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## The Europeanization of Prehispanic tradition: Bernardino de Sahagún's transformation of Aztec priests (*tlamacazque*) into classical wise men (*tlamatinime*)

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The Nahua wise men known as *tlamatinime* (singular *tlamatini*) have been treated as core figures of Prehispanic indigenous culture in Mexico. Major scholars of various disciplines such as Miguel León-Portilla (1990, 10–24; 1992, 39–42: 163–210), Elizabeth Hill Boone (2005, 2014), and Enrique Dussel (1994) have highlighted their primary roles as sages, intellectuals, scholars, philosophers, scribes, poets, physicians, etc. who reflected the advanced and highly civilized nature of Prehispanic Mexico. For their arguments, these scholars rely primarily on Bernardino de Sahagún's works such as *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España* (1997), *Coloquios y doctrina cristiana* (1986), and the *Florentine Codex* (1950–1980). His solid methodology and extensive thematic content are the reason that numerous scholars depend on Sahagún's works. Sahagún acquired information through direct and indirect communications with indigenous elders who were knowledgeable about Prehispanic Mexico, he covered extensive ethnographic aspects of Prehispanic Aztec society from public institutions to individual everyday practices, and he published most of his works in Nahuatl.<sup>1</sup> I would argue, however, that several aspects of Prehispanic indigenous culture described in Sahagún's texts were heavily influenced by European cultural traditions. One of the most conspicuous examples of this influence appears in the way *tlamatinime* are defined and described.

The structural framework of Sahagún's major works, the *Florentine Codex* (1950–1982) and its Spanish version, *Historia natural de las cosas de Nueva España* (1997), was derived from the European medieval encyclopedic tradition. The influence of Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* (Garibay 1992, 567–72), the English Franciscan Bartholomaeus Angelicus's *De proprietatibus rerum* (Robertson 1966), and the European traditional treatises (Ríos Castaño 2011) is evident. In this framework, indigenous social and cultural practices and categories were classified and transformed into similar European counterparts. However, the differences between European and Nahua culture forced Sahagún to trim, modify, and transform his presentation of indigenous culture in order to make it compatible with European culture (Klor de Alva 1988, 48; Browne 2000, 93).<sup>2</sup> One of these apparent transformations involves the characterization of *tlamacazque* (priests) as *tlamatinime* (wise men). In Sahagún's works, the *tlamatinime* appear as moral guides, wise advisors, trustworthy counselors, keepers of knowledge, and prudent teachers, very similar to classical European sages. The similarities between Nahua and European wise men appear because of Sahagún's colonial treatment of a special group of people, the *tlamacazque* (priests), who performed most of the roles assigned to the *tlamatinime* before the conquest. By projecting a European cognitive and encyclopedic framework onto the

Prehispanic culture, Sahagún was able to transform the *tlamacazque* into European wise men, *tlamatinime*.

### Defining *tlamatinime* as Nahua wise men

As Sahagún himself mentions in several places in the *Florentine Codex* and *Historia general*, his main purpose in producing the codex and history was to help him and his fellow priests better understand indigenous religion and more effectively eradicate its practice after the conquest.<sup>3</sup> Thus Sahagún argues that all things related to indigenous religion such as buildings and customs should be destroyed. Yet he praises certain aspects of Prehispanic customs, such as strict corporal abstinence and the educational system, lamenting that the conquest destroyed these good customs. In other words, whether an indigenous custom should be continued or destroyed totally depends on its utility for Christian evangelization (1997, 579–80).<sup>4</sup> This ambivalent or even contradictory attitude of Sahagún toward indigenous culture seems to be clearly reflected in his treatment of the Prehispanic *tlamacazque* who were in charge of religious activities as well as major social systems such as education and the vigilance of public behavior. In his major works such as the *Florentine Codex* and *Historia general*, Sahagún tried to sanitize the *tlamacazque* by omitting what he saw as their negative roles while preserving their positive roles, and thus present them as *tlamatinime*. Yet, his efforts to transform the *tlamacazque* into the *tlamatinime* were not entirely successful for in some cases his works still provide or preserve certain traits regarding the religious roles of the *tlamatinime* before the conquest. Such traits will serve as the basis for demonstrating that the *tlamatinime* were actually Prehispanic indigenous priests, *tlamacazque*.

From the beginning of the conquest, the presence of indigenous *tlamatinime* before the conquest was a fundamental issue for the Spanish missionaries who needed to demonstrate the civility and intellectuality of the indigenous people. Whether the natives were intellectually capable of receiving Christian doctrine or not was probably the most contentious topic between the conquistadors, who wanted to treat the indigenous people as colonial subjects, and the Spanish missionaries, who wanted to treat them as evangelical subjects. To prove indigenous intellectuality, Spanish missionaries focused on the highly advanced and complex level of indigenous political, religious, moral, artistic, and cultural practices. In this context, they frequently compared the Aztecs with European gentiles such as Greeks and Romans or sometimes with other advanced ethnic groups. In the prologue of Book VI, Sahagún praises indigenous rhetoric, philosophy, and theology by comparing them with those of not only Greece and Rome but also Spain, France, and Italy. In such comparisons, Sahagún (1997, 297) presents indigenous wise men as political, moral, and religious leaders like European wise men in their nations:

All the nations, however barbarous and lowly they have been, have looked to wise men and powerful men to persuade, and to eminent men for moral virtues, and to skilled and brave men for military exercises, and more to those of their generation than to those of others. There are so many examples of this among the Greeks and Latins, Spaniards, Frenches, and Italians, that books are full of them.

The same was done in this Indian nation, more mainly among the Mexica, among whom wise rhetoricians, the virtuous, and the valorous were highly respected; and from these men they elected pontiffs, and lords, and nobles, and captains no matter how low their status.

They governed the republics and led the armies, and presided over the temples.<sup>5</sup> (Sahagún 1997, 297)

By placing Aztec rhetorical, philosophical, and religious systems on the same level as those of European countries, Sahagún tries to show that the Aztecs were intelligent and capable people like the Europeans. With such intelligence and capability, they were able to establish an empire. For those who doubt indigenous competency, he even assures that all the information he collected is based on authentic indigenous practices: ‘In this book it will be clearly shown that what some rivals have claimed, that everything written in these books, before this one and after this one, are fictions and lies, they speak biased parties and liars, because it would be impossible to invent what is written in this book, nor could a man alive feign the language that is in it. And all the knowledgeable Indians, if they are asked, will confirm that this language is typical of their ancestors ...’ (1997, 297).<sup>6</sup> In Sahagún’s texts, indigenous wise men (*tlamatinime*) appear as clear evidence of indigenous civility and capability. Yet, so that indigenous *tlamatinime* would be understandable by the Europeans and comparable with European wise men, Sahagún transformed the former into the concept and category of the latter.

Sahagún’s Nahuatl texts, especially the *Florentine Codex*, provide the most detailed and extensive information on the *tlamatinime*. Among the twelve volumes of the codex, the *tlamatinime* mostly appear in Book VI, which records Nahua morality and philosophy, and Book X, which describes the vices and virtues of the indigenous people. In the latter appears one of the most quoted texts about the *tlamatinime* which numerous scholars have relied on:

The wise man [is] exemplary. He possesses writings; he owns books. [He is] the tradition, the road; a leader of men, a rower, a companion, a bearer of responsibility, a guide.

The good wise man [is] a physician, a person of trust, a counselor; an instructor worthy of confidence, deserving of credibility, deserving of faith; a teacher. [He is] an adviser, a counselor, a good example; a teacher of prudence, of discretion; a light, a guide who lays out one’s path, who goes accompanying one. [He is] reflective, a confessor, deserving to be considered as a physician, to be taken as an example. He bears responsibility, shows the way, makes arrangements, establishes order. He lights the world for one; he knows of the land of the dead; he is dignified, unreviled. He is relied upon, acclaimed by his descendants, confided in, trusted—very congenial. He assures, calms, helps. He serves as a physician; he makes one whole.

