# *Nican mopohua*
(1649)

*One of the most visited Catholic shrines in the world is that of Our Lady of Guadalupe, located in present-day Mexico City on a hill called Tepeyac, a shortened form of Tepeyacac, the hill's name in the indigenous Nahuatl language. The shrine is associated with apparitions of the Virgin Mary which a Nahua man is said to have experienced in 1531, ten years after Spanish colonial rule began. Displayed in the shrine is a painted image of Mary, of reputedly miraculous origin. That image has been a leading symbol of Mexican civil religion since Mexico's war of independence in the early 1800s.*

*What has come to be regarded as the classic narrative of the Guadalupan apparitions was published in 1649, more than a century after the apparitions are said to have occurred. Composed in Nahuatl, the narrative is referred to by its opening words,* Nican mopohua*, meaning "Here is recounted." The* Nican mopohua *was the first publication to tell the story of the Guadalupan apparitions in Nahuatl, and the second publication of the story in any language. (The first published telling of the story had appeared in Spanish, one year earlier.) The authorship and dating of the* Nican mopohua *are contested. The 1649 publication presents itself to readers as the work of Spanish colonist and priest Luis Laso de la Vega. However, defenders of the Guadalupan apparitions' historical authenticity favor an argument that the manuscript for the* Nican mopohua *was actually penned in the mid-1500s by a missionary-educated Nahua Christian with the Spanish name Antonio Valeriano.*

*Presented here is a fairly literal and very heavily annotated English translation of the* Nican mopohua. *This translation was guided by two aims: (1) to give readers information about the Nahuatl original that would enhance their ability to do close readings of the text, and (2) to help readers engage with the* Nican mopohua *as a product of colonialism—that is, as an artifact of a Hispanicized and Christianized Nahua culture. In support of those aims, the annotated translation does the following:*

- *As much as feasible, consistently uses the same English term to translate multiple instances of the same Nahuatl term; and conversely, uses different English terms to represent different but synonymous Nahuatl terms. Readers are thus able to perform literary or rhetorical analyses based on the repetition, or not, of specific terms in the Nahuatl text.*
- *Provides, in endnotes, additional information about the meanings of Nahuatl words and expressions, including cultural context and alternative translations.*
- *Preserves the duplicative style of the Nahuatl text, which frequently deploys pairs, sometimes trios, of synonymous or parallel words or phrases.*
- *Signals all instances of Nahuatl reverential forms; these are grammatical elements sometimes attached to nouns or verbs, the presence of which elevates the tone of a passage. (Translators typically represent these forms more sporadically because they are so frequent.)*
- *Leaves Spanish and Latin loanwords untranslated, so that readers recognize them as loanwords, but also leaves these words unitalicized, thus not marked as foreign, to represent their assimilation into Nahuatl. (English translations of loanwords are provided at the foot of each page.)*
- *Shows how Christian concepts were translated, linguistically and conceptually, into Nahuatl.*
- *Calls attention to how the story portrays its characters operating within the hierarchies of colonized Nahua society—including how they sometimes resist or complicate those hierarchies.*

*[Introduction]*

Here is recounted, here is set down in order, how the perfect maiden[1] Sancta Maria, the mother* of Dios, the noblewoman*[2] who rules over us,[3] appeared* newly,[4] very marvelously,[5] there on Tepeyacac, which is designated Guadalupe. First she caused herself to be seen* by a commoner*[6] named Juan Diego.[7] Afterward her precious[8] image* appeared* before the face of[9] the new obispo of Mexico, Don Fray Juan de Zumárraga. And here are recounted, here are set down in order,[10] all the marvels that she does* by now.[11]

*[Mary first appears to Juan Diego]*

Ten years after the conquerors' reign commenced[12] in the city[13] of Mexico, the arrow and the shield were laid down,[14] the cities all around were at peace. The belief[15] in, the knowledge* of, the one who causes places to be inhabited,[16] the true God DIOS,[17] not only commenced; it is already blossoming, already blooming.

At that very time, in the year mil y quinientos y treinta y uno, just a few days into the month[18] of diciembre, there was a commoner,* a poor working man,*[19] whose name was Juan Diego;[20] it is said that his home was Cuautitlán.[21] With regard to divine things,[22] everything still pertained to Tlatelolco.[23] It was sábado, still in the very wee hours;*[24] he was coming[25] in pursuit of divine things and his charge.[26]

He arrived near the hill* that is named Tepeyacac; by then, the dawn is cleansing the ground.[27] He heard singing from up on top of the hill,* like the singing of diverse[28] precious birds. The voices rise and fall, as if the hill is answering back to them.[29] The singing is extremely sweet, pleasing, entirely surpassing the bellbird, the trogon,[30] and other precious birds that sing. Juan Diego stood and looked,* he said to himself, "Can it be that I have obtained, can it be that I have been granted to hear this?[31] Am I perhaps merely dreaming, am I perhaps merely seeing things in my sleep? Where am I, what is this place?[32] Could up there be what the aged, our great-grandfathers, our grandfathers[33] told us about before they died: the land of flowers, the land of plenty?[34] Could up there be the land of the sky?"[35]

*Unexpected shifts from past tense to present tense recur throughout the Nahuatl text of the* Nican mopohua *and are preserved in this English translation.*

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* *Indicates that a noun or verb appears, in the Nahuatl text, in a reverential grammatical form. The use of reverential forms elevates the tone of a passage. A noun is marked as reverential by adding a form of the suffix* -tzin. *A verb is marked as reverential usually by adding both a prefix and a suffix, one of which cancels out the grammatical effect of the other, thus lengthening the word without substantively changing its meaning.*

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**LOANWORDS:** ■ ***Sancta Maria*** = *Saint Mary* OR *Holy Mary [Latin]* ■ ***Dios*** = *God [Spanish]* ■ ***obispo*** = *bishop [Spanish]* ■ ***Don*** = *Sir [Spanish]* ■ ***Fray*** = *Friar [Spanish]* ■ ***Juan de Zumárraga*** = *[a name, Spanish]* ■ ***mil y quinientos y treinta y uno*** = *one thousand and five hundred and thirty-one [Spanish]* ■ ***diciembre*** = *December [Spanish]* ■ ***sábado*** = *Saturday [Spanish]*

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He was looking off toward the top of the hill,* in the direction of the rising sun,[36] from where the precious singing from the sky[37] came. When the singing was stilled, when it fell silent, he hears from up on top of the hill* someone calling him to come, saying to him, "Juan,* Juan Diego*!"[38] Then right away he sets out to go off to the place from where he is being called. Nothing troubles his heart, nor is he apprehensive about anything; rather, he feels very happy, he feels good.

He ascended[39] the hill* to see where he was called to come. Arriving at the top of the hill,* he saw* a noblewoman there, standing* on her feet;[40] she called* him to come* near her. When he arrived before her face,* he greatly marveled* at how entirely all-surpassing was her perfect splendor.* Her raiment*[41] is like the sun in the way it shines, in the way it glistens. The rocks, the large stones, beside which she stands discharge the arrows of her radiance*[42] like precious green gems,[43] like a bracelet; the ground appears like a shimmering rainbow. The mesquites, the nopals, and the other diverse small herbs that adorn[44] the place are like emerald-green jade;[45] their leaves appear like fine turquoise.[46] Their stems, their thorns, their spines glisten like the fine yellow metal.[47]

He bowed down before her face.* He heard her breath,* her word,*[48] which was extremely pleasing, very courtly,[49] like one who seeks to attract* another with sweet words,[50] who highly esteems* the other. She said* to him, "Pray[51] hear, my youngest child,[52] Juan*: Where are you off to?"

*Repetitive pronouns—"he, he," "I, I," and so on—represent instances in the Nahuatl text when a subject pronoun is used even though the accompanying verb is grammatically marked to indicate the same subject, thus making the pronoun unnecessary. This redundancy has the effect of emphasizing the subject.*

And he, he answered* her, "O[53] my lady,[54] O noblewoman, O my maiden,*[55] I am on my way to your home,*[56] Mexico Tlatelolco. I am going in pursuit of the divine things that are given* to us, that are taught* to us, by our priests,[57] the images[58] of the personage,[59] our Lord."[60]

Then, at once, she converses* with him, she discloses* to him her precious will.* She says* to him, "Please[61] know, please let your heart be very certain,[62] my youngest child, that I, I am the forever perfect maiden,[63] Sancta Maria, mother* of the very true God Dios, the one who causes places to be inhabited,[64] the one who invented people,[65] the one to whom belongs what is near at hand,[66] to whom belongs the sky, to whom belongs the earth.[67] I very much want, I greatly desire, that they erect for me here my temple,*[68] where I will show, I will make manifest, I will give to people all my love, my compassion,[69] my succor, my protection. For truly I, I am your *[plural]* compassionate mother,* mother to you *[singular]*, and to all of you here in this land, and to the diverse other peoples who love me, who cry out* to me, who search for me, who trust* in me. There I will hear their sobbing,[70] their sadness, so that I may put to rights, so that I may cure, all their diverse needs,[71] their sufferings, their pains.

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**LOANWORDS:** ■ ***Sancta Maria*** = *Saint Mary* OR *Holy Mary* *[Latin]* ■ ***Dios*** = *God* *[Spanish]*

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***A pre-colonial temple on Tepeyac?***

*Today it is frequently asserted that the Virgin of Guadalupe's shrine on Tepeyac was built where a temple to a Nahua goddess stood prior to the Spanish conquest. That assertion rests on thin historical evidence, chiefly on an allegation of syncretism that was penned in the 1570s by Spanish Catholic priest Bernardino de Sahagún. Sahagún alleged that Our Lady of Guadalupe's church on Tepeyac was such a popular pilgrimage site for indigenous Mexicans—more popular than other churches in the region dedicated to Mary—because Tepeyac had formerly been the site of a temple to the goddess Cihuacoatl. Sahagún worried that indigenous Mexicans continued to worship Cihuacoatl at Tepeyac under the guise of venerating Mary; he blamed this situation on missionaries having adopted Cihuacoatl's title Tonantzin* (to-, *"our"* + nantli, *"mother"* + *reverential* -tzin) *as a title for Mary. As he tries to account for what he finds to be the puzzling popularity of the church on Tepeyac, Sahagún displays no knowledge of the story of Mary's apparitions to Juan Diego or of the miraculous image.*

*If, as Sahagún claimed, an indigenous goddess's temple stood on Tepeyac, archaeological evidence of it has not yet been uncovered. Nor is a temple on Tepeyac listed in the catalog of pre-colonial shrines that appears in the Florentine Codex, a 16th-century encyclopedia of Nahua culture compiled by indigenous scholars under Sahagún's supervision. It is certainly noteworthy that the* Nican mopohua *applies the pre-colonial Nahuatl word for "temple" to the Guadalupan shrine (see notes 68 and 199), thereby creating a linguistic continuity from pre-colonial to colonial religion in Mexico. One might argue, also, that the Guadalupan shrine's being located on a hill resonates with the symbolic significance of mountains generally in indigenous Mexican religions: mountains as sources of life-giving rain, the mountain-like shape of pyramids. But that the Guadalupan shrine on Tepeyac was built on the site of a pre-colonial temple is uncertain.*

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**Learn more:** *Louise M. Burkhart, "The Cult of the Virgin of Guadalupe in Mexico," in* South and Meso-American Native Spirituality: From the Cult of the Feathered Serpent to the Theology of Liberation*, ed. Gary H. Gossen with Miguel León-Portilla (New York: Crossroad, 1993), 198-227 (esp. 207-209).*

*Sahagún's claim about a pre-colonial temple on Tepeyac is available in English translation from the Empire and American Religion archive, https://sites.miamioh.edu/empire/files/2026/01/1576-Sahagun-On-the-concealing-of-idolatry.pdf.*

"In order to fully bring to pass[72] this to which I have set my mind[73]—to fully bring to pass my compassion—please go to the palace[74] of the obispo of Mexico. You will tell him how I, I have dispatched[75] you so that you will disclose to him how I very greatly desire that he please make me a house here, that he erect for me, on this level plot,[76] my temple. You will recount to him everything, in full: all that you have seen, all that you have marveled at, and what you have heard. Please let your heart be certain that I will be very grateful for it. I will repay it, for I will cause you to prosper, I will cause you to have enjoyment,[77] and abundant will be what is granted to you,[78] for I will recompense you for your fatigue, your labor, in setting your mind to what I

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**LOANWORDS:** ■ ***obispo*** = *bishop* *[Spanish]*

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have dispatched you to do. So now, my youngest child, you have heard my breath, my word; please be off, please do* this for me with all your strength."

Then he bowed down before her face,* he said* to her, "O my lady, O noblewoman, I am going right away to put to rights your breath,* your word.* So, please, I take* my leave of you[79]—I, your poor commoner."[80] Then he came down in order to bring to pass his charge;[81] he heads for the causeway that comes straight to Mexico.[82]

*[First audience with Zumárraga]*

He arrived inside the city; then he went straight to the palace* of the obispo (who very newly had come to occupy his see),[83] the priestly ruler,[84] whose name* was Don Fray Juan de Zumárraga, a priest of San Francisco.[85] He arrived; then he tries to see* him; he implores his servants, his domestics,[86] to go see him. After a slightly long time, they call him; the ruler, the obispo,[87] has ordered* that he enter.

*Throughout this translation, English "then" usually represents the Nahuatl word* niman*. At times, though,* niman *can carry the more specific meaning "immediately." The translation leaves it up to readers to decide when the context supports interpreting "then" as "immediately."*

He entered; then he knelt, he bowed down before his face.* Then, at once, he discloses* to him, he recounts* to him, the breath,* the word,* of the noblewoman of the sky,[88] his charge; and also he tells* him all he marveled at, all he saw, all he heard.

He heard everything—his word, his charge—but it seemed he did not greatly take* it to be true.[89] He answered* him, he said* to him,[90] "O my boy,*[91] you will please come another time. I will hear you without haste, I will see it from the very beginning, I will set my mind on what you came for—your will, your desire."

*Wherever the English translation is unclear about subjects of verbs or antecedents of pronouns, it replicates a lack of clarity in the Nahuatl text.*

*[Juan Diego reports back to Mary]*

He came away; he is sad as he comes, because his charge was not then brought to pass. Then he came back, right away, on that very day; then he came straight to the top of the hill.*[92] He arrived before the face* of the noblewoman of the sky; right there[93] where he first saw* her, she was waiting* for him.

When he saw* her, he bowed down before her face,* he threw himself onto the ground.[94] He said* to her, "O my lady, O personage, O noblewoman, O my youngest child, O my maiden*[95]

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**LOANWORDS:** ■ ***obispo*** = *bishop [Spanish]* ■ ***Don*** = *Sir [Spanish]* ■ ***Fray*** = *Friar [Spanish]* ■ ***Juan de Zumárraga*** = *[a name, Spanish]* ■ ***San Francisco*** = *Saint Francis [Spanish]*

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—I went where you dispatched* me; I went to bring to pass your breath,* your word.* Although with much difficulty, I entered the place where he sits, the priestly ruler;[96] I saw him, I set before his face your breath,* your word,* as you bade* me. He received me gladly, he listened well. But from the way he answered me, it seemed his heart was not satisfied,[97] he did not take it to be true. He said to me, 'Come another time; I will hear you without haste, I will see from the very beginning what you came for—your desire, your will.' I saw clearly from the way he answered me that he thinks that your temple,* which you want* them to build* for you here, perhaps merely I, I have invented it,[98] perhaps it is not from your lips.*[99]

"So I greatly implore* you, O my lady, O noblewoman, O my maiden:* Let it be one of the precious nobles, someone well known, someone respected, someone revered—leave* it[100] to one of them to carry, to deliver, your breath,* your word,* so that that one[101] will be believed. For truly I am a poor working man;* I am a tumpline, I am a pack frame;[102] I am the tail, I am the wing;[103] I am someone who must be carried, who must be loaded onto someone else's back.[104] The place you sent me to, O my maiden,* O my youngest child, O personage, O noblewoman—it is not a place where I usually walk, it is not a place where I usually stand. Please forgive* me, for I will cause distress to your face,* to your heart;* I will come under your frown,* I will fall into your anger,*[105] O personage, O my lady."

The perfect, splendorous maiden* answered* him, "Pray hear, my youngest child, please let your heart be very certain: they are not precious,[106] my servants, my messengers, those to whom I fully leave it to carry my breath, my word, in order to bring to pass my will. But it is very necessary that you yourself go after it, that you speak for it,[107] that yours be the hand by which my wish is brought to pass, by which my will is done. So I very much implore[108] you, my youngest child, and emphatically[109] order you, that yet again, tomorrow, you go and see the obispo. On my behalf, instruct[110] him, make him hear clearly my wish, my will, so that he will bring it to pass, so that he will build my temple as I am requesting him. And tell him yet again how I myself, the forever maiden Sancta Maria, the mother* of God Dios, have dispatched you."

Juan Diego answered* her, he said* to her, "O my lady, O noblewoman, O my maiden,* may I cause no distress to your face,* to your heart.* I will go very much with all my heart, I will go and bring to pass your breath,* your word.* Never will I abandon* it nor think the road arduous.[111] I will go, I will go and do your will*—only it may very well be that perhaps I will not be well listened to; or if I am listened to, perhaps I will not be believed. Even so, tomorrow afternoon, at sunset, I will return your breath,* your word,* to you with whatever answer I am given by the priestly ruler. Now I take* my leave of you, O my youngest child, O my maiden,* O personage, O noblewoman.[112] Please take* your rest." Then he went to his home to take his rest.

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**LOANWORDS:** ■ ***obispo*** = *bishop [Spanish]* ■ ***Sancta Maria*** = *Saint Mary* OR *Holy Mary [Latin]* ■ ***Dios*** = *God [Spanish]*

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*[Second audience with Zumárraga]*

The next day, domingo, still in the very wee hours,* while it was dark, he came from his home, he came straight to Tlatelolco. He comes to know divine things[113] and to be counted;[114] then he will go at once to see the priestly ruler.

By perhaps the tenth hora, preparations were complete. The misa was heard[115] and the people were counted; all the commoners dispersed. He, Juan Diego, he then went to the palace* of the ruler, the obispo. He arrived, he made every effort to see* him. With great difficulty, again he saw* him. He knelt at his feet;* he sobs, he is sad,[116] as he converses* with him, as he discloses* to him the breath,* the word,* of the noblewoman of the sky. Perhaps it will not be believed—the charge, the will,* of the perfect maiden that they build,* that they erect,* her temple* in the place she designated,* in the place she wants.*[117]

The ruler, the obispo, asked him very many things, questioned him closely, so that his heart would be very satisfied as to where he saw* her, how she was.*[118] He recounted* everything, in full, to the ruler, the obispo. Although he declared to him everything, in full—her likeness* and all he saw, all he marveled at, so as to make very apparent that it was she,* the perfect maiden,* the precious, splendorous mother* of our Liberator,*[119] our Lord Jesu Christo—nevertheless, it was not then taken to be true. He said that not merely because of his word, not merely because of his request, would what he requested[120] be done, be brought to pass. It was still very necessary that there be some sign from her[121] in order for it to be fully believed that she,* the noblewoman of the sky, had dispatched* him.

When Juan Diego heard this, he said* to the obispo,[122] "O personage, O ruler, please see* to it, what it will be, the sign that you request* from her. Then I will go, I will request* it of the noblewoman of the sky, who ordered* me here." The obispo saw that he very much takes it to be true, that he in no way turns back[123] or displays doubt. Then he sends him off.

