

The Archbishop and the Virgin:

Alonso de Montúfar and the Early Cult of Our Lady of Guadalupe*

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Few, if any, Mexican phenomena have such a strong religious or political impact as the cult of Our Lady of Guadalupe. For centuries, the colourful image of the Virgin, in the Basilica in Tepeyac in the northern parts of Mexico City, has been a major devotion for Catholics in Mexico and other parts of the world. From the eighteenth century, Guadalupe has been one of the most celebrated Marian images of the Catholic world and during his pontificate, John Paul II proclaimed Guadalupe the patroness of the Americas, following his predecessors who made her the patron of Mexico and Latin America respectively. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Guadalupe became a unifying symbol for the Mexican insurgents in their struggle against Spanish sovereignty; the Virgin was even looked upon as their spiritual general. During the first half of the twentieth century, Guadalupe also became a powerful symbol against the anti-religious politics of the Mexican government.¹

In our time, the cult of Guadalupe seems more popular and influential than ever. It is certainly no exaggeration to see it as the very centre of contemporary Mexican religiosity. Tens of millions of people visit the Basilica every year, reaching a peak around her feast day on December 12, when the celebration attracts people from all over the world. Reproductions of Our Lady Guadalupe, standing on a moon crescent and clad in her blue garment filled with stars, are found in almost

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¹ David A. Brading, *Mexican Phoenix. Our Lady of Guadalupe. Image and Tradition Across Five Centuries* (Cambridge 2001): 4-11.

every Mexican or Chicano home, but also in bars, barbershops, parking lots, and on buses. The role and impact of the cult of the Virgin is a constant matter of discussion among Mexicans. Believing or not, most Mexicans have some kind of opinion or interpretation of the Virgin and her cult at Tepeyac.²

The basis of the cult of Guadalupe, as we know of it today, is an account of an apparition believed to have occurred in 1531, a little more than a decade after the Spanish conquest of Mexico. According to the ecclesiastically recognised version of the story, Virgin Mary appeared on four occasions to a recently baptised Indian by the name Juan Diego. On a Saturday morning in December, Juan Diego was on his way from his home in Cuauhtitlan to Tlatelolco where he was going to attend mass at the Franciscan church. Passing by a hill known as Tepeyac (or Tepeyacac) situated somewhat to the north of Tlatelolco, a young woman appeared to him introducing herself as Virgin Mary. The Virgin said to Juan Diego that she wanted a church to be built on the hillside, so that the Mexican inhabitants could venerate God there. Bewildered, Juan Diego went to the bishop of Mexico, Juan de Zumárraga, to tell him what he had experienced. The bishop was reluctant to accept the story as true and wanted some proof in order to believe what he was told. Consequently, Juan Diego returned to the hill, where he met the Virgin again and told her what the bishop had said to him. She pledged him to return to the prelate and tell about their new meeting. He did, and Bishop Zumárraga asked him many questions, but still found the story hard to believe and therefore let the Indian go away.

Very disappointed, Juan Diego turned home. When passing the hill the Virgin approached him for the third time and told him to return in the following day. On the following day, a Monday morning, Juan Diego was again going towards Tlatelolco, but on the way, he went to visit his uncle, Juan Bernardino. Finding him severely ill, he stayed to attend to him. On Tuesday before dawn, Juan Diego continued to Tlatelolco to ask the Franciscans to come and visit his uncle, fearing that he was about to die. Not wanting to be detained by the Virgin, he took a detour behind the hill, but the Virgin saw him and asked him what was wrong and why he was in such a hurry. Telling her about Juan Bernardino's illness, she assured him

² For a study of contemporary views on Guadalupe among inhabitants in central Mexico, see Daniel Andersson, *The Virgin and the Dead. The Virgin of Guadalupe and the Day of the Dead in the Construction of Mexican Identities* (Gothenburg 2000), in particular pp. 70-135.

that he did not have to worry, as his uncle would be cured through her intercession, and that instead he should go to the bishop and talk to him.

Before leaving, the Virgin told him to go up the hill and collect flowers there. Although it was winter, he found an abundance of flowers, and even roses. He placed the flowers in his cloak and went to the bishop a third time. When he unfolded his garment before the prelate, the flowers within it were transformed, leaving an imprint of the Virgin on the cloak. Astonished, the bishop finally believed what Juan Diego had told him and ordered that a chapel should be built in Tepeyac. Thereafter, Juan Diego stayed in the bishop's house for one night before going back to his uncle, who told him that he had recovered after having seen and talked to the Virgin. The Virgin had also told Juan Diego's uncle that the image that had miraculously been imprinted on the cloak should be known as Our Lady of Guadalupe. The cloak was then kept in the cathedral before being transferred to Tepeyac when a church had been built there. At this time, Juan Diego left his home and moved to Tepeyac, where he lived in chastity with his wife María Lucía until his death in 1548, when he was seventy-four years old.

The story as outlined above appeared for the first time in printed form in *Imagen de la Virgen María* (1648) by diocesan priest Miguel Sánchez. In the work, the apparition story includes an interpretation of the revelation of the Virgin in chapter 12 of the Book of Revelations. In this context, Sánchez argued that the picture in the chapel was nothing less than an exact imprint of the same Virgin seen by of St. John.³ Less than a year after the appearance of Sánchez' book, in a work in Nahuatl, known as *Huei Tlamahuiçoltica* ("By a great miracle"), another diocesan priest, Luis Lasso de la Vega gave a somewhat longer version of the story. His work begins with the account of Juan Diego, the Virgin, Bishop Zumárraga, and Juan Bernardino, known by its initial words as *Nican mopohua* ("Here is recounted"), and includes an elaborate version of the affectionate discourses between the Virgin and the Indian. This apparition story is followed by another text called *Nican motecpana* ("Here is an ordered account"), which described fourteen

³ Miguel Sánchez *Imagen de la Virgen María, Madre de Dios Guadalupe, Milagrosamente aparecida en la Ciudad de Mexico. Celebrada en su historia, con la profecía de los doze del Apocalipsis* [1648], re-edited in Ernesto de la Torre Villar & Ramiro Navarro de Anda (eds.) *Testimonios históricos guadalupanos*. (Mexico City 1982): 153-267.

miracles that were attributed to the picture of Guadalupe at Tepeyac, followed by a short note on the life of Juan Diego after the apparitions.⁴

The two works by the so-called Guadalupan evangelists Miguel Sánchez and Lasso de la Vega were published almost 120 years after the events that they claim to describe. Many authors, ever since the end of the eighteenth century, have doubted the historicity of the events and the age of the cult, especially since there are no contemporary notes on whether Bishop Zumárraga knew about the alleged miracles or the picture. When, for example, the Mexican historian Joaquín García Icazbalceta, published his well-known biography on Bishop Zumárraga in 1881, he did not include any notes on Our Lady of Guadalupe, due to the total lack of contemporary sources.⁵ In fact, nobody has yet found any palpable contemporary evidence that Bishop Zumárraga knew anything about the apparitions, let alone accepted them as true. On the other hand, an increasing number of works appeared in the 1880s and onwards, ardently defending the historicity of the apparition account and the tradition. Since the publication of García Icazbalceta's work, the struggle between "apparitionists" and "anti-apparitionists" has been fierce. The struggle only increased with the beatification of Juan Diego in 1990 and the subsequent canonisation process, discussing the existence or non-existence of Juan Diego and the age of the apparition account, especially its Nahuatl version, the *Nican mopohua*. However, on July 31, 2002, during an apostolic visit to Mexico, Pope John Paul II solemnly canonised Juan Diego.⁶

Beyond doubt, a cult of Virgin Mary as Our Lady of Guadalupe existed at Tepeyac by 1556, when the cult figured in an investigation that was carried out by Archbishop Alonso de Montúfar. The very name Guadalupe has always been a

⁴ See the Nahuatl-English parallel edition by Lisa Sousa, Stafford Poole CM, & James Lockhart, *The Story of Guadalupe. Luis Laso de la Vega's 'Huei tlamahuiçoltica' of 1649* (Stanford & Los Angeles 1998).

⁵ Joaquín García Icazbalceta *Fray Don Juan de Zumárraga, primer obispo y arzobispo de México* [1881], (4 vols. Mexico City 1947).

