious texts apart from close supervision by the Church. Against this backdrop, Aquino’s statement of authorship locates him and his work outside of the officially-sanctioned boundaries of native literacy in colonial Spanish society. Moreover, it offers a compelling counter-narrative to the colonizer’s negative assessment of native peoples’ intellectual capabilities.

And yet, Aquino wrote and wrote. The manuscript that bears his name is filled with dozens of texts, some copied and translated, others composed by Aquino in Nahuatl. Diminutive in size if not length, Aquino’s notebook was intended as a kind of portable religious manual that served as an aid to Nahua Christians in their efforts to understand and practice the new faith brought by the caxtiltecah (“Castillians, Spaniards”). Aquino may have been the fiscal, or church steward, of his local community. It was to literate Nahuas such as this that fell the responsibilities of administering the daily practice of Christianity at the local level. In the absence of a resident priest – as was often the case where indigenous people so vastly
outnumbered European clergy – native fiscales like Aquino routinely taught Christian doctrine, collected and recorded offerings, maintained the sacristy, and even performed baptisms and marriages on occasion. Due to the dearth of official religious texts available to them in the performance of their various duties, fiscales often employed the literacy gained in their training to write their own unofficial religious texts. Today, the manuscript under consideration here bears the rather generic title miscelánea en lengua mexicana (“Miscellany in the Mexican Language”). However, in light of Aquino’s role in its creation I will refer to it as “Fabián’s Notebook.” This dissertation is, among other things, the story of Fabián de Aquino’s devotional notebook, its texts and their author, and the diverse indigenous christianities that emerged as the result of the supposed “spiritual conquest” of Mexico.

The “spiritual conquest” paradigm in colonial Mexican historiography

Aquino’s devotional notebook emerges from the archive as a quiet challenge to the once-dominant paradigm of the “spiritual conquest” of Mexico. The idea of a religious complement to the military assault on the New World’s native civilizations has its origins in the writings of both conquistadors and friars of the sixteenth century. Much of the Franciscans’ own writings employed the Pauline metaphor of “spiritual warfare” in reference to their dealings with indigenous people and their religions. Mexico’s first archbishop, fray Juan de Zumárraga, wrote to his confreres of “the glorious victory against our enemies” (meaning Satan and his demon armies), urging his brethren to “enlist in the militia of Christ.” The paradigm of conquest quickly came to dominate the historiography of religion in the colonial Americas. Its classic articulation was at the hand of William Prescott, whose publications History of the Conquest of Mexico (1843) and History of the Conquest of Peru (1847) keep this perspective on the shelves
of modern booksellers to this day. This perspective received an important modern validation in
the influential work by Robert Ricard, _La Conquête spirituelle du Mexique_ (1933), published in
translation as _The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico_ in 1966. However, challenges to the spiritual
conquest paradigm began even prior to Ricard’s publication. In the 1920s and 30s Mexican
anthropologist Manuel Gamio was the chief proponent of viewing native Christianity as a
“mixed religion,” where conversion was seen as an incomplete process which permitted the
survival of native practices.¹¹ Later in the twentieth century there was a broadening of historical
inquiry to encompass social history and a greater diversity of sources, as scholars began to turn
to native-language records to further complicate traditional notions of conversion to Christianity.

There are a number of problems with viewing the process of Christian indoctrination in
terms of conquest. First, it ascribes a completeness and finality to the process that it simply did
not have. David Carrasco describes this as a “‘mission accomplished’ victory,” a clever turn of
phrase in a post-George W. Bush era.¹² By suggesting finality, the spiritual conquest paradigm
masks the myriad ways in which the religious exchanges between Europeans and Indians in
colonial Mexico unfolded as an on-going process over many years. Second, there is also a not-
so-subtle hint of inevitability about the notion of conquest that at best smacks of Eurocentrism
and at worst of racism. From this perspective Spaniards are cast as “the doers” of conquest and
Indians as those to whom conquest is done; Spaniards are active, Indians are passive. One
doesn’t have to dig very hard into the historiography to unearth blatantly racist justifications for
such an asymmetrical relationship. Finally, the notion of a spiritual conquest is the product of an
over-reliance on Spanish-language sources and a naïve acceptance of the triumphalist writings of
the earliest chroniclers. Beginning with the 1976 publications of _Nahuatl in the Middle Years and
Beyond the Codices: the Nahua View of Colonial Mexico_, scholars like James Lockhart and
Frances Karttunen initiated a serious examination of Nahuatl-language colonial sources that ushered in a revisionist trend in early colonial Mexican social history known as the New Philology. By highlighting the perspectives of indigenous peoples as revealed in native-language sources, these authors undercut centuries of Eurocentric bias and broke open a rich new vein in the history of native Mexico.

Approaches such as these further complicate the notion of spiritual conquest by questioning the very concept of “conversion,” a phenomenon most commonly understood as a dramatic change in an individual’s beliefs. Scholars have noted that historians’ acceptance of this “belief-bound” understanding of conversion shelters the implicit question, “Did the Nahuas really become true Christians?” When it comes to the individual, private beliefs of historical actors, attempting to answer this question becomes highly problematic. The fact is that Nahuas like Aquino didn’t write explicitly about such things. Not only that, it is debatable whether they would have even understood the dualistic categories of “Christian” and “pagan” implied in such a question. Therefore, many of these revisionist scholars assiduously avoid the question of “beliefs” and any notion of “true conversion” because, in the words of Louise Burkhart, it is “pointless, and indeed ethnocentric” to do so. Inga Clendinnen states it this way, “The notion of a ‘belief’ as a proposition to which the individual assents does not catch the quality of a lived faith, where ‘belief’ has as much to do with affect emotional, moral, and aesthetic as with propositions.” Clearly we need an alternative way of thinking about and assessing indigenous responses to Christianity.

One alternative to the belief-bound understanding of religious conversion mentioned above is to widen our understanding of conversion to view it as a social and cultural process that engages people at the level of entire groups. William Hanks notes that describing conversion
solely in terms of religious beliefs of individuals unnecessarily limits our ability to understand these important processes. Especially in sixteenth-century Mexico, conversion was primarily a collective rather than individual process deeply implicated in the act of colonial domination. Clendinnen makes a very useful distinction between what she calls the “belief analysis” approach and her preferred method, following that of symbolic anthropology, which focuses instead on observable religious practices. When writing about the religious experience of sixteenth-century Nahuas, she argues, historians are on much more solid footing observing and analyzing the public performances of Christianity than hypothesizing about subjective thinking of individuals. Much has been written about the friars’ tolerance of certain aspects of pre-contact religiosity such as dancing, singing, decorating of images and churches, and so forth, that were deemed “safe.” It is often assumed by historians (and by the friars themselves) that this was because these sorts of actions were somehow of secondary importance to that which really mattered – what the Indians believed. In other words, as long as the Indians believed the correct doctrine, what they “did” was less important. What Clendinnen points out so eloquently is that these supposedly secondary actions – the singing, dancing, drinking, dressing of images – were in fact primary to the Nahuas; they were “the performances which crucially constituted individual and group experience.” From this perspective rituals become for their performers the primary means of constructing and maintaining the “really real” world they live in, to quote Clifford Geertz. For modern observers, removed by time from the people practicing them, rituals become one of the primary means of understanding how these people structured and maintained reality.

The literary output of native writers like Fabián de Aquino offers another valuable point of access to “Christianity as practiced” among colonial Nahuas. His devotional notebook, filled
with page after page of texts he copied, translated, and composed, maps the contours of colonial Nahua Christian praxis. In the spiritual conquest paradigm favored by traditional historiography, Fabián’s notebook reads as proof of native assimilation to Christianity and a measure of the depth of Aquino’s conversion. Yet, as we will see, Aquino was no passive son of the Church. Seizing the tools of literacy, he stepped in to fill what he perceived to be needs going un-met by the institutional church. From the fruits of his labor emerges fascinating new material that challenges to the notion of a spiritual conquest of native New Spain.

Fabián de Aquino’s work and its significance

Among the texts that fill Fabián’s notebook, there lie two of exceptional value. These are the scripts of two religious plays that take as their subject matter two of the preeminent stories in Christian eschatology: Antichrist and the Final Judgment. The first of the two was likely translated from a now-lost Spanish original. The second, I will argue, was composed by Aquino himself based on the first. These plays are noteworthy for many reasons, three of which I will briefly discuss here. First, Aquino’s compositions constitute very early examples of indigenous literature in the Americas. Precisely dating the texts is difficult, but based on linguistic and orthographic evidence I locate their composition between the years 1550 and 1600; some evidence suggests an even earlier date. On folio 67 there is a text that recounts the year when Pope Pius IV granted a plenary indulgence to fray Francisco Zamora, minister general of the Franciscan order. The author, who appears to be Aquino, writes out this date (1560) in both Nahuatl and Spanish: *öcontli xivitl ypan castolpovalxivitl ya no ypan epovalxivitl de mil e quinientos e sesenta anos*. There are no other specific dates mentioned in the manuscript. Mere decades from the arrival of alphabetic writing in Mexico, this was a time of tremendous written
output in indigenous languages, especially Nahuatl. However, as I have already noted, when it came to religious writing by natives, the Church required tightly supervised conditions. Apart from their early date, what makes Aquino’s plays noteworthy is that they were written outside of these controlled conditions, translated or composed by Aquino alone and unsupervised. Although they are unmistakably hybrid texts, incorporating elements of both European and indigenous cultures, these conditions permitted Aquino to write with a degree of freedom not enjoyed by most Nahua writers of religious texts at this time. For this reason I refer to Aquino’s two plays as important early works of indigenous American literature.²⁴

Second, until now these plays have lain silent in their notebook, unknown to scholars and unread by comprehending eyes since they first left Nahua hands. The small but important corpus of colonial native-language theater is one of the earliest forms of indigenous literary expression in the New World. Although it is unknown who, precisely, first introduced European-style religious drama in New Spain, its existence was documented by members of the Franciscan order as early as the 1530s.²⁵ Initially employed as a means of indoctrinating native audiences in Christian morality and doctrine, religious theater was quickly seized by native peoples as a cherished form of religious expression and community solidarity. Many communities all across Mexico and elsewhere in Latin America still continue to perform annual religious plays at important times of the year, such as Passion Plays at Easter. Although in colonial times there existed scripts written in upwards of thirty indigenous North and South American languages,²⁶ today the thirty two scripts that are known to survive are exclusively written in Nahuatl. Therefore, the two plays in Fabián’s notebook constitute a significant new contribution to this important corpus of texts.
Third, Aquino’s plays are notable for taking as their primary subject matter the medieval legend of the Antichrist. Though Antichrist features prominently in the religious literature, theater, and art of medieval and early-modern Europe, the friars responsible for the indoctrination of New Spain’s indigenous population seem to have consciously avoided the subject. In all the massive literary output in Nahuatl during the early colonial period, Aquino’s plays are the only ones to offer a complete treatment of the Antichrist legend. They may even be the earliest extant treatments of the Antichrist legend in the whole of the New World. The fact that a legend of such prominence made its debut at the hand of an indigenous American author makes these compositions all the more fascinating and worthy of study. Aquino’s Antichrist takes the stage as a fully indigenous being, a wicked tlahtoani (“native ruler”) who pleads with Christian macehualtin (“commoners, native people”) to return to the bloody sacrifices of their recent past and the worship of newly cast-down gods. Here we see the Antichrist legend translated not only from Spanish into Nahuatl but from a European to an indigenous cultural universe. In light of the opportunity this affords to observe such a fascinating example of cultural translation, Aquino’s “Aztec Antichrist” is the other central narrative of this dissertation. Like the notebook in which it rests, it, too, is a story of native literacy, the diverse corpus of religious texts it spawned, and their impact on the emergence of indigenous christianities across colonial Mexico. Specifically, “Aztec Antichrist” is a story of what native authors like Aquino wrote when the ecclesiastical authorities weren’t looking. In Aquino’s Antichrist plays we observe the appropriation of one of the colonizer’s central religious stories by one of its colonial subjects and the remarkable work of transculturation that resulted.

These two narratives, Fabián’s Notebook and Aztec Antichrist, are woven like threads throughout the chapters that follow. They provide a framework for understanding Aquino’s plays,
which are presented in complete translation at the end of this dissertation for the first time since they were composed, as many as four and a half centuries ago.

Fabián de Aquino: Spanish name, native identity

The mere existence of Fabián’s notebook poses a number of questions: How did Aquino acquire the skills to read and write in Spanish, Latin, and Nahuatl? Did the Church know about and approve of his writing religious texts? How do we even know that Fabián de Aquino was a native person in the first place? And more broadly, can a notebook filled with what on the surface appear to be thoroughly orthodox Christian texts tell us anything meaningful about indigenous perspectives on Christianity?

Fabián de Aquino’s was probably only the second or third generation of Nahuas to write using the Roman alphabet. Western-style literacy was first introduced by the members of the mendicant orders – Franciscans initially, then Dominicans and Augustinians – who selected members of the native nobility to receive advanced education in their schools. In the immediate aftermath of the military conquest of the Aztec Empire, Hernán Cortés had requested that King Charles V send members of the Reformed wing of the Franciscan order to initiate the indoctrination of the Crown’s newest subjects. These Franciscans were in the midst of a fervent effort to reform their order and purify it from the perceived moral torpidity that plagued their brothers who lived comfortably in their monasteries. Driven by a supposed millenarian vision that tied their efforts to the signs of the end of time and Christ’s second coming, they eschewed comforts of the cloister and traveled the countryside barefoot and begging for their living. In 1524 the specially chosen group of twelve “Apostles of the Americas” landed on the shores of
Mexico and walked, barefoot and coarsely dressed, over land to the new capital of the viceroyalty of New Spain.

The Franciscans’ lofty dream of ushering in the millennial kingdom of Christ in the New World immediately ran into the language barrier. A debate ensued: should they first teach millions of natives to comprehend the colonizer’s tongue then teach them how to be saved from hell? How could the all-important work of preaching, teaching, and baptizing be delayed while the natives were taught to understand Spanish? Soon it was decided that the risk of losing unsaved souls was too great to delay; instead, the friars would undertake the acquisition of indigenous languages and conduct their efforts in tongues of their new subjects. Of all the languages spoken in central Mexico, Nahuatl was deemed the most appropriate. After over a century of imperial Aztec rule, it had become something of a lingua franca across broad swaths of the colony, a fact that meant native speakers of other languages were often conversant in the imperial tongue. Out of expediency and a fervent desire to begin the work of saving souls, the friars began their efforts to learn Nahuatl and produce religious texts to aid in their work. This decision would continue to be debated throughout the colonial period. Especially in the wake of the reforms of the Council of Trent, increasing efforts were made to restrict and regulate the production of religious texts in Nahuatl and other indigenous languages. Nevertheless, over time the friars and their Nahua colleagues produced a large corpus of religious materials in Nahuatl that included didactic texts like catechisms (doctrinas), collections of sermons (sermonarios), manuals for priests administering the sacrament of confession (confessionarios), religious songs and plays, and a diverse sub-genre of devotional materials including prayers, meditations, and hagiographic texts. Today those that survive constitute the largest corpus of colonial native-language religious texts in the western hemisphere.
It is in this context of friars, religious writing, and the evangelization of Mexico that Fabián de Aquino emerges on the historical stage. We learn from contemporary sources that almost immediately the friars began gathering together native children and adults to receive instruction in Christian doctrine. In the very early days, while friars were gaining facility with Nahuatl, sermons were delivered using images drawn or painted on large sheets of cloth called lienzos. This practice was famously illustrated in Diego de Valadés’ 1579 *Rhetorica christianae*. In an idealized church courtyard we see friars “discussing doctrine” with a crowd of seated natives, pointing to a large, hanging lienzo and teaching about the “creation of the world.” We also see them baptizing, marrying, and performing rites over the dead. This romanticized view of the evangelization project dovetails neatly with the spiritual conquest paradigm discussed above, emphasizing as it does the active and superior roles of the friars and the passive and subordinate roles of the natives. In reality, Nahuas and other educated natives played key roles in deciding the how to translate Christianity for their own communities, collaborating closely with the friars in composing key doctrinal works without which the mission would most certainly have failed.

The Franciscan Colegio de Santa Cruz, the first college in the Americas, opened in Tlatelolco in 1536 and was a key early center of linguistic production. Specifically intended as a school to educate and prepare a cohort of indigenous aides for the friars and their work, some friars even held out the hope that one day a native priesthood might be born. Into colleges like Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco members of the native nobility were brought to receive the kind of humanist education taught back in the Old World. Select Nahua youths were taught to read and write in Latin, Spanish, and Nahuatl, and were instructed in rhetoric, logic, and philosophy.\textsuperscript{33} Important to our story is the fact that a significant portion of their training consisted of copying printed works from the friars’ libraries into bound paper copybooks.\textsuperscript{34} This was typically done through
dictation, where one student would read from a text and another would replicate the text, achieving the two-fold benefit of practicing writing skills while simultaneously absorbing edifying lessons from the text being copied. It is possible that Fabián’s notebook had its origins in just this sort of scenario. These budding Nahua intellectuals were also tasked with teaching Nahuatl to the friars, as well as assisting them in the production of the important religious materials mentioned above. A fruitful collaboration emerged in the early decades of the colonial period as friars and Nahuas worked together on the monumental task of translating Christian concepts into Nahuatl. So important was the role of these Nahua amanuenses that the eminent Franciscan Bernardino de Sahagún would remark, “for if sermons…and catechisms have been produced in the Indian language, which can appear and may be free of all heresy, they are those which were written with them.”

Fabián de Aquino was, either directly or indirectly, a product of this synergistic collaboration; the simple fact of his literacy makes this all but certain. This same fact, under most circumstances, would also typically suggest a noble heritage. However, certain clues cast doubt about the social status of Aquino. Most notably, he never signed his name with the expected honorific “don.” Early in the contact period the Spaniards assigned this title to most of the highest echelon of indigenous nobles at the time of their baptism. However, management of its application was quickly appropriated by Nahuas themselves and by the late sixteenth century had come to be associated much more broadly with the higher-ranking members of indigenous society. Even so, the lack of “don” before each of the three instances where Aquino signed his name in his devotional notebook neither indicates nor counter-indicates noble status, at least not clearly. Lockhart’s study of colonial naming patterns among Nahuas demonstrates that the use of “don” varied depending on which time period the writer lived. If I am correct that Aquino wrote
during the latter half of the sixteenth century, his omission of “don” suggests a greater likelihood that he wasn’t a member of the indigenous nobility. However, as Lockhart points out, the use of “don” among Nahuas was much more fluid than among Spaniards and tended to be acquired and lost depending on the gaining or losing of prominent positions in indigenous society, such as high municipal office. Other clues in his writing point towards a middling status, perhaps a lower-ranking member of the nobility or an upper-level member of the macehualtin. His name itself, the very Spanish-sounding Fabian de Aquino, would have been highly unlikely for a commoner. From contact through the middle of the sixteenth century most commoners bore combined Spanish baptismal names and indigenous surnames such as Diego Maçaihuitl, Pedro Coçamalocatl, or Juana Xoxopanxoco. By Aquino’s time, however, it was increasingly more the norm among ordinary Nahuas to adopt two Spanish first names, such as Juan Martín and Barbara Agustina. More complex appellations such as Antonio de San Juan or Juan de la Cruz bespoke higher status, as did the wholesale adoption by Nahuas of surnames of the Spaniards who served as godparents, mentors, or baptismal sponsors. This may very well have been the case with Fabián de Aquino. Based on the evidence of his literacy, education, his name, and the fact that he had access to a wide array of Christian literature, I feel most comfortable hypothesizing that Aquino was a member of the indigenous nobility, who, whether due to change in rank or occupation, did not use the honorific “don” at the time of his notebook’s composition.

Other clues add more to Aquino’s emerging profile. His handwriting, while regular and careful, lacked the polish of native writers who produced some of the most well-known and studied religious works. His wasn’t the stately gothic lettering employed by some Nahuas, or the flowing Italianate hand that was adopted by many others, such as that which graces the John Carter Brown Library’s Nahuatl translation of the Imitatio Christi (see fig. 1.2). Aquino’s
handwriting appears more work-a-day, serviceable for accomplishing the task at hand and not intended to impress with its beauty (see fig. I.3). His misspellings of Spanish words, discussed in more detail below, clearly reveal that this was not his native tongue; the same is true for the Latin he employed in certain headings that appear throughout his notebook. However, the presence of these languages in his writing suggests some degree of familiarity with both, echoes of formative years spent in the scriptorium of some Franciscan house. Furthermore, the great variety of religious texts that fill Fabián’s notebook point to his broad familiarity with and understanding of Christian doctrine and religious literature. For though many of these texts were surely copied from preexisting sources, a number of them, such as the second of his two Antichrist plays and the Final Judgment treatise cited above, were likely composed by Aquino himself. What, we might ask, were his sources? Did he possess a small library of books? We know from surviving wills that many Nahua nobles collected books, mostly of a religious nature. Or did he have regular access to the library of local Franciscans? Perhaps he was permitted to copy texts by a sympathetic friar, though as I have indicated there was deep concern over the issue of Nahuas making unapproved copies of religious materials. Finally, it is my strong suspicion that Aquino was the fiscal of his local community. We know that in addition to keeping track of church finances and teaching doctrine classes, fiscales routinely copied religious texts in order to provide further means of spiritual growth and understanding among their people. In some cases, fiscales went beyond merely copying or translating and composed their own unique Christian texts. Aquino’s Antichrist plays fall into this latter category.

The Franciscans who were Fabián de Aquino’s teachers wielded literacy as a tool of spiritual colonization. And yet, the entire mission depended heavily on indigenous assistance as translators, language instructors, cultural informants, and co-authors of religious texts. Literacy,
it turned out, was a double-edged sword. As hard as the Church tried, it simply could not control what natives wrote. Much scholarship over the past couple of decades has brought to light the many different ways natives used their literacy to pursue their own interests. From the drafting of petitions of complaint against the colonial government, to the seeking of redress for abuses at the hands of cruel encomenderos and corrupt priests, or to the writing of local histories in defense of traditional land rights, native writers found ways to creatively and effectively respond to the pressures of colonial life. In the realm of religion, the demand among native communities for religious texts in native languages was so great that despite the Church’s firm commands against it many native writers took up the pen and wrote their own. This represented a great threat to ecclesiastical authority, which increasingly sought to control what was written in native languages, fearing the spread of heterodoxy and the persistence of non-Christian beliefs. In the epigraph we read the First Mexican Church Council’s firm statement dating to 1555 that “no sermons be given to the Indians in their language and no doctrine be translated into Indian languages without being examined by a cleric or friar who knows the language in question.” This pronouncement was in response to the widely-known (and much-fretted over) fact that natives were writing unofficial and unapproved religious texts, some of which contained incorrect or unorthodox content. At the end of his collection of daily Nahuatl devotions, the so-called Ejercicio cotidiano, fray Bernardino de Sahagún wrote “I found this [text] among the Indians. I don’t know who wrote it, nor who gave it to them. It had many errors and incongruities.” In this same vein, Augustinian friar Juan de la Anunciación wrote in 1577 that the plethora of unofficial notebooks of religious texts in circulation resulted in doctrine “so varied, so indigestible, so confusing” that the entire project of evangelization was at risk. For the most part, the writing of unofficial religious texts by natives was not an overt act of
resistance. Instead, it was driven by demand. Many native communities eagerly desired more information about the Christian religion. Writers like Aquino and numerous others whose identities have been lost strove to meet this need by copying and composing their own texts that delivered the devotional materials sought by their communities.

As a way of parsing the intertwined roles of friars and Nahuas in the production of native-language religious texts, Mark Christensen has devised three broad categories.46 The first consists of published writing. These important native-language imprints were authored by friars exclusively or, more often than not, by friars working with Nahua assistants. Destined for the presses, texts such as these were subjected to the most rigorous editing and censorship. Only after receiving multiple statements of approval from ecclesiastical authorities were they sent to press. As such, Category One texts capture the Church’s official discourses on religion in native languages. Their intended audience was primarily the clergy responsible for the indoctrination of the native population, but they were also targeted at the upper echelon of literate indigenous society, who, as I’ve said, were interested in collecting and reading such texts. Important early examples of this category include fray Alonso de Molina’s 1546 Doctrina christiana breve, his 1565 and 1569 small and large confessionarios (see fig. 1.4), fray Pedro de Gante’s 1553 Doctrina cristiana en lengua mexicana, and fray Juan de la Anunciación’s 1577 Sermonario en lengua Mexicana.47 Christensen’s Category Two texts are handwritten texts that either weren’t intended for the press or never made it there. These were also the product of collaboration between friars and native writers. However, since they never passed through the licensing and review process they were not censored. Therefore, Category Two texts sometimes manifest a greater diversity in the way Christianity was presented, and in certain cases may contain material that can be considered non-standard or even heterodox. Examples of Category Two texts include
the John Carter Brown Library’s aforementioned Nahuatl *Imitation of Christ* (see fig. I.5), an important text containing a translation of sections of the Book of Proverbs dating to the mid-sixteenth century held at the Hispanic Society of America, and Sahagún’s previously-mentioned *Ejercicio cotidiano*.\(^{48}\)

Texts such as Fabián’s notebook fall into the third category proposed by Christensen. These are religious texts authored by natives exclusively for native audiences. Like Category Two texts, they were also handwritten and never passed through the Church’s censoring process. Importantly, Category Three texts were likely written with little or no priestly supervision. As a result, they tend to convey the most diverse, unorthodox interpretations of Christianity of all the categories. Some of these texts, if they had come to the attention of ecclesiastical authorities, would surely have been confiscated. That they survived at all is due to the fact that they were carefully guarded by trusted members of the communities that held them, perhaps fiscales like Aquino and his successors. Various additions to their contents over the years, including signatures, baptismal records, and other miscellaneous annotations, tell us that these important communal records were passed down from generation to generation. Examples of Category Three texts include a devotional manual similar to Aquino’s held at the John Carter Brown Library, a fragment of a manuscript held in the Schoyen Collection that contains sermons on Saints Paul and Sebastian, another devotional manual held at the John Carter Brown Library (see fig. I.6), and of course Fabián de Aquino’s devotional notebook and the two Antichrist dramas it contains.\(^{49}\) This category of unapproved, unofficial religious texts is a little-studied genre that represents tremendous potential for those interested in accessing native perspectives on Christianity and studying locally-specific manifestations of indigenized christanities in colonial Mexico. Due to the circumstances in which they were redacted – by natives working
unsupervised by ecclesiastical authorities – these texts allow us to observe the processes of cultural contact with a clarity not possible in texts where we know Europeans were involved.

Cultural contact in the colonial context was once thought of exclusively as a unidirectional imposition of the dominant (European) culture upon subordinate (indigenous) cultures. From this Eurocentric perspective, Western culture was so overwhelming a force that assimilation and cultural desolation were assumed to be inevitable. While various permutations of this perspective persist today, scholars working with native-language primary sources have offered a compelling counter-narrative. In this revisionist historiography, native peoples are understood as active agents and participants in a cultural exchange akin to a dialogue, with different parties negotiating ways of existing in the presence of the other. Category Three texts allow us to witness native authors exercising this agency, choosing for themselves and their communities not only which Christian texts to adopt into their religious practice, but also how to present Christianity in translation. These are acts of appropriation, a seizing of the “symbols, artifacts, genres, rituals, or technologies” of one culture by another. They are not merely mechanical acts of translation. Rather, authors like Aquino carefully selected from the materials made available to them by the Church, drawing on their own indigenous worldview to adapt, interpret, re-present, and in some cases even critique the colonizer’s dominant ideology. As a result, many such texts contain what James C. Scott calls “hidden transcripts,” subtle counter-narratives spoken “behind the back” of the colonizer, that quietly open spaces for indigenous persistence. In native-language religious writings from Christensen’s first and second categories it can be challenging to disentangle native voice from that of the friars involved. Though it was inevitable that the surveilling presence of the spiritual colonizer overshadowed all religious writing by indigenous peoples, in Category Three texts it is one or two more steps
removed. Aquino’s choices of which texts to redact, although made possible by means of his Franciscan education, were his alone, not those of a friar. His decisions of how to translate concepts, while guided by his training, nevertheless remained unchecked and uncorrected by a representative of the Church. And when it came to the composition of original works such as his second Antichrist play, it was Aquino who was responsible for what to tell and how it would be told. For these reasons his theatrical works, like the notebook that contains them, stand out as unique opportunities for approaching the indigenous religious mentality.

Evidence of Aquino’s Native Identity

Central to the story being told here is the assertion that the one who signed his name Fabián de Aquino ytlatequipanol was, in fact, a native person. Up until this point this has been assumed, but on what basis do we know it to be true? For if Aquino was a Spaniard then the central narratives of this dissertation immediately unravel. Just as important are the circumstances under which I argue Aquino wrote. How do we know he worked alone, unsupervised by ecclesiastical authorities?

That Aquino was a Nahua and not a Spaniard is clearly demonstrated by the peculiarities of his handwriting. These peculiarities situate his work within James Lockhart’s second stage of linguistic evolution, a period lasting from approximately 1540 to 1650. This stage is characterized by the borrowing of nouns from Spanish by Nahuas who were experiencing increasing contacts with Spaniards and Spanish culture. These nouns are often spelled in such a way that reflects native pronunciation, with certain sounds that Nahuatl lacked replaced with those more familiar to Nahua tongues. Common examples drawn from Aquino’s manuscript include c for g substitution (mactalena for “Magdalena”), as well as r for l (diabro for “diablo”),
$t$ for $d$ (*saceltote* for “sacerdote”), and $p$ for $b$ (*anprossio* for “Ambrosio”). In some cases Aquino made multiple substitutions in a single word, as in *artal* (for “altar”) where he substituted $r$ for $l$ at the beginning of the word and $l$ for $r$ at the end. Sometimes he accurately reproduced the standard spelling, as in *credo* (“creed”), only to later revert to the Nahuatized spelling, *creto*. Other examples of misspellings seem to follow none of the expected substitutions and merely suggest lack of familiarity with the language, such as *poyerta* for “puerta,” *yuyevhes* for “Jueves,” and *merchiyotl* for “Melchior.” In this last example, Aquino’s addition of Nahuatl’s absolutive suffix –*tl* suggests confusion about whether Melchior is a proper noun (in which case it wouldn’t be given the absolutive suffix) or a regular noun (in which case adding the suffix would follow an established Stage Two pattern).

Another indication of Aquino’s native identity is the way he inflected Spanish loanwords with Nahuatl prefixes and suffixes. The most common instance of this is his tendency to add the Nahuatl plural ending –*me(h)* to the end of certain Spanish loanwords, as in *angellome* for “ángeles, angels” *apostolome* for “apóstoles, apostles” and *xpiānome* (*cristianomeh*) for “Cristianos, Christians”. Loaned nouns could also be inflected with personal prefixes such as in *ancristianome* for “you (are) Christians” and *tiquetzalcoatl* for “you are Quetzalcoatl.” Similarly, loaned nouns could be possessed by the addition of the possessive prefix, as in *mobonete* for “your bonete (cap)” and even compounded with other nouns as in the elaborate construction *xn tlateochihualcuentastli* (“the blessed rosary beads”), where the Spanish word *cuentas* (“rosary beads”) is the compounded loanword.

In addition to evidence of an orthographic nature, other linguistic clues suggest that Aquino was a Nahua. Some of Aquino’s spellings went beyond the expected substitutions mentioned above and reveal his lack of familiarity with Spanish vocabulary and grammar. We
see this in what I consider to be his confusion regarding the Spanish plural ending. Take for example his spelling of *ermitaño* (“hermit”), the starring role in his second Antichrist play. In one instance he wrote the plural form *ermitanos* (minus the ň) even when he intended only one hermit (fol. 143v). In another case, he seemed to do the same with the word “mártires” (“martyrs”). This he wrote *martilles* even though he intended only one “martyr” (fol. 159v). This sort of phenomenon abounds in his notebook. Similar errors and inconsistencies plague Aquino’s handling of the various Latin headings and verses that are scattered throughout the texts he redacted. Taken together, the linguistic and orthographic evidence clearly indicates that Aquino was a native Nahuatl speaker for whom Spanish was a second language and Latin a distant third.

Finally, the presence of what we might call “ethnographic content” in Fabián’s notebook is in keeping with the hypothesis of native authorship. Aquino’s deep knowledge of indigenous culture is most clearly displayed in his two Antichrist plays. The striking profusion of references to various aspects of indigenous culture, especially religion, suggests a native rather than a Spanish identity of their author. The table below lists just some examples of this type of content in Aquino’s plays.

Table I.1: Ethnographic Content in HSA MS NS 3/1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>category</th>
<th>ethnographic content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>personal names</td>
<td>two unbelievers named Tlacateuctli and Huitznahuatl; a ruler named Otontiyeyo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deities</td>
<td>Tlaloc, Tezcatlipoca, Huitzilopochtli, Quetzalcoatl, Otontecuhtli, and Cihuacoatl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>native social roles</td>
<td>fire priests, tonalpouhqui (“day keeper”), pochtecatl (“merchant”), tlahtoani (“ruler”), ticitl (“healer/doctor”), ahuiani (“prostitute”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sacrificial practices</td>
<td>auto-sacrifice (ritual bloodletting), human sacrifice, heart sacrifice, and general “offerings”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other ritual practices</td>
<td>painting of the face, bodily adornment with feathers, bathing rituals, divination by casting maize kernels, divination by reading from the <em>tonalamatl</em>, predicting the fate of newborn children, use of traditional medicines, celebration of feasts in honor of certain deities, the raising of the sacred guava tree (<em>xoxocoquahuitl</em>),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>specific objects</strong></td>
<td>“Tlaloc’s green rattle stick,” a divinatory codex, conch shell trumpets, flint sacrificial knives, water jars (apilloli), deity images, temples, cloaks (tilmas)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>native foods</strong></td>
<td>atolli, tortillas, chili peppers, honey, maize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>underworld (mictlan)</strong></td>
<td>described as “very cold, and hot and windy” (fol.142v), “very cold” (fol.159v), and “a place of urine, a place of excrement” (axixtitlan cuixtlatitlan; fol.160r)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This sort of content isn’t in and of itself proof of native authorship. After all, any of the examples above could have been introduced into the text by a friar with a thorough knowledge of native culture. The period during which I argue Aquino composed his plays was precisely the time when a number of friars were conducting research into pre-contact indigenous culture. The work of Franciscan Andrés de Olmos, now mostly lost, was perhaps the earliest. In 1533 Olmos was asked to compile a survey of indigenous culture and history by fray Martín de Valencia, custodian of the Franciscan order in New Spain and leader of the Twelve Apostles. Far better known is the monumental work conducted by Bernardino de Sahagún between the years 1558 and 1579, the twelve-volume ethnographic encyclopedia commonly known as the *Florentine Codex*. Both of these Franciscans relied heavily on native informants, typically community elders who had been born prior to the arrival of the Spanish. Although these works were compiled for the express purpose of understanding which aspects of native culture should be targeted for eradication, much of this knowledge was incorporated into the religious writings of the friars as a means of making Christianity more appealing to their audiences. Therefore, the mere presence of ethnographic content in Aquino’s plays doesn’t prove he was a Nahua. However, I would argue that the presence of so much information about pre-contact religion makes attributing them to a friar highly dubious. The ethnographic works mentioned above were viewed by many at the time as dangerous means by which non-Christian ideas could be preserved, not eradicated. Sahagún’s
work never made it to press for this very reason; in fact, it was confiscated in 1577 and wasn’t rediscovered until the late eighteenth century. The idea that a friar would have woven so much “paganism” into a play whose express function was to persuade native audiences to abandon it in favor of Christianity seems highly unlikely. Instead, references to divination and dancing, feathers and flint were merely the cultural raw materials from which our Nahua author composed his own version of the Antichrist legend.

How do we know that Aquino worked alone and was not aided or supervised by friars? One sign of this is the complete absence of corrections or marginal glosses in any hand other than Aquino’s. There are a multitude of instances throughout his notebook where a vigilant friar might have insisted on corrections had he been involved in the process. Non-conventional spellings might have been passed over, but not instances where Aquino erred in his presentation of Catholic doctrine and biblical content. One example of such errors is his incorrect identification of hatred as one of the seven deadly sins. Another example is his confusion regarding the story of Sodom and Gomorrah and the story of Noah and the Great Flood from Genesis. In one of his plays Aquino conflates the two, attributing the destruction of the world by flood to the sin of sodomy and stating that God saved Lot and his family from the flood instead of Noah. While neither of these cases rises to the level of heresy, they would most certainly have been flagged by a friar, had Aquino been writing under those circumstances.

However, by far the most persuasive evidence that Aquino redacted his notebook unsupervised is the presence of the aforementioned ethnographic content, especially that of a religious nature. The particular period during which Aquino wrote his Antichrist plays was marked by ever-increasing scrutiny of native-language textual production. With the ascendance of the Dominican Alonso de Montúfar to the Archbishorprie of Mexico in 1553 and the opening
of the Inquisition in 1571 under Pedro Moya de Contreras, concerted efforts were made to regulate, censor, and seize texts that either lacked the appropriate ecclesiastical license or had been written by natives working independently of clerical oversight. Most dubious was content that put details pertaining to the religious beliefs and practices of indigenous people into writing. This is the very reason Sahagún’s magnum opus was seized in 1577 by royal decree of Philip II. Texts such as these were deemed by some to run the risk of enabling the persistence of idolatry among New Spain’s native populations. In light of this, Aquino’s inclusion of references to auto-sacrifice, heart sacrifice, and divination rituals, his presentation on stage of sacred ritual objects like the divinatory codex, the flint knife, and the conch shell trumpet, not to mention the audacity of his casting Huitzilopochtli, Tlaloc, and other deities as characters, would most assuredly have raised grave concerns. Regarding this last case, the friars were well aware that in precontact times Nahuas had dressed sacrificial victims in the costumes of important deities for high festivals. Once dressed, the chosen *teixiptla* (“someone’s image, substitute, delegate”) became the living embodiment of the deity impersonated, filled with the sacred concentration of *teotl* (“divinity; sacred power”) until their lives were snuffed out on the altar stone. What friar would condone the appearance of costumed actors portraying the very same deities, placed on display before native audiences on the stage for all to see? No other surviving Nahuatl religious play contains such a thing, nor do any contain anywhere near the amount of ethnographic information contained in Aquino’s plays. The presence of such information is therefore not only one of the most significant features of these texts, it also provides strong evidence that Aquino wrote his plays – and likely the rest of the texts in his notebook – either in isolation or with very cursory clerical oversight.
Indigenous forms of Christian practice

The focus of this dissertation is the two plays that are the hidden jewels of Fabián’s notebook. However, the other texts that accompany them are important in their own right and bear mentioning here. Together they give us a sense of the form of Christian practice that Aquino sought to nurture among his people. A more complete summary of the contents of Fabián’s notebook can be found in Appendix A at the end of this dissertation. All of the texts redacted by Aquino enable us to catch a glimpse of the aspirations of the Nahua Christians in his community. At least two of these reflect the desire for a deeper understanding of the mass and the sacrament of holy Eucharist: a step-by-step translation and explanation of the Latin mass and a collection of miracle stories (*exempla*) involving the Eucharist (see Appendix A, texts 1 & 4). Many of the texts in Fabián’s notebook suggest Nahuas were eager for emotionally-compelling examples of the lives of model Christians. Texts 4, 6, 13, and 16 all appear to be translations of medieval *exempla*, or miracle stories, involving the saints. Text 6 is the longest block of texts in the manuscript, a collection of thirty-three Marian *exempla* spanning 43 folios. A number of these and others Aquino copied underscore Nahua fascination with wondrous and frightening phenomena, what must be considered a fundamental characteristic of indigenous Christian spirituality. Various texts (1, 5, 9, 10, 11) suggest there was a desire for guidance in matters of public devotion. Text 1 offers a detailed translation and explanation of the Latin mass, text 5 is the plenary indulgence granted by the pope to the minister general of the Franciscan order in 1560, and text 10 is a short set of confraternity ordinances, evidence of another universal characteristic of indigenous Christian practice. Some of the contents of Fabián’s notebook (texts 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 15) reveal Nahuas were interested in developing private devotion as well. In addition to the miracle stories already mentioned, one of the more lengthy texts appears to be a
meditation on mortality, death, and eternal things. Its tone is devotional, not didactic, and appeals to the emotions of the reader to inspire an internal transformation of the soul. Together these texts offer a much-needed counterpoint to the historiography of colonial Mexico’s native peoples, which has traditionally been dominated by the perspectives of outsiders. The texts preserved in Fabián’s notebook can offer us, if we listen closely, an insider’s perspective on one of Mexico’s many native expressions of Christianity.

Reflecting on all of the texts redacted by Aquino in his notebook, what strikes one at first glance is how thoroughly and enthusiastically their authors seem to embrace the colonizer’s religion. Aquino’s compositions, like the texts he and others redacted, embrace discourses that demonize native culture and seek to replace “pagan” elements with the “Truth” proclaimed by the Catholic Church. Some of the central questions addressed in this dissertation are, How can we understand Aquino’s relationship with the colonizer’s demonizing discourses? Was he a proxy for the “spiritual conquest” being waged by friars and ecclesiastical authorities? And, can a notebook filled with what on the surface appear to be thoroughly orthodox Christian texts tell us anything meaningful about indigenous perspectives on Christianity?

Inherent in questions like these is the assumption that indigenous responses to Christianity can be reduced to the simple binary of “assimilation” or “rejection”: either Nahuas completely accepted Christianity and ceased to retain any vestige of their former ways, or they bravely resisted, rejecting the colonizer, his culture, and his religion. Models such as “hybridity” and “syncretism” are only slightly better at describing native responses, since they imply an uncritical mixing of diverse elements without allowing for either to undergo any fundamental change. If one comes to texts like those in Fabián’s notebook expecting to find an overt rejection of key tenets of Christianity, one will be disappointed. After all, the hegemonic forces of the
spiritual colonizer reached far beyond the physical presence of its emissaries. Even though Aquino wrote without clerical supervision, he conducted his work with full knowledge that most of the texts filling his notebook would be performed publically, either in church or on stage.

Just as approaching his work from the binary of “rejection” misses the mark, so too would we be mistaken if we were to assume that Aquino and his successors were fully assimilated and compliant Christian subjects. Louise Burkhart makes the important distinction between seeing Nahuatl Christian texts as mere copies or translations of European texts and instead understanding them more precisely as interpretations of the colonizer’s religion. Her work and that of other scholars in this vein have highlighted the complex ways that the process of translation altered the meaning of the words and concepts translated. The friars may have thought of this as the relatively straightforward process of finding acceptable equivalents in Nahuatl for concepts in Spanish or Latin. However, they lacked an adequately complex understanding of language that sees words as being deeply embedded in the cultural universes from which they are derived. Although the friars hoped Nahuas understood what they meant when, for example, they employed the Nahuatl word *teotl* for “God,” thousands of years of metaphysical and philosophical development made it virtually impossible that one understanding of divinity could simply be exchanged for another. In the hands of indigenous writers, the process of copying and translating Christian texts transgressed the boundaries of the mechanical act the friars had in mind. They are more accurately considered works of interpretation that could, in the hands of some writers, fundamentally alter their meanings. Burkhart notes that these indigenous interpretations of Christianity could at times “subvert the Church’s doctrinal authority” for the reason that “a refusal to practice Christianity quite in the European mode implies that there is something unsatisfactory, even inferior, about the European version.”
However, detecting the indigenous voice in such texts requires close reading; as Burkhart notes “resistance speaks in a soft voice.” We must listen carefully, searching for discourses that are woven in between the lines of text and listening for what is spoken by the silences and omissions. By remaining sensitive to these muted messages we can recover something of the hidden transcripts that lie therein.

The chapters that follow approach Aquino’s two Antichrist dramas in this way. Together they paint a vivid picture of the brilliant creativity of a Nahua author who, despite the overwhelming forces arrayed against him, seized one of the colonizer’s central religious narratives and made it his own. The Aztec Antichrist that emerges from the pages of Fabián’s notebook, like the characters of the Sibyl, the Hermit, and the brave Nahua converts that battle him, boldly storms on stage and enacts Aquino’s own, indigenized performance of Christianity.
Figure I.1. Signature of Fabián de Aquino. *Sermones y miscelánea de devoción*, MS NS 3/1
Hispanic Society of America, New York, fol. 55r.
Courtesy of the Hispanic Society of America.
Figure I.2. Example of Italianate lettering by a native hand.  
Codex Indianorum 23 De contemptu omnium vanitatum huius mundi, fol. 1r.  
Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University.
Figure I.3. Fabián de Aquino’s handwriting. *Sermones y miscelánea de devoción*, MS NS 3/1 Hispanic Society of America, New York, fol. 170v. Courtesy of the Hispanic Society of America.
Figure 1.4. An example of a Category One religious text:
Fray Alonso de Molina, *Confessionario breve en lengua mexicana* (1565).
Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University.
Figure I.5. Example of a Category Two religious text:
Codex Indianorum 23 *De contemptu omnium vanitatum huius mundi*, fol. 5r.
Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University.
Figure I.6. Example of a Category Three religious text:
Codex Indianorum 7 [Dogmas of the Church and devotional materials in Nahuatl], fol. 63r.
Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University.
Endnotes

1 Francisco Antonio Lorenzana, *Primero, y segundo, celebrados en la muy noble, y muy leal Ciudad de México, presidiendo el Ilmo. Y Rmo. Señor D. Fr. Alonso de Montúfar, En los años de 1555, y 1565.* (México, Imprenta del Superior Gobierno Hogal, 1769), 144.

2 fol. 55r.

3 The designation Nahua refers to speakers of Nahuatl, the dominant language in central Mexico at the time of First Contact. “Aztec,” the more readily recognizable term, more properly refers to the Mexica who ruled a vast land-based empire in central Mexico until the Spanish-led conquest of 1519–21.

4 The lack of the expected honorific title “don” is puzzling and suggests Aquino may either have been of the lesser indigenous nobility or was merely a well-educated commoner, or *macehualli.* The ambiguity of Aquino’s social status only serves to heighten the mystery surrounding this enigmatic Nahua.


8 This manuscript is held in the archives of the Hispanic Society of America in New York and is catalogued as HSA MS NS 3/1, *Sermones y miscelánea de devoción.*

9 Here I follow Mark Christensen’s practice of referring to the manifestations of Christianity among colonial indigenous peoples in the plural in recognition of the many locally-specific interpretations that are preserved in the documentary sources. See Mark Z. Christensen, *Nahua and Maya Catholicisms: Texts and Religion in Colonial Central Mexico and Yucatan* (Stanford University Press, 2013), 3–4, 263.


16 Ibid.

Hanks, *Converting Words*, 5.


Ibid., 126.


A detailed discussion of the evidence would fill more space than allowed here, but briefly it consists in certain characteristics of Aquino’s orthography. Since there is such a wealth of Nahuatl writing from the 16th through the 18th centuries, scholars are able to map spelling conventions chronologically, allowing us to identify certain conventions with specific periods. Aquino’s use of v for Nahuatl’s /w/ and the seldom-seen t-cedilla (ţ) for Nahuatl’s /č/ were replaced by hu and tz respectively by the mid- to late-sixteenth century. For more see Lockhart *Nahuas After the Conquest* chapters 7–8 and Karttunen and Lockhart *The Art of Nahuatl Speech*.

fol.67r–v. Folio 67r is mis-marked as “69.”

Important studies of indigenous American literature for the Mesoamerican region include Garibay *Historia de la literatura náhuatl* (1954), León-Portilla *Pre-Columbian Literatures of Mexico* (1986), and Tedlock *2000 Years of Mayan Literature* (2011).

See for example the account of Franciscan Toribio de Benavente (known as Motolinía) in his *History of the Indians of New Spain* (1951:160–167).

Horcasitas *El teatro náhuatl*, p. 31.

Antichrist shows up in another Nahuatl play (*Final Judgment*; see Sell and Burkhart *Nahuatl Theater Volume 1*). However, he plays a bit part and little details of the full legend are to be found. Franciscan friar Juan Bautista and his Nahua assistant Agustín de la Fuente penned the only other Nahuatl retelling of the Antichrist legend in their massive collection of sermons for the church year, published early in the next century (1606:178–80).

Pre-contact Mesoamericans were literate, but since their writing systems weren’t alphabetic many have labeled them “illiterate” or “preliterate.” If we define literacy more broadly, as Elizabeth Hill Boone argues in *Stories in Red and Black*, the wide variety of “texts” that were able to be read by observers is apparent. Painted codices, inscriptions carved onto stone monuments, feathered decorations, and even city plans could all be read by those with the cultural knowledge to do so.

John Leddy Phelan wrote the classic study of the supposed millenarianism of the Franciscan missionaries to Mexico (Phelan 1970). Elsewhere I have argued that Phelan’s thesis is flawed because he applied the millenarian writings of a late-sixteenth century friar retroactively onto the first generation of Franciscans. When one examines the writings of this early cohort of friars, they don’t appear as millenarian as Phelan argues. See Leeming 2015.


These efforts are discussed thoroughly in Poole, *Pedro Moya de Contreras*, and Nesvig, *Ideology and Inquisition* (2009).

Barry Sell notes that over 110 Nahuatl printed religious texts survive (1993:xiii). The number of texts in manuscript form is unknown, but certainly numbers in the hundreds. Today these texts are scattered across library and archival collections in Mexico, Europe, and the United States.


W. Michael Mathes, *The America’s First Academic Library: Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco*.

Lockhart *Nahuas After the Conquest*, 126.

Ibid.

For example, Kevin Terraciano discusses the case of Mixtec nobleman Don Gabriel de Guzmán. An inventory of his possessions indicates that he owned books of a religious nature, including a copy of the *Contemptus Mundi* (2004: 284).


See for example the recent issue of the journal *Ethnohistory* titled “Colonial Mesoamerican Literacy: Method, Form, and Consequence” (62:3) 2015.


Mark Christensen has written extensively on this subject as it applies to both Nahua and Yucatecan Maya communities. See *Nahua and Maya Catholicisms* (2013) as well as “The Use of Nahuatl in Evangelization and the Ministry of Sebastian” (*Ethnohistory* 59:4, 2012) and *Translated Christianities* (2014).

Francisco Antonio Lorenzana, 144.

*Comienza un ejercicio en lengua mexicana sacado del Sancto Evango. y distribuido por todos los días de la semana* (Newberry Library, Ayer Ms. 1484), 85. Also see Anderson *Adiciones, Apéndice a la postilla y Ejercicio cotidiano* (1993).

Fray Juan de la Anunciación *Sermonario en lengua mexicana* (Mexico City: Antonio Ricardo, 1577), fol.3r.

Mark Christensen, *Nahua and Maya Catholicisms*, 70–89.

No edition of Molina’s 1546 *doctrina* survives (save for a single fragment held by the Hispanic Society of America) but a copy was recorded in the manuscript called the *Códice Franciscano* dating to the 1560s and is available in García Icazbalceta 1941. Molina’s *confessionarios*, Gante’s *doctrina*, and Anunciación are all available as digital scans at the Internet Archive ([www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org)). It bears mentioning that, despite the Church’s best efforts, nativistic language could and did slip into certain printed texts. The *Psalmodia christiana* published under Sahagún’s name in 1583 is a case in point. See Burkhart 1995 for example.

Of these texts, only the *Ejercicio cotidiano* has been published (Anderson 1993). The Nahuatl *Imitatio* is available at the Internet Archive. David Tavárez has recently written about this fascinating Nahuatl devotional text (“Nahua Intellectuals, Franciscan Scholars, and the *Devotio Moderna* in Colonial Mexico,” *The Americas* 70:2 (2013), 203–235) as well as the Proverbs text (“A Banned Sixteenth-Century Biblical Text in Nahuatl,” *Ethnohistory* 60:4 [2013], 759–762).

The JCB devotional manual is available on the Internet Archive. Mark Christensen has published the Schoyen manuscript in *Nahua and Maya Catholicisms*, Louise Burkhat’s 1996 publication *Holy Wednesday* contains the English translation of this text. The full transcription and translation of Aquino’s plays are provided in Appendices B & C.


Lockhart, *Nahuas After the Conquest*, chapter 7 “Language.”

Ibid., 294.


Although I concede that it’s possible he may have been lightly supervised by a very lax friar. Aquino leaves out “envy” and instead gives tecocoliliztli (“hatred”). See HSA MS NS 3/1 fol.169r. There is a possibility that he confused tecocoliliztli with neyolcocoliztli (“envy”), both of which are derived from the verb cocoa (“to be sick”).

Ibid., 294.


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HSA MS NS 3/1, fol.186r.


Any of Burkhart’s numerous publications ably highlight this phenomenon. Also see David Tavárez (2000), Berenice Alcántara (2005, 2013), and Mark Christensen (2013). For work in the other indigenous languages of New Spain also see Kevin Terraciano (2004) and Nancy Farriss (2014).

Chapter 1:
Antichrist in America

This I do preach with certitude and security, the Lord confirming my word by many signs, that in an exceedingly short time will come the reign of Antichrist and the end of the world.

St. Vincent Ferrer, c.1412

She who is called Sibyl will say, ‘Oh my children, please look here! Perhaps you have heard what I have come to tell you…You know that the one deity, God, has sent me by his command to say to you that the whole world will end. Everywhere there will be dying, everywhere nothing will be left behind, indeed everywhere will be burned. But the world won’t end [until] first a wicked person comes, is born whose name will be Antichrist…’

Fabían de Aquino, c.1550–1580

Introduction

Through the collaborative efforts of friars and Nahuas, thousands of pages of religious texts were produced and circulated throughout New Spain during the colonial period. From the printing presses emerged catechisms, confession manuals, collections of sermons, and devotional literature intended both for literate Nahuas and the friars who ministered to them; numerous manuscripts also survive. Together, these sources testify to the flowering of religious writing in Nahuatl that occurred in New Spain from the middle years of the sixteenth through the middle years of the seventeenth centuries. Like their brothers before them, much of the rhetoric of New Spain’s friars centered around eschatological themes, the Final Judgment and the punishments of hell being preeminent among them. Nahua writers, too, embraced these themes with great enthusiasm and produced their own imaginings of the end times and all its marvelous and frightening signs. However, despite the frequency of these eschatological themes, in all the numerous Nahuatl religious texts that I have surveyed I have been able to locate only three brief mentions of Antichrist. The absence of the so-called Son of Perdition from this corpus is made
all the more striking when set against the backdrop of the spiritual climate in which the early Franciscan missionaries were formed back in Spain, a climate steeped in apocalyptic expectations in which Antichrist played a central role. It is against this backdrop that Fabián de Aquino’s two plays emerge, perhaps the earliest known New World presentations - on stage or in writing - of the full Antichrist legend.

In order to understand how Aquino became acquainted with the Antichrist legend, this chapter necessarily begins in Spain. It was there, during the 14th and 15th centuries, that an apocalyptic fervor took hold of the popular consciousness, growing especially strong among the reform-minded Franciscans from whose ranks the “Twelve Apostles to the Americas” were drawn. Their particular interpretation of history understood the end of days to be immanent, souls ripe for the harvest, and the hand of God lying heavily upon their order to bring the Gospel to “all the nations” of the earth. This apocalyptic mindset caused a heightened sensitivity to the appearance of certain signs that the Bible had predicted would precede the second coming of Christ, the Final Judgment, and the end of the world. Preeminent among these was the advent of Antichrist, the great persecutor of Christians, who would lead one final assault against the saints and the Church. Theologians published treatises and preachers wrote sermons that warned Christians to be vigilant and watch for his coming. Others expressed anxieties about his advent through poetry, literature, and art. Still others brought the Antichrist legend to life on the medieval stage, where all the terrifying events that would soon surely come to pass were displayed to the wonder and amazement of all.

At some point in the middle decades of the sixteenth century, somewhere in the region of central Mexico, Fabián de Aquino first encountered the Antichrist legend. Although the details of this encounter are unknown, it likely occurred during the course of his interactions with the
mendicant friars who introduced him to the Christian religion and taught him to write using the Roman alphabet. Also uncertain is the form in which this particular version of the Antichrist story was presented. Perhaps it was in the pages of the *Golden Legend*, an extremely popular collection of hagiographic literature Aquino would likely have known, or in a volume of the printed sermons of one of Europe’s apocalyptic preachers that lay within his reach in some Franciscan library. It may have also been a visual depiction, a manuscript illustration or a wood block print in some published treatise. Another possibility is that Aquino first encountered the Antichrist legend in the form of a script of a European religious play that he had access to at some point during his education. One final possibility is that Antichrist appeared as a character in a play he himself witnessed, such as the Final Judgment spectacle reported by Sahagún and Chimalpahin thought to have been performed in Tlatelolco in 1531 or 1533. The question of the source or sources of Aquino’s Antichrist plays will be more fully addressed in Chapter Two. For now, the focus of this chapter will be on the Antichrist legend’s origins in the religious literature of medieval Europe, its influence on the reformed Franciscans of Spain, its journey from the convents of San Gabriel Extremadura to the central Mexican highlands where, sometime in the middle years of the sixteenth century, a Nahua writer named Fabián de Aquino first became acquainted with this central feature of European apocalypticism.

The Antichrist legend in medieval European thought

Eschatology has always been central to Christian thought. In the Christian view of history, the imminence of the end was planted as a seed while the tilled soil of the gospel was still fresh. Jesus Christ was an apocalyptic messiah who boldly announced the arrival of the kingdom of God. John the Evangelist, in his epic visionary text, has Jesus state “I am the Alpha and the
Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”7 The other gospel writers record Jesus predicting the end numerous times. Matthew has him put it this way: “When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats,”8 and Mark this way: “For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels,”9 and Luke in his turn writes: “You also must be ready; for the Son of man is coming at an unexpected hour.”10 In a sense it could be said that all Christian theology begins with the end, as Ernst Käsemann indicates in his oft-quoted dictum “apocalyptic was the mother of all Christian theology.”11 For it is in the end of things – in Christ’s return and the ultimate reward of heaven – that people, places, events, and life itself find their ultimate purpose and meaning. Christianity’s view of history is therefore profoundly teleological and linear, the Book of Revelation’s cataclysmic end making a fitting denouement to the Testament that opens with a rising star, a birth in a manger, and new-born baby.

But what of that “unexpected hour” referred to by Christ? How would Christians know that the time was near? Would there be adequate time to prepare? Expectations and anxieties about the return of Christ were nurtured by the words of Jesus himself. When asked by his disciples “when will this be, and what will be the sign when these things are all to be accomplished?”, he responded with a frightening prediction that has come to be called the “Little Apocalypse” of Mark chapter 13. In his response to his disciples’ question, Jesus predicted “wars and rumors of wars,” famines, earthquakes, the darkening of the sun and moon, and the falling of the stars from the sky. Before concluding, he told them, “If any one says to you, ‘Look, here is
“the Christ!” or ‘Look, there he is!’ do not believe it. False Christs and false prophets will arise and show signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the elect.” This allusion to “false Christs” proved too tantalizing to be overlooked by New Testament writers, who would build on this reference to identify one called “antichrist.”

From these vague warnings, New Testament writers developed the essential features of the Antichrist tradition. The author of 1 John was the first to use the term “antichrist,” emphasizing the timing of his arrival in “the last hour,” which he believed to be immanent. He also identified Antichrist as “he who denies that Jesus is the Christ,” a liar and a deceiver. The author of 2 John added that “many deceivers...have gone out into the world” and admonished the faithful to “Watch out that you do not lose what we have worked for.” A number of other New Testament passages were understood by later commentators as references to Antichrist, even though they didn’t mention him by name. Most important of these is the second chapter of 2 Thessalonians. To the developing Antichrist tradition, these verses added the following key elements: just prior to Christ’s Second Coming, one known as the “man of lawlessness” and the “son of perdition” will come and “seduce” the faithful, proclaiming himself to be God; Satan will endow Antichrist with power to work signs and miracles to deceive the elect; God will permit Antichrist to come as a test of the faithful; and finally, when Christ comes again he will defeat Antichrist once and for all. Importantly, this author also suggested that Antichrist was already at work in the world, a statement that encouraged later commentators to seek to identify the antichrists of their own times. Over the course of the Middle Ages this would result in the proliferation of commentaries that boldly unveiled antichrists in the form of kings, emperors, Jews, Muslims, Protestants, and popes. As a testament to the durability of the legend, a simple
internet search of the term “antichrist” today reveals Pope Francis and President Obama as two of the many supposed “antichrists” currently threatening humanity.

After the Pauline writings, the visionary prophecies of John the Revelator added some of the most potent material to the Antichrist tradition. John’s revelation presented commentators with an abundance of opaque symbols that begged for interpretation, such as its seven scrolls, seals, and lampstands; horses and riders; golden bowls; mysterious marks and numbers; beasts; and dragons. Over the centuries many of these symbols developed authoritative interpretations; for example, the “woman clothed with the sun” of Chapter 12 came to be identified as the Immaculate Virgin. Another identified the “beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads” of chapter 13 as Antichrist. Other important details emerged as commentators tackled the material from this important chapter. The beast (Antichrist) receives his evil powers from Satan, reigns for forty-two months (three and a half years), curses God, claims to be Christ, wages war against the faithful, performs miracles, places his mark on those who believe in him, and is identified with the number 666. Another important element is added in chapter 11. Here John makes mention of “two witnesses” who will prophesy against the Beast for 1260 days (three and a half years). Early on, commentators identified the two witnesses as the Old Testament prophets Enoch and Elijah, neither of whom had experienced death and who were believed to have been preserved by God in preparation for their role at the end of history. In chapter 11, they perform miracles and preach against the Beast, returning to the fold many who had been led astray. Importantly, these two Jewish prophets would convert their fellow Jews, fulfilling predictions that before the Second Coming the children of Israel would be brought into the faith. In the end, Antichrist slays them, leaving their bodies unburied for three and a half days, at which time God raises them from the dead and takes them up to heaven. The ministry of the two witnesses,
Enoch and Elijah, became one of the most durable features of the Antichrist tradition in the middle ages, with manifestations in literature, art, and drama.

Sibylline prophesies also contributed to the development of the Antichrist legend as medieval exegetes combed the sources for specific information about the end times. Since the days of the early Church, the prophesies of pagan sibyls were embraced as authentic predictions of Christ’s birth that added to the universal significance of the messiah’s advent in history. One of these texts, the Tiburtina, was influential in shaping the medieval Antichrist legend. In this prophecy, the Tiburtine Sibyl predicted the rise of a “Last World Emperor” who would unite all of Christendom under his rule. This would be a time of great prosperity and righteousness, when idolatry and paganism would be destroyed and the Jews converted. She predicted that when he had reigned for one hundred and twelve years, “the Prince of Iniquity who will be called Antichrist” would be born from the Jewish tribe of Dan. After making war on the faithful, the Last World Emperor would vanquish Antichrist in one final, apocalyptic battle. Then, having “put off the diadem from his head and laid aside the whole imperial garb,” this messianic ruler would “hand over the empire of the Christians to God the Father and to Jesus Christ his Son.”

Like the Tiburtina, the text known as the Pseudo-Methodius exerted enormous influence on apocalyptic writing during the Middle Ages. Supposedly authored by the fourth-century bishop Methodius of Patara, it was likely composed between 660 and 680 by an unknown Syrian author who viewed the rise of Islam in apocalyptic terms. Though it contains no reference to Antichrist, it served as an important source of information about the Last Days that would be drawn upon by medieval writers who linked its references to the “sons of Ishmael” (Islam), the armies of Gog and Magog, and the Last World Emperor to the apocalypse and Antichrist.
Of all the medieval sources, abbot Adso of Montier-en-Der’s *Libellus de Antichristo* (c. 954) was the most widely utilized source of information regarding the life and career of Antichrist. So numerous are the references to this brief narrative of the legend that many scholars have labeled certain manifestations as being in the “Adso tradition.”

Scholars have identified the *Libellus* as the source text for manuscript illustrations, numerous apocalyptic writings, and many of the surviving Antichrist dramas, such as the *Ludus de Antichristo* and the *Chester Mystery Cycle* Antichrist plays. Adso wrote his letter to Queen Gerberga of France, who had requested from the learned monk information about the “Son of the Devil” and the role he would play in the end times. His response outlined significant details about the life and career of Antichrist that codified the legend for future generations. In brief, Adso’s *Libellus* includes an explanation of the name “Antichrist,” the story of his origins in the Jewish tribe of Dan, his birth and education, his false teachings, the sending of apostles into the world to spread his teachings, the three means he will use to deceive the faithful (fear, gifts, and miracles), an interruption of the narrative that describes the coming of a powerful French Emperor (the Last World Emperor motif derived from the *Tiburtine Oracle* and the *Pseudo-Methodius*), his circumcision and deceitful conversion of the Jews, the opposition of Enoch and Elijah and his murder of the same, the coming of the Archangel Michael and the slaying of Antichrist, which is followed by a forty-day delay of the Final Judgment so that those he deceived might have time to repent and return to the faith.

Adso’s brief treatise didn’t technically add anything new to the Antichrist legend. Its significance lay in his collating and systematizing of numerous traditions – biblical, patristic, sibylline – into a coherent narrative of the life and career of Antichrist. Emmerson notes that by structuring the Antichrist tradition around the life of Antichrist, Adso established a *vita* of
Antichrist that essentially mirrored the structure of the immensely popular genre of saints’ lives.21 In so doing, Antichrist was transformed into “Anti-Saint,” whose life parodied the careers of the saints in certain ways: by modeling his life on that of Christ, embodying evil just as saints embodied holiness, and ultimately being martyred for his beliefs. Adso’s *Libellus* also codified the many parallels exegetes had noticed between Antichrist’s life and that of Christ: like Christ, Antichrist was a Jew, his advent was preceded by signs, his ministry was accompanied by miracles, he preached for three and a half years, he journeyed to Jerusalem to be hailed as the Messiah, and so forth. By establishing a “hagiography” of Antichrist, Adso made his legend more accessible and easier to grasp by wide audiences, thereby contributing to the establishment of Antichrist as a central figure in medieval apocalypticism.22 So influential was Adso’s *Libellus* that elements of it would manifest themselves approximately five centuries later in the Nahuatl Antichrist plays of Fabián de Aquino.

By as early as the fifth century, Antichrist had become a fixed element in Christian understandings of the end times, endlessly replicated and expounded in art, literature, and theological writings of the Middle Ages. The general sequence of events that would come to pass at the end were neatly summarized by Augustine in *De Civitate Dei*: “[T]he following events shall come to pass, as we have learned: Elias the Tishbite shall come; the Jews shall believe; Antichrist shall persecute; Christ shall judge; the dead shall rise; the good and the wicked shall be separated; the world shall be burned and renewed.”23 This sequence came alive for Christians in the sculpted reliefs over church portals, in the brightly colored pages of illuminated manuscripts, in poems and songs, and in the sights and sounds of religious theater. This was as true in Germany, France, and England as it was in Spain, where in the 15th and 16th centuries, a
zealous reform movement with an apocalyptic spirituality was transforming the Franciscan order on the eve of its mission to the New World.

Apocalypticism & Franciscanism in Medieval Europe and Spain

The earliest missionaries to New Spain were drawn almost exclusively from the ranks of the reformed Franciscan province of San Gabriel in Extremadura, Spain. It was there in the fifteenth century that a group of friars noted for their strict adherence to the Rule of St. Francis established themselves as the Custodia de los Angeles under the leadership of fray Juan de la Puebla. In their zeal to live in imitation of Francis, these friars wore no shoes, dressed in coarse wool habits, slept on boards, and begged for their food. Their practice of strict self discipline and poverty was descended from a particular manifestation of Franciscan spirituality influenced by the teachings of Calabrian abbot Joachim of Fiore, one of the most influential apocalyptic writers of the Middle Ages. This section will explore the links between Fiore, the Spiritual and Observant Franciscans, the friars of San Gabriel province, and the “Twelve Apostles of the Americas” who brought Christianity to Aquino’s native land. The aim here is “take the apocalyptic temperature” of the first generation of missionaries, to evaluate the extent to which apocalyptic thinking informed their sense of mission, and specifically, to ascertain what role that Antichrist may have played therein.

After the prophet John, Joachim of Fiore has been called “the most important apocalyptic thinker in the history of Christianity.” Born sometime around 1135 in the region of Calabria, Italy, Fiore lived as an ascetic hermit for a number of years before joining the Cistercian Order. In the late twelfth century he penned a lengthy treatise titled *Expositio in Apocalypsim* in which he outlined a new interpretation of the Book of Revelation that had a profound impact on
medieval Christian thought. By outlining what he called “con cords” – essentially interrelationships between all the books of the Bible – Joachim was able to offer an interpretation of Revelation that laid out a new periodization of history. He based his new scheme on the Trinity, imagining three great ages (which he called statuses) that were interrelated, unfolding and growing over time in an organic manner that he likened to the growth of trees. The first age was the Status of the Father and lasted from Creation to Christ. This was the era of the Old Testament, governed by the Law of Moses, and characterized by slavery. The second age was the Status of the Son, beginning with Zechariah, father of John the Baptist, and lasting twelve hundred and sixty years (or until approximately the year 1260). This was the era of the New Testament, an age of grace, which freed humankind from slavery to the law to the freedom of sons of God. At the end of the second status Joachim believed that Antichrist would come to persecute the church; his death would bring the second status to a close.

The final era, the Status of the Holy Spirit, was Joachim’s most significant contribution to medieval apocalypticism. Joachim envisioned this era as a modification of the millennial kingdom described in Revelation 20, an age of peace and prosperity when true understanding of God’s word (spiritualis intelligentia) would come to humankind. Whereas the Second Status has been the age of the church, Joachim believed that the Status of the Holy Spirit would be a monastic age. Led by two new orders of “spiritual men” (viri spiritualis), this would be a time of renewal for the church. Of these “spiritual men” he wrote, “Clad in black garments and girt with a belt from above, they will increase and their fame will be spread abroad. In the spirit of Elijah they will preach the faith and defend it until the consummation of the world.”

There are debates over whether Joachim’s Status of the Holy Spirit was his interpretation of the millennial reign of Christ described in Revelation chapter 20 and precisely how long this period would last.
Regardless, the end of the Third Status would be heralded by the frightening signs predicted by Christ in the “little apocalypse” of Mark 13 and would be brought to a close by the Second Coming, the raising of the dead, the Final Judgment, and the destruction of the world. It’s clear that Joachim believed himself to be living at the close of the second status and that Antichrist would soon be revealed, perhaps within a single generation.

The apocalyptic ideas of Joachim of Fiore found fertile soil among the reform-minded members of the Franciscan Order in the late thirteenth century. This was a period of crisis for the Friars Minor. Debates about how precisely to live out the spirit of Francis’ Rule of 1223 split the Order into two camps, each one representing two “parallel streams of spirituality,” the eremitic and the active.27 The latter was embodied by the Conventual Franciscans. These friars took a more flexible position on the call to live the vocation of poverty, preferring the life of the cloister and permitting some ownership of property. This approach was opposed by the former group who came to be called the Spiritual Franciscans. The Spirituals took a much more literal view of Francis’ Rule, insisting on the practice of radical poverty, self-discipline, absolute rejection of material possessions, and a life of eremitic contemplation. The search for balance between these two forms of spirituality would become one of the central plot lines of the Franciscan story.

The Spiritual Franciscans drew on apocalyptic texts for validation of their views and as sources of inspiration for their efforts to reform the order. In many of these texts, Antichrist played a central role. For the Spirituals, the life of “apostolic poverty” was an apocalyptic sign of the times. Like Joachim they believed the end of the world was close at hand. They identified Saints Francis and Dominic as the founders of Joachim’s two new orders of viri spiritualis chosen by Christ to ready the world for the Second Coming. Francis’ rejection of material possessions and his radical interpretation of the vita evangelica were, like his stigmata, the marks
of Christ’s election. The urgency they felt about reform and their understanding of their role in bringing about the consummation of Francis’ call to live the *vita evangelica* were fueled by the teachings of Joachim of Fiore and other writers inspired by him. One of the most vociferous proponents of Joachimism among the Spirituals was Peter John Olivi (1248–1298), a French Franciscan whose apocalyptic writings caused him to run afoul of ecclesiastical authorities. For Olivi, it was Francis himself who had initiated the period of renewal that would lead to the transition from the second to the third status of history. Just as Francis had gone out and preached the gospel among the Muslims, so too should his followers take the gospel to the ends of the earth, completing the work of conversion that Christ stated must precede his Second Coming.\(^{28}\) Italian Franciscan Ubertino da Cassale (c.1259–1330) made the logical step of identifying the two new orders predicted by Joachim, writing, “Let the reader then behold the mystery concerning the spiritual men, the Enoch and Elijah of this time – they are Francis and Dominic sent to preach the Second Coming of Christ.”\(^{29}\) For these two Franciscans, the urgent call to convert all the remaining “gentiles” of the world was intimately tied to their belief that they were living in the Last Days. Fulfilling Christ’s mandate to take the Gospel to the corners of the earth – the very mandate that Francis himself had revived – was intimately linked with the impending arrival of Antichrist and the end of the world. This was the “apocalyptic conversion” that was at the center of late medieval Spiritual Franciscanism.\(^{30}\)

Spain’s Franciscans rarely quoted Fiore directly in their writings.\(^{31}\) However, the writings of Olivi, Casale, and other Joachist writers were enormously influential on Spanish Franciscans. Delno West notes that it was Catalán author Arnold of Villanova, who published his *De tempore adventus antichristi* in 1297, who became the “primary conduit” for Spiritual Franciscan Joachimism in Spain. In *De tempore* Villanova predicted the precise date of Antichrist’s advent,
which he calculated to be the year 1376 based on his interpretation of the prophecies in Daniel. In keeping with the Adso tradition, he also predicted that the Last World Emperor would arise and conquer Jerusalem and impose a universal monarchy that would eventually end with the arrival of Antichrist. José Guadalajara Medina surveys a number of other important Spanish apocalyptic texts dating to this period. The anonymous Spanish text *Libro del conocimiento del fin del mundo* (c. 1420) offered lengthy discussion of the sinfulness that would result in God initiating the Apocalypse, signs that would mark its arrival, and devoted two major sections to the arrival and career of Antichrist. In 1474 there appeared a Spanish translation of a text titled the *Libro de los grandes hechos* by German Franciscan Juan Unay, or Juan el Alemán, which was widely distributed. This text illustrates the flexibility of the Antichrist tradition by attacking contemporary social, political, and religious issues. Unay rails against Spanish Jews and Muslims, proclaiming that a saintly pope will arise who “will destroy all the moors of Spain and all the Jews and the infidels; they shall be cruelly compelled and killed because they are deceivers and ridiculers, despisers of the faith of Jesus Christ.” Among the most influential and widely disseminated Antichrist texts of fifteenth-century Spain was Martín Martínez de Ampiés’ *Libro del Anticristo*, first published in 1496. Consisting of forty-five chapters, each accompanied by a woodblock print illustrating events in the life of Antichrist, this lengthy text closely followed Adso’s *vita*. Although Ampiés wasn’t himself a Franciscan, Françoise Gilbert has argued that his spirituality was closely tied to that order. There seemed to be no shortage of material discussing prophecies and signs of the end times in fifteenth-century Spain. Spanish Franciscans, like their brethren in France, Italy, and Germany, had access to and were influenced by apocalyptic literature in which Antichrist played a central role.
Finally, any survey of fifteenth-century Spanish apocalypticism and Antichrist texts would be incomplete without mentioning the sermons of famed Spanish Dominican preacher and self-proclaimed “Angel of the Apocalypse,” St. Vincent Ferrer (1350–1419). According to a letter he wrote to Pope Benedict XIII in 1412, the origins of his preaching vocation lay in a vision he received in 1396 or 1397 while suffering from a grave illness. He reported that saints Francis and Dominic had appeared to him, standing at the feet of Christ and beseeching the Savior for Vincent’s recovery. Christ then turned to him and instructed that “in imitation of these saints, he [Vincent] must go through the world preaching as the Apostles had done, and that He, Christ, would mercifully await this preaching for the conversion and correction of mankind, before the coming of Antichrist.”

Many of Ferrer’s sermons contained this same fervent apocalyptic sentiment that linked the conversion of Jews, Muslims, and unbelievers to the advent of Antichrist, the second coming, and the Final Judgment.

Though collections of Ferrer’s sermons in Latin would receive massive world-wide distribution following his death, publications in Spanish of sermons specifically addressing the themes of Antichrist and end times were an important subset. In 1563 Juan Navarro published a collection of Ferrer’s sermons titled *Sermones sobre el anticristo*. In 1573–74 Francisco de Guzmán published *Sermones del bienaventurado san Vicente Ferrer, en los cuales avisa contra los engaños de los dos antechristos. Y amonesta a los fieles christianos que esten aparejados para el juycio final*. This collection was enormously popular and went through at least three other editions, in 1577, 1588, and 1612. And finally, in 1578 Juan Navarro of Valencia published *Los sermones que predico y escrivio contra la venida del Antichristo y apercibimiento del juycio final*. In the writing and preaching of Ferrer the apocalyptic expectations of the age receive both exhaustive theological support and eloquent communication to a popular audience.
Ferrer was merciless in hammering home the terrors that very soon would be unleashed on the world due to the deeply sinful condition of mankind. His rhetorical strategy sought to strike fear into the hearts of his listeners, a tactic Guadalajara Medina refers to as “didactic terror,” due to the nature of its intended outcome: moral reform, repentance, and conversion. As we will see below, Ferrer’s sermons were almost certainly known to Fabián Aquino and played an important role in the composition of his Antichrist dramas. Together with the texts summarized above, each of those mentioned here paints a picture of the spiritual climate that defined fifteenth-century Spain, one in which apocalyptic expectations circulated widely and played into Spanish concerns about society, race, sovereignty, the state of the Church, and, of course, a fearful anticipation of the consummation of biblical history in the Second Coming of Christ.

