

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

UNSETTLING THE SPIRITUAL CONQUEST:  
THE MURALS OF THE HUAQUECHULA MONASTERY  
IN SIXTEENTH CENTURY MEXICO

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In loving memory of my father  
CW4 Bruce A. Smith (May 3, 1962 – November 2, 2003)

For my son, Francis Esquivel

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines how Nahuas used their Franciscan monastery—its spaces, imagery, and institutional structure—to challenge Spanish hegemony in the Atlixco Valley, the bread-basket of sixteenth century New Spain. It concentrates on the artistic and sociopolitical interventions of Indigenous Nahuas within the public and private spaces of the monastery of San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, Mexico to upend a frequent assumption that Indigenous people engaged with Christianity on a superficial level and predominately through outdoor, public rituals. Analysis of the Huaquechula monastery's multiple topographies repositions Nahuas as *insiders*, physically and socio-politically situated within the monastery to negotiate power asymmetries and advance Nahua interests and futures. My chapters follow Nahuas from the most public to the most private sacred spaces within the Huaquechula monastery to trace two distinct but overlapping issues: the development of a sixteenth century Nahua mural painting tradition, and Christian art and architecture as an expression of Indigenous political and territorial self-determination. In so doing, my dissertation demonstrates that Nahuas were not passive recipients of the large-scale changes to their built and sociopolitical environments in the wake of the Spanish conquest. Instead, Nahuas deployed the monastery's art and architecture to negotiate a future for their *altepetl*, one that made Nahuas indispensable to the spiritual and administrative operations of the monastery of San Martín de Tours.

The Huaquechula monastery raises a fundamental question for the study of the colonial Americas: how does Indigenous Christian art and architecture evince artistic and political agency? Traditionally, this question has been answered by centering specific objects and texts that have discernible marks of Indigeneity. The case of the Huaquechula monastery is instructive in this instance because the standard sources for investigating Indigenous agency are extremely

limited. As a result, the Huaquechula monastery seems to be an unlikely place to unearth Indigenous agency. I overcome this impasse by shifting the analytical lens from form to context. This dissertation investigates the Huaquechula monastery within a fifty-year interval between 1535-1585 through a comparative analysis of four spaces: the monastery patio (chapter 1), the lower cloister (chapter 2), the church interior (chapter 3), and the upper cloister (chapter 4). Considered together, the Huaquechula monastery illuminates how Nahuas used Christian art and architecture to address the ever-changing configurations of Spanish colonial power. An art historical investigation of the Huaquechula monastery is thus an opportunity to critically engage with the assumptions implicit in current models of Indigenous art history in the Americas, and broaden the analytical toolkit to encompass approaches grounded in Indigenous worldviews

## INTRODUCTION

On Christmas 1535, don Juan and his wife and other nobles from the Nahuatl *altepetl* of Huaquechula in today's state of Puebla, Mexico, made the day-long trek to Huejotzingo to attend Mass at the Franciscan monastery [Fig. 1].<sup>1</sup> Related by marriage to the illustrious Mexican Emperor Moteuczoma II, don Juan was the second-highest ranking noble in Huaquechula. Despite his station, he dressed modestly at Mass that day, donning the simple white tunic of commoners to express his humility before the sacrament. The gesture, ripe with Biblical symbolism, so impressed the friar that he administered Communion to don Juan, making him the first Indigenous recipient of the Eucharist in New Spain. Then, three days later and back in Huaquechula, don Juan suddenly became ill and died.

First recorded by fray Toribio de Benavente ("Motolinia") in 1541, the story of don Juan conforms to Franciscan ideas about the Christian conversion of pagan peoples before the Last Judgment.<sup>2</sup> Don Juan's clean, white tunic alludes to symbolism found in Biblical passages noted

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<sup>1</sup> An *altepetl* (plural: *altepemeh*) is an ethnically Nahuatl city-state. James Lockhart addresses the political organization of late pre-Hispanic and colonial Nahuatl society at length in *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), 14-58. For clarity, I adopt the modern appellation Huaquechula to refer to the pre-Hispanic *altepetl* and the colonial city. In the documentary record, however, Huaquechula appears variously as Quauhquechollan, Cuauhquechollan, and Huehuequechollan, with the later designating the ancestral settlement at Macuilxochitepec.

Today in Mexico, mendicant establishments are commonly referred to as *conventos* or *ex-conventos* to distinguish them from parish churches. In sixteenth-century Nahuatl documents, however, "monestr<sup>os</sup>" was used to describe mendicant establishments or indicate the residence of friars; by contrast, "yglesia" more broadly connoted any Christian temple or was used to distinguish the nave and sanctuary from the cloisters. One of the best examples of the level of specificity with which Nahuas described religious establishments appears in 1567 *acta de cabildo* from Tlaxcala. See James Lockhart, Frances Berdan, Arthur J. O. Anderson, *The Tlaxcalan Actas: A Compendium of the Records of the Cabildo of Tlaxcala (1545-1627)* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1986), 122-125.

<sup>2</sup> Motolinia first recorded this account in his *Historia de los Indios de la Nueva España*, written between 1538-1541 but not published until 1858. For a modern edition, see Motolinia, *Historia*

for their millenarian content, while his ‘good death’ ensured his soul a speedy passage through Purgatory in advance of the Second Coming.<sup>3</sup> In the view of the Franciscans, don Juan was guaranteed life in Christian Paradise because he had taken Communion before he died. Moreover, the promise of Christian salvation had motivated Nahuas to convert. The episode initiated the Christian salvation economy in New Spain. Perhaps most significantly, don Juan’s death yielded Christian architecture: in 1538 and shortly after don Juan’s death, the Nahua *gobernador* don Martín Cortés Xochitlahua (r. ca. 1530-1550) founded a Franciscan monastery at Huaquechula [Figs. 2-4].<sup>4</sup> He dedicated the monastery to his namesake, San Martín de Tours,

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*de los indios de la Nueva España*, ed. Edmundo O’Gorman (Mexico City: Editorial Porrúa, 1969), 131-132. For an English translation, see *Motolinia’s History of the Indians of New Spain*, ed. and trans., Francis B. Steck (Washington D.C.: American Academy for Franciscan History, 1951), 194-195. The miracle at Huaquechula also appears in later chronicles by Franciscan friars. See Gerónimo de Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana*, ed. Joaquín García Icazbalceta (Alicante: Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes [1870; Porrúa: 1980], bk. 3, chap. 42; Juan de Torquemada, *Monarquía indiana* (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, 1975), vol. 5, bk. 6, 267-268; See also Osvaldo F. Pardo, *The Origins of Mexican Catholicism: Nahua Rituals and Christian Sacraments in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 137. I adopt the standard Nahuatl spelling “Motolinia,” rather than the Spanish spelling because Hispanized Nahuatl terms carry accents that tend to distort the emphases and glottal stops characteristic of Nahuatl.

<sup>3</sup> The white garment worn by Don Juan alludes to the prophecy of Isaiah 61:10: “I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, and my soul shall be joyful in my God: for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation;” and Apocalypse 22:14-15: “Blessed are those *who wash their robes*, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and may enter the city by its gates. But outside are the dogs, the sorcerers, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the *idolaters*, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.” [emphasis mine]. These allusions were especially potent during Advent as the season celebrates the Second Coming of Christ and is thus associated with spiritual rebirth. See Francisco Jiménez, “Vida de fray Martín de Valencia,” ed. Pedro Angeles Jiménez in Antonio Rubial García, *La hermana pobreza. el Franciscanismo: de la Edad Media a la evangelización novohispana* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1996), 232-233. All biblical quotations in Latin are taken from the Douay-Rheims translation based on the Vulgate Bible.

<sup>4</sup> Motolinia indicates that Don Juan had attended Mass at Huejotzingo for three years before his death and that a friary was built “about four years later.” Don Juan’s death and the building of the monastery thus occurred between 1529, when the Huejotzingo friary was founded, and 1540. Based on parallel historical evidence, I hypothesize 1538-39 for the founding of the Huaquechula monastery. See George Kubler, *Mexican Architecture of the Sixteenth Century*, vol. 2 (New

a warrior saint hailed as a conqueror of Death.<sup>5</sup> The construction of the Huaquechula monastery made tangible the Franciscan dream of rebuilding the Temple of Jerusalem in New Spain.<sup>6</sup> In this regard, Motolinia's narrative is just another allegory of the so-called spiritual conquest of the Americas, a topic of perennial interest in colonial Latin American historiography.<sup>7</sup> Yet the story of don Juan's death and the subsequent foundation of the Huaquechula monastery also contains key details that disrupt Motolinia's apocalyptic anecdote.

When read through the lens of Nahua sources, Motolinia's account illuminates ancient feuds and inter-Indigenous rivalries accelerated by Spanish colonization and Christian

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Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), 458. On the dating of Motolinia's chronicles, see *Handbook of Middle American Indians*, vol. 13, pt. 2, ed. Robert Wauchope, Howard F. Cline, and John B. Glass (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1974), 144-145.

<sup>5</sup> This characterization of Saint Martin is characteristic of Nahua Christian sources, especially Bernardino de Sahagún, *Psalmody Christiana*, ed. and trans. Arthur J. O. Anderson (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1993), 332-333. Martin of Tours, whose feast is celebrated November 11, is traditionally associated with the suffering souls of Purgatory and his feast day is the last to be celebrated before the season of Advent. On the cult of Saint Martin, see Yossi Maurey, *Medieval Music, Legend, and the Cult of St. Martin: The Local Foundations of a Universal Saint* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 206-246.

<sup>6</sup> John Leddy Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans in the New World: A Study of the Writings of Gerónimo de Mendieta (1525-1604)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1956), 20-22.

<sup>7</sup> Canonical studies of Franciscan evangelization in New Spain are: Marcel Bataillon, "Nouveau Monde et fin du monde," *L'Education Nationale* 32 (1952): 3-6; Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom*; Robert Ricard, *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico: An Essay on the Apostolate and the Evangelizing Methods of the Mendicant Orders in New Spain, 1523-1572* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974); Delno C. West, "Medieval Ideas of Apocalyptic Mission and the Early Franciscans in Mexico," *The Americas* 45, no. 3 (1989): 297-300; Georges Baudot, *Utopia and History in Mexico: The First Chroniclers of Mexican Civilization (1520-1569)* (Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1995); Francisco Morales, "Dos figuras en la Utopía Franciscana de Nueva España: Fray Juan de Zumárraga y fray Martín de Valencia," *Caravelle. Cahiers du monde hispanique et luso-brésilien* 76-77 (2001): 333-334. Most recently, Steven E. Turley revisited canonical studies of the Franciscan apocalyptic mission, casting the friars as victims of their own enterprise. See Turley, *Catholic Christendom, 1300-1700: Franciscan Spirituality and Mission in New Spain, 1524-1599: Conflict Beneath the Sycamore Tree (Luke 19:1-10)* (Farnham: Routledge, 2016).

conversion.<sup>8</sup> Don Juan's Communion on Christmas 1535 upset the balance of power in the Puebla-Tlaxcala Valley. As Motolinia related, don Juan was a member of the powerful Mexica lineage. What he does not tell us, however, is that the Mexica had oppressed the Huaquecholteca for decades. Furthermore, Huejotzingo, where don Juan and his family attended Mass, was a long-standing adversary of Huaquechula. In the 1450s Huejotzingo defeated Huaquechula and displaced the community from their ancestral settlement and temple. From a Huaquecholteca perspective, don Juan's Communion was a serious snub: a foreigner and invader had received Communion at Mass celebrated in enemy territory instead of Huaquechula's *gobernador*, don Martín! For the Huaquecholteca, don Juan's Communion was a disquieting reminder of nearly a century of Huaquecholteca oppression under foreign rule. Don Juan's preferential treatment by the Franciscans, furthermore, underscored the political allegiance they had forged with the Mexica in Mexico City where the mission was headquartered.<sup>9</sup> It also undermined don Martín's authority and legitimacy as the hereditary ruler of Huaquechula.

That all changed when don Juan suddenly died. With don Juan out of the way, *gobernador* don Martín was in position to strike up a relationship with the Franciscans and reassert the authority of his Huaquecholteca lineage.<sup>10</sup> Earlier in 1535 don Martín had successfully

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<sup>8</sup> The origin story of the Huaquechula monastery is exceptional. Franciscan chroniclers rarely recorded the foundation of new friaries, even though the Order established over one hundred missions in New Spain in a span of less than seventy-five years. Even fewer provided insight into the sociopolitical situation of the *altepetl* (city-state), let alone the names of the Indigenous rulers who marshalled the labor and materials to build a monastery.

<sup>9</sup> Barbara E. Mundy, *The Death of Aztec Tenochtitlan, The Life of Mexico City* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015), 99-113.

<sup>10</sup> Notably, Motolinia does not provide the names of the friars at Huejotzingo or Huaquechula in 1535. While it could be argued that Motolinia's presupposes the reader knows the names of friars active in New Spain in the 1530s (Motolinia was father guardian at Tlaxcala then), this omission contradicts one of primary objectives of the chronicle: the recording of spiritual biographies of the missionaries. Most importantly, this omission focuses attention on the two Indigenous protagonists, the only named historical persons in the account.

negotiated for recognition of Huaquechula's political and territorial sovereignty in colonial courts. A decree signed by Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza himself established Huaquechula's borders and granted the community access to land and water in contested territory claimed by Huejotzingo.<sup>11</sup> The incident at Huejotzingo, however, made it clear that a viceregal decree did not guarantee Huaquechula's place in the new colonial system. After all, the Huaquecholteca still had to attend Mass at Huejotzingo, making a humiliating trek through lands they had relinquished to their enemies decades before the Spanish conquest. Huaquechula needed its own monastery and so *gobernador* don Martín built one. Around 1538 Huaquechula established the monastery of San Martín de Tours, enhancing its political status and expanding its territorial domain as a result. For the Huaquecholteca, the construction of a Franciscan monastery following don Juan's death was not a Christian miracle. Instead, it was a calculated strategy to secure authority and power in the shifting terrains of colonial Mexico.

This dissertation examines how the Huaquecholteca used their Franciscan monastery—its spaces, imagery, and institutional structure—to challenge Spanish hegemony in sixteenth century New Spain. It concentrates on the artistic and sociopolitical interventions of the Huaquecholteca within the public and private spaces of the monastery to upend a frequent assumption that Indigenous people engaged with Christianity on a superficial level and predominately through outdoor, public rituals. Analysis of the Huaquechula monastery's multiple topographies repositions Nahuas as *insiders*, physically and socio-politically situated within the monastery to negotiate power asymmetries and advance Huaquecholteca interests and futures. My chapters

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<sup>11</sup> The *Real cédula* (royal ordinance) recognized Huaquechula's petition to retain ancestral "lands, waters, and mountains," AGN, Tierras, vol. 2683, exp. 4, f. 162 quoted in Avis Mysyk, "Land, Labor, and Indigenous Response: Huaquechula (Mexico), 1521–1633," *Colonial Latin American Review* 24, no. 3 (2015): 339.

follow Nahuas from the most public to the most private sacred spaces within the Huaquechula monastery to trace two distinct but overlapping issues: the development of a sixteenth century Nahua mural painting tradition, and Christian art and architecture as an expression of Indigenous political and territorial self-determination.<sup>12</sup> In so doing, my dissertation demonstrates that Nahuas were not passive recipients of the large-scale changes to their built and sociopolitical environments in the wake of the Spanish conquest. Instead, the Huaquecholteca deployed the monastery's art and architecture to negotiate a future for their *altepetl*, one that made Nahuas indispensable to the spiritual and administrative operations of the monastery of San Martín de Tours.

The Huaquechula monastery raises a fundamental question for the study of the early modern period: how does Christian art and architecture evince Indigenous artistic and political agency? Traditionally, this question has been answered by centering on specific objects and texts that have discernible marks of Indigeneity, such as paintings with pre-Hispanic symbols, liturgical ornaments decorated with feather imagery, pictorial cartographs with pre-Hispanic glyphs, or manuscripts written in alphabetic Nahuatl. The case of the Huaquechula monastery is instructive in this instance because the standard sources for investigating Indigenous agency are extremely limited. As a result, the Huaquechula monastery seems to be an unlikely place to unearth Indigenous agency. I overcome this impasse by shifting the analytical lens from form to

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<sup>12</sup> The Huaquechula monastery was designated a historical monument by the Instituto de Antropología e Historia (INAH) in 1963 when it underwent an architectural restoration under the direction of Efraín Castro Morales of the Centro INAH Puebla. In 1972-1973 murals were uncovered in the church and monastery by a conservation team headed by Rodolfo Vallin. To date, the only study of the monastery has concentrated on the murals of the lower cloister, see Julieta Domínguez Silva, "La pintura mural del claustro bajo del convento de San Martín Huaquechula, Puebla (OFM). Análisis del estilo y de la iconografía," Master's Thesis (Universidad Autónoma Nacional de México, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, 2009). My thanks to Dra. Julietta Domínguez Silva for introducing me to the Huaquechula monastery.



context. This dissertation investigates the Huaquechula monastery within a fifty-year interval between 1535-1585 through a comparative analysis of four spaces: the monastery patio (chapter 1), the lower cloister (chapter 2), the church interior (chapter 3), and the upper cloister (chapter 4). Considered together, the spaces of the Huaquechula monastery illuminate how Nahuas used Christian art and architecture to address the ever-changing configurations of Spanish colonial power. An art historical investigation of the Huaquechula monastery is thus an opportunity to critically engage with the assumptions implicit in current models of Indigenous art history in the Americas, and broaden the analytical toolkit to encompass approaches grounded in Indigenous worldviews.

By demonstrating that the Huaquecholteca used Christian art and architecture to assert self-determination, this dissertation challenges the conventional picture of the colonial Mexican monastery as a crucible for Christian religious conversion. Instead it shows that monasteries are key sites for studying Indigenous sovereignty and the politics of style in the early modern period, intertwined issues that are often treated separately by scholars. Bringing an awareness of the dynamics of settler colonialism to the investigation of colonial Mexican monasteries allows me to integrate the study of Christian art and architecture with the study of Nahua sovereignty. This approach encompasses the centering of Indigenous material culture and history alongside an inquiry into the particularities of the political and territorial dynamics of the on-going displacement and dispossession of Indigenous people from their lands and institutions. My approach crosses disciplinary borders to create a dialogue between scholarship on Indigenous arts and critical theory in Latin America and the United States and Canada.<sup>13</sup> Such an

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<sup>13</sup> On the fundamentally expansive conception of Indigenous sovereignty, see Robert Allen Warrior, *Tribal Secrets: Recovering American Indian Intellectual Traditions* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994); Fred Hoxie, “Retrieving the Red Continent: Settler

intervention is fundamental to recognizing Indigenous survivance through the vehicle of the colonial Mexican monastery, and addressing discourses of passivity, subversion, and victimization that have characterized analyses of Indigenous agency in the Americas.<sup>14</sup>

### **The Lay of the Land**

Following the Spanish invasion of Mexico in 1519, European missionaries arrived in Mexico, which they named New Spain, to preach and convert diverse Indigenous populations to Christianity. The first missionaries to arrive in Mexico were the Franciscans, a religious order distinguished by their values of poverty and penance, and their following—as literally as possible—the model of Saint Francis, their founder, and of Christ and the Apostles. Within seventy-five years, Indigenous communities had built more than three hundred mendicant monasteries throughout Mexico. The colonial Mexican monasteries were sites for forceful indoctrination of Indigenous people and the formation of Spanish imperial subjects. Yet, a constitutive feature of the structure of power at Mexican monasteries was the scarcity of friars. At the Huaquechula monastery, there were never more than three friars posted to the monastery at any time in the sixteenth century, and at least one friar was usually away ministering in

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Colonialism and the History of American Indians in the US,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 31, no. 6 (2008): 1153-1167; Michelle H. Raheja, *Reservation Reelism: Redfacing, Visual Sovereignty, and Representations of Native Americans in Film* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010); Jolene Rickard, “Visual Sovereignty in the Time of Biometric Sensors,” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 110, no. 2 (2011): 465–86; Dylan Robinson, “Public Writing, Sovereign Reading: Indigenous Language Art in Public Space,” *Art Journal* 75, no. 2 (2017): 85-99.

<sup>14</sup> On the term “survivance,” see Gerald Vizenor, *Manifest Manners: Postindian Warriors of Survivance* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1994); Gerald Vizenor, “Aesthetics of Survivance,” in *Survivance: Narrative of Native Presence*, ed. Gerald Vizenor (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 1-24; Stephen W. Silliman, “Archaeologies of Indigenous Survivance and Residence: Navigating Survivance and Residence in Colonial and Scholarly Dualities,” in *Rethinking Colonial Pasts through Archaeology*, ed. Neal Ferris, Rodney Harrison, and Michael V. Wilcox (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 57-76.

neighboring villages.<sup>15</sup> Even after the sharp demographic decline in the sixteenth century as a result of devastating outbreaks of infectious disease (*hueyi cocoliztli*), Huaquechula had a population of just over 5,000 inhabitants by 1600.<sup>16</sup> The shortage of friars had a tangible impact on how Franciscans designed conventual spaces, interacted with Indigenous people within the monastery, and carried out their spiritual practices. Yet this shortage also created a situation in which the friars were extraordinarily reliant on Nahua elites educated in Franciscan schools to

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<sup>15</sup> The monastery of San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula is located within the bishopric of Tlaxcala in the Franciscan Province of the *Santo Evangelio*. The only friars named in relation to Huaquechula in Franciscan sources are fray Juan de Alameda, who died at the monastery in 1570, and fray Miguel de Rodarte from Valencia, who died at the monastery in 1610. Both men rigidly adhered to the Observance, and Alameda was associated with the eremitic Conceptionist Province in Spain before coming to New Spain. Given that fray Gerónimo de Mendieta directly associated fray Diego de Almonte with Huaquechula, it is like Almonte founded the monastery. He may have been joined by Antonio de Maldonado, who is also associated with the monastery. Both men arrived from the eremitic Province of San Gabriel in winter 1525 and established the Cuernavaca (Cuauhnahuac) monastery in 1526. Joaquín García Icazbaleceta, *Códice franciscano in Nueva colección de documentos para la historia de México* (henceforward *NCDHM*) vol. 2 (Mexico City: Francisco Díaz de León, 1903), 26-27; Antonio de Ciudad Real, *Tratado curioso y docto de las grandezas de la Nueva España*, ed. Alonso de San Juan, Víctor M. Castillo Farreras, and Josefina García Quintana, vol. 1 (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, 1976), 99-101; Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica*, bk. 3, chap. 31; Juan de Torquemada, *Monarquía indiana* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, [1615] 1975), bk. 20 chap. 82, <http://www.historicas.unam.mx/publicaciones/catalogo/ficha?id=154>, 405-406; George Kubler, *Mexican Architecture of the Sixteenth Century*, vol. 2 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), 457-459; John McAndrew, *The Open-Air Churches of Sixteenth-Century Mexico: Atrios, Posas, Open Chapels, and Other Studies* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), 334-339.

<sup>16</sup> Demographic studies and historical sources tabulated population figures differently and as result, a number of factors need to be taken in consideration when estimating the total population of an *altepetl* and its subject polities. The introduction of censuses for taxation purposes in the 1560s standardized this considerably. For an introduction to the complexities of estimating Mexico's Indigenous populations in the colonial period, see Sherburne F. Cook and Woodrow Borah, *Essays in Population History: Mexico and the Caribbean*, vol. 3 (Berkeley: University of California press, 1979), 29. For 1568, Cook and Borah record a total population of 10,329 people in the *altepetl* proper, basing their figures on the *visitador* Juan de Ovando's report. Drought and infectious diseases in the mid-1570s contributed to a second dramatic decrease in Huaquechula's population. By 1595, the city had a population of 5,625 people, and by 1646, Huaquechula's population had plummeted to only 2,922 people.

carry out even the most basic operations of the monastery's spiritual enterprise. What a comparison of these spaces and practices (detailed in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2) yields is a picture of European power distributed across a series of nodal points in the monastery that were under the direct supervision of elected Nahua church officials. Thus, we need to consider the monastery as space characterized by overlapping fields of power in which inter-Indigenous relations were also reproduced and maintained.<sup>17</sup>

This is not, however, the view of the monastery that appears in many historical and contemporary sources. Our conception of monastic art and architecture is informed to a large extent by the representations of the monasteries found in mendicant-authored chronicles about the mission. By and large, these writers concentrated on public spectacles and other large-scale Indigenous Christian ritual actions in the monastery patio. Descriptions of these spectacles served the aims of the friars as evidence for the mass conversion of Indigenous people, an event they considered a portent of the Second Coming. This results in a view of the monasteries in which Indigenous people are only found in the places which are described by the friars. Consequently, the activities and spaces associated with Indigenous agency are limited by the perceptions of the friars. The structural absence of Indigenous people within colonial sacred spaces is a common thread in the approaches taken to the study of Mexico's colonial monasteries.

Two types of analysis by art and architectural historians dominate scholarship on colonial Mexican monasteries. Significantly, each of these approaches evinces different currents of scholarly thinking about Indigenous cultural production within colonial Mexican monasteries.

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<sup>17</sup> Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 16-17; Franz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markman (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 61-108.

The first is the synthetic study that covers multiple sites pertaining to different mendicant orders and regions.<sup>18</sup> This approach is characterized by the default adoption of the colonizer's standpoint which tends to generalize and homogenize sites and ethnic groups. While this comparative approach has resulted in the creation of architectural taxonomies that help us map relationships between sites—laying the groundwork for future studies on the transmission of colonial art forms that challenges center-periphery models—we lack a picture of how interventions in the built environment related to local and regional transformations in the sociopolitical or natural environments of sixteenth century Mexico. The risk of this wide-angle lens model is that it homogenizes Indigenous engagements with the built environment, and often frames Indigenous interventions in the monastery as reactions to cataclysmic upheavals rather than as proactive negotiations within the Spanish colonial system.

The second mode of analysis focuses on a single program of murals in a monastery or church interior. These studies are characterized by the conception of Indigenous agency as rooted in the form of the objects and texts produced by Indigenous people.<sup>19</sup> By and large, these

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<sup>18</sup> Kubler, *Mexican Architecture*; George Kubler and Martin Soria, *Art and Architecture in Spain and Portugal and Their American Dominions: 1500-1800* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1959); McAndrew, *Open-Air Churches*; Robert J. Mullen, *Dominican Architecture in Sixteenth Century Oaxaca* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1972); Juan B. Artigas, *Capillas aisladas de México* (Mexico City: Universidad Autónoma de México, 1982); Constantino Reyes-Valerio, *Arte Indocristiano* (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 2000); Samuel Y. Edgerton, *Theaters of Conversion: Religious Architecture and Indian Artisans in Colonial Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002); Eleanor Wake, *Framing the Sacred: The Indian Churches of Early Colonial Mexico* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010); Ryan Crewe, *The Mexican Mission: Indigenous Reconstruction and Mendicant Enterprise in New Spain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

<sup>19</sup> Donna Pierce, "The Sixteenth-Century Nave Frescoes in the Augustinian Mission Church of Ixmiquilpan, Hidalgo, Mexico," (Ph.D. diss., University of New Mexico, 1987); Jeanette Favrot Peterson, *The Paradise Garden Murals of Malinalco: Utopia and Empire in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993); Susan Verdi Webster, "Art, Ritual, and Confraternities in Sixteenth-Century New Spain: Penitential Imagery at the Monastery of San

inquiries have centered on issues of intention, either from the perspective of Indigenous artists or mendicant patrons. This model has contributed greatly to our knowledge of the symbolism embedded in mural decoration, and it opens an opportunity to broaden the scope to the wider monastery and diverse audiences it served. Despite these interventions, Indigenous artists continue to be dismissed as assimilated, passive copyists of European material culture, rather than active participants in it.<sup>20</sup> As Carolyn Dean and Dana Leibsohn have noted, the fetishization of objects with surface-level Indigenous qualities reveals a great deal about our own preconceptions while also narrowing the set of terms for recognizing Indigeneity in the first place.<sup>21</sup> The implication is that Indigenous agency is visible in the materials and forms that Indigenous creators used. As a result, scholarship has concentrated on a narrow set of colonial Mexican monasteries that have mural and sculptural programs with overtly Central Mexican features. Yet this approach has sidelined the examination of religious artworks because of its formal and iconographic proximity to European models, as scholars have noted.<sup>22</sup> In the case of the monasteries, the problem of preservation combines with a model that corrects too sharply

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Miguel, Huejotzingo,” *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas* 70 (1997): 5-43; Pablo Escalante Gonzalbo, “Iconografía y pintura mural en los conventos mexicanos,” in *Felipe II y el arte de su tiempo* (Madrid: Fundación Argentaria, 1998), 328-239; Elena Estrada de Gerlero, *Muros, sargas y papeles: La imagen de lo sagrado y lo profano en el arte novohispano del siglo XVI* (Mexico City: Universidad Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, [2004] 2011).

<sup>20</sup> The prejudice is pervasive, consider, for instance: “the Indian painters, who, in spite of their indigenous heritage, were still able to learn the style of the Flemish and Italian Renaissance,” Edgerton, “Theatres of Conversion,” 108.

<sup>21</sup> Carolyn Dean and Dana Leibsohn, “Hybridity and Its Discontents: Considering Visual Culture in Colonial Spanish America,” *Colonial Latin American Review* 12, no. 1 (2003): 14-16. On the expectations settler-colonial societies impose on Indigenous people to appear in certain ‘authentically’ Indigenous forms and places, see Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2004).

<sup>22</sup> Dean and Leibsohn, “Hybridity,” 13-17; Barbara E. Mundy and Aaron M. Hyman, “Out of the Shadow of Vasari: Towards a New Model of the ‘Artist’ in Colonial Latin America,” *Colonial Latin American Review* 24, no. 3 (2015): 312.

away from imagery that displays European formal characteristics or content.

The intersection of these paradigms has established a narrow set of expectations about Indigenous artistic and sociopolitical agency within colonial Mexican monasteries. On the one hand, many of the textual and visual sources for centering Indigenous cultural production in the traditional sense are not available in the case of the monasteries. On the other hand, Spanish sources contain representations that marginalize and silence Indigenous people. The Huaquechula monastery makes an important case for reformulating the approaches brought to the study of Mexico's colonial monasteries. Nahuatl artists (*tlacuiloque*) at Huaquechula had mastered European iconographies and formal conventions. Some of the murals in the Huaquechula monastery thus appear 'derivative' and more closely in dialogue with frescoes found in Florence than in Central Mexico. Because an archive of Nahuatl-language documents does not survive for Huaquechula, we are also left to parse the words of *conquistadores* and Franciscan friars whose joint enterprise was to eliminate Indigenous people and culture. Given these evidentiary problems, many of the traditional operations for centering Indigenous people as part of a postcolonial/decolonial critique are not possible. As a result, sites like Huaquechula fall outside the traditional set of terms for engaging issues of Indigenous cultural production in colonial Mexico. This issue is significant because much of the material and textual evidence for studying colonial Mexico was produced within a monastic context. By applying a broader range of approaches, we can find Indigenous agency even in the seemingly European walls of Huaquechula.

### **Style and Sovereignty in Colonial Mexican Monasteries**

That Nahuas used art and architecture to shape and respond to Spanish colonial processes

is abundantly evident in the codices, cartographs, mundane documents, and even feather mosaics created in the sixteenth century.<sup>23</sup> Many of these painters (*tlacuiloque*) had been trained to read, write, and paint in European modes in mendicant schools and had passed rigorous exams to receive a viceregal license to work at the monasteries. Circling around these artworks are often questions of artistic and cultural assimilation to European epistemologies. The conflation of formal characteristics of visual expression with Indigenous identity stems from two overlapping convictions. First, the history of Mexican art can and should be told from an Indigenous point of view and second, that Indigenous forms and styles persisted after the Spanish conquest and thus the presence of formal continuities are indicative of epistemological or ontological continuities. The latter's emphasis on continuities forms part of an on-going rebuttal to George Kubler's polemical essay "On the Colonial Extinction of Pre-Hispanic Motifs" (1961) which, as the title suggests, hypothesized a European conquest of the Americas waged on aesthetic grounds.<sup>24</sup> Kubler's assertion pre-dated the recovery of many monastic mural programs, and these discoveries in the 1970s and 1980s supplied a bonanza of evidence for counter-arguments themed around resistance, subversion, and convergence.<sup>25</sup> These studies emerged alongside

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<sup>23</sup> Mundy, *The Death of Aztec Tenochtitlan, the Life of Mexico City* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015), 103-107.

<sup>24</sup> George Kubler, "On the Colonial Extinction of Motifs of Pre-Columbian Art," in *Essays in Pre-Columbian Art and Archaeology*, ed. Samuel K. Lothrop (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 14-34.

<sup>25</sup> Especially notable are: Elisa Vargas Lugo Rangel and Marco Díaz, "Historia, leyenda, y tradición en una serie Franciscana," *Anales de Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas* 44 (1975): 59-82; Antonio Rubial García, *El convento agustino y la sociedad colonial (1533-1630)* (Mexico City: Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, Universidad Autónoma de México, 1989); Peterson, *Paradise Murals of Malinalco*; Reyes-Valerio, *Arte Indocristiano*; Pablo Escalante Gonzalbo, "Elogio de la cofradía y arraigo de la fe. La pintura mural de la capilla abierta de san Juan Teitipac, Valle de Oaxaca," in *Imágenes de los naturales en el arte de la Nueva España*, ed. Elisa Vargaslugo (Mexico City: Universidad Autónoma de México, Fomento Cultural Banamex, 2005), 225-237; Estrada de Gerlero, *Muros, sargas y papeles*; Jaime Cuadriello, *The Glories of the Art of Tlaxcala: Art and Life in Viceregal Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011).



developments in ethnohistory and linguistics that placed newfound emphasis on the transcription and translation of Indigenous archival sources. Bringing together codices, historical annals, testimonies, petitions, and other mundane texts, scholars such as James Lockhart, Rolena Adorno, Frances Karttunen, Luis Reyes Garcia (Nahua), Louise Burkhart, Camila Townsend, and within art history, Elizabeth Boone, Tom Cummins, Carolyn Dean, Dana Leibsohn, and Barbara Mundy, among others, opened a window onto Indigenous worldviews of the sixteenth through late eighteenth centuries providing a necessary corrective to an historiography of the colonial Americas previously centered on Spanish sources.<sup>26</sup>

Tom Cummins' analysis of a drawing of a Christian icon in the *Codex Huejotzingo* (1531) is one of many key theoretical contributions from this moment. Cummins demonstrates that early colonial images articulate the history of colonization to the same extent as written texts. Yet, because images are documentary material created from the Indigenous point of view they also provide insight into the transformation of European iconographies and meanings into Indigenous tropes.<sup>27</sup> The colonial archive is, unfortunately, uneven and the recovery of especially rich Indigenous material in some archives, and only Spanish sources in others, has resulted in the overrepresentation of particular regions and communities in scholarship. As a result, the conditions of the archive itself present “a formidable challenge to the agency of any one-story

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<sup>26</sup> James Lockhart describes the ethical premise of the New Philology method as the use of “sources created by the people themselves, in their own language, revealing their outlook, their rhetoric, their genres of expression, the intimacies of their lives, above all their categories.” Lockhart, *Of Things of the Indies*, 250. See also Matthew Restall, “A History of the New Philology and the New Philology in History,” *Latin American Research Review* 38, no. 1 (2003): 113–134; James Lockhart, Lisa Sousa, and Stephanie Wood, *Sources and Methods of the Study of Mesoamerican Ethnohistory*, <http://whp.oregon.edu/Lockhart/>.

<sup>27</sup> Thomas B. F. Cummins, “The Madonna and the Horse: Becoming Colonial in New Spain and Peru,” *Native Artists and Patrons in Colonial Latin America*, ed. Emily Umberger and Thomas B. F. Cummins (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1995), 52-84.

teller,” as Jessica Horton observes echoing the Diana Taylor’s sentiment that archives sustain power.<sup>28</sup>

Recently, a sustained engagement with the Indigenous operations of European expressive vocabularies has yielded important findings that invite further inquiry into artworks and genres traditionally associated with European domination. In the cartographic history the *Historia Tolteca-Chichimeca* (ca. 1550) Dana Leibsohn has shown that the Nahua painter used an illusionistic landscape to signal a rupture in the Cuauhtinchan *altepetl*’s ancestral connection to land after a decisive battle waged prior to the Spanish conquest.<sup>29</sup> This is the only instance in the *Historia* when the painter departed from Central Mexican conventions and used European ones instead. In so doing, the artist drew on the pictorial language associated with a more recent foreign invader, the Spanish, to make an analogy with a historical moment also characterized by the loss of territorial and political sovereignty, Cuauhtinchan’s pre-Hispanic invasion.

Similarly, Diana Magaloni-Kerpel has shown that in Book 12 of the *Florentine Codex* (ca. 1575-1577) Nahua artists used Passion iconography to depict the capture and death of Moteuczoma II, recasting the fate of the Mexica Emperor as the “tragic fulfillment of prophecy paralleling the sacrality of Christ.”<sup>30</sup> In these examples, the choice of a European painting style and Christological iconography was a political act and moral commentary, and one tailored to

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<sup>28</sup> Jessica L. Horton, *Art for an Undivided Earth: The American Indian Movement* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 8; Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 19.

<sup>29</sup> Dana Leibsohn, *Script and Glyph: Pre-Hispanic History, Colonial Bookmaking, and the ‘Historia Tolteca-Chichimeca.’* (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2009), 85, 160-161.

<sup>30</sup> Diana Magaloni-Kerpel, “Visualizing the Nahua/Christian Dialogue: Images of Conquest in Sahagún’s *Florentine Codex* and Their Sources,” in *Sahagún at 500: Essays on the Quincentenary of the Birth of Bernardino de Sahagún*, ed. John Frederick Schwaller (Berkeley: Academy of American Franciscan History, 2003), 219.

the expectations of the artworks' intended audiences. Significantly, these examples also reveal the artistic proficiencies developed within Franciscan monastic contexts.

On the question of cultural appropriation and agency, art historical scholarship on Native American and First Nations material culture is particularly instructive. Addressing contemporary Native American landscape painting, Kate Morris observes that Indigenous “artistic expression is not “expressly oppositional,” but rather that contemporary Indigenous artists adapt European conventions and genres “to convey a uniquely Indigenous worldview.”<sup>31</sup> This dissertation shows that the Huaquecholteca likewise adapted European visual vocabularies and styles in accordance with their own needs. In her analysis of late nineteenth-century graphic arts, Jessica Horton also reminds that style is a political choice, one that Indigenous artists conversant in Euro-American conventions can reject when it does not serve their artistic interests.<sup>32</sup> This insight builds on the notion of “visual sovereignty” put forward by Michelle Raheja and Tuscarora theorist Jolene Rickard which disentangles Indigenous claims for self-determination from the outward appearance of objects. In the words of Rickard:

“artworks made by Indigenous makers are the documentation of our sovereignty, both politically and spiritually. Some stick close to the spiritual centers while others break geographic and ideological rank and head West. But the images are all connected circling in ever-sprawling spirals the terms of our experiences as human beings.”<sup>33</sup>

Rickard's definition of sovereignty as beyond the political and actively embedded in artworks made by Indigenous artists resonates powerfully with the conditions for artistic expression in colonial Mexican monasteries where European conventions were often the only

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<sup>31</sup> Kate Morris, *Shifting Grounds: Landscape in Contemporary Native American Art* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019), 5.

<sup>32</sup> Jessica L. Horton, ““All Our Relations’ as an Eco-Art Historical Challenge,” in *Ecologies, Agents, Terrains*, ed. Christopher Heuer and Rebecca Zorach (Williamstown: Clark Art Institute, 2018), 86-87.

<sup>33</sup> Jolene Rickard, “Sovereignty: A Line in the Sand,” *Aperture* 139 (Summer 1995): 54.

visual language available to artists even though techniques and materials were Central Mexican.<sup>34</sup> The structure of artistic labor in those contexts was a determining force but one that did not preclude Indigenous artists from choosing other expressive languages in other contexts and mediums, as Dana Leibsohn's analysis of landscape conventions in the *Historia Tolteca-Chichimeca* has shown. What each of these studies has in common is that they demonstrate how appropriated European pictorial conventions and iconographies provided Indigenous artists a vehicle for confronting settler-colonial processes. That is, once again in the words of Rickard, our perspective of Indigenous agency shifts "from a victimized stance to a strategic one."<sup>35</sup>

### **The Trouble with Spanish Sources**

This picture of Nahua negotiation and struggle within Spanish hegemony is the inverse of the common picture of domination found in the historiography of the colonial Mexican monasteries. Questions of absence and presence also draw attention to the utility of attending to experience in the monastic context. Studies about Christian evangelization in New Spain often bring together anecdotal evidence found in mendicant chronicles to understand issues that "haunt[ed] the minds of Mexican missionaries."<sup>36</sup> Neglected from these inquiries, however, are Indigenous people who also inhabited these spaces. As this dissertation shows, a central feature of the Nahua experience of the monastery was the visual, and sometimes physical, absence of the friars: on the opposite side of a wall, in a different corridor, in an oratory on the upper floor. In

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<sup>34</sup> Scholars of post-modern and contemporary Native American and First Nations art provide a useful framework for disentangling intentionality, identity, and visual language. See Jessica L. Horton and Janet Catherine Berlo, "Beyond the Mirror: Indigenous Ecologies and 'New Materialisms,'" *Third Text* 12, no. 1 (2013): 19; Morris, *Shifting Grounds*, 27-56.

<sup>35</sup> Rickard, "Sovereignty," 51.

<sup>36</sup> Pardo, *Origins of Mexican Catholicism*, 133.

response, friars projected their dominance through other means, one of the most significant for the present purposes being the missionary chronicle. Spanish sources mobilize colonial relations of power by excluding Indigenous peoples precisely at the points where their presence most challenged Spanish colonial authority. In these texts, friars crafted representations of Indigenous people to systematically distort, displace, and silence the monastery's Indigenous inhabitants, contributing to the on-going readings of the monastery as sites of limited Indigenous agency. In other words, mendicant-authored chronicles produced a condition of Indigenous absence to contend with the perceived problem of Indigenous presence within the monastery.

Mendicant-authored texts are, paradoxically, crucial to decentering settler-colonial perspectives. These sources generated many of the stereotypes that continue to color expectations about Indigenous communities' relationships to Christian places and objects. As a result, an approach that centers Indigenous people within the monastery necessitates a methodical interrogation of the ways mendicant-authored sources construct discourses that displace and distort the historical activities of Indigenous people within monastic spaces. The interpretation of mendicant-authored chronicles thus requires the hermeneutics of suspicion. According to Rita Felski, this technique entails "reading texts against the grain and between the lines, of cataloging their omissions and laying bare their contradictions, of rubbing in what they fail to know and cannot represent."<sup>37</sup> In this dissertation, I cross-reference mendicant-authored sources against the material evidence of the Huaquechula monastery to identify contradictions and examine how the stereotypes they spawned impacted representations of the monasteries in the colonial Mexican historiography. In so doing, I undermine the dominant narrative and unearth Indigenous meanings to center Indigenous perspectives within monastic spaces.

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<sup>37</sup> Rita Felski, "Context Stinks," *New Literary History* 42, 4 (2011): 574.

My approach to missionary sources is indebted to the methodologies put forward by scholars of colonial Nahua literature, including Heather Allen and Kelly McDonough. Heather Allen juxtaposed conquest histories by Spanish and Nahua authors, showing how discourses perform differently for different cultural and ethnic audiences.<sup>38</sup> Kelly McDonough identified a series of “discursive pillars” that Nahuas used to bolster their claims to authority and legitimacy in historical annals and petitions to Spanish officials. The levers of power are: “noble lineage, military alliance, religious affiliation,” and the “on-going recognition of noble legitimacy by commoners through the reciprocal exchange of good governance (the former), and goods, labor, and ritual offerings (the latter).”<sup>39</sup> I identify these levers of power also at work in the patronage and decoration of the Huaquechula monastery, demonstrating the physical form of the monastery as itself a central document to understanding inter-Indigenous relationships and claims of self-determination. Essential to this reading is McDonough’s observation that Nahuas deployed discourses associated with Spanish colonial domination to defend the interests of their lineage and recover power, a “calculated risk” that could effectively garner Spanish attention.<sup>40</sup>

I overcome the impasse presented by mendicant-authored chronicles by looking for “Indians in unexpected places.”<sup>41</sup> That is, I interrogate the spaces within the Huaquechula monastery that are consistently elided in mendicant-authored chronicles. In these texts, Nahuas

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<sup>38</sup> Heather J. Allen, “‘Llorar amargamente’: Economies of Weeping in the Spanish Empire,” *Colonial Latin American Review* 24 no. 4 (2015): 479-504.

<sup>39</sup> Kelly S. McDonough, “‘Love Lost: Class Struggle among Indigenous Nobles and Commoners of Seventeenth-Century Tlaxcala,” *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 32, no. 1 (2015): 1-28; *Ibid.*, “Indigenous Rememberings and Forgetting: Sixteenth-Century Nahua Letters and Petitions to the Spanish Crown,” *Native American and Indigenous Studies* 5, no. 1 (2018): 69-99.

<sup>40</sup> McDonough, “Indigenous Rememberings,” 86.

<sup>41</sup> Philip J. Deloria’s enjoinder also forms the basis of inquiry into how Native Americans challenged the stereotypes established for them by white Americans in twentieth century United States. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2004).

only appear where it served the author's propagandistic aims. In the case of the Huaquechula monastery, I juxtapose mendicant-authored descriptions of the monastery and its rituals with the material evidence of the monastery to examine how Franciscan representations of the mission performed to advance their combined evangelical and settler-colonial agendas. This draws attention to a disjunction between the discourses and the material conditions of the monastery that functioned to express Spanish authority and power.

### **A New Framework for the Study of Colonial Mexican Monasteries**

Addressing questions of Indigenous agency in colonial Mexican art entails reformulating and intertwining approaches to the study of colonial Mexican monasteries that address settler-colonial configurations of power, injustice, and dispossession head-on. Among these are questions of Indigenous authenticity and identity politics, and the absence of Indigenous people from the monastery interior, a representation constructed by Spanish colonial sources that nonetheless continues to pervade scholarship.<sup>42</sup>

My use of the term "settler colonialism" requires further elaboration. Settler colonialism is the process of territorial dispossession concomitant with the systematic assimilation and

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<sup>42</sup> Fundamental to the project of decolonizing is the "repatriation of Indigenous land and life," a view that foregrounds place and the knowledges and ways of being rooted in it, and can be expanded to address structural displacement and oppression facing marginalized groups. Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization is Not a Metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): 2; On distinctions between the terms "decolonial," "decolonization," and "decoloniality," see Walter D. Mignolo, "The Geopolitics of Knowledge and the Colonial Difference," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 101, no. 1 (2002): 57-96; Ibid., "Cultural Studies: Geopolitics of Knowledge and Requirements / Business Needs," *Revista Iberoamericana* 69, no. 203 (2003): 401-415; Ibid., *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton University Press, 2012); Ibid., "Geopolitics of Sensitivity and Knowledge. On (De)coloniality, Border Thinking and Epistemic Disobedience," *Journal of Philosophy* 74, no. 2 (2011): 7-23.

erasure of Indigenous peoples from their homelands.<sup>43</sup> The spiritual conquest of the Americas was a settler fantasy. The logic of settler-coloniality is evident in writings of Franciscan missionaries who imagined the densely populated Mexican landscape fit for hermits and devoid of Indigenous inhabitants, and thus available to Europeans.<sup>44</sup> Joining scholars of Native American and First Nations art and critical theory, this project sharpens focus on the particular structural arrangements of power and labor that characterized relations between Indigenous people and Europeans in the Americas, in this instance, sixteenth century Mexico. Recently, Jessica L. Horton observed that while ‘settler colonialism’ is standard analytical terminology in First Nations critical and political theory, it is “rarely used in art history.”<sup>45</sup> This is problematic because it elides the question of land/water from analysis, as well as the particularities of the concomitant processes of displacement and dispossession that have shaped Indigenous communities in the Americas for hundreds of years.

With regard to the colonial Americas, a decolonizing approach contributes an analytical frame that foregrounds Indigenous notions of land/water, as well as the power arrangements that contributed to Indigenous displacement and dispossession. Centering land/water relations in inquiries of colonial Mexican art is an opportunity to generate a broad dialogue with other moments and places characterized by settler-colonial dynamics of power, but it also sharpens attention to the particularities of the local arrangements of power that Indigenous communities navigated. The emphasis on *land* as a “medium of struggle” expands the traditional critical

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<sup>43</sup> Tuck and Yang, “Decolonization,” 5; Patrick Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 387-409; Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 6-7.

<sup>44</sup> Motolinia, *History*, 278.

<sup>45</sup> Horton, *Undivided Earth*, 3; Hoxie, *Returning the Red Continent*, 1158.



analytical categories of ‘space’ and ‘place,’ and better aligns it with Indigenous worldviews.<sup>46</sup> A decolonizing approach thus makes room for Indigenous notions and experiences of land/water fundamental to understanding the multiples topographies that intersected at the monastery.

Still, it is important to distinguish between pre-Hispanic and European systems of territorial dispossession. The Huaquecholteca suffered forced migration and then invasion during the Last Postclassic period. Yet in these instances, territorial dispossession was not a mechanism for the elimination of the Huaquecholteca. Instead, foreign occupation violently inserted the Huaquecholteca into a new configuration of exploitative political and economic arrangements dependent upon the continued vitality of the *altepetl*. The arrival of the Spanish changed that picture considerably. In the sixteenth century, territorial dispossession through the privatization of land and water separated the Huaquecholteca from their means of sustenance, driving members of the *altepetl* into ever more exploitative labor arrangements in newly-founded Spanish cities.<sup>47</sup> These structural changes threatened to sever the Huaquecholteca’s physical and symbolic connection to the land from which they derived their sense of ethnic identity and political sovereignty. This dissertation shows that the Huaquecholteca challenged conditions that

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<sup>46</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Hoboken: Blackwell Publishing, [1974] 1991), 35, 59, 89, 109-114; Stuart Elden, *Understanding Henri Lefebvre: Theory and the Possible*, *Continuum Studies in Philosophy* (London, New York, 2004), 189-190.

<sup>47</sup> This phenomenon evinces Marx’s theory of “primitive accumulation,” a process which marks the transition to a protocapital system. In the Atlixco Valley, monoagriculture and the emergence of textile and mill industries in newly-founded Spanish cities accelerated the emergence of a protocapital system, which is usually described as an eighteenth-century phenomenon. For more on Puebla, see Lidia Gómez García, *Los anales nahuas de la ciudad de Puebla de los Ángeles, siglos xvi y xviii: Escribiendo historia indígena como aliados del Rey Católica de España* (Puebla: Ayuntamiento de Puebla and Rutgers University Press, 2019). On Karl Marx’s “Theory of Primitive Accumulation,” see *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, ed. Frederick Engels, trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling (Moscow: Progress Publishers, [1887] 2015), v. I, chap. 26-33, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/Capital-Volume-I.pdf>; Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*, 7-16, 151-154.

precluded political legitimacy and territorial autonomy within the monastery, often working across European and Central Mexican artistic, legal, and socio-political discourses to do so.

More specifically, I am interested in how the biopolitical management of Indigenous life within semi-autonomous Franciscan monasteries contributed to displacement and dispossession of Indigenous people. The strategies of segregation, surveillance, marginalization, in addition to violent coercion, characterized the operation of power in the monasteries. Nahuas were denied sovereignty over territorial domains, including the monastic spaces they built and used. The physical spaces of the monastery are thus contested topographies where the friar-settler repeatedly disrupted the Nahua connection to place. Yet as this dissertation shows, Nahua “place-based knowledge,” the intimate knowledge of land, history, institutions, and the discourses that run through it, poised Nahuas to challenge settler-colonial operations *within* hegemonic spaces.<sup>48</sup> The art and architecture of the colonial Mexican monastery supplied one of the most persuasive tactical means of contesting European domination and, significantly, imagining alternative Indigenous futures.<sup>49</sup>

The methodology elucidated in this dissertation entails a multipronged approach to centering Nahuas in the history of the Huaquechula monastery. My method emerges from fieldwork at over seventy Mexican monasteries, and is informed by the conversations I had with local monastery officials and members of the public who took the time to share with me their experiences and encouraged me to question my own assumptions about the role of art in Indigenous spaces. Knowledge of Nahuatl language and culture has been essential to my effort to

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<sup>48</sup> Morris, *Shifting Grounds*, 5.

<sup>49</sup> For Michel de Certeau, tactics are the means through which people relegated to subordinate positions carve out agency for themselves within systems imposed by dominant powers. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 30.

bring to the forefront Indigenous knowledges of colonial monuments. In particular, the Nahuatl intellectuals who taught me how to read, speak, and write in their language—Eduardo de la Cruz, Ofelia Cruz Morales, and Sabina Cruz de la Cruz—drew my attention to the importance of land and place in contemporary Nahuatl worldviews, urging me to more closely examine the intersection of ecology and art history by integrating the experience of *milpa* into the story of the monasteries.

Out of these engagements emerge a number of methodological commitments. Foremost, my dissertation takes seriously the community's rich oral tradition and adopts the Huaquecholteca position on the history of the Spanish conquest and foundation of the monastery as the default. The readings of the archival, archaeological, and pictorial sources I contribute to the study of Huaquechula monastery demonstrate that the colonial archive expresses Huaquecholteca interests and values. This gesture in solidarity with the Huaquecholteca is crucial because the historiography of the Huaquechula *altepetl* is marked by the subordination of Huaquecholteca oral history to more 'traditional' sources and hence, the ongoing silencing of Nahuatl voices. A decolonizing history of the colonial Mexican monastery must emplace Nahuats and their perspectives in the sacred spaces they used in the past and continue to use today. This involves identifying the audiences for particular monastic spaces and rituals, and reconstructing how the imagery functioned alongside the Indigenous activities that occurred there. I read this tangible evidence against descriptions of monasteries found in mendicant-authored texts to identify the considerable 'gap' between material evidence and the representations of Indigenous people in Franciscan sources. I then cross-reference this finding with information in Nahuatl-language sources from outside Huaquechula to contextualize the disjuncture in its Indigenous cultural and sociopolitical milieu. This last step is crucial because it exposes the power relations

between Nahuas and friars. Consistently I have found that the distortion preserved in Franciscan sources registers the friars' tenuous grip on power in the monastery and hence, challenged Spanish hegemony. Reading the missionary chronicles inside out thus helps us to pinpoint sites of Nahua agency within the monastery. This illuminates how monastic art and architecture provided the Huaquecholteca "the common material and meaningful framework for living through, talking about, and acting upon social orders characterized by domination."<sup>50</sup>

This dissertation builds a bridge between scholarship on the logics of settler-coloniality in Mexico and other settler-colonial nation-states by setting forth a shared set of analytical terms, ethical priorities, and approaches to evidence characterized by its proximities to discourses imposed by colonizers. A clearer grasp of artistic appropriation as expressive of Indigenous interests ensues. This dissertation also restores a range of art historical evidence to the study of colonial Latin America that has been previously overlooked either for its lack of perceived Indigenous 'authenticity,' such as Christian portraiture (chapter 2) and pictorial landscape (chapter 4), as well as spatial and decorative arrangements associated with the creation of colonial subjects, such as spoliation (chapter 1) and confessionals (chapter 3). It also integrates architectural analysis with studies of mural paintings, demonstrating that architectural history supplies a groundwork for identifying moments of Indigenous interventions in the material environments of the monastery, as well as a deeper understanding of the architectonic contexts in which artists and viewers engaged with painted imagery.<sup>51</sup> Finally, the dissertation supplies a

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<sup>50</sup> William Roseberry, "Hegemony and the Language of Contention," in *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico*, ed. Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniel Nungent (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 358. See also Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, ed. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith and Quentin Hare (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), 12.

<sup>51</sup> In thinking about discrepancies between the interpretation of pictorial and architectural evidence in the history of colonial Mexican art, I reflect on Katherine Fischer Taylor's observation

framework for interrogating the settler-colonial motivations bound up in representations of Indigenous people. My approach to the study of early modern art and architecture is thus rooted in materiality; that is, in an examination of the monastery as a physical entity and a field of social relations among persons and objects.<sup>52</sup>

## Chapter Summaries

Nahuas transformed power relations *from within* monastic spaces. Advancing this claim necessitates more than demonstrating that Nahuas participated in Christian rituals and other institutional practices within the monastery. In the words of Mohawk scholar Gerald Taiaiake Alfred, “It isn’t enough just to regain political space; we need to fill it up with indigenous content if it is going to mean anything to our people.”<sup>53</sup> Each chapter of my dissertation examines an episode in the material history of the Huaquechula monastery through a case study centered on the analysis of the program, viewership, and religious function of a single monastic space. In so doing, each chapter excavates a different facet of Nahua “situational knowledge” to emplace the sixteenth century Huaquecholteca within the Christian sacred spaces that continue to give to shape their community.<sup>54</sup> In sum, the dissertation demonstrates that the Huaquechula

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that the “frequency of situations in which architecture falls out of art historical focus makes it important for art historians to think about how buildings and constructed landscapes fit within the current practice of art history...” Fischer Taylor, “Architecture's Place in Art History: Art or Adjunct?” *The Art Bulletin* 83, no. 2 (Jun., 2001): 342.

<sup>52</sup> Donna Haraway “A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s,” *Australian Feminist Studies* 2, no. 4 (1987): 38; Vine Deloria Jr., *God is Red: A Native View of Religion*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Golden, Co: Fulcrum, 2003), 67; Robert Warrior, *The People and the Word: Reading Native Non-Fiction* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), xiv.

<sup>53</sup> Gerald Taiaiake Alfred, *Wasáse: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 4-5.

<sup>54</sup> Drawing on Donna Haraway’s notion of knowledge as always “situated,” First Nations political theorist and art historians have used this framework to emphasize the embodied and

monastery is an embodiment of Huaquecholteca survivance, rather than an index of Indigenous dispossession and displacement.

Chapter 1 reconstructs the episodic construction and decoration of the Huaquechula monastery through analysis of the political history of the Atlixco Valley during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Monumental building campaigns of 1538, 1550 and 1569 forged new Indigenous social arrangements and relations to history and the physical environment, powerfully demonstrating the capacity of the Huaquecholteca to change material circumstances and assert self-determinacy through Christian art and architecture. The chapter uses Huaquechula's pre-Hispanic and colonial material record to interrogate the history of the spiritual conquest as presented in Franciscan chronicles, demonstrating the on-going role of ancient interregional rivalries and materials in shaping Huaquecholteca attitudes about the colonial present.

While chapter 1 concentrates on how the Huaquecholteca assembled a colonial history through monastic patronage, chapter 2 investigates the presentation of history through the series of portraits of Christian saints that decorate the lower cloister. At Huaquechula, Nahuas and friars viewed history differently in part because they encountered its presentation on the walls of the lower cloister from different cultural and spatial vantages. By reconstructing the daily pathways of the monastery's two constituencies through the cloister, this chapter demonstrates how the multivalence of the program's iconography undercut the spatial and the temporal boundaries established by the friars.

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ways of knowing in contrast to the objectivity of Euro-American epistemologies. Such an analytical framework raises new questions when considered in the contexts of New Spain. Melissa K. Nelson, "Indigenous Science and Traditional Ecological Knowledge: Persistence in Place," in *The World of Indigenous North America*, ed. Robert Warrior (New York: Routledge, 2015), 201-202.

Chapter 3 examines the mural decoration of Huaquechula's church against the backdrop of the socio-political upheavals facing Nahua communities in the 1560s. It investigates how Nahua artists contended with economic and social instabilities through the patronage and decoration of the church interior. My analysis centers on the architectural design and decoration of spaces for religious confession in the Huaquechula church, demonstrating that the social and the spatial experience of religious confession structured social relations among distinct classes of Nahuas at the monastery. In making this claim, this chapter emphasizes the role of Nahua sensorial experience in Christian sacramental ritual at Franciscan monasteries in New Spain. This chapter also contributes to a growing body of scholarship on inter-Indigenous colonial relations by concentrating on the political operations of Nahua Christian religious rituals in monastic spaces.

Chapter 4 focuses on the polychrome landscape murals painted in four upper cloister oratories of the Huaquechula monastery. It argues that Indigenous communities contended with the ecological impact of settler colonialism through pictorial landscape. Understanding the confluence of factors that gave rise to landscape painting at Huaquechula requires integrating the economic and environmental history of the region from a standpoint of the changing notions of land and water during the second half of the century. Yet it also brings attention to how Huaquecholteca artists relied on their longstanding experience with the land to contest colonial oppression through mural painting. Analysis of the barren landscapes of the oratory murals thus provides insight into emergent structures of life and the land reshaping the Atlixco Valley around the time the murals were painted.

Monasteries continue to be contested topographies where Indigenous people challenge settler colonialism. Huaquechula is the center of the state of Puebla's cultural campaign to

elevate regional tourism through the *Día de los Muertos* festivities. Annually, thousands of tourists flock to Huaquechula over the span of a week, inundating the homes of a community that lack consistent access to potable water, has rivers contaminated with industrial agricultural runoff, and suffers from a heart-wrenching rate of infant mortality.<sup>55</sup> Nevertheless, the community receives little external funding to offset the considerable costs of constructing domestic altars and feeding the throngs of visitors who take advantage of ritual enactments of generosity to imbibe tequila and chow down on turkey mole. The juxtaposition of dine-and-dash cultural tourism with traditions that ground Huaquecholteca connections to their land and their ancestors, many of whom are buried at the monastery, is striking. As a result, a quagmire of distrust surrounds Huaquechula's relationship with local, state, and federal agencies, and navigating those relationships as a researcher entails a constant reflection on one's ethical priorities. The Conclusion turns to some of these issues alongside an analysis of murals of a Huaquecholteca penitential procession in the Huaquechula monastery's upper cloister. These murals powerfully register the institutional presence of the Huaquecholteca within the monastery. As a result, it raises the question of how a Nahua-centered approach to monastic art and architecture positions us to address issues of collectivity, self-determination, and tradition in Huaquechula today.

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<sup>55</sup> In 1999 Huaquechula's rate of infant mortality was 16.3%. Lucero Morales Cano and Avis Mysyk, "Cultural Tourism, the State, and Day of the Dead," *Annals of Tourism Research* 31, no. 4 (2004): 890.



