

temples and their images bears the wounds of defeat on his body: humiliation, betrayal, torture, and death. Motecuhzoma-Christ expresses the disappearance of the gods from Indigenous land. The use of grisaille creates an image that is only a trace of its former self, deprived of all the colors and powers that were lost on the way from the Old World.

8.2. The Codex Yanhuitlan

The Codex Yanhuitlan, the last manuscript considered in this book, is quite different from those addressed so far. Its contents are not religious, although there are remarkable images of Mesoamerican gods. It dates to the colonial period but was not produced in the schools of the conventos. However, as I claim in the following pages, it shows a clear relationship with and dependence on the artistic innovations of the friars' workshops. The Codex Yanhuitlan was produced in the Mixtec town of the same name under Indigenous patronage and thus offers an opportunity to close the story of Mesoamerican pictography and religion by returning to an Indigenous point of view, albeit in an inevitably colonial context.

The manuscript hails from the Mixteca in modern Oaxaca, southern Mexico, a region known for its long pictographic tradition in pre-contact times. Possibly drafted around 1550, the manuscript directly addresses historical events and characters related to the tumultuous period following the invasion and the imposition of the colonial regime. For this reason, it has attracted the attention of scholars since the 1940s, which resulted in a progressive clearer image of its contents and the town's history (Jiménez Moreno and Mateos Higuera 1940, Berlin 1947, Sepúlveda y Herrera 1994, Jansen and Pérez Jiménez 2009, Doesburg et al. 2015). Every folio of the manuscript was cut and separated from the original quire or binding, most likely in the eighteenth century. Most of the pages are in the Biblioteca Lafragua in Puebla (hereafter referred to as "Lafragua"), while other parts are found in the Archivo General de la Nación (AGN) in Mexico City and the Centro Cultural Santo Domingo of the Biblioteca Francisco de Burgoa (CCSD) in Oaxaca.

I specifically address the manuscript's style and iconography, which display a unique intermingling of Mixtec, Nahuatl, and Western features. Grisaille is used throughout the manuscript, which represents an innovation of the Codex Yanhuitlan within the Mixtec pictographic tradition. Folio Lafragua 8v (Fig. 8.13) depicts a typical colonial scene. A large Spanish figure looms in the center and is seated on a large wooden armchair. He is engaged in a lively interaction with three visibly smaller Indigenous men while holding an oversized necklace (most likely a rosary), which extends to the other side of the page. The Indigenous figures on the Spaniard's right stand on top of a rectangle, a place name for Yanhuitlan found throughout the manuscript. Another male figure addresses the Spaniard from the left. The lower part of the page is missing, but there is another place name on the right,



Figure 8.13. Man holding a rosary and talking to Indigenous peoples. Codex Yanhuitlan, f. 8v. Biblioteca José María Lafragua, Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, Puebla.

which is currently unidentified. The identity of the scene's protagonist has been a matter of disagreement among scholars. On the one hand, Jiménez Moreno and Higuera (1940, 64) considered him to be a religious figure such as a vicar or a bishop because of his long robe and large hat, whose brim is tied with a knotted rope. Jansen and Pérez Jiménez (2009, 167), on the other hand, identified him as a lay person—more specifically, Francisco de las Casas, a Spanish conquistador and the first *encomendero* of Yanhuitlan, who was said to have usurped the role of the friars and taught the rosary (doctrine) to Indigenous people under his *encomienda* (Sepúlveda y Herrera 1999, 167–168).