Franciscan reform in fifteenth-century Spain

An important development in the evolution of the Franciscan apocalyptic mindset was the extensive reform the order went through in the latter part of the fifteenth century. Since the preceding century the Spirituals had run afoul of church authorities. In 1322 Pope John XXII launched an investigation into the writings of Peter Olivi. The Spirituals’ embrace of Joachim’s vision of a new world order led by religious brothers was read as a blatant challenge to ecclesiastical authority. This was just the beginning of official opposition to the Spiritual movement. On October 7, 1317, Pope John XIII published the constitution Quorundam exigit, which officially suppressed the Spirituals. By the fifteenth century, another branch of the Franciscan Order had emerged in their place, the less-radical but still Joachimist Observants. Like the Spirituals, Observants sought to live lives of radical poverty outside of the cloister. Their adherence to the letter of Francis’ Rule was more literal and rigid than that of most of their
confreres at the time. Believing themselves to be the true heirs of their founder’s call to poverty, they embraced the most ascetic practices and favored silent retreat in their hermitages or begging food from townspeople to the sheltered life of the monastery. Although direct references to Joachim’s work are scarce in their writings, it is clear that they understood their asceticism and eremitic spirituality as apocalyptic signs. As discussed above, Joachim and his followers believed that two new monastic orders, the so-called *viri spiritualis*, would usher in the third and final Age of the Holy Spirit. Franciscan writers such as Ubertino da Cassale and others identified the Franciscans and Dominicans as the two new orders. These saintly monastics would be contemplatives whose apostolic lifestyles Joachim described both as “like rain watering the face of the earth” and like “a blazing fire.” This imagery of deluge and conflagration is suggestive of purifying destruction associated with the end of time. Indeed, after the completion of their mission to bring the Gospel to the rest of humanity, they believed that Christ would come again, the dead would rise to judgment, and the earth would be destroyed by fire. In Spain, events such as the completion of the *Reconquista* in 1492 and the discovery of the New World were like fuel to the fire for this sort of thinking. Columbus himself zealously embraced an apocalyptic interpretation of events, even to the point of citing Joachim in his writing. He viewed his discovery of the Americas as having opened the door to fulfilling Christ’s command to “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation.” The completion of Christ’s mandate was an apocalyptic sign, since immediately following this universal conversion, he declared, “then the end will come.”

During the century leading up to the conquest of Mexico, the Spanish Franciscans of the Observant family were engaged in their own apocalyptically-framed reform movement. A number of important figures emerged at this time who would play a significant role in setting the
tone for the New World mission that brought Christianity to Aquino’s homeland. These were Juan de la Puebla and Juan de Guadalupe, both instrumental in establishing the rigorous reform movement in Spain, and Francisco de los Angeles Quiñones and Martín de Valencia, the minister general of the order and the leader of the Twelve Apostles to the Americas, respectively. Fray Juan de la Puebla (1453–1495) embraced the rigors of Observant practice as a young man, obtaining permission from Pope Innocent VIII to establish the Observant Custodia de los Angeles.45 There, Puebla instituted a severe form of eremitic spirituality that he felt most closely imitated the Rule of St. Francis. His friars were required to go barefoot (hence “discalced”), wear clothing made of the coarsest wool, beg for the most minimal food, sleep on wooden pallets, and erect simple, unadorned churches. His disciple and successor was Fray Juan de Guadalupe (1450–1506), who, after arousing opposition in Granada, established two new custodies in Extremadura: Santo Evangelio and Nuestra Señora de la Luz. There Guadalupe was free to institute Puebla’s strict call to spiritual poverty, severe discipline, and frequent silent retreats in hermitages for contemplation. In 1517, Pope Leo X attempted to unify and pacify the often-contentious Franciscan families by issuing the “bull of union,” *Ite vos in vineam meam.* A victory for reformed Franciscanism, it required that henceforth all minister generals of the order must be from the Observant family.46 One of the by-products of *Ite vos* was the elevation of the custodies of Santo Evangelio and Nuestra Señora de la Luz to the status of province in 1519 under the name San Gabriel de Extremadura. It was to this province, famed for the reformed spirituality of its founders, that reform-minded friars came from all across Spain. Among them were fray Francisco de los Angeles Quiñones, named minister general in 1523, and fray Martín de Valencia, provincial of San Gabriel and the future leader of the Twelve Apostles to the Americas.
It was in the figures of Quiñones and Valencia that the apocalyptic overtones of Guadalupan Franciscan spirituality shone most clearly. Quiñones, a disciple of Juan de la Puebla and strict practitioner of Guadalupan spirituality, was enflamed with the desire to partake in the apostolic mission to “preach the gospel to the whole creation.”47 Therefore, upon learning of Hernando Cortés’ conquest of the Aztec Empire in 1521, he eagerly volunteered to lead the first cohort of missionaries to New Spain. However, due to his elevation to the role of minister general he had to forego his dream and passed it on to fray Martín de Valencia. In his Obediencia of October 7, 1523, delivered to fray Martín on the eve of the departure of the Twelve to New Spain, Quiñones revealed the apocalyptic framework in which he understood their mission. Referencing Christ’s parable of the Vineyard from Matthew 20 he stated:

But now that the dawn is far spent and passing away, which is the eleventh hour of which the Gospel speaks, you are called by the head of the family to go forth into his vineyard; not hired for a price like the others, but rather like true sons of such a father, not seeking your own interests, but those of Jesus Christ without promise of pay or reward; may you run like sons following your father to the vineyard…48

In the apocalyptic tradition, Jesus’ parable of the laborers in the vineyard was interpreted as a prediction that all the peoples of the world (the grapes) would be converted (the harvest) by Christ’s followers (the laborers) at the end of time (the eleventh hour). Quiñones’ reference of this parable in his commissioning of the Twelve reveals that, like his spiritual predecessors, he too viewed their mission as apostolic and instrumental in the hastening of the end times. Later in his Obediencia he used martial imagery as another framework for the mission, urging the Twelve to do battle against obstacles thrown in their way by the devil. This, too, has apocalyptic undertones. The Revelation of St. John is filled with images of cosmic battles between the forces of evil and those of good. Revelation chapter 16 visualizes the final battle at a place called Armageddon during which the forces of the beast battle the angels of God. Drawing on
apocalyptic themes of battle and spiritual warfare, Quiñones tells the Twelve that he eagerly wishes he could join them in the “liberating and snatching away from the maw of the Dragon the souls redeemed with the most precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, deceived by Satanic wiles, dwelling in the shadow of death, held in the vain cult of idols – and bring them to fight under the banner of the cross and to place their neck into the yoke of Christ.”

For his own part, fray Martín de Valencia had attained legendary status for his extreme asceticism, his humility, and his ecstatic visions. Fray Toribio de Benavente (known by his adopted Nahuatl name Motolinia), one of the Twelve, wrote a biographical sketch of Valencia in his Historia de los indios de la Nueva España. His account offers a number of data points that suggest he, too, was an apocalyptic figure among Spanish Franciscans. First, Valencia lived a life of radical poverty, retreating from the world and living as an ascetic hermit both in Spain and in New Spain. Second, Valencia had visions induced by lengthy periods of fasting, prayer, and self-flagellation. Motolinia recalled that once while back in Spain when he was chanting Matins fray Martín found himself contemplating the conversion of “the infidels” while reciting the Psalms. “When will this prophecy be fulfilled?” he thought to himself, noting that “We are already in the afternoon, at the end of our days, and in the world’s final era.” So filled with zeal was he that he experienced a vision of a “vast multitude of infidels being converted, confessing the faith, and coming to receive Baptism.” Unable to contain his joy he exclaimed “Praised be Jesus Christ!” three times in a loud voice, so upsetting his brothers that they had to restrain him in his cell for fear he had gone mad. Fray Martín’s linking of the conversion of “vast multitudes of infidels” with the belief that he was living in the last days all mark him as an apocalyptic thinker in keeping with the Joachist tenor of Spanish Spiritual/Observant Franciscanism.
So far in this chapter I have endeavored to establish two points: first, that Antichrist occupied a central role in medieval Christian understandings of the sequence of events that would precede the end of time, and second, that Franciscans – Spirituals, Observants, and friars of the Spanish province of San Gabriel – tended toward an apocalyptic view of history and their role in its consummation. The linkage between these two points is, I admit, less clear than I would like. To what extent did Antichrist lurk in the imaginations of the early missionaries to New Spain? Did he enter into their conceptualization of the New World and its native inhabitants? These questions will be taken up in the next section. For now, it will have to be enough to note that in Spain, during the period when the reformed spirituality of the missionaries was being forged by Puebla and Guadalupe, Antichrist was alive and in the forefront of the minds of many of their brethren and countrymen. The demand for Ferrer’s Spanish-language Antichrist sermons, the circulation of treatises identifying ominous signs of the end, and the performance of the Antichrist narrative in paint, stone, poetry, and drama are evidence enough that the Son of Perdition was among the cultural cargo brought to the shores of Mexico by barefoot Franciscans in 1524.

Antichrist in the New World

For Quiñones, Valencia, and others, the arrival of a cohort of twelve Franciscan missionaries in Tenochtitlan in June of 1524 to formally initiate the mission to New Spain was laden with symbolism. Just as Christ had sent out his twelve apostles to bring the Gospel to the gentiles, they saw their task as bringing that gospel to a newly-discovered population of “gentiles,” countless Indians who had been “deceived by Satanic wiles” and “held in the vain cult of idols.” In keeping with their commissioning to practice apostolic poverty, the twelve walked barefoot
from the port of San Juan de Ulúa to Tenochtitlan. Dressed in coarse robes and sweltering under
the hot altiplano sun, they must have made a striking impression. During a stop in Tlaxcala along
the way, while passing through the busy market, the friars noticed the locals pointing and
exclaiming, *motolinia, motolinia* in the Nahuatl language. Upon discovering that this meant
“poor ones,” fray Toribio de Benavente adopted this moniker for the remainder of his days.52

Over the course of the following decades, the friars would disperse across the land,
preaching, teaching, baptizing, and building churches. Central to their mission was the learning
of native languages, Nahuatl preeminent among them, and the writing of religious texts that
would facilitate the evangelization and indoctrination of their new flock. This they accomplished
with the aid of a cohort of native assistants, bi- and trilingual Nahuas who assisted the friars in
translating and composing texts in Nahuatl. At some point in the decades following the arrival of
the Twelve, perhaps as early as the 1530s or 1540s, Fabián de Aquino likely passed through one
of the friar’s schools, acquiring the skills of reading and writing and a thorough knowledge of
Christianity. It was perhaps during these formative years of Aquino’s education that he first
learned of the one the friars called Antichrist. This section now turns to the question of
Antichrist’s place in the discourses of Aquino’s Franciscan teachers. In order to ascertain the
degree to which Antichrist figured in their indoctrination of natives like Aquino, I have surveyed
early Franciscan writing in both Spanish and Nahuatl. I have limited myself to works written
between roughly 1540 and the end of the sixteenth century, the window of time that I believe
Aquino was educated and during which he redacted his devotional notebook. My survey reveals
a startling fact: although Antichrist played a prominent role in the eschatological discourses of
European Christianity, he is virtually invisible in the writings of New Spain’s mendicant friars.
This conclusion in turn raises an important question that will be addressed in this section: If not
from the preaching and teaching of the friars, how is it that Fabián de Aquino came to know the story of Antichrist?

My survey of the Spanish-language writings of the early Franciscans examined important sources by figures central to the evangelization of New Spain’s indigenous populations. These included: Motolinia’s aforementioned *Historia de los indios de la Nueva España* (c. 1540), Archbishop fray Juan de Zumárraga’s *Pastoral and Doctrina cristiana breve muy provechosa* (1543/44); the Spanish introductory material in fray Andrés de Olmos’ *Arte para aprender la lengua mexicana* (1547), *Los siete sermones principales sobre los siete pecados* (1551–52), and the *Tratado de hechicerías y sortilegios* (1553); the various letters written by Franciscans including two to Emperor Charles V, one by fray Martín de Valencia himself in 1533 and another by fray Pedro de Gante in 1552; the text known as the *Códice franciscano* (late 1560’s); fray Alonso de Molina’s *Epistola nuncupatoria* (1565); and fray Bernardino de Sahagún’s Spanish introductions to the twelve books of the *Florentine Codex*, the *Primeros memoriales*, and the *Coloquios y doctrina cristiana*. Even though his work post-dates the period I have limited myself to, I have also examined the extremely important chronicle written by fray Jerónimo de Mendieta, the *Historia eclesiástica indiana* (1596). Finally, for the sake of comparison, I also examined two important works by Dominicans: fray Diego Durán’s *Historia de las indias de la nueva españa* (c. 1581) and Augustín Dávila y Padilla’s *Historia de la fundación y discurso de la provincia de Santiago de Mexico* (begun in 1589; published in 1596).

This survey yielded not one single reference to Antichrist. How can we understand this silence? It’s important to note that the sources I surveyed cover a wide range of genres and were the product of a number of different motivations that presented numerous opportunities for Antichrist to participate in the discourse. The absence of Antichrist references in documents
internal to the order, such as the *Códice franciscano*, suggest that Antichrist wasn’t one of the ways they conceptualized their mission when they were addressing each other. The absence of references in letters written to the Spanish emperor suggest Antichrist wasn’t part of how they communicated their work to the Crown. His absence from their chronicles suggest Antichrist didn’t factor into their interpretation of the order’s history and activities in New Spain. His absence from their Spanish-language catechisms and pastoral communications from the archbishop suggest Antichrist wasn’t a feature of their efforts to induce proper moral behavior or conceptualize the presentation of doctrine. Across the board, the silence on the subject of Antichrist in the Spanish-language writings of sixteenth-century Franciscans in New Spain is deafening.

What about the Franciscans’ communications to native peoples? Did Antichrist play a role in the Nahuatl doctrinas, sermons, and confession manuals they produced? In order to find out, I began by surveying texts that fall within Christensen’s first category: official, authorized, printed texts that were produced under the watchful eyes of the Church. This was the logical starting point since my goal was to ascertain whether or not Antichrist played a role in the Church’s official teaching to native peoples. Because combing through hundreds and thousands of folios of Nahuatl sermons and catechisms quickly became unfeasible, I devised a strategy to more quickly pinpoint areas on which to focus. There are a number of reliable “hot spots” of apocalyptic discourse in catechetical and homiletic literature where references to Antichrist are most likely to appear. In the sermonarios, these are the sermons for the First Sunday of Advent, which traditionally take the subject of signs preceding Doomsday and Final Judgment. In doctrinas, similar material can typically be found in the fourteenth Article of the Faith (“He will come again to judge the living and the dead”). Another strategy I used was made possible by the
availability of many colonial imprints online, especially through the Internet Archive. Since these texts have been scanned and processed using optical character recognition (OCR) technology, I was able to execute keyword searches on each of the texts listed below.\(^{53}\) In light of the amount of material I needed to survey this proved an inestimable boon.

Another factor that affected my survey was the fact that relatively few Franciscan-authored Nahuatl religious imprints survive from the period in question. According to Barry Sell’s study, there are only eight surviving publications:\(^{54}\) Alonso de Molina’s *Doctrina christiana breve* (1546), \(^{55}\) Pedro de Gante’s *Doctrina christiana* (1547/1553), Alonso de Molina’s *Confessionario breve* and *mayor* (1565/1569 and 1577/1578), Gante’s Christian primer of 1569, \(^{56}\) Molina’s *Doctrina christiana* of 1578, Juan de Gaona’s *Colloquios de la paz* (1582), Sahagún’s *Psalmodia christiana* (1583), and Juan Bautista Viseo’s *Confessionario en Lengua Mexicana y Castellana* (1599). In light of this, I have chosen not to limit myself to only those texts produced by Franciscan authors, but have broadened my inquiry to Dominican and Augustinian publications as well. Therefore, in addition to those above my survey included: the Dominicans’ *Doctrina christiana* (1548), Dominican Domingo de la Anunciación’s *Doctrina christiana breve* (1565), Augustinian fray Juan de la Anunciación’s *Doctrina christiana* (1575) and his *Sermonario* (1577). Although they fall outside of my search timeframe, I also examined Franciscan Juan Bautista’s *Huehuetlatolli...* (1601), *Libro de las miseria* (1604), and *Sermonario* (1606); Franciscan Juan Mijangos’ *Espejo divino* (1607); Dominican Martín León’s *Camino del cielo* (1611) and *Sermonario* (1614); and Mijangos’ *Sermonario* (1624).

There is a much larger body of sixteenth-century Category Two Nahuatl religious texts. These are manuscripts that were produced with more varying degrees of ecclesiastical supervision, by friars or Nahuas or a collaboration of the two. In either case, these texts didn’t
pass through the official censoring process and never made it to the presses. As such, they are somewhat less reliable manifestations of official Church discourses. Nevertheless, they are a very important corpus that I attempted to survey for Antichrist references as well. Those texts that have been published in modern editions could be keyword searched in Google Books, but there are many that have not been published and therefore couldn’t. In cases when I was examining the original, I relied on searching the hotspots as well as skimming and spot checking. As a result of this method, I am less confident of my results from this category. The Category Two texts I surveyed include: Sahagún’s *Siguense unos sermones* (Ayer MS 1485, 1540–1563), Andrés de Olmos’ *Los siete sermones principales sobre los siete pecados mortales* (1551–52) and his *Tratado de hechicerías y sortilegios* (1533), Books I and II of Sahagún’s *Florentine Codex*, Sahagún’s *Coloquios* (1564), *Adiciones a la Postilla, Apéndiz* and *Exercicio en lengua mexicana* (1570’s), Franciscan Alonso de Escalona’s *Sermones en mexicano* (BNM 1482, c. 1588), the anonymous “Epistolasy evangelios en mexicano” (Ayer MS 1467, dating to 1596), the anonymous “Sermons in Nahuatl” (Beinecke MS-369; early 17th cent.?), the Bancroft library’s “Santoral en mexicano” (M-M 464, 1600–1620?), and all of the plays in the four volume *Nahuatl Theater* set.

The result of my survey of these Nahuatl imprints and manuscripts was a mere three references to Antichrist. The first was in a colonial Nahuatl *Final Judgment* play, the second was in fray Andrés de Olmos’ 1553 manuscript *Tratado de hechicerías y sortilegios*, and the third in fray Juan Bautista’s *A Jesv Christo S.N. ofrece este sermonario en lengua mexicana*, published in 1606. These three references present a very limited view of the figure of Antichrist, narrowly focusing on his general role of deceiver and persecutor of Christians in the last days just prior to Judgment Day. The surviving Nahuatl *Final Judgment* play presents Antichrist making his
familiar plea to Christians to believe that he is the true Christ. He enters “wearing a cloak of wickedness” and declares, *Nolūçopilhuane: Cuix amo annechiximati: ca nehuatl: yn amopampa onitotoneuh tlalticpac. amopampa onitlayyohui*, “O my beloved children, do you not know me? It is I, who endured pains on earth on your behalf, who suffered on your behalf.” As in European Antichrist plays certain characters model the appropriate identification and rejection of Antichrist’s deceipts while others fall for his ploy; in this case a pitiful character named Lucia proclaims, *Ca quemacatzin. Ca tehuatzin yn timitztochialia: noteotzin notlatocatzin…* “Yes, it is you whom we are awaiting, O my deity, O my ruler…” Olmos’ mention of Antichrist, from his Nahuatl translation of a Spanish treatise on witchcraft, comes in the context of explaining why more women are drawn into witchcraft than men. At the end of this section, he mentions *yehuatl yn itoca yez antecristo* (“he whose name will be Antichrist”), one who will come to seduce the faithful on behalf of the devil with gifts of gold. The passage in question from Bautista’s sermonario is found within the second sermon for the First Sunday of Advent, which addresses the signs that will precede the Final Judgment. It opens with the statement: *Inic centlamanatl tetzahuitl, in quiyacattitiaz in ihuallalilitzin Dios, ca yehuatl in achto huallaz, in achto neciquiuh î cemacica tlahueliloc Antichristo, in tetlapoltiani, in cemacicatlahtlacohuani* (“The first sign that will precede God’s coming: He, Antichrist, the utterly wicked one, the confuser, the utterly sinful one will first come, will first appear”).

Importantly, none of these references are the kind of fuller treatments of the Antichrist legend that are so common in European religious literature. They don’t mention Antichrist’s origins, any of the events in his career, his miracles, the intervention of Elijah and Enoch, or the circumstances of his defeat. We learn only that God will allow him to come once the sinfulness of humankind warrants it, and that his advent will be a sign of the immanence of the coming
Judgment. My survey reveals that in most cases, friars chose not to mention him at all, even when they were expounding in great detail on the very same eschatological events that frequently included Antichrist in the European tradition. It seems that once they arrived in New Spain, the friars responsible for directing the composition of doctrinas, sermons, confession manuals, and other didactic aids made the conscious decision to sideline Antichrist in their discourses to the Nahuas.

Before moving on, I must cite an important example of Antichrist and apocalyptic discourse in Franciscan doctrinal literature written in a language other than Nahuatl. Fray Maturino Gilberti’s 1559 publication Diálogo de Doctrina Cristiana en lengua de Michoacán contains extensive discussions of Antichrist’s coming in the Last Days as well as recommendations of how native Christians should prepare for and respond to his advent. His treatment of the subject is by far the most thorough that I have encountered in the native-language doctrinal literature from New Spain. However, unlike Aquino’s Antichrist dramas, it still doesn’t constitute a complete treatment of the entire legend. Since Gilberti wrote his Diálogo in the Purepecha language and not in Nahuatl, I have not included him in my search for possible sources of Aquino’s Antichrist material. Nevertheless, Gilberti’s Diálogo is important to note here because of the fact that it fell under the suspicion of the Inquisition right around the time I surmise Aquino was writing his Antichrist plays. On Dec. 3, 1559, Bishop of Michoacán Vasco de Quiroga denounced Gilberti’s text to the Mexican Inquisition of Archbishop fray Alonso de Montúfar. The next year, in 1560, the Diálogo was recalled, and in 1563 it was formally banned. According to Nesvig, the decision to ban Gilberti’s Diálogo was part of growing hostilities between the Dominican and Franciscan orders and the more general trend under Dominican leadership to crack down on what they perceived to be the Franciscans’
humanism and overly-liberal attitude toward native-language writing.\textsuperscript{62} However, Nesvig also ties Gilberti’s censure to the Dominicans’ “deep concern about the millennial character of the Franciscan mission in Mexico.”\textsuperscript{63} So suspicious were the Dominicans of Gilberti that some even wanted to put him on trial. At the core of their unease seemed to be Gilberti’s apocalypticism. Witnesses reported that he frequently told native audiences that the end of the world was immanent and that only the Franciscan friars and their charges would be saved.\textsuperscript{64} Messages such as this were highly suspect, both during Gilberti’s time and especially later on during the post-Tridentine era when the Church in both New and Old Spain was struggling to consolidate and strengthen its control over the Christian faith.

The Dominican hostility toward Gilberti and his apocalyptic message, a message in which Antichrist was of central importance, brings us at last to the question of why Antichrist didn’t play a larger role in the doctrinal discourses of the friars. In light of the integral role of the Antichrist legend in European apocalypticism, what are we to make of his relative absence in the Nahuatl doctrinal literature of New Spain’s mendicants? The censure of Gilberti’s Diálogo suggests a broad discomfort with apocalyptic messages among ecclesiastical authorities. This is evident in Europe in the Church’s crackdown on the Joachimist Spiritual Franciscans in the early fourteenth century and it appears to have been true also in New Spain in the sixteenth. Apocalyptic preaching was inherently threatening to Church authorities. With its declaration of the immanence of the end of the world and terrifying visions of looming cataclysm, it threatened to unleash unpredictable and violent forces, often at the hands of the masses of common folk who bore the brunt of the suffering caused by famine, plague, and war. The delicate balance between order and chaos in medieval Europe, the maintenance of which necessarily preserved the power dynamics that benefitted Rome, could easily be thrown off by apocalyptic messages
that often involved the inversion of the status quo. A similar skepticism seems to have existed in New Spain, especially under the more conservative Dominican leadership. Add to this the reactionary edicts of the Council of Trent, which began to be felt in New Spain in the 1560’s and ‘70’s, and a picture emerges in which apocalyptic messages announcing the end of the world were frowned upon. The Antichrist legend, with its attendant search for the signs of Doomsday and the promises of frightful tribulations and inversions of world orders, seems to have been deemed too risky to play a significant role in the preaching of the friars; in light of Dominican dominance in mid-century New Spain, it also may have been too political. The fact that the most thorough treatment of the Antichrist legend ever to be translated into an indigenous Mesoamerican language in colonial times was censored by the Inquisition helps explain the absence of the “Son of Perdition” from the discourses of the missionary friars.

The search for Aquino’s source

Of course, the relative absence of Antichrist in the discourses of the friars poses the question, how did Aquino come to be acquainted with this figure of Antichrist and the legend that surrounded his life and career? The most likely scenario is that he first encountered Antichrist in the Christian literature that was available to him in Franciscan libraries he had access to during the course of his education. One way to test this hypothesis is to examine the surviving inventories of Franciscan libraries to see whether they contained known Antichrist texts. While the presence of such texts doesn’t prove that they were Aquino’s sources, it at least establishes that such texts were present in Franciscan collections and theoretically may have been available to him.
W. Michael Mathes’ important publication *The America’s [sic] First Academic Library* contains a record of the books in the possession of the friars at the Colegio de Santa Cruz, Tlatelolco. Between the years 1535 and 1600 there are listed a number of texts by important authors who wrote about Antichrist. Especially noteworthy is an early sixteenth-century collection of Spiritual Franciscan Arnold of Villanova’s works, the *Opera* (Venice, 1527). As mentioned above, Villanova wrote a *Tractatus de tempore adventus Antichristi* that was an important Antichrist text by a Spanish (Catalán) author. I don’t know whether this specific text was included in the *Opera*, but the presence of Villanova’s work in the Franciscans’ collections suggests that they may have been acquainted with this text. Peter Comestor’s *Historia scholastica* is also listed in Mathes’ inventory. An enormously influential text, the *Historia* addresses Antichrist in Comestor’s commentary on the prophecies in the book of Daniel, the *Quarta visio danielis* and the *Visio decima*.65 Although not listed in Mathes’ inventory for the dates 1535–1600, works by other important authors who also wrote about Antichrist were known to occupy Franciscan libraries in New Spain. These include works by St. Augustine, St. Jerome, Peter Damian, St. Thomas Aquinas, and of course the *Flos Sanctorum*, a Spanish-language version of the *Golden Legend* by Jacobus Voragine.66 After investigating these sources, however, I have concluded that no one individual text could have been Aquino’s source of Antichrist material. This is due to the fact that none of these sources contains all of the details of the Antichrist legend recorded in Aquino’s two plays. It’s possible that he drew his knowledge of Antichrist from multiple sources, although, as I will discuss below, this seems the less likely of the possible scenarios.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the works of St. Vincent Ferrer are very well attested in the Mathes’ inventory. Four volumes of sermons are listed: *Sermones fructuosissimi*
hyemales de tempore (Lyon, 1513), Sermones aestivales Beati Vicentii (Lyon, c. 1515), Sermones hyemales (Lyon, 1558), and Sermones aestivales (Antwerp, 1570). Additional evidence of the demand for Ferrer’s work can be found in other inventories. A list of books sold in 1576 in Mexico City contains this item: “unos Sermones Vicente tres tomos en 8° a 22 reales.” Mathes notes that in 1585 bookseller Pedro Ochoa received a shipment of 381 books from Spain that included “the works of St. Vincent.” The Memoria de los libros depositados en la librería del convento de San Francisco (1689) lists the following works: “San Vicente Ferrer. – De Sanctis. N. 85.; San Vicente Ferrer. – De ay. de entre año. N. 88.; San Vicente Ferrer. – Adviento y Quar. N. 89.” And finally, the Memoria de todos los libros que tiene esta librería de San Joseph de Tula (1668) lists “Sermones de San Vicente Ferrer, 3” (i.e., three volumes).

Although these last two references post-date the life of Aquino they nevertheless attest to the enduring influence of the Valencian preacher in New Spain.

As we have seen above, Ferrer’s sermons were among the most apocalyptic of his day, with Antichrist featuring centrally in his rhetoric. One of the texts listed in Mathes’ inventory of the college of Santa Cruz, the Sermones Hyemales, contains a notable example. Ferrer’s third sermon for the second Sunday of Advent is based on the Gospel reading from Luke 21, often the source text for sermons on the Final Judgment. The passage begins, Erunt signa in sole, et luna, et stellis (“There will be signs in the sun, moon, and stars”). Ferrer described three principal signs that will occur in the Last Days as an indication of the pending judgment. The first of these is “the affliction of Antichrist, a man but a diabolical one.” In his exposition on this theme, Ferrer incorporated significant details of the Antichrist legend, details that are missing from the three short passages mentioning Antichrist in the Nahuatl literature discussed above. He noted that in the Last Days, Antichrist will perform many miracles to deceive people into thinking he is
the Christ, such as making fire come down from heaven, causing images (statues?) to speak, and bringing the dead back to life. Ferrer specifically mentioned the raising of a person’s mother and father, a miracle that Aquino’s Antichrist also performs. In accord with the standard *vita* of Antichrist, Ferrer noted that he will be empowered by the devil, have support of demons, draw allies from the ranks of powerful kings, reign for three and a half years, and ultimately be “slain by lightning” on the Mount of Olives. Ferrer ended by explaining that God will allow a forty-five day period following Antichrist’s death for repentance before the destruction of the world.

However, evidence from Ferrer’s sermons both supports and undermines the case for his being Aquino’s source of Antichrist material. For one, Aquino cited forty days for repentance after Antichrist’s death, not forty-five. Both numbers were common in Antichrist literature – Adso also cited forty days in the all-important *Libellus* – but the disparity between Ferrer’s consistent use of forty-five and Aquino’s forty is problematic. Another important detail in Aquino’s plays that is missing in Ferrer’s sermons on Antichrist is the character of the sibyl. Her role as prophet of the pending Doomsday is a well established component of the Antichrist tradition, dating back to the fourth century *Tiburtina* text, Augustine’s discussion of the Eretraean sibyl in *City of God*, and the Pseudo-Methodius. In Aquino’s first play, “Antichrist and the Final Judgment,” the sibyl is the first to take the stage, delivering a lengthy monologue that stretches to over six folios. Her role goes beyond that of merely announcing the coming of Antichrist and the impending Final Judgment. With passionate words she admonishes the audience to repent and believe in Christ, delivering a summary of the foundational beliefs of the Creed, clearly an adaptation of her traditional role made out of consideration of the newness of the faith to native audiences. The sibyl’s role as the announcer of Antichrist’s coming, while a common feature in the European apocalyptic tradition, is lacking in Ferrer’s preaching on
Antichrist. Aquino’s incorporation of the sibylline tradition, like his use of the forty-day period for repentance, suggests that although he may have been familiar with the preaching of Spain’s “Angel of the Apocalypse,” he may have been drawing on some other source when composing his Antichrist plays.

Or so I felt until I encountered Aquino’s list of demons. This brief text is not associated with either of the plays and appears in a section of his devotional notebook that contains short fragments of texts that don’t seem to be directly related to each other. Aquino may have just been copying material that he found interesting, collecting it for later use. On this particular page there appears a list of seven named demons, each of which is associated with one of the seven deadly sins. Written in Aquino’s distinctive hand, it begins: _Ce tlacatl diabro ytoaca leuiametham… quicuitlaviltlya yn nepovalliztli yn cemanavactla… _ (“A certain demon, named Leviathan…forces the people of the world to be prideful.”). After Leviathan, he pairs the demon Mammon with Greed (_teoyevacatini_, “the greedy one”), Asmodeus with Lust (_tetlaximani_, “adulterer”), Beelzebub with Envy (_moyococovani_, “the envious one”), Belphegor with Gluttony (_in moxvitanin in tlavananii_, “the over-eater, over-drinker”) Balberith with Anger (_in qualanini_, “the wrathful one”), and Ashtaroth with Sloth (_yn tlatizvini_, “the lazy one”). I was certain that this list, copied from some European source, must have been Aquino’s inspiration for the seven demons in his play “Antichrist and the Hermit.” Associating specific demons with the seven deadly sins had a long tradition in the Middle Ages. While searching for Aquino’s source I located examples in illuminated manuscripts (e.g., the fourteenth-century German _Concordantie Caritatis_), mural paintings (e.g., the thirteenth-century French church of St. Pierre-ét-Liens, Martignac), anti-Catholic tracts (e.g., the early fifteenth-century _Lanterne of Light_), theological treatises (e.g., Alfonso de Spina’s fifteenth-century _Fortalitium Fidei_), and a number of medieval
dramas. A partial list of named demons associated with specific mortal sins even shows up in the *Malleus Maleficarum*, the infamous witch-hunting manual of the fifteenth century.

In all those lists that paired the seven deadly sins with named demons, none that I could locate paired the same name with the same sin as those Aquino copied into his notebook. That is, until I found the sermons of St. Vincent Ferrer. Located in the *Sermones Hyemales* volume, which was known to have been in the possession of the Franciscans at Tlatelolco during the sixteenth century, is a sermon that contains the list in the precise order copied by Aquino. In a later edition published in Augsburg in 1727 this sermon received the subtitle *De septem Luciferi capitaneis* (“On the Seven Captains of Lucifer”). Locating this later edition and its Latin subtitle enabled me to decipher a particularly difficult Nahuatl word in Aquino’s demon list that had confounded my repeated attempts to translate it. In the list, Aquino refers to each demon as *ytepanicacavh* (*ytepanicacauh*). Eventually I was able to make sense of this, enlisting the aid of generous Nahuatl scholars with more experience than I. As it turns out, this root components of this word bear the literal meaning of “he who stands upon others,” which appears to have the metaphorical meaning of “a guide, or supervisor.” Putting it together with the rest of the sentence it reads, “A certain person, named Leviathan, is the devil’s guide/supervisor.” This word, *ytepanicacavh*, I believe was Aquino’s way of translating “captain,” establishing a clear link between Aquino’s work and Ferrer’s sermons. Subsequent searches of Ferrer’s oeuvre revealed the same list in his second sermon on the Feast of Epiphany and the second of three sermons preached on Antichrist in July of 1411. Therefore, in the sermons of Vincent Ferrer a number of critical themes related to Aquino’s work come together: Spanish apocalypticism, demons associated with the seven deadly sins, and of course Antichrist and the Final Judgment, all in the words of a Spanish mendicant known to have been highly influential on New Spain’s
Franciscans and printed in editions known to have been in their possession during the years Aquino was active. And yet, there were certain details that still didn’t add up to a definitive attestation. These have led me to believe that while Aquino was certainly familiar with the work of Ferrer he was probably working with another source when translating and/or composing his two Nahuatl Antichrist plays. These problematic details and my hypothesis regarding Aquino’s likely source will be discussed in the next chapter.

Conclusion
In this chapter I have traced the journey of Antichrist from the pages of Scripture to the minds of medieval writers to the pen of Fabián de Aquino. My investigation has shown that the Franciscan missionaries who were responsible for transmitting the Christian faith to New Spain’s native population were steeped in a form of spirituality that had apocalyptic overtones. This reveals itself in the way they conceived of their role in the conclusion of salvation history, as laborers in the Vineyard of the Lord at the last hour of Time. With the opening of the New World had come the opportunity to bring the Gospel to the last remaining gentile populations and in so doing usher in the Second Coming, the Final Judgment, and the end of the world. The advent of Antichrist was one of the many signs they had been taught to look for, signs that would herald the beginning of the end. However, when they arrived on the shores of Mexico and began to preach, although their sermons regularly contained eschatological themes they chose not to include Antichrist in their messages to Nahuas. Their silence on the subject makes Aquino’s decision to translate and compose two Antichrist dramas in Nahuatl all the more intriguing. What may have motivated his choice and how he adapted the Antichrist legend are the subjects of the chapters that follow.
Endnotes


2 Fabián de Aquino, *Sermones y miscelánea de devoción*, MS NS 3/1, Hispanic Society of America, New York, fol.155r. When quoting extensively from Aquino’s Nahuatl Antichrist dramas I have chosen not to provide the original text out of respect for space as well as the fact that the originals are readily available in the appendices at the end. When possible, I will provide the original language of quotations from sources other than Aquino’s plays in text.

3 A good example of a thoroughly native take on hell can be found in the so called “Nahuatl Bible,” Schoyen Ms. 1692, a fragmentary text that contains two Nahuatl sermons that have been translated and analyzed by Mark Christensen. One of these relates the story of the conversion of St. Paul. In a twist on the canonical story from the New Testament Book of Acts, the Nahua author imagines angels taking Paul to hell to witness firsthand the suffering of the unconverted. See Mark Z. Christensen, “The Tales of Two Cultures: Ecclesiastical Texts and Nahua and Maya Catholicisms.” *The Americas* 66, no. 03 (2010): 374–377.

4 Matthew 28:19, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

5 Medieval plays about Antichrist and Final Judgment will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two. These include the twelfth-century German *Ludus de Antichristo*, a fourteenth-century French *Antichrist and Judgment Day*, the English *Coming of Antichrist* from the fifteenth-century Chester Mystery Cycle, the German *Churer Weltgerichtsspiel*, published in 1517, a Doomsday play performed in Perugia, Italy between 1320–1340, and a fifteenth-century French play titled *Le Jugement Dernier*.


8 25:31–33.

9 8:38.

10 12:40.


12 Mark 13:21–23

13 1 John 2:18.

14 2:22.

15 2 John 7–8.


17 Ibid., 36.


21 Emmerson, “Antichrist as Anti-Saint,” 177.
22 Emmerson, Antichrist in the Middle Ages, 11.
24 McGinn, Visions of the End, 126.
25 Ibid., 136–137
26 For example, see Lerner’s chapter in Emmerson and McGinn, The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages (Cornell University Press, 1992), 51–71.
28 McGinn, Visions of the End, 205.
29 Ibid., 213.
32 José Guadalajara Medina, El Anticristo en la España Medieval (Madrid, Ediciones del Laberinto, 2004), 63.
34 Martín Martínez de Ampiés, Libro del anticristo: Declaración del sermón de San Vicente (1496), Françoise Gilbert, ed. and trans (Ediciones Universidad de Navarra. EUNSA, 1999), 23–24.
35 Ferrer, “Letter to Benedict XIII.”
36 St. Vincent Ferrer, Sermones del bienaventurado san Vicente Ferrer, en los cuales avisa contra los engaños de los dos antechristos. Y amonesta a los fieles christianos que esten aparejados para el juycio final (Burgos: Philippe de Junta, 1577).
41 McGinn, Visions of the End, 136–137.
42 Phelan, The Millennial Kingdom, 21–23.
43 Mark 16:15.
44 Matthew 24:14.
45 Turley, Franciscan Spirituality and Mission, 15.
46 Ibid., 21.
47 Mark 16:15.
Ibid., 61.


51 Ibid., 232.


53 Keyword searching using OCR processed scans isn’t as straight forward as might be imagined, since the texts I was searching were set in sixteenth-century type. I quickly realized that I needed to search for multiple variants of the word “Antichrist” that reflected typeset and spelling idiosyncrasies. For example, in some texts I needed to search “anticrhisto” rather than “antichristo.” I also needed to search Anti- and Ante-christo as well as Anticristo and Antichristo. In some texts, the words “Ante” and “christo” were separated by a space, which made the process more complicated still.

54 The number seven indicates unique works, not editions or number of copies. Sell’s dissertation, *Friars, Nahuas, and Books: Language and Expression in Colonial Nahuatl Publications* (1993), is an indispensible resource for those interested in the subject.

55 Sell doesn’t list this text in his appendix because at the time there was no known extant copy. Recently I learned that the Hispanic Society of America actually contains a couple of fragmentary pages from this imprint. However, the entire text of Molina’s *doctrina* was copied into the *Códice Franciscano*, which permitted me to include it in my survey.

56 I was not able to search this text.


61 Moisés Mendoza’s 2008 dissertation “Maturino Gilberti, Traductor: Dialogo de la Doctrina Cristiana en lengua de Mechucan” is the most thorough treatment of this text and contains extensive translations of parts of Gilberti’s lengthy monolingual text.


63 Ibid.

64 Ibid., 123.


Ibid.


Ferrer also discusses this miracle in the first of three sermons on Antichrist preached in Toledo in July of 1411. See Pedro Cátedra García, Sermón, Sociedad y Literatura en la Edad Media: San Vicente Ferrer en Castilla (1411–1412) (Salamanca: Junta de Castilla y León/Consejería de Cultura y Turismo, 1994), 541.

See Ferrer’s third sermon preached in Toledo in July 1411 (Cátedra García, Sermón, Sociedad, 561–573) and his third sermon for the second Sunday of Advent (Sermones Hyemales 1558).

Aquino, Sermones y miscelánea de devoción, fol.65r.

St. Vincent Ferrer, Beati Vincentii...Sermones Hyemales Autoris vitam, indicemque locupletissimum in fronte libri praefiximus. Eisdem denuo summa cura per D. Damianum Diaz Lusitanum. Recognitis luculentae adnotationes in margines accesserunt. (Leiden, 1558); also see Mathes, The America’s First Academic Library, 63.


Louise Burkhart helped me on the way to deciphering this (personal communication April 13, 2016). My final translation is based on Julia Madajczak’s analysis (personal communication April 15, 2016). According to her analysis, itepānīcauh breaks down as i- (“his”) te- (“one’s”) pan (“on”) ica- (“to stand”) ca- (preterite agentive ligature) -uh (possessive suffix) or “his one-who-stands-upon-people.” She points out a number of terms in Alonso Molina’s dictionary that appear to be related to this one, such as teixpānicacaultl “guiding,” teixpān icaliuh “a guide” or “to guide,” teoyotīca tepān ical “abbot” or “prelate.”


Cátedra García, Sermón, Sociedad, 553–554.
Chapter 2:
Reconstructing Aquino’s Lost Source

Introduction

Previously I hypothesized that Aquino may have encountered Antichrist in the sermons of the Spanish Dominican St. Vincent Ferrer, volumes of which sat within his reach in the mendicant libraries of central Mexico. And yet, certain pieces of the puzzle didn’t quite fit with this scenario. If he did base his plays on Ferrer’s sermons, how can we account for the discrepancy in the number of days granted for penance following Antichrist’s death? And how can we explain the absence in Ferrer’s sermons of the sibyl, a character who occupies so prominent a position in Aquino’s plays? While Ferrer’s influence cannot be discarded, there is one final possibility that has yet to be considered in detail. In what follows, I will argue that it is likely that Aquino had access to a Spanish play about Antichrist and the Final Judgment that he translated into Nahuatl, adapting it for his Nahua audience. This adaptation, which I will refer to as “Antichrist and the Final Judgment,” contained seeds of ideas that he explored in his second play, which I have given the title “Antichrist and the Hermit.” However, this second play was not merely another version of the now-lost original, but a highly original adaptation of the Antichrist legend that has no direct analogue in European theater. This chapter will first present summaries of the plays, then make the case for the first of these being a translation of a now-lost original. This will be shown by comparing Aquino’s plays to surviving examples of medieval Antichrist and Final Judgment plays.
Aquino’s Nahuatl Antichrist dramas

Aquino’s two plays are nested in the middle of Hispanic Society of America MS NS 3/1, spanning folios 131r–150r and 155r–187r (see figs. 2.1 and 2.2). Between these two scripts he redacted a short set of confraternity ordinances, which intervene like a kind of devotional interlude. Neither play is overtly broken up into acts or scenes; action flows continuously from one moment to the next. The organizational structure I have imposed below is intended to facilitate analysis and comparison with European analogues. Only the first play contains introductory material of any length: a summary of the play’s subject, how many players would be required, and a list of characters. The second play opens with the simple statement *Nican onpeva yn itoca auto čan tlatori mitoz,* “Here begins what is called ‘a play’; it is to be said with words only.” Presumably this meant that there would be no accompanying music or song, as it seems was the case with its predecessor. There is no mention in either play of stages, sets, rigging, or sound effects, although a certain amount of this is implied. Lastly, Aquino gave neither of the plays a title; those I have chosen are based on the subject matter of each.

“Antichrist and the Final Judgment”
Hispanic Society of America MS. NS3/1, fols.131r–150r

I. Introductory rubric (fols.131r–133r)
   a. The theme of the play is announced; Aquino uses the curious word *tetlayeyecalhuiliztli* (“representation”) instead of the more common choice, *neixcuitilli* (“example”); no other surviving script uses this word.
   b. States how many people are required (fifty-one); states that assistants will be needed; all the characters of the play are then listed.

II. Scene 1: Opening Monologue by the Sibyl (fols.133r–138r)
   a. Sibyl addresses the audience urging them to come see the play (*neixcuitilli*) so as to be prepared for the end of the world; she urges them to see God’s wonders and fear his judgment, giving up sin so they won’t be sent to hell (*mictlan,* “place of the dead”).
b. Summarizes the incarnation of Christ, his life, death, resurrection, and ascension, as well as his future coming and judgment; reads like a creedal statement
c. Warns of Antichrist’s coming, his plans to deceive through miracles, threats
d. Announces that God will send Elijah and Enoch to combat Antichrist, who will slay them and in turn be slain by an angel who will cast Antichrist down to mictlan
e. Following the death of Antichrist God will grant forty days for repentance
f. She announces that after this period God will burn the whole world; the Final Judgment will follow

III. Scene 2: The Career of Antichrist (fols.138r–142r)

a. Antichrist speaks
   i. with much bragging and boasting, he claims to be God
   ii. he promises all sorts of benefits to those who will follow him (pulque, women, tortillas, honey, “very good chili peppers,” atolli, etc.)

b. Enoch and Elijah preach against Antichrist
   i. they explain that they have been sent by God to counter the false teachings of Antichrist and win back those who have been led astray
   ii. some who had fallen away return to the faith at this time; these are referred to here as conversos
   iii. Elijah and Enoch take turns arguing that Antichrist is not God, that he’s a liar, people are urged not to follow him, to do penance for their sins so they won’t go to mictlan
   iv. some conversos speak, agreeing with Elijah and Enoch and expressing a desire to return to God, asking them to pray for them, which they do

c. Antichrist is angry with Elijah and Enoch and their success at winning back souls; kills Elijah and Enoch
d. God sends the Archangel Michael to kill Antichrist
e. A group of tlatlacetecoltl (pl. of tlacatecolotl, “horned-owl person,” the word chosen as a synonym of “devil” or “demon”)3 come out to bring Antichrist to mictlan, singing a song which is described as very sad

IV. Scene 3: The Hermit (fol.143v)

a. Hermit enters, interrupting the demons as they carry off Antichrist; asks them where they come from, why they are so sad; demands that they show him what they are carrying
b. the demons refuse to show him, so Hermit commands them in the name of God; finally they yield; Hermit orders them to go; we never learn what they are carrying
c. Singing, the demons carry off Antichrist
V. Scene 4: The Final Judgment (fols.144r–150r)
a. Raising of the Dead
   i. the world is burned; St. Michael appears and calls the dead to rise for judgment; trumpets are blown
   ii. demons emerge and bring out the condenados (“condemned”) from mictlan, placing them on Christ’s left; angels will bring out the beatos (“blessed”), placing them on Christ’s right
b. Final Judgment
   i. Christ gives lengthy speeches that mirror Matthew 25:31–46
   ii. Christ sends the blessed to heaven and the condemned to mictlan
   iii. there is much weeping as the demons carry the sinners away “on their backs”; there is another lengthy song text
c. Christ reigns in glory
   i. Mary speaks, urging Christ to take his beloved ones up to heaven
   ii. the Apostle Peter speaks, agreeing with Mary
   iii. Christ then calls the blessed to “come up” to heaven; they ascend singing a song of praise and thanksgiving
   iv. all concludes with the singing of the Te deum

“Antichrist and the Hermit”
Hispanic Society of America MS NS3/1, fols.155r–187r

I. Introductory rubric (fol.155r)
a. The rubric consists of nothing more than the statement “Here begins what is called ‘a play.’ It is to be said with words only.”

II. Scene 1: Opening Monologue by the Sibyl (fols.155r–156r)
a. Sibyl announces who she is, that God has sent her, and why; all very similar to the first play, though in a more condensed form.

III. Scene 2: The Career of Antichrist (fols.156r–165v)
a. Antichrist’s Monologue
   i. Antichrist threatens Christians telling them that he will kill them if they don’t believe in him; claims to be all powerful and the source of all life.
   ii. He then expresses wonder that people have abandoned him, asking why they dismantled his “house,” presumably the pre-contact teohcalli (“deity house” or temple).
iii. Urges all to return to him and to their old ways, claiming that he is the true Christ.

b. The Martyrs
   i. Character named Martyr dialogues with Antichrist trying to ascertain whether he is the true Christ; Antichrist tries to convince him, ends by threatening to kill him if he doesn’t believe.
   ii. Martyr still doubts, so Antichrist raises Martyr’s mother and father from the dead, saying he brought them here from mictlan where they were suffering because they didn’t acknowledge him as the Christ
   iii. Antichrist asks whether Martyr believes him now; Martyr replies that he doesn’t; Antichrist then kills the martyrs (now plural; it seems that Martyr was perhaps representing a group)
   iv. Antichrist next addresses another group of martyrs, threatening to kill them if they don’t believe in him; they reject his entreaties and promises; Antichrist slays this group as well.
   v. Finally, he addresses the audience and threatens them saying that he will come back to kill them as well if they don’t believe in him

c. Enoch & Elijah Preach Against Antichrist
   i. Enoch enters and speaks
      1. States that God sent him to warn good Christians about Antichrist
      2. urges them to do what “God’s teachers, the priests, go about teaching [them]”; urges them to be strong and to be baptized, to do penance, to weep for sins so that they will go to heaven, and to confess
      3. addresses the conversos specifically, telling them not to offend God again and to accept death at Antichrist’s hands

d. Antichrist speaks
   i. Antichrist commands his servants to kill Enoch and Elijah.
   ii. Antichrist next rages at the converts, demanding to know why they trapped him, why they believed Enoch & Elijah; threatens to kill them unless they obey him
   iii. the converts give back the gifts they received from Antichrist, saying that if they took them they’d offend God
   iv. Antichrist kills them and sits down on his throne

e. St. Michael comes and kills Antichrist

IV. Scene 3: Hermit’s Interrogation of Demons & the Condemned (fols.165v-187r)

a. Lucifer
   i. Lucifer states that he and the demons have come to get one of their companions (Antichrist) and bring him back to mictlan
ii. Hermit then asks Lucifer what is the meaning of the water jar he is carrying in his hands; Lucifer says the water stands for pride

b. Tlaloc
   i. his water jar carries a potion called “Hatred” (tecocoliztli; note that this is not one of the traditional seven deadly sins)

c. Tezcatlipoca
   i. his water jar carries a potion called “Adultery and Sodomy” (i.e., Lust)

d. Huitzilopochtli
   i. his water jar carries a potion called “Anger”

e. Quetzalcoatl
   i. his water jar carries a potion called “Gluttony”

f. Otontecuhltli
   i. his water jar carries a potion called “Laziness”

g. Cihuacoatl
   i. her water jar carries a potion called “Greed”

h. Hermit speaks to the Seven
   i. commands the demons to smash their water jars to the ground
   ii. turns to the next group, asking them to tell him what the props they are carrying mean

i. “Six Fire Priests of the Demons”
   i. they are carrying the flint knives that they used to use to bleed themselves and the conch shell trumpets that they used to use to call the macehualtin (“native people, commoners”) to come bleed themselves
   ii. they confess that they used to have sex with the young children who used to come sweep the temples

j. Ahtlaneltocani (Unbeliever)
   i. names: Tlacateuctli and Huitznahuatl
   ii. sins: secret idolatry, falsely receiving baptism, auto-sacrifice, burning of papers

k. Tonalpouhqui (The Day Keeper)
   i. this character is carrying his tonalamatl (divinatory codex)
   ii. sins: reading the signs when children were born, telling the parents the fate of their children, etc.

l. Tlahtoani Itlatqui (The Ruler’s Goods)
   i. name: Otontiyeyo
   ii. sins: living off the labor of the macehualtin, abusing them, stealing from them, not paying them fairly, etc.

m. Pochtecatl (The Merchant)
   i. name: Toribio
ii. sins: charging people “usurious interest,” stealing, enriching himself, adultery

n. Motolinian (The Impoverished One)
   i. name: Juan
   ii. sin: anger, envy, laziness, stealing, doing nothing

o. Telpochtli (The Youth)
   i. name: Lucas
   ii. sins: had many mistresses, didn’t give them up when baptized

p. Tetlanochiliani (The Madam)
   i. name: Juana
   ii. sins: deceiving young women into sleeping with men for money

q. Ahuiani (The Prostitute)
   i. name: Catarina
   ii. sins: sleeping with men

r. Ichpochtli (The Maiden)
   i. name: Cecilia
   ii. sins: didn’t get married; devil deceived her and she slept with a young man

s. Ticitl (The Healer)
   i. name: Antonio
   ii. sins: deceiving people with his false curing; describes the casting of maize grains to divine causes of illness

t. Motlatlaxiliani (One Who Induces Abortions)
   i. name: Francesca
   ii. sins: she “cast away” (i.e., aborted) her own children; adultery; failed to have her children baptized

u. Motetzacatiliani (The Sterilizer of Women)
   i. sins: asked a ticitl for an abortifacient potion, lived devoting herself to adultery

v. Moyectocani Tetenanahuatiliani (The Traitorous Hypocrite)
   i. name: Domingo
   ii. sins: he “lived hypocritically,” betrayed people, defamed people, accused a woman he hated of adultery; didn’t confess

w. Ichtequinii (The Thief)
   i. name: Antonio
   ii. sins: stealing

x. Inin Ihuanyolqui Quitecaci (“This one lay with his relative”)
   i. name: Martin
   ii. sin: forcing a relative to have sex with him

y. Cuiloni
i. name: Gonzalo
ii. sin: tecuilontiliztli (sodomy; a “very frightening mortal sin”)
z. Tepatlachhuiani
  i. name: Domingo
  ii. sin: another sort of “frightening” sexual sin

aa. Hermit’s Concluding Admonitory Speech
  i. Hermit urges audience to desist from their sinful living so as to avoid the fate of these sinners
  ii. Urges the audience to receive the teotlahtolli ("sacred words" or Word of God), believe in the only teotl ("deity") Jesus Christ so that they will be purified and saved
  iii. Finally, the hermit addresses the demons and tells them to “Grab the wicked ones and bring them to mictlan!” His last words are, “Now, Oh my children, I will leave you.”
  iv. Play ends with the demons exiting “singing for Antichrist,” apparently in contradiction of the introductory rubric.

Intertextuality in the two scripts

As these summaries show, Aquino’s plays are clearly connected, both in terms of their subject matter and their intertextuality. Regarding their subject matter, both plays are hybrids of two important genres of European religious theater: Antichrist plays and Final Judgment, or “Doomsday,” plays. Aquino’s first play, “Antichrist and the Final Judgment,” offers the most complete treatment of both themes. It begins with the advent of Antichrist, narrates his career, the preaching of Elijah and Enoch, and his death, which is then followed by the resurrection of the dead, the separation of the blessed and the damned, the Final Judgment, and the end of the world. Aquino’s second play, which I have titled “Antichrist and the Hermit,” also combines both Antichrist and Final Judgment genres, but diverges from the canonical Final Judgment narrative delivered in the first. Just at the point when the slain Antichrist is being borne off stage by a group of demons, Aquino revisits the interaction between the demons and a hermit that was only briefly treated in the first play. This time he expands the interaction into a lengthy series of
dialogues in which the demons reveal that they are representations of the seven deadly sins. After these dialogues, at the point when the narrative should shift to the resurrection of the dead and the Final Judgment, Aquino makes a critical decision. Perhaps drawn to the potential of his developing hermit character, he skips to a moment in the plot of many Final Judgment plays when the condemned souls are paraded on stage to answer for their sins before the throne of Christ. However, rather than permitting Christ to act as chief inquisitor, as is typical in European plays, Aquino’s hermit stays in the spotlight and conducts interrogations of the eighteen condemned sinners listed in the summary above. The twenty-five dialogues between the hermit and the demons and condemned sinners are without question the most striking moments of originality in either of the plays. These dialogues will be explored more fully in Chapter Four. Finally, Aquino ends his second play with an admonitory speech by the hermit, who addresses the assembled audience and urges them to heed the warnings of the pitiful sinners who have been paraded before them. The play concludes without ever narrating the resurrection of the dead, the separation of the blessed and condemned, the Judgment, or the triumphal reign of Christ in heaven, making it a highly atypical Doomsday play at best.

Aquino’s two plays are also related to each other intertextually; that is, each makes references to the other in a number of complex, interrelated ways. This is most notable in the presence of certain details that are only alluded to or mentioned briefly in the first play that are fully developed in the second (see fig. 2.3). This is true with the characters of the hermit, the seven demons representing the seven deadly sins, and the eighteen condemned sinners. As previously mentioned, the introductory rubric of the first play contains a long list of characters, fifty-one in total. In addition to the hermit, the list mentions each of the seven demons, stating yn tlahtlacate⁹. chicomētin Canaqvi yn ātexpō. Ce ytoqa ločiber ynic ii tlaloc ynic .iii. Tezcatlipoca
ynic iii viçilopochtli ynic . v. qtzalcoatl ynic vi Otontecvhtli ynic...vii. civacovatl, “seven demons…will come to take Antichrist. The first is named Lucifer, the second Tlaloc, the third Tezcatlipoca, the fourth Huitzilopochtli, the fifth Quetzalcoatl, the sixth Otontecuhtli, the seventh Cihuacoatl.” The list also names all eighteen condemned sinners, singling them out one by one as well: Ce tlatovani tonalpovhq’ pochtecatl motolliyani telpochtli aviani Tetlanochilliyani..., “a Ruler, a Day Keeper, a Merchant, a Poor Person, a Young Man, a Prostitute, a Procuress…” However, despite the fact that the seven demons and eighteen sinners are listed in the introductory rubric of the first play, none of these are mentioned by name in that play’s narrative. On folio 143 verso Aquino brings on stage the hermit, a character with no known analogue in medieval Final Judgment plays, and we are told that he confronts the demons carrying Antichrist’s slain body off stage. However, in this first play we are not treated to the details of this confrontation. Here is the full extent of this brief scene from “Antichrist and the Final Judgment”:

Here at this point here the person called Hermit will enter. He will ask the demons to tell him where they come from so that they will reveal it to him, and he will ask them what the meaning is of all they are carrying with them. Then the hermit will say, “Tell me, where are you all going?” Why are all of them suffering? Don’t hide it! Just show me what your burden is. Who is it that you are now taking away? Show him to me now!” But they won’t want to show it to him. Then by God’s command he will order them. For a very long time they will confer among themselves because all of them came out of mictlan. Then they will tell him what it is that causes them to suffer. When he orders them to go, then the will go.

Presumably, the character list at the beginning of “Antichrist and the Final Judgment” was written by Aquino before he wrote (or translated) the play itself. If so, it strikes me as odd that he would list each demon by name in the rubric, even stating that these seven demons “will come to take Antichrist” but then not mention them by name when it comes to their scene. Here in “Antichrist and the Final Judgment” we are not treated to anything that remotely approximates
the extended dialogues between the hermit and the demons that we receive in “Antichrist and the Hermit.” Heightening the intertextuality of the two, in the second play when the moment arrives for the hermit to enter and confront the seven, Aquino provides no introduction to the character who will go on to dominate the narrative for the remainder of the play. After St. Michael kills Antichrist and admonishes the audience to return to God, Aquino simply writes, “Then the hermit will say…” presuming that the audience already understands the backstory laid out in the first play.

Similarly, despite the care taken by Aquino to list all eighteen condemned sinners in the rubric to the first play, no mention of them is made by name in that play; rather, like the demons, their moment in the spotlight doesn't happen until the second play. In fact, the narrative structure of the first play’s rubric lays out a specific sequence of events with regard to the eighteen that don’t occur in the second play. According to the rubric, the sequence should unfold like this: “an angel named St. Michael…will come to slay Antichrist,” then “from mictlan will enter the seven demons [who] will come to take Antichrist.” Next, we are told that they “will bring out six priests,” presumably a reference to the “fire priests” who are the first group of the eighteen, then “all those who didn’t believe in God,” the Atlanteocani (“unbelievers”), who are followed by “those who have done evil, a ruler, a day keeper, a merchant,” etc. After the remainder of the eighteen are listed, we are told “a person will enter who is called hermit” who will “order them to reveal their wickedness.” After this, the rubric states, “Then our lord Jesus Christ will come revealing himself, will come judging,” which is followed by the resurrection of the dead and the separation of the blessed and the condemned. Apparently, in the mind of the rubric’s author the interaction between the hermit and the sinners takes place prior to the resurrection of the dead and the Final Judgment. However, in the first play, the play to which the rubric appears to be
attached, there is no mention of the eighteen individual sinners whatsoever. Once Antichrist has been borne off stage, St. Michael announces the Final Judgment, a “wind instrument” is blown, the dead are brought out of mictlan, and the “bad ones” are placed at Christ’s left hand and the “good ones” at his right. During the ensuing Judgment scene, Aquino does introduce two groups of resurrected souls, the beatos (“the blessed”) and the condenados (“condemned”), who stand before Christ to account for their deeds. It could be that these are the eighteen listed in the rubric, but again, no mention of them by name is made. Rather, as with the seven demons, it is only in the second play that they each are interrogated in turn by the hermit.

As we have seen, Aquino introduced characters in the rubric attached to the first play which didn’t make their appearances until the second. In light of this, one might be tempted to conclude that the rubric may more properly belong to the second play. Perhaps copying error resulted in its being attached to the first? However, this is problematic in light of the narrative elements of the rubric which clearly indicate that the play will involve the Final Judgment, an entire second or third act that is missing from “Antichrist and the Hermit.” One possibility is that Aquino wrote the rubric after he had finished both plays. In this scenario, the lengthy rubric does double duty for both scripts, a hypothesis bolstered by the fact that it incorporates elements from both. This is my best guess at the moment. As I will next argue, I believe Aquino had access to a now-lost Spanish play script, one that combined both Antichrist and Final Judgment stories. I posit that this play did not contain the lengthy rubric that currently precedes Aquino’s first play. Instead, I propose that he either wrote the rubric after finishing the second play or if writing it first, he used it to lay out a grand vision which was then realized in the two scripts he produced. This complex scenario is demanded by the intertextuality of Aquino’s Antichrist and Final Judgment plays.
The roots of Aquino’s Antichrist plays in medieval theater

In the previous chapter, I proposed that the apocalyptic sermons of St. Vincent Ferrer make attractive candidates for Aquino’s sources of Antichrist material. The notable role played by Antichrist in the saint’s preaching, the apocalyptic tenor of his message, and the existence of his works in the libraries of New Spain’s Franciscans all support this hypothesis. What is more, I have argued that the demon list on folio 65 of Fabián’s notebook was based on Ferrer’s sermons, specifically his sermon “On the Seven Captains of Lucifer.” This may have been the source of the seven demon characters he brings on stage in “Antichrist and the Hermit.” However, in the previous chapter I noted two problems with this hypothesis. First, Aquino appears to have been working from an Antichrist text that was part of the “forty day” tradition. Ferrer was unequivocally of the “forty-five day” school. Second, Aquino’s sibyl is a prominent character in both plays even though she is completely absent from Ferrer’s apocalyptic sermons. One additional problem not mentioned previously is a discrepancy in Aquino’s list of seven demons. In Ferrer’s sermons the first demon’s name is given as Leviathan. This is the case in the “Seven Captains” sermon as well as the two additional sermons I have found containing this list. However, in Aquino’s plays, the first demon – the only one Aquino didn’t transform into a pre-contact deity – is named Lucifer. If he were working from Ferrer, why didn’t he use Leviathan? These three red flags caused me to reconsider my original hypothesis that Aquino had conceived of both plays as original works of theater, influenced by European sources but not translated directly from them. I now believe Aquino did, in fact, have access to a European play. This was probably a Spanish script dating to the fourteenth or fifteenth century that combined both Antichrist and Final Judgment plots. Further complicating the picture are certain aspects of his translation that raise the question of whether he actually had this script in his possession or was
working from memory. I will address these at the end of the chapter. In what follows I will present evidence gathered from my survey of surviving medieval Antichrist and Final Judgment plays. A comparison of these plays with Aquino’s reveals that his first script, “Antichrist and the Final Judgment,” while certainly containing elements that he adapted for his Nahua audiences, hewed closely to established forms of European medieval drama.

In its earliest and most inchoate forms, medieval theater emerged in pious elaborations of the Catholic liturgy of the mass. Scholars have long noted the dramatic potential of the Eucharistic celebration. As early as the fourth century, when the liturgy of the mass took the form it would hold for a millennium, the central feature was a dramatic reenactment of Christ’s Last Supper. Each and every Sunday, before the audience of the assembled faithful, the priest would embody Christ through words and gestures, keeping this pivotal moment in salvation history alive in front of the eyes of the faithful by means of ritualized performances. The introduction of dialogued speech took form with the introduction of antiphonal song to liturgical worship. Using “scripts” taken from biblical texts, these call and response chants gradually developed into “tropes,” short insertions of dialogued speech or chant intended to explain or elaborate upon a theme. One of the earliest of these tropes was the Quem quaeritis (“Whom do you seek?”), a dialogue between an angel and the three Marys at Christ’s empty tomb on Easter morning that dates to at least the ninth century. Chambers’ statement that in the Easter Quem quaeritis “the liturgical drama was born” is based on the presence of certain elements fundamental to drama: mimetic action, symbolism, and dialogued speech.¹¹

Aside from Easter, the Advent liturgy was another early locus of proto-drama. Unlike Easter, Advent was long associated with apocalyptic themes, themes that related directly to the lost source of Aquino’s Nahuatl “Antichrist and the Final Judgment” play. Advent, the first
season of the liturgical calendar, has always been the most eschatologically-oriented time of the liturgical year. In John’s Apocalypse Jesus proclaimed himself to be the “alpha and omega, the beginning and the end” (Revelation 21:6). Therefore, from earliest times it was deemed fitting that the liturgical season of Advent, which celebrated Christ’s birth, include references to the end of the world. As a result, the biblical readings for the first two weeks of Advent are eschatological in nature. For example, the standard gospel text for the first Sunday of Advent (or sometimes the second), was a passage from Luke chapter twenty-one. In it Jesus states, “And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth distress of nations in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, men fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world” (Luke 21:25–26). Both Old and New World sermonarios and lectionaries, including those penned in Nahuatl by friars and their Nahua assistants, open with sermons that take this text as their model. Nahuas like Aquino would have grown up hearing sermons that elaborated on this passage, often in frightening detail. One such example comes from a small, ornate lectionary held in the Newberry Library (Ayer Ms. 1467). In elegant Nahuatl it reads:

[I]niquac tlalticpac monemitiaya totecuio, i.xº. Quinmolhuili in itlamachtihuaá. yn iquac ye ontlamiz cemanauc, in techneçiz machiotl in tonatiuh ſ metztli, in čićiltatí in tlalticpac vei netoliniliztlí mochíuaaz. Yn uei atl aoc motlacamaniz, aocmo iuian maniz, yn tlalticpactlaca netolinilitzica nemauhtilitzica quauaquízq ipampa in ixquich temamauhti nouian tepan mochíuaaz...

While our lord Jesus Christ lived on the earth, he said to his disciples, “When the whole world ends, signs will appear to us in the sun, the moon, and in the stars. On earth a great suffering will happen. No longer will the sea be peaceful, no longer will it lie calmly spread out. The people of the earth will shrivel up with pain and fear, because of all the frightening things that will happen to people everywhere…”¹²

As early as the eleventh century, the Christmas liturgy included another important early trope, the Ordo Prophetarum. During the midnight mass or matins on Christmas morning, costumed performers representing several Old Testament prophets would process to the high
altar and utter their prophecies regarding the birth of the Messiah. Based on the pseudo-Augustine text known as the *Sermo contra Iudaeos, Paganos et Arianos*, each of these prophets would deliver his indictment of the Jewish people for failing to recognize and accept Christ as the long-awaited Messiah.\(^{13}\) Often one or more of the pagan sibyls were included in the ranks of the *prophetae*. For reasons that are little understood, in medieval Spain the *Contra Iudaeos* text never evolved into a full-blown *Ordo Prophetarum* as it did elsewhere in Europe.\(^{14}\) Instead, the prophecies of the sibyls, the *Cantus Sibyllae*, became the centerpiece of the Spanish Christmas liturgy. Central to this performance were the prophecies of the Erythraean Sibyl, the *Signum Judicii*, which announced in frightening detail the signs that would precede the end of the world and the Final Judgment. These performances eventually grew to be quite elaborate affairs that were not formally part of the liturgy. Stearns paraphrases a contemporary Spanish source’s vivid description of one such performance, which took place in the cathedral of Toledo in 1433. At a certain moment in the midnight mass, the sibyl appeared accompanied by two choir boys dressed as angels and carrying unsheathed swords, which they clashed together between the stanzas of her chant. Two other choir boys illuminated the scene with torches. The sibyl’s prophecy, chanted now in Castilian, was punctuated by the horrific refrain *Juicio fuerte / sera dado / cruel y de muerte*, ‘Harsh judgment will be meted out, cruel and fatal.’ After the actors withdrew, the midnight mass commenced.\(^{15}\)

This confluence of apocalyptic themes in the Advent season, from frightening signs of the End, to the narrative of the Final Judgment, to prophetic utterances by prophets and sibyls, eventually found expression in two separate but related theatrical performances: Antichrist plays and Doomsday plays. It is to this tradition that the now-lost source of Aquino’s Nahuatl “Antichrist and Final Judgment” belongs.

In Chapter One I explored the development of the medieval Antichrist legend. In that chapter I touched on the influential role played by Adso’s *Libellus de Antichristo* on the
standardization of that legend, noting that his text was the source for numerous manifestations of
the Antichrist legend in art, literature, and, apropos to this study, drama. Although it wasn’t a
large genre, Antichrist dramas were fairly common in medieval Europe. Klaus Aichele’s
_Antichristdrama_, the most comprehensive catalogue of medieval Antichrist plays to date, lists 17
from the medieval period, 12 dating to the Reformation, and 14 to the Counter-Reformation
period. Although the figure of Antichrist would make appearances in other play genres, most
notably certain Final Judgment plays, true Antichrist dramas focused exclusively on the life and
career of the Son of Perdition. Some, like the extensive Middle French _Jour du Jugement_,
narrated the entire life of Antichrist from prophecies of his advent to his conception, birth,
education, career, and death. Others focused primarily on his career, the most famously example
being the twelfth-century German play _Ludus de Antechristo_. Frequently these plays narrated the
efforts Antichrist makes to deceive the faithful, relying on the legend’s standard set of three
methods: enticement with gifts, threats of violence, and the performance of miracles. Antichrist
dramas also introduced characters representing the Jews, who, according to the legend, would be
the first to fall prey to Antichrist’s lies. The Old Testament prophets Elijah and Enoch are
universally present in the plays I have examined. They preach against Antichrist, urging those
who have been deceived to return to the faith, and, having some effect, are in the end killed by
Antichrist or his servants. Some plays, particularly the German ones, incorporated the legend of
the Last World Emperor, a powerful Christian ruler who opposes Antichrist in accordance with
the prophecies of the Tiburtine Sibyl and the Pseudo-Methodius. Demons are frequent members
of the cast. In the _Jour du Jugement_ they convene in a “parliament of hell” to plan for the coming
of Antichrist. In the Chester “The Coming of Antichrist” they bear off the slain body of
Antichrist to hell. In the German _Churer Weltgerichtsspiel_ demons appear to be associated with the seven deadly sins.

Notably absent from Aichele’s list are any Antichrist dramas that originate in Spain. I have looked long and hard to find a Spanish example that pre-dates Juan Ruiz de Alarcón’s Golden Age play _El Anticristo_, an important Antichrist drama but one that is too late to be considered Aquino’s source. None of the four volumes of Léo Rouanet’s extensive catalogue _Autos, farsas y coloquios del siglo XVI_ contains an Antichrist drama. Hilaire Kellendorf, who consulted over eight hundred Spanish plays for her book _Sins of the Fathers_, reported in a personal communication to me that she has not encountered a single Antichrist drama pre-dating the seventeenth century. Richard K. Emmerson, author of numerous studies of the medieval Antichrist legend, similarly came up empty-handed when asked this question. I have only been able to locate a single reference to a Spanish Antichrist play, one titled “Auto de la venida del ante Christo” which seems to date to 1585. Although efforts to locate a copy of this play have been fruitless, this reference offers some meager evidence that pre-Alarconian Spanish Antichrist dramas existed at one time. The profusion of Antichrist literature in Spain during the fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries discussed in the last chapter, together with the demonstrable popularity of the theme in religious theater outside of Spain, strongly suggests that such plays did exist, even if surviving evidence is scant.

Final Judgment plays, despite their thematic connection with Advent liturgies and _lectios_, appear to have been performed during the Corpus Christi celebrations that developed following the elevation of this feast to the Roman Rite in 1264. In the early fourteenth century, public processions featuring the consecrated host, which according to Church dogma was transubstantiated into the true body of Christ, became popular Corpus demonstrations of piety.
across Europe. These processions gradually evolved into more elaborate performances involving tableaus of costumed actors depicting important events in Christian history. In Spain by the early sixteenth century Corpus Christi tableaus had become full theatrical performances, called *autos*, which were the highlight of the Church calendar. As early as the fifteenth century in England, lengthy series of plays were being performed by professional troops of actors who traveled from town to town in wagons which could be converted into stages. These roving Corpus productions came to be called Mystery Cycles. Beginning with the story of Adam and Eve, these cycles traced the history of Salvation from the Fall through the Final Judgment. The most famous surviving examples of these are English, those performed in Chester, Townley, and Coventry. The Chester Mystery Cycle contains two plays pertaining to the Antichrist legend (“The Prophets of Antichrist” and “The Coming of Antichrist”) as well as a Final Judgment play.

Dramatizations of the Final Judgment often opened with a solemn proclamation of the arrival of the end of time. Some plays mention the appearance of frightening signs, either referencing the passage from Luke’s Gospel or the medieval text known as the *Fifteen Signs Before Doomsday*. Next, an angel or angels appear blowing trumpets in announcement of the beginning of the End. The dead are raised, often emerging from trapdoors set into the stage, where they congregate shaking with fear. In some plays, four angels then emerge bearing the instruments of Christ’s passion: a crown of thorns, nails, a sponge, and a lance.

The Judgment itself was usually based on the passage in Matthew’s gospel where Jesus separates the blessed from the damned. Matthew writes, “Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left” (25:31–33). Thereupon follows an exchange between Christ and the resurrected souls in which Christ says to
the blessed, “Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me” (verses 34–36). The blessed ask Christ “When did we see you hungry and feed you?,” to which Christ responds, “Whenever you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me” (verse 40). A similar exchange takes place with the condemned souls, with Christ stating that “whenever you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me” (verse 45).

In a number of medieval Final Judgment plays, the blessed and damned are represented by characters playing the roles of specific members of medieval society. For example, in the English mystery play performed at Chester, the script calls for a “redeemed” pope, emperor, king, and queen, as well as a “damned” pope, emperor, king, and queen. Other plays flesh out the ranks of the damned to include corrupt bishops, friars, nuns, merchants, judges, bailiffs, notaries, and lawyers. One play even adds “Observantines and friars minor” to the list of damned. Once each has spoken their piece, Christ beckons the blessed to join him in heaven and sends the damned back through their trapdoors to hell. Demons dance and sing with delight at the tortures they will soon be inflicting upon such pathetic souls, who must have howled and moaned as they were dragged off stage. Many such plays concluded with the singing of the Te deum, a hymn of praise often associated with medieval theater.

Surviving examples of Final Judgment plays written in Spanish, whether from Spain or New Spain, are as hard to come by as those of Antichrist plays. Miguel M. García-Bermejo Giner lists a number of autos “del Juicio” dating to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in his Catálogo del teatro español del siglo xvi. So far I have been unable to locate any of those he
cites in modern editions. However, as I stated above, the ubiquity of this theme in the art, architecture, and literature of medieval Europe, along with the existence of multiple examples from religious theater outside of Spain, make it all but certain that such plays did exist and enjoyed widespread popularity during the Middle Ages. The one notable exception is the well-known Nahuatl Final Judgment play that is often dubiously cited as the first work of New World theater.29 Multiple early sources, both Spanish and Nahuatl, make reference to a *uei tlamaizolli*, *uei neixcuitilli* (“a great marvel, a great example,” i.e., a religious play) possibly performed multiple times in the 1530’s and 40’s in New Spain that depicted *inic tlamiz cemanauac* (“how the world will end”).30 In his *Apologetica historia sumaria* Bartolomé de Las Casas refers to a massive production of the “juicio universal” involving eight hundred native actors that took place in Mexico City.31 There is some confusion about whether these sources are referring to the same production or two different productions.

