5

Language Policy and Legal Fiction

The Jesuit Jerónimo Navarro was shocked when he arrived in the parish of Duitama in April 1615. The town, some one hundred miles north-east of the city of Santafé, had recently been placed under the care of his order, and Navarro was among the first Jesuits sent there to preach, catechise, and administer the sacraments. Duitama was not far from the city of Tunja, the provincial capital. But something was not right. 'I began to preach in the language of the Indians,' he explained to his Provincial, but this 'was something new and that they had never heard'.[1] Navarro was not referring to the Gospel. The problem, he admitted, was that his new parishioners could not understand him. He had taken with him the archdiocese's standardised translation of catechetical materials in 'the language of the Indians' ('*la lingua de gl'Indiani*'), produced in response to far-reaching empire-wide legislation and as a core part of the reforms of Lobo Guerrero, Borja, and his own fellow Jesuits. But it was of no use. Instead, Navarro was forced to learn the language of his new parishioners and produce a new bespoke translation of key texts, starting with the confessionary, in order to perform his duties. What was going on?

Navarro was not alone in his predicament. Linguistic diversity posed a fundamental problem to priests and administrators around Spanish America and the Philippines who sought to evangelise Indigenous peoples, just as it did to their fellows in other missionary theatres around the world. It was also a challenge for the Spanish crown, which twice in the sixteenth century sought to put in place a systematic language policy

[1] Jerónimo Navarro to Manuel de Arceo, quoted in the Jesuit *littera annua* for 1615, dated 22 July 1616, ARSI NR&Q 12 II, 159v.

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for all of its territories in the New World, based on experiments and feedback it received primarily from the two centres of empire, Mexico and Peru. The latest of these, which sought to incorporate Indigenous 'general languages' into religious instruction, was how Navarro had come to be equipped with standardised linguistic materials in 'the language of the Indians' of the New Kingdom of Granada. Both royal efforts to institute a universal solution to the problems of language, however, failed in the New Kingdom because they were wholly unsuited to the region's linguistic conditions, and local actors like Navarro eventually had to produce their own solutions.

This episode, and others like it, are revealing of the complexity of the linguistic landscape of the New Kingdom of Granada, of how linguistically heterogeneous even the region closest to the centres of Spanish colonial power remained decades after the European invasion. But it also reveals something more fundamental: the distance that existed between the expectations and pretentions of authorities at the centre of the monarchy and realities on the ground, between empire-wide legislation and local initiatives, and between the different registers of writing – as well as the images of Indigenous peoples that they painted – that emerged alongside the colonial regime of the New Kingdom of Granada. As such, the history of language policy in the first century after the arrival of the secular church in the region – the subject of this chapter – throws valuable light not only on the development of the Spanish colonial project and the changing priorities and concerns of religious reformers, but invites us to reflect on the complexity of translating normativity into local contexts, the role and initiative of Indigenous actors, and the limitations of the colonial archive.

The role of language as both an instrument and a theatre of interaction between colonial powers and their subjects has been an important focal point for modern historians of colonialism, of Spanish America and elsewhere, and the subject of much theoretical discussion.[2] In contrast,

[2] The historiography of language policy in colonial contexts is considerable, from foundational texts such as Johannes Fabian, *Language and Colonial Power: The Appropriation of Swahili in the Former Belgian Congo, 1880–1938* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); and Vicente L. Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society under Early Spanish Rule*. 2nd edition (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), to more recent surveys such as Joseph Errington, *Linguistics in a Colonial World: A Story of Language, Meaning, and Power* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008). In the Spanish American context, key recent works include Durston, *Pastoral Quechua*; Nancy Farriss, *Tongues of Fire: Language and Evangelization in Colonial Mexico*

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comparatively little has been written about the New Kingdom of Granada, and less still about the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Lacking the Indigenous-language archives of many regions of Mesoamerica, and faced with a paucity of colonial texts in and on Indigenous languages compared with other regions of South America, an underlying concern of many studies on New Granada has been loss. Even though in recent decades the Colombian state has finally sought to safeguard and promote surviving Indigenous languages, not least granting them co-equal status with Castilian in the landmark 1991 constitution, an incalculable number of Indigenous languages formerly spoken in the territory of modern-day Colombia have disappeared.[3] These included the Muisca languages, which largely ceased to be spoken by the mid eighteenth century, at least until modern efforts of linguistic revival.[4] Because the Spanish crown issued legislation in the 1770s to 'banish' or suppress Indigenous languages across Spanish America, it is common to ascribe the disappearance of Indigenous languages to deliberate colonial policy, and to assume similar policies were implemented throughout the colonial period.[5] Indeed, much of the historiography has focused on how – to quote what remains the most comprehensive survey of colonial language policy, by Humberto Triana y Antorveza – 'in colonisation, Spain imposed the Castilian language, destroying without consideration

(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); and Daniel I. Wasserman-Soler, *Truth in Many Tongues: Religious Conversion and the Languages of the Early Spanish Empire* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2020).

[3] On the loss of Indigenous languages in Colombia, see Ximena Pachón and François Correa, *Lenguas amerindias: Condiciones sociolingüísticas en Colombia* (Santafé de Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Antropología, 1997), 17–19; and Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadistica, 'Lenguas y dialectos indígenas'. In *Ayer y hoy de los indígenas colombianos* (Bogotá: Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadistica, 1971), 45–49. For an overview of contemporary language policy, including in the 1991 Constitution, see Javier García León and David García León, 'Políticas lingüísticas en Colombia: tensiones entre políticas para lenguas mayoritarias y lenguas minoritarias'. *Boletín de filología* 47, no. 2 (2012): 47–70.

[4] On the disappearance of Muisca, see Nicholas Ostler, 'Fray Bernardo de Lugo: Two Sonnets in Muisca'. *Amerindia: Revue d'ethnolinguistique Amérindienne* 19–20 (1995): 129. And on modern revival efforts, Richard Alberto Cardozo Sarmiento and Jose Fernando Páez Jaramillo, 'Proceso de revitalización lingüística de la lengua muisca de la comunidad de Cota'. BA dissertation, Facultad de Comunicación y Lenguaje, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2008.

[5] The decree in question is compiled in Richard Konetzke, *Colección de documentos para la historia de la formación social de Hispanoamerica, 1493–1810* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1953), vol. 3, 364–368.

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our Indigenous languages'.[6] As a result, most historians have tended to focus on the view from the top, and especially on royal legislation.[7]

These perspectives, although understandable, are problematic, in part because they gloss over a much more complicated reality on the ground, leaving fundamental questions unanswered. On a basic level, we know little of how communication in religious instruction actually worked in practice. We know that the Indigenous inhabitants of New Granada spoke a multitude of languages, and we know that they were (eventually) catechised, but little has been written about how this was actually done, beyond speculation. There are very few surviving texts in Indigenous languages, whether simple '*vocabularios*' – word lists – or more sophisticated dictionaries and catechetical texts.[8] And yet we know that Indigenous languages must have been used because even though we have evidence of the spread of Spanish among Indigenous people throughout this period, we also know that many groups and individuals did not speak it – as evidenced, for example, by the continued presence of interpreters in the interactions of Indigenous people with colonial officials, whether at court in Santafé or visitations.[9] More fundamentally, these perspectives have tended to take the claims and pretentions of royal authority at face value. In fact, owing to the peculiar position occupied by the New Kingdom of Granada, local authorities took advantage of royal

[6] Humberto Triana y Antorveza, *Las lenguas indígenas en la historia social del Nuevo Reino de Granada* (Bogotá: Instituto Caro y Cuervo, 1987), xv.

[7] Javier Real Cuesta, 'Política lingüística en el Nuevo Reino de Granada durante los siglos XVI y XVII'. In *Estudios sobre política indigenista española en América* (Valladolid: Seminario de Historia de América, Universidad de Valladolid, 1975), vol. 1, 279–302; Triana y Antorveza, *Las lenguas indígenas en la historia social* and also his other works, *Las lenguas indígenas en el ocaso del imperio español* (Santafé de Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Antropologia, 1993) and 'Factores políticos y sociales que contribuyeron a la desparición de lenguas indígenas (Colonia y Siglo XIX)'. In *Lenguas amerindias: condiciones sociolingüisticas en Colombia*. Edited by Ximena Pachón and François Correa (Santafé de Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano Antropología, 1997), 85–154.

[8] Christiane Dümmler identified eight texts in 'Chibcha' for the entire colonial period, in 'La Nueva Granada como campo de labor lingüístico-misionera: presentación y análisis de varias obras de la época colonial'. In *La descripción de las lenguas amerindias en la época colonial*. Edited by Klaus Zimmermann (Frankfurt; Madrid: Vervuert Iberoamericana, 1997), 429–439. A further text, discussed later, was identified by Santiago Muñoz in 2015. A number of these have been digitised and compiled online by the Grupo de Investigación Muysccubun (at http://muysca.cubun.org).

[9] Jorge Augusto Gamboa, 'Presentación'. In *Gramática en la lengua general del Nuevo Reino, llamada mosca* (Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historia, 2010), 15–19.

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legislation on language to implement policies that directly contradicted the original intentions of this legislation, but which served their interests and reflected local priorities and concerns. To understand how this worked, we need to start at the centre and at the beginning.

'GREAT DISSONANCE AND IMPERFECTION'

Early royal legislation on the issue of language had left most of the responsibility for evangelisation and language teaching to people on the ground: missionaries from the religious orders and *encomenderos*. The Laws of Burgos-Valladolid of 1512–1513, for example, included a small number of instructions regarding language, most significantly a provision (law 9) ordering all *encomenderos* in charge of fifty or more people to teach a young man to read, so that he could then teach others and help the friars with religious instruction.[10] As in so many other areas the crown was by no means taking the initiative. Instead, early missionaries and settlers responded to the challenges posed by Indigenous languages with a two-pronged policy that would come to characterise the Spanish response to the problems posed by language throughout Spanish America and the Philippines: learning the languages of the inhabitants of the areas in which they were active while teaching them how to speak Castilian as well. Unsurprisingly, this began in the Antilles, New Spain, and Peru, areas that had been settled by Europeans long before their invasion and settlement of the interior of New Granada in the late 1530s and 1540s.

Eventually, however, the crown sought to take a more active role, and decided to institute the first systematic language policy for all of its American territories in 1550. This first empire-wide policy was to throw its weight behind one of the two strategies pioneered by people on the ground, favouring the teaching of Spanish. In this way, in June 1550, Charles V decreed that in order to evangelise Indigenous peoples what was necessary was 'to ensure that these peoples are taught our Castilian tongue, and that they adopt our manners and customs'. Only in this way, he proposed, 'can [they] be instructed in doctrine and will understand the things of our Christian religion'.[11] In these instructions, then, the teaching of Spanish was fundamental not only to catechesis, but also of the

[10] 'Ordenanzas para el tratamiento de los indios', or Laws of Burgos-Valladolid, 23 January 1513, AGI Indiferente 419, lib. 4 83r–96v, at law 9 (87v).

[11] Royal decree (*cédula*) on teaching the Indians the Spanish language, 7 June 1550, compiled in *Recopilación* 6.1.18.

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assimilation of Indigenous people into colonial rule more generally. Language, in other words, was a powerful tool to be deployed alongside measures to improve the 'manners and customs' of Indigenous people. It was a tool for the promotion of Spanish *policía*.

