

THE CHURCH AND CONVENTO OF SANTO DOMINGO YANHUITLAN, OAXACA:
ART, POLITICS, AND RELIGION IN A MIXTEC VILLAGE,
SIXTEENTH THROUGH EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

by

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Abstract

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by

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The mission-building campaign undertaken in the Americas in the years following the Spanish conquest (1521-1546) is the largest and most ambitious evangelical and artistic enterprise in the history of the Catholic Church. In the span of just a few decades, Spanish mendicant friars, at the head of the missionary efforts, established hundreds of *conventos* (missions) in both colonial cities and provinces. These institutions did not merely accommodate friars. Planned to carry out doctrinal, educational, and liturgical activities, they soon became booming economic and cultural centers.

This dissertation focuses on the convento in the Mixtec town of Yanhuitlan in Oaxaca, southwestern Mexico, and is the first to provide a comprehensive study of a mission and its historical development. Previous art historical scholarship has usually granted separate attention to the architecture, painting, and sculpture of the Mexican missions, overrating formal qualities and neglecting the fact that all aspects of the convento were part of the same larger artistic and religious program.

The sixteenth-century missionary complex consists of the main church, adjoining cloister, and residential and working areas; it houses several colonial altarpieces and a

collection of wooden polychrome sculptures. It was the most important artistic enterprise undertaken in Yanhuitlan in the early decades after the conquest and has remained since then the main focus of artistic and religious activities. First, the alliance of Mixtec leaders with Dominican friars and Spanish authorities made possible the erection of the mission, which became a powerful statement of the new hegemonic status of Yanhuitlan in the region. In the following centuries, activities of the confraternities became the most important impulse of art patronage. Spanish in origin, these institutions became gradually independent from the local parish and colonial authorities, filling the vacuum left by a waning traditional leadership.

My dissertation integrates on-site investigation and archival and ethnographic research to address the various strategies of appropriation, manipulation, and display of Spanish, Mixtec, and hybrid art forms in the context of political colonization and religious evangelization.

PREFACE

The village of Santo Domingo Yanhuitlan is located in the Mixteca Alta (Highland Mixteca), a mountainous area of southern Mexico mostly inhabited by Mixtec speakers, an Amerindian language that is part of the Otomanguean family. While the Mixteca also includes the Mixteca Baja (Lowland Mixteca) and the Mixteca de la Costa (Coastal Mixteca), the Mixteca Alta can be considered a somewhat separate region given a peculiar climatic and orographic situation. Its highland setting in fact gives the region a cool and dry season, between November and April. Tropical humidity and temperatures are instead typical in the Mixteca Baja and Mixteca de la Costa throughout the year. Strong linguistic variations between the highlands and the tropical regions also indicate closer ties within the Mixteca Alta than with the other two areas. Map 1 shows the regions of the Mixteca, plus the area of the Central Valleys, where Mixtec enclaves were found in and around the town of Cuilapan.

The more intensively studied area of Central Mexico is an adjoining region in the central highlands of Mexico, encompassing the modern states of México, Morelos, Tlaxcala, Puebla, and the Federal District (D.F.). Similar to the Mixteca, it constitutes a single geographical and cultural area, given its location on a high plateau and the common Nahuatl language and heritage shared by its inhabitants.

Several indigenous and Spanish terms employed in this dissertation appear with different spellings in original documents as well as modern secondary sources. The lack of an alphabetical script in ancient Mesoamerica and colonial-era notaries' ignorance of terminology related to local geography and socio-political institutions generated a persistent ambiguity. I employ modern spellings for Mixtec and Nahuatl names, except when I was not able to identify the modern equivalent of colonial names. This is

particularly the case of Yanhuitlan's barrios (neighborhoods) discussed in chapter 6, which no longer exist and are currently only known through oral traditions. In Appendix B, "Processional Angels," I supply alternative spellings for each barrio.

Although in modern Spanish there is a tendency to stress the last syllable of Mexican indigenous localities with an accent (e.g., Yanhuitlán), I avoid doing that. This practice does not correspond to the correct native pronunciation, where the penultimate is accentuated. Finally, recurrent Spanish terms are not translated into English. Instead, the first occurrence is italicized and accompanied by an English explanation in parenthesis. A Glossary provides common Spanish, Mixtec, and Nahuatl terms employed throughout this dissertation. All translations from Spanish are mine, unless otherwise specified.

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Many people and institutions have helped me grow as a person and student since I began graduate studies in 2001.

First of all, I have to thank Professor Eloise Quiñones Keber, my adviser since year one at CUNY Graduate Center, who guided me through seven years of coursework, academic writing, fieldwork research, conferences, publications, grant applications, and dissertation drafts. I benefited enormously from her comments and support. Whatever level of scholarship I achieved as a doctoral student, I owe to her more than anybody else.

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I was first introduced to the Mixteca, its millenary history and culture, by Professor Maarten Jansen and Ms. Aurora Pérez Jiménez at Leiden University, in the Netherlands, where I studied for my Masters degree in 2001-2002. Their vision concerning the study and preservation of Amerindian cultures has had the deepest impact on my research, giving me an intellectual purpose I doubt I would have ever acquired had I not had the chance to study with them, albeit briefly, in Leiden.

I entered the doctoral program at CUNY Graduate Center as a Fulbright scholar. This privilege enabled me to complete all residency requirements without any onerous work commitment. Fieldwork and archival research for this dissertation received the

initial support of the Center for Latin American, Latino, and Caribbean Studies at the Graduate Center that sponsored my first exploratory research in Oaxaca in 2002. In 2005, thanks to a Samuel H. Kress Foundation grant from the Renaissance Society of America, I spent a summer in Mexico and Spain, laying the foundation for my year-long fieldwork during 2006-2007. The bulk of my research was assisted by a fellowship from the International Dissertation Research Program of the Social Science Research Council with funds provided by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and additional grants from the Renaissance Society of America, the Graduate Research Grant Program and the Martin M. Spaggiaria Dissertation Award, these last two from CUNY Graduate Center.

In the Archivo General de la Nación, Fundación ICA, and Fototeca de la Coordinación Nacional de Monumentos Históricos, in Mexico City; the Archivo Histórico del Poder Judicial del Estado de Oaxaca, Archivo General del Estado de Oaxaca, Biblioteca Pública, and Fundación Bustamante Vasconcelos, in the city of Oaxaca; and the Archivo General de Indias and Archivo Histórico Provincial, in Seville, my work was made easier by the professionalism of the various staff. I was able to study rare indigenous doctrinal books at the Newberry Library, Chicago (2006), and the Huntington Library, San Marino (2008), thanks to the financial support of both institutions. My paleographic skills were improved during a Mellon Summer Institute in Spanish Paleography, held at the Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas, Austin, in 2007.

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truly a scholar's paradise, where the exceptional research facilities and stupendous location is only matched by the kindness and professionalism of the staff. I would have never been able to finish my dissertation in such a timely fashion had it not been for the view of the ocean from my office and the pool at scholar housing. Many thanks to Gabrielle Azucena, Jasmine Lin, and George Weinberg for making themselves available with their technical savvy and many afternoon tea conversations. Angie Donougher, Daniela Ferrari, and Sabine Schlosser facilitated my stay in every way possible. I also thank Director Thomas Gaehtgens and Dr. Charles Salas, formerly Head of Research and Education, for believing in my project. My colleagues Esra Akcan, Susaan Babaie, Carolin Behrmann, Jorge Coronado, Thierry de Duve, Hannah Feldman, Tallinn Grigor, Rob Linrothe, Germain Loumpet, Courtney Martin, Mary Roberts, and Andy Schulz have made this experience the more intellectually enriching and great fun. Many thanks especially to Carolin for sharing her knowledge and expertise of Italian Renaissance art with an Italian outsider.

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I dedicate this work to all Yanhuitecos. I hope they do not mind sharing this with my family in Bologna, Italy, and with Diego Zavaleta, *mi querido compañero*, in Mexico.

Alla mia famiglia

A Diego

Al pueblo de Yanhuitlán

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84. Albrecht Dürer, *Last Judgment*, from the *Small Passion*, 1511. *Source*: <http://www.artmuseums.harvard.edu/exhibitions/featured/passion/small371g.html>.
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89. Andrés de Concha, *Pentecost*. Church of Yanhuitlan. Source: Guillermo Tovar de Teresa, *Pintura y escultura en Nueva España (1557-1640)* (Mexico City: Grupo Azabache, 1992), 94.
90. Albrecht Dürer, *Pentecost*, from the *Small Passion*, 1511. Source: <http://www.artmuseums.harvard.edu/exhibitions/featured/passion/small361g.html>.
91. Lentencloth, 1472. Zittau, Germany. Source: http://www.zittauer-fastentuecher.de/frame_grossesfastentuchflash.htm.
92. Lentencloth (detail), 1472. Zittau, Germany. Source: http://www.zittauer-fastentuecher.de/frame_grossesfastentuchflash.htm.
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94. Simón Pereyans, *Ascension*, Main Altar. Church of San Miguel, Huejotzingo. Source: Guillermo Tovar de Teresa, *Renacimiento en México: Artistas y retablos* (Mexico City: Secretaría de Asentamientos Humanos y Obras Públicas, 1982), 243.
95. Baltazar Echave Orio, *Ascension*, Main Altar. Church of San Bernardino de Siena, Xochimilco. Source: Guillermo Tovar de Teresa, *Pintura y escultura en Nueva España (1557-1640)* (Mexico City: Grupo Azabache, 1992), 122.
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98. Andrés de Concha, *Virgin of the Rosary*. Church of San Pedro Tlahuac, D.F. Photo by author.
99. *Madonna and Child with a Rosary*. Source: *The Illustrated Bartsch*, vol. 164, German Single-Leaf Woodcuts before 1500: Anonymous Artists.
100. Veit Stoss, *The Angel Saluting Mary* ("Englischer Gruss"), 1517-18. Church of St. Lorenz, Nuremberg. Source: Erich Lessing Culture and Fine Arts Archives/ART RESOURCE, N.Y.

101. Maestro de Calviá, *Madonna of Rosary*, early 16th century. Museo Arqueológico, Palma de Mallorca, Spain. *Source*: Chandler R. Post, *A History of Spanish Painting* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), XI: 152.
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103. Andrés de Concha, *Coronation of the Virgin*, Main Altar. Church of Santo Domingo, Yanhuitlan. *Source*: Guillermo Tovar de Teresa, *Pintura y escultura en Nueva España (1557-1640)* (Mexico City: Grupo Azabache, 1992), 195.
104. Glorious Mysteries, from *Psalter und Rosenkranz Unser Lieber Frau*. Augsburg, 1492. *Source*: *The Illustrated Bartsch*, vol. 87, German Book Illustration before 1500: Anonymous Artists, 1489-1491.
105. Andrés de Concha, *Descent from the Cross*, Main Altar. Church of Santo Domingo Yanhuitlan. *Source*: Guillermo Tovar de Teresa, *Pintura y escultura en Nueva España (1557-1640)* (Mexico City: Grupo Azabache, 1992), 95.
106. Pedro de Campaña, *Descent from the Cross*. Musée de Montpellier. *Source*: Diego Angulo Íñiguez, "Algunas obras de Pedro de Campaña," *Archivo Español de Arte* 24, no. 95 (1951).
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108. *Descent from the Cross*, Sacristy. Church of Yanhuitlan. *Source*: Guillermo Tovar de Teresa, *Pintura y escultura en Nueva España (1557-1640)* (Mexico City: Grupo Azabache, 1992), 185.
109. Mirror image of Marcantonio Raimondi, *Descent from the Cross*, after Raphael. *Source*: *The Illustrated Bartsch*, vol. 26.
110. Marcantonio Raimondi, *Descent from the Cross*, after Raphael. *Source*: *The Illustrated Bartsch*, vol. 26.
111. *Descent from the Cross*. Church of San Miguel Huejotzingo, Puebla. *Source*: Susan Verdi Webster, "Art, Ritual, and Confraternities in Sixteenth-Century New Spain: Penitential Imagery at the Monastery of San Miguel, Huejotzingo," *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas* XIX, no. 70 (1997): 27.
112. Portería, convento of San Juan, Teitipac, Oaxaca. Photo by author.

113. Main Altar (detail), church of San Jerónimo, Tlacoahuaya, Oaxaca. Photo by author.
114. *Pietà*, attributed to Andrés de Concha, church of Santo Domingo Yanhuitlan, Oaxaca. © J. Paul Getty Trust.
115. Michelangelo, *Pietà*, ca. 1550. Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence. *Source*: Culture and Fine Arts Archives/ART RESOURCE, N.Y.
116. Albrecht Dürer, *Trinity*, 1511. *Source*: http://www.wga.hu/art/d/durer/2/12/6_1520/01trinit.jpg.
117. El Greco, *Pietà*, 1575. Hispanic Society of America, New York. *Source*: http://www.wga.hu/art/g/greco_el/03/0310grec.jpg.
118. A page from Jerónimo Taix, *Llibre des miracles del Nostra Seynora del Roser*. Barcelona, 1597. *Source*: <http://www.grec.net/cgibin/fotcl.pgm?NDCH=0170091&CBD=5&LIN=2&COL=7&PAG=8>.
119. Scala coeli, from Benito Hernández, *Doctrina Cristiana en Lengua Mixteca*, 1568. *Source*: *Historia del arte de Oaxaca* (Oaxaca: Gobierno del Estado de Oaxaca; Instituto Oaxaqueño de las Culturas, 1997), 2: 264.
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121. Title page of Ricolto da Montecroce, *Improbatio alcorani*. Seville: Ungut y Polono, 1500. *Source*: <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/heavenlycraft/images/rw588s.jpg>.
122. Pedro de Feria, *Doctrina Cristiana en lengua Castellana y Zapoteca*, 1567. Courtesy of the Biblioteca Burgoa, Oaxaca.
123. The Legend of the Knight of Cologne, from Gaspar Gorricio, *Contemplaciones sobre el Rosario*. Seville: Ungut y Polono, 1495. *Source*: *Woodcuts from Fifteenth-Century Books* (New York: Hispanic Society of America), 1931.
124. *The Virgin of the Rosary*, from Pedro de Feria, *Doctrina Cristiana en lengua castellana y zapoteca*, 1567. Courtesy of the Biblioteca Burgoa, Oaxaca.
125. Benito Hernández, *Doctrina Cristiana en Lengua Mixteca*, 1567. Courtesy of the Biblioteca Burgoa.
126. Benito Hernández, *Doctrina Cristiana en Lengua Mixteca*, 1568. Courtesy of the Biblioteca Burgoa.

127. Virgil Solis, *Agony in the Garden*. Source: *The Illustrated Bartsch*, vol. 19, pt. 1, German Masters of the Sixteenth Century: Virgil Solis.
128. Lamentation, from Benito Hernández, *Doctrina Cristiana en Lengua Mixteca*, 1568. Courtesy of the Biblioteca Burgoa.
129. Ascension, from Benito Hernández, *Doctrina Cristiana en Lengua Mixteca*, 1568. Courtesy of the Biblioteca Burgoa.
130. Last Judgment, from Benito Hernández, *Doctrina Cristiana en Lengua Mixteca*, 1568. Courtesy of the Biblioteca Burgoa.
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133. Map of Teozacoalco, from the *Relaciones Geográficas* (detail). Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas, Austin. Source: Enrique Florescano, "El canon memorioso forjado por los Títulos Primordiales," *Colonial Latin American Review* 11, no. 2 (2002): 24.
134. Codex Colombino, pl. III-V. Source: *Códice Alfonso Caso* (Mexico City: Patronato Indígena, 1996). Modified by the author.
135. Codex Borgia, p. 49. Source: *Codex Borgia* (Graz: Akademische Druck u. Verlagsanstalt, 1976).
136. Diagram of the retablos in the church of Yanhuitlan. Source: Ross Parmenter, *Week in Yanhuitlan* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1964), 327.
137. Retablo of San Pedro Mártir, ca. 1620. Church of Yanhuitlan. Picture taken in 1961. Source: Fototeca de la Fundación Bustamante Vasconcelos, Oaxaca.
138. *Saint Peter Preaching*, Retablo of San Pedro Mártir. Photo by author.
139. *A Man Teaching a Boy*, Retablo of San Pedro Mártir. Photo by author.
140. Sculptural detail, retablo of San Pedro Mártir. Source: Guillermo Tovar de Teresa, *Pintura y Escultura en Nueva España (1557-1640)* (Mexico City: Grupo Azabache, 1992), 180.
141. Mural decoration in the sagrario. Church of Yanhuitlan. Photo by author.
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146. Main Altar (detail), church of Santo Domingo Yanhuitlan. Paintings and sculptures attributed to Andrés de Concha (ca. 1579); gilding by Miguel Montesinos (ca. 1720). *Source*: Jaime Ortiz Lajous, *Oaxaca: Tesoros de Alta Mixteca* (Mexico City: Grupo Azabache, 1991), 61.
147. Adrián de Roxas, *Retablo del Señor Jesús*, ca. 1699. Church of Yanhuitlan. Photo by author.
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151. Juan de Villalobos, *Apparition of the Virgin on a Ocote Tree*, 1723. Camarín de la Virgen, church of Nuestra Señora de Ocotlan, Tlaxcala. *Source*: Angel Santamaría, *Nuestra Señora de Ocotlán: Su historia, su arte, su mensaje* (Toluca: Apolonio Guadarrama, 1990), 5.
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153. Retablo de Santa Rosa. Church of Yanhuitlan. *Source*: Fototeca de la Fundación Bustamante Vasconcelos, Oaxaca.
154. *Trinidad*. Church of Yanhuitlan. Photo taken in 1959. *Source*: Fototeca de la Fundación Bustamante Vasconcelos, Oaxaca.
155. Retablo de Santa Gertrudis. Church of Yanhuitlan. *Source*: Fototeca de la Fundación Bustamante Vasconcelos, Oaxaca.
156. Retablo de Santa Gertrudis (detail). *Source*: Joseph Baird, *The Churches of Mexico, 1530-1810* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962), 52.

157. Scene of a Baptism (now missing), from the retablo of Santa Gertrudis. *Source*: Fototeca de la Coordinación Nacional de Monumentos Históricos, Mexico City.
158. Retablo de San Agustín. Originally in the chapel of San Sebastián. Church of Yanhuitlan. *Source*: Guillermo Tovar de Teresa, *Renacimiento en México* (Mexico City: SAHOP, 1979), 335.
159. Retablos of the Benditas Almas del Purgatorio (left) and Virgin of Guadalupe (right). Church of Yanhuitlan. *Source*: Fototeca de la Coordinación Nacional de Monumentos Históricos, Mexico City.
160. Martines de Roxas, *Founding of Teposcolula, presided over by the Virgin of the Rosary*. Church of San Pedro and San Pablo, Teposcolula, Oaxaca. *Source*: Jaime Ortiz Lajous, *Oaxaca: Tesoros de la alta Mixteca* (Mexico City: Grupo Azabache, 1991), 134.
161. José Rodríguez Carnero, *Institución del Rosario*. Chapel of the Rosary, church of Santo Domingo, Puebla. *Source*: Francisco Pérez Salazar, *Historia de la pintura en Puebla*. 3rd ed. (Mexico City: Imprenta Universitaria, 1963), fig. 23.
162. *Virgin of the Rosary*, ca. 1621. Church of St. Andreas, Cologne. *Source*: <http://www.lvr.de/lvrresssourcen/Presse/03/1623StAndreas,Rosenkranzbild,fertigrestauriertG.jpg>.
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164. Colonial foundations of the chapel of San Sebastian, Yanhuitlan. Photo by author.
165. Plan of Yanhuitlan. *Source*: Ross Parmenter, *Week in Yanhuitlán* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1964), 60. Modified by the author.
166. San Gabriel Arcángel. Sagrario, church of Yanhuitlan. Photo by author.
167. El Divino Señor de Ayuxi. Mayordomía, Yanhuitlan, 2008. Photo by author.
168. Carreta de la Muerte. *Source*: Eliot Porter and Ellen Auerbach, *Mexican Churches* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987), 43.
169. A nineteenth-century depiction of a sixteenth-century Holy Friday procession. *Source*: Luis González Obregón, *México viejo: 25 láminas* (Mexico City: J. Porrúa, 1988).

170. Pyre of María Bárbara de Braganza, Oaxaca, 1759. *Source*: Francisco de la Maza, *Las piras funerarias en la historia y en el arte de México* (Mexico City: Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, 1949), pl. 11.
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172. Main Altar, church of Yanhuitlan. *Source*: Eliot Porter and Ellen Auerbach, *Mexican Churches* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987), 64.
173. Crucifix with dark Christ in recessed niche near apse, church of Yanhuitlan. *Source*: Eliot Porter and Ellen Auerbach, *Mexican Churches* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987), 67.
174. Cross of Tico, church of Yanhuitlan. *Source*: Fototeca de la Coordinación Nacional de Monumentos Históricos, Mexico City.
175. El Cristo filipino, convento of Yanhuitlan. Photo by author.
176. Cross of Topiltepec, Oaxaca. *Source*: Alfonso Caso, "La cruz de Topiltepec, Tepozcolula, Oax.," in *Estudios antropológicos publicados en homenaje al doctor Manuel Gamio* (Mexico City: Dirección General de Publicaciones, 1956).
177. Drawing of the cross of Topiltepec. *Source*: Alfonso Caso, "La cruz de Topiltepec, Tepozcolula, Oax.," in *Estudios antropológicos publicados en homenaje al doctor Manuel Gamio* (Mexico City: Dirección General de Publicaciones, 1956).
178. Raphael, *Crucifixion*, ca. 1502-4. National Gallery, London. *Source*: <http://www.wga.hu/art/r/raphael/1early/03citta.jpg>.
179. Huey Tozotli, from *Primeros Memoriales*, fol. 250v. Palacio Real, Madrid. *Source*: http://www.davidson.edu/academic/anthropology/ant356/Sah_xiu04_Huetozotontli.jpg.
180. Cross of Zitlala, Guerrero. *Source*: <http://flickr.com/photos/ilhuicamina/2462387978/sizes/l/>.
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193. Easter Procession entering the church, Semana Santa, Yanhuitlan, 2007. Photo by author.
194. Mixtec text found inside the head of the Christ of Ayuxi. *Source*: Blanca Noval Vilar, and Francisco Javier Salazar Herrera, "La restauración de dos Cristos de pasta de caña como parte de los trabajos del proyecto de conservación integral en Santo Domingo Yanhuitlán, Oaxaca." In *Imaginería indígena mexicana: Una catequesis en caña de maíz*, edited by Antonio F. García-Abásolo, Gabriela García Lascurain and Joaquín Sánchez Ruiz (Cordoba: Publicaciones Obra Social y Cultural CajaSur, 2001), 227.
195. El Divino Señor de Ayuxi being taken from El Calvario, Mayordomía, Yanhuitlan, 2007. Photo by author.
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197. A posa during the procession, Mayordomía, Yanhuitlan, 2008. Photo by author.
198. The Christ of Ayuxi, Mayordomía, Yanhuitlan, 2008. Photo by Carmen Montes.

199. The altar of the Divino Señor de Ayuxi, church of Yanhuitlan, Mayordomía, Yanhuitlan, 2007. Photo by author.
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204. Mayordomía, Yanhuitlan, 2007. Photo by author.
205. Juan Guas, Royal Chapel, 1476. San Juan de los Reyes, Toledo, Spain. *Source*: SCALA, Florence/ART RESOURCE, N.Y.
206. Juan de Colonia, Cartuja de Miraflores, 1484. Near Burgos, Spain. *Source*: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/ed/Burgos_-_Cartuja_de_Miraflores.jpg.
207. Juan de Colonia, Cartuja de Miraflores, 1484. Near Burgos, Spain. *Source*: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/6c/Cartuja_de_Miraflores_%28Burgos%29_-_Nave_interior.jpg.
208. Plan of the church and living quarters at Yuste, Spain. Lines going from room 5 to the church indicate the private view of the main altarpiece from Charles V's bedroom. *Source*: Francisco Javier Pizarro, *El Monasterio de San Jerónimo de Yuste* (Madrid: Patrimonio Nacional, 2006), 8. Modified by the author.
209. Gil de Siloé, Retablo in the church of the Cartuja de Miraflores, near Burgos, Spain. *Source*: <http://i.pbase.com/g3/72/726772/2/88588161.iT2cunZ5.jpg>.
210. Church of Yanhuitlan, interior. Photo by author.
211. Church of San Juan Bautista Coixtlahuaca, Oaxaca. *Source*: Gauvin A. Bailey, *Art of Colonial Latin America* (London: Phaidon, 2005), 228.

ABBREVIATIONS

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| AGEO | <i>Archivo General del Estado de Oaxaca, Oaxaca City</i> |
| AGI | <i>Archivo General de Indias, Seville</i> |
| AGN | <i>Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico City</i> |
| AHJT | <i>Archivo Histórico del Poder Judicial del Estado de Oaxaca, Juzgado de Teposcolula, Oaxaca City</i> |
| AHP | <i>Archivo Histórico Provincial, Seville</i> |
| Ayer | <i>Edward E. Ayer Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago</i> |
| INAH | <i>Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia</i> |
| MS | <i>Michael Swanton, personal communication, 2008</i> |
| RP-GB | <i>Ross Parmenter and Gabriel Blanco in Ross Parmenter, Week in Yanhuitlan (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1964), 365-366.</i> |
| UL | <i>Ubaldo López García, "Sa'vi: Discursos Ceremoniales de Yutsa To'on (Apoala)" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Leiden University, 2007), 45 and 296.</i> |
| UNAM | <i>Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México</i> |

GLOSSARY

alcalde. (Spanish) Elected member of the cabildo (town council) with some executive powers.

aniñe. (Mixtec) Royal residence.

barrio. (Spanish) Village subunit.

cabecera. (Spanish) Head town or village.

cabildo. (Spanish) Municipal council, a Spanish institution introduced in indigenous communities after the Conquest.

cacica (fem.); **cacique** (masc.). (Spanish, derived from Arawak, a Caribbean language) Native dynastic ruler.

cacicazgo. (Spanish, derived from Arawak, a Caribbean language) Native dynastic rulership.

doctrina. (Spanish) 1. Religious jurisdiction designed for the conversion and indoctrination of the local Indian population; 2. A manual used for catechism.

encomendero. (Spanish) a Spaniard (most often a conquistador) holding privileges for the extraction of tribute and labor from an indigenous community (see **encomienda**).

encomienda. (Spanish) Grant given to conquistadors with right to extract tribute and labor from the local community.

gobernador. (Spanish) Elected president of the cabildo (town council).

mayordomía. (Spanish) Stewardship. Sponsorship and organization of a local religious celebration (see **mayordomo**).

mayordomo. (Spanish) Elected official in charge of managing financial resources and organization of religious functions and celebrations.

ñuu. (Mixtec) Village.

principal. (Spanish) Member of the native non-ruling nobility.

regidor. (Spanish) Elected member of cabildo (town council).

siña. (Mixtec) Territory; used as barrio, village subunit.

sujeto. (Spanish) Subject town or village.

tecpa. (Spanish derived from Nahuatl) Royal residence.

tñiño. (Mixtec) Cargo, duty, labor.

yuhuitayu. (Mixtec) literally, Reed mat/throne-couple. Cacicazgo, native dynastic rulership.

ytu. (Mixtec) cultivated field.

yya. (Mixtec) Lord, applied to native, Spanish and religious officials, as well as saints.

Introduction

The Church and Convento of Santo Domingo Yanhuitlan, Oaxaca A Case Study in Mexican Visual Culture of the Colonial Period

Project Rationale

This dissertation centers on the *convento* in the Mixtec town of Yanhuitlan in Oaxaca, southwestern Mexico, and is the first to provide a comprehensive study of a mission and its historical development. Previous scholarship has usually granted separate attention to the architecture, painting, and sculpture of the Mexican missions, overrating formal qualities and neglecting the fact that all aspects of the convento were part of the same larger artistic and religious program. I offer a critique of this approach, by considering the mission as a microcosm of the intertwined social, artistic, and religious changes in Yanhuitlan from the first embattled moments of the encounter to the centuries of coexistence that followed the conquest, and extending to issues faced by contemporary Yanhuitecos in the midst of a massive emigration from rural areas.

The missionary complex, consisting of the main church and adjoining cloister, houses several unstudied altarpieces (including original paintings, frames, and sculptures), a *mudéjar* (Islamic-style) ceiling, indigenous mural painting and a collection of wooden polychrome sculptures. It was the most important artistic enterprise undertaken in Yanhuitlan in the sixteenth century and has remained since then the main focus of artistic and religious activities. First, the allegiance of Mixtec leaders with Dominican friars and Spanish authorities made possible the erection of the mission, which became a powerful statement of the new hegemonic status of Yanhuitlan in the region. Eventually, religious confraternities, organized around the cult

of saints and images, deeply shaped the symbolic and liturgical meaning of both architecture and images in the convento, whose primary function was hosting community-based rituals such as penitential processions, liturgical dramas, and public preaching and indoctrination.

I combine archaeological observations, archival research, and ethnographic analysis to move beyond a formalist and ultimately essentialist paradigm that equates stylistic qualities and ethnic affiliation. This reinforces a monolithic view of art and religion as tools to control the indigenous population, whose social and ethical values are conversely seen as mere survival, irremediably destined to perish under the pressure of the Spanish imperial expansion. Throughout regional conventos, Mixtec elite sponsored Spanish artists, at the same time as Dominicans promoted the study of indigenous language and literature. Today, the Mixtec neighborhood names of processional sculptures reveal the history of a resilient community identity. My study suggests that artistic outcomes at Yanhuitlan were not the result of a unidirectional process of Westernization, but rather of multiple and simultaneous dynamics of culture change.

Historical Background

The mission-building campaign undertaken in the Americas in the years following the Spanish conquest (1521-1546) is the largest and most ambitious evangelical and artistic enterprise in the history of the Catholic Church. In the span of just a few decades, mendicant friars, at the head of Spanish missionary efforts, established hundreds of missions (called in Spanish *conventos*) in both major colonial cities and remote provincial centers. Integral to the political conquest, these

institutions did not merely accommodate friars, but carried out doctrinal, educational, and liturgical activities.¹ Spanish conquistadors regularly attended mission churches for service, while hundreds of friars actively promoted indigenous culture and language in the conventos.² At this time of epochal changes, conventos soon became booming economic and cultural centers, hubs in the rising network of Spanish imperial power among the local indigenous communities. The economic and human resources necessary to build conventos required the integrated efforts of Spanish settlers, friars, and local indigenes. Amid linguistic obstacles, the visual arts became one of the primary vehicles of communication, cultural integration, and power negotiation between the groups involved.

Yet, the typical narrative of artistic development in New Spain bears little evidence of the deep social impact of the missionary arts. The overriding importance given to style and form, treated in isolation from their socio-historical contexts as well as related political, religious, and economic factors, generated a seeming conformity of the artistic developments in the New World to the narratives established for European art. The specificity of the colonial situation—the confrontation of the rising Spanish imperial power with whole new cultures, the American indigenous civilizations—is often bypassed in favor of a perceived continuity of American colonization with the

¹ Franciscans arrived in New Spain first, in 1523. They established missions and schools in Mexico City and were in charge of the evangelization of most part of Central Mexico (the modern states of Mexico, Morelos, Puebla, Tlaxcala), and the Yucatan Peninsula. Dominicans, arriving in 1526, centered their efforts on Oaxaca and Chiapas. The third and last to arrive were the Augustinians in 1533, whose missions were mostly located in Michoacán and Hidalgo.

² Friars compiled the first books in indigenous languages with the help of indigenous intellectuals. The books are primarily grammars, dictionaries, and doctrinal manuals for the instruction of Catholic religion. The most comprehensive study of books in the New World still remains the 1886 work by Joaquín García Icazbalceta, *Bibliografía mexicana del siglo XVI: Catálogo razonado de libros impresos en México de 1539 a 1600*, ed. Agustín Millares Carlo (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1954).

Iberian reconquest of the peninsula from Islamic rule.³ Spain, and even more so the American colonies, are often seen as part of an unending Middle Ages, which seemingly corresponds more to a mind-set than a historical period.⁴ By neglecting the impulse of evangelical reformism of Spain, an integral part of the wider reform movement that transformed Europe in the early sixteenth century, and the rise of Hapsburg imperial policy in conjunction with the development of a worldwide mercantile economy, we are left with a simplistic image that juxtaposes the progress (or lack thereof) of the European input against the “eternal” spirit of premodern mentalities and indigenous folk culture.⁵

To counter this viewpoint, in this dissertation I consider the arts in the American colonies not so much tools of conquest, but rather as part of a process of mutual assimilation that was achieved through selective New and Old World esthetic, religious, and social practices on American soil. The failures and successes of that assimilation represent the central focus of this study. I seek to situate indigenous agency in the colonial context; at the same time, I attempt to specify the contribution of the Americas to the creation of a transatlantic Iberian culture. I focus on issues of reception, use, and patronage of images over esthetic and formal questions. My main purpose is not to distinguish the Spanish from the indigenous, and their various

³ Luis Weckmann epitomizes this paradigm. In his words, “from the outset, the prevailing spirit in the Spanish conquest of America was similar to that which had inspired the Spanish advance in the Peninsula, from the eighth century to the end of the fifteenth.” Luis Weckmann, *The Medieval Heritage of Mexico*, trans. Frances M. López Morillas (New York: Fordham University Press, 1992), 4.

⁴ Weckmann states at the opening of his work, “it is no exaggeration to say that in many ways we [the Mexicans] are more medieval than a good part of the West, and certainly more so than the Spaniards themselves.” *Ibid.*, 3.

⁵ This view is part of the so-called Black Legend. See Charles Gibson, ed. *The Black Legend: Anti-Spanish Attitudes in the Old World and the New* (New York: Knopf, 1971); Richard L. Kagan, “Prescott’s Paradigm: American Historical Scholarship and the Decline of Spain,” in *Spain in America: The Origins of Hispanism in the United States*, ed. Richard L. Kagan (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 247-276.

interminglings, as much as to analyze the manipulation of hybrid styles, and their diverse appropriation by indigenes, Spaniards, and friars alike. I maintain, in fact, that both Spanish and indigenous forms changed their meaning and values when moved from their original “national” environment to that of an international transcultural encounter. How we define national, cultural, and ethnic identities are crucial questions in this study, which regards the visual arts as tool and evidence for this formative process in New Spain.

The Critical Approach

Reconsidering Hybridism and Mestizaje in Colonial Mexico

When first confronted with the primary material of my research – the church, convento, and liturgical objects of Yanhuitlan, a dominant Mixtec village at the time of the Spanish conquest – I was puzzled by the apparent “conservatism” of the paintings, sculptures, and architecture of the complex. At Yanhuitlan, we find major examples of late European mannerist painting, Spanish Isabelline and Baroque architecture and architectural decoration, a *mudéjar* (Islamic-style) ceiling, and seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Sevillian processional sculptures. Besides one surviving wall painting depicting St. Christopher, Yanhuitlan shows little evidence of indigenous manufacture or iconography; rather the complex fits well into the development of European Spanish art. Erected between 1550 and 1580, the Yanhuitlan mission falls chronologically within an artistic period recognized as one of great stylistic creativity, one that witnessed the rise of new artistic forms that harmoniously blended native and imported features. Some scholars consider the art of this period as the most important artistic output of colonial Mexico: this hybrid is seen as lasting testimony to a utopian

and short-lived social experiment that engaged friars and natives living together in and around the missions.⁶

A major obstacle to studying the convento of Yanhuitlan immediately arose. How could I explain the apparent lack of indigenous input in a large and important indigenous town, where a few friars and the family of the *encomendero* (a conquistador who had been granted labor and land privileges) constituted the only Spanish presence among thousands of indigenous Mixtecs? The invisibility of “indigenous influence” in the artistic styles present at Yanhuitlan forced me to reconsider the current paradigm employed to categorize Mexican colonial art. I realized that I had to move from a stylistic to a socio-cultural analysis. Such a shift would allow me to simultaneously consider visible (i.e., style and form) and invisible (i.e., patronage and consumption) qualities of the art objects to fathom the cultural processes by which ethnic affiliation was conceived, negotiated, and expressed. My starting point was the recognition of the physical reality of the material studied. Spatial and functional contiguity, location and use, were the primary selective factors in defining the object of my investigation. The church and convento of Yanhuitlan have been for almost five hundred years the primary locus of religious and civic activities, performative actions through which the local indigenous community has created and fostered their sense of Mixtec identity. I was able to observe this first-hand during my research in the Mixteca from 2005 to 2007.

How could I continue to ignore the still pulsing indigenous motivation behind such “Spanish-looking” art? I hypothesized that, unlike outside Western observers, modern Yanhuitecos do not perceive stylistic differences based on assumed ethnic

⁶ Samuel Y. Edgerton, *Theaters of Conversion: Religious Architecture and Indian Artisans in Colonial Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001); Serge Gruzinski, *Painting the Conquest: the Mexican Indians and the European Renaissance*, trans. Deke Dusinberre (Paris: Unesco; Flammarion, 1992); Constantino Reyes Valerio, *Arte indocristiano* (Mexico City: INAH, 2000), exemplify this point of view.

mixing (or lack thereof) as bearing the same cultural and even political significance.⁷ Our current impulse to do so has roots in the nineteenth-century conception of hybridity, which, as Young demonstrates, is at the same time obsessed with racial purity and attracted to the racial “other.”⁸ Despite the conscious effort to strip colonial Mexican art of its “colonialist” connotations (an art of imposition and conquest), the insistence on ethnically hybrid traits merely disguises the old concept of exoticism. I follow scholars Rolena Adorno and Jorge Klor de Alva, who believe that, despite the fact that genetic mixing began in the sixteenth century, concerns about racial mixing are a legacy of eighteenth-century Linnaean taxonomy and especially nineteenth-century ideological exploitation by the British and French empires.⁹

The use of the term *mestizo* (of mixed Native American and European descent), often favored to describe the arts of the colonial period, clarifies the point. While the word *mestizaje* refers to racial intermingling, in art historical scholarship it has assumed a metaphorical and ideological meaning tied to the birth of styles in Latin America that mixed native and European elements. Following scholars of South American architecture who referred to a specific Baroque style that flourished in the Peruvian and Bolivian Andes in the seventeenth century as “mestizo,” the Mexican scholar Manuel Toussaint adopted *mestizaje* to describe the rise of a unique Mexican

⁷ On the subjectivity and relativism of the concept of hybridity, see Carolyn Dean and Dana Leibsohn, “Hybridity and its Discontents: Considering Visual Culture in Colonial Spanish America,” *Colonial Latin American Review* 12, no. 1 (2003): 6-35.

⁸ Robert Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture, and Race* (London: Routledge, 1995).

⁹ Rolena Adorno, “Reconsidering Colonial Discourse for Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Spanish America,” *Latin American Research Review* 28, no. 3 (1993): 135-145; Jorge Klor de Alva, “Colonialism and Postcolonialism as (Latin) American Mirages,” *Colonial Latin American Review* 1, no. 1-2 (1992): 3-23.

style in the Baroque period.¹⁰ Writing in the 1940s he said: “When the new social groups formed by the fusion of the Spanish people with native races appear in the land, we witness the culmination of this process [the persistence of the indigenous spirit]: their art, the Baroque, is already individual; deeply influenced by the old Indian spirit, it has already been transformed into the hybrid, the mestizo.”¹¹

Concurrent with the rise of indigenist movements, the modern ideology of mestizaje has tried to culturally emancipate countries with historically large indigenous populations from the economic neocolonialist burden of world capitalism by promoting the idea of the uniqueness of Latin American cultures. Conquest and colonialism are perceived as tragic but also creative events, from which ultimately derived modern Latin American mestizo identity.¹² Such a political reuse of mestizaje nevertheless obliterates the historical fact that mestizos, who were first the result of a genetic mixing beginning in the sixteenth century, crystallized in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries into a separate class. Far from becoming “the” Hispanic culture in the Americas, mestizos shaped their own identity as a middle ground between, but distinct from, *both* peninsular Spanish and American indigenes. On the wave of the tremendous population loss and social subordination that followed the seventeenth-

¹⁰ Ángel Guido, *Fusión hispano-indígena en la arquitectura colonial* (Rosario: Editorial “La casa del libro,” 1925).

¹¹ Manuel Toussaint, *Colonial Art in Mexico*, trans. Elizabeth Wilder Weissmann (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1967), 4. See also Weissmann’s foreword in Toussaint, vii-ix.

¹² Indigenist policies in Mexico throughout the 1940s and 1950s were carried out under the auspices of the Instituto Nacional Indigenista. See Alfonso Caso, ed., *Métodos y resultados de la política indigenista en México* (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional Indigenista, 1954). A critique of the historical processes of indigenismo is offered by the classic essay, Luis Villoro, *Los grandes momentos del indigenismo en México* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1950). For a more recent appraisal in English, see Jorge Klor de Alva, “The Postcolonization of the (Latin) American Experience: A Reconsideration of ‘Colonialism,’ ‘Postcolonialism,’ and ‘Mestizaje,’” in *After Colonialism: Imperial Histories and Postcolonial Displacements*, ed. Gyan Prakash (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 241-275.

century economic depression, European settlements grew to importance while also attracting increasingly larger numbers of indigenous villagers.¹³ In the process, mestizos living in the urban centers forged their identity by ostensibly adopting European manners and language (opposed to, and thus creating, a barbarian and uncivilized “Indian”). At the same time, they reclaimed a prehispanic ancestry, analogous to the way modern European countries refer to Classical Antiquity as the cradle of their culture.

The indigenous past was absorbed and assimilated into an acceptable Western historical narrative that nullified the persistent and unsettling presence of contemporary indigenous cultures.¹⁴ By the nineteenth century, it was the Creoles, white descendents of Spanish colonists, who fought and gained independence from the European homelands, instrumentally adopting the Western Romantic concept of nationalism to reinforce their identity.¹⁵ The Reforma in the mid-nineteenth century and the Revolution at the beginning of the twentieth century are two subsequent events through which mestizos in turn established themselves as the dominant class in Mexico, setting Western liberal progressivism against the backwardness of the

¹³ Estimates on population loss are still hypothetical. It is generally believed that within one century from the conquest 80 to 90% of the native population had disappeared. Sherburne Friend Cook and Woodrow Wilson Borah, *Essays in Population History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 3: 102.

¹⁴ A typical example of this phenomenon in colonial Mexican visual culture is discussed in Emily Umberger, “The *Monarquía Indiana* in Seventeenth-Century New Spain,” in *Converging Cultures. Art & Identity in Spanish America*, ed. Diana Fane (New York: Brooklyn Museum and Harry N. Abrams, 1996), 46-58. I nevertheless disagree with the final remarks of the author who sees in the depictions of the *biombo* an expression of a resurging climate of toleration and interest in native culture introduced by the Jesuits in Mexico in the latter part of the sixteenth century. I consider *biombos* as displaying a Creole or Spanish view, appropriation, and display of an “ideal and genuine” Indian culture, whose past grandeur is exalted, and present situation pacified for the sake of legitimizing the political position of the Hispanic ruling class. The depictions of Montecuhzoma as a (defeated) pagan hero and the present Indians as harmless village dwellers (whose inclination to drunkenness has to be controlled by the Hispanic authority) are complementary parts of the ideological construction of Creole identity.

¹⁵ Klor de Alva, “Colonialism and Postcolonialism,” 8-9.

indigenous population.¹⁶ The strength of *mestizaje*, therefore, not only lies in its distinction from European and indigenous cultures, but upon a strong, fixed, and unchangeable idea of the alterity of its counterparts. The fatal mistake of ignoring the peculiar history of Latin American *mestizaje* and anachronistically projecting it back to previous centuries and across different social and ethnic groups prevents us from identifying the indigenous unless it remains visibly (to the nineteenth-century as much as to the present observer) prehispanic.¹⁷ It is ultimately the denial of an indigenous history that moves beyond mere resilience and survival (although that is also certainly part of history), because what is defined as native remains confined to certain recognized quintessential features.

My intent, however, is to formulate a basis for an art historical analysis that considers cultural identities (indigenous, Spanish, *mestizo*, or Creole) as being in a constant state of flux (recognizing that some of them may at times be under the threat of extermination). Although rooted in the colonial period, this study finally connects

¹⁶ Guillermo Bonfil Batalla, "Sobre la ideología del *mestizaje*," in *Decadencia y auge de las identidades*, ed. José Manuel Valenzuela Arce (Tijuana: El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, 1992), 40-41. Liberal reforms started under the presidency of Benito Juárez (1855) and involved curtailing military and ecclesiastical powers to strengthen state institutions. The Revolution (1910), initially aimed at the overthrow of the dictator Porfirio Díaz, is primarily responsible for the agrarian reform, which parceled large estates to small private owners. Both movements were based on a bourgeois ideology that favored the interests of the urban and industrialized classes.

¹⁷ If in the 1940s Baroque was favored as an example of *mestizo* art, recent studies apply the term to sixteenth-century indigenous art. See Christian Duverger, *Agua y fuego: Arte sacro indígena de México en el siglo XVI* (Mexico City: Landucci Editores, 2002); Serge Gruzinski, *The Mestizo Mind: The Intellectual Dynamics of Colonization and Globalization*, trans. Deke Dusinberre (New York: Routledge, 2002). Both authors first acknowledge that *mestizaje* and hybridization are universal features of every civilization, eventually proceeding to a simplistic bipolar opposition between dominant and dominated culture. Acculturation is only discussed in terms of an inevitable Westernization.

with the present-day condition of Mexican indigenous people, which is still marked by internal national colonialism.¹⁸

Kubler's seminal article on the extinction of precolumbian motifs in colonial art set the basis for what is still today an accepted development of Latin America art.¹⁹ In Kubler's words, "[native art motifs] are . . . few and scattered . . . like a search for the fragments of a deep-lying shipwreck." He adds, "In the sixteenth century the rush to European conventions of representation and building, by colonialists and Indians alike, precluded any real continuation of native traditions in art and architecture."²⁰ Not only did artistic traditions rapidly wane, but more importantly indigenous culture itself is perceived to have died together with the "pure" symbolic expressions that characterized it.²¹ All that remains is "folk art," another ambivalent category for all sorts of different remnants of art history.²²

With his pioneering and monumental work on mendicant art and architecture in New Spain, in which he combined an extensive treatment of the artistic achievements of New Spain with a due reconstruction of the history of the missions, Kubler established the basis for future studies.²³ Subsequent scholarship has built on the

¹⁸ Guillermo Bonfil Batalla, "Historias que no son todavía historia," in *Identidad y pluralismo cultural en America Latina* (San Juan: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1992), 163-176.

¹⁹ George Kubler, "On the Colonial Extinction of the Motifs of Pre-Columbian Art," in *Essays in Pre-Columbian Art and Archaeology*, ed. Samuel K. Lothrop et al. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961), 14-34.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 14.

²¹ This is almost an inevitable conclusion, when a strict use is made of Kubler's idea of formal and cultural disjunctions. George Kubler, "Period, Style and Meaning in Ancient American Art," *New Literary History* 1, no. 2 (1970): 127-144.

²² Kubler, "On the Colonial Extinction," 18.

²³ George Kubler, *Mexican Architecture of the Sixteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948).

formalist base of Kubler's analysis, neglecting however to delve deeper into the specific socio-historical context of colonial art and architecture. Although archival research has already established that indigenous and Spanish artists and patrons were active simultaneously in conventos throughout New Spain, some current art historians, such as Marcus Burke in the US, and Jorge Manrique and Guillermo Tovar de Teresa in Mexico, typically still assume a chronological dichotomy between the hybrid quality of the early colonial period – defined as an exotic mixture of indigenous and Western styles and techniques – and the strict conservatism of the subsequent art imported from Europe.²⁴ Following the prototype of Toussaint, who summarized the arts of New Spain not only on the basis of European chronological categories but also by a strict differentiation of media, scholars of colonial art have tended to focus on painting, sculpture, and architecture separately, drawing general conclusions on artistic developments from the limits of their expertise's perspective. The results are artificial, since the fields of painting, architecture and sculpture largely intersect and artists were normally trained to be painters, gilders, sculptors, and architects at the same time. They also tend to overemphasize "genetic" lines of descent between the arts of Spain and New Spain at the expense of the diverse circumstances of creation, consumption, and perception in the mainland and colonies. Inevitably, the arts of New Spain fail in comparison to the model. According to Manrique, for example, "the undeniable differences between the original European models and the Mexican works can only be

²⁴ Linda Bantel and Marcus B. Burke, *Spain and New Spain: Mexican Colonial Arts in their European Context* (Corpus Christi: Art Museum of South Texas, 1979); Jorge Alberto Manrique, "The Progress of Art in New Spain," in *Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; Little, Brown, 1990), 237-242; Donna Pierce, "The Mission: Evangelical Utopianism in the New World (1523-1600)," in *Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; Little, Brown, 1999), 243-249; Guillermo Tovar de Teresa, *Pintura y escultura en Nueva España (1557-1640)* (Mexico City: Grupo Azabache, 1992). For archival documentation, see Heinrich Berlin, "The High Altar of Huejotzingo," *The Americas* 15, no. 1 (1958): 63-73; Efraín Castro Morales, "Francisco Becerra en el Valle de Puebla, México," *Anales del Instituto de Arte Americano e Investigaciones Estéticas* 13 (1960): 11-26.

attributed to 'mistakes in reading'.²⁵ Even after the arrival of the first group of artists from Spain and the consequent appearance of the Mannerist style in New Spain, "some uncertainties persisted in the comprehension of the full meaning of imported forms," and these remain today as the main characteristic of Mexican art.²⁶ With this last remark, Manrique shows himself to be still within the paradigm that first praised and mythologized Mexican *mestizaje* sixty years before.

In their introductory essay on the Spanish influence in Mexican colonial painting, Bantel and Burke also follow a strict chronological model, based on ethnic considerations that juxtapose indigenous and Spanish styles. They break the sixteenth century into two phases, posing 1565 as the dividing date, since they believe that the hybrid art expressed in such innovative architectural and sculptural forms as the stone crosses was replaced by the Mannerist art of the Spanish guild painters.²⁷ A strict medium-based approach shows its limit here. The impact of Spanish art over a disappearing indigenous culture is bound to be overstated when based solely on the analysis of oil painting, an imported technique that was wholly foreign to the Americas.

The treatment of the artistic developments of the colonial period, sweeping through different regions and periods of Latin American history, without ultimately challenging the assumptions set forth over forty years ago by Kubler, also characterizes recent scholarly efforts to integrate "Indian artisans" into the mainstream of art historical discourse. Serge Gruzinski, Samuel Edgerton, and Gauvin Bailey all contribute to the definition of the "Amerindian Renaissance," the cross-fertilization

²⁵ Manrique, 239.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Bantel and Burke, 18-19.

between Renaissance and Indian art.²⁸ The focus on religion and ritual posits a performative common ground between Spanish friars and indigenous people. Nevertheless, their analysis is still ultimately grounded on formalism, as it considers detectable indigenous features the only measure for categorizing the arts in the colonial New World. Edgerton programmatically sets out to study sixteenth- and seventeenth-century architecture, painting, and sculpture only produced by native artisans trained in Spanish workshops. His study of this new artistic style parallels Lockhart's analysis of the Nahua reception of Christianity based on written Nahua documents.²⁹ In his survey of colonial Latin American art, Bailey dedicates a separate chapter to the arts of the evangelical missions, forcefully segregating indigenous agency from the major centers of colonial Latin America.³⁰

Both Edgerton and Bailey highlight the fruitful relationship of mendicant and Jesuit missionaries, respectively, with local artisans while asserting that the acceptance of native forms was contingent upon the friars' approval. At the same time, seemingly small provincial centers with a minimal Spanish lay presence were the only places where such forms could be expressed. Edgerton, for example, explicitly refers to the missionaries as the "sixteenth-century equivalent of the twentieth-century Peace Corps;" largely if not solely basing his analysis on accounts written by missionaries themselves.³¹ Bailey juxtaposes mission and metropolitan churches, as respective expressions of native and imperial ideology, neglecting the fact that Mexico City and Cuzco were also indigenous centers throughout the colonial period and that their

²⁸ Gauvin A. Bailey, *Art of Colonial Latin America* (London: Phaidon, 2005); Edgerton.

²⁹ Edgerton, 3.

³⁰ Bailey, 207-260.

³¹ Edgerton, 12-33.

cathedrals were built by indigenous workers, with available material from prehispanic monuments, and were also largely attended by indigenous people.³² Without the substantiation of documentary evidence other than missionary histories, which were written with the intent of glorifying the evangelical enterprise, it is difficult to grasp the meaning and importance of extant examples of colonial architecture, painting, and sculpture; every historical assessment is bound to be prejudicial. In trying to rescue the vitality of indigenous cultures under imperialistic rule these authors fail to truly emancipate native agency, as it is posited to have survived only in restricted geographical and chronological pockets and to have come to artistic realization exclusively through a harmonious and consensual blending of Renaissance and Baroque forms with local craftsmanship.

Divorcing art from the specific socio-historical circumstances that produced it, however difficult they might be to fully recover, means in principle denying the very existence of a native history in the colonial period. Only an approach that integrates stylistic considerations with documentary evidence from archives and textual information from sixteenth- and seventeenth-century sources will be able to determine whether and to what extent missionaries, Spanish settlers, and indigenous people were engaged in the formation of a common cultural ground.

Relying on original documentary evidence and ethnographic fieldwork, I attempt to balance the impact of Spanish cultural and economic presence in the Americas with the active role of the indigenous people in the mediation process. I propose a history of colonial art that does not rely on the idea of a seamlessly unfolding

³² Bailey, chaps. 5 and 6. This “topographical” arrangement follows that of his previous work, Gauvin A. Bailey, *Art on the Jesuit Missions in Asia and Latin America, 1542-1773* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 35-ff. On the denied hybridity of Latin American cathedrals, see Dean and Leibsohn: 15-16.

progress of transplanted artistic European styles and techniques (Gothic, Moorish, Renaissance, Mannerism, Counterreformation, and, finally, Tenebrism). Rather, it considers each single aesthetic choice as the product of negotiation and adaptation to problems of coexistence and cultural interaction.

Methodology and Sources

Latin American studies in general has grown considerably since the pioneering works of linguistic scholars like Miguel León-Portilla and Thelma Sullivan, who began to translate and publish Nahuatl (the language of the “Aztecs”) texts, and historians like Charles Gibson and James Lockhart, who recognized the importance of investigating literary and archival documents produced by indigenous people to reconstruct colonial Latin American history beyond the imperial narratives of Spanish chroniclers.³³ Official documents produced by Spaniards, in fact, only depict a triumphant picture of American colonization. They are incapable of understanding and translating the contribution of Native Americans to the establishment of the first colonial institutions. Nahuatl chronicles, literature, land disputes, testaments, criminal suits open a window into world of New Spain’s different social classes and shed light on their interaction. They highlight the fact that new institutions were largely based on preexisting patterns of social behavior, economic dependency, and religious authority. Because of the centrality of textual evidence, Lockhart’s “school” has been renamed the New

³³ Charles Gibson, *The Aztecs under Spanish Rule: A History of the Indians of the Valley of Mexico, 1519-1810* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964); Miguel León Portilla, *Los antiguos mexicanos a través de sus crónicas y cantares* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1961); James Lockhart, *The Nahuas after the Conquest: A Social and Cultural History of the Indians of Central Mexico, Sixteenth through Eighteenth Centuries* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992); Thelma D. Sullivan, *Compendio de la gramática náhuatl* (Mexico City: UNAM, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, 1976).

Philology. It aims at understanding how indigenous people perceived the changing world around them and consequently acted upon it.³⁴ Lockhart's student Kevin Terraciano published in 2001 the first study of the Mixtecs in colonial Oaxaca relying primarily on Mixtec written sources.³⁵

A microhistorical approach that focuses on one specific locality, the major actors involved, and the material at hand, so as to concentrate more intensely on the social and historical evolution of the institution studied, is another common outcome of the use of ethnohistory.³⁶ Particularly suited for pre-modern societies, when states and their formal institutions did not have the coercive power that they acquired with industrial technologies and the development of mass culture, microhistory has traditionally paid attention to underrepresented entities and to marginal geographical areas. While it criticizes universalizing historical accounts, microhistory cannot be described as a mere account of local events either. On the contrary, this type of research aims at reconstructing, from a finite series of elements (people, events, and situations), a whole microcosm, a system of values, expectations, and meanings that respond to an internal coherent logic. The system thus delineated is linked to larger assumed notions (of cultural, economic, or religious development) that raise questions about both the nature of the relationship between dominant and marginal classes and our historical understanding and use of established historiographic models.³⁷

³⁴ For a review, see Matthew Restall, "A History of the New Philology and the New Philology in History," *Latin American Research Review* 38, no. 1 (2003): 113-134.

³⁵ Kevin Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca: Ñudzahui History, Sixteenth through Eighteenth Centuries* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

³⁶ James Lockhart, "The Social History of Early Latin America," in *Of Things of the Indies: Essays Old and New in Early Latin American History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 76.

³⁷ Carlo Ginzburg, *Il formaggio e i vermi: Il cosmo di un mugnaio del '500* (Turin: Einaudi, 1976), xi-xxv.

I do not attempt to redefine the trajectory of artistic changes in New Spain, but rather to combine microhistory with a discussion of broader and theoretical macrohistorical issues. The specific examination of the convento of Yanhuitlan in its cultural and historical context (that of a Mixtec village from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries) questions issues of core-periphery relations within a global imperial system, political and economic domination, and ethnic identity as they have so far been examined in the context of colonial Mexican visual culture. Yanhuitlan was a major village center prior to the Spanish conquest. Its long dynastic history is narrated in Mixtec pictographic codices and formed part of the larger integrated political and economic system of Postclassic Mesoamerica. With the settlement of Spaniards in the 1530s Yanhuitlan became one of the most prosperous *encomiendas* (grants given to Spanish conquistadors to extract tribute and labor from the local indigenous community) of the early colonial period, a hub for the trading routes between New Spain, the Viceroyalty of New Castile (modern Peru), and the Philippines through the ports of the Pacific Coast. Was Yanhuitlan at the center or the periphery of the Spanish empire? And is it fruitful to superimpose on the economic dichotomy of center and periphery an opposition between Spanish and indigenous cultures? Are the arts produced at Yanhuitlan, finally, the result of Spanish, Mixtec, or Dominican ideology?

My study covers a span of roughly two hundred and fifty years, between 1540s and the 1780s. Different from the prehispanic period, for which there is a general agreement on the timing of subsequent civilizations, for the colonial era a comprehensive chronology is far from being established. In my study, I test some of the chronologies proposed in different areas of Mesoamerica against the specific local development in Yanhuitlan as revealed through primary sources. In general, I reject an

evolutionary and linear model that sees indigenous history after the conquest as an inevitable and progressive process of decay and disintegration. Rather than describing the trajectory of the Westernization of indigenous mentalities, the fragmentation and isolation of indigenous political and social entities,³⁸ I find that adjustments to the colonial condition and appropriation of Spanish institutions constituted the major strategy of cultural survival in the village of Yanhuitlan.³⁹ The rise, in the realms of politics, of the *República de Indios* (a council of the town representatives) allowed indigenous communities to maintain negotiating power in the colonial situation even despite, and to some extent thanks to, the demise of the *cacicazgo* (the prehispanic form of government based on hereditary titles). Resorting to the Spanish legal system, representatives of Yanhuitlan were eventually able to strip the *cacique* (indigenous dynastic ruler) of all his economic privileges.⁴⁰ Indigenous participation in church activities was guaranteed by *cofradías* (confraternities) and *barrio* (neighborhood) associations, which, first introduced by the Spanish friars, became fully independent from parish priests with the Bourbon reforms (1750s). In both cases it is evident that autonomy and community identity were achieved and strengthened through an active adjustment to social and institutional changes. The case of Yanhuitlan suggests that institutions that were initially Hispanic had become by the end of the seventeenth century fully indigenous.

Finally, my socio-historical approach coincides with my art historical analysis in that I reject essentialist paradigms incapable of explaining the enduring indigenous

³⁸ Gibson, *The Aztecs under Spanish Rule*, 408-409. For the Mixteca, see Rodolfo Pastor, *Campesinos y reformas: La Mixteca, 1700-1856* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1987).

³⁹ Marcello Carmagnani, *El regreso de los dioses: El proceso de reconstrucción de la identidad étnica en Oaxaca, siglos XVII y XVIII* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1988).

⁴⁰ AGN Tierras, 400 and 985.

presence in contemporary Mexico. Indigenous history should be written with the intent of making sense of the indigenous present, incorporating indigenous sources, oral history, and ethnography.