⁶ See Stafford Poole CM, *Our Lady of Guadalupe. The Origins and Sources of a Mexican National Symbol, 1531-1797* (Tucson 1995). For the criticism against the planned canonisation during the late 1990s and the first years of the new millennium, see Manuel Olimon Nolasco, *La búsqueda de Juan Diego* (Mexico City 2002). For a detailed overview of the discussions about Guadalupe and the historicity of Juan Diego in the nineteenth and twentieth century, see Stafford Poole, "History vs. Juan Diego", *The Americas* 62.1 (2005): 1-16 and the same author's monograph *The Guadalupan Controversies in Mexico* (Stanford 2006). Lately, Poole has published a new article presenting his arguments, "A Response to Timothy Matovina", *The Catholic Historical Review* 100.2 (2014): 271-283.

matter of dispute, since Guadalupe was also the name of a very popular Marian pilgrimage in the Spanish province of Extremadura. The Spanish cult goes back to the discovery of a small wooden statue of the Virgin, which was attributed to St. Luke and allegedly had been hidden when the Muslims arrived in the eighth century. When it was found again in the fourteenth century it was kept in the Guadalupe monastery that belonged to the Order of St. Jerome, where it soon became one of the foremost Marian devotions in Spain, and her name was given to various churches around the country.⁷

Even if, as has been shown, the first printed versions of the story of Guadalupe appeared as late as 1648 and 1649 with the works of Sánchez and Lasso de la Vega, this does not, *per se*, rule out the possibility that they based their works on earlier oral or written traditions. In his book, Miguel Sánchez, however, claimed that all documents relating to the apparition of the Virgin in 1531 had disappeared and that he therefore had to rely entirely on interviews with elders who had knowledge of the events.⁸ Luis Lasso de la Vega did not mention any particular sources for his work, and figured as the sole author, not even mentioning the existence of Sánchez's book, that appeared less than a year before his own. Like Sánchez, Lasso de la Vega stated that he built his work on oral traditions, and further assumed that the elders had not taken the time to write down the traditions, but only transferred them orally.⁹

However, some Nahua *manuscripts* include the apparition story. Therefore, much work has been done in order to establish their date, to see if they precede the printed accounts. One of the most important manuscripts, a part of the *Nican mopohua*, is in the New York Public Library.¹⁰ In the early 1980s, North American Jesuit Ernest J. Burrus devoted a slender volume to this manuscript, wanting to date the manuscript to around 1550 taking into account the palaeography of the

⁷ See Richard Nebel, *Santa María Tonantzín Virgen de Guadalupe. Religiöse Kontinuität und Transformation in Mexiko* (Immensee 1992): 53-81. Cf. Anna-Britta Hellbom, "Las apariciones de la Virgen de Guadalupe en México y en España", *Ethnos* 29 (1964): 58-72.

⁸ Torre Villar & Navarro de Anda 1982

⁹ Sousa, Poole & Lockhart 1998.

¹⁰ The manuscript is reproduced in Miguel León-Portilla, *Tonantzín Guadalupe. Pensamiento náhuatl y mensaje cristiano en el "Nican mopohua"* (Mexico City 2000): 175-190. Cf. Xavier Noguez *Documentos guadalupanos. Un estudio sobre las fuentes de información tempranas en torno a las marionetas en el Tepeyac* (Mexico City 1993): 26-33.

document.¹¹ On palaeographic grounds alone, I find it somewhat daring to date the manuscript as precisely as the mid-sixteenth century. According to me, the palaeography do not have a distinctly mid-sixteenth or even a sixteenth century look.

As Nahuatl constantly changed in interaction with the Spanish language, a study of grammar, orthography, and the presence of certain word constructions and loan words is of interest for scholars who want to date the manuscript. For Burrus, a philological study gives the same result as his palaeographic study, consequently dating it to the mid-sixteenth century.¹² Still, Burrus's philological argumentation is not convincing. As Stafford Poole has pointed out in his study of the Guadalupan traditions, Burrus analysed the manuscript text as if it was written in Spanish, discussing the use of letters that are not found in Nahuatl, such as "b" and "r". On linguistic grounds, and especially because of the use of the letter "h" to indicate the glottal stop in Nahuatl, Louise Burkhart wants to date the manuscript to the late sixteenth or very early seventeenth century.¹³ Stafford Poole, on the other hand, notes that the use of "h" is not consistent; at times, the glottal stop is indicated by a grave accent, as was quite common in later ecclesiastical Nahuatl.¹⁴

James Lockhart has argued that from a linguistic point of view the text could have been written from the 1550s or 1560s onwards, but also states that the text includes a couple of Spanish loanwords that hardly occur before the last quarter of the sixteenth century.¹⁵ For Mexican scholar, Miguel León-Portilla, the language in the *Nican mopohua* is an example of noble Nahuatl, characterised by an abundant use of reverential forms and metaphors, which could very well have been written in the mid-sixteenth-century.¹⁶ Louise Burkhart calls the language, "standard church Nahuatl", a form of elevated Nahuatl developed in the early mission years that lasted throughout the colonial period.¹⁷ According to Stafford Poole, the language

¹¹ Ernest J. Burrus SJ, *The oldest copy of the Nican Mopohua*. (Washington 1981).

¹² Burrus 1981.

¹³ Louise M. Burkhart, "The Cult of the Virgin of Guadalupe in Mexico", in: Gary H. Gossen & Miguel León-Portilla (eds.) *South and Meso-American Native Spirituality. From the Cult of the Feathered Serpent to the Theology of Liberation* (New York 1993): 198-227. See also Burkhart's *Before Guadalupe. The Virgin Mary in Early Colonial Nahuatl Literature* (Albany 2001).

¹⁴ Poole 1995:115.

¹⁵ Lockhart 1992, cf. Sousa, Poole & Lockhart 1998:22.

¹⁶ León-Portilla 2000: 51-69.

¹⁷ Burkhart 1993: 204.

of *Nican mopohua* could very well reflect the “linguistic renaissance of the mid-seventeenth-century, one aspect of which was a move to restore a pristine, classical form of Nahuatl.”¹⁸ Thus, from a linguistic viewpoint, there are no possibilities to give a more exact date in which the text could have been written.

Having, albeit briefly, indicated the problems relating to the dating of the oldest copies of the *Nican mopohua*, I would like to briefly discuss its authorship, which, of course is intertwined with the dating of the account. On the assumption that there existed earlier Nahuatl manuscripts before the printing of Lasso de la Vega’s work in 1649, the indigenous scholar Antonio Valeriano (1520s-1605) has, since the late seventeenth century, often been seen as the author of the *Nican mopohua*. Nowadays, the authorship of Valeriano is part of the ecclesiastically recognised tradition. Antonio Valeriano was known as a brilliant Latinist, educated by Franciscan friars at the College of Santa Cruz at Tlatelolco, where he later taught Latin rhetoric. He is also known for his translation of Latin classics into Nahuatl. The assertion of the authorship of Valeriano appeared in a book entitled *Piedad heroyca de don Fernando Cortés*, written by the Mexican savant Carlos Sigüenza y Góngora towards the very end of the seventeenth century. There, the author claimed to possess a manuscript containing the apparition account in the “letter of Don Antonio Valeriano, an Indian, who is its true author”. However, it should be stated that Sigüenza y Góngora did not explicitly write that the text that is known as *Nican Mopohua*, but only that it was a “relation” dealing with miracles related to Our Lady of Guadalupe.¹⁹

The passing note by Sigüenza y Góngora is the earliest known source stating that Valeriano had written an account on the Virgin of Guadalupe, and it is a thesis that has been widely accepted by the apparitionist authors, who identify the account with the *Nican mopohua*. According to this thesis, popularised by Jesuit historian Mariano Cuevas in the 1920s, Valeriano was the sole author of *Nican mopohua*, while another author is thought to have written the account of the miracles, the *Nican motecpana*. Sometimes, the Indian noble, Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxóchitl, is attributed as the author of the latter work. According to this vein of scholarship,

¹⁸ Poole 1995:113.

¹⁹ The authorship of the *Nican mohua* is discussed by for example Nebel 1992, Noguez 1993, Burkhart 1993, Poole 1995, Sousa, Poole, Lockhart 1998, León-Portilla 2000. The quotation is from Noguez 1993: 21-22.