Complicating the matter further, we have a surviving script of a Nahuatl Final Judgment that appears to date to the seventeenth century and bears the title *Neixcuitilmachiotl motenehua juicio final* (“Exemplary Model Called Final Judgment”).32 Horcasitas, whose 1974 publication *El Teatro Nahuatl* remains an early and important study, speculates that the surviving play is a seventeenth-century copy of the one performed in 1533.33 Louise Burkhart, who can be considered today’s leading authority on the subject of colonial Nahuatl theater, is highly suspicious of this claim, noting that there was “no compelling reason” for him to do so other than wishful thinking on his part.34 Casting further doubt on the connection, she notes that the production of written texts in Nahuatl had barely begun in 1533 and the apparent discrepancy between the surviving script’s diminutive nineteen-member cast and the much larger spectacle implied in the sixteenth-century sources, even allowing for considerable exaggeration on the part
of Las Casas.  Nevertheless, I have included the Neixcuitlmachiotl motenehua juicio final in my data set because it is one of the few surviving early-modern Final Judgment play scripts in any language, let alone Spanish. Making it even more tantalizing is the fact that one of the nineteen characters it portrays happens to be Antichrist. Although his part is minor, it is one of the only surviving references to this important figure of European apocalypticism that I have been able to locate from the corpus of colonial Nahuatl religious writing. Whether described in sermons, painted in vivid color on the walls of New Spain’s fortress churches, or enacted in living color on the Nahuatl stage, the Final Judgment was a theme that saturated the religious milieu in which Fabián de Aquino was reared. Whether or not these depictions also included Antichrist can only be speculated about, although I lean towards thinking that they must have. Perhaps Aquino witnessed for himself the performance of the “Juicio Universal” recorded by Las Casas, or was told about it by members of the preceding generation. According to seventeenth-century Nahua annalist Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin, the Nahuas who witnessed the spectacle cenca quimahuizoque yn mizahuique, “were very amazed and astonished,” and would likely have kept its memory alive into Aquino’s time. Although there is no direct evidence that this production – like the surviving Neixcuitlmachiotl script – contained the Antichrist character, we are left wondering whether Aquino may have first come to be acquainted with Antichrist in the context of a live performance of the end of the world and the Final Judgment.

Reconstructing Aquino’s lost source

A comparison of Aquino’s “Antichrist and the Final Judgment” play with European analogues strongly suggest the existence of a source text. Though now lost, I argue that this missing source
was translated into Nahuatl by Aquino with some adaptation and today occupies folios 131r–150r of the Hispanic Society manuscript. However, the second of his two scripts, comprising folios 155r–187r, I argue has no direct European source. Instead, it seems to have been inspired by elements in the first. As such, it represents a remarkable flowering of native literary creativity. In order to bolster my hypothesis that Fabián de Aquino worked from a now-lost source text, I gathered a database of medieval plays and compared them with Aquino’s. Though my list doesn’t include every surviving script, it does include most of those that exist in modern editions. I examined eight plays in total. Four were Antichrist plays and include the twelfth-century German Ludus de Antichristo, a fourteenth-century French Antichrist and Judgment Day, the English Coming of Antichrist from the fifteenth-century Chester Mystery Cycle, and the German Churer Weltgerichtsspiel, published in 1517. The four Final Judgment dramas I examined include a play performed in Perugia, Italy, between 1320 and 1340, another text from the Chester Mystery Cycle, a fifteenth-century French play titled Le Jugement Dernier, and the aforementioned Neixcuitilmachiotl motenehua juicio final.

The results of my analysis are displayed in figures 2.4a and 2.4b. The horizontal rows represent the key characters and plot events common to each of the two genres. Rows above the centerline on the left pertain to Antichrist plays; rows below the centerline on the right pertain to Final Judgment plays. Each of the vertical columns represents a different play; Antichrist plays are on the left and Final Judgment plays on the right. In the center I have displayed Aquino’s plays for comparison. Even the briefest glance at these data shows that Aquino’s plays follow their European analogues very closely. In what follows I will highlight the important similarities.

A number of the European plays in my database open with a speech by an authoritative figure. This character’s function is to set the scene, establish the theme of the play, and invite the
audience to pay careful attention. In the *Ludus* this speech is given by the allegorical character “Gentilitas,” in the Chester *Coming* it is Antichrist, in the *Churer* it is a Prelocutor (“herald”), in the French *Antichrist and Final Judgment* it is a Preacher, and in the Nahuatl *Neixcuitilmachiotl* it is St. Michael. The Preacher who opens the French *Antichrist and Final Judgment* play is representative of these sorts of speeches. After chiding the audience, saying, “calm down, fair gentle folk,” he announces that he will deliver a sermon before the opening of the first scene. What follows is a lengthy summation of salvation history starting with Creation and proceeding to the Fall of Adam and Eve, Noah and the flood, Christ’s Passion, and the resurrection of the dead at the end of time. His sermon is part catechesis, touching on essential tenets of Christian dogma, as evidenced in the following brief excerpt:

…at the time when Jesus,
cloaked in our humanity,
came to battle against the king of iniquity,
whom he vanquished by dying
on the cross, whence, hastening,
his soul descended to Hell
and gave back to all his beloved
the heritage of Paradise
that they had previously lost.
Through him Death died on the cross.
He opened to all virtuous people the portal of Paradise…\(^\text{37}\)

In place of a preacher, Aquino’s first play, “Antichrist and the Final Judgment,” opens with a lengthy speech by a sibyl. Like the Preacher above, she addresses herself to the audience. However, here the audience is clearly indigenous. In addressing them, she employs the Nahuatl diphrastic expression *ticuitlapilli, tahtlapalli* which literally means “you tail, you wing” but bears the metaphorical meaning of “you commoner or native person.” Her tone is solemn and her message grave: “Here you are at last, you tail, you wing! Look here! At last arise, you who are well brought up, and you will see the *neixcuitilli*, so that you will really know when God by his
will shall end the whole world!” (fol.133r–v). After this introduction, Sibyl launches into a lengthy series of prognostications and admonitions, amounting essentially to a sermon. She states that God has sent her to urge the audience to fully embrace Christian teachings before the end of the world. She reminds her listeners of the story of the Savior’s birth, death, resurrection, and ascension. As with the Preacher quoted above, her words read like an abbreviated catechism.

Here she nearly quotes from the Nicene Creed:

By means of the Holy Spirit’s goodness Jesus Christ came to take on flesh. He came to assume his body inside Saint Mary. Jesus, our ruler, died on the cross as a man. It should be believed that he died only for us on earth.

On the third day he came back to life, he went to show himself to his noblemen and also to console them. Forty days later he ascended to heaven. He prepared us; he will come again to judge you; you will lay before him what you did on earth.38

She continues, chiding them for treating sin casually and risking the eternal fate of their souls. Fulfilling her long-established role as prophet, she announces the coming of Antichrist, warning the faithful that he will claim to be Christ himself, will offer them gifts and perform miracles. Many ahcualtin (“not good ones”) will be led astray by Antichrist, whom she calls tlacatecolotl.39 After summarizing the key events in the Antichrist legend, such as the preaching of Enoch and Elijah, she turns to narrating the Final Judgment and the awful terror experienced by those who “didn’t want to get baptized.” Her sermon is more didactic in tone than that of the Preacher from the French Antichrist and Judgment Day, which is in keeping with the catechistic nature of Nahuatl religious drama. Unlike European audiences who were born and raised in the Christian tradition, Aquino’s audience was less firmly founded in Christianity. As a result, his plays reiterate the same fundamental tenets of the faith that were found in Nahuatl doctrinas, establishing a close parallel between Aquino’s work and these catechistic materials. This connection will be explored in greater detail in the chapters to come.
The fact that Aquino’s play opens with an introductory sermon by a sibyl points in the direction of Spain as his source text’s country of origin. As has already been noted, while the medieval Spanish liturgy never fully developed the *Ordo Prophetarum*, it showed a preference for its sibyl characters. The rich theatricality of the “Song of the Sibyls” and the “Signs of Judgment” in the Spanish church makes it all the more believable that a Spanish playwright would give such a prominent role to a Sibyl in the composition of a Final Judgment play.

Aquino’s narrative of the life and career of Antichrist closely follows those of the European plays I surveyed. The tradition established by Adso in the tenth century stated that Antichrist would set out to deceive the faithful by employing three strategies: he would entice them with gifts, perform miracles, and threaten them with violence. Each of the four plays surveyed made mention of gifts. The Chester *Antichrist* speaks of “worldly wealth” and grants of land, while the French *Antichrist and Judgment Day* mentions clothing, “goods,” and “wealth and everlasting joy.” Also noted in detail are the miracles Antichrist performs with the aid of the special powers granted to him by the devil. In the *Ludus* he heals a lame man and a leper, and raises the dead. In the Chester *Antichrist* he not only raises the dead but causes trees to grow upside down and fire to fall from heaven; both these miracles are specified in many medieval sources and depicted in artwork. In the French *Antichrist and Judgment Day* Antichrist feigns his own death and then raises himself back to life, makes the blind see, cures a leper, and raises those who had died.

Aquino’s Antichrist behaves in much the same way as these. He strives to win followers from among the Nahua *macehualtin*, alternating between heartfelt pleas and bitter threats of violence. Like his European counterparts, he entices them with gifts, which in Aquino’s hand are imagined as items especially appealing to a native audience:
But if you will obey me then you will receive your reward in my home, you will live with me forever…I will give you tortillas so that you won’t be hungry, so that you will really rest yourself there. And you shall drink honey. There are very good chili peppers growing there in my home and you will drink good atolli there in the morning. And now I want to give to you a whole lot of gold! Here is a precious cloak!*

In Aquino’s second play, Antichrist performs one of the miracles that are most commonly included in European plays: he raises the dead. More specifically, he raises the mother and father of a character named Martyr in an effort to convince him that he (Antichrist) is in fact the true Christ. This specific detail wasn’t mentioned in the European plays I examined. However, it does show up in another location: the sermons of Vincent Ferrer. In two sermons that I have identified, one preached by Ferrer in July of 1411 in Toledo and his third sermon for the second Sunday of Advent from the 1558 edition of *Sermones Hyemales*, he relates that either the “ministers of Antichrist” or Antichrist himself will raise the mothers and fathers of doubting Christians from the dead. Note that this miracle appears in Aquino’s second play, not the first. I have been arguing that this second play, “Antichrist and the Hermit,” wasn’t based on a European model, but rather was adapted from “Antichrist and the Final Judgment,” which was. The appearance in Aquino’s more original script of material from Ferrer’s sermons both strengthens and complicates the story of Aquino’s sources. It paints a picture of a learned Nahua in possession of broad knowledge of European sources as well as the freedom and creativity to fashion his own version of the colonizers’ legends.

In many medieval narratives of the Antichrist legend, the Jewish people play an important role and, consequently, show up in many of the staged dramatizations. All four of the plays I examined for this comparison had characters representing Jews. In Chapter One I noted that Antichrist’s first converts were often the Jews, which was in keeping with the anti-Semitism of the day. In the medieval mindset, since Jews had been the “killers of Christ,” they were
generally assumed to already be in league with the devil and therefore predisposed to be duped by Antichrist. In the Antichrist plays they are portrayed as eager allies of Antichrist, marveling at his miraculous powers, and gleefully scorning the person of Jesus Christ. However, the legend also dictated that the Jews would eventually be converted to the Christian faith in order to accord with Scripture, which stated that before the second coming “all Israel will be saved.”

Depending on the tradition their salvation would be brought about either through the preaching of Enoch and Elijah or by the Last World Emperor. Aquino’s Nahuatl “Antichrist and the Final Judgment” doesn’t mention Jews as characters. However, it does include a group of characters who are referred to as conversos (“converts”), using the Spanish loanword as opposed to a Nahuatl equivalent. After Elijah and Enoch have preached against the Antichrist Aquino writes “Here then those who no longer acknowledged God will believe, those who are called conversos.” Expressing their contrition they exclaim, “Today the wicked ones have fooled us. We have offended the only deity. And now may we appease him, may we live by the words of Jesus Christ, may you grant, may you pray to our father on our behalf!”

Enoch and Elijah then command them to weep for their sins and “spit on the tlacatecolotl,” finally pronouncing “what is called a prayer” (yevatl yn itoca Oraçion) over them. It is almost certain that in Aquino’s source text these conversos were Jews. Since all of the characters in his adaptation are natives, it’s not too far fetched to conclude that in Aquino’s hands these converts to Christianity were Nahuas, the New World analogue to the conversos of Spain following the expulsion of 1492. Like Nahuas of Aquino’s day, Spain’s conversos endured intense scrutiny by the Christian population and the sincerity and depth of their Christian faith was under constant suspicion. Here, then, is another clue that Aquino’s source text may have originated in Spain.
Like most European narratives of the Final Judgment, whether they be theater or otherwise, this scene in Aquino’s first play is modeled on the passage from Matthew 25 in which Jesus separates the blessed from the condemned “as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats” (25:32). In European performances based on this passage, stage directions indicate that after the dead have been resurrected for judgment, angels will separate them into two groups: the blessed gathering to the right of Christ’s throne and the condemned on the left. The French Antichrist and Judgment Day is a typical example of how dramatizations depicted what follows next. In this case it is God, not Christ, who beckons the blessed ones to approach his throne. He says to them, “When I was hungry, you gave me to eat/When I was thirsty, you gave me to drink/When I was cold, you covered me/When I was in prison,…,” etc. A character named “The Just Man” responds, asking when did they ever do these things. God continues, explaining that whenever they did these things to others, they were doing the same to God. Next, God’s attention shifts to the condemned. He lashes out at them, saying, “Wretched ones, away with you, delay no longer!/Into the eternal fires of Hell, ever blazing, tarry no more…/When you saw me hungry/Near death, you did not feed me…,” etc. After this bitter tirade, rather than having one representative of the condemned respond, as was the case with the blessed, a series of characters respond in turn: a Lawyer, a corrupt Queen, a Usurer, etc. These bemoan God’s harsh sentence, begging for mercy, which, of course, is not granted. The play ends with demons dragging the guilty off stage to hell and St. Paul saying, “Let us now sing Te Deum/with ringing voices.”

In a general sense Aquino’s portrayal of the Final Judgment follows the model of European Final Judgment quite closely. St. Michael announces the resurrection of the dead, shouting, “O, dead! Get up! Quickly, be counted before God! Reveal all of your filth.” The demons drag the ahcualtin from mictlan, and angels arrange them along with the cualtin (“good
ones”) to the left and right of Christ’s throne. During all of this we are told “there will be beating of drums.” Then Christ addresses the good ones, referred to here as beatos (“the blessed”), and we are run through roughly the same sequence of exchanges summarized above. The same is repeated with the bad ones, who are referred to as condenados (“the condemned”). Unlike the French Antichrist and Judgment Day, however, we do not hear from individual members of the condemned, at least not in Aquino’s first play. As has already been discussed, these exchanges are saved for the second play where they are embellished and expanded to include eighteen individuals. However, like the French Antichrist and Judgment Day we are told in Aquino’s rubric that these characters include everyday figures like a corrupt merchant, ruler, and doctor. After the judgment has been pronounced, the demons come back on stage to drag the condemned to hell. We are told that “Some they will bear on their backs, others they will carry in their arms. All of them will weep greatly.” As they leave, they sing a song, the text of which is provided by Aquino. This short excerpt gives a sense of its doleful tone:

Alas! If only we were never born!
Alas! We were in danger!
Let us now weep,
Let us be sad,
Let us enter mictlan!
Let all people say, “Alas!”

Next, the blessed are ushered heavenward by Christ who tells them “Come up, all of you.” In both European and New World theater this entailed actors literally ascending ladders to the upper level of a three-part stage; there’s no reason to think that this wasn’t true in this case as well. The blessed ascend singing their own song, the text of which is not provided. Finally, the play ends with a prayer of praise to St. Mary and the singing of the Te deum.

Despite the close correspondence between European plays and Aquino’s Antichrist and the Final Judgment, certain elements complicate the idea that he was working directly from a
European source. This has already been discussed to an extent, principally the unclear relationship between the lengthy introductory rubric and the two Nahuatl plays. However, there are other elements that strike me as problematic in a scenario where Aquino has the source text in his possession while making his translation. This is especially noticeable in his presentation of the Judgment scene, where aspects of his narrative diverge from both biblical and European models. For example, Aquino’s version of Matthew 25 garbles the gospel account. In Matthew, Jesus states the reasons why the blessed will be called to heaven by proclaiming, “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink,” etc. Each of the six statements of Christ are listed in the left-hand column of the diagram below.

Table 2.1. Comparison of Matthew 25:35–36 with fol. 145v of HSA NS 3/1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Matthew 25:35–36</th>
<th>Aquino, fol. 145v</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I was hungry and you gave me food</td>
<td>you received me into your homes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was thirsty and you gave me drink</td>
<td>you had mercy on me when I was hungry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was a stranger and you welcomed me</td>
<td>you gave your sustenance to the poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was naked and you clothed me</td>
<td>when I was in jail you really cared for me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was sick and you visited me</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was in prison and you came to me</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, as can be seen from the information in the right-hand column, Aquino’s sequence doesn’t match the account in Matthew or European dramatizations of this passage. Rather than opening with the iconic statements “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink,” Aquino’s Christ paraphrases the entire Matthew 25:35–36 passage by saying,

When I lived on earth you received me into your homes, and you had mercy on me when I was hungry. When you gave your sustenance to the poor it was on my behalf, and when I was in jail it was me you really cared for.”

56
Some of the missing details are filled in later on in the Judgment narrative. For example, in their response to Christ’s words the blessed say, “never here on earth did we give you drink,” (even though Christ didn’t mention “drink” in his first statement). Additionally, when Christ accuses the condemned he tells them, “those who went around naked you didn’t want to cover up.” Although Aquino doesn’t include a full paraphrase of the Matthew 25:35–36 passage, he elaborates extensively on certain aspects of Jesus’s words, building them up into something approaching a sermon. This is particularly clear in Christ’s words chastising the condemned. In order to give a sense of Aquino’s elaboration of the canonical text, I will quote it in length:

Then he will say to the bad ones, “You who have become wicked, you will be locked up in *mictlan* because you did not show mercy to people with your possessions. Even though you prospered you did not show mercy to those who suffer; you didn’t feed them…

And when my children taught you long ago that I am your ruler, you didn’t believe them, you just hated them, you just wished for their death and also you spoke ill of them. You killed them because of me.

When you prospered you disparaged those who were really poor. How very arrogant you were! Those who went around naked you didn’t want to cover up, you were just inconsiderate in how greedy you were, you didn’t take pity on people.

You just lived devoting yourselves to all of your many women, your very many mistresses, those who you cared for. When you committed adultery you just satisfied yourselves as a result. And now I desire that you see your reward in *mictlan*.

And all those who are poor, never did you have mercy on them, for my sake [never] did you feed them. You just looked at them with anger. When they came into your home, you did not have compassion on them. And you would rise up in your homes when it was morning and you would just devote yourself to food and you would eat amongst yourselves. Because of this you will not go to my house.

And when I was sitting in jail you didn’t go to see me, you didn’t go to give me anything. Although you were rich, you used to feed your yellow parrots and your white parrots well, but those who are poor, my beloved ones, you left them to starve.57

The themes raised in this passage also found expression in another basic catechistic text that Aquino would surely have been exposed to: the Corporal Works of Mercy. This is a list of seven
compassionate acts, based on the Matthew 25 passage, that Christians are encouraged to perform as part of their practice. In his 1546 *Doctrina christiana breve* Molina lists these as:

*Inic centetl tlaqualtilozque in moteociuitiani yn mapizmiquitiani*  
*Inic untetl atlitilozque yn mamiquitiani*  
*Inic etetl tlaquentilozque in mopetlauiltitinemi*  
*Inic nauhtetl yn cucuxque yollalilozque tlapalolozque*  
*Inic macuiltetl maquixtilozque yn temac huetzini yn tlaltlacotin*  
*Inic chiquacentetl cochitilozque yn nenenque yn motolinia*  
*Inic chicuntetl tocozque in mimicque.*

First, the hungry and the famished will be given food.  
Second, the thirsty will be given drink.  
Third, those who go along naked will be clothed.  
Fourth, the sick will be consoled and visited.  
Fifth, those who have fallen into slavery will be rescued.  
Sixth, the suffering travellers will be given a place to sleep.  
Seventh, the dead will be buried.  

While it is possible that something akin to this may have existed in Aquino’s hypothetical source script, the degree to which he departs from the gospel text and the catechistic nature of its content casts some doubt over the idea that he had this source in his possession while executing his translation. Rather, the general impression his treatment of Matthew’s passage gives me is that of someone working from memory: he gets the general thrust of the passage, even if he misses some of the details. And, what he lacks in terms of precise recollections of the source, he fills in generously with original material that is targeted specifically at his native audience.  

Is it conceivable that Aquino, at an earlier stage in his career, had encountered a Spanish Antichrist and Final Judgment play – perhaps in the library of the Franciscans who trained him – and had been so impressed that later on he decided to try to recreate it in Nahuatl? He certainly would have been familiar enough with the Final Judgment narrative to do so; it was a common theme in the preaching and teaching of the friars, not to mention the murals that decorated their churches and the reliefs carved into their walls. Any details of the source play he couldn’t
precisely remember could be filled in by an imagination steeped on such eschatological themes and trained in the basic texts of the Nahua Nahuatl catechism such as the Corporal Works of Mercy.

Evidence in the passage above further suggests its origins lay in New, rather than Old, Spain. For one, there are the clear fingerprints of a native hand in the composition of this passage. Those among the condemned who were rich are indicted for generously feeding their “yellow parrots and [their] white parrots” while leaving the poor to starve. However, beyond that there are the unmistakable echoes of the friars’ discourses on morality, clear traces of Aquino’s religious indoctrination in earlier years. Whereas Christ’s emphasis in the gospel passage is squarely on what today might be called “social justice” issues (feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the imprisoned, etc.), Aquino’s Christ emphasizes precisely those vices which the friars perceived as being endemic to indigenous peoples’ character. For example, the damned are accused of being gluttonous: “you would rise up in your homes when it was morning and you would just devote yourself to food,” as well as stingy: “you were inconsiderate in how greedy you were.” Most telling of all, the damned are accused of being adulterous, sexually unrestrained, and polygamous: “you just lived devoting yourselves to all of your many women, your very many mistresses, those who you lived taking care of. When you committed adultery you just satisfied yourselves as a result.” Here is further evidence of the imprint left on Aquino’s psyche by his religious indoctrination. This has already been alluded to in Chapter One. In the chapters that follow it will be taken up and probed more deeply. For now, it stands as one additional piece of the puzzle we are trying to assemble in an effort to trace the sources of Aquino’s Antichrist and Final Judgment plays.

Conclusion
In this chapter I have endeavored to make the case that Aquino had access to a European play script, and that this was the source of the first of his two plays, “Antichrist and the Final Judgment.” Support for this conclusion is drawn from a close comparison between known examples of European Antichrist and Final Judgment plays and Aquino’s works. The results of this comparison are displayed in Figures 2.4a and 2.4b. Like its European counterparts, Aquino’s first play traces the career of Antichrist, detailing his efforts to deceive the faithful through seductive words, gifts, and miracles, relating the efforts of the Old Testament prophets Elijah and Enoch to counter Antichrist’s actions, incorporating characters representing demons and Jews, and ending with Antichrist’s death at the hands of St. Michael. Like European Final Judgment plays, Aquino’s script then proceeds to the announcement of the resurrection of the dead, the separation of the blessed from the damned, dialogues based on Christ’s words from Matthew 25, and the singing of the *Te deum* at the conclusion. It would be difficult to account for these correspondences in any way other than the existence of a source text. Whether Aquino had that text in front of him while producing his translation or was working from memory is, at this time, still up for debate. Similarly, the degree to which Ferrer’s sermons influenced Aquino’s translation and the complex relationship between the first play and the second are also difficult to determine with precision. Nevertheless, though its existence may never be proven, this shadowy source lives on in the newly-discovered Nahuatl plays of Fabián de Aquino.

Earlier I argued that Aquino redacted the texts in his devotional notebook with singular focus on the Nahuas of his home parish and their spiritual needs. In the absence of frequent visits from friars and out of a desire to satisfy a demand, Aquino used his literacy and deep knowledge of Christian doctrinal literature to provide for his people what the church was unable to do sufficiently at the time. The two plays bound within the covers of Fabián’s notebook are the
product of these efforts. In the next chapter, the focus will shift from Aquino’s sources to a close reading of his adaptation of the Antichrist and Final Judgment narratives. What I hope to show is that his work, far from being a slavish copy of his sources, was a creative adaptation of two of the spiritual colonizer’s most important eschatological stories. The characters that emerge are both native and Christian. Though they speak Nahuatl, obey Nahua conventions, and express a deep knowledge of Nahua culture, they also mouth words originating in the catechisms and sermons of the friars. As such, they inhabit the role of “Christian” in a thoroughly Nahua way.
Illustrations

Figure 2.1. The first folio of “Antichrist and the Final Judgment.” Hispanic Society of America MS NS 3/1 fol. 131r.
Figure 2.2. The first folio of “Antichrist and the Hermit.” Hispanic Society of America MS NS 3/1 fol. 155r.
Figure 2.3. Comparison of the plot structures of Aquino’s Antichrist and Final Judgment plays.
Figure 2.4a. Chart comparing European Antichrist plays (left, tan) and Aquino's two plays (right, purple).
**Figure 2.4b.** Chart comparing Aquino’s plays (left, purple) and Final Judgment plays (right, lavender).

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- Christ, Mary, St. Peter, "apostles".
- Named in the cast list at the beginning of the play: Satan, Lucifer, Belshazzar, "Deiobus maior."
Endnotes

1 Fabián de Aquino, *Sermones y miscelánea de devoción*, MS NS 3/1, Hispanic Society of America, New York, fol.155r.

2 Friars and Nahua working on the earliest translations of Christian concepts into Nahuatl settled on the word *mictlan* as an equivalent for *infierno* (Spanish for “hell”). *Mictlan* (“place of the dead”) was understood by Nahuatl-speaking peoples prior to First Contact to be one of a number of otherworlds. Because it was the destination of most souls following death and due to its general location under the earth, it was a natural candidate for the equivalent of hell, but *mictlan* was not an uncomplicated choice. For one, it was not a place of eternal punishment. Additionally, it was the destination of all souls regardless of their actions during life; the only souls who didn’t end up in *mictlan* were those who had died under very specific circumstances: drowning, during birth, in battle, etc. Due to the fact that *mictlan* is not a simple equivalent for the Christian hell, and in recognition of the likelihood that its use in Nahuatl Christian texts contributed to the persistence of indigenous concepts of the afterlife, I have chosen to leave it untranslated. For more on *mictlan* see Burkhart 1989, Chapter Three.

3 Like *mictlan*, *tlacatecolotl* was an imperfect choice as the equivalent for “demon” or “devil.” See Burkhart 1989:40–41 for a more thorough treatment of this term and its usage in Nahuatl Christian texts. Here and below I will leave this term untranslated for reasons similar to those stated in the preceding note on *mictlan*.

4 Though traditionally translated as “sodomite,” *cuiloni* literally means, “one who is customarily taken [by another],” which appears to be a euphemism for the passive homosexual act (i.e., anal sex; Pete Sigal, *The Flower and the Scorpion: Sexuality and Ritual in Early Nahua Culture* [Duke University Press, 2011], 193). In this dissertation I will leave the term *cuiloni* and its derived forms (such as *tecuilontli*, “sodomy”) untranslated. This is due to the heavy cultural and moral baggage carried by the term and my desire not to carry that baggage over into my analyses and translations.

5 *Patlachhuiani* is a little understood term. See note on fol. 186r of “Antichrist and the Hermit” (Appendix C) for more. Due to this uncertainty, here and below I have chosen to leave this term untranslated.

6 According to Emmerson, Glaeske, and Hult (1998), the only European drama to combine full treatments of both the Antichrist legend and the Final Judgment was the fifteenth-century Middle French play they title “Antichrist and Final Judgment.” I have identified an additional example, the German Doomsday play performed in Chur, Switzerland in 1517. See Ursula Schulze, ed. *Churre Weltgerichtsspiel* (Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1993).

7 Aquino, *Sermones y miscelánea de devoción*, fol.132r.

8 Ibid., fol.132r–v.

9 fols.143v–144r.

10 Ibid., fol.132r.


15 Ibid., 205.
17 See Emmerson, Glaeske, and Hult, *Antichrist and Judgment Day*.
21 Hilaire Kallendorf, e-mail message to author, January 14, 2016.
26 For example, the fourteenth-century Middle French “Jour du Jugement” includes a miser, a usurer, a lawyer, an abbess, a bishop, a provost, and a bailiff. See Emmerson, Glaeske, and Hult, *Antichrist and Judgment Day*.
28 Giner, *Catálogo del Teatro Español*, 269–70.
29 For example, this assumption is made in a number of the essays in the volume edited by María Sten, *El Teatro Franciscano en la Nueva España: Fuentes y Ensayos para el Estudio del Teatro de Evangelización en el Siglo XVI* (Mexico: Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, UNAM, 2000), 154, 320.
32 Currently held in the Library of Congress. Horcasitas included a Spanish translation of the play in *El Teatro Náhuatl* in 1974 (pp. 568–593). It was first published in English by Sell and Burkhart in 2004 as part of the first volume of their *Nahuatl Theater* project (2004:190–209).
34 Personal communication to the author, August 2016.
35 Ibid.
38 fols.133v–134r.
39 It is unclear whether Aquino believed Antichrist to be *a* devil or *the* devil, since the Nahuatl word he used *tlacatecolotl* can mean both in the colonial Christian context. Either way, Aquino
reveals the incomplete nature of his understanding of this character, since Christian theologians were clear that Antichrist was not the devil incarnate, nor was he a demon, but a fully human being who was endowed with evil powers by the devil.

40 See John Wright, ed. and trans., The Play of Antichrist (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1967).


43 fol.138v.

44 Pedro Cátedra García, Sermón, Sociedad y Literatura en la Edad Media: San Vicente Ferrer en Castilla (1411–1412) (Salamanca: Junta de Castilla y León/Consejería de Cultura y Turismo, 1994), 541.

45 Romans 11:26.

46 Emmerson, Antichrist in the Middle Ages, 41.

47 Aquino, Sermones y miscelánea de devoción, fol.139v.

48 Ibid., fol.140v.

49 Ibid., fol.141r.

50 Emmerson, Glaeske, and Hult, Antichrist and Judgment Day, 84.

51 Ibid., 85.

52 Ibid., 88.

53 Aquino, Sermones y miscelánea de devoción, fol.144v.

54 fol. 148r.

55 Ibid.

56 fol.145v.

57 fols. 146r–147v.

58 Joaquín García Icazbalceta, ed. Códice Franciscano, Siglo XVI (México: Editorial Chavez Hayhoe, 1941), 45.
Chapter 3:

Aztec Antichrist

Antichrist will say: “O rise up! O my children!...Do not be confused. Why did you dismantle my house? From long ago you served me well when you slashed open the chests of your captives and when you bled yourselves...And also you women, I really marvel at you! You don’t paint your faces anymore, you don’t cover yourselves with feathers. And now what happened to you? Who has confused you? Devote yourselves to everything that you used to devote yourselves to!”

“Antichrist and the Hermit,” mid-sixteenth century

Listen... Do you know what our grandparents are saying? When it is our binding of years there will be complete darkness, the tzitzimime will descend, they will devour us and there will be a transformation. Those who received baptism, ... who believed in God... will perish, ... because their life, ... their count of years [will end]...

Juan Teton, Nahua nativist prophet, 1558

I have been weeping greatly because the priests came to teach you…
Huítzilopochtli, “Antichrist and the Hermit”

Introduction

Aquino’s Antichrist, born from the apocalyptic imagination of medieval Europeans, transported to the New World in the leaves of friars’ books, emerges from the pages of Fabián’s notebook as native person, an Aztec Antichrist. The first quote above hints at the complex interplay of European and indigenous worlds embodied by this figure. In a broad sense, he mirrors countless European Antichrists in his efforts to lure Christians into apostasy. However, he does so here as a native being and his targets are native Christians. Antichrist’s speech echoes the voices of other sixteenth-century native resisters of Christianity: tlahtohqueh (“rulers”) like Texcocan noble don Carlos Ometochtzin, nanahualtin (“shamans”) like Martín Ocelotl, or apocalyptic prophets like Nahua Juan Teton. Like them, Aquino’s Aztec Antichrist orients himself against the friars as a
bitterly-agrieved defender of traditional ways. And yet, his discourse style echoes that of those same friars in its cadence, its rhetorical choices, and even its phraseology. His impassioned utterance *nopilvanhe...macamo ximoyolpollocan* (“O my children!...Do not be confused!”) might sooner have come out of a Franciscan *sermonario* or *confessionario* than the mouth of the Antichrist. Who is this figure, then, who defends “diabolical” religion yet speaks like one of the friars? Such is the nature of Aquino’s adaptation of the legend we have traced from the medieval imagination to the New World stage. It is an adaptation that bears the imprint of the social space navigated by the Nahua Fabián de Aquino: contested, ambivalent, and often marked by contradiction. The precise contours of this adaptation and the dynamics that shaped it are the subject of this chapter.

In the last chapter I argued that Aquino likely had access – via possession or memory – to a European Antichrist and Final Judgment drama. Although this text is now lost, it can be reconstructed with relative confidence from the first of Aquino’s two Nahuatl scripts, which I have been referring to as “Antichrist and the Final Judgment.” Following a story line that was well established in medieval European theater, we hear Antichrist bribe, coax, and threaten Christians in an effort to lead them astray and win their souls for the devil. The Old Testament prophets Elijah and Enoch enter to counter the lies of Antichrist, rebuking him and imploring Christians to return to the faith. After they are slain by Antichrist, he in turn is slain by St. Michael and carried off by a gang of demons. After proceeding with the resurrection of the dead, the separation of blessed and condemned, and the final judgment, the play concludes with the standard practice of singing the *Te deum*.

However, Aquino’s treatment of the legend of Antichrist goes well beyond slavishly copying the hypothesized source text. While this is evident in both plays, it is most vividly
displayed in the second of the two, “Antichrist and the Hermit.” Although the first follows the
general contours of its European predecessors, the second play is much less fettered to Old
World sources. In it Aquino invents new scenes, expands dialogue, embellishes certain thematic
elements, and perhaps most boldly, floods his script with cultural details that unmistakably mark
the native origins of their author. Over the course of twenty-five staged dialogues between the
hermit and various demons and sinners, the audience is presented with a virtual catalogue of
indigenous religious and social practices. If the first play can be considered Aquino’s warm up, it
is in the second that we see the full flowering of his literary craft.

Aquino’s Antichrist dramas are products of a particular kind of socio-cultural
environment, what Mary Louise Pratt has referred to as the “contact zone.” She defines contact
zones as “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts
of highly asymmetrical relations of power.” The complex nature of the colonial contact zone left
an indelible mark on Aquino’s scripts, shaping the way he re-presented the figure of the
Antichrist and the legend that surrounds him. In this chapter I will argue that Aquino’s Aztec
Antichrist can be seen as a manifestation of the disruptive and conflicting forces unleashed upon
native communities by the introduction of Christianity and the suppression of native religion.
Within this contested context a religious debate emerged as early as 1524, a debate which
brought representatives of the Catholic Church into conflict with representatives of indigenous
traditional ways. This debate, at times civil, at times violent, went on for the better part of the
sixteenth century. Aquino’s Antichrist embodies the voices of those native individuals who
resisted the Christianity of the friars, speaking as another Ometochtzin or Ocelotl or Teton.
However, at the same time, Aquino’s plays and characters also embody the friars’ condemnation
of these nativist resisters. Antichrist is countered by Elijah and Enoch – speaking here with the
clear voices of the friars – as well as the Converts and Martyrs – native characters who perform their roles modeling fealty to the colonizer’s religion. So immersed was Aquino in the discourses of the friars that even his Antichrist adopts some of their rhetorical strategies and discourse markers. The result is a highly complex and sometimes contradictory literary hybrid that bears many of the marks of the contact zone of early colonial Mexico.

The inter-religious dialogue in early colonial Mexico

One of the products of contact between Old and New World peoples, in Mexico and all across the Americas, was the initiation of an exchange of ideas around the subject of religion. In early colonial Mexico, this exchange had its symbolic origins in the semi-legendary dialogue between the Franciscan “Twelve Apostles” and tlahtohqueh and tlamacazqueh (“rulers” and “priests”) of the Aztec empire that took place in 1524. These initial exchanges, referred to by Sahagún in 1564 as Colloquios, established the arguments and rhetorical strategies used by Spaniards and Nahuas alike as they engaged with the religious views of the other. Despite a clear power differential that limited the ways Nahuas could openly debate the colonizer’s religion, this exchange of ideas continued throughout the course of the sixteenth century. As such, it manifest the attributes of the contact zone previously discussed. In this and the following sections I will argue that Aquino’s Aztec Antichrist is a product of the contentious exchange of ideas about religion that manifests the conflicts and contradictions of the colonial contact zone. I will argue three points specifically. First, I will show that Aquino imagined his Antichrist as an Aztec Antichrist, a native being who operated in a native socio-cultural space. Second, I will argue that Aquino’s Antichrist embodies native voices of resistance to the friars and the new faith they preach. He speaks as both resistant tlahtoani and nahualli, bitterly decrying the arrival of the
friars and the impact of their preaching on the traditional ways of their people. Third, I will present evidence that Aquino’s Antichrist dramas also voice the discourses of the friars and their efforts to contest the influence of the resisters. Characters like the Old Testament prophets Enoch and Elijah or the hermit counter the anti-mendicant diatribes of Antichrist and seek to pull confused Nahuas back to the side of the friars. Additionally, as a sign of the often-contradictory nature of the contact zone that produced him, Antichrist himself even adopts some of the rhetorical strategies and discourse markers of the very friars he seeks to counter in his virulent speeches. Seen in this light, the entire drama of the Antichrist legend as presented by Aquino can be seen as a metaphor for the conflict between the friars and elements within the native community that resisted their spiritual colonization. The resulting adaptation is a cultural hybrid, a complex and at times contradictory voicing of the exchange of ideas that roiled Nahua Mexico in the early decades following the Conquest.

Before moving forward, some clarification of terms is warranted. By referring to inter-cultural interactions over religion as an “exchange of ideas” I don’t mean to gloss over the fact that these interactions were often violent and coercive. In keeping with the asymmetrical balance of power in the contact zone, this “exchange” was most often foisted upon indigenous peoples by European pilgrims and conquistadors eager to spread their own particular conceptions of the “true faith.” Some have gone so far as to include these interactions over religion as evidence of a wide-spread policy of genocide against the indigenous peoples of the Americas. However, when it comes to the question of the introduction of Christianity in the Americas, we must be careful not to fall into the trap of reducing indigenous peoples to helpless, passive victims of colonialism. Representing (again) this outdated perspective is Robert Ricard, who categorically rejected the idea of “a free discussion” between Nahuas and Spaniards over religion in The Spiritual
Conquest of Mexico. He wrote that “by their own ignorance and the pressure of the authorities they were prevented from publically discussing the new religion and from opposing its doctrines and ceremonies.” He even went so far as to question, “Were there really many Indians capable of sustaining a theological controversy at the time of the arrival of the Spaniards?” While it’s true that “free” and “public” discussion and dissent was circumscribed in colonial times, Ricard’s own Eurocentric views of indigenous Americas inhibited him from recognizing the existence of an exchange of ideas about religion that most certainly did exist in early colonial Mexico. Additionally, his analysis – like that of nearly all historians in modern times – was hampered by ignorance of indigenous-language documentation. The negative perspectives that once dominated the historiography of Contact have now begun to shift with the advent of scholarship employing ethnohistorical methods to recover native voices from these sources. Recent studies of indigenous-language sources have manifestly shown that native peoples from Massachusetts to Mexico creatively responded to the colonizer’s dogmatizing, speaking back to power in a multiplicity of ways. These analyses reveal the persistence of the dialogue over religion in New Spain at least through the end of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Initiated in the Colloquios of 1524, friars and Nahuas continued to talk about religion. At times it was carried out in muted tones through hidden transcripts, at other times more publicly. Examples of the latter include the famous Inquisition cases of the 1530s that brought native resisters like Ocelotl, Mixcoatl, and Ometochtli to trial; I will argue that Fabián de Aquino’s Nahuatl Antichrist dramas are examples of the former. In both cases, the arguments and rhetorical strategies deployed by friars and tlahtohqueh in the Colloquios continued to be voiced in the early colonial Mexican contact zone.
For the purposes of this chapter’s analysis, I will present the 1524 exchanges between friars and Nahua leaders as both the symbolic starting point of the dialogue over religion and as encapsulating the basic rhetorical strategies and arguments of each group. Although reputed to have taken place soon after the arrival of the first twelve Franciscan “apostles,” the Colloquios weren’t written down until 1564. Under the direction of Sahagún, his four brilliant Nahua colleagues – Antonio Valeriano, Alonso Vegerano, Martín Jacobita, and Andrés Leonardo – worked from notes and recollections Sahagún had in his possession to reconstruct these early religious discourses in flowing, elegant Nahuatl. Debates over the historicity of their recollections aside, the arguments presented in the Colloquios – especially those made by the friars – typify the discourses that were employed in hundreds of folios of sermons, doctrinal texts, and confession manuals. In terms of the native response, they contain seeds of an approach that grew to become a common theme in native engagements with Christianity, the appropriation of aspects of the colonizer’s discourse.

As presented in the 1564 text, the twelve friars who addressed the assembled tlahtohqueh and tlamacazqueh built their argument for submitting to their God on a number of rhetorical “planks.” One of these planks was the diabolization of native deities and religious practices. This is one of the most common arguments made by the friars here and throughout the entire corpus of Nahuatl doctrinal material, summed up here in the words of the friars: “Indeed, all of these, which you regard as gods, absolutely no one is a god, …Indeed, all are devils,” and then again later on, “these very evil ones…these who are our enemies, the devils, those you falsely regard as gods.” Díaz Balsera labels this strategy “epistemic domination.” By claiming to possess knowledge about the true nature of the Nahuas deities, knowledge that negates their own indigenous epistemology, the friars exert the hegemonic claims of Christianity over native
religion. Wielding this claim of superior knowledge, they demand that the tlahtohqueh and tlamacazqueh abandon their gods and embrace in čan jceltzin nelli teutl, “the One Sole True God,” saying, “If you desire to enter there, into heaven, it is very necessary for you that you detest them, you despise them, you hate them, and you spit on them, these whom you have continually regarded as gods.”

In order to impress upon their audience the urgency of these demands, the friars employ another strategy, what José Guadalajara has referred to as “didactic terror.” Common in the medieval tradition as well, this approach sought to use fear of impending pain or destruction as a means of inducing the desired behavior in audiences. The friars warn the tlahtohqueh and tlamacazqueh that their religious practices “cause [God] an injured heart,” placing them in “his anger, his ire.” As punishment for their evil ways God caused the Spaniards to come and wage their devastating war of conquest. It is for this very reason he has sent us, they say, “so that you will be able to cool the heart of He by Whom All Live, so that He will not completely destroy you.” The threat of destruction at the hands of an angry God is made even clearer later when the friars warn “if you do not desire to hear [God’s word]…you will be in much danger. And God, Who has commenced your destruction, will conclude it, you will be completely lost.” These threats were reiterated innumerable times in the friars’ didactic and homiletic discourses and grew to become one of the most consistent themes in the religious exchange of ideas in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

Finally, it is worth pointing out two additional themes that show up in the friars’ 1524 dialogues. The first is the idea that the Nahuas have been deceived (iztlacahui) by the devil into following things that are merely “carved in stone and wood” as if they were gods. Idolatry (tlateotoquiliztli), the unremitting obsession of the church throughout the colonial period and
beyond, consists of “following something” (tla+toca) as god (teotl). In the rhetoric of the friars, idolatry began as the result of collusion among the demons after their fall from heaven; they agree among themselves to “always continually cause them to be deceived, these people on the earth.” Related to the theme of deception is that of confusion (netlapololtiliztli, from the verb tetlapololtia “he/she confuses people”). This confusion, too, is part of the devil’s strategy for deceiving people into following “earth, clay things” as gods. In order to deceive them, the demons note that “it is necessary that we [first] disconcert [or confuse, tiquintlapololtizque] them so that they will not be able to know him, This One Who is Their Creator.” Both of these themes, deception and confusion, are components of epistemic domination because they imply the existence of a “truth” that the Nahuas have been unable to detect due to the stratagems of the devil.

The arguments made by the tlahtohqueh and tlamacazqueh in response to the friars’ arguments reveal aspects of native rhetorical strategies of resistance that also show up in the records of the inter-cultural dialogue over religion. Although they ultimately defer to the priests on matters of a theological nature, the rulers allude to one of the dominant themes of native resistance to the hegemonic claims of Christianity. They politely respond by saying, “But we, what now, immediately, will we say? … Perchance, then, are we, here before you, to destroy it, the ancient law (in veve tlamanjtiliztli); the one which was greatly esteemed by our [grandfathers], our [grandmothers]?” The suggestion that Nahuas would abandon “the ancient law,” the collected wisdom and knowledge of the ancestors, in favor of a God who demanded exclusive worship was dumbfounding to native ears. Nancy Farriss has noted that this spiritual crisis constituted a trauma that, on some levels, was even more disruptive than the wars of conquest. For, unlike the military conquest, the crisis of religion demanded that indigenous
people “deny the existence of their entire religious cosmology.”21 When it is their turn to respond to the friars, the priests reiterate this reaction. The authors of the Colloquios note that when they heard these demands they “were greatly disturbed, greatly saddened, as if they had fallen and were scared, frightened.”22 They, too, question the possibility of rejecting in veve tlamanjilitliztli stating “Already our heart is this way.” Díaz Balsera interprets this statement as meaning “the Nahuas already had an age-old way of conceiving divinity,”23 in other words, “thanks, but no thanks.” The priests reiterate their refusal to break with the traditions of the elders time and again, noting that to do so would incur the anger of the gods.24 They conclude by stating, “Indeed, our heart is not able to be full,” a way of stating that they are not convinced by the friars’ arguments.25 Their cautiously-worded rebuttal of the friars’ arguments, their refusal to submit to the exclusive claims of Christianity – even as they accepted some of the claims about the Christian God – set the stage for native resisters in the decades that followed this initial encounter.

The themes established in the Colloquios were developed and re-worked by both friars and Nahuas in the decades between that first, semi-legendary encounter and the period of time during which I argue Aquino penned his Nahuatl Antichrist dramas, roughly 1550–1580. Ten years after the first exchanges between friars and Nahua rulers and priests, during the mid- to late-1530s, the Mexican church was forced to confront the most serious threat to its mission since the arrival of the Twelve. The records pertaining to archbishop fray Juan de Zumárraga’s Inquisition of 1536–43 preserve additional voices of native resistance in the trials of nanahualtin Martin Ocelotl and Andrés Mixcoatl and the tlahtoani of Tetzcoco don Carlos Ometochtzin. Two decades later, in 1558, another voice of resistance is captured in the historical record. Like Ocelotl and Mixcoatl before him, Nahua prophet Juan Teton spoke back to the exclusive claims
made by the friars, and voiced his own resistance to their preaching. All four of these native voices expand the scope of native refusal to submit to Christianization. Their arguments – and the friars’ response to them – became the inspiration for Aquino’s Antichrist dramas. By imagining his Antichrist as an Aztec Antichrist, Aquino cast him as an embodiment of these native voices of resistance to the friars.

Aquino’s Aztec Antichrist

That Aquino imagined his Antichrist as a native being is evident from numerous clues scattered throughout the two plays. I use the vague term “being” because it is unclear what sort of entity Aquino understood Antichrist to be. Did he imagine him to be a deity? Or a human? Or some intermediate category, an other-than-human being? Did he equate Antichrist with Lucifer? Or did he see him as being more akin to a demon? What is clear is Aquino’s consistent labeling of Antichrist tlacatecolotl (“human-horned owl”) throughout both plays. However, since he also uses this term to denote the Devil as well as the myriad other demons who populate his plays it seems likely that Aquino himself was uncertain about the precise nature of Antichrist. Regardless of what sort of entity he thought Antichrist to be, Aquino clearly portrays him as a native being. For one, Antichrist – like all of Aquino’s characters – utters his lines in Nahuatl. The casts of all colonial Nahuatl dramas were composed exclusively of Nahua actors, typically boys or men, but eventually women in the female parts, who delivered all of their lines in their native tongue.26 As obvious as the language of Antichrist may seem, it’s critical to state this up front. The mere act of translating European theater from Spanish or Latin into Nahuatl and placing their words in indigenous peoples’ mouths enacted a massive transformation upon the characters and plot of
such productions, effectively pulling them from a foreign cultural universe into a local, native one.

However, not only is Antichrist a Nahuatl speaker, he speaks in a kind of polite, elevated register of Nahuatl that was typical of indigenous elites. While his speech patterns don’t rise quite to the level of the native speech genre referred to as *huehuehtlahtolli* (“speech of the elders”), they do follow some of the same general contours. For example, he makes liberal use of vocative expressions, referring to the *macehualtin* as *nopilvanhe*, “O my children,” indigenous rulers as *tlatoqhe*, “O rulers,” and his demon-servants as *notechivhcavanhe*, “O my progenitors.” In the first and third of these three we see another marker of polite discourse, the phenomenon referred to as “inversion.”27 By addressing one’s social inferior using terms for the speaker’s superior, one sought to flatter the other. In the *huehuehtlahtolli* genre it is common to read expressions like *nopiltzitzine* (“O my nobles”), *noconetzin, notlaçcoichpochtzin* (“my child, my dear daughter”), and *notlaçotatzine* (“O my precious father”).28 In the third example above, Aquino’s Antichrist borrows one of these common polite inversions when refers to the demons who serve him as his “progenitors” or “ancestors.”

Such politeness is also demonstrated in the various commands issued by Antichrist. In Nahuatl there exist varying degrees of politeness when giving a command. The most rudimentary and least polite form of the command “(you, singular) listen,” for example, would be *xiccaqui*. Adding the introductory particle *ma* before the command (*ma xiccaqui*) increases the politeness somewhat. Replacing *ma* with *tla* increases the politeness of the command even further, to the point that translation in English can sound silly: *tla xiccaqui* “O won’t you please listen” or “please listen, if you will.”29 That one such as Antichrist would use such elevated degrees of civility in his discourse seems odd at first blush. For example, while trying to persuade a group
of martyrs that he is the true Christ, Antichrist exclaims, *tla xicmocaquiti* “O won’t you please listen!” Not only does he employ the *tla*, he further augments the politeness and formality of his command by elevating the verb *caqui* with Nahuatl’s reverential apparatus, in this case the reflexive prefix *mo-* and the causative suffix -*tia*. This can be seen as a deeply indigenous means of persuasion. By addressing his potential converts with the utmost politeness that Nahuatl will allow, he seeks to entice them to believe his honey-coated lies.

Another linguistic indication of Antichrist’s native status is his use of couplets and various forms of parallelism. By structuring his speech in this most characteristic aspect of native Mesoamerican verbal art, Aquino betrays Antichrist’s native heritage. Not only that but, as with the polite command forms discussed above, couplets such as *yn amoteovh yn amotlatocavh* (“your deity, your ruler”) and *yn ovamechmachtitinenca yn ovamechiztlavitinēca* (“those who went around teaching you, those who went around deceiving you”) elevate the tone and therefore the rhetorical force of his words. Additionally, the couplets in both of these examples demonstrate the use of parallelism, where each of the words in the pair share common morphological components. Couplets and parallel constructions are both central features in Nahuatl poetics and feature prominently in elevated forms of indigenous speech.

Various other clues further suggest a Nahua identity for Aquino’s Antichrist. For one, his knowledge of native religious rituals is extensive. In the speech quoted in this chapter’s epigraph Antichrist laments that the *macehualtin* have abandoned their former ways, saying, *tleyca yn ovañqixixitique yyevatl yn nochancinco ca yn ya vevcavh vell oanechtlaycoltitinenq ca yn ia quac yn aquimeltequiya yn aⁿ malvan avin iquac yn amiçoya*, “Why did you dismantle my house? From long ago you served me well when you slashed open the chests of your captives and when you bled yourselves” (emphasis mine). Note that he laments their abandonment of native religion,
and also that he associates himself with these practices, referring to the pre-contact temple as “my house” and saying “you served me” when committing human sacrifice. In conclusion, we might also note that Aquino repeatedly depicts Antichrist seated on an icpalli (“seat of authority; indigenous throne”), enticing the macehualtin with characteristically native foods like atolli, chili peppers, and tortillas, and expressing his preference for octli, the alcoholic beverage of Nahuas and other native inhabitants of central Mexico.

In Aquino’s adaptation not only is Antichrist a native being, but he exists in a native socio-cultural space. Throughout both plays we find repeated mention of the two basic hereditary classes of Nahua society: nobles (pipiltin) and commoners (macehualtin). To these two Aquino typically adds the highest rank of the nobility, the tlahtohqueh (“rulers”). For example, when the hermit is interrogating demon/deity Cihuacoatl in “Antichrist and the Hermit,” he asks what kind of potion (pahtli) she is carrying in her water jar. To this she replies, “I am carrying a potion whose name is ‘greed-potion’ with which I wash the common folk (macehualtin), the rulers (tlahtohqueh), the lords (pipiltin) and thus I will place stinginess within them.” Otontecuhtli, who bears a potion called “sloth,” uses it to sicken “the rulers, the nobles, and those who have no work” with laziness. “Those who have no work” likely refers to the macehualtin, the majority of which were laborers. We find this same three-part division of indigenous society in other sources as well. In the Category Three religious text erroneously known as the “Nahuatl Bible,” St. Sebastian assembles “the rulers, the nobles, and all the commoners” (yn ixquichtin · yn tlatoque yn pipiltī yhua yn ixquichtin macehualtin) in order to preach to them. The semantic thrust of this phrase – both in the St. Sebastian story and in Aquino’s Antichrist dramas – probably points in the direction of meaning “everybody” or “all of society.” Additional evidence from the plays reveals a subtle tension between the macehualtin and the pipiltin. Hermit time and
again reproaches the “rulers” and “nobles” for their corrupt behavior, lambasting them for stinginess, vanity, oppressive labor demands, and rapacious sexual appetite.\textsuperscript{39} The macehualtin, on the other hand, Aquino portrays as unjustly abused and, interestingly, more faithful in their Christian practice. These tense social relations and critiques of leadership are well documented in the sources. Their presence here further aligns Aquino’s plays with mid sixteenth-century native communities.

References to more specific societal roles in “Antichrist and the Hermit” add to the picture of Antichrist’s world as a native social space. Among the eighteen “sinners” called on stage for interrogation, Aquino includes “six fire priests of the demons” (\textit{yn chichuacemintin intlenamacahcavā yn tlahtlacate}), a day keeper (\textit{Tonalpovhqui}), a ruler (\textit{Tlatovani}), a merchant (\textit{Pochtecatl}), and a traditional healer (\textit{Ticitl}). These characters represent key actors in native society, holders of positions that came with prestige. Lastly, Aquino chooses indigenous names for characters who have refused baptism and retain their traditional religious practices. We meet a corrupt ruler whose name is Otontiyeyo and two “unbelievers” (\textit{Atlaneltocani}) named Tlacateuctli and Huitznahuatl.\textsuperscript{40} The other native characters called on stage for the hermit’s interrogation all have names like Toribio, Juana, Lucas, and Catarina, evidence of their status as baptized Christians.

Finally, in addition to Antichrist’s native identity and social context, Aquino gives him a decidedly native mission. In the medieval tradition, Antichrist has always embodied people and forces deemed hostile to Christianity. To New Testament and patristic writers he was one of the “false Christs” or “false prophets” Jesus predicted would appear in the Last Days. To medieval exegetes he was the “beast rising out of the sea” prophesied in John’s Revelation who would come to challenge the Son before the Last Judgment. To Protestants he was the Pope; to
Counter-Reformation Catholics, Luther. However, in all of these cases Antichrist had a common mission: to wage war against Christ and his Elect, leading them into apostasy and the hands of the Devil. Aquino’s adaptation both aligns with and differs from this tradition. As with European analogues, he portrays Antichrist as a false Christ who performs miracles and threatens violence in an effort to lead the faithful astray. However, he does so in a highly specific way that links him exclusively to the world of native colonial Mexico. Aquino’s Antichrist is portrayed as a distinctly native being whose primary goal is to induce natives who have converted to Christianity to reject their baptism and return to the practices of native religion. In “Antichrist and the Hermit” Aquino has Antichrist exclaim to his prey, “I love you very much; indeed, you are my children. I really, really pity you because of all those who went around teaching you, those who went around deceiving you. Do not believe what they said to you!” The reference to “those who went around teaching you” is a reference to the friars, whose evangelistic work Antichrist fervently desires to disrupt. Unlike European Antichrists, who strive to induce Christians to reject faith, Aquino’s Aztec Antichrist seeks to woo them from the worship of one deity (the one Deity) back to the worship of many deities. No such analogue exists in European Antichrist dramas, and its presence here is yet another marker of the hybrid nature of Aquino’s adaptation.

In the words of Antichrist cited above, we begin to detect the presence of the central tension I am arguing shaped Aquino’s portrayal of this character. This is the tension between the friars and certain native individuals who strove to counter their efforts with their own fervent arguments.
Voices of native dissent

Aquino’s Antichrist dramas can be seen as staged performances of the spiritual conflict roiling the Mexican church in the middle of the sixteenth century. In the decade following the initial confrontation between the twelve Franciscan friars and Nahua rulers and priests, the church struggled to win the hearts and minds of their new subjects. Despite the triumphalist claims of early chroniclers like Motolinía, who greatly exaggerated the success of the initial mission, many Nahuas resisted the harsh demands made by the Twelve. Although resistance took many forms, some more active, some more passive, by the 1530s two groups had emerged whose more overt resistance threatened the Church’s evangelization and indoctrination program. These were certain tlahtohqueh like Tetzcocan lord don Carlos Ometochtzin and nanahualtin (itinerant ritual specialists) like Martín Ocelotl and Andrés Mixcoatl who strove to keep alive pre-contact religious practices. Friars like Antonio de Ciudad Rodrigo and Juan de la Cruz brought their complaints to Zumárraga, lamenting that Martín Ocelotl’s “constant harangues against the Church were keeping the Indians distant from the Catholic faith.” So significant were these threats that the archbishop launched inquisitorial proceedings in 1536 intending to stamp out the resistance once and for all. The records of these proceedings are a rich resource for glimpsing the arguments of native resisters ten years after the initial exchange of 1524.

Martín Ocelotl and Andrés Mixcoatl rose to prominence among Nahua communities of central Mexico in the 1530s as noted ritual specialists with reputed supernatural powers. Their ability to conjure rain and transform themselves into wild animals, and their skills of divination, made them highly sought after representatives of traditional Nahua religion. Ocelotl eventually accumulated tremendous wealth and properties owing to the fact that powerful members of the native nobility were his primary clients. His influence with the tlahtohqueh made him especially
threatening, since the church relied on rulers to model prescribed Christian values and fealty to the pope and king. The public nature of the nanahuitlin’s practice, their unabashed persistence in idolatry, and various heretical statements they were reported to have made inevitably brought them into Zumárraga’s crosshairs. Mixcoatl for one boldly proclaimed in 1537, “I became a god,” and Ocelotl was reportedly called Telpuctle (possibly Telpochtli, another name for the god Tezcatlipoca) by his followers. From the church’s perspective, both men constituted unwelcome and dangerous competition for the souls of Nahuas. Like the friars, these nanahuitlin wandered the countryside preaching, teaching, healing, and ministering to the needs of native communities. Also like the friars, they performed essential ritual functions and sought to fill the spiritual vacuum left after the dissolution of the institutional Aztec priesthood in the wake of the conquest. It was for obvious reasons, then, that Zumárraga took drastic action, arresting both men and charging them with crimes like idolatry, “sorcery,” “heretical dogmatism,” and “concubinage.”

Don Carlos Ometochtzin was tecuhtli (“lord”) of the powerful central Mexican altepetl of Tetzcoco, a position he inherited from his father, the famed pre-contact ruler Nezahualpilli. The termination of Aztec imperial rule in 1521 posed both challenges and opportunities for rulers like don Carlos. The collapse of the hueintin tlahtohqueh (“imperial rulers”) of Tenochtitlan represented an existential threat to central Mexico’s surviving rulers. Would they seek to link their fortunes with the Spaniards and negotiate a place within the upper ranks of colonial society or would they resist and attempt to preserve their traditional sources of wealth and power? Most chose the former, due to the futility of open resistance as well as shrewd political calculation on their part. However, don Carlos grew increasingly unwilling to accommodate the demands of the Church. Specifically, he began to resist the friars’ teachings about sexuality and marriage,
principally by taking his niece, Inés, as his mistress and siring two children by her as well as encouraging his fellow lords to pursue what he saw as their prerogative to take as many wives as they pleased. He was eventually denounced to Zumárraga by his young nephew Francisco, a zealous Christian proselyte and student at the Colegio de Santa Cruz, Tlatelolco, for making heretical statements. After a lengthy trial, don Carlos was convicted of the crime of heretical dogmatism and, on December 1, 1539, he was burned at the stake, the only indigenous person to receive such a sentence in Zumárraga’s Inquisition.

Although he belongs to a later decade, Nahua prophet Juan Teton is an important additional voice of resistance to consider here. For one, the date of his anti-mendicant prophecies (1558) locates him much closer to the period I propose Aquino was composing his Antichrist dramas. This makes him a significant indicator of the nature of native resistance that Aquino was responding to in his plays. Also, like Ocelotl and Mixcoatl, his prophecies have a decidedly apocalyptic bent, which is also relevant in light of Aquino’s subject matter. Garibay first published on this fascinating figure in 1945 when he wrote about the contents of what he called the “diary” of a Nahua named Juan Bautista that was held in the Biblioteca Capitular de Guadalupe in Mexico City. Very little is known about Bautista save that he hailed from Mexico City’s San Juan parcialidad, where he served as alguacil (“clerk”), and that he was closely associated with the city’s Franciscans. According to Garibay, most of the material in the diary dates to the years 1564–69, though there is some from as early as 1555. In material dating to 1558 Bautista reports on the activities of the Nahua named Juan Teton. The precise content of his prophesies will be discussed below. As will be seen, his anti-mendicant tirade links him with his predecessors from the 1530s Ocelotl, Mixcoatl, and Ometochtzin, as well as Aquino’s Antichrist character.
The words of Ocelotl, Mixcoatl, Ometochtzin, and Teton reveal certain common themes in their nativist rhetoric: anti-mendicant discourse, the call to return to former ways, an apocalyptic tendency, and the strategy of appropriating of the friars’ discourse and melding it with indigenous discourses. First, nativist resistance expressed itself as being anti-mendicant. Don Carlos established himself in opposition to the friars a number of times during the speech that got him denounced to the Inquisition. Rebuking the nephew who would later denounce him, he was reported to have said, “Stop these vain things [i.e., Christian practices]. I say this to you as an uncle to his nephew, pay no mind to these things and don’t encourage the native people to believe what the friars say.”

He also scoffed at the friars’ efforts, saying that their only concern was “denying us women.” He continued, “All the friars talk about is sin. What is it that they name except sin?” Andrés Mixcoatl echoed these sentiments in a speech to the macehualtin of Atlintaca:

> Everything that the friars say is a lie and a falsehood…They don’t know us nor do we know them. Did, perhaps, our grandfathers and our fathers know these friars? Did they perhaps believe what [the friars] preached about this God? It is not so. They just lie.

Ocelotl even went so far as to associate the friars with tzitzimimeh, frightening stellar demons who were thought to descend during times of uncertainty to devour humanity.

In addition to opposing the work of the friars themselves, nativist discourse opposed certain central tenets of the doctrine that they preached. It’s important to note that although these resisters were clearly anti-mendicant, referring to them as “anti-Christian” would overly simplify the particular orientation of each person to the religion of the Spaniards. Mixcoatl, for example, began his testimony stating, “My name is Andrés. I am a Christian. A friar baptized me at Tetzcoco five years ago.” Mixcoatl’s positioning of himself in relation to the friars, the Church, and Nahuas is characteristically complex and aligns with the nature of inter-cultural exchanges in
the contact zone previously discussed. Don Carlos of Tetzcoco was one of those who, through baptism, voiced a stronger rejection of the religion of the friars, at one point even stating, “What are the things of God? They are nothing.” Both Ocelotl and Mixcoatl repudiated the central tenet of Christian faith – the belief that God is in zan iceltzin nelli teotl “the only one true deity” – by claiming divinity for themselves or closely associating themselves with the divine. In Mixcoatl’s testimony before the Inquisition he stated, “I confess that, instead of practicing what [the friars] told me, for three years I have preached and maintained that the brothers’ sermons were good for nothing, that I was a god, that the Indians should sacrifice to me.” Ocelotl never claimed divinity as boldly as Mixcoatl. However, there were rumors that he had taken to referring to himself as “Telpuctle,” as noted above. Lopes Don asserts that he behaved as an iixiptla (“deity image”) of Tezcatlipoca, a designation that blurred the lines between human and divine in the pre-contact tradition. Juan Teton demanded that the people of Coatepec and Atlapolco “wash their heads,” a repudiation of the new faith they had received through baptism.

Central in the speeches of each of these native resisters is a passionate call to return to former ways of the ancestors, to traditional religious practices. This they demonstrated with both words and actions. For nanahualtin like Ocelotl and Mixcoatl, their lucrative careers as itinerant ritual practitioners, their broad appeal among both pipiltin and macehualtin, and the demand for their services across broad areas demonstrates their commitment to the “ancient law.” In speeches they urged their listeners to do the same. Mixcoatl admonished the people of Atlixtaca, asking “why they abandoned and forgot former things since the gods which they used to worship aided them and gave them whatever they needed.” Don Carlos, speaking to the assembled nobles, stated, “You well know that my father and grandfather were great prophets and they said
many things that passed and were to come and nothing did they say about these [Christian rites]. If something were true in what you [Francisco] and others say in this [Christian] doctrine, they [his ancestors] would have said so.”56 And later he declared, “Let us flee from the friars and do what our ancestors did.”57 His words echo those of the tlahtohqueh who, in Sahagún’s recollection, responded to the Twelve by saying, “Perchance, then, are we, here before you, to destroy it, the ancient law, the one which was greatly esteemed by our [grandfathers], our [grandmothers]?”58 Regardless of whether these words date to 1524 or 1564, they clearly resonated with the likes of don Carlos and other native resisters, forming one of the strongest emotional appeals to Nahuas troubled by the demands of the friars.

It is particularly interesting, in light of Aquino’s choice of subject matter, to note what I’m calling an “apocalyptic” tendency in the anti-mendicant speeches of Ocelotl and Teton. Like Christian apocalyptic preachers, both men heralded the immanent arrival of trials and tribulations. In Ocelotl’s 1536 trial he was accused of telling a group of Nahuas he had assembled “in a house below the ground” (possibly a cave?) to “hurry up and plant all the fruit trees [you] can...because, due to a lack of water, great hunger will come and the corn will not grow.” Adding to the terror of the pending calamity, he told one witness “that two apostles, with very long teeth and nails, and other frightening insignia, had come down from heaven and [they said that] that the friars would become Chichiminctli [tzitzimimeh].”59 The speech of Teton recorded in the Bautista manuscript picks up on these same themes twenty years later:

Listen... Do you know what our grandparents are saying? When it is our binding of years there will be complete darkness, the tzitzimimeh will descend, they will devour us and there will be a transformation. Those who received baptism, ... who believed in God, will be changed into something else. He who eats the meat of the cow, will turn into that; he who eats pork..., will turn into that; he who eats sheep, will turn into that and will go about dressed in their skin; he who eats rooster meat, will turn into that. Everyone, in that which is their food..., in the
Teton allegedly spoke these words in 1558, one year before the arrival of the first “binding of the years” since the conquest. For Nahuas this significant cosmological event was a time of great uncertainty and fear brought about by the termination of one important calendrical cycle and the beginning of another. The tzitzimimeh were associated with the liminal time between the extinguishing of ritual fires and lighting of the “New Fire” that initiated the next fifty-two year calendrical cycle. Ocelotl associates the tzitzimimeh with the friars explicitly; Teton merely associates them with the pending calamity, though he notes that it will be “those who received baptism” that will suffer the most frightening effects of that time. In both cases, Christianity and its bare-footed emissaries are cast as heralds of doom, upending the Nahuas’ world and ushering in uncertainty and destruction. The only recourse, according to these native voices, is to listen to “what our grandparents are saying,” reject the baptism of the friars, and return to the gods and the sacrifices that keep the world in order.

Finally, each of these four in their own way appropriates elements of the friars’ discourses and uses these against them. For example, when Mixcoatl accuses the friars of telling “lies and falsehoods” he turns the tables on the friars, usurping their rhetorical strategy of epistemic domination. By accusing them of lying and deceiving the Nahua people, Mixcoatl lays claim to superior knowledge, to the “truths” of the “ancient law,” a proposition which enacts a remarkable reversal of the dominant discourse of the friars. By proclaiming “it is not so, it is a lie,” Mixcoatl reduces the friars’ knowledge to “falsehoods.” Instead of Tezcatlipoca, Huitzilopochtli, or Tlaloc, it is now the friars who are the teiztlacahuianiḥ “the deceivers of people.” Perhaps it was due to this inversion of the dominant discourse of diabolization that both Ocelotl and Teton associated the friars with the frightening, demon-like tzitzimimeh. In their
prophetic imaginings, they presented to put-upon Nahuas a world-turned-upside-down vision of reality where friars were demons “with great fangs and other frightening things” that pushed back against the friars’ own world-turned-upside-down vision, articulated in the Colloquios. This reading is consistent with James C. Scott’s analysis of certain forms of subversive discourse. By “reversing a customary relationship of hierarchy or predation,” the subordinate exacts revenge and reclaims some degree of the power lost in the typical order of things. The themes of reversal and inversion are integral to the European Antichrist legend. They were also inherently threatening to ecclesiastical and political authorities and may have been part of the reason why apocalyptic and Antichrist-related discourse was periodically suppressed by the Church. As I have already argued at the end of Chapter One, this may have also played a role in the relative silence on the subject of Antichrist in the doctrinal writings of New Spain’s mendicants. In the hands of the nativist resisters mentioned above, the appropriation and inversion of the friars’ rhetorical strategies was a powerful tool of insubordination and the assertion of autonomy.

Aquino’s Antichrist as anti-mendicant nativist resister

The nativist resistance of the 1530s and the apocalyptic preaching of Teton in the late 1550s form part of the social and religious cloth out of which Aquino cut his Antichrist character. As I’ve already argued, he conceived of this character as a native being operating in a native social milieu and possessing a distinctly native mission. Turning now to the plays themselves, we will see Antichrist and other characters embody the voices of native resistance to the friars and their world-inverting message. Aquino presents Antichrist as an anti-mendicant nativist resister along the lines of Ocelotl, Mixcoatl, and Teton. He urges the macehualtin to reject the teachings of the friars and return to the ways of their ancestors, and so avoid terrifying consequences.
Early in Aquino’s second play, “Antichrist and the Hermit,” Antichrist gives an impassioned speech directed at the very same Nahua “hearts and minds” that were the object of the friars’ preaching. It follows immediately upon the sibyl’s opening monologue, one in which she warns the audience that the world won’t end until “a wicked person comes, is born, whose name will be Antichrist.” Since it illustrates a number of ways that Aquino’s Antichrist embodies voices of resistance to the friars, I will quote it at length here.

Antichrist will say, O rise up, O my children. Come all of you. What are you doing? Do you want to die by my hand? Right now I will spill your blood if you don’t believe in me. Did I not say to you that I alone am all-powerful? I made all that lies growing. Do not be confused. Why did you dismantle my house? From long ago you served me well when you slashed open the chests of your captives and when you bled yourselves. And you, O rulers, why do you diminish your lives? Why do you leave your women? Many were your mistresses! Now, devote yourselves to all the women, however many you want, so that I will be content!

And also you women, I really marvel at you! You don’t paint your faces anymore, you don’t cover yourselves with feathers. And now, what happened to you? Who has confused you? Devote yourselves to everything that you used to devote yourselves to! O my children, didn’t you used to honor my words? Indeed I, I am your deity, your ruler! I am Christ! Would you please come! I will greatly enrich you! You will prosper in my house! You will rest yourselves there, you will go reaping your reward. Why don’t you want to believe in me? Don’t you want to come with me? Look at those wicked ones! I will kill them…

…Today I have come to save you, I have come to teach you, to show you the straight road that is to be followed in order for people to go to my house. There will be resting there. Today I have come to enrich you. I don’t want you to be troubled. I love you very much. Indeed, you are my children. I really, really pity you because all those who went around teaching you, those who went around deceiving you. Do not believe what they said to you! And if you don’t obey me, then I will slay you with my own hand. Furthermore, if you don’t want to die by my hand I will enrich you greatly. I am the deity, I am Christ.

In this series of lines, Aquino’s Antichrist vacillates between tender entreaties to Nahua conversos and bone-chilling death threats in his effort to sway them to reject Christianity. As such, he differs little from his European counterparts. However, when considered in light of the spiritual climate of mid-sixteenth century Mexico, nativist resistance as represented by the likes of Ocelotl or Teton, and the thoroughly native socio-cultural setting, the locally-specific nature
of Aquino’s adaptation snaps into focus. As with the Nahua resisters discussed above, Antichrist comes across as firmly anti-mendicant, opposing both the friars and their teachings about \textit{in zan iceltzin nelli teotl}. He says as much when he states, “I really, really pity you because all those who went around teaching you, those who went around deceiving you.” “Those who went around teaching you” is clearly a reference to the friars, the implication of his pity being that these disruptive preachers have caused turmoil and confusion among Nahuas. His command, “Do not believe what they said to you!”, echoes don Carlos Ometochtzn’s words to his young nephew Francisco, “don’t encourage the native people to believe what the friars say.” The disruptive effects of the friars’ preaching are lamented by Antichrist here and elsewhere in Aquino’s two plays. Later on in “Antichrist and the Hermit” Antichrist confronts a group of \textit{conversos} who have been returned to the faith through the preaching of Elijah and Enoch who, as will soon be shown, act as stand-ins for the friars in both plays. Regarding the preaching of the two prophets (and by extension the friars), Antichrist complains, “It seems those two old men (\textit{huehuetqueh}) have blinded you.”\textsuperscript{65} It is against the friars that Antichrist rails and from them that he seeks to woo Nahua Christians.

Antichrist’s anti-mendicant message parallels that of Ocelotl and Mixcoatl in his insistence that he is the deity (\textit{teotl}). Echoing Mixcoatl’s statement that “I became a god,” Antichrist insists multiple times, \textit{ca niteotl, ca nicristo} “Indeed I am the deity, I am Christ!” Aquino’s Antichrist seizes on the friars’ exclusive claims regarding the Christian God and rejects them by proclaiming himself to be a deity. The fact that he does so using language that parallels that of the friars only adds to the vigor of his rejection of the friars and their message regarding their god. Anti-mendicant voices are also expressed by other characters in Aquino’s plays, principally the seven demons representing the seven deadly sins from “Antichrist and the Hermit.”
Each of these seven is found to be in possession of a kind of “potion” (paltl) representing one of the deadly sins, with which they “bathe” the macehualtin, inducing them to commit that particular sin. For example, when confronted by the hermit, Tezcatlipoca confesses to teaching the macehualtin “how to commit adultery, how to commit tecuilontilitzti,” Quetzalcoatl confesses to encouraging them to “overeat…get drunk…[and] bleed themselves,” and Otontecuhtli confesses to “placing laziness within the nobles.”66 These seven mortal sins featured centrally in the doctrinal literature of the friars, forming part of the basic catechism taught to all Nahuas as part of their indoctrination. As discussed in Chapter Two, Aquino’s choice to associate a named demon with each of the seven sins may not have been his innovation, but he frames this trope here in locally-specific terms. Each demon, or pre-contact deity, stands in opposition to the evangelical work of the friars, part of the devil’s efforts to “confuse” and “deceive” the New World’s native populations.

