

Barcelona, lords of Vizcaya and Molina, dukes of Athens and Neopatria, counts of Roussillon and Cerdagne, marquises of Oristano and Goceano.

Because you, Christopher Columbus, are going at our command with some of our ships and personnel to discover and acquire certain islands and mainland in the Ocean Sea, and it is hoped that, with the help of God, some of the islands and mainland in the Ocean Sea will be discovered and acquired by your command and expertise, it is just and reasonable that you should be remunerated for placing yourself in danger for our service.

Wanting to honor and bestow favor for these reasons, it is our grace and wish that you, Christopher Columbus, after having discovered and acquired these islands and mainland in the Ocean Sea, will be our admiral of the islands and mainland that you discover and acquire and will be our admiral, viceroy and governor of them. You will be empowered from that time forward to call yourself Sir Christopher Columbus, and thus your sons and successors in this office and post may entitle themselves sir, admiral, viceroy and governor of them.

You and your proxies will have the authority to exercise the office of admiral together with the offices of viceroy and governor of the islands and mainland that you discover and acquire. You will have the power to hear and dispose of all the lawsuits and case, civil and criminal, related to the offices of admiral, viceroy, and governor, as you determine according to the law, and as the admirals of our kingdoms are accustomed to administer it. You and your proxies will have the power to punish and penalize delinquents as well as exercising the offices of admiral, viceroy, and governor in all matters pertaining to these offices. You will enjoy and benefit from the fees and salaries attached, belonging and corresponding to these offices, just as your high admiral enjoys and is accustomed to them in the admiralty of our kingdoms. . . .

Source: Granada Capitulations, Granada, April 30, 1492, as translated in Geoffrey Symcox and Blair Sullivan, eds., *Christopher Columbus and the Enterprise of the Indies* (Boston: Bedford, 2005), pp. 60–61.

1.4 AZTEC PRIESTS, STATEMENT TO THE FRANCISCAN FRIARS (1520s)

In 1524, three years after the conquest of Tenochtitlan, a group of twelve Franciscan friars representing the twelve apostles arrived in Mexico. They orchestrated a series of official meetings with high-ranking Aztec political leaders and priests. On several of these occasions, the Europeans took notes. Years later, in the 1560s, another Franciscan rewrote these notes as though the exchange he was recording had occurred on a single occasion, though he was really creating a composite picture. Here is a direct translation from the Nahuatl of what he claimed the Aztec priests said after having listened for several hours to the messages of the Christians. Notice that what has truly angered them is not so much the idea of a new god as the demand that they abandon the old.

You say that we do not recognize the being who is everywhere, lord of heaven and earth. You say our gods are not true gods. The new words that you utter are what confuse us; due to them we feel foreboding. Our makers [our ancestors] who came to live on earth never uttered such words. They gave us *their* laws, their ways of doing things. They believed in the gods, served them and honored them. They are the ones who taught us everything, the gods' being served and respected. Before them we eat earth [kiss the ground]; we bleed; we pay our debts to the gods, offer incense, make sacrifice. . . . indeed, we live by the grace of those gods. They rightly made us out of the time, the place where it was still dark. . . . They give us what we go to sleep with, what we get up with [our daily sustenance], all that is drunk, all that is eaten, the produce, corn, beans, green maize, chia. We beg from them the water, the rain, so that things grow upon the earth.

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