# CHAPTER 1

## MERCHANTS, CONQUERORS, CHRISTIANS: HUAQUECHULA, 1400-1600

### Introduction

Huaquechula is located in the southern half of the Atlixco Valley, a historically significant corridor for agriculture and trade in the central plains of the modern Puebla state [Fig. 1.1]. Located in the Popocatepetl volcano watershed, the Atlixco Valley is fed by three rivers and boasts rich soils and a climate conducive to agriculture, especially cereals, as Spanish settlers discovered. Today, the region also supplies the bulk of the marigolds and celosia flowers used to decorate the region's Day of the Dead altars every October [Fig. 1.2]. Wedged between the Basin of Mexico and the grasslands of the Puebla-Tlaxcala Valley, the Atlixco Valley is also situated along commercial arteries that linked the Basin of Mexico with the Gulf Coast, Oaxaca, and the Puebla-Tlaxcala Valley [Fig. 1.3]. Throughout its history, the *altepetl* (ethnic city-state) of Huaquechula played an important role in keeping these trade routes open and protecting the southern route into the Valley of Mexico. It was this confluence of agriculture and trade that set the stage for Huaquechula's long history of conquest, colonization, and Christianization. Yet this material history marked by multiple colonizations also served the Huaquecholteca as a potent repository for asserting their presence, permanence, and political self-determination.

This chapter argues that monastic patronage was a key ingredient in Huaquecholteca identity formation. Time and again, the Huaquecholteca turned to Christian art and architecture to creatively engage with their past and chart a sustainable future for the *altepetl* during moments of exceptional sociopolitical upheaval. Here, I reconstruct over a century of sociopolitical change in the Huaquechula *altepetl* through the lens of the construction history of the Franciscan monastery. This approach elucidates how architecture and Christian patronage were variously

understood within a distinctly Huaquecholteca worldview, as well as their role in shaping a Huaquecholteca colonial identity. By cross-referencing Spanish sources with Nahuatl oral sources, archaeological evidence, and a reconstruction of the monastery's building campaign, I show that monastic patronage formed part of a Huaquecholteca strategy to assert territorial sovereignty and political authority. In taking Indigenous political history as the point of departure, this chapter joins recent scholarship on the material culture of the monasteries in colonial Latin America in foregrounding the broader set of cultural traditions and social relations that gave physical form to Christianity in the Americas.<sup>1</sup> The Huaquecholteca were key figures in configuring the monastic environment where they themselves were actors.

The Huaquechula monastery is a chronicle of Indigenous history. To elucidate the political and symbolic meanings of the monastery, I trace the evolution of the monastery through a series of transformations. I begin in the fifteenth century with the Huaquecholteca's forced migration from their homeland. I show how a series of humiliating defeats and occupations shaped the Huaquecholteca leadership's response to the Spanish invasion and the arrival of Franciscan missionaries. I then analyze the three construction campaigns of the Huaquechula monastery and church: Phase one (1538-1545) corresponds with the construction of the monastery's ground floor under the leadership of the politically savvy Nahuatl *gobernador*, don Martín Cortés Xochitlahua.<sup>2</sup> I argue don Martín maneuvered within a new Christian system to

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<sup>1</sup> Ananda Cohen-Aponte, *Heaven, Hell, and Everything in Between: Murals of the Colonial Andes* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2016); For a microhistorical framework, see Alessia Frassani, *Building Yanhuítlan: Art, Politics, and Religion in the Mixteca Alta Since 1500* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2017); Ryan Crewe, *The Mexican Mission: Indigenous Reconstruction and Mendicant Enterprise in New Spain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

<sup>2</sup> Naming patterns among the Nahuas changed after the Spanish invasion and the case of don Martín Cortés Xochitlahua is instructive in this regard. First, Nahuatl elites adopted the title *don* to distinguish themselves from commoners (*macehualli*), although this changed after the sixteenth

secure privileges and status for the *altepetl* by patronizing the monastery. During phase two (1545-1563) the Huaquecholteca began construction of the church amid a wave of territorial and political disputes. I demonstrate how the Huaquecholteca selectively wove the material vestiges of their pre-Hispanic past into the fabric of the new church, recasting a history of subjugation and invasion into the ultimate statement of Huaquecholteca political ascendancy and permanence. I draw out locally contingent meanings to displace narratives of Christian triumphalism and apocalyptic conversion currently standard to architectural analyses of the missions. In phase three (1569-1585) the Huaquecholteca finished the church and upper cloister while combating the entangled crises of drought, dispossession, and economic exploitation. The art and architecture of this final building campaign marks a new aesthetic engagement with the local landscape.

This chapter demonstrates the traumas and invasions that predated the Spanish Conquest engendered the aesthetic strategies the Huaquecholteca mobilized to address Spanish colonial hegemony. In stressing continuity, however, my intention is not to bypass the incredible violence of Spanish colonization.<sup>3</sup> Instead, it is to stress how the long-term effects of the structural condition of territorial occupation and political subjugation informed the aesthetic and political

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century as more social groups adopted the title. Xochitlahua was don Martín's Nahuatl personal name though it seems to have also signaled a dynastic name, at least after the Spanish invasion. It was also common for individuals to adopt the names of prestigious Spaniards or Christian saints, which were appended to Indigenous personal names at the time of Christian baptism. In this case, don Martín adopted the name of the son of Hernán Cortés and Malintzin (Malinche), Martín Cortés. At Huaquechula, Nahuatl personal names no longer appear in records after the 1570s. James Lockhart addresses Nahua naming patterns at length in *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), 117-130.

<sup>3</sup> “A decolonial perspective would take the trauma of conquest and invasion as the ground zero for an art history of the colonial Americas,” Ananda Cohen-Aponte, “Decolonizing the Global Renaissance: A View from the Andes,” in *The Globalization of Renaissance Art: A Critical Review*, ed. Daniel Savoy (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 74.

choices made by the Huaquecholteca in the sixteenth century. In so doing, this chapter shows the ‘situation’ of the Spanish invasion resonated powerfully with previous episodes of dispossession, the effects of which continued to impact Indigenous society well into the sixteenth century. For the Nahuas, time did not begin with the arrival of the Spanish. In fact, an examination of the material history of Huaquechula monastery provides important grounds for overturning a Euro-American temporal framework based on notions of progress, rupture, and expansion.<sup>4</sup>

### **Conquest Histories, 1443-1538**

Until 1443, the Huaquecholteca settlement was concentrated around Macuilxochitepec (modern Cerro de San Miguel), a promontory located in the modern city of Atlixco about 30 km from modern Huaquechula [Fig. 1.4]. The hilltop provides a panoramic view of the snow-capped Popocatepetl volcano to the northwest, the source of the rivers that irrigate the Valley. More strategically, from Macuilxochitepec the Huaquecholteca could monitor the movement of trade caravans and potential aggressors along the southern route that connects the Puebla-Tlaxcala Valley to the Basin of Mexico to the west, and across the grassy plains of the Puebla-Tlaxcala Valley to the northeast.

For much of its history, Huaquechula was a cultural crossroads. Located along an important trade corridor, the rise of the settlement at Macuilxochitepec coincided with the ascent

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<sup>4</sup> Jessica L. Horton, *Art for an Undivided Earth: The American Indian Movement* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 6; Vine Deloria, *God Is Red: A Native View of Religion* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing [1973] 2003), 63; Ibid., “Towards an Aboriginal Art History,” in *Native American Art in the Twentieth Century: Markers, Meanings, Histories*, ed. W. Jackson Rushing III (London; New York: Routledge, 1999), 84.

of Classic period metropolises such as Teotihuacan and Cholula.<sup>5</sup> Macuilxochitepec continued to be a significant commercial center during the tumultuous Epiclassic and Early Postclassic period.<sup>6</sup> Crucial to this success was proximity to an important source of Thin Orange ceramics, and a major pilgrimage center with shrines dedicated to the Central Mexican deities Macuilxochitl (5 Flower) and Quetzalcoatl [Fig. 1.5].<sup>7</sup>

An important node in a sprawling trade network, Huaquechula was also in the crosshairs of conflict and conquest. Late Postclassic settlement patterns and the remains of defensive architecture suggests Macuilxochitepec experienced a series of foreign occupations as major

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<sup>5</sup> Avis Mysyk and Lucero Morales Cano, "The Ethnohistory and Archaeology of Cuauhquechollan, Valley of Atlixco, Mexico," *Ancient Mesoamerica* 26 (2015): 331-333.

<sup>6</sup> Migration accounts that feature Huaquechula are: *Annales de Cuauhtitlan* in *Códice Chimalpopoca: Anales de Cuauhtitlan y Leyenda de los Soles*, trans. and ed., Primo Feliciano Velázquez (Mexico City: Universidad Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, [1543; 1545] 1975); "Histoyre du mechique," *Journal de la Société des Américanistes* vol. 2 ([1543] 1905): 8-41; *Historia-Tolteca Chichimeca*, ed. Paul Kirchhoff, Lina Odná Güemes, and Luis Reyes García (Mexico City: Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social, Fondo de Cultura Económica [c. 1560] 1989); and Diego Muñoz Camargo, *Historia de Tlaxcala*, ed. Germán Vázquez Chamarro (Madrid: Dastín, [1585] 1986). All are based on Nahuatl oral histories recorded in the sixteenth century. See also, Mysyk and Morales Cano, "Ethnohistory," 333-335; Patricia Plunket, "Arqueología y etnohistoria en el Valle de Atlixco," *Notas Mesoamericanas* 12, no. 3 (1990): 8. On discrepancies between the Postclassic migrations in the archaeological and textual record, see Michael E. Smith, "The Aztlan Migrations of the Nahuatl Chronicles: Myth or History?" in *Ethnohistory* 31, no. 3 (1984): 153-186; Patricia Plunket and Gabriela Uruñela, "Recent Research in Puebla Prehistory," *Journal of Archaeological Research* 6, no. 1 (2005): 108-115.

<sup>7</sup> Patricia Plunket and Mónica Blanco, "Teotihuacan y el valle del Atlixco," *Notas Mesoamericanas* 11 (1989): 120-132; Evelyn Childs Rattray, *Teotihuacan: Ceramics, Chronology and Cultural Trends* (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia; University of Pittsburg, 2001), 383-384. Macuilxochitl is the patron of divination and the *patolli* game (as depicted in the *Codex Magliabechiano* f. 60r.), as well as dance, flowers, music, *pulque*, and sport. See Diego Durán, *Book of Gods and Rites and the Ancient Calendar*, trans. Fernando Horcasitas and Doris Heyden (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), 289-291, 306; Bernardino de Sahagún, *Historia general [universal] de las cosas de [la] Nueva España* (henceforth, *Florentine Codex*), (Florence: Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Colección Palatina, mss. 218-220, 1575-1577), bk. 1, chap. 14, f. 11r., <https://www.wdl.org/en/item/10096/>.

powers vied for control of the Atlixco Valley's resources and strategic location.<sup>8</sup> Two of the most consequential of these hostile takeovers occurred in the mid-fifteenth century. In 1443 (3 Reed), Huejotzingo defeated Huaquechula, taking control of the shrine at Macuilxochitepec and ousting the Huaquecholteca from their settlement.<sup>9</sup> To mark this triumph and humiliate the Huaquecholteca, the Huejotzinca may have installed images of their patron deity, Camaxtli at the Huaquecholteca shrine at Macuilxochitepec.<sup>10</sup> This was Huaquechula's second conflict with Huejotzingo, and the devastating loss reconfigured the political landscape of the region.<sup>11</sup> Forced to migrate to the southern Atlixco Valley, the Huaquecholteca surrendered to Huejotzingo their ancestral homeland and ritual center.<sup>12</sup> They also lost a tactical position along a crucial artery for

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<sup>8</sup> Ursula Dyckerhoff, "La época prehispánica," in *Milpa y hacienda: Tenencia de la tierra indígena y Española en la cuenca del Alto Atoyac, Puebla, México (1520-1650)*, ed. Hanns J. Prem et al., trans. María Martínez Peñaloza (Mexico City: Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social/Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1988), 24; Plunket, "Valle de Atlixco," 10-11; Patricia Plunket and Gabriela Uruñela, "The Impact of Xochiyaoyotl in Southwestern Puebla," in *Economies and Politics in the Aztec Realm*, ed. Mary G. Hodge and Michael E. Smith (Boulder: State University of New York at Albany; University of Colorado Press, 1994), 438; Mysyk and Morales Cano, "Ethnohistory," 335-341.

<sup>9</sup> Ethnohistorical sources that recorded the decisive defeat include: Velázquez, *Anales de Cuauhtitlan*, 105, 114, 123; Kirchoff, *Historia Tolteca-Chichimeca*, 341; 344; Toribio de Benavente Motolinia, *Motolinia's History of the Indians of New Spain*, ed. and trans., Francis B. Steck (Washington D.C.: American Academy for Franciscan History, 1951), 325-326; Juan de Torquemada, *Monarquía indiana* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, [1615] 1975), vol. 1, bk. 3 chap. 31, <http://www.historicas.unam.mx/publicaciones/catalogo/ficha?id=154>; See also, Dyckerhoff, "época prehispánica," 20-21; Carlos Salvador Paredes Martínez, *La región de Atlixco, Huaquechula y Tochimilco: La sociedad y su agricultura en el siglo XVI* (Mexico City: Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social/Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1991), 25; Mysyk and Morales Cano, "Ethnohistory," 335-336.

<sup>10</sup> Emily Umberger discusses the Mexica practice of making deity sculptures for allies and enemies. Umberger, "Aztec Presence and Material Remains in the Outer Provinces," in *Aztec Imperial Strategies*, ed. Frances Berdan et al. (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1986), 170-171.

<sup>11</sup> The Huejotzinca and the Calpaneca had also defeated Huaquecholteca armies in 1403 [2 Reed].

<sup>12</sup> The Huaquecholteca migration from Macuilxochitepec fits into a well-established pattern in Central-Mexican migration histories recorded during the early colonial period. See Elizabeth Hill

the movement of trade and troops. The Huaquecholteca eventually resettled at a river junction nestled along a ridge and constructed defensive ravines and walls along the eastern perimeter to fortify their new settlement.<sup>13</sup>

The defeat of the Huaquecholteca by Huejotzingo in 1443 precipitated a clash of between the Mexica and Huejotzinca (and others) in the Puebla-Tlaxcala Valley. Newly in control of the northern Atlixco Valley, Huejotzingo posed an immediate threat to the rapidly expanding Mexica empire.<sup>14</sup> Huaquechula's fortifications made it an attractive site for Mexica and later Spanish imperial armies to establish an arsenal. Within three years of Huaquechula's defeat at Macuilxochitepec, the Mexica garrisoned troops at (new) Huaquechula to protect their trade

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Boone, *Stories in Red and Black: Pictorial Histories of the Aztecs and Mixtecs* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010), 184-185; Dana Leibsohn, *Script and Glyph: Pre-Hispanic History, Colonial Bookmaking, and the 'Historia Tolteca-Chichimeca'* (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2009); Federico Navarrete Linares, *Los orígenes de los pueblos indígenas del Valle de México: Los altépetl y sus historias* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2011).

<sup>13</sup> According to Torquemada, Moteuczoma I (Ilhuicamina) conquered Huaquechula in 1447. According to Huaquecholteca oral tradition, the garrison was located to the northwest of the ceremonial center, see *Monarquía indiana*, vol. 1, bk. 2, chap. 76. Huaquechula's defensive walls are described by Hernán Cortés, depicted in the *Lienzo de Quauhquechollan* (c. 1530s). However, archaeologists have not been able to ascertain their location. Recently, a fragment of Metropolitan-style sculpture with shell motifs, associated with the water god Tlaloc, was discovered in the vicinity of the Huitzilac River, which is still strewn with monumental, shaped boulders as I observed during a recent survey. Personal communication Silverio Reyes Sarmiento, November 6, 2019. See Cortés, *Cartas de la Relación* (Mexico City: Porrúa, 1993), 92; Florine Asselbergs, *Conquered Conquistadors: The Lienzo de Quauhquechollan: A Nahuatl Vision of the Conquest of Guatemala* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2004), 45-46; Mysyk and Cano, "Ethnohistory," 337.

<sup>14</sup> The Huejotzinca were now poised to cut off the flow of trade that supplied Tenochtitlan with goods from the Gulf Coast and Oaxaca. The recent territorial expansion of the Huejotzinca was also an affront to Mexica military power and hegemony. The Mexica had only recently emerged from a war with the Huejotzinca (and others) that ended in a deadlock. This conflict gave rise to an innovative resolution consisting of regular ritualized warfare called the "Flower Wars." For Mexica relationships with unconquered polities and tributaries, see Michael E. Smith, "The Strategic Provinces," in *Aztec Imperial Strategies*, ed. Frances Berdan et al. (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1986), 137-150; Ross Hassig, *Aztec Warfare: Imperial Expansion and Political Control* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), 254-256.

caravans and halt a Huejotzinca advance into the Valley of Mexico from the north.<sup>15</sup> The combined results of this initial conquest shaped Huaquechula's early colonial history.

Strategic control of Huaquechula hastened Mexica eastward expansion. In 1454, widespread drought and famine drove the Mexica into the Atlixco Valley's rich farmland.<sup>16</sup> Then, thirteen years later, in 1467, the Mexica launched an invasion of the southern Puebla-Tlaxcala Valley from Huaquechula, expanding their tribute empire and taking decisive control over the southern trade routes.<sup>17</sup> The presence of several basalt sculptures carved with Mexica iconography found in the vicinity of Huaquechula indicate the *altepetl* continued to be an important military enclave for the Mexica prior to the arrival of the Spanish.<sup>18</sup> Today, some of

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<sup>15</sup> Moteuczoma I ruled the Mexica during the 1443/7 campaign. See Diego Durán, *History of the Indies of New Spain*, trans. Doris Heyden (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 152; Fernando Alvarado Tezozómoc, *Crónica mexicana*, ed. Manuel Orozco y Berra (Mexico City: Editorial Porrúa, 1975), 306; Torquemada, *Monarquía indiana*, vol. 1, bk. 2, chap. 76; Mysyk and Cano, "Ethnohistory," 338.

<sup>16</sup> For a discussion of the 1 Rabbit famine in relation to meteorological changes in the region, see Matthew D. Therrell, David Stahle, and Rodolfo Acuña Soto, "Aztec Drought and the 'Curse of One Rabbit,'" *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society* (Sept. 2004): 1263-1272; Michel Graulich, *Myths of Ancient Mexico*, trans. Bernard R. Ortiz Montellano and Thelma Ortiz Montellano (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 35-43.

<sup>17</sup> *Hueyi tlahtoani* Axayacatl also conquered Tepeacac (modern Tepeaca) and the twenty-one *altepemeh* subordinate to it during this campaign, see *Codex Mendoza*, ca. 1542, Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, MS Arch. Selden A1, f. 10v.; Luis Reyes García, *Cuauhtinchan del siglo XII al XVI: Formación y desarrollo histórico de un señorío de un señorío prehispánico* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1988), 85-86. That Huaquechula is not recorded in the register of Mexica conquests in the *Codex Mendoza* despite its status as a tributary province of Tepeacac suggests that Huaquechula was not hostile to Mexica takeover and that the polity had affiliated itself with the Mexica Empire at the time of Tepeacac's conquest, as Torquemada indicates. The *Matrícula de Tributos*, however, does indicate that Huaquechula was a Mexica tributary province and, like Tepeacac, was responsible for supplying captives for the Flowery Wars between the Mexica and the Puebla-Tlaxcala federation. See Torquemada, *Monarquía indiana*, vol. 1, bk. 2, chap. 76; Asselbergs, *Conquered Conquistadors*, 39-40; Frances F. Berdan and Patricia Rieff Anawalt, *The Essential Codex Mendoza* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 98.

<sup>18</sup> Mysyk and Cano, "Ethnohistory," 338-341; Plunket and Uruñela, "The Impact of the Xochiyaotl," 439; and Plunket and Uruñela, "La escultura postclásica," 48.



these sculptures are located in Huaquechula's principal plaza and monastery museum [Fig. 1.6]. Four more were embedded in the foundation of the church and monastery during the second construction phase, which I address later in this chapter [Fig. 1.7].

Huaquechula's status as a buffer state between antagonistic military powers shaped the polity's colonial destiny. Huaquechula openly rebelled against Mexica overlords in 1507, only to be brutally crushed by Mexica forces under command of *hueyi tlahtoani* Moteuczoma II (r. 1502-1520).<sup>19</sup> Captives from Huaquechula were sacrificed in honor of Mexica gods at the Templo Mayor in Tenochtitlan, and members of the Mexica ruling dynasty married into the Huaquecholteca ruling lineage in order to secure Mexica political dominance.<sup>20</sup> War with the Mexica forced subject polities like Huaquechula to garrison even more troops and pay exorbitant tribute.<sup>21</sup> By 1519, Huaquechula's economic, military, and political might had been utterly annihilated.

Regional instability set the stage for Spanish invasion. Hernán Cortés targeted the tributary provinces of the Mexica in order to accrue allies for his assault on the Mexica capital of

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<sup>19</sup> Francisco Javier Clavijero, *Historia antigua de México* (Mexico: Editorial Porrúa, 2003), 192.

<sup>20</sup> For example, Motolinia reports that don Juan's wife was a relative of Moteuczoma II. Motolinia, *History*, 194. For the Moteuczoma genealogy, see David Tavárez, "Mutable Memories: The Moteuczomas and Nahua Nobility in the Atzaqualco Catechism," in *Painted Words: Nahua Catholicism, Politics, and Memory in the Atzaqualco Pictorial Catechism*, ed. Elizabeth Hill Boone, Louise M. Burkhart, David Tavárez (Washington D. C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2017), 125-126.

<sup>21</sup> Soon after, Huaquechula became embroiled in bloody conflict between the Huejotzinca and Tlaxcalteca, two of the most powerful *altepemeh* in the Puebla-Tlaxcala Valley. During this war, the Huejotzinca allied with the Mexica and together they fought a war of attrition against the Tlaxcalteca. According to Diego Muñoz Camargo and Torquemada, Mexica troops advanced through the southerly route into the Puebla-Tlaxcala Valley, passing through Tochimilco and just north of Huaquechula. See Durán, *History of the Indies*, 436-439; Diego Muñoz Camargo, *Historia de Tlaxcala*, ed. Rene Acuña, vol. 1 (Mexico City: Universidad Autónoma de México, 1981), 181; Torquemada, *Monarquía indiana*, vol.1, bk. 2, chap. 71; Asselbergs, *Lienzo*, 41-42; Mysyk and Cano, "Ethnohistory," 338.

Tenochtitlan. In Spring 1520, Huaquecholteca spies supplied tactical information to Cortés that enabled the Spanish to expel Mexica oppressors from Huaquechula.<sup>22</sup> Aided by Indigenous allies, the Spanish sacked the Mexica garrison at Huaquechula, killing 30,000 warriors.<sup>23</sup> For the next decade, the Huaquecholteca joined the Spanish military campaigns in Central Mexico and later, Guatemala, in hopes of securing power, prestige, and tribute exemptions for their *altepetl* in the new colonial system.<sup>24</sup>

Instead of autonomy, however, Huaquechula gained a third overlord. For over a century, Huaquechula had been dominated by foreign powers and wedged between warring states. First the Huejotzinca invaded from the north in the 1450s, driving the Huaquechula from their ancestral homeland. Shortly after, the Mexica invaded Huaquechula from the west to patrol the region's lucrative inter-continental trade routes. After the Spanish Conquest, the Mexica continued to exert economic, military and political control over the *altepetl*, while Huejotzingo controlled the territory around Macuilxochitepec, the ancestral homeland of the Huaquecholteca. Now Huaquechula was distributed in an *encomienda* grant, giving a *conquistador* exclusive

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<sup>22</sup> According to Cortés, this occurred during the raid of nearby Tepeacac, a Mexica tributary. Huaquechula had also formed an alliance with Tlaxcallan in order to expel the Mexica invaders. Cortés, *Cartas de Relación*, 90-92; Bernardino de Vázquez de Tapia, *Relación de méritos y servicios del conquistador*, ed. Jorge Gurría Lacroix (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1972), 36; Asselbergs, *Lienzo*, 43-46. Factional feuds in the region spurred Spanish conquest because it created sociopolitical instability. See Geoffrey G. McCafferty, "The Cholula Massacre: Factional Histories and Archaeology of the Spanish Conquest," in *Entangled Past: Integrating History and Archaeology*, ed. J.C. Erwin M. Boyd, and M. Hendrickson (Calgary: Archaeology Association of the University of Calgary, 2000), 354-355.

<sup>23</sup> Tlaxcala and Tepeacac participated in the assault led by *conquistador* Cristóbal de Olid. See Cortés, *Cartas de Relación*, 90-92.

<sup>24</sup> The *Lienzo de Quauhquechollan* records the Huaquechula's role in the conquest of Guatemala. See Asselbergs, *Lienzo*, 204-228.

rights to extract labor and tribute from the *altepetl*.<sup>25</sup> Despite fighting alongside the *conquistador* Jorge de Alvarado during the Spanish seizure of Guatemala between 1527-1529, the Huaquecholteca did not receive the exemptions they had certainly hoped for. Instead, Huaquechula was granted in *encomienda* to Jorge's brother, the ruthless Pedro de Alvarado.<sup>26</sup>

Adding insult to injury, because the Huaquecholteca did not have a church they were compelled to travel to the Franciscan monastery of San Miguel Arcángel in Huejotzingo for Mass. Founded in 1528, the Huejotzingo monastery was one of the first monasteries established in New Spain and its doctrinal jurisdiction stretched across much of the Puebla Valley.<sup>27</sup> During the day-long journey, Huaquecholteca nobles trekked north through territory that had once belonged to their ancestors, passing Macuilxochitepec, erstwhile their ceremonial center and the site of the 1443 defeat. Upon arriving in Huejotzingo, Huaquecholteca leadership then presented themselves and their tribute to the Huejotzinca, their historical oppressors. Huejotzingo's affiliation with the Franciscans had only increased the influence of the powerful *altepetl*. The entire spectacle must have been humiliating for the once proud Huaquecholteca.<sup>28</sup> Yet in 1535,

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<sup>25</sup> *Conquistador* Jorge de Alvarado later received the grant. He was the brother of the notorious Pedro Alvarado, responsible for the *Noche Triste* Massacre at the Templo Mayor in Tenochtitlan. The *encomienda* passed to Jorge's son in 1540, and his grandson in 1563, and Huaquechula remained in *encomienda* until 1696. See Asselbergs, *Lienzo*, 47.

<sup>26</sup> It was customary for *altepetl* who had participated in Spanish campaigns to receive exemptions and privileges; the most far-reaching were those obtained by Tlaxcala in 1528. See Laura E. Oudijk and Matthew Restall, *Indian Conquistadors* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007), 55; Mysyk, "Land and Labor," 339; Jovita Baber, "Law, Land, and Legal Rhetoric in Colonial New Spain: A Look at the Changing Rhetoric of Indigenous Americans in the Sixteenth Century," in *Native Claims: Indigenous Law Against Empire, 1500-1920*, ed. Saliha Belmessous (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 43; Arthur J. O. Anderson, Frances Berdan, James Lockhart, *Beyond the Codices: The Nahua View of Colonial Mexico* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 176-91; Gibson, *Aztecs*, 60.

<sup>27</sup> Motolinia, *History*, 194-195.

<sup>28</sup> Ryan Crewe, "Building in the Shadow of Death: Monastery Construction and the Politics of Community Reconstitution in Sixteenth-Century Mexico," *The Americas* 75, no. 3 (2018): 506.

the death of a prominent Nahua noble shifted the balance of power in Huaquechula. Don Juan had a distinguished lineage; his family had close connections to the Huejotzinca and his wife was a blood relative of the Mexica *hueyi tlahtoani* Moteuczoma II.<sup>29</sup> Don Juan's family embodied a century of Huaquecholteca subjugation by foreign powers.<sup>30</sup> But don Juan's unexpected death after Christmas Mass provided an opportunity for Huaquechula's *gobernador*, don Martín Cortés Xochitlahua, to oust Mexica and Huejotzinca influence from Huaquechula once and for all.<sup>31</sup>

### **Phase One: Fashioning Huaquecholteca Futures in the Lower Cloister, 1538-1545**

Huaquechula's history of migration and invasion fueled the founding of the Franciscan monastery of San Martín de Tours in 1538 [Fig. 1.8]. The forced migration of the Huaquecholteca from their ancestral homeland in the fifteenth century severed the *altepetl* from its source of economic power and ethnic exceptionality. The subsequent invasion of their newly-established city by imperial armies stripped the Huaquecholteca of their autonomy. By founding a monastery, *gobernador* don Martín Cortés Xochitlahua liberated Huaquechula from foreign control. To begin, the establishment of a *doctrina* (parish) monastery brought the Huaquecholteca important legal standing in colonial courts, and its friars advocated for

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<sup>29</sup> Conquerors often replaced some local leaders with their own officials to stave off insurrection, which is likely how a lineage linked to Huejotzingo and Tenochtitlan came to prominence in Huaquechula. It is unclear, however, if this political arrangement preceded or was a result of Spanish invasion. On the "genealogical politics" of Nahua dynastic rule, see Tavárez, "Mutable Memories," 113-160.

<sup>30</sup> I use the term 'foreign' here to convey that the Huaquecholteca, Huejotzinca, and Mexica represented distinct ethnic groups united only by the shared language of Nahuatl, which has significant regional differences.

<sup>31</sup> In 1535 don Martín and Huaquechula's leaders sued the viceroyalty because Spanish settlers had violated the terms of an agreement that had established the *altepetl*'s territorial borders. Perhaps recognizing that a legal strategy to assert Huaquecholteca territorial sovereignty had been ineffective (indeed, don Martín returned to court in 1545-6 for similar reasons), he appealed to the Franciscans instead. AGN, Tierras, vol. 2683, exp. 4, f. 162; Mysyk, "Land, Labor," 339.

Huaquecholteca territorial autonomy. Mendicant friars considered Spanish settlers a threat to their evangelization efforts and complained that the Spanish introduced vice and exploited the Amerindians.<sup>32</sup> Construction of a *doctrina* monastery also relieved the Huaquecholteca from the necessity of making the humiliating trek to Huejotzingo for Mass. Pictorial cartographs from this period, moreover, suggest that Huaquechula regained control of the northern Atlixco Valley and with it, Macuilxochitepec. One map, the *Codex Huaquechula*, even depicts a figure glossed “Do[n] Jua[n] Panahuicatli Tlan[??]os...tli” emerging from the toponym for Macuilxochitepec, as if a certain don Juan’s fate was intimately entangled with the history of the sacred promontory [Figs. 1.9, 1.10].<sup>33</sup>

However, perhaps don Martín’s most resounding statement of power came in the form of the monastery itself. A stone cloister signaled the expansionist ambitions of the Huaquecholteca

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<sup>32</sup> John Leddy Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans in the New World: A Study of the Writings of Gerónimo de Mendieta (1525-1604)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1956), 86-91.

<sup>33</sup> Florine Asselbergs maintains that the *Codex Huaquechula*, a pigment on cotton painting, was made in the mid-sixteenth century. Idiosyncrasies such as the distribution of topographical elements, unusual spellings of Nahuatl names (including don Juan’s), and the late-colonial handwriting style, however, suggest to me that the *Codex Huaquechula* is more likely a *título primordial*, which are spurious documents that record a foundational moment in an *altepetl*’s history (territorial, historical, evangelical, or genealogical) and were produced after the sixteenth century to buttress an *altepetl*’s political and land tenure claims. Today the *Codex Huaquechula* is in the repository of the Museo Poblano de Arte Virreinal, Puebla, Mexico. The single scholarly description of the pictorial cartograph is Asselbergs, *Lienzo*, 55-62. On primordial titles, see Robert Haskett, “Paper Shields: The Ideology of Coats of Arms in Colonial Mexican Primordial Titles,” *Ethnohistory* 43, no. 1 (1996): 99-126; Lockhart, *Nahuas After the Conquest*, 34; Stephanie Wood, “The Cosmic Conquest: Late-Colonial Views of the Sword and Cross in Central Mexican Títulos,” *Ethnohistory* 38, no. 2 (Spring 1991): 176–195; *Ibid.*, “The Social vs. Legal Context of Nahuatl Títulos,” in *Native Traditions in the Postconquest World*, ed. Elizabeth Hill Boone and Tom Cummins (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1998), 201-231; *Ibid.*, “The Cosmic Conquest: Late-Colonial Views of the Sword and Cross in Central Mexican Títulos,” *Ethnohistory* 38, no. 2 (Spring 1991): 176–195; *Ibid.*, “El problema de la historicidad de Títulos y los códigos del grupo Techialoyan,” in *De tlacuilos y escribanos: Estudios sobre documentos indígenas coloniales del centro de México*, eds. Xavier Noguez Ramírez and Stephanie Wood (Mexico City: El Colegio Mexiquense and El Colegio de Michoacán, 1998), 167–221.

and their leadership. In 1538, Huaquecholteca laborers formed a human chain to transport stone from the Huitzilac River to the site of the new cloister.<sup>34</sup> The stones were incorporated into the massive walls and vaults of the cloister, which consisted of rubble and cut stones set in a large amount of mortar.<sup>35</sup> Rather than extracting stone from the foothills of the volcano Popocatepetl to the west, Huaquecholteca oral history indicates that the human chain stretched to the east.<sup>36</sup> There they found an excellent source of building materials in the remains of dismantled pre-Hispanic defensive structures near the Huitzilac River [Fig. 1.11].<sup>37</sup> Recall that in the fifteenth century the Huaquecholteca constructed defensive walls along the riverbank and it was here that the Mexica built a garrison after they invaded the Valley [Fig. 1.12].<sup>38</sup> On the *Lienzo de Quauhquechollan* map (ca. 1530), crenelated walls frame the Huitzilac River, forming two impenetrable arcs so high and solid that the Spanish *conquistadores* found the ramparts formidable.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Oral testimony collected by Florine Asselbergs in 1997. One of her informants, don Gonzalo Alejo Martínez, served as Huaquechula's *sacristan* for 45 years before his death in early 2019. See, Asselbergs, *Lienzo*, 67; Ibid, "El Mapa Circular de Quauhquechollan," *Revistas Filológicas* 17 (2011): 226, n. 18. In November, 2019 community historian Silverio Reyes confirmed this information. Personal communication Silverio Reyes Sarmiento, November 6, 2019.

<sup>35</sup> Although technically simple, rubble-core construction demands large quantities of raw materials. See George Kubler, *Mexican Architecture of the Sixteenth Century*, vol. 2 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), 348-349; John McAndrew, *The Open-Air Churches of Sixteenth-Century Mexico: Atrios, Posas, Open Chapels, and Other Studies* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), 150.

<sup>36</sup> Huaquechula's western border is formed by the Sierra Nevada foothills, a region where good building materials abound in the form of soaring conifers and limestone deposits for mortar and plaster. Thus, it is remarkable that the Huaquecholteca did not solely draw on these plentiful resources for construction.

<sup>37</sup> The Huitzilac forms the eastern boundary of modern Huaquechula and its deep ravine brims with water during the rainy season so that the gorge forms a natural barricade around the *altepetl*.

<sup>38</sup> Mysyk and Morales Cano, "Ethnohistory," 337. The defensive walls appear on the *Lienzo de Quauhquechollan*, a map painted in Huaquechula in the 1530s. Cortés, *Cartas*, 92; Asselbergs, *Lienzo*, 45-46, 139-140.

<sup>39</sup> "The whole city is surrounded by a very solid wall of lime and stone, twenty-eight feet high, on the outside of the city and, inside, it is almost level with the ground. A parapet, three and a

The Huaquecholteca also salvaged pre-Hispanic carvings from the ruins for the monastery. Workers embedded one of these carvings, a basalt plaque bearing the glyphic date 2 Flint 1 Reed (August 30, 1467), into the monastery's eastern perimeter wall [Figs. 1.13, 1.13.1]. The Mexica invaded the Puebla-Tlaxcala Valley in 1467-8, launching the campaign from their garrison in Huaquechula.<sup>40</sup> The Mexica invasion of the Puebla-Tlaxcala Valley upset the political and territorial landscape of the region, and this watershed is noted throughout pictorial histories produced in the region. It is thus likely that Mexica made this plaque to commemorate their victory over Huaquechula. When the Huaquecholteca appropriated the plaque, they recast a symbol of subjugation into a marker of triumph.<sup>41</sup> The plaque served as a strategic “remembering” that positioned Huaquechula’s monastic construction as a major accomplishment over the tyranny and paganism of their former Mexica overlords, the trace of which don Martín was actively working to obliterate.<sup>42</sup> Thus, while the pagan past gave physical shape to the

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half feet high, runs all along the ramparts; for the purpose of battle, there are four entrances, wide enough that one can enter on horseback and each entrance has three or four turns in the wall, supported by the facade of the other, and there are also parapets for battle on top of the rampart leading to those turns.” Hernán Cortés quoted and translated in Mysyk and Morales Cano, “Ethnohistory,” 336-337.

<sup>40</sup> Huaquechula became a Mexica tributary province at that time. Avis Mysyk, “Land, Labor, and Indigenous Response: Huaquechula (Mexico), 1521–1633,” *Colonial Latin American Review* 24, no. 3 (2015): 338.

<sup>41</sup> On Mexica date plaques, see Emily Umberger, “Events Commemorated by Date Plaques at the Templo Mayor: A Reconsideration of the Solar Metaphor,” in *The Aztec Templo Mayor*, ed. Elizabeth Hill Boone (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1987), 411-450; *Ibid.*, “Notions of Aztec History: The Case of the 1487 Great Temple Dedication,” *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 42 (2002): 86–108.

<sup>42</sup> Kelly S. McDonough, “Indigenous Rememberings and Forgetting: Sixteenth-Century Nahua Letters and Petitions to the Spanish Crown,” *Native American and Indigenous Studies* 5, no. 1 (2018): 70-71. As Stephanie Wood notes, “Indigenous people’s self-perceptions, at least as represented in their community histories, are regularly not those of vanquished, conquered, subordinated, overcome, or powerless peoples. It is not even clear that Spaniards on the scene would have uniformly seen them in this modern light.” Wood, *Transcending Conquest: Nahua Views of Spanish Colonial Mexico* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012), 142.

Christian present, the plaque's symbolism was recast to serve present Huaquecholteca interests.<sup>43</sup> The strength of this statement of enduringness and political savvy was soon put to the test by a virulent plague that erupted in 1545 just as the final coat of paint was applied to the monastery's newly finished walls.

Sixteenth century Mexico also suffered from a severe and prolonged drought, punctuated by years of excessive rainfall.<sup>44</sup> This extreme weather devastated maize-based agriculture in Indigenous communities but had little impact on the wheat now sprouting across the Atlixco Valley likely because water was diverted to Spanish fields.<sup>45</sup> Environmental degradation culminated in catastrophe in late 1545, when a virulent outbreak of disease swept across Mexico, killing an estimated seventy-five percent of Huaquechula's population.<sup>46</sup> Historian Ryan Crewe

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<sup>43</sup> Dismantled pre-Hispanic temples provided an excellent source of cut stone for monastery construction, and many Franciscan monasteries took advantage of the convenience and symbolism offered by ruined temples and built directly on top of them. At sites like Tepeapulco and Tlatelolco, Christianity's triumph over paganism was declared through monumental architecture according to Spanish sources. As the case of Huaquechula shows, possibilities for other local meanings of the appropriation of pre-Hispanic monuments need to be pursued to nuance the dominant narrative of Christian triumph. See Motolinia, *History*, 100; Byron Ellsworth Hamann, "Producing Idols," *Latin American and Latinx Visual Culture* 1, no. 1 (2019): 25-26.

<sup>44</sup> David W. Stahle, et al., "Tree-Ring Data Document 16<sup>th</sup> Century Megadrought over North America," *Eos* 81, no. 12 (2000): 121-131; Rodolfo Acuña-Soto, et al., "Megadrought and Megadeath in 16th Century Mexico," *Emerging Infectious Diseases* 8, no. 4 (2002): 360-362; David W. Stahle, "Anthropogenic Megadroughts," *Science* 368, no. 6488 (Apr 2020): 238-239. For the year 1543 (12 House), tree-ring data in conjunction with Nahuatl codices makes it possible to estimate periods of drought and their relative intensity, see Eloise Quiñones Keber, *Codex Telleriano-Remensis: Ritual, Divination, and History in a Pictorial Aztec Manuscript* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), f. 46r.

<sup>45</sup> Wheat was grown as Spanish cash crop. I discuss agriculture in the Atlixco Valley at length in chapter 4.

<sup>46</sup> According to the Nahuatl-language *Anales de Tecamachalco*, composed in the Puebla-Tlaxcala Valley, the plague first appeared in the Puebla-Tlaxcala Valley in May 1545 and was characterized by the sudden onset of a hemorrhagic fever. See Eustaquio Celestino Solís and Luís Reyes García, eds. *Anales de Tecamachalco, 1398–1590* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1992), 70. Viceregal authorities tabulated Huaquechula's population twice in the sixteenth century. In the 1520s, Huaquechula had consisted of 20,000 households. In 1569,



has recently remarked on the notable increase in monastic church construction in the immediate aftermath of the epidemic, demonstrating that local sociopolitical factors within Indigenous communities, more than a rise in fervent Indigenous religiosity, stimulated the building of these new public monuments.<sup>47</sup> I agree with Crewe's assessment because a similar set of factors in Huaquechula contributed to the seemingly inexplicable growth of that monastery during this moment of extraordinary instability. Huaquechula's leaders mobilized local resources and labor to build monasteries, centralizing their authority over subject polities that delivered the labor and materials in exchange for access to collectively-held farmland or a decrease in tribute demands. Yet building big also introduced political discord into the *altepetl*, and intensified friction between Huaquechula and its neighbors as they competed for the rapidly disappearing reserves of farmland, labor, and timber. Significantly, monumental construction at Huaquechula occurred *before* outbreaks of infectious disease, compelling us to reconsider the place of plague events in the architectural history of the region. As the case of Huaquechula shows, regional rivalries and local factionalism shaped the timing and form of Huaquecholteca interventions in the built environment. Understood this way, monumental construction at Huaquechula marked an effort to

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Huaquechula had just 1,500 residents, with another 1,000 in subject towns. See Joaquín García Icazbaleceta, *Códice franciscano in Nueva colección de documentos para la historia de México* (henceforward *NCDHM*) vol. 2 (Mexico City: Francisco Díaz de León, 1903), 24; Antonio de Ciudad Real, *Tratado curioso y docto de las grandezas de la Nueva España*, ed. Alonso de San Juan, Víctor M. Castillo Farreras, and Josefina García Quintana, vol. 1 (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, 1976), 99-101.

<sup>47</sup> Ryan Crewe has shown that Indigenous rulers used monumental construction projects to reaffirm their control over subject villages who supplied materials and labor through a rotational draft system. In other words, "the very means of producing a monastery was a political end in itself, whose meaning was known to ruler and laborer alike." Crewe, *Mexican Mission*, 513-514. For a view of monastery construction as a response to cataclysm, see Eleanor Wake, *Framing the Sacred: The Indian Churches of Early Colonial Mexico* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010), 86.

stabilize a devolving situation by shoring up Indigenous elite power, rather than reaction to cataclysmic events.

Shortly after the foundation of the monastery in 1538, *gobernador* don Martín devised a new strategy to secure a sustainable future for Huaquechula: establish a loom in the monastery. The loom produced the sackcloth woven into the tunics worn by Franciscan friars. According to a story related in fray Gerónimo de Mendieta's chronicle, don Martín was appalled at the sight of the scantily clad fray Diego de Almonte who, apart from flaunting his commitment to pauperism, complained to don Martín that he could not find sackcloth for a suitable habit and so wore rags instead.<sup>48</sup> Don Martín sent tailors to Mexico City to apprentice under a *savalero* (sackcloth maker) and then set up a workshop in the monastery, which was still functioning when Mendieta wrote his chronicle in the 1590s.<sup>49</sup> The loom and other workshops likely were situated in a room attached to the back (east) of the monastery that opened onto the monastery's orchards [Fig. 1.14].

The story of don Martín clothing a friar is ripe with Christological symbolism. Mendieta draws a parallel between don Martín's benefaction and instances of generosity in the hagiographies of Saint Francis and Saint Martin of Tours, Huaquechula's patron saint.<sup>50</sup> In Saint

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<sup>48</sup> Gerónimo de Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana*, ed. Joaquín García Icazbalceta (Alicante: Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes [Mexico City: Porrúa: [1870] 1980), bk. 3, chap. 31. The material used for Franciscan habits and the specifications for their measurements can be found in García Icazbalceta, *Códice franciscano*, 145.

<sup>49</sup> Although recounting the story in the 1590s, Mendieta was very familiar with the region having taken his vows at neighboring Tochimilco in the 1550s and served as father guardian at friaries in the region. See Torquemada, *Monarquía indiana*, vol., 1, bk. 20, chap. 73. Because Motolinia does not mention the loom in his chronicle, finished ca. 1540, it is likely the loom was established after the monastery was founded, as Mendieta also suggests.

<sup>50</sup> Yossi Maurey, *Medieval Music, Legend, and the Cult of St. Martin: The Local Foundations of a Universal Saint* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 216. For the hagiographic parallels between Sulpicius's *Vita* of Saint Martin and the *vitae* of Saint Francis composed by

Francis' *vita*, the young merchant Francis sheds his rich clothing to garb a poor man; in Saint Martín's *vita*, the knight Martin likewise sheds his cloak for a beggar (later revealed to be Christ) he encounters on the roadside. A carving over the Huaquechula main church portal portrays the latter scene [Figs. 1.15, 1.15.1]. The prosperous, polychromed Christian knight twists in the saddle to cut his cape with his sword and present it to the pauper. This act of charity and selflessness demonstrates the knight's commitment to following Christ's teaching while also marking his conversion into a warrior for Christ.<sup>51</sup> The portrayal of Saint Martin would have reiterated the association between the humble Christian warrior saint and the *gobernador* of Huaquechula, further legitimizing don Martín's lineage and political connections with the monastery.

The allegorical dimensions of Saint Martin of Tours's *vita* resonated with the Huaquecholteca who were a community of merchants (*pochteca*) and warriors, especially since the *altepetl* had rendered military services to the Spanish during the conquest of Guatemala a decade earlier. Yet those military exploits had failed to secure the Huaquecholteca privileges and status. In 1535, *gobernador* don Martín had negotiated a special viceregal license for the *altepetl* to create a monopoly on trade with Chiapas and Guatemala, regions the Huaquecholteca had helped violently incorporate into the viceroyalty.<sup>52</sup> This secured the Huaquechula's access to the materials for running the loom, and created a channel of income for the *altepetl* that could be used to support monumental building and other projects. It also locked the Huaquechula in control of the movement of goods between Mexico City and the Maya lowlands, renewing the

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Bonaventure (*Legenda maior*) and Thomas of Celano (*Vita secunda*), see F. Cardini, "I primi biografí francescani... San Martino di Tours," *Studi Francescani* 76 (1979): 56–61.

<sup>51</sup> Bernardino de Sahagún, *Psalmodia Christiana (Christian Psalmody)*, ed. and trans. Arthur J. O. Anderson (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1993), 297-299, 326-327.

<sup>52</sup> AGN, Mercedes, vol. 2, exp. 532, ff. 215v–216r.; Mysyk, "Land and Labor," 337.

Huaquecholteca's rich legacy of interregional commerce. The two ventures, the loom and the license, made Huaquechula indispensable to the burgeoning viceregal commercial enterprise, as well as to the material culture of Franciscan spirituality in New Spain. Through trade and textiles, the Huaquecholteca fashioned themselves as charitable Christian warriors and humble merchants, which I discuss in chapter 2. This much is registered by Mendieta's description of don Martín as "extremely devoted to the religious, and who used to great liberalities with them [the friars]."<sup>53</sup> Those "liberalities" no doubt convey the influence don Martín had within Huaquechula's interconnected secular and sacred institutions. Indeed, monastic patronage was but one facet of don Martín's strategy to secure Huaquechula's future in a new Christian order.

### **Phase Two: The Contested Landscape of the Monastic Church, 1545-1563**

Much more than a public display of Huaquechula's Christian faith, monastic construction was also a means of asserting territorial sovereignty. The monastery's eponymous patron, *gobernador* don Martín Cortés Xochitlahua, went to court several times in the 1540s and 1550s to fight for Huaquechula's land and water rights. In 1545, don Martín filed a lawsuit charging the viceroyalty with violating a 1535 agreement that had established Huaquechula's territorial borders.<sup>54</sup> In 1542 Spanish settlers received grants to grow wheat on Huaquecholteca lands along the Huitzilac River, stripping the community of its most productive farmland.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> "Este principal que digo se llamaba D. Martín, señor del pueblo de Guacachula, devotísimo en extremo de los religiosos, y que usó grandes liberalidades con ellos." Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana*, bk. 3, chap. 31.

<sup>54</sup> AGN, Tierras, vol. 2683, exp. 4, f. 162; Mysyk, "Land and Labor," 339.

<sup>55</sup> Three *reales mercedes* (royal grants) along the Huitzilac River were awarded to Spanish settlers in 1542. This consisted of two and a half *caballerías* (crop lands) and a quarter league of land, and one *estancia* (pasture land) for *ganado* (livestock) total. See Mysyk, "Land and Labor," 341, table 1. On wheat cultivation in the Atlixco Valley, see Paredes Martínez, *Atlixco*, 40. The *Códice Huaquechula* records Spanish settlement in Huaquechula territory. It depicts two Spanish

Huaquecholteca commoners were also obligated to plant and harvest the Spanish wheat fields. Not only did Indigenous people lose energy and time needed to cultivate their own crops, soon they were working into dire poverty. To accompany the 1545 lawsuit, don Martín presented a painted map that delineates the territorial boundaries and the political structure of Huaquechula. The stone church appears at the center of the *Mapa Circular de Quauhquechollan* (1546), wedged between the *altepetl*'s eagle-headed toponym and the *tecpan*, the post-and-lintel palace and seat of the Nahuatl municipal government [Fig. 1.16].<sup>56</sup> The *Mapa Circular de Quauhquechollan* is pigment on cotton map, and the construction of a stone church at Huaquechula was not yet underway when the map was made. The icon of the church thus more properly alludes to the stone cloister, then a distinguishing feature of the city, or more importantly, signifies the monastery's status by generating the impression of permanence, which was important to stress because the Franciscans had recently demoted two *doctrina* monasteries. In the map, Don Martín (upper left) sits in a curule chair and wears Spanish clothing and a beard, attributes that conventionally denote his station rather than his ethnicity. He is also the only figure identified by an alphabetic caption rather than a glyph. He is surrounded by sixteen lesser

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settlers with digging sticks standing on the shores of the Huitzilac River. The figures are glossed “*tepolihque*” or “victors, conquerors.” Alonso de Molina, *Vocabulario en la lengua Castellana y Mexicana*, sixth edition, ed. Miguel León-Portilla ([1555]1571; repr., Mexico City: Editorial Porrúa, 2008), f.103r.

<sup>56</sup> Today the *Mapa Circular de Quauhquechollan* (1546) is in the repository of the Austrian National Library (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek) in Vienna, Austria. Round maps, as Amara Solari has shown, represent Indigenous conceptions of space as circular and communicentric. Solari, *The Transfiguration of Space: Maya Ideologies of the Sacred in Colonial Yucatan* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013), 99-126; For an alternative reading of pre-Hispanic spatial conceptions and mapping, see Alessandra Russo, *The Untranslatable Image: A Mestizo History of the Arts in New Spain, 1500-1600* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014), 197-222.

nobles who sit in the high-backed chairs associated with leadership.<sup>57</sup> Each figure corresponds with one of Huaquechula's *calpoltin* (*barrios*), signaled by the large white edifices with red lintels that appear throughout the map.<sup>58</sup> Two concentric circles depict the forty dependents of the federated *calpoltin* (inner) and the physical borders (outer rim) that together comprise the *altepetl* of Huaquechula. In the lower left corner, a green dome signifies the Popocatepetl volcano (northwest of Huaquechula), from which emerges the Nexpapa and Huitzilac rivers; the latter runs behind the monastery in the center of the map.<sup>59</sup> The lawsuit was successful and the Viceroy Velasco issued a *real cédula* (royal ordinance) that recognized much of the *altepetl*'s ancestral domains.<sup>60</sup> Don Martín had once again negotiated a future for Huaquechula, perhaps leveraging his community's on-going construction of the monastery's lower cloister to persuade the viceroy.<sup>61</sup> At the same time, as the monastery's walls went up, relations among the

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<sup>57</sup> Elizabeth Hill Boone, "Rule, Service, and Privilege in the Pictorial Additions," in *Painted Words: Nahua Catholicism, Politics, and Memory in the Atzaqualco Pictorial Catechism*, ed. Elizabeth Hill Boone, Louise M. Burkhart, David Tavárez (Washington D. C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2017), 96-98.

<sup>58</sup>As indicated by the *Mapa Circular de Quauhquechollan* (1546), Huaquechula's social organization was based on the *calpolli* structure, a political subdivision of the *altepetl* in which nobles (*tlahtoque*) from the same ethnic group controlled the *altepetl*'s labor, territory, and tribute. The *calpolli* structure was typical of the western Puebla-Tlaxcala Valley. On the sociopolitical organization of the Puebla-Tlaxcala Valley and ethnic lineage groups, see 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), 105-108; John K. Chance, "The Noble House in Colonial Puebla, Mexico: Descent, Inheritance, and the Nahua Tradition," *American Anthropologist* 102, no. 3 (2000): 498-499; Mysyk, "Land, Labor," 339.

<sup>59</sup> Some of the toponyms are *barrios* and *sujetos* that can be identified through cross-referencing them with other Huaquecholteca sources, including oral history, and it appears they are generally distributed in accordance with their actual geographical location. Further research is needed to determine if the position of the *principales* on the map corresponds with the geographical area that they controlled.

<sup>60</sup> Huaquechula was elevated to *doctrina* (head-town) status before 1552, see Newberry Library, Ayer ms. 1121, f. 176v.

<sup>61</sup> Huaquechula was also awarded in its entirety as a single encomienda and this likely forestalled the division of the *altepetl* into nucleated Nahua villages or allotments for Spanish settlers. See

Huaquecholteca rulers broke down.

The following year, 1546, a high-ranking Nahua judge (*juez*) was sent to Huaquechula on behalf of the viceroy. The stated problem was that “don Martín had brought disorder upon the *calpoltin*,” or Huaquechula’s subdistricts, each of which was headed by a noble family.<sup>62</sup> Don Esteban de Guzmán’s recorded his ruling in Nahuatl alphabetic writing on the upper-left corner of the *Mapa Circular de Quauhquechollan*, the same map used in a lawsuit the previous year. The inscription names the sixteen figures depicted on the map and identifies them as all nobles (*pipiltin*), merchants (*pochteca*), and officials in Huaquechula’s Indigenous municipal government (*cabildo*) and church [Appendix 3]. Unfortunately, this section of the text is badly damaged, complicating the identification of all the figures. The map also lists the sixteen *calpoltin*, each presumably ruled by one of the identified nobles that together compose the Huaquechula *altepetl*. Finally, Guzmán explains that Huaquechula was also known as “Mexicapan tianquiztenco” or, “the place on the edge of the Mexica market.”<sup>63</sup> This may reflect how the *altepetl* was known in the Valley of Mexico, from where Guzmán hailed, and underscores the continued importance of Huaquechula as a node in a transregional commercial network. It also helps to explain why such a distinguished administrator like Guzmán would be sent to Huaquechula to settle a local dispute.<sup>64</sup> The Spanish government had a vested interest in

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Avis Mysyk, “Political Autonomy, Factionalism, and Economic Survival: Indigenous Governance in Huaquechula, New Spain (1535-1735),” *Revista Española de Antropología Americana* 46 (2016): 160.

<sup>62</sup> “in ixquich yn calpoli mochi oquixnelo yn don Martin,” Asselbergs, “Mapa Circular,” 223.

<sup>63</sup> The original Nahuatl text is translated and transcribed in Asselbergs, “Mapa Circular,” 223.

<sup>64</sup> Don Esteban de Guzmán wrote his ruling in the upper left margin of the map however, the text is in poor condition having faded considerably. Asselbergs, “Mapa Circular,” 222-224. Don Esteban de Guzmán was a Nahua judge and governor who was born in Coacalco and baptized in the presence of Cortés. See Elizabeth Hill Boone, “Pictorial Documents and Visual Thinking in Postconquest Mexico,” in *Native Traditions in the Postconquest World*, ed. Elizabeth Hill Boone and Tom Cummins (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1998), 168-169. As a judge, he

keeping trade flowing from the Maya lowlands, through Huaquechula, and into Mexico City.

There are two apparent causes for the disorder caused by don Martín and recorded on that *Mapa Circular de Quauhquechollan*. First, Huaquechula's trade license likely brought new wealth into the city which upset the finely-tuned sociopolitical hierarchy that sustained order within the *altepetl*. Second, monastic construction strained local resources and relationships between *calpoltin* and their dependents, the smaller communities which supplied the labor and materials through a rotary draft (*coatequitl*).<sup>65</sup> To resolve the crisis Guzmán divided Huaquechula into two moieties, a 'front' part (upper) and 'back' part (lower).<sup>66</sup> When properly functioning, leadership positions within the *cabildo* rotated among the heads of the *calpoltin* so that power was evenly distributed among all the ruling lineages (*caciques*). Although an elected position, this also applied to the *gobernador* who rarely served a term longer than a year, although they could serve multiple terms.<sup>67</sup> In this regard, it is striking that don Martín won consecutive elections to maintain a grip on power in Huaquechula for at least fifteen years. In addition to checking don Martín's influence, Guzmán's division of Huaquechula into two parts

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examined Indigenous lawsuits pertaining to land, and also compiled and presented complaints against the viceroyalty (the Codex Osuna) in 1565. See Wood, "Nahuatl Títulos," 207-208. On the *Codex Osuna*, see Luis Chávez Orozco, ed., *Códice Osuna* (Mexico City: Instituto Indigenista Interamericano), 1947; Vicenta Cortés Alonso, ed. *Pintura del Gobernador, Alcaldes y Regidores de México*. 2 vols. (Madrid: Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, 1973). On the biography of don Esteban de Guzmán, see Barbara E. Mundy, *The Death of Aztec Tenochtitlan, the Life of Mexico City* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015), 162-167. On the 1554 letter he wrote to the king in Spanish and Nahuatl in 1554, see Emma Pérez-Rocha and Rafael Tena, *La nobleza indígena del centro de México después de la conquista* (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 2000), 191-192.

<sup>65</sup> Crewe, "Building," 509, 517-518. The *coatequitl* system of draft labor is a reciprocal, albeit asymmetrical, exchange of political allegiance for access to arable land. See, Lockhart, "Nahuas," 96-97.

<sup>66</sup> "motenehua tlaixpan tlatepotica yn tlaixpan yehuatl," in Asselbergs, "Mapa Circular," 223.

<sup>67</sup> David Tavárez, "Mutable Memories," 128; Lockhart, *Nahuas*, 34-37; Gibson, *Aztecs*, 69; William F. Connell, *After Moctezuma: Indigenous Politics and Self-Government in Mexico City, 1524-1730* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012), 164, 279.



doubled key leadership positions. This ensured more equitable representation in the Nahua *cabildo*. Where there had once been a single *fiscal* (chief church constable), for instance, there were now two, one representing the subdistricts of ‘upper’ Huaquechula and the other representing those of ‘lower’ Huaquechula. This structure persists in Huaquechula today where each moiety stages its own religious processions and feast day celebrations, sometimes with great rivalry.<sup>68</sup>

Under don Martín’s leadership, Huaquechula also continued to expand its territory, pushing further and further into contested regions to acquire timber for construction. This reignited a century-long feud with a smaller rival polity, Tochimilco, which sued Huaquechula for infringing on their lands in 1550.<sup>69</sup> That same year Huaquechula began construction of a towering stone church suggesting that competition for limited resources may have motivated this dispute.<sup>70</sup> The litigant *altepetl* controlled the mouth of the Huitzilac River and vast tracts of timber located at the base of Popocatepetl that Huaquechula needed for its monumental projects. In court documents Tochimilco, which had a very modest monastery at this moment, regarded Huaquechula’s construction as a clear signal of the *altepetl*’s rising dominance, and thus a growing threat to their own authority. First, Huaquechula’s ability to secure land and labor from subordinates in the service of Christian architecture made a convincing case for their territorial sovereignty in the Spanish legal system, thereby preventing Spanish encroachment while also

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<sup>68</sup> Personal communication Silverio Reyes Sarmiento, November 6, 2019. ‘Lower’ Huaquechula identifies with the parish church while ‘upper’ Huaquechula associates with the monastic church.

<sup>69</sup> Tochimilco also claimed that Huaquechula had neglected to pay tribute, violating a 1450 agreement where Tochimilco offered the fleeing Huaquecholteca safe haven in exchange for tribute paid as cotton mantles and cacao. AGN Tierras, vol. 11, 1a pta., exp. 1, f. 3v. quoted in Paredes Martínez, *Atlixco*, 30.

<sup>70</sup> Tochimilco was hardly a political rival, the small *altepetl* did not even have a monastery until the 1560s when fray Diego de Olarte (d. 1569) founded it, looking to Huaquechula’s plan and design for inspiration. See Kubler, *Mexican Architecture*, 483.

checking the power of rival communities. Second, the construction of a stone church sealed Huaquechula's status as a *doctrina* monastery, and served as a physical proclamation of permanence of the mission and the influence the Huaquecholteca leveraged through their institutional relationship to it. *Doctrina* status was not a fixed designation. The Franciscans were stretched thin and so Indigenous communities had to consistently persuade the Franciscans to retain the monastery rather than relinquish it to other missionary orders, or demote it to *sujeto* status, as happened to a handful of other monasteries in the region.<sup>71</sup> Huaquechula's status was thus liable to change unless the *altepetl* continued to demonstrate its relevancy as a mission center. In 1550, that task fell to a new *gobernador* who, like his predecessor, faced external threats to the *altepetl*'s control over the Atlixco Valley.

Tochimilco's case against Huaquecholteca expansion was well-timed. In 1550, the *altepetl* underwent a transition in power. Whereas the documents pertaining to the Tochimilco lawsuit indicate don Martín was the *gobernador* of Huaquechula, a plaque inserted into the wall of Huaquechula's rising church evinces a new configuration of power.<sup>72</sup> The plaque is lodged in the first buttress flanking the apse on the north side. At Huaquechula and elsewhere, construction began at the apse and proceeded in a westerly direction, culminating with the *sotocoro* and vaults. The plaque's inscription reads: "...R TEL~Z AÑOS 1550 Tochtl 6" [Fig. 1.17].<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Xochimilco and San Andrés Cholula were demoted to *sujetos* in 1538, while Cuauhtinchan, Tlaquiltenango, and Teotihuacan were transferred to other mendicant orders, albeit with little success. Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica*, bk. 3, chap. 60, 62.