The legislation of 1550 responded to the preoccupations of three interrelated trends. The first, as we have seen, was the ongoing emergence of an identity of 'Spain' and Spanishness increasingly characterised by ideas of cultural unity, expressed in increasingly religious terms, that saw religious heterogeneity as an obstacle to political stability.[12] The second was the justification of the conquest and possession of the New World based on the need for evangelisation and eventually on the preservation of orthodoxy.[13] But a third trend concerned language specifically. This was the growth in importance of vernacular Spanish and the concomitant development of ideas about language and its role in early modern Europe.[14] Of course, this increasing vernacularisation was not limited to the Iberian Peninsula, but it was nevertheless well suited to become one of the markers of the developing identity of a united Spain, and one that would be exported to the New World.[15]

[12] On 'Spanishness', see Albert A. Sicroff, *Los estatutos de limpieza de sangre: controversias entre los siglos XV y XVII* (Madrid: Taurus, 1985); M. J. Rodríguez-Salgado, 'Christians, Civilised and Spanish: Multiple Identities in Sixteenth-Century Spain'. *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 8 (1998): 233–251; Margaret Rich Greer, Walter Mignolo, and Maureen Quilligan, eds, *Rereading the Black Legend: The Discourses of Religious and Racial Difference in the Renaissance Empires* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); María Elena Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions: Limpieza de Sangre, Religion, and Gender in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008).

[13] On the justification for the conquest, see Enrique Dussel, *El episcopado latinoamericano y la liberación de los pobres, 1504–1620* (Mexico City: Centro de Reflexión Teológica, 1979), 57ff; M. J. Rodríguez-Salgado, 'How Oppression Thrives Where Truth Is Not Allowed a Voice": The Spanish Polemic about the American Indians'. In *Silencing Human Rights: Critical Engagements with a Contested Project*. Edited by Gurminder K. Bhambra and Robbie Shilliam (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 19–42; and Gonzalo Lamana, 'Of Books, Popes and Huacas; or, the Dilemmas of Being Christian'. In *Rereading the Black Legend: The Discourses of Religious and Racial Difference in the Renaissance Empires*. Edited by Margaret Rich Greer, Walter Mignolo, and Maureen Quilligan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 117–149.

[14] Peter Burke, *Languages and Communities in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[15] For Penelope Harvey, 'the abstraction of spoken language into stable rule-governed forms began to lend language a timeless form and facilitate the emergent association of language with singular, person-specific identities or ethnicity'. See Penelope Harvey, 'Language States'. In *A Companion to Latin American Anthropology*. Edited by Deborah Poole (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008), 197. Also Durston, *Pastoral Quechua*, 34; and Sheldon Pollock, 'Cosmopolitan and Vernacular in History'. *Public Culture* 12, no. 3 (2000): 592.

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Vernacularisation was problematic, and especially in a religious context. A clear illustration of this can be seen in the ambiguous treatment of vernacular languages later in the century at the Council of Trent. On one hand, one of the principal means through which reformers sought to further involve the laity in ecclesiastical life was through the use of vernacular languages. Session XXII required priests to preach in the vernacular, and during the mass explain 'some of what is recited', to give some explanation – a departure from the almost theatrical form of late medieval Catholicism, in an attempt to turn congregations in many senses from spectators into active participants. But at the same time, the same concerns of religious orthodoxy made it much more cautious about the use of the vernacular for the liturgy, explaining that 'council fathers did not think it advantageous that it should everywhere [*passim*] be celebrated in the vernacular' – and, later, anathemised the opinion 'that mass should be celebrated only in the vernacular'.[16] So while these developments led to a boom in the publication of vernacular pastoral texts and religious literature in the peninsula, not only in Castilian but also in other peninsular languages, this literature was also a source of anxiety and the subject of great scrutiny, not least since the Inquisition had banned translations of Scripture in Spain from 1551.[17] These ambiguous experiences formed the context that framed the ideas about language of the people at the centre of the monarchy who determined language policy in the Spanish America: men who recognised the fundamental importance of communication for conversion but who were uneasy with the use of even their own language to achieve it.

This anxiety about language can be seen in the legislation of 1550. The central problem lay with the languages themselves: 'having particularly examined whether even in the most perfect Indian language the Mysteries

On the standardisation of language around Europe, see Burke, *Languages and Communities*, 89–110.

[16] Trent, Sess. XXII, 'Teaching and canons on the most holy sacrifice of the mass', ch. 8, and 'Canons on the most holy sacrifice of the mass', can. 9, in Tanner, *Decrees*, vol. 2, 735–736. John O'Malley noted that this was 'a far cry from forbidding the vernacular', although, oddly, he translated '*passim*' ('everywhere') in the second quotation as 'elsewhere' ('*alibi*'). See O'Malley, 'Trent: Myths', 220.

[17] This prohibition was preceded by another banning all books on doctrine printed outside of Spain the previous year. On these restrictions, and the broader context of the controversy over the prosecution of the archbishop of Toledo, Bartolomé de Carranza by the Inquisition, see Wasserman-Soler, *Truth in Many Tongues*, ch. 1; and Marcel Bataillon, *Erasmo y España: estudios sobre la historia espiritual del siglo XVI* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1966), 549–557.

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of our Holy Catholic Faith can be well and properly explained', the decree read, 'it has been recognised that it is not possible to do so *without great dissonance and imperfection*.'[18] Indigenous languages, the logic went, were just not up to the task. The issue was maintaining and policing the orthodoxy of what was taught, and the simplest solution was to avoid the problem altogether and discount Indigenous languages as means to transmit the tenets of Christian doctrine, and with it Spanish *policía*. Reality, however, would not disappear at the stroke of a pen.

When the legislation of 1550 reached Santafé, the civil and ecclesiastical authorities of New Granada charged with putting the king's dispositions into practice soon became aware of the difficulty of doing so. For a start, both the church and the civil administration of New Granada were in their infancy, and the resources available to them were negligible. All that the first bishop of Santafé, Juan de los Barrios, could do was to echo this official policy in his Synod of 1556. In this way, his constitutions began by emphasising the necessity of teaching doctrine in Spanish, and of doing so uniformly, before laying out a method for teaching children, who were to take lessons every day for two hours. All teaching, including prayers, were to be taught in Spanish, alongside 'reading, writing, singing, and counting'.[19] In Chapter 2 we saw how the constitutions of synod of 1556 were divorced from local realities and incapable of effecting change. But even here, in what was predominantly an aspirational text, the cracks in the royal policy of 1550 were already beginning to show. After outlining this programme of religious instruction in Spanish, the same synod, in a rare moment of perspicacity, required that adult converts seeking baptism be examined on their knowledge of the catechism 'in a language they understand'.[20] How else, after all, could one be sure that everything had been transmitted reliably?

Although the policy of 1550 gave priority to the teaching of Spanish, missionaries active in Mexico and Peru had not abandoned their study of Indigenous languages and were ready to provide an alternative when the shortcomings of the crown's policy began to become obvious. There, missionaries and scholars had been debating the merits and usefulness of Indigenous languages for decades, and many had been petitioning the crown for a change of policy. This is the context, for example, of the prologue to the famous 1560 Quechua grammar of Domingo de Santo

[18] Royal decree on teaching the Spanish language, 7 June 1550, in *Recopilación* 6.1.18, my italics.

[19] 'Constituciones sinodales 1556', 19, 41. [20] Ibid., 22.

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Tomás, in which he directly responded to the language of the legislation of 1550, praising 'the great *policía* of this language, its abundance of vocabulary', comparing it favourably to Latin and Castilian in its elegance and virtues.[21] By the end of the decade they came to be joined by the civil authorities, first in New Spain, under viceroy Luis de Velasco, and then in Peru, under Francisco de Toledo. In 1558, for example, Velasco had started to petition for the establishment of a school in Guadalajara for the teaching of Nahuatl to Indigenous children.[22] Toledo, for his part, attempted over the course of four letters in 1570 to convince the king of the necessity of using Indigenous languages.[23] Within a few years, the result was a fundamentally different policy at the centre of the monarchy, a shift towards a strategy that sought to incorporate Indigenous languages into the program of evangelising the Indigenous peoples of the New World.

The change began with the *Cédula magna* of royal patronage of 1574, discussed in Chapter 3, that was so central to the crown's effort to assert its control over ecclesiastical institutions and the missionary project, dispatched to civil and ecclesiastical authorities throughout Spanish America. For the purposes of this chapter, however, one thing stands out among the sections to do with the appointment of candidates to ecclesiastical positions. Hoping that in 'the presentation and provision to all prelacies, dignities, offices and ecclesiastical benefices, the most meritorious be presented and provided', article 19 ordered that local civil and ecclesiastical authorities were to prefer candidates 'who know the language in which they are to indoctrinate'.[24] These instructions about language were reiterated in 1578, when Archbishop Zapata de Cárdenas was ordered not to appoint any candidate ignorant of the local language to an Indigenous parish.[25] The same year, the king wrote to the archbishop of Lima compelling him to do the same.[26] In December, he decreed that all priests travelling to Spanish America from the peninsula or

[21] Santo Tomás, *Grammatica, o Arte de la lengua general de los Indios de los reynos del Peru* (Valladolid: por Francisco Fernandez de Cordoua, impressor de la M. R, 1560), [7–8]. On this see Juan Carlos Estenssoro Fuchs, 'Las vías indígenas de la occidentalización. Lenguas generales y lenguas maternas en el ámbito colonial americano (1492–1650)'. *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez* 45, no. 1 (2015): 15–36.

[22] Rosenblat, 'La hispanización de América', 91; Pardo, *Mexican Catholicism*, 108ff.

[23] Triana y Antorveza, *Las lenguas indígenas en la historia social*, 163–164.

[24] *Cédula magna del patronato*, AGI Indiferente 427, lib. 30, 258r.

[25] Alberto Lee López, 'Gonzalo Bermúdez, primer catedrático de la lengua general de los Chibchas'. *Boletín de Historia y Antigüedades* 51, nos 594–597 (1964): 186.

[26] Real Cuesta, 'Política lingüística', 299.

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elsewhere would be required to demonstrate a knowledge of local languages in order to be admitted to Indigenous benefices and parishes.[27]

The new legislation concluded with two decrees of 1580, which now also affected those already in possession of Indigenous parishes. The first decree, issued by Philip II in August 1580, once again required priests working in Indigenous parishes to know the language of their parishioners, forbidding the installation of those who did not.[28] The second, issued a month later, ordered the establishment of a chair or professorship, a *cátedra*, in each diocese for an expert in its 'general language' to teach it to those who required it and to examine them.[29] It also forbade even the ordination of 'anyone lacking a knowledge of the general language of the said Indians'. Such knowledge would be assessed and certified by the holder of the chair, and candidates would be required to study under him for at least a year. This was to be obligatory 'even if the said ordinand possessed the ability and sufficiency in the faculties that the Church and sacred canons require' because, 'for the teaching and indoctrination of the said Indians what is most important is knowing the said language'. Only in this way would 'the spiritual good of the said Indians [be] achieved'. Priests already in possession of parishes were not exempt: they were all to be examined in the language within the year, or lose their parishes.[30] This new strategy represented a fundamental change from the policy that the crown had favoured in the mid sixteenth century. But it relied on a problematic idea.