The bad wise man [is] a stupid physician, silly, decrepit, [pretending to be] a person of trust, a counselor, advised. [He is] vainglorious; vainglory is his; [he is] a pretender to wisdom [...], vain—discredited. [He is] a sorcerer, a soothsayer, a medicine man, a remover of intrusive objects from people. A soothsayer, a deluder, he deceives, confounds, causes ills, leads into evil; he kills; he destroys people, devastates lands, destroys by sorcery. (1950–1982, 10:29–30)

This description of the *tlamatinime* appears in Chapter VIII of Book X ‘in which are mentioned other ways of gaining a livelihood, such as [the work of] carpenters and the stone cutter’ (1950–1982, 10:27). He is presented as a professional along with the carpenter, the stone cutter, the mason, the scribe, the singer, and the physician. All these professions seem to have Prehispanic origins as their existence was actually reported in numerous colonial texts. In other chapters, there also appear some occupations such as the feather worker (*amantecatli*), the seller of coarse maguey fiber capes (*aianamacac*),

and obsidian seller (*itznamacac*), all of which would have existed before the conquest. After describing numerous occupations between Chapter IV and Chapter XXVII of Book X, Sahagún confirms that all the occupations described in Book X are Prehispanic: ‘After having written about the skills and professions that these Mexica natives had in the time of their infidelity, and the vices and virtues that they had in those ways among themselves, it appeared reasonably harmonious to me to place here the professions and skills, vices and virtues that they have acquired here afterwards’ (1997, 578).<sup>7</sup> According to Sahagún, then, the information about all the professions including *tlamatini* that he collected for Book X was based on Prehispanic practices.

Sahagún’s claim that Book X describes Prehispanic occupations, however, is not corroborated by the book itself. In some chapters of the book, there appear several occupations that must have emerged after the conquest. Chapter XIX, which primarily deals with the sellers of tortillas, includes the sellers of wheat bread (*caxtillan tlaxcalnamacac*), wheat (*trigonamacac*), and flour (*texnamacac*), which were introduced during the colonial period. In addition, many of the occupations described in Book X seem to have been influenced by Spanish professions. In the description of the indigenous scribe, *tlacuilo*, such European influence is evident: ‘The scribe: writings, ink [are] his special skills. [...] The good scribe is honest, circumspect, far-sighted, pensive; a judge of colors, an applier of the colors, who makes shadows, forms feet, face, hair. He paints, applies colors, makes shadows, draws gardens, paints flowers, creates works of art’ (1950–1982, 10:28). The first part of the description fits in a Prehispanic context: a *tlacuilo* wrote pictorial books with glyphs and was a specialist of writing and ink. Thus, he would have decided on colors and applied them in producing pictorial books, but his major function as a writer virtually disappears in the later part of the description. Rather, he appears like a European painter who draws flowers and gardens. In addition, as Robertson (1966, 625) points out, the Prehispanic scribe did not use *chiaroscuro*, rather it was introduced as a painting technique during the early colonial period.<sup>8</sup> Like the scribe and other professions, the *tlamatini* seems to have been also influenced by European concepts, but his case is more complicated. Unlike the other professionals, the *tlamatini* seems to have played multiple roles encompassing several professions.

The classical European wise man was widely discussed and appreciated by Renaissance humanists. In Spain, Juan Luis Vives (1492–1540) was probably the most distinguished humanist to deal with ancient wisdom and wise men. In his ‘Prelección al opúsculo a la rebusca del sabio (*Praelectio in Sapientem*),’ he himself appears as an interlocutor who looks for a true wise man. Luis Vives begins by lamenting that there are many false wise men during his time: ‘the teachers of truth and wisdom were for the others a mirror, model, and guide and light for their path, and, seeking out lies, trifles, and pure delusions, they brought immense darkness’ (1947, 1:864).<sup>9</sup> This presentation of wise men is very brief, but its positive description of them demonstrates a cognitive perception similar to that of the Nahuatl *tlamatini* described in Book X of the *Florentine Codex*. The description of *tlamatini* in Nahuatl begins as follows: ‘*in tlamatini tlaulli ocutl, tomaoac ocutl apocio, tezteatl coiaoac, tezcatl necoc xapo, tlile tlapale, amuxoa, amoxe, tlilli tlapalli, utli, teiacanqui, tlanelo, teuicani, tlaucani, tlaiacanqui* (The wise man [is] exemplary. He possesses writings; he owns books. [He is] the tradition, the road; a leader of men, a rower, a companion, a bearer of responsibility, a guide)’ (1950–1982, 10:29). As Dibble and Anderson do not translate the paragraph literally, the translation does not clearly show

the similarity between Luis Vives's and Sahagún's descriptions of the wise man, but León-Portilla's word by word translation clearly demonstrates it:

in tlamatini, tlaulli, ocutl, tomaoac ocutl apocio  
The wise man: a light, a torch, a thick torch that does not smoke

tezcatl coiaoac, tezcatl necoc xapo  
a perforated mirror, a mirror with holes on both sides

tlile tlapale, amuxoa, amoxe,  
His is the black and red ink, his are the books, his are the codices

tlilli tlapalli, utli, teiacanqui, tlanelo,  
He himself is writing and wisdom, he is a path, a true guide for others

teuicani, tlaucani, tlaiacanqui  
He leads people, things, he is a guide of human affairs.<sup>10</sup> (1974, 253–54)

The key words that commonly appear in the two descriptions of the wise man are light (*luz* and *tlaulli* or *ocutl*), mirror (*dechado* or *espejo* and *tezcatl*), and guide (*guía* and *teiacanqui* or *tlaiacanqui*). These linguistic similarities could be a pure coincidence, but the Nahuatl description of the *tlamatini* could be influenced by the European concept of wise men commonly accepted in the sixteenth century that Luis Vives epitomized in his work. One of Sahagún's purposes in writing the *Florentine Codex* was to train Spanish priests to properly preach in Nahuatl. According to him, the description of the professionals described in Book X is a translation of Spanish examples in Nahuatl: 'The prudent reader should not be offended at the fact that only words, not sentences, are included above and in other sections further on, because the main purpose of this treatise is to apply Spanish to the Indian language, so that you learn to speak words belonging to this topic of vices and virtues' (1997, 546).<sup>11</sup> When he was planning Book X, Sahagún was mainly interested in looking for adequate words in Nahuatl to convey Christian and European values to indigenous people.

After defining each of the professionals, Book X presents good/virtuous as well as bad/vicious examples of each professional's performance. In the case of *tlamatini*, the book primarily presents a good wise man as a physician, counselor, teacher, advisor, guide, and confessor while a bad wise man is a stupid physician, false counselor, sorcerer, and soothsayer. The binary division of the good and bad professionals described in Book X, however, follows the European medieval encyclopedic model. Donald Robertson (1966, 624–25) first pointed out the similarities between Book X of the *Florentine Codex* and Book VI of Bartholomaeus Angelicus's *De proprietatibus rerum* as both books classify and describe human age groups, social classes, and professionals according to their virtuous or evil behavior. Building on Robertson's study, Victoria Ríos Castaño (2011) demonstrates that the sections of Book X that deal with vice and virtue were also influenced by the extensive European tradition of treatises on vices and virtues such as Aristotle's *De virtutibus et vitiis* and Thomas Aquinas's *Summa theologiae*. These treatises on vices and virtues became an important tool for the priests of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Europe to preach Christian values. As an alumnus of the University of Salamanca, Sahagún would have been familiar with the treatises, and as an instructor of the Colegio de Tlatelolco in New Spain, he could have consulted Aquinas's books that were

housed in its library. The treatises on vices and virtues became a popular tool for evangelization because ‘they provided rhetorical training in the sense that their readers could learn a wide range of synonyms and antonyms [...] and constituted a valuable proselytizing aid’ (Ríos Castaño 2011, 33). In this sense, treatises on vices and virtues were effective instruments for Sahagún, as the main purpose of Book X was to help Spanish priests learn Nahuatl and preach Christian doctrine properly in Nahuatl.

