

## **World Time and Imperial Allegory in a Nahuatl Manuscript on the Final Judgment**

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Pre-Columbian Nahuas of Central Mexico understood world time as a cycle of ages characterized by cataclysmic endings that also anticipated new beginnings. An account of this cycle is famously rendered on the *Sunstone* of Mexico-Tenochtitlan. Five glyphs at the center of this wheel-shaped monolith correspond to five eras of life on earth. These eras, Nahui Atl (Four Water), Nahui Ocelotl (Four Jaguar), Nahui Quiahuitl (Four Rain), and Nahui Ehecatl (Four Wind), are carved onto the glyph of the fifth era, Nahui Ollin (Four Earthquake). Read sequentially, these glyphs describe both the ages of earth and the series of natural disasters that bring each “sun” or age to an end. The first ends by flood; the second by the ravages of wild animals; the third sun ends in a rain of fire; the fourth by hurricane winds; and the fifth and current sun is to end through seismic activity.<sup>1</sup> Cognate sources, both painted and alphabetic, fill out a narrative of survival through transformation, and of regeneration in the wake of disaster. For example, when the age of Nahui Ehecatl ends through gale-force winds, human survivors live on, changed into monkeys; and the current sun of Nahui Ollin is freshly peopled from the remnant matter of an earlier age of humanity. At the dawn of this era, the Feathered Serpent god, Quetzalcoatl, travels into the underworld of Mictlan (Land of the Dead), where he gathers human bones from the previous sun. When Quetzalcoatl re-emerges, doves begin a process of transforming these bones by pecking them to pieces. The Female Serpent goddess, Cihuacoatl, follows their work with her precious mortar and pestle, grinding the broken parts into meal. Finally, Quetzalcoatl and other gods step in to complete this process. Modeling a ritual act of self-sacrifice practiced by the Central Mexican Nahuas who recorded this legend—and also recalling the agricultural practices of watering and fertilization—the gods let blood from their penises over the ground bone meal. As a result, metamorphosed bones from the fourth sun sprout anew with human life.

**Writing in the End Times: Apocalyptic Imagination in the Hispanic World**

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Missionaries in Colonial Mexico—or New Spain—introduced a radically different story of time and human experience on Earth that begins in the Garden of Eden, is punctuated by the birth and death of Christ, and ends with His prophesied return. A significant corpus of Christian art, literature, and theater from the early colonial period describes aspects of this linear progression through time, from creation to the final judgement. One example of this is found in the open chapel of the Augustinian convent of San Nicolás Tolentino at Actopan in Hidalgo, where murals from the mid-sixteenth century visually introduced local peoples to the fall of Adam and Eve, among other Biblical events; and prominent images of the final judgment underscore the horrors of the Christian end of days, depicting souls sent to anguish in an eternity of flames, terrifying demons, and cruel instruments of torture (Jackson 90, 93). Multiple Nahuatl-language sermons and religious texts that describe the Christian end of time also circulated in print in early New Spain. These include the Dominican *Doctrina* of 1548, the Franciscan Pedro de Gante's *Doctrina* of 1553, the Augustinian friar Juan de la Anunciación's *Sermonario* of 1575 and catechism of 1577, the Franciscan friar Juan Bautista's *Sermonario* of 1606 and his *Libro dela miseria y breuedad de la vida del hombre* (*Book of the Misery and Brevity of the Life of Man*) of 1604 (Burkhart, *Death and the Colonial Nahua* 39–43). Additionally, the Franciscan friar Andrés de Olmos oversaw the production of a Nahuatl-language dramatic performance of the final judgment in Mexico City sometime between 1535 and 1548 (Horcasitas 697). While the original manuscript of this play is no longer extant, a related script from the seventeenth century (Sell 10) century may be a copy or later version inspired by the Olmos text. The unfortunate protagonist of this drama is a woman named Lucía, who has “sinned” by failing to embrace the sacrament of “teoyotica nenamictiliztli” (Sell and Burkhart 198; my translation) (holy matrimony). She confesses but fails to receive absolution before the return of Christ and, as a result, faces eternal damnation. In the context of early New Spain, Lucía is most likely a noblewoman in a polygamous marriage (Arróniz 392; Schuessler 141). By drawing attention to her transgression and its gravity, the text appears to promote Christian marriage among members of the Nahua nobility who had formed polygamous unions prior to the conquest and whose families the early friars attempted to Christianize by distinguishing “legitimate” from “illegitimate” wives. The text therefore serves two didactic purposes: it teaches about the Christian end of time and also addresses a category of “sin” that was specific to the context of Nahua family relationships in the years immediately following the conquest.

