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**Sinopsis**

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The introduction of the Virgin Mary to the native peoples of Mexico is often closely associated with Our Lady of Guadalupe, the principal Mexican Marian devotion. According to legend, the devotion originated in 1531 when the Virgin appeared to a Nahuatl man, Juan Diego, and left her image miraculously imprinted on his cloak. Historical evidence indicates, however, that the Mexican shrine was not established until the 1560s, the legend was virtually unknown until its initial publication in Spanish in 1648 and in Nahuatl the following year; and native people did not participate in the devotion to any extensive degree until after the mid-seventeenth century. How, then, was devotion to the Virgin actually introduced to Nahuatl during the first decades of Christian evangelization? This book addresses this question through the presentation of Nahuatl-language devotional texts relating to Mary, texts through which Nahuatl people learned about the Virgin and expressed their own developing devotion to her. The wide range of Nahuatl literature on the Virgin shows that, far from some early "syncretic" mixing of Mary with native "goddess" cults, Nahuatl people were introduced to, and to varying degrees participated in, the full-blown medieval and Renaissance devotion to Mary, adapted into their own language. These sources date from the 1540s through the 1620s and represent all of the major religious orders involved in the evangelization of the Nahuatl: Franciscans, Dominicans, Augustinians and Jesuits. Native scholars participated in the composition of much of this material. Genres include sermons, catechisms, prayers, narratives, drama, hymns, and antiphonal chants. The earliest extant edition of the rosary in Nahuatl is included, as are twelve miracle narratives, a complete Augustinian sermon on the Purification, and a lengthy native-edited account of the Assumption. Nahuatl text and English translation are presented in parallel columns. Each text is preceded by introductory commentary that explicates the European background of the material and its new meanings and uses in the Mexican context.