When he came away, he then ordered*[124] some of the people of his household, whom he very much trusts, that they come pursue him, that they spy out well where he goes and whom he sees, whom he calls on. But it happened thus: Juan Diego then came straight to the causeway, he followed it. Those who came pursuing him, there where the gorge comes out[125] near Tepeyacac, at the wooden bridge, they lost him. Even though they searched all around, nowhere did they see him. They came back having gained nothing; not only were they worn out, but they were forced to turn back,[126] they were angered. So they went to advise the ruler, the obispo, to set him straight,[127] so that he would not believe him. They told him that he is merely deceiving* him, that he is fabricating what he comes to tell* him, or maybe he merely dreamed it, he merely saw in his sleep what he tells* him, what he requests* of him. Likewise, they said* to each other that

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**LOANWORDS:** ■ ***domingo*** = *Sunday [Spanish]* ■ ***hora*** = *hour [Spanish]* ■ ***misa*** = *mass [Spanish]* ■ ***obispo*** = *bishop [Spanish]* ■ ***Jesu Christo*** = *Jesus Christ [Spanish, but with a Latin-like spelling]*

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if he came again, if he returned, they would seize him then and there[128] and punish him forcefully, so that he would never again lie, would never again fool people.

> [*At this point, the author of the* Nican mopohua *leaves a gap in the narrative. Earlier, Juan Diego had promised Mary that he would return to her on Sunday afternoon, after his second audience with Zumárraga; presumably he is on his way to meet Mary when Zumárraga's servants lose sight of him near Tepeyac. The next section of the narrative implies that during a Sunday afternoon meeting, Mary told Juan Diego to return to Tepeyac on Monday to receive from her a sign to take to Zumárraga. However, the* Nican mopohua *does not narrate that Sunday afternoon meeting. From Zumárraga's servants returning to the palace, the text jumps directly to Juan Diego's activities on Monday.*][129]

*[Juan Diego tries, but fails, to avoid Mary]*

The next day, lunes, when Juan Diego would have delivered some sign from her in order to be believed, he did not come back—the reason being that when he arrived home, sickness set upon an uncle of his, whose name was Juan Bernardino,[130] making him very gravely ill. He went to call a healer[131] for him, he spoke for it;[132] but there was no longer time, he was already very gravely ill. That night, his uncle implored him to leave for Tlatelolco in the wee hours,* while it was still dark, to come call*[133] for one of the priests to be off[134] to know* his heart's misdeeds[135] and to prepare* him—the reason being that his heart is very certain that now is the time, that there he will die; he will not get up, he will not be cured.

On martes, while it was still very dark, Juan Diego came from home to call* for a priest in Tlatelolco. As he arrived near the hill* of Tepeyacac—where the road passes by the foot of the hill in the direction of the setting sun,[136] where he passed by before—he said, "If I merely go straight on down the road, how can I keep the noblewoman from seeing me?[137] She will detain* me, as before, so that I will deliver* some sign to the priestly ruler, as she bade* me. Let first our distress leave us; let me first quickly call* the mendicant[138] priest, let my uncle* not merely wait.*"

Then he skirted the hill; he climbed a gap located over on that side, in the direction of the rising sun, passing by that way so that he can promptly be on his way to Mexico, so that he will not be detained* by the noblewoman of the sky.[139] He thinks that because he circled around that way, it will be impossible for her to see* him—she who sees* absolutely everywhere! He saw that she was descending[140] toward him from the top of the hill;* from off where he saw* her before, she had been looking* down at him.[141] She went and met* him next to the hill; she goes and intercepts* him. She said* to him, "My youngest child, where are you going, where are you headed to?"

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**LOANWORDS:** ■ ***lunes*** = *Monday [Spanish]* ■ ***martes*** = *Tuesday [Spanish]*

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And he, could it be that he was a little annoyed? Or could it be that he was embarrassed? Or was he apprehensive, was he frightened?[142] He bowed down before her face,* he greeted* her, he said* to her: "O my maiden,* O my youngest child, O noblewoman: I wish you happiness.*[143] How were you when the morning sun shone on your face?[144] Does your precious body* feel well,* O my lady, O my noble**?[145] I am going to cause distress to your face,* to your heart.* Please be informed,* O my maiden,* that a commoner* of yours,[146] my uncle, is very gravely ill; a great sickness has set upon him, he will surely die* soon. So I am hurrying to Mexico, your home;* I am going to converse* with one of our Lord's precious ones, our priests, so that he will go to know* his heart's misdeeds and prepare* him—because truly, for this we were born: we come to wait to be drafted to the labor of our death.[147] Once I have gone and brought this to pass, then I will come back here again so that I will go, I will carry your breath,* your word,* O personage, O my maiden.* Please forgive* me, please be patient* with me just a little longer, for I am not deceiving you, O my youngest child, O my noble.** Then tomorrow, I will pass by quickly."

When she heard* Juan Diego's word, the compassionate perfect maiden* answered* him: "Please hear, please let your heart be very certain, my youngest child: that which has frightened you, that which has distressed you, is nothing. In no way let your face, your heart, be troubled. Do not fear this sickness, nor any other sickness, affliction, tribulation. Am I not here—I, your mother*? Are you not in my shadow, under my shade? Am not I, I your happiness? Are you not cradled in my lap,[148] are you not loaded onto my back?[149] What do you need more than this? Let nothing distress you, upset you; let not your uncle's* sickness distress you. He will not die today[150] from it. Please let your heart be very certain that he has already been cured." (And indeed then, at that moment, his uncle* was cured, as he found out afterward.)

*[The miracle of the flowers]*

When Juan Diego heard the breath,* the word,* of the noblewoman of the sky, his heart very greatly settled down,[151] his heart was very content. He implored* her to dispatch* him right away to go and see the ruler, the obispo, to carry some sign, some proof, from her so that he will believe.

The noblewoman of the sky then ordered* him to climb to the top of the hill,* to the place where he saw her before. She said* to him, "Climb, my youngest child, to the top of the hill.* In the place where you saw me and I told you my bidding, you will see, spread out[152] there, diverse[153] flowers.[154] Cut them, collect them, gather them; then descend here again, deliver them here before my face."

Then Juan Diego ascended the hill.* He arrived at the top. He greatly marveled at the diverse

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* *Indicates that a noun or verb appears, in the Nahuatl text, in a reverential grammatical form.*

** *Indicates a duplicated reverential form.*

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**LOANWORDS:** ■ ***obispo*** = *bishop* *[Spanish]*

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precious Castilian[155] flowers all spread out there, blossoming, blooming,[156] though it was not yet a suitable time for them[157]—for very truly, at that time the frost is strong. They were extremely fragrant, being covered with the nighttime dew like precious pearls.[158] Then he commenced to cut them; he collected all of them, every one, into his lap. There, at the top of the hill,* is in no way a suitable place for flowers, for it is full of large stones, brambles, thorn bushes, nopals, mesquites. And even if there are small herbs that adorn the place, at that time it is in the month of diciembre, when everything is consumed, wiped out, by the frost.

Then he came down, he came carrying* to the noblewoman of the sky the diverse flowers he had cut. When she saw* them, she took* them from him into her hands;*[159] then she packed them again into his lap. She said* to him, "My youngest child: these diverse flowers, they are the witness,[160] the sign, that you will deliver* to the obispo. On my behalf, you will tell him to please see[161] by this what is my will and to bring to pass my will, my wish. You, you are my messenger; you are very much to be trusted. I very emphatically order you[162] that you unfold your tilma and reveal what you are delivering before the face of the obispo only, no one else. You will recount to him everything, in full; you will tell him how I ordered you to climb to the top of the hill* to cut flowers, and all you saw, all you marveled at. Thus the heart of the priestly ruler will be very stirred up,[163] so that then he will speak for it, so that he will build my temple, he will make it stand, as I requested of him."

*[Third audience with Zumárraga]*

The noblewoman of the sky having told him her bidding,* he came following the causeway that comes straight to Mexico. Now he comes happily, now he comes with his heart certain, because things will turn out well, he will carry it off well. He comes very careful of what is in his lap; now he comes, he must not drop anything. He comes enjoying the fragrance of the diverse flowers.

He arrived at the palace of the obispo; he was met by the steward[164] and other domestics of the ruling priest.[165] He implored them to please tell* him that he wants to see him. But none of them wanted to, they did not want to listen to him—perhaps because it was still the very wee hours, or maybe because they know him as one who merely bothers them, who is a nuisance, and they were advised by their friends who had lost him when they were pursuing him.

For a very long time, he waited to receive word. They saw for what a very long time he was there, on his feet,[166] his head bowed. He was on his feet, doing nothing else,[167] in case he will be called, and it seemed as though he comes carrying something in his lap. For that reason, they then went up to him to see what he was delivering, to make their hearts content.[168] Juan Diego saw then that it will be impossible to conceal from them what he is delivering, because they will harass him, they will push him around, or they will beat[169] him; so he showed them, just a little,

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* *Indicates that a noun or verb appears, in the Nahuatl text, in a reverential grammatical form.*

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**LOANWORDS:** ■ ***diciembre*** = *December* *[Spanish]* ■ ***obispo*** = *bishop* *[Spanish]*

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that here are flowers.[170] So they saw all the diverse Castilian flowers, and they marveled very greatly because that time was not a suitable one for flowers and because of how extremely fresh they were, for they were blossoming, they were fragrant, they were splendorous. They desired to grab some, to take them out. All three times that they did this, all three times that they set out to take them, it was then impossible to do—the reason being that when they went to seize them, they no longer saw real flowers; it seemed as though they saw merely something painted, or embroidered, or sewn upon the tilma.

Then they told* the ruler, the obispo, what they saw and that he wants to see* him—the commoner* who came several times already[171]—and for a very long time now has been waiting in case he receives word, because he wants to see* him. When the ruler, the obispo, heard* this, then he had in his heart*[172] that this was it, the proof to satisfy his heart so that he would bring to pass* what the person*[173] was going after. He bade* then that he enter then,[174] that he would see* him.

He entered, he bowed down before his face* as he did before.[175] Again he recounted* to him all he saw, all he marveled at, and his charge. He said* to him: "O my lord, O ruler, I have done, I have brought to pass, as you ordered* me.[176] Indeed I went and told* the personage, my lady, the noblewoman of the sky, Santa MARIA, the precious mother* of God Dios, that you request a sign in order to fully believe* me, so that you will build* her temple* where she requests* that you erect* it. Likewise I told* her that I gave* you my word that I would come deliver* to you some sign, some proof, from her of her will,* as you left* it to my hand. She heard* well your breath,* your word.* She received* gladly your request for some sign, some proof, from her so that her will* will be done, will be brought to pass.

"Today, when it was still the wee hours,* she ordered* me to come again to see* you. I requested* from her some sign, as she had said* that she would give* me, so that I would be believed. Right then, she brought it to pass.* She sent* me to the top of the hill,* to the place where I saw* her before, in order to go cut diverse Castilian flowers. I went and cut them; I came and delivered* them to her down below. She took* them from me into her hands;* she packed them again into my lap so that I would carry* them, I would give* them, to you yourself.* Although I knew well that the top of the hill* is not a suitable place for flowers—for it is full of only large stones, brambles, thorn bushes, nopals, mesquites—I did not doubt, I did not waver. I arrived at the top of the hill,* I beheld[177] that it was now the land of flowers,[178] with diverse precious flowers of the Castilian kind all growing together[179] there, shining with the dew; so then I went and cut them. She told* me to give* them to you on her behalf. In this way, I would bring to pass that you see* some sign, as you request,* so that you will bring to pass* her will,* and so that the truth of my word, my charge, will appear.[180] Here they are—please receive* them."

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* *Indicates that a noun or verb appears, in the Nahuatl text, in a reverential grammatical form.*

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**LOANWORDS:** ■ ***obispo*** = *bishop [Spanish]* ■ ***Santa María*** = *Saint Mary* OR *Holy Mary [Spanish, not Latin as in earlier instances, though the forms are very similar]* ■ ***Dios*** = *God [Spanish]*

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*[The miracle of the image]*

Then he unfolded his white tilma, in the lap of which he was carrying the flowers. As the diverse Castilian flowers all came spilling onto the ground,[181] then was emblazoned[182] there, then appeared, the precious image* of the perfect maiden, Santa MARIA, the mother* of God Dios—the likeness* that is* today, that is preserved* today, there in her precious home,* her temple,* Tepeyacac, which is named Guadalupe.

So the ruler, the obispo, saw* it, and all those who were there. They knelt,[183] they marveled greatly. They stood and looked; they were sad, their hearts suffered,[184] as if their hearts, their minds, were wrought up.[185] The ruler, the obispo, with sobbing, with sadness,[186] implored,* requested* her forgiveness because he had not brought to pass then[187] her will,* her breath,* her word.* He stood; he loosed, from where it was tied at his neck, Juan Diego's raiment, his tilma, upon which had appeared,* where was emblazoned,* the noblewoman of the sky.[188] Then he delivered* it to, he went to set* it in, his place for doing what is divine.[189]

Juan Diego remained the entire day there in the home* of the obispo, who detained* him. The next day, he said to him,[190] "Let us go cause the people to see[191] the place where it is the will* of the noblewoman of the sky that they erect* her temple.*" Then the people were summoned to build it, to make it stand.

*[Juan Bernardino's vision of Mary]*

When Juan Diego had caused the people to see the place where the noblewoman of the sky ordered* that her temple stand, he then sought leave to depart.[192] He wanted to be on his way to his home, in order to go see his uncle* Juan Bernardino, who was very gravely ill when he left him behind to call one of the priests, there in Tlatelolco, to know his heart's misdeeds and to prepare him—who the noblewoman of the sky told* him was now cured.

They did not leave him to go merely by himself; indeed, they delivered him to his home. When they arrived, they saw his uncle* now fully healthy, he is in no way afflicted. And he, he marveled greatly that his nephew was delivered here[193] and was greatly revered.[194] He asked his nephew why it is that he seems to be greatly revered. And he, he told him how when he was starting off to call a priest to know his heart's misdeeds, to prepare him, he saw* there on Tepeyacac the noblewoman of the sky. She dispatches* him to Mexico to go and see the ruler, the obispo, so that they will make* her a house there on Tepeyacac. She told* him not to be distressed, because he was now healthy; thus his heart greatly settled down.

His uncle told him that indeed it was true: she indeed cured him then, at that time, and he saw* her clearly, in the very same likeness in which she caused herself to be seen* by his nephew. And

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* *Indicates that a noun or verb appears, in the Nahuatl text, in a reverential grammatical form.*

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**LOANWORDS:** ■ ***Santa María*** = *Saint Mary* OR *Holy Mary* *[Spanish]* ■ ***Dios*** = *God* *[Spanish]* ■ ***obispo*** = *bishop* *[Spanish]*

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***Why "Guadalupe"?***

*What does it mean that, in the* Nican mopohua*, Mary instructs Juan Bernardino that her miraculous image be named St. Mary of Guadalupe—not St. Mary of Tepeyac?*

*Guadalupe is the name of a town in the Extremadura region of Spain, where a shrine to Mary was established in the 1300s. Associated with that shrine was an apparition story, according to which Mary showed a cowherd named Gil Cordero where Christians had buried a statue of her a few centuries earlier to conceal it from the Muslims who conquered much of Spain in the 700s. The story said that to help convince local church authorities of the truth of Cordero's report, Mary resuscitated Cordero's son after he died from illness. The statue to which Mary was said to have led Cordero came to be venerated under the title "Our Lady of Guadalupe." The shrine in Guadalupe had become an important pilgrimage site in Spain by the time the Spanish began their conquests in the Americas.*

*Interpreters seeking an indigenous underlay to Guadalupan devotion at Tepeyac have postulated that Nahuas initially venerated Mary under a Nahuatl name, which Spaniards misheard as "Guadalupe." One version of this claim, popular today among Catholic devotional writers, is that Nahuas venerated Mary as Coatlaxopeuh; the name is said to mean "she who crushes the serpent" (from* coatl*, "snake"* + xopehua*, "to kick"), an allusion to Genesis 3:15. Another claim, promoted by late 20th-century Chicana feminist Gloria Anzaldúa, is that the Virgin of Guadalupe's Nahuatl name is Coatlalopeuh. Anzaldúa translated this name as "she who has dominion over serpents" (from* coatl*, "snake"* + pehua*, "to conquer"); Anzaldúa believed that the name links the Virgin of Guadalupe to the pre-colonial goddesses Coatlicue ("Her Skirt Is Serpents") and Cihuacoatl ("Serpent Woman"). Neither of those purported Nahuatl names for Mary—Coatlaxopeuh or Coatlalopeuh—is attested in colonial-era sources. These are, rather, attempts to reconstruct a name that modern commentators theorize existed.*

*Whatever merit these linguistic speculations might or might not have for understanding the actual historical origins of Guadalupan devotion at Tepeyac, the* Nican mopohua *asks its readers to accept a different scenario. The* Nican mopohua *claims that Mary herself gave her image a Spanish name—the name of a prominent Marian shrine in Spain. The question remains, then: What does it mean for the* Nican mopohua *to make that claim? How does the claim distribute status or power between Spanish and indigenous elements in colonial Mexican culture?*

she told* him how she, she dispatched him to Mexico to see the obispo. She said also, please, that when he goes and sees him,[195] he please disclose everything, in full; that he advise[196] him of what he saw and how marvelously she cured* him; and likewise that he please name,* likewise that her precious image* please be named* the perfect maiden* Santa MARIA de Guadalupe.

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* *Indicates that a noun or verb appears, in the Nahuatl text, in a reverential grammatical form.*

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**LOANWORDS:** ■ ***obispo*** = *bishop [Spanish]* ■ ***Santa María de Guadalupe*** = *Saint (*OR *Holy) Mary of Guadalupe [Spanish]*

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Then they delivered Juan Bernardino here[197] before the face of the ruler, the obispo; he came to advise him, he came to bear witness. The obispo lodged him in his home, along with his nephew Juan Diego, for a few days, all the while the temple* of the ruling noblewoman[198] was being made to stand* there on Tepeyacac, in the place she caused Juan Diego to see.*

The ruler, the obispo, transferred over to the iglesia mayor[199] the precious image* of the precious noblewoman of the sky; he brought it out from his palace—from his place for doing what is divine, where it was*—so that every person could see, could marvel at, her precious image.* Absolutely everyone, the entire city, was moved;[200] they came to see, they marveled at, her precious image.* They came to worship,[201] they implored*[202] her. They marveled greatly at how divinely marvelously[203] she had appeared,* because no person on earth, whatsoever, had painted* her precious image.*

*[An afterword, describing the image on the tilma]*

The tilma* on which marvelously appeared* the image* of the noblewoman of the sky was the clothing of Juan Diego. It was ayate,*[204] a little thick and well woven, because at that time ayate was the raiment, the clothing,* of all the commoners.**[205] Only the nobles, the lords,[206] and the warriors[207]—only they adorned themselves with, clothed[208] themselves in, soft cotton tilmas. Ayate, as is known, is made of ichtli,[209] which comes from the maguey plant.