Many such didactic texts—visual, alphabetic, and performative—reveal not only how friars of various orders sought to instill in Nahuas a Christian sense of world time, while correcting perceived errors in native cultural prac-

tices or perspectives; some also transmit localized interpretations of Christian teachings. This is both an effect of translation in written or scripted texts and a legacy of the cultural perspectives of the Nahua collaborators who painted, translated, penned, co-authored, conceived, or performed these pieces. These native producers of culture may have identified as Christians, but their workmanship often reveals indigenous expressions of Christianity. This phenomenon has been described as the “Nahuatlization of Christianity” (Dibble 1974). As Jeanette Favrot-Peterson has effectively explained, examples of this in “joint native-friar projects” reveal “not only the sustaining power of older indigenous views, but their viability, capable of effecting subtle transformations from the Nahua to the Christian and back again” (26). The present study concerns a short allegorical text in Nahuatl about the final judgment. I will discuss its origins and influences, with special attention to how it manifests this phenomenon of Nahuatlization, giving testimony of the “sustaining power” of Nahua cosmology, as the text implicitly forges a parallel between Christian and Mesoamerican perspectives on world time.

This allegory is untitled, but a scribal note in Spanish in the upper left-hand margin of the first page summarizes its content: “El juicio final se compara a la entrada del virrey” (250v) (The final judgment is compared to the [royal] entry of the viceroy).<sup>2</sup> It is part of a much larger manuscript collection of Nahuatl-language sermons and other religious texts held at the Bancroft Library and entitled *Sermones y santoral en mexicano* (*Sermons and Santoral in the Mexican Language*), m-m 464. Scholars believe the manuscript was produced in a Jesuit setting sometime during the first half the seventeenth century. More specifically, Louise Burkhart has connected the *Sermones y santoral en mexicano* with two other manuscripts held in Mexico, having identified in each the same distinctive primary scribal hand. One of these additional manuscripts bears the name of the Jesuit father Horacio Carochi and the date of 1617; the other includes dates that range from 1585–1597. Based on this information, Burkhart speculates that the Bancroft manuscript was produced during the first two decades of the seventeenth century (Burkhart, *Before Guadalupe* 19).<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, an additional piece of information welcomes further speculation as to both the date and—importantly—authorship of the allegorical text on folios 250v–251r that compares the final judgment to a viceregal grand entry.<sup>4</sup> Directly above the summarizing scribal note at the beginning of this piece is the name “Lorenço.” The same name similarly appears elsewhere in this manuscript, e.g., on folio 270r, with a text on the “Spû S<sup>10</sup>” (Holy Spirit). However, this second piece is written in a noticeably different scribal hand, and the name “Lorenço” on folio 270r also appears in this second hand. This fact suggests that Lorenço’s role was not scribal; in fact, it would have been unusual for a scribe to write his name in the margin

of a text. Instead, both scribes appear to attribute these didactic texts to an author named Lorenço.

Thanks to the work of the seventeenth-century Jesuit historian Andrés Pérez de Ribas, we have a good indication as to who this “Lorenço” may have been. In his *Historia de los triunfos de nuestra santa fe entre gentes las mas barbaras y fieras del nuevo orbe (History of the Triumphs of our Holy Faith amongst the Most Barbarous and Fierce Peoples of the New World)*<sup>5</sup> of 1645, Pérez de Ribas describes a Mexica of noble descent who went only by the Christian name of Lorenzo and who first studied and then worked at the Jesuit mission schools of San Martín in Tepoztlán and San Gregorio in Mexico City (328). As a nobleman, Lorenzo had an excellent command of courtly Nahuatl, frequently edited the Nahuatl-language writings of the Jesuits at both schools, and interfaced with Nahua parishioners, giving doctrinal “*coloquios*” (discourses or dramatized colloquies)<sup>6</sup> and both writing and directing sacramental plays in Nahuatl (329). Pérez de Ribas also notes that Lorenzo went to study in Tepoztlán at an early age, dedicated forty years of adult service to the Jesuits, and died after a brief illness around the age of sixty (329, 331). Given the coincidences of period and context between Lorenzo’s life and work among the Jesuits—which coincided with the period of 1604–1655, when Pérez de Ribas lived in New Spain—and the production of the Jesuit *Sermones y santoral en mexicano*, in the early- to mid-1700s, as well as the fact that Pérez de Ribas, as Lorenzo’s contemporary, singles him out as an important participant in the production of missionary literature in New Spain’s Jesuit seminaries, it is likely that this “Lorenzo” and the Lorenço whose name appears in the manuscript margins of the *Sermones y santoral en mexicano* are one and the same. Furthermore, if this Mexica nobleman was, in fact, the author of the allegorical text on ff 250v to 251r, we can be certain that this piece predates the year of 1644, when Pérez de Ribas completed his history, in which he describes Lorenzo’s death.

