

SAHAGÓN'S SOURCES FOR BOOK II

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One of the questions which was raised when the translation of the Nahuatl of Sahagún's *Florentine Codex* was becoming a possibility was: What information can we find in the Nahuatl which the informants were deliberately withholding from the Spaniards? If the question should be of interest now, we have indeed found that in general the Nahuatl is more informative than the Spanish text, but not in a way to suggest that the informants used the Nahuatl to hide information from the authorities. If the informants were not always good Christians, the young men helping Sahagún were, and Sahagún or any competent translator could have detected a trick. The only passages in which there may well have been a decision not to inform are the well-known sacred songs which form one of the Appendices in Book II. In the first place, Sahagún did not translate them (though there are glosses of uneven value in the *Real Palacio MS version*): Sahagún thought them works of the devil. It is quite likely, therefore, that his amanuenses likewise so considered them, and thought it improper to study them carefully enough to help translate them. For, if we can accept the results of Seler's and Garibay's studies and translations—as most scholars do—they could not have been impossible for them to translate. Besides, some of the difficulties to surmount are due to poor copying—if that is what accounts for the presence of absurd sequences of vowels and consonants, in both the *Real Palacio MS* and *Florentine Codex* versions. It is a reproduction so corrupt that it looks as if it must have been deliberate, with the purpose, maybe, of shaming the devil since it was the devil's work.

Of course, there are other untranslated sections. Sahagún did not put the chapter on the parts of the body (Book X, Chapter 27) into Spanish, presumably because it is just a catalogue, a vocabulary.

In the *Florentine Codex*, the Spanish column under the chapter heading is labeled simply, "*Relacion del autor digna de ser notada*", in Sahagún's hand; the printed version,¹ from the *Tolosa MS*, adds that it is "more pleasing than the declaration in the [Nahuatl] text could be". In Book IX, the Spanish texts for Chapter 16 (goldworkers), part of Chapter 17 (lapidaries), and Chapters 20 and 21 (featherworkers) tell nothing of their techniques. The only Spanish text for Chapter 16 reads: "What is declared in this chapter is of little importance as to the Faith or as to the virtues, for it concerns purely geometrical practices. If one should want to know the vocabulary or the precise ways of speech of the craftsmen who practice this craft, one can ask them themselves, for they are to be found everywhere." Lapidaries and featherworkers are dismissed in almost the same terms.² There are omissions in Book XI, too. The most considerable one includes, to all intents and purposes, the latter half of Chapter 12 (part of Paragraph 6 and all of Paragraphs 7-10 inclusive: mountains and other land forms, stones, roads, buildings, caves), and all of Chapter 13 (six Paragraphs: maize, its cultivation, beans, chía, amaranth, squashes). The Spanish text,³ which in the *Florentine Codex* begins under the heading "*Nota*", is interrupted by the Spanish translations of the paragraph headings and of the Chapter 13 heading, an explanation or two referring to the Nahuatl text, and numerous illustrations. There are brief interlinear glosses on the Aztec side which make up somewhat for the lack of a fuller Spanish text. Sahagún's discussion in the Spanish column contains the accounts of superstitious practices and of the course of Christianization in the Old World, the New World, and the Far East which are familiar to us in the published editions of the *Historia general*. But the most interesting omission in Book XI—perhaps it is rather a transformation than an omission—occurs in Chapter 9, concerning the metals. In 150 or 160 words is sketched what the Nahuatl text says at considerably greater length about gold, silver,

1 Bernardino de Sahagún. *Historia de las cosas de Nueva España* (Angel María Garibay K., ed.; México, Editorial Porrúa, 1956, henceforth referred to as Sahagún, Garibay, ed.), vol. III, p. 157; my translation.

2 Sahagún, Garibay ed., III, p. 58, 60, 64. The English is my translation of Chapter 16.

3 Headed "*Apéndice: Adición sobre supersticiones*"; "§ 7.—*De las calidades de los caminos*"; and "*Capítulo XIII: De todos los mantenimientos*" in Sahagún, Garibay ed., III, p. 351 ff.

lead, mica, tin, and copper. In the remainder of the chapter, Sahagún describes the medicinal uses of: 1) copal resin, bitumen, and rubber properly liquefied and mixed; 2) pork fat, and 3) pulverized obsidian mixed with egg white.⁴

From such examples as the foregoing it is evident enough that some categories of information in the Nahuatl text have been suppressed, so far as Sahagún's Spanish text is concerned, but it seems fairly obvious that suppressions, abridgements, and substitutions were not due to informants' or Sahagún's wish to withhold damaging information in the Nahuatl text. The Spanish text may be regarded as a series of glosses or a series of summaries or sometimes a fairly close translation of practically all of the Nahuatl text.