I believe that an illustration produced in Juan Pablos' printing workshop in Mexico City may contribute to the discussion on the identity of this enigmatic character. The print first appeared in Pedro de Gante's 1553 *doctrina* (doctrinal manual), a bilingual Nahuatl and Spanish text. On a page dedicated to the Spiritual Works of Mercy (*Las obras de misericordia espirituales*; Fig. 8.14), a small illustration depicts a man engaged in a lively conversation with a group of smaller people standing in front of him. The image illustrates one of the seven spiritual works of mercy—namely instructing the ignorant, which involved lay people, not friars or priests, in the care of the spiritual

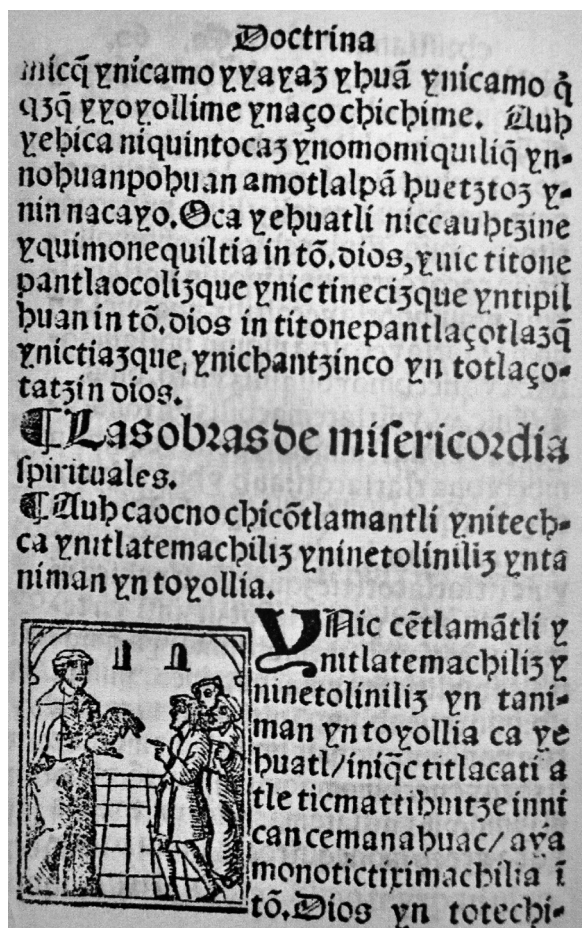


Figure 8.14. Spiritual Works of Mercy. Illustration from Pedro de Gante, *Doctrina cristiana en lengua mexicana* (Mexico City: Juan Pablos, 1553), f. 60v. Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas, Austin.

well-being of those in need. People who offered works of mercy were often depicted wearing a long robe that covered their entire body and a large hat, a reference to the first act of mercy attributed to a traveling Samaritan. Therefore, the scene from the Mexican engraving shows a double relationship with the page from the Codex Yanhuitlan in both form and content. Not only can the central character be identified as a lay person, but it can also be argued that he is in fact engaged in a spiritual work of mercy, given the large rosary that fills the page. García Valencia and Hermann Lejarazu (2012) noted that the Codex Yanhuitlan's characters make particularly complex gestures that nonetheless bear little resemblance to the equally elaborate hand movements of the protagonists of the Mixtec codices. The colonial manuscript adheres more closely to the rhetorical gestuality of Renaissance treatises found in many of the early illustrations produced for Juan Pablos' press, which indicates that such representational conventions circulated in New Spain's artistic, intellectual, and Indigenous circles from a very early date and had already been fully absorbed by local artists when the Codex Yanhuitlan was produced.

Juan Pablos (originally Giovanni Paoli from Brescia, Italy) co-founded the first printing shop on the continent

in 1539 with Juan Cromberger, who hailed from Seville. The printing house was located on a plot that was once the property of Juan de Zumárraga, the first bishop and inquisitor of New Spain, who also resided nearby (Grañén Porrúa 2010, 3–6). The Franciscan school San José de los Naturales was built on the old grounds of the destroyed royal workshops of the palace of Motecuhzoma (Escalante Gonzalbo 2010, 137) and located only blocks away from the press. Although the conventual school in Santiago Tlatelolco is widely credited as the main center of production for Indigenous manuscripts in the capital, the city center of Mexico was also important. The intellectual and physical proximity of the Office of the Inquisition, the school of San José de los Naturales and the press of Juan Pablos offers an opportunity to ponder the exchanges that may have occurred between men who worked and lived there at both the local and regional level, once the effects of the conventos' institutionalized education were felt in other parts of New Spain.