While the name “Lorenço” in the manuscript margin, therefore, suggests likely authorship and an outside date of production, a second piece of information indicates an earliest probable date. Both key phrases and conceptual details of the text point to the *Sermonario* of the Franciscan friar and *nahuatlato*<sup>7</sup> Juan Bautista as a primary source, as I will shortly explain. Unless the author of the manuscript allegory had access to an oral rendition or pre-print copy of Bautista’s sermons, we can assume that it was written no earlier than the *Sermonario*’s publication date of 1606. Therefore this allegory, which I speculatively attribute to the Jesuit-educated Mexica whom Pérez de Ribas describes, was probably written sometime between 1606 and 1644. Finally, this piece likely figured among the “*coloquios*” (discourses or colloquies) that the historical “Lorenzo<sup>8</sup>” wrote in order to explicate aspects of the faith for Nahua audiences.

This piece is unusual among early colonial texts about the final judgment for several reasons. The first is the striking nature of the allegory, which establishes a symbolic parallel between two performative scenarios of lordship, one imperial and the other spiritual. It begins by comparing “yn itlamian cm~tl” (the end of the world) and the return of Christ as “yn ilhuicac tlatoani . . . totemaquixticatzin . . . yhuã totetlatzontequilicatzin” (King of Heaven . . . our revered redeemer . . . and judge) to the arrival in New Spain of an incoming viceroy (250v). When a new viceroy came to take his post in Mexico City, the administrative capital of New Spain, he was lavishly fetted during a lengthy journey that began at the port city of Veracruz and wended, over the course of several months (Curcio 15), through both colonial and indigenous towns before he arrived with great pomp in the city of Mexico. Masquerades, native dances, bullfights, military parades (Chiva-Beltrán 122–125), mock battles (Gruzinski 2010: 11), fireworks, and drills with rifles (Curcio 19)—among other displays—characterized the progression of celebratory events that culminated in Mexico City, where elaborate arches of triumph were erected for the occasion.<sup>9</sup> The royal entry of 1595 even included staged skirmishing by native warriors on Lake Texcoco (Chiva-Beltrán 125), an apparent reference to decisive military engagements on this lake during the Spanish conquest Mexico-Tenochtitlan of 1521. Each viceregal entry was both a performance of imperial power that derived from Roman tradition, as scholars have noted, and a re-enactment of Cortés’s arrival in Mexico, in which “the subjects of New Spain renewed their vows of obedience to the Spanish Crown in the figure of the viceroy, as successor of that first conquistador” (Rodríguez Moya 46).<sup>10</sup> Lorenço’s allegory highlights the triumphant quality of the viceroy’s entry, which made a sumptuous public display of uncontested imperial power in New Spain and also commemorated the pacification of the powerful native states that once held dominion in the region.

This piece is also striking because it begins by describing an outcome of judgment that is both celebratory and collective, rather than horrific and individual, as in the damnation of Lucía due to personal “sin” in the Nahuatl drama on this theme. This allegory presents a scenario in which the corporate body of the *alteptl*, the Nahua city or ethnic state, is exempt from punishment:

Ca in nican amo iuh mochihua yn ipan amaltepetzin, ca in Mexico iuh tlamani, yn iquac hualmohuica, hualmaxitia in visorey, ca in hue huey tlequiquiztli tiros quitocayotia ca quitlatlaça, quicuecuepotza ynic quitemachiltia ca omaxtico in tlatoani ynic mochi tlacatl papaqui iuhquin ÿ ychihui ynic hualhui quimoztilizque quimotlapalhuzque. (250v)

(For here, it [the terror of judgment] does not thus happen in your city,<sup>11</sup> for in Mexico it is like this, when the Viceroy comes, when he arrives here, the great fire trumpets (rifles)<sup>12</sup> fire what are called “*tiros*,”<sup>13</sup> they shoot, they burst,<sup>14</sup> and by this they announce that the ruler is arriving here, therefore the people are gladdened and hurry as they come forth to see him and greet him.)

The text symbolically connects obedience to the Son of God with obedience to the viceroy as representative of the Spanish King. It proposes that its audience of Nahuas be a people spared divine wrath at the end of days, just as the Mexica Nahuas of the post-conquest years are now—implicitly—spared the ongoing military wrath of the Empire, because they have made peace with Spain. For the native *altepetl* of Mexico in this allegory participates with the rest of the viceroyalty in a performance of glad receptivity before the incoming Spanish lord, thus signaling its status as a pacified nation and upholding its end of a subject-to-sovereign contract of fealty.

