The Mesoamerican codex re-entangled : production, use, and re-use of precolonial documents

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4. Demons and Colonization, the Destruction of Written Culture

When the European conquerors entered the mainland of the Americas, they encountered a completely different world. In that encounter, the Spaniards brought with them an already complete worldview. This worldview was subsequently projected upon all they encountered, leading to reinterpretation of Mesoamerican culture and tradition that was often wrong. The class of objects that is being dealt with here – the indigenous written material culture – was perceived by the Spaniards as being dangerous and as a consequence was virtually eradicated. To be able to understand the reasoning for the destruction of what is now considered priceless heritage, this chapter focuses on the historical and ideological developments that led to the conceptualization of the codices as "evil" for Medieval Europeans. During the high and Late Middle Ages, a changing understanding of the role and nature of demons and the Devil combined with a changing perception of "Others" to give rise to an increasingly hostile attitude towards non-Christians. During this period, a canon for the depiction of Evil was created, giving form to shapeless demonic horrors. As will be shown, these now embodied evil figures were encountered by the Europeans in a very explicit manner when they arrived in Mesoamerica.

This chapter is divided in three parts. First, an explanation is given to show how the general Christian European perceptual framework concerning Evil and Others came into being during the Late Middle Ages. Second, an account is provided of how internal developments combined with the external perception of the other to form a complete demonology including demon worshippers. Both these factors will be shown to be for a large part responsible for the attitude of the colonizers in Mesoamerica, especially their attitude towards religion and writing. In the third part, the direct result of this attitude will be examined by considering the local treatment of the Codex Iya Nacuaa (Colombino-Becker).

4.1 CHRISTIAN PERCEPTION OF EVIL AND THE OTHER

While many religions have some opposing forces incorporated within their pantheon, Christianity, with its eternal struggle between Good and Evil, has taken this polarisation to the extreme. Around the fourth century BC, the concept of Satan fully crystallized as a separate identity opposing God. In what Cohn (1993, p. 17) calls apocalyptical writings – Jewish texts written between the second century B.C. to the first century A.D. – the court of Satan was first expanded to include the counterpart to God's angels: the demons. These demons are said to have a similar origin to Satan in the sense that they are seen as fallen angels. Thus, they are described as also originally being a part of the realm of God himself, but then broke away from God's grace. Moreover, it was because of their sins, which according to the Book of Enoch Chapters VI-X (Charles, 1912) was the lusting after the daughters of men, that they fell from grace.

To cleanse the earth, God created the Hell to which all who fell from grace were sent. While in this early text the fallen angels are stated to be bound until judgment day, in later centuries evil would be seen as far from neutralized.

According to Early Middle Age theology, the remaining angels had reasserted their status as good by resisting temptation. Like God, they too became more and more inherently benevolent as the demons fell further from the light of God. During the Middle Ages, then, the schism between Good and Evil is complete, with the earth perceived as divided into two kingdoms: one living in the light of God, the other living in the darkness of the Devil. What's more, these entities were conceived as being locked in an eternal struggle between Good and Evil, until the end of days. However, it is clear that from the earliest roots of Christianity until the Middle Ages, Evil was limited in both its role and power. In early Christianity, for example, Satan and his host of fallen

angels are limited to their powers to seduce people to stray from the righteous path of Christianity. And by this logic Satan is also to blame for all non-Christian belief systems. The early limits of Satan's power can be explained by the historical success of Christianity in the first few centuries of its existence (Cohn, 1993, p. 67), in which it became the pre-eminent religion of the Roman Empire and subsequently becoming the dominant religion in virtually the whole of Europe. Figures in older religions and belief systems were incorporated within Christianity to make the religion more palatable to pagan-dominated cultures, though these figures were often twisted in the form of demons. Kobolds, Fairies, and Elves, which were in their original Celtic, Germanic, and Slavic context ambivalent and not necessarily evil creatures, were identified as demons in the Christianised world (Dinzelbacher, 1996, p. 27). This ambivalent potential remained part of the Christian conceptualisation of demonic character, in the sense that demons were still taken to have the ability to do beneficial things, though within Christian doctrine they never do so willingly or without a price.

In the Early Middle Ages, demons were mostly a practical problem for people, because they were taken to be the cause of drought, disease, and famine (Cohn, 1993, p. 29). As a consequence, they formed a special challenge for the clergy, as they had to face and overcome demons in order to stay on the path of righteousness, but they remained in essence a surmountable hurdle (Dinzelbacher, 1996, p. 28). The fact that evil is destined to lose in Early Christian theology, is reflected in the idea that when a demon is resisted by a good Christian he will be tossed into hell and can no longer harm humanity. As the number of demons was seen to be limited, Early Middle Age Christians may have felt reassured that the power of the demonic host must be slowly but surely dwindling. It can thus be seen that in the early Christian view, the demon is a being that has fallen from heaven to earth and is eventually destined to take its place of eternal damnation in hell. From this it follows that Christianity was seen as the natural religion, one that would, after the vanquishing of the demons – including those at the heart of other religions, be the only "True Religion".

This view of the inevitable fall of the forces of evil and with it the inevitable victory of the forces of light would drastically change during the High and Late Middle Ages. The original conception of the demonic being was during their time on earth they are ethereal beings floating through the air and it was only after their failure that they went to hell. This was the view that dominated Christian theology in the Early Middle Ages. By the 13th century, however, both the celestial hierarchy and a fully developed mirror image in the infernal realm was introduced as doctrine by St. Thomas Aquinas (Cohn, 1993, p. 24; Plaisance, 2012, p. 88). By then, both the angels and the demons, as a result of neo-platonic thinking, had become incorporeal and purely spiritual beings (Hopkin, 1940, pp. 31-32). The significance of this change is that their incorporeal nature allows for an infinite number of demons plaguing the world, as they do not take up any physical space. It must be kept in mind that still no demon can use force to make a person do a bad thing, as this goes against the divinely ordained free will of human beings. Instead, demons were taken to be omnipresent tricksters, trying to exploit every possible moment of human weakness. Far from being the strong and natural winners in the battle against Evil as in Early Middle Age Europe, humans were now seen as slaves to their vices, and resisting Evil was taken to be a constant and infinite struggle.

This sudden hopelessness can again be related to historic events at the time. A sense of helplessness plagued the populace after such disasters as the Black Death, famines, and economic instabilities (Dinzelbacher, 1996, p. 136), but surely also because of the constant struggle that Christianity found itself in with groups of "Others" during the High and Late Middle Ages. The threats to Christianity were perceived to be coming from all sides. The biggest threats were the Muslim peoples, who as early as 711 AD had conquered virtually the whole Iberian peninsula (O'Callaghan, 2003, p. 1) and were threatening the eastern Orthodox Christian Byzantine Empire. And to the North, the Slavs plagued the borders of Christendom (O'Callaghan, 2003, p. 20). The response to these threats was a series of Crusades starting in the 11th century to recover land lost to the non-believers in the Holy Land, Northern Europe,

and Iberia. In hindsight, the success of these crusades – especially those to the Holy Land – was minimal. Even its most fruitful form – the Crusades directed towards the reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula – the whole venture took almost five hundred years to complete.

The conquest of new territories in the Americas and the way in which this conquest was perceived and justified by Spanish conquistadors is firmly rooted in the medieval history of the Iberian peninsula itself. The religious differences between invading Muslims and the Christians was, according to O'Callaghan (2003, p. 15), not frequently noted in the earliest centuries following the spread of Islam. However, from the 9th century onwards, when the influence of Islam became more apparent, references to the invader became increasingly hostile and increasingly biblical. Already as early as A.D. 1063, Pope Alexander II declared in a papal bull directed mostly at French knights that if they would take up arms to fight in Spain, then they would have relief of their penance and remission of their sins (O'Callaghan, 2003, 24). This trade-off – combat and holy war for penance and remission of sin – was a crucial aspect of all the true crusades. This was thus a precursor for the crusades that would later be declared to retake the Holy Land.