Just as the European treatises on vices and virtues served as models for the description of Nahua professions in Book X, the roles of the *tlamatini* described in the book also reflect the European tradition. A comparison between the European wise man and the Nahua *tlamatini* described in Luis Vives’s *Praelectio in sapientem* and Sahagún’s Book X of the *Florentine Codex* respectively shows a close relationship between European and Nahua wise men. In the former, Luis Vives and his two friends look for and converse with various types of people who were typically known as wise men of their time: grammarian, poet, dialectician, physicist, philosopher, rhetorician, astrologer, physician, and finally theologian. With the exception of the theologian, all the professionals turn out to be false or bad wise men: the grammarian is stupid, the poet is vain, the dialectician is dedicated to illogical puzzles, the physicist pretends to be an omniscient man, the philosopher is an absurd man, the rhetorician is a crazy and incapable teacher, the astrologer as soothsayer deceives people with lies for money, and finally the physician appears probably as the worst wise man because he is an executioner who kills others without being punished but still gets paid. The three interlocutors finally were able to find a real wise man, the theologian, who leads people to the wisdom of God. As this wisdom is true, supernatural, and eternal unlike that of the so-called mundane wise men, the Christian theologian is the only true wise man who could provide true wisdom.

Like the European wise men described by Luis Vives, the Nahua definition of *tlamatinime* examined previously chose specific professions such as the physician, sorcerer, and soothsayer, but at the same time they were presented in more general and abstract terms like counselor, confessor, guide, and adviser. On other occasions, however, Sahagún shows who these indigenous *tlamatinime* could refer to more specifically. In the prologue of Book VI examined earlier, Sahagún mentions three types of wise men among the Aztecs: ‘the rhetorical, and virtuous, and zealous wise men’ (1997, 297).<sup>12</sup> If we take into consideration these types of wise men in the light of the title of Book VI, *De la retórica y filosofía moral y teología de la gente mexicana [...]*, the three types of wise men actually turn out to be rhetorician, philosopher, and theologian. The Nahua wise men then share several similar roles with the European wise men such as physician, astrologer (soothsayer), rhetorician, philosopher, and theologian. Due to these similar roles, Nahua and European wise men were described with common words with which their good and bad qualities were presented. Especially similar are the adjectives describing the bad wise man in Luis Vives’s *Praelectio in sapientem* and Book X of the *Florentine Codex*: stupid, vain, illogical, absurd, crazy, deceitful, and murderous.

The Prehispanic professionals described in Book X lost many of their unique pre-conquest features and roles in the colonial evaluation and description, especially their close connection with Prehispanic religion. Before the conquest, the life of the Aztecs was extensively dominated by religious activities and practices: ‘The native societies of late pre-Hispanic central Mexico were among the most highly ritualized of all time. Religion permeated every facet of the culture. No important area of human activity was entirely

free from its pervasive influence, and some were almost completely dominated by it' (Nicholson 1971, 444).<sup>13</sup> Everyone from the ruler (*tlatoani*) to the commoners (*macehualtzin*) paid homage to their gods by participating in public rituals such as monthly ceremonies and in private rituals concerning their individual lives. From birth, education, marriage, and profession to death ceremonies, Aztec life was fully engaged in religious practices. The Prehispanic professionals described in Book X of the *Florentine Codex*, however, appear completely deprived of a close relationship with their patron deities. In Nahua society, professions and religious practices were not separable or distinguishable from religious practices but absolutely united and integrated. The complete absence of this close relationship between indigenous occupations and religion in the descriptions of Book X could be comprehensible taking into consideration Sahagún's purpose in writing the book. He wanted to eliminate any possible indigenous religious features from the descriptions of the Prehispanic professionals so that when the Spanish priests used Nahuatl words to teach Christian virtues and vices in their speeches and sermons, they would not evoke any indigenous religion in the mind of the indigenous audience. Unlike other professionals, the *tlamatimime* probably would have been most affected because they were actually priests who played multiple roles in various professions before the arrival of the Spaniards.

### Transforming *tlamacazque* (priest) into *tlamatimime* (wise men)

Before the conquest, all specialists, from the craftsman of luxury goods who required highly sophisticated skills to the sellers who simply sold maize or chili in *tianquiztli*, worshipped certain deities as their patrons. For instance, the goldsmiths (*teocuitlapizque*) served *Xipe Totec* as their patron god, and the weavers (*ihquitque*) had *Xochiquetzal* as their chief patroness. Many professional classes had several gods as their patrons: the feather workers (*amanteca*) served *Coyotlinahual* and six other gods. And the lapidary (*tlatecqui*) had four patron deities: *Chicunahui Itzcuinli* (Nine Dog), *Nahualpilli* (Magic Prince), *Macuilcalli* (Five House), and *Centeotl* (Maize God) (Zantwijk 1985, 172–73).<sup>14</sup> The Nahua professionals regularly celebrated specific days or months by conducting rituals dedicated to their gods in public and among themselves in order to secure their protection. The rituals of the Aztec merchants (*pochteca*), for example, were performed collectively and individually before and after any travel was completed (Sahagún 1950–1982, 10:1–67; Zantwijk 1985, 152–72). The relationship between Nahua professionals and deities is complicated by the fact that their roles frequently overlapped. If the *tlamatini* was a Prehispanic professional, his various roles described in Book X must have been closely related to certain deities. Thus, examining the roles of the professionals in relation to indigenous religion would reveal some unmediated Prehispanic characteristics of the *tlamatini* that Sahagún tried to sanitize in the description of Book X.

The description of *tlamatini* as a professional includes specific professions such as the bookkeeper (*amoxhuaque*), the physician (*ticitl*), the sorcerer (*nahualli*), soothsayer (*tlapouhqui*), and teacher (*temachtiani*) as examples of either good or bad *tlamatini*. At the same time, it also presents some general professions such as counselor, guide, leader, adviser, and deluder as examples of good and bad *tlamatini*. However, as we will see, the general and the specific are not mutually exclusive: the general professions are larger categories under which the specific professions fall. In the *Florentine Codex* and



its Spanish translation, *Historia general*, I found ten groups of people described as *tlamatinime*: the *amoxhuaque* (bookkeepers), the *huehuetlaca* (old people), the *huehuetque* (old men or ancient men), the *ticitl* (physician), the *tlaciuhqui* (astrologer or soothsayer), the *tlapouhqui* (soothsayer), the *tonalpouhqui* (soothsayer), the *nahualli* (sorcerer), the *temachtiani* (teacher), and the *tolteca* (people of Tula).<sup>15</sup> Nine out of these ten groups will be discussed here, as the *tolteca* appear in most cases not as professionals but as an ethnic group.<sup>16</sup> Some of these professionals perform very similar roles. The *amoxhuaque*, the *huehuetlaca*, and the *huehuetque* commonly appear as book carriers or owners while the *tlaciuhqui*, the *tlapouhqui*, and the *tonalpouhqui* as soothsayers. All these professionals seem to perform diversely different duties, but all of the duties they perform are closely engaged with native religious practices.

The most well-known example of the *tlamatini* is the role of bookkeeper, who has been metaphorically identified with the carrier of ancient wisdom and knowledge (Boone 2005, 10–11; León-Portilla 1990, 12). The *Florentine Codex* generally presents the *amoxhuaque* as indigenous leaders and guides in Mexica history. When the Mexica were traveling to look for a place to permanently settle down, the *amoxhuaque* guided them, talking to their god (1950–1982, 10:190). The following description of the *amoxhuaque* demonstrates in detail who the *amoxhuaque* were and what kind of books they carried: ‘Thereupon departed those who carried the god on their backs; they carried him wrapped—wrapped in a bundle. It is said that their god went advising them. And as they went, they traveled to the east. They carried the writings, the books, the paintings. They carried the knowledge; they carried all—the song books, the flutes’ (1950–1982, 10:191). The *Amoxhuaque* are described here actually as the priests who carried a god (*teomamaque*) and also carried general books and song books. The content of these books is not specified here, but the fact that the priests carried them suggests that they were religious in nature: song books and flutes were essential parts of indigenous religious rituals.<sup>17</sup> In fact, Sahagún’s Spanish version confirms that the content of the books was religious: ‘Their wise men or seers took with them all the painted books of the rites and mechanical services that they had brought’ (1997, 610).<sup>18</sup> Some of these god- and book-carriers were later described as *huehuetque* (old men) as well as *tlamatinime* who formed government councils (1950–1982, 10:191). Another bookkeeper, *huehuetlaca* (ancient men), is mentioned in Book VI of the *Florentine Codex* when the noble father advises his son to remain abstinent. He uses *huehuetlahtolli*, words of the old men, *huehuetlaca*, who is simply described as ‘the old man, the wise one, the keepers of the books, go saying that the pure in heart are very precious...’ (1950–1982, 6:114). This brief description does not specify what kind of people the *huehuetlaca* were or what kind of books they kept; but as the father uses the words of *huehuetlaca* to teach his son how he should serve the god, the *huehuetlaca* must be priests, and his book must be religious. Sahagún’s Spanish text demonstrates that the book of the old men refers to an indigenous religious text: ‘the books of our doctrine’ (1997, 356).<sup>19</sup> Thus, the bookkeepers or owners of books in the *Florentine Codex* described as *tlamatinime* are indigenous priests who carried the books of the gods.