WHAT IS A 'GENERAL LANGUAGE'?

The language policy implemented between 1574 and 1580 depended on the use of 'general languages'. But what were they? In a recent study of the 'general language' of colonial Peru, César Itier highlighted a fundamental problem: 'In historical sources, the term *lengua general* is applied to what in reality are several different concepts.' In the case of Peru, it is applied in

[27] Royal decree 'Que los clérigos y religiosos no sean admitidos a doctrinas sin saber la lengua general de los Indios que han de administrar', 2 December 1578, in *Recopilación* 1.6.30.

[28] Royal decree 'Que los Religiosos doctrineros sean examinados por los prelados diocesanos en la suficiencia y lengua de los Indios de sus doctrinas', 5 August 1580, in *Recopilación* 1.15.6.

[29] The copy dispatched to New Granada can be found in AGN C&O 9, 226r–227v.

[30] Royal decree for the establishment of a professorship in the general language, 22 September 1580, AGN C&O 9, 226v–227r.

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some sources to 'the entire Quechua language family; in others, to the specific dialect that served as the lingua franca of Tawantinsuyu; in others still, to a collection of dialects that seems to coincide with what modern classifications call "Quechua IIc"'.[31] This ambiguity is problematic, and has led to a great deal of confusion about the linguistic reality of areas such as the New Kingdom of Granada. What the legislation of 1580 referred to was a single Indigenous language that could be used widely within a territory for the purpose of evangelisation, an Indigenous lingua franca that could be appropriated by colonial officials for their purposes. The idea was simple and the advantages were obvious: instead of trying to learn and use all the languages of a particular region for the purposes of indoctrination, efforts were focused on what was seen as the dominant language. This idea was attractive because it provided a means to overcome the most difficult aspect of the problem of language in the New World: the heterogeneity of the linguistic landscape.

It had first arisen in New Spain and Peru, where friars had been learning Indigenous languages for decades with varying degrees of success. There, missionaries had sought to best employ their resources by focusing their efforts on what seemed to be the most predominant language in the regions where they operated.[32] Their decision was facilitated by the fact that these were regions where certain languages had become widespread before European contact, as a consequence not only of the military and economic expansion of the Mexica and the Inca, but also of deliberate language policies that they implemented.[33] In contrast, no such processes had occurred before the European invasion in the region that became the New Kingdom: for all the claims and embellishments of explorers and chroniclers, Muisca groups lacked political unity, and no single group had imposed its control over all others. Indeed, research into the social and political organisation of the Muisca at the moment of contact with Spaniards over the past few decades, as Chapter 1 discussed,

[31] César Itier, 'What Was the "Lengua General" of Colonial Peru?' In *History and Language in the Andes*. Edited by Adrian J. Pearce and Paul Heggarty (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 63.

[32] As Juan Carlos Estenssoro explains in his survey of the emergence of the term 'general language', it was a matter of 'linguistic economy'. Estenssoro Fuchs, 'Las vías indígenas'.

[33] Harvey, 'Language States', 194. In the words of Santo Tomás – whom Estenssoro suggests coined the term 'general language' in his 1560 grammar – Quechua 'was the language that was used throughout the domain of great lord Huayna Capac', explaining that 'it was used generally by lords and *principales* of that land, and the greater part of the commoners'. See Estenssoro Fuchs, 'Las vías indígenas', 21, citing Santo Tomás, *Grammatica*, [9].

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has generally questioned received wisdom about the cultural, political, and social homogeneity of these groups. As a result, no Indigenous lingua franca had emerged.

In New Spain and Peru, Spaniards soon began to appropriate and spread apparently dominant languages among Indigenous peoples under their rule – the next logical step – often far beyond the areas where they had been dominant before European contact.[34] Moreover, missionaries had devoted a great deal of effort to codifying and employing certain Indigenous languages for their purposes from an early date, a fact that is evident from the volume of surviving works in Indigenous languages and from their dates of publication.[35] The printing press was introduced to New Spain by Bishop Fray Juan de Zumárraga, in 1539, and it seems that its first publication was a bilingual Nahuatl-Castilian catechism, his *Breve y más compendiosa doctrina christiana en lengua mexicana y castellana*.[36] Similarly, the first publication of the press in Lima was a 1583 trilingual doctrinal work, in Spanish, Quechua, and Aymara, while Santo Tomás's Quechua grammar and vocabulary, the *Grammatica o Arte de la lengua general de los indios de los reynos del Perú* – featuring the first appearance of the term 'general language' – had been published in Valladolid in 1560.[37]

Of course, references to 'the Mexican language' or 'the general language of the Indians of the kingdoms of Peru' gloss over what were in fact complicated linguistic realities, ignoring the prevalence of dialects, geographical variation, and a whole host of other important considerations.[38] In the case of Peru, for example, significant debate remains about the connection between the lingua franca of Tawantinsuyu and the 'general language' Quechua of colonial sources and pastoral

[34] Rosenblat, 'La hispanización de América', 91; Harvey, 'Language States', 197; Durston, *Pastoral Quechua*.

[35] Resines, *Catecismos americanos*, vol. 2, 725–727.

[36] Rosenblat, 'La hispanización de América', 89; Joaquín García Icazbalceta, *Bibliografía mexicana del siglo XVI; primera parte: catálogo razonado de libros impresos en México de 1539 a 1600 con biografías de autores y otras ilustraciones, precedido de una noticia acerca de la introducción de la imprenta en México* (México: Librería de Andrade y Morales, 1886), 1; and Resines, *Catecismos americanos*, vol. 2, 236–237.

[37] On the former, see Durston, *Pastoral Quechua*, 49–55. On the latter, Estenssoro Fuchs, *Paganismo*, 33–34, 84, and 'Las vías indígenas'. In contrast, the New Kingdom would have to wait until the seventeenth century for a work concerning one of its Indigenous languages to be printed, and until the eighteenth for its own printing press. On the latter See Medina, *La imprenta en Bogotá*.

[38] Itier, 'What Was the "Lengua General"', 73.

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literature: whether the latter was an artificial construct produced after the former had disappeared (as argued by Cerrón-Palomino), whether it reflected the language that Indigenous people actually spoke (as argued by Durston), or whether it was indeed a lingua franca widely spoken by Indigenous people (as proposed by Taylor and Itier).[39] These debates continue, but what is crucial is that a lingua franca could be, and was, used in evangelisation in these centres of empire, and that this cemented the idea that the same would be the case elsewhere. The legislation of 1580 accepts this as a given, assuming that an equivalent lingua franca existed in each individual realm, and that it was widespread enough to justify constructing an educational framework for missionaries to be trained in it and for standardised translations of a pastoral and catechetical corpus to be produced. Characteristically, the crown was attempting to extend what seemed to be working in one region across the rest of Spanish America. Indeed, the second decree of 1580, which called for the establishment of a *cátedra* in the general language of each region, explicitly referred to the successful experience of the Quechua *cátedra* in Lima.[40]

Crucially, what the legislation of 1580 did by introducing the expectation that an Indigenous lingua franca existed and should be employed was to open the way for the authorities in charge of areas where no language had been identified as 'the *general* language' to choose any language and label it as such, as long as they were under the impression that it was or could be used in a similar manner to what the legislation described was the case elsewhere. In other words, the concept was ambiguous, and while a 'general language' could be an Indigenous lingua franca in Mexico or Peru, elsewhere it could easily be little more than an optimistic fiction. When these instructions reached the New Kingdom in 1581, where languages were as overwhelmingly heterogeneous as they were uncharted, manpower was scarce, political will was negligible, and

[39] Gerald Taylor, 'Un documento quechua de Huarochirí-1607'. *Revista andina* 5, no. 1 (1985): 157–185; Rodolfo Cerrón Palomino, 'Unidad y diferencia lingüística en el mundo andino'. *Lexis: Revista de lingüística y literatura* 11, no. 1 (1987): 71–104; Durston, *Pastoral Quechua*; and César Itier, 'Lengua general y quechua cuzqueño en los siglos XVI y XVII'. In *Desde afuera y desde adentro: ensayos de etnografía e historia del Cuzco y Apurímac*. Edited by Luis Millones Figueroa, Hiroyasu Tomoeda, and Tatsuhiko Fujii (Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology, 2000), 47–59 and 'What Was the "Lengua General"'.

[40] Royal decree for the establishment of a professorship in the General Language, 22 September 1580, AGI SF 234 n. 47, 1r.

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little progress had been made in studying and codifying the languages that were known, it would turn out to be the latter.

'THERE IS NO GENERAL LANGUAGE IN THIS KINGDOM'

The second decree of 1580, which arrived in Santafé on 2 July 1581, required the *Audiencia* to make a difficult decision. After all, in order to establish a *cátedra* in the 'general language', it was first necessary to decide which language that might be. The following December, the *Audiencia* published edicts calling for candidates to present themselves to the newly created chair in 'the general language', explaining that the *Audiencia* 'declared it to be that of this valley of Bogotá and Tunja'.[41] This decision involved two important assumptions: that a single language – described as 'Mosca' in most contemporary sources and 'Chibcha' and Muisca in modern literature – was present throughout this region, and that it was widespread enough to be useful as a lingua franca.[42] But the reality was very different. For a start, there was no single, homogenous Muisca that was spoken throughout the 'valley of Bogotá and Tunja'. This became clear as soon as people with a knowledge of local languages were consulted and when the new legislation was first criticised, after which the reference to Tunja, which is in fact located several valleys away (see Map 2 in the Prelims), was generally dropped.[43] Instead, the language the *Audiencia* selected was the language of the region immediately surrounding the city of Santafé.

It is difficult to reconstruct the details of the process through which the *Audiencia* settled on this variant of Muisca, owing to a dearth of documentation, but the rationale was straightforward enough. They chose the language spoken by the people with whom they had the greatest contact,

[41] Edict advertising for the position of *catedrático*, 23 December 1581, AGI SF 234, no. 47, 4v.

[42] Even though in an earlier literature the terms 'Muisca' and 'Chibcha' were often used interchangeably, the term 'Chibcha' is primarily used by linguists to refer to the broader linguistic family of Chibchan languages of which the Muisca languages were part, historically spoken in parts of northern South America and in Central America as far north as Nicaragua. To avoid confusion, throughout this book I prefer the term 'Muisca'. See Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadistica, 'Lenguas y dialectos indígenas', 45.

[43] For example, by witnesses called to support the legislation in 1582 (Proceedings on the case of the salary of Gonzalo Bermúdez, AGI SF 234, no. 47, 33v, 36v, 39r, 44r). As one explained, 'there is a general language in this valley of Bogotá, except in the valleys of Guatavita and Ubaque and Tunja' (at 46r).

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who inhabited the towns nearest the city, and assumed it would be good enough for the rest of the highlands of the eastern *cordillera*. As supporters of using this Indigenous vernacular later argued, people from around the region went to the *Audiencia* for redress of their 'suits and grievances', as well as to a market frequently held in the city, 'to contract, to sell and to shop, and in doing so' – they deduced – 'they *must* be able to understand each other in this general language of the valley of Santafé'.[44] From this uninformed perspective, unaware of the extent of linguistic heterogeneity but optimistic about the potential of the new legislation, Santafé Muisca would do just fine.

