

Vitzilopochtli	Huitzilopochtli,
Can maceualli	Only a subject,
Can tlacatl catca.	Only a mortal was.
Naualli	A magician,
Tetzauitl	A terror,
Atlacacemelle	A stirrer of strife,
Teixcuepani	A deceiver,
Quiyocoyani in yaoyotl	A maker of war,
Yaotecani	An arranger of battles,
Yautlatoani;	A lord of battles;
Ca itechpa mitoaya	And of him it was said
Tepan quitlaza	That he hurled
In xiuhcoatl	His flaming serpent,
Immamalhuaztli	His fire stick;
Quitoznequi yaoyotl	Which means war,
Teoatl tlachinolli.	Blood and burning;
Auh iniquac ilhuiq'xtililoya	And when his festival was celebrated,
Malmicouaya	Captives were slain,
Tlaaltimicoaya	Washed slaves were slain,
Tealtilaya impochteca.	The merchants washed them.
Auh inic mochichiuaya:	And thus he was arrayed:
Xiuhtotonacoche catca	With head-dress of green feathers,
Xiuhcoanuale	Holding his serpent torch,
Xiuhtlpile	Girded with a belt,
Matacaxe	Bracelets upon his arms,
Tzitzile	Wearing turquoises,
Oyuvale.	As a master of messengers.



## Preface

In accordance with the general object of this series of volumes—which is to furnish materials for study rather than to offer completed studies—I have prepared for this number the text of the most ancient authentic record of American religious lore. From its antiquity and character, I have ventured to call this little collection the RIG VEDA AMERICANUS, after the similar cyclus of sacred hymns, which are the most venerable product of the Aryan mind.

As for my attempted translation of these mystic chants I offer it with the utmost reserve. It would be the height of temerity in me to pretend to have overcome difficulties which one so familiar with the ancient Nahuatl as Father Sahagun intimated were beyond his powers. All that I hope to have achieved is, by the aid of the Gloss—and not always in conformity to its suggestions—to give a general idea of the sense and purport of the originals.

The desirability of preserving and publishing these texts seems to me to be manifest. They reveal to us the undoubtedly authentic spirit of the ancient religion; they show us the language in its most archaic form; they preserve references to various mythical cycli of importance to the historian; and they illustrate the alterations in the spoken tongue adopted in the esoteric dialect of the priesthood. Such considerations will, I trust, attract the attention of scholars to these fragments of a lost literature.

In the appended Vocabulary I have inserted only those words and expressions for which I can suggest correct—or, at least, probable—renderings. Others will have to be left to future investigators.

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## Vitzilopochtli icuic

- 1 In ivitzilopochtli ayac nouiui, *id est*, ayac nechneneuilia, ayac iuhqui, in iuhqui. Anenicuic, *id est*, amo ca nen nonicuic, in quetzali, in chalchihuitl in ixquich ynotlatqui, toçiquemiti. Queyanoca oya tonaqui, *id est*, onocatonat, onocatlatuit.
- 2 *Q.n.*, tetzauiztli, *id est*, oquintetzauito, in mixteca inic oquiyaochiuhqui: oquimanilito in imicxi in pichauzteca, ioan in mixteca.
- 3 Ay tlaxotla tenamitl, *q.n.*, quitepeua inin tena in aquiue yauchiuallo. Iuitli macoc, *q.n.*, oncan quitema in tiçatl in ihuitl. Mopopuxotiuuh yauhtlatuaya, *q.n.*, inic mopopuxoticalaqui yauc, ioan, *q.n.*, yeuatl quitemaca y yauyutl quite-maceualtia, tepanquizqui, mitoayaqui yehuatl quichioa yauyutl.
- 4 Oya yeua huel mamauia, *q.n.*, çan oc momamauhiya in aya momochiua yauyutl. Teuhtla milacatzoya *q.n.*, in noteuh in opeuh yauyutl, aocac mo-mauhtica iniquac ynoteuhtli moquetza ynoteuhtica tlayoa (lli).
- 5 Amanteca toyauan, *q.n.*, yn iyaoan yn aquiue in cani omocentlaliue ca in calipan in yautioa ca tlatlaz ynin cal.
- 6 Pipiteca, toyaoan, xinechoncentlalizque, *q.n.*, in pipiteca y yaoan mochiuhque. Yn calla in mochiua yauyutl in i calipan.

