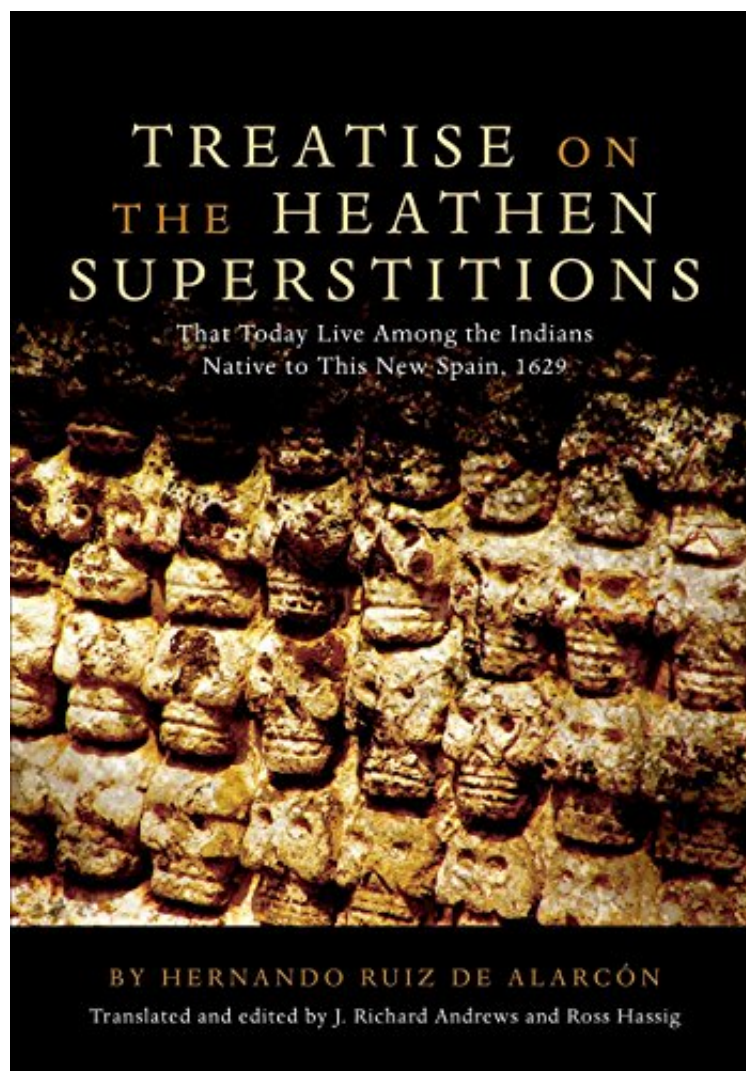


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## **Treatise on the Heathen Superstitions: That Today Live Among the Indians Native to This New Spain, 1629 (Civilization of the American Indian Series) (The Civilization of the American Indian Series)**

*Hernando Ruiz de Alarcón*

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before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Treatise on the Heathen Superstitions: That Today Live Among the Indians Native to This New Spain, 1629* (Civilization of the American Indian Series) (The Civilization of the American Indian Series):

13 of 14 people found the following review helpful. REVIEW of Alarcon's *Treatise* By Tom Frederiksen REVIEW: If you have an interest in Mexica incantations, Mexica medicine, or first hand accounts of the every day life of the Mexica, this editorial team has translated one of the best source books you can find. Written in 1629 by Alcaron as a guide to understanding the Mexica religion and beliefs that were hampering the conversion of the Indians. Alcaron's goal was to prepare other Catholic Priests by education of the past. Along the way, Alcaron wrote a fascinating collection of various incantations used by the Mexica for such things as blessing a fishing net to curing a broken heart. His attention to Mexica herbal medicine along with generous recent research by the editorial team, has combined to serve as a textbook on the subject. The book is easily read and the incantations are in Nahuatl as well as paraphrased in English. Some of the more interesting incantations related are: About the Incantation and Spell of Those Who Rig Lime Kilns, About the Incantation or Witchcraft That They Use in Order to Hunt, Beginning with the Hunting of Fowls, About Fortune-telling with the Hands. Further contains a host of incantations for medical purposes including, belly pains, bone fractures, and others simple and complex illnesses. Appendices attached to this book are full of information relating to place names and linguistic terms that will be of interest to a serious reader. Of interest is the attention to the breakdown of the meaning of the Nahuatl terms to the root level. This work will leave you questioning traditionally accepted terminology and academically accepted myth.

The *Treatise* of Hernando Ruiz de Alarcn is one of the most important surviving documents of early colonial Mexico. It was written in 1629 as an aid to Roman Catholic churchmen in their efforts to root out the vestiges of pre-Columbian Aztec religious beliefs and practices. For the student of Aztec religion and culture is a valuable source of information. Hernando Ruiz de Alarcn was born in Taxco, Guerrero, Mexico, in the latter part of the sixteenth century. He attended the University of Mexico and later took holy orders. Sometime after he was assigned to the parish of Atenango, he began writing the *Treatise* for his fellow priests and church superiors to use as a guide in suppressing native "heresy." With great care and attention to detail Ruiz de Alarcn collected and recorded Aztec religious practices and incantations that had survived a century of Spanish domination (sometimes in his zeal extracting information from his informants through force and guile). He wrote down the incantations in Nahuatl and translated them into Spanish for his readers. He recorded rites for such everyday activities as woodcutting, traveling, hunting, fishing, farming, harvesting, fortune telling, lovemaking, and the curing of many diseases, from toothache to scorpion stings. Although Ruiz de Alarcn was scornful of native medical practices, we know now that in many aspects of medicine the Aztec curers were far ahead of their European counterparts.