It is therefore something of a surprise to find instances in the Spanish text of considerable differences or expansions of materials in the Nahuatl text, or of inclusions of information not to be found in the Nahuatl text, as one does to a notable degree in Book II, Sahagún's account of the Aztec months of the civil year and their religious ceremonies.

Such differences appear to be of three sorts: 1) those due to an occasional discrepancy in translation; 2) those natural in an explanation to non-Aztec readers, and 3) those due to the introduction of apparently new material. Some examples follow.

Discrepancies in translation

1. Some of the simplest such occur in Chapter 20⁵ (Quauitl Eua) when the child sacrifices are told of. The one sacrificed at Quauhtepetl is described in the Spanish text (HG) as dressed in red garments, whereas the Nahuatl text (FC) says they were dark

⁴ Gold and silver were both called *teocuitlatl* (god's excrement), and the Nahuatl text is partly concerned with this concept, which it applies also to lead and to a mineral which is probably mica. Hence, probably, Sahagún's abridgement and his introduction of extraneous material in the Spanish text. Most of the discussion of pork fat is missing in the printed Spanish Sahagún, and what remains is badly garbled (*cf.* Sahagún, Garibay ed., III, p. 340-341).

⁵ Sahagún, Garibay ed., I, p. 140 (my translations into English throughout); Arthur J. O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble, trans. "The Ceremonies", *Florentine Codex*, Book II, Santa Fe, School of American Research and University of Utah, 1951 (hereafter referred to as Anderson and Dibble, Book II), p. 43. The translations are here somewhat revised. HG identifies the Spanish; FC the Nahuatl.

green; the one sacrificed at Cocotl is described as in red and tawny ones (HG) as against in red and dark green ones (FC); and the once sacrificed at Yiauhqueme as it tawny one (HG) as against in dark green ones (FC).

2. In the month of Etzalqualiztli (Chapter 25), dancers went from house to house begging *etzalli*, a kind of cooked corn:⁶

These went in pairs, in threes,	[They went some] in fives,
in fours, in fives... (HG)	some in sixes, some in sevens... (FC)

3. In the Appendix listing the structures in the temple square, in the description of Tochinco,⁷ there is an interesting calendric discrepancy:

... It was a low, square pyramid which had steps on all four sides. Here each year they killed the impersonator of Ome Tochtli when his sign [Two Rabbit] reigned... (HG)	There died the impersonator of [Ome Tochtli], once yearly, at the time of [the feast of] Tepeilhuitl. (FC)
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4. In the same Appendix, one of the structures named for a mirror-like spring of water shows some contradictions as to its users:⁸

... it was a spring like a pool in which those who performed penances because of a vow bathed themselves. Many used to make a vow to perform penances for certain months or for a year, serving the pyramid temples or the gods to whom they paid devotion... (HG)	... there the priests just bathed themselves; it was their bathing place. (FC)
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Explanations for non-Aztec readers

Sometimes differences between the texts exist which can be ex-

⁶ Sahagún, Garibay ed., v. 1, p. 166; Anderson and Dibble, Book II, p. 79.

⁷ Sahagún, Garibay ed., v. 1, p. 233-4; Anderson and Dibble, Book II, p. 167.

⁸ Sahagún, Garibay ed., v. 1, p. 236; Anderson and Dibble, Book II, p. 171.

plained as arising from the need to explain to a Spaniard what might be quite obvious to an Aztec.

1. For example, in the celebrations in the month of Toxcatl (Chapter 24), in the elaborate arraying of the god Uitzilopochtli, the sacred roll of paper known as the god's breechclout was carried to him; ⁹ specially made arrows steadied it:

... these arrows went one below and one above the paper. Two men held them, one on one side and the other on the other side, their hands holding them together tight against the paper, one arrow above and the other below... (HG)

[The arrows] were made only that they might support it... (FC)

2. The activities of a class of priest called *quaquacuilitin* are prominent in the Etzalqualiztli celebrations (Chapter 25); the priests are described ¹⁰ in the Spanish version only:

... there came some old men whom they called *quaquacuilitin*, who had their faces stained black and their hair clipped close except on the crowns of their heads, where their hair was long—the opposite of what [our] clergy do... (HG)

... the old priests took away [the offerings]... (FC)

3. In that same chapter, ¹¹ the description of the priest of Tlaloc is much more ample in the Spanish version:

... the priest of Tlaloc preceded all of them. He had on his head a crown like a box, close-fitting to his head but wide above, and from the middle of it there emerged many

... The fire priest of the Temple of Tlaloc led the others. He went putting on his quetzal and heron feather crown, and his face was coated with liquid rubber. He put on his

⁹ Sahagún, Garibay ed., v. 1, p. 156-7; Anderson and Dibble, Book II, p. 69.