The knights not only received spiritual compensation for their efforts, however. When in 1064 the city of Barbastro was captured and plundered, it became clear to the French knights that the war in Spain was a lucrative business (O'Callaghan, 2003, p. 26). And this economic profit was not limited to knights. For example, while Pope Gregory VII encouraged French knights to conquer the lands of the Muslim principalities or Taifas, he also declared that from ancient times the land had belonged to the papacy. As such, crusading knights were free to take the land in vassalage so long as they did nothing that went against the will of the Church. Pope Gregory VII also claimed that these lands had traditionally paid a tribute to the Church and that this was a tradition that should be reinstated once the lands had been liberated.

The success of the reconquest depended on the stability of the Islamic states to the south and far to the east. When a strong dynasty took possession of the Islamic empire, the Taifas formed a united front against the divided Christian kingdoms. The rise and fall of the Almoravid, Almohad, and Merenid empires saw the integration and disintegration – and simultaneous stability and instability – of the Islamic lands (Fletcher, 1992, pp. 105, 157; Hillgarth, 1976, pp. 16-18; O'Callaghan, 2003, pp. 57-77). When the Taifas were isolated, the Christian states used a strategy of economic deprivation by taxation, followed by military conquest. To the annoyance of the Papal See, the Christians Kings fought each other as much as they fought the Muslims. For these kings, it did not matter who used to control newly conquered lands, as long as new war taxes could be imposed. The Papacy, however, could only expand its tax revenues by the conquest of Islamic states. Employing the policy of heavy taxation to cripple the states followed by physical conquest, the states of Leon-Castile, Catalonia-Aragon, and Portugal conquered new territories to the south and grew larger, until in the mid-13th century when only the emirate of Granada was still standing.[38]

Hostilities remained between these Christian kingdoms and remnants of this can still be seen today in the tension between the Catalonian and Castilian areas of Spain. Deep mistrust between individual Christian kingdoms was bridged for the first time with the marriage of Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon. Many different parties, the French, Portuguese, but also their own relatives, laid claim to the territories of Castile and Aragon (Hillgarth, 1978, pp. 351-365). Anarchy reigned for over ten years, for even though their marriage bonded the pair in 1469, it was not until 1480 that they could make effective political decisions (Kamen, 2005, p. 3). Even then there was no united kingdom of Spain. Each realm had its own customs, laws, economy, and, consequently, their own interests. The only practical way that Ferdinand and Isabella could rule such a kingdom, then, was by personal appearance. They were constantly travelling throughout the

38. For more information on the individual battles see O'Callaghan 2003, 77-120.

land with their entire court, which thus had to be relatively small (Kamen, 2005, p. 26). There was, therefore, no capital or centre of power other than the one residing in the royal personages themselves. They did, however, create a number of councils and positions that would allow for the rule of lands from which the monarch was currently absent. One of these positions – that of viceroy – became very important in the Americas (Kamen, 2005, p. 30).
The final Muslim frontier in Spain was one of the top priorities of the Catholic Monarchs. In 1481, the town of Zahara had been overrun by Muslim forces from Granada, which was the final push needed for Ferdinand and Isabella to launch a full-scale assault on the emirate. A campaign of devastation and siege crippled the emirate further, until eventually in 1492 the city capitulated to Castilian forces (Fletcher, 1992, p. 165). Whether it was a conscious effort or not, these ten years of warfare against the Islamic caliphate created some form of unity in the face of a common enemy: an Other. The ways in which these Others were dealt with in this period became considerably much more grim. This was particularly the case with those Others who were either Muslim or Jewish.

Before the coming to power of the Catholic Monarchs, the policy of dealing with non-Christian minorities had been one of convivencia. The conversion of individual people was not as big an issue as was the official conversion of the land. It was the objective, then, that the land first fall under Christian rule; both in the sense of a secular ruler and in the sense of the ecclesiastical system of bishops. What the people themselves believed seems to have been of secondary importance, as for a long time Spanish conquerors allowed the conquered Muslims to live their own lives in their own way according to their own religious beliefs. When a town was conquered, in general the inhabitants were not killed, but many were captured and sold as slaves (Fletcher, 1992, p. 136). This may be one of the primary reasons why the Christianization of the population was not deemed to be a high priority, because slave owners feared losing their property if they converted to Christianity. The remaining nominally free Muslims – called Mudejars – were all of low social status, because those who could afford it left for Northern Africa or the last remaining Muslim state in Iberia: Granada. One of the main reasons for the tolerance of Muslim ways of life was the need to pacify the conquered lands to facilitate settling. Because of the centuries of warfare preceding conquest, large tracts of land remained unpopulated on the Iberian Peninsula. In order to consolidate control over these lands, it was necessary to have people actually living there. And while there were many colonists coming to the Iberian peninsula from other parts of Europe, the Christian rulers could not afford a full depopulation of tax-paying an economy-driving peoples before Christian migrants could be settled there (Fletcher, 1992, pp. 144-147; Hillgarth, 1976, pp. 22-29; 1978, pp. 390-391). For this reason, the Mudejars were initially tolerated, if not actively welcomed.

Attempts to convert Muslims to the Christian faith had begun in earnest in the 13th century with two founders of orders that would later come to dominate the conversion efforts in the Americas. Domingo, the Prior of Osma, wanted to follow his bishop Diego and preach the gospel to the Moors. He was persuaded that his order of Preachers was better used by preaching against heresy (Fletcher, 1992, p. 154). Also during this time, the founder of the Franciscan Order – St. Francis – travelled to Egypt to preach to the Sultan (Fletcher, 1992, p. 154). The objective of these two missionary missions still seemed not to be the conversion of individual unbelievers, but, rather, the conversion of prominent enough unbelievers – e.g. heads of state – that could ultimately result in the conversion of entire lands and possibly entire peoples.

Convivencia did not mean equality. Legally speaking the Christian rulers issued fueros: laws stating the way in which the Muslims should be treated. Fletcher (1992, p. 137) shows that legally these Mudejar communities were allowed to choose a governor according to the conventions of their own law; they were free to worship in their own way; were guaranteed possession of their properties; had freedom of movement; and were allowed to trade. They were also subject to the same taxes and dues to the crown. These general terms may seem reasonable; however, specific clauses of the fueros show a much darker aspect of this convivencia. Segregation and inferiority seems to have characterized the nature

of Mudejar and Jewish communities. In some cases, they were physically isolated from the rest of the population. This was done by the creation of ghettos – such as in Murcia – and laws, for example, regulating the days allotted to different religious groups on which they could use bath houses or forbidding Muslim men to have sexual intercourse with Christian women. These segregationist actions and laws illustrate just how pervasive discrimination against perceived Others was (Fletcher, 1992, p. 138).

By 1499, when archbishop Cisneros of Toledo asked the Monarchs for permission to take more direct measures against the Moors, the mentality had clearly hardened (Kamen, 2005, p. 38). A new phase of compulsory conversion and baptism dawned. In 1492, the Catholic Monarchs changed the official policy and all Jews were given the choice: either convert to Christianity or leave. By then the Jews had become so suppressed by anti-Semitic laws that their economic value to the state, which previously had been great due to their function as moneylenders, had become negligible (Kamen, 2005, p. 45). Jewish people who did convert to Christianity (conversos) were looked upon with suspicion by the "old Christians". In 1478, Ferdinand and Isabella had already made a request to Rome for the institution of the Inquisition, specifically to investigate the relapsing behaviour of converted Jews. Working as a self-fulfilling prophecy, it is no surprise that anti-Semitism and distrust of the conversos, which were seen by some as secret Jews, only increased. Stimulated by suspicion over the sincerity of the forced conversions, distrust in conversos grew further, with the result that discrimination shifted from one of religious difference to one of race. The New Christians were discriminated by new rules at institutes (such as colleges and churches) aimed at excluding the conversos (Kamen, 2005, p. 47). These so-called limpieza de sangre rules did not become official state policy, but must have fed into the public opinion of conversos and the Others in general.

