The Origins of Mexican Catholicism: Nahua Rituals and Christian Sacraments in Sixteenth-Century Mexico (review)

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dedicated to Tezcatlipoca, others were founded to honor one of his avatars. Analyzing the function of the *momoztli*, an altar or temple dedicated to a god, he notes that while these were common (if not clearly defined) features in the pre-Columbian landscape, they were closely associated with Tezcatlipoca. Olivier also finds a close relationship between the Tezcatlipoca priesthood and the highest offices of the land.

In Chapter 6 he looks closely at the celebrations to Tezcatlipoca in the Nahua month of Toxcatl, dedicated to Tezcatlipoca and filled with ceremonies to revere him. Music, and especially the flute, was an important component in his celebration as was the slow ascent of the pyramid, and Olivier focuses on the *ixiptla* or ritual impersonator of Tezcatlipoca in order to gain greater insights into the deity's character. Depictions of Tezcatlipoca frequently show him with a torn or amputated left foot and in Chapter 7 Olivier demonstrates that this feature is by no means universal. The lost extremity seems to be related to the production of fire. On the other hand, the smoking mirror was one of the nearly universal features of Tezcatlipoca. The mirror was a tool of sorcerers and diviners and through it Tezcatlipoca could reveal people's transgressions. In the end Olivier concludes that Tezcatlipoca, as a result of these two key features, represented sexuality. In his conclusions, Olivier compares and contrasts what he has elucidated about Tezcatlipoca with what is known about Quetzalcoatl, and sees in these two deities the poles of Mesoamerican religion, or as he calls them "the alpha and omega of ancient Mexican mythology" (p. 277).

This is an excellent book, well researched and extremely detailed. This said, it suffers from some unnerving flaws. The translation from time to time mystifies. One of the attributes of Tezcatlipoca is small bells, what most people would call jingle bells. The text calls these "tinker bells" (e.g. p. 55) or "tinkle bells," (e.g. p. 211). At several points the work talks of "monks" (e.g. p. 82) referring to the early Franciscan missionaries; Franciscans are friars, not monks. The book would have also been greatly improved if the illustrations could have been placed in proximity to the text where they were described, rather than at the end. Lastly, a glossary would aid readers unfamiliar with Nahuatl terms such as *ixiptla*, *momoztli*, and *tlaquimilolli*, or with specialized Spanish terms such as *trecena*, to mention but a few.

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The Origins of Mexican Catholicism: Nahua Rituals and Christian Sacraments in Sixteenth-Century Mexico. By Osvaldo F. Pardo. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2004. Pp. xii, 250. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. $70.00 cloth.

Osvaldo Pardo examines how mendicant friars introduced Christian sacraments—baptism, confirmation, confession, and communion—to the sixteenth-century Nahuas. Though working exclusively with published materials, Pardo shows a broad command of the literature from and about Mexico (both sixteenth-century

sources and recent ethnohistorical work), and the historical development of sacramental theology and ritual in the Old World. The book is a useful guide to what the friars thought they were doing. A major point of the study is that European theology and practice in Europe were not fully standardized, and the friars were able to exploit this flexibility as they sought out the opinions and options most applicable to their experiences. They often chose to simplify their tasks by pursuing those options that allowed the greatest degree of tolerance for native people's behavior. Pardo intends that his focus on the missionaries help correct the tendency to take European culture as a given and look at how native people "respond" to it; instead, he is looking for how the missionaries responded to the Mexican context.