¹⁰ Sahagún, Garibay ed., v. 1, p. 163; Anderson and Dibble, Book II, p. 76.

¹¹ Sahagún, Garibay ed., v. 1, p. 169; Anderson and Dibble, Book II, p. 82.

feathers. His face was anointed with liquid rubber, which is as black as ink. He had on a jacket called *ayatl*. He wore an ugly mask with a big nose, and he had a mane of hair reaching to his waist. This hair was joined to the mask. (HG)

mist jacket, his rain mask or his Tlaloc mask. His long, tangled hair fell to his loins... (FC)

4. During the Uey Tecuilhuitl celebrations described in Chapter 27, the offering priestesses accompanying the impersonator of the goddess Xilonen danced before her. They were known as the "hanging gourd", the Nahuatl text tell us, and the reason is given us:¹²

The men... went beating for them a two-toned drum which had only one tongue above and another below; and from the one below hung a gourd vessel such as they use to drink water. With this the drum is much louder than the kind which has two tongues above and none below. (HG)

...the two-toned wooden drum, which they beat as they went, had going tied to it a gourd; it went under, at the bottom of the drum; it looked as if it went hanging... (FC)

5. The final sacrificing of a victim in honor of the fire god Xiuhtecutli is more explicitly told in the Spanish version;¹³ after they dragged him out of the fire,

... they opened his breast from nipple to nipple, or a little below that... (HG)

... They cut open his breast; they split open his chest... (FC)

6. Sacrifices were offered to the fire god also in the month of Izcalli, told of in Chapter 37. The following note on part of the preliminaries is more explanatory in the Spanish version:¹⁴

In this fourth year, on the last day of the month, at dawn,

... when already [the feast of] Izcalli had dawned, the cere-

¹² Sahagún, Garibay ed., v. I, p. 180-181; Anderson and Dibble, Book II, p. 98.

¹³ Sahagún, Garibay ed., v. I, p. 188; Anderson and Dibble, Book II, p. 108.

¹⁴ Sahagún, Garibay ed., v. I, p. 222-3; Anderson and Dibble, Book II, p. 150.

they took those who were to die to the pyramid where they were to kill them. The women who were to die carried their few clothes and all their ornaments on their backs, and the men did the same. They did not wear the paper vestments in which they were to die, but someone carried them for them in front, placed on a tripod, or rather a globe resting on three feet, which was perhaps almost a yard high. On this tripod these papers went arranged and hanging, and someone carried this tripod ahead of the slave who was to wear them...

(HG)

monially bathed ones entered the sand; they brought them to the sand there at Tzonmolco. The women carried everything, all their womanly array, and the men carried everything, all their array... And they carried for them all their paper array; these various things went upon a wooden globe. (FC)

7. In the description of the Uauhquiltamalqualiztli celebration of that same month (the eating of tamales of amaranth greens), described in Chapter 38, we are given a reason for naming merchants who provided slaves as sacrificial victims "bathers of slaves". The Spanish version is more explicit on some points, the Nahuatl version on others.¹⁵

These owners who killed these slaves were called *tealtiani*, that is, bathers; and this was because every day they bathed these slaves with warm water. This indulgence and many others they accorded them in order to fatten them. Until the day they died they gave them fine and luxurious food, and each slave owner provided his slave a pleasure girl as a com-

... for this reason he was called "the bather of a slave": he continually bathed him with warm water all the time he was going to die. All the time [the bathed one] went knowing that there was his tribute of death at its appointed time when he would die at the time of Tlacaxipeualiztli.