Lasso de la Vega's role was just that of a compiler and editor of earlier manuscripts in Nahuatl.²⁰

However, the editors of the Nahuatl-English version of Lasso de la Vega's work think that the same author or at least the same group of authors wrote the entire work. For them, the most plausible solution to the problem of authorship is that the whole work was written by Lasso de la Vega around 1649—certainly with the help of indigenous aides—using the earlier Spanish work by Miguel Sánchez as the main basis. While the style in the Nahuatl text by Lasso de la Vega is more elaborate, they argue that it adds nothing important to the basic narration of the story about the Virgin and Juan Diego as seen in the Spanish work.²¹

Another shorter Nahuatl account of a Marian apparition associated with Tepeyac has been found in a collection of sermons in the National Library of Mexico. The manuscript is known by its initial words, *Inin huey tlamahuiçoltzin* (“This is the great marvel”). As in the case with the *Nican mopohua*, there is no consensus among scholars on the origins and date of this manuscript. According to Louise Burkhart, on linguistic and palaeographic grounds, the manuscript could be dated to the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century, while Stafford Poole dates it to the eighteenth century. The basic story of the apparition and the transformation of the flowers as told by Lasso de la Vega is found in the manuscript, but the text does not indicate any date and the Indian is unnamed, and nor is the bishop, to whom he presents the cloak. Therefore, Louise Burkhart argues that the story was probably a part of an emergent legend, where only later the Indian was named as Juan Diego, the bishop was named as Zumárraga, and the year of the apparition became 1531.²²

Having outlined the discussions on the authorship and date of the apparition account, I will proceed to the main theme of this chapter. Here, I will focus on the cult of Virgin Mary under the name Guadalupe during the Montúfar administration, using documents that could be dated without any major doubts. As it is not possible to date the apparition tradition as presented in the *Nican mopohua* with any degree of certainty, I argue that knowledge of this story should not be presupposed when

²⁰ Fidel González Fernández, Eduardo Chávez Sánchez & José Luis Guerrero Rosado, *El Encuentro de la Virgen de Guadalupe y Juan Diego* (Mexico City 1999):143-161. For a criticism of the arguments, see for example Poole 1995: 165-170 and Poole 2006.

²¹ Sousa, Poole & Lockhart 1998: 17-18.

²² Poole 1995:40-43 and Burkhart 1993: 214-216.

reading the documents from the Montúfar era concerning the cult of Our Lady of Guadalupe at Tepeyac.

Montúfar, Bustamante, and Guadalupe

The most important document on the cult of Guadalupe during Montúfar's archiepiscopacy is without doubt an investigation (*Información*) on some thoughts on the cult that were expressed in a sermon, given by the Franciscan provincial Francisco de Bustamante in September 1556. The record was re-discovered in the archiepiscopal archives in the mid-nineteenth century and made public towards in the late 1880s. Thereafter, it disappeared from the archives, not to be found again until 1955 among the papers of the abbot of the Guadalupe Basilica, José Antonio Plancarte y Labastida.²³ Until recently, the document was kept in the Historical Archives of the Archbishopric of Mexico, from where it unfortunately has disappeared again.²⁴

Fortunately enough several printed editions exist. The first appeared in 1888 and a second edition was published three years later, together with thorough comments by José María Andrade and Francisco Paso del Troncoso.²⁵ In 1978, Mexican Franciscan Fidel de Jesús Chauvet made a new careful transcription of the text as an appendix to his book on the cult at Tepeyac in the sixteenth century, including some valuable diplomatic notes in a foreword.²⁶ Mexican historian Francisco Miranda Godínez has made a new palaeographic version of document, published in 2001 as an appendix to his voluminous work on Guadalupe and

²³ Jesús García Gutiérrez, "Un documento guadalupano del siglo XVI: la información contra el padre Bustamante", *Memorias de la Academia Mexicana de la Historia* 14 (1955): 313-330.

²⁴ Personal communication with the archivists, February 2001.

²⁵ On the re-finding of the manuscript in 1849 and the interesting events before and just after the publication, see Edmundo O'Gorman, *Destierro de sombras. Luz en el origen de la imagen y culto de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe* (Mexico City 1986): 263-276. The document was published as *Información que el señor arzobispo de México D. Fray Alonso de Montúfar mandó practicar sobre un sermón que el 8 de septiembre de 1556 que predicó Fray Francisco de Bustamante acerca del culto de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe* (Mexico City 1891). A modernised version of the 1891 edition is also found in Torre Villar & Navarro de Anda 1982: 36-141.

²⁶ Fidel de Jesús Chauvet OFM, *El culto guadalupano del Tepeyac. Sus orígenes y sus críticos en el siglo XVI* (Mexico City 1978): 213-251. For some strange reason, however, Chauvet has opted to modernise the orthography of a major part of the document (from fol. 11r onwards). A modernised version of the text is also found in Torre Villar & Navarro de Anda 1982:36-141

Remedios: *Dos cultos fundantes*.²⁷ For this study, I have also been able to consult the photocopies of the original used by Doctor Miranda for his palaeography.²⁸ In the following, I will refer to both the pagination of the now disappeared original document and Miranda's recent edition.²⁹

According to the witnesses in the *Información*, a cult of the Virgin Mary under the name of Guadalupe was initiated at Tepeyac not long before 1556. Several of the witnesses testify that the cult was "new" (*nuevo*), but that it rapidly had become very popular among the inhabitants of the city. Many people, both Spaniards and Indians, and men and women from all social strata, travelled to Tepeyac to pay devotion to Our Lady and the picture of her that had been placed there. They also gave great amounts of alms. In addition, miracles had been reported and this only increased the popularity. The witnesses stress specifically the piety of upper class Spaniards who made pilgrimages to Tepeyac and entered the chapel on their bare knees. Some of the witnesses also asserted that the effect of the cult had been very positive and that the general piety of the people had increased since it had appeared. People went more frequently to mass and certain common vices decreased. In the document, the church building at Tepeyac is referred to as an *ermita*, a word signifying a small church, or chapel of ease, often to be found in rural areas or in the outskirts of a town and without resident clergy.³⁰

The conflict between the Archbishop and the Franciscan provincial on the cult at Tepeyac began in early September 1556. On Sunday September 6, the octave of the Nativity of Our Lady, Archbishop Alonso de Montúfar preached in the cathedral about a text from the Gospel of St. Luke. The sermon centred on the devotion faithful Catholics should have for the Mother of God. According to witnesses, Montúfar expressed his contention that many people in various parts of the world held images of Virgin Mary in high esteem.³¹ He was also pleased to note

²⁷ Francisco Miranda Godínez, *Dos Cultos Fundantes: Los Remedios y Guadalupe (1521-1649)*. *Historia documental*. (Zamora 2001): 421-438. The paleography is somewhat modernised.

²⁸ In the course of the investigation, I have donated a scanned version of the document to the Historical Archives of the Archdiocese of Mexico, the place where the original used to be.

²⁹ I will refer to the original document as *Información*. It consists of 19 folios, though some are blank. The testimonies are found on fols. 9r-19v, preceded by two denunciations and a questionnaire.

³⁰ Testimonies of Juan Salazar (*Información* fol. 10r-12r; Miranda Godínez 2001:425-428), Alonso Gómez de León (*Información* fol. 17r-18r; Miranda Godínez 2001: 435-436), Alonso Sánchez de Cisneros (*Información* fol. 16r-17r; Miranda Godínez 2001: 434-435), and Juan de Maseguer (*Información* fol. 19r-19v; Miranda Godínez 2001: 436-438).

