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Nahuas and Spaniards

Postconquest Central Mexican
History and Philology

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8. Toward Assessing the Phoneticity of Older Nahuatl Texts: Analysis of a Document from the Valley of Toluca, Eighteenth Century

There are various opinions on the question of how closely older Nahuatl texts reflect speech.* In general, it seems to me that the people who know them least tend to discount them in this respect, while those who know them more take them more seriously. Perhaps if the matter receives some direct discussion in a context of closeness to the evidence, a consensus will begin to arise among students of Nahuatl, and a valuable resource for historical linguistics and dialectology will be more fully utilized.

One useful way to attack the problem is to compare deviant written examples with examples well attested in present-day speech. Sullivan and Dakin have shown that a *-qui/quetl*, preterit and agentive, which occurs in the Twenty Hymns of Sahagún, corresponds to a /ki/ still so used in Huasteca Nahuatl today. Karttunen and Lockhart (1976) collected written forms of many Spanish words in Nahuatl texts which agree with existing modern spoken variants, for example *xinola* < *señora*, "lady," today in some places in fact pronounced [šinola]. Comparisons of this type can be systematized, as Karttunen and Lockhart have already done up to a point, and as I hope to do quite rigorously in the future with documents I have collected from the Valley of Toluca, comparing them with the data published by Lastra and Horcasitas on the Nahuatl spoken in the same region today. Anticipating one of the main findings, I can already say that the majority of the texts, nearly all from the eighteenth century, agree with Lastra and Horcasitas in respect to the predominance of *-l* over the *-tl* which is standard in the central region (i.e., today final [l] predominates over [tʰ] in the Toluca Valley). On the other hand, at the eastern side of the valley is a zone where final [tʰ] is predominant today, and in the case of the only town of this subarea for which I have older texts, *-tl* instead of *-l* is in fact in evidence.

But before carrying out large-scale operations, I believe that it is necessary to demonstrate, on the basis of specific documents, two things: first, that older texts were markedly deviant from the norm of Molina and Ca-

*Many readers may find the present piece forbiddingly technical. They could nevertheless get something of the gist by reading the first three paragraphs (making allowances for the second), as well as the last three.

rochi; and second, that the deviation is not haphazard, but that it stems from a practice consistent in itself however peculiar, and that the deviances tend to correspond to linguistically plausible phenomena. To this end I will discuss a document from the town of San Lucas Tepemaxalco, written in 1731 by a local person, with much briefer reference to two other texts written in the same place in 1735 and 1736. (The town, in the past sometimes called San Lucas Chiquito, is attached to the larger San Antonio la Isla just to its north; both are on the east side of the main road from Toluca to Tenango, not far from Calimaya.) Two of the texts are among the most idiosyncratic I have seen, while the third appears superficially to approach fairly close to the standard. Yet all three agree in giving *-l* instead of *-tl* and in showing some evidence of omission of *-c*, *-uh*, and *-ch*, substitution of other letters for them (specifically *-x* for *-ch*), and "epenthesis" of *i* after them.

Nothing equals the close examination of individual documents in its power to convince, and I would like to be able to give all three texts the same treatment, but for considerations of time and space, though I reproduce them all here, I will comment in extenso upon only the first, a testament written by Anastasio de Benavides in 1731.

Weakening of final consonants. In this text there is occasion for only two tests of the *-ll-tl* question. Both result in *-l*: *nechual* (eighteenth-century standard *nehuatl*, "I") and *cuscomal* (*cuescomatl*, "grainbin"). But there are two instances, the only ones in the whole larger body of Toluca texts I have seen, where *-l* for *-tl* extends beyond word-final position: *centlamali* (*sentlamantli*, "one item") and *miltoli* (*miltontli*, "small field"). Lastra and Horcasitas do give examples of [l] for [tʰ] in analogous environments in some modern Toluca Valley speech. The omission of an immediately preceding *n* in both cases makes it hard to say whether the presumed substitution of [l] for [tʰ] has occurred intervocalically or postconsonantly, but postconsonantal weakening seems the most natural second step, and it appears to be the second most common type in the Lastra/Horcasitas modern examples. After all, orthographic omission does not necessarily imply zero pronunciation, but is equally compatible with pronunciation as one of the weak segments not usually reproduced in writing. *Centlamali* likely corresponds to [sent^lamahli]. At any rate, here is some evidence consonant with the Lastra/Horcasitas suggestion that [l] for [tʰ] starts as weakening in final position and extends to other environments only later. For the rest, there is no deviance from the standard in writing prevocalic *tl*, nor any other prevocalic consonant, except for the puzzling matter of *hu-* (see below).

The document contains a great deal of evidence of a more general weakening of syllable-final consonants, including *c* [k], *ch* [č], *x* [š], and *uh*