Unfortunately for them, this Muisca of Santafé was not widely understood within most Muisca-speaking territories. As the linguist María Stella González de Pérez affirmed in her survey of studies of the language, 'it can be unequivocally said that, before the arrival of Spaniards, the aborigines of the Chibcha territory did not constitute a unilingual mass'.[45] And in any case this language bore little relation to the overwhelming majority of Indigenous languages in the rest of the New Kingdom of Granada, outside the Muisca highlands. The problem was not going to go away: almost forty years later, in 1618, the then archbishop of Santafé, Hernando Arias de Ugarte, still bemoaned how, unlike in Peru, '*there is no general language in this kingdom*, but many particular ones'.[46]

These issues were further complicated by the fact that, as earlier chapters have discussed, this was a tumultuous period for the New Kingdom. On one hand, Indigenous communities were coming under unprecedented pressure as a result of demographic collapse and colonial impositions, most recently the violence unleashed by the scramble for *santuarios*. What was left of the civil authorities spent the early 1580s, as we saw, trying to cover up their tracks, while the secular church, for its, part, was in the throes of Archbishop Zapata de Cárdenas's reform programme. In Peru and Mexico, the implementation of the new language policy advanced significantly with the influential provincial councils that were held there in the 1580s. Both councils published not only sophisticated guidelines to govern and homogenise the conduct of evangelisation,

[44] Proceedings on the case of Gonzalo Bermúdez, AGI SF 234, no. 47, 39r, my italics.

[45] María Stella González de Pérez, *Trayectoria de los estudios sobre la lengua chibcha o muisca* (Bogotá: Instituto Caro y Cuervo, 1980), 60.

[46] Letter of Archbishop Arias de Ugarte to the king, 11 June 1618, AGI SF 226, no. 142, 1r–1v. My italics.

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but also sought – with varying success – to produce catechetical corpora that embraced the new language policy and took advantage of the opportunities provided by the existence of dominant Indigenous languages.[47] Things would be more difficult in Santafé, where Zapata had already been struggling against the limits of his resources and authority – even before his efforts to hold a provincial council and establish a seminary, which occupied him for much of the 1580s, both failed by the middle of the decade. Priests in his archdiocese would have to make do with his 1576 *Catechism* instead of the catechetical materials translated into Indigenous languages or the sophisticated legislation available to their contemporaries in the centres of empire.

In this context, the language provisions of the *Cédula magna* of 1574 provided a lifeline for Zapata. Language became central to his justification for his most controversial policies, the ordination of at least 124 men to the priesthood before his death in 1590 – including 22 *mestizos* – and his ruthless efforts to place them in Indigenous parishes to the exclusion of the religious orders. As early as 1575, Zapata pointed to the ability and fluency in Indigenous languages of his candidates to justify admitting them to the priesthood and using them to displace regulars from Indigenous parishes, reiterating this in letter after letter – especially as his ordination of *mestizos* became the focus of the antagonism of the religious orders, and a huge controversy in its own right.[48] Owing to political conditions in the New Kingdom, then, evangelisation in Indigenous languages quickly became an especially thorny question, and when the legislation of 1580 arrived it soon become a focal point in this broader conflict.

By 23 December 1581 the *Audiencia* had published edicts declaring the general language to be Santafé Muisca, advertising the professorship, and offering a salary of 400 pesos of twenty-karat gold. Applicants were informed of the requirements for office, that the successful candidate was to examine all those who presented themselves, teach every working

[47] Rosenblat, 'La hispanización de América', 89; Estenssoro Fuchs, *Paganismo*, 32ff; Durston, *Pastoral Quechua*, 28–29; Resines, *Catecismos americanos*, vol. 2, 236–237. However, as Poole shows (in *Pedro Moya de Contreras*, 160–162), the publication of catechetical texts in Mexico was not straightforward either.

[48] He defended his actions in these terms in his letters to the king of 22 April 1575 (AGI SF 226, no. 7), 8 August 1577 (AGI SF 226, no. 12), 30 March 1580 (AGI SF 226, no. 31), and 26 March 1583 (AGI SF 226, no. 44). This controversy, and what it reveals about emerging ideas about race and difference, was the subject of my first book, *Mestizos heraldos de Dios*.

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day, and compose a grammar and a vocabulary of the language so that students could make copies. He would also be required to say mass every Sunday, preaching and catechising in the language. Gonzalo Bermúdez, whom we met in Chapter 3, a secular priest from Santafé with experience working in the language preaching, teaching, and – as we saw – interrogating Indigenous leaders and seizing their valuables, applied shortly after. He was examined, selected, and appointed in early March 1582.[49] After a few months, the archbishop declared all Indigenous parishes vacant so that they could be filled in line with royal instructions.[50] Everything seemed to be running smoothly, until Bermúdez collected his first wages on 4 July 1582.

Five days later the Franciscan and Dominican provincials petitioned the *Audiencia* to suspend the general languages policy, arguing that it was pointless, not least because many Indigenous people already knew Spanish. They also argued that these languages could not be reduced to writing, much less to a grammar; and that they had poor vocabularies, lacking the words necessary to describe the mysteries of the faith, or properly and honestly translate concepts such as 'Christ', 'charity', 'grace', 'contrition', or 'penance', so that it was far more fruitful to make the Indigenous speak Castilian.[51] Such arguments were, of course, not new, and had been prominent in discussions about the validity of these languages at court and in other dioceses around Spanish America, especially in New Spain and Peru. Proposed solutions there had included the extensive use of loan words, the appropriation not just of Indigenous vocabulary but also rhetorical devices (with important consequences for the translation of concepts themselves), and other methods to bridge the linguistic and conceptual gap. But translation inevitably remained slippery and full of problems, and the use of Indigenous languages was a great source of anxiety at a time when even the Castilian language of which contemporary grammarians spoke so highly was not free from suspicion as a vehicle of evangelisation.[52]

[49] Proceedings on the case of Gonzalo Bermúdez, AGI SF 234, no. 47, 7r–8v. On Bermúdez, see his petitions for promotion of 19 April 1596 (AGI SF 238, no. 10), and 12 March 1613 (AGI SF 242); and the documentation of the suit over his wages as *catedrático* (AGI SF 234, no. 47). For a discussion of the latter document, see Lee López, 'Gonzalo Bermúdez'.

[50] Ibid., 197.

[51] Proceedings on the case of Gonzalo Bermúdez, AGI SF 234, no. 47, 21r.

[52] Louise M. Burkhart, *The Slippery Earth: Nahua-Christian Moral Dialogue in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1989), 11–14; Estenssoro Fuchs, *Paganismo*, 43ff.

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At the same time, the friars argued that the main requirement for religious instruction was a knowledge of Latin and theology, not a familiarity with the 'language of the Indians'. Few people actually knew the language, they argued, and they lacked the experience of those who had spent years working in evangelisation. Last but not least, they argued that if priests with no knowledge of the language were excluded, most of the regulars of the New Kingdom would have to return to the peninsula, at great cost to the colonial administration, which would not only have to subsidise their travel expenses but take over the funding of missions, church building, and even the procurement of oil and wine for consecration.[53] This financial argument may have been particularly attractive to an administration afflicted by insufficient resources.

The secular clergy, led by Alonso Romero de Aguilar and his fellows, presented their case three days later, arguing that the last forty years of missionary activity in New Granada had achieved little progress. Priests, they argued, had been forced to rely on Indigenous or African interpreters who were incapable of translating the basic tenets of Christian doctrine accurately, and who were difficult to police.[54] In doing so they were echoing the criticism of the use of interpreters that had been common in the first decades of Spanish colonisation of the New World, and – like the legislation of 1580 – they invoked the success of the *cátedras* of New Spain and Peru as proof of the viability of the policy.[55] They proposed that it was certainly possible to learn the language, as the first Dominicans and Franciscans, they claimed, had apparently done so fruitfully, and all the more now that the legislation of 1580 included the provision that Bermúdez compose a clear grammar, which he was already drafting. They recognised that it was not easy to translate the mysteries of the Christian faith, but that it had been a problem throughout the history of the church: similar problems had come up when translating the tenets of Christian theology from Greek to Latin, but they had been overcome, as Bermúdez was now doing. Even though few priests knew the language, very few Indigenous people knew Spanish, and it was ridiculous to demand that the thousands of inhabitants of the provinces of Bogotá and Tunja learn it when the majority of them were adults who had to work for a living, and even the young found it difficult. Instead, thirty or forty learned priests with time to devote to the study of Muisca could learn it easily, especially

[53] Proceedings on the case of Gonzalo Bermúdez, AGI SF 234, no. 47, 20v–22r.
[54] Ibid., 22r–27v.
[55] On the former, see Harvey, 'Language States', 196; Durston, *Pastoral Quechua*, 314.

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now that they were to have access to linguistic resources and catechetical texts in translation.

In response to the argument that they lacked the necessary experience, they reminded the *Audiencia* of petitions from local *caciques* during Lent, when they were apparently asked to provide Muisca-speaking priests to hear confessions from the Indigenous people. They even pointed to the discovery of *santuarios* by Zapata, Bermúdez, and others the previous decade, claiming these survived because Indigenous people had never been catechised properly, with friars content to teach them to recite the *Paternoster* and *Ave Maria* in Spanish, unable to explain what they meant. When called to administer Extreme Unction, they continued, ignorant friars unable to understand their parishioners would simply give them a blessing, saying 'may your faith and contrition save you, because I do not understand you'.[56]

The controversy raged on. The archbishop's opponents later focused their efforts on Bermúdez, convincing their allies in the *Audiencia* to withhold his wages and later suppress the chair. They even used Zapata's argument for ordaining *criollos* and *mestizos* against him: since these men already knew the language, no chair was necessary, especially as no peninsular priest had managed to learn the language – although no doubt in part as a result of the fact that the regulars had been ordered to boycott Bermúdez's lessons.[57] A smallpox epidemic that ravaged the region in the late 1580s inflamed things further, encouraging Zapata to strip the friars of their parishes with greater enthusiasm because their priests were 'unqualified by their lack of knowledge of the language of the Indians to whom they are to administer the holy sacraments', so that 'a great number of Indians have died without confession'. The friars claimed this was untrue, since 'the Indians know the Spanish language, because the said friars have taught it to them, and if some of them fail to learn it, it is because they are so old and decrepit, that language or no language, they do not want to be catechised or disciplined'.[58]

The policy was there to stay, and the crown reiterated this repeatedly in the face of petitions to the contrary, reissuing, whenever it seemed necessary, the provision that friars were to be examined in the language by diocesan authorities before they could be appointed to any Indigenous

[56] Proceedings on the case of Gonzalo Bermúdez, AGI SF 234, no. 47, 27r.
[57] Lee López, 'Gonzalo Bermúdez', 203–204.
[58] Proceedings concerning Zapata's seizure of Franciscan parishes, 19 January 1588, AGN C&O 9, 221r, 22v.