<sup>72</sup> Huaquechula's church was built from east to west that is, apse to *sotocoro*. Archaeological evidence from Huejotzingo's monastery and church demonstrates this was the standard approach. For phases of construction at Huejotzingo, see Mario Córdova Tello, *El convento de San Miguel de Huejotzingo, Puebla* (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1992), 45-101.

<sup>73</sup> The first name is undecipherable however, the inscription does not present the large capital "A" that usually precedes the name of the *alarife* (foreman or architect) and occasionally

Sculptors recorded the project's date in alphabetic script but drew on the calendrical conventions of both the Central Mexican solar calendar (6 Rabbit) and Julian calendars (1550). The name "TELL~Z" refers to the Nahua noble don Gregorio Tellez Xochitla a high-ranking member of the *cabildo*, a status that paved the way for his election to the office of *gobernador*.<sup>74</sup> Don Gregorio's ascendancy marks a new phase of church construction as well as a new aesthetic strategy in the ongoing pursuit of territorial sovereignty and political authority.

In 1552, Viceroy Velasco passed legislation that provided Spanish settlers from Puebla de los Ángeles with Indigenous laborers to work their fields in the Atlixco Valley. The labor force consisted of field hands drafted from surrounding communities, and the policy stripped the Huaquecholteca of forty workers.<sup>75</sup> This was an important turning point in labor arrangements in the region, and the first step toward the unmooring of the paternalistic system of commoner-noble relations that sustained Nahua society.<sup>76</sup> By usurping Huaquecholteca labor, the Spanish undermined the Nahua nobility's special rights to distribute lands and the manpower to work it in exchange for the commoners' ongoing recognition of their legitimacy.<sup>77</sup> That acknowledgement of legitimacy by the commoners, however, hinged on the perceived ability of the nobility to

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*maestro albañil* (chief mason), which is clearly discernable on carvings inlaid in the east buttresses.

<sup>74</sup> Don Gregorio Tellez Xochitla is listed as a noble on the *Mapa Circular de Quauhquechollan* (1546) and named in archival documents pertaining to the 1545 lawsuit. Asselbergs, "Mapa Circular," 226-227.

<sup>75</sup> Also impacted were Cholula, Tepeaca, and Tochimilco. Newberry Library, Ayer ms. 1121, f. 174-174v.

<sup>76</sup> Yanna Yannakakis terms this interdependence as "the reciprocity of society-state relations," Yannakakis, *The Art of Being In-Between: Native Intermediaries, Indian Identity, and Local Rule in Colonial Oaxaca* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 222;

<sup>77</sup> Peter Villela, "Pure and Boble Indians, Untainted by Inferior Idolatrous Races': Native Elites and the Discourse of Blood Purity in Late Colonial Mexico," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 91, no. 4 (2011): 639; Kelly McDonough, "Love Lost: Class Struggle among Indigenous Nobles and Commoners of Seventeenth-Century Tlaxcala," *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 32, no. 1 (2015): 9-10.

protect them from abuse and exploitation. One of the most important was the power of the nobility to ensure that commoners could tend their own fields. The 1552 policy thus laid bare the inability of the Huaquecholteca leaders to protect commoners from the demands of Spanish farmers. Don Gregorio thus found himself in a novel situation, one which required an age-old solution.

To build the church, the Huaquecholteca returned to the ruins. As with the lower cloister, the Huaquecholteca repurposed the remains of toppled pre-Hispanic structures to include in Christian architecture. This time they selected three large stones with significant relief carvings, each of which pertains to a specific moment in the pre-Conquest occupation of Huaquechula. A close reading of the iconography and placement of the pre-Hispanic carvings in the walls of the church and monastery reveals how the Huaquecholteca appropriated fragments associated with their defeat to materialize a colonial-era territorial reconquest of the region through monastic construction. The first stone is a sun stone and it is tipped on its side and planted into the wall at ground level so that a section of the stone is not visible [Fig. 1.18]. Sun stones like this one were associated with warfare and sacrifice but also sometimes used to mark territorial boundaries between rival city-states.<sup>78</sup> The second stone, a *cuauhxicalli*, a flat ritual basin with a central cavity, is embedded in the church wall opposite the apse [Fig. 1.19]. In Central-Mexican religious practices, *cuauhxicalli* were used as ritual receptacles for depositing offerings from

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<sup>78</sup> Susan D. Gillespie, "Ballgames and Boundaries," in *The Mesoamerican Ballgame*, ed. Vernon L. Scarborough and David R. Wilcox (Tucson: University of Arizona Press), 341; Robert S. Santley, Robert S., Michael J. Berman, and Rani T. Alexander, "The Politicization of the Mesoamerican Ballgame and Its Implications for the Interpretation of the Distribution of Ballcourts in Central Mexico," in *The Mesoamerican Ballgame*, ed. Vernon L. Scarborough and David R. Wilcox (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1991), 3-24; Mysyk and Cano, "Ethnohistory," 338-339; Felipe R. Solís Olguín and Roberto Velasco Alonso, "Monuments of Sun Worship," in *The Aztec Calendar and Other Solar Monuments*, ed. Eduardo Matos Moctezuma and Felipe Solís (Mexico City: Grupo Azabache, 2004), 148.

animal and human victims.<sup>79</sup> Here, a reed emerges from a ball of grass where maguey spines for ritual bloodletting were kept. The round stone has a depressed center with a low relief carving of an arrow with a tuft of a down near the fletching and three down balls along the length of the shaft. A human heart, to the right, and sharpened bone for autosacrifice, on the left, flank the arrow. Three counters denote the date 3 Reed or 1443, the year the Huaquecholteca were routed from their homeland in the north Atlixco Valley by the rival Huejotzinca. The third stone is a carving of Huejotzingo's patron deity, Camaxtli. Inserted at the base of the church wall near the *sotocoro* this stone also registers Huaquechula's subjugation by a foreign adversary [Figs. 1.20, 1.21]. This round stone measures half a meter in diameter and was inserted into the wall at ground level. The stone is tipped on its side so that Camaxtli's back is now perpendicular to the ground, perhaps to signal humiliation. Carved in profile, Camaxtli's form is asymmetrical and linear, stylistic qualities characteristic of pre-Hispanic Central Mexican art. The hunting god wears a feather headdress and carries two arrows and a shield decorated with puffs of cotton, implements associated with ritual gladiatorial warfare.

Significantly, each stone fragment registers a distinct phase of church construction.<sup>80</sup> The apse, built in 1550, contains the sun stone. The *cuauhxicalli* stone occupies the wall of the nave, which was completed by 1563. Another carving appears above the north portal, likely

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<sup>79</sup> *Cuauhxicalli* (eagle-vessel) are stone or gourd receptacles used for heart sacrifice. As Karl Taube notes, stone *cuauhxicalli* were likely used for ritual feasting during particular festivals rather than routine offerings. For comparison, see the drawing of Camaxtli/ Mixcoatl in Quiñones Keber, *Codex Telleriano-Remensis*, f. 4v., "Quecholli." The rim of the vessel is also carved, although the iconography is difficult to discern. For a discussion of *cuauhxicalli* iconography and function see, Karl Taube, "The Womb of the World: The *Cuauhxicalli* and Other Offering Bowls of Ancient and Contemporary Mesoamerica," *Maya Archaeology* 1 (2009): 86-95. Thank you to Kristopher Driggers for assistance parsing the iconography.

<sup>80</sup> In 2013 I viewed all three carvings embedded in the north façade *in situ*. By 2015, the *cuauhxicalli* had been removed and I have not been able to determine its current location.

commemorating the completion of the third bay of the church and north portal (*Porciúncula*). A stylized crucifix next to a column of six disks combines Central-Mexican conventions and Christian iconography to present the year 6 Reed or 1563 [Fig. 1.22].<sup>81</sup> The Camaxtli stone was interred during construction of the *sotocoro* walls, after 1563.<sup>82</sup> The decoration of the Huaquechula church exterior thus draws on a collection of fragments culled from ancient monuments for their specific chronological, iconographical, and material attributes. Over the course of twenty years, the Huaquecholteca selectively integrated pre-Hispanic objects into fabric of the church to mark construction campaigns and evoke a relationship between the pre-Hispanic built environment and the new Christian one. This visual and material strategy of embedding history to produce a new monument provides important insight into how the Huaquecholteca mobilized collective memory and material artifacts to shape history and community. The fragments record watershed moments in the *altepetl*'s past while also serving to chronicle how construction transpired over a period time. The monument is thus a powerful instantiation of how the Huaquecholteca expressed their own history within monumental architecture.

The incorporation of pre-Hispanic carvings into the church at Huaquechula is hardly unique.<sup>83</sup> Friars and Indigenous peoples alike recognized new architecture's potential to display

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<sup>81</sup> Stones carved with the names of patrons or masons appear to the right ("Juan..."), and below ("Pedro...") the carving. The names do not carry the honorific appellation "don" and I have not been able to decipher the surnames. The name of the *alarife* may be inscribed in a stone directly above the *Porciúncula* lintel: "A ROSONTOPIO."

<sup>82</sup> For comparison, see the carving of Camaxtli-Mixcoatl on the frontal side of a serpentine pectoral deposited in Offering 1 at the Templo Mayor. See Rubén Bonifaz Nuño, *El arte en el Templo Mayor: México-Tenochtitlan* (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia/SEP, 1981), 75-76, pl. 27a. My thanks to Kristopher Driggers for the reference and discussion.

<sup>83</sup> Eleanor Wake compiled a list of embedded stones in mendicant monuments, organized by motif and location. Wake, *Framing the Sacred*, 94, 139-170.

or surreptitiously encase stone images. For instance, shattered “idols of stone” were “the best foundation in the world for so great and holy a work,” claimed Motolinia.<sup>84</sup> Yet Nahuas also used architecture to conceal idols. In 1539, friars discovered that Nahua nobles throughout Central Mexico had been hiding deity images in the walls of buildings and beneath patio floors to protect them from missionaries then roving New Spain on iconoclastic campaigns.<sup>85</sup> By contrast, the Huaquechula church preserves stone idols in plain sight; the pre-Hispanic stones at Huaquechula are whole and positioned along the north side of church façade, a section not typically plastered over. The north patio was once the focal point of Nahua Christian ritual and the cemetery was also located in this quadrant of the monastery patio.<sup>86</sup> With every Mass, burial, and daily catechism lesson, the Huaquecholteca community walked within viewing distance of the remnants of its ‘pagan’ past embedded in the foundation of the church. Strikingly, the pre-Hispanic carvings embedded in the north church wall at Huaquechula create a dialogue with Christian ceremony [Fig. 1.7]. The sun stone and *cuauhxicalli*, pre-Hispanic objects associated with ritual combat and sacrifice, are part of the exterior walls of the apse and chancel, and are

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<sup>84</sup> Motolinia, *History*, 100.

<sup>85</sup> Jacinto de la Serna, “Manual de ministros de indios para el conocimiento de sus idolatrías y extirpación de ellas,” in *Colección de documentos inéditos para la historia de España* (Madrid: José Perales y Martínez, [1656] 1892), 24. For a recent discussion of the 1525 and 1539 extirpation campaigns see, Hamann, “Producing Idols,” 25-30. The most well-known instance is the discovery of over fifty central-Mexican deity images absconded in the walls of temples at Texcoco, a revelation that ended with the trial and execution of a noble from Texcoco. For the trial of don Carlos see, Patricia Lopes Don, *Bonfires of Culture: Franciscans, Indigenous Leaders, and the Inquisition in Early Mexico, 1524-1540* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012), 146-175. This practice of repurposing ancient artifacts into new structures is well documented for the Mexica, see Emily Umberger, “Antiques, Revivals, and References to the Past in Aztec Art,” *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 13 (1987): 62-105. Byron Hamann, “Chronological Pollution: Potsherds, Mosques, and Broken Gods before and after the Conquest of Mexico,” *Current Anthropology* 49, no. 5 (2008): 808-816.

<sup>86</sup> Today, only the corner foundations of the open-air chapel remain and a wall bisects the north patio at the *Porciúncula*.

thus contrasted with the interior space of the church where Christ's sacrifice is celebrated during the Mass.<sup>87</sup> Likewise, the figural carving of the hunter god Camaxtli adorns the exterior wall of the *sotocoro*, a space in the church associated with new Christians. Thus, one of the functions of the Huaquechula church was to display a collection of objects selected from different moments in the past because their pagan iconography served as a repository for meanings that validated the Christian activities of the present.

The pre-Hispanic sculptures on the north façade of the Huaquechula church also elucidated difference through their formal and material qualities. Consider, for instance, the style of the Camaxtli stone in relation to the Christian imagery carved around the *Porciúncula* portal, located a few meters from the Central-Mexican fragment. Camaxtli is carved in such low relief that the planar figure hardly emerges from its durable limestone support. The effects achieved by pre-Hispanic carvers in limestone sharply contrasts with the deep-cut Last Judgment program that decorates the *Porciúncula* installed in 1563 [Fig. 1.23].<sup>88</sup> Working in a soft, striated sandstone local to Huaquechula, carvers achieved voluminous Christian figures that reach out from the façade. The movement of the viewer between the north patio and the church interior intensified the formal, historical, and conceptual rupture between the pagan past and the Christian present, articulated by the style of the paired monuments. To enter the church through the north portal, parishioners walked past the upturned and angular carving of Camaxtli stone. They then turned to face relief carvings of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, whose voluminous forms

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<sup>87</sup> Pablo Escalante Gonzalbo associates this imagery with 1 Reed and Quetzalcoatl, and he notes that some of the carving might be colonial, and the imagery might also align with the 5 Wounds cult. Escalante Gonzalbo, "Iconografía y pintura mural en los conventos mexicanos," in *Felipe II y el arte de su tiempo* (Madrid: Fundación Argentaria, 1998), 328-239.

<sup>88</sup> The *Porciúncula*'s program is inspired by a woodcut of the *Last Judgment* in Pedro de la Vega, *Flos Sanctorum* (Zaragoza, 1521).



flank the entrance like sentries. Directly above the doorway, the figure of Christ beckons the viewer into the church with outstretched hands that extend from the surface of the image. The radical difference between the stone support and style of each carving marks a discontinuity between the Huaquechula's pagan past and Christian present.<sup>89</sup> The Huaquecholteca thus used a visual and material strategy to make a polemical point, one that exceeds the imperatives of Christian propaganda.

If Christian ceremony invested the carvings with new meanings it did not, however, displace their original significance for the Huaquecholteca.<sup>90</sup> The four carvings displayed in the church façade and monastery wall are linked to specific events in Huaquechula's recent, war-torn past. Integrated into a new context, however, the carvings posit a new relationship between the Huaquecholteca and its long history of hostile takeovers. The display of the pilfered stones makes a case for Huaquechula's new prominence because material reuse also enacts subjugation.<sup>91</sup> Central Mexicans understood painting and sculpture to be an embodiment of its subject, composed of the same essence as what was represented. The Nahuatl term for this

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<sup>89</sup> In his analysis of the Roman Arch of Constantine (315 CE), Jaś Elsner argues the stylistic and chronological juxtaposition of materials in the Arch is central to its exegetical function, and became foundational to the Christian aesthetic of spoliation: "the Arch's aesthetic of bricolage—its syncretism of fragments from different periods and styles as the basis for a new monument puts a certain interpretative onus on its viewer..." to make typological connections that validate the present. Elsner, "From the Culture of Spolia to the Cult of Relics: The Arch of Constantine and the Genesis of Late Antique Forms," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 68 (2000):175.

<sup>90</sup> My reading revises Serge Gruzinski's claim that pre-Hispanic carvings lost their meaning once inserted into a new context. Gruzinski, *The Conquest of Mexico: The Incorporation of Indian Societies into the Western World, 16th-18th Centuries*, trans. Eileen Corrigan (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), 39.

<sup>91</sup> On the political function of cult effigies and their display in special temples (*coateocalli*) in the Mexica empire, see Richard F. Townsend, *State and Cosmos in the Art of Tenochtitlan* (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, Harvard University, 1979), 34-36; Ross Hassig, *Aztec Warfare: Imperial Expansion and Political Control* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 105.

concept is *ixiptla*.<sup>92</sup> Significantly, Camaxtli was a foreign invader, and the patron deity of the rival Huejotzinca who had conquered Huaquechula in the 1440s. When the Huaquechula interred Camaxtli's *ixiptla* in the ground, they perpetrated an act of violence against Camaxtli himself in a triumphant gesture that resonated across Central-Mexican and Christian discourses of conquest.

This engagement with the vestiges of pagan antiquity situates the *altepetl* in a larger, transatlantic set of early-modern practices.<sup>93</sup> Yet Huaquechula's approach to the uses of *spolia* also speaks to concurrent Huaquecholteca concerns about land and territorial sovereignty, and an ongoing engagement with the liveliness of pre-Hispanic images. The display of the pre-Hispanic carvings in the *altepetl*'s largest public monument served to distinguish Huaquechula's leaders from the failed rulers of the past, who were not merely considered idolaters within the new Christian tradition but seen as weak and unable to protect Huaquechula's ancestral lands from plundering outsiders. The visual strategy of the Huaquechula church materialized the *altepetl*'s new claims to prominence through an ongoing campaign of territorial conquest enacted on stone proxies of former rivals strategically displayed in the foundation of the church. On the one hand, the spoliation of pre-Hispanic imagery instantiated a Franciscan narrative of Christian conquest.

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<sup>92</sup> Arlid Hvitfeldt, *Teotl and \*Ixiptlali: Some Central Conceptions in Ancient Central Mexican Religion* (Munksgaard: Copenhagen, 1958), 76-100; Elizabeth Hill Boone, "Incarnations of the Aztec Supernatural: The Image of Huitzilopochtli in Mexico and Europe," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 79, no. 2 (1989): 4-9; Alfredo López Austin, *Los mitos del tlacuache: Caminos de la mitología mesoamericana* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas, [1990] 1996), 178-181; Inga Clendinnen, *Aztecs: An Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 249-253; James Maffie, *Aztec Philosophy: Understanding a World in Motion* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2014), 113-114, 526; Molly Bassett, *The Fate of Earthly Things: Aztec Gods and God-Bodies* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015), 52-88, 130-161.

<sup>93</sup> Sara Ryu, "Calendar, Column, Crucifix: Material Reuse in the Early Modern Transatlantic World (Ph. D. diss., Yale University, 2015). For an introduction to the topic of Christian *spolia*, see Dale Kinney, "The Concept of Spolia," in *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, ed. Conrad Rudolph (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 239-249.

At the same time, the particular sculptures selected to be incorporated into the Huaquechula church signaled not just the *altepetl*'s status as a Christian polity but also its emergence as a new political power in the Puebla-Tlaxcala Valley.

### **Phase Three: Stone, Paint and Permanence, the 1569 Construction Campaign**

In 1560s New Spain economic turmoil destabilized the traditional political organization of the *altepetl*. As will be discussed in detail in chapter 3, Spanish authorities imprisoned Indigenous rulers (*pipiltin*) for delinquent payments, while the commoners (*macehualtin*) scorned the native nobility for failing to protect them from corrupt colonial overlords.<sup>94</sup> Indigenous rulers were thrown in the stocks, commoners abandoned communal fields, and the ancestral structure of socioeconomic life unraveled. Paradoxically, the 1560s was also a decade of extraordinary building activity at the missions. Indigenous communities in Central Mexico constructed more stone churches in the 1560s than in any other decade during the sixteenth century. Penniless and politically unviable, Nahua nobles capitalized on this opportunity to refashion themselves as legitimate leaders. One of these was Huaquechula's *gobernador*, don Diego de Peñalosa, who organized an extensive campaign to finish the church and upper cloister around 1569. The project attested to the viability of the local *cabildo*, while the vaulted church was a soaring statement of the prominence of the ruling lineage.

As the church neared completion, Spanish settlers once again infringed upon Huaquecholteca territory, occupying the Atlixco Valley with their sheep and wheat.<sup>95</sup> For the

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<sup>94</sup> Carlos Sempat Assadourian, "La despoblación indígena en Perú y Nueva España durante el siglo XVI y la formación de la economía colonial," *Historia Mexicana* 38, no. 3 (1989): 419-453.

<sup>95</sup> In 1567, four *reales mercedes* of cropland were awarded to Spanish settlers, see Mysyk, "Land and Labor," 341.

previous forty years, the Huaquecholteca had successfully thwarted the advancement of Spanish farmers into the region. But in 1567, Spanish settlers started pouring across Huaquechula's borders, as I will address in chapter 4. The incursion exacerbated the effects of the ongoing drought, as river water was diverted into new canals to quench thirsty Spanish crops. Allowed to freely graze fields after the harvest, sheep and goats plundered Huaquechula's communally-held lands, driving dependents out of the fields and to labor in Spanish grain mills and textile mills.<sup>96</sup> Compounding the crisis was a new tribute policy that required Indigenous rulers and commoners to pay taxes to the Crown in the form of currency, rather than goods and labor. Never before had rulers been taxed, and the monetization of the colonial economy destabilized local political hierarchies.<sup>97</sup> Adding to the precarity of the situation was a sweeping Franciscan reform that closed monasteries and reduced construction.<sup>98</sup> But rather than scaling back, Huaquechula scaled up.

Through monastic patronage, the Huaquecholteca once again asserted their claim to the region's contested natural resources. In 1569, the Huaquecholteca began an immense campaign

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<sup>96</sup> Chevalier, *Land and Society*, 68.

<sup>97</sup> Ethelia Ruiz Medrano, "The Lords of the Land: The Historical Context of the *Mapa de Cauauhtinchan No. 2*," in *Cave, City, and Eagle's Nest: An Interpretative Journey through the Mapa de Cauauhtinchan No. 2*, trans. Scott Sessions, ed. David Carrasco and Scott Sessions (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007), 96; McDonough, "Indigenous Rememberings and Forgetting," 74-75.

<sup>98</sup> John McAndrew argues that Franciscan reforms prompted the architectural program of the north façade of the church at Huejotzingo to be reduced, see John McAndrew, *The Open-Air Churches of Sixteenth-Century Mexico: Atrios, Posas, Open Chapels, and Other Studies* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), 495-97; Marcela Salas Cuesta, *La iglesia y el convento de Huejotzingo* (Mexico City: Universidad Autónoma de México, 1982), 64-65; Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica*, bk 3, chap 60; "Miguel Navarro to Viceroy don Martín Enríquez, 1568," in Joaquín García Icazbalceta, ed., *NCDHM*, vol. 1 (Editorial Salvador Chávez Hayhoe, 1941), 67; Steven E. Turley, *Catholic Christendom, 1300-1700: Franciscan Spirituality and Mission in New Spain, 1524-1599: Conflict Beneath the Sycamore Tree (Luke 19:1-10)* (Farnham: Routledge, 2016), 114-118.

to finish the church and upper cloister. Stone masons used costly building materials to construct striking rib vaults and elegant arcades in the church and upper cloister [Fig. 1.24]. An elevated open chapel was built above the *sala de peregrinos*. This innovation ensures everyone in the patio (and beyond) can witness the act of consecration during the celebration of the Mass, while the friar remains cloistered in the monastery [Fig. 1.25]. Throughout the monastery and church, Nahua artists devised innovative painting techniques to visualize new subjects, such as the natural landscape, grotesque friezes, and the local Nahua Christian confraternity [Fig. 1.26]. One mural even features the distinctive promontory of Macuilxochitepec, the Huaquecholteca's ancestral temple site [Fig. 1.27]. The choice of striated sandstone for sculptural embellishments and architectural elements also signaled a deep engagement with the local landscape. During this moment, artists also selectively modified the lower cloister murals. Artists repainted the polychrome cartouches in a more naturalistic style and added landscape backgrounds dominated by blue-greens, but retained the frieze, carefully preserving the planar, monochrome ornaments painted in the 1540s. In the upper cloister oratories, artists emulated the distinctive material in illusionistic painted ribs that crisscross the vaults [Fig. 1.28]. The Huaquecholteca quarried the stone to the south of the city at Tetla, an important *calpoltin* that slipped in and out of Huaquechula's control during the sixteenth century.<sup>99</sup>

Three mason's stones made from striated sandstone and embedded on the west façade of the cloister commemorate the final phase of construction in 1569. The first inscription contains Nahuatl text with Spanish loanwords: "ASCA: OPEUHQUI YN TEPETz/TLI: Y[n]PA[n]: MIERCOLLES" or, "today: began the smooth stone on Wednesday" [Fig. 1.29]. The word

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<sup>99</sup> For instance, Tetla is conspicuously absent from the *Mapa Circular de Huaquechula* (1546), which was made during a moment of regional discord.

“tepetzli,” means “smooth stone” and likely refers to plastering and then polishing of the cloister façade. The inscription thus marks the final phase of the project and its imminent completion.<sup>100</sup> A second block positioned elsewhere on the façade reads: “D. PENALOSA / JULIOS AÑO 1569,” possibly an auspicious day, in July of 1569 [Fig. 1.30].<sup>101</sup> The name “D. PENALOSA” refers to the Nahuatl *gobernador* of Huaquechula when the project was completed.<sup>102</sup> Directly to the left, an adjacent stone bears the Nahuatl glyph 12 House. Twelve round disks (*chalchihuitl* or precious jade stones), signifying years in the Central Mexican calendar, form two vertical columns that flank an image of a *tecpan* (governmental palace). In this image of the *tecpan*, Nahuatl and Renaissance architectural vocabularies are integrated in the depiction of a Doric archway with the cornice decorated with a series of disks representing *chalchihuitl*, a conventional emblem for lordship and investiture.<sup>103</sup> In the Central Mexican calendar the date glyph 12 House corresponds with the Gregorian calendar year 1569, thereby reiterating

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<sup>100</sup> Frances Karttunen, *An Analytical Dictionary of Nahuatl* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 230. An alternative translation is “ASCA OPEUHQUI IN TEPEH TU: Y[n]PA[n]MIERCOLOES” or, “today began their city XX on Wednesday,” however a colon is common convention used in Nahuatl alphabetic writing to separate words, and is here used to indicate that the word “TEPETZ” trails onto the second line, thus ending in “TLI.” My thanks to Eduardo A. Polanco for his assistance deciphering the inscription.

<sup>101</sup> Reyes-Valerio, *Arte Indocristiano*, 328.

<sup>102</sup> It is also possible that the inscription pertains to Francisco Peñalosa of Atlixco, whose son, Francisco de Sosa Peñalosa later led the Spanish campaign in New Mexico. However, Huaquechula was under the Alvarado family’s *encomienda* and Nahuas adopted Spanish surnames and the honorific appellation “don” so it is probable that “Peñalosa” here refers to the Nahuatl *gobernador* whose family adopted their Spanish surname after an influential *conquistador* family, much as *gobernador* don Martín de Cortés Xochitlahua once had. Notably, the Peñalosa name does not appear in earlier Huaquecholteca cartographs or archival records, and may thus index a notable shift in power away from ancestral ruling families, like the Cortés Xochitlahua and Tellez Xochitla. The emergence of a new lineage in leadership positions is also seen in other *altepemeh*, most notably Mexico City-Tenochtitlan. More archival research is needed to confirm this hypothesis.

<sup>103</sup> *Chalchihuitl* continued to be an emblem of leadership into the sixteenth century Puebla-Tlaxcala Valley, see John K. Chance, “Noble House,” 496.

information presented in Latin script. The choice of vibrant local sandstone for these important carvings draws attention to Huaquechula's unique access to an important quarry, and associates it with don Diego Peñalosa, the leader who used monastery patronage to bring Tetla back under Huaquecholteca control. Finally, in 1575, the community installed the main altar (*retablo mayor*) in the church [Fig. 1.31]. This commission marked the conclusion of major construction: the vaults were in place and the mural decoration of the church was complete [Fig. 1.32].<sup>104</sup> According to a Franciscan report, the church and monastery were finished before 1585.<sup>105</sup>

## Conclusion

This chapter reconstructs the pre-Hispanic and sixteenth-century history of the Huaquechula *altepetl* through the lens of the community's material engagement with monastic art and architecture. It stressed historical continuities between Huaquechula's pre-Hispanic and colonial history of foreign occupation and subjugation, evidencing how the Huaquecholteca asserted their power and prestige by mobilizing the past to serve the present. During the pre-Hispanic period, the Huaquecholteca were forced to migrate from their ancestral homeland, an event that supplied the ideological fodder for territorial reconquest through the mechanism of monumental construction during the sixteenth century. Leading the charge was don Martín Cortés Xochitlahua whose patronage of a Franciscan monastery in 1538 asserted Huaquecholteca

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<sup>104</sup> This date appears on the right finial of the *retablo mayor*, which was significantly renovated by Cristóbal de Villalpando in 1675. Nearby Huejotzingo and Tecamachalco celebrated the end of church construction by commissioning *retablos*, inviting noble houses from rival communities to attend the dedication. Celestino Solís and Luis Reyes García, *Anales de Tecamachalco*, 95; Heinrich Berlin, "The High Altar of Huejotzingo," *Americas* 15 (1958): 63-73.

<sup>105</sup> Antonio de Ciudad Real, *Tratado curioso y docto de las grandezas de la Nueva España*, ed. Alonso de San Juan, Víctor M. Castillo Ferreras, and Josefina García Quintana, vol. 1 (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, 1976), 151.

claims to political and territorial autonomy. Between 1545-1563, the Huaquecholteca expanded their borders and acquired natural resources needed for church construction. *Gobernadores* don Martín Cortés Xochitlahua and later, don Gregorio Tellez Xochitla pressed into communal lands shared with a rival polity in order to obtain building materials, inciting a legal battle that the Huaquechula won. Building a monastery justified expanding Huaquechula's jurisdiction and the mobilization of draft labor from subordinate communities reaffirmed political alliances and social hierarchies that bolstered Huaquechula influence. In both of these moments, the Huaquecholteca used pre-Hispanic materials during construction to recast a history of humiliating defeats into powerful statements of triumph and permanence. In 1569, don Diego Peñalosa initiated a monumental building campaign to complete the Huaquechula monastery and church during a moment of rampant unrest. Whereas don Martín and don Gregorio drew on the vestiges of the pre-Hispanic past to chart a sustainable future, don Diego fostered new pictorial traditions and incorporated local materials to distinguish his contributions to the monastery from that of his illustrious predecessors. Throughout the sixteenth century, the Huaquecholteca expanded their influence over the Atlixco Valley through monumental interventions into the built and natural environment. As the next chapters will show, Huaquecholteca influence also extended into the monastery where they cultivated an institutional presence that is vividly expressed in murals.



## CHAPTER 2

### UPENDING THE APOCALYPSE: THE SPATIAL DYNAMICS OF HUAQUECHULA'S PAINTED CLOISTER

#### Introduction

Around 1540, Nahua artists painted the Huaquechula lower cloister with a monochrome upper frieze interspersed with a series of portraits of Christian saints and Christological emblems [Figs. 2.1-2.3]. The frieze stretches the length of the inner and outer walls of the cloister, surrounding the viewer with an ensemble of exemplars who attested to the mission's early roots and its prophetic future.<sup>1</sup> When read together, the portraits narrate the role of the Franciscan mission in Christian history while also underscoring central themes of Observant Franciscan life. One curious feature of the painted program is the two adjacent images of Saint Francis in the southeast corner of the complex, a key location where the monastery's Huaquecholteca and Franciscan viewers intersected [Fig. 2.4].<sup>2</sup> This chapter analyzes patterns of movement and conditions of socio-spatial separation in the Huaquechula lower cloister.<sup>3</sup> I reconstruct the

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<sup>1</sup> On the identification of the Christian figures in the Huaquechula lower cloister frieze, see Julieta Domínguez Silva, "La pintura mural del claustro bajo del convento de San Martín Huaquechula, Puebla (OFM). Análisis del estilo y de la iconografía," Master's Thesis (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, 2009), 25.

<sup>2</sup> On Mexican monasteries as semi-public spaces, see Jeanette Favrot Peterson, *The Paradise Garden Murals of Malinalco: Utopia and Empire in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993), 159-160; William Hood, *Fra Angelico at San Marco* (London; New York: Yale University Press; BCA, 1993), 124-125. Richard E. Phillips, "La participación de los indígenas en las procesiones por los claustros del siglo xvi en México," *Relaciones* 78, no. 20 (1999): 227-250.

<sup>3</sup> Recently Allie Terry-Fritsch elucidated a humanistic account of the cloister frescoes at the Observant Dominican monastery at San Marco and demonstrated that Fra Angelico's frescoes addressed secular and religious viewers. For questions of spectatorship and multivalence, see Allie Terry-Fritsch, "Florentine Convent as Practiced Place: Cosimo de' Medici, Fra Angelico, and the Public Library of San Marco," *Medieval Encounters* 18 (2012): 230-271. For medieval China, Wei-Cheng Lin has demonstrated how the physical negotiation of a spatial environment also influenced viewer subjectivity during ritual perambulation and the possibilities for multiple

pathways of the Huaquecholteca and the friars through the cloister, first separately and then together during a religious procession, to consider how different audiences interacted with the paintings at different moments. Analysis of quotidian and ritual movement in the lower cloister reveals the social boundaries that Nahuas crossed during religious processions, and foregrounds the Indigenous viewer as an active participant in the creation of new iconographic meanings in colonial Mexico.

Huaquechula's lower cloister was built and decorated around 1540 during a moment of Huaquecholteca regional ascendancy under the leadership of *gobernador* don Martín Cortés Xochitlahua. This makes Huaquechula's lower cloister one of the oldest surviving monasteries in the Puebla-Tlaxcala Valley. Motolinia, writing in 1539, first recorded the presence of a monastery at Huaquechula. As described in the previous chapter, *Mapa Circular de Quauhquechollan* (1546) also depicts the monastery in the form of a stone structure with an arched main portal and a small bell tower with a cross. Below the image is a label "Sanct Martyn" in alphabetic Roman script. This cartographic evidence corroborates Motolinia's chronicle. Comparison with other "buttressed cloisters," such as Ocuituco and Totolapan, which likewise have early foundation dates, further substantiates the antiquity of the lower cloister at Huaquechula. Unfortunately, the Ocuituco and Totolapan monasteries were severely damaged during an earthquake in September, 2019.<sup>4</sup> As a result, the Huaquechula lower cloister provides a critically early glimpse into the Franciscan design of architectural spaces to segregate the friars

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meanings in medieval Chinese mural painting, see "Relocating and Relocalizing Mount Wutai: Vision and Visuality in Mogao Cave 61," *Artibus Asiae* 73, no. 1 (2013): 129.

<sup>4</sup> George Kubler, *Mexican Architecture of the Sixteenth Century*, vol. 2 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), 346-351.

from the Indigenous people.<sup>5</sup> Seen from a different standpoint, the Huaquechula lower cloister also provides crucial evidence for how Indigenous communities engaged with mural painting in ways distinct from the friars.

## The Painted Cloister

Huaquechula's quadrangular cloister is attached to the south wall of the church, wrapping around a central courtyard that contains a fountain fed by a cistern that diverts water from the Huitzilac River that flows behind the monastery [Fig. 2.5].<sup>6</sup> Today the cloister garth is planted

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<sup>5</sup> Fray Gerónimo de Mendieta singled out Huaquechula in his chronicle for its adherence to the Order's statutes on apostolic poverty: "Item: los edificios que se edifican para morada de los frailes sean paupérrimos y conformes á la voluntad de nuestro padre S. Francisco; de suerte que los conventos de tal manera se tracen, que no tengan mas de seis celdas en el dormitorio, de ocho piés en ancho y nueve en largo, y la calle del dormitorio á lo mas tenga espacio de cinco piés en ancho, y el claustro no sea doblado, y tenga siete piés en ancho" [a Castillian foot is .28 meters]. Mendieta, *Historia ecclesiástica*, bk. 3, chap. 31. Caroline Bruzelius offers a useful introduction to the scholarship on the paradox of apostolic poverty and Franciscan conventualization, see "The Architecture of the Mendicant Orders in the Middle Ages: An Overview of Recent Literature," *Perspective 2* (2012): 372-375.

<sup>6</sup> The Franciscans located the cloister on the south side of the church where it is warmed and illuminated by the powerful Central Mexican sun. Likewise, locating the cloister on the south side of the church made space for the atrium just beyond the ceremonial north portal (the *Porciúncula*). Gerónimo de Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana*, ed. Joaquín García Icazbalceta (Alicante: Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes [1870; Porrúa: 1980], bk. 4, chap. 16. On Biblical and monastic precedents for locating the cloister to the south of the church, see Ann Leader, *The Badia of Florence: Art and Observance in a Renaissance Monastery* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2012), 109. On cloister symbolism and the cloister as the locus of *vita apostolica*, see Anselme Dimier, *Stones Laid before the Lord: A History of Monastic Architecture*. Cistercian Studies Series 152 (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1999), 67-68; Wayne Dynes, "The Medieval Cloister as the Portico of Solomon," *Gesta 12* (1973): 61-69; Walter Horn, "On the Origins of the Medieval Cloister," *Gesta 12* (1973): 13-152; Walter Horn and Ernest Born, *The Plan of St. Gall, A Study of Architecture and Economy of and Life in Paradigmatic Carolingian Monastery*, 3 vols (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979); Kathryn Horste, *Cloister Design and Monastic Reform in Toulouse* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 19; Paul Meyvaert, "The Medieval Monastic Claustum," *Gesta 12* (1973): 53-54; Peterson, *Paradise Garden Murals*, 127-129, 132-134; Hood, *Fra Angelico*, 123-146.

with fruit trees but it once contained a garden with medicinal herbs and flowers.<sup>7</sup> Although the courtyard is bright and airy, the lower cloister's walkways are cavernous and dark with low barrel-vaulted ceilings that attach to angular groin vaults in each corner [Fig. 2.6]. The construction material is largely cut stone and rubble that the Huaquecholteca appropriated from Mexica structures near the site. A thick veneer of plaster conceals the heavy mortar and uneven texture of the walls, while illusionistic brickwork painted on the vaults lends the sloping ceilings an impression of solidity. Each range of the cloister contains a modest five bays and measures approximately twenty meters long with corridors that are approximately two meters wide. At the end of each corridor there is an arched niche (*testera*) cut into the left side of the exterior wall used in stational processions in the cloister and where a small altarpiece and candles would have been displayed.<sup>8</sup> Oratories located on the north corridor, now walled up, once provided friars an additional space for a moment of repose and prayer at an even greater remove from the other occupants in the cloister. Heavy wall buttresses perforated by round arch windows that rise above a low parapet contain the cloister on the interior side. Because of the walls and shadows, people on one side of the cloister would have difficulty seeing people on the opposite side of the

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<sup>7</sup> Fray Juan de Torquemada tells of a fray Miguel de Rodorate who meditated in the gardens and orchards of the Huaquechula monastery. As part of his Passional focus, Rodorate regularly contemplated the thorny stalks of the *cardo santo* (*cnicus benedictus*) and imbibed its bitter, but in fact salubrious, juice during periods of fasting. Juan Torquemada, *Monarquía indiana* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, [1615] 1975), bk. 20, chap. 82, 405-406.

<sup>8</sup> Huaquechula's two friars would have made daily rounds through the cloister after Prime to sanctify these auxiliary altars by sprinkling with holy water. During this morning rite, friars walked through the cloister in the counter-clockwise pattern typical of Catholic ritual movement and encouraged by the location of the niches. Moving in this direction participants always faced a *testera* before rounding a corner of the cloister walkway. John Harper, *The Forms and Orders of Western Liturgy from the Tenth to the Eighteenth Century: A Historical Introduction and Guide for Students and Musicians*. Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1991), 128-129.

cloister.

In the Huaquechula lower cloister, artists superimposed over the upper frieze a series of thirty-eight polychrome escutcheons (*cartelas*) that depict Christian figures and monograms.<sup>9</sup> An illusionistic knotted cord loops around the perimeter of each escutcheon and hooks onto a thicker knotted cord painted below the vault, so that the imagery appears to hang freely like a pendant. Despite the small scale of the paintings, the artists took full advantage of the expressive possibilities of iconography and style when painting the portraits of Christian saints. Artists depicted each holy figure with their conventional attributes, such as a crozier, a bishop's hat, or an animal, and surrounded by a blue-green background with landscape features that either relate to the figure's biography or serve to localize the saint. Portraits are also individualized, and painted with a high degree of attention to individual facial characteristics to aid in the identification of each figure. For instance, Saint Bernardino da Siena preaches in a rugged landscape that alludes to his eremitic lifestyle, while the single palm tree behind Saint Mark is a Biblical symbol of the Cross but also suggestive of the toponym to the Cerro de las Palmas, an

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<sup>9</sup> Like the iconic images of Christian saints, the emblematic imagery in the Huaquechula lower cloister derives from illustrated Latin Bibles, which typically had woodcut images in the Gospels and the Book of Revelations. These small images served various purposes, one of the most important was to aid the reader in exegesis by alluding to another episode in the text or a theme. Especially important were interpretations of Biblical narrative and symbols that offered insight into the Second Coming centered on the prophecies of the Apocalypse in the Book of Revelations written by Saint John the Evangelist. Nahua scribes and painters trained in Franciscan *colegios* and employed in monastic *scriptoria* were highly familiar with the Christian exegetical tradition, and introduced their training in the interpretation of Christian salvation history into their translations and paintings. For an introduction to Nahua scholars trained at the *Colegio*, see Louise M. Burkhart, *Holy Wednesday: A Nahua Drama from Early Colonial Mexico* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 42-73. An important example of Nahua exegesis of Christian narrative appears in Book 12 of the Florentine Codex, as analyzed by Diana Magaloni-Kerpel. "Visualizing the Nahua/Christian Dialogue: Images of Conquest in Sahagún's *Florentine Codex* and Their Sources," in *Sahagún at 500: Essays on the Quincentenary of the Birth of Bernardino de Sahagún*, ed. John Frederick Schwaller (Berkeley: Academy of American Franciscan History, 2003), 195-200.

important local boundary marker that appears on Huaquecholteca maps from this period [Figs. 2.7, 2.8].<sup>10</sup> The uniqueness of each portrait supplied the viewer a range of memory aids to assist them in identifying the figure perched high up on the wall with a passing glance as they moved along the corridor. Such variety also rewarded opportunities for slower and closer looking, such as when the viewer paused to recite a prayer upon entering the cloister.

Given that Huaquechula had only two friars and the hustle of missionary life, one might suspect that friars and Nahuas crossed paths frequently in the monastery corridors. This was not the case. The monastery's layout imparted a rigid physical separation of the monastery's Nahua and priestly constituencies. Notably, the portraits of Christian saints that decorate the Huaquechula lower cloister are also arranged according to their Nahua or Franciscan audiences. The Huaquecholteca had access largely to imagery of Christian saints directly associated with the history of the Franciscan mission on the south corridor. The cycle the friars viewed, by contrast, displayed Biblical figures from the New Testament along the east and the north corridors. The separation of the monastery's two constituencies into the south and the north corridor has interesting implications in Nahua directional symbolism. Both the Nahuas and the Europeans associated the East with the rising sun and rebirth: for Nahuas, the god Quetzalcoatl would return from the East whereas the friars associated East with the Second Coming.<sup>11</sup> However, Nahuas associated North and South with death and life, the former direction ruled by Flint and called *mictlampa* or, "place of the dead," and the latter ruled by Rabbit, a symbol of

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<sup>10</sup> See Song of Songs 7:8: "ascendam in palmam" or, "I will be crucified," and Ezechiel 41:18-20, which also associates palm trees with the Temple of Jerusalem. As discussed later, a copy of Heitor Pinto's translation of the prophecies of Ezechiel formed part of the Huaquechula monastic library.

<sup>11</sup> James Maffie, *Aztec Philosophy: Understanding a World in Motion* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2014), 220-221.

fertility, and called *huitzlamapa*, or, “place of thorns,” a realm that was precarious and yet regenerative because thorns were implements for ritual sacrifice.<sup>12</sup> Thus, whereas the friars traversed a corridor they related with the originary authority of the Apostles and Evangelists, in a Huaquecholteca worldview the north corridor used by the friars resonated with death, perhaps quite fittingly given the infectious diseases Europeans introduced into the Americas.<sup>13</sup>

At the end of each of these paths, artists painted a portrait of Saint Francis. The first portrait of the patron saint appears on the outer wall of the south corridor, which Nahua Christians used, just to the left of the refectory entrance [Fig. 2.9]. Just around the corner, artists painted a second image of Saint Francis on the outer wall of the east corridor, which friars used [Fig. 2.10]. In both portraits, artists portrayed Francis against a blue background and wearing a cowled habit and cord, and situated next to one of his attributes, a heron.<sup>14</sup> It is impossible to view the two portraits of Saint Francis at once. The portraits are arranged on adjacent walls but at a considerable distance apart. Although artists carefully individuated the other images of Christian saints, the portraits of Saint Francis in the southeast corner are identical in structure and iconography but reversed. Each portrait faces in the direction of the viewer walking toward the refectory portal, perhaps to mark the important activities that took place therein. The repeated portraits underscore the importance of Francis, whose role as a prophetic figure is the central theme of the lower cloister’s mural program.<sup>15</sup> Yet it also encouraged the viewer to hold Saint

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 307.

<sup>13</sup> My thanks to Bob Kendrick for calling my attention to the possibilities of North/South directional symbolism in European and Nahua systems.

<sup>14</sup> Bellini’s oil on tempera panel of *Saint Francis in the Desert* (1480), today in the Frick Collection, includes this attribute, for instance. See Davide Gasparotto, “Bellini and Landscape,” in *Giovanni Bellini: Landscapes of Faith in Renaissance Venice* (Los Angeles: Paul G. Getty Museum, 2017), 20-21.

<sup>15</sup> Saint Francis’ identity as a prophet extends from Bonaventure’s *Legenda maior*. See “The Major Legend of Saint Francis,” in Regis J. Armstrong, J. A. Wayne Hellmann, William J. Short,

Francis in their mind as they rounded the cloister's southeast corner. Seeing both portraits thus requires the viewer to move around the southeast corner, and as a result, to navigate crucial boundaries within the cloister's space and decorative program. To understand how the priestly and Huaquecholteca viewers in the lower cloister would have interpreted the program differently, I now turn to an analysis of the daily pathways of the friars through the north and east corridors, followed by the Huaquecholteca along the south corridor.

### **The Friars' Pathway**

Every day friars made multiple trips to the monastery atrium, passing through the cloister's ceremonial entrance situated in the northwest corner of the complex, where a door opens onto a series of vestibules (the *locutorio* and the *portería*) which leads out to the atrium [Fig. 2.11]. Access to the church, by contrast, was through a portal located in the ante-sacristy in the northeast corner of the complex. The Franciscan Constitutions stipulate that the door to the *portería*, which connects to the main entrance of the cloister, was to remain locked and opened only on ritual occasions by the father guardian.<sup>16</sup> Locking the main portal instantiated the Franciscan missionaries' commitment to enclosure, and the friars' ongoing pursuit of the

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and Francis of Assisi, *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, vol. 2 (New York: New City Press, 1999), 525-683.

<sup>16</sup> Joaquín García Icazbalceta, ed. *Códice franciscano*, in *NCDHM*, vol. 2 (Mexico City: Francisco Díaz de León, 1903), 154. The directive to seal the *portería* may reflect the Franciscan tradition of building confessional niches into the walls of the *portería* and *locutorio*, as addressed in chapter 3. Yet, it also contrasts with the common picture of the *portería* and adjacent *locutorio* as semi-public spaces where the friars conversed with the Indigenous laity. For instance, the Augustinians received Indigenous parishioners in the *portería*, see Juan de Grijalva, *Crónica de la orden de nuestro padre San Agustín en las provincias de Nueva España* (Mexico City: Editorial Porrúa, 1985), 445-446.



eremitical lifestyle of the Observant reform in New Spain.<sup>17</sup> This diverted lay traffic to the south side of the cloister and away from the spaces used by the friars to minister to the Huaquecholteca or to carry out their communal life. Thus, the priestly traffic concentrated along the north and east corridors of the cloister, while the Huaquecholteca may have moved principally along the south corridor which is was on an axis with the secular entrance.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Steven F. Turley, *Catholic Christendom, 1300-1700: Franciscan Spirituality and Mission in New Spain, 1524-1599: Conflict Beneath the Sycamore Tree* (Luke 19:1-10) (Farnham, GB: Routledge, 2016), 57-81. Either fray Diego de Almonte or fray Antonio de Maldonado served at Huaquechula during the construction and decoration of the lower cloister. Both friars left Observant hermitages in the San Gabriel Province in Spain to join the mission and later, Almonte joined the Insulana Province, a failed attempt to establish an eremitical province in northern New Spain in 1549. Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica*, bk. 3, chap. 31; Kubler, *Mexican Architecture*, 457-458. Torquemada's biographies of Almonte and Maldonado does not make mention of Huaquechula, however. See *Monaquía indiana*, bk 20, chap. 35, 37.

<sup>18</sup> The sources for my reconstruction are, foremost, the 1569 Constitutions of the Santo Evangelio Province. Today the Constitutions and related materials forms part of the so-called *Códice franciscano*, edited and published by Joaquín García Icazbalceta in 1889. García Icazbalceta was first to attribute the 1569 Constitutions to fray Gerónimo de Mendieta, see *Códice franciscano*, in *NCDHM* vol. II (Mexico City: Francisco Díaz de León, 1903), ix. For a discussion of Mendieta's authorship, see Howard F. Cline and John Glass, eds., *Handbook of Middle American Indians*, vol 13: Guide to Ethnohistorical Sources: Part 1 and 2 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014), 145. Because the Constitutions are best understood as an appendix to be consulted alongside the General Constitutions of the Order of Friars Minor, I read them with fifteenth and sixteenth-century Iberian statutes from Franciscan friaries to achieve a more complete picture of liturgical and spatial practices at the Huaquechula monastery. To reconstruct the experience of the liturgy, I draw on the following primary sources, listed in chronological order beginning in 1523: Luis Carrión ed., "Casa de Recolección de la Provincia de la Inmaculada Concepción y Estatuas por se regían," *Archivo Ibero-Americano* 5, no. 9 (1918): 264-227; Costanzo Cargnoni, "Houses of Prayer in the History of the Franciscan Order," in *Franciscan Solitude*, ed. André Cirino and Josef Raischl (New York: The Franciscan Institute, 1995), 224-228; García Icazbalceta, *Códice franciscano*; Alonso de Medrano, ed., *Instrucción y arte [sic] del Breviario* (Mexico City: Pedro Balli, 1579); Francisco Gonzaga, *Estatutos generles [sic] S. Francisco ...* (Mexico City: Pedro Ocharte, 1585). Because the *horarium* is calibrated to sunrise/sunset, the relative timing and length of each performance depends on the season. For example, Matins, often the longest Office, is considerably shorter during summer and at its longest during Advent. It is unclear whether Franciscans in New Spain combined the short service of Lauds with Matins or omitted it entirely, an option particularly convenient during the short nights of the summer. My thanks to Robert L. Kendrick and David J. Rothenberg for many stimulating discussions about the Divine Office.

The north corridor was the friars' conduit to the secular world; it linked the sacristy to the cloister's main entrance and the confessional niches in the *portería* and *locutorio* just beyond. Once the upper cloister was finished, a narrow staircase located in the ante-sacristy made it possible for the friar to travel from the choir loft to the ground floor quickly and discreetly.<sup>19</sup> Given the constant demand to hear confessions, Huaquechula's two friars frequently traveled along the north corridor. Following the most direct route between choir, sacristy, and confessionals, friars made approximately six round trips along the north corridor every day. By contrast, friars used the east corridor only once or twice on an average day. Friars devised the most efficient system of ministry possible so as to not detract from their spiritual practices. This was made possible by the placement of oratories and confessionals along the principal axis between the atrium and sacristy and chapter room, mural imagery in the cloister that alluded to the mission's apocalyptic expectations, and the practice of separation from the Huaquecholteca congregation in conformity with the practice of *clausura*.<sup>20</sup> Because of the rigidity of the missionaries' observance, which mandated silence and counting steps, keeping to the most straightforward route to their destination in the monastery might afford friars a moment for prayer in one of the oratories located along the north corridor.<sup>21</sup> The route of the friars through

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<sup>19</sup> On so-called 'day stairs' in Cistercian and Benedictine houses, see Leader, *Badia*, 125.

<sup>20</sup> The arrangement of conventual spaces to separate the friar from laypersons was a standard feature of Franciscan convents since the Middle Ages, and its extension to New Spain exemplifies the friars' ongoing commitment to eremitism as a central feature of the mission. Donal Cooper, "Experiencing Dominican and Franciscan Churches in Renaissance Italy," in *Sanctity Pictured: The Art of the Dominican and Franciscan Orders in Renaissance Italy*, ed. Trinita Kennedy (Nashville; London: Frist Center for the Visual Arts and Philip Wilson Publishers, Ltd., 2015), 47-61.

<sup>21</sup> In New Spain, Franciscan missionaries altered their observance in response to the strain of active ministry on their spiritual health. For example, Franciscan missionaries celebrated Matins during the night, rather than after Compline like their Iberian counterparts. Cargnoni, "Houses of Prayer," 224-228; García Icazbalceta, *Códice franciscano*, 147-148. Turley, *Franciscan Spirituality*, 75-78.

the monastery was thus characterized by moving back and forth along a single axis that connected the rooms associated with the common life with the spaces used for ministering to the Huaquecholteca. With their passage through monastic space limited to predominately one corridor, the friars thus remained apart from the monastery's Nahuatl inhabitants as they practiced their communal life and ministry. Thus, we can characterize the friars' itinerary through the cloister as physical separation in the service of religious conversion.

The portraits of Christian saints that friars encountered on the north corridor reminded friars that Indigenous ministry fulfilled Christian prophecy. Friars followed a medieval tradition in which they interpreted Revelation and the hagiography of Saint Francis in a predicative way, looking to the texts for spiritual meanings about the future.<sup>22</sup> The friars understood their efforts in New Spain to be a direct, unbroken continuation of the work of Christ's Apostles, and believed that Francis's restoration of the evangelical mission laid the groundwork for Christ's impending return. Kevin Poole summarizes this view: "[t]he Triumph of the Church over pagan rule, representing Christ's triumph over the Antichrist, would set into action the events leading to the Last Judgement and to the establishment of the Celestial Jerusalem."<sup>23</sup>

Just as the friars interpreted Revelation in a predicative way, their millenarian perspective guided their interpretation of the cycle of portraits of Christian saints that decorates the Huaquechula lower cloister. Outward movement, from the sacristy towards the *locutorio*, began

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<sup>22</sup> The mission as a catalyst of the final age traces back to Peter Olivi's (d. 1298) interpretation of Chapter 12 of the Rule (1223) in the *Expositio super Regularum*. Delno C. West, "Medieval Ideas of Apocalyptic Mission and the Early Franciscans in Mexico," *The Americas* vol. 45, no. 3 (1989): 297-298; Francisco Jiménez, "Vida de fray Martín de Valencia," ed. Pedro Angeles Jiménez in Antonio Rubial Garcia, *La Hermana Pobreza. El Franciscanismo: de la Edad Media a la evangelización novohispana* (Mexico City: UNAM, 1996), 232-233.

<sup>23</sup> Kevin Poole, "The Western Apocalypse Commentary Tradition," in *A Companion to the Premodern Apocalypse*, ed. Michael A. Ryan (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 103.

near the portrait of Franciscan theologian Saint Bonaventure in the northeast corner of the corridor [Fig. 2.12]. Bonaventure's sermons and *Major Life of Saint Francis* popularized an interpretation of Revelation 7:2 and 10:1 that identified Saint Francis as the Angel of the Sixth Seal of the Apocalypse.<sup>24</sup> The pairing of Bonaventure and John the Evangelist, the author of Revelations, on the north exterior wall of the cloister thus alludes to Franciscan eschatological exegesis [Fig. 2.13]. Across from the portrait of Saint John are paintings of the Apostles Peter and Paul, posing together in a single escutcheon near the main portal [Fig. 2.14]. The pairing of the Apostles Peter and Paul is a symbol of papal authority, one which resonated with an Observant Franciscan understanding of authority as extending directly from the papacy. In this sense, the imagery is an important reminder for any visitor to the cloister of the Franciscan hierarchy of power, one which placed the missionaries in ongoing conflict with viceregal administrators and ecclesiastical officials. The Apostles Peter and Paul also established Christ's ministry, laying the groundwork for the prophetic mass conversion of the pagans at the end of time. The final image the friar saw before exiting the cloister was the portrait of Saint Jerome, notable for his Latin translation of Scripture and first authoritative reading of the Old Testament

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<sup>24</sup> "And so not without reason; is he considered to be symbolized by the image of the Angel; who ascends from the sunrise; bearing the seal of the living God, in the true prophecy; of that other Friend of the Bridegroom, John the Apostle and the Evangelist. For "when the sixth seal was opened," John says in the Apocalypse, "I saw another Angel; ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God." Bonaventure, *Legenda maior*, chap. 12. Bonaventure's reading was likely inspired by the writings of John of Parma and was later elaborated by Peter Olivi and Angelo Caetano whose writings which significantly shaped fifteenth-century Franciscan reform movements in Spain. See David Burr, *The Spiritual Franciscans: From Protest to Persecution in the Century after Saint Francis* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 94, 207; Ibid., "Mendicant Readings of the Apocalypse," in *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* ed. Richard Kenneth Emmerson and Bernard McGinn (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 1992), 89-104; Ibid., "Franciscan Exegesis and Francis as Apocalyptic Figure," in *Monks, Nuns, and Friars in Medieval Society*, ed. E. B. King et. al. (Sewanee, TN: Press of the University of the South, 1989), 51-62. West, "Apocalyptic Mission," 297-300.

Book of Ecclesiastes, a staple of eschatological literature.<sup>25</sup>

Movement along the north corridor cast the friar as an active participant in history's apocalyptic trajectory, which came to fruition in the atrium where he preached and converted the Nahuas. This reminded the friars of the purpose of their individual labors in the larger process of redemption, and situated the Huaquechula monastery in the unfolding story of Christian salvation history. In the Huaquechula lower cloister, the interrelationship between any given friar and the mural decoration of the architectural space that he habitually navigated reinforced the view that his actions were quickening the return of Christ at the Last Judgement. Because friars did not see Nahuas as they moved about the cloister, they could imagine them as essentially absent from the monastic interior as they accomplished the tasks of conversion and ministry that evoked the Apocalyptic ideas for the Franciscans. In the Huaquechula lower cloister, Nahua mobility was confined to spaces where their actions were out of view and out of the way.<sup>26</sup> The progressive march of Christianity towards the Second Coming was thus also a means of advancing the erasure of the Huaquecholteca from monastic spaces.

This combined spiritual and spatial orientation permitted the friars to imagine a social relationship with the Nahuas that was incongruent with reality, and this inflected the descriptions of monastic spaces found in Franciscan sources. For instance, fray Gerónimo de Mendieta's chronicle hardly discusses conventual cloisters and one notable instance is a chapter on poverty which contains a narrative about the origination of the Huaquechula monastery's loom.<sup>27</sup> It may

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<sup>25</sup> Poole, "Western Apocalypse," 104-106.

<sup>26</sup> Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 129.

<sup>27</sup> Gerónimo de Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana*, ed. Joaquín García Icazbalceta (Alicante: Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes [1870; Porrúa: 1980], bk. 3, chap. 31; bk. 4, chap. 28. The only other mention of the cloister in the entirety of the chronicle is in the context of Purgatory exemplum in the spiritual biography of a friar at Tlaxcala.

have been the case that communal life within the monastery was routine and apparently unremarkable to write about. However, a comparison of Franciscan chronicles with those written by the missionaries of other orders reveals that Augustinians and Dominicans had a great deal to say about Indigenous activities in the monastery interior.<sup>28</sup> Given that these friars found the internal workings of the monastery notable indicates that Indigenous erasure in Franciscan chronicles deserves a closer look. That Nahuas were habitually present in the monastery further underscored the friars' failure to maintain enclosure, and the utter dependence of the friars on the Nahuas to carry out their mission. Paradoxically, the absence of information about Nahuas within monastic spaces, in particular the cloister, is a revealing indication of Indigenous historical presence.

### **The Huaquecholteca Pathway**

The principal entrance to the cloister for the Huaquecholteca was a nondescript doorway in the southwest corner [Fig. 2.15]. On axis with the south corridor, the monastery's public entrance connects to the refectory, kitchens, and sackcloth loom on the ground floor, as well as the main staircase to the upper floor where the library and *scriptorium* were located.<sup>29</sup> The public entrance was thus the quickest access to key spaces of work and prayer within the monastery interior for the Huaquecholteca officials, artisans, and laborers who served at the monastery.

The paintings of canonized Christian warriors and merchants the Huaquecholteca encountered

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<sup>28</sup> Grijalva, *Crónica*, 445-446.

<sup>29</sup> There were two additional entrances to the monastery's ground floor, both located on the south side of the complex. The first is a doorway that connects the gardens to the anterefectory. The second is a doorway connected to the monastery's loom and workshop and is located on the far southwest side of the complex, a section where many of the walls are collapsed. The placement of the Mexica-era plaque on the southwest side of the monastery implies the importance of this secondary entrance to the monastery.

along the south corridor substantiated their view of history and the *altepetl*'s place in the colonial order. As discussed in chapter 1, there were two pillars of Huaquecholteca identity: they were warriors, and they were elite merchants (*pochteca*). Recent actions undertaken by *gobernador* don Martín Cortés Xochitlahua had extended these historical identities to the present. In 1528 the Huaquecholteca had campaigned alongside the Spanish *conquistadores* during the invasion of the Maya lowlands. In 1535, the *altepetl*'s receipt of a viceregal license for trans-regional commerce renewed the Huaquecholteca's long mercantile history and positioned them to acquire the flax needed for Franciscan habits made on the monastery's loom. The construction of the lower cloister, furthermore, recast the vanquished pre-Hispanic Huaquecholteca as victors and expunged Huaquechula's history of foreign occupation through the repurposing of pre-Hispanic materials. The cloister's mural paintings reinforced the antiquity of these identities and cast them in Christian terms. Don Martín—himself a member of the merchant and warrior elite—found precedent in a mythic Christian history of Huaquechula that he was already actively assembling for the *altepetl* for the patronage of the new monastery.<sup>30</sup>

The portraits of sanctoral figures that artist painted along the south corridor, the main pathway of the Huaquecholteca through the lower cloister, aligned ancient Huaquecholteca identities with Christian exemplars. Upon entering the lower cloister through the public doorway,

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<sup>30</sup> Here I extend Stephanie Wood's insight about Nahua collective memory as "a product of careful selection, assemblage, and persuasive presentation." Wood, "Introduction: Collective Memory and Mesoamerican Systems of Remembrance," in *Mesoamerican Memory: Enduring Systems of Remembrance*, ed. Amos Megged and Stephanie Wood (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012), 5. Kelly S. McDonough stresses the "highly selective task" of remembering and forgetting as a political act and a constitutive feature of Nahuatl-language historical annals. McDonough, "Indigenous Rememberings and Forgetting: Sixteenth-Century Nahua Letters and Petitions to the Spanish Crown," *Native American and Indigenous Studies* 5, no. 1 (2018): 69-99; *Ibid.*, *The Learned Ones Nahua Intellectuals in Postconquest Mexico* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2016), 63-82.

the Huaquecholteca saw portraits of Franciscan Minorites Saint Anthony of Padua and Saint Louis of Toulouse, and then Saint Francis and Pope Innocent III as they walked towards the refectory [Figs. 2.16-2.18]. The saints depicted along the south walkway were associated with the foundation of the primitive Franciscan mission. These four figures also represented the four principal social groups at the apex of Huaquecholteca society: nobles, priests, warriors, and merchants. The psalms of the *Psalmody Christiana* (1583), a Nahuatl-language songbook for use on Christian feast days, gives us insights into these associations.<sup>31</sup> The cases of Saint Anthony and Saint Lawrence also shed light on how Indigenous history and the spatial politics of viewing monastic art shaped a Nahua Christian hagiographical tradition.