[w], not only word-finally as with *-tl* (that being the only place syllable-final *-tl* occurs in standard writing, or final [tʰ] in standard speech) but also word-internally. There is not a final *-c* in the whole text. In twelve instances where it would standardly appear, the writer has simply omitted it. These cases include a good number of transitive reverential verbs such as *ninotlatlatilia* (*nicnotlatlauhtilia*, “I implore him”) where one might suspect that the omission is on morphological rather than phonological grounds. That is, Nahuatl does not mark the direct object if the indirect object prefix is present, and some varieties, like most in present-day Morelos, have extended this principle to omitting the direct object when the oblique reflexive prefix is present, which would cover these cases. But *c* is also missing in simple nonreverential forms such as *nichichua* (*nicchihua*, “I make it”) and *nisonquixitia* (*nictzonquixitia*, “I conclude it”). Presumably a glottal stop or [h] (not represented in most older writing conventions, including this one) still marked the object in speech, as occurs with many modern speakers in the area. Standard Nahuatl demands, when sufficient supporting vowels are lacking, that the object prefix take the form [ki] rather than [k], and in such cases the writer gives us the standard *qui*: *niquitochia* (*niquittoa*, *niquitohua* [niki?toa], “I say it”). Thus the letter representing [k] reappears when a vowel follows. The same pattern occurs with syllable-final *c* generally (these examples are all word-final, but in this text the only word-internal syllable-final *c* called for is the object prefix): *yni* (twice) (*ynic*, “through which,” ordinal marker), *ynema* (*ynemac*, “his portion”), but *ylchuicaqui* (*ylhuicac*, “in heaven”), *calitiqui* (*calitic*, “inside the house”), *nonemaqui* (*nonemac*, “my portion”). The nonstandard final *-i* in these cases is associated with the preservation of the letter representing [k]. One is hesitant whether or not to call this epenthesis. All Nahuatl consonants were followed by a vowel in reconstructable times, and any reduced vowel has historically taken the form [i] as its last and weakest manifestation. In the [k]~[ki] alternation of the verbal object prefix, the *i* is definitely not epenthetic, but a reflex of a segment in the original form of the morpheme, [k] being a shortened form occurring only when a vowel is adjacent and there is no unmanageable consonant cluster. Various dialects of Nahuatl have preserved idiosyncratic [i] in certain words and morphemes through the centuries, long past the time of its loss in the speech of the central area. In this case, nevertheless, I tend to think the nonstandard final [i] may have been lost and then reinserted in true epenthesis to avoid loss of the consonant. However that may be, the text seems to portray a speaker who

*Insertion of a vowel adjoining a consonant for ease of pronunciation.

customarily either weakens standard syllable-final [k] or pronounces an [i] after it.

The picture is exactly the same with *-ch*, which never occurs finally either, being either omitted, weakened, or replaced by *-chi*. In *cuahutenco* (*cuaxochtenco*, “at the edge of the border”) it is omitted. In *nechimotlapopolchuilisque* (*nechmotlapopolhuilisque*, “they will pardon me”), *ncehimopalechuilis* (orthographic metathesis of *e* and *c*, *nechmopalehuilis*, “he will aid me”), *ixiquichi* (*ixquich*, “everything”), and *nechimaquilis* (*nechmaquilis*, “he will give it to me”), *-ch* is followed by a nonstandard *i*. Rather complicated are two stabs at the same word: *nu^xpuchi* (*nochpoch*, “my daughter”), where the first *-ch* was originally omitted, then as an afterthought a weakened substitute was written in above ($x = [\text{ʃ}]$), though without following *i*, while the second *-ch* is indeed followed by *i*; and *nohipo* (*nochpoch* again), where the first *-ch* is reduced to *h*, possibly representing some weakening, though I am not sure of its form, yet nonstandard *i* follows anyway, while the second *-ch* is simply omitted this time.

With *-x*, the writer falls just short of the same consistency. In one case *-x* is omitted: *nocococatlatol* (*nococoxcatlatol*, “my sick person’s statement”). In several cases nonstandard *i* follows: *nicocoxiqui* (twice) (*nicocoxqui*, “I the sick person”), *noteopixicatzin* (*noteopixcatzin*, “my priest”), *nisonquixitia* (*nictzonquixitia*, “I conclude it”), *ixiquichi* (*ixquich*, “everything”), *yxitlahuateco*, “at the edge of the plain”). In two cases *x* appears syllable-finally, but in both there are extenuating circumstances: in *ax^ca* (*axcan*, “now”) the word was first written *axa*, then the *c* was written in above as an afterthought (in several places today, including Tepoztlan, the [k] of this word has been dropped and the [ʃ] retained); in *nu^xpuchi* the *x* is also a posterior addition, as we just saw, aside from representing standard *ch*. In one case *x* is changed even though intervocalic: *cuahutenco* (*cuaxochtenco*, “along the border”); as mentioned above with *nohipo*, I am not sure just what is intended by this *h*.

With *-uh*, the writer omits it in the three cases where it would standardly appear, all in the same word and form: *ninotlatlatilia* (*nicnotlatlauhtilia*, “I implore him”). Nonstandard *i* after *uh* (which would then be *hu*) fails to appear. The same is true in the other texts to be mentioned. Possibly the weakening of final [w] was farther advanced than that of most of the other final consonants.

In the writing of Anastasio de Benavides of San Lucas, then, the following correspondences exist:

18th-century orthographic standard	Benavides
-tl	-l
-c	∅ or -qui
-ch	∅, -chi, or -x
-x	∅ or -xi
-uh	∅

I infer that the orthographic correspondences reflect the following state of things in Benavides' speech:

general standard		Benavides
[tʰ]		[l]
[k]	#	[?]~[h]~∅?, or [ki]
[č]	— C	[h]~∅?, or [či] or [š]
[š]		[h]~∅?, or [ši]
[w]		[h]~∅?

The substitutions [l] for [tʰ] and [h] or ∅ for [w] seem stable, while the other substitutions appear to be at a transitional stage, the sporadic nonstandard [i] serving to preserve the standard consonant part of the time. On the other hand, Benavides does consistently write standard -l and -s, and I presume this corresponds to his pronunciation. He has -n something over half of the time where it is "standard," which in fact would be about the normal performance for a writer of the Valley of Mexico in the postconquest centuries.

Syllable-final nasals. Syllable-final *n* (in colonial-period texts in general, final *m* rarely appears even before *m* or *p*) is by far the most volatile orthographic element in older Nahuatl texts, in more or less standard ones as well as more idiosyncratic ones, early ones as well as late ones, ones written near Mexico City and ones written far away; indeed nasals account for the majority of all deviance from the Molina or Carochi norm. Gemination of medial nasals, reduction of geminates, omission, and intrusion all occur frequently. Some of this behavior clearly corresponds to speech; even the early grammarians commented on the frequent omissions. Gemination and reduction are phonetically plausible and often occur as a means of tying an introductory particle to the following nuclear word (*san ixquich* > *sannixquich*, "only," a variant of which is found in this text, or *yn noyolia* > *y noyolia*, "my spirit," as also here). Other phenomena, especially intrusion in the absence of an adjacent nasal, require a great deal of background discussion and long lines of reasoning if one is to explain the nature of their correspondence to speech. In brief, Karttunen and I have felt

(1976, 1977) that since final [n] was apparently the weakest and most unstable segment in the speech of the central area to be represented in the Spanish-based orthography introduced in the sixteenth century, it came to be used to represent (sporadically) all manner of weak and reduced segments in a given writer's speech.