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benefice.[59] At the same time, however, the crown sought to avoid alienating the religious orders by restoring some of their parishes and reining in successive archbishops. It even made sure that Bermúdez's wages were paid, and he remained in office until his death in 1625.[60] For their part, the religious orders would continue to oppose the requirements to learn Indigenous languages until the early seventeenth century, when Lobo Guerrero, Borja, and the Jesuits were able to establish a consensus around the use of Indigenous languages as part of their project to reform evangelisation, at least as far as the regular authorities of New Granada were concerned. The result was that the religious orders, who had been so strongly opposed to the use of Indigenous languages, produced their own linguistic texts and translations into Indigenous languages – most notably fray Bernardo de Lugo's famous Muisca grammar – even if individual friars continued to criticise the policy.

It is tempting to focus on the controversy over the use of Indigenous languages at this top level, as a number of scholars have done. After all, the arguments used by the supporters and opponents of the policy are revealing, not just of the politics and tensions that affected the church of the New Kingdom in this period, the relationship between the secular clergy and the religious orders, or competing perspectives on how best to evangelise Indigenous people, but also of more fundamental ideas and prejudices about language and its role. To do this, however, would be to leave crucial questions unanswered.

The most basic problem that the linguistic landscape of the New Kingdom of Granada posed to implementing the legislation of 1574–1580 was its heterogeneity. The legislation relied on the use of an Indigenous lingua franca, but everyone involved in the controversy of the 1580s was aware that the New Kingdom did not have one. Even Zapata, who had been an enthusiastic supporter of the idea of using Indigenous languages in evangelisation even before the landmark legislation of 1580, was well aware of the linguistic heterogeneity of the region. This was clear as early as 1577, when he proposed that 'the best method for it [evangelisation] is to preach and declare the Holy Gospel to them in their own languages', adding the caveat:

[59] The decree of 1580 that ordered friars be examined was reissued for different jurisdictions in 1603, 1618, 1622, 1624, and 1637. Royal decree 'Que los Religiosos doctrineros sean examinados por los prelados diocesanos en la suficiencia y lengua de los Indios de sus doctrinas', originally issued 5 August 1580, in *Recopilación* 1.15.6.

[60] Lee López, 'Gonzalo Bermúdez', 209.

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and I say *languages*, because in this Kingdom every valley or province has a different one, and it is not like Peru and New Spain, where there are different languages but one general language, which is used throughout the land. But in this land a friar goes to his catechumens and preaches the catechism in a language that is as if he did not preach it at all.[61]

The Jesuit Navarro, after all, would experience this first-hand a few decades later. It is not surprising that Zapata supported the policy of 1574–1580, for all its flaws. The 'general language' of Santafé might have been part misconception and part legal fiction, but it allowed him to use the legislation of 1574–1580 to support his attempts to reorganise the church.

His opponents were also well aware of this reality, and repeatedly highlighted the fact that there was no such thing as an Indigenous lingua franca in the New Kingdom of Granada in their campaign against the policy. As Diego Malo de Molina, Franciscan *comisario general*, argued in 1588, 'in a single valley there are usually two or three languages, and the same in other valleys, so that if a priest somehow manages to learn some of the language of Bogotá, he does not know that of Suesca or Nemocón' or of other places, so that Zapata's *criollo* and *mestizo* priests were hardly a solution.[62] The policy could only work in the long term if there was a steady supply of priests from the various parts of the highlands, and if care was taken to ensure they remained in the areas where they were from.[63] Using *mestizo* priests would be difficult, after the huge backlash against Zapata's ordinations. As time would show, his successors would not share his stubborn enthusiasm for ordaining them in such large numbers. Indeed, the long period of vacancy that followed his death resulted in a dearth of new ordinations. At least according to the Jesuit vice-provincial, Gonzalo de Lyra, *criollos* would not do either. As he claimed in a letter to his superiors of 1609, unlike in other parts of the New World, the New Kingdom by this point lacked 'the custom that

[61] Letter of Archbishop Zapata to the king, 8 February 1577, AGI SF 226, no. 12, 1r (my italics).

[62] Proceedings concerning Zapata's seizure of Franciscan parishes, 19 January 1588, AGN C&O 9, 222.

[63] Aside from some more specific temporary missions, such as hearing confessions in Lent, or serving as interpreters. This was the experience of the mestizo priest Alonso Romero de Aguilar, which he described in his *información de méritos* of 20 December 1588, at AGI SF 236, no. 14, 1r–16r. A similar experience was reported by Gonzalo Bermúdez in his petitions for a canonry in 1596: he was ordinarily the Muisca *catedrático* but also the priest of the parish of Santa Bárbara in the city of Santafé and occasionally served the archbishop as an interpreter and a preacher, including visitations (AGI SF 238, no. 10).

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Indigenous women raise the children of Spaniards born in this land', so that new generations of *criollos* were raised with no knowledge of local languages – although, as we will see, this was no small exaggeration.[64]

Moreover, Zapata's efforts had focused on the training of priests, fostering and protecting the new Muisca chair and its incumbent. Bermúdez's task was to teach the 'general language' to the clergy, but it was not to produce a standardised translation of catechetical texts for use in the parishes. It is entirely possible that he produced a translation of catechetical material as a teaching aid, as some historians have suggested.[65] No such text has survived, and in any case there was no effort to issue standardised Muisca catechetical material in this period. The closest the archdiocese came to having a standard catechetical corpus was Zapata's 1576 manuscript *Catechism*, written in Spanish and designed more to be an aid to evangelisation rather than a single, systematic corpus for the obligatory use of everyone in the archdiocese, like the texts of Lima III.[66] In other words, a knowledge of Indigenous languages was required, and the means to learn them provided, but beyond this priests working in Indigenous parishes were to be left to their own devices.

Zapata's approach to the problem of language was pragmatic and ambitious, and very much in line with his broader desire to introduce greater homogeneity and order to Christianisation across the archdiocese, but it was still haphazard and unsustainable in the long term. Of course, Spanish had continued to spread among Indigenous people, as some of Zapata's opponents were eager to highlight, and bilingualism became even more prevalent from the 1580s.[67] But it was by no means universal. When his successor, Bartolomé Lobo Guerrero, arrived in Santafé in 1598 the problem had not gone away. In this area too Lobo Guerrero and his allies would need a new strategy, and they found one.

[64] Gonzalo de Lyra to Claudio Acquaviva, 1609, ARSI NR&Q 1–2, 15r.
[65] Gamboa, 'Introducción', 27.
[66] Fernando Campo argues that this text was translated into Indigenous languages and used around the archdiocese, citing the chronicler Zamora (who wrote in the 1690s). This may well have been the case, although it was by no means an official text of obligatory use, and no such translations have been found. See Fernando Campo del Pozo, 'Catecismos agustinianos utilizados en Hispanoamérica'. In *Provincia Agustiniana de Nuestra Señora de Gracia en Colombia: escritos varios. Vol. 4*. Edited by José Pérez Gómez OSA (Bogotá: Provincia Agustiniana de Nuestra Señora de Gracia en Colombia, 1993), 321–369.
[67] Gamboa, 'Introducción', 17–19.

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NEW TEXTS FOR NEW PRIORITIES

By the time Archbishop Lobo Guerrero arrived in Santafé almost twenty years had passed since the general languages policy had been introduced in the region, and yet a large number of parishes remained in the hands of regulars with no knowledge of Indigenous languages. Even when friars did know them, their authorities were so unconcerned with the issue of language that they failed to send them to parishes where they could use them. Legislation to remove those failing to meet the linguistic requirements, as he put it, had been 'promulgated but not executed'. And the friars had used the vacuum left by the death of his predecessor eight years earlier to entrench their privileges and exemptions, turning back the clock on Zapata's reforms. Lobo Guerrero set to work, and shortly after his arrival announced his intention to force the holders of Indigenous parishes to be examined in their proficiency in Indigenous languages, in his presence, even if it meant enlisting the support of Rome.[68] Two years later he reported that his investigation had revealed that only seven or eight Franciscans knew the languages, three or four Dominicans, and three Augustinians.[69] Nevertheless, even though he had been able to compel all holders of parishes to be examined, the *Audiencia* under President Sande had taken over the examinations and was allowing a number of incompetent priests to keep their parishes.[70] This was going to be an uphill struggle. But here too he could rely on the Jesuits he had brought with him.

The Jesuits had become aware of the challenges posed by the region's linguistic heterogeneity early on, but also realised that it provided them with an opportunity. The first task facing Alonso de Medrano and Francisco de Figueroa, the two Jesuits that arrived with Lobo Guerrero in 1598, was convincing their superiors to establish a permanent presence in the New Kingdom. This involved treading a fine line: on one hand highlighting the failures of evangelisation, even if it meant mischaracterising the efforts of their peers in the other religious orders and the secular clergy, but, on the other, still making clear that the region constituted a viable missionary theatre where their order's resources would not be squandered. The New Kingdom's complex linguistic landscape – or at least their characterisation of it – was central to both arguments.

[68] Lobo Guerrero to the king, 16 May 1599, AGI SF 226, no. 61a, 1v.
[69] Lobo Guerrero to the king, 20 May 1603, AGI SF 226 no. 87, 3v. [70] Ibid., 3v–4r.

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To make their case, Medrano and Figueroa sent their superiors a detailed report on the New Kingdom of Granada around the turn of the century, containing detailed descriptions of the conditions of the kingdom, its size, its Spanish cities, its Indigenous inhabitants, the Spanish authorities, the needs of the church, and the state of evangelisation.[71] A central concern was language. The Jesuits explained that the largest 'Indigenous nation' was 'the province of the Muisca Indians, which comprises Santafé and Tunja', and 'whose language is general in the whole Kingdom', only to then claim that it was in fact 'so horrible and difficult to pronounce and lacking in vocabulary' that no one had been able to codify or translate prayers and the catechism into it – at least until they had arrived on the scene. Neglecting to inform their superiors of the work of Gonzalo Bermúdez and other linguists and interpreters over the previous half century, the pair proceeded to claim they had cracked the issue of language for the first time and produced the very first translation of the catechism and a basic grammar of the language, which they enclosed for publication, 'to the astonishment of the entire land'.[72]

This Jesuit grammar and catechism, long thought lost, or perhaps even fictitious, was recently located by Santiago Muñoz and appears to have been printed in Seville in 1603, alongside a much better known Quechua grammar by Diego de Torres Rubio, on which it is closely modelled.[73] This *Grammar of the Muisca Language of the Indians of the New Kingdom of Granada* takes the linguistic homogeneity of Muisca groups for granted, and served to underscore both the viability of organising a

[71] 'Descripción del Nuevo Reino de Granada de las Indias Occidentales en orden a la fundación que el mismo Reino pretende y pide se haga en él de casas y colegios de la Compañía de Jesús', ARSI NR&Q 14, 15r–15v.

[72] Ibid., 2v, 15r–15v.

[73] *Arte de la lengva mosca de los Indios del nueuo Reyno de Granada, en las Indias Occidentales*, which Muñoz and I attribute to Alonso de Medrano and Francisco Figueroa and which was likely printed in Seville in 1603 by Clemente Hidalgo. This extraordinary book, of which the only known copy is held at the Bodleian Library of the University of Oxford, comprises twenty-five printed pages containing a basic grammar with the most basic structures of the language and the conjugation of two types of verbs, followed by a 'doctrina cristiana' with translations of religious terms and expressions, and Muisca translations of the Creed and the Ten Commandments. The book is undated and unsigned, but through a careful analysis of the paper, typography, and other characteristics we have been able to determine that it was printed at the same time as Diego de Torres Rubio's better known *Grammatica y vocabolario en la lengva general del Perv llamada Quichya, y en la lengua Española: El mas copioso y elegante que hasta agora se ha impresso* (Impresso en Seuilla: en casa de Clemente Hidalgo, 1603), with which the Bodleian copy is bound. If this is correct, it is the earliest text in Muisca to have been discovered to date.