In the songs celebrating Saint Anthony of Padua in the *Psalmody Christiana*, he is identified as warrior and Christian conqueror; the songs invoke valiant jaguar and eagle warriors at the apex of the Central Mexican martial hierarchy.<sup>32</sup> The Huaquecholteca had served as Christian eagle warriors and jaguar warriors alongside Spanish *conquistadores* in the invasion of Guatemala (1527-1529), recording the campaign on the *Lienzo de Quauhquechollan*, depicting themselves in the jaguar pelts and feather headdresses fighting alongside the Spaniards [Fig. 2.19]. This shared imagery contributed to the creation of a meaningful historical pattern that validated the authority of the Huaquecholteca: just as Saint Anthony battled on behalf of Christ in the past, the Huaquecholteca are the Christian warriors of the current age.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> In looking to Nahuatl musical texts, it is important to note that Huaquechula's painted cloister predated the psalms analyzed here by decades, even though the music has been composed and circulating with viceregal authorization at least twenty years before its publication. Lorenzo Candelaria, "Bernadino de Sahagún's *Psalmody Christiana*: A Catholic Songbook from Sixteenth-Century New Spain," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 67, no. 3 (2014), 640.

<sup>32</sup> Bernardino de Sahagún, *Psalmody Christiana (Christian Psalmody)*, ed. and trans. Arthur J. O. Anderson (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1993), 180-181.

<sup>33</sup> Burkhart, *Slippery Earth*, 241.



Painted directly across the corridor from Saint Anthony, Saint Louis of Toulouse was a prince who gave up his birthright to become a Franciscan friar and who is associated with Christian charity in the *Psalmodia Christiana* [Fig. 2.20].<sup>34</sup> Like Saint Martin of Tours, the patron of the monastery, and later Saint Francis, Saint Louis had given his cape to a naked man he encountered on the roadside.<sup>35</sup> Franciscan chronicles draw an allusion to Saint Louis's actions as a humble noble who clothed the poor and don Martín's own act of charity when he established a sackcloth loom to make habits for the friars. Such parallels may have also entered into the sermons and songs sung at Huaquechula in celebration of the community's patron saint. Seeing Saint Louis' portrait *en route* to the sackcloth loom reminded the Huaquecholteca of their distinguished history as charitable Christian nobles. Christian history thus supplied Don Martín a pattern that authorized his patronage of a new monument. In this sense, *gobernador* don Martín's foundation of the loom cast don Martín as another Saint Louis, and the monastery as the next installment of an authoritative tradition repeating in the present era.

The example of don Martín and the patronage of the loom raises the question of Franciscan intention and Indigenous agency in the decoration of the Huaquechula cloister. On the one hand, the distribution of some Christian portraits in the Huaquechula monastery conforms to medieval precedents, such as the clustering of Evangelists near the sacristy entrance. On the other hand, it is likely the friars considered the intended viewership when determining the program, reserving figures associated with Franciscan mysticism, such as Bonaventure, for sectors of the cloister where the friars would have the most engagement, and selecting more familiar figures, such as the Church Fathers, for the West corridor that connects the cloister's

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<sup>34</sup> Sahagún, *Psalmodia Christiana*, 252-253.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 255.

public entrance to the ceremonial entrance. Attention to lay viewership may clarify why Saint Anthony of Padua and Saint Louis of Toulouse flank the doorway used by the Huaquecholteca. From an early date, the Franciscan missionaries associated Saint Anthony of Padua and Saint Louis of Toulouse with Purgatory, as evident in Pedro de Gante's *Doctrina Christiana* (1555) which names these Franciscan Minorites as intermediaries in the prayers for the dead.<sup>36</sup> Such an association is also registered in the songs celebrating Saint Anthony and Saint Louis of Toulouse in the *Psalmodia Christiana*, which makes explicit reference to the sacrament of extreme unction in psalms dedicated to Saint Louis, for instance. A principal duty of Nahua officials in the monastery was to assist with burial rites and this implies the imagery was intended to remind the Huaquecholteca of the power of Christian intercessors as they exited the cloister on the way to bury community members.

At the same time, the Huaquecholteca painted the portraits of Saint Anthony and Saint Louis in the 1540s when Huaquecholteca power was ascending in the Valley of Atlixco. The symbolism of Christian warfare and the power of merchant elite appears in other sources associated with Huaquecholteca during this period, including maps, inter-regional trade agreements, and the selection of patron saint that shared a name with the *altepetl's* *gobernador*. It is thus logical that the Huaquecholteca would extend these themes to the Christian saints they regularly encountered in the cloister. In the words of Louise Burkhart, “the worship of the community patron saints was so conflated with collective identity that this might not have been a meaningful distinction,” and a Christian ritual was a “statement equally of politics as of piety.”<sup>37</sup> What is significant is that monastic art was a central ingredient in not only promoting the

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<sup>36</sup> Pedro de Gante, *Doctrina Christiana en lengua Mexicana...* (Mexico City: Juan Pablos, 1555), f. 136r-161

<sup>37</sup> Burkhart, “Pious Performances,” 376.

veneration of Christian saints by the Huaquecholteca but also transforming their identities to more closely align with Nahua worldviews. The portraits of Saint Anthony and Saint Louis are thus a key example of the role of mural painting in the creation of a Huaquecholteca cult of the saints.

We can extend this inquiry to the imagery of Saint Francis on the south corridor where Huaquecholteca artists painted a second charitable noble merchant. Saint Francis was a member of the merchant elite before he cast away his clothes and inheritance after a vision of a speaking crucifix told him to “Go and repair my Church.”<sup>38</sup> Initially, Saint Francis interpreted this directive literally and repaired three crumbled chapels near Assisi. The psalms for Saint Francis’s feast day stress his identity as a merchant and a builder of churches, associations that were relevant to the Huaquecholteca leaders who directed the *altepetl*’s commercial wealth into the patronage of the Franciscan cloister. In this sense, *gobernador* don Martín’s commission of the Huaquechula lower cloister was as much an act of Christian *imitatio* through trade and architecture, as it was the next phase of an ancient repeating cycle of Huaquecholteca history.

It is also significant that artists depicted Saint Francis with a heron in the south corridor. This matches the presentation of Saint Francis found on the east corridor used by the friars, however the symbolism of the bird for each constituency was radically different. In this portrait, the heron twists its long neck to peer at Francis as he composes the Rule [Fig. 2.11]. Herons are important symbols in Nahua worldview, and equally expressive of ideas about origins. The ancestral home of the Huaquecholteca was the mythical land of Aztlan, described and represented as a place of herons.<sup>39</sup> Nahua temporality recognizes repeating cycles, as well as the

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<sup>38</sup> Sahagún, *Psalmody Christiana*, 298-299.

<sup>39</sup> Elizabeth Hill Boone, *Stories in Red and Black: Pictorial Histories of the Aztecs and Mixtecs* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010), 163.

linear teleology similar to Western Christendom.<sup>40</sup> For Huaquecholteca viewers, the heron depicted alongside Saint Francis locates the saint in Aztlán and signifies his ancient and enduring presence in Central Mexico. This identification was reinforced in the psalms of the *Psalmodia Christiana* which describes Saint Francis as an ancient figure who “renewed” the memory of Christ.<sup>41</sup>

For the Huaquecholteca, the embodied experience of the south corridor of the lower cloister was central to negotiating a Christian history.<sup>42</sup> The Huaquecholteca used Christian art and architecture to make the past relevant to the present. The saintly imagery painted along the south corridor reminded viewers of the Huaquecholteca’s recent activities as Christians, and it also functioned to extend that history even further back in time.<sup>43</sup> The imagery of the Huaquechula south corridor thus presents an intriguing example of how Christian subjects and colonial Huaquecholteca subjects, the warrior and the merchant elite, line up to mutually

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<sup>40</sup> For an introduction to Central Mexican temporalities, see Elizabeth Hill Boone, *Cycles of Time and Meaning in the Mexican Books of Fate* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013).

<sup>41</sup> “oquimoiancuilili.” Significantly, the term “renew” in Nahuatl also connotes “to make anew” and “to start over,” which implies repetition. Sahagún, *Psalmodia Christiana*, 296-297. Bonaventure’s *Major Life of Saint Francis* was translated into Nahuatl in 1577, while his *Mystica Theologica* was published in Nahuatl in Mexico City in 1547 and 1575. Louise Burkhart analyzes the implications of Bonaventure’s use of solar imagery on Nahua characterizations of Christ in “The Solar Christ in Nahuatl Doctrinal Texts of Early Colonial Mexico,” *Ethnohistory* 35, no. 3 (1988): 236.

<sup>42</sup> Writing about colonial cartographic histories, Dana Leibsohn observes that the *Mapa de Cuauhtinchan No. 2* the past “served as a site that rendered the past visible and ... forge[d] a colonial history that was compelling in the in the sixteenth century, no less than it is now.” Leibsohn, “Seeing in Situ: The *Mapa de Cuauhtinchan No. 2*,” in *Cave, City, and Eagle’s Nest: An Interpretive Journey Through the Mapa de Cuauhtinchan No. 2*, ed. Scott Sessions and David Carrasco (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2007), 391.

<sup>43</sup> On the assembling of an ancient Peruvian Christian history, see the excellent scholarship on Guaman Poma’s *El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno* (ca. 1615). Rolena Adorno, *Guaman Poma: Writing and Resistance in Colonial Peru* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000); Lisa Trever, “Idols, Mountains, and Metaphysics in Guaman Poma’s Picture of Huacas,” *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 59/60 (2011): 39-59.

reinforce each other's meaning within the particular context of Huaquecholteca history, and the socio-spatial environment of the south corridor. This instance demonstrates how conditions of viewing and Indigenous historical experiences inflected the meanings viewers attached to monastic mural painting. It also draws attention to the interplay between the Huaquechula's actual pre-Hispanic past and the community's investment in creating a new Christian identity for itself through the patronage of monastic architecture. The imagery of the south corridor suggests that the Huaquecholteca extended this project to mural painting. This kind of expressivity would have only intensified in the course of ritual viewing during the religious processions the Huaquecholteca elite made around the cloister alongside the friars on Christian feast days and the weekly ceremonies to commemorate the dead.

### **Ritual Circuits**

Every Monday morning the community made a procession through the cloister to speed the souls of the dead through Purgatory in advance of the impending Last Judgment.<sup>44</sup> The votive

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<sup>44</sup> Requiem Masses commemorate the dead and occur after the funerary (Exequies) Mass. Whereas friars in Spain celebrated this commemorative Mass at Prime (sunrise), Novohispanic sources suggest friars delayed the liturgy until after the celebration of the High Mass at Terce (9 am). This made it possible for lay parishioners to join the friars and Nahua choir singers in the procession through the monastery. García Icazbalceta, *Códice franciscano*, 161; Gonzaga, *Estatutos generales*, 17f. The musically sophisticated Matins Responsories for the Office of the Dead could be sung in polyphony, although this is more typical of cathedral practice, see Grayson Wagstaff, "Morales's Officium, Chant Traditions, and Performing 16th-Century Music," *Early Music* 32, no. 2 (2004): 229. According to Franciscan Diego de Valadés, Nahua Christian cantors chanted the Responsories in monophonic (single-line) chant during Requiem processions and at the gravesite. See Valadés, *Rétorica cristiana...* (Perugia: 1585), f. 17r. Iberian and Novohispanic sources across mendicant orders indicate this commemoration of the departed was widespread and continued into the eighteenth century. With respect to Franciscan sources, Cardinal Francisco de Quiñones's 1523 Statutes for "Casas de Recolección" in the Province of the Immaculate Conception, Spain requires a votive Mass on Mondays but does not specify a procession: "Todos los lunes del año... se diga una Missa de *Requiem*, en tono, por los bienhechores defunctos y por las Animas de Purgatorio," in Luis Carrión, "Casa de Recolección,"

rites on Monday complemented other standard rituals at the monastery as part of the cult of the dead.<sup>45</sup> During the procession through the cloister, participants paused in each corner of the cloister and knelt in front of the small altar to recite a prayer and sing responsories on behalf of the dead. The painted decoration of the Huaquechula lower cloister reiterated this message and was made, at least in part, with Monday's observance in mind. Significantly, Monday's circuit was one of the few moments when the monastery's two constituencies came together and viewed the entire cycle of portraits that decorate the cloister.

When read as a circuit, the mural portraits painted in Huaquechula's lower cloister

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266. The 1569 Constitutions Generales of the Franciscan Order in New Spain stipulate a Mass for deceased friars on Sundays and a sung responsory after Mass on Mondays: "todos los domingos celebren los sacerdotes por los frailes defunctos de la Orden... los lunes, despues de la misa mayor, dígase un responso cantado, con los oraciones acostumbradas..." in Garcia Icazbalceta, *Códice franciscano*, 160-161; Although the legislation does not specify a procession, that does not mean processions did not happen. Dominican and Augustinian sources suggest the Monday procession following the Votive Office for the Dead was standard. Furthermore, Cardinal Francisco Gonzaga's 1582 statutes (published in Mexico in 1585) adhere to Quiñones's precedent and stipulate a votive Mass and procession after Prime on Mondays: "Item, todos los Lunes, (quando no se celebrare alguna fiesta de guardar, ó doble,) se cantara la missa de Requiem, despues de prima por los Frayles difunctos, y por los que estan enterrados en nuestros conuentos; y acabada Missa, se haga procession por el claustro, diziendo en tono los Responsos de difunctos. A todo lo qual acudiran todos los Frayles, que no estuvieran evidentemente ocupados" in Gonazaga, *Estatutos generales*, 17f. See also 100v to 102v on Requiem Masses and prayers for the dead, as well as maintaining a book recording the names of the deceased friars and their good works. For a summary of Cardinal Gonzaga's 1582 statutes, see Cargnoni, "Houses of Prayer," 230-231.

<sup>45</sup> This included the daily reading of the Office of the Dead and commemorative Masses for the Dead (at Vespers, Lauds, and Matins) on the third, seventh, thirtieth day after the death of a friar, as well as an additional Mass on the anniversary of the death. The lessons for all of these rites were taken from the Book of Job, followed by appropriate responses and the penitential psalms. According to the 1569 Constituciones Generales, friars sang five Masses with vigils for each departed friar, three Offices of the Dead for each deceased chorus member (indigenous?), and thirty Pater Nosters with the Ave María for deceased laypersons, see Garcia Icazbalceta, *Códice Franciscano*, 160-161. The 1583 clarify *Estatutos generales* that this was an annual commemoration on the anniversary of the death, see *Estatutos generales*, f. 101r. Francisco Gonzaga, *Estatutos generales* (1585), 100v.; On the setting of the Requiem Mass and Office of the Dead see, Harper, *Forms and Orders*, 106-108; 125-125.

present a tight teleological sequence that coherently conveys the role of the Franciscan mission in Christian Church history. Recall that portraits of Christian saints in the lower cloister are distributed according to broad themes. The cycle begins on the west corridor with the four Church Fathers, proceeds to the primitive Franciscan mission and the renewal of Christ's apostleship along the south and east corridors, and concludes on the north corridor with portraits of saints associated with Christian eschatology. In this regard, the painted decoration of the Huaquechula lower cloister is a conceptually unified program that uses portraiture to encode the eschatological worldview of the Franciscan friars. In this sense, each portrait can also be understood as a cog within a larger Christological conception of sacred time. Each Christological figure functions to prefigure the Last Judgment by alluding to a significant portent of the end times, such as Saint Francis' renewal of Christ's apostleship. In this sense, the embodied movement of the viewer around the cloister animated the millenarian perspective of the friars. As a result, the Huaquechula lower cloister program implicated the viewer in the fulfillment of the Biblical prophecy toward which Christianity was marching.

Yet in the Huaquechula lower cloister, Nahua systems of history and time overlapped the colonial discourses imposed by the friars. As an analysis of the south corridor's decoration shows, the Huaquecholteca interpreted history as a means of making the past align with the present, enabling the Huaquecholteca to trace their ancestry back to Christian exemplars depicted in the lower cloister. In addition to their linear conception of history, repetition and patterns were also highly significant in a Nahua cyclical view of history. For Nahuas, repetition could point forward to the future as much as backwards into the past.<sup>46</sup> In this way, saints were integrated into the Nahua past so that the contemporary moment was merely a Christian iteration of

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<sup>46</sup> Burkhart, "Solar Christ," 240.

someone or something that had already existed. Christian revelations thus fit into a Nahua cosmology in which the present derived meaning from its similarity to the events of a past that was dynamic and mutable.<sup>47</sup> The repeated portraits of Saint Francis thus fit into a Nahua temporal logic. The doubling marks the seam between the past and future, but also indicates the present moment is but a subsequent development in a historical cycle that repeats. As Susan Gillespie explains, “[s]ince the next cycle is structurally identical to the previous one, its ending must share an identity with its beginning.”<sup>48</sup> Gillespie’s insights clarify the presentation of history in the Huaquecholteca cloister. At Huaquechula, artists used adjacent and nearly identical portraits of Saint Francis to communicate historical symmetry.

At the same time, paintings of Saint Francis positioned near each other were interpreted differently by the friars and the Huaquecholteca. For the friars the double portraits of Saint Francis communicated the Saint’s two intertwined identities. On the one hand, Saint Francis’ actions in this world gained him renown as an *alter Christus*, an association confirmed by the stigmata and ascension into heaven in a chariot of fire like the Old Testament prophet Elijah. On the other hand, the missionaries interpreted Saint Francis’s temporal life through an eschatological lens, and identified him as the Angel of the Sixth Seal described by Saint John in the book of Revelations. For the friars, the twin portrait of Saint Francis in the Huaquechula lower cloister refer to the Saint’s earthly and prophetic identities, and this is communicated in the shift in the cycle’s narrative from a roughly chronological presentation of history (west and south corridors) to one with explicitly anagogical contours. In this sense, the double portraits signal to the viewer that, as the viewer rounded the corner to enter the east corridor, the viewer was

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<sup>47</sup> Boone, *Cycles of Time*, 13.

<sup>48</sup> Susan Gillespie, *The Aztec Kings: The Construction of Rulership in Mexica History* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1992), 147.



entering a new era of Christian time and one that required a different interpretative model. This instance of multivalence in the Huaquechula lower cloister is significant. While apocalyptic worldview of the friars encoded the spatial and visual practices of the monastery, it did so without displacing a Nahua conception of history for the Huaquecholteca. This is because, as Louise Burkhart has shown, Nahuas “did not view their conversion as ushering in a new spiritual order of reality that superseded all preceding history.”<sup>49</sup> Analysis of ritual circuits in the lower cloister animates how iconographical multivalence contributed to the continuity of Nahua worldviews.

## Conclusion

As will be discussed in chapter 3, omens and cataclysmic endings were a central part of the Nahua worldview, one that understood the apocalypse not as a future event but as actively unfolding around them.<sup>50</sup> Source material for a prophetic view of history was also available to Nahuas working in the monastery’s scriptorium, located on the second floor of the complex and accessed by the refectory staircase. Huaquechula’s conventual library contained a copy of Heitor Pinto’s *In Ezechielem prophetam* (1581), a commentary on the Old Testament book of Ezekiel which contains millenarian prophecies about the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem.<sup>51</sup>

Nahuas and friars at Huaquechula could have equally drawn on this text’s description of the

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<sup>49</sup> Burkhart, “Solar Christ,” 253. See also Mark Z. Christensen, “Predictions of Doomsday in European, Nahuatl, and Maya Texts,” in *Words and Worlds Turned Around: Indigenous Christianities in Colonial Latin America*, ed. David Tavárez (Chicago: University Press of Colorado, 2017), n.p.; Magaloni-Kerpel, “Visualizing the Nahua/Christian Dialogue,” 195-200.

<sup>50</sup> Christensen, “Apocalypse,” n.p.

<sup>51</sup> The full title of Pinto’s 1581 commentary is: *In Ezcheliām Prophetam in Esaiām prophetam commentaria*. Today the contents of the Huaquechula conventual library are at the Biblioteca Franciscana, Cholula. My thanks to Dra. Circe Hernández Sautto and her staff for their assistance while I worked with the collection.

Temple of Solomon to inform their abstract conception of the Huaquechula cloister as they worked with the text in the *scriptorium*. Significantly, the Huaquecholteca used the iconography of Christian saints to substantiate a claim to the *altepetl*'s Christian antiquity and *gobernador* don Martín's political legitimacy. While the twin portraits of Saint Francis mark the boundary between two different cycles of time in the cloister, the Biblical era and the Church/Mission era, the double portraits also produce a seamless transition between two eras: the image that marks the end of one cycle corresponds formally with the image that marks the beginning of the new cycle. Saint Francis thus functions as a bridge between historical eras and reinforces a Nahuatl view of Christian time as characterized by repeating cycles, each presided over by Saint Francis.<sup>52</sup> The painted program of the Huaquechula lower cloister thus frames the Huaquecholteca of the colonial present as part of an ancient and authoritative Christian tradition.

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<sup>52</sup> Diana Magaloni-Kerpel observed this concept at work in the "link" between Moteuczoma and Christ in Book 12 of the *Florentine Codex*. Magaloni-Kerpel, "Nahuatl-Christian Dialogue," 220.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE POLITICS OF PENITENCE: CONFESSION IN HUAQUECHULA'S SOTOCORO

#### Introduction

At Franciscan monasteries in New Spain, Christian sacred space was also an arena for inter-Indigenous politics. Nowhere was this more expedient than in the spaces designated for confession. Nahua Christians were obliged to make confession once a year during Lent, to prepare to receive annual Communion during Holy Week.<sup>1</sup> For friars in New Spain, hearing hundreds of confessions a day was a demanding duty. In the early years of the mission, confession took place in the patio where penitents met individually with the friars. Friars

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<sup>1</sup> Franciscan missionaries in New Spain permitted parishioners to fulfill their Easter duty beginning as early as Septuagesima (the ninth Sunday before Easter) because there were so many people to absolve. See García Icazbalceta, ed. *Códice franciscano*, 98. In 1215 annual confession in advance of participating Holy Communion became obligatory with canon-twenty-one *De confessione facienda et non revelanda a sacerdote et salte in pascha communicando* of the Fourth Lateran Council, called by Pope Innocent III. In 1209, Pope Innocent III had approved the Order of the Friars Minor on the condition that the friars expressly preach penance. "In all of your sermons you shall tell the people of the need to do penance, impressing upon them that no one can be saved unless he receives the Body and Blood of our Lord." *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies, English Omnibus of Sources for Life of St. Francis*, ed. Marion Habig (Quincy: Franciscan Press, 1991), 113. At Franciscan monasteries in New Spain, Nahua Christians partook of Communion on Holy Thursday after the midday Mass and on Good Friday (the arrangement likely depended on the number of communicants). Members of Nahua Christian confraternities partook of the Eucharist at the altar and helped distribute the sacrament to non-members and commoners (*macehualtin*). For Franciscan missionary accounts of Holy Week in New Spain, see Toribio de Benavente Motolinia, *Motolinia's History of the Indians of New Spain*, ed. and trans., Francis B. Steck (Washington D.C.: American Academy for Franciscan History, 1951), 55-56, 64; Gerónimo de Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana*, ed. Joaquín García Icazbalceta (Alicante: Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes, [1870;1980] 1999), bk. 4, chap. 19, 32, <http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/nd/ark:/59851/bmcs2p6>; Joaquín García Icazbalceta, ed. *Códice franciscano*, in *NCDHM*, vol. 2 (Mexico City: Francisco Díaz de León, 1903), 77, 102-103; Juan de Torquemada, *Monarquía indiana* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, [1615] 1975), vol. 5, bk. 7, chap. 16, <http://www.historicas.unam.mx/publicaciones/catalogo/ficha?id=154>

complained that hearing confession for long hours depleted their physical and spiritual energies.<sup>2</sup> During Lent, Huaquechula's three friars heard confessions beginning immediately after Prime and continued into the night, interrupted only by the mid-day Mass.<sup>3</sup> Yet from the 1560s onward, the spaces for confession changed with the completion of many new Franciscan churches. Christian rites transitioned away from an outdoor context of the patio into designated places within the new church interior decorated with murals.<sup>4</sup> An architectural innovation, which I will call the through-wall confessional, allowed friars to hear confession through a small, perforated metal plate in the common wall between the monastery and the church [Figs. 3.1, 3.2].<sup>5</sup> The

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<sup>2</sup> For instance: "And, except for the time he spent saying Mass, reciting the Divine Office, and eating, he would be all day in the sun without his hood, hearing confessions, something that no one else could tolerate for even a day." Gerónimo de Mendieta, quoted and translated in Steven F. Turley, *Catholic Christendom, 1300-1700: Franciscan Spirituality and Mission in New Spain, 1524-1599: Conflict Beneath the Sycamore Tree (Luke 19:1-10)* (Farnham: Routledge, 2016), 69; 94-97. See also Motolinia, *History*, 247. On how "continual confession and preaching" "extinguished" "the spirit and fervor" of the friars, see Miguel de Navarro, "Patente de Comisario General para las Provincias de Nueva España, 1573," in *NCDHM*, vol. 4, 187.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix 1. By comparison, priests in Spain complained that hearing up to twenty confessions per day, every day was a tremendous burden. See, Patrick J. O' Banion, *The Sacrament of Penance and Religious Life in Golden Age Spain* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2012), 53, 61.

<sup>4</sup> In many cases it would be another decade before the vaults were finished.

<sup>5</sup> George Kubler referred to this "strange Mexican solution, of incorporating the confessional within the thickness of the nave wall" as a "baffled confessional." George Kubler, *Mexican Architecture of the Sixteenth Century*, vol. 2 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), 254. Contrary to Kubler's conclusions, this formulation can be traced to the Observant Franciscans in late medieval Italy. See Roberto Cobiانchi, "The Practice of Confession and Franciscan Observant Churches: New Architectural Arrangements in Early Renaissance Italy," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 69, no. 3 (2006): 289-330. Cobiانchi's article is significant for drawing attention to the Observant Franciscan brotherhood's new emphasis on hearing confession beginning in the 1430s and its impact on innovations to church design and furniture. Huaquechula's design represents an extension of this tradition in New Spain. On the segregation of Christian sacred space with choir screens in European Franciscan churches see, Marcia B. Hall, *Renovation and Counter-Reformation: Vasari and Duke Cosimo in Sta. Maria Novella and Sta. Croce, 1565-1577* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979); Donal A. Cooper, "Franciscan Choir Enclosures and the Function of Double-Sided Altarpieces in Tridentine Umbria," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 64 (2001): 1-54; Jacqueline E. Jung, *The Gothic Screen:*

formulation physically separated the confessant and friar, and enabled the friar to remain concealed in the monastery while hearing confessions. However, this meant the Indigenous penitent could no longer see the friars who were no longer in the church associating with their parishioners. The physical absence of the friar from the church during confession reconfigured Indigenous social relations at the monastery.

This chapter argues that the practice of religious confession at Franciscan monasteries in New Spain sustained Indigenous social hierarchies. Analyzing the experience of confession in part through its architecture gives insight into the broader field of power relationships unfolding in the church during the sacrament. Huaquechula's through-wall confessional presents important evidence for revising the traditional view of confession at Franciscan missions with important implications for understanding the dynamics of power within Christian sacred spaces. Complementing architectural analysis is also an inquiry into the painted decoration of the *sotocoro*, which at Huaquechula and elsewhere prominently featured ornamental friezes with botanical and Greco-Roman motifs. Although often associated with pagan antiquity, the ornaments of the frieze incorporated imagery of potent botanicals to associate the *sotocoro* with the power and prestige of Nahua elites. This chapter uses the practice of confession to show the entangled nature of Christian ritual and Indigenous politics within the public space of the church. Analysis of the monastic confessional environment through architecture and art foregrounds the spectrum of Indigenous social arrangements engendered by the practice of confession, and the multiple nodal points of power occupied by Indigenous people at the monastery.<sup>6</sup>

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*Space, Sculpture, and Community in the Cathedrals of France and Germany, ca. 1200-1400* (Cambridge, England; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 23-25.

<sup>6</sup> This finding troubles Michel Foucault's now classic interpretation of the confessional as a one-way imposition of clerical power in his formulation of sovereign power. It also expands Wietse de Boer's conclusions about the public nature of the social arrangements engendered by the later

In addition to the building of churches, the 1560s were also marked by widespread economic turmoil that eroded political relations between Indigenous elites and their dependents. This confluence of architectural and social events embedded Indigenous politics into the sacred topography of the monastic church. Throughout the rite the penitent remained in full view of the Nahua church officials who supervised the administration of confession in the church, while standing amidst murals decorated with symbolic references to their authority. High-ranking Nahua church officials (*fiscales*) oversaw the preparation and execution of confessions and exercised their authority over commoners (*macehualtin*) who flocked to the church to fulfill their Lenten duty.<sup>7</sup> The commoners' ritual recognition of the ancestral hierarchy through the sacrament of penance thus bolstered elite Nahua claims to privilege and forestalled the class conflicts erupting in other domains of Indigenous society.

Studies of Indigenous inter-ethnic relations have concentrated on secular spaces of law and justice. Yet how was Nahua political authority visualized and enacted within public spaces of worship? My analysis takes the sacrament of penance as a point of departure to engage with recent work on the role of the senses in the expression of Indigenous sovereignty.<sup>8</sup> Following

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'modern' Borromean confessional box, which was widely implemented following the Council of Trent in parish churches throughout the world. The Franciscans and the Jesuits, however, were slow to adopt this furniture in Spain and New Spain, where through-wall confessionals were built into the early 1600s. Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2012), 92-102; Wietse de Boer, *The Conquest of the Soul: Confession, Discipline, and Public Order in Counter-Reformation Milan* (Boston: Brill, 2001), 95-96, 105; O'Banion, *Penance*, 51-53.

<sup>7</sup> Although sharing some duties with financial officers (*fiscals*) across the trans-Atlantic world, the *fiscalía* in Nahua communities emerged as a distinct political-religious institution in the sixteenth century closely related to confraternities but with far more political influence in municipal and church affairs. On the *fiscalía*, see Lidia E. Gómez García, "Las fiscalías en la Ciudad de los Ángeles, siglo XVII," in *Los indios y las ciudades de Nueva España, México*, ed. Felipe Castro Gutierrez (Mexico City: Universidad Autónoma de México, 2010), 174.

<sup>8</sup> Michelle H. Raheja, *Reservation Reelism: Redfacing, Visual Sovereignty, and Representations of Native Americans in Film* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010); Jolene Rickard,

recent scholarship by Kelly McDonough and Camila Townsend, this chapter demonstrates that Nahuas worked within colonial discursive spaces that would otherwise compress complex social identities and affiliations, to instead sustain the sociopolitical distinctions intrinsic to Nahua political sovereignty.<sup>9</sup> This finding is significant because it shows that Christian ritual practices directed toward Indigenous religious conversion may have, in fact, mitigated the biopolitical strategies of the settler-colonial state.<sup>10</sup>

### Conundrums Concerning Confessionals

Huaquechula is one of at least seven Franciscan churches that have through-wall confessionals. The majority of these churches are located in the Puebla-Tlaxcala region and are associated with the Franciscan friar-builder Juan de Alameda, who died at Huaquechula in 1570.<sup>11</sup> In place before 1575, the south wall of the Huaquechula church formerly contained two

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“Visual Sovereignty in the Time of Biometric Sensors,” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 110, no. 2 (2011): 465–486; Dylan Robinson, “Public Writing, Sovereign Reading: Indigenous Language Art in Public Space,” *Art Journal* 75, no. 2 (2017): 85–99.

<sup>9</sup> Kelly S. McDonough, *The Learned Ones Nahua Intellectuals in Postconquest Mexico* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2016); Camilla Townsend, *Annals of Native America: How the Nahuas of Colonial Mexico Kept Their History Alive* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

<sup>10</sup> By ‘biopolitical’ I mean the political and economic mode in which power operates through the organization and management of living itself that was central to the emergent Spanish colonial regimes of racialization and gendering. See Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 144–145; Donna Haraway, “A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s,” *Australian Feminist Studies* 2, no. 4 (1987): 1–42; Sylvia Wynter, “Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation—An Argument,” *CR: The New Centennial Review* 3, no. 3 (2003): 257–337.

<sup>11</sup> Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica*, bk 5, chap. 36. Beyond Huaquechula, Atlixco, Cuauhtinchan, Cholula, Huejotzingo, Tepeaca, and Zacatlan in modern Puebla state each have through-wall confessional niches cut into the south walls of the church; Tula (Hidalgo) and Tlaquiltenango (Morelos) also contain intact confessionals. Tlaquiltenango’s confessionals are positioned on the north wall of the church and are still functional. Gerónimo de Mendieta was the first to associate the monasteries at Atlixco, Cholula, Huaquechula, Huejotzingo, and Tula with fray Juan de Alameda. Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica*, bk. 5, chap. 36; Torquemada, *Monarquía indiana*, vol. 6, bk. 20, chap. 61; Kubler, *Mexican Architecture*, 11, 117, 170; John McAndrew, *The Open-Air*

through-wall confessionals, one within the nave and the other within the *sotocoro* (lofted narthex) [Fig. 3.3]. The nave's confessional is nearly across from the *Porciúncula* portal and opposite the monastery's *locutorio* [Fig. 3.4]. Today, a late colonial altarpiece blocks an entrance sealed by a door with a mesh screen. An antiquated sign of a penitential prayer hangs below the ogee-arched portal announcing the doorway's original function. Unfortunately, the *sotocoro*'s through-wall confessional was destroyed; a modern renovation removed the baffle wall that once separated the *sotocoro* from the *portería* to create a modern passageway between the church and monastery [Fig. 3.5]. The exact arrangement of this confessional can be inferred through comparison with the confessional in the nave, as well as the well-preserved and analogous through-wall confessional in the *sotocoro* of the church of San Miguel Arcángel, Huejotzingo [Figs. 3.6, 3.7].<sup>12</sup> Huaquechula and Huejotzingo have nearly identical plans and both churches were initiated during Alameda's guardianship and completed within the same ten-year period.<sup>13</sup>

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*Churches of Sixteenth-Century Mexico: Atrios, Posas, Open Chapels, and Other Studies* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), 334-339.

<sup>12</sup> Marcela Salas Cuesta was the first to identify Huejotzingo's second through-wall confessional that is located in the southeastern section church nave on axis with the *Porciúncula*. It does not appear in plans of the Huejotzingo church by MacGregor and Salas Cuesta, Kubler, or Córdova Tello. All three authors reproduced a plan made by the *Bienes Nacionales* at a moment when a Baroque altarpiece blocked the confessional. See Rafael García Granados and Luis MacGregor, *Huejotzingo: La ciudad y el convento franciscano* (Mexico City: Secretaria de Educación Pública, 1934), 244; Kubler, *Mexican Architecture*, 254; Marcela Salas Cuesta, *La iglesia y el convento de Huejotzingo* (Mexico City: Universidad Autónoma de México, 1982), 75. For an archaeological analysis of the construction phases of the Huejotzingo monastery, see Mario Córdova Tello, *El convento de San Miguel de Huejotzingo, Puebla* (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1992), 45-110.

<sup>13</sup> Huaquechula is smaller than Huejotzingo. For comparison of the measurements for these and other churches, see Kubler, *Mexican Architecture*, 274. Huaquechula's church was finished between 1569 and 1575, according to dates inscribed on the west cloister façade and the right finial of the *retablo mayor*. Huejotzingo's church was largely finished by 1571 according to the *Anales Ramírez*: "Tecpatl 1571. Nican yecauh teopantli huexotzinco," quoted in Kubler, 460. However, documents from 1572 and 1574-80 record master masons Alonso Ruiz and Francisco de Becerra at Huejotzingo suggesting construction of the vaults remained. In 1584, the Huejotzingo *cabildo* commissioned Simón Pereyans and Pedro de Requena to produce paintings



Regrettably, an earthquake in September 2017 damaged Huaquechula's church and monastery. The vault of the choir loft collapsed during the tremor, turning the *sotocoro* into a pile of rubble [Fig. 3.8].<sup>14</sup> I base my analysis of the Huaquechula *sotocoro* on my fieldwork at the site before the devastating earthquake.

By happenstance the murals that line Huaquechula's *sotocoro* suffered little damage during the earthquake. A monochrome grotesque frieze runs the length of each wall of the *sotocoro*, and once extended into the church nave [Fig. 3.9]. The frieze measures one meter in height and extends just above shoulder level, framing the portal where the through-wall confessional was once located. Huaquecholteca artists painted twisting tendrils, voluminous blossoms, and otherworldly figures, called *romanos* in sixteenth-century Spanish texts, within the frieze.<sup>15</sup> While the Huaquecholteca artists likely drew on a range of printed sources to devise

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and sculptures for the *retablo mayor*, a project which implies the vaults were complete. Heinrich Berlin, "The High Altar of Huejotzingo," *Americas* 15 (1958): 63-73; Córdova Tello, 106-109; Penny C. Morrill, *The Casa del Deán: New World Imagery in a Sixteenth-Century Mexican Mural Cycle* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014), 88. In general, Nahuas and Spaniards determined church completion differently. In Nahuatl sources, a church is "complete" (*yecauh*) when the walls were up and ceremonies moved in. By contrast, the Franciscan fray Antonio Ciudad de Real (secretary to commissioner general Alonso Ponce during his provincial tour) called a church "*acabado*" only when the stone vaults were in place. At both Huaquechula and Huejotzingo, the through-wall confessional niche may have been in operation before the church vaults were in place.

<sup>14</sup> Located farther away from the earthquake's epicenter, Huejotzingo's church and cloister suffered considerably less damage than Huaquechula and other sites near the Atlixco Valley, such as Tochimilco, Tetela del Volcán, and Hueyapan.

<sup>15</sup> The first attested use of the term *romano* to name this *all'antica* ornamental repertoire in New Spain is the "Ordinance for Painters" issued by Viceroy Luís de Velasco in 1557. See, "Ordenanzas de pintores y doradores de 1557, Colección de Ordenanzas de la Muy Noble, Insigne, Muy Leal Ciudad de México. Tomo I. Hizolo el licenciado don Francisco del Barrio Lorenzot," f. 50v-64r, in Manual Toussaint, *Pintura colonial en México*, ed. Xavier Moysén (Mexico City: UNAM-Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas), 1965, appendix 3, 220-223; Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica*, bk. 4, chap. 13; See also, Elena Estrada de Gerlero, "Apuntes sobre el origen y la fortuna del 'grutesco' en el arte," in *Muros, sargas y papeles: La imagen de lo sagrado y lo profano en el arte novohispano del siglo XVI* (Mexico City: Universidad Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, [2004] 2011), 522. The earliest

the program, they also incorporated local plants that were associated with superior powers of elites and deities.<sup>16</sup> Artists painted the motifs in saturated blacks and soft greys against a burnished, opaque black field. This mode of *grisaille* modeling inverts the optical rules of light and shadow by silhouetting forms in white and pooling grey and black in the center, an effect that contributes a sense of plasticity in the forms and makes them particularly legible in the low and uneven light that characterizes the *sotocoro*. Above the frieze, artists painted polychrome landscape murals, although large sections of the cycle were destroyed when it was overpainted with a later program of figural murals. The *sotocoro* program thus juxtaposes ways of representing nature, one mimetic and the other highly artificial, to create a Christian devotional environment.<sup>17</sup> Fragmentary evidence from Franciscan monastery churches at Huejotzingo, Tecali, and Zempoala indicate the combination of grotesque frieze and pictorial landscape was a

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attested use of *grotesco/grutesco* is in the late seventeenth century. Entries for *romano* and *grutesco* in Sebastián de Covarrubias's 1611 *Tesoro de la Lengua Castellana* indicate that the terms were used interchangeably by the seventeenth century in Spain. Covarrubias, *Tesoro de la Lengua Castellana* (Madrid: Luis Sanchez, 1611), f.14r-f.14v. For clarity, I use the term "grotesque" to refer to any ornamental repertoire variously named *grottesche*, *grotesco/grutesco*, *romano*. I follow Hetty Joyce's definition of the grotesque as, loosely, "any decoration based on vegetal forms and elaborately molded compartments, enriched with *putti*, *pegasoi*, and griffins." Joyce, "Grasping at Shadows: Ancient Paintings in Renaissance and Baroque Rome," *The Art Bulletin* 74, no. 2 (1992): 220; Hellmut Wohl, *The Aesthetics of Italian Renaissance Art: A Reconsideration of Style* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 212.

<sup>16</sup> I have not yet identified a source for the Huaquechula *sotocoro* program. The closest parallel are engravings by Italian Enea Vico (d. 1567), such as the *Three Friezes with Ornamental Foliage* ca. 1541-1543. Indigenous artists at Franciscan monasteries at Cuauhtinchan, Tecamachalco, and Zempoala quoted Vico's engravings of cascading trophies which attests to the engraver's popularity in Franciscan milieus and the circulation of pattern books. For the use of pattern books in New Spain, see Aaron Hyman, "Patterns of Colonial Transfer: An Album of Prints in Mexico City," *Print Quarterly* 34, no. 4 (2017): 393–99.

<sup>17</sup> Claire Farago has observed that non-narrative art, especially ornament, raises the fundamental question of the utility of visible artifice in sacred art, making ornament an important site around which Tridentine image theory developed. Farago, "Gabriele Paleotti on the Grotesque in Painting: Stretching Old Cultural Horizons to Fit a Brave New World," *Medieval Feminist Forum* 16, no. 1 (1993): 21.

standard decorative practice in church interiors where confessionals were located.

The epistemological and devotional value of murals in the context of the practice of confession in New Spain has not been previously addressed. This is striking because the visual component of confession has been a consistent topic of discussion in studies of the mendicant monasteries. Contemporary scholars characterize confession in sixteenth century New Spain as a sacrament of pictures and gestures, associating it with the use of aids to bridge the linguistic and cultural barriers between Spanish confessors and Indigenous penitents.<sup>18</sup> By and large, these conclusions have been drawn from the words of the mendicants themselves with little attention to the changing material conditions of the mission during the sixteenth century.<sup>19</sup> There were undoubtedly moments and places where aids were crucial for the practice of confession, such as

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<sup>18</sup> Fray Alonso Molina explains in the “Prologue” that language barriers between confessors and Nahua penitents motivated his writing of a bilingual confessional manual. Molina, *Confessionario Mayor* (Mexico City: Antonio de Espinosa, 1565), f. 12-13; Osvaldo F. Pardo, *The Origins of Mexican Catholicism: Nahua Rituals and Christian Sacraments in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 116; The Order had gone to great lengths to elevate the importance of penitence among the laity through preaching and composing confessional manuals. For Spain, see Patrick J. O’Banion, “‘A Priest Who Appears Good:’ Manuals of Confession and the Construction of Clerical Identity in Early Modern Spain,” *Dutch Review of Church History* 85 (2005): 333-348.

<sup>19</sup> Robert Ricard, *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico: An Essay on the Apostolate and the Evangelizing Methods of the Mendicant Orders in New Spain, 1523-1572* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 116; John Leddy Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans in the New World: A Study of the Writings of Gerónimo de Mendieta (1525-1604)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1956), 94; Samuel Y. Edgerton, *Theaters of Conversion: Religious Architecture and Indian Artisans in Colonial Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002), 118; Pardo, *Origins of Mexican Catholicism*, 79-130; Gretchen Starr-LeBeau, “Lay Piety and Community Identity in the Early Modern World,” in *A New History of Penance*, ed. Abigail Firey (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 404-408; Eleanor Wake, *Framing the Sacred: The Indian Churches of Early Colonial Mexico* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010), 78. For Nahua conceptions of penance and sin, see Louise M. Burkhart, *The Slippery Earth: Nahua-Christian Moral Dialogue in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1989), 141-149.

in the early days of the mission or on the frontier.<sup>20</sup>

Drawing on Valadés' engraving, scholars have contended that confession consistently took place outdoors in the church patio or under the monastery's portico (*portería* or *sala de peregrinos*) [Fig. 3.10].<sup>21</sup> This conclusion contradicts the information in the contemporary Constitutions of the Franciscan Santo Evangelio province. These Constitutions stipulate that friars hear confessions of sick people and of healthy people in separate places: healthy people in a confessional (*confesionario*) and unhealthy people in the *portería* or an "other public place."<sup>22</sup> The image of confession in colonial Mexican prints and paintings, moreover, does not align with the architectural evidence at Huaquechula and other sites. While the representation of confession is in keeping with sweeping Tridentine reforms to the sacrament of penance, the public nature of the rite and the depiction of the interaction between the friar and the penitent is not consistent with Franciscan practices. I examine this question in terms of the architectural representation of spaces for confession in pictorial sources, as well as the built environment that supports the practice of confession at Franciscan monasteries in New Spain.

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<sup>20</sup> Writing in 1537, Motolinia described hearing confessions at Cholula: "I told them that I could hear the confession of only those who would bring their sins written down in figures, because writing in figures is a thing they know and understand, and this being their way of writing." Motolinia, *History*, 198.

<sup>21</sup> According to Mendieta, the door to the *portería* remained locked throughout the day. The only reference to the *portería* in relation to confession is a description of the space being used for bloodletting after penitents had made confession during the plague. Phlebotomy was a standard European medicinal treatment to plague, although a rather odd response to the hemorrhagic fever that characterized the *hueyi cocoliztli*. Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica*, bk. 3, chap. 36. The practices of the other mendicant orders differed from the Franciscans. For a review of discussions of confession in sixteenth century mendicant chronicles from New Spain, see Luis Martínez Ferrer, "Las ordines mendicantes y el sacramento de la confesión en Nueva España, siglo XVI," *Revista Complutense de Historia de América* 24 (1998): 47-68.

<sup>22</sup> "Item ordenamos que á los indios sanos confiesen por confesionario, y á los enfermos puédenlos confesar en la portería o otro lugar público..." García Icazbalceta, *Códice franciscano*, 154; Mendieta mentions in passing that penitents made confession in the church 'coro' that is, the *sotocoro*. Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica*, bk. 4 chap. 28.

## Picturing Truth Production

The textbook image of the practice of confession appears in Part Four of Franciscan Diego Valadés' *Rhetorica christiana* (1579) [Fig. 3.10].<sup>23</sup> The Latin text is a discourse on the arts of memory and rhetoric in the service of Christian ministry crafted by Valadés to silence the many critics of the Franciscan mission in New Spain. Valadés amply illustrated the text with engravings he designed, most of which are an innovative synthesis of Biblical scenes and highly-exoticized Americana derived from woodcuts. The illustration that received the most attention, however, is Valadés' depiction of an idealized atrium of a Franciscan monastery. The image weaves Valadés' own recollection of the sprawling patios of the friaries where he trained and preached together with well-known architectural models to create an allegorical portrayal of the Franciscan mission. Because the engraving visualizes Franciscan strategies for teaching church doctrine, notably the use of painted *lienzos* and rebus systems, the image has taken on a quasi-documentary status in scholarship.<sup>24</sup> Yet, while Valadés' engraving may aid our understanding of Franciscan didactic strategies, it also complicates the picture of how those events occurred in the actual monastic environment. Indigenous peoples were not passive recipients of Christian doctrine, and Christian conversion produced new social arrangements that contributed

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<sup>23</sup> Diego Valadés, *Rhetorica christiana* (Perugia: Petrus Jacobus Petrutius, 1579), f. 108.

<sup>24</sup> For instance, Tom Cummins and Joanne Rappaport describe the engraving as: "... not an allegorical scene but a descriptive one, because it depicts the actual practice of instruction with different types of images." *Beyond the Lettered City: Indigenous Literacies in the Andes* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 91; Elizabeth Hill Boone, Louise Burkhart, and David Tavárez's recent study of Nahua pictorial catechisms is an instructive introduction to the use of image systems in Franciscan ministry, see "The Atzaqualco Catechism and Colonial Mexican Catechismal Pictography," in *Painted Words: Nahua Catholicism, Politics, and Memory in the Atzaqualco Pictorial Catechism*, ed. Elizabeth Hill Boone, Louise M. Burkhart, David Tavárez (Washington D. C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2017), 1-34.

powerfully to their meanings.<sup>25</sup> In this regard, the vignette of confession in Valadés' engraving is particularly illustrative.

In the engraving, Valadés depicts confession occurring within a portico in the lower left corner of the page labeled "G." The friar sits in the confessor's chair and a Nahua penitent kneels in front of him. The friar raises his hand in a gesture of absolution while the penitent speaks, sometimes even making eye contact. The gestures of both the priest and penitent are clearly exposed to Nahua onlookers (F) who are standing in the immediate vicinity of the portico awaiting their turn. Directly above, a priest presides over a group of Nahua reciting doctrine in advance of making confession (E). The text corresponding with these vignettes stresses the attentiveness of the Nahuas during doctrinal instruction, and notes that penitents used pictures and stones to portray their sins.<sup>26</sup> Valadés also indicates that friars administered all the sacraments publicly and heard confessions within the large porticos attached to the monastery's entrance. Yet, Valadés' illustration and corresponding description provides a misleading picture of confession.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> For a detailed discussion of the cultural, material, and sociopolitical implications of conversion in the Kingdom of Kongo, see Cécile Fromont, *The Art of Conversion: Christian Visual Culture in the Kingdom of Kongo* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

<sup>26</sup> Diego Valadés, *Retórica cristiana*, trans. Tarsicio Herrera Zapién (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1989), 212-214.

<sup>27</sup> Valadés looked to Old World architectural models when devising his image of the 'ideal' church patio. For instance, the church carried on a litter in the center of the image recalls an early iteration of Saint Peter's basilica in Rome, as many scholars have noted, but other elements, such as the portico at the bottom of the page, allude to foundational Franciscan spaces and images, which Valadés may have encountered after his recent arrival in Italy. Valadés' post in Perugia placed him fewer than thirty kilometers away from Saint Francis's birthplace in Assisi where he could have immersed himself in the frescoes, chapels, and hermitages associated with the Order's founder. For instance, the earliest image of Saint Francis hoisting a structure on one shoulder appears in the fresco of the "Dream of Innocent III" from the *Legend of Saint Francis* cycle in Upper Church of San Francesco d'Assisi painted by Giotto in 1299. Notwithstanding the longer, pre-Franciscan history of this iconography, Valadés' European Franciscan audience

Valadés' well-known engraving of the practice of confession in the *Rhetorica christiana* is markedly different from the architectural context in which he served. Valadés was father guardian of the Huejotzingo monastery in the mid-1560s supervising the construction of the church and, along with it, the pair of through-wall confessionals cut into the church's south (Epistle) wall. He also was familiar with the church then under construction at Huaquechula. Valadés was a native to the Tlaxcala-Puebla Valley and his predecessor at Huejotzingo, Juan de Alameda, transferred to Huaquechula upon Valadés' arrival.<sup>28</sup> Valadés left for Perugia, Italy before the project in Huejotzingo was finished. Soon after he arrived in Italy a papal decree in 1575 mandated that all establishments serving the laity adopt the confessional box, and that it should replace the through-wall confessionals typical of friaries, such as the Huejotzingo church.<sup>29</sup> The decree followed on the heels of a handful of Tridentine directives issued in the 1560s that prohibited confessional cells and *confessionarios* during precisely the same period in which the Huaquecholteca built through-wall confessionals in their church.<sup>30</sup> Because Huejotzingo and Huaquechula had recently implemented a now prohibited mode of confessional, Valadés had good reason to depict a more antiquated but open confessional arrangement in his book. Reading the illustration alongside ecclesiastical decrees thus accounts for some of the otherwise baffling elements of Valadés' representation of confession.

Documents from the late sixteenth century indicate that episcopal authorities in Spain met

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would have immediately recognized the allusion to what became a standard depiction of the foundation of the Order.

<sup>28</sup> Alameda is documented at Huejotzingo in 1560, Valadés arrived at Huejotzingo in 1564. It is also possible that the younger Valadés' time at Huejotzingo overlapped with Alameda's guardianship. Hanns J. Prem, ed., *Matrícula de Huejotzingo* (Graz: Akademische Druck und Verlagsanstalt, 1974). Salas Cuesta, *Huejotzingo*, 64-65; Córdova Tello, *Huejotzingo*, 106; Morrill, *Casa del Deán*, 89.

<sup>29</sup> De Boer, *Conquest of the Soul*, 96.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

considerable resistance from the Franciscans and Jesuits when it came to implementing the modern confessional box.<sup>31</sup> This textual information also suggests that the Franciscans in New Spain were not in compliance with papal orders when they adopted the through-wall confessional type for the churches. Published just four years after Gregory XIII's 1575 decree, the *Rhetorica christiana* instead depicts the confessional chair arrangement which highlights the publicly visible nature of the sacrament. By depicting a fictive setting that conforms with papal recommendations Valadés implied that confessional practices of Franciscan missionaries in New Spain were in keeping with the new emphasis on the openness of the sacrament, even if outdated.<sup>32</sup> The representation of the practice of confession in Valadés' engraving is thus a reflection of trans-Atlantic polemics about confessional practices in which this image was also active participant.<sup>33</sup> The representation of Indigenous confessions in the print thus sheds light on the role of art early-modern Tridentine debates, further underscoring the engraving's status as an allegory. Yet because Valadés' engraving does not provide an accurate view of practices of religious confession, it has contributed to a distorted view of the inter-Indigenous relations engendered by the practice of confession at Franciscan monasteries. Other Indigenous laypeople,

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<sup>31</sup> Wietse De Boer observes that Franciscans and Jesuits in Spain were slow to implement to the confessional box, maintaining the through-wall confessional arrangement in their churches into the seventeenth century even though it conflicted with ecclesiastical mandates. De Boer, *Conquest of the Soul*, 96.

<sup>32</sup> The depiction in the *Rhetorica christiana* of friars in confessional chairs (then outmoded) beneath a portico intensifies the sense of antiquity in the scene, while alluding to rich symbolism of porticos in the Franciscan tradition, such as that of the upper church of San Francesco, Assisi. The much earlier Santa Maria degli Angeli had porticos before its renovation in the Neo-Classical style. The original foundation was repaired by Saint Francis and where he established his first hermitage, which consisted of a series of cells. The so-called Portiúncula chapel on the grounds was built over Francis's cell and its name derives from the provisional portico structure of the first establishment. See Bruzelius, *Preaching*, 25-30.

<sup>33</sup> The through-wall confessional arrangement seems to have persisted into the later sixteenth century at churches such as Cuauhtinchan and Zacatlan, which each have a through-wall confessional in the nave.



not the confessor, monitored the gestures of the penitent in the confessional whose actions were open to public scrutiny. At the same time, neither the confessant nor other laypeople could observe the priest and this denied them a means of checking clerical misconduct in the monastery.

Valadés' well-known engraving of the practice of confession in the *Rhetorica christiana* is not the only visual source that offers a misleading picture of the Indigenous politics of the confession. In Franciscan Alonso de Molina's 1565 bilingual *Confessionario Mayor*, confession is set in an open space where the confessor sits in a chair and the penitent kneels before him [Fig. 3.11].<sup>34</sup> This iconography was familiar to friars and Indigenous penitents. As Elena Estrada de Gerlero has shown, the woodcuts and engravings in confessional manuals drew on the imagery found in loose-leaf prints (*ejemplos*) the friars distributed to Amerindians to help them prepare for confession.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, Molina's Nahuatl-language confessional manuals were intended for use by friars as well as Indigenous *fiscales*, who were responsible for preparing parishioners to make their confession and, in extraordinary instances, administering extreme unction.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Alonso de Molina, *Confessionario Mayor* (Mexico City: Antonio de Espinosa, 1565), f. 117r.

<sup>35</sup> Juan Baptista's *Confessionario* 1599 describes loose-leaf *ejemplo* prints that were distributed by friars to Amerindians during Easter which they displayed in their homes. See, Estrada de Gerlero, *Muros, sargas y papeles*, 222-223.

<sup>36</sup> Alonso de Molina, *Confessionario Mayor* (Mexico City: Antonio de Espinosa, 1565), f. 12-13; Jonathan Truitt, "Nahuas and Catholicism in Mexico Tenochtitlan: Religious Faith and Practice in la Capilla de San Josef de los Naturales, 1523-1700 (Ph.D. diss., Tulane University, 2009), 49. See García Icazbalceta, *Códice franciscano*, 80-84; In Spain, vernacular confessional manuals were widely owned by an increasingly literate lay population. Many manuals, including those by Azpilcueta (Doctor Navarro), a copy of which was in Huaquechula's conventual library, indicate in their prefaces that laypersons were one of the intended audiences. Molina was thus keeping with a tradition by signaling out Indigenous church officials as one of the intended audiences for his confessional manuals. O'Banion, "A Priest Who Appears Good," 338-339. For the use of confessional manuals in Franciscan missions, see Mark Z. Christensen, *Nahua and Maya Catholicisms: Texts and Religion in Colonial Central Mexico and Yucatan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press; Berkeley: Academy of American Franciscan History, 2013), 161-165.

The engraving from Molina's manual inspired a pair of murals painted by a Nahua artist over the entrance to the through-walls confessionals in the former Franciscan monastery of San Diego de Guzmán, Tlaquiltenango (modern Morelos) [Fig. 3.12].<sup>37</sup> Tlaquiltenango's cloister predates the one at Huaquechula and this early founding may have served as an important reference point.<sup>38</sup> At Tlaquiltenango, a well-preserved mural in the monastery's *portería* depicts the scene of confession and the more damaged mural in the *locutorio* represents absolution.<sup>39</sup> In the *portería* mural, the Indigenous penitent wears the splendid cloak of a noble and his mouth spews black creatures as sins that scatter to the ground while the priest raises his hand in absolution [Fig. 3.13]. The *portería*'s benches wrap around the perimeter of the room to provide the Indigenous penitents a place to sit and, perhaps, contemplate the painting as they awaited their turn in the confessional. But while the painting conveys a great deal about the expiatory function of confession, it does not accurately describe the arrangement of the space on the opposite side of the confessional door. Rather than an open room with a seated friar in waiting, as in the mural, the penitent entered through a narrow door to face a small opening covered with

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<sup>37</sup> Tlaquiltenango's church and monastery predate Huaquechula and Huejotzingo. The monastery passed back and forth between the Franciscans and Dominicans during the second half of the century, which is probably why the program is so accretive. Laura Hinojosa notes that the murals were formerly attributed to the Dominicans until the paintings were restored and the original tempera murals were revealed. The Franciscans left Tlaquiltenango in 1572, returned in 1586, and left for the last time in 1592. Laura E. Hinojosa, "La relación de la pintura mural con el acontecer histórico y su importancia como fuente primaria para la investigación," in *Defensa y conservación de la pintura mural*, ed. Carlos Flores Marini (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, 2010), 121-137.

<sup>38</sup> Like Huaquechula, Tlaquiltenango's cloister belongs to an early group of structures that had buttressed walls and parapet windows. Kubler, *Mexican Architecture*, 348, 481.

<sup>39</sup> Tlaquiltenango's layout flips the standard organization of Franciscan monasteries and churches by locating the cloister on the north side of the church. Here, the confessor enters the confessional niche on the church side and penitents congregate in the monastery. The through-wall confessionals are still used today, although now both priest and penitent enter the space from the church.

a perforated plate behind which was the friar. Hence, the Tlaquiltenango mural depicts an idealized arrangement where the penitent faces the confessor, and not the actual architectural space or social setting for confession found in this monastery and others such as Huaquechula.<sup>40</sup> While it is possible to account for the disjunction between the mural and the architectural context by pointing to an illustration from a confessional manual as the source of the mural, the example of Tlaquiltenango nevertheless highlights the significant gap between local circumstances and the image of confession that pervades the literature then and now.

A final example from a Franciscan chronicle further complicates the picture of confession as an open interaction between priest and Indigenous penitent. Anecdotal evidence from fray Juan de Torquemada's spiritual biography of Juan de Alameda, the friar who implemented Huaquechula's confessional arrangement, underscores the importance of separation in Franciscan architectural design. The through-wall confessional was a salient feature of Franciscan friaries in Spain, and would have been familiar to friars like Alameda who had taken his vows in Spain.<sup>41</sup> Alameda died at Huaquechula in 1570 while the church vaults were still unfinished. Although he did not live long enough to see the completed church, he was guardian when the walls of the nave were constructed and thus on site for the addition of the church's two through-wall confessionals. Although often associated with more monumental architectural features, the humble through-wall confessional may best represent Alameda's position on the

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<sup>40</sup> Lu Ann Homza and Patrick O'Banion show that, in the case of Spain, lay people used confessional manuals to check clerical behavior by comparing the confessor to the models described in the texts. Homza, *Religious Authority in the Spanish Renaissance* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 150-175; O'Banion, "A Priest Who Appears Good," 338. Mark Z. Christensen's thorough treatment of the use of confessional manuals by mendicants working among the Nahuas and Mayas does not address how Indigenous penitents may have used confessional manuals. Christensen, *Nahua and Maya Catholicisms*, 159-192.

<sup>41</sup> Patrick J. O'Banion, personal communication, October 1, 2018. My thanks to Patrick J. O'Banion and Jodi Bilinkoff for stimulating discussions about Spanish confessional practices.

intertwined roles of the built environment and public ministry. According to Torquemada, Alameda loathed hearing confession and avoided the duty at all costs. Rather than a mark of disobedience, however, Torquemada considered Alameda's position on confession exemplary.