Official Church policy concerning the way in which the church should deal with non-Christians was detailed in papal decrees, but until the mid of the 13th century these were only related to the treatment of non-Christians within Christian lands. It was Pope Innocent IV (1243-54) who was the first to officially address the question of whether or not the Church had the right to interfere with foreign non-Christian societies (Muldoon, 1979, p. 5). In essence, his argument was that the Church had the responsibility to intervene in a society if their own rulers were either unable or unwilling to enforce natural law as written down in the Holy Book, because all peoples, regardless of their origin and geographic locations, were part of the flock of God. Pope Innocent IV did, however, decree that non-Christians had the right to govern themselves. And conversion to Christianity was only supposed to happen voluntarily. Muldoon (1979, pp. 10-11), however, shows that there were some actions that could be taken in order to help the uninitiated see the light. For example, as the worship of idols was forbidden by natural law, it was the duty of the Church to have them burned. This included the burning of non-Christian Holy Scriptures – such as the Talmud – because of the heresies it contained. In addition, while the conversion of people could not be done by direct force, according to Innocent IV it was the church's duty to send missionaries to non-Christian lands for the spiritual well-being of all people. And if a ruler were to block the free passage of these missionaries in his lands, the Pope could order Christian rulers to take up arms against the one blocking the missionaries. According to Innocent IV, the Church thus had indirect power over all peoples. Other opinions were heard as well, stating that the Church had even greater, direct power over all people, because the infidels did not in actuality have the right to govern themselves. Henry of Segusio, better known as Hostiensis a student of Innocent IV, argued that because Christ was both king and priest, he holds ultimate power over both secular and ecclesiastical matters (Muldoon, 1979, p. 17). By the fact that they were non-believers, therefore, people lost all their right of property and government. This power of judgment had, according to Hostiensis, been passed on to the vicars of Christ.

Thus, both Innocent IV and Hostiensis concluded that the Church had at least some power to intervene in non-Christian society, either directly or indirectly. In practice, however, this was not so easy. The only true power the Church had was excommunication, which had no efficacy against non-believers. The

other weapon available to the Church was to declare a crusade, which was very costly (Vose, 2009, p. 24) and had to be carried out by willing Christian rulers. With the increase of power of kings and emperors during the 14th and 15th century, the balance of power shifted. By the 15h century, Panormitanus (1386-1453), commenting on the viewpoints of Innocent IV and Hostiensis, concluded that Church law would take precedence in cases of ecclesiastical crimes, but the empire – or the state – was responsible in case of violation of civil law (Muldoon, 1979, pp. 24-25). This declaration was one that reflected the changing power relations between the Imperial powers and the Church in general at that time, as it increasingly became the norm that the support of the Church was sought only after action by an empire had already been undertaken (Muldoon, 1979, pp. 132-133). In this context, the role of the pope became more and more one of arbiter in the conflicts between empires. This is most clearly visible in the conflicts between Portugal and Spain about first West Africa and later about the Americas and Asia.

The rights bestowed on Portugal in 1454 to conquer new lands are clearly detailed in a decree by Pope Nicolas V:

> *"[they have the right] to invade, search out, capture, vanquish and subdue all Saracens and pagans whatsoever, and other enemies of Christ wherever they live, along with their kingdoms, dukedoms, principalities, lordships, and goods, both chattels and real estate, that they hold and possess…"*
> (Muldoon, 1979, p. 134).

Spain's American imperial program was the result of multiple accidents. Columbus only came to Ferdinand and Isabella because he had been shot down by the Portuguese, English, and French rulers (Kamen, 2005, p. 57). Once the news of the newly discovered lands reached the Spanish crown, they were quick to lay their claim to them with the help of Pope Alexander VI, who happened to be the former Spanish Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia. Eventually, Spain and Portugal reached an agreement in the famous treaty of Tordesillas, paving the way for the Spanish expansion in the Americas. And the formation of the European branch of the Spanish Empire was due to yet another accident. Upon the death of Ferdinand, twelve years after Isabella, rule passed to their daughter Juana (later known as Juana the Mad) and her husband Philip the Fair of Burgundy. When Philip died, however, it became clear that Juana was unfit to rule and in 1516 their oldest son Charles was summoned to Spain to take the throne. He had until that time always lived in the Netherlands, part of the realm of his father. Having a foreigner come in and take over the hard-earned throne of the Catholic Rulers led to old ruptures resurfacing. Once again, many different factions vied for power (see Hillgarth, 1978, pp. 592-604; Kamen, 2005, pp. 65-70). A major shift took place when Charles I of Spain received news of the death of his grandfather Maximilian I Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. Charles was recognised as Holy Roman Emperor Charles V in 1519, making his empire the largest that Europe had ever known.

While Charles may have been the de facto ruler of an empire, this in no way meant that there was a unity of these lands under his rule. In the north, Charles faced the threat of the reformation, which occupied a great deal of his time. As a result, he did not introduce many changes into the government of Spain, meaning that it was mostly the local nobility that was in control (Kamen, 2005, p. 88). For the newly conquered territories in the Americas there was even less state control. The only interest for the state at that time was the influx of gold coming from the Americas. This was sorely needed to finance the campaigns of Charles in Europe, mainly against the French in Italy. However, all the income coming from the Holy Empire, the Netherlands, the Kingdoms of Spain, and the Americas could not cover the expenses of Charles. His only solution was to loan money, a custom started by Isabella and Ferdinand to finance the conquest of Granada. Ever increasing costs drove up the interest rates at which money could be loaned, thus increasing the national debt, a burden that lay heavy on the Spanish Empire for centuries.

As a result, by the time that Cortés returned with news of his discoveries, the Iberian Peninsula was a place that had been ransacked by wars for centuries. The strategy used against the individual Taifas – that of economic deprivation by taxation followed by

military conquest – made it possible to conquer them, but it also reduced the economic value of the lands enormously. On the level of the individual, there was much wealth to be gained from the conquest of new territories and the right to collect taxes that came with this conquest. So much, in fact, that the treasuries of the Spanish rulers had traditionally been filled by booty obtained from conquest or the tribute extorted from land to prevent conquest. By the High and Late Middle Ages both of these options were gone. Much like in the case of the Islamic caliphates that had to keep on expanding to sustain themselves, the Spanish Empire hungered for new lands from which to extract wealth. With the fall of Granada and the unification of the territories of Spain under one banner, the desire to conquer new lands needed a new vent. This desire, combined with observations of the successes of Portugal in exploiting new lands in the south along the coast of Africa, inspired Spanish dreams of riches overseas.

4.2 THE INTERNAL DEMON

A second perceived threat to Christianity came from within the border of the Christian lands. Heretical behaviour by Christians themselves was not as clearly visible, yet was perhaps an even bigger problem to the power of the Church, as it was harder to combat by force. Throughout the Middle Ages, groups of people that had ideas which diverged from the orthodoxy of the Holy Roman Church were persecuted as heretics. Most of these differences were not manifested as a result of a difference in belief of scripture, but, rather, as a result of differences in regards to the authority of the dominant religious power structures of the time. Most of the groups who challenged the orthodoxy of the Holy Roman Church considered themselves to be the true Christians. The Holy See, however, seeing itself as the vicar of Christ, saw these religious dissenters as offenders against divine majesty.

By 1231 AD the various penalties for heresy were firmly established (Cohn, 1993, p. 42). The most grievous acts after being tried as a heretic were either not repenting or reverting back to non-Christian beliefs after repenting; both of which were deemed to be crimes punishable by death through burning at the stake. The process by which an individual was tried – and generally found to be guilty – was the inquisitorial procedure. In this old procedure the individual first had to be denounced by his or her peers, and only after this denouncement would an official inquiry be conducted. This inquiry was conducted in secret and generally involved torture. A confession of whatever nature was thus not hard to obtain. And the later withdrawal of a confession was seen as relapsing heretical behaviour and thus grounds for immediate execution. The Inquisition was thus easily abused, which can already be seen in the procedure of the earliest officially sanctioned inquisitor, Conrad of Marburg, and the two self-appointed inquisitors, Conrad Torso and Johannes, who joined him a few years later (Cohn, 1993, pp. 43-47). These three devised a very "effective" system, in which the accused could only come out of a trial alive if he or she repented and gave up the other members of their "heretical school". This process whereby reformed "heretics" denounced other "heretics" who were then tried for heresy, created a snowball effect leading to many abuses, such as resolving personal feud through inquisitorial denunciation. Ironically, the early inquisition process was even used by people who could be considered to be actual heretics to denounce and take revenge on Catholics (Cohn, 1993, pp. 46-47).