There is nothing out of the ordinary in Anastasio de Benavides' use of -n; that is, as opposed to dictionary or grammar usage, it is like most texts whether of the Toluca Valley, the Valley of Mexico, or Morelos, in its frequent omissions, intrusions, and occasional gemination of *n*, with yet other cases done the "standard" way. Several times *n* occurs in the location of a weak syllable-final segment, as in *ytlasonpiltzin* (*ytlasopiltzin*, "his precious child"), where it coincides with an expected glottal stop or perhaps [h] in Benavides' dialect; the standard pronunciation is [itʰaso?piltʰin].

The problem of chu- Standard *hu-*, representing prevocalic [w], is replaced by *chu-* with rather alarming consistency throughout this text, 16 times in all. Two exceptions, *ycha* and *yhua* (*yhuan*, "and"), are likely orthographic errors within the writer's convention, since it is the commonest words and phrases which are most frequently misspelled. In *ytlasomahuisnatzin* (*ytlasomahuisnatzin*, "his precious honored mother") one could imagine that the rounding of the glide had been extended rightward, converting [awi] to [au], but no conclusions can be drawn from a single exceptional occurrence. I have seen this same *chu-* for *-hu* in a very few isolated Valley of Mexico texts of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but I am still very unsure of its intention. Is it simply a more convoluted way of representing [w], somewhat as final [kʷ] was often written as *-cuh* rather than Molina's *-cu* or Carochi's *-uc*? On the other hand, in many varieties of Nahuatl [kʷ] has weakened to [w] in some environments, with consequent occasional hypercorrection of [w] to [kʷ], of which *chu* conceivably could be a representation. In fact, there are some examples of [gʷ] for standard [w] among modern Toluca speakers recorded by Lastra and Horcasitas. Older Nahuatl prevocalic [w] may have been fortis under certain conditions. Some of the old grammars say that men pronounced it more forcefully than women; Spaniards usually transcribed it as *gua* in loan words (*macegual*, etc.) or when amateurs tried to write Nahuatl (*ygua* for *yhuan*, etc.); in Tetelcingo today, standard [wi] is [fi] postconsonantly.

If all this tends to lead in somewhat the same direction, in a second San Lucas text, to be considered briefly below, standard *hu-* is replaced with equal consistency by *ahu-*, which points the opposite way in every respect except in strengthening the notion that some speakers of eighteenth-century San Lucas may have had a nonstandard pronunciation of prevocalic /w/.

To me, the *chu* is an example of a deviance that is surely interesting, but so opaque, ambiguous, and lacking explanatory context that no definite conclusion can be drawn from it, except indeed that it illustrates the high degree of autonomy of Nahuatl texts. The writer was perhaps not conversant with any other writing convention than his own; he was totally undeterred by the fact that nearly everyone else in the Toluca Valley, not to speak of the Valley of Mexico, was writing /w/ differently.

Spanish loan words. Special care is demanded in interpreting Spanish loan words in Nahuatl texts as to their phoneticity. From the present text alone one can clearly see the general procedure with indigenous vocabulary: to apply the orthographic canon to each segment as it was pronounced rather than to make any attempt to "spell" "words." There was a lack of concern with making the same word or root uniform orthographically even across a line or two. The system cannot give us fine phonetic detail that the orthography is not equipped to represent, but otherwise it is calculated to deliver a good deal of information on variation in speech. The problem with Spanish as distinct from indigenous vocabulary is that there were two different ways to approach it. One was the normal way, applying the orthography to the writer's pronunciation of the item in context, resulting in many substitutions, omissions, and intrusions which we have good reason to accept as evidence of actual speech patterns. The other way, since some Nahuatl speakers apparently felt very much in the dark about Spanish vocabulary, was to refer to authority. Whether they asked Spaniards, kept lists, or looked in dictionaries (this I doubt), some writers produced "correct," uniform renderings of Spanish loan vocabulary which give every sign of having been created on the "word-spelling" principle and thus no more reflect individual speech than does modern standard writing in Spanish or English. In other words, a deviant form probably reflects speech, while a standard form either may or may not (see NMY).

One must compare all of a writer's examples before reaching even tentative conclusions. The standard *viernes*, "Friday," in itself tells us nothing, nor do the immediately following words. With *año*, "years," however, since Benavides otherwise makes his *s*'s dance to the standard tune, we may suspect that he uses the singular for the plural demanded here, and on the other hand *Resposos*, "response," has a plural where a Spaniard would usually put a singular. These cases seem to represent speech, though they speak to Benavides' nonstandard conception of the Spanish plural rather than to any omission or insertion of [s].

In *Enbangelista*, "Evangelist," we see that the writer is as ready to intrude an *n* in Spanish as in indigenous vocabulary, while in *Marti*

(Martín) he omits one. In *yllesia* (*yglesia*, "church") an awkward consonant cluster has been avoided, and I would consider it likely that the written form corresponds closely to Benavides' speech, particularly in view of the second text's *lesia* and the third's *gelsia* and *gelesia*. *Leonisio* (Dionisio) is an often-seen form (also *Lionisio*) apparently frozen in the earlier time when Nahuatl had not yet acquired [d] and often substituted [l], so that here too the form appears to correspond to speech.