This precious ayate* on which appeared* the perfect maiden,* the noblewoman* who rules over us, is made of two pieces[210] that are sewn together, fastened together, with soft thread. The height of her precious image*—commencing at her sole,* arriving at her crown*[211]—is six finger-spans and one woman's finger-span.[212] Her precious countenance* is perfectly splendorous, courtly,[213] a little dark-complexioned.[214] Her precious upper body*[215] has the appearance* of someone* humble; her hands are joined* at her breast,* in front of her, commencing there at her waist.*

> [*The author goes on to describe the colors, cut, and embellishment of the clothing Mary wears in the image. Today, claims circulate that her clothing has indigenous symbolism—for instance, that she wears the colors of Aztec royalty, or that her belt betokens she is pregnant. The* Nican mopohua *makes no such claims; it offers no interpretations of what Mary's clothing signifies.*]

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* *Indicates that a noun or verb appears, in the Nahuatl text, in a reverential grammatical form.*

** *Indicates a duplicated reverential form.*

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**LOANWORDS:** ■ ***obispo*** = *bishop [Spanish]* ■ ***iglesia mayor*** = *greater church* OR *principal church [Spanish]*

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***What becomes of Juan Diego?***

*Despite his having been the* Nican mopohua*'s central character, Juan Diego is invisible in its closing scene. He has delivered Mary's messages; he has been honored with a few days' lodging in the episcopal palace; he serves no further narrative purpose for this author. He simply fades away into the anonymous crowd who come to marvel at Mary's miraculous image as the story concludes. His individuality, his voice, the struggles and dramas of his life as an indigenous person navigating the hierarchies of Nahua society under Spanish colonialism—all of that dissolves into a final scene in which a Spanish bishop unveils an image with a Spanish name, in a church erected at the command of the Spanish conquerors, before awestruck indigenous masses. To be sure, there are ways in which Juan Diego, the Nahua commoner, can be interpreted as challenging colonial hierarchies over the course of this story; but in the* Nican mopohua*'s closing scene, those challenges are swallowed up in a pageant that reinforces the power of the colonizing church. Or is that too harsh a reading?*

*While the* Nican mopohua *relates nothing more about Juan Diego after his stay in Zumárraga's palace, some supplementary biographical claims are put forward in the* Nican motecpana*, a catalog of miracles attributed to Mary's image at Tepeyac that was appended to the* Nican mopohua *in its initial 1649 edition. (As the* Nican mopohua *is known by its opening words, "Here is recounted...," so too the* Nican motecpana *is known by its opening words, "Here are set down in order...") In the* Nican motecpana*'s brief narration*, *Juan Diego obtains permission from Zumárraga to take up residence on Tepeyac, where he spends the last 16 years of his life tending to Mary's shrine and performing penitential acts that include self-mortification with a chain cilice. The author informs us that Juan Diego had been married to a woman named María Lucía, who died two years before the Guadalupan apparitions; we are told that María Lucía and Juan Diego were both lifelong virgins, having abstained from sex even during their marriage. Juan Bernardino wants to join Juan Diego on Tepeyac, but Juan Diego insists that Juan Bernardino tend to their ancestral properties instead. On his deathbed, Juan Diego has a final vision in which Mary promises he will go to heaven. He dies in 1548, at age 74 (which would make him 57, give or take a year, at the time of the apparitions), and is buried in the Tepeyac shrine. How well do these biographical claims from the* Nican motecpana *mesh with the impression of Juan Diego that you took from the* Nican mopohua*?*

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**Learn more:** *The pertinent passages from the* Nican motecpana *are available, in English translation, in Lisa Sousa, Stafford Poole, and James Lockhart, eds. and trans.,* The Story of Guadalupe: Luis Laso de la Vega's "Huei tlamahuiçoltica" of 1649 *(Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 113, 115.*

**_The_ Nican mopohua _and the_ Cantares mexicanos**

*The* Nican mopohua*'s narrative of Juan Diego's preternatural experiences on Tepeyac has some commonalities with a Nahuatl song that predates the publication of the* Nican mopohua *by several decades at the very least and may have elements that predate the Spanish conquest. These commonalities connect the* Nican mopohua *to a broader Nahuatl literary tradition. They also offer insight into how certain images or words in the* Nican mopohua *might have resonated culturally for Nahua readers or hearers.*

*The song in question bears the pseudo-title "*Cuicapeuhcayotl,*" "Beginning of the songs," so called because it is the first in a collection of Nahuatl song texts compiled under missionary supervision during the late 1500s. Although the collected songs were written down in Nahuatl, not in Spanish translation, the collection is known by the Spanish title* Cantares mexicanos*, "Mexican songs." Scholars generally regard these songs as representing an artistic tradition with origins in pre-colonial times. Some songs in the collection contain Spanish loanwords or overt Christian content; these must be either post-conquest compositions or pre-conquest compositions that were later reworked to reflect Christian sensibilities. But* "Cuicapeuhcayotl" *is not one of those songs.*

*The song is a narrative told in the first person, apparently by a warrior from the upper classes, judging from the few hints the song provides regarding the narrator's identity. The song begins with the narrator searching for flowers, which he says he wants to take to the noble-born and lords, to bring them pleasure. The Nahuatl word represented here by "lords,"* teteuctin*, is ungendered: in the* Nican mopohua*, that same word's singular form is applied to Mary as well as to Jesus and Zumárraga (see notes 54 and 60). However, in* "Cuicapeuhcayotl," *context suggests that the narrator is using* teteuctin *to refer to fellow warriors, thus to men.*

*The narrator's search for flowers takes him into a forest where there are "diverse precious singing birds." A few species of birds are named; among them are the* tzinitzcan *and the* coyoltototl*, the species named in the* Nican mopohua *when Juan Diego hears birdsong at the beginning of his first encounter with Mary (see note 30). In* "Cuicapeuhcayotl," *the narrator says that the birds' singing echoes "as if the hill is answering back to them." This is the same Nahuatl expression, with an inconsequential change in word order, that the* Nican mopohua *uses to describe the echoing birdsong that Juan Diego hears (see note 29). In the* Nican mopohua*, the birdsong falls silent (*cactimani *is the Nahuatl verb), whereupon Mary calls to Juan Diego. In* "Cuicapeuhcayotl," *the birdsong falls silent (again the verb is* cactimani*), whereupon a hummingbird asks the narrator what he is looking for.*

*The narrator asks the birds where he can find flowers with which to bring pleasure to the lords. The narrator refers to the lords as the birds' equals or, alternatively translated, the birds' fellow beings; this is consistent with a pre-colonial idea that warriors killed in battle were transformed after death into brightly colored birds. When the birds reply to the narrator, they likewise speak of the lords as their equals or fellow beings and, later in the song, as their friends. The birds lead the narrator to a valley, which he calls* xochitlalpan, tonacatlalpan*. These are the same terms Juan Diego uses when he wonders if he is glimpsing the "land of flowers, the land of plenty" that his ancestors told about (see note 34). In the valley, the narrator of* "Cuicapeuhcayotl" *finds "diverse precious, aromatic flowers, ...clad in dew, shining like a rainbow." The birds tell the narrator to cut the flowers, to take pleasure in them, and to give them to the lords. He does so, carrying the flowers away—as Juan Diego does in the* Nican mopohua*—in the "lap" of his clothing. The fact that the narrator carries the*

*flowers in his "lap" is mentioned twice in the song. The narrator of* "Cuicapeuhcayotl" *regrets that he didn't bring someone else with him so that they could have carried away more flowers; but he resolves to return regularly with friends to gather flowers for the noble-born, whom he also now calls friends. The narrator then reports placing garlands of flowers on the heads of the noble-born and filling their hands with flowers (or, alternatively translated, filling their arms; see note 159).*

*The song then shifts from narration to reflective commentary. The narrator says that one must be "deserving" to enter* xochitlalpan, tonacatlalpan*: "One who is not deserving, from where will that one take, where will that one see, aromatic flowers? Will that one be able to arrive with me in the land of flowers, the land of plenty—one who is not deserving, who is grieved [unhappy, afflicted], who does harm on the earth?" When the narrator speaks of someone being deserving, the root word is the verb* mahcehua*; Juan Diego uses that same root when he wonders if he in fact deserves, or if he has really been granted, to hear the beautiful birdsong (see note 31). The narrator of* "Cuicapeuhcayotl" *says that only a certain deity makes a person deserving of flowers—the sense of which might be better conveyed by saying that only a certain deity grants to a person the good fortune of obtaining flowers. The narrator does not name this deity but uses the epithet* tloque nahuaque*, "the one to whom belongs what is near at hand." Another divine epithet appeared earlier in the song:* tlalticpaque*, "to whom belongs the earth." For more about these divine epithets, which are used also in the* Nican mopohua*, see notes 66 and 67.*

*In the final stanza of* "Cuicapeuhcayotl," *the song takes a pessimistic turn. Here on earth is "no good place," the narrator declares. Prosperity or enjoyment is found elsewhere, in a place where the dead live. (The noun translatable as "prosperity" or "enjoyment" is derived from the verb* tlamachtia*. Mary uses that verb in the* Nican mopohua *when she promises to reward Juan Diego for being her messenger; see note 77.) The narrator wishes to go to that other place, the place of the dead, where he says the precious birds and the fragrant flowers that bring happiness are. This ending may seem unexpected, given the song's earlier celebration of earthly pleasures. But the message that life on earth is misery is found in other texts that preserve themes from pre-colonial Nahua culture; so too the contrasting promise of heavenly bliss, represented by fragrant flowers, for fallen warriors. The narrator of* "Cuicapeuhcayotl" *has been granted a foretaste of the future bliss that awaits him and his fellow warriors if they lose their lives carrying out their duty.*

*How does* "Cuicapeuhcayotl" *contribute to your understanding of certain terms used in the* Nican mopohua*? How do the commonalities—and, perhaps, the differences—between* "Cuicapeuhcayotl" *and scenes in the* Nican mopohua *influence the "feel" of those scenes for you? That is, what new associations do you now bring to those scenes in the* Nican mopohua*?*

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**Learn more:** *A complete English translation of* "Cuicapeuhcayotl," *facing the Nahuatl original, is available in John Bierhorst, trans.,* Cantares Mexicanos: Songs of the Aztecs *(Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1985), 134-137, with commentary on page 430. Other English translations of* "Cuicapeuhcayotl," *exist, but Bierhorst's reproduces the syntax of the Nahuatl original most closely. Bierhorst postulated that the* Cantares mexicanos *were productions of an otherwise unknown post-conquest Nahua ghost dance movement, a theory that was not widely accepted among scholars of colonial Mexico or Nahuatl literature. Bierhorst's idiosyncratic theory is reflected in his commentary on* "Cuicapeuhcayotl" *but makes little difference to his translation of this song by itself.*

*A scholarly translation of the song into Spanish, facing the Nahuatl original, is freely available in Miguel León-Portilla, ed.,* Cantares Mexicanos*, vol. 2, book 1 (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2011), 12-21, https://historicas.unam.mx/publicaciones/publicadigital/libros/cantares/cm02.html.*

**Notes**

[1] ***perfect maiden:*** *In Nahuatl,* cenquizcaichpochtli*, a compound word.* Cenquizca *("perfect") has the sense of "total" or "absolute."* Ichpochtli *("maiden") is a young unmarried woman. The compound word is being used to indicate Mary's virginity.*

[2] ***noblewoman:*** *In Nahuatl,* cihuapilli*, literally "woman"* (cihuatl) + *"noble"* (pilli). *The* Nican mopohua *frequently applies this title to Mary, probably as an equivalent to the Spanish title* señora *("lady").*

[3] ***who rules over us:*** *This phrase corresponds to the element* tlatoca *in a Nahuatl compound word,* tocihuapillitocatzin. *The construction of the word is:* to *("our")* + cihuapilli *("noblewoman")* + tlatoca *("ruler")* + -tzin *(reverential suffix, represented in the translation by the asterisk after "noblewoman").* Tlatoca *is derived from* tlatoani*, "one who speaks" or "one who commands," the title held by the governor of a Nahua state; the title remained in use under Spanish colonialism. The compounding of* cihuapilli *and* tlatoca *("noblewoman-ruler") appears to be an approximation, in Nahuatl, of the Spanish title* reina *("queen"), which Spanish Catholics would have been accustomed to apply to Mary. Hence the English translation "the noblewoman who rules over us" could be rendered more simply as* ***our queen****.*

[4] ***newly:*** *In Nahuatl,* yancuican*, a word that indicates something is being done for the first time.* Yancuican *will be repeated later in this paragraph—there translated as "new"—to describe Zumárraga as the first, or inaugural, bishop of Mexico. What makes the word applicable to the Guadalupan apparitions? Does the author mean that this was the first time Mary appeared on Tepeyac, or in Mexico, or maybe in the New World? Does the author mean that there's something unprecedented about the way in which this apparition occurred? By applying* yancuican *both to the Guadalupan apparitions and, in the same passage, to the inauguration of episcopal authority in Mexico, is the author deliberately linking those two events based on their perceived historical significance: a new miracle performed in the presence of a New World bishop occupying a newly established see?*

[5] ***very marvelously:*** *Or, a little less literally,* ***in a very miraculous way****. The Nahuatl word translated as "marvelously" is* tlamahuizoltica*. This word is derived from the noun* tlamahuizolli, *which is derived in turn from the verb* mahuizoa*. Both of those words also appear in the* Nican mopohua; *for consistency, they will be translated as the noun "marvel" and the verb "to marvel."*

[6] ***commoner:*** *The Nahuatl word,* macehualli*, referred in pre-colonial Nahua society to non-nobles, hence "commoners." Under Spanish colonialism, however, the word came to be applied to indigenous people generally, regardless of their social rank. The word thus came to serve as the Nahuatl equivalent of the Spanish word* indio *and hence could be translated as* ***Indian****. Appended to the word in this instance is the reverential suffix* -tzin*, represented in the translation by the asterisk. If that suffix is intended to do something more here than lend the text a formal tone, it will function in this case as a diminutive, implying* ***lowly commoner*** *or* ***humble commoner*** *(or* ***lowly Indian*** *or* ***humble Indian****).*

[7] ***Juan Diego:*** *This is the character's baptismal name, which he would have received following the Spanish conquest. In the* Nican mopohua, *there are two named indigenous characters: Juan Diego and his uncle Juan Bernardino. For both of those characters, the text gives only Spanish baptismal names, not Nahuatl names. A tradition external to the* Nican mopohua *assigns Juan Diego the Nahuatl name Cuauhtlatoatzin* (cuauhtli, *"eagle"* + tlatoa, *"to speak"* + *the reverential suffix* -tzin)*.*

*A literary analysis of Juan Diego's baptismal name might go as follows: The first of his two names, Juan*

*(= John), is the name of one of the twelve apostles, the one traditionally known as Jesus's "beloved disciple." Juan is also the name of the author of the Book of Revelation, who records a vision of a splendorous woman, equated in Catholic iconography with the Virgin Mary. Or the name Juan might suggest John the Baptist, who is portrayed in the New Testament as a messenger sent to bear witness and prepare the way for Jesus's appearing. All of those associations with the name Juan provide potential parallels to Juan Diego's role in the* Nican mopohua*.*

*The character's second name, Diego, might be an abbreviated version of Santiago (= St. James), another of the twelve apostles. Alternatively, though, readers may be meant to understand that Juan Diego has been named for St. Diego of Alcalá, a Franciscan missionary who, in the 1400s, helped Christianize the Canary Islands after they were conquered by Spain. (San Diego, California, was named for St. Diego of Alcalá.) Associated with St. Diego of Alcalá is a miracle story in which he sneaks food out of his monastery, enfolded in the lap of his clothing, to give to the poor. An official of the monastery catches him and orders him to reveal what he is carrying; when Diego unfolds his lap, the food has miraculously transformed into roses.*

[8] ***precious:*** *Represents the prefix* tlazo-*, which is attached to the Nahuatl noun translated as "image." This prefix appears frequently in the* Nican mopohua*. It will be consistently represented throughout this English translation as "precious," but it carries a range of meanings, including "beloved," "valued," "esteemed," and "illustrious."*

[9] ***before the face of:*** *A literalistic translation of Nahuatl* ixpan *(*ixtli, *"face"* + -pan, *"place of"). The sense of the Nahuatl word is* ***in the presence of****.*

[10] ***And here are recounted, here are set down in order:*** *The Nahuatl sentence reads simply "And all the marvels that she does by now." The verbs "is/are recounted" and "is/are set down in order"* (mopohua, motecpana) *are to be understood as carrying over from the beginning of the paragraph.*

[11] ***all the marvels that she does by now:*** *The English translation would read more naturally as* ***she has done****, but "does" replicates the grammar of the Nahuatl text.*

*The* Nican mopohua *was published in 1649 as one section of a longer book. The statement that here also are recounted and set down "all the marvels that she does by now" would seem to refer to the section of the book that follows the* Nican mopohua*. That section is known as the* Nican motecpana *(from its opening words, "Here are set down in order"); it is a catalog of miracles, mostly healings, attributed to Mary's image at Tepeyac. The entire book—containing both the* Nican mopohua *and the* Nican motecpana*—is known by the first words on its title page,* Huei tlamahuiçoltica *(literally, "Very marvelously"; less literally, "By a great miracle").*

[12] ***the conquerors' reign commenced:*** *A more straightforward translation of the first clause of this sentence would be:* ***Ten years after the city of Mexico was conquered****... However, the Nahuatl verb that here means "to conquer"* (pehua) *also means, in other contexts, "to begin" or "to commence"—and is used with that meaning in the very next sentence, to describe the establishment of the Christian faith in Mexico. The repetition of "commenced" in the English translation ("the conquerors' reign commenced...," "the belief in... the true God... commenced...") is meant to signal for readers the repetition of* pehua *in the Nahuatl text. The author may not have intended the repetition to be significant. Nevertheless, the repetition lends itself to being read as an unintentionally meaningful coincidence, one which reminds us that the beginning* (pehua) *of the Christianizing of Mexico and the conquering* (pehua) *of the Aztec*

*empire were the same thing.*

[13] ***city:*** *In Nahuatl,* in atl in tepetl, *an idiomatic pairing of the words for "water"* (atl) *and "hill"* (tepetl). *The pairing appears later in the* Nican mopohua *as a single compound word,* altepetl. *This word referred to the political units into which pre-colonial Nahua society was subdivided; in that usage, the word might be translated as "territory" or "state." However, the Spanish understood the word* altepetl *in a narrower sense, as equivalent to Spanish* pueblo*, which can be used to mean a country but refers most frequently to towns or cities. It is in that narrower sense that* altepetl *is used in the* Nican mopohua*; hence the translation "city*." *The* altepetl *of Mexico is Mexico City.*

[14] ***the arrow and the shield were laid down:*** *In Nahuatl, the pairing of the words for "arrow" and "shield"*—in mitl, in chimalli—*was an idiom for war. Thus the sense of the clause is that* ***war had ceased****.*

[15] ***belief:*** *In Nahuatl,* tlaneltoquiliztli*, the noun form of a verb* (neltoca) *that means "to believe." Nahua Christians adopted this noun form to correspond to the theological term* ***faith*** *(in Spanish,* fe).