- 1 Vitzilopuchi, yaquetlaya, yyaconay, ynohuhuihuia: anenicuic, toçiquemiti, yya, ayya, yya y ya uia, queyanoca, oya tonaqui, yyaya, yya, yya.
- 2 Tetzauiztli ya mixtecatl, ce ymoxci pichauztecatla pomaya, ouayyeo, ayyayya.
- 3 Ay tlaxotla tenamitl yuitli macoc mupupuxotiuuh, yautlatoa ya, ayyayyo, noteuh aya tepanquizqui mitoaya.
- 4 Oya yeua uel mamauia, in tlaxotecatl teuhtla milacatzoya, itlaxotecatl teuhtla milacatzoya.
- 5 Amanteca toyauan xinechoncentlalizquiua ycalipan yauhtiua, xinechoncentlalizqui.
- 6 Pipiteca toyauan xinechoncentlalizquiua: ycalipan, yautiua, xinechoncentlalizqui.

*Var. 6 This verse is omitted in the Medicean ms.*

## The Hymn of Huitzilopochtli

- 1 Huitzilopochtli is first in rank, no one, no one is like unto him: not vainly do I sing (his praises) coming forth in the garb of our ancestors; I shine; I glitter.
- 2 He is a terror to the Mixteca; he alone destroyed the Picha-Huasteca, he conquered them.
- 3 The Dart-Hurler is an example to the city, as he sets to work. He who commands in battle is called the representative of my God.
- 4 When he shouts aloud he inspires great terror, the divine hurler, the god turning himself in the combat, the divine hurler, the god turning himself in the combat.
- 5 Amanteca, gather yourselves together with me in the house of war against your enemies, gather yourselves together with me.
- 6 Pipiteca, gather yourselves together with me in the house of war against your enemies, gather yourselves together with me.

Huitzilopochtli was the well-known war-god of the Azteca, whose functions are described by Sahagun (*Historia*, Lib.I., cap.1) and many other writers. The hymn here given is probably the *tlaxotecuyotl*, which was chanted at the celebration of his feast in the fifteenth month of the Mexican calendar (see Sahagun, *Historia*, Lib.II., cap.34). The word means 'his glory be established.' It was commenced at sunset and repeated till sunrise.

- 1 'In the garb of our ancestors' (*to-citli-quemiti*). The high priest appeared in the insignia of Quetzalcoatl, which, says Sahagun, 'were very gorgeous.' (*Historia*, Lib.II., Appendix.)
- 2 Mixteca, plural of Mixtecatl, an inhabitant of Mixtecapan, near the Pacific. The Huasteca, a nation of Maya lineage, lived on the Gulf coast.
- 3 The god was called the Hurler, as he was believed to hurl the lightning serpent (the *xiuhcoatl*).
- 5 Sahagun recites the legends about the Amanteca (*Historia*, Lib.IX., cap.18). Here the name refers to the inhabitants of the quarter called Amantlan.
- 6 *Pipiteca*, a *nomen gentile*, referring doubtless to a certain class of the hearers.

When in Florence, in 1889, I had an accurate copy made of the Nahuatl text and all the figures of the first book of Sahagun's *Historia*. This hymn may be compared to another, descriptive of the same divinity, preserved in Sahagun's ms. in Madrid. It is on p.iv, with my translation by its side. The frontispiece of Huitzilopochtli is in accordance with the above description.

## Teteuynan ycuic

- 1 *Q.n.*, in tonan ocueponya umpa oalquiz yn tamoanchan.
- 2 *Q.n.*, in amona ca izcui yn xochiuh ca umpa oquiz yn tmoanchan.
- 3 *Q.n.* In tonan ocuepo in umpa oquiz tamoanchan.
- 4 *Q.n.*, in amona iztac in oxochiuh yn umpa oniquiz tamoanchan.
- 5 *Q.n.*, in tonan ca teucumitl icpac in quiz yn itzpalotl.
- 6 *Q.n.*, in tonan ixtlauan in mozcaltito auh inic mozcalti macatl y yollo y yeua tonan tlaltecutili.
- 7 *Q.n.*, auh inic potoniloc, tonan, yancuic tiçatł ioan yancuic yn iuitł, auh nauhcampa quite yncatł.
- 8 *Q.n.*, in macatl yeuan can iliaya yn ixtlauacan yuhqui inic quic noitayan y yeuatł inimich ioan in xiuhnel.