As to *r*, Spanish [r] originally caused Nahuatl speakers considerable trouble; they ordinarily substituted [l] or omitted the [r], especially in consonant clusters. By the time of this document one expects [r] to have been acquired by the writers of central Mexican Nahuatl, but there is no way of being sure in a given text. At least we can say that syllable-final *r* is treated as in Spanish in the several instances of its occurrence here, except for a single omission, *Bernadino* (*Bernardino*); in fact one very often sees exactly this form of the name in Nahuatl texts, or sometimes *Bernandino*—the Spaniards themselves often used the form *Bernaldino*. Prevocalic *r* is also mainly handled according to Spanish convention, with word-initial *R* to indicate trilled [r] (of course we cannot be sure the consonant was pronounced in the standard Spanish way), but there are two instances of an interesting deviance: *Risto* (*Cristo*, "Christ") and *Rus* (*crus*, "cross"). Generally speaking, older texts, supported by some modern pronunciations, reveal that the earliest postconquest speakers often adapted a Spanish consonant cluster by omitting its first segment, while if one of the segments was [r], that one was omitted whether it was first or second. In the present case, the first segment has been omitted orthographically despite the fact that the second is *r*. This is not the usual way of resolving the problem (with *crus* or *cruz*, epenthesis between the two consonants was a frequent solution), but I imagine that Benavides' orthography corresponds to an idiosyncratic local pronunciation, probably carried down from an earlier century.

Jesus (*Jesus*) is decidedly nonstandard for this particular word, but tells nothing about pronunciation, since Spaniards frequently interchanged *g* and *j* in their writing. Benavides' *Retor*, (*Rector*, "rector") omits a syllable-final *c* of the standard Spanish form, which would surely be in line with his general -*c* omission, but the fact is that the great majority of Spaniards of the time wrote VcCV as VCV, and presumably pronounced accordingly.

Miscellaneous reflections of speech. At the beginning of the text, the writer puts *Nica* for *Yn ica*, "in the name of." In many dialects of modern Nahuatl the [i] of the article [in] has been dropped and the [n] has been reanalyzed as the beginning of the following earlier vowel-initial word, especially with the second person plural pronouns and subject prefixes.

Surely something of the kind had occurred in Benavides' speech, perhaps as a regular feature, though we cannot be sure because all the other instances of *yn* in the text precede words beginning with consonants.

In some cases (of many more handled the usual way) Benavides puts *u* instead of standard *o*; this itself is so common as to be almost standard in Valley of Toluca or Morelos texts, especially for long [ō] (in today's Tetelcingo Nahuatl, the historical long vowel is transcribed as [u], the short vowel as [o]). Some of the *u*'s here do coincide with long vowels, but in other instances the vowels are short, at least in general Nahuatl. The relatively frequent use of *u* where standard short [o] is expected, especially with the [o] of the possessive prefixes, is a marked characteristic of Toluca Valley texts. In view of these texts' many idiosyncrasies compared with each other, from which we can be sure they were not slavish imitations, I tend to think this *u* corresponds to a different vowel quality of /o/ in Toluca Valley speech than in the speech of the Valley of Mexico.

Toluca Valley texts generally show less vowel elision than Valley of Mexico texts, especially between the possessive prefix and a vowel-initial possessed noun. Standard speech, with Valley of Mexico writing reflecting it, called for [o] + [a] > [a], [o] + [e] > [e], and [o] + [i] > [o] (except that [o] would be the one elided when the [i] was long or followed by a glottal stop). The present text comes down on both sides of the question. Both versions of standard *nochpoch*, "my daughter," are deviant, but they do embody the normal elision. *Noermanotzin*, "my brother," is not elided, but on the other hand I have seen the form in Valley of Mexico texts written the same way or with an intervening *h*, which may even have been pronounced originally, preventing elision. But unelided *noanimatzin*, "my soul," goes against the overwhelmingly predominant standard elided form *nanimatzin* or *nanimantzin*. I conclude that Benavides shared the Toluca Valley reluctance to elide.

Omitting no relevant detail, for I am concerned to show that there is almost no deviance without its rationale, often a phonetic one, I will mention three more small items. In *nimoyoytlacalhuili* (*nicnoyolloitlacalhuili*, or *nicnoyolitlacalhuili*, "I have offended him"), not only are there some deviances previously discussed, and an *l* for standard *ll*—an extremely common reduction in Valley of Mexico texts as well—but in place of the *n* of the standard first-person reflexive prefix Benavides has written *m*, making the prefix look like that of the second and third person, *mo*. The latter was in fact historically the universal reflexive prefix, as it still is in many places today; it appears as the first person prefix in many older texts from outside the Valley of Mexico, and specifically with great frequency in Toluca Valley

texts, though in many of them not to the exclusion of *no*. Thus despite the fact that Benavides has used *mo* only once and *no* many times, I do believe that this is an instance of the general Toluca Valley tendency and evidence of fluctuation in the writer's speech. In *nisonquixitia* (*nictzonquixitia*, "I conclude it"), standard prevocalic *tz* is replaced by *s*; the same thing happens with this very word in other Toluca Valley texts. Lenition of [tʰ] to [s] is widespread in Nahuatl speech and is implied in many older texts from a broad area, primarily syllable-finally but also sometimes prevocalically. With *cuscomal* (*cuescomatl*, "granary, grainbin") we are dealing with an extremely common word which has numerous local variants and a first segment /kʷ/ which was relatively unstable in older Nahuatl. On the one hand it might delabialize, as had already happened in many standard forms syllable-finally, and could happen prevocalically too (modern Zacapoaxtla has [kepa] for [kʷepa] "turn"). On the other hand, if prevocalic, the rounding might be transferred to the following vowel, yielding [k + rounded V]; standard [kʷiʃ], "perhaps," has become [koʃ] or [kuʃ] in some places. I presume that something analogous had happened in Benavides' speech, that his pronunciation was in fact on the order of [kuscomal].