In fact, the link between receptivity to the Christian God and submission to the Spanish Crown was an established trope in New Spain well before this piece on the final judgment was authored. Its conceptual roots lie in a document that is literal rather than allegorical. The *Requerimiento* (*Requirement*) of 1513 is a legal document drafted in Spanish courts and designed for use in the context of enterprises of discovery and conquest in the Indies. The leadership of such enterprises was required to read this Spanish-language text to native peoples prior to any act of war against them. It presented two stark options that, even if translated, would have most certainly been confounding to native audiences. The *Requerimiento* invited indigenous communities in the Indies to either welcome representatives of the Spanish Crown and the Christian God—of whom they would have had no prior knowledge—and, subjecting themselves to these unfamiliar authorities, make peace with Spain; or to reject Spanish soldiers and their priests, and thus bear the responsibility for the punishing attacks that would ensue, resulting in the destruction of property, the enslavement of families, and the death of anyone who chose to resist. The letters of Cortés indicate that he complied with the mandate to read the *Requerimiento*, or similarly communicated messages based on its logic, as he first arrived at Cozumel, skirted the Yucatan Peninsula, and then proceeded from Veracruz toward the Valley of Mexico (Cortés 55, 63, 94). Until 1556 this document continued to be read during first encounters with native communities in New Spain and other regions of the Americas, where its logic was familiar, if also notorious in the view of detractors such as Bartolomé de las Casas, who furiously decried the *Requerimiento* as “cosa absurda y estulta

y digna de todo vituperio y escarnio e infierno” (96) (something absurd and foolish and worth of all shame and ridicule and hell).

Additionally, early colonial Spanish writings introduced a second trope that complemented this connection between receptivity to Spanish rule and receptivity to Christian authority. Military destruction by Spanish agents of the Hapsburg Empire was sometimes presented as a manifestation of divine judgment. For example, the Franciscan missionary and historian Toribio de Benavente Motolinía describes the conquest of Mexico as a punishing plague, by which “Dios hirió esta tierra” (*Memoriales* 17) (God struck this land) because of “*pecados*” (28) (sins) that included the practice of anthropophagy (*Historia* 79). This perspective casts devastating wars of conquest as God-ordained punishments for breeches of a divine law that the Christian historian believed to be universally applicable.

Lorenço’s allegory follows the logic of both the *Requerimiento* and historiographical references to the conquest as an outpouring of God’s judgment upon peoples of the Indies. However, it focuses on a scenario of obedience and peace, rather than resistance and wrath. The Mexica author celebrates the friendship that his *altepetl* has made with Spain, de-emphasizing their earlier role as enemies of God and Crown, and thus avoids spelling out the painful flip side of this line of thought, that the Mexica deserved the horrors that Cortés and his cohorts visited upon them.

Secondly and more specifically, the terms of this allegory closely recall those of another missionary Nahuatl text, the *Sermonario en lengua Mexicana* (*Sermonary in the Mexican Language*) by the Franciscan friar Juan Bautista. Bautista’s “Sermon primero sobre el euangelio, de las terribles, y espantosas señales, que precederàn al iuyzio vniuersal” (First Sermon on the Gospel, of the Terrible and Frightening Signs, that Will Precede the Universal Judgment) for the “Dominica primera del adviento” (First Sunday of Advent) similarly begins with comparison to an event of territorial subjugation, although the Bautista text invokes Biblical, Hebraic history rather than that of New Spain. The Spanish-language summary in the margin of the first page refers to the conquest of Jericho, as narrated in the book of Joshua:

Iosue 6. Como Dios con solas bozes y clamores de trõpetas, derribò, y destruyò, y asolò ala Ciudad de Ierico y sus moradores, y amadores, y solamente escapò aquella Raab, que auia dado posada . . . a los exploradores del Pueblo de Dios: asi destruyrà este mundo, y lo asolorà con todos sus amadores, y solamente escapan, y se salvaràn aquellos que vuieren rescebido las amonestaciones e inspiraciones diuinas, guardado sus mandamientos, y exercitado las obras de charidad con sus próximos. (121–122)

(Joshua 6. How God with mere shouts and clamors of trumpets toppled, and destroyed, and devastated the City of Jericho and its inhabitants, and people, and the only one to escape was Rahab, who had given lodging . . . to the explorers who were of the People of God: in the same way He will destroy this world, and will devastate [it] with all its people, and the only ones to escape and be saved will be those who have received divine admonishment and inspiration, kept His commandments, and practiced acts of charity among their neighbors.)

The Nahuatl-language text of Bautista's sermon more fully explains that only Rahab and her family escape destruction (122). This portion of the sermon may indirectly refer to the conquest history of New Spain and to indigenous allies who similarly escaped the destruction that Tenochtitlan faced, because of their aid to conquistadors, given the precedent in Spanish letters of a comparison between Hebrews in the Promised Land and Spaniards in the New World. Martín Fernández de Enciso, who was influential in drafting the *Requerimiento*, invoked God's hand in Hebrew conquests in Canaan in order to justify territorial conquests and the enslavement of native populations by Spain in the Indies (Pagden 454). Lorenço's allegory echoes the comparison to Jericho in Bautista's sermon. However, it focuses on a period in which the Mexica are spared destruction because, like Rahab with Hebrew "explorers," they now welcome the viceregal successor of the first Christians who entered their land.