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permanent Jesuit presence in the region, and the applicability of the missionary methods they had been implementing in regions such as Mexico and Peru, whilst emphasising that without them the enterprise would never succeed.

This was a claim that the Jesuits of Santafé continued to push in their correspondence with their Roman superiors for years, even after a vice-province was established with the arrival of Torres Bollo and greater numbers of Jesuits arrived in the region. In this vein, their very first *littera annua*, in 1605, described how the Jesuits had begun their work by preaching to the Indigenous inhabitants of the city of Santafé on Sundays and market days, only to realise that 'little fruit was reaped from this work' because 'few Indians understand the Spanish language' and the Jesuits 'did not know that of the Indians'.[74] It was as if the history of the Spanish encounter with Indigenous languages was repeating itself. Behind these stories for external consumption, of course, the Jesuits were availing themselves of Zapata's legacy. For all their claims that they had learned Muisca without assistance, the Jesuit vice-provincial Gonzalo de Lyra himself acknowledged the Jesuits' debt to Gonzalo Bermúdez in 1611, 'for having taught [them] the language', and advocated for his promotion and reward by the authorities.[75]

What is more significant about the involvement of the Jesuits in language policy is that they were at the centre of the production of a new consensus on language policy at a local level. In the 1580s Bermúdez had been appointed to enable priests to learn Indigenous languages, producing a Muisca grammar and vocabulary, and using them to teach priests who wanted to retain or to be appointed to Indigenous parishes. Now Lobo Guerrero and the Jesuits went much further: they wanted to produce a standardised translation of catechetical texts in the general language, thereby homogenising the contents and practice of catechisation.

Just as Torres Bollo had envisioned the Peruvian parishes under the care of his order in Chucuito to serve as language school for Jesuit missionaries, their Neogranadian parishes became centres of translation and language teaching.[76] Only months after their arrival in the

[74] Draft 1604–1605 Jesuit *littera annua*, c. 1605, ARSI NR&Q 12-I, 34r–34v.

[75] This was in a letter supporting Gonzalo Bermúdez's petition for the position of dean or archdeacon in the cathedral of Santafé in the 1610s, at AGI SF 242, not numbered, dated 6 May 1611, fol. 1r.

[76] Even though, as Aliocha Maldavsky has shown, few Jesuits in the Peruvian province were enthusiastic about actually having to learn Indigenous languages and considered this a menial skill better left to less distinguished members of their order, in particular *criollos*

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Indigenous parish of Cajicá, Lobo Guerrero reported how 'with their help the catechism [*doctrina cristiana*] and prayers were translated into their language', and that he had ordered that catechisation and prayers be conducted in it 'as is done in New Spain and Peru'.[77] The text in question was the translation of the *Catecismo breve* of Lima III.[78] Moreover, an unnamed Jesuit described how he had been given a copy of the confessionary used in the diocese of Lima, 'which [he] translated' as well.[79] Nevertheless, while Lobo Guerrero praised the success of these translations in June 1606, they had been the subject of great criticism. As a Jesuit source of the same period put it, 'when our priests began to try it out, there were many contradictions'. This time, however, the criticism was constructive, and the result was a concerted collaborative effort to improve the Jesuit translation of the text, with 'the twelve best linguists of the kingdom coming together, in the presence of the lord archbishop, an *oidor* of the *Audiencia*, and our father Rector'. After 'many months of meetings', the result was 'a most perfect translation of Christian doctrine, catechism, and confessionary', which was completed a year later, in August 1606.[80]

A decree of President Borja of 15 August provides further details about how this worked. He explained that the text comprised 'the Creed, the *Paternoster*, the *Ave Maria* and *Salve Regina*, the Ten Commandments of the law of God, the Works of Mercy, and a brief catechism in the form of questions and answers containing the articles of our faith'. That the Jesuits, with the input of Gonzalo Bermúdez and other unnamed experts, under the supervision of Lobo Guerrero, had translated it 'from the Castilian language to the general language of the Indians of this province of Santafé de Bogotá that they call Chibcha', only for it to be criticised, and that he had therefore intervened, and brought together a committee that included the Franciscan, Dominican, Augustinian, and Jesuit provincials, Gonzalo Bermúdez, a number of other secular priests and friars, an

and *mestizos*. Aliocha Maldavsky, 'The Problematic Acquisition of Indigenous Languages: Practices and Contentions in Missionary Specialization in the Jesuit Province of Peru (1568–1640)'. In *The Jesuits II: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540–1773*. Edited by John W. O'Malley, Gauvin Alexander Bailey, Steven J. Harris, and T. Frank Kennedy (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 602–615. On Torres Bollo in Chucuito, see Meiklejohn, *La iglesia y los Lupaqas*, 207.

[77] Letter of Archbishop Lobo Guerrero to the king, 6 October 1606, AGI SF 226, no. 101, 1v.

[78] Gamboa, 'Introducción', 28.

[79] Jesuit *littera annua* for 1608–1609, dated 20 September 1609, NR&Q 12-I, 46r.

[80] Draft 1604–1605 Jesuit *littera annua*, c. 1605, ARSI NR&Q 12-I, 34r.

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encomendero expert in the language, and the *Audiencia's* own official interpreters. The Jesuit Joseph Dadey then read the earlier translation clause by clause, and each was considered and modified by the committee until all were satisfied and the translation was so authoritative that 'it could not be improved further'. This done, a further meeting was called, this time also including the municipal council of Santafé and other local notables, who all swore that it was an accurate translation.[81]

Since the translation had been the result of a communal effort and approved with such broad consensus, it had a legitimacy that no previous text had enjoyed. The Jesuit source was not exaggerating in praising the skills and experience of the members of the committee: some, such as the Augustinian Provincial Vicente Mallol, and the Dominican Bernardo de Lugo, were themselves the authors of other translations of catechetical and linguistic material.[82] Indeed, Borja even highlighted the fact that because the committee included not only experts in the language but eminent theologians (the Jesuits), it was more faithful than any previous translation could have hoped to be. The result was that the controversy over the validity of using Indigenous languages for evangelisation that had been raging since the 1570s was finally laid to rest, at least at the level of the authorities. Finally, Borja ordered that this text be published, and that 'by it and by no other' the Indians were 'to be taught and instructed from today on in the things of our holy Catholic faith', establishing harsh penalties – 200 pesos, one year's exile, and potentially 200 lashes – for those who questioned its accuracy, and decreeing that the stipends of parish priests who refused to use it were to be withheld.[83]

[81] Decree of President Borja on the official translation of the catechism to the General Language of Santafé, 25 August 1606, ARSI NR&Q 14, 48r–49r. The *encomendero* was none other than Diego Romero de Aguilar, the brother of *mestizo* priests Andrés and Alonso.

[82] Vicente Mallol had explained to the king in July 1603 that he had produced his own catechism in Muisca, which has not survived (AGI SF 240, not numbered, letter dated 2 July 1603, 1r). On this missing text, Fernando Campo del Pozo, 'El P. Vicente Mallol, OSA, su actuación y catecismo en la lengua chibcha'. In *Provincia Agustiniana de Nuestra Señora de Gracia en Colombia: escritos varios. Vol. 4*. Edited by José Pérez Gómez OSA (Bogotá: Provincia Agustiniana de Nuestra Señora de Gracia en Colombia, 1993), 11–34. Lugo's grammar and confessionary, until recently thought to have been the only text in Muisca ever actually published in the colonial period, is better known. Bernardo de Lugo, *Gramatica en la lengua general del Nuevo Reyno, llamada Mosca* (Madrid: Bernardino de Guzmán, 1619).

[83] Decree of President Borja on the official translation of the catechism to the General Language of Santafé, 25 August 1606, ARSI NR&Q 14, 49v.

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A few days later, in September 1606, Lobo Guerrero and the other reformers held the second synod of the archdiocese of Santafé, and the first since 1566. Aware of the archdiocese's limitations and of the urgency of its situation, rather than delve into the complicated process of producing its own catechetical corpus, the synod effectively sought to buy some time by temporarily introducing the material produced by Lima III that had just been translated, which it reproduced in Spanish.[84] A few years later, in 1625, the first Provincial Council of Santafé was finally called, and the archdiocese issued its own catechetical materials at last.[85] Nevertheless, the real change in the use of Indigenous languages for evangelisation had come not in 1625 but in 1606, with the production of this official translation. And yet, the biggest problem of all had still not gone away.

LOCAL CONDITIONS AND LOCAL SOLUTIONS

Despite the innovations of the early decades of the seventeenth century, nothing had been done to overcome the problem of linguistic heterogeneity, the crucial weakness in any argument in favour of using an Indigenous lingua franca for evangelisation in the New Kingdom of Granada. After all, what use was an official translation of catechetical material into the 'general language' if there was no such thing?

Historians have tended to propose that the solution to the problem of the linguistic heterogeneity of New Granada was to use more than one 'general' language, in the sense of lingua franca. For Ortega Ricaurte, for example, in addition to Muisca, Quechua was used in the diocese of Popayán, as it was spoken by a number of groups in the south and south-west of the New Kingdom of Granada, and 'those in the south [used], Siona … and because it seemed that *Tupí-rupí* or *Yeral* was common in Brazil and the Amazon, this was to be used there'.[86] This idea seems to arise at least in part from a misreading of the legislation of the synod of 1606, which declared that the texts of Lima III had been translated into 'the general language' – that is Santafé Muisca – 'with great care and diligence by the most intelligent and able people that have been found'. Like Borja, the synod declared this was to be the only

[84] 'Constituciones sinodales 1606', 226, 268–275.
[85] 'Concilio provincial 1625', 336–339.
[86] Carmen Ortega Ricaurte, *Los estudios sobre lenguas indígenas de Colombia: notas históricas y bibliografía* (Bogotá: Instituto Caro y Cuervo, 1978), 32.

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translation and the only catechetical text in this language that was to be used, and also established penalties for non-compliance – in its case, excommunication. This did not mean, however, that the synod was ignoring the uncomfortable reality of the archdiocese's linguistic heterogeneity. It ordered priests active in 'the other districts [*partidos*] . . . bringing together the best linguists in these villages, [to] translate the same doctrine and catechism of Lima into the language used in the said districts [*partidos*]'.[87]

How historians interpret these requirements rests on their interpretation not only of the ambiguous term 'general language', but also of what they understand to be a 'district' or '*partido*'. In light of the experience of New Spain and Peru, it is easy to see how some scholars have tended to assume that these districts were vast areas, even corresponding to entire dioceses, so that 'the language' referred to a lingua franca spoken across a large geography. This impression is reinforced by the legislation of the First Provincial Council of Santafé, in 1625, which produced standardised, official catechetical materials for the entire archdiocese – including the dioceses of Cartagena, Popayán, and Santa Marta – and banned the use of all other versions, while also legislating on the question of translations. The council had been called by Archbishop Hernando Arias de Ugarte, after a long visitation of a great deal of the metropolitan archdiocese, and the council referred to this visitation in its constitutions concerning the languages that were to be used for evangelisation.[88] The text explained that over the course of the visitation, 'in the Provinces [*Provinciis*] of Tunja, of Merida, of Muzo, and of La Palma', the Jesuit Miguel Jerónimo de Tolosa 'produced a version of the catechism in the language of the same Indians'.[89] The text referred to '*Indorum linguam*' in the singular, but does this mean that the inhabitants of these provinces (which cover most of the northern section of the eastern range of the Andes) all spoke a single language?

