

The Spanish villagers William Christian wrote about were truly Christians, however, not the same form of Christianity that we see today since it has evolved over the centuries. I say this because the way Christian described vows in this chapter doesn't sound anything like what I know Christianity today to be, however, there is ample evidence in the chapter of these vows being a component of the villagers' Christian religion.

The vows they took were to specific saints to observe their feast days in order to ward off disasters. For example, in Auñón Saint Benedict's Day was observed because in an earlier year on that day olive oil mills burned to the ground (Christian 34). This is evidence that these villagers considered the saint on whose day a disaster occurred to be responsible. As evidence of the religious authority these vows carried, they could only be commuted by bishops and in some cases only by the pope and observed long after the reasons for observance were forgotten (Christian 36).

The observances that these vows made mandatory have all the power of any other Christian tradition today, even though some dioceses looked down on the observances (Christian 60). That leads you to question my opening statement, but in reality what makes up any religion, the administrative authorities or the multitude of those who practice the religion? The vows are one of the embodiments of Christianity that these villagers used to practice their religion. It may not have been one fully ordained by the Vatican, but nonetheless it was a practice of the Christian religion.