- 1 Ahuiya coçauic xochitla oya cueponca yeua tonana teumechaue moquiçican tamoanchan, auayye, auayya, yyao, yya, yyeo, aye ayo, ayy ayyaa.
- 2 Coçauic xochitla oya moxocha yeua tonana, teumechaue, moquiçica tamoanchan, ouayye, auayya, yyao, yya, yyeo, ayo aye, ayya, ayyaa.
- 3 Ahuia iztac xochitla, oya cueponca yeua tonana teumechaue moquiçica tamoanchan, ouayye, auayya, yyao yya, yyeo, ayeaye, ayya ayyaa.
- 4 Ahuiya iztac xochitla oya moxocha yeua tonana teumechaue moquiçica tamoanchan, ouayye, auayya, yyao, yya, yyeo, aye aye, ayya ayyaa.
- 5 Ahuia ohoya teutł ca teucontł paca tona aya, itzpalotł, auayye, yyao, yya, yyeo, ayyaa.
- 6 Ao, auatic ya itaca chicunauixtlauatla maçatł yyollo, ica mozcaltizqui tonan tlaltecutili, ayao, ayyao, ayyaa.
- 7 Aho, ye yancuic tiçatla ye yancuic yuitla oya potoniloc yn auicacopa acatł xamontoca.
- 8 Aho maçatł mochiuhca teutlalipan mitziya noittaco, yeua xiuhnello, yeua mimichan.

Var. 7 *Xamantoca*. 8 *Yehoa*.

## Hymn to the Mother of the Gods

- 1 Hail to our mother, who caused the yellow flowers to blossom, who scattered the seeds of the maguey, as she came forth from Paradise.
- 2 Hail to our mother, who poured forth flowers in abundance, who scattered the seeds of the maguey, as she came forth from Paradise.
- 3 Hail to our mother, who caused the yellow flowers to blossom, she who scattered the seeds of the maguey, as she came forth from Paradise.
- 4 Hail to our mother, who poured forth white flowers in abundance, who scattered the seeds of the maguey, as she came forth from Paradise.
- 5 Hail to the goddess who shines in the thorn bush like a bright butterfly.
- 6 Ho! she is our mother, goddess of the earth, she supplies food in the desert to the wild beasts, and causes them to live.
- 7 Thus, thus, you see her to be an ever-fresh model of liberality toward all flesh.
- 8 And as you see the goddess of the earth do to the wild beasts, so also does she toward the green herbs and the fishes.

The goddess to whom this hymn is devoted was called *Teteoimān*, the Mother of the Gods, *Toçī*, our Mother (maternal ancestor), and also by another name which signified 'the Heart of the Earth,' the latter being bestowed upon her, says Duran, because she was believed to be the cause of earthquakes. Her general functions were those of a genius of fertility, extending both to the vegetable and the animal world. Thus, she was the patroness of the native midwives and of women in childbirth (Sahagun). Her chief temple at Tepeyacac was one of the most renowned in ancient Mexico, and it was a felicitous idea of the early missionaries to have 'Our Lady of Guadalupe' make her appearance on the immediate site of this ancient fane already celebrated as the place of worship of the older female deity. The *Codex Ramírez* makes her a daughter of the first King of Culhuacan.

1 *Tamoanchan*. This word Sahagun translates 'we seek our homes,' while the *Codex Telleriano-Remensis* gives the more intelligible rendering 'there is their home whither they descend,' and adds that it is synonymous with *Xochitlycācan*, 'the place where the flowers are lifted.' It was the mystical Paradise of the Aztecs, the Home of the Gods, and the happy realm of departed souls. The *Codex* just quoted adds that the gods were born there, which explains the introduction of the word into this hymn.

5 For *teucontł* (see Glossary) I should suggest *teocomitł*, a species of ornament (cf. Sahagun, *Historia*, Lib.II., cap.37).