The physician, *ticitl*, as *tlamatini* was also a priest or at least a specialist closely related to supernatural powers. The clear connection between physician and religion is that he has his own patron goddess for his medical practice: ‘This Teteo innan [Toci] the physicians served, the leeches, those who purged people, the eye-doctors, and the women—midwives,

those who brought about abortions, who read the future, who cast auguries by looking upon water or by casting grains of maize, who read fortunes by use of knotted cords, who cured sickness by removing stones or obsidian knives from the body, who removed worms from the teeth and the eyes' (1950–1982, 1:40–41). As all medical practitioners including the physician are closely bound to the Goddess Toci or Teteo Innan, the Aztecs viewed the causes of illness as divine punishments. For instance, the god Xipe Totec causes several diseases such as blisters, sores, smallpox, ophthalmia, and maladies. The cures for such diseases were to be done in a religious way including vowing that the patient would make an offering to Totec or would wear the skin of the Totec in the ceremony, *tlacaxipehualiztli* (Flaying of Men), dedicated to this god (1950–1982, 1:16–17, 44). The priest as physician was actively involved in this spiritual healing process. Yet, indigenous gods provided not only a spiritual solution but also specific medicine. The Goddess of Zapotlan (*Zapotlan tenan*) made the turpentine unguent with which she cured people: 'She healed men's bodies; those with itch of the head; they who were hoarse used the turpentine unguent on the throat; [they used it] who had sores or pimples on the head; or cracks in the skin of the feet, lips, face, hands, or legs; and when it was eaten, [it was used for] the tortilla-sickness' (1950–1982, 1:5). As every single god of the Aztecs had his own priest, the priest of the goddess of Zapotlan must have been a physician who knew how to make and apply the unguent. It is important to note here that numerous indigenous gods were involved in the causes and cures of illness (Andrews and Hassig 1984, 30), and the priests of these gods as physicians provided spiritual as well as material methods of curing for their patients.<sup>20</sup>

The three soothsayers, the *tlapouhque*, the *tonalpouhque*, and the *tlaciuhque*, as examples of *tlamatinime*, were the priestly interpreters of divine signs hidden in the sacred calendar *tonalamatl*. The *tlapouhque*, which literally means 'those who count something,' and the *tonalpouhque*, which means 'those who count the day,' seem to share similar roles as they count day signs. According to Sahagún, the *tlapouhqui* 'reads the day signs for one; who examines, who remembers [their meaning]. He reads the day signs; he brings them to one's attention' (1950–1982, 10:31), and the *tonalpouhque* were the wise men whom 'the fathers, the mothers summoned [...], in order that they tell of what sort the day was when the baby was born; they studied the kind of day on which he was born' (1950–1982, 6:197). The book the *tlapouhque* and the *tonalpouhque* used was obviously the sacred indigenous calendar book, *tonalamatl*, with which Nahua priests determined the date and time favorable for public projects such as military expeditions and religious rituals and for private events such as marriage and travel (Boone 2005, 15; Berdan 2005, 146–47). Yet, the *tlapouhque* seem to have played a more religious role as they were the priests of the goddess *Tlazolteotl*: 'And her warden—he who saw for her—was a seer, the *tlapouhqui*, wise in reading the sacred almanac which lay in his hand, with which the picture [writing], the ink, [and] the colors of painting; the knowledge, the wisdom which has been uttered' (1950–1982, 1:8–9). As the priest of *Tlazolteotl* (goddess of vice or filth) who forgave sins, the *tlapouhqui* acted not only as a counselor specialized in selecting the appropriate date, time, and place for the sinner to go to confess but also as confessor who helped the sinner speak out his sins. As the *tlapouhqui* used the sacred calendar book, he was also called *amox tlacuile* ('owner of books [and] of writings') (1950–1982, 10:31). Sahagún reports that indigenous leaders modified the calendar and published it like a non-religious product after the conquest. Sahagún severely

denounces this practice as a ‘very harmful lie to the Catholic faith’<sup>21</sup> because the *tonalamatl* reminds the natives of their religious practices, and the masters of the divinatory art are ‘respected like prophets and people of close friends of the gods’ (1954, 383).<sup>22</sup>

The last type of soothsayer, the *tlaciuhqui*, was probably the distinctively specialized priest who predicted the future and explained unknown and supernatural things as he was a counselor to the highest officials. The *tlaciuhqui* as wise man appears in the *Florentine Codex* when Moctezuma saw omens. In one of the omens that anticipated the destruction of the Aztec empire, Moctezuma was given a bird whose head was round and circular like a mirror. Through that head, Moctezuma saw the heavens, stars, and the fire drill (constellation), and when he looked at the head again, he saw the people coming in war array and mounted on the backs of deer. Moctezuma took this as an evil omen, and he summoned the *tlaciuhque* to ask them about it. The omen did not appear again in the bird’s head, so they were not able to answer the question (Sahagún 1950–1982, 10:177; 12:3). As López Austin (1967, 101–2) explains, the *tlaciuhqui*, occasionally translated as the astrologer, was a special type of priest:

They [*tlaciuhque*] were, especially, respected by the rulers, who continually turned to their advice, and they come to be identified with the *papahuaque*, priests who had as a distinctive sign a lock of hair that hung from the nape of their neck, and lived celibate, continuously fasting, confined to temples, to the point that they were truly segregated from the social group; they were usually elderly men. Of course, not all *tlaciuhque* were *papahuaque*, because they were known to have family according to the sources; but they were the priests who had the greater prestige.<sup>23</sup> (López Austin 1967, 101–2)

As a special priest, the *tlaciuhque* seems to have a special ability to deal with unknown or supernatural phenomena. When the Spaniards were marching to Tenochtitlan, Moctezuma sent him with other magicians such as the *nahualli* to contend with them (Sahagún 1950–1982, 12:21, 22, 26, 33, 34). According to James Lockhart’s translation of the same events, the *tlaciuhqui* is translated either as soothsayer (1993, 54, 82) or as rainmaker (1993, 82, 88, 100, 102) who was believed by the Aztecs to have some magical power.

The type of *tlamatini* known as *nahualli* was probably the most important priestly and political figure before the conquest because he had magical power like indigenous deities. Major indigenous gods such as Tezcatlipoca and Quetzalcoatl were recorded as *nahualli* (Sahagún 1950–1982, 1:1) and *huei nahualli* (Sahagún 1950–1982, 3:13) respectively. The *nahualli*’s close relationship with indigenous religion and politics is corroborated by many other passages. When the Mexica stayed in Tamoanchan for a long time and departed from there, they abandoned a group of people called the Olmeca Uixtotin and their leader, Olmecatl Uixtotli, who were described as the *nanahualtin* (plural form of *nahualli*) because they practiced sorcery and divinations (1950–1982, 10:192). This example indicates the relationship between *nahualli* and religion and politics, but Sahagún’s Spanish version more clearly indicates their close relationship: ‘And while all of them were staying in *Tamoanchan*, certain families went to populate the provinces that are now called, *Olmeca*, *Uixtoti*, who used to know the curses or spells in the past, whose leader and lord had a pact with the devil and was called Olmécatl Uixtotli, from whom taking his name, they were called *olmecas uixtoti*’ (1997, 611–12).<sup>24</sup> For Sahagún, the *nahualli* was a ruler and idolatrous practitioner of old religion who had a

connection with the pagan god (*el demonio*). Sahagún more clearly shows his anti-*nahualli* sentiment in the translation of the description of *nahualli as a professional* (1950–1982, 10:31). Like the description of other professionals, the Nahuatl text presents him as either a good or a bad wise man, but Sahagún’s translation mostly presents him as an evil character by eliminating the positive aspect of *nahualli*: ‘The *naualli* is properly called witches, who frightens men at night and sucks on children. He who is interested in this profession understands well anything having to do with spells, and he is clever and astute in using them; he does good and does no harm. The one who is evil and harmful within this profession causes harm to the body with the spells, and drives people crazy and strangles them; he is a changer or magician’ (1997, 555).<sup>25</sup> Sahagún ironically describes the *nahualli* as a core figure of indigenous religion which was the main target of the Spanish missionaries, but the *nahualli* concept was still preserved in the native mind among the seventeenth-century indigenous people who wanted to protect their crops from wild animals or to be cured from certain diseases (Ruiz de Alarcón 1984, 86, 108, 167–69).