In this light, further similarities between images produced in Juan Pablos' workshop and the Codex Yanhuitlan may not be coincidental. The *Manual de adultos*, a catechism for adults, was possibly the first book published in the New World by the press and is known today only through fragments held at the Biblioteca Nacional de España (Grañén Porrúa 2010, 22, 145–148). The book appears to be a Latin-to-Spanish translation of *Liber Sacerdotalis* (first printed by Pietro Ravani in Venice in 1523), a very popular manual for the administration of sacraments and Catholic liturgy that was widely utilized by friars in New Spain, including Bishop Juan de Zumárraga (Zulaica Gárate 1939, 31–36). The frontispiece of the *Liber Sacerdotalis* depicts a small group of priests or novices who are presented from the back and kneeling in front of the pope and other prelates (Fig. 8.15). A similar representational strategy is used to illustrate a crowd of men on one of the Codex Yanhuitlan's pages, which breaks with pre-Hispanic Mixtec conventions (Fig. 8.16; Escalante Gonzalbo 2010, 165–168). Some of their heads have a tonsure, which was typical for ordained men but quite uncharacteristic for Indigenous men.

Despite the Codex Yanhuitlan's evident Mixtec affiliation, the manuscript's exact site of production is not known. The Indigenous ruler of the town, don Domingo de Guzmán, and the governor don Francisco de las Casas spent two years in Zumárraga's prisons in Mexico City while the Inquisition officially investigated accusations of idolatry and apostasy leveled against them (Greenleaf 1969, 74–81). During interrogatories, which occurred between 1544 and 1546, Domingo de Guzmán testified that he knew the Christian doctrine because he learned it from a book circulated by the friars (Grañén Porrúa 2010, 21). It is even more likely that, during their two years in jail, both Mixtec men were given regular instruction with doctrinal manuals. The manuscript was painted not long after the two Mixtec leaders' safe return to their town; thus, it is perhaps unsurprising that the painter of the Codex Yanhuitlan relied on print images.