Abbreviations. In the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries writers of both Nahuatl and Spanish allowed themselves great leeway in devising arbitrary abbreviations of frequently used words. It is true that they followed certain patterns, that some abbreviations hardly ever varied among skilled writers, and that Benavides was not exactly au courant, especially in such oddities as *Johp* (*Joseph*, often done *Josph*). But none of his abbreviations have any clear implications for speech. His *tt^o* is standard for *totecuyo* or *totecuiyo*, "our Lord"; in one instance the abbreviation is followed by the last portion of the word, *tt^o cuiyo*, and another time the word is written out in full, a rare occurrence in a Nahuatl notarial text.

Simple orthographic error. In older Nahuatl texts any deviance in a single letter or word that does not fit a known wider tendency or have parallels in the individual writer's practice is best left alone—not totally ignored, but filed in the memory to see if such a thing happens again. (One should somehow note even the most deviant-appearing phenomenon. After having seen thousands of examples of Spanish loan words in Nahuatl texts without any indication of an absolute singular suffix, I came upon a single one with *-tli* added and went right by it as a meaningless oddity. Later I learned from modern dictionaries that a small class of loan nouns, mainly personal items normally possessed, in fact shows this ending in speech, and the very word of the deviant example is one such noun. I had to search through a huge corpus to relocate the example, *camisatli*, modern

[kamisaht'i], "shirt." Later I found a few more attestations, most of words still bearing the suffix today.) Some deviances can be identified as most likely orthographic because they are of a type which frequently occurs and remain intractable even after all correspondences to speech have been investigated. They are also similar to orthographic and typographical errors we commit today. The most common slip in Nahuatl texts, the omission of one entire syllable (or less frequently writing it twice), happens not to occur here. Also frequent is the metathesis of individual letters, as here in *ncehimopalechuilis* (*nechmopalehuilis*, "he is to aid me"). True, metathesis is sometimes a valuable clue to speech, but it must occur in some pattern, and at a very minimum it must correspond to a pronounceable sequence in Nahuatl, which this example does not. An orthographic metathesis will also usually be the single exception to an otherwise uniform practice of the writer, as is also the case here. As with writers today, all types of orthographic error and especially omissions and repetitions occur with greatest frequency at line and page break and in material which has the nature of often-repeated formula. A special case of apparent orthographic error here is *alxado*, near the bottom; I take this to be Benavides' first try at writing *alexadro*, (*Alexandro*, *Alejandro*) as he did immediately afterward.

Lost or undecipherable portions. Many Nahuatl documents are missing some words at the margins or have holes of some size along the folds. Other times, because of such things as partial blotting of the ink, errors or extremely deviant usage on the part of the writer, or simple failure of the interpreter to fathom the intention, a portion of the text must be omitted. In the present case, I failed in several tries to understand what letters (two or three of them) were intended after *y*. . . toward the end of the document. While such gaps are regrettable, I do not see that they affect findings. The approximate sense can be reconstructed most of the time, and for linguistic interpretation the principle of a copious random sample is not changed at all.

In lieu of exhaustive analysis of the two very interesting companion documents to our main text, I will at least briefly indicate the situation in them as to syllable-final consonants. In a testament written by Leonardo de la Cruz in San Lucas in 1735, the following is the picture:

Standard	Leonardo de la Cruz
-tl	-tl 8 times, -tl once (can be analyzed as syllable-initial)
-c	missing 17 times, -qui 8
-ch	missing once, -x once, -h once
-x	present twice, missing 3 times

-uh	missing 5 times
-s	present 24 times, missing 10 times
-l	present 11 times (plus the cases where it replaces -tl), missing 4

In other words, in this text weakening extends to all syllable-final consonants which have occasion to appear, making it even clearer than [l] for final [t^h] is no isolated phenomenon, but rather part of a radical weakening of all syllable-final segments. The use of epenthetic *i* [i] to preserve a consonant which would otherwise be lost is also seen in this text, specifically with -c, i.e., the writer puts either \emptyset or -qui.

The third text, written in San Lucas in 1736 by Domingo Ramos, approaches much closer to the standard, at least in parts of it. If one had not seen the others, one might dismiss it as hopelessly arbitrary and contradictory, the only consistent deviance being -l for -tl. But looking closer, with the previous two texts in mind, one sees that Ramos *either* gives the standard form or deviates from it in the same directions as the others, so that he can be said to share their tendencies. The following summarizes Ramos' practice:

Standard	Domingo Ramos
-tl	-l 7 times
-c	present 15 times, missing 2 times, -qui 3
-ch	present 3 times, omitted 2 times, -chi once, -x 4 times, -c once.
-x	present 6 times (plus the 4 in which it replaces -ch)
-uh	omitted twice
-tz	-s (once) (i.e., apparently lenition of [t ^s] to [s])

Overall, I hope that the above data and analysis strongly support the position that deviances in older Nahuatl texts can deliver systematic evidence on speech patterns. I emphasize that one must (and can) identify and discount abbreviations and orthographic error, and also disregard any isolated case, drawing conclusions only from phenomena which repeat within a writer's practice and preferably within the practice of many writers of the same time and region, looking also to attestations of modern pronunciation in that region as a point of reference. Under these conditions, I believe that deviant spelling in older texts is potentially a prime source for historical phonology.

For the present I will not enter deeply into the question of whether the converse is true, that is, whether or not standard spelling tends to betray

standard pronunciation by the writer of the text. While I do not accept standard spelling as unequivocal evidence of pronunciation, I do believe that there tends to be a correspondence between the two. Note for example that one does not find *-l* for *-tl* in older Valley of Mexico texts, and correspondingly one finds only standard [tʰ] pronounced today. But what shall we make of variations between standard and nonstandard within the same or nearby towns or even in a single text, as with the third one discussed above? While I am far from being able to settle this question, let me suggest a hypothesis that seems to me consonant with what is known. I tend to think that the variations produced by a writer such as Domingo Ramos correspond to actual wavering between the standard and the nonstandard in speech; I would say that he is more in touch with the upper-class or formal tradition of speech than the other two, and tries to stick to it in his text, as in fact he does fairly well in the first part, but then increasingly slips back into more colloquial speech, influenced perhaps by the manner of speech of the testator.