In this case, my analysis is different from Adorno, Klor de Alva, Lockhart and Gibson, discussed above. The first two scholars consider the eighteenth century as a turning point, when the rise of a modern form of colonialism took place, which was based on the implementation of market economy and colonies' dependency on goods produced in the mainland. The two ethnohistorians, Lockhart and Gibson, postulate that after the middle of the seventeenth century indigenous corporations underwent a process of fragmentation by which Hispanic elements penetrated into the indigenous cultural framework. In both cases, authors offer macrohistorical explanations, covering various areas of the Latin American continent. Rather than invalidating their conclusions, the microhistorical case of Yanhuitlan offers a "subversive" example, as it demonstrates that the colonized "other" cannot always be fully erased from history.⁴¹

My dissertation relies heavily on original unpublished material from archives in Mexico (Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico City, and Archivo Histórico del Poder Judicial del Estado de Oaxaca, Oaxaca City), the United States (Newberry Library, Chicago) and Spain (Archivo General de Indias and Archivo Histórico Provincial, Seville) in which I researched from 2005 to 2007. The nature of the primary sources deeply shaped my research. While legal proceedings, such as land disputes, Inquisition trials, and civil suits, vividly portray political and social struggles, highlighting the

⁴¹ Spores argues that Mixtec communities maintained a great degree of autonomy and negotiating power well into the nineteenth century. Ronald Spores, "Relaciones gubernamentales y judiciales entre los pueblos, los distritos y el estado de Oaxaca (Siglo XIX)," in *Lecturas históricas del Estado de Oaxaca*, ed. María de los Ángeles Romero Frizzi (Mexico City: INAH; Gobierno del Estado de Oaxaca, 1990), 3: 239-290. See also John Monaghan, Arthur A. Joyce, and Ronald Spores, "Transformations of the Indigenous Cacicazgo in the Nineteenth Century," *Ethnohistory* 50, no. 1 (2003): 131-150.

ideological use of religion and religious activities in the local arena, testaments, personal inventories, and trial testimonies give insights into private devotional practice and informal religious institutions, such as barrios. The private and public spheres as they emerge from the documentary record may overlap, complement, or contradict each other. In the sources, I not only seek factual evidence, but also inquiry into the agendas and motivations of the people involved.

Archaeologist Ronald Spores, who first combined archival and archaeological research in his study of postclassic and early colonial Mixteca, can be credited with founding Mixtec ethnohistory.⁴² Oaxacan archives have become the focus of much research in the following years,⁴³ while archaeological work has only been recently undertaken.⁴⁴

In my study I have relied on Spores' archaeological survey and benefited from the knowledge of the Yanhuitecos regarding local topography. As a contribution to ethnohistory, in my dissertation painting, sculptures, and liturgical objects are regarded as material culture to be interpreted against traceable public and private behavioral patterns. In this light, patronage and function of the works of art become particularly important. Indigenous agency is found in these aspects of artistic production in a much more durable and significant way than authorship and technique. Caciques in the sixteenth century and indigenous religious organizations in the following period were the most important patrons of the works of art. The use of processional sculpture, in

⁴² Ronald Spores, *The Mixtec Kings and Their People* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967).

⁴³ Most notably, María de los Ángeles Romero Frizzi, *Economía y vida de los españoles en la Mixteca Alta, 1519-1720* (Mexico City: INAH; Gobierno del Estado de Oaxaca, 1990); *El sol y la cruz: Los pueblos indios de Oaxaca colonial* (Mexico City: Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores de Antropología Social, 2002).

⁴⁴ Ronald Spores and Nelly Robles García, "A Prehispanic (Postclassic) Capital Center in Colonial Transition: Excavations at Yucundaa Pueblo Viejo de Teposcolula, Oaxaca, Mexico," *Latin American Antiquity* 18, no. 3 (2007): 333-353.

conjunction with the organization of religious festivals, continued to ensure an active native role in the fruition of works of art.

Terraciano's work on Mixtec colonial history was a constant work of reference. His groundbreaking research on primary sources, most of it in Mixtec, greatly facilitated my own investigation.⁴⁵ I differ from his approach, however, in that I believe that integrating other types of sources enriches, at the same time that it also problematizes, the understanding of indigenous institutions and their historical changes through the course of the colonial period. Terraciano, for example, quite categorically excludes Dominican chronicles, which were, on the other hand, extremely useful in my research.⁴⁶ Although the works of friars Agustín Dávila Padilla (*Historia de la fundación y discurso de la provincia de Santiago de México de la Orden de Predicadores*, 1596) and Francisco de Burgoa (*Palestra historial*, 1670, and *Geográfica descripción*, 1674) were written with the clear intent of glorifying the Dominican mission in New Spain, I recognize that particular agendas inform every historical source, not least the legal proceedings that constitute the bulk of Terraciano's primary material.⁴⁷ Padilla and Burgoa provide eyewitness accounts of religious festivals and missionary establishments, giving unexpected details on places and people they encountered.

The shortcomings of Terraciano's philological approach are more strongly felt in his analysis of Mixtec Christianity, primarily based on two Mixtec doctrinal manuals by

⁴⁵ Most of the sources used by Terraciano are found in the Archivo Histórico del Poder Judicial del Estado de Oaxaca, in the city of Oaxaca. He systematically went through the whole Mixtec section of the archive (Juzgado de Teposcolula) before it was finally catalogued in 2004.

⁴⁶ Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca*, 11.

⁴⁷ Terraciano recognizes the limitations and potential of sources written by the dominant class in the investigation of subaltern classes, but fails to include Dominican chronicles. *Ibid.*, 253-254.

fray Benito Hernández (1567 and 1568) and indigenous testaments.⁴⁸ The American historian too unproblematically extracts words and expressions from their textual context. He reproduces “native expressions of piety” without the due preliminary assessment of Spanish literary prototypes that guide the production of such orthodox texts as catechisms and testaments.⁴⁹

On the other hand, I follow the example of Dutch scholar Maarten Jansen and Mixtec Gabina Aurora Pérez Jiménez, who critically incorporate nineteenth-century sources (such as the largely unpublished oeuvre of Manuel Martínez Gracida, in Oaxaca City’s Public Library), pictography, and contemporary oral traditions in the study of Mixtec history. This integrative approach allows us not only to reconstruct historical facts, but, perhaps more importantly, to grasp deep ideological implications and symbolic significance behind hard data.⁵⁰ Pictography, *the* Mixtec writing system, informs us about indigenous historiographic models, tropes of storytelling, and ritual behavior that can hardly be found in colonial alphabetic sources. Oral tradition and knowledge reveal patterns of cultural continuity not only in socio-political organization, but also in the linguistic and literary realm.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 252-312.

⁴⁹ See also Kevin Terraciano, “Native Expressions of Piety in Mixtec Testaments,” in *Dead Giveaways: Indigenous Testaments of Colonial Mesoamerica and the Andes*, ed. Susan Kellogg and Matthew Restall (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1998), 115-140. For a linguistic study that includes the analysis of literary genres employed by the friars, see Sebastian van Doesburg and Michael Swanton, “La traducción de la Doctrina cristiana en la lengua mixteca de fray Benito Hernández al chocholteco (ngiwa),” in *Memorias del coloquio Francisco Belmar*, ed. Ausencia López Cruz and Michael Swanton (Oaxaca: Biblioteca Francisco Burgoa, Universidad Autónoma Benito Juárez de Oaxaca; Fundación Harp Helú Oaxaca, 2008), 81-117.

⁵⁰ See Ferdinand Anders, Maarten E. R. G. N. Jansen, and Gabina Aurora Pérez Jiménez, eds., *Origen e historia de los reyes mixtecos: Libro explicativo del llamado Códice Vindobonensis* (Madrid; Graz; Mexico City: Sociedad Estatal Quinto Centenario; Akademische Druck u. Verlagsanstalt; Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1992); Maarten E. R. G. N. Jansen and Gabina Aurora Pérez Jiménez, “Iyadzehe Añute: Valor literario de los códices mixtecos,” in *Etnicidad pluralismo cultural: La dinámica étnica en Oaxaca*, ed. Alicia M. Barabas and Miguel A. Bartolomé (Mexico City: INAH, 1986), 173-211; Maarten E. R. G. N. Jansen, “The Search for History in Mixtec Codices,” *Ancient Mesoamerica* 1, no. 1 (1990): 99-112.

Project Outline

The first chapters of each of the two parts of this dissertation (Part I: The Sixteenth Century and Part II: The Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries) open with a discussion of the political, social, economic, and religious climate of the historical period in question. I give special attention to the reciprocal relations among and within the groups involved, with the aim of rooting the understanding of painting, architecture, and sculpture in the culture that nurtured them.

Chapter 1, "Indigenous Leadership and Religion and the Spanish Conquest," is centered on the reconstruction, through analysis of published and unpublished literary and pictographic documents, of the major personalities and different political and cultural strategies adopted by the *caciques*, indigenous leaders of the *yuhuitayu* (Mixtec socio-political unit) facing the impact of the Spanish presence in sixteenth-century Yanhuitlan. The cacique Don Domingo de Guzmán continued the prehispanic tradition of conflating political and religious powers, undermining at the same time the legitimacy of the Dominican presence. He allied with Francisco de las Casas, the Spanish conquistador and cousin of Hernando Cortés who had been granted the *encomienda* of Yanhuitlan. He thus succeeded in keeping the Dominican friars out of Yanhuitlan for about ten years, until other Mixtec governors accused him of allegedly practicing idolatry, resulting in his having to face the Inquisition. Don Domingo's successor, Don Gabriel, on the other hand, relied on the wealth derived from silk-raising production and the vertical political realignment in Yanhuitlan, both introduced by the Spaniards, to successfully transform the construction of the convento from a statement

of foreign spiritual conquest to a strategy of political hegemony vis-à-vis other local Mixtec tributaries.

I add to the study of the so-called Codex Yanhuitlan, a pictographic manuscript produced in the village around 1550. While the 1940 study by Jiménez Moreno still remains a constant reference for the groundbreaking information and interpretation he offered on the establishment and development of the mission in Yanhuitlan in the early colonial period, the Mexican scholar could not incorporate in his analysis the few pages that were found only seven years later by Heinrich Berlin in the Archivo General de la Nación.⁵¹ While the manuscript was recently published as a whole,⁵² no comprehensive study was attempted.⁵³

In the second chapter, titled “The Church and Convento,” I analyze the major artistic enterprises in Yanhuitlan in the sixteenth century, all centered on the construction and decoration of the convento. A chronological reconstruction of church works is accompanied by a comparison of the Yanhuitlan complex with other major missions built around the same period in the Mixteca. Patterns of artistic patronage and religious ideology are evident among villages closely tied by nobility’s intermarriage and economic interdependence. Dominican friars, in charge of the evangelization, were often moved from one convento to another, thereby creating a homogeneous network in the region.

⁵¹ Heinrich Berlin, *Fragmentos desconocidos del Códice Yanhuitlán y otras investigaciones mixtecas* (Mexico City: Antigua Librería Robredo de J. Porrúa, 1947); Wigberto Jiménez Moreno and Salvador Mateos Higuera, *Códice de Yanhuitlán* (Mexico City: Museo Nacional, 1940).

⁵² María Teresa Sepúlveda y Herrera, *Códice de Yanhuitlán: Estudio preliminar* (Mexico City: INAH; Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, 1994).

⁵³ But see Maarten E. R. G. N. Jansen, “Mixtec Rulership in Early Colonial Times: The Codex of Yanhuitlan,” manuscript in author’s possession (2007).

In this chapter I also discuss the involvement at Yanhuitlan of international artists, namely the Sevillian painter Andrés de Concha and the Extremaduran architect Francisco Becerra, who both came to the New World thanks to the intermediary role of Gonzalo de las Casas, son and successor of the conquistador Francisco. Today they are considered among the major artists active in the Americas in the sixteenth century. Their presence in Yanhuitlan and the Mixteca under the patronage of both Spanish *encomenderos* and Mixtec *caciques* is the sign of an exquisitely indigenous cultural policy of appropriation and display of Spanish art forms. It ultimately calls into question the notion of the subaltern status of indigenous centers in the Spanish empire and suggests that these towns were neither a provincial reflection of a distant European taste nor an expression of a fading culture, but rather the nexus of a global phenomenon of intercultural exchange.

Finally, in chapter 3, "Images and Texts of the Evangelization," I discuss the role of visual arts in the evangelization process through an analysis of Dominican doctrinal and devotional books. These sources clearly link the conversion program of the friars with larger European religious reform movements of the late fifteenth century. In Spain, the friars began to promote a learned lay form of devotion that addressed the spiritual needs of the emerging urban mercantile elite: in the countryside, they tried to uproot the magic and superstitions of the peasants. In the New World, however, they confronted a wholly different economic, social, and belief system. Mesoamerica was characterized by minimal urbanization. Elite members, both secular and religious, lived in scattered villages among their peasant subjects and partook of the same rural and agrarian culture. As a result, in the rural village of Yanhuitlan, iconography and compositions of the sixteenth-century paintings directly point to the pietistic and

devotional ideas of Renaissance Humanism. Documents also attest that indigenous nobles normally participated in church dances that utilized bird feathers and rattles.

The second part of the dissertation opens with a discussion of primary sources related to the cacicazgo of Yanhuitlan in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The power of native rulership rapidly peaked in the first decades of the colony, only to slowly erode in the following two centuries. Disputes over the property of the ruler's residence (built in conjunction with the convento in the mid-1550s) and his fields reveal a shifting balance of power between the inheritors of Gabriel de Guzmán, the powerful cacique of the sixteenth century, and the lesser nobility of Yanhuitlan. The latter claimed that their rulers had become like the Spaniards; they had acted too much and for too long like them until they were no longer any different from the colonizers. In sum, what was a successful strategy on the part of the ruling class of Yanhuitlan in the sixteenth century had become in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the very same reason for their inexorable decline. If life was changing all around the convento, within the walls of missionary establishments friars felt the increasing and threatening pressure of the American-born Spaniards among them. The fervor that had brought to the New World the first generation of evangelizers was replaced by a more rooted economic and social presence in New Spain's colonial society. The idealism and optimism that characterized missionary activities in the sixteenth century were replaced by disenchantment and even resentment against the native population.

In the fifth chapter, titled "The Church and Convento," I analyze the major works that enriched the mission in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in conjunction with an analysis of Mixtec and Spanish testaments from Yanhuitlan. This enables a fuller reconstruction of religious behavior and artistic practice, oscillating between private devotion and adherence to established Catholic norms. While the Virgin of the

Rosary and two altarpieces of the Passion of Christ can be interpreted within the Dominican traditions of the cult of the Rosary and Holy Week, “smaller” saints attracted pious testators seeking intercession after death.

The sixth and last chapter, “Art, Ritual, and Community Identity,” analyzes the importance and function of the institution of the barrios, or neighborhoods. From the onset, these organizations represented grassroots movement that countered the hierarchical structure superimposed by the colonial government. They relied heavily on participation in public ceremonies to foster economic interdependence and community identity. Several colonial crucifixes and angels still bear Mixtec names relative to the barrio of origin, although such affiliations have been long forgotten. Processional sculptures are “activated” only during specific liturgical festivities, most importantly Holy Week and the celebration of El Divino Señor de Ayuxi (considered the patron saint of the village). A comparison of the current use and display of images with colonial descriptions of year-round festivities reveals striking continuities from the seventeenth through the twentieth century, connecting the indigenous past with current identity issues faced by Yanhuitecos, together with many other people around the world: emigration, modernization, and globalization.

PART I
THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

Chapter 1

Indigenous Leadership and Religion, and the Spanish Conquest

Yanhuitlan and the Mixteca Alta in the Postclassic Mesoamerican World (AD 1000-1521)

Santo Domingo Yanhuitlan is a Mixtec village located in the northwest extremity of the Nochixtlan Valley in the Mixteca Alta, in the state of Oaxaca. Its current name betrays a history of foreign conquests the town endured in the late prehispanic and early colonial periods. Dominican friars, visiting the area around 1527-1528, imposed the name of Santo Domingo (Saint Dominic). One of the most prominent Mixtec *yuhuitayu* (cacicazgo), Yanhuitlan was christened with the name of the founder of the Dominican order. Prior to the Spanish invasion, the Mexica (Aztecs) had subjugated a large part of the Mixteca (ca. 1481), leading eventually to the current denomination of Yanhuitlan, the Nahuatl translation of Yodzocahi, the original Mixtec name of the village. Both terms mean “wide plain” or “new plain,” possibly referring to its location in a wide valley.¹ In this section, I will briefly introduce Yodzocahi, its place and history in prehispanic Oaxaca.

¹ Francisco de Burgoa, *Geográfica descripción*, Publicaciones del Archivo General de la Nación (Mexico City: Talleres Gráficos de la Nación, 1934), 286.

Archaeological Evidence

No major excavation has ever been conducted in Yanhuitlan, despite its recognized importance in the Postclassic Mixteca. In the 1960s, Ronald Spores completed the most exhaustive study of Yanhuitlan, combining data from archaeological surveys and ethnohistorical sources.²

Archaeological evidence shows that in the late Postclassic period (AD 1000-1521) the Nochixtlan Valley in Oaxaca had the greatest population density than in any previous era. In contrast to population growth, monumental ceremonial architecture, typical of the Classic period (AD 250-900), ceased. In the Mixteca, old Classic sites, such as Yucuñudahui and Cerro Jazmín in the Nochixtlan Valley, served as revered ritual centers, much in the same guise as Teotihuacan in Central Mexico and Monte Alban in the Valley of Oaxaca.

Little urban concentration characterized settled areas, although Spores recognizes hierarchical patterns between *cabeceras* (head) and *sujetos* (subject) towns. A central plaza in the form of a raised platform, around which were found elite multi-chambered structures with plastered walls and drainage systems, identifies the main town.³ Residential areas were dispersed around the central plaza, separated by large plots of land.⁴ Very little differentiation in residential structures characterized *sujetos* such as hamlets, suggesting a homogeneous social composition. Michael Lind

² Ronald Spores, *An Archaeological Settlement Survey of the Nochixtlan Valley, Oaxaca*, Vanderbilt University Publications in Anthropology (Nashville: Vanderbilt University, 1972); *Stratigraphic Excavations in the Nochixtlan Valley, Oaxaca*, Vanderbilt University Publications in Anthropology (Nashville: Vanderbilt University, 1974).

³ Spores, *An Archaeological Settlement Survey*, 189.

⁴ See diagram in Spores, *The Mixtec Kings*, 95.

describes the lack of a clear dichotomy between urban and rural settlements as dominant in the Nochixtlan Valley, a feature that still persists in most part of the Mixteca.⁵ Most of the population lives in hamlets referred to as *ranchos*, *agencias*, or *estancias*, while the town center can be identified by a public square (or a sports court) with a community building or church around it.

Postclassic ceremonial precincts in the Mixteca are usually not found in the center of town, but rather adjacent to them. They are commonly associated with remarkable natural features on hilltops, in caves, or near springs, or with abandoned archaeological sites.⁶ Visitation to and ritual gatherings in these places, therefore, implies a population movement, or peregrination, not to the head town but to a peripheral area. This behavioral pattern persists among contemporary indigenous people who perform fertility rituals (during rainy and harvesting seasons) in sites distant from residential areas.

As for Yanhuitlan, archaeological surveys show intensive agricultural terracing on the hill slopes surrounding the village and a highly differentiated center (the large raised plaza with elite residences). Spores considers these features to be the product of late Postclassic changes caused by increased population pressure and tribute demands from the Mexica (Aztec) empire.⁷

⁵ Michael Lind, *Postclassic and Early Colonial Mixtec Houses in the Nochixtlan Valley, Oaxaca*, Vanderbilt University Publications in Anthropology (Nashville: Vanderbilt University, 1979).

⁶ Spores, *The Mixtec Kings*, 96-97.

⁷ Spores, *An Archaeological Settlement Survey*, 190.

The Genealogy of Yanhuitlan

In keeping with its attested historical importance in the late Postclassic period, Yanhuitlan has a long dynastic record traceable through ancient genealogical manuscripts. Colonial legal documents also mention ancient rulers in connection with contemporaneous hereditary disputes. In court proceedings, ancient “pinturas” (i.e., painted manuscripts) constituted valid legal evidence and often accompanied testimonies. Spanish authorities generally acknowledged the rights and rulership of indigenous nobility, mainly with the purpose of establishing a legitimate interlocutor between the Crown and the Indian subjects.

The Mexican scholar Alfonso Caso was the first to demonstrate that the Mixtec manuscripts dealt primarily with historical characters and places, contrary to the astrological explanations of German scholar Eduard Seler. Caso’s conclusions were based on a combined study of pictographic and postconquest written sources. In a sixteenth-century legal proceedings dealing primarily with land possessions and successions in Yanhuitlan, old witnesses testified that in “infidel times” a couple, named Lady Cahuaco (1 Flower in Mixtec) and Lord Namahu (8 Death in Mixtec) ruled until about 1525-30, when their daughter María Coquahu (Lady 2 House) succeeded them.⁸ Caso noticed that a couple with the same calendrical names appears in the Bodley screenfold, page 19-III (Figure 1). The ruling couple sits atop a place sign that Caso identified as the prehispanic place name of Yanhuitlan. The umbilical cord on Lord 8 Death indicates that he is the son of the couple immediately preceding him.

⁸ AGN Civil, 516. For a transcription, see Maricruz Paillés H., ed. *Documentos del archivo del doctor Alfonso Caso para el estudio de la Mixteca: Archivo General de la Nación, Ramo Civil* (Mexico City: INAH, 1993), 10-11.

Following the genealogy backward reveals that he was a descendent of Lord 8 Deer of Tilantongo (1063-1115), the most powerful and charismatic military leader in Mixtec history. His Tilantongo ancestry further indicates that the direct heir of the cacicazgo of Yanhuitlan was his wife, Lady 1 Flower. This matrilineal pattern continued upon Lady 1 Flower's death, when her daughter María Coquahu inherited the title. The legal proceedings also state that Coquahu married Diego Nuqh (Lord 6 Movement) and that the couple resided primarily in Tamazola, the origin town of the husband. María was the mother of Don Gabriel de Guzmán, who was chosen to inherit the yuhuitayu of Yanhuitlan. Nevertheless, at his mother's death, Don Gabriel was too young to rule and leadership was handed over to a brother of María, Don Domingo. Don Gabriel would eventually assume the title in 1558. The proceedings analyzed by Caso were the legal proof of Don Gabriel's possession of the cacicazgo produced by the cacique in 1580.

This dynastic history is nevertheless complicated by a character appearing prominently in a pictographic document from Yanhuitlan and again mentioned in different colonial written sources. In plate 2 of the manuscript (Figure 2), a man sits on a throne in front of a royal residence, addressing a male crowd. On this page his full name is no longer readable, but he appears again in the following pages connected to the place name of Yanhuitlan. The full name of this ruler is 9 House. The date Year 2 Flint (1520) on page 2 indicates that he was the cacique before Lady 1 Flower and Lord 8 Death, who were ruling around 1525-1530. A cacique named Calci (containing the root for the Nahuatl word "house") is frequently mentioned in the Inquisition trials against Yanhuitlan rulers in 1544-46, where it is stated that the cacique Don Domingo de Guzmán used to honor Calci's death during specific ceremonies.⁹ A 1563 letter sent to

⁹ María Teresa Sepúlveda y Herrera, *Procesos por idolatría al cacique, gobernadores y sacerdotes de Yanhuitlán, 1544-1546* (Mexico City: INAH, 1999).

the Spanish officer Jerónimo Valderrama states that Francisco Calci was succeeded directly by Don Domingo, the ruler at the time of the Spanish conquest.¹⁰ Given the same information in three unrelated sources, it seems quite believable that a person named Francisco Calci, Lord 9 House, did in fact possess at some point the yuhuitayu of Yanhuitlan. It is not clear, however, when exactly he was the town's ruler, whether before or after Lord 8 Death and Lady 1 Flower. That he is not mentioned in the AGN document discussed above is not surprising because Calci's rulership interrupted the direct line of descent from prehispanic times that the cacique Don Gabriel intended to prove in the lawsuit.

The Mexica and Spanish Conquests

Several ethnohistorical sources indicate that Yanhuitlan was a tributary of the Mexican ruler Motecuhzoma II at the time of the Spanish conquest. The town was part of the province of Coyxtlahuacan (Yodzocoo in Mixtec), located to the north of Yanhuitlan in the Mixteca. Together with other prominent towns of the region, such as Tamazulapan (Tiquehui), Teposcolula (Yucundaa), Jaltepec (Añute), and Nochixtlan (Atoco), Yanhuitlan paid tribute to the Aztec empire in the form of clothes, *chalchihuitl* (precious greenstones), quetzal feathers, cochineal (carminic insect dye), gold, and elaborate warrior costumes made of bird feathers (Figure 3).¹¹ Less clear is when the Mexica conquered the Mixteca Alta. Both the Mendoza and Chimalpopoca

¹⁰ France V. Scholes and Eleanor B. Adams, eds., *Cartas del licenciado Jerónimo Valderrama y otros documentos sobre su visita al gobierno de Nueva España, 1563-1565* (Mexico City: Porrúa, 1961), 300.

¹¹ Matrícula de Tributos, fol. 21; Codex Mendoza, fol. 43r.

manuscripts attribute the defeat of Yanhuitlan to Tizoc, whose short reign lasted from 1481 to 1486.¹² The latter source again lists Yanhuitlan among the victories of Motecuhzoma II. Discrepancies are likely due to the nature of Aztec hegemonic power. Because only tribute was demanded, without political takeover of the conquered territory, the Mexica had to wage war against its subjects any time a province simply refused to pay tribute. Motecuhzoma II's victory was probably the punitive expedition related by Diego Durán in his *Historia*.¹³ According to the Spanish friar, during the reign of Motecuhzoma II, the people from Yanhuitlan and Sosola mistreated Aztec merchants while they were passing through the region. The upcoming annual feast of Tlacaxipehualiztli (The Flaying of Men) offered the Aztec emperor a good occasion for a punitive action against the two Mixtec towns. Reportedly, over a thousand captives were taken by the Mexica army, which looted and destroyed Yanhuitlan with almost no opposition. They were eventually sacrificed in Tenochtitlan during the culminating ceremony of Xipe Totec.

Spanish incursions in the Mixteca took place as early as 1520, when Hernando Cortés sent some envoys to the southern regions of Mexico, where most of the Mexica gold was acquired.¹⁴ By 1522, the Spaniards had already conquered the Mixteca, encountering only minor resistance, probably due to the already subjugated status of the Mixtecs under Aztec control.¹⁵

¹² Mendoza, fol. 12r; Chimalpopoca, 67-68.

¹³ Diego Durán, *The History of the Indies of New Spain*, trans. Doris Heyden (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 428-429.

¹⁴ Hernán Cortés, *Cartas y documentos, 1485-1547* (Mexico City: Porrúa, 1963), 111; Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *Historia de la conquista de Nueva España* (Mexico City: Porrúa, 1980), chap. CII.

¹⁵ Bernardino Vázquez de Tapia, *Relación de méritos y servicios del conquistador B. Vázquez de Tapia, vecino y regidor de esta gran ciudad de Tenustitlan, México* (Mexico City: Antigua Librería Robredo, 1953), 52.

In 1523, Yanhuitlan became an encomienda when Cortés granted the privilege to his cousin Francisco de las Casas, a Trujillo native.¹⁶ As numerous Spanish and Mixtec witnesses declared in the 1540s, the encomienda of Yanhuitlan was considered one of the richest in New Spain because of the abundance of natural and human resources.¹⁷

Native Resistance and Adaptation

Two Early Sources

This subsection analyzes two closely related sources from the decades immediately preceding the beginning of church construction in Yanhuitlan: first, the well-known proceedings from an Inquisitorial trial probing the cacique and governors of Yanhuitlan for allegedly continuing “pagan” rituals more than a decade after having been baptized (between 1544 and 1546); second, a pictographic manuscript, known as Codex Yanhuitlan (ca. 1550) detailing Mixtec, Spanish, and Dominican activities in the village over a twenty-year period. These two sources are in many respects complementary.

In terms of format, the Inquisition trials are the product of the Spanish legal system and reflect the agenda and concerns of the Crown in the conquered territory. The written proceedings consist of testimonies and interrogations of Mixtecs, Spanish residents, and Dominican friars from Yanhuitlan who were directly questioned about specific “idolatrous” practices that allegedly persisted in Yanhuitlan and surrounding

¹⁶ Burgoa, 290-291; Vasco de Puga, *Prouisiones, cedula, instrucciones de Su Magestad* (Mexico City: J. M. Sandoval impresor, 1878), 348.

¹⁷ Sepúlveda y Herrera, *Procesos*, 147.

subject towns. Pre-Hispanic deities are consistently referred to as “devils” and traditional rituals as “witchcraft.”

The pictographic manuscript, on the other hand, fully adheres to the prehispanic pictographic tradition. Although Spanish glosses appear throughout the document, they were evidently added later and do not substantially alter the narrative, which is conveyed pictorially. All events narrated are postconquest, but dates are recorded according to the traditional Mixtec calendar, indicating not only indigenous manufacture but also an intended indigenous audience.

As such, it would seem easy to assume that the latter pictorial source better represents the indigenous point of view, while the former texts chiefly express colonialist Spanish biases. This is only partly true, however. Although personal rivalries and factionalism, evident throughout the trial, may undermine the factual reliability of the source, accusations by indigenous people were nevertheless articulated according to a direct native experience of traditional religion. If questions by Spanish judges were framed according to a Western Christian mentality, answers from indigenous people, raised in precolonial times, reflect fully a Mixtec understanding and knowledge of precontact culture.

On the other hand, the pictographic document, despite its clear indigenous format, betrays the changing attitude of Yanhuitlan leaders towards the conquest, both military and spiritual. The document can be better understood as a testimony to the acculturative strategy of the Mixtec elite, who instead of fighting and resisting conquering forces, took full advantage of their role as mediators between conquered and conquerors to secure economic and social privileges within the new colonial order. Mixtec leaders ostentatiously wear Spanish clothes and subserviently pay tribute in both staple and luxury goods to the Spaniards. Indigenous agency is more clearly

visible in this conscious adaptive strategy, even though important native institutions are also portrayed.

The substantial differences between the two sources derive from the dramatic changes that occurred in Yanhuitlan in the few years that separate the Inquisition trials from the production of the pictographic manuscript. After having successfully rejected the demands and impositions of the friars for a few decades, thanks to the alliance with the Spanish encomendero, Yanhuitlan leaders had to finally succumb under the pressure of the friars, supported by the political and military support of the Crown. The Inquisition trials were instrumental in the re-entry of the Dominicans into Yanhuitlan after their initial expulsion in the early 1530s. Consequently, the pictographic manuscript, produced ten years later, reflects the post-Inquisition-trial political and spiritual status quo in Yanhuitlan.

Yanhuitlan Inquisition Trials

The Yanhuitlan Inquisition trials, consisting of more than three hundred handwritten pages, are among the most important and well-known cases of New Spain's Inquisitorial persecution in the sixteenth century.¹⁸ Excerpts were first published by Jiménez Moreno as a documentary appendix to the commentary on the manuscript.¹⁹ It has been more recently transcribed and published by Sepúlveda y Herrera.²⁰ The trial

¹⁸ For study of Inquisition activities in New Spain and Yanhuitlan in particular, see Richard E. Greenleaf, *The Mexican Inquisition of the Sixteenth Century* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1969), 74-81.

¹⁹ Jiménez Moreno and Mateos Higuera.

²⁰ Sepúlveda y Herrera, *Procesos*.

spans a two-and-half-year period, from August 1544 to January 1547. Three prominent members of Yanhuitlan's political leadership were brought before the Inquisitor Tello de Sandoval: the regent cacique Don Domingo de Guzmán, Don Francisco de las Casas, and Don Juan, *principales* (non-ruling nobles) of Yanhuitlan. The naming patterns of the three nobles reflect to a certain extent the Mixtec perceived value of Christian conversion. As stated in the proceedings, Don Domingo, Don Francisco, and Don Juan changed their Catholic names when confirmed by the Bishop of Oaxaca, years after having been baptized. In the prehispanic tradition, a person was given a date name at birth, later in life adding personal names that reflected his character and achievements. Don Domingo de Guzmán adopted the namesake of the founder of the Dominican order, also the patron of the village and church. The cacique's decision shows that he considered himself not only a political leader, but also a moral and spiritual guide to his people, in spite of friars' attempts to usurp the religious role of indigenous leaders.

The case of Don Francisco de las Casas is also worth noting. He adopted the name of the first encomendero of Yanhuitlan and gave his son the name Gonzalo, the same as the encomendero's son. The Extremaduran Francisco de las Casas played a prominent role in Yanhuitlan in the first decades after the conquest. He is often mentioned in the proceedings as a supporter of the Indians, acting with them against the friars. Many witnesses testified that the alliance between the encomendero and the cacique had been the major obstacle to the successful evangelization of the area. It is said that the encomendero Francisco de las Casas urged the Indians not to pay tribute to the friars and to refuse to work for them. When caciques and principales were forced to bring their "idols" to the friars, Don Francisco suggested to them to give only the old ones, secretly keeping the new and precious ones.

The alliance between local caciques and Spanish encomenderos against the Spanish Crown and clergy was a widespread phenomenon in New Spain in the sixteenth century. Encomenderos, led by Hernando Cortés, fought to maintain the right to pass on to their descendants the land grants they initially received as a payoff for their military duties during the conquest. By this strategy, conquistadors were ultimately seeking to establish politically independent kingdoms in the New World.²¹ Besides the obvious economic advantages, this plan often took on religious overtones. In Central Mexico, some Franciscan friars embraced the conquistadors' quest, adding an utopian and messianic spirit to the encomenderos' political plan. Clues that Francisco de las Casas may have shared these ideas is suggested by a passage in the Inquisition trial proceedings, where a witness testified that the encomendero had been instructing the Indians on the matters of faith and had married them according to the Catholic Church, in all taking on the role of the Dominicans in the evangelization of Yanhuitlan.²² Also, Francisco de las Casas paid the bail of two thousands pesos that freed Don Domingo. Although the final sentence is not known, it seems that the case was settled without the conviction of any indigenous leader, because Don Domingo ruled in Yanhuitlan for another fifteen years.²³

Amid political and personal accusations, changes in religious attitudes among the colonized and evangelized Indians can be detected. Don Domingo and Don Francisco emerge as Mixtec leaders who openly resisted the imposition of Christian faith, never

²¹ Ethelia Ruiz Medrano, "Fighting Destiny: the Nahua Nobles and the Friars in the 16th-Century Revolt of the Encomenderos against the King," manuscript in author's possession (2007).

²² This specific information leads Maarten Jansen to suggest that the Spaniards appearing on plate 16 of the Yanhuitlan manuscript is indeed Francisco de las Casas teaching the Rosary to a young Don Gabriel, future cacique of Yanhuitlan. Maarten E. R. G. N. Jansen, "Mixtec Rulership."

²³ Don Gabriel de Guzmán succeeded Don Domingo in 1558. AGN Civil, 516, 3: 47r, also published in Paillés, 11.

fully surrendering the old religion. They urged their people to congregate in the patio of the church not to attend mass, but rather to honor their ancestors, who had been worshipped on that very same patio where the ancient temple once stood. From the steps of the atrial cross, they preached in Mixtec to their subjects that they need not listen to the friars. The Spaniards would soon be gone, they said, and they would be able to revert fully to the ancient customs. They offered incense and food to the gods in their home altars before going to church, so to avoid the wrath and revenge of their ancestors. They chewed *piciete* (tobacco) before hearing mass so they would be intoxicated during service and not have to listen to the preaching friars.

Many traditional rituals, especially those related to the agricultural cycle, continued to be celebrated decades after the conquest. A witness recalled that in the times of drought, Don Francisco sent some priests to the woods to find charcoal. With the charcoal they made a black paint with which Don Francisco painted his body.²⁴ He then proclaimed that he was no longer a Christian and proceeded to draw sacrificial blood, burn copal, and sacrifice quails. Several witnesses mention four important annual celebrations held in Yanhuitlan, dedicated to different deities. They were Zagui (the Rain God), Tizono ("el corazón del pueblo," Heart of the Town), Toyna (the patron deity of Yanhuitlan), and Xitondoco (the merchants' god). The cacique and principales of Yanhuitlan forced their people to continue this tradition. Offerings in the form of plumes, cloths, copal, and even slaves were bought in the market for ritual purposes. Images of the four deities were kept in villages subject to Yanhuitlan and were periodically moved around so that the friars would not find and destroy them.

²⁴ Black body paint is a common identifier of priestly figures in prehispanic manuscripts. See, for example, the manuscripts Vienna, pp. 50-52 and Borgia, pp. 29-46.

Along with open resistance, other aspects of Yanhuitlan religious life bespeak an incipient syncretism, which would prove to be the most important factor in the successful evangelization of the Indians in the decades to come. When Don Francisco's wife died, she was buried according to the prehispanic tradition, wrapped in a bundle with a precious greenstone (*chalchihuitl*) in her mouth. With her hair they made a wig for the mummy bundle's mask. Eventually, the mummy was buried in the church and Don Francisco continued to bring offerings to her tomb. Public ceremonies were made to coincide with the Catholic liturgy. For example, harvesting rituals, called Huicotuta in Mixtec, were celebrated during All Saints and All Souls at the end of October.²⁵

Finally, a sincere embrace of the new faith coexisted with resistance and accommodation. Friars actively involved the native population in the administration of the church, creating religious associations such as *mayordomías* and *cofradías* to finance and organize public rituals. They monopolized the education of the young nobility, teaching them the Spanish language and the tenets of Catholic religion. Among the students in Yanhuitlan was certainly Gabriel de Guzmán, nephew of the cacique Don Domingo, who would become the pivotal indigenous figure in the promotion of church construction in the following decade.

Codex Yanhuitlan

Codex Yanhuitlan, a pictographic manuscript, is a fragment whose loose pages are today located in two separate institutions in Mexico. The main part of the document is found in the University Library in Puebla, while a few more pages were

²⁵ Similar cases are known from other part of Mesoamerica. See, for example, Diego Durán, *Book of the Gods and Rites and the Ancient Calendar*, trans. Fernando Horcasitas and Doris Heyden (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), 441-443.

located by Heinrich Berlin in the Archivo General de la Nación in Mexico City in 1947.²⁶

A thorough interpretation of the manuscript is hampered by what seems a deliberate destruction of pages. Several fragments indicate that more pages are missing.

Stylistically, the manuscript shows a remarkable hybridism. The author was most certainly Mixtec, as the use of Mixtec calendar signs suggests. Central Mexican pictographic conventions also appear throughout the manuscript. On plate E²⁷ (Figure 4) and 18 (Figure 5), rulers sit on an *icpalli*, a straw mat with a tall back, commonly depicted in Nahuatl manuscripts, but not found in Mixtec documents, where royal seats do not have a back (as, for example, in plate 2). On plate 16, a woman is depicted with the typical Nahuatl two-horned hairdo of a married woman.

Other elements are clearly non-native. The artist did not employ color, but favored grisaille instead. This black-and-white technique, common in convento murals throughout New Spain, enabled native artists to show best the mastery of the newly “discovered” three-dimensional system of representation, including linear perspective and chiaroscuro.²⁸

In plates 9 and 17 (Figures 6 and 7), three illustrations, only roughly sketched, appear in rectangular frames. Painted by native artists, this device reflects a Western use of pictures as illustrations subordinate to a text, rather than as part of the pictographic text itself. How did Spanish-influenced colonial manuscript convention reach the Mixteca? A mid-sixteenth-century manuscript from the Mixtec-Chocho community of Santa Caterina Tejupan in the Mixteca Alta refers to Central Mexican

²⁶ AGN Vínculos, 272, 10.

²⁷ I follow the page numeration employed by Jiménez Moreno and Mateos Higuera, pl. 1-23; and Heinrich Berlin, *Fragmentos desconocidos*, pl. A-H.

²⁸ Edgerton, 125-127; 134-138.

Nahua artists brought to town by the friars to instruct and interact with the local community and do work in the church.²⁹ The friars relied on Nahuas they had trained and educated in their missions in Central Mexico to facilitate communication with the newly-encountered non-Nahua people. Nahuatl, a lingua franca in prehispanic Mesoamerica, was commonly spoken outside of Central Mexico.

All these factors indicate that the Yanhuitlan manuscript was produced by a Mixtec artist from within the missionary circle and that he adhered to the friars' cultural and ideological mission. The document does not express the point of view of the indigenous nobility vis-à-vis Spanish institutions. It more directly confronts, instead, the friars' struggle to establish their own position within a political status quo that saw encomenderos and caciques monopolizing economic resources. While tribute is the main topic of this pictographic document, it cannot nevertheless be compared with the extensive tribute sections of the Mendoza manuscript or the Matrícula de Tributos. Further, it is not a mere tribute account, but rather a chronological reckoning of tribute adjustments after the conquest. Stress is not on quantity but rather on the quality of tribute. Along with economic interdependence, it emphasizes the social and moral implications of this material exchange. In my view, the symbolic and ceremonial aspect of tribute giving, from a prehispanic to a colonial situation, is fundamental for the understanding of the friars' successful strategy in their missionizing attempts in Yanhuitlan.

²⁹ Nicolás León and Mariano J. Rojas, *Códice Sierra* (Mexico City: Impr. del Museo Nacional de Arqueología, Historia y Etnografía, 1933), 12, 30; Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca*, 32.

Mixtec Iconography and the Ancient Tribute System

A few pages in the manuscript show a clear precolumbian iconography and content, including supernatural monsters and deities. Plates E (Figure 4) and F (Figure 8) bear the year dates 5 Flint and 6 House, 1524 and 1525, respectively. On the earlier date (Figure 4), a larger-than-life Spaniard triumphantly sits on a Spanish folding chair. He holds a sword that almost pierces the Yanhuitlan place-sign below, identified by the name of the cacique 9 House. A picture of conquest, it probably refers to the establishment of the *encomienda* of Francisco de las Casas a year before.³⁰ This hieratic representation of the new political order contrasts sharply with the symbolic representation on the other side of the page, where the open jaws of an earth monster fill the entire page (Figure 8). This picture introduces plates A, B, and C (Figures 9, 10, 11) that depict four prehispanic deities. The earth monster's maw may indicate a cave or temple, the place where rituals related to the deities portrayed in the following pages were carried out.³¹ Plate A (Figure 9), to be read horizontally, depicts to the right the profile figure of Dzahui (the Mixtec patron deity), known as the rain god Tlaloc among the Nahuas. Recognizable by the conical hat, twisted nose, goggled eyes, and fangs, it makes a reverential gesture, commonly found in precolumbian manuscripts, towards a nearly destroyed figure on the left. The *huipilli* (female upper garment) and frontal position of this other character indicate that it is possibly a female deity, although a more specific identification is impossible, due to the missing upper part of the page.

³⁰ Puga, 348.

³¹ In prehispanic codices, the earth and earth entrances are often depicted as giant reptilian creatures. See for example, Laud, p. 3.

In plates B and C (Figures 10 and 11), two large disks with radiating rays occupy the whole page. At the center are the Europeanized profile faces of two different male deities. Plate B represents the fertility god Xipe Totec, recognizable by the closed (dead) eyes and the stone in his mouth. Although better known in Central Mexico, this god also played a role as a founding god in the prehispanic Vienna manuscript, where he appears with the name of 7 Rain.³² On plate C, the open eyes, nose bars, and jeweled necklace of this deity suggest a solar connection. In the Mixtec manuscripts, the solar deity, known by the calendrical name of 1 Death, appears on pages 24 and 25 of the Vienna manuscript. In the historical screenfolds, Lords 8 Deer and 4 Jaguar reach the place of the Sun God after a long peregrination and series of conquests.³³

These four deities are associated with *veintenas* of the Mexica calendar during which tribute from the provinces of the Aztec empire was collected, as Jansen and Pérez Jiménez have noted.³⁴ Tlaloc was celebrated during Etzalcualiztli (Sustenance of Maize and Bean Porridge); a female fertility deity (Toci or Teteo Innan) had her feast during Ochpaniztli (Sweeping of the Roads); Xipe Totec was honored during Tlacaxipehualiztli (Flaying of Men); and finally, Panquetzaliztli (Raising of Banners) was consecrated to Huitzilopochtli, the most important solar deity among the Mexica of Tenochtitlan. Documents from different Central Mexican towns under the yoke of the Aztec tribute specify these four months as the quarterly tribute dates of the Triple

³² Vienna, pp. 25, 26, 29, and 33.

³³ Nuttall, p. 85 and Becker I, pp. 3-4.

³⁴ Maarten E. R. G. N. Jansen and Gabina Aurora Pérez Jiménez, *La dinastía de Añute: Historia, literatura e ideología de un reino mixteco* (Leiden: Research School of Asian, African, and Amerindian Studies, 2000), 123-124. The ancient Mexican religious calendar comprised eighteen months of twenty days each (known as *veintenas*). Each month was associated with a deity and related rituals. For a study of the tribute dates, see Robert H. Barlow, "The Periods of Tribute Collection in Moctezuma's Empire," *Notes on Middle American Archaeology and Ethnology* 1, no. 23 (1943): 152-155; Richard C. E. Long, "The Payment of Tribute in the Codex Mendoza," *Notes on Middle American Archaeology and Ethnology* 1, no. 10 (1942): 41-44.

Alliance empire. The Humboldt fragment (Figure 12), part of the Azoyú II manuscript from Guerrero, is a long strip of paper organized vertically into a grid. On the far right-hand column appears a year sign, while on the near right column are symbols of the veintenas. From top to bottom, the head of Tlaloc signals Etzalcualiztli; fresh maize cobs wrapped in white cotton cloth indicate Ochpaniztli; a white-and-red flag and banners represent Panquetzaliztli; and, finally, the head of Xipe Totec stands for Tlacaxipehualiztli. The middle column depicts tribute in the form of gold sheets and possibly gold powder.³⁵

These non-Mixtec documents provide the key for understanding the significance and presence of the four deities in the Yanhuitlan manuscript. There are nevertheless also noticeable differences. In the Humboldt fragment, month signs are mere chronological markers, much in the same manner as the more famous Codex Mendoza from Tenochtitlan.³⁶ They emphasize the listing of tribute and the quantity due. The Yanhuitlan manuscript instead focuses on a single deity and beautifully renders iconographic details. On plate A, the gods are portrayed in large size and full figure. They can be interpreted as priests in the act of performing rituals dedicated to the deities. Plates B and C represent the deities in the form of jewels, large disks that closely resemble prehispanic Mixtec gold work found in the tombs of Zaachila (Figures

³⁵ For the Humboldt fragment, see Eduard Seler, *Mexican and Central American Antiquities, Calendar Systems, and History: Twenty-four Papers*, trans. Charles P. Bowditch (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1904). For the Mauricio de la Arena manuscript, Manuel Mazari, "Códice Mauricio de la Arena," *Anales del Museo Nacional de México* Epoca 4, no. 4 (1926): 273-278.

³⁶ Mendoza, fol. 47r, for example, also shows the months of Ochpaniztli and Tlacaxipehualiztli with the same iconography found in the other manuscripts, as tribute dates for the Oaxacan province of Xoconochco (Soconusco).

13 and 14).³⁷ We are therefore invited to consider that, in the prehispanic tradition, rituals and precious gifts are the most important aspects of tribute exchange.

The Spanish Tribute

Quite different, on the other hand, is the perception of Spanish tribute depicted more narratively in three scenes on plate 9 (Figure 6). A strikingly native landscape, with water springing from a ball court (an entrance to the underworld, according to traditional cosmology) and thick drops and swirls, representing water according to precolumbian conventions, is the setting for a typical colonial story. Indigenous workers are extracting gold from the river under the watchful presence of an armed Spaniard who maintains an aggressive stance. His armor and sword betray the intimidating nature of his power and underline his greedy intentions.³⁸

The Introduction of Christianity and the Cult of the Rosary

Lastly, depictions of Dominicans prominently occupy the last portion of the manuscript. Plates 15 and 16 (Figures 15 and 16), the recto and obverse of the same page, clarify in the strongest way possible the nature and extent of Dominican authority. The first page (Figure 15) is entirely filled with a beautiful drawing of a rosary, with every bead meticulously detailed to invite the viewer to observe the designs closely. The count begins on the upper left corner with a cross-shaped pendant

³⁷ Burgoa mentions that silver plates and golden disks from ancient times were kept by families of Yanhuitecos as a memory of their ancestors. Burgoa, 288.

³⁸ Yanhuitlan was under a *corregidor* (an official directly appointed by the Crown) in 1531, when commoners had to pay large quantities of melted gold. AGI Contaduría, 657: 786.

and winds up and down the page seven times before extending into the following page. The iconography of the beads is particularly interesting, because it clearly shows precolumbian motifs. A comparison with Mixtec jewels from Tomb 7 in Monte Alban offers the most striking similarities with the rosary's iconography and demonstrates an underlying continuity in the way the concept of the sacred was denoted from the prehispanic to the postconquest period. A necklace found at Monte Alban (Figure 17) shows remarkable similarities with the rosary in the Yanhuitlan manuscript. Beads are decorated with *xonecuilli*, twirling S-patterns, associated with the lightning sword of the rain god Tlaloc. In the rosary, some beads are decorated with *xicalcolihqui*, a step-meander motif, commonly found on prehispanic pottery and architecture. Regardless of whether a rosary with such unusual "pagan" designs ever existed,³⁹ or the artist simply transferred established precolumbian patterns to the decoration of the beads, the fact remains that the sacred character of the rosary, a devotional object particularly dear to the Dominicans,⁴⁰ is here conveyed using a native "language."

The representation of this precious Christian object and what it reveals of surviving native religious motifs offer a key for understanding the success of the evangelical enterprise as it is portrayed in the Yanhuitlan manuscript.⁴¹ Following the trail of beads leading to the next page, we find that the rosary ends up in the hands of an oversized figure, who sits on a large Spanish chair, conversing with a character

³⁹ The testament of a later cacique of Yanhuitlan, Gabriel de Guzmán, lists numerous Catholic devotional objects decorated with cascabels, along with a few crocodile and eagle gold pieces with similar decorations, which may point to the existence of actual jewels mixing precolumbian and Christian iconography. See the list in Spores, *The Mixtec Kings*, 241-242.

⁴⁰ According to tradition, Saint Dominic established the cult of the Rosary, which was given to him by the Virgin. The devotion became particularly popular in Spain in the late fifteenth century.

⁴¹ The story, we know, was in fact rather more complicated. The Dominicans had been forced to leave Yanhuitlan after first settling there in 1530. Only after the Inquisition trials in 1544-46 were they able to finally return to the village.

named 7 Monkey and two translators. The meeting takes place in an unidentified town represented in the lower right corner. Authors such as Terraciano and Romero Frizzi have noted that the disproportion between the looming central figure and the “ancillary” indigenous persons diagrammatically reflects the new colonial order. It has also been written that this conventional representation does not belong to Western canons, but rather responds to an indigenous aesthetic sensibility uninterested in naturalistic depictions.⁴² Curiously not taken into consideration, though, is that the rosary is far bigger than any other character in the scene! The painter seems to say that the preciousness of the object, its manufacture and symbolic meaning, acknowledged by Dominicans and natives alike, confer authority on the ecclesiastical official. I believe that the prototype for such a hieratic depiction should not be looked for in precolumbian representations, but rather in canonical Catholic images of the rosary. A good example is the painting of the *Virgin of the Rosary* (Figure 97), part of a large altarpiece today in the church of Yanhuitlan, executed by the Spanish artist Andrés de Concha.⁴³ Looming in the center is Mary, graciously holding the child Jesus, and looking downward toward an adoring crowd of Spanish religious and political dignitaries. A giant rosary encircles the Virgin and child Jesus, imparting a supernatural aura that is further enhanced by the celestial clouds and angels. As in the Yanhuitlan manuscript, great care is given to the decoration of the beads, which are here painted with scenes from the Passion of Christ. This painting demonstrates the enduring devotion in Yanhuitlan to the Dominican cult of the Virgin of the Rosary.

⁴² Romero Frizzi, *El sol y la cruz*, 97; Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca*, 32.

Conclusion

Comparing depictions of indigenous and Spanish tribute, these pages clarify what finally enabled the success of the Dominicans in their evangelical enterprise in the Mixteca. I propose that the friars, in contrast to the Spanish encomenderos, understood that the effectiveness of tribute did not rely on an exploitative system of human and natural resources but in the social and sacred bond created between the two parties at the moment when the material transaction took place. In the prehispanic tribute system, elites exchanged precious gifts to establish alliances. Correspondingly, the caciques of Yanhuitlan, accepting the new colonial order, stressed the importance of their privileged elite status in negotiating between commoners (represented by the assembly in the first page) and Spanish friars and encomenderos. For the Spaniards gold was purely a raw material to be acquired in as great amounts and as efficiently as possible. From an indigenous point of view, however, quality mattered more than quantity. The solar disks (Figures 10 and 11) the rosary (Figures 15 and 16) are in fact the only oversized representations in the whole manuscript. Not simply tokens of tribute due, they in fact express the awe and respect for the divine encapsulated in these precious objects.

If plate 14 (Figure 18) represents an agreement between the members of the Dominican order to establish the convento, the rosary in the following pages may indeed represent an actual object that indigenous authorities donated to sanctify their commitment to initiating church construction. The use of prehispanic iconography in both precolumbian and Christian objects further underlines the full appropriation of new religious symbols on the part of the indigenous elite.

⁴³ See chapter 2.

Only this understanding can explain the conclusion given to this tributary manuscript on plate 20 (Figure 19). A beautifully drawn stone church rises atop a stepped platform. Attached to the lower part of the church is the rectangular place name of Yanhuitlan. A large bell, turrets, and exterior decoration complete the picture. Given the context, the place sign can also be interpreted as the *atrio* (courtyard) that almost invariably was built in front of mission churches to provide a space where large masses of indigenous converts could convene. An almost completely faded Mixtec gloss reads “huey ñuhu yodzoquehe,” which can be translated as “the sacred house [church] of Yanhuitlan.” The date on top right, year 2 Flint day 10 Jaguar, corresponds to June 2, 1544. The complete date in the manuscript (the first in over twenty years of recorded history) allows the identification of the “month” of this occurrence, Etzalcualiztli, one of the four tribute collection dates discussed earlier. This is most likely the date of the foundation of the church, the culminating event of twenty years of economic, social, and religious adjustments in the town of Yanhuitlan. As a new beginning for the local indigenous community, this date, then, acquires a particularly important meaning.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ The famous plaque on an external wall of the open basilica of Santiago Cuilapan may be interpreted as the equivalent of the Yanhuitlan manuscript, plate 20, carved on stone. On the left, the year 10 Reed and days 11 Crocodile and 6 Reed correspond to June 16 and 25, 1555. These days fell during the *veintena* of Tecuilhuitontli, represented as a *macahuitl* on top of a volute. On the right, the year 10 Flint day 11 Death corresponds to the days March 1 and November 15, 1568, during the *veintenas* of Tlacaxipeualiztli and Panquetzaliztli.

The New Colonial Order

Economic and Demographic Changes

Mixtec economy underwent several profound changes in the course of the sixteenth century. A combination of institutional, economic, and production factors allowed for a prosperous period between 1550 and 1580. In contrast, epidemics, acknowledged to be one of the most devastating effects of the Spanish invasion on American soil, swept the region several times in the second half of the century. Although figures are highly disputed, population loss in the Mixteca Alta is calculated at around 90% in the course of the sixteenth century, with population going from an estimated 700,000 to 57,000 between 1520 and 1590, with the highest decline rate occurring after 1569.⁴⁵ New studies suggest that population decline peaked and waned during specific epidemic episodes rather than occurring on a steady pace.⁴⁶ In Central Mexico, major outbreaks occurred in 1544-1545 and between 1576 and 1591. The latter was worsened by a drought that caused crop failure and famine.⁴⁷ According to Spores, nevertheless, such drastic demographic change in the Mixteca did not substantially

⁴⁵ Sherburne Friend Cook and Woodrow Wilson Borah, *The Population of the Mixteca Alta, 1520-1960*, Ibero-Americana (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 32.

⁴⁶ Hanns J. Prem, "Disease Outbreaks in Central Mexico during the Sixteenth Century," in *Secret Judgments of God: Old World Disease in Colonial Spanish America*, ed. Noble David Cook (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 31 and 38-42.

⁴⁷ Noble David Cook, *Born to Die: Disease and the New World Conquest, 1492-1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 120-121.

alter settlement patterns, kinship organization, and group relations that were maintained intact through the nineteenth century.⁴⁸

The introduction of cattle and silk raising largely contributed to the positive trend of Mixtec economy up to 1580, balancing the demographic collapse. Cattle enabled Mixtec communities to make a productive use of agricultural fields no longer cultivated because of population loss.⁴⁹ This substantially changed land use and tenure, which in prehispanic times was closely tied to agricultural productivity. The breeding of sheep and cows became a basic source of revenue for entire villages and community institutions. Silk raising, first introduced in New Spain by Cortés, was one of the most successful industries in the Mixteca Alta from the early 1530s to the 1590s.⁵⁰ Spanish conquistadors and Dominicans alike claim to have introduced sericulture into the Mixteca. According to Gonzalo de las Casas, the son of the first encomendero of Yanhuitlan, his mother, María de Aguilar, introduced the *grana* in the Mixteca.⁵¹ Fray Francisco de Burgoa, author of a lengthy account of the Dominican enterprise in Oaxaca, on the other hand, claims that the Dominicans were responsible for teaching the Mixtecs how to raise silk.⁵² Although it may be that silk was introduced by the Las Casas family in Yanhuitlan, which remained the leading production center even after other areas ceased production, Dominicans were responsible for the promotion of

⁴⁸ Ronald Spores, *The Mixtecs in Ancient and Colonial Times* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984), 113.

⁴⁹ Romero Frizzi, *El sol y la cruz*, 145.

⁵⁰ Woodrow Wilson Borah, *Silk Raising in Colonial Mexico* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1943), 23-26.

⁵¹ Gonzalo de las Casas, *Arte nuevo para criar seda*, ed. Antonio Garrido Aranda (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1996), 6.

⁵² Burgoa, 279.

sericulture throughout the Mixteca, channeling the wealth derived from silk production into church construction and sponsorship of religious celebrations.⁵³

The production and trade of silk was the single most important source of income for many Mixtec villages at least up until 1580. Although no detailed account exists for Yanhuitlan, we know that in Santa Caterina Tejupan, for example, 3355 pesos were collected in 1561, of which 3150 derived from silk, 205 from sheep, herd, and cheese.⁵⁴ Between 1550 and 1564, the community spent 16398 pesos, of which 15% was invested in sericulture and cattle, another 15% was paid to Spanish authorities, both civil and religious, and 10% was paid to indigenous town officials. The remaining 58% can be accounted for in church-related activities, including expenses for food and decoration.⁵⁵

The cultivation and commerce of silk added and even supplanted in some cases the production of cochineal, a natural red dyestuff derived from dried bodies of insects raised on the nopal plant. The Mendoza manuscript and Matrícula de Tributos include cochineal as one of the tribute items paid to the Aztec empire by the Mixtec province of Coyxtlahuacan. Around 1600, cochineal export from Central and southwestern Mexico (especially Puebla and Oaxaca) to Spain was only second to silver.⁵⁶

The introduction of horses and mules facilitated overland commerce to the distant provinces of Guatemala, Tabasco, and Chiapas. The trade of preconquest valuable goods, such as cacao, jade, cloths, and feathers, declined under the Spanish tribute system, which favored raw materials. Some of these items, however, continued to be

⁵³ Borah, 25-27.

⁵⁴ León and Rojas, *passim*; Spores, *The Mixtecs in Ancient and Colonial Times*, 176.

⁵⁵ Romero Frizzi, *Economía y vida*, 119-121.

⁵⁶ Raymond L. Lee, "Cochineal Production and Trade in New Spain to 1600," *The Americas* 4, no. 4 (1948): 449-450.

traded because they maintained an important ritual function in the new Catholic liturgy. Along with prestigious items, more common dyes, maize, and turkeys were traded. New products soon included silk and wheat.

Finally, Yanhuitlan, located on the present-day Panamerican Highway, known formerly as *ychi yaya cano*, “large road” in Mixtec, that connected Mexico City with the southern provinces, became a hub on the new continental trade network opened by the Spaniards. Between 1531 and 1585 sea trade flourished in the Pacific Coast port of Huatulco, a location chosen by Cortés for shipping materials to Panama and Peru.⁵⁷ This natural harbor was near Tehuantepec, one of the most important indigenous towns on the coast, and could be easily reached from the Panamerican Highway’s predecessor.⁵⁸

Numerous documents testify to the importance of Yanhuitlan as a trading post for the flow of goods from Mexico City to Peru. Yanhuitlan merchants were actively involved in interregional maritime trade, continuing the prehispanic trade route to Guatemala by sea.⁵⁹ In 1550, when Antonio de Mendoza became viceroy of Peru, his provisions were temporarily stored in Yanhuitlan, until *tamemes* (human porters) were hired to take the load to Huatulco to be shipped south.⁶⁰ The following year, provisions

⁵⁷ Woodrow Wilson Borah, *Early Colonial Trade and Navigation between Mexico and Peru* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1954), 22-26.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁵⁹ Hugh G. Ball and Donald L. Brockington, “Trade and Travel in Pre-Hispanic Oaxaca,” in *Mesoamerican Communication Routes and Cultural Contacts*, ed. Thomas A. Lee and Carlos Navarrete (Provo: New World Archaeological Foundation; Brigham Young University, 1978), 107-114; Arthur A. Joyce, “Interregional Interaction and Social Development on the Oaxaca Coast,” *Ancient Mesoamerica* 4, no. 1 (1993): 67-84; Silvio Arturo Zavala, *Libros de asientos de la gobernación de la Nueva España: Período del virrey Don Luis de Velasco, 1550-1552* (Mexico City: Archivo General de la Nación, 1982), 130.