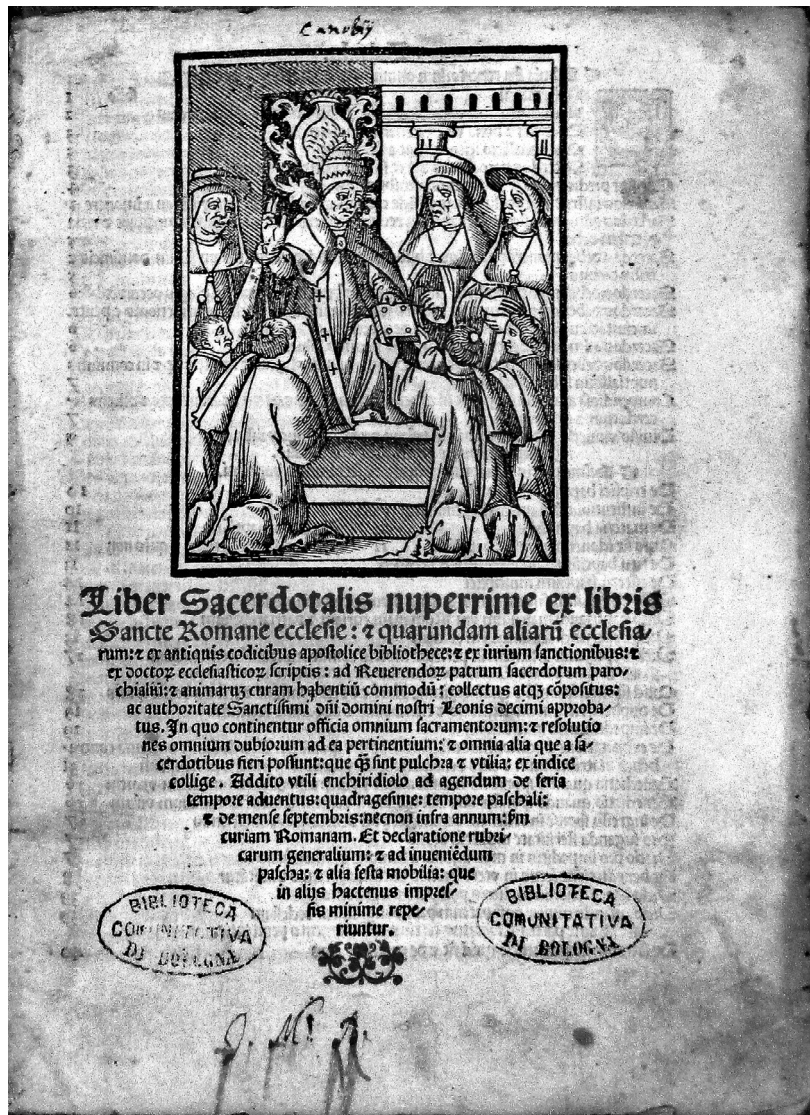


Figure 8.15. Frontispiece of *Liber Sacerdotalis* (Venice: Pietro Ravani, 1548). Biblioteca dell’Archiginnasio, Bologna.

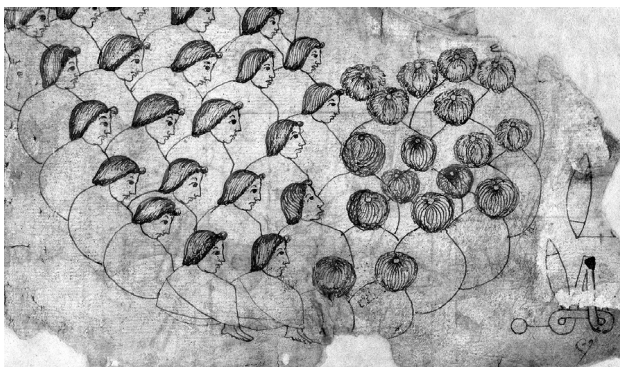


Figure 8.16. Codex Yanhuitlan, f. 5r, detail. Biblioteca José María Lafragua, Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, Puebla.

Another interesting correlation between circulating Christian prints and the imagery of the Codex Yanhuitlan can be seen in the two large medallions that depict a solar god and Xipe Totec in AGN folios 504r–507v (in the left

of Fig. 8.17). The heads are encircled by a series of rays commonly found on Mixtec gold disks. Although they presumably depict pre-Hispanic objects, the rendition of the two gods’ profiles is inconsistent with known Mixtec goldwork, which favors front-facing and often three-dimensional depictions. Rather, the medallion portraits of Christ (Hill 1920), which became increasingly common in fourteenth-century Europe, seem to be a closer iconographic antecedent. A print by Hans Burgkmair was widely copied, and different versions appeared in the books of New Spain. Some were perhaps locally produced, as evinced from their style and execution (Grañén Porrúa 1993–1994, 105–107; Fig. 8.18). In folio 504v, the two medallions of the solar god and Xipe are paired with two anthropomorphic and life-like depictions of the rain god, who is known as Ñuhu Ndzaui among the Mixtecs, and a female goddess. As established by Jansen and Pérez Jiménez (2009, 159), the four gods correspond to the four tribute and veintena periods of the Mexica Empire, to which Yanhuitlan was subject (see Section 4.2). The solar god is related to the celebration of Panquetzaliztli,