As mentioned above, San Lucas was physically attached to the larger and richer San Antonio de la Isla; texts from San Antonio at this time are even more standard than those of Domingo Ramos—yet they do contain subtle hints of the same deviant phenomena alluded to above. My interpretation of this state of things is that in better-off and better-connected San Antonio the speech of the upper group was closer to the Valley of Mexico standard. In fact, texts from the larger Toluca Valley centers are more standard in general than those from smaller towns. From the latter seventeenth through the eighteenth century one sees in texts from the whole area what one could call a destandardization. I believe that what was happening was not a progressive phonological evolution but a change in which the upper groups, especially in the more important towns, who had spoken a quite standard Nahuatl, were increasingly adopting Spanish. (It is no accident that San Antonio's eighteenth-century church has a Spanish inscription on its façade, San Lucas' church one in Nahuatl.) Thus the more idiosyncratic, localized Nahuatl which had always been spoken by the lower-ranking members of society became more dominant. Finally localized speech took over to the extent that modern dialectologists presume a total uniformity for each "village," something I am sure was far from the case through the first two or three centuries after the Spanish conquest, in the Valley of Toluca or anywhere else in central Mexico.

Texts

Text 1. *Testament of Lucía María, San Lucas Tepemaxalco, 1731, written by Anastasio de Benavides.* (AGN, Tierras 2541, exp. 9, f. 6)

Jesus Maria Johp

Nica ytlasoMachuiostocatzin y dios tetatzin yn dios ytlasonpiltzin yn dios Espiritu Sⁿto ma i mochichua jē maria jos

- ax^{ca} viernes a 15 de junio de 1731 año Nica nicchichua notestame^{to} nechual nicocoxiqui Notoca Lusía maria Ca ninotlatlatilia noteotzin Notlatocatzin y tr^o dios nocychua ninotlatlatilia notlasomausnatzin Santa maria Nocychua ninotlatlatilia yn Sⁿtoti ycha Sⁿtati yn motemiliticate ylchicaqui Calitiqui nopa motlatoltisque yn nechimotlapopolchuilisque yn notlatlacol yni onimoyoloytlacalchuilis yn tr^ocuio gesus Risto Ca ninocemaquilitzinnochua y noyolia noanimatzin ytla ninomacechuis yntlasomiquilistzin yn tutecuio dios ypallechuiloca noanimatzin Ce misa Ynca Resposos nopa mitos y ncehimopalechuilis noteopixicatzin padre ministro Ca Sannixiquichi niSonquixitia nocococatlato Ynpa yaltepetzin Sⁿto S^a Lucas EnBangelista ca yechuatzin-zin notestigos

- Yni centlamali Nitlanachuatitias ce miltoli mani Cuahutenco nimacatias nu^xpuchi yntuca felisiana de la Rus ychua Ce Cuscomal ynema ies testigos

- yhua no niquitochua noermanotzin

Jesus, Mary, Joseph

In the precious honored name of God the father, God his precious child, and God the Holy Spirit, may this be done. Jesus, Mary, Joseph.

Today, Friday the 15th of June of the year 1731, here I make my testament, I the sick person named Lucía María. I implore my god and ruler our lord God; I also implore my precious honored mother St. Mary; I also implore the male and female saints who fill heaven to speak for me and forgive me my sins through which I have offended our lord Jesus Christ, for I give him my spirit and soul entirely. If I experience the precious death of our Lord God, the aid of my soul will be that one mass with responses will be said for me; with this one my priest, the father minister, will help me. This is all; I conclude my sick person's statement. My witnesses are:

First I order that I am giving a small field at Cuaxochtenco to my daughter named Feliciana de la Cruz, and also a granary will be her inheritance. Witnesses:

And I also say that my brother

Dⁿ F^{co} marti nechimaquilis nohi-
po felisiana del + opuali Surco
yxitlahuateco y. . . nonemaqui
nicocoxiqui

Maiordomo Bernadino de Sⁿtia-
go fiscal de la S^ata ylesia Dⁿ
Leonisio Rafael aHde Dⁿ fr^{co}
marti Retor alxado ju^o alexadro
E^{no} anastasio de Benabides

Text 2. *Testament of Francisco Martín, San Lucas Tepemaxalco, 1735,*
written by Leonardo de la Cruz. (AGN, Tierras 2541, exp. 9, f. 33r-33v)

ju maria jucph
Yn ican itlasomaynstocatzin y dios
tetatzin y dios ytlaspiltzin y dio
epiritun santo ma y mochihua ca ne-
hual nichiahua notestamento noca
fr^{co} martin ca ninoneltoquitia y
noteotzi y notlatocatzin y dios no
ihua notlasomaisnatzin sata maria
ma nopa motlatoltiz quimotlatlalis
yntlasomaiscenconetzin y ttyo jesu
sto nehmopolpoluhuilis y notlacoli
notlapilchiahua niahua ninotlatlali-
lia santomen y sa pedro y san pablo
moxtiztizi apostelo[. . .] ma nopa
motlatolti[. . .] y quinnoyquilis no-
yoliatzi noanimatzi quimoyetenehui-
lis yn ahuicatl itin ma y mochia a-
me jesus maria jucph
- Ca no yahua nopaleahuiloca noani-
matzi centel misias yahua ce respo-
sos nopa motlatoltzinno padre guar-
dia nica ypan ialtepetzi satun sa lu-
cas Ebagelita notlaxilacalpa
- nin celtel y tlanahuatia ni caltzintli
nicati agustin de los ageles quimo-

don Francisco Martín is to give for
me to my daughter Felician de la
Cruz forty furrows at the edge of the
plain, the inheritance of me the sick
person.