[16] ***the one who causes places to be inhabited:*** *This English phrase translates what is, in Nahuatl, a one-word epithet:* Ipalnemohuani. *Considerable evidence indicates that this was a divine epithet in pre-colonial Nahua religion which was subsequently adopted for the Christian God. The epithet's construction is* ipal, *"through whom"* + nemohua, *a form of a verb that means "to live"* + -ni*, "the one." In Spanish sources, the Nahuatl epithet is typically translated as* ***the one through whom beings live*** (aquel por quien se vive) *or* ***giver of life*** (dador de vida). *However, the Nahuatl verb* nemohua *means "to live" not just in the abstract sense of being alive, but in the more concrete sense of inhabiting a place. Alonso de Molina's 16th-century Nahuatl-Spanish dictionary defines the verb as "everyone lives or everyone dwells somewhere," while American scholar Frances Karttunen's 20th-century dictionary defines the verb as "for living or residence to go on."*

[17] ***God DIOS:*** *In the original text,* Teotl DIOS *(capitalized here as in the 1649 publication).* Teotl *is a Nahuatl word used to indicate a deity, hence translated here into English as "God."* Dios *is a Spanish loanword that also means "God."* Teotl Dios *is thus the Nahuatl word for "God" paired with the Spanish word for "God." This repetitive expression is the* Nican mopohua*'s preferred way to refer to the Christian God. The expression is a little out of the ordinary. It can be found in other Nahuatl texts of the 1500s-1600s. However, the Christian God is more commonly referred to in texts of that era by the Spanish loanword alone:* Dios, *not* teotl Dios*.*

[18] ***month:*** *The Nahuatl word,* metztli*, literally means "moon." As it happens, the word's first syllable sounds somewhat like the Spanish word* mes *("month"), for which the Nahuatl word is standing in. Using* metztli *to mean "month"—that is, to denote subunits of the year—may have been a post-conquest development in Nahuatl. Pre-colonial Nahua society had two calendars: a 260-day calendar, called the* tonalpohualli *("counting of days"), which was used for astrological purposes; and a 365-day calendar, called the* xiuhpohualli *("counting of the year"), which tracked the solar cycle. Both calendars had subunits akin to weeks or months—each subunit being 13 days for the* tonalpohualli *and 20 days for the* xiuhpohualli*—but for neither calendar are those subunits known to have been called* metztli*. Thus it is possible, though uncertain, that Nahuas may not have started to use the word* metztli *to mean "month" until they started using the Julian calendar from Europe, with its months of 28-31 days.*

[19] ***poor working man*:*** *In Nahuatl,* icnotlahpaltzintli*, a compound word.* Icnotl *means "someone poor,"*

*with connotations of "pitiable";* icnotl *can also mean "orphan."* Tlahpalli *means "strength" or "vigor." The suffix* -tzintli *(represented by the asterisk) is a reverential which can also function as a diminutive. Based on instances of the term in the 16th-century Florentine Codex, Alexis Wimmer's Nahuatl-French dictionary defines* tlahpaltzintli *in its diminutive sense as "little young man," and in its reverential sense as "mature young man." A related word,* tlahpalihui*, refers to the class of men who used their strength to work the land.*

*Different English and Spanish translations of the* Nican mopohua *have represented* icnotlahpaltzintli *in different ways: "a poor ordinary person," "a poor man of the people," "a very poor individual," "one of pitiable poverty," "a poor villager," or "a campesino." The translators are basically agreed that the term indicates lowly social status: not noble, not rich. In the English translation adopted here ("poor working man"), "poor" corresponds to* icnotl*, while "working man" aims to communicate non-noble status together with the implication of strength, and therefore labor, embedded in* tlahpaltzintli.

[20] ***a commoner... whose name was Juan Diego:*** *Of the* Nican mopohua*'s three main characters—Juan Diego, Mary, and Zumárraga—the narrator will refer to Mary and Zumárraga most frequently not by their names but by their social positions: for Mary, "the noblewoman"; for Zumárraga, "the obispo." For Juan Diego, the reverse is true: the narrator will refer to him more frequently by his name than by his social position ("the commoner"). What might be the significance of that?*

[21] ***his home was Cuautitlán:*** *The corresponding Nahuatl text is* chane catca in Quauhtitlan, *which very literally means "homeowner he was of Cuautitlán." The translation "his home was Cuautitlán" preserves in English an ambiguity about the meaning of* chane *that facilitates competing interpretations of what the* Nican mopohua *is saying here about Juan Diego.* Chane *is constructed from* chantli, *"home"* + -e*, a suffix meaning "possessor of": hence, "homeowner." Other Nahuatl texts of the era show* chane *being used to mean "resident" or "inhabitant," so* chane catca in Quauhtitlan *could be translated as* ***he lived in Cuautitlán****. However, Spanish translators of Nahuatl texts often understand* chane *as equivalent to the Spanish expression* natural de*, which indicates that someone is "a native of" someplace, without necessarily indicating that they currently live there. That interpretation would support, as an alternative translation,* ***he was from Cuautitlán****.*

*Cuautitlán was (and still is) a city located 7 hours' walk north of Tlatelolco, the sector of Mexico City that Juan Diego walks to and from repeatedly in the story. A tradition developed, external to the* Nican mopohua*, which holds that while Juan Diego was originally from Cuautitlán, he was living at the time of the Guadalupan apparitions in a settlement called Tulpetlac, located 4 hours' walk northeast of Tlatelolco. Interpreting* chane catca in Quauhtitlan *to mean that Juan Diego* ***was from*** *Cuautitlán, rather than that he* ***lived in*** *Cuautitlán, appeals to commentators who want to read the* Nican mopohua *as consistent with the tradition that places Juan Diego in Tulpetlac. The* Nican mopohua *itself says nothing about Juan Diego living in Tulpetlac. Nor does the* Nican motecpana*, a catalog of miracles that immediately follows the* Nican mopohua *in the 1649 edition, which puts forward some additional biographical claims about Juan Diego.*

[22] ***divine things:*** *This phrase represents the Nahuatl word* teoyotl*, which is the abstract form of* teotl *("god").* Teoyotl *might be translated alternatively, therefore, as "divinity." Nahua Catholics used this word to refer to the sacraments, among other sacred things.*

[23] ***everything still pertained to Tlatelolco:*** *Tlatelolco was a city on the northern portion of the island that also housed Tenochtitlán, the capital of the Aztec empire. Under Spanish colonialism, Tlatelolco became*

*a sector of Mexico City. The point of this sentence in the* Nican mopohua *is to explain that Juan Diego had to travel to Mexico City to attend to religious matters because the Spanish missionaries had not yet established churches outside that city. (The historical accuracy of that claim by the narrator is disputable.)*

[24] ***wee hours*:** *In Nahuatl,* yohuatzinco*, whose sense is "early in the morning" but whose construction is* yohuac *("at night") + a version of the reverential suffix* -tzin*, functioning here as a diminutive. The asterisk indicates the presence of* -tzin*, but the suffix's diminutive function is also conveyed in translation by the English idiom "wee hours."*

[25] ***coming:*** *Often when the narrator speaks of Juan Diego traveling to Tlatelolco, grammatical elements are used which imply that Juan Diego is traveling toward the narrator—in this case, a directional prefix,* hual- *(translated here as "coming"), affixed to the verb* tepetztoca *(literally "to pursue," but translated here as "in pursuit of"). The narrator thus views the action from the vantage point of Mexico City, not from the vantage point of Juan Diego's home. The city where the bishop has his see is central; Juan Diego's home is placed on the margins, in an outlying location. At some later points in the story, the narrator's vantage point shifts to Tepeyac. In only one scene, near the end of the story, does the narrator speak from the vantage point of Juan Diego's home.*

[26] ***in pursuit of divine things and his charge:*** *The Nahuatl word* netitlaniztli *is consistently rendered, throughout this translation of the* Nican mopohua, *as "charge," but depending on the context, it could also be translated as* ***errand*** *or* ***message.***

*The translation "in pursuit of divine things and his charge" preserves an ambiguity in the Nahuatl text. The text could mean that Juan Diego is going to see to divine things—that is, to do something at church, presumably worship or catechesis—and thereby to fulfill the obligation ("charge") that, as a Christian, he has toward God. Alternatively, the text could mean that in addition to seeing to divine things, Juan Diego is also going to carry out some mundane errand ("charge") with which he has been tasked. The narrator never tells us exactly what Juan Diego intended to do on this Saturday trip to Tlatelolco, except that it would have involved some kind of priestly instruction. Once Juan Diego receives his new charge from Mary, the story makes no further mention of his original plans.*

*An observation, at this point, about Juan Diego's social position: Whenever Juan Diego goes anywhere in this story, it is to fulfill a charge or errand, or in response to a call or command, or because he has been granted permission. He moves neither freely nor at leisure.*

[27] ***the dawn is cleansing the ground:*** *An elaborate translation to capture both the meaning and the etymology of the Nahuatl verb* tlatlalchipahua*. The sense of the verb is "to dawn." Its construction is* tlalli *("the ground," "the earth")* + chipahua *("to cleanse," "to purify").*

[28] ***diverse:*** *In Nahuatl,* nepapan*. This word appears repeatedly in the* Nican mopohua*. Translators often render it into English as "various," but* nepapan *means "various" in the specific sense of indicating variety: "****a variety of*** *precious birds" or "****different kinds of*** *precious birds." The English word "various" might be understood, alternatively, to indicate an indefinite quantity ("a number of precious birds"), but* nepapan *indicates diversity.*

[29] ***as if the hill is answering back to them:*** *A literalistic rendering of the Nahuatl expression. The sense, presumably, is that the birdsong is echoing off the hill.*

[30] ***the bellbird, the trogon:*** *English "bellbird" is a literal translation of Nahuatl* coyoltototl *(*coyolli*, "bell"* + tototl*, "bird"). The Florentine Codex, a 16th-century encyclopedia of Nahua culture, gives a description of the* coyoltototl *that sounds like it could be the flame-colored tanager, but scholars have also proposed the red-winged blackbird and the yellow-headed blackbird as identifications. English "trogon" represents Nahuatl* tzinitzcan*, which translators typically identify as the mountain trogon.*

[31] ***Can it be that I have obtained…?*** *A more literal translation of this question would be: "Can it be my reward* (ilhuilli)*, can it be my deserts* (mahcehualli)*, that I hear?" Or, unpacking the sense of that:* ***Can it be that I have earned, can it be that I have deserved, to hear this?*** *As reflected in those alternative translations, the words* ilhuilli *and* mahcehualli *are often used in Nahuatl texts outside the* Nican mopohua *in contexts indicating merit—that is, indicating that someone deserves or has earned the thing that the word refers to.*

*However,* ilhuilli *and* mahcehualli *are also attested in other Nahuatl texts as indicating fortune, favors, or benefits that one has obtained or enjoys, without necessarily indicating that one has merited them. That usage is the basis for the translation "Can it be that I have obtained, can it be that I have been granted...," which shifts away from an emphasis on merit. The intended emphasis of Juan Diego's question is not—in light of his subsequent question about dreaming—whether or not he has merited the experience of hearing the beautiful birdsong. The emphasis, rather, is on whether or not he is really having the experience.*

[32] ***what is this place?*** *The Nahuatl expression literally means, "Where now do I see myself?"*

[33] ***the aged, our great-grandfathers, our grandfathers:*** *The Nahuatl word translated as "the aged,"* huehuetque*, could also be translated as* ***elders****.* Huehuetque *is used in some other Nahuatl texts of the era in ways that could be understood as including women as well as men; but by contrast, there are also texts in which* huehuetque *refers to elderly men only, with a different word being used for elderly women. The Nahuatl words translated as "our great-grandfathers,"* tachtonhuan, *and "our grandfathers,"* tococolhuan, *refer literally to men, not women; there are different Nahuatl words that mean "great-grandmothers" and "grandmothers." However, the pairing* tachtonhuan, tococolhuan *may be a rhetorical gesture toward ancestors generally, irrespective of gender.*

[34] ***the land of flowers, the land of plenty:*** *In Nahuatl,* xochitlalpan *(more literally, "flower-covered ground" or "flower-filled land") and* tonacatlalpan *("produce-covered ground" or "produce-filled land"). The reference is apparently to a place from pre-colonial Nahua lore, since Juan Diego says that his ancestors taught him about it. A probable referent is Tlalocan, the realm of the rain god Tlaloc, which was envisioned as a land where it was continually springtime, where flowers and the produce of the fields constantly abounded. Tlalocan was the afterlife destination of individuals who died by drowning, by lightning strike, or from ailments that Nahuas associated with water, such as edema.*

[35] ***the land of the sky:*** *This phrase represents a Nahuatl compound word consisting of* ilhuicatl *("sky," "heaven")* + tlalpan *("ground," "land"). In this translation of the* Nican mopohua*, the word* ilhuicatl *will be rendered consistently as* ***sky****, but it could just as well be rendered as* ***heaven****. In English, it's possible to use the words "sky" and "heaven" to make a distinction between two historically related concepts: the expanse above the earth ("sky") and the transcendent realm that Christianity envisions as the dwelling place of God and the blessed dead ("heaven"). However, in Nahuatl, as also in Spanish, one word is used to communicate both of those concepts: in Nahuatl,* ilhuicatl; *in Spanish,* cielo*. Somewhat like Christianity, pre-colonial Nahua religion envisioned divine beings and select categories of the human*

*dead as living in the* ilhuicatl*. Most people passed after death into the* mictlan*, the underground land of the dead, but men who gave their lives in war and women who gave their lives in childbirth ascended to the* ilhuicatl *after death.*

*Thus far the meaning of* ilhuicatl. *But what to make of the compound word* ilhuicatlalpan*? The word can be translated literally as either "land of the sky" or "heavenly land." Juan Diego appears to be using the compound word to mean something akin to English "heaven," in the sense of a place in the sky where people live. But which heaven is he thinking of: the Christian heaven, or a pre-colonial Nahua heaven? If the Christian heaven, then this question would seem to show Juan Diego's thoughts changing direction from his previous question, when he wondered if he was glimpsing "the land of flowers, the land of plenty" that his ancestors taught about before Christianization. Alternatively, if Juan Diego is thinking here of a pre-colonial Nahua heaven, then his thoughts are still moving in the same direction as his previous question.*

[36] ***in the direction of the rising sun:*** *A literalistic translation of* tonatiuh iquizayanpa*, the Nahuatl expression that means "east." For what symbolic reason might the author have placed Mary's apparition in the direction of the rising sun?*

*As a practical matter: If we are supposed to picture Juan Diego coming from Cuautitlán, which is northwest of Tepeyac, then looking east would mean looking toward his left. If we are supposed to picture Juan Diego coming from Tulpetlac, which is northeast of Tepeyac, then looking east toward the future site of the Guadalupe shrine would mean that Juan Diego is turning around to look behind him. See note 21 on the Cuautitlán/Tulpetlac question.*

[37] ***singing from the sky:*** *Alternatively,* ***heavenly singing*** *(see note 35).*

[38] ***Juan,* Juan Diego*:*** *On the few occasions when Mary addresses Juan Diego by name, she affixes to his Spanish names the Nahuatl reverential suffix* -tzin *(represented in the translation by the asterisk): here,* Juantzin, Juan Diegotzin. *In this context, the reverential should likely be understood as a diminutive, communicating affection.*

[39] ***ascended:*** *The Nahuatl verb,* tlecahuia, *literally means "to raise" or "to lift," but it is the same verb that was adopted to refer to Jesus's ascending into heaven in Nahuatl translations of the Apostles' Creed.*

[40] ***standing on her feet:*** *An alternative translation would be* ***standing upright****. Either way, there is a redundancy in the English: to say that Mary is "standing" already implies that she is "on her feet" or "upright." That redundancy in English reflects the redundant use in the Nahuatl text of two verbs together*, quetza *and* icac*, both of which mean, in this context, "to stand." The redundancy serves to elevate the tone of the Nahuatl text, as does also the author's affixing the reverential suffix* -tzinoa *to the verb* quetza *(represented in the translation by the asterisk that follows "standing").*

[41] ***raiment:*** *The Nahuatl word,* tlaquintli*, is more pedestrian than English "raiment" may sound. "Clothing" would be an alternative translation. However, the English words "clothe" and "clothing" will be used to represent a different Nahuatl verb and derivative noun that appear later in the* Nican mopohua*.*

[42] ***discharge the arrows of her radiance:*** *The simple sense of the Nahuatl text is that the rocks* ***reflect her radiance****, but the author turns Mary's radiance into metaphorical arrows by using the verb* mina*, "to*

*shoot arrows." What should we make of this violent metaphor in a story that began by informing us that since the Spanish conquest, the arrow and the shield had been laid down?*

[43] ***green gems:*** *In Nahuatl,* chalchihuitl. *Alonso de Molina's 16th-century dictionary defines this word as "unpolished emerald." Frances Karttunen's 20th-century dictionary defines it more generically as "precious green stone."*

*Paired here with* chalchihuitl, *"green gems," is the word* maquiztli, *which means "bracelet" or "armband"; a little later, the passage will also mention* teoxihuitl*, "fine turquoise." Those three Nahuatl terms were stock metaphors for something valued. In Nahuatl speeches recorded during the 1500s, the terms* chalchihuitl, maquiztli, *and* teoxihuitl *are used together—sometimes as a trio, sometimes just two at a time—to describe such metaphorical treasures as wise instruction, innocent hearts, rulers, sons of nobles, girls dedicated to a god's service, girls grown to womanhood, women who have become pregnant, and babies.*

[44] ***adorn:*** *A literal translation of the Nahuatl verb,* chichihua.

[45] ***emerald-green jade:*** *In Nahuatl,* quetzalitztli*. "Emerald-green jade" is how 20th-century scholars Arthur Anderson and Charles Dibble translate that word into English when it appears in the 16th-century Florentine Codex. The word is a compound of* quetzalli *("quetzal feather")* + itztli *("obsidian").*

[46] ***fine turquoise:*** *A compound word in Nahuatl, formed from* teotl + xihuitl. Teotl *means "god" or "divine thing"; but in compounds, it can communicate elevated status in a more mundane sense, hence "fine."* Xihuitl *refers in this context to the gem turquoise. In other contexts,* xihuitl *can refer to herbs, presumably because turquoise and herbs are both greenish in color. In fact,* xihuitl *appears earlier in this same sentence as part of a different compound word, translated there as "small herbs"* (xiuhtotontin*; the compound is* xihuitl *attached to* -totontin, *the plural form of an affix indicating smallness*). *There is thus a repetition in the Nahuatl text that might be interpreted as wordplay on the author's part but could well be coincidental: Mary's radiance makes the leaves of the small* xihuitl *(herbs) look like fine* xihuitl *(turquoise).*

[47] ***the fine yellow metal:*** *A literalistic translation of* coztic teocuitlatl*, the Nahuatl expression that refers to* ***gold****. (Analogously, silver is* iztac teocuitlatl, *"the fine white metal.")*

[48] ***her breath, her word:*** *The pairing of the words* ihiyotl *("breath") and* tlatolli *("word") is a Nahuatl idiom referring to the discourse or speech of a ruler. The idiom appears frequently in the* Nican mopohua, *to the point of cliché. The idiom nearly always refers to Mary's words, with a single exception: Juan Diego uses the idiom during his third audience with Zumárraga to refer back to something Zumárraga had said during the second audience.*

[49] ***courtly:*** *The Nahuatl adjective,* tecpiltic, *is derived from a noun,* tecpilli, *that refers to members of the Nahua noble class.*

[50] ***seeks to attract another with sweet words:*** *This entire phrase translates a single Nahuatl verb,* coconahuia*. The English phrase is adapted from the definition of this word given in Alonso de Molina's 16th-century Nahuatl-Spanish dictionary.*

[51] ***pray:*** *Represents a grammatical particle,* tla-*, used in Nahuatl to express imperatives, or commands,*

*with maximum courtesy. Mary is the only character in the* Nican mopohua *who ever expresses imperatives this way*.