However, it is to Huitzilopochtli that Aquino gives the most succinct articulation of the spiritual conflict between the friars and forces aligned with indigenous religion. After lamenting that the macehualtin no longer celebrate his annual festival (probably Panquetzaliztli), he states

Therefore I have been weeping greatly because the priests came to teach you. If it had been the Christians [i.e., Spaniards] alone who had come, perhaps I would have been able to deceive them, perhaps I would have been able to fool them, perhaps some others I would have brought to mictlan because of their sins. Those priests just hold me back when they go around teaching them [the macehualtin] and because of this my life will be cut off. This is the reason why there is confessing, why there is leaving of sins. The hearts of those priests are exceedingly strong and therefore they leave their sins. Even though many times I place within them what is not good, not right, they don’t obey me at all. If some priest does it then they confess and cleanse their souls. They earnestly do penance. As a result God is placated so that it’s impossible for me to bring them to mictlan…I am sad because my house [i.e., temple] was knocked down, my image was destroyed. I am very sad because the cross of Jesus Christ reached you.67
Aquino tells us that Huitzilopochtli’s “poison” is anger (*cualanilizpahtli*), which seems an appropriate emotion to assign to one whose words capture the emotional response of those voices arrayed against the friars and their preaching. One detects a similar sense of anger expressed by don Carlos when he complained, “All the friars talk about is sin,”¹⁶⁸ before launching into his tirade against Christian sexual mores. That Huitzilopochtli expresses sadness in addition to anger is understandable. Indeed, the sentiment “I have been weeping greatly because the priests came to teach you” might just as easily come from the mouths of Martín Ocelotl or Andrés Mixcoatl as from one of Aquino’s demon characters or Antichrist himself.

Like Ocelotl, Ometochtzin and others, Aquino’s Antichrist also embodies native voices of resistance by urging the *macehualtin* to return to the ways of their ancestors. In his words we can sense the exasperation he feels at the new, Christian behavior of the *conversos*. To the *macehualtin* he exclaims, “Why did you dismantle my house?” To the *tlahtohqueh*, “Why do you leave your women?” And to women, “I really marvel at you! You don’t paint your faces anymore!” His exasperation echoes that of Tetzcoan *tlahtoani* don Carlos Ometochtzin both in tone and in word. Don Carlos chided his fellow *pipiltin* for their abandonment of traditions and privileges that used to be accorded to the nobles and rulers. Especially vexing to him was the loss of sexual prerogatives of noblemen due to the friars’ enforcing of Christian sexual norms. In order to make his point, he reportedly called his sister María into the room and told her in front of the assembled *pipiltin* that she and all women should follow “what our ancestors used to do” with regard to sexual privileges. In order to show how closely his message parallels that of Aquino’s Antichrist, I will present their words side by side:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>don Carlos Ometochtzin</th>
<th>Antichrist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“If your husband desires to have other women, don’t stop him or quarrel with the women that he takes or follow marriage under Christian law! I, too, am married, but, in spite of this, I do not refrain from having your niece as my mistress.”</td>
<td>And you, O rulers, why do you diminish your lives? Why do you leave your women? Many were your mistresses! Now, devote yourselves to all the women, however many you want, so that I will be content!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Both Ometochtzin and Antichrist make impassioned pleas to their fellow Nahuas to reject the teachings of the friars and return to their former ways. Antichrist cries, “Devote yourselves to everything that you used to devote yourselves to,” assuring the macehualtin that this is the way to return order to the world turned upside down by the friars and their strange prohibitions. When the macehualtin waver in their response to Antichrist, he resorts to direct threats, proclaiming, “if you don’t obey me, then I will slay you with my own hand!” Here, too, Aquino’s Antichrist sounds as if his words have been ripped right out of the inquisitorial record from the 1530s. Compare Antichrist’s words above with those one witness claimed were uttered by Andrés Mixcoatl in 1537: “Andrés said to the maceguales, ‘If you don’t obey me, all of you will die’.” To this the witness added, “and in this way he frightened the maceguales into believing he was a god.” Mixcoatl’s threats seem to have been intended to increase his stature and amass wealth from offerings given to him by the frightened macehualtin as much as they were an effort to push back against the friars. In Aquino’s telling, Antichrist’s menacing of Nahua Christians is more squarely directed at countering Christianity and its mendicant ambassadors so as to reclaim for the devil the souls lost through their preaching.

Aside from these repeated threats of physical violence, the words of Antichrist are themselves not as apocalyptic as those of Ocelotl and Teton. However, when the entire context of Aquino’s plays is taken into account, the apocalyptic tone is unmistakable. Both plays begin
with sibyls uttering prophecies of doom, warning Christians of the pending trials at the hands of Antichrist. The classic plot lines of the Antichrist legend unfold, bringing terrors, miraculous wonders, and violent death in the frightening run-up to the end of time. At least in the first play, the entire Final Judgment narrative is told, with trembling sinners answering to the stern accusations of Christ, demons who laugh as they drag the damned to hell, and the ultimate triumph of Christ the King, reigning in glory at the End of Days. Aquino’s choice of Antichrist as his subject matter will be examined later in this dissertation, but it, too, will be shown to have grown out of the anxiety, uncertainty, and conflict roiling Nahua communities mid-century. In light of this, Aquino’s decision to stage two Nahuatl Antichrist plays corresponds neatly with the apocalyptic tenor of Nahua prophets and nanahualtin like Teton and Ocelotl.

Resisting the resisters: Discourses of the friars in Aquino’s Antichrist plays
In Fabián de Aquino’s hands, the medieval Antichrist legend became an expression of the conflict between friars and the voices of Nahua resistance that unsettled Nahua communities in the middle years of the sixteenth century. Antichrist’s words mark him as the embodiment of the resisters, a mash-up of the Ocelotls, Ometochtzins, and Tetons of Aquino’s day. Although Aquino’s role as cultural mediator necessarily pulled him in two directions, one toward his people, one toward the friars, what we might call the dominant narrative of his Antichrist dramas falls squarely on the side of the latter. It is unsurprising, therefore, that many of his characters voice this dominant narrative. Characters like Elijah and Enoch utter lines that sound as if they could have come straight from the doctrinal literature of the friars, as does the hermit and the various conversos, mártires, and beatos that populate the two plays. What is surprising, however, is that even Aquino’s Aztec Antichrist – the embodiment of native resistance to the work of the
friars – himself simultaneously embodies aspects of the friars’ discourse, a striking contradiction that nevertheless serves as a metaphor for Aquino’s world and his role in it.

Repeatedly throughout both plays, many of Aquino’s characters speak lines that echo those of the Colloquios of 1524/1564, drawing on the arguments and rhetorical strategies that the friars had developed and reworked over the decades since first contact. We find, for example, repeated use of the tactics of epistemic domination and diabolization. The hermit repeatedly lays claim to superior knowledge about the gods of the Nahuas’ not-so-distant past, “recognizing” them for what they “truly” are: demons. Hermit’s superior knowing is expressed when interrogating a demon in the guise of Tezcatlipoca, “I recognize you (nimitziximati)! You are very wicked!” Similarly, when questioning Lucifer he says, “I recognize you (nimitziximati)! You are a tlacatecolot!” Other characters claim similar recognition of the true identity of Antichrist. Elijah shouts, yyoyavhe yn tiquetzalcovatl “Aha! You Quetzalcoatl!” A group of conversos sees through the Antichrist’s deceit and utters this delightful expression: Ca yn tevatl amoma titeotl çan ticoyotl “You are not a deity, you are just a coyote!”

Like the Twelve as they were imagined in 1524/1564, Aquino’s characters exercise their superior spiritual knowledge and correctly identify Antichrist, demons, and Aztec deities as tlacatecoloh, demons intent on “deceiving” and “confusing” unsuspecting natives. Even the deities themselves must grudgingly acknowledge their true nature. Huitzilopochtli admits “I went around deceiving the common folk. They used to take me as a god (nechteotocaya).” The Twelve used their claim of superior knowledge to demand that Nahuas “detest them,…despise them,…hate them, and…spit on them, these whom you have continually regarded as gods (anquimmoteotitinemih).” Similar responses are to be found in Aquino’s plays. At the end of his interrogations of the seven demons/deities the hermit states that the macehualtin will “hate
you, into the fire they will cast all your images. They now know that those they take as gods
deceive them here. You are just demons. But now they will consider you as nothing. They will
exceedingly spit on you. And you, spit on those that were our gods.” He concludes with what I
consider to be an aside to the audience, saying, “And you (pl. amehhuantin), spit on those that
were our gods.”75 As I have already shown in the preceding chapters, Aquino was, to borrow
Garibay’s phrase, muy en trato con los frailes franciscanos.76 As such, it comes as little surprise
that his characters, especially the faithful Christian ones, would follow the “party line” of the
friars fairly closely. What is surprising is noting just how thoroughly the rhetoric of the friars
permeated Aquino’s work, even to the point of shaping the speech patterns of Antichrist himself.

In Aquino’s adaptation of the Antichrist legend, as with its European counterparts, the
figure of Antichrist threatens to overthrow the established order of the world. Since earliest times,
this threat has been conceptualized as an inversion of the life and ministry of Christ. Hippolytus
of Rome noted nine such inversions in his early third-century treatise, De antichristo. For
example, just as the messiah would be born of the Jews, so would Antichrist; just as Christ
would commission his apostles, so too would Antichrist send out his own “false apostles”; just as
Christ would rule with divine royalty, Antichrist would rule through “tyranny and violence.”77
By the tenth century, when Adso finalized his vita of the Antichrist, the parodic inversions of the
life of Christ were codified as part of the Antichrist legend.78 His scandalous conception due to
incest parodied Christ’s birth of a virgin; his performance of false miracles parodied Christ’s true
miracles. In this general sense of Antichrist as inverter of the order of things, Aquino’s
adaptation tracks quite closely with European analogues. However, as I have already argued,
Aquino’s version of the Antichrist legend was uniquely shaped by conditions and forces at play
locally in the social space he inhabited, a world which was in the process of being turned upside
down by the preaching of the friars and the demands of the new political and religious order. This raises the question, did Aquino have something more specific in mind when adapting the Antichrist legend for the Nahuatl stage? What “order,” specifically, did he see Antichrist as threatening to invert?

As the embodiment of native resistance, Aquino’s Antichrist threatens to upend the friars’ entire project of evangelization, turning the Nahuas’ world turned upside down once again and reinstating the pre-contact status quo. William Hanks offers an important reminder of just how wide the scope of the friars’ mission was. Referring to it as a “total project,” he writes, “it was aimed at nothing short of a remaking of Indian life, from heart, soul, and mind to self-image, bodily practices, lived space, and everyday conduct, including speech.” The friars’ policy of reducción illustrates one of the means by which they sought to enact such a thorough-going transformation. He notes that the term reducción derives from the Spanish verb reducir, properly understood not as having to do with decreasing size, but as “to convince and put in a better order.” This policy had two objectives: to relocate native populations into centralized towns based on a Spanish model, and to remake the disposition and conduct of native peoples according to policía cristiana, “Christian civility.” This total project is the order that Aquino’s Aztec Antichrist threatens to overturn. Building upon the medieval interpretation of Antichrist as “inverter of order,” Aquino presents his Antichrist as the inversion of the friars he battles against, parodying their benevolent paternalism, appropriating and inverting their rhetorical strategies, and coopting their doctrinal discourses in his blasphemous speeches.

Throughout the two plays, Antichrist strives to endear himself to the recently converted Nahua macehualtin who are the primary objects of his preaching. One of the ways he does this is by adopting the benevolent paternalism of the friars. From the outset of their mission the friars
sought to build trust and love between themselves and their new flock. Motolinía writes frequently about the bonds of affection linking Nahuas and friars. He notes that the Nahuas begged Spanish officials “not to assign any friars to them but those of St. Francis,” since “the Indians knew and loved these friars and they in turn loved the Indians.” In their preaching and the doctrinal literature they produced in Nahuatl, the friars communicated this sentiment frequently, most often casting themselves as benevolent parents and their Nahua charges as simple children. Sahagún, like many other friars, addresses his Nahua flock using the reverential vocative expression notlazohpilhuane, “O my beloved children.” For example, in a sermon for the second Sunday of Advent he writes, Inin teotlatolli yn onocvntenquixti, notlacopilhuane; ipan icuiluhtoc in Santo Euangelio, “O my beloved children, these sacred words I have declared are written down in the holy Gospel.” Similar examples are found throughout the doctrinal literature. Pedro de Gante uses both notlazohpilhuane and noteyccauhtzin, “O my younger brother” in his 1553 Doctrina cristiana, as does the author of the anonymous Incipiunt Epistolae et Evangelia dating to the mid-sixteenth century. In his longer confessionario Alonso de Molina pairs notlaçopiltzine (singular of notlazohpilhuane) with a command to “listen” or “hear”: In axcan tla xicmocaquiti {notlaçopiltzine}, “Now please listen, O my beloved child.” Similar language can be found in the 1548 Doctrina produced by the Dominicans (Xicmocaq’ticā notlamachtilhuane, “Listen, O my pupils!”), in Martín de León’s Camino del cielo… (Ma huel xicmocaquitian notlaçòpilhuane, “Listen well, O my beloved children!”), and Domingo de la Anunciación’s Doctrina cristiana (Tla xiccaq’ nopiltze, “Listen, O my child…”).

In light of the prevalence of this language among the friars, it may seem odd that Aquino gives the following lines to his Antichrist. Addressing a group of macehualtin Antichrist tenderly entreats them, saying, ca cenca namechnotaçotilliya ca hānopilvan cenca cenca
namechicnoytta, “I love you very much. Indeed, you are my children. I really, really pity you…” Next, speaking to a character named martilles (Spanish mártires, “martyrs”) who has just rejected Antichrist’s claim to be the messiah, Antichrist responds, tleyca yn amo nevatl tla xicmocaqti “Why am I not? O won’t you please listen!” Later, Antichrist addresses a group of occequintin martiresmeh, “some other martyrs,” exclaiming, yn axcā tla xicmocaqti can nopilvanhe ca ya vel ovāquimitaq yn oniquinmicti yn tlavelliloque ca çano yvhqui yn aʾpā mochivaz, “Now please listen, O my children! You have seen how I killed those wicked ones [a previous group of “martyrs”]. The same will be done to you!” As the bold face words show, Antichrist’s language closely mirrors the language of the friars; his yn axcā tla xicmocaqtitcan nopilvanhe is virtually identical to that of Molina’s priestly confessor’s in axcan tla xicmocaquiti notlaçopiltzine. However, the discourse that issues from Antichrist’s lips results in an inversion of the benevolent paternalism of the friars. Here the affectionate nopilvanhe is immediately followed by chilling threats such as “if you don’t obey me, then I will slay you with my own hand!”

Not only does Aquino’s Antichrist seize upon the friars’ kindly approach to the Nahua macehualtin, he appropriates their rhetorical strategies, thereby inverting the moral order established by the Twelve in 1524. Borrowing their tactic of epistemic domination, Antichrist asserts his claim to superior knowledge, charging the friars with spreading lies and deceiving the macehualtin. Just as the Twelve proclaimed that the Aztecs’ gods “are the ones who deceive people, the wicked ones,” Aquino’s Antichrist accuses Enoch and Elijah – and by extension, the friars – saying: “How did you confuse my beloved ones? You came to teach them and you came to really deceive them. As a result you disturbed them. This is proof that you are wicked!” The reversal here is striking. Antichrist presents himself to be in possession of the “truth” and the
friars, represented by Enoch and Elijah, are the *tlahueliloqueh*, “wicked ones,” who confuse, deceive, and disturb the *macehualtin*. Elsewhere, after being rebuffed by the feisty *conversos* who call him a *tlacatecolotl* and a *coyotl*, Antichrist exclaims, *tleyca yn amiztlacati*, “Why are you lying?” With this response he again presents himself as the possessor of the truth. The implication is that the friars’ teachings are falsehoods that have deceived the *macehualtin*. Again appropriating the role of the friars, he reassures them: “Today I have come to save you, I have come to teach you, to show you the straight road that is to be followed in order for people to go to my house.”

When the *macehualtin* refuse to heed his warnings, Antichrist resorts to the friars’ favored tactic of “didactic terror.” His words echo those of the Twelve when they warned the *tlahtohqueh* and *tlamacazqueh* that their religious practices “cause [God] an injured heart” instigating “his anger, his ire.” After a long series of interactions with various groups of “martyrs,” and following their final refusal of his entreaties, Antichrist exclaims: “You, why did you trap me? Why did you believe the wicked ones so that they confused you? Because of this I just killed them…Why have you abandoned me? I have already made you rich!” In his anger, Antichrist co-opts the friars’ warning to the *tlahtohqueh* and *tlamacazqueh* that, if rebuffed, God would “completely destroy” them. Initially he only threatens, saying *ynlaca° amniquiznequi nimā anechvicazque yn āmochintin*, “If you don’t want to die, then all of you will accompany me.” However, as the faithful *macehualtin* persist in dismissing him, his threats get progressively more violent: *tla xiqmitacan yn tlavelliloque niquinmictiz*, “Look at those wicked ones, I will kill them!” These threats ultimately give way to bloodshed as Antichrist commands his demons, *niman icivhc xiquımictican notechivhcavanhe*, “Now swiftly kill them, oh my progenitors!” Stage directions state tersely, “Here the martyrs will die,” and “Then the [other]
martyrs will kneel down [and] Antichrist will kill them,” and “Then here he will kill them.”

Such bloodshed was never one of the friars’ methods of punishing recalcitrant natives. However, in their sermons and the murals that adorned their churches friars and native artists painted images of torture and suffering that were no less terrifying. In comparison with these vivid portraits of the suffering of sinners in mictlan, Antichrist’s use of rhetorical terror can come across as bland. Nevertheless, his frightening threats are another example of Antichrist’s seizure of the friars’ rhetorical tools, a move that aligns him with nativist resisters like Martín Ocelotl and Juan Teton who similarly used terrifying imagery to induce the desired response in the macehualtin.

Finally, Antichrist appropriates doctrinal language formulated by the friars as part of the lengua reducida intended for the conversion of the natives and uses it against them. According to Hanks’ usage, a lengua reducida is another of the products of the “total project” of reducción, a form of Maya – or Nahuatl in our case – that has been “converted” and “put into better order” by the friars. Through the process of analyzing indigenous languages, writing grammars and dictionaries, and creating neologisms for certain essential Christian concepts, Hanks argues, the friars transformed these languages from “the pagan, idolatrous code (to Spanish ears) it had been into a revised and reordered language” that was suited to the work of transforming native peoples into Christian subjects. Maya and Nahuatl reducido were both formed and shaped by the writing of doctrinas in Mayan and Nahuatl. In the creation of Nahuatl doctrinas, for example, friars like Gante and Molina, working with their bilingual Nahua colleagues, formulated canonical translations of Christian concepts like God, the Holy Spirit, sin, and confession. Since doctrinal literature was, by nature, intended for iterative performance through the recitation of
prayers and creeds, the *lengua reducida* of the *doctrinas* was disseminated and could be internalized by Nahuas through repeated practice.\(^\text{102}\)

The pervasive nature of doctrinal Nahuatl helps make sense out of the apparent contradiction of Aquino’s Antichrist, who, as we’ve seen, utters phrases drawn from doctrinal literature. However, Antichrist’s utterances cannot be attributed solely to the saturation of Aquino’s world by doctrinal Nahuatl. For, as I have argued, he has imagined his Antichrist as the embodiment of native resistance to the work of the friars. As such, Antichrist’s use of doctrinal Nahuatl can also be viewed as another example of the “inverted order” he represents. Antichrist’s appropriation of the *lengua reducida* of the friars is more deeply penetrating than phrases like *yn axcā tla xicmocaqtican nopilvanhe*. Take the following two passages for example:

\[
\begin{align*}
&cuix a^o onamechnolvilli & Did I not say to you that \\
&ca čan nocel yxquich nohvell & I alone am all powerful, \\
&onicchivh in yxquich mochivhtoc & that I made all that lies growing?^{103}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
&Ca nevatl yxquich novella & I am all powerful. \\
&niman ayac nivhqui in tpc & There is no one like me on earth. \\
&onicchivhiqvi yn cemanavic & I made the whole world. \\
&ca čan nocelṭin in onamechicneli & It is I alone who favored you.^{104}
\end{align*}
\]

Compare these statements of Antichrist with the following excerpts from some of the most important doctrinal literature of Aquino’s time:

\[
\begin{align*}
&Nicnoneltoquitia in dios tetatzin & I believe in God the father \\
&yxquich yhueli: & all-powerful \\
&in oquiyocox yn oquimochihuili & who created, made \\
&in ilhuicatl in tlalticpac. & heaven and earth.^{105}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
&ca čan iceltzin teotl tlatoani & He alone is deity and ruler.^{106}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
&nicnoneltoquitia yniceltzin & I believe that he alone \\
&huel nelli Dios & is the really true God.^{107}
\end{align*}
\]
What is clear from this comparison is that Antichrist’s blasphemous statements closely parallel canonical formulations of the Christian God’s divinity, formulations which were codified in the friars’ doctrinal literature. In effect, he appropriates the lengua reducida – the colonized and “converted” form of Nahuatl – and deploys it in his effort to win the same Nahua hearts and minds that the friars seek to win.

Conclusion

We might rightly ask, was Aquino conscious of all of this when writing the plays? Did his Antichrist consciously parody the benevolent paternalism of the friars, inverting their rhetorical strategies, and co-opting their doctrinal discourses? Or are each of these factors merely evidence of how thoroughly Aquino himself had been “reduced” by the preaching and indoctrination of the friars? Hanks might answer that the pervasiveness of Nahuatl reducido in Aquino’s plays is proof of the success of the friars use of language to remake the “heart, soul, … mind, … self-image, bodily practices, lived space, and everyday conduct” of their native subjects. Though I want to refrain from putting words into Hanks’ mouth, I would be reluctant to accept this premise unconditionally. Such a conclusion slips back into the kind of “spiritual conquest” thinking that has dominated the historiography of religion in colonial Mexico for a long time. Of course, we will never know what, precisely, Aquino was thinking as he penned the lines quoted above. However, two things I am certain of. One, Aquino was no passive Christian subject of the friars. The very existence of his devotional notebook and the individual decision making, interpretation, and preferences it represents all suggest he understood what he was writing and that he exercised his own authority in copying, translating, and composing its texts. Two, evidence from the two plays and the other texts he redacted in his notebook strongly
suggests he was well versed in the medieval legend of the Antichrist, at least well enough to understand that figure’s role as the enemy of Christ and his inverse. It has been noted by many scholars of medieval spirituality that the Antichrist legend was remarkably “elastic,” easily adapted to fit local conditions and express whatever anxieties and fears seemed most pressing at the time. Fabián de Aquino seems to have been aware of this fact and perhaps even chose Antichrist as his subject matter for this very reason.

The question of why Aquino chose the Antichrist legend for his two Nahuatl plays will be taken up more fully in the conclusion to this dissertation. What I have endeavored to demonstrate in this chapter is that Aquino fashioned his Aztec Antichrist in response to the spiritual climate of central Mexico in the mid- to late-sixteenth century. In the decades between the 1530s and the 1580s, the church’s efforts to impose policía cristiana upon Nahuas resulted in a crisis of faith for many native communities. Although active resistance was relatively rare, individual Nahuas like Ocelotl, Mixcoatl, Don Carlos of Tetzcoco, and Juan Teton defiantly pushed back against the preaching of the friars, preaching which threatened to turn the whole world upside down. These prominent voices countered the work of the friars, vying for the same hearts and minds, urging Nahuas to reject baptism, to “wash their heads,” and to return to the ways of their ancestors. Aquino was born into this fractious spiritual environment and through his association with the friars became conversant in the discourses and arguments used to battle the native resisters. In light of this, his choice of Antichrist as the subject matter of his plays makes sense. Antichrist – the arch nemesis of Christ and the Church – could easily be molded and adapted to fit the troubling times in which he lived and worked, voicing the arguments of the anti-mendicant elements within Nahua society, and serving as a foil for the friars’ rebuttals. As a result, his Antichrist emerges as a fully native being, an Aztec Antichrist, whose contradictory nature
reflects the contradictions equally as inherent in Aquino’s world as in his own experience as a cultural intermediary between the friars and his fellow Nahuas.
Endnotes

1 Fabián de Aquino, *Sermones y miscenánea de devoción*, MS NS 3.1, Hispanic Society of America, New York, fol.156.

2 Jorge Klor de Alva, “Nahua colonial discourse and the appropriation of the (European) other,” *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions* (1992b): 21


7 Ibid., 267.


12 Klor de Alva, “The Aztec-Spanish Dialogues,” 64, 100.


15 Ibid., 132.


17 Ibid., 153.

18 Ibid. 156

19 Ibid., 155–56.
Ibid., 107–08; Klor de Alva incorrectly reads tocolhua toçihu as “our grandparents, our women.”


Ibid., 112.


Klor de Alva, “The Aztec-Spanish Dialogues,” 125.


fol.138v


Aquino, *Sermones y miscenánea de devoción*, fol.173v

Ibid., fol.172v.


See for example the hermit’s interrogation of a tlahtoani on fol.178r–v.

Aquino, *Sermones y miscenánea de devoción*, fol.178r and fol.176r respectively

Ibid., fol.157r–v.

“conflict” on the other (Klor de Alva 1982:351–352). Some Nahuas accommodated Christianity by completely converting and adopting Spanish customs. Some expressed “incomplete conversion” by embracing Christian faith outwardly while maintaining active participation in certain native rites or by grounding their Christian belief on the premises of native religion. Under the category of conflict-type responses are those natives who refused baptism and rejected the teachings of the friars, various forms of passive and active resistance, as well as apostasy, where initial belief is rejected later in life. Despite the problematic nature of Klor de Alva’s attempt to assess the authenticity of conversion to Christianity – an undertaking he rightly calls “ticklish” – there is strong evidence that the majority of Nahuas during Aquino’s time adopted Christianity mostly in an outward sense. Referencing an earlier study by León-Portilla, he describes this situation by stating “without changing their religious convictions, [Nahuas] simply borrowed from Christianity whatever elements were necessary to appear Christian” (Ibid., 353). He interprets the abundance of primary source evidence showing that force was required to compel Nahuas to participate in church ceremonies and adopt Christian morality as evidence of this. His assessment is in keeping with Lockhart’s principle governing Nahua-Spanish interactions cited earlier. It also reinforces the ambivalent nature of indigenous responses to Christianity and the resulting “two-heartedness” referenced by Terraciano. However, I am loathe to subscribe too uncritically to Klor de Alva’s typology. Scholarship since he published “Spiritual Conflict and Accommodation in New Spain” in 1982 has continued to complicate the matter of “conversion” and native responses to Christianity. Louise Burkhart has gone so far as to question whether Nahuas would have even understood the dualistic categories of “Christian” and “pagan” implied by western notions of conversion (Louise M. Burkhart, “Pious Performances: Christian Pageantry and Native Identity in Early Colonial Mexico,” in Elizabeth Hill Boone and Tom Cummins, eds., Native Traditions in the Postconquest World [Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1998], 362).


45 Klor de Alva “Martin Ocelotl,” 133.


48 Lopes Don, 167.

49 todo lo que los frailes decían, que es mentira y falsedad...que ni nos conocen ni nosotros á ellos; por ventura nuestros abuelos y nuestros padres conocieron á estos padres, y por ventura vieron lo que ellos predicaron, que es aquel Dios que nombran, que es asi, sino mienten. “Procesos de indios idolátricas y hechiceras,” in Publicaciones del Archivo General de la Nación, Vol. 3 (Mexico: Tipográfico Guerrero, 1912, 60, translation mine.


52 ¿qué son las cosas de Dios? no son nada, “Proceso inquisitorial del cacique de Tetzcoco,” 2.
55 *por qué dejaban las cosas pasadas y las olvidaban, porque los dioses que antes adoraban que ellos los remediaban y les daban lo que habían menester,” Procesos de indios,” 60.
56 *pues hágote saber que mi padre é mi agüelo [sic] fueron grandes profetas, é dixieron muchas cosas pasadas y por venir, y ninguna dixieron cosa ninguna de esto, y si algo fuera cierto esto que vos é otros decis de esta doctrina, ellos lo dixieran,” Proceso inquisitorial del cacique de Tetzoco,” 2.
57 *huyámos de los padres religiosos y hagamos lo que nuestros antepasados hicieron,” Proceso inquisitorial del cacique de Tetzoco,” 42.
58 Klor de Alva, “The Aztec-Spanish Dialogues,” 107–08; see note about Klor de Alva’s misreading of this phrase above.
60 Ibid., 21.
61 According to Hassig and others, the last New Fire Ceremony before the conquest took place in 1507. Fifty-two years later, Nahua of central Mexico were well aware of the pending “binding of the years,” even though no formal New Fire Ceremony could be performed. See David Carrasco, *City of Sacrifice: The Aztec Empire and the Role of Violence in Civilization* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999), 96 and Ross Hassig, *Time, History, and Belief in Aztec and Colonial Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001), 96.
63 Aquino, *Sermones y miscenánea de devoción*, fol.155r.
64 Ibid., fols.156r–157v.
65 Ibid., fol.163v.
66 fol.170r and fol.172r
67 fols.170v–171v.
69 *si tu marido quisiere tomar otras mujeres que no se lo impidas, ni riñas á las mujeres que tomare, ni cues del matrimonio de la ley xpiana, que you también soy casado y no pore so dexo de thener por manceba á tu sobrina,” Proceso inquisitorial del cacique de Tetzoco,” 54.
70 *el dicho Andrés dice á los maceguales si vosotros no me obedeciereis todos mororéis...y de esta manera tiénenle miedo los maceguales pensando que es dios,” “Procesos de indios idolátras y hechiceras,” 56–57.
72 Ibid., fol.164r.
73 Ibid., fol.170v.
74 Klor de Alva, “The Aztec-Spanish Dialogues,” 64, 100.
76 Garibay, “Temas Guadalupanos,” 53.

Ibid., 2.


Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, *Siguense unos sermones de dominicas y de sanctos en lengua mexicana: no traduzidos de sermonario alguno sino cópuestos nuevamente a la medida de la capacidad de los indios* [1540–1563], MS 1485, Ayer Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago, fol.2v.

Fray Pedro de Gante, *Doctrina Christiana en Lengua Mexicana* (Mexico: Juan Pablos, 1553), fol.1v.


Fray Alonso de Molina, *Confessionario Breve en Lengua Mexicana* (Mexico: Antonio Espinoza, 1565), fol.2r.

*Doctrina cristiana en lengua española y mexicana por los religiosos de la orden de Santo Domingo* (Mexico: Juan Pablos, 1548), fol. cxiii v.

Fray Martín de León, *Camino del cielo en lengua mexicana* (Mexico: Diego López Dávalos, 1611), fol.45v.

Fray Domingo de la Anunciación, *Doctrina cristiana breve y compendiosa* (Mexico: Pedro Ocharte, 1565), fol.6v.


Ibid., fol.158v.

Ibid., fol.161v.

Ibid., fol.157v.


Aquino, *Sermones y miscenánea de devoción*, fol.157r.


Aquino, *Sermones y miscenánea de devoción*, fol.163v.

Ibid., fol.139r.

Ibid., fol.157r.

Ibid., fol.160v.

Ibid., fol.160v, 161r, 165r.


Ibid., 244–245.

Ibid., fol.156r–v.

Ibid., fol.138r.

Molina 1546 in *Códice franciscano*, 31.

Sahagún 1540–63: fol.17r.

Anunciación 1565:fol.14v.

Chapter 4:
Sin, Sex, and Confession at the End of the World

Introduction

In this chapter, we turn from Aquino’s Aztec Antichrist to another character that springs from his fertile imagination: the hermit. In Aquino’s second play, “Antichrist and the Hermit,” this enigmatic figure – surely inspired by European legend but nowhere to be found in the Antichrist literature – conducts a lengthy series of interrogations of demons and sinners that span over twenty folios (forty pages) of the manuscript. First he confronts seven demons, each representing one of the seven deadly sins: Lucifer (pride), Tlaloc (hatred), Tezcatlipoca (lust), Huitzilopochtli (anger), Quetzalcoatl (gluttony), Otontecuhtli (sloth), and Cihuacoatl (greed). These he excoriates, demanding that they name their sins and detail the ways that they have deceived and confused the macehualtin throughout the ages. At the conclusion of each, he tells them tla xiyavh, “Be gone!” and sends them off stage to mictlan, probably a space beneath the stage entered via a trapdoor. Then, he calls on eighteen additional characters, each one named by either their occupation (Healer, Day Keeper, Merchant, etc.) or their sin (“This One Slept With His Relative,” “One Who Induces Her Own Abortion,” “Thief,” etc.). These too are subjected to harsh interrogation at the hands of the angry hermit, then sent off stage to mictlan and eternal torment.

As a group, these interrogations are undoubtedly the most original and engaging writing in either of Aquino’s two Antichrist plays. Each one follows a similar format. The hermit begins by asking each, ac tevatl, “Who are you?” or tlen motoca, “What is your name?” They respond accordingly, saying, ntitlaloc “I am Tlaloc,” niyantonio ni[t]ciitl, “I am Antonio, a healer,” nichpochtli nicencilliya, “I am a young woman, I am Cecilia,” etc. The hermit then asks them,
tleyca Otia mictlan, “Why did you go to mictlan?” In their responses, Aquino presents us with a wealth of detailed information about the lives and struggles of everyday Nahuas. In one sense, these interrogations read like public confessions, staged performances of what typically were private moments of self-disclosure before a priest. This is reinforced by the fact that of the eighteen human characters, Aquino has fourteen utter some form of this statement offered by the Ychtequini (“Thief”): “Because I didn’t confess, God cast me into mictlan.” Equally as notable is the fact that of the twenty-five characters interrogated by the hermit, sixteen of them confess sins of a sexual nature. Tezcatlipoca states, “I show [the macehualtin] how to commit adultery, how to commit tecuilontiliztli (i.e., “sodomy”); the six fire priests: “We used to secretly have sex with their children”; the woman who induces her own abortion: “I just lived devoting myself to adultery”; and the cuiloni: “I satisfied myself greatly when they did cuiloni me!” Such vivid and graphic detail links Aquino’s play to the confessional manuals written by the friars. Manuals such as fray Alonso de Molina’s Confessionario mayor (1565a), along with sermons and doctrinal literature, established the moral discourses and fixed categories of sins that Nahua Christians were taught to internalize and use to form their consciences. Aquino would certainly have been familiar with these texts and their moral discourses; in “Antichrist and the Hermit” he puts them into the mouths of everyday Nahuas.

The hermit’s interrogations are not actually staged confessions, of course. All twenty-five characters are already deceased souls – mictlan chanehqueh, residents of mictlan. They don’t seek forgiveness for their sins (it’s far too late for that) and the hermit offers them no absolution or hope of redemption. And yet, their interactions are confessional in nature. Their format is dialogical, one person asking questions and the other responding, and the power relationship between the two is asymmetrical: one demands access to private acts, and the other submits. The
overall message of this section of “Antichrist and the Hermit” is that sin must be avoided at all costs, and when committed it must be confessed, or else the sinner risks unimaginable suffering in hell. However, Aquino presents these “confessional dramas” in a manner that is at odds with that which was typified in the confession manuals of his day. For one, texts like Molina’s *Confessionario mayor*, written to aid priests in the administration of confession to Nahuas, were monological in format: the priest asks probing questions about the penitent’s behavior but there is no response given; the penitent is silent. Aquino’s interrogations invert this relationship and give voice to the Nahua penitent, foregrounding the penitent’s response and minimizing the questioning of the hermit-cum-confessor. Each of these performances constitutes a miniature confessional drama, complete with salacious details of sexual transgression. This is made all the more intriguing due to the fact that these interactions were not written by a friar but by a Nahua.

Additionally, I will argue that in his staging of these twenty-five dialogues Aquino showcased a number of anxieties that gripped the friars with regard to the matters of sin and sacramental confession. These anxieties include: native (mis)understandings of sin (especially sin of a sexual nature), the lack of participation by natives in the sacrament of penance, concerns over how to induce the proper state of preparedness for confession (contrition), and the stubborn persistence in the lives of Nahuas of behaviors and practices the friars deemed “pagan.” Finally, although Aquino’s hermit-sinner interactions clearly perform officially-sanctioned discourses on sin, sex, and confession, I will argue that they also perform native reactions to and understandings of those discourses. Since these staged confessions were penned by a Nahua, they provide the rare opportunity to assess native responses to the teachings of the friars on matters central to their efforts to inculcate Christian doctrine among the Nahuas of New Spain.
In order to illustrate how the themes of sin, sex, and confession intertwine throughout Aquino’s twenty-five confessional dialogues, a representative example follows below. Towards the end of hermit’s interrogation of the eighteen human sinners, he calls on stage a character named Telpochtli, “the young man.” Here is the entirety of the interaction between the two:

“The Young Man”

Then the hermit will say,
“I ask you, who are you?”

And [the young man will reply],
“I am a young man, my name is Lucas.”

[The hermit will say,]
“And why did you go down to mictlan?”

[The young man] will say,
“Because of the many women I took as mistresses. I baptized myself in it even though God’s teachers told me many times to leave them. But I did not leave them, I just despised their words. I had sex with some of my mistresses a lot! In this I offended God greatly. Because my sins didn’t cause me to weep, I didn’t confess, he cast me to mictlan. If I had turned around my bad life, if I had confessed, then God would have had mercy on me. But I just lived wickedly and without care. And now my mistresses go whipping me for account of me they have gone down to mictlan. They wanted to live but it was not possible for them to live. It is I who prevented them. Since they obeyed me, they go suffering with me. Indeed, there are very many young men who went there to mictlan.”

The hermit will say,
“Very well! Be gone, you wicked one!”

This interaction is characteristic of each of the eighteen dialogues that constitute this section of “Antichrist and the Hermit.” The hermit plays the role of confessor, asking his questions in terse phrases. Notably, he does not adopt the paternalistic tone of the confessor in Molina’s manual, omitting the reverential forms and expressions like notlazohpiltzine, “O my beloved child.” The sinner, here naming himself as “Lucas,” obeys the hermit’s injunction to explain how it is that he came to be in mictlan, detailing his particular sins. In this case as in all of the interactions, the sinner’s shortcomings are those which in the discourses of the friars were stereotypically
associated with a native person’s particular occupation, role in society, or stage in life. As with three-quarters of these interactions, these are largely of a sexual nature. Lucas’ response, not the hermit’s questioning, dominates the scene, with him uttering twenty-six out of the original manuscript’s thirty lines. It is a doleful story, a bitter lamentation of human failing while the individual was yet alive in light of the present suffering. Lucas’ particular punishment – as with many of the sinners the hermit interrogates – is delivered at the hands of those he committed his sins with on earth, in this case his mistresses who “go whipping” him. His response highlights the three themes that I will discuss in the remainder of this chapter – sin, sex, and confession – themes which I will argue reflect friars’ anxieties about how these subjects were taught to and understood by native audiences.

Sin and damage in Nahua Christian discourse

When the hermit interrogates a sinner named Gonzalo, the accused doesn’t immediately name his particular sin. Instead, in response to the hermit’s question about how he ended up in *mictlan* Gonzalo cries that it is “because of one single, great mortal sin (*centetl vey tlahtlacoltemictiani*). It is very frightening, let me not utter it! It is very frightening, it shames me greatly, it really renders me mute!” To this hermit scoffs, “Ha! It didn’t shame you when you did it!” and again demands that Gonzalo name his transgression. Relenting, he confesses, *niCuilloni*, “I am a *cuiloni.*” Throughout his plays Aquino uses the Nahuatl word *tlahtlacolli* as a translation of the Spanish *pecado*, “sin.” Here it is modified by *temictiani*, “deadly.” The story of how this particular word was chosen as the translation for *pecado* is as fascinating as it is central to understanding the Nahua-Christian moral discourse that evolved in the early decades of the mission in New Spain. Louise Burkhart, whose analysis remains the definitive work on the
subject, notes that the entirety of Nahua-Christian morality developed by the friars and their Nahua colleagues “rested upon their adoption of *tlatlacalli* as a synonym for sin.”5 This particular aspect of cultural contact in the Americas might seem like a mere footnote in the grand narrative, yet it had important ramifications for how Christianity was transmitted by the friars to millions of Nahuatl-speaking peoples and how those people understood the central concept of sin.

If Aquino’s *cuiloni* character can be seen as evidence of how this transmission was received by Nahuas, the first task is to follow it back to its source and understand how the friars communicated the concept of sin to Nahuas.

The Nahuatl word *tlahtlacalli* is derived from a verb (*ihtlacoa*) that means “to be corrupted, spoiled, [or] damaged.”6 With the addition of the impersonal object prefix *tla-*, *tlahtlacalli* carries the literal meaning of “something corrupted, spoiled, or damaged.” It was likely agreed upon as a synonym for *pecado* due to the perception that certain of its applications in pre-contact times loosely overlapped with the Christian concept of sin. For example, Burkhart notes that a wide variety of errors or misdeeds were labeled *tlahtlacalli*, citing “conscious moral transgressions, judicially defined crimes [and] accidental or unintentional damage.”7 Notably, the most common pre-contact uses of *tlahtlacalli* were in the areas of sexual excess, intoxication, and theft, a fact which probably explains why friars were drawn to it as a translation for sin. However, prior to contact *tlahtlacalli* was also used to name a much wider field of errors, many of which appear to have had little to do with the sort of moral absolutes implied by the friars’ understanding of sin. Burkhart cites “a weaver who tangled her weaving, a feather worker who ruined feathers, a singer who failed to harmonize, a mouse gnawing garments, hail harming crops” as examples of *ihtlacoa*-type damage.8 Clearly *tlahtlacalli* was an imperfect translation of
the Christian concept of sin, which is understood to be a violation of a clearly-defined set of moral absolutes that are universal in nature.

In fact, traditional Nahua religion – like all Mesoamerican religions – had no concept of moral absolutism, at least not in the sense that the friars understood it. Both friars and Nahuas understood the universe in terms of dualities, but what those dualities were and how they interacted with each other differed in fundamental ways. For Christians, this duality was the expression of good and evil forces. For Nahuas, these forces were those of order and chaos. For both, the opposing forces existed in a state of tension, each struggling with the other and manifesting themselves in myriad ways. However, Christian dualism understands good to be morally superior to evil. The struggle between good and evil began with the rebellion of Lucifer, became universal with the original sin of Adam and Eve, and will be eventually brought to an end in the Final Battle at the end of time, a victory made possible by the saving act of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross. In this cosmos of moral absolutes, time was seen as a linear unfolding of events across history, ordered by the omnipotent and omnibenevolent deity. The problem of evil and suffering – one of Christianity’s fundamental paradoxes – will only be resolved at the end of time. At that point, evil will cease to exist and good will reign uncontested. The ultimate goal of Christian morality, then, is to orient oneself with good and eschew all evil, to seek righteousness and reject temptation. Seen in this context, sin is both an act and a state; one commits sin by breaking God’s commandments, an act that results in a change in status in relation to God’s moral goodness. Unless this status is rectified through confession and absolution, one will live for eternity in the complete absence of God’s goodness, in other words, hell.

The cosmic dualities understood by Mesoamerican peoples were not morally absolute; “good” and “evil” were not categories understood by Nahuas prior to First Contact. Rather,
“order” and “chaos” were the relevant forces that marked life and human existence. Both were seen as natural components of life, each one necessary for the existence of the other, and neither superior in a moral sense to the other. Rather than one seeking to abolish the other, order and chaos were mutually-inclusive, balancing forces, each one perpetually interacting with the other. Time was understood in terms of cycles, mirroring the cycles of nature, where birth and growth are inevitably followed by decay and death. Responsibility for this back and forth quality of existence was what Nahuas referred to as teotl. Although the friars translated it “Dios” or “dios” (“God” or “god”), the concept of teotl was understood by Nahuas in an impersonal, ambivalent way, a sacred power that could manifest itself in phenomena and entities as diverse as forces of nature, deity impersonators and effigies, and mountains. Neither good nor evil, teotl was marked by both order and chaos. Concerning personal morality, this too was understood in similar terms. Actions either led to disorder or to harmony. The ultimate goal of Nahua morality was to live in a way that balanced the forces of order and chaos and brought continuity and stability to self, family, and society. Nahua parents admonished their children to avoid immorality, which wasn’t the same as telling them not to sin in the Christian sense. Burkhart writes that for Nahuas “to behave immorally is to disrupt order, to promote decay over cohesion, randomness over continuity.” This is quite different from how the friars understood morality and it underscores the problematic nature of their decision to use tlahtlacalli as a translation of sin. Was sin/tlahtlacalli something essential to the act itself or was it the result of the act? With a sin like drunkenness – one of the friars’ favorites – did the transgression lie in the act of drinking to excess or in the resulting “damage” that might be done to people, property, or relationships? The ambiguities inherent in tlahtlacalli as sin likely were lost on the friars, but they certainly would have affected how Nahuas understood the friars’ teachings.
Teaching Nahuas about sin was absolutely essential to the mission strategy of New Spain’s mendicants. For if the concept of sin wasn’t adequately grasped by Nahuas they wouldn’t be able to confess their sins; if they didn’t confess their sins their souls would be lost for eternity to the devil. Teaching about sin abounds in the doctrinal materials produced in Nahuatl by the friars and their native assistants. In fray Pedro de Gante’s 1553 *Doctrina christiana*, much of which is presented in dialogical format, the catechist asks the catechumen *tlein qtozneq yn tlacolli*, “What does ‘sin’ mean?” The novice correctly replies,

> Ca yehuatl in ahatlamachiliztlī įnépohualiztli in tlapixtlateneltliliztli in ichteqiliztli į tlahananaliztlī į papolotliliztlī in ixqch qtlacahui in iteotenahuatiliztī į totecuīyo dios.

It is ambition, pride, giving false testimony, theft, drunkenness, gambling, taking lovers, everything that damages the sacred commandments of our lord God.

The friars’ teaching on sin tended to list examples, as Gante does above, rather than delve into complex theological discussions. This was in keeping with the friars’ assessment that new Nahua Christians were like “tender plants” and young children who required simple, straightforward instruction. Much of the basic catechism taught to Nahuas centered on sin. In 1546 Molina framed the entire rationale for learning the catechism as *inic uel moyolmelauazque*, “in order to confess well.” In other words, learning the prayers and creeds contained in the catechism will enable the Nahua Christian to correctly identify their sins so that through confession and absolution they may *uel momaquixtizque*, “really be saved.” The contents of his *Doctrina christiana breve* bear this out, with many of its texts focusing on naming and listing sins.

In addition to teaching creedal statements like the Ten Commandments and Fourteen Articles of the Faith, all of which mention sin in general terms, the *doctrinas* went into more specific detail about the various types of sin. For example, all taught Nahuas to recognize the difference between *tepiton tlachtlacolli* (venial sins, lit. “little damages”) and *temictiani*
Molina tells his catechumens that *tepiton tlahtlacoli* are called small sins *yehica ca yciuhca ypan tiuetzi yhuan yciuhca technopopolhuilia yn totecuiyo Dios, “because we quickly fall into them and our lord God quickly forgives us.”

Much more attention is given in the doctrinal literature to describing the *temictiani tlahtlacolli*, mortal sins. Although Molina’s “brief” catechism merely lists the seven deadly sins, longer catechisms like the one published by the Dominicans in 1548 devote entire sermons to each one. Friars and Nahua aides who penned these sermons and others that fill the doctrinal literature lavished great detail on the *temictiani tlahtlacolli*, emphasizing their frightening nature and terrifying consequences. This blossomed into a mode of religious discourse I have previously referred to as the “poetics of terror,” which employed the creative potential of Nahuatl poetics (and a lively imagination) to conjure frightening visions of sin, demons, hell, and suffering.

In the friars’ teaching about sin, they tended to employ metaphors as a means of explaining what sin was and its effect on the soul. Two types of metaphors are very common in the doctrinal literature: sin as *tlahzolli* (“filth”) and sin as *cocoliztli* (“sickness”). Both of these were also commonly used in medieval writing about sin, and their translation into Nahuatl must have seemed to the friars to be unproblematic. However, as with their adoption of *tlahtlacoli*, this ended up not being the case. Burkhart explains this by distinguishing between metaphor and metonymy. In its most simple sense, a metaphor is a figure of speech that describes one thing in terms of another. In a metaphor such as “time is money,” one term (“money”) is used to describe another term (“time”) based on a relationship of *similarity*: both time and money are valuable commodities. Metonymy, on the other hand, is based on a relationship of *contiguity* or closeness. Unlike metaphor, the two terms are both from the same semantic domain and an attribute or characteristic of the one is used to describe the other. Common metonymies in the English
language include “the White House” (place for institution), “plastic” (substance for form), and the expression “hot under the collar” (effect for cause). Burkhart notes that Christian teaching links physical and moral pollution through the use of the metaphor “dirt is to the body as sin is to the soul.” When a priest tells a penitent “your soul is dirty” he is using a metaphor. Souls can’t actually be dirty because they are immaterial; souls and dirt come from different semantic domains, at least in the western tradition. However, Burkhart argues that Nahuas understood the symbolic relationship between physical and moral pollution metonymically, not metaphorically. Because Nahuas didn’t share the same body/spirit dichotomy, dirt (tlahzolli) was understood as lying within the same semantic domain as moral pollution: both ordinary dirt and moral pollution were tlahzolli.

When the Nahua penitent was told “your soul is dirty,” she argues, it was likely understood metonymically, as if sin somehow physically dirtied the sinner.

Sin as filth or pollution was vividly described by the authors of the Dominicans’ *Doctrina*. Of the person who has fallen into the deadly sin of lust they write:

\[
\text{auh yniuhqui yeuatl cenca catçauac cëca yyac cenca tliltic cânnoiuhqui}
\]
\[
yntecheuitlauiltitinemi cenca catçauac cenca yyac cenca tliltic
\]

And just as [the devil] is very filthy, very smelly, very black likewise he will cause us to be very filthy, very smelly, very black.

One notes how the emphasis here is on the effects of the sin of lust, not on lust itself, yet another by product of the adoption of tlahtlacolli or “damage” as a translation of sin. When one is lustful one becomes “filthy,” however, we are uncertain as to whether this filth was understood by Nahuas in a figurative or a literal sense. Sahagún muddies the waters significantly with the following comparison made in his sermon for the first Sunday of Advent: *In titlatlacovanj... yn maca çan tipitzol, tlacolçoctitlan timomimitoc*, “You sinner, you are just like a pig, rolling around in the mud of sin!” Sin is like mud that a pig lathers itself with. It is black and stinking and it physically covers and adheres to the animal.
In a similar way, sin was also likened to sickness. Like a virus it could be caught; its effects were likened to physical symptoms that weaken and eventually kill the host. This was another of Sahagún’s favorite metaphors and he expounded on it at great length. In the second part of his sermon for the third Sunday after Epiphany he writes *In yevatl tlatlacolli, ca icocoliz in tanima*, “sin is the sickness of our souls,” and proceeds to offer this colorful elaboration:

* Auh in tevatl titlatlacoani cenca tepinauhti cenca tetlaelti in itech ca manima in yevatl tlatlacolli: yn manima yuhquin tlatlacoltica, papalani, tlatlacoltica temalli ytech quiça, hiyac, tetlaelti, temava. 

You sinner, the sin in your soul is very shameful, very revolting. Because of sin it is as if your soul is festering, because of sin pus is coming out, stinking, revolting, and infectious.  

As with the “sin as filth” comparison, “sin as sickness” might also have resulted in understandings among Nahuas that diverged from what the friars had intended. If, as Burkhart has argued, it was received as a metonym rather than a metaphor, it could have led Nahuas to think of sin in the same way they thought of other physical ailments. Perhaps sin could be caught merely by being in proximity to other sinners, or perhaps it could be cured by ingesting a certain kind of medicine. In either case, Nahuas might have been discouraged from thinking of sin in the sense of universal principles of good and evil essential to the acts themselves.

Aquino’s hermit-sinner “confessional dramas” reflected a number of anxieties the friars felt about how the concept of sin was being understood by native audiences. That Nahuas lacked sufficient understanding of sin was evidenced by the infrequency with which they participated in the sacrament of penance (confession). According to Gruzinski, towards the middle of the 1560s more than eighty percent of the indigenous population died without confession in the archbishopric of Mexico.  

Another telling indication of the lack of effective teaching about sin was the persistence of what the friars deemed “idolatrous” and “superstitious” practices. This
was the cause of much hand-wringing and grumbling by the friars, whose writing is replete with dour reflections on the durability of indigenous religious practices in the new, Christian era.

It is likely that both of these cases were due to the difficulty Nahuas experienced in understanding and accepting the friars’ concept of sin/tlahtlacolli. As I have already noted, Nahuas lacked a close analogue to sin in their moral system. Also, the choice of tlahtlacolli as a translation for sin likely encouraged an understanding of that concept that differed in important ways from what the friars were aiming for. For one, the emphasis on “damage” and the results of transgressive acts rather than on sin as a negative moral concept inherent to the act itself may not have caused the change in behavior intended by the friars. Hence the repeated emphasis in the doctrinal literature on specific acts that were sinful. Also, the friars’ specific categories and classifications of sins seemed to have eluded most Nahuas. Franciscan Juan Bautista noted that Nahua penitents struggled to differentiate between venial and mortal sins, as well as between good deeds and guilt. Efforts to correct these impediments to proper understanding of sin are found throughout the doctrinal literature in Nahuatl. They can be detected as well in the writing of Fabián de Aquino, to which we now turn.

Part of the function of confessional manuals such as Molina’s was to introduce Nahuas to certain categories of acts that were deemed sinful. The frameworks used in confessionarios and doctrinas were the Ten Commandments and the seven deadly sins. Molina’s Confessionario mayor is broken into sections with headings like Tetlatlaniliztli, ytechpa ynic centetl teonauatili, “Questions regarding the first commandment of God,” Tetlatlaniliztli, ytechpa yn teoyeuacatiliztli, “Questions regarding greed,” etc. This classificatory tendency is manifest clearly in Aquino’s hermit-sinner dialogues. However, rather than classifying sins by commandment, sins are associated with certain professions or societal roles. In a sense, the
subjects interrogated by the hermit read like a taxonomy of the sins of indigenous society seen from the vantage point of the spiritual colonizer. Each character is a “type,” a representative of a particular slice of Nahua society easily recognizable to the audience members. The complete list of these eighteen types and the sins they are associated with follows:

Table 4.1. Categories of sin in “Antichrist and the Hermit”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>social category</th>
<th>categories of sin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tlenamacacaqueh (“fire priests,” i.e., native priests)</td>
<td>idolatry, murder (human sacrifice), sex with children, <em>tecuilontilitzli</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahtlaneltocani (“unbelievers,” i.e., those who have rejected Christianity)</td>
<td>unbelief, secret idolatry, mocking God’s word, deceit, false baptism, “burning papers” and offering incense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonalpouhqui (day keepers)</td>
<td>deceiving people, sorcery (divination)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tlahtoani Itlatqui (rulers)</td>
<td>pride, greed, tyrannical rule, theft, abuse of authority, fornication, neglecting to confess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pochtcatl (merchants)</td>
<td>deceiving people, usury, theft, greed, adultery, neglecting to confess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motoliniani (the poor)</td>
<td>anger, envy, sloth, theft, neglecting to confess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telpochtli (young males)</td>
<td>fornication, despising God’s word, neglecting to confess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tetlanochiliani (those who arrange sex for others; “madams”)</td>
<td>deceiving young women, encouraging others to commit fornication/adultery, neglecting to confess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahuiani (prostitutes)</td>
<td>fornication, selling body for sex, lewd and suggestive behavior, adultery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ichpochtli (young females)</td>
<td>refusal to marry, fornication, omitting a mortal sin from confession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticitl (traditional healers)</td>
<td>deceiving people, sorcery (divination), refusal to confess, encouraging women to abort their pregnancies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motlatlaxiliani (women who induce their own abortions)</td>
<td>abortion, dereliction of maternal duties, neglecting to confess, not baptizing one’s children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character Description</td>
<td>Sins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motetzacatiliani (women who sterilize themselves)</td>
<td>sterilization, adultery, neglecting to confess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moyectocani Tetenanahuatiliani (hypocrites)</td>
<td>hypocrisy, betraying people, false accusation, anger, hatred, adultery, neglecting to confess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ichtequini (thieves)</td>
<td>theft, neglecting to confess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inin Ihuanyolqui Quitecac (people who have sex with their kin)</td>
<td>sex with kin, neglecting to confess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuiloni (homosexual “passives”)</td>
<td>tecuilontiliztli, neglecting to confess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tepatlachhuiani (a person who commits a certain kind of sexual act, possibly homosexual “actives”?)</td>
<td>fornication of an indeterminate sort</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On one level, the parading of characters across the stage, each one confessing to their sins, can be seen in a purely didactic light. Aquino’s intent here would appear to teach Nahuas about certain categories of acts that the friars had labeled sinful and had to be avoided or, if committed, then confessed. Condensing all of the individual sins listed above into a shorter list of categories results in the following:

Table 4.2. Sins by type in “Antichrist and the Hermit”

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sexual sin</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neglecting to confess</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lying</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unbeliev/idolatry</td>
<td>3–5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>theft</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interruption of pregnancy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anger</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>greed</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>laziness</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>envy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pride</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I have stated the hypothesis that the way Aquino presents sin in these “confessional dialogues” reflects the friars’ teaching on sin and anxieties they felt about how well Nahuas were understanding their teaching. This link can be demonstrated by comparing Aquino’s treatment of
a representative sampling of the sins above with the friars’ treatments of those same sins in the doctrinal literature.

The hermit’s interrogations of human sinners begin with the “six fire priests of the demons.” They lament that they failed to “acknowledge the true God (yn nelli dios)” by worshipping those who are “not true gods (amo nelli teteo).” They confess that “we used to cut ourselves with flint knives [and] kill people in front of our gods…we used to blow [the conch shell trumpet] to call the common folk to bleed themselves before our gods. In this way we went around deceiving the common folk.” Aquino’s inclusion of these characters is curious due to the fact that by the time he was composing “Antichrist and the Hermit” the institutional Aztec priesthood had been effectively eliminated for decades. It’s true that nanahualtin like Martín Ocelotl, Andrés Mixcoatl and others continued to offer some of the ritual services formerly carried out by the native priesthood but these were not tlenamacacaqueh and they didn’t perform human sacrifice. So why did Aquino include them in this list of eighteen sinners, all of whom appear to be chosen as “types” immediately recognizable by Nahua audiences of his day? One possibility is that these individuals were formerly fire priests prior to First Contact who were put out of business by the arrival of the missionaries and the new regime. If Aquino wrote his plays in the 1550’s–1580’s, it is entirely possible that there were still living members of the community who had been Aztec priests prior to the arrival of the Spaniards. Evidence for this comes from a series of amonestaciones (“warnings”) Sahagún wrote in 1579. Each warning contained an explicit condemnation of certain pagan beliefs that continued to linger among Nahua Christians at that time. In his second warning he writes:

_Inic yntlamantli in cenca quyilaçotlaia in amoculhua: ca in iehoanti yn tlenamacacaque yn tlamacazque, in mopiñxinemjyn atle qujximati teuhtli tlaçolli, qujtoaia: ca in iehoanti cenca quyilaçotlaiayn teteou....In juh qujtoaia y in vevetque, cenca omotlapololititaque, iehica ca in iehoanti...amo qujmjximachilia_
in nelli dios...çan iehoâiti gujmotlaieculiaia yn diablos...

The second thing that your grandfathers held in high regard were the fire priests, the priests of Tlaloc, those that lived chastely and knew nothing of dust and filth. They used to say that the gods greatly esteemed them...The elders who said this were really confused because [those priests] didn’t recognize the true God, they were just serving the demons...27

Sahagún’s warning reveals the same anxiety conveyed by Aquino in his dramatization of the confessions of six fire priests: namely, that certain Nahuas fostered a nostalgic regard for pre-contact religious figures that persisted well into the later sixteenth century. Both Sahagún and Aquino respond to this lingering attachment by condemning the pagan priests as serving the devil. Aquino does this by having his priests declare for the audience, yn tiquinteotocaya Ca hamo nelli teteo “Those who we used to consider gods are not true gods.” He reinforces the gravity of persistent reverence for the fire priests by having them bemoan the tortures they currently endure in mictlan at the hands of the demons whom they used to serve. The coexistence of Sahagún’s warning about regard for the tlenamacacaqueh and the hermit’s interrogation of the six fire priests is a striking example of how the friars’ anxieties regarding the persistence of pre-Contact beliefs and practices were reflected in Aquino’s second Antichrist drama.

Another category of sinner that provoked the friars’ anxieties were those Nahuas who staunchly refused to convert to Christianity at all, or worse, those who feigned their conversion but persisted secretly in their idolatry. After the six fire priests, Aquino introduces us to two characters who fit this profile, two Atlaneltocani, “unbelievers,” named Tlacatecuhtli and Huitznahuatl, whose unconverted status is emphasized by their lack of Christian names. When the hermit asks them why they are suffering in mictlan, they reply, “because the words of God (yn itlatoltzin d[ios]) reached us but we didn’t take believing seriously, we just made fun of it.” Although they “broke down the houses” of their gods when the Christians came, they confess
“we didn’t do it willingly. We just erected their homes within us and we carefully protected the images of our gods so that the Christians wouldn’t burn them.” Moreover, they admit “we got baptized to satisfy the priests. We didn’t do it voluntarily, we did it falsely...We were just secretly serving our gods.”28 The references to crypto-paganism, false baptism, and lack of voluntary submission to the faith all echo concerns that permeate the doctrinal literature of the friars. Molina’s confessionarios repeat these themes like a drum beat. Regarding belief in the one God of the Christians he asks,

Notlaçopiltze cuix vel ticcenneltoca yn totecuïyo Dios
My precious child, Do you completely believe in our Lord God?

aço otomeyollouac y (fol.6r.) n itechpa ytlá yneltococatzín:
Did you doubt something regarding his faith?

Cuix ticmocemmaca?
Do you give yourself entirely to him?29

Throughout his questioning Molina emphasizes the necessity of “complete” belief, using the Nahuatl word cen, “entirely, totally, altogether.”30 There is no room in the friars’ faith for partial or half-hearted acceptance of itlatoltzin dios, “God’s word.” Molina also emphasizes the importance of coming to belief voluntarily. Molina uses variations of the construction yollocacopa, “voluntarily, willingly,” to express this. Often this is found in its possessed form and modified with cen. This renders a meaning close to our expression “with all of your heart” but with stronger associations of volition and will. We find this at work in questions such as:

Cuix otimoquatequi: cuix moyollocopa ticceli yn Dios yatzin yn itoca baptismo?
Were you baptized? Did you willingly receive the water of God, called baptism?

Cuix mocenyollocopa, oticmotlaçotili, cuix motlatoltica oticmoyecteneuili,
Have you loved [God] with all of your heart? Have you praised him with your words?
Pedro de Gante targets the Nahuas like Tlacatecuhtli and Huitznahuatl in his *Doctrina christiana*.

In the section where the catechist quizzes a novice on the basic tenets of the Christian faith we find:

*No. Auh tlein quichihua in tlalticpactlaca ynic ñpa hui yn mictlan.*

[Priest] And what do the people of earth do in order to go to *mictlan*?
[Novice] They who go around sinning, never restraining themselves in their baptism. Even though they were baptized, they do not follow God: even though they were baptized, they don’t believe, they don’t live according to the divine law of our Lord God.  

It was not only during Aquino’s time that the friars and priests of New Spain wrestled to teach Nahuas how to “completely” believe in God, and to do so freely and “with all one’s heart.” Throughout the colonial period this message was repeated again and again in catechisms and confession manuals and sermons.

The sin of clinging to pre-contact religious beliefs and practices by baptized Christians was one of the most anxiety-provoking realities for the friars of early colonial Mexico. In fact, documentation such as Inquisition records, idolatry trials, and the writings of friars and secular priests all attest to this throughout the colonial period. Picking up where clergy left off are the accounts of twentieth-century ethnographers who have documented the persistence of traditional practices into the present. Records dating to the time of Aquino aren’t difficult to come by.

Molina’s *Confessionario breve*, also published in 1565 and intended for confessors, contains exhaustive questioning that sought to root out traditional beliefs. Under the first commandment, mandating that Christians worship God alone, Molina suggests that confessors ask the following questions of Nahua penitents:

*Cuix no çan ticpia ytlal yxiptla tlatecolotl, cuix ticmati yn aço aca quipia, yn*
Do you still keep any images of the devil? Do you know someone who perhaps has them but hides them?...
Did you make an offering to him? Did you offer copal? Did you cut papers? Have you at any time summoned a sorcerer so that he would divine for you? Or perhaps you summoned him so that he could reveal to you what you had lost? Perhaps he laid water before you (f.6v) so that he could read the signs?...
Did you believe in predictions or in the prediction cord? Or did you stop the diviner, the reader of the prediction cord?
Did you believe in or regard as a bad omen the horned owl when he calls? Or the barn owl when he cries, [or] make a scraping sound with his claws? Or the beetle when you saw it somewhere? 

Aquino’s hermit interrogates a number of characters who confess to having maintained the practice of pre-contact rituals similar to those noted by Molina’s confessor above. One such character is a tonalpouhquī, “day keeper, diviner.” In pre-contact Nahua communities these important ritual practitioners served essential functions in the day-to-day cycles of life. For example, Sahagún’s informants tell us that when babies were born “the fathers, the mothers summoned the soothsayers, the wise men, in order that they tell of what sort the day was when [their] baby was born.” As part of this divination ritual, the day keeper then “looked at his books, at his paintings, his writings; he read, examined, looked at the day sign on which the baby was born, studied which were those related to it which governed there.” Aquino’s Tonalpouhquī, when called on stage by the hermit, is asked to identify a particular prop he is carrying with him. He responds:

I am bearing the book of the gods. I used to read the book in order to deceive people. When someone was born the mother and father would bring him (or her)
before me so that I would tell them under which day sign their child had been born. I say to them what will happen to their child here on earth.34

The existence of divinatory codices as well as the knowledge required to use them persisted well into the sixteenth century. Although the vast majority of these were destroyed in the years immediately following the conquest, there is evidence that Nahuas had carefully secreted away their sacred books. A full decade after the arrival of the first twelve Franciscans, archbishop Zumárraga was able to locate enough to conduct a public book burning in the marketplace of Tetzcoco in 1535.35 The symbolism of this act at the initiation of the episcopal Inquisition that prosecuted the likes of Martín Ocelotl was not lost on those who witnessed the event. Another fascinating shred of evidence comes from a collection of Nahuatl annals known as the Codex Aubin that documents important events stretching from the founding of Tenochtitlan in pre-contact times through the end of the sixteenth century. Under the rubric for the year 1559 we find this brief record, xvii marco yn tlaltl amatl, “On the seventeenth of March a book/books was/were burned.”36 The red and black coloration of the illustration accompanying this statement clearly indicates that the amatl in question was in fact a traditional painted codex, quite possibly a divinatory manual like the one carried by Aquino’s Tonalpouhqui. Seen in this light, that Molina’s confessor would be prompted to ask Nahua penitents in the 1560’s “Have you at any time summoned a sorcerer so that he would divine for you?” doesn’t seem unwarranted. Together with the Aubin’s record of a book burning in 1559, Tonalpouhqui’s confession in “Antichrist and the Hermit” links together the existence of pre-contact divinatory practices, painted codices, and the friars’ concern over their lingering influence among baptized Nahuas. These anxieties are communicated to Aquino’s audience when the shamed Tonalpouhqui continues his confession:
In this manner I used to deceive them. What I used to know is nothing. Am I perchance a deity? Does the only deity teach people what will happen to them?... And now at God’s command two demons go along whipping me because I am a very great wicked one, I have deceived many!37

His words echo the rhetorical strategies of the friars discussed in Chapter Three, adopting discourse that classifies native knowledge as lies, native deities as devils, and practitioners of native ritual as idolaters worthy of punishment in mictlan.

In addition to the tonalpouhqui, a traditional healer, a ticitl, reveals the continuation of pre-contact religious practices. He confesses “my job was just scattering shelled maize grains before people; I used to count [i.e., conduct divination rituals].”38 Crucially, even though Aquino’s ticitl character is clearly carrying out his pre-contact function, Aquino indicates that he is also a baptized Christian. We know this because he states ca nevatl niyantonio ni[ti]çitl, “I am Antonio, I am a healer,” giving away his baptized status.39 This situation gravely worried the friars: Nahuas who nominally accepted Christianity through receiving baptism and participating to a certain extent in the sacramental life of the Church, but who continued on with their traditional practices as if there were no conflict between the two. This is precisely the kind of ambivalent response to Christianity documented by Kevin Terraciano among the Mixtec lords of Oaxaca. In one memorable instance he cites, the native governor of Chachuapa explained to ecclesiastical authorities in 1545 that his people made sacrifices both to their ancestors and to “the one God from Castile” because the “people of Yanhuitlan were of two hearts.”40 This type of non-committal response was so prevalent that Molina specifically references it in the previously-cited passage from the Confessionario breve, under questions regarding the First Commandment. He writes: Notlaçopiltze cuix vel ticcenneltoca yn totecuiyo Dios? aço otomeyollouac yn itechpa ytlta yneltococatzin? “Oh my beloved child, do you really believe completely in our lord, God? Or have you had doubt regarding some belief in him?” The word
for doubt he uses is *omeyolloa*, which literally means “to be of two hearts.” Aquino’s *Ticil* reflects this ambivalent condition when he admits, “Even though many times I heard the sacred words (*yn teotlatoll*) I didn’t want to confess, I didn’t want to abandon my wickedness.” Then, so that the audience understands the spiritual colonizer’s position on such two-heartedness, he continues, “And now because of this God has cast me down into *mictlan*...Because of this I am suffering greatly and those who I considered gods are whipping me; they’re just the demons I called upon when I was divining.”

Time and again the friars communicated this message in their *doctrinas* and in their *sermonarios*. At least insofar as religion was concerned, Nahuas’ conversion to Christianity required a complete break with the past. Pre-contact religious practices were unequivocally labeled *tlahtlacolli*, “sin,” and forbidden. The consequences of persisting in such sin was made clear by the testimony of Aquino’s characters, each of whom bemoans their terrible suffering in *mictlan* at the hands of the demons. However, the reality of the situation in mid-sixteenth century New Spain was that among many native communities such a break was untenable. Traditional healers and day keepers continued their practices well into the colonial period and beyond, seeking to accommodate certain aspects of Christianity by striving for balance with that enduring framework of indigenous beliefs that created order in human bodies, communities, and the cosmos.

Lastly, a number of the sinners interrogated by the hermit reflect friars’ concerns that Nahuas didn't adequately understand the important distinction between mortal and venial sin. This wasn’t for lack of trying. In the doctrinal literature the friars took great pains to distinguish between the “little” sins and the “deadly,” usually by expounding at great lengths on the terrifying consequences of the latter. In his 1546 *Doctrina christiana breve* Molina offers definitions of both *tepiton tlahtlacolli* and *temictiani tlahtlacolli*. However, while the former
receives only cursory treatment Molina devotes a great deal of space relative to the length of his “brief” catechism for the explanation of the more grave temictiani tlahtlacolli. He describes this kind of sin with these words:

In temictiani tlatlacolli ca yehuatl ye tiquitlacoa yn itenauatiltzin Dios. Aco totlalnamiquiliztica, aco totlatoltica. Anocho totlachualitztica. Auh ypampa moteneua temictiani tlatlacolli, yehica ca quimictia yn tanima yuan yn tonacayo, yhuan ye ypampa cemicac mictlan tlaihiyouiz yntlacamo nican tlalticpac tlamaceualiztica poltuiz.

Deadly sins are those that damage (ihtlacoa) God’s commands perhaps by our thoughts, perhaps by our words, or perhaps by our deeds. And the reason they are called deadly sins is because they kill our soul and our body, and because of them [our soul] will suffer forever in mictlan if they are not destroyed [our mortal sins] here on earth with confession.42

Longer doctrinas spilled a great deal of ink expounding on the seven deadly sins and their consequences. The 1548 doctrina published by the Dominicans, as well as those authored by Franciscan Pedro de Gante (1553), Dominican Domingo de la Anunciación (1565), and Augustinian Juan de la Anunciación (1575), all address the seven deadly sins in detail. So too did the confessionarios of Alonso de Molina (1565a and 1565b), Juan Bautista (1599), and Bartolomé de Alva (1634). Such emphasis was placed on preaching about tlahtlacolli that in the 1530s don Carlos Ometochtzin reportedly grumbled, “All the friars talk about is sin. What is it that they name except sin?”43

However, it seems that Nahuas struggled to assimilate the friars’ teachings about the differing severity of various sins, failing (in the eyes of friars) to ascribe sufficient fear to those temictiani tlahtlacolli that could “kill the soul” and commit it to eternal suffering. This reality was expressed by fray Juan Bautista in his 1600 publication, Advertencias para los confesores de los naturales (“Warnings for confessors of natives”). He noted that Nahuas, when confessing, no llegan a peccado mortal, “they don’t get to the mortal sins.” Instead, they become bogged down with the minutiae of venial sins, failing to distinguish between cosas livianas, “frivolous things,”
and mortal sins. He notes, *ya que aduierten que es malo, no hazen juyzio de mortal ni venial,* “once they notice that [some deed] is bad, they don’t rightly judge whether it’s mortal or venial.” Dominican fray Domingo de la Anunciación addressed this difficulty directly in his 1565 *Doctrina christiana.* Another dialogically-formatted *doctrina,* Anunciación’s has a “disciple” ask his friar-catechist, *(Notatzīe) nimitznotlatlauhtilia ma xinechmolhuili, catlehuatl ynic moxexelohua yn tlatlaculli temictiani yuan yn tepitō tlatlaculli yn ytoca venial?* “Oh my father, I ask you to please tell me which sins are divided up into deadly sins and the little sins, called venial?” (i.e., “What is the difference between mortal and venial sins?”) The friar responds, *ca cēca uei ynic moxexelohua (nopiltzine),* “Indeed, the difference is very great, Oh my child…” He then proceeds to explain the nature of this difference in detail.

Other friars sought to compensate for this difficulty in discerning venial from mortal sins by composing descriptions of the consequences of un-confessed mortal sin, typically by conjuring infernal visions of unrepentant sinners who report on the horrific tortures they are experiencing in hell. These descriptions employed what I’ve already referred to as discursive terror, fear as a means of instruction, trusting in the ability of the Nahua imagination to correctly amplify the gravity of certain sins. Seeking a representative example from among the many such passages results in a wealth of possibilities, but the following will suffice. In Augustinian friar Juan de la Anunciación’s 1575 *doctrina* he imagines a series of seven encounters between sinners and the demons who have been tasked with tormenting them. Each group of sinners is guilty of committing one of the seven deadly sins, and their individual punishments have been diabolically tailored to fit their crimes. Here he describes the treatment of a group of drunkards who are taunted by their demonic tormentors:
Come, oh my friends, you who lived obeying us by means of octli, you who lived happily getting drunk! With painted vessels you imbibed so much octli that you fell down drunk into your filthy vomit! Sit down over here!”

Then from flaming cups the demons will make them drink putrid water, bitter water, [and] filthy water until their hearts boil over…

Each of Aquino’s characters gives testimonies that employ frightening visual imagery to emphasize the grave nature of certain sins deemed temictiani by the friars. Many of them report that not only did their unconfessed mortal sins land them in mictlan, but like the drunkards above they are being punished by that which caused them to sin while on earth. The merchant who “devoted [him]self to adultery” is beaten by his many concubines; the lustful young man bemoans Auin axcā nechme cavitectivi yn nomecavā, “my mistresses go along whipping me!”; the unmarried young woman must carry her lover around on her back in mictlan; and the woman who induced her own abortion suffers the horrific punishment of carrying around her aborted fetuses. The aforementioned cuiloni, Gonzalo, makes very clear the necessity of properly distinguishing tepiton from temictiani tlahtlacolli. He states his reason for being cast into hell by explaining to the hermit – and hence, the audience – that it was “because of one single, great mortal sin.” Later he states, “That particular sin God really hates” and also “because of this I suffer greatly [in mictlan]. Those who did cuiloni to me go along whipping me.” Finally, to drive the point home, the hermit addresses the audience and demands, ma nimā xiquinchichacan yn amochintin, “Now spit on them, all of you!” This is followed by a statement I have struggled to translate: Ca vel tleco moneq yn Cuillonime. The key words here are tleco “into the fire,” monequi “it is necessary,” and “the cuilonimeh.” I lean towards translating this statement as, “It is necessary that the cuilonimeh be [cast] into the fire.” Aquino’s association of the tleco
with *cuiloni* echoes the description of the *cuiloni* in Book X of the *Florentine Codex*: “The *cuiloni* [is] an effeminate – a defilement, a corruption, filth; a taster of filth, revolting, perverse, full of affliction…he merits being committed to flames, burned, consumed by fire.”50 Whether this statement represents veritable pre-contact sentiments about those who engage in passive homosexual acts or not is debatable. Nevertheless, hermit’s aside to the audience following Gonzalo’s frightening testimony offers a chilling warning regarding the gravity of certain forms of *tlahtlacolli* that would have been recognizable to Nahuas and Christians alike.