## Izcatqui yn cuicatl chicuexiuhlica meuaya iniquac atamalqualoya

- 1 Xochitl noyollo cuepontimania ye tlacoyoalle, oaya, ouayaye.
- 2 Yecoc ye tonan, yecoc ye teutl tlacolteutla, oaya, oaya.
- 3 Otlacatqui çenteutl tamiyoanichan ni xochitlicani. Çey xochitli yantala, yantata, ayyao, ayyaue, tilili yao, ayaue, oayyaue.
- 4 Otlacatqui çenteutl, atl, yayau cani tlaca pillachiualoya chalchimichuacan, yyao, yantala, yatanta, a yyao, ayyaue tilili yao, ayyaue, oayyaue.
- 5 Oya tlatonazqui tlauizcalleuaya inan tlachinaya nepapan quechol, xochitlacacan y yantala, yantata, ayyao, ayyaue, tilili yao, ayyaue, oayyaue.
- 6 Tlalpa timoquetzca, tianquiz nauaquia nitlacatla, ni quetzalcoatl, yyao, yantala, yantata, ayyao, ayyaue, tilili yao ayyaue, oayyaue.
- 7 Ma ya auiallo xochinquauitl itlani nepapan quecholli ma ya in quecholli xicaquiya tlatoaya y toteuh, xicaquiya tlatoaya y quechol amach yeua tonicauh tlapitza amach ychan tlacaluaz, ouao.
- 8 Aye oho, yyayya, ça miquiyecauiz ça noxocha tonaca xochitli ye izqui xochitla, xochitlicacan, yyaa.
- 9 Ollama, ollama uiue xolutl nauallachic, ollama ya xo-lutl chalchiuecatl xiquitta mach, oya moteca piltzintecutli yoanchan, yoanchan.
- 10 Piltzintle, piltzintle toçuitica timopotonia tlachco, timotlalli yoanchan, yoanchan.
- 11 Oztomecatla yyaue, oztomecatla xochiquetzal quimama, ontlatca cholola, ayye, ayyo, oye maui noyol, oye maui noyol, aoya yecoc centeutl, matiui obispo, oztomecatl chacalhoa, xiuhnacochtla, yteamic ximaquitzla yteamico, ayye, ayye.
- 12 Cochina, cochina, cocochi ye nicmaololo, ni cani ye çiatl ni cochina yyeo, ouayeo, yho, yya, yya.

Var. 3 Çenteuteutl. 4 Uillachiualoia. 5 Oya tonazqui. 5 Tlapan.

10 Timotlalia. 11 Suchiquetzal. Ontlatoa cholollan.

## The Hymn sung every Eight Years when They Fasted on Bread & Water

- 1 The flower in my heart blossoms and spreads abroad in the middle of the night.
- 2 Tonan has satisfied her passion, the goddess Tlazolteotl has satisfied her passion.
- 3 I, Cinteotl, was born in Paradise, I come from the place of flowers. I am the only flower, the new, the glorious one.
- 4 Cinteotl was born from the water; he came born as a mortal, as a youth, from the cerulean home of the fishes, a new, a glorious god.
- 5 He shone forth as the sun; his mother dwelt in the house of the dawn, varied in hue as the quechol bird, a new, a glorious flower.
- 6 I came forth on the earth, even to the market place like a mortal, even I, Quetzalcoatl, great and glorious.
- 7 Be ye happy under the flower-bush varied in hue as the quetzal bird; listen to the quechol singing to the gods; listen to the singing of the quechol along the river; hear its flute along the river in the house of the reeds.
- 8 Alas! would that my flowers would cease from dying; our flesh is as flowers, even as flowers in the place of flowers.
- 9 He plays at ball, he plays at ball, the servant of marvelous skill; he plays at ball, the precious servant; look at him; even the ruler of the nobles follows him to his house.
- 10 O youths! O youths! follow the example of your ancestors; make yourselves equal to them in the ball count; establish yourselves in your houses.
- 11 She goes to the mart, they carry Xochiquetzal to the mart; she speaks at Cholula; she startles my heart; she startles my heart; she has not finished, the priest knows her; where the merchants sell green jade earrings she is to be seen, in the place of wonders she is to be seen.
- 12 Sleep, sleep, sleep, I fold my hands to sleep, I, O woman, sleep.