The terms and phrasing of Lorenço's short piece also echo additional elements of Bautista's sermons for the first Sunday of Advent. The details of blazing "fire trumpets" or "fire conches" (rifles) and "gunshots" of the Spaniards most certainly refer to the artillery fire and perhaps also the fireworks displays that were part of the military demonstrations and mock battles that characterized the historical grand entries of viceroys into New Spain during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, as I have noted. Yet they also recall Bautista's mention, in his Spanish-language summary, of the "clamos de trōpetas" (clamor of trumpets) that brought down city walls in Canaan, although the verb "*tlapitztia*" that Bautista uses in his Nahuatl text renders the Hebrew *shofar* played outside Jericho as a native flute rather than a conch-shell "trumpet" (122). More striking yet in similarity to Bautista's text are the terms with which Lorenço develops his initial reference to Spanish "fire trumpets," as he pivots from joyful to ominous imagery.

Lorenço's play on gunfire in city precincts serves as a lynchpin to connect oppositional scenarios. As in the first part of this allegory, he concludes with a second reference to gunfire, but now it portends devastation rather than cele-

bration for the people of Earth, as sinners faint with fright at signs of Christ's return.

. . . ca amo ic papaquizque in tlaticpactlaca in mache yehuantin tlatlacoanime, ca amo can huehuey tlequiquiztli, tlequiquizmimilli cuecueponiz, huehuetziz, ca tlexochquiahuiz tlexochtletzonchachapacaz yn inpan tlatlaticpac tlaca, cicitlaltzin motlatlaloque, motetehuilacachotiquicaz yn ilhuicatl, nanatzcaz, tlalli oliniz, tlalli tecuiniz, tlalli comoniz, ye oniquitto, ca amo inpac mochihuaz amo in neyollaliz in tlatlaco anime ca in yolmiquiliz in nemautiliz, ic miquiz ciocopinizque in tlatlaco anime. (250v-251r)

(. . . [The return of Christ as Judge] will not cause the people of earth to be glad, especially those who are sinners. It is not only the big fire trumpets, the fields of artillery that will blossom,<sup>15</sup> [the gunfire] that will fall; it will rain embers, it will patter down as embers, as streamers of fire upon the people of earth. The stars will streak forth, the sky will churn forth like a whirlwind, it will gnash [its parts together]. The earth will move, the earth will burn, the earth will blaze. I have said this, [so] this will not befall them: there will be no consoling of the sinners, of he who will faint with fear, of he who will be greatly afraid, and thus die; they will become pale and transformed with fright, the sinners.)

References to artillery in this passage correspond to Lorenzo's unique treatment of judgment through the allegorical lens of colonial history in New Spain, where Spanish gunpowder was a decisive feature of devastating conquests. Lorenzo writes for a Nahua audience whose sense of so-called Christian "judgment" was linked to their experiences of these conquest wars. He therefore incorporates the deadly bloom of rifles into his discussion of apocalyptic signs of Christ's return. Meanwhile, he also figuratively connects gunfire in the field of battle to a second category of falling fire. In tandem with the military phenomenon of fiery bursts in the earthly sphere, the heavens also produce fiery manifestations, along with a range of additional signs: celestial disturbances, seismic activity, and raging fires. In this second category of references, Lorenzo borrows heavily from Bautista.

Bautista's "Sermon segundo sobre el evangelio," which elaborates upon the first sermon's theme of signs that precede the final judgment, discusses

fifteen signs of the end of days. While Bautista cites in the margins of his sermon multiple verses from the Bible that refer to the end times, this series of fifteen signs is not part of any single Biblical text but instead derives from medieval Christian tradition, and multiple Nahuatl-language doctrinal texts of New Spain mention the fifteen signs (Christensen 139–140). Below, I cite a passage from the introductory pages of this sermon, followed by a selection from Bautista’s discussion of the twelfth sign of stars falling from the sky:

Auh . . . in Ilhuicatl nanatzcaz: [rechinaràn y cruxiràn los cielos] . . . citlalin motlaloç [aura muchas exalaciones, que pareceràn estrellas que caen] . . . auh niman . . . in tlallolintimomanaz [aura grandes temblores] . . . ca muchi temamauhti. (159)

(And . . . the sky will gnash [its parts together] (the heavens will gnash and grind) . . . stars will streak forth (there will be many exhalations, that seem like falling stars) and then . . . the earth will quake (there will be great earthquakes) . . . indeed, it is all frightening.)

. . . hualhuetzizque in cicitlaltin . . . ca çan cenca huey tletl, cenca huehuetzizque tletzontli [ignitas impresiones, y es compuesto de tletl y tzontli cabello, porque quando se queman, caen a manera de cabellos de fuego] huel hualmopipitziatz, hualpipixauhtiaz . . . in nicã Tlalticpac” . . . In Ilhuicatl huel nanatzacatimomanaz, huel cuecuepocatimomanaz, in ihquac in hueyhuey tlexochtli, in tlexihuitl impan hualhuetziz. . . (175)

(. . . the stars will fall hither . . . for just very big flames, very great streaks of fire (burning seals or marks; [the word] is composed of “*tletl*” [fire] and “*tzontli*” (hair), because when they burn, they fall like hairs of fire) . . . will be made to blow hither, will be made to drizzle hither . . . here upon the earth . . . The sky will greatly gnash [its elements together], it will blossom, when great embers, burning comets fall upon us.)