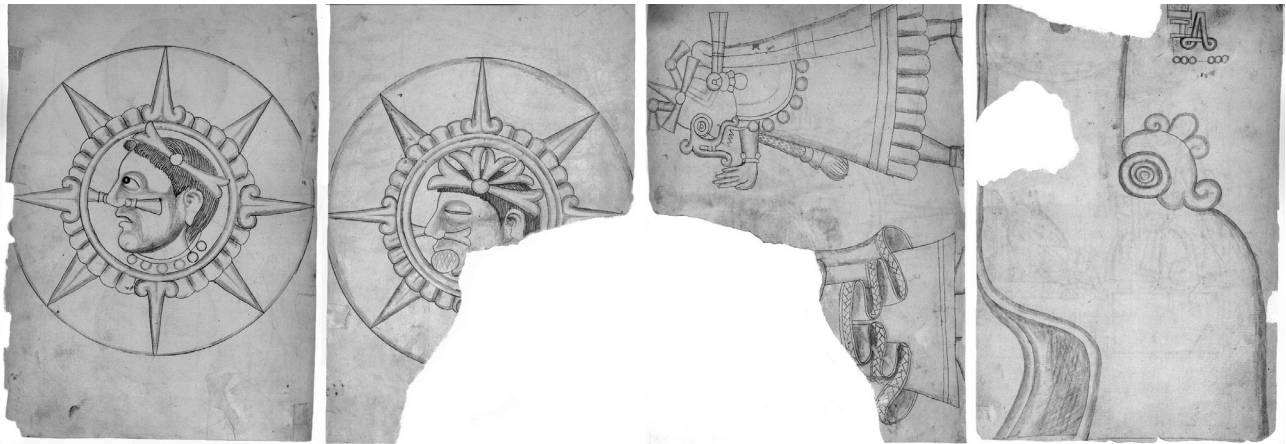


Figure 8.17. Reading right to left, a cave and four gods. Codex Yanhuitlan, ff. 504–507. Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico City.