**Sexual sin in “Antichrist and the Hermit”**

This last example highlights the emphasis on sins of a sexual nature in the hermit’s interrogation of demons and sinners. Out of the twenty-five characters interrogated, well over half (sixteen, or 64%) admit to sexual sins. Adultery is one of the most frequently mentioned (eight out of sixteen characters), then sex outside of marriage (six characters), two kinds of sins *contra natura*, “against nature” (i.e., homosexual acts; four characters), selling sex and arranging for sex to be sold (two characters), sexual relations with kin (one character), sex with children (one character), lewd behavior (one character), and lying for sex (one character). Two characters confess to sins that pertain to sexuality and reproduction. One, named Francisca, admits that she was sent to *mictlan* “Because I aborted my children when I was pregnant.”51 Another identifies herself by saying, *ca nevatl nimotetzacatilliyan*, “I am the one who makes herself sterile.” As to why she was sent to *mictlan* she states, “Because I asked the curer (*ticitl*) for a sterilizing potion and with it I sterilized myself because I didn’t want to give birth, I didn’t want to get pregnant. I just devoted myself exclusively to adultery in order to satisfy myself.”52 Finally, a variety of
characters confess to sins related to the friars’ teaching on marriage, including sex outside of wedlock, the keeping of mistresses, and the refusal to get married.

This detailed treatment of sins of a sexual nature is one of the strongest links between Aquino’s plays and the moral discourses of the friars, a great deal of which revolved around issues pertaining to the body and sexuality. Gruzinski notes that while a mere one percent of Molina’s *Confessionario mayor* is devoted to idolatry, an issue of pressing importance to the friars’ mission, a full fifteen percent is devoted to the body and sexuality.\(^5\) In the *confessionarios*, questions regarding the Sixth Commandment (“You shall not commit adultery”) probed deeply into the sexual practices of Nahuas. An excerpt from Molina’s *Confessionario breve*, written to aid priests in confessing Nahuas, illustrates this point. At first the questions cover the expected range of transgressions: did you lust after a woman?, have sex with someone you aren’t married to?, sleep with a relative?, etc. However, certain queries were much more specific, even suggesting possible scenarios in which the penitent might have violated the Sixth Commandment. For example, Molina’s confessor asks:

\[
\text{Cuix aca çan ica otimocayauh ciuatzintli, aço tiquilhui, tinociuauh tiyez, teoyotica nimitznonamictiz, auh yn çatepan yn iquac ye otitectac, çan otitectelchiuh amo ticemonamicti, çan otiquiztlacaui?}
\]

Did you at one time deceive some poor woman, telling her: you will be my wife; I will marry you in a sacred way, and afterwards, when you had already lain with her, you despised her, you did not marry her, you just lied to her?\(^5\)

Or, consider the following questions:

\[
\text{Cuix aca ticennamic ciuatl, anoço ticnauatec: aço ticchichiualtzitzitzqui, anoçe ticauilti? Yn iquac ytech tacie, aço mitztlacaualtiaya, auh yn tehuatl çan oticcuitlauilti? Cuix aca ticuilonti, anoce aca mitzcuilonti: aço tehuatl ticpeualti, ticcuitlauilty?}
\]

Did you kiss a woman or embrace her? Or did you grasp her breasts or fondle her? When you had sex with her, did she [try to] stop you and you just forced her? Did you have sex with a man or did some man have sex with you? Was it you who started it, who encouraged it?\(^5\)
And then from the invasive to the ridiculous:

*Cuix yca timomachiuh, anoce aca omitzmachiuh? Cuix yc oquiz ym moquichyo ym motlacxinachyo? cuix ytech tacic, ytzcuintli, anoço ychcatl, anoço totolin? Cuix yca otitecenteca[n]hui, otitlaquauhtla?*

Did you at one time do yourself with your hands or perhaps someone did you with theirs? Did your semen, your seed come out as a result? Did you have sex with a dog, a sheep, or a turkey? Did you ever have frequent relations with a woman, did you and many others have sex with the same woman?56

The near-obsessive nature of the priest’s questions about the sexual lives of Nahua penitents reveals the power human sexuality held in the minds of the friars. What explains such probing specificity? Are these confessional queries merely the means by which celibate friars sought out titillation? Or is there something else at work? Links between sexuality and power have been the mainstay of certain schools of analysis since the time of Foucault. His three-volume *History of Sexuality*, written between 1976 and 1984, focused on the sacrament of penance and its relationship to power and knowledge. Foucault noted that in the centuries following the Council of Trent the Catholic Church revised confessional practices and increased the ability of its ministers to know detailed information about the lives of their subjects. Through the mandate to confess every sin that might be recalled, the Church increased control over its subjects, control that extended far beyond matters of an overtly spiritual nature and resulting in forms of domination over their minds and bodies. Klor de Alva argues that the objective of such intervention was nothing short of forming a new kind of conscience in Nahua penitents, one that broke with traditional morality and therefore yielding an easier target for domination.57 Seen in this Foucauldian light, confession provided the institutional Church with new and more invasive ways of knowing and, as a result, new and more complete ways of exerting power over its subjects.
However, Nahuas weren’t passive victims of the confessional act. As Asunción Lavrin notes, the distance between the proscriptive language of the *confessionarios* and the actual behavior of the people (as evidenced in Inquisition trials for example) highlights the difficulties the Church experienced in realizing its intended dominion over penitents’ bodies.\(^{58}\) The tilt toward the sexual in Aquino’s confessional dialogues is another indicator of this difficulty. The existence of these dialogues, like the existence of Molina’s exhaustive questions based on the Sixth Commandment, points to the ongoing challenges faced by the friars in inculcating Christian sexual norms among Nahuas. The fact that sixty-four percent of the characters in this section confess sexual sin suggests that the friars’ teaching was falling on deaf ears. Like don Carlos of Tetzcoco, Nahuas across the social spectrum struggled to understand and live up to the rigid moral prescriptions of the friars regarding sex and marriage. His bold rejection of the friars’ order to abandon his multiple wives and mistresses, cited in Chapter Three, likely captured sentiments common among Nahuas who, prior to Contact, practiced polygamy and whose attitudes regarding sexuality differed in some notable ways from those of the Christians. The friction felt by Nahuas regarding Christian sexual norms is well documented in the colonial sources. Pete Sigal writes that the friars’ adoption of Nahua concepts like *tlahzolli* (“trash, filth”) into their preaching on sexuality, like their adoption of *tlahtlacolli* (“damage”) for sin, resulted in “a discourse of confusion” that reinforced indigenous understandings of sexuality.\(^{59}\) Notably, Aquino’s confessional dialogues make no mention of *tlahzolli* in their discussion of sexuality, perhaps in recognition of the potential for confusing Christian and indigenous ways of understanding sex. Regardless, it is sex that dominates the confessions of these Nahua sinners, an unmistakable echo of the preeminence of this theme in the friars’ preaching and teaching.
Aquino’s confessional drama

In addition to sin and sex, Aquino’s hermit-sinner dialogues reflect the friars’ anxieties about the sacrament of confession. As noted above, few Nahuas of Aquino’s day were availing themselves of the sacrament on a regular basis. This was gravely concerning due to the risk of dying while in a state of mortal sin according to Catholic dogma. Domingo de la Anunciación emphasized this in his discussion of mortal and venial sins: *in tlatlacohuani yin ipā huetzi īlacamo tlameuaz nican tlalticpac, ca ompa yaz yin mictlan infeini, ynic ēpa cemicac tlahiyohuiz,* “A sinner who falls into it (mortal sin), if they don’t confess here on earth, will go to *mictlan,* hell, and suffer there forever.”60 Sahagún explained this to Nahuas by using the “sin as sickness” metaphor. Returning to the passage cited above, he continues,

*In yev atl tlatlacoll, ca icocoliz in tanima ic cenca motolinia ic cenca mococova; čan iceltzin in totecuiyo vel quimopatilia... Auh intla quemman tlatlacova, in iuh ca quitemova in patli in iuh ca moyolmelava ic pati; yeica yn neyolmelavalitzli ca patli ypatica in tanima; in iuh ca quitemova in ayamo vetya cocolitzli, ixpantzinc mopechiteca in totecuiyo yvan in itepaticauh in teyolmelavani, quinextia in icocoliz quitoa. totecuiyoe ma xinechmopatili, ca čan moceltzin vel tinechmopatiliz. Auh in yevantin in iuh ca quinmopatilia in totecuiyo quinmotlapopolhuilia yeica ca quimalhuia in tanima.*

*Sin is the sickness of our souls, [and] because of it they suffer, because of it they are very sick; it is our lord alone can heal them... If [someone] sometimes sins, just as s/he seeks a medicine he confesses and is healed as a result, because confession is the medicine, the cure of our souls. Just as one who seeks out [a medicine] before a disease grows worse, s/he bows down before our Lord and his/her healer, the confessor, and reveals his/her sickness, saying “Oh our lord, cure me, for you alone can heal me.” Those who do thusly our lord heals and forgives them because they are taking care of their souls.*61

For Sahagún and the rest of the friars, the simple truth was that if Nahuas didn’t learn how to properly prepare for and participate in the sacrament of penance, their souls would be lost to the devil forever. Failure of Nahuas to understand the reality of sin and its eternal consequences placed the entire spiritual battle being waged by the friars in jeopardy. If we keep in mind the apocalyptic framework within which many friars understood their urgent work of evangelization,
the stakes rise higher still. It was absolutely imperative that Nahuas understand the importance of confession and that they partake of the sacrament at least once a year as per the Church’s mandate.

Morality plays like Aquino’s were one such way to do this. Over and over again we hear words like those uttered by the merchant, “I wouldn’t confess. Because of this God cast me into mictlan,” or the Prostitute, “because I didn’t confess…while I was still living on earth,” or the thief, “Because I didn’t confess, God cast me into mictlan,” or the cuiloni, “if I had confessed, God would have had mercy on me. But I didn’t confess and because of this I am suffering greatly.” That fourteen of the eighteen sinners mention the failure to confess while living demonstrates that the purpose of these dialogues was to convey to Nahua audiences the importance of receiving the sacrament before death.

In addition to their concerns about the paucity of Nahuas who were availing themselves of confession, the friars were concerned that those who did confess were not coming to the sacrament sufficiently prepared. This was partly due to the fact that Nahuas lacked a concept of moral guilt as it was understood by the friars.\(^\text{62}\) Since indigenous morality was not one of absolutes, the incentive to avoid transgressions resided in the this-worldly consequences of one’s actions, rather than in an other-worldly punishment following death. Nahua morality prior to Contact had relied on a fear of the consequences of certain kinds of actions on the state of order or harmony in the body, the family, and society at large. For example, pre-Contact restrictions on drinking stemmed not from anything fundamental to drinking itself, but from the kinds of disorderly conduct that often resulted when one has over indulged in drinking. Inga Clendinnen notes that the “deeper danger” at work in drunkenness was “its capacity to lay humans open to the sacred.”\(^\text{63}\) Entering into a state of complete inebriation made people “open channels” for
sacred forces that were unpredictable and uncontrollable. Such forces and the actions that drew them close inspired uneasiness and fear in Nahuas. While not synonymous with the Christian notion of guilt, this was deemed similar enough by friars for it to be shaped into something approximating the emotional state required for confession, a state referred to as contrition.\textsuperscript{64}

Contrition can be defined as heart-felt sorrow at having offended God by means of one’s sins. It is the first of three central components of the sacrament of penance, the second being oral confession and the third, satisfaction or penance. According to Pardo, the question of whether or not Nahuas were coming to confession in a state of true contrition nagged at the friars.\textsuperscript{65} If they were not truly contrite, they ran the risk of nullifying the sacrament and its restorative grace. Since the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, annual confession had been obligatory for all baptized Catholics and a necessary prerequisite for the reception of the Eucharist. Theologians since then had debated whether true contrition was necessary for absolution for sins to be granted or whether a lesser state of “imperfect contrition,” or attrition, was allowable. Unlike contrition, which was supposed to flow from a penitent’s sincere sorrow, attrition was sadness based on fear of punishment for one’s sins. However, in 1551 the fourteenth session of the Council of Trent decided that whether it was the result of fear of hell or simply the detestation of sin, attrition was enough for true reconciliation to take place.\textsuperscript{66}

The attrition/contrition distinction was debated by the clergy in New Spain, with some arguing that natives were simply incapable of achieving true contrition. Although there were those who disagreed,\textsuperscript{67} the general trend in Nahuatl doctrinal literature was to focus on producing the state of attrition rather than contrition. Their most effective and favored method was the rather blunt instrument of didactic terror. Early on in the mission, when language still presented a significant barrier to effective communication, friars resorted to physical demonstrations to
convey the gravity of sin, the horrors of infernal punishment, and as inducements to partake in
the sacrament of penance. In order to convey the tortures inflicted on sinners in hell, Fray Luis
Caldera apparently resorted to burning small animals alive in front of native spectators, while
fray Antonio de la Roa walked barefoot on hot coals, his cries of anguish mingling with the smell
of burned flesh.\textsuperscript{68} To these early vivid demonstrations were added much more elaborate
performances such as those staged in 1538 during the Corpus Christi celebrations at Tlaxcala.
The Nahuas of this major \textit{altepetl} staged a number of dramatic productions at this time, one of
which centered around the preaching of St. Francis. Motolinia tells us that during his sermon
Francis was repeatedly interrupted by characters representing various mortal sins. Each one was
reprimanded by Francis and then dragged off to hell by actors playing demons. Of the staging of
these actions Motolinia reports:

the simulated hell had a secret door through which those who were inside could come out; and after those who were inside came out, the hell was set on fire. It burned so frightfully that no one seemed to have escaped. It was as if the demons and the reprobate were all burning, the souls and the demons yelling and shrieking. This caused great horror and fear even among those who knew that no one was burned.\textsuperscript{69}

To this must be added the aforementioned Final Judgment play of 1531 or 1533, staged in
Mexico City. The message inherent in any performance of Doomsday, whether in old Europe or
in New Spain, was unequivocally a call to repentance here on earth before the final trumpet blast
sounded and the window of opportunity closed. Fear of impending doom, hence the moniker
“Doomsday” play, had always been inherent in medieval stagings of the Final Judgment. Spanish
Dominican fray Luis de Granada stated as much when he wrote, \textit{Esta materia bien tratada sirve
grandemente para atemorizar los corazones de los hombres... Y este temor dispone mucho los
corazones para recibir la fe} ( “This material, when well presented, serves greatly to terrify the
hearts of men…And this terror prepares hearts to receive the faith”).\textsuperscript{70} He was referring here to
the Church’s outreach among Spanish Muslims, a context which the friars of New Spain easily adapted to their Nahua subjects. Mendieta writes that the Nahuatl Final Judgment play abrió mucho los ojos á todos los indios y españoles para darse a la virtud y dejar el mal vivir, y á muchas mujeres erradas, para movidas de temor y compugnidas, convertirse á Dios (“greatly opened the eyes of all the Indians and Spaniards, and led them to give themselves to virtue and desist from bad living. And many misguided women, motivated by fear and contrite, converted themselves to God”). 71 Even Molina, who was more inclined to coax Nahua towards the state of perfect contrition than other writers, tells his Nahua penitents auh yn yximachocatzin totecuiyo ca no ytech peua tzinti yn imacaxocatzin “the knowledge of our lord also begins, starts with fear [of God].”72 Together with a correct recognition of one’s sins, it is through this fear of God that “sin-anguish” (tlatlacolnetequipacholitzi) begins. He continues:

ynic cenca timoyolcocaun ynpampa mololatlcot, yehica yn otcimoyolitlacalhui ymmoteuh ymmotlatoacauh, ynic cenca tichoca ttilacoay. auh yn yuhqui yn moneyolcocoliz, monetequipacholiz, ytechpa ualquiça moneyolcuutiliz, ynic muchi tcmelaua, tictenquixbia motlauelilocayo, (yxpan sacerdote, yn ixiptlatzin totecuiyo Dios).

Therefore you suffer much regret due to your sins, because you offended your lord, your ruler and thus you cry [and] are sad very much. Likewise, your regret, your anguish, through them your confession issues forth, thus you declare, you speak all your offenses in front of the priest, the representative73 of our lord God.74

From this evidence it is clear that didactic terror was the primary vehicle used by the friars to address their concerns about Nahuas’ lack of participation in the sacrament of penance as well as their state of readiness to receive this great “medicine and cure of our souls.”

The confessional statements uttered by Aquino’s sinners reflect none of Molina’s efforts to distinguish perfect from imperfect contrition. Instead, they aim squarely at producing the state of attrition in Nahua audiences. At various times throughout both plays Aquino presents his audience with sights and sounds that were intended to induce the kind of terror referenced by
friars Granada and Molina above. Whether through the enacting of Antichrist’s slaughter of martyrs and *conversos*, the sight of demons dragging the condemned kicking and screaming from the stage, or sinners detailing their particular torments in hell, audiences were exposed to sound and imagery intended to terrify. That such terror was intended to point the audience in the direction of the confessional is repeatedly made clear by members of the cast. At the beginning of “Antichrist and the Hermit” the sibyl offers comfort to an audience frightened by her announcement of Antichrist’s advent by stating, “Do not become faint…Believe in the only God Jesus Christ. Be baptized, confess, take courage!” Later, Enoch tells a group of *macehualtin* that in order to go to heaven and avoid hell “Confess so that you don’t go to *mictlan!*” Even Huitzilopochtli reluctantly admits, “if some priest does it (i.e., teaches the doctrine) then they confess and cleanse their souls…so that it’s impossible for me to bring them to *mictlan*.” Add to these statements those of the fourteen sinners mentioned above, each of whom laments their neglecting of confession, and the message becomes quite clear: “confess so that you can avoid the fate of these poor souls standing before you.”

**Conclusion**

Aquino’s twenty-five hermit-sinner dialogues refract through the eyes of a native writer the teachings of the friars concerning sin, sex, and the sacrament of confession, as well as their anxieties about these subjects. Earlier I made the statement that the hermit’s interrogations of demons and sinners have a confessional feel to them. The hermit inhabits the role of the priest, asking questions, representing the moral authority of the Church, demanding access to the secrets of his penitents; and the demons and sinners are the penitent, frankly admitting to their sins, expressing the requisite sadness, and suffering through their penance in hell. Indeed, the
overarching purpose of these confessional dialogues seems to be to urge Nahuas to seek out the sacrament of penance as the “remedy” for the tlahtlacolli that threatens to “kill” their souls.

There is a kind of call-and-response relationship that emerges between the confessionarios of Aquino’s day and the sinners he imagines for the Nahuatl stage. From manuals like Molina’s we hear the friars ask questions like, “Do you still keep any images of the devil? Do you know someone who perhaps has them but hides them?” Then, as if in response comes the reply of Aquino’s Atlaneltocani: “we carefully protected the images of our gods so that the Christians wouldn’t burn them…We were just secretly serving our gods.”

His sinners have, in a sense, entered into dialogue with Molina’s confessor; in answering the hermit’s questions, they are in actuality answering the questions posed in the confessionarios. This suggests a form of intertextuality at work in Aquino’s plays. Aquino’s deep knowledge of the doctrinal discourses of the friars enables him to resolve the monological nature of the confession manuals and restore them to dialogue. Consider the following examples:

Table 4.3. Comparison of Molina’s Confessionario with Aquino’s “Antichrist and the Hermit”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Molina, Confessionario breve 1565a:14r–15r</th>
<th>Aquino, “Antichrist and the Hermit” fol.184v and fol.178v–179r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Did you steal someone’s property? Perhaps a cloak, precious metal, jade, quetzal plumes, or perhaps ears of dried maize, shelled maize, ears of green maize, squash, chili peppers, chia, beans...?”</td>
<td>Thief: “I made going around stealing my job. I would take a person’s cloak from him, a person’s property, a person’s things…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“When you sell, buy, or barter things, do you rip off people, do you fool people?”</td>
<td>Merchant: “My job was going around deceiving people, charging them excessive interest and stealing from the nobles. When I did business I sold things on the sly. I snatched away people’s property and I sold it to others.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Did you charge someone excessive interest?”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Molina, Confessionario breve 1565a:10v</th>
<th>Aquino, “Antichrist and the Hermit” fol.183r–v</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Did you drink a deadly potion so that you aborted, so that you killed your child?...And because you drank the potion, since you wanted to cast things away (i.e., abort your</td>
<td>One Who Sterilizes Herself: “I asked the healer for a sterilizing potion and with it I sterilized myself because I didn’t want to give birth, I didn’t want to get pregnant.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On the surface, Aquino’s confessional dialogues might appear as little more than a regurgitation of the friars’ official discourses on sex and sin. Similarly, we might be inclined to view Aquino as little more than the mouthpiece of the spiritual colonizer. However, “mouthpiece” doesn’t come close to capturing the complexity of the role played by Fabián de Aquino in his interactions with the culture and religion of the friars who trained him. As I have already argued, his devotional notebook, like the plays it contains, are documents of Aquino’s work as an intermediary between two cultures, a negotiator skilled at balancing the interests of both communities to which he belonged. And if we are inclined to see these dialogues as uncritical parroting of ecclesiastical discourse, then we’ve missed the most striking aspect of his work. For the fact is that by simply writing the words of these Nahua confessions, he has given voice to those who are largely voiceless in this context. And the act of giving voice to the subaltern is never a neutral act. What we might call the political significance of Aquino’s work lies in this act of restoring native voices to the doctrinal discourses that produced texts like Molina’s *Confessionario mayor*, discourses that were monological and hegemonic in nature. Foucauldian interpretations of the sacrament of penance stoke the indignation of postcolonial scholars seeking new ways to “decolonize” history, but rather than shift the focus from dominator to dominated, they instead perpetuate historiography’s traditional fixation on the deeds of white Europeans. In a small way, Aquino’s “Antichrist and the Hermit” offers a corrective to this trend by opening a window on native reactions to the spiritual colonizer’s teachings about sin, sex, and confession. His characters humanize native people who in the doctrinal literature suffer the reductionism of
the friars’ moral categorization: “prostitute,” “thief,” “madam,” and “unbeliever.” Instead, his “sinners” each bear names like Antonio, Cecilia, Gonzalo, Lucas, and Juana. With the exception of the six fire priests and two “unbelievers” they are all baptized Christians, and yet their testimonies publicly demonstrate – perhaps even model? – the ambivalent and conflicted nature of being Nahua under a Christian regime. They are in omeyollotin, “those of two hearts,” condemned to hell by the colonizer but brought back to life again and again on Aquino’s Nahuatl stage.
Endnotes

1 As I’ve previously noted, “hatred” is not one of the traditional seven deadly sins.
3 f.179v–180r.
4 Fabián de Aquino, Sermones y miscenánea de devoción, MS NS 3.1, Hispanic Society of America, New York, fol.185v.
7 Burkhart, The Slippery Earth, 28.
8 Ibid., 29.
10 Ibid.
12 “False testimony,” essentially “lying.”
13 fol.4r.
14 Códice franciscano, in Joaquín García Icazbalceta, ed. Códice Franciscano, Siglo XVI. (México: Editorial Chavez Hayhoe, 1941), 34.
15 Ibid., 39–40.
19 Ibid., 98.
20 Doctrina cristiana en lengua española y mexicana por los religiosos de la orden de Santo Domingo (Mexico: Juan Pablos, 1548), fol. cxvii.
21 Bernardino de Sahagún, Siguense unos sermones de dominicas y de sanctos en lengua mexicana: no traduzidos de sermonario alguno sino cópuestos nuevamente a la medida de la capacidad de los indios, MS 1485, Ayer Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago, 1540–1563, fol.1v.
22 Sahagún, Siguense unos sermones, fol. 21r.
24 Fray Juan Bautista, Confessionario en lengua mexicana y castellana. Con muchas advertencies muy necessarias para los confessors (Santiago de Tlatelolco: Melchior Ocharte, 1599), fol. 3r–v.
25 Fray Alonso de Molina, Confessionario mayor en lengua mexicana (Mexico: Antonio Espinoza, 1565a), fol.19v and fol.79v.
26 Aquino, *Sermones y miscénánea de devoción*, fols. 174v–175r.
28 Ibid., fols. 176v–177r.
29 Fray Alonso de Molina, *Confessionario breve en lengua mexicana* (Mexico: Antonio Espinoza, 1565b), fols. 5v–6r.
31 Fray Pedro de Gante, *Doctrina christiana en lengua mexicana* (Mexico: Juan Pablos, 1553), f.4r.
32 Molina, *Confessionario breve*, fol. 6r–v.
34 fol. 177v.
37 fol. 177v.
38 Aquino, *Sermones y miscénánea de devoción*, fol.182v.
39 Ibid., fol.182r.
41 Aquino, *Sermones y miscénánea de devoción*, fol.182v.
42 *Códice franciscano*, 41.
44 Fray Juan Bautista, *Advertencias para los confesores de los naturales*, 2 vols. (Mexico: Melchor Ocharte, 1600), fol.3r.
45 Fray Domingo de la Anunciación, *Doctrina cristiana breve y compendiosa*, (Mexico: Pedro Ocharte, 1565), fols. 56v–57r.
46 Fray Juan de la Anunciación, *Doctrina christiana muy complida*, (Mexico: Pedro Balli, 1575), 63–64.
47 Aquino, *Sermones y miscénánea de devoción*, fol.185v.
48 Ibid., fol.186r.
49 Ibid.
51 Aquino, *Sermones y miscénánea de devoción*, fol.183r.
52 Ibid., fol.183v.
There was a school of thought among the Franciscans of the mid- to late-sixteenth century that Nahua (or some Nahua) had the capacity to attain the same levels of spiritual maturity and devotion as Europeans. David Tavárez has written about this in his 2013 article for *The Americas*, “Nahua Intellectuals, Franciscan Scholars, and the *Devotio Moderna* in Colonial Mexico.” I look at texts such as the Nahuatl *Contemptus mundi* held by the John Carter Brown Library as well as the *Camino del cielo en lengua mexicana* by fray Martín de León (1611) and fray Juan de Gaona’s *Colloquios de la paz y tranquilidad christiana* (1582) as evidence of this. Interestingly, Fabián de Aquino appears to belong to this group as well. As I hope to argue in future publications, a number of the texts in his devotional notebook are analogous to the work of those cited above in their striving to develop mature Christian devotion in the lives of Nahua Christians.

**Note that the word Molina uses for “representative” is -iixiptla. In pre-Contact times, specially-chosen war captives or slaves were selected to play central roles in high state festivals as living embodiments of key deities. After a lengthy period of preparation, these teixiptlahuan (pl. of -iixiptla) were elevated to the deity’s temple and sacrificed by the high priests officiating over the ceremony. Clendinnen’s eloquent descriptions of the process by which Aztec teixiptlahuan...**
transitioned from mere human beings to beings infused with teotl highlights the stark difference between these native performances and the European notion of actors performing roles (see Clendinnen 1991:253). Molina certainly never intended any meaning other than “representative of God” by using -ixiptla in reference to the priest. However, one might rightly question whether Nahuas would have understood the distinction between “representative” of the deity and the deity itself given their long history with -ixiptla.

74 Molina, Confessionario mayor, fol. 5r.
75 Aquino, Sermones y miscénánea de devoción, fols.155v–156r.
76 Ibid., fol.162v.
77 Ibid., fol.171r.
78 Molina, Confessionario mayor, fol.6v and Aquino, Sermones y miscénánea de devoción, fol.176v.
Chapter 5:

Aquino’s Antichrist Plays as Autoethnography

The Mexican missionaries adopted the concept of the *tabula rasa* because of their insistence upon not only destroying idolatry, by whatever might suggest a memory of it. They destroyed temples, suppressed all pagan feasts, banished idols, and trained children to search them out and to track down all pagan ceremonies which the Indians still practiced in secret. *At least in the field of religion, therefore, a complete rupture occurred.*

Robert Ricard, *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico.*

And the hermit will then say to all of them, “Oh, my children! Today you have heard about all of the sins due to which there is descending into *mictlan*…Now desist from your bad way of living so that you will not go there. Don’t follow the example of the bad ones. Place the divine word, the instrument of salvation, within you. Believe in the only *teotl*, Jesus Christ, the true God, so that you will be saved.”

Fabián de Aquino, “Antichrist and the Hermit”

**Introduction**

The words of the hermit, uttered at the conclusion of the second of Aquino’s two Antichrist plays, would seem to corroborate Robert Ricard’s statement about a “rupture” occurring in native religion as a result of the friars’ “spiritual conquest.” Aquino’s hermit addresses a native audience and urges them to embrace belief in “the only *teotl*, Jesus Christ” in order to save their souls from hell. The “bad way of living” he mentions refers not only to the various sins catalogued in the preceding scenes, but also to certain fundamental aspects of native religion and culture. In addition to urging the audience to desist from adultery, pride, lying, and theft, the hermit commands the assembled *macehualtin* to abandon blood offerings to the gods, divination by casting maize kernels, consultation of painted codices, seeking traditional cures, and the
singing of traditional songs. The play ends with the hermit’s triumphant expulsion of the Aztec deity-demons from the stage, who we are told exit “singing for Antichrist” (f.187v). So orthodox is Aquino’s presentation of Catholic morality and doctrine that one might suspect he was a friar himself, as nineteenth-century German book dealer and the manuscript’s cataloguer, Karl Hiersemann, mistakenly did.3 However, as I have already shown, Aquino was most certainly a native person. This complicates the matter considerably, since the one responsible for authoring characters like the hermit, characters who whole-heartedly condemn native beliefs and practices, was himself a member of the native community. What are we to make of Aquino’s seemingly thorough and impassioned embrace of the religion of the spiritual colonizer? One answer would be that Aquino had “truly converted,” undergoing a thorough acculturation, and that he was the product of a successful “spiritual conquest.” However, as I argued in the Introduction the concepts of conversion, acculturation, and spiritual conquest are highly problematic and don’t do justice to the complex forces and processes that shaped the creation of these two plays. In this chapter I will argue that in place of conversion, acculturation, and spiritual conquest the concepts of appropriation, transculturation, and autoethnography are more suited to the task of understanding Aquino’s response to Christianity as well as his two Antichrist dramas.

I have already argued that the composition of Aquino’s plays was shaped by three forces: literacy, indigeneity, and independence. Of course, other forces exerted influence on his work. After all, the colonial Mexican contact zone was a contested space in which Aquino negotiated between often conflicting forces, most notably the Catholic Church and his own native community. How can we adequately understand the way literate natives like Aquino negotiated these complex spaces and forces? More specifically, what accounts for his seemingly wholesale adoption of the stories and values of the colonizer? Why did he collaborate with those who
deemed his ancestors’ religion a diabolical ruse? Traditionally this question has been answered by applying the metaphor of “spiritual conquest” to the missionary work of the friars who arrived on the heels of Cortés. However, due to the unsatisfactory nature of this paradigm, I will adopt the three frameworks that I have found to be far more illuminating than those just mentioned.

In the most general sense, cultural appropriation refers to instances when members of one culture adopt or appropriate elements of another’s culture to serve their own ends. One pertinent example of cultural appropriation was Nahuas’ response to didactic religious plays introduced by the friars. Although the format was European in origin and intended to counteract certain aspects of indigenous religion, native peoples enthusiastically embraced the form, if not necessarily the content, of European theater. Drawn perhaps to the spectacle, or seeing in it a sanctioned replacement for pre-contact ritual performances, or for its function as an event strengthening community identity, native peoples quickly made theater their own. Much to the consternation of the friars, they composed their own scripts, handing them down generation to generation. We see in this example one of the fundamental characteristics of appropriation: a form proper to one culture is seized upon by another whose use of it is shaped to meet their own ends. In this sense, appropriation corrects one of the deficiencies of traditional frameworks such as acculturation by opening up space for the colonized to creatively respond to and engage with the culture of the colonizer. The colonized is now a full actor in the drama of the contact zone. In the case of Fabián de Aquino, this suggests the possibility that his appropriation of the religious discourses of the friars somehow served purposes of his own, rather than those of the spiritual colonizer.

The concept of transculturation was first used by Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortíz in his book *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar*, published in 1940. In it he argued that the history of Cuba during the colonial era was vastly more complex than the model of acculturation
allowed. By coining the term transculturation he intended to suggest that the relationship between the cultures of colonizer and colonized was bidirectional and dialectical, involving a give and take. Since Ortíz, scholars from various fields have adopted the concept. Communications theorist Richard Rogers locates transculturation within his typology of cultural appropriation, defining it as the creation of cultural elements “from and/or by multiple cultures, such that identification of a single originating culture is problematic.” Whereas his definition focuses on the product of cultural appropriation, literary scholar Mary Louise Pratt’s definition emphasizes the process. She identifies transculturation as a phenomenon of the contact zone that describes “how subordinated or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted to them by a dominant or metropolitan culture.” Her formulation emphasizes native agency while simultaneously acknowledging that power relations constrain native choice. She notes that while subordinate peoples cannot control what the dominant culture forces upon them, “they do determine to varying extents what they absorb into their own, how they use it, and what they make it mean.” Scholars studying colonial Nahuas through the texts they authored have demonstrated time and again this very phenomenon, highlighting the creativity with which they negotiated their place in the colonial world. In Aquino’s case, transculturation has forced me to look for evidence of his choice making, noticing the ways he subtly “selected and invented” from the materials made available to him by the friars, from the catechisms, sermons, and religious texts which were his sources of inspiration.

Aquino's plays as autoethnography

It is in Pratt’s conceptualization of autoethnography that I have found a more effective framework for understanding Aquino’s Antichrist dramas. Autoethnography is currently
enjoying wide popularity in fields as varied as anthropology, communications studies, education, and business administration. It is typically used as a research methodology that, according to Garance Maréchal, “involves self-observation and reflexive investigation in the context of ethnographic field work and writing.” In anthropology, autoethnography is a manifestation of the field’s postmodern turn towards reflexivity in the study of human culture. However, this is not the sense in which Pratt uses the term. Rather than a research method, she understands it as referring to a particular kind of cultural product that is the result of transculturation. Pratt defines the autoethnographic text as “a text in which people undertake to describe themselves in ways that engage with representations others have made of them.” Distinguishing autoethnography from ethnography as it is typically understood, she writes,

Thus if ethnographic texts are those in which European metropolitan subjects represent to themselves their others (usually their conquered others), autoethnographic texts are representations that the so-defined others construct in response to or in dialogue with those texts. Autoethnographic texts are not, then, what are usually thought of as autochthonous forms of expression or self-representation…Rather they involve a selective collaboration with and appropriation of idioms of the metropolis or the conqueror. These are merged or infiltrated to varying degrees with indigenous idioms to create self representations intended to intervene in metropolitan modes of understanding.

Pratt’s definition suggests that an autoethnography is the sum of a number of key parts. First, there are the various “representations” of the colonial “other” fashioned by the colonizer. The classic example is Said’s “orientalism,” but an example from colonial Mexico might be the friars’ “diabolization” of native religion and people. Next, a native author, like Aquino, composes a text that engages with those representations through “selective collaboration with and appropriation of idioms” of the colonizer. As a part of this process the colonizer’s representations are to varying degrees “merged or infiltrated” with indigenous idioms. Much scholarship over the past three decades has brought to light this fascinating process of creating
hybrid or transculturated texts. The product of native compositions such as these is a “self-representation” that is “intended to intervene in metropolitan modes of understanding.” While not all texts produced in this way constitute autoethnography and not all of them intentionally seek to intervene in such a direct way, I will argue that Aquino’s does. In what follows, I will address each of these central components of Pratt’s definition of autoethnography as they pertain to Fabián de Aquino and the plays he wrote. By examining the plays as autoethnographic works I hope to offer a more nuanced understanding of the forces that shaped the adoption (or appropriation) of Christianity among early colonial Nahuas.

Two dominant tropes: Diabolization and the perpetual neophyte

Long before the first twelve friars set foot on Aztec soil, Europeans had been fashioning representations of the strange people of terra incognita. Stories of pygmies, Amazons, giants, and hermaphrodites fired the imaginations of Europeans and stoked visions of cities with streets paved with gold. Once contact had been made and the colonial enterprise was under way, more grounded first-hand interactions became much-read chronicles of contact with people deemed so utterly different that their status as humans was considered questionable. Thus Europeans fashioned representations that highlighted the gulf that existed between “we civilized” and “those savage,” a process postcolonial scholars refer to as “othering.” These representations, while on the surface devoted to cataloguing and describing the other, were in fact descriptions of the interior mindset of the colonizer, a map of their identities, fears, and convictions. When the friars began their mission to New Spain in 1524 they formed their own impressions of the indigenous population and in time wrote their own chronicles. Soon they began intensive studies of indigenous culture and religion, interviewing Nahua elders and writing their proto-ethnographies.
in meticulous detail. From these sources, some Spanish, some Nahuatl, we can distinguish a number of broad tropes that were commonly used to describe the natives the friars had sought so eagerly to convert, transform, mold, and “reduce.” Here I will focus on just two, the “native culture as diabolical” trope and the “native as perpetual neophyte” trope.

As Fernando Cervantes (1994) and Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra (2006) have convincingly shown, European explorers, conquistadors, and evangelizers tended to view the native peoples and cultures of the New World as existing under the sway of the devil and his demons. This was a powerful and near-universal paradigm that colored much of the writing about New World peoples from the late fifteenth century through the time of the Enlightenment. Cervantes notes that in the early post-contact period there also was a strain of thought that tended to view the New World as a kind of lost paradise in which noble natives lived in a state of “primeval innocence.” However, by the mid sixteenth century, he argues, the tendency to see native peoples and culture as demonic had triumphed and would remain the dominant lens through which they would be seen. European chroniclers and friars alike believed that the devil had long ago chosen the New World as his “fiefdom” and had ruled without challenge as a “tyrannical lord” over its native inhabitants. In the religious discourses of the friars, what I have referred to as “diabolization” acted both as a guiding ideology and as a missionary strategy. As an ideology it conceived of the world as existing in a state of stark spiritual conflict, where the soldiers of Christ, Mary, and the saints did battle against the devil, his demons, and those under their sway. Elements of native culture and religion that were seen as in some way contradicting or challenging Christian doctrine were deemed “works of the devil.” Native people were seen as especially susceptible to the wiles of the devil, who deceived them into worshipping demons as if they were gods and offering bloody sacrifices. Diabolization was also an important strategy of
conversion employed by the friars, as shown by my discussion of Sahagún’s *Coloquios* in Chapter Three. This approach, which I have referred to as “epistemic violence” following Diaz Balsera, constituted an act of domination within the realm of knowledge.\(^{15}\) The friars reinforced this act of domination by means of “didactic terror,”\(^{16}\) which sought to instill a state of fear in native audiences and so induce them to abandon their gods and embrace Christianity. Though sermons, catechesis, religious theater, and the visual arts the friars relentlessly represented natives as under the influence of the devil and native culture as diabolical. This was one of the dominant discourses in the spiritual environment into which Fabián de Aquino was born, raised, and indoctrinated. As I will presently show, it had a profound effect on him and colored the way he viewed his native heritage.

The second trope Aquino’s autoethnographic texts engage with is that of the “native as perpetual neophyte.” The missionaries’ view of native peoples was always contradictory. On the one hand, there was a marked tendency to praise aspects of native character and to see in them a kind of simplicity and innocence that gave them the potential to become ideal Christians. On other hand, friars were quick to point out that native character was weak, prone to falling into certain vices such as drunkenness and laziness. Regardless of these contradictions, the first generation of missionaries was optimistic about the potential for natives to eventually become full, mature Christians. According to Motolinia, who wrote in the late 1530s, so enthusiastic had native response been that it was as if they had “forgotten the idols as completely as if a hundred years had elapsed since they abandoned them.”\(^ {17}\) The Colegio de Santa Cruz in Tlatelolco was founded in 1536 at least in part with the hope of producing the New World’s first indigenous priests.\(^ {18}\) Although this was a dream that was never realized, the aspiration to do so indicates the existence of the belief among certain parties that natives were capable of attaining to the highest
levels of spiritual maturity. However, by mid-century this optimism had begun to sour. As the mission had progressed, it became increasingly clear to the friars that native Christians were extremely reluctant to completely abandon their former ways. As I argued in Chapter Four, evidence of persistent paganism was everywhere: “backsliding” Indians hid idols in the bases of crosses to shroud their idolatry, sang songs employing opaque metaphors to throw off the friars, and openly resisted conversion by fleeing to the hinterlands. As the leadership of New Spain’s church shifted from Franciscan to Dominican hands (fray Alonso de Montúfar succeeded Zumárraga in 1551), the idealism and triumphalism of the early generation of missionaries gave way to a more critical outlook on the project of building the *ecclesia indiana*. The First Mexican Provincial Council of 1555 cast natives as feeble and inconstant creatures who were naturally inclined to vice.  

It wasn't only Dominicans who were skeptical. So pessimistic was Sahagún about the prospects of training spiritually mature native Christians that he would lament in 1576 “we can be certain that, though preached to more than fifty years, if they were now left alone…I am certain that in less than fifty years there would be no trace of the preaching which has been done for them.” In 1585 the Third Mexican Provincial Council codified the widespread sentiment regarding native Christianity by declaring that Indians would likely remain perpetual neophytes, never rising above the level of spiritual children. It labeled them *rudes* in Latin (the translation of *de menor capacidad* in Spanish) and compared them repeatedly to “new plants” that need tender care and nurturing. By the end of the century, the dream of a native priesthood had been abandoned. Mendieta attributed this failure to native character, citing their persistent return “to the vomit of the rites and ceremonies of their gentility.” Thus, he concluded, “they are not good for leading and ruling but rather for being led and ruled.”
These attitudes, at once pessimistic and paternalistic, were communicated to Nahuas through sermons and catechesis, and also through informal interactions with the friars. They shaped the environment in which Fabián de Aquino was educated and were part of the cultural matrix from which he composed his Antichrist dramas. If an autoethnography is a native-authored text that engages with representations others have made of them, then how did Aquino engage with the tropes of native culture as diabolical and of eternal native neophytes? In keeping with Pratt’s definition, Aquino’s texts “intervene” in these tropes by offering counter-narratives of indigenous Christianity. Whether or not Aquino intended this as an overt intervention I cannot say. Nonetheless, in a number of situations imagined by Aquino, we find quiet but unmistakable instances in which he “talks back” to the spiritual colonizer.

Appropriating the colonizer’s idioms

Continuing with Pratt’s definition of autoethnography, we should expect texts like Aquino’s to engage with the conqueror’s representations through “a selective collaboration with and appropriation of idioms of…the conqueror.” By “idioms” I understand Pratt to imply more than just language, but also a wide array of communicative practices that don’t necessarily take on linguistic forms. Aquino’s plays appropriate four of the colonizer’s idioms in both the specific and this more broad sense. These are alphabetic writing, the European genre of religious theater, the medieval legend of the Antichrist, and the doctrinal discourses of the friars.

When he composed his two Antichrist plays Aquino utilized the literacy he gained during his religious training by the friars. As I wrote in the Introduction, native literacy in early colonial Mexico nearly always began as a collaboration between friars and young males of the indigenous nobility. Whether or not Aquino was a nobleman is up for debate, but he surely acquired the
skills of reading and writing in Spanish and Nahuatl in the context of some mendicant convent. However, at some point along the way Aquino’s use of alphabetic writing shifted from collaboration to appropriation, as his use of literacy was put to work to serve more native ends. I have posited that Aquino occupied the role of fiscal of his home community and that he began redacting religious texts into his small notebook in the absence of the friars’ oversight. This may have been due to demand for devotional literature from the people who were his spiritual charges, a demand intensified by the lack of available Nahuatl-language resources. This decision was not without risk. As I have endeavored to show, the Church’s attitude toward natives writing religious texts ranged from highly circumspect to forbidding the practice altogether. The product of Aquino’s copying, translating, and composing texts in alphabetic Nahuatl was the devotional manual I have been referring to as Fabián’s notebook. Though lacking the polish and literary flourish demonstrated by other examples of Nahuatl devotional writing, the texts redacted in Fabián’s notebook are nevertheless striking examples of one native person’s appropriation of this powerful idiom.

The second idiom Aquino adopted was the performance genre of European-style stage plays. Aquino’s introduction to this genre is unknown. It may have occurred when he witnessed first hand one of the many Nahuatl-language performances of religious (or “catechistic”) drama the sources indicate were a regular occurrence. Or, perhaps he was introduced to this genre in the context of his religious education, either by the friars or their Nahua colleagues who were involved in the composition or translation of Nahuatl theater. In either case, we know that religious plays were composed in or translated into native languages beginning as early as the 1530s and eventually became immensely popular among native audiences. Perhaps due to the similarities between pre-Contact high religious festivals and European dramas, Nahuas showed a
lot more enthusiasm for theater than they did for hearing mass or attending catechism. As with the production of religious texts mentioned above, Nahuas soon began composing their own religious theater outside of the carefully directed environment desired by the ecclesiastical authorities. According to Barry Sell, a number of the plays in the corpus that survives to this day were likely composed in this more independent fashion. He cites the plays “How to Live on Earth,” “Final Judgment,” and “The Life of Don Sebastián” as examples.\textsuperscript{24} To this list must now be added Aquino’s two Antichrist plays. Much of this story has already been covered in the early chapters of this dissertation. I have forwarded the hypothesis that Aquino’s first play, “Antichrist and the Final Judgment,” was likely translated from a now-lost Spanish source text. Although I have been unable to locate any surviving Spanish Antichrist or Final Judgment plays that may have served as his source, due to close parallels between Aquino’s first script and surviving medieval scripts from other countries I have concluded that this was most likely the case. There are numerous examples in this first play that support labeling it an “appropriation” of the colonizer’s idiom; since I have detailed much of this already I won’t repeat them here. Evidence of appropriation is much stronger in Aquino’s second script, “Antichrist and the Hermit.” As I discussed in Chapter Four, it is in this script that Aquino demonstrated his greatest creativity and most bold acts of appropriation. The remainder of this chapter will seek to showcase additional ways that our Nahua playwright adapted the Antichrist legend for native audiences, ultimately producing a number of pointed critiques of the colonizer’s negative representations of native Christians.

The third of the colonizer’s idioms adopted by Aquino was his selection of the Antichrist legend for his plays’ subject matter. As I discussed in Chapter One, the Antichrist legend was deeply embedded in the consciousness of medieval Europeans and played an important role in
the thinking of the reformed Franciscans who were New Spain’s first evangelizers. Chapter Three detailed the numerous ways that Aquino adapted the Antichrist for native Mesoamerican audiences. The distance between European Antichrists and his “Aztec Antichrist” highlights the appropriative nature of his adaptations. Aquino’s choice of this particular legend takes on greater significance in light of the fact that the friars themselves largely avoided the subject, as has already been discussed. While I have uncovered no evidence that suggests that the Antichrist legend was outright forbidden by ecclesiastical authorities, the near-universal silence on the subject only underscores the unique nature of Aquino’s decision. That a native writer such as he would take on a subject eschewed by the friars speaks volumes of the independent nature of this Nahua’s thinking.

For me, the most intriguing idiom appropriated by Aquino in his Antichrist plays are the doctrinal discourses of the Nahuatl-language *confessionarios, doctrinas,* and *sermonarios* of Aquino’s day. The phrase “doctrinal discourse” as I have used it in this dissertation refers both to the specific language of the *confessionarios* and *doctrinas* – what Hanks might refer to as *Nahuatl reducida* – and to the moral and theological ideologies that *Nahuatl reducida* was employed to communicate. Aquino would have first encountered these doctrinal discourses in the earliest days of his religious training. Sources are largely in agreement as to how indoctrination was conducted among members of the indigenous population, allowing us to assume with some certainty how he came to learn this particular idiom. Sources like the *Códice franciscano* reveal a comprehensive program of doctrinal education that sought to teach native catechumens the prayers and dogmas that were deemed necessary for admission to the sacraments. These include prayers such as the *Per Signum, Pater Noster,* and *Ave Maria,* creedal statements like the Apostle’s Creed, and other dogmatic summaries including the
Fourteen Articles of the Faith, the Ten Commandments, and the Seven Deadly Sins. The author of the *Códice franciscano* reports that it was the friars’ custom to assemble native children early in the morning in the patios of the churches. There they would first hear mass, then gather in groups to learn the catechism based on how advanced they were in their indoctrination. After mass they would return to their homes, where they were expected to teach the doctrine to their parents in the evening. Oral catechesis, typically by repeating aloud statements made by the friars, was facilitated by the publication of catechisms in both Spanish and indigenous languages. Archbishop fray Juan de Zumárraga’s Spanish *Doctrina breve* of 1543/44 was an important doctrinal resource for the friars. Important early Nahuatl doctrinas include those published by fray Alonso de Molina in 1546, the Dominicans in 1548, fray Pedro de Gante in 1553, and fray Domingo de Anunciación in 1565. Doctrinal material can also be found in confession manuals, collections of sermons, and even dictionaries and grammars, as William Hanks has shown.\(^{26}\)

Since most of these texts and Aquino’s appropriation of their doctrinal discourses have already been used in previous chapters, I won’t say much more here. However, by claiming that Aquino appropriated doctrinal discourse I don’t mean to suggest that he was merely mimicking the friars. Appropriation is not the same as imitation. Aquino’s approach was selective. He choose which elements of the colonizer’s idioms to employ, and he retained some autonomy by deciding how to use them. The exercise of this autonomy is one of the markers of autoethnography as defined by Pratt. Returning to her formulation of this term, we will next see how he exercised his autonomy to disrupt the two tropes devised by the colonizer previously mentioned, the trope of native culture as diabolical and native Christians as perpetual neophytes.
Disrupting the colonizer’s narratives

Certain characters from Aquino’s plays, notably his *conversos* (“converts”), *martyres* (“martyrs”), and *beatos* (“blessed ones”), suggest a radically different view of indigenous Christians than that of the ecclesiastical authorities of the day. It is important to note that Aquino makes it clear that these characters are natives people (*all* of his human characters are native, including Antichrist, as discussed in Chapter Three). First, he consistently refers to them as *macehualtin* (plural of *macehualli*). Early in the contact period this term bore the general meaning of “commoner” but towards the end of the sixteenth century came to be the universal appellation for “native person.”27 To my knowledge, this term was never used to refer to Spaniards and generally, though not exclusively, it referenced non-noble native persons. That Aquino intended this is amply attested in the plays. For one, there is the sibyl’s use of the Nahuatl diphrastic expression *in cuitlapilli, in ahtlapalli* (“the tail, the wing”), a phrase originating in pre-contact times and bearing the metaphorical meaning of “commoner.”28 Aquino’s use of such an indigenous expression suggests that the “commoners” he had in mind were the Nahuas for whom his plays were intended. Additional evidence that Aquino conceived of his *conversos* as native people is found in the scene from “Antichrist and the Hermit” previously cited in Chapter Three. When Antichrist asks a group of *conversos*, “Why did you dismantle my house? From long ago you served me well when you slashed open the chests of your captives and when you bled yourselves”,29 he reveals their indigenous heritage.

The ecclesiastics of the Third Council would have been surprised to read how their “new plants” responded to the threats of the Antichrist. Rather than withering or returning to the “vomit” of their former ways, they respond with vigorous renunciations of the Antichrist. When presented by Antichrist with a mock cross as “proof” that he is Christ, they correctly identify his
ruse, proclaiming, *ca hatley yn cruz yn itech Otimicq yehica amo tley oticCualitquic ca [y]evatl yc tineci tztlacati*, “The cross on which you died is meaningless because that which you carry is meaningless. Indeed, because of this you seem to be lying.”

They also correctly recall what they learned from the friars, citing biblical and sibylline prophecies warning of Antichrist’s coming, as in their statement *Auh yvan yv iCuillivhtica ca ce tlacatl tlacatiz yn tpc moteotocatinemiz : yc miyeqntin quimiztlacaviz* “furthermore it is written that a person will be born on earth who will be taken as a god [and] because of this he will deceive many.”

In one scene Antichrist promises a character named Martyr riches and a place for him in his heavenly home if he will only confess belief in him. Martyr responds with a disparaging (and characteristically Nahua) reference to Antichrist’s “house” calling it *axixtitlan Cuitlatitlan*, “a place of urine and excrement.” Finally, Aquino’s converts and martyrs make the ultimate sacrifice, choosing death at the hands of Antichrist rather than abandoning the faith. At the moment of their death, one group of martyrs falls to their knees exclaiming, *tote ohe. d.he yexpõhe ma xitechmocellili yn mochanťinco ma xiquinmotlay[oc]ollili xi ą npohpolvi yn intlahtlacol, “O our lord! O our God!, O Jesus Christ! Receive us into your house. Have mercy on them, pardon them of their sins.”* This statement echoes the very words spoken by Christ when, at his crucifixion, he uttered the memorable words “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). Aquino’s move is a daring one. By establishing parallels between his Nahua Christian martyrs and Christ himself he pushes back against the negative assessments of native character promulgated by the ecclesiastical authorities. Had Aquino’s work been brought to their attention, they would surely have been scandalized.

As the passages above illustrate, Aquino repeatedly presented the *macehualtin* as morally constant, unwavering in their devotion to the friars and the faith. It is Aquino’s *macehualtin* that
emerge from his plays as the superior representatives of Nahua Christianity. In envisioning his *macehualtin* characters this way, Aquino may have had a specific historical model in mind. In Motolinia’s important chronicle of the early years of the mission, he records a number of incidents that took place in Tlaxcala in the late 1520s involving the activities of zealous young Nahua converts to the new faith. The words and actions of Aquino’s *conversos* and *mártires* echo those of Motolinia’s Nahua converts, which suggests to me that it might have been these Nahua youths whom Aquino had in mind when composing his plays.

In the sixteenth chapter of the Third Treatise of the *Historia de los indios de la Nueva España*, Motolinia relates how a group of the friars’ eager Nahua initiates were returning to the convent after a swim in the river when they observed someone “sauntering” through the marketplace “chewing or eating some sharp-edged stones (i.e., sacrificial blades).” Seeing that a large crowd had gathered around to witness this spectacle, the boys asked the bystanders who this individual was. The bystanders responded, “Our god, Ometochtli.” The boys’ reply to this was, “That is not a god, but the devil who is lying and deceiving you.” Motolinia continues,
demon merited, that he should stumble and fall. He had hardly fallen when the
boys, thinking him dead, heaped stones on him and exclaimed with great
rejoicing: “We have killed the devil who wanted to kill us. Now the macehualtes
(that is, the common people) can see that this person was not God but a liar; that
God and Holy Mary are good.”

A number of details from Motolinia’s account bear striking resemblance to the behavior of
Aquino’s conversos and mártires, whom I am arguing he presents as model native Christians in
his two Antichrist plays. Although the Christian youths in the story above were children of the
nobility, they demonstrate the same fierce devotion to the faith as Aquino’s macehualtin. Both
Motolinia’s noble youths and Aquino’s macehualtin boldly confront “the devil” in his various
disguises. In the account above the devil takes the form of a flint blade-chewing priest of
Ometochtli; in Aquino’s plays he appears as Antichrist or as pre-contact deities who, like the
priest, appear “wearing the demon’s attire.” In Motolinia’s account, the youths demonstrate their
adoption of the friars’ epistemic domination, correctly unmasking the priest of Ometochtli as one
who is “not a god, but the devil who is lying and deceiving you.” As I argued in Chapter Three,
Aquino’s mártires demonstrate a similar adoption of the friars’ rhetorical strategy of epistemic
domination by seeing through the Antichrist’s lies. When they are confronted by his claim to be
God they shoot back, ca niman da’ timizneltocazque Ca titlacatecollotl, “We will not believe in
you, you devil!” In both accounts, model Nahua Christians are those who, like the friars, accept
the diabolization of native religion and condemn native priests and deities as devils and demons.

Other interactions between the priest of Ometochtli and the Nahua youths sound
strikingly similar to the interactions Aquino imagines between the Antichrist and his conversos
and mártires. In the passage above we hear the priest of Ometochtli threaten the youths with
death, stating “You are all going to die because you anger me.” These are virtually the same
words uttered by Aquino’s Antichrist, who, like the priest of Ometochtli, represented a native
voice of resistance to the friars. Repeatedly, Antichrist utters threats like “Right now I will spill your blood if you don’t believe in me” and “Do you want to die by my hand?” Referring to the friars’ systematic destruction of pre-contact temples, the priest of Ometochtli also accuses the Christian youths of abandoning their former ways, saying, “[you] have deserted my house, and have gone to the house of Holy Mary.” Aquino’s Antichrist shares a similar frustration: “Do not be confused! Why did you dismantle my house?” Even closer parallels to the priest of Ometochtli are Aquino’s six demons who also “wear the attire” of pre-contact deities. One of these, Huitzilopochtli, echoes the priest of Ometochtli when he laments to the hermit, “I am sad because my house was knocked down, my image was destroyed. I am very sad because the cross of Jesus Christ reached you.” Responding to the priest, one of the older boys in Motolinia’s account declares, “You lie. We do not fear you, because you are not God; you are the devil and a wicked deceiver.” This bold statement is echoed by Aquino’s *conversos*, who, when asked by Antichrist, “Am I not Christ?” respond, “No indeed, you are not Christ! You are just a devil. You really have deceived us…you are not a deity, you are just a coyote!”

Finally, at the end of the incident reported by Motolinia, after the youths have killed the priest of Ometochtli, they declare, “We have killed the devil who wanted to kill us. Now the *macehuales*…can see that this person was not God but a liar.” What are we to make of this statement? I would argue that the way Motolinia recollects the words of the noble Tlaxcalan youths and their reference to the *macehuales* reflects the bias of friars like Motolinia who clearly favored members of the nobility over the *macehualtin*. This can plainly be seen in their granting of the gifts of education and privileged positions within the New Spanish church to the elites of Nahua society. Despite their vicious treatment of the priest of Ometochtztin, the youths from the account above came to be memorialized for their heroic defense of the faith, which ultimately
resulted in their martyrdom at the hands of angry Nahuas. Clearly their dying for the faith came to overshadow their impetuous act for, in Motolinia’s telling, these youths are remembered as models of the purest form of native Christianity and represent the brightest hope for the *ecclesia indiana*. In his accounting of the deaths of three other noble Christian youths, the so-called “child martyrs of Tlaxcala,” Motolinia’s account approaches hagiography; it even played an instrumental role in the process of their beatification by Pope John Paul II in 1990. When the youths proclaim “now the *macehuales*...can see” they are in effect saying (or rather, Motolinia is saying) that through the righteous example of these Nahua Christian nobles, the common folk will come to acknowledge *in zan iceltzin nelli teotl*, “the sole true deity” of the friars.

In Aquino’s “Antichrist and the Hermit,” we find a striking parallel to the Tlaxcalan youths’ statement “now the *macehuales*...will see.” It is uttered by the central character of this second play, a hermit who like Aquino’s *macehualtin* serves as a model of indigenous Christianity. At the conclusion of his interrogations of the demons Lucifer, Tezcatlipoca, Huitzilopochtl, Cihuacoatl, and the six fire priests, the hermit says these words: *Ca ya hamechiximati yn macevaltin*, “the commoners have recognized you.” Both of these statements, that of the Tlaxcalan noble youths and that of Aquino’s hermit, are statements about the *macehualtin* “seeing” or “recognizing” the true nature of their forefathers’ priests and deities. Both indicate a degree of acceptance of the friars’ diabolizing worldview. However, what does Aquino’s appropriation of the “now the *macehuales*...can see” statement mean when issuing from the mouth of an indigenous hermit in the context of a Nahuatl stage play? To begin, it needs to be seen as a response to statements previously made by the demon and sinner characters about the *macehualtin* in the pre-Christian era. Time and again we hear characters like the Quetzalcoatl demon say things like “The *macehualtin* used to serve me,” or Otontecuhtli state
“the macehualtin used to consider me a god,” or the fire priests confess “in this way we lived deceiving the macehualtin.” It is in response to these statements that the hermit’s response is given: “the commoners have recognized you.” Throughout Aquino’s second play the macehualtin are consistently presented as possessing the necessary spiritual vision to correctly “see” through the deceits of the devil and “recognize” the Aztec deities’ true identity as demons. Importantly, it is not the members of the nobility who are lauded in this fashion. I interpret this as a direct challenge on the part of Aquino to the spiritual colonizer’s notion that Nahua commoners were lacking the spiritual and intellectual capacity to become mature Christians and a counterpoint to the friars’ bias towards the Nahua nobility. Though his portrayal of morally constant, spiritually mature, and fearless Christian macehualtin, Aquino would seem to argue for a broadening of the friars’ assessment of native intellectual and spiritual character.

Based on this reading, I would even go so far as arguing that not only does Aquino claim macehualtin can be zealous converts and martyrs for the faith, but he indicates that they are better Christians than the friars’ favored pipiltin and tlahtohqueh. Through his characters Aquino repeatedly excoriates members of the noble class, singling them out for special condemnation. Consider the following passage from “Antichrist and the Final Judgment.” At the point in the narrative when the dead have been raised for judgment, the sibyl tells the audience:

…And they will give an accounting to God, and God will ask all the rulers and also all those who are there how they lived. God will examine them. He will favor all the good ones, he will really speak for the commoners. But those wicked ones, they will really go burning forever! The nobles will descend to mictlan [where] their mistresses are. They went around deflowering many young women, they went around despoiling their mistresses on earth.41

Here we see Aquino associate “the commoners,” in macehualtin, with in cualtin, the “good ones” or the blessed who are destined for heaven. Conversely, he associates in pipiltin, “the nobles,” with in tlahueliloqueh, “the wicked ones” who are condemned to “go burning forever” in mictlan.
Note that he makes the statements above even prior to the narrative of the Final Judgment which will shortly follow, effectively pronouncing their condemnation before Christ can. This formula of *macehualtin = cualtin* and *pipiltin = ahuaultin* is consistent throughout both of Aquino’s plays. In “Antichrist and the Hermit,” the demon Otontecuhtli confesses

> All I do is go around placing laziness within the nobles so that they will just go along slothfully, so that they will just do nothing but look for young women or perhaps some people’s wives to have sex with.\(^{42}\)

At the end of this interrogation the hermit emphasizes this point by turning to the audience and warning, *Auin axcan pihpil[tin] ma ca’ xitlatzivican*, “And now noblemen, don’t you be lazy!”\(^{42}\)

As I discussed in Chapter Three in the context of nobles like don Carlos of Texcoco, this class of Nahua society was criticized by the friars for their resistance to adopting Christian sexual norms. Aquino’s skewering of the nobility is, on one level, in keeping with the friars’ concerns over the sexual behavior of the elite in Nahua society. However, throughout both plays, there is not a single instance where Aquino calls out a member of the *pipiltin* or the *tlahctohqueh* for praise.

Seen in the context of my argument that Aquino seems to favor the *macehualtin* as the more worthy examples of Christianity, it is also an emphatic indictment of the spiritual character of those the friars had deemed more worthy. The effect of these not-so-subtle jabs at the *pipiltin*, together with his elevation of the *macehualtin* as model converts and martyrs, is to directly undermine one of the colonizer’s most durable tropes of native Christians.\(^{43}\)

In the character of the demon-battling hermit Aquino offers the most direct refutation of the “native as neophyte” trope. As are all of his human characters, the hermit, too, is a native convert to Christianity. This is confirmed in at least two instances. First, in the short speech following his interrogation of the demons representing the Seven Deadly Sins, the hermit turns to the audience and commands them, “Spit on those that were our gods!”\(^{44}\) In addition to providing
a striking mental image of audience participation, this command would seem to suggest Aquino’s hermit was, like his audience, a native person. The second clue comes from the hermit’s interrogation of the six fire priests. In the midst of their response to his questions, they say to him, “You used to take [the demons] as gods, but they are not true gods.” The “you” here is singular (*tiquinteotecaya*), referring to the hermit and not the audience or other characters in general.

It is unclear whether this hermit character was borrowed by Aquino from the hypothesized source text or was an innovation. Hermits did occasionally appear as the protagonists in miracle narratives such as those Aquino redacted into his devotional notebook (none of which contain a hermit). However, given the popularity of these texts among Nahuas, it is possible that Aquino may have found inspiration for his hermit character among the many hundreds of Nahuatl *exempla* in circulation at the time, such as those contained in the *Golden Legend* or the *Flos sanctorum*. What is certainly attributable to Aquino was the decision to expand his role into the interrogator of twenty-five demons and sinners. Although characters representing corrupt rulers, merchants, and priests did make appearances in some medieval Doomsday plays, they weren’t interrogated by a hermit. Also without parallel is the great length to which Aquino stretched this sequence. I would argue that another decision clearly attributable to Aquino was conceiving of this hermit character as a native person. This is especially notable in light of the fact that the phenomenon of native people adopting the eremitic lifestyle in mid-sixteenth century New Spain is virtually unattested. So wary was church leadership about the presence of hermits in the colony that in 1555 the First Mexican Provincial Council decreed, “Let no one [Spaniard or Nahua] build church, monastery, or shrine without permission, nor may there be hermits in this land.” This didn’t stop the phenomenon, however. By mid-century there
were reportedly a number of Spaniards living the eremitic life in New Spain. Most notably, fray Martín de Valencia, leader of the Twelve, lived for extended periods of time in his hermitage in Amecameca, where he reportedly continued to experience ecstatic states, levitation, and the gift of prophecy. By far the most famous of New Spain’s sixteenth-century hermits was lay Spaniard Gregorio López (1542–1596), who spent over thirty years in various hermitages across New Spain and was noted for his saintliness and the gift of prophecy. It’s worth noting that López, like the cenobite St. Anthony, famously battled demons on many occasions throughout his life. Despite these two notable instances, hermits and hermitages remained relatively uncommon during the sixteenth century, although beginning in the last years of that century and into the next there was a significant increase in the phenomenon. If during Aquino’s time the church forbade Spaniards from adopting the eremitic life, then the idea of native hermits must surely have been deemed out of the question.

I view Aquino’s decision to imagine his hermit character as a native person possessing exceptional spiritual authority as another direct challenge to the dominant perceptions of Nahuas and Nahua spirituality. Aquino’s hermit is a charismatic, tough-talking, and energetic figure. He speaks with unwavering conviction and with authority. Although Aquino doesn’t state it directly, I think it possible that he conceived of his hermit as an ordained priest. Hermit exhibits certain unmistakable priestly behaviors. He addresses his spiritual subordinates using the discourse marker xiccaquican (“Listen!”) discussed in Chapter Three, just as a priest would address the catechumen or penitent. He commands demons and they obey him. And he uses holy water, crosses, and other symbols of priestly authority in his confrontations with demons and sinners. One of these confrontations is especially suggestive of the priestly nature of hermit’s work. In this scene, hermit has been trying to get a demon to tell him his name, but the demon has
repeatedly refused, exclaiming *Ca ha’ niceya*, “I don’t want to!” Exasperated with the demon’s recalcitrance, hermit proclaims,

Ah! You wicked one! You don’t want to obey me!...So be it. I will make the sign of the cross on you so that you will reveal to me your name!” Then the hermit will say, he will say to another person, “You, O my child, grab the holy water, the water of God. I will spread this on the *tlacatecolotl* so that he will suffer and therefore reveal what his name is.” Then when he is about to spread the holy water on him, then he will say, “Oh *tlacatecolotl*! Reveal your name. For if you don’t I will pronounce God’s words and God’s prayers on you, and if not I will spread on you the holy water, God’s water, so that you will suffer burning pain! Tell me your name!!”

With this the demon relents, saying *Ayioyave Onotlaveliltic yn axcan Cenca Ochinechpinavhti : macivi yn a’ niceya niman axcan ticmatiz yn notoca yehica nopā Oticchivh ĸ Cruz “Alas! How unfortunate I am! You have greatly shamed me. Even though I don’t want to, you will now know my name because you made the [sign of the] cross on me.”* Hermit takes a similarly hard-nosed approach with all the demons and sinners he interrogates. To Tezcatlipoca he barks, “Ah! You wicked one! What are you up to?” and to Quetzalcoatl “Be gone, you wicked one!” He commands the audience to spit on various sinners and to avoid imitating their vile sins. He singles out nobles in particular, stating, “Now noblemen, don’t be lazy!” Finally, at the end of “Antichrist and the Hermit” he concludes with the admonitory speech quoted in the epigraph, a speech similar to those found in confession manuals, doctrinas, and sermons: “O my children!...Now desist from your bad way of living so that you will not go [to mictlan]. Don’t follow the example of the bad ones!” None of this constitutes incontrovertible evidence that Aquino imagined his hermit as an actual priest. However, what is clear is that Aquino’s hermit is a powerful spiritual authority. He speaks on behalf of God, commands demons, excoriates sinners, and urges the audience to fidelity. Aquino’s characterization is a direct challenge to the spiritual colonizer’s trope of natives as weak, prone to backsliding, lazy, and spiritually
immature. Aquino brings this character to life on the page, but even more profoundly, he brings him to life on stage. There, standing before the assembled community, the hermit is embodied by a living native actor who struts, shouts, barks commands, and boldly displays a spiritual ideal deemed off-limits to native Christians by friars and ecclesiastical authorities. As such, Aquino presents a powerful counter-narrative to that which was repeated again and again in sermons, catechisms, and official conciliar edicts.

Aquino’s intervention in the “native culture as diabolical” trope is more deeply embedded “between the lines” of his texts than the trope just discussed. Evidence would seem to point to Aquino’s wholesale adoption of the friars’ discourse of diabolization. Lucifer, Antichrist, the Devil, and all precontact deities are universally labeled *tlatlacatecoloh* (i.e., demons). Native practices such as auto-sacrifice, heart sacrifice, divination, traditional healing, bodily adornment with paint and feathers, building of temples, and reading painted codices are lumped together with the gods of the pre-Christian past and are condemned in no uncertain terms. Aquino would even seem to have adopted the friars’ strategy of epistemic violence. His deity characters confess that the beliefs and practices they forced upon the *macehualtin* were merely deceptions, illusions, and lies. They confess to the hermit that although they knew who the true God was, they hid the “truth” from generations of natives. In this they would seem to ally themselves with the Twelve Apostles to the Indies who made the same argument in Sahagún’s *Coloquios*. Similar to the sermons he was weaned on, Aquino borrows the friars’ strategy of highlighting the frightening consequences of sin and damnation. Trembling sinners detail the pains and torments they suffer at the hands of *mictlan*’s tormentors, cry out at their misfortune, and beg the audience to avoid the predicament they find themselves in. If we are looking for evidence of Aquino challenging
this powerful representation of native culture, we will have to look beneath the surface of plots and characters.

One possibility is suggested by Louise Burkhart in her essay on representations of sin and death in colonial Nahuatl theater. She writes, “by depicting death and the afterlife in such concrete ways [i.e., on stage], the plays may have reinforced rather than challenged the this-worldly orientation of Nahua religiosity.”\(^{58}\) This passage raises questions about Nahua perceptions of the effect of staged performances of invisible realities on the visible world of everyday life. As it pertains to the friars’ representation of native culture as diabolical, it raises the question, What might have been the effect on native audiences of performances such as those imagined by Aquino? In these performances we find the following: fire priests bearing flint knives and conch shell trumpets, a day-keeper who carries his *tonalamatl* (divinatory codex) and recounts how he divined the fate of newborn children, and a *ticitl* (curer) who explains how he cast shelled maize as part of his healing ritual. What might the effect of performances like these have been on audiences? These characters are, of course, publicly and loudly condemned by the hermit and consigned to an eternity in hell. This constitutes the dominant discourse of Aquino’s plays, the discourse of the spiritual colonizers. However, Scott has suggested that where there are dominant discourses often there also lie “hidden transcripts,” discourses proper to the colonized that represent counter-narratives to those of the public sphere.\(^{59}\) What might have been the native ways of reading these embodied fire priests, day-keepers, and curers?

A closer look at one of the scenes in which these characters are represented will help approach an answer to this question. During his interrogation of the eighteen sinners, the hermit calls on stage one called *Ticitl* (“Healer, Curer”). In the wake of the systematic dismantling of the Aztec high priesthood after the conquest the *ticitl*, like the *tonalpouhqui*, came to occupy a
central role in the spiritual lives of Nahua communities. The *ticitl* was a repository of traditional knowledge about local medicinal plants, illnesses, and the cures that had been relied on for Nahua for centuries. Nahuas valued having recourse to their incantations and divinations when officially sanctioned, i.e., Christian, methods seemed ineffective or inadequate. In the early seventeenth century, rural priest Hernando Ruiz de Alarcón uncovered evidence of a flourishing local industry of indigenous healers and he recorded the incantations they uttered as remedies for a wide variety of ailments and problems. That so many *titicih* (plural of *ticitl*) continued to thrive and offer their services to Nahua communities a full century following the so-called “spiritual conquest” is a testament to the durability of pre-contact practices. But it is also a reminder of the flexible way Nahuas approached Christianity and its claims of exclusivity. As Lockhart has noted, “Whenever Christianity left a niche unfilled [or, I would add, *inadequately* filled], it appears, there preconquest beliefs and practices tended to persist in their original form.” Keeping this in mind together with our inquiry into how Aquino addresses the “native culture as diabolical” trope, consider the full exchange between Aquino’s hermit and the *Ticitl*:

“The Healer”

*Then the hermit will say,*

“I ask you, who are you?”

*Then he will say,*

“I am Antonio, I am a healer.”

*[The hermit will say,]*

“And why did you go to *mictlan*?”

*Then he will say,*

“Because I really devoted myself to healing and so deceived many because of it. My job [182v] was just scattering shelled maize grains before people; I used to count them. And those who I hated, I treated in such a way that they would die. Even though many times I heard the sacred words, I didn’t want to confess, I didn’t want to abandon my wickedness. And now because of this God has cast me down to *mictlan*. Now I will always go along carrying on my back everything that I divined. Because of this I am suffering greatly and those who I
considered gods are whipping me; they’re just the *tlatlacatecoloh* I called upon when I was divining.”

*Then the hermit will say,*

“Come now! How did you divine and so deceive the common folk?
Please, divine it!”

*Then here the soothsayer will make his prognostication.*

*Then the hermit will say,*

“Alas! You liar! Did you know what God taught while you were still living on earth?”

*Then he will say,*

“Very well! Be gone, you wicked one!“

On the surface, this scene operates in the realm of the friars’ dominant discourse of the diabolization of native culture. Not only does the hermit, acting as the representative of the Christian religion, condemn the *ticitl* and send him back to hell, the *ticitl* offers his own public self-condemnation before the assembled audience. He confesses that he “deceived many people” with his curing, admits that he rejected the word of God and laments, “Now I will always carry on my back everything that I divined.” This is probably a reference to the props he, like the other characters, is carrying to symbolize his sinful practices. This prop might have been the maize kernels he used in his divination rituals or other unspecified ritual objects. In this portrayal it would seem that there is no room for reading anything other than a clear demonization of native culture. However, returning the question posed above, I want to consider the possibility that the public performance of the *ticitl* on the Nahuatl stage might have encoded alternate readings that would have been perceptible to native people alone. As such, these readings constitute hidden transcripts embedded within and between the lines of Aquino’s text.

First, we need to consider that native understandings of “role-playing” and “performance” differed in important ways from those of Europeans. It’s true that all performances – native or otherwise – engage two different realities simultaneously, the one an imagined reality and the
other the “real” reality of everyday life. In the European tradition, the audience and the actors typically remained cognizant of which reality was which. Allowing for certain exceptional performances, actors were conscious of being an actor performing a role; audience members made the same distinction. However, in the Mesoamerican tradition religious performances, particularly the high rituals of the Aztec state, regularly blurred the lines between actor/role, imagined/real. In the course of certain rituals, the teixiptlahuan donned the garb and ritual paraphernalia of a particular deity and performed the role of that deity as a part of the ritual. However, in the act of dressing the actor to play the role a transformation was understood to take place, one that far surpassed the “method acting” of the western tradition. Inga Clendinen offers a stunning description of this transformation:

> After the transformations of fasting, painting and robing, the priests and the persons or groups nominated as participants moved into the compelling rhythms of collective dance and chant, opened to the great sensory assault of full Mexica ceremonial. Sounds mattered: the distinctive voices of the different drums, the hollow moaning blast of the conch shell trumpet, the surge and swell of the antiphonal chants…Flowers and incense, sweat and paint and the flat sweet smell of blood mingled in the distinctive scent of the sacred, which was signaled by the brush of feathers on skin, the sudden darkening and narrowing of vision as the masks slid down over the face, precise, repetitive movements as the lines of dancers interwoven and the drums, dance and voices intertwined.

These actions and sensory stimuli initiated a surging of the sacred power of teotl in its human receptacle such that the teixiptlahuan ceased to be mere representations of the deity and were transformed into that deity, even if for only a short time. So utter were transformations like these that often the performance was ended with the razor-sharp blade of a priest’s obsidian knife. There is further evidence supporting the blurring of lines between the indigenous view of performed reality and “real” reality. In his fascinating account of mid-seventeenth century Mexico, English traveler Thomas Gage related that native performers in religious theater often went to confession prior to performing the roles of saints, “saying that they must be holy and
pure like the saint.” Similarly, after performing roles of evil characters like Herod or Herodias, “would afterwards come to confess of that sin.” Gage attributed this to mere “superstition,” but a better way to read these actions is as evidence of the kind of transformation that native peoples associated with performing roles.