⁶⁰ Ronald Spores, *Colección de documentos del Archivo General de la Nación para la etnohistoria de la Mixteca de Oaxaca en el siglo XVI*, Vanderbilt University Publications in Anthropology (Nashville: Vanderbilt University, 1992), 11.

for the Spanish army employed in the pacification of Peru were also taken to the harbor by Yanhuitlan tamemes.⁶¹ In the same year, Yanhuitlan merchants asked permission to embark from Huatulco to Guatemala, presumably continuing a prehispanic route.⁶² In 1591, the cacique Don Gabriel de Guzmán signed a request to the Viceroy that all passengers going through Yanhuitlan, to and from Mexico City, pay the due amount to the local tameme employed and for the lodging offered to them during their stay in the village.⁶³ The remains of a building usually referred to as *hostería* or *hospedería* (inn) are attached to the south side of the convento (no. 12 in Map 2 and Figure 20). Finally, in 1621, a wealthy Mixtec merchant from Yanhuitlan drafted his testament while in the city of Guatemala.⁶⁴ He had traded silk fabrics from the Mixteca, Tlaxcala, Europe and Asia.

This brief analysis of the socio-economic situation in the Mixteca during the second half of the sixteenth century reveals a complex picture: major construction works were carried out exactly during times of extreme hardship between 1550 and the late 1570s, when revenue from indigenous tribute and manpower was at its lowest due to major epidemic outbreaks. Once the Pacific Ocean trade with the Philippines and China was established, silk production practically ceased and the port of Huatulco closed by 1590. Sixteenth-century churches and their rich decorations remain as a grandiose testimony to the ephemeral economic boom derived from sericulture and maritime trade. In this context, Yanhuitlan indigenous elite deftly exploited a rapidly changing situation to

⁶¹ Zavala, 155-56.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 139, 224.

⁶³ Spores, *Colección de documentos*, 88-89.

⁶⁴ AHJT Civil, 8, 38: 14v-ff.

impose a new political ideology based on the adherence to Catholic values and the new economy. Although the following centuries would reveal the flaws and limitations of this strategy, in the late 1500s, caciques monopolized political and economic leadership in a way unprecedented in prehispanic times.⁶⁵

Don Gabriel, Cacique and Gobernador (1558-1591)

The single most influential indigenous figure in the reshaping of colonial Yanhuitlan is the cacique Don Gabriel de Guzmán, who ruled between 1558 and 1591. Together with the encomendero Gonzalo de las Casas and the Dominican friars, he was the pivotal figure in the erection of the church and convento, turning a symbol of Spanish conquest and colonization into an enduring legacy of Mixtec political power and religious devotion.

Succeeding to the cacicazgo of Yanhuitlan in 1558, he inherited the rule from his uncle Don Domingo, brother of Doña María, Gabriel's mother, who temporarily ruled until Don Gabriel came of age. The uncle and nephew, however, could not have been more different from one another. In just a generation, political, economic, and religious changes had been completely absorbed by local elite. Don Gabriel could appropriate and display Spanish customs, language, and religion with great confidence, without experiencing the cultural trauma and ambivalence that characterized his uncle's life and rule. Most likely educated by the friars, Don Gabriel came to embody the perfect Catholic and ladino (Hispanized) cacique. Comfortably sitting in the middle ground between Spanish authorities (both encomendero and Dominicans) and Mixtec subjects,

⁶⁵ For a discussion of this phenomenon in the Mixteca, see Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca*, 117-123.

he enjoyed the best of both worlds. Consistently referred to as cacique and gobernador, he was the head of the traditional rulership system (the cacicazgo) and the newly-introduced representative assembly of the cabildo, also referred to as República de Indios. As such, he is a unique figure, and probably the most powerful cacique Yanhuitlan ever had. In the middle of the eighteenth century, when the cacicazgo came to an end, he was regarded as the founder of Yanhuitlan's ruling dynasty.⁶⁶

At the time of his succession, nevertheless, Don Gabriel had to prove his right to rule, both in front of Spanish authorities and his subjects. Gonzalo de las Casas (not to be confused with the encomendero) challenged the legitimacy of Don Gabriel's succession. Don Gonzalo was the son of Don Francisco Calci, the cacique appearing in the Yanhuitlan manuscript, said to be a brother of both Don Domingo and Doña María.⁶⁷ A clause in Don Domingo's testament confirmed the cacique's intention of passing his title on to Don Gabriel. On the basis of this evidence, the viceroy Don Lu s de Velasco decided in favor of Don Gabriel.⁶⁸ In 1580, the cacique petitioned to again prove his title. As ordered by Spanish authorities, the people of Yanhuitlan gathered on a Sunday on the church patio, at the end of mass. In front of his people, Don Gabriel declared his ancestry, the land he owned, and the services due to him.⁶⁹ In 1581, he produced a *probanza* (proof), stating in writing what he had claimed the year before in the church patio.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ AGN Tierras, 400: 3.

⁶⁷ Scholes and Adams, eds., 303.

⁶⁸ AGN Civil, 516:47-48.

⁶⁹ AGN General de Parte, 2, 1053; see also Spores, *Colección de documentos*, 67.

⁷⁰ In this case, it seems that he was trying to prevent the sons of two brothers from laying claim to the cacicazgo. AGN Civil, 516: 2.

Don Gabriel never questioned the dominant Spanish power that considered caciques as the only legitimate spokesmen for indigenous communities, but on the contrary took advantage of postconquest changes. In 1591, after thirty-five years of power, Don Gabriel wrote his testament. He left the cacicazgo to his son, Don Francisco.⁷¹ His daughter Doña María would receive the cacicazgo of Achiutla, which Don Gabriel acquired when he married Doña Ysabel. He owned a considerable amount of wealth in the form of jewelry and silver or gold objects. The descriptions found in the testament leave the impression of a varied collection of prehispanic and colonial artifacts: icons of the Virgin, Jesus, and saints appear together with effigies of crocodiles and eagles. Every gold piece was decorated with cascabels, an indication of their ritual use, as in dances that evidently continued from precolonial times. Furthermore, he owned several gold and silver plates, vessels, and goblets. His estate included over a hundred plots of land (indicated by the Mixtec word *ytu*), 1340 goats, and two hundred kid goats. He possessed a horse, a stallion, and a colt. He owned two devotional texts, *Flos Sanctorum* and *Contemptus Mundi*, which could as well be found in the library of a devout Spaniard in Castile. He requested that his body be carried into the church on a litter with a high cross, and buried where his wife already rested. He gave money to church singers and members of the *cofradías* he belonged to so that a proper funeral could take place. After his death, he made sure that fifty masses would be said in his honor in the monastery.

⁷¹ A transcription of the testament in Spanish appears in Paillés H., ed., 37-42. An English translation is in Matthew Restall, Lisa Sousa, and Kevin Terraciano, eds., *Mesoamerican Voices: Native-language Writings from Colonial Mexico, Oaxaca, Yucatan, and Guatemala* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 106-113.

Yanhuitlan vs. Tecomatlan

Yanhuitlan acquired the status of an undisputed hegemonic center, thanks to a vertical realignment of political and tributary status of the subject towns of the cabecera, introduced by the Spaniards. The process was channeled through church construction and public ceremonies associated with Catholic feasts, which in turn became a main catalyst of interpolity conflict. Not only were manpower and resources requested, but participation in communal ceremonies was also mandatory, as it reinforced the moral obligation of subject towns to the cabecera.

A case found today in the Archivo General de Indias in Seville, consisting of over four hundred pages of testimonies and evidence brought before the Royal Audiencia throughout the early 1580s, documents the power struggle between Yanhuitlan and the subject town of Tecomatlan.⁷² Central to my discussion is not the case per se (Tecomatlan tried to secede from Yanhuitlan as a cabecera), but some specific events and a signed settlement consequent to those events. In 1572, the cacique and governor of Yanhuitlan sent a punitive expedition to Tecomatlan after the principales of the town failed to participate in a deer hunt that traditionally took place a few days before the celebration of Santo Domingo, Yanhuitlan's patron saint. Witnesses explained that this hunt had become customary ten years before. The deer were eventually part of a meal served during the celebration of the tutelary saint.⁷³ Indians from all the estancias and sujetos of Yanhuitlan had to congregate in the cabecera and participate in communal hunting. Failure to do so was evidently interpreted as an act of insubordination.

⁷² AGI Escribanía, 162C. See also the discussion in Manuel Hermann Lejarazu, "Nuevas cabeceras contra viejos señoríos: La separación de Tecomatlan del señorío de Yanhuitlan," *Anuario de Estudios Americanos* 65, no. 1 (2008): 87-100.

⁷³ AGI Escribanía, 162C: 388v. This issue is treated in the sixth question of the interrogatory.

Writing in the seventeenth century, Burgoa informs us that hunting expeditions, *monterías* in Spanish, were organized in Yanhuitlan before any important celebration.⁷⁴ Normally, more than three hundred men participated in these three-day-long events that took place all around the valley. The meals were cooked by women, and every village contributed a deer that was richly adorned with leaves and flowers. Part of a larger feast, the wild animals were served together with turkeys and goats. Burgoa took part in one of these celebrations, reporting that the meal took place under a large canopy of flowers on top of a hill, with a commanding view of the valley. After the banquet, the place was set up for a gift exchange between the lords, which included silk mantles as the most precious items. Burgoa closes his account by saying that such sumptuous celebrations were no longer customary, in part as a result of nobles wasting large quantities of gold and silver in the form of plates and jewels, heirlooms from ancient times, in “profane things.”⁷⁵ Deer hunting and related rituals were important in prehispanic times, and they remain such today.⁷⁶ Depictions of deer, possibly prescribing ritual hunting and sumptuous consumption, are found in the ancient Codices Borgia, p. 19 (Figure 21) and Vaticanus B, p. 77.

Returning to our case, three people from Tecomatlan were harassed and whipped by Don Gabriel’s emissaries as a result of their failure to participate to the communal *caza*. In turn, the principales of Tecomatlan threatened to seek justice from the Audiencia in Mexico City. In order to avoid a trial and the intrusion of a higher

⁷⁴ Burgoa, 288-289.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ See for example, Cospi, pp. 27-31, and modern Tlapanec rituals. Karl Anton Nowotny, *Tlacuilolli: Style and Contents of the Mexican Pictorial Manuscripts with a Catalog of the Borgia Group*, trans. George A. Everett and Edward B. Sisson (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005), 302-306.

authority, which would have destabilized the newly constructed order in the area, the encomendero of Yanhuitlan, Don Gonzalo de las Casas, offered to act as an intercessor between the two parties, drafting a *concierto* (settlement) that was signed in 1572.⁷⁷

This document illustrates quite explicitly the strategic alliance of friars, encomendero, and cacique that strengthened Yanhuitlan as a cacicazgo, an encomienda, and a *doctrina* (the area assigned to each convento). The signers were Gonzalo de las Casas, the vicar fray Domingo de Aguiñaga, and the principales of the town of Tecomatlan.

First, it was negotiated that of the current twenty-six men per week that Tecomatlan was giving to Yanhuitlan for church-related works, only ten would remain over a period of one year (with further negotiations left for the following years). Second, the contribution of vanilla flowers (a type of orchid) for church decoration during Holy Week and the Eucharistic celebration of Corpus Christi was reduced to generic “plants and flowers” that could be more easily gathered within Tecomatlan town limits. The provision of wood and tortillas to the community of Yanhuitlan was no longer mandatory but voluntary upon participation in religious activities in the cabecera.

While money was used to resolve successive disputes, the involvement of laborers from Tecomatlan in church construction and activities was demanded as an act of submission and recognition of the authority of Yanhuitlan. Participation in liturgical activities in Yanhuitlan was further restricted to three times a year, while regular mass attendance was carried out in Tecomatlan. Finally, on a weekly basis Spanish officials would check in Tecomatlan to make sure that no immoral or illegal activities were taking place. Although parish friars and not indigenous leaders administered the *doctrina*, in the document it is clearly stated that Tecomatlan is subject to church

⁷⁷ AGI Escribanía 162C: 283-285 and 363-364. See Appendix C, no. 1.

services and tribute to Yanhuitlan because it lies within its doctrina limits. The agreement rested on a perceived coincidence between political, economic, and religious institutions.

About ten years later, in 1582, Tecomatlan tried to secede from Yanhuitlan, claiming a long independent status prior to the Spanish conquest. The strategy of legitimization was done according to ancient customs. At the time of the arrival of Cortés, Tecomatlan was ruled by Mataçe Itzli (Lord 11 Flint), the last descendant of Nahui Caltzin (Lord 4 House), a sovereign ruler of the Mixteca Alta and Baja 400 years before.⁷⁸ According to them, it was only after the imposition of the *encomienda* that they became Yanhuitlan's subjects. They regretted that personal and public services were imposed on them, among them attending mass and other spiritual functions in Yanhuitlan and paying tribute to the cacique. The profitable business of silk-raising and the revenues deriving from it, they claimed, were also imposed on Tecomatlan by Yanhuitlan.⁷⁹ Yanhuitlan's case rested heavily on territorial grounds. Friars Antonio de la Serna and Francisco de Espinosa, respectively the former and current vicars of the mission, and important Spanish representatives such as Juan de Villafañe, an *encomendero* (perhaps of Añute/Jaltepec) testified that Tecomatlan was a subject town because it lay within the territorial limits of Yanhuitlan. At the same time, ancient *pinturas* (pictographic manuscripts) were also taken as legitimate evidence.⁸⁰ Yanhuitlan presented a genealogical account that dated back twenty-four generations (more than five hundred years) before the currently ruling Don Gabriel. Tecomatlan was consistently

⁷⁸ Ibid.: 493-495.

⁷⁹ Ibid.: 496ff.

⁸⁰ Ibid.: 505.

indicated as a subject town.⁸¹ On the other hand, Tecomatlan insisted that their established town limits proved independence. As it was explained, *mojoneras* (boundary stones) at the town limits served the purpose of delimiting the borders with neighboring villages but did not have any bearing on the subject or independent status of a *cabecera*.⁸²

The case Tecomatlan brought before the judge against Yanhuitlan clearly demonstrate that church building had deep ideological implications. The next chapter explores those implications by detailing chronological developments, artists and patrons involved, and urban and architectural theories current in the Iberian world at the time of construction.

⁸¹ A resident of Tilantongo further explained that Yanhuitlan rulers were *primos hermanos* (first cousins) to Tilantongo, and the genealogical manuscripts were therefore quite similar.

⁸² AGI Escribanía, 162C: 524ff.

Chapter 2

The Church and Convento

The Dominican Presence in Yanhuitlan and the Mixteca Alta

The Dominican enterprise in the Mixteca began in the late 1520s and expanded in the region with an incremental process of incursions and establishments in the following decades. By the end of the sixteenth century, a large network of missionary settlements had been founded with strong ties to other indigenous peoples and areas, such as the Nahuatl in Central Mexico and the Zapoteco in southern Oaxaca, and the colonial cities of Mexico, Puebla and Oaxaca.¹ The systematic planning of the construction program was fundamental for the success of the evangelical mission, which rested on a meager number of Dominican friars dispersed through a vast territory populated by millions of indigenous people. Forced or amicable collaboration with Spanish settlers (conquistadors for the most part) was also a necessary means to gather financial and labor resources.

Although the churches and conventos established in the sixteenth century remained the focus of a wide range of religious, cultural, political and economic activities throughout the colonial period, the magnitude of the building enterprise required such intensified efforts that there is a remarkably more consistent documentary record for the first decades of missionary expansion than for the following centuries of continuous and consolidated presence of the friars in indigenous land.

¹ Ricard defined the Dominican mission in the Mixteca as a "mission of liaison," that is, a series of establishments on a route that connected major urban centers. Robert Ricard, *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico*, trans. Lesley Byrd Simpson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 78.

Establishment of the Mission

After their arrival in Mexico in 1526, Dominicans entered the Mixteca, briefly visiting Yanhuitlan as early as 1527. In the Inquisition trials (1544), it is said that it had been seventeen years since the governor and principales had been baptized, at the time that Yanhuitlan became the first Dominican settlement in the Mixteca.² The friars were only passing through the region in 1527, though, first settling in Antequera (as the city of Oaxaca was known in the colonial period) and eventually proceeding down to Chiapas and Guatemala, looking to further their missionary reach. A temporary presence in Yanhuitlan was established around 1538 when, according to the records of the regional Dominican chapter meeting that took place in Mexico City, three friars and the vicar Domingo de Santa María were assigned to a mission called Santo Dionisio de Yanhuitlan.³

The current name of Santo Domingo Yanhuitlan appears for the first time in 1541 when the foundation was formally accepted. In residence were the vicar Fray José de Robles and Bernardino de Salina.⁴ On a nineteenth-century illustration from the unpublished work of Martínez Gracida, identified by Maarten Jansen as a copy of a now-lost page from the Yanhuitlan manuscript, two indigenous noble figures are portrayed standing on a large area delimited by two rivers.⁵ Corn grows in a field

² Sepúlveda y Herrera, *Procesos*, 281.

³ Burgoa, 286; Magdalena Vences Vidal, "Fundaciones, aceptaciones y asignaciones en la provincia dominica de Santiago de México. Siglo XVI (Primera parte)," *Archivo Dominicano* XI (1990): 122.

⁴ Vences Vidal: 126.

⁵ Jansen, "Mixtec Rulership."

nearby that Jansen interprets as a possible donation of a plot of land to the friars.⁶ He draws his conclusion from the fact that the current church and convento are found on a raised platform around which two small rivers join.⁷ The years given on the page are Year 8 Flint (1540) and Year 9 House (1541). Burgoa confirms that in 1541 the foundations of the church and convento of Yanhuitlan were laid.⁸ This may possibly be what appears in an undated page of the Yanhuitlan manuscript, plate 18 (Figure 5), in which a church attached to the glyph of Yanhuitlan is depicted in the middle of the page surrounded by other place signs. However, the optimistic picture painted by Burgoa, according to which the encomendero fervently collaborated on these early efforts, is overstated, as the Dominicans were forced to leave Yanhuitlan again, possibly during the same year. As noted previously, in the discussion of the Inquisitorial trials, the missionaries struggled for several years before finally establishing themselves in Yanhuitlan.⁹

On a subsequent page of the document, plate 20 (Figure 19), appears the date June 2, 1544 (Year 12 Flint, Day 10 Jaguar). At the time of the Inquisitorial trials (1544-1546) against Don Domingo, cacique of Yanhuitlan, many Spaniards, friars and other witnesses lamented the poor state of the church, which completely lacked decorations and painting.¹⁰ The same people also resented the fact that the encomendero Francisco

⁶ A similar donation was made by Don Gabriel de Guzmán in 1576. See, Jiménez Moreno and Mateos Higuera, 37.

⁷ The streams of water today are channeled artificially. In 1607, the governor and principales of Yanhuitlan requested permission to complete this work. Silvio Arturo Zavala and María Castelo, eds., *Fuentes para la historia del trabajo en Nueva España* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1939), 6: 154-155.

⁸ Burgoa, 290.

⁹ Sepúlveda y Herrera, *Procesos*, 34-35.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

de las Casas had in many ways supplanted the Dominicans in the evangelization, in fact forcing the friars to move their headquarters in the region from Yanhuitlan to Teposcolula. In 1544, the Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza signed an order that church construction should be carried out in every village of the Mixteca where deemed necessary and that encomenderos should not put any obstacle to the establishments of friars in the region, possibly in reaction to the facts related in the trials.¹¹ Discrepancies with earlier sources are most likely due to the aim of the pictographic manuscript. Painted with the intention of portraying a strong alliance between caciques and Dominicans under Don Gabriel's rule, it by passes the controversial years of Don Domingo's governorship.

Finally, the *Actas* (official accounts of the Dominican chapter meetings) state that the last and definitive acceptance of Yanhuitlan occurred in 1548, the same year that the Dominicans returned to Yanhuitlan, after the end of the trials.¹²

Construction of the Convento at Yanhuitlan

The present convento at Yanhuitlan was undergoing construction by 1550. On March 15 of that year, the Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza issued an order to divide money and ornaments that had been provided by the Crown to Domingo de Betanzos, the friar at the head of the Dominican mission in New Spain. Yanhuitlan figures among the establishments most in need of books and ornaments, together with the Dominican conventos in Mexico City, Puebla de los Ángeles, Oaxaca, Oaxtepec in Morelos,

¹¹ Spores, *Colección de documentos*, 6-7.

¹² Jiménez Moreno and Mateos Higuera, 23; Vences Vidal: 131.

Chimalhuacan and Tepapayeca in Puebla.¹³ On October 4 of the same year, workers from the village of Yanhuitlan were given permission to extract stones from a quarry close to Teposcolula. Previously, the workers had been violently attacked by residents of Teposcolula who did not want the quarry, which was allegedly found within their town limits, to be used by another village.¹⁴

On May 14, 1552, the Indians of Yanhuitlan were given permission to cut up to 400 *vigas* (beams) of wood from the hills of Jaltepec and Tamazola for the construction works of the church and convento that, according to the document, had just started.¹⁵ On September 2 of the same year, royal officials were ordered to pay the sum of 200 pesos for the Dominican monastery of Yanhuitlan, again mentioning the fact that the construction works at the site had newly began.¹⁶ In 1552, the Viceroy Luis de Velasco ordered that subject towns of Suchitepec, Mazaltepec, Coyotepec, and Ixquisuchitlan had to pay tribute to the cacique of Yanhuitlan since they fell under the same *encomienda*. This was the case even though it was acknowledged that no service or tribute had been due to Yanhuitlan in ancient times. Furthermore, Suchitepec, Amatlan, and Axomulco had to provide a total of ten days of work toward the construction of the church in Yanhuitlan. The cacique of Yanhuitlan would pay a peso a day for the work.¹⁷ The following year, a number of unspecified subject towns refused to

¹³ Edmundo O'Gorman, "Mandamientos del Virrey Don Antonio de Mendoza," *Boletín del Archivo General de la Nación* 10 (1939): 276-280.

¹⁴ Spores, *Colección de documentos*, 9.

¹⁵ Ayer 1211: 33v. See also Peter Gerhard, *Síntesis e índice de los mandamientos virreinales, 1548-1553* (Mexico City: UNAM, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, 1992), 522.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 523. Ayer 1211: 106r.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* Ayer 1211: 107v-108r. At the same time other villages had gained independence from Yanhuitlan as a result of having been placed under a different *encomienda*. AGI Escribanía, 162C: 526-527.

participate in the construction works of the convento, claiming an independent status from Yanhuitlan.¹⁸ The viceroy rejected the request and obligated the principales and other officials of the villages to join forces with Yanhuitlan in providing for the friars residing in the convento.

Yanhuitlan monastery is again mentioned as being under construction in the following year and must have been very close to completion in 1558 when Yanhuitlan hosted the regional chapter meeting of the Dominicans.¹⁹ At that time, the work of conversion, which comprised the simultaneous tasks of destroying “idols” and schooling young Mixtecs, was fully operating.²⁰

The convento had a deep economic and social impact in the village. The sustenance of the friars and the resources needed to guarantee their evangelical mission in the surrounding doctrina resonate in many contemporary documents accounting for tributaries and tributes given. In 1562, the Viceroy Don Luis de Velasco ordered that 400 pesos, 80 *fanegas* (roughly equivalent to 55.5 liters) of wheat, and 100 fanegas of maize be given every year to the monastery of Yanhuitlan towards clothing and other material needs of the eight friars who were ordinarily in residence.²¹ In the 1562 *Actas*, seven friars are mentioned in Yanhuitlan: Prior Domingo de Aguiñaga, Martín de Niebla, Tomás Hurtado, Sebastián de Ribera, Miguel Martínez, deacon Juan Bautista, and Cristóbal Garrosa.²²

¹⁸ Ayer 1211: 291r.

¹⁹ Vences Vidal: 144, 163.

²⁰ Alonso Franco y Ortega, *Segunda parte de la historia de la provincia de Santiago de México* (Mexico City: Impr. del Museo Nacional, 1900), 56-57.

²¹ AGI México, 68, R. 22, N. 65.

²² Yanhuitlan consistently had more than six friars throughout the decade of the 1560s. Magdalena Vences Vidal, “Fundaciones, aceptaciones y asignaciones en la provincia dominica de Santiago de México. Siglo XVI (Segunda parte),” *Archivo Dominicano XV* (1994): 104.

Robert Mullen, in his study of sixteenth-century Dominican architecture of Oaxaca, primarily relied on the *Actas* to reconstruct the roles several friars may have played in both the architectural design and building program in the Mixtec conventos.²³ The surviving information on foundations, acceptances and assignments provided by the *Actas* enables us to reconstruct the Dominicans' movement throughout their assigned territory, which grew through an expanding network of establishments.²⁴ Fray Francisco Marín, mentioned by the sixteenth-century Dominican chronicler Agustín Dávila Padilla as an expert architect, mason and carpenter, was most likely involved in the design of Teposcolula, where he resided in 1541, 1548 and 1553; Coixtlahuaca, where he was in 1546; and Yanhuitlan, where he is documented in 1550.²⁵ Friars Antonio de Serna, Juan Cabrera, and Domingo de Aguiñaga were vicars in the Mixtec conventos of Teposcolula, Coixtlahuaca and Yanhuitlan throughout the decades of construction (1550-1570) and Mullen credited them with the logistical planning of the construction at these sites.²⁶

In the second half of the seventeenth century, Burgoa reported that the Yanhuitlan church and convento took twenty-five years and the work of six hundred

²³ Robert Mullen, *Dominican Architecture in Sixteenth-Century Oaxaca* (Tempe: Center for Latin American Studies, Arizona State University, 1975), 141-150.

²⁴ The primary documents are "Actas Provinciales de la Provincia de Santiago de México del Orden de Predicadores," 1540-1589, Mex MS 142, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley; and "Libro de Actas de los capítulos Provinciales de la Provincia de Santiago de México, Orden de Predicadores, Siglo XVI," Tomo 11, fol. 1-117, Colección de Federico Gómez de Orozco, Archivo Histórico, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Mexico City.

²⁵ Agustín Dávila Padilla, *Historia de la fundación y discurso de la provincia de Santiago de México, de la Orden de Predicadores*, Colección de grandes crónicas mexicanas (Mexico City: Editorial Academia Literaria, 1955), 238-244; Vences Vidal, "Fundaciones, aceptaciones (Primera parte)," 93-142.

²⁶ Mullen, 141-150.

Indians to build.²⁷ Almost a century earlier, Alonso Caballero, a Spanish resident of Yanhuitlan, gave details on how the resources were gathered in the village in a letter sent to the *visitador* Jerónimo Valderrama.²⁸ Allegedly, every Indian who participated in the construction works was not only charged twenty cacao beans every week, but was not even paid for the service provided. Furthermore, every worker had to pay one *tomín* (eighth of a peso) for every work day they missed at the monastery. The workload included two weeks a year in the quarries and one week cutting wood in the forest. There were over two thousand people, mostly merchants, who were regularly charged by the friars for four weeks a year worth of service, amounting to a total of 8000 pesos.

Aside from construction, the indigenous population commonly provided for the expenses related to religious celebrations. Every participant had to bring cacao or money and failure to do so would result in public whipping on the church patio. For Easter, they charged every Indian a tomín and a half. In 1563, when the letter was written, four thousand extra pesos were collected for the expenses related to a forthcoming Dominican regional meeting. Finally, the friars derived regular income from candles, wool, and straw hats produced by Indians who were not paid for their service. Although it may seem excessive, this exploitation was standard practice throughout the colonies.²⁹

The letter not only reveals important information about the resources provided by the local population, but also tells us about the current politics of coexistence

²⁷ Burgoa, 291-292. This information coincides with the work for the main retablo done by Andrés de Concha in the late 1570s. The main altarpiece could not have been executed unless the church had been completely constructed. See Tovar de Teresa, 83.

²⁸ AGI México, 2547. It is published in Scholes and Adams, eds., 297-302.

²⁹ See, for example, the pictographic manuscripts from Tepeucila, Oaxaca (AGI Justicia, 198), and Huejotzingo, Puebla (Library of Congress, Harkness Collection) both dated around the mid-sixteenth century, which accompanied legal cases against exploitation.

between friars, caciques and Spanish settlers in the sixteenth century. Alonso Caballero, the author, made clear that the friars took a stand against the Crown, saying that paying tribute to Spanish officials would result in capital punishment upon divine judgment. He further stated that during the previous Dominican provincial meeting in Teposcolula, fray Pedro de la Peña held a “secret council” with all the friars and caciques of the Mixteca to raise enough money to send a friar back to Spain to petition a tribute cut for the Indians. The author of the letter appears as an open supporter of Don Gonzalo, son of Francisco Calci, against Don Gabriel, who, the author claims, had formed a coalition with the friars to oppress his own subjects with excessive labor.³⁰ Francisco Calci, a former ruler of Yanhuitlan according to both the Yanhuitlan manuscript (where he can be identified as 9 House) and the Inquisitorial trials, probably lost the cacicazgo because of his opposition to the Spanish colonial regime, a position eventually taken also by Don Domingo. Two political factions, supporting opposing ideologies, were present in Yanhuitlan throughout the first decades of the construction of the convento. Don Gabriel’s impeccable Spanish education, Catholic behavior and political legitimacy based on prehispanic descent, prevailed over the more religiously heterodox and politically subversive strategy of the Spanish conquistador Francisco de las Casas, Don Domingo de Guzmán, Francisco Calci and his son.³¹

Descriptions and Inventories

In a census of the Bishopric of Oaxaca, possibly dated to 1572, eight friars are mentioned as regularly in residence in Yanhuitlan. They were in charge of a large

³⁰ Ibid., 300-301.

³¹ Jansen, “Mixtec Rulership.”

doctrina that included two more encomiendas besides Yanhuitlan: Chachoapan, whose encomendero was Juan de Benavides, and Tiltepec granted to Agustín de Salinas.

These three head towns plus their subject towns gave a total of 7000 tributaries, out of an estimated 100,000 in the whole Bishopric.³²

By 1598, the Dominican establishment at Yanhuitlan was among the largest and most sumptuous in the region. The church was one of the few constructions entirely built with masonry, including the ceiling and cloister.³³ It could accommodate up to thirty friars and had regularly between nine and ten Dominicans in residence.

Revenues derived from 520 pesos and 260 fanegas of maize that the encomendero gave every year; 1200 pesos on interests and benefits on owned properties; a mill, used to make bread; and four plots of land, used to grow wheat. Local indigenous people were also paying alms to the friars every year. To this should be added the significant wealth derived from cattle, an important industry introduced by the Spaniards that thrived in the Mixteca from at least the 1570s.³⁴ The breeding of *ganado mayor* (cows and mules) and especially *ganado menor* (sheep and goats) was rooted in the local economy but its commerce extended to the major cities of Puebla and Mexico. In Yanhuitlan, significant cattle transactions are documented at least from the early 1600s.³⁵

By the end of the sixteenth century, large quantities of silver objects were found in the sacristy. These included two large candleholders; eight small candleholders; a tabernacle; two crosses (one large and one small); two censers, with their spoons and

³² AGI México, 357: 3.

³³ AGI México, 291: 43; Magdalena Vences Vidal, "Iglesias y bienes del Obispado de Antequera," *Archivo Dominicano XX* (1999): 220.

³⁴ María Teresa Pita Moreda, *Los predicadores novohispanos del siglo XVI* (Salamanca: Editorial San Esteban, 1992), 263-264; Romero Frizzi, *Economía y vida de los españoles*, 134-137.

³⁵ Romero Frizzi, *Economía y vida de los españoles*, 136.

containers; a pair of cruets with plates; a number of silver chalices and one large golden chalice. Vestments included: a brocade adornment with a cape, a frontal and dalmatics; a red velvet, white damask, and black velvet ecclesiastical vest; fifteen damask and taffeta chasubles of different colors completed with alb, amice, stole, and maniple; twelve silk frontals of different colors; a yellow damask altar veil; and many other vests and altar covers.³⁶

The Jesuit Bernabé Cobo visited the Mixteca in 1639 on his way from Guatemala to Mexico City.³⁷ He mentions that of the original 20,000 inhabitants, only 400 remained in the village, the whole doctrina including about 1200 people. He was particularly impressed by the church and convento of Yanhuitlan. He praised the fine exposed ashlar masonry of the complex raised high on a platform. He also remarked on the buttresses with arched openings projecting from the north side of the church (Figure 34), 45 feet long and 20 feet thick, and the reinforced buttressed towers in the church front (Figure 60). Cobo also mentioned the latrines (no. 11 in Map 2 and Figure 22): a quadrangular structure with a well in the middle and fourteen seats around it, whose arched entrances were decorated with fine stone sculptural reliefs. The church floor was covered in tiles.

Burgoa offers a later description of the complex dated to about 1670. According to the friar, the convento complex and atrio on the north side stood on top of a large manmade platform, created to avoid the destruction deriving from the frequent and abundant floods during the rainy season.³⁸ As noted above, the church is surrounded by

³⁶ AGI México, 291: 43r-43v; Vences Vidal, "Iglesias y bienes," 294-295.

³⁷ Jiménez Moreno and Mateos Higuera, 49-50.

³⁸ Burgoa, 292.

two streams that were deviated later in the colonial period.³⁹ The large atrio on the north side may be in fact the result of this later work. On the other hand, testimonies in the Inquisition trials state that the ancient temples of the ancestors lay underneath the church foundations, thus indicating that a smaller platform was already in place in the south.⁴⁰ The Dominican friar also praised the Capilla Mayor, the church apse, whose semicircular shape looms over the main square of the village. In the interior, the Capilla Mayor was closed off from the nave by a wooden *reja*, a grilled fence, painted red and gold, probably of the same manufacture as the pulpit that is still standing. The wooden ceiling underneath the choir is described as one of the finest works in the complex. This mudéjar ceiling of the *sotocoro* (no. 14 in Map 2 and Figure 23), space beneath the choir, was said to be over a century old at that time (placing the possible date around 1560-1570), the craftsmanship so fine that it did not yet need restoration.

During conservation works carried out in 1975, evidence came to light of an older façade lying underneath the current one.⁴¹ From the present choir one can still see the two big arched windows that once illuminated the nave (Figure 24). The old façade appears to have been much simpler than the one covering it. The entrance door was surmounted by a semicircular conch ornament. A larger rectangular *alfiz* (a rectangular framing of the door arch) included rose decorations, a typical element of Dominican iconography. On top was a large rose window (Figures 25 and 26), an impressive feature of the façade.

³⁹ Zavala and Castelo, *Fuentes*, 6: 154-155.

⁴⁰ Sepúlveda y Herrera, *Procesos*, 137. The building of Christian temples on top of ancient ones was customary in sixteenth-century New Spain, but archaeological evidence is still lacking at Yanhuitlán.

⁴¹ Luis Brozon McDonald, "La primitiva portada de la iglesia del convento de Santo Domingo Yanhuitlán, Oax.," *Monumentos Históricas: Boletín* 1 (1978): 5-10.

Although no document has yet come to light to tell us the timing and reason for the new façade, the old one does not fit what seems to be a standard front design in Oaxaca, as I will discuss below. Perhaps, the new design, in line with more recent stylistic developments, was implemented around 1607, when the other works on the atrio were carried out.

Spanish Artists and Local Networks

Andrés de Concha

The Sevillian painter Andrés de Concha (d. 1612) is considered one of the most important European artists active in the New World during the sixteenth century. Praised by his contemporaries, his activity in New Spain has also received considerable scholarly attention since the beginning of the twentieth century.⁴²

The Sevillian master sailed for Santo Domingo, Hispaniola, on February 22, 1568, under the sponsorship of the Dominican friar Agustín Campuzano.⁴³ It is commonly agreed that he traveled to the New World after being contracted by Gonzalo de las Casas, encomendero of Yanhuitlan, for the retablo (multi-paneled altarpiece) of Yanhuitlan. Although a document referring to this event was located sometime in the 1920s by the Sevillian archivist Celestino López Martínez in the Archivo de Protocolos Notariales of Seville, it was never transcribed or precisely located, and remains to this

⁴² For references on contemporary assessments of Andrés de Concha, see Guillermo Tovar de Teresa, *Pintura y escultura del Renacimiento en México* (Mexico City: INAH, 1979), 129. In reference to his work at Yanhuitlan, Francisco de Burgoa called the painter “the Apelles of the New World.” Burgoa, 293.

⁴³ AGI Contratación, 5537. See also José Ruiz Gomar, “Noticias referentes al paso de algunos pintores a la Nueva España,” *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas* XIV, no. 53 (1983): 65-73.

day unknown.⁴⁴ Don Gonzalo de las Casas, a native of Trujillo in Extremadura, was in Seville by the end of 1567 and left for New Spain in January 1568, two pieces of circumstantial evidence that seem to confirm the direct patronage of Concha by Gonzalo de las Casas.⁴⁵

Extant documentary evidence leaves the first decade of Concha's residence in New Spain unknown. The first document dates to 1580, when Concha and Simón Pereyng, a Flemish artist who worked in close connection with Concha during his entire career in New Spain, requested payment for a retablo they had finished a year and half before in the church of Teposcolula.⁴⁶ This puts the date of this no-longer extant work as 1578. The main altar at Yanhuitlan appears to have been under construction in 1579, when local residents requested permission to cut wood for the retablo that was being made in Yanhuitlan.⁴⁷ In the following year, Concha was still in residence in the village, when he signed a contract for the apprenticeship of Diego de Montesinos, a *vecino* of Yanhuitlan, to work with him for a period of five years.⁴⁸ In 1581, Concha, together with Pereyng, was again in Teposcolula, providing wooden doors for the retablo of the convento's open-air chapel.⁴⁹ In 1582, he was contracted to

⁴⁴ George Kubler and Martín Soria, *Art and Architecture in Spain and Portugal and their American Dominions, 1500 to 1800* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1959), 392n24; Enrique Marco Dorta, "Noticias sobre el pintor Andrés de Concha," *Archivo Español de Arte* 50, no. 199 (1977): 343.

⁴⁵ AHP Protocolos, 18.590; AGI Indiferente, 2051, 35: 1-8; AGI Contratación, 5537.

⁴⁶ "Tres pintores del siglo XVI: Nuevos datos sobre Andrés de la Concha, Francisco de Zumaya y Simón Pereyng," *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas* III, no. 9 (1942): 60.

⁴⁷ AGN General de Parte, 2: 58v-59; Spores, *Colección de documentos*, 65-66; Tovar de Teresa, *Pintura y escultura en Nueva España*, 83.

⁴⁸ María de los Ángeles Romero Frizzi, *Más ha de tener este retablo* (Oaxaca: INAH, Centro Regional de Oaxaca, 1978), 6-8.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 9-11.

work in the cathedral of Oaxaca to make two lateral altars.⁵⁰ In that document, the retable of Yanhuitlan is taken as a point of reference for what would be executed in Oaxaca, an indication that the work in the village must have been concluded by that time. Inventories of the cathedral of Oaxaca mention four works by Concha, executed more than twenty years prior, which had never been put out in the church and were in 1605 still kept in the sacristy.⁵¹

While in the early 1580s he collaborated with Pereyng on the decoration of the convento de Santo Domingo in Mexico City and the main altar of the Franciscan mission in Huejotzingo, Puebla,⁵² in 1589 Concha was again in Yanhuitlan. A criminal suit, involving “Juan mulatto, a gilder, slave of Andrés de Concha,” mentions the artist only in passing, also attesting to the involvement of mulatto slaves in skilled art craftsmanship.⁵³ What Concha was working on is not known, but a lateral painting found in situ in the church of Yanhuitlan could be attributed to him, as first suggested by Manuel Toussaint (Figure 114).⁵⁴ The following year (1590) he was working in Achiutla and Tamazulapan, two important villages in the Mixteca Alta.⁵⁵ The main altar of Coixtlahuaca, Concha’s only complete extant work other than the Yanhuitlan main altarpiece, remains undocumented.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 12-14.

⁵¹ AGI México, 358. See also Marco Dorta: 344.

⁵² Berlin, “The High Altar of Huejotzingo,” 63-73; Constantino Reyes Valerio, “Los constructores de Santo Domingo de México,” *Boletín del Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia* 38 (1969): 43.

⁵³ The text in Spanish reads: “Juan mulato, dorador, esclavo de Andrés de Concha.” AHJT Criminal, 3, 15.

⁵⁴ Manuel Toussaint, *Paseos coloniales* (Mexico City: Porrúa, 1983), 23.

⁵⁵ Romero Frizzi, *Más ha de tener este retablo*, 15-26.

By the end of the sixteenth century, Concha appeared to have worked largely as an architect in Mexico City, where he was frequently mentioned as *obrero mayor* or *maestro mayor*. Between 1597 and 1598, he worked at the Hospital de Jesús.⁵⁶ By 1601, he was at work at the cathedral.⁵⁷ He further worked at the Convento del Carmen, Convento Real de Jesús María, and the Hospital de San Hipólito.⁵⁸ He also designed two triumphal arches set up in Mexico City in 1603 and 1604 for the entrance into the city of the Viceroy Marqués de Montecclaros and Archbishop García de Santa María.⁵⁹ To this period spent in the viceregal capital should perhaps be dated the corpus of painted works once attributed to the unknown “maestro de Santa Cecilia.”⁶⁰

This brief survey of Andrés de Concha’s activities in New Spain shows his great versatility as an artist: first, painter and sculptor, then architect and designer. It also points to extended and intersecting networks of patronage that were connecting Spain, the colonial metropolitan capitals, and indigenous territory. Since Concha’s connection with Gonzalo de las Casas, encomendero of Yanhuitlan, remains ultimately unproven, his travel to the New World under the auspices of Dominican friars helps explain why, once in the Mixteca, he could be redirected to work in Teposcolula, where the construction of the church was more advanced than at Yanhuitlan.

⁵⁶ AGN Hospital de Jesús, 112: 22.

⁵⁷ AGI México, 24; AGI México, 375. Martha Fernández, *Arquitectura y gobierno virreinal: Los maestros mayores de la ciudad de México, siglo XVII* (Mexico City: UNAM, Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, 1985), 69, 343-345; Enrique Marco Dorta, *Fuentes para la historia del arte hispanoamericano: Estudios y documentos*, 2 vols. (Seville: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-americanos; Instituto “Diego Velázquez,” 1951), 145-152.

⁵⁸ Fernández, 72-74. The documents are AGI México, 293; AGI México, 298; AGN Hospital de Jesús, 33.

⁵⁹ Efraín Castro Morales, “Los maestros mayores de la Catedral de México,” *Artes de México* 21, no. 182-183 (1976): 137-144; Fernández, 75-76.

⁶⁰ Tovar de Teresa, *Pintura y escultura del Renacimiento*, 134. The paintings include *Santa Cecilia*, *La Sagrada Familia con San Juan niño*, *El martirio de San Lorenzo*, and *Cinco Señores*, all in the Pinacoteca Virreinal de San Diego, Mexico City.

Once in Yanhuitlan, he and Pereyns, also, had direct contact with local authorities. Indigenous contractors specified the *traza* (design) to be followed, the amount to be paid, and the date of completion, Christmas Day 1581.⁶¹ In the Mixteca, the network of Dominican conventos was financially and logistically tied to the constant input of Mixtec caciques, principales and their people. In Achiutla, where Concha worked in 1587, the commission was made by Miguel de Guzmán, husband of Doña María de Guzmán, daughter of Don Gabriel, cacique of Yanhuitlan.⁶² She was in fact the cacica of Achiutla, while Don Miguel co-ruled as her husband.⁶³ Dominican friars are explicitly mentioned as *lenguas* (translators) and intermediaries between Andrés de Concha and the Mixtec and Chocho principales of barrios and sujetos in the contract for the retablo of Tamazulapan.⁶⁴ This agreement also reveals the opposition of the local encomendero, Luis Suárez de Peralta, who later in the same year filed a petition against the cacique and friars. He accused them of charging the people of Tamazulapan large quantities of tribute and revenues from silk raising and channeling them into the unnecessary luxury of decorating the church.⁶⁵

Major commissions in the cities of Oaxaca and Mexico were largely based on the reputation Concha had built in the Mixteca. He executed several works in the cathedral of Oaxaca, for which the retablo of Yanhuitlan served as an example: the Mixtec commission evidently was considered fitting for an urban and Spanish

⁶¹ Romero Frizzi, *Más ha de tener este retablo*, 10.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 15.

⁶³ AGN Tierras, 400: 14. Maricruz Paillés H., ed. *Documentos del archivo del doctor Alfonso Caso para el estudio de la Mixteca: Archivo General de la Nación, Ramo Tierras* (Mexico City: INAH, 1993), 42.

⁶⁴ Romero Frizzi, *Más ha de tener este retablo*, 21.

⁶⁵ AGN General de Parte, 3, 107: 57r-57v.

audience as well.⁶⁶ His prestigious appointment as maestro mayor of the Mexico City cathedral was decided on the basis of his accomplishments as a painter and sculptor, as it was acknowledged that he had no design experience.⁶⁷

Francisco Becerra and Religious Architecture in New Spain

Similarly to Andrés de Concha, the Extremaduran architect Francisco Becerra is considered one of the most important artists active in the Spanish colonies in the later sixteenth century. Although it has not been previously recognized, his career path, which would eventually lead him to South America where he was involved in the design and construction of Cuzco and Lima cathedrals, intersects with Concha's. Networks of patronage are again the key for understanding the movements of these artists and the artistic developments that followed.

His early career in Spain, where he worked in his native town of Trujillo, Extremadura, is relatively well known.⁶⁸ Son of the stone mason and architect Alonso Becerra, between 1553 and 1558 Francisco *el moço* (the young) was already at work in the churches of San Martín in the Plaza Mayor and Santa María la Mayor in Trujillo, under the direction of Sancho Cabrera. In 1560, he worked with his father on the design for the church of San Bartolomé Apóstol in Herguiejuela, a town a few miles from Trujillo. Later, Francisco was *maestro mayor* of the church of Santo Domingo (1566), which

⁶⁶ Romero Frizzi, *Más ha de tener este retablo*, 12-14.

⁶⁷ Fernández, 343-344.

⁶⁸ Cristina García Oviedo, "Francisco Becerra; interpretaciones de la arquitectura española en América," *Anales de Historia del Arte* 11 (2001): 121-148; Marco Dorta, *Fuentes*; Carmelo Solís Rodríguez, "El arquitecto Francisco Becerra: Su etapa extremeña," *Revista de Estudios Extremeños* 29 (1973): 287-384.

remained unfinished, and the convento of San Francisco (1570) in Trujillo. Among the civil architectural works in which his intervention has been documented are the townhouses of the conquistadors' families Pizarro de Orellana and las Casas (1574), a corner window (*ventana-esquina*) in the house of Isabel de Mendoza (Figure 27) and the Dehesa de las Yeguas, 1573 (Figure 28), a corral gate, all in his native hometown.

In 1573, Becerra asked permission to sail for the New World, together with his wife Juana González de Vergara.⁶⁹ Gonzalo de las Casas may have been behind Becerra's decision to move to the New World.⁷⁰ Later, in 1580, the encomendero would act as *fiador* (guarantor) for Andrés Hernández, a carpenter, and he was likely behind Andrés de Concha's transfer from Seville to New Spain in the late 1560s, as discussed above.

Two years later he was already involved in the major architectural enterprises of New Spain, namely the cathedrals of Mexico City and Puebla de los Ángeles. He further worked for the Dominicans in the conventos of Santo Domingo and San Luis in Mexico City and for the convento of Santo Domingo in Puebla.⁷¹ In the same town, Francisco Becerra also worked directly for the Dominicans of Coixtlahuaca, for whom he conducted some restoration works in a house owned by the friars.⁷² Concha and Becerra both worked in the Dominican motherhouse in Mexico City. With Pereyngs, the former gilded four coats of arms and round sculptures for the *reja* (grid) of the main

⁶⁹ AGI Patronato, 191, 2. See also Marco Dorta, *Fuentes*, 246-249.

⁷⁰ Ida Altman, *Emigrants and Society: Extremadura and America in the Sixteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 179, 185.

⁷¹ Marco Dorta, *Fuentes*, 256.

⁷² Castro Morales, "Francisco Becerra," 13-14.

altarpiece, while the architect was employed in much needed restoration.⁷³ The two worked together again in another Dominican house in Tlahuac, in the Federal District. Becerra's involvement in a town transcribed as Cruytlabaca, in the basin of Mexico, was mentioned by some testimonies in the *probanza de méritos y servicios* (a testimonial of merits and services rendered to the Crown) given in Lima in 1585.⁷⁴ Marco Dorta identified the place as Cuernavaca, although Tlahuac, known as Cuytlahuac or Cuitlavaca in the colonial period, seems a more likely place.⁷⁵ For the same church, Andrés de Concha painted a *Virgin of the Rosary*, still found in situ (Figure 98).⁷⁶ The dates for the execution of both works are not known, but the church was still under construction in 1587.⁷⁷

Tlahuac was not the only indigenous town where Becerra worked during his years in New Spain. In the 1585 probanza mention is made of Tlalnepantla, D.F., Tepoztlan in Morelos, and Totimehuacan and Cuauhtinchan in Puebla.⁷⁸ Other documents regarding Becerra's work in Totimehuacan clearly point to indigenous patronage since regidores, principales and mayordomos of the village contracted the architect directly, a Spanish friar acting as translator.⁷⁹

⁷³ Marco Dorta, *Fuentes*, 104-106; Reyes Valerio, "Los constructores de Santo Domingo de México," 44.

⁷⁴ Marco Dorta, *Fuentes*, 256, 268, 279.

⁷⁵ Peter Gerhard, *A Guide to the Historical Geography of New Spain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 102-104; Kubler, *Mexican Architecture*, 113.

⁷⁶ Tovar de Teresa, *Pintura y escultura en Nueva España*, 91.

⁷⁷ Zavala and Castelo, eds., *Fuentes para la historia del trabajo en Nueva España*, 3: 44-45.

⁷⁸ Marco Dorta, *Fuentes*.

⁷⁹ Castro Morales, "Francisco Becerra," 14.

What architectural elements traceable to Becerra can be found in Mexican architecture of the sixteenth century? A Renaissance door decoration, consisting of lateral enclosing columns on top of which rests an indented gable decorated with finials, is recurrent in Becerra's work. It is found at Herguijuela, near Trujillo, where Alonso and Francisco Becerra worked together, and Francisco would use it again in his window for the house of Doña Isabel de Mendoza (Figure 27) and the Dehesa de las Yeguas (Figure 28), both in Trujillo. In New Spain, the main doorway to the church of Corpus Christi, Tlalnepantla, has the same characteristics (Figure 29).

The cloister of Tlalnepantla (Figure 30) is a two-story masonry construction with exposed ashlar and lowered arches on Corinthian columns, a design Becerra had already employed in the monastery of San Francisco (Figure 31) and in the salon for Gonzalo de las Casas' house in Trujillo.⁸⁰ The high ceilings of the salon and corridors, all made with masonry, were described by a fellow countryman of Becerra as one of the best works done in Extremadura.⁸¹

Two other almost unique features of Yanhuitlan's design, the round apse (Figure 32) and the pierced buttresses on the north side (Figure 34), offer possible links to the work of Becerra. Yanhuitlan shares the round apse with Cuauhtinchan (Figure 33), where Becerra worked in the second half of the 1570s. Back in Spain, buttresses with passageways have a rare antecedent in the church of Santiago del los Caballeros in Cáceres, an old synagogue redesigned as a church by Rodrigo Gil de Hontañón and Sancho Cabrera (with whom Becerra would eventually work in Trujillo) in 1549 (Figure

⁸⁰ Solís Rodríguez: 329.

⁸¹ Marco Dorta, *Fuentes*, 298.

35).⁸² According to Burgoa, a foreign architect was called upon to resolve some stability problems on the north side of the church.⁸³ A long crack is visible on the north wall, although is perhaps more recent than what Burgoa may be talking about. The buttresses appear to be made with the same stone and cut the same way as the rest of the building.

Francisco Becerra may have worked in the Mixteca right before his arrival in Peru in 1581.⁸⁴ He is documented in Puebla between 1574 and 1578, but not later.⁸⁵ In 1579, Concha was likely finishing the retablo in Yanhuitlan, after completing the apse. Becerra already knew the encomendero Gonzalo de las Casas, for whom he had worked in Trujillo; Andrés de Concha, with whom he worked in Central Mexico; as well as the Dominicans of Coixtlahuaca, in the Mixteca, for whom he worked in Puebla.⁸⁶ Furthermore, he must have passed through Yanhuitlan on his way to South America, as the town was a preferred stop on the route to the harbor of Huatulco, on the Pacific Coast of Oaxaca.⁸⁷

The few elements discussed above may point to a further involvement of Becerra in Central Mexican and Mixtec conventos than previously recognized. His work in New Spain should be more widely understood within a common practice in late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth-century Spain that combined Gothic and Renaissance

⁸² García Oviedo: 126; Kubler, *Mexican Architecture*, 268. García Oviedo sees the overall project of Santiago de los Caballeros as being an antecedent to Becerra's design for Santo Domingo in Trujillo.

⁸³ Burgoa, 291 and 295.

⁸⁴ Marco Dorta, *Fuentes*, 279-280.

⁸⁵ Castro Morales, "Francisco Becerra."

⁸⁶ Kubler also suggested a possible connection between Becerra and certain Mexican mission churches, *Mexican Architecture*, 237.

⁸⁷ Spores, *Colección de documentos*, 11; Zavala, *Libros de asientos*, 155-156. See also chapter 1.

elements in both architectural design and decoration.⁸⁸ Gothic rib vaulting offered technical advantages, given the seismicity of the American Pacific Rim. Renaissance decoration applied on doorways and church fronts equally responded to a taste for clear structure and architectonic principles. Similar ideas are found at Yanhuitlan. For example, in the cloister, a classical frame is inserted in an otherwise Gothic trabeation (Figure 36). The linear decoration of the entrance door to the refectory (Figure 37) is similar to the one realized by Becerra in Totimehuacan (Figure 38). Becerra's training in the late medieval Spanish mode proved to be particularly adaptive to the socio-economic and environmental challenges of the New World.

Conclusion

Concha and Becerra moved within a similar network of patronage. If, in fact, both may have traveled to the Indies thanks to initial connections with Gonzalo de las Casas and the Dominicans, indigenous patronage, metropolitan cathedrals and conventos became major catalysts of their activities in New Spain. No single venue was preferred; both artists were capable of adapting to different social contexts, audiences, and local necessities. They did not show any preference with respect to city and provincial centers, as they were equally and indiscriminately active in Spanish towns and indigenous villages.

Andrés de Concha and Francisco Becerra's activities prove that it is wrong to reduce artistic production in sixteenth-century New Spain to dichotomies of urban and rural settings. Patronage was similarly not divided along ethnic lines. Alliances

⁸⁸ Fernando Marías, *El largo siglo XVI: Los usos artísticos del renacimiento español* (Madrid: Taurus, 1989), 33-44. In this framework should also be understood Robert Mullen's discussion of Rodrigo Gil de Hontañón's influence on Dominican architecture in Oaxaca. See Mullen, 157-174.

between Dominicans, Spanish settlers and indigenous elite were created and implemented differently depending on the local context; these different strategies, nevertheless, always rested on the shoulders of indigenous labor and tribute, which was substantially employed in both cities and villages. This was the direct result of the economic situation of the second half of the sixteenth century, characterized by the integration of indigenous towns in the hubs of the world-wide commercial empire of the Habsburgs.

Native rulers emerge as the privileged venue through which Spanish artistic forms entered indigenous society. Caciques logistically and ideologically mediated between the need of Spanish authorities and their indigenous subjects. The Spanish material and symbolic world was manipulated in order to function suitably in rapidly changing political and religious situations.

Church Building and Ideology in the Mixteca Alta

Architecture

In their classic studies on sixteenth-century Mexican architecture, Kubler, Toussaint, and McAndrew see an evolution from a typical “medieval” plane façade, predominant in the earlier period (e.g., Figures 39 and 40), to a more classicizing or purist variation of later establishments (e.g., Figures 41 and 42).⁸⁹ Tall towers replace diagonally projecting buttresses to give the building a stronger symmetrical appearance. In this type, rarely found in Central Mexico, documentation has proved the

⁸⁹ Kubler, *Mexican Architecture*, 271; John McAndrew and Manuel Toussaint, “Tecali, Zacatlan, and the Renacimiento Purista in Mexico,” *The Art Bulletin* 24, no. 4 (1942): 320-321.

involvement of Francisco Becerra. At Tepoztlan, Morelos (Figure 41) and Cuauhtinchan, Puebla (Figure 42) the church front is imposing, thanks to the two high towers, but the façade itself only displays a doorway decoration, *tequitqui* in Tepoztlan and sparsely classical in the case of Cuauhtinchan. In Totimehuacan, Puebla (Figure 43), the towers have become a framework for an extended and articulated façade design, comprised of several tiers of niches and compartments, ordered by enclosed columns.

This model was carried though to the south of New Spain. Entering the Mixteca we notice that the flat church fronts of Central Mexico are practically absent. In contrast, a consistent use of large projecting towers, which most of the time do not exceed in height the main body of the church, is favored, along with composite church fronts, to which Totimehuacan constitutes the closest precedent. Achiutla, Coixtlahuaca, Teposcolula, and Tamazulapan (Figures 44, 45, 46, 47, and 48), among the most important Dominican establishments in Oaxaca, display such characteristics.⁹⁰ Yanhuitlan's original front can only be partially reconstructed, but it seems not to have conformed to this model (Figures 25 and 26).

Mixtec church interiors also share similar features in design: Gothic rib vaulting and corbels are predominant as are architectural decoration on doorways, windows and cloisters' columns. These similarities, amply discussed by Mullen, point to a coherent and concerted planning of the architectural projects in the region.⁹¹ Mullen probably exaggerated the role played by the Dominican Fray Francisco Marín in the design of Mixtec conventos. The friar was only briefly present in any given establishment, while

⁹⁰ Other examples include Etna, Huitzo, Tilantongo, Magdalena Peñasco, Tayata, San Juan de Gracia. Illustrations can be found in Robert Mullen, *The Architecture and Sculpture of Oaxaca, 1530s-1980s* (Tempe: Center for Latin American Studies, Arizona State University, 1995).

⁹¹ Mullen, *Dominican Architecture*, 157-174.

construction works lasted for an entire generation, roughly between 1550 and 1575.⁹² On the other hand, the constant exchange of friars between urban and rural conventos, the consistent reliance on indigenous labor, including in the construction of metropolitan churches, and the logistical support of caciques contributed to the appearance of certain architectural patterns.

Work in Teposcolula was undertaken earlier than any other large Dominican convento in the Mixteca (late 1540s).⁹³ There, emphasis is on the open chapel and the grand atrio that opens in front of it, while the church façade is minimally decorated. A more articulated sculptural program was developed at Coixtlahuaca, where a smaller but still ample open-air chapel is also present. In both Teposcolula and Coixtlahuaca (Figures 49 and 50), indigenous artistic contribution is visible in the façade sculptures and reliefs, particularly flat and deep in the case of Coixtlahuaca.

Tequitqui features are nevertheless inscribed within a larger framework that derives from models imported from Spain. Coixtlahuaca's façades are similar to the plateresque fronts of San Esteban in Salamanca (Figure 51) and Plasencia cathedral's north transept (Figure 52). Distinctive *a lo romano* (in a Roman manner) features, such as small niches, medallions, and floral carvings, are inserted in a flat structure of carved pilasters and trabeations. The central part is larger and given a more monumental outlook by the use of consecutive arches and rosettes. On the other hand, in Totimehuacan (Figure 43), Achiutla (Figure 44), Tamazulapan (Figure 48) and partially Teposcolula (Figure 47), Diego de Siloé's church front of San Salvador in Ubeda (Figure 53) and the Puerta del Perdón of the Granada cathedral (Figure 54) constitute more pertinent Peninsular references. Siloé was one of the foremost masters in Spain of the

⁹² Ibid., 127-141.