³¹ Testimony by Juan Salazar (*Información* fol. 10r-12r Miranda Godínez 2001: 425-428).

the devotion that the inhabitants of the City of Mexico showed for Our Lady of Guadalupe in her temple at Tepeyac, and thought that the Spaniards' devotion would surely have edifying effects on the Indians, whom he thought did not show such great affection for Our Lady. In relation to the purported miracles that the image performed, Montúfar told the congregation of the decision taken of the "Lateran Council", which established penalties towards those who showed disregard for the prelates and for those who publicly defended miracles that did not have explicit approval from the local bishop.³² According to Stafford Poole, the decision referred to by the Archbishop was probably a constitution that was promulgated in 1516 by Pope Leo X during the Fifth Lateran Council.³³

Later in the afternoon, when Montúfar had ended his sermon, one of the archbishop's associates, Gonzalo de Alarcón, went to the Franciscan monastery in the city. There, he met some of the friars among whom he recognised Alonso de Santiago and Antonio de Guete. Alonso de Santiago told him that he had attended mass in the cathedral in the morning and had listened to the archbishop's sermon, and expressed his utter dislike of the archbishop's approval of the Marian image at Tepeyac. *Fray* Alonso said that he considered this type of popular devotion particularly harmful to the recently christianised Indians, as "they used to venerate idols during the time of their infidelity". He also said that he and his co-friars had spent much time trying to extirpate all kinds of idolatries, and thought that the cult of Tepeyac could well ruin what they had tried to edify. After saying this, he took a book—it is not explicitly stated that it was a Bible—in his hands, and read parts of chapter 13 from the book of Deuteronomy to those gathered, a passage dealing with idolatry and the cult of dead things. Moreover, *Fray* Alonso thought that the name Guadalupe was confusing and strange as it referred to a sanctity in Spain, and thought that the most logical would be to name the chapel Our Lady of Tepeyac, as it was the name of the location.³⁴

This was, however, just the overture to the conflict between Montúfar and the Franciscans. The following Tuesday, September 8, on the feast day of the Nativity of Our Lady, the Franciscan provincial Francisco de Bustamante preached in the

³² Testimony by Juan Salazar (*Información* fol. 10r-12r Miranda Godínez 2001: 425-428).

³³ Poole 1995: 251-252.

³⁴ Testimony by Gonzalo de Alarcón (*Información*, fol. 15r-16r; Miranda Godínez 2001: 432-433), Alonso Sánchez de Cisneros (*Información* fol. 16r-17r; Miranda Godínez 2001: 434-435)

chapel of San José de los Naturales in Mexico City. Bustamante was an influential and respected person in the Franciscan province and had been commissary general of the order for six years before being elected provincial in 1555.³⁵ In the church, both the viceroy and the members of the *audiencia* were present, together with many other people from the city. Towards the end of his sermon on the Virgin, the provincial dealt with the new cult of Our Lady of Guadalupe at Tepeyac and some of the witnesses noted that the provincial then had become very angry and that his face turned red. In opposition to the archbishop, he affirmed that the Indians were very much devoted to the Virgin. In fact, their devotion was so great, that they thought that the Virgin was a goddess, instead of the mother of God. Bustamante said that Archbishop Montúfar was totally mistaken in approving the cult, which would have devastating effects on the indigenous population. The Franciscan provincial asserted that the position of the archbishop threatened to uproot the fragile Christian faith of the indigenous population. This was so important for Bustamante that he threatened to stop preaching to the Indians if the archbishop's support of the cult continued.³⁶

Bustamante also thought that the alleged thaumaturgic effect of the picture was a hoax and questioned how a picture “that an Indian had painted” was making miracles. Only one of the witnesses in the investigation, Alonso Sánchez de Cisneros, stated that he knew the name of this indigenous artist— Marcos.³⁷ Though nothing more than his Christian name was rendered, it has often been assumed that he was the indigenous painter called Marcos Cipac or Marcos de Aquino, who had been trained by the Franciscans in Tlatelolco.³⁸ According to the testimony of Juan de Salazar, Bustamante continued stating that:

He did not know what effect the said devotion had, because it would contradict what he and other members of religious orders with much sweat had been preaching to the natives of this country. Because it would be to convince them that this image of Our Lady of Guadalupe performed miracles and if some lame, blind or crippled Indians went there with the intention [to get cured] and they turned back without being cured, or getting even worse because of the

³⁵ Chauvet 1978: 119-126 and Poole 1995: 59.

³⁶ Testimony by Álvaro Gómez de León (*Información* fol. 17r-18r; Miranda Godínez 2001: 435-436).

³⁷ Testimony by Alonso Sánchez de Cisneros (*Información* fol. 16r-17r; Miranda Godínez 2001: 434-435).

³⁸ Poole 1995: 62-63.

walk, they would make jokes about it/her [the cult/the Virgin] and it would thus be better to take away this devotion, because of the scandal of the natives..³⁹

The Franciscan provincial urged that the purported miracles must be thoroughly investigated before they were made public. It is also interesting that the people that he suggested to be in charge of such an investigation were the viceroy and the *oidores*, and not the ecclesiastical authorities in the form of the archbishop. If the miracles were found to be groundless, Bustamante thought that the inventor ought to be severely punished. In fact, he suggested that he should be given “a hundred lashes” and if anyone should dare to do so in the future, he should be given the double amount of lashes. Moreover, Bustamante did not know what use the alms given to the *ermita* had and thought that they could be used in better ways, for example to maintain the hospitals or to aid the many poor people in the city. According to Montúfar, Bustamante’s harsh criticism of the popular devotion had caused scandal among the listeners and other people. One of the witnesses even stated that he had become so indignant by the provincial’s words that he had left the church during the sermon.⁴⁰

Later this same day, probably after having heard reports on the Franciscan’s sermon from his assistants, Archbishop Montúfar went out to Tepeyac. There, he preached to the Indians present, his words being translated into Nahuatl by his *provisor de indios*, Francisco de Manjarres. According to his witnesses, Montúfar had tried to explain the orthodox Catholic views on the veneration of images and in particular the cult of the Virgin. Montúfar is then reported to have said that pictures such as this of the Virgin should not be revered as such, but only for what they represent, that is the mother of God.⁴¹

³⁹ “no sabia que efecto se tenia en la dicha debocion, porque era dar a entender a los yndios naturales desta tierra al contrario de lo quel y otros religiosos con mucho sudor les avian predicando; porque les daban a entender que aquella ymagen de nuestra señora. de guadalupe hazia milagros y como algunos yndios coxos ciegos, o mancos yban a ella con aquel proposito y no tornaban sanos antes peores con el cansancio del camino, lo tenian por burla y que seria mejor que se procurase de quitar aquella debocion, por el escandalo de los naturals”. Testimony by Juan de Salazár (*Información* fol. 10r; The paleography is mine; cf. Miranda Godínez 2001: 426).

⁴⁰ Testimonies by Juan de Salazár (*Información* fol. 10v-12r; Miranda Godínez 2001: 425-428) and Marcial de Contreras (*Información* fol. 12r-12v; Miranda Godínez 2001: 428-429).

⁴¹ Testimony by Juan de Salazár (*Información* fol. 10v-12r; Miranda Godínez 2001:425-428). Manjarres does not figure in the text as *provisor de indios*. Edmundo O’Gorman’s assertion (O’Gorman 1986:39) that Manjarres was the first chaplain of the *ermita* seems to be groundless.

A couple of weeks later a man of Catalan origin named Juan de Maseguer appeared before Montúfar informing him of the views on Guadalupe held by certain other Franciscans in the city. On September 20, Maseguer had passed by the Franciscan monastery of Santiago Tlatelolco. There he had met and talked to one *Fray Luis*, probably Luis Cal, although his full name is not mentioned in the document. When he mentioned to the friar that he was on his way to Guadalupe, hoping that his pilgrimage would cure his daughter from whooping cough, the friar answered:

Get rid of this drunkenness, because this is a devotion, that none of us like at all. The witness then said – Father, do you want to take my devotion away from me? And he said: No, but truthfully, I say to you that I think that you offend God, and that You will not gain any merit, as you give a poor example to the natives. And if his Excellency, the Archbishop, says what he says, it is because he acts according to his own interests and because he is more than sixty years old and is getting dizzy now. Thereafter he swore by the true God and by the sign of the cross, which he took in his hands, that those words that he had spoken were true. [The witness] also remembered Fray Luis saying; we will make that Archbishop go another time across the sea!⁴²

Despite what the friar, who had been his confessor, had told him; Maseguer went to Tepeyac and could inform the archbishop that his daughter had recovered from her illness. However, he could also report that the presence of Indians at the shrine was not as great as before, something he explained by the opposition from the Franciscans.⁴³

Strangely enough, the *Información* is the only known contemporary source to the quarrel between Montúfar and the Franciscans on the cult at Tepeyac. Thus, there are no explicit notes in any of the Montúfar's many letters. Nor are there any notes on the events in any of the Franciscan chronicles or in any letters by members of the order that are known to me. It is strange that Archbishop Montúfar did not

⁴² “Dexese desa borrachera, porque esa es una deboçion que nosotros todos estamos mal con ella, y este testigo le dixo padre quereisme bos quitar a mi, mi deboçion y dixo no, pero de verdad os digo que antes me parece que ofendeis a dios que no ganais merito, porque dais mal emjemplo [sic] a estos naturales; y si su señoria del [sic] arçobispo dize lo que dize, es porque se le sigue su ynterese, y pasa de sesenta y devaría ya y questa es la verdad y juro lo por dios verdadero y por la señal de la cruz en que puso sus manos ques la verdad lo que dicho tiene y mas se acuerda quel dicho fray luis dixo calla que nosotros haremos con quel arçobispo vaya otra vez por la mar.” Testimony by Juan de Maseguer (fol. 19v, my palaeography. Cf. Miranda Godínez 2001: 437).