Paradoxically, then, it is the process and nature of the early inquisition which brought into existence the charges levelled against heretics. The combination of torture and suggestive questioning meant that the accused could in most cases be coaxed to confess to anything, no matter how absurd it might sound to the modern reader. The view of heretical behaviour gets expanded over the course of multiple generations of inquisition trials, each elaborating the accusations of the previous one. The ideas about heretical behaviour come to a peak during the witch-hunt, as evidenced by the fantastic views held by the public and found in Inquisitorial manuals such as the Malleus Maleficarum of Kramer and Sprenger (2012[1484]). At the core of these heretical practices lies the idea that the heretic commits to a pact with evil. This idea was on the one hand fuelled by the non-Christian religions that the Europeans come into contact with. And, on the other hand, by practices which were profoundly Christian in origin. The best example of

this was the practice of Ritual Magic. The central aim in this practice was to summon a demon and to subjugate it, forcing it to use its powers to the benefit of the summoner. The practice can supposedly be traced back to the biblical first magician – Solomon – about which a Jewish text from the second century AD – the Testament of Solomon – tells that he used a ring given to him by the archangel Michael to command demons (Rankine, 2012, pp. 95-96). He forced the demons to tell him their names as well as divulge the names of angels they feared, thus making it possible to create incantations which would coax them into service out of fear of these holy names. It was with these invocations that the powers of evil were harnessed in and through the names of the righteous. A long process of syncretism, combining elements from alchemy, astrology, and ritual, which in turn descended from Neoplatonic philosophy, Indian cosmology, and Jewish Cabbala (Agrippa ab Hildesheym, 1967, p. 387), but was also firmly grounded in Christian and Jewish Holy Scripture, led to the conception of magic as it existed in the 15th and 16th century (Shelomo & Gollancz, 1914, pp. iv-v).

While the summoning of demons may, then, have been grounded in Christian and Jewish scripture, it did not go well with Roman Catholic doctrine in the High and Late Middle Ages. By the 13th century, Thomas Aquinas had raised questions about whether or not it was possible for a human to command the demon or whether or not it was in fact the demon who was in charge, but by complying to the magician's wishes was influencing the magician himself (Hopkin, 1940, pp. 113-115). He came to the conclusion that in any form of magic a pact between the magician and the demon was made, in the sense that the magician pays homage to the demon, which should be the sole prerogative of God. Aquinas thus reached the conclusion that the magician is displaying heretical behaviour (Cohn, 1993, p. 114). By 1320, Pope John XXII empowered the inquisition to act against the practitioners of Ritual Magic as heretics (Cohn, 1993, p. 114). A number of grimoires reflect this change of mentality (Butler, 1979, p. 84). The Grand Grimoire (Waite, 2008, p. 249), clearly states that a pact is made with the demon, and that if the magician does not follow the prescriptions to the letter, his soul will be lost to the demon.

That words may have such a power can be understood through Agrippa's explanation:

> *"..in this very voice, or word, or name framed, with its Articles, the power of the thing as it were some kind of life, lies under the form of the signification. First conceived in the mind as it were through certain seeds of things, then by voices or words, as a birth brought forth, and lastly kept in writings."*
> (Agrippa ab Hildesheym, 1967 B1, Chapter LXX).

It is in this light that it may be understood why saying blasphemous things, sharing forbidden knowledge, or writing the wrong texts may be conceived as dangerous or evil in and of itself.

Even though Weyer in his work De Praestigiis Daemonum argues fervently that these books are ridiculous and do not work, he nonetheless states that "[these books] should be signed forthwith to Vulcan, among the books that may not be read" (Weyer, Mora, & Kohl, 1991, p. 112). No matter the actual efficacy of the ritual text, by virtue of its blasphemous content it should be burned. Ritual texts were notoriously difficult to read. This is the result of the use of different languages and also the use of Cabbalistic ciphers. Books that were written in other languages – especially those in Arabic – were suspect by virtue of this characteristic alone, not to mention the fact that they may have contained religious texts of a non-Christian nature. These texts, of course, were also taken to be works of the Devil. During a large part of the Middle Ages, the only translations of Arabic religious texts that were made had the purpose of showing that they were wrong (Fletcher, 1992, pp. 153-155).

As a book aimed at debunking popular myths about the power of demons and witches, De Praestigiis Daemonum is a very rich source of information, giving insight into popular beliefs about demons and their human collaborators in 16th century Europe and thus indirectly also about the extent of the inquisitions' success in demonising European heretics. Even at this early point in the history of the colonisation, references to practices in the Americas were already incorporated in the Christian worldview

about the demonic threat. In the chapter called "on the sacrifice of human blood, originated by the Devil and widely observed among the people of God, the Greeks, The Romans and other peoples", Weyer cites a letter from Cortés saying: "In America, Hernando Cortez attests, idols of Temextita[39] were sprinkled with the blood of human victims." (Weyer et al., 1991). The significance of this passing note is that by the 1580's the Americas had been integrated within the framework of demonology in Europe. As Weyer was not a court historian but a humanist who studied in Bonn under Agrippa of Nettesheim and later at the University of Paris (Weyer et al., 1991, pp. XXXI-XXXII), his access to these letters is an indication of the early spread of this information amongst the general learned public.

While these books of magic do describe the demons that may be conjured, they contain virtually no depiction of what these demons and devils would look like. Depiction of the supernatural had for Christianity long been a problem. In the earlier Christian period, imagery of the Divine was not taken to be possible, since no one could know what God looks like. Also the angels, by virtue of their ethereal nature, were hard to capture in imagery. However, despite the earlier prohibitions against the worship of images, during the late Middle Ages the imagery of the divine beings became extremely common (Walker Bynum, 2011, p. 125). These images were much more than mere depictions. In a sense they were what they depicted – they were divine – similar to the present-day use of the Icon in the Eastern Orthodox Church (see Vikan, 2007). Walker Bynum (2011, p. 49) points furthermore to the violent reaction of reformed Christians, to show that even those that were very much acting against the worship of these images, saw the power emanated by them. During the 16th century, this culminated in many of the northern European countries in what is known by its Dutch name the "Beeldenstorm" – literally the "statues storm" – a period where many of the statues of saints and depictions of the divine were decapitated or otherwise destroyed.

Just like in the case of angels, by the 15th century demons had been firmly established as non-corporal beings. However, ever since their incorporation in Christian faith they had also been considered to have the ability to take on any shape they desired. There are many textual descriptions of demons and of the devil both in the books of magic, but also in ecclesiastical works. Dinzelbacher (1996, p. 114) categorizes demons into three different groups: human, animal (generally composed of a mix of different animals), and the small black Eidolon or "spirit". It depended upon the context in which a demon was found what type of form it takes. In a situation where the demon is tempting a person, it is likely to have a beautiful human form, but when it wants to scare, it takes the form of a grotesque monster. To understand why beings that were said to be able to take any form they wanted would choose to appear often as grotesque creatures, it is necessary to look at ideas first formulated in Classical Greece about "the Other" (Mason, 1990, pp. 71-77).

Grounded in humoral, climatic, and astrological theory (see Higgs Strickland, 2003, pp. 30-35), the idea of the monstrous races eventually becomes central for the iconography of evil. The idea in its Greek and later Roman context can be distilled from the perception that all outsiders are uncivilised and barbaric because of their non-Greek-ness or non-Roman-ness (Mason, 1990, pp. 71-79). Because the Greeks and Romans thought of themselves as ideally balanced – both because of their diet and because of the climatic conditions in which they lived – their external features were thought to be optimally balanced as well. As a result, those that lived further away, lived in more unbalanced conditions and therefore looked more unbalanced and grotesque.
The existence and nature of the monstrous races had

39. The original Latin text, in the 6th edition of the de praestigiis daemonum from 1583 on which this translation is based, reads: Temixtitæ in America, idola ſanguine hominum oblatorum conſperſa fuiſſe, author eſt Ferdinandus Cortheſius. This suggest a slightly different reading if we consider that Temixtitæ should be read as Tenuxtitæ due to a common error of the interpretation of handwriting in Spanish changing -nu- (-nu-) into -mi- (-mi-) (Jansen personal communication, 25-09-2012). Furthermore, because this is a copy to Latin from Spanish, the -ch- in Tenuchtita changed to -x- as Latin does not have the -ch- combination. This would suggest that the original meaning was not "idols of [the god] temixtita", but rather: Tenochtita (either referring to the people or the capital of the Aztecs) in America, have idols which they sprinkle with human blood.