⁹³ AGI México, 291.

classical language derived from Italy, systematized and disseminated through the publication of architectural treatises. Decorative elements derived from the antique are used here more sparsely, with the intention of highlighting symmetry and proportion. In Spain as well as New Spain different architectural languages (Plateresque, Classical and indigenous) coexisted in one single design and were artistically integrated with one another, rather than constituting parallel or antithetic forms of developments.⁹⁴

The evolution toward a more symmetrical and monumental façade was eventually carried through to the south of Oaxaca, becoming a trademark of Oaxaca City (Figure 55) and Zapotec (Figure 56, church of Ocotlan) religious architecture. These new solutions were built on the previous experience in the Mixteca; further they constitute a continuing experimentation on a model that was established in Mixtec churches. McAndrew and Toussaint do not include this typology in their discussion of Mexican Renaissance Purism (a classical language derived mostly from Italian architectural treatises), but rather consider it a lesser version of the designs of Mexico City and Puebla cathedrals (Figures 57 and 58), whose sixteenth-century designs were executed by Claudio de Arciniega and Francisco Becerra, respectively. Similarities are found in the large enclosing side towers and the superimposed stories of the façade.⁹⁵ The Basilica of San Lorenzo at El Escorial (Figure 59), dating to 1561, is another important prototype for this design. Commissioned by Philip II to commemorate a victory against the French, its grandiosity and ambition of concept immediately turned it into a cornerstone of Spanish architectural design.

⁹⁴ Marías, 41-42.

⁹⁵ McAndrew and Toussaint: 321. The first project for Mexico City dates to 1563, while Puebla's was executed around 1575.

Artistic outcomes in indigenous villages were not derivative or inconsequential for larger artistic developments in colonial Mexico. Rather, they were a laboratory of experimentation for new and adaptive strategies and solutions to problems of cultural, economic, and political interaction. The current façade at Yanhuitlan (Figure 60), dated to the early seventeenth century, follows the trend of Oaxaca City's church fronts of the same period.⁹⁶ The towered front could readily be adjusted to accommodate a new taste for deeply carved and sculptural decorations, because the preexisting typology constituted in fact a stylistic antecedent to the Baroque superimposition. A debate on architectural forms was constantly ongoing between missions and cathedrals, friars and bishops, and indigenous and Spanish patrons.

Urban Planning

Churches and adjoining conventos were not the only noticeable architectural achievements in early colonial Mixtec villages. The long Mesoamerican tradition of royal architecture, with residential and political/diplomatic functions, also found new expressions in the early postconquest period.⁹⁷

The royal palace is known in Mixtec as *aniñe*. In Spanish documents, it is sometimes referred to with the Nahuatl loanword *tecpan* (or *tecpa*). It is furthermore described as *huahi tniño* (duty house) a term translated into Spanish as "casa de la comunidad" (community house). This double terminology refers to the fact that the

⁹⁶ In 1609, Yanhuitlan laborers were coerced to work on the construction of the church and convento of Santo Domingo in Oaxaca (AHJT Civil, 07, 46). The similarities between the two projects may have something to do with the interchange of indigenous labor.

⁹⁷ The most important example of postclassic elite residential architecture in Oaxaca is found in the Zapotec town of Mitla, in the Valley of Oaxaca.

building hosted cabildo's meetings, during which decisions were taken regarding community service, land use, and tribute. These palaces were large residences comprising several adjoining and interconnecting structures organized around internal courts. The best-preserved and best-known example is the *aniñe* in Teposcolula, usually referred to as "casa de la cacica" (the residence of a female ruler, Figure 61, foreground) because of the known historical figure under whose rulership the residence was constructed. Extant documents relate it to Doña Catalina, cacica of Teposcolula in the 1560s.⁹⁸

The building still extant today in the village of Teposcolula shows a characteristic disk-frieze decoration running along the flat-roof building, which frequently appears in pictographic documents in association with elite and religious architecture (Figure 2). Round arches of the entrance door are, on the other hand, of clear European derivation. In Coixtlahuaca, the community house, although heavily reconstructed, shows a few features that indicate a colonial construction, such as the arcaded porch on the main plaza. At Yanhuitlan, the current state of preservation of the building known as "casa del cacique," nowadays part of a municipal complex, does not allow any speculation about its formal characteristics. Nevertheless, the account of the Jesuit friar Bernabé Cobo, who passed through Yanhuitlan in 1639, makes clear that the construction works for the ruler's residence and the convento were carried out at the same time, using the same stones and workers.⁹⁹ The compound was built around a large internal patio, so large it was later used as a bullfight arena. The ruler's residential quarters were arranged around two smaller patios supported by stone columns. The complex was deemed by the friar worth of a royal residence.

⁹⁸ Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca*, 160.

⁹⁹ Jiménez Moreno and Mateos Higuera, 49-50.

In all three villages, when one moves beyond the confines of the enclosed *aniñe*'s patios, it becomes apparent that a larger design is in place. *Caciques*' residences, sites of governmental power, are visible from the conventos' atrios. The alignment of the two complexes forms in fact an axis from which extends the rest of the town, projected according to orthogonal lines (Figures 61, 62, and 63). The convento itself is not merely a building, but rather a piece of the urban fabric thanks to the surrounding atrio, a buffer zone between the enclosed spaces of cloister and church, and the village (Figures 64, 65, and 66). In Teposcolula and Coixtlahuaca, these spaces are created by enclosing walls, whereas in Yanhuitlan an elevated platform demarcates the gathering space (Figure 60).¹⁰⁰ Characteristic of Mexican missions, atrios, which frequently feature open-air and *posa* chapels (as in Teposcolula and Coixtlahuaca), are original features of New World architecture.¹⁰¹ They are nevertheless a variation on the plaza, a basic constituent of prehispanic urban design, which continued after the conquest while taking on some Western features.¹⁰²

Church design in Teposcolula, Coixtlahuaca and Yanhuitlan was tied to a larger urban reorganization of the populated surroundings. Several factors — the demographic collapse that left many neighborhoods and hamlets almost completely deserted, colonial authorities' desire to exert a tighter control over the indigenous subjects, and the embrace of a new political ideology on the part of the indigenous ruling elite — converged in reshaping settlements along with some significant socio-

¹⁰⁰ In the 1670s, Burgoa relates that the atrio to the north of the church used to be enclosed by a wall five *varas* tall (about five meters), topped by crenellation. Burgoa, 292. It is not known when the walls were torn down.

¹⁰¹ John McAndrew, *The Open-air Churches of Sixteenth-century Mexico: Atrios, Posas, Open Chapels, and Other Studies* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965).

¹⁰² Setha M. Low, *On the Plaza: the Politics of Public Space and Culture* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), chap. 5.

behavioral patterns. The scattered appearance of the prehispanic village gave way to an order achieved through a clearly normative design. Conventos generated a centripetal force by channeling communal efforts necessary for the construction and the public rituals that took place around them. The visibility of the palace, with its royal insignia, from the grand atrio in front of the open-air chapel in Teposcolula bespeaks an economic, logistical and ideological alliance of the indigenous ruling elite with Spanish authorities.¹⁰³ In Yanhuitlan, the *añiñe*-convento alignment further extends to incorporate the main square to the east, the important shrine of El Calvario to the north (Figure 67), and the Panteón (cemetery) to the west (Figure 68) across the highway (see also plan, Figure 62).

The church front design discussed in the previous section can also be taken as a visual expression of this drive for a new social order that resulted from postconquest adjustments. The planar articulation of the classicizing façade not only reflects on the exterior the main altarpiece in the church interior (whence the term “retablo-façade” that is sometimes employed), it also becomes a programmatic statement for the creation of an urban space.

Not all villages in the Mixteca seem to have gone through the same process of urban reshaping, however. A noticeable exception is the village of San Miguel Achiutla, known as Ñuu Ndecu in Mixtec. The present church and convento are not found within the core area of the town, but rather on a hilltop just outside of it, in a very visible position from many parts of the valley (Figure 69). A recent settlement survey revealed that the present convento stands on top of a prehispanic platform, which may have

¹⁰³ James B. Kiracofe, “Architectural Fusion and Indigenous Ideology in Early Teposcolula,” *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas* XVII, no. 66 (1995): 45-84.

included a plaza, as well as residential and ceremonial buildings.¹⁰⁴ While the village was congregated downhill, similarly to Teposcolula, the convento was built according to ancient settlement patterns. The mission of San Miguel Achiutla was one of the most important in the region. Fray Benito Hernández, co-author of the first published books in Mixtec, two *Doctrina Christiana* (1567 and 1568), resided in the convento for many years and was eventually buried there.¹⁰⁵ Burgoa relates the importance of Achiutla as a religious center from ancient times: it was the main temple of the Mixtec nation and attracted pilgrims from all over the region. The oracle, which had to be reached through a long and perilous walk through the forest, was consulted for personal and political matters. In the cave that preserved the oracle, fray Hernández found a multitude of offerings including gold, silver, jade, and painted manuscripts. Nobles from all over the valley were buried there.¹⁰⁶ In page 2 of the Selden screenfold, the founder of the ruling dynasty of Añute is seen emerging from a ceiba tree found in Achiutla, attesting to the importance of the town as a sacred place of origin. On page 6, the sacred cave is consulted for an oracle by the hereditary ruler of Ñuu Tnoo (Tilantongo) on a delicate succession matter.¹⁰⁷

These different examples coming from the Mixteca demonstrate that artistic outcomes in the colonies were not predetermined by geographical or ethnic factors, but rather resulted from local politics of coexistence and adaptation. The instructions and

¹⁰⁴ Andrew K. Balkansky and others, "Archaeological Survey in the Mixteca Alta of Oaxaca, Mexico," *Journal of Field Archaeology* 27, no. 4 (2000): 380.

¹⁰⁵ Burgoa, 318.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 332 and 339-340.

¹⁰⁷ Jansen and Pérez Jiménez, *La dinastía de Añute*, 128.

ordinances given by Spanish authorities in their effort to organize and control the life in the Latin American colonies should also be understood in this light.

Viceregal Ideology

The importance of convento design for the architectural and urban development in New Spain is suggested by an *instrucción* left by the Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza to his successor, Luis de Velasco. Written just before the end of 1550, when the Viceroy left office, they reflect a deep knowledge and concern about the exploitation of Indian work and the general situation of indigenous material and spiritual life in Spanish territory. Among them were some specific annotations regarding the Dominican missions in the Mixteca. Mendoza specified that they should follow the same design that had earlier been devised and utilized by the Franciscans and Augustinians in the conventos of Central Mexico. This was to avoid errors in construction that would eventually result in a waste of resources. He added that two or three people deemed good and trustworthy officials should be sent around the region to ensure that the works were done in the proper manner. He mentioned that in Teposcolula a church was begun downhill on a very humid spot. He realized that the friars were planning on congregating the population —still settled on the top of the hills— close to the newly-established mission. He nevertheless advised against it and called for measures to be taken to prevent the friars from resettling the Indian population.¹⁰⁸ Despite this, the Dominican project was carried through and the Pueblo Viejo of Teposcolula was soon

¹⁰⁸ Ernesto Torre de la Villar and Ramiro Navarro de Anda, eds., *Instrucciones y memorias de los virreyes novohispanos* (Mexico City: Editorial Porrúa, 1991), 115.

abandoned.¹⁰⁹ Mendoza also noted that in Yanhuitlan a large establishment was under construction, but good resources had been wasted due to the lack of proper coordination and supervision.¹¹⁰

Although Mendoza's interests in Alberti, Italian Renaissance urban design and utopian ideas have been emphasized with regard to this specific *instrucción*, the urge to adopt what Mendoza called a *traza moderada*, a "moderate design," in the construction of Mixtec conventos suggests financial and social concerns that owe more to the pragmatism of a bureaucrat than to a preconceived ideological position.¹¹¹

The Viceroy owned and annotated a copy of Alberti's *De Re Aedificatoria*. The Italian theoretician constantly paralleled architectural design with the notion of a well-administered city. Public health and social order went hand in hand with specific advice for a proper design. Mendoza seemed to have had the same concerns: he was, after all, the chief administrator of New Spain for the Crown. It is nevertheless impossible to derive any principle of urban design from the mere suggestion of a *traza moderada*, which came with no detailed explanation of what was actually intended.

The *Ordenanzas sobre descubrimiento, nueva población y pacificación de las Indias*, signed by Philip II in 1573, are often taken as the clearest and strongest embodiment of sixteenth-century imperial ideology applied to urban theory. Written in an effort to guide the construction of the newly-founded cities of the Spanish colonies, they were meant to implement good government through the use of Renaissance principles. In the Ordinances, the plaza becomes a key generating element of urban

¹⁰⁹ Spores and García, "A Prehispanic (Postclassic) Capital Center in Colonial Transition, 333-353"; Zavala, *Libros de asientos*, 316-317.

¹¹⁰ Torre de la Villar and Navarro de Anda, eds., 115-116.

¹¹¹ Guillermo Tovar de Teresa, "La utopía del virrey de Mendoza," in *La utopía mexicana del siglo XVI: Lo bello, lo verdadero y lo bueno* (Mexico City: Grupo Azabache, 1992), 17-39.

development. The extent of the central square is measured according to the foreseen growth of the settlement.¹¹² As has been already rightly remarked, however, these instructions were written after the restructuring of both small towns and large centers of the New World had been undertaken.¹¹³ Escobar further suggests that the grid plan of the city of Tenochtitlan, praised by Cortés for its order, cleanliness and efficient integration of commercial, residential, religious and administrative buildings, may have been a reference upon which future planning in Spain was based.¹¹⁴

There is no doubt about the ideological underpinnings of the grid design. It expresses visually the imposition of an external power over a conquered territory. The prehispanic plaza, and the urban development that grew around it in the case of Tenochtitlan, had been transformed into a means and expression of colonial control. I will now turn again to Yanhuitlan, where, albeit minimally, a settlement reconstruction that accentuated a monumental nucleus around a central gathering place was created through the building of the church and convento. The rural setting of the village thus became a testing place of political, social and economic strategies of domination that would also be expressed in larger urban contexts.

¹¹² These precepts are expressed in points 111ff. of the Ordinances. Axel I. Mundigo and Dora P. Crouch, "The City Planning Ordinances of the Laws of the Indies Revisited: Part I: Their Philosophy and Implications," *Town Planning Review* 48, no. 3 (1977): 247-268.

¹¹³ Jesús Roberto Escobar, *The Plaza Mayor and the Shaping of Baroque Madrid* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 194-195; Low, 85.

¹¹⁴ Escobar, 196.

Conclusion

The twenty-five-year-long enterprise of colonial construction in the village of Yanhuitlan brought about deep and durable changes. The erection of the convento not only channeled an economic and social reorganization according to Spanish demands, but also allowed the Spanish way of life (dressing, mannerisms, and horse riding), thinking, and religious customs to enter the Mixtec world. While it is hard to assess the reaction of the commoners (*mecehaules*, as they are referred to in Spanish using a Nahuatl loan word) to the settling in of the Spaniards, the role played by the ruling elite is clearer. The indigenous nobility based their legitimacy and authority on a prehispanic legacy, while at the same time extending their reach into Spanish colonial society.

The moral obligation to participate in the construction and ceremonies related to the church has roots in the prehispanic period, when tributary relations were at the basis of the political structure. The payment of tribute symbolized allegiance between the members of the elite across different regions of Mesoamerica. No territorial reorganization, for example, followed the Aztec conquests in the late Postclassic period, indicating that none was needed. On the other hand, ceremonial and deferential behavior on the part of the local ruling elite at the moment of tribute/gift exchange was the sole and ultimate reassurance of the vassalage of the vanquished.¹¹⁵ The gold disks and deities associated with the periods of tribute payment in the Yanhuitlan manuscript (Figures 10 and 11) express the sacredness of the bond established with the

¹¹⁵ As such it can be noted that the only way to map the extent of the Aztec empire is to rely on tribute accounts such as the Mendoza manuscript and *Matrícula de Tributos*, a scheme followed by Robert H. Barlow, *The Extent of the Empire of the Culhua Mexica* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1949).

exchange. The documentary sources just discussed point to a substantial continuity of this social pattern. The communal deer hunt, discussed in the section “Yanhuitlan vs. Tecomatlan” in chapter 1, was a ceremonial act in that it ended with a meal and fest during which gifts were exchanged.

Power and control in precolumbian times were tied to tribute. Spaniards, nevertheless, introduced a different political and economic outlook, one that shifted the focus of imperial domination from the transaction of goods to the means of their production. Land appropriation was the main concern of Spanish authority when trying to impose control over the Indian territory. Encomiendas were given by the Crown in the attempt to establish a European presence in the conquered New World. Spanish land ownership, legacy of a feudal society, was forcefully introduced into the Mesoamerican agricultural system, which was based on usufruct rather than possession of the land.¹¹⁶ The Mesoamerican earth was a sacred and alive being (see Figure 8), while “Spanish land” was mere plots to be owned, appraised, and sold. In this scenario, indigenous elite not only relied on ancient means of legitimization (such as ancestry and pictographic genealogies). Caciques actively engaged Spanish concepts of town limits and territorial jurisdiction in legal disputes in order to pursue their agenda, such as imposing or avoiding tribute and labor payments.

Conventos are ambivalent statements. While their foundation was based on the ancient system of tributary reciprocity and allegiance, the architectural and urban program, articulated around the monumental core and the expanding grid plan, projected into the colonial future as the expression of a new territorial ideology.

¹¹⁶ Barbara E. Mundy, *The Mapping of New Spain: Indigenous Cartography and the Maps of the Relaciones Geográficas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 187-188; Michel Oudijk and Maarten E. R. G. N. Jansen, “Tributo y territorio en el lienzo de Guevea,” *Cuadernos del Sur* 12 (1998): 53-102.

Chapter 3

Images and Texts of the Evangelization

Sixteenth-century Painting at Yanhuitlan

The works, wanderings, and patronage of Andrés de Concha, the Sevillian artist responsible for the sixteenth-century paintings that decorate Yanhuitlan's church, were discussed in chapter 2 in the section "Spanish Artists and Local Networks." This chapter gives primarily an iconographic interpretation of his work at Yanhuitlan, identifying models, sources and function of religious images in the context of the evangelical enterprise. First, I identify significant features of the paintings by comparing them with related imagery from Europe and New Spain. I then interpret such features in the light of the specific literary sources the Dominicans likely utilized in the Mixteca.

The Retablo Tradition in the Iberian World

In my analysis of the main altarpiece of Yanhuitlan, I focus on painted iconography over sculptures and design. The reason is simple: Yanhuitlan's main altarpiece, like most surviving sixteenth-century altarpieces in New Spain, does not bear its original frame. The sculptures date to the sixteenth century, but their original placement within the retablo is not known.

A comparison with roughly contemporaneous retablos in New Spain's mission churches reveals patterns and exceptions in the overall thematic choices and arrangements of the scenes. Episodes from the lives of the Virgin and Jesus are

generally presented chronologically from bottom to top. While earlier episodes such the Annunciation, Three Kings, and Adoration of the Shepherds are found in the lower registers, the Resurrection, Ascension and Coronation appear on top (Figures 70, 71, 72 and 73). The figurative narrative is remarkably consistent in all extant colonial Mexican retablos, a fact that is even more remarkable considering that the churches and respective missions were dedicated to different saints and established by different religious orders. On the other hand, the Virgin of the Rosary, Last Judgment, and Descent from the Cross are unique to Yanhuitlan and raise the obvious question of the reason behind the decision to incorporate them in the narration. A closer look at the iconography and sources of the scenes helps recreate a meaningful and consistent context that adds to the overall interpretation of their possible significance.

Retablos, multi-paneled altarpieces, are considered one of the most original contributions of Spain to Western art.¹ They combine the narrative quality of late-Byzantine painting, such as Duccio's *Maestà* (Siena, 1308-1313), with the unified design of the winged and gilded altarpieces from Central Europe, such as for example Veit Stoss's altar in the church of Saint Mary (Cracow, 1486). In Spain, the development of the retablo genre reflects the cultural, political and religious diversity of the Iberian Peninsula.² What follows is a discussion of some specific examples of fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Spanish retablos that are particularly meaningful for understanding those of Yanhuitlan.

¹ Jesús Miguel Palomero Páramo, "Definición, cronología, y tipología del retablo sevillano del Renacimiento," *Imafronte*, no. 3-5 (1987-89): 52-53.

² For general overviews, see Judith Berg-Sobré, *Behind the Altar Table: The Development of the Painted Retable in Spain, 1350-1500* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1989); Juan José Martín González, "Tipología e iconografía del retablo español del Renacimiento," *Boletín del Seminario de Estudios de Arte y Arqueología* XXX (1964): 3-64.

Beginning in thirteenth-century Spain, the theme of the Lives of Mary and Jesus was more widely developed in Catalonia and the Balearic Islands (the Crown of Aragon).³ Narration extended over a variable number of wood panels, ranging from six to twenty-four, developed around a central piece that could be either sculpted or painted. This piece most often represented iconic subjects such as the Virgin Enthroned with the Child Jesus, plus scenes from the Life of Jesus and Mary such as the Crucifixion, Coronation, and so forth. Jaime Huguet's *Retablo del Condestable Pedro de Portugal* (Figure 74) for the chapel of the Royal Palace in Barcelona (1464-65), for example, develops the Marian theme of the Seven Joys of the Virgin around a large panel of the Three Kings. Six saints are depicted in the predella. The so-called Seven Joys of the Virgin (Annunciation, Nativity, Epiphany, Resurrection, Ascension, Pentecost and Assumption) were usually recited in the form of private prayers, but also attained a larger liturgical importance with the creation of chants and hymns in the Catalan language in the High Middle Ages.⁴ While the decision to place the Three Kings at the center most likely responded to ideological concerns of the patron,⁵ other examples display the Virgin enthroned, or others, such as the Crucifixion (Figures 75 and 76). In Seville in the Renaissance period, the so-called "retablo-rosario" continued to be a very popular typology (Figure 77).⁶

³ Berg-Sobré, 190; Gabriel Llompart, *La pintura medieval mallorquina: Su entorno cultural y su iconografía*, 4 vols. (Palma de Mallorca: Luis Ripoll, 1977), II: 119-146.

⁴ Berg-Sobré, 167; Joan Molina i Figueras, *Arte, devoción y poder en la pintura tardogótica catalana* (Murcia: Universidad de Murcia, 1999), 158-159.

⁵ Molina i Figueras, 158.

⁶ The *retablo-rosario* is an altarpiece devised with the specific purpose of helping the recitation of the Rosary. For this purpose, it includes depictions of all or a selection of the Mysteries. Palomero Páramo: 73.

Yanhuítlan's Main Altar: Iconography and Context

Yanhuítlan's main altarpiece comprises thirteen panels (Figure 70). The predella at the bottom depicts Mary Magdalene and Saint Jerome (Nos. 12 and 13 in Figure 70), possibly as female and male examples of Christian penitents. They can be paired with three small panels depicting friars and nuns on the very top (indicated by an X in Figure 70). The general layout, from bottom to top, follows the just-mentioned chronological approach to the depiction of the Life of Jesus and Mary. Sculptures include a *Crucifixion* in the center (Figure 191), and sixteen sculptures of saints that can stylistically be dated to the same period of the paintings.

Ascension, Pentecost and Last Judgment

The importance of print sources in the artistic development of New Spain has been often stated by art historians, particularly in the case of Christian art produced by native artists, who did not have a direct knowledge of Western artistic prototypes and canons, part of routine apprenticeship in Europe.⁷ Copying was a wide and generalized practice in Renaissance art and was not due to lack of creativity on the part of the artist. Patrons could require that a certain model be followed, or artists might decide to emulate a famous master. Utilizing printed sources in the arts of the New World should not assume a derivative outcome. Rather, they constitute a means to explore the way in which émigré and native artists and patrons conceived their newly acquired role within the wider Hispanic artistic world. In New Spain, Spanish and native artists alike relied

⁷ Kubler, *Mexican Architecture*, 372-382; Tovar de Teresa, *Pintura y escultura en Nueva España*, 191-199.

on prints. The best known examples are perhaps those of Simón Pereyng's borrowings from his fellow Fleming Maarten de Vos, source of at least four of the six panels at Huejotzingo, Puebla, and the murals in the cloister at Epazoyucan, Hidalgo, executed by an indigenous artist.⁸

The *Last Judgment* (Figure 78) is a complex painting, in which numerous sources were reworked into an original composition. While there is an obvious citation of Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel, evident in the figure of Charon slashing the damned into Hell in the lower right portion, stylistically, the dynamism that characterizes the upper portion of the picture, especially in the wide gestures of Christ and St. Peter on the right, are reminiscent of Venetian altarpieces of similar subjects (Figures 79 and 80).⁹ Concha's composition, however, is tighter and less flamboyant than its Venetian counterparts, allowing for a greater and easier readability of the subject. Iconographically, Dürer's *Adoration of the Trinity* (Figure 81), executed in 1511 for the All-Saints Chapel in Nuremberg, offers interesting clues that will also help to understand Concha's *Last Judgment*. In the main panel, a depiction of the Holy Trinity in the center is combined with the theme of All Saints on the sides. We can recognize Mary on the left followed by a female retinue of well-known examples of Christian devotion. On the right, St. John leads a series of male pre-Christian prophets. Below stands the crowd of the living, with prominent religious figures in the foreground. A reduced depiction of the Last Judgment in the carved frame, for which Dürer was also in charge, crowns the painting. Panofsky suggests that the image as a whole has to be understood as the combination of these three iconographic themes, as the heavenly

⁸ Diego Angulo Íñiguez, "Algunas huellas de Durero en México," *Archivo Español de Arte* 18, no. 72 (1945): 381-383; Diego Angulo Íñiguez, "Pereyng y Martín de Vos: El retablo de Huejotzingo," *Anales del Instituto de Arte Americano e Investigaciones Estéticas* 1, no. 2 (1949): 25-27; Tovar de Teresa, *Pintura y escultura del Renacimiento*, 167.

⁹ Titian's *Glory* was painted for Charles V, who contemplated it from his deathbed at Yuste.

City of God, comprising the Trinity, all saints and worthy humans, will be realized only after the Last Judgment.¹⁰ Panofsky referred to the work of Saint Augustine. This iconography, however, was widely available in popular texts such as Voragine's *Legenda Aurea*, which was a constant source of inspiration for Dürer. The three-figured Last Judgment in the All Saints altar, for example, derives from book illustrations that circulated in New Spain as well (Figures 82 and 83). It was repeated in the almost contemporaneous *Last Judgment*, part of the so-called *Small Passion* (Figure 84). The preeminence of the three-figure composition was repeated by Concha. Tequitqui stone carvings from Central Mexico, which have a direct lineage to late-fifteenth-century German woodcuts, ultimately prove the continuity and indeed intentional overlap between native and Spanish artistic productions in the New World (Figure 85).¹¹ By the same token, All-Saints iconography commonly appears in indigenous murals of the *Last Judgment* throughout New Spain (Figure 86).¹²

The *Ascension of Christ* and *Pentecost* in Concha's altarpiece at Yanhuitlan also derive from Albrecht Dürer's *Small Passion* (Figures 87, 88, 89, and 90).¹³ While Concha's *Last Judgment* has a more crowded composition, the *Pentecost* and *Ascension* are similar to Dürer's print. A long and ambitious work, the *Small Passion* was created by the German master in 1511. It was part of a larger book project, to which Dürer contributed illustrations (Figure 88). A Benedictine friar, known by his

¹⁰ Erwin Panofsky, *The Life and Art of Albrecht Dürer* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), 127-128.

¹¹ Kubler, *Mexican Architecture*, 391-394.

¹² This iconography is usually interpreted according to Mendicant's messianic ideas. See Miguel Ángel Fernández and Mario de la Torre, *La Jerusalén indiana: Los conventos-fortaleza mexicanos del siglo XVI* (Mexico City: Smurfit Cartón y Papel de México, 1992), 118-137.

¹³ Dürer's woodcut series of the *Small Passion* is arguably one of the most successful print series of the Renaissance. It was widely copied in Southern and Northern Europe alike through the nineteenth century.

Latinized name of Chelidonium, wrote accompanying texts. Classicizing poems, written in the metric system employed by the Latin poet Horace, were in line with the humanist trend of contemporary intellectual circles to which both Dürer and Chelidonium belonged.¹⁴

Thirty-six pictures in total illustrate what is in fact much more than the Passion of Christ. The story of humanity is followed from the Fall of Adam and Eve to the Final Judgment, a grand visual narrative that is seemingly contradicted by Chelidonium's short and lyrical poems.¹⁵ Dürer's unusual inclusion of the first episodes (The Fall of Man and Expulsion from Paradise), Veronica's Veil, and the concluding Pentecost, Ascension and Last Judgment can be traced to broadsheets, leaf prints and Lenten cloths (*Fastentuch* in German) that widely circulated in Germany from the end of the fifteenth century (Figures 91, 92, and 93).¹⁶ These cheap and popular media are tied to forms of lay devotion and religious practice, including indoctrination and public preaching during specific liturgical times of the year, a similar function to much early colonial art in Latin America.¹⁷ These examples are also remarkable because they help elucidate iconographic choices in Yanhuitlan's altarpiece. As noticed above, the final cluster — Pentecost-Ascension-Last Judgment— is unique at Yanhuitlan. The disappearing Christ in the Ascension derives from illuminated manuscripts and is also typical of book

¹⁴ David Price, *Albrecht Dürer's Renaissance: Humanism, Reformation, and the Art of Faith* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 135.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 137.

¹⁶ Angela Hass, "The Devotional Manuals by Albrecht Dürer: The Small Passion and the Engraved Passion. Iconography, Context and Spirituality," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 63 (2000): 175-176.

¹⁷ Numerous sources report on the use of portable *lienzos* (cloths) to instruct native people. See Gerónimo de Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana* (Madrid: Atlas, 1973), 107, 211. Diego Valadés, *Retórica Cristiana* (Mexico City: UNAM; Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1989), 132-133.

illustrations.¹⁸ In New Spain, it was also adopted by Pereyng at Huejotzingo (Figure 94) and Echave Orio at Xochimilco (Figure 95). The sequential narrative seems to point to a storytelling that embraced the whole destiny of humanity, from its inception to the last day. It casts present and past actions into a cosmological stage, explaining the meaning of human existence as a quest for salvation.¹⁹ This same idea was the basis of Dürer's own iconographic sources, found in the *Nuremberg Chronicle* (compare, for example, the *Pentecost*, Figure 96, with Dürer's). An encyclopedic account of world history through its seven ages, it drew from biblical and Roman history, classical mythology and Christian hagiography.²⁰ These would have been the visual referents for the readers of Dürer's images. As I will discuss in the next section, close scrutiny reveals that these were also the referents for the Mixtec readers of Yanhuitlan's pictures. For both Dürer and Concha, it was a "judicious scrutiny and reassessment of established narratives and methods of presentation that made appropriation successful."²¹

Virgin of the Rosary

Andrés de Concha's two versions of the Virgin of the Rosary, mentioned in chapter 2, section "Andrés de Concha," are extremely similar (Figures 97 and 98). Such

¹⁸ Meyer Schapiro, "The Image of the Disappearing Christ: The Ascension in English Art around the Year 1000," in *Late Antique, Early Christian and Mediaeval Art* (New York: G. Braziller, 1979), 267-287.

¹⁹ Price, 144-145.

²⁰ Dürer's reliance on the *Nuremberg Chronicle* is indisputable. Anton Koberger, publisher of the *Nuremberg Chronicle*, was the godfather of Albrecht Dürer. The German master was also an apprentice in Michael Wolgemut's workshop, creator of the *Chronicle's* illustrations.

²¹ Hass: 212.

a close repetition of the theme is even more striking if we consider that the treatment of this subject matter is unique in New Spain and rather rare in European Renaissance painting as well. The “apparition” of the Virgin and baby Jesus is framed by a white rosary. Between five small beads, there is a big bead containing scenes of the Mysteries of the Rosary (fifteen in total). In the lower portion of the painting are members of Spanish colonial society: the church hierarchy to the left, including the Pope, a bishop and a Dominican friar, and the Spanish political establishment to the right, comprising two knights in armor and two women.²² This picture is highly iconic and emblematic for several reasons. First, it is a diagrammatic display of the Spanish imperial system; second, it does not fit and indeed breaks the narrative flow of the rest of the scenes; and finally, it offers to the viewer alternative levels of reading by incorporating different scenes rotating around a frontal image.

The prototype of this picture is the late-fifteenth-century *Rosenkranzbild* (Figure 99), which developed in Germany across different media. Single-leaf woodcuts representing the Virgin enthroned were accompanied by texts explaining the indulgences conceded to those devoted to the Rosary.²³ In churches, large wood sculptures hung from the ceiling comprising in one design different representations of rosary necklaces, Passion scenes, and theological symbols (Figure 100).²⁴

²² The presence of females, most likely wives of the men in front of them, seems to indicate that these are the donors (in this case, Don Francisco and Gonzalo de las Casas, father and son, with wives María de Aguilar and Leonor de Vargas). Nevertheless, they look identical to the personages in *Virgin of the Rosary at Tlahuac*, which may point to the possibility that they are instead Charles V, Philip II and their spouses. José Guadalupe Victoria, “Dos pinturas con el tema de Nuestra Señora del Rosario,” *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas* XIV, no. 56 (1986): 34.

²³ Panofsky, 111.

²⁴ David Ganz, “Ein “Krentzlein” aus Bildern: Der Englische Gruss des Veit Stoss und die Entstehung spätmittelalterlicher Bild-Rosarien,” in *Der Rosenkranz: Andacht, Geschichte, Kunst*, ed. Urs-Beat Frei and Fredy Buhler (Bern: Benteli, 2003), 152-169.

In the Iberian Peninsula, the cult of the Virgin of the Rosary was especially popular in Catalonia and the Balearic Islands, from which in fact the closest antecedent to Concha's depiction in New Spain originates (Figure 101). An early sixteenth-century painting from Palma de Mallorca depicts a Virgin enthroned with two kneeling figures below. The Virgin and the praying figures are encircled by fifteen roundels depicting the rosary and its mysteries. In Concha's, the *orantes* are not a friar and nun. The artist followed another prototype that shows members of the ecclesiastical and earthly powers at the two sides of the image, as found, for example, in an engraving by the Catalan artist Francisco Doménech dated 1488 (Figure 102). It was possibly part of the first publication containing the recitation of the Fifteen Mysteries of the Rosaries, but stands today as a loose print.²⁵ The retablo-like page is divided into two sections. On top are the fifteen Mysteries of the Rosary, arranged in a grid. At the bottom, the Virgin and Child, framed by a white Rosary, are surrounded by kneeling clergymen on the left, and a knight (with a reference to the popular legend of the Knight of Cologne) on the right.²⁶

This print highlights the close continuity between images from the *Small Passion*, sources in popular prints and liturgical objects, and Rosary pictures. The Ascension shows the same disappearing Christ, followed by the Pentecost and the Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin (Figure 103). Alternatively, the Death of the Virgin could replace the Assumption, and the Last Judgment the Coronation, as in a contemporaneous Psalter of the Rosary printed in Germany (Figure 104).²⁷ This

²⁵ Guy C. Bauman, "A Rosary Picture with a View of the Park of the Ducal Palace in Brussels, possibly by Goswijn van der Weyden," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 24 (1989): 138.

²⁶ *Ibid.*: 140-142. The legend refers to a miracle granted by the Virgin of the Rosary to a knight who was about to be killed by his enemies.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

iconographic cluster and the specific formal treatment point to a textual origin for Yanhuitlan's retablo. Print culture, the spread, circulation, and manner of reading books and the images therein, seems to be the fundamental frame of reference for understanding religious imagery at Yanhuitlan.

Descent from the Cross

The *Descent from the Cross* (Figure 105), found at the top of Yanhuitlan's main altarpiece, depicts followers Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus carefully taking the dead body of Jesus down from the cross with the help of a cloth. The body of Jesus is stiff and his rigid arms remain straight even after removal from the beam. At the bottom, female followers hold Jesus' feet. Mary, overwhelmed with grief, collapses in the foreground of the picture. The overall composition, and the treatment of the body of Jesus in particular, can be compared to two paintings (Figures 106 and 107) of the same subject executed around 1546-47 by the Flemish Peter Kampeneer, active in Concha's hometown of Seville, where he was known as Pedro de Campaña. The simplified and more compact structure of Concha's is closer to Campaña's version now in Seville cathedral.²⁸

The composition is characterized by a very high placement of the crossing beam and by solid diagonals created by the lateral ladders. The use of a white cloth to wrap the body of Jesus right before burial was a Jewish custom, documented in the Gospel. In medieval Christian liturgy, however, the descent was routinely enacted

²⁸ This painting enjoyed continuing popularity in the city, as mentioned by the seventeenth-century painter and theoretician Francisco Pacheco and the eighteenth-century writer and collector Ceán Bermúdez. Cited in Diego Angulo Íñiguez, "Algunas obras de Pedro de Campaña," *Archivo Español de Arte* 24, no. 95 (1951): 244-245.

during Holy Week, giving rise to a more complex scene. The cloth is used to take down the body, by passing it under the arms of Jesus while holding it from above. Jesus is eventually presented to the Virgin before being placed inside the coffin (the Holy Sepulchre).²⁹ This iconography is more commonly found in sculptures used during Holy Week processions and sculptural reliefs than in paintings. In Yanhuitlan, for example, a low-carved relief in the church sacristy depicts exactly this maneuver (Figure 108). Dating to the sixteenth century and likely executed by an indigenous artist, the composition is taken from a widely-circulating print by Marcantonio Raimondi after a lost Raphael, applied in a mirrored image (Figure 109).

Significant for my analysis are mural paintings from other churches and cloisters of New Spain. In the church of San Miguel Huejotzingo, Puebla, a Holy Friday procession is depicted around the north and south walls of the nave.³⁰ The Deposition, also derived from Raimondi's engraving (Figure 110), is found above the north door (Figure 111). In the Dominican monastery of San Juan Teitipac, in Oaxaca's Central Valleys, the portería is decorated with murals of Dominican friars participating in a Holy Week procession. The Descent is again found on top of a door, this time at the entrance to the convento (Figure 112). Both examples are very close to Yanhuitlan's chronologically and constitute, I would argue, a typological equivalent to Concha's *Descent*. I think these pictures are cognate in their placement of the Descent in a crowning position, indicating that the Deposition from the Cross was a dramatic climax in Holy Friday services. By personal experience, I can report that people have today a

²⁹ In New Spain, this liturgical tradition was already established by 1582. Dávila Padilla, 565-566. See also chapter 6.

³⁰ Elena Estrada de Gerlero, "El programa pasionario en el convento franciscano de Huejotzingo," *Jahrbuch für Geschichte von Staat, Wirtschaft, und Gesellschaft Lateinamerikas* 20 (1983): 642-662; Susan Verdi Webster, "Art, Ritual, and Confraternities in Sixteenth-Century New Spain: Penitential Imagery at the Monastery of San Miguel, Huejotzingo," *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas* XIX, no. 70 (1997): 5-43.

strong emotional response to the enactment of the Descent, especially when the sculpture “comes alive,” as the arms of Jesus fall lifelessly from the cross.³¹ The haunting murals and paintings helped commemorate throughout the year this specific liturgical moment. The same idea was carried through in the seventeenth century in the central panel of the main altarpiece of the church of San Jerónimo, Tlacoahuaya (Figure 113), Oaxaca, which is largely based on Concha’s at Yanhuitlan.

Yanhuitlan’s Pietà

In chapter 2, “Spanish Artists and Local Networks,” discussing Andrés de Concha’s production in New Spain, I presented the painting of a *Lamentation* in the church of Yanhuitlan as another possible attribution to the Sevillian artist. Its original location is not known, but it is now in a lateral altar on the south wall of the church (Figure 114). Likely executed around the same time of the main altar, it displays a similar late-sixteenth-century iconography and composition, in accordance with the pietistic concern of the time. Michelangelo’s *Pietàs* best express these ideas, the closest to Yanhuitlan’s being perhaps the Florence *Pietà* (circa 1550), given the more solid and vertical composition (Figure 115). The comparison is telling, because stylistic and compositional choices point to a specific religious symbolism: the display of the body of Christ as the Eucharist, the death of Jesus as salvation of humanity.³² This iconographic type has a long tradition in Western art, generally referred as *imago pietatis*, but more complex compositions that include several people around the body of

³¹ See chapter 6.

³² John T. Paoletti, “The Rondanini ‘Pietà’: Ambiguity Maintained through the Palimpsest,” *Artibus et Historiae* 21, no. 42 (2000): 65.

Christ are more typical of the late sixteenth century, when this devotional image became the subject of a heated religious debate.³³ Within the Catholic world, it came to embody the doctrine of transubstantiation (the belief that the Host actually transformed into the body of Christ during Mass), which was vehemently denied by Protestants. Other examples that are iconographically and stylistically close to Yanhuitlan's *Pietà* are Dürer's *Trinity* (Figure 116), dated 1511, and El Greco's *Pietà* (Figure 117), dated 1575. These pictures testify to the constant osmosis between doctrinal disputes and devotional practice that characterized Renaissance art and religion throughout the sixteenth century.

Yanhuitlan's *Pietà*, fully in sync with current trends of European visual culture, finally suggests that in looking for textual sources for Yanhuitlan religious imagery, we should not restrict ourselves to doctrinal texts, but should include a wider range of devotional literature.

Mixtec Doctrinal and Devotional Books

Format, Content and Illustrations

This section discusses books and texts known through different sources to have circulated in the Mixteca in the sixteenth century. Dominicans employed different written sources, whose educational scope, as will come clear in the following pages, went far beyond the basic instruction on the tenets of the Christian faith. While elementary literacy in both Spanish and native languages was introduced with the use of doctrinal manuals, different modes of religious practice were encouraged,

³³ Ibid.

diversifying the ways in which native peoples came to understand and practice Catholicism.

Catholic Religion and Books in Early Modern Spain

Doctrinal manuals for the instruction of the Indians constitute a particularly important chapter in the development of native language writing in the New World. Although alphabetic writing was non-existent in prehispanic America, friars immediately realized the importance of introducing literacy to indigenous peoples in order to spread the Catholic faith. Their educational and catechumenal outlook is the product of the late-fifteenth-century Spanish cultural climate; it was not born in a vacuum in the American colonies.

With the conquest of Granada (1492), the Spanish monarchs began a systematic policy of forced cultural assimilation and religious conversion of Moors and Jews in the Peninsula. Spanish clergy became increasingly aware of the need of a thorough reform of Catholic beliefs and practices suited to the demands of the new socio-political situation. Monastic orders were at the forefront of a movement that advocated both intellectual and spiritual reforms. The view that “new Renaissance ideas,” coming from the outside, only briefly entered the Iberian Peninsula is part of the legacy of the “Black Legend.”³⁴ Rooted in the work of French scholar Marcel Bataillon, such a view assumes a sharp dichotomy between Erasmian Humanism and dogmatic stances of Church hierarchy and Inquisition.³⁵ Philological rediscovery of the Classics and the Bible

³⁴ See the discussion in the introduction.

³⁵ This view is postulated in Marcel Bataillon, *Erasmus y España: Estudios sobre la historia espiritual del siglo XVI*, trans. Carlos Pujol (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1950). A critique is

mingled with Scholastic erudition and late-medieval piety. On the contrary, a nuanced understanding of the socio-cultural dynamics at play in Spain at the turn of the sixteenth century is, however, necessary to understand the intentions and outlook of the friars who settled in the New World. Such a drive toward religious reformism, which was in Spain tightly connected with the political agenda of the kings, was not unique to Spain. Quite the contrary, religious turmoil spread all over early modern Europe, ultimately resulting in the end of a unified Western Christendom.

Perhaps the most significant and emblematic figure of this period of Spanish history is Cardinal Jiménez de Cisneros.³⁶ A Franciscan friar with a strong spiritual inclination, he had an astonishing political and diplomatic career, from personal confessor to Queen Isabel, to Archbishop of Toledo, Primate of Spain, and Inquisitor General. He was Spain's most important statesman during two critical periods of interregnum that followed the death of Queen Isabel (1506-1507) and King Ferdinand (1516-1517). He founded the University of Alcalá de Henares, where the first polyglot Bible was printed. He promoted the reform of his monastic order, and was principally responsible for the spiritual and intellectual formation of the generation of friars who sailed to the New World. Cisneros' reformism acted on two fronts. First, he ended the long dispute between Conventual and Observant houses in the Franciscan Order. A strong supporter of the Observants, who maintained the vow of poverty and commitment to communal life of Saint Francis, Cisneros also insisted on the need of

offered by Lu Ann Homza, *Religious Authority in the Spanish Renaissance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), i-xxiii; 114-122.

³⁶ There are numerous studies and biographies dedicated to Cisneros. José García Oro, *Cisneros y la reforma del clero español en tiempo de los Reyes Católicos* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas; Instituto "Jerónimo Zurita," 1971); Erika Rummel, *Jiménez de Cisneros: On the Threshold of Spain's Golden Age* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999).

reforming the education of regular and secular clergy. A renewed study of the Scriptures had to be accompanied with training in the liturgy, sacraments and commandments of the Church, indispensable to proper pastoral care. New emphasis was placed on literacy, especially among children: correct knowledge of prayers, articles of faith, commandments, sins, and their remedies was thought to derive directly from a knowledgeable and conscientious reading of religious texts. This educational intent, on the other hand, also had a strong censorial connotation. It was this preoccupation with forms of devotion practiced by educated and uneducated laity, in fact, which ultimately led to the institution of the Inquisition.

Out of these concerns and the newly available printing medium came the first books utilized by friars and secular priests to instruct their flocks. Usually referred to as *doctrinas* (doctrinal manuals), these books were not entirely invented in the late fifteenth century. Rather, they were adapted from earlier texts produced for the instruction of the clergy, rapidly growing in number beginning in the early sixteenth century.³⁷ The content of the *doctrinas* comprised all the basic elements of faith perceived to be necessary for salvation. Their organization ranges from very succinct enumerations to long and verbose explanations, always maintaining, however, a basic structure that heavily relies on numerological associations. The format also varies from plain expositions to sermons (hence the name *sermonario* that is sometimes applied) and dialogs (*catecismos*), engaging teacher and audience at different levels, depending on age, previous instruction in the doctrine, and degree of literacy.³⁸ Also part of

³⁷ Luis Resines, *La catequesis en España: Historia y textos* (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1997). The most important evangelical authors of the period are Juan de Valdés, Juan de Ávila, Bartolomé Carranza, Constantino Ponce de la Fuente and Luis de Granada. Resines, 227-268.

³⁸ Luis Resines, "Los catecismos del XVI y su modo de presentar la fe," *Anuario de Historia de la Iglesia*, no. 3 (1994): 197-214.

doctrinal literature are the so-called *cartillas*, booklets of eight to ten pages that contained the alphabet, syllables, and prayers (Ave Maria, Paternoster, Salve Regina, etc.).³⁹ Finally, *confesionarios* (confessionals) were meant to help the devout prepare for the sacrament of confession by recapping the most important precepts, dogmas and commandments.⁴⁰ All texts share similar educational strategies: they stress literacy skills while at the same time relying on “pre-literate” devices of recitation and long, redundant enunciations. The technological advent of printing did not result in an immediate cultural revolution; rather it deeply interacted with long-established means of oral communication.

Studies on the spread of literacy and books in early modern Europe are still lacking. While the ability to read may have been more common than we think, loud recitation (as opposed to silent reading) created a vast readership even among illiterates.⁴¹ Books normally circulated in rural and provincial centers, and members of the lower classes acquired books second-hand.⁴² Texts today considered classics of Spanish Golden Age literature, such as Cervantes and Lope de Vega, however, were not the best-sellers. Medieval Chivalric tradition and popular literature on the lives of saints constituted the most popular genres, along with ascetical and meditational texts

³⁹ Victor Infantes, “La educación impresa,” *Cuadernos de Historia Moderna*, Anejos III (2004): 227-251; Emilio Valtón, *El primer libro de alfabetización en América: Cartilla para enseñar a leer, impresa por Pedro Ocharte en México, 1569* (Mexico City: Antigua Librería Robredo, 1947).

⁴⁰ Lu Ann Homza, “The European Link to Mexican Penance: The Literary Antecedents to Alva’s Confessionario,” in *A Guide to Confession Large and Small in the Mexican Language, 1634* by Don Bartolomé de Alva, ed. Barry D. Sell and John Frederick Schwaller (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999), 33-48.

⁴¹ Margit Frenk, “‘Lectores y oidores.’ La difusión oral de la literatura en el Siglo de Oro,” in *Actas del Séptimo Congreso de la Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas*, ed. Giovanni Bellini (Rome: Bulzoni, 1980), 101-123.; Sara T. Nalle, “Literacy and Culture in Early Modern Castile,” *Past and Present*, no. 125 (1989): 66.

⁴² *Ibid.*: 76-80.

typical of the late fifteenth century. While Spanish translations of the hagiographic *Legenda Aurea* by Jacobus da Voragine widely circulated, authors such as Luis de Granada and Antonio de Guevara developed a new genre of mystical literature, which would later be better known through the works by Teresa de Ávila and Ignatius de Loyola.⁴³

In *Libro de la oración y meditación* (Of Prayer and Meditation), written in 1554, Granada juxtaposes silent, private and inward prayer to loud and public recitation.⁴⁴ It is acknowledged that meditation is a particularly difficult type of prayer that requires exercise and long practice. Reading and reciting aloud is a first and necessary step toward the full internalization of prayer.⁴⁵

Christian Doctrine and Practice in New Spain

The earliest extant copy of a Mexican doctrina dates to 1543-44. Titled *Doctrina breve muy provechosa de las cosas que pertenecen a la fe catholica y a nuestra cristianidad*, it was published in Tenochtitlan-Mexico City under the sponsorship of the first bishop of New Spain, the Franciscan friar Juan de Zumárraga. Provided with a simple structure, it was directed to the friars in charge of the indigenous evangelization. The book is organized according to seven basic tenets: Articles of Faith (*Los Artículos de la fe*); Sacraments (*Los Sacramentos*); Commandments (*Los Mandamientos*); Commandments of the Church (*Los Mandamientos de la Iglesia*);

⁴³ Angelo J. DiSalvo, "The Ascetical Meditative Literature of Renaissance Spain: An Alternative to Amadis, Elisa and Diana," *Hispania* 69, no. 3 (1986): 466-475.

⁴⁴ Luis de Granada, *Obras del v.p.m. fray Luis de Granada*, 3 vols., Biblioteca de autores españoles (Madrid: Atlas, 1944-45), vol. 8.

⁴⁵ This distinction is explained in the second chapter of the book.

Mortal Sins (*De los pecados mortales*); Works of Mercy (*De las obras de la misericordia*); Five Senses, Potencies and Virtues (*De los cinco sentidos, las potencias y virtudes*). Between the exposition of the articles and sacraments are inserted the most important prayers: Per Signum, Paternoster, Ave Maria, Credo, and Salve Regina.⁴⁶

Following this template, another and more extensive *Doctrina* was published in 1546 by the Bishop. This version has been recognized as being a faithful transcription of Ponce de la Fuente's *Suma de de Doctrina Cristiana* (1543), a doctrinal book that was part of a trilogy devised for children, young people, and adults.⁴⁷ Of Jewish origin, Ponce de la Fuente is one of the most important religious authors of Renaissance Spain. After his education at the University of Alcalá, he moved to Seville where he quickly gained notoriety for his preaching abilities.⁴⁸ He came under the scrutiny of the Inquisition for his doctrinal writing, all indexed in 1559. The following year he was executed in Seville during a public *auto da fé*. Zumárraga's *Doctrina* is based on the text written for young people, organized in the form of a dialogue, a device that originated in Classical philosophy (the so-called Socratic dialogue) but that had recently been revived by Erasmus as a valid instrument for teaching and inquiring into the Christian faith. Another important reference to the Dutch reformer is found at the end of the work, where Zumárraga, transcribing Erasmus, stresses the need for the translation of the Gospels into vernacular languages to reach people of all nations. All

⁴⁶ Fernando Gil, *Primeras "doctrinas" del nuevo mundo: Estudio histórico-teológico de las obras de Fray Juan de Zumárraga (1548)* (Buenos Aires: Publicaciones de la Facultad de Teología de la Pontificia Universidad Católica Argentina "Santa María de los Buenos Aires," 1993), 405-406.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 334-335; William B. Jones, "Evangelical Catholicism in Early Colonial Mexico: An Analysis of Bishop Juan de Zumarraga's *Doctrina Cristiana*," *The Americas* 23, no. 4 (1967): 423-432. The book was dedicated to Charles V, who had a copy with him at the Monastery of Yuste where he spent his last days.

⁴⁸ María Paz Aspe, "Constantino Ponce de la Fuente, escritor "evangelista" del siglo XVI," in *Actas del Sexto Congreso Internacional de Hispanistas*, ed. Evelyn Rugg and Alan M. Gordon (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 73-76.

these Humanistic references are embedded in a text whose overall concepts owe more to scholastic analogical thinking than Renaissance philological accuracy.

Although it may seem inconsistent that Bishop Zumárraga, founder of the Mexican Inquisition, would so heavily rely on writings that were at some point censored by the Inquisition itself, this situation reflects the complexity of the ongoing debate on both sides of the Atlantic on questions of religious practice and belief. This also further confirms that it is a mistake to simplify such debate to an opposition between “reactionary medieval” ideas, supposedly supported by the Church, and “progressive Renaissance” instances put forth by heterodox religious reformers.

“Doctrina Cristiana en lengua Mixteca”

Fray Benito Hernández is the credited author of all extant books in the Mixtec language printed in the sixteenth century. Fray Hernández arrived in New Spain in 1550, upon completion of his studies in the Dominican convento of San Esteban in Salamanca. Soon assigned to the Mixteca, he was based in Achiutla for the most part of his tenure in the region, where he was also buried at the time of his death.⁴⁹ While the first of his Mixtec doctrinas appeared in 1567, the friar was actively learning and writing Mixtec at least from 1552, while assigned to Tlaxiaco.⁵⁰ In 1560, he was ordered to supervise the production of native-language cartillas for literacy instruction of the natives.⁵¹ His doctrinas are among the most impressive of the dozens produced in New

⁴⁹ Francisco de Alvarado and Wigberto Jiménez Moreno, *Vocabulario en lengua mixteca* (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional Indigenista, 1962), 30-34.

⁵⁰ Vences Vidal, “Fundaciones, aceptaciones (Primera parte),” 144.

⁵¹ Magdalena Vences Vidal, “Dominicos ejemplares en Nueva España,” *Archivo Dominicano XXII* (2001): 345.

Spain during the sixteenth century. They are entirely monolingual, lines of Spanish and Latin texts appearing only occasionally, and comprise almost two hundred folios (four hundred pages). While it is not known how many copies were originally printed, few of these books have survived to the present day. Two editions, made in 1567 and 1568, correspond to two different variants of the Mixtec language, from Achiutla and Teposcolula, respectively.⁵²

I have examined a photographic reproduction at the Newberry Library, Chicago (1567),⁵³ and originals in the Biblioteca Francisco de Burgoa, Oaxaca (1568), and the Huntington Library, San Marino (1567 and 1568).⁵⁴ There are noticeable differences between these books, perhaps due to later additions or rearrangements following deterioration of the original. Large portions of the 1568 copy in the Biblioteca Burgoa, for example, are hand-written. The 1567 Huntington copy is extensively annotated in Spanish and Mixtec, mostly added in the seventeenth century. The 1567 edition at the Newberry Library is the only one that begins with a calendar of the months, illustrated by vignettes that bear French writings. Every month has a daily list of the saints and religious festivities, according to Dominican ordinances.⁵⁵ Another Dominican, Pedro de Feria, authored in 1567 a doctrina in Zapotec that also begins with the same calendar and illustrations.⁵⁶ After this section, all editions I consulted continue with a

⁵² Alvarado and Jiménez Moreno, 34; Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca*, 68.

⁵³ This is probably a reproduction of the original in the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

⁵⁴ A 1568 edition was recently acquired by Texas A&M University. Gregory Lee Cuéllar and Christopher L. Morrow, eds., *Passages in the New World: Books & Manuscripts from Colonial Mexico, 1556-1820* (College Station, TX: Cushing Memorial Library & Archives, Texas A&M University Libraries, 2006), 6.

⁵⁵ This information is stated at the beginning of the calendar itself.

⁵⁶ I have consulted a photographic reproduction of Feria's *Doctrina* at the Newberry Library, Chicago, and the copy in the John Carter Brown Library, Providence. I am thankful to María Isabel Grañén

prayer of Saint Thomas (*Oración de Santo Tomás*), requesting God to prepare the worshipper for the sacraments and communion of the Church. This is an appropriate moral exhortation before the instruction begins. The rest of the book follows the basic outline found in Zumárraga's doctrinas: Articles of Faith; Commandments; Sins; Five Senses, Potencies and Virtues; Works of Mercy; Sacraments; Church Commandments. All the prayers, Per Signum, Credo, Paternoster, Ave Maria and Salve Regina, in Mixtec, Spanish and Latin are inserted at the beginning, before the Fourteen Articles of Faith. They are discussed again at the conclusion of the book, this time accompanied with a lengthier explanation on their meaning and significance.

"Institución, modo de rezar y milagros e indulgencias del Rosario de la Virgen María"

This precious and now unique book was published in 1576 in Mexico City by Pedro Balli.⁵⁷ Originally written in Catalan by the Dominican friar Jerónimo (Geroni) Taix in 1556, the *Llibre des miracles del roser* was a best seller in Catalonia throughout the early modern period. Only one Spanish version exists today, found in the Biblioteca Burgoa in Oaxaca, part of the old Dominican library in the city convento. The importance of this book for my discussion lies in the fact that it was translated into Mixtec sometime in the sixteenth century.⁵⁸ The manuscript is now in the Library of

Porrúa and Michael Swanton of the Biblioteca Burgoa, Oaxaca, for giving me a digital copy of the latter.

⁵⁷ García Icazbalceta, 278-279; Nicolás León, "Un impreso mexicano del siglo XVI," *Anales del Museo Michoacano*, no. 3 (1891): 76-84.

⁵⁸ Maarten E. R. G. N. Jansen, "El Rosario de Taix y la literatura mixteca," *Acervos*, no. 8-9 (1998): 24-32.

the Sociedad Mexicana de Geografía y Estadística, Mexico City.⁵⁹ Information on the circulation of this text in the Mixteca during the most important decades of the evangelization is not known. As observed with the discussion of the pictographic manuscript from Yanhuitlan in chapter 1, however, the introduction of the cult of the Rosary, so dear to the Dominican Order, is presented as the most important factor in the successful conversion to Christianity of Yanhuitlan's rulers. Plus, an image of the Virgin of the Rosary is part of the main altarpiece in Yanhuitlan's church.

Confraternities of the Rosary were founded as early as 1538 in New Spain and Mystery Plays with stories of the Rosary were adapted in Mixtec.⁶⁰

The book is divided into four sections (*libros*). After a calendar indicating the most important celebrations of the year established by the Council of Trent, the book deals with the institutionalization of the cult of the Virgin of the Rosary through the foundation of a confraternity devoted to it. It continues with an explanation of the different ways in which one can pray the Rosary and different miracles attributed to the Virgin of the Rosary. Finally, it concludes with the indulgences granted by the Church to the members of the Confraternity of the Virgin of the Rosary. Unfortunately for us, the exact pages in the second book discussing the use of images for praying are missing (Figure 118).⁶¹ In the preceding chapters of the section are other explanations of

⁵⁹ The library is now closed and I was not able to study the document.

⁶⁰ Francisco de Burgoa, *Palestra historial*, Publicaciones del Archivo General de la Nación (Mexico City: Talleres Gráficos de la Nación, 1934), chap. LVI; Dávila Padilla, 354-355; Pedro Fernández Rodríguez, *Los Dominicos en el contexto de la primera evangelización de México (1526-1550)* (Salamanca: Editorial San Esteban, 1994), 164-165. Cited in Jansen, "El Rosario de Taix," 24.

⁶¹ The pages were cut off very carefully. Nicolás León said he found them inside the binding of a copy of Maturino Gilberti's *Diálogo de Doctrina Cristiana en lengua de Michoacán* (1559), but never published them. Nicolás León, "Lo que se encuentra en las pastas de los viejos libros de México," *Boletín del Instituto Bibliográfico Mexicano*, no. 3 (1902).

different ways in which the Rosary was prayed by noted Catholic men and women.⁶² A devout Spanish lady by the name of María, for example, used different images to recite the Rosary. First, she would put before her eyes an image of the Virgin and begin to go through the first five Joyful Mysteries by contemplating the heart, eyes, ears and lips of Mary (Taix does not mention the fifth body part, perhaps implying that different ones could be chosen according to one's preference). The Sorrowful Mysteries pertaining to the Passion of Christ were similarly recited by concentrating on Jesus' body parts. Finally, the Glorious Mysteries were prayed in front of different images in the church altars, favoring those for which the woman had the greatest devotion. Another lady called Catalina la Bella (Catherine the Beautiful) prayed the Joyful Mysteries by contemplating an image of the Child Jesus. Taix explains that although the image would depict a baby, Catalina had in her mind the image of the crucified Christ. The contrast between the tenderness of the actual image and the cruelty of the mental one was meant to intensify the emotional involvement during prayer. Catalina chanted the second and third *quinguesimas* (rounds of fifteen prayers to the Mysteries) while contemplating images from the Passion, first concentrating on the human suffering of Christ and then on the divine significance that derived from it, that is, salvation.