In light of this, we must reconsider the performance of Aquino’s *Ticitl*, as well as the performances of his *Tonalpouhqui*, *Pochtectl*, *Tlahtoani*, etc. On one level, Aquino has imagined the performance of an officially-sanctioned discourse condemning native religious practices as diabolical. This is obviously the dominant reading, the “public transcript,” to use Scott’s parlance. However, on another level what Aquino has done is create a space, a very public space, where important members of native society can be presented to the community as living embodiments of roles whose existence has been threatened by the spiritual colonizer. Moreover, the lines they utter, like those of the *Ticitl* cited above, contain important cultural knowledge whose existence was similarly threatened with oblivion. In light of the unstable nature of indigenous knowledge in the early colonial context, consider the hermit’s command to the *ticitl* “Come on! How did you divine and so deceive the common folk? Please, divine it!” There follows the enigmatic stage direction “Then here the diviner will make his prognostication.” Did Aquino actually intend that the actor playing the *ticitl* would perform the divination ritual there and then, right on stage before the audience? That would appear to be the implication. If we add to this the iterative nature of Nahuatl religious theater, its annual performance year after year throughout the colonial period and beyond, we can see how such performances would have kept alive and present before the members of the community the people, knowledge, and practices that despite official condemnation continued to have meaning in native circles.
The fact that Aquino both preserves performances like this while simultaneously condemning them highlights the ambiguous and often contradictory nature of transculturation in the contact zone. Through the appropriation of the forms and practices of the colonizer a continued, if contradictory, existence for them is permitted. In situations such as these, a ticitl and his rituals can be simultaneously condemned and cherished. It isn’t necessary that Aquino intended this multivalent reading for it to have some truth to it. Aquino may not have intended the alternative reading I have proposed at all. However, such a reading is nevertheless possible. If I am correct, this reading of Aquino’s native sinners would constitute yet another way that his plays intervened in the dominant narratives of the spiritual colonizer.

Conclusion

Fabián de Aquino’s Antichrist plays appear superficially to be the work of a thoroughly acculturated native Christian. Their subject matter is Christian, they are realized as stage plays in the European fashion, his characters speak and act like Christians, and the moral discourses of his own indoctrination are woven throughout every scene. Seen in this light, Aquino comes across as an unabashed collaborator with the friars who sought to eradicate the elements of indigenous spirituality they deemed diabolical and idolatrous. However, I have tried to argue that the concepts that underlie these conclusions, concepts such as acculturation and conversion, are inadequate and don’t reveal the true complexity of religious change in the contact zone. For one, these concepts imply that change travels in one direction, towards the colonizer’s culture and away from that of the colonized. They also imply that a clear line exists between “before” and “after,” and that once the process is complete, nothing of the former remains in the latter. I have argued that transculturation is a far more adequate tool for understanding complex cultural
products like Aquino’s plays. It shifts the focus from the colonizer to the colonized, opening up space for native peoples to act with agency, creatively selecting from the colonizer’s culture in an effort to navigate change. From this perspective, Aquino emerges not as a traitor to his culture, but as a cultural broker, an intermediary between the friars and the macehualtin. Using the materials presented to him by the colonizer – literacy, education, books, stories, even doctrine – Aquino translates Christianity into the Nahuatl language but also into the bodies of Nahua people. His actors don't just portray converts, martyrs, and hermits, but also Christ, Mary, and the saints. These performances are autoethnographic in the sense that they appropriate the colonizer’s representations of native people and speak back to them with counter-narratives of their own making.
Endnotes

2 fols.186v187r.
3 Hiersemann attributes the manuscript to “Aquino, Fabian de o. S. Franc. [Orden de San Francisco].” See HSA NS 3/1 inside cover.
11 Ibid.
21 Poole,  *Pedro Moya de Contreras*, 153.
http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra-visor/historia-eclesiastica-indiana--0/html/), Book IV, Ch. XXIII.
One historical manifestation of tensions between nobles and commoners is found in the
Tlaxcalan Actas, meeting records of the cabildo, or indigenous municipal council, of the
important altepetl of Tlaxcala. In the records dating to March 3, 1553, we witness the ire of the
cabildo’s members, all of whom were nobles, at the impudence of commoners
who have grown wealthy through the cochineal trade. In the lengthy declaration recorded by the council’s notaries,
the cabildo members decry the effects of cochineal cultivation and the prosperity it has afforded
to commoners. Sounding much like the sermons preached by the city’s Franciscans, the nobles
accuse the commoners of laziness, drunkenness, and sexual sin. More than likely the real issue
was the disruption of traditional relationships between nobles and commoners, relationships that
directed tribute, staple crops, and honor their way. Surely such tensions were felt in indigenous
localities outside of Tlaxcala and issues like these may have shaped Aquino’s attacks on the
nobility. His sharp condemnation of the moral character of Nahua nobles reads like a defense of
the commoners against accusations like those expressed in the Actas’ “cochineal crisis.” See
James Lockhart, Frances Berdan, and Arthur J. O. Anderson, The Tlaxcalan Actas: A
Compendium of the Records of the Cabildo de Tlaxcala (1545-1627) (Salt Lake City: University
of Utah Press, 1986), 7984.

fol. 174r.
Admittedly, tiquinteotocaya could be read tiquinteotocayah, “we used to consider them gods.”

Louise Burkhart, personal communication, August 2016.

Que ninguno edifique Iglesia, Monasterio, ni Hermita sin licencia, ni en esta tierra haya Hermitaños;” see Francisco Antonio Lorenzana, Primero, y segundo, celebrados en la muy noble, y muy leal Ciudad de México, presidiendo el Illmo. Y Rmo. Señor D. Fr. Alonso de Montúfar, En los años de 1555, y 1565. (México, Imprenta del Superior Gobierno Hogal, 1769), 9294.


Burkhart and Sell, Nahuatl Theater, Vol. 1, 52.


Lockhart, The Nahuas After the Conquest, 258.

Burkhart and Sell, Nahuatl Theater, Vol. 1, xxi.

Inga Clendinnen, Aztecs: An Interpretation (Cambridge University Press, 1991), 258.

Conclusion:

Fabián de Aquino’s Nahua Apocalypse

_Fabián de Aquino ytlatequipanol._ These words resonate across the centuries, emanating from the pages of a thick notebook of religious texts sitting in obscurity on the shelves of an archive hundreds of miles from where they were penned. However, more than just years and miles separate us today from the Nahua man who proudly added his signature to the end of a treatise on the Final Judgment. For one, his native language, Nahuatl, forms a linguistic wall around his writings so difficult to penetrate that his works of theater could lie unidentified for the many generations that it was out of native hands. In 1914 – precisely one century before my own encounter with Aquino’s manuscript – Karl Hiersemann wrote the catalogue description pasted to the inside cover of Hispanic Society of America MS NS 3/1. In it he stated, “Without doubt this very curious book includes many more details relative to the ancient Mexicans beyond those few we have been able to understand with our scant knowledge of the language…In any case, it merits being examined and published by a courageous Americanist.\(^1\) Whether or not my work will be deemed worthy of Hiersemann’s charge, it has fallen to me to rediscover “the work of Fabián de Aquino,” and through translation and, I hope, rigorous analysis, offer it to the world for enjoyment and a greater understanding of the encounter of worlds that took place in early colonial Mexico.

This dissertation has sought to accomplish three primary objectives. First, it presents for the first time in translation the two Nahuatl Antichrist dramas penned by Fabián de Aquino sometime in the latter years of the sixteenth century. These plays are among the earliest surviving New World play scripts written in an indigenous language.\(^2\) As far as I have been able
to discern, they may also be the earliest surviving treatments of the complete medieval legend of Antichrist anywhere in the western hemisphere. The fact that these distinctions belong to a member of the New World’s indigenous communities and were written so soon after that community’s first encounter with alphabetic writing and European style theater only adds to the striking nature of these works. Aquino’s two Antichrist dramas make fitting complements to the twenty some-odd colonial Nahuatl plays published by Louise Burkhart and Barry Sell in the monumental Nahuatl Theater set from 2004–2009. Like those contained in those four volumes, Aquino’s plays deserve to be made public and beg to be read and studied widely by those with more knowledge than I in the areas of literature and theater. What’s more, having spent a lot of time with these plays, I believe that laypeople of all varieties will derive great entertainment from Aquino’s Antichrist, martyrs, converts, and the whole cast of demons and sinners interrogated by his intrepid hermit.

The second primary objective of this dissertation has been to contextualize Aquino’s plays by delving into the histories that shaped them. Chapter One began in the Old World and traced the development of the Antichrist legend from its roots deep in late antiquity to the theological writings of the high Middle Ages to the work of Spiritual and Observant Franciscans steeped in apocalypticism and finally to that order’s libraries in New Spain. One significant discovery of this stage of my project was that despite the ubiquity of Antichrist in the late medieval milieu of Europe and Spain, the missionaries responsible for indoctrinating New Spain’s indigenous populations largely omitted this legend from their communications in Spanish and Nahuatl. This posed a question which has yet to be considered thoroughly, the question of why Aquino chose this particular legend as the subject matter of his two plays. I will finally come to this question later in the conclusion.
Chapter Two proposed the hypothesis that the first of Aquino’s two Antichrist plays had a source text, a late medieval drama about Antichrist and the Final Judgment, probably written in Spanish, that is now lost. Aquino’s treatment of these subjects in the first of his two plays was compared with examples of surviving medieval Antichrist and Final Judgment plays and found to align closely to those European antecedents, plays like the fourteenth-century middle French “Antichrist and Judgment Day” or the fifteenth-century English “Coming of Antichrist.” Aquino’s second play, which introduces a new character to the genre, I argued does not have a direct European source. Picking up on a thread from the Final Judgment narrative, Aquino imagined a lengthy series of interrogations of demons representing the seven deadly sins and various sinner types at the hands of a tough-talking hermit. This second script, I believe, will astound readers with its creativity, pathos, and the picture it paints of indigenous life in the late sixteenth century.

The third chapter made the argument that Aquino’s Antichrist was imagined as an indigenous being, an Aztec Antichrist who inhabited a native social space. Drawing on inquisition records from famous trials from the 1530s, I argued that Aquino cast his Antichrist as a nativist resister, a fusion of the obstinate tlahtoani don Carlos Ometochtzin and the nahualli or shaman Andrés Mixcoatl. And yet, at the same time, Aquino’s Antichrist utters speeches that echo the discursive modes of the friars, seizing their language and their arguments and turning them against the Nahua Christian conversos and mártires that he seeks to lead astray. Chapter Four shifts from Antichrist the Aquino’s hermit character, the clearest embodiment of the voice of the friars of Aquino’s day. The lengthy series of interrogations that comprise the final two thirds of the second play read like staged confessions which restore the dialogical nature of the sacrament of penance by giving voice to the native penitent. As such, these confessions fill the
silences of the *confessionarios* with words spoken by native Christians, words that capture both the dominant discourses of the friars and the “hidden transcripts” of colonial subjects.

Chapter Five brings the analysis of Aquino’s plays to a close, and offers a closer look at one of the most striking “hidden transcripts” of our Nahua playwright’s work. Using Mary Louise Pratt’s conceptualization of “autoethnography,” I argued that Aquino’s *conversos*, *mártires*, and hermit characters voice narratives that counter the colonizer’s condemning representations of native Christians as weak, inconstant spiritual children. In their heroic resistance to Antichrist and their fidelity to the teaching of the friars, these native Christians model a level of spiritual maturity which the ecclesiastical authorities deemed impossible for indigenous people. Consistent with Scott’s theory of “hidden transcripts,” Aquino’s critique of the colonizer’s demonizing discourses is not uttered directly to the face of power but is nevertheless unmistakable in the words and actions of the characters he imagines for the stage.

With these five chapters I have just begun the process of delving into the many layers of significance embedded in the work of Fabián de Aquino. There will surely be those who take issue with some of my arguments, perhaps disagreeing strongly in certain cases. I welcome this. The purpose of historical research and writing is not to end discussion but inspire it, and I present Aquino’s plays and my initial analysis of them in this spirit. As with any literary work, each reader or analyst brings her own perspective to bear on the text and necessarily arrives at her own conclusions. By making Aquino’s Antichrist dramas available in translation I intend only to initiate this process and hope that it will engender fruitful dialogue among scholars and lovers of theater and literature alike.

The third and final objective of this dissertation is one that seized hold of me from the moment I first viewed the signature of Fabián de Aquino and the words *ytlatequipanol*, that is,
the search for Aquino’s footprints in the historical record. The desire to know more about the man who wrote these two plays – as well as the many other fascinating texts in his devotional notebook – has so far yielded scant information of a concrete nature. In the absence of clear historical data on the person of Aquino, I have had to rely almost exclusively on the evidence contained within the three hundred folios of Hispanic Society of America MS NS 3/1. This evidence has led me to a short list of conclusions about the author that I continue to defend. First, Fabián de Aquino was a native person, a speaker of the Nahuatl language. Spanish was most certainly not the tongue of his birth. Second, he was literate and he redacted many if not most of the texts in his notebook. Third, he was devoted to the Christian religion – at least as he understood and practiced it – as well as to the friars (probably Franciscan) who were his educators, although as I’ve endeavored to show he didn’t agree with them on every point. And fourth, he worked largely unsupervised by these friars, although I imagine he retained some sort of affiliation with them – be it occupational or emotional – throughout his life. Beyond these few general points, I am much less confident in making statements about who Fabián de Aquino was.

Regarding where and when he redacted his Antichrist dramas, here again I have had to rely on clues gathered from the pages of his devotional notebook. As to when he wrote, I can state with confidence only that the manuscript was redacted sometime between 1540 and 1640. As I noted in the Introduction, this conclusion is based on the way Aquino incorporated Spanish loanwords and how he spelled them, all of which is consistent with Lockhart’s second stage of colonial Nahuatl linguistic development. Of course there is the 1560 date associated with the indulgence text (Text 5, Appendix A), which serves as a *terminus post quem* for the manuscript. Apart from this, the themes that run throughout his two plays, themes I have analyzed in Chapters Three, Four, and Five, all corroborate roughly the mid- to late-sixteenth century as the
period in which Aquino was active. His engagement with the doctrinal discourses of friars like Alonso de Molina and Bernardino de Sahagún, and his adoption of their language and rhetorical strategies are indicative of his close connections with the Friars Minor during this important early stage in linguistic and cultural contact. Similarly difficult to pin down is where Fabián de Aquino may have lived and worked. Some evidence from the manuscript suggests that his Nahuatl was of the variety spoken in parts of central Mexico or perhaps the eastern regions of Veracruz and the Huasteca. However, other linguistic traits suggest Mexico City and its immediate environs. Since Mexico City was something of a melting pot where Nahuas from all across the colony resided, it is possible that Aquino originally hailed from an eastern region but relocated to the capital at some point during his career, or vice versa.

Other clues are provided by the mentioning of historical figures in other texts found in Fabián’s notebook. One of these is fray Alonso de Santiago, an early Franciscan missionary who was associated with locations such as Mexico City, Tlaxcala, and a smattering of small towns throughout what is now Veracruz. At the beginning of the brief set of confraternity ordinances on fol. 151r, Aquino wrote, *Oquimitavillitevac ź frāyalōxo de.s.diago ynopa ospital*, “Fray Alonso de Santiago left saying to them there at the hospital…” (see Appendix A, Text 10). Figure one is a map with a pin on each location I have been able to connect to the work of this early Franciscan. Did Aquino know Santiago in person? Or was he merely an important Franciscan figure in the region of New Spain from which Aquino hailed? Finally, adding to the sense that Aquino may have lived and worked in this region is the mention of Tlaxcala and another prominent *altepetl* by the demon/deity Cihuacoatl in “Antichrist and the Hermit.” During her interrogation she confesses that she “went to the Tlaxcallans, the Huexotinzans” in order to
procure the human sacrifices she desired. Significantly, these are the only two cities or towns mentioned in the entire manuscript.

With these few data points and the conjectures I have proposed based on them, this is the fullest extent of what I can say that I know about the historical figure named Fabián de Aquino, at least for now. I cannot deny that this leaves me dissatisfied. And so, I will make a few additional tentative gestures in the direction of knowing more and return to one of the questions left unanswered by the five chapters that precede this conclusion. This is the question of why Aquino chose the story of the Antichrist to translate and then elaborate into a second play on the theme. What does his choice tell us about the man and the world he inhabited? What was it about this particular story that so captivated him? For one, based on my reading of the rest of his devotional notebook, it seems that Aquino took a keen interest in Christianity’s apocalyptic and eschatological themes. The treatise I mentioned in the Introduction titled “On the Terrifying Final Judgment and Eternal Punishment,” which I believe to be an original composition of Aquino, certainly testifies to this. His familiarity with the works of the “Angel of the Apocalypse” St. Vincent Ferrer also suggests Aquino was drawn to this sort of subject matter.

In search of the reasons for Aquino’s interest in the Christian apocalyptic, we might look to certain aspects of his Nahua heritage that may have predisposed him to the subject. The themes of world-ending cataclysm and the ominous signs that were to precede it were woven into the Mesoamerican outlook on life and the universe. Nahuas, like the Maya and other ethnicities, believed that the world they were living in was only the most current of many cycles of worlds. In the mythology of central Mexico’s native people, the current age at the time of Contact was the age of the “Fifth Sun.” It had been preceded by four “suns” or ages, each one of which had been brought to an end by a catastrophic act of destruction: the first by jaguars, the
second by wind, the third by a rain of fire, and the fourth by a flood. The Fifth Sun, marked by
the sign *Nahui Ollin*, “Four Movement,” would eventually be destroyed by earthquakes. The
marking of the culmination of important calendrical cycles was also tinged with fear and
anticipation. Liminal times such as the ending of the fifty-two year cycle discussed in Chapter
Three or the *nemontemi*, (the five unnamed days at the end of the 365-day calendar called the
*xiuhpohualli*) were thought to be times of uncertainty. Before the New Fire could be lit Nahuas
feared the coming of the *tzitzimimeh* who would descend from the sky to devour people.

Nahuas were especially sensitive to signs and omens that might portend calamity. The
earth was conceived of as a “slippery” place where certain actions, such as the *tlahtlacolli*
discussed in Chapter Four, could result in misfortune. Much of the moral rhetoric found in Book
VI of the *Florentine Codex* underscores the dangerous nature of life and the anxieties that it
produced. Employing evocative *difrasismos* like *in atoyati in tepexitl*, “the torrent, the crag,” and
*in mecati in tzonhuaztili*, “the rope, the snare,” people were urged to walk carefully through life.⁷
Keeping one’s eyes open for omens was one way to avoid these frightening slips. Colonial
Nahuas continued to look for omens, a fact reflected in the inclusion of questions like the
following in Molina’s *confessionario*: “Did you believe in or regard as a bad omen the horned
owl when he calls? Or the barn owl when he cries [or] a scraping sound is made with his claws?
Or the beetle when you saw it somewhere?”⁸ The presence in Aquino’s devotional notebook of
numerous short texts referred to as *tlamahuizolli* (“something marveled at”) is in keeping with
this tendency. The *tlamahuizolli* genre is a Nahuatl adaptation of the European genre of the
*exemplum* (Latin “example”), short stories about saints and sinners intended to teach a moral
lesson.⁹ Evidence from Category Three religious literature – that class of manuscripts written by
natives for exclusively native audiences – suggests that Nahuas were deeply fascinated by stories
that highlighted frightening and marvelous phenomena: the shimmering appearance of angels, terrifying demons, miraculous apparitions, wondrous healings, etc. Numerous collections of *tlamahuizolli* in the Nahuatl devotional literature underscore the attraction of this genre among Nahuas. Examples can be found in the John Carter Brown Library’s *Codex indianorum 7*, a devotional manual not dissimilar to Aquino’s, the Bancroft Library’s *Serones y santoral en mexicano* (M-M 464), the Benson Latin American Collection’s *Teotlatol Nemachtiloni ipan in Nahuacopa* (BLAC JGI 984), and the Biblioteca Nacional de Mexico’s *Santoral en mexicano* (BNM 1476). Aquino’s devotional notebook alone contains thirty-three stories titled *yn itlaçotlamaviçoltin û totlaçonātin Sancta maria*, “Precious Marvels of Our Beloved Mother Saint Mary” (f.71r–114v). Like the characters in these stories adapted for Nahuatl-speaking audiences, Aquino, too, would have been keenly aware of a world in which sudden penetrations of *teotl* into the world of the living was always possible.

Christian apocalyptic literature overlapped with Nahua anxieties about ends of cycles, frightening omens, and miraculous phenomena. St. Luke’s oft-quoted passage, already mentioned as the inspiration for many sermons for the first Sunday of Advent, must have resonated with Nahuas and Christians alike: “And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth distress of nations in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, men fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world…” Such anxieties resulted in a number of gripping visual depictions at the hands of indigenous artists such as Juan Gerson. His series of paintings on *amate* paper at the Franciscan convent at Tecamachalco brought scenes from the Apocalypse to life in vivid detail for native audiences. The legend of the Antichrist also contained details that would likely have resonated with Nahuas. Frightening prophecies warned Christians of his immanent coming at the end of time, a prelude to the
destruction of the earth by fire following the “terrible” Final Judgment. Aquino’s Sibyl concludes her opening speech in “Antichrist and the Final Judgment” with these chilling words, *Auh çatepā a’ vecavh noviyan Cenca tlachinaviz yn ixäch yn oc atley çan niman caviz*, “And not long afterwards everywhere will be burned, absolutely nothing will be spared.” The faithful were warned to keep vigilant for signs pointing to the fulfillment of these prophecies. In Aquino’s two plays numerous characters make reference to prophecies and signs in connection to Antichrist as well as the need for Christians to recognize them. The martyrs of “Antichrist and the Hermit” challenge Antichrist’s claims of divinity by stating *Auh catli ya monezca ynic ẖxpō*, “What is the sign that you are Christ?”, and making reference to end-time prophesies: “it is written that a person will be born in earth who will be followed as a god.” The Antichrist literature also features many miraculous and wondrous happenings. Antichrist performs miracles, raising the dead and making trees grow upside down and statues to speak. Such phenomena were *tlamahuizolli*, a point driven home by Aquino’s Sibyl who states, *yevātin quintlamaviçoltiz*, “He [the Antichrist] will cause them to marvel.”

Could the tendency for Nahuas to look for frightening omens and to see time as inevitably ending in cataclysm have predisposed Aquino to be drawn to the Christian apocalypse? I think it’s at least possible, perhaps even likely. But there are other factors worth mentioning as well. As I have already discussed, the friars’ teaching heavily emphasized the frightening events surrounding the end of the world, especially the Final Judgment (but not, as I’ve noted, the story of Antichrist.) The liturgical year opened with the Luke 21 reading quoted above, framing the whole of the Christian calendar in apocalyptic terms. As discussed in Chapter Four, preaching focused on inducing in Nahuas a state of attrition – a terrifying fear of God’s judgment and eternal punishment in hell. Mural paintings like those in the open chapel at the
Convento of San Nicolás de Tolentino, Actopan, and the *visita* chapel at Santa María Xoxoteco, both in Hidalgo state, reinforced this message with powerful visual depictions of demons torturing sinners in graphic detail. Aquino could not have escaped these messages, written as they were into the Church’s liturgy, pedagogy, and visual “sermons” in paint and stone.

I also think it’s possible that Aquino may have perceived of the time he was living in as an apocalyptic moment, a Nahua apocalypse. Assuming that he was active during the period of time roughly spanning the 1550s through the 1580s, we can point to a number of factors that might have contributed to this sense. For one, he may have lived through one or two of the devastating epidemics that ravaged the indigenous population, the first lasting from 1545–1548 and the second from 1576–1579. Estimating mortality rates among the indigenous population is exceptionally tricky, but it seems that indigenous populations had plummeted from approximately 25 million on the eve of Contact to just about 1 million by 1580. Such catastrophic loss of life would have created rippling effects that touched all aspects of native life and it would certainly have constituted a frightening event easily susceptible to apocalyptic interpretation. Derek Daschke has written about the connection between traumatic events and spikes in apocalyptic thinking and writing during the Middle Ages. His thesis is simple: when wars, famines, plagues, invasions, and schisms occur, people turned to apocalyptic interpretations in search of answers to explain their circumstances and assuage their suffering. Add to epidemics the moral and social disorientation resulting from the forced *congregación* of native communities and the oppressive labor and tribute requirements of the *encomienda* and *repartimiento* systems, and the traumatic nature of living for Nahuas in mid-sixteenth century New Spain becomes apparent.
In Chapter Three I proposed that Aquino imagined his Aztec Antichrist as the embodiment of voices of native resistance to the friars’ preaching. Could this idea have been suggested to Aquino by some friar commenting on the “apocalyptic” nature of the day? The fact that they tended not to write about Antichrist casts doubt on this explanation, although the exception of fray Gilberti is worth noting. Perhaps the idea originated in Aquino’s own fertile imagination, nurtured by reading the sermons of Vincent Ferrer or paintings such as those by Gerson at Tecamachalco. In either case, Aquino’s choice of Antichrist is not an illogical one in light of the historical context. It links him with innumerable medieval folk throughout the ages who when experiencing their own traumas responded by looking for signs of the Antichrist’s coming. This, together with the apocalyptic conditions cited above and the tenor of Nahua-Christian discourse at the time, constitutes an important part of the answer to the question of Why Antichrist?

*   *   *

I have spent two years searching for Fabián de Aquino in the folios of Hispanic Society of America MS NS 3/1, an item that I accidently called from storage while researching another dissertation topic entirely. In a matter of moments the course of my research was altered when, while thumbing through the pages of this tiny leather-bound book, I came upon the words “Tlaloc,” “Tezcatlipoca,” “Huitzilopochtli,” and “Quetzalcoatl.” The striking incongruity of seeing the names of Aztec deities in the context of a manuscript containing Christian devotional texts immediately cried for a deeper investigation. Although this dissertation represents my own best efforts to answer some of the myriad questions suggested by Aquino’s work, so many more linger. I may be more familiar with this Fabián de Aquino than any other person today; however, in many respects I feel like I barely know him. But there have been moments when I’ve felt I’ve
been close. Recognizing his passionate defense of native Christian spirituality in the words of his valiant _conversos_ and _mártires_ was one such instance. Other moments have been more mundane: confronting certain examples of his muddling of Spanish words offered the occasional chuckle, but more importantly served as a window on Aquino the bilingual writer and his struggles navigating a second language – struggles I myself face with humbling regularity.

In one of the other texts in his notebook, Aquino wrote what I believe to be an original composition in the first person. It appears to be a kind of Nahuatl jeremiad, a highly personal meditation on human frailty, mortality, and death written from the perspective of an indigenous Christian. It opens with the doleful exhortation, _Otlacathe tla xinechitta yn çan ivhquin yn onipactinenca yn oc nitlacatl nicatca yn iquac yn ayad° ticeva yn notzontecon yn °yamo nomitl nitepevhtoc yntecocho_ “Oh, personage! Won’t you please look at me! I just used to live happily [when] I was still a person, when you hadn’t yet raised my head, before I was bones lying scattered about in the grave…”[^18] In what follows, Aquino paints a raw and unpolished portrait of a Nahuat Christian psyche tortured by the harsh doctrines of sin and eternal punishment. Like the resurrected sinners in “Antichrist and the Hermit,” he speaks as one who has already died and is waiting anxiously in _mictlan_ for the Judgment Day. He laments that while he was yet alive he didn’t take care to follow the ways of God and that now he suffers immeasurable torment at the hands of _yn tequanime yn mictlan tzitzimit_, “the beasts, the _tzitzimit_ of hell.” Repeatedly he cries, _iyoyahue iyoyahue_, “Alas! Alas!” as he describes his torment and urges the reader to take heed and avoid a similar fate. So extensive and vivid are the details of his pain that at one point he simply writes _hao hao hao hao hao hao_, “Ow! Ow! Ow! Ow! Ow!” By the end of the text, Aquino’s tone takes an even darker turn. He begins to cry out for God to kill him and end his sorrow and pain. “Oh ruler!” he writes, “Grant us that we might die from our shouts of suffering.
Already our uvulas are torn…Oh lord of the near! Order us to die!” He concludes by noting “May we just die because…you look upon us as ash, pus, [and] excrement.”

With these bleak and desperate sentiments, Fabián de Aquino – whoever he may have been – emerges from the fog of history as the inheritor of the tradition of the cuicameh, the poets and singers who composed some of the most striking examples of Nahuatl in xochitl, in cuicatl, “flower and song.” In the decades following the brutal Spanish conquest of Tenochtitlan, an unnamed Nahua poet wrote the following words, the tenor of which anticipates Aquino’s own:

Ototlahueliltic çan titotoliniah timacehualtin queçohuel tehuantí otiquittaque in cococ ye machoyan ohuaya.
Ticmomoyahua ticxoxocoyan in momacehualy in tlatilolco cococ moteca cococ ye machoyan ye ic ticiahuia ic titlatzihuia ipalnemoani ohuaya
Choquiztli moteca yxayotl pixahui a in tlatilolco
Yn annexica ma xiquilnamiquican oya çan topan quitemohuia yellelon imahuiço yehuan çan yehuan Dios

Oh, how unfortunate we are!
We macehualtin are afflicted, we have seen and felt misery.
You scatter, you crush your macehualtin in Tlatelolco,
Misery spreads out, misery is felt,
Thus we suffer fatigue, thus we are drained of energy, Giver of Life.
Weeping and mourning sprinkles down in Tlatelolco…
You Mexicans, remember he who sends down his agony and fear is none other than God…

The historical event described here was undeniably a “Nahua Apocalypse,” a trauma that would reverberate long after the initial conquest. Nahuas like the unnamed poet above and his literary descendant, Fabián de Aquino, drew on the poetic tradition of their ancestors to name their “antichrists,” acknowledging nican tlalticpac tlaalahui, “it is slippery here on earth,” and confronting the terrible possibility that the Giver of Life (ipalnemohuani), a deity who is simultaneously Yahweh and Tezcatlipoca, may have abandoned them to oblivion. Though years
separated these two authors, the pathos expressed in their writing unites them, as does their decision to express the trauma of conquest and colonialism with words.

When Fabián de Aquino signed his name *ytlatequipanoli*, “his work,” he chose his words carefully. There were other words for “work” that he might have chosen, such as *tequitl* or *tlachihualli*. The former, *tequitl*, implies the kind of work one does as an obligation or duty; one’s chores are *tequitl*, as is one’s tributary requirement. The latter, *tlachihualli*, refers to something one has made or done, a creation or accomplishment of some sort; one’s offspring could be their *tlachihualli*. But the precise word he chose, *tlatequipanollí*, suggests Aquino invested his work with greater significance than that which is expressed by *tequitl* or *tlachihualli*. Molina defines *tlatequipanollí* this way: *cosa obrada, o que se trabajó en ella cuando se hizo*, “something labored upon; or having toiled on something when it was made.” This suggests that, in Aquino’s mind, the texts he redacted into his devotional notebook were the products of great effort, works and words in which he took great pride. In this dissertation, I, too, have toiled to convey Aquino’s work to the world, to bring his *tlatequipanollí* to light, again, for both scholarly and lay audiences. Like the countless individuals, medieval and modern, who have trembled at the signs of the times and seen in them their own looming antichrists, may we *nican tlalticpac*, “here on earth,” take what lessons we may from the work of Fabián de Aquino.

*Ben Leeming itlatequipanol.*
Illustrations

Figure C.1. Map showing locations associated with sixteenth-century Franciscan friar Alonso de Santiago.
Endnotes

1 Translation mine. *Sin duda este libro muy curioso incluye aun muchas particularidades relativas á los Mexicanos antiguos, á fuera de aquellas pocas que hemos podido comprender nosotros con nuestras escasas luces acerca de la lengua...Merecería, en todo caso, ser examinado y publicado por un americanista valiente.* Hispanic Society of America MS NS 3/1, *Sermones y miscelánea de devoción.*

2 The Nahuatl play referred to as “Holy Wednesday” by its translator Louise Burkhart dates to the 1590s and may be roughly contemporary to Aquino’s plays.

3 Certain clues suggest the earlier end of this period. Take for example the lack of consistency in how Aquino wrote Nahuatl’s /ts/ sound (ç, ñ, barred-z, and tz), which, according to Karttunen and Lockhart, had become standardized as tz as early as mid-century. Frances Karttunen and James Lockhart, “The Art of the Nahuatl Speech. The Bancroft Dialogues in Nahuatl Studies Series Number 2,” UCLA Latin American Studies 65 (1987), 66. Regarding Aquino’s use of the rarely-seen *t-cedilla*, it is interesting to note Lockhart’s comment that the earliest known alphabetic Nahuatl texts (a set of census records dating to the late 1530’s–40’s from the Cuernavaca region) use ç instead of tz. See James Lockhart, *The Nahuas After the Conquest: A Social and Cultural History of the Indians of Central Mexico, Sixteenth Through Eighteenth Centuries* (Berkeley: Stanford University Press, 1992), 335.

4 For example, Aquino repeatedly employs Nahuatl’s archaic preterite -qui ending, a diagnostic trait that linguists I consulted uniformly associated with the eastern varieties of Nahuatl. Magnus Pharaoh Hansen, personal communication 5/24/15; Julia Madajczak 11.18.15; Gordon Whittaker 5.22.16.

5 Such as Aquino’s use of the antecedent o- in the preterit and the reflexive no-. Julia Madajczak 11.18.15.

6 fol. 173r.


11 Aquino, *Sermones y miscénánea de devoción*, fol. 137r.

12 Ibid., fol. 157v–158r.

13 Ibid., f.135r.


17 See Chapter One, page 28 and note 49.
18 Aquino, *Sermones y miscenánea de devoción*, fol. 116r.
19 Ibid., fol. 120v.
21 Ibid.
22 Nahuatl Dictionary, Wired Humanities Project, 2000–2016, University of Oregon
http://whp.uoregon.edu/dictionaries/nahuatl/index.lasso, s.v. “Tlachihualli.”
23 Ibid., s.v. “Tlatequipanoll.”
In the year 1591 a caravan of travelers snaked its way north from the central valley of Mexico en route to establishing a new settlement on the frontier of New Spain. They were responding to a call issued from the viceroy of the colony, don Luis de Velasco, to take part in a mission to pacify northern bands of indigenous Chichimecas, nomadic hunters who had been staunchly resistant to the crown’s efforts to bring them into policía cristiana. However, the intrepid settlers who comprised this initial migration in 1591 were not Spaniards but Nahuas, proud citizens of the “loyal city of Tlaxcala,” which during the initial conquest of the Aztec empire had allied with the Spaniards and assisted in the conquest. Importantly, the Tlaxcaltecah considered themselves to be among the first indigenous Mexicans to adopt Christianity, which in their histories and painted manuscripts they depicted themselves as doing voluntarily and enthusiastically. In this sense they were a logical choice for a remarkable kind of experiment: native peoples as emissaries of the crown’s wide-ranging total project of reducción, inducing unconverted nomads to adopt sedentism, agriculture, and Christianity. The town they founded was named San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala, which today lies subsumed by the urban sprawl of Saltillo, the capital of Coahuila state in northern Mexico.

Very recently I came across a reference to a document that lists the names of the seventy-two Tlaxcalan families who left their homeland in 1591 to settle San Esteban. Carefully selected from each of the four sub-altepemeh of Tlaxcala, Quiahuiztlan, Tizatlan, Ocotololco, and Tepeticpac, these initial colonists included not only heads of household, but entire families; the document lists the names of women and children, even providing the children’s ages. Scanning this list of families my eyes settled on the following item:

_Fauian de Aquino, casado con Frca., con tres hijos, dos de doce años, que son Ysabel y Maria y Sebastian de tres años._
Fabián de Aquino, married to Francisca, with three children, two of twelve years, Isabel and María, and Sebastián of three years.\(^2\)

Of this Fabián de Aquino, I have so far been unsuccessful in locating any additional information. It does not appear that he occupied a position of importance in the government of San Esteban, and I have no evidence other than his name that suggests he was related to a number of other Aquinos who served as *regidores* and *alguaciles* of San Esteban over the years. The fact that no one named Fabián de Aquino was listed as *fiscal* in the *ayuntamiento* records casts doubt on my assumption that the authors of the plays held this particular position.\(^3\) Nevertheless, I suspect that there may be more to this figure than the brief mention above. Consider, for example, that in the present-day city of Saltillo there exists a street named “Calle Fabián de Aquino.” Here is yet another historical footprint that suggests the bearer of this name may have been notable at one time in the past.

Though it is tempting, I won’t be so bold as to proclaim this Fabián de Aquino to be the Fabián de Aquino who wrote the two Nahuatl Antichrist dramas preserved in Hispanic Society MS NS 3/1. However, certain details align well with the picture whose outlines I have sketched out over the past couple of years. First, the *Favián de Aquino* listed in the 1591 document was, like our playwright, a Nahua and not a Spaniard. Second, he lived during the final quarter of the sixteenth century, a date which is slightly later than I had previously thought but one that accords well enough with the linguistic and orthographic data summarized in this dissertation. Third, of all the *altepeh* he might have been associated with, *Favián de Aquino* hailed from Tlaxcala, one of only two locations mentioned in MS NS 3/1 and the one towards which some of the linguistic data point. Finally, my assertion in Chapter Three that Aquino modeled his Nahua Christian *conversos* and *mátiros* on the child martyrs of Tlaxcala – figures so central to that polity’s sense of identity – lends added weight to the connection between our playwright and this
important altepetl. None of this rises to the level of proof and it is admittedly mere conjecture at this stage. Further research is required if I am to locate concrete links between the Fauian de Aquino who settled in San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala and the Fabián de Aquino who penned the two Nahuatl Antichrist dramas. Since our Aquino was literate, there is hope that he wrote more than just that which is bound within the covers of his devotional notebook. It is possible that I might be able to locate documents that bear his signature or at least offer a match in terms of their handwriting. Such documents could exist in the archives of either Tlaxcala or Saltillo, as well as repositories such as the Archivo General de la Nación or the Biblioteca Nacional de Mexico. However, as much as I yearn to set off in search of them this instant, this will have to wait.
Endnotes

Appendix A:
Annotated Table of Contents of HSA MS NS 3/1

Text 1: [untitled] (fols.1–37r)
The first text in Fabián’s notebook appears to be some kind of instruction manual on the proper Christian education of young children. It is divided up into seventeen numbered chapters, each one initiated by a pilcrow, or paragraph mark. Immediately following the chapter heading the author provides a short summary of its contents. Here is a representative sampling: “How the child will dress himself [??] and how he will live purely and [?],” “How very willingly mass will be heard,” “How you will greatly pray to God and saint Mary and also the saints,” “How you will greet [people] in the road,” and “How the table will be blessed when there is about to be eating.” Taken all together the topics of this first text suggest that what we have here is some sort of manual instructing parents or guardians in how to properly train young boys to be dutiful Christians and members of civil society. I have been unable to identify the source text, assuming it was either copied or translated by Aquino. It is also possible that this is an original composition, a possibility strengthened by the fact that the text is signed by Aquino himself. The presence of such a text in Aquino’s notebook makes sense if he was, in fact, the fiscal of his local community, since the responsibility for educating the youth largely fell to people like him.

Text 2: De terrebilitate judicii finali et penie interni [sic] (“On the Terrifying Final Judgment and Eternal Punishment”) (fols.37v–55r; See fig. 1)
Aquino himself was the likely author of this discourse on the End Times. I base this upon the fact that this is the text Aquino signs and adds the phrase “his work.” Taken together with the
two Antichrist dramas, this lengthy treatise establishes a strong eschatological bent in Aquino’s work. Beginning with the words *timochintin timiquizque*, “we all shall die,” Aquino lays out a roughly chronological survey of the Last Days. He opens noting that many frightening things will happen to us upon our death, including nasty torments at the hands of the *tlatlacecoloh* (lit. “horned-owl people,” demons). As a good catechist would, Aquino offers suggestions for how to avoid such terrifying things, such as saying the *Credo* and *Pater Noster* (fol.38v), confessing of sins and penitential acts. He distinguishes between venial (“little”) and mortal (“big”) sins (fol.38v), explains the aid of the saints, and then launches into a detailed explanation and description of purgatory (*porgatollio*; fol.40r), which he describes vividly as a “very great cave” (*cenca vey oztotl*). Next begins a narrative of the Final Judgment starting with the resurrection of the dead, the weeping and crying of the “bad ones” (*acualtin*) who utter cries of regret at their “black and filthy” sins (fol.46v). His telling of the Judgment itself follows the standard approach of narrating the separation of the sheep and the goats from Matthew chapter 25. He announces his vivid discussion of hell by stating “Behold! This is what hell is like” (f49r). Aquino’s hell (referred to as *mictlan*, “among the dead”) retains some elements of the indigenous understanding of the underworld, such as it’s very windy, as well as preserving the salient features of the Christian view (lots of fire). This is followed by a description of heaven that is similarly vivid. He concludes with an admonitory speech, much as a priest would at the conclusion of a sermon.
Text 3: [untitled] (fol.56r)

This is a single-folio fragment of an unidentified text that begins with the words, *oquimitauilli ypā sermo to[tla]cotatzin fray seronimō...* (“Our beloved father fray Jeronimo said to them in a sermon…”). It appears to begin *in medias res*, since the opening lacks a pilcrow, historiated capital letter, or any other mark of initiation. The text speaks of the virtues of mercy, confession, and love of family and neighbor. It appears to be in a different hand from the rest of the manuscript, making this one of the few texts where Aquino’s authorship is questioned. While there is no way to prove it, it is possible that “fray Jeronimo” refers to the venerable Franciscan Gerónimo de Mendieta (1525–1604), one of the most influential Franciscans of sixteenth century Mexico. The author’s use of the phrase “our [revered] father” is just one of the numerous clues tying the notebook’s redactors with that order.
Text block 4: [untitled] (fols.57r–66v)

This is a collection of short miracle stories (tlamahuizolli, “marvelous things”) and instructions that revolve around the sacrament of the Eucharist. It opens with the words “Here is another thing [i.e. “story”] by which our hearts will believe when mass is said”) and goes on to discuss the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist (referred to as the tlaxcalçintli, “the little tortilla”). Like a number of the sections in Fabián’s notebook, this block of Eucharistic texts was probably mis-bound at some later date apart from its original location. The opening statement “Here begins another…” is typical of texts in a series. Each of these stories involves a person who is either miraculously aided by the Sacrament or is damned for some impropriety involving it. The text extolls the benefits of regular receiving of the Eucharist, such as curing the soul from sickness of sin and living a calm, peaceful life. Some of the stories involve comical demons who seem to take delight in deceiving Christians, tricking them into incorrect reception of the Eucharist and thus condemning them to hell. Fol. 65r contains the list of seven demons that I have shown to be derived from St. Vincent Ferrer’s sermon “On the Seven Captains of Lucifer.” The final page contains the third of Aquino’s four signatures.

Text 5: Nican mitohua yn tlahtlacolpololliztli yn itoca ynidulsencias…[sic] (“Here the destruction of sins, what is called indulgences, is spoken of…”) (fols.67r-70v; see fig. 2)

This important text provides the names of not one but two historical personalities, fray Francisco de Zamora, minister general of the Franciscan order from 1559–1565, and yn cenca vey teopixqui pahpa parilo [?] 4 (“the very great priest pope parilo [?] the fourth,” fol.70r), who I presume to be pope Pius IV, and also ruled from 1559–1565. Of even greater significance is the mention of the date this special plenary indulgence was granted by the pope to the minister general, 1560,
written both according to the Nahuatl count (“twelve hundred and three hundred and also sixty years”) and using Arabic numerals. The first part of the text appears to be in a different hand (fol.67r–v), although it’s possible that Aquino was merely attempting to lend a greater formality to this text by writing this part in larger, more boldly lettered script. At the bottom of fol.67v the text reverts unequivocally to Aquino’s hand for the remainder of the text, which consists of instructions on how to receive the indulgence. Each short paragraph that follows begins with the words No yvan yn aquin ypan quitoz... (“And also he who says...”) followed by a certain number of prayers (e.g. “five Pater Nosters”) and then a corresponding number of years of reduced time in purgatory. The conclusion of the text makes further mention of the minix?tro Genelalesme (“minister generals”) and totlaçotašin Sanc frauco (“our beloved father Saint Francis”). One of it’s folios was mis-bound and currently appears as folio 228 recto, further evidence that the original order of the manuscript was disrupted during re-binding and that the current foliation was added after that date.

Figure A.2. Text 5 showing the date “1560” in Nahuatl (fol. 67r). Courtesy of the Hispanic Society of America.
Text block 6: *Estos senmira glosacadus del maria de Rosario yntonic del discípulo* [sic] (fols. 71r–114v)

The title to this section appears to be a partially-Nahuatlized Spanish that nevertheless clearly indicates the centrality of the Virgin Mary and the rosary to this group of texts. At 43 folios in length, it constitutes the largest “chapter” in Aquino’s notebook; a clear statement of the importance of the Virgin in the devotional practices of Christian Nahuas. It consists of 33 *exempla* (short stories intended to teach a spiritual lesson), each of which follows a standard formula. Many begin with the words *Ce tlacatl...* (in essence, “There once was a person…”) or *Yzcatqui centetl machiyotlamaviçolli* (“Here is an exemplary marvel…”) or just *Yzcatqui centlamātli machiyotl* (“Here is an example…”). Thematically, they each follow a similar formula. The protagonist, either a good or a bad person, experiences a situation where they need help. The person calls out to Mary and she either helps or makes an example of the person depending on their profile. Finally, the Virgin Mary comes to the aid of the person who beseeches her, demonstrating her miraculous powers and effective advocacy. My sense is that these stories were copied from another text, a Nahuatl-language collection of exempla that was itself probably copied or translated from a European text. References to European locations (Gascona, Rome, Coracio), and important saints (St. Bernard, St. Boniface) add certainty to the existence of an as-of-yet unidentified European source of these texts. Other collections of exempla abound in the colonial Nahuatl religious literature and offer powerful testimony to the importance of the Virgin Mary to Nahua Christians.
Text 7: [untitled] (fols.116r–128r)

This text opens with the doleful proclamation, “Oh personage, Won’t you please look at me! I just used to live happily [when] I was still a person, when you hadn’t yet raised my head, before I was bones lying scattered about in the grave…” (fol.116r). What follows appears to be a meditation on mortality, death, and eternal things. Unlike some of the other texts in Fabián’s notebook, this one is devotional, not didactic, in nature, the goal being a deepening of the interior life of the devout Nahua Christian. The text employs the elevated tone and poetic language typical of indigenous forms of rhetoric. Although it isn’t signed, my hunch is that Text 7 may have been composed by Aquino as well. In its tone and emphasis on spiritual transformation it recalls the text on the Final Judgment, which does bear his signature.

Text 8: [untitled] (fols.129r–129v)

This is a short text that seems to be about the Assumption of Mary. It is not in Aquino’s hand. The presence of fragmentary texts like this in the manuscript raises questions about their origin. Why did Aquino (or someone coming later?) begin such texts only to leave them incomplete? Was Aquino working with an assistant? Or did a later owner of the notebook try to add to it by inserting texts in pages Aquino had left blank?

Text 9: [untitled] (fols.131r–150r)

This is the first of Aquino’s two Antichrist plays. Based on its subject matter I will refer to it as “Antichrist and the Final Judgment.”
The first part of this short text is a set of confraternity ordinances (cofratiya navatilli). It opens with the statement “Fray Alonso de Santiago left saying to them there at the hospital…” It then continues “Regarding him [fray Alonso?] they made a vow to St. Mary. [or, “on his behalf they made a vow”?] On Fridays when the bendedicta will be said at the vigil the singers say it. Then the first candle will be lit” (fol.151r). The remainder of the ordinances prescribe certain prayers to be said each day of the week, beginning with Friday and ending with Thursday. The prayers are mostly Ave marias, Pater nosters and the Doxology. There are two references to yn cofratiaome, which is either “confraternities” or a reference to the cofrades, members of the confraternity in question. It ends on fol.153r with the phrase ya yxch nicā tlami yn cofratiya navatilli (“That’s all. Here end the cofradía ordinances”). The second part of the text is a series of four choquiztlahtolli (“weeping words”). These seem to be four things that a devout person will weep over, such as “he will recall that he will go to hell.” I have included them as part of Text 10 because they follow Text 9 seamlessly without the customary blank page break. There is a large space between the ordinances and the choquiztlahtolli so I may be incorrect in grouping them this way.
Text 11: [untitled] (fols.155r–187r)

This is the second of Aquino’s two plays. I refer to this play as “Antichrist and the Hermit” after the play’s starring character.

Text 12: De como nascio sacro(?) en quen crupicaron senor iesuxpō [sic] (“How the tree on which Christ was crucified was born…?”) (fols.188r–212r; see fig. 4)

This is the first of three texts that follow a similar format and are written in the same hand. Each begins with a title written in red letters. The bodies of the texts are carefully marked with a large, lavishly-historiated initial letter. The hand of all three could be that of Aquino, although certain features raise doubts in my mind. Regardless, whoever wrote or copied the Spanish title above most certainly didn’t have a good grasp on the language. The subject appears to be the story of the Finding of the True Cross, an important legend in medieval literature. It opens with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden where the teyxcali cuavitl (“tree of understanding”) grows and from which Christ’s cross will be made centuries later. There are many references to things described as tlamahuizolli and mahuizti (“marvelous and wondrous”) including angels, pure springs, birds, flowers, and waters that have curative abilities. Rambling through the story of the Fall and the Expulsion, mentioning the Temple of Solomon, “the Jews,” and the crucifixion, the story ends with the finding of the True Cross by Helen, mother of Constantine.
Text 13: *Evangelio maria cēca qualli* (“The gospel [reading about] Mary; she was very good…”)
(fols.213r–230v)

The second of three texts appears to take as its subject the life of Mary Magdalene. Its red-lettered title reads in its entirety, “Very good Gospel of Mary [or, “Gospel of Mary, who is very good”]; our lord chose her; her prosperity will never end, no one will take it from her.” Alternatively, this could read “The Gospel [story which is about] Mary.” This seems most likely since further down in the text we find “The Gospel that today is said at mass was written by our lord Christ’s writer, his name is St. Luke the Evangelist” (fol.213r). The presence of a lengthy Magdalenan text in Aquino’s notebook supports my suspicion that this figure in particular played an important role in the spirituality of Aquino’s home community. There is a difficult to decipher reference to the Magdalene that follows Aquino’s signature at the end of the Final Judgment text. Could it be that this Nahua Christian nurtured a special devotion to the patroness of converts?
Text 14: *Auh ynh yehuatl niman quimacato yvan [?] ynitlamachtihan...* (“And then he came to give it and his disciples heard it [?]...”) (fols.231r–254v?)

The beginning of this text clearly links it with the previous two; however, by what I am assuming to be its end, a number of changes have taken place that leave me much less certain about its relationship with those that precede it. The opening subject would appear to be a musing on Christ’s so-called “hidden years,” the gap that exists in the Gospel accounts between Jesus’ presentation at the Temple and the beginning of his ministry. But soon the text turns to the Temptation in the Desert and Christ’s life and ministry. A number of changes take place over the course of the text that have confounded me to date. There is a discernable change in hand by the end. There is also a change in format from the preceding two texts, with the addition of the word *Exposicio* (“exposition”) starting on fol.237v. The format shifts into that of a santoral or miracle story involving various saints. The formulaic *Ce tlacatl ytlaco y dios ytoica san maximo* (“A person, beloved of God, named Saint Maximo...”) is typical.

![Figure A.5. Drawing of a Franciscan’s knotted belt (f.230v). Courtesy of the Hispanic Society of America.](image)

Text 15: [untitled] (fols.255r–296v?)

From about this point on through the end of the entire manuscript it becomes much more difficult to discern discrete texts. I suspect that the pages have been shuffled and mis-bound. I have
already demonstrated that this has happened at least twice, and it seems likely that whoever bound the manuscript in its lovely leather binding simply didn’t have the linguistic skill to correctly collate the loose pages. Folios 231–300 contain a variety of hands. One of them seems to be Aquino’s (fols.297r–300v), a hypothesis supported by the presence of his signature at the very end, but of the others I am just not able to say for certain at this point.

Text 16: [untitled] (fols.297r–300v)
The text opens Ce tlacatl nemiya ytoca mardin... (“There lived a man whose name was Martín…”). This text is mis-bound and may belong back in the block of miracle stories I have labeled Text 6 (fols.71r–114v). Aquino signs it with a very elaborate signature.

![Signature of Fabián de Aquino (fol. 300v).](https://example.com/signature.png)

Figure A.6. Signature of Fabián de Aquino (fol. 300v). Courtesy of the Hispanic Society of America.
Appendix B:

“Antichrist and the Final Judgment”

(fols. 131r – 150r)
Nican peva yni otoca Tetlayehyecalvillitzli ynic tlayehyecalvilloj yn quenin ontlamiz
ceanavac yni qnin yni iquac tetlatzonteqliliquivh .d. ynic nenemil, cueppalloj yn oc
nemova. tpc 2 ynic vel tlayehyecalvillo yevatl yni otoca avto monequi ontecpatli Onmatlactli
Once yni tlaca yevantin ynin mocchintin ytlaqtozque no yvã monequi yni cequentin quinpalevizque
yevatl yni yacachto moneq otoca tetlanextilli yni ytcq yez qteneczayotilliz yni iyqeh mochivaz
ynic vel cacoj ynic vel onCuiqaz

Niman valquiçaz ce tlacatl ytoqa Sibila [131v] pphetisa 3 qvalvicazque omêtin yn ägellome
nimä valquiçaz yni otoca antexpó4 quivalvicazque .etc. miyequentin qmictiz yni aö5 qmeltocazque
yevantin yni intoca martiles chiCuaqemintin yeque nimä valquiçazque Omentin yni intoca Eliyas
yvã Enoc .d. ypilovan temachtiquivi yvicpa yntlaveliloc Auh ca çan ipaltzinco .d. ymac miqzque
nimä ya6 ce tlacatl yni ayocmo qmoCuiti .d. Occeppa qmoCuitiz yvã ceqntin yni iyqivã yevätin
ynintoca : Conversos nimä qnvalmivalliz yni tote7 xpó [132r] ce angel yni otoca .S. miguel yni
qmictiqvhy niqntexpó nimä valquiçazq yni miclan yni tlhlatlace8. chicomêtin Canaqvi yni ätexpó.
Ce ytoqa loçiber ynic ii tlaloc ynic .iii. Tezcatlipoca ynic iii viçilopochtli ynic .v. qtzalcovatl
ynic vi Otontecvhtli ynic chi.8 vii. civacovatl

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1 .d.: here and below read dios.
2 tpc : here and below read tlalticpac.
3 pphetisa: read profetisa. David Tavárez wrote the following in a personal communication: “q' for <qui> or <que>,
and the barred p in Pphetisa are abbreviations that are rarely found after the late 16th / early 17th century” (email
dated 1.8.15).
4 antexpó: here and below read Antecristo. Also, here and below read xpó as Cristo.
5 aö: here and below amo or ahmo.
6 ya: This is a variant of yé that is used in these two texts. “ya = related to ye (already)” (Horacio Carochi, S.J.,
Grammar of the Mexican language…133–34 n4, 222 n1, 223 n3, 225 n4, 245 n6, and see 515; cited at WHP
website).
7 tote′: read totecuiyo.
8 chi: here I believe the author began writing the word chicome (“seventh”).
Here begins what is called a “representation” through which it will be represented how the world will end, how when God comes to judge, many people will turn their lives around while there is still living on earth. In order for what is called a “play” to be well represented, fifty-one people are needed. If all of these are to speak, then along with them some others are also needed to help them. The first one who is required is called “the revealer.” His job will be to explain all that will happen so that [the play] will be understood, so that it will be comprehended.

Then a person named Sibyl, a prophetess, will enter. Two angels will bring her out. Then one named Antichrist will enter, [the angels] will bring him out. He will slay many who don’t believe in him, those who are called Martyrs. There will be six of them. Then two will enter who are named Elijah and Enoch, God’s noblemen, they will come to teach people how to avoid wickedness. For God’s sake they will die by [Antichrist’s] hand. A person who no longer acknowledges God will once again acknowledge him along with some of his friends, those who are called Converts. Then our lord Jesus Christ will send an angel named St. Michael who will come to kill Antichrist. Then from mictlan will enter seven tlatlacañtecolotl. They will come to take Antichrist. The first is named Lucifer, the second Tlaloc, the third Tezcatlipoca, the fourth Huitziłopochtli, the fifth Quetzalcoatl, the sixth Otontecuhtli, the seventh Cihuacoatl.

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9 Here Aquino uses the term tetlayeyecalhuilitzli (“representation” or “imitation”) in place of the standard Nahuatl word for “play,” neixcuitilli (“example”). Curiously, this term doesn’t appear in any of the surviving colonial Nahuatl plays. According to Agnieszka Brylak of the University of Warsaw, this word is related to a class of words employed in ritual scenarios (personal communication, 4/15/15). One such example, recorded in Book VIII of the Florentine Codex, uses a related form of this word to describe the performance of traditional songs (cuicatl) by singers who imitated in dress and actions the people whose songs they were singing. Aquino’s use of it in the colonial context suggests that he may have associated Christian drama with the pre-contact ritual performances of this ancestors.

10 tetlanextiliani: literally “he/she who customarily reveals things to people.” I initially assumed that Aquino was searching for an equivalent for “narrator.” It is also possible that tetlanextiliani may refer to John the Evangelist, the author of the book of Revelation, who is also called “The Revelator.” In the original Spanish script, this character may have served as the narrator of the play, here presented to the audience as a living, moving “representation” of John’s apocalyptic vision. Unfortunately, this character is never directly mentioned again in either of Aquino’s two plays.


12 As previously noted, here and below I have chosen to leave mictlan untranslated. See Chapter 2, note 2.

13 For reasons similar to those regarding the use of mictlan, I have chosen to leave tlacatecolotl and tlatlacañtecolotl untranslated. See Chapter 2, note 3.
Sibila quitoz

Yz tonoc y tiCuitlapilli yaqne y tatlapalli Sivallachiya19 yaquine20 ximozcalli ynt te[133v]vatl titlacaltilli tiqttaz y neyxCuitilli ynic velticmatiz ynt iCuac .d. yyolotlamatiz ynt qntlamiz cemanavac

Ma vel xistlamicac tleyca Çanê anenemi ma hamechmvhti ynt ipaltinem ni xicnotlamican ma xiquimacaçican ynt itleyo ynt [i]mavicyavcCa yevatl .d. ytlacoz motecaziv ynt ihc18.

Sibila nevatl notoca onechvalmivalli .d. ma tlathlacoçcavallo yxcaviloz ynt inotzaloca yeso21 xpö. ytenevaloca ma novian tlacamachoz Ca yevatl yximachoz yCucatl tlamiz Cemanavac

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14 ivayorq: read ihuanyolque.
15 valmonestitiiyaz: read hualmonestitiiyaz. This is one of a number of examples where Aquino uses “s” for “x.” This is evidence supporting an early date for the text. David Tavárez wrote regarding this phenomenon: “Your dating proposal is also supported by your observation that t...” (email dated 1.8.15).
16 yn .s. mä.: read yn santa maria.
17 auin: here and below read auh in.
18 ihc.: read ilhuicac.
19 Sivallachiya: read xihuallachia.
20 yaquine: here and below read yequene.
21 yeso: read jesu.
[Next] they will bring out six priests.22 Then [the angels] will bring out those who didn’t believe in God; there will be six of them. Then following these will be those who have committed wicked acts: a Ruler, a Day Keeper, a Merchant, [132v] a Poor Person, a Young Man, a Prostitute, a Procuress, a Healer, a Secret Adulterer, One Who Induces Her Own Abortion, One Who Sterilizes Herself, a Hypocrite, a Thief, One Who Slept With His Relative, a Patlachhuiani,23 [and] a Cuiloni.24 Then a person will enter who is named Hermit. He will make the [sign of the] cross on them. By the command of God he will order them to reveal their wickedness, so that they will say to him the reason they go suffering. Then our lord Jesus Christ will come revealing himself, will come judging. Arrayed with him will be many angels [133r] along with his beloved mother Saint Mary and the apostles. When [wind instruments] are blown then all the dead will rise. The bad ones will then go to mictlan. The good ones will go happily to heaven with God; they will go rejoicing forever. Two angels will say, “God will come to judge when the whole world ends!”

The sibyl will say,

“Here you are at last, you tail, you wing!25 Look here! At last arise, you who [133v] are well brought up and you will see the example,26 so that you will really know when God by his will shall end the whole world.

Be very prudent! Why do you shuffle around in vain? May the giver of life27 frighten you! May you be saddened, may you fear his glory, his marvels. It is God’s beloved who will ascend to heaven.

Sibyl is my name. God sent me. May sins be abandoned, may attention be given to the counsel of Jesus Christ; may his exposition be obeyed everywhere. Indeed, there will be knowing [of God] when the world ends.

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22 priests: indigenous, not Roman Catholic. In “Antichrist and the Hermit” these six are called tletlenamacaque (“fire priests”).
23 Patlachhuiani is a little understood term. See note on fol. 186r for more. Due to this uncertainty, here and below I have chosen to leave this term untranslated.
24 Since early colonial times, cuiloni has been translated “sodomite” and cuilontia as “sodomy.” Since these terms are deeply laden with cultural baggage, like patlachhuiani I will leave them untranslated here and below.
25 The couplet “tail, wing” is a difrasismo meaning commoner or vassal. In Chapter Five I argue that Sibyl’s use of this distinctly indigenous expression is evidence that the “commoners” he had in mind were Nahuas.
26 neixcuitilli: here Aquino uses the term more commonly used to refer to religious plays.
27 ipal tinemih: literally “by/through/because of him/her we live.” This is very close to the more common form ipalnemohuani (lit. “he by whom there is living”), one of a number of pre-contact deity epithets appropriated in early colonial times by friars and Nahuas as names of the Christian god.
Spiritu Santo. 28

Eylhuitica yn mozcalli ypillovan quinextilito no yvy quinyollalitico ynic omeccavaca amechtlazontequilliqvh : yyyxpâñico anquitlalitivi yn ovanquichivhque. 30

Ma hanmochintin xicacâ ca yvykuiyn â ancochtinemi ynCualli ancovicayztinemi avin tlahltcolli ye anquiycemati Auhyninn namechilvia yn tlahltcolli : xictlaçacan ycel .d. xicneltocacan 31 yehica a° [134v] amechtlazatzictlan yn a° onpa tlahltlaz 32 yn a°yolla Cemicac

Ma vel amitec 33 motlali yn tley quito .S. yuâ Ca yvayolqui yezâya yn âtxpó. Centa aqualli ynymoteotiz yvykuiyn qualli ye vel teca mocacayavaz Centa vellic mochicavaz yn iztlacatilliztli Cemanac

Ynic vel teltlaneloqtîtz. xppoâmotocayotiz. miyeñntin ñnyollitiz Ca yn omicca quinyolliti[?] teyxpâ yn tenâ quinextitz Ca â tlacatecolotl yvvhynma ocelotl miyec anaz tpe .

Y evatl tlaveliloc yta yez Centa veveintin av[?][34] niman centa ylama[135r]tin no yvykuiyn yetz yntlahloc 34 ytxe quitylamiz yn mocihyctoc ynic veltyzlacaviz yn quinequi aya mocihyctoviz yn itlan .d. yn ilh .

Y evatl yn iyaqualemmilliz yn çan amechmchtiquivh 35 yvâ amechitiñiqvhyyn iyaaquatemachilliz : macacy yztlacatilliztli ytxe momachi[y?]ti 36 macama : canapa yylotij 37 yn teotlatoll . tpe .

Y quivic 38 quinetoltiz yn motollinia teoCuitlatl Oc cequentin tilma matlatl yevâtin quintlamanicoltz Ca çan ic noviyan yllotiz .d. yttlatoltin tlachiyaloni ynic caviy netloconi ynic tonevaloz cemicac

Yn a°qualtin xpîânome 39 yn tley químacaz[?] [135v] quiCuiquez vel quitlecamatizque yn yevantin yn aviyanime Çan ivhquiyn teCuanime qualtin ypâ quimatzique ynic

28 Spû.S.to: here and below read Spiritus Santo.
29 mâçin: read Mariatzin.
30 ovanquichivhque: read oanquichivhque. Here and below Aquino consistently writes the antecedent o- and the second person plural pronoun an- as ovan- (ohuan-).
31 sicphnn: read xicneltocacan.
32 tlahltlaz: read tlaltetlaz. Here and elsewhere Aquino incorrectly inserts the glottal stop marker. His use of this marker is inconsistent, a fact that begs for further interpretation.
33 amitec: read amitic. Here and below Aquino writes itec for itic.
34 yntlahloc: read tlahuetusloc? Tentative translation.
35 amechmchtiquih: read amechmachtiquih.
36 momachiy[y?]ti: possibly “temachia, nino. confiar or esperar alguno” (Molina 2004 [1571]:96v).
37 yylotij: read yloti, “to turn back, go back, to return; to diminish; for a disease to become less severe, abate” (WHP)
38 Yquihuic: read ye ihuc.
39 xpîânome: read cristianome.
40 químacaz: I am choosing to read this quinmacaz.
By means of the Holy Spirit’s goodness [134r] Jesus Christ came to take on flesh. He came to assume his body inside of Saint Mary. Jesus, our ruler, died on the cross as a man. It should be believed that he died only for us on earth.

On the third day he came back to life, he went to show himself to his noblemen⁴¹ and also to console them. Forty days later he ascended to heaven. He prepared us; he will come again to judge you; you will lay before him what you did on earth.

Awake, all of you! It’s as if you go along sleeping. You consider goodness a difficult thing [and] you consider sin to be a fine thing. Moreover, regarding sin I say to you: Cast it down! Believe in the only God so that he will not [134v] cast you into mictlan, where your souls will burn forever.

May it really be placed within you what Saint John said, that one of his relatives would be Antichrist.⁴² Those who will worship him are very bad. Likewise the good ones will be thoroughly deceived. As a result, lies will be greatly strengthened in the whole world.

In order to cause people to believe he is the Christ, he will bring glory to them, he will give life to many. He will give life to those who had died. He will reveal their mothers before them.⁴³ [However,] he is just a tlacatecolotl.⁴⁴ Like a jaguar he will seize many on earth.

His father will be wicked and very old. And then a very old woman, [135r] who will also be wicked, will credit him⁴⁵ for that which lies growing so that he will thoroughly deceive people. He doesn’t want anyone to go up to be with God in heaven.

He will come to teach you his bad way of life and he will come to show you his bad teaching. May nobody go and trust in lies;⁴⁶ may the sacred words not diminish anywhere here on earth.

Therefore, to the poor person he will promise gold, to other people cloaks and nets. He will cause them to marvel. As a result, the seeing device of God’s word will diminish everywhere.⁴⁷ The articles of the faith will be abandoned, and there will be suffering forever.

The bad Christians will snatch up [135v] what he gives them. The prostitutes, who are just like wild beasts, will obey him. They will consider treat them as if they were good people

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⁴¹ his noblemen, i.e., his disciples.
⁴² his relatives: this refers to Jesus’ relations. This might be a reference to what the medieval sources say was Antichrist’s Jewish heritage.
⁴³ This is a reference to an exchange in the second play between Antichrist and the character named “Martyr” during which Antichrist raises Martyr’s mother and father from the dead. See fols. 158v–159v.
⁴⁴ Aquino’s decision to refer to Antichrist using the term tlacatecolotl highlights the inadequacy of this word as an equivalent for “devil, demon.” Since he also uses the term to refer specifically to the Devil, it is unclear here whether he means to say that Antichrist is the Devil or merely a devil.
⁴⁵ credit him: the expression is tetech tlamia which is typically “to blame or accuse someone of something.” But Aquino seems to be using it in a non-negative way here and elsewhere.
⁴⁶ Tentative translation.
⁴⁷ “seeing device” is tlachialoni. In precontact times tlachialoni referred to a ritual implement, an obsidian mirror with a hole in its center that was mounted on a staff. It was closely associated with certain deities and ritual specialists who used it in divination rituals. As far as I know Aquino’s use of it in a Christian context is unique in the colonial Nahuatl literature. It remains unclear what exactly he intended it to mean here.
ñmamahamavhtizque Cequin miquizque yn imac

⁴⁸ Çaño: here and below read çañ no.
⁴⁹ tlaçate’: here and below read tlaçatecolotl.
⁵⁰ /quimichtacaan/?: here and below I will read this as quimichtacaana.
⁵¹ ynican: here and below read yn nican.
⁵² iacayotzin: read iacayotzin.
⁵³ ńlivicac: read ńlivicac.
⁵⁴ tlaçae?: read tlatlaçateco.
⁵⁵ çañiman: here and below read çañ niman.
in order to frighten them. Some will die by his hand.

He will love the bad ones and they will be drawn to him. And he will consider those who won’t believe in him wicked. He will give the bad ones his kingdom because they did his wicked deeds on earth.

He will snatch up the one who lives presumptuously like a fish. In the same way he will go about killing the wretched nobles. It is also the same way with dogs and cats who secretly snatch mice. In the same way the tlacatecolotl will secretly take the virtuous [136r] on earth.

From the founding place of God’s lineage will come Elijah [and] Enoch. They will come to speak against wickedness; evil will be abandoned and good will be done. May the very good sacred words be placed inside people everywhere so that people will go to heaven.

They will come living humbly, they will come living poorly, so that there will really be believing, so that [Christ’s] life will be followed, so that [the faithful] will disparage the earthly things here where the heavenly kingdom will be fully known on earth.

Those who no longer acknowledge him will believe once more. Indeed, the sacred words of God will be believed. They will abandon the bad life. Then because of this [the bad ones] will kill them. Absolutely no one will bury these two old men, God’s noblemen, because they turned around people’s bad way of living on earth. [136v]

Then their bodies will lie fallen for three days. At our lord’s command they will come back to life on the third day. Then the angels will take them to heaven so that they will rejoice there forever. Absolutely nothing will happen to them. God will make them happy forever.

And when the wicked one sits on his throne, then [God] will send an angel, God’s nobleman. He will cast down everything. Last of all he will throw [Antichrist’s] body into the flames so that it will burn there forever with the bad ones.

Now I will show you how God will give them forty days so that the soul will be purified because God desires that you weep for your sins. For if not, the tlacatecolotl will come to snatch you on earth. [137r]

And not long afterwards everywhere will be burned, absolutely nothing will be spared. Our ruler, our savior desires that all he said in his word when his blood came to spill on earth will then come true.

And not long afterwards God will come to judge people. From that time forward, let it be remembered what our judge accused them of, what our creator will say to you when he comes shining.

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56 In the Antichrist tradition Enoch and Elijah will be slain by Antichrist and remain dead for three days before they are raised to life by Christ and brought to heaven.

57 This would be St. Michael. In some Antichrist legends it is Christ himself who slays Antichrist. In both of these plays St. Michael does the deed.

58 This is a reference to the forty days of penitence granted to the faithful after the death of Antichrist according to medieval tradition. See Emmerson 1979:182 n.15. Some Antichrist traditions stipulate forty-five days.
yn aqualtin qνvallaveliziyaz Ca çā valtemoz ylh^c^.

Yn ixquichtin yn āgelome ytlan .d. valmātiyazque ynic tlacapehpenazque ya nelli qualtin xϕano no yevātin yn apostollome ytlanṭînc obedote⁶⁰. yezque quintlavellittaz yn aqq velνenizquiyaz .

tpc . [137v]

Yn iquac tlapitzalloz yn vellomica⁵⁹ mozcallizque : mochi tlacatl velvollizque yxpā tote⁰. tlapovalloz ynic ūpa nenemilliznextiloz Onpa cacoz yn canpa yaovaz ynic onpa nelli xelliovaz Auh catlyevatl yn otli tocoz yn iCuac

Auh quitlapovillizque .d. yvā quimitlanilliz yn .d. mochintin yn tlatoq̲ no yxq̲chtin yn onoque quenin yn omonemîtique quinmotlahtlanilliz .d. avin i̲xq̲chtin yn qualtin quinnocellilliz yn macevâltin vel quintlatoltiz no yevātin [y]n tlavellilloque vel tlahatliti Cemicac

Auh mictlan temozque yn pipiltin yn ócate ynin mecavā yn cenca miyeq̲ yn ichpopochtun yn oquuxapotlatîn[138r]que yn oqνcentecpavitinēque yn imecavā . tpc .

Auinin⁶⁰ Onpa chocazque mochintin yn amo q̲ximatizneq̲ : yn nelli .d. Ce颤抖ntin Onpa CueCuechcazque miyequintin yehica yn amo moquahatequizneq̲ yehica yn a⁰ q̲Cueppaznequi yn imaqualnemilliz . tpc .

finis

Nican tlatoz yn ât ex

Niman valquiçaz yn itoca antex po . nimā q̲toz Ca nevatl yxquich novella⁶¹ niman ayac nivhqui yn . tpc . Onicchivhqui yn eemanavac Ca çan nocelṭin yn onamechinelī yn a⁰ ma çan nicpîqui Ca yα nelli yn aqνcα namēchmachtico

Auh yn xcan q̲lmach Ovanquineltocaque yn yeso xpō mamacovhticac⁶² ynin cahamo⁶³ Ca çan ic ovanechelcavhque yn âçe⁰ntin . tpc . avin xcan macayac q̲[…]olo⁶⁴ [138v] yn otlatoltîn yn aqq quipolog niman nicnoquiz yn iyezçο nomac miquiz .

Auh yntla hanechtlacamatzique niman àquittativi yn amonemac nochântîncō : ynic cemicac notlan amonemîti q̲ nимα Onpa Octli : anechitzique⁶⁵ yn yevātin yn omacevalvā yvā Onpa yezque yn amocîvavā ynic çecα anvellamatizque

Y vā namechmacaz tlaxcaîltintli ynic a⁰ âteovizque ynic vel onpa âmo cevizque yvā âconizque necvîntîlty onpa cenca qâllī yn mochiva chîlîntîli y[no]chanṭîncō yvā yn onpa Oc yovaṭîco qualli anquizque atollîntli

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⁵⁹ vellomica: read huel omicca.
⁶⁰ Auinin: here and below read auh inin.
⁶¹ ixquich nohuella: read ixquich nohueli.
⁶² mamacovhticac: read mamazouhticac
⁶³ cahamo: here and below read ca amo.
⁶⁴ q̲[…]olo: I am uncertain how to read this. Possibly quipolo.
⁶⁵ anechitzique: read anechitizque.
He will go raging at the bad ones [when] he descends from heaven.  

All the angels will go spreading out with God for the purpose of selecting those who are not truly good Christians. The apostles will also be beside our lord. He will look with hatred at those who should have lived honestly on earth. [137v]

Then [wind instruments] will be blown and those who have died will rise again, every person will come back to life. There will be accounting before our lord, there will be a revealing of lives. It will be heard where they will go so that there will be dividing there. And which road will be taken then?

And they will give an accounting to God, and God will ask all the rulers and also all those who are there how they lived. God will examine them. He will favor all the good ones, he will really speak for the commoners. But those wicked ones, they will go burning forever!

The nobles will descend to mictlan [where] their mistresses are. They went around deflowering many young women, [138r] they went around despoiling their mistresses on earth. Furthermore, all those who did not want to know the true God will weep. Many others there will quake because they didn’t want to get baptized, because they didn’t want to turn around their bad way of living on earth.”

(The End.)

Here the Antichrist will speak.

Then Antichrist will enter. Then he will say, “I am all powerful. There is no one like me on earth. I made the whole world. It is I alone who favored you; I’m not just making it up! In truth, today I have come to teach you.

Now it is said that you have believed that Jesus Christ was crucified. This is not so! Because of this some of you on earth have forgotten me. But now may no one […] my words. I will spill the blood of whoever destroys it! They will die by my hand on earth.

But if you will obey me then you will receive your reward in my home, you will live with me forever. You my subjects will give me pulque to drink there, and your women will also be there so that you may really be happy.

Also, I will give you tortillas so that you won’t be hungry, so that you will really rest yourself there. And you shall drink honey. There are very good chili peppers growing in my home, and you will drink good atoll there in the morning.

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66 “It will be heard…taken then” tentative translation.
67 Sahagún speaks of ancestors and ritual specialists, çan amo nelli quitoa çan quipiqui, “What they say is absolutely not true; they are just making it up” (fol. 2v, Ayer MS 1485).
68 In the medieval legend of Antichrist gifts are one of the three ways he entices the faithful to believe in him (the other two are miracles/signs and by terrifying them). Here the gifts offered by Antichrist take on a decidedly indigenous flavor: tortillas, chili peppers, atoll, tilmas, etc.
Auin axcā namechmacaznequi Cenca miyec : teoCuitlatl yzcatqui yn tlaçō tilmatli yntla hanechtlacama[139]tiznequi yntlaca69 anmiquipiznequi nimā anechvicazque69 yn āmochintin yntla hanechneltozcaque Auh yn ceqntin yehica yn āmiquipize

Y nin vel nican tlatoz temachtiz avin iqac yn ceqntin yn oēCUique yn tlatquītl yn oēqnetoacque Cenca quīntlaçotlaz Auh yn a⁰ ēqnetoacneq nimā ēqmaqav quīnmictiz Auh nimā motlalitivh yn iyipalpan Auh nimep val-qicāzquez elyias Enoc.