Figure 4.1: Jesus before Annas detail of Salvin Hours, f.7r 1275 A.D. Annas was one of the Jewish high priests to judge Jesus. The Jews are clearly identified by their beard and long crooked nose (from http://www.bl.uk/, accessed 10-08-2014).

to be explained and accommodated in the Christian worldview. This was ideologically challenging, as God was supposed to have created all humans in his image. Multiple narratives were devised, all revolving around a link between the sins committed by humans and their having deformed offspring. Having explained them in such a way, an important theological issue comes to the fore: the essential humanity of these monstrous races. If they were considered to be humans, which they were from at least the 9th century onwards by some theologians, then they fall under Christ's charge to spread the word of God (Higgs Strickland, 2003, pp. 50-51). As such it becomes the Church's responsibility to find and save these wretched creatures.

This deformity takes on even greater dimensions in the imagery of demons. These beings of pure evil were depicted as a combination of different bestial characteristic combined with human deformities to show how far removed they were from God's creations and thus how full they were of sin. A number of aspects of human physiology that were of special interest to characterize sinful people are singled out by Higgs Strickland (2003, pp. 78-79). Of those, three aspects are of special interest in the current context. The large crooked nose and the goatee beard became two traits stereotypical for the non-Christian groups living in Europe (see figure 4.1). As these were living within the Christian community and thus visible on a daily basis, they are depicted not as monstrous as those living on the edge of the earth. One group that was heavily stereotyped were the Jews. The stereotypical Jew nose is sadly still alive as a discriminative term today.

The third human figure that was heavily demonized is the dark skinned "Ethiopian". Figures designated by this umbrella term for all dark skinned African people have a number of important features: "dark skin, woolly or tightly coiled hair, large eyes, flat nose and thick, everted lips" (Higgs Strickland, 2003, p. 79). As was discussed above, the original idea of the devil and demons was an insubstantial antithesis to angelic beings. From this dark insubstantial form, the figure of the devil as a dark man arose. The oppositions light/dark, angel/demon, and white man/dark man were created and equated during the High Medieval period. Not in all contexts was the devil or demon taken to be black though; what is more important is the non-whiteness of the figure that clearly puts it on the side of evil (see figure 4.2).

Within Christian iconography, specific rules were thus in place in order to depict non-Christians and, by extension, Evil. The monstrous nature of non-Christians is even more clearly apparent in their perceived behaviour. All antisocial and barbarous acts such as sorcery, cannibalism, and sacrilegious acts were ascribed to Jews and Muslims and even more so to peoples and cultures encountered in colonies overseas.

4.3 THE EFFECT OF THE EUROPEAN MIDDLE AGES ON THE MESOAMERICAN CODICES

Late 15th century Europe – and especially the new kingdom of Spain – was a place plagued by both religious and mundane strife. The discovery of the Americas created an opportunity for (virtually exclusively) men of all ranks to try and find wealth, glory, and fame. In a very similar way as with the reconquest of territories in the Iberian Peninsula, newly claimed land brought great advantages. The

downside was that one would have to leave everything behind and go on a perilous journey to get it. This made it more attractive to people who had nothing to lose. The conquest of the American continent was thus mostly done by peasants, sailors, and soldiers of fortune, rather than the upper echelons of Spanish society. The other category of people going to the New World was interested primarily in the spiritual conversion of its people. And people in this category were willing to travel to the other side of the world to convert the non-Christians. This in itself is a sign of their zealotry.

Although the laymen coming to Mesoamerica were responsible for much physical harm and destruction, their main aim was not the extirpation of all non-Christian influences. Instead, their focus was on material gain acquired through the encomienda system. This system was a continuation of the Iberian system of the reconquest, whereby individuals that had recovered land for the Crown and Christianity had the right to exact taxes from this land in exchange for the Christianisation of its populace. The lack of regulation and the large physical distance from the Spanish capital led to many abuses of this system, and it de-facto became an excuse to enslave the population and put them to work in gold mines or on plantations (Carmack, Gasco, & Gossen, 2007, p. 156). For these encomenderos, then, making their subjects into good Christians was generally not a first priority.

Assuring the spiritual welfare of the people meant introducing missionaries to the Americas. The priests coming to Mesoamerica encountered the exact things that the European inquisition trials had prepared them for: people worshipping demons by building temples, making offerings, and writing magic books about the proper way to pay them homage. Christian doctrine dictated that if there would be people already settled in the New World they would be likely non-Christian, as they were so far removed from the Holy See. Just like the Jews and Muslims, however, they were to be converted and brought into the flock of Christ. The main difference between them and the Jews or Muslims with whom the missionaries were familiar, was that where the Old World infidels practiced their evil works hidden from view, but in the Americas Evil roamed free. Public ceremonies worshipping

Figure 4.2: Devils tormenting the souls of the damned. Ms Douce 134, f.95v. Besides the obvious combination of animal and human characteristics, a second signifier of the demonic being is its non-white colour (courtesy of Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford).

these devils on a grand scale were the norm. The missionaries really felt themselves under attack from those evil forces. The depiction of the first cross set up by the Franciscan monks in the Relacion Geográfica de Tlaxcala (Acuña, 1984 cuadro 8) shows how the monks were attacked by demons (see figure 4.3). The depiction of those demons is a compilation of characteristics of Mesoamerican deities. Clearly visible are the de-fleshed jaws as well as the flint in front of the nose known from Mictlantecuhtli (see Codex Yoalli-Ehecatl page 73); the round "goggled" eye of Tlalloc; and the conical hat with two wing-like elements known from Quetzalcoatl (see Codex Borbonicus page 22).

Figure 4.3: The first cross set up by the Franciscan friars and the demons that besieged them. The detail on the right shows that these depictions of demons are combinations of characteristic elements of Mesoamerican deities such as Mictlantecuhtli, Tlalloc and Ehecatl (after Acuña, 1984 cuadro 8).

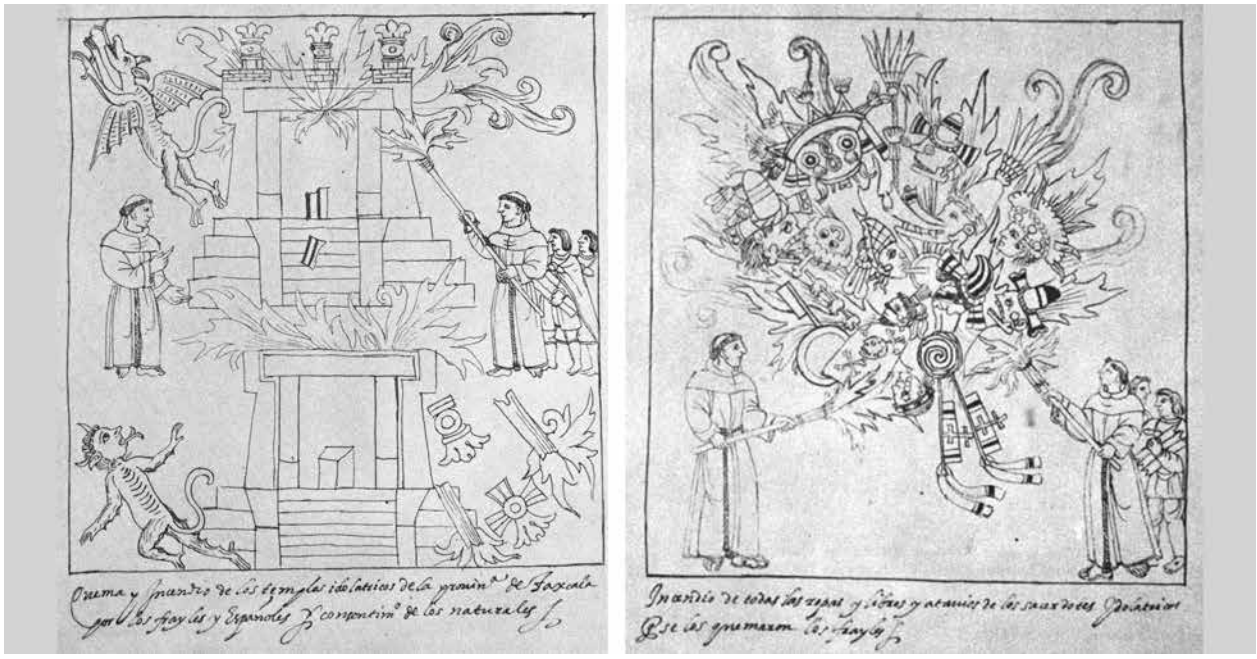

Figure 4.4: The destruction of temples and sacred objects as depicted in the Relacion Geográfica de Tlaxcala (Acuña, 1984 cuadro 10 and 13).