And before he died, much did the bather of slaves esteem

¹⁵ Sahagún, Garibay ed., v. 1, p. 226; Anderson and Dibble, Book II, p. 155-6.

panion, so that she might gladden him, and arouse his passion, and indulge him, and not let him become sad; because thus he would grow fat. And when that slave was going to die, he gave all his clothing to that girl who had been his companion all these previous days. (HG)

him; he paid much attention to him. He regaled him he gave him things; all good was the food which he gave him. And a pleasure girl became his guardian. She constantly amused him; she caressed him; she joked with him; she made him laugh; she gratified him; she took pleasure on his neck; she embraced him. She deloused him, she combed his hair, she smoothed his hair. She banished his sorrows. And when already it was the bathed one's time to die, the pleasure girl took all. She rolled up, she bundled up all the bathed one's belongings, each of what [the bather] had clothed him in, had placed on him when he had sent him as a messenger; [the things] with which he had lived in pretense, had gone with head high, had lived at ease, had gone about drunk, had indeed lived in pride. (FC)

8. Several edifices listed in the Appendix on the structures in the temple square which are merely named or given scant treatment in the Nahuatl version are much more fully described in the Spanish version. What they do with the Tlillan Calmecac (one of Moctezuma's favorite retreats) illustrates:¹⁶

... it was a chapel made in honor of the goddess Ciuacoatl. Three priests who served this goddess lived in the building;

Tlillan Calmecac: there dwelt the guardians of Ciuacoatl. (FC)

¹⁶ Sahagún, Garibay ed., v. 1, p. 234; Anderson and Dibble, Book II, p. 168.

she visibly would appear before them and reside in that place, and from there visibly would emerge to go wherever she wished. Certainly it was the devil in the form of that woman. (HG)

9. In the Appendix on various sorts of offering ceremonies, similarly a number of details taken for granted in the Nahuatl version are described in the Spanish version; the ladles in which incense was offered, for example: ¹⁷

The priests . . . offered incense with a certain kind of incensory made of fired clay, like a ladle. They were medium-sized ladles with handles of the thickness of a yard measure or a little less, about a cubit long, hollow within; inside it had pebbles to form a rattle.

The ladle's cup was made like an incensory with holes in the bottom of the cup . . . (HG)

. . . an incense ladle made of clay, with [stones in its hollow making] a rattle . . . (FC)

Apparently new material

Even taking into account that the *Historia general* is often enough not a close translation of the Nahuatl text, there are a number of passages which so much expand the information in the Nahuatl text that one may well wonder where it came from. 1. Sahagún used a considerable number of informants, and, besides, he tells us in the prologue to Book II that "The Mexicans added and amended many things in the twelve books as they were copied" to produce the final Nahuatl text. This copying occurred before 1569; the date of

¹⁷ Sahagún, Garibay ed., v. 1, p. 242; Anderson and Dibble, Book II, p. 181.

writing the Spanish text of Book II is unknown, but could have been at any time in the ensuing decade. Since these dates are approximately 50 to 60 years after the conquest, it would seem unlikely that there could have been further reference to eyewitness informants to make changes and additions. Perhaps Sahagún or his helpers just remembered alternative descriptions. 2. It is also attractive to entertain the possibility that other documents provided the basis for the differences. There were redraftings of the Nahuatl text until it took final form. Though Sahagún was ordered to surrender all his manuscripts to the authorities, he quite evidently did not do so. There must have been other lost Sahaguntine documents besides what may be referred to as the Enríquez copy of the bilingual text, for there is evidence that Sahagún used earlier drafts of his compilations toward the end of his life, and Mendieta and Torquemada evidently did, too, after Sahagún's death.¹⁸ Carochi, fifty years after Sahagún died, put some short passages in his grammatical work as examples. That there were different versions of the calendar of festivals is further evident from the fact that in Book II, Chapters 37 and 38, there are in effect two different and somewhat varying descriptions of activities in the month of Izcalli.

Here are some examples:

1. In the month of Toxcatl (Chapter 24) the sacrificial victim who had spent a year as impersonator of the god Tezcatlipoca of his own accord mounted the steps of the pyramid as he went to his death, breaking his flutes and whistles as he went up. All we know of the structure from the Nahuatl text (FC) is that it was "a small temple called Tlacochealco"; it is the Spanish version (HG), however, which tells us that it was "poorly ornamented", "at the edge of the road", "out in the wilderness a league or so from the city".¹⁹

¹⁸ The possibility of Sahagún's use of other native sources at present unknown is suggested by Garibay in Sahagún, Garibay ed., v. 1, p. 11-12, and by Miguel León-Portilla in *Ritos, sacerdotes y atavíos de los dioses*, Miguel León-Portilla, ed. and tr., Mexico, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Historia, Seminario de Cultura Náhuatl, 1958, p. 161 ff., with examples from the appendix on priests in Book II. See also Luis Nicolau d'Oliver and Howard Cline: "Sahagún and his Works", in Howard Cline, ed.: "Guide to Ethno-historical Sources", Part 2, *Handbook of Middle American Indians*, Robert Wauchope, gen. ed., Austin, University of Texas Press, 1973, v. 13, p. 186 ff.