[52] ***youngest child:*** *The Nahuatl word,* xocoyotl*, literally denotes a person's last-born child. The word was used in polite discourse to express affection or care for the addressee.*

[53] ***O:*** *Throughout this translation of the* Nican mopohua*, English vocative "O" stands for the Nahuatl suffix* -é*, a vocative form used only by males. Consequently, Juan Diego uses this form when speaking to Mary, and Juan Diego and Zumárraga use it when speaking to one another, but Mary never uses the form.*

[54] ***lady:*** *The Nahuatl title is* teuctli*. It is the very same title that Juan Diego will shortly use to refer to Jesus, there translated as "lord." Although the English terms used to translate this title are gendered ("lady"/"lord"), the Nahuatl title takes the same form for a woman as for a man.*

[55] ***my maiden:*** *The corresponding Nahuatl term is a possessive form of* ichpochtli*, the word for an adolescent girl that is also used in the* Nican mopohua *to mean "virgin." For consistency,* ichpochtli *is always rendered in this translation as "maiden." However, in possessive forms,* ichpochtli *conveys the meaning of "daughter"—so here,* ***my daughter****.*

*It might seem odd that Juan Diego calls Mary his daughter, as if to imply intimacy, immediately after addressing her by the deferential titles "lady" and "noblewoman." This is a convention of courteous speech, known as inversion, attested in other Nahuatl texts of the era. In her opening question to Juan Diego, Mary addressed him as her "youngest child"* (xocoyotl)*, a metaphor that communicates caring but also reflects the hierarchical relationship between noble and commoner. In response, Juan Diego likewise invokes the parent-child metaphor but inverts it: thus, instead of calling Mary his mother, he calls her too his child, i.e., his daughter. Such inversions of metaphorical kinship were customary in polite Nahuatl speech. There is no reason to think that Nahua readers would understand Juan Diego's inversion of Mary's parent-child metaphor as subverting the hierarchical relationship between noble and commoner. Rather, the inversion is a conventional courtesy congruent with the hierarchical relationship.*

[56] ***your home:*** *Referring to a place as someone's home was a polite figure of speech in Nahuatl. English-speakers use a similar figure of speech when they urge guests to make themselves "at home." However, the Nahuatl figure of speech is attested even in conversations where neither speaker was from the place they were calling "home." Thus Juan Diego's statement should not be taken to mean that he thinks Mary lives in Tlatelolco. The figure of speech "your home" is being used here as mere verbal embellishment, to create a courteous, formal tone.*

[57] ***priests:*** *The Nahuatl word,* teopixqui *in its singular form*, *literally means "caretaker of the god" or "guardian of the god." The compound is built from* teotl*, "god"* + piya, *"to have in one's care, to guard."*

*Scholars are uncertain whether* teopixqui *is a pre-colonial word adopted by Christians or a new coinage invented by Christians to distinguish Christian priests from priests of pre-colonial Nahua religion. A more frequently attested word for priests and other servants of the pre-colonial deities is* tlamacazqui*, from a verb that means to wait on someone or to serve them their food. Bear in mind that among the offerings which pre-colonial Nahua deities received from those who waited on them were human sacrifices. In colonial-era texts, the word* teopixqui *(one who cares for/guards the god) was regularly applied to Christian priests and sometimes, perhaps anachronistically, to pre-colonial priests; by contrast,*

tlamacazqui *(one who waits on/feeds the god) was applied only to pre-colonial priests, not to Christian priests. The word* tlamacazqui *does not appear anywhere in the* Nican mopohua.

[58] ***images:*** *This is the same Nahuatl word,* ixiptlatl, *that the* Nican mopohua *uses to refer to Mary's painted image. Because an image represents, or stands in for, someone, Juan Diego is using the word here to convey that the priests are* ***representatives*** *of Jesus. In pre-colonial Nahua religion, the word* ixiptlatl *was applied to individuals who dressed in costume to represent deities during ceremonies.*

[59] ***personage:*** *The Nahautl word,* tlacatl*, is used elsewhere in the* Nican mopohua *to refer generically to a human being; in those instances, the word will be translated into English as "person." However, at times the word is used as an honorific, as here; in those instances, it is translated as "personage." Read on to note 60 for a further discussion of the significance of* tlacatl *being used here to refer to Jesus.*

[60] ***our Lord:*** *In Nahuatl,* totecuiyo*. This word is the first-person plural possessive form of* teuctli*, the title held by the head of a Nahua noble house ("house" in the metaphorical sense of a kinship group). A* teuctli *was subordinate to a* tlatoani *("ruler"), the head of a Nahua state.*

*Applied here to Jesus, the word* totecuiyo *would serve as a natural Nahuatl equivalent to* nuestro señor *("our lord"), a customary Spanish title for Jesus. However, the longer phrase* in tlacatl in Totecuiyo *("the personage, our Lord," capitalized here as in the 1649 publication of the* Nican mopohua*) requires further commentary. In some 16th-century Nahuatl texts describing pre-colonial Nahua religion, the terms* tlacatl *and* totecuiyo *appear paired together, in that order, as an epithet for a pre-colonial deity. The epithet is used to refer to the deity both in the third person (*in tlacatl in totecuiyo, *"the personage, our lord") and in the second person, as a vocative (*tlacatlé totecuiyoé, *"O personage, O our lord"). Based on this textual evidence, it could be argued that when Juan Diego calls Jesus* in tlacatl in totecuiyo*, he is using a distinctively Nahuatl title that has been redirected from a pre-Christian god, not a translation of a Christian title from Spanish or Latin.*

*That argument has been challenged, though, by American scholars Frances Karttunen and James Lockhart, who theorize that* in tlacatl in totecuiyo *is not, in fact, a pre-colonial usage but a Christian coinage, corresponding to the Bible-based epithet "the Lord our God" or "our Lord God." It would follow from Karttunen and Lockhart's argument that when colonial-era texts show the epithet being applied to pre-colonial deities, this is an anachronism. Karttunen and Lockhart speculate that Christianized Nahuas promoted the anachronism in order to make pre-colonial Nahua religion look more similar to Christianity, and thus more acceptable by the colonizers' standards, than it actually was.*

*In sum: When Juan Diego calls Jesus* in tlacatl in totecuiyo*, he may or may not be using an epithet carried over from pre-colonial Nahua religion. If the epithet is a Christian coinage, it is nevertheless noteworthy that Christians coined the epithet in a distinctively Nahua style, modeled after other Nahuatl honorifics where the word* tlacatl *("person," which speakers of European languages are likely to find a peculiar honorific) precedes some other social title or titles. Examples of such honorifics seen in other colonial-era texts—referring to human beings, not deities—include* in tlacatl in tlatoani *("the personage, the ruler"),* in tlacatl in cihuapilli *("the personage, the noblewoman"), and* in tlacatl in totelpochtzin in toxhuiuhtzin *("the personage, our stripling,* our grandchild,*" referring, in context, to a governor).*

[61] ***please:*** *Throughout this translation, English "please" represents the grammatical particle* ma*, which politely expresses imperatives (though not as politely as the particle* tla-*. See note 51).*

[62] ***let your heart be very certain:*** *A literalistic translation of a Nahuatl idiom whose sense is* ***have no doubt*** *or* ***rest assured****.*

[63] ***I am the forever perfect maiden:*** *In Nahuatl, this is a long compound word:* ni *("I")* + cenquizca *("perfect")* + cemicac *("always," "forever")* + ichpochtli *("maiden"). The compound word is an effort to translate into Nahuatl the Marian title* ***ever-virgin*** *(in Spanish,* siempre virgin*).*

[64] ***the one who causes places to be inhabited:*** *See note 16 on this divine epithet, which Nahuatl-speaking Christians likely carried over from pre-colonial Nahua religion.*

[65] ***the one who invented people:*** *In Nahuatl,* teyocoyani: te- *(a prefix referring to people in general)* + yocoya *("to invent")* + -ni *("the one"). Evidence suggests this may be a divine epithet used in pre-colonial times that was redirected to the Christian God. Instead of* ***invented****, the epithet could be translated, alternatively, as "the one who* ***created*** *people," but the verb* yocoya *will reappear later in the* Nican mopohua *with the meaning "to invent" or "to make something up."*

[66] ***the one to whom belongs what is near at hand:*** *A moderately free translation of the Nahuatl title* Tloque Nahuaque*, which is, without dispute, a divine epithet from pre-colonial Nahua religion that was subsequently adopted for the Christian God. The epithet is often rendered into English as "Lord of the Near and the Nigh," but a more precise translation would be "Possessor of the Near, Possessor of the Nigh." The adjectives* tloc *and* nahuac *both mean "near"; the suffix* -e*, appended to both adjectives, means "possessor of." The sense of the epithet appears to be that the deity's domain is always near, ergo extends everywhere, a concept akin to the Christian teaching that God is sovereign over all. Alonso de Molina's 16th-century Nahuatl dictionary understands the epithet to indicate the being who preserves and sustains all things.*

*In the English translation adopted here, the redundant expression "near at hand"—redundant because "at hand" means "near"—represents the likewise redundant, but stylistically elegant, pairing of the synonyms* tloc *and* nahuac.

[67] ***to whom belongs the sky, to whom belongs the earth:*** *The Nahuatl epithets are* Ilhuicahua (ilhuica*, "sky, heaven"* + -hua*, a suffix that means "possessor of"*) *and* Tlalticpaque (tlalticpaq*, "earth, world"* + -e*, a different suffix meaning "possessor of"*). *Paired, these terms provide a Nahuatl equivalent to "Lord of heaven and earth," a familiar epithet for the Christian God. Some commentators assert that the pairing of* ilhuicahua *and* tlalticpaque *functioned as a divine epithet even before Christianization, but the textual evidence for this is debatable. There are grounds for arguing that the pairing could be a Christian coinage anachronistically projected back into pre-colonial times, not a pre-colonial epithet adopted by Christians.*

*In some texts produced by Spanish missionaries, the pairing appears as part of a triple epithet:* in ilhuicahua, in tlalticpaque, in mictlane*, which indicates the possessor of heaven, earth, and the* mictlan. *The* mictlan *was the underworld of the dead in pre-colonial Nahua mythology; the term was adopted also for the Christian hell. European Christians did not commonly refer to God as the Lord of heaven, earth, and hell (or the underworld), from which one might argue that the epithet does, after all, originate in pre-colonial Nahua religion. Then again, it's also conceivable that the triple epithet is a Christian coinage inspired by biblical references to things "in heaven, on earth, and under the earth" (see, for instance, Philippians 2:10, which in the Vulgate contains the Latin expression* caelestium, terrestrium et infernorum*). The* Nican mopohua *uses only the pairing* ilhuicahua tlalticpaque*, without ever referring to*

*the Christian God as* mictlane, *Lord of the underworld.*

[68] ***temple:*** *The Nahuatl word,* teocalli*, is literally "house of the god" (*teotl*, "god"* + calli*, "house"). The same word was used for temples of Nahua deities prior to the Spanish conquest.*

[69] ***compassion:*** *The construction of the Nahuatl word,* teicnoittaliztli*, suggests the act of seeing or looking upon* (itta) *someone poor or pitiable* (icnotl).

[70] ***sobbing:*** *The Nahuatl word,* choquiztli*, connotes not just shedding tears but emitting sounds; the same word can refer to the howls or cries of animals.*

[71] ***needs:*** *In Nahuatl,* netoliniztli. *Alonso de Molina's 16th-century dictionary defines the word as "poverty or misery."*

[72] ***bring to pass:*** *The Nahuatl verb,* nelti*, is derived from a root that means "truth"* (nelli). *A more elaborate translation, reflecting that etymology, would be* ***make*** *[****it****]* ***come true****.*

[73] ***set my mind:*** *The Nahuatl verb,* nemilia*, has a range of meanings, including "to consider," "to resolve," and "to work to support oneself." In this instance, the meaning seems to be "this which I am considering." However, later in this paragraph, Mary will use the same verb to describe Juan Diego's efforts to carry out her will; there the word's connotations of resolution and work seem to apply. In both instances, the Nahuatl verb has been consistently translated into English as "setting one's mind" on something. The verb will appear again, with that same translation, during Juan Diego's first audience with Zumárraga.*

[74] ***palace:*** *The Nahuatl word,* tecpanchan*, is a compound of* teuctli *("lord")* + -pan *("place of")* + -chan *("home," "household"). Two variations on that word,* tecpan *and* tecpancalli *(*calli = *"house"), were used in pre-colonial Nahua society to refer to the headquarters or court of a* tlatoani*, the ruler of a Nahua state. A lower-ranking ruler—a* teuctli*, the head of a noble household—could also have a* tecpan*, as the word's construction suggests. In his role as bishop, Zumárraga has been given the Nahuatl title* tlatoani *(see notes 84 and 87); so too his residence has been dubbed a kind of* tecpan.

[75] ***dispatched:*** *The Nahuatl verb,* titlani*, means to send someone as a messenger. This verb is the root of* netitlaniztli*, the noun that is consistently represented throughout this translation as "charge."*

[76] ***level plot:*** *This phrase translates a single Nahuatl word,* tlalmantli*. The word denotes a piece of land level enough that it could be built on or farmed.*

[77] ***I will cause you to prosper, I will cause you to have enjoyment:*** *In Nahuatl,* nimitzcuiltonoz*,* nimitztlamachtiz*. The prefix* ni- *is the subject "I"; the prefix* mitz- *is the object "you"; the verbs are* cuiltonoa *and* tlamachtia*, both in future tense. Alonso de Molina's 16th-century dictionary defines both of these verbs as meaning to make someone rich, a meaning that conceivably fits the context here. However,* tlamachtia *also means "to enjoy" and will be used in that sense later in the* Nican mopohua*, when Juan Diego "comes enjoying" the fragrance of the flowers that Mary gives him to carry to the bishop. For consistency, then,* nimitztlamachtiz *is translated here as "I will cause you to have enjoyment." The potential meaning* ***I will cause you to be rich*** *is preserved in the translation of* nimitzcuiltonoz *as "I will cause you to prosper." However,* cuiltonoa *too has other meanings and could therefore be*

*interpreted as a vaguer promise that* ***I will cause you to rejoice****.*

*The verb pairing* cuiltonoa, tlamachtia *was idiomatic in Nahuatl. The pairing appears (albeit with the order of the two verbs reversed) in two different figures of speech recorded in the Florentine Codex, a 16th-century encyclopedia of Nahua culture; both of those figures of speech are about people being fortunate. The Florentine Codex also reports that in pre-colonial times, Nahuas believed that the god Tezcatlipoca* yehuatl tecuiltonoa, yehuatl tetlamachtia*, "he causes people to prosper, he causes people to have enjoyment."*

*Given the* Nican mopohua*'s tendency toward repetition and cliché, one might expect the idiomatic verb pairing* cuiltonoa, tlamachtia *to recur near the end of the story, in a statement attesting that Juan Diego was indeed rewarded, as Mary promised, with joy and prosperity. That doesn't happen, though. Twice near the story's end, the author does tell us that Juan Diego has come to be "revered"* (mahuiztilo)*—a different verb than those Mary uses here. As noted above, the author will later tell us that Juan Diego enjoys* (tlamachtia) *the fragrance of the flowers that Mary gives him to carry to the bishop. Is that the* tlamachtia *she promises him here?*

*In its 1649 edition, the* Nican mopohua *is immediately followed by another text known as the* Nican motecpana*, a catalog of miracles attributed to Mary's image at Tepeyac. The* Nican motecpana *concludes with a summary of Juan Diego's life after the apparitions. According to that account, Juan Diego leaves his family's properties to take up solitary residence in a small house near the Tepeyac shrine; there he spends the remaining sixteen years of his life engaged in spiritual disciplines that include sorrowful prayer, penance, fasting, and self-mortification with a chain cilice. Perhaps to resolve the tension between the* Nican motecpana*'s portrayal of Juan Diego as an ascetic and the* Nican mopohua*'s promise that he will rejoice, prosper, be rich, have enjoyment, etc., the* Nican motecpana *recounts a deathbed vision of Juan Diego's in which Mary tells him that, in heaven, he will "enjoy"* (tlamachtia) *everything she promised him.*

[78] ***abundant will be what is granted to you:*** *Or* ***abundantly will you receive your deserts****, or* ***abundantly will you receive your desires****. The Nahuatl expression is* miec oncan ticmahcehuaz*. It breaks down as follows:*

Miec *indicates a great quantity. It could be translated more simply as "much." "Abundant" has been used instead in order to distinguish* miec *from* huel*, the latter being a far more frequently used intensifier, which is rendered at some points in this translation as "very much."*

Oncan *can mean "there" or "then"; "then" would make more sense in this context. However,* oncan *has been omitted from the translation here, as also at several other points in the* Nican mopohua*. This omission has been made to avoid textual clutter and also to reserve English "then" for a different Nahuatl word,* niman*.* Niman *potentially makes a greater difference to the meaning of the text, where it appears, than* oncan *makes here because* niman *can mean not only "then" but also "immediately."*

*The verb* mahcehua *is the most complicated part of this expression to translate. The verb can be variously interpreted as to deserve something, or to become deserving, or to be granted (or to obtain) something that one desires. Earlier in this scene, Juan Diego used the noun derived from this verb,* mahcehualli*, when he wondered if it was true that he had been granted, or that he deserved, to hear the precious birds singing.*

[79] ***I take my leave of you:*** *The Nahuatl text reads* nimitznotlalcahuili*, which means "I took my leave of*

*you," in past tense. Other translators of the* Nican mopohua *have treated this as an error for* nimitznotlalcahuilia *(with a final* -a*), which would be present tense. That emendation has been adopted in this translation as well. Later, when Juan Diego takes his leave of Mary at the end of their second meeting, he uses* nimitznotlalcahuilia *(present tense), as one would expect. The Nahuatl verb that means "to take one's leave" appears here in a reverential form; hence the asterisk following the verb in the English translation.*

[80] ***your poor commoner:*** *Nahuatl* macehualli *is consistently represented throughout this translation by English "commoner."* Macehualli *came to be applied in the colonial era to indigenous people generally, and thus, in most instances, it could be translated alternatively as "Indian." However, in a possessive form, as here,* macehualli *comes to have the sense of "subject"—in this case,* ***your poor subject****. In this sense, the word was applied also to non-indigenous people. For instance, Spanish priest Luis Laso de la Vega wrote a preface to the* Nican mopohua *(not included in this translation), in which he used a possessive form of* macehualli *to declare himself Mary's subject.*

Macehualli*, the word under discussion here, is not the same as* mahcehualli*, discussed in notes 31 and 78; observe the difference in how the first vowel sound has been transcribed* (a *vs.* ah, *indicating short vowel vs. long vowel*). *Some translators and commentators conflate the two words, leading them to erroneously interpret the word for "commoner" as linked to the idea of being deserving or worthy.*

[81] ***his charge:*** *In Nahuatl,* inetitlaniz. Netitlaniz *means "charge," "errand," or "message." The* i- *which precedes* netitlaniz *is the possessive prefix for the third person singular—equivalent to English "his" or "her," but the Nahuatl possessive does not indicate gender. The antecedent of* i- *is therefore unclear: Is the charge Juan Diego's, or is the charge Mary's? The context would permit either interpretation. The term* inetitlaniz *will recur several times between now and the end of the* Nican mopohua. *It will usually be translated as "his charge," rather than "her charge," on the grounds that at one point, Juan Diego speaks of "my charge" (see note 180). Alternatively, though,* inetitlaniz *could be interpreted as* ***her charge****, especially in instances when the term appears near a reference to Mary.*

[82] ***the causeway that comes straight to Mexico:*** *In the 1500s-1600s, Mexico City stood on an island in a giant lake. (The lake has been mostly drained since then.) A long causeway, built in pre-colonial times, connected the island to the north shore of the lake at a point close to Tepeyac.*

[83] ***had come to occupy his see:*** *An elaborate translation of a Nahuatl verb,* hualmohuica*, which means "to come" but with honorific overtones—as when speaking, for example, of the arrival of a dignitary. Hence, in the translation, the addition of the modifying phrase "to occupy his see."*