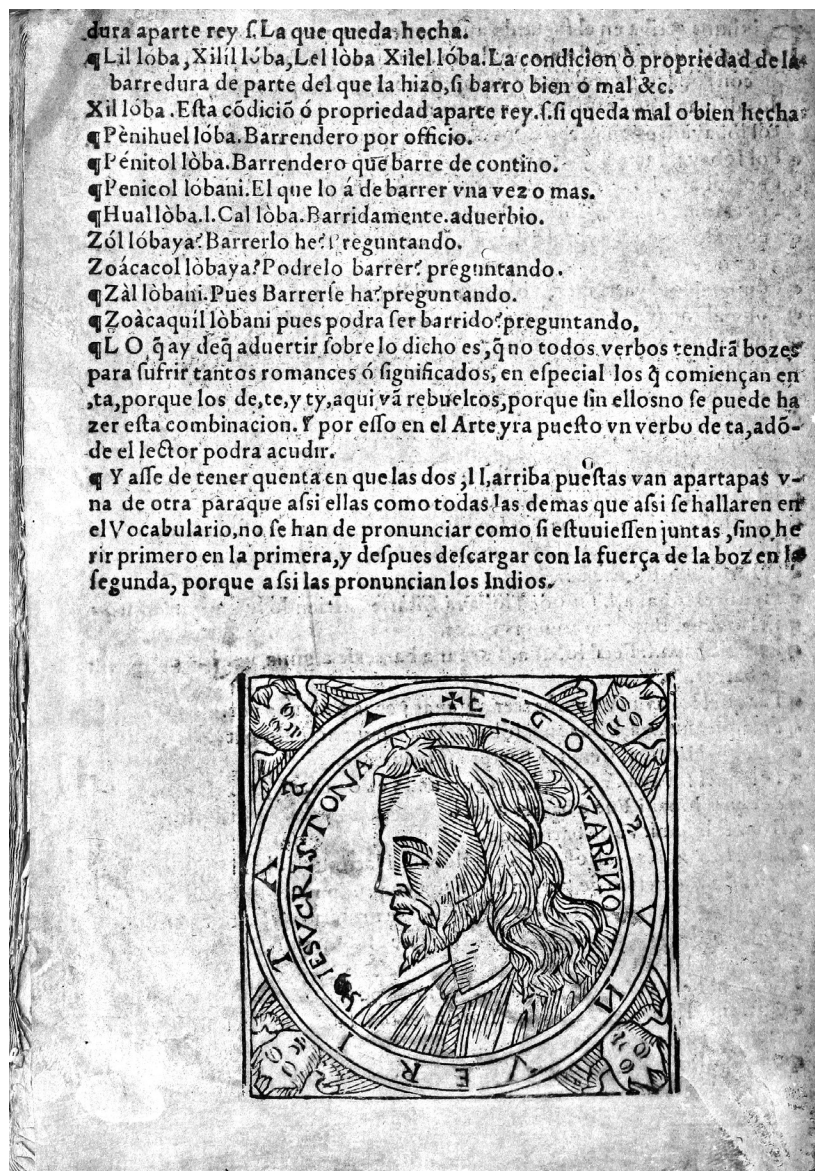


Figure 8.18. Portrait of Christ. Illustration from Juan de Córdoba, *Vocabulario en lengua zapoteca* (Mexico City: Pedro de Ocharte, 1573). John Carter Brown Library, Providence.

Xipe Totec to Tlacaxipehualiztli, and the rain god to Etzalcualiztli. Finally, the goddess can be identified as Tlazolteotl, who corresponds to the *veintena* of Oehpaniztli. According to the most accepted reconstruction of the manuscript (Doesburg et al. 2015, 53–54), the four gods were positioned right before a giant reptilian maw, as reconstructed in Figure 8.17. Jansen and Pérez Jiménez (2009, 159) interpreted the crocodilian creature as the first day of the calendar, day Crocodile, while Doesburg et al. (2015, 54) considered it to be the entrance to a cave and the earth, which is often zoomorphically rendered in pictographic manuscripts. These two options are not mutually exclusive, as previously seen on pages 39–40 of the Codex Borgia (Fig. 3.5) and pages 17–22 of the Codex Laud (Fig. 7.22). In all these representations, the day/cave crocodile eats the days and ceremonies and the gods that lead them. In the Codex Borgia, the extended and horizontal jaws of the crocodilian creature count as the first day, day Crocodile, of the two sets of days that extend over the sides of the manuscript. In the Codex Laud, the gods walk towards a cave, where an offering is eventually placed. As noted by Anders and Jansen (1994, 253), in Codex Laud the day 1 Jaguar is inserted into the cave in the form of a round dot and a feline ear at the back of the crocodilian monster. The pages of the Codex Yanhuitlan, possibly painted in the early 1550s, are not only among the earliest surviving depictions of Mesoamerican gods in the post-conquest period but also indeed contemporaneous to the *veintena* images from colonial manuscripts discussed in the previous chapters. Based on these notable aspects of the Codex Yanhuitlan, it can be concluded that the

manuscript was produced by an artist from a cultural and religious milieu who was well aware of the friars' intellectual pursuits and their preferred portrayal of both “ancient” Mesoamerican religion and Christian doctrine.

A third distinctive iconographic element found throughout the manuscript further corroborates the idea that the *tlacuilo* of the Codex Yanhuitlan had been trained at the schools of the conventos. In two instances (Lafragua 9v, AGN 506v), Indigenous rulers sit on the typical Nahuatl *icpalli*, a royal seat with a high back. In folios Lafragua 8v (Fig. 8.13), Lafragua 1v, and CCSD 1r, women sport the typical two-horned hairstyle of married Nahuatl women, while Indigenous men wear the characteristic central Mexican *tilma*, a large cloth knotted on the shoulder. These features are not found in Mixtec manuscripts. The same “foreign” conventions appear in the sixteenth-century monochrome murals in San Juan Teitipac in the valley of Oaxaca, in which local friars, Spaniards, and Indigenous people participate in the Holy Friday procession (Fig. 8.19). The use of Nahuatl conventions indicates that the artist was either from central Mexico or had been trained at a conventual school in that region. The fact that monochrome was employed in both mural and manuscript painting further suggests that the technique was also tied to a specific central Mexican artistic training and the schools of the conventos.