Majordomo, Bernardino de San-
tiago. Fiscal of the holy church,
don Dionisio Rafael. Alcalde, don
Francisco Martín. Rector, Juan
Alejandro. Notary, Anastasio de
Benavides.

Jesus, Mary, Joseph.

In the precious honored name of
God the father, God his precious
child, and God the Holy Spirit; may
this be done. I, named Francisco
Martín, make my testament; I be-
lieve in my divinity and ruler God,
and also may my precious honored
mother St. Mary speak for me and
ask her precious honored one child
our lord Jesus Christ to pardon me
my sins and evildoing, and I im-
plore the saints San Pedro and San
Pablo and all the apostles to speak
for me and take my spirit and soul
to praise him in heaven. May this
be done. Jesus, Mary, Joseph.

Also for the help of my soul,
may the father guardian say a mass
with a response for me here in the
altepetl of the saint San Lucas E-
vangelista, in my district.

First I order that (at) this house
(where) I am Agustín de los Angeles

telquipanilhuili santotin Ca huelztzin
Juan Bastista ca nema yes yhua so-
lar quimochili mepapa tequtzitli

- cotlamatli nitlanahuatia ninoma-
quilia totlaxomaisnatzi de los ageles
yahua sa fr^{co} ynemaqu in agustin de
los ageles

- yetlamantli nitlanahuatia nino-
maquilia totlasomaisnatzi de ahuada-
lope ca ynemaqu i jua batista yhua
ce san fr^{co} yahua sann aniotonio

- y natlamatli nitanahuatia ninoma-
quiliatia totlasomaahuinatzi ecar-
natio ca ynemaq i geronimo miguel

- yn macuitmatli nomaquilia ce
mili mani cuaxotenco calaqui xnax-
tli yei almo ninomaquilia agustin de
los agele quimochilis nepapa tequi-
tzitli ce chicaties notlatol

- yn chiqucetlamatli nitlanatia ce
mili mani yxtlahuateco ynemaq i
nosihua ytoca maria madalena
- y chicotlamatli nitlanahuatia ce
mili mani nixehuila ce poali surcu
ynemaqui marcos nosobrino

- Chquey chice tlamatli nitlanahua-
tia ce machio ninomaquilia Agustin
de los ageles yehua ome acha yhua
asasado

- hinatlamatli nitlahuatia ce mili
mani san anitzin calbaro atzitlepa
onechmocalitia noCotzi catca ytoca
D fr^{co} martin ninomaquilia agustin
de los ageles quilemotequipanis ya
tzin Sⁿora de s ageles opa quitias

is to serve the saints, (for Juan Bau-
tista cannot?); (the house) and the
lot are to be his inheritance, and he
is to perform the various duties.

Second, I order that I give our
precious honored mother of the An-
gels and the saint San Francisco to
Agustín de los Angeles as his inher-
itance.

Third, I order that our precious
honored mother Guadalupe is the in-
heritance of Juan Bautista, along
with a San Francisco and San Anto-
nio.

Fourth, I order that I give our
precious honored mother of the In-
carnation to Gerónimo Miguel as
his inheritance.

Fifth, I give a field near the bor-
der where three almudes of seed can
be planted to Agustín de los An-
geles; he is to perform the various
duties. My statement is to be valid.

Sixth, I order that a field next to
the plain is the inheritance of my
wife named María Magdalena.

Seventh, I order that a field at
(Nixehuillan?) of twenty furrows is
the inheritance of Marcos, my ne-
phew.

Eighth, I order that I give a mule
to Agustín de los Angeles, and two
axes and a hoe.

Ninth, I order that I give a field
at San Antonio (Calvariottlan?)
that my late grandfather named don
Francisco Martín left me to Agustín
de los Angeles; he is to serve the
Lady of the Angels; there he is to

cadela yhua xochil ca chicias no-
tlatol
- yahua quecomal ynemaqui juan
bastia centel
- yahua geronimo miguel o ce que-
comal ynemaquis
- Ca ytzoqutia nocococatlatol ca ye-
ahuatzin notestigo

D^o Ilonísio Rafael D^on atonio
de la crzu fiscal de la ta lesia D^on
antonio de sa juan ald pasado nico-
las de santi alsin leonardo de la crz
esquiriban

Ax 1 de julio Axcan i xiahuil de
1735 años

Text 3. *Testament of Agustín de los Angeles, San Lucas Tepemaxalco, 1736, written by Domingo Ramos.* (AGN, Tierras 2541, exp. 9, f. 35)

Jesus maria y Joseph
Yn iCa yntocatzin dios tetatzin yhua
dios ytlasopiltzin yn dios espiritu
sato yhua notlasomahuiznatzin sata
maria mochipa huel neli yxpochtli
ynic nopapan quimotlatlatilzinnos
yn itlasomahuizseteConnetzin yn
tt^o x̄tō ynic nexmopopolhuilzinnos
y nanima noyolia yn ixquich i
notlatlacol y notlapilchihuaz yn
itlatocachatzinCon yn ilhuicac yn
opa Cemicac quimoyectenehuilis-
zinnos yeyca axcan lunes a 23 de
julio de 1736 años y nica nicchihua
nomemoria testameto nehual notoca
agustin de los ageles niCa notlaxila-
Calpa yn iCuac dios quimonequilti-
zinnos y nanima noyolia yla nino-
miquilis y notlalnaCayo onpa mo-
toCa yn iteoyinchatzinCon dios yhuan

(provide) candles and flowers. My
statement is to be valid.

And a grainbin is the inheritance
of Juan Bautista.

And another grainbin is the in-
heritance of Gerónimo Miguel.

I conclude my sick person's
statement. These are my witnesses:

Don Dionísio Rafael. Don An-
tonio de la Cruz, fiscal of the holy
church. Don Antonio de San Juan,
past alcalde. Nicolás de Santiago,
constable. Leonardo de la Cruz,
notary.