In these selections are several distinctive phrases that Lorenço echoes. Just as gunfire and fields of artillery “*cuecueponiz*” (will blossom) like falling stars, according to Lorenço, Bautista writes that the sky “*cuecuepocatimomanaz*”

(will blossom in an extended or spread out configuration)<sup>16</sup> when burning comets and great embers fall. Also, where Lorenço writes that: “*tlexochquiahuit tlexochtletzonchachapacaz*” (“it will rain fire, it will pour down as embers, as streamers of fire), his phrasing recalls Bautista’s assertion that “*hualpipixauhtiaz*” ([fire] will be made to drizzle hither). In this expression, Lorenço directly incorporates the term “*tlexochtli*” (embers), which, Bautista announces, will pour down upon the earth. Even more compelling as indication that Lorenço draws from Bautista is his use, in the same phrase, of the extremely rare term “*tletzontli*” (streaks, streamers, or “hairs” of fire),<sup>17</sup> which also appears in Bautista’s description of falling stars. Additionally, Lorenço both replicates Bautista’s expression that heaven “*nanatzcaz*” (will gnash [its parts] or grind) and also embellishes this expression with a second phrase that he appears to draw from an earlier passage in this sermon, in which Bautista writes that “*quimmalacachozque in Ilhuicame*” (129) (the skies will revolve)<sup>18</sup> when Christ returns upon the clouds with glory and power. Recalling Bautista’s use of the verb “*malacachoa*” (to move something circularly), Lorenço employs the related “*tetehuillacachoa*” (swirl like a whirlwind)<sup>19</sup> to indicate that, when the heavens grind, churning currents of air will move forth or “out” like a “whirlwind.” Similarly, his phrase “*cicitlaltzin motlatlaloque*” (stars will streak forth) closely echoes Bautista’s statement in his introductory pages that “*citlalin motlaloque*” (stars will streak forth).<sup>20</sup> Finally, Lorenço repeats Bautista’s reference to earthquakes, fire, and the frightful nature of these signs.

Yet while the second half of Lorenço’s allegory follows the “*Sermon segundo sobre el evangelio*” closely with regard to this selection from the fifteen signs that judgment is nigh, the effect of his text differs from that of Bautista’s sermon. The “*Sermon segundo*” is forty-nine print pages; Lorenço’s allegory is just two handwritten pages. Bautista produces an extensive commentary on the fifteen signs of the return of Christ’s as judge, but the short length of Lorenço’s text does not permit this. Instead, he features a small selection from Bautista’s rendering of these signs. This selection gives most attention to celestial manifestations that correspond to some of those described in Bautista’s passage on the twelfth sign of falling stars. It also more briefly mentions seismic activity and fires on earth. One clear reason for Lorenço’s choice to focus on celestial signs is the parallel that he can thus establish between gunfire and fiery bursts in the heavens, as I have noted. Yet I would like to suggest an additional reason behind this choice. Lorenço discusses only those signs of an impending final judgment that recall Mesoamerican “suns” or ages of life and destruction on earth.

Bautista’s sermon includes certain phrases that may suggest correlations to some of the age-ending catastrophes of the “*Legend of the Suns*,” but these references are isolated in the text, in contrast to Lorenço’s selection that fo-

cuses exclusively on such phrases. Furthermore, where a connection to the five suns may seem weak or uncertain in Bautista's "Sermon segundo," Lorenzo strengthens it with parallel images, as in his distinctive pairing of a "whirlwind" with the image of "gnashing" or "grinding" skies that he borrows from Bautista. The effect of this pairing in Lorenzo's allegory is to more clearly invoke the hurricane-force winds of the sun of Nahui Ehecatl (Four Wind). Likewise, Lorenzo plays off of Bautista's description of a "drizzle" of fiery streaks by similarly describing a "patter" of fiery streaks. He then amplifies the hint in Bautista of a stylistically Mesoamerican, age-ending rain of fire by explicitly stating that "*tlexochquiahuiz*" (it will rain embers). Lorenzo's use in this phrase of the verbal expression "*quiahuiz*" (it will rain) forges an unmistakable connection to the fiery sun of Nahui Quiahuitl (Four Rain). Additionally, he briefly reproduces Bautista's reference to earthquakes. Seismic activity is both a Biblical sign of the end times and the geological phenomenon that, in Mesoamerican tradition, will bring an end to the sun of Nahui Ollin (Four Earthquake). Finally, Bautista and Lorenzo both refer to fires that will burn upon the earth, a detail that also characterizes the scenario of destruction during the sun of Nahui Quiahuitl (Four Rain). The second half of Lorenzo's allegory, therefore, borrows from Bautista to describe the Christian end of time but is also distinctively crafted to highlight links with Mesoamerican thought on cycles of world time.