Elias

Auh nimā qitozque yn yevātīn yn vehuetē qyn axcā otivallaqteq tomentin yn ōpa yn otivalevaq yn itlacaqintiayan .d. ynic otechvalmivalli yehica yn amo netlocoz yn tleyn axcā yn ovāquicaq qyn ovmitec ēqtallitiaq qyn tlaqellicoq nimā : axcā qyn ovamechmaq[...]ue70 qyn imaxca qyn ovame[...]hitla[139v]cavitiyq271

Enoc

Auh nimā .q.tozque qyn elyias enoc qyn tevantī ca otamechqualenmīllitzmachtico qyn ēvā otamechtititico qyn nelli .d. qyn iyixmachoca Auh ma yxicavillo qyn inotzaloca qyn amo mictlan vilovaz novian moneq qvCuivaz qyn icel teotl qyn itenevalocaq

/Elias /

Nican nimā qnetoaczeq qyn aomo72 quimoCuitique .d. qyn itoca Conversos

Nimā .q.73 qyn vevetē āq ce .d. qyn oqiyox qyn ēxēq qochivhtoc qnimā atley āq omochivh qyn onoc qvā topāpa qyn otlayocox qyn iyolloqti qyn oēqchtli qyn itech Cruz + qyn ommiquiilli . ipc . qyn tlecovaz qyn ιh⁶. qyn itlatoltīn qnetlocoz

(Enoc)

Auh nimā qitozque qyn elyias Enoc macaxicnel[140r]tocacan74 qyn ovamechvilī tlaqelloc Ca niman atley qyn iyasca75 qyn ēxēq qyn mochivhtoc maca⁰ xītlaçotlacā maca⁰ ytlan ximovicana Ca qyn oPa qeyatlq qyn amechtitiz qyn tenseviztli qyn chichinaqutztlī : maca⁰ xītlaçamatican

69 anechvicazque: read anechvicazque.
70 ovamechmaq[...]ue: read oamechmacaque.
71 ovame[...]hitlaqavitiyq: read oamechitztlakahuitiyaq.
72 aomo: read ayamo.
73 q: read qitozque.
74 macaxicnetocacan: I am reading this as maca⁰ xic… (macamo xic…). Later on in this passage this is more clearly written maca⁰ (macamo).
75 iyasca: read iaxca.
And now I want to give to you a whole lot of gold! Here is a fine cloak! If you wish to obey me, [139r] if you don’t want to die, then all of you will accompany me, if you believe in me. And the rest of you, you are about to die.”

(This will be spoken here, will be preached. And then some of them seized hold of the goods. [Antichrist] will really love those who believe in him. And those who don’t want to believe in him he will scold, he will kill. And then he settles himself on his throne. Next Elijah and Enoch will enter.)

Elijah

Then the elders will say, “Today we two have come. We have come from the founding place of God’s lineage. For this he sent us, so that what you have heard today, what the wicked ones have placed within you, will not be believed. And now they have given you their goods and because of it [139v] they have deceived you.”

Enoch

And then Elijah and Enoch will say, “We came to teach good living to you and we came to show you the knowledge of the true God. People should pay attention to his counsel so that they will not go to mictlan. It is necessary that the only deity’s proclamations are understood everywhere.”

Elijah

(Here those who no longer acknowledged God will believe, those called Converts.)

Then the elders will say, “The one and only God created everything that lies growing. There is nothing that was made that he didn’t make. Because of us his heart was sad when as a man he died on the cross on earth so that there would be ascending to heaven [and] there would be believing of his words.”

Enoch

Then Elijah and Enoch will say, “Do not believe [140r] the wicked things [Antichrist] said to you! Out of everything that has been made absolutely nothing is his. Do not esteem him, do not go with him; indeed there [in mictlan] he will show you pain, affliction. Do not obey him!”
Elias

Nimā quitoz elias ma vellamitec76 motlallli yn ixtlatolli yn icelṭin nelli .[d]. yn yesu xpō. ma ycelṭin tlacamachō maʼchi77 tlacatl mozcalli X78 ma yeyatl teytec quitlallli yn iqualtica yn icaco z yn ixtlatolli ynic neltocoz ca čan icel cēca qualli

/Enoc /

Nimā quitoz enoc ma xitlamevacan yn aʼchintin . tpc . yec āyazque yn ilvicac ma ximoyormellavacan79 ma xinētlamatic ypanpa yn aʼtlahtlacol [y]nic aʼ[140v] tlacateʼ. yn amechvicac yna ypa ynh ichā ynh mictlā

Auh niman ʻtozē y nōvelsox80 Ca ya nelī ynh axcā Otechiztlacavica yn tlavelliloque ynh teca mocacayavani ynitzel81 teotl Ca ya otcyollitlacoque avin axcā ma ticyorcevican82 ma tictonemilliztican ynh ixtlatolli ynh yesu xpō ma tlacava ynh aʼyolloṭin ma to[p]āhpa xicmotahtlavhtillican ynh totaṭin

Nimā ʻncētlalizē ynh oāCuiq y tlatquitl

Elias


Auh ynh elias ynh enoc ynh imomexti nimā ʻtozque yeyatl ynh itoca Oraçion.

Dieose ma xiquintlayocolli ynin tlahtlacovanipohpol : ca oqmiztlacavi ynh tlacate⁰ ma ōpalṭinco84 xiquinohpolvilli ma no yvā xiqnomochicavilli ynic amo CueCuetlaxivizque ynic mopaltinco vel miqizque ma ymitec xictllali ynh moqualticaṭin

Nimā nīca tlatoz temachtiz ynh elliyas ynh anoço Enoc ynic nechicavalloz Auh nimā Occeppa ynpā acizquiv ynh ātexpō. nimā cēca quimavaz yvā ʻqmimictiz ypāhpa ynh tlaneltoqlliztli

76 vellamitec: read huel amitic.
77 maʼchi: read ma mochī.
78 This X has a hooked right “foot.” I am assuming it's an abbreviation for “Christ.”
79 ximoyormellavacan: read ximoyolmetahuacan.
80 čövelsox: read conversos. This shows that Aquino’s s for x interchange can go the other way, too.
81 ynitzel: read yn icel.
82 ticyorcevican: read ticyolcuhuican.
83 amechocti: read amechchocti.
84 ma̱paltinco: read ma mopaltzinco.
Elijah

Then Elijah will say, “Place the words of the one true God, Jesus Christ, within you. May he alone be obeyed. May all people be raised by Christ. May his goodness be placed within people so that his words will be heard, so that it will be believed that he alone is very good.”

Enoch

Then Enoch will say, “Do penance, all you on earth, so that you will go to heaven! Confess! Feel badly for your sins so that the tlacatecolotl won’t [140v] bring you there to his home, mictlan.”

Then the Converts will say, “Indeed, it’s true. Today the wicked ones have fooled us. We have offended the only deity. And now may we appease him, may we live by the words of Jesus Christ, may you grant this, [141v] may you pray to our father on our behalf!”

(Then [Elijah and Enoch] will gather together, will take [Antichrist’s] goods.)

Elijah

Then God’s beloved noblemen will say, “Kneel down before the giver of life. He is very merciful. Weep before him. Mourn! May your sins cause you to weep. Spit on the tlacatecolotl Obey the only God [141r] and pray to him!”

(Elijah and Enoch both will then say what is called a “prayer.”)

“O God, have mercy on these wretched sinners! The tlacatecolotl has deceived them. Pardon them for your sake and also strengthen them so that they will not faint, so that they will die well for your sake. Place your goodness within them.”

(Then here Elijah or Enoch will speak, will teach so that there will be strengthening. And now Antichrist will again approach them. He will scold them greatly, and he will kill them because of the faith.)

85 May you grant that: Molina has “tlacahua noyollo. otorgar; otorgar a conceder algo [to grant or concede something]” (Molina 2004 [1571]: fol. 115v).
86 I assume this means that Enoch and Elijah gather up the gifts Antichrist had offered to entice the Converts, presumably to remove them from stage.
87 There are more commands to spit on people in the second play. This is the first reference to spitting, and while it’s directed to the actors playing converts, it may be seen as applying to the audience as well. Spitting is also commanded in Sahagún’s Colloquios. See J. Jorge Klor de Alva, “The Aztec-Spanish Dialogues of 1524” Alcheringa 4, no. 2 (1980):100.
88 This is one of the instances when Aquino seems to be applying tlacatecolotl specifically to Antichrist, although he could also intend it to refer to the devil. Since up until this moment Antichrist’s chief aim has been to deceive the Christian macehualtin, I am inclined to favor the former.
89 This is one of a number of instances in the scripts when actors are called on to give an impromptu sermon to the audience. This underscores the didactic nature of this genre of theater, a genre which Horcasitas dubbed el teatro catequístico (“catechistic theater”). See Fernando Horcasitas, El Teatro Náhuatl: Épocas Novohispana y Moderna (Mexico City: UNAM, 1974), 19.
90 Antichrist seems to kill them here and also later on f.142r.
Antexpō

Nimā qtoz yn ātexpō[q] q[n]ī yn ovāṇṭilapololitique y no[141v]tlaçovā yn ovāṇmachtico : yvan yn ovel anquimiztlacavico Ca čan ic ovāquinyolpōloq vel amoneza yn ātlavelilōq yn axcā vel miquiz yn a’nacayo ypāhpā yn a’tlavellilocayo yntlaca° ylloti yn ovāquitoque

Elias

Nimā .qtoz. yn eliyas yyyoyavhe yn tiquetzalcovatl ca vel moneza yn titlaveliloc motetch ticmotlamillia ų mochi Onoc . tpc . Ca niman atley yn maxca yntlanel ça ce yn ovatl niman a° maxca avinin aço ticon[e]vh ų civacovatl ypāhpā Ca timoteotocatinemi ma nimā : mizmicti91 yn ipalnomovani Ca ovel yca ticmocacayavh yn imacevaltin .d.

Enoc

Nimā quitoz enoc yn axcan ayc moCue[142r]ppaz .d. ytlaltolṭin Auh yn axcan Ca čan ipalṭinco timiquizque ynic ytlantinco titokevizque ca čan topāpa yn onoquivico yn itlaçoyezçoṭin ma techmoviquiṭli ų tote°. yotin niman axcā yn ih[e]. ma noviyā Cemanavac Onchicava yn teyoltoṭin


Ɂvīz micayeltze93 ximocaqṭi niman ičivhca xiquechotonati yv veylacate°. Ca yevatl yvhquyynma pitzotl mačivi yn omic yolliti tleypāpa yn oquntlapolloti yv yevātin yn otlachivalvan Auh ma nimā91 Ɂcivhca : Axcā xitemo ynicivhca94 ticmictiz

Auh yv oqmit[a]villī yv tote°. : niman ičivhca val mvicaz yv .S. Miguel avin iquac yv ovacico nimā ḷvīz yvātexpō

Axcā ycvivhca ximotecay yv titlactace°. Ca vel iten[c]oqatīnco yv icel teotl yv .d. nixpā vel ximopechtea niman ičivhca nimiztlacaz yv aeccan yehica yv oquntmoteoticac vel cemicac mictlā titonevaz yv opa ĉeneca cva yvā tona yvā yeheca

91 mizmicti: read mitzmicti.
92 In the context of this passage the abbreviation .r. seems to refer to Antichrist… I need to confirm this.
93 micayeltze: read migueltez.
94 ynicivhca: read ynic ičiuhca
Antichrist

Then Antichrist will say [to Elijah and Enoch], “How did you confuse my beloved [141v] ones? You came to teach them and thoroughly deceive them. As a result you disturbed them. This is proof that you are wicked! Now your bodies will die because of your wickedness unless you take back what you have said.”

Elijah

Then Elijah will say, “Aha! You Quetzalcoatl! This is proof that you are wicked! You take credit for everything on earth. But you have absolutely nothing! You don’t even have a single green maize shoot! Moreover, perhaps you are Cihuacoatl’s offspring because you go around following her as a god. May the giver of life kill you now! You really have mocked God’s common folk.”

Enoch

Then Enoch will say, “Now the words of God [142r] will never return. Now we will die for his sake so that we will rest with him. For it was on our behalf that he came to pour out his precious blood. May our lord now bring us to heaven. May people’s hearts be strengthened everywhere in all the world.”

(Here Antichrist will kill Elijah and Enoch. And then he will scold them so that some will believe in him and others he will kill. Those who the elders caused to believe, those who desired Jesus Christ, they will be strengthened, they will not fear him. Before [Christ] they will cast [Antichrist’s] belongings, those which Antichrist gave them. Then he will go sitting on his throne. And then God will send an angel named Saint Michael to come and kill Antichrist. God will summon him, saying to him, “Saint Michael!” [142v] And Saint Michael will then kneel down. He will say to him,)

“O Michael! Listen! Swiftly cut off the head of the great tlacatecolotl! He is just a pig! Even though he died he has come back to life. Why did he confuse my creations? May you now swiftly descend and kill him!”

(When our lord said this to him then quickly Saint Michael came down. And when he arrived, then he said to Antichrist,)

“Now quickly lie down, you tlacatecolotl! By the command of the one deity, God, bow down before me! Then quickly I will cast you to a bad place because you considered yourself a god! You shall truly suffer in forever in mictlan. There it is very cold, and hot and windy.”

95 huel amonezca in antlahueliloque: this is a difficult phrase to translate. It literally reads, “It is really your symbol/sign/mark/omen/meaning you wicked ones.” I take this to mean something to the effect of “this is evidence or a sign that you are wicked.” The phrase appears again just below in the words of Elijah.

96 This might perhaps be a reference to Isaiah 55:11 “so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and prosper in the thing for which I sent it.”

97 Presumably another group of Christian macehualtin.

98 This is a reference to one of the miracles performed by Antichrist in the medieval sources: he kills himself and then raises himself back to life.

99 Cold and windy are descriptors of the indigenous Mesoamerican underworld, what Nahuas called mictlan.
South Miguel.

Nimà .á. yn .s. miguel ye[143r]hica yn tahtlatinemi Cerca miyeqntin mopâhpa yn mictlan axcan mizmotlaxiliz yn ya nelli yn ipal tinemi Auh yn mochintin miztlavelilocatezque yn iz nemi yvâ tetonevhcâ miznamoyazque : yn yevâtin yn otiquintlaycoltitinenca

Auh nimà nican valçazque yn tahtlacate⁰. yvâ ceqntî yn itlan cate ynic quivicazî mictlan yn âtexpô yn iquac yn oquimiicti yn âgel nimà ñtaquivi Cuicaqvi yn inCuic Cerca tetlayocolti yezqui ñvâzqî yn to[n]joq ânic ma tichocanca¹⁰⁰ ma tichocacan

Ma tichocacan yn axcâ timochintin ma nimà Ceqntî tlayocoyacan

Xitlaçoconacâ ma ca xitlatzivican ma nimà xonelçîcivican ma tiqçacan

Ximotecpanacâ tic[t]a[ni[143v]litiivi¹⁰¹ yevatl yn tocniivh xinenemicâ

Xitotoyocacan ticmavitzillizque tictoviçllizque yn opa tletitan

Auh nimâ níccâ valçaz ce tlacatl ynitoca ante¹⁰² ermitano nimà ñntlahtlaniz yn tahtlacate⁰. ynic ñtozque yn cápa vi¹⁰³ ynic ñnextizque yvâ ñntlahtlaniz yn tleynezca yn ixâcîn yn quitétiivi Ermitanos¹⁰⁴

Auh nimà ñtoz yn ermitano ma xinechilvican Canpa yn ayavi¹⁰⁵ yn a”chintin tleyn ic toneva yn mochintin macâ⁰ xictlatican ma cà xinechititicân yna tleyn yn a”tlatq yetivh av¹⁰⁶ aquin axcan ancanativi ma nimà xinextican

Auh yn yevâtin niman amo quinextizneqzque Auh niman ytêcopa yn .d. nimà ñnav[a]tíz Cerca vecavh mononoçazque yehica yn⁰.[144r]chintin¹⁰⁷ yn ovalquizque mictlan Auh nimà qulivizque yn tleyn ynic tonevativi Auh yn iquac ñnavatiz ynic yazque nimà yazq Auh yn iquac ya canaznequi yn antexpô nimà Occêppa ñvazque yn inCuic yn iquac ya yyyxpâ cate niêmâ ñvazque ñtozq

Ca cà¹⁰⁴ tichoca yn otimizpoloque yn axcan yn ixâçhtin yn ovallâq ma mizmoviquilicâ

Niman quitozq ma xicnapalocan yn inacayoñin yvâ yn iyeççoñin tla xocôCuican tla xoconololocan

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¹⁰⁰ ma tichocanca: read ma tichocacan. This phrase may be repeated for effect or because he made a mistake on the first one and just didn’t cross it out.


¹⁰² ante: it appears that Aquino was starting to write antexpô here.

¹⁰³ vi: read hui.

¹⁰⁴ Ermitanos: read ermitano. Aquino never uses the ñ for ermitaño. In this instance he intends the singular, not the plural. This is one of a number of cases where his use of Spanish loanwords reveals his lack of understanding of the plural ending in Spanish.

¹⁰⁵ ayavi: read anyahui.

¹⁰⁶ av: read auh

¹⁰⁷ yn”.chintin: read yn mochintin.

¹⁰⁸ niêmâ: read niman.
St. Michael
Then Saint Michael will say, “Because there are so many burning in mictlan on your account, he who is true, he by whom we live will now cast you down. All who wickedly follow you, those who live here in a place of torment they will rob you, those who you went along serving.”

(At this point the tlatlacatecoloh will enter along with some others in order to bring Antichrist to mictlan when the angel kills him. They will come to see him, they will come singing. Their song will be very sad, they will raise it up. May we who are here weep, may we weep.)

“Let us weep now all of us. Let some others be sad.
Beat the drums! Be not lazy! Sigh! Come out!
Line up! Let’s go get our friend. Walk!
Run! We will honor him, we will carry him there among the flames.”

(Here at this point the person called Hermit will enter. He will ask the tlatlacatecoloh to tell him where they come from so that they will reveal it to him, and he will ask them what the meaning is of all they are carrying with them.)

Hermit

Then the hermit will say, “Tell me, where are you all going? Why are all of them suffering? Don’t hide it! Just show me what your burden is. Who is it that you are now taking away? Show him to me now!”

(But they won’t want to show it to him. Then by God’s command he will order them. For a very long time they will confer among themselves because all of them came out of mictlan. Then they will tell him what it is that causes them to suffer. When he orders them to go, then they will go. And when they are about to take up Antichrist they will again raise their voices in song. When they are before him they will raise up their song saying.)

“It is just because of this that we weep: we lost you! Now all who came here, may they carry you.

(Then they will say.)

Carry his body
and his blood!
Take it!
Ball it up!

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109 some others: this refers to the eighteen sinners who the hermit interrogates in addition to Lucifer and the six demons/deities.
110 What follows I am treating as a song text. I am uncertain whether the preceding phrase “May we who are here weep, may we weep” is part of the song text or not since, unlike the rest of the song, it is not set apart by a pilcrow in the original manuscript.
111 This is a direct reference to the dialogues that take place in the second play. See my discussion of the intertextuality of Aquino’s two play scripts in Chapter Two, “Reconstructing Aquino’s Lost Source.”
112 all of them: probably referring to the eighteen sinners who accompany the seven demons.
Nimā q̪toz ȳn .s. migel mimiq̪hei ximoquec̪an ma nimā ȳcìvha xitlapovaq̪ ȳyxpḁ̄t̪inco ȳ .d. nimā xicnex̪tiq[u]114 ȳn ix̪q̪ch ȳn ḁcatzavaca nimā icìvha xivallacaq̪ ȳn omacevalloq̪ ȳn oncelliloq̪ ȳn nicā ȳyxpḁ̄t̪inco ȳ .d. tla ȳc ximozeqałlican

Auh nimā ȳcìvha valmonexti ȳn .s. miguel quimoq̪nachiliz ȳniq̪chtin113 ȳn omomi̥l̄li q̪a ȳn nimā nimoq̪callizq̪

.S. miguel

Nimā q̪toz ȳn .s. migel mimiq̪hei ximoquec̪an ma nimā ȳcìvha xitlapovaq̪ ȳyxpḁ̄t̪inco ȳ .d. nimā xicnex̪tiq[u]114 ȳn ix̪q̪ch ȳn ḁcatzavaca nimā icìvha xivallacaq̪ ȳn omacevalloq̪ ȳn oncelliloq̪ ȳn nicā ȳyxpḁ̄t̪inco ȳ .d. tla ȳc ximozeqałlican

Auh nimā tlapisálloq̪ yevatlı niman ic̪ valmonexti ȳn ix̪q̪chtin mimic̪q̪ ȳyxpḁ̄t̪inco ȳn jesu xp̪̄ nimā valquic̪azq̪e ȳn tlahltlacaq̪°. ȳn q̪nvc̪azq̪e ȳn ḁq̪ualt̪in ȳn opa mictlan av[i]n iȳxpañinco tote°. mochī [145r] tlacatl viviyocazq̪e nimā quimonaq̪atilliz ȳn tote°. ȳn āgellome ȳn q̪npehpənq̪azq̪e ȳn ixquichtin ȳn amoq̪ualt̪in ȳn q̪ntlallizq̪e ȳn ioq̪oq̪hcopa avh ȳn q̪ualt̪in ȳn q̪ntlalizq̪e ȳn imayeczq̪apa Auh nimā motlanq̪uaq̪eçałq̪e ȳn āgellome ȳyxp̪̣t̪inco ȳn jesu xp̪̄

xp̪̄.

Auh nimā quitoz ȳn totemaquixtaç̪in ȳn jesu xp̪̄ ȳn amevḁ̄tin ȳn amāgeloq̪ tin tla xicmocã́tq̪a q̪ ȳn q̪nvc̪azq̪e q̪a ȳn q̪ualt̪in x q̪̄t̪a notin115 ma nimā q̪ntlalitī ȳn yectin ȳn omayavhc̪apa Auh ȳn ḁq̪ualt̪in nopoq̪hcopa xiquimiquanitī

Auh nimā tlaztoq̪zalalloq̪ ȳn iquac q̪umiquanizq̪e : ȳn q̪ualt̪in x q̪̄tī nome ȳn yevḁ̄tin ȳn angelome ȳn [t]eyquaniq̪izq [145v]

Auh nimā x̪po quitoz ȳn totemaquixtaç̪in ȳn jesu xp̪̄ tla xicmocã́tq̪a q̪ ȳn axc̪ : nopoq̪hvanhe ȳhica ȳn q̪ualtī ȳn āxp̪̣ḁ̄nomo ma notlḁ̄tinco xivalmovicac̪ tla ximotlamachq̪a Ca ȳp̪̣̣hpa ȳn ovanechlyaq̪ec̪olitînīnē ȳhica q̪a ȳnotlatolq̪ tin ȳn ovə́q̪uipq̪ex q̪e ma nimā noq̪ḥ̣t̪inco xicalaq̪can

nimā q̪toz y[n] tete°yoq̪tin ȳn iquac . tpe . ninonemitiaya ȳn ḁq̪uq̪alq̪inco ovanechcellitīnēq̪e ȳvā ovanechlyaq̪ec̪olitīnēq̪e ȳn iquac q̪itq̪e q̪ihtīnēq̪a Auh nimā ovḁ̄quinmacaq̪e ȳn ḁnenca ȳn motoria Ca ca nopoq̪alq̪inco ȳn iquac q̪incaq̪a Cuavhc̪alq̪tinco Cenc̪a ovanechmoCuitlavitīnēq̪e

Niman q̪tozqe ȳn intoca . bts .116

113 ȳniq̪chtin: read ȳn ixquichtin.
114 xicnex̪tiq[u]: read xicnex̪t̪ic̪an. It’s clear that Aquino meant –gui and not –can. Is this another use of the archaic – gui ending that I am unaware of?
115 x q̪̄t̪a notin: read xpiq̪anotin.
116 bts : Here and below I am reading this as an abbreviation for beatos (“the blessed”).
Again they will begin their song as they go bringing Antichrist to mictlan. And once they had brought Antichrist to mictlan then quickly the four directions are burned so that it will appear how surpassing the fire will be there in [144v] mictlan. Then quickly Saint Michael will appear. He will call out to all who have died and they will then rise from the dead.)

Saint Michael

Then Saint Michael will say, “O dead! Get up! Quickly be counted before God! Reveal all of your filth. Come quickly! The one who has merited it will be favored here before God. O won’t you arise!”

(And then [wind instruments] will be blown. Thereupon all the dead will appear before Jesus Christ. Then the tlatlacatecoloh will enter bringing out the bad ones from mictlan. And in the presence of our lord, all [145r] people will tremble. Then our lord will command the angels to gather all the bad ones and place them at his left hand. And the good ones they will place at his right hand. And then the angels will kneel down before Jesus Christ.)

Christ

Then our savior Jesus Christ will say, “You angels, listen! Gather up all the good Christians. Then place the virtuous ones at my right hand. But get rid of the bad ones at my left hand!”

(And then there will be beating of drums then the angels will move the good Christians to the side so that they can get rid of [the bad Christians] [145v]).

Then our savior Jesus Christ will say, “Now please listen, O my children, because you are good Christians, come to be with me! Rejoice! Because you served me, because you kept my words, you may now enter into my home!”

Then our lord will say, “When I lived on earth you received me into your homes, and you had mercy on me when I was hungry. When you gave your sustenance to the poor it was on my behalf, and when I was in jail it was me you really cared for.”

(Then those who are called “blessed” will say.)

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117 This would appear to indicate that the stage will be made to look like it is burning as if it were hell.
The text appears to be an ancient Nahuatl language document. Here's a transcription and translation:

123

122

121

"noblemen," presumably it is referri

120

119

ā

monep

ā

ā


tin

ā

ov

ā

hpa an

mictlan anyaz

yn

o

¶

otimizmoCuitlavi

ā

[146v] a

o

anyazquelitlā

¶[to]te

Y

A

A

ţ

vanechmotlayecoltilli

ā

v

a

n

cuallancaytta

ov

ā

ynic

o

ct

ē

tlaqualli Çan

ā

otimiztlaqualtiyazq yn nic noviā [146r] cemanavac niman ayc nica tpc . Otimiçatlitique ayc timotlachqualtiq ynh timotlachivalvan ynh ivh ticmitalvia ynh vel otimizmoCuitlavić cahaol18

xpō .

Auh nimā ñtoz ynh totenhtoṭin Cuix aŋ yvhē y nevatl ynh ovanechetlayecoltineq ynh aŋqu motoliniyā ynh ovāqUINTaycollitineq Çan vel nevatl ynh ovanechmomaŋlīque vnh in iquac ynh ovāquimottillique ynh aŋq Cuavhcałṭinc o cate ynh ovāŋmotlatapalvīque Çan vell ic ovanechmotlayecotillīq

Auh nimā ñmilviz ynh aqualtin

yn amevantin ynh ovātllavellilocateque Çan nimā aŋniçacvihatayazq119 ynh mictlā yehica ynh amaxca ynh aŋ ovantetlaycollique ynh manel anmoCuitlonovaya amo vāqntlayocolliyā ynh motoll[il]nia [146v] aŋ antenqluuqta

Auin amevātin tla xivalchiyacan ynh ovanechmamaçovaltiŋ yzcatē ynh ovāquicocoyoniŋ ynh nomātin xiqualitiyacā yvā ynh nocitiū xiçtacan ynh itēc Cruz + ynh ovanechinchazque Çan nelli axcā mictlā anyazq antlachiyatīy ynh onpa aqualcan

Auh ynh iquac ynh ovamechmachiya ynh nopilvā120 ynh y vēcavh ca nevatl namotlatacvh ynh aŋ anqnetocaya ynh çan anqntlavelitayō ynh çan ānniuviz temachitinenca no yvā anquichicoytitiyēc nopaŋpa anqniçitiyā

yniquac ynh amoCuitlonovaya yvhqu ynatley ypā ynh aquimittayē121 ynh aŋq vel motolliniyā Çan çan ic cēcā amatlamatitiyēc avin aŋq ynh omopetlayviltitiyēc ynh amo [a]nŋɥŋtiznecq122 çan illiviz [147r] ynh ovanteoyeyacatiq ynh aŋ anteycnoyztineque123

Çan ovāqinixcavitinenque miyequotn ynh amocivačan cenca miyeq ynh amomecavan ynh ovāquinnmoCuitlavititinēc ynh iquac ynh ovātℓayocintinenca Çan çan ic pachivī ynh amoyollo Auh ynh axcā yvh ninconequiltya ma nimā mictlā xiquittati ynh aŋnemac

Y vā ynh ixquichtin ynh motolliniyā ayc nopalṭnico : ovāqntlaycollique Ovāqntlayqualtíque Çan ovāqCuallancayttaq ynh iquac Calaquiya ynh a-chanṭinc o a-vāqntlaycollique124 avix namevātin125 nimā anvaluemvaya ynh a-chanṭinc ynh iquac yovaṭinc o nimā tlaquilli Çan āquicxaviya yvā āmonepāCuitiya ynh yevatl yc amo anyazque nochāntinc [147v]

118 caha: read ca amo.
119 aŋniçacvihatayazq: read anquintzaucitiyazque.
121 aquimittayē: read anquimittayē.
122 [a]nŋɥŋtiznecq: read anquinquentizneqci.
123 I believe this should be teicnoitta.
124 a-vāqntlaycollique: read ahmo anquintlaocolique.
125 avix namevātin: read ahu in amehuantin.
The Blessed

“O our lord! We never fed you in all the world, never here on earth did we give you drink, never did we your creations feed you and thus really care for you like you said – no, indeed!”

Christ

And then our lord will say, “Didn’t you serve me [when] you had mercy on the poor? Indeed, it was me you gave yourself to. And when you went to see those who were in jail and you helped them, in this way you were serving me.”

Then he will say to the bad ones,

“You who have become wicked, you will be locked up in mictlan because you did not show mercy to people with your possessions. Even though you prospered you did not show mercy to those who suffer; [146v] you didn’t feed them.

And you all, look here, you crucified me! Behold, you made holes in my hands! Look also at my feet! Look! You made me suffer on the cross. Truly now you will go to mictlan, you will gaze upon a bad place there.

And when my children taught you long ago that I am your ruler, you didn’t believe them, you just hated them, you just wished for their death and also you spoke ill of them. You killed them because of me.

When you prospered you disparaged those who were really poor. How very arrogant you were! Those who went around naked you didn’t want to cover up, you were inconsiderate [147r] in how greedy you were, you didn’t take pity on people.

You just lived devoting yourselves to all of your many women, your very many mistresses, those who you cared for. When you committed adultery you just satisfied yourselves as a result. And now I desire that you go see your reward in mictlan.

And all those who are poor, never did you have mercy on them for my sake, never did you feed them. You just looked at them with anger. When they came into your home, you did not have compassion on them. And you would rise up in your homes when it was morning and you would just devote yourself to food and you would eat among yourselves. Because of this you will not go to my house. [147v]

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126 oannechtlayecoltinequih… oanquintlaocoltinequih: literally “you desired to serve me…you desired to have mercy on them.”
Auin iquac nimotlalliya Cuavhalco niman a° anechittato amoma ytlan anechmacato macivi yn a’Cultonovaya vel anquintlaqualtiya yn tozenemeyn a’c cochová Auh yn yevátin yn motolliniya yn notlaçová Çan ováquimapizmictiay

Auh níman nican tlatoz yn iotca Daná Dos

Niman qtoz yntla timiztotlinian niman timiztotlinquixquiyá yvá yntla timiztomaquillizquiya ypanpa Ca vel mopalnemovani yntla xitechmonextilliani níman timiztotlinquixqui yvá timiztotlinquillizquiya timiztotlinquillizquiya yphabeta Ca çan mocel titeyocoyani

(Yesuxpó.)

Auh niman qtoz yn totlatocaçin Ovamotlaveliltic xiccaçá yhica yn motolliniya yn a° anqǔtlayocollitinéq yn iC[u]ac moteocivititinéca [148r] avin amevátin Ca cenca amnoCultonovaya Çacañ tlatzivcayttaya ma níman yq mictlan xicallaçcan ma níman xitonevati yphabeta ca hatley nopalçinco anéchivaya

Ca níman tlatoz yntote°. qaquiliz yq qualteyá yqmoviquilla yn ihc. avin aqualtín quimilviz tleyáhhpa quinmotlaxillia mictlan .d. níman qnivicazque yn tlachtalcatecollos yn aqualtín yq ópa mictlán Ceñqntín ñmamazq Çenqntín quinapalzolzque mochtint : Cen[c]a chicazque qtotiyazque yn intoca Dana Dos

yyoyavé maca tiyeni yyoyavé Otovitique

Μa níman títocochacan ma titlayocoyacan ma mictlan ticalaquican ma mochi tlacatl quito yyoyavé [148v]

Μa yca títatelchivacan : yn otechivaco nican xiquintlatzivhcayttacan yaqne yyoyavhe

Macyac techivani macaham yeavgł techyollitiyani yq yevatl ypalnemovani yye yc tiyovitivi yyoyavhe

Ca ya nellí titlahtlativi : mictlan titnevati Ca onpa titoycocotivi yq tiquitox axcá yyoyavhe

Auh yq tiquintlatzilvya yq iquac motolliniya yq axcan ya ytlan .d. motlecaviya aví tevantin ya mictlantivi yyoyavhe

Auh yq iquac yq ocalaq mictlái níman qmitalvz yq .s. mà : yxypáčinco yq tote°.

Niconeñ Ça vell otiiquintlatzonteçlli yq amoqualtin Auh ihixe° yq qualtin Cenca

127 anechittato: read anechiattato.
128 anechmacato: read anechmacato.
129 Dana Dos: this is a far cry from Condenados and suggests not only that Aquino isn’t clear about the Spanish word but that he may consider it two words. Whether Aquino intended Dana Dos or Tana Tosa is unclear. In “Antichrist and the Hermit” he writes “Teczatiopoca” as “Dezcatilopoca.” See folio 169v.
130 timiztotlinquixqui: read timiztolutlauhtilizquiya.
132 This is a very interesting little detail: Aquino has used the Spanish plural on a Nahuatl word.
133 mcaham: read macamo.
134 yye: read yn yehhuatl.
135 .s. mà: read santa maría.
And when I was sitting in jail you didn’t go to see me, you didn’t go to give me anything. Although you were rich, you used to feed your yellow parrots and your white parrots well, but those who are poor, my beloved ones, you left them to starve.”

(Here the one called “condemned” will speak.)

Then he will say, “If we had seen you then we would have fed you and we would have brought you something because you are really the giver of life! O if only you had revealed yourself to us! Then we would have prayed to you and we would have fed you, we would have given you something to drink because you are the only creator!”

Jesus Christ

Then our ruler will say, “You wicked ones! Listen! Because you didn’t have mercy on the poor when they were hungry and [because] you all really enriched yourselves [and] just looked lazily at them, because of this may you enter mictlan! Now you must suffer because you did nothing in my name!”

(Then our lord will speak, saying to the good ones why he brings them to heaven. And he will say to the bad ones why he casts them into mictlan. Then the tlatlacecoloh will bring the bad ones to mictlan. Some they will bear on their backs, others they will carry in their arms. All of them will weep greatly; the condemned will go saying.)

“Alas! If only we were never born! Alas! We were in danger! Let us now weep, let us be sad, let us enter mictlan! Let all people say, ‘Alas!’”

With this let us be despised! Those who came to send us away from here lazily look upon them at last! Alas!

O don’t let anyone send us away! If only the giver of life hadn’t given us life! It is because of this that we go suffering! Alas!

We will truly go burning in mictlan, we will go suffering. Indeed, we are contrite because of what you said just now. Alas!

We hated them when they suffered. Now they are already raised up with God, and we are already going to mictlan. Alas!”

(And when they have entered mictlan, saint Mary will say in the presence of our lord.)

“My child, you have judged the bad ones properly. O Jesus Christ,

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136 jūx’e: read yesu cristoe. Aquino improperly uses the vocative here. Women didn’t use the e.
137 For a time I considered the following a song text. But I am not sure now.
138 maca tiyenih: the first word I am reading as macamo. The literal meaning is something like “would that we weren’t.”
otiqu[i]nmocnellili ma⁷paľtín[149r]co¹³⁹ xiquinmotlecavilli yn motlaçovă yñ ilh°. ma nimă onpa quitati yñ inemac Cenca : yectli Cenca qualli

Apostoles .s. pe°.¹⁴⁰

¶ Nimă quitozque yñ apostolome ma moyecteneva yñ motocaţin Ca çan mopaltţico yñ titonemitiya Ca çan ic veiltitomaquixtia yehica yñ oticcellique yñ maţin Ca çan mocel titotlatocaţin : yñ axcan vel otitetlatzontequilli yñ motlaçovă otiquimocnellili Otiquinnmomaqxtilli yñ iyollıyatiţin.

. X po .

¶ Nimă ñtoz yñ tlaçotlatocaţin ma xivalmovicacan nopolvanhe yñ otlätinc°¹⁴¹ ma namechnoviquillitivh yñ nochätinc° ma hanmochintin xivallecovan¹⁴² ma yc xipahpaqça [149v] Ca cemicac anmotlamachtizque yñ a°tlatocayo anqmotillizque yñ ovăquimacevă tinēque nică . tpc .

¶ Niman nican quimoyectenevillizque yntoteo¹⁴³ yñ qualti xpāname yñ iquac yñ motelecia ynic Cuicatiyazque mtāzqve quināqllizq ve yngellome . ñtozq .

¶ Ma moyecteneva yo tote° yñ totlatocavh yñ totemaqsticavh

¶ yyo tote°he .d.he¹⁴⁴ ñqin cemanavac Otitechmopepenilli Otitechmocnellili nican . tpc . ynic yñ titechmoviquilliya yñ ilh°. yñ titoteyo[co]xcavh titotemaqsticavh¹⁴⁵

¶ Auh yñ tote°. Ca çã cemicac tiktlaçomatizque tiqcnellilmatizque ynic amochi toyolliţin Auh yñ yevatţin otlacavhqi yñ iyollotţin [150r]

¶ Auh yñ .d. ynotzaloca yñ iyecetenevalloca ma tiquitoti ma tićmavići yñ iyectenevaloca yñ iyximachoca yñ toteyocxcavh totlatocavh

¶ Nimă ñtozque yñ ixqächtin ma vel ticcemittani yñ .d. tpc . macamo nel ylvicacyotl yc ticmacевani ma çan tiquicaxiyani yñ toteyocxcavh Ca totepixcaţin

¶ Nimă ñtozq. yñ ti.s.māţin¹⁴⁶ Cenca timitzinellilmati yvan timitztlaçomatı Ca titotepătlatocaţin yñ iyxţinco yñ totepixcaţın Ca tototlaçotţin totecemitocavh nimă qvhtiyaţque yñ yevatlı yn imavizyecetenevalocatin yñ iŋcTa Deù laudam ted nz¹⁴⁷

¹³⁹ ma°paľtínco: read ma maopaltzinco.
¹⁴⁰ Apostoles .s. pe°. Here is another instance where I believe Aquino is confused about the Spanish plural ending. Either that or what was intended here was “The Apostles and St. Peter.” This could be the case since right after we have a clear plural apostolomeh.
¹⁴¹ otlätinc°: read notlantzinco.
¹⁴² xivallecovan: is this hual+tleco+? This is not an appropriate optative ending.
¹⁴³ (superscript insertion) yntote°: read in tecucuyio.
¹⁴⁴ yyo tote°he .d.he: read yyo totecuioye diose.
¹⁴⁵ Here is another example where Aquino writes s for x.
¹⁴⁶ ti.s.māţin: read tisantamariatzin (ti+santa+maria+tzin).
¹⁴⁷ The “Te Deum” begins: Te deum laudamus, te dominum confitemur… (“we praise thee, we acknowledge thee to be lord”). I presume that this is what was intended by the perplexing abbreviation.
you have befriended the good ones. [149r] Raise up your beloved ones to heaven for your own sake. There may they see their very right and good reward.”

The Apostles [and] St. Peter

Then the apostles will say, “May your name be praised. It is only by your grace that we live. Therefore we are really saved because we received your water. 148 Indeed you alone are our ruler! Today you have judged well your beloved ones. You befriended them, you saved their souls.”

Christ

Then our beloved ruler will say, “Come here, O my children, [to be ] with me. I have come to bring you to my home. Come up, all of you. Rejoice! 149 [149v] You will be happy forever. You will see your kingdom, that which you merited while here on earth.”

(Here the good Christians will praise our lord when they have already ascended. Then they will go singing, raising their voices in song. They will answer the angels saying,

“May our lord, our savior be praised!

Ah! O our lord, O our God! How is it that in all the world you chose us? You befriended us here on earth and because of this you have brought us to heaven, you our creator, our savior!

And we will just thank him and be grateful to our lord forever with all our hearts. He is the one who has granted this.

And let us go and say it, let us go and marvel at God’s call, his praise, the song of praise, 150 the knowledge of our creator, our ruler.”

Then everyone will say, “Let us on earth fix our gaze upon God. We do not merit heavenly things, but let us just devote ourselves to our creator, our guardian.”

Then they will say to you, Saint Mary, “We are very grateful to you and we thank you, you are our advocate before our guardian, our ruler, our promised one.”

(Then they will go raising up his honored, praised song which is called the Te deum laudam[us].)

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148 your water: i.e., baptism.
149 come up: In all likelihood the actor playing Christ has at this point ascended to a platform above the stage via a ladder and is beckoning for the beatos to literally ascend the ladder to join him in heaven. Vertical arrangements of heaven and hell in colonial Nahua theater are discussed in Horcasitas 1974:114–116.
150 Referring to the Te Deum. This song of praise was often sung at the conclusion of religious plays during the Middle Ages, a link to the liturgical roots of productions like Aquino’s “Antichrist and the Final Judgment.”
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Appendix C:

“Antichrist and the Hermit”

(f.155r – 187r)
[155r]

¶Nican onpeva yn itoca Auto Çan tlatori1 mitoz yacachto quitoz
yevatl ytoca Sibila
. Sibila .
¶Nopilvanhe tla xivallachiyacan aço ovanq’mocaquitique yn onamechmolvillico yn axcan ma vel
namechtlaCuepcayotilli anq’matizque Ca yn icel teotl .d. Onechvalmivalli ytēcopaţinco yn
amechilvico Ca ontlamiz yn cemanavac noviyan micovaz noviyā atle caviz ca çan noviyan
tlachinaviz Auh yn ao ontlami cemanavac achtopa vallaz tlacatiz ce tlacatl tlavelliloc ytoca yez
ātexpō avin ic vell amechiztlacaviz xpō. quimotocayotiz ca çan nelli yevatl tlacatecolotl
amechmacaq’vh yn teoCui[tl]atl [155v] yvā tilmatli .ets. yniq’tlā2 anyazq̄ amechilviz nevatl nixpō
ca çan ic amechiztlacaviz q’ntlamaviçoltiz yn aq’q̄ quitlacamatizque ca çan icelţin3 yn aqˇltin
q’ntlaneltoq’ltiz Auh yn yevātin yn qualtin xpīanome çan ipalţinco : .d. miq’zq̄ ynic yazq̄ yn
ilvicac Auh yn axcā nopilvanhe ma ximoyollapaltillican4 macao niman itla anq’cellizque yn
amechmacaz yehica amo ytlan antonevativi mictlan cemicac tla ximovepavacan5 ynic çan
ipalţinco .d. anmiquizque macao ximoçoçotlavacan ma yntech xi[m]ixCuitican yn .s. tome [156r]
ca çan ipalţinco yn .d. temac omomiq’llique yc oq’motlecavilli yn ichanţinco tla vel xicneltocacan
yn icel .d. yn yexpō.6 ximoCuahateq’can ximoyolmellavacan ma ximoyorchicavacā macao
amechyorpollo7 yn ovamechmachtico yn itlatenq’xticavā .d. ma hamechmomaq’lli .d. yn iqualtica
ma yevatl amechmopiyalli ma namechnotlalcavilli

. Qutoz . antexpō8
¶Ma ximeviltitiyecā nopilvanhe ma xivalmovicacan yn amochintin tleyn amaya cuix nomac
anmiq’zneq’ nimān axcan nicnoq’z yn ameço yntlacamo xinechneltocacan Cuix ao
Onamechnolvilli ca çan nocel yxquich novelli [o]nic[156v]chivh yn ixquich mochivhtoc
macamo ximoyolpollocan tleyca yn ovanq’xixitique yyevatl yn nochançinco ca yn ya vevcavh
vell oanechtlayecoltitinenq̄ ca yn ia quac yn aquimeltequiya9 yn aomalvan avin iquac yn amiçoya
avin amevātin tlatoq̄he tleyca yn ya hanquicotona yn amonemilliz. tleyca yn ya hanq’ncava yn
amoçivavan yn miyeq’ntin ocatca yn amomecavan Auh yn axcan ma xiquimixcavican yn
ixquichtin çiva yn q̄xq’chime yn āquineq’zque ca vell ic pachiviz yn noyollo

1

tlatori: read tlatolli.
yniq’tlā: read ynic itlan
3
Here again we see Aquino using reverential for Antichrist. This construction mirrors those used in doctrinal
literature to describe the singularity of the Christian God. See Chapter 3.
4
ximoyollapaltillican: read ximoyollotlapaltilican, from “yollotlapaltilia, nite-. esforzar a otro desta manera [to
strengthen someone in this way].”
5
ximovepavacan: read ximohuapahuacan? Tentative translation.
6
yexpō: read jesu cristo.
7
amechyorpollo: read amechyolpolo.
8
Qutoz . antexpō: quitoz antecristo.
9
aquimeltequiya: read anquimeltequia.
2

312


(Here begins what is called “a play”; it is to be said with words only. First, she who is called Sibyl will say.)

Sibyl

“O my children, please come to your senses! Perhaps you have heard what I have come to tell you. Today I will repay you well. You will know that by his command the one deity, God, has sent me to say to you that the whole world will end. Everywhere there will be dying, everywhere nothing will be left behind, indeed everywhere will be burned. But the world won’t end [until] first a wicked person comes, is born whose name will be Antichrist. In order to really deceive you he will call himself Christ. [But] he is really just a tlacatecolotl. He will come to give you gold [155v] and cloaks. So that you will go with him he will say to you, “I am Christ.” Because of this he will deceive you, he will cause those who obey him to marvel. Him alone will the bad ones believe in. And the good Christians will just die and go to heaven for God’s sake. And now, O my children, take strength! Do not accept anything he gives you so that you will not go suffering forever with him in mictlan. Strengthen yourselves so that you will die for God’s sake. Do not become faint! Devote yourselves to the saints. [156r] It is just for God’s sake that they died by someone’s hand, because of this they rose to his house. Believe in the only God, Jesus Christ. Be baptized, confess, take courage. Don’t let [Antichrist] fool you into thinking that he came to teach you God’s pronouncements. May God give you his goodness. May he guard you. Now I take my leave of you.”

Antichrist will say,

“O rise up, O my children. Come all of you. What are you doing? Do you want to die by my hand? Right now I will spill your blood if you don’t believe in me. Did I not say to you that I alone am all powerful, that I made [156v] all that lies growing? Do not be confused. Why did you dismantle my house? From long ago you served me well when you slashed open the chests of your captives and when you bled yourselves. And you, O rulers, why do you diminish your lives? Why do you leave your women? Many were your mistresses! Now, devote yourselves to all the women, however many you want, so that I will be content!

---

10 words only: “Antichrist and the Final Judgment” contained a number of songs. However, for some reason Aquino decided that this second play should not include singing. See the hermit’s interaction with Lucifer regarding songs and singing on folio167v. Ecclesiastical authorities fretted much about the Nahuas’ singing of songs in liturgical or religious settings and periodically made efforts to regulate the practice. Fray Bernardino de Sahagún and his Naua assistants composed a lengthy collection of Nahuatl liturgical songs with Christian content (the Psalmodia christiana, published in 1583) in an attempt to offer an alternative to songs that may have contained content deemed “pagan.” Aquino’s decision to limit singing in this play may be a reflection of the touchiness of this subject at the time of its composition.

11 mictlan: “the place of the dead.” Due to the lack of clear equivalence with the Christian concept of hell I will leave this word untranslated. See “Antichrist and the Final Judgment” note 8 for more on this matter.

12 my house: i.e., precontact temple. Here we see Aquino associating Antichrist with the indigenous deities of the Nahuas. This was one of the universal rhetorical strategies employed by the friars in their efforts to persuade Nahuas to abandon their former gods.
I am assuming that this should read *yn amo anxahuaya yn amo anpotoniaya.*
14 *anechneltocaznequi...anechmoviquilliznequi:* read *anechneltocaznequi...annechmoviquilliznequi.*
15 The “I” is problematic. I think it may be a mistake.
16 *ovamechiztlavitinēca:* read *ovamechitztlacahuitinenca.*
17 I am uncertain about the meaning of this abbreviation. I will read it as *nomac,* “by my hand.” This phrase is used in the preceding sentence and elsewhere in reference to Antichrist killing people.
18 *martilles:* read *mártires.*
19 *otichualitquic:* read *otichualitquic.* Tentative.
20 *iv:* here and below read *iuh.*
21 *yex opo:* read *jesu cristo.*
And also you women, I really marvel at you! [You] don’t paint your faces anymore, [you] don’t
cover yourselves with feathers. And now what happened to you? Who has confused you?
Devote yourselves to everything that you used to devote yourselves to! O my children, didn’t
you used to honor [157r] my words? Indeed I, I am your deity, your ruler! I am Christ! Would
you please come! I will greatly enrich you! You will prosper in my house! You will rest
yourselves there, you will go reaping your reward. Why don’t you want to believe in me?
Don’t you want to come with me? Look at those wicked ones! I will kill them!”

(Here he will give it to someone.)

“Who are you?”

“I am Christ.”

Then they will say to him, “Where do you come from?”

Then he will say, “From my house there in heaven.”

Then they will say to him, “Where is your house?”

He will say, “There in heaven. Today I have come to save you, I have come to teach you, to
show you the straight road that is to be followed in order for people to go to my house. There
will be resting there. Today I have come to enrich you. I don’t want you to be troubled. I love
you [157v] very much. Indeed, you are my children. I really, really pity you because of all those
who went around teaching you, those who went around deceiving you. Do not believe what they
said to you! But if you don’t obey me, then I will slay you with my own hand. Furthermore, if
you don’t want to die by my hand I will enrich you greatly. I am the deity, I am Christ.”

And then the martyrs will say to him, “What is the sign that you are Christ? The cross on which
you died is meaningless because that which you carry is meaningless. Indeed because of this
you seem to be lying. Thus it is written that when the true Jesus Christ comes appearing, when he
comes judging people, he will bring his cross so that he will be clearly recognized. And
furthermore it is written that a person will be born [158r] on earth who will be taken as a god
[and] because of this he will deceive many, because of this people won’t believe. Indeed, when
our lord rose to heaven he told us that one would be born whose name would be Antichrist.

Moreover, this is your sign,

22 In her notes to Durán’s History of the Indies (p. 524:n2) Doris Heyden writes about the adornment of young
women whose cheeks were painted red and whose arms and legs were adorned with feather plumes when dancing in
festivals for the gods.
23 reaping: tentative translation.
24 This is probably referring to the gifts that Antichrist is promising them.
25 “Who are you?” is asked by the martyrs; “I am Christ” is Antichrist’s response.
26 ca ahmo niceya in amolinitinemizqueh: this is more literally “I don’t want you to go stirring yourselves up.”
27 Antichrist would seem to be carrying his own prop, a cross. This is likely a reference to the medieval tradition that
at the end of time a sign would appear in the heavens in the form of Christ’s cross and the instuments of his passion.
This appears to be based on Christ Matthew 24:30 in which Christ pronounces, “then will appear the sign of the Son
of man in heaven.” This “eschatological cross” was also associated with the legend of Antichrist in medieval times.
See Lara 2004:47.
28 This may be a reference to Matthew 24/Mark 13/Luke 21.
ypāhpa amo titechmachtiya yn tleyn Otechnomachtillitiya yn yexpō. nelli .d. ypāhpa yn amo nimizneltocaznequi29 ca titechiztlacaviznequi niman amo niciñeʔ yn motlatqui Ca nimotolliniteminizneq ypalṭinco yn nelli .d. ynic nechmotlayocolliliz ynic niucacevaz yn ilh. pahpaajlitzti Ca yvhqui mitalvititya yn .d. chocovaz tlayocoyalloz tlahtlacolecavaloz tlalticpac netollinilloz ynic nemaqštilloz ynic villovakaz yn ilh. Auin tevatl tiqui[t]ova [158v] ma noviyā pahpacova netlamachtillo neCuitlonollo yc neči ca hamo nelli tixpō

Auh nimā quitoz yn antexpō tleyca yn amo nevatl tla xicmocaqti Cuix yaq'n iquac tinechneltocaz yntla niucimizcalli yn monančin ʔh motoqin

nimā quitoz30 yn martilless ca tiztlacati

nimā qtoz y åtexpō yn amevantin tla nimā ximozcallican tla nimā xivallauh yn tinātìn yn titātìn

Auh nimā mozcallizque ca hamo nelli ca tlacatecolotl

Auh nimā qtoz yn åtexpō Cuix a9 yzcatqui yn monā yn mota Cuix a9 tiquiximati ca yn axcan Ca onpa Ovalaquete yn mictlan onpa Otemoq ypanpa amo nechiximattiaq ma xiquintlahtla nican quenamican yn opa mi[c]tlan .etc.
niman qtoz [159r] yn martilles ma niuxiximati yn notātìn cahaçomo31 yevatl yntla nelli yevatl yCuitlapā niuxiximatiz Ca yn iquac oc nenca . îpʻ . yCuitlapā qquezca32 yn tlaloc ychicavaz xoxoctic

Auh nimā qtoz yn åtexpō tla xoconitillican ca oncan onicac

nimā qtoz yn martilles Ca nelli Oncan achi nichicot[ā]mati ca tinechitztlacaviya

Auh nimā qtoz yn antexpō Cuix a9 Otoconitilli yn imachiyo

nimā qtoz yn martilles ca quemaca aço tlacatecolotl ca ya yvhq Omonexti yn ivhqui notātìn ca çano ca timocacayava : ca ya tevatl yn tantexpō : yn otechtenevillico yn yevatl civatl yn itoca ppetisa33 ca otechhilvico ca ce tlacatl [159v] vallaz teca mocacayavtinimiquiv quimotemaqlliqv teoCuitlatl yn ixq̲̃チ tlatq̲̃チ etc. yc miyequintin qmiztlacaviz Auinin vel monezca yn tevatl ca yvhtinemi cenca nichicotlamati ca titlacatecolotl tantexpō :

29 nimizneltocaznequi: read nimizneltocaznequi. As mentioned in the statement about conventions of translation, Aquino often wrote the Nahuatl digraph tz as merely z. From here on out I will not restore the missing “t” of tz, nor will I include an explanatory footnote.

30 This should probably be quitoque. It’s possible that Aquino thinks the word “martilles” is a personal name and this is why he is using the singular. In any case, he is definitely speaking with one martyr here, not a group.

31 cahaçomo: read acazomo.

32 quiquezca: read quiquetza.

33 ppetisa: read profetisa.
since you didn’t teach us what Jesus Christ the true God taught us. Because of that I don’t want to believe in you. 

34 You want to deceive us! I don’t want your goods! I want to live suffering for the sake of the true God so that he will have mercy on me, so that I will merit heavenly joy. Thus God says there will be weeping, there will be sadness, there will be leaving of sin on earth, there will be suffering in order that there will be saving of people, there will be going to heaven. And you, you say, [158v] ‘Let there be happiness, enjoyment, riches everywhere!’ Because of this it seems that you are not the true Christ.”

Then Antichrist will say, “Why am I not? O won’t you please listen! Will you finally believe in me if I raise your mother and your father from the dead?”

Then Martyr will say, “You’re lying!”

Then Antichrist will say, “Arise! You his mother and you his father come forth immediately!”

(And then they will rise up. He is not true, he is a tlacatecolotl.)

Then Antichrist will say, “Do you not behold your mother and your father? Do you not recognize them? Now they have come from mictlan where they descended because they didn’t acknowledge me. Let them burn!”

*Here: What sort of place is mictlan?*

Then Martyr [159r] will say, “I recognize my father, [but] perhaps it’s not him. If it is truly him I will recognize his back. When he still lived on earth he bore Tlaloc’s green rattle stick on his back.”

And then Antichrist will say, “Go look for it. It’s right there.”

Then Martyr will say, “It really is there! [But] I am a little suspicious that you are deceiving me.”

And then Antichrist will say, “Did you not see his mark?”

Then Martyr will say, “Yes, perhaps in this way the tlacatecolotl made it seem like my father. You are just fooling me. You are Antichrist. That woman called “prophetess” came to declare to us, came to tell us that a person would come who would deceive people, he would come to give people gold and all sorts of goods. He will deceive many because of this. Moreover, this is proof that you go around in this way! I really am suspicious that you are a tlacatecolotl, you are Antichrist.”

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34 I don’t want to believe in you: now it seems that only one martyr is speaking. Perhaps this one is speaking for the group.

35 your goods: these are the gifts that Antichrist uses to entice Christians into believing that he is the Christ.

36 The raising of the mother and father is one of the miracles associated with Antichrist and his followers in the medieval tradition. St. Vincent Ferrer, who wrote extensively about Antichrist, mentions this precise miracle in his first sermon on Antichrist preached in July of 1411 in Toledo (see Cátedra 541) and in his third sermon for the second Sunday of Advent from *Sermones Hyemales* (1558).

37 …he is a devil: This could also be “the devil.” I take this to be an aside spoken to the audience. It’s almost as if he is reassuring the audience, who might themselves begin to wonder whether Antichrist really is the Christ.

38 This seems to be an invitation for the narrator to speak extemporaneously about hell. In the Nahuatl text Aquino concludes this statement by writing *et cetera*, seemingly inviting elaboration. The use of *etc.* in this way was common in the Nahuatl sermonarios of Aquino’s day.

39 This could refer to a distinguishing feature such as a birth mark.
Auh nimá qtoz ył atexpó aço nomac timiquizneq
nimá quitoz ył martilles ma ypalținco ył .d. nimomiqllí
nimán qtoz ył âtxepó. tla xiçiñimati ył yevatl ył monanțin ynic tinechncelocaz ca yxquich novelli
nimá qtoz ył martilles yntla yevatl ył nonățin tleycy ył ayocmo tlane ył ca ył iquac Omicq
tlaniyá
nimá qtoz ył antexpó ca čan ic ovezque41 ył itłavan ypăhpa ył onpa mictlan Cenca ceva cenca vi[160r]viyoca ynic aº. onpa tiyaz : ma xinechneltoca ył mixpan Onicchivhqui ył tlamanviçolli ynic oniquinmonextilli ył monă ył mota ypanpa ca ył nêci Ca niteotl yntla xinechneltoca
nimizCuiltonoz nimiznoviquilliz ył nochăținco ył ilhº. ynic onpa tipahpaqž Ca ył onpa Cenca
pahpacova tlaCuallo
Auh nimá quit[øy]z ył martilles : Auh yntla onpa pahpacova tlaqallo ył mochăținco aq42 cenca axixtitlan Cuiltonitlan aq cenca amoqualcan amoyecan Auh ca niman aº honpa niyaznequi Ca čan onpa niiyaznequi ył içaținco ył .d. Ca ył öpa niman aº tlauqalli Ca čan ixcaçvillo ył netlamachtillo yxcaçvillo ył nto43 ył qñin Cenca qualli ył icel teotl Ca čan ic pachiviz ył toyollo
Auh y[n] a[416v]can cenca nichicotlamati : ca haº nelli yevatl ył nonățin .y.44 Ca čan
tlacatecolotl no yvá y tevatl cenca titlavelliloc tiztlacatini macivi ył tineççaçayanaz ypăhpa amo
niyaznequi ył mochan ył ixçêq yniqvivíc45 ył tinechnetlotiya ca čan tlatipacayotle Auh ył ya
nelli .d. ył iquivic nechentoltia ca ylvicçayotle ył ayc polliviz ył ayc tlamilz ył aqń mochivaz
Auh nimá qtoz tla ył âtxepó niman icyiciva xiquimictican notechivhecavanhe

¶Nimá nican miquizque ył martilleme motlanquaççazque qmocnelligmatizque ſ .d. yehica čan
ipalțınco ył niqiz Québec
qtozqute toteº .he. d.he yexpõhe ma xitechmocellili ył mochanținco ma xiquinmotlay[oc]llili xiq
npohpolvi ył [161r] intlahtlacol.

Oceqntin martillesme
¶Nimá qtoz ył âtxepó tla xinechneltocacă yntlacăº ył ânechneltocazneq nimá nicińoqz ył ameço
avinin : xinechneltocacan Cenca namechCuiltonoz yntla xinechnmoviquillizneqçan
avh nimá qtozque ył martillesme ca niman aº timizneltocazque Ca titlacatecollotl Ca niman atley
Otìcchív ſ mochihvhtoc Ca čan icel .d. Oquichív ył ipalținemi avin axcan Ca čan ipalțınco
timiçzque ynic momașstiz ył toyloliya Cahamo [?] onpa tiyaznequoi ył mochă ył öpa neaxixallo
Auh nimá molțăCuaqueçazq ył martillesme ynic quinmictiz ył âtxepó

40 nimomiqilí: read ninomiqilí? Why is it in the reverential? Is it because he will die for God?
41 ovezque: read ohetzqueh.
42 aq: read aakui. Molina defines aakui “to enjoy oneself and have great pleasure” (WHF website).
43 tto: read totetuyó.
44 I still have not figured out what this abbreviation is…
45 yniqvivíc: here and below read ył ic ihuic.
Then Antichrist will say, “Do you want to die by my hand?”
Then Martyr will say, “I will die for God’s sake.”
Then Antichrist will say, “Recognize your mother and believe in me! I am all powerful!”
Then Martyr will say, “If she is my mother, why does she no longer have teeth? When she died she had teeth.”
Then Antichrist will say, “Her teeth just fell out because there in miictlan it is very cold and she shivered [160r] a lot. Believe in me so that you won’t go there! I have already done miracles right in front of you before by showing you your mother and your father. Therefore it seems that I am the deity. If you believe in me I will make you rich, I will bring you to my house in heaven so that you will be happy there. There is great happiness and feasting there!”
Then Martyr will say, “If there is happiness and feasting at your house, he wallows in a place of urine, of excrement, he wallows in a very bad place, an unjust place. I don’t want to go there! I only want to go to the house of God. There is no food there but only devotion to learning, devotion to our lord. How very good is the only deity! It’s just because of him that we are content. And now [160v] I am really suspicious that that is not my true mother. It’s just the tlacatecolotl. Also you are very wicked, you are a liar! Even though you will cut me up into pieces because of this I don’t want to go with you to your house. Therefore, all that you promise me is just worldliness, That which the true God promises me is heavenliness. It will never be destroyed, it will never end, nothing will happen to it.”
And then Antichrist will say, “Now swiftly kill them, O my forefathers!”
(Here the martyrs will die. They will kneel down giving thanks to God because they will die for his sake.)
They will say, “O our lord! O God! O Jesus Christ! Receive us into your house. Have mercy on them, pardon them of [161r] their sins.”

Some other martyrs

Antichrist will then say, “Believe in me! If you do not want to believe in me, then I will spill your blood! Furthermore, believe in me [and] I will enrich you greatly! O if only you would desire to come with me!”
Then the martyrs will say, “We will not believe in you, you tlacatecolotl! You have made absolutely nothing that lies growing. The only God, he by whom we live, made it. And now for his sake we will die so that he will save our souls. Indeed, we don’t want to go to your house, there where there is urinating on people.”
(Then the martyrs will kneel down and Antichrist will kill them.)
Nican tlac46 Enoc


Yn enoc nímaqñnomvolvilliz yñ conpersos51

Yn axcan nopilvane ovamechtmitlayocollí yñ. d. macá6 Occeppa xictlatlacalvizneçcan ma čan ipaļtínco ximiquicá Can yevatl yñ tlavellilloc techmictiquív yñ axcan yñ timochintín tla ximovapavacan macá6 xiCueCuëtxavico ma chicava yñ amoyolloc ma čan ipaļtínco. d. ximiqcan etc.

Nímaq ñtoz yñ ătepó

Tla xiquimittacan yñ yevantín yñ tlavellilloc tla niman icyvhe xiquinocoqullican yñ imecó Cuix à p[í]ñava yñ ixpa tlatova: tleyca yñ oquintlanetxq̤ltí[163v]q̤ue yñ notlaçoq̤a ma nímaq miquicán

46 Nican tla: read Nican tlatoz.
47 ynaqili read yñ aqli (aquallí); this isn’t the first time that he has used the incorrect q abbreviation.
48 yniquitláninco: read ynic ilantzinco.
49 aomo: read aocmø.
50 etc.: are we to understand this as leaving room for elaboration of this moment? Perhaps the characters representing the converts are encouraged to perform their conversion through gestures and actions on stage before the audience? See note 29 for more on the use of etc.
51 conpersos: read conversos.
Then Antichrist [161v] will say, “Now please listen, O my children! You have seen how I killed those wicked ones. The same will be done to you! Believe what I say to you so that you may be content. Now I go, I take my leave of you [But] I will come again! I will come to kill those who don’t believe in me!”

*(Here Enoch will speak.)*

“O my children, please won’t you listen! God has sent us on your behalf from the founding place of his lineage, there where our first father and our first mother were made. Indeed, long ago God placed us there. We never died, we were just waiting for the wicked one. Now [162r] [Antichrist] has come to confuse you with earthliness in order to pay you [back]. By the order of God today we have come to teach against him. We have come to teach you, we have come to say to you, do what God’s teachers, the priests, go about teaching you! His words are true, they will go on instructing you forever and ever. Believe in the one God Jesus Christ. Don’t believe in the bad, unjust words that the wicked one said to you. He has deceived many that are here. Those who he caused to believe in him will suffer forever in mictlan if they don’t desist from their bad life, if they do not weep over their sins. And you, now cast off [162v] the bad he caused to be placed within you. Fortify your hearts so that you won’t offend God. Follow our example. The wicked one is coming here to kill us. Therefore, we will die for God’s sake so that we will rest forever with him in heaven. So that people will go there it is necessary that there is believing in the true God here on earth, that there is baptism with his water and the keeping of his commands and the doing of penance, weeping for our sins, the serving of the one God so that there will be salvation, so that there will be rising up to heaven. I give to you God’s goodness so that you will desist from your bad life. Confess so that you don’t go to mictlan!” [163r]

*(Then at this point those who didn’t acknowledge God will believe.)*

Then Enoch will say to the converts,

“Now, O my children, God has had mercy on you! Desire not to offend him again! Just die for his sake. The wicked one is coming to kill you. Now strengthen yourselves, all of you, do not become faint. May your hearts be strengthened. Die for God’s sake!”

Then Antichrist will say,

“Look at those wicked ones! Please won’t you quickly go and spill their blood. Is it not shameful what they have said before you? Why did my beloved ones [163v] believe them? Let them die right now!”

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52 This is part of the medieval Antichrist tradition. Because in the Old Testament Elijah and Enoch never died but were “assumed” to heaven, they were chosen by God to come back to earth and preach against Antichrist at the end of times.

53 I assume this is meant in the sense of “pay you back for your sins.”

54 Again we see Antichrist being extremely polite, even using the tla with a command.
Niman quitozq ŭ cöversos

ɬY zcatqui yn moteocuítl ŭ motilma amoma tineque Ca yn iquac ticuizque ye ĉee taicuítlaçozque yn .d.
Auh nimā qtoz yn ĉeptpo ye neci Ca ya ovamechixpohpoyotilliqueste yn yevātin yn omēti [164r] yn vevetque Cuix a’o ya neval nixpō.

nimā quitozq yn conversos ca ha’o tevaln tiq po Ca qan titlacatecolotl Ca cenca
Ontitechitztlacivy yevātin yn itlaçowan yn nelli .d. yn otechmolvillico yn Cualli tlatolli yaqtne čan ipaltinco yn onomiquilliqueste ynsā yniqntech titxucuitizigue yn Cenca tevatl amoma titeotl čan ticoxtol titheçhuaecnequi Ca qan ic titechcuitlaviltejía yns quallqui
nimā qtoz yn ĉeptpo tleca yn amizltlaçati : Cuix [a]mo cenca namechpaqltia Cuix a’o
namechmolvilliya yn opa nochāntincenca papachova cenca tlacualo Ďopa Cate miyeqntin čiva : cenca chipavaque ynic pachiviz yn amoyollo

nimā quitozq[57] yn conversos Cuix amo [164v] ticcaq ca ha’o onpa tizayeq yntlanel onpa tizayeqnici yevállo Cuix a’o yvā neaxiallo Ca qan nimi amqon cenca mochā yns yaneli[58] yns ichā .d. niman a’o tlacuallo Ca qan icxavillo yn netlamanctillo Ca yns no yvan tiquitova yn opa mochan Onpa cate čiva cenca chipavaq ynic pachiviz ŭ toyollo Ca qan ic tineci yn titelxainqui yns tlavellilloc yns iquac yns ötzōquićaz yns nemillizcotl yns onpa yavi yns teyolliya Auh Cuix nimā[n] Ďopa : tlelaximalloq Ca yns onpa mictlān Ca qan icxavillo yn tnevełlo Aun ilvicac xycavillo yn ahaviyallo yns yaquine yevāt .d. cenca qytlayllitta yn tlelaximaliztli Auh yn tevatl tlextlaçotla [165r] Ca yq tineci yns ticaçavac yehica yns titechcuitlaviltejía yns quallqui yns manel titechmizteq niman a’o moltna tīyaq.
niman nican quimictiz yvā quimavaz nimā motlallitivh yns cypalpan Auh .S. Miguel nima āquinoqviz yns mochintin yns iquac yns quimictiz yns ētē qpo

ɬTla xicmoçaqči tym en yaqval yns itzel[59] .d. onechvalmivali ynic nicmictico yns yevatl yns tlavellilloc yehico[60] yns ovamechiztlacavintinemiqo yns ometolotcinemiqo Ca qan tlacatecloctl miyeqntin yns ipaḥp qy n tevena mictlān Ďan ipampaqapa[61] niman axcα yns quimamayqvivi yns diabrom[62] :

[56] yniqntech: read ynic intech.
[57] quitoz: read quitozque.
[59] ynitzel: read yn iceł.
[60] yehico: read yehica.
[61] ipampaqapa: read ic ipampa.
(Here Antichrist will kill [Elijah and Enoch].)

Then he will say to them, “You, why did you trap me? Why did you believe the wicked ones so that they confused you? Because of this I just killed them; I spilled their blood right in front of you. And I will do the same to you unless you’re willing to come with me, unless you obey me. Why have you abandoned me? I have already made you rich!”

Then the converts will say,

“Here is your gold, your cloaks. We don’t want them! If we took them we would greatly offend God.”

And then Antichrist will say, “It seems those two old men [164r] have blinded you. Am I not Christ?”

Then the converts will say, “No indeed, you are not Christ! You are just a *tlacatecolotl*! You have really deceived us. They are the beloved ones of the true God, they have come to tell us the good words. Furthermore, for his sake they died right in front of us. We will follow their example. You are not a deity, you are just a coyote! You want to devour us. You only want to incite us to do bad.”

Then Antichrist will say, “Why are you lying? Have I not made you very happy? Have I not told you that over there at my house there is a lot of happiness, there is a lot of feasting, there are many beautiful women with whom to satisfy yourselves?”

Then the converts will say, “Perhaps you haven’t [164v] heard? We don’t want to go there! Even if we wanted to go there, why is there feasting? Isn’t there also urinating? It is not a good place. Your house is not the true house of God. There is no feasting, there is only devotion, prosperity. And you also tell us that in your house there are very beautiful women with which to satisfy ourselves. Because of this it is apparent that you are an adulterer, a wicked one! When life comes to an end, there the soul goes. And will there be adultery there in *mictlan*? There is only suffering. But in heaven there is only gladness. Furthermore, God greatly despises adultery. And you who love him [165r] you appear dirty because you incite us to what is not good. Even though you will kill us we will not go with you.”

*(Then here he will scold them and kill them. Then he will sit on his throne. St. Michael will then say to all of you when Antichrist kills them,)*

“Please won’t you listen! The only God sent me to come slay the wicked one because he came to deceive you. He was taken as a god [but] he was just a *tlacatecolotl*. Many already are suffering in *mictlan* because of him. It’s just because of him that right now the *diablomeh* will come

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63 I am uncertain about how to translate this.
64 It is unclear who is being addressed here. The “you” is singular. It appears to be directed at Antichrist. Perhaps the sense of this is “You who claim to love him…”
65 Here St. Michael addresses the audience.
66 Here for the first and only time in both plays Aquino uses the Spanish loanword *diablo* with the Nahuatl plural suffix rather than the Nahuatl word *tlalocatecolo*. 
ynie qvicazque mictlan Ca niman onpa yaz yn iyolliya : Ca çano yvā tele monequi yn inacayo ypāpa yn itla[165v]vellilocayo niman axcā anquimatizque yn qnin Onpa tonevallo mictlan yn iquac quinapalloquivi yn tlahtlacatecolo Auh tla nimā xiccotonacan yn amonemiliz ynic amo Onpa anyazque mictlan

Niman qtoz yn ermitano

Tlahtlacatecolloye xinechilvican Canpa anyavi ac amevantin
yn mochi tlacatl nimā qtozque yyxpan timovica
Auh yn tevalt tle motoca
Auh nimā qtoz yn lociper ac tevalt yn tinechtlatlaniya tle motoca
Auh nimā qtoz yn ermitano Ca nevatl yn itetlayecoltiavh .d. notoca niyermítano Auh nimā qtoz yn ermitano Auh yn tevalt xinechilvi tleyn motoca
nimā qtoz yn loci[166r]per Ca ha° niceya
nimā qtoz yn ermitano tleyca yn amo ticeya
niman qtoz yn lociper yehica amo nicneq
Auh nimā qtoz yn ermitano yyoyave yn titlavelliloc amo tinechtlacamatiznequi vel
Auh nimā qtoz yn lociper ca amo niceya

67 a°pā: read amopan.
to steal away with him and bring him to *mictlan*. Then his soul will go there. Likewise, it is necessary that his flesh be in the fire because of his wickedness. [165v] You will immediately know how there is suffering there in *mictlan* when the *tlacatecoloh* come to bear him away in their arms. And now, make a break with your life\(^68\) so that you will not go to *mictlan*.\(^69\)

Then the hermit\(^70\) will say,

> O you *tlacatecoloh*! Tell me, where are you going? Who are you?"
>
> *Then each person will say before him* "We come."\(^71\)

And [the hermit will say], “You, what is your name?”

And then Lucifer will say, “Who are you, you who ask me ‘What is your name’?”

Then the hermit will say, “I am the servant of God. My name is Hermit.” Then the hermit will say, “And you, tell me, what is your name?”

Then Lucifer [166r] will say, “I don’t want to.”\(^72\)

Then the hermit will say, “Why don’t you want to?”

Then Lucifer will say, “Because I don’t want to.”

And then the hermit will say, “Ah! You wicked one! You don’t want to obey me! I recognize you, you are a *tlacatecolotl*! I just don’t know your name. So be it.\(^73\) I will make the sign of the cross on you\(^74\) so that you will reveal to me your name!” Then the hermit will say, he will say to another person, “You, O my child, grab the holy water, the water of God. I will spread this on the *tlacatecolotl* so that he will suffer and therefore reveal what his name is.” Then when he is about to spread the holy water on him he will say, “O *tlacatecolotl*! Reveal your name! For if you don’t, I will pronounce God’s words [166v] and God’s prayers on you, and if not I will spread on you the blessed water, God’s water, so that you will suffer burning pain! Tell me your name!”

And Lucifer will say, “I don’t want to!”

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\(^{68}\) break with your life: i.e., desist from your sinful living

\(^{69}\) This whole speech of St. Michael’s refers to the death of Antichrist and his being spirited away to hell by the demons (all of which is part of the Antichrist mythology), but curiously there is no mention of St. Michael actually slaying him. We must presume that he is dead after this point.

\(^{70}\) The hermit enters here without any introduction, which is curious given the central role he plays for the majority of the production. The introduction to “Antichrist and the Final Judgment” contains more material on the hermit character, evidence of the intertextuality of the two scripts. See Chapter Two “Reconstructing Aquino’s Lost Source.”

\(^{71}\) Lockhart states that *mohuica* can mean either “to come or go.” My sense is that the demons’ statement “We come” is similar in effect to a student’s statement “present” when the teacher takes attendance.

\(^{72}\) This section of the Lucifer dialogue isn’t merely didactic or catechetical; it’s also comedic. The comedic section runs up until f.168r.

\(^{73}\) So be it is *ma ihui*. Karttunen defines *ma zo ihui* as “let it be so” (WHP website).

\(^{74}\) “You” is plural here. The hermit appears to be referring to Lucifer and the other demons who appear with him.
Auh nimā &q75 nelli .d. yvā ypāpa yn iCruz yn mopā nicchiva yvā ypāhpā yn iyat[z]in yn movicpa nicetca ma nimā xicnexti yn motoca yvan yxquich tienxtiz yn nimiztlahlaniz


Auh canpa ayavi

niman quitoz yn lociper yn axcā Ca čan nican tivallaq ynic ticanaco yn ce tlacatl ṭ tocnivh yn otechtlayecoltitinēca yn nican tpč . Ca cenca miyequentin yn oquintlaneltoqti yn otemoq mictlan ye tiqulvichivialiya Ca čan ic [167v] tichocativi yehica yn omomiquilli yntlaca° momiquilliani miyequentin Onpa yazquiya tochan avinin Ca čan ic titlayocoxtivi

Auh nimā quitoz yn ermitano Auh ṭlta hantlayocxtivi tleyca yn āCuicativi

Nimā &q76 Cuix mo tiCuicativy Ca čan tichocativi

Auh nimā &q77 ynic a°vica yn ávalvezq yn ilh°.