⁴³ Testimony by Juan de Maseguer (fol. 18v-19v; Miranda Godínez 2001: 436-438)

persecute the rather blunt criticism put forward by various Franciscan friars against his authority. At the present state of research, there is no evidence that Montúfar sent any reports to Spain or that any further steps were taken to persecute Bustamante or any other Franciscan involved in the *Información*. Anyhow, if there were any such process it would have been put to an end by the death of the provincial in Spain in 1562, while defending the privileges of the mendicants at the Spanish court.

To end this study of the *Información*, I would like to examine the most detailed treatment of the document that has been written, the *Destierro de Sombras* by Edmundo O’Gorman. In this work, which certainly has its merits, the author at times enters a quite hazardous argumentation. According to O’Gorman, the cult at Tepeyac began in the last months of 1555 or the beginning of 1556. His most substantial argument for this assertion is that the decrees of the First provincial council of Mexico, dated in November 1555, did not mention the cult. However, there is no obvious reason why a provincial council should deal with a new and local Marian cult such as the one at Tepeyac. According to O’Gorman, Montúfar played a most important role in the promotion of the Marian cult at Tepeyac, as he had himself surreptitiously placed a picture of Virgin Mary in the *ermita* in order to arouse the devotion of the indigenous population. There is, of course, no direct foundation for this assertion.⁴⁴

According to O’Gorman, Montúfar put the *ermita* at Tepeyac under his direct jurisdiction, whereas earlier it had been subject to the Franciscans at Tlatelolco. Edmundo O’Gorman’s proof for this is, however, very vague, citing a letter written by Montúfar on May 15, 1556, which includes a general statement that he had put some Franciscan churches under his jurisdiction. According to the author, Montúfar should thus have placed the image in the *ermita* before ascribing it to his direct jurisdiction. Here the apparition story, the *Nican Mopohua*, enters the argumentation. Although a devoted anti-apparitionist, O’Gorman fully accepts the authorship of Antonio de Valeriano dating to the mid-sixteenth century, thus following Ernest J. Burrus’s argument. In fact, O’Gorman goes as far to assert that the text was written in 1556, as a way to sacralise the image of Mary. Here he makes

⁴⁴ O’Gorman 1986: 30-40, 145-148.

yet another questionable leap in his argumentation, without presenting any substantial proof.⁴⁵

Another important aspect of Edmundo O’Gorman’s work is his attempt to find a solution to why the cult of Guadalupe gave rise to such an animated quarrel between the friars and the archbishop and why the Franciscans opposed the cult. In his analysis, O’Gorman relates the events in September of 1556 to the struggle between Montúfar and the mendicants on jurisdiction in the Indian ministry and on Indian tithes.⁴⁶ As regards this complicated matter, I will restrict myself to a more commentaries.⁴⁷ It is interesting to note that the Franciscans and in particular their provincial, used the same types of arguments as in the conflict on jurisdiction and Indian tithes. Though the cult of Guadalupe might look like a positive contribution, the Franciscans thought it was harmful for the faith of the newly christianised Indians, as they feared that it would induce them in idolatric cult. This was against what the Franciscans had taught the Indians from the beginning, and the cult threatened to uproot their teachings. If the archbishop supported the cult it was due to his lack of knowledge of the Indians, and because he had an interest in gaining money from the cult. As in the case of Indian tithes, the archbishop was implicitly criticised for being driven by an interest in personal gains.

In his very substantial book on the cult of Remedios and Guadalupe, Francisco Miranda Godínez includes an important document from the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. The letter, almost certainly written by Francisco de Bustamante in September 1556, is part of the argumentation against Indian tithes. There, Bustamante wrote that the Indians had learnt to be greedy from the Spaniards, and that the secular clerics have great difficulties preaching against greed as they then would preach against themselves. In this context, he mentioned the cult of Guadalupe at Tepeyac and the false miracles that he thought were supported by the archbishop:

In the city of Mexico, they have sustained and do still sustain the cult in a church, where a Spaniard said that a miracle was made involving the curing of a lame man. [Even if] this

⁴⁵ O’Gorman 1986: 48-61.

⁴⁶ O’Gorman 1986:131-134.

⁴⁷ For a detailed discussion on these apples of discord, see Magnus Lundberg, *Unificación y conflicto: La gestión episcopal de Alonso de Montúfar O.P., arzobispo de México, 1554-1572* (Zamora 2009), chapters 3 and 4.

[miracle] has been proofed to be a lie and a falsity and to be invented, the archbishop still approves of it, just because he is interested in the alms that are plentiful. We preached [to the Indians] that the idols they had were just stones and tree and were no gods, but now they can see that one can do more with a picture than with the sacrament, and when yesterday they said that it [the image] had cured sick people and today they know that it is false, they will think that that is the case with holy thing that we have preached to them, and that another day we will say them that it is not case. This could no be anything else but great harm and a scandal to the Indians.⁴⁸

Though the letter do not treat Bustamante's sermon and the archbishop's reaction to it, it is clear that it was written just before or after the time of the compilation of the *Información*.

The Origin of the Cult at Tepeyac

Even if the *Información* is the only known detailed source to the quarrels between Montúfar and Bustamante in 1556, various Nahuatl chronicles mention that something special involving the Virgin Mary occurred at Tepeyac in 1555 or 1556. The earliest of these sources is the *anales* that are attributed to Juan Bautista, a Nahua official from the city of Mexico, which today are guarded in the archives of the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Among Juan Bautista's notes, there is a brief observation that appears abruptly in the text: "Yn ipan xihuitl mill e qui(nient)os (15)55 a(ñ)os yquac monextitzino in Sancta Maria de Quatalupe yn ompa Tepeyacac".⁴⁹ The phrase could be translated as "In the year 1555 Saint Mary of Guadalupe *monextitzino* there at Tepeyacac." I have left the verbal phrase

⁴⁸ "En esta cibdad de México an sustentado y sustentan la deboción de una iglesia donde dixo un español que había hecho milagro en sanar un coxo y averiguando ser mentira y falsedad y ser todo fingido lo sustenta el arzobispo con grande escándolo por solo el interese de las ofrendas que son muchas y abiéndoles predicado que los ydolos que tenían heran piedras y palos y no dioses, viendo ahora que se haze más con una imagen de lienço que con el sacramento y que ayer les dixerón que abía sanado enfermos y oi saben ques falsedad pensarón que así son las cosas de la fee que les hemos predicado y otro día les diremos que no es ay, lo qual no podía ser sin gran daño y escándalo de los yndios." The document, found in BNP, Fonds Espagnols, vol. 325, is transcribed in Miranda Godínez 2001: 443-456; citation on p. 445-446.

⁴⁹ Reyes García 2001: 53-55, 160-161

untranslated as it is somewhat ambiguous and requires a further discussion. The prolific chronicler Don Domingo Francisco de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin uses the same verb in his early seventeenth century relations. Chimalpahin, however, dates the event to the year 1556 and writes “Auh ça no ypan in yhcuc mo(n)extitzino yn totlaçonantzin Sancta Maria Guadalupe yn Tepeyac”.⁵⁰ This phrase could be translated: “And likewise in this year our beloved mother Saint Mary Guadalupe *monextitzino* at Tepeyac.”