Historians have tended to assume so, even if they are also aware of, and indeed cite, the various sources that complain about linguistic heterogeneity. Looking at this problem from the top it is easy to get this impression. Even so, the idea that a handful of general languages – Muisca, Quechua,

[87] 'Constituciones sinodales 1606', 229–230.

[88] Arias de Ugarte's visitation is scrutinised in Chapter 6. For now see Pedro Antonio Ospina Suárez, *Hernando Arias de Ugarte (1561–1638): El criollo arzobispo de las tres sedes sudamericanas* (Rome: Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, 2004).

[89] 'Concilio provincial 1625', 338–339.

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Siona, Tupí-rupí – were used, rather than just one, hardly explains how the issue of linguistic heterogeneity was addressed, given the size of the New Kingdom of Granada. This is why it is important to examine what actually happened within one of these allegedly homogenous blocks, through local sources that describe the situation inside the Muisca heartlands of the 'valley of Bogotá and Tunja' to which the *Audiencia* referred in 1581, and even the 'province of Tunja' of the 1625 legislation – which may scholars have assumed constituted a homogenous linguistic block. These local sources paint a very different picture.

In February 1608 Archbishop Lobo Guerrero presented the priest Diego de Sanabria to fill the Indigenous parish of Paipa, vacant after the death of its previous incumbent. The town is located some twenty-five miles north-east of Tunja, in the north-eastern highlands of the archdiocese. It was part of the province of Tunja, and firmly in the region that all the legislation described as being inhabited by speakers of Muisca. Of course, the legislation of the 1580s required Sanabria to be fluent in the 'general language' of the New Kingdom of Granada – that is Santafé Muisca – to have studied it under the *catedrático*, Gonzalo Bermúdez, and to have passed his examination. Naturally, this came up in the documentation surrounding his appointment. Indeed, the archbishop described how 'father Diego de Sanabria, priest, said that he knows and understands and is fluent in the language of those Indians *of the said parish*'. But the archbishop was not referring to the general language of the New Kingdom of Granada: President Borja accepted Sanabria, 'since he knows the general language, *and that of Sogamoso, and that of the said town of Paipa*'.[90] Paipa is about 120 miles away from Santafé, but it is only twenty miles away from Sogamoso, and yet the languages spoken are listed separately. Here we have further indication of the linguistic heterogeneity of New Granada.

Records such as this are rare. Most of the documentation surrounding the appointment of priests to Indigenous parishes contains no details about the linguistic qualifications of the people concerned, or indeed anything else, since they tend to be short and formulaic texts. When the Dominican Francisco de León was nominated to the parish of Siachoque, in 1615, all that was mentioned was that his ability in the language had been 'examined and approved by our lord archbishop'.[91] Alonso Macías,

[90] Language examination of Diego de Sanabria, 1608–1610, APSLB Parroquias Boyacá 4/2/7, 13r, my italics.

[91] Appointment of Francisco de León to the parish of Siachoque, 1615, AGN C&O 28, doc. 88, 125r.

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elected to the parish of Tabio in the same year, 'was examined in his Christianity and cases of conscience and in the general language of the natives by the *catedrático* Gonzalo Bermúdez'.[92] Hernando Vásquez got little more in 1625, when he was admitted to the parish of Monguí in 1625: his sufficiency 'in the exam both of the language and of cases of conscience' was 'moderate' ('*mediana*'), but, still, off he went to his new parish.[93] No information about these exams, what they contained, or even what made Vásquez's effort unimpressive, seems to have survived. But in this regard Sanabria's records are once again unusual.

Two years after his appointment, the cathedral chapter issued an edict requiring all priests holding Indian parishes in the region to be tested in their ability with the languages of their parishioners, even if they had already been examined in the past. Sanabria duly appeared before the chapter in September 1610, stating that he had received news of edict, which required parish priests 'to be examined *in the general language of the Indians of the district of Tunja*'. The chapter explained that he was to be examined not just 'in the language of the district of Tunja', but also 'particularly in the language of the Indians of the *repartimiento* of Paipa and its surroundings'.[94]

As might be expected, the chapter summoned 'Gonzalo Bermúdez, priest, *catedrático* of the general language of the district of this kingdom', but also 'Juan de Sepúlveda, linguist and interpreter of the *Real Audiencia*', and 'Alonso Sanz, native of the said city of Tunja'. Different specialists, different languages. First, Sanz was ordered 'to ask the said Diego de Sanabria in the general language of the Indians of Tunja, and in that of the Indians of the said town of Paipa, some questions . . . touching the administration of the Holy Sacraments' and his pastoral duties. Sanabria passed. Sanz was then taken aside and told to ask Sanabria some more questions in the language of Paipa, 'related to his office of priest and the teaching of his parishioners'. Sanabria was asked to answer them 'in our Castilian language', which he did. Sanabria was then asked to step outside, and the specialists were required to confirm whether he 'knew and understood the said languages' (plural): 'that of the Indians of the district of Tunja, of the said town of Paipa, and of the valley of

[92] Appointment of Alonso Macías to the parish of Tabio, 1615, AGN C&O 28, doc. 91, 129r.

[93] Appointment of Hernando Vásquez to the parish of Monguí, 1625, AGN C&O 28, doc. 234, 314v.

[94] Proceedings of the language examination of Diego de Sanabria, 24 September 1610, APSLB Parroquias Boyacá 4/2/7, 14r.

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Sogamoso'.[95] They agreed that he did, and Sanabria was allowed to return to his parish.

Unfortunately, these documents do not record further details of what was asked, let alone the questions presented to him in the original language, so it is not possible to reconstruct even a glimpse of these different languages, or of concrete differences between them. There is also some ambiguity as to whether the languages of Sogamoso and Paipa were one, as president Borja suggested when he confirmed Lobo Guerrero's appointment of Sanabria in 1608, or whether they were different. What is clear, at least, is that even the experts identified a language of Tunja that was distinct from that of Santafé, and a language of Paipa that was distinct from these two, and this makes the text clear evidence of the linguistic heterogeneity of even this small corner of the archdiocese.

The documentation surrounding the presentation of Sanabria is unusually detailed, but fortunately not unique. A fellow Dominican, Tomás Benítez, appeared before the cathedral chapter at around the same time as Sanabria, in response to the same edict.[96] Benítez was the parish priest of Lenguazaque, which was located in the province of Santafé rather than that of Tunja, but still some seventy miles north-east of the seat of the archdiocese. Benítez was to be examined 'in the general language of the Indians of this kingdom, and in particular in the language of the Indians of Lenguazaque'.[97] Bermúdez and Sepúlveda were summoned and given the same instructions. But they replied that he should only be examined in the general language of Santafé, since 'the Indians of the district of this city can make themselves understood very well in the language of the Indians of the said town of Lenguazaque'.[98] Once again, there is no concrete information about the similarities, but what is striking is that the authorities assumed that the languages were different and that this necessitated two separate exams. It was only when the experts arrived that they learned that the languages were similar enough, and that only one exam was therefore necessary.

What these records demonstrate was that the linguistic landscape was indeed heterogeneous, even within an area traditionally assumed to have been largely homogenous. It also demonstrates that the idea of using one lingua franca could not work in New Granada, and that the authorities

[95] Ibid., 14v.
[96] Proceedings of the language examination of Tomás Benitez, 22 September 1610, AGN C&O 28, 153r–161v.
[97] Ibid., 154r. [98] Ibid., 155r.

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were aware of the situation. But how could this be combined with the drive to homogenise the conduct of religious instruction? After all, the standard catechetical literature that was issued in the general language might have been good for Lenguazaque, but not for Paipa and elsewhere. The answer the New Kingdom's authorities came up with was remarkably simple.

SOLUTIONS ON THE GROUND

Chapter 6 examines surviving records of the exhaustive visitation of the Indigenous parishes of the archdiocese that was conducted over six years by Archbishop Arias de Ugarte before he called the First Provincial Council of Santafé in 1625. For now, what is key is that surviving documentation provides a glimpse of how linguistic issues were being overcome at a local level by the 1620s.[99] Priests examined by the archbishop were required, among other things, to produce a number of items and texts integral to the performance of their duties. Andrés de Córdoba, parish priest of Soracá (some five miles east of Tunja), was thus asked in November 1621 to produce the documentation of his ordination and appointment to his benefice, adequate parish records, a breviary, and other documents. Crucially, he was also asked to produce copies of 'the Christian doctrine and catechism *in the language*' and 'the Confessionary *in the language*'.[100]

Córdoba had a copy of the constitutions of the Council of Trent, the decrees of the synod of 1606, some parish records, and the documents of his ordination and installation, but he failed to produce most of the others.[101] Since the archdiocese still lacked its own catechetical corpus, priests like Córdoba were required to use the catechetical material produced by Lima III, specifically its Catechism for Indians, which the synod had introduced to the archdiocese in Spanish. He lacked this text, and also the catechism and confessionary 'in the language'. The archbishop admonished him, and recorded how despite, 'being so able in the language he has not made [*hecho*] the catechism, prayers, and confessionary

[99] Little of the documentation of the visitation has survived, not least because much of it was lost during the arduous progress of the visitation itself, during which Arias de Ugarte almost drowned. Pacheco, *La consolidación*, 67–79; and Ospina Suárez, *Hernando Arias de Ugarte*.

[100] Visitation of the parish of Soracá by Archbishop Arias de Ugarte, 24 November 1620, AHSB Libro 6, 13r (my italics).

[101] Ibid., 13v.