Another way of praying the Rosary derives directly from the teaching of Saint Dominic, who used a colorful rosary to convert a knight to the true faith. The first big bead (*granizero grande*) was made of glass of different colors. The glass signified the mere appearance of preciousness that characterizes the sinful human condition. The different colors indicated the variety of human sins; the second bead was yellow or ash-colored (*cenizero*) to signify death, the inescapable human destiny; the third was also

⁶² Each Mystery requires the recitation of specific numbers of Paternoster and Ave Maria prayers, usually either five or ten, leading to a total that could be up to 150 prayers.

yellow referring to the judgment we will face after death; the fourth bead was black like *azabache*, ebony, as the sorrows of Hell; the fifth and last bead was golden like the Glory of Heaven.

“Contemptus Mundi”

Among the books owned by Don Gabriel de Guzmán, cacique and gobernador of Yanhuitlan between 1558 and 1591, were “a Flos Sanctorum and another very small book called Contemptus Mundi.”⁶³ Educated by the Dominicans since childhood, Don Gabriel was a well-versed *ladino* (i.e., he could read and write Castilian). The Latin titles of the books seem to indicate that they were in fact written in Spanish, although a version of the Contemptus Mundi was translated and published in Nahuatl in the sixteenth century.⁶⁴ Perhaps Mixtec versions were produced as well. I have already discussed the popularity of devotional texts in Spain at the turn of the sixteenth century. It is no surprise then that an educated Catholic such as Don Gabriel owned what is briefly described as a “very small book,” the size hinting at a strictly private and meditational use. But what book is this exactly? The Latin expression *contemptus mundi* is usually translated in English as “contempt of the world” and indicates a state of detachment and even disdain of the material world. Since early Christian times, a strain of religious literature was devoted to the cultivation of this rather reclusive and stoic spiritual attitude. In early modern Spain, *De Contemptu Mundi* was the translation

⁶³ “Yten tengo por mis bienes un Florsanctorum y otro librito chico llamado Contentus Mundi.” AGN Tierras, 400. See Spores, *The Mixtec Kings*, 242. These books were best sellers also in Spain and largely exported to the New World. See Irving A. Leonard, “On the Mexican Book Trade, 1576,” *Hispanic Review* 17, no. 1 (1949): 18-34.

⁶⁴ García Icazbalceta, 474-475; Mendieta, chap. XIV.

of *Imitatio Christi* written by the Dutch Thomas à Kempis, done by the friar-theologian Luis de Granada in 1536.⁶⁵

Kempis' *Imitation of Christ* consists of four books. Each of them has several (up to twenty-five) short chapters, typically not longer than four paragraphs, titled with a clear statement regarding the content. Citations of the Gospels are often found at the beginning of each chapter, offering clues to the following topic. This format enables the reader to spend little time in the act of reading itself, and more on pondering upon it. The author stresses right at the beginning that too much knowledge is actually detrimental to true faith. Any outward expression of religiosity, including excessive drive toward intellectual knowledge, should be avoided. Rhetoric and eloquence are presented as enemies against the truth. Contempt of the world in this text does not carry any moralistic or, even less, sarcastic or scornful connotations, but rather is an exhortation to shy away from the mundane world to better cultivate your inner comfort. One should not worry about other people's opinion and should also restrain from reaching out to others. Lonely people should place themselves in the hands of God rather than seeking the help of others.

"Flos Sanctorum"

Literally "The Flowering of the Saints," *Flos Sanctorum* was a major text of popular literature in early modern Spain, as introduced above. This long book is structured upon the Christian calendar: the lives of the saints are narrated in short stories according to the day of their official commemoration, following a hagiographic

⁶⁵ Granada, vol. 11.

template established by Voragine's *Golden Legend* in the thirteenth century. The most important addition of the Renaissance version in Spain was the narration of the Life of Christ and the Virgin, compiled following the Spanish translation of texts by Catalan Francesc Eiximenis and eventually Ludolph of Saxony.⁶⁶ In early editions, the lives of Jesus and Mary are intermingled in the regular calendar, as, for example, in Pedro de Vega's edition, first published in Zaragoza in 1521, but reprinted many times, including one in Seville in 1569.⁶⁷ A woodcut illustration of the Last Judgment, cited by George Kubler as the source of inspiration of many colonial Mexican tequitqui images, derives from Vega's *Flos Sanctorum* (Figure 83).⁶⁸ In the latter part of the century, a "reformed" version appeared, in which the Marian and Christological texts are placed at the beginning of the book, in an edition by Alonso de Villegas, printed in Toledo.⁶⁹

Illustrations

The use of illustrations varies a great deal depending on the book. Zumárraga's doctrinas, for example, are not illustrated at all apart from the title page. Other doctrinas I consulted at the Huntington Library, such as those by the Augustinian friar Juan de la Anunciación (1575), the theologian Sánchez Muñón (1579), and an anonymous Dominican (1548), are also barely illustrated. On the other hand, both editions of Benito

⁶⁶ José Aragüés Aldaz, "Para el estudio del *Flos Sanctorum* renacentista: La conformación de un género," in *Homenaje a Henri Guerreiro: La hagiografía entre historia y literatura en la España de la Edad Media y del Siglo de Oro*, ed. Marc Vitse (Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2005), 97-147.

⁶⁷ Antonio Palau y Dulcet, *Manual del librero hispano-americano* (Barcelona: Librería anticuaría, 1923), 201-202.

⁶⁸ Kubler, *Mexican Architecture*, 374-376.

⁶⁹ James P. R. Lyell, *Early Book Illustration in Spain* (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1976), 130; Antonio Palau y Dulcet, *Manual del librero hispano-americano* (Barcelona: Librería anticuaría, 1923), 128.

Hernández's *Doctrinas* share an abundant and complex use of illustrations with Pedro de Feria's Zapotec *Doctrina* (1567) and the *Doctrina en lengua huasteca* (1571) composed by Juan de la Cruz.⁷⁰ They were all printed by the same publisher in Mexico City, Pedro de Ocharte, and many of the same pictures appear again throughout the books.

Printing in New Spain was introduced through Seville, the Iberian port to the Indies in the sixteenth century. It is therefore not surprising that illustrations found in Mexican books from this period derive from previous Sevillian publications. Although a systematic analysis of the reuse of illustrations in different texts is very difficult given the fact that Mexican and Spanish *incunabula* (books printed before 1500) are extremely rare and sometimes unique copies, by consulting modern bibliographic publications, I was able to find three cases of images from Spanish publications that eventually crossed the Atlantic. They are all found in books printed by "Meinard Ungut Alamanum et Stanislaus Polonus socios," a partnership of Meynard Ungut, a German, and Estanislao Polono, a Pole, active in Seville in the latter part of fifteenth century.⁷¹

The *Scala Coeli* found in both Mixtec *doctrinas* (Figure 119) first appeared as the title page of a book by the same title printed in 1496 (Figure 120).⁷² Although Ungut and Polono's book identifies the author with San Jerónimo, the text was composed by

⁷⁰ I consulted the Huastec *doctrina* at the Hispanic Society of America, New York, and a digital reproduction of the copy owned by the John Carter Brown Library.

⁷¹ The partnership ended when Polono left for Alcalá de Henares. At that point, Ungut began working with fellow German, Jakob Kromberger, whose son, Johann, known as Juan Cromberger in Spanish, was responsible for the introduction of printing in New Spain. This may be the way by which prints initially used by Ungut and Polono ended up in several of New Spain's *doctrinas*. Konrad Haebler, *The Early Printers of Spain and Portugal* (London: Printed for the Bibliographical Society at the Chiswick Press, 1897), 54-55.

⁷² Konrad Haebler, *Bibliografía ibérica del siglo XV: Enumeración de todos los libros impresos en España y Portugal hasta el año de 1500, con notas críticas* (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1903), 98; Francisco Vindel, *El arte tipográfico en España durante el siglo XV* (Madrid: Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores; Relaciones Culturales, 1945), V: 237.

Johannes Junior, also known as Gobius in Latin, or Jean Gobi in French (fl. 1323-1350) in the 1480s. The ladder refers to good and bad exempla, ordered alphabetically from *abstinentia*, abstinence, to *usura*, usury, all of which have to be considered if one wants to achieve salvation. In the Mixtec books, the “ladder to heaven” appears as the introductory illustration to the Ten Commandments. The Mixtec caption on top reads “Yyaca taniño ychi andehui” in the Achiutla variant and “Yyaca taniño [quayu diyoy] ychi andehui” in the Teposcolula variant, meaning “Look, the image [that resembles the steps] of the path of heaven.”⁷³ The commandments, and other teachings that follow, can be analogically compared to the steps leading to Heaven and salvation.

In 1500, Ungut and Polono published a popular text by the Florentine friar Ricoldo da Montecroce, titled *Improbatio alcorani* (Refutation of the Koran), whose only illustration shows a hooded friar preaching to a group of Muslims, recognizable by their attire of turbans and swords (Figure 121).⁷⁴ The same picture is found twice in the Zapotec doctrina, at the beginning of the exposition of the Fourteen Articles of Faith and the Ten Commandments (Figure 122).⁷⁵ The parallel here is clearly between the condition of infidels shared by Muslims and Zapotecs in the Hispanic world.

Finally, in 1495, the publishers released *Contemplaciones sobre el Rosario de nuestra señora historiadadas con la forma de la institución del psalterio* by Gaspar Gorricio de Novaria. The author was a Carthusian monk of Genoese origins and a friend of

⁷³ Translation by the author. See also Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca*, 294.

⁷⁴ Vindel, V: 366-369.

⁷⁵ Luis Resines, *Catecismo del Sacromonte y Doctrina Christiana de Fr. Pedro de Feria: Conversión y evangelización de moriscos e indios* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2002), 130-137.

Christopher Columbus.⁷⁶ His book belongs to a fast-growing tradition in late-medieval Spain devoted to the cult of the Virgin of the Rosary. It contains typical stories on the origins and evolution of this devotion, culminating in the foundation of a Brotherhood of the Virgin of the Rosary, leading to the modern institutionalization of the cult. The beginning of the second section of the book, dedicated to the recitation of the fifteen Mysteries, is illustrated with a large woodcut (Figure 123). Kneeling to the enthroned Virgin and Child, on top, are a pope and prelates to the left and a young man in the center. The man is holding a rosary in his hands, and flowers (prayers) are seen coming out of his mouth directed upward toward the Virgin. At his back is a knight, who is ready to attack the praying man with his sword. The scene depicts the so-called Legend of the Knight of Cologne, a popular story related to the cult of the Rosary, which is also found in Doménech's engraving and Taix's Rosary, discussed above.

The illustration was used by the publisher Pedro de Ocharte in two Dominican doctrines: Domingo de la Anunciación's *Doctrina Xpiana en lengua castellana y mexicana* (1565) and Feria's *Doctrina Cristiana en lengua Castellana y Zapoteca* (Figure 124). In the latter in particular, it served an interesting function. Concluding the presentation of the Ten Commandments, Feria explains in detail the dangers of idolatry, encountered by those who did not fully and consciously embrace God's Commandments. He draws examples from both Old and New Testaments and uses the picture to explain that when praying one has always to bear in mind that in front of one's eyes is only an image, a mere representation of God or the saints, but not God himself. Even if it may seem that God or the saints, are in front of our eyes, this is simply an illusion created by the painter who wisely placed the color on the canvas.

⁷⁶ Gaspar Gorricio de Novara, Santiago Cantera Montenegro, and Almudena Torrego Casado, *Contemplaciones sobre el Rosario de Nuestra Señora historiadadas: Un incunable sevillano* (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universität Salzburg, 2002), 8-11.

The friar explains that God and Saints cannot be seen because they are in Heaven. Images are simply a physical reminder of God and saints and prayers said in front of the pictures are directed not to the canvas, which obviously cannot hear anything, but to God who is always listening. In the illustration, a typical Renaissance *sacra conversazione* puts the Virgin and Child in the same illusionary space created by the checkerboard floor with the clerics and knight. However, the vertical hierarchal composition and the posture and behavior of the characters have to be read as an indication that the Virgin and Child are in fact a mere depiction.

Illustrations in the doctrinas seem to have served different functions depending on their placement and relation to the text. While most of the time they merely punctuate the written text, offering a visual marker to the reader who was skimming through the pages, in some instances they constitute a parallel text that has to be read in conjunction with, but not necessarily in subordination to, the written word. The most complex image-text interaction is in the Huastec doctrina, a short book in which entire pages are filled with pictures. On the other hand, the Mixtec doctrinas have the longest text, given that no Spanish translation is provided.

Pictures are most often placed right before a new section to visually signal the beginning of the chapter. Figure 125 shows Jesus inside the temple engaging the disciples with his teachings. In this case, readers identify with the apostles, who learned directly from Jesus, the book in their hands acting as a surrogate of the Savior's words. This creative reuse of illustrations appears throughout the text marking different *praecepta* (commandments).

More complex is the reuse of a picture illustrating the Paternoster from one of the earliest pages of the 1568 Mixtec *doctrina* (Figure 126). The image portrays the Agony in the Garden, referring to the episode when Jesus was told of his fate by an

angel. He is shown in the picture willingly accepting his sacrifice, here represented by the chalice and host carried by the angel.⁷⁷ The event occurred when Jesus was praying in the Mount of Olives with his disciples. When the night came, they fell asleep, remaining unaware during this critical moment. The woodcut derives from Dürer's *Engraved Passion* (1508), whose innovative gesture of Jesus surrendering to the will of the God Father was widely imitated (Figure 127). While simply reutilizing an illustration perhaps because a more appropriate one was not available, the friar also creatively suggested a connection between Jesus and the devout. The Paternoster is in fact recited during mass right after the consecration of the Host, while it is elevated in front of the altar. It is at this point that people begin praying by opening up their arms and extending their palms to God in a similar manner to Jesus in the picture. He is also turning to the chalice and wafer carried by the angel.

The most interesting and complex use of pictures, however, is found in the presentation of the Articles of Faith. I will use Feria's *doctrina*, which comes with a Spanish translation, alongside Hernández's, by way of comparison. As explained in the text, there are fourteen Articles of Faith: seven pertaining to the divinity and seven to the humanity of Jesus.⁷⁸ While the former section is barely illustrated, the seven articles related to the incarnation of God in Christ become in pictures the narration of the life of Jesus. This treatment of the seven articles is unique among the doctrinas I was able to study. Table 1 below compares the illustrations in three different books.

⁷⁷ The Agony in the Garden is also associated with the Paternoster in Feria's *doctrina*.

⁷⁸ The word "article" comes from Latin *articulus* (hence, the Spanish *artículo*) which means "joint," thus etymologically expressing the connection of each article to the other and the necessity of connecting single and separate theological notions to the whole of the Creed. Berard L. Marthaler, *The Creed: The Apostolic Faith in Contemporary Theology* (Mystic, Conn.: Twenty-Third Publications, 1993), 13.

| Articles | Hernández, 1567 | Hernández, 1568 | Feria (Zapotec), 1567 |
|------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| 1 st Incarnation | Annunciation | Annunciation | <i>Annunciation</i> |
| 2 nd Virginal Birth | Nativity | Nativity | Nativity |
| 3 rd Death on the Cross | Flagellation; Crowning of Thorns; Road to Calvary; Crucifixion; Lamentation | Flagellation; Crowning of Thorns; Road to Calvary; Crucifixion | Crucifixion; Agony in the Garden; Christ before Caiaphas; Crowning of Thorns; Flagellation; Crowning of Thorns; Crowning of Thorns; Road to Calvary; Crucifixion; Lamentation |
| 4 th Descent into Limbo | None | Lamentation | Descent into Limbo |
| 5 th Resurrection | Resurrection; <i>Resurrection</i> | Resurrection | Resurrection |
| 6 th Ascension | Ascension | Ascension | Ascension |
| 7 th Final Judgment | Last Judgment | Last Judgment | <i>Last Judgment</i> |

Italicized titles refer to a different illustration of the same subject.

Table 1. Comparison of the illustrations related to the Seven Articles of Faith in three doctrinal manuals.

While the first two articles (referring to the incarnation and birth of the son of God) aptly depict the Annunciation and Nativity, the third section, referring to the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, digresses with a series of pictures of the Passion. Jesus Before Caiaphas, Flagellation, Crowning of Thorns, and Road to Calvary precede the Crucifixion. In Feria's, the Crucifixion is presented first, together with the enunciation of the article, eventually telling the story as a sort of flashback. The narration ends with the Lamentation (Figure 128). With the bare cross in the background, the dead Jesus rests on Mary's arms, while John and the other Marys pray around them. The fourth, fifth and sixth articles, pertaining to the Descent into Limbo, Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus (Figure 129), respectively, are again illustrated by single vignettes. Finally, Hernández's doctrinas end with a large depiction of the Last Judgment that fills the entire page (Figure 130). Christ enthroned in Heaven summons humanity by lifting his right arm. While the Virgin and a retinue of angels are with him in Heaven, the

Devil is ready to claim souls for himself on the lower right. The saved souls are on the lower left.

The interaction between text and picture in this section of the Mixtec and Zapotec doctrinas is rather interesting in that the authors took the chance to expand on a schematic exposition of dogmas by superimposing and intersecting a larger narrative. From this perspective, the relationship recalls what was already noted for Dürer's illustration of the *Small Passion* and the accompanying poems by Chelidonium. While the written content is in itself rather fragmentary, every small part takes on larger significance when seen in the light of the quest of human redemption expressed in the life deeds of Jesus.

Discussion and Conclusion

Missionary Art at Yanhuitlan

The narrative content of sixteenth-century retablo painting is apparent. There is a consistent reference to a template, constituted by episodes of the lives of the Virgin and Jesus, regardless the saint to which the mission was dedicated (Saint Dominic, in the case of Yanhuitlan) and the religious order (San Miguel Huejotzingo, for example, was a Franciscan establishment). Such thematic choice reflected also a recurrent iconographic treatment of the different subjects represented, as, for example, in the disappearing Christ of the Ascension and the crowning position of the Descent from the Cross. Didactic purposes probably constitute the rationale for these choices. The comparison with contemporaneous texts circulating in the Mixteca in the second half of the sixteenth century therefore becomes particularly important. What my research suggests, however, is more than a mere illustrative purpose for the pictures. They are

not subordinate to the text, rather, a complex and interactive process of viewing/reading is in place. The extensive devotional literature that stressed the importance of meditational practice typical of the turn of the century quite explicitly highlights the role of pictures in attaining a true and full religious conversion.

Picture/text relationship can be characterized by a series of oppositions, which frame the dialog between the natural, human world of the believer and the supernatural and divine realm of God. Pictures play a fundamental role, as they help move from a superficial and sensorial apprehension to a deeper intellectual grasp of the divine. There is a constant tension between two poles (outward/inward; picture/text; sensorial/intellectual), based on the ontological dualism between body and soul. One cannot exist without the other and faith itself becomes the constant struggle to reach across the gap that separates the human condition from God.

The iconography of the Ascension of Christ discussed above, rooted in early Medieval English illuminated manuscripts, has been interpreted in divergent ways in the art-historical scholarship. While Meyer Schapiro and Emile Mâle interpret it as a realistic, dramatic reenactment of the event in early medieval and Gothic art respectively, Dushman argues for a contemplative meaning.⁷⁹ On the one hand, scholars point to the subjective and personal engagement experienced during Passion plays and pilgrimages to the *loca sancta* in the Holy Land. On the other, the stress is placed on monastic reforms in tenth-century England that promoted an ideal contemplative life. In the latter case, images of the disappearing Christ served as a reminder of the limitation of sensorial vision, while paradoxically gazing at a picture.

⁷⁹ Robert Dushman, "Another Look at the Disappearing Christ: Corporeal and Spiritual Vision in Early Medieval Images," *The Art Bulletin* 79, no. 3 (1997): 518-546; Emile Mâle, *Religious Art in France: The Late Middle Ages*, trans. Marthiel Mathews (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 35-80; Schapiro, 267-287.

What it means is that our sinful and mortal human condition prevents us from a full apprehension of Heaven (and Christ's position in it).

The importance of theater in missionary activities in Hispanic America has been widely assessed in the scholarship.⁸⁰ I want to add here a second possible layer of meaning to the external, public and communal practice of the theatrical experience, one that conversely emphasizes internal and private knowledge. Gabriel de Guzmán, the Mixtec cacique of Yanhuitlan, owned a copy of the devotional bestseller *Contemptus Mundi*. The inventory of his goods lists other objects, as well, among which “two jewels that are two golden cascabels used for dancing belonging to the community of Achiutla”.⁸¹ Theatrical paraphernalia such as rattles and feathers were transmitted from precolumbian to colonial religious theater. The fact that the Mixtec cacique owned such a wide range of ritual objects further points to the complementarity rather than mutual exclusiveness of the different aspects of religious practice. This means that he not only meditated on the life of Christ in a fashion popular in the learned classes of Europe, but he also participated in communal dancing and celebrations, religious expressions more typically associated with popular culture. Boundaries between popular and learned culture in the early modern period are thus quite blurred. Images travelled across different social classes and religious practices. This aspect was already discussed in this chapter when discussing the presentation of the

⁸⁰ Raquel Chang-Rodríguez, *Hidden Messages: Representation and Resistance in Andean Colonial Drama* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1999); Edgerton, *Theatres of Conversion*; Fernando Horcasitas, *El teatro náhuatl: Epocas novohispana y moderna* (Mexico City: UNAM, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, 1975); Marilyn Ekdahl Ravicz, *Early Colonial Religious Drama in Mexico: From Tzompantli to Golgotha* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1970).

⁸¹ “yten aclaro q. estan en mi poder dos joyas q. son dos caxcabeles de oro para bailar de la comunidad de achiutla...” AGN Tierras 400. Transcription in Paillés, *Documentos, Ramo Tierras*, 39.

iconographic sources of Concha's altarpiece that equally include portable cloths, printed texts, and High Renaissance illustrations.

Viewer/picture relationship functioned within two other "polar opposites": oral recitation, carried out aloud and characterized by long repetitions, and an internal meditation on the picture. This was made clear in the previous discussion on Taix's Rosary prayers. As the "linear" recitation of the Ave Maria and Paternoster progressed, the devotee was asked to concentrate on different pictures and their details. What sounds externally like a mere repetition corresponds in fact to a figural composition. Techniques of mental praying owe much to the medieval "art of memory."⁸² Based on the canons of Classical rhetoric, mnemotechnics allowed for the memorization of extremely long texts and mass quantity of information that had to be mentally organized according to a well-known image. A more complex mental picture enabled the memorization of a more articulate text. Contents were stored along a visually-structured outline and could be recited in an ordinate fashion. Zumárraga explains in the first pages of his *Doctrina* that "coherence and order greatly contribute to an easier understanding and remembrance of something."⁸³

Pictures themselves carried an intrinsic cosmological or affective knowledge (they are referred to as *loci*, "places," and *imagines agentes*, "striking images") that is tied to the recited text, even though not explicitly mentioned.⁸⁴ The correspondence between words and images multiplied the ways in which analogies between different realms of knowledge could be imagined. This is a deeply creative thinking process: the

⁸² Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 50-104.

⁸³ "el concierto y el orden, hace mucho para más fácilmente entender una cosa y retenerla en la memoria." *Doctrina Cristiana* (1546), fol. 3v. Cited in Gil, 385.

⁸⁴ Peter Parshall, "The Art of Memory and the Passion," *The Art Bulletin* 81, no. 3 (1999): 456-472.

etymological meaning of the word invention, *inventio* in Latin, is “to retrieve” in one’s mind; recollecting a text becomes an exegetical practice.⁸⁵

In this light, we can now interpret the cycle of the Life of Christ that appears within the Seven Articles of Faith (see the table above and Figures 128, 129, and 130) in the doctrinas. While reciting the articles through a mnemonic structure, based on the “places” of the Passional narration and replete with “striking images,” one should never forget God’s agency and purpose in human history: divine creation and salvation. This dual mode that constantly switches between linear and figural, narration and contemplation, enabled an active interaction, rather than a passive reading, for viewers with the image before their eyes.

Paintings of the Virgin of the Rosary presented above similarly adopted either linear (Figure 111) or circular representation (Figures 108 and 110). The latter carries deeper cosmological implications related to the fullness of the circle and the otherworldly quality attached to the shape of the mandorla. The beginning and the end coincide in a sort of encyclopedic summa of human and divine experience.⁸⁶ The quincunx composition found in a Psalter illustration (Figure 113) places the Last Judgment at the center of the composition rather than following a linear disposition, which would have placed the scene in the lower right corner. As mentioned above in this chapter, the occurrence of the themes of the Last Judgment and Virgin of the Rosary in Yanhuitlan’s retablo is unique in New Spain. They closely relate to the Pentecost (Figure 70) and Coronation of the Virgin (Figure 112), as we have seen. These panels, together with their similarities with Spanish retablos, seem to suggest that the cult of the Virgin of the Rosary may be the unifying theme of the altarpiece. Unfortunately, because the retablo

⁸⁵ Mary J. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 189-220.

⁸⁶ Ganz, 160-166.

was dismantled and given a new frame in the early eighteenth century, we do not know what the original disposition of the panels may have been.

PART II

THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Chapter 4**From Cacicazgo to República de Indios****The Rise of a New Indigenous Leadership**

Early colonial Yanhuitlan was defined by the leadership of Don Gabriel de Guzmán, the skilled Mixtec cacique who forged a strategic allegiance with the encomendero and Dominican friars. After his death (1598), however, things rapidly changed in the village. The present chapter is concerned with these changes, especially within indigenous sociopolitical institutions. I analyze the trajectory of Yanhuitlan's cacicazgo and cabildo, the town assembly, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, relying on primary archival sources. However, institutional changes among indigenous communities should be understood within concomitant power shifts among the local Spanish population and the larger economic and political trends in the Hispanic world. The rising Mexican Creole identity had to confront the centralizing reform of the Bourbon monarchs, who took over from the House of Hapsburg in 1700. The newly-embraced absolutist ideology of the Spanish Crown aimed to increase direct control over the colonies at the expense of local and long-established power structures. At the same time, an "enlightened wave of anticlericalism" curtailed the power and presence of the Church, culminating with the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767.

While most of the events narrated in this chapter happened before the so-called "second conquest," it will become clear in the discussion that, at the local level,

indigenous representational bodies, cacicazgo and República de Indios, with roots in the prehispanic and early colonial period, respectively, struggled to assert new prerogatives, political or economic, fully operating within the changing conditions of the Spanish colonial system.¹

Martín José de Villagómez, Cacique against the People of Yanhuitlan

The Archivo General de la Nación in Mexico City holds a very long file (approximately 368 folios) containing the proceedings of a lawsuit initiated by Martín José de Villagómez, cacique of Acatlan, Petlacingo, Yanhuitlan, Silacayoapan and Jaltepetongo.² Beginning in the early eighteenth century, the trial, which lasted several decades, settled a dispute between the Mixtec ruling noble and the “people” of Yanhuitlan regarding the rightful property of the royal palace (referred to in the document with the Nahuatl loanword *tecpa*) and cultivable lands. In the early nineteenth century, the proceedings were extensively copied to be used again as

¹ The expression “second conquest” refers to a period in the latter part of the eighteenth century when a series of administrative and economic reforms originating in Bourbon Spain tightened imperial control over the colonies. This resulted in a renewed attack on local indigenous institutions after the first adjustments following the invasion in the sixteenth century. For a discussion, see Nancy M. Farriss, *Maya Society under Colonial Rule: the Collective Enterprise of Survival* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 355-388; Serge Gruzinski, “La “segunda aculturación”: El estado ilustrado y la religiosidad indígena en Nueva España (1775-1800),” *Estudios de Historia Novohispana* 8 (1985): 175-201.

² AGN Tierras, 400. The cacique was from the very important family of the Villagómez from Acatlan and Suchitepec, in the Mixteca Baja (today located across the states of Oaxaca and Puebla). See John Monaghan, “Mixtec Codices and the Transition to Corporate Communities,” in *Painted Books and Indigenous Knowledge in Mesoamerica: Manuscript Studies in Honor of Mary Elizabeth Smith*, ed. Elizabeth Hill Boone (New Orleans: Middle American Research Institute, Tulane University, 2005); Mary Elizabeth Smith and Ross Parmenter, *The Codex Tulane* (New Orleans: Middle American Research Institute, Tulane University, 1991), 65-69.

evidence in a related case involving the town of Tecomatlan against the same cacique.³

This document is also very long, comprising over three hundred folios.

While both documents have been previously studied and cited by numerous scholars dealing with Mixtec colonial history, focus has been usually placed on the information the archival material provides regarding the transition from the precolumbian postclassic to the early colonial period.⁴ In an attempt to legitimize his position as rightful ruler of Yanhuitlan, the cacique was in fact able to bring in front of the Spanish judge original documents from the sixteenth century, including testaments of previous caciques, *probanzas*, and testimonies of Yanhuitecos and Spanish officials, and confirmations signed by representatives of the Crown. The chronological span covered by these large documents, however, extends beyond the early colonial period into the seventeenth and early eighteenth century, leading up to the complex situation that brought the cacique to court. Finally, it presents a late colonial view of the early period, giving the opportunity to analyze not merely economic and political changes, but also shifts in perceptions on the historical role and present currency that indigenous sociopolitical institutions had for the parties involved in the suit.

Martín José de Villagómez was the husband of Doña Teresa de la Cruz Villagómez Pimentel y Guzmán. He was cacique of Yanhuitlan only because he married into the Guzmán family, caciques of Yanhuitlan since precolumbian times.⁵ Mixtec yuhuitayu (cacicazgos) were jointly ruled by a couple and inheritance was passed down

³ AGN Tierras, 985. The town of Tecomatlan had been disputing its status as a subject of Yanhuitlan since the early colonial period (AGI Escribanía 162C). See chapter 1, section “Yanhuitlan vs. Tecomatlan.”

⁴ Jiménez Moreno and Mateos Higuera, *Códice de Yanhuitlán*; Spores, *The Mixtec Kings*. For an overview of the case, see Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca*, 195-197.

⁵ AGN Civil, 516; AGI Escribanía, 162C. Alfonso Caso, “The Lords of Yanhuitlan,” in *Ancient Oaxaca*, ed. John Paddock (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966), 313-335.

to offspring along separate female and male lines of descent. This fundamental aspect of Mixtec political organization finds visual expression in the pictographic sources, where cacicazgos are represented by a couple seated on a mat, the throne (Figure 1). The Spanish system, however, could not contemplate equal gender rights.⁶ As discussed in the section “Yanhuitlan and the Mixteca Alta in the Postclassic Mesoamerican World” in chapter 1, the Guzmanes’ cacicazgo of Yanhuitlan had a long history of primarily female rulership, which continued under colonial rule despite the inequality introduced by the Spaniards. After María Coquahu, mother of Don Gabriel, Doña María de Guzmán, Doña María Pimentel y Guzmán, and Doña Josefa Villagómez Pimentel y Guzman ruled with their husbands before Teresa de la Cruz Villagómez, wife of the cacique who sued the people of Yanhuitlan in the case under discussion.⁷ Martín José de Villagómez inherited the cacicazgo of Suchitepec, but acquired the joint rulership of Jaltepetongo, Acatlan, Petlalcingo, together with Yanhuitlan, through his marriage with Doña Teresa. Within the Spanish viceregal system, local indigenous nobility maintained not only the social status but also the political power they had in ancient times. Exactly because of this reason, at the beginning of the eighteenth century the cacique was still able to present to the judge a full dynastic record.

On the other side in the trial was the *pueblo de Yanhuitlan*, the village of Yanhuitlan, or *naturales*, the people, represented by the *gobernador* (governor), *alcaldes* (mayors), *regidores* and other *oficiales de la República* or *cabildo* (town officers). These representatives were elected to a system of government introduced in native communities by the Spaniards soon after the conquest. Even though the Crown

⁶ Ronald Spores, “Mixteca Cacicas. Status, Wealth, and the Political Accommodation of Native Elite Women in Early Colonial Oaxaca,” in *Indian Women of Early Mexico*, ed. Susan Schroeder, Stephanie Gail Wood, and Robert Stephen Haskett (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 185-198.

⁷ See Appendix A.

recognized the existence and rights of native nobility, including political privileges and duties, a parallel system was implemented with the aim of segregating and protecting the Amerindian population from Spanish settlers. Segregation was attained through *reducciones* or *congregaciones* (i.e., resettlements and forced congregation of preexisting villages) and preclusion from certain professions and goods.⁸ Protection from excessive exploitation by local Spanish officials was sought by granting a specific status to the Amerindians within the Hispanic imperial system, an Indian republic separate from the so-called *República de españoles*. As a colonial project, the institution of the República de Indios sought to acculturate and assimilate the Indian subjects into Spanish customs and mores while at the same time removing them from the negative influence of corruption and greediness of the local Spaniards.⁹ I will come back later to the debate that is ongoing among scholars on the extent to which the colonial indigenous cabildo was based in prehispanic institutions. Regardless of this specific aspect, it should be noted that in the early colonial period Gabriel de Guzmán was always referred to in the numerous legal proceedings in which he was involved as both cacique *and* gobernador.¹⁰ He was therefore at the head of both the traditional and the new political institutions, which evidently acted as one in the first decades after the conquest. According to the Yanhuitlan manuscript, this was already the case under the previous rulership of Lord 9 House. On plate 2 of Codex Yanhuitlan (Figure 2), he is

⁸ A large portion of the colonial legal documents in the Archivo General de la Nación deals with these matters. Indians sought permission to wear Spanish clothes, ride a horse, and carry a weapon. On the other hand, indigenous people often tried to bar Spanish, blacks, mestizos, and mulattos from settling in their villages. On attempts to congregate Yanhuitlan, AGN Indios, 6, 1023 (1598); on ethnic segregation, AGN Tierras, 2984, 69 (1647); on permission to ride a horse, AGN Indios, 3, 565; 5, 430 (1591); to carry a sword, AGN Indios, 5, 469 (1591); permission to wear Spanish cloths, AGN, Indios, 9, 52 (1617).

⁹ David Eduardo Tavárez, "República de Indios," in *Encyclopedia of Mexico*, ed. Michael Werner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1256-1257.

¹⁰ This is also the case of Tecomatlan vs. Yanhuitlan (AGI Escibanía, 162C), discussed in chapter 1.

shown seated on a step-fret throne in front of a royal palace, recognizable precolumbian power symbols, together with other male dignitaries. The rulers are addressing a male crowd, an expression of colonial order, which did not allow for female participation.¹¹ This event is said to have occurred in the Year 1 Flint, 1520 according to the Christian calendar. However, the Spanish entered and settled in the Mixteca only in the early 1530s, indicating that this is a symbolic, non-durational date. Evidently in the 1550s, when the manuscript was executed, a combination of old and new institutions, centered on the leadership of the cacique, was perceived, as the most viable form of government in the colonial context.

The suit of the cacique against the people of Yanhuitlan does not directly deal with the issue of the cacicazgo and its political outlook. Although the consequences were momentous for the political life of the village, the judge deliberated on the possession of the royal palace (*tecpa*) and cultivable lands (*sementeras*), not on the legitimacy of the cacicazgo per se. The naturales of Yanhuitlan, however, explicitly questioned the very existence of the institution of native rulership.

Aniñe and Huahi Tniño: The Royal Residence and the Community Meeting House

In protecting, or claiming, properties that constituted the material basis of his rights as cacique, Don Martín de Villagómez employed a strategy of legitimization that had been customary in Yanhuitlan for centuries. Legitimate possession of the royal residence was based on a public ceremony of accession. Several testimonies provided

¹¹ Jansen, "Mixtec Rulership."

direct witness accounts to accession ceremonies, formal acts of possession of the royal residence.

A testimony told that in 1718:

Don Martín entered the residence, opened and closed the doors and windows and did other formal acts of possession that the governor Joseph Hernández opposed, accessed the patios of this said palace through a fenced entrance facing west where there are also some ruined houses while the governor continued his opposition, he then proceeded south until he reached the corner of the residence and turned westward again until he arrived at another front entrance where are the ruins of the community meeting house of the town and, despite the opposition, he was given these patios where he walked around pulled some grass from the ground, threw stones, and made other acts of possession...¹²

The multiple patios and other features of Yanhuitlan's *aniñe* were described in chapter 2, "Architecture and Ideology in the Mixteca Alta," according to the seventeenth-century account of Friar Bernarbé Cobo.¹³ This description seems to further strengthen the idea that the *tecpa* was a multifunctional building comprising residential and administrative quarters. Two separate gate entrances were on the west and east sides, the latter connected to the "ruins" of the *casa de la comunidad*, while seemingly other parts in and around the complex were no longer in use.

Even though the governor Joseph Hernández opposed such formal acts of possession, the witness account in favor of the *cacique* was just the last of a very long series of testimonies that were meant to establish the patrimonial legacy of "las casas

¹² AGN Tierras, 400: 256r (74r)-256v (74v) "El dho Don Martín en las casas del Techpa deste dho pueblo en que entró, habrió y zerró puertas y ventanas y hizo otros autos de posesión a que el dho gobernador Joseph Hernández continuó la contradiziön y aviendo salido a los pathios deste dho techpa desde la rexa que forma la puerta de la entrada desta techpa por la parte que mira al poniente en que están unas rruinas de casas contradijo hasi mismo el dho gobernador y corriendo para el sur hasta la esquina las rreprodujo y continuó subiendo del poniente hasta otra thestera que en ella está diciendo ser rruinas de las casas de comunidad deste dho pueblo y no obstante la contradiziön le restituyó en dhos pathios en donde se paseó arrancó yerbas tiró piedras e yzo otras señales de poses.ön y me pidió lo pusiese por testimonio y que se guardase comendado en el despacho de mi comisiön."

¹³ Published in Jiménez Moreno and Mateos Higuera, 49-50.

de la techpa.” On September 3, 1591, when Don Francisco de Guzmán succeeded to the cacicazgo of Yanhuitlan, following dispositions contained in Don Gabriel’s will, his father, he took formal possession of the royal residence.¹⁴ The alcalde mayor, Gonzalo de Ovando Guzmán, in the name of the Spanish king, took Don Francisco by the hand and introduced him to the house, which was said to have nine patios. By doing so, he granted the cacique rightful possession of the cacicazgo. Don Francisco walked through the patios, courts, and other rooms of his new residence. He closed the doors of the house, leaving both Spanish and Indians out. Like his father, he gave an official acceptance speech in Mixtec on the church patio right after mass on a Sunday.¹⁵ Thirty-eight years later, in 1629, Don Francisco died without heirs, clarifying in testament that the cacicazgo had to pass down to his nephew, Don Baltazar de Velasco y Guzmán.¹⁶ The cacique once again took possession of his title during a ceremony in the “casa de la comunidad y tecpa” (community meeting house and royal palace), in front of Mixtec nobles and Spanish officials. At the end, he was given the keys to the property.

Formal possession, however, did not spare Don Baltazar from a dispute by a natural son of Don Francisco, called Don Juan Manuel de Guzmán. The two settled an agreement for the sake of the community’s peace and wellbeing, according to which Don Juan Manuel was given a fourth part of the residential palace, following testamentary dispositions of Don Francisco. He was also given permission to open an entrance door on the street, but had to clearly separate his living quarters from the rest

¹⁴ AGN Tierras, 985: 41ff.

¹⁵ For Don Gabriel, see Spores, *Colección de documentos*, 67. For Don Francisco, AGN Tierras, 985: 51r-51v.

¹⁶ AGN Tierras, 985: 73ff.

of the tecpa. Possession of a royal residence came with other important privileges such as male and female servants, chosen from specific barrios in the village.¹⁷

The caciques' strategy at the beginning of the eighteenth century, then, was still rooted in established canons of rulership that were not only derived from ancient ancestry but were also accepted by colonial authorities since the early postconquest period. What strategy could the naturales possibly adopt to counter the cacique's claims and make their case in front of the Spanish judge? Testimonies in favor of the naturales of Yanhuitlan were given according a questionnaire that included the following question:

If you know or heard someone saying that the house of the tecpa of the head town of Yanhuitlan has always been the residence of the present governors and was always considered property of the community and village, without ever being in possession of a private person or of any of the governors, in particular Don Gabriel de Guzmán, not any of his descendants, because it was always considered as a council and public house.¹⁸

The naturales contended that the tecpa was not private property of the cacique or governor, but rather was a meeting house, where the cabildo convened to take political decisions. Although the naturales were obviously trying to stretch their case (caciques had evidently been residing in the tecpa for centuries), it is fair to say that both parties were right. The tecpa was used from the very early colonial period, when it was built in the new town center of Yanhuitlan, as both royal residence and meeting house. In this eighteenth-century document, the building is referred to with both the Nahuatl loanword tecpa, royal residence, and *casa de la comunidad*, community

¹⁷ Ibid.: 80r-81v.

¹⁸ AGN Tierras, 400. Transcription in Paillés, *Documentos, Ramo Tierras*, 24. "Si sauen o han oydo decir que las Casas de tecpan de la Cauezera de Yanguitlan an sido siempre de la hauitacion delos Gouernadores actuales y tenidas y reputados por dela Comunidad de el dho Pueblo, sin que en tpo. ayan pertenecido a Persona Alguna particular, ni a ninguno de sus gouernadores, expecialmente a dn. Gabriel de Guzman, ni a ninguno de sus descendientes por que siempre se han tenido por Casas Publicas y Conzejiles."

meeting house. In a Mixtec document from 1598, two terms are similarly employed: *aniñe*, “palace,” and *huahi tniño*.¹⁹ *Huahi* means “house,” while *tniño* can be translated as “labor” or “duty,” a reference to the civil service at the base of community politics and economy in Mesoamerican indigenous communities.²⁰ Alvarado’s dictionary translates *huahi tniño* as “cabildo, el lugar donde se juntan.” So while the cacique was stressing his direct line of descent as inheritor of the royal residence, the naturales were instead pointing to the house as a seat of government, where decisions affecting the community were taken.

Yuhitayu and Ñuu: The Cacicazgo and the Village

Whether private landholding existed in prehispanic Mesoamerica is debated among scholars. While it is recognized that land did not constitute a patrimonial good in the sense in which even a Spaniard would have understood it in the sixteenth century, early colonial documents, product of a precipitous adjustment to the demands of the newly-established order, portray a changed situation from the precolonial period.²¹

¹⁹ AHJT Criminal, 05, 14. See also Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca*, 110-111.

²⁰ On the origins and historical developments of the system, see Pedro Carrasco, “The Civil-Religious Hierarchy in Mesoamerican Communities: Pre-Spanish Background and Colonial Development,” *American Anthropologist* 63, no. 3 (1961): 483-497; John Chance and William Taylor, “Cofradías and Cargos: An Historical Perspective on the Mesoamerican Civil-Religious Hierarchy,” *American Ethnologist* 12, no. 1 (1985): 1-26. For a discussion of the Mixtec system, see Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca*, 191-195.

²¹ The literature on the topic is noticeably more extensive for the Nahuatl region of Central Mexico. See the essays in Arij Ouweneel and Simon Miller, eds., *The Indian Community of Colonial Mexico: Fifteen Essays on Land Tenure, Corporate Organizations, Ideology, and Village Politics* (Amsterdam: Centrum voor Studie en Documentatie van Latijns Amerika, 1990); Ronald Spores and Patricia A. Andrews, eds., *Ethnohistory*, Supplement to the Handbook of Middle American Indians (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986).

Information on tribute and land use and ownership in Yanhuitlan is found throughout the documents under discussion as well as in Codex Yanhuitlan, the pictographic manuscript produced in the 1550s, discussed in the corresponding section in chapter 1.

In the trial against the naturales of Yanhuitlan, the cacique Martín de Villagómez adopted a similar strategy to the one used in the protection of his house property. For the caciques Don Martín and Doña Theresa the ancestry to Don Gabriel de Guzmán was the first and foundational basis of their argument. They represented an original 1567 *tasación* (valuation) officially certified by the Crown, of the tribute and labor due to Don Gabriel. The document also included a *memoria de las sementeras*, a listing of six fields given in Nahuatl, that had to be worked for the cacique.²² While four of the six fields were worked for the cacique, the other two did not carry any tenant farmer.²³ Testimonies further told that that it was customary for the cacique to receive labor from the commoners, who would work his fields. Don Gabriel was a well-known, important, and respected Mixtec ruler throughout the region. He had a large family and house, and therefore needed and deserved people to work his fields. The labor would have been remunerated with a due salary. Later the same year, it was established that the crops derived from the four fields of the cacique were to be divided between Don Gabriel and the community of the village. The cacique still had to pay the labor involved in the farming of his land.²⁴

²² AGN Tierras, 400. Paillés, *Documentos, Ramo Tierras*, 33. "...las tierras que de oy en adelante se le an de labrar y beneficiar para sementera de mais para su sustentación..."

²³ *Ibid.*, 34-35.

²⁴ AGN Tierras, 985: 13r.

Drafting his own testament in 1591, included as evidence in the trial under discussion, the cacique Don Gabriel stated:

I declare that I am cacique and lord of this town of Yanhuitlan and its subject towns through direct line of descent, and I possessed it peacefully for thirty-five years, I order that Don Francisco de Guzmán, my son inherit it after I am gone, to him belong rightfully also all that is annexed to it, and the land included in this memorial.²⁵

He then proceeded to list *ytu* (fields in Mixtec) in eight different villages including Yodzocahi (Yanhuitlan in Mixtec), with 43 plots; Tiyaha (Tecomatlan), nine plots; Yuchduchi (Etlatongo), five plots; Yodzocono (Patlayxtlahuaca), 22 plots; Yuchatnoo (Apoala), fourteen plots; Ñutuhui (?), five plots; Queunjiy (?), one plot; Atoco (Nochixtlan), three plots. The list provided is remarkably similar to another one produced ten years prior, in an inquiry meant to defend Gabriel's cacicazgo from external claims.²⁶ Don Gabriel clearly stated that those plots belonged to the cacicazgo. The total of about one hundred plots is staggeringly higher than the one just mentioned in regarding the tribute, when only six were mentioned.

It seems that the 1576 document provided a list of the plots that were part of the cacique's patrimony, including also tribute and services due to him, while the longer lists produced in 1581 and 1591 belonged to cacicazgo. At this point it seems difficult to establish what came first: the yuhuitayu (cacicazgo) or the ñuu (village).²⁷ The majority of the plots (over forty) belonging to the cacicazgo of Don Gabriel were found

²⁵ AGN Tierras, 400. Paillés, *Documentos, Ramo Tierras*, 40. "Yten declaro que yo soy cazique, y señor de este Pueblo de Yanhuitlan y sus sujetos por linea recta, y como tal ha treinta y cinco años que lo poceí quieta y pacificamente; mando que lo haia y herede despues de mis dias, Don Francisco de Guzman mi hijo a quien de dro. le pertenesce con todo lo a el anexo y conserniente, y con las tierras contenidas en esta memoria."

²⁶ AGN Civil, 516. Paillés, *Documentos, Ramo Civil*, 9-22.

²⁷ For a discussion of the terminology in Mixtec documents, see Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca*, 103-105.

in Yanhuitlan. Did the cacique own those plots as legitimate ruler, that is, they were an inalienable part of the cacicazgo, or was the land part of the cacicazgo because he was the ruler, and the plots would be eventually partitioned among the offspring? The *tasación* was a document produced for the Crown, while the other two, eventually used in a viceregal court, were initially meant to settle internal affairs. This also explains the difference in the language adopted. While the first document gives names in Nahuatl, a lingua franca in Postclassic Mesoamerica and early New Spain, the Mixtec terms for both the fields and the villages in the testament and memorial betray an intended local audience.

The ambiguity of the status of landholding is further illustrated in the above-mentioned litigation regarding the succession to the cacicazgo between Don Baltazar, nephew of Don Francisco, and a natural son of the cacique, Don Juan Manuel in 1629. The settlement also included a plot, called Ticaqueye in Mixtec, which was given to Don Juan Manuel, together with some houses found within it, as part of the estate of the cacicazgo. Don Juan Manuel explained that the people and community, “naturales y comunidad,” had previously refused to hand over that land, because it belonged to the cacicazgo.²⁸ Don Baltazar, acting as both governor and cacique, possessed enough authority to surrender that portion of land to his cousin.

In 1718, the authorities of Yanhuitlan presented a memorial in which they meant to clarify their position with respect to land and property. They said it was known since

²⁸ AGN Tierras, 985: 81r. “Y por quanto yo el dho Don Joan Manuel de Guzman, como hijo y heredero del dho. Don Francisco de Guzman mi padre, è pretendido quedar con las casas y tierras llamadas Ticaqueye, que por su muerte en su testamento, me las mandó; las quales, y las dhas tierras no se me han entregado por los naturales y comunidad de este dho. pueblo defendiendo siempre el darmela diciendo son del cacicazgo de el.” “And since I, the said Don Juan Manuel de Guzmán as son and inheritor of Don Francisco de Guzmán, my father, requested to keep the house and land called Ticaqueye that were given to me upon his death following testamentary dispositions; the said land was never given to me by the people and community of this said town, claiming that they belonged to his [Don Martín's] cacicazgo.”

ancient times that caciques did not own all the land found within the limits of the village, but only some plots within the village boundaries, while the rest was considered common and free land.²⁹ They went even further and claimed that conceding to the fact that the cacique owned all the land of the cacicazgo meant condemning to slavery the people who lived in it. They in fact stated that being treated as mere *terrazgueros* (tenant farmers) would be economically so unbearable to them that they would be practically enslaved. To support the absurdity of the cacique's claim they reminded His Majesty that the Indians had never been considered subject to slavery by the Crown. The document was glossed with comments by Martín de Villagómez, who argued that if the cacique could not have people working for him then there could never be a cacicazgo ("de esse modo no hubiera cacicazgo alguno").

In their concluding statement, the governor, regidores and alcaldes of Yanhuitlan said that they would pursue their case as far as their given rights in the colonial judicial system allowed them.

Finally, in 1722 the people of Yanhuitlan presented an interrogatory in which questions VIII through XII concerned the town limits and land of Yanhuitlan.³⁰ The boundaries were given according to the four directions: west, east, south and then north. The respective markers were given in Mixtec as: *tisatoco*, *ytuhuisahu*, *dequeyucutum*, *sayucutacaye*. All the land contained within these limits was claimed to belong since time immemorial to the village and the people of Yanhuitlan, who

²⁹ AGN Tierras, 400. "Asentado por sierto como lo es que los casiques no son dueños de todas las tierras que se comprehenden en los terminos de un pueblo, pues es notorio que desde la jentilidad ubo casiques en esta cav.a , los quales solo poseían diferentes suertes y sitios de tierra dentro de sus términos quedando para el comun libres las demas." "Being a fact as it is that the caciques do not own all the land within the town limits, because it is known that since ancient times they always only owned some and certain plots within the limits, while the rest is free and common land."

³⁰ Paillés, *Documentos, Ramo Tierras*, 24-25.

worked the fields without paying rent for it to anybody. As a follow-up to the testimonies, Don Martín de Villagómez, the governor, and mayors of Yanhuitlan gathered together to create a map. They walked to a *lindero*, a boundary marker, known in Mixtec as *tende nuquu*, where land was contested between Yanhuitlan and neighboring Chachoapan. Both parties intervened carrying a *vara de mando*, staff of rulership. A fight broke out, although seemingly no one was seriously injured.³¹ They then proceeded to the north until they reached Ytnuyendi nuu. The cacique stated that the border was not contested, but they had eventually to suspend the recognition because the people present were not knowledgeable enough about the remaining boundaries. Such public identification of boundaries is still carried out periodically today. It is supervised by the Presidente de la Comisión de Bienes Comunales, the President of the Commission on Public Property. The commission owns two maps drafted in the twentieth century with names in Mixtec marking village boundaries (Figure 131).

Cacique and Gobernador: Cacicazgo and Cabildo

In their settlement regarding estate and house property, drafted in 1629, Don Baltazar de Velasco and Don Juan Manuel agreed not only to divide the *tecpa*, but also not to interfere with the electoral process for the designation of the governor.³² They acknowledged that either of them could be elected as the head of the *cabildo*; whatever the decision, they would respect the outcome of the election. This is, I believe, a fundamental change in the political process of indigenous communities. Lineage

³¹ *Ibid.*, 30.

³² AGN Tierras, 985: 82v-83r.

ceased to be a sufficient proof to guarantee the ability to represent the rights and interests of the naturales in the colonial system. Although this rupture seems to have occurred already in the sixteenth century in many parts of New Spain, appointed officials were members of the native ruling elite in Yanhuitlan throughout the eighteenth century.³³ Don Francisco de Guzmán, son of Don Gabriel, enjoyed wide support in his community, according to testimonies given in 1631. He was also cacique of Achiutla and Tlaxiaco, two major centers of the Mixteca Alta.³⁴ In 1622, he confronted, on behalf of his community, Francisco de las Casas, grandson of the Extremaduran conquistador and encomendero of Yanhuitlan.³⁵ Don Francisco de las Casas, the encomendero, claimed that Don Francisco de Guzmán was charging labor and tribute to the naturales of Yanhuitlan that were in fact not due to him: he charged the people twice, Guzmán claimed, as both cacique and governor. In rebuttal, the cacique stated that he never charged his people more than what was due to him as inheritor of the ancient title. He in fact greatly contributed with his own estate to the expenses the community had to sustain for the doctrina and the royal tribute. For the same reason, the cacique-gobernador continued, he had to step down from the office of governor in Achiutla, where he was also natural cacique. The material obligations deriving from being at the head of the cabildo and cacicazgo were evidently no longer sustainable. The pressure of the Spanish Crown was evidently not adjusting (or at least not adjusting enough) to the economic and demographic hardship faced by the

³³ Different views are expressed in Arij Ouweneel, "From "tlahtocayotl" to "gubernadoryotl:" A Critical Examination of Indigenous Rule in 18th-Century Central Mexico," *American Ethnologist* 22, no. 4 (1995): 756-785, and Tavárez, 1257.

³⁴ Don Francisco inherited the cacicazgo of Achiutla from his sister after her death, while he possibly became ruler of Tlaxiaco by marriage. Paillés, *Documentos, Ramo Tierras*, 42.

³⁵ AGN Tierras, 985: 61vff.

indigenous population. Don Francisco de Guzmán also added that he had been elected governor of Tiltepec and Tilantongo, but decided to resign because neither town belonged to the cacicazgo of Yanhuitlan, and this, according to him, could lead to conflict.³⁶

These statements seem to point to a complex and potentially conflictive situation, in which interests of different parties could clash and easily exacerbate each other. While the encomendero was raising the doubt that Don Francisco may have abused his privileges, several testimonies, given by *mayordomos* (councilors) of Yanhuitlan, testified that Don Francisco did not in fact even collect all that was due to him in the over twenty years of his tenure as cacique. Although he was entitled to 400 pesos, paid labor in his fields, and services at his residence, the cacique had never charged more than fifty pesos to the community. One cornfield and one field of beans belonging to the cacicazgo were reserved for gifts given to the principales who occasionally visited the cacique, while he paid for the work done on his own private fields.

As long as the cacique was also the elected governor of the village no substantial conflict could arise: the traditional lineage title and the gubernatorial office were one, embodied in the person of the cacique-gobernador. The moment, though, when the possibility of these two offices being separate is given, the situation is open to conflict. This is probably what happened during the course of the seventeenth century, fostered by increasing economic and demographic crises. It eventually resolved in the eighteenth century, and the trial under discussion is proof of an ongoing power struggle between indigenous political institutions.

³⁶ *Ibid.*: 63v.

The controversy between Don Martín de Villagómez and the naturales of Yanhuitlan dates back to 1699, during the rule of Don Martín's predecessor, Don Luis de Montezuma. While all of Don Martín's predecessors were successfully recognized as rulers by the community, through official ceremonies of investiture and possession of the land and residence as discussed above, Don Martín was never accepted by the assembly (cabildo). The cabildo seized the moment of rupture derived from the passing of the title (Don Martín was significantly only the spouse to the natural cacica of Yanhuitlan, Doña Theresa de Guzmán) to claim the right over the material possessions of the cacicazgo (cornfields and tecpa).

Until 1698, the cacique and governor of Yanhuitlan was Don Luis de Guzmán, husband of Doña Josefa, natural cacica of Yanhuitlan. He regularly collected the tribute for the Crown from the people of the village and subject towns. He, however, failed to give the tribute to the Crown, but instead ran away with it and disappeared, which resulted in the village of Yanhuitlan having to pay the tribute twice.³⁷ The disjunction between the title of cacique and the office of gobernador had already been an issue twenty years before when alcaldes and regidores of Yanhuitlan removed the cacique Don Diego de Villagómez from his office as gobernador, because other occupations (he was a resident of Minas de Chilapa in the Mixteca Baja) and health problems prevented him from exercising his duties, such as collecting the royal tribute.³⁸

In the 1699 interrogatory, the naturales of Yanhuitlan directly questioned the mere existence of the cacicazgo, by asking:

If they know, or have heard that the said town of Yanhuitlan and its subject towns since time immemorial until today have always been and continued to maintain the quasi-possession of not recognizing as cacique the said Don

³⁷ Paillés, *Documentos, Ramo Tierras*, 24.

³⁸ AHJT Civil, 15, 01: 02.

Gabriel de Guzmán or any of his descendants until these days, and did not give tribute to him because of this reason.³⁹

Quasi-possession is a legal term derived from Roman law referring to the possession of something immaterial, such as the enjoyment of a right, which comes with all the privileges of material ownership. What the naturales were trying to say is that they held from time immemorial the right to deny the legitimacy of the Guzmán cacicazgo, even when its existence was recognized by others (such as the Spanish Crown that had consistently confirmed the title to the caciques). This passage is important because it makes clear that the naturales were fully aware of and able to apply the existent Spanish code of law to serve their own rights, as they saw it from an indigenous perspective. From their point of view, although rulership may derive from inheritance, the ability to rule had to be proven by facts. It was obvious to everybody that the cacique was no longer taking up the duty and responsibility expected from a Mixtec cacique. In a formal petition to the judge, the governor, alcaldes, and officials of the República explained that Don Martín de Villagómez laid claims on the land of cacicazgo because of his marriage with the cacica Doña Theresa de de Guzmán. They thought that marrying a cacica was not enough to be declared rightful owner and possessor of the cacicazgo, especially because, they say, he was a native of Acatlan, in the Mixteca Baja.⁴⁰ This seems an unusual statement, since intermarriage among ruling elite members from different towns was standard policy in establishing political ties in

³⁹ Paillés, *Documentos, Ramo Tierras*, 24. "IV Itt. Si sauen o han oido decir que el dho Pueblo de Yanguitlan y sus sujetos sean mantenido y conseruado de Ymmemorial tiempo a esta parte en la quassi possession de no reconocer por tal cazique al dho. dn. Gabriel de Guzman, ni a ninguno de sus descendientes hasta la presente, sin contribuirles com va expresado con cantidad alguna por esta razon."

⁴⁰ AGN Tierras, 400: 188r (9)ff. The document is undated, but, given its location within the file, it was probably drafted in 1718. The naturales say that their litigation with Don Martín had started around twenty years prior. The first testimonies were given in 1698.

the Mixteca. Nevertheless, they also added more substantial allegations that in their view strongly undermined the cacique's credentials to act on behalf and for the wellbeing of Yanhuitlan and its community. Twenty years prior, Don Martín had left the village while he was in office as elected governor, and he did so without concluding his term. He had taken the 200 pesos that the community put together as tribute to the Crown and disappeared with it. Furthermore, he asked several farmers to work for him on some plots promising to share the returns, but eventually failed to keep his promise. This especially hurt the revenues that were generally reserved for confraternities' activities. He also did not carry through on his duty to contribute to the re-building of the church, which was currently under way.⁴¹

The case was settled favorably for the naturales of Yanhuitlan in 1720.⁴² As late as 1758, the widow of Don Martín, Doña Theresa, tried once again to lay claim to the cacicazgo and its annexed possession, and requested to reopen the case. A long summary of the case, drafted by Miguel Joseph Martínez, a legal representative in Mexico City of the village of Yanhuitlan, restated in an even more forceful way the case expressed by the governor and alcaldes over thirty years prior. He denied the existence of the cacicazgo, stating that Don Gabriel, Don Francisco and Don Baltazar de Guzmán all enjoyed certain privileges, including a house, the provision of labor, and exerting tribute only because they were governors of Yanhuitlan. Boundary markers set the town limits of the village, that is, public land used by all dwellers of Yanhuitlan, but they did not by any means coincide with property privately owned by the Guzmán family. The petition was rejected.

⁴¹ The works were carried out in the first decades of the 1700s, as confirmed by a document dated 1721 (AGN Indios, 44, 136: 167-168) and inscriptions on the apse of the church that bear the dates of 1718 and 1721. See section "Apse and Main Retablo" in chapter 5.

⁴² AGN Tierras, 400: 365r (183r).