Then, how should the verb “monextitzino” be translated in this context? According to Xavier Noguez the verb could be understood as “se dignó manifestarse”, “se dignó aparecer” or “se dignó estrenarse”, which thus might be understood as an apparition.⁵¹ However, in his recent edition of the *anales* of Juan Bautista, Luis Reyes García has proposed the translation “fue mostrada”, meaning “se hizo del conocimiento público”, thus not clearly implying an apparition.⁵² “Nextia” is the causative form of the verb “neci”. A reflexive prefix is added and we get the form “monextia”, literally “to cause oneself to appear”. To make the reverential form, we add the suffix “-tzinoh” (the preterit form of “tzinoa”), where the “h” is a glottal stop, which most often is not written in colonial manuscripts. Then, “monextitzino” would just mean “se manifestó” as the reverential generally is not translated into Spanish.⁵³ However, it is still not possible to know if it was the Virgin or an image of the Virgin that “manifested herself there in Tepeyac” in 1555 or 1556.

From the *Información*, it is possible to conclude that there was a cult of Virgin Mary, under the name Guadalupe in a small church at Tepeyac, at least in September 1556. There are some notes on the existence of a church building at Tepeyac even before Montúfar’s arrival. The first note, of unquestionable date, appears in a book published by Francisco Cervantes de Salazar in 1554. In the Latin dialogues about the environs of the City of Mexico, there is a passing mention to a church building at Tepeaquilla, the Spanish version of the name Tepeyac. One of

⁵⁰ Günther Zimmermann, *Die Relationen Chimalpahins zur Geschichte Mexikos* (Hamburg 1963-1965): vol. 2:16.

⁵¹ Noguez 1993: 46-47.

⁵² Reyes García 2001: 53-55

⁵³ I wish to thank Dr. John Sullivan, Dr. Cristina Monzón, and Dr. Hans Roskamp for their valuable commentaries on this verb.

the interlocutors in Salazar's dialogues describes the following scene, as seen from his viewing point at the hill of Chapultepec.

From the hills to the city, a fact that heightens its advantage, the intervening lands, irrigated with water from canals, streams, and springs, extend on all sides for thirty miles or more. Here are situated the largest towns of the Indians such as Tetzco, Tlacopan, Tepeaquilla, Azcapotzalco, Cuyoacán, Iztapalapan, and many others. Belonging to them are those white churches that lie towards the City of Mexico.⁵⁴

As seen, Cervantes de Salazar does not mention anything about a Marian cult or provide any other details of the church at Tepeyac (Tepeaquilla). From the short note by Cervantes de Salazar, it is possible to deduce that a church building existed at Tepeyac at least when the archbishop arrived in 1554. From the text, it is, however, not possible to deduce the existence of a Marian cult at Tepeyac in 1554 and much less a cult of Mary under the name of Guadalupe.

Moreover, in the famous mid-sixteenth century map of the City of Mexico and its environs that is now to be found in the Uppsala University Library in Sweden, there is a depiction of a church building at Tepeyac. However, it should be noted that the place and the church building is called Tepeyac and not Guadalupe. The map was earlier attributed to the Spanish cosmographer, Alonso de Santa Cruz, but today it is a common opinion that it was executed by a group of Indians, probably at the College of Tlatelolco, as there are many distinctive indigenous features in its design. In this context, the attempts at dating the map are particularly interesting as they might prove the existence of a chapel at Tepeyac even before 1555 or 1556. Swedish archaeologist Sigvald Linné has written a detailed study of the map and the world it depicts, where he dates the map as early as about 1550, which would then prove the existence of a church building at Tepeyac at this early date. In his study, Linné sees the year 1556 as the latest possible date, as the map was dedicated to the Emperor Charles, who abdicated in this year.⁵⁵ The dating is, however, not precise enough to serve as an argument for

⁵⁴ "A collibus ad civitatem, quod etiam plus ipsam commendat: interna centes agri, irriguis aquis, fossis, fluminibus, & fontibus rigati undique per triginta & eo amplius milliarum patent. In quibus Indorum maxima oppida, qualia sunt Tezcucus, Tlacuba, Tepeaquilla, Escapuçalcus, Cuiacanus, Istapalapa, & alia multa posita sunt, quorum albicantia sunt illa quae Mexicum prospectant templa." Translation in Cervantes de Salazar 1963: 65, original fol. 285r.

⁵⁵ Sigvald Linné, *El Valle y la Ciudad de México en 1550* [1948] (Stockholm 1988): 198-205.

the existence of a church building at Tepeyac before 1555, and even less, for the existence of a Marian cult. Another researcher who has dealt with the map is Mexican art historian Manuel Toussaint, who has dated the map to the time span between 1555 and 1562, thus not saying anything more than the *Información*.⁵⁶

Finally, the *Códice de Tlatelolco* includes a picture of a church building accompanied by a glyph (a mountain and a human face in profile) that represented “Tepeyacac” in the section that corresponds to the year 1555. Although it is not easy to know what this means, taken together with the other testimonies, the drawing indicates that something involving the *ermita* at Tepeyacac succeeded in 1555.⁵⁷

The Archbishop and the *Ermita*: A Matter of Dispute

Another very important source on the role of Archbishop Montúfar in the early cult of Our Lady of Guadalupe is an investigation from the year 1562, made by Viceroy Velasco and the *audiencia* of Mexico. The investigation was initiated directly by King Philip II, after receiving serious accusations against the archbishop from the members of the cathedral chapter. Relating to the cult of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the accusations against Montúfar were twofold. Firstly, the archbishop is accused of taking personal advantage of the alms that were given to the *ermita* at Tepeyac. Secondly, he is accused of having collected revenue for a monstrance for the Holy Sacrament, which was to be used in Tepeyac, but which was never made. In spite of its great interest, the document has rarely been used in Guadalupan studies.⁵⁸

The accusation that Montúfar took advantage of the alms of Our Lady of Guadalupe in part echoed the claims by the Franciscan provincial six years before. In his sermon, Bustamante had stated that they did not know the purpose of the alms

⁵⁶ Manuel Toussaint, Federico Gómez de Orozco & Justino Fernández, *Planos de la ciudad de México siglos XVI y XVII: estudio histórico, urbanístico y bibliográfico* (Mexico City 1938).

⁵⁷ *Códice de Tlatelolco*, edited by Perla Valle (Mexico City 1994): 72.

⁵⁸ AGI, Justicia 279, no. 2, see also the cathedral chapter to the King, Feb 14, 1561 (PT 498). The royal letter is transcribed in *ibid.*, fol. 1r-2v. To my knowledge, this document was first noticed by Francisco Miranda Godínez in his “Fray Alonso de Montúfar y el culto guadalupano”, in *Tercer encuentro nacional guadalupano* (Mexico City 1979): 68-79 and he has later published a transcription of the whole document (Miranda Godínez 2001: 456-488). For a detailed study of the record, see Ethelia Ruíz Medrano, “Los negocios de un arzobispo: el caso de Fray Alonso de Montúfar”, *Estudios de Historia Novohispana* 12 (1992): 63-83.

given to the chapel, and therefore preferred donations to the hospitals or the poor of the city. The revenues of the *ermita* were great, since the inhabitants of the city and its environs showed much devotion. According to various witnesses, the alms given to the *ermita* since its foundation amounted about ten thousand pesos.⁵⁹

However, according to the schoolmaster Sancho Sánchez de Muñón, the archbishop had recently informed him that the annual incomes from Guadalupe surpassed three thousand pesos and he therefore thought that the total incomes during Montúfar's time had surely surpassed the amount of ten thousand pesos.⁶⁰ As patron, the archbishop had the right to appoint the major-domos of the *ermita*, and he had therefore entrusted two members of the cathedral chapter, Dr. Rafael Cervanes and Pedro de Nava, with the office. However, these two men were later dismissed from the office after questioning the archbishop's use of the alms. Thereafter, Montúfar was able to take with him the money he wanted without contradiction from anyone.⁶¹ In this context, one of the witnesses, Antonio de Oliver, explicitly stated that Archbishop Montúfar dedicated the *ermita* at Tepeyac to Our Lady Guadalupe and that he himself collected the alms on a regular basis.