¹⁹ Sahagún, Garibay ed., v. 1, p. 155; Anderson and Dibble, Book II, p. 68.

2. In the month of Etzalqualiztli (Chapter 25), offering priests spent four days bathing at a point at the water's edge where four "mist houses" stood: ²⁰

On the first day they all went into one of them; on the second day into another; on the third day into the third one; on the fourth day into the fourth one... (HG)

... at the cardinal points were the mist houses... (FC)

3. The offering priests' costuming in the *etzalli* dance of the same month which followed some days after the bathing mentioned above, shows some differences: ²¹

... on their backs [they placed] a large flower of pleated paper, round like a shield, and afterwards they fastened to the napes of their necks some more pleated paper flowers which came out on both sides of their heads like paper ears, like semi-circles. They dyed the fronts of their heads blue, and over the dye they spread iron pyrites. This priest had, hanging from his right hand, a bag or pouch of jaguar skin, sewn with little shells which like little bells went rattling one against another. From one corner of the pouch the jaguar's tail went hanging; from another its two hind feet, from another its two forefeet. (HG).

... he carried on his back the round, pleated flower, and he went placing a pleated paper flower on the nape of his neck.

And his forehead was painted blue; besides, he put iron pyrites on it; he sprinkled iron pyrites.

And with him he went grasping a paper incense bag, with shells, attached, covered with seashells, also known as a seashell incense bag... (FG)

²⁰ Sahagún, Garibay ed., v. I, p. 164; Anderson and Dibble, Book II, p. 77.

²¹ Sahagún, Garibay ed., v. I, p. 166-7; Anderson and Dibble, Book II, p. 80.

4. The sacrificing of the impersonator of the goddess Uixtociuatl, in the month of Tecuilhuitl (Chapter 26), is graphically told in both versions: ²²

...last of all they killed the woman, whom, thrown on her back on the sacrificial stone, five young men held by her feet, her hands, and her head, and held her tightly stretched. On her throat they held a cylindrical piece of wood, which two of them held pressing it down so that she could not cry out as they opened her breast.

Others say that it was the beak of a swordfish... with this they pressed down on her throat.

According to others the slayer stood ready; then, when things were as they should be, with the flint knife held in both hands he struck her on the breast, and as the breast split open the blood escaped with a great burst... (HG)

... they laid her down on the offering stone. They stretched her out upon her back. They each laid hold of her; they each pulled tightly her hands, her feet. They bent her breast up greatly; they bent down her back. And her head they pulled tightly so that they took it nearly to the ground. And they bore down upon her neck with the beak of a swordfish, serrated, spiny—spiny on either side.

And the slayer stood ready; he arose upright for it. Thereupon he cut open her breast. And when he had opened her breast, the blood gushed up high... (FC)

5. The month of Xocotl Uetzi (Chapter 29) began with the setting up of what they called the *xocotl* tree.²³ Each text contains some details peculiar to itself.

... they cut down a big tree in the forest, one which was twenty-five fathoms tall, and having cut it down they removed all the branches and stubs from the trunk but left the

... when they set up the *xocotl*, it was on the day after Tlaxochimaco that at dawn they began it. Thus during one day was their strength used. Shouting was widespread. The over-

²² Sahagún, Garibay ed., v. 1, p. 173; Anderson and Dibble, Book II, p. 89.

²³ Sahagún, Garibay ed., v. 1, p. 184-5; Anderson and Dibble, Book II, p. 104.

terminal bud above the highest stalk, and then they cut other logs, and hollowed out concavities in them. They placed the big tree trunk on these logs and secured it with ropes, and pulled it along. It did not touch the ground because it lay on the other logs so that the bark would not be scraped off.

As they neared the city the noblewomen and principal women came out to receive them. They carried gourd vessels of chocolate for those who brought the tree to drink, and flowers to deck them. When the men had brought the tree to the pyramid courtyard, then the overseers shouted loudly for all the population to get together to raise this tree, which they called *xocotl*.