The heterogeneity of the Codex Yanhuitlan's sources complicates the identification of the document's genre. In addition, its purpose and commission are not documented.



Figure 8.19. Parade during Holy Friday, sixteenth century. Convento of San Juan Teitipac, Oaxaca. Photo by Javier García.

The combination of Christian and Mesoamerican iconography seems even more baffling when one recalls the persecution suffered by the leaders of Yanhuitlan shortly before the manuscript's presumed realization. The manuscript was likely sponsored by the cacique Domingo de Guzmán, following his return to power after two years in prison in Mexico City, where he had been formally charged and persecuted by the Inquisition. Perhaps don Domingo's defeated rulership after years of struggle accounts for the juxtaposition of different ideologies: pre-Hispanic gods and their importance in the Indigenous tribute system and Spanish and Dominican attempts to dominate local resources.

8.3. Discussion

As Quiñones Keber (1988, 203) remarked, Sahagún's project was inherently contradictory. The friars sought information regarding Indigenous religion and customs while simultaneously persecuting, demonizing, and destroying every manifestation of them. Nahua artists bore witness to a world in which the past that they were asked to portray was only visible in the ruins that surrounded the schools that they attended. In the Sahaguntine work, the reference to Classical antiquity and the abrupt passage to Christianity should be understood in this light.

Although it is deeply indebted to the artistic endeavors of the conventual schools, the Codex Yanhuitlan seems to propose a different model of coexistence. Mesoamerican gods, despite being depicted according to European conventions, were not framed within a Classical canon but rather were clearly presented as part of a Mesoamerican understanding of time, the calendar, and tribute. Mesoamerican gods and Christian symbols and institutions are represented in the Codex Yanhuitlan, in stark contrast to the conspicuous absence of European religion in the extensive Sahaguntine works (Terraciano 2010, 67). Despite its purported ethnographic stance, Sahagún's experiment is fraught with the impossibility of reconciliation between the Mesoamerican and Christian worldviews, as seen in the image of Motecuhzoma-Christ. Rather than a mediation between two worlds, as frequently suggested (e.g., Escalante Gonzalbo 2003, 191, Magaloni Kerpel 2003b), the Nahua artists who worked within the confines of the conventual schools belonged to a single world, replete with contradictions that could not be resolved in light of the friars' patronage and exigencies.

The use of monochrome reveals the mechanism by which the painted image was created and conceived and, by extension, reveals gaps in the friars' contradictory project. As previously suggested (Cline 1988, Magaloni Kerpel 2003b, 221), it is possible that Book 12 of the Florentine Codex offers a subversive view of Sahagún's project that was highly critical of Spanish military and political presence in Mexico. However, Indigenous artists were required to frame history through a dramatic and irreconcilable division between the periods before and after the conquest, a legacy that lingers in academia to this day. The Codex

Yanhuitlan, in contrast, manages to portray the Indigenous point of view on the colonial situation. As a result, Mesoamerican and Catholic sacred images and objects are given similar and equal treatment in the Codex Yanhuitlan. By contrast, in the Florentine Codex, Christian imagery is only indirectly found in the diabolical representation of God-Tezcatlipoca in Book 6 and the Motecuhzoma-Christ. The Codex Yanhuitlan indeed belongs to a long Mixtec tradition of picture writing that did not wane with the conquest but adjusted to the colonial context and continued well into the eighteenth century, whereas the Sahaguntine experiment was short-lived because it was incapable of translating and imagining Mesoamerican religious and cultural conditions in the colonial context.