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Here it is. A Nahuatl translation of European cosmology : context and contents of the Izcatqui manuscript in the Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam

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Conclusion

This dissertation has focused on one central research question: what is the content of ms 3523-2? This research question has been further specified to the following sub-questions:

- 1) Content: which source(s) lie at the foundation of Izcatqui? Is a reconstruction possible of how it or they were selected? In which context was Izcatqui produced?
- 2) Text: how were words converted from one language into another? Are there terms that do not exist in one of the two languages? And, if so, how is this resolved?
- 3) Cultural translation: are there signs of cultural terms and/or practices translated that are unfamiliar within one of the two cultural framework?

A secondary research question has been: why was ms 3523-2 described as being an important piece by curators of the Tropenmuseum, the museum where the manuscript currently resides?

I am not the first to study the Izcatqui manuscript, however, it had never been studied in its totality before. The previously conducted research had established that the main source of Izcatqui is a sixteenth century Spanish *reportorio de los tiempos* by Sancho de Salaya (Spitler, 2007). My investigation has confirmed that the *tlacuiloque* of Izcatqui to a large extent worked with the almanac of this editor. This particular almanac is the tangible product of developments in, for instance, time reckoning for religious purposes, agricultural activities, medicine, and astrology. It was a book that functioned as a theoretical framework for the aforementioned themes, which served as a practical guide for clerics, physicians, and farmers alike.

As for the reconstruction of Izcatqui, this study has shown that this is a much more complex issue. Although superficially the text seems to have been copied from a single *reportorio*, my detailed study of the combination of text and image seems to suggest something else. None of the *reportorios* that I have studied have the exact same combination of text and visual information. Rather, the outcome seems to suggest that somewhere in the making of the Nahuatl translation, different sources were consulted and the texts and images from different editions of these *reportorios* were selected.

Moreover, in addition to *reportorios*, other sources were consulted and added to the almanac folios. The first ten folios are of a religious nature which is not part of the *reportorio* genre. The first 9 folios have a descriptive nature; they explain how Pope Gregory XIII extended the Holy Bull of the Holy Crusade – which granted indulgences to those who fought for the Christian faith – to the Indies. These folios also inform the reader about periods and days throughout the year during on which confession is appropriate. From folio 10r onwards, however, the reader is no longer informed about any religious content, but is asked to actively be part of that religious content through gestures and speech. For example, the reader is invited to recite prayers from the Divine Office and, in doing so, to attest to his/her acceptance of a ritual belonging to Christianity. These prayers give the text a formal character. Their importance, therefore, perhaps lay not so much in their textual content, but in the rhythm and religious formula of the recitals they made possible.

Thus, I can conclude that the structure of the first ten folios of Izcatqui is well thought out; it introduces Christianity, while offering the reader salvation through a fixed set of days and prayers that

will lead to absolution. The religious character of the text found in the *reportorios* justified translation and inclusion in the almanac. At least one of the purposes of ms 3523-2 was to clearly establish a Christian mindset that was definitive of the culture in which the Spanish almanac originated. Although the corpus of Christian texts in Nahuatl is quite abundant, the reference to the Bull of the Holy Crusade is a rare one and adds to the uniqueness of the manuscript.

The folios on religion point to a certain context in which ms 3523-2 was created and read. According to the information available at the Tropenmuseum, the manuscript was used for educational purposes and is supposedly written by Spanish clergymen to instruct “Aztec noblemen.” Izcatqui contains a variety of methods to calculate the celebrations of Catholic feast days. These methods also appear, for example, in a Dutch textbook from 1436 by a certain Magistri Jacobi. His book served the purpose of teaching young clerics how to calculate dates in the liturgical calendar. Local bishops or priests of communities were expected to have knowledge at hand to calculate the dates of specific Catholic feasts, so they could pass this on to local communities. They were aided in the difficult task by a variety of devices for calculating dates and finding the correct week day of a feast. These included verses, to be counted on the phalanxes of both hands, in combination with circular diagrams to keep the mathematics in line with leap years. The young clerics also had to learn the mathematics of the 19-year lunar cycle of the Aureus Numerus and the Dominical Letter - this was no easy task. The presence of these mnemotechnic devices in ms 3523-2, then, clearly indicates that the manuscript was indeed used to teach young men how to undertake the necessary calculations to correctly organize the liturgical calendar for the upcoming year. These devices are not present in the *reportorio* by Sancho de Salaya and so I have argued that the *tlacuiloque* probably consulted a work similar to the one by Magister Jacobi. This seems to suggest that ms 3523-2 served a purposed that went beyond a pure translation of an almanac.