The last major role of the *tlamatini* is that of teacher, *temachtiani*. In Book X of the *Florentine Codex*, the teacher is not presented as an individual professional like the physician, sorcerer, and soothsayer. Rather, he appears only as an example of *tlamatini* probably because he was the professional most involved in Prehispanic religion. In his description of the Aztec schools, *Calmecac* and *Telpochcalli*, Sahagún (1997, 208–12) explains that Aztec children received a well-organized education. According to an indigenous informant, they learned diverse and comprehensive life skills in those schools through religious, military, and vocational training:

And when they (the children) had eaten, right away they [the adults] began teaching them again: again [i.e., resuming from the morning a list of things taught], to some how to do battle, or how to hunt, how to shoot a blowgun or how to hurl stones; they were taught all about the shield and the handsword, and how to hurl spears and darts with a spear thrower; also about netting and snarling. Others were taught the different crafts: [f.10v] featherwork, how (small) feathers and plumes were arranged; also mosaic work, goldsmithery, jewel cutting, and metal polishing; and also [codex?] painting, woodworking, and the various other crafts. Others were taught song composition and oratory and the science known as ‘the drum and the rattle’ [i.e., music], and also the science of the heavens, how the sun and moon and stars, called the Ninefold, move; and then what are called divine codices which talked about the All-pervasive, the Creator of humanity, though they also were about the former false gods with whom people used to delude themselves, for it was still the time of darkness, and the light of our Lord, the faith, had not yet reached them. And indeed, some they took to the fields or the flower gardens to teach them how to sow seeds, to plant trees and flowers, and to cultivate and work the land. They taught them all it was needful for them to know by way of service, knowledge, wisdom, and prudent living. (*The Art of Nahuatl Speech* 1987, 151–53)

The indigenous informant here appears to refer to all the training that several different schools offered before the conquest. Many professionals such as military leaders, priests, feather workers, goldsmiths, metal workers, painters (scribes), carpenters, singers, astrologers, etc. were trained in the Prehispanic schools. Each of these professionals seems to have his own school, *calmecac*, that taught his particular specialty. For instance, the *amanteca* (feather workers) and *teocuitlapitzque* (goldsmiths) learned their skills at their own *calmecac* (Berdan 2005, 32; Calnek 1988, 171–73).<sup>26</sup> In this

educational system, it was the *temachtianime* (teachers) who taught these future professionals, and they were none other than the Aztec priests, *tlamacazque*, that were in charge of the schools: 'It was the first custom that all the ministers of the idols who were called *tlamacazque* used to sleep in the house of *Calmécac*' (Sahagún 1997, 213).<sup>27</sup> The *Codex Mendoza* (1992, f. 61r) also describes *tlamacazqui* as the head priest in charge of a *calmecac*. Among the Aztec schools, *calmecac* was especially administered by the two highest priests of Aztec religion, *Quetzalcoatl Totec tlamacazqui* and *Tlaloc tlamacazqui*, who 'faithfully fulfilled and made all customs and exercises and doctrines which the ministers of the idols in the monastery of *Calmécac* used' (Sahagún 1997, 214).<sup>28</sup>

All the professionals, the *amoxhuaque*, the *ticitl*, the *tlapouhque*, the *tonalpouhque*, the *tlaciuhque*, the *nahualli*, and the *temachtiani*, presented as examples of *tlamatini* performed their specialized roles under the native *teopixcayotl* (priesthood). Sahagún's transformation of indigenous priests (*tlamacazque*) into European wise men (*tlamatinime*) is more clearly seen in the process in which he collected information for his Nahuatl texts. Sahagún records how he acquired all the information in his Nahuatl texts from indigenous principles:

In the said town [Tepepulco] I gathered all the leaders along with the governor of the town, who was called don Diego de Mendoza, an elderly man of great stature and ability, very experienced in all things of government, war and politics and even idolatry. Having gathered them, I proposed to them what I intended to do and I asked them to provide me with skilled and experienced people, with whom I could talk and who would be able to answer the questions that I was asking. They answered me that they would talk about what was proposed, and that another day they would respond to me, and thus they took their leave of me. Another day the governor came with the leaders, and having made a very solemn dialogue, like they then used to do, they introduced me to up to ten or twelve elders, and told me that with those I could communicate and that they would explain to me everything that I asked. (1997, 73)<sup>29</sup>

According to Sahagún, he talked to the elders whom the governor brought to him for almost two years. From them, he was able to acquire information about Prehispanic religious, military, political and cultural systems. In this paragraph, Sahagún does not specify what kind of role or profession they were actually engaged in during Prehispanic times, but another of his Nahuatl texts, *Coloquios y doctrina cristiana*, provides a clue to the identity of the old men from Tepepulco. This Nahuatl text reproduces a debate over Nahua religion between the Twelve Franciscan missionaries, who denounce Nahua religion as idolatry, and indigenous rulers, who defend their religion as true.<sup>30</sup> After the missionaries preached Christian doctrine, one of the indigenous rulers presented a special group of wise men who were the real leaders or guides for them:

And, behold, our lords,  
 here are those who are still our guides,  
 they carry us on their backs, govern us,  
 in relation to the service  
 to those who are our gods,  
 those who have their merit  
 that of the tail, the wing [the commoners]:  
 the priests [*tlamacazque*] who offer things, those [*tlenamacaque*] who offer fire,  
 and also those who are called quequetzalcoa.  
 Wise men of the word,

their profession, in which they toil,  
 during the day and night,  
 offering of copal,  
 offering of fire,  
 thorns, fir-tree branches,  
 the action of blood-letting.  
 Those who look, those who exert themselves with  
 the course and procedure ordered by the heavens,  
 how the night is divided.  
 Those who are watching [reading],  
 those who count [or tell what they read],  
 those who unfold [pages] the books,  
 the black ink, the red ink,  
 those who are in charge of the paintings.  
 They carry us,  
 guide us, indicate the path.  
 Those who sort  
 how the year falls,  
 how the count of destinies and days follow their path,  
 and each one of the twenty-day periods.  
 For this they take responsibility  
 It is their charge, their mission,  
 their responsibility: the divine word. (Sahagún 1986, 139–41)<sup>31</sup>

The indigenous rulers presented their indigenous priests, *tlamacazque*, *tlenamacaque*, and *quequetzalcoa* who could, according to them, answer the questions of the missionaries. Then, the rulers asked the Franciscans to allow them to get together with their priests. The most significant information that the rulers provide here is that the roles the indigenous priests carried out were almost exactly the same as those of the *tlamatínime* that Sahagún presented in the *Florentine Codex* and *Historia general*. The priests just like *tlamatínime* act as guides who lead people, astrologers who watch the order of the sky, book-keepers who read the paintings, and soothsayers who read day signs. When the indigenous rulers came back to talk to the missionaries, one of the native priests, *quequetzalcoa*, stood up and defended their religion because their gods were the true owners of world, taught them how to live, and provided them with sustenance. However, given that they were defeated, he said to the Franciscans, ‘Do with us whatever you like’ (Sahagún 1986, 155).<sup>32</sup> According to Sahagún (1997, 214), these *quequetzalcoa* were the highest pontiffs who were elected from among the three priestly groups, *tlamacazton*, *tlamacazque*, and *tlenamácac*. The wise men whom the rulers brought to the meeting as their leaders were none other than the Aztec priests. Following the same pattern, the old men whom the ruler of Tepepulco brought to Sahagún for his questions were most likely priests before the conquest.<sup>33</sup>