Discussion and Conclusion

Ancient Traditions and Political Pragmatism

In establishing rulership, the caciques of Yanhuitlan placed a great deal of importance on choreographic acts of possession of their residence. Public participation was meant to ensure official acceptance on the part of the community and could eventually be called upon as a legitimate piece of evidence. These types of ceremonies are usually referred to as *toma de posesión*.⁴³ They were and still are in certain Mesoamerican indigenous communities extremely important ceremonial acts. Taking place at the beginning of office tenure, usually the first day of the year, public ceremonies culminate in elaborate speeches given by elected officials.⁴⁴ Oratorical skills are among the most important qualities required of an Amerindian ruler.⁴⁵

Similar accession ceremonies to those described for Yanhuitlan have been recorded as early as 1569 in the town of Teposcolula, where the cacica Doña Catalina de Peralta took formal possession of what is still today referred to as the *casa de la cacica*.⁴⁶ As late as 1922, a land dispute among the Zapotec villages of Santa Cruz Lachizolana and San Sebastián Xochimilco, in the central Valleys of Oaxaca, was also concluded with the formal repossession of the land which included the throwing of

⁴³ Michel Oudijk, "La toma de posesión: Un tema mesoamericano para la legitimación del poder," *Relaciones XXIII*, no. 91 (2002): 96-131.

⁴⁴ For the Mixteca, see Ubaldo López García, "La presencia de Apoala en los códices mixtecos," in *Historia del Arte de Oaxaca: Arte Prehispánico*, ed. Margarita Dalton and Verónica Loera y Chávez Castro (Oaxaca: Gobierno del Estado de Oaxaca; Instituto Oaxaqueño de las Culturas, 1997), 282-284.

⁴⁵ The word for "ruler" in Nahuatl, for example, is *tlatoani*, which literally means "speaker."

⁴⁶ AGN Tierras, 24, 6. Cited in Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca*, 160-162.

stones and grabbing of grass.⁴⁷ Terraciano and Oudijk, who studied these ceremonies during the colonial period, noticed the similarities with traditional Spanish medieval customs that stressed vassal-lord relationship in a feudal system. It is possible that this is a case of overlapping between the indigenous and Spanish traditions that enabled a strong persistence of this ceremonial pattern and its ideological implications.

Pictographic documents are another important source of information on the traditional *toma de posesión*. In the map of Teozacoalco (Figure 132), produced around 1580 as part of the *Relaciones Geográficas* sponsored by Philip II of Spain, the last ruler on the dynastic line to the left (Figure 133) is holding a bow and arrows, while another arrow is piercing the ground just in front of him. As identified by Oudijk, this is one of the most characteristic features of the Mesoamerican accession ceremony, which also included the drilling of a New Fire and the visitation of the territorial possessions of the cacique together with local nobility.⁴⁸

A long scene in the Colombino screenfold depicts the rituals of possession performed by Yya Nacuaa (Lord 8 Deer), ruler of Tilantongo (Figure 134).⁴⁹ After receiving an arrow, a shield, a golden fish and conch, and hearts with a stone vessel (a *cuauhxicalli*) ritual objects used in political ceremonies when a new rulership is established, Yya Nacuaa performs a ritual to the Sun God, seen on a tree on top of a hill.⁵⁰ Eventually, two attendants of the ruler, carrying a feathered staff of rulership (*bastón de mando*), called *Tukukua* or *Tnucucua* in Mixtec, and an arrow introduce

⁴⁷ Oudijk, "La toma de posesión," 109.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*: 102.

⁴⁹ The scene is also depicted with meaningful modifications in the Selden (p. 6), and Nuttall (p. 44) manuscripts. For a discussion, see Maarten E. R. G. N. Jansen and Gabina Aurora Pérez Jiménez, *Encounter with the Plumed Serpent: Drama and Power in the Heart of Mesoamerica* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2007), 196-209.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 201.

another series of important rituals.⁵¹ Lord 8 Deer is seen making a tobacco offering in front of six temples visited on consecutive days. Among them are temples associated with the four cardinal directions, as indicated in Figure 134. As a result, Lord 8 Deer enters triumphantly into Tututepec (a major Mixtec kingdom on the Pacific Coast of Oaxaca). His establishment as a ruler is signified by the Tukukua (staff of rulership) standing on top of the large place sign for Tututepec.

The toma de posesión is also the topic of pages in the Borgia divinatory manuscript.⁵² In the lower portion of pages 49 through 51 (Figure 135) a composition of eight scenes is repeated four times, one for each cardinal direction following the sequence east-north-west-south. On the right side, a man is performing a New Fire ceremony, traditionally associated with the establishment of a new kingdom, while two figures (male and female) descending from the sky bring objects of power, such as spears and a shield, and white cords, possibly signifying sacrifice. To the left, a throne and crown are associated with a ruling male personage. A royal marriage is depicted at top right, where a couple is shown embracing in a blanket inside a house. The central part of the scene is occupied by a tree, a powerful symbol in Mesoamerican cosmology, associated with lineage, among other things, and a temple, in front of which a deity is portrayed giving an offering. The tree and the temple also constitute a sort of complementary pair of natural and cultural elements upon which indigenous

⁵¹ Carmen Cordero Avendaño de Durand, *La vara de mando: Costumbre jurídica en la transmisión de poderes* (Oaxaca: H. Ayuntamiento de Oaxaca de Juárez, 1997); López García, 281.

⁵² Alessia Frassani, "Pilgrimage and the Temple of Death in the Ancient Mexican Manuscripts," in *Visualizing Rituals: Critical Analysis of Art and Ritual Practice*, ed. Julia Kim Werts (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006), 27-28.

communities are found.⁵³ A series of similar iconographic features and ritual ceremonies are also found in the Vienna screenfold occurring at the time of the establishment of the first kingdoms on the four corners of the Mixteca (pp. 21-9).⁵⁴

If this type of accession ceremony was a viable tool for establishing authority and rulership in colonial Yanhuitlan through the eighteenth century, the people of Yanhuitlan, represented by the gobernador, alcaldes and regidores, also employed a truly indigenous strategy of legitimization geared toward protecting land, labor, and property rights. The testimonies presented and the amount of written record produced to dispute the power of the aspiring yuhuitayu (ruling couple) falls within the native tradition of the *Títulos primordiales* (primordial titles), a pictographic, alphabetical, and oral genre that developed in New Spain during the late colonial period.⁵⁵ Incorporating alphabetic texts into a pictographic format, these manuscripts related community history relying on recurrent narrative features such as migration histories, throne accessions, church foundations, etc.⁵⁶ Although many of these documents were produced to claim rights in front of a Spanish judge, and are therefore the result of a confrontation with the colonial system, legitimacy is first established within an indigenous framework that ties the present colonized condition (and the struggle for emancipation) to a long immemorial past. Oudijk and Romero Frizzi have proposed to study the primordial titles within a larger Mesoamerican literary/historiographic genre,

⁵³ Ferdinand Anders, Maarten E. R. G. N. Jansen, and Luis Reyes García, *Los templos del cielo y de la oscuridad: Oráculos y liturgia, libro explicativo del llamado Códice Borgia* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1993), 261.

⁵⁴ For a recent discussion, see Jansen and Pérez Jiménez, *Encounter with the Plumed Serpent*, 78-93.

⁵⁵ The study of these documents has traditionally centered on Central Mexico beginning with the so-called Techialoyan manuscripts. See Donald Robertson, "Techialoyan Manuscripts and Paintings with a Catalog," in *Guide to Ethnohistorical Sources*, ed. Howard F. Cline, Handbook of Middle American Indians (Austin: Texas University Press, 1975), 253-280.

⁵⁶ Michel Oudijk and María de los Ángeles Romero Frizzi, "Los títulos primordiales: Un género de tradición mesoamericana. Del mundo prehispánico al siglo XXI," *Relaciones XXIV*, no. 95 (2003): 26.

and I think that there are distinctive features in the way both the cacique and the naturales of Yanhuitlan made their case that can be traced to this tradition.⁵⁷

While the cacique principally relied on the authority of the toma de posesión of the royal palace, the naturales founded their ancestral rights of possession on the establishment of village boundaries, which marked inalienable communal properties. The placement of *mojoneras* (boundary markers) and their subsequent public reconnaissance formed the basis of the naturales' argument. We are not told how many landmarks are actually visited, but rather the Mixtec names of those placed at the four directions are given.⁵⁸ Both ceremonies, or strategies of legitimization, rested on public and visible acceptance. The speeches by Don Gabriel and Don Francisco de Guzmán given on the patio in front of the church on a Sunday after mass are also part of a Mesoamerican tradition that placed great authority on oral recitation.

In the map of Teozacoalco, just discussed, the third and fourth dynasty of Teozacoalco are shown directly tied to the *aniñe*, placed in the center, while a toma de posesión takes place at the end, that is, present day of the first and second genealogy of Tilantongo-Teozacoalco (Figure 132). As Mundy remarks, the most striking aspect of this famous map, a characteristic shared with most of the other maps produced for the *Relaciones Geográficas*, is the attention placed on the land.⁵⁹ The artist places topographical details, including prominent village boundaries, within a beautiful circular map that ideally represents Teozacoalco as a whole and self-contained entity.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Questions IX through XII in the interrogatory. Paillés, *Documentos, Ramo Tierras*, 24-25.

⁵⁹ Barbara E. Mundy, "Mixtec Elites and the Teozacoalco Map-genealogy," in *Painted Books and Indigenous Knowledge in Mesoamerica: Manuscript Studies in Honor of Mary Elizabeth Smith*, ed. Elizabeth Hill Boone (New Orleans: Middle American Research Institute, Tulane University, 2005), 368-369.

Lineage and land are therefore narrated together and inextricably linked. Mundy goes further to suggest that, while land and lineage are complementary, they portray a somewhat divided perception of the village of Teozacoalco: the ruling class would have identified with the long dynastic line, while commoners would have more readily recognized features of the landscape (rivers, mountain tops, the church and tecpa in the center and the smaller chapels around).⁶⁰

Mundy, I think, convincingly argues for the basic unity of the map of Teozacoalco, in that a similar process of “symbolic reduction” informs the creation of both elite genealogy and common land in this early colonial map.⁶¹ But it can be argued that by the latter part of the colonial period, in the face of the waning power of Mesoamerican cacicazgos, the claiming of the territory, by naming boundary markers, became the predominant and decisive factor in the negotiation of power for indigenous communities. The strategy employed by the naturales of Yanhuitlan against Don Martín de Villagómez has to be understood within the framework of the *Títulos Primordiales* (Primordial titles) of the late colonial period.⁶² Although no map has survived, one was supposedly created for the establishment of the village boundaries.⁶³

While the general understanding of the proliferation of the primordial titles in Central Mexico during the late colonial period is tied to litigation over land between growing Spanish estates and indigenous communities, Yanhuitlan’s case presents a

⁶⁰ Ibid., 373-374.

⁶¹ Ibid., 375.

⁶² Enrique Florescano, “El canon memorioso forjado por los Títulos primordiales,” *Colonial Latin American Review* 11, no. 2 (2002): 184.

⁶³ Paillés, *Documentos, Ramo Tierras*, 30.

direct confrontation of two opposing Mixtec parties.⁶⁴ Both cacique and cabildo were pushing their agendas and maneuvering within the Spanish imperial system. A simple dichotomy would juxtapose a growing and stronger Hispanizing tendency against a resisting and regressing indigenous presence. What we see in Yanhuitlan instead are shifting views on political and economic power among different sectors of the indigenous population.⁶⁵

The analysis of this case implies understanding multiple and sometimes contrasting ways of identifying things Spanish, Hispanic or ladino, as well as Mixtec or indigenous in the Mesoamerican colonial context. Let us consider, for example, the fact that the naturales of Yanhuitlan gave a negative connotation to the evident Hispanization of behavior, dress codes, and lifestyle in general, of the cacique. They described Don Martín as “sumamente ladino,” extremely Hispanized, implying his lack of reliability when it came to pushing for local indigenous rights and needs.⁶⁶ In the late seventeenth century, the strategy that was so successful in putting Don Gabriel at the head of the cacicazgo of Yanhuitlan—his powerful alliance with the encomendero and the Dominican friars, the appropriation of Catholic public pageants for the purpose of political legitimization and subordination—had come full circle, threatening the mere existence of the cacicazgo itself.⁶⁷ The naturales, however, did not intend in any way to

⁶⁴ Lisa Sousa and Kevin Terraciano discuss a similar case in “The “Original Conquest” of Oaxaca: Nahua and Mixtec Accounts of the Spanish Conquest,” *Ethnohistory* 50, no. 2 (2003): 349-400.

⁶⁵ For an understanding of colonial history that generally sees a progressive Hispanization of indigenous culture, see James Lockhart, “Three Experiences of Culture Contact: Nahua, Maya, and Quechua,” in *Of Things of the Indies: Essays Old and New in Early Latin American History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 204-228. A critique of this view is offered by Carmagnani, 52-57. For an overview of colonial periodization, see William Taylor, “Mesoamerican Chronology: Colonial Period,” in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Mesoamerican Cultures*, ed. David Carrasco (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 2: 257-264.

⁶⁶ AGN Tierras, 400. Cited in Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca*, 195.

discredit everything Spanish. Quite the contrary, the only reason why they could enjoy representation in the colonial system, and in front of a Spanish judge, was through an institution, the *cabildo*, which had initially been introduced by the Spaniards in indigenous communities. Although the *cacicazgo* was a Mixtec prehispanic institution, for the *naturales* it was not more reliable or functional within the colonial system than the *República de Indios*.

The *cabildo* and *República de Indios* are arguably only two of the many political, social, economic, as well as religious and artistic institutions that, by the late colonial period had been fully incorporated into Mixtec society, although the exact moment when this did occur can hardly be established. This incorporation was not definitely based on ignorance of historical facts. In 1758, Miguel Joseph Martínez stated that some *naturales* only recognized Don Gabriel de Guzmán as legitimate *cacique* because of the “ignorance and simplicity innate in the Indians, people naturally without the necessary ability to understand due to lack of education and culture.”⁶⁸ While this derogatory remark by a Spaniard reflects a long-lasting stereotype, based here on the eighteenth-century ideology of the Enlightenment, the *naturales* were very skillfully manipulating both ancient and modern concepts of rulership and political authority. The colonial legal system equally recognized as acceptable forms of legitimization the Mesoamerican ritual of boundary markers’ recognition, the European concept of quasi-possession, and innate natural rights to liberty and freedom.⁶⁹ No fixed juxtaposition existed between indigenous and Spanish systems of rule, but rather a pragmatic

⁶⁷ Don Gabriel de Guzmán described himself as a “ladino” (well versed in speaking, writing and understanding the Spanish language) in his own testament. AGN Tierras, 985: 14r.

⁶⁸ AGN Tierras, 400: 189v. “...ignorancia y simpleza tan connatural a los Indios (Gente por lo regular pobre de las luces necesarias por falta de educación y de cultura)...”

⁶⁹ AGN Tierras, 400. Transcription in Paillés, *Documentos, Ramo Tierras*, 24.

approach was implemented meant to foster and protected a sense of community identity.

Chapter 5

The Church and Convento

After the initial building campaign, which roughly spanned between 1550 and 1580, the church and convento of Yanhuitlan continued to be the focus of ritual activities through the colonial period. Maintenance and decoration of the complex included both structural works and the commission of several altarpieces. In the sixteenth century a few pivotal figures, namely the cacique and encomendero, catalyzed the financial and ideological efforts behind the creation of the complex. The extant documentary record, however, reveals that in the following centuries a more diverse patronage and social participation developed. The most important source of information are testaments of Mixtecs and Spaniards from Yanhuitlan. The analysis of these documents offers a glimpse into both private and institutional devotions, ranging from the cult of the saints to funerary customs and almsgiving, allowing the reconstruction of a fuller picture of local, popular and Mixtec forms of Catholicism.

Decoration and Maintenance

Works in the Church, 1623

In the Archivo Histórico Provincial del Juzgado de Teposcoula, in the city of Oaxaca, a folder contains several documents regarding works and activities carried out in the church of Yanhuitlan in 1623.¹

¹ AHJT Civil, 9, 10.

On May 12, Jacinto Quintero, a painter in residence at Yanhuitlan, is mentioned in regard to a debt contracted for the purchase of a doublet.² Although what he may have been working on is not mentioned, around the same time, two master gilders and polychromers (the ones who apply designs), Alonso de Luna from Yanhuitlan and Bartolomé González from Huajuapán in the Mixteca Baja, signed a contract with friar Eugenio Gutiérrez of the convento of Santo Domingo for the completion of the retablo of San Pedro Mártir (no. 10 in Figure 136, and Figure 137).³ As stated in the contract, the work had already been completed but was deemed unsatisfactory by the patron. The masters agreed to retouch the final work and were given a time of two months to put the finishing touches. They would disassemble the retablo, mount scaffolding and provide the necessary gold, silver and color. Figure 137 shows a photograph taken before the theft of the two lower paintings. In 1950, the American scholar Ross Parmenter visited the church and described that on the lower left side was a painting showing “a priestly court passing judgment on a poor man whose dunce cap and sandwich boards slashed with a great X proclaimed him a heretic.”⁴ On the right side was the martyrdom of Saint Peter, the most common theme in the saint’s iconography, which occurred at the hands of Cathar killers in 1252. On the upper left is a panel (Figure 138) depicting the Dominican saint in an elevated position, addressing a crowd below. As words come out from his mouth, he points upward with his right hand. This may be the depiction of a miracle by Saint Peter, known as the “miracle of the cloud.” Peter was challenged during a sermon to call for God’s intervention in providing a cloud

² Ibid.: 2v-3r.

³ Ibid.: 11r-11v. See Appendix C, no. 2.

⁴ Ross Parmenter, *Week in Yanhuitlán* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1964), 335.

to relieve the heat afflicting the crowd that had gathered to listen to him preach.⁵ Facing this canvas on the right in a mirrored composition, a man is shown standing on the upper right while speaking down to a boy who is holding a book toward him (Figure 139). His long doublet and wide white collar suggest a wealthy, lay, and perhaps even noble status. The retablo also displays laymen as supporting sculptural figures at its base (Figure 140), similarly wearing richly decorated doublets, white shirts, and hats. The iconographic choice of including non-clerical figures in prominent and active roles within such a strictly religious context is a unique choice, as far as I was able to determine. The retablo is crowned by a picture of Saint Peter kneeling in front of Saint Dominic, the founder of his order. Two sculptures of the saint are still found in the central niches of the altar. In 1646, María Méndez, of the barrio of Tico, requested to be buried close to the altar of the “very glorious Saint Peter Martyr.”⁶

In the same year, the friars of the convento contracted Agustín García, from the city of Oaxaca, a brick master (“maestro de hacer ladrillos”) to redo the roof of the church. The master had to provide the bricks and finish the work within six months from the signing of the contract. In return, the friars would provide food, accommodations, and the daily labor of six Indians.⁷

Finally, in 1623 the cacique of Yanhuitlan, Don Francisco de Guzmán, gave to the friars 400 pesos left by Gonzalo Ortiz, a Mixtec, to found a chaplaincy in the convento. The friars invested the money in properties they owned in the city of Puebla.⁸ In return, the friars of the convento would say in perpetuity a mass for Gonzalo, his

⁵ This miracle is cited in various hagiographic sources. See Christine Caldwell, “Peter Martyr: The Inquisitor as Saint,” *Comitatus*, no. 31 (2000): 158.

⁶ AHJT Civil, 41, 4: 3.

⁷ AHJT Civil, 9, 10: 9v-10r.

⁸ AHJT Civil, 9, 10: 3r-4v. See Appendix C, no. 3.

wife, and other deceased members of his family, on Christmas and the feasts of saints Peter and Agnes Martyrs.

Sagrario

In the 1670s, Francisco de Burgoa described some works that according to him had just been concluded inside the church at the time of his writing.⁹ Between the altar and the apse of the church (no. 13 in Map 2) was a tabernacle with painted and golden decorations, which was accessible through the main altarpiece, two of the panels functioning as doors. The consecrated host was kept inside a precious silver and enameled shrine. It was closed off by a chamois (a type of leather) decorated with amber, gold embroidery and pearls. The monstrance, made out of a single piece of crystal, was created by a Milanese master. Today wall paintings (Figures 141 and 142) are still visible in the space between the main altar and the apse. According to Burgoa, the prior responsible for the works in the *sagrario* also ordered the construction of a chapel under the choir on the north wall.¹⁰ It was to be used as place to administer the sacraments to those who were too old or sick to reach the main altar. Today this space is reserved as a baptismal room (no. 5 in Map 2 and Figure 143). Finally, the carved low-relief of the Descent from the Cross in the sacristy was painted and gilded around the same time (no. 6 in Map 2 and Figure 81).¹¹

⁹ Burgoa, *Geográfica descripción*, 293-294.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 294.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 295.

Retablo de la Virgen del Rosario

The second largest altarpiece still extant in the church of Yanhuitlan is the retablo de la Virgen del Rosario, next to the main altar on the south wall (no. 8 in Figure 136 and Figure 144). By 1950, four original paintings in the lower portion had already been stolen.¹² In 1692, the naturales of Yanhuitlan officially complained about the excessive tribute paid to finance the works in the retablo.¹³ The alcalde Domingo Ramírez had initially charged every family a peso to pay the master Pedro de Montesinos, only to make a second request later for the same amount of money.¹⁴ According to the naturales, it was the alcalde's idea to sponsor such a work, which, in the opinion of the representatives of the barrios, would have required a Royal permission given the very large expenditure involved.

Apse and Main Retablo

In 1711 or a few years later, a major earthquake struck the Mixteca, leaving the church and convento of Yanhuitlan unsafe.¹⁵ The Prior and other friars requested labor enforcement from surrounding subject towns to reconstruct the living quarters and church in the cabecera. The friars estimated that all fourteen subject towns had to participate by taking weekly turns and offering the labor of twelve to fourteen men. They would be given food and take the sacraments in the church of Yanhuitlan while

¹² Parmenter, 334.

¹³ AGN Indios, 32, 14: 13v-15v.

¹⁴ AHJT Criminal, 21, 11: 77r.

¹⁵ AGN Indios, 44, 136: 167. The date given is August 16, 1711, but it seems to be a mistake. Perhaps, it should be 1717 or 1721.

working there. Today, the work of these men is visible in the upper part of the exterior of the apse (Figure 32). Two of the darker bricks bear inscriptions: “De 1718 Año” (in the year 1718) is readable around the carved cross, while “1720 año” (Year 1720) is written upside down above it (Figure 145).¹⁶ In 1722, the naturales of Santiago Tillo and San Pedro Topiltepec, subject towns of Yanhuitlan, complained that during their work in the village they had been forced to participate in the reconstruction not only of the church, but also of the *casas reales*, the royal buildings.¹⁷ In addition, the workers had to provide wood, masonry, bricks and mortar. They contended that the residences did not need any repair. According to the Spanish alcalde, they had to contribute to the works, because the *casas reales* functioned as public prison.

Finally, in 1728, Andrés Hernández, husband of Magdalena Montesinos, officially requested that his wife be given money and goods she inherited from her deceased father, Miguel Montesinos.¹⁸ Among other things, she was entitled to “one hundred pesos that he [Miguel Montesinos] gained as gilder when he did the retablo of the church of this village.”¹⁹ Although no specific information is given on which retablo Miguel Montesinos had worked on, it seems reasonable to think that it was the main altar, as it is referred to as *the* retablo. Furthermore, the work would have been carried out in the early 1720s, coinciding with the repairs in the apse, as a consequence of the earthquake, as mentioned before. Stylistically, the retablo of the main altarpiece can be assigned to the beginning of the eighteenth century (Figure 146).

¹⁶ Around the same years work was taking place in Coixtlahuaca, AGN Indios, 40, 174: 254-256 (1717); and Tamazulapan, AGN Indios, 51, 45: 46-47 (1726).

¹⁷ AHJT Civil, 15, 36.

¹⁸ AHJT Civil, 26, 6.

¹⁹ “cien pesos en reales que ganó en su oficio de dorador quando hizo el retablo de la yga. deste pueblo.” Ibid.

Miguel Montesinos may be the last of a family of gilders. The artist of the retablo of the Virgin of the Rosary just discussed (ca. 1690) was called Pedro Montesinos. Over a hundred years before, in 1580, Andrés de Concha had an apprentice working at the retablo in Yanhuitlan, called Diego Montesinos.²⁰

Retablos del Señor Jesús and Virgen de la Soledad

Nos. 5 and 6 in Figure 136 are two altars dedicated to images of Jesus Carrying the Cross (Figure 147) and the Virgin of Solitude (Figure 148), respectively. The image of Señor Jesús is carried in procession on Wednesday morning of Easter Week together with the images of San Juan and the Virgen de los Dolores (Figure 182). La Virgen de la Soledad plays a role during the ceremony of the Descent from the Cross, also during Holy Week, in the so-called *Pésame a la Virgen*, condolences to the Virgin (Figure 149).²¹ Accordingly, the theme of the paintings is related to the Passion of Christ, with scenes such as the Mount of Olives, Flagellation, Crowning with Thorns, Carrying of the Cross, Nailing to the Cross, Crucifixion, and, finally, the Resurrection.

The sculptures of the retablo del Señor Jesús are probably the work of Adrián de Roxas, master sculptor from the city of Oaxaca. In 1699, the Mixtec Nicolás Coronel declared in his testament that he had contracted the artist for a retablo of Jesús Nazareno.²² The testator clarified that he had paid Adrián de Roxas more than initially agreed, but that the works had yet to be concluded.

²⁰ Teresa Mora and María Sara Molinari Soriano, *Tradición e identidad: Semana Santa en Yanhuitlán, Oaxaca* (Mexico City: Plaza y Valdés and CONACULTA-INAH, 2002), 94; Romero Frizzi, *Más ha de tener este retablo*, 6-8.

²¹ See chapter 6, "Semana Santa."

²² AHJT Civil, 17, 6.

On the remaining lower portion of a lost painting from the Retablo de la Virgen de la Soledad, is still readable the signature “Villalobos F.,” for Villalobos Fecit (Figure 150). Parmenter suggested that the artist may be Juan de Villalobos, a Puebla artist, born in 1687 and active until 1724.²³ Signatures found in other known paintings by Juan de Villalobos are quite similar and seem to confirm this hypothesis.²⁴ Villalobos’ most important works are in the church of the Society of Jesus in Puebla and in the Sanctuary of the Virgin (Camarín de la Virgen) of Ocotlan in Tlaxcala (Figure 151).²⁵

Retablos de Santa Catalina, Santa Rosa and Trinidad

In 1950, altars dedicated to Saint Catherine, Saint Rose, and the Trinity were still located in the western part of the south wall (nos. 11, 12, and 13 in Figure 136).²⁶ They have all been stolen since then, although photographs survive. These small retablos share a similar format, consisting of only one single large panel. The altars of Santa Catalina and Santa Rosa (Figures 152 and 153), within very similar frames, displayed the same subject matter, the betrothal of a female saint with the baby Jesus, for the former, and the adult Christ for the latter. In both cases, the scene takes place in Heaven amidst numerous saints and with the blessing of God and the Holy Spirit

²³ Parmenter, 331.

²⁴ Abelardo Carrillo y Gariel, *Autógrafos de pintores coloniales* (Mexico City: UNAM, 1972), 119-120.

²⁵ Francisco Pérez Salazar, *Historia de la pintura en Puebla*, 3rd ed. (Mexico City: Imprenta Universitaria, 1963), 80.

²⁶ Parmenter, 335-336.

above. In 1673, the Spanish captain Luis de Haro requested to be buried in the church under the altar of Santa Rosa.²⁷

Parmenter described the painting of the Trinity that used to be under the choir. A caption along the bottom of the canvas read: "This image of the Most Holy Trinity was painted for a widow of this town very devoted to this sacrosanct mystery called María de la Trinidad. Year of 1784."²⁸ The image is probably the one seen in Figure 154, still in situ in 1959.

Retablo de Santa Gertrudis

No. 9 in Figure 136 is an altar dedicated to Santa Gertrudis. Today, no picture is left in the retablo, but a 1961 photograph (Figure 155) shows three paintings and four empty niches. According to Parmenter, in the lower left corner (Figure 156) was the depiction of "a young novice having her hair cut by a nun," while on top was "a nun raising her lips to Christ leaning forward from the cross to kiss her."²⁹ On the right side was the depiction of a baptism. According to Gabriel Blanco, the parents in the baptism scene were the donors of the altar, which was dedicated on the day of their son's christening.³⁰ Parmenter described the father as having a "worried look." Figure 157 is likely the picture that is now lost. Given that in the other scenes the central character is a nun and that the altar is dedicated to a female saint, I think it can be suggested that the infant was actually a girl who eventually entered conventual life.

²⁷ AHJT Civil, 14, 13: 1.

²⁸ Parmenter, 336-337.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 334.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

Two painted signs at the bottom of the altar explain that the work was finished on June 16, 1789 and that was paid for by Don Juan de Mata and Doña Juana de Zaragoza.

Yanhuitlan's Testaments

Catholic Orthodoxy and Private Practice in the Late Colonial Period

Around thirty testaments and inventory of goods survive from colonial Yanhuitlan. They span from the late sixteenth (Don Gabriel de Guzmán drafted his own in 1591) to the late eighteenth century. The majority of these testaments are written by Mixtecs, most of the time in the indigenous language. This testifies to the importance the Dominicans gave to this aspect of native literacy and the potential of testaments for understanding native forms of devotion. Few but significant testaments by Spaniards who resided in the village, furthermore, allow a comparison of personal devotions, funerary customs and arrangements, and alms donation along ethnic and class distinctions.

Mixtec testaments from Yanhuitlan most often begin with an identification of the testator, giving his or her name and barrio affiliation in the upper left corner.³¹ The text then begins with a rather formulaic preamble containing a divine invocation and declaration of faith. In this part, Mixtec testaments tend to follow Spanish prototypes rather closely.³² The declaration of faith usually involved naming dogmas or mysteries, such as the Trinity, Articles of Faith, the Incarnation of God in Jesus, the Resurrection,

³¹ For a transcription and translation of a testament from Yanhuitlan, see Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca*, 386-388.

³² For a discussion of the format of Spanish testaments, see Carlos Eire, *From Madrid to Purgatory: The Art and Craft of Dying in Sixteenth-century Spain* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 34-39.

and so on. After this, indigenous testaments tend to depart from the Spanish format. They take a more succinct form, in which funeral specifications and alms, debts and credits are mentioned in a sort of checklist. The item-sign (V) marks the paragraphs on the left, while the corresponding amount of money is placed flush right. Michael Swanton has noticed these same features in Chocholtec testaments from the Coixtlahuaca area in the Mixteca.³³ Funerary dispositions typically included the payment for the tolling of bells, the black wrapping cloth, the carrying of the cross, candles, singers, and finally the burial proper. Masses were paid for by the testators to be said for their salvation. Often, however, other people offered money for masses. Testaments usually ended with a series of distributive clauses, clarifying debts, and credits of the testator.

Despite the seeming impersonality of these testaments, which rarely include verbal clues to personal religious inclinations, interesting considerations on patterns of piety can be made by comparing images and *cofradías* mentioned by the testators, as shown in the table below.

| Testator (barrio); AHJT Civil (Year) | Image/Cult | Sum |
|---|---|--|
| Juan López Ohmañe (Tindee); 8, 33 (1616) | Yya dzehe S. Ma.* S. Dgo. S. Cruz Sant Sebastian S. Ma. Rosario | 4 tomines** Total 20 tomines |
| Miguel Ximenes (Ticoho); 9, 11 (1621) | Nra. Señora Santa María Santa María del Rosario Santa Cruz Santo Domingo San Reymundo San Sebastián San Pedro Mártir Animas del purgatorio | 2 tomines 2 tomines 2 tomines 2 tomines 1 tomín 2 tomines 1 tomín 4 tomines |

³³ Personal communication, 2008. In Yanhuitlan, a noticeable exception is the earliest extant testament by a Mixtec, that of Don Gabriel de Guzmán, which was significantly drafted in Spanish in 1591. AGN Tierras 400; AGN Indios, 985: 37v-ff. Transcription in Paillés, *Documentos, Ramo Tierras*, 37-42. English translation in Restall, Sousa, and Terraciano, eds., *Mesoamerican Voices: Native-language Writings from Colonial Mexico, Oaxaca, Yucatan, and Guatemala*, 106-113.

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| | Al ospital San Jasinto San Nicolás Santo Entierro | 1 tomín 1 tomín 4 tomines 2 tomines |
| Catalina García (n/a); 8, 38 (1621) | Cofradía de la Santísima Cruz Cofradía de Nra. Señora del Rosario San Sebastián | 2 pesos 2 pesos 1 tomín |
| Juan Lopes (Ayusi); 15, 25.01 (1642) | Yya dzehe S. Ma. del Rosario* | 2 reales |
| María Mendes (Ticoho); 41, 4 (1646) | Cofradía del Rosario Cofradía del Señor (Santísimo Sacramento) Cofradía de la Santa Cruz Glorioso San Sebastián Glorioso Santo Domingo Soriano Virgen del Rosario San Sebastián | 2 reales 2 reales 2 reales 2 reales 3 tomines Plot of land in nuñu Plot of land in ssatatimama |
| María Gutiérrez (Yuchacoyo); 16, 18 (1658) | Nuestra Sra. del Rosario Sta. Cruz San Pedro Mártir | 2 reales 2 reales 2 reales |
| Juan de la Cruz (n/a); 15, 5 (1673) | Cofradía de Nra. Señora Cofradía de la Santa Cruz | 2 tomines for candles 2 tomines for candles |
| Gaspar da Silva (n/a); 41, 4 (1680) | Nothing | |
| Juan de la Mesquita (Ticoho); 16, 18 (1686) | Nothing | |
| Domingo Hernández (Tindee); 17, 5 (1689) | Nothing | |
| Francisco de Avendaños (Yuchayoho); 33, 23 (1726) | Virgen de Guadalupe Virgen del Rosario | Not specified For candles |
| Blas de la Cruz (n/a); 28, 1 (1736) | Nothing | |
| Diego Ortiz (n/a); 6, 38 (n.d.) | Cofradía de Nra señora Cofradía ss. Sacramento (?) San Sebastián | 1 peso 4 pesos 4 pesos |
| Gregorio Garcia (n/a); 8, 38 (n.d) | Nothing | |

*Yya dzehe is a Mixtec expression that can be translated as "Our Lady."

** A *tomín* is equivalent to a *real*, an eighth of a peso.

Table 2. Mixtec testaments from Yanhuitlan.

It can be noticed easily that there is a great disparity in the number of images and related cults mentioned in these testaments. While five males did not leave any offering, Miguel Jiménez in 1621 mentioned twelve images found in the church. In the same year, Catalina García, widow of a wealthy textile merchant, only mentioned three. Testators, furthermore, do not make any clear distinction between an image and a more

institutionalized cult, such as a *cofradía*. This probably derives from the tight control exerted by the Church on the official foundation of indigenous confraternities.³⁴

In 1591, Gabriel de Guzmán did not mention any image in particular, but rather mandated that every confraternity to which he belonged contribute some candles.³⁵ In 1616, Juan López Ohmañe in his very short testament in Mixtec gave money to the Virgin Mary, Santo Domingo, Santa Cruz, San Sebastian and Virgin of the Rosary. These cults are alive or at least identifiable in the village today, where five *comisiones*, modern equivalents of colonial *cofradías*, still operate. For Semana Santa, two commissions are established each year, Santísimo Sacramento and Santa Cruz; for the Velación de la Mayordomía (October 8), there is a commission of the Virgen del Rosario; the commission of Santo Domingo is established for the celebration of the patron saint (August 5-8); and finally there is a commission of the Purísima Concepción for the Posadas de la Navidad (December 16-24).³⁶ San Sebastián is a barrio chapel to the west of the main settlement of the village. Figure 158 (no. 1 in Figure 136) shows the unfinished retablo de San Agustín, which was taken from the ruined chapel of San Sebastián.³⁷

Other important cults are those of San Pedro Mártir, mentioned since 1621, and the Virgen de Guadalupe found in the testament of Francisco de Avendaños of Yuchayoho in 1726.³⁸ Both images have their retablos in the church (nos. 10 and 4,

³⁴ Serge Gruzinski, "Indian Confraternities, Brotherhoods, and *Mayordomías* in Central New Spain: A List of Questions for the Historian and the Anthropologist," in *The Indian Community of Colonial Mexico*, ed. Arij Ouweneel and Simon Miller (Amsterdam: Centrum voor Studie en Documentatie van Latijns Amerika, 1990), 205-221.

³⁵ Paillés, *Documentos, Ramo Tierras*, 38.

³⁶ Information gathered in Yanhuitlan, May, 2008.

³⁷ Parmenter, 326.

³⁸ AHJT Civil, 33, 23.

respectively, in Figure 136). In 1738, Pasquala García left money to the *cofradía* de Nuestra Señora de los Dolores.³⁹ As late as 1802, eight *cofradías* existed in Yanhuitlan: Santísimo Rosario, Animas, Nuestra Señora de los Dolores, Santo Domingo, Santísimo Sacramento, San Sebastián, Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, Santísima Trinidad. San Pedro Mártir had been aggregated with the Santísimo Sacramento.⁴⁰

The amount of money offered, found in the right column in the table above, is somewhat more consistent. Only one person, María Mendes of Ticoho, left in 1646 two plots of land to the Virgen del Rosario and San Sebastián. Everybody else usually donated a few *tomines* (less than a peso). Only Catalina García and Diego Ortiz in the sixteenth century donated pesos. The devout Miguel Ximenes mentioned the largest numbers of images, leaving nonetheless only as little as one *tomín* per image. What this tells us is that the act of expressing devotion was more important than the actual money that could be donated. This becomes even clearer if we compare Mixtec testaments with Spanish ones from the village. Pedro Díaz de Aguilar, a native of Sanlúcar de Barrameda in Andalusia, requested in an undated testament to be buried in the church of Santo Domingo in Yanhuitlan, under the stairway in front of the main altar (the paleography suggests that it dates to the sixteenth century).⁴¹ He gave four reales for each mass sung in his memory, requesting 500 masses to be recited in total, for a total of 250 pesos. In contrast, only requests for one or two masses are found in Mixtec testaments. The 500 masses had to be recited in Dominican conventos

³⁹ AHJT Civil, 43, 27: 22r.

⁴⁰ Irene Huesca, Manuel Esparza, and Luis Castañeda Guzmán, eds., *Cuestionario del Sr. Don Antonio Bergoza y Jordán, obispo de Antequera a los señores curas de la diócesis* (Oaxaca: Archivo General del Estado de Oaxaca, 1984), 167.

⁴¹ AHJT Civil, 07, 27.

throughout the Mixteca and the city of Oaxaca. Pedro Díaz de Aguilar bequeathed money to the *cofradías* of the Rosary of Our Virgin, the Sacrament and San Sebastian, for a total of 1400 pesos, an amount incomparable to anything found in a Mixtec testament. Some of the money had specifically to be used to buy wax and candles for the *monumento* (decorated altar) of Maundy Thursday. Finally, he founded a chaplaincy with a donation of 7000 pesos. A mass had to be said in perpetuity on the first Sunday of each month by the deacon and sub-deacon. In contrast, the cacique Francisco de Guzmán founded a chaplaincy in 1623 with a sum of 400 pesos.⁴²

In 1730, the Spanish sergeant Antonio de Balchiburin left 1000 pesos to fray Antonio Burguete, priest of the doctrina of Yanhuitlan.⁴³ The sum had to be equally divided into two amounts of 500 pesos and applied to the *cofradías* of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe (Virgin of Guadalupe) and Benditas Almas del Purgatorio (Blessed Souls of Purgatory). In return, the sergeant required a mass to be recited for his soul every month in perpetuity. The 500 pesos each were an endowment mortgage on property that the testator owned in the village. Five per cent of the monthly revenues would be for the mayordomos of the confraternities in order to ensure that the clause contained in the testament be fulfilled. Twenty-five pesos more a year would be given to the confraternities. Both confraternities still existed in 1802 and have their altars in the church (Figure 159).⁴⁴

Alms amounting to thousands of pesos left by Spaniards can hardly be compared with anything left by Yanhuitecos. Even wealthy Mixtecs, such as Catalina García in the sixteenth century or Domingo de la Cruz in the eighteenth century, left

⁴² AHJT Civil, 9, 10: 3r-4v. See Appendix C, no. 3.

⁴³ AHJT Civil, 25, 02: 160v.

⁴⁴ Huesca, Esparza, and Castañeda Guzmán, eds., 167.

only a few pesos. It is possible that the friars had some influence in these decisions, obliging Spanish residents to contribute far greater sums of money than local Mixtecs. Finally, whenever *cofradías* are mentioned by either Spaniards or Mixtecs, it is not specified whether these were open to all ethnic groups, or were ethnically segregated.⁴⁵

Inventories

In 1621, Catalina García listed her goods.⁴⁶ She owned two crucifixes, one image of Saint Mary, and eight more paper images. Images of Saint Gregory and Saint Catherine were also part of her inventory, understandably, as the patron saints of Catalina and her deceased husband, Gregorio. She not only owned images, though. She also had a mask, two feathered gourds, several feathers, and a fan used for dancing.⁴⁷ These items relate to precolumbian dancing traditions that played a major part during rituals. The cacique Don Gabriel de Guzmán owned similar items, such golden *cascabels*.⁴⁸ Burgoa relates that during religious celebrations in Yanhuitlan dances were so grand that rows of dancers stretched through the whole nave of the church. So extravagant were they in the use of their green feathers that some people had up to fifty of them hanging from the heads down to the feet.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ In general, there seems to be no fixed rule. See Asunción Lavrín, "Rural Confraternities in the Local Economies of New Spain: The Bishopric of Oaxaca in the Context of Colonial Mexico," in *The Indian Community of Colonial Mexico*, ed. Arij Ouweneel and Simon Miller (Amsterdam: Centrum voor Studie en Documentatie van Latijns Amerika, 1990), 239-240.

⁴⁶ AHJT Civil, 8, 38.

⁴⁷ Ibid. "una mascara, dos tecomatillos con plumas para bailar... un abentador de pluma con que bailan."

⁴⁸ "dos joyas q son de caxcabeles de oro para bailar..." Paillés, *Documentos, Ramo Tierras*, 39.

⁴⁹ Burgoa, *Geográfica descripción*, 287.

In 1699, Nicolás Coronel, patron of the altar of Jesús Nazareno mentioned above, declared that he owned property whose rent he bequeathed to the same altar, not only to finish the work, but also to properly found a *cofradía* with its corresponding masses.⁵⁰ He also owned twenty-four canvases of different images and saints in all sizes and a statue of Our Lady of the Rosary of the size of a *vara* and a half, roughly a little over a meter.⁵¹ Other Yanhuitecos owned large quantities of paintings. In 1738, Pasquala García of the barrio of Yuyucha declared that she had in her possession eleven paintings; Miguel Gutiérrez, in 1779, ten; and, quite astonishingly, Domingo de la Cruz in 1782 owned 47 images, among them six sculptures.⁵² The pieces vary in size ranging from $\frac{1}{4}$ of a *vara* (ca. 20 cm) to two *varas* (a meter and a half), with an average of one and a half *vara* (little over a meter).

Only a few of these paintings were appraised at more than 15 pesos. Around forty pieces in Domingo de la Cruz's collection did not exceed the value of three pesos. Subject matter is exclusively religious, almost always images of saints, while only rarely subjects such as Nativity or Passion scenes appear. Some paintings are described as "historiated," implying a composition more complex than a mere single-figure. The most common image is the Virgin, present in her many manifestations as *Virgen del Rosario*, *Guadalupe*, *del Carmen*, *de la Merced*, *Belém*, *de Juquila* (a shrine in the south of Oaxaca City still very popular today), *Purísima*, *de los Dolores*, *de la Soledad*, and *Divina Pastora*. All three collectors also possessed pictures of Archangels (Raphael or Miguel) and the Holy Trinity. San José and the Holy Family were also represented.

⁵⁰ AHJT Civil, 17, 06: 7r.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*: 8r. He does not specify the subject matter of each of them.

⁵² See Appendix C, no. 7.

Although it is difficult to account for the sheer quantity of paintings owned by Domingo de la Cruz, defined in the testament as an “indio principal,” a member of the lesser nobility, his inventory further included many items used in dances and processions related to religious celebrations.⁵³ This perhaps indicates that he was a high-ranking person in the cabildo, with the duty of organizing and keeping objects used by the community during rituals.⁵⁴

The inventory of goods in possession of the Spanish captain Luis de Haro was compiled in 1673, upon his death. In a box were found a small silver crown with a golden pendant decorated with pearls and green and white stones, a pelican with a stone in its chest and a garnet inside it, another pelican of low quality gold, a golden crab, a silver cross with some relics, a small golden cross with two palms at the sides, an image of Our lady of the Immaculate Conception with four emerald stones at the sides, a small golden *agnus dei* with an image of Christ on one side and small relics on the other, another silver *agnus dei* plated in gold, a silver reliquary with Saint Mary of the People and Saint John, a bronze image of Jesus with the cross, a Saint Jerome in its glass box, and more images of the *agnus dei*. Finally, he also owned a domestic altar made of silver-plated wood containing an image of Saint Mary of the People, with a shroud on one side and Saint Nicholas and the Virgin on the other. On top was an image of Saint Louis of France.⁵⁵ This inventory lists items quite different from anything found in the possession of Mixtec Yanhuitecos. Golden objects decorated with precious stones replace painted images as items of private devotion. Consumption of luxury

⁵³ See Appendix C, no. 7.

⁵⁴ See also chapter 6, “Processional Sculptures and Religious Festivals: An Historical Reconstruction.”

⁵⁵ AHJT Civil, 14, 13.

goods, and class and social distinction, may have been a reason for the captain to own these items as much as their devotional purpose. Among Yanhuitecos, luxury was conversely more a matter of public display, as seen in the case of the Angels' vestments and church dance attire.

Discussion and Conclusion

The pictographic manuscript from Yanhuitlan, painted by an indigenous artist around 1550, prominently depicts the cult of the Rosary as the main vehicle for the introduction of the Catholic faith in the village (Figures 15 and 16).⁵⁶ The execution of a large altar at the end of the seventeenth century dedicated to the Virgin of the Rosary demonstrates the enduring success of this cult well beyond the limits and scope of the initial task of conversion.

Information on the construction, decoration, and ritual activities carried out in the church of Santo Domingo in the city of Mexico seems to indicate the existence of a "national" Mixtec devotion to the Rosary among Oaxacan émigrés, tied to the network of Dominican conventos.⁵⁷ In 1612, Mixtecs and Zapotecs had their own chapel of the Rosary just outside the church of Santo Domingo in the main atrio.⁵⁸ The Nahua historian Domingo Muñoz Chimalpahin related a year later, in 1613:

⁵⁶ See chapter 1.

⁵⁷ Mixtec "barrios" existed in Central Mexican cities since the Classic period (AD 600-900) in the great city of Teotihuacan. While we do not have specific information regarding these emigrated communities, commerce was probably was one the main factors of geographical mobility.

⁵⁸ AGN Indios, 11, 122. Heinrich Berlin, *Kirche und Kloster von Santo Domingo in der Stadt Mexico* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1974), 36; Alejandra González Leyva, "La capilla del Rosario de la ciudad de México a partir de las fuentes históricas: Posibilidades de corroboración arqueológica," in *Primer Congreso Nacional de Arqueología Histórica*, ed. Enrique Fernández Dávila and Susana Gómez Serafín (Mexico City: INAH; Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1998), 46.

And also today on the said Good Friday a procession came out from the church of Santo Domingo [p.214] in the afternoon as is always done every year, in which they buried the image of the death of our lord God that belongs to the Spaniards coming out from there. And also for the first time they put us commoners who were Mixtecs, gathered from various places, in the lead, at the front of the procession. They have been granted and took what used to be the chapel of the blacks, from whom the *cofradía* they had there was taken away, and then the said Mixtecs were granted and given this said chapel, so that they established there their *cofradía*, dedicated to our precious mother of the Rosary, so that in the procession today the commoners took along in the procession our said precious mother of the Rosary, though rather small, that belongs to them.⁵⁹

A similar account is found in the 1645 chronicle by the Dominican friar Alonso Franco.⁶⁰ In 1667, an order was issued that all the Mixtecs and Zapotecs residing in the city of Mexico be indoctrinated in the chapel of the church of Santo Domingo. This was in fact an attempt to segregate indigenous groups that were under the jurisdiction of the different mendicant orders.⁶¹ Furthermore, it was established that while the space had become a gathering area for a sort of *cofradía*, sacraments such as matrimony and extreme unction could not be carried out in the chapel. In 1649, “Juan Antonio, Indian from the Mixteca, currently bailiff of the chapel and congregation of Our Lady of the Rosary in the church of Santo Domingo in this city,” was ordered to stop collecting tribute from his fellow Mixtecs congregated in the chapel of the Rosary.⁶² In 1681, the Spanish brotherhood of the Rosary and friars of the convento of Santo Domingo decided to give to the Indians part of the *sala* (large room) reserved for the confraternity of the Descendimiento (Descent from the Cross) and Santo Entierro (Holy Sepulchre), so that

⁵⁹ James Lockhart, Susan Schroeder, and Doris Namala, eds., *Annals of His Time: Don Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 247.

⁶⁰ Franco y Ortega, 546.

⁶¹ AGN Indios, 24, 229.

⁶² AGN Indios, 15, 29: 113. “Juan Antonio, indio natural de la mixteca alguacil mayor que al presente es de la capilla y congregación de Nra. Señora del Rosario que esta en el convento de Santo Domingo desta ciudad...”

they could have their own chapel.⁶³ The cult was still alive in 1751, when a new altar was placed in the chapel.⁶⁴

As a Mixtec national cult, images of the Virgin of the Rosary are found in other conventos of the Mixteca. In Teposcolula, for example, the founding of the colonial settlement is commemorated by a late colonial painting (Figure 160) depicting a white-dressed Virgin encircled by Rosary scenes. She is presiding over three Dominicans, possibly portrayed in the moment of establishing the cult. The two rows on the lower right and left corners are filled by noble and ecclesiastical dignitaries, following a composition not uncommon in these types of pictures (Figures 107 and 108).⁶⁵ The souls in purgatory in the lower center seem to be the recipient of the rosary prayers of the friars. In the lower right corner, a painted inscription says: "On November 25, 1746 this canvas was completed thanks to the devotion of the alcalde Don Ygnacio de Salazar being mayordomo of the Blessed Souls, and priest, the very Reverend friar Joseph Gonzales. Martines de Roxas fecit."⁶⁶ According to this inscription, the patron was the confraternity of the Blessed Souls of Purgatory, headed by a friar.

The picture is cognate to a larger painting (Figure 161), part of the decoration of the Rosary chapel of the church of Santo Domingo in Puebla, realized by José Rodríguez Carnero in 1690.⁶⁷ This mural is one of six works executed by the Mexican artist for the chapel, which includes also an *Assumption* and episodes from the infancy of Christ.

⁶³ AGN Indios, 26, 38. Berlin, *Kirche und Kloster*, 36; González Leyva, 46.

⁶⁴ AGN Bienes Nacionales, 1210, 1. Berlin, *Kirche und Kloster*, 42; González Leyva, 47.

⁶⁵ See chapter 3.

⁶⁶ "En 25 del mes de Noviembre de 1746 años se acabo este lienzo a devosión del Alcalde Dn. Ygnasio Salazar siendo mayordomo delas Stas. Animas y cura el M. Ro. Pe. Don fray Joseph gonzales. Martines de Roxas f."

⁶⁷ Francisco de la Maza, *La decoración simbólica de la Capilla del Rosario de Puebla* (Puebla: Gobierno del Estado de Puebla, 1990), 14.

The prototype is ultimately a 1620 painting from the Dominican church of St. Andreas in Cologne (Figure 162), home of the cult of the Rosary, where it was established by the Dominicans in 1575.

In the sixteenth century, a network of artists was created along established connections between Dominican monasteries, Spanish, and Mixtec patrons.⁶⁸ A similar situation may still have remained in place in the eighteenth century, despite the fact that caciques and encomenderos practically ceased to play any role by the middle of the seventeenth century. Mixtec confraternities actively supported the cult of the Rosary in Mexico City's church of Santo Domingo. The Puebla artist Juan de Villalobos worked for the Dominicans in Tlaxcala and the Mixteca, while the Teposcolula painting shows very close ties to the Rosary cycle in the church of Santo Domingo in Puebla.

The cult of Saint Peter Martyr followed rather different patterns. Peter of Verona is one of the most important Dominican saints, whose cult is second only to the founding friar Saint Dominic. Because Peter was the patron saint of the Inquisition, brotherhoods and confraternities founded in his name had most often a close association with members of the Holy Office. In New Spain, the congregation of San Pedro was founded in the church of Santo Domingo in Mexico City in 1577 to serve primarily the spiritual needs of the clergy.⁶⁹ As such, most members were high-ranking Church officials, although lay people were also encouraged to join. According to Greenleaf and Lavrín, the *cofradía de San Pedro Mártir* was from its inception rather elitist, a factor that mixed during the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth century with an anti-Creole sentiment against the growing Spanish population born in the

⁶⁸ See chapter 2.

⁶⁹ Asunción Lavrín, "La congregación de San Pedro: Una cofradía urbana del México colonial, 1604-1730," *Historia Mexicana* 29, no. 4 (1980): 568-571.

colonies.⁷⁰ The confraternity tried to maintain as much as possible a policy of admission that favored Peninsulares over locally-born.⁷¹

The laity was not the only one concerned with issues of ethnic and cultural hegemony in the midst of changing social and racial relations. After the initial phase of expansion, when hundreds of missions were founded in Central and southern Mexico, the Dominicans entered a moment of consolidation in the Indian provinces at the turn of the seventeenth century.⁷² New material and spiritual concerns arose. With the waning of the evangelical mission, what was the purpose and justification of the friars' presence in New Spain? The double nature of the Order, equally divided between preaching and contemplative life, generated a vocational crisis among Dominicans.⁷³ As Creole financial and demographic input became increasingly important to the maintenance of missionary establishments, negative attitudes toward non-native Peninsulares intensified among the Dominicans.⁷⁴

The patronage of the retablo of San Pedro Mártir, which included "militant" subject matters, such as scenes of inquisitorial activities and martyrdom, can be understood perhaps within this shifting and conflicting situation that created a generalized climate of insecurity within the Order. The stress on the preaching

⁷⁰ Richard E. Greenleaf, "The Inquisition Brotherhood: Cofradía de San Pedro Mártir of Colonial Mexico," *The Americas* 40, no. 2 (1983): 175-176; Lavrín, "La congregación de San Pedro," 593.

⁷¹ Greenleaf, "The Inquisition Brotherhood," 204.

⁷² María Teresa Pita Moreda, "El nacimiento de la provincia dominicana de San Hipólito de Oaxaca," in *Actas del II Congreso Internacional sobre los Dominicos y el Nuevo Mundo*, ed. José Barrado (Salamanca: Editorial San Esteban, 1990), 433-452.

⁷³ This was a great problem also at the beginning of the missionary enterprise. Pita Moreda, *Los predicadores novohispanos*, 75-78.

⁷⁴ Tomás S. González, "La creación de la provincia de Oaxaca: Crecimiento y criollización," in *Actas del II Congreso Internacional sobre los Dominicos y el Nuevo Mundo*, ed. José Barrado (Salamanca: Editorial San Esteban, 1990), 456-460.

activities and ultimate sacrifice of the friar, almost one hundred years after the evangelization had taken place, may be understood as a response to the perceived threat posed by Spanish creolization within the Order and Indian Hispanization in surrounding communities, which challenged the established ethnic and cultural boundaries upon which the Dominican presence was founded, asserted, and justified.

In the retablo at Yanhuitlan, lay people are depicted as active participants in Dominican catechumenal efforts. In the upper part, the layman teaching is actually juxtaposed to Saint Peter, in a suggestive specular placement: the layman can learn from the friar, eventually passing on knowledge and wisdom to the following generation. Similar to the urban confraternity of Saint Peter Martyr in Mexico City, which involved noble lay men and women, “pure-blood” Spaniards, known as *familiares*, are called upon by the Dominicans to serve their duty to the missionary cause.⁷⁵ The iconography of Saint Peter Martyr is generally centered on the friar’s martyrdom. Other scenes include his education, especially his relationship with Saint Dominic, and miracles he performed.⁷⁶

Yanhuitlan’s iconography is a unique case that includes non-Dominicans as main characters, despite the fact that the laity was actively involved in the creation and spread of the cult of Saint Peter Martyr from its onset in the Middle Ages.⁷⁷ The miraculous powers ascribed to Saint Peter Martyr rested primarily on his work against heresy. Laymen, and not only inquisitors, were encouraged to see Peter’s sanctity and

⁷⁵ Greenleaf, “The Inquisition Brotherhood,” 171-173.

⁷⁶ The most important cycles on Saint Peter Martyr are in the so-called Spanish Chapel, the Dominican chapterhouse in the Basilica of Santa Maria Novella, Florence (1355), in the saint’s funerary chapel in the church of Saint Eustorgio, Milan (frescoes executed by Vincenzo Foppa in 1466-68), and a dismantled and partially-lost retablo by Pedro Berruguete for the Dominican church of Santo Tomás, Avila (1455).

⁷⁷ Caldwell: 165-166.

healing powers deriving directly from his fight for orthodoxy. The audience of sermons and the participants in the devotion were thus personally engaged in the Church battle of good against evil.⁷⁸ The depiction of lay men in the retablo at Yanhuitlan may point to a direct involvement of secular members of the brotherhood in the sponsorship of the work, as much as in the activities of the friars, in a heated ideological context.

Finally, the exclusion of the indigenous population from the operations of the Inquisition, both as persecutors and persecuted, requires a different explanation for the propagation of the cult of Saint Peter Martyr among the Mixtecs of Yanhuitlan, one that is not directly related to the ideological concerns of Spanish friars and laymen just expressed. The appropriation of the Catholic cult of a saint, seen in the case of Peter Martyr since the early 1620s, when the image is first mentioned in testaments and chaplaincies, was related to pious activities of the congregation.⁷⁹ While no official celebration of the saint is known in Yanhuitlan, masses were recited for the dead during the saint's day.⁸⁰ Similarly to the so-called *scuole piccole*, lay confraternities of Renaissance Venice, the main purpose of the congregation was not to be instructed on the faith, but to seek intercession for the Souls of Purgatory and relief from natural disasters such as plagues.⁸¹ Although Dominicans were instrumental in establishing the cult, most often with clear "political" goals, such as the canonization of one of their members or the promotion of their Inquisitorial activities, the growth and spread of the

⁷⁸ Ibid.: 172.

⁷⁹ See the testament of Miguel Ximenes, dated 1621 (AHJT Civil, 9, 11), and the chaplaincy, dated 1623 (AHJT Civil, 9, 10; Appendix C, no. 3).

⁸⁰ Appendix C, no. 3.

⁸¹ Peter Humfrey, "Competitive Devotions: The Venetian Scuole Piccole as Donors of Altarpieces in the Years around 1500," *The Art Bulletin* 70, no. 3 (1988): 403, 410.

cult among the laity primarily rested in the thaumaturgic powers of the saint.⁸²

Charitable activities seem to have centered in the urban confraternity of Mexico City around the care of the sick, culminating in the foundation of a hospital in the late seventeenth century.⁸³

As Dominicans had economic and ideological concerns behind the sponsoring of the retablo of Santo Pedro Mártir, the local population was also able to give to the cult great significance that addressed both their spiritual concerns and the welfare of the congregation.⁸⁴

⁸² *Ibid.*: 410.

⁸³ Lavrín, "La congregación de San Pedro," 579-585.

⁸⁴ For the material and spiritual economy of indigenous *cofradías* in Oaxaca, see Marcello Carmagnani, "Adecuación y recreación: Cofradías y hermandades de la región de Oaxaca," *L'Uomo. Nuova serie* 2, no. 2 (1989): 229-249.

Chapter 6

Art, Ritual and Community Identity

Chapters 4 and 5 have traced historical changes in the village of Yanhuitlan from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries and described concurrent construction works, maintenance, and decorations in the church and convento, as the product of cultural, political and economic negotiations. This last chapter now attempts to conclude the study of the church and convento of Yanhuitlan by filling two gaps. First, it will reconstruct different forms of indigenous social organization created around the cult of religious images during the course of the colonial period, discussing them as a systemic response to changing political and economic pressures. Second, it will consider modern celebrations of Holy Week and Divino Señor de Ayuxi in order to connect Yanhuitlan's art-historical colonial past with its present. The perception and importance assigned to religious celebrations is rapidly changing. Massive emigration, due to a lack of income resources in the region, threatens the persistence of "traditional" values and ceremonies. By connecting historical changes with the present situation, this chapter attempts to understand the continuing process of identity formation among the Mixtecs of Yanhuitlan.

Physical Settlements and Social Organization

Archaeological Record

With the definitive establishment of the encomienda and Dominican mission in the late 1540s, Yanhuitlan witnessed a fleeting moment of economic and political

prosperity under the indigenous leadership of Gabriel de Guzmán. Spanish customs, clothing and accessories, along with art forms, were proudly adopted and displayed by the cacique as evidence of assimilation and integration, not subordination, in the new imperial system.¹ The creation of a monumental nucleus expressed in the most powerful way a new type of religious and political ideology that granted the cacicazgo an unprecedented centralized power. This interpretation derives not only from the documentary record relative to early colonial Yanhuitlan, but also from archaeological findings.