Since the time when the said archbishop [Montúfar] dedicated the chapel to Our Lady of Guadalupe the citizens of this city had given alms with great devotion, the said archbishop visited the said chapel every week or fortnight to gather the alms that Spaniards and other inhabitants donated.⁶²

The schoolmaster of the cathedral chapter, Sancho Sánchez de Muñón testified that he had heard from the chaplain of Guadalupe that the archbishop invested some of the money to buy wine and oil, which he then sold to wealthy miners in the environs of Mexico to earn more money. These rumours had, according to the schoolmaster,

⁵⁹ Testimonies by Francisco Rodríguez Santos, (AGI, Justicia 279, no. 2, fols. 8r-8v), Diego de Velázquez, (ibid. fol. 11v), Sancho Sánchez de Muñón, (ibid. fol. 15v), Antonio de Oliva, (ibid. fol. 37v).

⁶⁰ Testimony by Sancho Sánchez de Muñón, (AGI, Justicia 279, no. 2, fol. 15v-16r).

⁶¹ “que al tiempo que el dicho arçobispo [Montúfar] hizo la dicha advocacion a la hermita de nuestra señora de Guadalupe dauan los vecinos desta ciudad con gran deuocion muchas limosnas y que el dicho arçobispo visitaua la dicha hermita cada ocho dias y cada quinze dias y cogia las limosnas que los españoles xpianos y los demas naturales dauan.” Testimonies by Francisco Rodríguez Santos, (AGI, Justicia 279, no. 2, fol. 8r-8v) and Antonio Oliva, (ibid. fol. 37v).

⁶² Testimony by Juan Oliver (AGI, Justicia 279, no. 2, fol. 37v).

caused “much scandal and murmuring” among the inhabitants of the city.⁶³ Whatever, they could testify that the money had not been used to improve the church building, despite the donations from the faithful. Several witnesses in the hearings from 1562 stated that the *ermita* at Tepeyac was still very humble and unadorned, built with sun-dried clay (*adobe*) with a stable beside it, all made at a very low cost and without any elaborate adoration. Therefore, the witnesses concluded that Archbishop Montúfar had used most of the alms for other purposes than maintaining and adorning the chapel at Tepeyac.⁶⁴

The other point of accusation deals with the custody of the Sacred Sacrament that was to be made for the chapel, but had not yet reached its destination. According to the witnesses, in 1559 Archbishop Montúfar had bought a large amount of mercury, with alms from the *ermita*. This mercury was to be used for the amalgamation of silver and was therefore given to a group of miners in Taxco, Sultepec, but also in Temascaltepec in the Toluca Valley, where the archbishop’s brother Martín de Montúfar lived. The miners were then asked to produce the largest amount of silver possible and were told that this silver would be used to make a monstrance for the Holy Sacrament in Our Lady of Guadalupe at Tepeyac. The miners produced the silver that was sent to the archbishop. However, nobody saw the monstrance and Montúfar was therefore also accused of having taken advantage of the silver for his own use.⁶⁵

The archbishop’s business transactions and their relationship to the *ermita* at Tepeyac are also mentioned in another contemporary document, dated in 1562, where Montúfar is referred to as the “patron and founder” of the *ermita*. According to this document, he had bought mercury with the alms that he had received. In this mercury business, Montúfar had gained a thousand pesos, which he lent to Martín Araguren, who agreed to pay an annuity of a hundred pesos to the *ermita*.⁶⁶ According to this and other contemporary testimonies, Archbishop Montúfar was the patron and the founder of the *ermita* at Tepeyac, and the one who dedicated it to Our Lady of Guadalupe shortly after his arrival in New Spain. However, if we

⁶³ Testimony by Sancho Sánchez de Muñón (AGI, Justicia 279, no. 2, fol. 15v-16r).

⁶⁴ Testimonies by Francisco Rodríguez Santos, (AGI, Justicia 279, no. 2, fol 8v) and Sancho Sánchez de Muñón, (ibid, fols. 15v-16r).

⁶⁵ AGI, Justicia 279, no. 2, mentions that a *cofradía* had been founded before 1562.

⁶⁶ This document is transcribed in Miranda Godínez 2001:305-308

are to believe the dialogues written by Cervantes de Salazar, a church building existed at Tepeyac before the arrival of the prelate.

On May 1, 1551, during the *sede vacante* of the Mexican church, the Crown issued a decree that might explain why Archbishop Montúfar chose to promote the cult of Guadalupe in the archdiocese of Mexico when he arrived there three years later. In the letter, the Crown urged the prelates in Spanish America to promote the cult of the Extremaduran Our Lady of Guadalupe throughout the Indies, as the cult was very dear to the royal family. Moreover, the Crown decreed that *cofradías* devoted to Our Lady of Guadalupe should be founded and that alms for the Guadalupe monastery in Extremadura should be actively collected overseas.

I plead and commission you not to impede the people in those parts [the Indies] who, because of their devotion to the house of Our Lady of Guadalupe that the agents of the house make them *cofrades* [members of the *cofradía*]. Rather you should assist such agents and procurators in the foresaid matters and let them collect the alms that they receive and which they give to the said house. At present, this does not apply to the Indians, but only to the Spanish people, who freely want to enter in the said brotherhood and give the said alms.⁶⁷

However, it does not seem that the archbishop sent the alms that were donated by the faithful to the monastery of Guadalupe in Extremadura, but made use of them himself.

The Cult at Tepeyac during the Montúfar Era

From the late 1550s until the early 1570s, there are a number of other references to the cult of Guadalupe, found in both Hispanic and Nahuatl sources. In 1558, Montúfar instigated an inquisitorial proceeding against the Portuguese merchant Simón Falcón, who was accused of heresy. At the end of the process, the archbishop

⁶⁷ “no impidáis a las personas que quisieron en estas partes por su devoción de la dicha casa de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe que los factores de ella los asienten por cofrades; antes a los tales factores y procuradores los favorezcáis en lo susodicho y les dejéis coger las limosnas que se dieron y ofrecieron para la dicha casa, con tanto que esto no se entienda por ahora con los indios sino solamente con los españoles que de su voluntad quisieren entrar en la dicha cofradía y dar la dicha limosna”, Royal decree, Valladolid, May 1, 1551, transcribed in Richard Konetzke, *Colección de documentos para la historia de la formación social de Hispanoamerica*, (Madrid 1953), vol. 1: 285-286. Cf. Manuel Josef de Ayala *Diccionario y legislación de Indias* (Madrid 1988), vol. 3:206.

sentenced him to go to the chapel of Our Lady of Guadalupe on three consecutive Fridays and do penance for his transgression. More concretely, that Falcón should pay the chaplain to read three masses for the souls in purgatory, whose existence he had denied, and he should read the seven penitentiary psalms while kneeling in the chapel.⁶⁸

There are also a couple of indigenous notes on the *ermita* of Tepeyac as such. A most interesting note from 1561 is found in a letter written in Latin by the indigenous scholar Antonio Valeriano in the name of the indigenous officials of the village of Azcapotzalco, where Valeriano was born. Complaining about the bad treatment they received from the colonists, the indigenous leaders mention that five Indians from their village had been working on the “temple of the Virgin Mary which is commonly known as Guadalupe”, without receiving any payment.⁶⁹

I would also like to mention the note on Guadalupe in a testament that was written in 1563 by Don Francisco Verdugo Quetzalmamalitzin, an indigenous governor from Teotihuacan. In his last will and testament, Verdugo donated four pesos so that the priest at Tepeyac could read masses for his soul after his death.⁷⁰ In the *Nican Motecpana*—the account of the miracles attributed to Guadalupe—there is an explanation of this donation. During the conflict in Teotihuacan when the Viceroy wanted to replace the Franciscan *doctrineros* with Augustinians, Don Francisco had prayed to the Virgin of Guadalupe in hope of help, which she conceded, when the Franciscans returned.⁷¹ The Franciscan chronicler Gerónimo Mendieta, writing in the last decades of the sixteenth century, also tells that the Indian nobleman prayed for an intercession of the Virgin, however without mentioning the name of Guadalupe.⁷²

Another indigenous source to the cult is a Nahuatl chronicle, today known as the “Histoire méxicaine depuis 1221 jusqu’en 1594” and kept in the Bibliothèque

⁶⁸ Sentence by Montúfar, Nov 28, 1558, (AGN, Inquisición vol. 15, exp, 16, fol. 241r).

⁶⁹ Antonio Valeriano together with thirteen *gobernadores*, *alcaldes* and *regidores* of Azcapotzalco to the King, Feb 2, 1561 (AGI, M 1842). The pertinent passage reads “quinque etiam ad templum (quod vulgo guadalupe dicitur) virginis mariae”. The entire document is transcribed and translated in Miranda Godínez 2001: 489-496.