He was very pure and chaste and much loved this virtue...thus he fled as much as he could from the women's conversation; because as Saint Augustine says, the most effective paste to fish souls is the woman, and among all the vices the one that most spoils the soul is the sensuality and delight of the flesh, which puts weariness in the word of God. Because of this, and because it is an offense against God, this servant of God hated this vice; and so much it came to offend him, only to hear it, that being very old, he gave up all confessions (so it was understood) for being so jealous and a friend of this chastity and cleanliness, that even in confession he was hateful and hateful to hear the vice contrary to it.<sup>42</sup>

The intertwined issues of perception, sensuality, and sexuality are reasonably resolved by the through-wall confessional. The partition that separates the confessor from the penitent is a permanent architectural feature that divides the public space of the church from the more private space of the monastery. In this way, the wall between the penitent and the friar physically instantiates the friar's pursuit of *clausura* or apartness from the world. Reading Torquemada's anecdote through the lens of architectural evidence thus suggests that the desire for isolation and

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<sup>42</sup>“...fue muy puro y casto y amó mucho esta virtud, porque sabía cuánto la ama Dios y la alabanza que tienen los limpios y castos, y así huía todo lo que podía de la conversación de la mujeres; porque como dice San Agustín, el más eficaz engrudo para pescar almas, es la mujer, y entre todos los vicios el que más estraga el alma es la sensualidad y delitación de la carne, la cual pone hastío en la palabra de Dio. Por esto, y por ser ofensa de Dios, aborrecía este vicio este siervo de Dios; y tanto llegó a ofenderle, sólo oírlo, que siendo ya muy viejo, renunció de todo punto las confesiones (según se entendió) por ser tan celoso y amigo de esta castidad y limpieza, que aun en confesión le era odioso y aborrecible oír el vicio contrario a ella.” Torquemada, *Monarquía indiana*, vol. 6, bk. 20, chap. 41. Translation my own. Torquemada's remark about women as “effective paste to souls” alludes to Augustine's comments on the “lust of the eyes” in the *Confessions*: “But I out not allow my mind to be paralyzed by gratification of senses, which often leads it astray. For the senses are not content to take second place. Simply because I allow them their due, as adjuncts to reason, they attempt to take precedence and forge ahead of it. Augustine, *Confessions*, 10. 33, 238. Torquemada's anecdote rehearses early-modern discourses about the supposedly inherent immorality of women, and it also evinces a conception of sin heavily rooted in sensuality and the overarching suspicion of the faculties of empirical perception, especially sight. See also, De Boer, *Conquest of the Soul*, 111-115.

enclosure motivated the adoption of the through-wall confessional at Huaquechula and other sites.<sup>43</sup>

This discrepancy between the common picture of confession in sixteenth-century images, on the one hand, and Franciscan policies, on the other hand, invites a closer look at the spatial and social environment of this sacrament. Images including those produced in Franciscan contexts, recycle conventional iconography to support two standard views: first, confession was a public and outdoor ritual; second, it involved a face-to-face interaction between the confessor and the penitent. Descriptions of confessions in chronicles, likewise, emphasize a unidirectional imposition of clerical dominance over the penitent.<sup>44</sup> These views, however, do not fit the architectural evidence for confession at Franciscan monasteries in New Spain. Franciscan Constitutions also complicate the picture by drawing attention to the expansive role of Indigenous church officials in administering the sacrament of penance. These figures are absent from visual sources yet, in many respects, they also held the power of the keys.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> With regard to solicitation in the confessional, the through-wall confessional was hardly a solid solution. In 1576 Tepeaca, a Franciscan friar was charged by the Inquisition with solicitation in the confessional and sexual relations in the church with an Indigenous woman, “tuvo acceso carnal con ella en un rincón de la iglesia de Tepeaca.” Significantly, Tepeaca’s church has a through-wall confessional, underscoring the limits of the through-wall confessional in protecting penitents and discouraging lewd behaviors among the friars. In 1579, the friar was reinstated because there were too few friars to staff the monasteries. 1576 AGN Inq. exp 5, fols. 300-322. Noemí Quezada, “Sexualidad y magia en la mujer novohispana: Siglo xvi,” *Anales de Antropología* 27 (1987): 270; Turley, *Franciscan Spirituality*, 143-44; On the problem of solicitation in the confessional in Europe, see Stephen Haliczer, *Sexuality in the Confessional: A Sacrament Profaned* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 86-105; O’Banion, *Penance and Religious Life*, 51-53.

<sup>44</sup> Homza, *Religious Authority*, 143.

<sup>45</sup> The power of the keys is the power of a priest to bind and loose sins. Christ conferred this responsibility on Peter and the disciples at the Pentecost (Matthew 16:19; 18:18-20).

## The Acoustic Dimensions of Confession

Franciscan sources often lack instructions or descriptions of the furnishing of church interiors; therefore, the main source for understanding the design and arrangement of Franciscan confessionals is the architectural space itself.<sup>46</sup> At Huaquechula and Huejotzingo, the confession proper took place in a cramped and dark space with poor acoustics. Carved into the thickness of the wall, the opening of the through-wall confessional is about two meters tall (1.8 m.) and one meter wide (.7 m.), its interior space is hardly deep enough to fully contain the body of a single occupant. In the niche during confession the penitent was visible to Huaquecholteca church officials and other penitents since the confessional did not have a door. By contrast, the confessional used by the friars on the opposite side of the wall was much deeper and had a door. Once inside the confessional, the Huaquecholteca penitent knelt in the direction of the church's main altar and faced a wooden frame with a small metal plate in the center. Set at mouth level, the metal plate is punctured with small holes that muffles sound as it passes through it. The rite began when the penitent heard the disembodied voice of the friar who was positioned on the other side of church wall and out of view.<sup>47</sup> According to Michel de Foucault, the hiddenness, rather than the presence, of the priest during the confessional transaction animated the production of power. The confessor's physical absence from the space shared by the penitent made it appear that the penitent's confession was made freely and on their own accord, and this illusion of

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<sup>46</sup> For instance, Molina's *Confessionario Mayor* (1564) and *Confessionario Breve* (1565) do not stipulate the physical settings for confession.

<sup>47</sup> Huaquechula's three friars were trained in Nahuatl. Only the friars who been trained and examined in the Indigenous languages spoken by their parishioners were permitted to serve as confessors. García Icazbalceta, *Códice franciscano*, 26-27.

choice naturalized the one-way imposition of the confessor's power.<sup>48</sup> Yet that narrow focus on what transpired within that narrow space, shifts attention away from the figures looming on the periphery who enforced the norms surrounding the Easter duty, sometimes with a lash in hand. Rather than concentrating power in the Franciscan friar to produce Christian colonial subjects, the through-wall confessional diffused it.

The *fiscal* was the gatekeeper to confession at Franciscan monasteries in New Spain. Sealed in the confessional, friars were unavailable to examine individual penitents about their doctrinal knowledge and prayers.<sup>49</sup> As a result, the Franciscan Constitutions delegate these roles to the monastery's *fiscales* and *tequitlatos*, positions occupied by high-ranking members of the Nahuatl municipal council (*cabildo*).<sup>50</sup> As members of the Indigenous aristocracy, *fiscales* had learned to read and write in Franciscan *colegios*, and were elected to the office by a joint vote of the friars and the *cabildo*, a process which underscores their role as mediators between the *altepetl*'s secular and spiritual governance.<sup>51</sup> The *fiscal* supervised doctrinal instruction and had the authority to mete out physical punishments on those who failed to make the annual obligation. With so few friars at the monastery, it was the *fiscal* who organized the activities in the church yard that prepared people to make confession.<sup>52</sup> Consider, for instance, Valadés'

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<sup>48</sup> As Michel Foucault would later observe in his study of confession, it is this appearance of freedom generated by inciting the penitent to speak and keep speaking that actualized the confessor's authority within and beyond the confessional. Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 3-35.

<sup>49</sup> The 1566 synod in Toledo, for example, mandated that penitents recite the Pater Noster, Ave Maria, Apostles's Creed, and the Salve Regina. O'Banion, *Penance*, 56.

<sup>50</sup> Appendix 2.

<sup>51</sup> Near Huaquechula, there were Franciscan *colegios* at Cholula, Huejotzingo, Tepeaca, and Tlaxcala. The grammar school at San Gabriel, Cholula was especially distinguished. AGI, Seville, Justicia 1006.

<sup>52</sup> Louise M. Burkhart, "Christian Doctrine: Nahuas Encounter the Catechism," in *Painted Words: Nahuatl Catholicism, Politics, and Memory in the Atzacualco Pictorial Catechism*, ed. Elizabeth Hill Boone, Louise M. Burkhart, David Tavárez (Washington D. C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2017), 79-84.

description of how Nahuas memorized prayers and counted their sins.

They demonstrate their ingenuity even more when they are going to confess, by using a painting in which they indicate the ways they have offended; and, in order to show the times they have repeated the sin, they place pebbles onto the drawing that represents the corresponding vices and virtues.<sup>53</sup>

Valadés does not specify to whom the penitents showed their paintings covered with pebbles.

However, it would have been impractical to bring paintings and pebbles into the church, and such aids would have been of little use to a penitent who made their confession in the narrow and dark confines of the through-wall confessional; this was likely an activity staged in the church yard supervised by the *fiscal*.<sup>54</sup>

The *fiscal* was aided in the church yard by the *tequitlatos* (alt. *mandones*) who doubled as the *altepetl*'s tribute bosses. *Tequitlatos* also carried out the public floggings ordered by the *fiscales* and friars. The *tequitlatos*' role as tax collectors provided them important insight into the whereabouts of everyone in the community which made them indispensable in tracking down parishioners who failed to turn up at Mass or make confession.<sup>55</sup> They also served as the monastery's bookkeepers, managing accounts of expenditures and recording the names of Indigenous men and women who fulfilled annual obligations. The overlapping role of the *tequitlato* as the mission's accountant and law enforcer on one hand, and the local tax collector

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<sup>53</sup> Diego Valadés quoted and translated in Wake, *Framing the Sacred*, 78.

<sup>54</sup> Mendieta describes Nahuas learning prayers in the church yard through a phonetic rebus-system involving glyphs painted with cochineal pigments. He also describes the making of other memory aids in preparation for confession. *Historia eclesiástica*, bk. 3, chap. 28.

<sup>55</sup>“In some parts, the Indians are so lazy in coming to confession [during] Lent that unless you take great care in warning them since the Sunday before the week that they come from their neighborhoods to confess, they don't come. And if ministers press the *mandones* [*tequitlatos*] to bring them ... and if they tell them to wait and think about their sins[,] ... it happens that when the confessor agrees [to begin], they have already gone and never return again.” Juan Bautista, *Advertencias*, vol. 1, ff. 9r–9v., quoted and translated in Christensen, *Nahua and Maya Catholicisms*, 159.



on the other, consolidated in one role the financial fate of the Indigenous *cabildo* and monastery, and gave the *tequitlato* considerable influence over the economic future of the community.<sup>56</sup>

Once inside the church, the *fiscal* saw to it that individuals atoned for their sins. The possibility for public scrutiny engaged onlookers in the wider spectacle of social discipline.<sup>57</sup> During the procedure, the penitent had to demonstrate to the church public that they merited absolution through comportment and gestures that signaled their humility. This external sign confirmed that the vocal confession was genuine because, presumably, the penitent's demeanor would reveal coercion or scandal. The through-wall confessional contrives a sense of privacy between confessor and penitent within the openness of the public space of the church. With the friar absent from the church, rather than merely concealed in the confessional box, someone else needed to monitor the penitent as they made ritual actions for the remission of their sins. At Huaquechula and elsewhere, this task belonged to the *fiscal* who waited in the wings with his logbook, recording the names of the men and women who had been reconciled.<sup>58</sup>

The through-wall confessional arrangement also placed a greater burden on the penitent to recall prayers and sins without the assistance of written or pictorial aids in the niche; the Nahua penitents relied upon their memory to make confession.<sup>59</sup> When a Huaquecholteca

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<sup>56</sup> Lent overlapped with the planting season in Central Mexico and so the mandate to make annual confession, which necessitated some communities travel considerable distances to the nearest *doctrina* monastery, was a considerable burden during a busy time of year.

<sup>57</sup> De Boer, *Conquest of the Soul*, 93-96.

<sup>58</sup> One of the duties of the *fiscal* was to maintain records, organized by *barrio*, of the names of the individuals who had been baptized, married, absolved, or died in a given year. See Appendix 2 and García Icazbalceta, *Códice franciscano*, 80-81.

<sup>59</sup> The resulting emphasis on vocal confession is remarkable considering the Franciscans endorsed the legitimacy of written confession. Huaquechula's conventual library contained a copy of Azpilcueta's influential confessional manual, notable in this regard for its controversial view that written confessions were valid. A marginal annotation in the text written in a sixteenth-century script about the baptism of "chichimecas" (barbarians) implies the text was consulted by friars about sacramental matters at the monastery. Martín Azpilcueta (Doctor Navarro),

penitent confessed as they had rehearsed with the *fiscal* earlier that day their words were accompanied by weeping. Upon exiting the confessional, the teary-eyed penitent stayed in the church to say penances, kneeling to recite the Lord's Prayer and the Hail Mary multiple times.<sup>60</sup> According to confessional manuals, the entire exchange was done in secret and the penitent was required to weep during the rite to demonstrate remorse while viewed by others.<sup>61</sup> Although the friar was invested with the power of 'binding and loosening,' it was thus up to the *fiscal* to confirm that reconciliation had happened.

Interestingly, when read alongside architectural evidence, a later section in Valadés' *Rhetorica christiana* illuminates key questions about the function of the through-wall confessional. Considered through Nahuatl sources this also offers insight into inter-Indigenous political relations during the sacrament. At the end of the treatise, Valadés included an appendix with his commentary on Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, a medieval textbook that contained the prevailing view on confession up until the Council of Trent.<sup>62</sup> Valadés' commentary sheds light

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*Enchiridion sive manuale confessoriorum*... (Antwerp: Plantin, 1575). My thanks to Aaron Schapiro for his assistance with translating the marginal inscription. On Azpilcueta's confessional manual see, Pardo, *Origins*, 107; O'Banion, "A Priest Who Appears Good," 336-338. Franciscan missionaries have long been recognized for devising novel pictorial and rebus systems for Christian proselytization. Yet, such systems may have also benefitted Nahuas who, unlike the priest, could not rely on a manual to aid them during the act of confession. If this is the case, it partly accounts for Valadés' inclusion of a commentary on Lombard's *Sentences* in a book otherwise devoted to rhetoric and the memory arts. Memory systems were indispensable to the practice of confession for Nahuas and priests alike. On rhetoric in New Spain, see Don Paul Abbott, *Rhetoric in the New World: Rhetorical Theory and Practice in Colonial Spanish America* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996), 55-58.

<sup>60</sup> Christensen, *Nahuatl and Maya Catholicisms*, 118.

<sup>61</sup> Pedro de Gante, *Doctrina Cristiana* (Mexico City: Juan Pablos, 1553), f. 15r.

<sup>62</sup> The *Sentences* was an important theology textbook up until the Council of Trent when its popularity among Catholic and Protestant reformers landed it on the *Index of Forbidden Books*. Lombard espoused the "doctrine of the keys" (Matthew 16:19) which maintains that a priest is not essential for absolution. This view was repudiated by the Council of Trent in 1563. The Mexican Inquisition banned Lombard's *Sentences* in 1573. For Lombard's influence of Franciscan missionaries, see Pardo, *The Origins of Mexican Catholicism*, 94.

on the theological framework for the through-wall confessional by stressing the limited role of the priest in process of absolution.<sup>63</sup> Valadés explained that confessants needed to be extremely contrite (“*contritio máxima*”) that is, having a deep feeling of internal remorse shown outwardly through weeping. In this formulation, the penitent’s contrite state unlocked God’s grace thereby absolving the penitent of their sins without the intervention of the priest. Thus, the crucial component of the sacrament of penance happened before the penitent even entered the confessional. Because the penitent had already achieved absolution from God, the act of absolution granted in the confessional was merely a procedural, verifiable, and external sign made by the confessor that confirmed Grace had been given by God. Moreover, because absolution occurred *before* the friar encountered the penitent in the confessional, greater emphasis needed to be placed on cultivating a sense of tearful contrition in the penitent during the morning’s sermon and recitation of doctrine, events which occurred under the supervision of the *fiscal* and *tequitlatlo*.

Valadés’s prescription for weeping mapped onto preexisting Nahua cultural practices associated with deference and supplication, as well as sadness. As Heather Allen has demonstrated, weeping was understood in the Nahua political discourses as an expression of respect, superiority and especially, a means of forging stronger bonds among humans, as well as

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<sup>63</sup> According to Lombard, mortal sins were those committed with full knowledge of the sinfulness of the act and thereby resulted in certain damnation of even the baptized sinner. However, a demonstration of deep, sincere sorrow for the sin (contrition) could redeem the sinner and return them to a state of Grace if accompanied by confession and penance (satisfaction) that is, *Compunctio cordis, confession oris, satisfactio operis*. The tripartite formula laid out in Book 4 of the *Sentences* provided the dominant definition of penance into the sixteenth century.

<sup>63</sup> Philipp W. Roseman, *Peter Lombard* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 165-168; Andrew Reeves, “Teaching Confession in Thirteenth-Century England: Priests and Laity,” in *A Companion to the Priesthood and Holy Orders in the Middle Ages*, ed. Greg Peters and C. Colt Anderson (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 253; Pardo, *Origins*, 84-85, 101.

between humans and the gods.<sup>64</sup> During the Spanish invasion of Tenochtitlan, the *hueyi tlahtoani* Moteuczoma II wept before Cortés, a gesture which Europeans described as cowardliness. In a Nahua worldview, however, Moteuczoma's tears were part of the ritual of good governance and means of stabilizing an uncertain situation. This discourse extended into Nahua Christian liturgical music. In the Nahuatl-language canticles of the *Psalmodia Christiana* (1583), Christ's Crucifixion is described as the moment when "weeping ceased," the inverse of the European Christian image of that moment.<sup>65</sup> Silence, rather than raucous grief, announced the Crucifixion as a rupture that cuts through human and otherworldly relations. For Nahuas, weeping resounded with political and cosmological meanings, making the sound emanating throughout the confessional environment fundamental to the structuring of power relationships in the *sotocoro*. Weeping during confession might thus be construed as a political act, one that simultaneously acknowledged the superior status of the *fiscal* and *tequitlato*, and functioned as an entreaty for the kind of mercy and aid—spiritual and secular—that they were specially situated to grant.

### **The Multisensorial Dynamics of the Painted Ornament**

Fulfilling the Easter duty compelled people from across social classes to enter the church and use the through-wall confessional, and then linger in the *sotocoro* to recite prayers and penance. For the lower classes, the *sotocoro*'s mural program was closely associated with the

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<sup>64</sup> Heather J. Allen, "'Llorar amargamente': Economies of Weeping in the Spanish Empire," *Colonial Latin American Review* 24 no. 4 (2015): 484-489, 479-504; Kay Almere Read, "Productive Tears: Weeping Speech, Water, and the Underworld in the Mexica Tradition," in *Holy Tears: Weeping in the Religious Imagination*, eds. Kimberley Christine Patton and John Stratton Hawley (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 55-62. Mendieta describes the ancient ritual of penance practiced by the Nahuas in his chronicle, *Historia eclesiástica*, bk. 3, chap. 41.

<sup>65</sup> Bernardino de Sahagún, *Psalmodia Christiana (Christian Psalmody)*, ed. and trans. Arthur J. O. Anderson (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1993), 110-111.

practice of making confession. Commoners rarely had occasion to enter the church outside of the rituals of the Lenten season, and their experience in its interior during religious processions, for example, left only a fleeting impression of the painted program. Making confession and the subsequent acts of atonement, however, required individuals to spend a great deal more time inside the church, either while waiting for their turn in the confessional or reciting penances in the nave or *sotocoro* afterwards. This is significant because mural painting comes to the fore of the experience of the church interior during Lent. In accordance with the season's emphasis on atonement, images were put away or concealed behind cloth, and altars were stripped.<sup>66</sup> While the Lenten prohibitions against images limited the multimedia experience of the church interior, it also contributed conversely to the visibility of the murals. In the absence of other images and ephemera, the murals became more prominent, not least because the arrangements of flowers and devotional items that once obstructed the view were cleared out of the way [Fig. 3.14]. During the confessional rite, penitents had ample time to take in the striking program of capricious ornaments, such as the pair of skeletal griffins with gaping maws, reminiscent of the hell mouths.<sup>67</sup> Today, a fragmentary painting of pairs of feline feet lurk on the *sotocoro*'s south (Epistle) wall near the former entrance to the through-wall confessional [Fig. 3.15].

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<sup>66</sup> Records of church expenditures compiled by a Nahuatl scribe at nearby Tepeaca recorded the purchase of meters of fabric for covering church furnishings. It was impractical, however, to extend cloth the length of the church walls to hide murals, and the monochrome coloration typical of murals was in line with season's emphasis on moderation. Hildeberto Martínez, *Colección de documentos coloniales de Tepeaca* (Mexico: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1984), 47.

<sup>67</sup> The griffins also have curly eyelids associated with deity images and curling tongues that are somewhat reminiscent of speech scrolls. While speech scrolls conventionally emanate from the mouth, whereas here tongues appear attached to the mouth, Huaquecholteca artists depicted speech scrolls in the friezes decorating the upper and lower cloisters, raising the possibility that the speech is also evoked in this frieze. My thanks to Alanna Radlo-Dzur for the discussion of colonial speech scroll conventions.

Scholars of colonial Latin American art have spilled much ink endeavoring to decipher the meaning of grotesques and account for the presence of such seemingly bizarre and indecorous imagery in monastic church interiors.<sup>68</sup> When situated within a European humanistic framework, the grotesque genre swings between artistic invention and capricious fantasy, making the genre the subject of intense debate in European artistic and ecclesiastical circles during the sixteenth century, as Claire Farago has observed.<sup>69</sup> That fine line may have been the exactly the point: aesthetic judgment requires the viewer to deploy the faculty of reason, rather than the frivolous empirical senses, to ascertain the program's meaning.<sup>70</sup> The ubiquity of grotesque friezes in monastic churches in New Spain does indicate that friars found the imagery instructive, perhaps because themes around carnality, the duplicity of the eye, and artifice dominate the liturgy during the very season when the frieze came to the forefront of the viewer's

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<sup>68</sup> José Fernández Arenas, "La decoración grutesca: análisis de una forma," *D'Art Barcelona*, 5 (1979): 5-20; Geoffrey Galt Harpham, *On the Grotesque: Strategies of Contradiction in Art and Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 48-76; Philippe Morel, *Les Grotesques: Les Figures de l'Imaginaire dans la Peinture Italienne de la Fin de la Renaissance* (Paris: Flammarion, 1997), 75-86; 115-117; André Chastel, *El Grutesco* (Madrid: Ediciones Akal, 2000); Serge Gruzinski, *The Mestizo Mind: The Intellectual Dynamics of Colonization and Globalization* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 45-87; Michael Gaudio, *Engraving the Savage: The New World and Techniques of Civilization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 75-85; Christopher P. Heuer, *The City Rehearsed: Object, Architecture, and Print in the Worlds of Hans Vredeman de Vries* (London: Routledge, 2009), 99-135; Eleanor Wake, *Framing the Sacred: The Indian Churches of Early Colonial Mexico* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010), 177-179; Frances S. Connelly, *The Grotesque in Western Art and Culture: The Image at Play* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Mónica Domínguez Torres, Mónica, *Military Ethos and Visual Culture in Post-Conquest Mexico* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 177-188; Alejandra Giménez-Berger, "Ethics and Economics of Art in Renaissance Spain: Felipe de Guevara's Comentario de la pintura y los pintores antiguos," *Renaissance Quarterly* 67 no. 1 (2014): 79-112.

<sup>69</sup> Farago, "Paleotti," 21.

<sup>70</sup> Sabine MacCormack, *Religion in the Andes: Vision and Imagination in Early Colonial Peru* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 24-30, 43.

experience of Christian sacred space.<sup>71</sup> The genre's close association with ancient Rome, at once illustrious ancestors and idolatrous pagans, also contributed to the popularity of the genre among the mendicant missionaries.<sup>72</sup> Reading the grotesque within a trans-Atlantic framework, however, requires familiarity with a range of texts and discourses that Nahuatl commoners had limited exposure to, suggesting a more local frame of reference needs to be considered.

While sensuous ornaments may cue Tridentine-era debates about artifice, to the Huaquecholteca the meaning of the grotesque frieze may have been exemplified by the botanical imagery interwoven throughout the program. Huaquecholteca artists painted identifiable flowers, such as morning glories and philodendrons, within the frieze. Nahuas associated these psychotropic and fragrant botanicals with esoteric knowledge and the privilege of the elite to

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<sup>71</sup> On carnal vision, see Susan Biernhoff, *Sight and Embodiment in the Middle Ages* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002), 41-57; Michael Camille, "Before the Gaze: The Internal Senses and Late Medieval Practices of Seeing," in *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance*, ed. Robert S. Nelson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 192-223.

<sup>72</sup> The Roman connection is best exemplified by the frieze of the Franciscan church of Todos Santos, Zempoala because the program, based on a print by Enea Vico, is replete with trophies, gorgons, and banners emblazoned with the S.P.Q.R. monogram. Scholars have also associated the grotesque frieze of the Augustinian church of San Miguel Arcángel, Ixmiquilpan with Roman antiquity because the program features centaurs and other creatures familiar to Greco-Roman myth. That connection would have been apparent to the Augustinians who assembled at the church for the 1571 chapter meeting, held the year after the program was finished. Estrada de Gerlero, *Muros, sargas y papeles*, 563-584; Donna Pierce, "The Sixteenth-Century Nave Frescoes in the Augustinian Mission Church of Ixmiquilpan, Hidalgo, Mexico" (Ph.D. diss., University of New Mexico, 1987); Olivier Debroise, "Imaginario fronterizo/identidades en transito. El caso de los murales de San Miguel Ixmiquilpan," in *Arte, historia e identidad en America: Visiones comparativas*, ed. Gustavo Curiel, Renato González Mello, Juana Gutiérrez Haces (Mexico City: Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, Universidad Autónoma de México, 1994), 155-172; Serge Gruzinski, *The Mestizo Mind: Pre-Hispanic America and European Globalisation* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 91-106; Mónica Domínguez Torres, "Negotiating Identities: Chivalry and Antiquity at St Michael Ixmiquilpan (Hidalgo, Mexico)," in *XXVII Coloquio Internacional de Historia del Arte. Orientes-Occidentes: El arte y la mirada del otro*, ed. Gustavo Curiel (Mexico City: Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2007), 597-613.

commune with the divine.<sup>73</sup> The imagery brings to mind the paintings of morning glories and philodendrons in the cloister and *sotocoro* murals of the Augustinian monastery of San Salvador, Malinalco, and Book 11 of the *Florentine Codex*. Although both were made over a decade after Huaquechula's *sotocoro*, the similarities suggest that conventions for rendering botanicals were widespread [Figs. 3.16, 3.17].<sup>74</sup> Much like the grotesque ornaments, the floral imagery evokes disputed forms of ancestral knowledge, and its link to potentially illicit medicinal and ritual practices supplies the kind of controversial content that is perfectly suited to sermons on Christian concepts of good and evil, idolatry, Paradise, and even Purgatory.<sup>75</sup> Yet, unlike the grotesque motifs, the floral imagery within the frieze also expressed characteristics associated with high-ranking individuals in the *altepetl*. This is significant because the frieze formed part of the backdrop for an interplay of power between Nahua social groups during the confessional rite which further reinforced the political dimensions of the frieze imagery.

In the frieze, morning glory (*ololiuhqui*) vines extend from the crowned heads that flank the serpentine griffins [Fig. 3.18]. The Huaquecholteca artists rendered the distinctive trumpet-shaped flowers in profile, depicting the flower's shape at the moment it emerges from the

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<sup>73</sup> Jeanette Favrot Peterson, *The Paradise Garden Murals of Malinalco: Utopia and Empire in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993), 91-93.

<sup>74</sup> Here, I use the digitized, online manuscript available from the World Digital Library. Bernardino de Sahagún, *Historia general [universal] de las cosas de [la] Nueva España* (henceforth, *Florentine Codex*), (Florence: Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Colección Palatina, mss. 218-220, 1575-1577), bk. 11, f. 129v., <https://www.wdl.org/en/item/10096/>. For the facsimile edition, see Bernardino de Sahagún, *Códice Florentino*, 3 vols. (Mexico City: Secretaría de Gobernación, 1979); Peterson, *Paradise Garden Murals*, 91-92, 125.

<sup>75</sup> In the Malinalco cloister murals, for example, Peterson identifies an image of the "Tree of Life" as the *xiloxochitl* (*clavellina*) tree, which was closely associated with maize and had important ritual value, see Peterson, *Paradise Garden Murals*, 85-86, 121-122, 131. In November 2019, the granddaughter of *ex-sacristan* don Gregorio Alejo Martínez (pictured in Fig. 14) told me the frieze of the Huaquechula church symbolizes Purgatory. This remark was particularly meaningful to her because, as she explained between tears, her recently departed grandfather was currently in that realm of the dead.



prominent sepals that enclose the blooms at night [Figs. 3.19, 3.20]. The artists sharply delineated the contours of the fused petals, overlapping them with an accentuated pistil that points to one side. The choice to depict the blooms in profile and emphasize the funnellform shape of the flower recalls similar imagery at Malinalco. For Nahuas, the psychotropic seeds embodied the agency of the gods. Morning glory seeds are powerful hallucinogens and pre-Hispanic Nahuas associated the delirium induced by the intoxicant with exceptional powers of sight and clairvoyance.<sup>76</sup> Pre-Hispanic Nahua priests ingested the kernels to stimulate visions and commune with the gods, and midwives gave the seeds to laboring women to elicit divine aid in delivering healthy babies.<sup>77</sup> The strong association between the morning glory and the materialization of the supernatural made it appropriate to Christian sacred spaces where Christ's invisible presence manifested in the Eucharist. Yet morning glories also expressed the higher-order perception and knowledge possessed by those most associated with the church interior, the friars as well as Nahua church officials, artists, and elites who had regular access to the sacred spaces.

The philodendron is a second important and identifiable floral motif in the Huaquechula frieze.<sup>78</sup> It is distinguished by an inflorescence composed of overlapping, cylindrical spathes and

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<sup>76</sup> Peterson, *Paradise Garden Murals*, 91.

<sup>77</sup> Jan G. R. Elefrink, José Antonio Flores, and Charles D. Kaplan, "The Use of Plants and Other Natural Products for Malevolent Practices Among the Aztecs and Their Successors," *Estudios de Cultural Náhuatl* 24 (1994): 28-33. Matthijs Jonker, "Negotiating the Representation of Natural History between Mexico and Europe," (unpublished manuscript, "Spaces of Art" Transregional Academy, Oct. 26, 2019), 9. My thanks to Matthijs Jonker for the many conversations about *ololiuhqui* in colonial Mexican botanical imagery. On Nahua healers, especially midwives, see Edward A. Polanco, "I Am Just a Tçitl": Decolonizing Central Mexican Nahua Female Healers, 1535–1635," *Ethnohistory* 65, no. 3 (2018): 441-463.

<sup>78</sup> Peterson, *Paradise Garden Murals*, 97-100. In addition, there are also Old World plants, such as pomegranates and acanthus, in the frieze. Like the philodendron, however, many of the blooms appear to be stylized versions of species native to Central Mexico still sought after for their medicinal and symbolic properties, such as marigolds (*cempoxochitl*). Artists did not need

a protruding spadix, here stylized with a slight twist at the tip [Fig. 3.21].<sup>79</sup> For the Nahuas, philodendrons symbolized sacrality and abundance, and they were used prominently in the garlands that decorated elites, warriors, and rulers [Fig. 3.22]. According to Jeanette Peterson, the flowers were so sacred that *hueyi tlahtoani* Moctezuma II made offerings of philodendrons to Huitzilopochtli at the Templo Mayor in Tenochtitlan.<sup>80</sup> In the frieze, philodendrons flank a crowned angel springing from a cornucopia, an Old-World symbol also associated with fecundity and the pagan divine. The allusions to abundance in the frieze fit into Nahua and Christian notions of paradise as a garden. Philodendrons were prominently featured in Nahua-Christian devotional music to express the radiance and eminence of the divine, such as the psalms for Easter in the *Psalmodia Christiana*.<sup>81</sup> Yet the inclusion of philodendron imagery in the Huaquechula frieze also signaled to viewers that the *sotocoro* was an elite space, and one where prominent individuals, such as the *fiscal*, exercised their authority over the community.

The depiction of aromatic philodendrons and other flowers in the Huaquechula frieze elicited a cross-modal sensory response in the Nahua viewer. Like other Mesoamericans, Nahua sensory experience is culturally synesthetic; that is characterized by “stimulus in one modality—sight— triggering perception in another—hearing or smell.”<sup>82</sup> Significantly, Indigenous artists continued coding imagery with cross-sensory cues well into the sixteenth century, sometimes

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to achieve a high-degree of botanical mimesis to elicit an association because, with the exception of Lent, fresh flowers were fundamental to the embellishment of church interiors, a tradition which continues to this day. Further research is needed to confirm these identifications, as well as that of other flora and fauna.

<sup>79</sup> Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, bk. 11, fol. 194.

<sup>80</sup> Peterson, *Paradise Garden Murals*, 93.

<sup>81</sup> Louise M. Burkhart, “Flowery Heaven: The Aesthetic of Paradise in Nahuatl Devotional Literature,” *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 21 (1992): 88-109; Sahagún, *Psalmodia Christiana*, 131.

<sup>82</sup> Stephen Houston and Karl Taube, “An Archaeology of the Senses: Perception and Expression in Ancient Mesoamerica,” *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 10, no. 3 (2000): 261.

drawing on conventional iconography, such as speech scrolls to elicit hearing, and others more local, such the composite symbols of bees that ‘buzz’ across the vaults of the lower cloister at the Augustinian monastery at Malinalco.<sup>83</sup> At Huaquechula, artists likewise drew on Nahua somaesthetics when painting the frieze. Monumental flowers and philodendrons alluded to the aromatic splendor of the divine and rulership while also conjuring the perception of fragrant scents, something conspicuously absent during Lent when all live flowers were removed. Flowers not only cued the sense of smell but also were closely related to sound. For instance, the metaphorical couplet (*disfratismo*) “*in xochitl in cuicatl*” or, “the flower, the song” signifies poetry and sacred music in Nahuatl.<sup>84</sup> Flowers and songs were also closely connected to ancestral Nahua conceptions of the sacred and the paradisiacal, such as a flowery garden filled within singing birds.<sup>85</sup> In the frieze, Huaquecholteca artists signal the generative power of the flower-song in the image of the festooned head with a pair of tendrils projecting from its mouth, alluding to notions of sacred songs and prayers as a kind of flowery emanation. Notably, this ornament flanks the entrance to the *sotocoro*’s confessional where penitents wept emanating the audible expression of penitence that characterizes the space [Fig. 3.15].

The programmatic emphasis on the evocation of senses beyond the visual in the frieze thus created a powerful multisensory resonance, one that countered the sensory privation imposed by the through-wall confessional. For many Nahuas, the ritual context in which they encountered the Huaquechula *sotocoro* frieze encoded its primary meanings. The ornamental imagery reinforced the political attachments Nahua elites and their dependents forged during the

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<sup>83</sup> Peterson, *Paradise Garden Murals*, 51, 128, 134-135.

<sup>84</sup> Houston and Taube, “Archaeology of the Senses,” 175-176.

<sup>85</sup> For a pre-Hispanic Nahua musical repertory, see John Bierhorst, trans. *Cantares Mexicanos: Songs of the Aztecs* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985); Miguel León-Portilla, *Cantares Mexicanos*, vol. 1-2 (Mexico City: Universidad Autónoma de México, 2011).

practice of confession by activating the phenomenological framework that characterized Nahua hierarchies of power. These processes affirmed the authority of the *fiscal* who supervised ritual within the *sotocoro*, and underscored the *sotocoro* as a center of Nahua elite political power during a moment characterized by the unraveling of ancestral social hierarchies.

### ‘The Tail, The Wing’

The Huaquechula *sotocoro* murals were painted in the midst of a widespread regional economic crisis.<sup>86</sup> In January 1561 the viceregal government imposed an exorbitant cash tribute (*tlacallaquilli*) on *altepetl* throughout Mexico.<sup>87</sup> The following month it levied a head tax on the nobility (*pipiltin*), church officials (*teopantlaca*) including *fiscales* and *teopixque*, and artists

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<sup>86</sup> Ethelia Ruiz Medrano provides a thorough introduction to various economic and political crises that rocked 1560s New Spain, demonstrating the political agency of Nahua nobles in Mexico City during these events. Ruiz Medrano, “Fighting Destiny: Nahua Nobles and Friars in the Sixteenth-Century Revolt of the *Encomenderos* against the King,” in *Negotiation within Domination*, ed. Ethelia Ruiz Medrano and Susan Kellog, trans. Michel Besson (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2011), 45-77.

<sup>87</sup> For instances, Tecamachalco was assessed 3,200 *pesos*, Cholula’s tribute increased by 13,640 *pesos*, and Tlamanalco’s maize tribute doubled. Eustaquio Celestino and Luis Reyes García, ed., *Anales de Tecamachalco, 1398-1590* (Puebla: CIESAS, 1992), 43; Kelly McDonough, “Indigenous Rememberings and Forgetting: Sixteenth-Century Nahua Letters and Petitions to the Spanish Crown,” *Native American and Indigenous Studies* 5, no. 1 (2018): 74; France V. Scholes and Eleanor B. Adams, *Sobre el modo de tributar los indios de Nueva España a Su Majestad, 1561-1564* (Mexico City: Porrúa, 1958); Margarita Menegus Bornemann, “La destrucción del señorío indígena y la formación de la República de Indios en la Nueva España,” in *El sistema colonial en la América española*, ed. H. Bonilla (Barcelona: Crítica, 1991), 17–49; Emma Pérez Rocha, “Reconocimiento y desintegración de la nobleza indígena del centro de México,” in *Memorias sin olvido: El México de María Justina Sarabia*, ed. María Luisa Pazos Pazos and Verónica Zárate Toscano (Santiago de Compostela: Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, 2014), 143–52; José Miranda, *El tributo indígena en la Nueva España durante el siglo XVI*, 2nd ed. (Mexico City: Colegio de México, 2005); José Luis de Rojas, *A cada uno lo suyo: El tributo indígena en la Nueva España en el siglo XVI*, Colección Ensayos (Zamora: Colegio de Michoacán, 1993).

(*nepan tolteca*), increasing the tax later that month from two to four *tomines*.<sup>88</sup> Previously, Indigenous elites had been exempted from the taxes levied on the dependents who worked their land. Now, elites and commoners were taxed individually. As Ethelia Ruiz Medrano stresses, the mere imposition of tribute, and its payment in cash, was as much a source of resentment as the actual amount collected.<sup>89</sup> Indigenous communities in New Spain were not cash economies and nobles were dependent on commoners for their income. Commoners suffered disproportionately from tribute increases and lacked access to cash markets. Viceregal administrators held *cabildo* leaders accountable for the *altepetl*'s failure to make tribute quotas, jailing *alcaldes* (the second highest *cabildo* officer) and humiliating them in the stocks.<sup>90</sup> This is important because *fiscales* were elected by the *cabildo* and, like other Nahua nobles, held various political posts in the *altepetl* during their lifetimes, including *alcalde*. James Lockhart notes that the "visibility" of the *fiscal* in the Nahua community made them, more so than Spanish priests, the targets of criticism and power abuse.<sup>91</sup> Furthermore, in a small *altepetl* like Huaquechula, the tax collector and church warden was the same individual, the *tequitlato* who rounded up the community for Mass and confessions.

The new taxation policy flattened an important distinction between the two social classes

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<sup>88</sup> A *tomin* is equivalent to one third of a *peso*. The total tribute demanded initially exceeded that levied on the Indigenous residents of Mexico City, for instance, who were obligated to pay one *peso* and one measure of maize annually, although the amount increased in 1564. See Ruiz Medrano, "Fighting Destiny," 63.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 63-64.

<sup>90</sup> Townsend, *Annals of Native America*, 63, 75. Throughout Central Mexico Indigenous leaders sent petitions to the Crown pleading for the restitution of land and tribute exemptions, the two principle challenges to their wealth and privilege. Kelly S. McDonough translates and analyzes a number of these petitions. McDonough, "Indigenous Rememberings," 81-88.

<sup>91</sup> 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), 215.

by stripping the nobility of their exceptional economic status.<sup>92</sup> The result of this process of social leveling can be seen in the viceregal courts and government halls where commoners accused the landed nobility of failing to protect them from Spanish extortion. In Mexico City, a Nahua artist connected to the Franciscan monastery transcribed the speeches made by commoners during a particularly uproarious *cabildo* meeting in winter 1564 that ended in violence: “Does he forget you, does he forget the tail, the wings?... Now go to warn people, you *merinos* [*tequitlatos*], make them hear your summons. Go house to house, you who gather the *medios* [monies].”<sup>93</sup> The expression “the tail, the wing” (*in cuitlapilli in ahtlapalli*) was a metaphor for the *macehualtin*, one that powerfully expressed the dependency of Nahua elites on their labor.<sup>94</sup> Without us, the speaker contended, the Nahua government would collapse. The *tequitlato*, furthermore, was charged with delivering the news of the imminent moment of reckoning. While limited archival information for Huaquechula survives from this period, land grant documents point to political and economic instability during this period, which I discuss further in chapter 4.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Remarkings on this policy, Charles Gibson states that one of the effects of tribute reform “was to equalize and compress [Indians], to move all classes toward a single level and condition,” that is, homogenization. Gibson, *The Aztecs Under Spanish Rule: A History of the Indians of the Valley of Mexico, 1519-1810* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964), 153–55; McDonough, “Indigenous Rememberings,” 74.

<sup>93</sup> Don Miguel Teiciniuh’s February 18, 1564 Nahuatl-language speech before the *cabildo* is recorded in the *Annals of Juan Baustista*, written by a guild of Nahua artists and scribes (*tlacuiloque*) associated with San Francisco el Grande monastery in Mexico City. For a Spanish translation, see Luis Reyes García, trans., “*Cómo te confundes? Acaso no somos conquistados?*” *Anales de Juan Bautista* (Mexico: Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social, 2001), f. 20-26v. Recently, Camilla Townsend transcribed and translated sections of the Nahuatl-language chronicle into English as part of her groundbreaking study of alphabetic Nahuatl histories. Townsend, *Annals of Native of America*, 61.

<sup>94</sup> Townsend, *Annals of Native America*, 55, 74.

<sup>95</sup> In 1567 Huaquecholteca estates opened up to Spanish incursion for the first time in decades. Financial troubles may have induced the *altepetl* to lease their lands to Spanish farmers to raise

The apocalyptic climate of the moment infiltrated monastic art, especially in the *sotocoro* where the secular Nahua power interpenetrated Christian sacred space. In conclusion, consider the case of the decoration of the Nuestra Señora de la Asunción, Tecamachalco church, painted around the same time as Huaquechula's *sotocoro* and located a day's journey to the west.<sup>96</sup> In 1561 Tecamachalco was insolvent and its Indigenous leaders were in prison.<sup>97</sup> The month after the imposition of the new tax, Juan Gerson began painting the interior of the church, lining the nave with murals of philodendrons, tulle, and *chalchihuitli* (jade disks) above a blue-green frieze, at once symbols of abundance and Nahua elite power [Fig. 3.23].<sup>98</sup> Don Juan was a member of the ancestral ruling classes and his father had previously served as an *alcalde* and was later elected *gobernador*, posts which attest to don Juan's own eligibility for the office of *fiscal*.<sup>99</sup>

Gerson's polychrome paintings of Old Testament and eschatological imagery for the *sotocoro* of the church done the following year, 1562, further animated the entanglement of inter-Indigenous politics and *sotocoro* space. Affixed to compartments in the soffit of the choir loft, the twenty-eight pigment on *amatl* roundels depict prophetic scenes related to the Second Coming of Christ [Figs. 3.24, 3.25].<sup>100</sup> Gerson's pictorial style recalls that observed in the

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revenue. Furthermore, commoners may have vacated fields in search of income elsewhere, leaving the nobility without its workforce.

<sup>96</sup> Camilla Townsend chronicles the commission and its impact on factional Nahua politics. Townsend, *Annals of Native America*, 107-120. She does not, however, address the impact of new economic policies on inter-Indigenous relations or art in Tecamachalco.

<sup>97</sup> Don Mateo Sánchez's *Annals of Tecamachalco (xiuhpohualli)* supplies a detailed record of these events. However, he does not list the names of the *tlahtoque* imprisoned in 1561. Church commissions had historically granted Nahuas exemption from tribute and I suspect Gerson's commission, given its timing, may have been one such arrangement. Celestino and Reyes García, *Anales de Tecamachalco*, 43-47.

<sup>98</sup> Close inspection of the Tecamachalco blue-green frieze shows faint traces of figural imagery, likely destroyed when the nave was whitewashed.

<sup>99</sup> Townsend, *Annals of Native America*, 105, 118-119.

<sup>100</sup> Gerson's naturalistic style and use of European prototypes have drawn considerable scholarly attention, so much so that the program has served as a touchstone in debates about ethnicity and

Huaquechula *sotocoro* murals: sharply contoured forms and modeled up through layers of diaphanous washes of pigment to contribute a sense of plasticity. Similarly, Gerson translated the iconography found in an array of European prints into new arrangements, often setting designs against a landscape featuring the jagged cliffs similar to those visible from the Tecamachalco monastery.<sup>101</sup> One roundel makes the eschatological theme especially explicit [Fig. 3.26]. A haloed eagle with outstretched wings grasps a pen-knife case and ink-pot case in its beak and stands before an open Bible as if ready to write.<sup>102</sup> Nahuatl text on the banderole that wraps around a thorn branch identifies the heraldic eagle as the symbol of Saint John Evangelist and indicates the painting was made in May 1562. Below the medallion Gerson painted the words “APOCALYPSIS.”<sup>103</sup>

By and large Gerson’s program at Tecamachalco has been interpreted as an allegory for religious conversion and Christian millenarianism. While Gerson and his peers certainly heard

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aesthetic assimilation in the Americas. Manuel Toussaint, “Pinturas coloniales en Tecamachalco,” *Revista de Revistas* 22, no. 1169 1932: n.p. Carolyn Dean and Dana Leibsohn, “Hybridity and Its Discontents: Considering Visual Culture in Colonial Spanish America,” *Colonial Latin American Review* 12, no. 1 (2003): 22; Pablo Escalante Gonzalbo, “Fulgor y muerte de Juan Gerson o las oscilaciones de los pintores de Tecamachalco,” in *El proceso creativo*, ed. Alberto Dallal (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Estética, 2006), 325-342; Barbara E. Mundy and Aaron M. Hyman, “Out of the Shadow of Vasari: Towards a New Model of the ‘Artist’ in Colonial Latin America,” *Colonial Latin American Review* 24, no. 3 (2015): 290-292.

<sup>101</sup> Chapter 4 discusses pictorial landscape in the Huaquechula upper cloister oratories, which were painted around this moment. Diana Magaloni Kerpel identified the depiction of the passage between the volcanoes Popocatepetl and Itzacchuatl in the painting of Saint John and the Angel, for instance, noting the trails’ association with Cortés invasion. However other paintings contain imagery that alludes to the craggy hills that surround Tecamachalco. Today, cement factories in the region, including one in Tecamachalco, are slowly leveling the once rolling landscape of the southern Puebla-Tlaxcala Valley featured in the paintings. Magaloni Kerpel, “Images of the Beginning: The Painted Story of the Conquest of Mexico in Book XII of the Florentine Codex,” (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 2004), 81-84.

<sup>102</sup> My thanks to Aaron Hyman for assistance identifying the items clutched by the eagle.

<sup>103</sup> Gerson inscribed a second caption above that was partially painted over at a later date.



fire and brimstone sermons in the *sotocoro*, doomsday imagery also fit into Indigenous Mexican temporal systems. Portents of the end of times aligned with Nahua and Maya worldviews marked by cataclysmic period endings and the volatile forces of chaos and order. As Mark Z. Christensen has shown, translations of the popular *The Fifteen Signs of the Apocalypse* circulated widely in Indigenous communities in early colonial New Spain, the imagery making its way into the songs of the *Psalmodia Christiana*, for instance.<sup>104</sup> Although rife with Biblical signs foreshadowing the Last Judgement, Gerson's paintings also resonated with the distressing contours of the moment in which he painted. The month after Gerson finished painting the *sotocoro* medallions, two members of the *cabildo* were imprisoned once again. A dispute had broken out between the leadership and a Spanish official (*alcalde mayor*), who also wound up in jail. Bishop Francisco de Toral, former guardian of the Tecamachalco monastery, arrived to mediate the conflict and made a pronouncement condemning the new taxes.<sup>105</sup> Amidst this tidal wave of new taxes, Gerson—a member of the nobility—mobilized Christian apocalyptic symbolism to address present Indigenous economic and political uncertainties.<sup>106</sup> With the legitimacy and authority of Nahua leaders challenged in secular domains, sacred spaces became key arenas for the visual and performative manifestation of Nahua power. During sacramental rites in the *sotocoro*, such as the Confirmation ceremony at Tecamachalco later in 1562, the

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<sup>104</sup> Mark Z. Christensen, "Predictions of Doomsday in European, Nahuatl, and Maya Texts," in *Words and Worlds Turned Around: Indigenous Christianities in Colonial Latin America*, ed. David Tavárez (Chicago: University Press of Colorado, 2017), n.p.; Burkhart, *Slippery Earth*, 64, 79-82; Sahagún, *Psalmodia Christiana*, 130-131.

<sup>105</sup> Celestino and Reyes Garcia, *Anales de Tecamachalco*, 45; Townsend, *Annals of Native America*, 113.

<sup>106</sup> The *Anales de Juan Bautista* also records the appearance of omens that were interpreted by the Nahua inhabitants of Mexico City as distressing harbingers of chaos and the miraculous return of *hueyi tlahtoani* Moctezuma II from the open maw of the earth, see Ruiz Medrano, "Fighting Destiny," 70-71; Townsend, *Annals of Native America*, 63.

*fiscal* presided over the *sotocoro* standing below paintings that detail calamity and doom, and especially positioned in space and station between the *altepetl* and chaos. A moment when the administration of the sacraments could not be more regulated—and where one might think the spaces of negotiation were most narrow—was, in fact, one in which Nahua political legitimacy was most loudly enacted.<sup>107</sup>

## Conclusion

This chapter examined the multisensory experience of the sacrament of penance in the Huaquechula *sotocoro*. It argued that the ritual environment of confession reproduced the hierarchical social structure of the *altepetl*, itself rife with inequalities that nevertheless operated outside the settler-colonial regime. In the case of religious confession, my analysis demonstrates that Christian sacramental rituals could inadvertently aid in the preservation of Indigenous sociopolitical structures, as the concluding example of the Tecamachalco paintings shows. These findings counter conventional representations of the practice of confession that appear in colonial Mexican imagery and which have become entrenched with repetition.<sup>108</sup> As scholars widely

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<sup>107</sup> Drawing on William Roseberry's materialist analysis of Antonio Gramsci's account of hegemony, which shows that hegemonic spaces can be arenas for struggle, Kelly McDonough argues alphabetic Nahuatl writing was as much a tool for resistance as for colonial imposition. McDonough, *The Learned Ones*, 18; William Roseberry, "Hegemony and the Language of Contention," in *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico*, ed. Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniel Nungent (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 355-366. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, ed. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith and Quentin Hare (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975).

<sup>108</sup> For recent interrogations of dubious pre-Hispanic discourses and their methodological implications, see Julia Madajczak, "A Deconstruction of the Notion of Nahua 'Confession,'" in *Words and Worlds Turned Around: Indigenous Christianities in Colonial Latin America*, ed. David Tavárez (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2017), 67-81; Michel R. Ouidjik, "The Making of Academic Myth," in *Indigenous Graphic Communication Systems: A Theoretical Approach*, ed. Katarzyna Mikulska and Jerome A. Offner (Louisville: University Press of Colorado, 2019), chap. 13.

recognize, Valadés well-known portrayal of religious confession in an idealized image of Franciscan missionary activity in New Spain. What has yet to be considered, however, is how Valadés' engraving is also an allegory for the profound inequality that suffused Indigenous experience at the monasteries. The absence of Indigenous church officials in text and image evinces a system that methodically devalued their labor because it was antithetical to a vision of Spanish colonial superiority, even though Franciscan documents make it clear that the *fiscales* and *teopixque* were essential to the institutional structure, authority, and power of the monastery. Using architectural evidence to interpret the information in Spanish sources thus provides a method for identifying inconsistencies in the texts and images which, as I have illustrated here, may draw attention to sociohistorical processes that construct and perpetuate colonial power asymmetries.

**CHAPTER 4**  
**UPROOTING LANDSCAPE:**  
**THE MURALS OF HUAQUECHULA'S UPPER CLOISTER ORATORIES**

**Introduction**

New Spain in the sixteenth century was a rapidly changing world, marred as much by drought and deforestation as by violence and rampant disease.<sup>1</sup> In the 1560s and 70s, vast tracts of Huaquechula territory were doled out to Spanish settlers.<sup>2</sup> This posed a problem for friars and the Nahua Christian community whose identities and claims to legitimacy were bound up in highly specific conceptions of territory and place.<sup>3</sup> But it was also a problem for monastic mural painting, because wood was in short supply.<sup>4</sup> Significantly, Nahua artists painted Huaquechula's

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<sup>1</sup> Elinor G. K. Melville, *A Plague of Sheep: Environmental Consequences of the Conquest of Mexico* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994); David W. Stahle, et al., "Tree-Ring Data Document 16<sup>th</sup> Century Megadrought over North America," *Eos* 81, no. 12 (2000): 121-131; Rodolfo Acuña-Soto, et al., "Megadrought and Megadeath in 16th Century Mexico," *Emerging Infectious Diseases* 8, no. 4 (2002): 360-362; Georgina H. Endfield, *Climate and Society in Colonial Mexico: A Study in Vulnerability* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2008); Bradley Skopyk, "Undercurrents of Conquest: The Shifting Terrain of Indigenous Agriculture in Colonial Tlaxcala, Mexico" (Ph.D. diss., York University (Canada), 2010); Bradley Skopyk, "Rivers of God, Rivers of Empire: Climate Extremes, Environmental Transformation and Agroecology in Colonial Mexico," *Environment and History* 23 (2017): 491-522; David W. Stahle, "Anthropogenic Megadroughts," *Science* 368, no. 6488 (2020): 238-239.

<sup>2</sup> Avis Mysyk, "Land, Labor, and Indigenous Response: Huaquechula (Mexico), 1521-1633," *Colonial Latin American Review* 24, no. 3 (2015): 341; On the settlement of the Atlixco Valley in the 1560s, see Ida Altman, *Transatlantic Ties in the Spanish Empire: Brihuega, Spain, and Puebla, Mexico, 1560-1620* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 9-42; Louisa Schell Hoberman, *Mexico's Merchant Elite, 1590-1660: Silver, State, and Society* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 96, 111.

<sup>3</sup> See Julia McClure on Franciscan notions of legal property and sovereignty, *The Franciscan Invention of the New World* (New York: Springer, 2016), 40. On Huaquechula's territorial history, see Florine G. L. Asselbergs, *Conquered Conquistadors: The Lienzo de Quauhquechollan: A Nahua Vision of the Conquest of Guatemala* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2004); Ibid., "El Mapa Circular de Quauhquechollan," *Tlalocan* XVII (2011): 219-232.

<sup>4</sup> Wood is burned in large quantities during the production of plaster. The viceroyalty passed legislation in 1570 that required loggers obtain licenses to cut trees, although in Mexico City such restrictions had been in place since the 1530s. See, *Ordenanzas del trabajo, siglos XVI y*

upper cloister oratories during this period, navigating new relationships to land and resources through art [Fig. 4.1]. By visualizing the potent—but now rapidly disappearing—Central Mexican countryside, the Nahua artists used pictorial landscape to contend with environmental crisis and its impact on the shifting domains of human and non-human life in early colonial Mexico.

This chapter argues that the landscape murals painted in the Huaquechula oratories depict structural changes around land and labor in the Atlixco Valley. The upper cloister consists of four oratories; eight polychrome murals decorate the walls of the oratories forming a landscape series. Each painting represents the Franciscan fantasy of the New World as a spiritual resource, while also marking the emergent protocapital system that underwrites that fantasy [Fig. 4.2].<sup>5</sup> The Huaquechula artists challenged the colonial regime and emergent conception of land and water as resources subject to private ownership by withholding from view the landscape elements where colonial exploitation was concentrated. Through selective visualization, artists opposed the totalizing colonial gaze and demonstrated that resistance can be powerfully asserted through absence. In so doing, artists used monastic mural painting to address the social and environmental instability undercutting Huaquecholteca life in sixteenth century New Spain.

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*XVII*, ed. Silvio Zavala (Mexico: Instituto de Historia de la Universidad Nacional, 1947), 75-77; John McAndrew, *The Open-Air Churches of Sixteenth-Century Mexico: Atrios, Posas, Open Chapels, and Other Studies* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), 148-149; George Kubler, *Mexican Architecture of the Sixteenth Century*, vol. 1 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), 171-173.

<sup>5</sup> The construction of the upper cloister began around 1569 according to dates carved on the west cloister façade. The upper cloister was finished before 1585 according to a report written by a Franciscan administrator surveying the region's monasteries. See Antonio de Ciudad Real, *Tratado curioso y docto de las grandezas de la Nueva España*, ed. Alonso de San Juan, Víctor M. Castillo Farreras, and Josefina García Quintana, vol. 1 (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, 1976), 15.

In the Americas, the trauma of colonization coincided with shifting climatic patterns.<sup>6</sup> In Central Mexico, a meteorological event known as the Little Ice Age exacerbated the effects of Spanish settlement.<sup>7</sup> For instance, the *Codex Telleriano-Remensis*, a Nahuatl-language almanac and history with Spanish commentary, records devastating frosts and droughts in the 1450s and 1540s.<sup>8</sup> Significantly, the events pictured in the *Codex Telleriano-Remensis* operate as a kind of shorthand for a more comprehensive sociopolitical transformation. Drought and famine accelerated the expansion of first, the Mexica Empire, and later, the incipient viceregal regime, by driving the acquisition of larger swaths of territory to feed starving subjects and stave off insurrection. As described in Chapter 1, the Atlixco Valley, with its many rivers and rich volcanic soils, was a principal target of both Mexica and Spanish advances. As Huaquecholteca

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<sup>6</sup> Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, “Decolonization is Not a Metaphor,” *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): 1-40; Ananda Cohen-Aponte, “Decolonizing the Global Renaissance: A View from the Andes,” in *The Globalization of Renaissance Art: A Critical Review*, ed. Daniel Savoy (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 67-94.

<sup>7</sup> Deforestation was initially considered to be the culprit in the drought, see Charles Gibson, *Aztecs under Spanish Rule: A History of the Indians of the Valley of Mexico, 1519-1810* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964), 303. On the ‘Little Ice Age’ in colonial Mexico, see the pathbreaking work of Enrique Florescano, “Meteorología y ciclos agrícolas en las antiguas economías: El caso de México,” *Historia Mexicana* (1968): 516-534; Georgina H. Endfield and Sara L. O’Hara, “Conflicts over Water in the ‘Little Drought Age’ in Central Mexico,” *Environmental History* 3 (1997): 255-272; More recently, Matthew D. Therrell, David W. Stahle, and Rodolfo Acuña Soto, “Aztec Drought and the ‘Curse of One Rabbit,’” *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society* 85, no. 9 (2004): 1263-1272; Karl W. Butzer, et al., “Soil-Geomorphology and ‘Wet’ Cycles in the Holocene Record of North-Central Mexico,” *Geomorphology* 101 (2008): 237-277; Chris Wooley and Susan Millbrath, “‘Real Time’ Climate Events in the Borgia-Group Codices: Testing Assumptions About the Calendar,” *Ancient Mesoamerica* 22, no. 1 (2011): 37-51. For the Andes, see Olga Solomina, et al., “Lichenometry in the Cordillera Blanca, Peru: ‘Little Ice Age’ Moraine Chronology,” *Global and Planetary Change* 59, no. 1-4 (2007): 225-235; Steven A. Wernke and Thomas M. Whitmore, “Agriculture and Inequality in the Colonial Andes: A Simulation of Production and Consumption Using Administrative Documents,” *Human Ecology* 37 (2009): 421-440.

<sup>8</sup> For example, the *Codex Telleriano-Remensis* contains a drawing for 1543 (12 Reed) with a sun looming above two floppy maize plants in a largely unplanted field to signify the drought, see Eloise Quiñones Keber, *Codex Telleriano-Remensis: Ritual, Divination, and History in a Pictorial Aztec Manuscript* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), f. 46r.

fields dried up, settlers moved in, ushered by a viceregal policy that considered sovereignty in terms of the ability to improve and bring to order seemingly untamed, vacant land.<sup>9</sup>

Making this argument requires incorporating Indigenous understandings and visualizations of land in colonial Mexican art. Central to this claim is problematizing the European discourse of the imperial landscape, in which a representation of land emptied of inhabitants signifies a territory available for settler-colonial consumption.<sup>10</sup> This standpoint motivated religious conversion and justified the confiscation of Indigenous territories in New Spain, and it seems at first glance that a frontier to be conquered is precisely what is on display in the Huaquechula oratory murals. However, such a standpoint presupposes that European artistic conventions constitute European ways of seeing. For Indigenous peoples, life, land, and identity are intrinsically entangled, and vision is but one of many modes of perceiving, experiencing, and knowing the land.<sup>11</sup> This is significant because the Huaquechula landscape paintings operate most forcefully when one considers what is *not* pictured. Not only is water

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<sup>9</sup> Gustavo Verdesio reminds us that Indigenous interventions in the biophysical landscape—such as irrigation networks— were often not recorded because they did not conform to European expectations, or were willfully ignored to advance a conception of the New World as available to European occupation, see “Invisible at a Glance: Indigenous Cultures of the Past, Ruins, Archaeological Sites, and Our Regimes of Visibility,” in *Ruins of Modernity*, ed. Julia Hell and Andrea Schönle (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 339-353.

<sup>10</sup> E. H. Gombrich, “The Renaissance Theory of Art and the Rise of Landscape,” in *Norm and Form: Studies in the Art of the Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966); Simon Pugh, ed., *Reading Landscape: Country/City/Capital* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990); W. J. T. Mitchell, “Imperial Landscape,” in W. J. T. Mitchell, ed. *Landscape and Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, [1994] 2002), 5-35; Charles Harrison, “The Effects of Landscape,” in W. J. T. Mitchell, ed. *Landscape and Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, [1994] 2002), 203-239; Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Michelle H. Raheja, *Reservation Reelism: Redfacing, Visual Sovereignty, and Representations of Native Americans in Film* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011).