During the Natividad Phase (AD 1000-1535), Yanhuitlan's most common ceramics are fine cream bowls with red to brown decorative patterns.² Although in the postconquest period Spaniards introduced glaze wares and porcelains, prehispanic techniques were by no means discontinued. During the so-called Convento Phase (1535-present) interesting patterns of ceramic use and distribution continued to bespeak the economic changes of the colonial encounter. Natividad ceramics are profusely found on numerous scattered hilltop neighborhoods around the center of Yanhuitlan. Figure 163 shows settlements indicated by the letter N. Particularly densely populated are those areas found west of the center across the highway (N 8 and 13 through 18) and on the northeast (N 2 and 5 to 7). In these same places very little or no colonial ceramics are to be found. On the other hand, survey and stratigraphic excavations around the convento and ruins of the colonial royal palace (N 10 and 37 in Figure 163) within the center of Yanhuitlan revealed numerous colonial remains, such as chicken bones, metal utensils and olive jars, alongside more typical postclassic

¹ See Gabriel de Guzmán's properties in Spores, *The Mixtec Kings*, 241-244.

² Spores, *Stratigraphic Excavations*, 26-33.

ceramics.³ What this tells us is that new “Hispanic” activities, indicative of consumption economics, were prevalent in the center, while surrounding areas continued prehispanic customs. This corroborates the idea of the strategic quality of the urban design of Yanhuitlan in the early colonial period, already presented in the section “Church Building and Ideology in the Mixteca Alta” in chapter 2. On the other hand, the high concentration of prehispanic artifacts in and around both the convento and anífe demonstrate that the ruling elite adopted a Spanish lifestyle without abandoning established customs. In a similar way, Dominicans relied on preexisting economic and production patterns when superimposing the new settlement.

Finally, given the substantial continuity in prehispanic patterns during the colonial period, it is impossible to tell archaeologically when the sites surrounding Yanhuitlan were abandoned. Only a few *rancherías* exist today at the outskirts of the village’s borders.

“Mixtec” Barrios, Angels, and Crucifixes

Spores surveyed the area in 1967 and 1974. The information gathered helped reconstruct the original Mixtec names of many of these settlements. Figure 163 shows the following names: Loma de Ayuxi (N 5 through 7); Dequedena (N 18); Tinde (N 15 and 16); Xatinde (N 8); Tijua (N 17); and Dequetico (N 13). Dequetico is today simply known as Tico. It is common knowledge among Yanhuitecos that these Mixtec terms correspond to ancient barrios that no longer exist in Yanhuitlan. Their meaning is not well known, either, as Mixtec is no longer spoken in the village.

³ Ibid., 61-96.

The existence of Mixtec barrios, that is those bearing Mixtec names, has been known since the late sixteenth century. As we have seen, in 1580, Don Gabriel de Guzmán, cacique and gobernador of Yanhuitlan, had to prove his rightful succession and possession of the cacicazgo before the Viceroy.⁴ In order to prove his ancestry, he not only presented several witnesses, but also listed in a *memoria* (personal statement) the fourteen barrios that he claimed “are and belong to the cacicazgo and kingdom of Yanhuitlan and Don Gabriel de Guzmán, as the cacique.”⁵ Only four years later, in a testimony in favor of Yanhuitlan against the subject town of Tecomatlan, the Spanish encomendero of Yanhuitlan, Gonzalo de las Casas, provided a similarly comprehensive account of the village barrios.⁶ The two lists are indicated in the table below.

⁴ AGN Civil, 516.

⁵ “Memoria de los barrios que son y pertenecen al cacicazgo y señorío de yanguitlán y al don gabriel de guzmán, como tal caçique...” Ibid.: 6. A Spanish transcription is found in Paillés, *Documentos, Ramo Civil*, 12.

⁶ AGI Escibanía, 162C: 307v.

| Memorial by Gabriel de Guzmán, 1580 (AGN Civil, 516) | Testimony by Gonzalo de las Casas, 1584 (AGI Escribanía, 162C) |
|---|---|
| Ytnunute | Yoyucha ² |
| Chiyonine ¹ | Ñondoco |
| Yuqhcava | Danacodzo(?) ² |
| Yuchandodzo | Yuchaxitu |
| Yucha ychi | Sayuqu ² |
| Tinduchi | Yuchachaco |
| Muuyahui | Yuyayy |
| Yodzo conuu ¹ | Ayuxi ² |
| Tiyusi ¹ | Tiuxi ¹ |
| Ñusaa ^{1 2} | Ñusa ^{1 2} |
| Dzaynu ¹ | Dayno ¹ |
| Atucu | Yuchayocoo |
| Tiqucui ¹ | Yuchacoyo ² |
| Tiquaa ¹ | Nunañu |
| | Yodoconuu ¹ |
| | Tindee ² |
| | Tindua |
| | Yuchacano |
| | Titee |
| | Tiquhui ¹ |
| | Ticuaa ¹ |
| | Tinducha |
| | Chioneni ¹ |

(1) barrios appearing in both lists

(2) barrios appearing in other documents from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

Table 3. Sixteenth-century barrios in Yanhuitlan.

Even a cursory reading of the lists raises some questions. Fourteen barrios are mentioned in 1580, while twenty-three appear in the 1584 list: a big difference for two documents that were produced only four years apart. Moreover, a cross-comparison reveals that possibly only seven barrios appear in both documents. How can we account for such striking differences? Language barriers may have played a big role. The documents were drafted by Spanish-speaking notaries, who had most likely little or no familiarity with the Mixtec language. We do not know which Mixtec term or spelling a Mixtec native speaker would have used. The nature of the two documents can also help making sense of such evident discrepancies. The 1580 document specifically deals with the cacique's inheritance issues, and as such perhaps includes patrimonial properties. Question 11 of the interrogatory presented just before the listing states:

If they know that besides the acknowledgement and service that were due to the said caciques, they had as patrimony of the cacicazgo many barrios with Indians only to work on his house, which were taken away from him when the Spaniards arrived, and considered like the other tributaries, which they are not because they were always recognized as Indians of the patrimony of the cacicazgo.⁷

On the other hand, the Spanish encomendero was speaking in 1584. He may have more likely reflected an external, “colonial,” or imperial perspective, one expressing the tributary relation of Yanhuitlan to the Crown, despite the known support of the encomendero for the local cacique.

This hypothesis seems to be partially confirmed by the only two other complete extant listings of Yanhuitlan’s barrios, shown in the table below.

| Expenses account for religious activities, 1677 (AHJT Criminal, 21, 3) | Account of tribute paid to the Crown, 1783 (AHJT Civil, 29, 05 bis 02) |
|---|---|
| Tico,o | Tico,o |
| Yu,uyucha | Yu,uyucha |
| Ayuci | Ayuci |
| Cahayuqu | Cahayuqu |
| Dana,a | Dana,a |
| Tindee | Tindee |
| Yuchacoyo | Yuchacoyo |
| Yuchayo,o | Yuchayo,o |
| Ñuça,a | |

Table 4. Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century barrios in Yanhuitlan.

According to a church expense account, Yanhuitlan consisted of nine barrios in 1677.⁸ Of these, six (Yoyucha, Ayusi, Cahayuqu, Dana, Tindee, Ñussa) are also found in the 1584 list, while only one, Ñussa, appears in the 1580 list provided by Don Gabriel.

As late as 1783, seven barrios comprised the town of Yanhuitlan and paid tribute to the

⁷ Paillés, *Documentos, Ramo Civil*, 12. “si saben que demas del reconozimiento y servicio que tenian los dichos caciques, tenian por patrimonio del señorío muchos barrios con yndios para solo el servicio de su casas, los quales quando los españoles vinieron a esta tierra se los quitaron a los dichos caciques y se sentaron en la compañía de los demas tributarios aunque siempre quedaron conozidos por yndios del patrimonio del dicho cacicazgo.”

⁸ AHJT Criminal, 21, 3: 63.

Spanish king.⁹ They were exactly the same as in 1677, minus Ñussa. This consistency is remarkable not only because the documents were produced almost a century apart, but also because they seemingly express two opposing views. The 1677 account describes expenses sustained by the barrios for financing religious celebrations, a strictly internal affair, while the 1783 document lists the amount of taxes paid to the Crown by residents of each barrio. In the sixteenth century, as we have just seen, the Spanish encomendero and the indigenous cacique gave quite different versions. It seems therefore that through the course of the colonial period there was a gradual assimilation of the indigenous system into the larger imperial structure, a readjustment that passed through dramatic demographic fluctuations, reflected in the substantial drop of the total number of barrios.

In 1698, testimonies from Yanhuitlan asserted that a barrio called *nuu shaa* (most likely Ñusaa) used to be located on a hill in the eastern part of the village. The ruins of houses of the barrio could still be found there, but at the moment the testimony was given, the barrio had disappeared, and its descendants had congregated in the village.¹⁰ This information places the disappearance of Ñussa as a barrio of Yanhuitlan between 1677 and 1698. Further in the document it becomes clear that a plot called in Mixtec *tende nuquu*, close to Ñusaa, was violently litigated between the people of Yanhuitlan and Chachoapan.¹¹ Could this be the reason for the abandonment of the barrio?

⁹ AHJT Civil, 29, 05 bis 02: 4-9.

¹⁰ AGN Tierras, 400. "en dha. loma permanesen las ruinas de casas de un barrio nonbrado nuu shaa que hubo en ella pertenesiente a este pueblo que oi se alla redusido de el y se conservan los descendientes de los naturales del dho barrio..." A transcription is found in Paillès, *Documentos, Ramo Tierras*, 27-28.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 30.

In the table above barrios are listed in the same order they appear in the original document. It is quickly noticeable that barrios appear in the same order in both lists (except for Ñuça,a, the last one, which does not appear in 1783). Although this may derive simply from a practical need for standardization in annotating tributaries within the village, the consistency during a span of over a century is remarkable.

Barrios also appear in Mixtec-language testaments, where the affiliation is usually stated in the first words written in the upper left corner of the document together with the name of signer.¹² In testaments from Yanhuitlan, the Mixtec term for barrio is *siña* or *ñuu siña*, a term that Alvarado translated in his dictionary as “lugar en que está algo,” a place where something is.¹³ The same word also appears in the definition for “corte,” such as in Papal Court or Royal Court (given as *siña ñuhu*, *siña toniñe* or *siña tayu*), and “parroquia,” parish, given in Mixtec as *huahi ñuhu ee siña*, literally “the sacred house of a place (or barrio),” and for “colación,” the parish territory. This definition is interesting as it identifies a specific locale with a sacred referent. Ñuu siña seems to suggest a more important political status for the barrio. The word ñuu, in fact, means town or village. Although no surviving sixteenth-century Mixtec-language document mentions Yanhuitlan barrios, as early as 1616 Tindee appears in a testament as the siña of Juan Lopes Ohmañe.¹⁴ Ticoo, Ayusi and Yuchacoyo are also mentioned in the first half of the seventeenth century.¹⁵

¹² For an example, see Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca*, 386.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 107.

¹⁴ AHJT Civil, 33, 8.

¹⁵ AHJT Civil, 9, 11; 41, 4; 15, 25.01. For another list of Yanhuitlan’s barrios, see Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca*, 108-110.

Siña is not the only term appearing in Mixtec documents and dictionaries that refers to barrio-type associations. The term *siqui* is used, as well, meaning “esquina,” corner, and *dzeque*, “cabeza,” head. These terms, although more frequently found in colonial documents from the Teposcolula area and the Mixteca Baja, are associated today with ancient barrio names in Yanhuitlan.¹⁶ In Spores’ map (Figure 163), for example, Dana and Tico are identifiable with Dequedana and Dequetico (*deque* is an alternative spelling of *dzeque*), meaning literally “head of Dana” and “head of Tico,” referring to the fact that these places are found on hilltops. In this respect, it is important to recall the prehispanic pictographic tradition of rendering a place name with a hill sign, even when the village was not located on a mountain top. What is meaningful, in fact, is more the symbolic referent in the landscape, and its wide visibility, than the topographical accuracy of the location. Furthermore, the terms “siqui” and “deque” appear in the names of several *mojoneras*, landmarks of village boundaries. These landmarks are periodically visited by local authorities, who have their names memorized. A 1920 map, showing the village borders with exact location of the *mojoneras* and their names, is found the Office of the President in the Yanhuitlan City Hall (Figure 131).

“Spanish” Barrios and Chapels

So-called “barrio chapels” were founded in Yanhuitlan as early as the beginning of the seventeenth century, hosting images and a wide array of activities pertaining to specific barrios, which bore the name of the titular saint of the chapel. None survive.

¹⁶ For a discussion of the use of this terminology in other parts of the Mixteca, see Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca*, 112-116.

However, two modern chapels are built on top of old colonial platforms still visible to the north and west of the village. These are respectively the chapels of El Señor de Ayuxi (N 19 on the map) and San Sebastian (N 14; Figure 164). The former is home to the most venerated image in the village, a crucifix, whose *Mayordomía* I will discuss later. San Sebastian is the last barrio of which old people in the village have a memory. Burgoa mentions that a chapel dedicated to the Santa Cruz was found at the northern outskirts of the village already in 1601.¹⁷ This chapel can be identified with the barrio chapel of Ayuxi. The chapel of San Sebastian was already under construction in 1606.¹⁸ According to Spores' survey, only Natividad ceramics are found at the sites of Ayuxi and San Sebastian, attesting an indigenous presence in the two areas since prehispanic times.¹⁹ When Ross Parmenter visited Yanhuitlan in 1950, the San Sebastian adobe chapel was in ruins.²⁰ Before the new one was built, the old altar was taken to the main church and is now found on the north wall under the choir. No images are in it, but the retablo is gilded and decorated with sculptures.

In 1950, another chapel was still standing in the center of Yanhuitlan, on the southeast corner of the main plaza (Figure 165). It was destroyed since then to make space for a public school. Parmenter recorded that the chapel was dedicated to La Pastora, a Spanish cult introduced in the New World at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The ruined adobe chapel had a thatched roof, no longer extant when Parmenter visited the place.²¹ The main altar was nevertheless protected by a stone

¹⁷ Burgoa, *Palestra historial*, 346.

¹⁸ AHJT Criminal, 07, 32: 4v.

¹⁹ Spores, *An Archaeological Settlement Survey*, 88, 91.

²⁰ Parmenter, 57.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 69-70.

wall and carved with Dominican symbols. The retablo was empty, but still bore traces of blue, white, and yellow paint.

In 1621, a wealthy Yanhuitlan merchant drafted his testament in Guatemala City. His first request was to be buried “in the church of Our Virgin of the Rosary, founded next to the convento of Santo Domingo.”²² There is no trace nowadays of such a chapel, but in 1883, Manuel Martínez Gracida reported that to the north of the church was a masonry chapel, measuring approximately 6 by 31 meters.²³

In 1950, Gabriel Blanco told Ross Parmenter that San Pedro, to the west of the church, was a barrio of Yanhuitlan.²⁴ This was most likely San Pedro Añañe, a town that has since then become independent from Yanhuitlan. To the south of San Pedro was San Sebastian, close to the cemetery, whose chapel was discussed above. A little more to the south was Santa Rosa, followed by San Bruno. None of these barrios still existed, wiped out by a catastrophic epidemic in the nineteenth century.²⁵ Gabriel Blanco also referred to the barrio of Ayuxi to the north of the church. Finally, according to Manuel Martínez Gracida, the village of Santa María Posoltepec, to the east of Yanhuitlan, used to be a barrio of Santo Domingo Yanhuitlan with the name of “barrio de la Asunción.”²⁶ According to the Oaxacan scholar, the barrio became an independent village in 1600.

²² “Mando mi cuerpo sea sepultado en la iglesia de nra Señora del rosario fundada junto al convento de santo domingo...” AHJT Civil, 08, 38: 14-15.

²³ Manuel Martínez Gracida, *Colección de "Cuadros sinópticos" de los pueblos, haciendas y ranchos del estado libre y soberano de Oaxaca* (Oaxaca: Imprenta del Estado, a cargo de I. Candiani, 1883), 658.

²⁴ Parmenter, 57.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Martínez Gracida, 67.

Discussion and Conclusion

The term “barrio” is frequently used in modern-day indigenous communities to designate subparts of a village. It may correspond to a specific section of town, in which case it would more directly translate to the English term “neighborhood,” but it may as well designate a group of inhabitants regardless of the specific whereabouts of their residence. Both cases occur, for example, in modern Santiago Apoala (Yutsa Tohon in Mixtec), a village two hours away from Yanhuitlan to the east, where barrio association derives directly from parental affiliation.²⁷ There are four barrios, represented by altar crosses on the street and meeting houses nearby. Barrios own cultivable lands and herds, used to produce income to finance religious festivals and civic ceremonies. In Mixtec, barrios are indicated with the Spanish loanword *barriu* and names in the native language. However, they also have Spanish equivalents that correspond to Catholic saints rather than merely translating the Mixtec term.²⁸

The apparent discrepancy between the Mixtec-name and the saint-name barrios in Yanhuitlan, as illustrated above, may be explained as a situation similar to the one in contemporary Apoala, where Spanish names of barrios are a form of “Catholic” appropriation that underscores the continuity in the perception of sacredness from prehispanic to colonial times. It should be noted, however, that throughout the colonial period Mixtec-language documents mentioning barrios normally kept the original term in the Spanish translation.

²⁷ Information derived from personal observation and conversations with Margarito López, a native of Apoala, 2002.

²⁸ Ubaldo López García, “Sa’vi: Discursos ceremoniales de Yutsa To’on (Apoala)” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Leiden University, 2007), 145.

A very important document, dated 1677, indirectly reveals some of the mechanisms behind the functioning of a *barrio* in colonial Yanhuitlan.²⁹ Local residents asked permission to finish a chapel in which an image of Jesús Nazareno was venerated. They stated that the building had remained unfinished from the time it was built many years before, with only two large cloths used as a ceiling. Not only did the image attract great devotion from all over the village and surroundings, but also the chapel itself had been used for years as “*casa de la comunidad*,” even though, it is said, the village already had such a building, deemed to be in perfect condition. What the Spanish *alcalde mayor* and *ministro de doctrina* (Spanish administrative officials in charge of judicial and religious affairs, respectively) probably referred to was the *aniñe*, the royal palace to the south of the convento. What is more likely, however, is that the chapel served as community meeting house for a local *barrio*, although it is not possible to identify which one. The crucifix venerated there was the representative image of the *barrio*, a so-called “*barrio Christ*.” Spanish authorities were evidently unaware or not able to understand the existence and functioning of *siña* subunits within the República de Indios of Yanhuitlan. It seems that *barrios*’ internal functioning was similar to that of the larger village to which they belonged.

What does a *barrio* refer to, then? Comparing the scattered information given, it seems as if the *barrio* had a territorial reference. It is a visible place that can be pointed at and in which a symbolic marker may also be found (such as a chapel or cross). At the same time, the *barrio* is an association of individuals that helps the entire community to cope with large expenses such as those due for taxation or religious financing. Different aspects of indigenous life seem to come together under the flexible category

²⁹ AGN Indios, 25, 214: 163-163v. See Appendix C, no. 5.

of barrio. Finally, the relationship with the territory in Yanhuitlan does not seem to be characterized by ownership (in terms of patrimonial wealth, as perhaps Gabriel de Guzmán intended in his 1584 probanza). Rather, the natural surroundings are partitioned and “claimed” by symbolic referents such as parishes and crosses. In sum, barrios comprise both material resources and symbolic significance, since they were the basis of the tribute and fiesta finance systems.

This structure finds its clearest and most compelling materialization in a unique Yanhuitlan tradition. During the processions of Good Friday and Easter Sunday, the Santo Entierro (Holy Sepulchre) is taken in procession to commemorate the death and resurrection of Christ, respectively. It is preceded by a parade of eight angels, richly dressed and adorned, which bear Mixtec names, generally understood by Yanhuitecos to correspond to old barrios. They are: Yuxayo, Tindee, Yuxacoyo, Saayuxo, Ayuxi, Danaa, Yuyuxa, and Ticoo.³⁰ They are, in fact, exactly the same as the barrios appearing in the 1783 tribute list. The statues can also be dated to the eighteenth century: their acquisition or commission reflected the political situation of the time. A ninth Angel (Figure 166) is in the church sacristy. He is still wearing a red robe, but is currently not taken in procession.

Moreover, there seems to be a pattern between the late-colonial and the modern order of appearance of the barrios in the document and parade, respectively.³¹ Ticoo and Yuyuxa, Ayuxi and Saayuxo, appear together. Albeit rather speculative, if we take into account that Yuxacoyo and Danaa had not paraded for years, and may have therefore been reinserted in a different spot, the modern order appears to be the reverse

³⁰ See Appendix B.

³¹ See Table 4 and Appendix B.

of the colonial one.³² Verbal patterns, often in the forms of couplets, are a basic feature of Mesoamerica literature. *Difrasismos*, for example, are metaphors used to create new meaning by juxtaposing two unrelated terms (*atltlachinolli*, water-fire, for war in Nahuatl, or *yuhuitayu*, mat-throne, for cacicazgo in Mixtec).³³ In prehispanic manuscripts, couplets are used to create long lists of attributes of individuals, as in the case of Lord 9 Wind Quetzalcoatl on page 49 of the Vienna screenfold. In oral cultures, literary texts are preserved through the use of specific enunciative features, among which repetition is the most common.³⁴ Might it be that barrios once formed part of a larger lineage or mythohistorical account of Yanhuitlan's ancestral past?

The angels are not the only significant case of sacred objects bearing barrio names. The most important celebration in Yanhuitlan is in fact dedicated to El Divino Señor de Ayuxi. It takes place during the month of May and is usually referred to as Mayordomía de Ayuxi (Figure 167). The image is a late sixteenth-early seventeenth-century crucifix, kept in its own chapel to the north of the village. Inside the church, in an altar just below the organ on the north wall, is another known "barrio crucifix" bearing the name of the barrio of Sahayuqu, an affiliation that is well known in the village, despite the fact that no official celebrations are held in his honor. Several other crucifixes, whose names have been forgotten, are now found in a room of the convento, not easily accessible by local Yanhuitecos, as this establishment belongs to the

³² Yuxacoyo could not be taken out due to its fragile conditions, while Danaa was left without any family affiliation, before being reinstated under the sponsorship of the *sindicatura* (town council).

³³ This idea forms the basis of Tedlock's philological edition of the Mayan book *Popol Vuh*. Dennis Tedlock, *Popol Vuh: The Mayan Book of the Dawn of Life* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

³⁴ Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Methuen, 1982), 31-75.

Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, the federal agency for the protection of the national heritage.

Processional Sculptures and Religious Festivals

An Historical Reconstruction

Documentation on the use of processional sculpture and its historical development in Yanhuitlan is rather fragmentary. Nevertheless, I was able to locate a few key documents that, together with already published colonial and modern sources, allow for the reconstruction of a general picture.

In his seventeenth-century chronicle, Burgoa relates that:

... a day during the month of May of the year 1601, during the solemn celebration of the invention of the Holy Cross in a chapel that with this name was founded in Yanhuitlan in the outskirts of a street that begins from the stairway of the church heading to the north of the village...³⁵

He was clearly referring to El Calvario where El Divino Señor de Ayuxi is currently kept. The image is nevertheless not referred to by its proper name, but rather as “*invención de una Santísima Cruz*.” This refers to a Christian tradition that dates back to early Christian times, when the mother of the Roman Emperor Constantine allegedly found a piece of the original cross in which Jesus was crucified. Because the recovery occurred on May 3, this day is traditionally reserved in the Catholic liturgy for the veneration of the Holy Cross. The tradition of the celebration of the Santa Cruz in the Calvario has continued in Yanhuitlan since then, as I will discuss below.

³⁵ “...un día del mes de mayo del año 1601, en que se celebraba solemnemente la invención de la Santísima Cruz en una ermita que con este nombre tiene el pueblo de Yanhuitlán edificada a las últimas goteras de una calle que empieza desde las gradas de la iglesia principal hacia para el norte...” Burgoa, *Palestra historial*, 346.

The earliest piece of information attesting to the use of crucifixes during religious processions in Yanhuitlan dates to 1606. During Holy Week, a man disappeared and was eventually found dead on the road from Tiltepec (a town to the southeast of Yanhuitlan and a *sujeto* in the sixteenth century) to Teposcolula. A loose page reproduces a question in the interrogatory held during the criminal trial.

Unfortunately, no answers have further survived:

If you know that the said Juan de Mendoza, sacristan of the village of Tocasahuala [a subject of Yanhuitlan] who came to this village of Yanhuitlan with the crucifix of his village and took part in the procession of the Blood [possibly involving flagellants], Maundy Thursday March 23 of the present year, and in the Good Friday procession of the Virgin of Solitude as well, until Easter Sunday did not leave the village. Tell what they know.³⁶

This information indicates that ceremonial obligations, involving participation and sponsorship of communal rituals of subject towns to the *cabecera*, were an important aspect of inter-polity relations at least since the early seventeenth century.

In 1695, the *principales* and *naturales* (nobles and commoners) of Yanhuitlan filed a case against Domingo Ramírez for allegedly wasting barrios' money and resources given to finance religious festivals.³⁷ The case is over a hundred pages long and includes testimonies from all nine barrios regarding their contributions. It was customary, for example, to give thirty three blankets to the poor during the *Semana Santa*. Every head of household had to give a *real* (an eighth of a peso) to buy candles for the Monumento (Holy Host). The tradition of offering blankets to the Santísimo

³⁶ "Si saben que el dho. Juan de Mendosa es sacristán del puo. de Tocasahuala el qual vino a este puo. de yanguitlan con el santo crusifijo de su puo. y estuvo en la procesión de la sangre jueves santo beynte y tres de marso pasado deste presente año y lo mismo al biernes santo en la prosección de la soledad y hasta el día de pascua siguiente no salió deste puo. Digan lo que saben." AHJT Criminal, 07, 39. The village of Tocasahuala (today San Andrés Andúia) is listed among the sixteen subject towns of Yanhuitlan in the *Suma de Visitas* of 1550. Cited in Jiménez Moreno and Mateos Figuera, 33.

³⁷ AHJT Criminal, 21, 11.

Sacramento was recorded by Motolinía in Tlaxcala during the Holy Week of 1536.³⁸ The Franciscan friar stated that the blankets, mostly woven by women, were decorated with crosses, the plagues of Christ, the names of Mary and Jesus, or floral patterns. People offered their works by kneeling in front of the Holy Host and praying. The blankets were eventually given to the poor.

For the celebration of their patron saint Santo Domingo, Yanhuitecos contributed also large quantities of blankets, half of which were given to the friars. Some testified, though, that the feast of Santo Domingo had not been celebrated in the past couple of years. Finally, every year, each *tequitlato* (tribute payer) had to give adobe (mud bricks) for the maintenance of the chapels of San Sebastian and Santa Cruz (possibly El Calvario of Ayuxi).

On June 11, 1711, Domingo Juan of the siña of Ayuxi was murdered in his house by Tomás de Santiago.³⁹ Don Domingo had been elected mayordomo of the barrio of Ayuxi a year before by the members of the barrio council. At the time of the murder, he had in his possession goods and items that belonged to the barrio and that were used to finance religious celebrations: twenty pounds and three ounces of wax (used for candles); a cloth for Jesus Christ, woven by the wife of Nicolás de Joyo (perhaps the garment used to cover Jesus' waist); forty goats, some small, others big; thirteen fanegas and a half of maize; eight pesos and one real in silver; two brass candleholders; and two arrobas of wool. The members of the barrio declared in a statement drafted in Mixtec that their image of the crucified Christ was highly venerated in the village. The Mayordomía provided for the annual celebrations of Corpus Christi, Santo Christo

³⁸ Toribio de Benavente Motolinía, *Historia de los indios de la Nueva España* (Mexico City: Editorial Porrúa, 1973), 57-58.

³⁹ AHJT Civil, 3, 9: 3-4.

(Santa Cruz, April 29-May 3) and Holy Week (specifically mentioning the *procesión de la sangre*, a procession carried out on Maundy Thursday night involving flagellants).

They further stated that it was customary that every barrio participate in this last procession carrying their representative cross.

The earliest information I found relating specifically to the processional use of angels in New Spain is provided by Neapolitan traveler Giovanni Gemelli Careri, who visited Mexico in 1697. He recorded that during the procession of the Santo Entierro, celebrated in the Convento of Santo Domingo in Mexico City, angels dressed in black and adorned with jewels carried all the insignia of the Passion.⁴⁰ Closer to Yanhuitlan, the guild of pulque-makers of Antequera (as the city of Oaxaca was known in the colonial period) petitioned in 1757 to be exempted from what had become a too heavy burden: participating in the Good Friday procession with their own angel. They explained:

It was decided more or less twenty years ago that all the guilds and workers' associations in the mechanical arts participate in the procession that takes place every year on the day of Good Friday in the sacred Convento of Santo Domingo and for which every guild is assigned an Angel with one of the symbols of the Passion that has to be carried at the guilders' expenses...⁴¹

⁴⁰ Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Careri, *Viaje a la Nueva España*, 2 vols. (Mexico City: Jorge Porrúa, 1983), 104-105. For citations through the course of the eighteenth century in Mexico City, see José Castro Santa Anna, "Diario de sucesos notables," in *Documentos para la historia de Méjico*, ed. Francisco García Figueroa (Mexico City: Impr. de J.R. Navarro, 1853), 121; *Gazeta de México*, 1 (Mexico City: D. Manuel Antónío Valdes, 1784-1785), 66; Arévalo Ladrón de Guevara and Juan Francisco de Sahagún, "Gazeta de México," in *Bibliografía mexicana del siglo XVIII*, ed. Nicolás León (Mexico City: Imp. de Díaz de León, 1903), 24-25. See also Manuel Carrera Stampa, *Los gremios mexicanos: La organización gremial en Nueva España, 1521-1861* (Mexico City: Edición y Distribución Ibero Americana de Publicaciones, 1954), 101-102; Mora and Molinari Soriano, 92.

⁴¹ "Avrá beinte años que se determinó que todos los gremios y oficiales de las artes mecánicas concurriesen a la procesión que se hase todos los años el día viernes santo en el sagrado Convento de Santo Domingo y para ello a cada officio o gremio se les señaló un Ángel cada uno con un insignia de la sagrada Pasión que havían de sacar a su costa..." AGEO Alcaldía Mayores, 29, 16.

This means that the tradition of parading angels was instituted in the city of Oaxaca by the Dominicans around 1737. In 1782, the principal Domingo de la Cruz possessed several items related to the use of angels in the village, according to his inventories of goods.⁴² He owned two blouses from Pontivi (in Brittany), two laces, three cloths, four pairs of wings, one headdress and three sticks said to be part of the ornamentation for the angels.

In 1818, the guild of *mecateros* (manufacturers of *mecate*, a maguey fiber cord) in the city of Oaxaca also asked to be exempted from the annual procession.⁴³ The Oaxacan historian Juan Baustista Carriedo, writing in 1849, states that in January each year, every guild elected a member to sponsor the procession of Good Friday, for which they were expected to provide food and beverages to be served during the procession. The wooden angel had to be dressed up and provided with its own insignia. Finally, every angel was announced by a trumpeter dressed in a dark sack. The angels would parade according to their antiquity.⁴⁴ As late as 1866, twenty-six angels were taken out on Good Friday.⁴⁵

These sources help clarify the role archangels may have played in Yanhuitlan. It seems that Yanhuitlan authorities readily adopted a Dominican tradition to fit a local socio-political need. As angels represented guilds in the cities of Oaxaca and Mexico,

⁴² AHJT Civil, 44, 32. See Appendix C, no. 7.

⁴³ AGEO Real Intendencia, vol. II, 54, 8.

⁴⁴ Juan Bautista Carriedo, *Estudios históricos y estadísticos del Estado Oaxaqueño* (Oaxaca: Imprenta del autor, 1849), 55.

⁴⁵ Francisco José Ruiz Cervantes, "La Semana Santa en la ciudad de Oaxaca de 1866," *Acervos*, no. 1 (1996): 18-20.

in Yanhuitlan they similarly expressed corporate interests, albeit not strictly commercial in nature.⁴⁶

A particularly curious and controversial piece in Yanhuitlan's convento has also been considered part of Holy Week ceremonies.⁴⁷ According to a sixteenth-century account by the Dominican friar Agustín Dávila Padilla, Good Friday processions were headed by a small cart with a cross on it, in front of which was lying Death, in the form of a skeleton. The image held a sign that said: "Ubi est mors victoria tua?" (Where is, death, your victory?)⁴⁸ Yanhuitlan's Death (Figure 168), however, is a triumphant image, crowned and enthroned, rather different from the prostrate and miserable skeleton described by Padilla (Figure 169).

Eighteenth-century royal funerary pyres (Figure 170) display this type of iconography, pointing perhaps to a similar use for Yanhuitlan's *carreta* (cart).⁴⁹ The 1792 Mexican novel *La portentosa vida de la muerte*, written by the Franciscan friar Joaquín de Bolaños (Figure 171) is also full of allegorical depictions of Death, in what appears to be a typical eighteenth-century representation. Holy Week images of death, such as the one described by Dávila Padilla, are rather different from these *memento*

⁴⁶ Peter Guardino studied and contrasted forms of corporate interest groups among Oaxaca City's plebeians and Zapotecs from the district of Villa Alta, concluding that they were much stronger among the latter. Citation of the use of angels in Oaxaca City's procession was also found in this book. Peter F. Guardino, *The Time of Liberty: Popular Political Culture in Oaxaca, 1750-1850* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 30. For guilds' participation in religious festivals, Carrera Stampa, 93-105.

⁴⁷ Mora and Molinari Soriano, 91-92; Judith Katia Perdigón Castañeda, "La devoción en el nacimiento y la muerte (el Niño pan de Xochimilco y la Santa Muerte de Yanhuitlán)," in *Imaginería indígena mexicana: Una catequesis en caña de maíz*, ed. Antonio F. García-Abásolo, Gabriela García Lascurain, and Joaquín Sánchez Ruiz (Cordoba: Publicaciones Obra Social y Cultural CajaSur, 2001), 263-271.

⁴⁸ Dávila Padilla, 565-566.

⁴⁹ Francisco de la Maza, *Las piras funerarias en la historia y en el arte de México, grabados, litografías y documentos del siglo XVI al XIX* (Mexico City: UNAM, Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, 1946), 65 and 85.

mori's that find their origins in the European *dance macabre* of the Middle Ages. In the former case, the skeleton lies on the ground, sometimes inside a coffin, while in the latter is "alive" and carries insignia of power.⁵⁰ Given this scattered information, I would tend to think that Yanhuitlan's Carreta de la Muerte dates to the eighteenth century and may have been used during funerary processions.

Finally, the name "Santa Muerte," most commonly used by modern authors to refer to Yanhuitlan's piece, is most likely inaccurate.⁵¹ The so-called Santa Muerte is in fact a modern cultic invention, derived from some forms of white magic that have become increasingly popular, starting initially from the neighborhood of Tepito in Mexico City.⁵² As such, it is strongly opposed by the parish priest and some people in village. It is commonly acknowledged, however, that the image used to be taken out in procession.

Coming closer to our time, angels and crucifixes paraded together during Holy Week (no mention is made of the image of death) at least until 1950.⁵³ Each angel preceded its Christ, according to barrio affiliation, in a nightly procession on Maundy Thursday that started at eight or nine o'clock at night, reached the Calvario (the Chapel of Ayuxi) and returned to the church around three or four in the morning.⁵⁴ In

⁵⁰ Gabriel Fernández Ledesma, "El triunfo de la muerte," *México en el arte*, no. 5 (1948). A hybrid case is constituted by the late nineteenth century "Penitente Death Carts" from New Mexico. They are carried by flagellants during Good Friday ceremonies along with Santo Entierro and Virgen de los Dolores. It is not possible to tell when this specific tradition began, though. Louisa R. Stark, "The Origin of the Penitente 'Death Cart'," *The Journal of American Folklore* 84, no. 333 (1971): 304.

⁵¹ Mora and Molinari Soriano, 91-92; Perdigón Castañeda, 263-271.

⁵² Claudio Lomnitz-Adler, *Death and the Idea of Mexico* (New York: Zone Books, 2005), 480-490. Gruzinski refers to the Holy Death in magic rituals from the eighteenth century, promptly persecuted by the Mexican Inquisition. Gruzinski, "Indian Confraternities," 219.

⁵³ Parmenter, 365-366; Toussaint, *Paseos coloniales*, 71.

⁵⁴ Parmenter, 365-366.

Parmenter's reconstruction, El Señor de Ayusi was found in the Calvario, while another one was kept in a private home. Some pieces were still kept in the main church: two were at the sides of the main altar (Figures 172 and 173); one was, and still nowadays is, in the retablo of the Virgin of Solitude; El Señor de Xaayucu was and still is found under the choir. Don Gabriel Blanco also told Parmenter that El Señor de Tico was the one with a dark skin and a two-pointed beard. He added that the supporting cross was decorated with a carving of Christ's head on Veronica's veil at the crossing of the beams.⁵⁵ Given this description, the Christ of Tico should be the one shown in Figure 174. The so-called "Cristo filipino" or "Cristo chino" was also in the main church (Figure 175). Of Asian manufacture, but made with the indigenous technique of *caña de maíz* (cornstalk paste), this piece is a durable testimony to the vitality of Hispanic colonial art and religion.⁵⁶ At the crossroads of international trade, Santo Domingo Yanhuitlan witnessed the creation and exchange not only of goods, but also religious beliefs and practices.

Colonial Syncretism

Mexico's month of May witnesses the beginning of the rainy season and in the rural areas of the country ceremonial activities petitioning good crops intensify. People gather on mountain tops to leave offerings to the rain god (today known as San Marcos, celebrated April 25), whose altar crosses are richly adorned with flowers and

⁵⁵ Ibid., 347.

⁵⁶ Andrés Estrada Jasso, *Imágenes en caña de maíz* (San Luis Potosí: Universidad Autónoma de San Luis Potosí, 1996), 132.

branches.⁵⁷ In indigenous America, the symbolism of the cross is deeply connected to the concept of the cosmic tree, frequently depicted and narrated in ancient carvings and manuscripts, and early colonial sources.⁵⁸ Not only does the Mesoamerican cosmic tree resemble the Christian cross in its quincunx shape, but the growth of the tree itself is strictly connected to the regenerative function of human sacrifice. Since colonial times, the Christian Holy Cross has taken up the meaning and function of the ancient cosmic tree, conflating cosmological knowledge about world order and ritual significance through the enactment of the periodical sacrifice of Jesus.⁵⁹

A striking example of Mixtec syncretism comes from a cross in the church atrio of San Pedro Topiltepec (Figure 176), a village subject to Yanhuitlan in colonial times. An atrial cross was made by utilizing ancient carved monuments, in a mutual translation of precolumbian and Christian symbolism characteristic of sixteenth-century Mexican religious dialogue. Figure 177 shows the iconography on the two sides of the cross' vertical beam (the horizontal beam does not bear any carving). Both compositions are characterized by an upward movement that has nonetheless to be understood as a descent from the sky, indicated by the celestial band at the bottom of the scenes. On one side is the depiction of a human sacrifice. A man is stretched and tied on a rack with his eyes closed, an indication that he is dead. His conical hat further indicates that he was sacrificed to Xipe Totec. A stream of precious blood gushes from

⁵⁷ Peter van der Loo, "Vamos a rezar a San Marcos," in *To Change Place: Aztec Ceremonial Landscapes*, ed. David Carrasco (Niwot: University Press of Colorado 1999), 212-218.

⁵⁸ For example, the Classic Maya reliefs in the Temple of the Cross and on Pakal's sarcophagus lid at Palenque; the Postclassic manuscript Ferjervary-Mayer, p. 1; and the Yucatec Mayan Books of Chilam Balam. For a general discussion, see David A. Freidel, Linda Schele, and Joy Parker, *Maya Cosmos: Three Thousand Years on the Shaman's Path* (New York: W. Morrow, 1993); Enrique Marroquín, *La cruz mesiánica: Una aproximación al sincretismo católico indígena* (Oaxaca: Universidad Autónoma Benito Juárez de Oaxaca, 1989), 42-49; Jill Leslie McKeever Furst, "The Tree Birth Tradition in the Mixteca, Mexico," *Journal of Latin American Lore* 3, no. 2 (1977): 183-226.

⁵⁹ Edgerton, 58-71.

the back of the sacrificed up to a warrior flying down from the top, who may be the executioner and beneficiary of the sacrifice. He is shown in full military attire, wearing an eagle costume, ready to throw his weapon to the victim below.⁶⁰ On the other side of the cross, two characters are seen transported by a serpent. They are the personification of the Sun and Moon gods, as the respective central disks indicate. Similarly to the previous scene, a warrior from the top seems to be the recipient of the “gift from the sky.”

A full interpretation of the prehispanic meaning of these scenes is now impossible, given the lack of the original context. The “transformation” of the Xipe victim into Christ is obvious. The falling moon and sun on the other side may refer to the eclipse that is said to have occurred at the time of Jesus’ death. Such an event is often iconographically represented with the two celestial bodies at the sides of the cross (Figure 178).⁶¹ The earthquake that was felt when Christ died on the cross was another cosmic sign of an impending end of the world (and call to repentance). Potentially apocalyptic periods, as for example the last five days of the year (called *nemonetemi* by the Nahuas), were characterized in ancient Mesoamerica by falling stars or meteors. In Christian depictions, such as in Raphael’s painting of the Crucifixion, angels come down from the sky to collect Christ’s blood. Perhaps, the warriors in the upper part could be read as the Mesoamerican equivalent of these angels.

Sacrifices to Xipe, such as the one on the Topiltepec cross, typically took place during the Aztec *veintena* of Tlacaxipehualiztli (The Flaying of Men). I have mentioned

⁶⁰ Alfonso Caso, “La cruz de Topiltepec, Tepozcolula, Oax.,” in *Estudios antropológicos publicados en homenaje al doctor Manuel Gamio* (Mexico City: Dirección General de Publicaciones, 1956), 177-178.

⁶¹ A Mexican colonial example is found in a mural painting in the upper cloister at San Agustín Acolman, Edo. de México.

the meaningful parallel between the human sacrifice of the Xipe festival and the Holy Week that reenacted Christ's Passion. A chronological correlation, however, can be further extended into the *veintenas* of Tozoztontli, Huey Tozoztli (the Small and Big Sacrifice, respectively), and Toxcatl (the Toasted Maize) that followed Tlacaxipehualiztli. These celebrations took place roughly during the months of April and May and were mostly concerned with the beginning of the rainy season. They were characterized by a much more joyful and celebratory spirit than the Xipe rituals.⁶² During Tozoztontli, flowers were arranged in large and elaborate compositions and offered to the gods as the first signs of agricultural renewal. People ate, drank, danced and partied all day and through the night.⁶³ The principal deities venerated during these *veintenas* were Tlaloc (the rain god), Chicomecoatl and Centeotl (god and goddess of maize and earth fertility). Ceremonies reached their peak during the ritual pilgrimage to a mountain dedicated to Tlaloc.⁶⁴ Durán also explains that Huey Tozoztli took place on April 29, and "everyone came [to the mountain top] to make his offerings ... exactly as people enter [the church] on Good Friday for the Adoration of the Cross."⁶⁵ According to the *Primeros Memoriales* (Figure 179), compiled by the Franciscan friar Bernardo de Sahagún in Tepepolco, northeast of Mexico City, around 1558, the first crops were celebrated with a dance performed by girls who moved through the suburbs of Tenochtitlan, stopping at different *calpulli* ("barrio") houses, and finally reaching the

⁶² Martha Toriz Proenza, *La fiesta prehispánica: Un espectáculo teatral* (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, 1993), 138-144.

⁶³ Durán, *Book of the Gods and Rites and the Ancient Calendar*, 419.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 156-158. The Borbonicus manuscript depicts the pilgrimage to Mount Tlaloc as occurring during both Tozoztontli and Huey Tozoztli.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

temple of Chicomecoatl to whom the retinue presented cornstalk offerings.⁶⁶ The young women had their arms and legs pasted with feathers and their faces covered with tar and flecked with iron pyrites. They carried ears of maize on their back.⁶⁷

The most important feasts to follow those of Holy Week in the Christian liturgy are the Holy Cross and Corpus Christi, which roughly occur during the months of April and May. Johanna Broda has assessed the importance that the celebration of the Santa Cruz (Holy Cross) took in indigenous Mexico in continuation of prehispanic agricultural rituals.⁶⁸ Among the Nahuas of Guerrero, for example, ritual pilgrimages to mountain tops (*yalo tepetl*, “the walk to the hill”) arrive at altar crosses adorned with flowers. The cross itself (Figure 180) is referred to as Tonantzin, *nuestra madre*, “Our Mother,” or Tonacaquahuitl, *el árbol de nuestro sustento*, “the Tree of Our Sustenance”.⁶⁹

While recent research has generally emphasized political overtones in the discussion of Corpus Christi in colonial Latin America, the reasons for the celebration of this event are deeply related to the renewal of life (salvation in Christian terms) derived from Christ’s sacrifice, inviting Christians to rejoice in the fruits of Jesus’ pains.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Bernardino de Sahagún, Thelma D. Sullivan, H. B. Nicholson, and Eloise Quiñones Keber, *Primeros Memoriales* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 58.

⁶⁷ Bernardino de Sahagún, *The Florentine Codex: General History of the Things of New Spain*, trans. Arthur J. O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble (Salt Lake City and Santa Fe: University of Utah Press and School of American Research, 1950-1982), bk. II: 7, 63.

⁶⁸ Johanna Broda, “La etnografía de la fiesta de la Santa Cruz: Una perspectiva histórica,” in *Cosmovisión, ritual e identidad de los pueblos indígenas de México*, ed. Johanna Broda and Félix Báez-Jorge (Mexico City: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes; Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2001), 165-238; Johanna Broda, “La fiesta de la Santa Cruz entre los nahuas de México: Préstamo intercultural y tradición mesoamericana,” in *El mundo festivo en España y América*, ed. Antonio Garrido Aranda (Córdoba: Universidad de Córdoba; Excmo. Ayuntamiento de Montilla, 2005), 219-248.

⁶⁹ Broda, “La fiesta de la Santa Cruz entre los nahuas de México,” 237. See also Marcos Matías Alonso, ed. *Rituales agrícolas y otras costumbres guerrerenses, siglos XVI-XX* (Mexico City: Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores de Antropología Social, 1994).

⁷⁰ Linda A. Curcio-Nagy, “Giants and Gypsies: Corpus Christi in Colonial Mexico City,” in *Rituals of Rule, Rituals of Resistance: Public Celebrations and Popular Culture in Mexico*, ed. William H.

Although Jesus himself instituted the Eucharist during the Last Supper in Passion Week, Corpus Christi is officially celebrated on the first Thursday after Trinity Sunday, because the solemnity and sadness of the Holy Week do not allow for joyful celebrations. Early modern Spanish accounts relate long processions of dancing and playing people. Organized in brotherhoods or guilds, different groups created puppets in the shape of eagles, dragons, dwarfs and giants and carried them down the city streets. *Entremeses* (one-act plays) of religious themes interrupted at regular intervals the parades.⁷¹ Modern Mayordomía in Yanhuitlan includes certain aspects of Corpus Christi, along with the celebration of the Holy Cross.

Modern Celebrations

Holy Week and Mayordomía del Divino Señor de Ayuxi are the most important celebrations carried out in Yanhuitlan today. They are in some ways complementary. While Holy Week is strictly religious and very solemn, the Mayordomía is rather festive and includes many civic ceremonies and entertainment events. Participation in the Holy Week is high, but confined to local residents, while the Mayordomía attracts many foreigners and is frequently sponsored by emigrants, given the financial burden that its organization entails. On the other hand, these celebrations share their focus on colonial pieces, whose historical value is generally recognized by Yanhuitecos and expressed in terms of great affection and respect.

Beezley, Cheryl English Martin, and William E. French (Wilmington, Del.: SR Books, 1994), 1-26; Carolyn Dean, *Inka Bodies and the Body of Christ: Corpus Christi in Colonial Cuzco, Peru* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999).

⁷¹ George McClelland Foster, *Culture and Conquest: America's Spanish Heritage* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1960), 193-198.

In my analysis, I am particularly interested in the interaction among objects, actions, and spaces. Within a ritual context, such as during processions and masses, sculpture and architecture take on a meaning and importance that they do not have in ordinary times. Formality of certain actions, their repetition to the point of self-referentiality, and their (at least perceived) invariability though the years create a sense of a divine numinous presence that materializes in movable images and sacred architecture.⁷² Rituals and processions are punctuated by liminal moments (climaxes) in which certain actions and objects play a fundamental role.⁷³ Social relations are renegotiated and reinforced during ceremonies that are in fact highly communal, not only because the whole community gathers together during public performances, but also because the required financial and organizational efforts involve large segments of Yanhuitecos at different moments.

Semana Santa

I attended Holy Week ceremonies in 2007 and 2008. The following description is based on my personal observation and two studies conducted in the late 1990s.⁷⁴

Palm Sunday is usually known as San Ramito in Spanish. The term refers to the palm branches (*ramos*), the distinctive symbol of the first day of the Passion, when people saluted Jesus entering Jerusalem by waving palm branches. In Yanhuitlan, the

⁷² Roy A. Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 23-68.

⁷³ Victor Witter Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure* (Chicago: Aldine, 1969), 166-203.

⁷⁴ Eugenia Macías Guzmán, *Sentido social en la preservación de bienes culturales: La restauración en una comunidad rural: El caso de Yanhuitlán, Oaxaca* (Mexico City: Plaza y Valdés; CONACULTA, 2005); Mora and Molinari Soriano.

celebration consists in a procession that carries an image of Christ on a donkey from El Calvario, where it is usually kept, to the church. This is the first time during the Holy Week in which the axis that runs north-south through the village, connecting the Chapel of Ayuxi to the convento complex, becomes the setting of an urban pilgrimage (Figure 181). The image is eventually placed in front of the main altar, which has been covered with a dark cloth since the beginning of Lent. During the following days, different images will alternate on this stage. On Tuesday, the area is prepared with sculptures of Christ carrying the Cross, the Virgin Mary and Saint John (Figure 182), which will all be taken in procession the following day. On Wednesday, people start gathering in the church early in the morning, not only for the traditional confession given by the parish priest, but also to keep company, with chants and prayers, with Jesus, Mary and John, who have already started their “journey of suffering.” A small procession, exiting and returning from the north door, is held on the church patio in the afternoon. The three images are carried on the shoulders by volunteers, most of the time young people who will also play the apostles in Thursday’s ceremonies. In the meanwhile, the Santo Entierro (Holy Sepulchre) is placed to the left of the main entrance, with flowers, candles and other offerings (Figure 183). Throughout Holy Week, someone is always sitting on the benches in front of it.

Wednesday night the mass is particularly spectacular. The so-called *oficio de las tinieblas* (Tenebrae) is carried out at dusk. Tenebrae refers to the darkness in which humanity fell after Judas’ betrayal and the judgment and crucifixion of Jesus that followed. Light and salvation will be restored only after the consummation of Christ’s sacrifice and his triumphant Resurrection. The descent into psychological and moral darkness is achieved affectively by a series of chants sung by the attendants. The church, lit only by a few candles, sinks into complete obscurity as candles are shut off

one by one after each intonation. At this point, a strong noise of *matracas* (cog rattles) is heard, echoing the sound of the quake that shook the earth the moment Jesus died on the cross. After a few moments, the church is lit again by electrical lights and people start gathering for the last procession of the day, during which the Santo Entierro, the Virgen de la Soledad and San Juan are taken in a short procession around the atrio. Depending also on weather conditions, the procession may be longer, around town, or not take place at all, as it happened in 2008, when it was raining hard.

The institution of the Eucharist on Maundy Thursday is remembered in Yanhuitlan with an enactment of the Last Supper and the Washing of the Feet. In the morning young boys rehearse the few lines that will accompany the priest's explanation of the act. Participants in the event partake of the meal with bread that has been blessed with holy water. After a procession in the atrio, in which the Santísimo Sacramento is carried around under a full moon (Figure 184), a vigil is carried out all night in front of the Santo Entierro in the main nave and in the sacristy where the Santísimo Sacramento is placed (the altar is referred to as Monumento). An image of Jesus between two Roman soldiers is also venerated all night (Figure 185). Children play underneath it, shaking chains and playing trumpets, filling the scene with a realistic noise.

Good Friday is the saddest and most solemn day of the Holy Week. During the two most important rituals, the Vía Crucis (Road to Calvary) and the Descendimiento (Descent from the Cross), the theatrical use of images and urban space is most dramatic. Activities start very early in the morning, when the mount of Golgotha is prepared right outside the church (Figure 186). Once mounted inside, it will serve as a backdrop for the crucified Christ. At noon begins the Vía Crucis, consisting of fourteen stations located throughout the village. Two separate processions depart from the

church. One accompanies the Virgen de la Soledad and San Juan (Figure 187), while the other follows Jesus, carried on a large platform where the images of two Roman soldiers and two (actual!) children are also standing. The two retinues meet at the fourth station in the main plaza during an emotionally charged moment called the *encuentro*, the meeting of Mary with her son. The priest stirs up people's emotion before the enactment by preaching on the unbearable sorrow the Virgin suffered when she saw her son in chains. Then, the images of the Virgin and Jesus are carefully tilted to reach one another. At this point, Jesus lifts up his head in a strikingly realistic move (Figure 188). Movable parts are important features of some processional sculptures that make the image literally come alive at specifically designated moments, generally perceived as the climax of the ritual. In this case, it is interesting to note that here this involves a delicate move to incline the sculptures, which may cause them to fall and break. The successful completion of the fourth station is consequently greeted with great relief.

The procession lasts several hours. In the afternoon the church is again filled by groups of people preparing for the evening procession. Golgotha is set up on the main altar of the church, with the image of the Santo Entierro carefully tied on the cross (Figure 189). In 2007, families gathered in the *portería* of the convento to dress their angels (no. 3 in Map 2 and Figure 190). This eighteenth-century tradition of New Spain is now unique to Yanhuitlan. Every family keeps the clothes and instruments pertaining to their angel at home during the year, while the sculptures themselves are kept in the sacristy.⁷⁵ Every angel bears a name of a barrio, as reconstructed in Appendix B.

⁷⁵ They used to be housed in the convento. At the end of Holy Week in 2007, however, it was decided to keep them within the precinct of the church. The decision was taken to prevent the relocation of the angels in the city of Oaxaca for restoration purposes, as previously decided by Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia. The pieces are currently being restored in situ.

Although only seven angels had been used in Yanhuitlan for several years, in 2008 Yuxacohoyo was finally restored and could safely join the rest of the group without risking serious damage. The Montes family no longer owned the clothes or instruments, so it was decided that Yuxacohoyo would hold a hammer.

According to the Dominican chronicler Agustín Dávila Padilla, the enactment of the Descent of the Cross was introduced in Mexico by the Dominicans in 1582.⁷⁶ He states that confraternities of the Descendimiento and Holy Sepulchre were established with the purpose of performing the ritual. His description of the event resembles very closely what is still today executed in Yanhuitlan, as well as in many other Catholic communities around the world.⁷⁷ In Padilla's account, the image of the crucified Christ had movable legs and arms, "as if it was a real body."⁷⁸ The priest preached to the congregation, while a group of friars approached Golgotha with a staircase, incense and coffin, where the body of Christ would be deposited. Before taking off the nails, the friars wiped Christ's face with a cloth, took off the sponge and spear that wounded his side, and removed the crown of thorns. They proceeded to give these objects to the Virgin. Then they began to extract the nails from the hands, carefully holding the falling body with a white cloth. Witnessing the "real" presence of the dead body of Christ caused great commotion among everybody present. After the removal from the cross, they placed the body on a cloth and presented it to Mary, in a very sad moment known as *el pésame a la Virgen*, "the condolences to the Virgin."

⁷⁶ Dávila Padilla, 561.

⁷⁷ Elena Estrada de Gerlero and Susan Webster have previously relied on Dávila Padilla's account to interpret the murals in the churches of San Miguel Huejotzingo, Puebla, and San Juan Teitipac, Oaxaca. Estrada de Gerlero: 642-662; Webster: 5-43.

⁷⁸ "como si fuese de cuerpo natural." Dávila Padilla, 563.

In Yanhuitlan, at this point everybody gets ready for the nocturnal ceremony. A long procession of eight angels, dressed in black as a sign of mourning, accompanies the Santo Entierro, the Virgin, San Juan, and San Pedro through the village. The retinue makes several stops to give rest to the people who alternate in carrying the images in front of houses where flowers have been placed. The first angel in the procession is Yuxayo, and it is always carried by women, as is the Virgen de la Soledad. Brass-band music and singing accompany the procession to warm up the spirit in the cold and dark night.

Most of Holy Saturday passes uneventfully, as no mass or procession is carried out during the day. The altar is cleared of Golgotha as well as other pieces used the night before. The black cloth that covered up the main altar is lifted and room is made ready for the image of the Christ Risen (Figure 191). Flowers and candles create a new and glorious atmosphere. People bring jars of water to the church for the traditional blessing and eventually the *Cirio Pascual*, the Paschal Candle, is lit as a sign of regained salvation. Easter Sunday is a day of joyful celebration: after the noon mass, a procession moves through the village parading triumphant angels dressed in red, along with the Santo Entierro, the Virgin, San Juan, and San Pedro (Figures 192 and 193).

Mayordomía del Divino Señor de Ayuxi

The celebration in honor of the Christ of Ayuxi is the most important social and religious event in modern Yanhuitlan. The image is venerated all over the region and beyond, and buses make special trips to Yanhuitlan where émigrés return to pay the due homage to what is considered the Patron Saint of the village. Similar to Semana Santa, the Mayordomía del Divino Señor de Ayuxi presents elements typical of a

Catholic ceremony along with unique local variants that bespeak centuries of cultural adaptation and social interaction between Mixtecs and Spaniards. Celebrations begin April 29, the day of the Santa Cruz according to the Catholic calendar, and last until the last weekend of May, official days of the Mayordomía.

Despite deeply syncretic origins discussed above in the section “Colonial Syncretism,” the modern-day Holy Cross celebration in Yanhuitlan has a wholly and coherent Catholic outlook. El Divino Señor de Ayuxi disguises well his indigenous roots under a perfect Spanish appearance. The image is hollow and partially made of cornstalk paste, a Mesoamerican technique that allowed for the creation of light and portable sculptures. During a restoration carried out in 1997, a Mixtec-language document was found inside the head of Christ (Figure 194).⁷⁹ Although a full translation has not been made yet (the document is a fragment), the contents are religious.⁸⁰

On April 29, El Divino Señor de Ayuxi is taken from El Calvario to the main church, where it remains until May 29 (Figure 195). An image of the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception follows the Christ of Ayuxi (Figure 196), celebrating the Virgin during the month of May, traditionally dedicated to her. The procession is a rather moving experience. The devotion to the image of Ayuxi is strong and families in charge of the year’s celebration feel a great sense of responsibility. Their home entrances are adorned as *posas* (processional stations) with flowers and colorful ribbons. It is considered that Christ is paying a visit to the house and this causes a strong emotional response in the participants (Figures 197 and 198).

⁷⁹ Blanca Noval Vilar and Francisco Javier Salazar Herrera, “La restauración de dos Cristos de pasta de caña como parte de los trabajos del proyecto de conservación integral en Santo Domingo Yanhuitlán, Oaxaca,” in *Imaginería indígena mexicana: Una catequesis en caña de maíz*, ed. Antonio F. García-Abásolo, Gabriela García Lascrain, and Joaquín Sánchez Ruiz (Cordoba: Publicaciones Obra Social y Cultural CajaSur, 2001), 223-235.

⁸⁰ Preliminary analysis done by the author.

Once the retinue has reached the church, the Crucifix is put to rest. The altar, and “official” veneration to the Señor de Ayuxi, will only start the next day. I was present during the preparation of the altar in 2007. A particularly delicate situation occurred when the Crucifix had to be lifted up from the ground to its pedestal. This required the efforts of several people and great care in securing the image with ropes and cloths. As Tata Ayuxi, Father Ayuxi, as he is sometimes referred to, was being lifted, women began to sing, as if accompanying the image in this difficult moment. After the cross was secured on the pedestal, everything went back to normal and the decoration of the altars could continue (Figure 199).