Sahagún’s introduction of the wise men to Prehispanic culture obviously does not reflect the indigenous reality. The Nahua scholars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries did not record the existence of the *tlamatínime*, but rather they identified them as priests or as a specialized group of post-conquest people. In his Nahuatl text, *Crónica mexicana yotl*, Fernando de Alvarado Tezozomoc uses the term *tlamatini* only once to describe the famous Don Antonio Valeriano, who was one of Sahagún’s indigenous assistants, not because he was a guide or counselor as described in Sahagún’s texts but because he knew Latin (*momachtiani tlamatini intechpalatin tlatolli*), that is, he had received a

European education (1992, 176). On the other hand, Alvarado Tezozomoc does not refer to those figures that Sahagún's texts present as *tlamatinime*. When the Mexica began their journey to Tenochtitlan, for instance, their religious leaders, *teomamaque*, were also described as the *amoxhuaque* (book owners) in the *Florentine Codex* as they carried books. Alvarado Tezozomoc (1992, 18–19, 29), however, simply describes them as god carriers, *teomamaque*, of the false god Huitzilopochtli without mentioning *amoxhuaque*, and one of them, Axollohua, is consistently called priest, *tlamacazqui*. Another example is the role of *huehuetque*, who are normally translated as old men or ancient men and thus sometimes appear as *tlamatinime* in the *Florentine Codex*, but they appear merely as ancestors or old men in the *Crónica mexicayotl* (1992, 4, 22).

Another colonial Nahua chronicler, don Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin, also exhibits a similar perspective toward the *tlamatinime*. Even though he was able to access Sahagún's writings (León-Portilla 1988), Chimalpahin tends to describe as *tlamatinime* the post-conquest people, either Spaniards such as priests (2006, 52–53) and governmental officers (2006, 110–11, 112–13) who were learned scholars such as doctors or licenciados, or the natives such as Don Antonio Valeriano (2006, 140–41) who received a European education.<sup>34</sup> In the following paragraph Chimalpahin provides important insight into the concept of the *tlamatini*: 'This statement [about eclipse], which as was already said was taken from a book about knowledge of the heavens, was composed and thought out by the great scholars [*huey tlamatinime*], the philosophers [*Philosophosme*] and astrologers [*Astrologosme*], who considered and wrote about all earthly matters and the nature of everything that we see and behold. And our forefathers [*tachcocolhuan*], the ancients [*huehuetque*] who were still idolaters, called pagans, were not able to find out anything about this because they lived in confusion' (Chimalpahin 2006, 181). Chimalpahin presents here European scholars, philosophers and astrologers, as the great wise men contrasting with his ignorant Prehispanic ancestors. It looks like Sahagún's concept of *tlamatini* did not appeal to Chimalpahin in his evaluation of Prehispanic culture. Even though he describes once the Prehispanic Texcocan ruler Nezahualpilli as a wise man (1997, 2:37), Chimalpahin does not follow the various types of *tlamatinime* that Sahagún has introduced.<sup>35</sup> One clear example that shows his perspective toward Prehispanic culture is the description about the *teomamaque* and *amoxhuaque* whom Sahagún presents as *tlamatinime*. Chimalpahin describes the Mexica god Huitzilopochtli as Demon and records his leading priest, Huitzilin, as *teomama tlamacazqui* (god carrier priest) or *huey teopixqui* (great god keeper) (1998, 1:86–89). The fact that the narrative form Alvarado Tezozomoc and Chimalpahin applied to their text was originally indigenous annals and the *tlamatinime* virtually disappeared in these annals demonstrates that the concept of the *tlamatinime* did not even exist before the conquest.

If colonial Nahua scholars do not record the existence of Sahagún's *tlamatinime* before the conquest, his classification of *tlamatinime* into sub-groups like the *amoxhuaque*, the *ticitl*, the *tlapouhque*, the *tonalpouhque*, the *tlaciuhque*, the *nahualli*, and the *temachtiani* must have been artificially created after the conquest. In fact, the professionals of the *tlamatinime* were not distinguished in the mind of indigenous people, nor did they work independently, from the priests (*tlamacazque*) who had supernatural power and worked as mediators between the human and the divine worlds. As the seventeenth-century Spanish priest Hernando de Ruiz Alarcón (1984, 157) records, the Indians of that

century manifest a comprehensive understanding of the professions: ‘So I will begin this Treatise with the explication of the noun *tiçitl*. Commonly it is used for what is expressed by our word “doctor,” but entering more deeply into it, [we find that] it is accepted among the natives as meaning sage, doctor, seer, and sorcerer, or, perhaps, one who has a pact with the Devil.’ This more integrated image of indigenous professionals known as *tlamatinime* still survives in the mind of contemporary Indians. The activities assigned to the *tlamatinime* by contemporary Nahua people in Mexico cover the role of the doctors who cure diseases, the organizers of local rituals dedicated to native deities and sacred places such as mountains and water, and the guardians who protect the community from possible harm through supernatural methods (Martínez González 2006, 41–42).

## Conclusion

Abundant sources prepared by Sahagún in Nahuatl and Spanish and his wide scholarly scope of Nahua culture in these sources frequently lead scholars to overlook his identity as a colonizer who was primarily interested in the usefulness of indigenous culture, not in the culture itself. The transformation of Nahua priests (*tlamacazque*) into European-style wise men (*tlamatinime*) is one of many Prehispanic traditions that Sahagún converted and classified following the European model. The cultural difference between Prehispanic Mexico and sixteenth-century Europe was not an issue for Sahagún because of his scholastic training and religious interest. Like other missionaries, he compared indigenous society to classical Greece and Rome where their European ancestors lived as pagans who practiced an idolatrous religion but maintained highly sophisticated social systems. As the pagan Greek and Roman philosophers, orators, rhetoricians, theologians, and physicians known as wise men in European history were responsible for the advanced level of social systems, Sahagún tried to identify those types of people, *tlamatinime*, in Prehispanic Mexico. However, because most of the professional roles that European classical wise men played were covered by the indigenous priests (*tlamacazque*), Sahagún had to divide the specialties of the Aztec priests into various professionals, depriving them of their religious features. By transforming Nahua priests into European-style wise men (*tlamatinime*), Sahagún was able to present the former as physicians, philosophers, orator, rhetoricians, and theologians as classical European wise men.

Since Sahagún introduced the *tlamatini* to Prehispanic Mexico, this Nahua wise man has formed as an essential part of Prehispanic indigenous culture. Many recent studies have used the concept of the *tlamatini* to study Nahua culture, and some of them have even added a new concept to the traditional images of the *tlamatini*. The notion of the *tlamatini* as a peaceful and civilized philosopher and poet promoted by Miguel León-Portilla is a notable expansion of the traditional images of the *tlamatini* introduced by Sahagún. For his study, León-Portilla examines first the concept of Greek philosophy and the poet as the emissary of that concept and then matches him to similar Aztec ideas and groups respectively documented in the beginning of the sixteenth century (1990, xxii–xxiii).<sup>36</sup> In this process, Sahagún provided two useful tools for León-Portilla: a theoretical framework and reliable sources. Just as Sahagún did for his *tlamatinime* project, León-Portilla took classical European culture as the indispensable starting point for examining and evaluating Prehispanic culture. Then, he took Sahagún’s already Europeanized texts as major sources to prove the existence of Aztec philosophy and poets as



its emissaries. The issue here is that Sahagún's texts have been, and will continue to be, critical sources for many other scholars who study Prehispanic Mexican culture. As important and valuable as his texts are, however, they should be read more critically, because Sahagún was a colonizer who recorded and evaluated indigenous society and culture with his European cultural and ideological framework.