<sup>11</sup> Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 13.

absent but so too are crops, livestock, timber, field hands, and—by extension—Indigenous labor. By choosing to not picture sites where colonial power concentrates, the murals offer incredible insight into the concealed forms of domination shaping Huaquechula’s uncertain future, as well as emergent material relations that cut through Huaquecholteca connections to the land.<sup>12</sup> Monastic mural painting thus provides an eloquent commentary on the impact of human-driven ecological change in the Americas, an urgent issue with deep colonial roots.<sup>13</sup>

### **Unyielding Landscapes**

Huaquechula’s upper cloister offered friars respite from the energetic activity of the Indigenous ministry. The painted decoration of the cloister’s five oratories enriched a space for meditation and renewal. Viewed during affective devotional exercises, the sprawling landscapes invited friars to imagine themselves beyond the confines of the cloister, perhaps even in an entirely different place and time. In this way, the murals nurtured their spirituality and helped them to deepen their connection to Saint Francis, whose own prayer sessions in the wilderness had yielded mystical results. But the paintings also illustrate physical changes in the Central Mexican landscape, ones that powerfully altered the terrain of Christian life in Huaquechula.

Huaquechula’s five painted oratories line the north corridor of the upper cloister, a pathway that stretches between the sacristy staircase and a vestibule (*antecoro*) that leads to the

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<sup>12</sup> In the context of contemporary Native American art, art historian Kate Morris has observed “anti-invitational” tropes in landscape paintings where the artist (or artwork) “literally intervenes between the spectator and the land.” What is significant about her observation for the context of the early-modern period is the reminder that *not* depicting something was also an expressive choice that could have considerable impact on the viewer. Kate Morris, *Shifting Grounds: Landscape in Contemporary Native American Art* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019), 5.

<sup>13</sup> Stahle, “Anthropogenic Megadroughts,” 238.



choir loft and elevated open chapel, located in the northeast corner of the complex [Figs. 4.3, 4.4].<sup>14</sup> Friars preached to Nahuatl-Christian parishioners and celebrated Mass in the elevated chapel and chanted with brethren in the choir throughout the day and night, making this trek along the north corridor frequently.<sup>15</sup> At no other monastery were the friar's divine duties located in such close functional and physical proximity, and it is probable that reforms implemented by the Franciscan Provincial General in the late 1560s influenced the upper cloister's distinctive combination of elevated open chapel alongside oratories. Friars had little opportunity for solitary prayer during the day, and rarely a chance to contemplate beyond the monastery walls. The lack of time devoted to quiet contemplation was a major source of discontent among the friars. At an emergency chapter meeting in 1568, for example, Franciscan Minister General Miguel de Navarro proposed a series of radical reforms to revive the failing spiritual health of the mission. He ordered friars to abandon monasteries in far-off and unhealthful places and proposed the ordination of *creoles*, arguing a smaller, centralized mission with more recruits would revive the rigorous observance of the Rule.<sup>16</sup> Built in the wake of the mission's reform, Huaquechula's painted oratories also resolve this problem through art and architecture to provide friars a place

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<sup>14</sup> To my knowledge, Huaquechula is the only Novohispanic monastery that has five oratories in the upper cloister. By comparison, nearby Huejotzingo, finished two decades earlier, has three shallow oratories in upper cloister.

<sup>15</sup> The 'goodness of creation' was a prominent theme of the nocturnal liturgy, and the imagery of the oratories extended this theme to other monastic spaces. Personal communication Robert L. Kendrick. July 17, 2020.

<sup>16</sup> I touch on the role of architecture in Franciscan Minister General Miguel de Navarro's reform in Chapter 1. See also Gerónimo de Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana*, ed. Joaquín García Icazbalceta (Alicante: Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes, [1870;1980] 1999), bk. 3, chap. 60, <http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/nd/ark:/59851/bmczs2p6>; "Miguel Navarro to Viceroy don Martín Enríquez, 1568," in Joaquín García Icazbalceta, ed., *NCDHM*, vol. 1 (Mexico City: Editorial Salvador Chávez Hayhoe, 1941), 67; Steven F. Turley, *Catholic Christendom, 1300-1700: Franciscan Spirituality and Mission in New Spain, 1524-1599: Conflict Beneath the Sycamore Tree (Luke 19:1-10)* (Farnham: Routledge, 2016), 114-118.

to contemplate the wonder of the natural world.<sup>17</sup>

Created for meditation, the oratory landscape murals placed friars in splendid isolation. Each barrel-vaulted oratory comprises a rectangular interior space large enough to accommodate a stone altar table (today absent or in ruins) and a single occupant.<sup>18</sup> An intact altar in an upper cloister oratory at Huejotzingo provides a sense of what this may have looked like [Fig. 4.5]. A display of devotional items would have been spread across the oratory's altar: a pair of candles, a small triptych possibly decorated with a feather mosaic, and a crucifix, all arranged on an altar cloth. At Huaquechula, the friar would have stepped into the oratory, faced the altar and knelt, his body pressing close to this display as he gazed up at the full-length portrait of a martyred saint on the wall behind the central altar. When the altar was intact, this spatial arrangement positioned the kneeling friar in the middle of the oratory and at the center of the landscape compositions that adorn the side walls of Oratories 1-4.<sup>19</sup> Directly below the landscape panels is a horizontal grotesque frieze that runs the length of the side walls above a red dado, which may have continued into the cloister walkway.<sup>20</sup> An illusionistic program of ribs springs from the

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<sup>17</sup> Fray Juan de Alameda was an adherent of the Observant reform and is credited with Huaquechula's upper cloister project. Characteristic of Alameda's projects are architectural features that minimized contact between friars and laypersons. For more on mendicant strategies for seclusion, see Caroline Bruzelius *Preaching, Building, and Burying: Friars and the Medieval City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 3-9. The problem of finding time to pray was not a uniquely Franciscan issue in New Spain, and so it is remarkable that only Franciscans in New Spain implemented cloister oratories in their friaries. The Augustinians and Dominicans, by contrast, tended to concentrate the upper cloister's devotional activity in the corner bays where large murals, typically Passional in focus, are located. On the decorative program of Augustinian cloisters, see Jeanette Favrot Peterson, *The Paradise Garden Murals of Malinalco: Utopia and Empire in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993), 162-164.

<sup>18</sup> For example, Oratory 5 is the widest oratory and measures 2.7 x 1.90 x 2.20 meters.

<sup>19</sup> Only Oratory 5 departs from this iconographic scheme, which I address in the Conclusion.

<sup>20</sup> The source for the motifs painted in the upper cloister friezes is the quarto-size frontispiece used by printers in Zamora and Seville, Spain between 1542 and 1552 for popular books, such as Johannes Sacrobosco, *Tractado de la Sphera*, trans. Jerónimo de Chaves (Seville: Juan de León, 1544), and Bartolomé de Las Casas, *Brevissima Relación de la Destrucción de las Indias*

corners of the oratory, enclosing the oratory in an architectural shell of painted stone that complicates the beholder's relation to real and virtual space.

The mural program of each oratory generates the illusion that the beholder is exposed to the elements on all sides even though they are within the confines of the upper cloister. Each landscape mural features a pair of trees in the foreground that frames a large clearing in the center [Fig. 4.6]. The beholder is positioned between the trees, forming a relationship to the murals by the architecture of the space. The mottled trunks and forked limbs of the trees stretch to the vault where they erupt into a canopy of foliage, their verticality and relief creating the sense that the oratory is an inhabitable landscape. Arid plains stretch across the foreground, clearing a pathway into the scene, while a cluster of buildings tucked into the middle register locate the viewer on the edge of urban life. Behind the trees extends a silhouette of hills painted in blue-green, and concentrations of color along the contours and right sides of the hills produce an atmospheric impression of spatial recession. The choice of blue-green, a precious pigment, here also registers the optical effect of viewing topographical formations from a great distance.<sup>21</sup> The paintings stretch toward a twilight sky crisscrossed with illusionistic ribs ornamented with the crest of the Franciscan Order.

The condition of the murals in each oratory varies considerably. I will focus on the three landscape murals in the best condition. Oratory 1, located in the northeast corner of the cloister,

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(Seville: Sebastián Trujillo, 1552). On the use of this frontispiece in Novohispanic monastic murals, see Santiago Sebastián López, "La decoración llamada Plateresca en el mundo Hispanico," *Boletín del Centro de Investigaciones Históricas y Estéticas*, no. 6 (1966): 59; and, "Los libros de emblemas: Uso y difusión en Iberoamérica," in *Juegos de ingenio y agudeza. La pintura emblemática de la Nueva España*, ed. Jaime Cuadriello (Mexico City: Patronato del Museo Nacional de Arte, 1994), 59.

<sup>21</sup> This convention is also used for illustrations of landscapes in the *Florentine Codex*, see Diana Magaloni Kerpel, *The Colors of the New World: Artists, Materials, and the Creation of the Florentine Codex* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2014), 16.

is the narrowest of the five oratories and is dedicated to Saint Sebastian. The mural of the martyr pierced with arrows is in very poor condition and no murals survive on the alcove's east wall [Fig. 4.7]. The west wall of the oratory, however, contains a large section of pictorial landscape that captures the Atlixco Valley's most prominent topographical features along the horizon [Figs. 4.8, 4.9, 4.10]. Macuilxochitepec (Cerro de San Miguel), a promontory in the northwest corner of the Atlixco Valley and the ancestral home of the Huaquecholteca, appears in the far-right corner, while a distinctive volcanic crater and the Popocatepetl volcano appear in the center and far left, respectively. Wedged between the crater and Macuilxochitepec are the towers of Villa de Carrión, a Spanish city established at the base of the hill at the end of the sixteenth century. The east wall of Oratory 3, dedicated to the Immaculate Conception, is also largely intact. It is notable for the depiction of highly-modeled trees in the middle ground. This is also true for Oratory 4, dedicated to Saint Paul, which has intact landscape murals on both walls, although the paintings on the east wall are more abraded. All of the landscape paintings share an iconographic program and similar set of spatial and painterly conventions. Only Oratory 5, located in the northeast corner of the cloister, departs from this iconographic scheme. A mural of Nahua Christian penitential procession occupies the upper section of the east and west walls, substituting a panoramic view with a detailed study of barefoot penitents crossing through a desiccated countryside. I address Oratory 5 in the Conclusion, although it is worth noting that these twin paintings of Nahua Christian Holy Week ritual likewise introduce outdoor religious experiences into the private confines of the upper cloister.

Franciscan friars coveted the solitude of the wilderness and saw in Mexico's mountains and caverns a biophysical environment perfectly suited to emulating the eremitical lifestyle of

their founder.<sup>22</sup> Describing the Valley of Mexico, Motolinia proclaimed:

Before long, I believe, those who come to New Spain are going to see how, as this land was formerly a second Egypt in point of idolatries and sins and afterwards flourished in great sanctity, so also these mountains and lands will flourish, and hermits and contemplatives will inhabit them.<sup>23</sup>

The roots of this fascination extend to the *vitae* of Saint Francis, whose penchant for oak trees and isolated hillsides prompted his followers in New Spain to plant trees and construct roadside oratories, enacting a physical transformation of the landscape as a gesture of pious imitation.<sup>24</sup>

However, in New Spain the friar's physical engagement with the natural was limited to the monastery garden. The Franciscan Order's Constitutions stipulated that friars could not venture

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<sup>22</sup> The absence of lush plants in the paintings also markedly separates the Huaquechula oratory murals from other paintings of non-human landscapes found in European monasteries, such as the landscape frescoes in the devotional oratories of the Benedictine nun's convent of San Maurizio, Milan by Bernardino Luini (ca. 1520). To my eye, the paintings thus register the eremitical life more so than the fecundity of the paradise. See Mary-Ann Winkelmes, "Taking Part: Benedictine Nuns as Patrons of Art and Architecture," in *Picturing Women in Renaissance and Baroque Italy*, ed. Geraldine A. Johnson and Sara F. Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 102-209.

<sup>23</sup> Toribio de Benavente Motolinia, *Motolinía's History of the Indians of New Spain*, ed. and trans., Francis B. Steck (Washington D.C.: American Academy for Franciscan History, 1951), 278. New Spain as an eremitic landscape is also a theme in the spiritual biography of fray Martín de Valencia, the leader of the first Franciscan mission to New Spain. Notably, an account of his vision of Saint Anthony of Padua and Saint Francis at the Amecameca cave includes a description of the Popocatepetl volcano, see Juan de Torquemada, *Monarquía indiana* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, [1615] 1975), vol. 6, bk. 20, chap. 17,

<http://www.historicas.unam.mx/publicaciones/catalogo/ficha?id=154>

<sup>24</sup> Francis blessed birds and meditated in the oak forests of Mount La Verna and Mount Subasio see, Thomas Celano, *Vita Prima*, in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, ed. Regis J. Armstrong, J. A. Wayne Hellmann, William J. Short, vol. 1 (New York: New City Press, 1999), 234-235. By contrast, diabolical trees incited Martín de Valencia to sin; overcoming the temptation, he planted oak trees wherever he resided, see Francisco Jiménez, "Jhesus, Maria, Franciscus. Vita fratris Martini de Valencia," in Antonio Rubial Garcia, *La hermana pobreza: El franciscanismo en la Edad Media a la evangelización novohispana* (Mexico City: Universidad Autónoma Nacional de México, 1996), 228.

outside the monastery to pray.<sup>25</sup> This denied the friars the experience of solitude in the wilderness central to their founder's spiritual formation. It also separated the current Franciscans from the primitive missionaries in New Spain who had also benefitted from periodic retreats to caves and hillsides.<sup>26</sup> Architectural decoration supplied a logical compromise, and one that aligned with a rich Franciscan tradition of vivid and imaginative pastoral scenes.<sup>27</sup> Bringing the wilderness inside, the oratory landscape murals resolved a spiritual problem by generating an enticing space for friars to pray in the manner of Saint Francis.

Fray Juan de Torquemada's spiritual biography of fray Miguel de Rodarte illuminates the function of Huaquechula's upper cloister oratories.<sup>28</sup> In 1609, Rodarte died and was buried at Huaquechula. According to Torquemada, Rodarte practiced a rigorous mode of personal asceticism and self-discipline that centered on alimentary deprivation, contemplation of the Passion, and intense periods of isolated prayer. Rodarte maintained an arduous practice of solitary prayer at night, far more intense than that mandated by Franciscan statutes. According to Torquemada, the ascetic friar's preferred spot for nocturnal cycles of prayer were the "cuartos de

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<sup>25</sup> Joaquín García Icazbalceta, ed. *Códice franciscano*, in *NCDHM*, vol. 2 (Mexico City: Francisco Díaz de León, 1903), 154.

<sup>26</sup> Torquemada, *Monarquía indiana*, vol. 6, bk. 20, chap. 17.

<sup>27</sup> The spirit of compromise that separated late sixteenth-century missionaries from their forebearers is expressed most clearly in Franciscan Juan Focher's *Itinerarium catholicum*, edited by Juan de Valadés, which advocates prudent flexibility in all matters related to missionary life. See Juan Focher and Diego Valadés, *Itinerarium catholicum proficentium ad infideles co[n]uertados* (Seville: Apud Alfonsum Scribanum, 1574); Turley, *Franciscan Spirituality*, 120-123; 163. For a recent intervention in analyses of Franciscan aesthetics and the natural, see Allie Terry-Fritsch, "Performing the Renaissance Body and Mind: Somaesthetic Style and Devotional Practice at the Sacro Monte di Varallo," *Open Arts Journal* 4 (2014-2015): 111-132.

<sup>28</sup> See, *Monarquía indiana*, vol. 6, bk. 20, chap. 82. Note that Torquemada spells the friars' name "Roldarte" whereas Agustín Vetancurt modernizes the spelling to "Rodarte." For simplicity, I adopt Vetancurt's modern spelling. Agustín de Vetancurt, *Teatro mexicano: Descripción breve de los sucesos ejemplares, históricos, políticos, militares y religiosos del nuevo mundo occidental de las indias, 1698*, vol. 3-4 (Mexico City: Porrúa, 1982), 22.

oración,” most certainly a reference to the five barrel-vaulted oratories that line the northern range of the upper cloister at Huaquechula.

At a glance, it is precisely this kind of space for meditation that the Huaquechula oratory paintings visualize.<sup>29</sup> For example, recession through pictorial space unfolds like an imaginative peregrination from meadow to mountain, a geographical trajectory that is also a foundational allegory for spiritual advancement.<sup>30</sup> Meanwhile, scanning the painting horizontally locates the beholder betwixt and between civilization, marked by the cluster of buildings in the left-hand margins of the middle register, and the spiritual desert, signaled by desiccated land and rocky escarpments typically in the lower right corners of the murals.

Trees do more than arrange the viewer’s relation to pictorial space, they also anchor the viewer in a recognizable place. The twisted, textured tree trunks and their expansive spread of leaves mark the trees as a local species, the prominent *ahuehuetl* or Moctezuma cypress (*Taxodium mucronatum*) that grows on the banks of rivers, such as the Huitzilac that runs behind the monastery [Figs. 4.11, 4.12].<sup>31</sup> Wooded foothills rim Huaquechula, and several murals cite

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<sup>29</sup> Following Wei-Cheng Lin, I prefer “visualization” over “representation,” a term that often connotes mimesis, to acknowledge the invocational functions of religious images and the active role of painting in constructing knowledge in the Nahua worldview. See Wei-Cheng Lin, “Relocating and Relocalizing Mount Wutai: Vision and Visuality in Mogao Cave 61,” *Artibus Asiae* 73, no. 1 (2013): 80-81. On the term “representation,” see David Summers, “Representation,” in *Critical Terms for Art History*, ed. Robert S. Nelson and Richard Shiff (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 1-19.

<sup>30</sup> Compare with the compositional organization of Bellini’s landscapes in the *Transfiguration* (ca. 1478-79) and *Saint Francis in the Desert* (ca. 1480). For a discussion of Bellini’s allegorical landscapes, see Davide Gasparotto, “Bellini and Landscape,” in *Giovanni Bellini: Landscapes of Faith in Renaissance Venice* (Los Angeles: Paul G. Getty Museum, 2017), 20-21. By contrast, consider Jessica Horton’s remark that the horizon line is a “compositional element that typically grants viewers a sense of mastery over a vast pictured terrain,” in “All Our Relations,” 87.

<sup>31</sup> The size and long-life span made the *ahuehuetl* tree made it an apt metaphor for rulership and ancestry during the pre-Hispanic period. Similar associations persist today, grafted on to the cult of the *Cristo de Chalma*, see Peterson, *Paradise Murals*, 136.

the distinctive contours of prominent geological features in the Atlixco Valley where the monastery is located. Such precise depictions of plant life and geological formations highlight the wonder of the Atlixco Valley landscape, enfolding it into the contemplative exercise of Franciscan private devotion.

In the Huaquechula oratory landscape murals, the combination of spatial recession and the open, inviting foreground guides the beholder into the scene, contributing to the notion that the land represented in the painting is land available for consumption. But the fantasy registered in Motolinia's poetic description is also a disavowal of Indigenous sovereignty, an exercise in spiritual occupation that hinges on a willful refusal to see Indigenous inhabitants as legitimate occupiers of the flourishing mountains and valleys.<sup>32</sup> A close examination of landscape murals likewise suggests that artists structured the paintings to resist and oppose the ideological constructions of the natural introduced by European colonizers by slowing the viewer's progression through space. Trees structure the beholder's visual relationship to representational space. Yet, trees also obstruct the view because they are situated between the beholder and the extension of the meadow. Tree limbs stretch towards the vault, blocking the beholder's imaginative movement through the landscape. Perhaps most importantly, the trees situate the viewer in an unfertile landscape.

The Huaquechula artists drew on European prints for the compositions and there are interesting parallels between the form and function of the trees in the foreground of etchings by German printer Albrecht Altdorfer (d. 1538) and the oratory murals [Figs. 4.13, 4.14].<sup>33</sup> In both

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<sup>32</sup> William Deneven, "The Pristine Myth: The Landscape of the Americas in 1492," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 82, no. 3 (1992): 379; Aileen Moreton-Robinson, *The White Possessive: Property, Power, and Indigenous Sovereignty* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), 65-78.

<sup>33</sup> On Altdorfer's novel use of spruce trees to obstruct visual pathways, see Christopher Wood,



cases, gnarled trees obstruct the viewer's entry into a scene, devoid of all traces of human labor as a poignant reminder of just how far away the viewer is from civilization. At the same time, this kind of "independent landscape," to draw on Christopher Wood's terminology, represents a significant innovation in monastic mural painting in the Americas. It marks a distinctive turn away from the kinds of background scenes teeming with human and animal life, as prominently displayed in the murals that adorn the salons of the Casa del Deán in nearby Puebla de los Ángeles [Fig. 4.15].<sup>34</sup> Notwithstanding the limited corpus of extant sixteenth-century Novohispanic murals, examples of pure landscape (that is those lacking fauna) appear to be limited to Franciscan monasteries whose programs date to the 1560s and 70s, decades marked by a dramatic transformation due to grazing, irrigation, mills, and Spanish settlement. But what is perhaps most significant is that at Huaquechula the artists took pains to present a land unaltered by human hands and thereby visualize a physical landscape unlike the rapidly changing and historically densely populated Atlixco Valley.

The central scene of the lonely grassland lacks the kinds of concentrated effects of line or shading observed in the buildings and trees, and consists predominately as a patch of color interrupted by gestural lines along the contours, recalling the arc made by tall grasses blowing in

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*Albrecht Altdorfer and the Origins of Landscape: Revised and Expanded Second Edition* (London: Reaktion Books, 2014), 214. Few prints survive from the sixteenth century because of their ephemeral materiality and use in the production of other paintings, in which they were cut, pricked, and worn, see Aaron Hyman, "Patterns of Colonial Transfer: An Album of Prints in Mexico City," *Print Quarterly* 34, no. 4 (2017): 393-399.

<sup>34</sup> On the murals of the Casa del Deán, see Penny C. Morrill, *The Casa del Deán: New World Imagery in a Sixteenth-Century Mexican Mural Cycle* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014). A point of departure for frescoes of martyrs against landscape backgrounds in Franciscan convents is Pietro Lorenzetti's murals for the chapter room and cloister at San Francesco, Sienna, ca. 1335. See William Hood, *Fra Angelico at San Marco* (London; New York: Yale University Press; BCA, 1993), 126. Interestingly, the upper cloister at Atlixco preserves a mural of a *trompe l'oeil* window that looks out onto a countryside. Unfortunately, the cloister is closed to the public because of damages incurred during an earthquake, complicating further analysis.

the wind. Yet, the brushwork here expresses more than the texture of the meadow's limited vegetation; it may also convey crucial information about the quality of its soil. Book 11 of the *Florentine Codex* (ca. 1575-1577) contains a chapter on the different qualities of land in Central Mexico.<sup>35</sup> Fray Bernardino de Sahagún and a team of Nahuatl amanuenses produced the bilingual three-volume encyclopedia in the scriptorium of the Colegio de Santa Cruz, Tlatelolco. For each entry, scribes wrote a textual description in alphabetic Nahuatl in the right column and a corresponding Spanish description in the left column, often including an illustration.

Consistently, the artists of Book 11 use the choppy-grasses convention to signal land that is fallow, even sterile (*estéril*). This is clearly marked out in a drawing corresponding to the entry for *Tlalcolli*, or sterile land, in which prickly tufts of grass protrude from the surface of three intersecting knolls [Fig. 4.16]. The Nahuatl and Spanish captions make the ominous quality of the spikey grass even more explicit by emphasizing that this type of land is “good for nothing” and that “everything perishes.”<sup>36</sup> The Spanish caption also includes information about the color of the land through an analogy by describing it as “land of quail, that is, the color of quail.”<sup>37</sup>

The drawing of *xaltllali* (sandy soil) in the *Florentine Codex* has comparable conventions [Fig. 4.17]. To understand the meaning of this convention, we can compare it to the entry on *Miccatlalli* (the land of the dead) that appears directly above it on the page. *Micctlalli* is

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<sup>35</sup> Here, I use the digitized, online manuscript available from the World Digital Library. Bernardino de Sahagún, *Historia general [universal] de las cosas de [la] Nueva España* (henceforth, *Florentine Codex*), (Florence: Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Colección Palatina, mss. 218-220, 1575-1577).

<https://www.wdl.org/en/item/10096/>. For the facsimile edition, see Bernardino de Sahagún, *Códice Florentino*, 3 vols. (Mexico City: Secretaría de Gobernación, 1979).

<sup>36</sup> “Tlalcolli: inic mitoa tlalcolli amo qualli tlalli: ipampa in amo tlevel [mochiua uncan in atle imuchiuhia, nenquizqui, atle inecoca. Nenquizca, nenpolivi, tlalcolti, tlalçoltia.” Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, bk. 11, f. 229r. All translations mine unless otherwise noted.

<sup>37</sup> “A la tierra esteril, donde ninguna cosa se haze bien; llamanla Tlalcolli, que quiere dezir tierra de codornices, o de color de codornices.” Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, bk. 11, f. 229r.

represented as a smooth patch of land with a skull and two bones. On the page, the juxtaposition of failed maize crop as a result of poor soil quality and the cemetery is a striking commentary on the integral relationship between land and living. But the *Micctlalli* drawing also reveals another convention wherein ‘good’ soil is distinguished by its smooth contours, as if the rough grasses have already been cleared to reveal level topsoil, marking a tactile engagement between humans and the earth. Other drawings of sites with good soil and robust organic life are likewise characterized by their continuous, level surfaces [Fig. 4.18]. Throughout the chapter captions and images describe the most productive land as green and even bright yellow.<sup>38</sup> Yet the majority of the foreground scenes in the Huaquechula landscape murals have tawny brown and olive-green hues, not the brilliant yellow associated with fertile land in the *Florentine Codex*. In fact, the color scheme used in the landscape paintings most closely corresponds to the color palette used in the illustrations for mosquitos, flies, and other flying pests [Fig. 4.19].<sup>39</sup>

Huaquechula’s artists were likely associated with the Colegio de Santa Cruz workshop where the *Florentine Codex* was painted. This close proximity increases the likelihood of shared conventions. The Colegio housed the main Franciscan art school responsible for training both painters and scribes (*tlacuiloque*).<sup>40</sup> Moreover, it seems that the most skilled painters and craftspeople were itinerant, moving around New Spain as commissions emerged, and often associated with the individual friars oversaw the architectural or decorative work while serving

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<sup>38</sup> For “tierra dulce, tierra amarilla,” see Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, bk. 11, f. 220r., f. 228v-229. Marcy Norton, “The Quetzal Takes Flight: Microhistory, Mesoamerican Knowledge, and Early Modern Natural History,” in *Translating Nature: Cross-Cultural Histories of Early Modern Science*, ed. Jaime Marroquin Arredondo and Ralph Bauer (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019), 132.

<sup>39</sup> Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, bk. 11, f. 107r.

<sup>40</sup> For an introduction to the Colegio de Santa Cruz, see Louise M. Burkhart, *Holy Wednesday: A Nahuatl Drama from Early Colonial Mexico* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 55-65.

at the monastery.<sup>41</sup> Although I have used the *Florentine Codex* images to illustrate these points, it is important to point out that the Huaquechula murals are earlier. While more work on artists' networks outside of the Valley of Mexico needs to be done, the Huaquechula murals, the *Florentine Codex* drawings and, as we shall see, regional maps, all point to an emerging set of shared conventions for describing the qualities of soil and landscape features.

Through a series of pictorial conventions and spatial strategies, the artists of the Huaquechula oratory landscapes mark the central foreground, the clearing, as a potentially unproductive and even uninhabitable place. These strategies combine to oppose the invitational aspect of the painting. While the open foreground invites the viewer to imagine themselves within the pictorial space, the murals take advantage of the architectural configuration of the oratory to confine the viewer to a section of the landscape where no energies flow, rebuffing the freedom to survey and subjugate the land into a colonial fantasy. By framing the viewer in this unproductive space, the mural thus implicates the viewer in the ecological problem it portrays.

Up to this point I have concentrated on what the landscape murals *picture* and how those elements organize a relationship to the beholder. However, what is *not pictured* might matter most in the Huaquechula upper cloister landscape murals. Not a single painting shows an animal or human, even though artists included human dwellings, tucking miniaturized abodes with towers and gabled roofs behind trees in the corners of the paintings. Even more unsettling is the absence of water. There are no rivers, no clouds promising rain, and no snow-capped mountains in the distance. Perhaps the artists were merely depicting the dry season, the five-month interval when even the lush Atlixco Valley looks sun-scorched. The blue-green hills that stretch across

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<sup>41</sup> For instance, fray Antonio Roldán supervised the painting of the lower cloister at Huejotzingo in 1556, and then transferred to Tecamachalco where he commissioned Juan Gerson to paint the *sotocoro* vault.

the horizon do appear to promise life, not least because blue-green colors are associated with vitality in Central Mexico.<sup>42</sup> But that relief is faraway and separated from the beholder by the thick, tawny contour line that defines the foreground and the vacant field that is the focal point of each painting.

### **Cultivating Drought**

The landscape murals that decorate the upper cloister oratories sharpen focus on the persistent uncertainty of sustaining life in sixteenth century Huaquechula. The mid-1560s and early 1570s are often associated with rebounding Indigenous populations, relative economic growth, and environmental stability. However, sources from the Atlixco Valley tell a different story.<sup>43</sup> The case of Huaquechula suggests that the fragility of the ecosystem was exacerbated by settler colonialism, in contrast to previous studies of other regions, which contend that drought did not contribute to long-term social or environmental degradation.<sup>44</sup> This brief reconstruction

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<sup>42</sup> Diana Magaloni Kerpel, “The Traces of the Creative Process: Pictorial Materials and Techniques in the Beinecke Map,” in *Painting a Map of Sixteenth-Century Mexico City: Land, Writing, and Native Rule*, ed. Mary E. Miller and Barbara E. Mundy (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 83-85; Molly Harbour Bassett and Jeanette Favrot Peterson, “Coloring the Sacred in Sixteenth-Century Central Mexico,” *The Materiality of Color: The Production, Circulation, and Application of Dyes and Pigments, 1400-1800*, ed. Andrea Feeser, Maureen Daly Goggin, and Beth Fowkes Tobin (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2012), 56–58; Magaloni Kerpel, *The Colors of the New World*, 42.

<sup>43</sup> The standard account of population change in the second-half of the sixteenth century is Sherburne Friend Cook and Woodrow Borah, “The Rate of Population Change in Central Mexico, 1550-1570,” *Historical American Historical Review*, XXXVII (1957): 463-470.

<sup>44</sup> Bradley Skopyk challenges the data for “megadrought” events in the middle of the sixteenth century, isolating other factors that contributed to environmental degradation in Tlaxcala. Although Skopyk convincingly demonstrates that long-term ecological damage did not occur in Tlaxcala until the late seventeenth century shift to agave cultivation, it is important to note that the wet, temperate climate of the Atlixco Valley is considerably different from Tlaxcala’s highland climate and was also more susceptible to drought. See, Skopyk, “Undercurrents of Conquest,” 284-289.

suggests that for Huaquechula, the combined forces of drought and settler colonialism were principal factors in the rise of monoagriculture and an emergent protocapital structure characterized by dispossession which, in turn, drove Nahuas into exploitative labor conditions in urban textile workshops and mills.<sup>45</sup> This larger phenomenon of agroecosystem instability touched every facet of Huaquecholteca life. The upper cloister landscape murals provide an important glimpse into how this new environment could be navigated through art.

In the Atlixco Valley rivers shaped history. As described in Chapter 1, drought and famine in the 1440s drove Mexica invaders into the Atlixco Valley in an effort to secure the Empire's lifeline to crops and inter-regional trade.<sup>46</sup> The Huaquecholteca had recently established a new settlement near a naturally fortified location on a branch in the Huitzilac River. This new settlement positioned the Huaquecholteca in control of a major source of fresh water, something the parched Mexica legions desperately needed. To cement their control and refresh their army, the Mexica invaded Huaquechula and built a garrison along the Huitzilac. This effectively severed Huaquechula's control of the waterways and the *altepetl* capitulated to the Mexica.<sup>47</sup>

The Huaquecholteca would spend the subsequent century restoring their ancestral boundaries. Yet regaining control of the greater Atlixco Valley set the Huaquecholteca on a

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<sup>45</sup> This is remarkable because the example of the Atlixco Valley draws attention to an emergent protocapital system in Central Mexico centuries before industrialization which, alongside structural racism, began to hamstring Indigenous communities in the Atlixco Valley around the turn of the seventeenth century. Daniel Nemser, "Introduction: Iberian Empire and the History of Capitalism," *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 19, no. 2 (2019): 1-15.

<sup>46</sup> Therrell, "Aztec Drought," 1263-272. The *Codex Telleriano-Remensis* records severe blizzards in the years 1447, 1448, and 1449, and these meteorological anomalies may have impacted the planting and harvest seasons, setting off a chain reaction that culminated in widespread grain shortages. See *Codex Telleriano-Remensis*, f. 32v.

<sup>47</sup> Huaquechula remained a Mexica outpost of tremendous commercial and military importance until 1520 when Cortés' army ransacked the garrison. See chapter 1.

collision course with Spanish farmers as both groups vied for rights to the region's waterways. Initially, Spanish settlement in the region was slow. Farmers preferred to reside in urban settings and their allotments consisted of small tracts of land, usually six or seven hectares on the edge of Puebla de los Angeles, fifty kilometers to the northeast of Huaquechula.<sup>48</sup> That all changed beginning in the 1560s. According to one study, in 1567 the viceroyalty awarded to settlers four grants (*reales mercedes*) of cropland (*caballeria*) within Huaquechula's borders.<sup>49</sup> This was the first time in twenty-five years that a *merced* granted land claimed by Huaquechula and it marked a turn in the *altepetl*'s future. Less than ten years later, in 1575, Spanish settlers seized another seven square miles of vital cropland from Huaquechula. The onset of plague in 1576-81 intensified this crisis as even more Huaquecholteca fields went unplanted due a sudden shortage of field hands. The land grab might have been much worse; on several occasions the Huaquecholteca successfully defended their interests by arguing that the granting of a *merced* would deprive them of their means of subsistence and paying tribute.<sup>50</sup> Significantly, it is precisely this period in which the artists of Huaquechula's oratories painted landscapes that figure the barren land as the subject of the paintings.

In the 1560s the traditional systems of collective land ownership and labor arrangements

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<sup>48</sup> François Chevalier, *Land and Society in Colonial Mexico: The Great Hacienda* (Stanford: University of California Press, 1963), 54; Carlos Salvador Paredes Martínez, *La región de Atlixco, Huaquechula y Tochimilco: La sociedad y la agricultura en el siglo XVI* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1991), 40. The *encomienda* labor system is a second factor that forestalled the emergence of a private agricultural sector. *Conquistador* families controlled the pools of Indigenous labor required for the development largescale agriculture. This changed with the implementation of the New Laws in 1544 which limited the amount of tribute *encomenderos* could extract from Indigenous peoples.

<sup>49</sup> Mysyk, "Land, Labor," 341.

<sup>50</sup> The Crown approved sixteen *mercedes*—often awarding multiple grants to a single applicant—comprising 44.5 tracts of cropland (*caballeria*) for a total of 1,913.5 hectares (roughly 4,289 acres), see Mysyk, 342. One *caballeria* is about forty-three hectares, see Chevalier, *Land and Society*, 69.

were unmoored by new tribute policies. As discussed in the chapter 3, Indigenous elites faced new challenges to their political authority after the Crown withdrew a policy that exempted them from paying tribute. This policy eliminated an important economic distinction between elites and commoners, contributing to the erosion of noble hegemony.<sup>51</sup> In addition to increasing the amount of tribute, new Crown policies destabilized the social cohesion of the landless and landholding classes. While Indigenous nobles retained their fields, it became increasingly difficult for them to find commoners to cultivate them.<sup>52</sup> Commoners had to hire themselves out to Spanish landholders to earn enough cash to pay tribute.<sup>53</sup> In the Atlixco Valley, this drove commoners into new labor configurations in urban textile workshops and, later, mills, and away from the fields controlled by the Indigenous nobility. As a result, the material relations began to deteriorate between Huaquecholteca elites and commoners, and their source of subsistence and power, arable land, began to diminish.

Huaquechula's unplanted fields hastened Spanish encroachment. In the context of viceregal policy, the land was uninhabited and thus available. This problem was especially acute in Huaquechula. The roots of the problem can be traced to a change in the allocation of labor in the midcentury. The Spanish Crown inaugurated a new system of forced, rotational labor called

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<sup>51</sup> Gibson, *Aztecs*, 153–55; Ethelia Ruiz Medrano, *Mexico's Indigenous Communities: Their Lands and Histories, 1500 to 2010*, trans. Russ Davidson (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 2011), 61-62; Ethelia Ruiz Medrano, "The Lords of the Land: The Historical Context of the *Mapa de Cauauhtinchan No. 2*," in *Cave, City, and Eagle's Nest: An Interpretative Journey through the Mapa de Cauauhtinchan No. 2*, trans. Scott Sessions, ed. David Carrasco and Scott Sessions (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007), 96; Kelly S. McDonough, "Love Lost: Class Struggle among Indigenous Nobles and Commoners of Seventeenth-Century Tlaxcala," *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 32, no. 1 (2016):12-14; *ead.*, "Indigenous Rememberings and Forgetting: Sixteenth-Century Nahuatl Letters and Petitions to the Spanish Crown," *Native American and Indigenous Studies* 5, no. 1 (2018): 74-75.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>53</sup> Chevalier, *Land and Society*, 68.



the *repartimiento* in 1549. This replaced the *encomienda* system which had bestowed native lands to Spaniards (often *conquistador* families) in a paternalistic arrangement wherein the landholder would ‘care’ for the inhabitants of the parceled land, principally by exposing them to Christianity, in exchange for their labor and tribute.<sup>54</sup> Under *repartimiento* native labor was distributed to privately-held estates (*estancias*) as a weekly force of Indigenous laborers corresponding to a percentage of the tribute owed by an Indigenous community.<sup>55</sup> In exchange, laborers received wages (typically a few *reales*), which helped insert Indigenous commoners into a new colonial cash economy. This also moved them out of ancestral labor arrangements with Indigenous nobility. Ensuing labor shortages intensified the transition to monoagriculture in the region. In the Atlixco Valley, the new *repartimiento* made it possible for a new wave of Spanish settlers to acquire the field hands needed for raising livestock and cultivating crops. Coupled with the tax reforms of the 1560s, the mandated service to Spanish farmers compromised the ability of Indigenous commoners to tend to their own fields during the planting and harvest seasons when the Spanish most demanded their labor. As a result, Indigenous land held in common went unplanted and the native inhabitants of the Valley continued to suffer.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Alessandra Russo, *The Untranslatable Image: A Mestizo History of the Arts in New Spain* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014), 108.

<sup>55</sup> Chevalier, *Land and Society*, 67-68.

<sup>56</sup> There is a strong correlation between periods of famine and subsequent outbreaks of disease in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, a pattern observed most clearly in the entries of Nahuatl annals. For an introduction to the genre, see Camila Townsend, *The Annals of Native America: How the Colonial Nahuas Kept their Histories Alive* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016). Wheat was grown as a Spanish cash crop and it appears to have not supplanted the maize-based diet of Indigenous communities even during periods of disease and famine, see Christina Warinner, et al., “Disease, Demography, and Diet in Early Colonial New Spain: Investigation of a Sixteenth-Century Mixtec Cemetery at Teposcolula Yucundaa,” *Latin American Antiquity* 23, no. 4 (2012): 467-489. For an enlivening discussion of wheat, maize and Spanish settler discourses of corporeality, see Rebecca Earle, “‘If You Eat Their Food ...’: Diets and Bodies in Early Colonial Spanish America,” *The American Historical Review* 115, no. 3 (2010): 688–713.

Inaugurated alongside the *repartimiento* was the *mercedes* system which ceded uncultivated and uninhabited land (*tierra baldía*) to Spanish farmers upon making a formal request to the viceroy. This point is key because, as we shall see, the criteria for a parcel of land to be considered uninhabitable were highly disputable. As part of the verification process, an administrative official reviewed the petition, typically amounting to forty-three hectares, and a cartographer, often an Indigenous painter, drew a map of the requested territory to confirm that the parcel of land in question was indeed vacant.<sup>57</sup> The introduction of the *mercedes* process incited what Alessandra Russo called a “cartographic fever” because maps became indispensable to the concession of land.<sup>58</sup> It also produced a new relationship between Indigenous peoples and the land they held in common.<sup>59</sup> While Indigenous communities could demand a *merced*, as the Huaquecholteca successfully did in 1545, the allocation of territory neither recognized any ancestral claim to the land nor accorded any legal protection to the occupants of the territory. Thus, in order to gain recognition of their territory within the new system, the Huaquecholteca had to cede, in effect, a key part of their ancestral identity and assimilate a new conception of land as private property.

In the Atlixco Valley poor water management practices contributed to an overall increase in the amount of Huaquecholteca territory that could be classified as *tierra baldía*. The Mediterranean variety of wheat preferred by the colonists was frost-hardy and well-suited to the unseasonably cooler growing seasons typical of the sixteenth century.<sup>60</sup> However, it was hardly drought tolerant. Wheat is a water-intensive crop, requiring an average 900 liters of water to

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<sup>57</sup> Chevalier, *Land and Society*, 58; Russo, *Untranslatable*, 111.

<sup>58</sup> Russo, *Untranslatable*, 109.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 110-111.

<sup>60</sup> Warinner, “Disease,” 483.

produce a one kilogram of grain, far more water than maize requires.<sup>61</sup> As a result, Spanish farmers required not only fertile land but also unprecedented access to water. Throughout much of Central Mexico, prolonged drought made wheat cultivation impossible, leading to the rise of livestock and logging industries, especially north of Mexico City.<sup>62</sup> However, in the Atlixco Valley canalization of the Huitzilac and Nexpapa Rivers made it possible to yield two annual harvests of wheat, despite the cooler temperatures and on-going drought.<sup>63</sup> Indeed, according to one estimate, the region produced enough wheat to single-handedly feed the Spanish armada.<sup>64</sup> This made wheat far more lucrative than other colonial crops, such as sugar and silk, prompting settlers to abandon those industries in the region.<sup>65</sup> To grow the wheat industry, in 1579 Spanish settlers—many of whom owned estates consisting of former Huaquecholteca cropland—founded the city of Villa de Carrión (modern Atlixco). The new city was established at the base of Macuilxochitl, the site of Huaquechula’s former ancestral temple, in the northeast corner of the Atlixco Valley, featured in the Oratory 1 landscape mural.

But if wheat boosted the region’s export economy, it also begat *tierras baldías*. Monoagriculture degraded the region’s soil. Spanish irrigation canals further depleted the rivers and siphoned water away from Huaquecholteca fields. The rapid transformation of Huaquecholteca farmland into barren tracts displaced Indigenous inhabitants and opened up more land to Spanish seizure. As early as 1550, in fact, inhabitants from three neighboring *altepemeh* collectively petitioned for water grants (*repartimiento de agua*), securing use of the

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<sup>61</sup> World Wildlife Fund, “Thirsty Crops,” 9. <http://assets.panda.org>

<sup>62</sup> For a study of the effects of pastoralism on the Valle de Mezquital (modern Hidalgo state), see Melville, *Plague of Sheep*.

<sup>63</sup> Chevalier, *Land and Society*, 60.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Chevalier, *Land and Society*, 68.

Huilango River (Huitzilac).<sup>66</sup> Not incidentally, the *merced* was granted in the midst of a dispute between Huaquechula and these upriver *altepeme*, suggesting control of the arteries was not only contested but part of a larger strategy to hamstring rival *altepeme*. The canalization of the region also increased competition for water among Spanish farmers. By the 1590s, the problem was so acute that Spanish laborers petitioned Viceroy Luís de Velasco to establish a system of *repartimiento de agua* to support the grain industry in the Atlixco Valley.<sup>67</sup>

### Mapping Dispossession and Environmental Change

Painted around the same time as Huaquechula's upper cloister murals, the *Mapa de Texcalayaca* (1576) pictures these forces at work [Fig. 4.20]. In the map, oriented with east at the top, serpentine irrigation canals (*asequias*) arc around a large landmass labeled "*Punta del mal Pais*," denoting a rugged stretch of hills that extends between Tochimilco<sup>68</sup> (lower left) and Huaquechula (not pictured).<sup>69</sup> Washes of brown and tawny-colored pigment model the rocky surface of the outcroppings while swipes of the brush along the perimeter of the rocks record tall grasses, recalling the conventions for rendering unfertile and rocky land observed in the Huaquechula upper cloister murals and Book 11 of the *Florentine Codex* [Fig. 4.21]. Few sources of water are colored, even though the artist took pains to paint layers of translucent pigment over the craggy hills, modeling up the forms to accentuate the relative altitude of the

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<sup>66</sup> "Real provision...sobre el uso de las aguas" of 1550 in AGN, Tierras, vol, 11, exp. 1, fs. 20.

<sup>67</sup> Archivo Histórico de Agua, "Repartimiento general de las aguas de la Villa de Carrión, Valle de Atlixco, 1592," *Aprovechamientos Superficiales*, c. 3931, exp. 54, 413, fs. 226-227 quoted in Gloria Camacho Pichardo, "Repartimientos de agua en el Valle de Atlixco 1592 y 1594: El cantarranas y manatales," *Boletín de Archivo Histórico del Agua* 35 (2007): 6.

<sup>68</sup> Here, the pre-Hispanic name of the *altepetl*, Ocopetlayuca, designates Tochimilco.

<sup>69</sup> The limited color is a striking feature of this map, particularly with regard to the canals and rivers. Although painted at the outset of the plague, it is likely the artist finished the map because the *corregidor* signed it. This suggests the artist intentionally left the water sources uncolored.

promontories. Around the left edge of the map appear four pink rectangular structures with arched doorways and domed or crenelated roofs topped with crosses. The three smaller structures are labeled “*estancias*” (Spanish estates) while the largest structure denotes Tochimilco through the depiction of a stylized-version of the head-town’s (*cabecera*) monastery. A trail of footprints originating in the monastery patio leads from Tochimilco to Huaquechula, which is presumably located just beyond the right edge of the map, opposite a thick blue line that delimits the border between the *altepemeh*. Before disappearing off the map, the footprints pass through a section of farmland, denoted by seven rectangles that each signify a cultivated field (*sementera*). Some of rectangles contain grids, suggesting the land was cultivated and irrigated by the nearby canals that encircle the plots of land.

The map was painted in conjunction with the award of a parcel of land and irrigation canals to a Spaniard to grow wheat in fallow land east of modern Huilango, a polity (*sujeto*) then under nearby Tochimilco’s jurisdiction.<sup>70</sup> Near the uppermost rectangle at the top of the map is an annotation recording the declaration made by the *corregidor* (Spanish magistrate) of Ocopetlayuca (modern Tochimilco). Briefly, the text indicates that the map is a verified and accurate record of the plot deeded to the farmer and its relationship to its physical surroundings.<sup>71</sup> The statement recorded on the map is the product of a more ritualistic gesture made by the farmer and *corregidor* much earlier in the day. As part of the concession, the recipient of the *merced* would have walked the boundaries of the new property, picking up

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<sup>70</sup> AGN, Tierras vol. 2429, exp. 1, cuad. 2, f. 113. The accompanying documents of the *merced* indicate the map was produced by the Tochimilca who claimed territory that belonged to Huaquechula, such as the *sujeto* of Huilango, in a 1550s lawsuit (described in Chapter 1). This dispute is registered in the map by the artist’s incorporating of Huilango into Tochimilca territory.

<sup>71</sup> Alex Hidalgo, *Trail of Footprints: A History of Indigenous Maps from Viceregal Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2019), 94-95.

sticks, tossing rocks, and pulling up grass as part of a ceremonial gesture that attests to the commitment to improve the land through cultivation.<sup>72</sup> This performance actualized the philosophical and legal framework of how Spanish property was founded. What is particularly important here is that *improvement* consisted not just of planting crops but of transforming a natural landscape into an artificial one. As the map shows, by the mid-1570s irrigation canals crisscrossed the Atlixco Valley. The arteries wrap around the disputed fields around Texcalyacac like tentacles, stretching into Huaquecholteca territory in the top-center and far-left side of the map.<sup>73</sup>

But the map also draws attention to the dubious category of the *tierra baldía*. A Nahua community later mobilized this map in court to contest the predatory Spanish farming practices. Residents of Huilango, a polity subject to nearby Tochimilco, contended that the *tierras baldías* portrayed on the upper right section of the map were not, in fact, vacant; rather, the community argued that the outbreak of disease had made it impossible for them to plant their fields. This is interesting because the Huilango lawsuit predates the outbreak of the *huey cocoliztli* plague later that year and implies that the community was already struggling to survive. Significantly, Huilango is located on the Huitzilac, just upriver from Huaquechula and closer to the source of water upon which the region depended. If residents of Huilango could not plant their fields, and thus forfeited sovereignty over them according to a Spanish legal framework, it is likely that Huaquechula and its subject polities were in an equally dire situation.

The *Mapa de Texcalyacac* and other land grant maps are an extension of a bureaucratic process that required the accurate depiction of topographical features to the extent that the

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<sup>72</sup> Chevalier, *Land and Society*, 58.

<sup>73</sup> On pre-Hispanic irrigation networks in the Atlixco Valley, see Paredes Martínez, *Atlixco*, 15.

painter's own experiential knowledge of the landscape was verified by administrative officials and private parties during the transaction process. As part of the map's authentication, the scribe signaled important geographical features pertinent to the recipient of the grant with captions; in this case the irrigation canals and "*punta del mal país*" take on particular prominence for the amount of corresponding identificatory annotations they received. Script and image thus combine to express the interests of the parties involved in the transaction by identifying sites where value, especially economic, resided. Following Alessandra Russo, Alex Hidalgo recently proposed that this mode of cartography marks a new "mapmaking epistemology" of which, as Barbara Mundy first observed, a significant facet was a shift in Indigenous conceptions of land from the "spatial substrate of collective identity" to "a picture of parcels of property for the use of acquisitive Spaniards."<sup>74</sup>

Although painted at the same moment, and potentially by the same atelier of artists, the Huaquechula oratory murals operate under a different set of conventions and convictions about the land while still marking an epistemological reconfiguration. Dispossession also displaced long-standing experiences of the land (and water) as a system interconnected with human life. But as the landscape murals show, the monastic context offered Indigenous artists a forum for marking a new formation of knowledge, one that did not need to yield to the acquisitive intention

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<sup>74</sup> Hidalgo, *Trail of Footprints*, 2. On 'blank' but not 'empty' spaces on *merced* maps, see Dana Leibsohn, "Mapping after the Letter: Graphology and Indigenous Cartography in New Spain," in *The Language Encounter in the Americas, 1492-1800: A Collection of Essays*, ed. Edward G. Gray and Norman Fiering (New York; Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2002), 138, 142; 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; In the case of nineteenth-century Plains arts, Jessica L. Horton shows that Indigenous artists in occupied lands selectively deployed Euro-American cartographic and pictorial landscape conventions despite having a "clear grasp" of genres, reminding that paintings of "grids and measurements" are always choices, see "'All Our Relations,'"<sup>87</sup>.

of the European gaze. This powerful fiction of a world without water portrayed in the oratory landscape paintings is at once a willful distortion and a mode of envisioning an alternative future, one where perhaps life is safeguarded by withholding its source from view.

### **Conclusion: Altered Landscapes**

The Huaquechula landscape paintings belie the conditions of the exterior world in ways that would have been significant for contemporary viewers. Examining this problem, however, requires an approach to landscape painting that is rooted in the Indigenous experience of land and its transformations in colonial Mexico. In the Huaquechula murals, we see how an understanding of the land in collective, relational terms informs how it is visualized and envisioned for outsiders, the friars.<sup>75</sup> Yet this represents one of a myriad of pictorial strategies Indigenous artists used to oppose the intertwined forces of dispossession and environmental degradation. By way of conclusion, consider the stairwell murals at the Augustinian monastery at Actopan in the Valle de Mezquital northwest of Mexico City [Fig. 4.22].<sup>76</sup> On each wall, Indigenous artists painted scenes of Christian saints sitting in their studies working on Biblical commentaries and other texts. Throughout the cycle, Indigenous artists depicted notable mountain peaks in each scene as if the saint need only glance out his *studiolo* window to

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<sup>75</sup> Here, I draw on Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*, 16. On collective land memory, see Kelly McDonough, "Indigenous Technologies in the 1577 *Relaciones geográficas* of New Spain: Collective Land Memory, Natural Resources, and Herbal Medicine," *Ethnohistory* 66, no. 3 (2019): 471-474; Stephanie Wood, "Collective Memory and Mesoamerican Systems of Remembrance," in *Mesoamerican Memory: Enduring Systems of Remembrance*, eds., Amos Megged and Stephanie Wood (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012), 3-14.

<sup>76</sup> For an introduction to Actopan's frescoes, see Luis MacGregor, *Actopan* (Mexico City: INAH-SEP, 1955); Víctor Manuel Ballestros García, *La pintura mural de convento de Actopan* (Pachuca, Mexico: Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Hidalgo, 1999).



appreciate the natural wonder of the New World.<sup>77</sup> One mural, however, tells a different story. A lunette near the ceiling depicts Saint Nicholas Tolentino, patron saint of the Actopan monastery [Fig. 4.23].<sup>78</sup> Garbed in a black robe dazzled with stars, the saint leans to one side, the curve of his body matching the form of the pinnacle in the background. Tree stumps protrude from the hillside on either side of the saint, twisting to reveal where the trunk was severed from its base. Today the Valle de Mezquital is a barren, arid region irrigated by waste-water pumped from Mexico City. Yet the peaks behind Saint Nicholas once teemed with trees, until Spanish settlers and sheep invaded the Valley in the 1570s.<sup>79</sup> So dramatic was the loss of vegetation and forests that the land south of Actopan fractured, carving a deep gorge into the countryside.<sup>80</sup> That ravine cuts across the right side of the painting, spilling an effluence pooled at Saint Nicholas's feet, implicating the mural's single occupant in the scene of tortured landscape. At Actopan, Christian religious conversion and environmental degradation are intertwined.

The field of environmental humanities has centered inquiry on Euro-American industrialization and the rise of fossil fuel economies.<sup>81</sup> Recently, however, scholars have made

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<sup>77</sup> For a discussion of the region's Indigenous sacred promontories, see Eleanor Wake, *Framing the Sacred: The Indian Churches of Early Colonial Mexico* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010), 188-192.

<sup>78</sup> The compositional structure also recalls a 1520s Netherlandish woodcut of Saint John on Patmos made by the circle of Jan Wellens de Cock today in the British Museum.

<sup>79</sup> Melville, *A Plague of Sheep*, 38.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>81</sup> Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Climate of History: Four Theses," *Critical Inquiry* 35 (2009): 197-222; T. J. Demos, ed. *Decolonizing Nature: Contemporary Art and the Politics of Ecology* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006); Nicholas Mirzoeff, "Visualizing the Anthropocene," *Public Culture* 26, no. 2 (2014): 213-32; Heather Davis and Etienne Turpin, eds., *Art in the Anthropocene: Encounters among Aesthetics, Environments and Epistemologies* (London: Open Humanities Press, 2015). Jessica L. Horton notes the risk of erasing "historical culpabilities" when the modifiers "Euro" and "American" are substituted with other terms. Furthermore, the Americas is located in the Western hemisphere and thus all of its inhabitants are, in that sense, also "Westerners." Horton, "Indigenous Artists against the Anthropocene," *Art Journal* 76, no. 2 (2017): 59-69.

important cases for shifting our attention to the early modern period to better understand how ecological change shaped Euro-American epistemologies and proto-industrial economies, charting the course for an interdisciplinary approach that embraces environmental science.<sup>82</sup> The ‘Little Ice Age’ changed the way Europeans understood and expressed ideas about an increasingly globalized world. The recent attention on winter in early-modern scholarship ignites new questions about the status of the image, the natural, and visibility. Nevertheless, these models tend to foreground European experiences, carrying with them the liberal notion of the individual’s agential exceptionalism in the context of the natural.<sup>83</sup> This framework has, therefore, not displaced the universalizing rhetoric of the Anthropocene but, rather, pushed it back in time. If looking at the past helps to envision an alternative future, then an essential first

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<sup>82</sup> Recent scholarship on the impact of the ‘Little Ice Age’ on early-modern globalization includes, John Opie, “Renaissance Origins of the Environmental Crisis,” *Environmental Review: ER* 11, no. 1 (Spring 1987): 2–17; Geoffrey Parker, *Global Crisis: War, Climate Change and Catastrophe in the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013); Stuart B. Schwartz, *Sea of Storms: A History of Hurricanes in the Greater Caribbean from Columbus to Katrina* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016); Sam White, *A Cold Welcome: The Little Ice Age and Europe’s Encounter with North America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017); Dagomar Degroot, *The Frigid Golden Age: Climate Change, the Little Ice Age, and the Dutch Republic, 1560–1720* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Christopher P. Heuer and Rebecca Zorach, eds., *Ecologies, Agents, Terrains* (New Haven: Clark Institute; Yale University Press, 2018); Christopher P. Heuer, *Into the White: The Renaissance Arctic and the End of the Image* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2019); Sugata Ray, *Climate Change and the Art of Devotion: Geoaesthetics in the Land of Krishna, 1550-1850* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019); Lydia Barnett, *After the Flood: Imagining the Global Environment in Early Modern Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019).

<sup>83</sup> Donna Haraway, “Cloning Mutts, Saving Tigers: Ethical Emergents in Technocultural Dog Worlds,” in *Remaking Life and Death: Toward an Anthropology of the Biosciences*, eds. Sarah Franklin and Margaret Lock (Santa Fe: SAR Press, 2003), 293-327; Sylvia Wynter, “Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation—An Argument,” *CR: The New Centennial Review* 3, no. 3 (Fall 2003): 257-337; Angela Roothan, *Indigenous, Modern and Postcolonial Relations to Nature: Negotiating the Environment* (New York: Routledge, 2019); Ramachandra Guha, “Radical American Environmentalism and Wilderness Preservation: A Third World Critique,” *Environmental Ethics* 11, no. 1 (1989): 71-83.

step is recognizing that multiple configurations of human-earth relations intersected during the early modern period.<sup>84</sup> As scholars of Indigenous knowledge point out, decolonizing climate change begins by accounting for how the occupation of Indigenous lands transformed Indigenous and European conceptions of land and ecological change, and the human/nonhuman realms.<sup>85</sup> As I have argued here, a fertile place to start exploring these questions is the monastic landscape painting tradition in sixteenth century New Spain.

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<sup>84</sup> Rebecca Zorach, "What Future?," *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance* 22, no. 2 (2019): 423.

<sup>85</sup> Jessica L. Horton and Janet Catherine Berlo, "Beyond the Mirror," *Third Text* 27, no. 1 (2003): 17-18; Leanne Betasamosake Simpson stresses the importance of "bringing in indigenous knowledge" in a way that is necessarily "on the terms of indigenous peoples" and not "extractivist" in its approach, see Naomi Klein, "Dancing the World into Being: A Conversation with Idle No More's Leanne Simpson," *YES! Magazine* March 6, 2016, <https://www.yesmagazine.org/social-justice/2013/03/06/dancing-the-world-into-being-a-conversation-with-idle-no-more-leanne-simpson/> Jinthana Haritaworn, "Decolonizing the Non/Human," in "Theorizing Queer Inhumanisms," *GLQ: A Journal of Gay and Lesbian Studies* 21, nos. 2-3 (2015): 213; Jessica L. Horton, *Art for an Undivided Earth: The American Indian Movement* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017); Horton, "Anthropocene," 48-69; Horton, "All Our Relations," 88.

## CONCLUSION

This dissertation has argued that the *altepetl* of Huaquechula used monastic art and architecture to contest settler colonialism in sixteenth century Mexico. The Atlixco Valley witnessed dramatic changes between 1450 and 1600 as multiple pre-Hispanic superpowers and then Spanish settlers vied for its rich natural resources and control of the lucrative trade routes that intersected in the Valley. Located in the heart of the Atlixco Valley, Huaquechula's monastery of San Martín de Tours illuminates how Indigenous communities defended their lands and sovereignty during the violent transition to Spanish colonial rule and the emergence of a protocapitalism system in the Atlixco Valley. I approached this question by reconstructing the Nahua topography of the monastery of San Martín de Tours through a series of case studies that began in the church patio and concluded in the upper cloister. Central to this trajectory was an inquiry into the discourses that produce Indigenous erasure within monastic spaces, alongside an examination of how art and architecture register Indigenous presence. This dialectical framework for the study of colonial Mexican art and architecture has broad implications for studies of artworks created and viewed within situations of structural inequality.

First, my analysis of the Huaquechula monastery reveals that Indigenous communities were sophisticated consumers of Christian art and architecture. There is a dearth of scholarship on the reception of colonial art, from the composition of the diverse audiences to the conditions in which viewing actually happened. As a result, the standard picture of monastery murals is that they were painted as tools for evangelization for homogenous groups of Indigenous neophytes who rarely entered the monastery proper. Furthermore, while it is well-established that Indigenous artists painted the hundreds of meters of murals that decorate colonial Mexican monasteries, rarely are these same individuals also considered viewers. Nahua artists painted for

their own communities and for the spaces they themselves used. The deep familiarity that painters had with monastic spaces, from the diverse audiences to the qualities of light in different spaces at different times, and from the rituals that framed that paintings to politics that surrounded commissions, inflected *how* they chose to paint, if they had little say in *what* they painted.<sup>1</sup>

Second, the case of the Huaquechula monastery reveals that monumental Christian architecture advanced Indigenous claims for sovereignty. Monastery construction in sixteenth century Mexico has been analyzed as a mendicant-directed effort that paralleled religious evangelization. This contributed to a picture of monastery construction in Indigenous communities as spearheaded by friars and a reaction to major upheavals recorded by Spanish friars and administrators, especially the outbreak of infectious diseases. By aligning architectural analysis with Indigenous sources, we can reconstruct the building chronology of other monasteries to be attentive to the priorities and challenges faced by the Indigenous communities who built and used the structures. For example, my analysis of the Huaquechula monastery's building campaigns indicated Nahua leaders were the driving force of architectural change at Huaquechula. Chapter 1 reveals that the Huaquecholteca used monastic construction to address regional competition for resources, including land, water, timber, to assert political dominance over ancient rivals. It also showed Huaquecholteca leaders initiated new construction during moments when outside groups, Spanish or Indigenous, threatened Huaquechula's political and territorial sovereignty. At Huaquechula, the confluence of collective land memory and Christian architecture disrupted the multiple, overlapping occupations imposed upon the Huaquecholteca.