[84] ***priestly ruler:*** *This phrase represents the Nahuatl compound word* teopixcatlatohuani *(*teopixqui*, "priest"* + tlatoani*, "ruler"). The compound word appears to have been coined after the Spanish conquest as a distinctively Christian term. Although the term is applied here to the bishop, it is also attested, outside the* Nican mopohua*, as a title for the provincial, the local head of the Franciscan order.*

[85] ***a priest of San Francisco:*** *That is, Zumárraga belonged to the Franciscan order, the order of St. Francis. The reference is not to the mission of San Francisco in California (which wouldn't be founded until the late 1700s), nor to any other place named for St. Francis.*

[86] ***his servants, his domestics:*** *The word translated as "his servants,"* itetlayecolticahuan*, is built from a*

*verb,* tlayecoltia*, that means "to serve others." The word translated as "his domestics,"* itlannencahuan*, is built from a noun,* nenqui*, that by itself means "dweller" but that in its possessed form, as here, means one's servant, implying that the servant lives in one's household.*

[87] ***the ruler, the obispo:*** *In Nahuatl,* tlatoani obispo*. This expression—combining the title for the ruler of a Nahua state with a Spanish loanword—is used repeatedly in the* Nican mopohua *to refer to Zumárraga. The expression is likely standing in for the Spanish title* señor obispo*,* ***lord bishop****. However, in this translation of the* Nican mopohua*, English "ruler" is consistently used to represent* tlatoani*, while English "lord" is reserved to represent a different Nahuatl word,* teuctli*.*

[88] ***noblewoman of the sky:*** *Alternatively,* ***heavenly noblewoman*** *(see note 35). The Nahuatl expression,* ilhuicac cihuapilli*, may well be a translation of the Spanish Marian title* señora del cielo, ***lady of heaven****. However, English "lady" is reserved in this translation to represent a different Nahuatl word,* teuctli*. Hence "noblewoman" is used here instead—a quite literal translation of Nahuatl* cihuapilli *("woman noble").*

[89] ***take it to be true:*** *This English phrase represents a single Nahuatl verb,* nelchihua*. An alternative rendering of the sense of the clause would be* ***he did not seem greatly convinced****. The word* nelchihua *appears to combine* nelli *("truth") and* chihua *("to make," "to do"). The English translation "take it to be true" makes that etymology visible. Alonso de Molina's 16th-century Nahuatl dictionary defines* nelchihua *as meaning to take in jest something that belongs to someone else; that definition makes no sense here, but it did motivate the use of "take" in the English translation.*

[90] ***He answered him, he said to him:*** *This is the only place in the* Nican mopohua *where Zumárraga unambiguously speaks in quotation. (There is one more quotation, near the end of the story, that is probably Zumárraga's, but he isn't clearly identified as the speaker. See note 190.) Usually the narrator gives us summaries of what Zumárraga says instead of quotations. There is an irony in this: Zumárraga bears the title* tlatoani*—literally, "one who speaks"—yet we hear few of his words. By contrast, we are given several substantial speeches, in quotation, of Juan Diego the commoner. Is that irony intended by the author or coincidental?*

[91] ***my boy:*** *A possessive form of* pilli*, a word which, depending on context, can mean either "noble" or "child"; here the meaning has to be "child." Although the Nahuatl word is ungendered, English "boy" is used in the translation instead of "child," because the English expression "youngest child" is used consistently in this translation to represent a different word,* xocoyotl*. In the same way that the word* ichpochtli*, "maiden," takes on the meaning of "daughter" in its possessive form (see note 55), so too* pilli*, understood as "boy," takes on the meaning of "son" in its possessive form. Thus Zumárraga should be understood as saying* ***my son****.*

*Earlier, Mary addressed Juan Diego as her child (*noxocoyouh*, "my youngest child"), and he responded with a polite Nahuatl inversion in which he likewise addressed her as his child (*nochpoch*, "my maiden" = "my daughter"). Though Zumárraga, too, addresses Juan Diego as his child (*nopil*, "my boy" = "my son"), at no point in the story does Juan Diego engage in polite inversion by addressing Zumárraga as his child. Juan Diego will only ever address Zumárraga by deferential titles: "personage," "ruler," "lord." Is this a portrayal of code switching? That is: Are readers of the story meant to understand that when speaking to Zumárraga, Juan Diego uses only deferential titles, without inversion, because he knows that is the Spanish custom for addressing a social superior?*

[92] ***He came away… he came straight to the top of the hill:*** *At several points when the* Nican mopohua *narrates Juan Diego's travels, grammatical elements are used which suggest that the story is being told from the vantage point of Tlatelolco. At some other points, the narrator's vantage point shifts to Tepeyac—as in the first two sentences of this paragraph, in which Juan Diego is repeatedly described as "coming" to Tepeyac: "He* ***came*** *away; he is sad as he* ***comes****… he* ***came*** *back, right away… he* ***came*** *straight to the top of the hill." English "to come" is being used in those four instances to represent either the verb* huitza*, which means "to come," or the directional prefix* hual-*, which indicates movement toward the speaker.*

[93] ***right there:*** *The English expression "right there" is used here to parallel the expression "right away," which appeared in the preceding sentence. The corresponding Nahuatl expressions have their own parallel construction:* iz za ye icuac *(which very literally means something akin to "here at the same when," hence "right away") and* iz zan ye oncan *(akin to "here at the same there," hence "right there").*

[94] ***threw himself onto the ground:*** *Throughout the* Nican mopohua*, whenever Juan Diego makes obeisance, the Nahuatl verb* pechteca *is used, consistently represented in this translation as "bow down." In this single instance, however, an additional verb is used:* tlalchitlaza*, whose literal meaning is to throw oneself* (tlaza) *onto the ground* (tlalchi). *The narrator never uses* tlalchitlaza *to describe Juan Diego's bowing to Zumárraga, only to Mary—and only in this one instance. Why might that be?*

[95] ***O my youngest child, O my maiden:*** *Here we again see Juan Diego engaging in the Nahuatl rhetorical practice of inversion, addressing Mary as his youngest child and daughter after she had addressed him, during their initial encounter, as her youngest child. See notes 55 and 91. Note that the rhetorical inversion does not alter Juan Diego's status as Mary's subordinate: he calls Mary his youngest child and daughter while prostrating himself before her.*

[96] ***priestly ruler:*** *In Nahuatl,* teopixcatlatohuani*. At no point in the* Nican mopohua *does Juan Diego use the Spanish loanword* obispo *to refer to the bishop; only Mary and the narrator use the Spanish word. If we assume that was a conscious choice by the author, what could be its significance?*

[97] ***his heart was not satisfied:*** *In Nahuatl,* amo yollo maci*, which would literally mean "his heart was not made complete." Alonso de Molina's 16th-century dictionary defines* yollo maci *as "to be assured of something." The expression contains the same roots found in the verb* yolmaxiltia*, which Molina defines as "to satisfy." In the context in which* amo yollo maci *appears here, the sense is* ***he was not convinced****.*

[98] ***I have invented it:*** *Or* ***I have made it up****. This is the same Nahuatl verb,* yocoya*, that appears in the divine epithet "inventor [or creator] of people" (see note 65).*

[99] ***from your lips*:*** *Less literally,* ***by your command****. The construction of the Nahuatl expression is* mo- *("your")* + tentli *("lips")* + copa *("in the manner of")* + *a form of reverential* -tzin*, represented by the asterisk. The compound* -tencopa (tentli + copa) *conveys the meaning "by order of" or "by command of."*

[100] ***leave it:*** *In Nahuatl,* cahua*. Here the sense of the verb is to* ***delegate*** *or to* ***entrust****. But* cahua *is consistently represented, throughout this translation, by English "to leave"—in the sense of leaving something or someone behind—which is the literal meaning of the Nahuatl verb.*

[101] ***that one:*** *An awkward translation, to avoid the even more awkward alternative* ***he or she****. In Nahuatl, there are no grammatical markers that specify the gender of the hypothetical noble whom Juan*

*Diego is asking Mary to send in his place.* ***They*** *would work in the translation if understood as singular.*

[102] ***a tumpline… a pack frame:*** *Equipment for carrying a load on one's back—symbolic of the periodic tribute labor owed by commoners, both in pre-colonial Nahua society and under Spanish colonialism.*

[103] ***the tail… the wing:*** *The Nahuatl word* atlapalli *can mean either "wing" or "leaf." The word appeared earlier in the story, with the sense of "leaf," during Juan Diego's initial encounter with Mary, when the narrator said that Mary's radiance made the leaves of the surrounding plants look like turquoise. When, as here,* atlapalli *is paired with* cuitlapilli *("tail"), the meaning "wing" makes more sense. The pairing* cuitlapilli, atlapalli *("the tail, the wing") is a Nahuatl idiom referring to commoners. By extension, a ruler was referred to idiomatically as "possessor of the tail, possessor of the wing," the sense of which is that the commoners act at the ruler's direction.*

[104] ***someone who must be carried, who must be loaded onto someone else's back:*** *An elaborate translation of* itconi, mamaloni*, a Nahuatl idiom referring to commoners. The idiom employs the verbs* itqui *and* mama*, both of which mean "to carry." The sense of the idiom is that the commoners are a burden to be shouldered by the ruling class (as the commoners themselves literally shoulder burdens in the service of the ruling class or community institutions).*

[105] ***I will come under your frown, I will fall into your anger:*** *On the contrary, nowhere in the* Nican mopohua *is Mary portrayed as frowning or angry. The same is true, for that matter, of Zumárraga. Only Zumárraga's servants, we will later see, are portrayed as angry, punitive, or threatening. What should we make of the fact that the story portrays the characters with the highest social status—Mary and Zumárraga—as constantly benevolent?*

*The translation "I will come under your frown,* I will fall into your anger*" takes modest liberties with the syntax of the Nahuatl text for the sake of readability in English. A more literal translation would be "I will go upon, I will fall upon, your frown,* your anger.*"*

[106] ***they are not precious:*** *Translators have interpreted this expression in two different ways, which would lead to differing interpretations of the "but"* (yece) *that begins the subsequent sentence.*

*One interpretation takes the Nahuatl word* tlazotin *to mean "precious" in the sense of rare, ergo* ***few****. In this first interpretation, Mary is saying to Juan Diego: The messengers whom I could send are not few, they are many;* ***nevertheless*** *("but") I need you to carry this message.*

*The other interpretation takes* tlazotin *to mean "precious" in the sense of* ***esteemed****, ergo high-status. Juan Diego used the prefix* tlazo- *in that sense in the preceding speech, when he asked Mary to send one of "the precious nobles" as her messenger. In this interpretation of* tlazotin*, Mary is saying: I do not send high-status people as my messengers;* ***rather*** *("but") I need you to carry this message.*

*If the second interpretation is the one intended, then the author's attitude toward social hierarchy is strongly subversive, at least in this moment. Mary isn't saying that commoners, as well as nobles, can serve as her messengers. She is making a stronger statement, an exclusionary one: commoners, not nobles, serve as her messengers. It should be asked, however: Does the* Nican mopohua *maintain so strongly subversive a social attitude throughout the story?*

[107] ***speak for it:*** *The Nahuatl expression is* ipan tlatoa; ipan *means "for" or "upon," while* tlatoa *means*

*"to speak." The sense of the expression is "to urge" or "to see that something is done."* Tlatoa *has connotations of commanding—it is the root of the word* tlatoani*, used for the ruler of a Nahua state—which might be read as elevating Juan Diego's social authority.*

[108] ***implore:*** *The Nahuatl verb is* tlatlauhtia*, which means "to plead" or "to supplicate"; Nahua Christians adopted the same verb to mean "to pray." Juan Diego used this verb in the speech he just finished, when he "implore[d]" Mary to send a noble as her messenger. If taken literally, Mary's use of the same verb momentarily flattens the hierarchical relationship between her and Juan Diego, making the relationship mutual: each is supplicating the other. In the next moment, however, Mary will reestablish the hierarchy by "order[ing]"* (nahuatia) *Juan Diego to do her will. Frances Karttunen observes in her 20th-century Nahuatl dictionary that "in polite speech,"* tlatlauhtia *"is an overblown but conventional way of saying 'to address someone.'" Mary's use of* tlatlauhtia *here is consistent with that polite convention.*

[109] ***emphatically:*** *The English adverb represents* tlacuauh-*, an intensifying prefix affixed to the Nahuatl verb translated as "ordered."*

[110] ***instruct:*** *In Nahuatl,* nemachtia*. The root* machtia *means "to teach." Alonso de Molina's 16th-century dictionary translates* nemachtia *using two Spanish verbs that mean to "prepare" or "equip" or, for one of the verbs, to "exhort" or "admonish"—all suggestive, again, of teaching. Note the subversive implications for the social hierarchy: Juan Diego is to occupy the role of teacher, Zumárraga the role of pupil.*

[111] ***nor think the road arduous:*** *A literal translation of the Nahuatl phrase. Is the author intentionally engaging here in dramatic irony, given that later in the story, Juan Diego will literally abandon—veer off—the road that runs past Tepeyac to Tlaltelolco in an effort to avoid having to carry out Mary's errand?*

[112] ***O my youngest child, O my maiden, O personage, O noblewoman:*** *When Juan Diego first addressed Mary at the outset of this second encounter, he referred to her by a string of titles, starting with deferential ones and then shifting to familial metaphors: "O my lady, O personage, O noblewoman, O my youngest child, O my maiden" (that last title being equivalent to "O my daughter"). Now, as he bids farewell to her, Juan Diego again uses a string of titles, but this time with the order reversed: he starts with familial metaphors and ends with deferential titles. This pattern of reversal—moving from deferential to familial as the encounter begins, moving from familial to deferential as the encounter ends—is consistent with the conventions of polite Nahuatl discourse as attested in other texts from the period. The pattern is not so neatly employed in Juan Diego's speeches to Mary on other occasions.*

[113] ***to know divine things:*** *A literalistic translation of the Nahuatl phrase, where the verb is* mati*, "to know," and the noun is* teoyotl*, an abstraction that means "divinity" but is represented throughout this translation as "divine things." Near the end of the* Nican mopohua*, the same roots appear combined in a single word,* teomati*, which will be translated there as "to worship" (see note 201).*

[114] ***to be counted:*** *Apparently the priests took a headcount of how many people attended Sunday mass.*

[115] ***the misa was heard:*** *In the introduction to their scholarly translation of the* Nican mopohua*, Lisa Sousa, Stafford Poole, and James Lockhart report that Nahuatl texts of the era usually speak of the mass as being "seen"* (*for which the Nahuatl verb is* itta). *The* Nican mopohua*, however, says that the mass was "heard"* (*the Nahuatl verb being* caqui)*, which corresponds to the expression used in Spanish.*

[116] ***he sobs, he is sad:*** *The Nahuatl verbs are* choca *and* tlaocoya*. The noun forms of those same verbs were paired together, in the same order, earlier in the story, when Mary told Juan Diego that she would hear people's petitions in her temple on Tepeyac: "I will hear their sobbing, their sadness..."*

[117] ***Perhaps it will not be believed...:*** *How should we understand this sentence? As a paraphrase of Juan Diego's thoughts? Or as an aside by the narrator? Either way, what did the author intend this sentence to add to readers' experience of the story?*

[118] ***how she was*:*** *The Nahuatl expression,* quenamicatzintli*, is a greeting, reverentially marked (hence the asterisk), whose meaning is quite literally "How," implying, "How are you?" or "In what condition are you?" In this context, the sense is that Zumárraga wants to know what Mary looked like or how she behaved.*

[119] ***Liberator:*** *The Nahuatl word is derived from a verb,* maquixtia*, which means to free or rescue someone from captivity. The term is standing in for the Christian title* ***Redeemer*** *or* ***Savior****.*

[120] ***not merely because of his word… his request… he requested:*** *The grammar of the Nahautl text does not indicate gender—that is, does not distinguish between "he" and "she." Consequently, the third-person singular pronominal prefixes, rendered in the English translation as "his" and "he," could be understood, alternatively, as referring to Mary, not to Juan Diego: "not merely because of* ***her*** *word, not merely because of* ***her*** *request, would what* ***she*** *requested be done..." Either way, Zumárraga is, in effect, dictating to Mary how she must proceed. Does the author intend us to see that as presumptuous on Zumárraga's part?*

[121] ***from her:*** *Or* ***from him****, because of the grammatical ambiguity explained in note 120. However, elsewhere in the* Nican mopohua*, including in Juan Diego's very next quoted speech, the sign will be spoken of more clearly as coming from Mary.*

[122] ***he said to the obispo:*** *The quotation that follows is the first time in the* Nican mopohua *that we "hear" Juan Diego speak to Zumárraga, meaning that this is the first time the narrator quotes for us what Juan Diego says to Zumárraga rather than summarizing it. Is it significant that the narrator does this at a moment when Juan Diego is not simply reporting Mary's words, but speaking on his own initiative? Is it significant that the first time we hear Juan Diego speak to Zumárraga, he speaks to the bishop in the imperative mood ("please see to it...")? Is it significant that Zumárraga does not, in fact, do what we hear Juan Diego urge him to do—namely, to specify what sign he wishes to receive from Mary?*

[123] ***turns back:*** *The Nahuatl verb,* elleltia*, is defined in Alonso de Molina's 16th-century dictionary as meaning to repent of what one has done or to restrain oneself. Here, the sense is that Juan Diego shows no hesitation, does not backpedal.*

[124] ***ordered:*** *Juan Diego just said, near the end of the preceding paragraph, that Mary had "ordered" him to come see Zumárraga. Now the narrator uses the same verb* (nahuatia) *to tell us how Zumárraga "ordered" his servants to follow Juan Diego. Intentionally or not, the repetition of the verb highlights the fact that Juan Diego stands in the same relationship to Mary that Zumárraga's servants stand to Zumárraga.*

[125] ***comes out:*** *The Nahuatl verb is* quiza*. At some other points in this translation of the* Nican mopohua*,*

quiza *will be rendered "to pass by," based on Alonso de Molina's 16th-century dictionary, which gives the running of a stream as one meaning of the verb. However, Molina records additional meanings for* quiza *that have to do with things ending, which may be the sense here: the gorge ends, or comes out, near Tepeyac.*

[126] ***they were forced to turn back:*** *A less-than-literal translation, to show that this is the same Nahuatl verb,* elleltia*, that was used shortly before, when the narrator said that Juan Diego "in no way turn[ed] back" from his claims about his encounter with Mary (see note 123). A more literal translation of that verb would be* ***they were restrained****, meaning in this context that* ***they were hindered*** *or* ***frustrated****. The fact that Juan Diego does not* elleltia *(turn back), but the servants do, creates, intentionally or not, an ironic contrast between Juan Diego and the servants: Juan Diego, socially disadvantaged but Mary's agent, moves forward, while the servants, despite their social advantages as Zumárraga's agents, are held back.*

[127] ***to advise the ruler... to set him straight:*** *"Set him straight" represents the Nahuatl verb* huellalia*, which means to correct or reform someone. "Advise" represents the verb* nonotza*, which can also carry overtones of correcting someone (but alternatively,* nonotza *could be understood more neutrally as* ***to inform*** *or* ***to report to****). Are we, as readers, meant to see these actions as a presumptuous role reversal on the servants' part—namely, that they are undertaking to instruct and correct their social superior?*

[128] ***then and there:*** *In Nahuatl, this is one word,* oncan*, which is usually represented in this translation of the* Nican mopohua *by English "there" (if the word is translated at all; see note 78). However,* oncan *can also refer to a point in time, hence "then." In this one instance, both meanings of* oncan *are presented in the English translation—"then and there"—because both meanings are potentially applicable here.*

[129] ***the text jumps directly to Juan Diego's activities on Monday:*** *Some more recent editions of the* Nican mopohua*, especially those made for devotional purposes, do have at this point a short paragraph recounting the Sunday afternoon meeting between Mary and Juan Diego. That paragraph was produced in the 1800s by Mexican scholar Joseph Julián Ramírez. Ramírez claimed to have found the paragraph in a fragmentary Nahuatl manuscript of uncertain provenance. That manuscript is now lost, if it ever really existed; but a purported Spanish translation of the paragraph, made by Ramírez, survives. Some editors now insert Ramírez's text into the* Nican mopohua *to fill the narrative gap left in the 1649 edition. There exist printings of the paragraph in Nahuatl, but these are a translation into Nahuatl of Ramírez's Spanish text, not a direct reproduction of the purported Nahuatl original.*

[130] ***Juan Bernardino:*** *Like Juan Diego, this indigenous character is referred to in the* Nican mopohua *only by the Spanish baptismal name he would have been given after the conquest, never by his Nahuatl name. He has been given the name of St. Bernardino of Siena, a Franciscan preacher of the 1400s.*

[131] ***healer:*** *In Nahuatl*, ticitl*; the same word was used for a midwife. The* Nican mopohua *gives no indication of the healer's gender. Other texts from the 1500s-1600s indicate that both women and men exercised the profession of* ticitl.