## Notes

1. For this reason, Garibay (1948, 307) argues that 'Of all the ancient documentation about the things of Anahuac none has greater value and importance than that of Fr. Sahagún [De toda la antigua documentación acerca de las cosas de Anáhuac ninguna tiene mayor valor ni importancia que la del P. Sahagún].' In light of modern scholarly practice, Anderson (1974, 17) and León-Portilla (1999, 212–13) call Sahagún the leading pioneer of American ethnography and anthropology. The title of pioneer or father of modern anthropology assigned to Sahagún is a misnomer. Walden Browne seriously challenges such an image of Sahagún (2000, 56–99).
2. Sahagún's Nahuatl texts could have been affected by his indigenous informants and his ex-students who participated as assistants in the production of the texts. This essay will, however, primarily focus on Sahagún's role because he introduced the concept of *tlamatini* and imposed it on the classification of Prehispanic culture. Donald Robertson (1966, 625) explains well his role with respect to this: 'he himself established the pattern of the work, established a true encyclopedia form, and that he by his questions elicited information through the answers of the informants to follow his pattern and to present material he thought worth presenting. In the beginning (*Códice Matritenses*) the role of the informants was in essence a passive role; the role of Sahagún was the active and dominant role, the role of editor and controlling mind of the whole enterprise—in short, the responsible author of the work.'
3. Along with this main purpose, Sahagún had other purposes in writing the texts: 'the recording of an extensive Nahuatl vocabulary which would help in preaching, and the disclosure of the old customs in order to correct the false opinion that the natives possessed a low cultural level before the arrival of the Spaniards' (López Austin 1974, 112–13). These objectives will also be discussed later in this essay.
4. Sahagún's selective attitude toward native culture was not his own but that of the entire Franciscan Order. In 1533, Fray Andrés de Olmos was ordered by his superior to 'write down in a book the antiquities of these native Indians, especially, of Mexico-Tenochtitlan, Texcoco, and Tlaxcala, so that there might be some memory in it and that any bad thing and nonsense might be better rejected, and if any good thing were found, it could be recognized, as many things of other gentil ones were noticed and preserved in memory. And the above mentioned father did it as follows: having seen all the paintings, which the caciques and nobles of these provinces had as their old account, and also having been given by the oldest men an answer to everything he wanted to ask to them, from all of this he wrote a very copious book [sacase en un libro las antigüedades de estos naturales indios, en especial de México, y Tezcuco, y Tlaxcala, para que de ello hubiese alguna memoria, y lo malo y fuera de tino se pudiese mejor refutar, y si algo bueno se hallase, se pudiese notar, como se notan y tienen en memoria muchas cosas de otros gentiles. Y el dicho padre lo hizo así, que habiendo visto todas las pinturas que los caciques y principales de estas provincias tenían de sus antiguallas, y habiéndosele dado los mas ancianos respuesta á todo lo que les quiso preguntar, hizo de todo ello un libro muy copioso]' (Mendieta 1971, 75).
5. 'Todas las naciones, por bárbaras y de bajo metal que hayan sido, han puesto los ojos en los sabios y poderosos para persuadir, y en los hombres eminentes en las virtudes morales, y en los diestros y valientes en los ejercicios bélicos, y más en los de su generación que en los de las otras. Hay de esto tantos ejemplos entre los griegos y latinos, españoles, franceses e italianos,

que están los libros llenos de esta materia. Esto mismo se usaba en esta nación indiana, y más principalmente entre los mexicanos, entre los cuales, los sabios retóricos, y virtuosos, y esforzados, eran tenidos en mucho; y de estos elegían para pontífices, para señores, y principales y capitanes por de baja suerte que fuesen. Estos regían las repúblicas y guiaban los ejércitos, y presidían los templos’.

6. ‘En este libro se verá muy claro que lo que algunos émulos han afirmado, que todo lo escrito en estos libros, antes de éste y después de éste, son ficciones y mentiras, hablan como apasionados y mentirosos, porque lo que en este libro esté escrito no cabe en entendimiento de hombre humano el fingirlo, ni hombre viviente pudiera fingir el lenguaje que en él está. Y todos los indios entendidos, si fueran preguntados, afirmarán que este lenguaje es propio de sus antepasados ...’
7. ‘Después de haber escrito las habilidades y oficios que estos mexicanos naturales tenían en tiempo de su infidelidad, y los vicios y virtudes que entre ellos eran tenidos por tales, parecióme cónsono a razón poner aquí los oficios y habilidades, vicios y virtudes que después acá han adquirido.’
8. Robertson (1966, 625) presents another example of the Europeanization of the indigenous professional. In the description of the good stone mason or *cantero*, he was able to make ‘curved stone’ or arches, but this technique was unknown to the natives before the conquest.
9. ‘los maestros de la verdad y de sabiduría eran para los otros espejo, dechado, y guía y luz de su camino, y, corriendo en pos de mentiras, de bagatelas, de puros delirios, acarrearón tinieblas inmensas.’
10. ‘El sabio: una luz, una tea, una gruesa tea que no ahúma/ un espejo horadado, un espejo agujereado por ambos lados/ Suya es la tinta negra y roja, de él son los códices, de él son los códices/ él mismo es escritura y sabiduría, es camino, guía veraz para otros,/ conduce a las personas, a las cosas, es guía en los negocios humanos.’
11. ‘No se debe ofender el lector prudente, en que se ponen solamente vocablos, y no sentencias en lo arriba puesto, y en otras partes adelante, porque principalmente se pretende en este tratado aplicar el lenguaje castellano al lenguaje indiano, para que sepan hablar los vocablos propios de esta materia de *vitius et virtutibus*.’
12. ‘los sabios retóricos, y virtuosos, y esforzados.’
13. For more detailed and concrete examples of religious domination in Aztec society, see also Alfonso Caso 1996, 106–7, 117, and J. Richard Andrews and Ross Hassig 1984, 14.
14. The close relationship between indigenous professionals and their religion is discussed in more detail in López Austin 1989, 65–69, and Berdan 2005, 31–39.
15. I was able to identify these nine groups of the *tlamatinime* with the help of Joe Campbell, who sent me all paragraphs of the *Florentine Codex* containing *tlamatini* or *tlamatinime*. He also helped me lexically analyze certain Nahuatl words. I would like to express my special thanks to him.
16. The *tolteca* literally means the people of the empire Tula, but for the Aztecs they were exemplary *tlamatinime* as they were skilled professionals (e.g., feather workers and stone workers); they invented medicine, a day and year counting system, and the divinatory system; and they were morally righteous and religiously devoted people. Thus, Tula and its residents represent an ideal place and people respectively that the Aztecs wanted to emulate. In this sense, it is understandable why the *tolteca* were presented as *tlamatinime* in the *Florentine Codex*.
17. The Mexica journey from Aztlan to Tenochtitlan was recorded in numerous colonial sources. The *Tira de peregrinación* (1964) or the *Códice Boturini* describes the journey pictographically. In this text, there appear four *teomamaque*: the leading man carries an image of Huitzilopochtli on his back and the other three also carry unidentifiable items on their backs. They are probably carrying religious books and instruments as Sahagún mentions. Patrick Johansson K.’s reading and interpretation of the text (2004, 333–456) helps contemporary readers understand the Mexica journey. In addition, colonial chroniclers such as Diego Durán (1984, 2:21–67), Alvarado Tezozomoc (1987, 17–31; 1992, 3–68), and Chimalpahin (1997, 1:65–110; 1998, vol. 1) also record the journey alphabetically.