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<sup>1</sup> Jessica L. Horton and Janet Catherine Berlo, "Beyond the Mirror: Indigenous Ecologies and 'New Materialisms,'" *Third Text* 12, no. 1 (2013): 19.

On a methodological level, this dissertation advocated for broadening our analytical tool kit and sharpening our attention to artworks and architectural arrangements that do not conform to our categories and surface-level notions of Indigenous agency. The centering of marginalized groups fundamental to the post-colonial approaches that dominate the field only get us half way. First, the pursuit of the empowered colonial subject privileges anthropocentric models of agency and objects that have visible or material signatures of Indigeneity. Instead, more attention needs to be given to relationality and objects as enmeshed in the contexts of making, using, and viewing. As this dissertation has shown through inquiries into Christian iconography (chapter 1) and landscape painting (chapter 4), style is not a by-product of ethnicity or an index of agency, it is a choice calculated to address contingencies marked by power differentials. At Huaquechula, ‘Europeaness’ was a tactical visual language for asserting the *altepetl*’s sovereignty to outsiders, be they rival Indigenous groups or the friars themselves.

A decolonizing approach also entails a deep contextualization of monastic artworks and architectural arrangements that is attentive to Indigenous experiences, embodied ways of knowing, and grounded ways of being, or “situational knowledge.”<sup>2</sup> In the words of Robert Warrior, “[t]o shut down a discussion of experience runs the risk of using antiessentialist rhetoric to silence the voices of those who continue to face marginalization, while never interrogating the essentialist underpinnings of the discourse we all otherwise inhabit by default.”<sup>3</sup> In Warrior’s terms, ‘experience’ is active and particular, and a framework that brings to bear how the epistemological and ontological biases inherent in Euro-American methodologies have

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<sup>2</sup> Melissa K. Nelson, “Indigenous Science and Traditional Ecological Knowledge: Persistence in Place,” in *The World of Indigenous North America*, ed. Robert Warrior (New York: Routledge, 2015), 201-202.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Warrior, *The People and the Word: Reading Native Non-Fiction* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), xx.

marginalized Indigenous ways of engaging with the world.<sup>4</sup> As analysis of pictorial ornament in the Huaquechula *sotocoro* demonstrated in chapter 3, Nahua ways of sensing the world, what Dylan Robinson calls “sensate sovereignty,” reinforced inter-Indigenous social structures.<sup>5</sup> More specific to Mesoamerica, Stephen Houston and Karl Taube’s work on cross-modal perception also draws attention to how colonial Mexican art was expressive across sensorial registers. Integrating these frameworks into the study of colonial Mexican art raises new questions about how Indigenous artists address the phenomenological conditions under which the paintings were created and viewed.

Finally, the case of Huaquechula points to the importance of re-engaging with settler-colonial sources to open up new paths of inquiry that center Indigenous perspectives. Side-stepping these sources does not undo colonialism, rather it runs the risk of shifting attention away from monasteries as Indigenous spaces. Using Indigenous sources to cross-reference Spanish ones, however, undercuts the dominant narrative by exposing how representations of Indigenous activities in monastic spaces reflected settler-colonial discourses and created archetypes that served the politico-spiritual agenda of conquest and forcible conversion. One of these is the view of the Nahua Christian as an outsider, marked by the practice of religion in outdoor settings, especially large public rituals that friars considered evidence for the sensuality of Indigenous people and their predilection for pageantry.<sup>6</sup>

A case and point are accounts of Holy Week ritual in mendicant-authored sources. While

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<sup>4</sup> Zoe Todd, “An Indigenous Feminist’s Take On The Ontological Turn: ‘Ontology’ Is Just Another Word For Colonialism,” *Journal of Historical Sociology* vol. 29, no. 1 (2016): 16-19.

<sup>5</sup> Dylan Robinson, “Public Writing, Sovereign Reading: Indigenous Language Art in Public Space,” *Art Journal* 75, no. 2 (2017): 85, 87.

<sup>6</sup> Louise Burkhart, “Pious Performances: Christian Pageantry and Native Identity in Early Colonial Mexico,” in *Native Traditions in the Postconquest World*, ed. Elizabeth H. Boone and Thomas B.F. Cummins (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1998), 372.

mendicant authors are suspiciously quiet on topics of Indigenous ritual *within* the monastery interior or at other moments of the liturgical year, the depth of coverage and specificity of detail provided by Holy Week reports lends them an “eye-witness” status in scholarship.<sup>7</sup> Holy Week was undoubtedly the high point of the ritual year across the Catholic world as Indigenous accounts of Holy Week also make evident.<sup>8</sup> Yet the attendant overrepresentation of Holy Week in studies of Nahua Christian religiosity and art has overtly reinforced the use of mendicant-authored sources in interpreting Nahua ceremonialism that compounds Indigenous absence at other moments of the liturgical year, in other spaces, and in other activities. Stepping outside Central Mexico, however, scholars addressing colonial Peru and Oaxaca have demonstrated how a deeply contextual approach foregrounds Indigenous artistic and political agency in public religious ceremonies.<sup>9</sup> In this spirit, I use a final case study to propose an alternative reading of visualizations of Holy Week drawing on the methodologies and findings brought together in this dissertation.

In its upper cloister, Huaquechula preserves a distinctive pair of murals that visualize members of a Huaquecholteca confraternity walking in a Holy Week penitential procession

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<sup>7</sup> Burkhart, “Pious Performances,” 366. For an introduction to Franciscan accounts of Holy Week, see Toribio de Benavente Motolinia, *Motolinia’s History of the Indians of New Spain*, ed. and trans., Francis B. Steck (Washington D.C.: American Academy for Franciscan History, 1951), 141-152; Gerónimo de Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana*, ed. Joaquín García Icazbalceta (Alicante: Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes [1870; Porrúa: 1980], bk. 4, chap. 19; Juan de Torquemada, *Monarquía indiana* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, [1615] 1975), v. 5, bk. 16-17.

<sup>8</sup> Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin, *Annals of His Time: Don Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin*, ed. and trans. James Lockhart, Susan Schoeder, and Doris Namala (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 215, 217, 241.

<sup>9</sup> Carolyn Dean, *Inka Bodies and the Body of Christ: Corpus Christi in Colonial Cuzco, Peru* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999); Alessia Frassani, *Building Yanhuitlan: Art, Politics, and Religion in the Mixteca Alta Since 1500* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2017).



[Figs. 5.1, 5.2]. In each painting, penitents make a steady peregrination through a starlit landscape, their bare feet pressing into the desiccated earth. The leader of the procession carries a large wooden cross in front of his body and a metal-tipped scourge over his forearm. Behind him trail four figures: two women who wear white robes and lash their backs with corded whips, and two men dressed in black who carry metal scourges. The male penitents twist toward the viewer to reveal a circular opening in the back of their robes where the metal barbs of the scourge tear bare flesh.<sup>10</sup> The artist's emphasis on surfaces—skin, earth, the texture of the plastered wall—imbues the murals with tactility, while the use of repetition and the horizontal format creates a sense of movement that unfolds across a limitless expanse of land.

The murals are notable as one of only three murals programs surviving from colonial Mexico that depict Indigenous Christian rituals [Figs. 5.3, 5.4]. They are also the only program painted in a private devotional space; the other murals of Indigenous penitential processions were painted in a church and a *portería*, respectively.<sup>11</sup> On the one hand, the murals contain all the surface-level signatures traditionally used to ascribe Indigenous agency. Although visualizing

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<sup>10</sup> The colors of the robes distinguish female (white) from male (black) penitents. 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), 222; 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* 70 (1997): 77, n. 25. Mendicant chronicles record the participation of men, women, and children in the penitential processions of Holy Week Motolinia, *Historia*, 143; Mendieta, Bk. IV, chap. 19. Confraternity ordinances indicate male and female membership. John F. Schwaller, "Constitution of the *Cofradía del Santísimo Sacramento* of Tula, Hidalgo, 1570" *Estudios de Cultura Náhuatl*, no. 19 (1989): 217-244; Alonso Molina, *Nahua Confraternities in Early Colonial Mexico: The 1552 Nahuatl Ordinances of fray Alonso de Molina, OFM*, ed. Barry D. Sell, Larissa Taylor, Asunción Lavrin (Oceanside: American Academy of Franciscan History, 2002).

<sup>11</sup> Webster, "Huejotzingo;" Pablo Escalante Gonzalbo, "Elogio de la cofradía y arraigo de la fe. La pintura mural de la capilla abierta de san Juan Teitipac, Valle de Oaxaca," in *Imágenes de los naturales en el arte de la Nueva España*, ed. Elisa Vargaslugo (Mexico City: Universidad Autónoma de México, Fomento Cultural Banamex, 2005), 225-237.

a Catholic ritual, the subjects of the paintings are Nahuas. Likewise, while the artist painted in a naturalistic style, the planarity of the conical hoods, the heavy contours, and the saturated coloration suggests formal features of the Central Mexican painting tradition. At the same time, the murals were painted for a private audience in an area of the Huaquechula monastery where the friars and Nahuas prayed. The murals of Oratory 5 thus raise the question of how Indigenous presence registered differently for the multiple audiences who used this devotional space.

The murals of the penitential procession decorate the side wall of Oratory 5 adjacent to the *antecoro* doorway, a high-traffic location that guaranteed friars viewed the paintings multiple times per day in the course of traveling to and from the choir loft or elevated open chapel where they celebrated Mass. A staircase on the exterior of the *sala de peregrinos* facilitated secular access to Oratory 5 from the monastery courtyard. The secular content of the imagery strongly suggests that this space was used by Huaquecholteca elite, as well as the friars.<sup>12</sup> Because the oratory is positioned on the periphery of the upper cloister, furthermore, its secular function is not in conflict with the rigorous spatial separation observed throughout the complex. Friars principally used the oratories at night when seculars would not have been permitted into the monastery and could have easily prayed out of sight in one of the oratories at the opposite end of the corridor. This view is further supported by the patron saint of Oratory 5, Saint Lawrence, whose fragmentary portrait decorates the backwall [Fig. 5.5]. The early Christian martyr was a deacon, or secular religious official, and he is identified as a *tlapixque (fiscal)* in Nahuatl-language devotional music.<sup>13</sup> These associations, among others, made the Saint a fitting patron of

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<sup>12</sup> Personal communication Conrad Rudolph, March 31, 2010.

<sup>13</sup> Bernardino de Sahagún, *Psalmodia Christiana (Christian Psalmody)*, ed. and trans. Arthur J. O. Anderson (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1993), 230-233.

Huaquechula's new Nahua confraternity.<sup>14</sup>

Processions were enactments of territorial sovereignty. Communities regularly walked the borders of the territories they claimed, a ritual that Amara Solari and Alessandra Russo have shown gave rise to circular communicentric maps, such as the *Mapa Circular de Quauhquechollan* (1546), analyzed in chapter 1 [Fig. 5.6]. As discussed in chapter 4, Spanish farmers and viceregal officials also walked the borders of their 'new' properties so that ritualized movement around a territory also enacted the confiscation of Indigenous collectively-held lands. Thus, walking the borders was a political activity that communicated the rightful, or at least legal, boundaries delimited by the processional route. This peregrination was recorded on maps, such as *Mapa Circular de Quauhquechollan*, which served as confirmation for the border-walking ritual and legitimacy of its inhabitants' claims to the land. This understanding of ritual processions and the visual recording of them illuminates a collective action that communicated a claim to physical space and Indigenous relations to it.

One of the most interesting features of the paintings is the relationship of barren earth to the participants, highlighted for instance by the artist's attention to how bare feet press into

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<sup>14</sup> The psalms of the *Psalmodia Christiana* draw parallels between the Saint's torturous death over a flaming gridiron and the immolation of the Nahua sun god Nanahuatzin. According to tradition, Saint Lawrence was from Iberia and thus was an important Saint to the Habsburg monarchy. The saints represented in the upper cloister murals also correspond with the four patrons of Rome, each of whom was martyred in Rome and honored with a basilica along a major pilgrimage route. For an introduction to stational processions in Rome, see John Francis Baldwin, SJ, *The Urban Character of Christian Worship: The Origins, Development and Meaning of Stational Liturgy*, *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 228 (Rome: Pontifical Oriental Institute Press, 2002). Confraternity charters and related documents from other *altepemeh* with Franciscan monasteries point to an increase in the foundation of Indigenous confraternities beginning in the 1570s. Schwaller, "Constitutions"; Lockhart, *The Nahuas*, 221-229; Urban centers, such as Mexico City and Tlaxcala, boasted high rates of Nahua membership in sodalities as early as the 1540s. James Lockhart, Frances Berdan, Arthur J. O. Anderson, *The Tlaxcalan Actas: A Compendium of the Records of the Cabildo of Tlaxcala (1545-1627)* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1986).

desiccated ground. Holy Week in Mexico overlaps with the peak of the dry season in Central Mexico when the earth is parched and the cloudless sky offers no respite from the sun's piercing rays. In that sense, the barren landscape reminds viewers of the heat and dust that typifies the penitential season in the southern Atlixco Valley, and the physical hardships of seventy-two hours of fasting, late-night ceremonies, and standing for hours under the sun in the church yard. Yet, I find it interesting that the landscape itself contains no allusion to regeneration, no optimistic blue-green sprout or leafy tree tucked in the corner. In that regard, the murals of the penitential procession continue the theme of the crisis landscape seen in the other upper cloister oratory landscape paintings that were discussed in chapter 4. But whereas the artists of the landscape murals, which were painted for friars, address ecological calamity by withholding life-giving resources from view, these murals of the penitential procession appeal to relations of reciprocity and direct action by actually placing Huaquechula's leaders within the land. The penitential procession murals visualize Huaquecholteca leadership grounded in the landscape, here depicted in the act of asserting their political and territorial sovereignty. In this sense, the murals record an ongoing claim to authority and power within the monastic spaces the confraternity inhabited.<sup>15</sup> The murals of the Huaquecholteca penitential procession are a powerful rejoinder to systematic dispossession the Huaquecholteca faced throughout the sixteenth century and explored throughout this dissertation.

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<sup>15</sup> Nancy M. Farriss has argued for the colonial Maya that Christian ritual provided an outlet for a communal expression of devotion that allowed the Maya to attend to the immediate needs of their corporate survival under the veil of colonialism. Farriss, *Maya Society Under Colonial Rule: The Collective Enterprise for Survival* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

## Afterword

The on-going displacement of Indigenous people from sacred spaces is an urgent issue, and one that directly relates to the preservation of the Huaquechula monastery as an Indigenous space. On September 19, 2017, a devastating 7.1 magnitude earthquake struck Central Mexico. Huaquechula was one of dozens colonial monasteries and churches damaged during the 2017 earthquake. The choir vault crumbled during the tremor, crashing down into the *sotocoro* and transforming the center of Huaquecholteca sacramental ritual into a pile of rubble [Fig. 5.7]. In the upper cloister, the wall that supports one of penitential procession murals fractured. A diagonal crack now runs through the right-hand side of one of the paintings, slicing through two of the figures [Fig. 5.8]. That spring, for the first time in hundreds of years, the community at Huaquechula did not attend the services of Holy Week in the *sotocoro*. Instead they congregated outside, in front of the church, around a makeshift particle-board desk that serves as an altar [Fig. 5.9].

Natural disaster has served as a pretense for displacing marginalized groups from holy spaces and usurping sacred objects from communities. But that can change. The knowledge and on-going connection Indigenous people have to Mexico's colonial-era monuments need to be recognized, and Indigenous leaders must be at the table and part of the decision-making process. Our research agendas can foster new collaborations with Indigenous communities to affirm their collective land memories, priorities, and multidimensional experiences with their ancestral sites. For over five-hundred years the Huaquecholteca have contested settler-colonial processes through monastic art and architecture. It is my firm belief that strategy will continue as Huaquechula once again forges a new future out of the sacred ruins of its distinguished past.

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**APPENDIX 1:  
DAILY COMMUNAL ACTIVITIES AT FRANCISCAN MONASTERIES  
IN NEW SPAIN <sup>16</sup>**

ACTIVITY	TIME OBSERVED	LOCATION
<b>call to Prime</b> <sup>17</sup>	4:45 am	cell
<b>PRIME</b>	5 am	choir
mental prayer (1hr)	----	----
<b>confessions</b>	6:15 am	<i>portería</i> or <i>locutorio</i>
<b>catechism</b>	8 am	patio
<b>MASS</b> and TERCE	9 am	church or open chapel
SEXT and NONE	at conclusion of Mass	
<b>burials and votive Masses</b>	10:45 am	church, cloister, and patio
Chapter of Faults	11 am	refectory
supper	----	refectory and kitchen
<i>siesta</i>	12:30 pm	cell
<b>call to Vespers</b>	2 pm	cell
<b>VESPERS</b>	2:30 pm	choir, sung with full solemnity <sup>18</sup>
manual labor, <b>confessions</b> , and <b>burials</b>	----	garden, confessional, or patio
<b>COMPLINE</b>	5:15 pm	choir
mental prayer	----	----
<i>collatio</i> and super	7 pm	refectory
prayer and sleep	8 pm	cell
call for Matins	11:45 pm	cell
<b>Matins</b>	12 am	choir
mental prayer (1-3 hrs.)	----	oratory or cell

<sup>16</sup> Calibrated to March 1557 when sunset was at 6:50 P.M. The hours of the Divine Office are CAPITALIZED. Activities that involved Nahua church officials are in **bold**.

<sup>17</sup> The celebration of Lauds was omitted or, more likely, combined with Matins. Lauds is an additional hour and is not described in Novohispanic sources.

<sup>18</sup> Indigenous elites were expected to attend Prime and Vespers, which featured instrumental music including the organ.

**APPENDIX 2:  
SUMMARY OF DUTIES ENTRUSTED TO NAHUA CHURCH OFFICIALS <sup>19</sup>**

Duties entrusted to the *fiscal* (alt. *tlapixqui*):

- Guard and care for the liturgical ornaments, trappings, and liturgical vestments with care to not touch the chalice, altar, or altar clothes with their hands; deliver altar clothes to friars for them to wash.
- Guard the donations and offerings to the church; maintain records of incomes and expenditures, keeping community leaders (“*principales*”) informed of costs and needs.
- Keep records, organized by each *barrio*, of the children baptized, those who made annual confession, were married, or died for each year.
- Round up local children for instruction at the monastery church, and teach them Christian doctrine. In instances where the church is far from the monastery, bring the children from about half a league away to the same monastery for instruction.
- Ensure that every *barrio* observes annual feasts, vigils, and ember days, providing each a plaque with important dates to hang in the *barrio* church.
- In case of emergency, and when a priest is not present, baptize sick children, following the guidelines for administering sacraments stipulated to the friars.<sup>20</sup>
- Console and inspire the sick through the Office of the Dead (“*artículo de muerte*”), reading it to them and asking them questions in preparation for extreme unction.
- Bury the dead, in cases when they are far from the monastery. Follow the instructions given by the friars for singing and praying for them. When the church is small or there are fewer than twelve Indigenous people who know how to sing, help them to learn this task because ordinarily Vespers and Prime are sung in every church.
- In *pueblos de visita*, appoint trusted, literate Indigenous men to assist in the church.

Duties entrusted to the *tequitlato* (alt. *teopixqui*):

- Round up congregation for Sunday’s Mass and sermon, and feast day services. Identify and punish those not in compliance.
- Maintain records of baptisms, confirmation, marriage, and confession. See to it that everyone makes annual confession, all marriages are legal, children are baptized and their godparents know Christian doctrine. Identify and punish those not in compliance.
- Maintain civil order (*policia cristiana*) by monitoring especially drunks, healers, and midwives. Ensure that idolatrous rites are not practiced.
- Ensure everyone in their charge learns Christian doctrine.
- In *pueblos de visita*, appoint trusted, literate Indigenous men to assist in the church.

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<sup>19</sup> “Memorial de las cosas de que han de tener cuidado los teopixques ó tequitlatos (que son los mandones de quien arriba se hace mención) para con los indios que tienen á su cargo, quanto á su doctrina;” “Memoria que se da á los indios tlapixques de las Iglesias,” in *Códice franciscano, NCDHM* vol. 2, ed. Joaquín García Icazbalceta (Mexico City: Francisco Díaz de León, 1903), 80-84. All translations my own.

<sup>20</sup> Here the author is referring to the next chapter in the report, the “Copia y relación del orden que los frailes de Sant Francisco desta Nueva España tienen en administrar a los indios todos los santos sacramentos de la iglesia.”

**APPENDIX 3:  
RULERS AND *CABILDO* MEMBERS OF HUAQUECHULA, 1535-1590**

Year	Name	Title	Source
1535	Don Martín Cortés Xochitlahua Don Alonso de Menses Xiloxochicatl	<i>Caciques</i>	AGN, Tierras, vol. 2683, exp. 4, f. 162.
ca. 1535	Don Martín [Cortés Xochitlahua] Don Juan	<i>Caciques</i>	Motolinia, 1951: 194-195.
1545	Don Martín Cortés Xochitlahua Don Alonso de Menses Xiloxochicatl Don Gregorio Telles Xochitla Simon de Castañeda Xochitotl	<i>Caciques and señores naturales</i>	AGN-M 2, exp. 532, fs. 215-216r.
1546	Don Martín Cortez Xochitlahua  don Pedro Hoca[astro?] chin..., don Hernando Cortés, don..., don Antonio Vazquez, don Diego Xicotencatl, don... .., don Alonso Barrios, don Gregorio Tellez, ...[Hur?]tado, ... ...chcohuacatl, Paulo Hezhuacatl, Andres Xiloxochicatl, Juan..., Pedro de...lias, Antonio... ..que, Francisco Accatecatl, Estevan... ...ancatl, ... ..yautecatl, Agostin Pochtec...	<i>Gobernador</i>  <i>Principales and Calpolli</i> leaders “fiscales catca...yn pilhuan yhuau pochteca yn ixquich” *All are <i>pilhuan</i> and merchants *presumably “... ... yautecatl” and Agostín Pochtecatl are <i>fiscales</i>	<i>Mapa Circular de Quauhquechollan</i> (Asselbergs 2011: 222-224)
1550	Don Gregorio Telles	unknown	Inscription, east church façade
1569	Don Diego de Peñalosa	unknown	Inscription, west monastery façade
1575	Don Gabriel Cortés Benito Cortés	<i>Cacique</i> <i>Alcalde</i>	AGN, Tierras, vol. 2708, exp. 4, f. 15.
1576	Don Felipe Cortés	<i>Cacique</i>	AGN, Indios, vol. 1, exp. 74, fs. 28
1589	Don Graviel de Morales	<i>Gobernador</i>	AGN, Indios, vol. 4, exp. 79, 24r.
1590	Don Juan de Tovar of Ocopetlayuca [Tochimilco]	<i>Juez-Gobernador</i> * disputed	AGN, Indios, vol. 4, exp. 201, 63v. AGN, Indios, vol. 4, exp. 305, 94r.

## APPENDIX 4: GLOSSARY

Nahuatl (N.) and Spanish (S.) terms as found in sixteenth-and-seventeenth-century Nahuatl texts. Notice that many Spanish administrative titles apply to Indigenous officials. Nahuatl terms have many orthographic variants, here I follow Lockhart (1992; 2001) and Karttunen (1992).

**Acapetlahuacan (N.):** Modern Atlixco; location of ancestral Huaquechula (Huehucuauhquechollan)

**Alcalde (S.):** Councilman in the Indigenous *cabildo*.

**Alcalde Mayor (S.):** Chief Spanish judicial and administrative official, governing over a large area including several *altepemeh*.

**Alguacil (S.):** Indigenous constable or *topile*, sometime interchangeable with *fiscal*, usually associated with law enforcement.

**Alarife (S.):** Master mason or overseer, can refer to a Spanish or Indigenous foreman.

**Altepetl (pl. altepemeh) (N.):** A local, ethnic city-state.

**Audiencia (S.):** The Spanish high court in Mexico City.

**Barrio (S.):** Any political subunit of the *altepetl* regardless of *calpolli* or *teccali* structure.

**Bienes de comunidad (S.):** Town revenues.

**Cuahxicalli (N.):** Literally, eagle-vessel. A ritual vessel or a stone with indentation for placing offerings, often animal or human remains.

**Caballería (S.):** Approximately 43 hectares of crop or grazing land.

**Cabecera (S.):** A semi-autonomous head town of an Indigenous parish, sometimes synonymous with *altepetl* in Spanish documents. Composed of *sujetos*.

**Cabildo (S.):** Typically, a local municipal Indigenous government but can refer to any town council.

**Cacique (Arawak):** Indigenous ruler or lord.

**Cacizago (Arawak):** An Indigenous noble's estate.

**Calli (N.):** House (architectural) or household (familial). Also, one of the four rotating names for calendar years.

**Calpolli (N.):** Literally, “big house.” A political-territorial subunit of the *altepetl*. In the Central Valley, it was a constituent part or subdistrict of an *altepetl* composed of lineage groups collectively controlling land. In the Puebla-Tlaxcala Valley, a *calpolli* was a peripheral subdistrict of an *altepetl*.

**Camaxtli (N.):** Also called Mixcoatl, the god of hunting associated with the *altepemeh* of the northern Puebla-Tlaxcala Valley, such as Huejotzingo and Tlaxcala.

**Cédula (S.):** Ordinance.

**Chalchihuitl (N.):** Precious jade stone, usually round and perforated in the center; a symbol of preciousness and rulership.

**Coatequitl (N.):** System of rotating unpaid, public labor drafts which provided commoners access to farmable lands controlled by Indigenous nobles.

**Cofradía (S.):** Religious sodality, can consist of Indigenous and Spanish members.

**Comuniotlacameh (N.):** Literally, “the communion people.” Seems to refer to elite member of society, typically confraternity officials, who regularly partook of communion at Mass.

**Corregidor (S.):** Mid-level Spanish judicial and administrative official, governing over a district smaller than that of the *alcalde mayor*.

**Doctrina (S.):** An Indigenous parish.

**Don/Doña (S.):** Spanish honorific. In New Spain, Nahuas in the sixteenth century adopted this title to distinguish the highest-ranking members of the Indigenous nobility.

**Encomienda (S.):** A grant, typically to a Spaniard (*encomendero*), of the right to tribute and labor from an *altepetl*.

**Esribano (S.):** Notary, clerk, typically associated with the Indigenous *cabildo*.

**Estancia (S.):** An outlying village.

**Fanega (S.):** A Spanish bushel equivalent to 1.6 bushels.

**Fiscal (S.):** Highest-ranking officer within the Indigenous religious hierarchy at a monastery, also called a *tlapixqui* or *aguacil*.

**Ganado (S.):** Livestock. *Ganado mayor* referred to cattle, and *ganado menor* designates goats, pigs, and sheep.

**Gobernador (S.):** Governor and head of the Indigenous *cabildo*.

**Guardián (S.):** Superior of *doctrina* typically posted at the *cabecera* monastery.

**Macehualli (pl. macehualtin) (N.):** Indigenous commoners, sometimes expressed with the Nahuatl metaphor “the tail, the wing” (*in cuitlapilli in ahtlapalli*).

**Macuilxochitepec (N.):** Literally, “Five-Flowers Hill.” The ancestral temple-site of the Huaquecholteca, located in modern Atlixco (former Acapetlahuacan)

**Mayectli (pl. mayeque) (N.):** A segment of the *macehualtin* attached to specific lands of the Indigenous nobility; tenants or those whose labor belongs to a specific person (*-tech pouhque*)

**Merced (S.):** A grant of land or water rights.

**Merino (S.):** Minor officials in the Indigenous *cabildo*, usually tax collectors. It is interchangeable with *tepixqui* when referring to a secular office.

**Monasterio (S.):** Friary. A religious house with church associated with a mission and the preferred term in sixteenth-century documents. Even though the establishments were technically convents (*conventos*), “monasterio” was the standard term used by Nahua scribes.

**Pilli (pl. pipiltin) (N.):** Indigenous nobleman, interchangeable with *principal*.

**Pueblo (S.):** Town.

**Principal (S.):** Indigenous nobleman, interchangeable with a *pilli*.

**Real (S.):** A silver coin worth 1/8<sup>th</sup> of a *peso*. Also, the word for “royal.”

**Regidor (S.):** Councilman, member of an Indigenous *cabildo*.

**Teccali (N.):** Noble house (estate). In the Puebla-Tlaxcala Valley, the dominant political subunit of the *altepetl* bound by corporate landownership rather than lineage. In the Central Valley, a lordly house consisting of a related nobles, dependents, and lands.

**Tecpan (N.):** Literally, “the place where the lord is.” A palace or the meeting place of the municipal council.

**Tepixqui (pl. tepixque) (N.):** In the secular government, a tax collector (also called a *merino*). Also, the second-highest-ranking Indigenous position in the monastery, sometimes called a *tequitlato*.

**Teopantlacatl (pl. teopantlacameh) (N.):** Literally, “church person.” Usually to refer to the congregation rather than Indigenous church officials.

**Tequitlato (N.):** A tribute-collector. Also, the second-highest-ranking Indigenous position in the monastery, sometimes called a *tepixqui*.



**Tlacuilo (pl. tlacuiloque) (N.):** A painter or scribe.

**Tlapixqui (pl. tlapixque):** Highest-ranking office occupied by an Indigenous elite in the monastery (also called a *fiscal* or *aguacil*).

**Teuctli (pl. teteuctin) (N.):** Lord, head of a *teccali*.

**Tierra baldía (S.):** A tract of uncultivated land.

**Tlatoani (pl. tlatoque) (N.):** Literally, “he who speaks.” Lord or ruler.

**Tomin (S.):** A coin valued as the equivalent of a *real* (1/8<sup>th</sup> of a *peso*).

**Topile (N.):** Literally, a “staff-holder.” An Indigenous constable, usually equivalent to an *alguacil*, often associated with law enforcement.

**Sacristan (S.):** Indigenous church official, responsible for the care of the liturgical ornaments and monastic spaces.

**Señorio (S.):** Traditional Indigenous lordship, replaced by the *cabildo* structure.

**Señor natural (S.):** Native lord or ruler, usually appears after a Spanish loanword-title.

**Sotocoro (S.):** Literally, “below the choir.” The narthex of the church below the choir loft.

**Sujeto (S.):** Rural churches under the jurisdiction of a *doctrina*. Also, polities subject to a ruler.

**Villa de Carrión (S.):** Today’s Atlixco, established by Spanish settlers in 1591.

**Visitador (S.):** Inspector. Sent by the Spanish Council of the Indies to investigate the administration of the viceroyalty.

APPENDIX 5:  
FIGURES

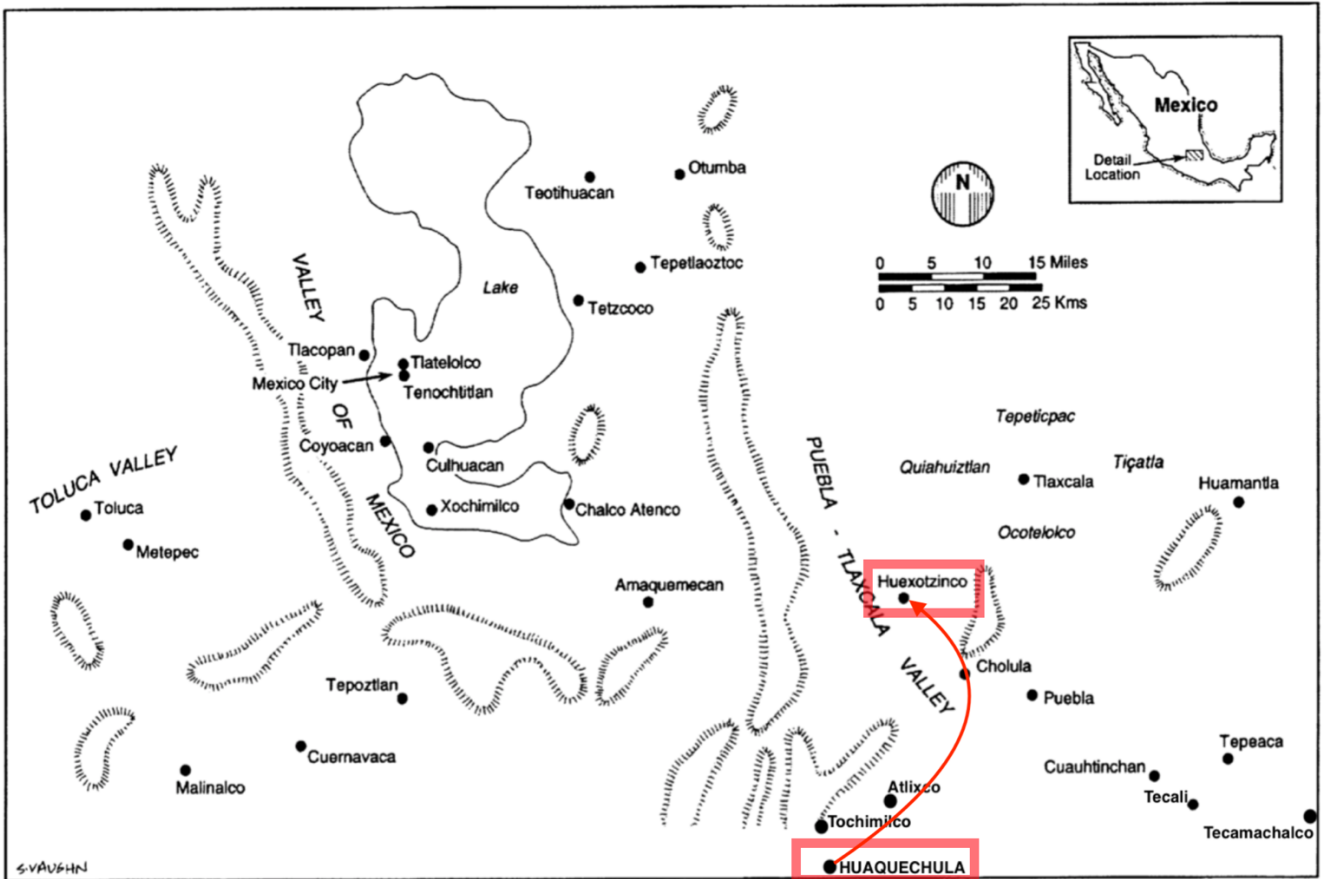


Figure 1. The Route of Don Juan from Huaquechula to Huejotzingo through the Central Mexican Highlands. Revised from John K. Chance, "The Noble House in Colonial Puebla, Mexico: Descent, Inheritance, and the Nahuatl Tradition," *American Anthropologist* 102, no. (2000): 487.



Figure 2. Monastery and church of San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, Mexico, ca. 1569. Photo by author.

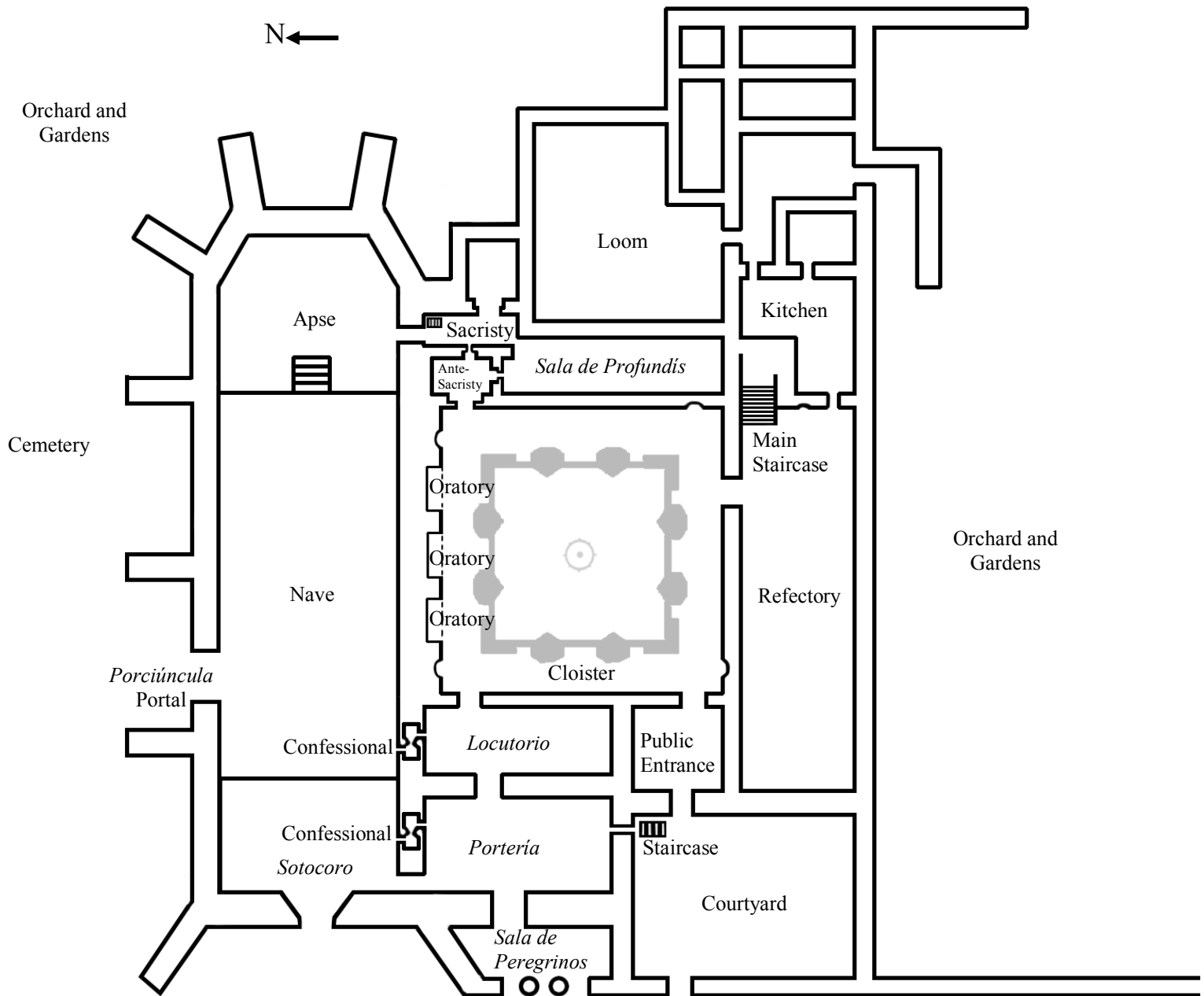


Figure 3. Plan of ground floor of San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1569. Plan by Magda Glotzer courtesy of University of Chicago Visual Resource Center.

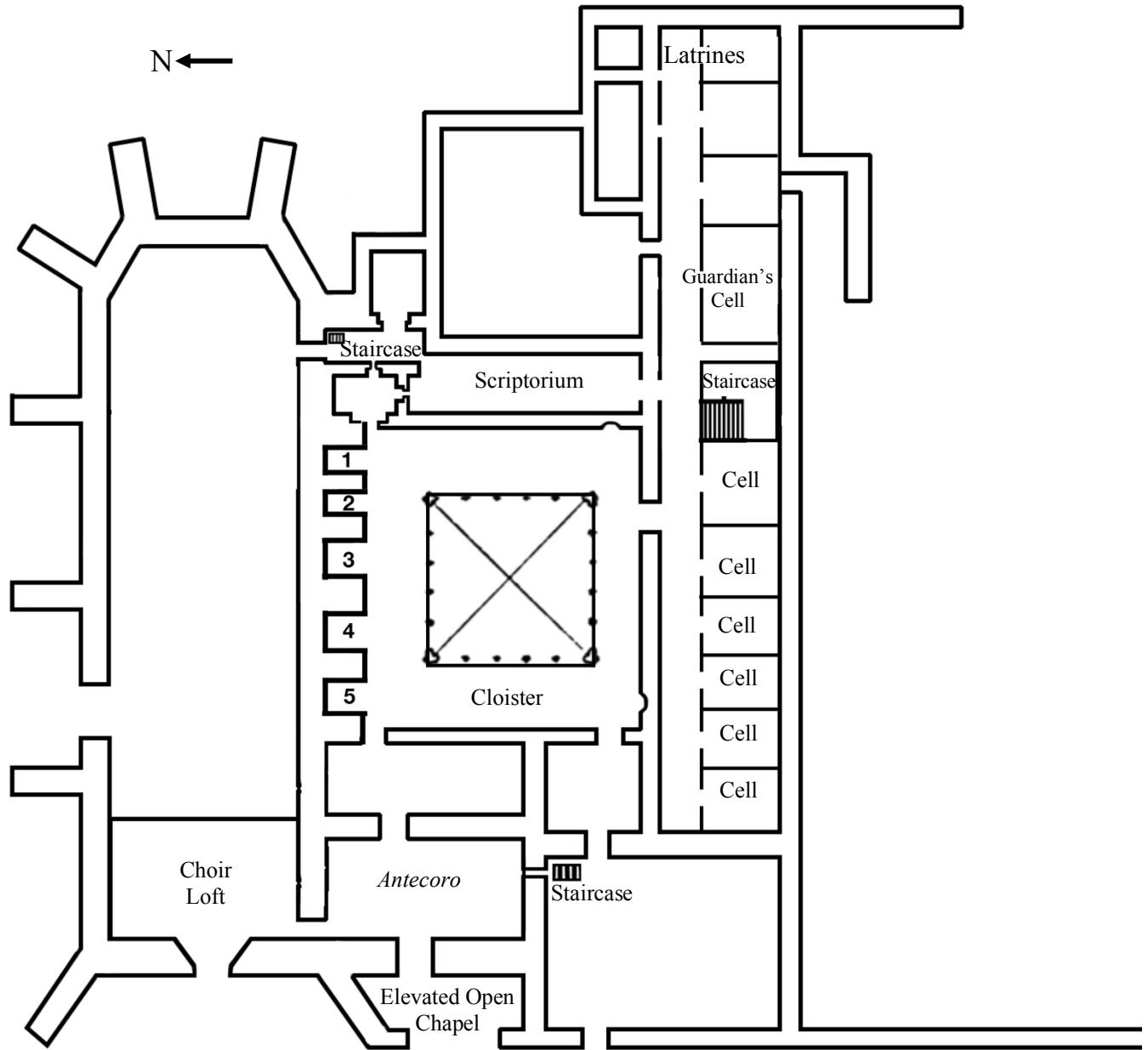


Figure 4. Plan of the upper floor of San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1569. Oratories labeled 1-5. Plan by Freddy Esquivel.

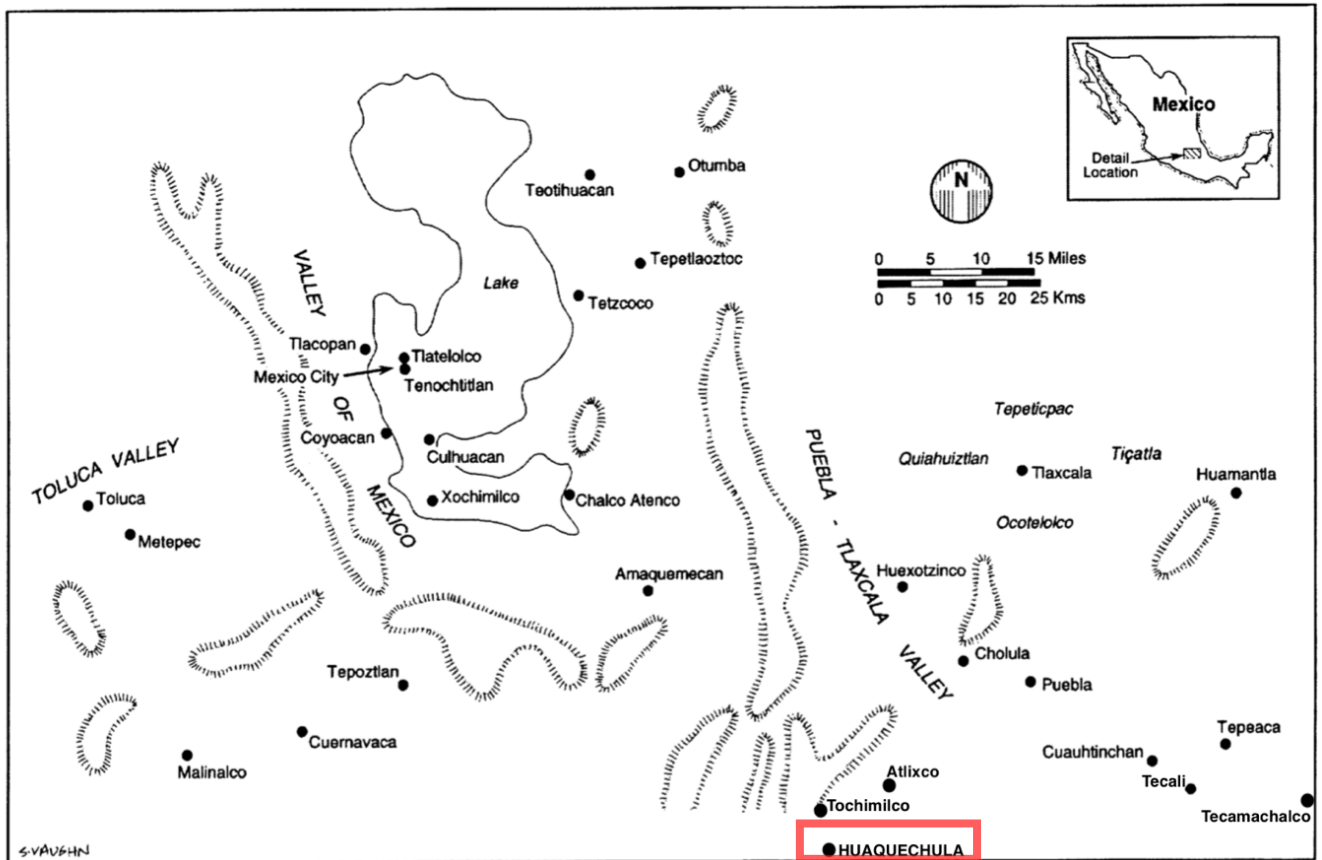


Figure 1.1. The Central Mexican highlands. Revised from John K. Chance, “The Noble House in Colonial Puebla, Mexico: Descent, Inheritance, and the Nahuatl Tradition,” *American Anthropologist* 102, no. 3 (2000): 487.



Figure 1.2. The Día de Muertos flower caravan. Photo by author.

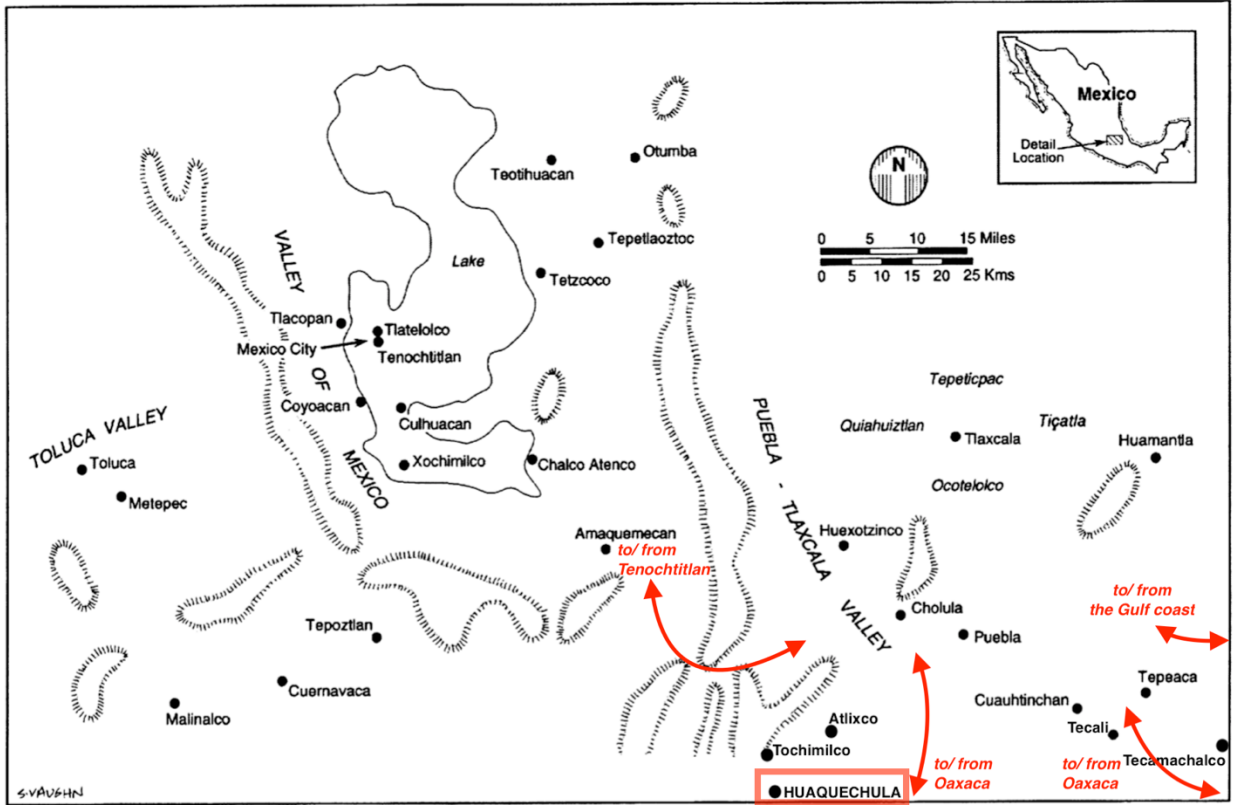


Figure 1.3. Map of Central-Mexican trade routes. Revised from John K. Chance, “The Noble House in Colonial Puebla, Mexico: Descent, Inheritance, and the Nahuatl Tradition,” *American Anthropologist* 102, no. 3 (2000): 487.





Figure 1.4. Macuilxochitepec (Cerro de San Miguel) with Franciscan monastery at its base and Popocatepetl volcano in the distance. Image in the public domain.



Figure 1.5. Macuilxochitl sculpture found near Huaquechula, ca. 1400-1520. Basalt, 90.2 cm. The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Maryland. Image in the public domain.



Figure 1.6. Eagle-Jaguar monolith, ca. 1400-1520. Huaquechula *plaza mayor*. Image in the public domain.

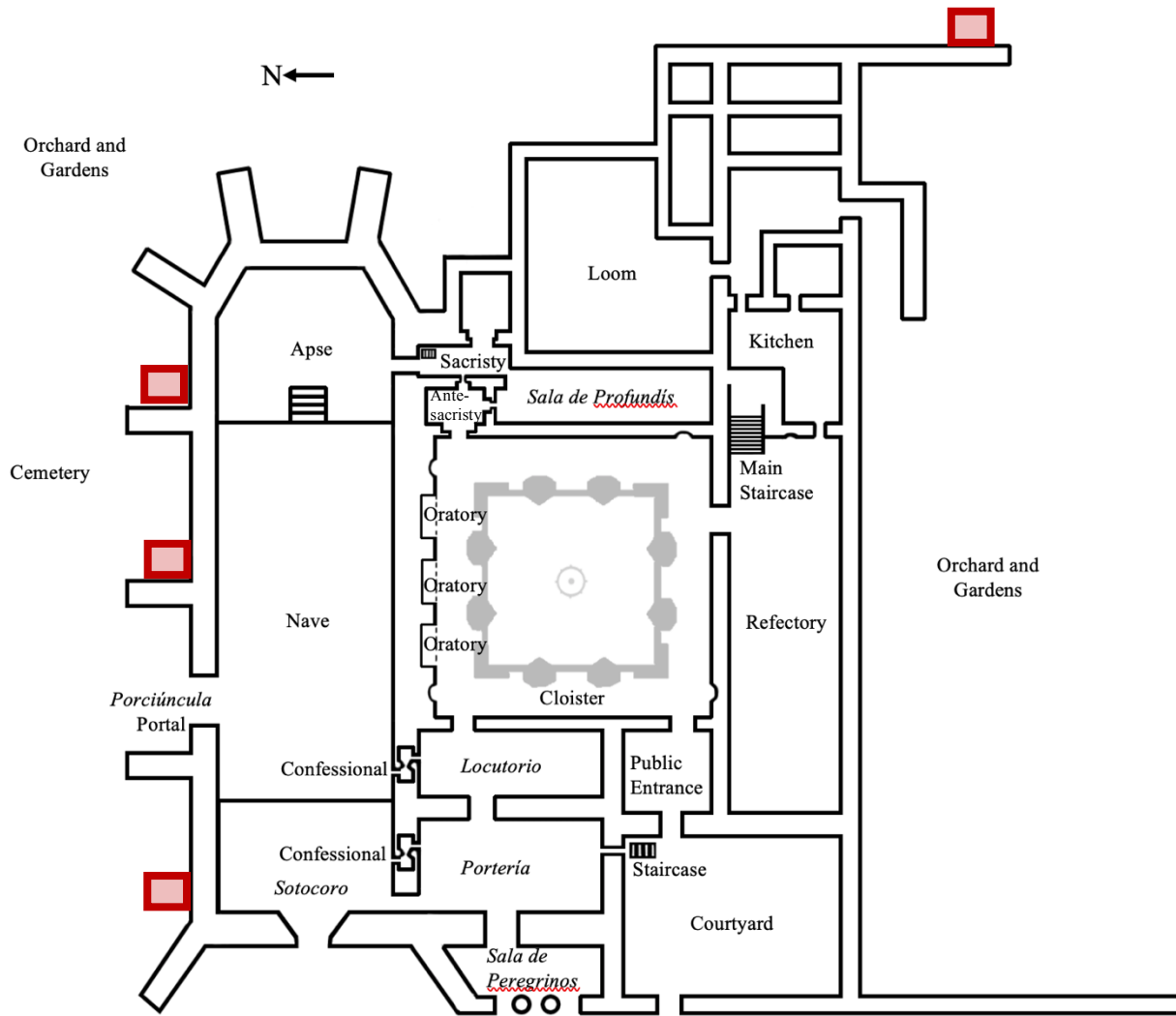


Figure 1.7. Plan of ground floor of church and cloister of San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1569. Red boxes indicate approximate position of pre-Hispanic carvings. Plan by Magda Glotzer courtesy of University of Chicago Visual Resource Center.



Figure 1.8. Monastery and church of San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1569. Photo by author.



Figure 1.9. *Codex Huaquechula*, mid-sixteenth century. Cotton, 211 cm x 144 cm. Museo Poblano de Arte Virreinal, Puebla, Mexico. Image in the public domain.



Figure 1.10. Don Juan emerging from Macuilxochitepec. *Codex Huaquechula*, mid-sixteenth century. Cotton, 211 cm x 144 cm. Museo Poblano de Arte Virreinal, Puebla, Mexico. Image in the public domain.

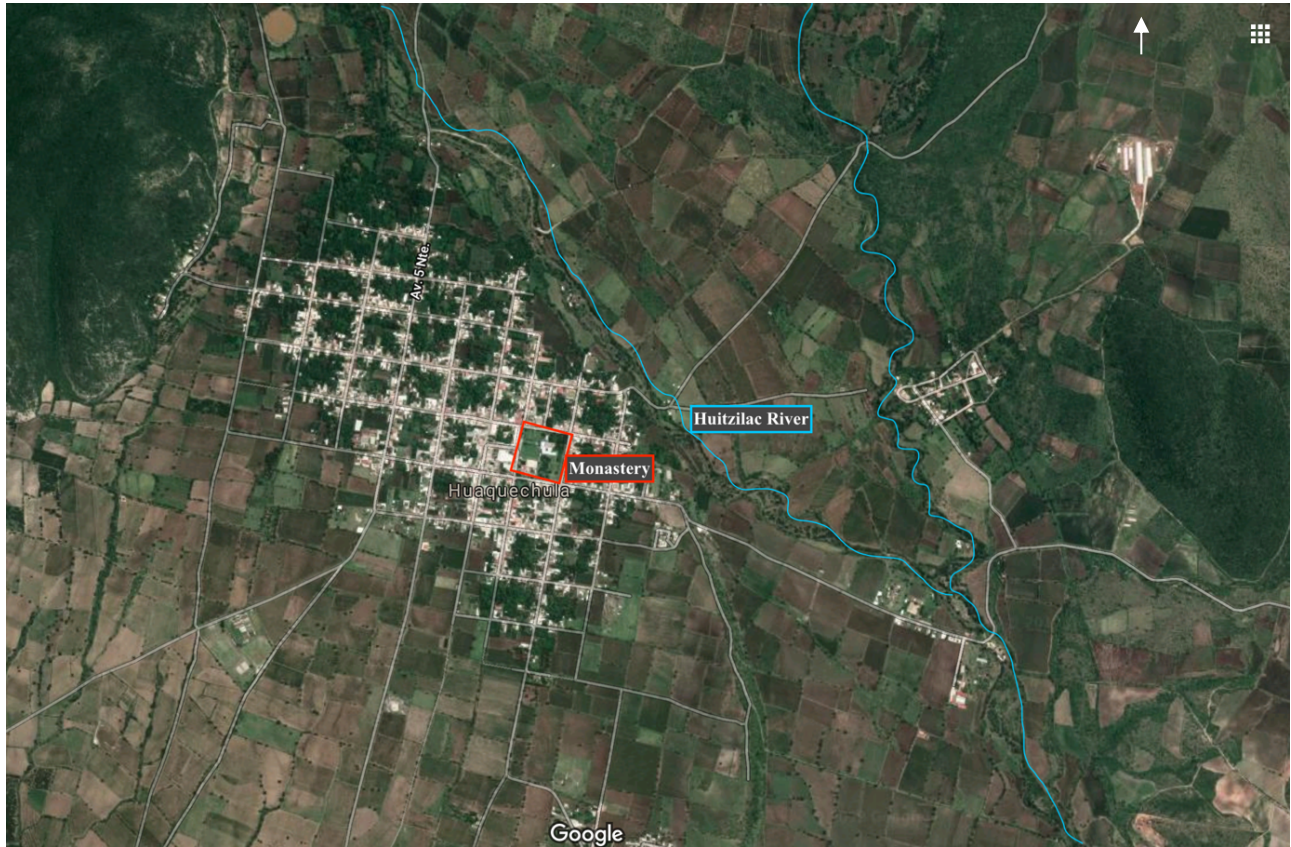


Figure 1.11. Topographical map of Huaquechula with monastery (red) and Huitzilac River (blue). Google Earth.



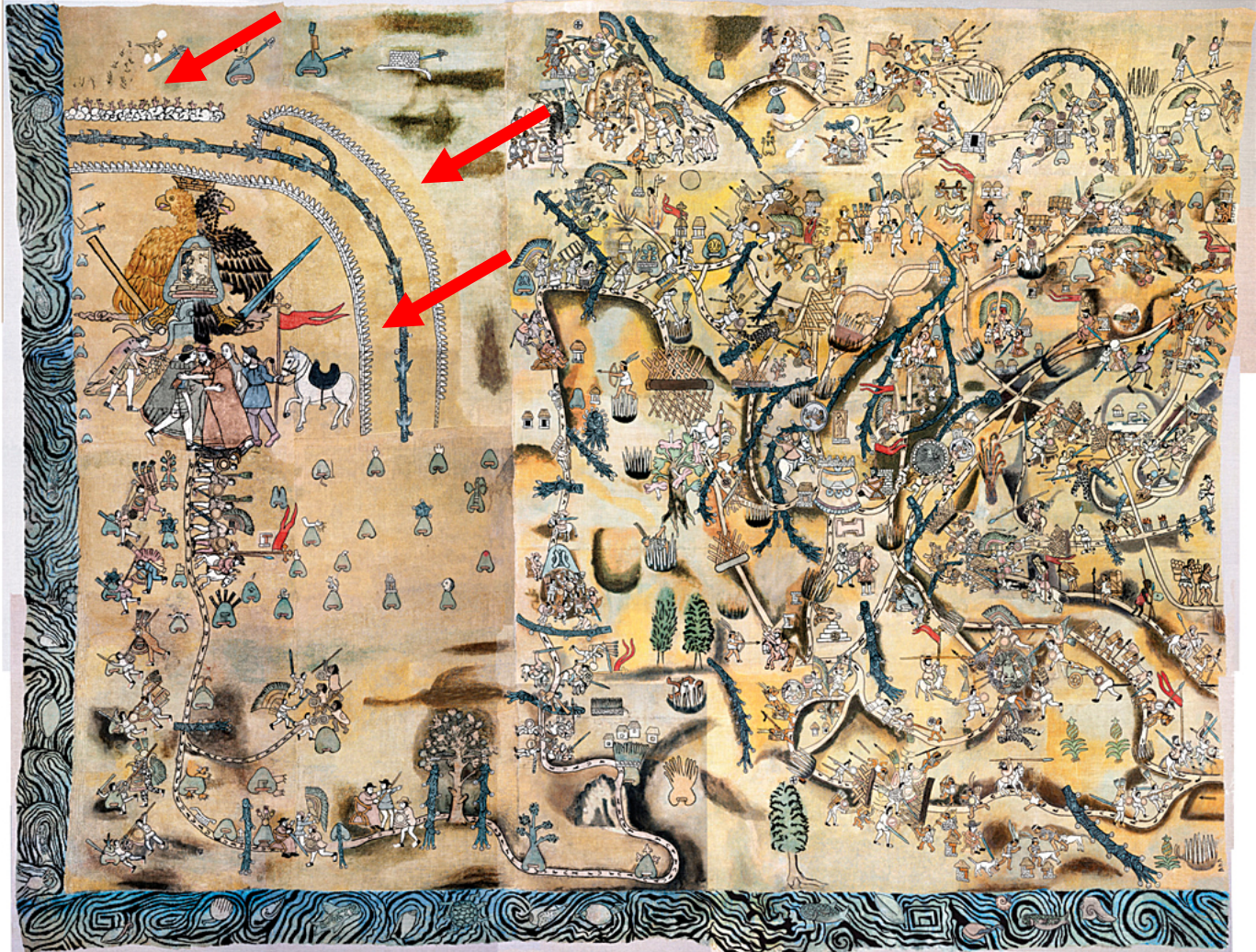


Figure 1.12. *Lienzo de Quauhquechollan* (red arrows indicate the defensive walls and garrison), ca. 1530. Digital restoration. Museo Poblano de Arte Virreinal. Image in the public domain.



Figure 1.13. Plaque with date glyph 2 Flint 1 Reed [August 30, 1467]. Formerly embedded in the south façade of the cloister. Monastery museum of San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula. Photo by author.



Figure 1.13.1. Line drawing of plaque with date glyph 2 Flint 1 Reed [August 30, 1467]. Avis Mysyk and Lucero Morales Cano, "The Ethnohistory and Archaeology of Cuauhquechollan, Valley of Atlixco, Mexico," *Ancient Mesoamerica* 26 (2015): 341.