Figure 4.5: Detail of Codex Dresden page 7. Maya gods as displayed in the codices fit perfectly within Christian iconography as demons (from www.slub-dresden.de, accessed 06-01-2016).

The remedy to this situation had already been prescribed in the Old World before Columbus. What was important was to remove the influence of the demons over the people, by the destruction of the objects that allowed such influence to be transmitted. In the Relaciones Geográficas de Tlaxcala (Acuña, 1984), a number of drawings show the burning of temples and sacred objects (see figure 4.4).

This explains the burning of the many religious texts that would have been in existence in precolonial Mesoamerica. If the Spaniards had fully understood the use and value of the historical codices – which was as described in the previous chapter also partially ritual – these would likely have been considered books of the devil as well. A second characteristic inherent to Mesoamerican writing systems contributed to the massive destruction of these books. The combination of animal and human characteristics of many divine figures in Mesoamerican Iconography fits perfect in Christian iconography of the demonic grotesque. Fundamental differences in worldviews on the role of and relation between humans and animals led to different interpretation of iconography. Coincidentally, some specific features of Mesoamerican divinities would have strengthened the interpretation of their demonic nature for the Christians. For example, the enlarged nose and the beard had been indicators of Evil in Europe for centuries. These also appear as indicative features of different rain deities (the nose) and as a general marker for aged and wise men (beard) (see figure 4.5).

Another example is the black, grey, or blue painted skin often used to signify a priest in Mesoamerican manuscripts. The interaction of these people with Mesoamerican Gods would have further solidified these characters as representing evil. That indigenous Gods were seen as demons by Christians becomes explicit in the colonial Historia de Tlaxcala.

Outside of religious contexts, all writing styles in Mesoamerica incorporate elements that could have been seen as demonic to Christian eyes. In Mixtec writing, for instance, the incorporation of names as part of the depiction of a person creates to the uneducated eye an image of a composite creature (see figure 4.6), again hinting at the perverted nature of the demonic realm.

Even in Maya writing, though hieroglyphic in nature and thus more difficult to interpret at face value, all the different head variants and full-figure variants,

Figure 4.6: Example of how the Mixtec writing system creates meaning through combination of different elements, a practice that to Christian eyes may be conceived as depictions of demons due to their composite nature (Codex Añute page 12 verso, photo by the author, courtesy of Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford).

either as anthropomorphised animals or composite human beings, could have been interpreted as demons for the same reasons. It is thus no surprise that the Conquerors were quick to condemn Mesoamerican books as they embody all the characteristics of evil that they themselves had invented in the Old World.

The result of seeing the Mesoamerican writing style in this manner is seen in the Codex Iya Nacuaa[40] (Colombino-Becker). This document is the precolonial codex that survived the longest in its original context under colonial rule. At an early stage, the codex was cut into seven pieces and partially re-assembled in the wrong order. It is today known under two names: the Codex Colombino, held in Mexico; and the Codex Becker I, kept in Austria. All sections contain glosses written in alphabetic script in Mixtec, though the Colombino part contains more texts. This document also contains a date written in Roman numerals: 1541. If this is the date for all the glosses on this document, then that means that the fragments were re-attached in their present order by that date as the glosses form a continuous narrative. The glosses are, however, not at all related to the content of the precolonial document; i.e. the exploits of famous Mixtec Lord 8 Deer. They rather detail the boundaries of the town of Tututepec and surrounding communities. The Codex Iya Nacuaa was, in fact, used in 1717 as a legal document in a land dispute between Tututepec and Sola (Smith, 1966, pp. 152-153). At the time it was evidently still kept in its original community and used and valued as an important document. Although the glosses have nothing to do with its original content and it would be easy to assume that the document had lost its original meaning, Troike (1974, p. 31) shows that the indigenous owners of the Codex Becker I fragment knew they were about the exploits of a Mixtec King as late as the mid-19th century.

Although it was a document that was probably more actively handled than its counterparts that quickly ended up in private collections and libraries, its handling was most likely much more reverent and careful. What is striking about this document, however, is its current state. Unlike such codices as the Codex Mictlan or Codex Tonindeye, this document is highly damaged. This damage is not due to careless handling or extensive wear, but is the result of heavy and selective censure.

Caso (1966, pp. 12-13) already noticed the curious pattern of the selective erasure (see also Troike, 1974, pp. 99-100). He, however, makes it seem more widespread and complete than it in fact is:

> *"Se borraron cuidadosamente los glifos de los nombres de los personajes, los días y años de los acontecimientos y aun personajes completos…"* (Caso, 1966, pp. 12-13)

This description makes it look as if the entire codex is illegible. That is not the case. By going through the identification by Caso and studying the high resolution images of the Codex now available online,[41] as well as conducting investigations of the original document,

40. Because there is still discussion on the order of the pages and fragments and because the documents are today physically separated and connected in a specific order, the page numbering used in this section is simply left to right, starting with the number 1 for each of the two parts. For the two loose Becker I fragments, the order followed is the one used in the facsimile of Nowotny (1961). In order to keep with the new naming system introduced by Jansen and Pérez Jiménez (2004), a reference to a specific scene will have the following format: codex "Iya Nacuaa, Colombino/Becker I section page X".

41. World Digital Library http://www.wdl.org/en/item/3245/ (accessed 01-04-2015).

Figure 4.7: Two examples of the erasure of animal head on headdresses (Codex Iya Nacuaa, Colombino section, p3) (from Biblioteca Digital Mexicana www.bdmx.mx, accessed 07-01-2016).

Figure 4.8: Place glyph on page 21 of Codex Iya Nacuaa, Colombino section page 21, showing traces of the bird that was part of the original design (from Biblioteca Digital Mexicana www.bdmx.mx, accessed 07-01-2016).

it has become clear that the removed images can be categorized into three different groups. By looking at these three categories within the context of Spanish demonology and conceptions of evil, it becomes clear why this document was treated this way.

The first category of erasure is the animals. Not all calendar names have been removed as there are numerous instances of the glyphs House, Flint, or Movement, for example, and yet not a single complete depiction of an animal glyph can be found. This erasure happened not only in the calendar names but also on other dates – both days and years – on which events happened such as conquests. Throughout the document animals have suffered erasure, as the removal of animals went beyond the erasure of animal calendar signs. Because of the custom to indicate valiant warriors by incorporating fierce animals in their dress, many of the characters in this document seem to "wear" either an eagle or a jaguar or puma suit (as in figure 4.6). These suits are normally depicted in such a way that the head of the animal sits on top of the head of the individual in the form of an animal headdress. These animals have open eyes and thus look to be alive. All these heads of animals have been removed in the codex Iya Nacuaa (see figure 4.7).

Besides these elements that are related to the identity of persons, other animal elements were removed as well. Many pictographic representations of towns incorporate either whole animals or parts of animals. In some cases, these are direct logographic representations of the names of places, while in others the reading relies on homophonic relations between the depicted animal and the name of the town. The comparison made with related documents such as the Codex Tonindeye and the Codex Ñuu Tnoo-Ndisi Nuu in Caso (1966) is of great help in identifying the original design of these partly erased glyphs.[42] Most of the places mentioned in the codex are places conquered by Lord 8 Deer, each of which happened on a specific day. As such, next to identifiers specific to each town, the calendrical sign that accompanies it can be used as a reference for correlating even the damaged place-signs depicted in the Codex Iya Nacuaa with those found in the Codices Tonindeye and Ñuu Tnoo-Ndisi Nuu (at least when not completely erased for being an animal). A few examples will show this pattern of erasure as well as one striking, but explainable, exception.