18. 'llevaron [sus sabios o adivinos] consigo todas las pinturas que habían traído de los ritos y de los oficios mecánicos.'
19. 'los libros de nuestra doctrina.'
20. For a more comprehensive study of the relationship between indigenous deities and diseases, see Richard Andrews and Ross Hassig (1984, 30), who summarize the roles of numerous deities as the cause and healer of many diseases.
21. 'embuste muy perjudicial a la fe católica.'
22. 'los maestros de ellas son estimados como profetas y personas de muy amigas de los dioses.'
23. 'Eran [los *tlacihque*], ante todo, personas estimadas por los gobernantes, quienes recurrían continuamente a sus consejos, y se les llega a identificar con los *papahuaque*, sacerdotes que tenían como señal distintiva un mechón de cabello que les pendía de la nuca, y que vivían célibes, en continuo ayuno, encerrados en los templos, al grado de quedar verdaderamente segregados del grupo social; eran hombres, por lo regular, de edad avanzada. No todos los *tlacihque*, claro está, eran *papahuaque*, puesto que se les conoce familia a través de las fuentes; pero sí eran los sacerdotes lo que tenían un prestigio más firme.'
24. 'Y estando todos en *Tamoanchan*, ciertas familias fueron a poblar a las provincias que ahora se llaman *Olmeca*, *Uixtoti*, los cuales antiguamente solían saber los maleficios o hechizos, cuyo caudillo y señor tenía pacto con el demonio y se llamaba *Olmécatl Uixtotli*, de quien tomando su nombre se llamaron *olmecas uixtotin*'.
25. 'El *naualli* propiamente se llama *brujos*, que de noche espanta a los hombres y chupa a los niños. El que es curioso de este oficio bien se le entiende cualquier cosa de hechizos, y para usar de ellos es agudo y astuto; aprovecha y no daña. El que es maléfico y pestífero de este oficio hace daño a los cuerpos con los dichos hechizos, y saca de juicio y ahoga; es cambiador o encantador.'
26. As Acosta Saignes (1946, 165–68) explains, some of the Aztec priests known as *Tequipane* seem to have had their own specialized jobs in the Aztec priesthood. Among these specialized priests, *Cuicapique* (composer of songs), *Ilhuica Tlamatilizmani* or *Tlacihqui* (astrologer), *Nemiliz Tlacuiloani* or *Tlatolicuiloani* (chronicler or historian), *Tlauecaytoani* (prophet), etc. seem to have taught their specialty at the Prehispanic schools as *temachtiani*.
27. 'Era la primera costumbre que todos los ministros de los ídolos que se llamaban *tlamacazque*, dormían en la casa de *Calmécac*.'
28. 'fielmente cumplían y hacían todas las costumbres y ejercicios y doctrinas, que usaban los ministros de los ídolos en el monasterio de *Calmécac*.'
29. 'En el dicho pueblo [Tepepulco] hice juntar todos los principales con el señor del pueblo, que se llamaba don Diego de Mendoza, hombre anciano de gran marco y habilidad, muy experimentado en todas las cosas curiales, bélicas y políticas y aún idolátricas. Habiéndolos juntado propúseles lo que pretendía hacer y les pedí me diesen personas hábiles y experimentadas, con quien pudiese platicar y me supiesen dar razón de lo que les preguntase. Ellos me respondieron que se hablarían cerca de lo propuesto, y que otro día me responderán, y así se despidieron de mí. Otro día vinieron el señor con los principales, y hecho un muy solemne parlamento, como ellos entonces le usaban hacer, señaláronme hasta diez o doce principales ancianos, y dijéronme que con aquellos podía comunicar y que ellos me darían razón de todo lo que les preguntase.'
30. The *Coloquios y doctrina cristiana* has fueled a long-time scholarly debate about its historicity, authorship, and narrative form. As this essay focuses on the content of what indigenous leaders said to the missionaries, the historicity of the indigenous discourse is more important. In fact, the speeches the indigenous leaders as well as the Spanish missionaries made in the text reflect the reliable reactions of both parties to religious issues (Lockhart 1992, 205–6). For more information on the debate about the *Coloquios y doctrina cristiana*, see Viviana Díaz Valsera 2005, 18–21.
31. 'Y, he aquí, señores nuestros,/ están los que aún son nuestros guías,/ ellos nos llevan a cuestras, nos gobiernan,/ en relación al servicio/ de los que son nuestros dioses, de los cuales es mercimiento,/ la cola, el ala [la gente del pueblo]:/ los sacerdotes ofrendadores [*tlamacazque*],/ los que ofrendan el fuego [*tlenamacaque*],/ y también los que se llaman quequetzalcoa./

Sabios de la palabra,/ su oficio, con el que se afanan,/ durante la noche y el día,/ la ofrenda de copal,/ ofrecimiento del fuego,/ espinas, ramas de abeto,/ la acción de sangrarse./ Los que miran, los que se afanan/ con el curso y el proceder ordenado del cielo,/ cómo se divide la noche./ Los que están mirando [leyendo],/ los que cuentan [o refieren lo que leen],/ los que despliegan [las hojas] los libros,/ la tinta negra, la tinta roja,/ los que tienen a su cargo las pinturas./ Ellos nos llevan,/ nos guían, dicen el camino./ Los que ordenan/ cómo cae el año,/ cómo siguen su camino la cuenta de los destinos y los días,/ y cada una de las veintenas,/ de esto se ocupan,/ de ellos es el cargo, la encomienda,/ su carga: la palabra divina.'

32. 'Haced con nosotros lo que queráis.'
33. As Francis Berdan (2005, 139) summarizes well, the priests, *tlamacazque*, were primarily responsible for taking care of religious duties for their deities, but at the same time they carried out multiple social as well as political responsibilities similar to those presented in the description of *tlamatini*: 'While the priests directed most of their attention to the deities they revered, they also were involved in the affairs of the society as a whole. They carried weighty responsibilities as the educators of noble boys in the *calmecac*, molding the future leaders. Transmitting knowledge to the next generation, the priests also were the principal guardians of this knowledge, at times adding to it. They read and interpreted the sacred books, making predictions about the future and attaching meaning to omens. In short, they often made decisions and offered advice on affairs of great political import. And, as with most central Mexicans, the priests frequently engaged in warfare, often distinguishing themselves and receiving prized rewards. On a more general plane, the priests served as the critical link between deity and mortal, interpreting the will of the deities and the role of humanity in the overall scheme of the universe.'
34. Chimalpahin's presentation of Antonio Valeriano as *tlamatini* sheds light on how colonial Nahua intellectuals understood the concept of the *tlamatinime*. As examined earlier, Alvarado Tezozomoc presented Valeriano as *tlamatini* and Chimalpahin was aware of this presentation because he copied Alvarado Tezozomoc's *Crónica mexicayotl* and included it in the *Codex Chimalpahin*. The fact that Chimalpahin presented Valeriano as *tlamatini* in his own authored annals demonstrates that the two major Nahua scholars of the sixteenth and seventeenth century commonly considered the concept of the *tlamatini* as a post-conquest phenomenon. For the relation between *Crónica mexicayotl* and *Codex Chimalpahin*, see Susan Schroeder 1997, 8.
35. Chimalpahin's presentation of Nezahualpilli as a great sorcerer (*huey nahualli*) and a wise man (*tlamatini*) seems to have been influenced by Texcocan chroniclers such as Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl. The reason that Chimalpahin describes Nezahualpilli as *tlamatini* is that this Texcocan king predicted the arrival of the Spaniards, and he mysteriously disappeared rather than physically died. This description of the king repeatedly appears in the chronicles of Alva Ixtlilxochitl, who embraced the perspectives of the Catholic missionaries in writing his Prehispanic history. In addition, Chimalpahin does not record Nezahualpilli as a sorcerer or wise man in his other annals. He simply records his birth, death, and military and political activities.
36. León-Portilla's studies on *tlamatinime* have been challenged by a few scholars. Richard Haly (1992, 271) criticizes the notion of León-Portilla's Nahua philosophy by arguing that, 'As its title suggests, *La Filosofía Náhuatl* attempts to take the religion out of Nahua culture in order to replace it with something that is at once pre-Christian and acceptable to contemporary Christians: philosophy. And this philosophy is apolitical. Gone are the ruler's intrigues of power, absent the priest with blood-matted hair. It is the speculation of wise men seeking the truth, on par with the Greeks, here, in the New World. It is a philosophy of an elite group of wise men, truly high culture, the truth known to only a few.' On the other hand, Jongsoo Lee (2008, 179–80) challenged the notion of the *tlamatinime* as peaceful poets by demonstrating that most of the peaceful poets proposed by León-Portilla were the rulers and warriors who actively promoted the dominant indigenous religion and politics.

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