⁷⁰ The original in AGN, Vínculos 232, exp. 1, ápuđ Francisco del Paso y Troncoso (ed) *Testamento de Francisco Verdugo Quetzalmamalitzin. Documento inédito del siglo XVI (1563)* (Amecameca 1884).

⁷¹ Sousa, Poole, Lockhart 1998: 110-113. See also an investigation, dated in 1558 about Francisco Verdugo (AGI, M 96).

⁷² Mendieta 1945, vol. 2: 203-208.

Nationale in Paris. This text includes a short passage about penitentiary walks to Tepeyac in 1564, not to be found in any other sources known to me. In English translation, the text reads: “Many people were whipping themselves, and so they did at Lent when they walked in procession and in the feast when the Spaniards were whipping themselves there in Tepeyac.”⁷³ Here, the chronicler explicitly points out that they were Spaniards, who did penitence by walking to Tepeyac. Probably these penitent Spaniards were members of the newly founded brotherhood (*cofradía*) devoted to Our Lady of Guadalupe started before 1562.⁷⁴ The existence of the *cofradía* is also mentioned in the last will and testament of one of its *cofrades*, Alonso de Montabte, in 1564: “Give to Our Lady of Guadalupe in this city of Mexico two *pesos de tepuzque*, as I am a *cofrade* of her house”.⁷⁵

Apart from the note on the “apparition” of the Virgin in 1555, which I have already mentioned, the annals of Juan Bautista include some more detailed notes on the cult Tepeyac during the 1560s. The first of these notes deals with the year 1565, and refers to the case of Miguel, a native of Santa Isabel Tollan, who as a penalty had to work for two months at Tepeyac in the service of Santa Maria of Guadalupe.⁷⁶ For September 15, 1566, the *anales* of Juan Bautista noted that the octave of the Nativity of Our Lady was solemnly celebrated at Tepeyac, by Archbishop Montúfar and the *oidores* of the *audiencia*, but also in the presence of “us the *macehuales* [the common Indians]” as Juan Bautista writes. On this occasion, the wealthy miner Alonso de Villaseca donated a large silver statue of the virgin that was placed in the *ermita*. It is also mentioned that on his own cost Villaseca had built a couple of houses, where infirm pilgrims could sleep.⁷⁷ In a note corresponding to October 19, 1566, the *anales* describes how the representatives of the indigenous communities (*altepetl*) celebrated the happy

⁷³ “Senca momecahuitequia ynquin quarema [sic] ymochihuaya ynic tlaya hualoloya auh cem ilhuilhuitl yn momecahuitequia yn españoles yn opa tepeyacac.”, quoted and translated into Spanish in Xóchitl de Guadalupe Medina González “Historie mexicaine depuis 1221 jusqu’en 1594 (Ms. No. 40 del Fondo de Manuscritos Mexicanos, Biblioteca Nacional de Paris) estudio historiográfico, paleográfico y traducción al español.” (Mexico City 1998): 109.

⁷⁴ AGI, Justicia 279, no. 2.

⁷⁵ “Dar a nuestra Señora de Guadalupe desta ciudad de México dos pesos de tepuzque en limosna por que soy cofrade de su casa.” AGI, Bienes Nacionales, vol. 391, exp. 10, ápuđ González Fernández, Chávez Sánchez & Guerrero Rosado 1999: 369.

⁷⁶ Reyes García 2001:325

⁷⁷ Reyes García 2001:151

arrival of the new Viceroy, Gastón de Peralta, marquis of Falcés.⁷⁸ The contemporary acts from the secular *cabildo* of Mexico City noted that the viceroy was going to spend a night at Tepeyac before entering the city. Therefore, the *cabildo* decided to spend no less than a thousand *pesos* to put “the house of Our Lady” in order for the high guest and to provide him and his court with food and their beasts of burden with corn.⁷⁹

The records of the episcopal inquisition of Montúfar include a story on the *ermita* of Guadalupe. In 1568, the curate Luis Olid Viedma was on his way from the *villa* of Santiago de Valles to Mexico City, together with a man who was to be interrogated by the archiepiscopal Inquisition. The man’s crime was that he had said that simple fornication—sexual intercourse between two unmarried people—was not a mortal sin. On the way, they had met the Augustinian Andrés de Aguirre from Atomilco who had accompanied them for a couple of days. Before entering the city of Mexico, they passed the *ermita* of Guadalupe, where the curate had convinced the man that he should pay “for nine masses to Our Lady” to atone for his sins.⁸⁰

In the acts of the Mexican cathedral chapter, there are some notes on the cult of Guadalupe from the last years of the 1560s. These documents note that the members of the metropolitan chapter could freely accompany the archbishop in the solemn procession to the *ermita* on the feast of the Nativity of Our Lady in September. The acts of 1570 include a passage that the cathedral chapter should especially care for the archiepiscopal houses, the cathedral, the *hospital de bubas*, and the *ermita* of Guadalupe, thus giving the chapel at Tepeyac a special status in the archdiocese.⁸¹ As part of a report to the Council of the Indies in January 1570, the chaplain of Tepeyac, the Portuguese cleric Antonio Freire, wrote that “it could have been fourteen years ago when the illustrious Archbishop founded and edified [the *ermita*] with the alms of the faithful”, thus also dating the construction of the chapel to 1555 or 1556. Father Freire also stated that the *ermita* was given seven or

⁷⁸ Reyes García 2001:153

⁷⁹ Acts of October 17, 1566, in: Edmundo O’Gorman (ed.) *Guía de las Actas de Cabildo de la Ciudad de México* (Mexico City 1970): 395.

⁸⁰ AGN, Inquisición, vol. 8, parte 2, exp. 5, fols. 384r-385v.

⁸¹ ACCMM, Actas del Cabildo, lib. 2, fol. 234bis r (Sept 14, 1568) and fols. 252r-252v (Sept 6, 1569), see also lib. 2, fol. 261r (April 21, 1570).

eight thousand pesos in alms and that he had an annual salary of 150 pesos, for which he read masses on Saturdays and Sundays.⁸²



In this article, I have studied a number of documents related to the cult of Our Lady of Guadalupe at Tepeyac during the mid-sixteenth century. In the documents that without doubt can be dated to Montúfar's time, I have not found any foundation for the story about Juan Diego and Bishop Zumárraga that, at least since the 1640s, has been associated with the cult. Still, at least from the mid-1550s, there was a cult devoted to Our Lady of Guadalupe in Tepeyac. In 1556, various witnesses stated that the cult existed and that it had been founded recently. None of the witnesses mentioned that the image of the Virgin in the *ermita* had a supernatural origin.

Nevertheless, several indigenous sources, written in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries briefly mention that Our Lady of Guadalupe “manifested herself” at Tepeyac in 1555 or 1556. In 1570, Antonio Freire stated that Archbishop Montúfar founded the *ermita* fourteen years earlier. Moreover, one of the witnesses in the 1562 proceeding against Montúfar, Antonio de Oliver, explicitly stated that Archbishop Montúfar who dedicated the *ermita* to Our Lady of Guadalupe.

At least from the mid-1550s onwards, the *ermita* became an important site for pilgrimages. Hispanics and Indians from the city of Mexico and its environs went there to pay devotion to Our Lady, to do penitence and to be cured from illnesses that afflicted them. Just as in the case of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Extremadura, the Virgin of Tepeyac was celebrated specifically on the feast of the Nativity of Our Lady in September. At that time, the Archbishop and the cathedral chapter took part in a solemn procession to Tepeyac; and this procession is a clear testimony of the importance of the cult towards the end of Montúfar's archiepiscopacy. There is thus ample evidence to claim that the cult of Our Lady of Guadalupe at Tepeyac was founded by Archbishop Montúfar in the first years of his episcopal administration, that an image was put there, and that the place soon became a popular pilgrimage, as people claimed that the image had miraculous effects.

⁸² “puede haber catorze años que fundo y hedifico el Illustrismo Señor Arçobispo con las limosnas que dieron los fieles xpianos” Report from Antonio Freyre, Jan 10, 1570 (Francisco del Paso y Troncoso *Descripción del arzobispado de México* (Madrid 1905):28f).