Today, 1st of July, year of 1735.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.

In the name of God the father
and God his precious child and God
the Holy Spirit, and my precious
honored mother St. Mary, forever a
very true virgin, (I desire) that on
my behalf she implore her precious
honored one child, our lord Jesus
Christ, to pardon my soul and spirit
all my sins and evil-doing so that it
will praise him eternally in his ro-
yal home in heaven, wherefore to-
day, Monday, the 23d of July of the
year 1736, here I make my memor-
andum of testament, I named Agus-
tín de los Angeles, whose home
district is here. When God wishes
my soul and spirit, if I die, my
earthly body will be buried in the
divine house of God and the house

ichatzinCon sato sa lucas auagelista
no niquitohua yn itechConpan yn
ipalehuiloca y nanima noyolia setel
misa yhua se resposos y Capa nito-
Cos yc nexmopalehuilis notlasoteo-
pixcatzin padre guardia

- ynic setlamatli nitlanahuatia no-
telpoch yntoca ju^o bactista nicnoca-
huilia Cali quimoquitlahuiz tlap-
panas tlapopoxhuis yhua yni solar
ynemaqui ninomaquilia ju^o bastista
quimotequipanilhuiz sata gelsia y-
hua yn mili mani yxtlahuateCon yc
quacxuCū nicnomaquili ju^o ba[. . .]-
tista quimochihuilis tequil yhua se
macho ynemaqui yhua se acha
- ynic ontlamatli nitlanahuatia
nosihua maria asosio nicnomaquilia
se quescomal yhua totlasonatzin de
loss ageles quimotepanilhuia yhua
se mili mani san atonio carballotitla
achi tlapaqui ayac a quixtili
quermania onechmocahuili no-
tlasotatzin omestiCacCac

- ynic yetlamatli nitlanahuatia notel-
poch ytoCa geronimo nicnomaquilia
[...] frascCon yhua se acha yne-
ma[...] geronimo yhua noalbasia
leonardo de la Crus auh Ca quimoc-
tilisque nopilhuatoto yhua no
yehual noalbasia Dⁿ diego de los
satos auh Ca ye nictzoquixtia
noCohCoxCatla[...] nehual ni-
ConCoxqui Ca yehuati Ynique
notestigohua ynique Dⁿnastasio
benabides fiscal de sata gelessia Dⁿ
sebastia nicolas alde lixosi de la
crus regidor mayor roque medosa

of the saint San Lucas Evangelista.
I also say, concerning the aid of my
soul and spirit, a mass and response
(will be said for me), and as to
where I am to be buried, my pre-
cious priest the father guardian will
help me with it.

First I order that I leave to my
son named Juan Bautista the house;
he is to take care of it, sweep up and
provide incense, and I give him this
lot as his inheritance—he is to serve
the holy church, and I give Juan
Bautista the field at the edge of the
plain, at the border; he is to perform
the duties; and a mule is his inher-
itance, and an axe.

Second, I order that I give my
wife María de la Asunción a grain-
bin and our precious mother of the
Angels—she is to serve her—and a
field at San Antonio Calvariotitlan,
somewhat broken (divided in two?);
no one is ever to take it away from
her; my late precious father left it to
me.

Third, I order that I give my son
named Gerónimo (an image of San)
Francisco and an axe, as Gerónimo's
inheritance. And my executor is
Leonardo de la Cruz; he is to see to
my little children. And also don
Diego de los Santos is my executor.
I conclude my sick person's state-
ment, I the sick person. These are
my witnesses: don Anastasio Bena-
vides, fiscal of the holy church; don
Sebastián Nicolás, alcalde; Dio-
nisio? de la Cruz, regidor mayor;
Roque Mendoza, majordomo; Juan

mayordomo ju^o pablo rafael rector Pablo Rafael, rector. I did the writ-
 nehuatl onitlaCuilo domingo ramos ing, Domingo Ramos, notary.
 esños

9. Care, Ingenuity, and Irresponsibility: The Bierhorst Edition of the *Cantares Mexicanos*

Bierhorst, John, transl. *Cantares Mexicanos: Songs of the Aztecs*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985. xiii + 559 pp. including appendix, bibliography, and index.

Bierhorst, John. *A Nahuatl-English Dictionary and Concordance to the Cantares Mexicanos: With an Analytical Transcription and Grammatical Notes*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985. 751 pp. including appendix and references.

Nahuatl, the primary indigenous language of central Mexico, is blessed with a written legacy unique among American Indian languages for its extent and time depth. One outstanding feature of that legacy is a body of songs set down mainly in the sixteenth century, the primary monument being the collection known as the *Cantares mexicanos*. The *Cantares* set contains well over half of all the known songs (91, some of which are song cycles) and greatly surpasses all other collections as to the variety of its materials and the sufficiency of its orthographic and other conventions. Ethnohistorians, cultural anthropologists, literary scholars, and others have long been interested in the texts, and several generations of scholars in Mexico and elsewhere, including some figures of high distinction, have devoted serious attention to them. Yet not until the appearance of the work now under review was there an adequate transcription of the *Cantares mexicanos*, or a complete translation of them into any modern language.

John Bierhorst's edition is thus distinctly a major event in Nahuatl studies, and it makes several very important contributions. It also has some outstanding faults. But first the contributions. Among them is a splendid transcription which for the first time makes the original Nahuatl of the entire *Cantares* easily accessible to scholars, arranged by the original units, reproducing the orthography as exactly as can be done in print, and spacing the letters into blocks following modern grammatical principles. The last part, a necessary but extremely difficult task (depending as it does on correct lexical and morphological analysis of texts of maximum complexity), is beautifully done. Though I would rearrange a few passages which I interpret differently, the transcription is in effect definitive. I have repeatedly checked suspicious-looking spots against a photocopy of the original and have yet to