A third source that I have argued was consulted was a medicinal treatise from the Greek scholar Pedianus Dioscorides, who lived in the first century A.D. His work entailed a collection of recipes with local herbs and other therapies from the Mediterranean area. Considered an authority for centuries, his work was translated into Spanish by Andrés de Laguna in 1555. Izcatqui is the only indigenous text that I have come across that refers to Dioscorides, again a unique trait of this manuscript. This study has thus demonstrated that the corpus of documents that found their way into this remarkable manuscript went beyond the genre of the *reportorio*: the information contained in Izcatqui combines a religious document (Bull of the Holy Crusade) with a textbook on the mathematics of the liturgical calendar and a first century A.D. treatise on medicine. And, although not explicitly mentioned in Izcatqui, its *tlacuiloque* were probably also familiar with other colonial sources on religion and medicine as well.

The context in which the document is produced must be considered in different moments in time. First, the manuscript can be dated in a single year in which it was produced (1758) and second, when its content was translated at first. Given the content and grammar of the Nahuatl as well as the amount and nature of Spanish loan words, the manuscript seems to be a copy of a much earlier text. The earlier text probably dates somewhere between 1583 and the first quarter of the seventeenth century. Now, the books of Chilam Balam (in their present form) were also produced (or copied and/or elaborated) in the second half of the eighteenth century or even later. So together with Izcatqui they prove there was an indigenous interest in what may have seemed to be ‘old fashioned’ texts. In addition, it is possible that the manuscript found in the Tropenmuseum was copied from an earlier text as a collector's item as well. If we consider that the content of Izcatqui originated in the late sixteenth century, we must take the following into account. The practice of astrology and documents concerning this field were being monitored by the Holy Office, the institution responsible for filtering out practices that were not in accordance with the prevailing message of the Catholic Church. Several individuals were put to trial for having practiced astrology or for keeping sources on the matter in the period 1582-1654. The Council of Trent implemented measures in the sixteenth century that aimed to prevent the circulation

and possession of unauthorized copies of religious or devotional works. The Tridentine measures – as they were called – were bypassed by some readers through underground distribution of copies. Izcatqui could well have thrived within that same, illicit system.

The corpus of translated *reportorios* in indigenous languages is not large. However, their existence of surviving texts in various languages (Nahuatl, Otomí, and Yucatec Maya) is illustrative of what probably was a much larger corpus at one moment in time. In addition, we can conclude from this small corpus that the scribes selected specific information from a *reportorio* (rather than copying a complete almanac) that they saw as fitting their product, intention, and/or personal interest. The earliest known indigenous copy of an almanac appears in a Doctrina Christiana from 1553, and the handwritten fragments from a reportorio seem to date to the same period. My claim, then, is that the *tlacuiloque* who devised ms 3523-2 were mainly interested in the agricultural and astrological advice. The scribe of Codex Huichapan – the description of which provides the only reference to the almanac in the language of Otomí – has clearly consulted a *reportorio*, but without any efforts to convey any of the type of information that it contains. Rather, he is interested in the names of the months and the amount of days each month holds, and so this indicates that his aim was primarily to establish a correlation with the indigenous calendar in the language of Otomí. The same is true for Codex Mexicanus, where images of important Christian religious days are connected to – now erased – dates within the indigenous calendar. Other pages of Codex Mexicanus, together with those of Fonds Mexicain 381 and the Chilam Balam books, so accurately re-present content from a *reportorio* that the translators must have carefully read them and selected fragments for the purpose of conveying what they deemed to be important information from the Spanish almanac. What they have in common, together with Izcatqui, is that the *reportorio* genre is incorporated into a miscellaneous work.

Furthermore, the above-mentioned corpus has illustrated the longevity of interest in the type of information contained in the Spanish almanac. This interest is present from the early years after the arrival of the Spanish in Mexico and continues for well over three hundred years. This is evidence of a strong intellectual indigenous group of people, a group that deserves more attention.

The efforts of the group of indigenous people that read, discussed, interpreted, and translated the texts that ended up in Izcatqui – as well as those who copied it in the eighteenth century – were truly remarkable. I argue, therefore, that Izcatqui's *tlacuiloque* were well-educated people that worked within a religious and educational context. They were, indeed, forced to accept a new religion and a new calendar amongst other things. However, they were also well-read and interested in what 'the other' (in this case, the Old World) had to offer them. New ways of conceptualizing the world, new ways to divine and to use guidance in hard-felt times, and new approaches towards curing and *consejos* for agriculture were all of interest to them. Thus, Izcatqui is a text that was designed to explain, in a local language that had still managed to withstand the competition from Spanish, how the world functioned and continued to function, even if the world order had changed.