In order to further interpret the presence and effect of both obscure and more pronounced references to the Mesoamerican suns in these texts, it is useful to look to Mark Christensen's discussion of three categories of colonial religious literature produced in native languages of New Spain. Christensen's first category includes print texts that were produced by "either ecclesiastics, native aids, or both and intended for a readership of ecclesiastics and natives alike." Before going to print, such texts underwent careful review "to ensure their orthodoxy" (5). The *Sermonario* by Bautista and his team of Nahua collaborators falls into this first category. Christensen also describes two more categories of doctrinal materials that did not go to print and therefore did not undergo the same level of censorship. These are handwritten texts by "either ecclesiastics, native aids, or both and designed for the use and readership of primarily ecclesiastics and at times natives," and, finally, religious texts produced by and for natives (5–6), in which we see clear examples of how indigenous peoples of New Spain "creatively incorporated eschatological doctrine into their preexisting worldview" (104). Lorenzo's manuscript allegory, which is directed in the second-person plural to a Nahua audience, fits best into this third category.

As an example of the first category that Christensen describes, Bautista's "Second Sermon" for Advent includes passages that are clearly designed to

help Nahuas distinguish Christian teachings about the final judgment from so-called ancestral “lies.” Toward the end of the sermon is a passage on “Los errores y mentiras que tuieron, y creyeron estos Naturales acerca del Sol” (196) (The errors and lies that these natives had, and believed, about the sun). The Nahuatl text describes “in intlahtol, in inçacçanil, inimixpopoyotiliztlahtol” (their sayings, their fables or little stories, their blindness), wherein “in huehuetque” (the ancients or elders) taught that “ye yc nauhtlamã ihua ï tlalticpac (the earth has already ended four times), and this passage goes on to provide an abbreviated account of the Mesoamerican suns (196–197). The inclusion of this content proves that Bautista and his authorial team are aware that this sermon treats matters of cosmology that native converts may still view from a pre-Christian perspective; and that references to certain signs of an impending final judgment may lead Nahuas to think in terms of the Five Suns. Bautista’s sermon, therefore, makes an explicit effort to maintain orthodoxy by addressing a perceived problem of “erroneous” pre-Columbian thought on world time. Meanwhile, the fact that earlier passages contain certain phrases that appear to discretely suggest parallels to the Mesoamerican suns suggests that the lingering influence of ancestral cosmology does not only characterize the worldview of intended Nahua audiences. It may also describe that of the Christianized native aids—scribes, editors, and authorial collaborators—who worked with Bautista in the production of his sermonary.

By contrast, Lorenzo’s allegory would not have undergone the degree of scrutiny that Bautista’s sermonary did, because it never went to print. Lorenzo, therefore, did not have the same need or impulse to include statements designed to guard the orthodoxy of his message. The result is a fascinating example of a Nahuatlized approach to evangelization. If the Lorenzo who wrote this text is indeed the Lorenzo whom Pérez de Ribas describes, he was remarkable not only for his intellectual skills but also for an impeccable practice of Christianity that—as the Jesuit historian reports—distinguished him from other Nahuas of his milieu. Lorenzo was apparently outstanding in virtue, chaste, fastidious in his practice of Christian poverty, and avoided not only the vice of drunkenness that, “generalmente hablando, a todos los indios arrastra” (generally speaking, entraps all the Indians), but also abstained from the Mesoamerican intoxicant and luxury item of drinking chocolate. His confessions were additionally something of a marvel in a man of native ancestry, in the prejudicial view of Pérez de Ribas. They were “. . . de conciencia tan delicada, que decía su confesor, que le causaba confusión vida tan ajustada a perfección, y tan superior a su estado” (330) (. . . so delicately conscientious that his confessor said he was astounded by a life so lived to perfection and so superior to his station). Moreover, Lorenzo stood out from other Nahuas in his choice of dress, preferring “ropilla y capa a lo español, que nunca usó del

traje de indio” (330) (clothing and a cape in the Spanish style, for he never wore Indian clothing). To all appearances, Lorenzo had stripped himself of both native customs and external markers of identity and—in the perspective of an historian who clearly disparages those customs—improved himself by fashioning his life on the model of the Jesuits among whom he lived and worked. However, the allegory in which “el Juicio final se compara ala entrada del virrey” (the final judgment is compared to the [royal] entry of the viceroy) renders a somewhat different portrait of an author who occupies a more nuanced position between Mesoamerican and Spanish Christian modes of understanding.