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in the language, nor has he taught the Indians the said catechism in it, as he should do'.[102] 'The language' was not the 'general language' of the archdiocese, but the language of the people of the town. This was even more explicit when, in June 1623, still on his visitation, Arias de Ugarte made similar charges to Fernando de Gordillo, parish priest of San José de Pare, some fifty miles north-west of Tunja. Gordillo too failed to produce 'the catechism and confessionary *in the language of the Indians of this parish*', and he could not even speak it.[103]

To the charge, of 'not having made the catechism and prayers and confessionary in the language' ('*no tener hecho*'), Córdoba gave a revealing answer: 'I have not yet made it before seeing how I was commanded to do it in this visitation, which I will now do in light of what has been commanded to me.'[104] A mediocre excuse, but a revealing one: priests in the archdiocese of Santafé were required to produce their own translations or adaptations of catechetical and pastoral literature in the language of their parishioners.[105] The archbishop ordered both priests to produce their translations and to send them to Santafé for approval – Córdoba within six months, Gordillo within four.[106] Moreover, when the archbishop had cause to doubt the ability of a priest to produce an adequate translation for his parish, he still had a solution. In July 1623, when he charged Rodrigo Alonso, the parish priest of Saboyá, of 'not having produced the catechism and confessionary in the language of the Indians', he ordered him to produce one within four months, or 'someone will be sent at his cost to do so' for him.[107] The same choice had been given to Juan de Guevara, priest of Moniquirá, in June.[108]

Arias de Ugarte was aware of the spread of Spanish among Indigenous people, but this was no reason to abandon the use of Indigenous

[102] Ibid., 14r (my italics).
[103] Visitation of the parish of San José de Pare by Archbishop Arias de Ugarte, 8 June 1623, AHSB Libro 6, 98v (my italics).
[104] Ibid., 15r.
[105] This may be why there is such a dearth of surviving catechetical texts in Indigenous languages for New Granada. Indeed, comparatively few parish documents of any sort survive for the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in most parishes in Cundinamarca and Boyacá.
[106] Visitation of the parish of San José de Pare by Archbishop Arias de Ugarte, 8 June 1623, AHSB Libro 6, 16r, 98v.
[107] Visitation of the parish of Saboyá by Archbishop Arias de Ugarte, 18 July 1623, AHSB Libro 6, 125v.
[108] Visitation of the parish of Moniquirá by Archbishop Arias de Ugarte, 10 June 1623, AHSB Libro 6, 105v.

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languages. When Gerónimo García Vásquez, the parish priest of Fúquene, a town some forty-five miles south-west of Tunja, had tried to argue that the majority of his parishioners could speak Spanish in October 1619, Arias de Ugarte ordered him to also catechise in Indigenous languages regardless, and to produce the required translations.[109] In March 1621 Arias de Ugarte had encountered Cristóbal de Cifuentes, another reprobate who made a similar argument for teaching only in Spanish.[110] Cifuentes was the priest of Guacamayas, a more remote town – located around 140 miles north-east of Tunja, 240 miles away from Santafé – but distance was no excuse, and when he failed to produce the texts, he was duly charged, for 'despite being required to have produced a confessionary and catechism in the language of the Indians ... he has not done so in the 27 years that he has been parish priest'.[111] The policy would remain in place, despite the fact that the adoption of Spanish among Indigenous people only grew, and even when the authorities introduced policies to bolster the use of Spanish. In 1641, for example, when a rescript was promulgated across the Indigenous parishes of the region that ordered that 'all young Indians who can learn the Castilian language be taught it' – for reasons similar to those quoted by the legislation of 1550 – three years later it was suspended because it seemed to be resulting in the abandonment of evangelisation in Indigenous languages altogether.[112]

Perhaps the discovery of new sources in the future might make possible an exhaustive linguistic analysis that can explore the extent of the heterogeneity of the different varieties of Muisca, but for now one thing is clear: what these sources reveal is that the authorities of the New Kingdom of Granada had abandoned the idea of using a single Indigenous lingua franca in evangelisation, and instead required that bespoke catechetical material tailored to the languages of the localities be produced as a matter of course.

[109] Visitation of the parish of Fúquene by Archbishop Arias de Ugarte, 16 October 1619, AHSB Caja 1, 184v.

[110] Visitation of the parish of Guacamayas by Archbishop Arias de Ugarte, 9 March 1621, AHSB Libro 6, 19r–38v.

[111] Ibid., 31r.

[112] A copy of this decree and its subsequent retraction survives in the book of baptisms of the parish of Oicatá (AGN PB, Oicatá, Libro 1, at 121v–123r and 130r, respectively). The decree was promulgated around the empire, and its reasoning seems familiar: that with a knowledge of Spanish would be beneficial to the salvation and *policía* of Indigenous people, and even that it did not seem very difficult ('*muy dificultoso*') given how the Inca had managed to impose Quechua.

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When the provinces of Santafé and Tunja were inspected in the second half of the 1630s by the *oidores* Gabriel de Carvajal and Juan de Valcárcel, respectively, in the last such inspections the *Audiencia* would carry out until the end of the century, their conversations with Indigenous witnesses reveal that the usage of Indigenous languages in catechisation at a local level was by now well entrenched and that Arias de Ugarte's *ad hoc* solution was working. Records for the twenty-eight parishes for which records survive – explored in greater detail in Chapter 6 – show that in each and every town the priest was deemed by Indigenous people to be competent in their language, even though most witnesses also reported large numbers of Spanish speakers in their towns. These were often perfunctory statements confirming the priest knew the language, but occasionally give us a little more. So it was in Tibaguyas, where Indigenous governor Pedro Cabra explained that their priest, Francisco Delgado, 'teaches them the prayers of Christian doctrine and preaches sermons in their language, explaining the things of God with much Christian zeal, and the Indians are *ladinos* and understand him in their Muisca language and in Spanish, and he confesses and marries them and baptises their children and buries their dead'.[113] By then, the overwhelming majority of priests in Indigenous parishes – regulars as well as seculars – were *criollos*, so that many had grown up in the multilingual environments that were the cities of Santafé, Tunja, and smaller towns, regardless of whether or not, as Lyra claimed in 1609, they had been raised by Indigenous nannies. So explained Juan de Betancur y Velosa, parish priest of Samacá, who matter-of-factly told visitor Valcárcel that of course 'he knows and understand the language' and had met all the requirements, for he was 'a native person [*persona natural*] and patrimonial son of the city of Tunja'.[114]

LANGUAGE AS LEGAL FICTION

The linguistic heterogeneity of the Muisca territories meant that colonial authorities lacked a lingua franca that they could take advantage of for their purposes. Attempts to use the variant of Muisca spoken in the region around Santafé as a lingua franca were unsuccessful, and recognised as such by the authorities of New Granada. This was evidenced by the adoption of multiple variants of Muisca for catechetical purposes, and

[113] Visitation of Tibaguyas by Gabriel de Carvajal, 22 March 1638, AGN VC 12 d. 2, 299v.
[114] Visitation of Samacá by Juan de Valcárcel, 2 August 1636, AGN VB 12 d 6, 560v.

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the creation of a formal and standardised procedure for ensuring the production of bespoke translations of catechetical material. The legal and disciplinary mechanisms that underpinned these procedures relied on the legislation of 1574–1580, in which the ambiguous idea of 'general languages' was at the centre. In this sense, the impression – or fiction – that New Granada did have an Indigenous lingua franca was essential, even if the policies that the legislation made possible were very different. In other words the New Kingdom of Granada did have a 'general language' (in the sense of general misconception among those unversed in local languages, and, crucially, as a legal fiction), and this was essential to the implementation of a language policy by local authorities to overcome the fact that, unlike other regions of Spanish America, it did not have a 'general language' in the sense of Indigenous lingua franca.

One consequence of the language policy ultimately implemented at a local level was that 'general Muisca' never became a lingua franca. Some scholars of 'general Quechua' in Peru propose the language was an artificial construct that fulfilled this role, and as a result influenced other variants of Quechua spoken around Peru, a thesis that continues to be the subject of debate.[115] In the case of New Granada it is clear is that there could be no equivalent process: the linguistic heterogeneity of the Muisca territories and the dearth of manpower available to Spanish authorities guaranteed this. The use of Indigenous languages in catechisation in New Granada instead reinforced linguistic particularism, contributing to the linguistic isolation of the localities and its inhabitants. The 'Muisca language' (singular) existed only on paper, in colonial texts, as a paper reality: a fiction born of the peculiar conditions of the region, and designed precisely to give the impression that the New Kingdom of Granada conformed to the expectations and models set by other regions – whether for the purposes of justifying Zapata's controversial reforms, the efforts of Jesuits to establish themselves in Santafé, or the attempts of successive civil and ecclesiastical authorities to make material their authority over the local clergy. Significantly, it was a paper reality that existed only in the register of writing on the New Kingdom of Granada and its inhabitants that was produced for export, for foreign audiences – whether the papacy, the crown, the Jesuit curia, or other readers – and contrasted sharply with the picture of linguistic heterogeneity seen so clearly in the more mundane bureaucratic archive of local

[115] Cerrón Palomino, 'Unidad y diferencia lingüística'; Durston, *Pastoral Quechua*.

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colonial institutions. But it is a powerful fiction that has contributed to cementing the idea that the disparate inhabitants of the highlands constituted a single, homogenous 'nation' before the European invasion.

These conclusions also challenge those of scholars who have examined the question of language in the New Kingdom in the past and has important consequences for understanding of the experience of the Muisca in the colonial period. Schwartz and Salomon, for example, argue that the imposition of general languages contributed to the cultural homogenisation and creation of new, homogenous identities among the Indigenous groups on which they were imposed, a suggestion repeated, if not elaborated, by Jorge Gamboa in his discussion of the Muisca.[116] Such an idea seems straightforward, except that in reality, at a local level, there was no such imposition. Policies such as the forced resettlement of disparate Muisca communities into *reducciones* that gathered pace towards the end of the sixteenth century, increased internal movement from Indigenous migration and labour drafts, and the reconfiguration of patterns of trade and exchange all undoubtedly represented new pressures towards cultural and linguistic homogeneity. But because the linguistic strategy implemented by local agents did not favour linguistic homogenisation around an Indigenous vernacular, it may have been responsible for these processes to bypass Muisca languages altogether, since the only practical lingua franca was increasingly Spanish, which had been spreading among Indigenous people, and offered those who could speak it advantages in pursuing their interests. Indeed, the resulting situation encourages speculation in an entirely different direction, suggesting that the language policy eventually implemented in the localities may in fact help to account for the eventual disappearance of Muisca from the region and increasing Hispanisation – all of which ensured that the 'general language' of the New Kingdom of Granada, in the sense of lingua franca, could only ever be Castilian. These are, however, questions for future scholarship. For now, the story of language policy clearly illustrates how

[116] Frank Salomon and Stuart B. Schwartz, 'New Peoples and a New Kind of People: Adaptation, Readjustment and Ethnogenesis in South American Indigenous Societies (Colonial Era)'. In *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas. Vol. 3: South America, part 2*, 443–501 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); and Gamboa, *El cacicazgo*, 14, 458. Similarly, the creation of a lingua franca, for James Sidbury and Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, was one way in which 'the church contributed mightily to the homogeneisation' of Indigenous communities. See 'Mapping Ethnogenesis in the Early Modern Atlantic'. *The William and Mary Quarterly* 68, no. 2 (2011): 195.

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local conditions fundamentally shaped and altered the application of imperial policy in the New Kingdom Granada, even beyond recognition. A policy that had the ostensible aim of advancing linguistic homogeneity could be transformed by local contingencies into one that reinforced heterogeneity.

Ultimately, however, this is also the story of how the authorities of the New Kingdom found creative solutions to ensure that religious instruction across the parishes of the provinces of Santafé and Tunja took place in languages that Indigenous people could understand, whether these were Indigenous languages, Spanish, or a combination, and that in doing so priests adhered, as much as practically possible, to a uniform and homogenous methodology. The alignment of Lobo Guerrero, the Jesuits, and Borja was central to this process, laying to rest the long-running controversy over whether or not to use Indigenous languages in evangelisation at all, and reaching a general consensus with the input of as broad a coalition of lay and religious authorities as possible. Indigenous language teaching thus became central to the reform movement they initiated in 1606, allowing their new approach to Christianisation to actually reach Indigenous people on the ground, and making it possible for them to interact with Christianity in new and transformative ways.

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