When they had come together, they tied ropes to the tree and having dug a hole where it was to be raised, they all pulled on the ropes and raised the tree with much shouting. They filled the hole with stones and earth so that it would remain erect, and thus it was for twenty days. (HG)

6. The fifth day of the month of Quecholli (Chapter 33) was devoted to the dead. In some respects one can tell more of the nature of offerings made for dead warriors from the Spanish than from the Nahuatl description: ²⁴

seer, as he hastened it, shouted; he shouted at one.

He said: "[Use] all your strength! Pull upon [the ropes]! Pull with strength!"

And when he shouted at them he was hoarse. It was as if his voice broke.

There was piled up for themselves, there was provided a mound of earth by means of which [the *xocotl*] was erected. Strength was indeed exerted; they each took hold of it with all their force.

And the *xocotl* was twenty-five fathoms long. They removed its branches; only its main stalk was left. Thus, in the manner in which they set it up, it was for twenty days. When they had brought it, it had no adornment. (FC)

²⁴ Sahagún, Garibay ed., v. 1, p. 203; Anderson and Dibble, Book II, p. 126.

They took a maize stalk with nine joints, and on the end placed a piece of paper as a banner, as well as another long one which hung to the bottom, and at the base of the stalk they put the dead man's shield with an arrow next to it. Likewise they tied the cape and the breechclout to the stalk. With red thread they put a cross on both sides of the banner, and they also made designs on the long paper with red and white thread, twisted from top to bottom. And from the white thread they hung a little bird which they call *uitzilin*—dead.

They also made some little bunches of white feathers of a bird they call *axtall*, tied in pairs, and all the threads were brought together and they tied them to the stalk. The threads were covered with white turkey feathers stuck on with resin. All this they took to burn in a stone basin called *quauhxiccalco*. (HG)

... the streamers, and the costly banners, and the shields, and the capes, and the breechclouts of those slain in battle they placed on a dry maize stalk. They tied them on. From it hung loose, twisted, red cotton thread. At its end went hanging a [dead] hummingbird and four hundred [white] heron [feathers]. They pasted many cords with feathers. At the ends heron [feathers] went hanging. They left them in the eagle vessel. There they burned. (FC)

7. At the very end of this month's celebrations, captives and bathed slaves were sacrificed to three gods and a goddess, Tlamoatzincatl, Izquitecatl, and Mixcoatl and Coatlicue. The contrast between the Spanish text account of the disposition of their remains and the Nahuatl account is considerable.²⁵

Down below, near the skull rack, were two old women When they had died, when they had given their service,

²⁵ Sahagún, Garibay ed., v. 1, p. 206; Anderson and Dibble, Book II, p. 129.

whom they called *teixamique*. They had with them some gourd vessels with tamales and sauce in a plate, and on the bringing down of those who had died, they took them where those old women were, and [the old women] put four bits of food moistened in sauce in the mouth of each one, and with some cane leaves moistened in clear water sprinkled their faces. Then those whose office it was cut off the heads of [the victims] and spitted them on some rods which were passed through some pieces of wood as in a lance rack. (HG)

then [they whose office it was] brought them down. As they brought each of them down, most carefully did they roll them here . . . (FC)

8. One could add a score of examples from the Appendix on structures in the temple square,²⁶ but it is sufficient to note that regarding many of them the Nahuatl text tells what went on in or about the structure, perhaps more specifically than the Spanish text does, without describing the structure as the Spanish text does. Data in other appendixes are often treated similarly.

Conclusions

The religious beliefs and rites of the Aztecs quite naturally interested Sahagún more than other aspects of their pre-conquest life, for he was in New Spain to save natives' souls and serve the Church and the King of Spain rather than to study Aztec culture as a scientist. Differences like those noted in this essay are not so prominent in other books of the *Historia general*. It is logical to speculate that he must have collected more material on aspects of his particular interest than he needed to use, very possibly in the form

²⁶ Sahagún, Garibay ed., v. I, p. 232 ff.; Anderson and Dibble, Book II, p. 165 ff.

of transcripts of informants' reports or of pictorial descriptions like those of the *Primeros memoriales* or other illustrative material in the Madrid and Florentine manuscripts. He certainly had some such records on hand, which he and others used, after he was supposed to have surrendered all his manuscripts to the authorities. Though there are other explanations for some of the differences pointed out in Book II, availability of some other source or sources seems to be very likely. In Book II to a greater extent than in any other, therefore, an adequate appreciation of Sahagún's descriptions of the complexities of Aztec religious activities depends upon a study of both the Spanish and the Nahuatl texts.