As a teacher of Christian doctrine, Lorenço employs methods that depart from those modeled in Bautista’s sermons for the first Sunday of Advent, even while much of his allegory echoes content generated by the Franciscan and his native authorial team. To begin, he dispenses with the full European Christian narrative of the fifteen signs, which might distract Nahuatl listeners, and speaks instead to historical realities of his audience. He also appeals to the recent past in New Spain, establishing an implicit contrast between experiences of “judgment” during conquest wars, and of the of peace in post-conquest years. As I have discussed, this contrast is the basis for his allegory of harrowing punishments at the end of time, as compared to the eternal fruits of Christian obedience. Lorenço’s treatment of conquest history reveals a sensitivity to the lived experience of his audience; and his move to de-emphasize the prior role of the Mexica as enemies of the Spanish Empire and objects of judgment shows one way that he writes with the feeling and agenda of a Nahuatl Christian who carefully positions his people in a favorable light, by highlighting their current status as exemplary subjects of Christ and King.

Secondly, Lorenço in this text avoids making disparaging statements about indigenous beliefs, as Bautista does when he denounces ancestral doctrine on the five suns as a deception. Instead, the Mexica author frames his message on Christ’s return in such a way that it becomes comprehensible to an audience whose understanding of world time remains rooted in the teachings of their elders. He effectively invites Nahuats to view Christian eschatology through the lens of the Mesoamerican suns and, thus, to move in familiar steps toward a Christian perspective on world time. This approach is less than orthodox, because it permits a degree of pluralism in sacred world views, if only during a period of transition for indigenous neophytes. Eschewing the uncompromising rejection of native doctrines in texts produced under the guidance of Spanish missionaries, such as the Franciscan Bautista, Lorenço—with greater respect for the conceptual and spiritual legacy of his ancestors—makes meaningful engagement with a pre-Christian cosmological narrative an unconventional platform for evangelization. His allegory, therefore, re-

veals an authorial mind that is not wholly patterned through Jesuit education and experience but that retains aspects of a Mesoamerican sensibility.

## Notes

1. This sequence of this narrative varies in the different sources that describe the five Mesoamerican suns. See the “Legend of the Suns” in the *Codex Chimalpopoca* (Bierhorst 139–148); the *Histoire du Mechique* (Garibay 103–106); the *Historia de los mexicanos por sus pinturas* (García Icazbalceta 87–91); and the *Codex Vaticanus A* (4v–7r).
2. All translation from the Spanish and Nahuatl are my own, unless otherwise indicated.
3. Mark Christensen similarly identifies the period of production as the first half of the seventeenth century (147), and John Schwaller has more generally and tentatively identified it as seventeenth century (379).
4. A second text on the final judgment, entitled “De Juicio Finali” (Of the Final Judgment) is found on folios 276r–280r of m-m 464.
5. Title as translated by Reff, Ahern, and Danford (1999).
6. Reff, Ahern, and Danford render the term “*coloquios*” as “discourses” in their translation of 1999. However, the word “coloquios” also referred more broadly to performative works in colonial New Spain, as in Fernán González de Eslava’s dramatic *Coloquios sacramentales y espirituales*, published posthumously in 1610, as well as didactic dialogues in the case of Bernardino de Sahagún’s *Coloquios y doctrina christiana* of 1564.
7. A speaker of Nahuatl.
8. I will henceforth refer to the author as Lorenço, following the orthography used in the manuscript margin.
9. These celebrations were so opulent that, during the period when this allegory was likely produced, the cost of a viceregal entry in Mexico was on average equivalent to one and one half times the city’s annual budget (Curcio 19).
10. “...los súbditos novohispanos renovaban sus votos de obediencia hacia la corona española en la figura del virrey, como sucesor de aquel primer conquistador.”
11. “your *altepetl*” (city or ethnic state)
12. The translation for “*escopeta*” “*arcabuz*,” or “*artilleria*” (rifle, arquebus artillery) in Molina’s Spanish/Nahuatl, Nahuatl/Spanish dictionary of the 1571 is “*tlequiztli*” (14, 47). This is a “*quiquiztli*” (trumpet, horn, or conch shell horn) of fire.
13. Spanish loan word; “gunshots.”
14. Literally, “blossom.” This verb is also used in Book XII of the *Florentine Codex* to describe the fiery bursts of Spanish firearms.
15. I have used the literal translation “blossom” rather than the more specific English verbs “shoot” or “fire,” because one of the two parallel subjects of this verbal phrase is a field of artillery that, with the firing of rifles, figuratively “blossoms.”
16. The reduplicated verb “*cuecuepoca*” is a variant of the reduplicated “*cuecueponi*.”
17. I have found this term in no source other than Bautista’s sermonary.

18. “Boluer algo en derredor” (Molina 20v).
19. Molina defines the term “*teteuilacachtic*,” which is based on the verb “*teteuilacachoa*,” as “remolino, o cosa semejante” (whirlwind (or whirl, swirl, eddy), or something similar) (107v).
20. The difference in these two phrases is minor; Lorenço merely uses reduplication of the first syllable to reinforce the plural nature of the already plural noun “*citlalin*” and also adds the honorific ending “-tzin.” Lorenço also correctly conjugates the verb to reflect the plural nature of the noun, but Bautista does not.

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