On Page 21 in the bottom left corner, a place name with a bend mountain (probably read as big mountain) can be seen. On its right flank it is just possible to see the feathers of some bird (see figure 4.8). Thus, clearly more than a bend mountain, this

42. Although for the reconstruction of the total reading of the document Troike is a much better referent, as Caso reconstructs the order of the individual codex fragments incorrectly (Troike, 1974, p. 57).

Figure 4.9: Central place glyph of page 21 of Codex Iya Nacuaa, Colombino section, showing traces of a claw sitting on top of the place glyph. (from Biblioteca Digital Mexicana www.bdmx.mx, accessed 07-01-2016).

place would have been something akin to the big mountain of the bird or the big bird mountain. In his identification of the place glyphs, Caso (1966, p. 35) identifies the central place glyph of page 21 as place of the snake, analogous to the depiction of Codex Tonindeye page 74 II. Close inspection of this glyph shows the remains of a claw that sits on top of the remnants of the outline of the place glyph (see figure 4.9), making it more likely that here also a bird was part of the place glyph, in the same way as the place of the bird found in Tonindeye 73II. This would also make it likely that the sign for rain that follows this place glyph is actually connected to this place glyph, like it is in the Tonindeye. Having the date follow the place instead of preceding it is not the common way of depicting events, but it does also happen of page 19 of the same codex.

Though the abovementioned erasure is rather extreme with the entire animal being removed, in other cases it was apparently enough to only remove the heads of the animals. In the Colombino section on page 8, as well as in the Becker I section page 8-9, for example, a snake without a head can be seen; on page 7 of the Colombino section, a lizard missing his head is also visible; and page 20 of the same section sports a turtle that is missing both its head and tail.
The exceptions to the rule that all animals needed to be removed is to be found in the place names that are related to birds and mountains. In the Colombino section, this combination appears four times on pages 5, 8, 14, and 20 respectively. It does not appear in the Becker I section. This at first appears to be a strange exception, until it is taken into consideration that the document was kept in a town called Tututepec in Nahuatl or Yucu Dzaa in Mixtec, which is translated as Hill of the Bird. Although these towns are not all the same bird hill – as some of them are depicted as conquered by Lord 8 Deer of Tututepec and some not – the fact that they bear this glyph would have made them understandable and defendable. The emblematic depiction would not only be easily defended against charges of heretical depiction, it would also be important to prove the historical link of the document with the town.

The question remains: Why would animals need to be removed in the first place? The first reason has already been given above: the combination of animal and human characteristics was indicative of the demonic nature of a depicted being. A second contributing factor was nahualism – the idea that there was a link between a human being and an animal and that people could change into that animal at night. Again a parallel can be seen with the European idea of witches and them changing into animals of all sorts. The link of a person with a specific animal could have been perceived as expressed in the calendar signs. Thus, a person with a jaguar name could be considered (wrongly) by Spanish friars as someone who was believed to have a jaguar nahual.

These reasons do not yet account for the removal of animals from place names, however. The first explanation for this action may be that erasure represented a "better safe than sorry" strategy on behalf of the person removing the depictions. It may have been feared that any document hinting at the link of animals with humans would end up on the pyre, and this may have provided enough of an incentive to remove all animal references. A second factor may be that the place glyphs were more than simple geographical markers. They were also indicators for the words for community or People. As such, a place called the place of the snake can also be read as the people of the snake, thus again crossing the human-animal divide.

A second category of images that needed to be removed were the images of precolonial deities and/

Figure 4.10: Detail of Codex Iya Nacuaa, (Colombino section) pages 3 and 12, showing the temple of death and the destroyed areas in front of the temples where Lady 9 Grass would have been depicted. (from Biblioteca Digital Mexicana www.bdmx.mx, accessed 07-01-2016)

or spirits. In precolonial Mesoamerican society, there was no difference between what Western science calls the natural world and the supernatural. Both function as component parts of the same world and thus everyday mundane events such as marriage and warfare are depicted in the codices intermeshed with spiritual experiences such as the consultation of oracles or performance of ritual to specific spiritual beings. Some of these appear to be very powerful beings and are integral parts of the historical narrative. One such is Lady 9 Grass who resided at a "place of death". She can be found in Codex Tonindeye and Codex Ñuu Tnoo-Ndisi Nuu, and is a figure consulted by and giving gifts to Lord 8 Deer. She is depicted as a woman with a skull as head. She is a deity of war and the one who presides over a cave where Mixtec rulers were buried (Jansen & Pérez Jiménez, 2005, p. 57). It is most likely that because of that connection many rulers visit her and receive gifts – both real and metaphorical – which help them to govern their towns. In the Codex Iya Nacuaa, such consultation happens twice: on pages 3-4 and on page 12. On page 3, the temple of death is clearly visible and the remains of the grass glyph are still intact as well. The number has been reduced to 5, however, by censors, and the figure of Lady 9 grass – which would have been depicted as sitting against the back of the chair depicted in the entrance of the temple – has been thoroughly erased. On page 12, not only the figure and name of Lady 9 grass have been removed, but also the skulls on the temple roof are damaged. Comparing the temples in the two scenes (see figure 4.10) makes it clear that this is the same place and that this scene should be reconstructed as another consultation of Lady 9 Grass.

Figure 4.11: Detail of Codex Iya Nacuaa, Colombino section page 13, which depicts the piercing of the nose of Lord 8 Deer by the Cholulan ruler 1 Wind, at the temple of Quetzalcoatl (after Biblioteca Digital Mexicana www.bdmx.mx, accessed 07-01-2016).

A version of the well-known scene in which the nose of lord 8 Deer gets pierced by Lord 1 Wind is found on page 13 of the Colombino section. A similar ritual happens later in the narrative on page 15 of the Becker I section. Here it is Lord 4 Wind who gets his nose pierced. This ritual took place in a place of reed, identified by Nowotny (1961, p. 16) as Cholula. Nowotny also gives a text explaining this ritual occurrence (1961, pp. 25-26), which provides a better understanding of the sections that were removed in the Colombino representation of this ritual (see figure 4.11).

The text itself was send to Spain between 1579 and 1581 in response to questionnaires sent by the crown. The text explains that Cholula had a temple dedicated to Quetzalcoatl, where rulers from all over the region came to reaffirm their allegiance to this deity and receive piercings through their ears, nose, or lower lip. In the representation of this ritual in the Colombino section, it is clear that a large part of the figure – especially that inside the temple – has been removed. However, on the right side of the roof of the temple the traces of plumes – possibly from a plumed serpents' tails – can be seen. The representation of this temple is thus similar to the depictions on the

Figure 4.12A: The erased Tlaloc head and erased ñuu on page 14 of Codex Iya Nacuaa Colombino section page 14 (from Biblioteca Digital Mexicana www.bdmx.mx accessed 07-01-2016); B: similar depictions of ñuu in Codex Yuta Tnoo page 25 and 27 (after Anders, Jansen, Reyes García, et al., 1992); C: and the depiction of a sacred bundle on codex Añute page 5 (after Jansen & Pérez Jiménez, 2007b)

pages 33 and 34 of the Codex Yoalli Ehecatl. Here the serpents are curled all around the temple. In the case of the temple of the Codex Iya Nacuaa, the red band with blue curls or volutes may in fact be part of that serpent's body. Close inspection of that area shows that it curls slight upwards on the left side and a little further up the remains of another curl can be seen (see detail of figure 4.11).