El Divino Señor de Ayuxi is venerated throughout the month of May with a daily noon mass, followed by rosary prayers in the afternoon in front of the Holy Host (Santísimo Sacramento) on the altar of Ayuxi. People alternate on the kneeler reciting the Paternoster and Ave Maria. Each prayer is recited five times for every mystery remembered that day. Mysteries are arranged in four groups of five (Joyful, Sorrowful, Glorious, and Luminous).⁸¹ The Rosary is a Dominican tradition, very well attested in Yanhuitlan since the early colonial period. According to the Yanhuitlan manuscript (Figures 15 and 16), Catholic religion was successfully introduced in the village thanks to the cult of the Rosary.⁸² The cult is further illustrated in Concha’s main altarpiece (ca. 1579) and Yanhuitlan’s second largest retablo, dedicated to the Virgin of the Rosary and dated 1695.⁸³ Finally, a chapel dedicated to the Nuestra Señora del Rosario was funded at the same time of the construction of the convento.⁸⁴

⁸¹ The five Luminous Mysteries were added by Pope John Paul II in 2002.

⁸² See chapter 1.

⁸³ See chapters 3 and 5.

⁸⁴ AHJT Civil, 8, 38.

La Fiesta de la Mayordomía, which took place between May 23 and 25 in 2008, is most strikingly characterized by the so-called *calenda*, a procession from El Calvario to the main church, in which different music bands, dancers and puppets alternate in a three-hour event accompanied by a big crowd of attendees. Giant puppets come directly from the Spanish Corpus Christi tradition of the *gigantes* (Figure 200), while monstrous buffoons (Figure 201) are reminiscent of the young boys who were sent down the streets at the end of Tozoztontli, covered up with paper banners that used to decorate idols and sacrificial victims, and jokingly scaring people away.⁸⁵

The dance performed just in front of the church is a truly Oaxacan tradition (Figure 202). It celebrates abundance, prosperity and fertility, and a loose comparison can be made with the female retinue that visited the city's *calpulli* before reaching the temple of Centeotl, as illustrated in the *Primeros Memoriales* (Figure 179). They are referred to as *procesiones de la calenda* (monthly or seasonal processions) and have not yet received much scholarly attention, despite their characteristic folkloric character. According to the Mexican sociologist Virginia Rodríguez Rivera, *calendas* were suppressed by the national government after the revolution, because they were considered "an extreme manifestation of religious cult."⁸⁶ While in 1910 *calendas* for celebration of the Virgen de la Soledad were still carried out, in 1933 they had apparently become a vanished tradition.⁸⁷ Early twentieth-century descriptions closely resemble Yanhuitlan's *Calenda* of the Mayordomía. *Calendas* were in fact held before

⁸⁵ Sahagún, bk. II: 59.

⁸⁶ Virginia Rodríguez Rivera, "Calendas," *Anuario de la Sociedad Folklórica de México* 4 (1944): 187.

⁸⁷ Jorge Octavio Acevedo, *Fiestas populares oaxaqueñas: Las calendas* (Oaxaca: Sur, 1933); Terry Mercerin, "Some Quaint Old Mexican Churches and Customs," *Overland Monthly* LV, no. 3 (1910): 236-238. Since then, this tradition has been revived and is today one of the biggest tourist attractions in the city of Oaxaca.

any important religious occasion, such as Christmas, Corpus Christi, or the feast day of the tutelary saint of city churches. A few days before the celebration, the barrio's streets were decorated with paper banners in different shapes and color. The Calenda procession was composed of a festive crowd of adults and children walking down the city streets carrying puppet figures and so-called *marmotas*, globes made of weeds and wire and covered in a white cloth. Fireworks and music were heard all along. Retinues of young girls paraded through the city's *posas* arranged by the house of the *madrinas de la calenda* (female sponsors of the procession). They wore elaborate dresses and carried woven baskets (*xicapextle*) decorated with beautiful floral arrangements in the shape of a swan, boat, lyre, or other figures.

The Calenda is officially the vigil to what is considered the celebration of the Patron Saint, El Divino Señor de Ayuxi. This is when incredibly large crowds of people fill in the church of Yanhuitlan (Figures 203 and 204). A very solemn mass, accompanied by music played with the old organ, is held at noon. Religious activities end at this point and the rest of the weekend is enjoyed with spectacles and entertainment events in the main plaza.

Finally, on May 31, El Divino Señor de Ayuxi is taken back to the Calvario. No procession or ritual is performed around such an event.

Conclusion

This dissertation has explored over two hundred years of art and history in the Mixtec village of Yanhuitlan, Oaxaca. Archival documentation allowed for the reconstruction of chronology and authorship of numerous works executed in Yanhuitlan during the colonial period. In chapter 2, section “Spanish Artists and Local Networks,” I presented various lines of evidence suggesting that Francisco Becerra, a fellow Trujillo native of the encomendero Gonzalo de las Casas, may have contributed to the design and construction of the church during the 1570s. Becerra’s activities in New Spain intersected with those of Concha, who was responsible for the execution of the main altar. Direct documentation on the involvement of both artists at Yanhuitlan is lacking. Networks of patronage, extending from Spain to New Spain, and across lay and religious commissions, however, seem to suggest that a fruitful collaboration was in place.

In chapter 5, “Decoration and Maintenance,” I reconstructed the work of several artists at Yanhuitlan during the course of the late colonial period. The Montesinos family, at work in the village in the retablo of the Virgin of the Rosary (1695) and main altarpiece (before 1720); Mixtec Alonso de Luna and Bartolomé González, polychromers of the altar of Saint Peter Martyr (1623); and Adrián de Roxas, author of the Retablo del Señor Jesús (1699), have never been documented before. The attested authorship of Puebla painter Juan de Villalobos for the Retablo de la Virgen de la Soledad, however, points to interregional exchanges between conventos in Central Mexico and the Mixteca, facilitated by both Dominicans and possibly Mixtec.¹ This practice continued

¹ See, for example, the case of Mixtec émigrés in Mexico City’s Santo Domingo and their relation to the cult of the Rosary. Chapter 5, “Discussion and Conclusion.”

from the sixteenth century, when artists Concha and Becerra collaborated with Dominicans and Mixtec patrons.

I now conclude by proposing further interpretations that arise from the attempt to integrate painting, sculpture, and architectural and urban design.

In the section “Architecture and Ideology in the Mixteca Alta” in chapter 2, special attention was given to the imposing exteriors of Mixtec mission churches, which recall those of cathedrals in both the Old and New World. I also suggested that the façade was a generating feature of urban space. A few considerations could be added with respect to interior design and plan, which fall squarely within the tradition of monastic architecture. According to an accepted interpretation, a unified single-nave design responded to the desire for simplicity typical of monastic life.² At the same time, the absence of visual obstacles between the clergy and the congregation at the time of ritual well suited the centrality of public lay preaching among reformed mendicant orders.³ Recent scholarship on New Spain’s architecture has interpreted this design as an expression of the utopian ideals that animated the evangelizers in the New World. Some scholars went even further, suggesting an antagonism between the material interests of Crown and the idealistic spirit of the friars who defended the Indians against Spanish abuses.⁴

In contrast, I think that the coinciding of political and religious goals in the Spanish colonization of the Americas should be emphasized. With the expulsion and forced assimilation of Moors and Jews at the end of the fifteenth century, Isabel of Castile established in Spain the unity of religious confession and state authority,

² Kubler, *Mexican Architecture*, 231.

³ *Ibid.*, 241; Mariás, 119.

⁴ See the discussion of Edgerton’s and Bailey’s work in the introduction.

anticipating the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio* (“whose reign, his religion”) that would prevail in post-reformation Europe.⁵ The reform of mendicant orders, which deeply informed the evangelical mission in the New World, was instrumental in the enforcement of the Queen’s policies.⁶

In architecture, this attitude was reflected in numerous examples of royal chapels and other royal commissions as a part of monastic complexes: the Royal Chapel of the San Juan de los Reyes, Toledo, designed by Juan Guas in 1476 (Figure 205); Juan de Colonia’s Cartuja de Miraflores, near Burgos, 1484 (Figure 206); the Royal Monastery of Santo Tomás de Ávila (1493); and finally Charles V’s retreat at Yuste, in Extremadura (1525). All these projects integrated the single-nave layout with large retablo as main altarpiece (Figures 205, 207, and 208).⁷ I argue that this is the result of a unified project meant to create an internally coherent environment. The design program was geared toward the exaltation of Catholic faith, at the same time as it celebrated the Spanish kings as exemplar Catholic monarchs.⁸ Isabel I and her grandson Charles V were both fervent adherents to the *devotio moderna* (“modern devotion”), which exalted internal meditation and contrition together with deep emotional involvement. The iconographic program of the complex retablo in the Cartuja de Miraflores (Figure 209) has been

⁵ Joseph Pérez, “El legado de Isabel y la proyección ulterior del reinado,” in *Isabel la católica y su época*, ed. Luis Ribot, Julio Valdeón, and Elena Maza (Valladolid: Instituto Universitario de Historia Simancas, 2004), 58-61.

⁶ “Catholic Religion and Books in Early Modern Spain” in chapter 3.

⁷ At Miraflores, the full view of the nave is obstructed by a *reja* (iron grid). Yanhuitlan also had a wooden *reja* that closed off the altar from the congregation. Burgoa, *Geográfica descripción*, 294.

⁸ Carmen María Labra González offers an iconological interpretation of funerary royal chapels during the time of the Catholic kings in “De la chartreuse de Miraflores à la chapelle royale de Grenade.” *e-Spania* (2008). <http://e-spania.revues.org/index171.html> (accessed December 3, 2008).

interpreted in the light of this type of devotion.⁹ Even when confined to his bed at Yuste, Charles V made sure that he could contemplate the main altar in the church (Figure 208). This spiritual approach was very important also among Dominicans in New Spain.¹⁰

In the Mixteca, and New Spain more generally, a similar ideological program was in place that, if it did not explicitly involve the distant Spanish kings, posited the obedience to and participation in the political project of the Crown as a necessary requisite to be a good Catholic.¹¹ In all major missions of the Mixteca, altarpieces and church construction went hand in hand, resulting, in fact, in the creation of a unified interior environment (Figures 210 and 211).

The integration of archaeological, documentary, and ethnographic data gave new results, discussed in chapter 6. The exact coincidence in the number and names of eighteenth-century barrios and contemporaneous processional angels was a particularly lucky find that nevertheless demonstrates the fruitfulness of interdisciplinary research. Some of the same barrio names also appear in settlement surveys conducted in the late 1960s and are still known in the village. Oral knowledge, archaeology, and archival sources need to be further integrated in order to fully understand Amerindian history and culture.

⁹ Labra González; Felipe Pereda Espeso, "El cuerpo muerto del rey Juan II, Gil de Siloé, y la imaginación escatológica. (Observaciones sobre el lenguaje de la escultura en la alta Edad Moderna)," *Anuario del Departamento de Historia y Teoría del Arte*, no. 13 (2001): 53-86.

¹⁰ "Christian Doctrine and Practice in New Spain" in chapter 3.

¹¹ The Spanish political establishment is present at Yanhuitlan in the painting of the Virgin of the Rosary.

Because prehispanic ceramics continued to be produced in the colonial period, along with Hispanic forms and materials, it is difficult to assess the timing and modality of the assimilation process of the scattered *siña* (barrios) into the center. Some aspects of urban design and patterns of processional behavior seem to suggest that reordering of adjacent settlements may have begun early in the postconquest period. Burgoa, for example, mentions that the chapel of Ayusi, which he referred to as “*ermita de la Santísima Cruz*,” was already in its current location in 1601.¹² We do not have any other information as to where the other *barrio* crucifixes may have been kept, whether they had their own chapels, or whether they have always been kept in the church.

On the other hand, the fact that Ayuxi was referred to as the Holy Cross by Burgoa points to the importance of Ayuxi over other *barrios*. The chapel is not found on top of the ancient location of the *barrio*, although it is not far from it (in Figure 163 settlements are N 5, 6 and 7, known as *Loma de Ayusi*, and N 19 is the chapel). It is instead located closer to the center, along a straight axis that connected the scattered settlements to the monumental core of the *convento* complex (Figure 181).¹³

In the eighteenth century, the parading of processional angels during Holy Week, as we have seen, became a major means of civic participation and an expression of community identity in Yanhuitlan. Did processional crosses play a similar role in the sixteenth century, during the *cacicazgo* of Gabriel de Guzmán? Despite the fact that *barrios* with Mixtec names have prehispanic origins, as indicated by the archaeological

¹² Burgoa, *Palestra historial*, 346. Above, “Processional Sculptures and Religious Festivals: An Historical Reconstruction,” in chapter 6.

¹³ “Church Building and Ideology in the Mixteca Alta” in chapter 2.

survey, they do not appear to have played a prominent role in the political adjustments of the early postconquest period, according to extant documents.¹⁴

Lefebvre's analysis of socially-constructed space offers a viable model for understanding several processes at play in colonial Yanhuitlan.¹⁵ The French philosopher describes social space as the result of a struggle between *spatial practices*, *representations of space*, and *representational spaces*. On the one hand is the space conceived by hegemonic institutions, which imposed certain spatial practices thanks also to theoretical representations of space found, for example, in treatises and government decrees. On the other is the lived space (representational space), a locus of appropriation, where complex symbolic associations reach the point of subverting the logic of domination incarnated by spatial practice and representations of space.¹⁶ In other words, the very forms (or "codes" in Lefebvre's model) that engendered a system of colonization are at times appropriated by different social classes and interest groups.

In the sixteenth century, crucifixes from subject towns convened and paraded during Holy Week in Yanhuitlan's atrio.¹⁷ In modern times, Don Victorino Ramírez, a Yanhuiteco guardian of the Chapel of Ayuxi, still recalls from his father that people from Yanhuitlan and San Pedro Anañe (a former subject town of Yanhuitlan to the west of the village) used to meet at the chapel of San Sebastián with their respective crucifixes

¹⁴ AGI Escríbanía 162C. Above, "The New Colonial Order," in chapter 1.

¹⁵ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).

¹⁶ Lefebvre makes a distinction, and indeed opposition, between abstract *connaissance* (epistemological systems) and absolute *savoir* (knowledge) that can be superimposed on the opposition between conceived and lived space.

¹⁷ AHJT Criminal, 07, 39. Above, "Processional Sculptures and Religious Festivals: An Historical Reconstruction," in chapter 6.

for an annual ceremony of mutual acknowledgement and respect of town boundaries and community sovereignty.¹⁸

Colonial Yanhuitlan was the expression of an ideology equally embraced by Mixtec caciques, Spanish encomenderos, and Dominican friars. The input of imperial bureaucracy and planning was also strategic in the creation of this urban space.¹⁹ At the same time, chapels and processional sculptures became symbolic places and images creating a coherent system of signification, albeit not as explicitly theorized as the dominant order. This process gave rise to modern Yanhuitlan, a social space that still lies at the intersection of village politics, Catholic practice, and a neocolonial system.

¹⁸ Personal communication, 2008.

¹⁹ Viceroy Mendoza's *traza moderada* and Philip II's *Ordenanzas*. See above "Viceroyal Ideology," in chapter 2.

APPENDIX A

Hereditary Succession of Yanhuitlan's Cacicazgo

| | |
|------------|--|
| | 9 Calli d. 1536 (?) |
| | Lady 1 Flower Cauaco == Lord 8 Death Namahu |
| ?-1540s | Doña María Coquahu == Don Diego Ñuqñ |
| 1540s-1558 | Don Domingo cacique-regent Brother of Doña María |
| 1558-1591 | Don Gabriel de Guzmán == Doña Isabel de Riojas Son of Doña María |
| 1591-1629 | Don Francisco de Guzmán == ? |
| 1629-1649 | Don Baltazar de Velasco y Guzmán == ? Nephew of Don Francisco |
| 1649-1669 | Don Francisco Pimentel y Guzmán == Doña Lucía de Orozco |
| 1669-1698 | Doña María Pimentel y Guzmán == Don Diego de Villagómez |
| 1698-1718 | Doña Josefa Villagómez == Don Luis de Montezuma |
| 1718- | Doña Theresa de Guzmán == Don Martín de Villagómez Niece of Doña Josefa |

APPENDIX B

Processional Angels



Tico

Spellings: Ticoho; Tico,o; Ticoo

Meaning: MS ti- place; -co ?. UL ti-: cima redonda

Attributes: Golden Cross

Family: Palma

Barrio documented since 1613 (AHJT Criminal, 09, 21)



Yuyuxa

Spelling: Yuyucha; Yuyusha; Yu,ucha

Meaning: MS yu-: mouth; yuxa: river; at the river bank

Attributes: Spear and fish

Family: García Cruz

Barrio documented since 1598 (AHJT Criminal, 05, 14), also known as Analco in Nahuatl



Ayuxi

Spelling: Ayusi; Ayuci; Ayuçi; Ayushi

Meaning: MS a- locative; yuxi: jewel; the place of the jewel

Attributes: Lily flowers and nails; RP-GB: Pincers

Family: Pérez Ortiz

Barrio documented since 1584 (AGI Escribanía, 162C)



Saayucu

Spellings: Xaayucu; Cahayuqu; Sahayucu

Meaning: MS saa-: at the feet of; yucu: mountain; at the feet of the mountain

Attributes: Crown of thorns; RP-GB: Veronica's veil

Family: Pérez Juan

Barrio documented since 1584 (AGI Escribanía 162C)



Danaa

Spellings: Dana; Danaha; Dana,a

Meaning: ?

Attributes: Scepter and SPQR sign

It belongs to the *sindicatura*

Barrio documented since 1677 (AHJT Criminal, 21, 11). Perhaps also in 1584 (AGI Escribanía, 162C)



Tindee

Spellings: Tinde; Tindehe

Meaning: MS ti- locative; -dee ? UL ti-: cima redonda

Attributes: Ladder

Family: Ramírez González

Barrio documented since 1584 (AGI Escribanía, 162C)



[missing]



Yuxacohoyo or Yadayoo

Spellings: Yuchacoyo; Yushacoyo; Yushacohoyo

Meaning: MS yuxa: river; cohoyo: reed; river of reed

Attributes: Hammer

Family: Montes

Barrio documented since 1584 (AGI Escribanía, 162C)



Yuxayoo

Spellings: Yushayoo; Yuchayo; Yuchayo,o; Yushayoho

Meaning: MS yuxa: river; yoo: mecate (?)

Attributes: Nails and lily flowers

Family: Gutiérrez Villanueva

Barrio documented since 1677 (AHJT Criminal, 21, 11)



Easter Sunday, 2007

Processional order:

Yuxayo
Tindee
Saayuxo
Ayuxi
Danaa
Yuyuxa
Ticoo



Easter Sunday, 2008

Processional order:

Yuxayo
Tindee
Yuxacohoyo
Saayuxo
Ayuxi
Danaa
Yuyuxa
Ticoo



Easter Sunday, 2007

Processional order:

Santo Entierro
Virgen de la Soledad
San Pedro
San Juan



Two moments in the Easter Sunday procession, 2008
The angels coming out of the church from the north door.



A posa

APPENDIX C

Transcription of Original Documents**1. Agreement signed by representatives of Yanhuitlan and Tecomatlan regarding contribution to church construction, maintenance and participation in religious festivals. AGI Escribanía da Cámara 162C: 283-285 and 363-364 (1572)**

Concierto entre los de Tecomatlan y Yanguitlan

Este es un traslado bien y fielmente sacado de una escritura de concierto q parece aver pasado entre los yndios de Tecomatlan y de Yanguitlan sobre las diferencias que entre ellos havyan, el original de la qual queda en poder de b[artolo]meblas e que de la qual yo Juan de San Pedro saque este traslado

En el pueblo de Yanguitlan a diez e siete de febre ro de myll e quy[nient]os setenta y dos delante del muy reverendo padre fray Domingo de a guinaga vic[a]rio gl y del señor Gonzalo de las casas vistos los capitulos pedidos por los principales y cav[ecer]a (caciques?) que de Tecomatlan por quitar pleytos e discordias e que no gasten sus hazien das y infermen sus animas venymos a concierto con ellos

En qto al prim[er]o cap[i]t[ul]o que dizen que dan veynte e seys yndios pa la iglesia quedo que aqui a delante daran diez yndios cada semana por t[iem]po de un año primo y seguidos que despues descansaran algun tpo y despues daran lo que fuere justo

en qto as seg[un]do cap[i]t[ul]o que era que no querian acudir a enramar la iglesia concertaronse que acudiran dos vezes a enramarla en el año que son la semana s[an]ta e pasqua de resurreccion e la fiesta del sacramento con condicion que a de ser no apenian dolos ny maltratandolos los fiscales ny otra persona sin solamte abisalos que ande venyr/ yten que no an de dar veynte baynillas que suelen ha zer la semana santa sino ramas y flores que hallaran en su distrito

En q[uan]to a la leña y tortillas y çacate que sue
 len dar tres bezes en el año ala comu
 nydad deste pueblo de yanguitlan/ noda
 ran nada sinolo que ellos quisieren volun
 tariamente y que quando vinyeren oir mysa tray
 eran ellos de comer por si e que quedan o
 bligados a traer la leña para los religiosos
 como la an traydo hasta qui

En q[uan]to a lo que dizen de la tasa que hizieron
 pa la comunidad que no quieren
 nada

En q[uan]to a lo que toca a las sementeras en q[uan]to alla
 labrarla que no lo hagan si no quisieren en q[uan]to a la
 propiedad de cuyas la tierra q se pondran
 tres juezes arbitros yndios p[rincipa]les de cada parte que lo
 que determinen y si no se conformeran todos
 seys se pondra un acesor rreligioso pa que
 los concierte

En lo tocante a los doz[ien]tos pesos que mando su padre a doña ma
 ria que no le an pagado sino ciento cinquenta (?)
 que se pongan a quantas con don gavriel e que
 lo que devieren que se lo pague y se careen con
 el señor Go de las casas porque ellos averiguen

En qto a lo que piden para su madre de
 doña maria doña ana que visto el testa
 mento se careen con el señor Go de las casas
 y que lo que determinaren pensen por ellos

En qto a lo que piden que de los quattrocientos
 pesos que dan a don Gabriel de tasacion de cacique
 y gobernador que den los dozientos a dona ma
 ria como hija legitima de don Domingo gobernador
 que fue del dho pueblo de yanguitlan y junta
 mente pedir al cacicazgo del dho pueblo de yan
 quitlan la dha doña maria que enesto no lleba
 nynguna razon porque el mysmo don Domingo
 pleyteo en su vida muchos anos por el dho
 don Gabriel como por legitimo cacique y
 heredero de yanguitlan e se lo oymos
 muchas vezes dezir al mysmo que el no hera
 señor sino que su madre de
 don Gabriel pidio en el gobierno has
 ta que fuese de hedad el dho don Gabriel y
 esto se hallaran escrito en el proceso que
 trato en la real audiencia y se sentencio por

don Gabriel en vida del dho don Domingo y se hallara lo mesmo en el testamento de don Domingo escrito a letra de fray Francisco de espinosa

En qto a lo que toca ser sujetos o no sujeto a yanguitlan q esto es question de nomina por q ya esta declarado q estan sujetos aqui a la doctrina de yanguitlan y concedido por ellos y a la justizia hordinaria del dho pueblo y pa ra que no sea a ellos tanta vezacion que yra un alcalde deste pueblo de quando en quando a bisitarlos y si fueren cosas livianas como son borracheras aunque la culpa es grave que en qto a la execucion de la justizia que los detengan alla dando noticia dello a los alcaldes del dho pueblo de yanguitlan cada sabado y en quanto a lo de yr a la mysa casi siempre abra mysa en el pueblo que al rededor al pueblo o otras estancias y alli podran oyr mysa y faltando estos yran a nochixtlan y a las tres fiestas que estan declaradas an de venyr a la cabecera

En qto a los dos tequitlatos que acudan al enramar a la yglesia y al servicio de las demas cosas de la yglesia pues ally reciban los sacramentos y oyen mysas en la fecha en yanguitlan a diezesiete de febrero de myll e qyos e setenta y dos años Fray dmingo de aguiñaga fray Pablo Ramirez Gonzalo de las casas bme blas escribano

2. Contract between the gilder and polychromer Alonso de Luna and the friar Eugenio Gutiérrez of the convento of Santo Domingo Yanhuitlan for the completion of the retablo of San Pedro Mártir. AHJT Civil, 9, 10: 11r-11v (1623)

Sepan quantos este carta bieren como yo Alonso de Luna maestro de dorador y estofador vecino del pueblo de guaxuapa y estante en este de yanguytlan, como principal deudor a bartolome de goncales asi mesmo maestro del dicho oficio y becino deste pueblo de yanguytlan como su fiador y an bosados de mancomun y a boz de uno y cada uno por el todo renunciando como renunciarnos las leyes de duobus resebendi y el beneficio de la division y exclusion y el autentica presente de fide y usibus y todas las otras leyes que abian en raçon de la mancomunidad otorgamos por la falta que parece aber en un retablo del señor san pedro martir que yo alonso de luna me oblige a dorar y estofar segun buena orden del dicho oficio como fornito de una cedula que por a ello le yce en que me obligue a dorar y estofar el dicho retablo y dexarlo acabado por demanda q me an puesto diciendo que por ello me pago lo que concertamos como es berdad y que no esta bien [dorado-erased] y resanado como tengo obligacion y por no tener pleyto yo como dicho es y yo bartolome goncales y la dicha mancomunidad nos obligamos a que entre dos meses primeros siguientes desde la fecha desta carta dandonos desarmado el dicho retablo y poniendo andamios le resanaremos [y doraremos-erased] en todas las partes que necesario fue deman [broken] quede acabo a bista de quien [broken]

f.11v

y a nuestra costa emos de poner el oro y plata y colores que sean necesarios y nuestras personas y demas oficiales sin que el dicho fray eugenio gutierrez aya a dar cosa alguna por que como dicho es ya lo tiene el pagado y per que lo cumpliremos ambos principal y fiador dentro de los dichos dos meses como esta dicho obligamos muestras personas y bienes abidos y peraber por a cada execucion damos nuestro poder cumplido a las justicias de su magestad que me sean competentes en especial a las deste pueblo y renunciarnos el nuestro propio y la

ley sicon benerio de iurisdictione omnium
judicium para que nos apremien a lo asi cum
plir como sentencia pasada en cosa
juzgada de juez competente y renuncia
ron quales leyes que se ayan en su favor
la general del derecho que dice que xeneral...
21 dias del mes de noviembre de 1623

3. Foundation of a chaplaincy. AHJT Civil, 9, 10: 3r-4v (1623)

En el nombre de dios y de su bendita madre amen sepan quantos en esta carta de obligacion de capellanía vieren como nos el prior y frayles del monasterio del señor santo domingo deste pueblo de yanguitlan estando juntos en nuestro capitulo [broken] f. 3v

como acostumbramos para tratar las cosas de nuestra comunidad especialmente presentes el muy reverendo padre fray Juan Martínez prior del dicho convento y fray Juan de Arias su prior y fray domingo mellado fray eugenio gutierrez fray alonso martinez y fray francisco gutierrez y fray mateo de cuenca frayles profesos que confesamos ser los conventuales que de presente ay en este convento otorgamos y conocemos que emos recibido realmente y con efecto de don francisco de guzman casique deste pueblo y de lacaro garcia vecino del q esta presente albaceas que fueron de Gonzalo Ortiz yndio vecino del ya difunto quatrocientos pesos en reales de oro comun los quales el dicho difunto dexo por clausula de su testamento que hizo ante el fiscal de la iglesia pablo de la Cruz por ella manda se ymponga una capellanía en este dicho convento y dota la dicha capellanía de los quatrocientos pesos referidos y de las renta dellos con cargo y obligacion que el prior y conventuales que al presente son y adelante fuesen para sienpre xamas a al decir por anima y la di su muger y difuntos tres misas cantadas la una el dia de otava de nabadad y las f. 4r

otras la otava de san pedro martir y las otra la otava de santa ynes martir y el dicho prior y conventuales confesamos aver percivido los dichos quatrocientos pesos de principal de las dichas albaceas y averlos echado a censo en la ciudad de los angeles sobre casas de Juan de ynostrosa vecino della y por que en presente no parecen renunciaron la execion de los dos años y leyes de la entrega prueba della como en ella se contiene y acetamos la dicha capellanía y confesan ser dotada congruamente

y nos obligamos por nosotros y los que adelante fueren acer las dichas misas en los tiempos dichos en cada un año y con fesamos tener licencia de nuestro probin cial para acetar esta capellania y a su cumplimiento como dicho es nos obligamos y obligamos a los priores y conventuales que adelante fueren en fe del qual asi lo otorgamos y los firmamos de nuestros nombres ante el presente escrivano y testigos siendolo al margen

[signed]

4. Account of church-related expenses of the cabildo and barrios of Yanhuitlan for the year 1677. AHJT Criminal, 21, 11: 63-69 (1677)

f. 63r

Cuentas

Oy martes a sinco de enero año de mil y seis cintos y setentaysiete se guntaron todos los regidor es y se iso cabildo de lo qual me dieron parte a mi el gobernador y a los alcades a quien la comonidad como es uso y costrumbre desde antiguamente y se compusieron los casiques y todos los prensipales y todo el comun a quien el pueblo de yanguitlan por no tener bi enes la comonidad para los gastos que se ofresen de la yglesia y asi nonbraron algunos prensipales que buscaron este dinero que llamamos en la lengua duayaqua lo qual se le da a los padres deste conbento la pasqua de resurisi3n y corpus y la fiesta de santo domingo y pasqua de navidad se gasta este dinero como es uso y costunbre y estas personas las reserbamos de todos los tequios que se ofresen en la yglesia y conbento y las casas reales y otras cosas que manda el gobernador y al caldes de todos estos tequios que dan reserbados en todo el año todo esto es lo que asen los que buscan este dinero

bario de tico,o = pasqua de resurisi3n = corpus = santo domingo = pasqua de navidad

| | | |
|--------------------------------|---------|--------|
| do. baltasar ortis = 1 peso | 2 pesos | 1 peso |
| do. pedro de las casas 2 pesos | 1 peso | |
| do. diego gimenes 1 peso | 1 peso | |
| da. mariana de la crus 1 peso | 1 peso | |

bario de yu,ucha

| | | | |
|--------------------|---------|---------|--------|
| do. juan lopes | 2 pesos | 2 peso | 1 peso |
| da. ana de la crus | 1 peso | 2 pesos | 1 peso |

bario de ayuci

| | | | |
|------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| do. juan domingo | 1 peso | 1 peso | 1 peso |
|------------------|--------|--------|--------|

bario ca,ayuqu

| | | | |
|------------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| do. domingo de la crus | 1 peso | | |
| do. domingo garsia | 1 peso | 1 peso | 1 peso |
| do. Diego lopes | 1 peso | 1 peso | 1 peso |

f. 63v

bario de dana,a

| | | | | |
|-------------------------|---------|---------|-----------|---------|
| do. domingo de la crus | 1 peso | 1 peso | 1 peso | 1 peso |
| bario de tindee | | | | |
| do. gaspar gutierres | 1 peso | 1 peso | 1 peso | |
| do. domingo sanches | 1 peso | | | |
| bario yuchacoyo | | | | |
| do. niculas canches | 2 pesos | 2 pesos | 2 pesos | 2 pesos |
| do. agustín ramos | | | | |
| bario yuchayo,o | | | | |
| do. pedro carabantes | 1 peso | 1 peso | 2 tomines | |
| do. felipe de bentansos | 1 peso | 1 peso | 1 peso | |
| do. Gregorio garsia | 2 pesos | 2 pesos | 2 pesos | |
| do. migel de la crus | 1 peso | 1 peso | 1 peso | |
| do. andres peres | 1 peso | | | |
| bario de nuca,a | | | | |
| do. juan domingo | 1 peso | 1 peso | 1 peso | |

monta este cargo sesenta y quatro pesos y dos tomines

descargo de los gastos que emos tenido todo el año en la yglesia

- oy martes a seis de abril de mil y seiscientos i setenta y siete años bino domingo ortis sacristán por quatro reales para gabon para labar los manteles de la iglesia 4 reales
- oi sabado de gloria a desiciete de abril fuimos con todo el gobierno al conbento a llebar sinco pesos de limosna al padre prior para la misa de pasqua 5 pesos
- oi domingo a beinteitres de mayo despahamos a pedro ruis del bario de tico,o a megico por polbora para selebrar la fiesta del cantisimo sacramento a quien le dimos quinse pesos 15 pesos
- oi marte a ocho de junio bino domingo de la crus cascristan por quatro reales para gabon para labar los manteles 4 reales
- oi miercoles a nuebe de junio fui yo domingo ramires y todos los regidores al conbento a comprar sera al padre prior quinse libras costaron quinse pecos para selebrar la fiesta de corpus 15 pesos
- oi domingo a tres de gunio fui yo domingo ramires y todos regidores a conprar media aroba de sera

f. 64r

en la tienda de gusepe luis y nos costo a nuebe reales

- la libra monta catorse pesos i medio real para se
lebrar la fiesta de corpus porque no ubo ar con
la que sacamos del conbento 14 pesos
- oi martes a beinte y siete de gullo fui yo domingo rami
res y todos los regidores a comprar sera a la tienda de
gusepe luis cinco libras costaron a nueve reales la
libra de sera 5 pesos 5 reales
 - oi martes a tres de agosto bispera de santo domi
ngo compramos tres reales de estoraque y pebete
s asen quatro reales i medio tomin 4 reales
 - montan los gastos y descargo del dinero que lla
mamos duayaqua sesenta y quatro pecos i dos
tomines 64 pesos 2 reales
 - oi sabado a dos de enero de mil i setenta i siete años rese
bimos del gobernador i los alcaldes del año pasado
de setenta y seis quenta de los bienes de la comunidad
yo el alcalde domingo ramires y juan migel i todos los re
gidores i el mayordomo de la comunidad que lo es
este año y asi lo asentamos lo que resebimos
 - primeramente ai dies probisiones reales
 - yten dose mandamientos
 - yten tres cedula de su magestad
 - yten todos los libros de los reales tributos y de
mas quantas los quales ai sinco
 - yten una aroba de sera = y un clarin = y una romana
y una balansa = y un salero = cobre dorado = y una sobre
mesa = y unos manteles tres asieras = un giero de
señalar ganado = cabrio = un asador = una chapa
con su llabe y oreos libros biegos
 - yten dose fanegas de trigo = y una pocas de masorca
s = yten cien cabezas de ganado cabrio chico i grande
 - yten secenta cabezas de ganado obeguno chico i gra
nde
 - memoria de lo que se a bendido de los bienes de la comu
nidad los quales bendi yo domingo ramires i juan migel
y todos los regidores y el mayordomo de la comunidad
 - oi martes a quinse de gunio se bendieron dos cargas de arina
a rason de catorse reales a carga 3 pesos 4 reasels
- f. 64v
- oi lunes diesioho de gullo se bendieron dies i nueve
yas de mais y sacamos beinte uno peso y otros tomines 21 pesos
 - oi guebes a beinteuno de gullo se bendieron dies chibatos
a quatro reales asen sinco pesos 5 pesos
 - oi sabado a ochho de agosto bendimos dos fanegas de mais
a seis reales la fanega asen dos reales 1 peso
 - oi sabado a dies de nobienbre bendimos una aroba de
deylo en dos pesos 12 pesos
 - monta este cargo quarenta i tres pesos y tres reales 43 pesos

- descargo y gastos de todo el año asido la iglesia como al reberendo padre probinsial y al padre prior y a l señor alcalde mayor y nuestra comunidad y la s festibidades del año
 - oi domingo a tres de enero di yo domingo ramires al maestro de esuela de los cantores un peso para oropel para la estrella para la pasqua de reyes 1 peso
 - oi jueves a nuebe de enero di un real para papel blanco para los mandamientos del medio real 1 real
 - oi sabado a dies de enero di yo domingo ramires un peso para chocolate y marquesotes para el resibimiento del vicario probinsial 1 peso
 - oi martes a tres de enero page una misa por todos aque llos que fueron por la bigas y un real de candelas de ser a asen sinco reales
 - oi domingo a trynta i uno de enero di dos reales paral papel sellado
 - oi lunes a nuebe de febrero di un real para papel pa ra unas cartas
 - oi biernes a sinco de febrero di dos reales para papel se llado para una petision contra los de guchitepeque i un peso de presentasion asen dies reales
 - oi sabado a seis de febrero di dos reales para papel se llado para una petision para que nos diera el señor alcalde mayor testimonio y un peso de la presen tasion y tres reales que nos lle...don juan salbardos
- f. 65r
- para asella que asen un peso y sinco reales
 - el mesmo dia di dos pecos para el testimonio para remitirlo a megico por el pleito de guchitepeque 2 pesos
 - oi lunes a cho de febrero conpre un guipil de seda en dose i me dio i un paño de seda en sinco i medio asen dos pesos i dos reales para dar de presente a los ceñores de la real au densia 2 pesos
 - oi martes a nuebe de febrero di quatro pesos para que los llebaron al letrado con el testimonio y mas dos ollas de manteca que costaron dos reales que llebo juan de a guilar de presente al letrado 4 pesos
 - oi domingo abeinte uno de febrero di dos reales por salitre para el ganado y fue por el juan gutieres mayordomo 2 tomines
 - oi miercoles a tres de marsco di un peso para chocolate que le en biamos de presente a don diego de Villagomes y dos reales de papel blanco 1 peso 2 reales
 - oi sabado a seis de marso di dos reales para papel blan co 2 reales
 - oi guebes a beinteysinco de marso di real i medio para papel 1 real =
 - oi biernes a beinte i seis de marso salio juan de la mesquita

| | | |
|--------|--|------------------|
| | del bario de tico,o y domingo gutieres del bario de tinde a conprar chobos a chinantla y trugeron los dihos desi nuebe chobos costaron siete pecos y medio y quatro reales de petates pintados y tres reales de bainilla y dos reales de rabo de raton para el monumento el guebes canto y dos reales de pan que enbiamos de presente a los casiques y a los que fueron les dimos seis reales = asen | 9 pesos |
| | - oi lunes a beintenuebe de marso di dos reales para sera amarilla para tapar la pila al bautisterio i real y medio para papel asen tres reales i medio | 3 reales = |
| | - oi miercoles a treinta i uno de marso di dos reales para dos libras de ylo para labrar la sera el guebes canto mas un real que page al serero | 1 peso 5 reales |
| | - oi guebes a primero de abril di dos reales por un libro de plata para el sirio pasqual lo trujo migel peres bario de nuça,a de guaguaca | 2 reales |
| f. 65v | el mesmo dia di a el mayordomo de la comunidad dies reales para unas gallinas de la tierra para la pasqua | 1 peso |
| | - oi lunes a sinco de abril di sinco pecos a todos los pueblos para que trujeran unas abes para yr a dar las pasquas al padre prior y al señor alcalde maior | 5 pesos |
| | - en el mesmo dia di seis reales para conserba para los casiques y prensipales que se guntaron el guebes canto | 6 reales |
| | - oi martes a seis de abril di dies reales para flores y nangas para domingo de ramos y algunos ramos que trujo sebastian de mendosa bario de ayusi i pedro garsia del bario de tinde las quales trugeron de quicatlan | 1 pesos 2 reales |
| | - oi miercoles a siete de abril salio lorenzo gimenes bario de dana,a que fue por flores de yolocuchil i cacalocuchil a cocotipaqui | 6 reales |
| | - en el mesmo dia di quatro reales para clabos para armar el monumento los trujo grigorio manuel | 4 reales |
| | - en el mesmo dia senbraron la milpa de la comunidad y conpre dos almudes de frigoles para la gente que trabajo en la milpa | 3 reales |
| | - oi guebes a ocho de abril bino nicolas canhes y nicolas morales a trasladar una petision por el pleito de guchitepeque les page quatro reales | 4 reales |
| | - en el mesmo dia se presento la petision ante el señor alcalde mayor di un peso de la presentasion | 1 peso |
| | - oi lunes a dos de abril di tres reales para chilchote i gito mate para llebar de presente al padre prior i señor alcalde mayor el miercoles canto y unos melo | |

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| nes para el monumento | 1 peso |
| - oi miercoles canto a catorse de abril di tres reales i me dio para robalo para los casiques i prinsipales que se guntaron el guebes canto | 3 reales |
| - en el mesmo dia bino marsial gimenes maestro de esquela por quatro reales para candelas el dia de tinieblas i maintines la mañana de pasqua | 4 reales |
| - el guebes canto a quinse de abril di quatro i medio para guebos y pan y aseite para los casiques i prinsipales que se gunatorn el guebes canto | 4 reales |
| - oi sabado de gloria desisiete de abril conpramos dos carneros el uno lo enbiamos de presente al padre prior i e | |
| f. 66r | |
| l otro al señor alcalde mayor costaron | 5 reales |
| - esto damos por descargo de los bienes de la comunidad los quarenta i tres pecos y tres reales | 43 pesos 3 reales |
| - memoria de los gastos que se ofresen a la iglesia para quando viene el padre probinsial i para el padre prior y el señor alcalde mayor i en la comunidad de lo que yo es suplido domingo ramires de mi dinero | |
| - primeramente oi sabado a diesisiete de abril di veinte reales i medio para cacao y asucar y canela i achiotte y pastillas para la manana de pasqua | 2 pesos 4 reales |
| - el mismo dia bino gasinto de villafana maestro de esquela i le di quatro reales para candelas para la mana de pasqua | 4 reales |
| - oi lunes a desinuebe de abril di dos reales para papel | 2 reales |
| - oi lunes a beiniseis de abril di dos reales para papel | 2 reales |
| - oi domingo a dos de mayo di dos pesos por el testimonio del pleito de guchitepeque | 2 pesos |
| - oi guebes a tres de mayo bino el prior de tlagiaco frai nicolas de abendaño y di un peso para chocolate y marquesotes lo qual llebaron al resibimiento | 1 pesos |
| - oi domingo a treinta de mayo enpesaron a ensayar la danza para el corpus di tres reales para chocolate y pan y querdas por el maeso que ensayo la danza | 3 reales |
| - oi martes a primero de gunio di tres reales para frigoles para la gente que trabajo en la milpa de la comunidad quando sembraron el trigo | 3 reales |
| - oi guebes a tres de gunio salio pablo de la crus regidor para guaguaca por recaudo para el corpus le di cinco pesos para pebetes y pastillas de saumar i pastillas de boca y cacao y patastle de canpeche y robalo y media dosena de platos y media dosena de esquedillas por toda monta | 5 pesos |
| - oi biernes a quatro de gunio di un real para papel | 1 real |
| - oi domingo a seis de gunio ensayaron la danza di dos reales para | |

- chocolate pan y querdas para el maeso
- oi miercoles a nuebe de gunio di dos reales para pan chocolate y querdas 2 reales
 - oi guebes de gunio di un real para papel sellado para poner en la probision 1 real
- f. 66v
- oi domingo a tres de gunio di dos reales para chocolate pan y querdas para el maeso 2 reales
 - oi lunes catorse de gunio se ensayaron otra bes di seis reales para chocolate pan i asucar para el maeso y algunos prensipales que se ensayaron 6 reales
 - en el mesmo dia calio migel peres del bario de tinde por cacalocuchil para la fiesta del corpus el dia que hizo la comunidad 5 reales
 - oi miercoles a desiceis de gunio se ensayo otra bes di tres reales para chocolate y pan y asucar y querdas 3 reales
 - el mesmo di di tres pesos y medio real para asucar y una mano de papel y achiote y canela y istle 3 pesos
 - oi guebes a desisiete de gunio calio agustin peres del bario de sayuqu por flores a apoala y llebo 4 reales
 - oi biernes a diesiocho de gunio di tres pecos y quatro tomises para asucar y pan y marquesates y guebos y manteca y aseite y asafran y binagre para el dia de la bela 3 pesos
 - oi guebes a beinte i quatro de gunio di un peso para una yate y una gallina poneder a i una torta para dar de presente al maeso que enseño la danza 1 peso
 - oi sabado a dies de gulio di dos reales para papel 2 reales
 - oi biernes desiseis de gulio bino el diesmero di cinco reales para chocolate marquesote y biscochillos para el resibimiento 5 reales
 - el mismo dia di seite reales i medio para robalo i asafran y pan par el medio dia y chocolate y biscochillos para el besitador 3 reales
 - oi martes a beinte de gunio di quatro reales de la presentacion de una petision contra los de guchitepe que a señor tiniente diego gimenes 4 reales
 - oi miercoles a beinteuno de gulio di quatro reales para agustar los tres pesos que se le dieron al padre prior de la misa el dia de santa maria madalena 4 reales
 - el mesmo dia conpre aroba y medio de algodón para las mantas para la fiesta de santo domingo 2 pesos 3 reales
- f. 67r
- oi domingo a beintesinco de gulio se enpesaron a encayar la danza para la fiesta de santo domingo di cinco reales para chocolate y pan para el maeso que ensayo la danza y algunos prensipales que se ensayaron 5 reales
 - oi martes a beinte y siete de gulio se labro la sera

| | |
|---|------------------|
| y conpre una libra de ylo que costo sinco reales | |
| y conpre siete libras de polbora a peso la libra | 7 pesos |
| - el mesmo dia di seis reales para chocolate para los que ensayaron la danza | 6 reales |
| - oi miercoles a beinte i ocho de gulio bino domingo de la crus cacristan por quatro reales para gabon para labar los manteles de la yglesia | 4 reales |
| - el mesmo dia di dos reales para papel | 2 reales |
| - oi biernes a beinte y nueve de gulio di seis reales para chocolate para el maeso que ensayo la danza | 6 reales |
| - oi lunes a dos de agosto di siete pecos para asucar y cacao y unas gallinas de la tiera y querdas y pita y canela y pastillas de boca y achiote i pastale para la fiesta de santo domingo | 7 pesos |
| - oi martes a tres de agosto di dos reales para chocolate y pan para el maeso de la danza i asafran i manteca y pimienta y clabo y tosino | 1 pesos 4 reales |
| - oi miercoles a quatro de agosto di tres pesos y quatro reales i medio para chocolate de espuma para el padre prior i el señor alcalde mayor el dia de la fiesta | 3 pesos 2 reales |
| - oi guebés a sinco de agosto di tres reales para papel sellado y un real de papel blanco y quatro reales de una presentacion de una peticion que presentamos ante el señor donmanuel | 1 peso |
| - oi guebés a beintiseis de agosto di un peso para chocolate y maquesotes y asucar rosquetes para el resibimiento del diesmero y pan y asafran y candelas asen un peso | 1 peso |
| - oi biernes beinte i siete de agosto di catorse reales y medio para chocolalte y marquesotes i asucar y pan para el resibimiento del padre probinsial | 1 peso 6 reales |
| f. 67v | |
| - oi biernes a tres de agosto conpre dos mantas de pagaros a peso cada manta y dos paños de seda a quatro tomines cada uno para dar de presente al padre probinsial | 3 pesos |
| - oi sabado a quatro de setiembre conpre una mani de papel costo tres pesos i un real | 3 pesos 1 real |
| - oi martes a beinte y seis de octubre di beinte reales para dos libras de sera para el tumulto (?) de las animas dia de los finados | 2 pesos |
| - oi miercoles a primero de diciembre di dos reales para papel sellado por la elecion y dos reales que le a lorenzo de ribera porque eschriebiera | 2 pesos |
| - oi guebés ados de diciembre di seis reales para un carnero para llebar de presente al señor alcalde ma | |

| | |
|--|------------------|
| yor en la matansa porque firmara su merse d las elesiones | 6 reales |
| - oi lunes a tres de disiembre di quatro pesos y dos reales para unas abes para el señor alcal de mayor y para el padre prior para la pas qua de nabidad | 4 pesos |
| - oi martes catorse de disiembre bino domingo de la crus cacistran por quatro reales para gabon para labar los manteles de la iglesia | 4 reales |
| - oi miercoles a beinte dos de disiembre di dos pe sos para chocolate y marquesotes y biscochillos y asucar y pan para le recibimento del señor alcalde mayor quando bino su mersedede de la matansa | 2 peos |
| - oi guebes a beinte y tres de disiembre di tres pesos i se is reales i medio tomin para cacao y asucar y cane la y pastillas y achiote por la pasqua de nabidad | 3 pesos 6 reales |
| - oi biernes a beintequatro de disiembre bino jasin to de billafana maestro de esuela por quatro re ales para candelas para maitines la mañana de pasqua | 4 reales |
| - en el mesmo dia di sinco pecos de limosna al padre prior de la misa | 5 pesos |
| - oi biernes a treinta y uno de disienbre di seis reales para un carnero para dar de comer a los precipa les que se guntaron en la comunidad | 6 reales |
| - se monta esto que yo es suplido domingo ramires ochenta y dos pesos y dos reales y medio real | 82 pesos |
| ... | |

f. 68v

| | |
|--|----|
| - memoria de la mantas que re recogeron para la sema na santa para los pobres desiocho mantas delas qua les ce dieron dose a los pobres y quatro que enbia mos a megico de presente a los cenores de la aude nsia por el pleito de guchitepeques las quales llebo antonio de la chrus el regidor | 16 |
| - memoria de las mantas que re recogeron para la fies ta titular del pueblo trujeron los tequitlatos catorse mantas de pajaros y un paño de seda de los dies barios y les dimos a los tequitlatos quinse li bras de algodón para las mantas las quales dimos de presente a los padres y al señor alcalde maior y a los conbidados con los ayates de trujo pedro de las casas y migel de la chrus de las que dan las mugeres de cada bario de las quales trugeron disi ocho ayates | 18 |
| - memoria de las mantas que dimos de presente al re berendo padre probinsial le dimos sinco mantas | |

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| de pagaros y un paño de seda | 5 |
| - y al compañero del padre probinsial le dimos una manta de pagaros y un ayate i un paño de seda | 3 |
| - al padre prior una manta de pagaros i un ayate y un paño de seda | 3 |
| - al padre su prior una manta de pagaros y un aiate i un paño de seda | 3 |
| - al padre frai jose ramires una manta de pagaros i un ayate y un paño de seda | 3 |
| - y al padre frai christobal una manta de pagaros y un ayate y un paño de seda | 3 |
| - y al padre frai jose de alfaro una manta de pagaros y un ayate y un paño de seda | 3 |
| - al padre frai jose de bergosa un ayate i un paño de seda y una manta de pagaros | 3 |
| - y al señor alcalde mayor una manta de pagaros y un ayate y un paño de seda | 3 |
| - al señor teniente dos ayates | 2 |
| - al gobernador y al alcalde tres ayates | 3 |
| - a guan ortis una manta de pagaros por los toros que se torearon | 1 |
| i un ayate que ysieron serbilletas | 1 |
| al señor don andres un ayate | 1 |
| a juan montesino un ayate | 1 |
| al señor coregidor de nuchistlan un ayate | 1 |
| - monta las mantas y los ayates treinta y tres con las dos que quedaron la semana santa y nueve paños de seda los quales costaron quatro reales asen quatro pesos porque uno trujeron de un bario | 4 pesos |
| - memoria del dinero que recogieron para la sera que se puso en monimiento el guebes canto se recogieron en los barios y en los pueblos quare i dos pesos i seis reales y conpramos dos arosas de sera a nueve reales la libra que asen cinquenta y seis pecos y dos reales en esta sera supli yo domingo ramires tres pecos i quatro reales | 13 pesos 4 reales |

5. Permission granted to the naturales of Yanhuitlan to finish the construction of a chapel dedicated to a barrio Christ. AGN Indios, 25, 214: 163r-163v (1677)

Ante mi se presentó una petición de testimonio garante ex.mo señor Basalobre el gobernador alcalde de común y naturales del pueblo de Yanguitlan del obispado de Oaxaca. Digo que en dicho pueblo y cavezera tienen una fábrica de dos lienzos de voveda que se principió en la antigüedad y no se perficionó ni acavó la obra desde entonces se deslizó sin poderse reconocer el efecto a que se fabricava y después se han servido los naturales, como de casa de comunidad, aunque no lo es pues tienen en dicho pueblo y cavezera señalada y perfecta sin necesitar de aquellos dos lienzos referidos y respecto de reconocerse suntuosidad y hermosura a la obra pretenden perficionarla y acavarla a su costa dichos naturales y que sirva de hermita dedicada a Jesús Nazareno en que se exerta y emplea la devoción de todos los naturales de aquel pueblo y territorio por ser en grande extremo la que tienen todos a esta santa ymagen de Jesús Nazareno en que no se causa perjuicio a nadie sino ante sea a monte al culto divino y devoción por tanto se conceda facultad y licencia dichos naturales para hacer acabar y perficionar dicha obra y que sirva de hermita dedicada a la santa ymagen de Jesús Nazareno por la razones que se an expresado. México, 9 Febrero de 1677

6. Appointment of the Mayordomo of the barrio of Ayusi. AHJT Civil, 20, 9 (1711)

f. 3r

Hoy martes veyntetres de junio año de 1711
 le dimos todos nosotros el gobier
 no gobernador y alcaldes y regidores el ju
 ramento a Domingo Juan por mayordomo
 del barrio de Xiquitongo q llaman en la len
 gua mixteca ayuxi en nombre del Rey
 nuestro señor como justicias que lo mas de
 esta cabecera de Santo Domingo Yanguil
 tlan para que sirva la festividad de
 Corpus Christo y del señor Santo Christo
 para que se le pida misa el biernes de
 quaresma y para la procesion la noche
 del jube de la sangre el fiscal Nicolas gonsales y felipe Ortiz
 y el mayordomo que acabo el año de
 milsetesientos y dies que fue Juan gomez
 con los dos tequitlatos Domingo Gonzalez y
 Domingo de la cruz que vino el mayordo
 mo nuevo Domingo juan y el regidor
 deste año de mil setecientos y once sebasti
 an Ortiz y sebastian lopez dose libras de se
 ra una toalla que ofrecio la muger de
 Nicolas de Joyo y quatro gavos de poner flo
 res dieciocho obejas de biente, una
 cabra un caballo y un peso en plata que
 gano este caballo que fue doxaca que fue
 lo que se mando en esta comonidad y por
 el tanto lo firmamos en este papel que
 no falte este cargo cada año felipe
 migel gobernador

...

f. 4r

Petizion

Felipe Ortiz rexidor natural deste pueblo
 de yanguitlan del bario de ayuxi Felipe
 Ortiz y Nicholas soriano tiquitlatos mando
 nes del Nicolas Gonzales sebastian Ortiz
 y Domingo mendosa sebastian mendosa
 Domingo Ximenes pedro gonsales del Balle
 Domingo García Nicolas Ramirez pedro
 Betanzos Juan de Tapia Nicolas lopez pri
 ncipales por nosotros y en nombre del co
 mun del dho bario = como nos aya lu

gar en derecho paracemos ante VM. y dijimos que teniendo como tiene dho nuestro barrio una milagrosa ymagen de nuestro señor crucificado que sacamos en procision la semana santa como los demas barrios de que se compone este pueblo como es publico y notorio y para su mayor culto aseo y reverencia eleximos entre nosotros un principal de dho nuestro bario por mayordo mo y en cuyo poder entregose la limosna y demas bienes de dha santa ymagen y para la selebración de la otava de Corpus questa repartida por dias y barrios debaxo de cuyo asentado principio criamos por tal mayordomos Domingo Juan natural del dho nuestro bario a quien alevosamente mato en su rancho el dia biernes oy ase quince dias un indio chocho llamadose Tomás de santiago en cuya diligencias esta uno entendiendo y porque tiene ... egecusi3n y enbargo en los bienes del suso dho. y entre ellos se allan parte de dho nuestro bario y santa ymagen de jesus crucificado que son los siguientes beinte libras y tres oncas de sera una toalla de santo Christo cuarenta cabezas de ganado obejuna de chico y grande una cabra y un chivo trese fanegas y media de maiz y ocho pesos y un real en plata un par de candeleros de asofar y como aroba y media de lana de la tres quila de agora dos meses para que dhos bienes se nos entregen restituyan y vuelavan aemos demostracion ante VM. del titulo de tal mayordomo del dho nuestro bario a proceado por el gobernador y alcalde que fueron del año prosimo pasado desta cabecera y por la memoria que de muestra mas con los espresos

7. Inventories of religious images owned by three Mixtecs of Yanhuitlan, 1738, 1779, 1782.

AHJT Civil, 29, 3

Pasquala García del barrio de Yuyucha, 10 de Octubre 1738.

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| Una imagen de la Ss. Trinidad y una de San José <i>2 varas*</i> | 20 pesos cada uno |
| San Vicente | 15 pesos |
| Nra. Señora de Guadalupe | 20 pesos |
| Dos Angeles <i>1 vara y ½</i> | 6 pesos cada uno |
| San Joaquín y Santa Anna <i>1 vara y ¼</i> | 6 pesos |
| Nra. Señora del Carmen <i>1 vara y ¼</i> | 6 pesos, 4 reales |
| Natividad y Jesús entre los doctores | 7 pesos cada uno |
| Virgen de los Dolores | 3 pesos |
| ... | |
| Un relicario de San Felipe con marco de plata | 20 reales |
| Un Rosario grabado con medallones | 3 pesos |

AHJT Civil, 43, 27

Miguel Gutiérrez, 1779

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------|
| Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe | 10 pesos |
| Ss. Trinidad | 15 pesos |
| Dos de San Rafael y San Miguel | 12 pesos |
| Una chica de San Miguel | 4 pesos |
| Una chica de San Juan Bautista | 4 pesos |
| Dos de la Purísima Concepción | 2 pesos |
| Sagrado Corazón de Jesús | 6 reales |
| Nuestra Señora del Rosario | 4 reales |

AHJT Civil, 44, 32

Domingo de la Cruz, 1782

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Una pintura de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe <i>2 varas</i> | 25 pesos |
| Una pintura historiada de Nra. Señora del Rosario y Santo Domingo <i>1 vara y ½</i> | 10 pesos |
| Dos chicas de San Raphael y el angel de la guarda <i>¾ vara</i> | 14 pesos |
| San Joaquín y Santa Ana <i>1 vara</i> | 5 pesos |
| Dos chicas con las cabezas de San Juan y San Anastacio <i>1/3 vara</i> | 2 pesos |
| Divina Pastora <i>¼ vara</i> | 12 reales |
| Santo Domingo <i>1 vara</i> | 2 pesos |

* 1 vara = 0.8 m

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| Nuestra Señora del Carmen 1 vara | 3 pesos |
| San José <i>menos de ¾ vara</i> | 2 pesos |
| Nuestra Señora de Belén <i>¾ vara</i> | 3 pesos |
| San Sebastián <i>¼ vara</i> | 2 pesos |
| Nuestra Señora de la Merced <i>¾ vara</i> | 2 pesos |
| Santa Catalina <i>poco menos de 1 vara</i> | 3 pesos |
| Otra pintura <i>1/3 vara</i> | 1 peso |
| San José, la Virgen y el Niño Jesús <i>1/3 vara</i> | 2 pesos |
| Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe | 6 reales |
| Jesús <i>1 vara y ½</i> | 3 pesos |
| Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe <i>2 varas</i> | 8 pesos |
| Una historiada de Nuestra Señora y San Juan niño <i>1 vara</i> | 6 pesos |
| Dos con las cabezas de San Juan and San Anastacio <i>½ vara</i> | 2 pesos |
| Señor de la Santa Cruz <i>1 vara y ½</i> | 3 pesos |
| Dos de Nra. Señora de Guadalupe y San José <i>¼ vara</i> | 2 pesos |
| Dos historiadas con los Doce Mártires <i>2 varas</i> | 24 pesos |
| Una escultura del Cristo Crucifijado en su baldaquín | 4 pesos |
| Juicio Final <i>2 varas</i> | 6 pesos |
| Divina Pastora <i>½ vara</i> | 12 reales |
| Nuestra Señora de los Dolores <i>½ vara</i> | 1 peso |
| María, San Joseph, Jesús y San Juan <i>1/3 vara</i> | 2 pesos |
| Una chica de la Virgen de los Dolores | 1 peso |
| San Agustín <i>½ vara</i> | 2 pesos |
| Dos de la Ss. Trinidad y Santo Tomás | 6 reales |
| San Francisco y San Raphael | 3 pesos |
| Una escultura de la Virgen de los Dolores | 6 pesos |
| Dos esculturas de Christo | 2 pesos |
| Una escultura del Niño Jesús | 2 pesos |
| San José <i>¾ vara</i> | 3 pesos |
| Una escultura de un Crucifijo | 1 peso |
| Un San José, Señora de Juquila, San Vicente | 4 reales cada uno |
| ... | |
| Un dengue de terciopelo carmesí bordado de plata en dos mitad | 12 pesos |
| Una tilma danzante de terciopelo morado | 13 pesos |
| Una funda de damasco colorado de danzante | 2 pesos |
| ... | |
| Quatro pares de media de danzantes | 1 peso |
| Dos calzones blancos de danzantes con sus encaxes y banda | 3 pesos |
| Dos camisas usadas de Pontivi de ropa de Angeles | 6 reales |
| Dos pañuelos de ropa de Angeles | 4 reales |
| Tres vuelos de camisa adorno de Angeles | 6 reales |
| Quatro pares de alas de Angeles | 2 pesos |
| Tres coronas de palo guarnecidas de flor y piedras falzas | 2 pesos, 2 reales |
| Un morrión de Angel | 4 reales |
| Ochenta y cinco plumas verdes | 42 pesos, 4 reales |
| Veynte y una otras blancas y pintadas | 2 pesos, 5 reales |
| Tres bastoncitos de Angelito | 10 reales |

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