Auh nimā quitoz yn lociper [168r] Cuix mo čan to[c]eltin Cenca timiyeqntin

Auh niman quitoz yn ermitano tla xicnexti tle ynez yvā yevatl yn apilloli yn amomac ycativh nimā &q77 ynic a° netlecavilloz yn ilvicae

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75 yex po : read jesu cristo.
76 xinechivi: read xinechilhaui.
77 ynez: read ineza.
Then the hermit will say, “Alas, O tlacatecolotl! By the command of Jesus Christ the true God and by [the sign of] his cross which I make on you and because of his water that I spread in your direction, reveal your name and reveal everything that I will ask of you.”

And then Lucifer will say, “Alas! How unfortunate I am! You have greatly shamed me. Even though I don’t want to, you will now know my name because you made the [sign of the] cross on me. Because of it [167r] you caused me pain, you afflicted me. Know that my name is Lucifer. A long time ago God created me in heaven. I was God’s very precious one, I was pure, I surpassed all of God’s creations. And because I was proud, I was haughty, I offended God greatly. Along with some of my companions who had grieved him, God cast us there into mictlan. All of us who come here live blackened by our sins.”

“Where are you going?”

Lucifer will then say, “We came here today to grab a person, one of our companions,78 one who lived in service to us here on earth. Indeed a great many of those he caused to believe have descended to mictlan. We celebrate a festival for him because of this.79 [167v] We do nothing but weep because he died. If he hadn’t died, many of them would go there to our house. Furthermore, we are consumed by our sorrow.”

And then the hermit will say, “If you are so sad, why are you singing?”80 Then Lucifer will say, “Were we singing? We were just weeping.”

Then the hermit will say, “Very well! Tell me quickly, what is the song about?81 Do not say the words, just raise it in song so that everyone will hear it.”

And upon raising his cross they will say, “We’re not singing! We’re just weeping!”

Then the hermit will say, he will say to Lucifer, “Tell me, was it only you who came here [when] you fell from heaven?”

Then Lucifer will say, [168r] “Was it just us alone? [No,] we were very many.”

Then the hermit will say, “Reveal what that water jar that is in your hands means!”82 Then Lucifer will say, “With it we carry water like a potion with which we bathed people so that God would be offended, so that there wouldn’t be any rising up to heaven.

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78 one of our companions: referring to Antichrist.
79 This is probably just a generic reference to pre-contact rites in honor of certain deities rather than a suggestion that Antichrist was associated with a specific festival.
80 This is another example of the intertextuality of these two plays. The singing took place in the “Antichrist” and as is stated at the beginning of “The Hermit,” this play is suppose to be čan tlatoalli (“just words,” i.e. no singing).
81 “What is the song about?” alternatively, “What is spoken of in the song?” But then hermit tells him not to say the words. Perhaps he wants Lucifer to tell him generally what the song is about without actually reciting the words. This is another example of the hermit behaving like the friars who we know were very interested in the contents of the songs native peoples sang and suspected there was much idolatry hidden in the metaphorical language they used.
82 Beginning with Lucifer, each of the eight demons carries a “water jar” (apilloli) that represents one of the Seven Deadly Sins. Aquino might have adapted this idea from the seven angels in Revelation who each pour out seven “bowls” (or “vials”) of God’s wrath upon the earth (see Revelation 16).
Ca yeica yn onpa tivalevzq yc cenca titoxicova yn iquac tiquimitt a Cequentin yn onpa motlecaviya

Auh niman qtoz yn ermitano tla xiquito quenami yn yevatl yn atl yn momac ycativh tleyn ic
ticchiva tleyn y[yn]ezca

nima qtoz yn lociper Ca ynezca yn nepovalitzti Ca yehica yn oninopovh cēca nicnequi ma
noviyan nepovallo ynic temolloz mictlan Ca čan ic pachivhiz yn noyollo : macivi Cenca
nīltatlatinemi Ca yevatl yn notequiv y[168v]nic nitenezpolizzcuītīnitemi yn ica tlamachoz Ca
yn ixquich yn amo qualli yn ayectli nevatl Onic[z]inti Auh yn ixqechtin yni83 mictlan temova
notech mixCuitiyan

Nimā qtoz yn ermitano Omotlavelliltic Ca cenca titlavellilloc ya mi[t]ziximati yn macevaltin avin
ic amo motech mixCuitizq tla xiyavh

Tlaloc

Nimā qtoz yn ermitano ḥlvihz yn tlaloc ac tevatl tle motoca

q.84 Ca nevatl nitlaloc

Ayjoyavhe yn titlavellilloc tla xiquimilvi yn macevaltin quen ticmati Catlyevatl yn motoca yn
monezca ynic 4 titeotl

Nimā quitoz Cuix mo niteotl Ca čan itlachival y. d. Ca onpa O[169r]nivalevz yn ilvicac
yehica yn oninopouh Auh čan no quiqimiztlacavitinenca yn macevaltin ynic nechteotocaya ynic
notech quitlamiyaya yn ɣyavīl ynin Ca čan ninca85 ninocacayavaya Cenca nechilvichivilliaya
e tc.

Au ni86 nimā . q. yn ermitano tle ynezca yn apillolli yn 0 .mac87 ycativh tleyn itec catqui

Niman .q. yn tlaloc Ca patli ytoca tecocolliliztli yc niquimahaltiya Ceçıntin yn imitec nictlalliya
ynic mococollizque ynic quyollitlacoqye .d. ynic temozque mictlan

Nimā .q. ma yvi [169v] tla xiyv88

83 yni: read yinin.
84 q.: read quitoz
85 ninca: read nenca.
86 Au ni: read Auh ni- (erroneous duplication of the beginning of niman).
87 yn 0 .mac: read yn momac.
88 xiyv: read xi yauh.
Because we fell down here we were really envious when we saw some others ascending up there.”

Then the hermit will say, “Say what kind of water you have in your hands. What are you doing with it? What does it mean?”

Then Lucifer will say, “It stands for pride. Because I was proud I yearned for there to be pride everywhere so that there would be descending to mictlan. I will content myself with this even though I am continually burning. That is my job [168v], making people proud. With this all the bad and wicked things that I began will be known. All who seek mictlan follow my example.”

Then the hermit will say, “O how unfortunate you are! You are very wicked! The common folk recognize you! And they will not follow your example! Be gone!”

Tlaloc

Then the hermit will say, he will say to Tlaloc, “Who are you? What is your name?”

He will say, “I am Tlaloc.”

“Ah, you wicked one! Tell the common folk how we know which of your names and your signs means you are a deity.”

Then he will say, “Perhaps I am not a deity but only one of God’s creations? Indeed, I [169r] fell down here from heaven because I was proud. Likewise I just went around deceiving the common folk so that they took me for a god, they attributed the rain to me. This was just a vain thing. I made a fool of myself [when] they celebrated feasts to me.”

Then the hermit will say, “What is the meaning of that water jar that you have in your hands? What is in there?”

Then Tlaloc will say, “It is a potion called ‘hatred of others’ with which I bathe them. I place it within some of them so that they will hate each other, so that they will offend God and as a result will descend to mictlan.”

Then [the hermit] will say, “So be it! [169v] Be gone!”

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89 nitenepohualizcuitinitemi: literally “I go about causing people to take pride.”
90 be gone: this is tla xiyauh. The presence of the tla in the command elevates the level of politeness of this order. However, here and below I will translate it as “Be gone!” so as not to rob the hermit’s command of its force.
91 I believe the sense of this is something like, “How do we know you’re who you say you are?” Thanks to the attendees at 2015 meeting of the Northeast Group of Nahuatl Studies for help with this.
92 It is tempting to read teyolcocoliztli (envy) here instead of tecocoliliztli (hatred) because hatred is not one of the seven deadly sins. However, I have left it as it is. One possibility is that perhaps Aquino didn’t have a good grasp of which sins made up the seven. Another possibility is that in the indigenous mindset, envy and hatred may not have been so different, hence using tecocoliliztli here may not have been problematic for Aquino.
Dezcatlipoca

Nimā Ӛ ym ermitano nimitztlatliniay aoc tevatl
Nimā Ӛ Ca nitezcatlipoca

Ayiyoavhe ym titlavelliloc quen timochiva
Nimā Ӛ Ca nitivitylatinemi

Auh Cuix a° cenca mizmaviztilliya ym macevaltin ynic motech quitlamiya ym mochivhtoc etc. ma xinechilvi quezq’ ym tin ym mopāhp a Otemoqué mictlan
Nimā. Ӛ. y Ӛ tez. ca cenca miyeqntin
vel Ӛzquintin


Auh nimā Ӛ. ym ermitano ya nimitziximati Cenca titlavelliloc Auh ma xinechilvi tleyn momac ycativh

Nimā .qui.°° Ca niquitqui ym atl ym itoca tetlaximaliztli yvan tecuilontilliztli ym niquihimahaltiya ym cequintin yvâ cequintin niquimititya ynic tetlaximazque ynic tecuilontizque ynic quitlachialvizque . d . ynic ĕqnomotlaxiliz mictlan miyeqntin nechtelcamati yehica Cenca Ӛ velmati ym tetałoxalliztli čan ic cemicac tonevazque : O ca ča°° yevatl ym notequivh

Niman Ӛlviz tla xiyavh Ӛ titlavelliloc Ca ya mitziximati ym macevaltin Ca ti[170v]late°.

Vitzilopochtli

Nimā quitoz ym ermitano Tla xinechilvi ym tevatl. tleyn motoca Ӛ Ca nevatl nivitzilopochtli niquimiztlacavitinencya macevaltin nechteotocaya Ca čan itlachival y . d. Ca ypanpa notlahatlac onechvalmotlaxilili mictlan notlahtatinemi Cenca nechivichihiliaya ym macevaltin ym iqac nolvivh quitzaya etc. ym axcā ca ca°° nictlayocaya noyollo yehica ym ovamopa°° acico ym x pia nome Ca cēca yc nichoca

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93 Dezcatlipoca: read Tezcatlipoca. See note on fol. 147v.
94 imaheuh: this may be from mahceuhtli which Wimmer has as “Impétrant, qui a obtenu” (recipient; he who got something”). It could also be a form of tlamaheuhtli “penitent, devout person.” I will use the tentative translation of “favored ones.”
95 .qui.: read quitoz.
96 ca: read čan.
97 ca: read ča (can).
98 ynova mopā: read in oamopan. The “o” in ynova is an “outrigger o” for acico. See three lines down for another example.
Then the hermit will say, “I ask you, who are you?”

He will say, “I am Tezcatlipoca."

“Ah! You wicked one! What are you up to?”

Then he will say, “I am continuously burning."

“Don’t the common folk venerate you greatly and credit you for what lies growing? Tell me, how many have descended to mictlan because of you?”

Then Tezcatlipoca will say, “Indeed, very many.”

“How many?”

“Are you able to count the stars? It’s just like that. It is not possible for us to count those who are burning there in mictlan because of me. Indeed, they think I made them. But there is nothing I made. I am merely God’s creation. Because of [170r] my sins I go along burning and because of this I fell from heaven. I go along deceiving God’s favored ones.”

And then the hermit will say, “I recognize you! You are very wicked! Now tell me, what do you have in your hands?”

Then he will say, “I carry the water called adultery and tecuilontilitzti99 with which I bathe some and some I show how to commit adultery, how to commit tecuilontilitzti, how to offend God. Therefore he will cast many who obey me into mictlan because they have found adultery to their liking. Because of this they will suffer forever. That’s just my job.”

Then [the hermit] will say to him, “Be gone, you wicked one! The common folk already recognize you! [170v] You are a tlacatecolotl!”

Huitzilopochtli100

Then the hermit will say, “Tell me, you. What is your name?”

He will say, “I am Huitzilopochtli. I went around deceiving the common folk. They used to take me as a god! But I’m just God’s creation. Because of my sins he cast me into mictlan where I go along burning. The common folk used to celebrate a feast in my honor when it was my feast day. Now my heart is sad because the Christians reached you. Therefore I have been weeping.

99 Tezcatlipoca is associated with the sin of Lust. Tecuilontilitzti has traditionally been translated “sodomy.” As mentioned in note 24 of “Antichrist and the Final Judgment,” I have chosen to leave these terms untranslated.

100 Magnus Hansen informed me of the existence of a European literary and dramatic figure known as “Vitzliputzli.” Remarkably, after appearing on stage here in the sixteenth century, Huitzilopochtli appeared three centuries later on European stages. See E. Boone’s Incarnations of the Aztec Supernatural: The Image of Huitzilopochtli in Mexico and Europe.
yehica yn ovamechmatico yn padretin yntla çàn incelztin yxpînome yn vallani aço vel niquimiztlacavizquiya aço vel yn ca ni[171r]nocacayavazquiy aco101 ceq̤intin102 niquinvicazquiya mictlan ypanpa yn intltlacol Ca çå yevâtin yn padretin nechtlacavaltiya yn iqac ńqmachtitinemi ynic nenemilliiz cotonalloz Ca çàn ic neyolmellavalo ytc tlahtlacolcavallo Auh yn yevantin yn padretin = Oc’enci tlapanaviya chicavac yn iyollo103 ynic motlahtlacolcavaltilya micivi104 cenca miyepa105 yn imitec nictlallia yn a[q]ualli yn ayectli niman amo nechtlacamatì Auh yntlahaca106 padre quichiva nimâ moyolmellava ynic quimochipavilliya yn iyolliya107 yn cenca tlamaeva nimâ yc qmóyolcevillia .d. ynic avel niquinvica mictlan Auh ceq̤intin yn xpîame108 yn aqualtin yn ńxcavitinemi yn tlahtlacolli macivi yn moyolmellava cecexivhtica niman ypâ quichiva yn tlaltlacoli Ca çàn ic pachivi yn iyollo yn iqac Cequintin ypâ miq[u]li [171v] yn temictiyani tlahtlacolli yc niquinvica mictlan Auh ca çàn ic notlayocoya yehica Oxitin yn nocal yn opolliih yn nixiptla Centca yc nítlayocoya yehica yn a’pan Ovacico yn iCruz yn ye’xpó Ca cenca niquimacaci yn iqac ce tlacatl yyołlocopa ytech q̤tzea yn niman avel niquitzlacaviz

Auh nimâ quitoz yn ermitano Ayyoyavhe = tla xiyavh yn titlavelliloc Ca ya mitziximati yn macevaltin Auh ma oc xinechivi tleyn moma ycatiuh

ma xicmatì Ca yevatl patli ytoca qualanillizpatli ynic niquimahaltiya yvâ cequintin yn itec nictlalliaya yn qualanilliztil yaquicavaza ynic moqualanizque ynic momictizque ynic moquazque ynic a’ yazque yn ichâťzincó .d. Ca çàn ic notlan cemicac tlahtlazque Óca çàn yevatl yn cemicac notequivh

Auh nimâ ñeitoz yn ermitano Ca ńmaca109 yntla ya nelli titeotl Ca ha’ ticnêqzqa y[ni]c neqallos Aunin yn ce tinemi [172r] yn ñlavelliloc tla xiyavh

**Quetzalcovatl**

Niman .q. yn ermitano : nimiztlahtlaniya ac tevatl
nimâ .q. Ca nevatl niqueçalcovatl Onechtlayecoltitinencà yn macevaltin nixpā Omiçoaya etc. Auh nimiztlahtlaniya tleyn momac ycatiuh

Nimâ .q. ca niquítq yn patli yevatl yn itoca xixicuiyotl yc niquimahaltiya yvâ cequintin ymitec nictltlaliya. ynic moxv[i]tizque ynic tlavaranazque ynic miçotzlazque ynic amo tecozque yn ilh5 yn aqn tlavâtinemi niman avel quichivaz yn qualli tpc. Ca çâ yevatl y[n]oteq̤vh110

N.111 ma yvi tla xiyavh yn titlavelliloc

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101 aco: read aco.
102 cequintin: read ceq̤intin.
103 iyollo: read in i[n]yollo.
104 micui: read macihuì.
105 miyepa: read miyecpa.
106 yntlahaca: read yntla aca.
107 iyolliya: read iyolìa.
108 xpîame: read cristianome.
109 Ca ńmaca: read Ca quemaca.
110 y[n]oteq̤vh: read yn notequîuh.
111 .N.: read niman.
greatly because the priests came to teach you. If it had been the Christians alone who had come, perhaps I would have been able to deceive them, perhaps I would have been able to fool them, perhaps some others I would have brought to mictlan because of their sins. Those priests just hold me back when they go around teaching them, and because of this my life will be cut off. This is the reason why there is confessing, why there is leaving of sins. The hearts of those priests are exceedingly strong and therefore they leave their sins. Even though many times I place within them what is not good, not right they don’t obey me at all. If some priest does it, then they confess and cleanse their souls. They earnestly do penance. As a result God is placated so that it’s impossible for me to bring them to mictlan. But the other Christians, the bad ones, live devoted to sin. Even though they confess every year they’re doing it in sin. I am content when some die in mortal sin because I bring them to mictlan. I am sad because my house was knocked down, my image was destroyed. I am very sad because the cross of Jesus Christ reached you. I am really afraid when a person willingly raises it up, then it is not possible for me to deceive him.”

Then the hermit will say, “Alas! Be gone, you wicked one! The common folk already recognize you. And furthermore tell me, what’s in your hands?”

“Know that this potion is called ‘potion of anger’ with which I bathed them. I place anger inside others so that they will scold each other, so that they will become angry with each other, so that they will kill each other, so that they will devour each other, so that they will not go to God’s house. They will burn forever with me. This will be my labor for eternity.”

And then the hermit will say, “Yes, indeed. If you were a true deity you wouldn’t want there to be devouring of people. Furthermore, because of this it appears that you are a wicked one! Be gone!”

Then the hermit will say, “I ask you, who are you?”

“I am Quetzalcoatl,” he will say. “The common folk used to serve me, they used to bleed themselves before me.”

“And I ask you, what do you have in your hands?”

Then he will say, “I carry a potion that is called ‘gluttony.’ I bathe them with it and I place it within others so that they will overeat, so that they will get drunk, so that they will bleed themselves, so that they will not ascend to heaven. It is impossible for the one who goes around drunk to do good on earth. This is just my job.”

Then [the hermit will say], “So be it! Be gone you wicked one!”

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112 Aquino makes a distinction between “priests” and “Christians.” I imagine that the latter refers to Spaniards, who were infamous among Nahua and friars for being poor representatives of the faith. The friars tried to keep Spaniards away from indigenous Christian communities because of their negative influence.

113 they leave their sins: meaning the Christian macehualtin.

114 does it: I am uncertain what he is referring to here. Perhaps preaching.

115 other Christians, the bad ones: i.e., Spaniards. See note above.

116 raises it up: the cross, as a sign of their conversion.
Otontecvhti

[N]imā quitoz yn ermitano NImiztlahtlianiya ac tevatl
Ca nevatl notontecvhti nechteotecayta yn macevaltin nechilvichiviliyaya nixpā ʔqueçaya [172v] yn quavitl yn itoca xoxocoquavitl. nimā nixpā mitotiaya yn telpohpochtin yvā yn čiva etc. Auin omocavheque niman quinamovaya yaoyotl yn momatiya 117 yn macevaltin Ca tepal tlamaquze Auh ca čan ic niquimiztlacaviya Ca čan a° niteotl Ca čan itlachival yn .d. ypāhpā ynotlacol.118 Onechvalmotlaxilli mictlan ynic onpa Cemicac nitlahtlatinemi

Auh ma xinechilvi tleyn momac ycativh
nimā. q. Ca niquitqui yn patli yevatl yn itoca tlaztivizpatli yc niquimahaltiya yn tlatoq yn pihpiltin no yevātin yn atleyn intequiv yn čanē nenemi Çan niquixcavitinemi yn imitec nictatlalliya yn pipiltin tlaztivioçtl ynic čan tlaztivirtinemizque ynic čã quimixcavizque [173r] yn quintemozque yn ichpohpochtin anoçto yn tecivavan yniquntech 119 ačizque Ca cacacanic120 pachiviz yn inyollo Auh cenca miyequintin nechtlacamati yn telpohpochtin yehica yn atleyn intequiv atleyn axtinenemi Ça mochipa tlaztivioçtl yntequivh Ca čã quixcavitinemi yn tlaxtliatlilli yc ʔtlahtlacavitinemci ynic .d. yc ʔntlācaçaz ʔmitlan O ca ča yevatl yn noteqv
ma yvi tla xiyavh yn titlavelliloc Auin axcan pihpil[tin] ma ca° xitlatzivican.etc.

Civacovatl

[N]imā. q. yn ermitano Nimi[t]ztilahtlianiya ac tevatl
. q. ca nevatl nicivacovatl Oniçuqmisztlahtacacitnemca yn macevaltin yn oninocuepqui yvāhqui yn nelli nicivatl nechteotecayta ca nitlacoq. vel nechtlayecoltiaya miyequintin nechmacaya yn niquçuayta Auh a° niquincuaya yn ca[n]a tlaca ca niyavh yn tlaxcalteca yn vexoçinca yvā yno[173v]tlamacazcavan yn imezço .ets.

Auh nimā quitoz yn ermitano xinechilvi yn tevatl yn tiçiva tlavelliloc yn tleyn momac ycativh
nimā. q. ca niquitqui yn patli ytoça teoyevacatillizpatli ynic niquimahaltiya yn macevaltin yn tlatoq yn pipiltin ynic miciq mitec nictatlillia ca teoyevacatillizti 121 ynic čã teoyevacatizque ynic amo ʔntlayocollizque ynic quimacaxtizque ynic iaxca yn .d. ynpāpa ca mochi yyaxcaçin ca čano yc ʔncuiltono ynic tetlayocollizque Auh yn iquac yn a° quintlayocollia yn tlaxococolliloni

117 This could be either matiya or matia.
118 ynotlacol: read in notla[tla]col?
119 yniquntech: read ynic intech.
120 Ca cacacanic: read ca can ic
121 čã teo: read occenca.
Otontecuhtli

Then the hermit will say, “I ask you, who are you?”

“I am Otontecuhtli. The common folk used to take me as god, they used to celebrate a feast in my honor. Before me they used to raise [172v] a tree called the guava tree. Then the young men and the women danced before me. They stopped when they stole it. Because of this war descended. The common folk thought with people’s help they would take captives. And because of this I deceived them. I am not a deity, I am merely God’s creation. Because of my sins he cast me into mictlan where I go along burning forever.”

And [the hermit will say], “Tell me, what do you have in your hands?”

Then he will say, “I am carrying a potion that is called ‘potion of laziness’ with which I bathe the rulers, the nobles, and also those who have no work, those who just walk around aimlessly. All I do is go around placing laziness within the nobles so that they will just go along slothfully, so that they will just do nothing but [173r] look for young women or perhaps some people’s wives to have sex with. They are completely satisfied [with this]. A great many of the youth obey me because they do nothing, they go around doing nothing. It is laziness that is their full-time work. They give themselves completely to sin and thus give injury to God. Because of this, he will cast them to mictlan. That’s just my job.”

“So be it! Be gone, you wicked one! Now noblemen, don’t be lazy!”

Cihuacoatl

Then the hermit will say, “I ask you, who are you?”

She will say, “It is I, Cihuacoatl. I used to go around deceiving the common folk, I made myself look like a real woman. They used to take me as a god, but I am a tlacatecolotl. They served me well. Many were given to me so that I would eat them. But I didn’t eat people from anywhere, I went to the Tlaxcalans, the Huexotzincans and the blood of [173v] my priests.”

Then the hermit will say, “Tell me, you wicked woman, what is it you have in your hands?”

Then she will say, “I am carrying a potion whose name is ‘greed-potion’ with which I wash the common folk, the rulers, the lords, and thus I will place stinginess within them. They will be so exceedingly stingy that they will not show them mercy, they will take for themselves God’s goods. He enriched them with his goods so that they would have mercy on people. And when they don’t have mercy on those who deserve mercy

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122 I am uncertain what is being referenced here. Perhaps it is an historical event. Tentative translation.
123 This last sentence is addressed to the audience, specifically, to the nobles in the audience. This could be the narrator (tetlanextiliani) who says this or it could be the Hermit, too.
124 This could be a reference to the Aztec empire’s frequent “flower wars,” battles waged for the purpose of capturing enemy warriors for sacrifice in high state festivals.
Ca quimaxcatia yc pachivi yn inyollo Auh Ca ça temosque mictlan O ça yevatl yn notequivh nimā .ₐ. ma yvi tla xiyavh tlacatecolotlhe yn axcan Ca ya hamechiximati yn macevaltin Ca cenca antlavelliloq yvā. Cenca amechtlavellilocotacazque yvā [174r] amechtlazitzizque tleco mochi quitlačazque yn amixiptlav yvā. Auh Ca ya quimita yn nican quimiztlacavitinemi yn nicā moteotocatemi Ca ċan ċatlahtacelotlhe Auh axcā yvhqui yn atle ypā amechtzaqce Occenca tlapanaviya amechhizazque Auh amevantin nimā xiquinchichacā yn toteovā Catca

Hermitano


X po aque

Nimā quitoz yn ermitano Auh amevātā xinechilvīcā tleyn amotoca .q. x pā. Ca tevātān ynic tichicacemintin tintlenamacahcavā yn tlaxtlacate⁰. ynic tixpā mástiti yni tiquintoteycay Ca hamo nelli tete macivi yn cenca Otiquintlayecoltique Auh ynic axcā ċan intlan titoneva mictlan yvēhica amotiquiximatiyyaq ynic nelli .d. ynic axcan ya tienelto Auh macivi yn ticieltoca Ca ċan a° ynic titomaquixtizque Otovitique Ca ynic axcā ynic tiquito ynic tixpohpoyontitinēca. tpcā. niman aye titoceviya ċan mochipa titlahtla ynic ċopā mictlan Ca cenca teçacay[175r]na ynic otiquintlayecoltitinenca tpcā tlcē ynic ċopā Ceppe topā qteca ynic coppalatl tle yneza yn xicca tichichinaca Auh nimā .q. yn ermitano xinechilvi ynic tevatl tle yneza ynic ċaquimama ṣx. ynic ynezcā ynic tixpozque ynic cenca tichichinaca

Auh nimā .q. ynic tevatl tle yneza ynic ċaquimama

125 tentative reading.
126 In the introductory rubric of “Antichrist and the Final Judgment” Aquino refers to these priests as pahpahuaqueh. However, in the dialogue here they are called tletenamacahuēque (“fire priests”). I have still not been able to decipher Aquino’s abbreviated title, but based on the presence of a discernable “po” and “aque” I assume he intended it to render pahpahuaque. Still, this doesn’t explain the clearly discernable “X” both in the title and in the abbreviations Aquino uses throughout this section. The presence of xpo, a ubiquitous abbreviation for Christ (Cristo) at this time is, I believe, only a distraction.
127 coppalatl: read copalatl.
128 nimaya: read niman ya.
129 titehertequiyā: read titeeltequia.
they take his goods for themselves in order to satisfy themselves. They will just descend to mictlan [because of this]. This is my job.”

Then he will say, “So be it! Be gone, O tlacatecolol! The common folk already recognize you.130 You are very wicked. They will consider you very wicked [174r] and they will hate you. Into the fire they will cast all your images. They now know that those they take as gods deceive them here. You are just tlacatecoloh. But now they will consider you as nothing. They will exceedingly spit on you. And you, spit on those that were our gods.”131

The Hermit

And then the hermit will say, “Listen, O tlacatecoloh! By the command of God I say to you [and] all of your creations: may your water jars that you have in your hands now be broken! Cast them down! Let them quickly be scattered. Furthermore, I will question all those that follow you [174v] regarding the meaning of what they go bearing on their backs so that they will reveal it.”132

Xpoaqueh

Then the hermit will say, “And you, tell me: what are your names?”

Then the XP133 will say, “We are the six fire priests of the tlacatecoloh. Before us they lay down offerings.134 Those who we used to take as gods are not true gods, even though we earnestly served them. And now we suffer with them in mictlan because we didn’t acknowledge the true God. Now we believe in him. Even though we believe in him, it is not just so that we might save ourselves. We were in danger. Now we see our blind way of life by means of which we went about living blindly on earth. Now we will never rest, we will always be burning there in mictlan. Those that we used to serve on earth135 are all broken [175r] to pieces. First they spread copal-water on us over there, then that metal-water. We suffer burning pain because of this.”

Then the hermit will say, “Tell me, you, what is the meaning of that which you are carrying on your backs?”

The XP [will say], “It represents how we used to cut ourselves with flint knives and kill people in front of our gods. There in mictlan we always go along carrying it on our backs. We suffer greatly from it. We also go along carrying on our backs the conch shell that we used to blow to gather the common folk to bleed themselves before our gods. In this way we went along deceiving the common folk. There in the house of our gods we just went along devoting

130 Addressing in the plural all the demons now; perhaps lined up on stage.
131 At this point I assume either the hermit or the narrator is addressing the audience. The pronouns are plural. Also of note is the fact that the speaker incudes himself with the idolaters, stating “those that were our gods.” I see this as a subtle but clear affirmation of the native identity of the author of this play.
132 The eighteen sinners that follow each bear some kind of prop representing their sins. XP and Xpoaque refer to the same people that are named in the title. See note above.
133 I presume “they” refers to pre-contact Nahua, not the deities/demons.
134 i.e., images of the gods or “idols.”
yn tlavellilocayotl ca çan ichtaca yn intech taciya yn inpîlvă catca Onpa tlachpanavaya titecuillontiay a yc tiquiμ[i]2[175v]tlacavía y yn tlatoq yvă yn mochi tlatl136 ca yn momatiya ca vel tinemiya yn ichă totoevă
Auh nimizltahtlaniya Cuix ça niyavh yn amotnevalliz yn otinechilvi

. xp . q Ca ha° Ca cencan miyec yn totonevalliz Ca yn ġêpa mictlan yn yevaťin yn totoevă ym tlahtlacatecolo ca çă quixcavía yn techitiya137 yn imeço yn mamaltin yn otiqmeltecque nică
tpc
Ca cenca totăqui yn techitiya yvă techmecaviteq
Auh xinechilvi anqûqntin yn onpa ancate yn amo anquiximattiyaq ġn nelli .d. yesux po
nimă .q.138 Ca havel titopovază Auh yn tevatl cuix veltiquinpovaz yn xalli yn noviyàn
cemanavac Ca havelli amocătlapovallì . xp . Auh no yvhqui ca havel titechpovaz ca timiyeqntin
yvan
timochintin Onpa Cenca [176r] titlahtlatinemi Cenca titepanaviya
Nimă .q. yn ermitano ma yvă Ca ya ovamovitiq sîx tla xiviyan Ca ya hamechiximati yn
macevaltın

Atlaneltocani

Yn aqque Oquicaq ġn itlatoltzin .d. Ca çan a° Oquineltocaq

Niman quitoz yn ermitano yn amevătin yn amomextin tleyn a’otoca
qitozque Ca nevatl ntlacatecvhctli yevatl nocniuḥ yn itoca viznavatl
Auh tle ynezca yn āquimama tleyn ipanpa yn ātomevă

. q. Ca yn ticmama [Ca] ynezca yn tonevalliztli ynic titoneva mictlan yehica ca toppă Ovacico yn itlatoltzin .d. Ĉanē Otniceltocaq çan ipă Oticamanaltique Ca çan ivhqui yn atle ypă Oticqtaq Auh yehica yn a° techmictizque yn xpiànome nimă yc tic[x][176v]tiniyana yn incal yn totoevă Auh ca ha° toyollocoppa Ca çan ivhqui yn titec tiquinquechilliaya yn incal yvă vel tiquinpiyaya yn imixiptlavă ym totoevă ynic a° quitlatizque yn xpiànome avîltă139 tincnextiani ynic pachivizquia yn inyollo yn xpiànome Ca çan yevatl tincnextiaya yn ivhqui atle ypă tiqyttaya Ca yevătin yn vel
totevă Cenca vel tiquinpiaya no yvă Ĉan ic oṭitoCuahatequique ynic pachiviz ynic inyolo yn padretin amo ma toyollocopa Ca çan talapictli Auh [y]ehica yc titoneva yn a° tieneltocaq yn "elli
yesux po . yn otechiximachtico yn padretin Ca çan140 ichtaca yn otiquntlayecoltitinęque yn
totevă Auh ca çan ic axcă yntlan titonevă yvă yntlan [į]tlahtla yn itlenamacacavă [177r] ym
totevă Ca tiquieltoca ynh techilviaya macivi yc techiztlacaviya Ca çan a° tieneltoca ynh
Cualli tlatatli yn otechilvico yn padretin Auh yn axcă ya tiquinpanaviya

136 tlacat: read tlacatl.
137 Tentative translation. It seems unlikely that this is tech-ittiă; it may be chichitia – to suckle. Although, it is used
below in such a way as to suggest it is tech-ittiă.
138 quitoz: read quitozque.
139 avîltă: read ahu intla.
140 can: read çan.
ourselves to wickedness. We used to secretly have sex with their children that used to sweep there. We committed *tecuilontilitl*.\(^{141}\) In this we deceived [175v] the rulers and all people who knew we lived in the house of our gods.”

[The hermit will say,] “I ask you, Is what you are telling me that you have a great deal of pain?”\(^{142}\)

The XP will say, “No, our pains are very many there in *mictlan*. Our gods, the *tlatlacatecoloh*, just devote themselves to causing people to suck the blood of the captives, those whose chests we cut open here on earth. [The blood] we used to suck is very hot and they whip us.”

“Tell me, how many of you were there that didn’t acknowledge the true god Jesus Christ?”

Then they will say, “We cannot count. Can you count all the sand everywhere in all the world? Indeed, it is not possible because it is infinite in number.” The XP [will say], “And likewise it is impossible for you to count us for we are many and all of us there greatly surpass people in how [176r] we go along burning.”

Then the hermit will say, “Very well, you got yourselves into danger. Be gone! The common folk already recognize you!”

The Unbelievers.

Those who heard the words of God but just didn’t believe in him.

Then the hermit will say, “You two, what are your names?”

They will say, “I am Tlacateuctli. My friend’s name is Huitznahuatl.”

“And what is the meaning of what you are carrying on your backs? Why are you suffering under it?”

He will say, “What we are carrying stands for the suffering by which we are tormented in *mictlan* because the words of God reached us but we didn’t take believing seriously, we just made fun of it; we just looked down on it. So that the Christians\(^{143}\) wouldn’t kill us [176v] we broke down the houses of our gods. But we didn’t do it willingly. We just erected their homes within us and we carefully protected the images of our gods so that the Christians wouldn’t burn them. But if in order to satisfy the Christians we did reveal them, the ones that we revealed were those that we didn’t care about. Those that are really our gods, we kept them carefully hidden. What is more, we got baptized to satisfy the priests. We didn’t do it voluntarily, we did it falsely. And as a result we are suffering because we didn’t believe in the true Jesus Christ, he whom the priests came to make known to us. We were just secretly serving our gods. It is just because of this that we are now suffering and burning with the fire priests [177r] of our gods. We used to believe in them, those that used to speak to us, even though they deceived us. We didn’t believe in the good words that the priests came to say to us. Now we are burning even more than

\(^{141}\) As discussed in the note above, this is traditionally translated as “sodomy.”

\(^{142}\) Tentative translation. This is based on “*zan ic niyauh*… to have something as a custom; to do something often” (WHP).

\(^{143}\) So that the Christians: “so that” is an alternate reading of *yehica*. Here again Aquino appears to mean Spaniards when he writes Christians. See note above.
yn tonavá\textsuperscript{144} yn totavá ynic titlahtla Cenca techtoneva yni\textsuperscript{145} yevatl yn covatl yn ticetotocaya yn iixpā titiçoya\textsuperscript{146} yn iixpā tamaxotlaya yn iixpā titlenamacaya ynic cenca techtoneva yni yevatl Covatl yv Cenca techichinaça yn tlahtlacate\textsuperscript{9}.

Auh nimā .q. yn ermitano yyoyave Ovamotlavelliltic yn a\textsuperscript{o} anquineltocatiyaq yn nelli .d. Auh anquezquintin

.¿. niman avel titopovazque Ca cenca timiyeqntin a\textsuperscript{o} çan titlapovaltin

nimā .q. yn ermitano ma yvi tla xivian yn ātlavliloloq

Tonalpovhqui

\textbullet\ Niman .q. yn ermitano ac tevatl [177v]

ca nitonalpovhqui

Auh nima çtoz ayyoyavhe tle ynezca yn ticmama

nimā .q. Ca nicmama yn imamos yn teteo yn yevatl nicpovaya yn amostli ynic niteyztlacaviaya yn iquac yn aca tlacatiya nimā nixpā quivalvicaya yn ināçtin yn itatçin ynic niğmilviz yncatleyvatl tonalli yn ipa [y]n otlacatqui yniconevh ynic niquimilviz yncotleyatl yniconevh. tpc . ynic [n]iteyztlacaviaya Ca hamo tley yn nicmatia Cuix ma niteotl ca çan icel teotl quimomachitiya yn tleyn tepā mochivaz

nimā .q. yn ermitano tla xinechilvi ynic iucac titlapovaya tleyn toquitovaya

nimā .q. ynic tlapovaya ets.

nimā Occeppe quitoz Auh in axcan ytencoppa yn .d. nechmecavitextinemi yn yevatī ynic omētin yn tlahtlacate\textsuperscript{9}. yehica ynic cenca nivayy nitlavelliloc miyeqntin Oniquimiztlacaviaya

nimā .q. ma yvi tla xiyavh [178r]

Tlatovani ytlatqui

\textbullet\ Niman .q. yn ermitano nimiztlatlaniya ac tevatl

nimā .q. ca nevatl notontiyeyo nitlatovani

\textsuperscript{144} tonavá: read tonanhuan.
\textsuperscript{145} yni: here and below read ynin.
\textsuperscript{146} titiçoya: read titoezzoa.
our mothers and fathers are. The serpent that we used to consider a god, he before whom we bled ourselves and before whom we burned papers and before whom we offered incense, he is greatly tormenting us. This serpent causes us to suffer terribly and the tlatlacatecoloh greatly afflict us.”

Then the hermit will say, “Alas, you wicked ones, you who didn’t believe in the true God! How many of you are there?”

They will say, “It is not possible for us to count ourselves. There are indeed very many of us; we just can’t count!”

Then the hermit will say, “So be it! Be gone, you wicked ones!”

### Day Keeper

Then the hermit will say, “Who are you?” [177v]

“I am a day-keeper.”

Then [the hermit] will say, “Alas! What is the meaning of what you are carrying on your back?”

Then he will say, “I am bearing the book of the gods. I used to read the book in order to deceive people. When someone was born the mother and father would bring him or her before me so that I would tell them under which day sign their child had been born. I say to them what will happen to their child here on earth. In this manner I used to deceive them. What I used to know is nothing. Am I perchance a deity? Does the only deity teach people what will happen to them?”

The hermit will then say, “Tell me, when you used to read things what would you say to them?”

(Then he will say what he used to read, etc.)

Then again he will say, “And now at God’s command two tlatlacatecoloh go along whipping me because I am a very great wicked one, I have deceived many.”

Then he will say, “So be it! Be gone!” [178r]

### The Ruler’s Goods

Then the hermit will say, “I ask you, who are you?”

Then he will say, “I am Otontiyeyo, I am a ruler.”

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147 titlenamacaya: literally “we used to sell fire.”
148 book of the gods: in imamox in teteo. There is ample evidence that native communities secretly kept their sacred divinatory codices from the prying eyes of the Church and the bonfires that consumed so many cultural treasures in the years following First Contact. One such example is recorded in the Codex Aubin. On fol. 52r one of the entries for the year 1559 states “On March 17 a book (or books) was burned.” The book in question, depicted by the Aubin’s artist with a splash of color, was in all likelihood a divinatory codex like the one mentioned here. 149 In Sahagún’s sermon for second Sunday of Advent he writes of these tonalpouhqui, “They do not know [anything about] what they tell them; they just make it up” (fol. 2v, Ayer MS 1485).
Auh tleyca yn omizmotlaxilli .d. yn mictlan


nimâ .ₐ. yn ermitano ma yvi tla xiyavh yn titlavellîocl avinin yc ximozcallică tlatoqhe

pochtecatl

Niman qtoz yn ermitano ni mitztlatlaniya ac tevatl

nimâ .ₐ. Ca nitoribio nipochtecatl ca noteqvh catca yn teca [ni]nocacayavhtinenca yniq⁸c [179r] yn tetech nitlaxylapanaya yvâ niqunmichtectinemiya yvâ nipîlîçîzitq[î]ntînîn yin iquac yn noztomëcatiya niqûmcitaçanamacaya yvâ nitetlauicuîlîtînênca yvâ nitetlanaçaqîtînêncya yn iquac nitêyîvîlîntocayîc yuacîn yn otîltaltîn ynic nechmacaz nimâ motzonevaz : momimiloz Auh Cuix mo yvhqui quimorequîltia .d. yvâ nîcnaçcatiaya yn âpîc cayôtl amo niquntlaxyocollîiya yn motollînia yehica ninocuiltonovaya Ĉa çan niqixcaviaya yn tetlaxîmallîzitî macivi niqumecavitequîiya ca niman a⁰ yc niqunçavhquî yn nomecavâ niman amo yc nigotonaya¹⁵³ yn aqûnalnemîlliz niman a⁰ niqunîormellavh¹⁵⁴ yc onechmotlaxilli .d. mictlan yeçâtin yn nechmecavitecinemi ynezce yn nomecavâ

nimâ .ₐ. cuix çan mocel yn òpã tica

nimâ .ₐ. yn pochtecatl Ca hamo çan nocel ca miyeqîntîn yn pochteca yn òpã cate mictlan

nimâ .ₐ. tla xiyavh yn titlavellîloc

¹⁵⁰ Thanks to John Sullivan for working out the morphology and meaning of this verb. (Email communication 11.25.15).
¹⁵¹ ynic nöpîltique: read ynic icnopîltique.
¹⁵² tetyamiça: read tiamiquia.
¹⁵³ nigotonaya: read nicotonaya.
¹⁵⁴ niqunîormellavh: read niqunîolmelauh.
“Why has God cast you into mictlan?”

He will say, “God cast me down because it was not possible for me to keep his commands, because I enriched myself, I just lived haughtily. Likewise, I just looked down upon my subjects, causing them to suffer, imposing much work on them. Many times I demanded their belongings. They cultivated fields for me [and] I compensated them nothing for it. Many times on my account they sold even what I demanded of them. Even though they had given me much, I wasn’t satisfied with it. And now I have descended into mictlan because I did not compensate them, I made them suffer. For this reason I will live burning forever [178v] because I didn’t provide my subjects with any compensation. What is more, I just took for myself that which they went to toss in the fire before me, thus making them orphans,155 I didn’t give them their share. Also, I made their women my property, taking them as my mistresses. When my relatives died, at my command they just went along begging in the middle of the marketplace, selling goods. In this way I greatly offended God. And because I didn’t confess before [a priest] he cast me into mictlan.”

Then the hermit will say, “So be it! Be gone, you wicked one! Therefore come to your senses, O rulers!”156

The Merchant

Then he will say, “I ask you, who are you?”

Then the merchant will say, “I am Toribio, I am a merchant. My job was going around deceiving people, charging them usurious interest and stealing from the nobles. When I did business I sold things on the sly. I snatched away people’s property and I sold it to others. Then I would denounce him [to the authorities] unless I would burn that which they will give me, then [the interest] will overflow, will spill over.157 I doubt God desired this.158 And I also took earthly things as my property. I didn’t have mercy on the poor because I was enriching myself. I just completely devoted myself to adultery. Even though I would whip myself I would absolutely not give up my mistresses, I wouldn’t desist from my bad living, I wouldn’t confess. Because of this God cast me into mictlan [where] the symbol of my mistresses goes around whipping me.”

Then [the hermit] will say, “Is it just you alone who is there?”

Then the merchant will say, “It is not just I alone. There are many merchants who are there in mictlan.”

Then [the hermit] will say, “Be gone, you wicked one!”

155 Tentative translation.
156 As I read it, this is another direct address to the audience, in this case, members of the audience who are tlatoque.
157 Tentative translation.
158 cuix mo: Andrews writes that when mo is “preceded by the interrogative particle cuix, the implied answer to the rhetorical question is in the negative” (2003:435). Therefore, the merchant’s question cuix mo iuhqui quimonequiltia dios (“Does God perchance desire this?”) can also be phrased as a statement, “I doubt God desired this.”
(motoriniani)\(^{159}\)

\[\text{Nimá .} \quad \text{yn ermitano nimiztla[179v]tlaniya ac tevatl}\]
Ca nevatl nigüa\(^{160}\) ninotoriniya

nimá .\(\text{q.}\) tleyca yn otiya mictlan

nimá tenăqlliz .\(\text{q.}\) yehica yn niquallaniya ninoxicovaya yehica yn atley yn notlatq amo ma ye
pachivia yn noyollo ca čan nitlăcivhtinencə . \(\text{tpc }\) amo nellimiqa niman

atley nayya\(^{161}\) ynic nečizquiya yn nocochca yn nonehevho.\(^{162}\) Ca čan niquixcaviaya yn nitlăcivhtinęcə ynic nichehtinięcə Ca čan nicohtinencia yehica yn a\(^0\) ninoyolmellavh Onitemoc
mictlan Auh cenca miyečntin ynpa yemi yn tlačivini ye nechtoneva yn cocova yehica
ninoxicotinencia yn atley notlatqui

nimá .\(\text{q.}\) māvi\(^{163}\) tla xiyavh

Telpochtli

\[\text{Nimá .} \quad \text{yn ermitano nimiztlahtlaniya ac tevatl}\]
Auh ca nevatl nitelpochtli notoca locas

Auh tleyca yn onitemoc mictlan

.\(\text{q.}\) yehica miyequintin čiva niq̃nomecatitinencia yn ipä Oninoquahateq macivi miyecpa
Onechilvique yn itemachticavan yn .\(\text{d.}\) ynic niq̃ncavaz[q]uia Auh amo niq̃ncavh čan ivhqui
y[180r]\(\text{t}\) atley ypä niq̃ticitac yn intlatol yvà Čeq̃tin yn nomecavan Oniquincentecpaví\(^{164}\) Auh yc
cenca Onicyollitlaco .\(\text{d.}\) yehica yn amo nechocti\(^{165}\) ynic notlahtlacol amo ninoyolmellavh ye
onechmotlaxilli : mictlan Auh yntla nicueppani yn naq̃nalnemiliz yntla ninoyolmellavani Ca
nechtlayocollizquia yn .\(\text{d.}\) Auh čan illiviz yc onitlavellillocatitinencia Auin axcā nechmečavitectivi
yn nomecavā : yehica nopāhpa Otémoq mictlá ypāhpa vel nemizneqā avh čan avel Onéque Čan
nevatl O niquinlacavalti ynic onechtlacamatq ynic notlan tonevativi Ca cenca miyečntin yn
telpohpochtìn yn onpa Otíaq mictlan

nima . \(\text{q.}\) yn ermitano ma yvi tla xiyavh yn titlavecloc

Tetlanochilliyani

\[\text{Niman .} \quad \text{q.\ yn ermitano nimiztlatlaniya\(^{166}\) ac tevatl}\]
nimá .\(\text{q.}\) Ca nevatl niguana\(^{167}\) nitetlavalnochilliani

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\(^{159}\) motoriniani: read motoliniani.
\(^{160}\) nigüa: read nijuana.
\(^{161}\) nayya: read ni ayya (the verb is ayy “to do”).
\(^{162}\) nonehevho: read nonehca. The couplet in nocochca in noneheuhoa means “my evening meal, my morning
meal,” i.e., my “daily bread” or “sustenance.”
\(^{163}\) māvi: read ma ihiu.
\(^{164}\) oniquincentecpanhui: read oniquincentecpanhui.
\(^{165}\) nechocti: read nechchocti.
\(^{166}\) nimiztlatlaniya: read nimiztlatlania.
\(^{167}\) niguana: read nijuana (“I am Juana”).
The Poor One

Then the hermit will say, “I ask you, [179v] who are you?”
“I am Juan, I am impoverished.”

Then he will say, “Why did you go to mictlan?”

Then he will answer saying, “Because I was angry, I was envious. Because I had no possessions I wasn’t satisfied, I just lived lazily on earth. I didn’t work the fields, I didn’t do anything at all to earn my daily bread. I just used to devote myself to rushing around and stealing. I just slept all the time. I descended to mictlan because I didn’t confess. Many, many lazy people live there. As a result the serpents afflict me because I was envious and I had no possessions.”

Then he will say, “So be it! Be gone!”

The Youth

Then the hermit will say, “I ask you, who are you?”
“I am a young man, my name is Lucas.”

“And why did you go down to mictlan?”

He will say, “Because of the many women I took as mistresses. I baptized myself in it even though God’s teachers told me many times to leave them. But I did not leave them, [180r] I just despised their words. I had sex with some of my mistresses a lot! In this I offended God greatly. Because my sins didn’t cause me to weep, I didn’t confess, he cast me to mictlan. If I had turned around my bad life, if I had confessed, then God would have had mercy on me. But I just lived wickedly and without care. And now my mistresses go whipping me for on account of me they have gone down to mictlan. They wanted to live, but it was not possible for them to live. It was I who prevented them. Since they obeyed me, they go suffering with me. Indeed, there are very many young men who went there to mictlan.”

The hermit will say, “So be it! Be gone, you wicked one!”

The Procuress

Then the hermit will say, “I ask you, who are you?”

Then she will say, “It is I, Juana. I am a procuress.”

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168 I take this to mean that he was willing to submit to baptism but untilling to end his relationships with his mistresses.
Auh tleyca [180v] yn oniya mictlā
.ȝ. yehica ca noteq'vh Catca yn niquimixtlacavintīnca yn ichpohpochtīn yniqlnoçaya169 ynic yntlan cochizque : yn telpohpochtīn Ca čan ic nechtlajaltiayaya yn telpohpochtīn Ĉano yevatl yn noconevh tetlanochilliani Auh yn axcan mictlān Otemoque mochipa nicmamatinemi yehica noteq Oḏcuic yn tetlanochillilištli Auh ya yc cenca titoneva yn tomextīn yehica yn a'0 ypā titoyolmelahuazque170

Auh nimā .q. yn ermitano tla xivh171 yn titlaveliloc

Aviyani

ponsorimā quitozyn ermitano nimiztlahtlania ac tevatl
.ȝ. ca nevatl naviani niCatharinā notoca
nimā qlviz Auh tleyca Otia mictlān

Ca yehica niquimixcvatintenca yn niqlnoztenca yn telpohpochtīn ynic notlan Cochīya Auh miyeq'tnīn nopālpā Otemoque mictlān Ca čan noteq'vh Ocencat[181r]ca yn nitenehnepliviltiyanca ynic nitapilvitinēca ynic otlica nitexquilitinēca nitemanoztinēca nitexyqnoztenca Ṣa techā nicacalactinēnca ynic opa notlā cochīya yn oqchtīn Ca čan ic pachivīya yn noyollo ynic nipactintenca ynic iquac nitetlaxintenca yehica ync. tpc. ninēca a'0 ninoyolmelavh niman a'0 niccōtōqi yn naqulnemillīz Auh yn axcan yc onechmotlaxilli .d. yn mictlān ypaḣpā Ca miyecpa yni onicaq' yn teotlatołli Ca ča centlacnepal Ocallaqē Oc nocentlacnepal Oqzē niman avel nitec Omotla[x]lli Auh yn axcan cenca tlapanaviyā ynic nechtonēva : yn tlaltlacačē0.

Auh nimā .q. yn ermitano Auh Cuix miyeq'tnīn ynic aviyanime ynic ona cate ynic mictlān
nimā .q. Ca cenca timiyequentīn ynic opa ticate : yn amo ča tlapovaltīn ynic [181v] titlaveliloci
nimā .q. r.172 ma yvi tla xiyavh ynic titlavelilloc

Ychpochtli

onorimā .q. yn ermitano ni miztlahtlania ac tevatl :

nimā .q. Ca nevatl nichpochtli nicencilliya173

Auh tleyca yn oniya mictlān

nimā .q. Ca yehica ynic iquac nichpochnēmiya Ca ča niqxcavitinemizquiya ynic nictlayecoltitinitemizqīya ynic .d. ynic a'0 ninoqčhavatizquiya Auh ca ča ceppa Onechitlacavi ynic tlacatecolotl ce pilontlā ychtaça onic[t]izqī Onopā nitecac Auh macivi ynic avel ynic o[n]echtlaxin Ca cenca ynic onicyollitolci .d. yehica ynic ma ninoqčhavatizquī niman

169 yniqlnoçaya: read in niquinnotzaya.
170 titoyolmelahuazque: read titoyolmelahuazque.
171 xiu: read xiyaух.
172 This is, I presume, an abbreviation for yn ermitano.
173 cencilliya: read Cecilia.
“And why [180v] did you go to mictlan?”

She will say, “Because my job was going around deceiving the young women. I called them to sleep with the young men. In this way the young men kept me fed. My child is also a procuress. And now they have descended to mictlan. I will always go along bearing her on my back because on account of me she took to procuring. And now as a result we both suffer greatly because we will not confess.”

And then the hermit will say, “Be gone, you wicked one!”

The Prostitute

Then the hermit will say, “I ask you, who are you?”

She will say, “I am a prostitute. My name is Catarina.”

Then he will say, “And why did you go to mictlan?”

“Because I went around devoting myself to calling on the young men so that they would sleep with me. Many of them descended to mictlan because of me. It was just my job. [181r] I stuck out my tongue at people, I pointed my finger at people in the road, I laughed at people, I beckoned with my hand to people, I beckoned with my head to people, I just went into people’s homes so that the men would sleep with me there. This way I satisfied myself; I was happy when I was committing adultery. Because I didn’t confess and I absolutely didn’t break off from my bad life while I was still living on earth, because of this God has cast me to mictlan. Many times I heard the sacred words but they just entered on one side and came out on the other. They didn’t sink in at all. Now the tlatlacecoloh cause me to suffer exceedingly.”

Then the hermit will say, “How many prostitutes are there in mictlan?”

Then she will say, “Indeed, there are many of us there. We who go along burning are without number.” [181v]

Then the hermit will say, “So be it! Be gone, you wicked one!”

The Young Woman

Then the hermit will say, “I ask you, who are you?”

Then she will say, “I am a young woman. I am Cecilia.”

“Why did you go to mictlan?”

Then she will say, “Because when I was a little girl I would devote myself to serving God, to the point where I didn’t want to live as a married woman. But just one time the tlacatecolotl deceived me. I secretly grabbed this small boy and laid him down on me. Even though it isn’t possible that he committed adultery with me, greatly did I offend God. Would that I had married! Then

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174 Thanks to the Nahuatl listserv, especially Michael McCafferty, Michel Launey, Magnus Pharo Hansen for help with this. Exchanges dated 9/28/14.
175 Literally, “they didn’t sink into my belly (nitic).”
176 I presume this is because neither were married at the time.

nimā .q. yn er¹⁷⁹ ma yvi tla xiyavh yn titlaveliloc

Ticitl

 Nimā quitoz yn ermitano nimiztlahtlaniya ac tevatl
nimā .q. Ca nevatl niyantonio ničitl¹⁸⁰
Auh tleyca yn otiya mictlan

nimā .q. yehica Cenca nicnocuitlavitinencya yn ticiyotl ŋc¹⁸¹ ni[q]uimiztlacavitinenca miyequentin ypāhpā Ca noteqyv [182v] catca yni¹⁸² nicchayavhtiīnēca ynteyxpā tlayolli niquintlapoviyaya Auin aŋq qniqintlavelliyya niqonipatiyya ynic miqžquq macivi miyecpa yn onicāq yntetoatlōl niman a⁰ ninoyolmelavazneq niman a⁰ niccavazneq yntotlahtlilocayo Auh yntey xcan yce onechmotlaxilī .d. mictlan yntey xcan mochipa nicmamatinemiy nisquich ynic niquintlapovhtineca yc cenca nitoneva yvā mochipa nechmecavite[ŋ] ynteyvātin yntiquintoqtiyta niča çā tlahtlacat° yntiquinoqtiyta niča ykuic niquintlapovhtineca

nimā .q. yn ermitano tla xivallavh ŋnin titlavelitineca ynic tiquimiztlacavitinenca yma cceveltin tla xicpovhauqī

nimā ničā tlapovaz yntlapovhāq

nimā .q. yn ermitano yyoyave ŋ titeyztlacaviy Cuxi ticiyati yn oc tinemī . tpc . ynteyn qnomachitiyya .d.

nimā .q. ma yvi tla [183r] xiyavh yn "tlavelliloc Auh yntī titcīyey ynnn maca° xicchivācā ninn maca° xiquimiticā yntātī Cān niman a° quallī yntey civa : yntezitite ynic qtlacaqsaq yne iconevas¹⁸³ ynic maca° xiquimiticun yntātī patli ynic moteqacatillizīqe ynecdí¹⁸⁴ anyazqey mictlan

Motlahtlaxillianī

 Nimā .q. yn ermitano nimiztlahtlania ac tevatl

¹⁷⁷ Auintla: read Auh intla.
¹⁷⁸ ninoyormalavani: read nonoyolmelahuani.
¹⁷⁹ yner: read yn ermitano.
¹⁸⁰ ničitl: read niticītīl.
¹⁸¹ ŋc: read ynic.
¹⁸² yni: read yn.
¹⁸³ iconevas: read inconehuan.
¹⁸⁴ ynicd: read ynic dios.
the *tlacatecolotl* would not have deceived me so many times. And I confessed many times. But this one single sin I never revealed, I never said it to the priest. [182r] I just hid it because my sins shamed me greatly. Even though I lived very penitently, because I died in sin God cast me into *mictlan*. If I had confessed God would have had mercy on me. But now I will never be saved, he will never have mercy on me. I will always suffer, always go around carrying that boy on my back because I slept with him and together with him I am continually burning. There are very many others there.”

Then the hermit will say, “So be it! Be gone, you wicked one!”

**The Healer**

Then the hermit will say, “I ask you, who are you?”

Then he will say, “I am Antonio, I am a healer.”

“And why did you go to *mictlan*?”

Then he will say, “Because I really devoted myself to healing and so deceived many because of it. My job [182v] was just scattering shelled maize grains before people; I used to count them. And those who I hated, I treated in such a way that they would die. Even though many times I heard the sacred words, I didn’t want to confess, I didn’t want to abandon my wickedness. And now because of this God has cast me down to *mictlan*. Now I will always go along carrying on my back everything that I divined. Because of this I am suffering greatly and those who I considered gods are whipping me; they’re just the *tlatlacatecoloh* I called upon when I was divining.”

Then the hermit will say, “Come now! How did you divine and so deceive the common folk? Please, divine it!”

*Then here the diviner will make his prognostication.*

Then the hermit will say, “Ah! You liar! Do you know what God taught while you were still living on earth?” Then he will say, “So be it! [183r] Be gone, you wicked one! Moreover, O healers, don’t do this! Don’t make women drink the potion. It is absolutely not good that women who are pregnant abort their children. Don’t make them drink the bad potion and become sterile, and in so doing God will make you go to *mictlan.*”

**One Who Induces Her Own Abortion**

Then the hermit will say, “I ask you, who are you?”

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185 This seems to imply that the character playing the *tonalpouhqui* will re-enact here on stage his divination ritual. This is remarkable to imagine happening in a play composed by or under the close supervision of a friar. Even writing about such rituals in detail was forbidden at this time. Many would certainly have considered performing them on stage before an audience scandalous.

186 the potion: this refers to an abortifacent. Apparently, Aquino’s chief concern with traditional healers was their role in helping women have abortions or sterilize themselves.
nimā quitoz. Ca ni[f]rācisca
Auh tleyca yn otiya mictlā
nimā .q. yehica yn iquac yn oztli187 nica ratio niquintlaçaya yn noconevā yniquac yn oce
ninēca tpc niman amo niquimizcaltizneqā amo niquvpavazneqā ca čañ niquixcavitinemiyā yni
nitetlaxintinemiyā Auh yehica yni a° ninoymellavyc onechmotlaxiīl .d. mictlā yni cenca
nitoneva mochipa niqumamatinemi yni noconevā yni oniqn[183v]tlaz yni cenca Onicyollitlaco .d.
yehica yni ayamo moquahateqtīyāq Ca čañ noppāhp
nimā .q. r. ma yvī tla xiyav yni titlavelliloc

Motetzacatilliani

Niman .q. yni ermitano nimitzatlānti yni ac tevatl
carnavatl nimotetzacatilliyani : Auh tleyca yni otiya mictlan
nimā .q. ca yehica yni oniquitlanili yni ticitl yni tetezcapaniti ynic onimotetzacatillī188 ynic a°
nitlaca chi-vasneqīyā n[i]tizinēqā ca čañ niquixcavitinemiyā yni tetlaximilitzli yni pachivia yni
noyollo yni cenca onicyollitlaco yni icel teotl yni onechmotlaxili mictlan yehica yni a° amo
ninoymellav yntiā ninoymellavani nimā nechtlayocollīzqīyā .d. avin axcā yni
nitlaxin etni yni nechmecavitinemiyā yni nomecavā yni niqvicatinēcā . tpc . ca vel
ye[184r]vatlpāhpnini nolatlalcol
ma vi189 tla xiyav yni titlavelli loc

Moyectocani Tedenanavatilliani190

Nimā .q. yni ermitano nimitzatlānti yni ac tevatl
nimā .q. ca nevatl nidomino ninoymectocani
Auh tleyca yni otiya mictlā
nimā .q. ca ypāhpā yni nomoyectocatinencā191 ca čañ noteqvh catca : yni nitetenanavatilitiēnēcā :
tetel nita xitizinēcā yni tlalilacoli Ca čañ ic niteyz tlalacaviyā yehica Ceppa Oniceteylvi Ce
civatl Otetlaxin ca čañ yehica nitzlavelliētā ca nić[i]tenanavatilliēyā yni yvā yvā192 Ōce civatl
ytech niquxalani niqnotzazneqā Ca čañ niquxalancayttaya yni iquac niqcnamiqui yehica
otitono[t]zque yni amo titepātlacakotlaqec onechmotlaxili .d. mictlan yehica yni a°
ninoyme[184v]llav Auh cenca miyequintin yni opa cate mictlan yni ivhē yni intlahtlacak

187 noztli: read notztli (ni[j]+otzti)
188 onimotetzacatili: read oninotetzacatili.
189 vi: here and below read ihui.
190 Tedenanavatilliani: read Tetenanahuatilliani.
191 nomoyectocatinenc: read ninoymectocatinenc.
192 Aquino mistakenly wrote yvā twice.
Then she will say, “I am Francisca.”

“Why did you go to mictlan?”

Then she will say, “Because I aborted my children when I was pregnant. While I was still living on earth I didn’t want to raise my children, I didn’t want to care for them, I just lived devoting myself to adultery. Because I didn’t confess God cast me into mictlan where I am suffering greatly, where I always go along bearing my children on my back, those who I cast away. [183v] In this way I really offended God, because they were not yet baptized; it’s all my fault.”

Then the hermit will say, “So be it! Be gone, you wicked one!”

One Who Sterilizes Herself

Then the hermit will say, “I ask you, who are you?”

“I am the one who makes herself sterile.”

“Why did you go to mictlan?”

Then she will say, “Because I asked the healer for a sterilizing potion and with it I sterilized myself because I didn’t want to give birth. I didn’t want to get pregnant. I just devoted myself exclusively to adultery in order to satisfy myself. As a result I greatly offended the only deity. Therefore he cast me to mictlan because I didn’t confess. If I had confessed then God would have had mercy on me. As a result I now go along burning while my lovers, those whom I used to accompany while on earth, whip me. This is really [184r] because of my sins.”

“So be it! Be gone, you wicked one!”

The Traitorous Hypocrite

Then the hermit will say, “I ask you, who are you?”

Then he will say, “I am Domingo, I am a hypocrite.”

“Why did you go to mictlan?”

Then he will say, “Because I lived as a hypocrite. I just made it my job to go around betraying people. I unjustly accused people of sin. I used to deceived people with this. One time I accused a woman of committing adultery just because I hated her. I betrayed her along with another woman with whom I was angry; I wanted to solicit her. I would look with anger at her when I would meet her because we solicited each other [but] we didn’t love each other. For this reason God cast me into mictlan because I didn’t confess. [184v] There are very many there in mictlan whose sins are like this.

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193 I aborted: niquintilazaya, literally “I cast them away.”
194 Literally, “I wanted to summon her” (nicnotzaznequia). The intent here is to summon for sex, to solicit. In the Confessionario breve, fray Alonso de Molina writes the following questions regarding the sixth commandment (“Thou shalt not commit adultery”): “Did you desire a woman? Did you have relations with her? How many women did you have relations with? Was she your relative? How do you summon her (ticnotza)?” (1565: fol. 11r).
Auh ynin ca çan ic nitoneva yn nonenepil yn ic nechcuapachivillitinemi yn tlatlahcateº nimā .q. r. ma yvi tla xiyavh yn titlavelliloc

Ychtequini

¶Nimā .q. yn ermitano nimitzlania¹⁹⁵ ac tevatl
nimā .q. ca nevatl niyantoniyo
Auh tleyca yn otiya m[i]ctlan

niman .q. yehica çan noteqvh catca yn nichitectinemiz yn nicteuiz y tetilma yn teyaxca yn tecococavh yehica a⁰ ninoyolmelavh. ynic onechmotlaxilli .d. mictlan ye nitoneva
nicmamatinemi yn Cuavitl ynic nechtllalia yn tlahtlacateº. Auh ynī ca timiyeqntin
nimā quitoz .r. ma yvi tla xiyavh yn titlavelliloc [185r]

YNin yvayorq Ñtecac

¶Nimā .q. yn ermitano nimiztlahtlaniya ac tevatl
ni.q.¹⁹⁶ ca nevatl nimartin
Auh tleyca yn otiya mictlan

yehica yn onictecac ce civatl novanyolq ye cenca onicyollitlaco .d. ye onechtiaz mictlan yehica
a⁰ Onimoyolmelavh Auh ca no yevatl yn novayozq çan nopāhpa oyaqui mictlan Auh macivi yn
nevatl OnicCui[t]lavilti Ca çan a⁰ Oninoyormellavh tomentin titlatlatingem Ca çano yevatl
nechmecavitetectinemi Ceqntin yn opa cate cenca miyeqntin yn oqnteqiaq ynin yvayorqe¹⁹⁷
yevatlin yn cenca noyeytlatlacol
nimā .q. ma vi tla xivh yn titlavelliloc Auh ynin macayac yvhqui qchivaz

¹⁹⁵ nimitzlania: read nimitztlatlania.
¹⁹⁶ ni.q.: read niman quitoz.
¹⁹⁷ yvayorque: read huanyolque.
What is more, because of this my tongue is in pain because the tlatlacatecoloh go around gagging me.”

Then the hermit will say, “So be it! Be gone, you wicked one!”

**The Thief**

Then the hermit will say, “I ask you, who are you?”
Then he will say, “I am Antonio.”

“Well did you go to mictlan?”

Then he will say, “Because I made going around stealing my job. I would take a person’s cloak from him, a person’s property, a person’s things. Because I didn’t confess, God cast me into mictlan. Because of this I am suffering, bearing on my back the wood that the tlatlacatecoloh placed on me. And there are many of us.”

Then the hermit will say, “So be it! Be gone, you wicked one!” [185r]

**This One Lay With His Relative**

Then the hermit will say, “I ask you, who are you?”
Then he will say, “I am Martin.”

“Well did you go to mictlan?”

“Well because I slept with a woman who was my relative and therefore greatly offended God. Because of this he cast me into mictlan because I didn’t confess. That same one, my relative, she also went to mictlan because of me. Even though I was the one who forced her I didn’t confess. Both of us are burning. That same one goes along whipping me. There are some others there, many who had sex with their relatives. This is my very great sin.”

Then he will say, “So be it! Be gone, you wicked one! Furthermore, let no one do this!”

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198 This might be a reference to the frequently cited passage in the Book of Third James where the author warns of the power of the tongue (i.e., speech) to drag people into sin. “When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal...Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one’s life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison” (3:2–8). Domingo bemoans his hurting tongue and the mention of being “gagged” by demons echoes James’ comparison of putting bits in the mouths of horses to “taming the tongue.”

199 The sinners each bear some kind of prop representative of their particular sin. In this case, Antonio appears to be carrying a bundle of wood. This echoes another series of questions in Molina’s Confessionario breve. Under questions regarding the seventh commandment (“Thou shalt not steal”), Molina asks, “Did you cut down wood from someone else’s forest? Or did you take someone’s wood?” (1565: fol. 14v). This is further evidence of Aquino’s familiarity with the doctrinal discourses of the friars.
Cuilloni

[185v] ¶ Nimá .q. yn ermitano nimiztlaniya 200 ac tevatl
nimá .q. ca nevatl nicontzalo

Auh tleyca yn otiya mictlá

nimá .q. ca yehica centetl vey tlahtlacoltemictianı Cenca temamavhti maca° niquito Ca cenca
temamavhti cenca nechpinavhtiya Cenca nechtēcacua

nimá .q. ayyoyavhe ancamo 201 mizpinavhti yn iCuaic Oticchivh avin axcan ya qnmi[t]zpinavhtiya
ytencopaçinco .d. nimi[t]zilviya ma niman xiquito

avin Cuiloni nimá qtoz : Onotlaveliltic axcan ticmatiz Ca niCuilloni Cenca yec pachivia yn
noyollo yn iquac nechCuillontiaya nevatl niqunCuitlavítiaya yn ceqntin yn notlan cochiya
yntlaça° noyollo tlamatini amo nechcuillontizquia yn yevatl yn tlahtlacolli Cenca quitlavellitta
ŷ .d. çan ic ovapachiovac yn yn ve[186r]cahv yn noviyā cemanavac : mochintin Ovato° que
Ovatlan micque Ca ca chiCueytin cacaltica Omomaquixtíque ytencopaçinco yn .d. yehica
teuillontitinêque Auh ce tlacatl : ytlaco .d. Omomaqti ytoca : lôt yvā Omētin yvipvā yec ticmatiz
Ca cenca qeucalxcaytta ŭ .d. yn aqq teCuilontitinemi Auh yntla nicotonani yn naqualinemilliz
yntla nimoyommellavani ca nechtlayocollizquia ŭ .d. avinin ca çan amo nimoyommellavhti ayc
cenca niteneva nechmeccavitentineyi yn nechcuillontique Ca nopahpa Onpa Òtemoque yn mictlan
Ca çan yevatlin ŭ. 202 notlahtlacol

nimá .q. yn ermitano ma yvi tla xiyavh yn titlavelliloc nimá .q. ma nimá xiquinchichacan yn
amochintin : Ca vel tleco moneq yn Cuillonime

[186v] Tepatlachviyani

¶ Nimá .q. yn ermitano ac tevatl
 .q. Ca nevatl nitepatlachviyani Ca nitominco

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200 nimitztlaniya: read nimitztlatlania.
201 ancamo: I’m not sure what this is, exactly. Could the an- be an outrigger from the mitzpinauhti? This would render “they didn’t shame you.” For now I am just reading –amo as ahmo.
202 I haven’t figured out what this abbreviation stands for. It appears elsewhere, too.
Then the hermit will say, “I ask you, who are you?”
Then he will say, “I am Gonzalo.”

“Why did you go to mictlan?”

Then he will say, “Because of one single, great mortal sin. It is very frightening, let me not utter it! It is very frightening, it shames me greatly, it really renders me mute!”

Then he will say, “Ha! It didn’t shame you when you did it! Now it shames you? By God’s command I say to you, Say it now!”

Then the cuiloni will say, “O how unfortunate I am! Now you will know that I am a cuiloni, I satisfied myself greatly when they did cuiloni to me. It was I who used to force some others to sleep with me. If I hadn’t been such a coward they would not have done cuiloni me. God really despises that particular sin. This was the reason that long ago [186r] the flood spread over the whole world. Everyone was carried away by the water, they died by the water. By God’s command only eight were saved in the boat. It was all because they went around doing cuiloni. And one person, God’s beloved, was saved along with his two children. His name was Lot. Because of this you will know that God greatly despises those who go along doing cuiloni to others. If I had desisted from my bad way of life, if I had confessed, God would have had mercy on me. But I didn’t confess, and because of this I am suffering greatly. Those who did cuiloni to me go along whipping me. They descended to mictlan because of me. That is my sin.”

Then the hermit will say, “Same to you: Be gone, you wicked one!” Then he will say, “Now spit on them, all of you! It is necessary that the cuilonimeh be [cast] into the fire.”

Then the hermit will say, “Who are you?”
He will say, “I am a tepatlachhuiani, I am Domingo.”

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203 they did cuiloni to me: here I follow Pete Sigal in his use of this phrase to render what traditionally would have been translated as “they sodomized me” (2011:99–101).
204 This is an example of Aquino confusing two different passages from scripture, in this case the story of Noah and the Great Flood and that of Lot and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Noah and his family were saved from the flood, and Lot was the one spared from destruction due to the sins of the the people of Sodom. I interpret this as more evidence that Aquino wrote this play with little to no supervision from friars, since it would be hard to imagine a friar catching this confusion of scriptural passages and not correcting it.
205 Book X of the Florentine Codex states that the cuiloni “merits being committed to flames, burned, consumed by fire” (Book X:38).
206 Molina defines tepatlachhuiani as “woman who does it with another woman; lesbian.” Although the etymology is uncertain, most commentators since Molina have followed suit, identifying the tepatlachhuiani as a woman who engages in sexual acts with another woman. However, we have here what to my knowledge is the only colonial usage of the term that identifies the individual as a male. A number of other possible definitions are suggested by this surprising fact: men masturbating each other, a cross-dressing male, a transgender male, or even a hermaphrodite. Due to difficulties accurately translating this term, I leave it untranslated here and below.
nimâ Oc ceppa .q. Auh tleyca yn otiya mictlan
nimâ .q. Ca tevantin Çä nepanol titopatlachviaya Ca cenca temahmavhti tlahtlacolli Auh amo hotechocti\textsuperscript{207} yn totlahtlacol yc otechmotlaxilli .d. mictlâ etc
nimâ .q. yn ermitano Otlaxiôn chichacan

**Auh yn ermitano nimâ qmilviz yn mochintin**

Nopilvanhe yn axcan Ca ya ovâquimocaqtique yn ixâch yn tlahtlacolli ypâhpa temollo mictlâ yvâ Ovâquicaq yn qinin Onpa tonevallo mictlan Auh yn axcan tlaxicotonacan yn amacualnemilliz yehica amo honpa âyazque macâ\textsuperscript{9} ytech ximixCuitican yn aqualtin ma vel amitec motlalli yn teotlatoli [187r] nemaquixtilloni xicneltocacan yn icel teotl yn yeSuxpô yn nelli .d. ynic a° maquistizque Auh yntlacamo xiyectiyacan ýtlaca° xicCueppacan yn amonemilliz ya hamevâ\textsuperscript{208} anqmati yn nevatl ya ninomaâstia

\textbullet Auh nimâ .q. yn ermitano tlahtlacatecolloye tla xiviyan\textsuperscript{209} tla xicanati yn tlaveliloc xicvicacan yn mictlâ Ca vel onpa moneq yn inacayo yehica miyeûntin Oqâmiztlacavi Auh nimâ .q. yn ermitano ma namechnotlalcavilli nopilvanhe

Auh ca ya Cuicativi yn tlahtlacatecolo ynic qCuicatizque yn âtexpô ets.

\textsuperscript{207} hotechocti: read otechchocti.
\textsuperscript{208} amehuan: read amehuantin.
\textsuperscript{209} This is another very formal, polite address by the hermit to the demons that could be translated “Oh devils, may you please go, if you will.”
Then again he will say, “Why did you go to mictlan?”
Then he will say, “We just did tepatlachhuiani to each other. It is indeed a very frightening sin. It didn’t make us weep for our sins, therefore God cast us to mictlan.”
Then the hermit will say, “Spit on them!”

**And the hermit will then say to all of them,**

“O my children! Today you have heard about all of the sins that cause there to be descending into mictlan, and you have heard how there is suffering there in mictlan. Now desist from your bad way of living so that you will not go there. Don’t follow the example of the bad ones. Place the divine word, [187r] the instrument of salvation within you. Believe in the only teotl, Jesus Christ, the true God, so that you will be saved. And if you don’t purify yourselves, if you don’t turn around your lives you know that as for me, I am saving myself.”

And then the hermit will say, “O tlalacatecoloh! Be gone! Go grab the wicked one [and] bring him to mictlan! His body is needed there because he deceived many.” And then the hermit will say, “O my children, I take my leave of you!”

*(At that the tlalacatecoloh go off singing.)*

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210 This is the final admonitory speech of the play; the “them” being referred to here is the audience.
211 I am saving myself: tentative translation.
212 Here singing is called for, despite the injunction against it at the beginning of the play. The ending imagined here by Aquino stands in stark contrast to the first play, which ends on a more optimistic note with the righteous singing the *Te Deum* with the saints in heaven.
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