On the following page – page 14 (because of the boustrophedon pattern, the preceding scene), two further examples of spiritual beings that were the victim of erasure are found. The first is the figure on the central place name, identified by Caso (1966, p. 30) as the rain deity Tlaloc (see also Codex Tonindeye page 52). On both sides of this figure, sacred bundles can be seen which originally had a figure on top of it. This figure can be interpreted by comparison with the Codex Añute and the Codex Yuta Tnoho (see figures 4.12A and 4.12C). When representing a sacred bundle, the scribe of the codex Añute chose to draw a face on top of it. The protrusion on his head, as well as the teeth and the round eye show that this is in fact a ñuu. Similar protrusions can be discerned on the figure erased from the sacred bundle on the right in figure 4.12. In case of the Iya Nacuaa ñuu, however, the depiction is upright, much like the ñuu depicted in the Codex Yuta Tnoho, though these are depicted without the sacred bundle.

A third category of images that was removed is a rather loose category, related to behaviour that was considered inappropriate. It includes scenes of sacrifice and ritualized execution. The clearest scene of sacrifice that was removed was located on page 1 of the Colombino section and was identified by Caso (1966, p. 23) as the same as found in the Codex Tonindeye page 44 line IV, the sacrifice of dogs. Not much remains of this scene except three persons in black, who originally would have carried the knives to kill the now also removed dogs.

Making offerings was in the Mesoamerican tradition also depicted in the form of scattering or burning of a certain substance, mostly tobacco or incense. Many characters in the codex Iya Nacuaa are depicted with green volutes coming from their hands. This in itself could be construed as a depiction of demon worship, if it was understood that these offerings were made to the precolonial deities or to the ancestors. However, that is not what is being depicted. The figures making such offerings are not shown as offering it to anything. In cases where they are clearly scattering to or over something this object has been removed, such as on the central band of page 15 of the Colombino section. On page 10 of the Becker I section, a person is being executed by having atlatl darts thrown at him while he is tied to a rack. This depiction may well have been understood as a form of human sacrifice, which was very much condemned by the Spaniards. What is interesting, however, is that there are a few other highly violent scenes that were not removed and were apparently not taken to be depictions of rituals. Apparently, then, in these cases the Spaniards did not take the circumstances of death to be ritualised in any way. This may be evident in the case of the depiction on page 11 of the Becker I fragment, where the death of lady 6 monkey and lord 11 Wind is detailed (Troike, 1974, pp. 324-325). From the way in which their deaths are depicted – having their chests cut open – it can be surmised that these two were indeed being sacrificed after having been taken captive, something depicted in the previous scene. Unlike similar scenes in other codices, however, there is no religious context to this scene. The figure on the left of the dead pair has the protrusions on his body indicating that this may have been a ñuu, but his head has been removed. Furthermore, while

the chests of the two have been cut open, there is no depiction of their hearts having been removed, nor are they depicted on an altar. As such, without knowing the narrative, the scene may be equated with the depiction on page 16 of the Colombino section: the murder in the steam bath. It is clear from all depictions of Colonial times that the Spaniards have in itself no problem depicting violence and gore. As such, without the ritual context, this image of a person killed, especially since it is put inside a black quadrant and thus isolated from any form of interaction with the world of the living, was acceptable.

All in all, it can be shown that the person who erased the parts of the Codex Iya Nacuaa did so in a highly selective way and with a clear aim in mind: the removal of anything going against what was allowed by the new colonial rulers. Troike (1974, p. 99) suggests that the person responsible for the destruction of selected areas of the Codex Iya Nacuaa, was probably not knowledgeable of Mixtec writing and could not read the codex. If that had been the case it could be expected that the destruction would be much more random and extensive. Furthermore, someone not knowledgeable of the narrative encoded in the document would not have bothered to preserve the document at all. There are much easier ways of getting rid of such a document than selectively removing the offensive part. One possibility would have been to simply put the torch to the documents, or to have scraped and washed it much more completely. The great care with which sections are removed is indicative of the value this manuscript had for the one removing it. It must, therefore, be concluded that the damage done to the codex was the minimum amount of damage that had to be done, in order for it to be an acceptable document under Spanish colonial rule. As seen in the previous chapter, the historical codices are not complete records of events and require a knowledgeable person to read and use them. In such a case, even when removing part of the headdresses, characters would still be recognizable, as the context of the narrative is known. As such, even removal of the specific calendar glyph does not render the document unusable. Moreover, what is very striking is also the removal in most cases of only the calendar sign, not the number. This would have helped the reader further identifying these figures. As such it can be concluded that this document was heavily censured by someone with intimate knowledge of not only the writing style itself, but also of the narrative contained in it, as well as a what would have been offensive within the new Christian context. The addition of the glosses after the document had thus been censured effectively provided the codex with yet another layer of protection. It transformed the documents from being a precolonial book related to a precolonial family, into a colonial text related to the ownership of land. This latter category was not just familiar to the new Spanish governors, it also gave it another layer of protection by enabling it to become an official and indispensable part of the Spanish legal system.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The difficulty with reconstructing the process of destruction of the codices is that only the exceptions survive and can be subsequently investigated. Thus, it is only possible to discuss general trends that would have impacted these documents rather than specific local realities. Comparing the relations of these books as they were shown in the previous chapters and in the present one shows a fundamental transformation in meaning. It has been shown in this chapter how the massive destruction of the precolonial Mesoamerican codices can be better understood in the context of the European struggle against “Others”, and the affordance of these books within that context. Over centuries this struggle grew out into religious wars against mostly Islamic states. On the surface, these were wars that were fought in the name of Christianity against Evil. There was also, however, a clear economic reason for conquest. Especially in the Iberian peninsula, the extraction of wealth from newly conquered areas was a prime source of income for monarchs and for newly (self-)appointed nobility. Such a system is highly destructive and can be seen as a precursor for the later colonial models, for it is based solely on extraction rather than on the building up a sustainable economy. Such extractive models require a continuing expansion to claim new resources. The problem was that the enemies of the Roman Catholic Church – both beyond and within

the borders of its territory – were not defeated that easily. This reality, combined with the devastation caused by natural disasters such as the Black Death, changed the perception of the forces opposing those of Christ; i.e. changing demons and the devil into an eternal and very real adversary.

Within Christianity itself a practice had originated that allowed for the interaction with demons. In its earlier form this was perceived as a highly pious endeavour, though with the changes in ideas about demons, the ideas about this Ritual Magic also changed. Conjuring a demon was now making a pact with it and thus serving the cause of Evil. Similarly, the books of other religions were increasingly perceived to be works of the devil. Depictions and descriptions of devils and demons revolved around the grotesque, often involving physical deformity or the combination of animal and human characteristics. Witch trials and the inquisition of supposed heretics only further established and reified the fantasy world created by Christian of non-Christians worshipping and serving demons.

When the Europeans encountered the Americas, these fears became more concrete than ever before. There people built large temples with statues of demonic figures in them, where they made all sorts of sacrifices to worship these demons. The books that were written in this area contained pictures that fell exactly within the expectation of the demons as the Europeans had imagined them. Thus, from the European perspective these codices afforded the conjuring or at least the worship of Evil. Still, the destruction of these demonic writings did not happen overnight. While there are descriptions of book and effigy burnings in the colonial literature, it may be that besides active destruction of books, the passive suppression of these writings had an even greater impact. In a situation where the precolonial writing is no longer publically accepted, the role that they can play in creating community becomes non-existent. The censure of the codex Iya Nacuaa described here is one way of dealing with this culture of suppression. However, the methods of censure used in the document do illustrate that it continued to have an affordance even during those suppressive times. Furthermore, that it was still known in the 19th century as a document about a great Mixtec King shows that some of the affordance of this manuscript for the community survived beyond the suppressive Spanish conquest. The addition of the Mixtec glosses only heightened the documents significance.

The continued existence of the precolonial codices thus depended on two things: a strategy of reinterpretation so it could be used in the new context under colonial rule, but also a continued successful protection of the object. This last aspect is made difficult in a context where a document continues to be used and where skills for making new copies, as well as the materials to do so, are no longer accessible. In this sense, it is not a great surprise that most of the documents that have survived are those that were removed from their context of regular use. In European collections, these books were mostly treated with a strategy of "benign" neglect and for some it was long forgotten where they even came from or what they were. It was not until their rediscovery and reproduction that these books regained a new set of relations. And it is these new relations that will be the subject of the next chapter.