[132] ***he spoke for it:*** *The Nahuatl expression is* ipan tlatoa*, where* ipan *means "for" or "upon," and* tlatoa *means "to speak," with the potential connotation "to command." Translators of the* Nican mopohua *have interpreted this expression, in this context, in two different ways:*

*In one interpretation, the verb's subject is Juan Diego, and the expression means that he urged the healer*

*to come, or he saw to it that the healer came.* Ipan tlatoa *was used in this sense earlier in the* Nican mopohua*, when Juan Diego begged Mary to choose a different messenger, but she insisted it was necessary that he "speak for" the doing of her will (see note 107). If* ipan tlatoa *is interpreted this way, then the expression's recurrence from earlier might be read as underscoring Juan Diego's disobedience or reordering of priorities: instead of going to "speak for" Mary's will, as she told him to do, Juan Diego is staying at home to "speak for" his uncle's needs.*

*Alternatively, some translators understand the verb's subject to be not Juan Diego but the healer, and they understand Juan Bernardino to be the verb's object. Literally translated, this interpretation would yield* ***he spoke upon him*** *or* ***she spoke upon him****, in either case indicating that the healer (male or female) "spoke upon" Juan Bernardino. In this interpretation,* ipan tlatoa *would mean that the healer commanded or took charge of Juan Bernardino, i.e., tended to him.*

[133] ***come call:*** *This is a conspicuous example of the* Nican mopohua *narrating the story from the vantage point of Mexico City (where the priests lived; hence Juan Diego will "come call" for a priest), when one might have expected this action to be described from Juan Bernardino's vantage point in the countryside (in which case Juan Diego would have been asked to "go call" for a priest). English "come" is used here to reflect the presence of two grammatical elements which, in Nahuatl, imply that Juan Diego's trip to Tlatelolco will take him toward the narrator: the directional prefix* hual- *attached to the verb* quiza *("to leave for") and the directional suffix* -quiuh *attached to the verb* notza *("to call").*

[134] ***to be off:*** *Or* ***to go****. The Nahuatl verb,* mohuica*, literally means to carry oneself. Mary used the same verb at the end of her first encounter with Juan Diego, when she told him to "be off" to take her message to Zumárraga.*

[135] ***to know his heart's misdeeds:*** *A literalistic translation of the Nahuatl verb* yolcuitia *(*yol*, "heart"* + cuitia*, "to know someone's misdeeds").* Yolcuitia *was one of two Nahuatl verbs that were used for the Christian rite of confession. The other was* yolmelahua *(*yol*, "heart"* + melahua*, "to straighten").* Yolmelahua *referred initially to a rite of confession practiced in pre-colonial Nahua religion; Christians carried the word over to the analogous rite in the colonizers' religion. American scholar Louise Burkhart reports that* yolmelahua *is used more frequently in colonial-era Nahuatl Christian texts than* yolcuitia*; she also proposes that* yolmelahua *is the more technical of the two terms. If so, then the* Nican mopohua*, in using* yolcuitia*, is using the more colloquial expression. Is it significant that of the two Nahuatl terms available to name Christian confession, the* Nican mopohua *does not use the one carried over from pre-colonial religion?*

[136] ***in the direction of the setting sun:*** *A literalistic translation of* tonatiuh icalaquianpa*, the Nahuatl expression that means "west." What it means to say that the road passes by the hill to the west depends on whether we are meant to picture Juan Diego coming from Cuautitlán or Tulpetlac; see note 21. If Juan Diego is coming from Cuautitlán, which lies to the northwest, then the text must be referring to the fact that his road runs along the west side of the hill (in a southerly direction). If he is coming from Tulpetlac, which lies to the northeast, then the text must be referring to the fact that his road runs in a westerly direction as it passes along the south side of the hill.*

[137] ***how can I keep the noblewoman from seeing me?*** *A more literal translation of this clause would be: "let it not be that the noblewoman will see me."*

[138] ***mendicant:*** *The Nahuatl word is* motolinia*, which means "poor." Nahuas used that word to describe*

*the first Franciscan friars who came to Mexico; one of those friars embraced the Nahuatl word as an adopted surname (Toribio de Motolinía, formerly Toribio de Benavente). The friars attracted the label* motolinia *because they were a mendicant order, meaning that they took a vow of poverty.*

*The translation "mendicant" assumes that* motolinia *refers here to the priest. However, the word is ambiguously placed within the Nahuatl sentence, so some translators understand it as referring instead to Juan Diego's uncle. In that case, the translation would be:* ***let me first quickly call the priest, let my poor*** *[=* ***impoverished****]* ***uncle not merely wait****.*

[139] ***Then he skirted the hill...:*** *The exact interpretation of the directions in this sentence will depend on whether one pictures Juan Diego coming from Cuautitlán, northwest of Tepeyac, or from Tulpetlac, to the northeast. In either case, the basic idea is that Juan Diego is taking a long way around the north, or back, side of the hill—whereas the road loops around the south side—so that he can sneak literally behind Mary's back as she stands on the hilltop watching for him to pass along the road below.*

[140] ***descending:*** *The Nahuatl verb,* temohuia*, literally means "to lower." The same verb was used in Nahuatl Christian texts of the 1500s-1600s to describe Jesus descending to hell, as in the Apostles' Creed, or descending from heaven at his second coming. However, there is nothing in the text that would indicate Mary's* temohuia *is an airborne descent; she will use the same verb later in this scene, when she tells Juan Diego to "descend" the hill after he has climbed it to gather flowers. In other words, the language of this passage gives no reason to think that we are meant to picture anything other than Mary picking her way down the hillside like an ordinary person.*

*Earlier in the* Nican mopohua*, Mary appears to Juan Diego as a radiant image whose only narrated actions are standing, speaking, and waiting. But during this third and final encounter, Mary appears to Juan Diego as a fleshly, active person—she walks down the hill, she picks up flowers, she packs them into Juan Diego's tilma—without any reference to her being supernaturally radiant. The narrator clearly intends readers to find it absurd that Juan Diego imagines he could evade Mary's gaze as if she were a mere mortal, yet the narrator portrays Mary as more like a mere mortal during this encounter than in any other. Why might that be? Does this portrayal of Mary alter her relationship to Juan Diego, as compared to earlier scenes?*

[141] ***she had been looking down at him:*** *The English verbs "look" and "see" are both used to translate the same Nahuatl verb,* itta*. Variations of that verb appear five times, in quick succession, in this and the preceding sentence of the* Nican mopohua *(beginning with "He thinks... it will be impossible for her to see him"). The verb occurs so frequently in this passage because, unlike in previous scenes, the narrator speaks here not only of Juan Diego seeing Mary, but also of Mary seeing Juan Diego. Narrating Mary's gaze is another way in which the text presents Mary as a more fully embodied subject at this point in the story, as discussed in note 140.*

[142] ***could it be that he was a little annoyed... embarrassed... apprehensive... frightened?*** *The narrator knows Juan Diego's thoughts: we've listened in on them at previous moments in the story. So instead of listing different ways in which a commoner might react when caught evading a noble who wants to draft him for an errand, the narrator could simply tell us what Juan Diego's reaction actually is. For what reason might the author instead have preferred running through the list of possibilities?*

[143] ***I wish you happiness:*** *More literally: "Please be caused to feel happy," or "May you be caused to feel happy."*

[144] ***How were you when the morning sun shone on your face?*** *An elaborate translation to capture both the meaning and the etymology of the Nahuatl expression* quen otimixtonalti*, whose sense is* ***How do you feel this morning?*** *or, more formally,* ***How did you wake?*** *The expression's literal construction is* quen *(how)* + timo *(to you)* + ixtli *(face)* + tona *(a verb referring to the sun shining, rendered in past tense)*.

[145] ***O my noble**:*** *In Nahuatl,* nopiltzintziné*. The construction is* no- *("my")* + pilli *("child" or "noble")* + *two instances of the reverential suffix* -tzin *(represented by the two asterisks)* + -é *(vocative suffix). The duplication of* -tzin *is an indication that* pilli *here means "noble," not "child." The translation is "noble," not "noblewoman," because in this instance,* cihuatl *("woman") is absent.*

[146] ***a commoner of yours:*** *A literal translation, but the sense is* ***a subject of yours*** *(see note 80).*

[147] ***to be drafted to the labor of our death:*** *The Nahuatl text says that we wait for* tomiquiztequiuh, *a compound word that literally means "our death-labor." The compound word's final component,* -tequiuh*, from the noun* tequitl*, means a labor or task that one is obligated to complete. One of that noun's applications was to the labor that Nahua commoners provided to nobles or institutions as a form of tribute, a pre-colonial practice that continued after the Spanish conquest. The addition of the verb "drafted" to the English translation is an attempt to communicate the metaphor of death as tribute labor ordered by God (or a god).*

[148] ***lap:*** *The English word "lap" can refer to (1) the front of the upper thighs, or (2) the clothing that covers that part of the body. Nahuatl* cuexantli *means "lap" in the second sense: it refers to a loose skirt, or similar garment, that something can be carried in. Juan Diego will later carry flowers in his "lap," meaning in a fold or pouch created by lifting the lower portion of his tilma.*

[149] ***Are you not cradled in my lap, are you not loaded onto my back?*** *For the sake of fleshing out the imagery, the English translation is a little more elaborate than the Nahuatl original, which reads, more literally, "Are you not in my lap, in my backpack?" The idiom "in my lap, in my backpack"* (nocuixanco, nomamalhuazco) *is clearly intended here to convey that Juan Diego is under Mary's protection, as if he were a child whom she is carrying.*

*However, the idiom also connotes subordination. Alonso de Molina's 16th-century Nahuatl dictionary explains this idiom as meaning that someone "has the charge to rule and to govern others." Earlier, when Juan Diego was urging Mary to send a noble as her messenger, he described himself disparagingly as "someone who must be carried, who must be loaded onto someone else's back" (see note 104). The parallel between Juan Diego's self-denigrating metaphor, there, and Mary's meant-to-be consoling metaphor, here, is stronger than a similarity of imagery; there is an echo at the level of the language. One of the words that Juan Diego used there (*mamaloni, *"someone loaded onto someone else's back") has the same root (*mama*, "to carry" or "to bear a load") as one of the words that Mary uses here (*mamalhuazco, *"backpack").*

[150] ***today:*** *In Nahuatl,* axcan*. That word is consistently rendered in this translation of the* Nican mopohua *as "today," but here it means, more loosely,* ***at this time****.*

[151] ***his heart... settled down:*** *A literalistic translation of the Nahuatl verb* yollalia: yolli*, "heart"* + tlalia*, "to be seated, to settle." The sense of the text is* ***he was very greatly comforted****.*

[152] ***spread out:*** *The Nahuatl verb,* onoc*, primarily means "to lie down" or "to be laid out," from which the translation "spread out" is derived. Another, less common, meaning of* onoc*, which could also apply here, is "to be* ***assembled****." Later in the story, Juan Diego will use the verb* cenquiza *to describe the flowers; that verb's primary meaning is "to assemble," and it will be translated there as "growing together."*

[153] ***diverse:*** *Alternatively,* ***a variety of*** *or* ***different kinds of****. See note 28.*

[154] ***flowers:*** *In Alonso de Molina's 16th-century dictionary, the Nahuatl word* xochitl *is defined as "rose, or flower." More recently compiled dictionaries tend to privilege the broader definition of "flower."*

[155] ***Castilian:*** *In Nahuatl,* Caxtillan*. The word is derived from Castile (in Spanish,* Castilla*), the name of the preeminent kingdom in the political union that became Spain.* Caxtillan *could therefore be translated also as* ***Spanish****.*

[156] ***blossoming, blooming:*** *The Nahuatl verbs are* xotla *and* cueponi*. This same pair of verbs, in the same order, appeared back at the very beginning of the story, when the narrator said that the Christian faith was "already blossoming, already blooming" in the land. The repetition of that verb pairing at this point in the story might simply be a cliché. On the other hand, might the author be thinking of the miraculous bloom on Tepeyac as a type, or symbol, for the Christianizing of Mexico? How would such a typological interpretation go? In that typology, what would be the relationships between Castilian elements and indigenous elements?*

[157] ***it was not yet a suitable time for them:*** *That is,* ***they were not yet in season****. The Nahuatl term that indicates being in season,* -mochiuhyan*, is used at some points in the story to indicate not the proper season (time) for something, but a proper environment (place). For consistency,* -mochiuhyan *will be translated, depending on the context, as "a suitable time" or "a suitable place."*

[158] ***pearls:*** *The Nahuatl word for "pearl,"* epyollotli*, is literally "heart of the oyster."*

[159] ***hands:*** *Or* ***arms****. The Nahuatl word* maitl *can refer to both the hand and the arm.*

[160] ***witness:*** *The Nahuatl word,* tlaneltliztli*, is used in texts from the 1500s-1600s to mean a legal certification. The word is derived from the root that means "truth"* (nelli); *that root is also found in the verb that means "to believe"* (neltoca)*.*

[161] ***to please see:*** *Alternatively,* ***that he should see****. English "please" is consistently used in this translation to represent the Nahuatl particle* ma*, which forms a polite imperative.*

[162] ***I very emphatically order you:*** *In Nahuatl,* huel nimitztlacuauhnahuatia*. The verb is* nahuatia*, "to give an order." Attached to the verb is an intensifying prefix,* tlacuauh-*, hence "emphatically."* Huel *is yet another intensifier, hence "very."*

[163] ***the heart… will be… stirred up:*** *An elaborate translation to convey the etymology of the Nahuatl verb* yolehua*. The verb's construction is* yol*, "heart"* + ehua*, "to rise." The reference to upward motion—"to rise"—is echoed in the English translation "stir up." The sense of the verb is to be moved or provoked to do something.*

[164] ***steward:*** *The Nahuatl word,* calpixque*, literally means "caretaker of the house" or "guardian of the house" (from* calli*, "house"* + piya*, "to have in one's care, to guard").*

[165] ***ruling priest:*** *On other occasions in the* Nican mopohua *when a Nahuatl title alone is used to refer to the bishop, without using the Spanish loanword* obispo*, that Nahuatl title is the compound word* teopixcatlatoani *(*teopixqui*, "priest"* + tlatoani*, "ruler"), translated as "priestly ruler." In this one instance, however, the Nahuatl compound's elements have been reversed to form* tlatocateopixqui *(*tlatoca*, "ruler"* + teopixqui*, "priest"), translated as "ruling priest."*

[166] ***on his feet:*** *In Nahuatl,* icac*, "to be standing." A simpler translation would be* ***he was standing there****, but the English verb "to stand" is consistently used in this translation to represent a different Nahuatl verb,* quetza*.*

[167] ***doing nothing else:*** *In Nahuatl,* tlatemmati*. In his 16th-century dictionary, Alonso de Molina defines this verb as "to be very lazy." That meaning doesn't literally apply in this situation, of course, but from it is derived the translation "doing nothing [else]." This interpretation of* tlatemmati *is consistent with other translations of the* Nican mopohua*. However, Molina also defines* tlatemmati *as meaning "to count [or to tell] the labors that one suffers." Perhaps, then, the author of the* Nican mopohua *means to convey that Juan Diego is enduring the discomfort of standing there for so long.*

[168] ***to make their hearts content:*** *A literalistic translation of the Nahuatl expression* yollo pachihuiz*, whose sense here is* ***to satisfy their curiosity****.*

[169] ***beat:*** *The Nahuatl verb,* mictia*, is very strong; it can even mean "to kill," though that meaning seems too extreme for this context.*

[170] ***he showed them, just a little, that here are flowers:*** *In their last meeting, Mary "very emphatically order[ed]" Juan Diego that he should reveal what he was carrying "before the face of the obispo only, no one else." Juan Diego is now disobeying that very emphatic order, albeit "just a little" (in Nahuatl,* tepiton*). For this disobedience, readers of the story might expect to see Mary somehow punish or reprimand Juan Diego, even if "just a little." Yet no such punishment or reprimand occurs. Why not? What values are operating here?*

[171] ***the commoner who came several times already:*** *Here the narrator appears to be paraphrasing for us how Zumárraga's servants identify Juan Diego when they speak to Zumárraga. That is, Zumárraga's servants identify Juan Diego not by name but as "the commoner." Similarly, the narrator is about to give us a report of Zumárraga's thoughts in which Zumárraga identifies Juan Diego not by name but as "the person." In the entire* Nican mopohua*, Mary is the only character who is quoted referring to Juan Diego by name.*

[172] ***he had in his heart:*** *A literalistic translation of a Nahuatl expression whose sense is* ***he realized****.*

[173] ***person*:*** *In Nahuatl,* tlacatzintli*. The construction is* tlacatl *("person") + the reverential suffix* -tzin*, which would be interpreted most readily in this social situation as a diminutive—thus,* ***humble person*** *or* ***lowly person****. But given how Mary, in her last speech, underscored Juan Diego's authority as her messenger, might the author intend readers to recognize the possibility of a double meaning? That is, might the author intend us to understand that an honorific, not diminutive, interpretation of* -tzin *would*

*be more appropriate, something like* ***honorable person*** *or* ***personage****?*

*This is the only instance in the* Nican mopohua *where the word* tlacatl *("person") carries the reverential suffix* -tzin*, represented in the translation by the asterisk. The word occurs elsewhere in contexts that indicate the word is being used as an honorific title; in those instances, the word is translated into English as "personage." But in none of those instances is* -tzin *used to explicitly mark the word as reverential, as is done here.*

[174] ***He bade then that he enter then:*** *Recall that throughout this translation, English "then" usually represents Nahuatl* niman*, which can potentially mean "immediately." In this clause, both instances of* niman *might be understood that way: "He bade* ***immediately*** *that he enter* ***immediately****."*

[175] ***he bowed down before his face as he did before:*** *During both of Juan Diego's previous audiences with Zumárraga, the narrator told us that Juan Diego knelt in the bishop's presence. This time, however, the verb "to kneel,"* tlancuaquetza*, is not used. Is that omission deliberate? Are we meant to envision that during this third, climactic audience, Juan Diego stands after his initial obeisance—as, indeed, he is portrayed doing in an illustration that was bound with the 1649 printing of the* Nican mopohua*? What difference does it make to the scene if Juan Diego is standing rather than kneeling?*