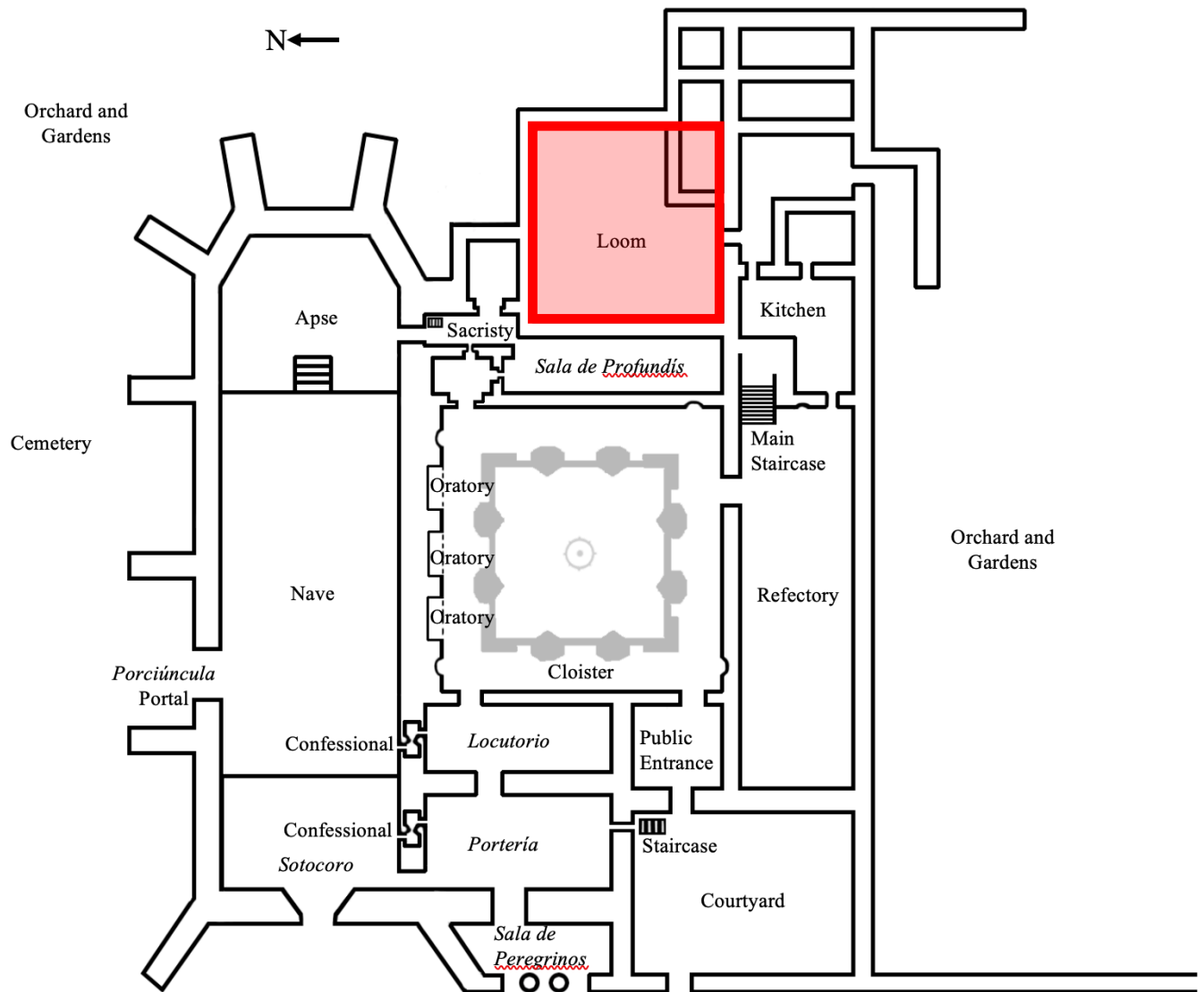


Figure 1.14. Plan of church and monastery, San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, c. 1569. The red box marks the probable location of the loom. Plan by Magda Glotzer.



Figure 1.15. Main portal. San Martín de Tours church, Huaquechula, ca. 1540-1569. Photo by author.



Figure 1.15.1 Carving of Saint Martin of Tours. West façade, San Martín de Tours church, Huaquechula, ca. 1540. Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, MEDIATECA, José Luis Ávila, ca. 1995. Image in the public domain.



Figure 1.16. *Mapa Circular de Quauhquechollan*, 1546. Cotton, 86.8 cm x 91.8 cm. Imperial Library (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek) Vienna, Austria. Image in the public domain.



Figure 1.17. "...R TELZ AÑOS 1550 Tochtl 6." First north apse buttress. San Martín de Tours church, Huaquechula, ca. 1550. Photo by author.





Figure 1.18. Sun stone. North façade, San Martín de Tours church, Huaquechula, ca. 1550-1585. Photo by author.



Figure 1.19. *Cuauhxicalli*. North façade, San Martín de Tours church, Huaquechula, ca. 1550-1585. Photo by author.



Figure 1.20. Camaxtli relief carving, ca. 1400-1520. North façade, San Martín de Tours church, Huaquechula. Photo by author.



Figure 1.21. North façade of church showing *Porciúncula* portal and Camaxtli stone (red box). San Martín de Tours church, Huaquechula, ca. 1563. Photo by author.



Figure 1.22. 6 Reed (1563) plaque. North façade. San Martín de Tours church, Huaquechula, ca. 1563. Photo by author.



Figure 1.23. *Porciúncula* portal. North patio, San Martín, Huaquechula church, ca. 1563. Photo by author.



Figure 1.24. Upper cloister. San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1569. Photo by author.



Figure 1.25. Elevated open chapel. San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1569. Photo by author.





Figure 1.26. *Huaquecholteca Penitential Procession*. Oratory 5, upper cloister. San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1569. Photo by author.



Figure 1.27. Oratory 1, west wall. Upper cloister. San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1569.  
Photo by author.



Figure 1.28. Oratory 4. Upper cloister. San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1569. Photo by author.



Figure 1.29. “ASCA: OPEUHQUI YN TEPETz/TLI: Y[n]PA[n]: MIERCOLLES.” East cloister façade. San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1569. Photo by author.



Figure 1.30. “D. PENALOSA / JULIOS AÑO 1569. East cloister façade. San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1569. Photo by author.



Figure 1.31. Main altarpiece. San Martín de Tours church, Huaquechula, ca. 1575. Photo by author.



Figure 1.32. *Sotocoro*, north wall. San Martín de Tours church, Huaquechula, ca. 1569. Photo by author.



Figure 2.1. Frieze with Saint John Evangelist escutcheon (red box). Northwest corner, lower cloister, ca. 1540. San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula. Photo by author.



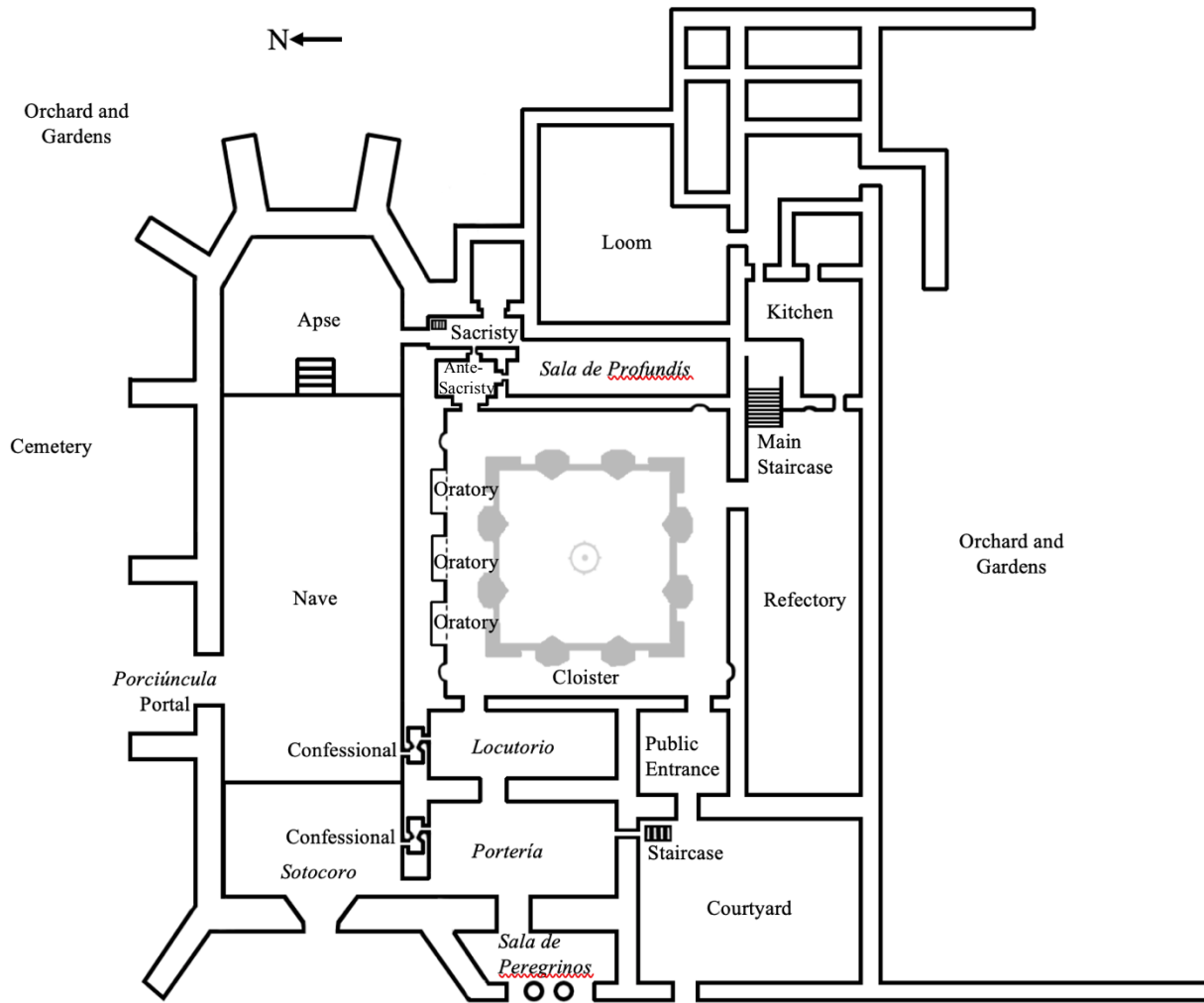


Figure 2.2. Plan of San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula. Plan by Magda Glotzer courtesy of University of Chicago Visual Resource Center.

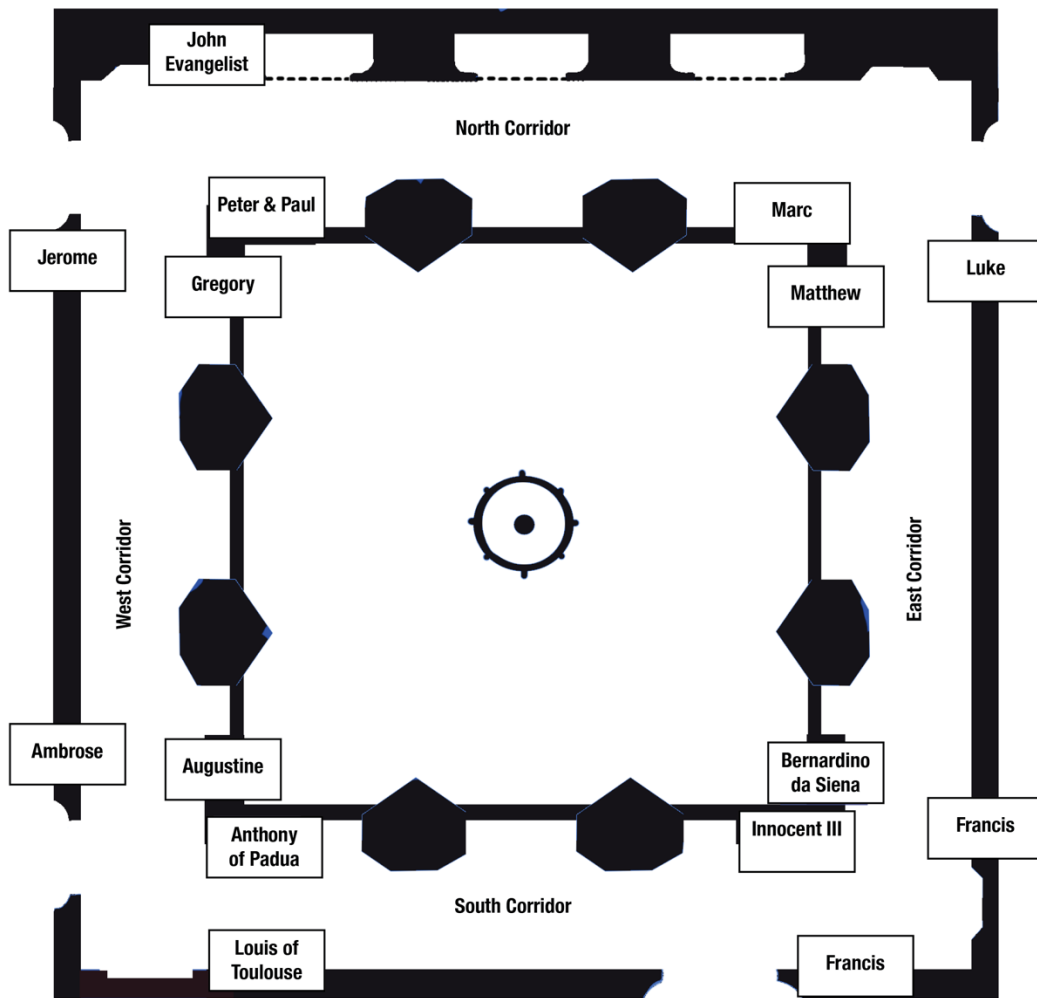


Figure 2.3. Plan of the iconographic program of the lower cloister. San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula. Plan by Freddy Esquivel and Magda Glotzer.

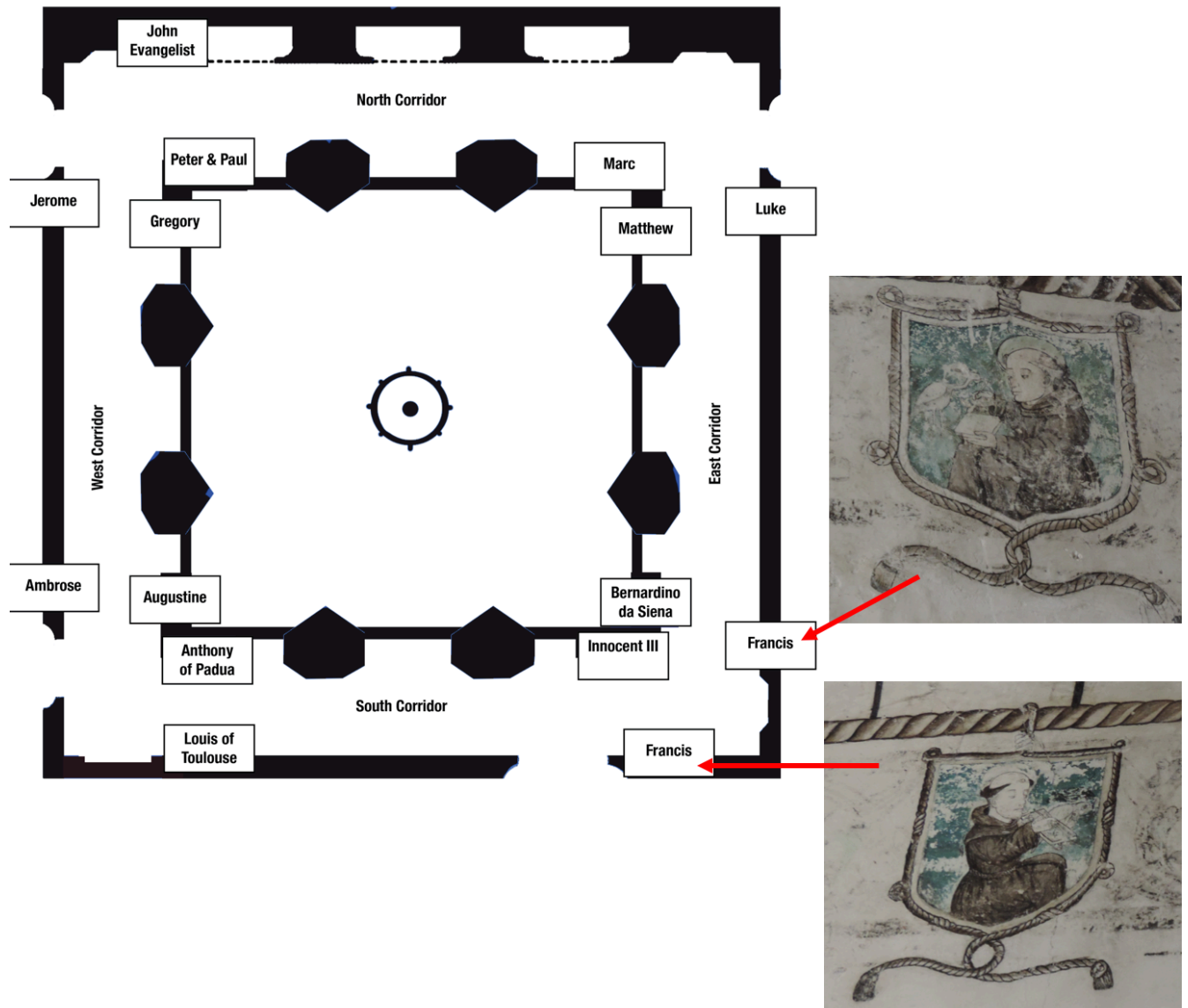


Figure 2.4. Position of Saint Francis portraits in the lower cloister. San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula. Plan by Freddy Esquivel and Magda Glotzer.



Figure 2.5. View of lower cloister. San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1540. Photo by José Luis Ávila, INAH MEDiateca, ca. 1995. Image in the Public Domain.



Figure 2.6. View of refectory entrance. South corridor, lower cloister. San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1540. Photo by author.



Figure 2.7 Saint Bernardino da Siena. East corridor, lower cloister. San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1540. Photo courtesy of Julietta Domínguez Silva.



Figure 2.8. Saint Mark with Palm Tree North corridor, lower cloister. San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1540. Photo by author. Red box around tree.



Figure 2.9. Saint Francis. South corridor, lower cloister. San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1540. Photo courtesy of Julietta Domínguez Silva.





Figure 2.10. Saint Francis. East corridor, lower cloister. San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1540. Photo courtesy of Julietta Domínguez Silva.



Figure 2.11. Main entrance to the cloister, northwest corner. San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1540. Photo by author.



Figure 2.12. Saint Bonaventure. North corridor, lower cloister. San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1540. Photo by author.



Figure 2.13. Saint John Evangelist. North corridor, lower cloister. San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1540. Photo courtesy of Julietta Domínguez Silva.



Figure 2.14. Saint Peter and Saint Paul. North corridor, lower cloister. San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1540. Photo courtesy of Julietta Domínguez Silva.



Figure 2.15. Secular entrance. Southwest corner, lower cloister. San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1540. Photo by José Luis Ávila, INAH MEDiateca, ca. 1995. Image in the public domain.



Figure 2.16. Saint Anthony of Padua. South corridor, lower cloister. San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1540. Photo courtesy of Julietta Domínguez Silva.



Figure 2.17. Saint Louis of Toulouse. South corridor, lower cloister. San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1540. Photo by author.





Figure. 2.18. Pope Innocent III. South corridor, lower cloister. San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1540. Photo courtesy of Julietta Domínguez Silva.



Figure 2.19. *Lienzo de Quauhquechollan*, ca. 1530. Digital restoration. Museo Poblano de Arte Virreinal.



Figure 2.20. Portraits of Saint Louis of Toulouse (outer) and Saint Anthony of Padua (inner). Southeast corner, lower cloister. San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1540. Photo by author.



Figure 3.1. Through-wall confessional (right) and ‘modern’ confessional box (left). *Locutorio*, San Miguel Arcángel, Huejotzingo, ca. 1571. Photo by Alice Kallman.



Figure 3.2. Interior of through-wall confessional. *Locutorio*, San Miguel Arcángel, Huejotzingo, ca. 1571. Photo by Alice Kallman.

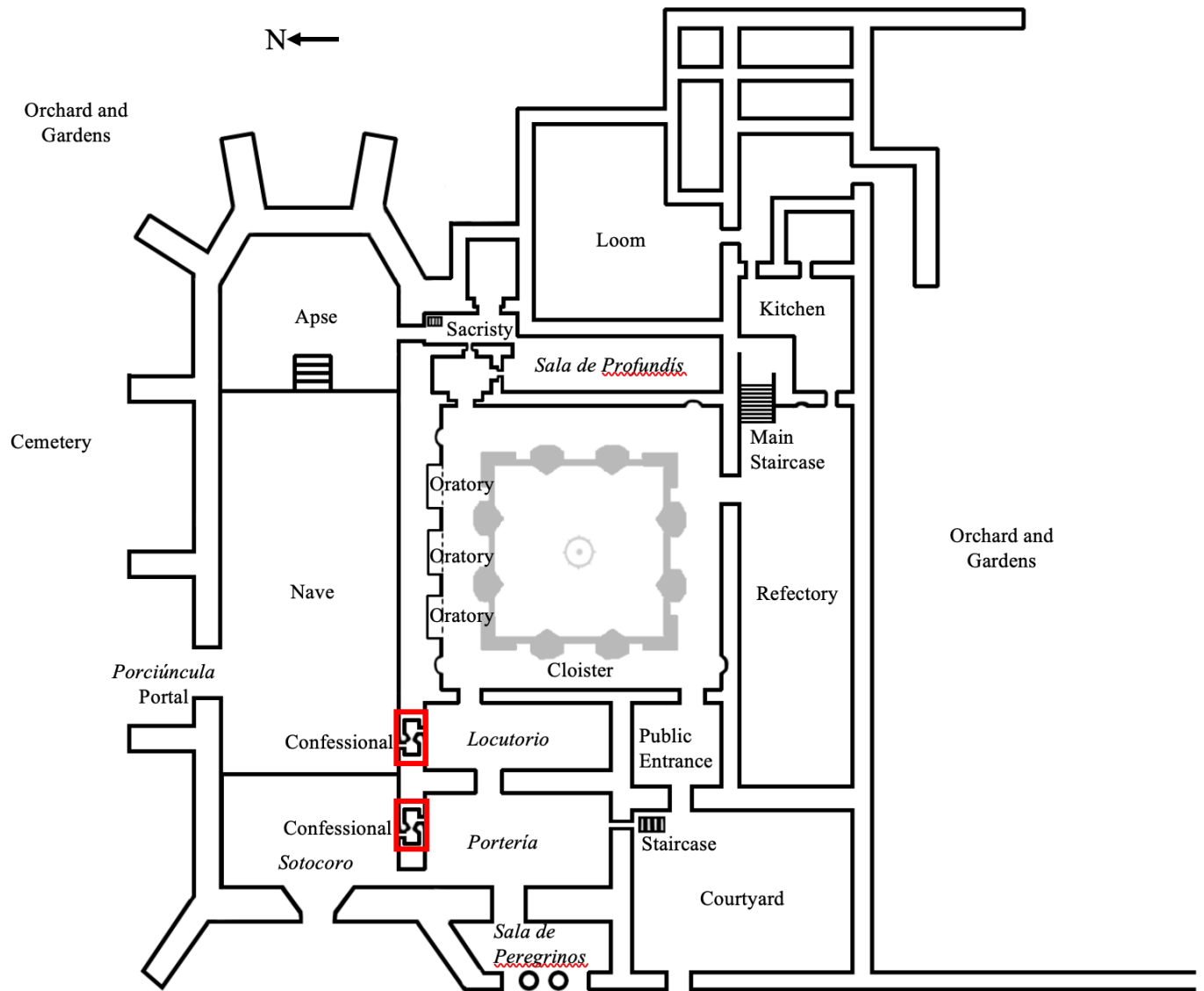


Figure 3.3. Plan of Church and Cloister, San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, c. 1569. Red boxes indicate approximate placement of confessionals. Plan by Magda Glotzer courtesy of University of Chicago Visual Resource Center.



Figure 3.4. Through-wall confessional. Nave, south wall. Church of San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1569. Photo by author.



Figure 3.5. Modern *portería* entrance and location of former through-wall confessional. *Sotocoro*, south wall. Church of San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1569. Photo by author.





Figure 3.6. Through-wall confessional. *Sotocoro*, south wall. San Miguel Arcángel, Huejotzingo, ca. 1571. Photo by author.

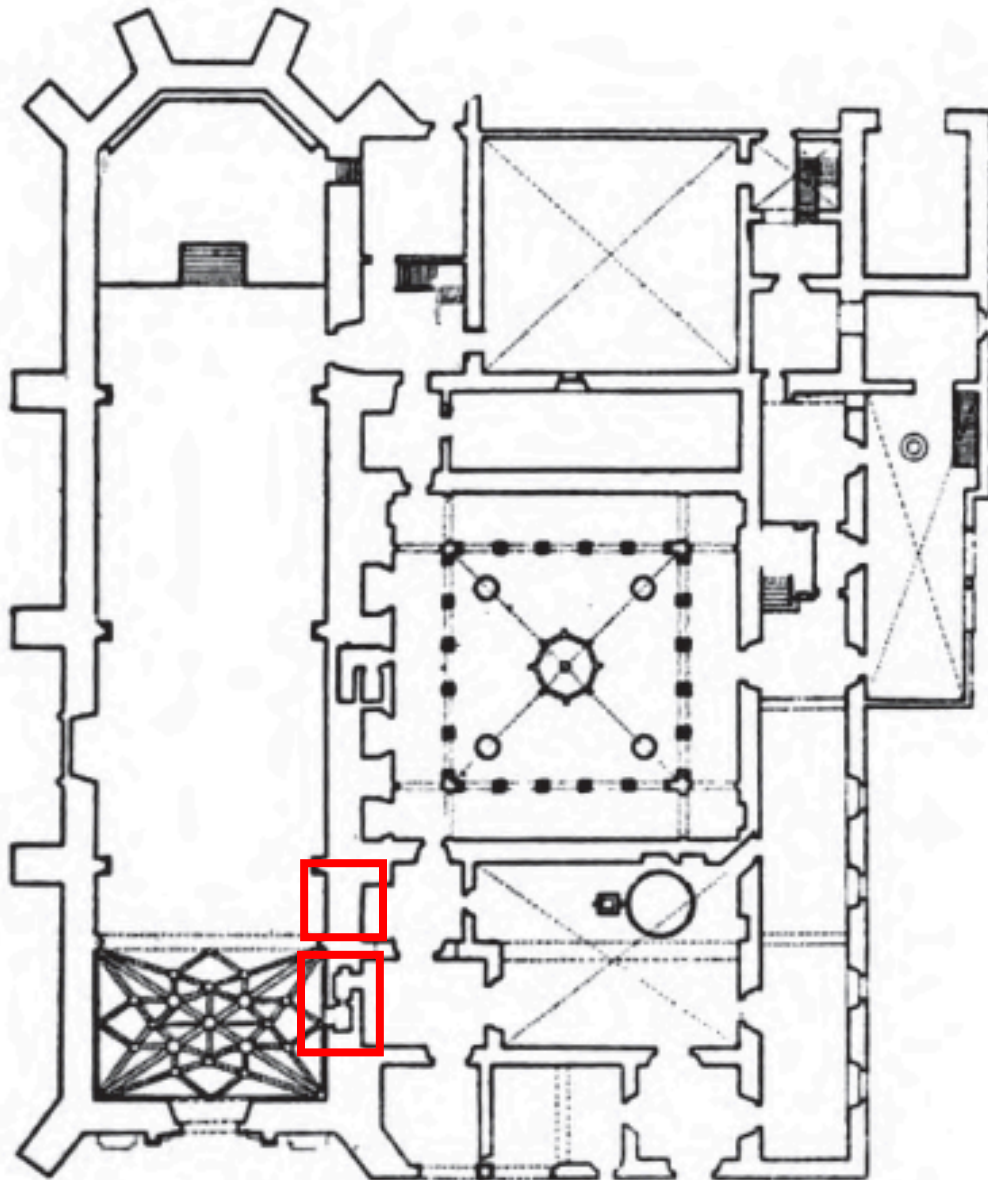


Figure 3.7. Plan of Church and Cloister, San Miguel Arcángel, Huejotzingo, ca. 1571. Red boxes indicate approximate placement of confessionals. George Kubler, *Mexican Architecture of the Sixteenth Century*, vol. 2 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), 253.



Figure 3.8. Collapsed vault and choir loft of the church. San Martín, Huaquechula. September 2017. Photo in the public domain.



Figure 3.9. *Sotocoro*, north wall. Church of San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula. ca. 1569. Photo by author.

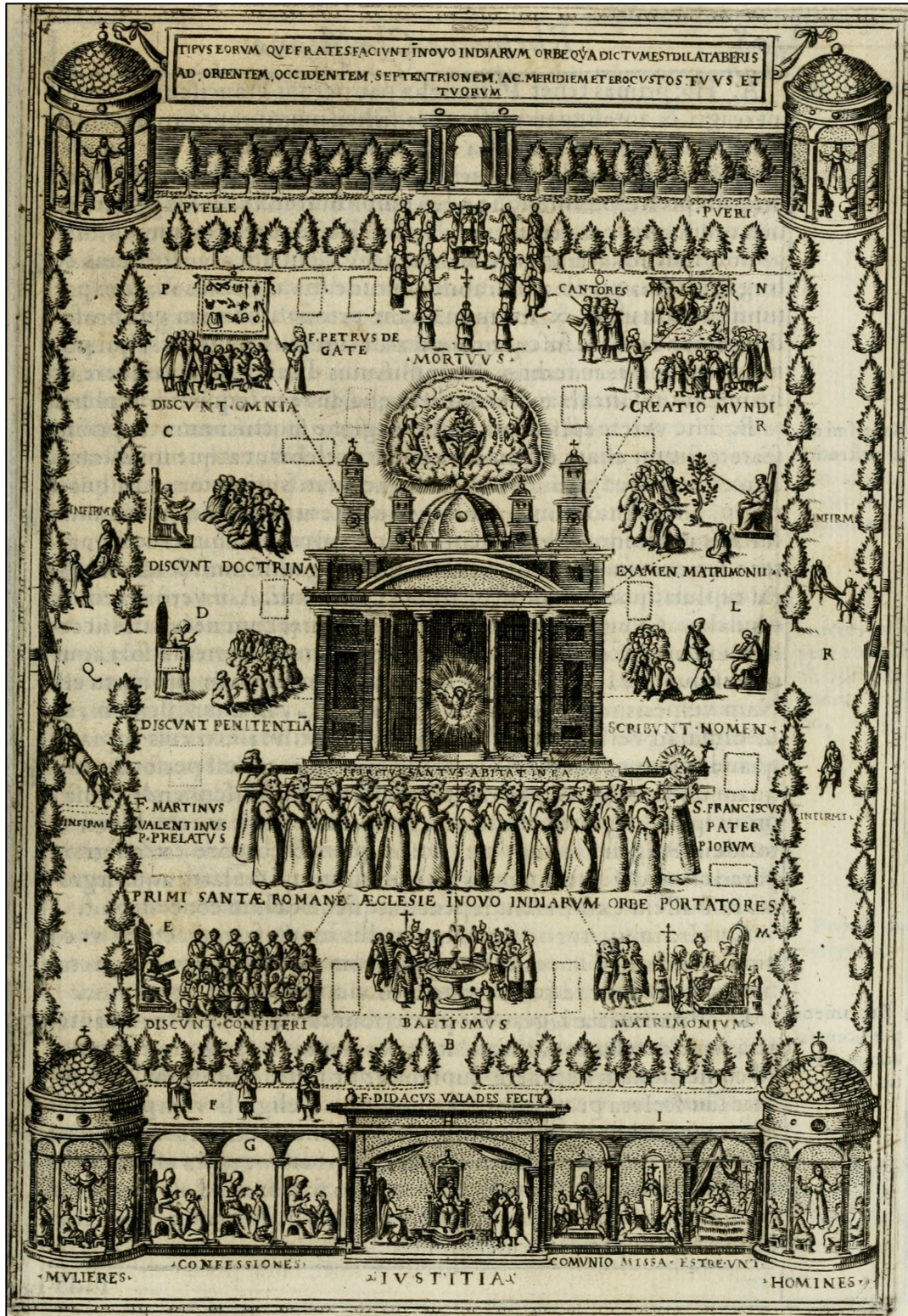


Figure 3.10. 'Ideal Atrio,' Diego de Valadés, *Rhetorica Christiana* (Perugia: Petrus Jacobus Petrutius 1579). Newberry Library, Ayer 657.V2 1579. Image courtesy of the Newberry Library.





Figure 3.12. Through-wall confessional. *Portería*, San Diego de Gúzman, Tlaquiltenango, ca. 1555. Photo by author.



Figure 3.13. Mural of confession. *Porteria*. San Diego de Gúzman, Tlaquiltenango, ca. 1555. Photo by author.





Figure 3.14. *Sotocoro*, north wall. Church of San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1569. Photo by author courtesy of *sacristan* don Gonzalo Alejo Martínez.



Figure 3.15. *Sotocoro*, south wall. Church of San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1569. Photo by author.



Figure 3.16. Vault, lower cloister walkway. The philodendron is in the blue box and the morning glory is in the red box. San Salvador, Malinalco, ca. 1571. Photo by author.



¶ Azual suchitl, iuhqujn tolin.  
 ¶ Topi suchitl, istac, ita tlapalhoa  
 canquj, ma couhquj, mynjiaoa  
 io, tomjollo, mala calhtic: inj  
 quauhio iuhqujn ifi to lin, ma  
 la calhtentli, atlan inmoctioa,  
 omjfo.



¶ Vacal suchitl: injquauhio  
 me me catic, motlaclanjanj,  
 ama tlapale: qujillo ya patlaaac:  
 inj atlapal iuhqujn, aio cona,  
 tatz caltic, tamanguj, hlatlahoa  
 io, vi viac injquauhio: myalla  
 pal mo vilanarij, mo vicomarij,  
 mo icatla canj: inj suchio inj  
 myltic, i htsaianguj: my itic hi  
 lac, mo ceppa yjollo, o lotic,  
 iaca vitsic: o xio. Inim suchitl  
 injeoio tilaac, mo vilana, me  
 catic, meme catic, memecati,  
 mycaja.



¶ Tocciz oacal suchitl: toma  
 oac injquauhio, cenca patla  
 sac myallapal: inj suchio tu  
 ma oac, istac, viac, amo velic  
 amo liia, amo me conj: ma  
 qujn qujnecaj, iaca thaltea  
 qua ethi vi, iaca to ma o. Inje  
 aan more quj: quj quj motu



Figure 3.17. Philodendrons (lower two drawings). Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 11, f. 194r <https://www.wdl.org/>



Figure 3.18. Detail: *Sotocoro*, north wall. Morning glory is in the red box. Church of San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1569. Photo by author.

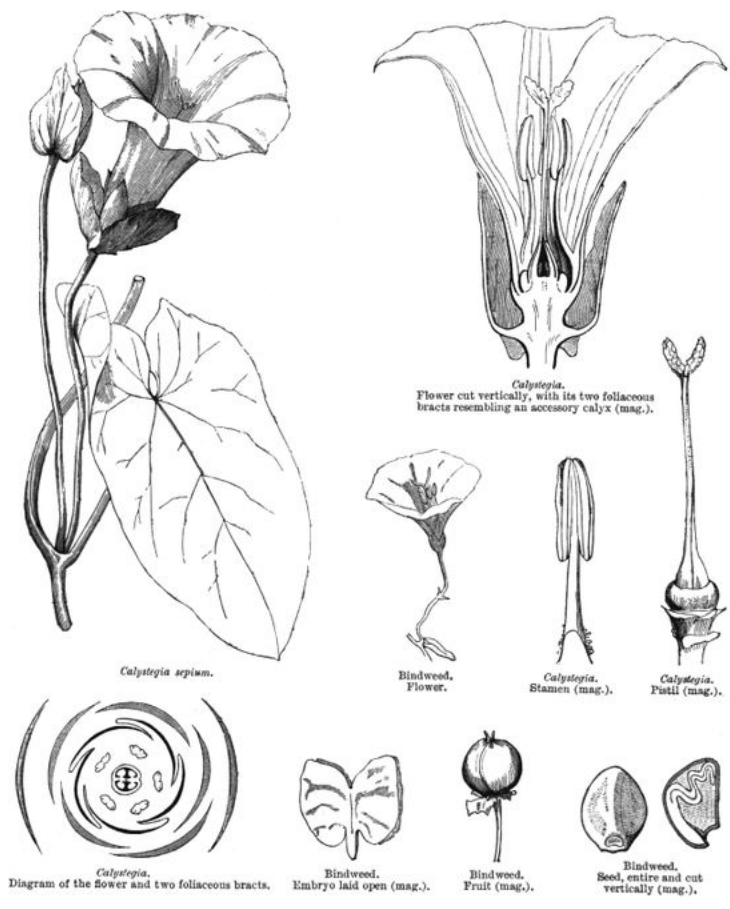


Figure 3.19. Diagram of morning glory. Image in the public domain.

Libro undecimo



melactic, papalactic, aio slo the  
palvi, patinj.

QOclo suchitl: xiviti, injatlapal  
inquislo memelactic, memelactic  
injac ponca, itoca: oculosuchitl  
cauhquj, itapapalo tactli, costic  
caquj suchitl: inje mitwa, oco  
losuchitl, in costic molhatlapal  
alpihi: in chichitl, mo ta teo  
cauh alpihi, mo caqujcaquj, ca  
caqujcaquj, caqujcaquj.

QQuasral suchitl: Alacotntli: in  
atlapal, inxiuhio canquez quj  
inmiltic, ite coionquj, suchitl  
in suchitl momoiactic, xexel  
taamaoac, ite ta, xexelvi, xexel  
vi, moiaoa, cuecuciaoa.

QPoima suchitl: ie hoatl inje  
comaio caca ea suchitl: qujtua  
teiolcuap, teiolmalacathoa, te  
iolla thololli: teiolcuapa, te  
iol malacathoa, teiollo tholol  
lia.

Q Tlalpoimathl: xiviti, hual  
velic, haviac, a vixtic, poima  
tic, italla inpoimathl, vela, hi  
iaia.

QTeutlaqujli: ita cotli, mamae,  
maxallo, maria tzo cello, mama  
xaltic, mama xaltic quj, quj quj

Figure 3.20. Morning glory (lowermost drawing). Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 11, f. 196v. <https://www.wdl.org/>



Figure 3.21. Detail: *Sotocoro*, north wall. A philodendron is in the blue box and morning glory is in the red box. Church of San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula. Photo by author.





¶ Parrapho duodecimo: de los arboles pequeños que tienen mas arboles que ayeruas.



isloca, nje tlapolotia: nje tva, nje  
tesuthi zokona, nje tesuthi va,  
hecamacatl nje tequilia, nje co  
conavta. Nite sushita, nje m  
da in suchitl, anco nje temaca  
nje acailhujlas, aco cacan nje  
tema maaca, te mac nje tlatla  
temac nje mamana in suchitl,  
aco nje coacala, anco nje te  
iepac sushita

¶ Inje mallactli omume par  
rapho: itech paffava in que  
nyn amj yielis qua Vill.

¶ Teupochotl, tmanan machua,  
tomactvntli, nanatstic, vel xixi  
potsic, xixipospatic, xicatalstic  
te gacstic: vel iuhquj in nje tva, ci  
rio pasqual, quav in ichiton, qua  
te gston. Auh isca in tectica in  
qualli, inaqualli. In aquin ce  
ca aultic quiqua, anco quj in j  
xinathio, anco in meialla, ic  
tumaqa, ic veia, ic monaca iotia,  
ic motuma: ic ipampa in tlexi  
matinj, in in isleaoan quiqua  
tia, nje tumaqa, nje vaia. Auh  
in amoqualli itectica: in te coco  
liani, quj te qualtia, quj te itia  
ad ipan, ocilli ipan, haqualli  
ipan quj te tolotia: can nje man

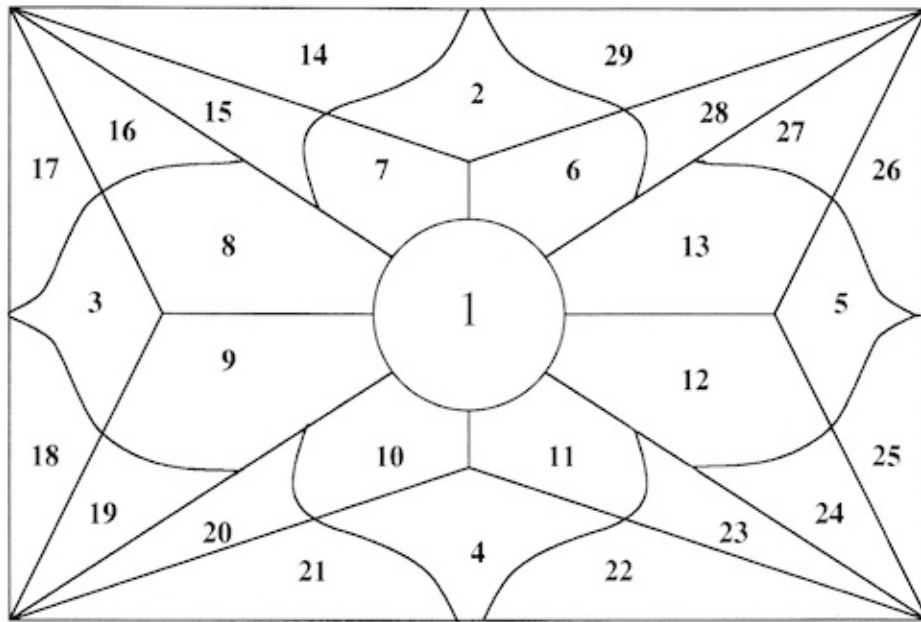
Figure 3.22. Adorning a ruler with flowers (uppermost drawing). Bernardino de Sahagún, Florentine Codex, Book 11, f. 199 <https://www.wdl.org/>



Figure 3.23. Don Juan Gerson. Frieze with philodendrons, tulle, and *chalchihuitl*. Nave, church of Nuestra Señora de la Asunción, Tecamachalco, 1561. Photo by author.



Figure 3.24. Don Juan Gerson. *Apocalypse Cycle*. Pigment on *amatl*. Soffit, church of Nuestra Señora de la Asunción, Tecamachalco, May 1562. Photo by author.



- |     |                           |     |                              |
|-----|---------------------------|-----|------------------------------|
| 1.  | Five Wounds               | 16. | View of Jerusalem            |
| 2.  | Eagle of St. John         | 17. | Vision of the Lamb           |
| 3.  | Bull of St. Luke          | 18. | Measuring the Temple         |
| 4.  | Angel of St. Matthew      | 19. | Taking of the Dragon         |
| 5.  | Lion of St. Mark          | 20. | The Beast from the Sea       |
| 6.  | Sacrifice of Isaac        | 21. | Fall of Babylon              |
| 7.  | Tower of Babel            | 22. | Christ with Seven Candelabra |
| 8.  | Noah's Ark                | 23. | Opening of the Seventh Seal  |
| 9.  | Cain & Abel               | 24. | Woman of the Apocalypse      |
| 10. | Temple of Solomon         | 25. | Four Angels of the Abyss     |
| 11. | Altar of Ariel            | 26. | Opening of the Sixth Seal    |
| 12. | Twenty Four Elders        | 27. | Angel pointing to Book       |
| 13. | Jacob's Ladder            | 28. | Choosing of the Elect        |
| 14. | Opening of the Fifth Seal | 29. | Four Horsemen                |
| 15. | Plague of Locusts         |     |                              |

Figure 3.25. Diagram of Tecamachalco "Apocalypse Murals." Diagram in the public domain. <http://mexicosmurals.blogspot.com/2017/01/tecamachalco-apocalypse-murals.html>



Figure 3.26. Don Juan Gerson, *The Eagle of Saint John*. Pigment on *amatl*. Soffit, Tecamachalco church, May 1562. Photograph by Manuel Álvarez Bravo. Image in the public domain. <http://mexicosmurals.blogspot.com/2017/01/tecamachalco-apocalypse-murals.html>



Figure 4.1. Oratory 4. Upper cloister. San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1569. Photo by author.



Figure 4.2. West wall. Oratory 4. Upper cloister. San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1569. Photo by author.



Figure 4.3. View of upper cloister. San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1569. Photo by author.



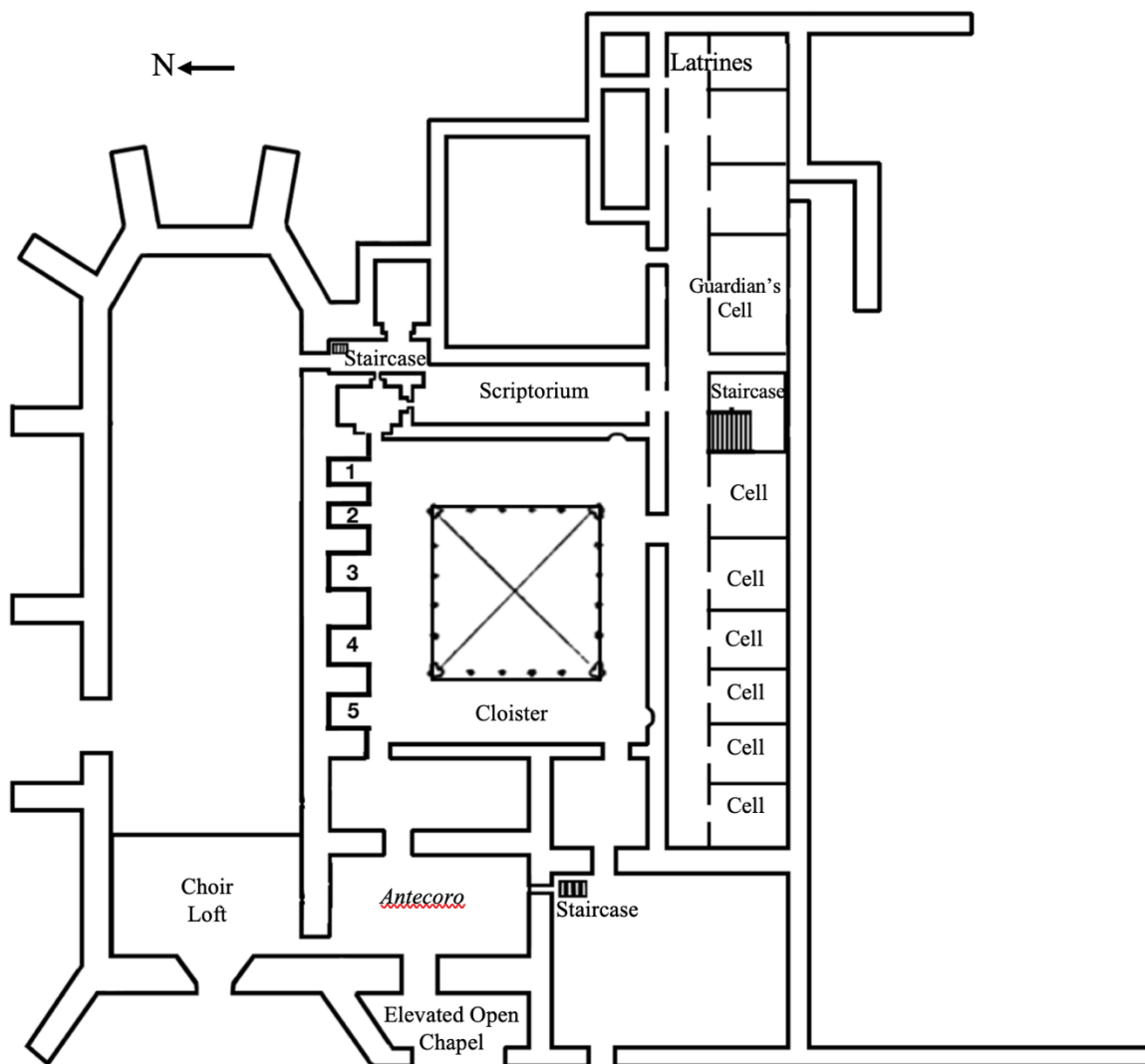


Figure 4.4. Plan of the upper cloister. San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1569. Oratories labeled 1-5. Plan by Freddy Esquivel.



Figure 4.5. Oratory, upper cloister. San Miguel, Huejotzingo, ca. 1556. Photo by author.



Figure 4.6. East wall. Oratory 3. Upper cloister. San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1569.  
Photo by author.



Figure 4.7. Oratory 1. Upper cloister. San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1569. Photo by author.



Figure 4.8. West wall. Oratory 1. Upper cloister. San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1569. Photo by author.

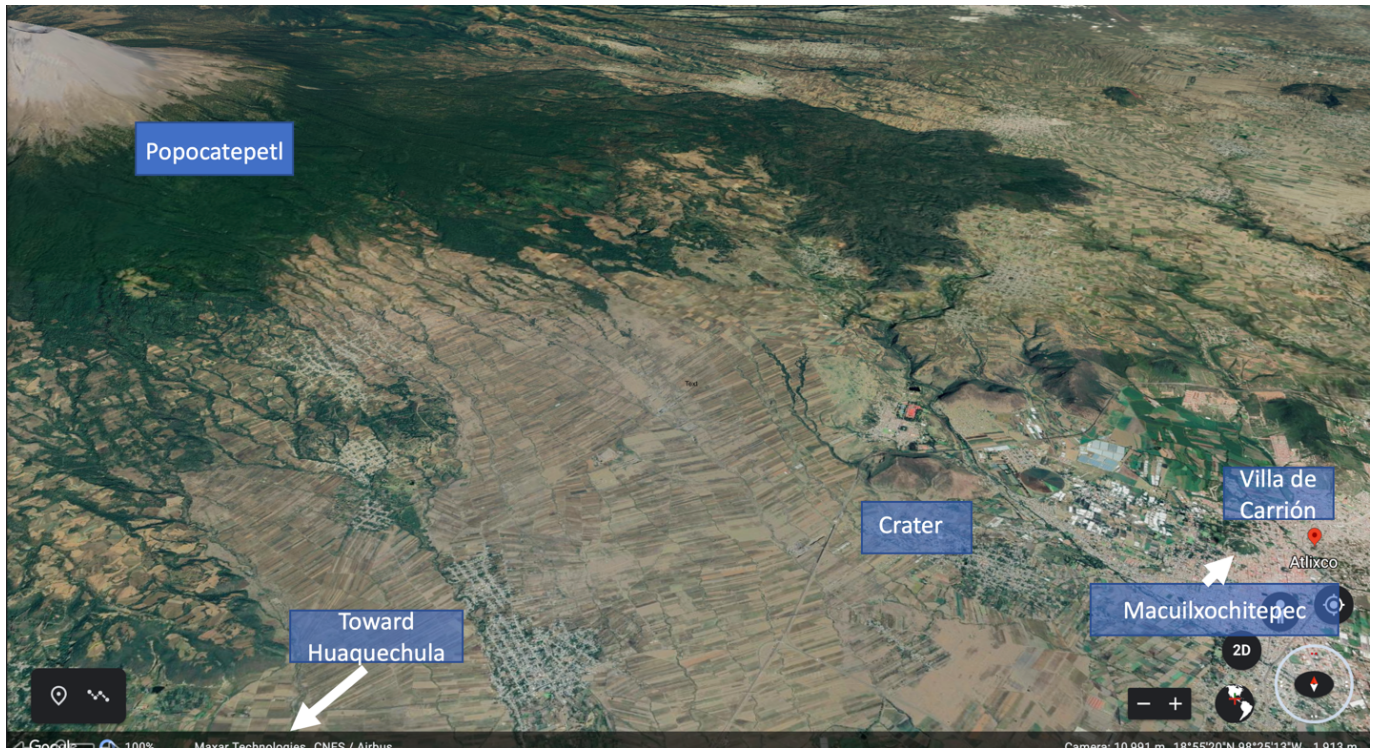


Figure 4.9. Aerial view of topographical features of Atlixco Valley as viewed from Huaquechula looking north. Google Earth.



Figure 4.10. Topographical features of Atlixco Valley as viewed from Huaquechula looking north. West wall, Oratory 1. Upper cloister. San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1569. Photo by author.



Figure 4.11. *Ahuehete* tree, Atlixco Valley. Photo in the public domain.





Figure 4.12. Detail, *Ahuehete* trees. Oratory 3. Upper cloister. San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1569. Photo by author.



Figure 4.13. Albrecht Altdorfer. *The Great Landscape with Water Mill*. Etching with traces of light grey and yellow watercolor, ca. 1520. National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., United States.



Figure 4.14. Albrecht Altdorfer. *The Large Spruce*. Etching, ca. 1517-1520. Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, England.



Figure 4.15. *Triumph of Love*. Casa del Deán, Puebla de los Ángeles, 1580. Photo by author.

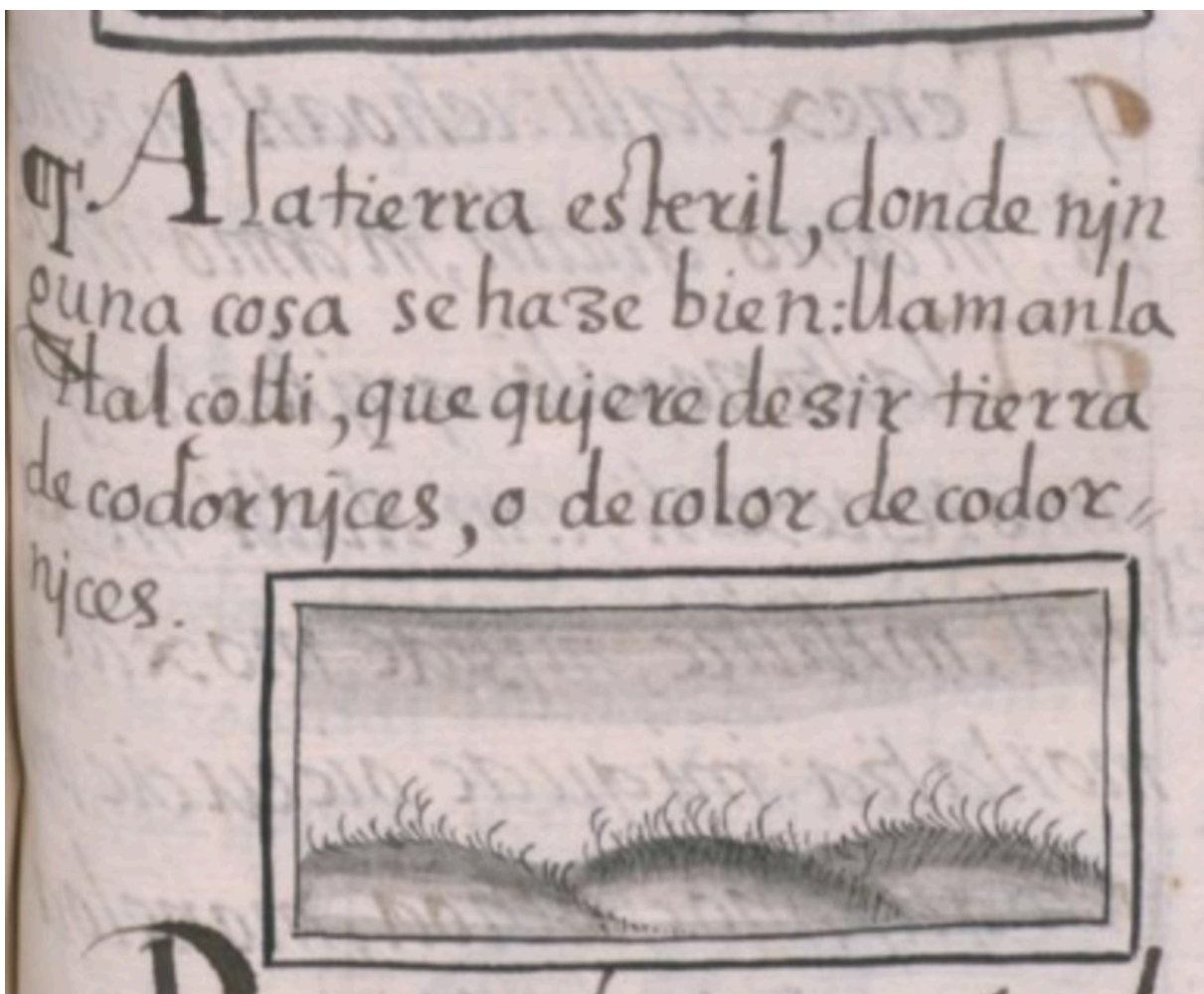


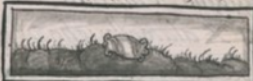
Figure 4.16. *Tlalcolli* or “tierra esteril.” Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 11, f. 229r. <https://www.wdl.org/>



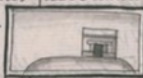
Figure 4.17. Detail, *Xatlalli* (below) and *Miccatlalli* (above). Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 11, f. 227r. <https://www.wdl.org/>

## Libro Undecimo

Y suelen para las Hapancas, y tambien es fertil haze se bien el mayz y el trigo.



**A** otra manera de tierra fertil, que se llama Callalli, quere decir tierra donde a estado edificada alguna casa, y despues que se cauda y sembrada es fertil.



**A** la tierra echada amano, y allanada con proposito de hazer alli algo, esta se aquella llanora echa amano: llamanla Halmanthi, quere decir tierra echada.

**A** la tierra que la allana, y la asieta, o tupen amano, llamanla Halvitectli, que quere decir tierra asentada a golpes.



**A** la tierra estercolada, la llaman Halaujac, que quere decir tierra suave: por que la an adouado con el estercol.



**A** las tierras donde se pueden sacar maqueces, y sean buelto estercol de zentla Metalli tierra estercolada con maqueces.

**A** la tierra de riego la llaman Athalli que quere decir de agua.

pa callaquonac, tziotic, tepitlic, cujchevac, thilevac, cha popotlic, tepizoni, Haquavm, Haquactia.

**C**allalli: itechqujsica mitorca calli, iom thalli: ichoatl in calli ipan manj thalli, iom in quicowalotoc calli, thamo diivanj, ontlaca.

**T**halmanthi: itechqujsica mitorca thalli, iom manquj, q. n. thalli amo thitec, omo no comoltic, calli vna manra.

**T**halvitectli: ichoatl in thalli in thachiuhthi, thadallli in thatepizthalli. Nithalhuq tequj, njthavitec thalia, njthalhujtec chiva.

**T**halaviac: ichoatl in thalli qualli thalli, in thamochoa thalaviana: njthacujthavira, njthacollathuja, njcavira lica, njc velica.

**M**ethalli: ichoatl in thalli meiotoc, meio, menelhorio, meiova.

**A**thalli: itech mitorca njteca atl, iom thalli: ichoatl in thalli

Figure 4.18. Examples of fertile and cultivated land. Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 11, f. 227v. <https://www.wdl.org/>



Figure 4.19. Mosquitos and Flies. Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 11, f. 107v and f.108r. <https://www.wdl.org/>





Figure 4.20. *Mapa de Texcalyacac*, 1576. Facsimile on display in the Museo del Ex-Convento de Huaquechula (Original: Archivo General de la Nación, Tierras vol. 2429, exp. 1, cuad. 2, f. 113). Photo by author.

que se puede regar



A la ladera o repecho, o falda de algun monte, o collado: llaman tepetlalli, que quiere decir tierra de cuesta.



A la tierra pedregosa, o cascada, que es huera, y buena llamada tepetilli, que quiere decir tierra pedregosa, no naturalmente; sino por averlo labrado, piedras o canchales.

En los repechos de las cuevas

maviliani, matequiani, intha avihilli, atequiloni, avililoni, apacholoni, palloni, coquiti, qualli, icchi, hacothi, quiloni, macheti, Hamochiuhia, Hamochi via, nacatio, toconi, etaxoni, pixconi, pixcoia, haqualoia, nathal chiva, nathal miltia, atalli nic chiva, atalpan mltagua.

Tepetalli: ichoatl in nacatio tepetl, mtlapactli, mtlamimilolli, noitoca ximimilli, vaquicoquiti, nextalli, xallalli, caquetalli quiquitocomi, cynthi, vauhtli, et. mochiuhia, nechli, nopalli, metl, xapoli, quaviti, ixvaia, quaviti ixva, xiuxva, caaxva, caaxva, meiova, meiotoc, caaxiotoc, quavitiotoc, capachisi, quappachivi, nopalloa, nopallotoc.

Tetalli: ichoatl in cuechic, in pinolte, tetl ixchiquica: in tehoz onqui quixtaca, quixicoa, in anoco hem tetl, cuechic, cuechivi, cuechica, pinolte, pipinolli.

Tetalli: in tepapan tlalli in

Figure 4.21. Rocky and uncultivated land. Bernardino de Sahagún, Florentine Codex, bk. 11 f. 228r. <https://www.wdl.org/>



Figure 4.22. North wall, stairwell. San Nicholas Tolentino, Actopan, ca. 1575. Photo by author.



Figure 4.23. Saint Nicholas Tolentino. Lunette, north wall, stairwell. San Nicholas Tolentino, Actopan, ca. 1575. Photo by author.



Figure. 5.1. *Huaquecholteca Penitential Procession*. Oratory 5. Upper cloister. San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1569. Photo by author.



Figure 5.2. Oratory 5. Upper cloister. San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1569. Photo by author.



Figure 5.3. *Huejotzinca Penitential Procession*. Church of San Miguel Arcángel, Huejotzingo, ca. 1571. Photo by author.



Figure 5.4 *Processional Murals. Portería, San Juan, Teitipac, Oaxaca. Late sixteenth century.* <http://mexicosmurals.blogspot.com/2018/01/san-juan-teitipac-processional-murals.html>. Image in the public domain.





Figure 5.5. *Saint Lawrence*. Oratory 5. Upper cloister. San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1569. Photo by author.



Figure 5.6. *Mapa Circular de Quauhquechollan*, 1546. Cotton, 86.8 cm x 91.8 cm. Imperial Library (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek) Vienna, Austria. Image in the public domain.



Figure 5.7. Collapsed choir loft. Church of San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1569. 25 September 2017. Image in the public domain.



Figure 5.8. *Huaquecholteca Penitential Procession* after the earthquake. Oratory 5. Upper cloister. San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula, ca. 1569. 18 September 2017. Image in the public domain.



Figure 5.9. Mass in the church patio. San Martín de Tours, Huaquechula. September 2017. Image in the public domain.