Information on Nahua ritual is limited to occasional treatments of rites that resembled Catholic sacraments. Pardo states "knowledge of ancient rituals became instrumental for the friars' teaching of Christian doctrine" (p. 12). However, the friars' improvisations that he documents derive more from the exigencies of preaching new religious habits to large numbers of people in an alien tongue, turf battles among the orders and between them and other colonial agents, and other realities of the immediate colonial context than with their ethnographic investigation and evaluation of "ancient" Nahua ritual. He demonstrates little connection between the friars' knowledge of preconquest rites and the specific forms they gave to the sacraments. That some friars thought Nahuas accepted sacramental confession because they had had something similar does not mean that they widely or knowingly allowed indigenous elements without European counterparts into the rite. Nor does the author consider the likely possibility that the friars were fed descriptions of "ancient" rituals that invented or exaggerated similarities to the newly introduced rites. Pardo's most extended example of a friar's attempt to frame a sacrament in native terms is the Franciscan Alonso de Molina's application of military terminology, not native ritual practice, to the sacrament of confirmation

Chapters deal with individual sacraments. The one on baptism focuses on the debates over how much preparation and ceremony were necessary to legitimately baptize Indians, usefully updating earlier work such as that of Ricard. The chapter on confirmation documents debates about the spiritual maturity and capacity of the Indians. A chapter on confession discusses the controversy over whether contrition was necessary for proper administration of the sacrament or whether attrition (fear of punishment) sufficed; the latter view received much support. Here Pardo usefully critiques recent attempts to read the imposition of sacramental confession as a Foucauldian disciplinary regime. Because it was difficult for friars to decipher Indians' emotional states in order to determine contrition, and friars barely proficient even in Nahuatl often confessed Indians who spoke other languages, Pardo focuses another confession chapter on the reading of non-linguistic signs, such as gestures and weeping, as evidence of repentance. The chapter on the Eucharist examines disagreements between those who thought that, as permanent neophytes, Indians were unfit to receive communion and those who thought participation would help to nurture them toward spiritual adulthood.

Flexible the friars may have been, and optimistic at the outset, but somehow their responses to the Nahuas led ultimately to the Church's accepting scaled-down, simplified, less demanding forms of Catholicism, which in turn supported their representations of the Nahuas as less spiritually capable than themselves, fit for only a rudimentary form of Christianity. Thus the friars invented a mode of colonial discourse that would be replicated in many other places. I see here more of a foregone conclusion structured by the colonial context itself than an open-minded "response" to the particularities of Nahua religious practice, but Pardo traces the friars' footsteps into this discursive trap.

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The Guaraní Under Spanish Rule in the Río de la Plata. By Barbara Ganson. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003. Pp. xii, 290. Illustrations. Notes. Glossary. References. Index. $65.00 cloth.

Barbara Ganson has composed the most comprehensive study of the Guaraní during the colonial period to date, and her book is likely to remain authoritative for years to come. She divides it sharply into two parts. The first, totaling some 70 pages, examines Guaraní cultural change and continuity up to the mid-eighteenth century. The second, just over 100 pages in length, studies Guaraní responses to the transforming changes they experienced from 1750-1825, in particular the Treaty of Madrid, the expulsion of the Jesuits, and the War for Independence.

Ganson states that the central concern of her book is the contrast between Jesuit accounts of Guaraní culture and the versions that emerge from the Guaranís' own writings. But these writings do not emerge before the mid-eighteenth century and seem to consist primarily of petitions to the crown and minutes of *cabildo* meetings; any private correspondence has yet to be discovered. The author neglects to describe the character of these native writings in any detail, which is strange because her narrative stresses their difference in perspective from the more standard Spanish sources. While Ganson remarks that her book was influenced by Charles Gibson's classic, *The Aztecs Under Spanish Rule* (1964), other than for the most general conclusions about native cultural adaptation, similarities are hard to find. The books are structured very differently, Gibson made little use of informal Nahuatl sources, and the peoples and situations studied could hardly be more distinctive from each other. As Ganson acknowledges, the Guaraní were a tropical semi-sedentary people who lacked dense numbers and precious metals and who consequently lived on the fringes of the empire.

Part I of the book is an informative, up-to-date survey of Guaraní cultural change and retention under the Spanish. The Spanish used Guaraní women as a significant part of their labor force and even obtained access to male laborers through the latter's kinship ties to senior females. Guaraní, rather than Spanish, became the dominant language for conversation. Even the Jesuit missionaries preached in it.