In default of a Gloss to this hymn, the indispensable Sahagun again comes to our aid. He informs us in the Appendix to the second book of his *Historia* that 'When the Indians celebrated the festival called *atamalqualiztli*, which took place every eight years, certain natives called Mazateca swallowed living serpents and frogs, and received garments as a recompense for their daring.' We are not informed of the purpose of the festival, and its name, which signifies 'eating bread made with water,' is merely that of one of the regular systems of fasting in vogue in ancient Mexico. (See Sahagun, Lib. III., cap. 8.) The song before us appears to be a recitation calling on a number of the Nahua divinities.

- 1 'The flower in my heart' is a metaphorical expression for song.
- 2 *Tonan*, 'Our Mother'; *Tlazolteotl*, the goddess of lascivious love, *Venus impudica*. The verb *yecoa* appears to have its early signification, expressing carnal connection.
- 3 *Centeotl*, god of maize and fertility.
- 4 The flowers referred to are the youths and maidens who die young.
- 5 The house of the ball player is the tomb.
- 6 This verse is very obscure and is obviously corrupt. It contains the only Spanish word in the text of these hymns—*obispo*—a word including two letters, *b* and *s*, not in the Nahuatl alphabet.
- 7 The woman referred to is Xochiquetzal. See *Hymn to Xochiquetzal*, p. 19.

**oholopa** [poetic compound] of *ololoa*, ‘to cover, to dress,’ and *oppa*, ‘twice.’

**ollama** ‘To play at ball;’ from *olli*, ‘a ball.’

**olya** Form from *ololoa*, ‘to cover or clothe oneself.’

**omei** For *ome*, ‘two;’ *matlactli ome*, ‘twelve.’

**on** [particle] Merely euphonic, or signifying action at a distance.

**onca** ‘There.’

**Onoalico** [proper name] From *onoua*, [impersonal] of *onoc*, meaning ‘a peopled place, a thickly inhabited spot.’ The terminal, *co*, is the [postposition] at.

**opuchi** ‘Left-handed;’ *tiacauh*, ‘brave, valiant.’

**oquixanimanico** [second person plural comp.] Of *quiça* and *mani*, ‘coming forth, scatter yourselves around.’

**otlalatqui** *Ilacati*, ‘to be born.’

**otli** ‘Path, road.’

**ouayyeo** An interjection.

**oya** 1. An interjection. 2. [preterit] Of *yauh*, ‘to go.’

**oyatonac** For *otonac*, from *tona*, ‘to shine.’

**oztomecatl** ‘A merchant.’

## P

**petlcalco** From *petlatl*, ‘mat,’ *calli*, ‘house,’ and *co*, [postposition].

**peua** ‘To begin.’

**Picha-huazteca** [proper name] ‘The frozen Huastecs,’ perhaps those living on the high Sierra, who were the nearest to the Nahuas.

**pillachiualoyan** [locative] From *pilli-chiua*, ‘to engender offspring.’

**piltzintecutli** ‘Lord of the youths or children,’ *piltzintli*.

**pipiteca** ‘Those in charge of spies,’ from *pipia*, ‘to spy.’

**pipitla** [reduplicated locative] From *pilli*, ‘a child.’

**pinauhtia** ‘To make ashamed.’

**pinauia** ‘To affront, to put to shame; to censure, blame.’

**poliuz** From *poloa*, ‘to destroy.’

**pomaya** Apparently for *panauia*, ‘to conquer.’

**potocaya** *Potli*, ‘companion.’

**potonia** ‘To be liberal, to give equally or freely; to adorn with feathers.’

**poyauhtla** ‘Among the fogs,’ from *poctli*, ‘smoke, fog, mist;’ *atl*, ‘water.’

**pupuxotiu** [gerundive] From *popoxoa*, ‘to till, to work the soil;’ here used [figuratively].

**quacuillo** From *qua*, ‘to eat.’

**quatonalla** ‘Head bright,’ the helmet on the head.

**quaui** Shortened form of *quaiuitl*; [compound] *quauhtli*, ‘eagle,’ *iuhtl*, ‘feather;’ decoration usually called the *quauhtzontli*, ‘eagle crest.’

**quauinochitla** ‘Among the tuna trees.’

**quaiquemitl** From *quauhtli*, ‘eagle,’ *quemitl*, ‘clothing.’

**quechol** ‘A bird.’

**quentia** ‘To dress oneself.’

**quetl** [poetic] For *quetza*, ‘to rise, come out of or from.’

## Q