*A digital scan of the 1649 illustration that shows Juan Diego standing in Zumárraga's presence during the third audience is available from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/resource/gdcwdl.wdl_02966/?sp=9.*

[176] ***I have done, I have brought to pass, as you ordered me:*** *In his speech to Zumárraga, which occupies this and the next paragraph, Juan Diego makes himself the primary actor. In the Nahuatl text of Juan Diego's account of events, he is the grammatical subject of more verbs than Mary is, which is to say that he spends more time recounting his actions than hers.*

[177] ***beheld:*** *In Nahuatl,* tlachiya*. It would be equally suitable to translate that verb simply as* ***saw****. However, the English verb "to see" is reserved in this translation of the* Nican mopohua *to represent a different Nahuatl verb,* itta*, the word most frequently used in the story to refer to sight.*

[178] ***the land of flowers:*** *In Nahuatl,* xochitlalpan*, a compound word that could be understood literally as "flower-covered ground" and could, therefore, be given the more pedestrian translation* ***a field of flowers****. However, this is the same Nahuatl word that Juan Diego used back at the beginning of his very first encounter with Mary, when he wondered if he was experiencing the* xochitlalpan *that his ancestors had taught him about. In that context,* xochitlalpan *was clearly a pre-colonial Nahua cultural reference to a flower-filled land, likely to the paradise of the rain god Tlaloc (see note 34). Like Tlaloc, Mary has created a marvelous* xochitlalpan*—but Mary's* xochitlalpan*, as Juan Diego now describes it, differs from any* xochitlalpan *of pre-colonial Nahua lore. Mary's is a distinctly post-conquest* xochitlalpan*, one filled with "flowers of the Castilian kind."*

[179] ***growing together:*** *This phrase represents a single Nahuatl verb,* cenquiza*, which would be more literally translated as* ***assembled****.*

[180] ***so that the truth of my word, my charge, will appear:*** *As Juan Diego tells it, the aim of the miracle is not only to bring about the fulfillment of Mary's will, but also to establish Juan Diego's authority: "the truth of my word, my charge." At the same time, the limits of Juan Diego's authority are indicated: Juan Diego says "my word, my charge," not "my breath, my word," the latter pairing being the idiom that*

*refers to the speech of a ruler. "My breath, my word" is used frequently in the* Nican mopohua *to refer to Mary's word, and Juan Diego used the idiom in the preceding paragraph to refer to Zumárraga's word. Juan Diego refrains, however, from applying the idiom to his own speech. Juan Diego's word is to be received by Zumárraga as authoritative, but it is a "charge"* (netitlaniztli)*, a message from someone else, not Juan Diego's own breath.*

[181] ***came spilling onto the ground:*** *In Nahuatl,* hualtepeuh: hual-*, a directional prefix indicating movement toward the speaker (hence "came") + a preterite form of* tepehua*, a verb defined in Alonso de Molina's colonial-era Nahuatl-Spanish dictionary as "to scatter or throw something on the ground."*

*If a reader were to elongate the first* e *in* hualt**e**peuh, *that mispronunciation would yield a different meaning: namely, that the flowers "came conquering" (elongated* te- *being a prefix referring to people in general, and* pehua *meaning "to conquer"). This potential for double meaning, or misunderstanding, is coincidental. But what if we pursued this unintended opportunity for creative misreading? That is: How might this climactic miracle be interpreted as a kind of conquest? Who is conquering whom?*

[182] ***emblazoned:*** *The Nahuatl verb,* machiotia*, has multiple meanings arising from the basic sense of "to make a sign." One of those meanings is to inscribe or draw something—hence, here, the translation "emblazoned." The same Nahuatl verb was adopted during the Christianization of Mexico to refer to the Catholic rite of confirmation, or chrismation, during which an individual was marked with the sign of the cross.*

[183] ***they knelt:*** *As observed earlier (note 175), we have not been told clearly that Juan Diego is kneeling during this third audience with Zumárraga, though that was specified during his previous two audiences. During the third audience, the verb "to kneel"* (tlancuaquetza) *appears for the first time now, when Zumárraga and his servants kneel before the miraculous image. If Juan Diego is also kneeling, how does that affect his relationship to Zumárraga and the servants at this moment? Alternatively, what is the effect if Juan Diego is the only person in the room standing at this moment?*

[184] ***their hearts suffered:*** *Or* ***they were contrite****. The translation "their hearts suffered" shows the construction of the Nahuatl verb, which is* yoltonehua: yolli*, "heart" +* tonehua*, "to suffer." Nahua Christians used this verb to describe feeling contrite or penitent.*

[185] ***were wrought up:*** *More literally, their hearts and minds "went up"* (aco yah)*. The sense of the idiom is that they* ***were moved****; the English expression "wrought up" has been used to preserve the Nahuatl idiom's reference to upward motion. Zumárraga's heart being "wrought up" at this moment might be interpreted as a fulfillment of what Mary predicted earlier: that his heart would be "stirred up" or, more literally, would "rise" (see note 163).*

[186] ***with sobbing, with sadness:*** *This is the third time in the* Nican mopohua *that forms of the Nahuatl words* choca *("to sob") and* tlaocoya *("to be sad") have been paired together in that order. The first time was when Mary told Juan Diego that she would hear people's sobbing and sadness as they petitioned her in her temple on Tepeyac. The second time was during Juan Diego's second audience with Zumárraga, when Juan Diego sobbed and was sad as he petitioned the bishop to build Mary's temple. Now the bishop occupies the position of the sobbing, sad petitioner.*

[187] ***then:*** *This is an instance where Nahuatl* niman *should be understood as* ***immediately****. Zumárraga is apologizing for not having done Mary's will right away when she requested it.*

[188] ***he loosed... Juan Diego's raiment...:*** *The text specifies, perhaps even underscores, that the tilma on which Mary's image has appeared is Juan Diego's property. Yet Zumárraga feels entitled to take possession, despite having received no instruction or permission to that effect, neither from Mary through Juan Diego nor from Juan Diego of his own initiative. Furthermore, as we are about to see, Zumárraga initially places the tilma in his private chapel, as if he regards the tilma as his personal possession; only later does he place it on public display as if it were community property.*

[189] ***his place for doing what is divine:*** *The Nahuatl compound word that this phrase represents is built around a verb,* teochihua*, whose construction is* teotl*, "god" or "divine thing"* + chihua*, "to do." That verb was coined after the Spanish conquest to refer to a range of Christian ritual practices, including praying the liturgy of the hours, bestowing absolution, and blessing objects or buildings. In this instance, the larger compound word built around the verb*—ineteochihuayan*, literally "his* teochihua *place"—appears to be a reference to Zumárraga's oratory, or private chapel.*

[190] ***he said to him:*** *The Nahuatl text is ambiguous about who is speaking to whom. Does it strike you as more likely to be Juan Diego speaking to Zumárraga, or Zumárraga speaking to Juan Diego?*

*The quotation that follows this dialogue tag ("Let us go cause the people to see...") is the last quoted speech by any character in the* Nican mopohua*. Subsequent speeches of Juan Diego and Juan Bernardino will be given to us only in summary. Juan Diego spoke the first quoted words in the story; could there be something significant about which character speaks the last quoted words? Is there something particularly significant about these last quoted words which made the author want to present them in direct quotation?*

[191] ***cause the people to see:*** *A simpler translation would be* ***show the people****, but the English verb "to show" is reserved throughout this translation of the* Nican mopohua *to represent a different Nahuatl verb* (nextia)*. Here the verb is* ittitia*, which quite literally means "to cause to see."* Ittitia *will recur a few times between now and the end of the story.*

[192] ***sought leave to depart:*** *This English phrase is used here to represent a single Nahuatl verb,* nahuatia*. Elsewhere in this translation,* nahuatia *is represented by the English verb "to order"—including in the clause immediately preceding this one, which says that Mary "ordered" her temple to be built in the place she showed Juan Diego. "To order" makes sense as a translation for the first instance of* nahuatia *in this sentence, when Mary is the subject; it doesn't make sense for the second instance, when Juan Diego is the subject. However, Alonso de Molina's colonial-era Nahuatl dictionary records other meanings for this verb, including "to seek permission to do something" and "to take one's leave." Either of those last two meanings could fit the instance of* nahuatia *that has Juan Diego as the subject. The translation "sought leave to depart" gestures toward both of those possible meanings.*

*The fact that the author of the* Nican mopohua *used the same verb twice in such close succession, with two such different meanings, could be merely coincidental. But the repetition also invites readers (even if the author didn't intend this) to consider how Juan Diego's social status has and has not been altered by his recognition as Mary's chosen messenger. Mary and Juan Diego can both* nahuatia*, but can Juan Diego* nahuatia *in the same sense in which Mary can? That is: Can Juan Diego, like Mary, give an order?*

[193] ***was delivered here:*** *This phrase is a literalistic translation of the Nahuatl verb* hualhuica: hual- *(directional prefix indicating movement toward the speaker, hence "here")* + huica *("to deliver"). A simpler translation would be* ***was brought****. The use of* hual- *at this point is notable because it indicates*

*that the narrator is speaking from the vantage point of Juan Diego's home. Normally the narrator uses directional prefixes in such a way as to narrate events from the vantage point of Tlatelolco or Tepeyac. The present scene, in which Juan Diego is brought home in honor, is the only scene in the* Nican mopohua *in which the narrator speaks unmistakably from the vantage point of Juan Diego's home.*

[194] ***greatly revered:*** *From the Nahuatl verb* mahuiztilia*. This verb has the same root,* mahuizti*, as the Nahuatl words that are rendered elsewhere in this translation as "splendor" and "splendorous," and it is related to another root,* mahuizoa*, from which are derived the words translated as "marvel" and "marvelous." Earlier in the story, Juan Diego had urged Mary to send, instead of him, someone "revered"* (mahuiztilo) *as her messenger. Now Juan Diego himself is more than "revered"—he is "greatly revered"* (cenca mahuiztililo)*.*

[195] ***he goes and sees him:*** *Judging from the rest of the sentence, the subject of "goes and sees" ("he") is Juan Bernardino, and the object ("him") is Zumárraga. The English phrase "goes and sees" represents the Nahuatl verb* itta*, "to see"* + -tiuh*, a suffix indicating movement away from the speaker. To say that Juan Bernardino "goes" to Tlatelolco to see Zumárraga is another instance of this scene being narrated from the vantage point of Juan Diego's home (see note 193). By contrast, in an earlier scene, the narrator had described Juan Bernardino as asking Juan Diego to "come" to Tlatelolco (note 133).*

[196] ***advise:*** *Alternatively,* ***inform*** *or* ***speak with****. The Nahuatl verb is* nonotza*, which is rendered consistently in this translation of the* Nican mopohua *as "advise" (see note 127).*

[197] ***they delivered Juan Bernardino here:*** *Or* ***they brought Juan Bernardino****. The verb is* hualhuica*; see note 193. The narrator's vantage point, having briefly and atypically shifted to Juan Diego's home in the previous scene, has now shifted back to Tlatelolco.*

[198] ***ruling noblewoman:*** *In Nahuatl, a compound word:* tlatoca *("ruler")* + cihuapilli *("noblewoman"). The compound word is likely meant as an equivalent to the Spanish title* reina*, meaning* ***queen****. A similar compound construction, but with the order of the components reversed, appeared at the beginning of the* Nican mopohua *(see note 3).*

[199] ***iglesia mayor:*** *That is, the main church in Tlatelolco, presumably the one where, earlier in the story, Juan Diego attended Sunday mass. Note that Zumárraga is not transferring the image to the shrine on Tepeyac. The* Nican mopohua *does not tell us when the image came to be installed at Tepeyac. Indeed, at no point in the* Nican mopohua *does Mary instruct that her image be installed there.*

*While the church in Tlatelolco is referred to by a Spanish loanword (*iglesia*, "church"), the shrine on Tepeyac is referred to, throughout the* Nican mopohua*, by a Nahuatl word (*teocalli*, "temple")—the same Nahuatl word that was used for buildings dedicated to the deities of pre-colonial Nahua religion. What might be the significance of that? A related question: Is it significant that the* Nican mopohua *ends with the people gathering to venerate Mary in the* iglesia *in Tlatelolco*, *not in the* teocalli *on Tepeyac? During her first appearance to Juan Diego, Mary says that she will manifest her compassion to the people in her* teocalli *on Tepeyac—so why did the author not construct the* Nican mopohua *in such a way that the story's ending shows that promise being fulfilled?*

[200] ***was moved:*** *The Nahuatl verb,* olini*, denotes literal movement, not merely an emotional state: in other Nahuatl texts from the 1500s-1600s, the verb is used to refer to people migrating or to the ground*

*shaking during earthquakes. Here, then, the reference might be to the flow of people coming to see the image, or the text might mean that people physically trembled upon hearing about the miracle.*

[201] ***to worship:*** *The Nahuatl verb is* teomati*, whose construction is* teotl *("god" or "divine thing")* + mati *("to know"). The 16th-century Florentine Codex uses this verb to mean something like "to consider a thing to be divine": the verb appears with that sense in a pre-colonial tale about a mysterious aquatic animal that the rulers decide is divine, and again in the Florentine Codex's account of the Spanish conquest, which says that when Moctezuma heard about the Spaniards' arrival in Mexico, he thought they were gods. Alonso de Molina's 16th-century Nahuatl dictionary defines* teomati *in a different way, as "to occupy oneself with spiritual or divine things." Both definitions—"to consider a thing to be divine" and "to occupy oneself with divine things"—point to the concept of worship.*

[202] ***implored:*** *The Nahuatl verb is* tlatlauhtia. *Nahua Christians adopted this word to mean "to pray," so a more straightforward translation would be* ***they prayed to her****.*

[203] ***divinely marvelously:*** *Or, less literally,* ***by a divine miracle****. The repetitiveness of saying, in the English translation, that the people "marveled" at how "marvelously" Mary had appeared reflects the repetition of the root* mahuizoa *in the Nahuatl text.*

[204] ***ayate:*** *A kind of cloth made from maguey fibers. The word also refers to garments made from this kind of cloth, which is coarser than cotton.*

[205] ***the commoners**:*** *In Nahuatl,* macehualtzitzintin*. The construction is* macehual*, "commoner," followed by not one but two instances—hence two asterisks—of the reverential suffix* -tzin*, plus a final suffix,* -tin*, that makes the compound word plural. As elsewhere in the* Nican mopohua*, the reverential* -tzin *could be understood as a diminutive highlighting the commoners' lowly status (see note 6). The doubling of* -tzin *does not intensify the diminutive; that is, the author is not trying to place Juan Diego among the lowliest of the lowly. Rather, the doubling of* -tzin *creates a tone of greater formality.*

[206] ***lords:*** *The Nahuatl word,* teteuctin*, is ungendered. Elsewhere in this translation, the word's singular form,* teuctli*, is translated as "lord" or "lady," depending on who it refers to (Jesus, Zumárraga, or Mary).*

[207] ***warriors:*** *The Nahuatl word,* yaotlacatl*, is literally* yao-*, "war"* + tlacatl*, "person."*

[208] ***clothed:*** *The Nahuatl verb is* ololoa*, from which is derived the noun translated earlier in this passage as "clothing"* (neolololli)*.* Ololoa *connotes rolling something up, so an alternative translation for this verb would be* ***wrapped****.*

[209] ***ichtli:*** *Thread made from maguey fibers.*

[210] ***pieces:*** *The Nahautl term translated here as "piece,"* zotl*, was a unit of production: cotton cloth woven for tribute was counted by the* zotl*. Pictographs illustrating Nahua textiles suggest that* zotls *were rectangular strips, which were then sewn together at their longer edges to create wider pieces of cloth. Tribute records speak of cloaks* (cuachtli) *that were three or four* zotls *wide. The fact that the Tepeyac ayate is only two* zotls *wide would be consistent with it having been a poorer man's garb.*

[211] ***crown:*** *The Nahuatl word,* cuayollotli*, means "crown" only in the sense of the topmost part of the head.* Cuayollotli *does not refer to the headgear ("crown") worn by royalty. As it happens, Mary does*

*wear, in the Tepeyac image, a golden crown in a European style—or at least she did at the time the afterword to the* Nican mopohua *was written; the crown was excised from the image in the late 19th century. Mary's golden crown is described in a later passage from the afterword, a passage not included in this translation. There the word used is* corona*, a Spanish loanword meaning "crown" in the sense of royal headgear.*

[212] ***finger-span:*** *The English term "finger-span" by itself corresponds to Nahuatl* cemiztitl*; the phrase "woman's finger-span" corresponds to the word* cihuaiztitl *(the prefix* cihua- *indicating a woman). In his classic Nahuatl dictionary, Antonio de Molina equated* cemiztitl *with the Spanish term* jeme*, which is a rough measure of length: the hypotenuse running from the tip of the thumb to the tip of the index finger of the same hand when these are stretched as far as possible away from each other at a right angle, in an L-shape. Presumably a "woman's finger-span" was a somewhat smaller measure.*

[213] ***courtly:*** *The Nahuatl adjective,* tecpiltic*, is derived from a noun,* tecpilli*, that refers to members of the Nahua noble class. See note 49 for the only other appearance of this adjective in the* Nican mopohua*, likewise applied to Mary.*

[214] ***a little dark-complexioned:*** *In Nahuatl,* achi yayactic*.* Achi *indicates a small amount or degree. Alonso de Molina's 16th-century Nahuatl-Spanish dictionary equates* yayactic *with the Spanish adjectives* hosco *and* moreno*, both of which indicate that something is dark in color;* moreno *is used to refer to skin color.*

[215] ***her precious upper body:*** *This phrase may sound odd in English but is a straightforward translation of Nahuatl* itlazotlactzin*. The construction is* i- *("her")* + tlazo- *("precious")* + tlactli *(a word referring to the human body above the waist) + the reverential suffix* -tzin. Tlactli *might be translated as* ***bust****, since that English word can refer to the entire torso above the waist; but English "bust" is often understood to refer more specifically to the breasts, which is not the emphasis of the Nahuatl text. The text will refer to Mary's breast, or chest, later in the sentence; there the Nahuatl word is* elpantli*.*

**Source:** Luis Laso de la Vega, *Huei tlamahuiçoltica omonexiti in ilhuicac tlatlocacihuapilli Santa María* [...] (Mexico City: Juan Ruiz, 1649), 1r-9r, https://www.loc.gov/item/2021666123. World Digital Library, Library of Congress. The Library of Congress is unaware of any copyright or other restrictions in the World Digital Library Collection.

Compared to the edited transcription of the Nahuatl text in Lisa Sousa, Stafford Poole, and James Lockhart, eds. and trans., *The Story of Guadalupe: Luis Laso de la Vega's "Huei tlamahuiçoltica" of 1649* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 60-88.

Translated into English and annotated by John-Charles Duffy, assisted by Travis Meyer. Italicized section headings added by Duffy. Additional paragraph breaks and sentence breaks inserted for readability; one of the source publication's paragraph breaks relocated to keep two sentences together for annotation purposes. Spelling of Nahuatl and Spanish words modernized, including the names *Laso* and *Zumárraga*. The abbreviations *D.* and *S.* spelled out as *Don* and *San*.

For the sake of modernization, various words capitalized in the source publication—some of them inconsistently—have been converted to lowercase in the translation. Terms converted to lowercase include the Spanish names for months and days of the week (which are not capitalized in modern Spanish but are capitalized in the source); also, titles such as "noblewoman" and "bishop" (although for clarity's sake, the title "Lord" is capitalized when it refers to Jesus, as is consistently done with the corresponding Nahuatl term in the source publication). The occasional placing of the words *Dios* and *María* in all caps replicates the source.

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